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Commander UFW Post 5912
P. O. Box 232
Munfordville, KY 42765
January 16, 1977

Dear Mr. President:

As a Veteran of WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Submarine Veteran WW II, a Pearl Harbor survivor, and a Retired U.S. Army Master Sergeant, I cannot sit back without writing you and letting you know my feelings and the feelings of the majority of Veterans in this area of the country, namely Hart County, Kentucky.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of this country with the responsibility for the defense and procuring of the Army in a National Emergency, I find it hard to believe that you can honestly, in your heart, give a blanket pardon to the deserters and draft evaders. I think this decision would be the same as throwing down your weapon in the face of the enemy.

I believe that everyone living in this country has a responsibility to serve in the Armed Forces or some type of defense job in times of National Emergencies whether it is right or wrong in the eyes of the individual. If each person were allowed to make his own choice as to whether or not he should serve, there would be no Army.

It is easy for people that have never been in combat to sit back and say, "Have mercy on them because they are doing what they believe is right." If this is so, what of the young men who died while they protested? Are they wrong? If these protesters are right, then no one here should fight; we should throw down our weapons and let our enemies take over because they are also fighting for what they believe is right. As for myself, I would rather forgive my enemies because they had the courage to fight, whereas the draft evaders and deserters are nothing but radicals that try to keep the country in a turmoil and fester old wounds.

I think it is a slap in the face of every man that has fought and died since our country's beginning and to the men that are maimed for life in our Veteran Hospitals. I do not believe these deserters or evaders should be allowed to walk on the streets the Veterans fought so hard to preserve and many died for.

Again I say there will be irreparable damage to the defense of our country by a blanket pardon, and I believe you should look at the problems this pardon will have in the future if the time comes in your term of office to call upon the Armed Forces and to reinstate the Selective Service. I know you are in a better position to see these things than I am but I am worried. I would fight again overseas if it becomes necessary, but I would be more afraid of what was happening back in this country if a blanket pardon were given today. I feel I would be left alone to die because no one would come to help me.

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If you feel you must do this, please think of the dead and wounded that fought while the others protested because it is hard on the morale of the troops when something like this happens. They must accept it but they accept it with a bitter almond.

Sincerely yours,

Martin B. Schenck
Master Sergeant U. S. Army Retired
Commander VFW Post 5912