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### Never Forget to Remember

The tragedies in our world can feel overwhelming at times. Police brutality in the US, endless war in the Middle East, humanitarian crises ravaging Yemen, are all constantly claiming innocent lives.

*Hearts that weren't ready to stop beating.*

*Minds that weren't ready to stop thinking.*

*Souls that weren't ready to stop wandering.*

At first glance, it seems as if nothing can be done. It is what it is, right? Well if you start to believe that, you've already lost the fight. You see, hope is the true face of courage. Hope for a world that could be better, that should be better.

Well then, where is this precious hope you speak of one may ask. You need only look to history to be your guiding light. Hope can be found in the hearts, minds, and souls of those who opposed the Vietnam war. You can see it in the hearts of Clarence Fitch, Andy Stapp, Howard Levy, Donald Duncan, Susan Schnall, the Fort Hood Three, Hugh Thompson, Ron Haerberle, Ron Ridenhour, and every individual who fought in the name of peace. You can recognize it in the minds of those who organized protests, created petitions, arranged secret meetings, and wrote antiwar sentiments. It is found in every soul who was brave enough to face death and imprisonment to end the horrific catastrophes being committed in Vietnam.

These people changed the course of history by putting an end to the war. A war where newborns suffered deformities from Agent Orange. A war where napalm burned little school children. A war where men, women, and children were raped and slaughtered in My Lai. A war where young US soldiers were unwillingly forced to greet death. A war that never had the intention of dealing with freedom and democracy.

Often in our society, we tend to suffer from a sort of historical amnesia. One that convinces us there is nothing to be done, so keep your head down and get back in line. Bad things happen and it's cruel, terrible, and unjust but c'mon what are you going to do about it? We are constantly beaten over the head and convinced to answer *Nothing! I'm not going to do anything about it.* Leaving us surrounded by darkness and despair. And yet, history illuminates an alternative path. Those who risked their lives to fight for peace, not war, life, not death, compassion, not cruelty, constantly show us there is always hope to be had. They show us you *can* help change the world, as long as you possess the hope, courage, and fight in order to do so.

The legacy of those who opposed the war goes far beyond Vietnam. Their legacy should and will stick with us forever. Their lesson is perhaps more prescient now than ever before amidst a world that seems bewilderingly evil at times. So when you look upon the destruction in our world today and feel helpless, never forget about those who were invaluable to ending the Vietnam War. They will always be there to remind you; if you put your heart, mind, and soul to it, there can always be a different tomorrow.