



CBS Reality Show Angers VFW

Mar 22, 2013

Mr. Leslie Moonves
President & CEO, CBS Corporation
51 West 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019

Dear Mr. Moonves:

Anger pointed directly at CBS is the reaction of the 2 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and our Auxiliaries. You may not have known what the *"Amazing Race"* producers had planned for Sunday night's show, but you certainly do now. I urge far greater executive oversight over what's aired under the CBS logo.

It's been 40 years since our last combat troops exited Vietnam. It was a war that tore our nation apart, both politically and on college campuses across the country. But my Vietnam Generation — whether they protested in the streets or fought in the mountains, jungles and swamps — learned how to separate the politics of war from the warrior fighting it. We made sure returning Gulf War veterans got their welcome home parade in 1991, and will do so again for returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. We also helped to heal our own wounds by getting Agent Orange legislation passed, by reforming the Department of Veterans Affairs, and by creating our own memorial on the National Mall that paved the way for two more to honor Korean War and World War II veterans. This is the legacy of a Vietnam Generation that has moved on with the motto: "Never again."

So I hope you can understand our anger at a show that wasted a golden opportunity to educate as well as entertain. The scene with the B-52 wreckage could have been used to tell a story about what was then America's longest war, about the 58,195 American names on the Vietnam Wall, about the 1,652 Americans still listed as missing-in-action, or about the fates of the multiple crewmen aboard each of the 17 American B-52s we lost in combat. The B-52 scene, as well as the young people singing a propaganda song, was totally unnecessary to the show's plot, which speaks volumes about naïve producers who think they're in charge when they are not.

I left Vietnam on a stretcher in 1970 after being wounded a third time as a Marine Corps rifleman, but I have been very fortunate to have returned several times to meet the people and to discuss the war with my former enemy, many of whom are now helping to recover the remains of missing Americans. To the Vietnamese, their war with America was a drop in the bucket compared to fighting the French for a century and the Chinese for a millennia, but to many VFW comrades and fellow Vietnam Veterans, that war continues to influence our daily lives.

CBS reopened an old wound by failing to educate a viewership about a time in American history that continues to be misunderstood, misrepresented and stereotyped. The Vietnam Generation and our nation deserve and expect much better from your network.

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Regards,
JOHN E. HAMILTON
Commander-in-Chief