

## Letters

---

I read the entire copy [Vol 7, No 2] with great interest, appreciation, and enjoyment. I particularly welcomed, and agreed with, the article, "McNamara's Makeshift Amends." The mother of one of my high school classmates called me when McNamara was doing his book tour; she was broken-hearted over the realization that McNamara has disavowed his own policies and remained silent all these years, while her son "had clearly died for no reason but some old men's vanity."

I disagree with Brian Hanley's review of "Achilles in Vietnam" for a number of reasons. I do not concur with Jonathan Shay's use of Achilles as a paradigm for Vietnam veterans. Simply put, here Jonathan compares an aristocrat with grunts. As "The Iliad" opens, Achilles refuses to participate further in the war because he is furious that Agamemnon has usurped Briseus. Thus the issue of the destruction of Achilles' honor and humanity is an argument over the possession of a woman. Whereas the moral conflicts faced by Vietnam combat veterans with 20+ years of PTSD (as so many of the articles in the journal show) deal with the differences between what they were told by their superiors and what they have come to understand about the war they fought. I applaud Jonathan's efforts in pleading for compassion from the nation and the military in supporting veterans. I look forward to Jonathan's work on Odysseus' 20-year journey home from his war and what that can tell us *vis-a-vis* Vietnam vets.

—Ellen Pinzur  
Cambridge, MA