

# Letters

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## Electronic Battlefield

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I very much enjoyed the automated battlefield ["The Electronic Battlefield: Wiring Down the War," by Paul Dickson and John Rothchild, May]. Although the subject is humorously treated, the article raises some very serious points. It is one further result of our tragic involvement in the Indochina War and our emphasis upon defense rather than domestic needs.

DONALD M. FRASER  
Washington, D. C.

*Mr. Fraser is a U. S. Congressman from Minnesota.*

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## The Burn Ward

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Anger was my first reaction to "The Burn Ward" [by Ronald J. Glasser, April]: There should be a law against publishing that kind of obscenity. Maybe because half-way through it there was a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes. (Maybe remembering my own two-year hospitalization with a burn.)

Perhaps the photographs of napalmed villagers, the My Lais are yet too remote for our calloused eyes and ears. They lack the impact to jar those responsible to action. What our decision-makers need is a tour of the burn wards. How many round-trip tickets can be had for the money that might otherwise be spent on a full-page moratorium ad in the New York Times? How much more influential would the experience of that tour be?

Further, the next march to the Capitol steps should be by those burned, armless, legless, sightless sons. It would not take 300,000 for impact.

JACK PREBIS  
New York, N.Y.

If anything will bring home to the American people the criminal obscenity that is the Indochinese War, it is "The Burn

Ward." It is a vicarious experience that rends the heart and soul. One that I will not—cannot—soon or easily forget.

This war is a wanton wastage of a precious human and natural resource. This war must be stopped. Now.

It is all so needless.

JOSEPH C. DAVIS, JR.  
Norfolk, Va.

Pete McCloskey's introduction and "The Burn Ward" were especially moving; the latter was devastating.

OGDEN R. REID  
Washington, D. C.

*Mr. Reid is a U. S. Congressman from New York.*



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# Busting Our Mental Blocks on Drugs and Crime

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by Suzannah Lessard

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Just as all people are potentially addicts, Americans have a susceptibility to paranoia—whatever form it may come in, the receptor cells are waiting. Dope provides the perfect, irresistible fix. A substance that is super-potent in tiny quantities, easily concealed in food or drink, which quickly enslaves the user, claiming his first loyalty and best energies, dope makes science fiction tales of brain implants and remote control sound awkward and primitive. It's the ideal agent for the forces of evil, whether they be the communists (a pretty good fix in themselves) or that vaguer but all-powerful darkness that our bones tell us lurks beneath the surface of creation, watching for an opportunity to swallow the frail forces of righteousness. The savage and the forest gave our forefathers rich enough images for their fears but in more complex times

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*Suzannah Lessard is an assistant editor of The Washington Monthly.*

subtler vehicles are needed. Dope is not only both furtive and seductive (prime qualifications) but, once established as a symbol of evil in the imagination, it is difficult to dispel the connotations with facts.

The tragedy of these attitudes is that they have in many ways created the very situation they presumed existed. When a drug problem is dealt with in strictly criminal terms, addicts, who for whatever reason are unable to withdraw successfully from their drug, have no choice but to seek out a black market. The dope underworld, in a nation where there are 200,000 addicts and yet heroin is contraband, develops into a grotesque, over-heated form of capitalism. The stakes are high enough to attract the biggest operators, and a small number tend to gain a monopoly. "Junk is the ideal product," wrote William Burroughs, "the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will