

POOL REPORT

November 2, 1974

Air Force One Pool - Salt Lake City to Grand Junction, Colorado

Just before he left the field house, (Special Events Center), at the University of Utah, the President stopped to talk to three Vietnam veterans about the G.I. Education Bill. We got a tape of most of the debate that ensued. Here's our own transcript:

President: I'm not in a position to say yes or no until it gets down to the White House.

Veteran: Don't you have a stand on it? (several talked at once at this point)

As the three veterans started to interrupt and talk at the same time, the President gestured and said: "Now wait a minute. The point is there are some provisions in there that have to be analyzed. They have added beyond what Korean and World War II veterans got by 9 months in entitlement."

Veteran: That's not exactly true.

President: Yes it is, the President said, waving a finger at the vet. It's totally true."

Veteran: But what's wrong with that?

President: But why should I have to ask this question...

Veteran: I can answer it for you...

President: Wait just a minute. Some of us served 4 years. The entitlement in World War II and Korea, which you want equality with, gives you nine more months than the sixteen million who served in the other draft. (What he apparently meant was that the GI bill would give the Vietnam vets 9 more months of entitlement than the World War II and Korea vets got).

Veteran: Only undergraduates, Mr. President.

President: Yes, but that's

Veteran: There's a very good reason for it.....

President: Now, now, wait just a minute. And, in addition, there's a loan program that has to be analyzed. Now the student loan program we've had under NDEA has had a very bad repayment record. I'm sure you're familiar with that, are you not?

Veteran: Well....

President: Well, it's about 35%. Now we've got to take a look....

Veteran: (interrupting) That's your era.... Those are your people that are are not paying it back. That's not us.

President: Well, I'm going to take a look at it, and will do the best. Thank you. Nice to see you. But there are some problems that have to be analyzed and until the Congress sends it down there I don't think in good judgment that I ought to make that....

Norton, Beckman, Girard