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American Legion Commander: CBS Should Apologize for Insulting Vietnam War Veterans

INDIANAPOLIS (March 20, 2013) -- In a scathing letter sent to CBS, Vietnam War veteran and American Legion National Commander James E. Koutz called for the Tiffany Network to apologize for “its disgraceful slap-in-the face administered to American war heroes” during a prime time broadcast Sunday night.

“The show is called ‘The Amazing Race,’ but I call it ‘The Amazing Gall,’” Koutz said. “In a broadcast reminiscent of Tokyo Rose, reality game show contestants visited a ‘B-52 Memorial’ in Vietnam, which featured the wreckage of a B-52 bomber shot down during the war. What wasn’t shown were the U.S. crewmembers that were killed or the grieving American families that were left behind. The Department of Defense is encouraging Americans to honor and commemorate our Vietnam War veterans for the sacrifice that they made 50 years ago. The American Legion takes this obligation very seriously. We only wish that the network that once gave us Kate Smith – famous for her rendition of ‘God Bless America’—would return to its great roots and not be so eager to broadcast anti-American propaganda.”

The B-52 visit was not the only portion of the show that The American Legion found objectionable. Contestants watched a performance by young people singing a song before a portrait of communist leader Ho Chi Minh. Lyrics included the phrases, “Vietnam Communist Party is glorious...Socialism is growing more beautiful with time. Follow the party’s step. Be loyal. Be pure...”

Ken Danilson, a prominent Legionnaire from Iowa, was particularly offended. “As a Marine Corps veteran having served two tours in Vietnam, it is extremely offensive to me and to our country to glorify a communist regime that without mercy killed and tortured our Vietnam allies and now is portrayed as something that is acceptable in our society.”

Koutz is encouraging Americans to show support for Vietnam veterans by letting CBS know of their disapproval and by refusing to watch future episodes of the show. “Vietnam War veterans were maligned enough when they returned to this country. We need to send a loud message that we will never again tolerate America’s veterans being disrespected.”

With a current membership of 2.4-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

War-time veterans and military members dedicated to a strong national security; compassionate care for veterans and their families; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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