

THE OTHER LETTERS HOME

By John Judy

MICHAEL

This past Monday America celebrated Memorial Day, honoring our nation's war dead by sleeping late and having barbecues. The LA Times and many other papers allowed their editorial staff to take the day off and filled the extra column inches with reprints of letters from soldiers, written in their brief respites from battle. These letters reflect the soldiers' timeless longing for home, peace, and the girl they left behind. Then there are the letters they didn't print....

(Civil War music. Maybe there's something on the screen like 1861-1865.)

UNION SOLDIER

Dear Father, I thought I had seen the depths of squalor and human degradation, what with us being from Philadelphia and all. Then my regiment marched into Alabama. I shall not sicken you with details, but if this backwater of incest and cross-eyed depravity wishes so badly to secede then Honest Abe should be well-advised to hasten its departure. I shudder at the thought, but should the prodigal Alabama be returned to our more perfect Union, can Hades or Florida be far behind...?

CONFEDERATE SOLDIER

My Dearest Elizabeth, For a while I was actually worried at the thought of combat, but now it appears this War of Northern Aggression shall be over before we know it. Can you believe that old rascal Lincoln is actually allowing negroes to serve in his army? How desperate that fool must be! Why the idea of such animals successfully mastering anything more complex than a spear is absur-

(SFX: "BANG!")

Oh shit.

(Cuban/Salsa Music. SCREEN CAPTION: "Spanish-American War 1898-1899")

TEDDY ROOSEVELT

Dear Edith, Well we made it to the top of San Juan Hill. Don't tell anyone but I peed myself rather a lot. Did the other thing too. "Remember the Maine!" Bully!

(MUSIC: "Over There." Caption "World War One, The Great War. 1914-1918")

DOUGHBOY

Dear Pa, Well, three months and still no one in our company can find Sarajevo on a map. I'm beginning to think there was no such person as "Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand" at all. Have to go gas some huns now. Love to Mom.

(German music. Caption "Word War Two. 1941-1945")

SOLDIER

Dear Mom, Keep this under your hat, but I'm pretty sure we shot down Glen Miller's plane last night. On the Q-T.

(MUSIC: "Theme from MASH." Caption: "The Korean War. 1950-1953")

SOLDIER

Dear Margie, Korea! It's a country in Asia and we've been at war with it for three years now! Jesus!

(MUSIC: "The End" by the Doors. Caption "The Vietnam War. 1961-1975")

DUBYA

Dear Laura, Well my Dad came through again. Screw the rest of 'em, ol' Dubya's in the Texas Air National Guard!

(MUSIC suddenly goes really fast. Captions on screen flash past "Grenada, Panama, Iraq One, Bosnia." Suddenly they slow down on the caption "Iraq War Two. 2003-???)

SOLDIER

Dear Mister Michael Moore, I would like to sincerely apologize for my earlier skepticism...

(BLACKOUT)