

Crowd Hears McCarthy

Antiwar Vets

End Protest

On Common

By Robert J. Sales, Globe Staff

The tall, dignified man in the conservative gray suit looked on approvingly yesterday as the raggedy troops of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War hoisted their toy rifles and started the final leg of their march to Boston Common.

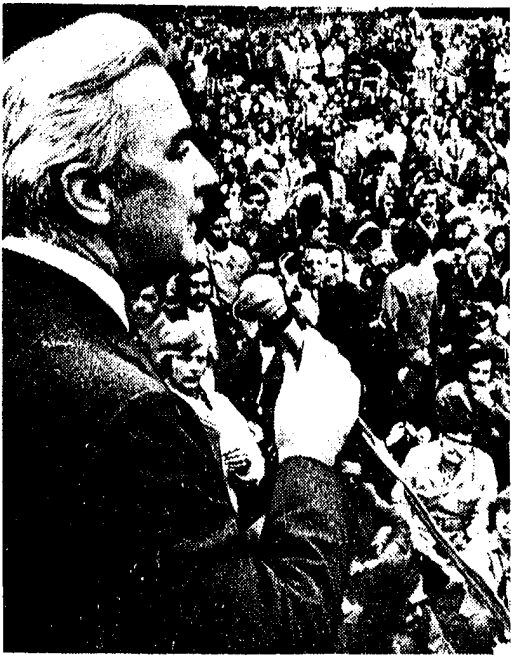
The tall dignified man was Eugene McCarthy, former US senator, former presidential candidate, professor of poetry, critic of this country's involvement in Vietnam. The raggedy troops lined up in front of Faneuil Hall were his comrades.

"It's a little bit like a religious pilgrimage," McCarthy observed. "They always said those were good for the people, although you never know."

McCarthy was wearing a red, white and blue tie, in the finest tradition of a Memorial Day orator, a role he would assume later at the Common. This march, he felt, would be good for the people.

"It's just as patriotic as a traditional Memorial Day ceremony," he said. "Nobody ever faulted Fourth of July parades. They said they do something for the spirit of the people. Well, maybe this will do something for the spirit of the people, in a different way."

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FORMER SENATOR Eugene McCarthy addresses the antiwar gathering yesterday on the Boston Common.



THEATER IN THE STREETS — Members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War give their interpretation of

the interrogation of Viet Cong suspects in a skit performed in the streets outside Faneuil Hall.



QUICK SNACK — Demonstrator grabs a bite to eat during march to Common. (Ed Jenner photos)

Antiwar veterans end march at Boston Common

★ VIET VETS

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The spirit of the troops was excellent. They'd survived mass arrests in Lexington and a night on Bunker Hill, following the route of Paul Revere as they "spread the alarm" against the war. They were not in a hostile mood.

A group gathered around a shaggy youth with a guitar and hummed the hymns of the movement. An older man, unmoved by their spirit, stepped into their midst and started heckling. It didn't last long.

Dennis Sheahan, a 27-year-old Marine Corps veteran from Providence, shoved a bottle of beer into the man's hand and murmured, "Have a drink, brother."

The man lifted the bottle to his lips, which made it difficult for him to speak. The incident was over.

"He just looked like he needed a drink," explained Sheahan.

Several hundred veterans marched haphazardly to the Park Street station and onto the Common, their ranks swelling as they plodded onward. They ran a friendly gantlet of spectators as they moved through the Common toward Charles Street. Many of the onlookers were among the 441 arrested at Lexington and wore cards tacked to their chest which said, "Lexington POWs"; others wore traditional poppies.

Most applauded the veterans and their efforts. Police on motorcycles, American flags behind the seat, looked on impassively.

As the troops approached the speakers' platform, veterans and spectators chanted, "Bring our brothers home!" The veterans tossed their toy weapons into the air in front of the platform and proceeded to break them up, whooping and shouting, "Peace now!"

When they were finished, they applauded themselves.

Rusty Sachs, wearing an artificial flower behind his ear, invited all to relax and enjoy a "celebration of life." He announced the names of several children who'd been

separated from their parents and introduced McCarthy, the first speaker.

"Finally," said McCarthy, "the men who are fighting this war have come home to call this country to a judgment of itself."

The crowd cheered.

"One of the marks of a first-class nation," said McCarthy, "is what it does to satisfy its own conscience . . . We are in that process."

McCarthy said he hoped "the complete turnabout you are asking for will be a reality for the United States" before the summer is over. He also chided President Nixon and former President Johnson.

"The concern of the President should not be what history says about him but what it says about the country," McCarthy said. "We do not need Presidents who are bigger than the country is, but rather those who speak for and support it."

Chris Gregory, an Air Force veteran, followed McCarthy to the platform. He likened the weekend's activities to those of the Minutemen in 1775 and said, "The majority is no longer silent. The government is deaf."

The final speaker was Mrs. Patricia Simon of Brookline, whose son was killed in Vietnam. She called for the formation of a Department of Peace and said the National Gold Star Mothers Assn. should form a branch called Gold Star Mothers Against the War.

"I think we should thank the Vietnam Veterans for giving us a marvelous alternative to Memorial Day," she said.

The crowd in front of the platform and beyond, estimated by a Globe reporter at 3000, joined arms and sang "Give Peace a Chance." Sachs grabbed the microphone and said, "Let's let the world know we are showing solidarity with our brothers in Indochina." He then pulled the artificial flower from behind his ear and held it over his head, clenched in his right fist. Mary Marshall, guitar in hand, was working her way toward the platform.

"Okay, brothers and sisters," Sachs announced, "Let's sit down and light up and celebrate life."

The celebration continued until dark.



DISABLED VETERAN ATTENDS COMMON RALLY IN HIS WHEELCHAIR (Ed Jenner photo)