

**Letter from ex- Governor Pete Wilson, CA
January 31, 2006**

Dear Dr. Bierstock,

Please accept my congratulations and my sincere thanks for "Before You Go". It is a beautiful and moving expression of the admiration and gratitude owed by succeeding generations who are the beneficiaries of the incredible effort, sacrifice and courage of those who fought and won World War II--- and literally saved the world from fascism.

As the incoming chairman of The National World War II Museum, I feel a great debt of gratitude to you on behalf of the museum trustees, members, staff, and volunteers for capturing so well in your song the feelings that prompted us to create and operate this institution. The world-famous historian of World War II, the late Stephen Ambrose, was the inspiration and driving force behind the creation of the museum, which has been designated by Congress as America's official World War II Museum.

Despite his immensely successful career as an author, Steve Ambrose insisted that something more concrete and tangible than books which can be put on the shelf must be put in place to tell the epic global story of the war. The purpose of the museum is to teach the grandchildren of those who fought it that freedom isn't free, that there are tragic consequences to unpreparedness and appeasement, and that peace through strength is the best policy to deter future aggression and bloodshed.

In addition to the artifacts of war and exhibits, the museum offers videos and audiotapes of many of the more than 4,000 oral histories of veterans taken personally by Steve Ambrose. The museum is a 501c(3) non-profit foundation supported by both federal and state grants and corporate and individual contributions of some 135,000 members nationwide. As you have correctly noted, we are losing the veterans of World War II at the rate of well over a thousand a day. I was greatly impressed that this sad fact moved you to offer free access to anyone wishing to download your lovely song. We at the museum admire your generosity and share the acute sense of urgency which prompted it.

We would be very interested in exploring with you ways in which we can collaborate in advancing our shared purpose of thanking the veterans and telling their remarkable stories. As an example, the museum website could provide another point of access to an audience that is ready made for your song as well as our messages. We communicate with our supporters by both print and online newsletters and notices. Another possibility is the performance of "Before You Go" by a popular singer and a fifty piece Marine Corps band orchestra at the gala we will hold this spring in San Francisco to award the museum's "American Spirit Award" to former Secretary of State George P. Shultz. I feel confident that such showcasing of your song, which so strikingly fits the theme of the evening, will generate more than local media coverage.

Governor Pete Wilson
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