

Impassioned Plea For Veterans Of Vietnam

By Helen Passaro

Media Borough Councilman Bob McMahon, a recipient of the Silver Star, gave an impassioned plea for more public support of Vietnam veterans at the borough council's meeting this past week.

"This month marks the 10th anniversary of our leaving Vietnam," McMahon said. "Many people have been instrumental in opening the new veterans

outreach center in the Armory in Media.

"It has been my feeling that Vietnam veterans have been treated like second-class citizens. I can't think of anything worse than fighting in that war, yet when we came back home, there was no public rejoicing.

"There was something else; doctors call it 'delayed stress.' Right now the unemployment rate among

Vietnam veterans is 30 percent. The government has been stalling on Agent Orange.

"In my business (the securities business) I have to deal with chemical companies. I have no qualms about saying it: they have avoided the issues. The veterans go to seek help and the hospitals will not admit that it may be related to chemical sprayings.

"Also, we have had many films made giving a distorted view of the Vietnam vet. There was one about My Lai. I was only two miles from My Lai when that tragedy occurred. The young officer who caused it had seen a lot of his troops killed by mines planted by women and little kids.

"Anyone who had to endure what that young man went through would have

cracked under the pressure. I don't blame him — his superiors are the ones who should have been put in jail. This sort of thing has given the public the wrong opinion about Vietnam veterans.

"I am happy there is now a place for these ex-soldiers in our borough. Their unemployment rate is unforgivable. I hope now they will start taking advantage of their new center in Media."

U.S. soldiers deserve our support

To the Times:

I noted with interest some protestors against U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf at our Veteran's Day parade in Media. We are lucky to live in a country that allows freedom of expression.

While I respect their right to express their views, I would like to reflect on my experience in a similar situation 20 years ago.

I was an infantry officer in Vietnam and saw my share of combat. Although I feel that war could have been fought differently, I felt our presence there at the time was a deterrent to Communist expansion. What upset me and most of my fellow servicemen was the lack of support and the vocal protest of the job we were trying to do 10,000 miles

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away. The treatment many veterans received upon returning home was unfair at best.

The president and the United Nations have set a Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq. Regardless of how you feel about the crisis, think about how our men and women stationed in the Persian Gulf feel as that date approaches and with it the possibility of war. Now is the time we should be united in our support and appreciation for the sacrifices they have made.

BOB McMAHON
Media

Support Our Troops Abroad

Town Talk:

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I was an infantry officer in Vietnam and saw my share of combat. Although I feel that war could have been fought differently, I felt our presence there at the time was a deterrent to communist expansion. What upset me and most of my fellow servicemen was the lack of support and the vocal protest of the job we were trying to do 10,000 miles away. The treatment many Veterans received upon returning home was unfair at best.

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Sincerely,
Bob McMahon
Media