

Veterans look back, reflect on wartime years

Former nurse still confronts her past daily

By Rene DeCair
Emerald Associate Editor

When Kathy Gunson was 24, she traveled halfway around the world in search of fun and parties.

"I wanted excitement, adventure and travel. I got all three," Gunson said of her stay in Vietnam. "(But) it was an expensive trip emotionally."

In 1970, Gunson spent a year in Vietnam as a first lieutenant Army nurse working in the emergency room at the 85th Evacuation Hospital at Phu Bai. She was responsible for stabilizing wounded soldiers flown in by helicopter so they could be sent to a hospital in Guam or the Philippines.

"I called them smoking," she said, because they were fresh off the fields.

And now at age 44, Gunson said she sometimes still feels she is paying emotionally for her stint there. As time passes, however, the memories and the pain dim, she said.

"I don't want it to be completely gone," she said. "I need enough (memories) to be able to speak up and speak out. I don't want to forget the men. I feel if I would have forgotten



Don Moore, who served in World War II, observes Veterans Day in front of the Veterans of Foreign Wars building in Eugene. About 100 people turned out for the ceremony on Monday as veterans around the state and nation marked the holiday.

them, they literally would have lost their lives for nothing."

Speaking in an interview a day before Veterans Day, Gunson talked frankly about her feelings about women in the military, the Gulf war and the media's portrayal of Vietnam.

She said she has not seen director Oliver Stone's movie on Vietnam, *Born on the Fourth of July*, because it would be too difficult to watch. Movies try to educate the public about the Vietnam War, but they often fall short, she said, because they rely on only the visual and the audible.

To get a true understanding of the war, she said, people need to touch, to feel the heat and the cold, to smell the blood, the gunpowder, exhaust and cooking that were a part of Vietnam.

Gunson does not like to watch the TV show *China Beach* because it is an unrealistic portrayal of war, she said. But she can watch *M*A*S*H* because it deals with people's feelings during war. And, she said, her friends were a lot like the characters in the show.

"We were just as bizarre as they were," she said. "Vietnam

was so ... surrealistic, like being on a bad LSD trip."

"They needed normalcy, so that normalcy took the shape of insanity," such as the time she and a friend got married in a mock wedding in a bar, just to relieve some boredom.

Or the times, she said, when the nurses and doctors would get drunk and jump off the roof into circular canvas water tanks only five feet deep. Or they would stay up all night making eggnog just for the fun of it.

She learned a lot about life

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Film draws out war memories, understanding

By Rene DeCair
Emerald Associate Editor

A philosopher and anti-war activist showed up at one of several Oregon Veterans Day events Monday to try and heal the wounds inflicted by her Vietnam War protests of two decades ago.

At an evening showing in Eugene of the movie *Cease Fire*, several people turned up for different reasons to view the film and discuss the Vietnam War.

Clergy and Laity Concerned, an anti-war group, sponsored the film's showing. In it, actor Don Johnson portrays a veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Lani Roberts, an Oregon State University philosophy teacher, said viewing the film and discussing issues with veterans is a way for her to make peace with those for whom she used to have little respect.

"I never spit on veterans, but I had it in my heart," she said. Now, Roberts said, with a more mature view of the war, she realizes the victims of

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Steppin' up

Eli Aloisi, 10, makes a quick break up a tree in front of the EMU on Monday.

Photo by Jeff Paslay

Health center supplies flu shots designed to prevent flu-time blues

Vaccination cost is low for staff and students

By Colleen Pohlig
Emerald Reporter

Flu season is right around the corner, and a quick shot in the arm could prevent the dreaded flu-time blues — for the season, at least.

Flu shots are being administered at the Student Health Center for students and staff who want to get a head start on avoiding the flu season that, in this area, is primarily in December and January, said Judy Moffett, nursing director at the health center.

"The closer to flu season it is, the better chance you have of being protected against getting the flu," Moffett said.

Students are already getting a jump on the vaccination, as 150 students and 166 staff members have taken advantage of the inexpensive shot. The cost for students is \$3.50 and \$4 for staff.

One shot reduces your chance of getting the flu for one season only.

Moffett said that of the people who have been vaccinated this year, none has reported side effects.

'The closer to flu season it is, the better chance you have of being protected against getting the flu (if you are vaccinated).'

— Judy Moffett
Student Health Center
nursing director

"No side effects have been reported so far, which is good because that means people have either had minimal or no side effects to the shot," Moffett said. "This is good because years before, there used to be terrible side effects."

Those wanting to be vaccinated should go to the health center Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays between 8 and 9 a.m., Moffett said. If this time won't work for some, the health center will accommodate them, she said.

Pregnant women and those highly allergic to eggs should check with their physicians before receiving the shot. Also, those who are sick or have a fever should wait until they are well to be vaccinated.

People who have certain illnesses should have the vaccine to prevent becoming more ill, Moffett said. These are adults and children with long-term heart and/or lung problems, people with cancer, immunological disorders or chronic diseases.

Also, those who work with the community in some way, such as the medical profession, should be vaccinated, Moffett said.

A consent form must be signed at the health center before the vaccination is given.