

Veterans: Former soldiers share experiences

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having lost the war in Vietnam upsets him.

"We made an impact," he said. "The parallel between Iraq and Vietnam is exact. We can put in a government, but we don't know what it's going to be."

Thompson said his experiences in the airlift were "absolutely, positively" life changing and that they inspired him to learn as much as he could about other cultures and conflicts.

"I know more about Iraq than I ever dreamed of. I know about Sunnis and Shias and tribal wars. I know the history. I know the difference between the religions and why there's factions," he said.

He expressed frustration at how the University often treats — or outright ignores — veterans.

"What's being done after all these years of war?" he asked.

"Veterans are not listed in the affirmative action section of the employment application here," he said. "They were removed. They call it 'job experience' on another page."

But some at the University make sure veterans are remembered.

Dave Musgrove, an office manager for the Business Affairs Office and a retired master sergeant for the Army, began putting up memorabilia displays for Veteran's Day eight years ago. People bring in helmets, medals and photos for themselves,

family and friends.

This year, they began putting up colored flags to honor individual service members and to designate which conflict they served in.

"We don't try to glorify anything. We just put out information," Musgrove said.

He echoed Thompson's thoughts, saying that many who have served are reluctant to talk about their experiences.

"We're a quiet minority; we're not real loud," he said. "You'd never know because they don't say anything about it, but they're proud of what they did."

He's going to Albany today for an annual parade and said that while Veteran's Day is important to him, some don't realize the meaning behind it.

"Some really think about it, and some just think of it the same way they think of Memorial Day, a day to go off and barbecue," he said.

C. J. Nelson, who is the communications scheduler in the Business Affairs Office and a retired tech sergeant in the Air Force, said his military experience gave him a strong work ethic that has extended throughout his life.

"If you're in the military you'll do what you need to do," he said. "You take your lunch if you get it and you take your break if you get it, but that's not your primary goal."

He added that the military has a family ethic, which he finds lacking in civilian life.

"You take care of the people that you work with," Nelson said. "It was very hard to move into the civilian sector, where you live next door to someone for years and don't know their name."

Musgrove said he hopes veterans of the Iraq war will be treated better than his colleagues, but he has his doubts.

"They're an invisible people. The treatment of veterans through this conflict are no different than Vietnam. They want to wave flags and send them away but don't want to talk to them when they get home," he said.

He added that it's important to remember that those in the military do not choose their missions.

"It doesn't matter where they went, where they served, what they did; what's important is they did it," he said. "For me, that's what Veteran's Day is all about."

He said he has no regrets about his military service.

"I'm extremely proud — I went back and served two more years in the merchant marines," Thompson said.

"Hate the war, never the veteran," he said. "The stigma goes to the individuals who served. ... We evacuated nearly a million people out of Vietnam, all told, and gave them a new life," he said. "That's winning to me."

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Skateboards: Safety is EPD's major concern

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as safe as possible for pedestrians," Ellis said.

In the past, pedestrians have been struck by skateboards and have been sent to the hospital because of their injuries, Ellis said.

On one occasion, an elderly woman was struck by a loose skateboard, fell, hit the street curb and broke her hip, Ellis said.

Leona Mark, an employee of Sigmund's Cleaners, said it's dangerous for customers when skateboarders are on the sidewalk. She also said the noise

of skateboarding can be irritating.

"I can't hear my customers," she said. "I can't hear the phone."

University sophomore Brad Snyder, who longboards near East 13th Avenue, said the prospect of ticketing would discourage him from longboarding on the street.

Ellis said he hopes to educate more people about the skateboarding ban so police won't have to start writing tickets.

"What we really want down here is a safe environment for pedestrians," Ellis said. "We're not

trying to make money."

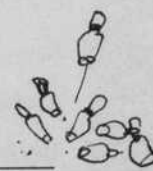
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