

Vet recalls war experiences

by Scott Wyland
Contributing Writer

In Ecclesiastes, it states how there is a time and a season for everything; a time to live, a time to die, a time to celebrate a time to mourn. Veteran's day was a time to remember the dead, the fallen, the casualties of our nation's wars.

It was a time not only to mourn the men who died for their country, but mourn that such a sacrifice was necessary in the first place.

For the Vietnam vets especially, wounds not completely healed often burn with the salt of out-pouring tears pumped from a battle-scarred heart, shed from eyes which have witnessed too much - the gravest devastation that human nature can foment, that humanity can inflict upon itself, that a survivor could possibly live with afterward, in memory, until the memory itself finally dies.

And somewhere within the clearing smoke of a thousand-rifle fusillade and the dusty haze still surrounding the unanswered questions of Vietnam, the tears, at last allowed to flow shamelessly, can penetrate and carthartically wash some of the long held anguish away, healing many vets as they find an embrace, a handshake, or just a feeling of camaraderie with a former brother-in-

arms which hasn't been felt since those moments, not so long ago, when gunpowder scoured the air, death was all around and life held its immenseness uncertainty.

Part of what has augmented the healing process in recent years has been the Vietnam vets being able to tell their story, to talk about their experiences in a war that, because of prevailing unpopularity, denied the vets their voice for too long.

"I've seen guys go up in a puff of smoke when hit by a mortar round"

Hal Devet is an example of a Vietnam veteran who talks freely about the war. He's a student here at the college who has returned to school for re-training because an old war injury no longer allows him to work his old job - Devet's knees were blown out by a grenade in Vietnam.

Devet received a premature initiation into manhood which consumed a year of his youth and marred his life at an early age: "I was 17 when I went in (the army) - two days after my birthday. I got to Vietnam on New Year's day, and was wounded four days after my 18th birthday."

Devet was an Airborne Ranger, one of the toughest trained soldiers in the army -

much of their training even surpasses the green berets in rigor. He described some of his 'unofficial' missions:

"We used go on patrols in Cambodia. I mean, we weren't supposed to be there at all. It wasn't officially part of the war.

"We went on three 10 man patrols; we came back with three men one time, six another, and all 10 another time. A lot of people were dying! I'm talking it was some hairy stuff."

About the much publicized drug problem Devet said, "I didn't see that much dope smoking actually. It was too intense of a situation for what dope does to you - it would make you too paranoid under those conditions. There was a lot of speed use though. We'd get viles of pure methedrine - that was government supplied by the way - and we needed it because sometimes we'd be up for fourteen days."

Devet believes there are still prisoners of war in Southeast Asia; but he's also witnessed a more chilling incident that accounts for some of the soldiers missing in action: "I've seen guys go up in a puff of smoke when hit by a mortar round; so that fast someone could cease to exist. But then, they weren't officially dead either."



Hal Devet, a Vietnam veteran who talks freely about the war.

photo by Beth Coffey

When asked if he knew why he was over there fighting, Devet responded: "No. People my age didn't. It wasn't until a long time afterwards that I had any idea why.

"I look at my son who's fourteen and I realize I was only three years older than him when I was over there. That was too damned young to be fighting a war that had no sensible reason."

Devet shared his thoughts concerning the drafting of men into war: "For those who went

to Canada, I don't really think that was the right thing to do, but then, I don't think it was right for the country to put them into that position in the first place.

"I can understand a real war - a real threat - I mean, this kind of thing has been going on as long as there's been two people on this Earth. But making some political action and then not giving anybody the choice of whether they want to fight and possibly die for it contradicts the freedom we're supposed to have in this country."

McConnell shows talents on and off campus

by Michelle Walch
Staff Writer

"It's about a woman - Ger-

trude Blum - and she runs a bar, The Seahorse, that used to be owned by her father," explains Pamela McConnell, theatre stu-

dent at CCC. McConnell is talking of a play she's currently cast in, "The Seahorse," at the Very Little Theatre in West Linn.

The part of Gertrude requires "a heavy set woman. Gertrude is a complex woman, a very strong woman, but very afraid," according to McConnell.

The playwright, Edward J. Moore "wrote it in the early 60's while he was an acting student. He had a girlfriend in the same class and he wrote something they could work on together," explains McConnell.

Admission is \$5, and the play runs Nov 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28,

and Dec. 4, 5, 6, at 8 p.m.

McConnell also has a project underway at CCC's McLoughlin Theatre. "I'm currently directing a play based on a Lewis Carroll poem, 'Jabberwocky,' called 'The Jabberwock.' It calls for three characters and they are played by M. Leigh Hagen, Lisa Hartenstin, and Garrett Lytle. Hagen and Hartenstin are fantasy characters who try to lead Lytle's character into a fantasy world. His character is trying to fight the Jabberwock (Hagen and Hartenstin) to get back into his world, according to McConnell. McConnell has been with the

CCC theatre for two of the three years she's attended the college. Some of her roles include Mrs. Boil in "Mousetrap" (Winter Term, '87) and a part in one of the Spring Term's Festival of One Act Plays, '87.

McConnell is excited about her projects, and for good reason - they look promising. She says of "The Jabberwock," "We're going to have some special effects this stage hasn't seen in along time." "The Jabberwock" runs Dec. 1-2 at noon, and Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m., in the McLoughlin Theatre.

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