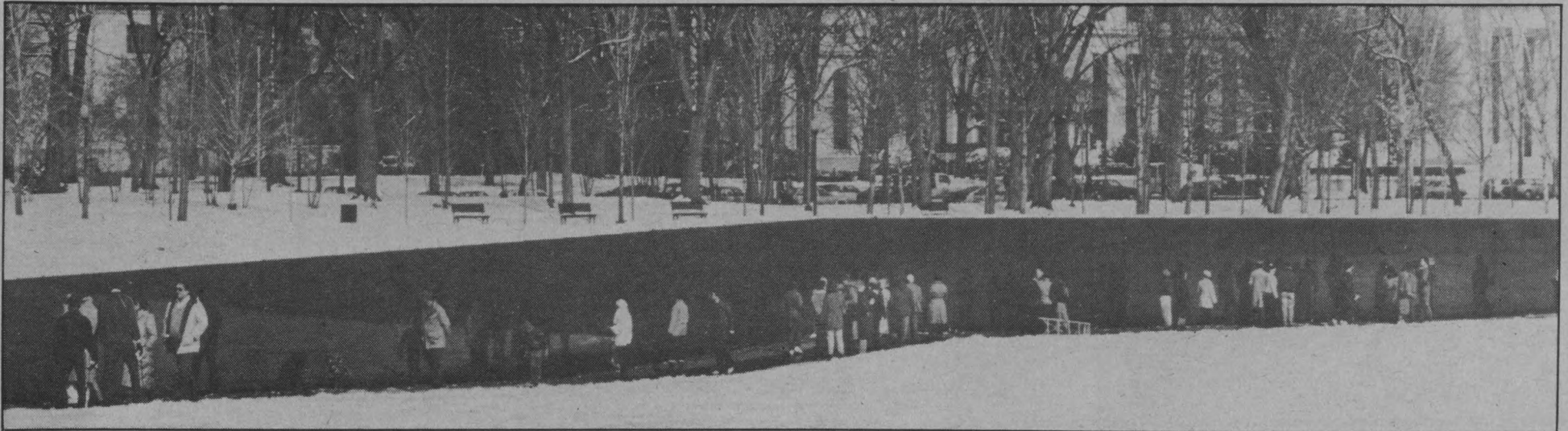


A Pilgrimage To

THE WALL



Visitors file past Vietnam Veterans Memorial on which 58,022 names were inscribed.

Vietnam War Memorial: a National Center of Healing

1959 — In honor of the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War. The names of those who gave their lives and of those who remain missing are inscribed in the order they were taken from us.

Dale R. Buis, Chester Ovnard, Maurice W. Flournoy and Alfons A. Bankowski — these are the first four of 58,014 men and eight women whose names are inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

We were a diverse group who had gathered at the memorial early Feb. 15. Although none of us knew all of the 50 or so people huddled before the wall and some of us knew none, we were bonded through our common goal of paying respect to those who served in the Vietnam War and prevailing hope of coming to a better understanding of that event's meaning in our lives.

We had, for the most part, come together on a pilgrimage out of UCSB — a sort of second annual event which germinated from Walter Capps' class, Religion and Impact of the Vietnam War.

When we arrived that morning in groups of two, three, and four, we were students, instructors, veterans, family and friends who had come to share an experience of a magnitude that had not yet been revealed to us. When we left two hours later, we were a girlfriend and wife of a veteran, a son, a daughter, a green beret, a conscientious objector — survivors who had shared our thoughts and our silence and felt the healing of the memorial.

The memorial was dedicated Nov. 13, 1982, over three years after the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund was incorporated and two years after congressional approval was awarded for the site. Jan Scruggs, himself a Vietnam veteran, conceptualized the fund and served as its president while fellow veteran and Washington attorney John Wheeler chaired the organization.

They and a small group of veterans joined forces out of anger at the lack of recognition those who served in the conflict received from both the American government and the public. They were determined to establish a memorial honoring these veterans.

A joint resolution was signed by President Jimmy Carter on July 1, 1980, giving final approval to the memorial's site in Constitution Gardens on the Mall. Fund raising and a design competition followed and the end result is a memorial which has been visited by hundreds of thousands of Americans in its two-and-a-half-year existence and is looked on as a center of healing for the nation.

Designed by a 21-year-old Yale University architecture student, Maya Ying Lin, the memorial is cut into the earth, framing a park within a park, and hidden from street view. It exists as a gash in the ground, like a wound that is to be healed over by the earth. Black granite panels bear the names of those killed or listed as missing in action; five on a single line at either end increasing to a height of 10 feet at the vertex. Reading the wall takes one in a full circle, from the center to the extreme right edge to the extreme left edge to the center, symbolic of coming full circle in a lifetime.

We knew all this when we set out from Santa Barbara, but we didn't know what it would mean to us, how these details would fit into our personal experience.

Perhaps 100 yards in front of the memorial, John Wheeler aligned us so we stood as a human representation of the wall. He and Sandie Fauriole — who head the Project on the Vietnam Generation, a Washington-based group exploring educational programs on the years leading up to, during and following the Vietnam War — came to speak to us on the struggle to build the memorial and the effect it has had since then.

Coming from Southern California, we quickly broke our ranks in deference to the 29-degree weather after a 6-inch snowfall. Forming a tight cluster around our "experts," both for warmth and solidarity, we listened solemnly as each spoke in turn.

"The trip to the memorial is both a field trip and a pilgrimage. It's a field trip because it is part of what we need to know about in order to come to terms with the Vietnam War. It is a pilgrimage, because this is the monument, the memorial, which more than anything else in our country can teach us how to respond to the war," Capps said.

Elaborating on the idea that the wall can teach, John Wheeler told us that our human mime of the wall made it "as if each one of you is a page in a book."

(See WALL, p.2A)

Veterans Learn to Cope with Painful Memories of the War

Those who served in the military during the Vietnam War are a diverse group of individuals. Their stories have been a long time coming, but now they are beginning to heal and to share their experiences. It has been said that in a sense, we all are Vietnam veterans; these are profiles of four people who participated in a journey to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. with a group from UCSB.

Dan Gisel

Although Dan Gisel would caution anyone to learn the facts before engaging in any sort of armed conflict, almost 20 years after he returned from the Vietnam War he believes his reasons for fighting remain important and justifiable.

Gisel enlisted in March 1964 as a private and was soon accepted into a class of 250 in the special forces program of the U.S. Army. The following December, he graduated as one of 18 green berets, 12 of whom became an A-detachment and volunteered for service as advisors in Vietnam.

"The career people volunteered to go to Vietnam simply because that's where the action was," Gisel said. "Some of us — myself included — went to Vietnam because we felt it was very important that in a sense we had an opportunity to, and I know this is something that has been used again and again, but an opportunity to stem the tide of the communist invasion in Asia."

Believing that if Vietnam were to come under Communist rule, the whole of Southeast Asia would be threatened, Gisel said he "felt for a long time while I was over there that what we were doing was important and I still feel that the reasons I wanted to go to Vietnam were important."

Committed to these ideals, Gisel said the war's outcome represented a failure of that purpose and in a sense, made the names of those listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial meaningless.

"Had we won, we might at least have given the nation a sense of purpose," he said. "I know in my heart that the parents of the people who died would feel a lot differently now.... I know for a fact that I would feel differently."

"We're going to have the stigma of being the first United States armed forces personnel to have ever lost a war."

It was 18 years before Gisel was able to share his experiences and feelings about the war with anyone but his wife, who received only bits and pieces herself. His recital began last June after taking Walter Capps' Religion and Politics class at UCSB. And only this quarter, in Religious Studies 155, has he told certain



Dan Gisel, Vietnam vet from Santa Barbara and member of RS155, spends a private moment before the bronze statue of three GIs.

stories to fellow students.

He said that "dress rehearsals" are going on now in Latin America for another Vietnam and this is "one of the reasons that I came to the realization that it was time for not just me but for all of us really to stand up and say what it was like.... To try to get across to people that war is not the glamorized thing that Hollywood has made of it."

After returning from the pilgrimage to the war memorial, Gisel told the class of an experience which he said was not the worst he encountered during his 22-month tour of duty. Gisel was the sole survivor of an attack. He spoke of the battle and of having to watch as a 14-year-old Viet Cong boy, whom he had shot in defense, first realized his fate then died. Gisel received a Distinguished Service Cross after this action. It was the second time he had ever related the incident.

Although he was frightened about what the class's response might be and how they would later view him, he felt it must be told because "nobody had talked about the blood and guts. Had the class gone away and not received that, I felt it would have been an injustice."

"I told it to give a bird's eye view of what war is about — when it comes right down to it, it's killing more of them than they can get of you," he said.

Receiving not only intensive combat training, but also instruction on things such as how to build schools and churches, Gisel said he "went over there probably one of the best-trained individuals who any country has ever sent to war."

"I went to Vietnam fully prepared to shoot, but didn't expect to be shooting at women and

(See VETERANS, p.3A)



A young inquisitive visitor asks ab

Dan Gisel grasps the hand of a bronze-figured GI and memories of the war.

WALL

(Continued from p.1A)

Our alignment — the wall's alignment — "seemed so right," he said, situated as it is between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, tributes to the nation's "two greatest presidents."

Wheeler walked before us, emphasizing that we were the living incarnation of the tribute to the veterans. He knelt and touched the ground before the last panel of our wall to show that it was here, with us, that the cycle of death ended.

"The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has been called a gateway to healing ... a symbol and instrument of national healing," Fauriole said.

As we stood in the cold, we shared

the moment's physical suffering and our emotions. Those of us who spoke did not come prepared, but related their feelings from their hearts — some were called upon, others volunteered.

"I can only speak for myself and some of my friends that are on that black wall over there," said Wilson Hubbell, a veteran who was making the trip for the second time with the group. "I am very happy and I am very proud and I know that all of those people would be very happy and very proud to know that somebody cared enough to travel 3,000 miles on their own money to stand in the snow and look at their names and wonder what they were all about. And that in itself is a miracle."

There were welcome-homes to the veterans, questioning of the "failure of leadership" that brings war, revelations of special missions at the

memorial, hopes expressed for further recognition of women and other minorities who served, personal feelings of closure, and above all the realization that we were creating a bond and establishing a commitment to do our part in the healing process.

"Vietnam veterans were the high priests of our society at this point, they can absolve us, they can heal," said John Simmons, head teaching assistant for the course. Simmons had completed two years of alternate service as a conscientious objector during the war, across the river from where the memorial now stands. He said his experiences with veterans has helped him reconcile his decision to serve his country that way.

A moment of silence fell upon us after those who had been compelled to speak had shared their feelings. Reverential and contemplative, we joined hands, no longer strangers to each other. We formed a circle to offer thanks for the opportunities we had been given and hopes for continued healing.

Earlier, Wheeler asked us to reflect on what we had expected when we arrived that day. Regardless of our expectations, we discovered quite a lot about human nature, about our own capacity for sharing, forgiving, understanding and compassion.

We discovered that despite numerous contrasts between those who fought the worst battles and those who were too young to know such battles occurred, the black wall and the white snow, our living reflections in the wall and the names of those who were lost, and the starkness of the memorial and the other monuments in view, we could give to each other and help one another.

Sharing is perhaps one of the most incredible things that happens at the memorial. Flowers, from a small bunch of wild flowers to a lavish floral spray, campaign ribbons, photos, poems and unending sorts of mementos are left at the wall as tribute and remembrance to the individuals represented there.

Dan Gisel, who was able to make the trip to the wall with donations from the class, left a song a fellow veteran wrote as a tribute to the wall. One student left a letter to a man she had never known, but whose name appeared in the stone.

Shows of friendship are also common at the memorial. Many had names of friends and relatives that they wanted to look up on the wall, but one of the veterans was too overcome to find those he had listed. A student volunteered to complete the task for him and a special sort of bond was formed between the two.

Although it was early on a cold day, there was a sizable crowd gathered that morning. There were quite a number of young servicemen, some in uniform, some not. It was difficult not to wonder what they thought as they passed by the memorial. Were their thoughts of a legacy or a destiny? Did they look on the names with foreboding or with the conviction they would avoid a similar fate?

Several of the young men spoke to the veterans that day. One had just entered the special forces, following in the steps of his father who had been killed in Vietnam while serving in the special forces. He saw the special forces patch on Gisel's arm and asked him if he had known his father. Unfortunately, the men served at different times. "I wish that I could have told that kid that I knew his father," Gisel said.

The friendships we formed solidified over the weekend as we had greater chances to discuss our experience and return to the memorial on our own and in smaller groups. Many of us returned at night when the wall took on a new significance. Its polished surface mirrors all that faces it. And in the evening, when the sun sets, it is easy to stand before the wall, see a hazy reflection of yourself held in the black surface and think that the majority of the casualties in the war happened at night. Day and night the wall reflects those who pass by, kneel before it, reach out a hand to touch a loved name and cry.

Opposite the wall stands a statue of three soldiers, one black, one white and one hispanic. They, like the people who visit the site, are reflected in the wall, as if they will permanently pay their respects to their comrades whose names are listed.

The statue was not added until 1984. Although the design of the memorial was considered shameful by those who wanted a clean, white memorial to purify the Vietnam conflict, the statue was thought to be a compromise by some. But with its

life-size, bronze sculptures, standing with weapons in hand, tense and gazing toward the wall, it has helped to complete the tribute to all the Vietnam veterans.

A young boy standing before the statue, perhaps four or five years old, asked "are those the guys who died?"

His mother crouched down beside him, took his hand lightly and told him "it's a memorial to the ones who fought. The ones who fought and lived and the ones who fought and didn't."

She is correct. The wall and the statue together make the memorial a living tribute to the veterans. Together they allow us to see the names on the wall as real men and women, people just as ourselves. Eddie De La Vega, a veteran who is now a counselor at the Santa Barbara Vet Center, felt this when he reached up and brushed the snow off the figures, saying they should not be standing out in the cold. Gisel felt this when he reached out to hold the hand of one of the bronze soldiers.

We were not alone that day. We were joined by family and friends on the east coast, UCSB graduates, students from other colleges, a professor from Boston University and reporters from the *New York Times*, the *Associated Press* and *ABC Television*.

Beyond these physical presences, we felt the influence of those who could not be there with us, others in the class and those whose names are on the wall.

At one point, De La Vega said that by our presence we validate the men on the wall and that it is our responsibility to ensure that their tragedy is not repeated.

We stood between the statue and the wall and saw the men who had fought and ourselves. And perhaps realized that both are the same, that we all are people.

Walter Boyd, Adres Garcia, Ellwood E. Rumbaugh, Richard Van De Geer; these are the last four men whose names are listed on the memorial. People.

Our nation honors the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country of its Vietnam veterans. This memorial was built with private contributions from the American people.

November 11, 1982

— 1975



A young inquisitive visitor asks ab

Dan Gisel grasps the hand of a bronze-figured GI and memories of the war.



Personal mementos, such as this flag, are frequently left by visitors at the memorial.

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... about the meaning of names on the wall.

VETERANS

(Continued from p.1A)

children."

Gisel said that had it not been for the emotional strength and support he receives from his wife and children, he would not be as stable as he is today. He has advised the eldest of his children, a 17-year-old son, that if he is faced with a decision to fight in a conflict like Vietnam he should "do whatever he had to do and whatever he decided I would back."

Gisel's parents and their generation never understood his involvement in the Vietnam War or forgave the defeat, he said. But he told class members that there is "a tremendous interest in your generation and I think that's a good feeling. It's like myself and the other vets in this class have a responsibility to keep this to the forefront so that the lessons are learned."

"The bottom line of all of this is for your generation to try to be as well-informed as they possibly can. Not to put an over amount of trust in what you are told," he said. "Someplace between the three medias, a middle-of-the-road line exists. Before you cross over that line in either direction, know where you're going."

Gisel said he drew strength not only from the other veterans who went to the memorial, but from the students as well. "They went with no preconceptions. Their concern was genuine and I got the impression that that they were looking on us as living history books," he said.

He agreed that it seems right to go to veterans to learn about the war, explaining that is why "I have tried to be as honest and straightforward as possible" in dealing with the students.

Barbra Meisenheimer

Barbra Meisenheimer enlisted in the Army a year before the Vietnam War's official close. And although she did not expect to be sent overseas, she was prepared.

"We (the women who served) were always told that if the unit went somewhere we would go with them, and at no time did I ever get the feeling that I was going to be left behind," she said.

"I took it very seriously, it was not a joke. I was there for the duration," she added.

Meisenheimer comes from a family with a strong military background and after graduating from high school she felt it was her duty to serve in the armed forces.

"I had protested the war — my cousin was killed over there and I became very irate, absolutely unglued," she said. "I was very much against the war, but there was still this subliminal sense of duty."

"I never held the men over there responsible because they were there, the majority of them, unwillingly.... But that's the only way I can justify my service."

After receiving training in helicopter repair because "that's where the action was," Meisenheimer unfortunately had little opportunity to practice her trade, being transferred to a clerical position. "They just weren't ready for women to be working on the helicopters," she said.

Although not a Vietnam veteran, she has felt the stigma associated with all who served in the military during that era. "It didn't matter that you weren't in Vietnam, as long as you were in the military," she said.

"There was a lot of attitude that the guys who were there lost the war," she said. "In my opinion you can't lose something that you lost before you walked in."

Everyone had choices to make then and they now have to live with those choices, she said. Looking back, she does not regret any of the decisions individuals made in terms of service, except those who received student deferments and can influence whether the U.S. will become engaged in another war.

"How dare them say we have to send our 19-year-olds to war?"

"What I am so angry about is that at 19 years old, you have no idea what you're doing, you don't even know what your potential is, but someone has taken it from you."

"These kids were taken out of their homes and probably 90

percent of them didn't know why we were there. Some vague thing called communism ... and they died."

She said that these young men could neither vote nor drink legally, "and yet they were being asked to die for something they didn't understand ... they never got to find out what life was all about, it was taken away from them."

"It was taken away by people who had nothing at stake. It wasn't their kids who were going. They were the ones who were getting student deferments, who could afford to get out of it that way," she said.

"I wish the healing would come, and God it doesn't come, because I'm still angry."

"The message I want the students to get is ... just don't accept anything you are told.... Please look at your options and look at what the military is and what it stands for," she said.

Despite the inequities she sees, Meisenheimer said that she does not regret her military service. "I learned about myself — that I can do anything I put my mind to. I'm a stronger person. But I've also learned that I don't have to do anything I don't want to do."

She said the U.S. underwent much change in the Vietnam years. "One of the major thrusts of that turmoil was that we would question and that no one has the right to take our lives from us."

Meisenheimer questions the role women play in the military and the Vietnam saga. She quoted Rose Sandecki, a veteran and Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program team leader, as saying that "if you're a woman in the military, you're either a whore or a lesbian" in the minds of both civilians and servicemen.

"It's a no-win situation," Meisenheimer said.

Women have consistently "gotten the shaft" in armed service, she said, explaining that only five years ago did women who had served as ferry pilots in WWI, piloting supply planes, receive their veterans benefits from the government.

Women returning from Vietnam faced the same problems with obtaining benefits due to them, she said. Those who attempted to go to find medical assistance were turned away because the hospitals "didn't know what to do with them. They wouldn't admit that they were suffering delayed stress."

"The military has no idea how many women served in Vietnam," she said, and these women deserve recognition.

Eddie De La Vega

Eddie De La Vega went into the Vietnam War believing in the "big picture" of America as a liberator. He came out of it disillusioned with the integrity of both the government's and the public's actions.

Drafted in 1967, he reported for service because "I wasn't open to anything else," he said. "I had an uncle who said 'well good, it'll make a man out of you.'"

"I remember thinking, 'you're in there whether you like this or not,'" he said. "I took the discipline, the physical training, very seriously ... because my objective was survival."

When De La Vega departed for Vietnam, he left behind a wife who he almost unwillingly married two weeks before reporting to the service. Once in combat, he remembers that he "really needed letters from home — reassurance from her that everything was okay, she was my only sanity there."

"Being a medic, it felt like some of me died (each time a soldier was lost), like there was something I had done," he said.

Present during the time when American forces were dramatically increased in Vietnam, De La Vega said "it was then that I saw what some vets call the dark side of the soul.... You understand what you will do to survive for yourself and your buddies."

"We tore them up. We had never been so close to winning the war (and) that was when the people in the U.S. turned their backs on us," he said. At that point, he explained, troops came to Vietnam without pride in their ability to fight as a professional operating unit, and military effectiveness suffered.

It was the lack of support from the public and family that most affected De La Vega upon his return to the U.S. in January 1969. He was met with a bitter disappointment when he walked through doors bearing the greeting "Welcome Home" in Ft. Lewis, WA., doors he said he had wanted to come through. Rather than receiving a feast as expected, he was met by off-duty cooks who were "mad at us for coming in."

(See VETERANS, p.4A)



Visitors to the memorial share in a unique experience of healing.

REQUIEM IN BLACK STONE

We knelt and wept in the summer rain
As we ran our fingers over your names
A promise made in a lifetime past
Here in the present — Black Granite at last

We remember our promise ... we'll never forget
As you looked in our eyes and you drew your last breath
A vision and love for our brothers stays true
You're alive in our lives and that always comes through

Chorus:
Requiem in Black Stone — welcome home, welcome home
Requiem in Black Stone — you're never alone
Requiem in Black Stone — welcome home, welcome home
Your sacrifice is the reason we're never alone
Requiem in Black Stone — welcome home, welcome home
Your love is in Black Stone — Welcome Home

We came back to the mainland of confusion and pain
Not knowing the reasons or knowing the game
A constant search and attempt to belong
A million paths in an ideal gone wrong

But we never stopped knowing just what you deserved
When the dominoes fell, the thunder was heard
And now there's a place where your fire burns bright
We carry the flame but you are the light

Chorus: Requiem in Black Stone ...

For so long the tears were frustration at best
The flag was a cloth nothing more nothing less
But now when we see her so gently glide by
The tears again proud as they slip from our eyes

We're home ... and we go on from here
We live once again in the land we hold dear
The promise lives on and will remain the same
As we run our fingers gently over your names

Chorus: Requiem in Black Stone ...

Copyright January 1986
Sam Jacobs & Don Baba



The moment of discovery when the name of a special vet is found on the wall.

Articles by
Heidi Soltesz
Photographs by
Greg Wong

VETERANS

(Continued from p.3A)

Wherever he went, he was met with hostility. "There were people who wore the American flag on their butt and called me baby-killer," he said. "How did that help the war out? I wonder how many of my buddies died over there because of war resisters."

Time passed, however, and he began to talk to friends about the war. De La Vega served as an officer for the Los Angeles Police Department for a time, survived a failed marriage, and received a master's degree in counseling.

De La Vega moved to Santa Barbara in October and began counseling at the Vet Center. "I had a societal commitment, and I don't know where it came from, to protect and serve," he said.

A heroes' welcome has traditionally validated veterans, he said, but the Vietnam veterans were not hailed in this way. This sort of validation is coming out of UCSB and the courses taught by Walter Capps though, he said. "The applause heals. It makes me feel like I'm not a monster, that I am a human being that someone can love and care about."

The nation will heal as well, "if we could all understand that we have more in common than we think," he said.

"I honestly feel that we weren't wrong getting into it (the Vietnam War), but we couldn't have messed it up more if we had tried."

"If you do not want to have a war ... the way to prevent it is to do it beforehand. The people demonstrating against Central America and South Africa are doing that now," he said. "We need to make positive choices that will have long-term results."

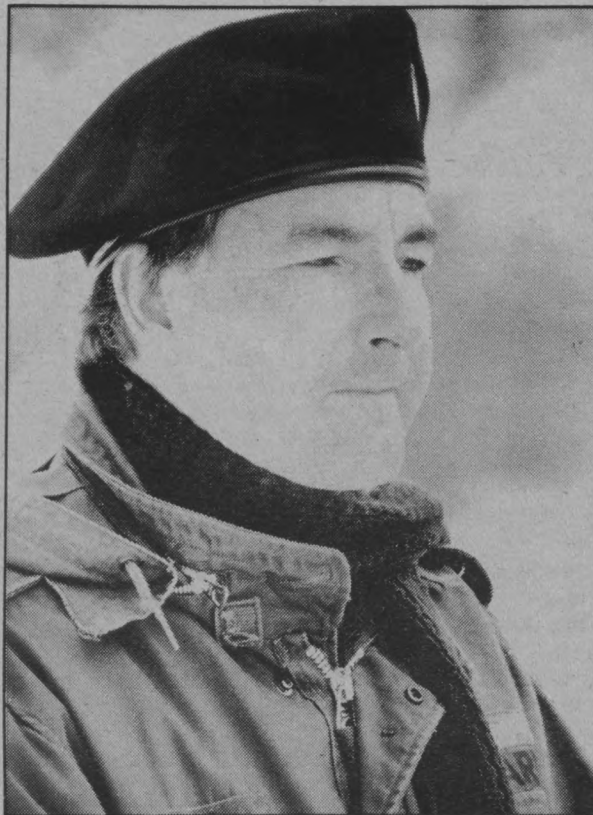
The current generation of youths has not been tested by depression and war as have the past few generations, De La Vega said, explaining that they have the opportunity to prepare for the future. "It is really important that people educate themselves about the big picture" so they will be prepared to intelligently face a test that the current political climate indicates may be severe, he added.

"It's not enough to be one of the cattle — every generation has had it's cattle," he said. "I hope there's enough in (this) generation to lead."

Wilson Hubbell

After years of hiding away the fact that he was involved in the Vietnam conflict, Wilson Hubbell can now talk about his experiences and find healing in meetings with fellow veterans, Walter Capps' class and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

"It's finally safe after all of these years to say, 'yeah I was a Vietnam vet,' and not worry about someone getting up and walking across the room and wondering if you're going to explode," he said.



"It's finally safe after all of these years to say 'yeah, I was a Vietnam vet.'"

— Wilson Hubbell

At the age of 20, Hubbell enlisted in the army before his draft notice could take effect in 1965 so he could choose his assignment. Pledging three years for the privilege, he entered the field of helicopter repair.

Hubbell went to Vietnam in December 1967. He took pride in his work. "We never had one fall out of the sky because of faulty maintenance, at least not while I was there," he said.

Not directly in the line of combat, he nevertheless came under fire. "At night time it was really bad news," he said. Every fifth machine gun bullet is hollow, he explained, and filled with a red phosphorus that burns when it is fired so that one can trace the path of the bullet. "If you're out in front of the bullet, you can see it coming," he said.

When he returned, Hubbell still had to complete his commitment to the army. Stationed in Oklahoma, he "had to have a bumper sticker to get on and off of the fort. I would take chrome tape to cover up the sticker if I had to go anywhere."

"People just didn't want to associate with you, they left you

alone," he said. "You learn to hide it away, you don't let anyone know (that you are a veteran.)"

Hubbell moved back to his home town of San Diego, but nightmares followed him. He suffered from heart palpitations during which his heartbeat went as high as 180. "You think you're going to explode."

It wasn't until he had moved to Santa Barbara and participated in last year's veterans parade on State Street that he met other veterans with whom he could share his experiences. "I thought I really owed it to myself to get a parade out of this deal," Hubbell said. "I couldn't believe that there would be a bunch of guys who would get together and actually admit they were vets."

From that parade, he made contact with people from the Vet Center and found his way to Religious Studies 155. "I learned a lot more about Vietnam from going to the class than from what I learned in Vietnam," he said.

Hubbell made the trip to the wall for the second time this year and looked there for names that are dear to him. He looked up the name of his best friend. "He was a good soldier.... He decided to stay in and they sent him back to Vietnam." Hubbell introduced this friend to a woman who would become his wife. She was pregnant when he returned to the war — he was killed on that tour of duty.

"You look at the names and the names symbolize people you used to know," he said. "But the statue is those of us who came back.... Most people who go to the memorial prep themselves for the wall, but you're never quite ready for the statue. The statue is incredible."

Many people were at the memorial "because they wanted to see what it was all about," he said. "That's a good sign that it has been accepted by the mainstream of society.... People who 20 years ago wouldn't want to get next to you if you were wearing a uniform are going to the wall and dealing with it."

"In 1965, I had the political sensitivity of a gatepost, I didn't know what the hell was happening," he said. "I think the bottom line now is that it's all right to fight for your country."

Hubbell outlined circumstances where an individual could be threatened and the reasoning behind defense in these situations. "If someone walks into your home and threatens you and you fight, it's love of self. If someone walks into your parents' house ... that's love of family. If someone walks into Capps' class ... it's love of community."

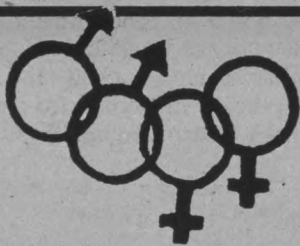
"But what do you do when somebody says it's your turn to go and fight and kill and protect the interests of Burger King in Nicaragua. That's when it gets tough."

Those who served in Vietnam "didn't understand the consequences," he said. "We got educated on the job and the best thing is not to."

Hubbell spoke of a UCSB graduate who had served two years in the Peace Corps and then was drafted into the Vietnam War. The student had become a helicopter pilot and was killed in action. "I think about that guy," he said. "I wonder what he would tell you if he was alive."

Welcome Home.

GLSU



Gay and Lesbian Student Union at UC Santa Barbara Facing the Threat: Gay Rights and the New Right Bigots

It never ceases to amaze me how many of those in our community seem quite oblivious of the crisis facing gay people in this country. This is as true at UCSB as anywhere else. Comments like "Well, you know I've never really been discriminated against," "I'm not really into politics," or "Yeah, I guess I did vote for Reagan, but he looks after our wallets and won't support those welfare bums," are all too typical of people who enjoy their little private paradise.

The AIDS crisis is only the tip of the iceberg. Did you know how much hate mail pours into the offices of congressmen supportive of a gay rights bill, especially of late? Gay people are referred to in this avalanche of bigotry as "perverts," "scum," "disease-carriers" and "child-molesters," amongst other things. The authors at best seek our conversion, "treatment," or quarantining; there are some who seek our death, advocating the death penalty for homosexuals. The advocates are all too often so-called Christians who assuredly would have made the Jesus of the gospels weep; some are neo-Nazis and KKK members. Whatever the case, groups like the "Moral Majority" know they are onto a good thing. As a recent article in *Christopher Street* pointed out, here is the one minority about which it is still acceptable to make ugly jokes — and we should not look to the liberals for support, not only because the Democrats have enough problems of their own already, but because, quite frankly, we are a political embarrassment, especially to those who fear the rightist tide and its tactics of smearing progressive politicians with "anti-family" tags.

Gay people need to understand the nature of the problem and they need to act on it in an intelligent way that understands both what we are up against and in

what kind of system we are operating. We cannot afford to be the new scapegoats for all ills as the Jews were in the thirties. Again and again we have to remind our fellow-citizens that Hitler used perhaps half-a-million gay men for his practice run for the Holocaust. Those who act against us will act against others later. The mentality is just right — how often is not these very anti-gay bigots who are the least concerned about other minorities, about poverty, about peace, and who are most concerned to build more prisons, hang more criminals, tolerate vicious dictatorships around the world in the name of "anti-Communism," and mouth platitudes about the South African government? We need to get the message out to the millions of basically decent folk of all political persuasions that because freedom is indivisible, so is prejudice. Nor can they get off the hook by saying "We don't mind them as long as they keep it out of sight." Bigotry cannot merely be tolerated, minorities cannot merely be ignored. Prejudice has to be acted against and the oppressed have to be actively supported to wipe out the threat not merely to gay rights, but to ALL our rights.

The message has to be loud and clear: "We are not begging you for crumbs from your table. We demand merely to be treated as full citizens who pay the same taxes as everyone else, and who make a contribution to this society far out of proportion to our numbers. It is not merely UN-AMERICAN to deny us the FULL EXERCISE of our civil rights, but it is ultimately a threat to all of you, because bigotry, especially in a crisis situation, is a tide that can all too easily be unstoppable." *Who's next on the New Right's menu?* Let that be your message to your fellow-students, your families and your co-workers.

Anywhere But Here

Silhouettes we are allowed
And cloudy rooms, smoke-filled
And gloomy alleys, empty
Of all but footsteps.
Shadows, we find our way
To a crowded place where
Passion grows, in the dark
And pleasure is rooted in the sin
Of not being you
Anywhere, but here.

GLSU Calendar

Tuesdays

7 p.m., Cafe Interim, General business meeting.
8 p.m., Social night.

Thursdays

7 p.m., Women's Center, Gay & Lesbian Support group.

Mondays

7 p.m., Women's Center, Lesbian Support group.

April 12

Annual Spring Retreat. Call office for more info.

Confidentiality is respected at all groups, meetings and functions.

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The GLSU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, handicap, veteran status, nor the basis of sexual orientation.

This newsletter was prepared by Dale.

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