

# A new hand reaches out to Viet vets

By Karen Hermes Smith  
staff writer

Although the war ended more than a decade ago, Marlin Newburn is still suffering from the psychological effects of combat in Vietnam. Twice divorced, Newburn has difficulty getting emotionally close, loses his temper easily and has little respect for authority.

Despite these problems, Newburn "avoided VA (Veterans Administration) counseling at all costs." The Union Lake resident terms it therapy by bureaucracy.

Newburn wasn't the only Vietnam veteran who felt that way, according to one VA official who asked not to be named.



Carol Weinberg, above, is a counselor at the Bloomfield Township center.

Veterans feared they'd have to wait hours to see therapists, then get "doped up with medicine" instead of receiving the proper treatment, the official said.

THEY ALSO FEARED having a damaging label like "character disorder" permanently attached to their service records.

In a new program established by Congress, private counseling is being offered free to Vietnam-era veterans and their families and friends.

Two local counseling centers, Weinberg & Stone Counseling Services in Bloomfield Township and West Maple Family Counseling Center in West Bloomfield, are being paid by the government to provide such counseling in Oakland, Macomb, Wayne and St. Clair counties.

"The basic intention is to completely do away with anything associated with bureaucracy or the government and provide an atmosphere that's just totally laid back," said Gregg Litter, contracting officer for the VA Medical Center in Allan Park.

Once veterans are certified — verifying they served between Aug. 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975 — they have little or no contact with the VA, said Anne Stone of Weinberg & Stone.

Individual appointments are made and kept, she added.

NEWBURN WAS INTRIGUED by the program when he heard about it, particularly because it is private.

But since he's been seen by Stone, he's found it has another advantage — women therapists.

Male counselors, he said, tend to get caught up in the war stories veterans tell as part of the therapy process, Newburn said.

They say things like, "Wow, I wish I could have done that." "When you walk out, you wonder, 'Why do I still feel for s---?'" he said.

With women, the veterans can let down their defenses and John



Counselor Anne Stone talks with Vietnam veteran Marlin Newburn, who says he is still suffering the effects of combat duty in Vietnam.

Wayne-type fronts, Stone said.

Newburn is among an estimated 500,000 Vietnam-era veterans having difficulty readjusting to life in the United States.

Many suffer from nightmares, depression, feelings of isolation, rage and survival guilt, according to a study conducted in 1978 by Dr. John P. Wilson of Cleveland State University.

Symptoms include substance abuse, job instability, divorce and suicide attempts.

FOR SEVERAL YEARS after the Vietnam War, the VA wasn't prepared to handle such problems, said Dr. Donald Tate, a psychologist and Vietnam veteran. Tate is chief of VA outreach services in Michigan and Toledo.

The VA was used to treating traditional disorders from traditionally fought wars such as the Korean and World Wars I and II. The Vietnam War was different, as were its effects, Tate said.

The servicemen in southeast Asia were flown home alone when their individual DEROS (Date of Expected Return from Overseas) expired, unlike soldiers in earlier wars who sailed together for weeks when the war was finished, giving them an opportunity to readjust to a new life with their comrades.

In the late 1970s, psychologists identified Vietnam veteran's problems, which many times didn't show up until a year after discharge, as post-traumatic disorder, delayed reactions to combat stress.

**'The basic intention is to provide an atmosphere that's totally laid back.'**

— Gregg Litter

SOON AFTER completion of a 1978 study into the problem, the Disabled American Veterans opened up counseling offices across the country for Vietnam veterans. The VA followed suit about a year later, opening up counseling facilities like The Bamboo Rap in Detroit.

Many veterans, however, failed to take advantage of the service, mistrusting, by this time, VA-sponsored counseling.

The new private counseling program is designed to get veterans the

counseling help they need. The Bloomfield Township program is coordinated by four full-time counselors and a clinical psychologist available for consultations. The program was begun to aid Vietnam veterans about two months ago after training sessions through the VA.

Therapy has been helping Newburn.

"It gives me the chance to talk about things I've had on my mind for a lot of years," he said.

## police pulse

Below is the total number of police reports and arrests during August in Farmington Hills. Figures appearing in the Observer's last Police Pulse reflect only partial figures.

FARMINGTON HILLS ARRESTS	
August 1982	
Aggravated assault	7
Burglary	6
Larceny	20
Motor vehicle theft	8

Arson	1
Non-aggravated assault	7
Stolen property	2
Vandalism	2
Sex offenses	0
Narcotic drug laws	3
Drunk driving	12
Liquor laws	14
Disorderly conduct	7
Vagrancy	0
Warrant arrests	18
Criminal Homicide	1



RANDY/staff photographer

## Tune up and cash in

Bring that old musical instrument that has been gathering dust around your house to the cafeteria of Farmington High School and turn it into cash. The department of music at the Farmington schools is sponsoring a used-instrument sale on Oct. 7, between 7 and 9 p.m. Tables will be provided for sellers to display their wares, and there is no admission charge for buyers or sellers. Staff

members from the music department will be on hand to help buyers appraise the instruments' value. Scott Haver (left), Paul Barber (center), Farmington schools music coordinator and Colleen Payne display some of the instruments that will be on sale. Farmington High School is at 32000 Shiloh in Farmington. For more information, call 855-1100.

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