

# UNL student vets—'victims of society's guilt'

"You're away from your family,  
away from your wife.  
You ain't got no friends on your left,  
your right!"

—U.S. Army cadence call

Once the PFC, the corporal or the sergeant leaves military life he often finds he doesn't have a friend. This also is true of the student vet. In today's *Close Up*, staff writer Dennis Onnen examines some of the problems that face UNL student vets.

"You've completely alienated the veteran. We came home second-and-third-rate citizens. There were no parades, no ticker tape and not any thanks most of the time."

Those were the words of Steve Beadle describing the problems facing approximately 1,500 student veterans at UNL. Beadle is Nebraska president of the Student Veterans Organization, (SVO).

"According to Beadle, veterans face not only emotional problems, but financial ones as well. Under the GI Bill for education, student veterans receive \$220 a month if they are single and \$261 a month if they are married. This is simply not enough for most veterans to live on, Beadle said.

He told about two student veterans at Kearney State who committed suicide, one because of a \$9 debt. Two UNL veterans also tried to kill themselves, he said.

Beadle who recently returned from a national conference, heard a psychologist speak at the conference who confirmed some of his own feelings. "The non-veteran population and the government share a collective guilt about the morality of the

Vietnam War and the veterans have become the victims," the psychologist said.

With these seemingly insurmountable problems in some cases, where do student veterans go for help? Beadle said that many come to him just to talk. Ed Kezar, graduate assistant in human development and the family, has volunteered as a counselor for SVO. However, since the end of January when he first offered his services, not one veteran has come to him for help.

Beadle explained this by saying that student



veterans are more likely to talk to other veterans. Leroy Ramsey, director of minority affairs, agrees. Ramsey, a veteran, said he has about 25 student veterans who come and talk to him "from time to time." He has requested \$12,000 from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to hire

a full-time student veterans counselor starting next fall.

Ramsey said the University is partly to blame for the difficulties that veterans have in adjusting to college. "What does dormitory life have to offer a veteran?" he asked. Veterans are usually about 22 years old and older but the University still treats them like children, he said.

A typical student veteran works part-time to continue his schooling, according to Jack Ritchie, assistant director of scholarships and financial aids.

"Quite a few do apply for aid," he said. He added that a veteran's money from the GI Bill cuts down on the amount of aid for which he is eligible for, so many veterans go to local banks for federally insured loans.

Beadle said he hopes to get money from the University to institute a work-study recruitment program in which student veterans would contact other veterans around the state. The purpose behind the program would be to show veterans the benefits they can gain by continuing their schooling.

Hopes for such a program come in the face of a growing number of UNL student veterans dropping out of school, Beadle said.

Beadle asks that civilians look at the veteran's problems before they turn against him.

"Veterans want so hard to be civilians again. We're trying to get the people to see that the Vietnam veteran has problems. He's nothing but a human being," he said.

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danger,  
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defeat.

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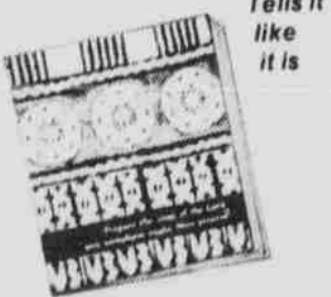
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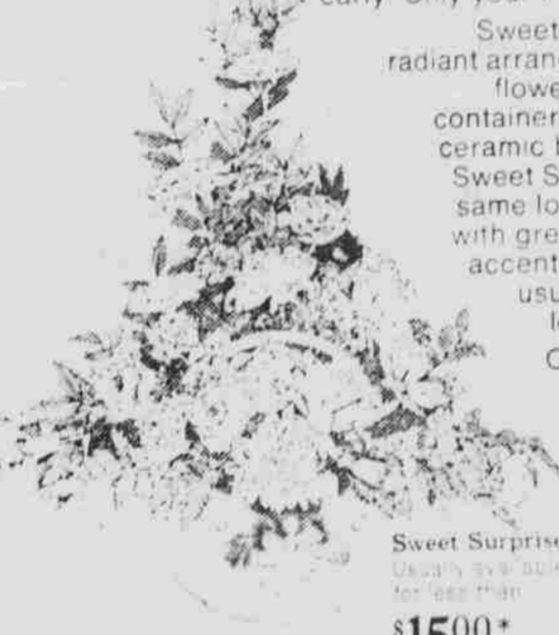
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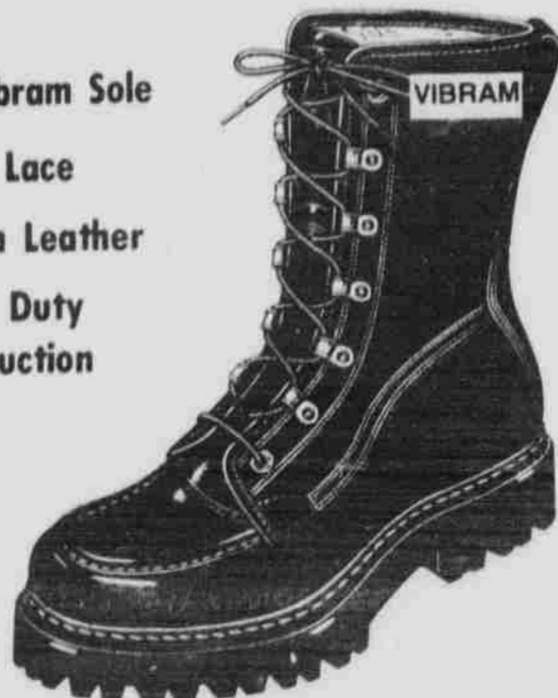
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