

NVVA Scholarship Application

No one can understand the feelings about Vietnam better than a Vietnam Veteran. Some people tend to shun the subject, others talk about it, or still others not have dealt with it. The Vietnam War has taken a toll on many people past and present.

When my father returned from Vietnam to America on May 20th, 1971, he was not thanked, appreciated, or not even respected for his service. Instead he had eggs thrown at him in the vehicle he was in and called a baby killer. I was a very dramatic time for him. He didn't know how to deal with people like that. He learned from then on he would keep Vietnam as if it was a closed book. One day in 1997 when he was having dinner with my mom, and Jon and Pearl Tinguist, Jon asked if he would like to return back to Vietnam with Jon on a trip. My mother said, "No, it was hard enough then to deal with and it will be harder now." My dad wasn't sure if he was ready at the time. Jon returned home from Vietnam and told my dad all about it, dad was regretting not going. Today he is in a better place. I asked my father "Would you go back to Vietnam as a visitor?" He said, "Now, I would. I think that it has dramatically changed. I know that my base in Bien Hoa is an industrial park used for businesses. The jungle would be all grown back like nothing had happened." When he was thinking about it he said that "Its like you're a kid in a candy store." Meaning that he would be looking all around thinking about how many things have changed. The smell and

the heat would probably be the same but for the most part it would be an awakening moment. I asked him if it would bring up emotions that he wouldn't want to feel anymore? He said, "I think that I would still be uncomfortable, I would be looking over my shoulder and watching my back. I know it would but it would give me a chance to put some emotions to rest. I would like to see the country as peace and it would give me peace. It's a great way to bring closure. You may think that talking with groups or doctors may help but its something about putting your feet in the sand and making that feeling that you know in your heart that your in a safe place and its all okay." Vietnam was a life changing experience. "Its not just a place it's a state of mind, a place on the map, which is very personal." He says.

For all those that have not returned to Vietnam like my father, I hope one day that they will get the chance to return and find the closure that they need.

Submitted by,

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