

10-22-1981

# Special Problems of Women and Minority Veterans

Assembly Select Committee on Veterans Affairs

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## Recommended Citation

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ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Hearing on

# SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN AND MINORITY VETERANS



Fort Mason  
San Francisco, California

October 22, 1981

MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

Assemblyman Richard E. Floyd, Chairman

Assemblyman Robert Frazee  
Assemblyman Tom Hannigan  
Assemblyman Richard Katz

Assemblyman Patrick Nolan  
Assemblyman John Thurman  
Assemblyman Curtis Tucker

Assemblywoman Cathie Wright

STAFF

Michael R. Leaveck, Senior Consultant  
Susan L. Duncan, Select Committee Secretary

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CHAIRMAN DICK FLOYD: My name is Dick Floyd; I am Chairman of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs for the California Assembly. To my left is Cathie Wright, the Assemblywoman from Simi Valley and Southern California and a member of our committee. We are expecting other members of our committee - we are half expecting other members of our committee. We have been holding hearings throughout the State for the last few months relating to various and sundry situations that affect the veterans in California. We had hearings on jobs on DVOP programs, and we have had hearings on delayed stress; we've had hearings relating to Agent Orange.

As everyone knows, we are a State agency and the bulk of the responsibility to the veterans in this country lies in the Veterans Administration, federal agency. However, we feel that the State has a responsibility to veterans residing in this State. We do have a Department of Veterans Affairs. We are able to be of some assistance in some ways in dealing with making it perhaps a little easier for California veterans to deal with the administration.

This morning we have a number of witnesses. This hearing as you know, is conducted to look into the problems of women and minority veterans. We are under some sort of a deadline in the use of this building. We, normally our hearings have gone from morning until early evening; but today we are restricted, I understand, in the use of the building. We want to hear everyone. We are asking you to be as brief as is possible, but we certainly are not going to bang the gavel and shut anybody down.

These proceedings are taped and we will do transcripts and they are available to witnesses and are available to the other Members of the Legislature. We are privileged today to have the

governmental, what is it, GAO federal agency. Their presence here has been prompted by the good auspices of Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, who is himself a veteran, and Dan Inouye has been very active in veteran affairs ever since he became a Senator with the inception of the State of Hawaii. With that, I didn't read the statement very well, I haven't seen the statement. I think that's what I'm supposed to say, except that I'm told to remind everybody about the Fair tomorrow and Susan, here, has programs and we have some very interesting people at the Fair who will be there. Our Speaker of the Assembly, Willie Brown from San Francisco, will be here; B. T. Collins, from the Governor's office, Chief Administrator will be here; Diane Feinstein, the Mayor of this fine town will be here and John Burton will be here according to the program. No?

But, with that done and I think we've got to congratulate the people, the organizations in San Francisco for making this effort on Vietnam Veterans Fair. We will move right into the witnesses that we have before us and...how about if we start with Debra DeBondt, Women Veterans' Information Network? Debra, thank you.

MS. DEBRA DEBONDT: I'm speaking for myself and as a member of the Women Veterans' Information Network. The Women Veterans' Information Network was established in February of 1980 for the purposes of promoting communication among women veterans and informing the public of the realities of womens' military experiences. In addition to making the problems and needs of women veterans known...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD:...Excuse me, Debra. Marcella Flores, there is an emergency phone call; is there a Marcella Flores.

VOICE: She's not here.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: I'm sorry, Debra.

MS. DEBONDT: Okay. This statement was composed by seven women veterans and it testifies to our own experiences and the experiences of other women vets who have been in contact with us through the Women Veterans' Information Network.

Primary among the needs of women as they return to society after military service is employment. We need jobs! This is particularly true for minority women. While men need jobs as well, we feel it is important to point out that the national employment rate for women, according to 1980 figures, was 7.4 percent to 6.9 percent for men. Yet, the employment rate for minority women was even less, at 13.1 percent. Women have less choices as far as the type of jobs they can obtain, and on the national average, the women make 59 cents for every dollar earned by a man. While some women have obtained skills in the military that will allow them to obtain good jobs when they return to civilian life, other's military skills are not applicable to outside positions or will only allow them to transfer into low-paying, unsatisfying positions. Primary among the needs of these latter women is education and training. These women need education or training in the field and/or school of their choice. In addition, they also need their GI bill payments to be prompt, as many women depend on this money for survival.

Other women have found that the most difficult step that they have had to face upon discharge from the service, has been in trying to obtain housing. Many service people, men and women alike, experience this shock as they step away from the relatively secure environment of the military where the basic needs, such as food,

shelter and clothing has been provided. However, for women whose earning power in the civilian world is much less than that of men, this shock is more severe. Many of us have grown up being conditioned to place a great deal of importance on the security of shelter, and while it is being stated that VA home loans are meant to help veterans acquire housing, it is the rare individual who can purchase a house upon discharge from the military in 1981, particularly if the individual is an unmarried woman. Women vets need more practical help in obtaining housing.

Many of the problems that women vets face are the result of attitudes which exist in the public and unfortunately, among the staff and administration of many veteran service organizations. First of all, women are not normally thought of as veterans. In fact, the notion that veterans are only male is so troubling that there are ex-service women who do not even think of themselves as veterans. They are totally unaware of the benefits to which they are entitled. These women need to be made aware of their benefits. Other women, aware of their veteran status, choose to hide the fact, remaining in the "closet", so to speak, as vets. This is largely due to the many negative stereotypes which have been placed upon us during our military tours of duty, and which follow us as we become women veterans in a civilian world. We have been misunderstood, ignored, feared, ridiculed and harassed. We have been written off as amoral, worthless females because of a long-standing myth about the sexuality of military women. We cannot be expected to come forward to claim our rightful benefits while we are being looked down upon as though we should be ashamed of who we are or who we have been. We need recognition and we need respect.



Finally, we need the veterans' benefits to which we are entitled. This will include medical treatment for all of our problems including gynecological ailments, hidden disabilities, and Agent Orange poisoning, among others. This means that in addition to being made aware of our benefits, we must also be made to feel welcome in veterans' service organizations through which we pass to obtain these benefits.

There are far too few women veterans working as counselors and administrators in veterans' service organizations. This is particularly distressing to us in light of the attitudes we have frequently found that male vet counselors possess. We're informed, time after time, that we are filling out the wrong application form because certainly we are either a serviceman's wife or daughter rather than a veteran in our own right. This attitude does not make us feel especially welcome in veterans' facilities, nor do the negative images that frequently become the assumptions about us, once it is concluded that we are indeed vets. "Women are not important in the military." "Women shouldn't be in the military." "Women didn't have to go into the military, because they weren't drafted and they had a free ride while the men were hard at work." These are resentments we faced in the military, and they often become particularly apparent once we're out trying to collect our veterans benefits.

We have frequently seen ourselves shoved into the same role in the veterans' service system and that we attempted to reject in the military itself. For example: Certain male veteran job counselors have expected us to act in a sweet, submissive manner, or to respond to their flirtations. When we have failed to live

up to these expectations, the counselors seem to have forgotten to tell us about the jobs in which we would be able to get a five or a ten point preference. I am talking about a subtle form of sexual harassment. These attitudes and actions make women feel degraded and unwelcome in veterans service facilities.

We have been cast by male counselors into traditional sexist stereotypes. We have experienced school and job counselors pushing us into traditionally female fields, although we have expressed that we neither like nor are trained for these positions. For example: when I was looking for work in December of 1979, I explained to my veterans' job counselor that I was interested in either a graphic arts position or entering into a blue collar trade. This counselor gave me no assistance in either of these areas and called me only about child care positions.

We have experienced being given second priority to men because, according to the male counselors, men need the jobs more than women because they have families to support. One woman was told this outright by a V.A educational counselor who she went to see because her G.I Bill payments were long overdue. This counselor, and others holding similar attitudes, need to be made aware of the fact that according to 1978 national statistics, there were 8.2 million women who were heads of families. I might add that this figure continues to grow. A large percentage of women being discharged from the military are responsible for at least their own support and frequently the support of others.

Minority women entering veterans' service agencies have been angered when they have been identified as "minority veterans", but totally disregarded as women vets. Minority women veterans

wish to have all of their special needs and problems dealt with. They will not settle for having their needs and problems divided into segments so that one portion can be addressed at the expense of other portions.

Several women involved with the Women Veterans Information Network have hidden disabilities -- disabilities that are not readily apparent to an unaware observer. Among these we include psychological disabilities. These women have experienced in varying degrees that their disabilities are not taken seriously by veterans' service personnel. We can only speculate as to whether this occurred because they are female, because their disabilities did not originate in combat, or because the disabilities are not as readily visible. But, whatever is the reason, we find it intolerable that these women had to fight so hard and meet with so much frustration and lack of respect in order to obtain that which they are legally entitled to.

Women who have served in Vietnam have experienced even more frustration than their male counterparts in obtaining the services they need and deserve. They have had to battle the false assumptions held by most Americans, that women have never served in war. In order to obtain treatment for such problems as Agent Orange exposure they have first had to convince veterans' service personnel that women were in Vietnam, women were exposed to Agent Orange and women do deserve treatment, just as men do.

One of the greatest inadequacies of veterans' service delivery systems is the treatment of women's medical problems, particularly gynecological matters. When women cannot be treated at V.A. treatment centers due to inadequate facilities, they are

legally guaranteed the right to have treatment by their own physician paid for by the V.A. The majority of women vets, however, are unaware of this. Unfortunately, most V.A. hospital personnel are not aware of it either. (At least those who tell women vets that gynecological facilities are not available do not as a rule tell them of their rights to obtain treatment elsewhere). Women who know their rights have faced tremendous obstacles in their attempts to obtain the vouchers they need before their physicians can begin treatment. These vouchers assure the physicians that they will indeed be paid by the V.A. Medical problems do not "wait" for vouchers from the V.A., vouchers that can take up to three months to arrive, thus, women are not receiving the medical treatment to which they are entitled.

We submit the following suggestions as to what the State of California can do to better meet the needs and address the problems of women veterans:

More women veterans, and this includes minority and disabled women vets, should be hired as counselors and administrators at veterans' service facilities.

Educational programs should be initiated to ensure that male vet counselors and all veterans service personnel are made aware of the problems faced by women vets. The attitudes that women vets find oppressive should be addressed in these educational sessions. Benefits women veterans are entitled to should be discussed. Programs such as the one that guarantees that womens' gynecological treatment will be paid for by the V.A. must be included. It is imperative that veterans service personnel be aware of such policies so that information can be properly passed on to

women vets, and so that prompt delivery of the necessary paperwork can be assured. Personnel at V.A. psychological treatment facilities should be sensitized to the needs of women vets, and personnel at State counseling facilities should be better trained to deal with all veterans.

Persons with oppressive, stereotypical attitudes towards women vets should not be hired or retained by veterans' organizations.

Special targeted women veterans' operated orientation programs should be established for women who are being discharged from the service. Women can thus learn about all of their benefits and discuss their problems in an understanding and supportive environment.

Outreach should be made to women vets already discharged to make certain that they are aware of their benefits.

The special needs for obtaining housing of women recently discharged should be addressed. We would like to suggest the establishment of temporary housing for these women. Veterans' service organizations should provide an up-to-date housing referral service. They should include addresses and phone numbers of organizations, such as local women centers, to which women can turn for further housing referral.

Finally, we ask that veteran service providers be our allies in confronting and doing away with the false stereotypes of military and ex-military women.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Thank you, Debra. Before I ask you a question, let me introduce Assemblyman Tom Hannigan from Fairfield, who represents a large area to the north and east of us. Does anyone have questions for Debra?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: How many women, do you know how many women were involved in Vietnam?

MS. DEBONDT: I think the exact figures are not available but there are estimates...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD:...we think there are 7,500 in the State of California. Nationwide?

MR. MICHAEL LEAVECK: No, that's not right. According to the Defense Department...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD:...that's who were in Vietnam?

MR. LEAVECK: Right. Their estimate is even higher than that.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: (inaudible)

There aren't good statistics. Apparently, and I'll address this to GAO Report, apparently no one has thought enough or wanted to open the door wide enough to find out how many female vets were actually involved in...we would like to know if there is some way, and I guess we figure we've got a little more than ten percent of everything so, whatever the national figure is, if we would come up with ten, twelve, maybe fourteen percent.

Any other questions from Members? Thank you very much. I would like to call Simone Patton.

MS. SIMONE PATTON: My name is Simone Patton and there are a couple of points I'd like to talk about that were brought up in Debra's speech. This is a personal statement concerning Voc-Rehab problems in counseling, where time and time again, I've gone in to get counseling after I had gotten out of the service and the hardest obstacle to overcome was to convince them that I was indeed a vet. Second obstacle that I had to overcome to explain

to them that I was 30 percent disable-rated, and that I had a hidden disability that was psychological and service-connected. It took me two to three days to get the same disabled veterans' program counseling as it would have taken only perhaps half a day for the average male vet who was an amputee of some sort. This angers me because it makes me feel as if my service to the military was not worthy. It's not as worthy as a man's who had gone in.

Beside that, I feel that the job counseling and the educational counseling should be broader in perspective. I was constantly told to go into nursing or dental hygiene school and nothing else. I was not encouraged to go into any of the sciences; I was not encouraged to go into any of the social sciences. They wanted me to go to just a minimal training so that I would get out and just do a regular 9 to 5 job. Currently now, I've been backing every corner step by step with the V.A. in my education at UC Berkeley. The V.A. outpatient clinic, I have found are not adequate for women vets. I have found that it's been actually easier for me to go to a local city psychological clinic or even a medical clinic. I don't feel welcome in the V.A. outpatient clinic and I don't feel welcome in any of the other veterans' service organizations, as a woman. Frequently, I have gone in to obtain my benefits and naturally the people say, "Oh, are you a dependent or was your father in the service?" Despite all of my records that I bring in stating how long I was in the service, and what I did, they seem to really resent the fact that I could have been a veteran.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: What was your training in the service?

MS. PATTON: My training was as a social worker, but it was not enough for me to get a job on the outside, where, as I was given ten weeks training in the military to do social work on various people, I would have to have gone through the same sort of education as a Ph.D. psychologist would have had to, so I was not readily trained to switch over to that sort of job on the outside because I had no credentials and no education.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Were you in Vietnam?

MS. PATTON: No, I was not.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Simone, in dealing with the V.A., was there any time that there was a woman counselor?

MS. PATTON: No. I...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD:...women doctors?

MS. PATTON:...No.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: I'm going to ask that of all the female vets, since I think it's something we ought to determine.

MS. PATTON: At no time I have never had, especially in the Voc-Rehab counseling, a woman, just a woman counselor.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Thank you. Any other questions? Tom?

ASSEMBLYMAN TOM HANNIGAN: Tell me, first of all, what branch of the service you were in.

MS. PATTON: I was in the United States Army.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: You were in the Army for how long?

MS. PATTON: I was in for two years.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: You got out when?

MS. PATTON: In 1979.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: In 1979, and you are not at U.C. Berkeley?



MS. PATTON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: And what is exactly your contact with the veterans' services or V.A. as a result of this...

MS. PATTON: I now am going to school through the Disabled Veterans Program, which...

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: So, you have, I'm trying to get a handle on your relationship to your benefits, because of your 30 percent disability and because of your involvement in the education program, you have some on-going contact with a veteran, is it a V.A. representative at the campus, or off the campus...

MS. PATTON: Yes. There is a V.A. representative on the campus, but they are not vets. They are civilians, and also...

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: What kind of services do they provide?

MS. PATTON: They basically provide fee deferment cards and things of that sort. Most of the contact that I get is through the actual V.A. administration, itself, because of that's where the authorization for schooling comes through. That's where I have to report in as to my school progress and whatever.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: When you report in is there some form of counseling available to you, or is it just simply taking in copies of your grades, or...?

MS. PATTON: Well, to give an example, just a few months ago, I had a counseling appointment with a much older male who was very pessimistic about my continuing ed at U.C. Berkeley, and I had to convince him that I was in good academic standing, the school felt that I was in good academic standing, and he was very upset when he could not find a job that I wanted to go into, which is

the cultural anthropologist, could not find it in their bible that they use called the Occupational Handbook.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Why was he pessimistic about your staying in school?

MS. PATTON: He felt it would have been better if I had gone into business or into some sort of clerical work or even nursing.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: So, you can stay in this program until you obtain a degree and then there is some service available to find job placement? Is that correct?

MS. PATTON: No, there are no job placements.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: But, you are in this program until you obtain a degree, or leave for some other reason.

MS. PATTON: Right. There is 45 months training available.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Is that the G.I. Bill?

MS. PATTON: That's not G.I. bill, that's for service...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD:... Rehabilitation programs...

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: O.K. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Is this gentleman you referred to, is he the V.A. Rehabilitation Officer that you are assigned to?

MS. PATTON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Was his decision, or his inference that you should not be in this program or allowed to study based on any tests that you had taken?

MS. PATTON: That's another thing. They have very, very old standardized tests and the standards are pointed to high school seniors, just fresh out of high school with fresh minds. When I took the standardized test, I had just gotten out of the service and I had just been through quite a lot, And I had been out of

school for three years, so my test scores were naturally lower than the average high school senior, and I really felt that that should change. I don't think one should be standardized or categorized in order to get the sort of job training that you feel you are best suited for.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Thank you very much. If there is no objection, I will make a little change in the agenda, here, because we have a gentleman from San Francisco State University who has to get back to the job, and we'll ask for Mr. Bill Richardson...

MR. BILL RICHARDSON: My name is Bill Richardson and I am a veteran representing the Office of Veterans Affairs at San Francisco State where I am Assistant Director. The old V.A. has two special programs for educational rehab and financially disadvantaged veterans. Consistently, 75 percent of the students we have served in the Veterans Upward Bound Program and the Veterans Special Admission Program, have been minority members. There is no surprise to any of us that veterans have been, and continue to be, discharged as educationally disadvantaged, as when they were recruited. I am concerned about the efforts upon this State's minority and poor veterans who are categorized as educationally disadvantaged, when the federal government closes down the Veterans' Upward Bound Program, the only program in the nation serving this population. All of us are certainly aware that today's Army recruits, large numbers of minorities and poor youth who do not meet the Army's basic minimum educational standards; 25 percent of the recruits in the past year fell into this category. What far too many of us are unaware of what we have failed to consider, is what happens to these veterans when they are discharged.

For too many minority veterans with inadequate education and skills, the Army is merely a revolving door. We recruit veterans without high school diplomas and without basic academic skills necessary for the successful competition in today's complex society. We discharge far too many of them, often before they complete their (inaudible) in exactly in the same condition. Where is today's veterans inducted on the lower standards, without any high school diplomas, with inadequate basic skills, with few, if any, transferable job skills to find a job. Who will be responsible for giving these veterans a lift up when the Army has made its uses of them?

As I consider the quality of life of many of the under-educated, poor, and minority veterans discharged from today's volunteer Army, I'm struck by shocking parallel with the Project 100,000 Program, instituted by the Army during the height of the Vietnam War. Then, as now, the military was having trouble filling its rank. Then, as now, the military responded to the crisis by lowering standards. Then, as now, the military discharged far too many of these soldiers, having used their services, back into the society with no effort to address the academic problems which qualified them for Project 100,000 in the first place. For the minority veteran, Project 100,000 was a betrayal, rather than an opportunity. The majority of Project 100,000's recruits were poor Blacks from the South. They did not have high school diplomas. They did not meet minimum standards on the GT, and the AFQT exams. They were inducted anyway, and not surprisingly, the majority of them found themselves fighting in Vietnam. Those Project 100,000 veterans who survived the war, with the exception of a very few

whom the Army was interested in providing with brief remedial education, passed through the Army's revolving doors, back into society, far worse off than when they entered the service.

The Veterans' Upward Bound Program, with only 45 programs nationwide, has been able to assist a small number of these veterans. VUB has not...will not be able to do that much longer, just as it is unable due to federal regulations, to serve the post Vietnam veteran discharged as "educationally disadvantaged."

I would like to share the story of one Project 100,000 veteran who found his way to Veterans Upward Bound at the age of 33. He is Black, divorced, living alone in a tenderloin hotel, still functioning at the second grade level of education that he went into the service with. He is unemployed and almost unemployable. This veteran about to begin work on the GED exam, served three tours of duty in Vietnam. He earned two Purple Hearts in combat, was wounded a third time before he was transferred back to the States. Those of us who provide services for veterans, particularly Black Vietnam Era veterans, were not at all surprised to find that this combat veteran was discharged dishonorably. He opted for a bad conduct discharge, instead of a courts martial, for what was later found to be a stress-induced behavior.

Who will make themselves responsible for providing remedial education to veterans like this man? Who will step in to help veterans who barely are able to read or write, veterans without high school diplomas, men who were used by the military to fill its ranks and to fight its wars and then jettisoned? For too many of our minority veterans in the past and today, the privilege of serving one's country has become a travesty. This is

true of the new volunteer Army, just as it was true of the Project 100,000 Program during Vietnam. Lowering standards has clearly increased the proportion of soldiers who lack the skill necessary to compete in the outside world. The federal government is determined to ignore the need for remedial education for veterans. The military, itself, described as educationally disadvantaged at discharge. Perhaps the State of California can step in and give these veterans...the majority of them are minority members, a lift up. We can give them an even break with the large number of youth who were able to choose not to volunteer and the large number of men who were able to avoid the draft during Vietnam.

This Committee can provide pressure at the federal level for contingent and expanded funding for Veterans Upward Bound Programs with the stipulation that VUB programs be allowed to serve the post Vietnam veteran. The State of California with far more veterans than any other state, can establish programs at a state level. The State can catch the large number of poor, minority, and uneducated veterans, who are consciously recruited through the lowering of standards as they pass through the military's revolving door. I suggest, therefore, that this Committee research the feasibility and needs for providing structured, academic remediation for our State's unemployed, under-educated poor and minority veterans, Vietnam Era veterans nearing 40 years of age, and the volunteer veterans just passing 21. I'm asking for your support for providing these services at a state level. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Any questions of Mr. Richardson, Tom?

ASSEMBLYMAN TOM HANNIGAN: Mr. Richardson, can you give me a little better understanding of the Vietnam Upward Bound Program?

For example, it's available at San Francisco State University?

Is it available at all state university campuses?

MR. RICHARDSON: No, it's not. Not all, I think we are the only ones that have one in Northern California. Recently, Laney College over across the Bay.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Is Laney a four-year college?

MR. RICHARDSON: Junior College.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Is it a totally funded federal program?

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, it is a federally funded program.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: And what department of the federal government do you deal with, Department of Labor?

MR. RICHARDSON: Department of Education.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: And you have some reason to believe this program is going to be terminated?

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, well, we have...

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: I know that there's some talk of terminating the Department of Education.

MR. RICHARDSON: Right. And we feel that we are in our third year of grants, and there's a reason to believe that when we apply again, that we won't be able to continue with these programs.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: How many students do you have in that program in San Francisco?

MR. RICHARDSON: Right now?

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Yes.

MR. RICHARDSON: We just started a new program for VUB and we've included 47 students. We are up to at least somewhere near a 150 per year.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: And you go out into San Francisco to the community and recruit, outreach...

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, we use bus cards, fliers, media, radio stations, tacking up fliers on walls.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: I'm sure you have statistics. But just briefly can you give me some indication of the success of that program at the San Francisco State University?

MR. RICHARDSON: Okay, well the program was put into operation in '72. Since '72, I would say roughly that we have about 5,000 veterans in the VUB Program; but, the other program, the VSAP Program, which is Veterans Special Admission Program, is a 12-unit credited program which is a fee that we deal with, and it gives the veterans the opportunity to deal with college level work for matriculating into the main stream academia. The VUB Program is sort of like a remedial program to aid the veterans in obtaining their GED's, preparing them for passing Civil Service exams, upgrading their basic skills -- math, reading, writing, study habits, techniques, vocabulary building and that sort of thing.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Well, many of those services are available through other educational programs.

MR. RICHARDSON: That's true.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Adult schools and community colleges. How does yours differ; do you just sort of isolate the veterans?

MR. RICHARDSON: We just strictly serve veterans. That's what it was based upon from the get-go. Many times...most of our instructors are veterans, and most of the personnel that work in the offices are veterans, also. It has been found that they seem to get along better, a lot better, when they are in their same



environment. There's that disparity of fear, there's that thought of not being wanted, and there's that thought of not being concerned about care of them when they go up into other organizations. We have our own counseling section, which does a fantastic job of encouraging the veteran student to continue on and move on to greater things. We have our own managerial staff, so we deal with basically one on one, through personal, private interviews and referrals. It works out better that way; we seem to capture more of their attention.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Mr. Richardson, there are many programs similar to Upward Bound that are geared to refugee populations. Do you have any of those also going on?

MR. RICHARDSON: At San Francisco State? No, we don't.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: And your grant only enables you to handle 150?

MR. RICHARDSON: That's the stipulation of the grant, but we extend that every year.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: That's probably less than two percent of what is out there, I would imagine?

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Any other questions for Mr. Richardson? Thank you very much. Leslie Zephyr.

MS. LESLIE ZEPHYR: My name is Leslie Zephyr. I served in the U.S. Marine Corp from 1970-1973. I am a Vietnam Era veteran.

I'd like to begin by saying that as most people are aware, the image of women in the military is a very negative one. That stereotype, that negative image is perpetuated by male veterans after they return to civilian life. It's my belief that the

majority of veterans' counselors are male, so they carry their same attitudes and beliefs with them.

Women, as a group, women veterans, are very isolated, almost to the point of invisible as evidenced by a lack of women vets here today. While I commend the Assembly Select Committee for putting on this testimony today, I just want to point out that there are many women who couldn't come because they had to work, and they couldn't get off from work. I really don't know if there would have been more than ten other women, even if it had been on a Saturday, or if it had been after work hours. And the reason, and I contacted many women, and they just didn't want to come. They didn't want to come because they're tired of dealing with the bureaucracy of the V.A. And when you mention the word "government", that's the V.A. They've been hassled, they've been made to feel that they don't count, that they will be treated just like they were treated in the military, which is true.

I myself went to school on the GI Bill. I cannot tell you the hassles I've had with the V.A., as well as the vet reps at school. I did not see my GI Bill until I called Congressman Burton's office. Ten days later I not only had my check, but I had a letter of apology from the V.A. I have been dealing with the V.A. hospital in Fort Miley since 1974. Never have I had a woman doctor and I have requested one. The attitude of the doctors out there towards women veterans is outrageous. And to comment on what Simone Patton had to say and DeBondt, it was assumed at the V.A., as well as at the V.A. hospital, that I certainly could not have been a veteran. I had to show my DD 214, which everybody has to do, but they believed that I was a dependent or the wife of a

serviceman. These type of attitudes, they need to be changed.

I also feel that women veterans are not targeted by any traditional systems, nor by any CBO's in this community. The vet centers, Swords to Plowshares, VFW: they are just not targeted. There are no women counselors available, and if they are, they are not women veterans. It would be different if the male veterans' counselors who were there were sensitive to the needs of women veterans, but they are not. And their attitudes are outrageous. I have worked within one of the organizations for a year and a half. I have been told by a job counselor, to my face, now this man knows that I am a Vietnam Era veteran, and he told me that if a woman vet came for a job, and a male veteran came in for a job, that no matter what, he would give that position to a male veteran because women didn't have to go into the service and this man probably had a family that he needed to take care of. I think that kind of attitude is rampant. Throughout the V.A., I also think that it may be a bit more stiffled, but I think that it is also in some of the vet centers. I think that there should be at least one woman veteran counselor, either in the East Bay or in San Francisco, so that when women come in, they can have someone to talk to. I've talked with numerous women who are not going to go in, they are not... people say, "Well, why don't they come in and complain? Then why don't you say something?" These women are in such a state by the time they get there, they don't want to go in and be hassled. They don't want to have to fight for this. It should be there. It's that simple. It should be there.

I think that women have a lot of readjustment problems that only a woman who has gone through those type of problems can

understand. I don't think that's asking too much for women veterans to have a counselor that they can talk to. Even the rap groups are comprised mainly of men. I've known some women have actually had to fight to sit in on the rap sessions, and even if they can get in the rap groups, the attitudes of the other male veterans are really negative towards them, even with the women who served in Vietnam. I won't get into that because I know that there are going to be some women serving in Vietnam speaking later.

Once again, back to attitudes, when I've been unemployed I've gone to several EDD offices. Naturally, they give me a form that is for civilians, and once we get past that situation, I have never been able to talk with a veteran employment counselor without demanding it. Even sometimes when I have demanded it, they have said they are too busy and this has happened at more than one EDD, O.K. As most people know, there are certain jobs that are held open especially for veterans. Certain employers have veterans preference. I've never been given one of these positions, but I know that they exist. I know that they exist, because I worked in a veterans organization for a year and a half. Nobody tells me about the preference points. If I didn't know from working in a veterans organization, well then I just wouldn't know.

If I hadn't worked in a vet organization I wouldn't know about such things as discharge upgrading. I know a number of women who were discharged with less than honorable discharges. Nobody targeted them; nobody let them know what is going on, that they can have their discharges upgraded and then they can receive their benefits. Men are targeted, but women aren't.

The V.A., itself, as it's been stated here, has no idea how many women have been in the service, where they are, how many were in Vietnam. I bet they could push a button on a computer and tell you how many men were. And there have been hundreds of thousands of women in the service, and it's just not equal treatment.

Again, attitudes, I tried to get a V.A. home loan, they couldn't give me one in four minutes. They could not. They could not explain anything to me. They wanted to know where my husband was. And once again, I said I am a veteran. "Where is your DD 214?" And even though I showed them the discharge paper, it was, "Well you have to do this, this, and this -- goodbye." I called Cal-Vet loans. I realize that's completely another institution. They treated me the same way. I have known male vets who have gone through these same channels, and everything has worked out fine. So, I truly believe that it is because I am a woman.

I believe that many of these men feel that women have no business in the service, and they didn't have to go into the service, and that they're not going to be treated equally. And I personally feel that treatment from veterans, both men and women could be much better. But I would like to see the treatment of women veterans at least equal to that of men. That's all.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Thank you. Any questions from Members? We'd like you to know at least...I'd like you to know that we're quite aware of this. I've had some conversation with other veterans and I've got a few friends who are female veterans who have gone through this, particularly in the Cal-Vet loans, which is one of the areas in which we can maybe be of some assistance and we intend to follow that through. Thank you very much for your

testimony. Paco Mendes.

VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Mr. Mendes will not be appearing; he went to San Diego yesterday.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Thank you. U-Shaka Craig, did I pronounce that right?

MR. U-SHAKA CRAIG: U-Shaka! That's quite O.K. I'm a Vietnam Era vet. I have been working with veterans for about eight to ten years, I guess, covering everything from readjustment counselor -- I'm also a readjustment counselor at the Vietnam Veteran Outreach Center dealing with the enormous problems that Vietnam veterans have. I've been working in organizations such as grass-root organizations; I've worked and developed the organization called Economic Development...called Vietnam Veterans Economic Development Brotherhood. This organization geared to working with veterans for developing self-help programs for themselves.

My major concern in reference to minority veterans in terms of not getting the support and the service that the State may be able to offer them, especially working with self-help programs. There are many problems, for example: employment happens to be one of the major problems that Vietnam veterans are experiencing at this point. And because employment happens to be a problem, veterans can't really pull together just survival needs, such as food and clothing, and a place to live. So it's of paramount importance that we begin to come to address some of the employment needs of the minority veteran. There are efforts I must admit, in terms of trying to find employment, but there is a slowdown, you know. For an example, I work out of the Oakland Center. Eleven percent of that population is veterans and out of that 11 percent, and this

was some figures EDD had about two years ago; 33 percent are unemployed. That's about 14,000 veterans. And again, I realize veterans many times don't look for a handout, they want to be able to do something for themselves. That was one of the reasons that many of them got together; they had skills such as carpentry, plumbing, painting, journeyman levels, and cannot find employment. They began to say, let's go out and try to survive the best way we can and develop as many economic skills, as many employable skills, I should say, as they possibly could. At this point, the organization needs support for it to be a viable organization in terms of making work available; in terms of survival, just at a basic level for the vets.

There are other problems that the Vietnam veteran is confronted with, Agent Orange. Of course, you all are aware of the enormous problem surrounding that and I do not really talk that much about Agent Orange, because it gets veterans really uptight and there is no real way of dealing with it. Now the research has begun. I think they poured about 12 or 13 million dollars into research. The problem is these veterans are saying that, "Well, we'll be dead by the time that the research is completed." I think that one of the major things that this committee could do is to really keep an eye and try to expedite as much as possible the concerns around Agent Orange, in terms of medical support.

I think Mr. Richardson talked a bit about education, I happen to have worked in an institution at Laney College, in the Veterans Affairs office, working with the Project 100,000, Not with the Project 100,000, but working with veterans that has deficiencies in education. The Upward Bound Program does serve

a viable need. Again, it serves the need of camaraderieship for veterans who are able to come together and support each other in terms of making it through the educational maze, in terms of getting those educational skills that they need, and again, the support of one another is very viable in that particular area.

Another concern, especially for the minority veteran since Project 100,000, was a reality, not a myth, is bad paper, discharge upgrade. I understand now that the State has begun to look more carefully, and I think even pour some money into discharge upgrading. Swords and Plowshares happens to be a grassroots organization which has spent a lot of time and a lot of effort and energy into that area. I understand at this point they had to reduce the level of their staff and cut back because of their not being able to receive enough funds to carry on. This is an area that has really a need to be looked at and really needs to be supported. We're talking about employment; many of the reasons some of the vets cannot get jobs, some of them basically because they do have bad paper and I think it's a vicious circle. Unless we're able to correct one, we're not able to deal with the other, especially with minority vets. Psychological readjustment. As I indicated from the outset, that I worked in an outreach program and I see all of the problems that Vietnam veterans have. At this point, there is fear that this program will be cut out. The last words that I heard, even though there was some indication that it was funded for an additional three years, the last word I heard is that some things are not right with the Congress. The enabling bill was not attached to that, and there is a doubt about this program continuing. I think that this is a very viable program



and I think it serves the need of giving again, support and counseling to the veteran that has experienced the trauma of war. And unless you have been there, unless you have seen people blown away, unless you have seen what it does to the mind, you would not understand it. I think that this program is essential. I can't say in words how important this program is, not because I work there, but because of the support that it gives the veterans to get back into the mainstream to begin to help him reestablish some self-worth, some self-dignity about himself, so I am encouraging this Committee to support that readjustment program.

That is about all I have in terms of the problems that Vietnam vets are confronted with. There are a lot of problems, but these happen to be some of the major problems that I'm concerned with, and I think that if we can begin to address some of them, we can help the Vietnam vet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Any questions of Mr. Craig? Thank you.

Charles Gorman:

VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Gallman

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Gallman. Wait a minute. Somebody printed it wrong, man.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: G-O-L is it?

MR. CHARLES GALLMAN: G-A-L-L-M-A-N

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Oh, it's way off!

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: All right, whoever typed this is fired.

(laughter)

MR. GALLMAN: I'd like to start...I'm pretty much going to wing this. I have some ideas that I hope you folks will listen to. I'd like to start by asking, "How many people on this panel

are veterans?" One, two, three.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: I'm not a vet.

MR. GALLMAN: Are you part of the Committee?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Yes, I am.

SUSAN L. DUNCAN: I'm the Committee Secretary. I'm the spouse of a hundred percent disabled Vietnam combat veteran.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: I'm the spouse, too, of a veteran. Two wars veteran.

MR. GALLMAN: A little background. I worked for the State of California for...since 1976 through '79 doing discharge upgrade with (inaudible) some of you might know him. Then I went to the Farm and Home Loan over in Concord, left there and I went to work for the Vet Center Operation Outreach in San Francisco. I am one of the Vietnam veterans counselors. Also I'm a Vietnam combat vet on duty in Vietnam for eleven months and twenty-two days. I bring this up to just make a point as far as I'm concerned about the lack of support that the State of California has given to the Vietnam veteran. In doing the discharge upgrading, there were budgetary cutbacks, whatever, and the State left approximately 300 people hanging who had applied for discharge upgrading. Now that really pissed me off. Lately, the State of California was back into discharge upgrading. I would like to see a concerted effort from you folks and those -- your superiors, whatever, to address a number of issues. Number One: County service offices, I think they are, well, they have good intentions, they are for the most part, good people, but I'd like to see them take a more assertive effort in the assisting of the Vietnam veterans, because they don't. In conjunction with that, I'd like to see that the

county service officers in the outlying communities, such as Barstow, Marysville, outlying communities, I would myself like assisting, helping them to set up rap groups dealing with the Vietnam veteran. Part of Operation Outreach is that we have approximately nine vet centers in the State of California. I need to walk and talk.....

CHAIRMAN FLOYD:...whatever feels good...

MR. GALLMAN: Part of Operation Outreach is that there are approximately nine centers in the State of California.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: We tried; that's the way it goes.

MR. GALLMAN: Part of Operation Outreach...there is approximately nine vet centers in this state. We constantly get calls from people in Marysville, Redlands or up north where there aren't any vet centers. People are asking us about, "Who do we refer vets to up here in the backwoods?" They can't make it to the city and we are told, and you know, we can't go outside of our perimeters. Lot of guys, we have to turn away, cause we don't know how to refer 'em to. So part of our outreach, we try to touch base with community organizations, social welfare, or social programs, or community programs and with mental hygiene, that kind of stuff. I'd like to see the CBO's get some sensitivity and some training in dealing with the Vietnam veteran. Two, I'd like to also see that...make sure the CBO's and county service offices are sensitized and to ask the guys, "Are you a Vietnam vet?" Most of them are not. "Are you a veteran, show me your DD 214." If the guy has an undesirable discharge, "Well, sorry about that. You know, we cannot deal with it, and we will not deal with it." So the guy is left hung up in the woods. I think because of our reaching out to the different segments of the community we have touched base with some folks, but I think the

State should take an active role and address that need for those people who want to...have come back from the war, have been hanging out in mountains, or been under bridges, or whatever, had not touched base with their community organizations. The State should do some PR. It should do some heavy PR, and say "Look, we know you guys are out there. We are trying to help." I haven't heard that in five or six years that I worked for the State and working for feds now.

Agent Orange, that's a big deal. Lately, the feds have come down with some monies to deal with Agent Orange. Plus we are not monitoring this, and correct me if I'm wrong, you folks, I'm sure from Sacramento area, the same defoliants that we used in Vietnam are used up your way. Now, I remember something from "Twenty Twenty" where women had miscarriages because in Oregon they are using the same defoliants to keep the underbrush down for the timber people. That the hell is that? What do you folks, we are asking for your help. We need a concerted effort from the State of California to address that issue, not necessarily what Texas...Texas has done a tremendous study on dioxin exposure and pesticide exposure. The State of California has been kind of mute. They've been shufflin' their feet as far as I'm concerned. Folks, take an effort to get in touch with these folks. Let these cats know that "We are the State of California. We represent you folks. You are a constituency. We are here to help." That's Number Two.

Farm and home. That's a good one. I know when I was (inaudible), It took me anywhere from ninety to one hundred days for a person to get his loan approved for homes. You people read the papers like I do and don't see anywhere in this city where you can buy a house for \$55 thousand.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: You mean Cal-Vet? Not farm and home?

MR. GALLMAN: Well, Cal-Vet is the Department of Home Loans. How about trying to do something about increasing maximum entitlement because \$55 thousand is not going to buy a person a home. The \$280 thousand allocated for farms - fine - but you have to have tremendous credit references and all that other stuff. I'm sure you all know about that.

Discharge upgrading...that's really a peeve with me, a pet peeve with me, because the State of California has the largest veterans population in the lower forty-eight, as they say. My understanding is that the State of California will not deal with the person who has BCD. They'll deal with an undesirable or a general, but BCD, no. They won't touch that. That's ridiculous. If you are providing a service for one class of individuals, why can't you provide it for others?

Incarcerated veterans. Present government - my understanding once again, is that present government has mandated that you go into the prisons to deal with incarcerated vets. My question to you folks is: Why can't the State take some initiative to assist those incarcerated folks - bring out - one major... Why don't we get these folks off the dole?

Expanding the educational benefits. Why can't the State of California give their veterans, okay, a two-year extension on your educational benefits? The delimiting date has passed for most of us. Ten years of service, you guys know all this stuff. Why can't the State take an active role in trying to give two-year's extension to the Vietnam combat vet, the Vietnam Era vet?

I hope you can answer these things.

I'd like to see the State of California do something about dispelling myths about all Vietnam vets are drug crazed, baby killers, dope addicts. That's bullshit. But, I speak my heart here.

PR. Employers know that "Hey, these guys are your sons and your daughters and brothers and all this other stuff and we have to start working on dispelling some myths. That's one of the big issues that I have to deal with in my rap groups. We've been labeled as losers; that's crap. We are not losers. We're survivors. What is the State doing to assist us? How come the State is not helping us get over that hump? Went to war, came home, rejected by society, our community, our peers, whatever. The State, I think, should take an active role.

Another question. Small business. Now, the feds is tightening up on their monies used for small business loans. Why can't the State use that--the federal guideline as--you have the federal regs. Why can't the State set up their own program and use those as guidelines for small business loans to help the small farmer, to help the small business, the small entrepreneur, whatever. Major issue, I think I was asked to come here for was to address the concerns of minority veterans. I don't know how many minority veterans there are in the State of California and I don't think you folks know, honestly. Why don't we know? Why don't we know? We need to know. The vet center on Wallace Street has had an ongoing wives and lovers rap group for some four or five months now and there is a rap group exclusively for women veterans.

VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Now?

MR. GALLMAN: Now.

VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: You are talking about Scooter's group?

MR. GALLMAN: No. Scooter's ...one of our staff people is running the woman veterans' rap group.

VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Who?

MR. GALLMAN: Mary Sue (inaudible)

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Mr. Gallman, I'm sorry. You're going to have to speak into the thing. If we are going to get into this, and I think at this point...if you don't mind, I'm going to interrupt you and then we'll let you go on; but at least 17 times the question's come up, "Why can't the State of California...?" It's a hell of a good point, I personally happen to agree with you. But, one of the reasons - and I come from an area in south Los Angeles where I have enumerable problems, just living problems, for all the people in my area, vets as part of it. We have drawn the short end of the stick with "Reagonomics" just of late. The Legislature and at the behest of a crusty old ... by the name of Jarvis, a few years back, starts putting the real screws to all services for the people within the State of California, as you are well aware. We face a deficit situation that they talk about at \$300 - \$500 million; I personally think it's a billion dollars. Our Legislature, just recently, and over the objections of a couple of us, voted \$50 million more to go out and chase some damned fly for the protection of the agribusiness in this State, which is a \$14 billion business, who have resisted paying any part of the "chase the fly" game. We're talking about priorities that we have to address all the way across the board.

A couple of us on this committee have some real strong feelings more for the veterans than maybe we do for other groups. The two of us here, Mr. Hannigan is a Vietnam vet. I was a veteran of a much more popular situation in Korea; a combat veteran, a disabled veteran and all that. But, one of the reasons that the State of California or the federal government or nobody has really addressed the problem of the vet, is because the vet is an invisible person. The vet does not register and vote in large numbers, and if he does, he registers and votes as a part of another group.

We do have some ongoing things. We've run some resolutions. We're trying to deal with increasing the amounts available and we recognize that you can't buy...hell, in San Francisco, you can't buy a house for \$55 thousand, in Compton you can't buy a house for \$55 thousand. I couldn't find a house for \$55 thousand in my area and the place is falling down. So, you know, that's just one of the things we got.

We are addressing and we have some meetings coming up with state officials and Mario Obledo, in dealing with some of the out-lying problems in some of his departments and some of the out-in-the-sticks areas situation next week. Any number of these; we are sensitive to it, but we are also pretty much out-voted in the Legislature. We have some people in the Legislature that I think come from districts where there's probably enough vets who, if they really got their act together, they could change some of those things.

I'm giving it back to you - what you're giving to me, because you state, "Why can't you?" And I think, "Why can't we turn it the other way. Why can't we go into a particular area in Orange County where a non-vet stands up and has consistently in every



committee and in every floor vote we've had in anything to the benefit of the veteran, voted "no". Why can't we dig out the 30, 40 thousand veterans plus members of their families and throw him out of office?" We can't, because the veterans don't want to be veterans at that point. They want to be something else. I'm through with my soapbox. I'm going to give you not too much more time.

MR. GALLMAN: Okay, vets don't vote. Okay, we were lied to when we got sent to Vietnam, we came, we were told we were vets the brightest, the healthiest, the most educated and...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: That's recruitment.

MR. GALLMAN: I knew that, but see, that's where it gets back to the media. You say, "vets don't vote." I think if Vietnam veterans were told that, "We do have a sympathetic ear; we will address your concerns," vets would come out of the closet. We're starting to come out. I see them everyday at the vet center here in San Francisco, because we have maintained our credibility. I think if the State were to be credible, the guys would start coming up and voting and get this bastard out of office.

Lack of money. The State of California instituted a program that would say they were going to give a reservist a Cal-Vet farm and home - well I don't know if it passed, but I know at one time when I was with the Farm and Home Loan, they said, "If they do get you in the Reserves, you will be eligible for a Cal-Vet farm or home loan." The hell with it.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: I agree with you. That's a Guard situation. But it's not the, it's not the same pot, it's a separate one they set up, I agree with you.

MR. GALLMAN: Those who served?

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Yeah.

MR. GALLMAN: Home loans, okay, now in this area, the Bay Area, there is a big deal about creative buying, I don't understand why the State can't come up and use their imagination. You are five articulate people here. I'm sure of that. I met two of them. Let's get into creative financing. Let's start generating additional revenues. Why can't the State do that to assist the veteran?

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: I got the answer to that, too. I've had a few bills that do a little creative financing on behalf of the State and I think I got 19 votes for it out of the necessary 54 at that point, but that's, you know, I get as frustrated as you do with trying to deal from the same situation.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Let me talk about the Cal-Vet program because you know I've spent a lot of time on that legislatively. I'm a realtor by my background, so I have some experience with it in assisting home buyers and sellers and getting involved in Cal-Vet loans.

Actually, I initiated, and initially wanted to change the whole program to something comparable to the V.A. program, so that we could leverage our resources instead of selling bonds and then turning around and loaning the bond money out, we ought to insure loans and let private lenders loan the money out, knowing that if it defaults, we will be responsible for any shortfall. And I frankly hit a stone wall from the administration, the State administration. There's a very conservative attitude within the administration towards the Cal-Vet home loan program; there's a good deal of pride in the fact that it is so well-respected in the financial community...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD:...used to be...

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN:...well, it still is. There is a different problem at the moment, all else being equal, but bond buyers like to buy Cal-Vet bonds, and certainly I know why, because they are so safe. They are so conservative they can't go wrong on them.

I carried a bill this year, AB 176, that did a couple of things and as you are aware, there is a preference system and there's also a substantial backlog of applications, so my bill said that if you had an application in before December 31, 1980, that application regardless of its preference category, was to be funded before we funded any 1981 preference category application. Part of the backlog - a major part of the backlog - was caused by a bill that extended the home loan benefit to essentially World War II veterans -- anybody whose 25 years ran out, for two additional years. Now that's expired, although there are bills to extend that. I oppose those because I think they exacerbate the problem with the Cal-Vet home loan program. I really think that regardless of who you are, the benefit was available to you for 25 years, I think that's sufficient. It really ought to be available for the younger vets who probably are out to buy their first home, more so than us, if you will, older vets, who might be using it because it's the cheapest financing around.

At any rate, and the final thing is, and I carried a bill, and a provision in 176 that raised the maximum interest rate that the State could pay for Cal-Vet bonds, not for mortgages, the bonds, to 11 percent. The Treasurer went out immediately and sold \$15 million worth of bonds, and since that time, he can't sell any, because the bond market now is in excess of 12 percent, so there are some problems with the home loan program. I'm hoping that if

nothing else, the provisions in 176 will deal with the backlog would at least loosen that backlog up and get people funded before they run out of the \$150 million. It's a rather complex problem and, frankly, unless there was a more interested audience in the Legislature, and I pick up from where Dick left off, I think it would be virtually impossible to use the creative financing concept that you suggested for the Cal-Vet home loan program. I'd like to try it, but I've not been successful.

MR. GALLMAN: Well, in closing, and I understand where you are coming from, in closing, I'd like to say that the State should take an active role in getting these guys out of the woodwork. Get them back into systems where they can be productive too, so they can get (inaudible) up, who have been counter...who have not supported the contentions or the ideas that those more vocal of us have raised about farm and home, discharge upgrading, whatever. I think that we should take a much more active role.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: I also offered the resolution, ACR 16, that put money into the discharge upgrading. I absolutely agree with you on discharge upgrading. And a bill that included Vietnam Era vets in the CWETA program, California Worksite Education Training Act, but those -- if it wasn't for the help of the veterans, those bills would be lost today, because there is not a warm reception, generally, in the State Legislature.

Is Robert Merrill from Swords to Plowshares here? You're taking Frank Jones spot, right?

MR. ROBERT MERRILL: I'd like to speak for Frank Jones. He couldn't make it. We were over at Pier 2 working on the Veterans Fair that's going to be Friday and Saturday, so we took our time to come over.

Concerning the issue on minority veterans and women veterans, I've been in the movement for a long time. When I first started in the movement in 1975, there weren't very many minorities and there certainly weren't very many women. I'm not an expert to speak on women, but usually minorities and women are the last hired and the first fired when we see the big budget cuts coming down.

I think that the bottom line is the problems that minorities and women face is employment. There's just not enough jobs. Even in the veterans' movement, this year we've seen massive budget cuts. We lost half of our staff. Some programs were cut completely. The State came through with some funding but the bottom line, I think is employment is the key. The State recognizes that problems with discharges are barriers to employment, that there are problems in health care, it's all tied to employment. If a guy is 50 percent disabled, he's considered 50 percent unemployable, or if he's 100 percent disabled.

But I think it's really a shame to see purple heart veterans sleeping in the streets. They can't get any help. The best way I think that you could get veterans, because you need special outreach programs, is to have the concept of veterans helping veterans. That's the only thing that works. It's been proven that veterans will not walk into the V.A. They will not walk into government agencies.

I don't agree with Assemblyman Floyd that veterans don't vote, because their families and veterans constitute almost 25 percent of the population in California. If we perceive the problems that veterans face as real problems, I think that...and if they are discussed among their families and everybody goes out and votes a

solid block, that's 25 percent of the registered voters in California.

But, with all the problems and with all of the remedies that I've seen over the years, we were headed in the right direction for a while. We had programs in California. We had several community-based programs in California. One of the reasons that the federal government started the vet center programs was to work hand-in-hand with community-based organizations. That is how you do it through the community. I really don't understand what's happening, if everything is going back to local control, how come no one's helping the community-based organizations? I mean it would take in the State of California to fund all the programs in existence now; it would take about half a million dollars. These are not elaborate programs. These are direct service programs. Then again, the bottom line is employment. We worked with the State employment office. We worked with other government agencies to get employment for veterans. That's the bottom line. The other services we perceive as barriers to employment, but it takes a specialist to work in those areas and with the programs that are going on now. I mean some of the programs are gone, so you can't make referrals to just a lot of services and things like that the veterans need.

The V.A. is turning people away. I mean, I've seen a circular that was dated December, 1981, which said that they were going to review all of the disabilities. Now we're starting to see veterans coming into our office who have been on service-connected disabilities for seven years; 100 percent unemployable, that they were summarily reduced -- their benefits were reduced. A guy can go from \$1100 a month to \$200 a month. He's severely disabled, he cannot work, and from the time that he's been cut to the time that

an appeal is effected could be four or five months maybe. On the regional level say at the V.A., 211 Vain Street, it could be four months, and oftentimes it's a real hardship for some of these vets. That's the name of the game running now.

If there's any way that the State could help in and in the same way we had ACR 16 and similar bills like that, I think that would be directly tied to employment. That's what I think we need at this point. I think we need to maybe set aside some money for community-based organizations. In the sense that most of the funding came from the CETA Program, State CETA, which funded several programs, several older programs in California, if we had some money from the State budget, or State revenues, I would say we would probably need maybe a half million dollars, we could maybe go back to pre-1981 levels, which weren't very high and maybe revive some of these community-based programs. That's all.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Thank you, Robert. Any questions? Paul McCauley, member of the State Employment Committee, DAV. I had breakfast with your commander this morning.

MR. PAUL MCCAULEY: California Department of Disabled American Veterans is appreciative to the Committee for its work in furthering the goals of the disabled veterans community. Your recent work in the past, such as AB 291 has demonstrated that veterans disabled in the Vietnam and Era veterans are recognized as a special population segment and have earned the rights to American society. By allowing special consideration for veterans you have helped further the goals of affirmative action. Thank you very much.

The other measures...I don't want to make this too long.

This hearing has scheduled itself for issues on women and minority veterans for which the State DAV is also grateful. The DAV was an early leader in providing full membership rights to women veterans in its charter. Many have held and are currently holding high positions in the organization. The population incidence of minority veterans in the overall population of veterans is approximately the same as the non-vet population. The figures will go on to show that. The major problem area for all veterans today, involves job and job training programs. This will require...this will continue to be amplified by virtue of the reductions in federal spending for CETA programs, reductions in funding for EDD and the fiscal spinoffs in the State spending. These figures, I will bypass those.

This population survey is only a ballpark analysis of population indices, but the ten percent minority incidence in both Vietnam Era and overall vet totals should serve as a foundation for your program development. There will be a U.S. Census Bureau Report out sometime in the near future to add further validity to these figures, either to prove the validity of the figures or cancel them out, whichever comes first.

The State does have the expertise in developing training and employment programs for veterans as evidenced by the CETA operations and California Worksite Employment Training Act activities. It's a matter of funding these types of programs, providing the controls to enable the target group to be reached, while programming enough flexibility to allow for changes and for local needs. The block grant programs that are being developed as a CETA offset, should be used as a resource for jobs and job training programs, not allocated to the communities on a most favored block voting basis. The block grant to State program is what the Governor wanted, when community



resource funding is what the veteran needs.

You have heard enough about DVOPs probably but there is some matter...the minor issue that may be overlooked in the transitional process into the EDD Program. The DVOP was designed as an outreach function, geared to the hard-to-place veterans. EDD may be attempting to make internal intake service personnel out of a significant portion of these people. Since there has been a PSE reduction under the CETA, the unemployment rate of minority veterans has probably gone up. It is necessary for the DVOP system to provide, to be provided with the flexibility to reach many of these people and turn the unemployed veterans around, making them a contributing member of society again.

Thank you, but for the sake of time I'll close, and I have purposely omitted the women's issue with the V.A. Hospitals due to the need for additional research on this problem.

I do have something that may be of interest to you and the other women veterans here. I received these figures last night, actually. And there are 3,542 women disabled in the State of California, receiving Veterans Administration compensation. Do you have all these figures from the V.A. Okay, these figures are available. I was with the V.A. for a number of years, and each year the publications are made that would be beneficial for your program development. It is available through each regional office, as a matter of fact, your veterans organizations, your service officers, at least the department commanders, and the state commanders of the various organizations, do have access to this information. And there is a breakdown on the age brackets, and the categories, the sub-categories, the women, and how many dependents they have

and on and on. These are not extrapolated figures, these are founded figures. Now with the...all the computer data banking systems that the Veterans Administration has, they can punch those keys and get those runouts overnight, and provide that information to Congress for funding veterans and the V.A., that's how it works, It isn't everyone that knows about this particular publication, that's for my report back to the commander. In addition, there are 1,728... correction, not in addition, of those figures, 775 of those veterans are Vietnam Era veterans, 361 are Korean veterans, 1,633 are World War II, 99 of those women veterans are World War I, and the figure that I don't understand is 674 -- pension or other plans, female veterans in the State of California.

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Maybe those are retirees that may have been in any numbers.

MR. MCCAULEY: Right, right it could...

ASSEMBLYMAN HANNIGAN: Career.

MR. MCCAULEY: There have been several items mentioned, concerning outreach, outreach programs, and the Disabled American Veterans has implemented an outreach program, augmenting the other systems that are available, including the California Service Officer programs. The DAV also understands the fiscal constraints that the State is undergoing at the present. The latest news with the recession, and the reduction in State spending. Thanks very much.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Any question further. Ms. Wright?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: I'd just like you to repeat your figures, you went through them so fast, could you?

MR. MCCAULEY: Yes, Ma'am. There are 3...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Do you have them in your statement?

MR. MCCAULEY: No, sir, I don't. No, my figures in the statement have to do with population divisions of veterans, with a minority breakdown of Black and other minorities, excluding women. Women are not included in these figures. The basis for these figures are Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for 1980. And the note that I placed in there was that of the Vietnam Era veteran's population, your Black and other minorities represent ten percent of the whole of the Vietnam as well as your Black and other minority veterans represent ten percent of the total of the whole veteran population, this is strictly California.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: ...women...

MR. MCCAULEY: I was going to clarify that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Mine don't total up. So I assume I've got something wrong.

MR. MCCAULEY: Right. Let me give this to you.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: What are you, a mathematician?

MR. MCCAULEY: Yes. Yes, with these types of figures there is some variable there that quite often they don't work themselves out.

MR. LEAVECK: Some might be in two categories.

MR. MCCAULEY: Right.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Are there any other questions? Thank you Mr. McCauley. Scooter Jenkins in the building? Thank you. Rudy Mathias, American G.I. Forum. Robert Boriskin, Department of Veterans Affairs.

MR. ROBERT BORISKIN: Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I'm here today basically to give you some general

information. I have some ideas I wanted to spread. I would like to respond, though, to some of the earlier questions that were raised because I think the questions are important. Before I respond to those, I want to thank the Committee for the work it's done, not only in these hearings, but all the hearings it has done across the State. The Committee should be commended for all the work it's done.

The Department of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Service Division Program are working to offer the best representation they can across the State to all veterans. With our limited staff of 20 veterans claims representatives, we have a diverse background of ethnic categories to include two women who are also minorities. The issues raised by prior speakers are concerns that must be continually addressed, and I can assure you that the Department is doing all it can to address these concerns.

The change in attitude which has been raised by, I think, almost every speaker that's been here, comes from not only a change that is brought about by Department's instructing their personnel, but it also comes from the media exposure. Media, I don't think, has been stressed enough. It makes me think of the old saying that if a tree falls in the forest, and there is no one there to hear it, does it make a sound? I think today you can rightfully say that if a tree falls in a forest, and it's not on the 6 o'clock news, it never fell.

We are having, then, in our society today, a lot of trees falling and no one is seeing them. During the next month or so, there is going to be a series of events all over the State, committee hearings, I don't know how much press is here, but there is a need

for the press to take a look at the veterans, all veterans, and to improve that image.

I had a sad experience last Friday night; I like to watch the Incredible Hulk, that was a mistake, I know, I watched it and unfortunately, that program...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD:...we all have our vices...

MR. BORISKIN: I know, unfortunately, that program did more in one hour to take the image of Vietnam veterans back to ten years ago than maybe we are going to do with all the efforts we have. But I hope that's not true, I hope our efforts are successful.

What I'd like to deal with is some of the questions that were asked. I think they were very important, questions that should be dealt with. I think I can answer some of them. I talked with Mr. Gallman before he left. There was a couple of specifics that I wanted him to hear, but I also wanted to make sure that the audience heard them. In terms of the discharge review program, the Department of Veterans Affairs does assist people with bad conduct discharges, but not all bad conduct, only those that are not the result of general courts martial, and it is limited. I think it's a -- the Department faces reality and says, "Where can we be most effective?" We can be most effective handling those people with the administrative discharge and those bad conduct discharges, which can be heard by the traveling boards. We don't have representation back East. We want to do the best job we can with the people we have. So, the issue that he raised...I just wanted to clarify that one point.

The County Veteran Service Offices. He raised a question about those people and how they treat the veterans. The Veteran Services Officers are people. I think that they are going to be the whole realm. They are going to be helpful and they are going

to interfere, but there had been an effort made by the Department to contact them and to get them more involved in all veterans, including the Vietnam veterans. Recently, at one of their conferences, I was happy to see that their numbers are changing. County Veteran Service Officers all used to be over 65. I think that was a prerequisite. They have now changed that and I was not the youngest person there. There was five other people my age or younger. So, its changing and the attitudes are changing, but that's something again that takes time. Those are a lot - you know, I still fight with my Dad all the time, so that kind of thing. There are changes.

I think the idea of PR again, came up so many times. The Department's doing that where we can, but again, it takes the whole community. The Department, in the discharge review programs, specifically had money set aside for that effort. There are public service announcements which have gone across the State. But again, public service announcement only gets played if the community that it's in puts pressure on the station to play it and if there is an interest. Those are out. We are making TV time right now for the discharge review program, and again, it will be played and aired if that is a concern that is shown by the rest of the community.

The incarcerated veterans was another issue that was raised. I think it's a serious concern. The Department for awhile was working with the incarcerated veterans, but again, there is only a certain amount of time and energy we can spend and we have to choose where we have the greatest expertise, and where we can do that.

Those are some of the questions that were raised. I am going to stay here for the hearings. I'll answer any questions

we can. The Department wants to do all it can for the veterans and I think that the more input the Department gets, the more input your Committee gets, the more effective a job we can do. So, I'm ready for any questions you have.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: I just want to ask you one question that was raised back in Mr. Richardson's statement. He gave an example, I guess that is what bothers me, about a veteran who had a dishonorable discharge and then he received the Purple Heart and... Are these more or less, you know, in general terms, wouldn't this be one of the ones that could definitely have some work done with him in regards to upgrading his discharge?

MR. BORISKIN: The question there is the type of discharge. If you talked about specifically the California Department of Veterans Affairs, it would have to be if it was a dishonorable discharge or a bad conduct discharge due to a general courts martial, we could not help them. Okay. If it was a general discharge, which does not interfere with the benefits they would get from the Veterans Administration, we also could not. So we are working with a limited category. The fact that he has two Purple Hearts does not tell me the type of discharge the individual may have.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: It's very simple. If he has a DD, that tells us where we are. I was just recently down in Chino with Bruce and that group of incarcerated veterans, I think that when we talk about discharge upgrade we would have to understand that the DD would be virtually impossible to upgrade. You know, I know there are a lot of bad guys that are good to their mothers, but that doesn't always answer all the questions. Are they or are they not? Why are they bad guys? I think that that's a question I do know that...

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: He has bad conduct discharge...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Manny Val, since he's been Director, has been very cooperative with this Committee in everything we've done, and I think that a couple of things and I've been making notes as I usually do. We're going to talk about somebody doing a number from within the Department in Sacramento, particularly as how we relate as a governmental agency with the female vets. I know we do have a Vietnam woman vet on the Board...

MR. BORISKIN: We have two women, but they are not veterans. And I wanted to point...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: We have two women that are not veterans?

MR. BORISKIN: Two women who are on the program who are veterans claims representatives...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: No, I mean on the Board...

MR. BORISKIN: Oh, on the Board, yes we do

MS. HARRIET MCCAULEY: The Chairperson...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: If I have my way with the Governor, we are going to have another one shortly.

Any other questions? Any questions for the Department? Thank you very much. Robert Merrill, okay, I'm sorry. What have we got here? We have a couple of women who won't be here until 1:00, so let's hear from Robert Henneberg and then we'll take a little break for the while we are waiting for these two women. Mr. Henneberg is Senior Vice Commander of the VFW District 15 of California in San Francisco. Welcome.

MR. ROBERT HENNEBERG: Thank you. I was called last evening by the State and asked if I could come and sit in and listen and bring back to the State Commander notes of our meeting here.



I've asked for a transcript for which I will tender to our State Commander. But, we are of course, very particularly interested in the veterans and we are looking forward to these next two days and are prepared to get acquainted with some of them and help them in any way we can. That's really all I have to say, except that we are working and we appreciate everything that's been done on the State level and through our Assembly for our veterans.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Thank you. I would just like to go into and this is not directed at any particular commander.

You know, there's been some talk about having the media doing the PR and I think it's indicative of this particular hearing that we called to look into some of the needs of female and other minority veterans. We had a hearing relating to Agent Orange in Sacramento, or in Lawndale, and we had other hearings, but we also had one in Sacramento. It came at a time when the hunger striker phenomena was going on, but when we talked about, "we're going to have a hearing on Agent Orange", we had TV cameras, news stories and all. I think it's very indicative. We did the same announcements. We contact the same press people. We did the absolute same thing on this hearing that we did on the Agent Orange hearing, and I think it's indicative, and I think these women are very much on target, that we are not dealing with just how the V.A. deals with women veterans. We are dealing how our whole society is dealing with it. I would think that this would be as interesting and as much a media interest as would Agent Orange hearing.

Let's take a break and we'll come back at 1:00.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Ladies and gentlemen, we will resume our hearing at this point; I must point out that we are getting thrown out of here at 2:00 p.m. which is about 56 minutes from now, so if

we may proceed. Our next witness is Peggy Tuxen. Peggy, are you ready?

MS. PEGGY TUXEN: We just walked in and we're really not very clear about what you need to know.

MR. LEAVECK: Just your experience as a woman veteran and the kinds of problems you have seen in the service deliveries systems, the needs and problems that you think we ought to be watching.

MS. TUXEN: Well, I was a nurse in Vietnam in 1970 and 1971, and I guess I can tell you a little bit about some of the things I feel weren't done for us. I don't think in any way that any of us became aware or were told about Agent Orange, though we all were exposed to it at that time, and we probably were never given the option at that time to decide whether we would want to be in an area where Agent Orange was being sprayed, especially since we were all young women and considering having children sometime in our lives.

Since I've come back I found the V.A. very insensitive to my needs. I was very much in need of finding a support group and found it on my own through the Veterans Outreach Center. There's three of us here that are in a rap group at the Veterans Outreach Center, now. In no way have we been counseled as to how we can find out what Agent Orange did to us when we were over there. The V.A. has been very insensitive to that. As a matter of fact, I think that the other ones here can hopefully, who have had tests can tell how the V.A. treated them while they were there. I have never been a patient of the V.A. except on an out-patient basis where I was - had to prove - besides my DD 214 papers, that I had been in the Army and they called Washington to make sure to verify

that I had been in the service. I felt like I was treated really poorly at that time. Insensitively. I think it's real important that the V.A. or some branch of the V.A. have more outreach programs for women. I have friends that are nurses in Vietnam that really have more access to the V.A. outreach programs, and they're in no way trying to reach out to these women and can explore some of their needs. I'd like to see more medical benefits for women that were in Vietnam. That to me is probably the most important thing... There is no gynecologist at Fort Miley. Right away that rules out the reason we might go. I think that having other women health care specialists or gynecologists out at the V.A. hospital would be really important for us. You may ask me some questions about some of the things you'd like to know.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Have you continued in your nursing profession or have you dropped it?

MS. TUXEN: No. I'm still a nurse and I'm in graduate school right now.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Well, aren't most of the veterans hospitals in many ways, that the doctors use it basically as a training or an internship in a veterans hospital, so - it's kind of difficult wouldn't it, to have a doctor who specializes, a gynecologist to be on staff at a veterans hospital?

MS. TUXEN: Why would that be?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: I think, basically, because they just would not - in the overall picture - they are going to look at it by priority, but I would think - and I'm not saying it's good or bad, but I'm saying that I think that basically that veterans hospitals look toward more of the male problems...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: I think that's basically what we are talking about...

MS. TUXEN: People don't know that there were women that were in the service and we have needs too.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Well, I guess the point I was trying to make is the fact that I don't see so much specialists, and I'm only talking about what I see, I'm not directly involved and I'm not going to a veterans hospital to be treated or anything else, but I think that isn't it basic that doctors that are on staff in the veterans hospital are usually in a general practice area?

MS. TUXEN: They do use it as a training program and they do have specialists in every field there, you know, ear, nose, throat, blood - hematologists, they have every type of physician there except gynecologists.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT:...switch from one department to the other? In other words?

MS. TUXEN: Residents do but they have the training division. The University of California at San Francisco, they have a rotating program, and they use the V.A. as a training place, yes, but they have every branch in medicine rotate through there, and I don't know if that was necessarily - you know, having gynecologists rotate through there, I think the V.A. should have a woman's health care specialist there just to deal with women's...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: I have to agree with you. You weren't here this morning, but we do have a couple of representatives for women here from the governmental accounting office, general accounting office, at the suggestion or direction of Senator Inouye and I hope that's one thing that will be related back to the...we really

need somebody in each of these facilities. Naturally, hell yes, a specialist in there, because you know you are going to play this game that, well, we don't need somebody like that, because we don't have many people to help. If we had someone in there, then we would have some people. I think there are people who don't ...you know, because you don't go to a bakery to have your damn shoes repaired. You go to the shoe repair shop. I think, if I were relating to a woman vet, I mean, why should she go to the V.A., there's some guys there that specializes in hemorrhoids for truck drivers, it's...

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: You are missing the point. My point is, we are talking, I think that I am trying to make a point of is the difference between a veterans hospital and the hospitals on the base, because I know we have hospitals on base where they are treating, now, the spouses of the veterans. Do they have specialists, or again, are they general?

MS. TUXEN: I don't know...

AUDIENCE: On an open post? An active post?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Yes, that's what I'm talking about.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: You don't want to go to Fort Ord to go see a doctor, isn't that just about what we are talking about?

MS. TUXEN: No, I want to be able to go out to Fort Miley.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: That's the point I'm trying to make because I know that, for instance, in my home town, there are veterans that live there, retired, that still go up to Port Hueneme to the base, and they go up there for their physical...

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Wait a minute, Mrs. Wright, a retired military career person is eligible to go to a military hospital. There is a distinct difference between a military hospital and a Veterans

Administration hospital, and none of us are eligible unless we are full-time retired members of the military to go on to an Army or Navy base and say, "Treat me." We are eligible and we should be taken care of with the best service this country has in a veterans hospital. And I think that's only what you're saying.

MS. TUXEN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: I think, too, that my own feeling is, and I get this not only from women vets, but I get this from vets throughout the State, that I for one, and I think every veteran that I've talked to, is damn sick and tired of being relegated to something akin to welfare when we go for treatment that we have paid for the hard way, and I have to agree wholeheartedly and this is the one thing that we wanted to do in addition to our other hearings, a hearing on problems of women veterans because I think it's an area we haven't touched, and we certainly do hope that Senator Inouye, and we will relay this to our Senators, too, we have one that will at least listen, and see where we can go from here.

MS. TUXEN: I'd also like to say something related to women that were specifically in Vietnam and that again is Agent Orange. The studies that are coming out are mostly about men. I think that there is enough evidence now that shows that women that were exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam have had children with problems. I, for one, you know, consider having a family and unless there is some sort of genetic counseling, somebody who knows something about it, and some studies done, I would be scared. I'd really be frightened to have a child and I think that the V.A. owes that to us. I think the government owes that to us.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: We did touch this on the Agent Orange hearings.

Our big frustration with the whole thing is that they are trying to do a study to determine more how they can get away from addressing the problem than they are to addressing the problem. I personally don't have all that much confidence in, and particularly under the present administration that we're going to go a whole long way towards getting anything done. The only way we are going to, is that we keep the heat on all of our federal representatives. We hope to do that.

MS. TUXEN: I'd like to conclude my presentation.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Thank you, Peggy. We have Margaret Walker, I believe next.

MS. MARGARET WALKER: I was in Vietnam during all the '72 Christmas to Christmas, and was medi-vaced back from Vietnam, and I was not made aware of anything. Now that I look back on it, I didn't know I had any rights at all. I was medically okay after a while, being held on medical hold, and nobody ever said anything about going to a VAD's or you know, and on the way back when I was on Air Force transport for seven days, I was treated like a prisoner, prisoner of war and held under guard and behind bars because there was drug abusers on the flight.

I haven't had a lot to do with the V.A. because I've been on active duty since then with a break in between and during that break, I did try to avail myself and just recently became aware of some of the things available only because of a newspaper article that Peg was in, and I said, "Oh, a woman". Was going through some of the symptoms and thinking that I was going crazy because I was having a lot of flashbacks and such and wondering what was going on and what was available to me because I was on active duty, was

frightened of going for help. I did go to an Army psychiatrist and was told that Vietnam was just a minor experience in my life and let's go back to my early childhood. When I saw the article by Peggy, or the one when she was interviewed, I thought, "Wow", maybe I could go see someone. I thought that there might be some center available or something available to me to see if I really am going crazy or if I'm, you know, just normal. So finally, after a lot of talking to the Army psychiatrist who kept insisting that there was no such thing as Vietnam delayed stress or anything like that, I went over to see Jack at the veterans center and he talked to me a little while and said, "Margaret, you're Okay. You really are having the same symptoms that other people are having, and you're really not going crazy and come on in and talk to the group." So, I thought, "God, I can't go in to that group, you know, I'm kind of afraid to do that", but I did and I was really glad that I did. I feel bad because I'm one of the lucky ones that happened to see it and got into a group in time before I tried to blow myself away or something else.

I had some problems when I came back with depression, too, and V.A. was never brought up at that time either. And I think back to that and I wonder if maybe I had gotten some assistance early on, not that they knew at the time what to do, but I think that the woman has been invisible, and still is, and if it weren't for ourselves reaching out for one another, we wouldn't know there were services available and I think that's wrong. I think the government should be doing something to reach out to all veterans. We've given our time. We've done our job and we did it well. I think it's time the government did something for us and reaches out to



the people who need it.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Do you have any questions? I have one question, Ms. Walker. During all the hearings we've had and we've had several hearings throughout the State relating to jobs, relating to stress, relating to Agent Orange, but at no time have we had anyone who is presently on active duty before us, so we don't really have any kind of a feeling - we know some of the problems with some of the people have in the streets as civilians. We assume that the same thing is happening on bases with people who stay in - in being in the medical area - this is the military; do they have some on-going programs for treating active personnel and this type of thing, or some of these problems we find in the streets that we're told the V.A. is not doing a hell of a lot about?

MS. WALKER: Do they have active programs for active duty people, you're saying? I think that the military is extremely insensitive to the issue of the Vietnam veteran. They ignore the fact that the Vietnam veteran exists. There's kind of an underground and undercurrent of the people who are on active duty that kind of hang together and occasionally mention Vietnam, but it's rarely talked about. I had never heard of delayed stress syndrome until recently. I knew something was going on. I had no idea what it was and I've been on active duty for, again, since 1976. I was on a very active, war-oriented post. I talked to - or had a lot of young troopers in particular talk to me about some of their feelings and now that I look back on it and know what it was, I understand what they were saying. I knew that they were having problems and I was having similar problems with flashbacks and with the helicopters and stuff - I was at Fort Bragg - there were a lot

of helicopters overhead. There was lots of mortar fire, artillery fire, and stuff like that brought back a lot of memories and the type of casualties I saw there were reminiscent of the war. It was the same for those people on active duty. It's very difficult but it was always put down, I mean, you didn't dare bring up that that was bothering you. I heard a lot of psychiatrists, because I'm in the medical field and work with people in the psychiatric field a lot, put down those kinds of feelings saying that the person was just maladjusted, that they couldn't possibly be experiencing any of these kinds of symptoms this late. I don't think the active duty military deals with problems of the vet. I think they -- as soon as a vet gets into problems -- a Vietnam vet, particularly.

I was talking to a young man yesterday who was pouring his heart out to me yesterday who was a two time tour person in the Green Berets. They tried to kick him out of the service. I know a lot of my young troopers did get kicked out 'cause they were causing problems all of a sudden. They couldn't deal with their jobs. They couldn't deal with authority. I don't think that any of the services deal with those things. No.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Well, what branch in particular. The guys just stay until they are eligible to go back? My old friends who stayed through -- that organization, I can understand that organization at Bragg, the 82nd, you wouldn't dare...I just wondered about some other less...

MS. WALKER: Less Army-type post?

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Yes, a trooper. That's -- we're always given to understand that there are certain things that the rest of the world, the other guys, you know, but that's one of the things that

we had mentioned earlier, the woman vet being even more invisible, if that's possible, than a lot of the other vets. We hope to be able to do something. To shed a little light on the situation.

We also pointed out as we came in that every hearing we've had, we've contacted press and the whole thing. Agent Orange and the other hearings following the strikers -- hell, we had all the press. As soon as we came in for one hearing on women veterans' problems, specifically, they're gone. We don't see anybody here. I think that is indicative...

MS. WALKER:...I don't think they think we're here.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: They know we're here, they just don't seem to think that it's going to play good on the 11 o'clock news tonight, I guess. There will be a lost dog story somewhere, sure as hell, but that's what we are up against and...Do you have any questions, Michael? Thank you very much.

MS. MARGO GIBSON: My name is Margo Gibson. I was an Army nurse in Vietnam in 1969 and '70. Like the other nurses, I was unaware of any problems that could be developed when I was in Vietnam. I was unaware of anything being sprayed, all I know is that I smelled a lot of stuff for a whole year and they sprayed all the time, and it began to smell good. You got used to it. They sprayed all the time.

When I came back I married another Vietnam veteran. We were married about seven years. He had a lot of flashbacks, I had anxiety periods, we stayed around military bases. We had access to the retired - I was medically retired. I even had some counseling; nothing was ever mentioned of Vietnam during this period. It was strictly something I was going through. I think that is really

unrealistic - the things that did happen to us, the daily stresses we were under in Vietnam, the things we had to see, the things we had to do, the way that we were everybody - we were there to nurture everybody whether we were on duty or off duty, was similar to emotional rape. We were ravaged of our innocence and I'm not talking about physical rape. I think that if we were physically raped, they would have been able to better deal with it, because the rape victim is known to have a problem, she is emotionally counseled. We were not, not one of us, not as a whole we weren't seen as a problem -- the men or the women. I think, you know, it's been 10 or 12 years since many of us have been back and this is still getting to us.

Now, if we had had some kind of - if we had lost a limb or an eye or something, people would notice that as a problem and be able to attribute it to that period in Vietnam. Many people have difficulty seeing this as a problem now, because it is not physical. They think we are crybabies, they think that we are just living in the past, that we like to tell war stories; that we just can't grow up and I don't see that as a problem. I have been to the V.A. hospital for Agent Orange testing: I've had better pre-employment physicals, quite frankly. I find I am really distressed by the way they are testing. They are not using standardized testing--the blood work should be all fasting, it is not done fasting; it's kind of slap-happy.

As far as addressing the fact whether they do or do not have a gynecologist in a V.A. hospital, that is supposed to be an option offered to us; that if we need this kind of treatment, we can do it on the outside. The V.A. will pay for it. We are not offered that

as an option, we aren't told about that, only if we find out some other way are we told of these added services. I don't feel that I should have to go crawling to the V.A. for services that I should have coming to me for what I did for the government and the service I provided.

I find it very uncomfortable to go to the V.A. hospital. As the press doesn't recognize us as women vets as having a problem, the V.A. also has difficulty understanding us as having a problem. We are an unusual animal. People don't know how to deal with us. They don't know, you know, what did we do in Vietnam. It just hasn't been something that has been addressed, and I think that now is the time for somebody to say, we went over there as honorable women with an honorable goal, and we came back that way, and we did provide services that were necessary. We did not offer our bodies. We offered up a lot more of ourselves than that, and I think that needs to be addressed now.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Yes, sir.

MR. JIM HENDRICKSON: I'm Jim Hendrickson and I'm with these three ladies. Everything they said I think is very, very true. Basic information about myself will lead up to what we are talking about here. I served in Vietnam from 1968, was wounded over there. My job was a sniper. I dealt with a lot of hell for that, to tell the truth. I came back here to the states, had a bad marriage, did badly in school, chronically depressed most of the time, contemplating suicide, doing a lot of dumb things, trying to become an alcoholic and such as that.

Last December I had a nervous breakdown and I was very fortunate that I knew these ladies. At the same time, I also

began working out at the Fort Miley as a kind of receptionist. People would come in and we would process them.

About the question of women coming into the V.A. hospitals, they should be automatically admitted, because the fact is, they worked and earned these things. There should be these specialists and doctors that these women require and such like that, or accessibility and more information.

I remember when I came back from Vietnam, I was no more off the airplane and on a bus rolling into the hospital and there was an officer who was telling us all about how the V.A. was going to help us and such like that. Well, I don't see that. If anything, it's turned its back on the woman veteran. It's treated them like a word I can't use.

As for the Vietnam veterans, I find that the Veterans Administration in general is insensitive, isolated and I'm very mad. I'm mad at being treated like I was a prostitute or some other person like that, like I didn't deserve to get help. If it wasn't for people like these people behind me here, and others in the area like Jack McClosky and a group of others, I think I would have killed myself.

Now, I would like to raise a question. I was told last Thursday in our group that there seems to be a small problem where the county, I mean, the Department, is holding the funds for the outreach program. I'd like to know why.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: We've not been made aware of that until it was mentioned this morning. The last word we had - it was flowing, but we will find out.

MR. HENDRICKSON: Okay. I feel personally, that those working

in the Veterans Administration, I had to quit at the end, because I felt that no matter what I was trying to do to help the veterans, that it was going down the tubes. You have a good idea. It was started with Abraham Lincoln. Don't you think it's time we started actually treating our veterans like people? They've earned it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN FLOYD: Thank you. That's concluding this hearing. We will continue addressing many of the problems of vets throughout the area. We will do a report to the Legislature. We will implement some of the suggestions we've had or try to through where we can, state legislation, and we have some resolution in the sense of the State Legislature that we will attempt to pursue in the next session of the Legislature. We would like to be kept informed of what goes on with vet groups throughout the State.

This is not the end of our looking in to see what we can do, in particular, for women veterans, as well as all veterans. It's an area that, to my knowledge, was one of the first things that I thought we would want to look into and when I became chairman of this committee. To my knowledge, this is the first hearing that's been held in the State, ever, relating to that matter. We hope to continue this effort and we hope that what we can do on the state level will have some fruition with the Veterans Administration.

Thank you very much for attending and for giving us some of your insight.