

Navajo Nation Council Office of the Speaker
Contact: Sararesa Begay, Public Information Officer
(928) 871-6384
sararesabegay@navajo.org
<http://www.navajonationcouncil.org>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Council Delegate submits written testimony about much-needed healing for Vietnam Veterans to Human Services Committee

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Council Delegate and Vietnam Combat Veteran Larry Anderson Sr. (Fort Defiance), submitted a written testimony on Feb. 19 about the difficult Vietnam Veterans' experience by saying "no one has found a real cure, a real healing," for each veterans' youth that was sacrificed, and returning to America profoundly wounded at every level.

"Vietnam had taken something from us," said Anderson who served in the Vietnam War during 1968-1969 in the U.S. Marine Corps, and was in Vietnam. "It robbed us of our youth. As a group, we had been lied to, led astray, and then abandoned by the country for which we had sacrificed so much."

Anderson, a Human Services Committee member, explained that, "we had gone to war believing we were patriots, and had returned a year or more later as second-class citizens."

"We were considered mentally unstable, unemployable and socially unacceptable," Anderson said, noting that no one had the time or the inclination to listen or help the Vietnam Veterans adjust to the "normal lifestyle."

"We had become instant outcasts," Anderson explained. "It was no wonder that so many of us had difficulties returning to the ebb and flow of the society had left. We suffered alone. The lucky survived."

Anderson who is originally from Fort Defiance, Ariz. described living with the memory of fighting the Vietnam War as struggling to shove "the nightmares and bad memories to the deepest recesses of our minds, vowing never to resurrect them."

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“Other Vietnam Veterans fought battles they could never win, succumbing to alcohol, drugs, crime and suicide,” Anderson said. “Many sought outside help.”

Wives, clergy, counselors, psychologists, psychoanalysts and psychiatrists all tried, according to Anderson.

“Some even achieve varying degrees of success,” he said. “But, in the end, the Vietnam vet was left to shoulder his own burden. The wounds had been patched, bandaged, sutured, and cauterized, but they had not healed.”

He said that “some had lain dormant. Others had slowly festered.

“A few erupted, spewing poison on everyone around,” Anderson noted. “No one had found a real cure, a real healing.”

Anderson is serving his 12th year as a council delegate.