

'Nam vets call out to fellow Canadians

Local Vietnam veterans want to reach out and touch someone.

The Maple Ridge-based Vietnam Veterans in Canada is attempting to revive a hotline for friends, relatives or soldiers who need someone to talk to about their experiences.

**By Debbie Kyvrikosaiois
News Contributor**

To further their plans, the vets held a car wash in Burnaby on Saturday, which raised more than \$300.

Also participating was the Christian-based veterans' organization Point Man Industries, a U.S.-based group which publishes a newsletter for veterans. The Canadian co-ordinator is well-known Maple Ridge artist Eric Nevatie.

Both organizations co-operate on community events such as Remembrance Day speeches, telethons and marches, and also lobby for the

Maple Ridge-based group gets involved with hot-line

rights of the 30-40,000 Canadian veterans.

Vietnam Veterans started a toll-free hotline three years ago, but couldn't afford to keep it running. People wanted to talk for hours at a time, at a cost of \$50 an hour to the veterans' group.

Woody Carmack, president and founder of Vietnam Vets, said the first day the 800-line was installed it started ringing.

"I knew there were people out there, but I had no idea (there were so many)," he said. "Most of them said the same thing when they called; that they thought they were the only ones silently suffering, and admitted to not having talked to anyone about it for 20 years."

Carmack said many vets suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which he described as "a normal reaction to abnormal cir-

cumstances." Symptoms include nightmares, depression, alienation from loved ones and suicide attempts.

The disorder is found more frequently in Canadian veterans than in Americans, Carmack said, because "it was not their war."

The U.S. has various programs

to aid Vietnam veterans, but the Canadian government takes no responsibility for Canadian Vietnam veterans, Vietnam Veterans director Alan Stanchi said.

Vietnam Veterans, funded by the American government, consists of 300 members, 40 per cent of whom are Americans who immigrated to

Canada. Stanchi said there are many more out there who have never talked about their experiences because "they are not going to talk to someone who wasn't there."

In addition to the hotline, Vietnam Veterans holds weekly group meetings and counseling sessions at the B.C. Armory in Vancouver.

For information on Vietnam Veterans in Canada, call 462-8701.