

Vet hotline was too hot

A crisis line set up last year for Vietnam veterans proved to be a victim of its own success.

The toll-free line, established last spring by Vietnam Veterans in Canada, received hundreds of calls — and rang up a bill of \$2,700 — before it was disconnected last November because the group couldn't afford to pay the long-distance bill.

"I was absolutely stunned by how many [veterans] were out there," says Woody Carmack, president of the veterans' group.

The group is planning a series of fund-raising events in an effort to reopen the line.

Carmack says vets who called the line last year often said the

same two things: "I thought I was the only one in Canada" and "I haven't talked about this for 20 years."

As a result of the crisis line and an exhibition last spring of a half-size model of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., the group has doubled its membership. It now has 350 veterans on its mailing list.

Carmack says it's important for vets suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome and other emotional problems to be able to talk to someone who has been through similar experiences.

He now mans a local phone line for veterans. His number is 462-8701.