

“Living in the Aftermath”

I was sent to Vietnam as a Military Policeman after five months of training, in March 1967. The public still generally supported the war effort at the time. My particular situation was to be stationed in Cam Ranh Bay, an area that was not under combat conditions while I was there.

Morale was a problem since other soldiers who rotated back from the fighting showed signs of psychological trauma, the fighting did not seem to be showing any signs of military or political gain, and we were aware that support for the war was steadily diminishing.

It was particularly hard for me to hear that Mohamed Ali had refused induction. At that time I was four months into my tour. Martin Luther King began making anti-war speeches at that time, and I was all too aware that about eighty percent of the men of my generation were not going to even serve in the military - then or ever.

To this day I do not have much trust or friendly sentiment towards my own generation. Churches changed almost overnight from being opposed to Communism to being opposed to a conflict that was purportedly stopping the spread of Communism.

I came home in May 1968 and learned to avoid telling people I had been in the Army. Only after forty years did I put veteran plates on my car and start wearing a hat that identifies me as a veteran.

I have tried to say as much in as few words as possible. A full narrative would be much longer. The main point I wish to make is that even those who never fought in actual combat have lingering issues.

— *John, Scotia*