

STORM

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But the Klan, the Nazis and other fringe groups that attract violence-prone disturbed people in our society are less important than the Klan mentality that hides behind three-piece suits and nice dresses.

The Klan went into decline when the so-called good people trimmed their support of its ends and became embarrassed at their own racism. But now racism is becoming legitimized; there is a direct link between the sophisticates who now feel free to make derogatory remarks about blacks and the primitives who kill and terrorize.

The flames of national intolerance are further fueled by groups who

politicize religion and morality and who want to impose their narrow interpretation of Christian doctrine on the rest of us.

Such groups are symptomatic of a national drift away from ideals of freedom and equality. They and the unorganized, alienated people who embrace racism reflect the insecurities bred by a deteriorating economic situation. They have a psychological need to blame somebody. And true to our history of racism, it is blacks who are made the scapegoat.

We as a nation have to understand the full import of the storm warnings of 1980. Deepening racial hostility, fed by inequality and economic stagnation, threaten to tear our society apart.

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30,000 Vietnam Veterans Visit "Vet Centers"

The neighborhood storefront "Vet Center" program established by the Veterans Administration is gathering momentum as it enters its second year of operation.

Geared to help Vietnam veterans who are having delayed problems readjusting after experiencing emotional or physical trauma during military service, the Vet Centers have attracted more than 30,000 during their first 12 months. Some 5,500 new contacts sought assistance last month alone.

Help is offered in the form of individual, group and family counseling sessions. Counselors also work closely with other government agencies and with local organizations.

Patterned after programs advocated by Max Cleland long before he took over as VA Administrator in March 1977, the 91 Vet Centers have a specially trained staff of 376 made up mostly of Vietnam veterans. About half are combat veterans, many with wartime disabilities.

The staff has a rich ethnic composition which includes about 30 percent Black, 10 percent Hispanic, and one percent American Indian.

VA's top psychiatrist, Dr. Jack Ewalt, and Dr. Don Crawford, the young VA psychologist who runs the Vet Centers, credit the program with accomplishing much more than providing direct services.

Operation Outreach personnel have played a vital role in educating and sensitizing other health care providers to the needs of the Vietnam veterans, they reported recently to colleagues of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association.

Veterans seeking the location and phone number of the nearest Vet Center should contact telephone information, the nearest VA installation, or a local veterans organization. Or they can write to VA (116A4), Washington, D.C. 20420.



Three men who served as combat Marines in Vietnam review problems troubling many Vietnam Era veterans in the Nation's Capital. David Scott faces Donald Gooding (with tie) and Kenny Virgilio, counselors at the Vet Center on Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., in Washington, D.C.

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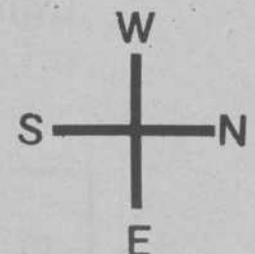
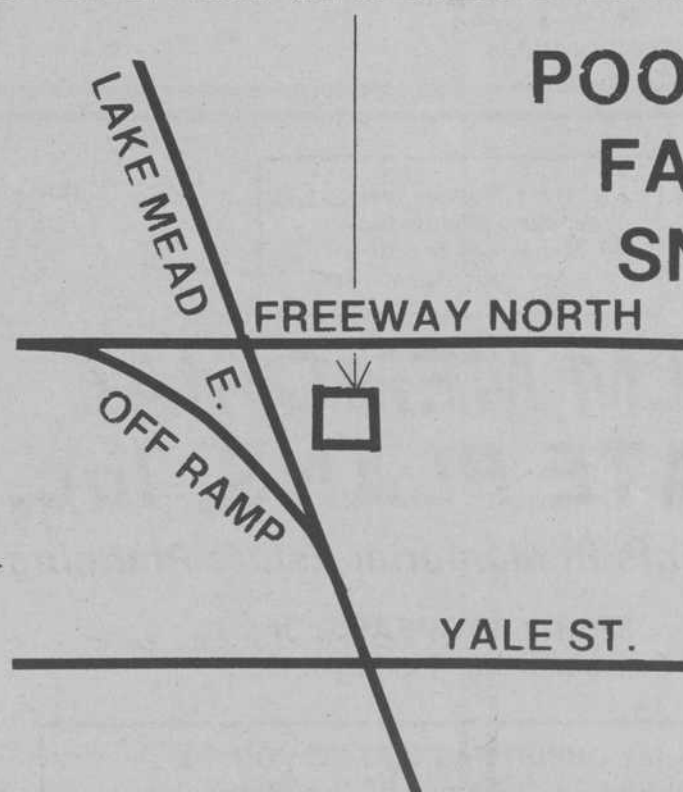
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