

Boxed in-

by Stephen J.J McKenzie- US ARMY

I saw a man...he was walking the street...He had nowhere to go, and nothing to eat...
He was pushing a cart, full of things he would keep...his destination; a cardboard box, his only place to sleep.

I saw sadness, behind his gaze... as he stared into nothingness, as if lost in a daze...

And the people walking past did not seem to care... going about their business... as if he wasn't there.
A mere ghost of the man, He once must have been...with no one concerned, about the shape he was in...
Wearing a tattered uniform, bearing both; rank and name... Eyes cast downward... head bent with shame.

I was to inquire...as to the cause of his plight; He said, "We are disposable... long after the fight."
I found no understanding, in the answer he'd given...tho' I could tell by his tone...He'd grown tired of livin'...

He proceeded to speak, of the horror's he'd seen...incomprehensible...unless you had been...
The haunting nightmares... the flashbacks of War... the cost of Freedom... and what's worth fighting for.
He told of his return, back to these United States...of civilian's at the airport, who spat in his face...

Of the shunning he'd experienced, by both family, and friends...

How the battle to remain sane... is the war, that never ends...

How little by little... Everything was lost... "Would you still have volunteered, had you known the cost?"
Being a true "Patriot"... "Yes", he answered me... "For I love my country... though it doesn't seem to love me."

I could sense his pain... could feel his grief... For when I offered my hand... he just stared in disbelief.

Because he'd been abandoned, by Country and Kin... after fighting a war, it was forbidden, to win...
A War fueled by drugs, based on Politics and money... and the joke had been on him... Tho' not the least bit funny.
The majority of the homeless, in the nation today... are Veterans, and "Why do we treat them this way?"

How can we, as a nation, act with such disregard and neglect?

And their V.A. Benefits... nowhere what you'd expect!

With politicians cutting funding, and Vet Programs too... What are the "mentally scarred"... or disabled, to do?

This question is unsettling... in fact, it "SHOCKS"... A once "Proud Warrior"... reduced to living in a box!
They are deserving of our gratitude... and our appreciation... Worthy of our Respect... and a little compassion.
We should not begrudge them, their "just reward"... THE LOSS OF THEIR SACRIFICES... We can ill-afford.

He smiled for a moment... and then turned away... But as he departed, he had this to say...

"You see... I'm a soldier... and always shall be... People owe their lives, to soldiers like me!

He then turned the corner... disappearing from view... and as I headed home, I knew just what I'd do...

I sat and wrote this Poem... to encourage ALL TO START... to value these heroes... and take them to heart...

And I pray, AMERICA... THAT YOU DO NOT FORGET!!! The "Man in the box,"... the Homeless Vet.

A Tribute to Vietnam Veterans

By Stephen J.J McKenzie- US ARMY

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March 29th is a day to remember... The day we honor our Vietnam Vets. Their hearts were true, bleeding red, white and blue, and it's a shame our government forgets. Sent overseas to fight and die to bring freedom to South Vietnam... Sons and Fathers who were cherished, fought their enemies and perished, and the nation was anything but calm.

That which we abhor, a "Political War,"... was unwinnable, from the first shot fired. A waste of lives and money, not the least bit funny... as futures and dreams expired. Politicians stood by watching brave men die, physically and mentally as well... For who could remain what society considers "sane"... after a yearlong tour in hell.

Shot through the heart, or bodies blown apart... or just missing and appendage or two... led to believe they fought for their country and in return... What did their country do? Many were spurned when they returned, spat upon and called vile names... For the following orders that were given by Politicians who were driven by greed and power. Lust to conduct these "War Games"

And our soldiers did their best when put to the test, the body count rose higher and higher... While back in the states, pacifist ingrates, protested the war... throwing our flag upon the fire.

They couldn't understand a "Military Man", one who fights for the rights of others. At least willing to die while at home left to cry are their wives, their children, and their mothers. And this holds true in all "Foreign Wars", where freedom may be in doubt. Is it our nation's job to rush to the rescue while our own people too often do without? A question to ponder as you read these verses, give credit where credit is due... These honorable soldiers, fought in essence for our country did what cowards were afraid, to do. Remember to treat them with respect... Listen no to what fools have to say. Their courage, loyalty and sacrifice... Epitomize the U.S. of A. God bless Vietnam Vets.

I got a call from Sarge and he asked if I would be interested in a writer for Veteran and other kinds of pieces. He then proceeded to tell me the background of the story "Man in the Box" were upon it's conclusion I said, "I would be honored to have your viewpoints included in the Free Riders Press. So I would like to welcome Stephen J.J McKenzie- US ARMY (Sarge) to the FRP family. Any comments or thoughts e-mail him at smdragonheart@gmail.com

LOOK Twice! Save a Life!