

ECHO ECHO ECHO ECHO

'Platoon' spurs student awareness of Vietnam conflict

By Elizabeth Berliner
Notre Dame High School

Platoon recently premiered in the Elmira area, making a powerful statement on war and promoting a new awareness of the Vietnam conflict, particularly among young people.

For the most part, the teenagers of the Vietnam War era are the parents of teenagers today. Predictably, teenagers usually shun tales of the older generation's past, and thus many modern teens know little or nothing about the Vietnam war. Many simply refer to the period as a decade of "Peace, Love, Dove" and joke about visions of their parents with long hair, handing out flowers and chanting songs of peace on college campuses.

Platoon, however, has established a reputation as the first truly realistic war movie on the topic of Vietnam, capturing the interest of teenagers across the nation. Because the

movie doesn't attempt to actually explain the logistics of the civil war between North and South Vietnam, most teenagers leave the theater with questions about the politics of the conflict and American involvement. In order to get the answers, they turn to those who fought and lived through it: Mom and Dad.

The turmoil of the '60s is finally becoming more to teens than just a period of wild styles, rampant use of drugs and peaceful demonstrations. Through their parents' stories, teens learn about death and dishonor in Vietnam and even on the homefront. At Kent State University, for example, a peaceful protest resulted in the deaths of four university students, when National Guardsmen fired into the chanting crowd.

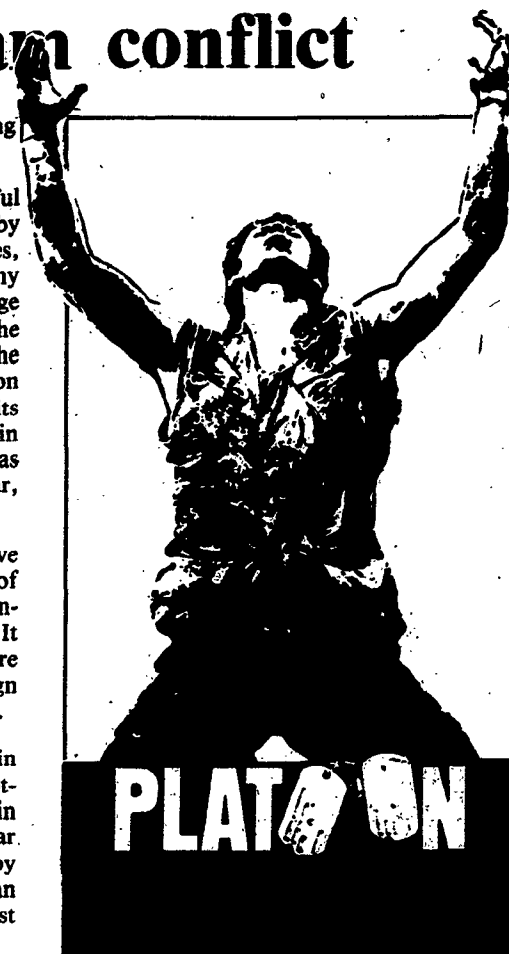
Many Vietnam veterans report that the movie is alarmingly true to life. A few contest the portrayal of extensive drug abuse among the soldiers and cruel treatment of

Vietnamese civilians by Americans raiding their villages.

Other details, however, such as the painful bites of ants and the wounds left by blood-sucking leeches, the burning of faces, and the deceptive booby traps left in enemy tunnels, result in an all-too-painful barrage of memories for Vietnam vets. In fact, the plot of the film is practically identical to the experiences of the 25th Infantry Division (called the "Manchus"), which fought its last battle along the Cambodian border in late December, 1968. At least *Platoon* has reversed the trend of glorifying the war, exemplified by last year's *Rambo*.

Most importantly, the interest teens have developed in the controversial adolescence of their parents may result in a better understanding between the two generations. It could also prompt many teens to take more of an interest in current American foreign policy and our involvement in foreign lands.

The Vietnam War was a tragic period in American history that should not be forgotten or glorified. *Platoon* has succeeded in educating the public about the reality of war and suffering. This movie should be seen by all of America's young people, so they can build the future on the knowledge of past mistakes.



Equal Time

Our Lady of Mercy High School
As a non-Catholic, how do you feel about attending a Catholic school?

LISA CORCORAN, junior

As a Unitarian in a Catholic school I feel a lot of pressure — not to become Catholic but being in a minority. Academically, I think I am getting a better education. I'm learning to deal with people who have very strong beliefs that differ greatly from my own, and have learned to respect them for that.



ROHINI PATEL, junior

Sometimes at school Masses I feel really uncomfortable not knowing what to do or what to sing. I don't mind saying the prayers in homeroom or other classes. I enjoy learning about a religion other than my own, because it gives me a greater insight about how Catholics feel on certain issues.



CHARU NARANG, senior

Being a non-Catholic in a Catholic school has made me realize that religion is very important to every culture, and the best way to provide greater understanding in the world is to promote understanding of different religions.



BETSY LYNAM, senior

Being an Episcopalian isn't that much different from being a Catholic. At Mercy, the emphasis on religion is not so great that I have ever felt uncomfortable. However, I did have to learn the Hail Mary.



Fashion show, luncheon set for Aquinas Institute soon

The Aquinas Parents Association is hosting a luncheon show of fashions suitable for junior proms, senior balls and other formal occasions this spring.

The fashion show will feature women's dresses and formal wear from Iroquoit Bridal, and men's formal wear from Vittorio's Formal Wear. Most of the models will be students from Aquinas, parents or friends of AQ.

Volunteers needed for projects

Volunteers are needed to work on fundraising projects with the Financial Development Committee of the Genesee Valley Arthritis Foundation. Contact the foundation at (716)271-3540 for information.

All are invited to the luncheon and fashion show at Brooklea Country Club on February 28, at 11:30 a.m. Tickets cost \$10 per person.

For ticket reservations and information, call Aquinas Institute at (716)647-2990. The deadline for reservations is February 20.

Speaking Out

By Cynthia Yantz
Nazareth Academy

This past December, I was fortunate enough to have been able to attend a week-long conference in Washington, D.C., along with more than 300 high school students from all over the United States. The week's activities included meetings with prominent government officials and foreign ambassadors to the United States.

The experience made me more aware of the responsibility each American citizen has to this country and the task facing my generation and the generations to come: upholding the principles upon which our country was founded.

Most of my friends and I will be turning 18 this year, along with other high school seniors across the nation. Regardless of which post-high school direction a student chooses to take, one thing is certain: at 18, students are suddenly eligible to vote.

A great number of the new voters will probably emulate their parents' political views, while others won't even bother to

register. I have talked with other teenagers who don't see the sense in taking the time to vote because, in their eyes, their vote won't count for very much.

My response to teenagers and adults alike is that each person has a responsibility to this country and should take advantage of the privilege given to all of us as citizens. Each vote does count in the big picture, and choosing not to vote does you and your country a disservice. It is important for young people today to throw off the mantle of apathy and get involved.

I encourage members of the new voting class to seek out information on the different positions taken by members of both political parties. I encourage my fellow seniors to keep an open mind and make responsible decisions.

It is very important for the American public to realize that our congressmen and senators are there to provide information and listen to the views of the people they represent.

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HOUSE OF GUITARS

We received 23 correct entries identifying Billy Idol's 1982 hit "White Wedding."

The winner was Mike Carlotta of St. Joseph's in Penfield.

MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:
Who recorded the following #1 song: "Bette Davis Eyes?"

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip Code _____
School _____

Rules:
Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.
If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.
All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Courier-Journal Music Trivia
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