

Jim Rentz
Former Chaplain, United States Army
Vietnam Veteran
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My fellow Vietnam veterans,

When fellow veterans are in need, other veterans have a way of showing up to help. For example, Craig Burnette, who was an infantry platoon leader in Vietnam, has a passion to seek out homeless veterans. He regularly recruits other veterans to join him to visit homeless veterans living under bridges, in tents deep in the forests, in culverts, and a myriad of other places. He tells them of services available to help them. He gently coaxes them to accompany him while he takes them to get the help they need. Far too many of them are leery and resist. He doesn't give up and often will return to try again at times bringing someone who is a resource to help inform and reassure them. Craig has even been instrumental in securing a home where homeless veterans can have temporary shelter. In short, he shows up physically, emotionally and in so many other ways. He doesn't just pray for them and leave, he becomes an answer to prayer.

In his book "The Invisible Partners", the late Reverend John Sanford wrote that there is a difference between wishful thinking and active imagination. In wishful thinking, one has an idea and says, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if..." but nothing ever comes of it. What might have been a wonderful creation dies even before it is on the vine. In active imagination, one says, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if..." and sets out to bring it into fruition to find that a symphony has been playing all along waiting for him or her to play their part of a touching musical piece.

Craig Burnette has demonstrated the invaluable gifts that have the potential to benefit other veterans by actuating active imagination. He found that an entire community lay dormant awaiting such leadership to spring it into action. I am told that in the heat of battle it is often the case that some soldier rises to the occasion and shouts, "Follow me!" and the soldiers rally behind him to seize the day. This soldier may not even be an officer or noncommissioned officer. Let us think of situations and needs around us and employ active imagination to help our fellow veterans. There is an abundance of our fellow veterans who could well benefit from what we have to offer. Let us leave not one of them behind! Don't just pray. Be an answer to prayer.

Blessings,

Chaplain Jim

"No man is an island unto itself. Each is a part of the continent, a part of the main. Each man's death diminishes me, for I am a part of mankind. Therefore, never send to know for whom the tolls, it tolls for thee."
John Donne