

# Viet vets protest war

By Robert B. Hanron  
Globe Staff

Rusty Sachs of Cambridge, former Marine Corps captain and helicopter pilot in Vietnam, said it all in a few paragraphs today without polling any punches.

"We, the veterans of the longest, costliest, most wasteful war in the country's history, know the Vietnam War must be stopped.

"We know that this war leads inevitably to the commission of war crimes and atrocities — not by perverted maniacs but by everyday Americans.

"We've seen atrocities that make the My Lai massacre look like nursery rhymes and we know that as long as Americans are fighting in Indo-China, such atrocities will continue.

"Vietnam war crimes did not start in the spring of 1968, nor are they all attributable to Lt. William Calley...

"The policy of genocide is a direct result of high-level decision making in the Pentagon and the executive branch of government.

"In no way can the Army wash its own dirty hands by passing the buck downward."

Only a dozen Viet veterans were on hand this morning when their white mobile information trailer truck stopped outside the main steps of the State House.

But their presence was enough to bring Gov. Francis W. Sargent down from his third floor corner office to talk with them.

In the group were soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen, all Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Sargent asked their

opinions on the war, the way they were treated on arrival home and what they wanted most.

They said they were after jobs and rehabilitation centers to treat those on drugs. But in the final analysis, the thing they wanted foremost was an end to the war.

The veterans told Sargent that coming home from Vietnam is entirely different than it was in any other war.

There is no martial music to welcome them back, they said. There are no parades or wild demonstrations by the public such as those on V-Day in 1945.

"What we hope to do" said Michael Roche, 22, of Beacon Hill, who served with the Army Security Agency in Vietnam, "is to convince other veterans and the public at large that our case is just."

"I don't believe," said the governor, "that the American people realize that the veterans returning home are so distressed by what they see."

He told them he hoped they continue demonstrations to win their point, but he also hoped that these would be conducted on a rational and not a disorderly basis.

Sargent said the white mobile truck manned by the veterans can't help carry some weight in their campaign to end the war.

The big van and tractor will begin a tour of the New England states and wind up this spring's drive by participating in Operation Dewey Canyon III.

The veterans, as part of a national end-the-war drive, will bivouac on the mall (the site of Resurrection City) in Washington from Apr. 19 to 23.