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STUDENTS GIVEN WAR'S HARD FACTS BY A SPEAKER WHO KNOWS THEM

"Things are happening too fast today to waste time, young fellows. Get a purpose in life – a foundation – and start building on that foundation today. If you aren't on solid ground today, your tomorrow is going to be empty."

That was a part of the inspirational message of Capt. Paul Stanley for junior and senior high school boys at special assemblies last week.

Stanley, Glen Rock High School's first football hero, has returned a decorated war hero from the Vietnam combat, although he would shun such a label. The facts, however, would be difficult to dispute.

A member of the high school's first graduating class, Stanley received letters in baseball, basketball and football and was captain of the football team. He won the outstanding athlete award for the class of '59 and was the first local athlete to make the all-state football team. He was also a class officer and a member of the student council.

He went on to the U. S. Military Academy at West Point where he was on the varsity football team, captain of the lacrosse team and made the All-American Lacrosse team in his senior year. He graduated in the top of his class in 1963.

The medals on his uniform as he spoke from the junior high school auditorium stage last week included the Silver Star for valor, the Bronze Star, the Air Medal for 58 helicopter assault missions, the Purple Heart for combat wounds and the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross.

All were won during his tour in Vietnam as company commander with the 199th Infantry Brigade that saw heavy action in the area north of Saigon.

The young captain, just back from the war zone, has spent the first ten days of his leave speaking to young people in the area. Asked last week why he was making two and three talks a day to various youth groups on his first

leave in over a year, Stanley said, “I’m concerned with some of the misinformation these young people are getting and their reaction to it. They have to get some foundations in their lives and get squared away before it’s too late. I want to tell them what’s going on over there and what Communism really is. They’re subjected to the thinking of too many self-appointed authorities who don’t know what they’re talking about.”

Stanley didn’t put any frosting on his stories of the situation in Vietnam and his young audiences were obviously moved by his talks.

“The textbooks tell us Communism is an ideology,” he said and then added dramatically the things he had learned of Communism first hand in Vietnam.

“Communism is an ugly cancer that eats into the minds and hearts of people. It distorts their values and views. Their motive is fight – kill – kill all Americans - kill all the free world forces.”

He told of the Viet Cong burning entire villages and killing women and children with flame-throwers. “This is what Communism is, young fellows.”

The children in a village are great indicators of the presence of the enemy, said Stanley. If they rush out to greet the Americans, you can be sure there is no Viet Cong about. “But if the children stay out of sight, you’d better put your security out. The enemy is in the area.”

He told of finding Viet Cong with the help of some little children in one village. “We returned later and found five of those children, their feet tied, hanging from a pole. Their hands had been cut off at the wrists and they had been left there to bleed to death. This is what Communism is doing.”

He had some harsh words for the peace demonstrators. “Show me a young man who has burned his draft card and I’ll show you an unprincipled, confused, unstable young man who’s a coward.”

If they carried their peace placards in front of the Viet Cong, Stanley said, the placards would become their gravestones. The Communists don’t want peace, said the young captain, they want to conquer the world.

There wasn’t a sound in the big auditorium as Stanley, speaking of blood poured on the street by demonstrators against an appearance by Secretary

Dean Rusk, told the youthful audience, “I held a young fellow, 18 years old, from Cleveland, Ohio, in my arms and he died – his blood on my hands. I cried. That young man was a great American – willing to give his life so that the people in Vietnam can know the freedom we know in this country.”

Stanley turned to this country during his talks, saying the United States has fallen more morally in the last year than in the previous 50 years.

“People outside of our country are looking to us today and some are concluding that the next five years are critical for us,” Stanley told the young audiences as he stressed the importance of their finding a direction and following it.

A tear could be seen in many a young man’s eye as Captain Stanley said, “I couldn’t stand here and talk to you fellows without sharing the thing that’s been most meaningful in my life. The Lord can be very real in your lives. I found Him to be the basis of my life – true and precious to me, not only in high school and college, but in combat in Vietnam.”

He said it simply but it had more dramatic impact than a thousand sermons in a thousand churches. This, said Captain Stanley later, is the message he hopes to bring to young men who are apt to think that religion is for women and old people.

The young captain has left his family’s home on Doremus Avenue (he’s the son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard R. Stanley) and has joined his family in Arlington, Va.

The young captain, whose picture was on front pages all over the world as he was shown with General William Westmoreland and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on a Vietnamese battlefield, is married to the former Phyllis Jewett. They have a daughter, Deborah, 3, and a son, Paul Jr., 2.

His next assignment is at Fort Benning where he will take a nine-month officers’ career course. He has been selected to go back to West Point to instruct on the faculty in the psychology department. He plans to get his master’s degree and work toward his Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Illinois.

This is the young man who carried the football over the line on the Glen Rock field ten years ago and who is now carrying a message from his heart to the young people of the country he loves.