

from 'Operation Desert Storm' to the Vietnam War

friends of the vets sang along with vocalists Eileen Greenip and Marc Whitten.

The unity of American families, said 82nd Airborne Division Capt. Bill Kelly of Upper Darby, was the reason the Allied forces so easily defeated Saddam Hussein's army after it invaded Kuwait in August.

"Our enemy was ... led by a dictator and powered by fear," Kelly said, adding that the American troops were supported by "love and affection from people like you."

"It's very nice to be home," Kelly said.

Phillies commentator and yesterday's emcee Harry Kalas expressed wonderment at the question Kelly said has been the most asked since his return — how the troops got the job done in just 43 days.

"How about the jobs the guys on the reviewing stand did on Saddam ... OUTTA HERE!" Kalas said in his distinctive home run-call style as the members of the

82nd Airborne watched and cheered the passing floats from a flatbed trailer.

"They did it quickly and efficiently. The greatest fighting force in the world," he said.

During the flag ceremonies, two Warthog fighter jets screamed in tandem over the amphitheater twice, bringing the loudest rounds of applause of the day.

A comical section of the parade was provided by the Marching Accountants, which did a take-off of a military marching chant.

"We don't care what people say ... We're proud to be a CPA."

Chaplain Archie Roberts led the crowd in prayer. Several county, state and federal elected officials were on hand as well. Veterans from every conflict since World War I were represented.

Greenip sang Havertown native Julie Gold's peace

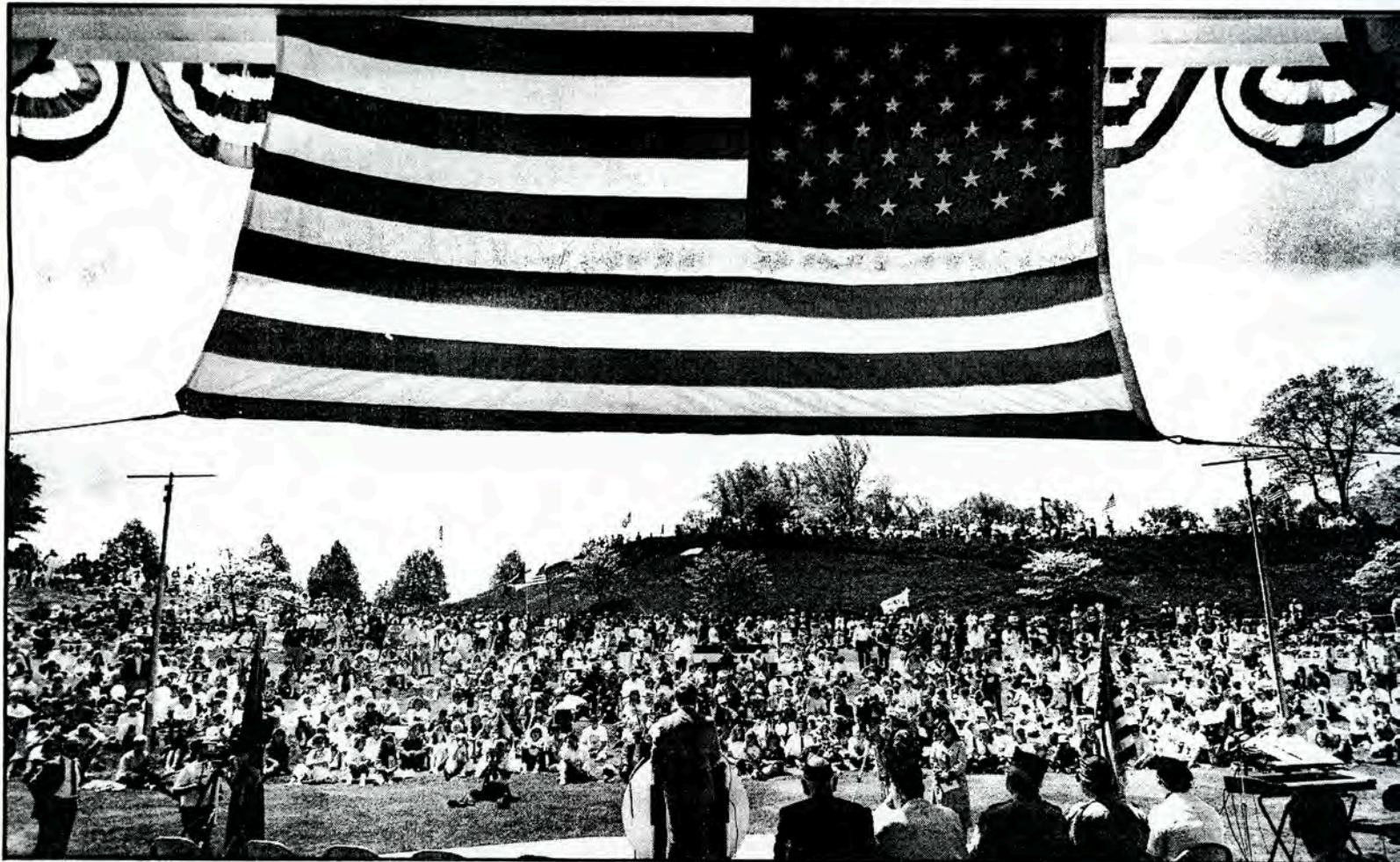
anthem "From a Distance" and Whitten sang "God Bless the U.S.A."

Weldon called the day a success for doing for the Desert Storm troops what should have been done for the Vietnam vets.

"No longer will you be a second-class citizen," Weldon said. "Now America knows what we should have known all along. You are the heroes of this country. applaud and thank each and every one of you."

McMahon said the cleansing that Weldon spoke of is just beginning.

"Today was just the start. We're just a small group of Vietnam veterans from a small corner in Delaware County," he said. "We will feel that our cause has been righted when this is done nationwide so that we can be assured that what happened to us will never happen again."



Times staff photo by ROBERT J. GURECH

From the stage at the amphitheater at Rose Tree Park, the crowd spreads out to hear speakers at yesterday's Welcome Home ceremonies.

Rally sign pressed back into service

By BARBARA ORMSBY

Times Correspondent

MEDIA — After last February's Hero Day parade and rally to honor those Americans fighting in the Persian Gulf War, Lois Gebhart carefully put away the sign she carried in the parade that was decorated with a photo of her soldier son who was serving in the gulf.

Gebhart took the sign out of storage yesterday to carry as she marched in the

victory parade, noting that her son was still on duty in the gulf.

"And when he comes home, we're going to take this sign to the airport to welcome him," Gebhart said as she waited at the corner of Front and Olive streets for her division to begin to march from the staging area to Rose Tree Park in Upper Providence.

A former Delaware County resident who now lives in Wilmington, Del., Gebhart was pushing a stroller where her six-month-old grandson, Rickey

Fuller, was snoozing, sporting an over-size pair of sunglasses.

When Gebhart marched in last February's parade she was accompanied by Woody's wife, Kerry, and his 2-year-old daughter, Theresa, her daughter, Christine Fuller, little Rickey, and an assortment of former neighbors and relatives.

But yesterday, it was just Lois and Rickey.

"My daughter-in-law and Theresa went back to Germany to wait for Woody," Gebhart said, adding that

Germany was where her son was based before shipping out to Saudia Arabia.

And the others were not able to make the latest parade.

"I don't know when Woody will be home," Gebhart said as her group got the word to move out. "He left the week before Christmas. I hope it's soon."

Gebhart and Rickey, still stealing 40 winks, walked down Front Street to meet up with other parade units.

"It's only two miles (to the park). I won't be too bad," Gebhart smiled.