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Fall 2010 ► HST 195 F10 (Escobar META 21581 24392) ► Forums ► Forum 3 ► Legacies & Issues

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**Legacies & Issues**  
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, 27 November 2010, 11:44 PM

The questions you will address are found in three parts, [located here](#).

With three different subjects, this should be the easiest forum week in which to earn the maximum credit for posts and replies. **Just be sure that you do NOT attempt to answer the questions for all three parts in a single post.**

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

When addressing the questions in parts 1, 2, and 3, put something descriptive like "Conservative Revisionist", "Register Guard as history", or "Legacy is ..." in the subject line of your post. DO NOT leave the subject line of your posts unchanged.

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**Liberal Realist**  
by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Monday, 29 November 2010, 05:05 PM

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After taking this course and reading what I have read and watched what I have watched, surprisingly I find myself out of all of these a liberal realist, which is kind of interesting because for the most part I find myself more so to the conservative side. According to the article, *Changing Interpretations of the Vietnam War*, "Had they more soberly assessed its true value to the economic and security interests of the United States, recognized the popular appeal of revolutionary nationalism within the country, and appreciated the limits of American power, then the ensuing tragedy might well have been averted." I can somewhat agree with this statement, I feel that this war could have been avoided. I'm not sure if it would have been the best, but I think we would have not lost as many people as we did. I know they needed our help and they weren't strong enough to support themselves, but I think there could have been a better faster way of dealing with the issue.

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**Re: Liberal Realist**  
by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 09:10 AM

I agree when you we should not have lost so many people just to back out. We should have done a little research on who we were fighting before we went there and maybe come up with a better battle plane or something and maybe less would have died and we could have accomplished what we went there for.

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**Re: Liberal Realist**  
by [Todd Lowry](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:23 PM

I agree. I think the fact that the U.S. was so ignorant about Vietnam, its people and culture before making the decision to wage war there is shameful. America had no idea what it was getting itself into, yet it blindly pressed on.

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**Re: Liberal Realist**  
by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:44 PM

I feel like we as a country blindly take many actions, and I think we need to work on the people more than random decisions.

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### Register Guard as History

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Monday, 29 November 2010, 05:22 PM

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I feel as though the local mini book of stories goes to show me that first hand basis is much more reliable then just some guy trying to go against someone's article that did not have the experience and the right information. This mini book goes to show people can totally put false information out there, and it is just like the media today, most the time they aren't there for the things that took place to they go off of what they hear instead of first hand experience and the media can definitely be one sided most of the time instead of factual. I take the stance that I believe a lot of the stories in the *Patriots* just for the reason that the people were actually there for the accounts that took place.

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### Re: Register Guard as History

by [Jesse Long](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:17 PM

I agree with you. The media can be very one sided due to the fact that they 99% of the time are not there to get first hand experience. When someone is reporting or writing about something they were involved in themselves, i too think they tend to carry a lot more credibility.

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### conservative

by [Justin White](#) - Monday, 29 November 2010, 08:17 PM

At the conclusion of this class I find myself more on the conservative side of things. I believe that the U.S definitely under estimated the "appeal of revolutionary nationalism" in Vietnam and under estimated the Vietnamese's fighting capabilities. I still believe entering the war in Vietnam at the time was a good choice but as far as how we handled it, there definitely could have been better ways of doing that. Which is easy to say now as opposed to the time it was happening.

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### Re: conservative

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 03:24 PM

I disagree, I do not think the way we went into the war was a good choice. I think there could have been many more options, and a better thought out plan. But yes, again it is easy to say this now after the war has been over for many years and we are not in the middle of it.

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### Re: conservative

by [David Verner](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:11 PM

I disagree also. I simply see no justification for the Vietnam war, besides the paranoia that came with the domino theory style of thinking. But hindsight, as i have said before, is a wonderful thing.

However i still think the USA did not full know its enemy before it went into war, and thus can still not be excused from poorly thinking out the idea to go to war. If they had any understanding of Vietnam, the people, and the pride they had in their land and how hard they would fight for it, i think they would have maybe thought differently. That, and maybe learning how to fight the war the way it needed to be in Vietnam.

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### Revisionist/Realist

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Monday, 29 November 2010, 09:14 PM

After taking this class it has become apparent to me that there is no one reason why the United States went into and stayed in Vietnam. There is also no one reason why we lost that war.

I tend to agree with the realist in the point that "American policymakers...foolishly exaggerated Vietnam's importance to the United States. Had they more soberly assessed its true value to the economic and security interests of the United States, recognized the popular appeal of revolutionary nationalism within the country, and appreciated the limits of American power, then the ensuing tragedy might well have been averted." The U.S. really underestimated North Vietnam's tenacity in their convictions, their willingness to send wave after wave of men to fight for the independence of their country. I understand why the domino theory was such a large influence on the war because at the time Communism was a very scary thing to America but after awhile their power faded and we were still in Vietnam.

As to the revisionist perspective believes that "military and civilian leaders failed to develop realistic plans for achieving American politico-military objectives in Vietnam, failed to assess accurately the capabilities and intentions of their adversaries, and failed to coordinate specific battlefield tactics with an overall strategy for securing victory." We fought Guerilla tactics with traditional maneuvers, the stuff that worked in Germany, but this was not Germany. Air power though effective in some ways only plugged leaks with bad aids.

I am very happy to have taken this class. It helps me see the world through another perspective and to seriously search for answers about history.

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### Re: Revisionist/Realist

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 05:54 PM

Tracy-you have a good point about the domino theory and the U.S. governments fear of communism. I remember in the earlier videos, President Johnson talking about if we let Vietnam go, then this little country will go, and that little country will follow. I do think we entered into the war for a noble cause, which prevented me from choosing the liberal realist view.

I thought for sure I would have selected the liberal realist, but after reading and reflecting, I follow the conservative revisionist point of view. I think if we had entered the war with a different plan of attack, less change in leadership, and learned more about the North Vietnamese and their combat style, we might have been able to secure a victory.

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### Re: Revisionist/Realist

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 07:05 PM

I chose both because there were things in each one that I agreed with and things that I did not. I am not sure if I would call our entering into the war noble but it was definitely a protective act and I hope that people can see it that way.

Victory could have been possible and I agree the constant change in leadership kept things unstable, especially when Eisenhower passed the war on to Kennedy and didn't even brief him on it. The stability of the government in South Vietnam was more of a problem than our own however and I doubt all the military power in the world could have kept the different regimes in their for long.

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### Re: Revisionist/Realist

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 03:29 PM

I think I am pretty well on your side on this one Tracy, I am pretty conservative on most things, but I found myself pretty bothered by the Vietnam war and how many people we lost. For future wars we need to make better plans. And I think you got it on the dot and I feel that the South should have respected our help more than they did.

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### register guard as history

by [Jaymie Skeslien](#) - Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 02:08 PM

I can say that by reading these materials and watching these videos i learned alot. this class made me realize all the impact of war. this was a perfect class to learn all this in i cant belive its all most over.

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### Re: register guard as history

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 09:15 AM

I agree I have learned so much, and not only about this war but how had we as Americans handled war in the sixties. I know that we are only scratching the surface of information about the Vietnam. And the opinions that were that so many different people took away from this experience.

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### Re: register guard as history

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 07:54 PM

It is cool to see how different people responded. Each person always notices or catches on to something unique.

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### Re: register guard as history

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:47 PM

I definitely agree, I knew pretty much nothing about the Vietnam War coming into this class and I really enjoyed gaining the knowledge I did by doing all the work we were assigned. I honestly did not even know we lost that war until this class. I am glad I got many things from this class. I now recognize that a lot relates to the Vietnam war. When I was little I loved Forest Gump, in my philosophy class the other day we read about a story in Vietnam etc. It is nice to know finally what they are about with a background knowledge.

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### Re: register guard as history

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:27 PM

Jaymie-I agree. "The impact of war" is a powerful statement you make. At times I have felt all this information about the Vietnam war to be overwhelming, almost depressing, to read and watch the films. I also find it hard to believe the class is coming to a end.

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### Re: Legacies & Issues-LIBERAL REALIST

by [Jairus Godeka](#) - Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 09:02 PM

I am conservative in values, ethics, and politics. I agree in part with the conservative revisionists that military and civilian leaders failed to develop realistic plans for achieving American military objectives in Vietnam, and failed to assess accurately the capabilities and intentions of their adversaries. However, I find myself in agreement with early writers that the Vietnam war represented a colossal mistake for the United States, and that American policy was plagued by errors, blunders, misperceptions, and miscalculations.

My analogy of the issues at hand as we come to the end of the term is that the American leaders at the time of involvement in Vietnam overexaggerated the importance of Vietnam as a strategic importance to us. There was also undue fear of how the Communists were going to conquer South East Asia if we didn't prevail in Vietnam.

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### Conservative

by [David Ross](#) - Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 09:03 PM

There were many things poorly handled in the execution of the war. The manner in which we treated the people of Vietnam to the very low level of respect we showed our enemy was awful as well as the Presidents demanding to run the war from the white house. However the goals we set and the reasons we were there I believe were sound.

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### Re: Conservative

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:21 PM

What exactly was sound about the goals and the reasons we were there? i am usually conservative on most issues and what not, but I really do not understand what was so sound about this war?

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### Re: Conservative

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 06:02 PM

I think we were there to help the people of South Vietnam. Unfortunately, everything was unstable. Their government, our government, our combat strategy, our perception of the North Vietnamese soldiers.

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### Re: Conservative

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 09:50 PM

Starting off we had just finished with WWII, a war that could have been less horrible if we had entered sooner. I think part of reasoning for going in, besides helping the French and gaining their cooperation in anti-communist manuevers in Europe was to stop anything like the concentration camps from happening all over again. Unfortunately we did not succeed.

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### Re: Conservative

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 03:31 PM

That's true, it was sound for us to help the French and try to protect a weak are, but it just isn't satisfying knowing how many lives were lost in the war. But you all do have a good point.

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### Register Guard as history

by [David Ross](#) - Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 09:20 PM

I think all that the Register Guard tells us is that different people had different experiences. I have personally spoken to many Vietnam veterans (one of which is my father) and I have gotten many different stories about what happened when they came home from the war. The only thing that I really took away from it is that some of the more liberal people were trying to alter some of what happened when veterans were coming home. The problem is that the liberals are talking for a large group and each of the veterans were talking about their personal experiences. Mr. Thompson claimed that spitting never happened any where but how did he know that, the other men that wrote in spoke only for themselves and people that they knew, other than giving information as to how they were told to dress in the civilian world.

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### Re: Register Guard as history

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:50 PM

I know we, as a class have spoken about what to believe and what not to believe, but the Register Guard is a good example on how it is better to believe personal accounts more so than someone like Mr. Thompson who is just saying stuff. I believe a lot of the personal accounts, mainly the ones that pretty much prove to be true by the way they tell them. Certain ones are true due to the fact there would be no benefit of lying about the certain story that took place. It's one of those, "why would you lie about that?" kind of stories.

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#### Re: Legacies & Issues-REGISTER GUARD

by [Jairus Godeka](#) - Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 09:28 PM

The information from letters to the editor tells me several things about the truth of war historically. One, that the public does not trust the government in times of war. two, the government doesn't effectively explain to the public the reasons why we go to war. Three, we lost over 57,000 of our best in Vietnam, and to make matters worse, we lost the war. I believe this left most Americans disillusioned, not knowing what to make of it. Fourth, the Vietnam war is still fresh in the minds of most Americans. Any new conflict that we get involved in brings back those sad and somber memories, including Iraq.

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#### Re: Legacies & Issues-REGISTER GUARD

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 02:56 PM

Jairus,

I agree with you that the Vietnam war is still a very heated subject. I think a lot of the reason for this is that we lost so many men which means that so many families were affected and had to grow up without someone special in their lives. I also think it is because the soldiers that did survive and come home still to this day have to deal with the hardships of the war and its haunted past.

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#### Re: Legacies & Issues-REGISTER GUARD

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:54 PM

That is an interesting idea you have about the letters to the editor Jairus, I did not look into those letters like that all and I am trying to figure out how you gathered all that info just from those letters. I liked the way you put it though, and I can agree with you, the public doesn't trust the government the way it is, I get the vibe from a lot of people and the public that they think the government are just a bunch of idiots and don't know what they are doing.

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#### Re: Legacies & Issues-LEGACY FOR USA

by [Jairus Godeka](#) - Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 09:56 PM

For me, the most significant legacy for the USA was after the end of the war. The impact on world politics of America's failure in Vietnam was considerably less than U.S. policy makers had predicted. Outside of Indochina, dominoes did not fall. On the contrary, in the years after the end of the war, the non-communist nations of Southeast Asia prospered and attained an unprecedented level of stability.

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#### Register Guard as history

by [Justin White](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 02:25 PM

I thought the mini book of stories from the Register Guard just showed that there were many different accounts of what happened to returning veterans of Vietnam. What I took from this article is that people can really mess up the facts. The majority of vet's probably never got spit on but there is clearly quite a few that dealt with hostility in their return. When one person tries to speak for a whole group it can definitely cause some problems.

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### Re: Register Guard as history

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:19 PM

One person can definitely try and out speak everyone with what they think they know and it can totally cause a problem, reading what Bob Thompson had to say in the register guard really bugged me cause he was trying to talk for everyone on something he had no clue on.

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### Re: Register Guard as history

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 04:33 PM

I completely agree with you. I think Bob Thompson made a mistake when he tried to generalize the information he had. To go out and make such a strong statement as to no one was ever spat on, well that was quite ridiculous. He obviously had no way of knowing that. And we can see that with the accounts of the people that were spat on or spat at.

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### Re: Register Guard as history

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:38 PM

Bob Thompson based his statement on Jerry Lembke's book, "*The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory and the Legacy of Vietnam*" which does indeed describe the spitting on returning Vietnam soldiers as an "urban myth." I do not agree with his statement, but Bob Thompson did not pull his idea out of thin air.

Another reason not to believe everything we read.

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### Re: Register Guard as history

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:55 PM

that is a good point Sheila. The media gets their stories mixed up just as easy as anyone else.

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### Conservative Revisionist

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 03:07 PM

At the conclusion of this course, after reading books, articles, personal accounts from veterans, and viewing countless movies, I find myself taking the position of a conservative revisionist, and also emphasizing with much of what is believed by liberal realists. I absolutely view the war as a tragic mistake, but that's easy to say decades after it has ended, when you can see of the damage that the war both directly and indirectly caused. I understand why the U.S. leaders felt the need to get involved in Southeast Asia at the time, what I don't understand is the disorganized, sloppy approach they took. From all the information presented in this class, I got an overwhelming sense that the American military lacked communication, clear objectives and strategies, and was did not make an effort to research their enemy. Many of the veterans' accounts that I read in *Patriots* made some mention of not knowing what their specific military objectives were or what the overall goal was in Vietnam. Sending soldiers to fight without telling them their goal or how to achieve it, is like sending them in with a blindfold on or their hands tied behind their back. It also seemed to me that there was a serious lack of communication between Washington and the military commanders in Vietnam, as well as a lack of communication through the military ranks of everyone in Vietnam. Part of this may have been because Washington didn't know enough about Vietnam and the adversary to give specific commands, so they gave really vague ones instead. These vague commands were never translated into specific orders, they were just passed through the ranks which led to indecision, uncertainty, and confusion. I think that the U.S.'s biggest mistake in the Vietnam War was a combination of underestimating their enemy and not studying Vietnamese history and culture. Americans basically had no idea what they were up against and when you don't truly know your enemy, it is impossible to know how to best fight them. I remember one Vietnamese general (I think in Apy) saying that Americans were so predictable that the Vietnamese knew when to expect their bombing raids, because they came at the same time every day. The Vietnamese would simply go into their underground bunkers at this time everyday, wait until the bombing was over, then come out and fight. This information not only allowed them to protect themselves but they also would time their attacks to occur when the Americans were resting between raids. I remember another Vietnamese leader saying in one of the videos we viewed that the Vietnamese knew they wouldn't win the war in Vietnam, but they'd win it in the streets of New York. This statement was incredibly powerful. Not only was he right, but it showed that the Vietnamese had such a good understanding of American culture that they actually used out own culture and media to their advantage. This is something that Americans were never able to do, but if we had it may have changed the outcome of the war entirely.

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#### Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:43 PM

I really agree with your post, though I am not totally sure that I really think that helping the South Vietnamese was right, that we might all just think this because we have hind sight. I think your right that military tactics were sloppy and that the whole way through the war was very badly fought. I don't think that military leaders would ever have thought of the fact that knowing more about Vietnam would have helped them, the Vietnamese did have the advantage, being in their own country.

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#### Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 02:08 AM

You're right, fighting in Vietnam was a huge advantage for the NLF/ North Vietnamese army because they knew basically every detail of the land. They were able to keep most of the fighting out of cities and made it a jungle war and with their use of bomb shelters, underground tunnels, and trenches it was definitely to their advantage. Not only were American soldiers unfamiliar with the land, they were also weighted down by heavy equipment, which was less than ideal when trying to trudge through swamps and the jungle terrain.

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#### Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 11:17 AM

Whats the craziest to me is that in all the years fighting over there things like the huge amounts of equipment never occurred to the Americans!! guess that just shows how much easier it is to see something in hindsight, it just seems so strange to me that no one ever thought to change tactics a little when theirs were clearly not working well, at least in ground combat.

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#### Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:26 AM

Yes I agree with you. I've also thought about that, but I think it's one of those things you can't really understand from the outside, you had to have been there. Even with that being said I'm sure there were many soldier who wanted to change tactics at the time but couldn't because they didn't have any rank or power in the military. That much have been incredibly frustrating for them.

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#### Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 06:13 PM

Seriously, but whats the worst part of it all is that hasn't really changed. Its sad to see a war like Vietnam that is unpopular and know that the soldiers were being heckled when they got home and yet a lot of them could do nothing to change the actions going on there.

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#### Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 11:11 AM

The weather was also a facor. I remember being over there in the summer time and I met people who would wear sweaters and even jackets all day long, even though it was 90 degrees and the air was like water. There was no way our soldiers could have stood up to that kind of weather with all of their equipment without a serious feeling of discomfort. Also both of our text make reference to the "enemy" only attacking when they wanted to and then fading out during our counter. Our fighting tactics were not sufficient, bombing a city to (Ben Suc) and then burning what was left didn't even stop them.

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**Re: Conservative Revisionist**

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 06:16 PM

That's a great point. I had kind of forgotten about the weather conditions and the heat/ humidity. Talk about miserable though, it'd be bad enough to go without fresh water or regular showers, then you add heat and humidity to the equation. I can't imagine how uncomfortable and hot it must have been for the American soldiers in uniform and carry 50-60 lbs of gear.

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**Re: Conservative Revisionist**

by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 11:13 PM

Excellent post Kelley, you make some very good points. Good Job

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**Re: Conservative Revisionist**

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 02:04 AM

Thank you!

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**Re: Conservative Revisionist**

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 06:15 PM

Great post Kelley-I agree with everything you said and would like to add how difficult it would have been for the US soldiers to know what their enemy looked like. How would they identify a North Vietnamese person from a South Vietnamese person ? Compound that scenario with women and children soldiers. I think it would have been heart wrenching to have a little kid ready to do battle against the US soldier.

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**Re: Conservative Revisionist**

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:29 AM

You bring up a great point! The North Vietnamese/ NLF all knew who their enemy was. Americans on the other hand had to not only distinguish civilians from military, but they also had to distinguish between north and south Vietnamese. In a way I can understand the free fire zones, but because when you are fighting against men, women, and children, in a war that was as chaotic as Vietnam; you'd almost have to shoot at anyone and everyone in some high risk areas just to survive.

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**Re: Conservative Revisionist**

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 11:17 AM

If its Vietnamese then its NLF. We read this statement more than once during the term. That is why our body count was so big. I agree with you completely Sheila.

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**Register Guard**

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 03:30 PM

I think the Register Guard articles just go to show how differently an event as large as the Vietnam War can be interpreted by those who were involved. Clearly Americans had many different and opposing views of the Vietnam War so it wouldn't surprise me that war protesters remember it differently than veterans do. It was unclear to me whether Bob Thompson was a Vietnam vet or what his role in the war was? However he made the very bold statement that the "spitting on veterans" story was completely false. It frustrates me when statements like this are made because in my opinion he took away from the voices and stories of everyone that actually did experience hostility upon returning home. The fact that several men wrote in responding to his statement, saying that they actually had been spit at and/ or knew soldiers that would change into civilian clothes just to avoid verbal abuse and hostility from anti-war protesters, clearly shows that Thompson was wrong. It breaks my heart that veterans received this treatment at all, but forcing them to defend their statements and trying to deny that it ever happened is just wrong. Who is Thompson to make such a blanket statement, as if he were standing at every single airport in the country, watching as every single veteran returned home. If he was a soldier and being spit at wasn't something that he experienced personally, than good for him, but that is what he should say, not that it didn't happen to anyone. Spitting in my personal opinion is the highest form of disrespect in our culture, so that fact that some soldiers had to endure that from the very country they risked their lives to defend it incredibly sad to me; for a man like Thompson to basically call them liars and say it never happened just because he never witnessed it personally, is almost worst.

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#### **Liberal Realist**

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 04:09 PM

I find that I tend to agree more with the liberal realist views. Through everything I have learned in this class I still feel that the war could have been avoided. I now have a much better understanding of what the war was about and why the United States made the decision to be a part of the war, however I still feel that the losses the war brought was not worth the reason for starting it. I feel that the lives lost and the suffering that the United States felt and inflicted on other people was not worth the fear of what might come to be. Knowing that even after the United States efforts, Vietnam still became a communist country simply restates that it should have all been avoided. This is why I feel when it comes to the Vietnam war I am more of a liberal realist.

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#### **Re: Liberal Realist**

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:12 PM

I am a good part on your side with this Raina, I did not really see a point in this war, it was not a war for us to be necessary to fight. We lost tons of youthful soldiers on something where we did not benefit. I do have a better understanding in general about the Vietnam war though. Before this class I did not really know anything about it.

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#### **Re: Liberal Realist**

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 02:39 PM

Kate,  
I feel like the United States stuck their nose into a fight that wasn't their fight to fight. A lot of men were lost and I don't see how much was gained. However, like you I learned a lot in this class, but even after all this education I still feel like the war should have never happened.

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#### **Re: Liberal Realist**

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 03:32 PM

I will agree with you on that one, but if it didn't happen then we would not have this class to learn so much from! ;)

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#### **Re: Liberal Realist**

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 01:32 PM

Well that is true we would have to take some other class that would probably be really boring :)

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### Vietnam's Legacy

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 04:13 PM

The biggest impact that Vietnam made on the U.S. was on its foreign policy. As stated in Herring, "the Vietnam experience also provoked strong opposition to military intervention abroad, even in defense of America's oldest and staunchest allies" (Herring, 349). Bitterness, confusion, and anger towards the Vietnam conflict still lingered in American decades after the war ended. Many Americans felt that in retrospect, intervening in Vietnam had been a mistake. These feelings resulted in a caution and opposition to military intervention abroad, in fear of making the same mistake again. After suffering defeat in Vietnam, the domino effect didn't take place quite as expected. While the "dominoes" in Indochina quickly toppled, those outside of it did not. Contrary to predictions made by American politicians, the non-Communist countries of Southeast Asia became surprisingly prosperous and stable. Seeing these favorable developments occur even after the North Vietnamese/ NLF had been victorious, only furthered Americans' feeling that the U.S.'s intervention was unnecessary and the war could have been avoided.

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### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:15 PM

I think you make some great points here. I think the war could have been avoided as well, but as far as I am concerned I am very happy that the outside dominos did not get topples as expected. What do you think would have happened if the prediction of the domino theory would have been correct?

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### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 02:11 AM

If they the domino theory had been an accurate prediction then I'm sure the world would be a very different place from what it is today! Its almost impossible to say what would've happened and what our lives would be like today as a result of it. Needless to say, that's a really scary thought! What are your thoughts on this?

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### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 03:34 PM

I would agree with you on that, it is a very scary thought, and to answer your question I think the world would be a much scary, harsh place than it is today. i know I would not want to be living under communism.

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### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 06:17 PM

Agreed!

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### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [David Verner](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:20 PM

It's a great question to ask, what would the world be like had domino theory been more on the money. I honestly believe the world would be much much worse. Communism is good in theory - but greed, and the want for more, is bred into every human being. Even right from the dawn of man, we were wanting to broaden our horizons and have new things, create new things, better our own situations. These reasons mean that although the idea of an equal utopia is nice, those with power to dictate that utopia will always take more for themselves. They will then give incentives to those who help them keep their utopia intact, and thus corruption creeps in. If the whole world had fell into this craze of communism, then my belief is right now, the world as a whole would probably be just starting to try and rebuild itself after most nations sunk into turmoil due to corruption and lawlessness. Or, we may still be in a period of turmoil in which nations power structures are being overturned by others battling for control and stability.

I'm a wannabe writer, so i have thought a lot of scenarios over such as these! :P

Thank god communism mostly died out as a craze, eh?

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#### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 06:26 PM

Great post!! I agree with you that the world would be much worse off, well at least 99% of us would be, with the top 1% of elite upper class being those in position of power and wealth benefiting. It's impossible to say what would have happened if the domino theory had actually occurred that way some had feared it would. If I had to guess I'd say we would probably still be in a period of turmoil and downfall. I think that it would take more than 40-50ish years for the world to reach rock bottom and begin rebuilding. I'm afraid that it may have taken a century or two, which is an absolutely horrifying thought! Although I find many of the facts about Vietnam frustrating, this is one area that I am really thankful it worked out the way that it did.

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#### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 07:56 PM

A few posts mentioned the prosperity of some of the Southeast Asian countries. I was recently on a United airlines flight and United airlines Hemisphere magazine featured an article entitled *Three Perfect Days in Ho Chi Minh City*. "After a half-century marred by war and economic stagnation, Ho Chi Minh City-a.k.a. Saigon-has come into its own with a tireless energy few places can match. (Just watch out for those scooters.)"

I found it odd that I was entrenched in the Vietnam war filled with destruction and death and here is an article [www.hemispheresmagazine.com/2010/11/01/three-perfect-days-ho-chi-minh-city/2](http://www.hemispheresmagazine.com/2010/11/01/three-perfect-days-ho-chi-minh-city/2) talking about the affluence of the present day Saigon.

So now I'm thinking maybe in some way we helped create this present day Vietnam. The people who lived in Saigon during the war, hopefully knew we were trying to help them.

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#### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:35 AM

I'm sure that some people did realize we were trying to help them at the time, but the stronger sense that I got the videos and reading material in this book was that Vietnamese civilians resented us being there. Especially towards the end of the war, because of the many years of warfare we had inflicted on their country, the forced relocation of civilians, burning villages, etc. Even if we were doing all of these things in efforts to help them, most people just wanted us to leave. Maybe since the Americans were fighting with the south and against the north, they saw us as one of the causes dividing their country, and if they were fighting in a civil war they would rather have done it just amongst themselves?

That sounds like an interesting article though, thanks for sharing!

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#### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Jairus Godeka](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 11:30 AM

I wouldn't exactly say "we were trying to help". It was public knowledge that we were there to protect our own interests and to minimize the spread of Communism. It is just too bad that we lost the war. The impact on world politics of our failure was considerably less than U.S. policy makers had predicted. Outside of Indochina, there wasn't the domino effect that had long been anticipated by U.S. policy makers. On the contrary, in the years after the war, the non-Communist nations of South East Asia prospered and attained unprecedented level of stability.

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#### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 11:31 AM

Look at what we brought them while we were there; brothels, bars, huge inflation, the government that we backed took land from the peasants. I have been to Saigon and it is a horribly beautiful city. Garbage floats in all the streams and rivers, the air is so thick with scooter exhaust that people wear masks all day long, there are many who work on the roadside selling things that they have found and maybe making enough in one day to buy a bowl of pho. Which can be purchased for 50 cents American, around 10,000 dong. Sure they have good schools and the main part of the city is rather prosperous- they have malls and fancy restaurants. Business men wear Western clothes and shirts in English are all the rage (even if the sentences make no sense). So whatever affluence and energy Saigon has, was not given to them by us.

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#### Register Guard as history

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 06:50 PM

Reading the mini book of the letters in the Register Guard makes it clear that Vietnam is still a very heated topic of discussion today. It is also clear that people today are very opinionated about what happened and perhaps don't have a clear idea of what exactly went on. People who weren't there to experience what really happened seem to be able to easily jump to conclusions. In my opinion many view the war as either black or white. However, I think there is a lot of gray areas. One of the gray areas I see is that different Vietnam vets had different experiences both in the war and in their home coming. So there can be no one right answer. It is clear by the letters in the Register Guard that some were treated very poorly, while others were treated fine. It seems that a lot of how the vets were treated was determined by where "home" was in the country. I think it is all very sad, but I do believe there is more truth in the stories from people who were there to personally experience it than those to do a Google search.

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#### Re: Register Guard as history

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 03:36 PM

There is definitely the gray areas, and I think people who were not a part of the war should respect those gray areas when it comes to things such as vets getting spit on or verbally abused when they arrived back in the states. The only people that know what that is like are the people who experienced it, so for people like us and Thompson, I think we should not jump to conclusions and give room for the stories from the vets and respect those.

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#### Re: Register Guard as history

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 01:37 PM

Yes I agree, I think part of the reason people get so upset is that people do tend to jump to conclusions when they should listen to those who actually lived it and experienced it. I think that the vets should be respected.

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#### History and The Register Guard

by [Todd Lowry](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 07:08 PM

I think the letters to the editor showed the primary problem historians have to deal with when trying to write an accurate account of events. All of the participants in the editorial exchange felt strongly about the positions they took; yet, their positions differed so widely. They all seemed to be intelligent, well-spoken people who felt their own individual version of events was the more accurate one.

Interestingly, had I been without an opinion on the issue of the treatment of returning vets, several of these letters would have made a persuasive case. I include in that list the letter Bob Thompson wrote. Looking at them as a whole, however, we get a much more rounded interpretation of events. We can rationally and intelligently decide for ourselves what makes sense and come relatively close to the truth. Were some returning vets abused and spit upon? I think some were. Did some return with no problems what so ever? Of course, many if not most probably did. This microcosm of differing opinions and experiences shows just how diligently historians must dig for information that will lead them to draw their conclusions as close to the truth as possible.

This is one very small subject in the grand scheme of the war. That such a small and comparatively trivial subject induces such heartfelt, and still divisive, reactions so long after the conclusion of the war, relates to the difficulty historians face. The sheer volume of information, interviews, opinions and official documents that historians must wade through leaves me speechless when I think about it. Somewhere, in all of that, is the truth about what actually happened in Vietnam. In some of that lies purposely

deceptive or false information that must be carefully considered and discarded as such. Historians like Appy and Herring absolutely amaze me with their attention to this kind of detail and their truly monumental works.

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#### Re: History and The Register Guard

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:37 PM

Todd,

This is a good analysis of the letters in the Register Guard and the way which they can be used as history. I think your right that if we were reading these without all of our information than it would have made the arguments more persuasive. The only thing I can't totally agree with you on is thinking that Bob Thompson, or any of the people who weren't actually involved in the event being talked about, I think as a historian its more important to read real first hand accounts rather than those of other researchers when using editorials as history, because honestly a researcher has just as much information as we do on the subject if they weren't actually ever a returning vet.

History is such a difficult subject when it comes to knowing the truth, it is important to learn how to find sources that will give you the most accurate information possible.

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#### Conservative Revisionist

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 07:43 PM

To my surprise I am finding myself to be a conservative revisionist. I agree with the idea that the United States military and civilian leaders failed to meet the mark in regards to our engagement in the Vietnam war. The U.S. failed to demonstrate clear objectives and a strategy for success in a timely manner.

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#### Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 03:39 PM

After reading your post I am starting to understand the conservative side more so than the others, I chose realist because I did not see the reason for the war. After seeing your post i feel like there can be two choices, we did not demonstrate clear objectives and a successful strategy in a timely matter at the war, and we failed to meet many issues that we said we were going to do. it happens, but we did the best with what we could, right?

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#### Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 06:01 PM

Not necessarily. I think one of the most important areas that the United States failed was with the miscalculation of the tenacity of the North Vietnamese soldiers.

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#### USA Legacy

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 07:47 PM

Although I feel there is more than one legacy that came from the Vietnam war I think the single most significant legacy for the USA that came from the Vietnam war was the United States ability to heal itself after the war was over. The healing was not right away and took some time but I find it remarkable that after the United States was so divided, it could come back together and begin healing. A memorial was created in memory of those who lost their lives, Herring states, "Millions of Americans each year went to the stark but moving V-shaped memorial on Washington's Mall, making it the most visited site in the nation's capital (p. 348-349)." He also comments that "the memorial evoked a profound emotional experience for many visitors and became a means of healing, a place for recognition of the costs of war (p. 349)." I think it is this powerful legacy of those who lost their lives and are still remembered in the healing of a divided country that is the single most significant legacy for the United States that came from the Vietnam War.

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#### Re: USA Legacy

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:04 PM

I do find it remarkable that a country can be divided and then once again come together. But look at the Civil War. The North and South had opposing views that drove them apart; however, after many years we were still one nation and continue to call ourselves one nation. This is just something I noticed and I do completely understand and agree with your post. Great job!

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#### Re: USA Legacy

by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 12:17 AM

I agree with you both that the healing process of a country after such devastating events can leave behind such a powerful legacy. I'm glad that you mentioned the Civil War and America's capability to heal after that war Jeremy. It really makes me attempt to imagine myself in the shoes of the Vietnamese and think of the healing process that has gone on in their country. It is just as profound if not more because that is where the battles were actually fought, now look how far they have come. It just goes to show how many legacies were left behind not only in America, but Vietnam as well.

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#### Re: USA Legacy

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 02:44 PM

Jeremy,  
Thank you for the compliments. I like your point about the civil war. At times war seems so inhumane but the ability to heal and become united once again shows that humanity isn't lost. It would be so nice though if people could heal and reunite themselves before a war had to break out. But, it seems like that is only wishful thinking.

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#### Re: USA Legacy

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 03:40 PM

This is what our nation is all about. Unity! we are all together in the choices that go on, we are one nation. I find it very impressive that we are able to do things such as the healing practice after the war. That is why I am proud to be an American.

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#### Conservative Revisionist

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:02 PM

I believe that the United States came up short with actually creating a plan that would work politically as well as militarily to win the Vietnam War. Furthermore, I believe that the liberals in power at this time were very irresponsible and, most definitely, overreacted to the Communists move into Vietnam. Vietnam was a third-world country with no real threat to anyone but invaders of their own nationalistic views. Overall I do not think we should have interfered, the French should stop asking favors, and when the United States fights a war we should commit to the War not hold back.

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#### Register guard as history

by [Samantha McCourt](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:07 PM

I think the most significant thing we can learn from these accounts right off is that no one person is ever completely sure of what happened during an event. Even people who all were in very similar situations don't have the same experience. Many of the people who wrote letters to the Register Guard (<http://media.lanecce.edu/users/escobarj/195/forum3/spitting.pdf>) seemed to think that they personally had been spit on when returning from Vietnam, while others, such as Bob Thompson, claimed that this was completely ridiculous, of course this person had no idea. Simply because it hadn't happened to him he assumed that it couldn't

have happened to anyone else. I think these accounts, like the ones in the Appy book, help to paint a wide range picture of a single event, in this way readers now can get a more accurate idea of what it was like for soldiers who were returning home. Some of them got spit on for fighting in the war and others didn't. It seemed like it fully depended on where you landed and at what time, it wasn't an opened or shut case of this happening or not.

I think using first hand accounts are the best way to learn history. People who were actually there obviously know more than any historian who is just theorizing about an event, but there is always going to be differences in what people think happened in a time period. I personally don't put very much faith in Bob Thompson's rant, as he never says that he was a returning vet and thus wouldn't really have any place to claim expertise on an issue he wasn't involved in. In point of fact I am sure that vets got spit on and verbally abused in Vietnam, knowing how violent the protests were people obviously had strong feelings. I also know that this still happens today to returning vets, so I see no reason why it wouldn't.

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#### Re: Register guard as history

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 11:07 AM

I agree with you completely. Firsthand accounts are definitely the best way to go when it comes to reporting history; however, I think that biased views can sometimes twist a persons memory as to what happened. As to where they landed, I believe that the reaction of the public did change with the venue. Great post.

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#### Re: Register guard as history

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 06:15 PM

yeah obviously bias views can twist a persons memory, thats why I tend to think that first hand accounts are most valuable when you have many of them from a lot of different people, as well as documents and articles that were actually from the time so that you get a broad enough view to see what was really happening.

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#### Legacy of the People

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:10 PM

@font-face { font-family: "Cambria"; }p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal { margin: 0in 0in 0.0001pt; font-size: 12pt; font-family: "Times New Roman"; }div.Section1 { page: Section1; }

I was not able to pull up the Legacy- News hour video, but in my opinion. The single most significant legacy of the war in Vietnam for the USA was the social and public consciousness. Before the war in Vietnam we did not have the media that was covering all the wars before so we were not getting information fed to us on an everyday basis about what was going on. The trust in the government was by far stronger than it was during and after the Vietnam War. People were seeing the pretty and the ugly sides of the war through the newspaper, news, TV, and radio. The students became active more so than any other time. Media affected public opinion and it still is affected to this day, the media changed everything. Before Vietnam we just seemed to go along with whatever the government said, but things changed. There was the credibility gap; there was what the government was telling us and what the people believed to actually be true.

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#### Re: Legacy of the People

by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 01:15 AM

I also tried several time to download the file and it failed again and again. Very frustrating.

I think that one of the legacies left was a combination of the people and the government. People for the first time began to question the government and I think the government began to question it's own foreign policies. I'm sure this is in large part due to the fact as you mentioned, that the media had began to expose the war more than ever before. It is difficult to pinpoint one specific legacy for the USA, but in large I think it is the people and our reactions to the government.

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#### Re: Legacy of the People

by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 01:46 AM

After being able to finally watch the news article it confirmed my beliefs of the legacy that was left behind. Stanely Karnow mentioned that it had changed the way people view America and also the way Americans view our own government in that the war and government actions created more skepticism. Also mentioned in the video was the healing process I had not thought of. I think that is an Important legacy that I personally overlooked and is the healing process that will likely be ever lasting for many Americans and in my belief should never be forgotten.

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#### **Re: Legacy of the People**

by [Kate Lonstron](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 06:00 PM

I agree Daniel, we have many legacy to take upon us as Americans and we must go through a healing process and rebuild our unity. I also think that the government needs to do a better job of gaining our trust and taking that responsibility upon them.

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#### **Register Guard as History**

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:18 PM

After reading the Register Guard letters to the Editor's my first reaction was to reflect on the instructions for assignment one: "WARNING: Some of these stories are very powerful , and will have a great effect on you. But do not make the common mistake that just because you read a single, firsthand account about someone's experience in the war, that you can then generalize and make that account the "norm" or the "common" way things were for everyone else, everywhere." (Escobar)

I think it is hard to get at the truth. Here we are over 30 years later and people have an outpouring of emotion of what happened to them during this time in history. The soldier who made reference to his haircut as being the telltale sign that he was a soldier. He had been spat on twice and understandably was on alert for attacks when he traveled. But it could have also been his perception that he was singled out as being a soldier because of his hairstyle.

I think the articles showed us how we still have a long way to go before we have healed from this tragic time in our history.

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#### **Re: Register Guard as History**

by [David Verner](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 01:07 AM

Indeed, I agree. I feel Vietnam will be one of those moments in history, even in 100 years, that will still be a sore point for many who study history. It is impossible to ignore from a historical context. Though the wound will heal slightly once most of those directly involved pass away in time - its historical impact as a moment when America realized its military prowess had its limitations, and political limitations as well, will long be remembered.

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#### **Local Memiors**

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:21 PM

I would like to point out that with the different posts about the protestors reactions to Vietnam Veterans I cannot conclude that anything truly did happen. However, I do find that it seems most Veterans from Vietnam dealt with exclusion from society. It sounds like there was almost a wall between the American public and themselves. Also, I believe that nobody has a firm account for the entire nations attitude from these articles; although, there are some firsthand experiences that cannot be ignored. All the information can only be compiled, studied, and allow the reader to create his or hers own conclusions.

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#### **Re: Local Memiors**

by [Jairus Godeka](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 11:12 AM

I find myself in agreement with your assessment. There is no conclusive evidence that the events in the register guard occurred, or did not. I see them as claims rather than facts. That said, I think it is important to mention that the public generally doesn't trust governments in times of war because half the information communicated by the government, if not

more, is usually justified propaganda. The Americans were in effect working against themselves during the Vietnam war- for the worse or the better. Finally, with more than 57,000 American lives lost, the public had the right to question what we were doing over there, and if conflict in a divided nation was any of our business.

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#### Liberal Realist

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:25 PM

Though I am a moderate conservative in real life, it was difficult for me to decided which view point I agreed with the most. In "Changing Interpretation of the Vietnam War" by Robert J. McMahon (<http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/vietnam/interpretations.htm>) he talks about the different types of "revisionists", each of which have certain views of the war in Vietnam and America's involvement. After reading these I found that it wasn't very difficult for me to decide which type of "revisionist" I was. Because I understood from all of our readings that at the time they were fighting the idea of another communist threat was very real and scary, which is much of the fuel behind coming to Vietnam in the first place. But in the end I had to agree more with the liberal realists. I honestly don't believe that America had any place intervening in the Vietnam war.

Vietnam was a civil war, one country fighting over the rights to their land. At first the conflict was between the country and the imperial French who had colonized them for years. Than it became a fight between two groups that both wanted power over the country. Though American was allied with France and thats how they got involved in the fight in the beginning, they could have ended their involvement the same as France did. America should never have been involved with Vietnam. I see that the fear of communism was very real to them, but of course I can see that the country in the end still fell to communism, and the world didn't get taken over by it, this also shows that in the end all of the American soldiers killed there were for nothing, it was a meaningless fight that all the presidents involved were just to noble to want to be the one to admit it was a battle that couldn't be won.

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#### Re: Liberal Realist

by [Jairus Godeka](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 10:53 AM

You make very good points. I was more interested in what the conservative revisionists had to say because it is the antithesis of why in my view, America lost the war. Conservative revisionists believe that both our military and civilian leaders failed to develop realistic plans to achieving American military objectives in Vietnam. There was also a failure on their part in assessing accurately the capabilities and intentions of their enemy. I am also in agreement with the early writers who took a more liberal point of view,- that our presence in Vietnam was a colossal mistake for the United States. American foreign policy at the time, was plagued by misperceptions, errors, blunders, and miscalculations.

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#### USA Legacy

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:33 PM

The government is definitely the most significant legacy of the Vietnam War. Before the Vietnam War, the American people, had the attitude that the government was right. That the United States will always fight "the good war" and no nation on the earth can stop us. There was not much questioning the government by the American people until Vietnam occurred; therefor, I find the government holds the most significant legacy during the Vietnam War. We read that "the Vietnam experience also provoked strong opposition to military intervention abroad, even in defense of America's oldest and staunchest allies" (Herring, 349). The questioning of the government is amazing. People who were the United States' allies, such as Great Britain, did not intervene. Instead, we were put on a guilt trip by the French (truly amazing and yet another reason to never help the French. Laugh, laugh, chuckle, chuckle). The government for the first time, since the Civil War, was being protested against by the United States people to a point where it divided the nation. This is my view of the Legacy of the United States Government.

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#### Re: USA Legacy

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 11:33 AM

I had to laugh at your jab at the French, but its totally true. American would never have gotten involved if the French could have dealt with their own colony and the mess they created there. I think its kinda pathetic that we came to aid our France because we were allies, and yet they abandoned us to clean up after them.

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### Re: USA Legacy

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 11:03 AM

True story. I cannot help but get my shots in about the French whenever I get a chance. Thank you for the post.

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### Re: USA Legacy

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 06:16 PM

Your welcome, its just to easy in this particular subject honestly. Though most people seem to forget that they even had anything to do with it.

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### U.S.A Legacy

by [Justin White](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:42 PM

The most significant legacy of the war in Vietnam for the U.S.A was the affect that losing had on world politics. The domino theory that was thought to happen by the U.S losing the war was considerably less than U.S policy makers had predicted." In the years after the end of the war, the non-communist nations of Southeast Asia prospered and attained an unprecedented level of stability."(Herring pg 341)

When the domino theory didn't happen the way that the U.S had predicted, it further backed the American citizens opposed to the war in the reasons of why we should have never got involved in the first place. I think that the Vietnam War left a lot of Americans questioning the U.S government's power, intentions and integrity, and that is something that is extremely hard to regain. No one will ever forget the ill fated attempts of America in this war. America's reputation will forever be tarnished because of the Vietnam War.

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### Liberal Realist

by [David Verner](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:44 PM

After reading - and then re-reading - the article, i find myself conservatively sitting on the liberal realist side of the fence. It's hard, because as a wanna-be historian, i find myself always looking at both sides and usually seeing truth in both. Situations such as the Vietnam war are intricate webs of politics and war, and such they are never as easy as just a black and white issue.

But, i still find myself leaning towards the liberal side more. I have always held the thought that the Vietnam war was a horribly implemented war, never did the US get it right in any facet of the conflict. Even years before troops, the fractured relationship with France over the handling of Vietnam was wrong. After France, the attempts to westernize the South was never done right (though the bumbling South did not help this either), and then finally when it came to war - the US completely underestimated the North and were to cocky in their approach in thinking it would be relatively easy, as long as they had more firepower.

But its easy to say that in hindsight, isn't it? Thats why i find it hard to pin myself completely to one group, as putting yourself into the shoes of those at the time may leave you thinking differently. We know now that the Cold War had reached its peak in the early 60's with the Cuban Missile Crisis and those events, but when troops started fighting in Vietnam that was only a recent event, just a few years ago - thus the fear was very much still there, and therefore made Vietnam a lot more relevant to some than it really was. Because although it was just a tiny little Asian nation that some could not even find on a map, at the time any nation falling to Communism was a major, major issue in the context of the Cold War. Thus, although i feel Vietnam was very wrong, and should have been avoided - or at least lessened involvement - I understand at the time the whole 'Domino Theory' was a very real fear and one that probably helped to cloud a lot of rational judgement on the part of Vietnam.

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### Re: Liberal Realist

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 09:17 PM

I completely agree with you David, you may be right about hindsight, but it does seem so obvious after all of our readings and the DVDs that the America's involvement wasn't right and was a terribly handled conflict.

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### Re: Liberal Realist

by [David Verner](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:54 PM

I was thinking about hindsight today though, on this subject, and thought yeah, hindsight is great here - but then even well before the war the likes of Kennedy were wary, they knew the war was not going to be easy, or probably a good idea at all. They just felt they had no choice due to America being so in deep already. But this does go to show that all along it was not a good idea, and although hindsight proves it - they really should have taken their fears and researched it more before, and maybe they would have found out that it REALLY wasn't a good idea and that their fears were justified.

We know a lot from hindsight, but they could have known more than they did, if they had just explored those nagging fears they had even more.

Oh how i love hindsight!

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### Re: Liberal Realist

by [Samantha McCourt](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 10:44 AM

Its really true, I think at the time there was ample evidence to show that they weren't doing the right thing in Vietnam, but like you said its hard to get out of something that you are already so ingrained in. I mean look at the end of the war, Nixon tried to just end it and no one liked the way he did it, even though it got America out which is what should have been happening the whole time. I think the other presidents were scared to seem weak and find a way to leave once they were involved already. The whole thing was just a proliferation of a stupid decision.

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### Conservative Revisionist

by [Jesse Long](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:46 PM

After taking this course and trying to absorb as much information as possible to make a decision about what I think regarding the war is rather easy. I am leaning more toward the conservative side as I was at the beginning of the course. I have learned things that have strengthened my thinking as well. I view the war a big mistake looking back on it, but I do see and understand the reasoning behind involving our selves in the first place. I think that the reason for being there in the beginning was for good reason but it was the decision making or indecisiveness that lead it to be a great mistake. I think that there was a lot of bad communication that lead to unclear orders and an overall unclear direction of the war after a while. The ground troops themselves did not know there orders for certain. I think that a major mistake was how we did not learn more about the country we were fighting. If we had learned about the Vietnamese people and their culture before the war I think we would have had a more clear understanding of how to achieve our objective. Because of this underestimating of our enemy they were able to predict our moves through out the war. The Vietnamese were much more than we figured when it came to fighting a war. They knew they would have to win the war from the streets of our own country and it worked. If we would have been more aware of who we were fighting I think things could have been very different.

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### Vietnam's Legacy

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:48 PM

The single, most significant legacy of the War in Vietnam for the United States would be that the people were eventually heard. That citizens made a difference. They influenced our government, they rallied and put the pressure on the government to make a change. They helped topple a corrupt president, who abused his power against the citizens of the United States.

The people are the legacy.

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### Re: Vietnam's Legacy

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 01:42 PM

I agree with you. The people were a huge impact and are one of the legacies of the war. They were very important. Good post, I like your ideas.

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### Register Guard as History

by [Jesse Long](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:54 PM

I believe the mini book shows that someone with first hand experience, someone who has "been there done that" has a much more reliable account of what really happened. When someone writes or reports on something they did not experience there credibility is not nearly as great as one who did experience it for many reasons. This mini book shows how people who write books or articles or whatever are just like the media can be today. Everybody thinks the "other" news network has an agenda, which may be true. You have your group who thinks FOX is right wing, and those that think CNN/MSNBC are left wing liberal but they both claim to be fair. Because of this I see how one sided information can be put in the media because it is everywhere. That is why I like the patriot book the most because it is coming from first hand experience from both sides.

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### Vietnams Legacy

by [Jesse Long](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:59 PM

The legacy from Vietnam as I have seen others say is exactly what I believe as well. The PEOPLE are the legacy. They were able to influence the government in the direction they wanted. They put pressure on the government to change the direction they were headed. This gives me hope for our current state in our country. I hope people can rally around an idea and put pressure on the government as we did during the Vietnam war, and begin heading in a better direction for our future. The United States citizens are the key.

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### Re: Vietnams Legacy

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 09:12 PM

This is a great point, the people and the way that they viewed their involvement with how the government is run changed hugely thanks to Vietnam. I think we do see this a the time today, with every issue there are people protesting and making their views know. I agree the citizens are definitely key to the Vietnam legacy.

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### Re: Vietnams Legacy

by [Jesse Long](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:27 PM

The american people are they key to which direction our country heads. If the people were to sit by without speaking their view and opinions the government may have continued along there own agenda. I think you see that today. The American people speaking out against where we are headed now and you see the swing of power we recently saw after the elections. So the people are the real key to our future as long as we continue to get our voices heard and not let the government run along without having to answer.

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### Re: Vietnams Legacy

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 02:50 PM

I like your point of view. The American people ended up being very influential in the proceedings of the war. I agree that they had a very big impact on the war. If it had not been for them the war might have gone on longer and things probably would have ended differently. Good point.

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### Re: Vietnams Legacy

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:45 PM

I agree with this. The American citizens were able to strongly influence the Vietnam war. This makes me proud of our country in that we do indeed have a say in whats going on in our goverment and such. So many other countries could only dream of having this. That is why I am proud to be an American. (:

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### USA Legacy

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 09:09 PM

I think the single most significant legacy that the USA gained from Vietnam is the effects that it had on the trust that the American people had in their government. During WWII the American people would have never thought to distrust a decision that their government made in respect to the fighting over seas in Europe and Asia. This was because nothing that went on was particularly seen by the people, everything that was told to them about the war was already filtered by the government. This began to change during Vietnam because of the fact that it was a completely media centered war.

Though I wasn't able to get the video to open, I can see from Vietnam: A television history, and from our books that this was a major differences from any other American war before. The images that the people were seeing weren't just propaganda, there were reporters traveling through Vietnam ensuring that the American people could see the true brutality that was going on.

Americans began to realize that all of the decisions that the government made weren't for the better and that Vietnam may not have been a war that they wanted to be involved in. Suddenly what the government was saying didn't seem to line up with the things that the reporters were showing them. Vietnam had a lasting effect on the American people. As it says on pages 346-47 in Herring's book, the people were shaken by the war because many so many people were unsure of why the war had gone on in the first place. They felt betrayed by a government who was clearly not thinking of their soldiers who were sent to fight for a lost cause. the people came together in protest against a war that they thought wasn't just, and I don't think that the people have ever regained that trust for the government.

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### Re: USA Legacy

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:56 PM

That is a very good point. The Vietnam war was the true beginning of the conspiracy theory era and we never left.

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### 70%Conservative Revisionist 30% Liberal Realist 100% American

by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 11:15 PM

After taking this class and reading and watching all of the required materials I am still at a point where I'm not sure where to take a stand as a "revisionist." There is one side that agrees with a liberal realist that thinks the United States had no place fighting in the Vietnam War, that could have been an easily avoidable tragedy and would have saved the lives of nearly 60,000 soldiers. The other side of me agrees with the conservative revisionist that there was potential global communist threat, but the United States did not handle battle situations as strategically as they should have. Mostly I sympathize with the soldiers who were thrown into Vietnam unknowing much of what was taking place. I can equally sympathize with the families and loved ones of these soldiers, but in hind sight I believe that the presence of the United States did make a difference and think that many of the situations could have been handled differently. If I had to choose one or the other I would say I'm more of a conservative revisionist.

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### Re: 70%Conservative Revisionist 30% Liberal Realist 100% American

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 11:29 AM

Well said Daniel, I mostly agree with you, I was also a little torn between the different "revisionist" ideas, I mean its hard to be so cut and dry by just picking on in such a complicated issue.

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### Re: 70%Conservative Revisionist 30% Liberal Realist 100% American

by [Justin White](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 12:26 AM

I agree with you, it is a very tough decision on which side to choose. I think you hit the nail on the head, the soldiers and the soldiers families are the ones who really suffered from this war. As with any war people suffer but with the Vietnam War I believe as you said the United States did not handle battle situations as strategically as they should have. Great post

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### Register Guard

by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 12:28 AM

After reading the articles in the Register Guard and trying to answer this question, I think we have gone in a full circle. In some of our first forum posts and assignments we tried to determine how credible firsthand accounts in the Appy book were compared to a historian who was never involved in the war. Just as I thought then, I think that each article in the Register Guard tells an account of an event that happened to someone from their own perspective. Undoubtedly many of these articles hold some truth but are more than likely misconstrued or exaggerated by the storyteller. Unfortunately I'm sure that there were soldiers that returned from Vietnam and were spat on. Just alike there were also soldiers who returned and were treated respectfully. It is my hope that any soldier who returns from combat, no matter what his mission was is treated with the utmost respect because that soldier was merely serving the country as his superiors saw fit. Basically I'm just reminded from this story book of Register Guard articles that there will always be many points of view to a story and it is up to us to logically decipher what is fact and not. I'm also reminded that there will always be at least one bad seed out there that is going to ruin the entire batch.

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### Register Guard History

by [David Verner](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 01:09 AM

I believe that the Register Guard stories tell us one simple fact - do not take what you search on Google as gospel. I find it laughable, and all the same downright angering, that a man actually wrote in to a newspaper so sure of his opinion purely based on a few internet searches. He mentions "exhaustive research" - i hardly believe his research was that exhaustive if he could not find one instance of it, considering even me as an Australian knew it happened here in America.

It is damning first of all of modern society that one simply decided that his opinion was absolute based on an internet search. Despite the plethora of information based on the internet these days, there still is a lot that can be found outside of it. And one of those valuable resources is indeed the memories of those very vets we hear from in the subsequent replies to Bob Thompsons idiotic letter to the Guard.

I was quite happy to read the responses to Bob's letter, because im sick of the people who sit at home with no idea about war - yet feel they have the right to an absolute opinion on it. Now, I myself have not, and barring WW3, will never experience war - but i feel i can have an opinion on it if i research it enough, hear every side to the story, etc etc. Bob however decided an "exhaustive" google search was enough. No, Bob, its not.

What this little mini history tells me, besides to not trust google completely, is that first hand experience is absolute paramount in opinion. These men who wrote in in response to Bob experienced the very things that Bob said didn't happen. They could remember how it felt, the situation, how it made them feel (the one guy saying if it had hit him there would have been a confrontation shows he must have been fairly angry about it). They experienced exactly what an ill-informed person who had no experience said did not happen. This proves how valuable the experiences of those involved in historical events are. Yes, bias is always involved in opinion - but this wasn't opinion. This was cold hard facts about things that happened to returning soldiers, and you simply cannot argue with that, unless they are lying - which i doubt.

Also, the last letter - despite the writer saying he didn't experience spitting - still re-enforces the notion Bob was wrong in my opinion, as he still mentions the huge prejudices he felt, in getting jobs and such. This proves how much prejudice was thrown against the veterans of Vietnam, that they were seen as lowly members of society.

Would have loved to have seen if Bob replied, and if he ate some humble pie or just kept his head in the sand.

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### Re: Register Guard History

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 11:26 AM

Your post pretty much summarized the feelings I had towards Bob Thompson's letter. I truly hate our generation of self appointed experts who think they know something because they have read about it on the internet, which is pretty much just a culmination of others opinions.

Thing that shocks me the most about his piece is that he thinks this couldn't have happened, its not like people heckling and spitting on soldiers is something isolated to Vietnam, it has happened to my father when he returned from the Persian Gulf and my boyfriend pretty much anytime we go anywhere while he is in uniform, a coffee shop here in Portland actually asked him to leave because they thought he was to threatening and made people uncomfortable. I am very sure that in a time were people were as discontented with military action as they were with Vietnam they would have had huge amounts of stigma towards soldiers and often showed their hate for the war by attacking the soldiers who fought in it.

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### Re: Register Guard History

by [David Verner](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:27 PM

Thats my same thought too, it really quite frankly pissed me off how he had this real attitude of thinking he knew exactly what happened, even though all he did was sit behind a bloody computer and read! I was loving reading the responses that were quite politely sending a big "screw you!" back to this guy. It's an insult to our veterans that people are still so ignorant and don't see how badly they were treated, and society just seems to ignore how badly it treated them. The fact your father, and boyfriend, from two different generations have experienced it shows how society still has a long way to go before it realizes that respect needs to be showed to those who go and fight, regardless of the wars intentions. I'm so sorry to hear that your boyfriend was actually asked to leave a coffee shop! That is horrible.

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### Re: Register Guard History

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 10:51 AM

Its all total ignorance, I find that people who preach acceptance of all and peace and such are often the most hateful people towards anyone that doesn't directly agree with them. I mean when you look at the violent anti-war protests during Vietnam, it seems so hypocritical to be yelling you want peace in a foreign country while you attack people in your own. In Portland, don't get me wrong I do love it here, but people are often narrow minded in their highly "alternative" views, they see uniforms and associate them with this illusive military they think is destroying the world. I just think that since Vietnam and the lack of trust people have in the government there is a lot of distrust for anyone who has any involvement in it. I think it was Tracy that mentioned the conspiracy theory people who have started to pop up more and more since Vietnam, because no one can trust each other now a days.

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### Re: Register Guard History

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:54 PM

That is a very horrible thing. As I mentioned before my brother is a Marine and if anyone ever did that to him..... well you can imagine. Soldiers are soldiers and sometimes they do bad things but that doesn't mean all soldiers are bad people. I was very disappointed in Thompsons letter, his argument lacked in ethos (credibility) and the logic was limited. The main strategy he used was emotions, mostly anger. It did make me angry but not the way he had wanted.

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### Re: Register Guard History

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 10:58 AM

Its a pain, you can imagine that I wasn't particularly pleased and I let the idiots who run the place know it. I'm glad that your brother hasn't had any experiences like that, soldiers get such a bad rap because of the bad ones. Its interesting to me that people always blame everyone for the mistakes of the few. There are a lot of people like this Thompson guy who live in a virtual world where they feel powerful and just fuel a lot of hate towards anything they don't agree with. Its ridiculous that people are so self centered now a days that they think they have the right to treat others the way they do. Its actually rather sad. In many ways I obviously think the swing in the 60s towards being more out spoken against the government and their actions was good, but I also think that there are negatives to having to many places for people to feel like they can have their opinions known.

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### Conservative Revisionist

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 08:49 AM

Before taking this class I had only a little knowledge of this war, the mostly propaganda, which come to find out was a major factor in this war. Now I know why the press and the people of the US made a huge difference in the outcome of the Vietnam War mainly because the people had thought that are men were dying needlessly, and stood up and said something about it. Little did they know that we were out manned were fighting in terrain unfamiliar and the tactical maneuvers of our government were not as effective as we would have liked them to be. Having said that, I believe that our intentions in the war at Vietnam were justified in a way that we were trying to stop communism and to help a weaker people from being from taken over by a brutal force, North Vietnam. I believe that there were also hidden agendas in helping the south. It is obvious that we wanted what everyone else wanted that had been fighting with Vietnam for hundreds of years, there fertile land and trade agreements. So the whole "stop communism from taking over the world" was just a front. And when we lost the war we still made it look like we were helping the south protect themselves just so we did not look so bad to the world by saying we, we had no idea what we were up against. The

Vietnamese have been fighting war for generations and even with little money and even less gun power they still managed to defeat one of the most powerful governments in the world. You know kind of what they have been doing to China for thousands of years.

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### Conservative Revisionism

by [Todd Lowry](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 10:52 AM

After reading Robert J. McMahon's essay I think I'm leaning toward conservative revisionism. I think the assessment that, "military and civilian leaders failed to develop realistic plans for achieving American politico-military objectives in Vietnam, failed to assess accurately the capabilities and intentions of their adversaries, and failed to coordinate specific battlefield tactics with an overall strategy for securing victory" was accurate (McMahon). It seems to me the problems that lead to America's defeat in Vietnam stemmed from failed policy rather than a failed military campaign. Though I can see how the two can be interpreted as failing hand in hand. Military decisions were micromanaged to such an extent that failure seemed inevitable. Military commanders were working under incredibly restrictive constraints imposed by American policymakers. Like I've said before, had the military been given a clear objective and left to their own devices to achieve that objective, the result of the war may have been much different. I really comes down to whether or not the Soviet Union and China would have intervened, as that was the reason for Americas restrictive military policy. The decisions, and the failures, in Vietnam were because of policy.

I don't agree with the latter group of Conservative revisionists, however. I haven't seen much evidence that lasting good was done in South Vietnam. Nor do I think the pacification program would have succeeded, even if it had more time to be implemented. I think the indigenous population, as war weary as they were, would never have become truly pacified.

American politico-military objectives in Vietnam were far to fluid and murky.

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### Register Guard

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 11:12 PM

Some parts of history can be hard to prove and when no one is left to talk about it. It helps when you there is some one that lived through it. It's obvious that a Vietnam soldier would not make up something about being so disrespected. I am guessing that people don't like talking about how men that fought with their lives for our country were treated so terribly when coming home. Behavior like this doesn't really boost patriotic moral by any means. After watching videos of anti war protesters it's not a far stretch to say that they spit on solders. The author of the article even goes as far as to say that the act of "spitting on Veterans" is completely false", that's a pretty bold statement. Sure he researched it, but was he there when these events were taking place? The other men in the stories were at those airports getting spit on, when they should have been getting a welcome home. Even after hearing the stories of soldiers that were actually there getting spat on he still sticks to his opinion. This author who was an anti war protester, sounds to me like he hasn't let go of his anger and is still trying to stir things up for the Vietnam soldiers.

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### Register Guard

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:43 PM

I remember reading in the Patriots book and the Appy book that Vietnam Veterans were not treated well when they returned home. I don't think there is any mention of spitting, and obviously there is a lot of debate on the subject. Whether or not it happened what really bothers me is the anger and coldness that was directed towards the vets. I felt as if they were being abused merely because the protestors could not get to the real people behind the war. Reading the articles from the Register Guard made me realize just how much is still un-common knowledge and that those old differences are alive today. They just have different masks.

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### The Legacy of Vietnam

by [David Verner](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:49 PM

The legacy of Vietnam for me has always been about how it changed the way the American people regarded the military and what it stood for. Vietnam was the war in which the people woke up and realized that the military was not always going to be doing the noble thing, as it had in history with WW1 & 2. Those wars had truly had a national backing, the entire nation at work

behind the war effort. However, Vietnam came right in the middle of a turbulent time in American history with society going through huge changes in a social context. People were really beginning to think a lot, lot more for themselves and were not afraid to question as they may have been decades before. This led to the questions about Vietnam.

In Herring (p.349) there is also a quote that states "The war shattered the Cold War consensus that had existed since the late 1940's, leaving Americans confused and deeply divided on the goals to be pursued and methods used." I believe this shows how much it changed the people of America, as it shows that they were starting to think a lot more for themselves, and question the government a lot more than had been done before.

The people learnt through Vietnam that its government, and the military it controls, will not always be working in the peoples best interests. They learnt that they could not completely trust them, and thus that not every war effort may be in the nations best interests.

I also believe that there has been a legacy left on the government, a warning sign since Vietnam of what not to do. The Herring text quotes a columnist named David Broder who says "Vietnam has left a rancid aftertaste that clings to almost every mention of direct military intervention." (349) This rings very true when we think about the issues of Iraq recently, as well as years before. The events in Mogadishu in 1993, when 18 Americans were killed in a firefight that was never meant to happen resulted in the immediate abandonment of the mission in Somalia, with Clinton seemingly wanting to avoid anymore casualties and getting himself in to deep. The mission had already gone on longer than planned, and he himself had found himself under pressure. I feel these kind of events have always had the shadow of Vietnam hanging over them, with Presidents always wary of not getting themselves into that kind of situation, such as Clinton in '93 backing out of Somalia.

Vietnam left huge legacies, but none more-so than the awakening of a nation to the deceit a government can have over its people about its actions, and how war can not always be for a good and noble cause. It did however affect government for years to come, as a warning sign to those of what not to do in the future.

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#### Register Guard on History

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 10:49 AM

What I got from the articles from the Register Guard was that everyone had a different experience coming home from the war. Some were simple home comings, others had to endure verbal abuse and a few were spat upon. But what caught my attention was the story of Robert L. Shaw at the very end of the articles. I never realized how much Vietnam could negatively affect ones life after they got out. I knew they were yelled at in their uniforms. And I knew that most people didn't want to talk to the veterans about what happened in their tours. But to not hire them, especially when Robert had so much useful experience in his field. It was very eye opening.

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#### Re: Register Guard on History

by [Kelley Allender](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 06:27 PM

I also found that story to be really eye opening - and heartbreaking! Great post!

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#### Americal Legacy

by [Todd Lowry](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:02 PM

I think the single most significant legacy of the war in Vietnam for the USA was the squandered support from the American People for their Government. After WWII the American people were more united and had more faith and support for their government than perhaps any time in American history. All that American unity would be lost through the actions of not one, but four consecutive administrations.

I think Stanley Karnow, Michael Beschloss and Doris Kearns Goodwin made good points about this erosion of support from the American people in their interviews on The News Hour. The American public was largely ignorant about Vietnam and why America was involved. This ignorance was met with continued secrecy and misinformation by U.S. policymakers for the duration of the war. Sure, there was a credibility gap that widened as the war progressed, but I think it was the outright lies the government told the people that was the legacy produced by Vietnam.

Not only that, Nixon was elected president on the assumption that he would quickly end the war. Instead, he broadened it to include three countries, at a cost of an additional four years and some 25,000 more Americans dead. As Beschloss pointed out, this left voters with the realization that the votes they cast may well have no connection to policy that those they elect follow. It was another disappointing misdirection from those who were elected to represent the people. That was a deliberately dishonest misdirection in a long line of them that Americans had endured to that point.

Some argue that the increased skepticism of the people about their government is a good thing. As Neil Sheehan points out in Herring's book when he says, "The United States was fortunate to have lost the war because the loss had made Americans more skeptical and cautious people and therefore spared the country further misadventures abroad" (367). I disagree with this take on the war. I feel that had the presidential administrations been forthright and honest to its citizenry from the start, and included them and Congress in the decision making process, it may well have spared itself the tragic misadventure in Vietnam, as well as other misadventures abroad.

I find myself drawn to Robert McNamara's quote in Herring's book where he says, "America's war on Vietnam makes clear the kind of tragedy that can result when presidents...enforce their foreign and military policies without the informed support of Congress and the American people" (359). I do think that Presidential dishonesty and secrecy during the war was a terrible tragedy. I also think that because of Vietnam no future presidential administration will ever have the unified, patriotic support from the American people that they had in spades prior to our involvement in Vietnam.

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#### Re: Americal Legacy

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:04 PM

There were many people who were ignorant of Germany and the Concentration Camps. There are also people ignorant about the reasons behind the Iraq war

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#### Liberal Realist

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:59 PM

As we come to an end in this course I find myself more on the end of a liberal realist. As the article *Changing Interpretations of the Vietnam War* states "American policymakers.. foolishly exaggerated Vietnam's importance to the United States. Had they more soberly assessed its true value to the economic and security interests of the United States, recognized the popular appeal of revolutionary nationalism within the country, and appreciated the limits of American power, then the ensuing tragedy might well have been averted." I have to say, this sentence alone is what I agree with most out of the article. America dipped its toes into the issue of Vietnam way back in the Truman administration, when America decided to financially aid the French. It was from this point that we slowly but surely got more and more involved with Vietnam. Because of this, I believe we got far too involved before we really knew the consequences. And so American policymakers did overexaggerate our need to be in Vietnam.

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#### American Policy

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:41 PM

The strongest legacy I see following the Vietnam war is the mistrust for the government that the American people have. Before that war, Americans trusted in their government to do the right thing and to inform them of what was going on. But this is no longer the case. Now a days Americans are very skeptical of their government. There are a few main reasons for this in my opinion. The vagueness of the war, the release of the pentagon papers, and media coverage of the war.

The first reason was the vagueness there was during the whole war. Presidents during the Vietnam war made it seem like the war would be over soon. That there was some light at the end of the tunnel when in fact there wasn't. Nixon was elected and the public believed he was going to quickly end the war. Yet instead he expanded it to two other countries.

The second reason was due to the pentagon papers being released. These papers were proof to the American people that their government had been lying to their faces. That even though the Vietnam war seemed hopeless for many government officials and policymakers, the president and McNamara would go on television and promise we were making headway.

Lastly there was always the factor that the media brought to the war. We no longer had to rely solely on the stories and information told to us by the government. We could see the truth right in our living rooms. And often times all Americans saw was death, death, and more death when government wasn't giving clear cut reasons as to what we were still doing in the war.

Though this may seem like a negative legacy I believe it has also benefited our country. It is good for us to be critical of our government. As one of the people in the 'Legacy- News Hour' video clip states, we pay the government their salaries, they are our employees and we have a right to question and know what it is they are doing. When you demand more answers from your government, you get more answers. And I believe that is better than sitting around and being naive about our government's relations.

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### USA legacy

by [Tracy Allen](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:02 PM

I think that the main thing that the U.S. ended up getting from the Vietnam War was the loss of respect for the government. Yes it was there before but Nixon was involved in criminal activities, he used his power as President to spy on people with out any real reason except his to protect his own political career. In this way he was similar to Thieu. After the Vietnam war America lost prestige all over the world and at home. It wasn't bad enough to completely destroy our society but I believe it was the first step in a slippery slope. Now people want to believe in things but they are more more likely to find faith in the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster then the government. Which makes decisons on its own ( in the case of the Vietnam war and LBJ/Nixon) and only making the choices that the people and congress wanted when it was convenient for them.

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