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**American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, November 3, 2012, 09:57 PM

Imagine that you are Christian Appy, the author of your Patriots textbook. Imagine these letters are portions of interviews that you conducted with individuals who actually participated in the Vietnam War. These people live in our community, our very midst, today. What can this mini book of stories tell us, if anything, about the truth of even the smallest historical occurrences of the Vietnam War era?

On a larger scale, what are the major issues concerning historical accuracy that you the student, must be concerned with when studying the events of this war from the perspective of our own soldiers?

Be sure to incorporate and cite any of the relevant materials you've been exposed to in this course as you address these issues.

Sum of ratings: -

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**Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Timothy Haley - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 09:21 AM

Answering the first question; I think these letters tell us that the truth of even the smallest historical occurrence is ambiguous. There is ambiguity in what was done, why it was done, and what the outcomes were. This mini-book also tells us of the heated emotions that revolve around these issues. The first letter from Tom Preuss that started this argument made many emotionally charged accusations with no corroborating evidence. According to Tom, war protestors are people who spit on war veterans. He slandered the ACLU, The New York Times, and the Register-guard without offering any reason why they are so evil. He labeled the anti-war movement "the effort to ensure our defeat." Tom concludes that questioning the premises for war, and the conduct of war is "traitorous" and the same as personally killing American soldiers. Wow. Likewise, after he spoke of a study conducted by a sociologist who earned his Ph.D. from the University of Oregon, Bob Thompson was insulting and condescending in response to Tom Preuss, and couldn't be bothered to study any further than a google search.

This is an interesting beginning to a conversation, and if I were Christian Appy, I would want to conduct a more academic study on the matter, rather than taking angry rants in the form of letters to the editor at face value. That said, I ask the question; is it possible to be patriotic without supporting war? Is it possible to be anti-war and still support troops? I think Christian answers this question with the title of his book: *Patriots: the Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides*. I understand Appy's point to be that patriotism means many different things.

Of course we should study this issue, but we should study it as objectively as possible.

 Sum of ratings:3 (1)
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**Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Barbara Bolt - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 09:50 AM

A book with our American soldiers recounting what had happened to them while they were away fighting for their country is a very compelling way to address what these people had actually gone through. However, it is acceptable to hear about the war from our media so people can be in touch with what is happening with the world and how it affects our country. In addition, we must be careful with using information from only our soldiers; they only have a small amount of information that we can use; therefore, we need many sources so we can determine the truth for ourselves.

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**Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Phillip Hubbard - Friday, November 9, 2012, 10:53 AM

I agree that listening to our soldiers describe their experience of a war is very compelling. They can enlighten as well. Media outlets can also be compelling. Both have their value but will portray even the same event or time differently. A collection of knowledge from multiple sources is probably the best way to fully understand and event in time.

You say that our soldiers have only a small amount of information. Are you assuming that soldiers are unaware of what is actually going on? Sheltered? Or naive? I think that is a bold statement to make and one that is completely inaccurate. Is a journalist more educated because they write for a living and a soldiers protects your freedom? I am sure your intentions were not to portray our soldiers in a negative light. A better choice of words in the future is probably in order.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Dustin McCowen - Friday, November 9, 2012, 09:15 PM

I think that Barbra makes a valid point that soldiers may not be aware of all the relevant information that would make their accounts completely historically accurate. They definitely give us a first hand account of what they went through, but those memories can be to easily distorted and clouded with emotion and personal, predisposed biases that may not give us the broader picture of what really transpired.

Personally I don't take much stock in what the media has to say either. Most major media has it's own agenda or slant on what they report, as well as being limited to the information that is being released by our officials. The Kennedy administration down played our involvement in Vietnam for years by giving reporters invalid information until reporters began to question the information. "Mounting criticism of U.S. Vietnam policy aroused grave concerns in Washington. The administration had attempted to keep it's involvement under wraps, but the rising toll of American deaths and the critical newspaper reports raised troublesome questions. U.S. officials spent hours investigating the journalists' reports and answering their allegations, and Kennedy himself attempted unsuccessfully to get the Times to recall Halberstam" (Herring, 111). I don't think that this is a rare occurrence for any political administration and we seldom know the truth until things are declassified or a historian like Herring brings it all together for us.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Phillip Hubbard - Saturday, November 10, 2012, 08:23 AM

I am confused on what you and Barbra are trying to say about soldiers. They are not aware of the relevant information? Why not? Are they not allowed to read the paper or watch T.V.? A journalist has a better understanding because they are being lied to by our administration? A soldier has a better account of what is going on during a war than a journalist because they are there in the war. Take Iraq for instance. How many articles do you read about U.S. troops building houses, or hospitals or schools? Very few. How many times do you hear about a suicide bomb blowing up and killing troops and civilians? Frequently. It's not wrong information but it's not all of the information. Both are happening everyday but our media will sell more papers or magazines when they write about the negative rather than the positive.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Dustin McCowen - Saturday, November 10, 2012, 10:43 AM

You have taken what I said out of context. I did not imply that journalist have a better understanding because they are lied to by our administration. I am not saying anything negative about soldier's accounts either, but to take what one person says as historical fact would be naive. Take for example, a group of eye witnesses to a crime; when asked to give an account of what transpired each witness may have a different memory. Memories are subject to the original interpretation of the event and can become distorted. You can read more about it [here](#). These same parameters should be considered when dissecting soldiers accounts as well.

I think you are right when you say that our media will tell the story that gets them the better ratings or sells more papers. We can't always believe what we read or hear on the news. Do you think that all our soldiers or the general public are aware of the political polices that brought them to be fighting in a war? Most likely not. In the early years of the Vietnam War the public was mislead by our political figures of the time by fluffed

reports. The same can be said for our involvement in Iraq.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Matthew Menigoz - Sunday, November 11, 2012, 11:14 PM

Yes exactly, watch out on who we listen too. Our media has their goals and what they want their viewers to see. Most have an agenda and most media whether it be radio, television, or movies will have a reason to put certain things out. Some soldiers have different interaction with conflict upon arriving back and leaving. We just need to be certain about how we approach sensitive topics like this and not base all our evidence on one region of study. These are personal opinions and reactions from people of the same area, for hard evidence of a Vietnam based soldier returning from war, we must study from a broad aspect and take accounts of many different people in different areas.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Tanaya Fonseca - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 04:34 PM

This book, along with any soldiers account of a war, tells us that no matter what your age, creed, gender, etc. war affects us all. Vietnam raised a lot of questions for the American public, one of the biggest questions was "who do we trust?". Compiling a book of war stories, not just from soldiers, but from activists, from people who were deeply affected by the war, shows us that it isn't only the government and our military involved. Looking at a war can become very black and white, very "us vs. them". By sharing accounts of the war, we can see that there is some grey area between what the government announced, what was seen while in Vietnam by officials, and what was seen and felt by the soldiers that were fighting.

While reading Herring and getting loaded down with facts and different policies, I was often left wondering, what did this mean for the people that were there? Having Appy as a pairing gives a perfect balance as to how exactly these government actions were felt where they counted the most. Personal accounts of any war, or of any major action, provides a great balance between what was said to have been implemented, and what actually happened.

On a larger scale, with any personal perspective we have to wade through the biases of the individuals themselves. Many vets were in support of the war, even after all was said and done, many vets were opposed to the war after they got out. While assumptions can do more damage than good, we do have to make assumptions about the people whose accounts we read. For example, a soldier who comes from a long line of military family members might see the issue of serving in the military as a noble and honorable thing. Whereas a soldier who was fresh out of high-school, only was in the military because of the draft, might see service as a forced choice to partake in wars that go against the core values of his own family. I am reminded of Barry Zorthian's story from Appy, he says on page 292 after giving the information regarding General Loans shooting of a VC prisoner, "a picture can never give the background [story]." We can apply what he says to Appy's book perfectly, while we are getting the accounts of soldiers from the war, we are not getting their full background. Being in the war obviously changed them and their thoughts, but what aided them in their mindset was also who they were before the war.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Coming Back Home

by Matthew Menigoz - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 08:54 PM

The stories that are shown in that file show us a lot about how Vietnam soldiers were treated when they came back from the war. The letters talk about how soldiers were spit on when they arrived home and some would change out of their uniforms before they got their so people wouldn't degrade them. Among the letters there was a majority telling about the disrespect that was given to these soldiers coming back from the war. In one of the stories Herman Isaac talks about how he was called a "baby killer", and people would ask him to take his uniform off. This was a huge issue among that time and these letters show a common thread among soldiers being degraded and disrespected when they returned from Vietnam. Even the last story that was told by Robert L. Shaw talks about how returning from the war was quiet easy. He talks about how nobody was really disrespectful to him and he was allowed in an anti-war protesting group. But even he had problems while returning back from Vietnam but they were when he was looking for a job. Every job he would have he would be degraded, slandered, and trivialized by people at work. He eventually had to cut a three year gap in his resume that covered the time he was in the military so he could get a job. Even though he wasn't degraded nor spit on when he came back he eventually was throughout his life in a different aspect because his time in the military. These letters show the awful things that people would do to these soldiers and what they had to deal with when they came home. Can we take these letters and say everybody was treated like this throughout America? I don't think so because although we had evidence of how people acted to soldiers upon their arrival back to the states, we can't judge everybody in America off these letters. I believe people did spit on and disrespect soldiers who came back but it's just as if soldiers came back

now from Iraq or Afghanistan, there will be people who dont like the government, dont like the military, and dont like any ideas of war, so their always will be backlash.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Coming Back Home

by Andrea Porter - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 10:33 PM

I agree that maybe not all soldiers were greeted by unwelcoming, spitting fellow Americans. I think it was possibly the time when they came home. Just like the War in Iraq at the beginning the soldiers had the support of their government and country. As the war goes on and lives are taken it seems that people want to blame someone. Politicians certainly don't want the blame even though it's in their power to control wars. So whom gets the blame or the negative support? The soldiers that put their lives on the line for their country.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Coming Back Home

by Dylan Curran - Sunday, November 11, 2012, 03:08 PM

Andrea, this is a definitely a case where protestors should have applied a "support the soldiers, but not the war" mentality. Drafted individuals were given the choice to engage in war or to "betray their country" (depending on one's upbringing and personal politics). Given those choices, it's hardly fair for a protester to harshly judge a soldier when the only difference between the two is who received the draft letter.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Coming Back Home

by Timothy Haley - Sunday, November 11, 2012, 04:00 PM

Dylan, I agree that it is best to support individual soldiers even if one opposes the war. However, I still question the extent to which returning veterans were treated badly. From the register guard we've been exposed to a few people who claim to be war veterans that were spit on, or treated disrespectfully in other ways. These letters to the editor don't tell us how many war veterans in this city were not spat on. We don't know who did the spitting, and who did not do it. These letters do not tell us how many veterans themselves were disgusted by the war. How many people protested the war in order to save American soldiers from going to battle?

Just as there are complaints of the media focusing on war protest rallies instead of war support rallies, could someone complain that the media covered the disrespectful and violent protests to a greater degree than the peaceful and respectful protests?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Coming Back Home

by Andrea Porter - Sunday, November 11, 2012, 11:39 PM

Dylan, I agree that the protesters judged too harshly. Without knowledge from a soldier's perspective of what all they endured in the war the protesters definitely needed to educate themselves on what they were and were not supporting.

Andrea

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Dustin McCowen - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 08:56 PM

I think the letters are a great example of how people's opinions can be forged on knowledge they believe to be true, even if they have no real valid information to base those opinions on. I believe that when we are talking of a certain instance such as the "spitting" on Vietnam vets, it is acceptable to take their accounts as factual, especially when their story is corroborated by others

that were there. It seems that Preuss's politically motivated letter set of a chain of vastly unsupported opinions by people that didn't bother to fact check, or dig deeper than the surface of a quick Google search. Bob Thompson's letter was a perfect example of being misinformed and taking what he read as truth; and was completely discredited by those Veterans that shared their personal experiences.

It had to be quite an undertaking for Appy to compile all the stories for his book since people's memories can so easily be influenced by emotion, inaccuracies, and personal belief. In the case of these letters to the editor I would not have taken them for much more than the emotional opinions and outraged responses to another citizen that didn't share their view.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Dylan Curran - Thursday, November 8, 2012, 09:21 AM

I agree that Bob Thompson's letter is a good example of a misinformed opinion, and would add that it's also an instance of a person forming an opinion too quickly; his reply implies that he formed the opinion after internet research and reading "The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory and the Legacy of Vietnam," without verifying its credentials. This debate is a good example of what psychologists call "Confirmation Bias," the tendency to notice and remember facts or arguments which supports one's pre-existing beliefs while ignoring or minimizing the others.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Barbara Bolt - Thursday, November 8, 2012, 05:03 PM

I agree with you that Bob Thompson's opinion was quickly formed. This is a huge problem when trying to determine the truth for yourself additional credited information and proof is needed when analyzing our past or while improving our future.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Timothy Haley - Saturday, November 10, 2012, 01:20 PM

While it is quite obvious that Bob Thompson did little homework before weighing in on this conversation, the book he mentioned represents a legitimate -and also contested- perspective in the conversation regarding the reliability of oral histories. Jerry Lembcke earned his P.h.D. in sociology from the University of Oregon. One main observation that Mr. Lembcke makes is the recurring theme of soldiers being spit on in many stories from many different wars throughout history, including Germany during and after World War I. He wrote this book in response to Bob Greene's book *Homecoming: When the Soldiers Returned From Vietnam*, which is a collection of letters from Vietnam veterans that he requested in his column in the Chicago Tribune. Greene includes 63 accounts of spitting that he feels are credible. He also includes 69 accounts of veterans who do not think anyone was spit on. Greene personally believes that some veterans were spit on by war protestors, however, he also concedes the issue is contested, with only personal testimony to support the claims (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Spitting_Image).

The other main observation that Lembcke makes is the fact that many Vietnam veterans participated and cooperated in the anti-war protests. The Documentary *Sir, No Sir!* also makes this point by interviewing many Vietnam veterans who were treated badly when they returned. These soldiers claim that supporters of the war were the people that were the most disrespectful. These veterans claim that they were personally blamed for losing the war by war supporters.

I think the only thing that we students can be certain of is that truth is usually unclear, and there will always be controversies with high-strung emotions on all sides.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Matthew Menigoz - Saturday, November 10, 2012, 09:58 AM

It probably was complete chaos to organize and decipher from all the people Appy covered. We take for instance these

letters and are trying to decide whether we can base them on factual evidence and if they really happened commonly widespread through America. Can you imagine what Appy had to do, he had stories from not just soldiers returning from the war, but generals, civilians, and vietnamese. But how does he even know that any of those people he interviewed weren't telling him lies and shaping history into what they wanted it to be. One thing that's different among these letters than his interviews and stories is that the letters compile together similarity unlike a lot of stories in the Appy book. We can compare these letters to all the stories within the book and see that when they're compiled together like this and all of them are similar then people will listen to the common thread.

It seems to me that people will listen and believe something when it's common and there's more than one case of it being true. A simple way of figuring that out is to just interview people from around the nation, from different towns and cities and then come to a conclusion.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Barbara Bolt - Saturday, November 10, 2012, 01:24 PM

I agree that we should interview a widespread group of people when we are trying to find the facts about something. This gives us a more generalized idea of what happened; therefore, it is easier to find verification.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Tanaya Fonseca - Sunday, November 11, 2012, 11:17 AM

Matthew,

I found that quite interesting about Appy. Usually when I have read compiled interviews they are scattered here and there. One story will mention an event and then four or five stories later another story will talk of that same event, they are out of sequence. I noticed that Appy has placed every story exactly where it should be. For an example, Peter Kuznicks story about being a demonstrator during Vietnam and witnessing police brutality against the protesters was perfectly positioned before J. Shaeffer's story about being a cop during the protesting. Both stories corroborate one another in that both police and protesters had a very difficult time maintaining the peace that they both wanted. Appy has done quite a good job putting varying stories on one central theme, whether it be Tet, protesting, POW's, etc. right next to each other so that you can get a well rounded view of the subject.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Accuracy in the Retelling

by Mario Scalisi - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 09:52 PM

This "mini-book" will tell us that no matter what, the bottom line is everybody's experiences are unique to that person. Though people may have experienced some events together, the fact remains that they experience it filtered through the beliefs, values and principles they hold. If my daughter and I both saw an argument escalate into a fight, while telling the story, the two of us will differ in points because my values, my beliefs and even my life experiences tint the "glasses" that I see the world through. As do those of my daughter.

Other factors can effect a person's recollections: what a person goes through (a traumatic experience for example), time passed, and changing opinions are a few. The same event can be experienced different ways by different people. It can be remembered in even more ways.

When Bob Thompson wrote in his letter about no evidence that spitting had occurred (by lack of media accounts) it illustrated what many of us have said in our posts about gathering info from multiple sources, not one (and not just the internet). That claim was disproved by another letter (which cites a NYT article from October 1967). We heard of such experiences in other of the letters as well as the *Black Lion's* telling of similar treatment (rotten tomatoes and eggs thrown at bus for example) upon returning in the audio clip. something else that stuck in my head to be concerned about after the video clip was the idea of "return with honor". If someone did something that they might be ashamed of it may color the retelling later.

The attached picture is from an old GI Joe comic. Thought it was appropriate. We need to know the truth about this war and as Duke always told me at the end of the GI Joe cartoon, "...and remember, knowing is half the battle".

Sum of ratings:3 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Accuracy in the Retelling**

by Andrea Porter - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 10:27 PM

I agree that a persons account of a story can be based on trauma, personal beliefs and experience. Definately opinions play a large role in any historical story as well as political views. In the American POW video one of the soliders state that after Ho Chi Minh dies the other Vietnam soliders change their stories about the beating that were given to the American POWs. After their leader dies these soliders now admit to the brutal beatings given, and basically put the blame on Ho Chi Minh. While I understand your statement refering to returing with honor and how a story could be tainted by what a person may not want to share or hide, i feel return with honor was said in a different perspective. These men and woman wanted to return with honor of not betraying a country that later didnt support them.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Andrea Porter - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 10:13 PM

Appys mini stories gve the reader the emotional perspective of a person experiences in the war. While it is a personal point of view that can be over or under exaggerated by different traumas or experiences by the authors its still thier story and experinces. Watching the American POW video it showed how the suilders were exposed to the negative media in America by thier capturers. These soilders were fighting for their honor, life and the trust of thier country, only to hear that their own country wasnt backing them. To have lived for over 7 years in pure hell to come home to zero support? One of the soliders in American Experience states that he is in a cab coming home from war and the cab driver doesnt even acknowledge what this man has done for our country. In the letter file the author of these letters do not have actual provable facts that the soliders were indeed spat upon, just their word. I was lucky enough to meet some Vietnam Vets and hear their stories. These men and woman told their accounts of their lives in Vietnam, many were POWs. Many couldnt say their stories without becoming visably emotional, others shooked, choked and became visably sick from their stories. The main thing they all said was that they held on to the hope of honoring their country and a welcoming hme from the country that they fought for their lives, instaed they came home to a country that questioned their actions and a war that they fought. On he large scale the major thing a student of history needs to be concerened about is the liability of the author as well as the perspective. If the story repeats itself by more than a few then the story is probably accurate.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War**

by Phillip Hubbard - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 10:35 PM

I think that the truth, in terms of the Vietnam War, will always be subject to opinion. Regardless of how it is presented there will always be interpretation by every American on the accuracy of the information. Christian Appy presents brief stories from all sides about Vietnam. Are they all accurate? Do they agree with your opinion? It's all up for interpretation.

Watching the film of the soldiers talking about their experience as POW's makes me proud to be an American. Whether they were a 10 or a 1, as Mike McGrath explains it, should make you want to hug each one of them and tell them thank you. Be proud of what our country has and will do. Whether you agree or disagree doesn't matter. The men that are appointed during a war live with every decision each day of their lives. Who are you to judge them? Would you do any better?

Accuracy of historical events is important to every student that agrees to study them. Most likely there is an interest in the topic for each of us. We want to better understand the who, what, when, and why of that specific event. We do not want to be mislead

of influenced. We just want the facts. Our soldiers provide a first hand account of what the war was like. But maybe not the historical facts of what it was all about. You must separate those two in order to get the truth. Facts are the who and when. Opinions are the why and how. Our quest as students for knowledge starts with the facts and ends with the opinion. Our opinion.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Dylan Curran - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 10:38 PM

There are certainly more letters of response to the Register Guard article verifying that the spitting happened than there are those denying it. Veterans are important sources of information about the details of the war, and in many ways the most qualified people to provide that information (being a primary rather than secondary source). However, it's very important to distinguish between a person's reports of facts and their reports of impressions.

For example, in his letter of response to the Register Guard, Robert Shaw states "Most firms told me they weren't hiring with the subtext of 'don't ever come back, we don't hire your kind.'" Impressions are valuable for understanding the experience of an individual, but can't be treated as representative of fact from a historical perspective.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Tanaya Fonseca - Friday, November 9, 2012, 02:51 PM

Dylan,

I agree with your statement "*Impressions are valuable for understanding the experience of an individual, but can't be treated as representative of fact from a historical perspective.*"; when reading the RG pdf, that was what really had me thinking. I am sure that there were spitting instances at some airports and welcome home rallies. But, without a tallied and quantifiable poll or statistics graph we cannot say for sure that spitting was a universal reaction or just a few isolated instances for different people. We cannot say that spitting did or did not take place because everyone coming back had different experiences.

I don't doubt that there was spitting, it is very hard for people to distinguish between someone doing their job because they were made to and someone doing their job because they want to. We have heard stories by many people who did not want to join the army but had to because of the draft. They were subjected to the harsh realities of home and painted with the same brush as the soldiers who wanted to go to war and were in support of the war. No one cared what their personal feelings were about the war, they were wearing a uniform so they **must** have been pro-war.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Matthew Menigoz - Saturday, November 10, 2012, 10:08 AM

My take on these letters were that they were very much impression based.

Although there was a common trend among these letters, they were only responses to the Register guard. Even though the Register Guard does have a wide audience, its still the Register Gaurd. Can we ask the Seattle Times to recall any instances of this happening and confirm that it happened in more than just one area.

I believe these letters provide evidence that yes, it did happen. But as a national response we can't take much from these letters. they have no evidence that this occured in more than one region. Also, I know from my experience of living in Oregon and around Eugene, that this could of easily happened becuase of the radicals and liberals that live here. I think it's a very good thing to look at wether its facts, or impressions. Becuase all of this could of easily been impressions of people from around here.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: American Soldier Perspectives on War

by Dylan Curran - Saturday, November 10, 2012, 05:57 PM

You make a very good point Matthew; I hadn't even considered how the responses in the Register Guard would be affected by the region we live in. Really, the question of "Were any returning soldiers spat on," is much less important

than "How many soldiers were spat on." An isolated incident doesn't mean much; it only reflects one person's frustrations and spite. Numerous spittings, especially in many locations, show a trend in national sentiment, which means much more in terms of analyzing the Vietnam war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Inconclusive

by Timothy Haley - Sunday, November 11, 2012, 07:58 PM

One thing I found interesting about the American P.O.W.'s Speak video, was the recollection of the easing of the torture coinciding with the death of Ho Chi Minh. I would like to know if this is totally anecdotal, or if there is verified evidence that there was an official change in policy due to his death. This, to me, is another problem with oral histories. These soldiers were only able to tell us when their treatment began to improve, and the reasons their captors gave for those improvements. We're getting into the realm of 'this person said that this other person said that. . .' This does not prove that it was Ho's policy -and no one else's, to torture prisoners.

That U.S. prisoners were tortured seems certain. So were North Vietnamese prisoners. I don't know what else can be decisively said beyond that.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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