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### Soldier Stories



by Joe Escobar - Sunday, November 10, 2013, 9:25 PM

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### Re: Soldier Stories: If I were the author of the Patriots



by Barbara Lay - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 8:18 PM

If I was the author of the *Patriots*, there are four or five letters I would use that tells the story of these soldiers who definitely were spit on, called names, or even denied employment. Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, and Herman Isaacs all experiences being spat upon. Thomas W. Postelle even had it happen to him twice. It was so disturbing for him that "I paid full fare and flew in civilian clothes to keep it from happening again" (Thomas W. Postelle).

My note to the readers would say; Returning to the states after completing their tours of duty, these brave American men were spat upon, and verbally abused by persons who claim to be American, but show no respect to our military. These are their accounts of what they have experienced returning home to the states.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories part 2



by Barbara Lay - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 8:28 PM

These letters show the ignorance of some people that believe everything they hear or read in the media. Just because they have not seen or heard of first hand accounts of certain events does not mean it did not happen. This is where the media

needs to talk to the actual individuals who have experienced this. Possibly the media did not want the people out there to know what is actually going on, and so by not reporting it, it would be kind of like covering up the facts. I have always heard of the stories of the soldiers being spit on by protesters, or being called baby killers. Even though I was just a kid, I still heard of those stories. The media needs to have the perspective of the soldier sides of the stories to get all the actual truth of the events happening, and not just what they want to report.

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Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories part 2**  

by Rhonda Garcia Mondragon - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 9:21 AM

You are right in getting their facts straight and listening to all sides, but what if they did here all sides? Could you imagine the response of the public finding out about the disrespect? In the stories from the letter to the editor of The Register Guard it gives an idea of how the public did react towards returning veterans. Not being able to get a job for instance and then having to erase 3 years worth of experience off of his resume. The veterans were not proud of killing people but they did because they were sent to war. I think that the government should have gotten the blame and spit at not the soldiers doing what they were ordered to do. The war could have been stopped if their weren't so many poor hungry people out in the world just wanting more.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories part 2**  

by Nicole Reese - Friday, November 15, 2013, 11:50 AM

In regard to when you said " I think the government should have gotten the blame and spit at not the soldiers doing what they were ordered to do," I was just thinking that! I feel awful because these young men were drafted to war, many of them didn't sign up and voluntarily go, they were forced too. So for them to be disrespected and spat at when they returned home was completely disgusting and uncalled for. If the war protesters wanted to take their anger and frustration out on somebody they should've directed it at the government since they got us to that point in war and ordered these young men to go fight.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories part 2**  

by Josey Grant - Friday, November 15, 2013, 4:00 PM

I think that you and I may think alike when it comes to the media. They all seem to have there own agenda and sadly the real story is lost in the message that the media or press wants to forward to the public. It seams like its only getting worse as time goes by.

It seams like there should be someone that should be a fact checker that is responsible for being a whistle blower if a reporter is leaving out key information. Also seams like there should be more of a punishment for the forwarding of their own personal gain or their own interests.

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### Re: Soldier Stories part 2

by Tracy Tunnell - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 3:27 PM

I agree about some people's ignorance about what they learn from the media. I've seen it too many times how people believe everything they read or watch on TV. They feel its been reported so it must be right. Its like when someone reads something on the Internet and they believe it to be true, because you can't lie, right? WRONG! Anyone can post online, just like the media can pick and choose what facts they want the public to hear. It s like when they interview someone on tv and you only see bits and pieces of the interview or things get misconstrued. I think all sides should be revealed so we as Americans or people can draw our own conclusions.

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### Re: Soldier Stories part 2

by Jonathan Rowlett - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:08 PM

It is true that there is so much that goes on that we do not hear about. I also believe that the media does their fair share of “spinning” stories so that a certain message is relayed. Sometime what is presented is not so much a blatant lie as it is the omission of truth (the whole truth and nothing but the truth). I think that it is entirely possible that many reporters interviewed a substantial amount of veterans who did not experience negative repercussions to their participation in the Vietnam War. However, even I, who was barely around for anything of that war, have heard numerous stories of the mistreatment of Vietnam veterans.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Rhonda Garcia Mondragon - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 9:32 PM

As I read the letters to the editor of the Register Guard I am filled with mixed emotions. I can hear the irritation in the writing from the veterans that put their lives on the line in Vietnam. To have a person read a book about spitting on soldiers, and then writing a letter to a newspaper where you know that veterans of not just the Vietnam war but of other wars are going to read this is preposterous. To say that people need to do their research as a google search is actually quite ridiculous in the fact that everything on the internet isn't true. How about interview some veterans and ask them how their welcoming was when they came back home to the United States. Out of the audio of the Black Lions remembering the Vietnam war a couple of quotes stuck out to me. "My grand-dad fought in a war, my father fought in a war, this is what you were supposed to do if they wanted you, so that is what you did, even though it was wrong you had no choice in it." "Once you get drafted you go. You fulfill your duty I just thought that was the right thing to do." "Nobody gives up their life for their country." The veterans that wrote back in response to the letter to the editor were good examples of what could be put in the Patriots book. The reason being is they state a spectrum of how they were treated when arriving back here in the U.S. from getting spit at, verbally abused, refused work by local companies because of being a veteran. One veteran did state that he didn't come across any hardships when returning, but the protesters asked him to join in on the protest. The Patriots book could use the feeling that they had to hide who they were by changing their clothes but the hair cut still gave it away, or having rotten tomatoes and eggs thrown at the bus leaving the military base. A note to the reader may state, "You can protest the war but don't protest the soldier" this gives one veteran's feelings towards a good idea. You can have your own opinion about war but don't accuse the soldiers they are just doing their job and following orders.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by David Lahy - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 10:01 AM

Good post. I too, found a couple quotes from the audio of American Soldiers Speak that made me pause and think;

"I did what I had to do, by God you would have done it too or died."

"A lot of people you argue with were never in Vietnam and didn't see death and when you see death you have a whole new perspective on life."

I find most people forget sometimes when they judge others is that they forget to look at it from the others perspective and have not experienced war or similar circumstances to make such claims.

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Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Josey Grant - Friday, November 15, 2013, 4:36 PM

David,

I liked the first one you quoted. I remember when I heard it I thought it couldn't be worded any better. After all, war is just that, war. You do what you have to stay alive, complete your mission, and to save your friends; to get home alive.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Barbara Lay - Friday, November 15, 2013, 6:32 PM

we all would have fought to stay alive if we were put in that position. Luckily most of us will never have to experience what our young men had to in Vietnam. War is horrible, and nobody likes it when our young men today have to go fight even now. We all hope they make it home alive, and hopefully have the respect they deserve when they do.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Tracy Tunnell - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 3:33 PM

I really liked both quotes you posted. It really made me think about what I would have done during that time. Would I have been a protester or would I have done what I needed to do in this war. I think I would have done what I had to do to survive. And to think our soldiers were judged for this war really disgusts me. We all need help sometimes and as Americans we should be the first to help if at all possible.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Jonathan Rowlett - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:34 PM

I agree with Josey that the first quote you referenced was especially impactful. So many of Vietnam's American soldiers were there because of duty and not by choice *and* the type of warfare they were engaging in required survival tactics. I see no shame in that. Having served in the armed forces myself, I can say with confidence that a soldier serves for purposes far greater than himself or his country. He serves for the man next to him, his family back home, and the millions of people he will never meet. I cannot imagine that anyone would appreciate being attacked physically or verbally for doing their job.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Barbara Lay - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 1:22 PM

I think it's quite horrible to treat our veterans with disrespect. Many of the protesters did not understand these soldiers were just doing their jobs. Back then, there was still the draft, and if you wanted to dodge the draft, you skipped to Canada. These soldiers either joined or were drafted, and were not draft dodgers. They did not deserve the disrespect of being spit on, or verbally abused. Employers should not have been allowed to disrespect the veterans either. These actions are totally un-American as far as i'm concerned. Protest the government, not the people sent to just do a job.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Jacob Nelson - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 10:23 PM

Barbara, I think you hit the nail on the head when you said that people should protest the government and not the soldiers fighting the war. Our soldiers deserve to always be treated with respect and dignity when they return home. It is completely twisted for people protesting wars to get angry at soldiers when they are just doing their jobs. After all, going to war is a political decision enacted by politicians who aren't even fighting in it.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by David Lahy - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 9:42 AM

After reading the letters I came away with the feeling that just about any topic about the Vietnam War can be divisive, even veterans are on both sides of the argument whether or not spitting incidents actually happened. While there is no concrete evidence documenting that these incidents happened, none the less you can't disprove they didn't happen either. What is not in dispute is Vietnam veterans were often blamed for a War the politicians started and were often denigrated upon their return. If I was the author of the Patriots textbook, I would use the stories of first-hand account of soldiers who experienced a negative public reaction upon their return from Vietnam. Out of the several stories three actually experienced being spat upon; Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, and Herman Isaacs. Robert L. Shaw account upon returning from Vietnam differs. "My experience was that returning from Vietnam was a simple event", Shaw said. "Nor has any Vietnam vet ever related to me an incident about being spat upon." But he later details the discriminatory practices he faced while attempting to assimilate back into civilian society. These are all good stories of actual veteran experiences that greater public should hear to gain a greater understanding of the hardships most Vietnam servicemen faced upon return home. There were only two stories, Tom Preuss and Bob Thompson's that I would not include for two reasons. First, it isn't clear they were Vietnam veterans. And second, they go on to personally attack the commentator instead of focusing on the real subject and providing accounts or referencing any credible evidence.

My note to the reader would state: The above stories are the personal accounts of the men and women who upon their return from war experienced varying degrees of mistreatment by society and anti-war protestors. The stories are not meant to provide definitive proof one way or the other, but to provide a first-hand perspective into the lives of those who served through their eyes. It is important for the American public realize the importance of separating support for the men and women who served from the support of war.

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Josey Grant - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 12:06 PM

I agree compleatly with the "note to the reader" because in the end everyone's experiance is different.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories



by Tracy Tunnell - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 3:35 PM

I really liked your note to the reader. I would keep an open mind to what I was reading after that. We all should have an open mind when reading about something that no one has all the facts to.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Jacqueline Collins - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:00 PM

In talking to war veterans in my life I find that they are also split between "who" was to blame for the war. Even the people who were actually there have thier own differing views. How can we expect the media to have a clear idea of what to print.

I agree with you about looking for veterans who seem to have a clear and precise account of what really happened.

J~

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Jonathan Rowlett - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:48 PM

First, I would be interested in understanding what you mean by "no concrete evidence". It seems to me that the first hand experiences of Vietnam veterans is substantial and concrete evidence enough. However, I could see why you would be hesitant since there is a lack of media coverage on the subject. Given that the Vietnam War is still a topic of great debate over 30 years after the fact, it seems likely that we will never know with absolute certainty just what *did* happen during those 18 years of fighting and loss. I absolutely agree that it is critical that Americans begin separating the soldier from the war. When a soldier is criticized for their work, it is the same as criticizing the janitor who cleans the building of a corrupt company. The soldiers are not the ones making the primary decisions and should not be blamed for the country's involvement.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Kaedyn Drake - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 10:27 AM

The letters that got to me the most would be that of Thomas Postelle, Rodney

Gordon, and Herman Isaacs. If I were the author of *Patriots* I would use these stories because they show a piece of the war that was very important, yet it really wasn't brought into light like some of the other parts of the war.

My note to the reader would say, "These men, upon returning home from Vietnam, were shown hostility and mistreatment because they were part of something that was distorted through the media, which in turn distorted the thoughts of many people in the United States. These are their accounts upon returning home."

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Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Barbara Lay - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 1:38 PM

The protestors got a lot of attention, but these returning soldiers did not. They used to have huge parades for returning soldiers in the world wars, but as a nation, I feel the vietnam soldiers did not earn respect they should have. Too bad even today, we cannot hear some of the soldiers tell their side of what happened to them coming home. Maybe there needs to be a documentary on that side of the story even still.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Tracy Tunnell - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 3:39 PM

The only attention our solders got was negative. There was no appreciation like there is today or even during our earlier wars. I think the media shoud've taken the spot light off of the protestors and given to our soldiers and given them praise for what they did. I too, hope one day there will be a documentary on the soldiers. I would like to hear the story from them, not from someone who wasn't there or a ignorant politician.

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**Re: Soldier Stories**  

by Jacqueline Collins - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:07 PM

This reality seems so foreign to me. Why were our men being treated so poorly? Many of them had no choice in the matter. Some were drafted and some went out of honor to serve their country not having any idea of what was really going on over there.

It angers me that the people of this great nation treated these young men as if they deliberately went out of their way to be killers. I bet you there

were plenty of young men who dodged the draft and yet were there taunting the returning soldiers. Such a sad state of affairs.

J~

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Josey Grant - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 11:15 AM

Upon reading the letters regarding "spiting" I was in agreement with Thomas W. Postelle of Veneta when he said that he was "Surprised the Regester-Guard would print such trash". Its reasons like this that people or the "general masses" are so ignorant when it comes to the real story. A thorough lack of genuine hard work and research should never be allowed to be published as "the truth". Makes me wounder if anyone checks the "fact checkers".

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Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Barbara Lay - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 1:26 PM

Thanks to our soldiers who fight for our freedom, we do have the freedom of the press, to be able to say or print what seems fit. We may not always like reading it, and I personally was apalled at the Michael Rooke-Ley letter, but it's reading material like this that keeps us knowing there are still folks out there that are mis-informed, and should make us want all the more to reveal the truth.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Rhonda Garcia Mondragon - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 10:43 PM

On a sad note, some people actually believe everything that is released by the press and then they tell someone a story out of the newspaper and it gets twisted a little bit, and then that person tells someone else and it gets twisted again, and again, and again. That is why it is so important for the public to do research about what they are reading not just believe what they have heard or read somewhere.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Nicole Reese - Friday, November 15, 2013, 11:43 AM

I agreed as well with Thomas W. Postelle's comment about Register Guard printing the article. The scary part is that a lot of people do use the newspaper and TV as a source for their information, completely oblivious to whether they are hearing the true unbiased facts or motivated personal beliefs. People need to put in the research and have at least a platform about the subject before putting full faith in media sources. If I were a Vietnam veteran I would've been extremely offended by the Register Guard article, I know I was.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Josey Grant - Friday, November 15, 2013, 4:51 PM

Freedom of speech is good and needed don't get me wrong, but to be acceptable to the any News paper or station, means that it should be just that, "News". Not uneducated whining about a subject that the writer clearly knows nothing about. Because the average person these days is reading the paper to learn and stay current with whats happening in the world. Most don't have the time to research information on anything in the paper. chances are they are like me in the sense that there are simply not enough hours in the day to do what we need to do let alone what we want to do. I kinda of think however that the hole point of news today is not to inform but rather to entertain. Sadly this only breeds ignorance.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Jonathan Rowlett - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 8:33 PM

Although I agreed with Mr. Postelle that it is a tragedy that such blatant disrespect for our country should ever be printed; I am also grossly aware that the privileges of the First Amendment allow for such things to be printed and read by the general public. The Register Guard is one of the best written newspapers in the nation; however, the writers do have liberal leanings due to the general political climate of the Eugene area. This is not to belittle or reject their arguments or opinions, simply an observation based on many years of reading the articles printed within its pages. It is sort of like comparing the reports of CNN to FOX News. There is definitely a difference in the opinions being presented. It does not necessarily make one side more right than the other. It does mean that there is a certain inevitability that toes from both sides will be stepped on. It is the privilege of

the "offended" party to respond (in print or otherwise).

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Jacqueline Collins - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:11 PM

I couldn't agree more! Checks and balances? Where are these people when you need them. Of course the truth doesn't sell papers the way lies do. Too often the media chooses to embellish the stories to make them more interesting. And there is no one to regulate the media. So many stories are being printed as truth and people are so willing to believe what they hear or read.

J~

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



### Re: Soldier Stories

by Elizabeth Bruno-Hibler - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 11:58 AM

If I were the author of *Patriots*, I would feel it would be important to use all of the stories that were provided in the series of letters, even the one written by Rooke-Ley. His letter started the chain of letters that came in as replies and I would want people to know about these specific writers and columnists that put so much hate out towards our troops. Rooke-Ley is the typical liberal writer who has nothing better to do than be hateful towards people and policies he disagrees with and making the United States look bad. Of course not all liberal writers are like that but I have been coming across more and more of them lately. Even conservative writers are doing it. Putting all of the letters into a book would give the readers different points of view just like the actual *Patriots* book. The reader can then do their own research (or not) and come to their own conclusion on what to believe. I personally believe that our soldiers have been spit on and verbally abused, and worse. My close friends who have returned from overseas have seen it happen to their fellow soldiers. In one letter Bob Thompson says, : In fact, it appears the "spitting on the veterans" story is completely false" (Register Guard) then goes on to say, "In the future, I suggest Preuss and his ilk do a Google search on "spitting on veterans" or other myths before writing in public." (Register Guard). For starters, there are many different search engines to use and they can come up with different things. I searched 'veterans being spit on' with the StartPage search engine and found a video of a veteran being spit on (Here is the link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q\\_-TBirrPiQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_-TBirrPiQ)). This video did not come up when I searched for the same thing on Google.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Elizabeth Bruno-Hibler - Thursday, November 14, 2013, 8:55 AM

My note in the book would be something like these are the accounts of some veterans and not all experiences are the same with every soldier.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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### Appy Question

by Josey Grant - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 12:03 PM

If I was Appy, publishing *Patriots*, I would have focused on the closing or lingering effects of war as well and their treatment by their own countrymen and their ability to go back to their civilian lives they had before the war. Just as the letters from Thomas W. Postelle, Rodney Gordon, Herman Isaccs, H. Hilliard Gastfriend, and Robert L. Shaw, point out a vital part of history that should be covered with in the book in order to show a complete history of the soldiers of the Vietnam war. It also makes me wonder if any of the Vietnamese (North, or South), had acted out against their own soldiers or gorillas? Sometime I can see it happening because of Newtons third law, "For every action, there is a reaction". This makes me wonder if there were people within any villages that were mad at their own countrymen for making them a target for U.S. soldiers.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Re: Appy Question

by Barbara Lay - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 1:28 PM

That is a very good question and one I never thought of before. I'm sure that there probably were some of the villagers mad at their countrymen for that reason. You would think the villagers just wanted to do the daily routines and live their lives as they were accustomed without the threat of war upon them. And wonder what happened after the war, when those villagers returned home. Were they welcomed, or were they looked down on? Would be interesting to hear of some stories pertaining to that issue.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: If I were the author of Patriots; Soldier Stories

by Jacob Nelson - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 4:35 PM

If I were the author of *Patriots* I would make sure to include the letters written by Robert L. Shaw, Herman Isaacs, and that of Rodney Gordon. These men were all

veterans of the Vietnam War and all had different experiences when they returned home to the United States. While Isaacs and Gordon both faced hostility and profanity directed towards them by anti war protestors Shaw was treated with respect by the protestor he personally met. However, Shaw was met with hostility when applying for jobs in the work environment because of his service in Vietnam. I think including these three individuals stories and letters in *Patriots* would be educational for the reader because it sheds light on the treatment of our veterans when they returned home. It also would show the reader that our veterans were trivialized by a variety of different civilians and not just the stereotypical anti war protestor. I would also include a "note to the reader" providing the context and background of these men to make the historical accounts more accurate. With this being said I wouldn't include the stories written by Michael Rooke-Ley or Tom Preuss. Both of these individuals' letters seemed very radical and objective. These men weren't veterans of the war and rather just expressed very one-sided opinions.

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Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Appy Question

by Tracy Tunnell - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 5:32 PM

After reading these letters, I would find it hard to not include all of them. I find that they all have a different point of view. The one letter that really stuck out in my mind was the one by Robert L. Shaw. He said ,"It was a "dont ask, dont tell" situation, often only working briefly, for as soon as an employer found out who I really was, I would be let go:" last one hired, first one fired." One employer told me to always come in the back door and don't cause in trouble." This letter shows how we treated are returning vets, horribly. here they fought in a brutal war and all we can do is treat them with disrespect. I also thought the "don't ask, don't tell" was important since it is something that we have been using for many other situations. These solider did what they had to do to survive and no one understands that more than they do. I would include a note to this solider, thanking him for what he has done and give him words of encouragement.

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Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Appy Question

by Kaedyn Drake - Thursday, November 14, 2013, 12:32 PM

I agree with you 100%. Growing up and learning about the Vietnam War I heard many stories and saw films of the returning soldiers being mistreated and so much more, but when you get older and start to mature more the stories that you read and hear about hit you a little harder because you can feel the emotion and the energy behind all of it. It's sad to hear about people from your own country treating these soldiers with such disrespect. I understand not agreeing

with something, but taking it out on these men like they did was absolutely terrible.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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### Re: Appy Question



by Barbara Lay - Friday, November 15, 2013, 6:37 PM

I think it is a horrible thing for an employer to treat any veteran that way. Today that would be considered work environment harrasment, but unfortunately back then harrasment wasn't such a big deal as it is today. Too bad it had to be that way. I just hope there aren't any employers out there today that would dare to treat a veteran like that.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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### Re: If I were the author..



by Courtney Waterman - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 5:39 PM

If I were the author I would be sure to include the stories of Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, and Herman Isaacs. All three of these men served in Vietnam, and they were all treated with hostility and spat on upon their return to the states. The mistreatment of some soldiers after their return seems to be a slightly taboo among classrooms. At least for me during my middle and high school years it wasn't really talked about. It was usually just a general, "Some soldiers were treated poorly" and then we moved on. That's why these are important stories to share; the anti-war movement *did* happen, and some soldiers *were* mistreated. If anything people can learn from these stories, and hopefully people will find other ways to express their disgust with the government rather than taking it out on the soldiers. Someone in the American Soldiers Speak clip summed it up well by saying, "You can protest the war but don't protest the soldier."

In my note to the reader I'd make sure to say that these are personal accounts of veterans, and that not all soldiers were spat upon, or mistreated.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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### Re: Soldier Stories second part



by Tracy Tunnell - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 5:47 PM

As a student, it would be hard not to be somewhat partial to the stories of war endure by Americans. Part of me would want to be one-sided and not hear all sides. This is the part where I would have to step back and listen to all sides and make educated judgements about Vietnam. Even the smallest truth might be a lie. I keep hearing

over and over " I did what I had to do and you would too." And this is from all sides of the war, not just from the American side. The smallest lie could be a truth. I think it is vital to gather as many stories and facts when learning the truth. I have actually talked with a Vietnam vet recently and he told me stories of what happened over there and they seem to coincide with others. He talked about how he has had to fight for VA benefits and that some people were supportive and helped, but most people turn a blind eye or said "how could you fight for something so worthless?" My heart went out to him. he said there were days of not sleeping and taking drugs to stay awake and most of them were delirious due to the lack of sleep. I feel very fortunate to be able to talk with him about this time and I wish I could remember his name to honor him.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories second part

by Elizabeth Bruno-Hibler - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 1:40 PM

As an American, I want to believe that it was right for us to go over there no matter how the end turned out. I want to believe that things could have been worse if America hadn't gotten involved. Part of me does believe that but of course there are the stories out there that Americans made it worse and had no business going to Vietnam and most of the stories come from the Vietnamese and the people opposed of the Vietnam war. Whenever I come across disrespect in person, and I have, or in the news, on the internet, to our soldiers and vets, it angers me. I think of the Westboro Baptist church (nothing against Baptists- just that church) and how evil and hateful people can be towards the men and women who risked everything to save those same protesters right to free speech. War is ugly and awful and I understand why people are so against it but sometimes it needs to happen.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories second part

by Courtney Waterman - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 12:16 AM

Hearing and reading disrespectful things about our soldiers angers me as well. They're doing their jobs. I wouldn't want strangers yelling and protesting me for doing a job that they aren't willing to do, so I don't think it is right for others to do that to soldiers. I think the soldier in the [American Soldiers Speak](#) clip hit the nail on the head when he said, "You can protest the war but don't protest the soldier."

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories  



by Jacqueline Collins - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 9:08 PM

As with anything concerning the media, one cannot be so trusting. It's everyone's views and opinions all rolled into one and it's your job to sift through it all to find a version of the truth.

If I was writing in Appy's style I would want to allow a person's memory of an event be heard. I would want the person telling the story to talk freely and express his/her opinion right or wrong. But I would want to also encourage my readers to see through the emotional side of the story and look for the facts. What's been said time and time again? What has been a common thread from teller to teller? The same "facts". And what can be backed up with actual accounts and documented eyewitness statements. In choosing a letter and or person to interview regarding the home coming event, I would choose the letter by H. Hillard Gastfriend. Dated February 26 2007. This person gives a logical and less emotionally tainted review of the original post by Bob Thompson and Tom Preuss. This H. Hillard gives links for the readers to look up and even includes an excerpt from the book by Jim Lembke. Thus supporting his belief in what he thinks is true, rather than just hurling more slanders back at the original poster.

Everyone knows the media reports of an event are never the whole story, so what is the whole story? You're only going to get that by talking to more than one person. So I would include links to trust worthy sites based on actual research, not Wikipedia or Google. I would include a recommendation of seeking out their local VFW group and doing some face to face research of their own with a Veteran who was actually there on that day in question. Or better yet ask residents of San Francisco who attended a coming home ceremony.

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Courtney Waterman - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 12:02 AM

Looking for "what's been said time and time again" is great advice! Since everyone has their own view on how the same event unfolded finding things like that makes the personal stories more concrete, and allows the objective and subjective to work together. I hadn't thought of having people reach out to their local VFW groups. That's a great way to connect with people and find out about other resources

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### If I were Appy

by Nicole Reese - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 10:29 PM

I found that each one of the first hand account letters from the Register Guard were extremely powerful and that each of the men were writing from a haunted and wounded part of their hearts and memories. I also feel terrible that they felt like they needed to defend themselves, even after forty some years. I'm sure it must have been just as hurtful reading the disrespectful commentaries of Bob Thompson and Michael Rooke – Ley as it was returning home in 1975 from a brutal and lost war.

If I were Christian Appy I would definitely include Bob Thompson's letter and two letters to disprove him. For the two letters I would probably choose Thomas W. Postelle and Herman Isaac. Both of the men gave specific encounters of being spat on and Herman even recalled the harsh remarks that were thrown at him. The reason I would include Bob's letter is because it did, after all, spawn all of the replies in which gave us the first hand accounts.

Note to the reader: Please take into consideration that these are letters written from personal experience and feelings. They are completely subjective and thus differ from each other. I would invite you to keep in mind that the Vietnam war remains an incredibly emotional and passionate subject for many, no matter what end of the spectrum they're on.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Keep in Mind

by Nicole Reese - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 10:57 PM

After reading this compilation of letters I've realized just how subjective history can actually be. For example the letter of Robert L. Shaw differed quite drastically from someone like Thomas W. Postelle's letter. Shaw agreed with Bob Thompson that he had never experienced being spat on or knew anybody who had and he even spoke quite fondly of the protesters. He did however go on to tell how he was disrespected when trying to integrate back into society. Postelle on the other hand, strongly disproved Thompson by giving his personal encounter of being spat on not once but twice.

I also was shocked to realize that there are people who don't believe that the mistreatment of soldiers ever happened. That was always one of the first things I thought of when I heard Vietnam, were the protests and spitting on soldiers. I personally believe that spitting on the soldiers did occur and although it may not have happened to every soldier we shouldn't disregard the soldiers who did have the unfortunate experience of such behavior.

As being the student and reading the soldier's stories, I think it's important to keep in mind that since they are personal accounts there's not going to be just one version of the subject, each soldier is going to have a different point of view whether it be positive or negative. And although that can be confusing at times, I appreciate the soldier's stories and will always honor their experiences as valid and crucial pieces of history. As I always say, they are the history!

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Re: Keep in Mind

by Josey Grant - Friday, November 15, 2013, 4:58 PM

Nicole,

I was also shocked that people today don't think our soldiers were ever mistreated. Honestly it sickens me.

Be antiwar if they want, but support our troops for crying out loud!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Keep in Mind

by Jacob Nelson - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 9:14 PM

I completely agree with you in the sense that it would be foolish to deny that there wasn't any mistreatment towards our veterans who returned home. It makes me sick to my stomach to think that soldiers were spit on upon returning to their homes after fighting for their country. I personally think that this type of mistreatment towards our soldiers was misplaced anger. It wasn't like these young men fighting overseas were calling all the shots. Rather it was politicians who weren't even physically fighting the war who should be held far more accountable than any of our veterans.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Elizabeth Bruno-Hibler - Thursday, November 14, 2013, 9:11 AM

It's very easy for the main stream media to not tell the whole story because no matter what, most people will believe what they hear from one source of media like ABC News, CNN, Fox News, and so on. They choose their news program and that is who they believe. I have learned to do my own research. I think the main stream media just tells the people what they want to hear and the people usually believe it. The media choose to only tell part of the story because there are always the little things that the public isn't supposed to know, and I think that is what happened, and still happens, with the Vietnam War. As a student I think it is important to remember that there is always a chance that a soldier is lying in their personal account of a war, whether it was good or bad. Whether or not something is true, each soldier will have a different experience. It's a students job to take in account all of the stories. Perhaps the stories of soldiers being spit on were something that the media didn't want the public to know so they simply didn't tell that part of the war. It is important to investigate a story from all sides and points of view and interviewing the ones who

were there is the best way to get the truth.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories

by Kaedyn Drake - Friday, November 15, 2013, 9:49 AM

Great post Elizabeth. I feel the exact same way about the news as you do. The news shows only what they want to show or what they're told to show and that's what a lot of people go around believing. I agree with you also when you said that even today the media still isn't telling us the truth about the Vietnam War. I think that iver all of this time the truth has been misconstrued so much that the real truth has been lost in time or is about to be lost.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories Part Two

by David Lahy - Thursday, November 14, 2013, 2:21 PM

After reading the compilation of letters I came away thinking would be very hard to learn the truth about what really occurred during the Vietnam War era. There is no straight forward or black and white answer, everything seems to bleed into a gray area where certain facts can be obtained but others aspects are hard to nail down and often second-hand accounts. One thing that is undeniable is the way in which the Vietnam War was documented in the media. To my knowledge this was the first U.S. war that was televised for the most part and hand reporters embedded with the soldiers reporting events as they took place. People back home had a pretty stark view of what war really happens in war, both the good and bad. The major issue concerning the historical accuracy of the perspectives of our own soldiers is one of subjectivity vs. objectivity. One must be careful when reading the personal accounts of soldiers and keep in mind that everyone's experience was different and largely subjective. Their statements may be colored by the events that took place and are based on real events, but reflect the perspective through which the speaker views reality. Not everything they say can be verified using concrete facts or figures. A good example in the reading was the response from Bob Thompson, where he states as fact the study conducted by Jerry Lembke. The study concludes that there was not a single media report to support the claim of spitting on returning Vietnam veterans. Since there was no media reporting, does this mean incidents like this did not happen? I would have to personally disagree with the study and agree with the response by Gastfriend and conclude the data the study was based upon was flawed. Not every incident encountered by returning veterans was reported and to rely on sole on electronic media searches does not reveal the whole truth.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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**Re: Soldier Stories Part Two**  

by Courtney Waterman - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 11:50 PM

David, I couldn't agree with you more on this one. There is definitely a gray area that very vast and very difficult to muddle through due to most of them being second hand accounts. I really like how you asked, "Since there was no media reporting, does this mean incidents like this did not happen?" It's not fair for people to discount something just because there wasn't a news story about it.

By the end of the 1950's "90 percent of American homes had television set." (Belton 322) That's definitely a massive change, and it brought the war home in a completely different way. I wonder how different things would have been in regards to the way American's viewed Vietnam if the television didn't reach this kind of popularity until the 70's. Would there have been fewer protests? Would the media have found another way to bring the war to the masses?

**Work Cited**

Belton, John . *American Cinema/American Culture*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009. 322. print.

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by David Lahy - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 8:22 AM

Courtney,

You are right in the fact that when it comes to interviewing individuals it is sometimes hard to separate fact from fiction, but in these cases I would tend to agree with most of their accounts because there seems to be just enough detail and differences in their stories tend to lend credibility the claim of being spat upon. But for me, we are losing seeing and understanding larger picture or issue by arguing whether or not veterans were spit upon. And that issue is were the veterans of Vietnam treated with disrespect upon their return? The answer is clearly yes! I hope as Americans we can learn from past mistakes and never repeat them in future wars and conflicts.

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by Courtney Waterman - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 2:05 PM

Yes, that is the main issue. The fact that any soldier was disrespected in some way is heartbreaking, and arguing over how the disrespect

occurred takes away from that main issue. Before the big media and television boom weren't most war stories second hand? Didn't a lot of information come from letters from soldiers, and the newspaper columns? The gray area has always existed, but I think the way people dealt with the gray area in previous wars was different. It seems like the gray area used to be treated in a more respectful manner. Like you said, hopefully we can learn from those mistakes

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### Re: Soldier Stories question #2

by Rhonda Garcia Mondragon - Thursday, November 14, 2013, 9:48 PM

The first thing that the letters to the editor is telling me about the truth of the Vietnam War is that there have been occurrences of unjustifiable disrespect towards our own soldiers. When just in our small community we have more than one soldier write a letter to the editor in regards to being spit at or verbally assaulted by protesters when returning home from Vietnam it makes me think twice about what was going on in that point and time. I am now wandering how bad it was not only returning home from a war where you are surrounded by death and war, but now supposedly safe at home and the soldiers are being disrespected for a decision that they didn't make. I don't think that any soldier wants to go to war, but when they enlisted or were drafted in that decision was taken away from them. If it weren't for soldiers we wouldn't be the strong and powerful nation that we have developed into. Some of the concerns of the events of this war from the perspective of a soldier are was there disrespect towards them when they returned home. If a soldier was drafted did that make a difference in how they tell their part of the war compared to a soldier that enlisted and came from a family of military. Personal perspective can change the entire story of what happened, but with multiple soldiers stating similar incidences there has to be a common factor between them all.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories question #2

by Elizabeth Bruno-Hibler - Friday, November 15, 2013, 1:40 PM

I believe that it's more common for the current soldiers and the returning veterans of the War on Terror to come across disrespect and incidences where hurtful things are said about them and to their face than the soldiers of the Vietnam War and my reasoning is because of the draft back during Vietnam. Most of the men that were enlisted didn't have a choice, even if they actually wanted to go. I think that if the draft didn't occur and all soldiers were volunteering to go to Vietnam then the disrespect would have been a whole lot worse. There is no draft for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and men and women join the military on volunteer basis only. In the minds of the people who

are against military and what it brings, the soldiers are volunteering to kill, not to protect. Therefore, I think our current soldiers most likely receive more disrespect and hateful occurrences than the ones of Vietnam. Either way, it's terrible that not everyone respects the people who protect them but it's also a wonderful thing that despite the hate, men and women continue to risk their lives for everyone, including the haters.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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### Re: Soldier Stories question #2

by Rhonda Garcia Mondragon - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 11:32 PM

So what you are saying is that we have protesters at our airports spitting on the returning soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan? I have three cousins, an uncle, an aunt, and I don't know how many close friends that have served an uncountable amount of tours in the war against terrorism and you think that Americans hold more disrespect towards them because they weren't drafted???? When a soldier enlists to serve our country it is not to go on some kind of a killing spree in a different country. It is protect the nation that we should all be proud to call home and a soldier should represent our freedom and what we stand for, which is clearly not volunteering to kill people.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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### History and Personal Accounts

by Courtney Waterman - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 11:08 PM

This compilation of stories shows us that learning the truth isn't always easy, and it's certainly not black and white. Some people seem to believe that, good or bad, all soldiers had the same experience coming home. They were either all treated horribly or they all arrived in a relatively uneventful manner. That's not the case at all. Just because the media didn't do huge stories on it doesn't mean that it didn't happen. If a soldier says that they were spat on, or at, when they arrived home then I choose to believe them because I wasn't there to watch every soldier arrive, and what happened to them is their truth.

While learning history from personal perspectives you have to keep in mind that everyone experiences things differently, and everyone handles their experiences differently as well. Soldiers who fought in the same battle will remember different things, and the way they are affected by these things will also differ. That's why some soldiers want to talk about the time they served and others would rather forget it happened. While reading the personal accounts I find it best to take it all with a grain of salt, and remember that these are *their* stories, *their* experiences, and that

everyone is different. It's nice to have the Appy book as a compliment to the Herring book. We get to read the "paper facts", (the numbers, strategy, and documents) and then we get to read the moresubjective facts (feelings, and personal accounts).

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### **Soldier Stories part 2**

by Jacqueline Collins - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 6:56 PM

One of the things we need to remind ourselves and our peers about, is that what we read in the media can be subjective to the writers opinion. While this is not always the case it is true a large percentage of the time.

When we read about each of these events from either Appy's interviews, the Register Guard or even listen to first hand accounts of people who were there, we learn that every person saw it, or experienced it differently. We as students must take the time to do the research about Vietnam so that when we walk away from this class we have a greater understanding of not only how political a war can be but how costly and devastating it can be to a country.

Perhaps, much like me, there are students who were uninformed about the war until now. And when we are finished with this class and move on with our studies and careers we can learn from the mistakes our leaders made and do our best not to re create them. It is our job as the next generation in charge to leave better legacies to our children. We can do this by finding the truth in both good and bad situations and making decisions that will have healthier impacts on our country and hopefully others as well.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### **Re: Soldier Stories part 2**

by Jacob Nelson - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 9:00 PM

I think you make a really good point about how we as students must decipher and further research the information we are given so that we can have a well-rounded understanding of that historical event. The media can often be subjective to the writer's opinion and we can sometimes see this in our very own textbooks. This is why we as students must always be open to hearing different perspectives of historical events, yet we also need to always recognize validated information over that of individuals.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**(Soldier Stories) Next >**

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