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Soldier Stories

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, November 10, 2013, 9:26 PM

Be sure to incorporate and cite any of the relevant materials you've been exposed to in this course as you address the issues and questions on the forum material pages.

Sum of ratings: -

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Andrew Tignor - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 10:11 AM

Question 1

If you were the author of *Patriots*, which stories/letters would you use or not use. Why? Would you include a “note to the reader”, as Appy has done in several cases, and what would it say to help clarify the account or make it more truthful or historically accurate?

There were quite a few stories that I would have used such as the ones that are brought up in the Register Guard Newspaper in Eugene. The main one would be spitting incidents did occur this is something that I have looked at and found to be false. But I do think that this brings up a lot of good points on the way that the soldiers that went to fight for us and then returned home on how they were treated when they got home. This war brings up a lot for these men and it causes them to not want to talk about their time in the war because of the way they were treated when they got home. I would write a note to the readers about this because it is not the way our soldiers should be treated on their return home.

As I looked more in to this all I could come up with is this did not occur. From this site (<http://www.veteranstoday.com/2009/08/26/part-two-spitting-image-this-legacy-of->

vietnam-is-a-myth/)



I found that these were Myths and did not occur. This would give readers a better look at how things are sometimes stretched from the truth. This kind of stuff makes it hard to know what we should believe and what we shouldn't

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Matthew Schroeder - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 5:46 PM

I really agree with your statement "This war brings up a lot for these men and it causes them to not want to talk about their time in the war because of the way they were treated when they got home." Some soldiers were spit on when they returned home, but this was only first sign for many of them that there adjustment to being back home would be difficult and not just because of the antiwar protestors.

Robert L. Shaw's letter really highlights how terrible some soldiers were treated when they got home. His experience in trying to get a job was summed up "On re-entering society and applying for an entry-level position, I was slandered, degraded, cursed, trivialized and shown the door whenever I mentioned being a veteran." This went well beyond a one or two time occurrence of being spit on when getting on or off a plane. The way many people in our country treated our returning veterans profoundly disrupted there adjustment back into civilian life.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Andrew Tignor - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 8:01 AM

Yes, this was a troubling thing for a lot of veterans and it is a very horrible thing to know that these men were treated like this.

I really never knew that this was the case when are soldiers returned home, you would think that they would be thanked and respected for what they had to sacrifice for this country. but yet that was not the case in this situation they were degraded and not respected for the fight and sacrifices they made.

Thank You.

Andrew Tignor.😞

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Matthew Schroeder - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 5:35 PM

I knew before this class that some soldiers returning home from Vietnam were mistreated, however I did not know the specifics or to the extent that some soldiers experienced. It would have been bad enough if they were simply spit on and that was the end, but as described in a couple of the letters to the editor their involvement in the war hindered them in many ways for years after returning home.

I can understand some of the reasons why people treated the soldiers the way they did. They were the face of the war back home. However just because I agree with their reasoning does not mean I agree with their actions. They should have been finding ways to take out their anger on the decision makers of the war and not the people who simply were following orders while putting their life on the line.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Andrew Tignor - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 6:09 PM

I completely agree with you. People should not have treated the soldiers the way they did, they should have taken that anger that they were experiencing out on the people that put those men there to begin with. It just not the what you think you would see from people. these soldiers put their life on the line so that we could be safe. This is a huge issue for me because I believe that any man or women that is willing to put their life on the line for this country they deserve to be respected and not mistreated for what they have done for us.

Andrew Tignor

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Soldier stories from left, right, and center

by Matthew Schroeder - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 5:10 PM

Question 1 Posting

Starting with the bad articles (in my opinion), I would not include the first three letters

to the editor by Michael Rooke-ley, Tom Preuss, or Bob Thompson. There seemed to be speaking from both extremes and there information consisted primarily of opinion rather than fact. They did not seem to be in the mind set to even consider someone else's view. They would not be good candidates for people to be included in the Patriots book.

The rest of the letters with the exception of H. Hilliard Gastfriend I felt were good, genuine accounts of what each experienced. They shared their own experiences but were open to and realized that other people might have a different one. They didn't make the presumption that because it happened or didn't happen to me, it was the same for everyone else. Gastfriend's letter was kind of pointless in my eyes as he was trying to discredit someone else by simply posting links and quotes from other peoples work.

I would include a "note to the reader" for each letter as they really help the reader understand where the person is coming from and there mind set when they are recounting what they experienced. I would continue to do what Appy does, put the reader into the view of the person being interviewed. Say what they did before the what, what they did during the war, something that made their experience unique to them.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldier stories from left, right, and center

by Andrew Tignor - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 8:42 AM

I agree with you the first three stories just were not the kind of stuff that you would want to share when it comes to the historical events of the past and the present. these few stories put off a bad vibe and give some miss leading information that was based on their opions rather then facts. just as you have pointed out.

As for the reminder of the stories they seemed to give some sort of account that had accuered with their time spent in the war or the time of the war. This information is the sort of stuff that is useful in the studying of these events. The one storie that I think I must have over looked is the one that you have mentioned By H. Hilliard Gastfriend. I will have to look at it and see these accounts because it seems that he could be a very miss guided person on these events.

Andrew Tignor.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Bias ≠ History

by Matthew Schroeder - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 5:33 PM

Question 2 Posting

For me these letters showcase the importance of gathering the information from multiple sources rather than putting your faith in one source and basing your opinion off just that. If we were tasked with determining whether or not soldiers were actually spit on and I only looked at one of these letters before making our decision, I would be missing out on so much and really do myself a disservice by only having a small piece of the puzzle but yet calling it complete.

The biggest issue I seem to encounter when reviewing the accounts of soldiers is bias. Whether or not it is intentional or not, every story will have a little bias that shifts the historical accuracy away from the absolute truth. Sometimes these shifts are small and other times they are big, but they are always there. The article by Tom Preuss really stood out for me as having a huge bias. While reading the letter I could just imagine a guy whose face is just glowing red with anger. Maybe there was more to what he was replying to than what was shown that caused his anger to build up. He clearly had bias's, but seemed more intent on bashing the person he was replying to rather than correcting issues he felt were stated incorrectly. History seems to be quite accessible to anyone searching for it. It must however be collected from multiple sources even ones saying the same thing before you should consider it factual history.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Bias ≠ History

by Ryan Bendel - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 11:46 PM

Mathew,

I agree with you that bias occur and they can change the way we look at history, which is why we must have lots of information, multiple sources, multiple letters, all of which ARE going to occur bias, because everyone is so different and everyone has their own opinions and its those opinions that make our history, think of plantation owners vereses an abolisionists views, both are going to be completely different and yet their differing views make our history, good or bad bias are important in the understanding of history

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Bias ≠ History

by Daniel Duerfeldt - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 10:29 PM

Mathew,

I agree with you that it is very important to gather the most amount of information as possible in order to make informed conclusions about events in

history. Leaving out opinions and accounts of events limits the scope of the historical research which may sway a reader's opinion one way or another.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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They Were There



by Erik Johnson - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 8:04 PM

Question 1

If I were writing a book such as *Patriots*, I would only use the four stories that were told by the Vietnam veterans who recounted their return to the United States. The rest of the letters are mostly political and social bickering. Each of the accounts by Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, Herman Isaacs, and Robert Shaw are all valuable testimonies to the situation that faced returning soldiers. A more in-depth interview of each of these men would be required for use in a book like *Patriots*, but the collection of their responses gives a good picture of the challenges of re-entering American society after the war.

I asked two Vietnam veterans about their return to the States and neither of them experienced any protests and spitting. One said that this may have been because he came back "feet first" after the deuce-half truck that he was riding in drove over a mine and blew up. He did say that a friend of his would get emotional when speaking of his experience of being spat on. He said that he believed his buddy had flown into Oakland or San Francisco.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: They Were There



by Daniel Duerfeldt - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 10:38 PM

Erik,

I agree that the accounts of ACTUAL soldiers returning from Vietnam are the most important. However, the other opinions from the selection of letters could demonstrate to the reader what Americans felt about the war and the kind of adversity faced by the returning soldiers.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Soldier Stories Have Value



by Erik Johnson - Tuesday, November 12, 2013, 8:36 PM

Question2

The letters to the editor show us that each of the hundreds of thousands of Vietnam soldiers that returned from the war has a very unique story to tell and we cannot make blanket statements about “all” of them or “none” of them. We may not be able to document their every move, but that does not mean that their testimony is invalid. However, it is certainly difficult, from an academic standpoint, to know what should be included in a body of work and what should be left for telling around the campfire. War is such an incredibly emotional and politically charged event that bias is to be expected. Our *Patriots* book does a good job of giving us some background about the interviewees, so we can take bias into consideration when reading their accounts.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories Have Value

by Ryan Bendel - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 11:50 PM

Erik,

I could not have said it better myself. We can not simply look at one persons experiance and say thats how it was for everyone, each and every person involvedor affected by this war has a different story, while these stories may be similar in some senses we can not simply say what happened for one happened for everyone

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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The stories Question 2

by Andrew Tignor - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 8:28 AM

Question 2

What can this compilation of stories (letters to the editor) tell us, if anything, about the learning the truth of even the smallest historical occurrences of the Vietnam War era? 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?

These stories shared a lot of information that can only truly be spoken by the men that were there and made the sacrifices for this country. It is so touching to hear these stories and to understand the hardship that they had to go through for us. These stories bring the whole thing to life, sharing what had happened gives us a bigger understanding over the bigger stories that are to be told and that is the stories

about our fallen and surviving soldiers that fight for us.

My major concern when I am studying these historical events is that the information that is given by some of these people is stretched a little further than the truth making it hard to believe what is to be taken as the truth or what is border line lies. Tom Preuss story is a good example of this miss given information that is given to the public and the actions that are going on in wars from the past and present. These types of people do not know the truth but yet the way that they state something makes us want to believe that this information the truth. This is hard when it comes to studying these events because they are so miss leading of the truth.

Andrew Tignor.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Question #1

by Chels Staton - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 1:33 PM

Question 1

If you were the author of Patriots, which stories/letters would you use or not use. Why? Would you include a “note to the reader”, as Appy has done in several cases, and what would it say to help clarify the account or make it more truthful or historically accurate?

If I had been the author of Patriots I would have made it a Vietnam trilogy; our side, their side, and the politics/politicians. I would include all of the POW stories, like Porter Halyburton's (Appy, p. 222-228) and keep the note to the reader. Stories like his truly let America's civilians have insight to what happened during the war. The soldiers who were captured were in fact tortured, and suffered. A POW in the American POW's video said it best when he said they were following orders, and when they were interrogated the goal was to return with honor and not say anything that they would not be proud to tell the guy next to them they had said. If there had been more media coverage from our side about what *really* they were going through than possibly there would have been more sympathy when they arrived home. Notes to the reader should include some sort of reference to accounts that have been verified, though I'm not entirely sure how one would go about doing that. Each story can be said to be made up or a matter of opinion.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question #1

by Chels Staton - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 2:16 PM

I would have included Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, and Herman Isaac's letter's to the editor in Patriots. These are accounts from people who were there

and include what they experienced, particularly in California, when they came home from Vietnam. The other letter's are mostly retaliation, opinions, and flawed attempts at research based solely on what the media made available.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question #1

by Andrew Tignor - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 2:31 PM

These are some very great points and I never would have thought about it in this way. your trilogy idea is so intriguing and optimistic, and it provides us the opportunity to hear both sides of the war instead of having just the one side our side.

I also agree with you on the point of keeping the stories from the POW. These are good stories and provide us with the information of what the soldiers had to go through. It really opens one's mind to the thought of what is currently going on in the wars that are present with the here and now. Such as our soldiers in Iran and Iraq being tortured and what kind of stuff they really are going through that we don't know about.

Andrew Tignor.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Question #1

by Matthew Schroeder - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 6:43 PM

I also really like your idea of doing a trilogy series. Having everyone's view, opinions, and experiences combined together and mixed throughout can present some information in a conflicting way. When you read something and then the next person says that it really didn't happen that way, this can be difficult to sort out.

The question I might ask however is while people such as us who are pursuing history to find out what really happened, if you had a documentary or a book divided up into sections described as say Americans point of view, Vietnamese point of view, and Politicians point of view, do you think that people might choose to avoid reading the sections that might conflict with what they believe. Some people might say "those damn politicians, there all a bunch of liars" and thus they might just skip over that entire section losing out on all the information contained within. However if the sections were not so evenly divided people would be more apt to read through a section they don't agree with while looking for something they do. I can definitely see good and bad in both ways.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question #1

by Ryan Bendel - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 11:31 PM

Chelsi,

I really enjoyed your thoughts, and I agree with you, I too believe that if I were to write patriots I too would include all the stories, I especially liked your idea of making it a trilogy, that way we could have all sides side by side, its sometimes difficult to read Appys book at least for me when we have US soldiers stories next to a politicians story, next to a Vietnamese story, sometimes the lines become blurred and its difficult to get a sense of what we are reading, very good job

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Question #2

by Chelsi Staton - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 1:51 PM

Question 2

What can this compilation of stories (letters to the editor) tell us, if anything, about the learning the truth of even the smallest historical occurrences of the Vietnam War era? 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?

The letters to the editor are horrifying as far as I'm concerned, mainly because these are people who live among us in our community. We know that these Veterans exist but sadly some are still not proud to say that they served in a war that was so profoundly protested. War brings out the worst in people, I myself have found serious discontent for some of the opinions I've witnessed in this class. Keeping in mind that the letters to the editor are only 8 people, and the Appy book only contains a few hundred stories of the thousands that returned home we may never know if the spitting happened. However, for anyone to say that it absolutely did not happen is ignorant. Of the hundreds of stories we are privy to, there are thousands that are untold. One soldier in American Soldiers speak said, "At that time it was hard for me understand why they were doing it, but through the years I've realized that's what this country is about", in reference to tomatoes being thrown at him when he returned home from the war. Yet another said, "You can protest the war, but don't protest the soldier. I did what I had to do, by God you'da done it too or died".

I have to agree with Rodney Gordon when he responded to Bob Thompson's letter, "Thompson needs to get his facts from actual people who were there and not rely on the media so much for information". I could feel my blood boil when I read Bob Thompson's piece especially this, "there was not a single media report to support

such claims of hostility toward the returned veterans". The fact that that were protestors at all (Michael Rooke-Ley) tells me that returning soldiers were in fact treated with hostility. It's important to remember and recognize that many people, including Vietnam Veterans themselves, were against the war. Today still there are people who are aggressive and hostile towards soldiers coming home from Iraq, this is the world we live in.

Historical accuracy can be left up to opinion. I don't think that any one of us will completely agree on every aspect that we are learning in this class, but we can get an idea of what happened and make our own judgments based on what we agree and disagree with in the material provided. What we face as students learning about a war that happened over 50 years ago is plainly the point that we were not there. The media disgraced America and our soldiers in the Vietnam War and sadly still has the ability to sway public opinion.

As a side note I feel I should add that I am the daughter of a Vietnam Veteran. Never in my whole life did my Dad ever mention that he had been in the war. We learned about it from his father, our grandfather, who told us that only once did my Dad talk to him about his experience. It was the day after he returned home and my grandfather listened but didn't ask questions or show much interest. After the fact he said he wished he had listened more carefully and maybe then he would know more or maybe my Dad would have talked more about it. The biggest thing I remember my grandfather telling us was that my Dad refused to tell anyone that he had served in the war, unable to get jobs he worked for himself as a mechanic and cutting wood for our small community.





Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question #2  

by Camren Bernico - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 3:33 PM

Hello Chels,

Firstly thank you to your father for his heroism and standing with his country. I wish he had felt more safe or comfortable speaking about his time in Vietnam. It saddened me greatly to imagine his spending his whole life aftering putting his

life into grave danger for all of us and not feel ok talking about it or trusting in his fellow Americans or perhaps the time there was so horrifying to haunting? I do not know but thank you for sharing about him Chels.

I also wanted to comment on your picture of the gentlemen holding the banner "Honor the warrior not the war". I feel people need to remember this. My brother in law hopes to join the Marines. That is his dream to be a soldier and serve his country. Personally that is about as far away from my own dream as possible but I respect him for his dream and his values.

He is a good kid and if he were called to war would go proudly for his country and it's people and we would send him off feeling like the hero to all of us that he is. A soldier is doing their job and often it may be a grisly one but they do what they must and they are the ones who bleed and die and stay awake at night haunted by the horrors they saw or committed. It is the soldiers who fight for us always and bear the burden of that fighting. A soldier pledges to the people and the constitution and not the government.

We must always remember they are not the bad guys and are one of us who left their homes to fight for us. Wars often get dirty, they become corrupt and lose their point and we the people are often duped. This is not the soldier but the politicians and corporations. That is a huge difference. Many wars are fought for the wrong reasons or even the right ones that turn into wrong ones.

So yea, don't hate on our soldiers.

Thank you Chels for the personal story the related to all of this.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: Question #2



by Chels Staton - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 5:29 PM

Thank you Camren! It's possible that my Dad was a part of something horrific, and as a Catholic I'm sure there were things that haunted him the rest of his life. I know for a fact that when he did his final repentance the priest disclosed to me that my father had been keeping a lot in and he hoped that he'd be able to disclose to me what he went through before he died. It never happened but I do have some peace knowing that he was finally able to (hopefully) forgive himself. I am sorry to hear about your brother in law, I fully support everyone who joins the military but I know the struggle and pain it can bring to a family! I hope he finds what he is looking for because I don't know a prouder man than a U.S. Marine. It's sad to realize that our men and women are doing what they do because of orders, not necessarily because they want to or believe in the cause. My ex-husband is currently in Afghanistan and we've had a hard time skyping with him because it really upsets our son to see how badly his Dad doesn't want to be a part of what's going on. I wholeheartedly agree with you that wars

are political and corporate, I wish more people realized that and supported our soldiers.

Thank you again for your response, and good luck to your brother in law!

-Chels

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Question #2

by Erik Johnson - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 1:26 PM

Well said Chels. It seems as though Vietnam veterans were received by the country in a way that caused them to avoid speaking of their experiences. The prevailing public expression was one of protest in the streets, rather than the romanticized ticker-tape parades of their WWII predecessors. Beyond the outspoken counterculture, at times there seems to have been an attitude of failure or mistrust (letter by Robert Shaw) that was aimed toward these returning soldiers.

My uncle enlisted in the army and was in Vietnam for a year and a half as a flight engineer on a Chinook helicopter. Although he doesn't mind talking to me about it, he downplays the overall experience and describes it as though he was just doing his job. He didn't experience protests when he came home, but said that he would avoid discussions on the topic because they would lead to heated debate. My other uncle (his brother) was a hippy who avoided the draft by acting crazy during his physical and was involved in the local protests against the war. Despite their polar views, they were always best friends.

Thank you for sharing about your father and I think it's great that you're learning more about his experience by taking this class.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Question #2

by Chels Staton - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 5:35 PM

Hi Erik! Thank you for responding, I agree with you about the public expression. My grandfather was a part of WWII and I'm sure that he felt some sort of guilt about the way my Dad was treated as opposed to the way he was when he returned. I remember when I enlisted the only advice they both gave me was to "keep myself" and I didn't know what that meant until I found out that I had orders to Baghdad International Airport. I called

home to tell my Dad how excited I was to go serve my country and do exactly what I had signed up to do. He told me to remember that not everyone agreed with what I was doing but that no matter what I should be proud that I done something bigger than myself for people I would never know. It meant a lot to me and I wish he had the same reception in his time.

I enjoyed hearing about your uncles, it fascinates me to think that in America we are the last generation to be affected by the Vietnam War. We are in a sense the children of the war and I crave to know everything I can about it, no matter how little the detail! I'm truly enjoying this course and getting to interact with others who have experiences to share as well.

Thank you Erik,

Chels

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Question One



by Ryan Bendel - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 2:31 PM

Question 1

If you were the author of Patriots, which stories/letters would you use or not use. Why? Would you include a “note to the reader”, as Appy has done in several cases, and what would it say to help clarify the account or make it more truthful or historically accurate?

If I were the author of Patriots, I would not omitted any of the stories, I would have chosen to include ALL the stories and letters that I obtained from my interviews all 350 of them. Appy choose to only include part of his interviews and letters, and although I have not read War was so greatly protested and there have been many books written about it, not to mention countless Hollywood films and educational series like the PBS series we are watching, its like the Civil War, people enjoy reading about it and dissucssing it, however unlike the Civil War the Vietnam War was greatly unpopular in todays standards, and having that unpopular stigma makes it hard sometimes to know if what you are reading is truth or fiction. Sometimes we vet very buased point of views when it comes to the Vietnam War. So the more we have the better, if we could have all the stories and interviews that Appy obtained I think it would only further the validity of his message. When you have different perspectives and I guarentee that when it comes to the Vietnam War there will be different perspectives the more the merrier. If we could get all 350 stories we would have an even greater idea of what really occurred from first hand experience. What was the war really like? Were they scared? How did it feel to take another life? These are all questions that we would like to have answered, and those first hand accounts, the experiences of people who were actually there and involved are the ones we wont, not second hand accounts of people who weren't even involved. The more you have the better of an idea you can have of what actually occured.

Especially when it comes to the Vietnam War you will get differing views, even from soldier to soldier, because everyone is different, its those different views of the same issue or situation that will be so crucial to knowing and truley understanding whats accurate and whats not

I would not chose to include an authors note, the authors note seem to have the authors opinion on the issue at hand. In the case of a book like this I would want the stories and interviews to stand alone on their own. Let the actual words of the person involved stand, if i wanted to have my thoughts and opinions I would write a text book or a book on the vietnam war, not one of first hand accounts.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question One

by Camren Bernico - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 3:23 PM

I both agree and disagree with your post Ryan.

I do feel that using firsthand accounts such as the Appy book, such as the letters we read are indeed vital to furthering our understanding of historical events. Not even limited to historical facts but as well as giving history a face and with it humanity and emotions.

What is interesting about studying the history of the Vietnam War is that we get to not only learn facts but we get to really know what life was like back then due to the living accounts of veterans, poloticians and more of that time.

The picture I personally get is much warmer (not in a happy way, but vivid understanding) from the Vietnam War history then say when I learn about Mayan / Aztec history. Both are interesting and important. None is the greater but I can more easily relate and picture the time of Vietnam thanks to the first hand data we have.

Where I disagree with you is that you decline a authors note and as well put to much faith into the hundreds of stories you could get, and why stop at hundreds when we could have hundreds of thousands even.

While firsthand accounts are important you have to be able to give credibility to your work and works cited. I could tell you I was in a war and give you a whole story about it but I lied. I could be a veteran but have some dementia so my facts are not always correct. So on and so on. History would be far to easy if all we did was take a handful of accounts and toss them into a book of historical facts because much of that is not fact.

A authors note can help add factual information, context, notes, comments, you name it. It helps to pull the data together.

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Re: Question One

by Morgan Magill - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 8:14 PM

Camren, it's funny that you used the Mayans/Aztecs as examples, because that is exactly what I had been thinking about. It is such an advantage to have first hand stories so that we can really sense how people were affected by the world around them. We may have beautiful architecture from ancient peoples, but we don't know what they were thinking on the day to day about what was happening around them. Just think about the internet now. The entire world has all of our opinions about every single worldly event that has happened. If I wanted to hear a first hand account from someone who's house was destroyed in Katrina, I can look it up on the internet. I believe that this will be an asset as far as our history, because people will always be able to see how people felt, right when something happened. Then we don't have to worry about loss of memory, or distortion throughout time.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Question Two

by Ryan Bendel - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 2:44 PM

Question 2

What can this compilation of stories (letters to the editor) tell us, if anything, about the learning the truth of even the smallest historical occurrences of the Vietnam War era? 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?

It tells us that no matter what the issue is people can have different perspectives on things, no matter the issue. Depending on where you are in the issue it can affect how you perceive it as well. Bob Thompson seemed to think that through his research of reading books and goole searching that no veteran was spat on. He seemed to get a lot of hate from the following people writing in to the editor. The next few letters contained accounts of veterans who were infact spat on, who had to change into civilian cloths to avid being spat on. To just goes to show that perspective is completely what makes an issue true or false, Bob Thompson wasn't a veteran, so he was never put in that situation, he only had facts based on what other people had seen or heard, while the actual veterans had to endure it in person, now it could be that their accounts were a bit exaggerated due to their frustaration of the war and the way they were treated. Having that sort of biased both from Bob Thompson and the other veterans is a majo concern, were they actually spat on or not? While it's a minor issue it's a topic that could probably be debated for hours,

days even. I would probably take the side of the actual veterans over the non. They were there and said they were, while Bob only took his info from second hand accounts

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Camren Bernico - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 2:58 PM

Camren Bernico

HST 195

Forum 2 - Question 1

To prefix I would like to say that I enjoyed reading these letters provided to us. It was a classic example that our teacher has been trying to imprint upon us from the start of this course. That being of course finding the ability to dig through many reports of history in order to uncover a more pure truth. These letters showed a direct contrast to each other when speaking of and answering the same question. Were soldier spat upon?

Of all these submitted letters it was the last one supplied to us, written by Robert L. Shaw of Eugene. "The problems began when I attempted to enter polite society", says Robert in his letter. His words gave me a whole new insight into what life was after the war for these vets.

I find his story, at least based upon my knowledge, to be horribly sad and yet important. It shows very well how misguided and harshly judged veterans were and that massive obstacles and difficulties they had to endure and overcome and at times lose to in order to live the resemblance of a normal American life.

In all honestly each letter presented held great merit even the hotly disputed letter written by Bob Thompson of Eugene.

What perplexed me however was how a book was published;

"The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory and the Legacy of Vietnam", when it was found to be full of fatal flaws and errors with most of the data used being secondary sources found online. This shows grave errors in that it was published, that is was

quoted as evidence to argue a point and just how great media can spin the wheel of history and current affairs.

If I were to include a note the reader it would be simply to inform the readers that the merit of these letters is not known as these are taken at face value personal accounts. As we saw there is a huge divide on if soldiers were spit on or not, imagine how this translates into even greater questions of history. Therefore while I side with the soldier letters on a personal level I can not simply deny the fact that errors, emotions, lies and more could plague any one or all letters submitted on either side of the question. If I were to be more historical as would be the case for a book, I would want to further investigate these claims to gain a better understanding of them.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Camren Bernico - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 3:12 PM

Question 2:

I feel I covered a lot of this in my first question so much of this may be a bit of reiteration.

The letters we read speak volumes about how hard it can be to interrupt the truth and validity of historical accounts. These accounts of course making up the sum of "history".

We see very clearly a "line down the middle" approach to the question of "Were US soldiers spit on when returning home from Vietnam". The article starts off with a very anti-war approach which simply begs for people to write in hot and bothered. I was shocked to see such blatant bait used as I always felt journalism was allowed to be passionate sure but it was never supposed to take sides in it's pursuit of truth and information.

The letters boil down to, simply, many veterans telling us firsthand accounts of their being spat upon when returning home and some others, mainly the letter written by Bob Thompson of Eugene which tries to cite a flawed source as a means to disprove that soldiers were ever spat upon. I say flawed source because we learn that the book used focused on internet and media sources while ignoring the first hand sources such as the soldiers themselves.

Now if we find it hard to dig through all these accounts and decide for ourselves what is history. Were soldiers spit upon? If we take all this effort for this question then imagine how this applies to the greater questions. Vietnam, the war, the politics are

full of questions, full of emotions and is an argument that wears many hats.

It is this that our professor has been trying to explain to us and impart the importance of upon us. We must be critical yet open to a variety of sources, understand where the sources come from and be able to weigh the sum of all information to then come up with what we feel is the most pure and accurate historical truths.

As for viewing history from the perspective of the soldiers. One thing to keep in the forefront of your mind is that while "historical" this was all real life. It at times can seem like a story, so far away, so long ago, almost as if it is not real or carrying with it the weight of reality and consequence. This is all real however and because of that reality these soldiers carry the burden of emotion. Emotions do many things to a man and often times they can paint a memory or thought in shades that mirror your personal feelings. This then can often bend the truth one way or another.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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The Value of Personal Experience

by Morgan Magill - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 4:16 PM

Question 1

If you were the author of *Patriots*, which stories/letters would you use or not use. Why? Would you include a “note to the reader”, as Appy has done in several cases, and what would it say to help clarify the account or make it more truthful or historically accurate?

If I were the author of *Patriots*, I would not include the first 2 articles by Rooke-Ley or Preuss. Rather than personal accounts that they experienced, they were just extreme opinions that are seemingly based on no factual information. Appy himself felt that, "One of the virtues of oral history is its capacity to encompass a wide range of individual experiences and viewpoints. In these accounts people are, in the best sense, speaking for themselves, making vivid the lived experience of the past, what it felt like to be them at an important moment in history," (Appy, preface). I believe that these articles do not exemplify this principal of oral history, and therefore, do not belong in a book like *Patriots*.

I think that the rest of these articles could have a place in a book like *Patriots* because they have actual personal accounts included which, to me, show the potential of validity. Even the article by Bob Thomas, though his argument did not come from a personal experience, has a place among the other accounts because it is the argument that all of the other articles are either agreeing or disagreeing with. The articles by Postelle, Gordon, Issacs, and Shaw are all valuable because they have their personal experiences as Veterans as evidence, whether they agree with each other or not. Even the article by Gastfriend is more valid than the first two because they are citing the source used in Thompson's article to provide an

argument, rather than just throwing out belligerent opinions that are not based on any sort of evidence or sources. Though Thompson's article comes from no personal experience, I just think it is an important piece to include as a preface to the following articles.

I would definitely use notes to the reader. I think they are valuable because they let the reader know out of what context the following piece is coming from. I would group all of these articles together as one piece and preface then with one note to the reader. It is important to give the reader context, so I would let them know that these articles were a series of back and fourths from the Eugene, Oregon Register Guard newspaper regarding the return of Vietnam veterans to the United States after their service. I would also say that these are personal accounts from each author, and that they should not necessarily be used as historical fact, and do not reflect the opinions of every veteran.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: The Value of Personal Experience

by Tyler Kennedy - Thursday, November 14, 2013, 3:55 PM

morgan

i like your insight on this weeks material, i also really like the last paragraph where you touched on how the letters shouldnt be used as historical fact. i agree with you. i think the personal accounts a great, but as time goes by memorys start to distort, and become less credible and less truthful.

-tyler

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The Value of Personal Experience

by Morgan Magill - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:45 PM

Thank you, Tyler. You definitely get what I am saying. And this is when it gets especially complicated. Those who were involved in whichever historical event would obviously know what actually happened, but then we have to be careful not to exactly go by what they say in case they do not remember correctly, or their account is the result of years of over exaggeration. That is why I say that we just have to have faith. There is no way for us to know whether a text book or a person who was actually there is more reliable, really.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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How can we trust our resources? 🍷 📖

by Morgan Magill - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 5:14 PM

Question 2

What can this compilation of stories (letters to the editor) tell us, if anything, about the learning the truth of even the smallest historical occurrences of the Vietnam War era? 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?

This compilation of stories just supports what we already should have known, that it is sometimes hard to find the truth. I myself can never one hundred percent know that is the truth and what is not about any historical event, simply because I was not there. It comes down to deciding which historical resources are worth trusting. Generalizations always cause concern for me. How can someone decide what every single soldier's experience was? Even when generalizations pertain to the Vietnamese I do not accept them. It is highly unlikely that every Vietnamese soldier or citizen behaved in the exact same ways toward the Americans.

It's not fair to tell someone that something that they say happened to them didn't happen. Unless Thompson was there with Thomas W. Postelle, how can he say that he was never spat on? Thompson committed extreme generalization when he said that no American soldier was ever spat on by other Americans. His argument for saying that nobody was ever spat on is that there was never any coverage in the media about it. It makes sense to me that not every spitting would be covered in the news or a magazine, because the instances didn't happen in front of any cameras. Also, a lot of media probably didn't want to include the negative things that protesters did because it made them look bad, which is why people like Thompson think that all veterans were greeted with open arms by all of the American people upon their arrival (another generalization). If this was the case, then I do not believe there would have been so many soldiers that would have responded with disagreement. It was obviously important enough to them to be heard, even though it was nearly 40 years after the fact.

I work at Shari's, and this last Veteran's Day we had a lot of veterans come in because we were offering a free slice of pie to anyone who serves or has served in our country's military. Not everyone wanted to talk about their experience, and some didn't even say which war they were in. Those that were more open shared a few stories with me. It was so interesting to hear different accounts from people who fought in the Vietnam War. I never assumed that any of them were lying or making false accounts. It seems silly to me to assume that this long after a war somebody would be lying about what they experienced. If anything, I feel that maybe specific details have been forgotten, or exaggerated over the years of telling their stories, but I would never expect that they would be lying.

There is no perfect way to find truth in stories. Like I've said in a previous forum post,

one just has to see what is repeated within multiple resources. If multiple soldiers say that they were spat on, then I have a hard time believing that every single one of them is lying. If multiple sources say that the POWs were tortured, then I'm not going to say that they weren't. If we only had personal stories from Prisoners of War that endured the tortures of the Vietnamese camps, rather than video evidence, would somebody have said that never happen either?



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: How can we trust our resources?  

by Erik Johnson - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 8:57 PM

I agree with your assessment of generalizations. As I read your post I began to consider that a significant amount of strife over the years can be blamed on generalizations. Whole groups of people have been the focus of stereotypes and blame.

I like that you took the time out of your workday to talk with some of the veterans. We can learn a lot from what they have experienced.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: How can we trust our resources?

by Morgan Magill - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:53 PM

Thank you, Erik. It was so interesting to listen to the wide variety of stories that the veterans had to offer. Some of my coworkers seemed like it was a chore listening to them go on and on, but as someone who is always thirsty for more knowledge, I just loved it.

And yes, I believe that generalizations cause so many problems that could be avoided. Any war can be blamed, in some part, by generalization. Many arrests of innocent people are caused by generalization, especially of those that are not white skinned. It is such a shame. Same goes for generalizations of the way that people are treated in war. Like I already said, there is absolutely no possible way that Thompson could know that *absolutely no soldiers* were spit on, unless he was with every single soldier at every single moment. It is infuriating to me. It's like if someone were to tell a child that they were obviously never abused by their parent, because their parent wasn't arrested.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Daniel Duerfeldt - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 9:06 PM

Question 1

If you were the author of *Patriots*, which stories/letters would you use or not use. Why? Would you include a "note to the reader", as Appy has done in several cases, and what would it say to help clarify the account or make it more truthful or historically accurate?

Out of selection of letters, I would use all of them if I were to be writing something similar to *Patriots*, because, as the letters clearly state, not every soldier had the same experience upon returning to the United States from Vietnam. As Thomas W. Postelle of Veneta wrote in his letter to the editor on February 25, 2007, "As an Army private flying on Delta Air lines to visit my family while on leave, I was spat upon." While Robert L. Shaw of Eugene wrote in his letter on February 26, 2007, "My experience was that returning as a Vietnam veteran was a simple event. Nor has any Vietnam vet ever related to me an incident about being spat upon." Shaw goes on, however, to relay his difficulty assimilating into society because of his status as a Veteran. While these two accounts are very different, put together they tell the story

of the big picture of what people thought of the war and of the returning soldiers; separately they tell one person's story. I would definitely include a note to the reader. For instance, I would suggest to the reader to reserve judgment until reading all the stories relating to the treatment of returning soldiers to get a better idea of the big picture.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Matthew Schroeder - Friday, November 15, 2013, 3:40 PM

I understand and agree with what you said that every soldiers experience should be included. But reading the first 3 letters and the one from Gastfriend, I cannot determine that they were soldiers at all let alone veterans of the Vietnam War. There are few people I could with any confidence believe in there description a soldiers experience. They include the soldier themselves and a seasoned historian. From the readings, I cannot determine if the people mentioned above fall into either of these categories.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Daniel Duerfeldt - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 10:03 PM

Mathew,

I definitely understand what you are saying. The credibility of the authors of the letters is suspect, but I think that the opinions expressed represent varying viewpoints of the same issue, which I think is the most important aspect to come away with. There are, almost certainly, different opinions about historical events.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldier Stories

by Daniel Duerfeldt - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 9:08 PM

Question 2

What can this compilation of stories (letters to the editor) tell us, if anything, about the learning the truth of even the smallest historical occurrences of the Vietnam War era? 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?

This compilation of letters to the editor shows us that there are always conflicting viewpoints of even the smallest events in history. However, the letters do have an overlapping theme that tells the story of the general attitude that was received by the returning soldiers. For instance some of the authors say that they were personally spit on while others say they were not, but most of them agree that they were subject to some form of mistreatment or another. What is really important as a student is to be able to read these stories, even if they are in conflict with each other, and be able to understand the big picture. It is not really important the number of returning soldiers that were spit on versus not spit on, but what is very important is to understand what kind of treatment they received on their return to the United States and what the general attitude was surrounding the politics of the war and the war itself.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Question 1

by Amanda Day - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 10:18 PM

First of all forgive me for any harshness but, if we are indeed trying to focus on the American soldier in this forum I think it best to leave out angry, and grudgingly sour opinions, that are tainted by blind hatred and false accusations. Often I find that many of the extreme “hippy” types we encounter here in our lovely city of Eugene are far from peace loving and fun but rather aggressive and bitter (and apparently published). Now of course our troops probably received a hot and cold welcome home after the mess that was Vietnam. But of course their effort is absolutely appreciated and we should provide support as communities to those who put their lives out there for our future safety back home. Considering all of this, I would have to say that if we want to truly look at our American Soldiers we should leave out the childish behavior and even the treatment upon their return so many years ago and focus on what they went through and sacrificed for us, their country, and most importantly what they believed was right as good citizens. We should take the first hand accounts and the documented evidence and judge for ourselves just what kind of legacy our troops need to have passed on. And now after this shot rant I realize that this would be a likely candidate for “note to the reader” if I were the author.

On a less ranty, more factual note, trying to gather information in a balanced, non-biased and informative way can be difficult, especially when the subject of Vietnam is so sensitive with many still. From an information based point of view, the *American Experience* POW video had some aspects that I would include if I were the author of *Patriots*. While slightly emotional at times, the interviews with the former POW’s provided detailed accounts that seemed to give us the same general idea of certain torture methods and determination of the South Vietnamese. One method for example that stuck with me was the “Vietnamese rope trick” where the prisoners arms were tied up behind their back until dislocation and fractures most likely occurred. There were three to four accounts of the same method and even a name

that several of the POW's shared with their audience.

These accounts of first hand every day life bring to realization articles like those in *The Register Guard* and their haughty replies seem irrelevant. Whether there is evidence of soldiers being spat on upon their return or not the only writer who chose to view both sides in that whole feed was Veteran Robert L. Shaw. He explained his difficulties entering back into society, claiming the protestors previously accused were fairly respectful but it was "polite society" that shunned and mistreated him. Hmm, the very people ranting in the newspapers about things they don't know...

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 1



by Chels Staton - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 6:03 PM

Hi Amanda,

You're right that we should focus on the sacrifice and what our soldiers went through for our country, and it should be that way with every war in my opinion. Sadly though that's not the way it is, and you can ask any soldier, veteran or professional who works with soldiers and vets with PTSD, the return home can be just as hard if not harder for some men and women than the war itself. Their efforts are not "absolutely appreciated" as you said. Then and now there is a large population who are against any war of any kind and do not support the men and women serving. It is our job now to try and make change so that our current generation that is serving is not dealing with the same issues that the Vietnam Veterans did. Quite recently I witnessed an Iraq veteran talking with a Vietnam Veteran at a cookout at the Springfield VFW (Veteran's of Foreign Wars), the two men were getting along well and a young man was silently listening in on their conversation. After a few minutes the young man walked up to both of them and said, "Anyone serving overseas in a war should be euthanized upon their return so that those of us who stayed behind don't have to deal with the drama you all bring back". He was immediately asked to leave and did so without further disruption but this goes to show that there are still people who do not respect or support any aspect of what these soldiers do and go through.

You're perfectly correct in saying that trying to gather information can be difficult because it's a sensitive subject for so many. It's hard to get a story from someone and verify that they are being objective about it. Pointing out that Robert L. Shaw chose to view both sides is insightful on your part, I thought that out of all the letters his was the most respectful and I didn't feel like it was retaliating.

I enjoyed and respect your post, and agree that as communities we need to support those who put their lives out there for our future. I think you have interesting points and I look forward to reading more from you in the future. I also don't think that you're too harsh, a lot of emotions are running through a lot

of us. Especially in this point in the term, and after hearing from POW's and reading the letters from people who live in our own community.

Thank you for your time and forum post,

Chels

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: Question 1



by Amanda Day - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 10:19 PM

Chels,

Thank you for the reply and props! I was really upset to hear the immaturity you witnessed and again as I believe I mentioned, I find more and more that some of our so called "friendly hippies" hold devastatigly hard grudges with establishment choices such as the war yet seem to take them out on those who merely stepped up and took the responsibility of what was inevitably going to pan out. Undoubtedly a likely majority of soldiers INDEED bring back "drama" as does anyone in life who experiences death in masses and incredibly harsh daily living circumstances. What we need to realize is that we live in one the the worlds wealthiest countries with some of the thighest standards one living. Rehibilitaion and any support needed is something we can work toward and achieve for our veterans. Meanwhile, the negatively should just mellow out.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Question 1



by Erik Johnson - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 8:04 PM

Chels. I noticed that you mentioned PTSD in a few of your posts and I agree that the Vietnam Veterans brought this condition to light. It seems as though they were also treated poorly in the time after their return because of their struggles in coping with the emotional trauma which they experienced as if it was something to be ashamed of. We often have this fantasy image of soldier not allowing anything to bother them, but if you experience what these people have experienced and are not bothered, then that is truly frightening.

My grandfather was a WWII veteran and I believe that he struggled in silence with what we now call PTSD in a time when there really wasn't any help. He fought the Japanese in New Guinea and the stories that he told me reminded me of the jungle warfare that occurred in Vietnam. Even fifty years after the war he would have nightmares after reliving these memories with me. My grandmother would tell me how he would be fighting and yelling in his sleep, sometimes even choking her after an evening of recalling the war.

These experiences are not easy for anyone to deal with and we need to be particularly gracious to those who must bear these burdens.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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question #1

by Tyler Kennedy - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 10:47 PM

After reading all the letters I would include all of them in my book. The letters as a whole show that each individual soldier coming home faced either high 5's, handshakes, and beers or malice, profanities and spit. Such examples range from Thomas Postelle who only flew home in his uniform twice and decided never to do it again, having been spit on both times he wore it. Another such example was the story of Rodney Gordon who touched on the fact that he saw some soldiers changing before they exited the airplane to avoid such confrontations (can't say I blame them). Now to touch on the other end of the spectrum we go to Robert Shaw who was never spat on while heading home. He did however have a really hard time finding gainful employment after returning from the war despite having experience needed for such jobs; however that is a different subject for a different day.

Switching gears here if I were to include a note in my own personal version of this book it would say something like "these are the individual stories for the people that were there, and each soldier may have experienced something different when returning home. It all depends on the year they came home, and where they went home to". I write that because everyone's story is going to be different that just the way things work. Now that's not to say the people didn't very similar stories. I do believe some people were spit upon, while others weren't. Rodney Gordon raised a good point in his letter when he said "the media would have only printed something about the protest had there been an actual confrontation." I like this point because the media wouldn't have reported on soldiers getting spat upon on a case by case basis. I'm sure there was a small article in a newspaper somewhere that reads something like "local soldier spat upon at the airport" but unless that incident resulted in some sort of fight or riot it wouldn't have been investigated by mainstream media. Thus the reason my disclaimer would basically say "individual results varied"

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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question #2

by Tyler Kennedy - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 10:47 PM

The letters tell me that it's very hard to determine if something actually happened or not, especially on something like soldiers being spat upon. We can all look up news reports about protesters being at the airport but from what I gathered from the letter written by bob Thompson no evidence exists stating whether the soldiers were spit on or not. Then in multiple letters that follow many soldiers give firsthand accounts of what happened when they arrived home, most of them experienced a welcome home that included spit, profanities and in some cases physical altercations. The difficulty in trying to teach something like this is that each soldier that came home experienced something different, and after a quick check over 1 million US soldiers fought in Vietnam, so to record over a million different accounts of what happened at the homecomings would be no easy task. Making it more difficult is the last us soldiers left Vietnam in the mid 70's, so the accounts of what happened are being told at least 35 years later. Now I know I have said in previous forums that some things as horrific as war stick in your mind, but I have a feeling this may have slipped from some people.

Major issues concerning historical accuracy again are the fact that the events some former soldiers are talking about in the letters are coming from at least 35 years ago. 35 years is a long time to recall something like a bad airport encounter, also not helping is that there is a possibility that over the years news paper articles have gone missing that may have shed light on what occurred. Not only is there an issue with what happened at the airport, but also events on the battle field we won't ever know took place on the battle field due to military cover ups, and un released information. An example being the my lei massacre that was originally covered up.

Simply put the passage of time is the major issue in trying to study the past.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: question #2

by Chels Staton - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 5:47 PM

Hi Tyler,

I think you have a very valid point when you say that the passage of time is the major issue, and I'm a little embarassed that I didn't consider that myself. It's so obvious! Even bigger than time, I completely agree that out of 1 million soldiers there is no easy way to get every account. This was a time when PTSD was just starting to be studying intensely and it was mostly because of the soldiers returning from this specific war. Memories could have been altered based on hearing other accounts, or someone implying an event happened or the whole experience could be blacked out entirely. It's hard to determine whether the spitting did or did not happen but I find it difficult to argue with multiple accounts of soldiers saying it happened to them personally. Maybe it didn't happen to them and they fabricated it, but out of 1 million who returned there is a small

amount of them who have never ever spoken about their experience. So who's to say it didn't happen to them? As you said, it may have slipped their mind but if you've ever been to war you know that the things you remember are the things that directly affect you. You forget details that happen to a larger number of people or that you weren't directly involved in. But when something or someone attacks you and only you, you're not likely to forget it or the details surrounding the situation.

I enjoyed your post because you make very valid points that are inarguable. There were many soldiers that returned, there is no way to know what happened to every single one of them and the passage of time is an issue. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, I really gained a new perspective and have some insight to add to my own thoughts.

-Chels

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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The truth behind the lies

by Enya McKinnon - Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 11:02 PM

Soldier Stories

If I was the author of the Patriots book, I do not think that I would exclude a single one of the letters that are a part of the soldier stories. I say this because each letter is a good addition as to getting the whole story about how Vietnam veterans were treated while coming home from the war. Some soldiers had bad experiences such as Thomas W. Postelle of Veneta and Rodney Gordon of Eugene, who actually experienced the spitting and the protestors, and their stories provided one side of the story. The other side came from other veterans such as Robert Shaw of Eugene who never actually experienced the spitting but had a hard time holding down or even getting a job once people learned he was a veteran. As for the added notes to the reader, I would keep the ones that Appy already uses, they are straight forward and clear as to why he put them in and they help add a bit of historical context and understanding to the stories.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: The truth behind the lies

by Andrew Tignor - Thursday, November 14, 2013, 8:05 AM

I see your point in wanting to include every letter of the soldiers stories, but there were a few of these letters that just did not make since and I do not see the point in putting them in a book such as Patriots. some of these letters are just out of opinion rather than facts. If I am studying a book I want the facts not

just somebodies opinion on the subject.

I do agree with you though that the soldiers stories are a very important part of what happened in the war and the truth to what was really going on. Their stories do give a different side of to the stories then what we think we know.

Andrew Tignor.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Re: The truth behind the lies

by Tyler Kennedy - Thursday, November 14, 2013, 3:20 PM

hey andrew,

im a little curious as to which letters you wouldn't include in your book. i know some of them weren't that great but i didn't seem to find a reason to keep them out. just wondering what your thoght process was

-tyler

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Re: The truth behind the lies

by Andrew Tignor - Friday, November 15, 2013, 8:06 AM

Hey Tyler,

The letter that I was more regarding to in this subject is by Bob Thompson, spitting incidents did not occur. In my mind it seemed to me like he was not open minded to the fact that our soldiers could have been spit on on their return home. This is really not the best reason to disregard his letter but I want stories that will support each other not counter act one another. Having the support to a storie from others is a storie that will have more truth then lies, now if I add a letter that did not support the others people would question it and the other letters.

Andrew Tignor.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Re: The truth behind the lies

by Tyler Kennedy - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 1:49 PM

andrew,

yah i could see where that letter wouldn't be the best one to include, if i remember corectly bob said that he did web research and found no evidence of soldiers being spit on. just because you can't find it on the internet does not mean it didn't happen. i think the personal accounts from the soldiers that were there is the best thing we have to determin the truth of the matter.

-tyler

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The truth behind the lies

by Ryan Bendel - Saturday, November 16, 2013, 11:38 PM

Enya,

I completely agree with you. Each and every one of these stories should and need to be included in the book in order for us to get the grand sense of what happened, obviously each solider is going to have a diffeent story, not all soliders experianced the same things while at war and while returning home from war. So the more stories we have the better, if we simply took the opinions of one solider we ould have a completely different picture of the vietnam war, so i say the more the merrier

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The truth behind the lies

by Camren Bernico - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 2:17 PM

While I feel every person who shares a story honestly thinks theirs should be included and is just as important as any other, it is not a sentiment I can really agree with.

I used to work in the medical field before choosing to go back to college. I remember many years ago having two patients, both elderly men in their 80s who had actually been friends throughout their lives. They were both acomplished and passionate mountain climbers and exploreres who had amazing stories, photographs and newclippings to share if you took the time to let them. The problem however was how each one recalled a shared event or point in time. Their "facts" did not always line up correctly which lead to bickering and some unsolved stories if you were to try and believe them both!

I use them as an example of searching out reliable and credible sources. When you are making a book that is intended to share and teach historical facts then

you can not simply allow any Bob, Dick and Harry to hand in a story for you to include in your publication.

The letter for this specific assignment, the one written by Bob, is an example of something that you may not want to include.

This is why not all submissions are accepted and this is why you have author notes and other similar tools when using first hand accounts of historical information.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Question 2

by Amanda Day - Sunday, November 17, 2013, 7:42 PM

The truth, as always, tends to rustle some feathers. Our presidential administrations spent years embellishing the truth of the war and playing down the masses of our young men that were sent to “do their duty to the country”. People were bound to find out as the media’s reach touched more and more and more information leaked that the war was much more hopeless and demanding than we had known. Citizens rarely like to come to the realization that their leaders have led them in a dismal and draining path politically and economically.

When our own soldiers are the source of information we can count on a passionate recollection and often first hand accounts of the horror that public eye rarely sees. What we can also count on is loyalty, which sadly holds far stronger than the clear-cut truth and is often distorted in favor of either party. Another large problem with information from our Vets is the fact that not every incident of their time in Vietnam or even their return home was documented. For example Thomas W. Postelle who wrote in from Veneta claims after reading Bob Thompson’s letter *No one spat on Vietnam vets* that spitting incidents did indeed occur to him personally as he returned home to visit family. This is a perfect example of an incident of disrespect that was likely un-documented yet could have occurred to many, many returning vets. Mr. Thompson wouldn’t technically be wrong in saying there aren’t documented incidents (although there very well may be) but he WOULD be slightly close-minded to rule out all personal experiences.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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