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Register Guard Letters

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, November 5, 2016, 3:49 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Register Guard Letters topic. To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

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BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Register Guard Letters

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Strong opinions and the credibility of veterans.

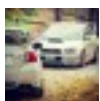
by Nick Cervantes - Monday, November 7, 2016, 8:43 PM

The letters to the editor illuminate a few interesting things. First, that emotional responses to the history of Vietnam are still strong. As someone who was born after the war was over, it is very helpful to hear all kinds of different accounts. Secondly, the fact that there are so many unique accounts. The letters mostly revolved around the question of spitting. I believe the soldiers who said it happened to them. Bob Thompson doesn't present any credibility compared to vets who came home from the war and lived that experience. He does cite a book that collected media reports, but not every experience has been documented by the media. Of course, as a student, I can't call any one person's story the absolute truth, but I can look at the credibility of the sources. The question is whether vets were spit upon. Multiple vets in our area claim they were and I have no reason to think their stories are untrue. For many, this was the defining chapter of their lives and the tone I get from most of these interviews is that they want the world to understand what really happened during and after the war.

Historical accuracy is a challenge when thousands and thousands of veterans each had unique experiences. I feel there was a calm and dignity in the POW and Soldiers Speak interviews, as well as in the letters. The last letter, from Robert L. Shaw, was very interesting. It was a rational middle ground. He had no experience with nor had heard any stories about being spit on, but he did receive awful treatment when trying to find employment. It just seems ridiculous for Thompson to write "No one spat on Vietnam vets" (Register Guard 2/16/2007). It's an unknowable claim. Obviously, there is much passionate disagreement about the history of the Vietnam war.

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Protesters to the Vietnam War

by Trever Neal - Tuesday, November 8, 2016, 7:33 PM

I think that this compilation of letters can teach us about the Vietnam War from a different point of view. I think they can teach us we need to reference more than one source before we can conclude that another is fact. In the letters it is argued back and forth whether or not Vietnam veterans returning home were spit on or not. Unfortunately, I do believe protesters spit on veterans returning home, just because it wasn't in the media or didn't happen in front of you, doesn't mean it didn't happen. One of the things that may concern me as a student, when learning about the war from our own soldiers, is how truthful it is. The Vietnam War was over 40 years ago and although I do believe that what those men saw cannot be forgotten, memories do fade and stories can sometimes be exaggerated. In the case of soldiers being spit on, I highly doubt the memories of all these men were fabricated.

In the P.O.W. video around the 4:30 mark, Jim Stockdale mentions when he was a prisoner of war, he met a man who he believed was the propaganda expert of Vietnam. He told Stockdale winning the war wasn't just about who has the better

weapons its national will. He said “We are going to win this war on the streets of New York.” I think what he is saying is that Vietnam doesn’t have to win on the battlefield in order to win the war, once the American people lost interest over time they would claim victory. The protesters played a large part in America losing interest in the war.

Another thing that stood out to me was in Herman Isaacs’s letter he mentions, “I wonder why I was never asked about my experiences.” In the audio clip we listened to, *Soldiers Speak*, near the end of the clip, one of the speakers mentions his taxi ride home. He says the cab driver made small talk about the cost of tires and the traffic, but never asked about his experience in Vietnam. A second veteran mentions his experience returning home, being greeted with rotten tomatoes and eggs by protesters. I believe it is your right as an American to protest, but one of the last speakers in the audio clip says, “You can protest the war, but don’t protest the soldier.” A lot of these men didn’t choose to go to war, they were drafted. I believe peaceful protest is fine but when you start spitting on or throwing things at people who served their country, a line has been crossed.

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Re: Protesters to the Vietnam War

by Trever Neal - Tuesday, November 8, 2016, 8:08 PM

I also found this image online that reminded me of Robert Shaw's letter in the Register Guard letters when he talked about the how hard it was to find and keep a job.



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Re: Protesters to the Vietnam War

by Trever Neal - Friday, November 11, 2016, 6:40 PM

I work in a restaurant and I thought it would be a good idea to ask Vietnam veterans about their experiences returning home from the war and how they were treated. Unfortunately, we were so busy due to giving free meals to any veterans/active military for Veteran's Day I had little time to talk with the veterans I met. However, towards the end of my shift I did meet a gentleman who served in Vietnam. He came to grab a glass of wine while he was waiting for a table. The conversation was so brief I didn't even catch his name, I had just enough time to explain what our class was discussing. He told me he came home through San Francisco and that he was not spit on or met with hostility. He didn't get into a lot of detail about the things he saw while in Vietnam. The last thing he said to me was, "It was a different time."

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Re: Protesters to the Vietnam War

by Jessica Fialho - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 8:59 AM

Trever, thank you for sharing that image that reminds you of Shaw's letter. It is amazing how powerful capturing a moment on film can be. I think it is important to see powerful images when learning about our history. It is important for us to help prevent our history from fading. Even though some of the images are gruesome and hard to see, it is important that we look to them because of they tell us about our past. The powerful images definitely help us remember, but Trever you also bring up an excellent point. "Just because it wasn't in the media, or didn't happen in front of you, doesn't mean it didn't happen." I believe too often we forget that film doesn't capture every moment.

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The Soldiers' Experience

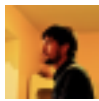
by Andrew Dellinger - Wednesday, November 9, 2016, 9:52 AM

If I were to conduct interviews with Americans on the subject of the Vietnam War such as Christian Appy has, I would be sure to include multiple experiences on both sides. Regarding the *Register Guard* letters to the editor, there are plenty examples of both sides of the argument regarding the spitting on American soldiers. First I would include Bob Thompson's letter, for he expresses his disbelief that anti-war protesters actually spat on returning soldiers. He seems to have done some research, however limited it was, and although his views might be flawed it is important to include his point of view. Secondly, I would include Thomas Postelle's account as a private in the military flying home in uniform. His firsthand experience is crucial to understanding this time in history. The power of his statement comes from the fact that he opted to pay more money by flying in civilian clothes than wearing his

uniform because of the harassment he received. Next I would use Robert Shaw's letter as a middle ground viewpoint. He expresses that he was never spit on, or that he never heard of anyone being spit on, but he also describes the harsh treatment he received as a veteran. I would include a disclaimer that recognizes that all accounts are personal experiences, and that as a reader it is your responsibility to keep what you read in context. Personal experiences are important to learn, but they are very likely bias. The reader should also keep in mind that just because they might be a little bias, it doesn't take away from the validity of their feelings and emotion during that time period. Furthermore, I think it's fair to say that most veterans were treated poorly upon return to America, because of the accounts from the Soldiers Speak audio file. So I think it's really important to make an effect to share those experiences.

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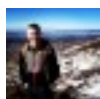
Re: The Soldiers' Experience

by Nick Cervantes - Saturday, November 12, 2016, 10:59 AM

I didn't think of hypothetically including Bob Thompson's letter, but I think that's a good idea you have. It shows that stubborn, disbelieving view that returning veterans were never spat on. I don't understand why Thompson wanted so vigorously to disprove that it ever happened at all. Its inclusion in a book like *Patriots* would set the reader up for the emotional first-hand accounts that might tell a different story.

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Re: The Soldiers' Experience

by Andrew Dellinger - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 12:15 PM

Exactly Nick. I thought it would be a good idea because it makes the veterans' responses even more powerful. I think another good addition to Appy's book would be an interview from someone who actively protested the war, and to see what their stance is today. It'd be interesting to see if they would have the same views of the war even after the atrocities perpetrated by communists in Vietnam and Cambodia after we left.

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Re: The Soldiers' Experience

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 7:11 PM

Hello guys,

I enjoyed reading the exchange of posts you two shared. Of course there is so much to consider when discussing the opposition to the war. I do agree with you Andrew, that even the flawed/contradictive stories must be included when trying to understand the denial of anti war conflict. In order to fully digest the Vietnam War understanding why false stories exist and what motivated protestors is definitely important.

A great story for both of you to revisit would be "Memorial Day 1968" by Clark Dougan. (Appy, pg. 304) It stood out to me that Andrew had wished for a good article by an active protestor in order to better understand their views. This story isn't by a protestor by any means but I feel it gave me a clearer understanding of how the antiwar protestors could be misunderstood. Although a short and simple story the point of remembering the individual males who were the essence of our American military is very important. Obviously America has a strong sense of pride and most of our men would willingly go to Vietnam, that is why the protests became so contradictive when the anger and frustration was being directed towards the soldiers. If the original concern was over our innocent men the goal surely got lost in the chaos of protest. It seems the argument is why civilians were mean to soldiers or if they weren't mean at all. I want to believe all protest was behind the same reasoning of the Cleavland Press Article in this story but my realism knows that is not true. Clark Dougan believed that memorial day of 1968, during the peak of the war, was when "Middle America" turned against the war. (Appy, pg. 306) Hope this can clear some confusion for both of you also or maybe even add a new perspective.

-Treva

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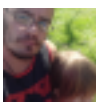
Re: The Soldiers' Experience

by Andrew Dellinger - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 8:43 PM

Thanks for your input Treva, I think you have a good insight on the inclusion of all viewpoints into historical research. When learning about something as controversial as the Vietnam War, I agree that no matter how radical someones viewpoint is it's still important to include it because it gives us a sense of the times. With as many interviews as Appy conducted I would not be surprised to find an account like the one I described. I will be sure to re-read the interview you mentioned.

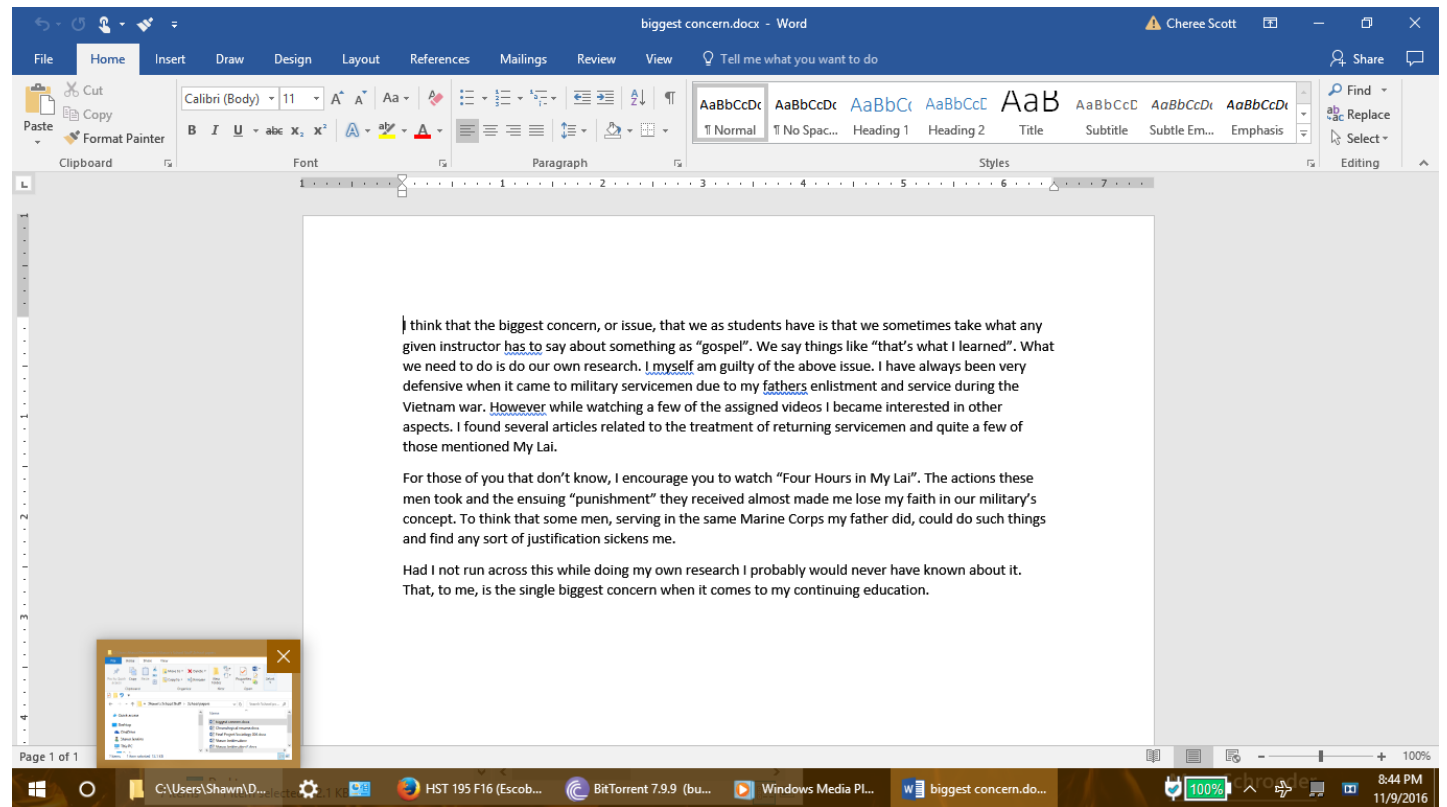
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Sinlge Biggest Concern

by Shawn Jenkins - Wednesday, November 9, 2016, 8:45 PM



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Re: Sinlge Biggest Concern

by Andrew Dellinger - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 5:27 PM

I agree with certain aspects of what you're saying Shawn, especially concerning only having certain resources available to us "in class." However, In only a limited time it's simply not possible to learn every singular event during the Vietnam War. Considering how long our instructor's been teaching this class, I'm sure he has chosen the best resources for us to use in our short term. Also, every week he includes several other resources on different topics than our usual textbooks and videos. I have heard of the My Lai massacre, and it was certainly terrible and it's unconceivable how people could do that. But I strongly urge you not to let that form your opinion of the entire military. There are bad apples everywhere, and that fact certainly shouldn't make you feel as they were all that way. Historically it is important to know it happened, but it shouldn't change your opinion about the dignity and honor of the military. That is a dangerous and unfair way of thinking. The corruption of the officers that tried to cover it up is very upsetting as well, but they were punished to life in prison.

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Two sides to every story.

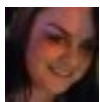
by Treva Thompson-Moore - Wednesday, November 9, 2016, 9:41 PM

When I was reading the letters to the editor I was taken aback at how quickly it seemed the discussion went towards confrontation and passiveness. I believe that when things are put into writing a lot of tone can be misunderstood or emphasized when not meant to be. Nonetheless these letters to the editor were blatantly strong willed and straight to the point of attacking one another over accuracy which caught my attention and intrigued me. Tom Preuss makes very bold statements in his initial response and even goes on to name call the writers and columnists of The Register Guard including Rooke-Lee. (Editor letters, Pg.2) At first, I couldn't believe a newspaper would allow such an exchange for public reading. By the end of the collection I realized exactly how controversial this topic is even for veterans and their fellow citizens to try to discuss with one another.

The americans who protested the war and were not captured or did not fight in combat have a different interpretation of the Vietnam War. That didn't change just because the soldiers who did go through that came back as their peers. However, I do think knowing that the men who fought in that war were our fellow americans should have brought the american people together when the soldiers returned and not caused a silence of the veteran status. Robert L Shaw shared his experience returning as a vet and advocated that a veteran could come back without being scrutinized.(Editor letters, Pg. 5) By adding that the worst part of his return was being made to be silent about his Vietnam participation when it came to the work force, just adds another credible account identifying a disservice to our veterans. This is just another veteran who experienced a different path than those that did go through suffering or may have been spit on. His story shouldn't mean that it is false just because it doesn't have the same history as others or that only his way of returning was possible. To me I am starting to learn that there will always be another perspective or detail when it comes to any aspect of the Vietnam War.

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Historically Accurate if I "explain"

by Beth Gaines - Wednesday, November 9, 2016, 9:50 PM

If I were the author of Patriots, I would use all the stories/letters of people who actually served during the Vietnam War. The perspectives being given are important in showing all sides to the war. In the "POW" video, it is reported that Col. Robinson Risner spent seven and half years as a POW. His experience during that time is invaluable and as an survivor and Veteran, he deserves the opportunity to share the sacrifice he made for the US. I don't know that I would include a note to the reader to clarify anything. The experiences don't belong to me to change. A personal account is just that, personal. If I attempt to clarify, I'm altering the perspective of the person sharing the information. This is why it is important to do your research and know where the information you are using is coming from. And for me, there is nothing more accurate than a person telling their first hand experience with a situation.

**pain and suffering is hard to learn about.**

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Wednesday, November 9, 2016, 10:20 PM

The American Soldier Speaks and Pow Videos were very hard for me to get through. Violence and gore is not my personal taste in anything. In many ways the content disgusted me and has almost haunted me in my passing thoughts because they were burned into my mind. When the American Soldier sound excerpt discusses the details about the attack on Oct. 17th 1967 on the Black Lions by the Vietcong I struggled not to turn it off and not reference this piece of content. (American Soldier, 3:50) After listening to the rest and realizing that these same men came home to such a distant country and experienced such protest I was further enraged and opened my eyes to the misunderstanding our country was truly experiencing. One man said, “you can protest a war but don’t protest the soldiers”, and this is how I believe our country’s citizens should have handled the opposition of this war. (American Soldier, 7:02) Not through the stories of disgust towards our veterans like we have learned about this week. I understand that the difference in the stories of veterans can reflect on many things. Such as what part of Vietnam they were in, what job they had when they were deployed and what part of America they came back to. A soldier on the front line, or an engineer constructing new communities, or a prisoner of war will all have different accounts of the Vietnam War and what it meant to them. Multiple veterans accounted the Tap code in the POW video and declared how important it was to their sanity and survival of the many years in these torture camps. (POW video, 10-13 mins) It terrifies me to think of isolation and loss of communication. These soldiers were there for one another through the most brutal of torture techniques including rope tying, bone breaks, starvation, and beatings. This is not something that a free american back in the states could ever understand at the time of welcoming veterans back home; and denying the ignorance to that would be a wrongdoing to the protestors. I have included two photos from the POW gallery that stood out to me for reference to the tap code and torture I am talking about. (POW gallery, image 9 & 6) People who do not believe that protestors would spit on a returning soldier from Vietnam must not understand exactly how misunderstood both parties are of each other. Just like generalizing the Vietnam Veterans into the same “type” of veteran would be a disservice to them all. The audio, letters, and POW video have made me accept that each soldier experienced a different path in Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia along with how they came home. This is something that should be learned about with an open ready to learn mind and not in a right or wrong manner.



DRAWINGS BY J. "MIKE" McGRATH



DRAWINGS BY J. "MIKE" McGRATH

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Re: pain and suffering is hard to learn about.



by Jessica Fialho - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 8:46 AM

Treva, I completely agree. The pain and suffering we are learning about is very difficult and emotional. I often have to take a break from watching through or reading our materials due to the heart wrenching stories and haunting images. When I had been watching through Cambodia and Laos, one of the shots that continues to haunt me is toward the end when they show the boy missing part of his wrist and arm. (44:10, episode 8). The images of how bad people were suffering from the war made my stomach turn with disgust. It sickens me when people have suffered so much. These gruesome images are another reminder of why learning from our history is so important.

In regards to the POW video, I was speechless listening to these war prisoners share their experiences. I truly am saddened by what these people went through. It angers me that people were forced through such extreme conditions. The fact that they had to adapt and learn to communicate through a tapping method completely caught me by surprise. It's very difficult to deal with the suffering and pain involved with the war.

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In response to Jessica.

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 11:32 AM

Jessica,

I can agree that I have gotten angry over the material but I still try my best not to dwell much on the violence and sadness surrounding this war and material we are learning this year. Every time I read about the bombings and air war aspect of the Tet Offensive in 1968 all of the gruesome images of suffering from all the videos rush back to me. Specifically mentioning in the Herring novel when he discusses the casualty count during the first 2 weeks of the Tet. He states, "the U.S lost 1,100 killed in action and South Vietnam 2,300. An estimated 12,500 civilians were killed." (Herring, pg.240) This number definitely brought all the images back into my head when reading. I'm sure you know when you get so into a book you start creating your own images to go along with the text and can understand when I say this is not a book you want to experience that with. With all the video content provided to us the images are not hard to come up with. I immediately start imaging thousands of suffering people like that boy you mention from PBS episode 8. It all comes full circle when comparing civilian casualties, front line soldiers, and POW's suffering;

none are less than or more than the others. I believe that one thing all of us students can agree on is that sadness and death plagued this country during this war.

-Treva

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Soldiers Experience is Crucial to Our Understanding of the War

by Andrew Dellinger - Friday, November 11, 2016, 12:22 PM

The small compilation of “letters to the editor” combined with the “Soldiers Speak” audio and “POW” clip gives us a good glimpse into the experience of our Vietnam veterans. They are crucially important to our understanding of the people who actually fought the war. I think that it would be a big injustice to disregard anyone’s experience of the war in regards to historical accuracy. If anything we should use what some might think as historically inaccurate as a tool to understand their emotion and frustrations. Reading a text book about historical dates and politics of the war are very important, but without the testimonies from the soldiers who actually had first-hand experience in the fighting our research would be incomplete. The amount of veterans claiming that they were treated poorly after the war should be enough evidence to prove that it happened, whether it involved spitting or not. Just as one man said in the “Soldiers Speak” audio clip, “you can protest the war, but don’t protest the soldier.” Today is Veterans Day, so we should take extra effort to reflect upon this dark time in history, and learn from it. One can only imagine the mental damage that comes from returning home to an ungrateful nation after fighting for your life and for the freedom of others. I had a similar experience when I returned home after my service in the Army, although it wasn’t nearly as dramatic and to the scale of the Vietnam era vets treatment. One lady told me straight to my face that I am a baby killer and should be ashamed of myself, as I walked away she told me to kill myself. This was my only bad experience with people at home, but it had a big impact on me. I can only imagine how hard it was for the Vietnam veterans.

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Re: Soldiers Experience is Crucial to Our Understanding of the War

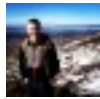
by Nick Cervantes - Saturday, November 12, 2016, 10:50 AM

Good point about the use of differing opinions on historical inaccuracies "as a tool to understand their emotions and frustrations." As I learn more about this particular war I believe certain accounts and agree or disagree with certain opinions, but I try to look at everything objectively and critically. I've found the personal accounts the most interesting part of this class. Your personal story is a

frustrating one to hear. I'd like to think that there is generally a more nuanced and empathetic support for returning soldiers, especially since Vietnam. Of course, there's a lot of veterans out there with a lot of different experiences. I agree, sadly, that there is proof enough of the poor treatment of Vietnam vets. I do appreciate the extra time to reflect. Thank you for your service.

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Re: Soldiers Experience is Crucial to Our Understanding of the War

by Andrew Dellinger - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 12:06 PM

Thank you for your thanks Nick, you're absolutely right that today people more times than not treat soldiers with respect and care. Just as the gentleman in the "Bulls-hit" video said, and I think its a true sign that society has recognized the poor treatment of Vietnam vets and the effect it had on them. My experience was truly rare and the women was definitely an anti-war extremist. Like you said, I have found it difficult to keep my opinions at bay when watching or reading the course materials on personal experiences, but I recognize that it's crucial to analyze the material objectively. I feel that because of this understanding, I have been able to get a lot more out of the material. Before this class I never realized how controversial this war was.

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Nick and Andrew

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 12:16 PM

In response to Nick and Andrew,

Nick's initial post made me remember an interaction I had with a customer at my work. Also, reading his personal story encouraged me to relate on a personal level too. As I was reading the Appy book in between check outs a middle aged man asked me about the content I was reading. He said his grandfather participated in the war and shared quite a bit with him and how it contradicted the material he learned in college. We bantered about how confusing our history can be and although the conversation was brief one thing he said was, "If you believe anything from your course, let it be the stories from the boots on the ground". That has stuck with me and now when I hear any personal accounts from a soldier it really resonates with my point of view.

Nick's story showed me that history will always in some way repeat itself and the essence of protest has not been eliminated at all here in America. I agree with you and Andrew that we definitely have enough proof to back up that the Vietnam Vets were in fact treated poorly and there is no doubting that.

Like the quote Nick and I used in our posts says you can surely oppose a war but disregarding every soldier and protesting them individually is just not needed.

-Treva

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"Not one media report"

by Zachery Brown - Friday, November 11, 2016, 8:12 PM

I personally quite frankly enjoyed reading the compilation provided by Mr. Escobar labeled, "Letters to the Editor." It was very interesting reading these debates and seeing the letters go back and forth, between different authors giving their own personal opinions, as well as experiences. Although, this one specific letter, really caught my attention. Mostly due to being able to greatly relate it to the occurrences that we are currently experiencing today, and the last few days, ever since Donald Trump rocked the election.

This letter was the segment written by, Bob Thomson of Eugene. This letter was a response to the segment written by, Tom Preuss of Creswell. The specific paragraph that caught my attention read the following, "In fact, in his book, "The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory and the Legacy of Vietnam," Jerry Lembke, himself a Vietnam vet, concludes that there was not a single media report to support such claims of hostility toward the returned veterans. In 1995, a study by Thomas Beamish and others analyzed some 495 media stories and found no reports of spitting or even negative taunting."

The above paragraph quoted from Bob Thomson of Eugene, completely and utterly represents the power, persuasion, and effect that the role of, "Mainstream Media" can have on the citizens of the country in which it reports too. The nerve that Mr. Thomson had to down right say that no reports of, "even negative taunting" just sickens me to the core. Now when I read this, it really struck me as to how spot on I was able to instantly relate it to what is happening in most major cities this very instant. We all clearly know about the violent protests, and destruction of property, as well as the physical assault that is taking place due to Trump's recent victory over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 Presidential Election. Although we are all aware, (or all should be if you're not one blinded or persuaded by the media as Mr. Thomson appears to be) of the extreme acts of violence being taken by the sore losers of this recent election. The Mainstream Media is still yet to report on them. Don't get me wrong, they are most definitely reporting on the protests. But I have yet to come across (as Thomson would say) one report of physical acts of violence, or destruction of business/personal property. And this is exactly what we witnessed during the entire time of prior to the election. Only false reports and accusations made from the

media (paid off by the Clinton Foundation) were reported. Whereas not one report of the TRUE criminal acts of treason, destruction, and corruption that floods anything surrounding or involved with the Clinton Family and Foundation.

This is truly relatable, in my opinion, due to the following response to Thomson's segment written by, Thomas W. Postelle of Veneta. In this response he goes on to write, "If I flew in uniform, I would only have to pay the taxes and a small amount to Delta to fly standby. After the second time I was spat upon, I paid full fare and flew in civilian clothes to keep it from happening again. Thompson doesn't need to Google anything, for I am here to tell him that it happened and not once, but twice. One more thing - all you had to do was look at my haircut at the time and I didn't have to be in uniform to be recognized as a soldier."

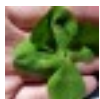
You see there are personal encounters, of not only negative taunting, but the literal spitting on soldiers. And just as these encounters were to go on, "Unreported," so will the personal encounters of extreme, brutal, and violent assaults, that once posted on YouTube, or Facebook are immediately taken down, will go unreported as well.

This is a clear connection to me that media plays an ultimately large part in the complete false representation of the way events truly happen and the disguising of actual encounters to be discredited and made out to be false.

Being as this was long ago, it is hard to determine what was true and untrue. But I personally do not for one second believe that these veterans are twisting their own personal accounts of violent acts taken by the US citizens when returning home from the Vietnam war.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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All the Perspectives

by Jessica Fialho - Saturday, November 12, 2016, 1:54 PM

First, I believe Christian Appy had a difficult job choosing what stories to put into Patriots. I know personally just sitting here trying to determine what story I'd put in is overwhelming. If I were putting a book together like Christian Appy has done, I know I would include some of the Register Guard Letters. One of them definitely being Returning from Vietnam easy. I would want to put this in the book specifically because it brings up the problems Shaw had when he tried to "...enter polite society" (Robert L. Shaw) after his service. I see Shaw's letter as another first hand perspective. Even though Shaw doesn't seem to be one of the veterans who was spat on, his letter brings up how some of society acted and treated him.

It is important to read a variety of perspectives in regards to history. Returning From Vietnam easy is just one perspective that I would add to my book like Patriots. There are plenty more I would add. Although, I find myself almost wanting to add all of the stories and letters into a novel because they are someone sharing their perspective

about history. It is giving us that perspective to keep with us and help us determine what really happened. I know I would include a “note to the reader” as Appy has done because it creates a way for the author to talk to the readers. I feel this is an important part in history books because the author can use it to help highlight events among other things. At least one thing, I would probably have to say to my readers is that everyone’s experiences are different and just because one individual experiences something in the war doesn’t mean that all the individuals involved did. It also goes the other way as well though. Just because one individual doesn’t have something happen to them, doesn’t mean that the rest were as lucky.

To me putting a novel together and us discussing what stories we would add, could take the rest of the term. There is just so many good personal stories and so much information to sort through.

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Balance facts and perspectives for Historical Accuracy

by Jessica Fialho - Saturday, November 12, 2016, 2:33 PM

I want to mention what studying history had been like for me until this last year. It was always really difficult for me to follow and feel involved in. It was taught to me in a way that caused me to feel distant from it. It’s almost like as soon as I heard dates, or numbers, it became clouded and all blended together. It made it difficult that history had always been about, “what happened on this date?” “Now, this date?” I had never been given much opportunity to hear it or study it from the perspective of a soldier. That is, until this term. For me, studying the events from the perspective of a soldier has really helped make a difference. It has helped make it more real and even though it is history, I can actually feel connected to it. The perspectives and hearing how people talk about the war and events make it easy to feel for everyone involved. This connection is why it is so important to actually learn from some of our soldiers.

Now, I know perspectives can actually hide some of the facts because of bias opinions and emotions. This is something we need to be aware of when studying anything involving humans. Emotions can influence our opinions and blind us from other facts if we aren’t careful. If we don’t go into learning with an open mind, we may refuse to listen and gather all the facts before making an opinion. In other words, we may jump to a conclusion. Next, when we learn from our soldiers we already have a influenced opinion because they are from our country. An important part of history is to gather all the information we can, from all sides and learn from it.

I feel there is a balance in learning history. We need to learn from the perspective of soldiers to help keep us connected. We also need to be sure we are getting perspectives from all sides, and that we are studying the facts as well. That all combined together helps us balance our study of history efficiently.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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My First Impression

by Dan Johnson - Sunday, November 13, 2016, 4:53 PM

The letters seem to me to be vitriolic political battles still playing out from the past over generally small anecdotes about the treatment of Vietnam soldiers. If anything, the letters can show the depth of the trauma of the time and the extent to which some Americans value the validation of their commentary. I think arguing over whether or not Vietnam vets were treated badly in a sort of intellectual binary forty years later shows the extent to which some people feel the need to protect their views. It also demonstrates the further polarization of America following the sixties and seventies. It doesn't seem like a major step of deference to be open to the idea some soldiers were spit on coming home. Would some people do that? Probably. Does that reflect some nature of America, the time, the political left? Who knows? People can debate those questions forever. It also doesn't seem like a major step not to demonize others as monolithic traitors of the country. That's extreme and counter-productive. To quote Tom Preuss,

"We should all know who and what they are. They, along with the editors of The New York Times and their sycophants at The Register-Guard, have invested heavily in the effort to destroy this president...I won't shed a tear. This war would be over by now if it wasn't for their traitorous actions. The blood of our soldiers is on their hands."

The love of snappy "back and forths" between Americans has certainly become neurotic. It probably stems from America's deep appreciation for debate of ideas which dates back to a strongly literate populous which enfranchised many to have a voice throughout American history. Currently, Americans still carry on that tradition, but many have kicked aside the thorough, substance based parts of it as "extra weight" on their path to existential supremacy. In an era of outrage and the race for confirmation of world view, explanations have to come pretty quick, and symbiotic discussion, intellectual growth, substantiation, and solutions have suffered.

"

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