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Week 7 Forum

Internet Testimonies

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Internet Testimonies

by Joe Escobar – Saturday, May 7, 2016, 7:28 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Internet Testimonies topic.

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IMPORTANT – SUBJECT LINES

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: Internet Testimonies

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Over Exaggerations

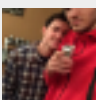
by Robert Taylor – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 11:49 AM

It is crazy to me that in 2016 we are still debating whether or not incidents like spitting on veterans actually occurred. Even the most skeptical person would have to deduct that at least a few of the first hand stories of people being spit on were true. I believe the reason why people are still debating is because people often respond to exaggerations with exaggerations. You see this in Bob Thompson's response letter to Tom Preuss in the Register Guard Letters. Mr. Preuss seems to exaggerate quite a bit in his critique of Michael Rooke-ley's protest of the Iraq War. It seems as though Bob Thompson possibly interpreted Mr. Preuss's letter to be equating protesting the war to spitting on veterans. In response Mr. Thompson exaggerated in his claim that "No one spat on Vietnam vets". Its much easier to ignore conflicting information than to understand that even people you agree with can do bad things. As i mentioned in the other forum i believe that being critical of the way we treated returning veterans is just as important as being critical in our involvement of the war. This is the way that we learn from our mistakes, instead of simply repeating them.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Internet Testimonies

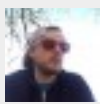
by Zachary Sielicky – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 4:26 PM

I believe that these stories should be in the books and even included in documentaries. In my opinion I believe that these incidents are extremely important to people in my generation and beyond because it provides us with more historical facts and events that could help us understand history even more. These are all important circumstances that should not be hidden but highlighted for the public to see and know. A lot of these media outlets want to hide the terrible treatment that veterans faced because it makes liberals of the time look like violent ungrateful pigs. People know and in the future should know that there was major disagreement with American involvement in Vietnam, these facts can provide people in the future with a better understanding of how the war was not only fought but received by the American people and how extreme it really got. As the BullsHitonVietnam states, 2/3rds of the Vietnam Veterans are dead which is limiting the truth that can be

discovered for all of the people who were not there, allowing us to look into the war with a more analytical sense. These Veterans are the only people who can inform us from experience whether or not there are fallacies in the documentaries and articles that we read and watch, which is advantageous to people seeking to understand the Vietnam War.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Internet Testimonies

by [Robert Taylor](#) – Saturday, May 14, 2016, 4:22 PM

Hi Zachary Sielicky,

I also think there is a lot to be learned from being exposed to these incidents. I have almost always believed that the Vietnam was unjust, and that most Americans were against it for good reason. After actually reading up on the war I find out that it is much more complicated than that, and that much of America approved of the war for a long time. It must have been confusing for soldiers who left the United States thinking that they had support of their country to go off, fight a war, lose friends, sacrifice everything, and come home to people spitting in their faces. It's sad that some of the protesters couldn't separate their political opinions from their feelings toward mostly young, disadvantaged soldiers that believed they were doing their patriotic duty.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Internet Testimonies

by [Zachary Sielicky](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 6:26 PM

I completely agree, I think these situations are so important for people studying this time in American history. These stories can show us and people in the future the political climate of the time involving the war. Understanding that there was a large group of Americans against the war shows us how American opinion changed regarding wars. It can also allow us to see how the changing of the war and other wars were covered and shown to the people of America to build public support.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Internet Testimonies

by [Tamara Berge](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 11:17 PM

That was really well said and I completely agree with you. Before this course I really only knew the highlights of the Vietnam War. I believed the protestors were the good guys, but the more I dig into the details of the war, I can no longer see it as black and white as I used to. One thing I didn't appreciate when I was younger, learning about the Vietnam War, was how young the soldiers were. Now at 35, I have nephews in their early 20's, the average age of Vietnam soldier was 23, and I can't imagine them going through what those soldiers did and returning home only to be scrutinized for what they had to do under orders and to simply survive.

You mentioned the soldiers as young and disadvantaged. This reminded me of both a story out of the Appy book as well as an account from PBS's episode 10, discussing the privileged draftees getting out of going to the war by adjusting their health in order to fail the fitness requirements. The story in PBS, the man James Fallows managed to escape the war by losing 10lbs and a Doctor's note. He states that while "9 out of 10 of [his] comrades from Harvard and MIT were getting out with their Doctor's excuses, the same proportion of people from this part of town were marching right through the physical and were going off to the military...while we were not going to war we were seeing the people who were, the people that were going to be killed." (Episode 10, 43:30) The Young men going off to war were of the working class in Boston.

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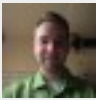
question 3
by [Daniel Long](#) – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 5:12 PM

Internet Testimonies

If these stories of past veterans who served in Vietnam and came home to an unwelcoming American public are true, then I think that they should be. They all include short stories from the veterans and one who started a channel to share his opinion on how America treated him. Although, the second video did not give specifics on where he served in Vietnam or what division he was in. Even in the comments he makes generalized thank you to people, and when asked a question he states facts that seem questionable to the PBS video, “the Tet offensive of 68 was one the greatest victories by American forces in our history and a crushing defeat for the NVA” (Clip 2). The PBS television series states the Tet offensive was a failure to the troops and caused major antiwar protests that led to the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam (PBS).

As for the first clip, we see multiple veterans who served in Vietnam be recognized as heroes instead as “baby killers.” To quote one veteran, “people were against the war so they were against us” (clip 1). The incidents of spitting probably won’t be proven, unless a photograph can justify the claims, but seeing as there are so many with the same experiences it’s hard not to ignore it. When all the Vietnam veterans have passed away the historical record will be as good as the history books surrounding the Civil War, we knew it happened and major battles took place, America divided, but only words could describe the experience not the actual person.

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question 4
by [Daniel Long](#) – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 5:12 PM

I think that to rectify historical information, the best the anyone can do is to combine all the sources together, see the similarities, and fit them into an essay like the Appy book, “Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from all sides” or the Herring book, “Americas Longest War–The U.S. and Vietnam” These sources focus on fact and stories to show what they think can be accurate depictions of the war.

Media seems to be manipulative to the American public. With the PBS television series, its facts were tested by another media source, “AIM” in which they made a documentary themselves despite trying to prove PBS wrong. Going back to 1960–75, the media then was the first to cover a war and show it publically to the American people, however, the veteran in the BullsHitONVietnam video clip say that, “the media hammered us and what they showed was a bunch of crap.” (Clip 2).

So, to sum up, I think that media should be eliminated from the conversation to rectify historical information, but rather stick to books and novels such as the Appy or Herring book that give fact and stories from actual veterans. Although the media physically shows the person talking, I think that to be fair, the stories should be written down on paper rather than a digital pen.

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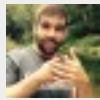


Re: question 4
by [Robert Taylor](#) – Saturday, May 14, 2016, 3:58 PM

Hello Daniel Long,

I agree with your first point that the best we can do to rectify historical information is to combine all sources. However i believe that point directly contradicts your last point. I would have to respectfully disagree with you on the idea that media should be eliminated, and that stories should be written down of paper. A written book can and commonly is biased also. Their are many books on the Vietnam war that take a stance and include information that fits their narrative the same way the news media does. I would argue that the advantage of the media is that it is a snap shot of particular opinions at the actual time the war was taking place. Whether these opinions are biased or uniformed is beside the point, they help us understand the way people were thinking back then. The combination of those media sources and the much more factual text allows us to understand the whole picture much better.

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Sources

by Bo Costello – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 7:49 PM

I think that both of these videos could have been in *Patriots*. Neither video was not nearly as in depth as some of the *Patriots* stories, but fit the mindset that the veterans deserved recognition and to not be insulted. These veterans were just doing a job that they were asked to do and felt like the people should be against the war and no them. They deserved to be honored. Appy shared Steve Sherlock’s story about the gathering of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War [VVAW] in 2009 in order to gain national attention. He stated,

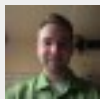
“The purpose was to focus public attention on he fact that veterans who actually fought in Vietnam, and had been decorated for it, were opposed of the war and that it wasn’t unpatriotic to be fighting against the wrong and harmful policy”

I really don’t understand why we would still be debating if some veterans were spit on during their return. I’m sure that there were plenty of vets that did deal with this, but the majority probably didn’t. Today, hearsay doesn’t make something a fact, especially 40 years later. Nowadays it is hard to say something is a fact without video evidence, so I don’t think we will ever know for sure what happened during the vets return. On Bll’s–hits video he mentions that majority of vets have passed away; I don’t think that this plays to big of a role on historical record of Vietnam. Now that the war is in hindsight, it is up to us as researchers to use only our best sources and state what we have gathered about Vietnam from all of our collected data.

For us to rectify the information that we have learned from Vietnam, we must continue to separate differences of information aside, and take a look at the reliability of the sources. ALW has been this source so far; the author offers multiple citations through each page. As for these Register Guard and the YouTube videos, these were just vets sharing their experiences from the war were. Everyone is going to have a different one, which makes it hard to consider these reliable. Not everyone had to go through the same thing. Some vets probably got spit on, and some didn’t.

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Re: Sources

by Daniel Long – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 11:06 AM

Bo,

I agree with you the two video sources outlining the spit in veterans faces could be used as context to help shine light on the Veterans treatment when they returned. However, when you bring up the point that "I’m sure that there were plenty of vets that did deal with this, but the majority probably didn’t" it is the same as the one veteran in the second video who said that "Most of the pertains are gone today." There is no evidence to support these claims given. I think that when you address the comment later, it shows just how this gives example to the media during the time. The use of showing a large crowd on television doesn't mean that this happened to the majority of the others aside form Washington D.C. but then again, well never know unless, in your words "we must continue to separate differences of information aside, and take a look at the reliability of the sources"

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Re: Sources

by Bo Costello – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 7:24 PM

Hey Dan,

You are right. I shouldn't of said, "the majority probably didn't". Instead I should have rephrased it, "After

watching the two videos, *Vietnam Vets never expected this...* and *Bulls-hit*, I find both sources to be reliable enough to be in Appy's book, but wasn't persuaded that soldiers were getting spit on often."

Thanks for pointing that out. My opinion of this war has changed a considerable amount. I'm starting to feel bad for everyone. Before listening to these types of stories and trying to put myself in their shoes. I had negative notion towards the American Soldier, but now I'm seeing more of the big picture unravel. Not every soldier had the same story to tell. Their was a wide range of soldier, from corrupt to soldiers wanting to fight for our country.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Rectifying History

by [Justin MacDonald](#) – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 10:09 PM

Regarding question 4, I actually believe the more sources of information one has, the better off you are. A lot of information has been thrown at us for the forums this week. Even now I'm still writing future forum posts. Human bias will always be present; the truth will be modified to fit the views of the historian: from the professor with a Phd to the keyboard warrior at home looking at wikipedia. However, the truth can be found piecing together multiple sources. Data-points will be reiterated, and gathering information through multiple angles will generally yield a decent middle ground. From there, it is up to the individual to decide where he stands based on the evidence presented.

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Re: Rectifying History

by [Bo Costello](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 7:52 PM

It's been kind of tough studying through multiple sources, but now I can see the major benefit. I am now forced to open my mind to come up with my own iteration of the war. Now I realized from this class how easy it is to believe the first source, especially when the information is presented in a professional format like the PBS series and *Vietnam Vets Never Expected This...* When I know nothing about the topic, I tend to believe everything I hear about it. This is a major human flaw. Just between these two YouTube videos, you can see how differently the same information is presented. In *Vietnam Vets Never Expected This...*, the video was professionally done and sparked emotion by sharing vets who weren't recognized when returned from the war, but finally was. In *Bulls-hit*, he expresses that people have been misinformed about what actually happened in the Vietnam war: the information is "crap". The only way to actually get people to believe anything these days is if there was actually footage up the act. Eventually I don't think any information will have merit without proper documentation.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Rectifying History

by [David Leavitt](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 11:29 PM

I agree. It can be tough sometimes trying to piece all the parts together. But in the end, it's the best way to get the most accurate perspective on what really happened in the Vietnam war, and every other event in history. You can try to find someone that has the "best answer", or people say "is the most accurate", but at the end of the day, he still has a bias, and you could be getting a less then full story.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Internet Testimonies

by [David Leavitt](#) – Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 10:30 PM

I think they should. The treatment of Vietnam veterans after the war in the states is a important aspect to the war as a whole, and someone that want's to get a balanced view of it should know about it. People are held accountable for their actions (most of the time), and also have to justify actions in their head later on in life. Spitting on solders, the hatred toward soldiers and mistreatment is looked down upon in todays society, so the people that performed these actions have in the 60's and 70's can either be ridiculed by the people around them, or claim that it never happened. This, in my opinion is why it's still debated to this day. Plus, the media

didn't cover it very much, which I think add to some people thinking it never happened.

I think one of the biggest things, is know where somebody, or a organization stands, then consider what they are saying on Vietnam. Like PBS is a liberal media organization, so you need to take this into account when watching the series. AIM is a conservative media organization, so this also must be taken into account. Taking every source that we've looked at, and taking from it all is what I think is the best way to construct accurate account of what happened.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Why would they lie?

by [Dustin Brown](#) – Saturday, May 14, 2016, 9:27 PM

Bull's personal account of the discrimination he faced on his flight home could be included in the Appy book since it fits the mold. The video of the welcome home ceremony which was amazing to watch and long overdue, however it does not belong in the Appy book, because it is more of a group ceremony than an in depth personal account and wouldn't fit the book's structure. The debate over whether or not Veteran's returning from Vietnam were spit on is going to continue until the naysayers see video evidence of such an occurrence. Video evidence will most likely never surface however, since most incidents took place at random locations, had it happened at an antiwar protest it may have been captured on film, but at random airports throughout the country the media (the ones with the cameras) would not be on standby waiting for a soldier to be spat upon. The ones that did spit are very lucky these soldiers showed restraint as that could have ended badly for those scumbags. The historical record will always have inaccuracies since we humans are flawed beings, and opinion, and bias color or perception of events. Bull's hit on Vietnam warns that most, not all combat veterans of Vietnam have passed away which could make personal accounts of the war and the return home difficult to come by in near future. The distinction that the ticker tape on the Bull video makes between veterans in combat roles and those who were not is inappropriate and disrespectful. The Infantry shoulders the burden of battle, but those who stay behind the wire especially at bases like Khe Shan endured rocket and mortar attacks repeatedly and could have been killed just as fast as those on patrol. There was no frontline in Vietnam the war and enemy was everywhere and nowhere. People will always be divided over Vietnam and no matter how many personal accounts are shared or facts presented the damage has been done. Even if somehow every veterans story could be told there would be an equal amount of pushback from those who seek to discredit and shame the soldiers. The sad reality is these soldiers were spit on called names and treated horribly when they returned, and for anyone who wasn't present for the incident, to say otherwise is wrong.

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Re: Why would they lie?

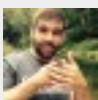
by [Robert Taylor](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 2:03 PM

Dustin

I hope you are wrong in your statement that "Video evidence will most likely never surface," yet unfortunately that is most likely the case. That made me think of something slightly off topic, but kind of interesting. For events that happen today video evidence will probably not be an issue. So many people have cameras on their phones, security cameras, and now even drones. That combined with the fact that traditional media doesn't nearly have the power that they did in the sixties would completely change this issue. If the same events happened today people would record them, put them on Facebook and Youtube, and the news media would be forced to report on it eventually. We do give up a certain level of privacy in this new technological era, some of the advantages are so incredible though.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Why would they lie?

by [Bo Costello](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 8:18 PM

I don't think that the there ceremony itself should have been in Appy's Book, but the individual stories of a soldiers struggles would have a place in the book. It would still be really hard for me to trust a video that surfaced 45 years after the war. Technology is so good these day, that now video footage is hard to trust. I guess we the only way I can say it happened "for sure" is if I were there in real time. So now my opinion is left to some stories, critical thinking and some human instinct. My conclusion from this, is that soldiers were

undoubtedly mistreated by some people, and some soldiers were called "baby killers" and "spit on". Two weeks into this class, I felt that animosity too, but now I have a wider understanding on what might have actually happened during this time.

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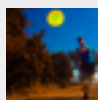
Re: Why would they lie?

by [David Leavitt](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 11:26 PM

I think another reason for talking and interviewing veterans, is for the historical record. The more we can contribute to the historical, the more accurate it will be. In many countries today, history is changed in the history books, especially older history, because there isn't really interviews and such. The more actual information we can get from people that were actually there the better for us, and the generations to follow. It's a opportunity only we have, as like it says in the video, the veterans only live so long, and there will come a day when the last one dies, and that opportunity is lost forever.

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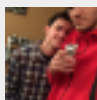
Lessons learned from our past can help us become better humans now

by [Adam Clairmont](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 5:17 PM

I believe that they should be included in the Patriots Text because they are a small part of the story that the author is trying to tell. The experience that these Veterans went through as part of their re-introduction back into the civilian life can teach us a valuable lesson in how to treat our current Veterans when returning home from conflict. We can argue even now if these "spitting" events occurred because it is something that we as Americans do not want to believe we did. I personally find it appalling that our servicemen were treated as they were. While it is possible that many soldiers did commit acts of cruelty while overseas it is impossible to determine from a crowded airport if that particular Veteran did serve faithfully or not. What if they were spitting on a soldier who saved his company due to great acts of heroism? Just because you disagree with the policy does not mean you can take out your frustrations on those who defend our freedom. When all the living Veterans have passed away we will have lost our best source for individual experiences from Vietnam. Sure we will still have the history books but they are always censored and provide the information the writer wants you to hear not necessarily the complete uncensored truth.

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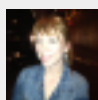
Re: Lessons learned from our past can help us become better humans now

by [Zachary Sielicky](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 6:47 PM

It is crazy to think that this is true for all wars that have happened involving America. It would be crazy to hear first hand stories from people who fought in the Civil War, Spanish American War and WW1. Every war has its own stories that we in today's world can hear, we are only left with developing our own ideas and impressions of what happened in these wars. Having the ability to still hear from these veterans and having their stories to understand how the war really was and from many different perspectives can only bring us closer to understanding the war itself.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Stories by the people

by [Tamara Berge](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 8:58 PM

With the question in mind of historical accuracy, I started digging around online trying to seek truth in the massive amount of information out there. After watching both, PBS's episode 10 and the American POW video, and hearing again about the manipulation of the media I decided to stay away from that and focus on the personal stories told through firsthand accounts. I spent all week going through link after link, website after website, and found so many stories that are still so raw for the storyteller that you feel it in their writing. All I could think was that these accounts are definitely worth something. Even if every detail isn't perfectly remembered, these stories need to be told.

While searching for accounts from more POW's, I found a story about a family that is still searching for information about the death of their father who died sometime after being captured by the Viet Cong. They were sought out and invited to Vietnam by one of their father's captors and will share the story through a documentary (link 1). Then while researching the story of the Black Lions and more information of what happened in the Battle of Ong Thanh on Oct. 17th 1967, I found a very unique part of the story from a man named Dave Berry, who has a picture gallery from his time in Vietnam as a medic. He was also part of the Black Lions and was there that day. He has some pictures of the young men that were also in that battle as well as some personal accounts of that day and the men he fought with (link 2). This last account was found in the interest of the knowing more about what it was like to return from the war during a time when nobody respected you for doing your civic duty (link 3). The shame that was put on the soldiers must have been devastating. To return home feeling pride in serving your country and feeling both thankful to be alive, and heartache for the ones who are not, only to find that you are not welcome. I hope the veterans of that war begin, or continue, to tell their stories; because they are relevant and interesting and occurred during a time when America as a whole was changing. That generation changed America for better or worse.

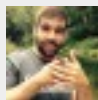
1) <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/03/04/years-later-sons-pow-look-answers-vietnam/24411209/>

2) http://www.pbase.com/d_berry/image/91156619

3) <http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history/videos/coming-home>

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Re: Internet Testimonies

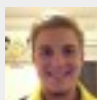
by [Bo Costello](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 10:30 PM



I saw this pic just searching around and It made me feel for these vets. It is so easy to categorize a certain group and place judgement as if they are all the same way. Our soldiers deserved to be recognized.

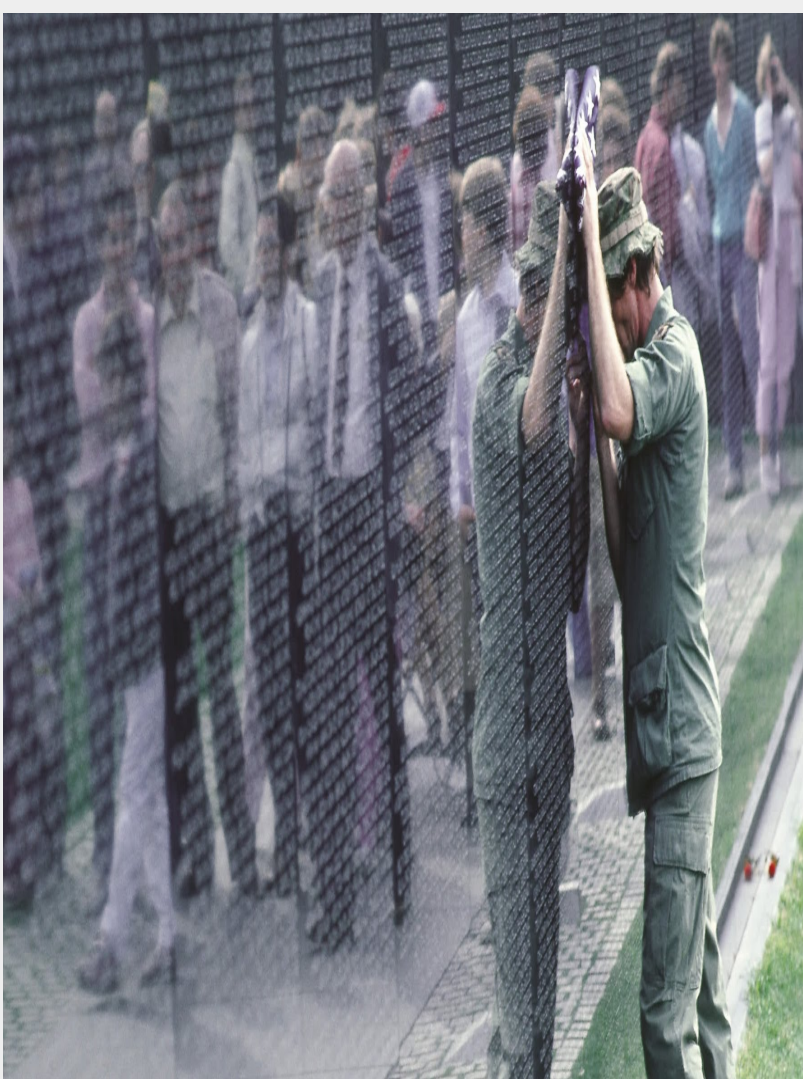
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Re: Internet Testimonies

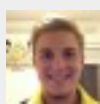
by [Justin MacDonald](#) – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 11:21 PM



I found this one the most powerful. Funny enough the image linked to the video "Vietnam Vets never expected this..." A lot is biased in our learning of the war, but let's not forget the soldiers who fought were still people, and they lost a lot of their friends. Sometimes we forget there is a human element to both sides.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Internet Testimonies (question 3)
by Justin MacDonald – Sunday, May 15, 2016, 11:08 PM

Of course the dialogue on the Vietnam war needs to continue. If one side shuts down, the other will drown it out with bias. A middle ground is achieved when both sides continue to shell out information. Truth lies in the facts. In regards to the spitting incident, it has more than enough evidence to be true.

The scary thing today is the last of our WWII veterans are dying out. They have the best accounts of information from the war on a micro scale. Historians can easily tell us of the macro; that is, how the war played out and its consequences on the world. But only those who experienced daily grueling war can say what it was really like, and give it a human element. The same is true from Vietnam vets. We need as much information as possible from them. It allows future generations to expand their minds on the war, and not just learn from teachers spitting information out from biased classroom textbooks.

In regards adding the accounts from the youtube videos into Appy's "Patriots," I wouldn't be against the idea, in fact they might even belong there. However, they might just be better served as they came; video catalogues of the Veteran's stories. To be safe though, perhaps they could be stored in a safe guarded digital archive. I found Appy's book well versed, certainly not lacking.

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