



Forum 5

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Legacy

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, May 31, 2015, 8:21 PM

This forum thread is for Legacy posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the various questions. 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.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Legacy

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Conservative Revisionist

by Jessica Seiler - Tuesday, June 2, 2015, 3:48 PM

I would say that I am a conservative revisionist. I believe that it was a necessary action for the U.S. to partake in the Vietnam War. The Prime minister of Vietnam even mentioned that the sole reason as to why they wanted to start this war was to gain rights and independence even though we had stated that it was possible to gain that without a war. In "The Changing Interpretations of the Vietnam War," states that from former U.S. Army officers, "asserted that military and civilian leaders failed to develop realistic plans for achieving American politico-military objectives in Vietnam, failed to assess accurately the capabilities and intentions of their adversaries, and failed to coordinate specific battlefield tactics with an overall strategy for securing victory." I agree that the war was a necessary action that we found ourselves almost inclined and forced to partake in. I believe that our actions in the war should have been executed better, but joining the war as a whole, was a necessary action our country had to take. With this being said, I believe that I am a conservative revisionist.

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The most significant legacy

by Daniel Hovet - Wednesday, June 3, 2015, 8:56 PM

The most significant legacy of the war here in the United States is that of the families and friends of those who died in the war, and the returning veterans who were debilitated physically or mentally because of it. For many, they returned home, only to die from conditions caused by exposure to Agent Orange and the like.

<http://www.pennlive.com/projects/2014/agent-orange/>

As pointed out in the News Hour video, veterans and their families were often treated poorly ("pariahs" was an exact word used), for many years after the war, by the public at large. The loss of loved ones was often followed up by harassment and chiding. It would be many years before the concepts of PTSD were properly understood, leading to poor handling of many veterans' issues.



Re: The most significant legacy
by [Dylan Kohn](#) - Friday, June 5, 2015, 7:24 PM

The aspects of PTSD and the lack of proper treatment and diagnosis of it amazes me given our prowess within the world when it comes to taking care of our soldiers. Every generation has had these war issues, whether it was known as "Shell Shock" or its proper term of PTSD. I think during the Vietnam War, there was just so many people that came back with it that they failed to diagnose anything more than, "war changes a person" and moving on. I agree that overall our soldiers were treated poorly after the war, and I think people don't know how to help. So many soldiers talk about how talking about it would have helped, but no one was willing to hear stories or listen. That kind of distance emotionally also played a part in our poor treatment of those fighting for our country.



Re: The most significant legacy
by [Adam Mellott](#) - Saturday, June 6, 2015, 9:46 PM

I free that PTSD was a huge problem with the soldiers that left Vietnam and it is a huge problem with soldiers post war today. I do not think that the ramped drug problem that engulfed the Vietnam war helped in any way, shape or form either. If anything good came out of the results of PTSD post Vietnam, it would be that it was diagnosed and is helping soldiers post Iraq today. It is sad, yet understandable how soldiers do not want to talk about their experiences. The sheer terror that must go through their minds is something that is incomprehensible and terrifying.



Legacy of Dioxin
by [Jeffrey Moat](#) - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 10:27 AM

The Agent Orange issue is particularly interesting especially how it is utilized in some current trends of activism and conversation these days. When you google Agent Orange you're inundated with warnings from alternative health sites which have no issue using contaminated veterans as fuel for a debate. But the true culprit in the negligent use of Agent Orange was the government. Before we landed combat troops in Vietnam, the presence of the toxic dioxin was known. It was discovered by Dow (one of the manufacturers under contract by the military) and shared with the other manufacturers. One of those manufacturers was Monsanto which brought the issue up with the government immediately. Despite the outright proclamation that the presence of dioxin (something Monsanto referred to as a contaminant) would have drastic health problems, the spraying continued. Depending on the source you're reading, some postulate that when the 'discovery' was made (many believe the government knew the risks as they themselves developed Agent Orange and just contracted others for manufacture) no one in the administration felt there would be a large commitment of American troops.



The Legacy Left Behind: Vietnam
by [Dylan Kohn](#) - Wednesday, June 3, 2015, 9:06 PM

The stigma of loss is one that is branded deep into the psyche of our culture. Sports stars who suffer defeat are constantly reminded of their losses and considered failures in their field regardless of their overall careers (See Buckner, Bill or Norwood, Scott).

So what happens to a country that suffers a defeat in a war? The first blemish for the United States is the legacy that the Vietnam War has for its citizens. A common stereotypical joke about the French has to do with surrendering and being less than adequate in its military. So when the U.S. has a defeat in a war, the new ideology associated with it is something that citizens have difficulty identifying with.

The loss proved the U.S. was no longer invincible to the world. Gone was the peak of industry and being the leader in socioeconomic pursuits. Many frustrated with the war itself not the outcome turned their anger internally, to the government and worse yet, to the soldiers. The fighting among ourselves just added to the side effects the citizens felt on their psyche after the war.

Is the U.S. a sore loser? Absolutely, yes. The American Dream has no mention of failing in it, nor does the Statue of Liberty say bring me your losers. This country was built on a foundation of can-do invincibility, and the Vietnam War tarnished that ideal, leaving a legacy of loss and heartbreak to the citizens of the U.S.

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Re: The Legacy Left Behind: Vietnam

by [Jeffrey Moat](#) - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 12:25 PM

I wouldn't say the Vietnam War was the first blemish for the United States. The Great Depression was absolutely disastrous. But then again, FDR's New Deal and then our economic boom after a successful end to World War II is probably what elevated America to such heights to cause the Vietnam War wound to sting so much more.

I'm not as brushed up on my pre-World War II history as I would like to be, but those elements are what catapulted this country to the top economically and socially. Perhaps we were due some humility in that regard? We grew in stature so incredibly fast.

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It's hard to pinpoint something specific.

by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Wednesday, June 3, 2015, 10:36 PM

On the grand level I feel like Vietnam will be remembered for a lot of things, it will be remembered for the six thousand soldiers who lost their lives needlessly the ones that survived came home to a country that didn't want anything to do with them. The Government for going into a situation they didn't understand and continually kept misunderstanding. Misunderstanding to the furthest extant. The people who were here and just trying to make sense of the situation their husbands and sons were in. I think it will also be remembered for the draft, for Kent state. For the protests. Mostly it will be remembered for being a turning point United States history. We will never really have another time like that. With Presidents and Civil Rights leaders getting assassinated. There was so much going on in the country amidst this back drop of an unwindable war.

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Re: It's hard to pinpoint something specific.

by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Friday, June 5, 2015, 10:40 PM

Sixty thousand. My macbook is autocorrecting everything.

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Re: It's hard to pinpoint something specific.

by [Christina Bergman](#) - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 9:01 PM

What you said made me think that if you’re trying to be as realistic as possible, it’s really hard to say one particular thing was the legacy of the war. Like you said, “There was so much going on in the country” at the time. The sixties were crazy. Not only are there many legacies of the war, but there are many legacies that arose from that time period in general. And because of all of these things happening at the same time, I think a lot of the legacies of the war are connected to everything else that was going on at the time, as well. Agent Orange, for example. It was being used over in Vietnam in operation Ranch Hand and the effect was terrible, but during the same time period (in 1962, to be exact) Rachel Carson wrote Silent Spring, a book about the effects of pesticides on the environment. And I think, possibly, without one or the other happening, it might not have the same legacy as it does today.

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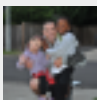
Re: It's hard to pinpoint something specific.

by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 9:13 PM

Basically that is what I was getting at. So much was going on in the world that i think it's impossible to say X is the legacy, you can't make blanket statements like you can about say World War 1. For that even there are a lot of

variables, some would say the first war we used planes, some would say trench warfare, some would say Gavrillo Princip (Im in this boat) But I think with anymore there is no definite legacy, we 40 or so years later have a very different idea about what the legacy is compared to people where were there and fighting.

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Re: It's hard to pinpoint something specific.

by Adam Mellott - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 10:35 PM

I do have to agree with you on this point. Obviously we will all look at one thing that we learned about Vietnam and relate it to our life experiences to this point and make an overall stand-out point as a legacy. In reality, as you just said, there are way too many moments throughout the 25 years of Vietnam that had a significant impact on the outcome and the effects of the war. There are the obvious ones; Tet, My Lai, the use of chemical warfare, U.S. policies, the protests, POW's, the bombings and the list just keeps going on. The fact of the matter is that Vietnam was very significant and it is kind of crazy how it is never talked about. This was a seriously enlightening class!

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Legacy of the POW's

by Adam Mellott - Wednesday, June 3, 2015, 10:39 PM

It seems to me that the most significant legacy of the Vietnam war would be the POW/MIA following. This is a constant reminder to all Americans how badly the soldiers were treated upon return from Vietnam as well as how much support and respect was given to those who returned from Vietnam from being a prisoner of war. According to Herring “the POW’s were singled out as the only true heroes of an unpopular war” (334). Although this was disheartening to the thousands of soldiers who served in the war, it did allow for some dignity to be regained. The POW flag and and the annual POW/MIA observance that occurs every September (<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/pow-mia-recognition-day>) displays a remembrance of the war and the lives that were lost. The symbol for the POW flag is known by americans who do not even know about Vietnam or the destruction that it caused. To me this is a lasting legacy that is the constant reminder of this unnecessary war.

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Re: Legacy of the POW's

by Dylan Kohn - Friday, June 5, 2015, 7:18 PM

While I agree that the legacy of the POW's is truly remarkable, I often wonder if the reason it is believed that they are the true heroes isn't just because of the sacrifice and torment that they had to endure. The POW's were one aspect of the war that both sides could use as political leverage and bargaining chips. Herring writes that the North continued to use POW's in the Paris talks, and on the homefront their significance is just as important now. But I question if because they were directed tied to the hope for peace that POWs was even more important during the Vietnam War.

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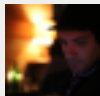


Re: Legacy of the POW's

by Adam Mellott - Friday, June 5, 2015, 7:59 PM

The POW's were and have been a significant part of this war and the war's that have followed. Reflecting on your comment about the POW's being leveraged, I also feel that their significance was indeed important with Americans. It was almost like America was trying to find something good and positive to come out of what had happened in Vietnam as well as the hope of survival for those who were lost but not recovered. Reading through the final chapter in the Herring book, I was disturbed to read how it was portrayed then it was stated that Nixon was basically using the MIA soldiers as "a means to rally public support behind an increasingly unpopular war". It was as if the U.S. was using our soldiers as a pawn for policy. This did of course bite Nixon and his administration in the butt as the first comment was followed by the statement "in doing so, it created a monster that would turn on the government with vengeance."

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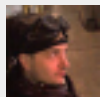


Re: Legacy of the POW's
by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Friday, June 5, 2015, 10:42 PM

This is an aspect I didn't think about, and clearly a lot of other people didn't either, I thought about the soldiers, but not the ones who went missing, or were never gotten back. I growing up, knew not a lot about Vietnam, but I could recognize the flag and understood what it meant. This really brings a whole different set of things I could have said in here. I think that goes to show you how many angles there were in this war, how many different things were happening, and how things like this, which is an incredibly important aspect of it can be forgotten.

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A Legacy of Suspicion
by [Jeffrey Moat](#) - Wednesday, June 3, 2015, 10:48 PM

I had to re-read the question a few times to make sure I understood the distinction properly that this was the most significant legacy of the Vietnam War for the United States and not for the world at large. I am not certain I could give that larger question the due diligence it would require. However, the question of the legacy for *us* is pretty easy to answer; at least from my perspective.

Being in my early 30's I have no memories of Vietnam or what life was like before then. I was raised in a world where "The Vietnam veteran [...] became a popular culture hero in the 1980s, the sturdy and self-sufficient warrior" (Herring page 362). I remember watching Rambo with my big brother and wondering how he could have been so abandoned and marveling at his ability to survive. I knew my father was a veteran of the Vietnam War, but he didn't talk about it and I secretly admired him like my own personal Rambo.

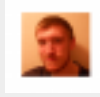
But it isn't the soldiers or their stories that I think is the most significant legacy. It's what surrounds that narrative and spawned a national unrest and upset that continues to this day. I would warrant that if you asked someone to rate a lawyer, criminal, college student, politician and a soldier on how much they were trustworthy, the politician would be ranked almost always the lowest. Even the politicians we vote for often are done so not due to trust in their ability to fairly govern or properly represent the people. The combination of the Vietnam War, Watergate and the 'Death of American Innocence' had such a lasting impact on our relationship with our own government that up to two years ago, only 20% of the American public felt they could trust it (<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/why-dont-americans-trust-government/>).

This sentiment rages through our culture like a wildfire spread by broadcast television, bloggers and social media. Conspiracy theories once considered preposterous start to sound reasonable as faith in our governing body erodes. The might of America now carries a stigma of corruption and special interests. And worse still, it's accepted with bristling resignation.

I don't blame this effect on any one person or group. It's just another step in the slow pace of history of how we got from there (the Greatest Generation) to here. And unfortunately our legacy as it stands now is paranoia and suspicion.

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Cynics and embitterment
by [Daniel Hovet](#) - Saturday, June 6, 2015, 10:23 PM

Yes, the Vietnam War certainly did usher in a kind of legacy of cynicism and suspicion about government, geopolitics, and the U.S.A. at large. First there was the disinformation regarding involvement (just "advisors"); in the Herring book, it is mentioned that U.S. air force pilots were taking random South Vietnamese ground crew up in the bombers with them so the bombing runs could be passed off as "training exercises". When "advisors" died, it was invariably in "Training accidents" and the like. Then, there was the support of Ngo Dinh Diem and his morally ambiguous government. Many wondered, are these the governments we support now? Then, troops were increasingly deployed to Vietnam, with as little fanfare as possible at first, until that became unfeasible. Then the whole process of increasing involvement and trying to extricate ourselves, often at the same time, was a contentious issue. All in all, this, to many people living at the time, was not their "parents' war", and they were not their "parents' generation". Coupled with the debacles at home, such as the Watergate break in and subsequent cover up attempt, the Chicago Democratic Convention riots, Kent State, etc. etc., an environment of cynicism developed that lingers still today.

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Not their parents war

by [Jeffrey Moat](#) - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 9:16 AM

"Not their parents war"

This also resonates with me pretty strongly. My father, like I mentioned before, was in Vietnam. Before him his father was in World War II. We have a long standing tradition of people in our family going to serve. When started getting into my late teens in the late 90's (I can't remember exactly when) my father came to me one day and told me not to join the military. It wasn't just something that I wanted to do, I felt obligated. It was tradition. But he told me that something changed after Vietnam and that our wars now were not like war my grandfathers fought (and one of them died) in. The conversation was more in depth, but it was chilling and persuasive.

I still to this day wish maybe I had gone in though. I'm not very favorable to what we do these days, but the life of a serviceman still appeals to me.

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Re: A Legacy of Suspicion

by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 9:10 PM

I am 32 so I am right with you on the growing up viewing Vietnam as " a self sufficient warrior" The only thing I knew about Vietnam until I was in my 20s was basically what movies like Rambo or Platoon taught me. I think this gave our generation a very skewed view on the war. In hindsight I could have just made this my entire post instead of commenting on yours but it really reminded me of it. The most I really learned about the war until my 20's was in cinema, giving a Hollywood sheen to it. How messed up is that?

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Re:Re: A Legacy of Suspicion

by [Christina Bergman](#) - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 10:13 PM

I feel ya, man. I didn't grow up with any of those movies because I'm only 20 years old, but I still understand where you're coming from because that just means I didn't even have that skewed Hollywood movie information! So my perspective hardly even existed, really. I've been taught the Civil War, World War I and World War II a bazillion times over the history of my schooling, but I've never been taught anything about the Vietnam War until now (or the Korean War...or the Gulf War...you get the point). It's really infuriating that the education system somehow decided, "Oh, we'll just skip over those parts until you have to pay for it." Now that's messed up. I mean, at what point did they say, "No, it's just not important enough for them to know about."? And how could anybody think that? I mean, yes all of the other wars I learned about were important and I'm glad I at least got that part of our history, but Vietnam is so much more current and relevant to life today. I've asked myself so many times, "WHY the heck wasn't I taught ANYTHING?" And I just don't get it...Sorry for the rant. It's just really frustrating.

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Re: A Legacy of Suspicion

by [Christina Bergman](#) - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 9:51 PM

Whoa! Only 20%? If that's true, that's an amazing statistic. My initial post was about something similar to yours, but I made a point to say that I didn't think America's attitude toward politicians was entirely because of outright distrust. But, now I'm not so sure! Thanks for bringing that into the conversation.

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Lessons To Be Learned

by [Marcus Farset](#) - Friday, June 5, 2015, 4:19 PM

The Vietnam war was one of the biggest military losses. It was also a major physical loss. 58,220 American military personnel died in the war. Each year the death tolls shook the American people, making them wonder what the aim for the

war really was. This brings me to another point which could have applied to the government at the time, never start a war you don't intend to finish. Vietnam was just a part of the cold war and it seemed like the US did not pay much attention to it because they they thought the could breeze right through. In reality the war just ended with massive death tolls. Another legacy is the psychological damage. Most of the American soldiers in Vietnam were around 20 years old. Put yourself in their shoes, being in a battle and looking over and watching your friend get his legs blown off, or losing an arm. This would heavily effect someone's mental state, maybe even cause PTSD. The psychological effects of the war are what I think decreased the soldiers morale also. The soldiers didn't know what they are fighting for. This caused their mental drive to decrease and not be focused on winning the war, just wanting to get home alive. There are many legacies to the Vietnam War or "The War We Couldn't Win", with some very valuable lessons to be learned.

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No ground gained

by Daniel Hovet - Friday, June 5, 2015, 5:49 PM

I agree that one of the most impactful legacies of the Vietnam War was how it affected those fighting in it, and how the loss of those 58,000 soldiers affected the people of the United States. With over two million United States personnel cycling in and out of Vietnam over the many years of the course of the war, no corner was left untouched in the U.S.A. Many felt great loss at having fought so hard and lost so much, with no real gains to be spoken of.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Responsibility and Idealism

by Christina Bergman - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 6:56 PM

In my opinion, it seems like the most significant legacy of the war for people in the U.S. would have to be a sort of national "lesson" that was learned. I think because of the Vietnam War (and other things that happened in the sixties) we've learned to question things. Jonathan Holloway put it nicely when he said that the war gave rise to the "...end of American innocence."(Legacy-News Hour). Stanely Karnow also mentions that before the war, "...those were the days when people didn't ask questions. People had confidence in the government."(Legacy). But, now I think, as Karnow says, the attitude towards politicians has changed and people in general believe that "we have a right to know what they're doing."(Legacy). And I think this is evident also from my own personal experience. The most close to home example would be my mother. She has always been quick to question politicians and measures on ballots and I've learned from her to do the same. But, I wouldn't go so far to call the reason for this attitude suspicion or distrust. I think it has more to do with our personal responsibility. We don't want to feel at fault. Because of the Vietnam War, many people decided to protest, either for it or against it. But, either way, every person did it, I think, because of their responsibility and right as a citizen of the United States to fight for what they believed in. And I think the outcome of the war imbued a feeling of failure in everybody and as a lasting effect, people nowadays, or at least people from that generation, make sure they take responsibility for what happens in this country to avoid another incident like the Vietnam War.

I also think that the war intensified our idealism. This isn't necessarily bad, but it just seems like we hold on to things that we believe in so tightly sometimes. And I think this has led to where we are now in regards to certain issues. It's created a kind of polarization where we can't put aside our ideals and just think of what might be best for everybody no matter what they believe and have essentially frozen the debate in time. Just like the "hawks" and "doves".

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Re: Responsibility and Idealism

by Marcus Farset - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 11:10 PM

I totally agree that we as citizens should be able to know what the government is doing. Unfortunately, I think we are left in the dark a lot of times, which causes people to question the government even more about policies and some of its doings. It seems like politicians are two faced; one when talking to the public to be elected, saying what the people want to hear. The other is when they get elected, they seem to contradict some of the past things they said.

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Troop Treatment

by Marcus Farset - Sunday, June 7, 2015, 11:01 PM

The Vietnam vet treatment when returning home was a big deal. The vets were known as “baby killers” because of My Lai and other similar events. The crimes these soldiers committed ruined the reputation of other vets who served honestly and nobly, who were returning home, sparking protests against them. The anti-Vietnam vet mindset lasted for many years after the conclusion of the war. This is a major legacy because the mistreatment of homecoming Vietnam soldiers is still heavily talked about today in society and in classes like ours.

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