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Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, May 11, 2013, 10:07 PM

After studying the required materials, address the two questions in SEPARATE posts.

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

Since there are multiple questions, BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Don't simply leave it RE: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

Sum of ratings: -

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Question 2

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Monday, May 13, 2013, 2:18 PM

The compilation of stories gives us more insight into the lives of those who have gone through these same situations. It allows for us to have a more complex image of events rather than just a simple "one story" image. The things that are most concerning to me about learning about different events and making sure I am being given the correct information is to separate the emotions from the facts. I know that we as humans can exaggerate something to keep the attention of our audience interested in what we are talking about. Sometimes that can happen when someone is talking about his or her war experiences as well. Also when you are just getting the perspective from one soldier, I personally tend to take that as fact and think that all the soldiers went through the same things, when they may have not. So I as a reader shouldn't take one persons word and think that it was the same for everyone.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Question 2  



by Athena Miller - Friday, May 17, 2013, 5:39 PM

I agree it is important to get many different stories from different people than just "one story." I would also try to acquire stories from different units of soldiers in the same particular battle. Some units of soldiers may have experienced "group think," where they all agreed something did or didn't happen in a particular situation which may or may not have been true. Soldiers work together so tightly and rely on each other to get them through a situation where each person is like an extension of themselves. There could have been situations where they collaborated together about an event to protect a fellow soldier's reputation if the situation was bad enough. I'm not saying that this happened; I'm just saying that it could have.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 2

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Saturday, May 18, 2013, 12:04 AM

That's a great idea, after reading your idea another one popped into my head. It was along the lines of you "group think" idea, where you could interview say five right after the war and then 5 years down the road interview them again to see how others reacted towards them being vets.

Thanks for those ideas 😊 I think that would be a very interesting read with all that you said.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Question 2

by John Howland - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 11:45 AM

Excellent, emotions always cloud our views of reality. But remember, soldiers are human too and emotions will cloud their perspective on events they were present at. Add to that the fact that they may be covering for one or more of their comrades in arms. Many things happened in the field, people do things when they are under stress that they may not have done anywhere else. Or they obeyed an order to do something that they are ashamed of and they are afraid to speak the truth. Every soldier had their way to deal with the stress on a daily basis, whether it was with drugs, alcohol or denial.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Question 1

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Monday, May 13, 2013, 8:37 PM

If I were the author of *Patriots* I would tell more of the POW stories. I would tell more of their stories, because they over came torture, they found away to communicate with each other when it was the last thing that their captors wanted for them. Even though some of them broke under the worst conditions they still had each other to count on.

I would include a note to the reader. I would say that even though some of the POWs broke, that doesn't make them weak, or any less of a soldier. They were fighting a mental war rather than a physical war that the others outside of those confined quarters.



(Welcoming home POWs)

But I would also like to tell about the reactions that a lot of civilians gave to show their lack of appreciation towards these vets. I would want America to see how we shouldn't treat those who have gone over either as volunteers or as draftees to a war that was brutal. The way that most the vets all have the SAME story of being spat on and treated negatively, except for Bob Thompson and Robert Shaw who didn't have any unpleasant stories to tell about being spit on.

I would include a note to the reader. It would say something along the lines of respect those who have accomplished much more than any of us who sat at home could. I would also say that this didn't happen to everyone.



Roger Leath

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 1

by Michelle Coming - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 11:06 PM

It's sad to hear about all of those soldiers and their stories of violence inflicted on them upon their return home. If I recall correctly they still had the draft during the Vietnam war, so many of them were forced to serve, and I'm sure many of those that were thrown into the mix didn't necessarily agree with the war. It's very disheartening to know that such anger and hatred was misdirected towards any of the soldiers, as if their experience in Vietnam wasn't bad enough.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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**Re: Question 1**

by John Howland - Saturday, May 18, 2013, 10:53 AM

The anti-war protestors were not anti-soldier; when I returned and the thousands of vets, that I know, not one was hassled when we came back, in fact a lot of the protestors were returning vets like me. Now that does not mean that none were assaulted, what I'm saying is that in certain areas, like New York and San Francisco, where the media was there by the hundreds, certain groups looking to discredit the anti-war protestors would start trouble. Being a vet AND anti-war protestor I can tell you that the groups I was with only held peaceful demonstrations and we were the ones who were spit on and assaulted for being anti-american. We were even called Communists, the funny thing that even today people believe if you are not with them then you are a Communist, like it is supposed to be an insult.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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**Re: Question 1**

by Patrick Haider - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 9:10 PM

I believe it is incredibly important to make that distinction between anti-war and anti-troops. Many people have a preconcieved notion that if you are anti-war then you must also be againts America and it's troops, because if you do not agree with that one aspect of America, then you must be against the country as a whole.

As a veteran prior to 9/11 I saw first hand how people could very much be against the war, but support the troops with kindness and compassion. Even during the height of the Iraq war there were countless people against the idea of us being there, yet I could still travel in my uniform and have random strangers thank me everywhere I went. During my time in the Air Force wearing my dress uniform in public was not only acceptable, but

beneficial due to how well people treated the troops.

I was not alive during the Vietnam war, and thus I can never fully know the full truth of how the soldiers were treated, but my experience tells me that people are inherently good, and I can only hope that veterans of the Vietnam era were treated as well as I was some ten years ago.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 1

by Jungmin Um - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 11:44 PM

I agree with you that the POW stories have to be told to many people because of the tortures that the soldiers got and thier sacrifices.

It has to be checked whether the stories are true or not though.

I always doubt whether the story teller has exaggerated the event/story or not because it is easy for people to exaggerate when telling the story and especially in this case because most of the readers were not there, in Vietnam, when the war occurred.

I think it is really good idea to add readers' reaction. There are many people looking at vets with negative view, but if they read some other reactions from other people, I think it will work in a good way that can change people's thought. Or it can at least make their thoughts neutral.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Question 1

by Nathaniel Hahn - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 9:25 AM

I am sure it was very difficult for Appy to narrow down the interviews and stories to be included in his book, and he has done a good job of giving us a diverse range of accounts. If the task was up to me, I would find it extremely challenging, although having read the letters and listening to the POW stories there are a few that I would include. Again with the goal of diversity in mind, I would try to include stories that gave some perspective from many sides. For instance, from the Register Guard Letters I would include the letter from Herman Isaacs and from Robert L Shaw. I would choose these two because it offers two varying accounts from soldiers returning form the war. One person experienced hostility while the other not so much. That is important because it illustrates that all because something happened or did not happen to an individual, that it was that way across the board, that the same thing happened to everyone. Everybody's account and experiences are different.

I would include a note to the reader; I feel it is important to give a little insight to the reader as to who is being interviewed and their background. I am not

sure that it necessarily makes the account more historically accurate, but it does “personalize” the account or story more which can help the story make more of an impact to the reader.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 1

by Ian MacDonald - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 11:23 AM

I agree with your statement, and as I said in my previous post, I too think that it's important to give more than just one or two people's experiences when writing a book about the Vietnam War. It is important to hear all sides of a situation because what happened to some people did not necessarily happen to everyone. I did find it a bit interesting, however, that not one single letter (in the collection of Register-Guard letters) written from a Vietnam vet, not even Robert L. Shaw's mentioned **nothing** at all about being tormented at some point in time about being a veteran. In Robert L. Shaw's case, he claims that he was never 'spit' on by anyone, but that he was, however, turned down for work and was criticized for being a Vietnam vet.

The biggest issue I had with reading the letters were with the ones that were written from people who were never there. They simply came to the conclusion they did by researching books and the internet. Bob Thompson's letter is a perfect example. His exact words were: "In fact, it appears that the spitting on the veterans story is completely false." I would like to see the guy tell that to an actual vet that did experience that! The fact that Thompson was not a veteran or was probably never even there however is the reason I would not include his story in the *Patriots* book.

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Sum of ratings:3 (1)



Re: Question 1

by Michelle Coming - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 9:15 PM

He simply took the reports from the media as fact. The media tends to only show one side of any given event. If anything was learned from this class it should be that we should never just assume that all sources of information are completely accurate. With as many soldiers that were sent to Vietnam and had the good fortune of being able to return, they're bound to have many different experiences upon returning to the United States.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question 1

by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 6:49 PM

I agree with you that including varying accounts doesn't mean one is wrong or right just because it didn't happen to that particular person. That is one of the great things about the Appy book - that we have stories from all sides, including Giap's view on the war which is very different than our commanding officers, to read and learn about the different experiences that happened. I think including a note to the reader to give background can be important but not always necessary when the story gives the reader the background within the recollection.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Question 2

by Nathaniel Hahn - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 9:56 AM

As are materials have done throughout this class, the letters to the editor have presented us with varying accounts and opinions about soldiers returning from the Vietnam War. These accounts range from somebody never hearing of soldiers being mistreated, to soldier's accounts of mistreatment and a soldier returning home without incident. What does this tell us? I think it tells us that there is no "universal" truth about the subject matter. With a subject matter this complicated it is important to look at even the smallest individual accounts to try to get a more diverse understanding of the event. These letters give us a little more insight as to just how divided this nation was with the war.

As with most experiences or accounts I have read thus far, most I am sure, are slightly biased according their experiences and beliefs then and now. Their opinions and beliefs have been molded form those experiences. However, that does not make them any less valid or historically accurate, but that is why it is important to

read as many different accounts or stories to understand all opinions about the war. Not only from the soldiers who fought in the war, but from those protesting as well.

Not one person is going to have all the answers, nor is somebody going to get a complete understanding of the war by reading or hearing just one source of information.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Question 1

by Ian MacDonald - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 3:52 PM

With a book like *Patriots* that is compiled of interviews taken from actual war veterans and people that were actually there and experienced the terrors of the war, I do think that it is important to get “all sides” of the story and I think Appy does a pretty good job at doing that. After reading all the Register-Guard letters, if I were the author of *Patriots* or any other book on the Vietnam War for that matter, I would tend to add interviews or stories written by people who were actually there and experienced it a lot sooner than someone who just googled it or has researched it (**i.e. - Michael Rooke-Ley and Bob Thompson**). That being said, the letters written by Thomas W. Posttele and Rodney Gordon are most likely the ones I would use for the book *Patriots* sooner than any of the others. If I was to use any of the other ones such as Thompson’s or Rooke-Ley’s, I would definitely add a “note to the reader” probably just simply stating what their occupation was. For example with Michael Rooke-Ley; if I was to add his statement in the book, I would add a short sentence before the statement just saying who he was and that he works for the Register-Guard. I have separate opinions about each of the letters that were written, but regardless to that, I think it’s a little easier to believe someone that was actually there and experienced what happened then someone who claims something to be true just from a little research they may or may not have done.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 1

by Nathaniel Hahn - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 12:44 PM

I would first like to thank you for the response and feedback to my earlier post. I would also like to agree with what you say about preferring letters or stories from those involved in the war in some degree or another. While I might have chosen different letters myself, I found more validation of the opinions from those who had a first-hand account. Although the more I think about it, as we speak of trying to get a whole and broad perspective of the war, I guess it would be important to hear from those who might not actually been directly involved with the war or anti-war movement. Some people were either too young or too old, or for numerous other reasons may not have taken part, but that does not mean that they were not affected somehow by the war (budget crisis, loss of a family member, i.e.), and their opinion would be important as well to understand how the war and its impact.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Question 2

by Patrick Haider - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 5:47 PM

I believe that the letters into The Register-Guard tell us a lot about history and how the media can show us only events that they want to while leaving out the bits that they don't want the public to know about. Reading the letters it is clear that while violent or distasteful protests may not have been the normal thing, they clearly happend to at least a few veterans.

I don't believe that there is a reason for these veterans to lie about what happened on their return home, and their recounts are far more revealing than any new report could ever be. Small occurances such as these protests can easily be overlooked by the media that does not want to portray the American public in a bad light, but they are important events. It is important for a society to know about behaviors such as these slander or spitting events so that we as a nation can respond and try to counteract them.

I am proud of any veteran who tried to bring these events to light. These men had the media, and parts of the public against them, yet they persisted in trying to represent their side of the story. Stories that try to minimize the accounts of these soldiers are mere attempts to further mute their voices in an effort to maintain the percieved truth of events. Without the accounts of these soldiers returning home, we may never get the whole truth, but instead an edited hand picked version of the truth that has been deemed appropriate for public consumption.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 2



by John Howland - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 2:06 PM

Here's something to think about, just recently a American Idol contestant. Matthew Farmer, made false claims of being hurt in Iraq. Why would he lie? No other reason but to bring sympathy for himself. And what about the reaction of Americans to the protestors? While protesting the war I was hit, slapped, cussed at, accused of being unpatriotic and had rocks thrown at me, and I am a Vet. There were never any anti-soldier protests; only anti-war.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by John Howland - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 6:07 PM

Before I get into the questions I want to restate the fact of my own service in Vietnam and that I was one of those returning soldiers who was NOT, in any way, spit on, swore at or accused of being a “baby killer”. I have, to this date, never heard from any of the thousands of fellow vets, that I know, that they were either. Upon returning home I too joined the anti-war movement. As a US Naval Corpsman, assigned to the Marines, I witness horrors that still haunt me to this very day. Watching these videos and clips has, at time, brought me to tears and I have had to walk away for a period of time.

Any person writing a historical book who decides not to present both sides of a story denies the reader the chance to form their own opinion. So I would have to include all the stories/letters and I would also include, like Appy, a “note to the reader”. I would have to point out that there is always two sides to a story and that the reader should do their own information gathering to get to the truth of the matter. I would also have to point out that anger sometimes makes one invent stories that have no facts to back them up.

I have been a student of history since grade school, looking beyond what was in my history books and delving into deeper truths. We just had another “war” that almost became another Vietnam, and again we were lied to by the very people in government that we are supposed to be able to trust. What will history books say in fifty years about the Iraqi war, I have already been called unpatriotic because I didn’t support it. People on the opposing side try to connect anti-war to anti-soldier; they tried it with the Vietnam War and the Iraqi War. We must never trust one source of information; instead we must look to numerous journals and history books to be able to form our own opinions. In “The Life of Reason” by George Santayana, he states “Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Yet how can we learn from our past if what we know is invalid?

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Michelle Coming - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 9:06 PM

You brought up a really good point about anger causing one to invent stories that have absolutely no factual backing. That's definitely one thing to keep in mind when reading personal stories like those in the Appy book and the letters. Emotion is a huge factor in distorting the way someone remembers an event.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by John Howland - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 12:13 PM

I've seen it many times from both sides; people believe in their cause so fervently that when they are confronted by an opposing view that they will say anything to bolster their own claim. In Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" (forgive my usage of this) he states "But the most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly and with unflagging attention. It must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over. Here, as so often in this world, persistence is the first and most important requirement for success." In other words, repeat a lie often enough and it will be believed.

Add to that is the fact that there are instigators who will infiltrate the opposing side to cause friction. Every peace sit-in, that I attended, used passive resistance, never attacking. That could not be said for the other side, I myself was bludgeoned by a police officer for no other reason but that I was there. If you look closely, in episode ten, you see demonstrators, who are handcuffed, being hit with billy clubs. You will also see demonstrations that were peaceful up until a few officers started swinging their billy clubs. Any normal person would try to defend themselves. Now that doesn't mean that demonstrators were 100% peaceful; out of those few times there were a lot of instigators who were sent in by the opposing side to make the demonstrators look bad.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Michelle Coming - Saturday, May 18, 2013, 6:30 PM

That's very true. In many cases they repeat the lie until they themselves believe it as well.

Even in the news today you can find demonstrators being treated with the same demeanour.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Patrick Haider - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 3:11 PM

This is indeed a very good point. Emotion can lead to a very distorted version of the truth. I can imagine that many returning veterans were very frustrated upon their return when their voices were being drowned out by the mainstream media. This frustration can lead a person to exaggerate a series of events in order for their voices to be heard. I am not saying that this was the normal situation by any means, but I'm sure it happens, and it can certainly affect the accounts of veterans.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 9:22 AM

I'm glad you're in the class because it has given us one more example of soldier's lives post war. Is it the historians fault for writing a book only revealing one side of the conflict, or is it the students job to find the other side out for themselves? Sometimes in order to appreciate something we as students have to search for what we believe first to have a deeper appreciation for it.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by John Howland - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 12:40 PM

Thank you. As to historians, yes they must present both sides if they want to be seen as unbiased. That doesn't mean that anyone who writes a book must show both sides, that is their prerogative but they can't be considered historians. Sometimes one doesn't have all the information when writing a history book, that's why these types of books are constantly updated. A history book written today will go through numerous changes in the next fifty years and beyond. We must remember history books are not written by historians, they are put together by a committee. That is why there is a problem with them even today. Lately the news has reported on the issue in Texas where they have been altering the text books, removing Thomas Jefferson, replacing him with religious right icon John Calvin. And yes, a student should never take what is written in one book as the ultimate truth,

instead they should use all the tools available today to research the issue.

I want to address one issue with the letters to the editor where Herman Isaacs derided Thompson for his use of the internet. Being a Computer Specialist, I can guarantee you that anything that can be found in the largest library can be found on the internet.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Friday, May 17, 2013, 10:44 AM

Good points. I am very interested to see what history book will even look like in five years. Maybe it won't be long enough to see a substantial change but it would perhaps start to change. I think history will continue to change the older everyone gets, and those who have lived through those important historical events start dying then the power is all in the hands of the writer and no one can tell them otherwise because they haven't lived through it themselves.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Hao Qiu - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 11:26 PM

I agree you point that there is always two sides to a story and that the reader should get trustful information by themselves. The author could change or make up stories depends on their emotion. To invent some story that absolutely wrong to lead readers.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Question 2

by Athena Miller - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 6:59 PM

The compilation of stories, tell us that it is difficult to discern the whole truth in small and large occurrences in history. I believe the major issues concerning historical accuracy from the perspective of our soldiers are many may have had different experiences or perspectives of how they were treated. I believe that some of the soldiers may have encountered hostile antiwar protestors while others met with more peaceful ones. It may have depended on demographics, location, and at what point in the war they arrived back into the United States. A combination or all of these factors could have determined what type of situation was present when a soldier returned home.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Question 2

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 9:25 AM

Those are very good things to consider with the demographics, locations, and the time they had come back in the war. I wonder if some historian could find a few from each year that had come back to see what their return was like.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Question 2

by John Howland - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 12:45 PM

You hit the nail on the head! Most of the problems occurred in large cities like New York and San Francisco, because this is not only where the media was but where the largest demonstrations took place. If the opposing side wanted to discredit the anti-war protestors all they had to do is send in a few instigators to cause mayhem.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question 2

by Travis Jones - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 12:41 PM

I really have to agree with your points on when and where the soldiers returned home to, could have greatly altered how they were greeted. It was a viewpoint I hadn't given a great amount of thought too. Still though the fact that soldiers were greeted by angry protests when they came home is utterly disgraceful by the Americans that participated. It was not the soldiers that made the politics and forced them to fight, whether they supported the cause or not. So to take it out on them is a prime example of media twisting and the result of the hippie movement at the time.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question 2

by John Howland - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 2:19 PM

First off, I was a Hippie, a Vietnam vet and a anti-war protestor! Hippies are pacifist and non-violent, the protests were the same. Any violence came from trying to protect themselves from over aggressive anti-protestors. Don't confuse anti-war with anti-soldier, something the far right seems to try and

do everytime an anti-war protest is held. As to the media in the Vietnam era, unlike the media today, they reported the events as they were unlike the media lately which reports the opinions their owners espouse.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Athena Miller - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 7:57 PM

I would probably use some of the stories or a use a variety of contradictory accounts because it is good to acquire a well-rounded perspective of the events and different perspectives of individuals involved in the war. I would only use the ones that were from writers that were actually involved with the Vietnam War in some capacity, whether they were a soldier or an antiwar protestor. I would include a "note to the reader," as Appy has done. The note would probably go something like this:

These accounts may seem contradictory, but many of the soldiers had similar or different experiences when they arrived home. Others may have been treated differently when others realized that they were Vietnam veterans. This may be due to how Americans felt about the war at that current time or the location of their arrival. The other major factor is at what point in the war they arrived home. The treatment could have had varying degrees of reactions depending if their tour was completed in the beginning, middle, or end of the war.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime



by Rebekah Rundstrom - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 9:27 AM

That would be an interesting book to read! Thanks for including a letter to the editor.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Travis Jones - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 9:01 PM

If I were to write the Patriots book, I would include a variety of the stories, but sticking to the more middle of the spectrum of stories. The wing extremists from both sides can greatly blur the medium of a general opinion. In the response of the personal note question, I think that some of the more extreme letters that it would be beneficial to the readers to have a note about the letters editing the historically or perhaps conveying the stance of the book and my own personal thoughts regarding why it was incorporated.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Question 1 - Letters I Would Use

by Jennifer Larson - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 9:03 PM

Upon reading the Letters to the Editor file, I found that there were a few letters that I would use if I was an author like Appy. Appy focused on those who had experience in Vietnam and the war, not just someone who was at home learning about the war from afar. I believe for that reason I would only include the letters from the veterans in the Register-Guard file – Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, Herman Isaacs and Robert Shaw. The letters don't all carry the same experience, as Shaw didn't have any issues with being spat on but the other three did, but all are veterans of the war and therefore have first-hand experience with coming home from Vietnam.

I would not include the letters of Tom Preuss and Bob Thompson because they did not have any experience in the war and instead were basing their information on internet searches, second hand accounts and news articles. While passionate, these men do not have the first-hand experience to support or refute that soldiers returning from war were spat upon. I believe Appy would have also refused these types of accounts because they are not experiences but pure opinion. I also don't feel a "note to the reader" would be necessary in including the letters I previously mentioned as they are the accounts of the men who came home to the experiences they are relating.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 1 - Letters I Would Use

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 9:32 AM

I think that your book would be interesting to read. Very informative and factual - because the events were taken from real letters. I think your right about Appy.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Question 2 - Soldiers Accounts vs. Historical Accuracy

by Jennifer Larson - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 9:05 PM

Compilations of any stories have to be taken with the knowledge that while these are first-hand accounts, they are not the experience of every soldier who was in Vietnam. That everyone experiences different situations and while their story is their truth, it is not the truth of another soldier and does not describe the war as a whole. Experiences are also tainted at times by our emotional state and this is true for veterans returning from war just as much as it is true of a mother giving birth. For example, we have four stories of men returning from war, and while three of them experienced hostility immediately upon their return, Shaw did not. The hostility he experienced came later and this is an issue that wasn't addressed by the other three men. So for Shaw, it is true that he wasn't spat upon or called a "baby killer", but for Isaacs, that is his truth.

I believe this is what we have to remember when reviewing the historical accuracy of events from the perspective of our own soldiers – that each soldier had a different experience and a different outcome, so their history is their own, but as far as it reflecting the totality of the war, it is not possible.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 2 - Soldiers Accounts vs. Historical Accuracy

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Friday, May 17, 2013, 10:49 AM

Well said, I think it's important for us when we're reading anything from someone who went through an experience like these POWs and soldiers did is really to separate their emotions from the facts. Emotions are good, because then it allows us to connect with them more, but you are right it can taint the

facts and their experiences.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Re: Question 2 - Soldiers Accounts vs. Historical Accuracy



by Ian MacDonald - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 5:14 PM

I think you bring up a good point as far as the experience of some soldiers not necessarily being the same as every soldier and not describing the war as a whole. I too think its important to understand that what some people experienced isn't what everyone experienced and to not rely on just one source. And although emotions do come into play to a certain degree, I don't think that makes most of what someone says invalid. For example with the prisoners of war, many of them (if not all of them in the video clip) were able to describe the experience in very good detail. Despite being locked up and tortured for seven long years which would definitely be a very emotional experience, each of them described the experience in a very similar manner.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Question 2 - Soldiers Accounts vs. Historical Accuracy



by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 8:43 PM

I also don't think that emotion makes experiences invalid. While it may make the situation seem more difficult, or joyful, or sorrowful depending on what the memory is, usually the story has threads of truth regardless of the emotion. By really listening to the story through the emotion, one is able to pull from it the facts about the history they are learning about.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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question 1



by Hao Qiu - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 11:37 PM

If I were the author of Patriots, I would tell the story of Roger Donlon. It was so sad to hear about all the soldiers' stories and the wartime they had been through. And Roger's story highly recommended soldiers were like babes in arms in every way. Appy did a really good job on telling people truthful stories. I would include a note to reader, do not put all your trust on either side, it should be a better way to focus on both sides and get accurate information from that.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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**Re: question 1**

by John Howland - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 12:02 PM

The average age of the vietnam soldier was 18 to 22 years old, kids who had barely started their lives. I can't count the number of times I looked into the eyes of a dying soldier, seeing the look of fear and wondered why we sent boys to do the work of men.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: question 1**

by Hao Qiu - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 7:09 PM

Nobody wants a war, and truly, all soldiers of the vietnam war were young man, they could be anyone's kids, or husbands. Nobody wants a broken family. I couldn't image how happy they will be if there are no wars.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Question #1**

by Jungmin Um - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 11:44 PM

If I were the author of *Patriots*, I think I would use the stories from POW video. While watching the video I, as a audience, felt more sadness and scariness that those soldiers at that moment and their families would have felt. They were tortured, and even developed a way to communicate with each other with the knock sound. The part where it made me sad and thankful toward them was when one person said that "how would my family live without me." It is not an exact quote, but the man worrying about his family was very realistic to me. Mostly, people think of their family as precious people that they do not want to make sad. In addition, I actually thought that the reason why they thought of the new communication style was to survive out of that situation for their families as well as themselves. Therefore, if I were Appy, I would include this story in the book.

I would include a "note to the reader", as Appy has done in several cases because it really helps guiding the audience especially when the readers have not much information about the topic of the book. To be specific, it can explain why the author included specific features of the events or stories

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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**Re: Question #1**

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 9:38 AM

I too had the same reaction towards their time as POWs. I also connected with the man longing for his family and longing to stay alive for them. I liked reading your post. It made me reconnect to my emotions watching that video.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question #1

by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 8:47 PM

I found the POW stories to be extremely powerful. The images each one painted through their recollection was terrifying and heartbreaking. To see the video of them walking through the streets and knowing that even the guards were becoming fearful for their lives was almost beyond comprehension, that kind of violence and fear.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Question #2

by Jungmin Um - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 11:44 PM

The compilation of stories can tell us brief explanation that can help us, the readers, understand the story easily. To be specific, it is very important for me to have brief summary or explanation of the reason for including certain story is because it is hard for me to read a long story without any prior knowledge in second language. Nevertheless, if I have some information before start reading the actual story, it really helps my understanding of the story.

In addition, a person's opinion and their way of thinking are usually saturated into their writing at most times. Therefore, if there is a piece of writing from an author, I can read and see how he or she thinks and looks at the events or stories. If they are against my opinion, I can learn how others are thinking about it on the different side and if they are on the same side with me, I can see why they think in this way.

The major issues concerning historical accuracy when studying the events of this war from the perspectives of U.S. soldiers is that they might speak badly about the Vietnamese and they might exaggerate when telling the stories they have gone through because usually people tend to exaggerate when telling tough event that they experienced in the past.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question #2

by Rebekah Rundstrom - Thursday, May 16, 2013, 9:41 AM

I said similar things in my post. So I'm glad we agree! I think that it is great to have a deeper understanding of a story before reading it so that the reader can have a better understanding of this persons life.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Question #2

by Hao Qiu - Saturday, May 18, 2013, 7:28 PM

I do agree your point that the compilation can tell us brief explanation. It helps readers to understand deeply and have a better view of whole store. And also I agree you opinion with the major issues. People tend to be exaggerate sometime when telling events that they have been through.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Question #2

by Athena Miller - Saturday, May 18, 2013, 11:51 PM

My first language wasn't English either, (it was Korean) and I also find it very helpful to have a brief explanation before the story. It allows me to understand the story better and have a greater insight of the reasons it was chosen.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question #2

by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 8:49 PM

I also agree that emotions, experiences and biases can infuse a story with untruths while telling the true facts of their experience. But I don't believe that makes the stories untrue, I think it is just important to weed through the emotion to find the truth of the experience.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question #2

by Hao Qiu - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 11:04 PM

English is also my second language, a good compilation of story could help me a lot on reading books. It is hard sometimes to read a book with some odd words and sentence, but on the other hand, it means I can learn something new to me.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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question 2

by Hao Qiu - Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 11:54 PM

The compilation of all stories, tell us that not everyone was completely right, not everything that you heard from a trustful person should be true. In history, a lot of occurrences are there and truth is just a small part. The major issues concerning historical accuracy that must be concerned with when studying the events of this war from the perspective of our own soldiers are experiences, when people talk about the war, they did not really go to there, they are just trying to use all the information which are get from books or videos to tell stories to others. And also, when people are talking their own soldiers, bias will happen. Almost everyone thinks their soldiers were great and their enemy was evil. The truth is, nobody knows what really happened in the war. Maybe our own soldiers did some really bad things, or their citizens helped our people a lot. Nobody knows the truth except people who were there. History has occurrences, and people should always doubt what they read from books or watched from videos.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: question 2

by Athena Miller - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 12:00 AM

I agree that many believe that there is a "right" side and a "wrong" side. Many people have to believe that the opposing side is "evil" to help them justify the actions that they are taking. I'm sure it was very difficult for some soldiers from either side to kill people and not know if they were really doing the right thing.

So the belief that the enemy is "evil" probably helped some cope with their actions.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: question 2

by Travis Jones - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 5:45 PM

Ok, I can understand your point about taking everything we read with a large grain of salt when it comes to personal accounts of some history. Though I think when you refer it to a trustworthy person and ho even what they say should be questioned. That is where I find a bit of uneasiness because we have obviously ourselves placed trust in an individual and then to take what they say an question it. You have promoted an encouragement of an atmosphere of distrust regardless of what the person says. Also the truth of some things in the war may never be known, but the overall shape of its events and what we perceive to have happened are based on many accounts that have similarities in accounts and information given, even with media spin. The overall ideas about the Vietnam war I think are the truth based upon the similarities of stories by individuals whom likely had never met prior.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: question 2

by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 8:50 PM

I think that, while it is important to question what you are reading, that one shouldn't always doubt what they read. Not believing 100% is understandable, but always doubting would lead me to believe that one could never believe anything or learn anything if there was constant doubt.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Question 1

by Michelle Coming - Friday, May 17, 2013, 12:08 PM

If I were the author of Patriots I would have to include the drawings by Mike McGrath, as well as other art from other sources. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words. I think adding drawings such as those done by McGrath would add to the impact of the POW's stories. Appy included many stories that talked about paintings such as those from Richard Olsen, and photographs such as those by Malcolm Brown. I would have, if possible, added these embellishments to stories such as these.

As far as letters/stories go I would have to add Bob Thompson's letter to the editor, as well as the others that discredited his claim. I would do so to depict that just because an event was not widely publicized by the media that does not mean that it did not happen at all. These letters demonstrate the importance of the collection of stories by people that were actually there and lived it. Even today the media's reports of events can not be entirely relied upon for factual information.

As a note to the reader I would make it clear that these experiences were by no means "the norm" and since there were so many people involved in the Vietnam War, their experiences cover a wide spectrum.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 1

by Nathaniel Hahn - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 12:30 PM

I agree with your statement of including the drawings by Mike McGrath in the book and how they would help make and more of an impact along with the other sources. I feel that through all of our readings and materials, the visual images, mostly from the PBS video, have made the most impact on me thus far. It is one thing to hear about the brutalities of being tortured, like from the "rope trick" for instance, but seeing images drawn from someone who went through the experiences made it more of a reality.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Question 2

by Michelle Coming - Saturday, May 18, 2013, 6:11 PM

These collections of stories tell us that no two soldiers' experiences are the same. So many soldiers went to Vietnam, each of them experiencing something different ranging from one extreme to the other on a large spectrum, each going in with a certain mentality and returning (if they were lucky enough to return) with an entirely different one, in most cases, due to their individual experience. So many different factors can contribute to their individual experiences such as personal background, where they were stationed in Vietnam, their rank within their branch of the military, and in the case of encountering hostile protestors, location when they returned home.

A major issue concerning historical accuracy of events from the perspective of the soldier would be the emotion factor. War in general is an emotional event for those involved directly and indirectly. Since these soldiers were subjected to such violence their emotions are going to take over when recounting the events of their tours in Vietnam. This emotion can cause them to recount things a bit differently.



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Question 2

by Patrick Haider - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 3:19 PM

I really love this image. You can see so much emotion from this one image, and you can almost get a feeling of what the soldiers have been through. They are tired, sad, and perhaps frustrated. What led up to this point for them? Were they just in a large battle, or are they on their way to one? Images such as this give an emotional look at the men of the war, rather than the war itself, and I find that incredibly important.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question 2

by Athena Miller - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 3:25 PM

I agree that emotions can skew the historical accuracy of an event, but I also

believe that emotions are important to understand an event. It allows us to understand what was going on in a person's head. I agree that they can cloud a memory but it can also make them crystal clear. Especially since war is fought by humans and we have emotions. Those emotions may determine why a certain event happened in a particular way.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Question 2

by Ian MacDonald - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 6:29 PM

Very good point Athena. In many ways, I think going through something traumatic can sometimes help us remember whatever that particular event was even more clearly. I keep going back to the example of the video clip on the prisoners of war. You stop and think about what they went through and obviously that had to have been a pretty traumatic thing (**both mentally and physically**) to be trapped in a prison cell for seven years not knowing when it was going to be their turn to be tortured. Yet they still got on there and described it with so much detail like they had just been released the day before!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Question 1

by Patrick Haider - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 3:15 PM

If I were in Appy's position I would likely include all or most of these letters. I believe that including as many accounts as possible is important in helping the reader to come to their conclusion of what the truth is. If you were only to include one or two of the letters you would be excluding other sides of the story that are equally important in drawing personal conclusions.

I would also include a note to the reader that explains how personal accounts can at times be manipulated by strong emotions and perspectives. I would also state that personal agendas either for or against the war can also cloud stories on both sides of the argument.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Question 2

by Ian MacDonald - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 4:45 PM

When it comes to the historical accuracy (or how something really happened), I believe that the very best chance of learning the most accurate account is going to

come from someone who was actually there and experienced it (i.e.-**POW's, veterans**). Therefore, I would say that the collection of letters from veterans and the interviews with the prisoners of war, give us quite a bit when it comes to learning what really happened.

I don't buy the belief that emotion totally alters the way somebody remembers something. Trauma or emotion undoubtedly probably makes it harder to remember every little detail of an incident, but so does time! My point is I'm not going to disbelieve everything someone tells me even if they've just been through a serious ordeal. If I'm talking to a Vietnam vet, and they tell me that they were criticized and spit on upon returning to the U.S., I probably wouldn't tell them that no they weren't, they just thought they were because of their "emotions."

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldier Perspectives on Wartime

by Travis Jones - Sunday, May 19, 2013, 6:24 PM

One thing that really bothers me about all the anti-war protestors and the treatment of returning soldiers coming home. Is the fact that many of the soldiers in the war were drafted and forced to serve against their own will and so the protestors took out their anger towards the government on the soldiers coming home who were really just caught in the middle and forced to do what the government told them. Those in the military do not have the same constitutional rights as a normal citizen. The rules of normal society do not apply when serving in a combat zone, its go along to get along, and in the loneliness of jungle if you went against the grain there is a chance you wouldn't come out of the jungle alive. Therefore for the anti-war individuals to treat soldiers in such ways, I hope they look back now disgust of their actions, and can only imagine what would have happened if they were the ones whom actually were drafted and served in Vietnam.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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