

# HST 195: History of the Vietnam War Sp14 (Escobar Meta 42384)

Home ► My courses ► Spring 2014 ► HST 195 Sp14 (Escobar Meta 42384) ► June 1 - June 7 ► Forum

5 ► Legacy

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## Forum 5

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< Previous (Type of Historian)

(Type of Historian) Next >



### Legacy

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 8:23 PM

This forum thread is for the Legacy discussion.

After studying the required materials, address the questions in your posts.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

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

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### Vietnam veterans

by Name Withheld-3161 - Tuesday, June 3, 2014, 8:24 PM

It has been more than 40 years since the end of the war, Vietnam veterans still have great influence on the United States. This group caused widespread concern in American society. Vietnam War is known as the U.S. military quagmire. As the war continued for a long time ,and brutal war scenes, trauma of Vietnam veterans is particularly serious. U.S. passed a bill on the protection of rights and interests of Vietnam veterans. United States Department of Veterans Affairs has opened a veterans center nationwide. While the U.S. government and related agencies solved some problems for the Vietnam veterans, there are still many Vietnam veterans shooting or having drug abuse or other serious social problems each year because of long-term psychological trauma or physical disability.Besides, they often expressed a lack of sufficient public support after returning home .Movies about Vietnam veterans reflects how veterans adapt to civilian life after returning from the battlefield.1980s'movie about the reality of discrimination against American Vietnam veterans in society caused great concern. Even so, there are still some Vietnam veterans stepping into the United States all social strata, some making even brilliant achievements.

There are U.S. senator who served in Vietnam to be the secretary of state and the new U.S. Secretary of Defense. After returning from Vietnam in 1970, they have publicly expressed their views on the history of the Vietnam War. Some participated in the Vietnam Veterans Against the Vietnam War campaign. Some advocates the United States should learn from the mistakes of the Vietnam War . They have a significant impact on the U.S till today.

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### Public Demands



by Justyn Dockery - Wednesday, June 4, 2014, 9:48 PM

The most significant legacy of the Vietnam War for the United States can be found in the relationship between the general public and government officials. During the war itself people began to openly protest and speak out against the war and the barbaric decisions our nations leaders were making at that time. Furthermore, the general public began to question the decisions made by their government in a public manner, and since the war ended, we the people have demanded a more transparent government. It is likely that everyone of us in this class had heard of or knew something about the Watergate scandal prior to taking this course, but the lies and deception of the general population from the government goes far beyond just the Watergate scandal; JFK deploys Secret Operation Forces in secrecy from the general public, we are lied to about the use and effects of agent orange, and the list could continue almost infinitely. And although our government still lies to the general public and keeps many things secret, the general public seems to be more and more demanding of a transparent government. So in my opinion, and with the reasoning I have provided, the single most significant legacy of the Vietnam War is two fold; a general population that openly questions and protests against the government, and a general population that demands honesty from the government.

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### Re: Public Demands



by Katherine Frank - Friday, June 6, 2014, 11:58 AM

I agree that the most important legacy of the Vietnam War is that the people have lost some of their complacency and have tried to take more control of the government, as it should be. I also believe a legacy of the war is a more aware and humane treatment of our returning Vets by the public and the Veterans Adm. Not considering the latest problems with scheduling, there seems to be better health care, more jobs being offered and an attempt to treat mental and physical problems instead of denying they exist. I also think the Vietnam War has caused the government to refrain from a "run the world" attitude and while I think we should have addressed some of the events that have happened, we have maybe learned that we do not have the right to set up governments and run other countries. As far as honesty from the government, we still have a ways to go, but you are right, we are at least trying.

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### Re: Public Demands



by Justyn Dockery - Saturday, June 7, 2014, 11:58 PM

Katherine,

Although I agree with most of what you have said, your claim that the us is no longer trying to run the world troubles me because, even before the attacks of September 11th, the United States was involved in active military operations in the Middle East. Although after these attacks, assuming the Islamic extremists to be the true "terrorists" responsible for the attacks as true, you could argue that we, the US, is not trying to run the world. However, when examining some of the events of the war in the Middle East and proposals to the United Nations by the United States, there are several points that lead me to believe that the US is still trying to rule the world. One prime example of a proposal to the UN by the US can be found in the United States resolution proposal of the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq to the UN in 2002 that would ultimately authorize imminent military action in Iraq, but the UN did not agree or sign on to their proposal; only Great Brittan was in agreement with the resolution proposed by the US. The US was not happy with the resolution that did pass in the UN which called for an extension of time in the search for weapons of mass destruction, so the US meet with what is commonly known as the coalition of the willing deciding to ultimately bypass the UN decision. The US took matters into her own hands by beginning her attacks in March of 2003, and the US congress overwhelmingly gave president Bush the authorization to engage in this action. This is only one example in modern times, but I believe this particular event is a quintessential example of the US government still trying to, as you put it run the world, or as I call it rule the world.

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### Re: Public Demands



by Debra Moran - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 11:18 PM

I don't know that I would believe in a "transparent" government, as there are dealings that shouldn't be made to the general public especially about war, some secrecy as to location and other various military reports should remain secretive, but the media was allowed in on the front line and that causes concern for the boys fighting.

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### Vets still healing



by Debra Moran - Wednesday, June 4, 2014, 10:26 PM

I found this to be a hard question as I tend to think of the term "legacy" as a good thing, but the one thing I that first comes to mind when I hear the word Vietnam, has always been the treatment of the soldiers, with activists calling them baby killers, people spitting on them, not allowing them to come home with pride and honor intact. I am not saying that horrific acts weren't committed but the few that committed those acts vs the thousands that fought with honor; those are the ones that I am talking about. Herring states that most vets have come to terms with the roles they played in the war and that America has come to the conclusion that "the war was a tragic mistake and that... those who fought and died in Vietnam were brave young men who deserve this countries respect and gratitude." (Herring 366) Yet to this day we still debate this. Even though there have been memorials built across the nation this and the veterans are supposedly at peace with the war all you have to do is drive downtown and see the homeless vets on the street corners to know many of the veterans have not found that 'peace" this is what I view as the legacy of the Vietnam War.

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### Re: Vets still healing

by Keeler McJunkin - Wednesday, June 4, 2014, 10:47 PM

This is a great point. Whether it's a "legacy" or not, The vets of Vietnam deserve to be treated well. With both respect and dignity. They fought for our country and put their lives on the line. Whether the results or reasoning for the war were respectable or not they still dedicated their lives to the United States. I have visited the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC and it's one of the most powerful things I've ever seen. Even that isn't enough though. Soldiers deserve to be treated well with the gratitude of the people who love in our Country today.

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### Re: Vets still healing

by Zoe Valentine - Saturday, June 7, 2014, 1:17 PM

I totally agree with what you have to say. I see a lot of bad things said about Vietnam Veterans. It's funny how the few bad stories are the ones that everyone chooses to discuss, while the stories of valor and heroism are almost completely overlooked. I think it's this public tendency to blame all Vietnam Veterans for the horrible mistakes of the few that leads me to believe there are still many Veterans who struggle with their involvement, and with finding peace.

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### Re: Vets still healing

by Name Withheld-3161 - Saturday, June 7, 2014, 10:42 PM

I completely agree with you on your attitude towards vets. At those time they were sent to the front of war to serve for the country. To adhere to the order was the responsibility of the soldier. Thus they have accomplished their duty. After returning home, whether the result of the war is, they deserve to be treated well and because of the hurt they have suffered, they should receive more care and respect from the public.

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### Lack of Confidence

by Katherine Frank - Thursday, June 5, 2014, 2:46 PM

The most significant legacy of the War in Vietnam for the USA is the lack of belief in the government by the people. As it was said in the "[War Protesters and Hard Hats](#)" video, the Vietnam War was the end of American innocence. Before the war, people didn't ask

questions, they had confidence that what their government was telling them was the truth. School children, as students, had faith that the history they were taught was the truth.

During the Vietnam War the people could not escape the uncovered differences in what was being said by "government" and what they were learning through the media, students, and returning Vets. Suddenly there was this huge credibility gap between what people wanted to believe and what was being reluctantly learned.

Today there is still no confidence in the government, no confidence that our vote counts, that the people that we elect to represent us really will, that what we say matters. I think it is unfortunate that the government still has not learned who should be in charge, but I believe that it is a good thing that we no longer blindly follow whatever they choose to tell us. That is the most significant legacy of the war.

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### Re: Lack of Confidence

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 8:52 PM

This is a good point. There are a large number of detractors from the government. If just a few more people would decide to act differently it could make a huge difference. All of the conspiracy theorists out there cause issues in this day and age as well. With the significance of the internet and how fast information can get out to people it can cause problems. Even if the information is fabricated.

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### Distrust of the Government

by Zoe Valentine - Saturday, June 7, 2014, 1:14 PM

To me, one of the most significant lasting legacies of the Vietnam War is the tendency of the US people to be cautious about trusting the government and its decisions. Before the Vietnam War, people were brought up naturally trusting in presidents and followed them with little to no opposition. As Stanley Karnow reiterates in the News Hour video, "Legacy," the beginnings of US involvement in Vietnam remained murky to the public for many years. During that time, presidents were wont to keep their plans a secret, and many decisions were not blatantly revealed to the people, or even to Congress. Gradually, these secret decisions were released to the public, and people began to question the government's actions like never before. My mom even admits her shock and mistrust after learning herself that Nixon had been secretly bombing Cambodia for years.

John Holloway, the Yale Professor in the video, states that "The Vietnam war was the end of American innocence as far as thinking about political culture. ... You see a whole cultural shift in terms of what one expects out of war, there are no 'good wars' left." (John Holloway, News Hour). To me, this sums up exactly what I'm talking about. No one was against the Allied struggle during WWII. The issues of morality were black and white – it was obvious that what we were doing was good, and what the Nazis were doing was very bad. In

Vietnam, the lines were far more blurred, and the addition of the public discovering what the US government had hidden from them on top of that, only escalated opposition and distrust. Nowadays, people are much warier about what presidents are up to. Holloway tells us that a "first step" is missing in how we first see a president; we do not immediately trust him. He needs to prove himself, and then maybe we'll start to trust his motives.

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### Re: Distrust of the Government

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 8:59 PM

You are very correct about an overall distrust towards the government in our Country and it's causing certain problems that could be avoided. I really like your point about people in the past being brought up to trust the Presidents and what they represent. The fact that they are in their position to serve the Country and everyone's best interests. Yet today this isn't the case. More people feel the need to be unsupportive and against ideals that are brought towards the forefront. Granted there are certain decisions made by Presidents of the past that caused these issues as well. It would just be a much easier time for the Country and our leaders currently if there was more of a sense of trust between the people and our leaders/government.

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### the soldiers' legacy

by Kye Ruddell - Saturday, June 7, 2014, 9:37 PM

The legacy left behind for future generations from the US involvement in the Vietnam War could be one of a number of events, ideas, or symbols which are still present in our society today. The NewsHour report stated they found the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington to be the legacy left for generations to come. After reading of the lives lost and the lives ruined by the war, I feel that one of the most poignant legacies which was left by the soldiers was their very involvement in this time in our history. There are those who fought and feel justified in their fighting, those who fought and came home to tell of their negative feelings about the war in protests and speeches, and there are those who continue to fight the effects of the war, both physical and psychological. It seems that, no matter what their view ended up being of their involvement in the war- how they got there and what it meant to them- it can't be denied that they were affected by this experience and that their experiences have provided a living text which later generations can learn from. They were the first group of soldiers to fight a war which was not fully understood, supported, or even appreciated by those back home. I imagine many of them left the US under the guise that this was a winnable war against communism, suffered from the reality and losses they experienced, only to go home to a country which had suffered its own losses and disillusionments while they were off fighting.

It was difficult for me to choose just one legacy from the Vietnam War, but when faced with this choice, it seemed to me that the soldiers and their experiences were the legacy that was the most poignant for me.

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**Re: the soldiers' legacy**  

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 10:49 PM

I think it's really hard to choose a single legacy that came directly from the Vietnam war. There are so many different things that came out of the conflict it's almost impossible to pick something in particular. One of the bigger things is definitely the lasting images left by the politics and split of the country regarding the war. In all other wars up to that point the Country was fully behind the reasons we were fighting. This wasn't the case for Vietnam as the war went on. It was controversial and many people thought things were being hidden and held back from the public. So this overall feeling of dissatisfaction is a big lasting image for me from what we have learned.

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**Re: the soldiers' legacy**  

by Debra Moran - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 11:10 PM

True, there was a lot of things being hidden from the people and I think that feeling of dissatisfaction evolved into distrust as more and more "secrets" came out of the closet, people felt the right to continue to distrust because the government for the people and by the people had lied to the people.

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