

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

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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.

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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Re: Two again

by John Moran - Wednesday, June 4, 2014, 1:24 PM

The first legacy should be to always question the actions of our leaders as they take us into any conflict that cost life and treasure of the American people, are they truly American interest and true concerns that requires our military action. Ask ourselves if we are being told what we want to hear or are we being given accurate information that we can believe and support.

Next, we should have learned to never treat our military personnel as we did upon their return, as we did during this conflict. I know that not every soldier was mistreated as they returned home. With some, it came later with the misperception that they were lazy drug addicts. Currently, I joy at the scenes of our troops returning to loved ones that have no idea that they are about to be reunited with a parent, spouse, son or daughter that's been away on duty in a war

zone. In all these scenes, there are un-related people that show the same joy as those being reunited. I'm sure that these celebrations are the result of what was learned by the poor behavior exhibited in the past. I hope this is a legacy that will continue through-out our future.

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Re: Two again



by Danielle Medina - Thursday, June 5, 2014, 5:36 PM

I agree with your post and the legacies that you stated. Even though there always seems to be some sort of negative media coverage of what is going on around the world I do think that they tend to tell us what they think we want to hear rather than the truth. I also think its important to question the actions of our leaders because they can tell us one thing to sway our vote to elect them and then once they are in office they could do a complete 180. I also think that the way soldiers were treated when they came back from the war is disgusting and a disgrace. Just because some stories of certain soldiers actions over in Vietnam might be true doesn't mean that every soldier is exactly the same. I bet that if any of those protesters/people who treated the returning soldiers that way were sent overseas to war they would regret what they did because they wouldn't want it done to them.

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Re: Two again



by Jessica Mitchell - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 12:17 AM

I agree with you completely on your second point. As the daughter of a Vietnam vet I heard first hand accounts of exactly how inappropriate and awful our soldiers were treated upon their return. no matter whether we believe in why they are fighting, we should always believe in the troop. They do not decide where or why they go somewhere, they follow orders. I think it is a terrible thing that it has taken years for many of those soldiers to be recognized as the brave soldiers they were.

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Re: Two again



by Sheena Moore - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 2:32 PM

I agree that the treatment of our soldiers has changed dramatically since the Vietnam War. One of the main reasons for that change is the way the media covers conflicts. The imagery presented during the Vietnam War was graphic to say the least. It was also the first time such coverage was presented to the public. As a result, the public's view of the soldiers in Vietnam was that they were rapists, murderers, and maniacs. In recent wars the media coverage has been far less graphic, therefor the public isn't

being presented with a pre-formulated, negative conclusion about the people fighting the war.

Below I've attached a picture from the Vietnam War and one from the beginning of the War on Terror to show what I mean.





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Re: Two again

by Lauren Grant - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 2:51 PM

I liked that you mentioned a positive side to a legacy from the war. It was terrible and disgusting the way that the soldiers were treated when they came home and the way that they were treated in the years following the war. However, today I often see people thanking soldiers and veterans for their service and those scenes of soldiers being reunited with their loved ones that you talked about make me happy as well. Like you, I also find it hard to believe that the better treatment that has happened now is not in some way a result of the mistreatment in the past. I believe that the mistreatment shouldn't be forgotten but should be a legacy that is a reminder to us of why we should be respectful to the people who serve our country.

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Re: Two again

by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 9:33 PM

John,

I also believe that we should always question our "leaders," a true leader will always have the best interest of others in mind and or their country, in this case it would be both. It always seems when talking about war there is more for the leaders to gain or loose either financially or politically. That is not right no matter what and there should be consequences if they are found guilty of not acting in the best interest of others. I also agree that no member of service should be treated in a way that those were

when returning from Vietnam. Especially since most were drafted and it was not their choice to be there.

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Distrust

by Danielle Medina - Wednesday, June 4, 2014, 11:31 PM

The most important legacy of the War in Vietnam is the distrust that has developed between the people and the government. The war caused people to question the decisions that their government was making. It also caused people to question what information is being provided to them by the government and media about situations around the world and situations that the U.S. is involved in directly. Michael Beschloss, presidential historian on the Legacy video, stated that Nixon was voted in to office because the people thought he would end the war quickly and if they had known he was going to extend the war for 4 years and extend it out past Vietnam they never would have elected him. I also think that all of the lies and secrets that surrounded the War in Vietnam have caused the people to be suspicious of conspiracies of corruption within the government and the people in office.

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Re: Distrust

by Jessica Mitchell - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 12:29 AM

Harold Prince said it very well in the Hard Hat clip when he said, " We have a terrific system, but it has awful, awful flaws." I think that one of the greater legacies left by the Vietnam war was that we as a nation were not as perfect as we might have been thought to be. There is room for mistakes, and mistakes happened, but I think the distrust between the government and the people was a two way street. We elected these men and than failed to support them. Maybe people disagreed with them, but the dissent only aided the cause of the opponent and left our government looking weak. Had both the government trusted it's people and the people trusted it's government to at least support our troops, maybe things would have come out differently.

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Re: Distrust

by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 9:37 PM

Danielle,

I think the distrust that you describe is also alive and well in today's society with the current conflicts going on in the middle east. It is hard to believe that all of this distrust could have been started so many decades ago and the government has not been able to overcome this dark cloud of distrust that is cast upon them. You are also right about Nixon, he was in office because people thought he would be the president to get the

job done, instead he had a presidency filled with corruption and distrust and never completed the task he set out to complete.

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The media and the credibility gap

by Bryan Sanders - Friday, June 6, 2014, 4:27 PM

There are two great legacies of the Vietnam War, both connected to an extent. One was the credibility gap. Chapter 5 of the Herring book at page 213 called it, "The difference between what the administration said and what it did." People at the time began distrusting the government, and the Tet Offensive helped widen this gap. It subsequently led to Johnson's announcement that he would not run again.

The other, and perhaps even greater, is the power of the media. Individuals like Walter Cronkite held considerable sway with the American people. As page 232 in Chapter 6 of Herring's book shows, Cronkite said, "What the hell is going on? I thought we were winning the war!" Reportedly when Johnson heard about Cronkite's assessment of the war, he said, "If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost Middle America." The footage of the carnage during Tet caused people to really question the war as well. There were other events like Watergate that helped widen the gap, but it all started with the media.

Both the U.S. government and the American people have been affected by these legacies. The television brings news to Americans quickly, and how the media portrays it has an impact on the approval ratings of a president. This has laid the foundation for modern media, and given it incredible power.

Here is a link on Walter Cronkite.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Cronkite (Look at the end of the section on the Vietnam War for the quote)

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Re: The media and the credibility gap

by Lauren Grant - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 2:09 PM

You brought up a legacy that I thought was one of the most important ones of the Vietnam War, the media. I think with television being a way for the public to get quick information, the media had a huge influence on how the war was perceived. Since footage was shown of the war I think that it also changed the way that people felt about the war, like in your example about the footage shown during Tet and how that made people begin to question the war. I agree with you that the questioning started with the media and that it has a lot more power than some people give it credit.

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Government mistrust

by Kyle Poirier - Friday, June 6, 2014, 11:22 PM

I feel the biggest legacy from the war is the mistrust in the government. Before this time I feel like there was a lot of trust before this, like when World War two happened people were rationing and doing everything they could to help out the cause. The people were right behind the government with the strong belief both their goals were aligned. But now in Vietnam with the deceit, people started mistrusting the government, and till this day that trust hasn't come back. Many people do trust but many don't.

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Re: Government mistrust

by Jessica Mitchell - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 12:23 AM

I have to agree with Buffy Sainte-Marie who spoke about the fact that our government was voted in, "Whether we voted or whether we didn't, we are responsible for these wars." (Hard Hat clip) Because that summarizes things exactly. People complain about our government's actions, and to an extent we have that right. But, we have elections for a reason, and officials are elected into office based on the people who vote, and the people who don't. We as a citizens are just as responsible for whatever actions the government carries out as they are, because we cast our ballot, or failed to cast our ballots. So I think some of that distrust has to be assigned to the people as well.

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A Gained Skepticism

by Lauren Grant - Saturday, June 7, 2014, 10:47 PM

It is difficult to decide on one single legacy of the Vietnam War. I think that one of the biggest legacies is the disconnect between the people and the government that formed because of the war. As Jonathon Holloway said in the Legacy video, "The Vietnam War was the end of American innocence as far as thinking about political culture." Many of the historians talked about how in the 1950's we as a nation had the mindset that the president and the government were people that we could trust and how after the 1960's that began to change. I agree with them that there was a level of trust that was lost and a new skepticism that was gained. We began questioning the government which in the long run I think was a good thing. The public deserved to know the truth, especially when it came to our own men that we were sending off to fight in a foreign country. Today we see the government as something that we want to trust but feel the need to question I think helps us think a bit more before we elect government officials. Stanley Karnow said that we realized that the government consists of employees that we pay and therefore we discovered that we had the right to know what they are doing. The relationship between the people and the government changed because of the Vietnam War and I think that it is one of the main legacies.

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Re: A Gained Skepticism

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 4:03 PM

Good point on the idea that the relationship between the government and the people changed. You make some similar points to what I thought the biggest legacy was. I agree with the idea that we want to trust the government but we have to question them before trusting. The loyalty between the government and civilians was changed dramatically. For example, if you compare the US efforts and support of WWII on the home front compared to Vietnam, it's two completely separate worlds. It's hard to imagine a world in which people want to genuinely help their country without distrusting them, but that was the reality of the Vietnam war and has carried on to this day.

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Re: A Gained Skepticism

by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 9:44 PM

I agree that the Vietnam war was the end of an era for the united states. there was a certain level of pride that American's had after world war 2, there were parades for soldiers returning from war and they were proud of the job they had completed. After Vietnam was a different story, soldiers were spat upon and had a difficult time finding jobs because business did not want to associate them self's with returning soldiers. This is a difficult thing for a country to over come and I think just now we as a country are starting to prevail.

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Legacy of the Nation

by Jessica Mitchell - Saturday, June 7, 2014, 11:45 PM

I think the biggest and most generic legacy that was left in the wake of the Vietnam conflict was the the United States first failure. As a country the U.S. had never lost a war. the idea of losing a war at home or abroad was really not an option prior to this police action. Maybe we as a population were cocky to think that way but a great deal of people did. Vietnam proved the nation to be fallible. All the losses proved to be "a sacrifice to a failed crusade." (Stanly Karnow, Legacy clip.)

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Re: Legacy of the Nation

by Sheena Moore - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 2:17 PM

Interesting point. You're right. It was the first time that the US had lost a war, but was it a legacy for the people, the government, the military, for the individual soldiers who fought the war, or someone/something else? Personally, it seems that the legacy was for the government. Many people argue that the war was lost due to poor decision making from our government officials. Also, at the time losing the war meant looking weak while we were in the middle of the Cold War.

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Re: Legacy of the Nation

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 4:00 PM

I hadn't thought of that legacy, you make a great point. Our country's pride often (to me) gets in the way of what our country is doing to upkeep the honor, and I think this war showed this to everyone around the world and gave the U.S a bad reputation in some ways. Before taking this class, I never really gave much thought into Vietnam being America's first failure, but it definitely was.

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Distrust

by Sheena Moore - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 3:29 PM

I have to agree with what almost everyone is saying. The biggest legacy of the Vietnam War in the US is the distrust is caused between the government and its citizens. Before Vietnam the people had confidence in the government official's ability to make decisions and keep the people informed. After Vietnam it was clear that there were secrets being kept and poor decisions being made. Until Jan. 30th, 1968 the American public was led to believe the North Vietnamese couldn't wage a large scale attack on the South. The North not only waged a large scale attack, but gained control of many of the cities it attacked. This is what made the Tet Offensive so surprising. Watergate furthered the distrust in government. The scandal included gross abuse of presidential powers including breaking into the DNC's headquarters and wire tapping. Both were done without a warrant. The scandal eventually forced Nixon to resign. The extreme secrecy of the bombing in Cambodia led the government to distrust each other. The War Powers Act was passed and "required the president to inform Congress within forty-eight hours of the deployment of American military forces abroad and to withdraw them in sixty days in the absence of explicit congressional endorsement." (Herring pg 328) Blind faith in our nation's government would be something we would never see again.

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Media

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 3:58 PM

I think that the most significant legacy of the War in Vietnam for the USA was the involvement of the US civilians and the transformation of media at the time. The war

undoubtedly created a national problem in most aspects, but the involvement of everyday people was astonishing. This was, arguably, one of the first wars to have a broad use of media evolving during its timespan. With demonstrations happening around the country for reasons of anger towards the war and drafting, the media was able to share these stories in record time. For example, in the Legacy video there is a short clip of a news station interviewing a young man during a demonstration against the draft. He says, "I don't want to go to Vietnam because I don't want to get killed". In previous wars this information would have never been able to be shown nationally due to technological difficulties and advancements, but it was easy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Also, as resentment grew on the battlefield, it grew faster in the USA. The Kent State University shootings are a devastating example of how the war affected everyone in the states in some way or another. This legacy is still carried today because the people who protested the war are still alive today. Their message against war can still be heard and is easy to come by and study.

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Re: Media



by Lauren Grant - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 7:16 PM

I agree with you that one of the most significant legacies of the war was the media. Footage from Vietnam was able to be shown in the states which dramatically affected the mindset of the public. Do you think that the media had a role in the distrust between the public and the government that grew during the Vietnam War? I think that it helped start the idea that the government doesn't show or tell us everything that is going on and made people begin to question. I think that is also another legacy of the war.

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Re: Media



by Eryne Grant - Sunday, June 8, 2014, 9:43 PM

I definitely think that the media had a role in the distrust between the public and the government in the Vietnam war. Anytime that a draft (which probably felt outdated and not practical to the civilians) occurs, people will get upset. But, the phrase "out of sight, out of mind" plays a major role in trusting the government (or distrusting). With the public being able to see some of the real events going on in the war, people were informed and could blame the government for what they thought they were doing wrong. Without the media, I think the government would have been able to prevent the amount of riots that would have occurred and the outbreaks around the country would have been numbered.

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