

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

Home ► My courses ► Spring 2014 ► HST 195 Sp14 (Escobar Meta 42384) ► May 11 - May 17 ► Forum
3 ► Soldiers' Stories

Search forums

Forum 3

Display replies in nested form Move this discussion to ...

< Previous (Soldiers' Stories)



Soldiers' Stories

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, May 10, 2014, 1:22 PM

This forum thread is for the Soldiers' Stories/Register Guard Letter 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: Soldiers' Stories

Sum of ratings: -

Edit | Delete | Reply



Who would I use

by Katherine Frank - Monday, May 12, 2014, 1:49 PM

Since the topic was "Were U.S. soldiers, returning from Vietnam, ever spat upon by anti-war protesters" I would Use Bob Thompson, Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, Hilliard Gastfriend and Robert Shaw. The others seemed to get off topic.

Bob Thompson supports the idea that returning Vets were not abused or mistreated. He depends on a book by a Vietnam vet who used the media reports or lack there of to make the claim that returning Vets were not even negatively taunted. Two actual Veterans, Thomas Postelle and Rodney Gordon gave first hand accounts of negative treatment and being spat upon and one, Hilliard Gastfriend, quoted a news article by the New York Times, relating the treatment of returning Vets as being "too obscene to print".

The last, Robert Shaw, did not get spit on. He reports being treated respectfully until he was discriminated against by employers. These people, I think present a balanced look at whether returning Vets were spit on so I don't think I would add a "note to the reader".

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Who would I use



by John Moran - Friday, May 16, 2014, 6:57 PM

I would also include Mr. Isaac's letter, as he also was spat on while returning from Vietnam. I'm sure you may have just missed this gentleman's letter. Otherwise, I like your posting.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Soldiers' Stories



by Katherine Frank - Tuesday, May 13, 2014, 6:23 PM

Even the smallest of historical occurrences have many sides, and that is especially true of the Vietnam era. The major issues that we face as students are staying emotionally uninvolved, and keeping an open mind so we can decipher the truth because for each and every returning soldier, the truth is what they themselves experienced.

The perception of the events of the Vietnam War change with the year served also. From the 1960's to the 1970's there is a great change in the way the soldiers and the public view the war, so time served, place served, job done and rank. All of those things will affect the "truth" that is told.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Soldiers' Stories



by Name Withheld-3161 - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 9:25 AM

Hi, Katherine,

I agree with you on your opinions that we should question and research different controversial issues even if they are small, so we can have a broader perspective. As for historical when studying the historical events, we should take into accounts dates, places, and events they were present for or participated in. People have their own perspective because of their standing points, so we should always be critical about

what we read.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Soldiers' Stories



by John Moran - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 2:54 PM

You make a very good point, when you state that it made a difference as to when a soldier served his time in Vietnam, the sentiment against the war got much more coverage by the media as time went by, some can even recall the nightly body count as to how many Americans had either been killed or missing for that day or week, broadcast on the nightly news. You also have a strong point as to where, when and what a soldier did while in Vietnam, non-combat soldiers have a very different accounting of their time and experiences in country, then those that actually saw combat action.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



soldiers captured and their role



by Name Withheld-3161 - Tuesday, May 13, 2014, 7:32 PM

After watching the video "return with honor", it gives me a whole picture of what soldiers in the war would face in Vietnam War. It demonstrates the mentality and living situation of the American soldiers. In the battle front, they witnessed various life passing by, thinking relatives in domestic would face and how to live if they lose their lives and furthermore considering the significance of the war. We also see some soldiers were arrested under the situation, how they were treated by the locals. At naval air station California, the talk between a POW Jim Stockdale and the North Vietnam propaganda expert impressed me. It gives me a new insight about war. War is not merely a matter of weapons. The Vietnamese know that they cannot compete with US in the battle. But that's not the way war wins, it's national will. When the American people knows what's the war all about, they would lose the interest in pursuing it. The Vietnamese are going to win this war in the street of New York when the American people understand the war. American soldiers captured would be the teachers to help them understand the war. That's an example of how the soldier captured would encounter in the war front. We can relate the frontier with anti-war movement in American domestic. Quantitative accumulation causes a qualitative change. Anti-war sentiment among the American people are also cumulative. At the end of the video, the newspaper reports that US fears American P.O.W.s to be brainwashed. We could imagine how American domestic public would react after those incidences. Those would be factors leading anti-war movement in the U.S and American failure in the war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Personal Involvement



by Eryne Grant - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 10:15 AM

If I were the author of Patriots, I would have included the letters from Postelle, Gordon, Isaacs, and Shaw. I think one of the main selling points of Patriots is the fact that they're first-hand accounts from people involved with the war. That being said, the people I picked seemed to all have been personally involved with the war and either been spit on or not. I would not have picked Thompson's letter because he doesn't make any connection to the topic of spitting on veterans other than his Google searches. If I were to include anyone in Patriots, they would have a first-hand story to share.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Personal Involvement



by Katherine Frank - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 3:03 PM

Hi Eryne,

I agree with all of your choices and the reasons, but I would include Thompson as "the other side" even though I don't agree with him. I too like the first hand accounts even though I wonder under what circumstances the Vietnamese were allowed to talk with the reporters

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Personal Involvement



by Eryne Grant - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 8:51 PM

You made a really good point! I guess I was a little shocked while reading the letters that I kind of sided against Thompson. I think that definitely shows how emotions can tie into how information is put into academic sources, to say the least. It is definitely very important to include both sides to a story. Thanks for reminding me, Katherine!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Personal Involvement



by Keeler McJunkin - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 10:50 PM

I agree. The biggest point of Patriots is the fact it's a first hand account from many different points of view. We should be able to get the entire perspective on what was supposedly going on. In the case of this subject a first person experience is needed to be accurate.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Majority isn't always right



by Zoe Valentine - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 12:23 PM



If I were writing *Patriots* and I wished to write some information on purported spitting on Vietnam veterans, I would use the accounts of Bob Thompson, Herman Isaacs, Thomas W. Postelle, H. Hilliard Gastfried and Robert L. Shaw. With these selections, the point I think I'd try to prove is that if one person experiences something and another doesn't, it doesn't mean that a particular experience is false or made up. Judging from what I know so far about the antiwar protests about Vietnam, I am not at all surprised some Veterans were spat at. I would guess that verbal abuse was probably more common, but I don't think one should discount stories of spitting because someone wrote a book about it being untrue. And, as it's revealed, the book in question isn't that reliable after all.

I would definitely include a "note to the reader" if I were to write about this. I would want to clarify that every experience was vastly different for each person involved in Vietnam, and that the reader shouldn't immediately discount something based on what a majority says is true. The reader wasn't there, they can't really say what every individual experienced. At the same time, everything should be taken with a grain of salt.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Who's in, Who's out

by John Moran - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 2:33 PM

I would add a note to readers to indicate that the letters chosen were in response to two letters that will be left out. That the letter left out by Mr. Rooke-Ley, was critical of the Iraq war in 2007 and the way that Pres. Bush was dealing with it. He also admitted to being a Vietnam War protester. That Mr. Preuss, then responded with a long list of items, other than Iraq, that he was dissatisfied with, but posed the question "Was he one of those who spit on our troops".

Then I, would let the readers know that the first letter, from Mr. Thompson proclaims that, spitting did not occur. We then follow with four Vietnam Veterans letters and their experience. That would be the letters of Postelle, Gordon, Isaacs and Shaw. Then close with Gastfriend's letter that indicates that it did happen.

The letters that are dropped are Rooke-Ley and Preuss , both seem to deal with 2007 issues.

The letters kept are, Thompson, Postele, Gordon, Issacs, Shaw and Gastfriend, as all deal with the treatment of returning Veterans and the treatment they experienced.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



A soldier's point of view

by Danielle Medina - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 2:52 PM

If I were the author of *Patriots* the letters that I would include would be Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, Herman Isaacs, and Robert Shaw. I wouldn't include Bob Thompson's letter for the simple fact that he was not a Vietnam Vet (or at least he doesn't claim to be) and therefore his letter wouldn't provide any useful material for the book. I would use the other letters because they have personal accounts of negative occurrences after returning from the war. Even though Robert Shaw wasn't spit on he was still treated poorly because he was a veteran. I would definitely want to include a note to the reader for each of the letters so that whoever was reading the book could have a little background information about each person and it would also help give them a bigger picture then just what is being said in the letters.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A soldier's point of view

by Katherine Frank - Friday, May 16, 2014, 11:14 AM

After re-reading the letters over and over, if I were to write an article in "Patriots", I agree that a note to the reader would be helpful. Especially on Postelle, Gordon and Shaw. I would be interested to know when they returned home and to what facility they returned to. In Isaacs case he states it was 1967 as was Gastfriend, whom you would not use. I would still use Thompson as the other side and I would like to know more about him to use as a footnote.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A soldier's point of view

by John Moran - Friday, May 16, 2014, 8:00 PM

I agree with Katherine on the use of Thompson's letter and then I would include Gastfriend's to show how two different inquiries of the on the same subject can result in totally different conclusions

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A soldier's point of view

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 7:00 PM

This is a really good point. It's a good thing to be able to see such different ideas coming from the same exact subject. It just shows us that we can't take one piece of evidence as truth. It's always a good idea to see as much info as we can. Even on the same subject.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A soldier's point of view

by Zoe Valentine - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 9:18 PM

I'm interested to see that you would not include Bob Thompson... I felt like his letter gave a good background to why each of the other writers were so angry. But then again, I guess a "note to reader" could be just as affective. It does seem that including Thompson's letter would be a little distracting.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: A soldier's point of view

by Danielle Medina - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 6:02 PM

I can understand how some people would want to include Thompson's letter so that it could show another point of view, but the only point of view that it shows me is fairly ignorant to be honest. He stated "Unless Preuss can provide references to proven instances of such behavior, I will be steadfast in my understanding that exhaustive research on that very topic has shown no examples of such behavior, period." Yet multiple Vietnam veterans who live in the same area as him were able to contradict his very words. He easily could have done research to find them and contacted them to ask them about their experiences but I'm pretty sure if he had done that then he never would have wrote his letter in the first place. All he did was some research on the internet, made his assumptions based off of what he found and decided to throw his opinion in. Since the question was if I were writing the book Patriots the only reference to Thompson's letter I would make is a note to say that with all of new technology that is available it is easy to be misled about certain events in history and you should always question everything until you are given hard facts that can't be disproved.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: A soldier's point of view

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 7:07 PM

I feel like even though it may be an "ignorant" point of view, It would still be good to include it with the stories. Solely based upon the fact it's a different point of view. I don't think it's a good idea for all of the stories to have the same reasoning and conclusions for the most part. To make a good collection it would be nice to have some widespread points of view. Whether we agree with the persons account or not, it's always a good thing to have a mix of ideas presented. That way people are able to come to their own conclusions while reading them about what they want to believe or not believe.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: A soldier's point of view



by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 10:28 PM

I agree with you that it is important to have a wide spread point of view, however I still would not include Thompson's letter. I feel that his letter is a bit to far off base to be able to come back and make a sane decision on what really happened. I believe, like you, that we need opinions and facts from both sides not just the side that we want to hear. Hearing both sides will allow for a good judgement on the facts that truly happened. But i also think that in order to display these differing sides it is important to throw out the far outliers that are non factual and are just looking to get a rise out of the readers. Just my opinion.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A soldier's point of view



by Zoe Valentine - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 8:26 PM

Oh I definitely agree that Thompson was ignorant and pretty much running his mouth off without doing any research. The only aspect about his letter that would make me want to include it would be some basis for the other soldier's response stories – they seem very tied in with what Thompson said. However, Thompson's limited research is something that would make me not want to include him either. Your idea for a note to the reader is good, I like that.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Wanting Historical Accuracy



by Coulter Dawson - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 3:43 PM

As an author, the stories to use would be the one's of first hand accounts such as Thomas Postelle, Rodney Gordon, Herman Isaacs, and H. Hillard Gastfriend. These account are more trustworthy than most done by third parties as we know from watching the Accuracy in Media video about the falsified information in the PBS Vietnam: A Television History. Though not all third party information is falsified. To oppose the soldier's first hand accounts Michael Rooke-Ley and Bob Thompson's stories would be added following that their sources are true to what they say.

Tom Pruess's story would not be used since the point that Pruess is trying to make is that Rooke-Ley wants the War in Iraq to turn into the Vietnam War. Whereas the other stories have a centralized topic on the treatment of American soldiers when they got back from Vietnam.

Including a "note to the reader" would be very helpful to the reader. It would say who the account was from and if that account was first or third person. This would help the reader

with historical accuracy and truthfulness, while also clarifying the source.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Wanting Historical Accuracy

by John Moran - Friday, May 16, 2014, 8:21 PM

I've noted that you've added the Thompson letter. I think it might be good to include the Gastfriend letter to offset the claim that there were no media reports of soldiers being spit on, as Gastfriend's letter shows that there were reports in the New York Times in Oct. 1967.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Which stories I would use.

by Jessica Mitchell - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 5:07 PM

If I were to choose which accounts would appear in the book from these letters, I would choose the accounts of Mr.'s Shaw, Isaacs, Gordon, and Postelle. I would choose these because they are actual accounts from people who where there, and not opinions of people who are weighing in on something they did not witness first hand.

I would note to the reader that these were spawned from a commentary written criticizing the war in Iraq, by a gentleman who admitted to having participated in Vietnam War protests. I would go on to explain that another man responded to this commentary and brought up the treatment of, and the spitting on of Vietnam Veterans as they returned home, which in turn led to a person replying that those things in fact did not happen to Veterans at all and that it was mythology.

I may include in my note a few quotes such as that of Bob Thompson stating, "Unless Pruess can provide references to proven instances of such behavior, I will be steadfast in my understanding that exhaustive research on that very topic has shown no examples of such behavior, period." So the reader might better understand the context of the letters I print.

I would also add that these are personal accountings, and as such, are written from a personal perspective, and that there are no other points of proof to verify they happened other than the word of the letter writers themselves.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Which stories I would use.

by Coulter Dawson - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 12:00 PM

I would also include Rooke-Ley and more Thompson to provide an opposing point of view cause even though Shaw, Isaacs, Gordon, and Postelle all witnessed first hand, not all soldiers had that happen to them. Otherwise your points would be very strong especially with the quote from Thompson.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Which stories I would use.

by Jessica Mitchell - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 3:23 PM

I agree that some Rooke-Ley background would be necessary in order for the reader to understand the context. I would also make it a point to list the resources Mr Gastfriend noted in his letter. And include part if not all of the quote he cited, " Among the journalists who gave firsthand accounts of spitting on soldiers was James Reston...Many of the signs carried by a small number of militants...are too obscene to print."

I completely agree that not all soldiers had this happen to them, but because those who didn't have it happen to them didn't submit letters those would have no way to be included. With the exception of Mr. Shaw, who was not spat on, but suffered other indignities for having been a Vietnam Veteran. So I can see making note that this was not the case with all returning soldiers, but the fact that it was the case with any returning soldier is a fact that deserves to have some light shed upon it.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



A small truth

by Danielle Medina - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 5:50 PM

This compilation of stories/letters tells us that not all information that is provided online or in the media about the war is going to be accurate or give the full story. It makes sense that the media wouldn't want to highlight negative reactions towards war veterans. This would cause conflict between those who oppose the war and those who support it. It also shows a weakness in our support for our troops and our military which is not what the media would want to portray even if it is the truth in certain cases. It also tells us that we should question and research any type of controversial issues, even if they seem small, so that we may get a better perspective of the bigger picture. The major issues concerning historical accuracy that I must be concerned with when studying the events from the perspective of our own soldiers is going to be dates, places, and events that they were present for or participated in. People have their own perspectives on certain controversial things such as race, religion, and gender so their opinion on situations that involve those things could be biased. I would make sure to research their story to be able to identify which parts are fact and which parts could be embellished. Also since this war was over 35 years ago I would want to take in to account how that much time passing could affect ones memory of the events, people and places that they experienced.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A small truth

by Name Withheld-3161 - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 9:16 AM

Hi,Danielle

I agree with your opinions and reasons. Ones who really participated in the Vietnam War may have different kinds of experiences and feelings. Thus we should take as many as possible stories from different people into accounts. Meanwhile we should keep an open mind so we can decipher the truth from each and every returning soldier. So that we can form an overall and relatively reliable opinion ourselves.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A small truth

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 7:13 PM

I agree with a lot of your points made here. The key is for us to keep an open mind while reading the different accounts and not taking any one thing specifically as the truth or not the truth. When taking a look at personal accounts of history we will always get some things that are disputed by another. It's just a fact of humans and the way we see things. The best example of this is seeing the two completely different ideas regarding the same situation. One person can look at the same exact situation in a completely different light than another person. Even if they saw the exact same thing. It's just human nature. We aren't all alike and sometimes we choose to see what we "want" to see or have seen, Not always what we "actually" saw.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A soldiers view

by John Moran - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 8:58 PM

The letters to the editor shows us that even the small details of this era must be researched thoroughly to insure that we get accurate information. On one hand we are told that spitting on Veterans absolutely did not happen and then we read about four veterans that recall being spit at. Then finally a letter in which it presents media reporting of soldiers being spit on.

There seems to be very strong feelings from both sides about this time in our history, so as I study, I try to determine, from which side, am I receiving the information. Then, I try to find other sources that are provided with this course, that also cover the same information for comparison.

As we study the events as presented by our soldiers, we should keep in mind who is giving us information, is this an enlisted man or an officer, was he in combat or not, is it first hand or as he heard it. I say this because, Officers seem to summarize activity as successful or unsuccessful, an enlisted man will talk of the intensity and hardship of that same activity. I also like firsthand reports, so far they seem very reliable.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: A soldiers view



by Danielle Medina - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 6:17 PM

You have a very good point about the differences between how an officer and an enlisted man would give accounts of the experiences that they went through in war. I think that it can give different views of the war from the same side and show people how it can affect people differently. For example the type and level of stress that they are put under can vary widely based off of many different factors and this could affect how they recall what happened during the war. I also agree that it is important to know and understand which side is providing the information about the war.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: A soldiers view



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 7:16 PM

This is a fantastic point you made about officers potentially seeing something in a completely different light than an enlisted man may have seen. They have two entirely different experiences at times. Whether it's regarding a battle, or just everyday life of being in the army. They are treated differently and therefore may act or see things differently.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Different Experiences



by Ryan Ronning - Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 9:47 PM

Reading the letters published in the Register Guard really made me sympathize with the soldiers returning home from war, I also felt some level of shame for the ignorance that was written by Bob Thompson. I feel that what this series of letters teaches me is how little research was done prior to writing books and making documentary movies. When Bob Thompson makes the bold statement that no soldier was ever spat on when returning home from war was absolutely ludicrous. I feel like if a person is going to make statements like that then they need to back it up with much more than reading one book and telling people to "google" it. I feel ashamed at the level of disrespect he showed Postelle, Gordon, and Isaacs. These were men who were presumably drafted into the war and were shown ultimate disrespect when returning. While the author of the last letter was never spat upon he was shown a great deal of disrespect by the public, for example he could not find a job who would hire vets and if he lied about being there he was soon to be fired once the employer found out. I think that this series of letters shows us how inaccurate some reports can be. What this series of stories tells me is that when doing a research report I need to do full and thorough research, because there is always more than one side to every story. I think the major issue is exactly what I have been talking about, research is one sided and incomplete and we the students are only seeing just a partial truth. Now when it comes to soldiers accounts of the war we must think that every soldier had a different experience, although not all soldiers were spit on some were and this will be true to almost everyone, just because one person didn't experience it doesn't mean it didn't happen and that is why we must conduct research from multiple creditable sources.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Soldiers' personal experiences.

by Shelby Wilson - Thursday, May 15, 2014, 12:16 AM

If I was the author of *Patriots* and I needed to use the letters printed in the Register Guard, I would include the ones from the people who wrote these letters from their personal experience such as: Thomas W. Postelle, Rodney Gordon, Herman Isaacs, and Robert L. Shaw. I believe these are the only people who would truly know the truth of how the veterans were treated when they returned home.

I believe I would include an author's note; it would remind the readers that these stories are people's personal experiences. They can think or believe, or maybe they had a completely different experience in some other part of a country. However, this is what happened to this person and that's that.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Soldiers' personal experiences.

by Katherine Frank - Friday, May 16, 2014, 11:19 AM

I agree with you, these are these soldiers personal stories and it is what happened to them. It may not have happened to all but it did happen to some. Period!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Soldiers' personal experiences.

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 1:44 PM

I definitely agree with your author's note and about how experiences can vary from different people across the country. That comment made me think about how soldiers from different areas who were drafted all had different upbringings from various parts of the country. I think remembering these personal touches that each person brought with them to the war makes up the stories and how they remembered the war as a whole.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Soldiers' personal experiences.

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 8:25 PM

Exactly. These are personal stories and accounts, period. They should be treated like that and taken as such. Some sort of note or explanation regarding this would be a great idea. Just so that readers don't get any misconceptions on what they are truly reading. Something that can't be taken necessarily for it's historical accuracy.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Soldiers' personal experiences.

by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 9:37 PM

Shelby,

I agree with you, I would only include the letters in Patriots that were written by soldiers. The letters written by soldiers are actual accounts of those who were in war, the other letters are just opinions of people looking in. I think for the sake of historical accuracy we should try to keep books like Patriots as close to the actual events as possible. I like you idea about the authors note, that will give the reader a final thought before reading that what they are reading are the actual events that person experienced. I agree with what you said about people having different experiences in different parts of the country, I believe this is far to often over looked in history. I think people get stuck in a rut and only believe that if they saw it then its true, but if they didn't see it happen than it never happened, which is a shame. Good Job on this.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Our responsibility as students

by Shelby Wilson - Thursday, May 15, 2014, 12:18 AM

These letters to the editor tell us that people are still uneducated about what actually happened: people still only believe what the media released. People are being told they're wrong about what happened to them because newspapers didn't print these stories.

Being a student, we have to take all accounts into consideration. We have to be open to learning new facts that maybe never crossed our minds previously, maybe even being proven wrong about things we may have believed to be fact. Being a student means we need to understand the difference between a reliable and a not-so-reliable source.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Our responsibility as students

by Name Withheld-3161 - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 9:42 AM

Hi Shelby,

I agree with you that people are still uneducated about what actually happened and believe what the media released. In my opinion, it is also a study on the difference of what the American government says to the Media publicly and what it does privately. I see parallels of this Phenomena today with many current affairs. That's our responsibility to distinguish right from wrong.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Our responsibility as students

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 8:29 PM

People are still very uneducated about a lot regarding this conflict in our history. There are many misunderstandings and bad information available to people out there. The media has a very strong hold on what people believe and think. It's imperative that people are able to get ahold of all the information available to them before they make conclusions and decisions on what may have happened.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Note To Reader

by Eryne Grant - Friday, May 16, 2014, 10:10 PM

I would include a "note to reader" before this group of letters because they may seem a bit out of context at first. A few of the letters get a little lost at the end from the main message they're trying to convey, but they still get the message across. My note would probably state the context in which they're writing (a newspaper and in response to a series of letters). I personally think that the quote "you can protest the war, but don't protest the soldier" from the Americans Soldiers Speak audio file can relate to these letters tremendously well. I think I would include quotes such as this to show the reader the controversy happening between the author's of the letters.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Note To Reader

by Coulter Dawson - Saturday, May 17, 2014, 8:16 PM

I completely agree that many of the letters may seem out of context especially Rooke-Ley, Pruess, and Gastfriend. I really like the quote you chose since it perfectly describes the whole topic we are discussing about soldiers' getting spit on. Plus you could even pull a quote or two from one of the those three authors to show the other side.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



First Hand Experience

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 1:55 PM

In relation to learning the truth and historical occurrences during the Vietnam War era, I believe these compilations of stories tell us about the less publicized information that occurs behind media's doors. In any situation there is more to the story than what is publicized or told from person to person. Also, I think that these letters in the particular situation show that information in the media definitely aren't 100% reliable all of the time,

which is a well known idea. This small historical occurrence of soldiers being spit on is a historical event to the people who it occurred to, even if the media didn't publicize it completely. That being said, I think there is always something to learn from first-hand experiences in any situation.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Memories

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 2:01 PM

Major issues concerning historical accuracy that students must be concerned with when studying the events of this war from soldiers include remembering that memories fade and emotions can intertwine with memories as well. From a first hand experience, my father was in the Vietnam War from 1967-1971. Up until he passed away last year, he was able to recall certain events that he was involved in, but sometimes the stories changed a little from year to year. As with recalling any story from the past, information is easy to accidentally forget and make up with something else that is believed to have happened. This isn't any different for war stories from soldiers as well. Lastly, emotions can be mixed into memories. My father would also recall certain stories and get very angry or sad about what happened, such as when his best friend died in combat, and the information would be switched around. With a topic as emotionally heavy as war, emotions are constantly in play. So, when information is relayed and retold, events seem different with how the soldier remembers the war that day. An event that seemed to be terrible one day could be seen in a different light the next day. It's a constant struggle to try to remember the cold hard facts of what happened. So, information from first-hand experiences may not necessarily be the most accurate, but it most likely generated from some sort of truth.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Memories

by Danielle Medina - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 6:33 PM

I agree that it is important to take in to account how much time has passed when being given a firsthand account of the war. I think it's also important to take in to accounts any illnesses that a person may have developed with time and age. While my dad wasn't a veteran of any war his memories and stories of his younger days are not always accurate because of memory loss from alcoholism and cirrhosis of the liver. I remember asking my mom about one of the stories he told me and she told me that it never happened and he was probably just confused and mixed it up with another story or another person. So I also feel that it is important to take into consideration if a soldier has any type of illness that could affect his memory or has had to take any medications due to PTSD or any injury.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

Re: Memories



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 8:32 PM

Time that has passed between what happened to people and when they are telling their stories can be very important. The more time that passes the more likely someone is to possibly forget something or maybe not remember exactly what happened. So this is a. Re good point that you brought up. Especially when you take into account a persons health and possible diseases/illnesses that could come into play as well.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Bias is inevitable



by Jessica Mitchell - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 5:30 PM

I think the most important thing that can be learned from this group of letters is that in any story there will be differing perspectives. That there will always be some form of bias, whether it is from a personal opinion, or a personal experience, every person will lean a little or a lot more in one direction than the other. It is an unavoidable thing. We are humans and are affected by things, and that will manifest itself in our perspectives.

I think that is the thing about it. Though it may be historically inaccurate, it may be very true to the person who is expressing it. Their perspective is tinged with their feeling about it, and they could very well have seen it as just what they are saying, even if what they are saying is not how the next person who saw it says it happened.

The media will always have a bias also. They do not work for free; they have bosses and agendas that they have to appease. We live in a time where it is a lot easier to get first hand video footage and photographs. It isn't such an easy thing when we are looking at events from decades ago. So we have to remember that much of the footage available for us to learn from is footage that was shot for the sake of propaganda. It was meant to illicit certain emotions and feelings from the viewer. We have to remember that and keep it in mind when we are trying to piece together the truth.

I also think that it is important to remember that because of all these things, we may never know exactly what took place, and why, as frustrating as that might be.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Bias is inevitable



by Zoe Valentine - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 8:39 PM

I totally agree with what you had to say! I have had a really hard time during this class saying, "Oh well, this story is obviously a load of crap," because you know that the storyteller is probably biased in one way or another, but most of the stories sound in one way or another like they could definitely be legitimate.

And I like what you said about how something could be historically inaccurate, but not to the storyteller themselves. I think that's a really good thing to keep in mind when

doing the readings/watching the TV show.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Bias is inevitable



by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 9:24 PM

Jessica,

I like what you have wrote and agree wit all of your opinions. I think the use of information as propaganda is a topic that should be talked about much more. The media is extremely bias and depending on what media outlet you are getting your information from the facts will vary greatly, and it is not to say that any of the information is false but rather that they only choose to report on one side of the story and not the big picture. Good write up!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Deciding What's True



by Zoe Valentine - Sunday, May 18, 2014, 8:35 PM

In reference to learning what's true about the Vietnam War, I think as an outside observer, it can be hard to say for sure that one event is a complete fabrication – especially relating to the stories of soldiers being spit on. I have to be honest, before this forum, I too didn't really believe that soldiers were ever spit on, mainly because of what my family told me. Now that I've seen these letters from the Register Guard, I am really open to the idea that it definitely happened to at least some people. I think this can be related to many other experiences and claims about this war.

As to discerning what's true, this has been a challenge for me during this class. You have to factor in people's political alignments, moral standings, which side they fought for, etc. While I'm not immediately willing to disbelieve someone's personal experience, I am far more inclined to believe things which are cited with reliable sources. That, or an incidence – such as the spitting – where multiple people come forward and describe the incident extremely similarly to another person's account. While that still doesn't mean something is absolutely true, I think it's still more reliable than one person coming forward with a claim just because they Googled about it.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

[< Previous \(Soldiers' Stories\)](#)

You are logged in as Joe Escobar (Logout)

Moodle Docs for this page

