

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

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Forum 2

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Week 2 - Continuing the Discussion

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 10:15 PM

After reading the NYT article and watching the second half of the AIM program, discuss specific examples of conflicting information you have encountered in the provided class sources (from the Herring book, PBS series, and AIM program). More importantly, which source gets your "vote", **on that specific issue (NOT overall)**, as having the more correct/accurate/truthful interpretation or reinterpretation?

Sum of ratings: -

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Re: Who gets my vote

by Katherine Frank - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 2:24 PM

Forum 2

There are so many differing opinions about the meaning of the same information that I find it somewhat confusing. The book and PBS say the ARVN, the Souths army, would just as soon have let the U.S." do it" rather than fight and that the desertion rate in training centers ran as high as 50%. AIM says we were demeaning to the Souths people, their President and their army. That "if they were so bad, why did it take 30 years for the communists to take over"?

AIM says that PBS glosses over the American peoples support for the war. The book says there was wide spread support for the war in 1965 but not by 1967. PBS says President Johnson played down the war so as not to build up a "war fever". Aim disputes that ¾ million veterans are still haunted by their service in Vietnam, while of the 3 soldiers interviewed by PBS, 2 appeared to be having emotional problems associated with their time and activities in Vietnam. Kenneth Morefield, of AIM said that PBS says the Armed Forces were not the equal of the North. I didn't see that.

All the New York Times article did for me , was reinforce my opinion that in history there will always be many interpretations and to get the full picture, people will have to be open

minded enough to look at all of those interpretations to have an informed opinion.

I took a closer look at the operation called Cedar Falls. In the book it is reported that the campaign sent 30,000 U.S. troops against the Iron Triangle, a NLF strong hold just outside of Saigon. After intensive bombing, specially trained ground troops were sent in to villages to remove the population, level the area, burn it and then re-bomb it, leaving nothing for the NLF to return to. They specifically mention Ben Suc.

In the PBS video they also mention Cedar Falls and specifically Ben Suc. . They too told of moving the peasants out, destroying the villages, poisoning the food and the surroundings. However they then mentioned destroying the tunnels which the book had left out. Right after this story, PBS launched into the narration of “a” battle led by Banks with narration by Jack Hill telling of the battle fought outside of a village just north of Saigon that the soldiers were sent to clear. After 36 hours with no food, water, or way out, and listening to the cries of their wounded buddies, they went into that village. The assault lasted 3-5 minutes according to Banks. Hill says that according to the inhabitants they “had no knowledge” of any VC and he has no knowledge of the killing of innocents. The U.S. Soldiers found tunnels inside the houses and they had been fired on by someone. The Vietnamese that they interviewed painted a totally different picture. According to them it was a massacre because the U.S. hated them.

My “vote” is the PBS video on this story. I think it is more detailed and closer to the truth, on both sides, than the book.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Who gets my vote



by John Moran - Saturday, April 26, 2014, 5:50 PM

I also found that the Herring text and the PBS series indicate that the ARVN did have a problem with their motivation to fight their own war and that they had a very high desertion rate during this span of time, however, I believe that the AIM video deals more with the entire PBS series when they conclude that the PBS series is demeaning to the President, army and its people. There is still a lot of PBS series to be seen .As for the support for the war in 1967, the Herring text (page 209) indicates that polls showed that Americans found the antiwar movement, its radical and hippie elements, more obnoxious than the war itself. Here, I stay with the text.

President Johnson does seem to deceive the American public as to the effectiveness of our action in Vietnam. This documented in both PBS series and the text, AIM doesn't touch this subject. I believe that the text is right as it explains why he feels he must continue to fight on, most of his advisers slant their views.

The CEDAR FALLS operation is fairly brief in the text, however, in the PBS series it shows hundreds of civilians being move from the village and

the one thing I noticed was a lack of men, lots of women and children, but no husbands, fathers, young men or teenage boys. Makes you wonder where they are.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Who gets my vote

by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 26, 2014, 11:14 PM

I found the two contrasting sides of battle, or as the Vietnamese citizens referred to it as a massacre, outside of Saigon to be extremely fascinating. The personal accounts from the U.S. soldiers and the Vietnamese citizens gave that event more contradicting points of view than the Herring book did. I also noticed that the book left out the detail of the tunnels being destroyed. Before watching the interviews from the PBS video I did not fully realize how differently the citizens and the soldiers remembered that event. Watching them speak it was if they were talking about two completely different things. I also would have to give my vote to the PBS video when it came to the battle since both sides seemed to be covered pretty well.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Who gets my vote

by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 11:50 AM

I agree with you about the Cedar Fall operation. There were those difference between video and books. Additionally, there were some more details in the video than books, just like destroying the tunnels. I think the video is more detailed and I vote video too.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Who gets my vote

by Danielle Medina - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 10:05 PM

I think that in regards to operation Cedar Falls the book stuck more towards the statistics of what happened and the general outcome of the operation, rather than diving in deep to specific situations and how each side viewed the operation. I think the PBS video definitely focused on how each person viewed the operation. The soldier was doing his job and following orders. He said he could only speak for himself

and not what other soldiers did in that same situation. The Vietnamese that were there told the story of what happened to them and how they felt about it. I think that if the roles were reversed and it was Vietnamese soldiers invading and destroying an American town it would be the same exact views from either side.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Inaccuracies



by Serina Stinson - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 3:29 PM

In the Accuracy in Media video, I noticed that the mentioned that veterans were portrayed in the PBS series as a victim who can't really do much because they have been "haunted" from fighting in the war. It goes on to say that veterans are well adjusted and productive members of society, many are taking on leadership roles in society as well. Their leadership and success in life in part comes from serving in the war. I have not noticed much about veterans in the Herring book yet. From personal experience, the men I know that have served in the Vietnam war are not hindered from living their lives because of fighting in the war, but I do know they are definitely haunted, even to this day, of being back in the war. My grandpa frequently wakes up at night and thinks that he is back in Vietnam fighting in the war. Luckily, he is able to tell pretty quickly that he is not in Vietnam anymore, but it goes to show that it can affect the soldiers for the rest of their lives. In this case I am definitely "voting" for the AIM program because from my person experience, I know that the veterans are more than capable of living a life and not being hindered from the war.

Reading the New York Times article was actually quite scary to me. At the end they stated that the producers of the PBS series says that their series cannot be reinterpreted unless the reinterpretation has their approval. Basically what that means to me is that they put the information in that program just how they wanted us to see it. They left out and changed certain details so that we could not uncover the truth of the matter. I know that these days the media only reports on what they want us to know. There is so much going on in the world right now that is not be reported on the nightly news that should definitely be reported but instead we get to hear about how someone wrote graffiti on a fence instead. In this case as well I am leaning towards "voting" for the AIM program. It is also possible that new information has come out since 1983 when the film was first aired. That is only eight years after the war ended. Some people may not have been ready to come forward with their information at that time or possibly was not able to. Either way I think that since the PBS program is a lot older, some of the information may be outdated.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: Inaccuracies



by John Moran - Saturday, April 26, 2014, 7:21 PM

I believe that the PBS series on the "haunting" of Vietnam Vets is aired in the 13th episode called Legacies, that's the way Mr. Heston described in the opening of 2nd AIM video, so at this time I'm holding back any judgment on the way either handled this topic until I can see the 13th episode.

Tell your grandpa I thank him for his service.

Your right, as far as the New York Times article, when they say that history can be reinterpreted only, with their approval. At the end of the AIM video Mr. Reed Irvine gives a good example of another media outlet, NBC refuses to correct the interpretation of the 1968 Tet offensive. They had reported it as a defeat for the U.S. and South Vietnam and when it was suggested that they should correct the record the head producer refused to do so as. He felt the public had accepted it as defeat, so it'll stay as a defeat. This is scary to know. The episode that deals with 1968 should shed some light on how PBS handles the subject of the Tet offensive.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: Inaccuracies

by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 10:21 AM

Hi, I saw your comment for my post so that I come to your post. As I expect, I saw your post has the same topic about veterans of the war. Actually, my grandpa is a veteran, and he fought for the Chinese People's Liberation Army in WWII. I asked him yesterday, he said that there are many many veterans who have PTSD, I post my point of view just because my grandpa is the "exception". Thus, you were right, I agree with you! And thank you for your comment though. 😊

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Week 2 - Continuing the Discussion

by John Moran - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 5:29 PM

There are three different descriptions of Ngo Dinh Diem as he becomes the Prime Minister of South Vietnam in 1954. PBS describes him as a little known Nationalist that worked with the French government. The PBS series, offers no history of Diem, prior to his appointment as PM. The AIM description of Diem, comes from Ret. General Lansdale, that after talking to the Vietnamese people that he knew, Diem was very well known, they felt he was honest, had a strong character and that he was the best known nationalist still alive, better and more favorable then Ho Chi Minh. The Herring text does not actually give a description of Diem, however, some of his history is provided, finished the top of his class in the school of public administration in Hanoi, entered public bureaucracy in Annam. He was an anti-communist, was a village supervisor, and appointed the highest position of minister of the interior by 1929. (page, 58 & 59)

Of the three I would trust the Herring history of Diem, if for no other reason, it seems to have been researched. The PBS is completely dismissive of any history and the AIM description from Gen. Lansdale is second handed at best.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Week 2 - Continuing the Discussion

by Lauren Grant - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 7:18 PM

I definitely agree that Herring is the most trustworthy source in regards to Diem and his history. I felt that the PBS series seemed to just make Diem appear and if I had not read his history in Herring that I would have felt confused. For a series that talks about Diem quite a bit I was surprised that they offered no history on him. However, I do agree that the AIM video offered a better look at Diem's personality and how the Vietnamese people saw him.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Week 2 - Continuing the Discussion

by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 10:27 PM

John,

I also noticed the three differences. I think this is a classic case of the writer trying to persuade their audience into the opinion they want them to believe. That is hard for history students because we are just trying to figure out the real facts but instead we have to weed out the false or covered up information. Also I agree that the PBS series is quite dismissive and I find the information to be un-reliable just due to the fact of I don't know what they have left out.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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AIM

by Eryne Grant - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 5:24 PM

In the beginning of the second half of the AIM video, I agreed with the idea that the PBS video's came off as almost racist. I find it important while retelling and learning about history to keep your position aside and present the facts correctly to prevent something (such as coming across racist) go against what you're saying. Therefore, I was at least a little confused at why the video focused on the brutality against the Vietnamese soldiers who were taken by the US and not the US soldiers who were abused. In the AIM video, they talk about how there was not one single documented case of captured soldiers in the US camps, but cases in the Vietnamese camps. For a video that (at least to me) seemed against the Vietnamese, they left out this very important detail. In the Herring book, I couldn't even remember them talking much about these POW camps and the treatment. But, the book in general is very unbiased and, although focused on the US standpoint, isn't

racist or have an obvious political view. So, overall, in relations to the way that the POW camps were mentioned, I say that the AIM video wins. The video talks about the darkness in the situation from both sides, and covers what the PBS failed to do.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: AIM



by Serina Stinson - Friday, April 25, 2014, 12:11 PM

The PBS video broke my heart when basically it was a hate against all the Vietnamese people. One man said that they couldn't help but start to think of all of the Vietnamese as their enemies. The story told to us about the woman greeting the soldiers and them laughing at her and dropping a grenade on her and the other 9 members of her family is absolutely tragic. I only notice one time that the Americans had captured someone in this weeks PBS video and that was really all the mentioned. It never mentioned Americans being captured.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: AIM



by Eryne Grant - Saturday, April 26, 2014, 9:24 PM

I found it ridiculous! I was a little shocked that they let the their hatred come across so blatantly. Despite all the sadness, I definitely think it's interesting to think about it from their perspective as where the PBS video didn't. It kind of makes me think of the AIM video as being the "bigger" people in the situation.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: AIM



by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 26, 2014, 10:56 PM

I also found it surprising that the PBS videos did not mention U.S. soldiers being captured. I thought that was something that really should have been included since it would have showed a contrasting side to the brutality that the PBS video mentioned about how the U.S. soldiers treated the Vietnamese. I felt that the PBS video seemed to only show the U.S. soldiers as being the villains that terrorized the Vietnamese, while the opposing point of view was ignored. The AIM video did a much better job at correcting this oversight and explaining what happened on both sides, like you said.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: AIM





by John Moran - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 12:32 PM

The 2nd AIM video seems to confront the PBS series on a lot of fronts that just haven't been covered by PBS so far, like the discussion on the 1968 Tet offensive at the end of the AIM video, the Herring text will cover this period in chapter 6, and the PBS series, also seems to cover it in episode 6. The POW issue and their treatment is not covered in the Herring text and I can't determine if the PBS series covers the treatment of American POWs at all.

I agree that the simple fact AIM does cover the American POW treatment makes them the better source.

In episode 4 of the PBS series, I see ARVN troops mistreating a prisoner, but never see prisoners mistreated by American troops.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: AIM



by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 12:32 PM

In this case, PBS did shows people they had some wrong, or inaccurate information about the reason to fight. However, history is so hard to make a decision to choose which source is right and accurate. Probably, I think, there was a reason of the war which was the race.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: AIM



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 7:20 PM

I agree with this completely. This was a very interesting point to me. Why are we not getting both sides of the story. It was really surprising to me that we'd be presented the information about how the Vietnamese pow's were treated. Yet, not the American soldiers.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Veterans Situation



by Chen Ling - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 7:42 PM

According to watch the video, I saw there is a negative effect of veterans, which is they cannot handle their postwar life. The reason of it is because they were haunted by the war

and the war brought them a negative influence, for me, it is just like one thing I learnt from a SAPP course in UO this term, the PDST. The result is that people will sometimes think that they were still in the nervous situation which they have been experienced and not been happening at this moment. However, I didn't see the relative information in neither Abby nor Herring book. Therefore, I think it is just a bias information because I think soldiers will remember what they experienced during the war, but there will be only minority or bare of them would be haunted by the war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Veterans Situation



by Serina Stinson - Friday, April 25, 2014, 12:00 PM

I feel a little bit differently about this than you, my grandpa fought in this war and he frequently thinks he is back in the war. I think this would definitely count as PTSD. Though I can't speak for all veterans but my grandpa used to tell me about his friends stories of how they kept up after the war and it wasn't that great.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Veterans Situation



by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 26, 2014, 10:45 PM

I think that you bring up some good points that not every soldier will be haunted by the war but I think that there are more than a small minority that have PTSD. Not every soldier is the same and just because the ones in the two books do not talk about it does not mean that there aren't a larger percentage that experience it. My dad fought in Vietnam and he was able to live out his life in a way that most people would call successful and normal. However, that does not mean that he didn't experience "haunting" dreams or have PTSD, because he did. Not every soldier had the same experience therefore it is hard to make a generalized statement regarding how the war affected soldiers as a whole.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Veterans Situation



by Eryne Grant - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 11:50 AM

I think that soldiers in any war will be forever haunted of what they experienced. I do not know this from personal experience, but going through anything traumatic leaves a major impact on someone for their entire lives. Like Lauren (my twin sister) previously stated, our dad experienced traumatic side-effects but still lived a fulfilling and motivated life. I definitely think that all soldiers are at least a little bit (but not a small minority) affected by their time in war.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)



Re: Veterans Situation



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 7:24 PM

Lots of veterans have a really tough postwar life. There are different effects and different types of PTSD. I don't think we can group them all together because of the way this happens. There isn't a way we can say for sure that this soldier will remember this or this soldier will remember that. So it's hard to call anything regarding PTSD a bias.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Veterans Situation



by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 10:52 PM

Chen,

I feel similar to you when it comes to speaking about the negative effect on veterans, im sure everyone of those veterans that was over there has re-lived some moment of war but that does not mean that they are a unproductive member of society. Im sure that most people returning from Vietnam just blended back into society and lived a "normal" life. That being said their will always be the veterans suffering from PTSD. I think the reason that you may not hear about the negative effects of post life war in the ABBEY books is because they are a lot of first hand accounts of what was going on during the war and not so much after the war.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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"haunted" and successful



by Kye Ruddell - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 9:32 PM

The article by Corry was right in saying the view of the events in Vietnam would be reinterpreted, and the various ways we have to do that seem to be both a blessing and a curse. There is a lot of information which is conflicting, depending on the source. When watch the second part of the AIM video, I was interested with the influence the media had on how the troops were portrayed to those who weren't there. The AIM video mostly disagreed with the PBS series' interpretation of many veterans being "haunted" by their experiences, and preferred to focus on their productive contributions to society. The Herring book agreed more or less with AIM, reporting that the media portrayal of troops was as negative as their portrayal of the South Vietnamese progress in battle, but has not so far highlighted the long-term effects of the war as the other sources have.

On the other hand, there are some stories in the Appy book, including those of Richard Olsen and Oliver Stone, which illustrate that even those who were able to become successful and productive in their lives, still lived with the demons which "haunted" them in later life. Looking at these conflicting viewpoints, I would have to say my vote goes to Appy

and PBS. Like it was said in the Corry article, they don't discount other ideas and they leave room for other opinions. Of course there are those who were able to return from the war relatively unscathed, but the documentation from the PBS series and the Appy book give a point of view which has been shared by many, one showing the effects of the violence and mayhem on those who were subjected to it. This doesn't contradict what AIM had to say about the successes veterans found in their lives, it leaves room for that and acknowledges the successes in most of the stories. This attitude is contrary to the AIM video, which doesn't allow for any amended opinions outside of their own. Even though it appears that all accounts are truthful to *someone*, the PBS and Appy accounts are perhaps more accurate for the masses and leave the most room for the wide array of experiences of those who lived this event in the wide array of places and experiences they encountered.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: "haunted" and successful

by Serina Stinson - Friday, April 25, 2014, 12:04 PM

I really like how you mentioned that all accounts are truthful to someone. I agree that people have different versions of the story and just because the information is conflicting, doesn't mean its actually wrong.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: "haunted" and successful

by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 12:12 PM

My post is also about veterans who were haunted by the war experience. They are affected long-term by their war experience, and actually there are a lot of people are under the PTSD negative effects nowadays. By the way, I like your point of view of different story does not stands for wrong facts, what a great point!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: "haunted" and successful

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 7:33 PM

I like your thoughts on this subject. I also agree that the AIM video disagreed with a lot of what we have heard regarding "haunting". It seems to me that even though it's a very important part of the Vietnam war and it's aftermath, we focus on it a little too much. So much of what we hear about Vietnam is in a negative light. It's a nice change of pace to hear something positive every once in awhile. Like the positive contributions to society you mentioned. So like I was saying, We need to hear the bad things because a lot of bad came out of this conflict. It's just nice to get some positive aspects at the same time.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)



A Reason To Fight

by Lauren Grant - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 9:59 PM

One issue that I find conflicting is the reason why the United States went to war in Vietnam. In the PBS series we are told that the reason was to fight communism. The series portrayed it as a reason that the soldiers did not understand and that therefore that it was not truly a reason to fight. The interviews with the soldiers that had fought demonstrate that lack of will to fight. When watching you get the feeling that we shouldn't have been fighting. The AIM program however says the opposite. They talk about how it was worth fighting for and how the PBS series did not correctly portray why we were fighting. At times it was confusing to learn any one side that they were choosing. The Herring book seems to show both sides although it does tend to lean at times towards the war not being justified. For me, Herring gets my vote for the facts are laid out. The book talks about how the U.S. had the idea of keeping communism from spreading but went in too far. Herring talks about how even the presidents at times did not believe in the war. These different sides make the facts more believable. I seem to trust the Herring book more with the issue of whether or not going to war was justified because it shows facts and points of view of the people in power during the war and isn't afraid to show contradicting sides itself.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight

by Kye Ruddell - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 10:49 PM

Lauren- This seems to be representative of how this information can be interpreted by different people differently. I, too, got the contradiction between PBS and AIM about the start of the war, though I saw that they both talked of fighting communism and differed in the attitudes and information the soldiers had when they went over to fight.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight

by Katherine Frank - Friday, April 25, 2014, 3:21 PM

Hi Lauren,

I agree that the Herring book seems to almost be like bullet points. These are the facts, period, while the Aim video, the PBS video and the Appy book all are very emotionally charged for me. They say hind sight is 20/20 and we could say that of the Vietnam war. All of the information we have access to seems to say that when the war started the government did believe we were fighting to halt the spread of Communism, but as the war progressed that belief changed. Over all I like all of the information so I can make up my mind, but specifically I feel the PBS video gives a more detailed account and portrays many sides to this war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight



by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 26, 2014, 9:52 PM

Hi Katherine,

I agree that the PBS and AIM videos are more emotional than the Herring book and that might be why I thought that the Herring book showed the reasoning behind going to war better than the videos. I think that to find the main justifications for going to war in the beginning, that a factual representation is needed since there is quite a bit of information on those justifications and the reasoning behind them. However, I did feel that if we are looking at the reasons as the war progressed that the more emotional videos would be more appropriate. As a whole I enjoyed the PBS videos probably the most because of the detailed accounts and different portrayals like you mentioned.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight



by Eryne Grant - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 11:54 AM

I definitely agree with you on the idea that the Herring book lays down facts and viewpoints without being afraid to contradict sides. I think that is the key to any sort of textbook or learning material- be unbiased, but show both sides and their viewpoints correctly. At some times, I definitely thought the book was just spitting out facts one after the other, but in the overall context, it works to convey their message, whatever it may be in a certain paragraph or chapter.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight



by Lauren Grant - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 6:59 PM

I do agree with you that at times the Herring book seemed to just spit out facts. It also felt like to me that the book is sometimes a timeline of the war which can be useful when an unbiased retelling of an event is needed. In this instance, the book definitely showed the reasons for going to war in Vietnam the clearest.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 7:39 PM

I agree this is a tough reason to be used as a main argument for the war. You make a good point about a lot of the soldiers not knowing what they are fighting against when they are told "communism". It was easy to tell from some of the interviews that there was a big problem with lack of will to fight. This was a big difference between WW2 and Vietnam to me. The soldiers as a whole were so into the cause of WW2 that we were fully invested in winning and what we were fighting for. I don't get that same feeling about Vietnam.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 7:44 PM

I have thought the same thing about the Herring book as well. I really like the way the facts are given to us. It also does seem like you said that the Herring book shows us both sides of the story well. Yet it does lean towards being against the war, and the fact that we went too far in trying to prove our point. We went in to stop the spread of communism, Which was a great sounding idea. Over time though the negatives started to outweigh the positives.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight



by Danielle Medina - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 9:21 PM

I think that the reason why the United States went to war is going to be one of the topics that will always have conflicting sides. Everyone is going to have their own opinion on why we went to war and they will have their own reasons why they believe that. I feel like the PBS video showed how a government can influence it's people to see the world the way they do. Like the soldier who joined the war because he thought he was going to be a hero and was fighting communism overseas, and then he realized later on in the war that he might not actually be a hero and that what they were doing over there might not be helping anyone at all. I think that the Herring Book and the PBS video however also showed how the war caused people to question what their government was doing and why they were making the decisions that they were. I also have to agree that I tend to trust what is said in the Herring Book more than anything because it's more factual and less biased.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: A Reason To Fight



by Eryne Grant - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 9:43 PM

I definitely agree with you that the PBS video showed how the government influences the world and our decisions. And, with this in mind, I the Herring text also emphasizes this.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Week 2 - Continuing the Discussion



by Ryan Ronning - Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 10:31 PM

Forum 2

After reading and watching the numerous materials in this class I have come to the conclusion that there are very different views on the war, these can be views that differ between liberals and conservatives or just normal people like you and I. That being said, in my opinion no matter what the event is, large or small, you will get a different view on the actions that took place from every single person in attendance. It's not to say that there is a right or wrong answer in these situations, only different views on how events played out.

The examples that I will touch on I tend to find disturbing because they effect the people involved in the war not a particular battle or event. The PBS series portrays the soldiers returning from the war to have symptoms similar to PTSD and that they are suffering severely from the actions that have taken place. The AIM video and more specifically SEN. John McCain represent the returning soldiers to be productive members of society, leaders, husbands, fathers and business owners. From what I have viewed in my life I find both of these to be true. But just because someone can lead a "normal" life doesn't mean that they are not fighting internal demons, neither media mentions that. This information conflicts because they are both trying to sway our opinions.

As of right now I say it's a 50/50 split between the PBS series and the Aim video. I think both have good reliable facts but it is also up to the person watching the video to decipher the accurate information and clear the story. After all just because two different sources have conflicting stories doesn't mean either is wrong, they are just presenting the side of the story they want you to hear. If I had to place a vote right now it would be for the APPY book because I like the first-hand accounts and I don't feel like they are trying to sway my opinion one way or the other.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Week 2 - Continuing the Discussion



by Serina Stinson - Friday, April 25, 2014, 12:07 PM

I have to say, you have said how I have been feeling about the who is right and who is

wrong. I feel like I have to choose a side when most of the time I feel like they are both right in their own ways. I definitely agree that most sources are trying to sway our opinions. I honestly feel like the AIM video is just there to give us another side of the story, not to correct what was wrong in the PBS video.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Week 2 - Continuing the Discussion

by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 12:27 PM

You are absolutely right, we cannot just judge an information depend on the difference of another information source. However, I don't think first hand accounts will be more believable than other accounts, and we have to compare more materials to summerize. By the way, it is still super difficult to get to close to the real fact, at lease we don't know which one is the true answer.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Week 2 - Continuing the Discussion

by Danielle Medina - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 9:45 PM

I agree that both videos have reliable facts about the aftermath of soldiers who were in the war and that they both seem to try to sway your opinion to one side or the other. Even though the information is conflicting I think that combined they offer a good view of what can happen to a soldier after they go to war. I also think it depends on the person as well. For some the war might be a nightmare that they'd rather not remember. For others the war might have been the highlight of their lives. Either way it helped them become the person that they are today, or the person they were if they have already passed on.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Soldiers in Vietnam

by Danielle Medina - Thursday, April 24, 2014, 12:00 AM

The second part of the AIM video focuses on claiming that the PBS series shows the American military in a negative way. One specific example in the AIM video Dan Cragg, of Army Magazine and Nat'l Vietnam Veterans Review, states "I think the great unjustness of this film is that it portrays the American soldier in Vietnam as a drug addict, a racial bigot, and a man who murdered his officers officers and NCO's almost at will." In the fourth episode in the series the whole episode focuses on soldiers who were over in Vietnam and it doesn't portray any of them as drug addicts. So far in the series it has only shown a short clip of a few officers using drugs. During the fourth episode of the PBS series one of the soldiers, Private Bill Ehrhart, admitted that at one point he started to treat all Vietnamese as the enemy and if he couldn't tell then you shoot fast and ask questions later. Another soldier Charlie Sabatier Specialist Fourth Class, stated that the American soldiers fighting

on the front lines came to respect the people they were fighting.

I have to say that I think that the PBS video shows an equal amount of positives and negatives about the American soldier in Vietnam. It shows that they aren't perfect and that they do make mistakes. When having to deal with the horrible situations that occurred during the war it is easy to understand why things might have happened the way they did. I think it also displays them as having courage, loyalty, and honor for their country and pride in choosing to become a soldier. Even after some of them questioned why they were there they still fought for their country.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldiers in Vietnam

by Katherine Frank - Thursday, April 24, 2014, 7:49 PM

Hi Danielle,

I agree, there are as many opinions about Vietnam as there are people. The changes in the feelings of the fighting men in Vietnam had a lot to do with the year that they were there. In 1965 there was a distinct feeling that we belonged there and that we were fighting communism there so we would not have to fight it at home. By 1967 along with the draft came a different kind of media coverage, dissent and a general wondering if we really did belong there. It is disconcerting to me that our leadership was also wondering and yet chose to build up the war. I too think the PBS video shows both sides of the soldier stories where the AIM video seems to be one sided. I say "we" in this post because I was there. I graduated high school in 1965, just in time to experience all of this in real time and still I feel like I don't know anything.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldiers in Vietnam

by John Moran - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 11:28 AM

The second AIM video states that it takes issue with way PBS treats the U.S. soldiers in Episode 13 called Legacies. I haven't watched that episode yet and can't comment on it at this time, so I'm not sure witch of the videos present the information in a way that I would agree or disagree with.

The story that Erhart tells, from an eighteen year old with a chance to be hero, all the way to almost going AWOL in Hong Kong after only eight months in Vietnam combat and now (1983) having a nightmare about shooting an elder women in a rice paddy. I thought his story was well told by PBS

Chaarlie Sabatier's story of respect for his enemy is typical of combat soldiers, I've heard this from

WWII vets, Korean vets and other Vietnam vets. I'm impressed that PBS included this.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldiers in Vietnam

by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 12:21 PM

Yes, I agreee with you that PBS video did give people a positive and negative aspect of American Army in the Vietnam battleground. And this is the way to tell the truth to us whom are studying and trying to learn more about the real background and facts of the historic events.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldiers in Vietnam

by Lauren Grant - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 7:35 PM

I also found the interviews with the soldiers to be a great example of PBS showing the positives and negatives of American soldiers in Vietnam. They did not all have the same experience and therefore were at times contrasting. The AIM video made the PBS series seem like they only showed the soldiers as villains but I agree with you that the PBS videos showed a realistic soldier. They did not portray them as the hero or the villain, but as humans that had to fight under some horrible circumstances and situations who made some mistakes but were also courageous and had pride in their country.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Soldiers in Vietnam

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, April 27, 2014, 7:53 PM

The interviews were great in showing us insight as to what American soldiers were thought as by the Vietnamese people. We saw some negative aspects, but also some positive things. The PBS video does seem to show the American military pretty negatively throughout. It's hard for us as Americans to think from the perspective of different people and really take it with a grain of salt. At least for me, When someone says something negative about America I try to think of something positive to say back instead. It's a sense of pride in American history that we tend to have. The same that our soldiers who have fought for our freedom in many different wars throughout our history have as well.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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