

HST 195: History of Vietnam War Sp18 (Escobar 41945)

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Week 7 Forum Register Guard Letters

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Register Guard Letters

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, May 12, 2018, 12:45 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Register Guard Letters topic.

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, something that describes which one of the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Register Guard Letters

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Traditional research



by [Kishahn Fellows](#) - Tuesday, May 15, 2018, 8:36 PM

I think the main thing this collection of stories and firsthand accounts can tell us about learning the truth of such events is that it requires more research, the kind most of us are not used to unless your hobby is investigative journalism. Traditionally we would rely on electronic means of information gathering but in cases like this, where word of mouth and first hand accounts are the only true sources for a significant amount of these incidents, this just does not cut it. Writer Bob Thompson made this mistake in his letter to the editor.

For cases like the nitty gritty events of the Vietnam war, we must rely on first hand accounts, and if accessible, mission briefings and battle reports. The more common the same or similar stories are between relevant troops, the more likely these reports are in fact, factual. The treatment of U.S. troops in North Vietnam is a prime example, as every troop from the "Return with Honor" short had very similar stories, as did John McCain in his segment during the PBS documentary. All made mention of the terrible living conditions, splinters under finger nails, and the awful stress positions they were held in by tight ropes that would break their shoulders.

So with that theory in mind, one could gather that Bob Thompson was in fact, wrong about his assertion that no returning veterans were spit upon. As 3 out of the 5 writers after Mr. Thompson gave personal accounts of being spit upon or harassed upon returning to the states. Herman Issacs and Rodney Gordon shared that their harassment was so severe that they feared, were told not to or chose not to wear their uniforms. while a 4th writer, Hilliard Gastfriend pointed out the faulty nature of Thompson's source, bringing to light that his source, the book "The Spitting Image: myth, memory and the legacy of Vietnam" was "Fatally flawed in relying on electronic searches, not realizing that most digitization of news did not get under way until the 1980's..." Although a final writer back up Thompson somewhat with his own personal account of not being spit on, his experience with harassment in the form of being ostracized from civilized society and his inability to land a job despite extensive experience and moderate credentials honestly left me feeling more frustrated than the other personal accounts. In the end, based on the accounts provided in the letters to the editor, one could come to the conclusion that veterans were indeed spit upon, and it was not an isolated incident, though also not a universal or perhaps even widespread incident.

Some major issues that need to be taken into account when viewing these accounts from the perspective of our own troops is that we are only getting the American point of view, and with it the exaggerations that stroke our ego, and the left out ugly little truths that would reflect poorly on the nation. To counter act this, If possible one should seek out accounts and battle reports from civilian and enemy sources that were present to try and get the most unbiased point of view possible.

present to try and get the most unbiased point of view possible.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Author's Choice

by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Tuesday, May 15, 2018, 8:56 PM

If I were the author of Patriots, I would include all of the stories. Readers have a right to know the opinions of others and base their own opinions on all the facts. From reading the Register Guard letters, I have been able to conclude that there was indeed spitting on veterans, but not on all. Every veteran had a different experience (though some may be similar) and they all have different ways of explaining their experiences.

Sum of ratings: 0 (1)

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Re: Author's Choice

by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Wednesday, May 16, 2018, 5:12 PM

Including all the stories would give my readers the all-around view that I got when I read them. By including Bob Thompson's post, readers can see that there are those out there who did not get spit on (such as Lembcke and Shaw) and those who did (like Postelle, Gordon, and Isaacs). Thompson got information that was focused on only the media. If one were to think logically here, they would understand that not everything that happens is posted in the media. The last couple of forums have been focused on that very fact. The media leaves stuff out. Just because there was never a report in the media that there was spitting on Vietnam veterans, does not mean that it did not take place.

Then, as H. Hilliard Gastfriend points out, there actually were reports in the media regarding the subject. He quotes Jim Lindgren as writing, "Among the journalists who gave firsthand accounts of spitting on soldiers was James Reston, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize." Note the plural form of "journalists" and "accounts." More than one journalist reported seeing protestors spitting on veterans.

Also, though Shaw did not get spit on, he was greatly persecuted for his service. He writes that, when trying to get a job, he "was slandered, degraded, cursed, trivialized and shown the door whenever I mentioned being a veteran." This may not be an account of someone physically spitting in his face, but I don't think it would be too far from the truth to say that it was a verbal spitting.

If we were to not include some of these stories, readers may not be able to get the broad picture that they can when all are included. Thompson's post shows that not all were spit on and that you must dig further than a single source in order to find

all were spat on and that you must dig farther than a google search in order to find the truth. Rooke-Ley and Preuss' stories set the stage for the rest of the accounts. The rest of the stories are important because they share firsthand experiences of soldiers and those around them.

I found a webpage full of accounts from veterans and their family members. I found the same kind of differences and similarities with these stories as with the Register Guard letters.

www.quora.com/Were-soldiers-returning-from-Vietnam-really-spat-on-in-airports

Medal Of Honor Winners Find Themselves Subjected To Abuse

By TOM TIEDE
NEA Staff Correspondent
NEW YORK (NEA) —Recently, the United States government did a wonderful thing for Air Force Maj. Merlyn Dethlefsen.

It gave him the Congressional Medal of Honor.

In so doing, the nation changed the man's life forever. It honored his superb heroism as a fighter pilot over North Vietnam, and at the same time handed him an awesome responsibility that will be a second skin all his life.

Not that the major isn't used to responsibility. He's spent 285 hours over the horrors of North Vietnamese ground fire.

And just a year ago he stubbornly ignored all the ground flak (plus shot from enemy jets and damage to his own ship) to roar over a key northland target. He then spent 10 punishing minutes knocking that target to splinters.

That action is what won Dethlefsen his Medal. That action is what jerked him from the files of the unknown and made him a lifelong celebrity.

Thus the big change.

Where once the major could blow his nose in public, now better things are expected of him. Where before he could be human and err, now he'd best not. Where previously he could speak his mind, tomorrow renders him controversially mute.

He must be loyal.

"I wish everybody was behind the war," he says.

He must be optimistic.

"I think our policy is an in-



MERLYN DETHLEFSEN—
"the worst may be even more bitter than for others."

They have been spat upon as "monsters," bullied in bars by idiots who try to impress friends, and even maliciously maligned by jealous military fellows.

Says Tom Kelley: "Some people look on us as a bunch of tough guys who need to be taken down a peg or two. So they call us names or something. Somebody will walk up to you and openly accuse you of being kill crazy."

"Well, it's just not true. We have got all kinds in the Society, including some very meek fellows. One of the members is only five feet tall and another, Desmond Doss, is a confirmed conscientious objector.

"Actually, the Medal is not awarded for killing people. It is given in recognition of a great act of love. For instance, I did not win mine for killing anyone. I won it (as a medic) for saving peoples' lives."

In a sense, America's newest Medal winner, Major Dethlefsen, also won his award for saving lives. But even so the 33-year-old career officer must still be prepared to receive both the best and worst of his nation's gratitude.

For him, in fact, the worst may be even more bitter than for others. Dethlefsen is the first pilot to win the award for bombing North Vietnam and in the light of present attitudes the recognition carries heavy implications.

There are more than the usual number who'll wait for the major to slip up. There are ev-

ternational success."

Right now these are small prizes to pay for fame. Besides the major very probably believes that our policy really is "an international success."

But if the history of this nation's previous war heroes holds true, the cost of being a celebrity is going to rise for Dethlefsen. At least that's what many of the 272 other living Medal of Honor winners conclude.

The feeling among former winners is that living up to the Medal is sometimes almost as hard as winning it. Often, the recipient must face unreasonable demands, humiliation and abuse from a thoughtless public at large.

One winner, Thomas Kelley of New York City, speaks for the majority opinion in his capacity as president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society:

"The award presents some very real problems. For one-

won the Medal (in 1945)."

The time consumed at such appearances is only part of the problem. Once in awhile the appearance itself leads to even greater personal sorrow.

Last year, as example, 200 Medal winners met at Beverly Hills, Calif. for annual business. Hearing of the meeting, some 300 antiwar protesters gathered near the convention site and began to taunt the heroes.

Most of the men were able to avoid the peaceniks. But at least one, James Connors (wounded thrice in World War II), was unable to duck a particularly noisy youth who kept flicking his beard and cursing the former Army sergeant.

Flick, flick, flick.

"Killer, killer, killer"

Finally, pow! Jimmy Connors hit him.

Such instances are not entirely rare among Medal winners.

er-growing legions of misguided young who will chide his speeches, mock his purpose and deride his position of honor.

It's a sad commentary of the times that this fresh American hero, or any like him, may very likely regret he ever left the ranks of the ordinary. — I (NEA)

Sheboygan Press
March 16, 1968



Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**1968 Newspaper clipping shows abuse**by [Paul Geu](#) - Saturday, May 19, 2018, 10:31 PM

Thank you for including the newspaper clipping highlighting some of the abuses that occurred not only to Vietnam veterans but veterans from World War 2. I especially like the part when Sargent Jimmy Connors hit the protestor that kept on flicking his beard at him. I reminded me of what my grandfather would have done if he was faced with that situation.

When reading the stories from anti-war protestors in the Appy book, I have come to a sense that many of them, at least in the book, were more focused on protesting the policy makers and kept the soldiers out of it. The Herring book also shows how disorganized the anti-war movement was and led to many groups with hundreds of agendas. As this clipping shows this particular group were protesting the wrong people. Veteran Tom Kelly states in the clipping that some look on them (medal of honor winners) as a bunch of tough guys that need to be taken down a peg or two and this is completely incorrect. The men in the article are true heroes that overcome insane odds to achieve something that most would consider impossible.

I think after reading all these stories and all the forums we have done so far shows us clearly that we need to always be researching every aspect of our topic in order to get a clear understanding of this polarizing topic.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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**Re: 1968 Newspaper clipping shows abuse**by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Sunday, May 20, 2018, 5:20 PM

I included the newspaper article to show that there were accounts in the media, though not on television. This would disprove Thompson and Lembcke's conclusions that "there was not a single media report to support such claims of hostility toward the returned veterans." Perhaps they meant television, but that's not what they said. Therefore, they have not done the necessary research to have a complete and accurate view of the hostility towards veterans of the Vietnam War. This means that I would throw out Thompson's account entirely because it's not founded on truth. I would include Robert Shaw's account, though. He is a Vietnam vet and his tale is firsthand and must be accurate. It also shows the fact that not all were persecuted, only some.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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**Hostility at Home**by [Tyler Cannon](#) - Tuesday, May 15, 2018, 9:55 PM

If I was the author of Patriots I would choose to incorporate the stories of BOB THOMPSON, HERMAN ISAACS, and H. HILLIARD GASTFRIEND. Bob Thompson makes the claim that there was no spitting or hostility towards vets coming home from the Vietnam War and cites "The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory and the Legacy of Vietnam," Jerry Lembcke, himself a Vietnam vet, concludes that there was not a single media report to support such claims of hostility toward the returned veterans. In 1995, a study by Thomas Beamish and others analyzed some 495 media stories and found no reports of spitting or even negative taunting." (Spitting pdf, pg2). This letter was met with much hostility especially from returning vets that returned to California and were met with great hostility. According to Herman Isaacs "I was called a "baby killer" to my face more than once; I was told "I'd like to buy you a beer if you will take that stinking uniform off" (that statement resulted in somewhat of a violent encounter); and yes, I was spat on just outside the San Francisco airport while waiting for my flight home." (spitting pdf pg 3). This testament from an actual vet shows that there in fact was hostility that was just not brought to the medias attention. Isaacs was not alone as there are other accounts of such abuse and can even be heard during the [American Soldiers speak](#) file in which a soldier recalls returning and leaving the Travis air force base and having his bus attacked by protesters who throw rotten tomatoes and eggs

base and having his bus attacked by protestors who threw rotten tomatoes and eggs. (Audio file at 6:40). I would include these stories because they represent the varying viewpoints between if American soldiers were met with hostility upon returning to the states. I would include a "note to the reader" in which I would provide the past of the different testimonies I took such as Herman Issacs who was in the military for 20 years and is proud of his time served and of the military all together. I would include this in order to show that there is a possibility of slight bias as well as providing some credibility to the stories that he recollects.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Opinions Based In Truth

by [Emilee Russell](#) - Tuesday, May 15, 2018, 10:15 PM

Had I been the author of Patriots, I would have chosen to include only the letters to the editor that were written by veterans, especially those who returned through airports in California, where much of the most outspoken antiwar protests were taking place. The reason for this is because they are firsthand accounts, as are other passages in the Appy book, from people who served and returned home to a country that felt so different from the one they'd known. I don't think I would want to include letters like Bob Thompson's-- the main reason I would be hesitant to include a letter like his is because since he was not a veteran himself, he was further removed from the conflict and would not have had the personal experience that a veteran would have. I felt that he was speaking for a lot of other people when in fact, he hadn't lived through it himself. Additionally, it seems that the sources he cites may be skewed and taken out of context. There just doesn't seem to be enough concrete evidence to warrant his claims, especially compared to the firsthand accounts of veterans.

When I thought about this more, I considered that perhaps as time goes on and we become further removed from firsthand historical accounts of the Vietnam war as veterans pass away, it will become even easier to believe whatever your Google search turns up without taking time to assess the validity and accuracy of sources. Perhaps Bob Thompson's letter is an example of this--without people who lived through it to dispute his letter, it is likely that we might take his slanted opinion as fact. To me, Thompson's letter highlights the ignorance we might all believe down the road if we don't really look into our sources as the Vietnam war becomes more a part of long-ago history once we are no longer able to ask our parents or grandparents' generations about their own firsthand experiences of it.

It is clear, through all these resources, that although we must always take firsthand accounts with a grain of salt and assess their own perspective, the firsthand accounts will almost always take precedence over a source that is more further removed. For

example, in several of the American POW interviews, they admit that they had very little way of knowing things happening in American society at the time, only learning about the moon landing by a stamp on a letter to a fellow prisoner so we cannot expect that each veteran's experience was the ONLY way something happened but rather as one essential piece of the larger event, but to me, a firsthand account of an experience will always top someone else's interpretation (like the movie made about John McCain's years as a POW), which I think we should always be checking for accuracy and bias before accepting as truth.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: Opinions Based In Truth

by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Thursday, May 17, 2018, 2:38 PM

"because they are firsthand accounts, as are other passages in the Appy book"

This is a very good point, Emilee. I think you are correct. If we were to follow Christian Appy's lead and only include firsthand accounts, we would only include the stories of Postelle, Gordon, Isaacs, and Shaw. However, Thompson and Gastfriend do quote previously recorded firsthand accounts.

Every one of the above-mentioned men has good points and backs up points with facts. Thompson may not have been completely accurate (or he may have), but he helps us understand the rest of the tales.

If I were to include Thompson and Gastfriend, I would research the men that they quoted. In order to publish a secondhand account like that, one would have to guarantee that the firsthand account was real.

Rooke-Ley and Preuss are not necessary to include. In fact, after further contemplation, I do not think that I would end up putting them in the book.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Inclusion of non veterans paints a more clear picture.

by [Paul Geu](#) - Saturday, May 19, 2018, 10:19 PM

One benefit I see with our reading of the stories in the Appy book is that it includes stories other than those who fought in the war. From draft dodgers to Viet Cong guerrilla fighters, Appy includes their sides of the conflict to give us a broader prospective of what these people went through during the war.

In these letters to the editor and especially Thompson's letter there was a large

in these letters to the editor and especially Thompson's letter there was a large amount of animosity towards each other to the point that the information that these writers give us is hate filled and almost useless and it is easy to not want to include them in any textbook.

I agree with you that as more veterans pass away, more people will take what Google shows them as an absolute truth. I have also seen some classes where Wikipedia is an acceptable source!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Stories from POW leave a powerful image the Appy book hardly covered.

by [Paul Geu](#) - Tuesday, May 15, 2018, 10:52 PM

When reading the section in the Appy book that related to the treatment of prisoners of war only one of the three actually dealt with an American pilot being held prisoner. If I was the editor of the text, I would have wanted to include stories told by other pilots such as Jim Stockdale and Leroy Stutz.

The description of what these two men went through, I feel, would have given a better narrative of how they were treated and how that treatment impacted the war effort at home. I was really drawn to the how Jim Stockdale's wife was able to discern how her husband was being treated by the letter he sent with a code message with the book darkness at noon (23 minutes into POW video). In his interview, Jim Stockdale stated he was brought in front of a man that he thought was the head of propaganda for the North Vietnamese and said that the man stated that they were going to win the war because they would win in the streets of New York (5 Minutes into POW video).

I wanted to include Leroy Stutz story because he gave a very detailed account of the torture that he endured including the fact that they would just shove a rag into your mouth to stop you from screaming and how he stated that the worst thought that he had would be that he was going to die without any one knowing that he was dead (9:30 minutes into POW video).

I would include a small note to the reader at the beginning of the prisoner of war section detailing that the following section would be very graphic. The reason that I would include that is mainly to not "sugar coat" what happened to these men. What these men had to go through all for the sake of propaganda purposes should not be curtailed for the sake of wanting to not make people uncomfortable.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Register Guard Letters shows us that we must explore all sides of issue before making an opinion

by [Paul Geu](#) - Tuesday, May 15, 2018, 11:50 PM

After reading all the letters to the editor that were published in the Register Guard is that each and every person involved in the war, from the soldiers to the anti-war protestors had different experiences and thus forces us as students to try and learn as much as we can on all sides of the issue we are learning about before making an informed opinion.

One aspect of the letters to the editor that I did not like in term of historical accuracy is that most of them are probably cut in order to fit the space that is given to the story. Another issue that I have is that it is the lowest form of evidence because it is opinion and not fully based off of fact.

When I compare the letters to the editor to the POW video and the Veteran audio file I felt that I gave more weight to the videos/audio files because they seemed to be more authentic than the letters to the editor. When I say authentic I mean that the soldiers in the files just told of their experiences while the letter to the editor had a lot of insults thrown that the opinions that the disagreed with. I noticed that the word "ilk" was used in multiple letters showing that this topic still has bad blood between groups of people.

Sum of ratings: [2 \(1\)](#)

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Media coverage/perspective

by [Alysia Knapp](#) - Saturday, May 19, 2018, 6:38 PM

After reading Bob Thompson's letter I can assume that he was not a Vietnam veteran. Thompson says that author and Vietnam veteran Jerry Lembke states that the media never covered aggression towards veterans when they got home. Thompson mentions more studies on media covering the hostile and spitting behavior. (Fourth paragraph). Therefore it seems like Thompson puts a lot of his trust in media coverage. Just because the media didn't report it doesn't mean it didn't happen. The could have hidden these occurrences for a political agenda.

While it is important to understand the perspective of the leaders and officials, as Herring presents it, individual stories are also essential in learning about the war. Appy shares several perspectives from both sides of the war, therefore providing a more thorough understanding. If I was the author of Patriots, my method would be similar to Appy's. I would share several stories and perspectives. Appy and the American POW

video helped me comprehend war in general more than Herring. The people in higher positions who have the power to control the soldiers' lives might not know what war is truly like since they do not have to experience it for themselves. In the POW clip they mention how after Ho Chi Minh died, prison conditions improved. (25:50) Torture was ordered by higher officials who did not have to do it themselves. With knowledge of both the officials' and troops' perspectives we can gain a more thorough understanding of this war.

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Sharing historically accurate stories

by [Alysia Knapp](#) - Saturday, May 19, 2018, 8:09 PM

I want to elaborate on my first post. If I was writing Patriots, I would include the letters written by Thompson and the veterans. I believe the first couple in the sequence of letters, and the second to last ones were not written by veterans. However if the removed letters provided necessary context, I would follow Appy's style of adding a little preface or note to more thoroughly explain the situation. I would even include the last letter written by a veteran who agreed with Thompson, because as I stated in my first post, I believe it is important to examine several perspectives of the war and its effects on people. The last letter can be compared to the lack of media coverage of the spitting on veterans. Just because it didn't happen to that specific veteran, doesn't mean it never happened.

There are a few things authors like Appy have to consider when sharing people's experiences. However unlikely, they must consider the possibility of lies or fading memories, as well as some personal embellishments or opinions added by the storyteller that might obscure historical facts. The storytellers also simply might not have the ability to express the situations in completely accurate manners, regardless of good intention. One man from the [American Soldiers Speak](#) says "It's hard to describe. It's hard for me to get it out of my mind and explain to people just how bad it looked out there that day." (5:24)

So if I was in Appy's position and decided to write a book sharing personal experiences as a way of telling history, I would share perspectives from all sides but remain cautious. I would make sure these stories align with facts (regardless of opinions), and if it didn't then I would share a footnote providing more context more "trusted" sources: perhaps ones similar Herring's book.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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**What can this tell us**by [Tyler Cannon](#) - Saturday, May 19, 2018, 9:29 PM

This compilation of stories can tell us a lot about learning the truth of even the smallest issue in the Vietnam War Era. Vietnam was unlike any other war that America had been in in the past in terms of the public's opinion. Of course during every war the U.S has been in there has been those who are for and those who are opposed to the war. However, usually in the public light the war was seen as a necessary evil and the right thing for Americans to do. You never really hear about someone who returned from Europe after World War II being called a "baby killer" or being spat at, but rather they were welcomed back as heroes. Vietnam was not like this. From numerous first hand accounts returning veterans have recalled being spat on or getting things thrown at them. As students of history we must learn to not just overlook these accounts and take what the media produces as facts. If we do not focus on making sure the facts that we publish and read are indeed fact we are doing a disservice to them, ourselves, and future generations to come. Now yes, as students we must also realize that some of the accounts of the war through a past soldier may also be different from the truth. We must be able to sort out the strong emotional feelings that some of these men may have from their past experiences and take away only the facts that can be proven or are the same through different soldier's testimonies. We need to also include the perspective of our enemy in order to get the full image of the past. The letters to the register guard were similar to the audio clip and POW video in which there were many veterans who spoke very passionately and emotionally about the war and what they had gone through as a result. The register guard also included those who disagree with some of the claims on the topic of spitting as oppose to the other clips where there seemed to be a very similar vibe between the speakers in those groups. One of these people is Bob Thompson who writes "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. Perhaps at the same time he can similarly disprove converse reports that war protesters were actually the recipients of spitting and other hostile acts coming from conservative, pro-war supporters such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars." This sparked a lot of debate between commenters that really can represent just what the Vietnam War was which was a war of words between ourselves. This is why it is so important to get the proper facts straight and to be knowledgeable of potential bias between the different stories of different first hand accounts.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**My choices for patriots**



my choices for patriots

by [Kishahn Fellows](#) - Sunday, May 20, 2018, 5:31 PM

If i were the author of the patriots collection, I would personally use "Nothing was more essential than our sandals (Vu Hy Theiu p. 190) "Being wounded was not considered the worst thing that could happen" (Chi Nguyen p. 175) "Man, If we're up against this, it's gonna be a long ass year" (Dennis Deal p. 130) and "These were rag tag farmers" (Henry Prunier p. 38) as these stories seemed to stand out to me more than others. I also wanted to ensure that i gathered accounts from both sides of the conflict, to better assure a larger point of view and greater understanding of the conflict. For example is chose Vu Hy Theiu and Chi Nguyen's accounts not only because they are Vietnamese, thus already assuring a vastly different point of view from what we would get from an American, but also because their stories provide different paths taken from the same conflict. Chi Nguyen was an orthopedic surgeon turned military doctor purely because that is what his people and country needed him to be, while Vu hY Theiu was a fine arts student turned communist insurgent.

The stories we get from the American G.I.'s follow a more common path for what we have come to know about the battles of in Vietnam. Sadly somewhat cocky and arrogant until reality evaporates all ignorance. Dennis Deal's account is a prime example of this self defeating thought process. Ranger and airborne trained, if he wasn't Special Forces ranked, then he was damn close. So from his point of view this whole thing should have been over fairly quickly , but american G.I's were being trained for conventional warfare, and Special forces was being trained in special small unit tactics to counter larger conventional units, but this was no conventional war, as Mr. Deal soon discovered. " Henry saw a few N.V.A standing p shaking bushes, I saw them too, it was designed to draw attention. Henry held up his rifle and said follow me... seconds later 8 Americans were killed, 12 were critically wounded and 7 more were wounded but combat effective". I chose this account specifically because it is a prime example of how America's ignorance perceived superiority is often our biggest detriment in conflict.

This thought process is echoed throughout the soldiers speak audio clip, as you hear many different soldiers and marines recount their initial excitement for the war, only to be shook to the core once the jungle envelops them. "you couldn't see 10 maybe 15 feet in front of ya... I happened to see a tree move to my left front, i tapped the man next to me and switched my m16 to fully-automatic.. a few seconds later, the rounds went out"(3:30) "You could almost taste the cordite, it just hung in the air"(4:00) "There were claymore mines going off, RPG's, fully automatic weapons, machine guns, it felt like every weapon in the world was being fired" (4:27). You can almost visualize the excitement and innocence drain from these soldiers and marines faces as they get deeper into their accounts.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Decisions**by [Casandra Fountain](#) - Sunday, May 20, 2018, 10:25 PM

The letters show us like anything that people had different experiences with war. The Vietnam war last for nearly 20 years. The marines did not get deployed until 1965. Before that there was advisors who “were not” involved in combat. I think it would be safe to say depending on when the soldiers were coming home during the war could have dictated how the response of the public played out. The student must try to see what side the source comes from; liberal/conservative, young/old, veteran/civilian. Then we have to see where their facts are coming from. I believe the video soldiers over the letters 9/10 times. I able to put a face to the statements, you can see their emotions and their accounts are more vivid through picture portrayals. Tom Preuss letter sparked something in me when he said, “In my opinion, Rooke-Ley, like many of the letter writers and columnists appearing in this newspaper, is an abject coward.” Those who denied the spitting on veterans, I’m curious how many were actual soldiers. How many were not drafted and forced to participate in a war they did not want. This also trigger me to remember there was several men who we heard in our videos they said they would never be captured but the moment they were shot down and surrounded by Vietnamese “we were out gunned and changed their mind” (4:00, POW video). You can say as much stuff as you want before something happens to you or behind a pen and paper, but the moment your are faced with making a life changing decision you will never know how it really feels and how it will go.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Decisions**by [Alysia Knapp](#) - Sunday, May 20, 2018, 11:54 PM

Yes, the stories are definitely more personal compared to simply reading the facts in Herring’s book. I’m definitely not criticizing his work, just comparing the different types of way to tell history. Herring mostly shares the perspective of the people in power (especially the South and US), and while Appy does too, Appy gives more perspectives of all sides and all kinds of people, with a major focus on the troops. This helps us understand what war truly means to group containing the largest amount of the same type of individuals.

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