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Week 9 Forum

Death in the Civil War

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Death in the Civil War

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Sunday, February 28, 2016, 12:44 PM

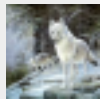
To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT – SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Death in the Civil War

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Re: War is Hell

by [Edith Ortega](#) – Tuesday, March 1, 2016, 7:26 PM

“My aim was to whip the rebels, to humble their pride, to follow them to their innermost recesses, and to make them fear and dread us. War is cruelty. There’s no use trying to reform it. The crueler it is, the sooner it will be over. War is Hell.” *William Tecumseh Sherman*.

In Episode 8 of the Ken Burns’ series, War is All Hell, at around 5:39, Sherman is quoted with the above statement. And in the McPherson book; Battle Cry of Freedom, page 809, he is quoted with telling the mayor of Atlanta: “War is cruelty and you cannot refine it.”

Both of these statements bring home to me, the fact that war is most definitely hell. Though I wasn’t born during the Civil War period, I was 12 when the Vietnam War was happening and well do I remember the tanks, army personnel carriers, missiles and other war machines driving down the street I lived on, so they could get to the highways and freeways that connected them with the railroads that would transport all (machines and humans) supplies to the distribution stations. And from there to the war being waged in a foreign land.

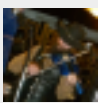
That was the okay memory of that time. The not okay memories, was when I visited a VA Clinic about a half hour bike ride from my home. I still see the soldiers with a missing body part. Some in wheelchairs, some using crutches, but all faces showing a degree of profound loss and sadness that no one should have to experience. And yet some faces that were completely vacant of all signs of life, like they were forever trapped inside their own personal battles that no one but they could see and hear and experience.

This series has added to the vast amount of knowledge that I as a child, was allowed to know and see in hopes that I may never take in vain, the freedom that was granted me by the sacrifice of another human being.

Sum of ratings: [3 \(1\)](#)

3

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Re: War is Hell
by [Jake Beckwith](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 11:51 AM

I find myself wondering if a large part of the sense of realism that we are getting from this series is due to putting faces and names to the soldiers. The way that Burns combines the photos and letters home really gives us a sense that each of these men had a personal history that was unique, yet similar enough to our own that we find ourselves relating on a much more emotional level. I imagine combining that with your own personal experience at the VA hospital really enhances the feeling of each soldier being an individual with a name and a face. I have not experienced anything like that myself, but I can only imagine the memories that must have stayed with you from that experience.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: War is Hell
by [Molly Townley](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 3:24 PM

I agree completely! The use of pictures combined with the letters really helps give the soldiers their own personal story in the war. I used to picture the war as almost two different teams, both as masses not once considering that each had multiple different men with similar but different reasons as to why they were there fighting. I like the Burn's series because of this fact. Having someone read the letters really helps too. Even the it is not read by the man who wrote it there are times that it feels like they are. if I were to read it myself it would be touching but having someone else read it with emotion you would imagine they were feeling when writing it is moving.

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Re: Lost by Decline
by [Edith Ortega](#) – Tuesday, March 1, 2016, 7:50 PM

I believe that we (as a Nation) have lost our cohesiveness and therefor our strength to stand together as a guard against not only foreign aggressors, but domestic aggressors as well. More and more, I see various individuals from all cultures, instead of unified and supportive groups of people who can and in times past, would stand together and present themselves with pride, to any and all, who would try and negate and or destroy them and what they stand for.

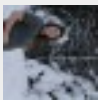
I was taught that each and every different culture had good and bad elements to it. But also that though each culture was a nation amongst, itself that in times of need of protection would put aside their differences and come together for the good of all.

We have lost one of the ‘key’ elements to who we are as a people (in my opinion). The belief that there is a higher ‘consciousness’ to which we all answer to, no matter what culture or religious group we claim to be a part of. And if we can’t hold ourselves responsible for our own actions then how can we hold an opponent responsible for their actions against us.

What have we “lost” you ask by the decline in religious devotion and our understanding and experience with death from the time of the Civil War until now.....just our humanity, understanding, self-respect, respect in others.....or in plainer terminology....we have lost our “**IDENTITY AS A UNITED NATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**” that’s all.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Lost by Decline
by [Carissa Kernutt](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 7:44 AM

As a nation we have grown, and as different religions have a huge impact on our country the respect of death has completely changed. Although we gained many positive things from the Civil War, I do say that I wish our country now could be the way it was in the 19th century. It is sad that we can no longer come together, and majority of the men and women in America would not go to war to defend our nation. We have definitely lost pride, religion, and respect.



Re: Lost by Decline

by [Edith Ortega](#) - Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 7:39 PM

I would question that we have grown at all considering the atrocities that we seem to imply we have the right to throw at one another on a daily basis. That we have moved (or removed) ourselves from one religion to another or none at all, and even go so far as to claim our desensitization of death is warranted and done in the name of a religion is an abomination of the principles for which we say we stand and fight for. The old saying of “Pride go-eth before the fall” I would say is a very apt description of where we stand today. Truly sad the state of the United States.



Re: Lost by Decline

by [Jake Beckwith](#) - Sunday, March 6, 2016, 9:30 PM

I apologize, but I am a little bit confused by your statement. I'm not sure that religion has anything at all to do with becoming desensitized to death, nor do I understand what principles you are talking about when it comes to standing and fighting. Perhaps as far as religion goes, there is a bit of a comfort to believing that there is something more after life, but I don't think that means that people who don't practice a religion are uncomfortable with the thought.

The second thing that confuses me is your statement of "Pride go-eth before the fall". I feel like you are referencing " Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall". To me, and I may be missing the point completely, that has nothing at all to do with the state of America today, as much as it had nothing to do with America in 1861. I just don't see the arrogance that would precede the fall that we are discussing.



Re: Lost by Decline

by [Ryan OToole](#) - Sunday, March 6, 2016, 12:00 AM

I definitely agree with you, Edith, when you say that having a higher consciousness is a very good motivator when entering a war. The idea that there is this being greater than yourself who not only is watching over you but is on your side in the coming battles is an excellent way to ensure high morale, and more often than not high or low morale can be the deciding factor in a battle. I think you made a very good point with this.

That being said, I think that it's a little bit extreme to claim that we've lost our humanity, understanding, and respect since our nation's religious decline. A lack of a belief in a higher power doesn't necessarily equal a lack of a moral compass. Similarly, I'm not sure that we were quite as united as you think we were. Sure, we very much have lost a certain sense of patriotism amongst many in our society, but the civil war itself was started because we couldn't stand united on important issues. The fact that both the Union and the Confederacy were of the same Christian faith didn't stop the South from seceding, nor did it stop either side from committing horrible atrocities (the event where the South butchered unarmed black soldiers comes to mind.) Religion alone isn't going to stop bad people from doing bad things unless it's backed by a kind heart unwilling to hurt others. This is true, I feel, for all faiths, as well as people who lack faith. Religion is fantastic for many people, I'm not arguing against religion, but I disagree that without it one is automatically going to feel like they are not responsible for their own actions.



Re: Lost by Decline

by [Molly Townley](#) - Sunday, March 6, 2016, 8:51 PM

I think you put that well. I agree that as a country we have lost our religion that holds us to being responsible

for our actions, respect for ourselves and others. again well put!

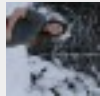
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Re: Lost by Decline
by [Jake Beckwith](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 9:35 PM

But isn't it possible that our actions are completely separate from religion? There has never been a point in my life where my actions were not my own. Whether I was religious at the time or not, I have always been the one that did things in my life. You can absolutely respect other people without religion. We are all individually responsible for our own actions.

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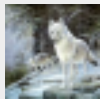
Government Roles in the Civil War
by [Carissa Kernutt](#) – Tuesday, March 1, 2016, 9:28 PM

The most significant part of this documentary that added to my prior knowledge of the Civil War was the death toll, and how many great things our nation gained from this war. For one, the death rate for the entire population was 2.5 percent of Americans, which had a big impact on everyone. It is said that everyone had a loved one die in some way. An estimate of 750,000 soldiers died during the Civil War, which is more deaths than all the other American wars combined! We already learned that, but I had no idea that the population was hit so hard. After the war we gained many things as a nation. Such as aid for veterans, new holidays, and national cemeteries. This war had the biggest impact on America.

Our modern culture has lost the way that we feel/think about death. In the 19th century death was a religious aspect, and as we all know a part of life. People during those times felt like it was something to discuss and think about often in order to live a prosperous life as well as "die well". In our culture now we have lost religion as a whole. Death has taken on a new meaning, as it has different meanings behind the word for each individual who now resides in America.

Bureaucracy of death for the federal government is the biggest change from "then" to "now". Soldiers and their families during the war were not taken care of by the government like they are now. They never had dog tags, as a result in not knowing the identity of these soldiers bodies that were lost or left behind during the war. The hospitals were also very ill prepared for these men, which resulted in many casualties. These soldiers laid down their lives to protect their states, and stand up for what they believed in!

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Re: Government Roles in the Civil War
by [Edith Ortega](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 7:27 PM

I too was taken back by the total of deaths that occurred during the Civil War. In all my history classes, the actual number of casualties was never mentioned. The death count of 750,000 being 2.5% of the (I find astounding) 31 million Americans back then, seems to most people a small amount. Yet it is estimated to equate to 7 million out 300 million now stated to live in America today. Either way you look at it....that may seem small to some, but I would say that they have a very narrow aspect of the world we live in today.

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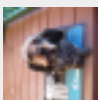
Re: Government Roles in the Civil War
by [Mychal Hilario](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 10:31 PM

I had much the same experience, in all my previous exposure to information about the Civil war there was always discussion about large death tolls but no real numbers. I imagine in some there must have been at least some mention but this was so much clearer and blunt. It hard to comprehend major

amounts of deaths like that today.

Sum of ratings: (1) 0

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Re: Government Roles in the Civil War

by [Molly Townley](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 8:57 PM

This was also a shocking part for me. 750,000, 2.5% is a lot of people to die. When you think about how our country deals with wars and takes care of dead or injured soldiers now, but then realizes that none of that was available during the civil war that's when it I realize how hard ti would have been to live during that time.

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The Right way to Die

by [Sebastian Warren](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 4:19 PM

“Death in the Civil War,” renewed my appreciation of the human condition. It is for us impossible to truly understand the horrors of death on a massive scale. In today’s world, we are so separated from the horrors of war. News programs shy away from showing the casualties of war during a broadcast. Imagine the shock Americans would feel if train loads of dead and wounded were unloaded everyday at the station. Even on the homefront, we do not view death often. If someone dies, their is an immediate response from the authorities to handle the body. Before viewing this film, I was not aware of the idea of there being a right way to die. The soldiers and their families had to come to the harsh realization that death is not always romantic. The idea that total strangers took the time to write home to the families of fallen loved ones, is very powerful. In their time religion taught helped people try to understand death. Although we are not confronted with death as often today, I fear that our understanding of it has not improved.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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Re: The Right way to Die

by [Edith Ortega](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 7:49 PM

Ah but we are confronted well ... almost every day. It may not be as out in the open as it was during the time before and certainly the time during the Civil War, but it is there. I don’t own a television, but just looking at the news stories online or watching a clip from a newscast, there is at least one death reported per newscast, whether it be a dead body found by the river, in a dumpster, etc. And unfortunately you are right in saying that our understanding of death and its effects have not improved one bit. Too bad we choose to ignore the ramifications of what it means to ‘die with dignity’ as they call it now.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Re: The Right way to Die

by [Mychal Hilario](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 10:42 PM

I agree it is impossible for us to truly relate to the horror and fear people of that time. I was struck by the uncertainty everyone must of lived with on a daily basis. To be at home and have your only communication be letters, that would be so difficult. Today we are lucky enough to be able to do things like skype with loved ones deployed. It is funny to think that for all that people talk about us as a country being desensitized to violence from movies, tv, books and music that in a lot of ways we are shielded from most of the actual death.

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Imagine the shock Americans would feel if train loads of dead...

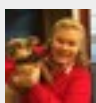
by [Thomas Brokaw](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 12:50 PM

Or plane loads of dead soldiers? Yes, I can imagine it.



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Beautiful/Horror

by [Taralee O'Connor](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 2:14 PM

Thomas,

What a profound picture you posted!! The beauty of the "UNITED" States of America flag juxtaposed with the horror of the it being draped over the coffins of our soldiers. In the documentary (27:50) Thomas Lynch says, "The kindness is we bare the bad news home." and that the Civil War showed us the obligation to do our "best to get them home". Your picture shows this and so much more. The most important may well be that we are UNITED as a country and in our grief to the loss of life for that county.

Excellent post Thomas!!

Thank you

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Re: Imagine the shock Americans would feel if train loads of dead...

by [Sebastian Warren](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 4:34 PM

Thomas,

I should clarify. I understand that the united states is still involved in conflict. And we as a nation are still experiencing casualties of war. This being said, the death toll of the civil war was far greater. More soldiers died in the battle Shiloh than have throughout our entire occupancy of Iraq. Also the way in which the corpses were cared for during the civil war was far worse than today. If the same amount soldiers were dying in battles today, people would be shocked.

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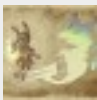
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Re: Imagine the shock Americans would feel if train loads of dead...

by [Thomas Brokaw](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 5:59 PM

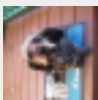
People were shocked when coffins were coming home from Vietnam. During the Iraq wars, learning from the Vietnam War, images of coffins containing dead US soldiers was banned due to the public shock it created. (<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2003/10/bush-o23.html>)



Re: Imagine the shock Americans would feel if train loads of dead...

by Ryan OToole – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 11:39 PM

Wow, that's a powerful and horrifying image. Not entirely sure why, but it brings to mind how in the documentary it mentioned that soldiers would bring photos of their families with them in case they became mortally wounded on the battlefield so that they could have some semblance of a good death. I wonder if the brave men and women who gave their lives in the picture would view their flag-draped coffins in a similar way, if they could see them.



Re: The Right way to Die

by Molly Townley – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 9:12 PM

I think part of the reasons that news stations shy away from the graphic scenes of death in war today is for the very reason that it is graphic, and our society has allowed ourselves to remove ourselves from the reality of war. Showing those images would not allow us to be separated from them any more. I myself get sick to my stomach from the sight of a little blood. I got sick from seeing fake blood in one of my classes, even watching shows like NCIS I look away when they are showing close ups of the victim. This series I have had to force myself to watch as the pictures go by. But with that being said, I do not agree that we should get to remove ourselves from the war our soldiers are in. I think that if we can't or won't be there ourselves we should at least know and support what the soldiers, who are willing and capable, go through.



images

by Taralee O'Connor – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 11:40 PM

The pictures and videos we view today are the equivalent the pages and pages of the divisions and soldiers names listed in the newspapers such as the New Year Herald. The necessity of the populist and average citizen to be aware of the price being paid for our freedom has not changed a hundred and fifty years later. And just as those thousands of names infuriated and sickened the North and South alike the pictures of coffin covered caskets make us sick and angry now. As well it should, Our country is precious but only made so by its citizens



Better for Families

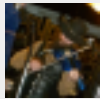
by Taralee O'Connor – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 6:02 PM

If posed this question last week, I would have quickly stated the lack of preparedness of both Northern and Southern governments to take care of the wounded and dead soldiers was the most significant aspect of this war besides emancipation. After viewing this documentary, I have had a drastic change in my views. As a military brat and the spouse of veteran myself, I was shocked to think what it would be like to send my uncles, parents and husband to war without dog tags or any way of notifying me of their injuries or death. Drew Gilpin Faust stated “four times as many people attended church each week than voted in the election of 1860”. This is not the case in America today. Our modern culture may have lost its ability to accept death as a natural and inevitable process filled with peace, tranquility and eternal life. Often it seems as though our Nation’s religion is medicine and the search for continued youth and vitality. We now fight death by any means possible. Military members do often create surrogate families where they are stationed but it is not the same. Our government now seems to acknowledge the importance of supporting its veterans and their dependents. The Veterans Administration has fallen short as of late but we as a Nation are discussing these problems and endeavoring to do better for our veterans. Lastly, I am proud of our Nations recognition of the many faiths that are represented in our Armed Forces.

Burns, Ric. "Ric Burns on Making Death & the Civil War." *PBS*. PBS, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. 02 Mar.2016.
<<http://www.pbs.org/video/2270991664/>>.

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Re: Better for Families

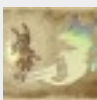
by [Jake Beckwith](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 1:12 PM

I think that before the war started, many people felt like it would be fairly quick and relatively bloodless. That could be why they were caught unprepared. They didn't have any way of identifying the bodies because they didn't think there would be very many. When the reality of the situation set in, the soldiers took it upon themselves to make sure that they wouldn't be forgotten.

I'm not sure that we have lost the sense of inevitability when it comes to death, but I agree that it has become less of a trip to heaven and more of just a thing that happens. I think it's fairly normal for a person to want to fight death as much today as we have in the past. All ages have had their struggles for survival, and we have survived for a reason.

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Re: Better for Families

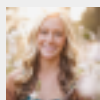
by [Ryan OToole](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 11:44 PM

I think you make a very good point, Jake, about how many were caught off guard on both sides of the conflict. The Union thought that their superior numbers and industrial might would put the South in its place, where the South thought that they'd just bloody the Union's nose a little and they'd leave them alone. Neither could have possibly predicted how gory the coming war would be, and, as you said, this was more than likely a major factor in the staggering death toll, as well as their lack of an organized system to account for casualties.

As for your analysis of how we view death, I definitely agree with you point of how we still understand the inevitability of death. I would argue that we probably think about it less, both intentionally and unintentionally, partially due to how much more common death was back then in everyday life, whether it was by unsafe conditions or sickness, death was likely on the mind far more often since it could come at any moment. That's still true to a point today as well, anyone could die for any reason, at any moment, but the degree of danger in modern life is far smaller than it was in the 1860's.

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Civil war death vs. Death in today's war

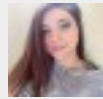
by [Katelyn Rasmussen](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 8:48 PM

In the first two documentaries, I found both including more detail than the Ken Burns series and the McPherson textbook. In the first documentary, I noticed a lot more about detail about every single aspect of the war. They included specific letters written, they talked about how soldiers died and how many often would scatter their pictures of family they kept with them, around themselves and they incorporated much better images relating to each scene. I did find a very similar relationship between Ken and Ric's videos but I would have to say that I enjoyed Ric's brief video a little better. He had things a little more upbeat and kept them going along. In Ken's videos I find myself spacing off and getting distracted when he puts in long pauses. As with the religious devotion with death, "the good death," it's hard to talk about. From the civil war on, many many people were unable to die in the comfort of their own homes and were unable to say goodbyes. War victims now, unlike in the civil war are occasionally lucky enough to be taken home to emergency hospitals and see their families but there are also probably more cases where those war victims aren't able to make it home and they die on the battle field fighting for our country. The way death is treated has changed so much. By identification and how quickly families are notified vs. with the civil war families might not have heard for months and may not have ever found out for sure what happened to their loved ones. We have immensely improved how we handle those who die for

our country and not only they are taken care of but also their families.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Civil war death vs. Death in today's war

by [Abigail Tatum](#) – Thursday, March 3, 2016, 9:10 PM

I agree, Ric's video kept me engaged and interested the entire time. I was emotionally invested in what he was saying, trying to picture the death toll in America along with the sad idea that our health care was not up to par considering the amount of help that we actually needed. We have immensely improved how we handle those who die for our country but at what price? Letting soldiers die without an ID or even the loved ones getting contacted because they don't know who the deceased soldier actually was. The hit we took was bad, but luckily we learned from this messy war and cleaned up our act. It is sad to think about how many people could have been saved if emergency hospitals and health care were around, let alone more female nurses sooner on in the war. At least Florence Nightingale took stand and saw the need for female help in this war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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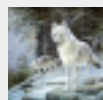
I gave them a break

by [Thomas Brokaw](#) – Friday, March 4, 2016, 11:37 PM

In 1860 there was no demand for the number of ambulances eventually needed for the war. They had no reason to have dog tags. Why would they have needed so many hospital beds in 1860? When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, the US was not ready. I believe both the north and the south were completely overwhelmed with casualties in numbers they could not have imagined. The state of medicine was also very limited by today's standards and they probably didn't have a number of physicians and nurses waiting for a war to give them something to do. Also, life expectancy in 1860 averaged 42 years old for both men and women. (<http://mappinghistory.uoregon.edu/english/US/US39-01.html>) Life was hard back then. I do not see 1864 US as needing to have gotten their act together. They fixed what they could when they could in a time when life was short and there was much to do.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Civil war death vs. Death in today's war

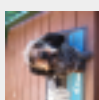
by [Edith Ortega](#) – Friday, March 4, 2016, 6:02 PM

For me, the 'long pauses' gave me a chance to absorb and think for a moment the information that had just been delivered, before the next installment began. By doing this, Ken Burns made it possible for us to ... 'digest' this new information. I was even grateful for those pauses, though I could have just paused the clip that I was watching.

As for us having improved how we handle and treat those who die for our country...I will agree to seeing some improvement compared to the Civil War treatment of the deceased and injured. But as always will be the case in life (all aspects of it) there is still room for improvement and at least we are starting to make progress in regards to our service men and women. Pray one day that war will no longer be a part of our lives.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Civil war death vs. Death in today's war

by [Molly Townley](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 6:04 PM

I agree, I think he used long pauses in appropriate places, as a way to give the viewer an opportunity to absorb what he just said. Like you said you can just pause the clip and think about it yourself, but I think Burns wanted you/ the viewer to have that time to think and absorb the information, because not everyone is going to take that time to do so. By doing this though he also risks the possibility of losing the viewer's interest, it I guess depends on the viewer.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Civil war death vs. Death in today's war

by [Mychal Hilario](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 10:58 PM

I would have to agree that Ric manged to have a bit more of an upbeat tone. That was a huge surprise to me considering his focus was on such a sad subject. I like both but I too tend to get a bit disengaged with Burns series because of things like the long pauses.

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

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Re: Civil war death vs. Death in today's war

by [Sebastian Warren](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 4:19 PM

Even though Ric Burns documentary was focused on death, I agree that his film was more upbeat than his brother’s. I wouldn't go as far to say I enjoyed Ric’s film more than Ken’s, but their were different aspects I did appreciate. Ric did a great job of describing the very personal experiences soldiers had on their deathbeds. The letter written on blood soaked paper really illustrated the horrors of war.

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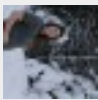
Aspect of Death

by [Abigail Tatum](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 9:17 PM

This documentary added to my knowledge of death and how it was perceived before the war and how that perception altered throughout the Civil War. The war changed many ways of living in America, from medical care in the fields to the conditions at home. Death went from being a religious and valued experience with loved ones to a frantic panic over the well being or demise of a loved one. Death grew closer to America and in a sense lost some of its value. I think that the federal government has made great strides in improvements for casualties of war and veterans. In the current day veterans have health care and many other forms of help, including memorial day to honor them and the deceased who fought for our country in any way. During the Civil War they didn't have ambulances, a way to identify deceased soldiers or even hospitals to help the soldiers that could be saved. The changes are good, but there is still room for improvement.

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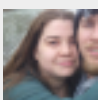
Re: Aspect of Death

by [Carissa Kernutt](#) – Thursday, March 3, 2016, 8:39 PM

It is so awesome to watch these documentaries and get to know how America grew from after the Civil War. All of the positive things that came about, due to the war such as hospitals like you said, as well as our veterans getting benefits, and even making memorials after all of the men who lost their lives. Such a big accomplishment! Especially the creation of dog tags and no man is left behind motto. America definitely changed for the better after the war.

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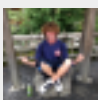
Re: Aspect of Death

by [Mychal Hilario](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 11:13 PM

I found how the war effected medical care was fascinating as well. I could not even imaging how scary and brutal all of that must have been, doing surgeries in a tent in the woods with no ambulances or hospitals. It was also interesting to think of how something as simple as a dog tag can be so important for so many. Thankfully we have made improvements and as you said there is room to improve more. I hope we are able to do so and proved better long term care for our vets, but this really drives home how much we have grown.

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

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Re: Aspect of Death

by [Sebastian Warren](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 4:41 PM

I'm glad you added at the end of your statement that there is still room for improvement. We have so many veterans who are struggling everyday with post war handicaps, both mental and physical. The government has definitely taken great strides since the civil war, but as you said, there is still room for improvement.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Today...Triage

by [Taralee O'Connor](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 8:10 PM

As stated by multiple sources in our class the aid for fallen soldiers during the war was virtually nonexistent at the beginning of the Civil War. Over the next four years the governments and civilians of the North and South tried to establish successful solutions. Today we have trained squadrons/units of soldiers dedicated to medical care in the field. This triage saves our country men's lives in combat situations. The Webster's Dictionary defines triage as "the assignment of degrees of urgency to wounds or illnesses to decide the order of treatment of a large number of patients or casualties." This is such a colossal shift in how we once handled and tried to treated our injured soldiers.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Letters of the fallen

by [Ryan OToole](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 11:14 PM

By and far I think the most significant thing that's enhanced my personal understanding of death in the civil war was the letters that they read in *Death in the Civil War*. *The Civil War* had plenty of these sorts of letters during it's run, but I have never seen any of them completely and utterly steal the show like the letter opening the short documentary written by James Robert Montgomery. Every letter, in fact, showed very strong emotion and translated very well how the war affected those who fought it. They were all extremely moving, and I think that it filled an important gap that wasn't quite filled by *The Civil War* or the book.

The concept of "the good death" was also quite interesting to me, as well as how they shifted from having the good death as their goal to simply not dying a bad death. Nowadays the good death probably isn't thought much about, since we as a society don't generally like to think about death anymore. We see it very much as an end, a reminder that life and all of its joys are finite, where society back then, being very much a Christian dominant society, saw it as simply another part of life, and something that should almost be embraced, I suppose. I think we still have this to an extent in our society, but we've largely grown a mentality that death will always come later rather than sooner, no matter how old, sick, or injured we become.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Letters of the fallen

by [Abigail Tatum](#) – Thursday, March 3, 2016, 8:58 PM

Without the emotional letters would you still have understood the death toll in the war? Or did this documentary and articles kinda allow you to understand how drastic it was? I understood the religion back then verses now was a huge difference, I just never thought about how that combined with death has changed throughout the years. A good death back then simply went out the window once the war started, kind of like now a days.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Letters of the fallen

by [Edith Ortega](#) – Friday, March 4, 2016, 6:16 PM

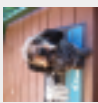
Thank you for pointing out the effect of the letters written to loved ones from the soldiers. The overall picture of death and mangled bodies, for me left me feeling like a bomb had exploded in my world. Creating a kaleidoscope of memories from a time when my own home life was not so pleasant to partake in.

The love, respect and overall civility that most strove to portray and be shown in return, is the type of life I would have been thankful to bear witness to. And as for the ‘good death’ I found that the pride in one’s thinking of what it meant was refreshing in this modern age of “Death? What is that?” mentality.

Again, thank you for pointing it out so that the grimness of the videos we have watched, no longer cast a shadow on my heart.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Letters of the fallen
by [Molly Townley](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 6:06 PM

I agree. I think the letters gave every viewer the opportunity to not just look at the war as a whole, but as individuals taking part in it and how it affected them.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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A Good Death, explained
by [Thomas Brokaw](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 11:23 PM

The most significant part of this documentary that added to my existing knowledge was the insight into the psyche of the soldier who faithfully marched into a hail of bullets because it was his duty to do so. The Burns video scene in the hospital when the soldier said, “fix me,” just before he died. There seemed to be a surrendering to the idea that death was likely inevitable and there was lacking the element of complaint or rebellion. I was left to wonder what was in the heads of the soldiers back then that led them to gracefully pass into death. The documentary helped to explain the religious connection to the afterlife and a “good death.” I was also struck with the idea of selling to an entire population the notion that to die well for a just cause was acceptable, honorable and one’s duty.

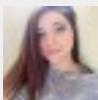
"To become a heroic martyr, officers had to perform conscientiously, suffer physical or emotional torments without undue complaint, exhibit moral conviction and self-control at the point of death, and embody all of those other character traits that represented with worthiness of their family and class backgrounds." (*A Worthy Death*) For the emotion and control needed to march thousands to their death there had to be a socially permeated mental brainwashing of sorts.

The decline in religious devotion in modern society has resulted in a population less convinced that sacrificing their lives foolishly is a matter best left to God and country. Today, American soldiers slaughtered in such high numbers would not be tolerated by the public. Media and 24-hour news improved the value of the life of today’s soldier. Body armor and state-of-the-art medical care have been provided at great federal expense under the scrutiny and demands of the American public.

The federal government now doing now takes better care of their soldiers. There are now trained combat medics, ambulances, hospital ships, body armor, each soldier carries a first aid kit and receives training. Dog tags are worn for identification and there are commitments to not leave wounded or dead soldiers on the battle field, leaving soldiers with the comfort in knowing they should, one way or another, return to their family. On the civilian side, the federal government maintains military cemeteries, provides funeral services for veterans. The Veteran’s Administration has been formed and now provides medical and dental services for veterans. And now we have Veteran’s Day as a day of remembrance for those American soldiers who died in battle.

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Re: A Good Death, explained
by [Abigail Tatum](#) – Thursday, March 3, 2016, 9:04 PM

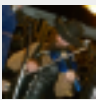
Do you think the soldiers that died trying to get medical help or even on the died felt as if the were dying a 'bad" death? Since the society back then was very religious and thought of death as a happy ending did the soldiers on their death bed, alone, without the loved ones, still think they were having a good death? Interestong to think about. Did they feel as if they weren't going to pass as peacefully? Did they care at that point?



Re: A Good Death, explained

by [Thomas Brokaw](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 4:10 PM

I believe it's a little more complicated than their believing it either a good or a bad death. I believe Union soldiers who followed the tenets of "the Second Great Awakening" (<http://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp>) believed they were doing what God wanted them to do and went along with whatever God planned for them to include dying. Deeply religious Union soldiers believed they had a duty to act against the sinful practice of slavery. (McPherson, page 8) I do not believe soldiers thought death was necessarily a good thing. I believe they thought God chooses their time of death and one doesn't argue with God. This belief would have been consistent with the Second Great Awakening's massive "fire and brimstone" influence on Baptist, Methodist, Puritans, Episcopalians, Quakers and others in northern community churches.



Facing Death With Dignity

by [Jake Beckwith](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 11:32 PM

There were a few different moments from this particular documentary that really opened my eyes to the grim reality of the war. While Ken Burns’ series did a good job of giving us numbers to look at in terms of how many people died during each battle, his brother did a better job of connecting us to these people through the use of letters, photographs, and mood setting music. While the methods of conveying each message were fairly similar as far as filmmaking style, the messages themselves were distinctly different. The elder Burns has a habit of keeping things fairly light whereas the younger Burns’ film was much more grim.

I think what stuck with me the most was the issue of how the soldiers would prepare themselves for death before each battle. I found it rather interesting to think about the fact that many of them were miles from home and facing death, yet they were able to do so knowingly and with foresight. Even with such a terrifying thing facing them, many of them found ways to have their deaths witnessed, documented, and relayed to the families. It really just kind of drove home the idea that although death was so commonplace and expected, many soldiers still found a way to face it with dignity. To me, that really helped to solidify the reality of the war and gives me more respect for the soldiers who believed in the cause so much as to willingly die for it.



The influence of "The Second Great Awakening"

by [Thomas Brokaw](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 1:43 PM

The Second Great Awakening (McPherson, page 8) was a religious campaign that began around 1790 until the 1830s with tent revivals and 'fire and brimstone' preachers preaching uncompromising positions that prompted many people to support emancipation on religious grounds. Northern churches preached about the sin of slavery and people were willing to fight and die for their deeply religious beliefs. (<http://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp>) I believe John Brown was one of those intoxicated with the powerful dogma of the Second Great Awakening. Just as John Brown was convinced by his religious beliefs that it was his duty to kill sinners for God, soldiers raised by families influenced by the sweeping religious movement also felt an obligation to fight against those who committed the great sin of slavery. (<https://ows.edb.utexas.edu/site/uncovering-anti-racism-us-history/john-brown-and-abolitionists>)

I believe soldiers influenced by the Second Great Awakening would have found peace in the belief that their sacrifice would be seen as good in the eyes of God. As they lie dying they would have believed that they were going to a better place and their final moments would have reflected that.



Re: Facing Death With Dignity

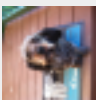
by [Katelyn Rasmussen](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 11:06 PM

I found things very similar between the Ken Burns' series and his brothers. I too preferred his brothers series

as I noticed myself more intrigued and retaining more of the information because it was more interesting to watch. I found their preparations for death quite interesting also. It was very heart breaking to think that these soldiers never knew if they were going to make it through a battle much less some through the night because of injuries. But through all the pain and zero resources out there on the battle field they still found ways to leave their notes and their stamps behind for their loved ones. From the resources and creativity then to the resources now, I can only imagine how much farther we and the soldiers can come in times of desperation and need.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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what does our federal government owe to the bodies of it's citizens

by [Molly Townley](#) – Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 11:33 PM

Hearing that if we had the same percentage die in a war today, we would have 7 million dead is a scary reality. If our federal government never made the advance that they have for caring for our dead or injured, we would be living in different world. It really makes you think about not just the injustice to the soldiers that gave up their lives for their country, but the emotional pain it caused their families. Never knowing if your husband is dead, never knowing where they buried your brother, never knowing when or if you are going to see your father again. It would not only make you fully understand what the men, women and children went through during the Civil War but after as well. Awaiting your family members return to never actually being reunited. Searching for their remains, but never finding them. Then imagine the soldiers who did survive, their lives will never be the same. They can never forget the massive number of deaths that they witnessed, and had to take part in as well. reading and watching the videos really helped me put this war into perspective, but imaging myself living in a similar war really made me think about the advances that the war helped us as a country make. Our soldiers put their lives on the line, the least we can do is to support them also. It is just sad to think about how many people had to die to help us come to this conclusion, a harsh reality.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: what does our federal government owe to the bodies of it's citizens

by [Abigail Tatum](#) – Thursday, March 3, 2016, 9:00 PM

I'm glad that our country saw how awful this war was and ow unprepared we were for it. Unfortunately it was the great losses that allowed us to see we needed better health care and quick health care at that, but I agree that this war helped our country better itself. It was a harsh reality, I liked how you put that.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Federal government's growing pains

by [Thomas Brokaw](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 2:15 PM

The Federal government before the Civil War was still very young and growing fast with the population doubling every 23 years (McPherson, page 10) and a "transportation revolution" (McPherson, page 11) that saw improved roads, expansion of railroads, and miles of canals fueling economic prosperity (for the few at the top. Some things never change). The country was growing fast and its identity still under development. The argument surrounding the responsibilities of the Federal government are as old as our politics. Once the war began the government was strained and did the best they could. After the war the Federal government began fixing problems related to soldiers and veterans.

The soldiers who died in the south had a different point of view. They died in defense of their home, their land and their way of life against trespassers.

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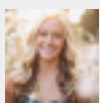
Re: Federal government's growing pains

by [Sara Baker](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 6:29 PM

I agree with your assessment of the federal government youth, however I feel that yo left the point at a bit of a loose end. Was it a good thing the federal government grew? Was it a bad thing? How did the

beliefs of the South fit into their deaths, and the growing federal government? Personally I believe the federal government is getting far too powerful, and states should have more rights, but that's just my personal opinion. Thank you for sharing your viewpoint and opinion with me.

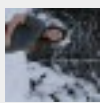
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Re: Federal government's growing pains
by Katelyn Rasmussen – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 10:46 PM

With the government back then being so new and unexperienced there was so much to work out and discover. Also with the civil war happening so quickly and lasting so long, it was hard to improve the governments needs when the focus was the civil war. I liked how you talked about the "Transportation Revolution" growing fast and many improvements happening at once. It was such an important time and with historical moments that made the government and United States what it is today, even through all the hardships they experienced.

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Re: what does our federal government owe to the bodies of it's citizens
by Carissa Kernutt – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 8:58 AM

During the Civil War religion had a huge impact on the people. They saw death differently then we think about today. It was normal for them, and everyone had a loved one lost in the war. I like how you said we should support the soldiers as they have put their lives on the line. I agree with your statement, and I think some Americans lack in this. Thankfully though that we are in the 21st century and have made huge leaps in the medical department to help these men and their families out.

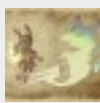
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What does "support the soldiers" mean?
by Thomas Brokaw – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 2:50 PM

When you say, "we should support the soldiers as they have put their lives on the line," leaves me with questions: What do you mean by "support the soldiers," and does "putting their lives on the line" always demand obligatory support?

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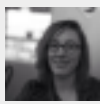


Re: what does our federal government owe to the bodies of it's citizens
by Ryan OToole – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 11:48 PM

Well put. That being said, I'm rather curious if other countries, such as England and France, already had systems to keep track of wounded and dead soldiers or if we made the first organized one that inspired the others.

The latter possibility seems unlikely, however, considering that England and France were great empires and conquerors that sent their soldiers to far away lands. It would be extremely strange if they lacked such a system to account for their troops abroad.

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Re: what does our federal government owe to the bodies of it's citizens
by Sara Baker – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 6:22 PM

The idea of loosing over seven million people both sickened and terrified me as well. What as a country would we do with such loss, and particularly without our "modern" coping mechanisms? I speak both of distraction and both medical and mental help. It makes us (or at least me) realize just how sheltered we are. We may "know" more, but we face less. It makes one wonder what we would do if faced with such a reality (and more so being forced to live in it). That world would be a strange and alien place indeed.

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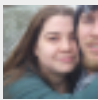
Re: what does our federal government owe to the bodies of it's citizens

by [Katelyn Rasmussen](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 10:57 PM

I didn't fully process that quote until reading and hearing it again. "If we had the same percentage die in our wars today, we would have 7 million dead." If we hadn't change our systems and improved our technology the world today would be devastating. We have over come SO much that today we are able to give our troops the support and help they need. Our soldiers deserve more thanks than they are given for what they put themselves through. I really enjoyed your entire post. You hit every major and key point necessary. From how it used to be in wars to now to whats to come. War has shaped this country and made it a safer, more united place. Without it, I couldn't even imagine either what things would be like today. It makes me uncomfortable to think about.

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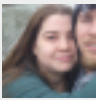
Re: what does our federal government owe to the bodies of it's citizens

by [Mychal Hilario](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 11:13 PM

You make a very good point that I had never considered, the fact that the brutality and incredible losses of the war did indeed help our nation to grow and become better. It is indeed a harsh reality. I agree the numbers are mind boggling and i could not imagine who hard that was on everyone from both sides and the disconnection I think is something hard for people of our modern world to understand. I have had family and friends deployed and we were able to talk on the phone message and it was fairly rare but we were able to skype. Comparing that to a few letters that could take weeks or months to get to you would be so difficult.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Realities of Death

by [Mychal Hilario](#) – Thursday, March 3, 2016, 3:33 PM

While i would have to say the short film did little to add to my knowledge about the war. The death tolls and much of its content were already covered in previous material. It did really make me connect emotionally to the general fear and confusion most people must have gone through. I am so used to modern technology and constant connection the idea of a family member dying alone in a hospital tent or battlefield and only finding out because some stranger took it upon themselves to inform you is heart wrenching. I am not a religious person and personally do not believe the decline, if there was one, of religious devotion is a bad thing. I think as a society we have become both more sensitive and less sensitive about death but that has little to do with religion. I think the government now is obviously doing better in care of injured soldiers vs then. I do think there are Major issues in our Veteran health care but in comparison to back in the civil war I think it would be hard to say we are doing worse.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Realities of Death

by [Carissa Kernutt](#) – Friday, March 4, 2016, 10:02 AM

Our country has come a long ways when it comes to helping out our Veterans, but still very far from perfect. I think that our country has become very insensitive when it comes to death, and mass shootings are in the norm when we watch the news. I like how you talked about modern technology, as most of us rely on our cell phones for main communication of family members. Even for our troops overseas, that is the main source of communication. We have come so far since the Civil War, but then again think about how people will feel about our government and decisions in fifty plus years.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Realities of Death

by [Katelyn Rasmussen](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 10:34 PM

I completely with both about our country coming a long way but also still having so much room for improvement. I really liked what you said about seeing how "people will feel about our government in fifty plus years." It is so true that even that far into the future people are going to think there is always room for improvement and a better way to do things. With modern technology advancing at the rate that it is, the future of this whole topic could be endless with amazing new inventions for prevent our biggest struggles today.

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decline of religion

by [Thomas Brokaw](#) – Friday, March 4, 2016, 10:20 PM

Religion provided comfort in tough times whether their individual belief was true or not. It also provided some guiding rules for one to live by.

As for improvements for soldiers and veterans, I see that as largely political. And by political I mean media driven. When the media (then or now) would get a hold of a story, the public reaction to the story drove the political response. I believe the war escalated beyond anyone's expectation and both sides were overwhelmed and constantly playing catch up with all that was needed in terms of medical support (ambulances, field hospitals, etc.,)

Soldiers caught up in an unprepared war got caught in a bad spot when their choice was to possibly be killed or to run and save yourself only to be shot or branded as a coward. From the excitement of enlisting to the bloody battlefield I'm sure at some point that the fun wore off and the reality sank in that they were stuck to see this through until their obligation had ended.

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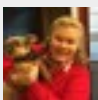
Re: decline of religion

by [Abigail Tatum](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 6:21 PM

Playing catch up is a good way to sum that up. The escalation of the war was not expected and neither was the amount of supplies or health care that was needed. I wouldn't say the "fun" wore off, more that they wanted to fight for what they thought was right, and that every young male around was enlisting. I like how you went about the part where you run and get shot or get killed in battle. It was brutal and a lose lose situation.

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Religion expansion

by [Taralee O'Connor](#) – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 11:24 PM

I have had similar thoughts as well. I'm not so sure there is a decline in religion as much as a shift in religious views today. In the Civil War era, Christianity was the known religion in America. As America has become a greater and larger melting pot of humanity, we have seen an influx of new religions and different view points. Today our fallen soldiers are not just assumed to be Christians. Additionally, the government and the VA honors these heroes with the symbols of their religion (if they have one). There are over 60 different Emblems available. This shows religion still holds a prominent place in our nation.

"National Cemetary Administration." *U.S Depatment of Veterans Affairs*. U.S Government, n.d. Web. 6 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.cem.va.gov/hmm/emblems.asp>>.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Death, Impact and Seven Million Lives

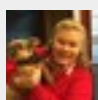
by [Sara Baker](#) – Saturday, March 5, 2016, 11:27 PM

While it can be said that the Civil war was one fought for freedom, the first step towards the end of slavery,

during the clip presented on the material list emphasized the loss of life never before, or after seen during warfare. The documentary stated it so frankly in the thirty-minute clip, while such information often felt lost within the book and even the documentary. Yes, we were given the reality of death, of blood, and sacrifice; however, in the “clip” I found the frank assessment of loss of life, the massive death toll chilling, and a call to reality, more so than the book or even Ken Burn conveyed. Yes, the book mentions the loss of life several times, but because of the list like flow of the text I found it easily vanished beneath battle dates and mentions of countless names and battle strategies. Not that those things aren’t important, but it made things seem less real, more far removed than the clip did. Burns also went for the dramatic, but he tended to do so on a much more personal basis. By that I mean he took battles and riots, and war, pulling and picking a person, or several persons to focus on from those scenarios. Not that the clip didn’t do that to some extent, but again, I felt the shocking reality of loss, the frank assessment of the impact the war had on our society more present and prevalent than inside the book or Burns long documentary. In addition, the article was informative, though I felt it was more interested (in certain areas) in judging and condemning war in general, rather than a frank discussion of Ric Burn’s work. Again, this only showed up occasionally, but I saw it threaded throughout the article. This was just what I observed, however there may be many, or few, who disagree. Overall, I found the clip from “*Death and the Civil War*” more reality inducing, and memorable, not because the book lacked the information given, but that it almost appeared to be drowned under the weight of battle titles, dates and strategies.

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VA volunteers
by Taralee O'Connor – Sunday, March 6, 2016, 12:22 PM

As stated in the documentary, James Montgomery’s friend Fairfax helped clarify the particulars of Montgomery’s death for his family. This aid to fellow comrades was shown to have taken this new form in the Civil War. I had not previously connected these occurrences. This act of kindness and show of reverence and respect for human life and death is still currently in VA facilities throughout our nation. The veteran volunteers still aid their comrades as well as the following generation of veterans by giving their time. They ease the suffering of soldiers by reading to the them, writing letters, text and emails to family members as well as assisting with the needs of family members while the soldier is convalescing. A virtual stranger becomes family by assisting the injured or dying soldier. It is a noble legacy for us all.

Burns, Ric. "Ric Burns on Making Death & the Civil War." *PBS*. PBS, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. 02 Mar. 2016.
<<http://www.pbs.org/video/2270991664/>>

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