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Vietnam Veterans: Different Experiences

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Abstract:

There have always been misconceptions about the treatment of Vietnam veterans upon their return home as the media portrayed them as spat-upon. However, this notion does not hold true for all of the two million returning veterans. Thus, in my research, I wanted to discover more about the different ways in which Vietnam veterans were affected by the war. During my research process, I mainly focused on primary documents of veterans recounting their experiences in the war and after the war as they return home. Although there definitely were many more experiences, my paper reflects the diverse opinions of different veterans. It also explains the role of the government and its decisions that shaped the coming home experiences of veterans. These experiences led me to conclude that all of the veterans were affected differently by the war which was largely due to how their lives changed and how they were treated after.

Keywords: Vietnam War, veterans, government, interviews, post-war experiences

1. Introduction

When Soviet troops and American troops shook hands in Berlin in 1945 to mark the defeat of Nazi Germany and, soon, the end of World War II, it ushered the world into a new era of history: The Cold War. During this 50-year conflict, capitalist America and communist Soviet Union struggled to take control of the world, each garnering the support of many allies. Although tension did not directly escalate into a worldwide bloody conflict like World War II, wars did happen, and they had a profound impact on America. One such war was the Vietnam War (1955-1975), in which America sent millions of soldiers in an attempt to stop communism from spreading. Back home, the public did not understand the motive of such a big investment of resources and humans which gave rise to the anti-war protests. On the other hand, in Vietnam, the young soldiers fought for years in the jungles, often adopting new tactics such as bombing and free-fire, but eventually, they returned home without being victorious while suffering from post-war trauma. Although there were many stories about spat-upon veterans, all of the veterans had a different experience coming home, some negative and some positive. Due to the government's failure to support these veterans initially and many people's cynical view of the war, some veterans developed PTSD, were not welcomed back to society, and grew skeptical of the government. However, others benefitted from the war individually and eventually gained recognition in the 1980s.

2. Causes & Early Stages of the Vietnam War

Not long after World War II, France, backed by financial support from the U.S, tried to regain control of its colonies in Indochina, current-day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. After eight years of fighting, under the Geneva Accords of 1954, Vietnam was granted its independence but temporarily split between North Vietnam and South Vietnam until free elections were to be held two years later. However, neither the U.S nor South Vietnam recognized the accords, thus prolonging the conflict in Vietnam.¹ At that time, a prevailing idea, known as the domino theory, gained traction in the U.S, warning that countries would fall one by one to communism, especially in Southeast Asia. Thus, the U.S felt that intervening in Vietnam would help its policy of containment, preventing further countries from falling to communism. Early in 1961, President John F. Kennedy sent in military advisors when North Vietnam attacked the South.² At that time, most people viewed the war as a noble cause and thought that it would be a quick victory. With only military advisors being sent from the U.S, most people did not think that America would ever be deeply involved in the war. As military advisors proved to be insufficient, President Lyndon B. Johnson, Kennedy's successor after his assassination, successfully convinced Congress to pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolutions in 1964.³ This act permitted the president to take necessary measures in the war which prompted Johnson to start sending in American ground troops into Vietnam in 1965. As more and more soldiers were sent, Johnson still reassured the public that the war was going well. However, tapes that were later

¹Overview of the Vietnam War,'Digital History, accessed April 4, 2020, <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/era.cfm?eraid=18&smtid=1>.

²Overview of the Vietnam,'Digital History.

³U.S Involvement in the Vietnam War: The Gulf of Tonkin and Escalation, 1964,' Office of the Historian, accessed May 21, 2020, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/gulf-of-tonkin>.

released reveal that he was very anxious about the situation but did not want to be the first president to lose a war.⁴ Thus, the U.S sunk into a quagmire that would take more and more young men away into Vietnam.

3. Escalation and Shift in Public Attitude

As attempts to make peace were rejected by the Northern Vietnamese government, America took more action. From March 1965 to the end of 1967, Vietnam witnessed the first American ground troops landing to troop levels of up to 463,000. With more direct involvement in the war, public opinion on it began to shift. At first, people still thought that the superpower, America, would eventually win and it was just a matter of time. This belief was reinforced by the government who only shared select information about the war. However, news of the Tet Offensive which was propagated throughout America in the spring of 1968 shook the public. In a period of ceasefire during Vietnam's Lunar New Year in January 1968, the North Vietnamese Communists took advantage of the time and launched a series of devastating attacks on Southern cities, bringing chaos and proving their strength. Preliminary estimates have shown that in just three days, 232 Americans were killed while 929 were wounded, clearly the deadliest days for Americans in Vietnam.⁵ Although the attack was suppressed in the end, it delivered a message to Americans that they were nowhere close to winning the war and it would eventually lead to more deaths. Many pictures in the newspapers of American soldiers being crushed showed a stark contrast between the actual situation and what President Johnson said about the war being under control. Feeling doubtful about the government and its Vietnam policies, many people began to protest against the war. These protests had a great impact on the public as they began to view the war with a more negative lens which would later play into effect in their treatment of the veterans.

As anti-war sentiment continued to rise, in 1969, *One Week's Toll* was published in the LIFE magazine, which showed the faces of the 242 men who lost their lives that week in Vietnam.⁶ Being read by one out of every four Americans, the issue had a profound impact on the nation. The people were no longer just viewing deaths as numbers, but seeing the faces of many young men, white, black, and brown. These pictures made them feel a personal connection as they could imagine that all of them had bright futures but sacrificed for the country. Thus, while many people still supported the war, anti-war sentiment also began to rise as people wondered why so many innocent young men were dying for an unjust cause. One reader of the magazine, a former U.S Marine Corps Captain, commented, 'Certainly these tragic young men were far superior to the foreign policy they were called upon to defend.'⁷

4. Soldiers in the War

While the nation debated America's involvement in the war, the American soldiers fought on in Vietnam, experiencing many things that would have a significant psychological impact on them for the rest of their lives. For them, 1968 also marked a turning point from the 'good' war to the 'bad' war.

From the American G.I.'s point of view, the enemy was the North Vietnamese army whose members could be easily recognized and thus killed legally. The G.I.'s could relate easily to Vietnamese villagers, talk to them, and eat with them. The later war involved the confrontation between American troops and Vietnamese guerrillas as well as civilians who sometimes shielded the troops.⁸

The guerilla group, the VietCong, often set booby traps, went on ambushes, and disguised themselves as civilians, forcing the American soldiers to also resort to inhumane tactics. All of these conditions coupled with the fact that they were fighting in the jungle caused the American soldiers' mentality to decline significantly. After being tricked by the VietCong, they started to distrust the Vietnamese people as a whole and went on to bomb entire villages of women and kids out of fear and also to follow the commands of the government.⁹

Although many of these massacres were initially covered up by the army and government, they eventually reached the media and public. One of the most famous atrocities was the My Lai Massacre in 1968, in which 100 soldiers completely wiped out a town of 504 civilians, mostly women, children, and elderly men.¹⁰ For more than a year, this incident did not reach the public. However, after much effort, Seymour Hersh, a freelance reporter who was in support of the anti-war Presidential candidate, Eugene McCarthy, successfully got this story onto the news in 1969. Anti-war

⁴Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, 'How the Vietnam War Broke the American Presidency,' *The Atlantic*, last modified October 2017, accessed March 29, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/10/how-americans-lost-faith-in-the-presidency/537897/>.

⁵Trenton Evening Times (Trenton, New Jersey), February 1, 1968, <https://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2282/apps/news/document-view?p=EANX-K12&docref=image/v2%3A1236872C1F6A0AE3%40EANX-126E02F899A195CE%402439888-126C533A5D000241%403-126E3CF4046C5827>.

⁶Ben Cosgrove, 'Faces of the American Dead in Vietnam: One Week's Toll, 1969,' *LIFE*, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.life.com/history/faces-of-the-american-dead-in-vietnam-one-weeks-toll-june-1969/>.

⁷Cosgrove, 'Faces of the American,' *LIFE*.

⁸Josh Hochgesang, Tracye Lawyer, and Toby Stevenson, 'The Psychological Effects of the Vietnam War,' *Stanford EDGE*, accessed April 1, 2020, https://web.stanford.edu/class/e297c/war_peace/media/hpsych.html.

⁹Hochgesang, Lawyer, and Stevenson, 'The Psychological,' *Stanford EDGE*.

¹⁰Ian Shapira, 'It was insanity': At My Lai, U.S. soldiers slaughtered hundreds of Vietnamese women and kids,' *The Washington Post*, last modified March 16, 2018, accessed May 21, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/03/16/it-was-insanity-at-my-lai-u-s-soldiers-slaughtered-hundreds-of-vietnamese-women-and-kids/>.

sentiment then exploded in the country like never before and led to the largest anti-war protest two days later when a quarter-million people gathered by the Washington Monument to call for an end to the Vietnam War.¹¹ As one general of a division in Vietnam said, 'In the present climate, people are liable to get convinced that all American soldiers go around killing innocent civilians.'¹² Although these incidents were true, it was only a very small proportion of the soldiers in Vietnam who murdered but many generalized every Vietnam veteran to be a 'baby killer.' Thus, upon these veterans' return home, they would not be welcomed in many instances but bashed for their crimes since many did not view them as heroes but villains.

Apart from being disliked by the public, many soldiers who had partaken in these mass killings would also carry guilt for the rest of their lives as they were forced to carry out these orders. Larry G. Holmes, a soldier in the My Lai Massacre, said, 'They told us everybody was supposed to be gone. Nobody was supposed to be there. If anybody is there, shoot them.'¹³ Mad Dog, another veteran from the war reflected, 'From childhood, most of us were taught to love and respect children and women, to believe killing is bad and good people always win. You get over there and everything is upside down. You realize war really kills.'¹⁴ For him, the war made him lose his innocence and abandon his view that the world is a perfect place, but it also shaped him to be stronger and more resilient.

Apart from the psychological distortion from killing civilians, the veterans also suffered within their platoons. During the war, the government used a tour duty system where soldiers would serve for a year in Vietnam before going home. This system caused a high fluctuation of soldiers within the platoons which lowered the overall morale.¹⁵ Because their platoon members were constantly changing, the soldiers did not have a sense of unity and often had conflicts among themselves. Thirty percent of all the American casualties came from friendly fire, either by accident or on purpose.¹⁶ This statistic highlights the reality that along with constant fear of the VietCong, some soldiers also lived in fear that their battalion members might kill them if they had problems with them. The constant state of fear that they were put in caused drug usage to be especially high as they tried to ward off reality.¹⁷ These problems did not disappear after the war and continued to harm the veterans.

5. Negative Impact

Due to the tour duty system, waves of Vietnam veterans returned home in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the last ground troops left Vietnam in 1973. As these veterans came home, they had different experiences based on their own adjustment abilities and treatment by others. Immediately following the war, many soldiers developed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, which directly stemmed from the trauma of war. Affecting as many as 15% of the veterans, this illness occurs occasionally and could last for years and even decades. Some of its symptoms are loss of memory, nightmares, and headaches.¹⁸ Tony, a veteran, who now lives on an Indian Reservation, has suffered severely from PTSD. For two decades, he has been drunk, unemployed, and unable to find true love while constantly being depressed.¹⁹ Oftentimes, he cannot sleep for many hours and has nightmares about helicopters and Asians. When these things come to mind, he becomes violent towards his friends and family and has even considered suicide.²⁰ He is not alone in this struggle as over a quarter-million Vietnam veterans have suffered from PTSD some time upon their return, and suicide rates are as high as 5% in this group.²¹

Apart from suffering from PTSD, many soldiers also started to doubt the government after the war. In the early and mid-1960s, many veterans were proud to serve America and save Vietnam from being communist. However, during the war, this attitude changed as they saw that the Vietnamese citizens did not even know the difference between communism and capitalism but just wanted to live a peaceful life without fighting everyday.²² In 1971, after his return

¹¹Shapira, "It was insanity," The Washington Post.

¹²Aberdeen Daily News (Aberdeen, South Dakota), November 23, 1969. <https://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2282/apps/news/document-view?p=EANX-K12&docref=image/v2%3A114175180414EFE8%40EANX-K12-1211AFB531E7F0A0%402440549-1211150C15EB82E0%4013-1218A8F7806C3B08%40>.

¹³Shapira, "It was insanity,"The Washington Post.

¹⁴'Coming Home Thousands of Vietnam Veterans Find 'Last Big Reunion' at Statue Dedication,'Dallas Morning News (Dallas, Texas), November 12, 1984, <https://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2282/apps/news/document-view?>

¹⁵Eric T. Dean, 'The Myth of the Troubled and Scorned Vietnam Veteran,'Journal of American Studies, no. 1 (1992): 61, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27555590>.

¹⁶Hochgesang, Lawyer, and Stevenson, 'The Psychological,'Stanford EDGE.

¹⁷Hochgesang, Lawyer, and Stevenson, 'The Psychological,'Stanford EDGE.

¹⁸Eric Vermetten et al., 'PTSD and Vietnam Veterans [with Responses],'Science, no. 5809 (2007): 185, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20035182>.

¹⁹Theresa D. O'Neil, 'Coming Home' among Northern Plains Vietnam Veterans: Psychological Transformations in Pragmatic Perspective,'Ethos 27, no. 4 (1999): 444, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/640708>.

²⁰O'Neil, "Coming Home," 446.

²¹Vermetten et al., 'PTSD and Vietnam,' 185.

²²The Vietnam War Episode 10: The Weight of Memory, directed by Ken Burns, narrated by Peter Coyote, 2017.

home from Vietnam, John Kerry, a US Senator from 1985 to 2013, who had strong feelings about the government, spoke for the experiences of millions of veterans. Looking back at his experience in the war, he said, 'We are angry because we feel we have been used in the worst fashion by the administration of this country.'²³ Furthermore, Kerry argued that freedom under the flag, which the government always assures to the public, was nothing but a hoax as he experienced firsthand racism in the armies, with blacks having the highest percentage of casualties. At the end of his interview, he came to a conclusion that the veterans have to die so that Nixon would not be 'the first president to lose a war.'²⁴

The veterans' mistrust of the government only increased when their G.I benefits proved to be insufficient compared to what veterans of previous wars received. For World War II veterans, the G.I Bill of 1944 gave them unemployment insurance for a year after discharge and most importantly, provided them educational opportunities at any college they wanted with a full ride. Thus, in the 1960s, many soldiers went to Vietnam with the same expectations of a smooth transition back.²⁵ However, the G.I Cold War Bill of 1966 was very different from what they anticipated. Although it still gave some benefits in education, veterans had to work a part-time job to fully pay off their tuition, which prevented many of them from attending prestigious private institutions as the World War II veterans did. Furthermore, under this bill, all Cold War veterans received the same benefits whether they never left the U.S or risked their lives in the jungles to fight the VietCong. Many Vietnam veterans were infuriated by this fact as they felt that the government abandoned its returning warriors. One veteran said to the senator, 'At any time in a nation's history it is not right to play politics with those who have served their country.'²⁶ The government's manipulateness in tweaking many things from the original World War II G.I Bill gave the veterans a feeling that it did not really care about the wellbeing of the veterans but just needed a bill to justify its actions of sending soldiers to war. The numbers that the government used to justify the effectiveness of its bill are misleading because they do not show what percent of veterans dropped out due to financial pressures and what percent were actually able to attend an out-of-state private institution. While the World War II G.I Bill helped the lower-class gain access to college education, the bill for Vietnam veterans only benefited those who already had some money.²⁷ Apart from the lower class, minority groups, particularly African Americans, also suffered after the war. The treatment of African American veterans during and after the war was poor compared to that of white veterans. In the 1960s, just a decade after Truman integrated the armies and a time which coincided with the Civil Rights Movement, many blacks fought in Vietnam alongside white soldiers. However, racial tension in the armies was prevalent. On the day of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's assassination, some white soldiers raised a Confederate flag, sparking controversy and conflict.²⁸ Even after the war, many statistics reveal that readjustment was significantly tougher for black veterans. Only 25 percent of black veterans used their educational benefits, compared to 46 percent of white veterans. The unemployment rate of black veterans was also 22%, three times higher than that of white veterans.²⁹ These numbers demonstrate that although many African Americans participated in the war, their efforts were not able to alter their status in society and they still remained victimized in both education and the job sector.

Not only were some veterans unhappy about government policies but many reported society's lack of interest to help with readjustment. Part of the indifference in society stemmed from the belief that the war was unnecessary and that the soldiers lost the war. Thus, people did not welcome these veterans' home as they did to veterans of previous wars. Although fictional, Tim O'Brien's novel, *The Things They Carried*, which is based on true war stories, vividly depicts this experience of the difficulty in coming home. Influenced by his friend Norman Bowker, who committed suicide after the war, O'Brien dedicates a chapter, *Speaking of Courage*, to recount his challenges of readjustment. In the story, Bowker circles around the lake all afternoon as he thinks about his past which will never be the same again: his best friend died and his girlfriend married someone else. Simultaneously, memories of Vietnam haunt his mind as he desperately wants to tell others the story of when he almost won a silver star for valor - 'A good war story, he thought but it was not a time for war stories, nor for talk of valor, and nobody in town wanted to know about the terrible stink. They wanted good intentions and good deeds.'³⁰ Many veterans all over the country faced the same problem where no one wanted to listen to their stories or help them readjust.

Richard C. Ensminger, a marine in the Vietnam War in 1966-1967 and in 1969, faced a similar problem as Norman Bowker. Upon his return home, society's indifference and contempt towards him made him feel like an outsider in his own

²³William Crandel and John Kerry, 'Statements by Vietnam Veterans against War,' in *The Vietnam Era, American Journey* (Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1999), 1, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EJ2162000317/UHIC?u=mlln_w_nthfield&sid=UHIC&xid=ef5d1a65.

²⁴Crandel and Kerry, 'Statements by Vietnam,' 1.

²⁵Mark Boulton, *Failing Our Veterans: The G.I. Bill and the Vietnam Generation* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 35, accessed April 8, 2020, <http://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2186/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=837422&site=ehost-live>.

²⁶Boulton, *Failing Our Veterans*, 102.

²⁷Boulton, *Failing Our Veterans*, 108.

²⁸Boulton, *Failing Our Veterans*, 111.

²⁹John A. Wood, *Vietnam Narratives and Collective Memory of the Vietnam War* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2016), accessed April 8, 2020, 5, <http://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2186/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1193299&site=ehost-live>.

³⁰Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*, 2009 ed. (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, n.d.), 143.

country. He was not prepared for all of the demonstrations and inferior treatment since he was in the military. A year later, Ensminger volunteered to go back to Vietnam as he 'didn't feel comfortable going outside a military base. I felt I wasn't wanted in American society, and I was getting tired of the petty, spit-shined mentality of the stateside marines.'³¹ For many veterans like him, society's ill treatment of them made their readjustment extremely hard. Some who could not take the challenge chose to go back to Vietnam or commit suicide.

6. Positive Impact

Although many veterans suffered in different ways from the war, some also benefited from it. In a Stanford study of the psychological effects of the Vietnam War, two interviewed veterans reported ways in which the war influenced them positively. Eddy L. Stevenson, a veteran who served in the Army in 1969, mentioned that the war taught him to be more tolerant of other races and cultures. In Vietnam, interacting with some civilians made him realize that all people are the same, with similar goals and emotions, and it was only certain groups in these two countries that wanted to perpetrate a war.³² Another interviewed veteran reported that instead of getting nightmares, he took it as an opportunity to learn. After his experience in Vietnam, he started to value more things he had previously taken for granted such as life, liberty, and security and also learned to never trust the country again.

Not only did I survive but I was going to be alright despite all of them. Never again would I be like them or participate in their country or their system, or the abstract laws that made them all my equals. Not only would I never be trapped like that again but I would see to it that none of my children were either. This idiot country is nothing but an idiot system and never again would I let other humans control my destiny.

For him, the war made him tougher mentally as he became more independent in his judgment.

Apart from individual gains from the war, veterans have also benefited from governmental support in readjustment through special sessions held by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA). The veterans reported these sessions to be extremely helpful in easing their stress. Jesse, a former Marine, who served for three years in Vietnam, gradually overcame PTSD through the help of the Veterans Administration. The program was a transformative experience for him since, immediately after the war, he tried to assimilate to what others looked like and never mentioned about the war. However, inside, he had been getting constant nightmares from the memories but could not share them with anyone. The best part about the VA, he said, was that there were a group of guys who he could talk with about his war experiences.³³ Although the veterans went to the war in different times and served in different areas, they all had the similarity of going to the war and coming back which made them connect in a special way that no one else in society could.

Veterans that received little or no opposition at all upon their return also found readjustment to be easier and tended to view the war through a more positive lens. Ed Shore served as an officer in the infantry of the Marine Corps from 1968 to 1969. In Vietnam, he faced direct combat and was eventually injured in an intense battle. Upon his return, he faced no hostility from civilians and took on a job in the National Guard for fifteen years. When asked about how the war affected him, Shore reflected, 'The greatest experience, the most challenging, the most rewarding experience of my life was defined during combat. Combat was the most important part of my life. I am proud, confident, but humbled by the war.'³⁴ For him, the war did not disrupt his life in that he easily found a job after. However, for other veterans, even though they might have also gained more experiences and skills through the war, their lives altered completely due to the war. Thus, they did not view the war as a positive experience as it caused them to face discrimination in the workplace and in society. At that time, public opinion on the war was still divided, and that opinion played a monumental role in how a veteran was treated. It was not until later that the nation, as a whole, started to change its attitude.

Starting in the early 1980s, Vietnam veterans began to gain public recognition. One symbol of this shift was the building of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. in 1982. V-shaped and made in black granite, the memorial has the names of all 58,000 missing and dead soldiers of the Vietnam War engraved. After it was built, thousands of families and veterans went there to pay their respects to the veterans who sacrificed for their country.³⁵ In this period of recognition, anti-war protests also dampened down as they were seen to be an insult to the veterans.³⁶ Although this recognition was belated and many veterans had already committed suicide, these efforts should still be taken into consideration when looking at the larger context of post-war treatment towards veterans.

³¹Shelley R. Stafford, 'The Good War v The Bad War: An Analysis of Combat Veterans' Experiences in World War II and Vietnam by Removing Social Stigma' (PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2001), 28, accessed May 21, 2020, https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1075&context=utk_interstp2.

³²Hochgesang, Lawyer, and Stevenson, 'The Psychological,' Stanford EDGE.

³³U.S Department of Veteran Affairs, 'Overcoming PTSD: 3 Vietnam War Veterans' Stories,' Make The Connection, last modified August 16, 2017, accessed March 30, 2020, <https://maketheconnection.net/whats-new/ptsd-vietnam>.

³⁴Stafford, 'The Good,' 31-32.

³⁵The Vietnam.

³⁶August Carbonella, 'Where in the World Is the Spat-Upon Veteran? The Vietnam War and the Politics of Memory,' *Anthropology Now* 1, no. 2 (2009): 51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41203541>.

7. Conclusion

Over the course of 20th century American history, the Vietnam War and its effect on its veterans was a major issue which should not be overlooked. The war spanned five presidencies and drafted more than 2 million men, making a significant impact on the nation. The war also coincided with many culture movements going on throughout the nation such as counterculture and hippies. These movements often came in conflict with the war and its motivations, thus creating a skeptical attitude for some towards the returning veterans. However, there is no single explanation of the post-war treatment of veterans as many faced discriminations while others were welcomed. For some, they suffered from PTSD, insufficient G.I benefits, and a lack of welcome from society. On the other hand, some veterans became stronger mentally through going to the war while others recovered from the illnesses and were recognized later on.

8. References

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- ii. This newspaper gives an overview of how the My Lai Massacre changed people's attitudes towards the soldiers. It also includes direct quotes from veterans to support this point.
- iii. Boulton, Mark. *Failing Our Veterans: The G.I. Bill and the Vietnam Generation*. New York: NYU Press, 2014. Accessed April 8, 2020. <http://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2186/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=837422&site=ehost-live>.
- iv. This book compares G.I benefits of Vietnam veterans to the benefits for veterans of previous wars. I used this source to gain more knowledge on the readjustment benefits which veterans received and their responses to them.
- v. Burns, Ken, and Lynn Novick. 'How the Vietnam War Broke the American Presidency.' *The Atlantic*. Last modified October 2017. Accessed March 29, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/10/how-americans-lost-faith-in-the-presidency/537897/>.
- vi. This article reports the lies that presidents have told to the public during the Vietnam War from released tapes. I used this when talking about how public opinion began to sway as they found out the truths of the war.
- vii. Carbonella, August. 'Where in the World Is the Spat-Upon Veteran? The Vietnam War and the Politics of Memory.' *Anthropology Now* 1, no. 2 (2009): 49-58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41203541>.
- viii. This journal article looks into the evolution of public opinion of Vietnam veterans: from disdain upon their return to gradual appreciation in the 1980s. I used this when talking about how anti-war protests dampened down in the 1980s along with a better overall treatment of veterans.
- ix. Cosgrove, Ben. 'Faces of the American Dead in Vietnam: One Week's Toll, 1969.' *LIFE*. Accessed April 27, 2020. <https://www.life.com/history/faces-of-the-american-dead-in-vietnam-one-weeks-toll-june-1969/>.
- x. This source tells the story of how one magazine issue made such a profound impact on the nation. I used this information when talking about the shift in attitude towards the war.
- xi. Crandel, William, and John Kerry. 'Statements by Vietnam Veterans against War.' In *The Vietnam Era*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1999. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EJ2162000317/UHIC?u=mlln_w_nthfield&sid=UHC&xid=ef5d1a65.
- xii. This primary source tells us the experiences of two veterans in the Vietnam War. One of them expressed strong disapproval of the government for sending American troops into the war. I used this information when talking about the distrust that veterans started to develop towards the government.
- xiii. *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Texas). 'Coming Home Thousands of Vietnam Veterans Find 'Last Big Reunion' at Statue Dedication.' November 12, 1984, [1A]. <https://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2282/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A0F99DDB671832188%40EANX-K12-136B7205D502F797%402446017-136B6D8322DD2A16-1405481BDBBE61D8>.
- xiv. This newspaper recounts a reunion of veterans after the war. It specifically talks about the story of Mad Dog, a veteran whose worldview changed after the war. I used the information in this source when talking about the psychological distortion that the war has done to its veterans.
- xv. Dean, Eric T. 'The Myth of the Troubled and Scorned Vietnam Veteran.' *Journal of American Studies*, no. 1 (1992): 59-74. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27555590>.
- xvi. This scholarly journal gives an alternative viewpoint of the treatment of Vietnam veterans. It states that stories of mistreatment were exaggerated and in reality, Vietnam veterans adjusted well. This source helped me look at opinions from the other side of the debate and also made me realize that the war also had some positive effects on its veterans.
- xvii. Hochgesang, Josh, Tracye Lawyer, and Toby Stevenson. 'The Psychological Effects of the Vietnam War.' *Stanford EDGE*. Accessed April 1, 2020. https://web.stanford.edu/class/e297c/war_peace/media/hpsych.html.

- xviii. This study looks into the psychological effects of the war on its veterans. It was particularly useful for me as it includes many stories of veterans' experience in the war and their readjustment after. It also talks extensively about PTSD and its effects on many different veterans.
- xix. Marchesini, Erika H. 'Vietnam Veterans Are Different.' *The American Journal of Nursing* 73, no. 1 (1973): 74-76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3422416>.
- xx. This journal article recounts the experience of a mental hospital and rehabilitation center with treating Vietnam veterans. I used this source when talking about the efforts that society has put in to help with readjustment.
- xxi. O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. 2009 ed. Boston, MA: Mariner Books, n.d.
- xxii. One of the stories in this work of fiction is based on a true story of a veteran who faced difficulties adjusting back to society and ended up committing suicide. I used this book to give an example of the aloofness of society towards veterans.
- xxiii. O'Neil, Theresa D. "Coming Home' among Northern Plains Vietnam Veterans: Psychological Transformations in Pragmatic Perspective.' *Ethos* 27, no. 4 (1999): 441-65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/640708>.
- xxiv. This scholarly journal tells the experience of the author who conducted a 5-year study on an Indian Reservation to look at the impact of war on some veterans. I used this source when describing the phenomenon of PTSD which many veterans had.
- xxv. 'Overview of the Vietnam War.' *Digital History*. Accessed April 4, 2020. <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/era.cfm?eraid=18&smtid=1>.
- xxvi. This encyclopedia gives an overview of the causes and details of the Vietnam War. I used this source when providing background information of how America got involved in the war.
- xxvii. Shapira, Ian. "It was insanity': At My Lai, U.S. soldiers slaughtered hundreds of Vietnamese women and kids.' *The Washington Post*. Last modified March 16, 2018. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/03/16/it-was-insanity-at-my-lai-u-s-soldiers-slaughtered-hundreds-of-vietnamese-women-and-kids/>.
- xxviii. This webpage gives information about the My Lai Massacre and how it eventually reached the public. It also includes the examples of many veterans who participated in the massacre and their hearings after. The most important information I extracted from this article is the story about the freelance reporter that published this atrocity and the effects it had on the nation.
- xxix. Stafford, Shelley R. 'The Good War v The Bad War: An Analysis of Combat Veterans' Experiences in World War II and Vietnam by Removing Social Stigma.' PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2001. Accessed May 21, 2020. https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1075&context=utk_interstp2.
- xxx. This paper gives accounts of many veterans' experiences in the Vietnam War, some positive and some negative. These stories were really helpful for me as I used some to support the different points in my paper.
- xxxi. *Trenton Evening Times* (Trenton, New Jersey), February 1, 1968. <https://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2282/apps/news/document-view?p=EANX-K12&docref=image/v2%3A1236872C1F6A0AE3%40EANX-126E02F899A195CE%402439888-126C533A5D000241%403-126E3CF4046C5827>.
- xxxii. This newspaper shows how the Tet Offensive was portrayed by the media to its citizens, marking a turning point in public attitude. I used this information to justify my point that the public gradually began to see the war as unwinnable.
- xxxiii. U.S Department of Veteran Affairs. 'Overcoming PTSD: 3 Vietnam War Veterans' Stories.' *Make The Connection*. Last modified August 16, 2017. Accessed March 30, 2020. <https://maketheconnection.net/whats-new/ptsd-vietnam>.
- xxxiv. This source includes interviews of three veterans who successfully overcame PTSD through the help of the VA. I referenced one of these interviews to show that although the veterans faced many problems, people were there to help and eventually they could overcome some.
- xxxv. 'U.S Involvement in the Vietnam War: The Gulf of Tonkin and Escalation, 1964.' Office of the Historian. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/gulf-of-tonkin>.
- xxxvi. This encyclopedia provides information on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolutions and how Lyndon B. Johnson responded in the first few years of the war. I used this information when giving context on the escalation of the war and increased American involvement.
- xxxvii. Vermetten, Eric, James D. Bremner, Leigh Skelton, David Spiegel, Dean G. Kilpatrick, Todd C. Buckley, B. Christopher Frueh, Richard J. McNally, Bruce P. Dohrenwend, J. Blake Turner, Nicholas A. Turse, Ben G. Adams, Karestan C. Koenen, and Randall Marshall. 'PTSD and Vietnam Veterans [with Responses].' *Science*, no. 5809 (2007): 184-87. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20035182>.
- xxxviii. This source gives many statistics of PTSD and tells how it affected many veterans. I used this information in my paper to inform readers about what PTSD is and how it affected veterans.
- xxxix. *The Vietnam War Episode 10: The Weight of Memory*. Directed by Ken Burns. Narrated by Peter Coyote. 2017.
- xl. This documentary tells the last segment of the Vietnam War: the fall of Saigon and the building of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in D.C. Watching this film really helped me visualize some of the things that happened in

Vietnam and the building of the memorial while listening to what different historians have to say about this war.

- xli. Wood, John A. *Vietnam Narratives and Collective Memory of the Vietnam War*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2016. Accessed April 8, 2020.
<http://libproxy.nmhschool.org:2186/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1193299&site=ehost-live>.
- xlii. This book tells many stories of Vietnam veterans and their return home, along with many statistics. I referenced the statistics when showing the huge gap between different ethnic groups in unemployment rates.