

## Vital Signs vs. Homelessness in the American West: Community Formation of Homeless Veterans in Greater Los Angeles in Recent U.S. History

Duration: Class, Grade Level, Number of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: English 10 and World History</li> <li>• 80 students: students are enrolled in an English 10 course and in a World History course.</li> <li>• Students adhere to the A/B block schedule; every class is 2 hours in duration.</li> <li>• 8-10 days</li> </ul>
Location:	Center(s) of student learning and discovery: Classroom, Library computer-media center, Los Angeles Mission, Los Angeles National Cemetery, Regent Hall
Key Vocabulary:	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Public Policy, class action suit, re-colonization of urban areas, containment (both Cold War and greater Los Angeles definitions), de facto urban renewal program
Instructional Materials:	<p><b>English:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appy, Christian G. "Paying the Price." <i>Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides</i>. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. 20-21. Print.</li> <li>• Appy, Christian G. Preface. <i>Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides</i>. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. XVIII- XIX. Print.</li> <li>• Appy, Christian G. Preface. <i>Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides</i>. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. XXIII. Print.</li> <li>• "Born on the Fourth of July (1/9) Movie CLIP - Ron Is Shot (1989) HD." <i>YouTube</i>. YouTube, 27 May 2011. Web. 03 Aug. 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0ladY1kwco">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0ladY1kwco</a>&gt;.</li> <li>• Davis, Mike. "Fortress L.A." <i>City of Quartz</i>. N.p.: n.p., n.d. 159-163. Guadalupe Salazar. Web. 22 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/people/guadalupe.salazar/courses/c2/s2/Fortress%20LA.pdf">http://www.sjsu.edu/people/guadalupe.salazar/courses/c2/s2/Fortress%20LA.pdf</a>&gt;.</li> <li>• Davis, Mike. "Urban Control: The Ecology of Fear." (1994):n.pag. <i>Minerva Partners</i>. Web. 22 July 2013</li> <li>• Ford, Richard J. "From Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans." <i>American Identities: An Introductory Textbook</i>. Ed. Lois Palken Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, and Rachel Rubin. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. 150-57. Print.</li> <li>• Hise, Greg. <i>Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-century Metropolis</i>. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. Print.</li> <li>• Kovic, Ron. "Born on the Fourth of July." <i>American Identities: An Introductory Textbook</i>. Ed. Lois Palken Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, and Rachel Rubin. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. 143-49. Print.</li> <li>• Lopez, Steve. "ACLU's Lawsuit against the VA Is a Step in Vet's Recovery." <i>Los Angeles Times</i> [Los Angeles] 10 June 2011. Web. 22 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jun/10/local/la-me-0609-lopez-vetlawsuit-20110609">http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jun/10/local/la-me-0609-lopez-vetlawsuit-20110609</a>&gt;.</li> <li>• O'Brien, Timothy. "Enemies." <i>The Things They Carried</i>. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. 62-64. Print.</li> <li>• "Platoon - Trailer - (1986) - HQ." <i>YouTube</i>. YouTube, 25 Dec. 2008. Web. 03</li> </ul>

	<p>Aug. 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPi8EQzJ2Bg">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPi8EQzJ2Bg</a>&gt;.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Public Policy.” Project Citizen (2013): n.pag. Web 27 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://newciviced.org/pc-program/instructional-component/public-policy">http://newciviced.org/pc-program/instructional-component/public-policy</a>&gt;.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wiener, Jon. “Homeless Vets vs the VA: An LA Story Continues.” <i>The Nation</i> (2013): n.pag. 25 Mar 2013. Web 22 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.thenation.com/blog/173498/homeless-vets-vs-va-la-story-continues#axzz2aUiv2KLp">http://www.thenation.com/blog/173498/homeless-vets-vs-va-la-story-continues#axzz2aUiv2KLp</a>&gt;.</li> <li>• Wiener, Jon. “LA's Homeless Vets.” <i>The Nation</i> (2013): n.pag. 8, April 2013. Web 25 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.thenation.com/article/173459/las-homeless-vets#axzz2aUiv2KLp">http://www.thenation.com/article/173459/las-homeless-vets#axzz2aUiv2KLp</a>&gt;.</li> </ul> <p><b>History:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appy, Christian G. “From Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam.” <i>American Identities: An Introductory Textbook</i>. Ed. Lois Palken Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, and Rachel Rubin. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. 138-42. Print.</li> <li>• Four Worlds: Template</li> <li>• Four Worlds: Social Science Factors</li> <li>• “Modern History Sourcebook: US State Department: North Vietnamese Aggression, 1965.” <i>Modern History Sourcebook: US State Department: North Vietnamese Aggression, 1965</i>. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1965US-vietnamaggression1.html">http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1965US-vietnamaggression1.html</a>&gt;.</li> <li>• O’Brien, Timothy. “How to Tell a True War Story.” <i>The Things They Carried</i>. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. 62-64. Print.</li> <li>• Photograph Analysis Handout</li> <li>• Photograph Chart Handout</li> <li>• “Vietnam War Hearing: John Kerry Testimony - Vietnam Veterans Against the War (1971).” <i>YouTube</i>. YouTube, 12 May 2013. Web. 29 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucY7JOfg6G4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucY7JOfg6G4</a>&gt;.</li> <li>• Vietnam War Hearings Handout questions</li> <li>• “Teaching With Documents: The War in Vietnam - A Story in Photographs.” <i>National Archives and Records Administration</i>. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/vietnam-photos">http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/vietnam-photos</a>&gt;.</li> <li>• “Veterans History Project (Library of Congress).” <i>Veterans History Project (Library of Congress)</i>. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.loc.gov/vets">http://www.loc.gov/vets</a>&gt;.</li> <li>• Written Document Analysis Worksheet</li> </ul> <p><b>Rubrics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Essay Rubric: Public Policy Paper.</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Project Rubric</li> </ul>
Enduring Understanding (Big Idea):	<p><b>Rationale:</b> According to historian Patricia Mooney-Melvin (1999), students’ lack of historical knowledge about the past results in an inability to see themselves, their families, and their communities as part of the larger process of American history. If students fail to see their own histories as important, they do not believe that they can have an impact on their environments. Students will examine the historical relationship to the distribution of wealth and power within Los Angeles by investigating the forgotten Vietnam Veteran’s stories to current U.S. international foreign policies of</p>

	Afghanistan and Iraq, connecting to current issues of economic and social resources in regards to homelessness.
Essential Questions	<p><b>Big picture:</b> why this way, in this time, in this place? (Community formation of the homeless vets in greater Los Angeles)</p> <p><b>Essential Questions:</b> How should soldiers be treated? Whose history matters? What is the responsibility of the community in regards to societal well-being? How do you bring to attention vital issues of inequality of wealth and power, such as homelessness that are not currently at the forefront of public policy?</p>
Learning Objectives:	<p><b>Purpose:</b> In order to promote classroom experiences as meaningful towards their human communities, students research and investigate a thesis with an emphasis on reflective consideration of the sociological and economic legacy of homeless Vietnam veterans in greater Los Angeles. Students will produce their own findings concerning community relationships and responsibilities through individual and group inquiry, culminating with utilizing powerful photography as a community exhibit to speak for the homeless who have no voice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop empathy and understanding for individuals that serve in our armed forces</li> <li>• Research and evaluate the legacy left to Vietnam vets after being vilified by their nation, suffering with PTSD.</li> <li>• Investigate current regional issues of the west, specifically in Los Angeles, constructing public policy to address issues of the social and economic treatment of Vietnam Veterans and homelessness.</li> </ul>
Standards:	<p><b>English:</b>  <b>Common Core English 9-10 Reading Standards:</b> (2) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text. (3) Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences- (a) engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events. (6) Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.  <b>Common Core English 9-10 Speaking and Listening Standard:</b> (4) Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.  <b>History:</b>  <b>Common Core History 9-10 Reading Standards:</b> (2) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text. (6) Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts. <b>Common Core History 9-10 Writing/ Research Standard:</b> (7) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question; narrow or broader the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.  <b>California Content Standards: World History 10.9</b> Students analyze the international</p>

	<p>developments in the post-World War II world. (3) Understand the importance of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, which established the pattern for America's postwar policy of supplying economic and military aid to prevent the spread of Communism and the resulting economic and political competition in areas such as Southeast Asia (i.e., The Korean War, Vietnam War), Cuba, and Africa.</p>
Background:	<p>What does the teacher need to know about this topic before introducing the lesson?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of the history of the Vietnam War.</li> <li>• Knowledge of locations of Veteran Centers and how to implement <i>Veteran History Project</i>.</li> <li>• Background knowledge of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and the current situation and causes of the homelessness in Los Angeles.</li> <li>• District policy on film screening in class and student release forms for filming and photographic media.</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of Prezi as a presentation tool: <a href="http://prezi.com/">http://prezi.com/</a> (You can use power point instead of Prezi if you prefer).</li> </ul> <p>What do students need to know prior to this lesson being introduced (or, what does this lesson built upon a previous enduring understanding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This lesson dovetails an overview unit on the Cold War in World History that includes the Vietnam War, so students should have a general understanding of the Cold War and Vietnam War, but do not understand the modern day implications and consequences of this war.</li> </ul>
Suggested Procedure:	<p><b>English:</b> <b>Day One</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin with KWL Chart (Know- Want to Know- Learned) on the Vietnam War. Students write down what they know about the Vietnam War, and what they want to know leaving the "L" column blank (Learned). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students Pair-Share: Share out basic facts, questions from their KWL chart.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Display Prezi (power point) Vietnam overview, students take notes.</li> <li>• <b>With prior parental consent</b>, Students watch <i>Born on the Fourth of July</i> clip where Ron Kovic is wounded. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How credible is the footage? Support argument with evidence from the film.</li> <li>○ Read <i>Born on the Fourth of July</i> memoir closely, documenting series of events and sensory detail. What is the function of the screaming baby? How does it work as a trope for the screaming men? Which is more compelling- the movie excerpt or the memoir?</li> <li>○ Students first share their thoughts in writing, then they debate: students literally move to opposite sides of the room to argue their perspective as a group.</li> <li>○ Finish with reflection: What are some new perspectives gained from the debate?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• End with the You Tube trailer from <i>Platoon</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What seem to be some commonalities from the two movies, created by true Vietnam War veterans?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read "Enemies" from Tim O'Brien's <i>The Things They Carried</i></li> </ul>

- How is the fistfight both similar and different from fights you have seen or participated in either within your community, through a story, a movie, or a video game?
- What can you begin to piece together regarding the complexity of Vietnam?
- *Homework:* Read “From *Bloods*: ‘An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans’” and trace the series of events, commenting three times on the author’s use of sensory detail.

### Day Two

- Discuss homework findings in pairs; share out.
  - How do multiple perspectives of the same war affect the learner?
- In groups, read excerpts from Christian Appy’s book, *Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides*, focusing on a brief history of Vietnam and the combat experience within Vietnam.
  - Short readings mirror the brief Prezi (power point) outline, reinforcement of details.
  - Students share sentences with each other, either reinforcing knowledge from their KWL, or adding to existing knowledge.
  - Students read “Paying the Price” from Appy’s book, a perspective from a wounded Vietnamese nurse.
    - Using a T-chart format, Students look for similarities between Ta Quang Thanh’s memoir and Ron Kovic’s memoir.
    - After documenting three similarities, Students analyze nuanced differences illustrated through speaker’s syntax, tone, and appeals.
    - Writing product: Students use examples from three of the four narratives to determine how to tell a war story. Students pre-write, compose first draft, peer review with constructive feedback.
- *Homework:* revise writing, type drafts; write essays in MLA format, including a Work Cited page.
- **Note:** As Students move through the unit, they search for compelling photographs of the Vietnam War, or the Gulf War, Iraq, or Afghanistan. Photographs can illustrate combat, hospital recovery, or homeless scenes. Students can access professional photography online or create their own. Students can also create collages with several photographs.

### Day Three

- Turn in final drafts, “How to Tell a War Story.”
- Read and discuss Jon Wiener’s articles online, excerpted from *The Nation*.
  - Whole class reads from displayed version, Students are allowed to access from smart phones as well.
    - Take notes; discuss findings.
  - Then read Steve Lopez’ *LA Times* article, “ACLU’s lawsuit against the VA is a step in vet’s recovery” and determine Greg Valentini’s war

experience based upon your prior knowledge.

- What is inferred in the interview?
- Can you articulate the writer's bias? What is your evidence?
- Even though Valentini fought in a different war, how might the central problem of treating PTSD remain the same in the eyes of the greater Los Angeles community?

• *Homework:*

- Continue to search for compelling photographs for the culminating War Exhibit.
- Students read and take notes on the introduction and first chapter of *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth Century Metropolis* by Greg Hise.

**Day Four**

- Students review their notes from Hise's *Magnetic Los Angeles* and then in groups of 4, Students read the two readings from Mike Davis- "Urban Control: the Ecology of Fear 1994" and "Fortress L.A." from *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1990).
  - Using an evidence chart, students compare Davis's and Hise's purpose in their discussion of Los Angeles city planning. After comparing each author's use of rhetoric, students evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in historical scholarship, taking care to consider how best to use this data in their public policy papers.
  - Students investigate the patterns of hiding the homeless problem in Los Angeles, a city big on forgetting, citing the author's bias behind his evidence of urban sprawl and decay, commenting on the underlying response of the community at large.
    - What is creating the urban fear?
    - What is becoming forgotten? Why?
    - What might be the economical/sociological/psychological/ecological impact on L.A.'s future?
    - How should American soldiers be treated after war ends?
    - What is the community responsibility for people suffering from PTSD?
  - In groups, Students write several paragraphs.
    - In the "One Slide" lesson design, Students share one sentence, analyze author's purpose through that one sentence, breaking down syntax, diction, tone, appeals, and synthesize a possible answer to one of the questions above through textual evidence.
- *Homework:* group is responsible to find a visual to pair with the sentence, and present the summary sentence, the analysis, and the visual on one slide only.

**Day Five**

- Students present their "One Slide" presentation as groups to the whole class.
  - Q & A interchange is required, completely student- centered.

- At this point students finish their KWL, answering their previous questions, filling in the “L” column, explaining how they gained their knowledge.
- Students discuss the power of policy making through *Project Citizen*, a web- based learning center found on the Ronald Reagan Library and Museum educational pull- down menu.
  - In groups, Students discuss possible solutions to the problem of homeless veterans in greater Los Angeles.
  - As students share ideas, they type their findings onto Ts Ipad, displayed on the LCD projector, furthering a whole class discussion and offering clarification to students who are new to the machinations behind civic responsibility.
- *Homework:* Students research Los Angeles public policies already in place, or review local proposals that had been on recent ballots.

#### **Day Six**

- Students discuss policy findings; segue into viable options to create public policy, taking into consideration the economic and sociological cost of their policy.
  - As they begin to write, they choose compelling veteran narratives we have read to serve as empathetic introductions while displaying concerted awareness of the issue.
  - Students spend two days in class researching, composing, peer reviewing, and publishing policy papers, balancing facts and evidence with bias.
  - Students research local politicians, determining as to whom to send their policy.

#### **Day Seven, Eight, Nine**

- Students plan and develop their *Veteran Museum Exhibit*, determining which photographs to use, how to place them in the blank wall space of Regent Hall, creating a progression of war from Vietnam to Afghanistan and its effects upon soldiers, culminating with excerpts of their policy papers posted at the end of the exhibit.
  - This exhibit will be open to visitors comprised of administration, faculty, and the student population of the high school to experience the exhibit: view the photographs, listen to war protest songs covering Vietnam to present time, and post their questions and comments on the far wall using post-it notes.
  - Students use the visitor’s responses to assess the exhibit’s effectiveness of community awareness towards America’s treatment of veterans.
  - Students will also utilize visitor responses to pose their own discussion questions and facilitate further conversation in formalized class discussions via shared inquiry and online blogs.

## **History:**

### **Day One:**

- *Quick Write:* Jot down everything you remember learning about the previous unit on the Cold War and the Vietnam War.
- Students read “The Modern History Sourcebook: U.S. State Department: North Vietnamese Aggression”
  - In groups of 3-4 Students will read this primary source document and analyze the document using the document analysis rubric.
- Students will view the "Vietnam War Hearing: John Kerry Testimony - Vietnam Veterans Against the War (1971)."
  - Students will respond to the Vietnam War Hearings questions.

### **Day Two**

- *Quick Write:* Create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the previous day’s activity of reading, “U.S. State Department: North Vietnamese Aggression” and video, "Vietnam War Hearing: John Kerry Testimony - Vietnam Veterans Against the War (1971)."
  - Students will share their responses in Pairs in a Think-Pair-Share activity.
- Students read “From Working-Class War”
  - Students then form groups of 3-4 to synthesizing their understanding of the reading utilizing both of the Four Worlds worksheets.
    - Students will write the term: ‘Veterans’ in the middle of the Four Worlds template
      - Students will analyze Veterans in relation to the reading in the following four categories: Social World, Economic World, Political World, and Cultural World.
      - Students may refer to the Four Worlds Social Science sheet for appropriate terms to add to their Four Worlds template sheet.
        - Students may draw diagrams, pictures, include phrases from the reading, and draw arrows showing relationships between multiple factors.
      - Students share their findings to entire class using an ELMO projector.
    - Discuss concepts from the reading and Four Worlds assignment in whole class format: Shared-Inquiry
- *Homework:* Students read the chapter, “How to Tell a True War Story,” *The Things They Carried*.
  - Respond to the following questions:
    - What is O’Brien’s message about his experience in Vietnam?
    - What in his experience made for a “true” story?
    - What surprised you about O’Brien’s story or message?
    - How does this chapter apply to what we have learned so far?



**Day Three**

- In pairs, students will review homework and share their responses to the homework questions.
- Students will analyze *Vietnam War photographs* (obtained from the "Teaching With Documents: The War in Vietnam - A Story in Photographs." *National Archives and Records Administration*).
  - Within groups of 3-4, students will analyze a photograph recording individually, their observations on the "Photograph Chart" handout.
  - Each student will choose one photograph to complete the "Photograph Analysis" handout.
- Students will visit the media center: investigate the *Veteran's History Project* website and choose to watch or read a transcript of either Gordon Nakagawa or Carolyn Tanaka, two Vietnam veterans from California.
  - Students report their investigation to another student partner in a Think-Pair-Share, and then discuss themes in whole class format.
  - Students create a list of appropriate and insightful questions to participate in the Veteran's Project, and interview a Vietnam Veteran.
- *Homework:* Students will create 15-20 appropriate and thoughtful interview questions to ask Vietnam Veterans for the Veteran's Project.

**Day Four-Five:** Complete *Vietnam Veteran Kit* and submit to the *Library of Congress Veteran Archives*.

- Students will break into groups of 4-5 students:
  - Review created interview questions from the homework.
  - Each group will compile a list of appropriate and insightful interview questions for their Vietnam Veteran interview.
  - Instructor will review all questions to make sure the questions are appropriate and thoughtful.
- Prepare for the interviews:
  - Establish Vietnam Veteran contacts
  - Establish place of interview
  - Prepare film equipment
  - Prepare necessary paperwork such as student release forms, interview release forms, etc.
  - Practice introductions, interview etiquette, and being filmed in front of a camera.
  - Prepare thank you card and small gift for the Veterans.
  - Remind students to wear formal clothing
- Conduct the Interview
  - Follow format as stated in the *Veteran's Project Kit*.

**Day Six-Seven-Eight:**

- Two of these three days should be devoted to fieldtrips:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fieldtrips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ L.A. Mission: Los Angeles Homeless Shelter and Recovery Program</li> <li>▪ Los Angeles National Cemetery</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Obtain the appropriate field trip release forms from each student</li> <li>○ Students will document their fieldtrip experience through notes and photography.</li> <li>○ This documentation may be utilized for their Interdisciplinary Project.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will use one day to work on their Interdisciplinary Essay and/or their Interdisciplinary Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Day Nine:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have already been planning and developing their <i>Veteran Museum Exhibit</i> with their English class (see Day Seven and Eight) and their World History class (see Day Eight), determining which photographs to use, how to place them in the blank wall space of Regent Hall, creating a progression of war from Vietnam to Afghanistan and its effects upon soldiers, culminating with excerpts of their policy papers posted at the end of the exhibit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This exhibit will be open to visitors comprised of administration, faculty, and the student population of the high school to experience the exhibit: view the photographs, listen to war protest songs covering Vietnam to present time, and post their questions and comments on the far wall using post-it notes.</li> <li>○ Students use the visitor's responses to assess the exhibit's effectiveness of community awareness towards America's treatment of veterans.</li> <li>○ Students will also utilize visitor responses to pose their own discussion questions and facilitate further conversation in formalized class discussions via shared inquiry and online blogs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Evaluations (Assessment):</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Culminating project for both English and History:</b> <b><i>Interdisciplinary Essay:</i></b> (Public Policy Paper)</p> <p><b>How Should Soldiers Be Treated?</b></p> <p>According to Jon Wiener, teaching professor at UC Irvine, "More than 30,000 U.S. troops will be coming home from Afghanistan in the year, joining more than a million who have already returned from the war there and in Iraq. Many, crippled by post-traumatic stress disorder and brain trauma, will face homelessness- and more of those will end up living on the streets of Los Angeles than of any other city.</p> <p>In 1888, property in Brentwood, Ca., was donated for the sole use of housing American veterans, offering them food, shelter, and medical care. Today, the VA building is not obligated to house its homeless, disabled vets, and instead turns a profit from leasing the land.</p> <p>What is the community responsibility regarding the fate of our soldiers who put their lives on the line to protect our country, yet come home worse for wear? Currently, an ACLU lawsuit is in the process of adjudication; however, local community support through public awareness and activism is necessary. Construct public policy regarding</p>

	<p>the treatment of veterans in our community, relying on evidence from first person interviews and narratives, academic readings from Mike Davis regarding the mindset of the greater Los Angeles community in its response to the homeless, and recent articles on the resistance of the VA building in Brentwood to care for homeless, disabled veterans. Spend time discussing these issues with the protestors outside the VA building, or contact either Jon Wiener via <i>The Nation</i> or Steve Lopez via the <i>Los Angeles Times</i>, gathering an activist's perspective.</p> <p>Finally, organize a viable argument that takes into consideration the economic, ecological, and sociological impact of housing and caring for homeless veterans. What should be the community's response, and how can it be implemented? Contact local politicians, reporters, or grass roots organizations that would display interest in your policy paper, publish it and submit it.</p> <p><b><i>Interdisciplinary Project:</i></b></p> <p>Students plan and develop their Veteran Museum Exhibit, determining which photographs to use, how to place them in the blank wall space of Regent Hall, creating a progression of war from Vietnam to Afghanistan and its effects upon soldiers, culminating with excerpts of their policy papers posted at the end of the exhibit. This exhibit will be open to visitors comprised of administration, faculty, and the student population of the high school to experience the exhibit: view the photographs, listen to war protest songs covering Vietnam to present time, and post their questions and comments on the far wall using post-it notes. Students use the visitor's responses to assess the exhibit's effectiveness of community awareness towards America's treatment of veterans. Students will also utilize visitor responses to pose their own discussion questions and facilitate further conversation in formalized class discussions via shared inquiry and online blogs.</p>
Extensions:	<p>What kind of activities can be suggested should a teacher wish to develop the essential understandings in greater depth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will utilize visitor responses to pose their own discussion questions and facilitate further conversation in formalized class discussions via shared inquiry and online blogs.</li> </ul>
Resources:	<p><b>English:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appy, Christian G. "Paying the Price." <i>Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides</i>. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. 20-21. Print.</li> <li>Appy, Christian G. Preface. <i>Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides</i>. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. XVIII- XIX. Print.</li> <li>Appy, Christian G. Preface. <i>Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides</i>. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. XXIII. Print.</li> <li>"Born on the Fourth of July (1/9) Movie CLIP - Ron Is Shot (1989) HD." <i>YouTube</i>. YouTube, 27 May 2011. Web. 03 Aug. 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0ladY1kwco">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0ladY1kwco</a>&gt;.</li> <li>Davis, Mike. "Fortress L.A." <i>City of Quartz</i>. N.p.: n.p., n.d. 159-163. Guadalupe Salazar. Web. 22 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/people/guadalupe.salazar/courses/c2/s2/Fortress%20LA.pdf">http://www.sjsu.edu/people/guadalupe.salazar/courses/c2/s2/Fortress%20LA.pdf</a>&gt;.</li> <li>Davis, Mike. "Urban Control: The Ecology of Fear." (1994):n.pag. <i>Minerva</i></li> </ul>

*Partners*. Web. 22 July 2013.

- Ford, Richard J. "From Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans." *American Identities: An Introductory Textbook*. Ed. Lois Palken Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, and Rachel Rubin. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. 150-57. Print.
- Hise, Greg. *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-century Metropolis*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. Print.
- Kovic, Ron. "Born on the Fourth of July." *American Identities: An Introductory Textbook*. Ed. Lois Palken Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, and Rachel Rubin. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. 143-49. Print.
- Lopez, Steve. "ACLU's Lawsuit against the VA Is a Step in Vet's Recovery." *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles] 10 June 2011. Web. 22 July 2013. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jun/10/local/la-me-0609-lopez-vetlawsuit-20110609>>.
- O'Brien, Timothy. "Enemies." *The Things They Carried*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. 62-64. Print.
- "Platoon - Trailer - (1986) - HQ." *YouTube*. YouTube, 25 Dec. 2008. Web. 03 Aug. 2013. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPi8EQzJ2Bg>.
- "Public Policy." Project Citizen (2013): n.pag. Web 27 July 2013. <<http://newciviced.org/pc-program/instructional-component/public-policy>>.
- Wiener, Jon. "Homeless Vets vs the VA: An LA Story Continues." *The Nation* (2013): n.pag. 25 Mar 2013. Web 22 July 2013. <<http://www.thenation.com/blog/173498/homeless-vets-vs-va-la-story-continues#axzz2aUiv2KLp>>.
- Wiener, Jon. "LA's Homeless Vets." *The Nation* (2013): n.pag. 8, April 2013. Web 25 July 2013. <<http://www.thenation.com/article/173459/las-homeless-vets#axzz2aUiv2KLp>>.

#### **History:**

- Appy, Christian G. "From Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam." *American Identities: An Introductory Textbook*. Ed. Lois Palken Rudnick, Judith E. Smith, and Rachel Rubin. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. 138-42. Print.
- "Modern History Sourcebook: US State Department: North Vietnamese Aggression, 1965." *Modern History Sourcebook: US State Department: North Vietnamese Aggression, 1965*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 July 2013. <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1965US-vietnamaggression1.html>>.
- O'Brien, Timothy. "How to Tell a True War Story." *The Things They Carried*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. 62-64. Print.
- "Vietnam War Hearing: John Kerry Testimony - Vietnam Veterans Against the War (1971)." *YouTube*. YouTube, 12 May 2013. Web. 29 July 2013. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucY7JOfg6G4>>.
- "Teaching With Documents: The War in Vietnam - A Story in Photographs." *National Archives and Records Administration*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 July 2013. <<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/vietnam-photos>>.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States. Cong. Senate. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. <i>Complete Testimony of Lt. John Kerry to Senate Foreign Relations Committee</i>. 92nd Cong., 1st sess. S. Doc. N.p.: Congressional Record, 1971. Print.</li> <li>• "Veterans History Project (Library of Congress)." <i>Veterans History Project (Library of Congress)</i>. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 July 2013. &lt;<a href="http://www.loc.gov/vets">http://www.loc.gov/vets</a>&gt;.</li> </ul>
--	---

## **Fighting in Vietnam- Christian Appy**

Preface. *Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides*. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. XXIII. Print.

Most of the fighting took place below the seventeenth parallel in South Vietnam, a war zone of extraordinary geographic and political complexity. On the smallest scale, a great deal of the war can be understood by imagining a few dozen heavily armed men trudging through small Vietnamese hamlets, across muddy rice paddies, over dikes, through tall, sharp, elephant grass, into thick jungle, and up into the highlands. These American or South Vietnamese soldiers are patrolling the countryside, hour after hour, in search of the southern guerrillas they call Viet Cong and troops from the North they call NVA (North Vietnamese Army). Days, even weeks, might pass before combat erupts. Most of the time the infantrymen are simply looking and waiting. In the hamlets you might see them interrogating villagers or poking into thatched houses looking for any signs of an enemy presence. Since it is rare to find young men in the villages, they look for weapons or large supplies of rice or documents. Whether they find anything or not, the villagers are unlikely to offer information about the whereabouts of the Communist forces. The villagers could themselves be Viet Cong. (It is almost impossible for the Americans to tell.) If so, late at night some of them might make booby traps or land mines to be placed on the trails near their homes. Perhaps they will use materiel from a few unexploded American bombs and artillery shells that fell in a recent attack, a strike that further fueled their hatred of the South Vietnamese government they call the "puppet" of "American imperialists."

As the patrol moves off into the jungle, the silence is shattered by small arms fire. The platoon has walked into a Viet Cong ambush. As was so often the case, the Americans did not find the enemy until the enemy found them and decided to initiate combat. Twenty miles away at an airbase in Danang or offshore on an aircraft carrier in the South China Sea, word arrives that an American unit has made contact. Several F-4 Phantom jets are scrambled. Within minutes they catch sight of a small forward observation plane marking a spot in the jungle with a flare. There is a deafening roar as the jets sweep in and drop napalm and bombs on the target.

The guerrillas have learned to anticipate the likelihood of an air strike and may have disengaged quickly to scurry deeper into the jungle or into an underground bunker. Or perhaps they continue to "cling to the belt" of their enemy, a common guerrilla tactic. Occasionally, combatants on both sides are caught in the destruction that rains down from above, their fates entangled by forces beyond their control. Survivors are left to evacuate their wounded, the guerrillas to the nearest jungle hospitals, the Americans onto medical evacuation helicopters that often put casualties into field hospitals in a matter of minutes.

# CHAPTER 19

## From Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam

Christian G. Appy

*Christian G. Appy is an historian of the Vietnam War. He is author of Working Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam (1993), and editor of Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism 1945–1966 (2000) and Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides (2003). In this excerpt from Working Class War, Appy demonstrates that class background was the most important factor in determining which young American men would serve in Vietnam.*



### Mapping the Losses

“We all ended up going into the service about the same time – the whole crowd.” I had asked Dan Shaw about himself, why he had joined the Marine Corps; but Dan ignored the personal thrust of the question. Military service seemed less an individual choice than a collective rite of passage, a natural phase of life for “the whole crowd” of boys in his neighborhood, so his response encompassed a circle of over twenty childhood friends who lived near the corner of Train and King streets in Dorchester, Massachusetts – a white, working-class section of Boston.<sup>1</sup> [...]

Focusing on the world of working-class Boston, Dan has a quiet, low-key manner with few traces of bitterness. But when he speaks of the disparities in military service throughout American society, his voice fills with anger, scorn, and hurt. He compares the sacrifices of poor and working-class neighborhoods with the rarity of wartime casualties in the “fancy suburbs” beyond the city limits, in places such as Milton, Lexington, and Wellesley. If three wounded veterans “wasn’t bad” for a streetcorner in Dorchester, such concentrated pain was, Dan insists, unimaginable in a wealthy subdivision. “You’d be lucky to find three Vietnam veterans in one of those rich neighborhoods, never mind three who got wounded.”

Dan's point is indisputable: those who fought and died in Vietnam were overwhelmingly drawn from the bottom half of the American social structure. The comparison he suggests bears out the claim. The three affluent towns of Milton, Lexington, and Wellesley had a combined wartime population of about 100,000, roughly equal to that of Dorchester. However, while those suburbs suffered a total of eleven war deaths, Dorchester lost forty-two. There was almost exactly the same disparity in casualties between Dorchester and another sample of prosperous Massachusetts towns – Andover, Lincoln, Sudbury, Weston, Dover, Amherst, and Longmeadow. These towns lost ten men from a combined population of 100,000. In other words, boys who grew up in Dorchester were four times more likely to die in Vietnam than those raised in the fancy suburbs. An extensive study of wartime casualties from Illinois reached a similar conclusion. In that state, men from neighborhoods with median family incomes under \$5,000 (about \$22,800 in 2005 dollars) were four times more likely to die in Vietnam than men from places with median family incomes above \$15,000 (\$68,600 in 2005 dollars).<sup>2</sup>

Dorchester, East Los Angeles, the South Side of Chicago – major urban centers such as these sent thousands of men to Vietnam. So, too, did lesser known, midsize industrial cities with large working-class populations, such as Saginaw, Michigan; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Stockton, California; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Youngstown, Ohio; Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; and Utica, New York. There was also an enormous rise in working-class suburbanization in the 1950s and 1960s. The post-World War II boom in modestly priced, uniformly designed, tract housing, along with the vast construction of new highways, allowed many workers their first opportunity to purchase homes and to live a considerable distance from their jobs. As a result, many new suburbs became predominantly working class.

Long Island, New York, became the site of numerous working-class suburbs, including the original Levittown, the first mass-produced town in American history. Built by the Levitt and Sons construction firm in the late 1940s, it was initially a middle-class town. By 1960, however, as in many other postwar suburbs, the first owners had moved on, often to larger homes in wealthier suburbs, and a majority of the newcomers were working class.<sup>3</sup> Ron Kovic, author of one of the best-known Vietnam memoirs and films, *Born on the Fourth of July*, grew up near Levittown in Massapequa. His parents, like so many others in both towns, were working people willing to make great sacrifices to own a small home with a little land and to live in a town they regarded as a safe and decent place to raise their families, in hope that their children would enjoy greater opportunity. Many commentators viewed the suburbanization of blue-collar workers as a sign that the working class was vanishing and that almost everyone was becoming middle class. In fact, however, though many workers owned more than ever before, their relative social position remained largely unchanged. The Kovics, for example, lived in the suburbs but had to raise five children on the wages of a supermarket checker and clearly did not match middle-class levels in terms of economic security, education, or social status. [...]

A community of only 27,000, Massapequa lost 14 men in Vietnam. In 1969, *Newsday* traced the family backgrounds of 400 men from Long Island who had been killed in Vietnam. "As a group," the newspaper concluded, "Long Island's war dead



have been overwhelmingly white, working-class men. Their parents were typically blue collar or clerical workers, mailmen, factory workers, building tradesmen, and so on."<sup>4</sup>

Rural and small-town America may have lost more men in Vietnam, proportionately, than did even central cities and working-class suburbs. You get a hint of this simply by flipping through the pages of the Vietnam Memorial directory. As thick as a big-city phone book, the directory lists the names and hometowns of Americans who died in Vietnam. An average page contains the names of five or six men from towns such as Alma, West Virginia (pop. 296), Lost Hills, California (pop. 200), Bryant Pond, Maine (pop. 350), Tonalea, Arizona (pop. 125), Storden, Minnesota (pop. 364), Pioneer, Louisiana (pop. 188), Wartburg, Tennessee (pop. 541), Hillisburg, Indiana (pop. 225), Boring, Oregon (pop. 150), Racine, Missouri (pop. 274), Hygiene, Colorado (pop. 400), Clayton, Kansas (pop. 127), and Almond, Wisconsin (pop. 440). In the 1960s only about 2 percent of Americans lived in towns with fewer than 1,000 people. Among those who died in Vietnam, however, roughly four times that portion, 8 percent, came from American hamlets of that size. It is not hard to find small towns that lost more than one man in Vietnam. Empire, Alabama, for example, had four men out of a population of only 400 die in Vietnam – four men from a town in which only a few dozen boys came of draft age during the entire war.<sup>5</sup>

There were also soldiers who came from neither cities, suburbs, nor small towns but from the hundreds of places in between, average towns of 15,000 to 30,000 people whose economic life, however precarious, had local roots. Some of these towns paid a high cost in Vietnam. In the foothills of eastern Alabama, for example, is the town of Talladega, with a population of approximately 17,500 (about one-quarter black), a town of small farmers and textile workers. Only one-third of Talladega's men had completed high school. Fifteen of their children died in Vietnam, a death rate three times the national average. Compare Talladega to Mountain Brook, a rich suburb outside Birmingham. Mountain Brook's population was somewhat higher than Talladega's, about 19,500 (with no black residents of draft age). More than 90 percent of its men were high school graduates. No one from Mountain Brook is listed among the Vietnam War dead.<sup>6</sup>

I have described a social map of American war casualties to suggest not simply the geographic origins of US soldiers but their class origins – not simply where they came from but the kinds of places as well. Class, not geography, was the crucial factor in determining which Americans fought in Vietnam. Geography reveals discrepancies in military service primarily because it often reflects class distinctions. Many men went to Vietnam from places such as Dorchester, Massapequa, Empire, and Talladega because those were the sorts of places where most poor and working-class people lived. The wealthiest youth in those towns, like those in richer communities, were far less likely either to enlist or to be drafted. [...]

### The Vietnam Generation's Military Minority:

## A Statistical Profile

Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon sent 3 million American soldiers to South Vietnam, a country of 17 million. In the early 1960s they went by the hundreds – helicopter units, Green Beret teams, counterinsurgency hotshots, ambitious young officers, and ordinary infantrymen – all of them labeled military advisers by the American command. They fought a distant, “brushfire war” on the edge of American consciousness. Beyond the secret inner circles of government, few predicted that hundreds of thousands would follow in a massive buildup that took the American presence in Vietnam from 15,000 troops in 1964 to 550,000 in 1968.<sup>7</sup> In late 1969 the gradual withdrawal of ground forces began, inching its way to the final US pullout in January 1973. The bell curve of escalation and withdrawal spread the commitment of men into a decade-long chain of one-year tours of duty.

In the years of escalation, as draft calls mounted to 30,000 and 40,000 a month, many young people believed the entire generation might be mobilized for war. There were, of course, many ways to avoid the draft, and millions of men did just that. Very few, however, felt completely confident that they would never be ordered to fight. Perhaps the war would escalate to such a degree or go on so long that all exemptions and deferments would be eliminated. No one could be sure what would happen. Only in retrospect is it clear that the odds of serving in Vietnam were, for many people, really quite small. The forces that fought in Vietnam were drawn from the largest generation of young people in the nation’s history. During the years 1964 to 1973, from the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to the final withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, 27 million men came of draft age. The 2.5 million men of that generation who went to Vietnam represent less than 10 percent of America’s male baby boomers.<sup>8</sup>

The parents of the Vietnam generation had an utterly different experience of war. During World War II virtually all young, able-bodied men entered the service – some 12 million. Personal connections to the military permeated society regardless of class, race, or gender. Almost every family had a close relative overseas – a husband fighting in France, a son in the South Pacific, or at least an uncle with the Seabees, a niece in the WAVES, or a cousin in the Air Corps. These connections continued well into the 1950s. Throughout the Korean War years and for several years after, roughly 70 percent of the draft-age population of men served in the military; but from the 1950s to the 1960s, military service became less and less universal. During the Vietnam years, the portion had dropped to 40 percent: 10 percent were in Vietnam, and 30 percent served in Germany, South Korea, and the dozens of other duty stations in the United States and abroad. What had been, in the 1940s, an experience shared by the vast majority gradually became the experience of a distinct minority.<sup>9</sup> [...]

## Study Questions

## **History and Implications of Vietnam- Christian Appy**

Preface. *Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides*. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. XVIII- IX. Print.

For many Vietnamese, the “Vietnam War” is not a single event, but a long chain of wars for independence against foreign enemies that began in the year 40 when the Trung sisters led the first insurrection against Chinese rule. Not until 1428, after dozens of wars, did Vietnam permanently establish its independence from China. French missionaries began arriving in the seventeenth century, and two centuries later, in 1883, France took formal possession of Vietnam, abolished its name, and divided the nation into three parts. Resistance to French rule grew over the next century and culminated in a brutal eight-year war (1946-1954). After a major Vietnamese victory at Dien Bien Phu, it ended with a peace settlement in Geneva. The anti-French war had been led by the Indochinese Communist Party but included many non-Communist nationalists. In the final years of that war, the United States provided massive military aid to the French. From that point on, many Vietnamese viewed the United States as an enemy in their quest for independence and the American War as a direct outgrowth of the war with France.

In 1954 at Geneva, the great powers agreed to divide Vietnam temporarily at the seventeenth parallel. The idea was not to create two separate Vietnams, North and South, but to establish the peaceful conditions that would allow for a nationwide reunification election in 1956. However, those elections were never held as the United States stepped in to build and bolster what it hoped would be a permanent, non- Communist South Vietnam. The Communists retained significant support throughout Vietnam, however, and set their sights on an eventual overthrow of the American-backed regime in Saigon, the capital of the newly created country.

For most Americans, Vietnam was not even a familiar name until the mid-1960s when their nation dramatically escalated its military intervention. Few realized the United States had been involved in Vietnam since the 1940s or that it had presided over the creation of South Vietnam. Instead, they believed their country had entered a war already in progress whose origins were mysterious. American leaders claimed that our troops were needed to help a small, struggling democracy in South Vietnam to maintain its independence from external Communist aggression launched from North Vietnam and engineered by the Soviet Union and Communist China, and that if the United States failed to prevent a Communist takeover of South Vietnam, one country after another would fall under the control of America’s Cold War enemies. These arguments had great resonance in American political culture in the 1950s and early ‘60s, and there was widespread public support for intervention in Vietnam that lasted through years of mounting escalation.

Over time, however, ever more Americans came to believe their leaders had misled and even lied to them about the realities of the war. Many concluded that South Vietnam was neither a democratic nor an independent nation, but a corrupt and unpopular regime entirely dependent on U.S. support; that preserving it was not vital to national security and that the United States was itself acting as an aggressor. Even many who supported the objectives of U.S. policy came to doubt whether they were achievable or worthy of the cost. By the end of the 1960s, the war had become the most unpopular in our history, producing an antiwar movement of unprecedented size.

# Notes on Mike Davis, “Fortress L.A.”

from *City of Quartz*

“Fortress L.A.” is about a destruction of public space that derives from and reinforces a loss of public-spiritedness.

“The universal and ineluctable consequence of this crusade to secure the city is the destruction of accessible public space” (226).

- the privatization of the architectural public realm;
- a parallel privatization of electronic space (elite databases, subscription cable services, etc)
- “the middle-class demand for increased spatial and social insulation” (227)

Davis appeals to the early city planner Frederick Law Olmstead’s conception of “public landscapes and parks as social safety-valves, *mixing* classes and ethnicities in common (bourgeois) recreations and enjoyments, a vision with some affinity with Jane Addams notion of the settlement house as a medium for inter-class communication and fraternity (a notion also shaped by “bourgeois” values).

## II. Forms

### 1. A “new class war . . . at the level of the built environment” (228).

- The language of containment, or spatial confinement, of the homeless (232), which makes living conditions among “the most dangerous ten square blocks in the world” (233).
- Design deterrents: the barrelshaped bus benches, overhead sprinkler systems, and locked, caged trash bins.
- Refusal by the city to provide public toilets (233); preference for ‘quasi-public restrooms’ in private facilities where access can be controlled.
- Use of police to breakup efforts by the homeless and their allies to organize safe havens.
- Swift cancellation of one attempt at providing legalized camping

### 2. The use of architectural ramparts, sophisticated security systems, private security and police to achieve a recolonization of urban areas via walled enclaves with controlled access. Examples:

- Los Angeles’s new ‘postmodern’ Downtown -- a huge redevelopment project of corporate offices, hotels and shopping malls.

“The goals of this strategy may be summarized as a double repression: to raze all association with

Downtown's past and to prevent any articulation with the non-Anglo urbanity of its future" (229). "a brutal architectural edge" (230) that "massively reproduced spatial apartheid" (230).

(Divorce from the past because the original downtown was too accessible by public transport and heavily used by Black and Mexican poor.)

- Loyola Law School (Gehry design, 1984), with its "formidable steel stake fencing, concrete block zigurat, and stark frontage walls" (239).
- Goldwyn Regional Branch Library "undoubtedly the most menacing library ever built," with "fifteen-foot security walls. . . , anti-graffiti barricades . . . , sunken entrance protected by ten-foot steel stacks, and its stylized sentry boxes perched precariously on each side" (239). It "relentlessly interpellates a demonic Other (arsonist, graffitist, invader) whom it reflects back on surrounding streets and street people" (240).
- The Panopticon Mall. Recapturing the poor as consumers while benefitting from municipal subsidization with "a comprehensive '*security-oriented* design and management strategy'" (242), including a high perimeter fence, video cameras linked to motion detectors, a handful of gated and monitored entry points, a security observatory, and a substation of the LAPD (243).
- Housing projects as strategic hamlets. One has "recently been fortified with fencing, obligatory identity passes and substation of the LAPD" (244).

**3. The fortification of affluent satellite cities**, "complete with encompassing walls, restricted entry points with guard posts, overlapping private and public police services, and even privatized roadways" (244). Night and weekend park closures are becoming more common, and some communities are considering requiring proof of local residency in order to gain admittance.

"Residential areas with enough clout are thus able to privatize local public space, partitioning themselves from the rest of the metropolis, even imposing a variant of neighborhood 'passport control' on outsiders" (246).

**4. Use of permanent barricades around neighborhoods in "denser, lower-income neighborhoods" (248).**

**5. Pervasive private policing contracted for by affluent homeowners' associations.**

"Anyone who has tried to take a stroll at dusk through a strange neighborhood patrolled by armed security guards and signposted with death threats quickly realizes how merely notional, if not utterly obsolete, is the old idea of the 'freedom of the city'" (250).

**6. The transformation of the LAPD into a operator of "security macrosystems"** (major crime databases, aerial surveillance, jail systems, paramilitary responses to terrorism and street insurgency, and so on) (251), in part because the private-sector has captured many of the labor-intensive security roles.

This process, with its roots in the fifties reform of the LAPD under Chief Parker, insulates the police from communities, particularly inner city ones (because after Watts aerial surveillance became the cornerstone of police strategy for the inner city) (252).

The dystopian future: “universal electronic tagging of property and people”, “use of a geosynclinal space satellite” “Once in orbit, of course, the role of a law enforcement satellite would grow to encompass other forms of surveillance and control” (253).

**7. Prison construction as a de facto urban renewal program.** The War on Drugs is expected to double the prison population in a decade.

“Jails now vie with County/USC Hospital as the single most important economic force on the eastside” (254).

INS micro-prisons in unsuspected urban neighborhoods (256).

Designer prisons that blend with urban exteriors as a partial resolution of conflicts with commercial and residential uses of urban space (256).

**8. Even “the beaches are now closed at dark, patrolled by helicopter gunships and police dune buggies” (258).**

### III. General Points

“‘Security’ becomes a positional good defined by income access to private ‘protective services’ and membership in some hardened residential enclave or restricted suburb. As a prestige symbol -- and sometimes as the decisive borderline between the merely well-off and the ‘truly rich’ -- ‘security’ has less to do with personal safety than with the degree of personal insulation, in residential, work, consumption and travel environments, from ‘unsavory’ groups and individuals, even crowds in general” (224).

“‘fear proves itself’. The social perception of threat becomes a function of the security mobilization itself, not crime rates” (224). “Moreover, the neo-military syntax of contemporary architecture insinuates violence and conjures imaginary dangers’, while being “full of invisible signs warning off the underclass ‘Other’” (226).

Fear of crowds: “the designers of malls and pseudo-public space attack the crowd by homogenizing it. They set up architectural and semiotic barriers to filter out ‘undesirables’. They enclose the mass that remains, directing its circulation with behaviorist ferocity. It is lured by visual stimuli of all kinds, dulled by musak, sometimes even scented by invisible aromatizers”

Among the few democratic public spaces: Hollywood Boulevard and the Venice beach Boardwalk (260).



Mike Davis: 'Urban Control: the Ecology of Fear' 1994

Is there any need to explain why fear eats the soul of Los Angeles?

The current obsession with personal safety and social insulation is only exceeded by the middle-class dread of progressive taxation. In the face of unemployment and homelessness on scales not seen since 1938, a bipartisan consensus insists that the budget must be balanced and entitlements reduced. Refusing to make any further public investment in the remediation of underlying social conditions, we are forced instead to make increasing private investments in physical security. The rhetoric of urban reform persists, but the substance is extinct. 'Rebuilding LA' simply means padding the bunker.

As city life, in consequence, grows more feral, the different social milieux adopt security strategies and technologies according to their means. Like Burgess' original dart board, the resulting pattern condenses into concentric zones. The bull's eye is Downtown.

In another essay I have recounted in detail how a secretive, emergency committee of Downtown's leading corporate landowners (the so-called Committee of 25) responded to the perceived threat of the 1965 Watts Rebellion. Warned by law-enforcement authorities that a black 'inundation' of the central city was imminent, the Committee of 25 abandoned redevelopment efforts in the old office and retail core. They then used the city's power of eminent domain to raze neighborhoods and create a new financial core a few blocks further west. The city's redevelopment agency, acting virtually as their private planner, bailed out the Committee of 25's sunk investments in the old business district by offering huge discounts, far below market value, on parcels in the new core.

Key to the success of the entire strategy (celebrated as Downtown LA's 'renaissance') was the physical segregation of the new core and its land values behind a rampart of regraded palisades, concrete pillars and freeway walls. Traditional pedestrian connections between Bunker Hill and the old core were removed, and foot traffic in the new financial district was elevated above the street on pedways whose access was controlled by the security systems of individual skyscrapers. This radical privatization of Downtown public space - with its ominous racial undertones - occurred without significant public debate or protest.

Last year's riots, moreover, have only seemed to vindicate the foresight of Fortress Downtown's designers. While windows were being smashed throughout the old business district along Broadway and Spring streets, Bunker Hill lived up to its name. By flicking a few switches on their command consoles, the security staffs of the great bank towers were able to cut off all access to their expensive real estate. Bullet-proof steel doors rolled down over street-level entrances, escalators instantly stopped and electronic locks sealed off pedestrian passageways. As the *Los Angeles Business Journal* recently pointed out in a special report, the riot-tested success of corporate Downtown's defenses has only stimulated demand for new and higher levels of physical security.

In the first place, the boundary between architecture and law enforcement is further eroded. The LAPD have become central players in the Downtown design process. No major project now breaks ground without their participation, and in some cases, like the recent debate over the provision of public toilets in parks and subway stations (which they opposed), they openly exercise veto power.



Secondly, video monitoring of Downtown's redeveloped zones has been extended to parking structures, private sidewalks, plazas, and so on. This comprehensive surveillance constitutes a virtual *scanscape*—a space of protective visibility that increasingly defines where white-collar office workers and middle-class tourists feel safe Downtown. Inevitably the workplace or shopping mall video camera will become linked with home security systems, personal 'panic buttons', car alarms, cellular phones, and the like, in a seamless continuity of surveillance over daily routine. Indeed, yuppies' lifestyles soon may be defined by the ability to afford electronic guardian angels to watch over them. (In the meantime these hard times are boom years for the makers of video surveillance technology. The leading manufacturer, a Swedish conglomerate, is now the official sponsor of the huge London marathon.)

Thirdly, tall buildings are becoming increasingly sentient and packed with deadly firepower. The skyscraper with a computer brain in *Die Hard I* (actually F. Scott Johnson's Fox-Pereira Tower) anticipates a possible genre of architectural antiheroes as intelligent buildings alternately battle evil or become its pawns. The sensory system of the average office tower already includes panoptic vision, smell, sensitivity to temperature and humidity, motion detection, and, in some cases, hearing. Some architects now predict the day when the building's own AI security computer will be able to automatically screen and identify its human population, and, even perhaps, respond to their emotional states (fear, panic, etc.).

Without dispatching security personnel, the building itself will manage crises both minor (like ordering street people out of the building or preventing them from using toilets) and major (like trapping burglars in an elevator). When all else fails, the smart building will become a combination of bunker and fire-base. When the federal Resolution Trust Corp. recently seized the assets of Columbia Savings and Loan Association they discovered that the CEO, Thomas Spiegel, had converted its Beverly Hills headquarters into a secret, 'terrorist-proof fortress. In addition to elaborate electronic security sensors, a sophisticated computer system that tracked terrorist incidents over the globe, and an arms cache in its parking structure, the 8900 Wilshire building also has Los Angeles' most unusual executive washroom:

Tom Spiegel's office, in addition to the bullet-proof glass, was designed to have an adjoining bathroom with a bullet-proof shower. In the event an alarm was sounded, secret panels in the shower walls would open, behind which high-powered assault rifles would be stored.

#### Free fire zone

Beyond the scanscape of the fortified core is the halo of barrios and ghettos that surround Downtown Los Angeles. In Burgess' original Chicago-inspired schema this was the 'zone in transition': the boarding house and tenement streets, intermixed with old industry and transportation infrastructure, that sheltered new immigrant families and single male laborers. Los Angeles' inner ring of freeway-sliced Latino neighborhoods still recapitulate these classical functions. Here in Boyle and Lincoln Heights, Central Vernon and MacArthur Park are the ports of entry for the region's poorest immigrants, as well as the low-wage labor reservoir for Downtown's hotels and garment sweatshops. Residential densities, just as in the Burgess diagram, are the highest in the city. (According to the 1990 Census, one district of MacArthur Park is nearly 30% denser than Midtown Manhattan!)



Finally, just as in Chicago in 1927, this tenement zone ('where an inordinately large number of children are crowded into a small area') remains the classic breeding ground of teenage street gangs (over one hundred according to LA school district intelligence). But while Gangland in 1920s Chicago was theorized as essentially interstitial to the social organization of the city —'as better residential districts recede before the encroachments of business and industry, the gang develops as one manifestation of the economic, moral, and cultural frontier which marks the interstice'—a gang map of Los Angeles today is coextensive with the geography of social class. Tribalized teenage violence now spills out of the inner ring into the older suburban zones; the Boyz are now in the 'Hood where Ozzie and Harriet used to live.

For all that, however, the inner ring remains the most dangerous sector of the city. Ramparts Division of the LAPD, which patrols the salient just west of Downtown, regularly investigates more homicides than any other neighborhood police jurisdiction in the nation. Nearby MacArthur Park, once the jewel in the crown of LA's park system, is now a free-fire zone where crack dealers and street gangs settle their scores with shotguns and Uzis. Thirty people were murdered there in 1990.

By their own admission the overwhelmed innercity detachments of the LAPD are unable to keep track of all the bodies on the street, much less deal with common burglaries, car thefts or gang-organized protection rackets. Lacking the resources or political clout of more affluent neighborhoods, the desperate population of the inner ring is left to its own devices. As a last resort they have turned to Messieurs Smith and Wesson, whose name follows 'protected by ...' on many a porch.

Slumlords, meanwhile, are mounting their own private reign of terror against drug-dealers and petty criminals. Faced with new laws authorizing the seizure of drug-infested properties, they are hiring goon squads and armed mercenaries to 'exterminate' crime in their tenements. The LA Times recently described the swashbuckling adventures of one such crew in the Pico-Union, Venice and Panorama City (San Fernando Valley) areas.

Led by a six-foot-three 280-pound 'soldier of fortune' named David Roybal, this security squad is renown amongst landlords for its efficient brutality. Suspected drug-dealers and their customers, as well as mere deadbeats and other landlord irritants, are physically driven from buildings at gunpoint. Those who resist or even complain are beaten without mercy. In a Panorama City raid a few years ago, the Times notes, 'Roybal and his crew collared so many residents and squatters for drugs that they converted a recreation room into a holding tank and handcuffed arrestees to a blood-spattered wall.' The LAPD knew about this private jail but dismissed residents' complaints 'because it serves the greater good.'

Roybal and his gang closely resemble the so-called matadors, or hired gunslingers, who patrol Brazilian urban neighborhoods and frequently, while the police deliberately turn their backs, execute persistent criminals, even street urchins. Their common coda is that 'they get the job done [after] all else has failed.' As one of Roybal's most aggressive competitors explains:

Somebody's got to rule and when we're there, we rule. When somebody says something smart, we body slam him, right on the floor with all of his friends looking. We handcuff them and



kick them and when the paramedics come and they're on the stretcher, we say: 'Hey, sue me.'

Apart from these rent-a-thugs, the Inner City also spawns a vast cottage industry that manufactures bars and grates for home protection. Indeed most of the bungalows in the inner ring now tend to resemble cages in a zoo. As in a George Romero movie, working-class families must now lock themselves in every night from the zombified city outside. One inadvertent consequence has been the terrifying frequency with which fires immolate entire families trapped helpless in their barred homes. The prison cell house has many resonances in the landscape of the inner city. Before the Spring uprising most liquor stores, borrowing from the precedent of pawnshops, had completely caged in the area behind the counter, with firearms discretely hidden at strategic locations.

Even local greasy spoons were beginning to exchange hamburgers for money through bullet-proof acrylic turnstiles. Windowless concrete-block buildings, with rough surfaces exposed to deter graffiti, have spread across the streetscape like acne during the last decade. Now insurance companies may make such riot-proof bunkers virtually obligatory in the rebuilding of many districts. Local intermediate and secondary schools, meanwhile, have become even more indistinguishable from jails. As per capita education spending has plummeted in Los Angeles, scarce resources have been absorbed in fortifying school grounds and hiring armed security police. Teenagers complain bitterly about overcrowded classrooms and demoralized teachers on decaying campuses that have become little more than daytime detention centers for an abandoned generation.

The schoolyard, meanwhile, has become a killing field. Just as their parents once learned to cower under desks in the case of an atomic bomb attack, so students today are 'taught to drop at a teacher's signal in case of ... a driveby shooting - and stay there until they receive an all-clear signal.' Federally subsidized and public housing projects, for their part, are coming to resemble the infamous 'strategic hamlets' that were used to incarcerate the rural population of Vietnam. Although no LA housing project is yet as technologically sophisticated as Chicago's Cabrini-Green, where retinal scans (c.f. the opening sequence of *Blade Runner*) are used to check id's, police exercise increasing control over freedom of movement. Like peasants in a rebel countryside, public housing residents of every age are stopped and searched at will, and their homes broken into without court warrants. In one particularly galling incident, just a few weeks before the Spring 1992 riots, the LAPD arrested more than fifty people in the course of a surprise raid upon Watts' Imperial Courts project. In a city with the nation's worst housing shortage, project residents, fearful of eviction, are increasingly reluctant to claim any of their constitutional protections against unlawful search or seizure. Meanwhile national guidelines approved by Housing Secretary Jack Kemp (and almost certain to be continued in the Clinton administration) allow housing authorities to evict families of alleged drug-dealers or felons. This opens the door to a policy of collective punishment as practiced, for example, by the Israelis against Palestinian communities on the West Bank.

### The half-moons of repression

In the original Burgess diagram, the 'half-moons' of ethnic enclaves ('Deutschland', 'Little Sicily', 'the Black Belt', etc.) and specialized architectural ecologies ('residential hotels', 'the two flat area', etc.) cut across the 'dart board' of the city's fundamental socioeconomic patterning. In contemporary metropolitan Los Angeles,

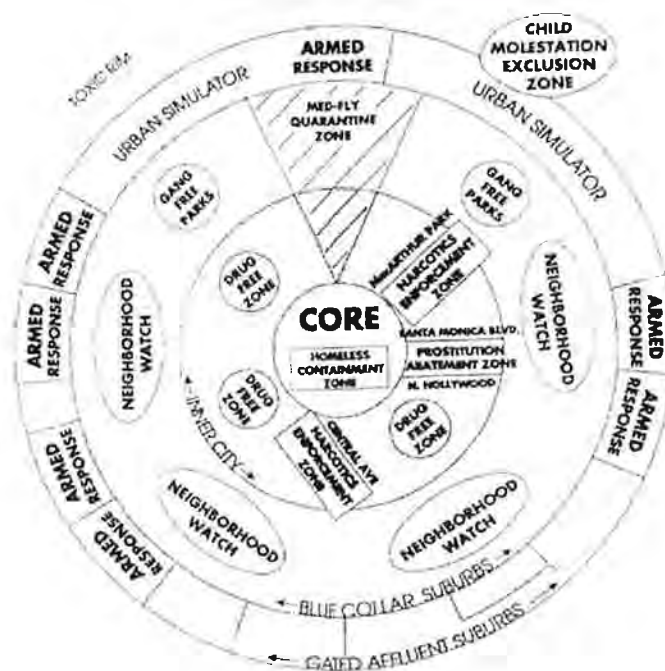


a new species of special enclave is emerging in sympathetic synchronization to the militarization of the landscape. For want of a better generic appellation, we might call them 'social control districts' (SCDs). They merge the sanctions of the criminal or civil code with land-use planning to create what Michel Foucault would undoubtedly have recognized as further instances of the evolution of the 'disciplinary order' of the twentieth-century city. As Christian Boyer paraphrases Foucault:

Disciplinary control proceed[s] by distributing bodies in space, allocating each individual to a cellular partition, creating a functional space out of this analytic spatial arrangement. In the end this spatial matrix became both real and ideal: a hierarchical organization of cellular space and a purely ideal order that was imposed upon its forms.

Currently existing SCDs (simultaneously 'real and ideal') can be distinguished according to their juridical mode of spatial discipline.' Abatement districts, currently enforced against graffiti and prostitution in sign-posted areas of Los Angeles and West Hollywood, extend the traditional police power over nuisance (the legal fount of all zoning) from noxious industry to noxious behavior. Because they are self-financed by the fines collected or special sales taxes levied (on spray paints, for example), abatement districts allow homeowner or merchant groups to target intensified law enforcement against specific local social problems.

#### THE ECOLOGY OF FEAR



Enhancement districts, represented all over Southern California by the 'drug-free zones' surrounding public schools, add extra federal/state penalties or 'enhancements' to crimes committed within a specified radius of public institutions. Containment districts are designed to quarantine potentially epidemic social problems, ranging from that insect illegal immigrant, the Mediterranean fruit fly, to the ever increasing masses of homeless Angelenos. Although Downtown LA's

homeless containment zone' lacks the precise, if surreal, signposting of the state Department of Agriculture's 'Medfly Quarantine Zone', it is nonetheless one of the most dramatic examples of a SCD. By city policy, the spillover of homeless encampments into surrounding council districts, or into the tonier precincts of the Downtown scanscape, is prevented by their 'containment' (official term) within the over-crowded Skid row area known as Central City East (or the 'Nickle' to its inhabitants). Although the recession-driven explosion in the homeless population has inexorably leaked street people into the alleys and vacant lots of nearby inner-ring neighborhoods, the LAPD maintains its pitiless policy of driving them back into the squalor of the Nickle.

The obverse strategy, of course, is the formal exclusion of the homeless and other pariah groups from public spaces. A spate of Southland cities, from Orange County to Santa Barbara, and even including the 'People's Republic of Santa Monica', recently have passed 'anti-camping' ordinances to banish the homeless from their sight. Meanwhile Los Angeles and Pomona are emulating the small city of San Fernando (Richie Valens' hometown) in banning gang members from parks. These 'Gang Free Parks' reinforce non-spatialized sanctions against gang membership (especially the recent Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act or STEP) as examples of 'status criminalization' where group membership, even in the absence of a specific criminal act, has been outlawed.

Status crime, by its very nature, involves projections of middle-class or conservative fantasies about the nature of the 'dangerous classes.' Thus in the 19th century the bourgeoisie crusaded against a largely phantasmagorical 'tramp menace', and, in the 20th century, against a hallucinatory domestic 'red menace.' In the middle 1980s, however, the ghost of Cotton Mather suddenly reappeared in suburban Southern California. Allegations that local daycare centers were actually covens of satanic perversion wrenched us back to the seventeenth century and the Salem witch trials. In the course of the McMartin Preschool molestation case - ultimately the longest and most expensive such ordeal in American history - children testified about molester-teachers who flew around on broomsticks and other manifestations of the Evil One.

One legacy of the accompanying collective hysteria, which undoubtedly mined huge veins of displaced parental guilt, was the little city of San Dimas' creation of the nation's first 'child molestation exclusion zone.' This Twin-Peaks-like suburb in the eastern San Gabriel Valley was sign-posted from stem to stern with the warning: 'Hands Off! Our children are photographed and fingerprinted for their own protection.' I don't know if the armies of lurking pedophiles in the mountains above San Dimas were actually deterred by these warnings, but any mapping of contemporary urban space must acknowledge the existence of such dark, Lynchian zones where the *social imaginary* discharges its fantasies.

Meanwhile, post-riot Southern California seems on the verge of creating yet more SCDs. On the one hand, the arrival of the federal 'Weed and Seed' program, linking community development funds to anti-gang repression, provides a new set of incentives for neighborhoods to adopt exclusion and/or enhancement strategies. As many activists have warned, 'Weed and Seed' is like a police-state caricature of the 1960s War on Poverty, with the Justice Dept. transformed into the manager of urban redevelopment. The poor will be forced to cooperate with their own criminalization as a precondition for urban aid.



On the other hand, emerging technologies may give conservatives, and probably neo-liberals as well, a real opportunity to test cost-saving proposals for community imprisonment built as an alternative to expensive programs of prison construction. Led by Heritage Institute ideologue Charles Murray - whose polemic against social spending for the poor, *Losing Ground* (1984), was the most potent manifesto of the Reagan era - conservative theorists are exploring the practicalities of the carceral city depicted in sci-fi fantasies like *Escape from New York* (which, however, got the relationship of land-values all wrong).

Murray's concept, as first adumbrated in the *New Republic* in 1990, is that 'drug-free zones for the majority' may require social-refugee camps for the criminalized minority. 'If the result of implementing these policies [landlords' and employers' 'unrestricted' right to discriminate in the selection of tenants and workers] is to concentrate the bad apples into a few hyper-violent, antisocial neighborhoods, so be it.' But how will the underclass be effectively confined to its own 'hyper-violent' super-SCDs and kept out of the drug-free shangri-las of the overclass?

One possibility is the systematic establishment of discrete security gateways that will use some biometric criterion, universally registered, to screen crowds and bypassers. The 'most elegant solution', according to a recent article in the *Economist*, 'is a biometric that can be measured without the subject having to do anything at all.' The individually unique cart-wheel pattern of the iris, for example, can be scanned by hidden cameras 'without the subject being any the wiser'. 'That could be useful in places like airports - to check for the eye of a Tamil Tiger, or anybody else whose presence might make security guards' pupils dilate.'

Another emerging technology is the police utilization of LANDSAT satellites linked to Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Almost certainly by the end of the decade the largest US metropolitan areas, including Los Angeles, will be using geosynchronous LANDSAT systems to manage traffic congestion and oversee physical planning. The same LANDSAT-GIS capability can be cost-shared and time-shared with police departments to surveil the movements of tens of thousands of electronically tagged individuals and their automobiles.

Although such monitoring is immediately intended to safeguard expensive sports cars and other toys of the rich, it will be entirely possible to use the same technology to put the equivalent of an electronic handcuff on the activities of entire urban social strata. Drug offenders and gang members can be 'bar-coded', and paroled to the omniscient scrutiny of a satellite that will track their 24-hour itineraries and automatically sound an alarm if they stray outside the borders of their surveillance district. With such powerful Orwellian technologies for social control, community confinement and the confinement of communities may ultimately mean the same thing.

Source: Davis, 1994, pp.3-12

# CHAPTER 21

## From Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans

Richard J. Ford III

*Richard J. Ford was born in 1947 to a father who managed a halfway house and a mother who worked for Washington, DC's Board of Elections. A year after graduating from high school in 1965, he was drafted. Although African Americans constituted 11 percent of the American population, they represented 20 percent of combat deaths in Vietnam during the time Ford served in Vietnam, from June 1967 to July 1968. A specialist in the LURPs (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) of the 25th Infantry Division of the US Army, Ford was awarded two Bronze Stars for heroic conduct. In 1969 he joined the Washington, DC police department as an undercover narcotics agent, earning a gold medal, as well as the American Legion Award. Ford joined the FBI in 1971. He was injured on duty and retired on disability. In the following oral history, excerpted from Wallace Terry's Bloods (1984) Ford tries to make sense of what happened to him in Vietnam.*



I should have felt happy I was goin' home when I got on that plane in Cam Ranh Bay to leave. But I didn't exactly. I felt – I felt – I felt very insecure 'cause I didn't have a weapon. I had one of them long knives, like a big hacksaw knife. I had that. And had my cane. And I had a couple of grenades in my bag. They took them from me when I got to Washington, right? And I felt insecure. I just felt real bad.

You know, my parents never had a weapon in the house. Rifle, shotgun, pistol, nothing. Never had one. Never seen my father with one. And I needed a weapon. 'Cause of that insecurity. I never got over it.

It was Saturday evening when we landed. Nineteen sixty-eight. I caught a cab from Dulles and went straight to my church. The Way of the Cross Church. It's a Pentecostal [Holiness] church. I really wasn't active in the church before I went overseas. But a lot of people from the church wrote me, saying things like "I'm praying for you." There was a couple of peoples around there. They had a choir

rehearsal. And they said they were glad to see me. But I went to the altar and stayed there from seven o'clock to about eleven-thirty. I just wanted to be by myself and pray. At the altar.

I was glad to be home. Just to be stateside. I was thankful that I made it. But I felt bad because I had to leave some friends over there. I left Davis there. I couldn't say a prayer for people that was already gone. But I said a prayer for them guys to come back home safely. For Davis. Yeah, for Davis.

The first nights I came home I couldn't sleep. My room was the back room of my parents' house. I couldn't sleep in the bed, so I had to get on the floor. I woke up in the middle of the night, and looking out my back window, all you see is trees. So I see all these trees, and I'm thinkin' I'm still in Vietnam. And I can't find my weapon. And I can't find Davis. I can't find nobody. And I guess I scared my mother and father half to death 'cause I got to hollering, "Come on, where are you? Where are you? Davis. Davis. SIR DAVIS." I thought I had got captured or something.

The first thing I did Monday was went to the store and bought me a .38. And bought me a .22.

It was right after the Fourth of July, and kids were still throwing firecrackers. I couldn't deal with it. Hear the noise, I hit the ground. I was down on 7th and E, downtown. I had this little .22. A kid threw firecrackers, and I was trying to duck. And some guys laughed at me, right? So I fired the pistol back at them and watched them duck. I said, "It's not funny now, is it?" I didn't go out of my way to mess with nobody, but I demanded respect.

One day, me and my mother and my wife were coming home from church, up Illinois Avenue. I made a left turn, and four white guys in a car cut in front of me and blew the horn. They had been drinking. They gave me the finger. And, man, I forgot all about my mother and wife was in the car. I took off after them. I had the .22 and was firing out the window at them. I just forgot where – and Vietnam does that to you – you forget where you are. It was open season. I'm shooting out the window. My mother said, "Oh, my God. Please, please help him."

Got home and it was, "You need help. You need help." But I was like that. I just couldn't adjust to it. Couldn't adjust to coming back home, and people think you dirty 'cause you went to Vietnam.

The Army sent me to Walter Reed Hospital for therapy. For two weeks. It was for guys who had been involved in a lot of combat. They said that I was hyper. And they pumped me up with a whole bunch of tranquilizers.

I'll never forget this goddamn officer. I'm looking at him. He's got a Good Conduct ribbon on. He's a major. He's reading my jacket, and he's looking with his glasses at me. I'm just sitting there. So he says, "Ford, you were very lucky. I see you got these commendations. You were very lucky to come back." So I told him, "No, I'm not lucky. You're lucky. You didn't go. You sitting there with a Good Conduct Medal on your chest and haven't been outside the States. You volunteered for service. You should have went. I didn't volunteer for Vietnam. They made me go." [...]

I graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1966 and was working for the Food and Drug Administration as a lab technician when I was drafted. My father was administrator of a half-way house for Lorton, and my mother was on the Board of Elections in DC. I was nineteen, and they took me to Fort Bragg. Airborne.

We were really earmarked for Vietnam. Even the drill sergeant and the first sergeant in basic told us that we was going to Vietnam. From basic we went straight to jungle warfare AIT [Administrator-in-Training] in South Carolina. Before I went to Vietnam, three medical doctors at Fort Dix examined my knees. They trained us so hard in Fort Bragg the cartilages were roughed up. The doctors signed the medical record. It was a permanent profile. Said they would find something in the rear for you. A little desk job, clerk, or medic aid. But they didn't. I was sent straight to the infantry.

I really thought Vietnam was really a civil war between that country, and we had no business in there. But it seems that by the Russians getting involved and supplying so many weapons to the North Vietnamese that the United States should send troops in.

When I stepped off the plane in Tan Son Nhut, that heat that was coming from the ground hit me in the face. And the odor from the climate was so strong. It hit me. I said, Goddamn, where am I? What is this?

While we was walking off the plane, guys were coming toward the plane. And guys said, "Happy Birthday, Merry Christmas, Happy Easter. I'll write your mom." They kept going. In other words, you gon' have Easter here, gonna have a birthday here, and you gonna have Christmas here. And good luck.

It was in June 1967. My MOS [military occupational specialty] was mortarman, but they made me be a rifleman first and sent me to Company C, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. We was operating in Chu Lai, but we was a floatin' battalion.

It was really weird how the old guys would ask you what you want to carry. It wasn't a thing where you get assigned an M-14, M-16. If you want to carry an M-16, they say how many rounds of ammo do you want to carry? If you want to carry 2,000, we got it for you. How many grenades do you want? It was really something. We were so in the spirit that we hurt ourself. Guys would want to look like John Wayne. The dudes would just get in the country and say, "I want a .45. I want eight grenades. I want a bandolier. I want a thousand rounds ammo. I want ten clips. I want the works, right?" We never knew what the weight of this ammo is gon' be.

A lot of times guys be walkin' them hills, choppin' through them mountains, and the grenades start gettin' heavy. And you start throwin' your grenades under bushes and takin' your bandoliers off. It wasn't ever questioned. We got back in the rear, and it wasn't questioned if you felt like goin' to get the same thing again next time.

Once I threw away about 200 rounds of ammo. They designated me to carry ammo for the M-60 machine gun. We was going through a stream above Chu Lai. I'm carrying my C rations, my air mattress, poncho, five quarts of water, everything that you own. The ammo was just too heavy. I threw away the ammo going through the river. I said it got lost. The terrain was so terrible, so thick, nobody could question that you lost it.

I come from a very religious family. So I'm carrying my sister's Bible, too. All my letters that I saved. And a little bottle of olive oil that my pastor gave me. Blessed olive



oil. But I found it was a lot of guys in basic with me that were atheist. When we got to Vietnam there were no atheist. There was not one atheist in my unit. When we got hit, everybody hollered, "Oh, God, please help, please." And everybody want to wear a cross. Put a cross on their helmet. Something to psych you up.

Black guys would wear sunglasses, too. We would put on sunglasses walking in the jungle. Think about it, now. It was ridiculous. But we want to show how bad we are. How we're not scared. We be saying, "The Communists haven't made a bullet that can kill me." We had this attitude that I don't give a damn. That made us more aggressive, more ruthless, more careless. And a little more luckier than the person that was scared.

I guess that's why I volunteered for the LURPs and they brought me into Nha Trang. And it was six other black fellas to go to this school at the 5th Special Forces. And we would always be together in the field. Sometimes it would be Captain Park, this Korean, with us. Most of the time it was us, five or six black dudes making our own war, doing our thing alone.

There was Larry Hill from New York. Garland from Baltimore. Holmes from Georgia. Louis Ford from New Orleans. Moon from Detroit, too. They called him Sir Drawers, 'cause he wouldn't wear underwear. Said it gave him a rash. And this guy from Baton Rouge named Albert Davis. He was only 5 feet 9. Only 120 pounds. He was a terrific soldier. A lot of guts, a lot of heart. He was Sir Davis. I was Sir Ford. Like Knights of the Round Table. We be immortal. No one can kill us. [...]

In the field most of the guys stayed high. Lot of them couldn't face it. In a sense, if you was high, it seemed like a game you was in. You didn't take it serious. It stopped a lot of nervous breakdown.

See, the thing about the field that was so bad was this. If I'm working on the job with you stateside and you're my friend, if you get killed, there's a compassion. My boss say, "Well, you better take a couple of days off. Get yourself together." But in the field, we can be the best of friends and you get blown away. They put a poncho around you and send you back. They tell 'em to keep moving.

We had a medic that give us a shot of morphine anytime you want one. I'm not talkin' about for wounded. I'm talkin' about when you want to just get high. So you can face it.

In the rear sometimes we get a grenade, dump the gunpowder out, break the firing pin. Then you'll go inside one of them little bourgeois clubs. Or go in the barracks where the supply guys are, sitting around playing bid whist and doing nothing. We act real crazy. Yell out, "Kill all y'all motherfuckers." Pull the pin and throw the grenade. And everybody would haul ass and get out. It would make a little pop sound. And we would laugh. You didn't see anybody jumpin' on them grenades.

One time in the field, though, I saw a white boy jump on a grenade. But I believe he was pushed. It ain't kill him. He lost both his legs.

The racial incidents didn't happen in the field. Just when we went to the back. It wasn't so much that they were against us. It was just that we felt that we were being taken advantage of, 'cause it seemed like more blacks in the field than in the rear.

In the rear we saw a bunch of rebel flags. They didn't mean nothing by the rebel flag. It was just saying we for the South. It didn't mean that they hated blacks. But after you in the field, you took the flags very personally.

One time we saw these flags in Nha Trang on the MP barracks. They was playing hillbilly music. Had their shoes off dancing. Had nice, pretty bunks. Mosquito nets over top the bunks. And had the nerve to have this camouflaged covers. Air conditioning. Cement floors. We just came out the jungles. We dirty, we smelly, hadn't shaved. We just went off. Said, "Y'all the real enemy. We stayin' here." We turned the bunks over, started tearing up the stereo. They just ran out. Next morning, they shipped us back up.

In the field, we had the utmost respect for each other, because when a fire fight is going on and everybody is facing north, you don't want to see nobody looking around south. If you was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, you didn't tell nobody. [...]

I remember February 20. Twentieth of February. We went to this village outside Duc Pho. Search and destroy. It was suppose to have been VC sympathizers. They sent fliers to the people telling them to get out. Anybody else there, you have to consider them as a VC.

It was a little straw-hut village. Had a little church at the end with this big Buddha. We didn't see anybody in the village. But I heard movement in the rear of this hut. I just opened up the machine gun. You ain't wanna open the door, and then you get blown away. Or maybe they booby-trapped.

Anyway, this little girl screamed. I went inside the door. I'd done already shot her, and she was on top of the old man. She was trying to shield the old man. He looked like he could have been about eighty years old. She was about seven. Both of them was dead. I killed an old man and a little girl in the hut by accident.

I started feeling funny. I wanted to explain to someone. But everybody was there, justifying my actions, saying, "It ain't your fault. They had no business there." But I just - I ain't wanna hear it. I wanted to go home then.

It bothers me now. But so many things happened after that, you really couldn't lay on one thing. You had to keep going.

The flame throwers came in, and we burnt the hamlet. Burnt up everything. They had a lot of rice. We opened the bags, just throw it all over the street. Look for tunnels. Killing animals. Killing all the livestock. Guys would carry chemicals that they would put in the well. Poison the water so they couldn't use it. So they wouldn't come back to use it, right? And it was trifling.

They killed some more people there. Maybe 12 or 14 more. Old people and little kids that wouldn't leave. I guess their grandparents. See, people that were old in Vietnam couldn't leave their village. It was like a ritual. They figured that this'll pass. We'll come and move on.

Sometimes we went in a village, and we found a lot of weapons stashed, little tunnels. On the twentieth of February we found nothing.

You know, it was a little boy used to hang around the base camp. Around Hill 54. Wasn't no more than about eight years old. Spoke good English, a little French. Very sharp. His mother and father got killed by mortar attack on his village. I thought

about that little girl. And I wanted to adopt him. A bunch of us wanted to. And we went out to the field, and then came back and he was gone. [...]

Our main function was to try to see can we find any type of enemy element. They gave us a position, a area, and tell us to go out there and do the recon. We alone – these six black guys – roamin' miles from the base camp. We find them. We radio helicopter pick us up, take us to the rear. We go and bring the battalion out and wipe 'em out. You don't fire your weapon. That's the worse thing you do if you a LURP. Because if it's a large unit and it's just six of y'all, you fire your weapon and you by yourself. You try to kill 'em without firing your weapon. This is what they taught us in Nha Trang. Different ways of killing a person without using your weapon. Use your weapon, it give you away. [...]

Davis would do little crazy things. If they had gold in their mouth, he'd knock the gold out 'cause he saved gold. He saved a little collection of gold teeth. Maybe 50 or 60 in a little box. And he went and had about 100 pictures made of himself. And he used to leave one in the field. Where he got the gook.

One day we saw two gooks no more than 50 yards away. They was rolling cigarettes. Eating. Davis said, "They mine. Y'all just stay here and watch." He sneaked up on 'em real fast, and in one swing he had them. Hit one with the bayonet, hit the other one with the machete.

Wherever he would see a gook, he would go after 'em. He was good. [...]

Before I went home, the company commanders in Bravo and Echo got killed. And rumor said their own men did it. Those companies were pressed because the captains do everything by the book. And the book didn't work for Vietnam. They had this West Point thing about you dug a foxhole at night. Put sandbags around it. You couldn't expect a man to cut through that jungle all day, then dig a hole, fill up the sandbags, then in the morning time dump the sandbags out, fill your foxhole back up, and then cut down another mountain. Guys said the hell with some foxhole. And every time you get in a fire fight, you looking for somebody to cover your back, and he looking around to see where the captain is 'cause he gon' fire a couple rounds at him. See, the thing about Vietnam, your own men could shoot you and no one could tell, because we always left weapons around and the Viet Congs could get them. [...]

When I got out of the service, I went back to Food and Drug, the lab technician thing. But I was carrying this pistol all the time, so people come up and say, "Why don't you go in the police department?"

I joined in December '69. And because I was a LURP and had these medals, they figured I wasn't scared of anything. So they asked me to work undercover in narcotics. I did it for 19 months. Around 7th and T, 9th and U, all in the area. The worst in DC. I would try to buy drugs on a small scale, like \$25. Heroin and cocaine. Then I gradually go up to where I could buy a spoon, \$100. Then I could buy a ounce for a \$1,000. I got robbed three times, hit in the head with a gun once. But my investigation was so successful that they didn't lock anybody up until it was all over.

I threw a great big party at the Diplomat Motel. I had 34 arrest warrants. I invited all the guys that I bought dope from. About 20 of them showed up. All dressed up, and everybody had Cadillacs and Mercedes. We had agents everywhere outside. Then I told them, "I am not a dope pusher like y'all scums." They laughed. I said, "Y'all scums of the earth selling dope to your own. Take the dope up in Georgetown if you want to do something with it. Heroin. Cocaine. Get rid of it." All of them laughed and laughed. And I said, "When I call your name, just raise your hand, 'cause you'll be under arrest for selling these heroins." And they laughed. And I call their names, and they raise their hand. Then these uniforms came in, and it wasn't funny anymore.

But they put out a \$25,000 contract on me. [...]

I was a federal agent until this thing went down in Jersey. We was working police corruption. This lieutenant was stealing dope out the property office and selling it back on the street. But somethin' told me the investigation just wasn't right. We had a snitch telling us about the lieutenant. But he had all the answers. He knew everything. He knows too much. I think he's playing both ends against the middle. So one night, my partner and me are walking down this street going to meet the lieutenant to buy these heroins. This scout car comes driving down on us, hits us both, and the lieutenant jumps out and shoots me in the head. He knows that even if he didn't sell no dope, we gon' nab him. I didn't have no gun, but I reach like I do from instinct. And the lieutenant took off. He went to jail, and the prisoners tried to rape him, kill him.

I retired on disability, because the wound gives me headaches. I do a little private security work now for lawyers, and I try to keep in touch with Davis and the other guys.

Davis tried to get a job with the New Orleans police, but they said he was too short. When it comes to weapons, Sir Davis is terrific. But he's been in trouble. A drug thing, two assaults. He writes me sometimes. Tells me his light bulb is out. They trained us for one thing. To kill. Where is he gonna get a job? The Mafia don't like blacks.

Hill went home first. Said send him all our grenades. He was on his way to Oakland to join the Panthers. Never heard nothin' about him again.

Fowler got shot through the chest with a BAR [Browning automatic rifle]. But he got home. He stays in trouble. He's serving 15-45 in Lewisburg for armed robbery.

Holmes got to computer school. He's doing okay in San Diego. I don't know what happened to Ferguson and Taylor.

Sir Drawers came over to see me for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. He is still out of work. We marched together. When we got to the memorial, I grabbed his hand. Like brothers do. It was all swollen up.

We looked for one name on the memorial. Louis. We found it, and I called his mother. I told her it was nice, and she said she might be able to see it one day.

But I think the memorial is a hole in the ground. It makes me think they ashamed of what we did. You can't see it from the street. A plane flying over it can't see nothing but a hole in the ground.

And it really hurt me to see Westmoreland at the memorial, 'cause he said that we had no intentions of winning the war. What the hell was we over there for then? And the tactical thing was we fought it different from any way we was ever trained to fight in the States. They tell you about flanks, platoons, advance this. It wasn't none of that. It was just jungle warfare. You jumped up and ran where you could run.

We went to church on the Sunday after the memorial thing. I was doing pretty good about Vietnam the last five years, 'cause I was active a whole lot. If I ever sit down and really think about it, it's a different story.

My sister's husband was with me. He got shrapnel in his eye. His vision is messed up. There were 2,000 people in the church. And the pastor gave us space to talk, 'cause we were the only two that went to Vietnam. My brother-in-law is a correction officer at the jail. So we've always been kind of aggressive. Ain't scared that much. But we got up there to talk, and we couldn't do nothing but cry. My wife cried. My children cried. The whole church just cried.

I thought about Louis and all the people that didn't come back. Then people that wasn't even there tell us the war was worthless. That a man lost his life following orders. It was worthless, they be saying.

I really feel used. I feel manipulated. I feel violated.

### Study Questions

- 1 What kinds of relationships sustained and troubled Ford in the military?
- 2 How did his experiences in the military affect Ford's experiences when he returned home? How do his experiences compare with those of Maria Tymoczko's father?
- 3 How did Ford see the Vietnamese people he came into contact with (soldiers and civilians)? Why do you think he saw them this way?

# CHAPTER 20

## From Born on the Fourth of July

Ron Kovic

Ron Kovic was born on July 4, 1946 to a grocery store cashier father and homemaker mother. He was raised with his five younger siblings in a lower-middle-class suburb of Long Island, New York. A self-described "All-American" boy, he loved sports, toy guns, television, and war movies. Not wanting to spend his life working hard for little money like his father, he joined the US Marines in 1964, and was sent to Vietnam. There he confronted the horrors of the war, which included his accidentally killing a fellow soldier, and his participation in a massacre of unarmed civilians, mostly children and elderly. On January 20, 1968, enemy bullets paralyzed him from the chest down. Disillusioned by the treatment he received in a veterans' hospital after returning home, Kovic began to travel a path that led him to question the US government's role in Vietnam. By 1970 he was participating in antiwar rallies and becoming a vocal opponent of the war. In the following opening chapter of his 1976 memoir, Kovic immerses us in the searing terror of his wounding in Vietnam.



Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.

– President John F. Kennedy January 20, 1961

I am the living death  
the memorial day on wheels  
I am your yankee doodle dandy  
your john wayne come home  
your fourth of july firecracker  
exploding in the grave

**T**he blood is still rolling off my flak jacket from the hole in my shoulder and there are bullets cracking into the sand all around me. I keep trying to move my legs but I cannot feel them. I try to breathe but it is difficult. I have to get out of this place, make it out of here somehow.



Someone shouts from my left now, screaming for me to get up. Again and again he screams, but I am trapped in the sand.

*Oh get me out of here, get me out of here, please someone help me! Oh help me, please help me. Oh God oh Jesus!*

"Is there a corpsman?" I cry. "Can you get a corpsman?"

There is a loud crack and I hear the guy begin to sob.

"They've shot my fucking finger off! Let's go, sarge! Let's get outta here!"

"I can't move," I gasp. "I can't move my legs! I can't feel anything!"

I watch him go running back to the tree line.

"Sarge, are you all right?" Someone else is calling to me now and I try to turn around. Again there is the sudden crack of a bullet and a boy's voice crying. "Oh Jesus! Oh Jesus Christ!" I hear his body fall in back of me.

I think he must be dead but I feel nothing for him, I just want to live. I feel nothing.

And now I hear another man coming up from behind, trying to save me. "Get outta here!" I scream. "Get the fuck outta here!"

A tall black man with long skinny arms and enormous hands picks me up and throws me over his shoulder as bullets begin cracking over our heads like strings of firecrackers. Again and again they crack as the sky swirls around us like a cyclone. "Motherfuckers motherfuckers!" he screams. And the rounds keep cracking and the sky and the sun on my face and my body all gone, all twisted up dangling like a puppet's, diving again and again into the sand, up and down, rolling and cursing, gasping for breath. "Goddamn goddamn motherfuckers!"

And finally I am dragged into a hole in the sand with the bottom of my body that can no longer feel, twisted and bent underneath me. The black man runs from the hole without ever saying a thing. I never see his face. I will never know who he is. He is gone. And others now are in the hole helping me. They are bandaging my wounds. There is fear in their faces.

"It's all right," I say to them. "Everything is fine."

Someone has just saved my life. My rifle is gone and I don't feel like finding it or picking it up ever again. The only thing I can think of, the only thing that crosses my mind, is living. There seems to be nothing in the world more important than that.

Hundreds of rounds begin to crash in now. I stare up at the sky because I cannot move. Above the hole men are running around in every direction. I see their legs and frightened faces. They are screaming and dragging the wounded past me. Again and again the rounds crash in. They seem to be coming in closer and closer. A tall man jumps in, hugging me to the earth.

"Oh God!" he is crying. "Oh God please help us!"

The attack is lifted. They are carrying me out of the hole now – two, three, four men – quickly they are strapping me to a stretcher. My legs dangle off the sides until they realize I cannot control them. "I can't move them," I say, almost in a whisper. "I can't move them," I'm still carefully sucking the air, trying to calm myself, trying not to get excited, not to panic. I want to live. I keep telling myself, Take it slow now, as they strap my legs to the stretcher and carry my wounded body into an Amtrac packed with other wounded men. The steel trapdoor of the Amtrac slowly closes as we begin to move to the northern bank and back across the river to the battalion area.

Men are screaming all around me. "Oh God get me out of here!" "Please help!" they scream. Oh Jesus, like little children now, not like marines, not like the posters, not like that day in the high school, this is for real. "Mother!" screams a man without a face. "Oh I don't want to die!" screams a young boy cupping his intestines with his hands. "Oh please, oh no, oh God, oh help! Mother!" he screams again.

We are moving slowly through the water, the Amtrac rocking back and forth. We cannot be brave anymore, there is no reason. It means nothing now. We hold on to ourselves, to things around us, to memories, to thoughts, to dreams. I breathe slowly, desperately trying to stay awake.

The steel trapdoor is opening. I see faces. Corpsmen, I think. Others, curious, looking in at us. Air, fresh, I feel, I smell. They are carrying me out now. Over wounded bodies, past wounded screams. I'm in a helicopter now lifting above the battalion area. I'm leaving the war. I'm going to live. I am still breathing, I keep thinking over and over, I'm going to live and get out of here.

They are shoving tubes and needles in my arms. Now we are being packed into planes. I begin to believe more and more as I watch the other wounded packed around me on shelves that I am going to live.

I still fight desperately to stay awake. I am in an ambulance now rushing to some place. There is a man without any legs screaming in pain, moaning like a little baby. He is bleeding terribly from the stumps that were once his legs, thrashing his arms wildly about his chest, in a semiconscious daze. It is almost too much for me to watch.

I cannot take much more of this. I must be knocked out soon, before I lose my mind. I've seen too much today, I think. But I hold on, sucking the air. I shout then curse for him to be quiet. "My wound is much worse than yours!" I scream. "You're lucky," I shout, staring him in the eyes. "I can feel nothing from my chest down. You at least still have part of your legs. Shut up!" I scream again. "Shut the fuck up, you goddamned baby!" He keeps thrashing his arms wildly above his head and kicking his bleeding stumps toward the roof of the ambulance.

The journey seems to take a very long time, but soon we are at the place where the wounded are sent. I feel a tremendous exhilaration inside me. I have made it this far. I have actually made it this far without giving up and now I am in a hospital where they will operate on me and find out why I cannot feel anything from my chest down anymore. I know I am going to make it now. I am going to make it not because of any god, or any religion, but because *I* want to make it, *I* want to live. And I leave the screaming man without legs and am brought to a room that is very bright.

"What's your name?" the voice shouts.

"Wh-wh-what?" I say.

"What's your name?" the voice says again.

"K-K-Kovic," I say.

"No!" says the voice. "I want your name, rank, and service number. Your date of birth, the name of your father and mother."

"Kovic. Sergeant. Two-oh-three-oh-two-six-one, uh, when are you going to..."

"Date of birth!" the voice shouts.

"July fourth, nineteen forty-six. I was born on the Fourth of July. I can't feel..."



"What religion are you?"

"Catholic," I say.

"What outfit did you come from?"

"What's going on? When are you going to operate?" I say.

"The doctors will operate," he says. "Don't worry," he says confidently. "They are very busy and there are many wounded but they will take care of you soon."

He continues to stand almost at attention in front of me with a long clipboard in his hand, jotting down all the information he can. I cannot understand why they are taking so long to operate. There is something very wrong with me, I think, and they must operate as quickly as possible. The man with the clipboard walks out of the room. He will send the priest in soon.

I lie in the room alone staring at the walls, still sucking the air, determined to live more than ever now.

The priest seems to appear suddenly above my head. With his fingers he is gently touching my forehead, rubbing it slowly and softly. "How are you," he says.

"I'm fine, Father." His face is very tired but it is not frightened. He is almost at ease, as if what he is doing he has done many times before.

"I have come to give you the Last Rites, my son."

"I'm ready, Father," I say.

And he prays, rubbing oils on my face and gently placing the crucifix to my lips. "I will pray for you," he says.

"When will they operate?" I say to the priest.

"I do not know," he says. "The doctors are very busy. There are many wounded. There is not much time for anything here but trying to live. So you must try to live my son, and I will pray for you."

Soon after that I am taken to a long room where there are many doctors and nurses. They move quickly around me. They are acting very competent. "You will be fine," says one nurse calmly.

"Breathe deeply into the mask," the doctor says.

"Are you going to operate?" I ask.

"Yes. Now breathe deeply into the mask." As the darkness of the mask slowly covers my face I pray with all my being that I will live through this operation and see the light of day once again. I want to live so much. And even before I go to sleep with the blackness still swirling around my head and the numbness of sleep, I begin to fight as I have never fought before in my life.

I awake to the screams of other men around me. I have made it. I think that maybe the wound is my punishment for killing the corporal and the children. That now everything is okay and the score is evened up. And now I am packed in this place with the others who have been wounded like myself, strapped onto a strange circular bed. I feel tubes going into my nose and hear the clanking, pumping sound of a machine. I still cannot feel any of my body but I know I am alive. I feel a terrible pain in my chest. My body is so cold. It has never been this weak. I feel so tired and out of touch, so lost and in pain. I can still barely breathe. I look around me, at people moving in shadows of numbness. There is the man who had been in the ambulance

with me, screaming louder than ever, kicking his bloody stumps in the air, crying for his mother, crying for his morphine.

Directly across from me there is a Korean who has not even been in the war at all. The nurse says he was going to buy a newspaper when he stepped on a booby trap and it blew off both his legs and his arm. And all that is left now is this slab of meat swinging one arm crazily in the air, moaning like an animal gasping for its last bit of life, knowing that death is rushing toward him. The Korean is screaming like a madman at the top of his lungs. I cannot wait for the shots of morphine. Oh, the morphine feels so good. It makes everything dark and quiet. I can rest. I can leave this madness. I can dream of my back yard once again.

When I wake they are screaming still and the lights are on and the clock, the clock on the wall, I can hear it ticking to the sound of their screams. I can hear the dead being carted out and the new wounded being brought in to the beds all around me. I have to get out of this place.

"Can I call you by your first name?" I say to the nurse.

"No. My name is Lieutenant Wiecker."

"Please, can I . . ."

"No," she says. "It's against regulations."

I'm sleeping now. The lights are flashing. The black pilot is next to me. He says nothing. He stares at the ceiling all day long. He does nothing but that. But something is happening now, something is going wrong over there. The nurse is shouting for the machine, and the corpsman is crawling on the black man's chest, he has his knees on his chest and he's pounding it with his fists again and again.

"His heart has stopped!" screams the nurse.

Pounding, pounding, he's pounding his fist into his chest.

"Get the machine!" screams the corpsman.

The nurse is pulling the machine across the hangar floor as quickly as she can now. They are trying to put curtains around the whole thing, but the curtains keep slipping and falling down. Everyone, all the wounded who can still see and think, now watch what is happening to the pilot, and it is happening right next to me. The doctor hands the corpsman a syringe, they are laughing as the corpsman drives the syringe into the pilot's chest like a knife. They are talking about the Green Bay Packers and the corpsman is driving his fist into the black man's chest again and again until the black pilot's body begins to bloat up, until it doesn't look like a body at all anymore. His face is all puffy like a balloon and saliva rolls slowly from the sides of his mouth. He keeps staring at the ceiling and saying nothing. "The machine! The machine!" screams the doctor, now climbing on top of the bed, taking the corpsman's place. "Turn on the machine!" screams the doctor.

He grabs a long suction cup that is attached to the machine and places it carefully against the black man's chest. The black man's body jumps up from the bed almost arcing into the air from each bolt of electricity, jolting and arcing, bloating up more and more.

"I'll bet on the Packers," says the corpsman.

"Green Bay doesn't have a chance," the doctor says, laughing.

The nurse is smiling now, making fun of both the doctor and the corpsman. "I don't understand football," she says.

They are pulling the sheet over the head of the black man and strapping him onto the gurney. He is taken out of the ward.

The Korean civilian is still screaming and there is a baby now at the end of the ward. The nurse says it has been napalmed by our own jets. I cannot see the baby but it screams all the time like the Korean and the young man without any legs I had met in the ambulance.

I can hear a radio. It is the Armed Forces radio. The corpsman is telling the baby to shut the hell up and there is a young kid with half his head blown away. They have brought him in and put him where the black pilot has just died, right next to me. He has thick bandages wrapped all around his head till I can hardly see his face at all. He is like a vegetable – a nineteen-year-old vegetable, thrashing his arms back and forth, babbling and pissing in his clean white sheets.

"Quit pissin' in your sheets!" screams the corpsman. But the nineteen-year-old kid who doesn't have any brains anymore makes the corpsman very angry. He just keeps pissing in the sheets and crying like a little baby.

There is a Green Beret sergeant calling for his mother. Every night now I hear him. He has spinal meningitis. He will be dead before this evening is over.

The Korean civilian does not moan anymore. He does not wave his one arm and two fingers above his head. He is dead and they have taken him away too.

There is a nun who comes through the ward now with apples for the wounded and rosary beads. She is very pleasant and smiles at all of the wounded. The corpsman is reading a comicbook, still cursing at the baby. The baby is screaming and the Armed Forces radio is saying that troops will be home soon. The kid with the bloody stumps is getting a morphine shot.

There is a general walking down the aisles now, going to each bed. He's marching down the aisles, marching and facing each wounded man in his bed. A skinny private with a Polaroid camera follows directly behind him. The general is dressed in an immaculate uniform with shiny shoes. "Good afternoon, marine," the general says. "In the name of the President of the United States and the United States Marine Corps, I am proud to present you with the Purple Heart, and a picture," the general says. Just then the skinny man with the Polaroid camera jumps up, flashing a picture of the wounded man. "And a picture to send to your folks."

He comes up to my bed and says exactly the same thing he has said to all the rest. The skinny man jumps up, snapping a picture of the general handing the Purple Heart to me. "And here," says the general, "here is a picture to send home to your folks." The general makes a sharp left face. He is marching to the bed next to me where the nineteen-year-old kid is still pissing in his pants, babbling like a little baby.

"In the name of the President of the United States," the general says. The kid is screaming now almost tearing the bandages off his head, exposing the part of his brain that are still left. "... I present you with the Purple Heart. And here," the general says, handing the medal to the nineteen-year-old vegetable, the skinny guy jumping up and snapping a picture, "here is a picture..." the general says, looking at the picture the skinny guy has just pulled out of the camera. The kid is still pissing

in his white sheets. "...And here is a picture to send home..." The general does not finish what he is saying. He stares at the nineteen-year-old for what seems a long time. He hands the picture back to his photographer and as sharply as before marches to the next bed.

"Good afternoon, marine," he says.

The kid is still pissing in his clean white sheets when the general walks out of the room.

I am in this place for seven days and seven nights. I write notes on scraps of paper telling myself over and over that I will make it out of here, that I am going to live. I am squeezing rubber balls with my hands to try to get strong again. I write letters home to Mom and Dad. I dictate them to a woman named Lucy who is with the USO. I am telling Mom and Dad that I am hurt pretty bad but I have done it for America and that it is worth it. I tell them not to worry. I will be home soon.

The day I am supposed to leave has come. I am strapped in a long frame and taken from the place of the wounded. I am moved from hangar to hangar, then finally put on a plane, and I leave Vietnam forever.

### Study Questions

- 1 Kovic places the reader in the middle of the Vietnam War without providing any specific information about the war, or the time or place the events are taking place. Why do you think he decided to begin his memoir this way?
- 2 How do the thoughts that run through his head relate to the ideas he had about religion, family, and war when he was growing up?
- 3 Why does Kovic's experience in the hospital begin to raise doubts for him about the war?
- 4 How does Kovic fit Christian Appy's profile of the average working-class soldier who fought in Vietnam?

[← Back to Original Article](#)

## ACLU's lawsuit against the VA is a step in vet's recovery

*Greg Valentini hopes the case will help other veterans who ended up traumatized and homeless*

June 10, 2011

Combat veteran Greg Valentini slept in Wednesday morning in Hollywood, the day he sued the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Actually, Valentini didn't file the suit himself, and he was only one of four plaintiffs in what could become a class-action case. The ACLU of Southern California argues in the suit that the VA has mismanaged and underutilized its sprawling West Los Angeles campus even as mentally impaired homeless vets sleep on the city's streets.

If there's money to wage two wars, there ought to be money to restore abandoned medical buildings at the VA and fill them with some of the estimated 8,200 homeless veterans in Greater Los Angeles, as well as provide them the rehab services they need. That's how the ACLU's Mark Rosenbaum described the thinking behind the lawsuit to me this week.

As the suit notes, the VA campus has enough space for private companies to store buses and rental cars and for a hotel laundry facility, but no permanent housing for veterans, even though the property was deeded to the government more than 100 years ago specifically to house veterans.

As for Valentini, his involvement in the lawsuit came as a surprise to me, even though I've been shadowing him for several months in a series of columns about his efforts to rehabilitate himself. He told me he was sworn to secrecy until the suit was filed.

On Wednesday morning I visited him at the Hollywood rehab center where he has lived since last August along with a few dozen other veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Valentini, 33, hadn't seen the lawsuit, so I delivered a copy.

Valentini, who grew up in Lakewood, wasn't entirely comfortable being named in the suit. He doesn't enjoy reviewing the harrowing details of his combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and his later descent into suicidal fantasies, homelessness and drug addiction. But he was willing if it would help others.

Here's what the suit says about his service in Afghanistan: "He took part in significant ground fighting, under nearly constant sniper fire and mortar bombardment" and "witnessed the gruesome deaths of numerous civilians, including children."

And in Iraq: "The unit's assignment was to clear, secure and hold certain key areas near Karbala while other forces moved toward Baghdad. He again experienced heavy combat, involving the deaths of soldiers and civilians."

Valentini rarely discusses those experiences.

"I've had this ping-pong battle in my head for a long time," he said, meaning that although he attributes his predicament to the damage he suffered in two wars, he doesn't want to be someone who never leaves the war behind.

Greg enlisted in the Army in 2000 because he wanted to honor his father and grandfather, both of them veterans, and then use the G.I. Bill to make something of himself. Instead, he ended up in post-combat hell, living in a tent by the Long Beach Airport, bathing in a lake and eating out of garbage cans.

"I don't want to be a whiny vet," he said. Tons of vets, he argued, came home with similar problems and fought through them with "diligence and hard work."

"A lot of what I've done," he said, referring particularly to his drug abuse after returning, "is a straight-up cop-out."

His involvement in the lawsuit is another illustration of that ping-pong battle in his head. It began when his request for an increase in disability compensation — from 50% disabled with severe post-traumatic stress disorder to 70% disabled — was denied in February after a visit with a psychiatrist.

"You were not hostile or fearful," says the VA's explanation for denial. "You did not have any bizarre posturing, gait, or mannerisms....You denied any suicidal or homicidal ideation or intent."

To Valentini, it was like being penalized for doing his best to cope, and he said the exam lasted only 15 minutes. The Volunteers of America,

which runs the rehab center where he lives, believed he might be entitled to the extra benefits and referred him to the Inner City Law Center, which had teamed up with the ACLU in the drafting of the lawsuit.

Valentini supports the argument that the VA ought to make better use of its nearly 400 acres in West L.A., and that the chances of rehabilitation are greater for vets who live in supportive housing with all the needed services in one place.

But he also blames the bulk of his problems on himself, rather than the VA. After his discharge in 2003, he said he got good care at the VA in Long Beach and was steered into a good housing program run by U.S. Vets, a nonprofit.

Later, he briefly lived in temporary housing at the West L.A. campus, but that was disastrous, in part because of the easy access to drugs.

One of his roommates there died of a heroin overdose.

Back to the streets went Valentini, and back to drugs, until he landed in jail for burglary. It was a VA rep who helped steer him into the program he's in now, Valentini said, and he has decided he wants to become a social worker and help other vets.

Now here's an ironic twist:

Though Valentini was named in Wednesday's lawsuit over the lack of housing for vets, he learned on Tuesday that he got a long-awaited housing voucher from the VA that will allow him to move into his own apartment in August.

Valentini hopes the lawsuit will do some good for other vets, and he hopes the voucher will get him one step closer to his goal.

He wants to be strong enough to reject his own rationalizations, to win that ping-pong battle in his head and not only leave the war behind, but show others the way.

*steve.lopez@latimes.com*



MIKE DAVIS

## "Fortress L.A."

from *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1990)

**Editors' introduction** It has been said that Mike Davis is to contemporary Los Angeles what Friedrich Engels was to mid-nineteenth-century Manchester. Engels was a kind of explorer, reporting to an educated, middle-class audience about the horrors of the industrial city and the miserable lives of the new proletarian class of modern capitalism. Similarly, Davis, 150 years later, explores the dark side of the postmodern metropolis and reports on the hopelessness and despair of the postindustrial "underclass" (largely defined by race, gender, and ethnicity) to an audience largely comprising young, disaffected intellectuals and academics. Clearly, the parallels are striking. Indeed, Davis may be the heir to Engels simply because the contemporary metropolis – characterized by wealth and homelessness and divided against itself along the fault lines that separate suburban enclaves from inner-city slums – is the heir to the geographical and social-class divisions of the cities of the Industrial Revolution.

Mike Davis, who is a native southern Californian and who teaches urban theory at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, is an insightful and acerbic social critic who makes his social-class sympathies and anti-Establishment bias perfectly clear on every page of *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London: Verso, 1992), which one admirer praised as a "visionary rant."

In *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (p. 47), Engels noted the boulevards that intersected the city of Manchester and how the facades of those broad thoroughfares served to mask and disguise the noisome hovels of the poor that lay beyond the view of the middle-class commuter. Davis, employing an eclectic "culture studies" methodology, makes a similar but even subtler point about contemporary Los Angeles. Not only do the freeways allow middle-class suburbanites to navigate the city as a whole without encountering the lives of the residents of the inner-city neighborhoods, but the city itself has become, in the semiotic culture of postmodernism, a vast and continuous system of signs that we read and obey on (mostly) a subconscious level. "Today's upscale, pseudo-public spaces," he writes, "... are full of invisible signs warning off the underclass 'Other.' Although architectural critics are usually oblivious to how the built environment contributes to segregation, pariah groups – whether poor Latino families, young Black men, or elderly homeless white females – read the meaning immediately."

Another similarity between Engels and Davis is that both men, as they proceeded to "read the streets" of their respective paradigm cities, seemed to reach the limits of language's ability to describe the physical and psychological conditions being reported. Engels adopted the strategy of social science, compiling a mountain of personal observations, journalistic reports, and official survey data to create a virtual catalog of social horror. Davis, on the other hand, relies on a more emotional, even histrionic, strategy. His overheated rhetorical excesses often seem to overwhelm rational discourse.

Still, Davis's critique of the contemporary urban social order, however enraged, has a kind of compelling validity quite independent of the received canons of intellectual discourse. Indeed, Davis turned out to be a prophet: the ghettos and barrios of Southcentral Los Angeles erupted into open rebellion in the Rodney King riots two years after the publication of *City of Quartz*.

Whereas Engels saw massive social dislocations and systematically set about to fashion a theory of revolutionary socialism in response to the observed reality, Davis offers no similarly optimistic solution. In a sense, Davis *personalizes* the horrors of the contemporary city, and his voice is one of desperation and despair offering no obvious way out of the current impasse. Unfortunately, many would say that the tone of that voice is an undeniably accurate echo of what we hear all around us today.

Davis's insights regarding the underclass "other" suggest comparisons with such classic analysts of ghettoization as Dubois (p. 57), Anthony Downs (p. 500), and William Julius Wilson (p. 226), but it is difficult to compare Davis with social policy and planning professionals – whether a conservative like Charles Murray (p. 233) or progressives like Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard (p. 165) – whose focus is on influencing the existing system by working within it.

As a chronicler of southern California, Davis continues a strong muckraking tradition begun by Carey McWilliams in *Factories in the Field* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1946), *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1946) and other works. For a more centrist view, see Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream* (New York: Oxford, 1985) and *Material Dreams* (New York: Oxford, 1990). Also useful is Sam Bass Warner's *The Urban Wilderness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). For another Marxist postmodernist discussion of the culture of contemporary urbanism with European examples consult British geographer David Harvey's *The Urban Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

## MIKE DAVIS, "Fortress L.A."

from *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1990)

The carefully manicured lawns of Los Angeles' Westside sprout forests of ominous little signs warning: "Armed Response!" Even richer neighborhoods in the canyons and hillsides isolate themselves behind walls guarded by gun-toting private police and state-of-the-art electronic surveillance. Downtown, a publicly subsidized "urban renaissance" has raised the nation's largest corporate citadel, segregated from the poor neighborhoods around it by a monumental architectural glacis. In Hollywood, celebrity architect Frank Gehry, renowned for his "humanism," apotheosizes the siege look in a library designed to resemble a foreign-legion fort. In the Westlake district and the San Fernando Valley the Los Angeles

Police barricade streets and seal off poor neighborhoods as part of their "war on drugs." In Watts, developer Alexander Haagen demonstrates his strategy for recolonizing inner-city retail markets: a panopticon shopping mall surrounded by staked metal fences and a substation of the LAPD in a central surveillance tower. Finally, on the horizon of the next millennium, an ex-chief of police crusades for an anti-crime "giant eye" – a geo-synchronous law enforcement satellite – while other cops discreetly tend versions of "Garden Plot," a hoary but still viable 1960s plan for a law-and-order armageddon.

Welcome to post-liberal Los Angeles, where the defense of luxury lifestyles is translated into



a proliferation of new repressions in space and movement, undergirded by the ubiquitous "armed response." This obsession with physical security systems, and, collaterally, with the architectural policing of social boundaries, has become a zeitgeist of urban restructuring, a master narrative in the emerging built environment of the 1990s. Yet contemporary urban theory, whether debating the role of electronic technologies in precipitating "postmodern space," or discussing the dispersion of urban functions across poly-centered metropolitan "galaxies," has been strangely silent about the militarization of city life so grimly visible at the street level. Hollywood's pop apocalypses and pulp science fiction have been more realistic, and politically perceptive, in representing the programmed hardening of the urban surface in the wake of the social polarizations of the Reagan era. Images of carceral inner cities (*Escape from New York*, *Running Man*), high-tech police death squads (*Blade Runner*), sentient buildings (*Die Hard*), urban bantustans (*They Live!*), Vietnam-like street wars (*Colors*), and so on, only extrapolate from actually existing trends.

Such dystopian visions grasp the extent to which today's pharaonic scales of residential and commercial security supplant residual hopes for urban reform and social integration. The dire predictions of Richard Nixon's 1969 National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence have been tragically fulfilled: we live in "fortress cities" brutally divided between "fortified cells" of affluent society and "places of terror" where the police battle the criminalized poor. The "Second Civil War" that began in the long hot summers of the 1960s has been institutionalized into the very structure of urban space. The old liberal paradigm of social control, attempting to balance repression with reform, has long been superseded by a rhetoric of social warfare that calculates the interests of the urban poor and the middle classes as a zero-sum game. In cities like Los Angeles, on the bad edge of post-modernity, one observes an unprecedented tendency to merge urban design, architecture and the police apparatus into a single, comprehensive security effort.

This epochal coalescence has far-reaching consequences for the social relations of the built environment. In the first place, the market provision of "security" generates its own paranoid demand. "Security" becomes a positional good defined by income access to private "protective services" and membership in some hardened residential enclave or restricted suburb. As a prestige symbol – and sometimes as the decisive borderline between the merely well-off and the "truly rich" – "security" has less to do with personal safety than with the degree of personal insulation, in residential, work, consumption and travel environments, from "unsavory" groups and individuals, even crowds in general.

Secondly, as William Whyte has observed of social intercourse in New York, "fear proves itself." The social perception of threat becomes a function of the security mobilization itself, not crime rates. Where there is an actual rising arc of street violence, as in Southcentral Los Angeles or Downtown Washington D.C., most of the carnage is self-contained within ethnic or class boundaries. Yet white middle-class imagination, absent from any firsthand knowledge of inner-city conditions, magnifies the perceived threat through a demonological lens. Surveys show that Milwaukee suburbanites are just as worried about violent crime as inner-city Washingtonians, despite a twentyfold difference in relative levels of mayhem. The media, whose function in this arena is to bury and obscure the daily economic violence of the city, ceaselessly throw up spectres of criminal underclasses and psychotic stalkers. Sensationalized accounts of killer youth gangs high on crack and shrilly racist evocations of marauding Willie Hortons foment the moral panics that reinforce and justify urban apartheid.

Moreover, the neo-military syntax of contemporary architecture insinuates violence and conjures imaginary dangers. In many instances the semiotics of so-called "defensible space" are just about as subtle as a swaggering white cop. Today's upscale, pseudo-public spaces – sumptuary malls, office centers, culture acropolises, and so on – are full of invisible signs warning off the underclass "Other." Although architectural critics are usually oblivious to how the built

environment contributes to segregation, pariah groups – whether poor Latino families, young Black men, or elderly homeless white females – read the meaning immediately.

## THE DESTRUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE

The universal and ineluctable consequence of this crusade to secure the city is the destruction of accessible public space. The contemporary opprobrium attached to the term "street person" is in itself a harrowing index of the devaluation of public spaces. To reduce contact with untouchables, urban redevelopment has converted once vital pedestrian streets into traffic sewers and transformed public parks into temporary receptacles for the homeless and wretched. The American city, as many critics have recognized, is being systematically turned inside out – or, rather, outside in. The valorized spaces of the new megastructures and supermalls are concentrated in the center, street frontage is denuded, public activity is sorted into strictly functional compartments, and circulation is internalized in corridors under the gaze of private police.

The privatization of the architectural public realm, moreover, is shadowed by parallel restructurings of electronic space, as heavily policed, pay-access "information orders," elite databases and subscription cable services appropriate parts of the invisible agora. Both processes, of course, mirror the deregulation of the economy and the recession of non-market entitlements. The decline of urban liberalism has been accompanied by the death of what might be called the "Olmstedian vision" of public space. Frederick Law Olmsted, it will be recalled, was North America's Haussmann, as well as the Father of Central Park. In the wake of Manhattan's "Commune" of 1863, the great Draft Riot, he conceived public landscapes and parks as social safety-valves, mixing classes and ethnicities in common (bourgeois) recreations and enjoyments. As Manfredo Tafuri has shown in his well-known study of Rockefeller Center, the same principle animated the construction of the canonical urban spaces of the La Guardia-Roosevelt era.

This reformist vision of public space – as the emollient of class struggle, if not the bedrock of the American *polis* – is now as obsolete as Keynesian nostrums of full employment. In regard to the "mixing" of classes, contemporary urban America is more like Victorian England than Walt Whitman's or La Guardia's New York. In Los Angeles, once-upon-a-time a demi-paradise of free beaches, luxurious parks, and "cruising strips," genuinely democratic space is all but extinct. The Oz-like archipelago of Westside pleasure domes – a continuum of tony malls, arts centers and gourmet strips – is reciprocally dependent upon the social imprisonment of the third-world service proletariat who live in increasingly repressive ghettos and barrios. In a city of several million yearning immigrants, public amenities are radically shrinking, parks are becoming derelict and beaches more segregated, libraries and playgrounds are closing, youth congregations of ordinary kinds are banned, and the streets are becoming more desolate and dangerous.

Unsurprisingly, as in other American cities, municipal policy has taken its lead from the security offensive and the middle-class demand for increased spatial and social insulation. De facto disinvestment in traditional public space and recreation has supported the shift of fiscal resources to corporate-defined redevelopment priorities. A pliant city government – in this case ironically professing to represent a bi-racial coalition of liberal whites and Blacks – has collaborated in the massive privatization of public space and the subsidization of new, racist enclaves (benignly described as "urban villages"). Yet most current, giddy discussions of the "postmodern" scene in Los Angeles neglect entirely these overbearing aspects of counter-urbanization and counter-insurgency. A triumphal gloss – "urban renaissance," "city of the future," and so on – is laid over the brutalization of inner-city neighborhoods and the increasing South Africanization of its spatial relations. Even as the walls have come down in Eastern Europe, they are being erected all over Los Angeles.

The observations that follow take as their thesis the existence of this new class war (sometimes a continuation of the race war of the

1960s) at the level of the built environment. Although this is not a comprehensive account, which would require a thorough analysis of economic and political dynamics, these images and instances are meant to convince the reader that urban form is indeed following a repressive function in the political furrows of the Reagan-Bush era. Los Angeles, in its usual prefigurative mode, offers an especially disquieting catalogue of the emergent liaisons between architecture and the American police state.

### THE FORBIDDEN CITY

The first militarist of space in Los Angeles was General Otis of the *Times*. Declaring himself at war with labor, he infused his surroundings with an unrelentingly bellicose air:

He called his home in Los Angeles the Bivouac. Another house was known as the Outpost. The *Times* was known as the Fortress. The staff of the paper was the Phalanx. The *Times* building itself was more fortress than newspaper plant, there were turrets, battlements, sentry boxes. Inside he stored fifty rifles.

A great, menacing bronze eagle was the *Times*'s crown; a small, functional cannon was installed on the hood of Otis's touring car to intimidate onlookers. Not surprisingly, this overwrought display of aggression produced a response in kind. On 1 October 1910 the heavily fortified *Times* headquarters – citadel of the open shop on the West Coast – was destroyed in a catastrophic explosion blamed on union saboteurs.

Eighty years later, the spirit of General Otis has returned to subtly pervade Los Angeles' new "postmodern" Downtown: the emerging Pacific Rim financial complex which cascades, in rows of skyscrapers, from Bunker Hill southward along the Figueroa corridor. Redeveloped with public tax increments under the aegis of the powerful and largely unaccountable Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the Downtown project is one of the largest postwar urban designs in North America. Site assemblage and clearing on a vast scale, with little mobilized opposition, have resurrected land values, upon which big developers and off-shore capital

(increasingly Japanese) have planted a series of billion-dollar, block-square megastructures: Crocker Center, the Bonaventure Hotel and Shopping Mall, the World Trade Center, the Broadway Plaza, Arco Center, CitiCorp Plaza, California Plaza, and so on. With historical landscapes erased, with megastructures and superblocks as primary components, and with an increasingly dense and self-contained circulation system, the new financial district is best conceived as a single, demonically self-referential hyperstructure, a Miesian skyscape raised to dementia.

Like similar megalomaniac complexes, tethered to fragmented and desolated Downtowns (for instance, the Renaissance Center in Detroit, the Peachtree and Omni Centers in Atlanta, and so on), Bunker Hill and the Figueroa corridor have provoked a storm of liberal objections against their abuse of scale and composition, their denigration of street landscape, and their confiscation of so much of the vital life activity of the center, now sequestered within subterranean concourses or privatized malls. Sam Hall Kaplan, the crusty urban critic of the *Times*, has been indefatigable in denouncing the anti-pedestrian bias of the new corporate citadel, with its fascist obliteration of street frontage. In his view the superimposition of "hermetically sealed fortresses" and air-dropped "pieces of suburbia" has "dammed the rivers of life" Downtown.

Yet Kaplan's vigorous defense of pedestrian democracy remains grounded in hackneyed liberal complaints about "bland design" and "elitist planning practices." Like most architectural critics, he rails against the oversights of urban design without recognizing the dimension of foresight, of explicit repressive intention, which has its roots in Los Angeles' ancient history of class and race warfare. Indeed, when Downtown's new "Gold Coast" is viewed en bloc from the standpoint of its interactions with other social areas and landscapes in the central city, the "fortress effect" emerges, not as an inadvertent failure of design, but as deliberate socio-spatial strategy.

The goals of this strategy may be summarized as a double repression: to raze all association with Downtown's past and to prevent any



articulation with the non-Anglo urbanity of its future. Everywhere on the perimeter of redevelopment this strategy takes the form of a brutal architectural edge or glacis that defines the new Downtown as a citadel vis-à-vis the rest of the central city. Los Angeles is unusual amongst major urban renewal centers in preserving, however negligently, most of its circa 1900–30 Beaux Arts commercial core. At immense public cost, the corporate headquarters and financial district was shifted from the old Broadway–Spring corridor six blocks west to the greenfield site created by destroying the Bunker Hill residential neighborhood. To emphasize the "security" of the new Downtown, virtually all the traditional pedestrian links to the old center, including the famous Angels' Flight funicular railroad, were removed.

The logic of this entire operation is revealing. In other cities developers might have attempted to articulate the new skyline and the old, exploiting the latter's extraordinary inventory of theaters and historic buildings to create a gentrified history – a gaslight district, Faneuil Market or Ghirardelli Square – as a support to middle-class residential colonization. But Los Angeles' redevelopers viewed property values in the old Broadway core as irreversibly eroded by the area's very centrality to public transport, and especially by its heavy use by Black and Mexican poor. In the wake of the Watts rebellion, and the perceived Black threat to crucial nodes of white power (spelled out in lurid detail in the McCone Commission Report), resegregated spatial security became the paramount concern. The Los Angeles Police Department abetted the flight of business from Broadway to the fortified redoubts of Bunker Hill by spreading scare literature typifying Black teenagers as dangerous gang members.

As a result, redevelopment massively reproduced spatial apartheid. The moat of the Harbor Freeway and the regraded palisades of Bunker Hill cut off the new financial core from the poor immigrant neighborhoods that surround it on every side. Along the base of California Plaza, Hill Street became a local

Berlin Wall separating the publicly subsidized luxury of Bunker Hill from the lifeworld of Broadway, now reclaimed by Latino immigrants as their primary shopping and entertainment street. Because politically connected speculators are now redeveloping the northern end of the Broadway corridor (sometimes known as "Bunker Hill East"), the CRA is promising to restore pedestrian linkages to the Hill in the 1990s, including the Angels' Flight incline railroad. This, of course, only dramatizes the current bias against accessibility – that is to say, against any spatial interaction between old and new, poor and rich, except in the framework of gentrification or recolonization. Although a few white-collars venture into the Grand Central Market – a popular emporium of tropical produce and fresh foods – Latino shoppers or Saturday strollers never circulate in the Gucci precincts above Hill Street. The occasional appearance of a destitute street nomad in Broadway Plaza or in front of the Museum of Contemporary Art sets off a quiet panic; video cameras turn on their mounts and security guards adjust their belts.

Photographs of the old Downtown in its prime show mixed crowds of Anglo, Black and Latino pedestrians of different ages and classes. The contemporary Downtown "renaissance" is designed to make such heterogeneity virtually impossible. It is intended not just to "kill the street" as Kaplan fears, but to "kill the crowd," to eliminate that democratic admixture on the pavements and in the parks that Olmsted believed was America's antidote to European class polarizations. The Downtown hyperstructure – like some Buckminster Fuller post-Holocaust fantasy – is programmed to ensure a seamless continuum of middle-class work, consumption and recreation, without unwonted exposure to Downtown's working-class street environments. Indeed the totalitarian semiotics of ramparts and battlements, reflective glass and elevated pedways, rebukes any affinity or sympathy between different architectural or human orders. As in Otis's fortress *Times* building, this is the archisemiotics of class war.

[Back to Modern History SourceBook](#)

# Modern History Sourcebook: US State Department: North Vietnamese Aggression, 1965

---

## *The Record of North Vietnam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam*

South Viet-Nam is fighting for its life against a brutal campaign of terror and armed attack inspired, directed, supplied, and controlled by the Communist regime in Hanoi. This flagrant aggression has been going on for years, but recently the pace has quickened and the threat has now become acute.

The war in Viet-Nam is a new kind of war, a fact as yet poorly understood in most parts of the world. Much of the confusion that prevails in the thinking of many people, and even many governments, stems from this basic misunderstanding. For in Viet-Nam a totally new brand of aggression has been loosed against an independent people who want to make their own way in peace and freedom.

Viet-Nam is *not* another Greece, where indigenous guerrilla forces used friendly neighboring territory as a sanctuary.

Viet-Nam is *not* another Malaya, where Communist guerrillas were, for the most part, physically distinguishable from the peaceful majority they sought to control.

Viet-Nam is *not* another Philippines, where Communist guerrillas were physically separated from the source of their moral and physical support.

Above all, the war in Viet-Nam is not a spontaneous and local rebellion against the established government.

There are elements in the Communist program of conquest directed against South Viet-Nam common to each of the previous areas of aggression and subversion. But there is one fundamental difference. In Viet-Nam a Communist government has set out deliberately to conquer a sovereign people in a neighboring state. And to achieve its end, it has used every resource of its own government to carry out its carefully planned program of concealed aggression. North Viet-Nam's commitment to seize control of the South is no less total than was the commitment of the regime in North Korea in 1950. But knowing the consequences of the latter's undisguised attack, the planners in Hanoi have tried desperately to conceal their hand. They have failed and their aggression is as real as that of an invading army....

The evidence shows that the hard core of the Communist forces attacking South Viet-Nam were trained in the North and ordered into the South by Hanoi. It shows that the key leadership of the

Viet Cong (VC), the officers and much of the cadre, many of the technicians, political organizers, and propagandists have come from the North and operate under Hanoi's direction. It shows that the training of essential military personnel and their infiltration into the South is directed by the Military High Command in Hanoi.

The evidence shows that many of the weapons and much of the ammunition and other supplies used by the Viet Cong have been sent into South Viet-Nam from Hanoi. In recent months new types of weapons have been introduced in the VC army, for which all ammunition must come from outside sources. Communist China and other Communist states have been the prime suppliers of these weapons and ammunition, and they have been channeled primarily through North Viet-Nam.

The directing force behind the effort to conquer South Viet-Nam is the Communist Party in the North, the Lao Dong (Workers) Party. As in every Communist state, the party is an integral part of the regime itself. North Vietnamese officials have expressed their firm determination to absorb South Viet-Nam into the Communist world.

Through its Central Committee, which controls the government of the North, the Lao Dong Party directs the total political and military effort of the Viet Cong. The Military High Command in the North trains the military men and sends them into South Viet-Nam. The Central Research Agency, North Viet-Nam's central intelligence organization, directs the elaborate espionage and subversion effort. . . .

Under Hanoi's overall direction the Communists have established an extensive machine for carrying on the war within South Viet-Nam. The focal point is the Central Office for South Viet-Nam with its political and military subsections and other specialized agencies. A subordinate part of this Central Office is the Liberation Front for South Viet-Nam. The front was formed at Hanoi's order in 1960. Its principal function is to influence opinion abroad and to create the false impression that the aggression in South Viet-Nam is an indigenous rebellion against the established government.

For more than 10 years the people and the Government of South Viet-Nam, exercising the inherent right of self-defense, have fought back against these efforts to extend Communist power south across the 17th parallel. The United States has responded to the appeals of the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam for help in this defense of the freedom and independence of its land and its people.

---

**Source:**

from *The Department of State Bulletin*, LII, No. 1343 (March 22, 1965), pp. 404-406.

---

This text is part of the [Internet Modern History Sourcebook](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1965US-vietnamaggression1.html). The Sourcebook is a collection of public domain and copy-permitted texts for introductory level classes in modern European and World history.

Unless otherwise indicated the specific electronic form of the document is copyright. Permission

is granted for electronic copying, distribution in print form for educational purposes and personal use. If you do reduplicate the document, indicate the source. No permission is granted for commercial use of the Sourcebook.

© Paul Halsall, July 1998  
[halsall@murray.fordham.edu](mailto:halsall@murray.fordham.edu)



## **“Enemies” by Tim O’Brien**

One morning in late July, while we were out on patrol near LZ Gator, Lee Strunk and Dave Jensen got into a fistfight. It was about something stupid- a missing jackknife- but even so the fight was vicious. For a while it went back and forth, but Dave Jensen was much bigger and much stronger, and eventually he wrapped an arm around Strunk’s neck and pinned him down and kept hitting him on the nose. He hit him hard. And he didn’t stop. Strunk’s nose made a sharp snapping sound, like a firecracker, but even then Jensen kept hitting him, over and over, quick stiff punches that did not miss. It took three of us to pull him off. When it was over, Strunk had to be choppered back to the rear, where he had his nose looked after, and two days later he rejoined us wearing metal splint and lots of gauze.

In any other circumstance it might’ve ended there. But this was Vietnam, where guys carried guns, and Dave Jensen started to worry. It was mostly in his head. There were no threats, no vows of revenge, just a silent tension between them that made Jensen take special precautions. On patrol he was careful to keep track of Strunk’s whereabouts. He dug his foxholes on the far side of the perimeter; he kept his back covered; he avoided situations that might put the two of them alone together. Eventually, after a week of this, the strain began to create problems. Jensen couldn’t relax. Like fighting two different wars, he said. No safe ground: enemies everywhere. No front or rear. At night he had trouble sleeping- a skittish feeling- always on guard, hearing strange noises in the dark, imagining a grenade rolling into his foxhole or the tickle of a knife against his ear. The distinction between good guys and bad guys disappeared for him. Even in times of relative safety, while the rest of us took it easy, Jensen would be sitting with his back against a stone wall, weapon across his knees, watching Lee Strunk with quick, nervous eyes. It got to the point finally where he lost control. Something must’ve snapped. One afternoon he began firing his weapon into the air, yelling Strunk’s name, just firing and yelling, and it didn’t stop until he’s rattled off an entire magazine of ammunition. We were all flat on the ground. Nobody had the nerve to go near him. Jensen started to reload, but then suddenly he sat down and held his head in his arms and wouldn’t move. For two or three hours he simply sat there.

But that wasn’t the bizarre part.

Because late that same night he borrowed a pistol, gripped it by the barrel, and used it like a hammer to break his own nose.

Afterward, he crossed the perimeter to Lee Strunk’s foxhole. He showed him what he’d done and asked if everything was square between them.

Strunk nodded and said, Sure, things were square.

But in the morning Lee Strunk couldn’t stop laughing. “The man’s crazy,” he said. “I stole his fucking jackknife.”

O’Brien, Timothy. “Enemies.” *The Things They Carried*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

62-64. Print.

bewildered. He reached down as if to massage his missing leg, then he passed out, and Rat Kiley put on a tourniquet and administered morphine and ran plasma into him.

There was nothing much anybody could do except wait for the dustoff. After we'd secured an LZ, Dave Jensen went over and kneeled at Strunk's side. The stump had stopped twitching now. For a time there was some question as to whether Strunk was still alive, but then he opened his eyes and looked up at Dave Jensen. "Oh, Jesus," he said, and moaned, and tried to slide away and said, "Jesus, man, don't kill me."

"Relax," Jensen said.

Lee Strunk seemed groggy and confused. He lay still for a second and then motioned toward his leg. "Really, it's not so bad, Not terrible. Hey, *really*—they can sew it back on—*really*."

"Right, I'll bet they can."

"You think?"

"Sure I do."

Strunk frowned at the sky. He passed out again, then woke up and said, "Don't kill me."

"I won't," Jensen said.

"I'm *serious*."

"Sure."

"But you got to promise. Swear it to me—swear you won't kill me."

Jensen nodded and said, "I swear," and then a little later we carried Strunk to the dustoff chopper. Jensen reached out and touched the good leg. "Go on now," he said. Later we heard that Strunk died somewhere over Chu Lai, which seemed to relieve Dave Jensen of an enormous weight.

## How to Tell a True War Story

This is true.

I had a buddy in Vietnam. His name was Bob Kiley, but everybody called him Rat.

A friend of his gets killed, so about a week later Rat sits down and writes a letter to the guy's sister. Rat tells her what a great brother she had, how together the guy was, a number one pal and comrade. A real soldier's soldier, Rat says. Then he tells a few stories to make the point, how her brother would always volunteer for stuff nobody else would volunteer for in a million years, dangerous stuff, like doing recon or going out on these really badass night patrols. Stainless steel balls, Rat tells her. The guy was a little crazy, for sure, but crazy in a good way, a real daredevil, because he liked the challenge of it, he liked testing himself, just man against gook. A great, great guy, Rat says.

Anyway, it's a terrific letter, very personal and touching. Rat almost bawls writing it. He gets all teary telling about the good times they had together, how her brother

made the war seem almost fun, always raising hell and lighting up villes and bringing smoke to bear every which way. A great sense of humor, too. Like the time at this river when he went fishing with a whole damn crate of hand grenades. Probably the funniest thing in world history, Rat says, all that gore, about twenty zillion dead gook fish. Her brother, he had the right attitude. He knew how to have a good time. On Halloween, this real hot spooky night, the dude paints up his body all different colors and puts on this weird mask and hikes over to a ville and goes trick-or-treating almost stark naked, just boots and balls and an M-16. A tremendous human being, Rat says. Pretty nutso sometimes, but you could trust him with your life.

And then the letter gets very sad and serious. Rat pours his heart out. He says he loved the guy. He says the guy was his best friend in the world. They were like soul mates, he says, like twins or something, they had a whole lot in common. He tells the guy's sister he'll look her up when the war's over.

So what happens?

Rat mails the letter. He waits two months. The dumb cooze never writes back.

A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things men have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very

old and terrible lie. There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue. As a first rule of thumb, therefore, you can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil. Listen to Rat Kiley. Cooze, he says. He does not say bitch. He certainly does not say woman, or girl. He says cooze. Then he spits and stares. He's nineteen years old—it's too much for him—so he looks at you with those big sad gentle killer eyes and says cooze, because his friend is dead, and because it's so incredibly sad and true: she never wrote back.

You can tell a true war story if it embarrasses you. If you don't care for obscenity, you don't care for the truth; if you don't care for the truth, watch how you vote. Send guys to war, they come home talking dirty.

Listen to Rat: "Jesus Christ, man, I write this beautiful fuckin' letter, I slave over it, and what happens? The dumb cooze never writes back."

The dead guy's name was Curt Lemon. What happened was, we crossed a muddy river and marched west into the mountains, and on the third day we took a break along a trail junction in deep jungle. Right away, Lemon and Rat Kiley started goofing. They didn't understand about the spookiness. They were kids; they just didn't know. A nature hike, they thought, not even a war, so they went off into the shade of some giant trees—quadruple canopy, no sunlight at all—and they were giggling and calling each other yellow mother and playing a silly game they'd invented. The game involved smoke grenades, which were harmless unless you did stupid things, and

what they did was pull out the pin and stand a few feet apart and play catch under the shade of those huge trees. Whoever chickened out was a yellow mother. And if nobody chickened out, the grenade would make a light popping sound and they'd be covered with smoke and they'd laugh and dance around and then do it again.

It's all exactly true.

It happened, to *me*, nearly twenty years ago, and I still remember that trail junction and those giant trees and a soft dripping sound somewhere beyond the trees. I remember the smell of moss. Up in the canopy there were tiny white blossoms, but no sunlight at all, and I remember the shadows spreading out under the trees where Curt Lemon and Rat Kiley were playing catch with smoke grenades. Mitchell Sanders sat flipping his yo-yo. Norman Bowker and Kiowa and Dave Jensen were dozing, or half dozing, and all around us were those ragged green mountains.

Except for the laughter things were quiet.

At one point, I remember, Mitchell Sanders turned and looked at me, not quite nodding, as if to warn me about something, as if he already *knew*, then after a while he rolled up his yo-yo and moved away.

It's hard to tell you what happened next.

They were just goofing. There was a noise, I suppose, which must've been the detonator, so I glanced behind me and watched Lemon step from the shade into bright sunlight. His face was suddenly brown and shining. A handsome kid, really. Sharp gray eyes, lean and narrow-waisted, and when he died it was almost beautiful, the way the sunlight came around him and lifted him up and sucked him high into a tree full of moss and vines and white blossoms.

In any war story, but especially a true one, it's difficult to separate what happened from what seemed to happen. What seems to happen becomes its own happening and has to be told that way. The angles of vision are skewed. When a booby trap explodes, you close your eyes and duck and float outside yourself. When a guy dies, like Curt Lemon, you look away and then look back for a moment and then look away again. The pictures get jumbled; you tend to miss a lot. And then afterward, when you go to tell about it, there is always that surreal seemingness, which makes the story seem untrue, but which in fact represents the hard and exact truth as it *seemed*.

In many cases a true war story cannot be believed. If you believe it, be skeptical. It's a question of credibility. Often the crazy stuff is true and the normal stuff isn't, because the normal stuff is necessary to make you believe the truly incredible craziness.

In other cases you can't even tell a true war story. Sometimes it's just beyond telling.

I heard this one, for example, from Mitchell Sanders. It was near dusk and we were sitting at my foxhole along a wide muddy river north of Quang Ngai. I remember how peaceful the twilight was. A deep pinkish red spilled out on the river, which moved without sound, and in the morning we would cross the river and march west into the mountains. The occasion was right for a good story.

"God's truth," Mitchell Sanders said. "A six-man

patrol goes up into the mountains on a basic listening-post operation. The idea's to spend a week up there, just lie low and listen for enemy movement. They've got a radio along, so if they hear anything suspicious—anything—they're supposed to call in artillery or gunships, whatever it takes. Otherwise they keep strict field discipline. Absolute silence. They just listen."

Sanders glanced at me to make sure I had the scenario. He was playing with his yo-yo, dancing it with short, tight little strokes of the wrist.

His face was blank in the dusk.

"We're talking regulation, by-the-book LP. These six guys, they don't say boo for a solid week. They don't got tongues. *All* ears."

"Right," I said.

"Understand me?"

"Invisible."

Sanders nodded.

"Affirm," he said. "Invisible. So what happens is, these guys get themselves deep in the bush, all camouflaged up, and they lie down and wait and that's all they do, nothing else, they lie there for seven straight days and just listen. And man, I'll tell you—it's spooky. This is mountains. You don't *know* spooky till you been there. Jungle, sort of, except it's way up in the clouds and there's always this fog—like rain, except it's not raining—everything's all wet and swirly and tangled up and you can't see jack, you can't find your own pecker to piss with. Like you don't even have a body. Serious spooky. You just go with the vapors—the fog sort of takes you in . . . And the sounds, man. The sounds carry forever. You hear stuff nobody should *ever* hear."

Sanders was quiet for a second, just working the yo-yo, then he smiled at me.

"So after a couple days the guys start hearing this real soft, kind of wacked-out music. Weird echoes and stuff. Like a radio or something, but it's not a radio, it's this strange gook music that comes right out of the rocks. Faraway, sort of, but right up close, too. They try to ignore it. But it's a listening post, right? So they listen. And every night they keep hearing that crazyass gook concert. All kinds of chimes and xylophones. I mean, this is wilderness—no way, it can't be real—but there it is, like the mountains are tuned in to Radio fucking Hanoi. Naturally they get nervous. One guy sticks Juicy Fruit in his ears. Another guy almost flips. Thing is, though, they can't report music. They can't get on the horn and call back to base and say, 'Hey, listen, we need some firepower, we got to blow away this weirdo gook rock band.' They can't do that. It wouldn't go down. So they lie there in the fog and keep their mouths shut. And what makes it extra bad, see, is the poor dudes can't horse around like normal. Can't joke it away. Can't even talk to each other except maybe in whispers, all hush-hush, and that just revs up the wil-lies. All they do is listen."

Again there was some silence as Mitchell Sanders looked out on the river. The dark was coming on hard now, and off to the west I could see the mountains rising in silhouette, all the mysteries and unknowns.

"This next part," Sanders said quietly, "you won't believe."

"Probably not," I said.

"You won't. And you know why?" He gave me a long,



tired smile. "Because it happened. Because every word is absolutely dead-on true."

Sanders made a sound in his throat, like a sigh, as if to say he didn't care if I believed him or not. But he did care. He wanted me to feel the truth, to believe by the raw force of feeling. He seemed sad, in a way.

"These six guys," he said, "they're pretty fried out by now, and one night they start hearing voices. Like at a cocktail party. That's what it sounds like, this big swank gook cocktail party somewhere out there in the fog. Music and chitchat and stuff. It's crazy, I know, but they hear the champagne corks. They hear the actual martini glasses. Real hoity-toity, all very civilized, except this isn't civilization. This is Nam.

"Anyway, the guys try to be cool. They just lie there and groove, but after a while they start hearing—you won't believe this—they hear chamber music. They hear violins and cellos. They hear this terrific mama-san soprano. Then after a while they hear gook opera and a glee club and the Haiphong Boys Choir and a barbershop quartet and all kinds of weird chanting and Buddha-Buddha stuff. And the whole time, in the background, there's still that cocktail party going on. All these different voices. Not human voices, though. Because it's the mountains. Follow me? The rock—it's *talking*. And the fog, too, and the grass and the goddamn mongooses. Everything talks. The trees talk politics, the monkeys talk religion. The whole country. Vietnam. The place talks. It talks. Understand? Nam—it truly *talks*.

"The guys can't cope. They lose it. They get on the radio and report enemy movement—a whole army, they

say—and they order up the firepower. They get arty and gunships. They call in air strikes. And I'll tell you, they fuckin' crash that cocktail party. All night long, they just smoke those mountains. They make jungle juice. They blow away trees and glee clubs and whatever else there is to blow away. Scorch time. They walk napalm up and down the ridges. They bring in the Cobras and F-4s, they use Willie Peter and HE and incendiaries. It's all fire. They make those mountains burn.

"Around dawn things finally get quiet. Like you never even *heard* quiet before. One of those real thick, real misty days—just clouds and fog, they're off in this special zone—and the mountains are absolutely dead-flat silent. Like *Brigadoon*—pure vapor, you know? Everything's all sucked up inside the fog. Not a single sound, except they still *hear* it.

"So they pack up and start humping. They head down the mountain, back to base camp, and when they get there they don't say diddly. They don't talk. Not a word, like they're deaf and dumb. Later on this fat bird colonel comes up and asks what the hell happened out there. What'd they hear? Why all the ordnance? The man's ragged out, he gets down tight on their case. I mean, they spent six trillion dollars on firepower, and this fatass colonel wants answers, he wants to know what the fuckin' story is.

"But the guys don't say zip. They just look at him for a while, sort of funny like, sort of amazed, and the whole war is right there in that stare. It says everything you can't ever say. It says, man, you got *wax* in your ears. It says, poor bastard, you'll never know—wrong frequency—you don't *even* want to hear this. Then they

salute the fucker and walk away, because certain stories you don't ever tell."

You can tell a true war story by the way it never seems to end. Not then, not ever. Not when Mitchell Sanders stood up and moved off into the dark.

It all happened.

Even now, at this instant, I remember that yo-yo. In a way, I suppose, you had to be there, you had to hear it, but I could tell how desperately Sanders wanted me to believe him, his frustration at not quite getting the details right, not quite pinning down the final and definitive truth.

And I remember sitting at my foxhole that night, watching the shadows of Quang Ngai, thinking about the coming day and how we would cross the river and march west into the mountains, all the ways I might die, all the things I did not understand.

Late in the night Mitchell Sanders touched my shoulder. "Just came to me," he whispered. "The moral, I mean. Nobody listens. Nobody hears nothin'. Like that fatass colonel. The politicians, all the civilian types. Your girlfriend. My girlfriend. Everybody's sweet little virgin girlfriend. What they need is to go out on LP. The vapors, man. Trees and rocks—you got to *listen* to your enemy."

And then again, in the morning, Sanders came up to me. The platoon was preparing to move out, checking weapons, going through all the little rituals that preceded a

day's march. Already the lead squad had crossed the river and was filing off toward the west.

"I got a confession to make," Sanders said. "Last night, man, I had to make up a few things."

"I know that."

"The glee club. There wasn't any glee club."

"Right."

"No opera."

"Forget it, I understand."

"Yeah, but listen, it's still true. Those six guys, they heard wicked sound out there. They heard sound you just plain won't believe."

Sanders pulled on his rucksack, closed his eyes for a moment, then almost smiled at me. I knew what was coming.

"All right," I said, "what's the moral?"

"Forget it."

"No, go ahead."

For a long while he was quiet, looking away, and the silence kept stretching out until it was almost embarrassing. Then he shrugged and gave me a stare that lasted all day.

"Hear that quiet, man?" he said. "That quiet—just listen. There's your moral."

In a true war story, if there's a moral at all, it's like the thread that makes the cloth. You can't tease it out. You can't extract the meaning without unraveling the deeper meaning. And in the end, really, there's nothing much to say about a true war story, except maybe "Oh."

True war stories do not generalize. They do not indulge in abstraction or analysis.

For example: War is hell. As a moral declaration the old truism seems perfectly true, and yet because it abstracts, because it generalizes, I can't believe it with my stomach. Nothing turns inside.

It comes down to gut instinct. A true war story, if truly told, makes the stomach believe.

This one does it for me. I've told it before—many times, many versions—but here's what actually happened.

We crossed that river and marched west into the mountains. On the third day, Curt Lemon stepped on a booby-trapped 105 round. He was playing catch with Rat Kiley, laughing, and then he was dead. The trees were thick; it took nearly an hour to cut an LZ for the dustoff.

Later, higher in the mountains, we came across a baby VC water buffalo. What it was doing there I don't know—no farms or paddies—but we chased it down and got a rope around it and led it along to a deserted village where we set up for the night. After supper Rat Kiley went over and stroked its nose.

He opened up a can of C rations, pork and beans, but the baby buffalo wasn't interested.

Rat shrugged.

He stepped back and shot it through the right front knee. The animal did not make a sound. It went down hard, then got up again, and Rat took careful aim and shot off an ear. He shot it in the hindquarters and in the little hump at its back. He shot it twice in the flanks. It wasn't to

kill; it was to hurt. He put the rifle muzzle up against the mouth and shot the mouth away. Nobody said much. The whole platoon stood there watching, feeling all kinds of things, but there wasn't a great deal of pity for the baby water buffalo. Curt Lemon was dead. Rat Kiley had lost his best friend in the world. Later in the week he would write a long personal letter to the guy's sister, who would not write back, but for now it was a question of pain. He shot off the tail. He shot away chunks of meat below the ribs. All around us there was the smell of smoke and filth and deep greenery, and the evening was humid and very hot. Rat went to automatic. He shot randomly, almost casually, quick little spurts in the belly and butt. Then he reloaded, squatted down, and shot it in the left front knee. Again the animal fell hard and tried to get up, but this time it couldn't quite make it. It wobbled and went down sideways. Rat shot it in the nose. He bent forward and whispered something, as if talking to a pet, then he shot it in the throat. All the while the baby buffalo was silent, or almost silent, just a light bubbling sound where the nose had been. It lay very still. Nothing moved except the eyes, which were enormous, the pupils shiny black and dumb.

Rat Kiley was crying. He tried to say something, but then cradled his rifle and went off by himself.

The rest of us stood in a ragged circle around the baby buffalo. For a time no one spoke. We had witnessed something essential, something brand-new and profound, a piece of the world so startling there was not yet a name for it.

Somebody kicked the baby buffalo.

It was still alive, though just barely, just in the eyes.

"Amazing," Dave Jensen said. "My whole life, I never seen anything like it."

"Never?"

"Not hardly. Not once."

Kiowa and Mitchell Sanders picked up the baby buffalo. They hauled it across the open square, hoisted it up, and dumped it in the village well.

Afterward, we sat waiting for Rat to get himself together.

"Amazing," Dave Jensen kept saying. "A new wrinkle. I never seen it before."

Mitchell Sanders took out his yo-yo. "Well, that's Nam," he said. "Garden of Evil. Over here, man, every sin's real fresh and original."

How do you generalize?

War is hell, but that's not the half of it, because war is also mystery and terror and adventure and courage and discovery and holiness and pity and despair and longing and love. War is nasty; war is fun. War is thrilling; war is drudgery. War makes you a man; war makes you dead.

The truths are contradictory. It can be argued, for instance, that war is grotesque. But in truth war is also beauty. For all its horror, you can't help but gape at the awful majesty of combat. You stare out at tracer rounds unwinding through the dark like brilliant red ribbons. You crouch in ambush as a cool, impassive moon rises over the nighttime paddies. You admire the fluid symmetries of troops on the move, the harmonies of sound and shape and proportion, the great sheets of metal-fire streaming down

from a gunship, the illumination rounds, the white phosphorus, the purply orange glow of napalm, the rocket's red glare. It's not pretty, exactly. It's astonishing. It fills the eye. It commands you. You hate it, yes, but your eyes do not. Like a killer forest fire, like cancer under a microscope, any battle or bombing raid or artillery barrage has the aesthetic purity of absolute moral indifference—a powerful, implacable beauty—and a true war story will tell the truth about this, though the truth is ugly.

To generalize about war is like generalizing about peace. Almost everything is true. Almost nothing is true. At its core, perhaps, war is just another name for death, and yet any soldier will tell you, if he tells the truth, that proximity to death brings with it a corresponding proximity to life. After a firefight, there is always the immense pleasure of aliveness. The trees are alive. The grass, the soil—everything. All around you things are purely living, and you among them, and the aliveness makes you tremble. You feel an intense, out-of-the-skin awareness of your living self—your truest self, the human being you want to be and then become by the force of wanting it. In the midst of evil you want to be a good man. You want decency. You want justice and courtesy and human concord, things you never knew you wanted. There is a kind of largeness to it, a kind of godliness. Though it's odd, you're never more alive than when you're almost dead. You recognize what's valuable. Freshly, as if for the first time, you love what's best in yourself and in the world, all that might be lost. At the hour of dusk you sit at your foxhole and look out on a wide river turning pinkish red, and at the mountains beyond, and although in the morning you must cross the river and

go into the mountains and do terrible things and maybe die, even so, you find yourself studying the fine colors on the river, you feel wonder and awe at the setting of the sun, and you are filled with a hard, aching love for how the world could be and always should be, but now is not.

Mitchell Sanders was right. For the common soldier, at least, war has the feel—the spiritual texture—of a great ghostly fog, thick and permanent. There is no clarity. Everything swirls. The old rules are no longer binding, the old truths no longer true. Right spills over into wrong. Order blends into chaos, love into hate, ugliness into beauty, law into anarchy, civility into savagery. The vapors suck you in. You can't tell where you are, or why you're there, and the only certainty is overwhelming ambiguity.

In war you lose your sense of the definite, hence your sense of truth itself, and therefore it's safe to say that in a true war story nothing is ever absolutely true.

Often in a true war story there is not even a point, or else the point doesn't hit you until twenty years later, in your sleep, and you wake up and shake your wife and start telling the story to her, except when you get to the end you've forgotten the point again. And then for a long time you lie there watching the story happen in your head. You listen to your wife's breathing. The war's over. You close your eyes. You smile and think, Christ, what's the *point*?

This one wakes me up.

In the mountains that day, I watched Lemon turn side-

ways. He laughed and said something to Rat Kiley. Then he took a peculiar half step, moving from shade into bright sunlight, and the booby-trapped 105 round blew him into a tree. The parts were just hanging there, so Dave Jensen and I were ordered to shinny up and peel him off. I remember the white bone of an arm. I remember pieces of skin and something wet and yellow that must've been the intestines. The gore was horrible, and stays with me. But what wakes me up twenty years later is Dave Jensen singing "Lemon Tree" as we threw down the parts.

You can tell a true war story by the questions you ask. Somebody tells a story, let's say, and afterward you ask, "Is it true?" and if the answer matters, you've got your answer.

For example, we've all heard this one. Four guys go down a trail. A grenade sails out. One guy jumps on it and takes the blast and saves his three buddies.

Is it true?

The answer matters.

You'd feel cheated if it never happened. Without the grounding reality, it's just a trite bit of puffery, pure Hollywood, untrue in the way all such stories are untrue. Yet even if it did happen—and maybe it did, anything's possible—even then you know it can't be true, because a true war story does not depend upon that kind of truth. Absolute occurrence is irrelevant. A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth. For example: Four guys go down a trail. A grenade sails out. One guy jumps on it and takes the blast, but it's a killer grenade and everybody dies anyway. Before



they die, though, one of the dead guys says, "The fuck you do *that* for?" and the jumper says, "Story of my life, man," and the other guy starts to smile but he's dead.

That's a true story that never happened.

Twenty years later, I can still see the sunlight on Lemon's face. I can see him turning, looking back at Rat Kiley, then he laughed and took that curious half step from shade into sunlight, his face suddenly brown and shining, and when his foot touched down, in that instant, he must've thought it was the sunlight that was killing him. It was not the sunlight. It was a rigged 105 round. But if I could ever get the story right, how the sun seemed to gather around him and pick him up and lift him high into a tree, if I could somehow re-create the fatal whiteness of that light, the quick glare, the obvious cause and effect, then you would believe the last thing Curt Lemon believed, which for him must've been the final truth.

Now and then, when I tell this story, someone will come up to me afterward and say she liked it. It's always a woman. Usually it's an older woman of kindly temperament and humane politics. She'll explain that as a rule she hates war stories; she can't understand why people want to wallow in all the blood and gore. But this one she liked. The poor baby buffalo, it made her sad. Sometimes, even, there are little tears. What I should do, she'll say, is put it all behind me. Find new stories to tell.

I won't say it but I'll think it.

I'll picture Rat Kiley's face, his grief, and I'll think, *You dumb cooze.*

Because she wasn't listening.

It *wasn't* a war story. It was a *love* story.

But you can't say that. All you can do is tell it one more time, patiently, adding and subtracting, making up a few things to get at the real truth. No Mitchell Sanders, you tell her. No Lemon, no Rat Kiley. No trail junction. No baby buffalo. No vines or moss or white blossoms. Beginning to end, you tell her, it's all made up. Every goddamn detail—the mountains and the river and especially that poor dumb baby buffalo. None of it happened. *None* of it. And even if it did happen, it didn't happen in the mountains, it happened in this little village on the Batangan Peninsula, and it was raining like crazy, and one night a guy named Stink Harris woke up screaming with a leech on his tongue. You can tell a true war story if you just keep on telling it.

And in the end, of course, a true war story is never about war. It's about sunlight. It's about the special way that dawn spreads out on a river when you know you must cross the river and march into the mountains and do things you are afraid to do. It's about love and memory. It's about sorrow. It's about sisters who never write back and people who never listen.

### **“Paying the Price” - Ta Quang Thinh**

Paying the Price. *Patriots- The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides*. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. 20-21. Print.

I was asleep in the jungle hospital when a male nurse woke me to tell me that Hue's blood pressure had gone down. Hue was one of our patients recovering from serious wounds in a postoperative care unit, a makeshift underground room with an A-frame roof made of logs and covered with a tarpaulin. So I got out of my hammock to go see him. I remember putting the stethoscope in my ears to listen to his pulse. I glanced at my watch and it was almost eleven o'clock. That's all I can remember.

Later my friends told me that we were hit by a bomb from a B-52. There were six of us in that room- myself, two male nurses, and three patients. I was crouched over Hue when the roof collapsed. It broke my spine and paralyzed me from the middle of my back down. They dug me out of the rubble the following morning. I was the only survivor. Somehow there was enough air to breathe and I was closer to the surface than the others, easier to dig out.

I stayed in the South another four years, treated that whole time in a jungle hospital, just wishing the war would end quickly. I couldn't communicate with my family for six years. Even if they had carried letters south, how would they have found us? We moved all the time.

In 1971, they were finally able to take me home. I was flat on my back in a hammock, two people at a time carrying me. They carried me the whole way back to the North. A third porter went along to relieve the other two. There were many stations along the way and I was relayed from one group of porters to another. It took us seven months. Of course it was very painful to be carried like that. I took painkillers but they didn't help much.

When I got home, I think everybody, including myself, was sick of the war. We abhorred it. It was not only cruel, it was absurd. Foreigners came to our country from out of the blue and forced us to take up arms. Don't you think that's absurd? We just wanted to be prosperous and live like other people. Of course we had to fight to protect our country but we were really sick of the war. Deep down we didn't like it. Casualties were enormous. And not just that- our savings, our houses, our plants and animals, everything was wasted by that war. I have many memories but I don't want to remember them. It sounds like a paradox to say that, but it's because I don't like war. I don't think anyone liked the war.

Greg Mitchell: Occupy Wall Street Hits Back at Portrayal in HBO's 'Newsroom'



96

232

Like

submit

eddit

submit

eddit

3

# LA's Homeless Vets

It seems unbelievable, but land dedicated to the VA for housing veterans has been denied to them—and LA has more homeless vets than any city in America.

**Jon Wiener** March 20, 2013 | This article appeared in the April 8, 2013 edition of The Nation.

Like 232

Tweet 96

3


✉

TEXT SIZE - +

SUBSCRIBE

More than 30,000 US troops will be coming home from Afghanistan in the next year, joining more than a million who have already returned from the war there and in Iraq. Many, crippled by post-traumatic stress disorder and brain trauma, will face homelessness—and more of those will end up living on the streets of Los Angeles than of any other city.

About the Author



**Jon Wiener**  
Jon Wiener teaches US history at UC Irvine. His most recent book is How We Forgot the Cold War: A Historical Journey...

Also by the Author

**Graduation Day Complaint from Fox News: Commencement Speakers Are All Liberals** (Higher Education, Media, Politics)

At the top liberal colleges and universities, commencement speakers are usually liberals. So what?

**Jon Wiener**  
**Venice Protest: 'No to Big Cruise Ships!'** (Activism, Regions and Countries, Environment)

Three days of struggle to defend the ecology of the Venetian lagoon and the life of the city.

**Jon Wiener**

problems, and there's a regional VA medical center across the street from the empty dorms in Brentwood. The VA, however, argues that it has no legal or other obligation to provide housing for mentally disabled vets. It has acknowledged in court that it is required to provide medical services, but it argues that it has no responsibility to provide housing, even though that housing is essential for those vets to have access to medical services.

LA is the homeless veterans capital of the country. At last count, in December 2012, the Housing Department reported 6,371 homeless vets living in LA and 62,619 nationwide. Of course, these official counts fail to find many of the vets sleeping under bridges, in alleys or in abandoned buildings.

President Obama and his secretary for veterans affairs, Eric Shinseki, have done much more than their predecessors to help homeless vets, including providing rental vouchers and money to those who have housing but are on the brink of eviction. For vets whose only problem is poverty, these measures have been successful in many places on a limited scale. But for the many homeless vets with serious psychiatric problems, substance abuse issues and physical disabilities, the solution has to be permanent supportive housing, with case

It doesn't have to be that way. Almost 400 acres of Veterans Administration land in Brentwood, in West LA, is supposed to be used for housing disabled veterans. It was donated in 1888 explicitly for that purpose, and for the next eighty years tens of thousands of vets lived there, at the Pacific Branch soldiers' home. But for the past several decades, the dormitories have been empty, and over the years the VA has leased parts of the site to Enterprise Rent-a-Car for a parking lot, to the Marriott hotels for a commercial laundry, to UCLA for a baseball field and a dog park. Meanwhile, homeless veterans sleep on the street outside the locked gates.

"If you want to spend the night at the VA in Brentwood," says Mark Rosenbaum of the ACLU of Southern California, "you're better off as a rental car than a homeless vet." And if you want access to the VA land, "you're better off as a dog." The ACLU-SC filed a class-action suit on behalf of homeless vets in 2011 (disclosure: I'm a member of the board of the ACLU-SC Foundation).

Particularly in need of help are vets with severe mental disabilities and those suffering from PTSD and other disorders. Housing is key to treating their medical

managers on site.

Meanwhile, the VA has been saying for a long time that it is going to house disabled homeless vets in Brentwood. More than five years ago, it designated three buildings for renovation. Congress appropriated \$20 million for the first one in 2010, but ground was not broken until this past January, with a completion target of spring 2014. That schedule is a “reminder of how long it takes the agency to do so little,” the *Los Angeles Times* declared in an editorial, “despite the enormity of the problem.” And nothing is happening with the other two buildings.

**Please support our journalism. Get a digital subscription for just \$9.50!**

What do you get for \$20 million? The VA says it will refurbish fifty-five apartments, forty-five as single rooms and ten as doubles, housing a total of sixty-five people. That’s around \$300,000 per person. “That’s ridiculous,” says Robert Rosebrock of the Old Veterans Guard, which has been demonstrating every Sunday for five years outside the locked gates. “We could build a tent city and house thousands of homeless vets for that money.”

Last year, US District Judge S. James Otero rejected the VA motion to dismiss the ACLU-SC’s case. Mark Rosenbaum hailed that ruling as “the first time in the nation’s history that a federal court has held the VA responsible for assuring that severely mentally disabled veterans have access to housing and services...they require to heal the wounds of war.”

Why won’t the VA agree to house homeless vets on the land in LA donated for that purpose? “The opposition of Brentwood homeowners” to housing homeless vets in their upscale neighborhood—probably the most valuable real estate west of the Mississippi—has been a key factor, writes longtime LA columnist Bill Boyarsky. Maybe that’s why Senator Barbara Boxer hasn’t said a word about the Brentwood VA land. (In January, she introduced a pathetic bill permitting voluntary contributions on federal income tax returns to fund homeless programs.) Senator Dianne Feinstein in February called on the VA to refurbish those other two Brentwood buildings for housing, which—if it happens—will bring the number of vets housed there to around 200. “This case could be settled tomorrow,” Rosenbaum says, if the VA established a plan to provide permanent housing for severely mentally disabled veterans on the Brentwood land donated for that purpose. But the government continues to argue that it doesn’t have to do that. Summary judgment motions are due April 10.

*Editor's note: An image caption in this article originally stated that Enterprise Rent-A-Car currently occupied the Veterans Affairs medical center parcel in Los Angeles. Enterprise Rent-A-Car's lease in the lot ended in May, 2012, and was not renewed.*

**Jon Wiener** March 20, 2013 | This article appeared in the April 8, 2013 edition of *The Nation*.

Like

232

Tweet

96

3



TEXT SIZE

SUBSCRIBE

Print

Web Letter (0)

Write a Letter

Single Page

PLEASE **SUPPORT** OUR JOURNALISM:  
GET A DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR JUST **\$9.50**  
[Click Here to Subscribe >>](#)



\_\_\_\_Nation\_\_\_\_  
**BUILDERS**

\_\_\_\_Nation\_\_\_\_  
**BUILDERS**

**Your Voice. Your Values. Your Nation.**  
Confirm your commitment to The Nation's groundbreaking news and commentary, driving progressive values into our national conversation.

**Your Voice. Your Values. Your Nation.**  
Confirm your commitment to The Nation's groundbreaking news and commentary, driving progressive values into our national conversation.

Like

Add New Comment

Login

Before commenting, please read our [Community Guidelines](#).

Showing 7 comments

Sort by newest first

rejco

If the homeless veterans are mentally ill then why do they all have HANDFULS of VA & Social Security "DISABILITY CLAIM DENIED" Letters?

4 weeks ago

Like Reply

SGillhoolley

Maybe it is time for the USA to take a break from the constant warfare so that they can focus on taking care of the existing troops, especially those broken by war. This is not merely a physical problem, and it is manifesting in the civilian world in many ways. The cost of taking care of all those broken men and women is going to be very high, but it has to be done. To do less is to dishonor the nation.

4 months ago

Like Reply

ReasonWithValues

Yes, you are right! I wish you had included in this write up what Schools of Social Work, in different universities across Southern California, are doing or are not doing on this matter. There are faculty in some of these universities spending more time visiting China and Turkey rather than focusing on dealing with these emerging local issues.

I left the university system several years ago because I found their lack of community focus upsetting. I hope that is changing. They should be calling back people like me who connected, in our research and advocacy, the personal and the political, and focused on the bio-psycho-social models of intervention that had to include both the individual and the community.

Mental health services, especially for veterans, that deals with long term effects of trauma and disability (that might worsen with time or age), requires a special kind of focus that involves exactly what "clinical social work" with "a community focus" has to offer - more than psychology and psychiatry that focuses mostly on medication and personal counseling without including the larger social reality and pressures. The other extreme are social programs that focus on the community overlooking individual needs and complexities.

It is clinical social work, with its unique blend of bio-psycho-social intervention, that can make an effective difference, with appropriate community services, support and community involvement.

Unfortunately too much of social work training either mimics "exclusive practice of Psychology" or "exclusive theories of Sociology"...unsuitable for the needs of returning Vets, the homeless or those who have complex set of needs.

My phone is not ringing...In fact lot of us with a PhD in Social Work are not even being invited to do some necessary relevant research on these matters.

<http://www.thenation.com/article/173459/las-homeless-vets#axzz2a2iRjtyO>

Page 3 of 5



Thanks for keeping the public informed and mobilized.

4 months ago

LikeReply

theshadowknows

Fact is America has never done right by its veterans. We have always been considered expendable if we survived the battlefield.

And one important point ignored in most writings on veterans rights: If you closely examine the benefits given to veterans by the VA you should be able to notice that post-Grenada veterans are treated far better than Vietnam Veterans. Vietnam Veterans are still treated as second class veterans by our government which seems to think we will all be dead soon so who cares. World War II and Korea veterans were treated better. Post Grenada, especially Iraq/Afghanistan veterans are treated better. Which is not to say that any veteran has been treated fairly, just that Vietnam Veterans are considered as a lower class by our Federal and state governments. Someone should do some writing on this class divergence within veterans affairs.

4 months ago

LikeReply

SGillhoolley

Dealing with veterans has always been like football. If they can keep moving the ball forward maybe the veterans will die before the payout is made. My Dad gets payments for the many problems he now has thanks to Agent Orange. It could have been worse. He could have been nailed with a dose of Agent Purple. I hear that one is way worse.

4 months ago

in reply to theshadowknows

LikeReply

rejco

The \$20 million being spent on bldg. 209 WILL NOT BE HOUSING; it'll be a prison-like & all-controlling MANDATORY 12-Step religious AA/NA cult & "Jesus Saves" insane asylum...

IT WILL NOT BE HOUSING!

4 months ago

1 Like

LikeReply

theshadowknows


DITTO!


4 months ago

in reply to rejco

2 Likes

LikeReply

 [Subscribe by email](#)

 [RSS](#)

Reactions



Trackback URL <http://disqus.com/for>

More Politics

**In Defense of Carlos Danger**  
(Political Figures, Sex and Sexuality)

**Americans Oppose Syrian Entanglement, but Boehner Won't Let House Bar It** (Barack Obama, Congress, US Wars and Military Action, Politics)

**Responses to 'Congressional Hunger Games'** (Budget Wars, Activism, Public Policy, Poverty)

**From the Deep South to the Midwest, a Generation Demands Justice** (Education, Social Justice, Politics)


Nation Media




**Help Iraqis and Iraq Veterans Gain the Right to Heal**



**Voices for Trayvon Martin**



**Jumaane Williams: Voices for Trayvon Martin**



**Jeremy Scahill: The War Against Whistleblowers**

Also From The Nation

**John Nichols: Standing Up to 'Stand Your Ground'** (Guns and Gun Control)

**In Defense of Carlos Danger**  
(Political Figures, Sex and Sexuality)

**Three Things Obama Can Do Today to Boost the Economy**  
(Economy)

**Americans Oppose Syrian Entanglement, but Boehner Won't Let House Bar It** (Barack Obama, Congress, US Wars and Military Action, Politics)

    **RSS**

[Home](#)  
[Blogs](#)  
[Columns](#)  
[Current Issue](#)  
[Magazine Archive](#)  
[Multimedia](#)  
[E-Books](#)  
[Puzzle](#)  
[Community](#)  
[Educators](#)  
[Students](#)

[Politics](#)  
[World](#)  
[Books & Arts](#)  
[Economy](#)  
[Environment](#)  
[Activism](#)  
[Society](#)

[Advertise](#)  
[Subscription Services](#)  
[The Nation Builders](#)  
[Newsletter](#)  
[Nation in the News](#)  
[Store](#)  
[Spanish Translations](#)

[Help](#)  
[About & Contact](#)  
[Digital, Mobile and E-Reader](#)  
[Community Guidelines](#)  
[Work for Us](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)  
[Terms of Use](#)

Copyright © 2012 The Nation

Blogs » Jon Wiener » Homeless Vets vs. the VA: An LA Story Continues



Jon Wiener

Follow @thenation

264K followers

RSS Feed

Politics and pop, past and present.

# Homeless Vets vs. the VA: An LA Story Continues

Jon Wiener on March 25, 2013 - 1:08 AM ET

Like366

Tweet98

2

TEXT SIZE

SUBSCRIBE



Veteran J.J. Asevedo, left, sits at a news conference announcing a lawsuit at the Los Angeles VA, June 8, 2011. (AP Photo/Reed Saxon, File)

Greg Valentini is a homeless vet in Los Angeles who took part in the initial invasion of Afghanistan and participated in the assault on Tora Bora that sought Osama bin Laden. He’s also a plaintiff in the [class action suit](#) brought by the ACLU of Southern California (ACLU-SC) arguing that the VA has “misused large portions of its West Los Angeles campus and failed to provide adequate housing and treatment for the people it was intended to serve.” (See my *Nation* article “[LA’s Homeless Vets.](#)”) Valentini was a private in the 101st Airborne, and the lawsuit describes his service in Afghanistan: “He took part in significant ground fighting, under nearly constant sniper fire and mortar bombardment” and “witnessed the gruesome deaths of numerous civilians, including children.” He was redeployed to Iraq, where he again experienced heavy combat. He received six decorations for his service.

[Steve Lopez](#), the legendary *Los Angeles Times* columnist, has been following Valentini. When he came back from Afghanistan, Lopez wrote, Valentini “ended up in post-combat hell, living in a tent by the Long Beach Airport, bathing in a lake and eating out of garbage cans.” He “doesn’t enjoy reviewing the harrowing details of his combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and his later descent into suicidal fantasies, homelessness and drug addiction.” He also told Lopez “I don’t want to be a whiny vet.” He “blames the bulk of his problems on himself, rather than the VA.” But he does think it would help other homeless vets who have severe emotional problems if they could live in the VA dorms on its Brentwood campus in West LA.

The problem is that the land, donated 125 years ago for housing disabled veterans, today houses nobody. That’s why the ACLU-SC is suing the VA. (Disclosure: I’m on the board of

the ACLU-SC Foundation.) Veterans of the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, WWI and WWII lived there for decades. But since the 1970s, the dormitories have been empty, and the VA has rented parts of the site to a Rent-a-Car company and a hotel laundry, along with a neighboring private school and UCLA, which use the land for athletic fields. Meanwhile homeless veterans sleep on the street outside the locked gates.

Every Sunday afternoon for the last five years a group of veterans have demonstrated in Los Angeles outside those locked gates, waving at the cars going past on Wilshire Boulevard on their way to the beach, carrying signs that read “Bring our homeless veterans ‘Home,’” and “In the deed we trust.” The deed in question is dated 1888. The VA acknowledges that the deed required that the land be used for housing disabled vets, and that the land was used for that purpose until the 1970s. But, the VA told the court, the deed is not enforceable without specific legislation by Congress. The VA said—and the court agreed—that no veteran, and no descendant of the family that donated the land (also represented by the ACLU) can enforce that deed. That’s the law, Judge Otero said, although it “may seem shocking.”

On Sunday, March 3, the vets’ group, led by Robert Rosebrock, held an event commemorating the 125th anniversary of the donation of the land to the government for veterans’ housing. The speakers included Anneke Barrie, a college student whose grandmother, Carolina Winston Barrie, is one of the ACLU plaintiffs and a direct descendant of Arcadia B. de Baker, the woman who donated the land in 1888. Standing in front of the locked gates, Anneke Barrie told the fifty demonstrators that the land was intended to provide veterans with “living quarters, food, recreation, amusements, religious instruction, employment opportunities, and medical care”—and it did that, for decades. The failure today of the VA and elected officials “to guard this precious heritage and unique gift is beyond shameful,” she said. “It is criminal.”

The LA story points to larger problems with the Obama administration and the VA. In Obama’s speech at the Democratic National Convention last September, he said, “When you take off the uniform, we will serve you as well as you’ve served us, because no one who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their head or the care that they need when they come home.” He and his secretary for veterans affairs, Eric Shinseki, have declared they will end homelessness among veterans by 2015. Veterans are 50 percent more likely to become homeless than the average American, and homeless vets account for nearly 20 per cent of the people living on the streets and in shelters. At the rate the VA is working, there will still be tens of thousands of homeless vets in 2015. And LA is the capital of homeless vets in America.

But instead of housing homeless disabled vets, the VA makes a lot of money from leasing its land in Brentwood, although they did their best to keep that secret. Congressman Henry Waxman, whose district includes the VA land, told Ina Jaffe of NPR, “We’ve never been able to get a lot of the details of exactly how much money they got and how that money was used.” NPR filed an FOIA request for the long-term rental agreements, on the basis of which Jaffe estimates that, “over the past dozen years, the VA Health Care Center of West Los Angeles has taken in at least \$28 million, and possibly more than \$40 million.”

The ACLU lawsuit challenging the VA leasing practices is being adjudicated now, after US District Judge S. James Otero rejected VA motions to dismiss the case. Mark Rosenbaum, lead attorney for the ACLU-SC in the case, hailed that ruling last March as “the first time in the nation’s history that a federal court has held the VA responsible for assuring that severely mentally disabled veterans have access to housing and services...they require to heal the wounds of war.” Otero ruled that “Congress’ intention was to ensure that the [VA’s] land was used primarily to benefit veterans,” rather than a rent-a-car company or a hotel laundry.

**Please support our journalism. Get a digital subscription for just \$9.50!**

The VA replies to critics that it is spending \$20 million to refurbish one building that will house

sixty-five vets. Rosebrock says they could house thousands of vets for a fraction of that in a tent city at the site. He [points to](#) the tent cities that housed Vietnamese refugees on military bases around the United States after the fall of Saigon in 1975. In South California, he says, 1,000 tents and Quonset huts were erected at Camp Pendleton in six days by 900 Marines and civilians, providing housing for 50,000 Vietnamese refugees. If we could do it for Vietnamese refugees, Rosebrock says, we can do it for homeless veterans—many of whom, incidentally, served during the Vietnam War.

But instead of housing homeless vets, the VA land in West LA was used in March to provide parking for the Northern Trust PGA Golf Tournament held nearby at the elite Riviera Country Club. Hundreds of late-model Jaguars, Mercedes and BMWs parked under the ancient eucalyptus trees, while homeless veterans sat outside the gates. Residents around the golf course didn't want public parking on their streets, Rosebrock says, "so the golf tournament attendees park on sacred grounds where veterans from the Civil War once walked."

Meanwhile another of the ACLU plaintiffs, a homeless Vietnam vet, "was going through the garbage on the VA campus in Brentwood," Rosenbaum reports. "He received a citation for stealing government property. He had to pay a fine of over \$100."

Read *Jon Wiener's primer on the VA-vet land war in the April 8 issue of The Nation.*

Related Topics: [Housing and Homelessness](#) | [Activism](#) | [Poverty](#)

Like 366 Tweet 98 2

TEXT SIZE - + SUBSCRIBE

#### Suggested for you

[Iraq Invades the United States](#)

[Despite His Politicized Trial, Aleksei Navalny Is Still a Divisive Figure in Russia](#)

[The Rise and Fall of the Muslim Brotherhood](#)

[Trayvon Martin: A Bullet in the Heart of Racial Justice](#)

[Leakonomics: Edward Snowden and the Pirates](#)

[Mountain Views](#)

#### From around the web

Advertisement

[Stocks soar—but some wealthy citizens are preparing for "The End o... Stansberry Investment](#)

[- New rule allows many residents to get car insurance at half-price. Consumer Daily](#)

[arrest records. Who do you know? You may be surprised! Search anyone! InstantCheckMate](#)

[What happens to your body when you take a free testosterone supplement... Nugenix](#)

[How Seniors Can Scoop Up Free \\$20,500 Checks \(See If You Qualify\). Moneynews](#)

[\(\): Obey this 1 weird "loophole" to get car insurance as low as \\$9... TheFinanceAuthority](#)

\_\_\_\_Nation\_\_\_\_  
**BUILDERS**

\_\_\_\_Nation\_\_\_\_  
**BUILDERS**

\_\_\_\_Nation\_\_\_\_  
**BUILDERS**

**Your Voice. Your Values. Your Nation.**  
Confirm your commitment to The Nation's groundbreaking news and commentary, driving progressive values into our national conversation.

**Your Voice. Your Values. Your Nation.**  
Confirm your commitment to The Nation's groundbreaking news and commentary, driving progressive values into our national conversation.

**Your Voice. Your Values. Your Nation.**  
Confirm your commitment to The Nation's groundbreaking news and commentary, driving progressive values into our national conversation.



---

    [RSS](#)

[Home](#)  
[Blogs](#)  
[Columns](#)  
[Current Issue](#)  
[Magazine Archive](#)  
[Multimedia](#)  
[E-Books](#)  
[Puzzle](#)  
[Community](#)  
[Educators](#)  
[Students](#)

[Politics](#)  
[World](#)  
[Books & Arts](#)  
[Economy](#)  
[Environment](#)  
[Activism](#)  
[Society](#)

[Advertise](#)  
[Subscription Services](#)  
[The Nation Builders](#)  
[Newsletter](#)  
[Nation in the News](#)  
[Store](#)  
[Spanish Translations](#)

[Help](#)  
[About & Contact](#)  
[Digital, Mobile and E-Reader](#)  
[Community Guidelines](#)  
[Work for Us](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)  
[Terms of Use](#)

Copyright © 2012 The Nation

# Social Science **Factors**: basic terms & **key concepts**

## reference sheet 1

The social sciences examine the interplay and impact of these factors.

Influence of **GEOGRAPHY** and impact of **TECHNOLOGY** affect the Four Worlds

Geography	Four Worlds			
	Politics	Economics	Social	Culture
a. climate b. physical features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>topography</li> <li>vegetation</li> </ul> c. natural resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water</li> <li>minerals</li> <li>rich soil               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arable land</li> </ul> </li> <li>trees (lumber)</li> </ul> d. trade routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rivers, straits</li> <li>mountain passes</li> </ul> e. <b>territory, borders, political boundaries</b>	<b>Governing Structure</b> a. type of government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monarchy, oligarchy</li> <li>democracy, authoritarian</li> <li>centralized, decentralized</li> </ul> b. military: armies, weapons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>defense, protection vs. conquest, expansion</li> <li>treaties, diplomacy</li> </ul> c. legal system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>laws, standards, rights</li> <li>judges, police, patrol</li> </ul> d. taxes, tribute <b>-----Central Concepts:-----</b> e. security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>order, stability, control</li> <li>state-building (rise &amp; fall)</li> </ul> f. power: limits, transfer, balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>legitimate authority</li> <li>role of govt / functions</li> </ul> g. rule of law vs. force / fear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>equality <i>before the law</i></li> <li>justice, fairness</li> <li>enforcement, recourse</li> </ul> h. leadership, stewardship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public service, duty</li> </ul> i. rights & responsibilities j. managing the commons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public goods, infrastructure</li> <li>redistribution</li> </ul>	<b>Economic Structure</b> a. products / trade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>goods &amp; services</li> </ul> b. production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>means of production</b></li> <li>resources: natural, human, financial</li> <li>tools, equipment, labor</li> </ul> c. types of labor, work, jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>merchants, artisans, craftsmen, guilds</li> <li>division of labor, specialization</li> </ul> d. <b>infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>irrigation, aqueducts</li> <li>roads, bridges, ports</li> </ul> e. means of exchange <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>barter system</li> <li>system of money</li> </ul> f. standard measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>length, weight, volume, distance</li> </ul> <b>-----Central Concepts:-----</b> g. entrepreneurship h. incentives i. scarcity vs prosperity j. innovation & efficiency	<b>Social Structure</b> a. class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>upper               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ruling class</li> <li>elite class</li> </ul> </li> <li>middle               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>common class</li> <li>working class</li> </ul> </li> <li>lower               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>peasants</li> <li>slaves</li> </ul> </li> </ul> b. status / position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>mobility</b></li> <li><b>privilege</b></li> </ul> c. nomadic v. sedentary d. rural v. urban e. hierarchical v. communal f. integrated v. segregated g. role of women <b>-----Civil Society:*-----</b> h. civic duty / common good i. education (literacy level) j. equity & access k. advocates, watchdogs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accountability</li> <li>transparency</li> </ul> l. news; distribution of information; <i>role of the media</i>	<b>Religion &amp; Belief Systems</b> a. origins b. teachings — <b>shared values, moral authority</b> c. texts d. practices, rites & rituals e. influence; role in society <b>Other Aspects of Culture</b> a. daily life b. customs c. language d. alphabet / writing system e. literature f. the arts — <b>aesthetics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visual art, crafts</li> <li>performing arts: music, dance, theater/drama</li> </ul> g. architecture <b>-----Central Concepts:-----</b> h. identity (pride, bonds, loyalty) i. tolerance (harmony) j. respect for authority k. meaning, comfort, hope (esp. to face hardship, suffering) l. cultural blending, diffusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>diversity v homogeneity</li> <li>assimilation v acculturation</li> <li>harmony v conformity</li> </ul>
Technology				
a. discoveries b. inventions <b>impact of technology:*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infrastructure: e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* transportation</li> <li>- navigation</li> <li>* communication</li> </ul> </li> <li>production</li> <li>weapons</li> <li>medicine, health</li> <li>beliefs, values</li> <li>legal process</li> </ul>				

\* Impact of technology across society is the central concept. Civil society is the central concept of the *social world*.

Developed by Teresa Hudock, 2008—Revised, July 2010

Identifying factors, relating factors, or determining the "most important" factor is **the science** of the **social sciences**.

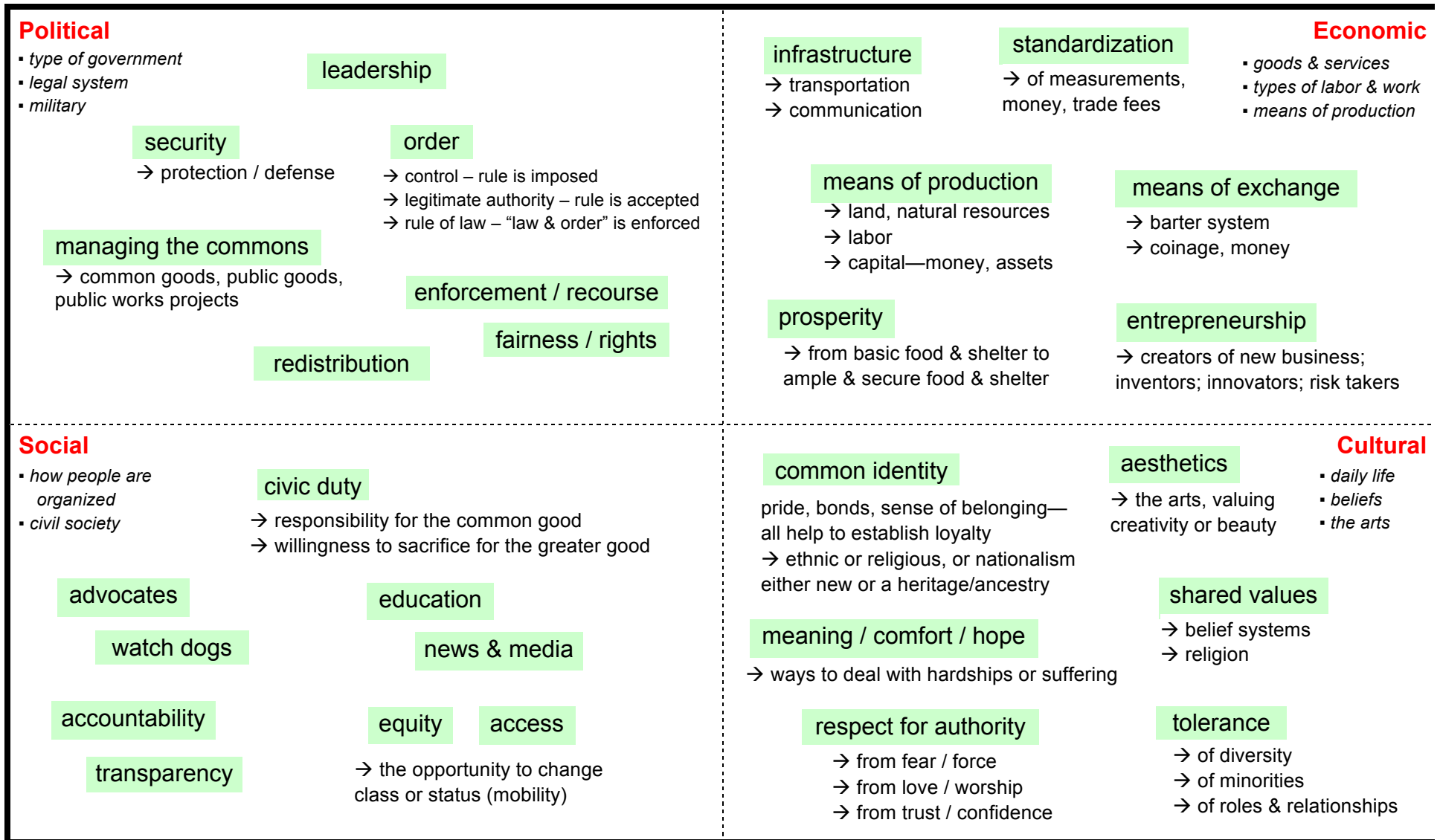
usc.edu/calcs

A history course is about studying how factors are combined differently in each society...

dynamics, effects, outcomes, changes, etc.

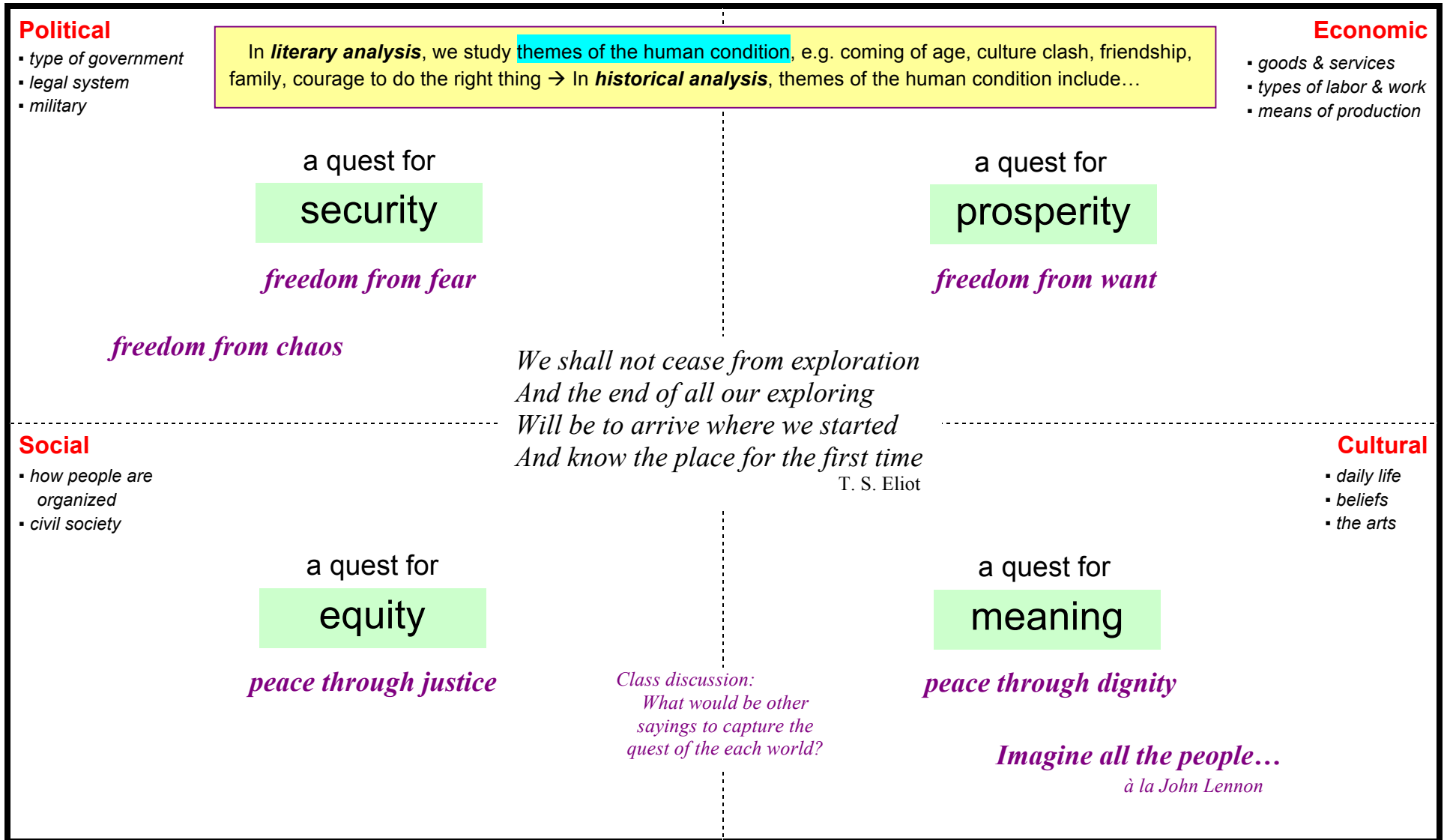
## Social Science **Factors**: 4W chart of key concepts

These concepts are “**factors**” of the human condition – that when **combined in different ways** – **produce different types of societies** throughout history and around the world today. Some factors are basic to survival while others help establish more order and greater stability. Some of these factors are needed for a thriving, *more humane* existence. Societies have strengths or weaknesses across these factors. Absence or loss of certain factors can lead to the decline of a society.



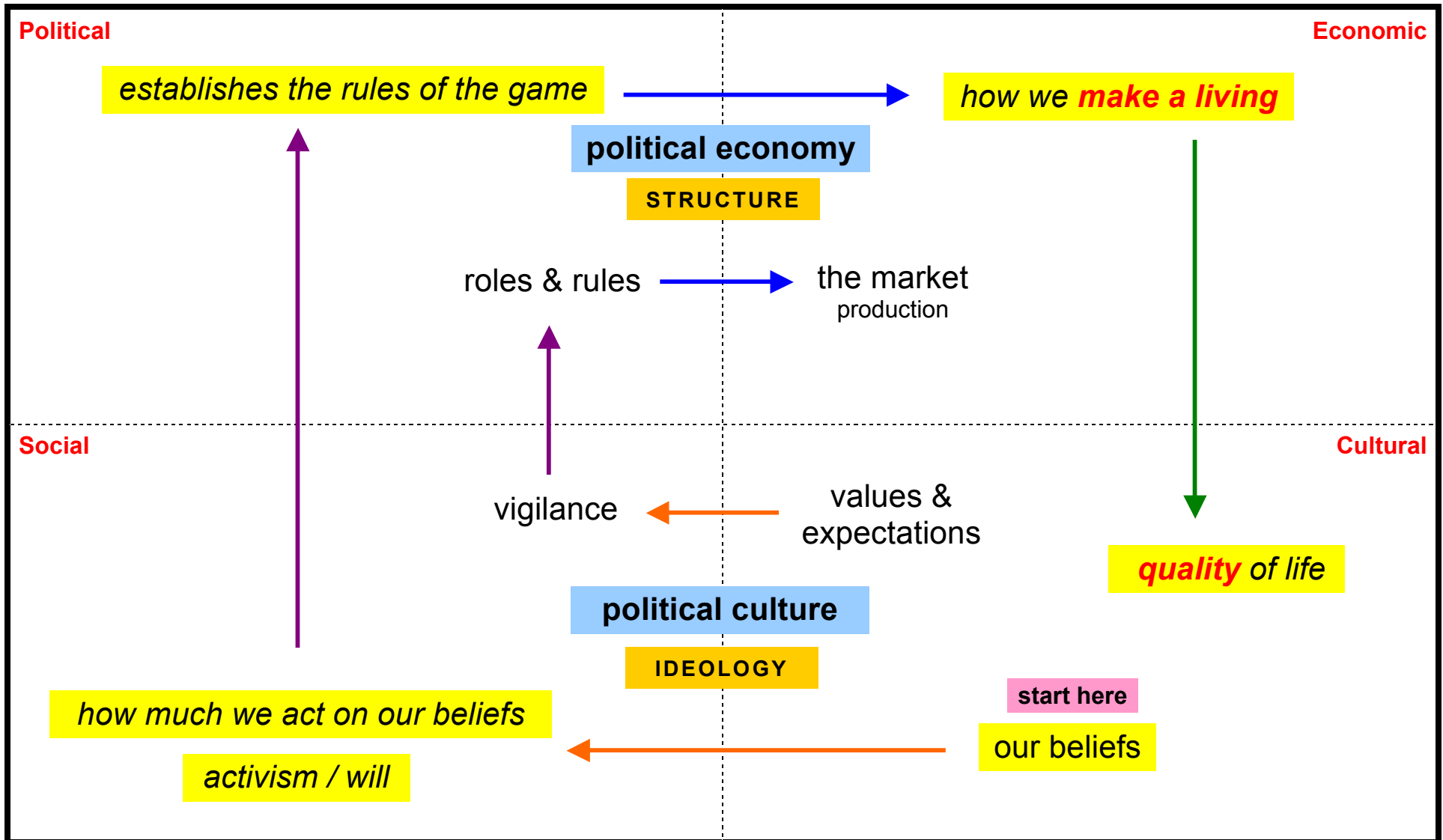
Social Science **Factors**: tools for exploration

## Human History can be studied as a quest....



Social Science **Factors**: same dynamics, different outcomes

## How do societies organize themselves?



Four Worlds analytical framework by Steven Lamy, Professor of International Relations, USC | Four Worlds of History adapted by Sandy Line, Associate & Teresa Hudock, Director, CALIS



## Four Worlds

***Political World***

- *type of government*
- *legal system*
- *military*

***Economic World***

- *goods & services*
- *types of labor & work*
- *production process*

***Social World***

- *how people are organized*

***Cultural World***

- *daily life*
- *beliefs*
- *the arts*

Name:  
Date:  
Period:

### Interdisciplinary Project Rubric

Categories	4	3	2	1
Content /Facts	All content throughout the presentation is accurate. There are no factual errors.	Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that might be inaccurate.	The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly flawed or inaccurate.	Content is typically confusing or contains more than one factual error.
Dates	An accurate, complete date has been included for each event.	An accurate, complete date has been included for almost every event.	An accurate date has been included for almost every event.	Dates are inaccurate and/or missing for several events.
Readability	The overall appearance of the timeline is pleasing and easy to read.	The overall appearance of the timeline is somewhat pleasing and easy to read.	The timeline is relatively readable.	The timeline is difficult to read.
Graphics	All graphics are effective and balanced with text use. Graphics are clearly identified and labeled.	All graphics are effective, but there appear to be too few or too many. Graphics are clearly identified and labeled.	Some graphics are effective and their use is balanced with text use. Graphics are identified and labeled.	Several graphics are not effective. Graphics are not all identified and labeled.
Learning of Content	The student can accurately describe 75% (or more) of the events on the timeline without referring to it and can quickly determine which of two events occurred first.	The student can accurately describe 50% of the events on the timeline without referring to it and can quickly determine which of two events occurred first.	The student can describe any event on the timeline if allowed to refer to it and can determine which of two events occurred first.	The student cannot use the timeline effectively to describe events nor to compare events.
Time Use	Classroom time was used to work on the project. Conversations were not disruptive and focused on the work.	Classroom time was used to work on the project the majority of the time. Conversations were not disruptive and focused on the work.	Classroom time was used to work on the project the majority of the time, but conversations often were disruptive or did not focus on the work.	Student did not use classroom time to work on the project and/or was highly disruptive.

Resources	The timeline contained at least 15-20 events related to the topic being studied. All resources were accurately cited.	The timeline contained at least 10-15 events related to the topic being studied. Most resources were accurately cited.	The timeline contained at least 10 events related to the topic being studied. Most resources were accurately cited.	The timeline contained fewer than 10 events. Few/None of the resources were accurately cited.
Written Text	The timeline contained and highlighted well-written excerpts from the policy paper that blended seamlessly with the project presentation.	The timeline contained written excerpts from the policy paper that added to the topic of the project.	The timeline contained a few excerpts from the policy paper and/or did little to add to the understanding of the project.	The timeline contained few to no excerpts from the policy paper and/or the excerpts did not add to the overall understanding of the project.
Cooperation	Group delegates tasks and shares responsibility effectively all of the time. All members attend and present project material.	Group delegates tasks and shares responsibility effectively most of the time. All members attend and present project material.	Group delegates tasks and shares responsibility effectively some of the time. One member absent, but other members present project material.	Group often is not effective in delegating tasks and/or sharing responsibility. More than one member absent on the day of presentation.

### Photograph Analysis:

1. What can you infer from the photograph? Describe the photograph.
2. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?
3. Where might you be able to find answers to your questions?
4. How might you categorize this photograph?
5. What perspective or viewpoint is this photograph depicting?
6. Create a caption for the photograph.

## Photograph Chart

[illegible]



## **Public Policy Rubric**

### Exceeds standard: 4

- Conveys thorough understanding of the issues and ideas addressed in the prompt.
- Effectively develops a position on public policy regarding homeless veterans.
- The argument is convincing.
- Utilizes appropriate evidence; develops fully; stays clear of generalizations.
- Organization is clear and coherent- argument development evolves thoroughly.
- Prose demonstrates effective writing through purpose, evidence, and appeals.
- Paper contains few errors or flaws, or none.

### Meets standard: 3

- Conveys adequate understanding of the issues and ideas addressed in the prompt.
- Effectively develops a position on public policy regarding homeless veterans.
- The argument is generally convincing but has sections that are less developed.
- Utilizes appropriate evidence; develops well; occasional summary over argument.
- Organization is clear and coherent- argument development evolves adequately.
- Prose demonstrates effective writing through purpose, evidence and appeals; language may contain syntactical simplicity or redundancy.
- Paper contains minor errors or flaws.

### Meets standard: 2 or 1

- Conveys inadequate understanding of the issues and ideas addressed in the prompt.
- Ineffectively develops a position on public policy regarding homeless veterans.
- The argument is misunderstood or misrepresented; superficial at best.
- Appropriate evidence is missing; insufficient argument ensues.
- Organization is weak or absent; argument is lost or merely summary of readings.
- Prose demonstrates weak elements of writing- little or no connection between purpose, evidence, and appeals; language simplistic and/or redundant.
- Essay contains a myriad of mechanical/usage/grammatical and spelling errors

## Vietnam War Hearings: John Kerry Testimony

1. Who is the main speaker? Who does he represent?
2. Who is the speaker's audience?
3. What is the purpose of his testimony? What does he hope to achieve for the Veterans? For America? For Vietnam?
4. How does he describe veterans' experience of the Vietnam War? Give at least 3 examples.
5. What are his perceptions of the government's actions?
6. How does the American public treat the returning soldiers and veterans?
7. What is the speaker's viewpoint of the Vietnam War?
8. What are some of the issues Vietnam Veterans have to address when returning home to America?
9. How does this account differ from the official statement from the U.S. Department of State bulletin?

# Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1.	TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):												
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Map</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Letter</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Telegram</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Congressional record</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Patent</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Press release</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Census report</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Report</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/> Map	<input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Telegram	<input type="checkbox"/> Congressional record	<input type="checkbox"/> Patent	<input type="checkbox"/> Press release	<input type="checkbox"/> Census report	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum	<input type="checkbox"/> Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/> Map	<input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement											
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Telegram	<input type="checkbox"/> Congressional record											
<input type="checkbox"/> Patent	<input type="checkbox"/> Press release	<input type="checkbox"/> Census report											
<input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum	<input type="checkbox"/> Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Other											
2.	UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):												
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Interesting letterhead</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Notations</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Typed</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Seals</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Interesting letterhead	<input type="checkbox"/> Notations	<input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten	<input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp	<input type="checkbox"/> Typed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Seals					
<input type="checkbox"/> Interesting letterhead	<input type="checkbox"/> Notations												
<input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten	<input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp												
<input type="checkbox"/> Typed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other												
<input type="checkbox"/> Seals													
3.	DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT: _____												
4.	AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT: _____  POSITION (TITLE): _____												
5.	FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN? _____												
6.	DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)												
	A. List three things the author said that you think are important: _____ _____ _____												
	B. Why do you think this document was written? _____ _____												
	C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document. _____ _____												
	D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written: _____ _____												
	E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document: _____ _____												

**Designed and developed by the  
Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408.**

[Contact Us](#) [Accessibility](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Freedom of Information Act](#) [No FEAR Act](#) [USA.gov](#)

**The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration**

1-86-NARA-NARA or 1-866-272-6272

**COMPLETE TESTIMONY OF LT. JOHN KERRY  
TO  
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**On Behalf of Vietnam Veterans Against the War**

**From the Congressional Record (92nd Congress, 1st Session)  
for Thursday, April 22, 1971,  
pages 179-210.**

Opening Statement .....	3
Statement of John Kerry, Vietnam Veterans Against the War .....	4
Winter Soldier Investigation.....	4
Feelings of Men Coming Back From Vietnam.....	5
What Was Found and Learned in Vietnam.....	6
Vietnamization.....	7
Returning Veterans Are Not Really Wanted .....	8
Lack of Moral Indignation in United States.....	8
Request for Action By Congress .....	9
Extent of Problem of Vietnam War .....	9
Where Is the Leadership? .....	10
Administration's Attempt to Disown Veterans.....	10
Commendation of Witness .....	11
Proposals Before Committee .....	11
Desire to Disengage From Vietnam .....	12
Question Is How to Disengage .....	12
Extraordinary Response Demanded By Extraordinary Question .....	14
Witness Service Decorations .....	14
North Vietnamese and VC Attitude Toward Definite Withdrawal Date .....	15
Saigon Government's Attitude Toward Complete Withdrawal Date .....	16
Attitude of South Vietnamese Army and People Toward Withdrawal.....	16
Obligation to Furnish Economic Assistance.....	18
Growth of Opposition to War.....	18
Voting of Veterans and Nonveterans Concerning Vietnam War.....	19
Obligation to South Vietnamese Allies .....	19
Actions of Lieutenant Calley.....	19
Strategic Implications of Vietnam War .....	21
Indochina and Question of World Peace .....	22
Background of Vietnam War.....	23
Possibility of Making U.S. Institutions Work Effectively .....	24
Can Basic System Be Made to Work?.....	25
Gradual Development of Concern About Vietnam War.....	26
War's Interference With Dealing With Other Problems.....	27
Developments in United States Requiring Fundamental Changes .....	28
Impact of Vietnam War and Others On Constitutional Balance.....	29
Representation of Constituencies .....	30
Necessity of Informed Electorate .....	31
Cost of Election Campaigns .....	31
Essential Question Will Be Response to Vietnam Issue.....	32
Commendation of Vietnam Veterans Against the War .....	32
Attitude of Servicemen Toward Congressional Opposition to War .....	33
Use of Drugs By U.S. Servicemen in Vietnam.....	34
Accuracy of Information Through Official Military Channels.....	35
Reporting of Vietnam War in the Press .....	36
Request for Letters Sent to Vietnam Veterans Against War .....	37
Changing Mood of Troops in Vietnam.....	37
Documentary Entitled "The Selling of the Pentagon".....	38
Resolution Concerning Vietnam Veterans' Encampment .....	39
Witness' Credentials.....	39
Evaluation of Testimony .....	39
Expression of Appreciation .....	40



## LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA<sup>1</sup>

---

THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1971

UNITED STATES SENATE;  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, D.C.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:05 a.m., in Room 4221, New Senate Office Building, Senator J. W. Fulbright (Chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Fulbright, Symington, Pell, Aiken, Case, and Javits.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

### OPENING STATEMENT

The committee is continuing this morning its hearings on proposals relating to the ending of the war in Southeast Asia. This morning the committee will hear testimony from Mr. John Kerry and, if he has any associates, we will be glad to hear from them. These are men who have fought in this unfortunate war in Vietnam. I believe they deserve to be heard and listened to by the Congress and by the officials in the executive branch and by the public generally. You have a perspective that those in the Government who make our Nation's policy do not always have and I am sure that your testimony today will be helpful to the committee in its consideration of the proposals before us.

I would like to add simply on my own account that I regret very much the action of the Supreme Court in denying the veterans the right to use the Mall. [Applause.]

I regret that. It seems to me to be but another instance of an insensitivity of our Government to the tragic effects of this war upon our people.

I want also to congratulate Mr. Kerry, you, and your associates upon the restraint that you have shown, certainly in the hearing the other day when there were a great many of your people here. I think you conducted yourselves in a most commendable manner throughout this week. Whenever people gather there is always a tendency for some of the more emotional ones to do things which are even against their own interests. I think you deserve much of the credit because I understand you are one of the leaders of this group.

I have joined with some of my colleagues, specifically Senator Hart, in an effort to try to change the attitude of our Government toward your efforts in bringing to this committee

---

<sup>1</sup> The copy text has no footnotes: all footnotes here are editorial additions. All elements in [brackets] or (parentheses) here are thus in the copy text.

and to the country your views about the war.<sup>2</sup> I personally don't know of any group which would have both a greater justification for doing it and also a more accurate view of the effect of the war. As you know, there has grown up in this town a feeling that it is extremely difficult to get accurate information about the war and I don't know a better source than you and your associates. So we are very pleased to have you and your associates, Mr. Kerry.

At the beginning if you would give to the reporter your full name and a brief biography so that the record will show who you are.

Senator JAVITS. Mr. Chairman, I was down there to the veterans' camp yesterday and saw the New York group and I would like to say I am very proud of the deportment and general attitude of the group. I hope it continues. I have joined in the Hart resolution, too. As a lawyer I hope you will find it possible to comply with the order even though like the chairman, I am unhappy about it. I think it is our job to see that you are suitably set up as an alternative so that you can do what you came here to do. I welcome the fact that you came and what you're doing.

[Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. You may proceed, Mr. Kerry.

#### STATEMENT OF JOHN KERRY, VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

Mr. KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Fulbright, Senator Javits, Senator Symington, Senator Pell. I would like to say for the record, and also for the men behind me who are also wearing the uniforms and their medals, that my sitting here is really symbolic. I am not here as John Kerry. I am here as one member of the group of 1,000, which is a small representation of a very much larger group of veterans in this country, and were it possible for all of them to sit at this table they would be here and have the same kind of testimony.

I would simply like to speak in very general terms. I apologize if my statement is general because I received notification yesterday you would hear me and I am afraid because of the injunction I was up most of the night and haven't had a great deal of chance to prepare.

#### WINTER SOLDIER INVESTIGATION

I would like to talk, representing all those veterans, and say that several months ago in Detroit, we had an investigation at which over 150 honorably discharged and many very highly decorated veterans testified to war crimes committed in Southeast Asia, not isolated incidents but crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command.

---

<sup>2</sup> Page 179 ends here.

It is impossible to describe to you exactly what did happen in Detroit, the emotions in the room, the feelings of the men who were reliving their experiences in Vietnam, but they did. They relived the absolute horror of what this country, in a sense, made them do.

They told the stories at times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to<sup>3</sup> the normal ravage of war, and the normal and very particular ravaging which is done by the applied bombing power of this country.

We call this investigation the "Winter Soldier Investigation." The term "Winter Soldier" is a play on words of Thomas Paine in 1776 when he spoke of the Sunshine Patriot and summertime soldiers who deserted at Valley Forge because the going was rough.

We who have come here to Washington have come here because we feel we have to be winter soldiers now. We could come back to this country; we could be quiet; we could hold our silence; we could not tell what went on in Vietnam, but we feel because of what threatens this country, the fact that the crimes threaten it, not reds, and not redcoats but the crimes which we are committing that threaten it, that we have to speak out.

#### FEELINGS OF MEN COMING BACK FROM VIETNAM

I would like to talk to you a little bit about what the result is of the feelings these men carry with them after coming back from Vietnam. The country doesn't know it yet, but it has created a monster, a monster in the form of millions of men who have been taught to deal and to trade in violence, and who are given the chance to die for the biggest nothing in history; men who have returned with a sense of anger and a sense of betrayal which no one has yet grasped.

As a veteran and one who feels this anger, I would like to talk about it. We are angry because we feel we have been used in the worst fashion by the administration of this country.

In 1970 at West Point, Vice President Agnew said "some glamorize the criminal misfits of society while our best men die in Asian rice paddies to preserve the freedom which most of those misfits abuse," and this was used as a rallying point for our effort in Vietnam.

But for us, as boys in Asia whom the country was supposed to support, his statement is a terrible distortion from which we can only draw a very deep sense of revulsion. Hence the anger of some of the men who are here in Washington today. It is a distortion because we in no way consider ourselves the best men of this country, because those he calls

---

<sup>3</sup> Page 180 ends here.

misfits were standing up for us in a way that nobody else in this country dared to, because so many who have died would have returned to this country to join the misfits in their efforts to ask for an immediate withdrawal from South Vietnam, because so many of those best men have returned as quadriplegics and amputees, and they lie forgotten in Veterans' Administration hospitals in this country which fly the flag which so many have chosen as their own personal symbol. And we cannot consider ourselves America's best men when we are ashamed of and hated what we were called on to do in Southeast Asia.

In our opinion, and from our experience, there is nothing in South Vietnam, nothing which could happen that realistically threatens the United States of America. And to attempt to justify the loss of one American life in Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos by linking such loss to the preservation of freedom, which those misfits supposedly abuse, is to us the height of criminal hypocrisy, and it is that kind of hypocrisy which we feel has torn this country apart.

We are probably much more angry than that and I don't want to go into the foreign policy aspects because I am outclassed here. I know that all of you talk about every possible alternative of getting out of<sup>4</sup> Vietnam. We understand that. We know you have considered the seriousness of the aspects to the utmost level and I am not going to try to dwell on that, but I want to relate to you the feeling that many of the men who have returned to this country express because we are probably angriest about all that we were told about Vietnam and about the mystical war against communism.

#### WHAT WAS FOUND AND LEARNED IN VIETNAM

We found that not only was it a civil war, an effort by a people who had for years been seeking their liberation from any colonial influence whatsoever, but also we found that the Vietnamese whom we had enthusiastically molded after our own image were hard put to take up the fight against the threat we were supposedly saving them from.

We found most people didn't even know the difference between communism and democracy. They only wanted to work in rice paddies without helicopters strafing them and bombs with napalm burning their villages and tearing their country apart. They wanted everything to do with the war, particularly with this foreign presence of the United States of America, to leave them alone in peace, and they practiced the art of survival by siding with whichever military force was present at a particular time, be it Vietcong, North Vietnamese, or American.

We found also that all too often American men were dying in those rice paddies for want of support from their allies. We saw first hand how money from American taxes was used for a corrupt dictatorial regime. We saw that many people in this country had a one-sided idea of who was kept free by our flag, as blacks provided the highest percentage of casualties. We saw Vietnam ravaged equally by American bombs as well as by search

---

<sup>4</sup> Page 181 ends here.

and destroy missions, as well as by Vietcong terrorism, and yet we listened while this country tried to blame all of the havoc on the Vietcong.

We rationalized destroying villages in order to save them. We saw America lose her sense of morality as she accepted very coolly a My Lai and refused to give up the image of American soldiers who hand out chocolate bars and chewing gum.

We learned the meaning of free fire zones, shooting anything that moves, and we watched while America placed a cheapness on the lives of orientals.

We watched the U.S. falsification of body counts, in fact the glorification of body counts. We listened while month after month we were told the back of the enemy was about to break. We fought using weapons against "oriental human beings," with quotation marks around that. We fought using weapons against those people which I do not believe this country would dream of using were we fighting in the European theater or let us say a non-third-world people theater, and so we watched while men charged up hills because a general said that hill has to be taken, and after losing one platoon or two platoons they marched away to leave the high for the reoccupation by the North Vietnamese because we watched pride allow the most unimportant of battles to be blown into extravaganzas, because we couldn't lose, and we couldn't retreat, and because it didn't matter how many American bodies were lost to prove that point. And so there were Hamburger Hills and Khe Sanhs and Hill 88's and Fire Base 6's and so many others.<sup>5</sup>

#### VIETNAMIZATION

Now we are told that the men who fought there must watch quietly while American lives are lost so that we can exercise the incredible arrogance of Vietnamizing the Vietnamese.

Each day——

[Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. I hope you won't interrupt. He is making a very significant statement. Let him proceed.

Mr. KERRY. Each day to facilitate the process by which the United States washes her hands of Vietnam someone has to give up his life so that the United States doesn't have to admit something that the entire world already knows, so that we can't say that we have made a mistake. Someone has to die so that President Nixon won't be, and these are his words, "the first President to lose a war."

We are asking Americans to think about that because how do you ask a man to be the last man to die in Vietnam? How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake? But we are trying to do that, and we are doing it with thousands of rationalizations, and if

---

<sup>5</sup> Page 182 ends here.

you read carefully the President's last speech to the people of this country, you can see that he says, and says clearly:

But the issue, gentlemen, the issue is communism, and the question is whether or not we will leave that country to the Communists or whether or not we will try to give it hope to be a free people.

But the point is they are not a free people now under us. They are not a free people, and we cannot fight communism all over the world, and I think we should have learned that lesson by now.

#### RETURNING VETERANS ARE NOT REALLY WANTED

But the problem of veterans goes beyond this personal problem, because you think about a poster in this country with a picture of Uncle Sam and the picture says "I want you." And a young man comes out of high school and says, "That is fine. I am going to serve my country." And he goes to Vietnam and he shoots and he kills and he does his job or maybe he doesn't kill, maybe he just goes and he comes back, and when he gets back to this country he finds that he isn't really wanted, because the largest unemployment figure in the country — it varies depending on who you get it from, the VA Administration 15 percent, various other sources 22 percent. But the largest corps of unemployed in this country are veterans of this war, and of those veterans 33 percent of the unemployed are black. That means 1 out of every 10 of the Nation's unemployed is a veteran of Vietnam.

The hospitals across the country won't, or can't meet their demands. It is not a question of not trying. They don't have the appropriations. A man recently died after he had a tracheotomy in California, not because of the operation but because there weren't enough personnel to clean the mucous out of his tube and he suffocated to death.

Another young man just died in a New York VA hospital the other day. A friend of mine was lying in a bed two beds away and tried to help him, but he couldn't. He rang a bell and there was nobody there to service that man and so he died of convulsions.

I understand 57 percent of all those entering the VA hospitals talk about suicide. Some 27 percent have tried, and they try because they<sup>6</sup> come back to this country and they have to face what they did in Vietnam, and then they come back and find the indifference of a country that doesn't really care, that doesn't really care.

#### LACK OF MORAL INDIGNATION IN UNITED STATES

Suddenly we are faced with a very sickening situation in this country, because there is no moral indignation and, if there is, it comes from people who are almost exhausted by their past indignations, and I know that many of them are sitting in front of me. The country seems to have lain down and shrugged off something as serious as Laos, just as

---

<sup>6</sup> Page 183 ends here.



we calmly shrugged off the loss of 700,000 lives in Pakistan, the so-called greatest disaster of all times.

But we are here as veterans to say we think we are in the midst of the greatest disaster of all times now because they are still dying over there, and not just Americans, Vietnamese, and we are rationalizing leaving that country so that those people can go on killing each other for years to come.

Americans seem to have accepted the idea that the war is winding down, at least for Americans, and they have also allowed the bodies which were once used by a President for statistics to prove that we were winning that war, to be used as evidence against a man who followed orders and who interpreted those orders no differently than hundreds of other men in Vietnam.

We veterans can only look with amazement on the fact that this country has been unable to see there is absolutely no difference between ground troops and a helicopter, and yet people have accepted a differentiation fed them by the administration.

No ground troops are in Laos, so it is all right to kill Laotians by remote control. But believe me the helicopter crews fill the same body bags and they wreak the same kind of damage on the Vietnamese and Laotian countryside as anybody else, and the President is talking about allowing that to go on for many years to come. One can only ask if we will really be satisfied only when the troops march into Hanoi.

#### REQUEST FOR ACTION BY CONGRESS

We are asking here in Washington for some action, action from the Congress of the United States of America which has the power to raise and maintain armies and which by the Constitution also has the power to declare war.

We have come here, not to the President, because we believe that this body can be responsive to the will of the people, and we believe that the will of the people says that we should be out of Vietnam now.

#### EXTENT OF PROBLEM OF VIETNAM WAR

We are here in Washington also to say that the problem of this war is not just a question of war and diplomacy. It is part and parcel of everything that we are trying as human beings to communicate to people in this country, the question of racism, which is rampant in the military, and so many other questions also, the use of weapons, the hypocrisy in our taking umbrage in the Geneva Conventions and using that as justification for a continuation of this war, when we<sup>7</sup> are more guilty than any other body of violations of those Geneva Conventions, in the use of free fire zones, harassment interdiction fire, search and destroy missions, the bombings, the torture of prisoners, the killing of

---

<sup>7</sup> Page 184 ends here.

prisoners, accepted policy by many units in South Vietnam. That is what we are trying to say. It is part and parcel of everything.

An American Indian friend of mine who lives in the Indian Nation of Alcatraz put it to me very succinctly. He told me how as a boy on an Indian reservation he had watched television and he used to cheer the cowboys when they came in and shot the Indians, and then suddenly one day he stopped in Vietnam and he said "My God, I am doing to these people the very same thing that was done to my people." And he stopped. And that is what we are trying to say, that we think this thing has to end.

#### WHERE IS THE LEADERSHIP?

We are also here to ask, and we are here to ask vehemently, where are the leaders of our country? Where is the leadership? We are here to ask where are McNamara, Rostow, Bundy, Gilpatric and so many others. Where are they now that we, the men whom they sent off to war, have returned? These are commanders who have deserted their troops, and there is no more serious crime in the law of war. The Army says they never leave their wounded.

The Marines say they never leave even their dead. These men have left all the casualties and retreated behind a pious shield of public rectitude. They have left the real stuff of their reputations bleaching behind them in the sun in this country.

#### ADMINISTRATION'S ATTEMPT TO DISOWN VETERANS

Finally, this administration has done us the ultimate dishonor. They have attempted to disown us and the sacrifice we made for this country. In their blindness and fear they have tried to deny that we are veterans or that we served in Nam. We do not need their testimony. Our own scars and stumps of limbs are witnesses enough for others and for ourselves.

We wish that a merciful God could wipe away our own memories of that service as easily as this administration has wiped their memories of us. But all that they have done and all that they can do by this denial is to make more clear than ever our own determination to undertake one last mission, to search out and destroy the last vestige of this barbaric war, to pacify our own hearts, to conquer the hate and the fear that have driven this country these last 10 years and more, and so when, in 30 years from now, our brothers go down the street without a leg, without an arm, or a face, and small boys ask why, we will be able to say "Vietnam" and not mean a desert, not a filthy obscene memory but mean instead the place where America finally turned and where soldiers like us helped it in the turning.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Kerry's authorship of his statement is disputed: it is claimed that anti-war activist Adam Walinsky, a former legislative aide to Sen. Robert Kennedy, either wrote the statement or helped Kerry to write it. Moreover, the "Winter Soldier Investigation" has been discredited.

Thank you. [Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Kerry, it is quite evident from that demonstration that you are speaking not only for yourself but for all your associates, as you properly said in the beginning.<sup>9</sup>

#### COMMENDATION OF WITNESS

You said you wished to communicate. I can't imagine anyone communicating more eloquently than you did. I think it is extremely helpful and beneficial to the committee and the country to have you make such a statement.

You said you had been awake all night. I can see that you spent that time very well indeed. [Laughter.]

Perhaps that was the better part, better that you should be awake than otherwise.

#### PROPOSALS BEFORE COMMITTEE

You have said that the question before this committee and the Congress is really how to end the war. The resolutions about which we have been hearing testimony during the past several days, the sponsors of which are some members of this committee, are seeking the most practical way that we can find and, I believe, to do it at the earliest opportunity that we can. That is the purpose of these hearings and that is why you were brought here.

You have been very eloquent about the reasons why we should proceed as quickly as possible. Are you familiar with some of the proposals before this committee?

Mr. KERRY. Yes, I am, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you support or do you have any particular views about any one of them you wish to give the committee?

Mr. KERRY. My feeling, Senator, is undoubtedly this Congress, and I don't mean to sound pessimistic, but I do not believe that this Congress will, in fact, end the war as we would like to, which is immediately and unilaterally and, therefore, if I were to speak I would say we would set a date and the date obviously would be the earliest possible date. But I would like to say, in answering that, that I do not believe it is necessary to stall any longer. I have been to Paris. I have talked with both delegations at the peace talks, that is to say the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government and of all eight of Madam Binh's points it has been stated time and time again, and was stated by Senator Vance Hartke when he returned from Paris, and it has been stated by many other officials of this Government, if the United States were to set a date for withdrawal the prisoners of war would be returned.

---

<sup>9</sup> Page 185 ends here.

I think this negates very clearly the argument of the President that we have to maintain a presence in Vietnam, to use as a negotiating block for the return of those prisoners. The setting of a date will accomplish that.

As to the argument concerning the danger to our troops were we to withdraw or state that we would, they have also said many times in conjunction with that statement that all of our troops the moment we set a date, will be given safe conduct out of Vietnam. The only other important point is that we allow the South Vietnamese people to determine their own future and that ostensibly is what we have been fighting for anyway.

I would, therefore, submit that the most expedient means of getting out of South Vietnam would be for the President of the United States to declare a cease-fire,<sup>10</sup> to stop this blind commitment to a dictatorial regime, the Thieu-Ky-Khiem regime, accept a coalition regime which<sup>11</sup> would represent all the political forces of the country which is in fact what a representative government is supposed to do and which is in fact what this Government here in this country purports to do, and pull the troops out without losing one more American, and still further without losing the South Vietnamese.

#### DESIRE TO DISENGAGE FROM VIETNAM

The CHAIRMAN. You seem to feel that there is still some doubt about the desire to disengage. I don't believe that is true. I believe there has been a tremendous change in the attitude of the people. As reflected in the Congress, they do wish to disengage and to bring the war to an end as soon as we can.

#### QUESTION IS HOW TO DISENGAGE

The question before us is how to do it. What is the best means that is most effective, taking into consideration the circumstances with which all governments are burdened? We have a precedent in this same country. The French had an experience, perhaps not traumatic as ours has been, but nevertheless they did make up their minds in the spring of 1954 and within a few weeks did bring it to a close. Some of us have thought that this is a precedent, from which we could learn, for ending such a war. I have personally advocated that this is the best procedure. It is a traditional rather classic procedure of how to end a war that could be called a stalemate, that neither side apparently has the capacity to end by military victory, and which apparently is going to go on for a long time. Speaking only for myself, this seems the more reasonable procedure.

I realize you want it immediately, but I think that procedure was about as immediate as any by which a country has ever succeeded in ending such a conflict or a similar conflict. Would that not appeal to you?

---

<sup>10</sup> Spelled with a dash in the copy text.

<sup>11</sup> Page 186 ends here.

Mr. KERRY. Well, Senator, frankly it does not appeal to me if American men have to continue to die when they don't have to, particularly when it seems the Government of this country is more concerned with the legality of where men sleep than it is with the legality of where they drop bombs. [Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. In the case of the French when they made up their mind to take the matter up at the conference in Geneva, they did. The first thing they did was to arrange a ceasefire<sup>12</sup> and the killing did cease. Then it took only, I think, two or three weeks to tidy up all the details regarding the withdrawal. Actually when they made up their mind to stop the war they did have a ceasefire<sup>13</sup> which is what you are recommending as the first step.

Mr. KERRY. Yes, sir; that is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. It did not drag on. They didn't continue to fight. They stopped the fighting by agreement when they went to Geneva and all the countries then directly involved participated in that agreement.

I don't wish to press you on the details. It is for the committee to determine the best means but you have given most eloquently the reasons why we should proceed as early as we can. That is, of course, the purpose of the hearing.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. KERRY. Senator, if I may interject, I think that what we are trying to say is we do have a method. We believe we do have a plan and that plan is that if this body were by some means either to permit a special referendum in this country so that the country itself might decide and therefore avoid this recrimination which people constantly refer to or if they couldn't do that, at least do it through immediate legislation which would state there would be an immediate ceasefire<sup>15</sup> and we would be willing to undertake negotiations for a coalition government. But at the present moment that is not going to happen, so we are talking about men continuing to die for nothing and I think there is a tremendous moral question here which the Congress of the United States is ignoring.

The CHAIRMAN. The Congress cannot directly under our system negotiate a cease-fire<sup>16</sup> or anything of this kind. Under our constitutional system we can advise the President. We have to persuade the President of the urgency of taking this action. Now we have certain ways in which to proceed. We can, of course, express ourselves in a resolution or we can pass an act which directly affects appropriations which is the most concrete positive way the Congress can express itself.

---

<sup>12</sup> Spelled without a dash in the copy text.

<sup>13</sup> Spelled without a dash in the copy text.

<sup>14</sup> Page 187 ends here.

<sup>15</sup> Spelled without a dash in the copy text.

<sup>16</sup> Spelled with a dash in the copy text.

But Congress has no capacity under our system to go out and negotiate a cease-fire.<sup>17</sup> We have to persuade the Executive to do this for the country.

EXTRAORDINARY RESPONSE DEMANDED BY EXTRAORDINARY QUESTION

Mr. KERRY. Mr. Chairman, I realize that full well as a study<sup>18</sup> of political science. I realize that we cannot negotiate treaties and I realize that even my visits in Paris, precedents had been set by Senator McCarthy and others, in a sense are on the borderline of private individuals negotiating, et cetera, I understand these things. But what I am saying is that I believe that there is a mood in this country which I know you are aware of and you have been one of the strongest critics of this war for the longest time. But I think if we can talk in this legislative body about filibustering for porkbarrel<sup>19</sup> programs, then we should start now to talk about filibustering for the saving of lives and of our country. [Applause.]

And this, Mr. Chairman, is what we are trying to convey.

I understand. I really am aware that there are a tremendous number of difficulties in trying to persuade the Executive to move at this time. I believe they are committed. I don't believe we can. But I hope that we are not going to have to wait until 1972 to have this decision made. And what I am suggesting is that I think this is an extraordinary enough question so that it demands an extraordinary response, and if we can't respond extraordinarily to this problem then I doubt very seriously as men on each that we will be able to respond to the other serious questions which face us. I think we have to start to consider that. This is what I am trying to say.

If this body could perhaps call for a referendum in the country or if we could perhaps move now for a vote in 3 weeks, I think the people of this country would rise up and back that. I am not saying a vote nationwide. I am talking about a vote here in Congress to cut off the funds, and a vote to perhaps pass a resolution calling on the Supreme Court to rule on the constitutionality of the war, and to do<sup>20</sup> the things that uphold those things which we pretend to be. That is what we are asking. I don't think we can turn our backs on that any longer, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Symington?

WITNESS SERVICE DECORATIONS

Senator SYMINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Kerry, please move your microphone. You have a Silver Star; have you not?

---

<sup>17</sup> Spelled with a dash in the copy text.

<sup>18</sup> Thus in the copy text.

<sup>19</sup> Spelled as one word in copy text.

<sup>20</sup> Page 188 ends here.



Mr. KERRY. Yes, I do.

Senator SYMINGTON. And a Purple Heart?

Mr. KERRY. Yes, I do.

Senator SYMINGTON. How many clusters?

Mr. KERRY. Two clusters.

Senator SYMINGTON. So you have been wounded three times.

Mr. KERRY. Yes, sir.

Senator SYMINGTON. I have no further questions, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Aiken. [Applause.]

NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VC ATTITUDE TOWARD DEFINITE WITHDRAWAL DATE

Senator AIKEN. Mr. Kerry, the Defense Department seems to feel that if we set a definite date for withdrawal when our forces get down to a certain level they would be seriously in danger by the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong. Do you believe that the North Vietnamese would undertake to prevent our withdrawal from the country and attack the troops that remain there?

Mr. KERRY. Well, Senator, if I may answer you directly, I believe we are running that danger with the present course of withdrawal because the President has neglected to state to this country exactly what his response will be when we have reached the point that we do have, let us say, 50,000 support troops in Vietnam.

Senator AIKEN. I am not telling you what I think. I am telling you what the Department says.

Mr. KERRY. Yes, sir; I understand that.

Senator AIKEN. Do you believe the North Vietnamese would seriously undertake to impede our complete withdrawal?

Mr. KERRY. No, I do not believe that the North Vietnamese would and it has been clearly indicated at the Paris peace talks they would not.

Senator AIKEN. Do you think they might help carry the bags for us? [Laughter.]

Mr. KERRY. I would say they would be more prone to do that than the Army of the South Vietnamese. [Laughter.] [Applause.]

Senator AIKEN. I think your answer is ahead of my question. [Laughter.]

SAIGON GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL DATE

I was going to ask you next what the attitude of the Saigon government would be if we announced that we were going to withdraw our troops, say, by October 1st, and be completely out of there — air, sea, land — leaving them on their own. What do you think would be the attitude of the Saigon government under those circumstances?<sup>21</sup>

Mr. KERRY. Well, I think if we were to replace the Thieu-Ky-Khiem regime and offer these men sanctuary somewhere, which I think this Government has an obligation to do since we created that government and supported it all along. I think there would not be any problems. The number two man at the Saigon talks to Ambassador Lam was asked by the Concerned Laymen, who visited with them in Paris last month, how long they felt they could survive if the United States would pull out and his answer was 1 week. So I think clearly we do have to face this question. But I think, having done what we have done to that country, we have an obligation to offer sanctuary to the perhaps 2,000, 3,000 people who might face, and obviously they would, we understand that, might face political assassination or something else. But my feeling is that those 3,000 who may have to leave that country——

ATTITUDE OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY AND PEOPLE TOWARD WITHDRAWAL

Senator AIKEN. I think your 3,000 estimate might be a little low because we had to help 800,000 find sanctuary from North Vietnam after the French lost at Dienbienphu. But assuming that we resettle the members of the Saigon government, who would undoubtedly be in danger in some other area, what do you think would be the attitude, of the large, well-armed South Vietnamese army and the South Vietnamese people? Would they be happy to have us withdraw or what?

Mr. KERRY. Well, Senator, this obviously is the most difficult question of all, but I think that at this point the United States is not really in a position to consider the happiness of those people as pertains to the army in our withdrawal. We have to consider the happiness of the people as pertains to the life which they will be able to lead in the next few years.

If we don't withdraw, if we maintain a Korean-type presence in South Vietnam, say 50,000 troops or something, with strategic bombing raids from Guam and from Japan and from Thailand dropping these 15,000 pound fragmentation bombs on them, et cetera, in the next few years, then what you will have is a people who are continually oppressed, who are continually at warfare, and whose problems will not at all be solved because they will not have any kind of representation. The war will continue. So what I'm saying is that yes, there will be some recrimination but far, far less than the 200,000 a year who are murdered by the United States of America, and we can't go around — President Kennedy

---

<sup>21</sup> Page 189 ends here.

said this, many times. He said that the United States simply can't right every wrong, that we can't solve the problems of the other 94 percent of mankind. We didn't go into East Pakistan; we didn't go into Czechoslovakia. Why then should we feel that we now have the power to solve the internal political struggles of this country?

We have to let them solve their problems while we solve ours and help other people in an altruistic fashion commensurate with our capacity. But we have extended that capacity; we have exhausted that capacity, Senator. So I think the question is really moot.

Senator AIKEN. I might say I asked those questions several years ago, rather ineffectively. But what I would like to know now is if we, as we complete our withdrawal and, say, get down to 10,000, 20,000,<sup>22</sup> 30,000 or even 50,000 troops there, would there be any effort on the part of the South Vietnamese government or the South Vietnamese army, in your opinion, to impede their withdrawal?

Mr. KERRY. No; I don't think so, Senator.

Senator AIKEN. I don't see why North Vietnam should object.

Mr. KERRY. I don't for the simple reason, I used to talk with officers about their — we asked them, and one officer took great pleasure in playing with me in the sense that he would say, "Well, you know you Americans, you come over here for 1 year and you can afford, you know, you go to Hong Kong for R. & R. and if you are a good boy you get another R. & R. or something you know. You can afford to charge bunkers but I have to try and be here for 30 years and stay alive." And I think that that really is the governing principle by which those people are now living and have been allowed to live because of our mistake. So that when we in fact state, let us say, that we will have a ceasefire<sup>23</sup> or have a coalition government, most of the 2 million men you often hear quoted under arms, most of whom are regional popular reconnaissance forces, which is to say militia, and a very poor militia at that, will simply lay down their arms, if they haven't done so already, and not fight. And I think you will find they will respond to whatever government evolves which answers their needs, and those needs quite simply are to be fed, to bury their dead in plots where their ancestors lived, to be allowed to extend their culture, to try and exist as human beings. And I think that is what will happen.

I can cite many, many instances, sir, as in combat when these men refused to fight with us, when they shot with their guns over tin<sup>24</sup> this area like this and their heads turned facing the other way. When we were taken under fire we Americans, supposedly fighting with them, and pinned down in a ditch, and I was in the Navy and this was pretty unconventional, but when we were pinned down in a ditch recovering bodies or something and they refused to come in and help us, point blank refused. I don't believe they want to fight, sir.

---

<sup>22</sup> Page 190 ends here.

<sup>23</sup> Spelled without a dash in the copy text.

<sup>24</sup> Thus in the copy text.

OBLIGATION TO FURNISH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Senator AIKEN. Do you think we are under obligation to furnish them with extensive economic assistance?

Mr. KERRY. Yes, sir. I think we have a very definite obligation to make extensive reparations to the people of Indochina.

Senator AIKEN. I think that is all.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Pell.

Senator PELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As the witness knows, I have a very high personal regard for him and hope before his life ends he will be a colleague of ours in this body.

GROWTH OF OPPOSITION TO WAR

This war was really just as wrong, immoral, and unrelated to our national interests 5 years ago as it is today, and I must say I agree with you. I think it is rather poor taste for the architects of this war to now be sitting as they are in quite sacrosanct intellectual glass houses.<sup>25</sup> I think that this committee, and particularly Chairman Fulbright, deserve a huge debt of gratitude from you and everyone of your men who are here because when he conducted hearings some years ago when we were fighting in Vietnam. At that time the word "peace" was a dirty word. It was tied in with "appeasement" and Nervous Nellies and that sort of thing. Chairman Fulbright and this committee really took public opinion at that time and turned it around and made "peace" a respectable word and produced the climate that produced President Johnson's abdication.

The problem is that the majority of the people in the Congress still don't agree with the view that you and we have. As the chairman pointed out, and as you know as a student of political science, whenever we wanted to end this war, we could have ended this war if the majority of us had used the power of the purse strings. That was just as true 5 years ago as it is today.

I don't think it is a question of guts. We didn't have the desire to do that and I am not sure the majority has the desire to do that yet. Whenever we want to as a Congress, we could do it. We can't start an action, but we can force an action with the purse strings. I think it is wonderful you veterans have come down here as a cutting edge of public opinion because you again make this have more respect and I hope you succeed and prevail on the majority of the Congress.

---

<sup>25</sup> Page 191 ends here.

## VOTING OF VETERANS AND NONVETERANS CONCERNING VIETNAM WAR

It is interesting, speaking of veterans and speaking of statistics, that the press has never picked up and concentrated on quite interesting votes in the past. In those votes you find the majority of hawks were usually nonveterans and the majority of doves were usually veterans. Specifically, of those who voted in favor of the Hatfield-McGovern end-the-war amendment in the last session of the Congress 79 percent were veterans with actual military service. Of those voting against the amendment, only 36 percent were veterans.

Now on the sponsors of the Cooper-Church amendment you will find very much the same statistics. Eighty-two percent were veterans as compared to 71 percent of the Senate as a whole being veterans. So I would hope what you are doing will have an effect on the Congress.

## OBLIGATION TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE ALLIES

I have two questions I would like to ask you. First, I was very much struck by your concern with asylum because now I see public opinion starting to swing and Congress passing legislation. Before they wouldn't get out at all; now they are talking about getting out yesterday. When it comes to looking after the people who would be killed if we left or badly ruined, I would hope you would develop your thinking at<sup>26</sup> little bit to make sure that American public opinion, which now wants to get out, also bears in mind that when we depart we have an obligation to these people. I hope you will keep to that point.<sup>27</sup>

## ACTIONS OF LIEUTENANT CALLEY

Finally in connection with Lieutenant Calley, which is a very emotional issue in this country, I was struck by your passing reference to that incident.

Wouldn't you agree with me though that what he did in herding old men, women and children into a trench and then shooting them was a little bit beyond the perimeter of even what has been going on in this war and that that action should be discouraged. There are other actions not that extreme that have gone on and have been permitted. If we had not taken action or cognizance of it, it would have been even worse. It would have indicated we encouraged this kind of action.

Mr. KERRY. My feeling, Senator, on Lieutenant Calley is what he did quite obviously was a horrible, horrible, horrible thing and I have no bone to pick with the fact that he was prosecuted. But I think that in this question you have to separate guilt from responsibility, and I think clearly the responsibility for what has happened there lies elsewhere.

---

<sup>26</sup> Thus in the copy text.

<sup>27</sup> Page 192 ends here.

I think it lies with the men who designed free fire zones. I think it lies with the men who encouraged body counts. I think it lies in large part with this country, which allows a young child before he reaches the age of 14 to see 12,500 deaths on television, which glorifies the John Wayne syndrome, which puts out fighting man comic books on the stands, which allows us in training to do calisthenics to four counts, on the fourth count of which we stand up and shout "kill" in unison, which has posters in barracks in this country with a crucified Vietnamese, blood on him, and underneath it says "kill the gook," and I think that clearly the responsibility for all of this is what has produced this horrible aberration.<sup>28</sup>

Now, I think if you are going to try Lieutenant Calley then you must at the same time, if this country is going to demand respect for the law, you must at the same time try all those other people who have responsibility, and any aversion that we may have to the verdict as veterans is not to say that Calley should be freed, not to say that he is innocent, but to say that you can't just take him alone, and that would be my response to that.

Senator PELL. I agree with you. The guilt is shared by many, many, many of us, including the leaders of the get-out-now school. But in this regard if we had not tried him, I think we would be much more criticized and should be criticized. I would think the same fate would probably befall him as befell either Sergeant or Lieutenant Schwarz of West Virginia who was tried for life for the same offense and is out on a 9 months commuted sentence. By the same token I would hope the quality of mercy would be exercised in this regard for a young man who was not equipped for the job and ran amuck. But I think public opinion should think this through. We who have taken this position find ourselves very much in the minority.

Mr. KERRY. I understand that, Senator, but I think it is a very difficult thing for the public to think through faced with the facts. The fact that 18 other people indicted for the very same crime were freed<sup>29</sup> and the fact among those were generals and colonels. I mean this simply is not justice. That is all. It is just not justice.

Senator PELL. I guess it is the old revolutionary adage. When you see the whites of their eyes you are more guilty. This seems to be our morality as has been pointed out. If you drop a bomb from a plane, you don't see the whites of their eyes.

I agree with you with the body count. It is like a Scottish nobleman saying, "How many grouse were caught on the moor." Four or five years ago those of us who criticized were more criticized.

Thank you for being here and I wish you all success. [Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator from New Jersey.

---

<sup>28</sup> Thus in the copy text.

<sup>29</sup> Page 193 ends here.

Senator CASE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF VIETNAM WAR

Mr. Kerry, thank you too for coming. You have made more than clear something that I think always has been true: that the war never had any justification in terms of Indochina itself. I wish you would take this question a little further and touch on the larger strategic implications. It is in these larger strategic implications, if anywhere, that may be found justification for our involvement. As you know, the President said the other day that it is easy to get out and to end the war immediately.

The question is to get out and leave a reasonable chance for lasting peace. We have to look at this because the American people are going to see the issue in the terms he has defined it. I would be glad to have your comment on this matter, although I won't press you to discuss it because in a sense you have already said this is not your area.

Mr. KERRY. I do want to. I want to very much.

Senator CASE. And I would be very glad to have you do it.

Mr. KERRY. Thank you, sir. I would like to very much.

In my opinion, what we are trying to do, as the President talks about getting out with a semblance of honor is simply whitewashing ourselves. On the question of getting out with some semblance for peace, as a man who has fought there, I am trying to say that this policy has no chance for peace. You don't have a chance for peace when you arm the people of another country and tell them they can fight a war. That is not peace; that is fighting a war; that is continuing a war. That is even criminal in the sense that this country, if we are really worried about recrimination, is going to have to some day face up to the fact that we convinced a certain number of people, perhaps hundreds of thousands, perhaps there will be several million, that they could stand up to something which they couldn't and ultimately will face the recrimination of the fact that their lives in addition to all the lives at this point, will be on our conscience. I don't think it is a question of peace at all. What we are doing is very, very hypocritical in our withdrawal, and we really should face up to that.

Senator CASE. May I press you just a little further or at least raise the question on which I would ask you to comment.

Mr. KERRY. I wish you would, please.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Page 194 ends here.



INDOCHINA AND QUESTION OF WORLD PEACE

Senator CASE. I think your answer was related still to the question of Indochina but I think the President has tried to tie in Indochina with the question of world peace.

Mr. KERRY. I would like to discuss that.

It is my opinion that the United States is still reacting in very much the 1945 mood and postwar cold-war period when we reacted to the forces which were at work in World War II and came out of it with this paranoia about the Russians and how the world was going to be divided up between the super powers, and the foreign policy of John Foster Dulles which was responsible for the creation of the SEATO treaty, which was in fact, a direct reaction to this so-called Communist monolith. And I think we are reacting under cold-war precepts which are no longer applicable.

I say that because so long as we have the kind of strike force we have, and I am not party to the secret statistics which you gentlemen have here, but as long as we have the ones which we of the public know we have, I think we have a strike force of such capability and I think we have a strike force simply in our Polaris submarines, in the 62 or some Polaris submarines, which are constantly roaming around under the sea. And I know as a Navy man that underwater detection is the hardest kind in the world, and they have not perfected it, that we have the ability to destroy the human race. Why do we have to, therefore, consider and keep considering threats?

At any time that an actual threat is posed to this country or to the security and freedom I will be one of the first people to pick up a gun and defend it, but right now we are reacting with paranoia to this question of peace and the people taking over the world. I think if we are ever going to get down to the question of dropping those bombs most of us in my generation simply don't want to be alive afterwards because of the kind of world that it would be with mutations and the genetic probabilities of freaks and everything else.

Therefore, I think it is ridiculous to assume we have to play this power game based on total warfare. I think there will be guerrilla wars and I think we must have a capability to fight those. And we may have to fight them somewhere based on legitimate threats, but we must learn, in this country, how to define those threats and that is what I would say to this question of world peace. I think it is bogus, totally artificial. There is no threat. The Communists are not about to take over our McDonald hamburger stands. [Laughter.]

Senator, I will say this, I think that politically, historically, the one thing that people try to do, that society is structured on as a whole, is an attempt to satisfy their felt needs, and you can satisfy those needs with almost any kind of political structure, giving it one name or the other. In this name it is democratic; in others it is communism; in others it is benevolent dictatorship. As long as those needs are satisfied, that structure will exist.

But when you start to neglect those needs, people will start to demand a new structure, and that, to me, is the only threat that this country faces now, because we are not responding to the needs and we<sup>31</sup> are not responding to them because we work on these old cold-war precepts and because we have not woken up to realizing what is happening in the United States of America.

Senator CASE. I thank you very much. I wanted you to have a chance to respond to the question of Indochina in a large context.

Mr. Chairman, I have just one further thing to do. Senator Javits had to go to the floor on important business, and he asked me to express his regret that he couldn't stay and also that if he had stayed he would have limited his participation to agreement with everything Senator Symington said. [Applause.]

#### BACKGROUND OF VIETNAM WAR

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Kerry, I have one other aspect of this I would like to explore for a moment. I recognize you and your associates, putting it on a personal point of view, feeling the seriousness and the tragedy of the experience in Vietnam. But I am disturbed very much by the possibility that your generation may become or is perhaps already in the process of becoming disillusioned with our whole country, with our system of government. There was much said about it. You didn't say it, but others have said this. I wonder if we could explore for a moment the background of this war.

It has seemed to me that its origin was essentially a mistake in judgment, beginning with our support of the French as a colonial power, which, I believe, is the only time our country has ever done that. Always our sympathies has<sup>32</sup> been with the colony. If you will recall, we urged the British to get out of Egypt and India, and we urged, many thought too vigorously, the Dutch prematurely to get out of Indonesia. I think there was much criticism that we acted prematurely in urging the Belgians to get out of the Congo. In any case, the support of the French to maintain their power was a departure from our traditional attitude toward colonial powers because of our own history.

It started in a relatively small way by our support of the French. Then one thing led to another. But these were not decisions, I believe, that involved evil motives. They were political judgments which at that time were justified by the conditions in the world. You have already referred to the fact that after World War II there was great apprehension, and I think properly. The apprehension was justified by the events, especially from Stalin's regime. There was apprehension that he would be able, and if he could he would, impose his regime by force on all of Western Europe, which could have created an extremely difficult situation which would amount to what you said a moment ago. You said if our country was really threatened, you would have no hesitancy in taking up a gun. So I think, in trying to evaluate the course of our involvement in this war, we have to take

---

<sup>31</sup> Page 195 ends here.

<sup>32</sup> Thus in the copy text.

all of this into consideration. It was not a sign of any moral degradation or of bad motives. They were simply political judgments as to where our interest really was.

In retrospect I think we can say that our interest was not in supporting the French, that it was not in intervening, and it was not in undoing the Geneva Accords by the creation of SEATO, but that is all history. I am not saying this in order to try to lay the blame on anyone, but to get a perspective of our present situation, and hopefully to help, if I<sup>33</sup> can, you and others not to be too disillusioned and not to lose faith in the capacity of our institutions to respond to the public welfare. I believe what you and your associates are doing today certainly contributes to that, by the fact that you have taken the trouble to think these things through, and to come here. I know it is not very pleasant to do the things you have done.

While I wouldn't presume to compare my own experience, I have taken a great deal of criticism since I myself in 1965 took issue with the then President Johnson over his policies. I did what I could within my particular role in the Government to persuade both President Johnson and subsequent political leaders that this was not in the interests of our country. I did this, not because I thought they were evil men inherently or they were morally misguided, but their political judgment was wrong. All of us, of course, know that as fallible human beings we all make errors of judgment.

#### POSSIBILITY OF MAKING U.S. INSTITUTIONS WORK EFFECTIVELY

I think it is helpful to try to put it in perspective and not lose confidence in the basically good motives and purposes of this country. I believe in the possibility of making our institutions work effectively. I think they can be made responsive to the welfare of the people and to proper judgments. I only throw this out because I have a feeling that because of the unusual horror that has developed from this war too many people may lose confidence in our system as a whole. I know of no better system for a country as large as this, with 200-plus millions of people. No other country comparable to it in history has ever made a democratic system work.

They have all become dictatorships when they have achieved the size and complexity of this country. Only smaller countries really have made a democratic system work at all.

So I only wish to throw it out hopefully that, in spite of the tragic experiences of you and so many other people and the deaths of so many people, this system is not beyond recall and with the assistance of people like yourself and the younger generation we can get back on the track, and can make this system operate effectively.

I know that the idea of working within the system has been used so much, and many people have lost confidence that it can be done. They wish to destroy the system, to start all over, but I don't think in the history of human experience that those destructions of

---

<sup>33</sup> Page 196 ends here.

systems work. They usually destroy everything good as well as bad, and you have an awful lot of doing to recreate the good part and to get started again.

So I am very hopeful that the younger generation — and I am certainly getting at the end of my generation because I have been here an awfully long time — but that you younger people can find it possible to accept the system and try to make it work because I can't at the moment think of a better one given the conditions that we have in this country and the great complexity and diversity.

I really believe if we can stop this war — I certainly expect to do everything I can. I have done all I can with all my limitations. I am sure many people have thought I could do better, but I did all that I was capable of doing and what wisdom I may have has been applied<sup>34</sup> to it. I hope that you and your colleagues will feel the same way or at least you will accept the structure of the system and try to make it work. I can see no better alternative to offer in its place.

If I thought there was one, I would certainly propose it or try.

#### CAN BASIC SYSTEM BE MADE TO WORK?

Have you yourself arrived at the point where you believe that basic structural changes must be brought about in our system or do you believe it can be made to work?

Mr. KERRY. I don't think I would be here if I didn't believe that it can be made to work, but I would have to say, and one of the traits of my generation now is that people don't pretend to speak for other people in it, and I can only speak as an individual about it, but I would say that I have certainly been frustrated in the past months, very, very seriously frustrated. I have gone to businessmen all over this country asking for money for fees, and met with a varying range of comments, ranging from "You can't sell war crimes" to, "War crimes are a glut on the market" or to "well you know we are tired now, we have tried, we can't do anything." So I have seen unresponsiveness on the racial question in this country. I see an unwillingness on the part of too many of the members of this body to respond, to take gutsy stands, to face questions other than their own reelection, to make a profile of courage, and I am — although still with faith — very, very, very full of doubt, and I am not going to quit. But I think that unless we can respond on as a great a question as the war, I seriously question how we are going to find the kind of response needed to meet questions such as poverty and hunger and questions such as birth control and so many of the things that face our society today from low income housing to schooling, to recent reaction to the Supreme Court's decision on busing.

But I will say that I think we are going to keep trying. I also agree with you, Senator. I don't see another system other than democracy, but democracy has to remain responsive. When it does not, you create the possibilities for all kinds of other systems to supplant it, and that very possibility, I think, is beginning to exist in this country.

---

<sup>34</sup> Page 197 ends here.

The CHAIRMAN. That is why I ask you that. The feeling that it cannot be made responsive comes not so much from what you have said but from many different sources. I can assure you I have been frustrated too. We have lost most of our major efforts. That is we have not succeeded in getting enough votes, but there has been a very marked increase, I think, in the realization of the seriousness of the war. I think you have to keep in perspective, as I say, the size and complexity of the country itself and the difficulties of communication. This war is so far removed. The very fact, as you have said, you do not believe what happens there to be in the vital interests of this country, has from the beginning caused many people to think it wasn't so important.

#### GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT VIETNAM WAR

In the beginning, back in the times that I mentioned when we first supported the French and throughout the 1950's up until the 1960's, this whole matter was not very much on the minds of anybody in the Congress. We were more preoccupied with what was going on in Western<sup>35</sup> Europe, the fear, particularly during Stalin's time, that he might be able to subjugate all of Western Europe, which would have been a very serious challenge to us. This grew up almost as a peripheral matter without anyone taking too much notice until the 1960's. The major time when the Congress, I think, really became concerned about the significance of the war was really not before 1965, the big escalation. It was a very minor sideshow in all the things in which this country was involved until February of 1965. That was when it became a matter that, you might say, warranted and compelled the attention of the country. It has been a gradual development of our realization of just what we were into.

As I said before, I think this came about not because of bad motives but by very serious errors in political judgment as to where our interest lies and what should be done about it.

I am only saying this hopefully to at least try to enlist your consideration, of the view that in a country of this kind I can't believe there is a better alternative from a structural point of view. I think the structure of our Government is sound.

To go back to my own State certainly, leaving out now the war, its affairs are being well managed. The people are, as you may say, maybe too indifferent to this.

Mr. KERRY. As it does in Massachusetts, too.

The CHAIRMAN. I have often thought they were too indifferent to it, but they have responded to the arguments as to where our interest lies quite well, at least from my personal experience. Otherwise I would not be here. But I think there is a gradual recognition of this.

---

<sup>35</sup> Page 198 ends here.

## WAR'S INTERFERENCE WITH DEALING WITH OTHER PROBLEMS

I also feel that if we could finish the war completely within the reasonably near future, as some of the proposals before this committee are designed to do if we can pass them, I think the country can right itself and get back on the track, in a reasonably quick time, dealing with the problems you mentioned. We are aware and conscious of all of them.

The thing that has inhibited us in doing things about what you mention has been the war. It has been the principal obstacle to dealing with these other problems with which you are very concerned, as, I think, the Congress is. Always we are faced with the demands of the war itself. Do you realize that this country has put well over \$1,000 billion into military affairs since World War II?

I think it now approaches \$1,500 billion. It is a sum so large no one can comprehend it, but I don't think outside of this war issue there is anything fundamentally wrong with the system that cannot be righted.

If we can give our resources to those developments, I don't have any doubt myself that it can be done. Whether it will be done or not is a matter of will. It is a matter of conviction of the various people who are involved, including the younger generation.

In that connection, I may say, the recent enactment of the right of all people from 18 years up to vote is at least a step in the direction where you and your generation can have an effect.

I hope that you won't lose faith in it. I hope you will use your talent after the war is over, and it surely will be over, to then attack these other problems and to make the system work.<sup>36</sup>

I believe it can be made to work.

Do you have anything else you would like to say?

Mr. KERRY. Would you like me to respond at all, sir?

The CHAIRMAN. If you care to.

Mr. KERRY. Well, my feeling is that if you are talking about the ideal structure of this country as it is written down in the Constitution, then you or I would not differ at all. Yes, that is an ideal structure.

---

<sup>36</sup> Page 199 ends here.

DEVELOPMENTS IN UNITED STATES REQUIRING FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES

What has developed in this country, however, at this point is something quite different and that does require some fundamental changes.

I do agree with you that what happened in Vietnam was not the product of evil men seeking evil goals. It was misguided principles and judgments and other things.

However, at some point you have to stop playing the game. At some point you have to say, "All right we did make a mistake." At some point the basic human values have to come back into this system and at this moment we are so built up within it by these outside structures, other interests, for instance, government by vested power which, in fact, you and I really know it is. When a minority body comes down here to Washington with a bill, those bodies which have the funds and the ability to lobby are those which generally get it passed. If you wanted to pass a health care medical bill, which we have finally perhaps gotten to this year, we may, but in past years the AMA has been able to come down here and squash them. The American Legion has successfully prevented people like Vietnam Veterans against the War from getting their programs through the Veterans' Administration. Those bodies in existence have tremendous power.

There is one other body that has tremendous power in this country, which is a favorite topic of Vice President Agnew and I would take some agreement with him. That would be the fourth estate. The press. I think the very reason that we veterans are here today is the result partially of our inability to get our story out through the legitimate channels.

That is to say, for instance, I held a press conference here in Washington, D.C., some weeks ago with General Shoup, with General Hester, with the mother of a prisoner of war, the wife of a man who was killed, the mother of a soldier who was killed, and with a bilateral amputee, all representing the so-called silent majority, the silent so-called majority which the President used to perpetuate the war, and because it was a press conference and an antiwar conference and people simply exposing ideas we had no electronic media there. I called the media afterward and asked them why and the answer was, from one of the networks, it doesn't have to be identified, "because, sir, news business is really partly entertainment business visually, you see, and a press conference like that is not visual."

Of course, we don't have the position of power to get our ideas out. I said, "If I take some crippled veterans down to the White House and we chain ourselves to the gates, will we get courage?" "Oh, yes, we will cover that."

So you are reduced to a position where the only way you can get your ideas out is to stage events, because had we not staged the events, with all due respect, Senator, and I really appreciate the fact that I<sup>37</sup> am here obviously, and I know you are committed to

---

<sup>37</sup> Page 200 ends here.



this, but with all due respect I probably wouldn't be sitting at this table. You see this is the problem.

It goes beyond that. We really have a constitutional crisis in this country right now. The Constitution under test, and we are failing. We are failing clearly because the power of the Executive has become exorbitant because Congress has not wanted to exercise its own power, and so that is going to require some very fundamental changes.

So the system itself on paper, no, it is a question of making it work, and in that I would agree with you, and I think that things are changing in a sense. I think the victory of the ABM was a tremendous boost.

The CHAIRMAN. SST.

Mr. KERRY. SST, excuse me.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope the ABM.

[Applause.]

Mr. KERRY. Wrong system.

I think the fact that certain individuals are in Congress today, particularly in the House, who several years ago could never have been. I would cite Representative Dellums and Congresswoman Abzug and Congressman Drinan and people like this. I think this is a terribly encouraging sign and I think if nothing more, and this is really sad poetic justice, if nothing more, this war when it is over, will ultimately probably have done more to awaken the conscience of this country than any other similar thing. It may in fact be the thing that will set us on the right road.

I earnestly hope so and I join you in that.

But meanwhile, I think we still need that extraordinary response to the problem that exists and I hope that we will get it.

#### IMPACT OF VIETNAM WAR AND OTHERS ON CONSTITUTIONAL BALANCE

The CHAIRMAN. I am glad to hear you say that. I have the same feeling. But you must remember we have been through nearly 30 years of warfare or cold war or crises which I think have upset the balance, as you say, in our constitutional system. Senator Javits has introduced a bill with regard to the war powers in an effort to reestablish what we believe to be the constitutional system in which you say you have confidence. I introduced and we passed a commitments resolution. There are a number of others. I won't relate them all, but they are all designed to try to bring back into proper relationship the various elements in our Government. This effort is being made.

I think the culprit is the war itself. The fact we had been at war, not just the Vietnam war but others too, diverted the attention of our people from our domestic concerns and certainly eroded the role of the Congress. Under the impact of this and other wars we have allowed this distortion to develop. If we can end the war, there is no good reason why it cannot be corrected.

#### REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENCIES

You mentioned some new faces in the Congress. After all, all these people get here because of the support back home, as you know. They are simply representative of their constituents. You do accept that, I believe.

Mr. KERRY. Partially, not totally.<sup>38</sup>

The CHAIRMAN. Why not?

Mr. KERRY. As someone who ran for office for 3½ weeks, I am aware of many of the problems involved, and in many places, you can take certain districts in New York City, the structure is such that people can't really run and represent necessarily the people. People often don't care. The apathy is so great that they believe they are being represented when in fact they are not. I think that you and I could run through a list of people in this body itself and find many who are there through the powers of the office itself as opposed to the fact they are truly representing the people. It is very easy to give the illusion of representing the people through the frank privileges which allow you to send back what you are doing here in Congress. Congressman insert so often.

You know, they gave a speech for the Polish and they gave a speech for the Irish and they gave a speech for this, and actually handed the paper in to the clerk and the clerk submits it for the record and a copy of the record goes home and people say, "Hey, he really is doing something for me." But he isn't.

The CHAIRMAN. Well——

Mr. KERRY. Senator, we also know prior to this past year the House used to meet in the Committee of the Whole and the Committee of the Whole would make the votes, and votes not of record and people would file through, and important legislation was decided then, and after the vote came out and after people made their hacks and cuts, and the porkbarrel came out, the vote was reported and gave them an easy out and they could say "Well, I voted against this." And actually they voted for it all the time in the committee.

Some of us know that this is going on. So I would say there are problems with it. Again I come back and say they are not insoluble. They can be solved, but they can only be solved by demanding leadership, the same kind of leadership that we have seen in some countries during war time. That seems to be the few times we get it. If we could get that

---

<sup>38</sup> Page 201 ends here.

kind because I think we are in a constant war against ourselves and I would like to see that come — they should demand it of each other if we can demand it of people.

The CHAIRMAN. Take the two cases of what goes on in the House about the secret votes. That is not a structural aspect of our Government. That is a regulation or whatever you call it of the procedures in the House itself.

#### NECESSITY OF INFORMED ELECTORATE

Fundamentally you said that the people can bamboozle their constituents; they can fool them. Of course, that is quite true of any system of a representative nature. The solution to that is to inform the electorate itself to the extent that they recognize a fraud or a phony when they have one. This is not easy to do, but it is fundamental in a democracy. If you believe in a democratic system, the electorate who elect the representatives have to have sufficient capacity for discrimination. They have to be able to tell the difference between a phony, someone who simply puts pieces in the record, and someone who actually does something, so that they can recognize it in an election, if they are interested.<sup>39</sup>

Now if they are apathetic, as you say they are apathetic, and don't care, then democracy cannot work if they continue to be apathetic and don't care who represents them. This comes back to a fundamental question of education through all different resources, not only the formal education but the use of the media and other means to educate them. Our Founding Fathers recognized that you couldn't have a democracy without an informed electorate. It comes back to the informing of the electorate; doesn't it? That is not a structural deficiency in our system. You are dealing now with the deficiencies of human nature, the failure of their education and their capacity for discrimination in the selection of their representatives.

I recognize this is difficult. All countries have had this same problem and so long as they have a representative system this has to be met. But there is no reason why it cannot be met.

A structural change does not affect the capacity of the electorate to choose good representatives; does it?

#### COST OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Mr. KERRY. Well, no, sir; except for the fact that to run for representative in any populated area costs about \$50,000. Many people simply don't have that available, and in order to get it inevitably wind up with their hands tied.

The CHAIRMAN. That is a common statement, but we had an example during this last year of a man being elected because he walked through Florida with a minimum of

---

<sup>39</sup> Page 202 ends here.

money. As he became attractive to the people he may have received more, but he started without money. You are familiar with Mr. Chiles.

Mr. KERRY. Yes, I am familiar. I understand it.

The CHAIRMAN. I know in my own state, our Governor started without any money or with just himself and came from nowhere and defeated a Rockefeller. So it is not true that you have to have a lot of money to get elected. If you have the other things that it takes, personality, the determination and the intelligence, it is still possible. There were other examples, but those are well known. I don't think it is correct to say you have to have a lot of money. It helps, of course. It makes it easier and all that, but it isn't essential. I think you can cite many examples where that is true.

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION WILL BE RESPONSE TO VIETNAM ISSUE

Mr. KERRY. Senator, I would basically agree with what you are saying and obviously we could find exceptions to parts of everything everywhere and I understand really the essential question is going to be the response to the issue of Vietnam.

The CHAIRMAN. I agree with that. I can assure you that this committee and, certainly, I are going to do everything we can. That is what these hearings are about. It is just by coincidence you came to Washington in the very midst of them. We only opened these hearings on Tuesday of this week. I personally believe that the great majority of all the people of this country are in accord with your desire, and certainly mine, to get the war over at the earliest possible moment. All we are concerned with at the moment is the best procedure to bring that<sup>40</sup> about, the procedure to persuade the President to take the steps that will bring that about. I for one have more hope now than I had at anytime in the last 6 years because of several things you have mentioned. I think there is a very good chance that it will be brought about in the reasonably near future.

#### COMMENDATION OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

I think you and your associates have contributed a great deal in the actions you have taken. As I said in the beginning, the fact that you have shown both great conviction and patience about this matter and at the same time conducted yourself in the most commendable manner has been the most effective demonstration, if I may use that word. Although you have demonstrated in the sense that has become disapproved of in some circles, I think you have demonstrated in the most proper way and the most effective way to bring about the results that you wish and I believe you have made a great contribution.

I apologize. I am not trying to lecture you about our Government. I have just been disturbed, not so much by you as by other things that have happened, that the younger generation has lost faith in our system. I don't think it is correct. I think the paranoia to which you referred has been true. It arose at a time when there was reason for it perhaps,

---

<sup>40</sup> Page 203 ends here.

but we have long since gone out of that time, and I think your idea of timing is correct. But I congratulate you and thank you very much for coming. [Applause.]

Senator Symington would like to ask a question.

Senator SYMINGTON. Yes. Mr. Kerry, I had to leave because we are marking up the selective service bill in the Armed Services Committee. But I will read the record.

#### ATTITUDE OF SERVICEMEN TOWARD CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO WAR

The staff has a group of questions here, four of which I would ask. Over the years members of this committee who spoke out in opposition to the war were often accused of stabbing our boys in the back. What, in your opinion, is the attitude of servicemen in Vietnam about congressional opposition to the war?

Mr. KERRY. If I could answer that, it is very difficult, Senator, because I just know, I don't want to get into the game of saying I represent everybody over there, but let me try to say as straightforwardly as I can, we had an advertisement, ran full page, to show you what the troops read. It ran in Playboy and the response to it within two and a half weeks from Vietnam was 1,209 members. We received initially about 50 to 80 letters a day from troops there. We now receive about 20 letters a day from troops arriving at our New York office. Some of these letters — and I wanted to bring some down, I didn't know we were going to be testifying here and I can make them available to you — are very, very moving, some of them written by hospital corpsmen on things, on casualty report sheets which say, you know, "Get us out of here." "You are the only hope we have got." "You have got to get us back; it is crazy." We received recently 80 members of the 101st Airborne signed up in one letter. Forty members from a helicopter assault squadron, crash and rescue mission signed up in another one. I think they are expressing, some of these troops, solidarity with us,<sup>41</sup> right now by wearing black arm bands and Vietnam Veterans Against the War buttons. They want to come out and I think they are looking at the people who want to try to get them out as a help.

However, I do recognize there are some men who are in the military for life. The job in the military is to fight wars. When they have a war to fight, they are just as happy in a sense and I am sure that these men feel they are being stabbed in the back. But, at the same time, I think to most of them the realization of the emptiness, the hollowness, the absurdity of Vietnam has finally hit home, and I feel if they did come home the recrimination would certainly not come from the right, from the military. I don't think there would be that problem.

Senator SYMINGTON. Thank you.

Has the fact Congress has never passed a declaration of war undermined the morale of U.S. servicemen in Vietnam, to the best of your knowledge?

---

<sup>41</sup> Page 204 ends here.

Mr. KERRY. Yes; it has clearly and to a great, great extent.

USE OF DRUGS BY U.S. SERVICEMEN IN VIETNAM

Senator SYMINGTON. There have been many reports of widespread use of drugs by U.S. servicemen in Vietnam. I might add I was in Europe last week and the growth of that problem was confirmed on direct questioning of people in the military. How serious is the problem and to what do you attribute it?

Mr. KERRY. The problem is extremely serious. It is serious in very many different ways. I believe two Congressmen today broke a story. I can't remember their names. There were 35,000 or some men, heroin addicts that were back.

The problem exists for a number of reasons not the least of which is the emptiness. It is the only way to get through it. A lot of guys, 60, 80 percent stay stoned 24 hours a day just to get through the Vietnam——

Senator SYMINGTON. You say 60 to 80 percent.

Mr. KERRY. Sixty to 80 percent is the figure used that try something, let's say, at one point. Of that, I couldn't give you a figure of habitual smokers, let's say, of pot, and I certainly couldn't begin to say how many are hard drug addicts, but I do know that the problem for the returning veteran is acute because we have, let's say, a veteran picks up a \$12 habit in Saigon. He comes back to this country and the moment he steps off an airplane that same habit costs him some \$90 to support. With the state of the economy, he can't get a job. He doesn't earn money. He turns criminal or just finds his normal sources and in a sense drops out.

The alienation of the war, the emptiness of back and forth, all combined adds to this. There is no real drug rehabilitation program. I know the VA hospital in New York City has 20 beds allocated for drug addicts; 168 men are on the waiting list, and I really don't know what a drug addict does on the waiting list.

And just recently the same hospital gave three wards to New York University for research purposes.

It is very, very widespread. It is a very serious problem. I think that this Congress should undertake to investigate the sources, because I heard many implications of Madam Ky and others being involved in the traffic and I think there are some very serious things here at stake.<sup>42</sup>

Senator SYMINGTON. In the press there was a woman reporter. I think her name was Emerson. In any case she stated she bought drugs six or nine times openly, heroin, in a 15-mile walk from Saigon. The article had a picture of a child with a parasol and a parrot.

---

<sup>42</sup> Page 205 ends here.

She said this child was one of the people from whom she had bought, herself, these drugs; and that the cost of the heroin was from \$3 to \$6.

If we are over there, in effect, protecting the Thieu-Ky government, why is it that this type and character of sale of drugs to anybody, including our own servicemen, can't be controlled?

Mr. KERRY. It is not controllable in this country. Why should it be controllable in that country?

Senator SYMINGTON. It isn't quite that open in this country; do you think?

Mr. KERRY. It depends on where you are. [Applause.]

Senator SYMINGTON. We are talking about heroin, not pot or LSD.

Mr. KERRY. I understand that, but if you walk up 116th Street in Harlem I am sure somebody can help you out pretty fast. [Laughter.]

#### ACCURACY OF INFORMATION THROUGH OFFICIAL MILITARY CHANNELS

Senator SYMINGTON. Mr. Kerry, from your experience in Vietnam do you think it is possible for the President or Congress to get accurate and undistorted information through official military channels.

(Shouts of "No" from the audience.)

Mr. KERRY. I don't know——

Senator SYMINGTON. I am beginning to think you have some supporters here.

Mr. KERRY. I don't know where they came from, sir, maybe Vietnam.

I had direct experience with that. Senator, I had direct experience with that and I can recall often sending in the spot reports which we made after each mission, and including the GDA, gunfire damage assessments, in which we would say, maybe 15 sampans sunk or whatever it was. And I often read about my own missions in the Stars and Stripes and the very mission we had been on had been doubled in figures and tripled in figures.

The intelligence missions themselves are based on very, very flimsy information. Several friends of mine were intelligence officers and I think you should have them in sometime to testify. Once in Saigon I was visiting this friend of mine and he gave me a complete rundown on how the entire intelligence system should be re-set up on all of its problems, namely, that you give a young guy a certain amount of money, he goes out, sets up his own contacts under the table, gets intelligence, comes in. It is not reliable; everybody is feeding each other double intelligence, and I think that is what comes back to this



country. I also think men in the military, sir, as do men in many other things, have a tendency to report what they want to report and see what they want to see. And this is a very serious thing because I know on several visits — Secretary Laird came to Vietnam once and they staged an entire invasion for him. When the initial force at Dang Tam, it was the 9th Infantry when it was still there — when the initial recon platoon went out and met with resistance, they changed the entire operation the night before and sent them down into the South China Seas so they would not run into resistance and the Secretary would have a chance to see how smoothly the war was going.<sup>43</sup>

I know General Wheeler came over at one point and a major in Saigon escorted him around. General Wheeler went out to the field and saw 12 pacification leaders and asked about 10 of them how things were going and they all said, “It is really going pretty badly.” The 11th one said, “It couldn’t be better, General. We are really doing the thing here to win the war.” And the General said, “I am finally glad to find somebody who knows what he is talking about.” (Laughter.)

This is the kind of problem that you have. I think that the intelligence which finally reaches the White House does have serious problems with it in that I think you know full well, I know certainly from my experience, I served as aide to an admiral in my last days in the Navy before I was discharged, and I have seen exactly what the response is up the echelon, the chain of command, and how things get distorted and people say to the man above him what is needed to be said, to keep everybody happy, and so I don’t — I think the entire thing is distorted.

It is just a rambling answer.

Senator SYMINGTON. How do you think this could be changed?

Mr. KERRY. I have never really given that spect of it all that much thought. I wish I had this intelligence officer with me. He is a very intelligent young man.

#### REPORTING OF VIETNAM WAR IN THE PRESS

Senator SYMINGTON. There has been considerable criticism of the war’s reporting by the press and news media. What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. KERRY. On that I could definitely comment. I think the press has been extremely negligent in reporting. At one point and at the same time they have not been able to report because the Government of this country has not allowed them to. I went to Saigon to try to report. We were running missions in the Mekong Delta. We were running raids through these rivers on an operation called Sealord and we thought it was absurd.

We didn’t have helicopter cover often. We seldom had jet aircraft cover. We were out of artillery range. We would go in with two quarter-inch aluminum hull boats and get shot at

---

<sup>43</sup> Page 206 ends here.

and never secure territory or anything except to quote Admiral Zumwalt to show the American flag and prove to the Vietcong they don't own the rivers. We found they did own them with 60 percent casualties and we thought this was absurd.

I went to Saigon and told this to a member of the news bureau there and I said, "Look, you have got to tell the American people this story." The response was "Well, I can't write that kind of thing. I can't criticize that much because if I do I would lose my accreditation, and we have to be very careful about just how much we say and when."

We are holding a press conference today, as a matter of fact, at the National Press Building — it might be going on at this minute — in which public information officers who are members of our group, and former Army reporters, are going to testify to direct orders of censorship in which they had to take out certain pictures, phrases they couldn't use and so on down the line and, in fact, the information they gave newsmen and directions they gave newsmen when an operation was going on when the military didn't want the press informed<sup>44</sup> on what was going on they would offer them transportation to go someplace else, there is something else happened and they would fly a guy 55 miles from where the operation was. So the war has not been reported correctly.

I know from a reporter of Time — showed the massacre of 150 Cambodians, these were South Vietnamese troops that did it, but there were American advisers present and he couldn't even get other newsmen to get it out let alone his own magazine, which doesn't need to be named here. So it is a terrible problem, and I think that really it is a question of the Government allowing free ideas to be exchanged and if it is going to fight a war then fight it correctly. The only people who can prevent My Lais are the press and if there is something to hide perhaps we shouldn't be there in the first place.

Senator SYMINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Applause.]

#### REQUEST FOR LETTERS SENT TO VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST WAR

The CHAIRMAN. With regard to the letters you have mentioned, I wondered about them. I have received a great many letters, but usually particularly in those from Vietnam, the men would say that they would not like me to use them or use their names for fear of retaliation. Of course, I respected their request. If you have those letters, it might be interesting, if you would like to, and if the writer has no objection, to submit them for the record which would be for the information of the committee.

#### CHANGING MOOD OF TROOPS IN VIETNAM

Mr. KERRY. Senator, I would like to add a comment on that. You see the mood is changing over there and a search and destroy mission is a search and avoid mission, and

---

<sup>44</sup> Page 207 ends here.

troops don't — you know, like that revolt that took place that was mentioned in the New York Times when they refused to go in after a piece of dead machinery, because it didn't have any value. They are making their own judgments.

There is a GI movement in this country now as well as over there, and soon these people, these men, who are prescribing wars for these young men to fight are going to find out they are going to have to find some other men to fight them because we are going to change prescriptions. They are going to have to change doctors, because we are not going to fight for them. That is what they are going to realize. There is now a more militant attitude even within the military itself, among these soldiers evidenced by the advertisements recently in the New York Times in which members of the First Air Cavalry publicly signed up and said, "We would march on the 24th if we could be there, but we can't because we are in Vietnam." Those men are subject obviously to some kind of discipline, but people are beginning to be willing to submit to that. And I would just say, yes; I would like to enter the letters in testimony when I can get hold of them and I think you are going to see this will be a continuing thing.

(As of the date of publication the information referred to had not been received.)

The CHAIRMAN. If you would like to we can incorporate some of them in the record.<sup>45</sup>

DOCUMENTARY ENTITLED "THE SELLING OF THE PENTAGON"

This is inspired by your reply to the Senator from Missouri's question. Did you happen to see a documentary called, "The Selling of the Pentagon"?

Mr. KERRY. Yes, I did. I thought it was the most powerful and persuasive and helpful documentary in recent years.

The CHAIRMAN. But you know what happened to CBS? They have been pilloried by the——

Mr. KERRY. They are doing all right.

The CHAIRMAN. You think they can defend themselves?

Mr. KERRY. I think they have; yes, sir. I think the public opinion in this country believes that, "The Selling of the Pentagon." I was a public information officer before I went to Vietnam, and I know that those things were just the way they said because I conducted several of those tours on a ship, and I have seen my own men wait hours until people got away, and I have seen cooks put on special uniforms for them.

I have seen good food come out for the visitors and everything else. It really happens.

---

<sup>45</sup> Page 208 ends here.

The CHAIRMAN. The Senator from New York has returned. Would he care to ask a question?

#### RESOLUTION CONCERNING VIETNAM VETERANS' ENCAMPMENT

Senator JAVITS. I don't want to delay either the witness or the committee. Senator Case was tied up on the floor on your resolution on the encampment and the expected occurred, of course. It has gone to the calendar.

Senator SYMINGTON. If you will yield, Senator. I have to preside at 1 o'clock. I thank you for your testimony.

Mr. KERRY. Thank you, Senator. [Applause.]

Senator JAVITS. It has gone to the calendar but I think the point has been very well made by, I think, the total number of sponsors. There were some 27 Senators.

#### WITNESS' CREDENTIALS

Senator Case was kind enough to express my view. I wish to associate myself with the statement Senator Symington made when I was here as to your credentials. That is what we always think about with a witness and your credentials couldn't be higher.

The moral and morale issues you have raised will have to be finally acted upon by the committee. I think it always fires us to a deeper sense of emergency and dedication when we hear from a young man like yourself in what we know to be the reflection of the attitude of so many others who have served in a way which the American people so clearly understand. It is not as effective unless you have those credentials. The kind you have.

The only other thing I would like to add is this:<sup>46</sup>

#### EVALUATION OF TESTIMONY

I hope you will understand me and I think you will agree with me. Your testimony about what you know and what you see, how you feel and how your colleagues feel, is entitled to the highest standing and priority. When it comes to the bits and pieces of information, you know, like you heard that Madam Ky is associated with the sale of narcotics or some other guy got a good meal, I hope you will understand as Senators and evaluators of testimony we have to take that in the context of many other things, but I couldn't<sup>47</sup> think of anybody whose testimony I would rather have and act on from the point of view of what this is doing to our young men we are sending over there, how they feel about it, what the impact is on the conscience of a country, what the impact is on even the future

---

<sup>46</sup> Page 209 ends here.

<sup>47</sup> Thus in the copy text.

of the military services from the point of view of the men who served, than your own.  
Thank you very much.

Mr. KERRY. Thank you, Senator. [Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Kerry, I am sure you can sense the committee members appreciate very much your coming. Do you have anything further to say before we recess?

EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION

Mr. KERRY. No, sir; I would just like to say on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War that we do appreciate the efforts made by the Senators to put that resolution on the floor, to help us, help us in their offices in the event we were arrested and particularly for the chance to express the thoughts that I have put forward today. I appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. You have certainly done a remarkable job of it. I can't imagine their having selected a better representative or spokesman. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

(Whereupon, at 1 p.m. the committee was adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.)<sup>48</sup>

---

Source:

<http://www.humaneventsonline.com/downloads-pdfs/ktpages179-210.pdf>,

*and*

<http://www.cwes01.com/13790/23910/ktp179-210.pdf>.

---

This PDF is a production of

**The Blog from the Core**

<http://weblog.theviewfromthecore.com/>

April 2004.

Distributed by

**WinterSoldier**

<http://www.wintersoldier.com/>

---

<sup>48</sup> Page 210 ends here.

## How Should Soldiers Be Treated?

According to Jon Wiener, teaching professor at UC Irvine, “More than 30,000 U.S. troops will be coming home from Afghanistan in the year, joining more than a million who have already returned from the war there and in Iraq. Many, crippled by post-traumatic stress disorder and brain trauma, will face homelessness- and more of those will end up living on the streets of Los Angeles than of any other city.

In 1888, property in Brentwood, Ca., was donated for the sole use of housing American veterans, offering them food, shelter, and medical care. Today, the VA building is not obligated to house its homeless, disabled vets, and instead turns a profit from leasing the land for profit.

What is the community responsibility regarding the fate of our soldiers who put their lives on the line to protect our country, yet come home worse for wear? Currently, an ACLU lawsuit is in the process of adjudication; however, local community support through public awareness and activism is necessary. Construct public policy regarding the treatment of veterans in our community, relying on evidence from first person interviews and narratives, academic readings from Mike Davis regarding the mindset of the greater Los Angeles community in its response to the homeless, and recent articles on the resistance of the VA building in Brentwood to care for homeless, disabled veterans. Spend time discussing these issues with the protestors outside the VA building, or contact either Jon Wiener via *The Nation* or Steve Lopez via the *Los Angeles Times*, gathering an activist’s perspective.

Finally, organize a viable argument that takes into consideration the economic, ecological, and sociological impact of housing and caring for homeless veterans. What should be the community’s response, and how can it be implemented? Contact local politicians, reporters, or grass roots organizations that would display interest in your policy paper, publish it and submit it.

# STEP 1. LEARN ABOUT VHP

## The Collections

The Veterans History Project collects first-person accounts of military service in World War I, World War II, the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf, and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. We also accept stories of service during other conflicts within this time frame.

## Go Online to Register

Go to our Web site at [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets) to learn more about our project. There, you can register the collection you wish to submit. Once we've received your registration information, you will receive a reminder of what we accept and how to submit your collection. You may also submit your collection without registering, but this may delay our receiving and processing your collection.

## Accepted Media and Format Standards

### Audio and Video Recordings

The Library of Congress encourages you to submit original, unedited materials, and to use the highest quality equipment available. Materials falling outside the accepted scope will be disposed of or returned to the donor. The only original format we do not accept is micro-cassettes. Recordings must be at least 30 minutes long. Include one interview per recording.

**Please turn to page 15 for details on accepted audio and video media and formats.**

### Documents and Photographs

In addition to oral history interviews, we also collect:

- Narratives, memoirs, and wartime diaries or journals of at least 20 pages
- Letters (10 or more)
- Official military documents (please mark out military serial or Social Security numbers to ensure privacy), official military or other instructional or informational pamphlets
- Photographs or two-dimensional artwork (10 or more)
- Original maps

In the absence of an interview, a submission may constitute several of these items. Quantity restrictions on items do not apply if they accompany an interview. If electronic copies of original materials are available, submit them on CD or DVD *together with* the original documents or photographs. Use .txt or .rtf formats for text files and .tif or .jpg for images (300dpi, scanned at 8 bits per channel). **Please do not copy protect any CD or DVD.**

### What We Cannot Accept

- Microcassettes or MP3s
- Photocopies
- Objects, such as medals, canteens, uniforms, helmets, dog tags, flags, weapons, or military equipment
- Framed materials
- Published works, including books, newspapers, and magazines
- Three-dimensional artwork (sculpture, fiber arts)
- Interviews done on behalf of veterans
- Group interviews, unit histories, or written compilations of veterans' stories
- Collections of veterans who performed military service for other countries

**Other repositories may accept these donations. Please check with them.**

Contact us if you have any questions.

We encourage you to retain high-quality copies of materials for your own personal use and enjoyment.

**NOTE:** Contact us regarding donations on behalf of living or deceased veterans.





## STEP 2. BE PREPARED



### What Equipment to Use

Please use:

- High quality or digital audio or video equipment. Digital is preferred.
- See page 15 for acceptable audio and video formats.
- An external microphone.

Please do not use:

- Mini or micro audiocassettes.
- Microphone built into a camera or audio recorder, unless necessary.

**NOTE:** We strongly urge you to make two copies of the interview, one for yourself and one for the veteran. VHP cannot make copies of material already submitted.

### Where to Interview

- Interview the veteran in a quiet area with soft surfaces (carpeting, upholstered furniture) for better sound quality.
- The interviewee should be in a fixed seat, not a rocking chair or recliner.
- Avoid background noises: chiming clocks, hissing air vents, air conditioners, ringing telephones, televisions, radios, computers, or noisy pets.
- Set the microphone six to twelve inches from the interviewee.
- Do not videotape your subject sitting in front of a window or bright light.
- Focus the camera on the upper body of the interviewee.
- Do not use the zoom feature on the video camera.
- Test your equipment for sound levels to make sure your subject is audible.

### Before You Start

- Do some homework. Try to learn in advance where and when your veteran served. If the veteran was involved in a specific campaign or battle, research it.
- Ask the veteran if he or she has any materials to bring to the interview. Personal photographs, letters, or other records of service might be useful in jogging his or her memory. Originals of these materials may also be donated as part of your veteran's collection.
- If the veteran has not filled out our Biographical Data Form prior to the interview date, you may want to work with him or her on it before you begin the interview. This may give you some ideas on questions to ask later.
- Have a brief conversation with your veteran before you start recording. Even if you know your interview subject, it will help to relax both of you.

**NOTE:** The Veterans History Project does accept self-interviews by individual veterans. The Project does not accept interviews of groups of veterans.



## STEP 3. THE INTERVIEW

### How to Conduct an Interview

Every interview is different. Each veteran will recall his or her own experiences, some more vividly than others. Your job is to make the interviewee feel comfortable and guide him or her through their story of service.

- Keep your own comments to a minimum and let the veteran do the talking.
- Do not interrupt.
- Keep the interview moving. However, if the veteran is telling a significant story, do not push him or her along.

**IMPORTANT:** Begin your interview by announcing:

- The name of your veteran.
- His or her birthdate.
- War served in and branch of service.
- Highest rank achieved.
- Date and place (town and state, but not address) of recording.
- The interviewer's name and relationship (e.g., relative, friend), if any, to the interviewee. Also, the name of anyone present assisting in the interview.
- The interview is being conducted for the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

**NOTE:** Do not ask for personal information such as home address, phone number, Social Security number, or family names.

## What to Ask

Here are a series of suggested topics. **This is an outline—not a script to be followed to the letter.** Let your veteran tell the story in his or her own way.

1. A Few Biographical Details.
  - Where and when veteran was born.
  - Family details: parents' occupations, number and gender of siblings.
  - What veteran was doing before entering the service.
  - Other family members who served in the military.
2. Early Days of Service.
  - How veteran entered service—draft or enlistment.
  - If enlistment, why and the reason for choosing a specific branch of service.
  - Departure for training camp, early days of training.
  - Specialized training, if applicable.
  - Adapting to military life: physical regimen, barracks, food, social life.
3. Wartime Service.
  - Where veteran served.
  - Details of the trip abroad, if applicable.
  - Action witnessed, or duties away from the front line.
  - If applicable, emotions relating to combat—witnessing casualties, destruction.
  - Friendships formed and camaraderie of service.
  - How veteran stayed in touch with family and friends back home; communication from home.
  - Recreation or off-duty pursuits.
4. War's End, Coming Home.
  - Where veteran was when war ended.
  - How he or she returned home.
  - Reception by family and community.
  - Readjustment to civilian life.
  - Contact with fellow veterans over the years; membership in veterans' organizations.
5. Reflections.
  - How wartime experiences affected veteran's life.
  - Life lessons learned from military service.

For more information on how to conduct an interview, go to our Web site and click on "Participate in the Project."

## Writing a Memoir

The Veterans History Project accepts previously written memoirs as well as memoirs written specifically for the Project. Submission of a memoir must be accompanied by a Manuscript Data Sheet. For more information and guidelines, go to our Web site and download our Memoir Guidelines.



## STEP 4. HOW & WHERE TO SEND IN YOUR COLLECTION



- **Make two copies of the interview** (one for you, one for the veteran) and copy any other items you are submitting. (We are unable to make copies of any items once you have submitted them.)
- Make sure you fill out all the forms marked **REQUIRED**. (Additional copies of the forms may be printed from our Web site.) If you need guidance in completing the Audio and Video Recording Log, go to our Web site and click on How to Participate, then Learn About the Audio and Video Recording Log.
- Please send original materials and forms to the Library of Congress **via a commercial delivery service** such as UPS, Federal Express, or DHL. (You do not need to use expedited delivery.) Due to security procedures, U.S. Postal Service mail to the Library of Congress is screened. Unfortunately, this process damages paper and melts plastic materials such as audio and video cassettes. Send collections to:

Veterans History Project  
Library of Congress  
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20540-4615

DO NOT SUBMIT MATERIALS BEYOND THOSE SPECIFIED. Should any part of the collection be found to include materials that the Library of Congress deems inappropriate for retention with the collection or elsewhere within the Library, the Library may dispose of such material in accordance with its procedures for disposition of materials not needed for the Library's collections.

## STEP 5. WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR COLLECTION AT VHP



When VHP receives your materials, we do the following:

- We check the required forms. If any are missing or incomplete, your materials go “on hold.” We will contact you and request that you complete these forms. Your collection cannot be processed until we receive all required forms.
- We send you an acknowledgement note card within six months of receipt of the collection.
- Once all required forms are received, we enter basic information about the veteran into the VHP database. Please note the following:
  - Biographical and service information are made public on the VHP database, which is accessible through our Web site ([www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets)).
  - Processing a collection may take as long as six months due to the extraordinary public response to our project. Please refrain from contacting VHP regarding the status of your collection for at least six months after the date of submission. We appreciate your patience.
- Your collection will be carefully stored and maintained in keeping with professional archival standards. This will ensure that your materials will be preserved for use by generations to come.

The materials you send will be available at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center Reading Room for use by researchers, educators, family members, and others. An advance appointment is required to view materials. Call 202-707-4916. Reading room hours are 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday–Friday (except federal holidays).

# REQUIRED

## Biographical Data Form

To ensure inclusion in the Veterans History Project, this form must accompany each submission. **Please use reverse or additional sheet if service was in more than one war or conflict.**

### PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Veteran ☐ Civilian ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ first middle last maiden name

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) - \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ month/day/year

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Male ☐ Female ☐

Branch of Service or Wartime Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioned ☐ Enlisted ☐ Drafted ☐ Service dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Rank \_\_\_\_\_

Unit, Division, Battalion, Group, Ship, etc. (Do not abbreviate.) \_\_\_\_\_

War, operation, or conflict served in \_\_\_\_\_

Locations of service \_\_\_\_\_

Battles/campaigns (please name) \_\_\_\_\_

Medals or special service awards. If so, please list (be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

Special duties/highlights/achievements \_\_\_\_\_

Was the veteran a prisoner of war? Yes ☐ No ☐

Did the veteran sustain combat or service-related injuries? Yes ☐ No ☐

Interviewer (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

(Please use reverse for any additional biographical information.)

### Additional Service History Information

Branch of Service or Wartime Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioned ☐ Enlisted ☐ Drafted ☐ Service dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Rank \_\_\_\_\_

Unit, Division, Battalion, Group, Ship, etc. (Do not abbreviate.) \_\_\_\_\_

War, operation, or conflict served in \_\_\_\_\_

Locations of service \_\_\_\_\_

Battles/campaigns (please name) \_\_\_\_\_

Medals or special service awards. If so, please list (be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

Special duties/highlights/achievements \_\_\_\_\_

Was the veteran a prisoner of war? Yes ☐ No ☐

Did the veteran sustain combat or service-related injuries? Yes ☐ No ☐

### Additional Biographical Information

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# REQUIRED

## Veteran's Release Form (See reverse for Interviewer's Release Form)

### TO BE COMPLETED BY VETERAN OR CIVILIAN

(In cases of deceased veterans, to be completed by the donor of the material.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am a participant in the Veterans History Project (hereinafter "VHP") of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center. I understand that the purpose of the VHP is to collect audio- and video-recorded oral histories of America's war veterans and of those who served in support of them, as well as selected related documentary materials such as photographs and manuscripts, for inclusion in the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. These oral histories and related materials serve as a record of American veterans' wartime experiences and as a scholarly and educational resource for Congress and the general public.

I understand that the American Folklife Center plans to retain the product of my participation in the VHP, including but not limited to my interview, presentation, video, photographs, statements, name, images or likeness, voice, and written materials ("My Collection") as part of its permanent collections.

I hereby grant to the Library of Congress ownership of the physical property comprising My Collection. Additionally, I hereby grant to the Library of Congress, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, perform, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of the materials in My Collection in any medium. By giving this permission, I understand that I retain any copyright and related rights that I may hold.

I hereby release the Library of Congress, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of My Collection, including but not limited to any claims for copyright infringement, defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

Should any part of My Collection be found to include materials that the Library of Congress deems inappropriate for retention with the collection or for transfer to other collections in the Library, the Library may dispose of such materials in accordance with its procedures for disposition of materials not needed for the Library's collections.

### ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewer (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Library of Congress American Folklife Center VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

# REQUIRED

## Interviewer's Release Form (See reverse for Veteran's Release Form)

TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWERS, RECORDING OPERATORS, AND PHOTOGRAPHERS  
(Please circle appropriate category.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am a participant in the Veterans History Project (hereinafter "VHP") of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center. I understand that the purpose of the VHP is to collect audio- and video-recorded oral histories of America's war veterans and of those who served in support of them, as well as selected related documentary materials such as photographs and manuscripts, for inclusion in the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. These oral histories and related materials serve as a record of American veterans' wartime experiences and as a scholarly and educational resource for Congress and the general public.

I understand that the American Folklife Center plans to retain the product of my participation in the VHP, including but not limited to my interview, presentation, video, photographs, statements, name, images or likeness, voice, and written materials ("My Collection") as part of its permanent collections.

I hereby grant to the Library of Congress ownership of the physical property comprising My Collection. Additionally, I hereby grant to the Library of Congress, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, perform, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of the materials in My Collection in any medium. By giving this permission, I understand that I retain any copyright and related rights that I may hold.

I hereby release the Library of Congress, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of My Collection, including but not limited to any claims for copyright infringement, defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

Should any part of My Collection be found to include materials that the Library of Congress deems inappropriate for retention with the collection or for transfer to other collections in the Library, the Library may dispose of such materials in accordance with its procedures for disposition of materials not needed for the Library's collections.

### ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if interviewer is a minor) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) - \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Veteran \_\_\_\_\_

Organization affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Library of Congress American Folklife Center VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT



# REQUIRED

## Audio and Video Recording Log

1. Name and address of collector or interviewer.

Name of Donor/Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) - \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Organization affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name and birth date of the veteran or civilian being interviewed as it appears on the Biographical Data Form.

Name of Veteran/Civilian \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

3. Recording format (please check)

VIDEO type: Digital Video ☐ Betacam ☐ 8mm ☐ DVD-Video ☐ MPEG-2 ☐ VHS ☐

Other ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
(identify)

AUDIO type: Cassette ☐ CD-Audio ☐ WAV ☐ Digital Audio Tape (DAT) ☐

Other ☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
(identify)

Do not add labels to DVDs or CDs.

4. Estimated length of recording (in minutes) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Recording \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of recording \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please log the topics discussed in the interview in sequence.

For example:

1:45	enlisted with best friend	22:30	on board troop ship to Europe
2:50	chose Signal Corps and reasons why	26:30	part of 2nd wave at Omaha Beach on D-Day

Minute Mark

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(Continue on back or on additional sheets as needed.)

[illegible][illegible]



# Photograph Log

Original photographic prints should be numbered with a soft (no.1) pencil on the back of the photograph in the lower-right corner. If the back is too slick to write on, enclose each photograph in a labeled envelope. **Please do not use a pen or marker to label prints.**

**Do not use tape or glue on photographic prints.** Photographers should sign a release form when possible. If more than eight photographs are submitted, please make photocopies of the second page of this form to complete.

Name of Veteran/Civilian \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

## PHOTOGRAPH # 1

Place \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Description \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PHOTOGRAPH # 2

Place \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Description \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PHOTOGRAPH # 3

Place \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Description \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Continue on back.)

(You may photocopy this side of the form to use for additional photographs if needed.)

**PHOTOGRAPH #** \_\_\_\_

**Place** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PHOTOGRAPH #** \_\_\_\_

**Place** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PHOTOGRAPH #** \_\_\_\_

**Place** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PHOTOGRAPH #** \_\_\_\_

**Place** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PHOTOGRAPH #** \_\_\_\_

**Place** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Manuscript Data Sheet

Please complete this form when donating letters, diaries, and other printed and handwritten manuscripts to the Veterans History Project. It is to be used in conjunction with the required forms.

1. Name of donor.

Name of Donor/Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) - \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Organization affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of veteran/civilian.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Types and dates of manuscripts submitted, for example:

Diary, November 20, 1942–February 17, 1944; Service records, 1951–1953; Letters, 1969–1972; Commendations, 1991; Unpublished memoir, 2001; etc.

Title of Item: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title of Item: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title of Item: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Number of items: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this an exact ☐ or estimated ☐ figure?

5. Number of pages: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Describe the scope and content of the manuscripts by addressing the following:

Please identify by name the writers and recipients of the letters and other documents. What is their relationship to the veteran or civilian whose name appears on the Biographical Data Form?

---

---

---

What are the most interesting/important topics and events described in these documents?

---

---

---

---

---

7. Have any of these materials been published, or have copies of them been donated elsewhere? If so, please provide full citation of the publication or the location of the copies.

---

---

---

## Accepted Media and Format Standards

### Audio and Video Recordings

The Library of Congress encourages you to submit original, unedited materials, and to use the highest quality equipment available. Materials falling out of the accepted scope will be disposed of or returned to the donor. The only original format we do not accept is microcassettes. Recordings must be at least 30 minutes long.

We will accept the following formats:

VIDEO Formats and Media	
Digital Video (DV)	MiniDV, DVCAM, DVPRO
Betacam	Betacam SP, Digital Betacam, Betacam SX
8mm	Hi8, Digital8, Video8
DVD-Video*#	
MPEG-2*	on CD or DVD Specifications: at least 3Mbps, with a spatial resolution of 702x480 at 30fps; or the highest your set-up allows.
VHS	Super-VHS (S-VHS), Digital-VHS (D-VHS), VHS-Compact (VHS-C) Please note that as of <b>June 2009</b> , we will no longer accept VHS recordings in any format.

AUDIO Formats and Media	
Audio cassettes†	
CD-Audio*	
WAV*	on CD or DVD Specifications; 44.1 KHz, 16-bit
Digital Audio Tape (DAT)	Please note that as of <b>June 2009</b> , we will no longer accept DAT recordings.

**\*Do not copy protect any CD or DVD. Do not add labels to any CD or DVD.**

**#VHP prefers video interviews on DVD with minimal indexing, titles, and/or graphics at the highest level your authoring application will allow.**

†Use an external microphone.

Please, only one interview per recording.

Contact us if you have any questions.

We encourage you to retain high-quality copies of materials for your own personal use and enjoyment.

**NOTE:** Contact us regarding donations on behalf of living or deceased veterans.



