Name of Student

Name of Professor

Name of Class

Day Month Year

Vietnam

**Introduction**

 Vietnam War was the 2nd longest in the history of the United States. Throughout the world, the war was deemed as extremely contentious as the U.S. had been unable to achieve military victory. As a result, North Vietnam took over South Vietnam, and the bitter experience of the Vietnam War by Americans was considered the only war that America lost. The Vietnam War continued to affect foreign, internal, and military policies of U.S. for a long time. The U.S. military suffered heavy casualties during the Vietnam War. More than 47,000 U.S. soldiers were killed in the combat while the figure of non-combat deaths was 11,000 (Obermeyer et al.). In addition, in excess of 150,000 were injured, and 10,000 missing. On the other hand, Vietnam suffered heavy losses as the conservative estimate indicates that more than 110,000 combat killed in action, whereas 500,000 were injured (Obermeyer et al.). Unfortunately, civilian casualties were very heavy. In this context, according to the lowest estimate, almost 415,000 people lost their lives. However, the careful estimates suggest that more than two million people had lost their lives, and tens of thousands were injured and misplaced (Obermeyer et al.). Overall, the Vietnam War brought a lot of devastation to the country (Herzog, Tobey). In this paper, a Vietnamese, American soldier, and a hippie’s take will be investigated in the overall context of the war.

**Phil Gioia (American Soldier’s take)**

Phil Gioia joined U.S. Army after his graduation from Virginia Military Institute in the year 1967. Also, he left the military in 1977 and became mayor on Corte Madera, Calif, and provi9ded his services in the technology industry. His story is being narrated here in first person's account.

 Long time back, we fought a war which saw a lot of bloodsheds and took lives of more than 58,000 U.S. soldiers while leaving thousands injured. The war saw the death and miseries of more than 3 million Vietnamese from North and South (Usatoday.Com). We were involved in a battle that was dragged for more than a decade. As soldiers, we were told that our mission was to save South Vietnam from falling to communism. I was a young infantry platoon leader and also as a company commander. I have observed soldiers were wonderful, but they were waiting for the war to end. I realized that most of them were passing the time, and they also knew that this was bringing too many miseries to innocent Vietnamese.

However, the army was a second family to me, and I was a dedicated soldier. In Vietnam, the radio code for our divisions' infantry was family. My company had to stay in the jungle and moved quietly to different locations. All the soldiers including me were in the same boat as we were feeling the humidity, and different insects such as leeches, big mosquitos, and in the open fields were exposed to different diseases. During that war, I learned so many things about leadership. One of my senior officers counseled me, he advised me not to worry too much about your soldiers, and I told him clearly that all the time, my priority is my men's safety. In the jungle, were like pack animals, taking upwards of 60 pounds of ammunition, water, gear, and much more for the people who were operating radios and machine guns. I was thoroughly impressed by the courage and determination of the soldiers who were performing their duties in such adverse conditions. Although my company lost a few soldiers, I still remember their deaths and can't forget those events.

 According to me, all the soldiers were professional, and some of them lost their lives while serving their country. Our primary duty was to control the damage of the war, were balling enemy's birth rate. As far as the strategy of the war is concerned, it was like "Alice in Wonderland." The main supply line of enemy ran through Laos and Cambodia. Until 1970, both of the countries reached their limits against U.S. ground forces. We continually bombed the trail, but our enemies did not lose their ability to move forward. North Vietnam was never attacked by us. I look back at the war strategy and found that had we reached a deadlock situation with our enemies, Would South Vietnamese have defended themselves on their own? I think it was unlikely. Also, the question arises would the U.S. have been in a position to keep forces in South Vietnam for a long period or indefinitely? I think it was also unlikely. The history has taught us many harsh lessons but have we learned anything out of it? We need to ask ourselves this question.

**Vietnamese take (**Mai Elliot**)**

 Mai Elliot was born and raised in Vietnam, and she spent most of her childhood in Hanoi, where her father was an officer under the French colonial system (Usatoday.Com). As a result of some political conflicts, her family got divided. During the Vietnam War, Mai conducted research on the Viet Cong insurgency for Rand Corp. She witnessed all the horrific events of the war and shared it with the public. Here, her story is narrated in the first person's account.

 During World War II, when I was a child, I remember people clustered in different shelters as Allied aircrafts targeted Japanese positions in the Northside where we lived. Also, in 1946, French soldiers returned to get Vietnam back from Ho Chi Minh's regime, French soldiers launched an attack on my village where were in refugees camp. In the incident, my father almost died although he worked under French colonial rule (Usatoday.Com). Later, in 1954 fearing retaliation from communist forces which were about to enter Hanoi, we escaped and moved to Saigon by taking a few clothes with us. Furthermore, we had to flee again as we were trapped in the battle between the army of the President Ngo Dinh Dien and the armed forces he was attempting to kill, thus, over home was likely to burn in the conflict. Moreover, in 1945, U.S. helicopters pulled my family members from Saigon in the last minute as communist bombs exploded nearby.

We experienced a lot of fear and uncertainty; however, it was not big in comparison with the trauma suffered by Vietnamese residing in the rural areas of South Vietnam as bombs and shells landed just in front of them, and many of them saw the tragic deaths of their loved ones. We were informed that children, old people, and women were dying helplessly. In addition, people were running out of edible things; they did not have much to eat, they were facing a shortage of medicine. The overall situation was miserable. My relatives in North Vietnam were hit by terror as U.S. B-52 carpet bombed the area in the year 1972, everyone was terrified, and had no idea that when they would get rid of this uncertain and devastating situation, they were trapped in. We were refugees and were able to get shelter and support from middle-class relatives and friends, while poor people had to move to the filthy camps in which overall living conditions were not suitable for people and they were struggling to get the necessities of life.

We learned that surviving and rebuilding process would need a lot of courage and determination. Besides, we were hopeful that one day we would come out of this miserable situation and things will be easier for us. Losing home and loved ones were, but we had to be courageous to meet the challenges of the life after the war. We all were waiting for peace although for many of the Vietnamese the world had ended because they went through a lot and were under trauma. The tears, cries, mourning, bombs, shells, bullets, and destruction of properties are still preserved in my memory, and these are the things that I cannot forget. Most of the people in the camps were living on their own as they were getting meager aid from the government in Saigon. The people like us who have witnessed war and a lot of bloodsheds can appreciate and value peace. The world needs peace, and war is the not the solution to any conflict but some governments are not concerned with the lives of the people, and they engage them in battle. The experience strengthened me I decided to live and would help out people. I am happy that now I am living peacefully in America, and the war that has ended the lives of many people ended. The Vietnam War affected millions of people both physically and mentally. The war was so unfortunate and disastrous for Vietnam and America.

**Hippie’s take (**Bill Zimmerman**)**

 Bill Zimmerman shares his experience of War which is narrated here as first person’s account. In the year 1958, I graduated from high school, considering myself a patriot, I was quite ambitious and wanted to become a fighter pilot. However, thirteen years later, I found myself in U.S. prison after the protests carried out by fighter pilots in Vietnamese Sky (Usatoday.Com). I witnessed the overall situation in the South during 1963 after a short spell of the civil rights movement. Meanwhile, the U.S. engaged itself in the Vietnam War, many patriots including me were skeptical as we were of the view that America is dragging itself towards a swamp. Subsequently, war intensified in 1965, and I opposed that war and protested vehemently against it. As a result, I was dismissed from two jobs at the university. However, in my opinion my sacrifices were minor compared to that of young U.S. soldiers forced into the battle, or Vietnamese citizens dying due to heavy bombardments.

Although other antiwar activists were supporting me, I was annoyed with the overall situation that we have been effective in stopping that bloody war which was taking the lives of people. Furthermore, we were furious in committing civil disobedience. I observed that other people were joining me as well, and they were in agreement with my viewpoint, and this particular aspect was not acceptable for authorities, and that is the reason why I found myself in jail in the year 1971, I was making an unsuccessful attempt to halt traffic to cause problems for federal government. Consequently, our failure that day harmed our cause because antiwar leaders realized that we had managed to convince a large number of Americas to stand against the war, but our militant strategy did not let them join us. In this respect, we changed our strategy. We ended large demonstrations. Educationists and intellectuals were an approach to guide the masses and lobby Congress.

The overall work was risky; still millions participated in the cause. Richard Nixon was the one who intensified the war, but he was feeling the pressure exerted from anti-war protestors, and their numbers were increasing with every passing day. Nixon's administration made their signature on the Paris Peace Accord in January 1973 as our lobby influenced Congress to stop funding for the incompetent and corrupt South Vietnam government, led to the collapse in the year 1975. We experienced that during both war and peace, Presidents do not tell the real story to the citizens of the country. All the presidents from Truman to Ford did not speak the truth regarding the Vietnam conflict. Also, we found that Nixon and Johnson were more concerned with their survival and political career than the lives of common people and the U.S. soldiers. They both dragged thousands of Americans to die in a war that they knew was extremely difficult, and the military was not in a position to win that. Participation in that war was a wrong decision by the government instead it was a crime against humanity.

Different chemicals were sprayed on millions of acres, which made population vulnerable, and they developed the risk of cancers and other diseases. The Vietnam War taught many lessons to the citizens of United States, and one of them was that every decision and policy of the government is not in the larger interest of the nation and the people of the country. As a responsible citizen, we should oppose our governments if they are engaging in unnecessary conflicts and the wars. The bloodshed in the war was very unfortunate, not only the soldiers from both sides suffered, but also their families got affected. The survivors of the war faced long-term health conditions, and they faced issues in treatment.

**Conclusion**

Three different viewpoints have been analyzed in this paper. One thing is evident that the U.S. should not have intensified the war. Bill Zimmerman rightly mentioned that on many occasions governments lie to their people and that government during that time was not much concerned with the lives of their soldiers. Also, for Vietnamese the war was the biggest tragedy of their lives. More than three million people got affected as a result of this war. Survivors of the war demonstrated a lot of courage and determination. Many of the U.S. soldiers also knew that they would not be able to win the war since they were soldiers, so, they had to fight the war.

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