

AI The Anti-War Movement – Viet Nam



I know a soldier does better to keep his stories to himself and yet, somehow, in the turmoil that this war brought to us and to our country, it may be our thoughts are all that was not left behind. For each of us who served in Viet Nam our destiny was changed in an extraordinary way. Not just because we had been to war, though that would have been enough, but by the whole spectrum of events and feelings that were a part of this time and what came to be.

The students on the campuses in that time, like many generations of students before them, thought they knew all there was to know about this war, what it was about, what was being done. It never mattered that they had never asked the questions, never been there, or that many may not have been able to point to Viet Nam on a map. They were told the war in Viet Nam was a "civil war" and that their fellow Americans were committing atrocities there, and they believed. They never realized that they merely "believed" – They didn't *know*.

The antiwar movement stemmed not from reason, but emotion and self-serving interests. When the protests and demonstrations ended, these people went on with their lives. They had done nothing, given nothing, made no commitment to anything. The citizens who went off to serve their country in this war returned to find they were reviled by their peers and outcasts in the very country they had served. It was the Jane Fonda's and Tom Hayden's that were on the evening news, leading thousands in protest against something they knew little or nothing about. They had the spotlight, the attention of the media and the nation. The citizen soldiers struggling to survive a miserable war in the jungles of Southeast Asia were characterized as misfits, drug addicts, and war criminals.

Today, the same people who led the antiwar demonstrations, refused to serve their country – but were more than prepared to tout their constitutional rights – are the people writing the "history" of the Viet Nam War. Now, think about that just for moment... Exactly whose story do you think they are going to tell the future generations ? Consider one other thing while were on the subject, some of these same people are in classrooms today, somewhere, teaching children the meaning of patriotism.