



Bridges

THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM



War Correspondents: New Technology, Greater Risk

By Jessica Highsmith

The effectiveness of media coverage has continually played a significant role in times of war. On the surface, there appear to be some similarities between the present Iraq War and the Vietnam War, which took place nearly forty years ago. However, a more in-depth look reveals some profound differences in media coverage between these two wars.

Technology has come a long way since Vietnam, the “first living room war.” The emergence of innovative media including satellite phones, 24 hour news networks, and the accessibility of the Internet, has considerably altered how we retrieve news on a daily basis. When I asked *WTVD News* anchorman Larry Stogner how media has changed since the Vietnam War, he replied, “Technology is number one.” He explained how the media’s use of color film during the Vietnam War put TV at a disadvantage, because the first video cameras and satellite uplinks were not around at the time. “The film had to be removed from the camera in the dark, shipped from the boondocks to Saigon’s Tan Son Nhut Airport for shipment to New York,” which often took several days. The media’s ability to report live from any location in the world has also been a major breakthrough for media coverage. Mr. Stogner added, “People hardly notice today when we’re live from Jerusalem, Baghdad, Beijing, or Moscow. It’s a given.”

The increased use of embedded war correspondents has further defined the world’s perspective of war, as it has also put journalists in life-threatening positions. “Embedded reporters ate, lived, and traveled with the troops. They choked on the same sandstorm grit and faced the same enemy fire,” stated Bill Katovsky in the book, *Embedded*. According to renowned international journalist Joe Galloway, “During ten years of the war in Vietnam, seventy war correspondents were killed covering the American side. During five years of the war in Iraq, more than 130 war



Artwork by Sally Lulciuc

correspondents have been killed going after the story or just going to work.” One aspect that has not changed in media coverage, Mr. Galloway emphasized, is *how* a correspondent covers a war and *why*. “He or she covers the story of war by accompanying troops into battle, at times with great personal risk and great personal sacrifice.” During my interview with Mr. Galloway, he went on to say that Iraq is far more dangerous a war and place for a correspondent than Vietnam ever was.

Recently, I conducted an interview with former *Fox News* producer Maya Zumwalt regarding her experiences as a journalist in Iraq. She discussed the tight censorship of reporting imposed under Saddam Hussein prior to *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Walking the streets unaccompanied was not even an option. However, when she later

embedded with the 82nd Airborne, she stated that there was unbelievable access to news and very few restrictions. I was intrigued by Ms. Zumwalt’s account of the time the unit in which she was embedded took over a headquarters building. While removing her bullet-proof vest, a group of insurgents started firing with AK-47’s. In the midst of all the danger and chaos, she was determined to report this story. This kind of dedication reaffirms the commitment that war correspondents have to their assignment. Ms. Zumwalt stated, “While sitting in a convoy ride for six hours, if there’s an ambush—that’s news. Rushing adrenaline kicks in as a reporter, and you just want to keep those at home connected. These people here are somebody’s loved ones.”

Although media coverage during the Vietnam War and the Iraq War clearly has some significant differences, the motivation of war correspondents to *report the story* has remained constant. Correspondents have continued to accompany troops into battle and have stayed true to their conviction that the story of war is vital to the American people—especially to those whose loved ones are fighting.

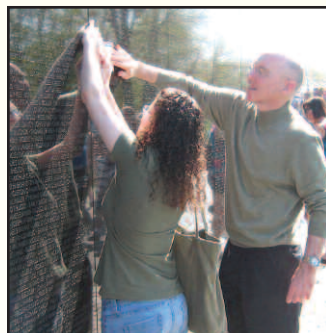
Lessons of Vietnam Links in Action



Veteran link June Eldridge speaks with LOV students at the Arlington Women’s Memorial.



Lisa Huynh introduces her link, Mr. Larry Stogner, to the LOV class.



Col. Bill Mayall assists his link, Danielle Poston, rub a special name on The Wall.



MHS Dad Ivan Waldorf shares the memory of a friend who served in Vietnam.

Another Step Toward Awareness

By Lisa Huynh

On a cold February 20th, more than 100 people filed into Millbrook High School's auditorium for one reason: to hear N.C. Congressman



DAC members display Operation Sharehouse certificates.

Brad Miller's perspective on the Darfur genocide. Congressman Miller described the situation in Darfur as a systematic destruction of human life in large numbers. He also explained that genocide is in fact spreading to different countries in Africa, and that peace will not be attained unless the world unites to help resolve this disaster. Members of the

MHS Darfur Awareness Club, who organized this event, were extremely pleased with the turnout. Furthermore, *News Channel 14* was present at the forum, as well as a staff writer, Yonat Shimron, from the *News and Observer*. The day after the event, Ms. Shimron's article was published in the *City and State* section, titled "Teens Tune in to Darfur crisis." The publicity about the event quickly resulted in numerous invitations and requests from a variety of sources. For example, students at Elm Place School in Highland Park, Illinois, asked our Darfur Club to engage in a project called *Reach for Change*, the goal of which is to decorate 400,000 paper dolls to represent the 400,000 lives so far lost in the Sudanese genocide. The dolls will be displayed at the Holocaust Museum in Illinois.

Currently, the *Darfur Awareness Club* is working on a major event at Millbrook to finish off the school year. On May 17th, members will host *Operation Sharehouse*, a program which is a part of *Stop Hunger Now*. Approximately 250 volunteers will package food, including vitamins and minerals, specially formulated for the malnourished. On average, just a mere 25 volunteers can package 5,000 meals in two hours. The packages are later shipped to countries worldwide in need of aid, such as Chad. The *North Carolina Holocaust Foundation* has graciously donated \$2,000 towards this event.

This year has been a busy and successful one for the *Darfur Awareness Club*. Since 2005, our club has continued to make a difference. Hopefully, our continuing efforts to promote awareness about this tragedy will help bring Sudan's genocide one step closer to an end.

Putin's Push for Power

By Megan Knox

On May 7th, 2008 Vladimir Putin's term as Russian President will come to an end as his hand-chosen successor Dmitry Medvedev takes office. Putin will then become the Prime Minister of Russia. However, important questions remain. How much power is Putin really relinquishing, and what are his long term plans?

It is well known that before becoming President, Putin was an active member of the KGB and the Communist Party. Over time, Putin gained status and titles, until eventually, he was inaugurated as Russia's President on May 7th, 2000.

In recent years, Russia has become the world's second leading producer of oil. Through heavy-handed tactics, such as governmental legal threats and actual imprisonment of Russian oil company presidents (Khodorkovsky and Gutseriev), Putin's government has gained control of this industry. But, instead of using the influx of oil dollars to improve the lives of Russian citizens, it appears Putin's team is using the money to maintain power. For example, his subordinates determine which towns get connected to oil pipelines and then court voters based on these favored investments.

Armed with oil money, the Russian government has also gained a new swagger on the world stage. Putin has Russia flexing her muscles in foreign affairs as has not been seen in years. Just recently, Russian strategic bombers have flown near American airspace.

Last year alone, U.S. fighter jets scrambled 46 times to intercept Russian "Bear" bombers, according to records provided by military officials.

How has the Bush administration reacted? It seems to be taking this all in stride, as the U.S. continues to expand the NATO alliance—supporting former Soviet satellite countries seeking admission to and the protection of this alliance.

Many questions remain regarding the future of the Russian government. Time will ultimately tell the story. But, one thing seems clear—even though the Iron Curtain was effectively torn down, we better continue to pay attention to the man "behind the curtain" in the Russian government, Vladimir Putin.



Artwork by Chris Pilley

Young Souls Lost

By Catherine Leake and Eric Book



Around the world today, there are approximately 300,000 child soldiers. It is hard to even imagine what these young children are going through. Why do they become child soldiers? And how do they become reintegrated into society later on?

Recently, Mr. David Smith, a Program Officer at the U.S. Institute of Peace, spoke to Ms. Poling's *LOV/RIR* students about this topic. Mr. Smith has found that even though more children are being used as soldiers today than ever before, historically the concept of the child soldier is not new. Even in the last stages of America's own Civil War, there were thousands of very young Confederate soldiers.

Why does a child choose to fight? According to Mr. Smith, many countries like Uganda and Sierra Leone have no code of conduct and people lack basic resources, so insurgents use whatever they can to gain control. Child soldiers are easy prey because they are so impressionable.

Poverty is often rampant, and adult soldiers make war seem exciting and attractive. Unfortunately, these children often face many horrible dangers beyond the battlefield, including sexual bondage and slavery.

Assimilation back into society is very difficult. Many children suffer post-traumatic stress disorder, and most find their families reluctant to accept them. Some join gangs, find another conflict, or turn to prostitution.

So, how can we respond to the battlefield cries from child soldiers today? The only real way, says Mr. Smith, is to *prevent war*. However, many humanitarian organizations are actively working on prevention. The United Nations has declared the use of children in war a violation of international law. Currently, the U.S. Congress is deliberating the *Child Soldier Prevention Act*. All of these efforts emphasize *demobilization, disarmament and reintegration*. The world of nations must aggressively act to permanently remove the child soldier from the battlefield, silencing these cries forever.



A Face Behind Each Name

By Molly Emmett

It's official! The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center *will* be built across the street from The Wall. This Center is significant for our generation, our parents' generation, and future generations. It will help us all better understand a war rarely discussed, yet one that almost tore our country apart nearly four decades ago.

The Memorial Center is designed to be built mostly underground to ensure that it does not take away from the sacredness of the Mall or the emotions it evokes. Its purpose will be to educate the thousands of visitors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial who are not old enough to remember the war, the controversy, and the healing process our country continues to go through. The Center will display many of the items left at The Wall for those lost, as well as show individual pictures on their

birthdays. It will help remind everyone that there is a *face behind each name* and that the American soldier has always embodied the values of duty, honor, respect, courage and integrity.

People will not leave this Memorial Center knowing *everything* there is to know about the Vietnam War and those who served. But, they will leave the Center as we will leave our *Lessons of Vietnam* class – better informed with an enhanced understanding of our country's foreign conflicts and the sacrifices made.

Perhaps Vietnam Veteran/Link Dave Rabadan summed it up best: "There is an old saying...Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. The fewer people who have had firsthand contact with the War, the more an educational place is needed."



A Moment of Silence

By Dawn Nwaebube

On the morning of our *LOV* class Candlelight Ceremony, I pondered how this special evening would unfold. I did not realize that what I would experience that night would be an event I would never forget.

Our ceremony started with students and chaperones making a circle around Veteran Phil Beane on the reflecting pool steps in front of the Lincoln Memorial. One by one, we each read the names of Wake County soldiers whose names are on The Wall. Mr. Beane then asked us to take sixty seconds of silence for reflection. I reflected on my life and how each of those men and women who died in Vietnam left an individual legacy. Would I leave a meaningful legacy by which others would remember me? By the end of the ceremony, I realized it is *up to me* to ensure the legacy I leave will be worth remembering.

After this period of reflection, several students purposefully stepped into the circle to share their thoughts. Eddie Harris admitted that at first he felt the Vietnam War was a war that happened in the past and, as such, he had nothing in common with those whose names are on The Wall. But then, that morning, he found a young man with *his name* on The Wall...a young man who died at the age of 18, the same age Eddie is now. "I know it sounds crazy," he said, "but now I have a totally *different* perspective!"

Molly Emmett related that a year ago when she visited The Wall, a little girl came up to her and started asking so many questions. At that time, Molly thought she "knew all the answers." But being a part of the *LOV* class caused her to realize she did not. Molly hopes one day that little girl will understand why the war in Vietnam took place and how beautifully The Wall memorializes the lives that were lost.

After the last student spoke, Mr. Beane again asked for a moment of silence and reflection. The words spoken that evening will always hold a special place in our hearts.

Nearly four decades ago, a generation of Americans represented by the names on The Wall sacrificed their lives in a far off place called Vietnam. It is our generation's legacy never to let them be forgotten.

Life Lessons Learned From *LOV*

By Hillary Stewart

Each spring, Ms. Lindy Poling takes a group of her *Lessons of Vietnam* students to Washington, D.C. Students have the opportunity to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the U.S. Institute of Peace, the Holocaust Museum, and many other historical sites. At the conclusion of our field trip, students are asked to fill out a survey. The very last question asks if *any life lessons have been learned from the LOV experience*. Many students' individual perspectives, feelings about civic responsibility, and understanding of life seem to have changed. Following is what MHS *LOV* students had to say:

- *Seeing The Wall really made me rethink my civic responsibilities as an American. Many things that were said and felt on this trip will not be forgotten—and will be used in my everyday life.*
- *Viewing the names etched upon The Wall opened my eyes to all of the generous, brave, and courageous people who fought to ensure my freedom. I feel inspired to give something back to this country.*
- *The next time I have a talk with my family about the Vietnam War, I will know exactly what they are talking about.*
- *I have a better idea of how I can pass on what I have learned in this class to younger generations.*
- *People need to use the opportunities given to them to make themselves, the world, and the people around them better.*
- *I learned how trivial my problems are compared to the thousands of soldiers who have given their lives for my country.*
- *I feel motivated to be something out of the ordinary; I will try my best to do so.*
- *Since I am interested in international affairs, the USIP has inspired me to act on my interest and desire to help poverty-stricken people in Third World countries.*
- *I do have a different perspective on things; I have learned to accept other points of view.*
- *I learned that I should not take life for granted.*
- *I learned there is so much more to understand.*



Artwork by Jessica Carrick



By Michael Frucht

Holding an idealistic outlook for Cuba, President Bush said, "This should be a period of democratic transition for the people of Cuba." Only time will tell.

The *Bridges* Newsletter Club has been recognized as a 2008 “Outstanding History Club of the Year.” 20 *National History Club* chapters (out of 260) are being honored for “exemplary activities, community service, and overall commitment.” Our club will receive a copy of the *Ronald Reagan Presidential Portfolio*, provided by the Reagan Museum and Library, and *Price for Peace*, a DVD provided by the National World War II Museum. A certificate will also be awarded.

Generous grants from Vice Admiral & Mrs. Emmett Tidd, the family of Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., the MHS PTSA, and the PBR-FVA made possible the publication and printing of this special issue of *Bridges*.



- “As Bob Dylan once said, ‘The times are a changing.’ Everyone should watch every debate or speech they can—especially those who will be 18 and able to vote in the upcoming election. Every vote counts, so make your voices heard!” ~ Brandi Wilburn
- “General George Price told my class that we owe it to the young men and women who lost their lives in battle. Therefore, I feel obligated to vote just as much as they felt obligated to serve. They served for my opportunity to vote; and I will make sure to use this right.” ~ Eddie Harris
- “I understand that for many, the most pressing question concerning whom to choose in the upcoming election is: how will he/she handle the war? But, it’s important for voters to look beyond the war, because the war is only a small part of what the President’s job entails.” ~ Michael Frucht
- “I wish the candidates would talk more about the oil crisis. My generation and my children’s generation will be greatly affected by this. If other countries, such as Denmark, are finding a way to save energy by using solar and wind energy, what is stopping us from doing the same?” ~ Dawn Nwaebube
- “The upcoming presidential election is something that can change the future of America. I’m hoping young adults will acknowledge that it is their civic responsibility to get out there and vote for a candidate who has our generation’s best interests in mind.” ~ Jessica Highsmith
- “As a first-time voter, I am looking forward to voting for a ‘presidential first.’ Our LOV/RIR class has taught me the importance of making a well-informed vote.” ~ Hillary Taylor



<http://mhs.wcpss.net/academics/poling/index.htm>
http://www.community_in_the_classroom/
<http://www.nationalhistoryclub.org/>