

Free term paper on the use of drugs and how it affected the soldiers at the vietn...

[Countries](#), [Vietnam](#)



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Introduction

At the dawn of the Vietnam War, the United States of America was driven by the malicious interest of going to war for no apparent motive to gain anything from the war. The cards were however turned upside down when the French withdrew from the war leaving the U. S troops at the war front. The U. S was just out to oppose the growth and establishment of communism at all costs. The proponents of communism were aggrieved by the malice occasioned on them by the U. S and thus resolved not to relent in the war. Due to the massive deaths and injuries sustained by the U. S troops at the Vietnam War, the U. S discovered that she was on the verge of losing everything at the war and despite her heavy investment and commitment to the war; she decided to withdraw her troops from Vietnam to avert more loss of U. S lives.

The pain meted on the U. S troops by the communist troops at war in Vietnam combined with the poor logistic support from the U. S government demoralized the soldiers who eventually resorted to drug abuse as a means

of seeking solace. Tests and examinations on U. S service men urines done by 1971 indicated that the level of drug use among the U. S soldiers was at an alarming level. It was actually described as an epidemic. The tests revealed that 5% of all U. s service men were involved in drugs at Vietnam.

Abstract

This paper is an outright evaluation of the magnitude and effects of drugs use by the American soldiers at the front of Vietnam War. It seeks to look into the extent into which the service men engaged in drug abuse and the outcomes of such actions. The paper will expose all the negative impacts of drugs use by the soldiers and any positive impacts if any. At the advent of such an analysis, it is worth noting that the soldiers were to some extent justified to engage in such drug uses due to some reasons which include: The availability of the illicit drugs in Vietnam at very low and affordable costs, A relaxed legal and moral environment in Vietnam where drug use was not highly opposed and the need for the soldiers to seek medication and a hiding place from the stressful and dreadful experiences at the war. With such reasons, the soldiers were at the verge of breaking loose from the American norms of anti drug use and the use and abuse of drugs among the service men became a common stratum at the war front.

Despite the term defeat is of an unimagined shame and dismay in any warfare experience especially for a world power like the U. S, it was a reality with which the U. S was compelled to put up with at the dusk of the Vietnam War. It is argued that the War was the most devastating experience in the history of America. The shame of a super power conceding a defeat at such a

war was of much contribution to the use of drugs among the U. S service men in Vietnam and also after they were withdrawn from the Vietnam. The aim of this paper is however to look into the advent of drug use by the U. S. A service men and the effects occasioned by the use of such drugs.

At the onset of the Vietnam War the U. S soldiers were one of the disciplined forces in the war with their core interest being a win and triumph over the communist Vietnamese. This was however short lived as the French withdrew and left the U. S as the war lords alone in Vietnam. The massive and painful experience by the U. s service men saw them down to a demoralized force which was an express victim of the war. The soldiers eventually started using such drugs as Heroin, Marijuana, and Cocaine, morphine, bin octal, opium, amytal and seconal among others.

The use of Marijuana by the U. S troops was a major concern during the Vietnam War. The drug was readily and widely available in Vietnam at that time and the Vietnamese locals went around the army camps selling it to the army officials. Despite the legal provisions to criminalize the use of drugs by army officials, the army leaders chose to wear a blind eye on the use of the drug by the soldiers. It was widely used to motivate the soldiers and keep them in the fighting spirit. Marijuana is a known stimulant and an anesthetic. As such it played a key role in the motivation and fostering the fighting spirit among the soldiers. Marijuana served to mellow the soldiers out and keep them fighting despite the bitter experiences of the war. It was also believed to keep a sharp focus in the minds of the soldiers at war. Marijuana was also used by the soldiers to a large extent to cascade their stressful experiences

at the war.

As the war went on with the U. S being the outright victim, the use of marijuana extended to many soldiers and most of them became habitual users of the drug so as to be functional. The soldier also used the drug to kill the pain of the injuries sustained at the war. The narcotics were readily available and sold at very low prices such that the soldiers could afford them without much strain. Over time, there was an increasing pressure mounted due to the use of marijuana and that gave rise to a bud of using Heroin at the war front. The extended use of marijuana was built on the fact that it was widely and readily available in many parts of the country at that time. It is also argued that it was readily sold in the open markets and some people could use it as a herb to cure their certain ailments. Among the reasons cited for the use of marijuana by the soldiers at the Vietnam War was the intention to cure their injuries sustained from the war which it did serve very well. The soldiers also used Marijuana widely to cool down their mental pressures and kill the stress of being at war in a foreign land with such bitter experiences as those suffered by their army. It is worth noting that the bitter experiences of losing fellow army members among the American service men bred a confused and troubled mental state in the face of the U. S soldiers. They therefore resorted to the use of marijuana to avert the incidences of built in stress and pressure which could be detrimental in the long run at war.

Among the soldiers who returned home after the U. S withdrew from the war, 20% were proved to be addicts of the drug. This followed a heavy critique on the American army and its excess use of Heroin in Vietnam. Heroin was also

widely available and affordable in the Vietnam. Vietnamese locals would sell it to the soldiers very cheaply. At the time the U. S soldiers were being withdrawn from Vietnam, the addicts of heroin remained in the country for detoxification before they returned home. The soldiers believed that the drug could effectively reduce or alleviate stress and cure the war pains sustained. The sale and use of the drug was also not strictly controlled and regulated. It was locally sold and at very cheap prices.

Opium was also readily available to the soldiers always at the war front. The drug was usually supplied by drug sellers from Indochina who made sure that the drug was always available for the soldiers. Some members of the army also served as retailers of the drug to guarantee a continued supply and prevent any instances of shortage. The soldiers used this drug for reasons as those of marijuana and heroin. They also used the drugs for their own leisure. When the soldiers retired to their tents for instance they would intoxicate themselves with the drug in an attempt to relax their minds. For a long time they used drugs as a source of pleasure in the war torn areas.

The effects of Drug use among the soldiers.

It is worth noting that the use of drugs affected the entire army: and top officials low level soldiers. At the onset of drug use among the soldiers, it was of much benefit to the users. The drugs could serve to stimulate the soldiers and kept them focused at the war front. Marijuana for instance served very well to stimulate the soldiers and kept them in action at war. The drugs also served to cure the sick and injured members of the army. The soldiers also used the drugs as stress removers and this was effectively

achieved by the controlled use of the drugs. However when the French withdrew from the war, the U. S soldiers exaggerated the use of drugs and it served as a force against their success in the war. It gradually developed into an uncontrolled habit among the entire army members.

The uncontrolled use of drugs as usual is a direct input to the threat and risk of addiction. The soldiers who continually relied on the drugs such as marijuana, heroin and opium ended up in acute addiction. The addicted states of the soldiers meant that the affected soldiers could not effectively discharge their military obligations whenever the drugs were either inaccessible or unavailable. Addiction is one of the reasons behind the tragic loss experienced by the U. S army at the Vietnam War. The soldiers could lose the focus of war at the expense of a drug. They spent more time in search of the drugs that it took them to plan their war strategies. This was so especially when the army senior officers became addicts of a particular drug. Addiction meant that the war was in the hands of drug fuelled fighters. The opposing sides of communism found it very easy to bring down the addicted American soldiers. The combat readiness and focus of the American soldiers was impaired by the use of drugs.

The continued use of the drugs by the American soldiers also contributed to the difficulty of issuing and obeying commands in the army. It is evident that the drug users among the service men developed resistant behaviors and were prone to many discipline cases. The continued drug uses impaired the ability of the soldiers to reason logically and obey orders from their seniors. The victims of the disciplinary cases usually made it hard for the army top launch a collective activity to survive on the war front. They often openly

rejected to take orders from the commanders and the enemy took an advantage of the disorganized state of the American soldiers, an avenue to mete out serious and successive attacks on the Americans.

Usually the continued drug abuse and overdose of the drugs led to the demise of American soldiers in Vietnam. The frequent deaths and deteriorated health among the users of drugs further weakened the American combat and were to blame for the loss from the war. The use of drugs saw the American combat force on the decline and this also served as an advantage to the opposing side as they launched continuous lethal attacks with minimal resistance. Those who suffered poor health were an additional problem to the army which was supposed to give medical care to their members. The continuation of diverted attention from war to the provision of extra and unusual expensive medical care for the soldiers served as an avenue and a loophole for the communists to overcome the U. s troops.

The continued use of the drugs by the soldiers also saw majority of them diverting their attention into many criminal activities usually occasioned on the Vietnamese citizens. Such practices as robbery with violence, sexual assaults, and unnecessary killings. These occurrences served as stimulants for the anger in the part of the Vietnamese and were determined to defend their state at whatever cost. Such a determination coupled with the tragedies that were afflicting the American army, the communists stood a greater chance of triumph as it eventually came to be. The harassment and sexual assaults meted on the locals by the army officers was a cause of children with mixed nationalities. The media put the injustices on the

spotlight and it was another blow for the American army.

The native Vietnamese fighters took a great advantage of the drug laden U. S army to defend their communist ideology. They carried out a series of massive attacks on the U. S army camps at first and also to the supporter of the U. S in the Southern Vietnam. The Vietnamese are argued to have used the drug menace as an added advantage to bring down the U. s army on their land. They arguably supplied the U. S army with the cheap drugs such as heroin, marijuana, opium and alcohol. The Vietnamese army remained disciplined and vigilant to wreck the drug laden U. S army.

Conclusion

The use and misuse of drugs by the American soldiers is inevitable at the Vietnam War. Many soldiers at the war were eventually getting into drugs and got addicted. Coupled with addiction were other negative impacts of drug abuse by the service men. It is the continued use of drugs by the U. S soldiers that immensely contributed to the loss suffered by the U. S at the war. There could be other ideological and strategic reasons behind the loss but the extended use of drugs by the soldiers led to the formation of a disgruntled, demoralized, disorganized and a weak force to achieve any significant combat objective. The Vietnamese must have made a great use of the state of the U. S army to successfully win the war.

The increased habit of drug use and abuse among the U. S soldiers was actually on the rise during the war. The drug use in the process of war eventually caused the U. S to be on the losing end of the war.

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