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Without a doubt the United States was brutal during their 14 years in the Vietnam War. There were times when our soldiers were commanded to shoot Vietnam civilians. Our second source tells us that they killed mostly women and children. Perhaps there were times when American soldiers could not tell a Viet Cong sniper apart from a civilian, but either way, there were around 5, 000 civilians killed by the United States. There are a lot of veterans who have served in American wars who suffer from PTSD after they get home from battle.

Post-traumatic stress disorder could be brought on by high intensity while a soldier is in battle, seeing a fellow soldier die, shooting enemies, and it is evident that shooting civilians can cause it as well. Veterans can get aggressive if their settings at home give them a flashback of a bad memory of war. A lot of soldiers such as veteran Bob Kerrey regret killing civilians and they have had to live with it for the past forty years. There are questions to whether or not the Americans are war criminals for killing these Vietnam civilians.

After the first paragraph of "The Things They Carried" is read, the reader has a very good idea of what the main character, Jimmy Cross, was doing. He was just a young kid in love. His problem was that he was thousands of miles away in Vietnam with nothing to do but march. He would yell at his men to spread out or march to the left, but Jimmy was just going through the motions. His heart was not in the war and he knew it. As much as the military wishes our soldiers were robots, they are humans with feelings.

Jimmy Cross made an immature but innocent decision to put his daydreams of a girl back home before thinking about his men. Jimmy Cross carries the

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burden of one of his soldiers deaths. Jimmy was daydreaming instead of watching his soldier when he was killed on the way to the bathroom, and he knows it will haunt him forever. This short story shows how the soldiers were drones roaming Vietnam killing civilians and burning cities. Jimmy Cross would think about how he had no explanation for the killing of civilians and would just keep marching onward.

The similarities between Jimmy Cross and Bob Kerrey are plentiful. They had probably done a lot of the same things while commanding troops in Vietnam. " Kerry admitted that a combat which he led during the Vietnam War was responsible for shooting dead more than 20 unarmed civilians, mostly women and children. After the killings, the squads commander reported that the unit had killed 21 Viet Cong, and Kerry was awarded a Bronze star. " Kerrey cannot be the only soldier that regrets killing civilians.

Soldiers that have experienced a traumatic events previously in war can have flash backs to old battles and lose sense of reality. Shooting innocent civilians did not cause either of these men PTSD. Someone who is having a breakdown might get hostile because they feel like violence is needed for survival. There are lower levels of cohesion, flexibility, and communication in a veteran of war. Killing enemies and killing innocent civilians changes soldiers, and when they are in the heat of war, they do not care who they kill. PTSD is at a different level depending on the soldier.

It is apparent in some and not so much in others. What it comes down to is realizing that our soldiers make decisions in war that they would make differently had they not been in the war so long. It distorts what is really happening to the soldier. Combat greatly effects soldiers when they go back

into regular society. American soldiers are war criminals for killing innocent civilians. Although the United States should not go back and charge soldiers with war crimes, like with Bob Kerrey, but in future wars civilians need to be spare civilians.

The United States has killed civilians in the Iraq war as well. It's hard to say that anything can be done to the United States for these murders because they obviously have been taking place for a number of years. Civilian murders need to be stopped in order for us to truly win a war.

## References

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