

The wars that america fought history essay

[History](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Professor: Jean A. Keller Course: history 110 Reflections on the Wars that America Fought History is a very important but difficult thing to study. The major problem with learning about historical facts is that they are often distorted. It happens sometimes that different sources present an issue or an event in different ways. Needless to say, in some cases these differences can be explained by the variations of opinions that scholars have regarding a certain event. However, the majority of distortions of historical facts happen because it is beneficial to some people or organizations. People with power often try to re-write history in order either to create some myths or to be presented in a favorable light. In the context of the above said, the best way to study history is to ask those who witnessed specific historical events.

What ordinary people can tell is much more reliable than various politically biased sources because people usually do not have any interest in not telling the truth. Therefore, for the current project I have interviewed my grandfather and managed to find out a lot of interesting and valuable facts about the World War II and the Vietnam War from him. The person I chose to do the interview is one of my grandfather ' s best friends. When I first came to the US, my grandfather suddenly passed away just a week after. At that time, my grandfather's friend took care everything of my family and me. So, I always consider him is my second grandfather. His name is James Florance. He was born in 1942 and grew up in Texas. He used to be a US Navy soldier. So, he knew very well about the World War II. Thus, the interview with my grandfather allowed me to collect valuable information about the wars from America's past that I would probably not get from any other sources. Clearly, being born in 1942, my grandfather cannot remember much about the World War II. However, his father and other people told him a lot about the

<https://assignbuster.com/the-wars-that-america-fought-history-essay/>

situation in the country during the war. In addition, he knows and has met many people that fought in the World War II and were affected by it. Drawing from the above, I consider the recollections of my grandfather to be a reliable source of information that sheds light on the war as seen by people not at the forefront of the events. Accordingly, my grandfather has provided many insights that political and military historians often overlook. For example, he told me that his father did not serve in the military as he worked in the field of chemical engineering. As a very valuable specialist, my great-grandfather had to work in the United States, providing support for the country that fought its enemies abroad. It is important to notice that even though the actual war did not take place on the territory of the United States, the life in the country was obviously affected by the international situation. Food and other products of the first necessity were rationed, so that a person could only a fixed amount of bread or sugar in a fixed period of time. Respective coupons were handed out to American citizens, and one could only buy the goods they needed using those coupons. At the same time, in such a multicultural country as America, the war also had negative social effects. In particular, people were often discriminated on the basis of race. Since the USA had Japan as one its major rivals in the World War II, people with Asian looks were all discriminated against, irrespective of whether they were actually Japanese or came from China, Vietnam, or other Asian countries. Interestingly, during the Vietnam War cases of such discrimination were not very often. Even vice versa, there were many people inside the United States that protested against war and treated American soldiers with contempt and anger. It was a popular opinion in the 1960s that America should not fight the war in Vietnam, losing thousands of lives with <https://assignbuster.com/the-wars-that-america-fought-history-essay/>

no obvious goal. My grandfather was in the Navy during the Vietnam War, and during his service from 1961 to 1965 he collected a lot of experiences. However, characterizing the war the major point he has stressed was that the secrecy was at the top level. Soldiers serving on Navy ships did not know what was going on in the war or even where exactly their ships were heading. Soldiers merely received orders and had to fulfill them, without knowing the motivations for the Government to continue the war in Vietnam in the first place. This, according to my grandfather's words, created uncertainty that was hard to cope with. People wanted to be patriots and defend their country but they were not told what they were actually fighting for. In addition, coming home from the Vietnam War, soldiers were often met in a hostile manner by the opponents of the war. The hardest part was that the people protesting against the Vietnam War did not realize one simple fact: ordinary soldiers did not start the war; they simply tried to be patriots and fulfill their duty for their country. He also mentioned that there were thousands and thousands of people died, including US soldiers, Vietnamese soldiers, women and children... He said that his heart was broken when he heard the bomb and his partner was killed in front of him. " Vietnam was not so much a war as it was one long battle in an ongoing war-the war in defense of freedom, which is still under assault, this battle was lost not by those brave American and South Vietnamese troops who were waging it but by political misjudgments and strategic failure at the highest levels of government"... " Ending the conflict is not so simple, not just calling it off and coming home. Because the price for that kind of peace could be a thousand years of darkness for generations in Vietnam borned." (Ronald Reagan). My grandfather said that he is so proud of Vietnamese because they are strong and

<https://assignbuster.com/the-wars-that-america-fought-history-essay/>

always together to protect their country and their freedom. In general, my grandfather has characterized the Vietnam War as the war that corporations supported in order to make profits. The United States as a country did not have strategic interests to defend while losing many lives of young people when there was no obvious threat to the country from the side of Vietnam or its allies. Summing the interview up, my grandfather has also compared the current events in Afghanistan and Iraq to the Vietnam War. The troops are overseas with numerous restrictions on their actions and no obvious goal to win the war. If in the World War II the whole nation united against a threat, the Vietnam War and the current military operations look more like projects of corporations than actual patriotic campaigns to defend America. Further on, the above-discussed interview allowed me to achieve several important goals. My most important job in this assignment was to show my grandfather that I had genuine interest in the topics that I was asking him about. It often happens nowadays that the youth are not interested in history and deal with the issues of today only. Such state of events makes experienced people that lived through remarkable historical events think that their memories are not valued. Well, in this assignment I have tried not only to learn about the American history but also to reassure my grandfather that there are young people that are actually concerned about the past, present, and future of this country. The most important thing I learned was that historical events are not always exactly described in books or by mass media. It is one thing to read about the Vietnam War and it is a totally different thing to hear the recollections of the person that saw this war with their own eyes. Getting information from the direct participants of events is always more vivid and impressive than reading it in writings of authors that never actually

experienced what they were writing about. Moreover, interviews like the one I have carried out allow finding out details that are not general knowledge. For instance, I didn't know that coming home from the Vietnam War many soldiers had to face contempt and hostility from a considerable part of the American society. It was important for me to learn this in order to better understand the social situation that developed in the USA during the Vietnam War. Thus, I find that the discussed interview provided me with considerable information about the topics of interest. Needless to say, there were drawbacks in the design of the interview but one thing I did well was to be an active listener and still maintain the balance between active listening and simply interrupting the interviewee. As for the weak point of the interview, I would name some aspects of the structure that I have chosen. So, if I had another opportunity, I would improve the structure in the sense that I would rather focus on one topic in more detail than try to cover all topics of interest during one short interview.

Conclusion

Thus, the above considerations allow concluding that the interview I have carried out with my grandfather was a valuable opportunity for me to learn a lot about the history of the United States. Although not without its drawbacks, the interview was successful, especially in the aspect of collecting insightful ideas and memories about the World War II and the Vietnam War. I am thankful to my grandfather for taking his time and giving me a chance to learn a lot of things I did not know about the life of people during some of the most dramatic events in American history.