

# Snowstorm of the vietnam war

Business



This essay reveals the use of drugs during the Vietnam War, and how they affected the US soldiers. In reference to the story “ Things They Carried” by Tom O’Brien, his motive of writing stories about Vietnam was to save his life. O’Brien is a veteran, and he writes about his life as a soldier in Vietnam by incorporating a fictional protagonist with his name. He narrates about his experience during the Vietnam War where he rekindles memories of other characters. This is through describing their behaviors such as those who used to carry physical items that involved grenades, and his other colleagues who died during the Vietnam War. In this story, he tries to evade to Canada, but changes his mind due to societal pressures of conforming to notions of duty, courage, and obligation.

In narrating the story, the writer confesses that he was a coward when he participated in the war he did not trust, and develops an indictment against the war wastefulness. The Vietnam drug user returns became apparent in 1972 between May and September when 943 men who returned to US from Vietnam as enlisted military man had to go through the interview and allow collection for their urine specimens (Blum 56). Out of the population, 495 men had their urine test positive during departure time from Vietnam. The interview took place 8-12 months after they had returned, and the outcome indicated that 17 percent were still in service while 83 percent were civilians. The test for a urine sample in Vietnam was to indicate if soldiers had traces of heroin in their organisms.

The results indicated that one-fifth developed psychological or physical dependence. The effect of drugs in soldiers detected after the period of 8 to 12 months since they had returned indicated that 10 percent had some

experience with opiates while less than 1 percent revealed signs of opiate dependence. In the sample positive for drugs, three quarters had a feeling of addiction to narcotics while in Vietnam. The drug abuse affected soldiers in a way that during their return, majority shifted from using heroin to barbiturates or amphetamines, and no soldier had an interest for seeking treatment. The effect of drug use to US soldiers went to extent that revealed strongest predictors of addiction in US caused by pre-service use in Vietnam.

The general report on Vietnam drug users indicates that occasional use of narcotics without addiction is possible for men who previously relied on narcotics. The drug use among US military increased at an alarming rate. This was evident during the Vietnam War when prosecution for a slice trace for marijuana became a court-martial offence for marines. However, absence of crime laboratory in Vietnam before 1968 contributed to major factors which hindered punishment to marijuana users. This led to a situation where the samples had to go all the way to Japan for testing, which took 45 days to complete. Despite these tedious circumstances, the war against the use of drugs did not come to a standstill.

The efforts incorporated the use of dogs, which detected traces of marijuana in the military service among marines returning from R&R trips from abroad to Vietnam. Marines subjected all marijuana users to court-martial, dealers and users of hard drugs went to court for trial. The other step in fighting against drugs in Vietnam consisted in establishing a drug rehabilitation center at Cua for users who came from infantry battalions. Before 1968, the army ignored the issue of marijuana use among soldiers until when the media publicized the situation. This was to convince the army officials to

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identify this as a problem, which in turn led to the creation of broadcast media, which proclaimed the risks of consuming marijuana.

To further fight the use of drugs among soldiers, it became compulsory for initiation of drug education lectures. Soldiers also received consultations from physicians, chaplains, and legal officers concerning the dangers of using drugs, which involved physiological damage that could lead to psychosis and injuries to dependent individuals. To prove the fight against use of drugs among soldiers, marijuana arrests reached a large number of 1000 in a week. On the other hand, the US war against drugs among soldiers is evident in US handing out large amount of money annually to Colombia to contest guerrilla groups such as FARC that took place in narco- trafficking. US took obligatory minimum sentences and came up with programs such as drug treatment and federal requirement to combat the use of drugs.

In addition, the US passed several acts such as the Drug Enforcement Administration, which involved the US military to put efforts in combating drugs (Adams 132). The drug haze war in Southeast Asia served as a reflection of social injustice and human costs. It also pushed blames to drugs as a marker of veteran's psycho-pathology instead of defiance act. According to Sergeant Jay Dee Ruybal who served in the 4th Battalion, for a majority of individuals in Southeast Asia, drugs acted as self medication form. They led to temporary release from physical suffering and constant fear. The US soldiers in Vietnam accessed drugs such as opium from suppliers commonly known as Corsican Mafia from Laos, and Vietnam.

In addition, the US became part of Indochina which is evident when the CIA assisted the Corsicans in transportation of opium, and later heroin to Vietnam. As a result, this made the military from the US to access the drugs, and in cases that involved marijuana, it was easy to access because; it was readily available and grew wild in most parts of the region. Majority of the soldiers used marijuana because; it was available and openly sold at market places. The reason behind this is that residents used it as herbs in a variety of Indochinese recipes. The cheap prices of drugs such as heroin also made it easy for soldiers to access them as they created ample effect during smoking.

Reports from the American Pharmaceutical association show that American soldiers acquired the drug habits from native Filipinos and Chinese who quitted the habit of using drugs. The response of the US military high command to the act of using drugs among soldiers was evident in their different treatment of marijuana as compared to other drugs, the fact that contradicted the federal controlled substances act. This response from the US high military commanders implied that the use of marijuana related separately from the use of other drugs. They further claimed that drugs such as marijuana were available in Vietnam before the US soldiers arrived, and the state did not define laws against the drug hence; there was no government control over marijuana. To support this claim, the US military command conducted a survey in 1966, which revealed that there were 29 fixed outlets in Saigon region, which allowed purchase for marijuana. An effort to combat the use of drugs among the US soldiers in Vietnam led to a situation where soldiers lacked interest in the treatment.

Soldiers who used drugs had multiple disciplinary issues when contrasted to those who abstained from drugs. In some circumstances, the use of drugs impaired a soldier's readiness to fight because; it had much impact on the soldier's capability to execute orders or participate in war actively. The US soldiers in Vietnam used drugs because; they assisted them to stay alert especially on reconnaissance missions. In addition, they used drugs such as opiates because; they found them appealing as they did not involve injections. A comparison of drug use in Vietnam War, and World War II, reveals that during the Second World War, the German army used Pervitin, a stimulant that today is commonly termed as speedy.

On the other hand, US soldiers in Vietnam War used heroin, opium and marijuana, which were available at the Vietnam market. During the World War II, most of the Wehrmacht's soldiers got high on Pervitin before they went to battle. There was also a supply of millions of methamphetamine tablets to German army during the first half of 1940. The mission of the drugs was to assist sailors, pilots and infantry troops to stay in a position of providing superhuman performance. In contrast to Vietnam War, the US soldiers used drugs to enable them stay alert on reconnaissance missions (Cico 225).

During World War II, the use of drugs became different when the military leadership liberally dispensed the use of stimulants. For instance, they recommended soldiers to take opiates and alcohol believing that it drugged, intoxicated troops and assisted in achieving victory over allies. However, the Nazi did not work hard in monitoring the side effects of drugs such as decline in moral standards, and drug addiction. On the contrary, the high command

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military in the US worked hard to ensure that they detected soldiers who used drugs and formulated war against them. For instance, during Vietnam War, the high command came up with an initiative where they tested the urine of soldiers who used drugs.

In addition, they arrested drug addicts who used hard drugs, and took them to court.