

1985

The Vietnam Veteran: A History of Neglect

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, William E. (1985) "The Vietnam Veteran: A History of Neglect," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 38 : No. 3 , Article 21.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol38/iss3/21>

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wrong he would not deny his guilt or start to shift the blame elsewhere Probably their honesty, their honor, like their sense of ridiculous, was derived from an instinctive realism; they seemed able to see to the center of things. I have not met another people with so few illusions about themselves or the world around them, or who, looking at the world with this practical, objective, unromantic eye, found it funny. It was easy to command such people. It was a privilege to be allowed to do so." (*A Child At Arms*, by Patrick Davis).

The narrative also contains much fascinating regimental lore. Farwell is at his sparkling best when describing the peculiar traits and customs of British Imperial officers. Toward the end, one will almost imagine hearing strains from the Colonel Bogey March from "The Bridge on the River Kwai." On the sobering side, Farwell provides an excellent sketch of the convulsive last days of the British Raj, noting the bewilderment of the Gurkhas and the shame of their officers over the manner in which the Brigade was broken and divided with the independent Indian Army. Final chapters trace Gurkha activities around the world in a much-reduced British Empire—Borneo, Malaya, Belize, Hong Kong. While some readers will conclude that the Gurkhas are an anachronism, others will agree with the author that the Falklands War demonstrates that their services may yet be required.

In all, another fine book by Byron Farwell and one which deserves the

attention of *Naval War College Review* readers. *Gentlemen, Aye Gurkali!* (The Gurkhas are upon you!)

JOHN S. PETERSON
Chicago, Illinois

Bonior, David E. et al. *The Vietnam Veteran: A History of Neglect*. New York: Praeger, 1984. 200pp. \$21.95

Within the last few years it has been popular to write books about the Vietnam War. Vietnam was a different kind of war for the United States. It was America's longest war and it was also television's first war. Many would agree that we lost not only a war in Vietnam but many of the ideals which we had been taught as being characteristic of the American way of life. Vietnam changed the lives of many of us, especially those who served their country in a cause neither advocated nor accepted by many Americans.

This book describes the treatment given to veterans who served their country in an unpopular and unrewarding war. The assertion that the Vietnam veteran has been unfairly treated is the primary theme which permeates this book. The authors contend that much is owed to those who served but that little has been given since completion of their duty and sacrifice. The clear and explicit message is that this nation and its institutions owes the Vietnam veteran a debt comparable to what was given to the veterans of prior wars.

Vietnam Veteran is divided into three parts. Part 1, "The Rush to Forget," focuses on the part played

by television, newspapers, and films. "At the war's beginning the locally dominated newspaper community had been uncertain of their readers' interest in distant Vietnam. Once they had been convinced to give the war serious attention only a handful of reporters would ever actually write about the Vietnam battlefield."

Part 2, "Failed Leadership," concerns the various Presidential administrations and veterans' organizations. Ironically, the Federal Government spent billions in its conduct of the war, but was less willing to spend any suitable amount on the individuals who participated in the war. In addition, the generation gap between older veterans who participated in World War II and those who served during the Vietnam War became a factor in lessening the benefits to be received by the younger veterans. "The leadership of the older veterans organizations seemed untouched by the war and by the doubt it engendered."

Part 3 focuses on Congress and the Veterans' Administration. Neither is portrayed in a favorable light. Congress is described as not responding appropriately to the valid needs of Vietnam veterans and a variety of reasons is cited in explaining this assertion. Congress did not have among its body any substantial number of individuals who had served during the unpopular Vietnam War as it did after World War II, and seemed to be more receptive to veterans' organizations which represented a different and older type of veteran.

Although some individuals may not agree with the theme of this

book, the authors support it with ample evidence. Sources used include several interviews with prominent individuals from the public as well as the private sector. Added pertinent information was secured from journals, periodicals, television tapes, and documents relating to media coverage. This book should appeal to a wide variety of readers. The style of writing is lucid and manages to hold the attention of the reader. Understandably, it will have a special interest to those who served in the military during the Vietnam War, as well as to their relatives and friends. Yet it should also appeal to anyone who has an interest in related policymaking on the highest levels in American society.

WILLIAM E. KELLY
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Wright, Robert K., Jr. *The Continental Army*. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1983. 451pp. \$15.00

While obviously not written with professional naval officers in mind, *The Continental Army*, the final volume in the trilogy on the American Revolution by the US Army's Center of Military History, will nonetheless appeal to those who are students of the War of American Independence. Appearing on the market at the end of the American Bicentennial, this well-researched, single-volume historical and reference work devoted to the American Continental Army is a fitting literary finale to the national celebration. As the title suggests, Dr.