



THE SPITTING IMAGE

Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam

JERRY LEMBCKE

Spitting Image Myth Memory And The Legacy Of Vietnam

George Black



Spitting Image Myth Memory And The Legacy Of Vietnam:

The Spitting Image Jerry Lembcke, 2000-05 How the startling image of an anti war protester spitting on a uniformed veteran misrepresented the narrative of Vietnam War political debate One of the most resilient images of the Vietnam era is that of the anti war protester often a woman spitting on the uniformed veteran just off the plane The lingering potency of this icon was evident during the Gulf War when war supporters invoked it to discredit their opposition In this startling book Jerry Lembcke demonstrates that not a single incident of this sort has been convincingly documented Rather the anti war Left saw in veterans a natural ally and the relationship between anti war forces and most veterans was defined by mutual support Indeed one soldier wrote angrily to Vice President Spiro Agnew that the only Americans who seemed concerned about the soldier's welfare were the anti war activists While the veterans were sometimes made to feel uncomfortable about their service this sense of unease was Lembcke argues more often rooted in the political practices of the Right Tracing a range of conflicts in the twentieth century the book illustrates how regimes engaged in unpopular conflicts often vilify their domestic opponents for stabbing the boys in the back Concluding with an account of the powerful role played by Hollywood in cementing the myth of the betrayed veteran through such films as *Coming Home* *Taxi Driver* and *Rambo* Jerry Lembcke's book stands as one of the most important original and controversial works of cultural history in recent years **The**

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Narratives and the Collective Memory of the Vietnam War John A. Wood, 2016-04-25 In the decades since the Vietnam War veteran memoirs have influenced Americans' understanding of the conflict Yet few historians or literary scholars have scrutinized how the genre has shaped the nation's collective memory of the war and its aftermath Instead veterans' accounts

are mined for colorful quotes and then dropped from public discourse are accepted as factual sources with little attention to how memory no matter how authentic can diverge from events or are not contextualized in terms of the race gender or class of the narrators *Veteran Narratives and the Collective Memory of the Vietnam War* is a landmark study of the cultural heritage of the war in Vietnam as presented through the experience of its American participants Crossing disciplinary borders in ways rarely attempted by historians John A Wood unearths truths embedded in the memoirists treatments of combat the Vietnamese people race relations in the United States military male female relationships in the war zone and veterans postwar troubles He also examines the publishing industry s influence on collective memory discussing for example the tendency of publishers and reviewers to privilege memoirs critical of the war *Veteran Narratives* is a significant and original addition to the literature on Vietnam veterans and the conflict as a whole *Combat Trauma* Nadia Abu El-Haj, 2022-09-27 Americans have long been asked to support the troops and care for veterans psychological wounds Who though does this injunction serve As acclaimed scholar Nadia Abu El Haj argues here in the American public s imagination the traumatized soldier stands in for destructive wars abroad with decisive ramifications in the post 9 11 era Across the political spectrum the language of soldier trauma is used to discuss American warfare producing a narrative in which traumatized soldiers are the only acknowledged casualties of war while those killed by American firepower are largely sidelined and forgotten In this wide ranging and fascinating study of the meshing of medicine science and politics Abu El Haj explores the concept of post traumatic stress disorder and the history of its medical diagnosis While antiwar Vietnam War veterans sought to address their psychological pain even as they maintained full awareness of their guilt and responsibility for perpetrating atrocities on the killing fields of Vietnam by the 1980s a peculiar convergence of feminist activism against sexual violence and Reagan s right wing war on crime transformed the idea of PTSD into a condition of victimhood In so doing the meaning of Vietnam veterans trauma would also shift moving away from a political space of reckoning with guilt and complicity to one that cast them as blameless victims of a hostile public upon their return home This is how in the post 9 11 era of the Wars on Terror the injunction to support our troops came to both sustain US militarism and also shields American civilians from the reality of wars fought ostensibly in their name In this compelling and crucial account Nadia Abu El Haj challenges us to think anew about the devastations of the post 9 11 era *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire* Steven Trout, 2020-04-07 A great white angel spreading her wings across the Moreno Valley this is how one visitor described the memorial standing atop a windswept prominence in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Taos New Mexico A de facto national Vietnam veterans memorial built by one family more than a decade before the Wall in Washington DC and without aid or recognition from the US government the chapel at Angel Fire is a testament to one young American s sacrifice but also to the profound determination of his family to find meaning in their loss In *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire* Steven Trout tells the story of Marine Lieutenant David Westphall who was killed near Con Thien on May 22 1968 and of

the Westphall family's subsequent struggle to create and maintain a one of a kind memorial chapel dedicated to the memory of all Americans lost in the Vietnam War and to the cause of world peace Focused primarily on a life lost amid our nation's most controversial conflict and on the Westphalls desperate battle to keep their chapel open between 1971 and 1982 the book's brisk and moving narrative traces the memorial's evolution from a personal act of family remembrance to its emergence as an iconic pilgrimage destination for thousands of Vietnam veterans Documenting the chapel's shifting messages over time which include a momentary and controversial recognition of the dead on both sides of the war The Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire spotlights one American soldier's tragic story and the monument to hope and peace that it inspired

The Long Reckoning George Black, 2023-03-28 The moving story of how a small group of people including two Vietnam veterans forced the U S government to take responsibility for the ongoing horrors agent orange and unexploded munitions inflicted on the Vietnamese Fifty years after the last U S service member left Vietnam the scars of that war remain This is the remarkable story of a group of individuals determined to heal those enduring wounds Elliot Ackerman author of The Fifth Act and 2034 The American war in Vietnam has left many long lasting scars that have not yet been sufficiently examined The worst of them were inflicted in a tiny area bounded by the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam and the Ho Chi Minh Trail in neighboring Laos That small region saw the most intense aerial bombing campaign in history the massive use of toxic chemicals and the heaviest casualties on both sides In The Long Reckoning George Black recounts the inspirational story of the small cast of characters veterans scientists and Quaker inspired pacifists and their Vietnamese partners who used their moral authority scientific and political ingenuity and sheer persistence to attempt to heal the horrors that were left in the wake of the military engagement in Southeast Asia Their intersecting story is one of reconciliation and personal redemption embedded in a vivid portrait of Vietnam today with all its startling collisions between past and present in which one time mortal enemies in the endless shape shifting of geopolitics have been transformed into close allies and partners The Long Reckoning is being published on the fiftieth anniversary of the day the last American combat soldier left Vietnam

What Happened? An Encyclopedia of Events That Changed America Forever John E. Findling, Frank W. Thackeray, 2010-12-09 This comprehensive and highly readable collection of essays highlights 50 important events that changed the course of American history What Happened An Encyclopedia of Events That Changed America Forever is designed to introduce beginning U S history students and lay readers to the most significant events in the nation's history More than that it also will give readers insight into why a particular event is important This book consists of 50 chapters in four volumes each dealing with a critically important event in American history from the 17th century to the present Each chapter includes a factual essay on the subject prepared by John Findling or Frank Thackeray The factual material is augmented with an interpretive essay on the same subject written by a specialist in the field Through this juxtaposition readers can learn not only about the who what and where of an event but also why it is important in the

sweep of American history Remembering Viet Nam Regula Fuchs,2010 How does American culture deal with its memories of the Vietnam War and what role does literature play in this process Remembering Viet Nam is a fascinating exploration of the ways in which authors of Vietnam War literature represent American cultural memory in their writings The analysis is based on a wide array of sources including historical political cultural and literary studies as well as works on trauma It begins with an examination of American foundation myths their normative formative and most of all their bonding nature and the role institutions such as the military and the media play in upholding these myths The study then considers the soldiers and war veterans minds and bodies and the stories they tell as key sites in the debates over the war s place in American cultural memory The multilayered approach of Remembering Viet Nam allows the investigation of Vietnam War literature in its whole breadth including the debates instigated by the works examined and the influence these narratives themselves have on American cultural memory Most importantly the analysis uncovers why American foundation myths despite their being thoroughly questioned and even exposed as cultural inventions by authors and reviewers of Vietnam War literature can still retain their power within American society **Vietnam's Prodigal Heroes** Paul Benedikt Glatz,2021-01-12 Vietnam s Prodigal Heroes examines the critical role of desertion in the international Vietnam War debate Paul Benedikt Glatz traces American deserters odyssey of exile and activism in Europe Japan and North America to demonstrate how their speaking out and unprecedented levels of desertion in the US military changed the traditional image of the deserter *Grunts* Kyle Longley,Jacqueline Whitt,2020-05-17 Now in its second edition Grunts The American Combat Soldier in Vietnam provides a fresh approach to understanding the American combat soldier s experience in Vietnam by focusing on the day to day experiences of front line troops The book delves into the Vietnam combat soldier s experience from the decision to join the army life in training and combat and readjusting to civilian life with memories of war By utilizing letters oral histories and memoirs of actual veterans Kyle Longley and Jacqueline Whitt offer a powerful insight into the minds and lives of the 870 000 grunts who endured the controversial war Important topics such as class race and gender are examined enabling students to better analyze the social dynamics during this divisive period of American history In addition to an updated introduction and epilogue the new edition includes expanded sections on military chaplains medics and the moral injury of war A new timeline provides details of major events leading up to during and after the war A truly comprehensive picture of the Vietnam experience for soldiers this volume is a valuable and unique addition to military history courses and classes on the Vietnam War and 1960s America

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