



Oral history essay

The Vietnam War effected the whole world in many ways. But when talking about wars in class only give you one perspective which is the big picture. But what about the small picture? The effect the war had on individuals and their families. Sometimes hearing the story from someone who was in the war can give you a better understanding about the conditions they faced. For this oral history paper interviewed my uncle Steven Mangled who was an engineer sergeant in the Vietnam War.

During this time before the draft was abolished in 1973, many troops were selected for service through the drafts but those who didn't want to go to war would sometimes flee to Canada or other places. 25 percent of the troops that served in this war were draftees. These people were called "draft dodgers." My uncle didn't want to be one of these people and wanted to do his duty as an American citizen so he joined the army in the 1960's after graduating college. He went through NCO school, which is a course to becoming a non-commissioned officer.

He then went through his training to become a sergeant and entered the U. S Army Corps of Engineers. Shortly after, around 1970, he was sent to Vietnam. His mission there was to support an artillery unit that was stationed on the border of North and South Vietnam. He built and designed things like helicopter pads, flood protection systems, facilities for the army and many other things. During his stay he also had the opportunity to help build a hospital for the Vietnamese people.

One of the things that affected my uncle during the war was the subject of races. At this time period there was a lot of civil rights movements going on. The Vietnam War had a very high percentage of blacks more than any war before it. Blacks made up about 13 percent of the troops that served. Before joining the war my uncle had a lot of prejudices about the different races, but started to think differently after working closely with people from all different races and ethnicities. He learned to live with them and became very close to a lot of them.

The Vietnam War provided these African Americans and Hispanics their first experiences of white comradeship and really opened peoples eyes to the fact that they weren't all that different. Of course there was bound to be occasional racial tension but they tried to keep this tension from affecting the performance of the troops. My uncle started to gain respect for Hispanics in the war. He said that they were the hardest workers and had a great work ethic. His visions of the races totally changed.

Another thing that really affected my uncle was when he was building the hospital for the Vietnamese. The hospitals in the Vietnam War were different from any other war. There wasn't a very good road system through Vietnam so transportation was very hard so most of the hospitals were sem

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