

Delve Deeper into

Regret to Inform

By Barbara Sonnenborn

Premieres on PBS Monday, January 24th, 2000 at 10PM E.T. (check local listings).

The national P.O.V. broadcast is a co-presentation with the National Asian American Telecommunications Association.

Fiction. There are so many fine American novels about the Vietnam War that it seems impossible and unfair to choose just a few. Tim O'Brien, Robert Olen Butler, Thom Jones, Philip Caputo, Larry Heineman, Bobbie Ann Mason, John Edgar Wideman and Ward Just have all written eloquently about the effect of the Vietnam conflict on Americans who served there (and those who didn't), as well as on Vietnamese who came to the United States as refugees. Perhaps less widely available is fiction written by Vietnamese writers, some still living in the Republic of Vietnam, others by now fairly settled residents of the U.S.; for example:

Duong, Thu Huong. *Novel Without a Name*. New York: Morrow, 1995.

Dinh, Linh, ed. *Night, Again*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 1996.

Ninh, B'ao. *The Sorrow of War: A Novel of North Vietnam*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1995 (originally published in Hanoi, 1991).

Nonfiction. Among the more comprehensive historical approaches to the conflict are works like:

Fitzgerald, Frances. *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam*. New York: Vintage, 1973.

Gettleman, Marvin E., ed. *Vietnam and America: A Documented History*. New York: Grove Press, 1995.

Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History*. 2nd rev. and updated ed. New York: Penguin, 1997.

Prados, John. *The Hidden History of the Vietnam War*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1995.

Reporting Vietnam. 2 vol. New York: Library of America (Penguin Putnam), 1998.

Sheehan, Neil. *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*. New York: Vintage, 1989.

Assessments of the impact of the War, the political and cultural polarization it inspired, and the postwar search for reconciliation include:

Brandon, Heather. *Casualties: Death in Vietnam, Anguish and Survival in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984

Emerson, Gloria. *Winners and Losers: Battles, Retreats, Gains, Losses and Ruins from the Vietnam War*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985.

Herr, Michael. *Dispatches*. New York: Vintage, 1991 c1977.

MacPherson, Myra. *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984.

Safer, Morley. *Flashbacks: On Returning to Vietnam*. New York: Random House, 1990.

Turner, Karen Gottschang with Phan, Thanh Hao. *Even the Women Must Fight: Memories of War from North Vietnam*. New York: Wiley, 1998.

Wells, Tom. *The War Within: America's Battle over Vietnam*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994.

Wiesner, Louis A. *Victims and Survivors*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1988.

From self-help to sociological study, widowhood has generated a rich literature over the past several decades. Highlights among self-help books include:

Brothers, Joyce. *Widowed*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.

Caine, Lynn. *Being a Widow*. New York: Penguin USA, 1990.

Feinberg, Linda Sones. *I'm Grieving as Fast as I Can: How Young Widows and Widowers Can Cope and Heal*. Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press, 1994.

Laurent, Pauline. *Grief Denied: A Vietnam Widow's Story*. Santa Rosa, CA: Catalyst for Change, 1999.

Among the valuable academic studies are:

DiGiulio, R. *Beyond Widowhood: From Bereavement to Emergence and Hope*. New York: Free Press, 1989.

Lopata, Helena Z. *Current Widowhood: Myths and Realities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996.

ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

"Delve Deeper" is compiled by *Booklist*, the review journal of the ALA.

Memoirs. Personal accounts of the War and its effect upon individuals within the broader context of their lives and history often offer an emotional insight into a time and place, for example:

Hayslip, Le Ly and Wurts, Jay. *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace*. New York: Doubleday, 1989.
Kovic, Ron. *Born on the Fourth of July*. New York: Vintage, 1989.
Novak, Marian Faye. *Lonely Girls With Burning Eyes: A Wife Recalls her Husband's Journey Home from Vietnam*. Boston: Little Brown, 1991.
Puller, Lewis B. *Fortunate Son: The Autobiography of Lewis B. Puller, Jr.* New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991.
Smith, Winnie. *American Daughter Gone to War: On the Frontlines With an Army Nurse in Vietnam*. New York: Pocke Books, 1994.
Wolff, Tobias. *In Pharaoh's Army*. New York: Random House, 1994.

Younger Readers. There is a surprising amount of wonderful fiction and nonfiction works for young adults and children. Some of these include:

Boyd, Candy Dawson. <i>Charlie Pippin</i> . New York: Puffin Books, 1988 (1987).	Myers, Walter Dean. <i>Fallen Angels</i> . New York: Scholastic Inc., 1988.
Bunting, Eve. <i>The Wall</i> . New York: Clarion Books, 1990.	Tracan, Khbanh Tuybcet. <i>The Little Weaver of Thbai-ycen Village</i> . San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1977.
Gay, Kathlyn and Martin. <i>Vietnam War</i> . New York: Twenty-First Century Books, 1996.	Warren, James A. <i>Portrait of a Tragedy: America and the Vietnam War</i> . New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1990.
Hoobler, Dorothy and Thomas. <i>Vietnam: Why We Fought</i> . New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.	Wright, David K. <i>War in Vietnam</i> . Chicago: Children's Press, 1989.

Web Sites. There are literally thousands of Vietnam-related sites. Among the valuable clearing-houses are:

Either <http://www.vietvet.org/> or <http://grunt.space.swri.edu/> should get you to the veterans' home page, which provides practical information (e.g., on veterans' benefits), access to interactive discussion areas and reports written by veterans and their families about recent trips to Vietnam.

<http://students.vassar.edu/~vietnam/index.html> and <http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~sdenney> are among the more useful university sites, which give surfers access to historical documents and, particularly at Berkeley, links to other information sources from the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi to Southeast Asian newspapers.

Finally, <http://www.taps.org/>, a site sponsored by the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, deals with grief in general, supplying information and links to other resources, from government agencies to local support groups.

Videos. Classic commercial films about the Vietnam War and its impact on combatants and/or non-combatants may be obvious; among them, in alphabetical order:

"Apocalypse Now," "Born on the Fourth of July," "Casualties of War," "Coming Home," "Good Morning, Vietnam," "Go Tell the Spartans," "Heaven and Earth," "In Country," "Platoon" and "Three Seasons."

Perhaps more valuable to people interested in the War and its impact would be the superb documentaries produced by public and commercial networks; for example:

"Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam" (HBO Video, 1987); "The Enemy" (Films for the Humanities [CBS News], 1989); "Hearts and Minds," (MPI Media Group, 1975) which won the 1974 Academy Award for Best Documentary; "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision" (Ocean Releasing, 1997); "They Were Young and Brave" (ABC Video, 1994); "Vietnam: Chronicle of a War" (CBS/Fox Video, 1981); "Vietnam: The Soldiers' Story" (ABC Video, 1998); "Vietnam: A Television History" (Sony Corporation of America, 1987 [1985]); "Vietnam: The War at Home" (MPI Home Video, 1986) and, for kids, a Reading Rainbow entry, "The Wall" (Great Plains National Instructional Television Library, 1992).

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