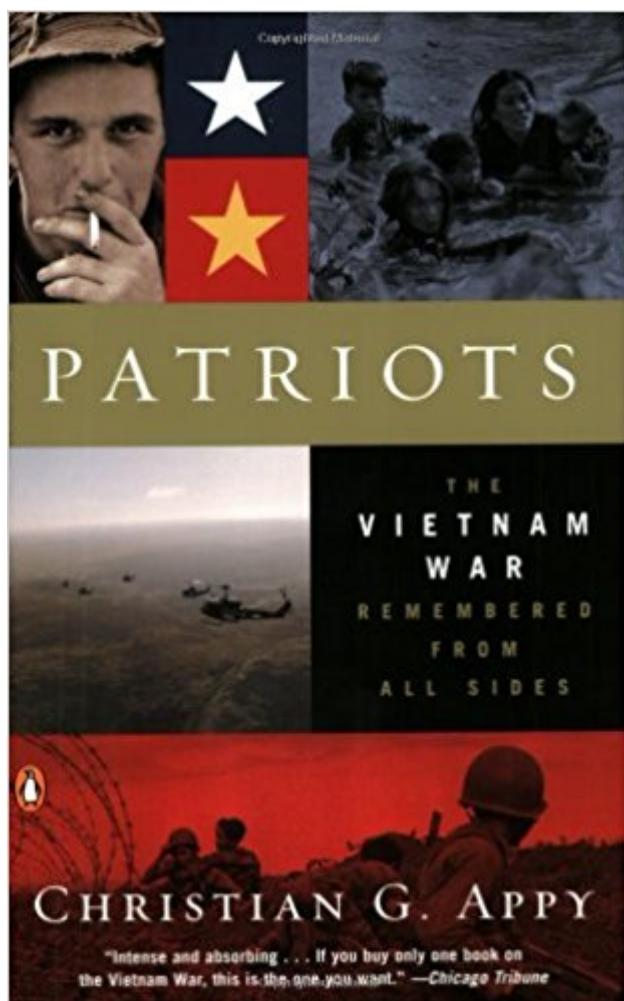


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# Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides



## Synopsis

"Intense and absorbing... If you buy only one book on the Vietnam War, this is the one you want." -Chicago Tribune Christian G. Appy's monumental oral history of the Vietnam War is the first work to probe the war's path through both the United States and Vietnam. These vivid testimonies of 135 men and women span the entire history of the Vietnam conflict, from its murky origins in the 1940s to the chaotic fall of Saigon in 1975. Sometimes detached and reflective, often raw and emotional, they allow us to see and feel what this war meant to people literally on all sides: Americans and Vietnamese, generals and grunts, policymakers and protesters, guerrillas and CIA operatives, pilots and doctors, artists and journalists, and a variety of ordinary citizens whose lives were swept up in a cataclysm that killed three million people. By turns harrowing, inspiring, and revelatory, *Patriots* is not a chronicle of facts and figures but a vivid human history of the war."A gem of a book, as informative and compulsively readable as it is timely." -The Washington Post Book World

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Christian Appy's *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* is an oral history that serves as a "final public record" from many who have struggled publicly with the war for 20 or 30 years. The book is also a monumental effort to capture voices long unheard and ensure that the words are not lost to a new generation. He includes statements from significant political and military figures from both sides of the conflict, including William Westmoreland, Alexander Haig, Nikita Kruschev's son Sergei, and Vice President Nguyen Thi Bihn. But he tempers these with the

voices of a World Airways stewardess who accompanied troops out of the war zone, of the widow of the immolated Norman Morrison, and of numerous Vietnamese and American non-combatants whose lives were torn by the conflagration. These tales, and the contributions from poets, writers, and activists transform the book into a epic dialogue. Indeed, Appy says that he chose the title *Patriots* not out of a presumed understanding of how that word should be defined, but rather because it served as a locus for so many of the inner struggles of his interviewees: "In what ways might patriotism be a force for good or inspire noble sacrifice, and when does it become a club for stifling dissent and a rallying cry for unjustifiable destruction." *Patriots* is a book that will reawaken memories--horrific and jubilant--for those who lived through the troubled 1960s and 1970s; and for those just coming to understand the war, it will make vivid the trials of a different time and place. This is a lasting, powerful book that's essential reading for students of the Vietnam conflict. --Patrick O'Kelley --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

When Appy (*Working-Class War*) says "all sides" he is not exaggerating. It's difficult to think of any group of people who were involved in the many and varied aspects of the American war in Vietnam not represented in these oral history pages. Appy's testifiers include war hawks; peace activists; former Vietcong guerrilla fighters, Vietnamese Communists, Vietnamese anti-Communists; American veterans of many stripes, from privates to generals, medics to infantrymen; POW/MIA activists; poets, novelists, journalists; entertainers; and former government officials from all sides. Appy amply fulfills his goal of presenting a "vast range of war-related memories" in this massive, valuable book. He spent five years traveling around the country and in Vietnam, interviewing 350 people, and included about half of their stories. Oral histories often suffer from loose organization or from voices that pop up confusingly again and again. Appy takes a different approach. Each person appears only once, and Appy gives the participants plenty of room to tell their stories. He also provides on-the-mark, often insightful introductions to each entry, along with brief but to-the-point chapter introductions to set the historical context. The book contains the remembrances of some well-known people, including Gen. William Westmoreland, Gen. Alexander Haig, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, Walt Whitman Rostow, Julian Bond, Ward Just, Oliver Stone, poet Yusef Kumunyakaa and writer-activists Todd Gitlin and Jonathan Schell. There are others known mostly to Vietnam cognoscenti (Chester Cooper, Le Minh Kue, Rufus Phillips, Wayne Karlin and Nguyen Qui Duc), as well as many of the voices of just plain folks who experienced the war in myriad ways. It all adds up to a solid contribution to the primary source background of the longest and most controversial overseas war in American history. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers

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Appy has compiled a number of collections of oral histories of the Vietnam War, and this is probably the most expansive. He interviews American service personnel and support staff, but he also talks with North Vietnamese, former Viet Cong fighters, civilians, nurses, "Donut Dollies" and scores of other people whose lives intersected in Vietnam. I was looking for a Vietnam War equivalent for Studs Terkel's *The Good War*, and this is very close. I will check out his other Vietnam interview collections.

The several hundred interviews of soldiers, nurses, pilots, politicians and others from many countries made this a poignant and gripping documentary. I was an Air Force physician in the mid-60s but never was assigned to Vietnam - though rumor had it that if we ever really screwed up we might be sent over. I bought a friend to our book club who had actually been a Navy aircraft mechanic and radar operator off Vietnam. Mike thought the book was a well written documentary. He did have some reservations about the veracity of participants on both sides. In war, he felt, everyone is hunkered down in their own small piece of real estate with little knowledge of the big picture. Stories filtered in about victories, defeats, atrocities, and death -Mike never knew which were true. Stories changed with time - days, months or years later. and knows

Great book, and it definitely opened various levels of understanding of what was the Vietnam War. Since it is based on so many different voices, from all sides of the conflict, and all levels of involvement, it really stands out. The writer knows his business, and the surprises it has revealed from top level government officials, to the grunts on both sides, it makes for a very revealing reading. This is much more information that I was prepared for. The information provided absorbed me completely, and continued throughout the book, to reveal aspects about this tragic war, that I had absolutely no idea had taken place. Everyone knows that each government of most countries always try to make the public agree with their stance regarding military conflicts, but what goes on behind the scenes sometimes can be even shocking to know. How does the average citizen know the intricate details they are basically not supposed to know? Well, this book does that by revealing, from the horses mouths, if I may, the real truth of what happened over there. The author has done a fine job. I really appreciate this book, which not only covers our side of this terribly wrong war, but the other side as well. From people high in power, generals, reporters, nurses, villagers, a vast array of inputs is what makes this book truly special. Well worth reading and must congratulate Mr.

Christian G. Appy for an above average job in presenting this complex narrative of events in a manner that reads more like a novel of short takes. One thing remains unchanged, though, and that is that the american soldier deserves maximum recognition for what they had to endure in that disastrous war. 4.5 Stars!

Had this book for my history class at UMass Amherst, and my professor was the author, Christian Appy. The class was structured around the book, which was great, and the book by itself is really insightful on multiple sides and opinions of the war, whether it was the Vietnamese, or the Americans, or the soldiers, or even the state officials at the time. I recommend anyone interested in US history to read this book for a thorough look into the Vietnam War, which can also answer questions about US foreign policy today.

The book does an excellent job at covering all the perspectives and really demonstrates the complexity of the war. Understanding that, the reader can move forward with a clearer understanding of America's most recent war in Iraq and critically analyze the relationship between the government and the public during war time.

A number of things jumped out at me reading this book. Westmoreland and Rostow still don't get it. Maybe it's too painful to reevaluate and admit your mistakes caused so much death. Several pilots, who never seem to have gotten to know Vietnam, also don't get it. How could they with all the time they put in drinking? The closer you were to the real world of Vietnam the more likely you were to see what was happening, and the reality changed a number of hawks into doves. I was most impressed by the analyses of both Jonathan Schell and Daniel Ellsberg. Schell for his idea of the US as a kind of domino, the need to show strength in a nuclear world. And Ellsberg for the way he connects Watergate, Nixon's paranoia and Vietnam. Everyone should read this book. It's pretty clear the application of a military solution to Vietnam was a huge mistake. I took the point of view that anyone who disagreed with this idea, so many years later, had some kind of blinders on and it was interesting to figure out what they were.

The author did an outstanding job of finding and interviewing folks from both sides of the war. As a Vietnam veteran with some agent orange issues, it amazes me that more Vietnamese folks don't despise us. After so many years of warring with interlopers, I guess they figure we aren't the worst of the bunch.

Provides an overall review of a war that should never have happened - like most wars, if not all. Ranks right up there with "The Good War" by Studs Terkel. Such a terrific waste of lives in both countries. Makes the reader aware of the tremendous price paid by innocent civilians during wartime.

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