

A Soldier's Experience in Vietnam: Robert L. Jones ^[1]

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Did you understand the purpose of the Vietnam War?

We were told that we were protecting freedom -- that we were going to stop the aggression--to keep the South Vietnamese people from being overran and it was all about freedom. In the Vietnam War, we were told, over and over again, that only a few of you guys will make it back. This is what you are going over there for. You're going over there to die. You gonna die. Death as we know it, as I grew up knowing it is when somebody became old and they got sick and they died, and that was hard to deal with. They say let's celebrate because he had done what he was supposed to do. Now when you take seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen year-old men into a military situation and they get shot down, whether its enemy or whether it's your people. It's... to me... it's just... I can't rationalize that to be the right thing to do.

Describe your return home from war? Were you confused?

Absolutely. Without a doubt. Confusion... a big ball of confusion. When I came back I didn't know who I was anymore. The people that I knew before I went over and I didn't want to have a whole lot to do with them and they didn't want to have *nothing* to do with me. And the ones that I would meet occasionally would last a very little while, the relationship, whether it be a male or a female. I could meet males a lot better than I can females because it was hard to allow feelings to be shown.

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