

BONDS BETWEEN VETERANS: A SHARED EXPERIENCE OF THE WAR

[3] Case Panel [rear of case]

Objects featured on this panel are from the collection of the National Park Service, National Mall and Memorial Parks. All photos by VVMF.



[3.1] Introductory Text

“It don’t mean nothing.” Have you heard this phrase? Widely used among service members in Vietnam, it has been described as “a sarcastic mixture of ‘cool,’ comedy, irony, agony, bitterness, frustration, resignation, and despair” – all concepts that express some aspect of the Vietnam experience.¹

Forged in the upheaval of a pivotal social and political crossroads in American history, there is perhaps no group with a bond as distinct as those who served in Vietnam.

For them especially, The Wall represents a catharsis of memory: a sacred space for communion with deceased comrades, a place of healing, and of closure.

3.A Objects

Lower label content	Object
<p>[3.A.3 – 3.A.7] FATIGUES</p> <p>OG-107 Tropical Combat Coat VEC 2016.1.52</p>  <p>Former U.S. Army Captain Steven Delp (left) (4th Engineers) with Major Robert W. Bauchspies (4th Infantry)</p>	

¹ *Don't Mean Nothing* by Susan O'Neill

A typical service member in Vietnam wore a uniform consisting of the standard-issue **OG-107 Tropical Combat Coat**, trousers, and **boots** along with the **M-1 helmet**.

OG stands for **O**live **G**reen, an Army color beneficial for jungle camouflage. **107** is the specific uniform of the 1960s and 1970s made of a cotton fabric good for use in the tropical climate of Southeast Asia.

The M-1 Combat Helmet is the most successful combat helmet of all time, and was used from the 1940s through the mid-1980s. Service members carried useful things like insect repellent in the band. Some also decorated their helmets with “graffiti” or with other personal tokens like this “**Death Card**,” seen as a pro-war statement and form of psychological warfare when left near the enemy because of the fear it may have incited.

Soldiers carried survival necessities like **M-16 magazines**, **grenades**, and a **KA-BAR knife** with load-carrying equipment such as this **M-1967 Modernized Load-Carrying Equipment (MLCE)**.

Since the MLCE consisted of interchangeable items, **it was common to see men in the same unit with mixtures of the equipment**, much like the informality of a personalized helmet.

This **lighter**, like those many carried and had engraved in-country, belonged to John Carlin Hollender (right), who served in the Army from 1967 – 1968.

M1 Combat Helmet

M-1967 Modernized Load-Carrying Equipment (MLCE)



M-1 helmet



M-16 magazines



KA-BAR knife



Death Card

[3.A.8] **Boots belonging to Jan Scruggs**

Currently in exhibition



VVMF founder Jan Scruggs wore these boots while serving with the U.S. Army 199th Light Infantry Brigade from 1969 - 1970.



[3.A.9] **Green Beret**

VEC 2017.1.2

Jackie Waymire was part of a group of U.S. Army soldiers known as **Special Forces**, often called the “Green Berets” because of their headgear (above). These soldiers were uniquely trained for secret missions distinct from those of most ground troops.



JACKIE L WAYMIRE 14E, 3

Green Beret courtesy of Paul and Ann Waymire

[3.A.11] **C-rations**

Currently in exhibition

IN-COUNTRY MEALS

For most meals, soldiers ate canned food known as an **MCI**: **M**eal, **C**ombat, **I**ndividual. The MCI consisted of three components: an “**M**”-unit **m**eat-based entree, a “**B**”-unit **b**read



item, and a “D”-unit dessert item.

[3.A.12] **Thanksgiving Day Program**

VEC 2017.2.1D

Courtesy of Edward Donato

On Thanksgiving Day 1968, service personnel at Tan Son Nhut Air Base ate a dinner of traditional American food, including turkey, gravy, and dessert.



[3.A.10] **SERVICE MEMBER CONDUCT**

Each soldier was issued documents dictating their conduct as members of the U.S. military.

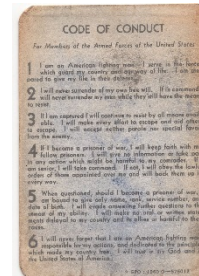
The **Code of Conduct** lists 6 rules in the event of capture by the enemy.

The **Nine Rules** encouraged American troops to be mindful of their role as guests in Vietnam and behave appropriately.

Code of Conduct

VEC 2017.2.1E

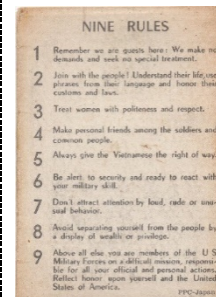
Courtesy of Edward Donato



Nine Rules MACV Pocket Card

VEC 2017.2.3

Courtesy of Edward Donato



ALLIES

Safe Conduct Pass

VEC 2017.2.2

Courtesy of Edward Donato



The **7 Flag Safe Conduct Pass** encouraged enemy Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces to defect to the allied side by offering immunity from potential harm.

The pass depicts the flag of the Republic of Vietnam and the United States alongside the flags of **allies: South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines.**

Each of these countries committed troops to the war efforts as part of President Lyndon Johnson's Free World Military Forces initiative.



South Korean troops in Vietnam. Over 300,000 South Korean troops served in the war, and 5,099 died.²

http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/ebook/p/2005/CMH_2/www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/vietnam/allied/ch06.htm



Australian troops in Vietnam, 1971. Over 60,000 Australian troops served in the war, and 521 died.³

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/CUN/71/0538/VN/>

© Australian War Memorial
CUN/71/0538/VN

² <http://militaryhistorynow.com/2013/10/02/the-international-vietnam-war-the-other-world-powers-that-fought-in-south-east-asia/>

³ <http://militaryhistorynow.com/2013/10/02/the-international-vietnam-war-the-other-world-powers-that-fought-in-south-east-asia/>

[3.A.17] **Red Cross Flag**
VEC 2016.1.41

MEDICAL ADVANCES

The Red Cross is a universal symbol of first aid in many countries. This **flag** most likely hung in a place providing medical care, such as a field hospital.

Because of major medical advances in Vietnam, service members received faster and better care than in previous wars. With **medevacs (right)**, **long-range radio communication**, and the **Emergency Medical System (EMS)** average time between injury and treatment went from an average of 4 - 6 hours in Korea to 35 minutes in Vietnam. **These innovations are standard practice in civilian medical care today.**



Echo Company 2/7 Vietnam Veterans Chapter



[3.A.14] **Sony recorder**
VEC 2016.1.37

MEDIA

This **Sony recorder** from National Public Radio (NPR) may have been used by a journalist in Vietnam.



Because restrictions surrounding the flow of information during the Vietnam War were relatively lax in comparison with, for example, World War II, journalists gained unprecedented access to war zones and service members. They provided Americans with in-depth images and stories that revealed the reality of everyday life for a soldier and the brutality of war.



Department of Defense

Walter Cronkite reporting from Vietnam, 1968.

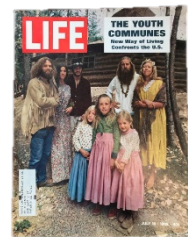
[3.A.15] **LIFE Magazine, July 18, 1969**

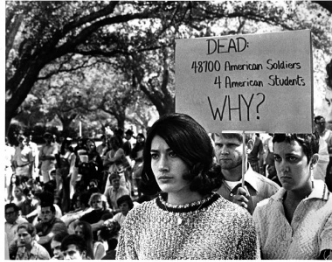
ON THE HOMEFRONT

This issue of **LIFE Magazine** features a story on a youth commune in 1969, just one way life was evolving for some Americans in a time of enormous societal change.

Vietnam has been called America's first "television War" because news media - in television, photographic, and editorial form - played a prominent role in depicting the growing and unparalleled anti-war sentiment and social movements in the U.S. during the 1960s.

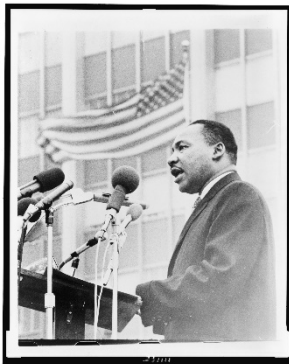
Student protests against the war were common throughout the nation. And in 1967, Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke out against the war in a speech titled "Beyond Vietnam."





Office of Public Relations Records, Jack Fiser Photographs, RG #A0020.1, Louisiana State University Archives, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.

Luana Perea at a Louisiana State University peaceful protest, 1970. A sign refers to the killing of 4 students at **Kent State University** earlier that year and the number of dead in Vietnam, asking "WHY?"



Library of Congress. Photo by Don Rice/World Journal Tribune
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/94505369/>

Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking at an anti-war rally in New York City, 1967.