

# A Veteran's Perspective



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**Grade Levels:** 8-12

**Purpose:** To enhance student knowledge and understanding of contemporary American history, especially our nation's involvement in foreign wars and the impact the war had on a soldier, by listening to and/or reading a veteran's personal interview.

**Objectives:** Upon completing the activities presented in this Resource Guide, students will:

- Use an oral history interview, a Primary Source, to gather information, and interpret it in conjunction with secondary or other primary source accounts of the events,
- Enhance their knowledge and understanding of the United State's involvement in recent wars,
- Expand and enhance research skills as he/she conducts background research to better understand a veteran's personal story,
- Broaden and refine writing skills and/or oral presentation skills,
- Demonstrate an appreciation for the service and sacrifices of America's veterans.

**Materials:**

Internet access, headphones, audio equipment for listening to interview clips, and reference materials for further research.

The Veteran's Remember site can be found at: <http://www2.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/VeteransRemember/Pages/default.aspx>

## Illinois State Learning Standards:

### Middle/Junior High School:

- **SS.16.A.3c:** Identify the differences between historical fact and interpretation.
- **ELA.5.B.3b:** Identify, evaluate and cite primary sources.
- **ELA.5.C.3a:** Plan, compose, edit and revise documents that synthesize new meaning gleaned from multiple sources.

### Early High School:

- **SS.16.A.4a:** Analyze and report historical events to determine cause-and-effect relationships.
- **ELA.5.B.4b:** Use multiple sources and multiple formats; cite according to standard style manuals.
- **ELA.5.C.4a:** Plan, compose, edit and revise information (e.g., brochures, formal reports, proposals, research summaries, analyses, editorials, articles, overheads, multimedia displays) for presentation to an audience

### Late High School:

- **SS.16.A.5a:** Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).
- **ELA.5.B.5a:** Evaluate the usefulness of information, synthesize information to support a thesis, and present information in a logical manner in oral and written forms.
- **ELA.5.C.5a:** Using contemporary technology, create a research presentation or prepare a documentary related to academic, technical or occupational topics and present the findings in oral or



### Middle School:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6:** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7:** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

### Early High School:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9:** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

### Late High School:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9:** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

## Background Information:

Listed on the following pages are veteran interviews from the presidential library's Oral History collection. All interviews have the entire audio posted, and most have transcripts posted as well. Students will also find photographs and other images for many of these interviews that will further enrich the interview content by making the story they are hearing more personal. Most of the interviews also discuss the veteran's life prior to his military service in considerable detail.

Interviews cover common themes, including a veteran's path to the military (whether drafted, enlisted or commissioned), the initial training, shipment overseas and combat experiences. Many WW II and Korean War veterans also have vivid memories of the Great Depression. Most interviewees talk about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and about the end of the war in Japan with the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many Vietnam era veterans talk about the protest movement back home and their views toward the same.

Not all of our interviews are with American veterans. We've interviewed spouses, children, and war brides, as well as an OSS cryptographer, a Polish soldier captured by the Soviets, and a young Korean girl who grew up in that war-torn country. Our Vietnam collection features a U.S. State Department official who served in both Laos and South Vietnam during the war. Several interviews focus on the experiences of POWs. Finally, we've included some Cold War interviews so students can also learn about that protracted struggle with the Soviet Union.

### **Activity Procedure:**

Students should be assigned one of the interviews listed below, either individually or as a group, learning about a particular veteran's personal experiences while placing that experience into the larger context of that war.

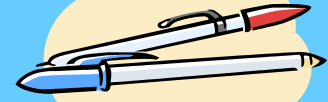
In order to more fully understand a veteran's perspective of war, students should first conduct background research in order to determine the origins of the war, what led to the United States' decision to go to war, the general public's view of that war, the war's basic chronology and geography, and the outcome of the war. By using the oral history interview, which is a primary source document, students will be able to gain important insights into the wars of the 20th century.

Students should either write a paper or give a short presentation on their interview, using the "A Veteran's Perspective Research Guide," and consider incorporating the following:

- photos, maps, graphics
- emotions expressed by interviewee
- stories/events (positive and/or negative)
- interviewee's opinions and viewpoints on the war
- overall sentiment of the interviewee's wartime service
- information about the war from other sources (e.g. textbook, classroom materials, other primary or secondary sources)
- how the interview affected the student's views of that war.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Did the veteran's early life and pre-war experiences influence their wartime experiences?
2. What was your veteran's view toward the war in which he/she served? What opinions did he/she express?
3. Did the veteran's wartime experience change his/her outlook on life?
4. How well was the veteran able to recall his wartime experiences? Why are some able to recall events better than others? Was the veteran as willing to discuss painful events as he was everyday events and humorous stories?
5. Was your veteran proud of his/her wartime service? Why or why not? What did he say to convince you of his feelings?



### **Tips and Suggestions:**

- \* If a student is assigned an interview with a transcript, suggest they do a word search to find key words and events, and listen to just those sections of the interview. This will save the student a lot of time in preparing for their project.
- \* Encourage the students to play short excerpts of the interview as part of their presentation.
- \* Create a focus or guiding question. Make this project work for a specific part of your curriculum by creating a focus for the students' work. Explore a certain theme or topic to narrow the scope of the project. Ex: "How did the soldier's perspective on the war compare to secondary source overviews of the events?"
- \* Encourage students to use the interviewees' photos and images as another way to understand a veteran's perspective.

### **Additional Resources:**

- Prezi Presentation Software: <http://prezi.com/index/2/>
- World War Two Background: <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii>
- Cold War Background: <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war>
- Korean War Background: <http://www.history.com/topics/korean-war>
- Vietnam War Background: <http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war>

## WWII Interviews

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Transcript</b>
<a href="#">Kenneth 'Tuck' Belton</a>	A downed B-17 pilot whose aircraft was shot down over Holland. He survived and spent the next several months hiding out with the Dutch underground, a participating in missions with them.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Arthur Betts</a>	African-American soldier, one of 2,221 who served in white infantry units during and after Battle of the Bulge.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Timuel Black</a>	African-American soldier in a Quartermaster unit who served in Europe and remembers seeing Buchenwald first hand.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">William Cantrall</a>	He served in the American Field Service (volunteer ambulance corps) working with the British 8th Army in Italy.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Ralph Contreras</a>	Mexican-American who grew up in Dixon, Illinois and served on Guam and Okinawa with the 6th Marine Division.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Marvin Farmer</a>	Illinois farm boy who became an infantryman and fought across northern Europe and saw heavy combat at battle of Aachen.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Evelyn Fields</a>	She remembers the dust bowl in Nebraska, and was married to a sailor. She worked in the wartime Office of Price Administration.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Paul Findley</a>	A future U.S. Congressman, he served in the Navy as a Supply Officer in the South Pacific (Guam) during the war.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Ann Hayden</a>	A riveter in a Boeing aircraft plant in Seattle during the war, she received letters from several lonely hearts after her photo appeared in the Seattle newspaper.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">William 'Bill' Ingram</a>	A member of the U.S. Navy, Ingram served on the USS Houston until it was sunk in 1942. He spent the remainder of the war as a Japanese prisoner of war, working on the Burma Railway.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Gene Jaeger</a>	A naval officer who served on a landing ship-tank (LST) and saw combat at Sicily, Salerno and the Normandy landings.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Kazimir Ladney</a>	Serving with the Polish Army, he was captured by the Soviets in 1939, exchanged with the German Army in 1940, and spent the rest of the war as a slave laborer for the Germans.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Richard Lockhart</a>	An infantryman with the 106th Infantry Division who was captured during the Battle of the Bulge.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">DeLoyce McMurray</a>	An African-American who served with the Marines in the South Pacific. In 2013 he received the Congressional Gold Medal from Senator Dick Durbin.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Sam Million</a>	Sam did not see combat during WW II, but was stationed at Sugamo Prison after the war, guarding Japanese war criminals.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Warren Musch</a>	A Marine intelligence officer with landed with the Marines on Iwo Jima, where he saw the flag raised over Mount Suribachi, and helped plan the invasion of Japan until the bomb was dropped.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Don Palmer</a>	Assigned to a Navy Beach Battalion, Palmer helped prep beaches in advance of major landings at Sicily, Salerno & southern France.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Webster Phillips</a>	An infantryman with reconnaissance unit in the 30th Infantry Division, he saw action across France & at the Battle of the Bulge.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Charles Sehe</a>	Joined the U.S. Navy in late 1940, he was assigned to the USS Nevada, one of eight battleships at Pearl Harbor on December 7th. The Nevada suffered heavy damage that day, but survived the attack. Sehe spent the rest of WW II on the USS Nevada.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Robert 'Bob' Serra</a>	An aircraft mechanic on the USS Yorktown who saw combat at Coral Sea, and at Midway, where the Yorktown was sunk.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Jim Smith</a>	A B-17 pilot flying missions with the 379th Bomb Group over northern Europe during WW II. He survived 25 combat missions over Germany and France.	<b>Yes</b>

## WWII Interviews Continued

Interviewee	Description	Transcript
<a href="#">Vincent Speranza</a>	Vince served with the 501st Parachute Regiment in the 101st Infantry Division, joining the unit shortly before the Battle of the Bulge. He saw action there but was wounded shortly after that. He recuperated in England and soon rejoined the unit in Germany	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Kelly Ann Sproul</a>	In the 2000s, Ms. Sproul, from England, attended veteran events as a reenactor, portraying a WW II era torch singer as she serenaded the veterans with the familiar ballads from WW II	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Edward Stapleton</a>	He served as an infantryman with the famous & bloodied 36th Infantry Division as it fought its way up Italy into southern France	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Harold Steele</a>	An infantry platoon leader with the 89th Infantry Division who saw combat in northern France. His platoon was among the first to discover the Ohrdruf Concentration Camp, part of Buchenwald.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Margery Steele</a>	The future wife of Harold Steele, Margery served with the Office of Strategic Services in Egypt and Greece as a cryptographer. She met Harold after the war while both were stationed in Vienna.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Fred Stockmeier</a>	An infantryman with the 100th Infantry Division. He was captured in southern France, and spent the remainder of the war as a POW, being shuttled from camp to camp.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Ernest Thorp</a>	A B-17 co-pilot with the 452nd Bomb Group who on his 18th mission was shot down over the North Sea. Pulled from the water by a German fisherman, he spent the rest of the war as a POW.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Iver Yeager</a>	He grew up on a small ranch in South Dakota before the war, and earned his commission and a college degree before serving on a destroyer in the western Pacific fighting kamikazes and typhoons	<b>No</b>

## Korean War Interviews

Interviewee	Description	Transcript
<a href="#">A. Robert Abboud</a>	Son of Lebanese immigrants, Abboud served as an infantry platoon leader with the 1st Marine Div. during the closing months of the Korean War when the Chinese launched heavy attacks	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Walter Ade</a>	Son of a German Army Officer during WW II, Walter emigrated to the U.S., and just a few years later served with the American Army during combat operations at the Punchbowl in South Korea.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Bob Bastas</a>	He served as a personnel clerk with the U.S. Air Force in 1952-1953 in Korea, and while there, collected U.S. propaganda leaflets to be dropped on Chinese troops. See also B. Goulet's interview	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">John Beechler</a>	An artillery officer and forward observer who served with the 3rd Infantry Division in 1953 at Outpost Harry. Beechler earned a Silver Star for his courageous resistance against a Chinese attack.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Norbert Bentele</a>	A Missouri farm boy who served in South Korea late in the war as a signalman. He vividly recalls R & R in Japan, and his post-war experiences in Missouri and Colorado as well	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Robert Berry</a>	A paratrooper with the 187th Airborne Regiment in Korea, he began his time there helping put down a prison deadly rebellion by North Korean prisoners on Koje Do Island in 1952.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Gene Bleuer</a>	An Illinois National Guardsman before the war, he became an infantry platoon leader, and was captured by the Chinese late in 1952. He spent the rest of the war as a POW until exchanged.	<b>Yes</b>

## Korean War Continued

Interviewee	Description	Transcript
<a href="#">Maija Devine</a>	The adopted daughter of a Korean couple living in Seoul at the beginning of the war, she and her mother spent the war years in Masan, near Pusan, Korea. She discusses her memories of American soldiers.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Allan Dulles</a>	Dulles was the son of Pres. Eisenhower's Director of the CIA. While serving with the 1st Marine Division, he took a piece of shrapnel in his head, and suffered permanent brain damage as a result. See also A. Robert Abboud's and Joan Talley's interview.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Robert Evans</a>	In 1948 he was attending law school, and decided to enlist in the Army rather than be drafted. Commissioned as an infantry lieutenant, he saw action in the Pusan Perimeter in August, 1950. Over the next several months he was in the thick of some of the most brutal combat ever experienced by the U.S. Army.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Dan Foulke</a>	An army engineer, he was a construction foreman in his last of three years in Korea. He supervised construction of POW and training camps, bridges & the exchange compound at Panmunjom.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Bernie Goulet</a>	An infantryman with 7th Infantry Division during the first year of the Korean War, he survived the combat at the Chosin Reservoir, and saw extensive combat during the Chinese Spring Offensive	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Carl Greenwood</a>	A machine gunner with 1st Marine Division at the Chosin Reservoir, he survived the bitter battle and went on to see extensive combat in South Korea during the war.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Harold Holesinger</a>	An F-84 Thunderjet pilot (Fighter/Bomber) flying over Korea in 1952-1953. He flew approximately 57 combat missions, mostly close air support missions along the Main Line of Resistance	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Robert Kirby</a>	A military policeman who served in Korea from 1952 to 1953, most of that time guarding notoriously recalcitrant North Korean POWs on Koje-do Island. See the notebook seized from POW.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Keith Larson</a>	A sailor assigned to duty on a Landing Ship-Tank (LST) during the Korean War, his ship helped with evacuation of US forces in N. Korea in Dec 1950, plus numerous operations following that.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Gary Leib</a>	Service on the flight deck of the USS Boxer, a fleet aircraft carrier during the Korean War. He was credited with saving several lives after a devastating explosion and fire on the hanger deck.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Donald Meier</a>	An Illinois Guardsman called up, who worked in a hospital on a small island off the coast of North Korea. The hospital provided aid to North Korean anti-communists who raided North Korea.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Isaac Mercer</a>	An African-American infantryman who served with the 45th Infantry Division during the last year of the Korean War. He earned a Bronze Star for valor at Heartbreak Ridge in June, 1953.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Lou Myers</a>	An Illinois Army National Guardsman who served as an advisor to a ROK (South Korean) field artillery battalion, helping the Korean artillerymen with nearly every aspect of artillery fire	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Stanley Nikulski</a>	An infantryman with the 25th Infantry Division during the brutal first year of the Korean War. In Dec. 1952 the Chinese pushed his unit all the way from north of Pyongyang to south of Seoul.	<b>Yes</b>

## Korean War Continued

Interviewee	Description	Transcript
<a href="#">James F. Perry</a>	An infantry battalion S-3 (Operations Officer) during the 2nd Infantry Division's retreat from North Korea and its run through the gauntlet at Kunu-Ri, Perry earned two Silver Stars during his year in Korea.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Clarence Senor</a>	An African-American sailor who saw action off the coast of South Korea on the USS Mason, a destroyer. As one of the first blacks to serve on the Mason, Senor gives his perspective on race relations.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Ed Smith</a>	An infantryman assigned to the 38th Infantry Regiment in Korea in 1952-1953. Smith was with the 38th when it helped put down a POW uprising at Kojé-Do, and was wounded during hand-to-hand fighting with a Chinese soldier at Old Baldy.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">William Smith</a>	Smith, a mortarman, was captured by the Chinese in November, 1950 and spent the next two and a half years in a North Korean prison camp. Deemed a trouble-maker by the Chinese, he was labeled a 'reactionary.' Smith was finally released in April, 1953.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">William &amp; Charlotte Smith</a>	The couple discuss how they met, and Charlotte discusses the many issues they faced due to Bill's brutal imprisonment by the Chinese, especially many health related issues due to his captivity.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Joan Talley</a>	Sister of Allen Dulles, who as a Marine lieutenant was injured in Korea during the war, talks about the permanent impact that injury had on his life, primarily due to his loss of short-term memory.	<b>Yes</b>

## Vietnam War

Interviewee	Description	Transcript
<a href="#">Jearl 'Buck' Balow</a>	A CID (Criminal Investigation Division) warrant officer during the Vietnam War who was stationed in Okinawa. His main duty was to interdict illicit drugs flowing to and from South Vietnam	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Ron Botz</a>	A warrant officer and Huey pilot with the 4th Infantry Division in Vietnam from 1968-1969. Following the war, he became an officer & eventually retired as a General with the National Guard.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Thomas Jones</a>	A navy corpsman (medic) who was assigned to a Marine Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol in Vietnam in 1967-1968. His small unit conducted patrols deep behind enemy lines. Jones discusses in detail the difficulties veterans experience adjusting to civilian life.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Paul Lambert</a>	A Marine stationed in South Vietnam in 1969-1970. He was assigned to the Combined Action Program (CAP), which placed small teams into villages throughout South Vietnam.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Eddy Nicklaus</a>	Enlisting into the Marines in 1963 with his twin brother, the two were serving together when their unit shipped to Vietnam in 1965. The unit was stationed near Da Nang & extensive of combat.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">James F. Perry, Jr.</a>	An army brat before the war who became an artillery officer assigned to a searchlight battery in South Vietnam. He also talks extensively about his difficulties adjusting to civilian life, and about the protest movement.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Bill Phillips</a>	An army medic serving with the 4th Infantry Division in Vietnam in 1969-1970. He served with an armored unit, then an infantry unit that went into Cambodia. He finished his tour in Hawaii.	<b>No</b>

## Vietnam War Continued

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Transcript</b>
<a href="#">Peter 'Pete' Rafferty</a>	Son of a coal miner who became a Marine in 1963. He served as a radio operator with the 1st Marine Division until his tour was cut a couple of months short due to a severe case of malaria.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">John S. Raschke</a>	Commissioned as an engineer in 1966, he served with the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam (MAC-V) patrolling with South Vietnamese units in the Mekong Delta region in 1969-1970.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Bill Spriggs</a>	Drafted into the army in 1965, his unit, the 4th Infantry Division, was sent to the Central Highlands region of South Vietnam in 1966. He saw extensive combat during his year in Vietnam.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Robert Tyler</a>	A Marine pilot flying a CH-46 helicopter for the 1st Marine Division in South Vietnam in 1970-1971. He flew everything from Medevac, resupply, troop delivery and VIP missions.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Roy Wehrle</a>	He joined the U.S. State Department in the late 1950s after earning a Ph.D. in economics, then was posted to Laos, and later to South Vietnam during the mid 1960s. He worked closely with several U.S. ambassadors and with Wm Westmoreland while in Vietnam.	<b>Yes</b>

## Cold War

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Transcript</b>
<a href="#">Richard Bowen</a>	A engineer assigned who was trained at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri who was then assigned to an Engineer battalion in Germany. He made trips throughout Europe, including Berlin.	<b>Yes</b>
<a href="#">Matthew Holden</a>	An African-American who grew up on a small cotton farm in Mississippi, he was in graduate school at Northwestern University until drafted in 1956. He spent a year in post-war Korea.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Paul Tarr</a>	A college athlete in Pennsylvania, Tarr was drafted in 1954 and spent his tour assigned to a Field Artillery unit in Germany while playing baseball throughout Europe for the unit's team.	<b>No</b>
<a href="#">Ron Thunman</a>	A Naval Academy graduate and career submariner, he joined that branch in the early days of the nuclear navy. He commanded nuclear subs, was a close protégé of Admiral Hyman Rickover, and retired as a three star admiral.	<b>No</b>



Name:

Date:

Period:

### A Veteran's Perspective Research Guide

Directions: Use this research guide to organize the information you gather while you listen to the interview and conduct background research.

Question: What is the background of the war? How did it start? How many years did it last? Who was fighting, and on what side? What were the most important events in the timeline?

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Source Citation(s):

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Question: Who was/is the veteran you were assigned? Tell us a little about your veteran's background before the war.

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Source Citation(s):

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Question: What was your veteran's role in the war? Where was your veteran stationed? How did your veteran enter the war?

Answer:

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Source Citation(s):

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Question: What events in the war stand out most to you and/or the veteran whose interview you have listened to?

Source Citation(s):

Question: What was your veteran's view of the war? How do they reflect upon it after the fact?

Source Citation(s):

Question: How did listening to the interview change your perspective on the war? Why?

Source Citation(s):