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movements, search and destroy missions that often covered the same ground over and over so you couldn't measure whether you were winning or losing. In Vietnam the way we measured that was by the body counts," he says, shaking his head in disgust.

"In Vietnam there weren't the types of things that created stories for people back home to latch onto."

When veterans returned home after a tour of duty in Vietnam, they came home at different times and never in one large group, according to Kamp. "As far as most veterans were concerned, their war was over when they came home."

Vietnam was also America's longest war, with plenty of time to pick up strong opposition.

"These criminals who decimated Vietnam belong in spirit to Hitler's Germany where people were afraid to speak out, and believed in country over humanity, truth, and justice," wrote R.M. Parts in a letter that appeared in the Oregon Daily Emerald and The Register-Guard last month. "Barbarous Vets of Vietnam are out of place among free people, because in a free society it is the responsibility of citizens to stand against government when it is wrong."

The letter also contained strong language condemning the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at a time when a replica of 'the Wall' was on display in Eugene.

Others were just as vehemently opposed to the war in Vietnam. There existed during the Vietnam conflict, an anti-war movement unprecedented in American history. During World War I and World War II there was some opposition to America getting involved in those wars, but nothing to match the inestimable thousands of people who took an active part in the anti-war movement of the late-60s and early-70s.

They criticized America for getting involved in what they called an unjust, dirty little war. Some blamed big business or big government, or both. Many, like Parts, blamed the veterans themselves.

By 1970, men returning from Vietnam were being met by jeering crowds. They were called baby-killers and fascists, among other things, and they were sometimes spit on as they walked through airports or on city streets in their uniforms. It was hardly the kind of welcome American servicemen of previous wars had received.

"When we finally stopped, there was something like a sigh of relief rather than parades and cheering," Kamp says. "There were a lot of people who supported the war, but there was nothing left for them to hang onto. They just wanted to see the war end."

"There never could have been a victory parade after Vietnam."

America, admittedly, had lost the war in Vietnam.

Most people will never forget the pictures of a surrounded American Embassy in Saigon, with armed U.S. Marines pointing their weapons at the crowd. These were not the enemy. These were the people who America had originally come to save from their communist neighbors to the north.

There were pictures of desperate Vietnamese who had worked for the U.S.-backed government in South Vietnam or for the U.S. government itself, pleading for a way out of a country being quickly overrun by the North Vietnamese Army. There was a particularly telling photograph of an American official in a white shirt shoving his fist into the face of a Vietnamese man as the man attempts to board the plane the American is leaving on.

There were pictures of mobs chasing taxiing planes on foot, on mopeds, in jeeps. Pictures of a man's legs dangling from the undercarriage of a jet he tried to stow away on, only to meet his death when he was crushed by the landing gear.

All of these images. That was another difference between Vietnam and other wars — televised broadcasts with a nightly diet of what was happening over there and the growing discontent that was boiling on the homefront. Critics often blame the media for helping to lose the war.

"If the media had that kind of effect, then, for example, politicians could buy their way into office by using the media, which they can't," says University associate professor of journalism, Lauren Kessler. "The media simply do not have that massive affect across a society and, second, I think history will show that it was not a war the French could win — it was not a war anybody could win."

Kessler is the author of the book, *The Dissident Press*, which deals with the press operating outside of mainstream journalism. She reports that there has always been dissenting voices, especially during time of war. In her book, she describes the process by which dissident ideas are sometimes, if ever, popularized in a society.

"The mainstream press, including network television and the daily newspapers, except for a very few and except for relatively late in the Vietnam War, was in no way a dissident press," she says. According to her, press coverage in Vietnam was similar to previous American conflicts, with the exception of television — "The cliché is that Vietnam was the television war, that it brought the war into millions of people's homes every day on the six o'clock news."

She describes the relationship of the press and the military, at least for the majority of the war, as being a situation where the journalists depended on the military as a source for critical information. "You are still beholden to your country for keeping you alive, so there's certain things you simply don't do as a journalist, and one of them, in general, is you don't bite the hand that feeds you," she says.

However, there are those who would say that, indeed, the media had bit the hand that fed them. Charles B. MacDonald is the former deputy chief historian for Southeast Asia at the U.S. Army Center for Military History. He believes the news media did have a negative impact on the outcome of the war.

In an article printed in the book, *The Vietnam War — The illustrated history of the conflict in Southeast Asia*, MacDonald cites a number of occasions throughout the course of the war when, he says, the media was undermining operations in Southeast Asia. He specifically mentions the creation by the media of a "Dien Bien Phu syndrome" during the siege of Khe Sanh in early 1968, and he charges that "the news media's negative handling of the Tet offensive caused the President to yield to increased pressure from anti-war critics" to proclaim another bombing halt, and yield to North Vietnamese demands.

"Bias in the media was primarily effective on the Congress and on middle-level, civilian bureaucrats and presidential advisers in Washington," MacDonald wrote. "Congressional 'hawks' fell silent, while 'doves' coo-ed ever more loudly. Many civilian officials reacted like the presidential special assistant who noted that whenever he read the official cables from Saigon, he found them 'almost hallucinatory' in view of what he had seen on television the night before."

Kessler believes that a lot of people found it hard to admit America had lost the war in Vietnam, and that they were looking for a scapegoat to blame. "There's people on the right who have accused the press of being on the left; and there are people on the left accusing them of being on the right," she observes. "I'm not saying the media are blameless, but they're always out there, exposed, and an easy target."

The war is over. No longer are there American troops in Vietnam, but Vietnam still haunts the men and women who were there. Some are more touched by what went on over there than others, but none of them will be able to forget Vietnam.

The Vet Center in Eugene, and other counseling facilities across the country like it, have been created to help