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Example History - Social Science Research Paper Abstract

Topic: Julie Pham (2001) "Their War: The Perspective of the South Vietnamese Military in Their Own Words"

Despite the vast research by Americans on the Vietnam War, little is known about the perspective of South Vietnamese military, officially called the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF). The overall image that emerges from the literature is negative: lazy, corrupt, unpatriotic, apathetic soldiers with poor fighting spirits. This study recovers some of the South Vietnamese military perspective for an American audience through qualitative interviews with 40 RVNAF veterans now living in San José, Sacramento, and Seattle, home to three of the top five largest Vietnamese American communities in the nation. An analysis of these interviews yields the veterans' own explanations that complicate and sometimes even challenge three widely held assumptions about the South Vietnamese military: 1) the RVNAF was rife with corruption at the top ranks, hurting the morale of the lower ranks; 2) racial relations between the South Vietnamese military and the Americans were tense and hostile; and 3) the RVNAF was apathetic in defending South Vietnam from communism. The stories add nuance to our understanding of who the South Vietnamese were in the Vietnam War. This study is part of a growing body of research on non-American perspectives of the war. In using a largely untapped source of Vietnamese history; oral histories with Vietnamese immigrants; this project will contribute to future research on similar topics.

Reference:

Abstract from <https://research.berkeley.edu/ucday/abstract.html>