



BROOKLYN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Brooklyn Historical Society

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For Immediate Release

April 28, 2008

Vietnam: Lessons Learned and Forgotten Marilyn B. Young Hosts Panel at BHS

WHAT:

Vietnam: Lessons Learned and Forgotten – Panel discussion presented in conjunction with the BHS oral history exhibit: *In Our Own Words: Portraits of Brooklyn's Vietnam Veterans*

This panel discussion will be hosted by historian **Marilyn B. Young**, author of *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*. Ms. Young will be joined by **Jan Barry** journalist and author of *A Citizen's Guide to Grassroots Campaigns*; **Joseph Giannini**, lawyer, writer, and Vietnam veteran whose story is featured in BHS's exhibit *In Our Own Words: Portraits of Brooklyn's Vietnam Veterans*, as well as members of the groups **Iraq Veterans Against the War**, and **Vietnam Veterans Against the War**.

Vietnam was America's longest war, but it is possible that the war in Iraq will challenge that record. What are the similarities and differences between the two conflicts? What lessons did the U.S. government learn from Vietnam? What lessons have the people of the U.S. learned about our government? Can history really teach?

WHEN:

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

6:30 – 9pm

Free and Open to the Public

WHERE:

Brooklyn Historical Society

128 Pierrepont St.

Brooklyn, NY 11201

718-222-4111 www.brooklynhistory.org

WHO:

Panelists

Marilyn B. Young has taught history at New York University since 1980. Her teaching and writing revolve around the history of U.S. foreign policy and, in particular, the wars the U.S. has fought since. Her writings include the *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*, several essays on the Korean War and, most recently, a co-edited (with Lloyd Gardner) collection of essays, *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam: Or, How Not to Learn From the Past*.

Jan Barry is a journalist, author of *A Citizen's Guide to Grassroots Campaigns* (Rutgers University Press), and a coeditor of *Winning Hearts & Minds: War Poems by Vietnam Veterans* (1st Casualty Press/McGraw-Hill). A graduate of Ramapo College of New Jersey, he was a journalist in residence at Rutgers University and, this semester, taught investigative journalism at New York University. In 1967, he was a cofounder of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, after a war tour in the Army and a stint at West Point, where he resigned from a military career.

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Joseph Giannini

Joseph Giannini was born in Brooklyn in 1943. Hofstra University, on Long Island, awarded him a wrestling scholarship, and he received his draft notice one semester before graduating. The Draft Board permitted him to finish college, and in 1966, he enlisted in the Marines. After completing basic training at Paris Island, South Carolina, Giannini volunteered for Vietnam. He commanded a rifle platoon that was part of the Special Landing Force. In August 1967, his platoon was among several defending the Khe Sahn Valley against a Vietcong onslaught. The Vietcong suffered heavily, but so did the Marines, and Giannini lost half his platoon. In December 1967, Giannini was again involved in heavy combat guarding a hill fort at Jo Lin. Giannini is married and has two children. He has been practicing criminal law for more than 30 years. He hosts a television show, *East End Veterans*, [<http://www.eastendveterans.com>] and remains politically active.

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) [<http://www.ivaw.org>] was founded by Iraq war veterans in July 2004 at the annual convention of Veterans for Peace (VFP) in Boston to give a voice to the large number of active duty service people and veterans who are against this war, but are under various pressures to remain silent. Their membership includes recent veterans and active duty servicemen and women from all branches of military service, National Guard members, and reservists who have served in the United States military since September 11, 2001.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. (VVAW) [<http://www.vvaw.org>] is a national veterans' organization that was founded in New York City in 1967 after six Vietnam vets marched together in a peace demonstration. It was organized to voice the growing opposition among returning servicemen and women to the still-raging war in Indochina, and grew rapidly to a membership of over 30,000 throughout the United States as well as active duty GIs stationed in Vietnam. VVAW quickly took up the struggle for the rights and needs of veterans. In 1970, they started groups to deal with traumatic after-effects of war, setting the example for readjustment counseling at Vet Centers now. They exposed the shameful neglect of many disabled vets in VA Hospitals and helped draft legislation to improve educational benefits and create job programs. VVAW fought for amnesty for war resisters, including vets with bad discharges. They helped make known the negative health effects of exposure to chemical defoliants and the VA's attempts to cover-up these conditions as well as their continued refusal to provide treatment and compensation for many Agent Orange Victims.

In Our Own Words is made possible by the Nathan Cummings Foundation, Astoria Federal Savings, HBO and is in partnership with Brooklyn College. Vietnam: Lessons Learned and Forgotten is supported by Independence Community Foundation and the Booth Ferris Foundation.

The mission of the Brooklyn Historical Society is to connect the past to the present and make the vibrant history of Brooklyn tangible, relevant, and meaningful for today's diverse communities, and for generations to come. Founded in 1863, BHS functions as a library, museum and urban education center dedicated to the people of Brooklyn, providing opportunities for civic dialogue and thoughtful engagement.

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