

Mexican Americans in Vietnam

Luz Garcia

When writing about the Mexican American contribution during the Vietnam war, I realized that all Mexican Americans struggled with ideas surrounding American identity. Many of them were trying to become citizens and wanted to prove that they were citizens of the United States. The only way to prove it during this time was fighting in the war, and so many did during the Vietnam era. They tried to show that they were American, but when they participated in the war they realized that they were not expecting to see many of their friends or families being involved and even being killed in action. Many Mexican Americans realized too late that this war was not meant for them to fight, and were often manipulated to fight in the war, in which politics played an important role. The result would be a vast number of Mexican American males returning home in boxes. Those that did return alive would come back changed and with flashbacks of the horrors of war. The conclusion of this paper looks at how Mexican American males knew who they were and contested the idea of fitting into a society that wanted them to assimilate, displaying a vicious cycle of contributing to American patriotism while respecting their traditional histories and cultures as Mexican Americans.