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OPEN LATE Aggie Bucks

Echoes of Vietnam

Campaign raises new issues 35 years later

By Nancy Benac
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — They were two years apart, these two Yale boys, these sons of privilege, and so the moment of truth came first for John Kerry, later for George W. Bush. Each faced the same life-changing question as did so many others of their generation: what to do about Vietnam.

Kerry, part of the class of 1966, signed on with the Navy late in 1965, then had months to ponder his decision before actually enlisting after graduation. The war, his decision, his doubts, all hung over him as he spoke at commencement the following June.

"What was an excess of isolationism has become an excess of interventionism," he told fellow students. He had to know his life was set on a course for Vietnam.

For Bush, a member of the class of 1968, his last year in college seemed to signal the end of a time of innocence.

"The gravity of history was beginning to descend in a horrifying and disruptive way," he wrote in his 1999 biography. "By the time the ball dropped in Times Square to welcome 1968, the situation in Vietnam had escalated from a conflict to a raging war. Every night the newscast included a body count."

Bush debated his options over Christmas break back home in Houston, took a pilot aptitude test after he got back to school in January, and chose the National Guard. He would fly fighter jets like his father. He had to know the odds of going to Vietnam were low.

Nearly 40 years later, the choices made by these two young

Echoes of Vietnam

Thirty-five years after the end of war in Vietnam, the choices candidates made as young men eligible to serve in that era serve as part of a larger debate over patriotism, leadership and character.

| Year | President Bush | Wesley Clark | Sen. John Kerry |
|------|---|--|---|
| 1966 | Attends Yale University | Graduates West Point at top of his class | Graduates Yale; joins Navy and begins officer training |
| 1967 | Yale | Rhodes Scholar; Oxford | Assigned to frigate USS Gridley |
| 1968 | Graduates Yale; joins Texas Air National Guard; takes eight-week leave to work on Senate campaign in Florida | Graduates Oxford with masters in philosophy, economics and politics; attends Army armor and infantry schools; commands company in 82nd Airborne Division in Kansas | First trip to Southeast Asia to support aircraft carriers in Gulf of Tonkin; swift boat training in California; returns to Vietnam to coastal and inland waterway patrol; shoulder wound during freight |
| 1969 | Graduates flight school at Moody Air Force Base in Georgia | Goes to Vietnam with 1st Infantry Division | Wounded in thigh; was Silver Star for chasing and killing a sniper after landing boat in enemy position; gets third Purple Heart when mine explodes near boat; returns to New York to serve as admiral's aide |
| 1970 | Graduates Combat Crew Training School at Ellington Air Force Base in Texas | Commands a company in the 16th Infantry in Vietnam; Silver Star after being shot while leading jungle patrol; returns to Kentucky to command armored brigade | Honorable discharge six months before commitment ends to go for House seat in Massachusetts but gives up bid for Democratic nomination; joins Vietnam Veterans Against the War |
| 1971 | Drills and alerts at Ellington | Officer attached to Army chief of staff in Washington, D.C.; becomes a West Point instructor | Organizes anti-war protests in Washington, D.C.; loses his re-election in protest; loses to Congress against conflict; gets arrested at protest |
| 1972 | Takes last flight as guard pilot; transfers to Alabama unit while working on campaign; no record of him reporting, but says he participated; loses flight credentials; returns to Texas | West Point instructor | Leaves anti-war group; wins nomination for Massachusetts Fifth District in House but loses election; works as fund-raiser for CARE, Inc. |
| 1973 | Participates in non-flying drills at Ellington; works at inner-city poverty program; placed on inactive guard duty six months before commitment ends; starts Harvard Business School | West Point instructor | Starts Boston College Law School |
| 1974 | Harvard Business School | Assistant professor of social sciences at West Point; becomes student at U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan. | Boston College Law School |

SOURCE: Associated Press

men are reverberating through the presidential campaign as part of a larger debate over patriotism, leadership, duty, character. Each man is defined in part by the path he chose.

"We are all hostage to decisions we made in the past," said Douglas Brinkley, a history professor at the University of New Orleans who has written a book about Kerry's war years. "The bottom line is Kerry went and Bush didn't and it's an uncomfortable fact for a president" who has so eagerly wrapped

himself in the flag as commander in chief.

Yet Brinkley said the two-year age difference between Kerry and Bush is an important backdrop to the courses they set.

In 1965, when Kerry decided to enlist, students "still saw the world in black and white," Brinkley said, and "not serving wasn't really an option" for the son of a foreign service officer. "His big decision was which branch of the military to join," said Brinkley.

Uprising spreads in Haiti

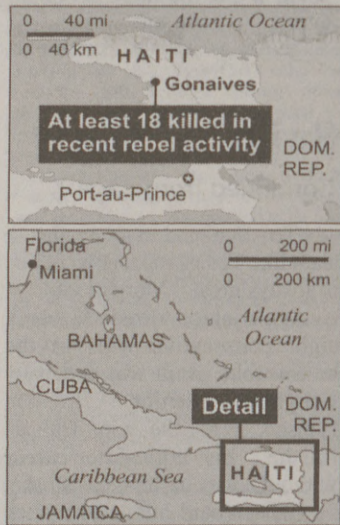
By Michael Norton
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. MARC, Haiti — Hundreds of Haitians looted TV sets, mattresses and sacks of flour from shipping containers Sunday in this port town, one of several communities seized by rebels in a bloody uprising against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Using felled trees, flaming tires and car chassis, residents blocked streets throughout St. Marc a day after militants drove out police in gunbattles that killed two people. Many residents have formed neighborhood groups to back insurgents in their push to expel the president.

"After Aristide leaves, the country will return to normal," said Axel Philippe, 34, among dozens massed on the highway leading to St. Marc, a city of about 100,000 located some 45 miles northwest of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

At least 18 people have been killed since armed opponents of Aristide began their assault Thursday, setting police stations on fire and driving officers from the northwestern city of Gonaives — Haiti's fourth-



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI AP

largest city — and several smaller nearby towns.

Anger has been brewing in Haiti since Aristide's party won flawed legislative elections in 2000. The opposition refuses to join in any new vote unless the president resigns; he insists on serving out his term, which ends in 2006.

Clashes between government opponents, police and Aristide supporters have killed at least 69 people since mid-September.

In the bloodiest fights of recent days, 150 police tried to retake control of Gonaives on Saturday but left hours later after meeting fierce resistance, witnesses said. At least nine people were killed, seven of them police, in gunbattles with rebels hiding on side streets and crouched in doorways.

Crowds mutilated and beat the corpses of three police officers. One body was dragged through the street as a man swung at it with a machete, and a woman cut off the officer's ear. Another policeman was lynched and stripped to his shorts, and residents dropped large rocks off his body.

Haitian radio stations reported claims by other rebels that many as 14 police were killed in Gonaives on Saturday, but that couldn't be confirmed.

Before dawn Sunday, arsonists burned down a two-story building in northern Cap-Haitien housing the studio of Radio Vision 2000, the independent Haitian broadcaster said.

Rebels continued to rule the streets of Gonaives on Sunday, witnesses said, though it was unclear how many armed militants were in the city of 200,000.

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