Vietnam's veterans — America's spoils?

Spoils of War
By Charles J. Levy

By Michael McNamee

Having once been a real history fan — before I came to MIT, lots of little tidbits of trivia I have leaned away in various places — it is not at all surprising that Vietnam seems to come up in this book on presidential power. Levy's book, Spolios of War, is an attempt to get at some of the effects - spoils, if you will — of a futile war on the men who fought in Vietnam. Levy, a sociologist at the University of British Columbia, studied vets returning from Vietnam. "The stories he heard were not meant to amuse; they include accounts of men running their families in flashbacks to their experience in Vietnam, men who have killed friends, officers, and other soldiers, and veterans who have cracked under the strain of trying to cope with situations where you are not on a kill-or-be-killed basis.

Vietnam, according to Levy, presents many enigmatic problems for the American soldier. He is fighting and men he cannot see, but who can usually see him; he tries desperately to take the offensive, in battle, in lieu of what the guerillas know the terrain better than he does, and thus he has the advantage of fighting when the American least expects it. American troops were caught flat-footed by the psychological warfare waged by the Vietcong, soldiers told Levy that the VC "talk to us all the time and shift loud-sounders." The VC would predict the future moves of the troops before the Americans had been informed by their officers of the moves. The American ended up feeling very exposed, while their enemy was still effectively concealed. Levy has written a very comprehensive and yet eminently readable account of the effects of a now-war on the American psyche. It's not a horror story, but it leaves strong impressions on the reader's mind, and shows how deeply the Vietnamese War has affected our country.

The Complicat Politics-Watcher

The Almanac of American Politics 1974
By Michael Barone, Grass Ujifusa and Douglas Matthews
Gannett $6.95

By Norman D. Sandler

In 1972, three former Harvard College students came up with an idea they thought would serve voters, political activists and journalists. Taking data from various congressional reference publications and their own investigative work, they compiled the first Almanac of American Politics, a directory of the legislative branch's main participants — the 535 men and women who make up the United States Senate and the House of Representatives. The authors compiled background information on all fifty states and 435 congressional districts, including census data, political registration, federal government outlays and election results. In addition, they pieced together short biographies on every member of the two congressional chambers, including educational and career backgrounds, voting record on selected issues and locations of offices in Washington and at home. From the special interest group ratings which appeared for Congressmen and senators who had been in office more than two years, an ideological index could instantly be drawn.

The result was an extremely successful first edition of the almanac published prior to the '72 elections. However, voting records of incumbents — and indeed the composition of Congress itself — change every two years, and so Messrs. Barone, Ujifusa and Matthews have now come out with an updated and even more complete version of the Almanac. The '74 edition offers more complete background sections on states and voting districts, statistics from the 1972 congressional and presidential elections, predictions for this year's up-coming congressional races, and much more, including updated group ratings and rosters of House and Senate committees. The 1972 Almanac was valuable to those interested in politics. However, with the ever-increasing interest in the actions of Congress, the 1974 Almanac of American Politics is certainly indispensable for many MIT students, who in the past have shown a sophisticated interest in American politics.

With issues such as the energy crisis and impeachment of the President facing the nation, it is ever important that all Americans be aware of who the principal actors are in Washington. "You can't tell the players without a scorecard," as the old saying goes, and the Almanac of American Politics is the most complete and most accurate "scorecard" you can buy for following American politics.

The Karl Tower Compton
Lecture Series Committee
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Speakers:
Lester Brown Overseas Development Council
Glenn Urban Management
Nevin Scrimshaw Head, Nutrition & Food Science

Wednesday, February 13
Kresge Auditorium
8:00 pm
(Please note change from Kresge Little Theater)

GIVE A DAM!

FORUM MEETING
Topic: Reorganization of the Undergraduate Association
West Lounge Student Center
Thursday, February 14, 1974 7:00 pm
All Undergraduates Welcome