

### The Pentagon's Latest "Mission Accomplished" Moment

By [Nick Turse](#)

#### Misremembering America's Wars, 2003-2053

It's 2053 -- 20 years since you needed a computer, tablet, or smart phone to go online. At least, that's true in the developed world: you know, China, India, Brazil, and even some parts of the United States. Cybernetic eye implants allow you to see everything with a digital overlay. And once facial recognition software was linked to high-speed records searches, you had the lowdown on every person standing around you. Of course, in polite society you still introduce yourself as if you don't instantly know another person's net worth, arrest record, and Amazoogolebook search history. (Yes, the fading old-tech firms Amazon, Google, and Facebook merged in 2033.) You also get a tax break these days if you log into one of the government's immersive propaganda portals. (Nope, "propaganda" doesn't have negative connotations anymore.) So you choose the Iraq War 50th Anniversary Commemoration Experience and take a stroll through the virtual interactive timeline.

Look to your right, and you see happy Iraqis pulling down [Saddam's statue](#) and showering U.S. Marines with [flowers and candy](#). Was that exactly how it happened? Who really remembers? Now, you're walking on the flight deck of what they used to call an aircraft carrier behind a flight-suit-clad President [George W. Bush](#). He turns and shoots you a thumbs-up under a "[mission accomplished](#)" banner. A voice beamed into your head says that Bush proclaimed victory that day, but that for years afterward, valiant U.S. troops would have to re-win the war again and again. Sounds a little strange, but okay.

A few more paces down the digital road and you encounter a [sullen looking woman](#) holding a dog leash, the collar attached to a man lying nude on the floor of a prison. Your digital tour guide explains: "An unfortunate picture was taken. Luckily, the bad apple was punished and military honor was restored." Fair enough. Soon, a digital General David Petraeus strides forward and shoots you another [thumbs-up](#). (It looks as if they just put a new cyber-skin over the President Bush avatar to save money.) "He surged his way to victory and the mission was accomplished *again*

Posted by Joan Russow  
Friday, 07 March 2014 06:57 -

---

," you hear over strains of the National Anthem and a chorus of "  
[hooahs](#)  
."

### Past is Prologue

Admittedly, we humans are lousy at predicting the future, so don't count on any of this coming to pass: no eye implants, no voices beamed into your head, no Amazoogolebook. None of it. Except, maybe, that Iraq War timeline. If the present is any guide, government-sanctioned, counterfeit history is in your future.

Let me explain...

In 2012, the Pentagon kicked off a [13-year program](#) to commemorate the [50th anniversary](#) of the Vietnam War, complete with a sprawling website that includes a "  
[history and education](#)  
" component.

[Billed](#)  
as a "public service" provided by the Department of Defense, the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration site boasts of its "resources for teachers and students in the grades 7-12" and includes a selection of official government documents, all of them produced from 1943-1954; that is, only during the earliest stages of modern U.S. involvement in what was then called Indochina.

The Vietnam War Commemoration's educational aspirations, however, extend beyond students. "The goal of the History and Education effort," according to the site, "is to provide the American public with historically accurate materials and interactive experiences that will help Americans better understand and appreciate the service of our Vietnam War veterans and the history of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War." To that end, the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration offers an interactive [historical timeline](#) .

By far the largest and most impressive offering on the site, the [timeline](#) spans 70 interactive pages with 830 individual entries that take a viewer from 1833 to 1976. The entries run the gamut from [tales](#) of daring and sacrifice from the official [citations](#) of Medal of Honor recipients to short offerings about [changes of command](#). There are even [couple-of-sentence](#) accounts of relatively minor operations -- like a December 20, 1969, sweep in Binh Duong Province by elements of the 1st Infantry Division, which captured 12 of 18 members of a North Vietnamese intelligence unit and 2,000 documents that “proved how much information the enemy had about American operations.”

It's an eclectic mix, but give credit where it's due: the digital chronology does mention [casualties](#) from the oft-forgotten first U.S. attack on Vietnam (an 1845 naval shelling of the city we now know as Danang). For the next 131 years, however, mention of Vietnamese dead and wounded is, to put the matter as politely as possible, in short supply. Flawed history, though, isn't.

### History is Bunk

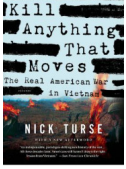
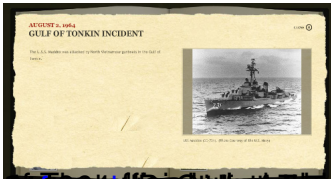
Take the August 2, 1964, “Gulf of Tonkin Incident.” It was a key moment of American escalation and, by the looks of the Pentagon's historical timeline, just what President Lyndon Johnson made it out to be when he went on television to inform the American people of “[open aggression](#)” on the part of North Vietnam. “The USS Maddox was attacked by North Vietnamese gunboats in the Gulf of Tonkin,” reads the [entry](#). A later one [mentions](#) “U.S. Naval Vessels being fired upon by North Vietnamese on two separate occasions [sic].” Case closed. Or is it?

[\*\*\*Click here to see a larger version\*\*\*](#)

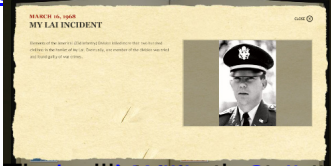
# Misremembering America's Wars, 2003-2053

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 07 March 2014 06:57 -



[Click here to see a larger version](#) [Ron Ridenhour](#) [Ron](#)



[Click here to see a larger version](#) [base](#)



[Click here to see a larger version](#)



[The Real American War in Vietnam](#) [history](#) [almost](#) [The](#) [copy](#) [right](#) [to](#) [the](#) [war](#) [in](#) [Vietnam](#) [is](#) [to](#) [be](#) [found](#) [in](#) [the](#) [book](#) [The](#) [Real](#) [American](#) [War](#) [in](#) [Vietnam](#) [by](#) [Nick](#) [Turse](#)