



Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam

Walter Dean Myers , Ann Grifalconi (Illustrator)

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Vietnam.

A young American soldier waits for his enemy, rifle in hand, finger on the trigger. He is afraid to move and yet afraid not to move. Gunshots crackle in the still air. The soldier fires blindly into the distant trees at an unseen enemy. He crouches and waits -- heart pounding, tense and trembling, biting back tears. When will it all be over?

Walter Dean Myers joined the army on his seventeenth birthday, at the onset of American involvement in Vietnam, but it was the death of his brother in 1968 that forever changed his mind about war.

In a gripping and powerful story-poem, the award-winning author takes readers into the heart and mind of a young soldier in an alien land who comes face-to-face with the enemy. Strikingly illustrated with evocative and emotionally wrenching collages by Caldecott Honor artist Ann Grifalconi, this unforgettable portrait captures one American G.I.'s haunting experience.

Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam Details

Date : Published January 4th 2005 by HarperCollins (first published 2002)

ISBN : 9780060731595

Author : Walter Dean Myers , Ann Grifalconi (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 40 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Historical, Historical Fiction, War, Poetry, Cultural

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From Reader Review Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam for online ebook

Jennifer says

First person perspective of going to war. Who's the enemy?

L13_Natasha says

Walter Dean Myers never disappoints. His account of a young American soldier facing the enemy in combat is emotional, intense, and frightening. This soldier's story is not told from moment to moment but rather emotion to emotion. Desiring a reason to kill the enemy, the soldier struggles with his plight but remains steadfast in his desire to stay alive.

We stare across the distance.

I know he wants me to lift my rifle, to be the enemy.

I want him to lift his rifle.

I want him to turn away.

In a heartbeat, we have learned too much about each other.

The story addresses the tragedy of the Vietnam War: the difficult terrain, the involvement of civilians, and the dropping of bombs.

This book is intense. The reading level is listed as third grade, but the content is really more appropriate for older readers. It certainly provides a first person account of war. A perspective young students don't often get to see.

Jessica says

Summary: A young American soldier waits for his enemy, rifle in hand, finger on the trigger. He is afraid to move and yet afraid not to move. Gunshots crackle in the still air. The soldier fires blindly into the distant trees at an unseen enemy. He crouches and waits -- heart pounding, tense and trembling, biting back tears. When will it all be over?

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-Thanks to goodreads

Literary Awards and Nominations:

Jane Addams Children's Book Award

Genre: Fiction, Poetry

Reading Level: 3rd-6th Grade

Social Issues: War, Vietnam

Topic: Fear, Courage, Sacrifice, War, Internal Struggle

Use: Read Aloud

Written by Walter Dean Myers Illustrated by Ann Grifalcone

Illustrations: The illustrations in the picture book are very deep and realistic. “The author artfully conveys the outward events of warfare and the resulting inner turmoil.” – Publishers Weekly

Published: 2002 by HarperCollins

Tanya Rianda says

An amazing older/ adult picture book that gives a realistic perspective on what war truly is. Not a glamorous situation, but rather gut wrenching unanswered questions.

Rebecca Weimert says

Rebecca Weimert
Picture Book

Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam is a story from the point of view of the soldier. The soldier describes what he is thinking and feeling as he waits for the enemy in the rice paddies of Vietnam. He also describes the village and what he feels when he sees the enemy up close. Although he is fighting for his country, the soldier is also ready for the war to be over and wants to go home.

As I was researching this book I noticed it was mostly listed as a children’s book, but I would disagree. The story describes killing and bombs. I do not feel this is appropriate for children, but for young adults. Young adults would understand the language used and the metaphors better than a child. In one scene the soldier invades a local town and describes the people they are going to attack. This seems a little too old for young children. The story is sad, but the reader gets a first-hand experience of what a real soldier in Vietnam actually thought and felt, especially at the end when he describes how much he just wants to go home.

James Govednik says

This is an outstanding work, blending vivid poetic images with rich collage illustrations. Walter Dean Myers’ poem takes us into the vulnerable side of every soldier. He uses contrasting images of the lush beauty of the forests of Vietnam and the searing danger of combat, along with contrasting emotions of a cunning pursuit and the weary soldier’s longing for relief. In addition, he uses realistic details of combat to “put us

there.” I think that whenever our young readers begin to learn about war, it’s important to balance honoring the soldier without glorifying war, and this book does the job wonderfully. We feel the suspense, the tension of the silence, the shock of the thundering bombers streaking overhead—the paradox of villagers going about their lives in the midst of a war zone. I was particularly drawn in by the author’s ability to bring the characters alive. I felt an instant connection to all the characters in the story. Poets amaze me in how they can do this in so few words. Ann Grifalconi’s illustrations are fantastic and capture all the nuances of the text. I kept finding new details in the collages every time I looked at them again. Together, text and illustrations bring honor to those who must survive war’s horrors. This is a book for ages 11-14, and the strengths of the poetry and the images make it worth reading and re-reading. Older readers would find much to discuss and analyze on many levels—a soldier’s life, combat, Vietnam history, civilians in war, as well as the poetic elements. One of the most moving picture books I’ve ever read.

Casey McGuire says

Main Characters: An unnamed American soldier

Setting: This story takes place in Vietnam during the Vietnam war.

Grade/Interest Level: Upper Elementary

Reading Level: 280 L

Genre: Historical Fiction, Picture Book

Summary:

Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam, written by Walter Dean Myers and illustrated by Ann Grifalconi, is a very powerful story about the day in the life of an American soldier during the Vietnam war. This story doesn't go into detail about the war, but it doesn't need to. Instead, this story demonstrates the fear of a soldier during this war and the inner struggles fighting within, one of the most prevalent being "Who is the enemy?". Several times throughout the story, the soldier thinks if his "enemy" is doing similar things as him. One of the most interesting parts of the story is when the American soldiers enter a village and surround the "enemies", who consist of women, farmers, elders and crying babies. At the end of the story, the main character is shown writing a letter and saying "I am so very tired of this war". This story is powerful because it avoids showing the soldier as a fearless hero, but instead as a young man who is confused and afraid.

Classroom Use:

One of the things I loved about this book is that it is such a low reading level, but covers very powerful themes and content. This book would be a great read aloud to include in a history unit about the Vietnam war or any wars. I believe that a lot of powerful conversations could come out of this text and I think it could be used as a great catalyst to discuss more serious themes that this book presents.

Teeny says

Summary: A young American soldier waits for his enemy, rifle in hand, finger on the trigger. He is afraid to move and yet afraid not to move. Gunshots crackle in the still air. The soldier fires blindly into the distant trees at an unseen enemy. He crouches and waits -- heart pounding, tense and trembling, biting back tears.

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Written by: Walter Dean Myers

Illustrated by: Ann Grifalcone

Audience: 3rd-6th

Genre: Poetry

Topics: war, Vietnam War, persons in war, soldier of war, fear, sacrifice, and courage

Literary Elements: Man versus Man Conflict

Illustrations: Ann Grifalcone's artwork clearly depicts the setting and people of the Vietnam war. Her color usage is symbolic of war and danger. Overall, her use of collage in such a book is absolutely perfect!

Usage: This particular book can be used in a variety of setting in the classroom including independent reading, guided reading, and reading out loud. One could easily introduce such a book while learning poetry, war, or etc.

Thanks GoodReads!

Sarah says

Title: Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam

Author: Walter Dean Myers

Illustrator: Ann Grifalcone

Publisher: HarperCollins

Year of Publication: 2002

Grade level: 3-7

Genre: Picture Book

Topics: War; fear; Vietnam

Social Issues Addressed: Vietnam War

Summary: Patrol is about a soldier during the Vietnam War. He is very scared and waits in the fields of Vietnam for the enemy. Fear has overtaken, and he can barely move. He comes across the enemy but doesn't shoot. This is a very descriptive book.

Interactions Between Text and Illustrations: The illustrations compliment the text by showing realistic scenes that set a tone throughout the book.

Curricular Uses: Read aloud and independent reading

Nick 4/7 says

Was a very cool book had some action and had some cool symbolism towards items and different colors on pages

Rachel Grover says

Personal Review:

This is definitely not a picture book for small children. I am in love with the fact that this story is told in poem format and the illustrations really enhance the text with relevant details. While it doesn't get too graphic, it truly portrays what fighting in the Vietnam War was like for some soldiers. This is an excellent pairing for Myers's *Fallen Angels* due to the same subject matter and the fact that it offers the same basic ideas in a different format while including illustrations. This would be an excellent alternative book to *Fallen Angels* for students who A) couldn't handle the language and graphic nature of *Fallen Angels* or B) couldn't handle the length of the novel. This gets the same idea across as *Fallen Angels* in a much shorter more visual manner. I will definitely buy this book for the collection if I end up in a middle or high school library. This is one book, however, that I would not include in an elementary school collection.

Official Review:

Title of Resource: *Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam*

Type of Resource: Picture Book – Pair for *Fallen Angels*

Complete Citation: Myers, W. (2001). *Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Ordering Information:

Publisher: HarperCollins

ISBN: 9780060283636

Price: \$16.95 Paperback

SOL: English 11.4f) Explain how the sound of a poem (rhyme, rhythm, onomatopoeia, repetition, alliteration, assonance, and parallelism) supports the subject, mood, and theme. **AND Virginia/USHistory VUS.13b)** The student will demonstrate knowledge of United States foreign policy since World War II by the describing...the American role in wars in Korea and Vietnam.

Student/Teacher Description:

I would put this book in the hands of a Language Arts or Social Studies teacher whose students are studying the Vietnam War and want an easy resource to supplement the study of the war or spur creative writing. This book offers a personalized view of what the war was like for a soldier and is written in verse instead of prose. I could also collaborate with language arts or social studies teachers to provide them additional resources on poetry, the Vietnam War, or activities for differentiated instruction either in the library or in the classroom.

Paragraph Version:

Patrol offers a truthful view of what life was like for soldiers during the Vietnam War using details and illustrations. Walter Dean Myers served in Vietnam and his brother was killed there. He experienced many events that help him accurately portray a soldier's life during that time. This would be a worthwhile picture book to use during the study of the Vietnam War in Social Studies or in 11th grade English when studying American Literature. The rawness of emotions and simplicity of text make this an excellent addition to the study of a serious time in history. This would be appropriate for an honors class, regular class, or remedial class, since it presents a difficult subject in simple poetry but could inspire a range of assignments. This book may be too intense for some students who are from war-torn areas or whose parents are deployed or part of the military. While *Patrol* doesn't explain the whole war, it offers a deep look into one soldier's experiences while on patrol in the jungles of Vietnam by explaining the boy's feelings and actions. The illustrations offer students a detailed look into the events and surroundings in Vietnam during war time. The writing is gripping, typical of Myers's style. This is one of the few high school picture books that portray the Vietnam War experience. Appropriate for all levels of students, *Patrol* stands out as a welcome addition to any library to be enjoyed by students as well as Language Arts and Social Studies teachers. **Review:** *Black Issues Book Review*, Sept./Oct. 2002, p.61.

Ashley Brocious says

The cover of this book calls it a "story-poem." This story is of an American GI's experience in Vietnam during the war. It is an interesting perspective of a "traveler." He is somewhere new, experiencing the land, but he is there as an "enemy." He is trying to reconcile himself as an enemy and the people he meets as an enemy. One very moving part says,

The enemy.

A brown woman with rivers of age etched deeply into her face.

And babies. Babies.

Little enemies crying on the mud roads.

Little enemies with tears running down dusty cheeks.

What does it mean to travel when you are a soldier? What position of outsider does it put you in? What insider experience does it offer? This book would be a great introduction to an excerpt from *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien.

Also, the pictures are very interesting. It seems like the people are glued onto the landscape..this could be an interesting way to talk about what it means to travel and to suddenly be "pasted" onto a new landscape as a foreigner. What's interesting is the Vietnamese are also pasted onto the landscape...so who belongs to this land and who doesn't? What is home if we are all pasted onto the land and can easily move about?

Emily says

Pages: 40

Age range: 8 (or maybe a little older) and up

Genre: Picture/Poetry

Race/Culture/Ethnic Group: African American

Summary: Through poetry and the voice of a young African American soldier, Myers tells of the experiences of soldiers in Vietnam.

Evaluation: *Soldiers in Vietnam* is a familiar topic for Myers (author of *Fallen Angels*, among others). The young soldier narrating the poem is very frank about his fear, about killing and about death. His view of “the enemy” changes over the course of the text, beginning with “he is the harvest” to episodes of wondering if the enemy is doing and feeling the same things he is. At the point when the speaker begins to humanize the Vietnamese in this way, he admits to being tired of war. Grifalconi’s collage type illustrations provide a beautiful setting for Myers’ text. The illustrations highlight the dichotomy between the beauty of the landscape and the horrors of war. While many aspects of the illustrations are somewhat fantastical and brighter than life, the faces of both the American soldiers (African American, mostly) and the Vietnamese are realistic, probably photographs.

A few reviews that I saw listed the age range for this book as low as 5 years old. I completely disagree. Even though it is a picture book, I would probably not use it until upper elementary or even middle school. In fact, this book could still be part of a high school curriculum when teaching about Vietnam. (At my local library this was shelved with the children’s chapter books, not with the picture books, which I think was appropriate.)

Amy Lafleur says

Illustrated account of one young American soldier in the jungles of Vietnam waiting for the enemy. The soldier is both tired and afraid as he waits and begins to try to understand the enemy as people like him. The text reads like poetry flow and description. Ann Grifalconi's collage illustrations complement the setting and the soldier's feelings. Although the format appears to be like a picture book, it's best read by school-age children, middle-grade and older. This is an important read for its view into soldier life during the Vietnam War and for gaining empathy for those who are the enemy.

Jackie Doty-abbott says

This vibrant picture book depicts the experience of a young American soldier during the Vietnam War. It deals with his struggle to survive in a harsh and unforgiving terrain while trying to come to terms with his role as a soldier. He is afraid but wants the enemy to fear him more. He feels conflicted about who his enemy actually is and whether or not he is the enemy. This situation climaxes when he is face to face with an enemy combatant. He realizes how young the boy is and is unable to even point his rifle at him. He finally admits how much he misses home and how tired he is of the war.

The illustrations were impactful and helped to fulfill the depth of the experience. I was especially moved when he was describing the enemy and there on the page were pictures of fragile, elderly people and mothers with toddlers and babies. How difficult it must have been to distinguish friend from foe and to be forced to defend yourself from an enemy who appeared to be so innocent.
