

# Historic Letters Get Responses

Original Title: Historic Letters Draw Modern Day Response

A news story that first appeared on the Internet in September continues to draw heartfelt response from viewers and readers. "When this story was first published the telephone rang constantly." That's the reaction of Betty Maffei of the Contra Costa History Museum in Martinez. "We have heard from people as far away as Paradise and Manteca."

The original story was about an elderly Contra Costa County woman named Peggy Ford who during the Vietnam War wrote letters to soldiers in combat. She saved the letters they wrote back to her. Ford died more than 30 years ago, but earlier this year, Ford's children discovered those letters and donated them to the history center.

Those who saw the report responded. "I had seen your show from Contra Costa," said Shannon Peters, 83, of Manteca. His wife Velma had saved more than 200 letters he had written to her from Vietnam when he was stationed there in the later 1960s. "I thought maybe somebody would be interested in those." Indeed, the San Joaquin County Historical Museum has contacted Peters.

While many have offered to donate their letters, it was the kind act of Peggy Ford that prompted others to action. Tanya Venglinsky of West Sacramento said that she plans on starting a modern day letter writing campaign to Sacramento area soldiers serving in Iraq. "It might bring a smile to their face, cookies they can share," Venglinsky told News 10. "You have to say thank you to them in one way or the other."

The Contra Costa History Center is interested mainly in Vietnam-era letters written to or from soldiers from Contra Costa County. Historical center workers suggest contacting your local historical center or museum if you have similar letters. Maffei said such letters are considered priceless pieces of history. "There's nothing that we can write about Vietnam that's better than what these boys wrote."

(This story was provided by News10 KXTV Sacramento.)

## Learn New Words

Donate

Combat

Era

Remember

Discovered

Perspective

Soldiers

Stationed

Inspiration

Appreciate

## Pick An Answer

1. One woman thinks Ford is \_\_\_\_\_.

1.  a soldier
2.  selfish
3.  too old
4.  an inspiration

2. The children \_\_\_\_\_ the letters to a museum.

1.  sold
2.  donated
3.  mailed
4.  drove

3. Soldiers like to \_\_\_\_\_ letters and treats.

1.  receive
2.  buy
3.  mail
4.  send

4. The museum felt it was important to \_\_\_\_\_ the war.

1.  forget
2.  remember
3.  watch a video about
4.  talk

5. The soldiers to whom Peggy wrote were fighting in \_\_\_\_\_.

1.  World War II
2.  the Vietnam War
3.  The Iraq War
4.  The Korean War

6. Ford knew the soldiers \_\_\_\_\_ the letters.

1.  worried about
2.  appreciated
3.  sent
4.  couldn't read

7. The letters were discovered by \_\_\_\_\_.

1.  a museum
2.  a realtor
3.  Ford's children
4.  the soldiers

8. Peggy Ford died \_\_\_\_\_ years ago.

1.  100
2.  50
3.  30
4.  3

9. The museum felt the letters were \_\_\_\_\_.

1.  boring
2.  valuable
3.  personal
4.  worthless

10. Peggy Ford wrote letters to \_\_\_\_\_.

1.  soldiers
2.  firemen
3.  pen pals
4.  college students

## What Did You Learn?

1. Why was the museum interested in what the soldiers wrote to Peggy?

- The museum wanted to know if the soldiers were lying.
- They told the story of the war the way it really was.
- The soldiers had beautiful handwriting.
- They like to read fiction.

2. Why does the woman want to write to the soldiers?

- She wants to tell them about Peggy Ford.
- She wants to ask them about the Vietnam War.
- She wants to send their letters to the museum.
- She thinks it's important to say thank you to the soldiers.

3. What did Peggy Ford's story inspire another woman to do?

- Write letters to soldiers in the Vietnam War.
- Write letters to the museum.
- Write letters to soldiers in the Iraq War.
- Write letters to Peggy Ford's children.

4. Where were the letters found?

- The soldiers found them in their attics.
- Ford's children found them in the attic.
- The museum gave them to Ford's children.
- The soldiers donated them to Ford's children.

5. What did Ford's children decide to do with the letters?

- Donate them to a local history museum.
- Keep them for themselves.
- Mail them to an army base in Vietnam.
- Give them back to the soldiers.

6. How did the TV news story about the letters help the museum?

1.  It made people want to visit Vietnam.
2.  The soldiers came to visit the museum.
3.  Many people donated money to the museum.
4.  It made many other people want to donate their letters.

7. Why did the museum want Peggy Ford's letters?

1.  They wanted to know what she wrote.
2.  Peggy Ford had beautiful handwriting.
3.  They feel it's important to remember the war.
4.  They are interested in Peggy Ford's life.

8. What does the woman plan to do?

1.  Write to Peggy Ford's children.
2.  Go to work for the museum.
3.  Write many letters to soldiers who are stationed overseas.
4.  Fight in the Iraq War.

9. Why were the soldiers stationed in Vietnam?

1.  They were sailing up the rivers on ships.
2.  They were in combat.
3.  They were keeping track of the weather.
4.  They were helping to build roads and bridges there.

10. Why did Peggy Ford write letters to the soldiers?

1.  She wanted to make them homesick.
2.  She wanted to tell them that she didn't approve of the war.
3.  She wondered what the war was like.
4.  She wanted them to let them know she cared about them.

## Write an Answer

What would you like to say to a soldier? Write a letter to a soldier stationed in Iraq.

