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History of the Vietnam War

The theme I picked up on most was sincere commitment to a cause. There were many causes that people identified with during the Vietnam War, such as fighting on one side or the other or protesting the war or helping people stay out of the war. People were trying to point out how the draft was unfair to the lower class in America and trying to help even the odds of going so to speak. No matter what their cause everyone that spoke in this section was dedicated to what they felt was their obligation and their duty. There were many people during this time that felt as if they had no choice but to take a certain path and almost all of the people in this section felt the same way so it wasn't easy to pick just three out but these were the ones that stood out the most to me.

Sylvia Lutz Holland enlisted in the Army and went to OCS to become a nurse. She served in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969 at the 312th evacuation hospital. She volunteered to spend two years of her life up to her elbows in blood and guts and the mess that a war leaves behind, that was her job and she did it to the best of her ability, but that's not what made her stand out to me. It seems to me that most people that were in that situation would want to spend their off time doing personal things and especially getting away from what she had to see in the operating room everyday despite what the T.V. show MASH showed us. Instead of getting out and drinking or doing her hair or simply trying to take her mind off of what she had to see, she spent her off time writing letters home for wounded men and sitting with the ones who probably weren't going to make it. At the end of the interview she talked about not allowing her son to fight in the Gulf War but that she would still go to war herself even after she saw the people she served with do things that were morally wrong such as not doing anything to help wounded Vietnamese.

Truong My Hoa was imprisoned by the South Vietnamese for being communist and kept in a tiger cage. She spent eleven years in prison being tortured and beaten and put through some of the worst conditions imaginable. The goal of all this was mainly

propaganda, making them say "Down with President Ho". During her time in the tiger cages she had things done such as having lime poured on her, burning her. She impresses me because she remained dedicated through all of this and held onto her beliefs to this day and more importantly she held onto them through what can only be compared to hell.

The last person that stood out was James Lafferty. He was a lawyer that believed the draft was immoral and should be abolished. Since he couldn't make the government stop it, he helped the people he believed it victimized get away from it. He saw the draft system as something set up to make sure that the poorest in our county were the ones that were forced to go fight in Vietnam. He talked about the different types of exemptions that could be applied for and how they couldn't work for people that couldn't afford them. I was also impressed because he never spoke against his country or denounce anything besides the draft. He saw a problem in the system and did everything he could to right that specific wrong. His practice wasn't only the most popular thing in that area and had to put up with a lot of ridicule from people who didn't like what he was doing.

All three of these people saw a place they were needed by their country and felt compelled to serve in different manners. Truong My Hoa could do nothing but stay put and not give in but her beliefs were so strong it allowed her to survive the worst conditions imaginable, at least to me. Mr. Kehler couldn't stand by and watch kids be sent off to fight in a war they didn't believe in and not be given any choice about it while the affluent could do anything they wanted to keep their kids out of the war. Mrs. Holland felt it was her obligation to go and do her part in the war effort and while she was there she felt compelled to go above and beyond. They all were so dedicated they never gave in and would all do it all over again.

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