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DEDICATION

The selection for my theme in Christian G. Appy's book, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides*, features one story from section, *You Want Me To Start World War III*, Walt Whitman Rostow (p124-127); one story from the section *Air War*, Harlan S. Pinkerton Jr. (p209-212); and one story from the *Prisoners of War* section, Truong My Hoa (p228-231). The common thread I will present is the dedication these people had to their missions. I chose a theme of dedication because each story, although different, demonstrates the challenges that were faced from both sides (American and Vietnamese) and what these individuals chose based on their beliefs. Rostow's journey was a dedication to anticommunism, Pinkerton was dedicated to freedom, and Hoa was dedicated to communism with the misguided understanding she would find peace and unity.

I selected *You Want Me To Start World War III*, for the unwavering stance that Walt Whitman Rostow had throughout his career and life in regards to the Vietnam War. Rostow was dedicated to anticommunism. His vision was to help the South Vietnamese people form a democracy. His vehicle of service was working for the United States government acting as a national security advisor to President Johnson during the years 1966-1968 of the Vietnam War. Rostow was confident that he had the answers of how the United States could win the war against communism with the use of airpower, destroying the Ho Chi Minh Trail and limiting the transportation of supplies. By doing this he thought the U.S. forces would be able to get the upper hand on the war. Unfortunately President Johnson did not share his views and became paralyzed with fear of escalating the war to a larger war, involving China and the Soviet Union. Rostow believed that the United States achieved their goals, and referred to President Johnson "...he saved Southeast Asia and we hold the balance of power in Asia today." despite the popular view of the withdrawal of the U.S. troops being a defeat for the United States government. I think in the end when Johnson admitted to using too little force and when Nixon did something similar to what Rostow pushed for in 1967, it again reinforced to Rostow that he was on the right path.

Harlan S. Pinkerton Jr. (p209-212), *Air War* story was selected for the history and passion he had for his country. I think his upbringing was influential in his dedication to his mission. Several generations of his family were members of the American Revolution and I think that impacted his responsibility to help the South Vietnamese achieve the same freedom he experienced in the United States. Pinkerton was passionate about his role as a fighter pilot in the Vietnam War, he trusted his country about the decision to go to war, and he would do whatever was needed to ensure a successful mission. He created a dream job, viewed himself as a "god" since he was both an officer and a fighter pilot, placing himself in a position to be of the best service to his country. Pinkerton did not view the war as a loss for the United States, he viewed it as a failure on the part of the South Vietnamese people.

My final selection, Truong My Hoa (p228-231), *Prisoners of War*, starts out with a similar theme of patriotism as Pinkerton. Hoa was also raised in a family passionate about their country. Her family wanted the French out (similar to the United States wanting the British Empire out during the American Revolution). I selected this story for the similarities in the historical perspectives of the Pinkerton and Hoa families, as well as Hoa's dedication to her country and people. I also appreciate Hoa's dedication to preserving her "integrity" during her imprisonment. Hoa was nine years old when her parents were separated with the understanding of unity in two years in compliance with the Geneva Accords. Soon after the Geneva Accords fell apart, Hoa became active in the revolution at fifteen years old and arrested at nineteen for "disrupting order and political stability." Hoa spent a difficult eleven years as a prisoner of the South Vietnam government which further solidified her dedication to the Communist Party and Ho Chi Minh. I view Truong My Hoa as a person who had to make serious life decision at a very early age, and unfortunately, the path available to her was narrow and limited in scope. I don't think her imprisonment made her softer or more compassionate, even though the last paragraph (p230) about how important it was to have the "support of the peace-loving people ...especially American people..." would like the reader to think so. Her last few sentences in her story (p231) sums up the harshness of her journey; "Those who worked for the puppet government had to be imprisoned in reeducation camps because they were obviously guilty; they had a blood debt to the Vietnamese people. They killed our people, so they were guilty. They were the henchmen and lackeys who served the foreigners and betrayed their own people. They had to be punished for their crimes."

Three stories, three people, in different places; all having a unique

and powerful perspective during this tumultuous period in time. I wonder how much influence, luck, fate, and destiny had on their journey's. I find it fascinating the courage and strength each one of these individuals displayed and their dedication to their belief of what they thought was right.

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