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What sparks a revolution of any sort? Disagreements on certain issues. The different kind of values and morals each person believes in. Ultimately revolutions are formed from conflict, and during the Vietnam War was the opportune time for a revolutionist to take advantage of the energy people had to voice their opinion. U.S. citizens wanted to take affirmative action on many situations. The two that seemed to be the main issue from my readings in part three was obviously the war and racial prejudice. People were looking to make a change about these two controversies, but waiting for some one to take the lead. In these three short accounts we will find that each of these individuals are revolutionists at heart, those who will risk their lives for a cause that they feel must be announced.

Truong My Hoa came from a family full of revolutionists, courageous people full of ideas for change.

Her family spent a near half century total in prison. Their communistic beliefs put them as a risk towards Dem's government. Truong My Hoa would not only voice her opinion but demonstrate it by trying to mobilize college and high school students onto their side. Eventually she was arrested in 1964 and spent 11 years in prison. Hoa was tortured with limestone, electric whips, physically and mentally starved from being placed in a tiger's cage with 5 other women. These cages were only two meters long and housed 5 women, no bathroom nor beds. Hoa endured this kind of treatment because she had something to hold onto, her beliefs. "A revolutionist's integrity is sacred because it allows you to persevere your ideals." That's what prison did for her, it perserved her ideals and only made her a stronger individual.

General Baker Jr. did not do anything he was not completely in support of. He was a hard working man from Detroit, worked for the Ford Motor Company the day he was called in from the draft. He wrote the draft board that he was neither a "dodger" nor a "conscientious objector" but that he would be objecting because he stated it was an, "unjust war." On his induction day he called a movement for all those who were against the draft. 50,000 blacks marched the streets of Detroit with one slogan, "Destroy the Draft." Baker shows an act of dis-obedience but also an act of a revolutionist. One who does not agree to mold to a cultural acception but would rather fight the majority.

This last account is a story about a little different type of revolutionist, one who was not nearly as extreme as the two

explained before but still had just as big of an impact on those around him. When James Brown heard other celebrities refused to join the draft or even go over to Vietnam to give moral support he did something about it. James Brown got an approval from Vice President Hubert Humphrey to travel to Vietnam and play for the soldiers in the country. He would do multiple shows a day in 126 degree heat. I was utterly surprised to hear the Viet-Cong called a cease fire for one of his shows. James Brown did not want to be like the other celebrities and not participate in the war. He stood out from the crowd for this action, took action, and became a respected figure to his musical peers. James Brown gave life to those he sang for in Vietnam, his inspiring music seemed to boost morals of soldiers. James Brown became a revolutionist in my eyes for not following the majority but rather pushing it away and practicing what he believed in.

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A Failure of Leadership

I would like to start by first asking the following question: "Why do Commanders fail?" Now I understand the question seems arbitrary; however there are certain characteristics that have been found throughout history proven to be a lack of leadership. For example, both Napoleon at Waterloo, and Lee at Gettysburg were both not feeling well during the time of battle, and led their men into a disaster.

The leadership roles of both the United States and Vietnam played a crucial part in the outcome of the Vietnam War. Lyndon Johnson was a profoundly insecure man who feared dissent and craved reassurance. In 1964 and 1965, Johnson's principal goals were to win the presidency in his own right and to pass his Great Society legislation through Congress. The Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, was particularly adept at sensing the president's needs and giving him the advice he wanted.

Lyndon Johnson was also an extremely intimidating man. He had quite the temper for a President of the United States. In one particular instance, page 121 of Christian Appy's book, Patriots, Charles Cooper as well as four other Senior Military Advisors to the President presented Lyndon with a strategic operation to begin blockading the North Vietnamese coastline and simultaneously beginning a B-52 bombing offensive on Hanoi. Now the president, feeling completely undermined, screamed obscenities to his five Senior Advisors, and kicked them out of his office. Now this operation took place regardless, but at the time, Lyndon was extremely fearful of Chinese, or Soviet intervention.

By this time advocates of "containment" set in place by Truman, were also advocating a new theory, "The Domino Theory." Hardly a theory at all, since it had little or no intellectual content, the domino theory argued that if a weaker nation (Vietnam) were to fall to communism, neighboring nations would also fall, like dominoes. This theory seems a bit ridiculous, it viewed smaller and weaker nations (Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, etc.) as having no history, no past, and no culture that mattered. They were simply a domino in a row waiting to be knocked down or picked up by a powerful nation. Lyndon was also presented another, and possibly great, solution to end the war. This solution came from Whitman Rostow, pg 124, his idea was to cut the Ho Chi Minh trail from within Laos, and take the city of Vinh hostage. Now to me, taking a city hostage seems a bit over the top, so this idea was a little farfetched but had a

possibility of great success. For example, if the Ho Chi Minh trail were to be destroyed, then supplies, men, etc. could not reach the front line in South Vietnam, then victory would surely be at hand in the South. Lyndon, again, shot this idea down. His main reasoning, again, was fear. The Johnson administration was influenced by the entrance of the Chinese into the Korean War, which in turn raised their fear of a Chinese recurrence in Vietnam.

Two possible ideas shot down based on fear, and not on any evidence of real threat to American lives. Lyndon was troubled with fear and doubt, none of the characteristics needed from a leader, but human nonetheless. I believe that it was this fear that led an inept offensive on Vietnam soil, not to mention the fraudulent account of the famous Maddox, and Turner Joy attack. While the Maddox did appear to have a torpedo shot at it, the Turner Joy it would seem did not contrary to national news at the time. The whole incident was turned into a National Security crisis. Lyndon fabricated this crisis for two purposes: 1. To gain political strength among the U.S. and ultimately lead to his legitimized Presidency, and 2. To tell the nation we would get involved in Vietnam.

However, Lyndon would not be the only leader to make a decision that would be detrimental to the determination of our GI's. The leaders of the Anti-War movement had begun to create a feeling of immorality among many soldiers. When morale is low, people tend to fight to stay alive, and not fight to win. When a soldier named Jim Soular, pg 156, had witnessed his best friend get murdered by another GI right in front of him. The Court marshal decided that Bob Harris, the man responsible, should only endure five years hard labor, while a case before theirs had a young man who tried to save a chopper, and crashed it, had received fifteen years. It was an injustice. The military of course did not tell the family the truth, they called it an accident. It is lies like these which decreased the morale of civilians, as well as GI's.

Morale seemed to be the deciding factor of the war. The war could not be won in a way that the American public would accept. The morale of the United States civilians had collapsed, and with this collapse, the GI's morale collapsed. The United States, as a nation, and as a leader in battle, failed to increase morale among GI's. As a result it would seem most GI's were left wondering, "just what in the hell am I doing here." These are not thoughts that should be going through their heads, GI's need only to listen to command, and be prepared to follow orders.

Imagine being a GI after his 12 month service, or being injured, coming home to a flight attendant telling you, a veteran, exiting his flight from Vietnam back to his own country, that he had better change out of his uniform before he gets into the public. This to me is a horror story. I cannot imagine the guilt these men felt coming home to a country who considered them murderers, or in some

cases 'baby killers.'

The Vietnamese on the other hand had pride. The morale of the Vietnamese came from their sincere belief that they were working toward freedom, and the freedom to pursue happiness. They even had some of their most popular singers and artists among them to help keep morale high. Even the U.S. troops in some cases could hear the singing and laughter of the Vietnamese people, which was bewildering at the time. It almost seemed to shatter the confidence and courage of our men, while building the courage and confidence of the Vietnamese.

Although on a few occasions battles had been lost due on the Vietnamese side to an underestimate from commanding officers of U.S. firepower, and tactics; the Vietnamese kept a high morale, and believed in the cause for which they were fighting. Troops from the North did not need to be recruited; they came in large numbers willing and ready to serve their country. The leadership of the Vietnamese was not well organized, but delivered one constant message, to keep spirits up and never lose courage. Even Ho Chi Minh himself would deliver this message to young soldiers. Pg. 213. It seems clear that mistakes by commanding officers had been made across the board, but when have they not? How many wars have been 'perfect', and how can you predict an outcome before it is made? I believe that in some cases people made the best decisions they could based on their current situation, and in others the account seems too obvious to have overlooked at the time, but the decision was not made now, it was made then when it had to be. But nonetheless it is imperative that we respect the nature of those mistakes in order to look for a better understanding of the future.

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HST 195
Assignment 2

A common theme that I found very interesting between persons on both sides of the war was the theme of that many enemy soldiers appeared to respect each other because there was an understanding that the war was not their doing but it was a causation of being misled by leaders. The soldiers on both sides disagreed with why the other was fighting them. The Viet-Cong were fighting for independence, the Americans were fighting to stop the spread of communism, yet I'm not sure both sides understood each other at the time. What they did understand is that Americans have leaders, and Vietnamese have leaders. Those leaders had them fighting this war and that it was the duty of each soldier on both sides to shoot at the enemy. I chose this theme because I found it interesting that some of the soldiers displayed that level of understanding. It would seem that it would be very easy, even after the war for many of the soldiers to continue hating the other. Dehumanization plays a large role in wars and I was interested to find that there seemed to be a respect soldiers on both sides had for the enemy soldiers. This is important because it shows the possibility of growth. If both sides continue hating each other than the war really solved nothing, even if it didn't it is important that people involved can look back and understand that and seek reconciliation.

The first story I read that I felt followed this theme was Jim Soular's part in "Free-Fire Zone." Throughout the story you realize that this guy was a good solid soldier. He worked hard and really knew how to do what he was supposed to. "I've always considered myself a good soldier." The way he spoke about the war was interesting to me. He didn't seem too affected by it at first. He said "And I loved war. I can't deny that. I loved it." Then as things continued the war started to unravel for him. In response to the court-martial hearing he said, "to the military, a goddamn chopper was worth three times more than David." So here we have a good soldier who does what he is told and the war ends up unraveling for him because of the people in charge. He then goes into saying, "I realized that I don't hate the Vietnamese. All I have is this deep, deep sense of sorrow that this whole thing happened." Vietnamese are no longer the enemy the war itself is. The soldiers look back on

the war and don't feel hate for one another, even though they may have partook in horrible things. They look back in regret that the war happened. "We might have learned so much from them instead of learning nothing and doing so much damage."

The next story I read that followed this theme really put it in more concrete terms. When the pilot Luu Huy Chao in Air War spoke to another American pilot at the end of the story he said, "We were only soldiers, we didn't cause the war." I find it powerful that this understanding was shared. Two people who were once enemies now can look back and realize the war really wasn't about the American soldiers. "American pilots had to obey their commanders. That's a fact." I found it interesting that some of the stories shared the same type of blue print. A soldier first recounts the war, all the horrible things that happened to them and the people around him or her. And then they reflect on the war as a whole. Sometimes they will reflect on the enemy, usually not with hate but with understanding and respect. Luu Huy Chao goes onto saying, "As a fighter pilot I'm not sorry to have shot down American jets, and American pilots shouldn't be sorry if they shot down Vietnamese aircraft." This really shows that he has no lasting anger towards Americans. He only has anger towards the fact that the war took place. Again the enemies aren't the soldiers on both sides of the war, the enemies are what those soldiers represented which was driven and commanded by the United States government, not the people. "Now my only wish is that there be no war."

The last story that applied to this theme was a little different. This is because Fred Branfman from the section "Air War" was not actually a soldier and he speaks about Laos instead of Vietnam. Of course both countries are tied together, Branfman exposed that the United States was bombing northern Laos since 1964. The part of his story that applies to this theme, like the other stories, is towards the end of his part. Being not a military man he shares a perspective that is rooted more in anti war activism than the others. He says "At a very deep level we were betrayed by our elders." Branfman has an understanding that the soldiers involved in the war, even the pilots that dropped the bombs that he fought so hard to stop were not the ones to blame. The fault lies with the commanders that made the decision to carry out this war to the extent they did. He even feels sorry for soldiers "Many vets were the most angry. I think a lot of them know how they were sold out by their leaders who never really cared whether they lived or died."

The theme at a whole portrays a very important picture of war itself. I included three stories from three people who were all completely different. Two were soldiers from either side of the war. They both have very similar views about one another. Both were just soldiers following their commanders. The third perspective is more of an overall perspective of the war. An antiwar activist who

attempted to shed light on what the United States was doing in Laos. There are extremely important lessons that we should take away from this theme. Misguided wars should be prevented at all cost. The people involved should be listened to and learned from. Intelligent people take lessons from the past to make better decisions for the future. Branfman said, "The most disturbing legacy of the war is that we don't teach our children that our country is capable of conducting mass murder of civilians." Lessons like these need to be taught. The problem is war is a terrible thing and people generally don't like to hear about terrible things. Our leaders don't like to shed light on the fact that Branfman brings up. Until the humans of this world face the realities and mistakes of our past wars will continue and new great regrets will develop. "An error doesn't become a mistake until you refuse to correct it" - Orlando A Battista

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While reading section three of the book *Patriots*, I tried to identify themes. Perhaps the most obvious one was the escalation of Vietnam War and the antiwar movements that were taking place during the mid 1960's. However, I did not want to go with the obvious, so I am highlighting a different theme. Even though the theme I have chosen coincides with the title of book, I think that is was very subtle in the majority of the accounts that I read.

By definition, patriotism is having a love for one's country and a willingness to sacrifice for it. In the accounts that I read, I found patriotism best exemplified in three stories: *Trails to War*, told by Vu Thi Vinh; *Free-Fire Zone* by Jim Soular; and *Air War* by Harlan S. Pinkerton Jr. The reason I decided to use patriotism as a theme is because I wanted to find a more positive message about the Vietnam War than its typical portrayal as an ambiguous and perhaps unnecessary conflict.

In *Trails to War*, Vu Thi Vinh a North Vietnamese girl who volunteered to work on the "Ho Chi Minh Trail," shows patriotism to her homeland, North Vietnam, by committing herself to help build these trails throughout Vietnam. Although Vin Thi Vinh was only fifteen when she started working on the trails in Vietnam, she showed a great deal of patriotism and resolve by offering to help her country despite harsh conditions, lack of food and sleep, and jeopardizing her own life for her country and the cause she believed in. Vu Thi Vinh states "We were so young we didn't know anything, but our patriotism was very high. We went to war willingly." (Appy, 103) The words of this young lady represent patriotism at its finest and the actions of this young woman symbolize patriotism even more, regardless of whether you agree with her choices.

The next account, by Jim Soular from *Free-Fire Zone*, tells the story of how he grew up in a small town working in mines and that how he quit college only to be drafted. He says, "I had no problem with that because I was a patriot. I believed in the flag, I believed in serving my country. And I was good at it." (Appy, 157) This statement by Soular shows that there were patriotic Americans serving in the war despite the fact that many of the soldiers did not even know what they were fighting for. Later in Soular's account, he tells about his duties flying CH-47s and how most of them had crashed. Also, and more pertinent to the theme of patriotism, he

tells about his comrade and friend who was killed during the war by a drunken GI soldier. The GI who killed his friend received a minimal punishment and his friend's family was lied to about how their only son died. Twenty-five years later, he contacted the family of his friend and let them know the truth about what happened to their son and that he was by his side during his death. I think that telling the truth about his friend's death and the comfort he brought to his friend's mother is a very patriotic act. Despite all of the negativity that Jim Soular faced, he remained a good patriot. He states, "I've always considered myself a good soldier, whatever that means. I did what I was told to do. But everything I'd been raised to believe was contrary to what I saw in Vietnam." (Appy, 161) Despite this internal turmoil, he followed orders dutifully out of love and respect for his country.

In the third and final account, *Air War* by Harlan S. Pinkerton Jr., he begins by telling about his experience flying planes and how gratifying that was. He relates that a typical day for a pilot consisted of waking up, carrying out his duties, and then being free to do whatever they wanted. From his account, it appears that many of them chose to drink heavily in the bar. Notwithstanding these excesses, his philosophy about serving in the military demonstrates patriotism: "To me it was my responsibility as an American citizen. I didn't really question it. I had orders. My country had made the decision that we were going to take part in that conflict over there and it was my duty to my country to follow orders." (Appy, 221) While Pinkerton's account does not show as strong a sense of pride and patriotism as the other two, it is still present. I think that many of the soldiers who served had an attitude similar to his, at least initially.

As demonstrated above in the three accounts told patriotism was present in the hearts and minds of many of the soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War. Among the 43 accounts that I read in section three, patriotism was difficult to find at times, but upon careful examination, a hint of it can be found in all of them.

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Throughout the three stories I have had the privilege to read I have notice a common theme among them. I believe each story represents the support, love and respect that the people had for their peers and the men and women they interacted with on a daily basis. When a person goes through dramatic situations the automatic thing that starts to happen is bonding with your fellow brothers/sisters. In all three of these stories this theme has a crucial effect on how the main characters survived the war in Vietnam.

It doesn't matter what kind of research you are doing it is important to look at all sides of the subject. That's why reading the story called "We came home hairless with ghostly white eyes" by Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy was so interesting. The fact that this woman volunteered for this job is shocking. It only shows how much she loves her country and willingness to contribute for the overall goal of her leaders. Her job to clear trees and produce/maintain trails shows that the task she had chosen was no easy job. During the story the author writes about the hardships that occurred when there was shortage of food and shelter. She follows by explaining how the woman worked together to provide the essentials just to survive. The author also explains how they respected the soldiers, as they would see them pass by walking towards the danger zones. The woman the author spent time with during the war became sisters for life. A love like that cannot be broken apart.

The story I chose to write about is called "Man, if we're up against this, it's going to be a long-ass year." By Dennis Deal I was drawn to this reading from the very beginning of the class because I myself have been through Airborne and Ranger school. I understood the type of fearless superman effect that kind of training could have on a soldier. Within the early parts of the story there is a soldier who believes he knows were a group of enemy soldiers are so he instructs his squad to follow him into battle. The sad part was that he led his men to death. The reason I bring this up, because for men of that caliber to follow another man into combat. With the conditions that would make most soldiers want to hide and never push forward really shows how much trust and commitment they have for each other as brothers. The leader of that squad knew without a doubt in his mind the men with him would fight to the death to protect each other. Towards the end of

the story the main character was pinned down by a machine gun and another soldier flanks the enemy and destroys the threat. The author said himself if help didn't arrive he would have been a dead man. He to this day remembers how that fellow soldier saved his life. That soldier could have done the same thing to do which is hide behind cover, but he saw a fellow brother in need so he was willing to sacrifice everything to prevent the enemy from causing him harm.

During this last writing I read was called "The Knife Man" written by David M. Smith. The main character was described among his peers as a hard ass. I think that is interesting because I believe this man portrayed himself this way because he knew he had a strong emotional side as well. That part of him was portrayed later on in the story. The images this man saw on a regular basis would make a normal person just become sick. That is why it takes a special person to be a surgeon. This man saw the horror of war every day. He understood the effects of it. He gained a great deal of respect for the men in the field. He knew from experience that most nights a high amount of the soldiers that went out on patrol would come back in body bags, or severely injured. It was his job to stay focused and fix the men up. He wished there was a better way to control the effects of post surgery illness due to the fact that a great deal of the patients that did have surgery would die from infection. Towards the end of the story the author explains how he has visited the Vietnam memorial site and all he could do is break down and weep for the men and hard times he experienced in the war. The author might have had a hard way of showing it but he will forever be grateful for the men who died during the war and wished he could have helped more. At the very end the author mentions again that his peers seem to believe that he is a hard ass then he says "but they never talked to me about Vietnam."

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David Ross

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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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Women are a group of people that many do not associate with having any real effect in war, historically especially. Looking back, we see images of mens bravado and masculinity out on the field of battle, and not many would ever feel that women had any real impact on the Vietnam war. However, reading through these accounts it is clear that almost all of the women felt that they had a positive impact on the men at war in Vietnam. Many who went to war in Vietnam did not even know where the place was on a map, let alone why they should be fighting a war there. It was a place so far away from home, many became heavily disillusioned and homesick, just wanting their tours to end so they could leave. For these men, the women in Vietnam - be they nurses, entertainers, or even Vietnamese - gave them some small reprieve from the horrors of war by giving them some small moments where they were able to just be normal men, spending time with a woman who will listen to them, comfort them, or provide them with pleasure - whatever it may be. I chose this particular theme purely because it was a theme i was not expecting to see in reading the accounts, and it was unique to me amongst everything else that was written. This theme has the most human and emotional aspect to it, something refreshing to see amongst the horrors of the war.

The first story from the reading that started my mind ticking on the positives of women in war was very much the one with the least emotional aspect to it - but it still began the idea of womens importance to men in the war. The short account by Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy speaks of her ordeals as a Youth Volunteer in the jungles of the Truong Son. Most of her story is mostly about her experiences in the jungle as far as her job was concerned, but near the end of the account she does make mention of her encounters with American troops. It is very brief, and she does not actually even mention the words sex, or specifically say thats what happened. But it is obvious it did due to this quote; "...it was just innocent romance. No babies were born." Obviously, sex is what happened.

The reason I use this as part of my theme here is that although maybe not an emotional morale booster, men do love sex. In war, sex is an illusive pleasure that generally not many would have access to, bar the R&R weekends if they are that lucky. To be able to encounter these young Vietnamese girls working in the jungles

who would allow them to have their way with them, and release some tension, is an undoubted way of boosting ones general mood and morale. It was free, and it was easy to get from these girls, and for men who are spending almost all of their time out of the company of women - it would have been absolute heaven for them to be able to just spend a short part of their time with one of these girls and do what they will, then move on in their travels with a notch to their belt of sexual encounters. It may be a short lived encounter, and one that doesn't exactly live on long in their minds due to shallow emotional context of it, but for a short while they were just a man with a woman, one of lifes most beautiful pleasures - and for that short while, war was able to be forced from their minds.

The next story for me is where we go into a more deeper emotional reason for the positive impact of women in the war - the story by Army Nurse Sylvia Lutz Holland. As a nurse, Sylvia often saw men who were at their worst, near death and in need of a comforting hand. Regardless of the fact a man is dying, a morale boost for that mans last moments is something of utmost importance. They do not want to die, lonely and without anyone acknowledging them. They want to feel one final moment of bliss, of comfort - and these nurses were there for them. Sylvia mentions that despite all they have been through, the horrors they have endured, that men on their death beds still just wanted some comfort; "Hold my hand. I know I'm dying, please don't leave me." Men at their core, no matter how tough they act, still need comfort. This proves that.

She also makes mention of the quieter times, when it was a little more relaxed in the hospital, how much the men appreciated the female presence. "Sometimes it was quiet and we just sat around. Then you were like a sister, a mother, grandmother, a girlfriend." These women acted as a porthole to a life at home for these men. It was an emotional escape from the horrors they have endured, allowing them to pretend that they are just hanging out back in America with a lady friend, talking about things such as girlfriends and cars. They could have an emotional connection with someone again, talk about life, the things they like - rather than how much they were hating the war they were in. It allowed them a window of happiness at life again, something they may not have had for a long time out in the field. A deeper positive emotional boost can be absolutely paramount in allowing a man to keep his passion for life amongst all he is going through in the field of war.

Entertainment. In life, entertainment is the one thing that every human being enjoys as a way of escaping from the hardships of life. Whatever the form of it, it allows you to switch your mind off from

whatever you are doing and just genuinely enjoy whatever it is that you are watching. The account of Bobbie Keith, or better known as 'Bobbie the Weathergirl' proves how important some regular entertainment for soldiers can be. Of course, a lot of her appeal was the fact she was a young, sexy, woman. Her weather broadcasts, although starting fairly standard, turned into a risque fun weather broadcast that men would tune into mainly just for her. She even mentions not exactly knowing what the weather was. However, that's what the men needed. They needed entertainment, something to see on a regular basis that made them happy, and gave them something other than war to talk about.

She also gave them a connection to home as well, by throwing in references to towns back in America for soldiers who asked for a mention. She says herself, "You do all these little things 'cause it brings them home." So not only was she providing entertainment through her sexy performances as a weather-girl, and giving the soldiers something fun to watch and take their mind off things - she was also giving them a connection back to the land they were at war for. Though to us, it may not seem a big deal to hear of America, for people so far away from home, any little mention of your homeland can give you such a boost that we may never be able to imagine. Myself, I feel such a boost whenever I see something about Australia on the TV. And even that would pale in comparison to how it would feel for a man in the Vietnam war.

Though it may not be something we immediately associate with the Vietnam war when it is mentioned, women played an integral part in keeping men's morale up while they were there. In three different ways, they provided pleasure, comfort, and entertainment for the men who otherwise may have descended into madness due to having nothing to take their mind off the war. Men at war may be portrayed as being tough beings, but beneath that is just a normal man who craves the everyday things they enjoyed at home. These women gave them that.

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Deanna Middlestetter

Assignment #2

Instructor Escobar

10-30-10

Assignment#2

Out of the book," The Patriots" by Christian G. Appy , I chose three stories. These stories were; From Civil Rights to Antiwar, Free Fire Zone and Triage. I found that all three of these stories had the common thread of prejudice. The Vietnam War took place at a time when prejudice was an epidemic in this country and people of color were fighting for their rights as human beings. Whether here or there people were surrounded by prejudice.

I read about a young black man who was a navy veteran and had lost his kidney during his time of service who when he came back to this country was fatally shot in his hometown because he tried to use a white bathroom at a gas station. (pg.144) I do not know very much about war but it does not make sense to me to go to war to fight for people's freedom when people were denied that right here in this country. For example when there was a draft, whites and people who were wealthy were given special treatment and priority as to whether or not they actually had to go or not. They would be granted excuses such as illness or taking care of family. People who were uneducated or had health problems, basically people who were from lower socioeconomic groups were chosen to accept the draft. In order to get consideration you had to see a private doctor. Most of people could not afford to see a doctor but had real health problems but were sent to war regardless of their condition. Perhaps some of these people thought it sounded like a dignified way that they could earn a living because of their lack of education.

The medical treatment in Vietnam was also full of prejudice. For instance, if you were white you got treatment before innocent civilians. It was all about race and status not your injury. A Vietnamese man did not want to be treated because the people who were treating him were white and spat on the nurse in charge of him. (pg. 174) This was surprising to me because the fact that

she was helping him should have shown him that not all the U.S. citizens were bad but apparently even saving his life would not change his mind. A U.S. Soldier shot another U.S. soldier in a drunken rage and was given five years yet a soldier flying a helicopter who accidentally crashed it and survived was given a much grimmer sentence. (pg 160)

It is a tragedy to see so much destruction all caused by prejudices.

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For me, the theme that I found running through all the stories we read in Part Three: Escalations was the tenacity of humans to seek out life even in the worst situations. I'm not talking about simply the condition of existing. I'm talking about actively pursuing activities, relationships and situations that appeal to their idea of a good life. The accounts of Harlan S. Pinkerton Jr., Bobbie Keith, and Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy painted an especially vivid picture of what it looks like to pursue what you find to be the most fulfilling despite the circumstances. In these stories, it's like war isn't real life. War is an overriding mode that one adopts in order to achieve an air pocket of satisfactory circumstances in which real life is lived, if only for a moment. If people have to go to war to protect that air pocket, they might as well attempt to live how they normally would when they can. Just because they're at war doesn't mean that those base desires go away. In a lot of cases, those base desires turn into a relief system.

Harlan S. Pinkerton Jr.'s account was the first account that I read that turned me on to this theme. In the beginning of his interview, he describes the joy he finds in takeoff, and then describes the bombing procedures. After that, the next half of the printed interview talks almost entirely about life on-base after flights. "On most days, you'd get up, go fly, come back, get debriefed, go back to the squadron to see if there was anything else you had to do, and then you were free to do whatever you wanted." From the interview, you get the feeling that Harlan spent quite a bit of time drinking and basically doing whatever he felt like doing. But he never shirked his duties as a pilot. "You may have felt bad [from a hangover] but you never canceled a flight unless you were sick from something other than alcohol." I think that if he were in the United States he would probably be living much the same life. This is most exemplified in this quote: "My country had made the decision that we were going to take part in that conflict over there and it was my duty to my country to follow the orders. And if I was going to serve, I wanted to serve in a way I considered first-class. I wasn't gonna dig ditches. I wasn't gonna polish the brass on my uniform. And I can't complain about my orders. What more can you ask for? One, you're an officer and, two, you're a fighter pilot. You're a walking god. That was it." What he considered first-class in life was the party life. Chasing girls, drinking all night and having fun while juggling his duties was the way he wanted to do things at

that point in his life. And he did.

The second account that struck me as representing this theme was Bobby Keith's interview and her stories about R and R. These guys coming from the war would get their hotel room complete with their own girl for \$16 a day. "They fall in love, taste a little freedom, have a good time, pick up their souvenirs and then, dammit, they have to go back to the war. How fair is that?" These soldiers would get this taste of life that the U. S. wants them to have to increase their morale. I'm sure that those few days that they had off from the fighting emulated something close to the lives they would be living back at home if they could. This R and R taste of life became a relief for them. It was meant to encourage those soldiers to keep on fighting for the life they want to live, and help make that life secure for their fellow Americans as well.

And finally, the third account that represented this theme was that of Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy. In one part she says, "We saw many soldiers traveling down the Truong Son. They loved us because we were courageous girls and worked so hard. When the Americans came to bomb us our boyfriends were very eager to protect us, but it was just innocent romance. No babies were born. Even if we wanted to do more, how could we? We lived apart from the boy volunteers and most of the soldiers moved on so quickly to the South. We didn't have much time together." This small section of her interview reveals a deep desire in the Vietnamese to find love with someone to marry and have a family with. This reveals that the Vietnamese want much the same things we as Americans do. We want safety and security for our families, and most importantly, love. Even in those impossibly hard times where Nguyen and her friends were doing what they had to do to help the war effort, they still found ways to express and deal with their emotions and desires.

In the long run, two entities that are in an ideological conflict generally want the same things, but idealize them in different ways. In this way, we can see that Americans and the Vietnamese are very much the same. We all want a good life. Nobody wants to suffer. But conflict becomes a contest of endurance. Who can withstand as much suffering as the other can inflict to prove their ideals of a good life are better? That's what war is about. In their own ways, Harlan S. Pinkerton Jr., Bobbie Keith, and Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy and their friends all chose their paths to what they thought was a good life even though their lives were engulfed by chaos. This is the human struggle.

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"The Abduction of Innocence"

For this assignment I wanted to delve into the psyche of the American soldiers, more importantly the juxtaposition of living in the America they grew up in and the transition to soldier and combatant. Rather than write on first-hand accounts, I decided to rather write about some of the second-person accounts. This way it will be more of a collaborative thought and removed enough so that the topic is a little more cohesive. The three subjects in this paper, I feel, represent the transitions that many of the troops went through. As Don Mclean once sang, "Oh there we were all in one place, a generation lost in space, with no time left to start again".

Helen Tennant Hegelheimer Pg. 106

Helen, in 1966 and '67 was a flight attendant with World Airways. She had a unique role and it allowed her to see the emotions, worries and thoughts of the soldiers. She could relate to their concerns about coming back changed from the war. She says, "These boys grew up the same way I did in the fifties. We attended church, we understood right from wrong". She knew that it was not their choice to kill; it was instilled with their duty to country. She saw the differences in the men before and after conflict. "I clearly remember thinking, these guys are not going home to their girlfriend and that '55 Chevy they had been working on," recalls Helen. "Their youth was gone and it showed. You absolutely saw a different look in their eyes on the way home". The soldiers were torn between the two cultures, their lives of the past and the situation of the present. Some of their innocence shows when she speaks of how the soldiers wanted to "practice" talking before they got home in fear that they would slip up and cuss in front of their mothers. They were also fearful that their mothers would be able to tell everything they had done in Vietnam. It wasn't just the killing they were concerned with; it was also the morality tests they failed. The drugs, the booze the promiscuity with the ladies, these were all things they've been raised to avoid. Perhaps some of the psychosocial difficulties that the soldiers came home with are tied in directly with their perception of everyone's judgment upon them.

Nancy Smoyer Pg. 188

In 1967 Nancy went to Vietnam as a "Donut Dollie", the nickname for a member of a program within the Red Cross whose job was to

boost morale. She toured Vietnam and engaged troops in games intended to lift their morale. The games that she had the troops play were somewhat childish, but that was the point. To have these cute American girls there having the troops play kids games brought a great amount of levity to them. If even for a hour or two, the troops forgot where they were at and their mission. She mentions of the troops that, "Their dream was to go back to 'The World' and drive cars and date girls and have fun. None of us knew that we weren't going to be kids anymore". She says that they were so naïve and 'innocent', not fully grasping the darkness of the situations that they were attempting to enlighten. "It was strange to play sweetness and light in a war zone". She talks of the troops and herself collectively suggesting that she knew she played a big role in the quality of life for the troops. She knew that after the war she would be changed just as they have been. She said that, "somehow even then, I knew it would be the high point of my life. And it's sad to know that age twenty-four it's as good as it's going to get." She shows a great sense of pride when talking about her activities but she was against the war. In 1965 when she was a senior in high school she "thanked goodness" that her little brother was so young, she thought that the war would be over by the time that he would be old enough to go fight. This was somewhat a naïve thought in hindsight. Three months after her return stateside in 1968, were brother Billy went o Vietnam and three weeks later, died in an ambush. This shows how it was not just the troops who were affected psychologically, but it was everyone involved. As with every war, a generation is aged not by time alone, but through emotional stress and pain that adds on much more than just years.

Fred Branfman Pg.217

Fred's story is a little different than the stories of Helen and Nancy but the aftershock is very similar. Fred was a free-lance interpreter and journalist in Laos and he saw first-hand the misleading accounts supplied by the US State Department. He was one of the first Westerners to expose the fact that the United States had been secretly bombing northern Laos since 1964. Upon learning of the attacks he felt anger towards the US government. "I couldn't believe the executive branch has been bombing this country without telling anyone." He was shocked that his country could steep to such a level. Upon learning of the bombings, he worked to stop the bombings. "Communism is obviously no better than capitalism," he says, "but I certainly have no regrets that I tried to stop the bombings". He had a solid base in wanting to help the Laotians and the Vietnamese but his experiences turned his soul dark. "The most disturbing legacy of the war is that we don't teach our children that our country is capable of conducting mass murder of civilians". In retrospect, he realizes that he was naïve and that if the North

Vietnamese won they would usher in a better world. Growing up in the fifties he really believed in America. "We had a coherent value system then along came Vietnam and every ideal was destroyed. I think that shock threw an entire generation into a moral abyss and I don't think we've crawled out yet". His views were shared by a lot of young Americans at the time. It just shows that when a government is deceitful and not completely truthful with its citizens, it leads to a foundation of anger and rebellion. I wish that the mass population of the United States could have known all the facts about what our government did, maybe they would have been more sincere and sympathetic towards own returning troops.

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The Vietnamese live in a completely different environment than that of America. The war on their part was extremely undersized in its technological advances and weaponry selection. The lifestyle spoke of an unknown life to many who lived in America. Vietnamese lived in jungle and grew up in small villages. Although their way of life was diverse, the Vietnamese still managed to use their ingenuity to survive in the war against the Americans successfully. The Vietnamese showed resourcefulness through work on the Ho Chi Minh trail, surgical operations, and their daily fight to stay alive.

One of the main assets the Vietnamese used regularly was children. They allowed fifteen year olds, even fifteen year old girls, to work on the Ho Chi Minh trail in order to keep it readily available. Vu Thi Vinh was one of those girls. Not only was resourcefulness found in the vast number of age groups from both genders fighting, but also in the way they responded to American bombs. The Ho Chi Minh trail was heavily bombed, but these loyal and devoted children managed to fill in the holes and rebuild destroyed bridges. It was very smart of the Vietnamese to let practically anyone fight. The numbers they had working on the trail allowed for the men and women to be out fighting, where they were more importantly needed, instead of being caught up in repairing the trail day after day. The helping hand from people of all ages was most definitely a resource well used and also effective.

Some of the helping hands came from those of Vietnamese doctors. Combat wounds were not the only reason for need of a nearby doctor. Due to Vietnam's environment, lack of food, and sanitary conditions, many Vietnamese ended up needing medical assistance. Le Cao Dai treated patients from all of these situations. The essence of resourcefulness shines through in the way Dai treated some of his patient's wounds. Ironically, lack of resources gave way to doctors using resourcefulness. The pedaling of bicycles kept lights on. Metal was used as surgical knives. Rubber insulation was used for intravenous tubes. Dai used whatever he could find, usually off of American bombs and equipment. Basically, American's trash was Vietnam's treasure. The ingenuity of these doctors helped save many lives. Had it not been for their creativity, many would have lost their lives or been unable to continue fighting for their country in which they were so passionate about.

Life in jungles was difficult, even for the Vietnamese. The issue, obviously, was trying to stay alive. In order to do so, the Vietnamese had to hide from Americans. Vu Hy Thieu got an insiders look into many aspects of resourcefulness in doing so. In order to keep American bombers from finding them, trucks were camouflaged by tree branches and smoke was sifted through a pile of leaves. Booby traps were set above propaganda for when Americans pulled them off the walls. These

ingenious ideas allowed the Vietnamese to press on in the fight against Americans. Such attention to detail, such as smoke, showed how much patience they encompassed. Their resourcefulness certainly helped in hiding when necessary, and killing Americans whenever they wanted.

The inventiveness of the Vietnamese people certainly gave them an even greater advantage fighting against the Americans. Not only where they fighting in familiar territory, but they had the minds of geniuses when it came to surviving with what they had at the time. The focus on the small things helped them in a big way. Such uniform thoroughness left them with a chance to go beyond American thinking, and hide in the spaces of their minds America never thought to look.

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The land we call free wasn't always this way, and in order to maintain peace and obtain what we Americans pride ourselves on, we needed a few brave souls who were willing to put their lives on the line. The following stories are about the people who had to endure the heartaches, the tough decisions and the courageous battles in order for us to live in peace and call ourselves Americans.

The north realized that winning the south was the ultimate goal for national unification. Many experienced the dangers surrounding the south. Many teenagers helped build the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The volunteer Youth Corp was founded in 1965, and it was they who helped build the trails in which to help the NVA move troops. The volunteers consisted of many teenagers who did whatever they could to help build. To me being able to just go out there, and build trails with so many dangerous situations really does take courage. Imagine eating whatever there is just to survive another day, and not knowing if it will be your last day on earth. To have many illnesses throughout the time of work, and seeing people you know just explode in front of you really does change your view in life. Having the heart to support your fellow soldiers, as well as the courage to know they might not come back is something I truly admire.

Reading "You Want Me to Start World War III" made me think that having to make tough decisions in part of war is just too hard for some, while others take the decision nonchalantly. People's lives are at stake with decisions that are made without thought. Sometimes you just need to stand up, and speak for what you actually think is right. Fullbright spoke up with his opinion, and not only did he seem like an enemy he was considered a traitor. I would have done the same just because bad decisions lead to bad consequences in which someone has to take the blame for, and I would rather have a decision that is made based on strong beliefs.

Reading what was happening was interesting, and I could only imagine the pain that was put on the POW. The human body can only take so much, and you have to respect all the POWs for enduring as much as they could to save the lives of others. I was surprised to have read that John McCain was an actual POW. Tiger cages, whips, and limestone were some cruel objects that were

used. I suppose any tactic that was used from either side was beneficial in order to get a leg up on the competition. Being imprisoned for such little crimes, and then tortured was hard for those who were punished. Then again in some of the stories it made the people who were being tortured come together and have more pride in what they really stood for. A lot of draft resisters were ridiculed just for not wanting to be involved in something they believed was wrong, unfortunately they suffered the consequences.

After reading about the tough decisions, and hardships that individuals had to endure it made me appreciate the air I breathe, the ground I walk on, and the freedom I have in this great country.

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I have chose to write about convictions. Specifically, people's sacrifices to uphold their convictions. By putting their beliefs above themselves, many people are able to commit their lives selflessly to their cause. This magnetic pull to do what they feel is needed through self sacrifice is heroic and courageous and makes me question my commitments to my convictions in my own life. Would I have what it takes to 'put my money where my mouth is' if needed? The people I have selected to write about did and I find all of their dedications inspiring.

Vu Thi Vinh was only a child of fifteen when she felt prepared to sacrifice for her country. She entered the Volunteer Youth Corps, even against her parents wishes in order to demonstrate her patriotism. By willingly exposing herself to constant danger, health risks and savage living conditions she proved that her convictions were stronger than any of these obstacles. As she describes the 'superhuman' tasks that were asked of these young women, I know that my faith in my patriotism would have been washed away during the flood season. Imagine the sheer will for a teenager to believe in her efforts so whole-heartedly that she found eating moss and fungus to be 'good' because she was so hungry. By not only exposing herself willingly to these physical hardships but by also maintaining her will and spirit during these intense trials, her convictions to support her country are given immeasurable weight.

Le Cao Dai also strongly believed in his passion of healing his country men, even up to his death. His life's work began in the French War but my focus is on his sacrifices during the Vietnam War. I can only imagine the driving force needed to compel this man and his team to travel by foot, carrying all of their own equipment, for two months to set up a very rudimentary and semi-functional medical facility in the middle of the jungle. Le Cao Dai was so dedicated to his work that he time and time again was willing to dismantle, relocate and rebuild his make-shift hospital to stay one step ahead of the US attacks. Not only risking his own personal health in the path of Agent Orange, he also was working on the 'front' where the most action was taking place and his life was in constant danger. This is where he was most needed so instead of establishing his clinic on the safer outskirts, he chose to deliberately move his hospital as close as he could, where he knew it would do the most good. This is a man who was trained to help people, to heal people, now selflessly placing himself in a war-zone

in order to help others. With limited supplies, horrible work conditions and even more devastating fatality odds, he gave what he had to offer and didn't give in until it was over.

Randy Kehler surprised me the most with his story of selflessness and determination. Coming from a very privileged life, his sacrifice could be seen as greater as he had more comforts to lose. He could have lived a comfortable life by continuing on with his education and becoming a member of his upper-class society. The war in Vietnam did not directly impact him. He wasn't at great risk to be drafted due to his I-Y status, he could have let that be the end of the war's impact on his life. Instead, he chose to take a moral stand against the war simply because he thought it was wrong. There was no direct personal gain for him, in fact, just the opposite. Opposing the war would create nothing but risk for Kehler. He left school, risked societal disapproval and eventually had his freedom taken when he was sentenced to prison all in the sake of protesting a war he did not believe in. I am not sure I would be willing to give up my freedom, my family or my comforts for two long and torturous years for something I believed in. To hold a conviction so strongly, with everything in him, Kehler proved that he was willing to sacrifice it all, even his freedom in order to do what he thought was right. By drawing attention to his cause by signing petitions, helping AWOLs, protesting and writing for the press, he placed his cause before his own life. This is the ultimate sacrifice for a conviction.

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determination

Webster defines determination as "the quality of being resolute or firm in purpose". I chose determination as my theme because it was a common thread among the three stories I chose to write about. I was able to read 40 of the 43 stories and came up with 9 themes to choose from. "Determination" which not only defines my personal view on the Vietnam war, but also relates directly to sheer determination of those involved in the conflict to believe very strongly in what they were fighting for. From central highlands, I chose "*Man, if we are up against this, it's gonna be a long-ass year*" by Dennis Deal. From Air War, I chose Fred Branfman's "*What would it be like to hide in a cave day after day for five years?*" And finally, for the Vietnamese perspective, from prisoners of war, I chose "*They tried to make us say, 'down with president Ho!'*" by Truong My Hoa. My goal is therefore an attempt on my part, to convince my teacher and fellow students why I personally believe this is the most coherent and reasonable theme.

Dennis Deal introduces us to Henry Herricks, platoon leader who when faced with heavy fire power, makes a choice of joining with the sister platoon. His judgment is put to a test when a few North Vietnamese standing up and shaking trees attempt to get his attention. It is sheer determination on Henry's part to go after the North Vietnamese. It is reasonable to assume that Henry knew the odds were stacked against him, because the author describes it this way "there were a thousand bullets coursing through that small area looking for a target-a thousand bullets a second". As determined as the men were to join Henry's platoon, so were the North Vietnamese, who as we have learned in part three of the text, strongly believed they were tactically superior to Americans.

Another man who was determined, and perfectly meets the theme of my story is Calvin Bouknight, the medic. Given the odds of survival in his platoon, anyone might have deemed the situation hopeless. In the heat of battle, we are told of four of the five men that he successfully treated. More important was his determination to protect his patients. He did this by placing his body between the continuous sheets of heavy fire and the man he was treating. He, in every sense of the word was determined to save another person's

life.

Another incident that stood out in my mind as full of determination and heroism, is the time during the heat of battle when Dennis Deal finds himself surrounded by four to six men dressed in mustard khaki. As he says it best,..... " I had this Darwinian type feeling-a survival- of- the -fittest type thing- which said, if you don't turn around this second, you are going to be dead". With determination and some measure of luck, he killed all of them. In this battle, 450 Americans of the 1st cavalry division were surrounded by three North Vietnamese regiments- a force of more than two thousand. It was fought in the Ia Drang Valley of the Central Highlands. It was through determination that the men of the 1st cavalry division prevailed.

The second story opens up with two opposing determination perspectives. On one hand, are the Americans, so determined to crush all outcroppings of communism in the region, that they resorted to secretly bombing northern Laos. President Johnson and his closest allies were so determined to stop the spread of communism in southeast Asia that they were willing to expend everything at their disposal including American lives, and yes, peasant farmers who were considered collateral damage to achieve what eventually turned out to be political ideals than the threat and destabilization and resulting imbalance of power that had been used to lure Americans into supporting the war.

On the other hand, are the peasants determined to survive the secret bombings of their country by digging L- shaped underground tunnels where they hid during the day for periods lasting as long as five years. The target of the bombings was able to elude the enemy by hiding under forest cover determined to not only survive the American bombings and their superior air power, but to tactfully prevail. The Pathet Lao, who were Laotian communists were the primary target of the air campaign. As the author puts it,....."The most disturbing legacy of the war is that we don't teach our children that our country is capable of conducting mass murder of civilians". The determination of the peasants and the Pathet Lao made them survive the American bombings.

The Truong My Hoa story opens with a very strong ideology and political commitment and determination to communism that, it would rival the commitment of any patriotic American to capitalism. She was committed to communism at an early age of 15 when she strongly started participating in the revolution. Her imprisonment, which lasted eleven years with a variety of torture techniques, didn't break her spirit. Her unwavering support of Ho Chi Minh is a

strong evidence of the communism ideology that she was ready to sacrifice her life for. Most of her fellow prisoners either died from the torture inflicted by the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, or were disabled through torture and punishment. Even though she was broken down with her determination running on the equivalent of an automobile on fumes of gas, they were not able to break her spirit nor, her political will.

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Loss of Innocence

Reading all these stories, it depressing how many young people lost their innocence because of the war. Whether Vietnamese or American, the war changed a lot of people's lives permanently. So much so that some were unable to go back to their old lives, relate to others and unable to forget that traumatic time. The war had such an effect that it stretched outside the battlefield in Southern Vietnam. The war went on to damage the lives of future youth as well.

The first story that struck me was that of Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy on page 105. In her story, she describes her time working on Ho Chi Minh trail. Even though she wasn't in warfare, her life was put on hold to work on the war effort. It's amazing how hard they worked to keep the trail effective. The descriptions of the conditions on the trails were unbelievable. I don't think I could even endured a week

of that kind of labor. To work to the point of having to be nursed back to health by your parents and only weighing 82 pounds and losing the ability to have kids is sad and at the same time amazing the limits some can endure.

The second story was Le Cao Dai's (page 138) and how the war affected the future Vietnamese lives. This story reminded me of the documentary "In Country: A Vietnam Story" were veterans that are members of "Friends of Danang" deliver medical supplies. While there, they toured an orphanage of children with birth defects. Even the survivors of the War can't escape the side effects. Survivors had to continue to battle cancer and deal with birth defects of their children. They have to deal with the destruction of their surroundings and their environment.

Jim Soular (page 156) says in the first paragraph that the Vietnam War hurt him. How his patriotism led to putting himself in a position to be drafted. He told of the adrenaline high which some never got over. When they had to pick up soldiers from the "incredibly dense and menacing" part of the jungle, the way he describes the soldiers. With their fatigues rotting off, and how one guy had scalps hanging from his belt. And how these "bad looking dudes" out in the deep jungle were young guys like himself. In his conclusion he says that "A day doesn't go by that I don't think about Vietnam-not just what happened to Americans, but what we did to Vietnam."

While talking to a vet recently, he described how at his age, he drank all the Kool-Aid. That not only did he "drink the cool-aid" but the youth recruited by the gorillas. That it wasn't until he was older that he started to question. It seems like on both sides, youth and patriotism kept this war alive at the sacrifice of that very youth. The youth who fought, grew up and survived by adapting to warfare. It's amazing how far the effect a war in the small country of Vietnam had. Long in both distance in time, the effect of the war continues to hurt youth in Vietnam.

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Jason Carlstrom

History 195

10/26/10

The Bloodline of the War

The Ho Chi Minh Trail was considered one of the great achievements of military engineering of the 20th century. It's intricate web of roads, trails, and waterways amount to over 10,000 miles in length carving through Laos and Cambodia to the front lines of battle. During the span of the war over one million North Vietnamese troops traveled down it and a countless amount of supplies and resources. The journey took anywhere from 3 to 6 months to complete, testing the strength and health of ever person who traveled it. Throughout Part 3 (Escalations) I came across stories of the Ho Chi Minh trail that described how it gave the North a key leverage in the war that I was unaware of. This key leverage came with great hardship for the young volunteers who risked their life while maintaining the roads. American strategist saw the importance of the Ho Chi Minh trail and made it a daily bombing target. The Ho Chi Minh trail was a War within a War as I see it. Without it the history of Vietnam wouldn't be the same.

The story of Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy; Part Three, 105-106 is an example of the Ho Chi Minh trail and the graphic images the teen volunteers witnessed. Each paragraph she tells is a moment of hardship with no light on the situation. I was hoping for a happy ending, but it wasn't there. Her story is the type that reminds me how nothing should be taken for granted. At such a young age she experienced things most couldn't imagine. "I saw with my own eyes a bomb drop into a shelter hole. Everyone stopped working and rushed there, screaming and crying...Our arms were smeared with blood. There were five people in the shelter. Four of them just turned to porridge." (105). I want to know what kept her going through the trauma, but she never mentioned what kept her driven. Was it the thought of her boyfriend after the war? Was it her young patriotism? After reading the story I'm left with all grief because how she described her time carving the Ho Chi Minh trail. Her story is a reminder of how the War affected everyone. Vietnamese, American, young, old, soldier, civilian. No light was shining on her

and her experiences and she didn't try to sugarcoat life on the Ho Chi Minh trail because it was a grueling time. Even though she came home after the war the Ho Chi Minh trail took her life.

Walt Whitman Rostow; Part Three 124-127 one of the leading "Hawks" in the Kennedy & Johnson administration and advocate of the American military escalations saw the potential of shutting down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to gain a quick victory. "A rational view would say the North Vietnamese couldn't beat us if we cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail." (126). It sounds like a good move and he proposed the idea to the president and other superiors, but was shut down by the rules of engagement. Rostow understood without the trail the North would lose supplies, without supplies the soldiers would weaken, and without soldiers the war was over. "If we had cut the trail, it wouldn't have taken very long to win the war because all the supplies came from the North. The Viet Cong didn't produce anything by themselves-not even a Saturday Night Special." (125). A version of his plan did happen, but it was by the South Vietnamese that were not equipped or strong enough as Rostow's vision and it ended in a entire division lose. You can't rewrite history, but what if Rostow's full plan went into action. Would it have ended the war? Or would it have drawn China into the war? Possible started nuclear war against China and Soviet Union? It's uncertain what the outcome would have been, but it all revolved around stopping the blood flow of the Ho Chi Minh Trail the lifeline for the North.

The story of Vu Hy Thieu; Part Three 190-194 was a little different than the others. He started from the begging on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and even though it wasn't the main focus of his story many of his life changing events happened while traveling it. His job as an artist brought him down the Ho Chi Minh Trail like the million other Northerners and experienced much of the stealth traveling to avoid bombing. But he witnessed a deadly bombing "I saw one convoy of four hundred people killed." (191). His time on the trail was five months where he lived primitively and packed light like everyone else. His story shows the resilience of the Northerners and their dedication to ending in victory. They used their creativity to survive "we learned to cook without producing smoke...we made necklaces and bracelets from the handles of pots and pans and exchanged them for food." (191-192). The willingness to endure harsh environments and circumstances for the good of the North shows the patriotism Thieu possessed and every other Northerner who traveled the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Reading about the trail and the events of death, sickness, and struggle makes me wonder why they put themselves through such a trek. I see it being for the Northerners a deep devotion to your country and being a spiritual

hike. The Ho Chi Minh Trail was the heart of the War.

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Jaymie Skeslien

History in vietnam war

October 30,2010

Assignment 2

" Effectiveness Of The Air Bombing Campaine"

My theme I chose to go with is the bombing and explozives that took place in vietnam war,that caused all the tragity's and Deaths in the Vietnam war. I chose the theme because all three storys talk about all the bombings and fatetilities in vietnam war.How effective the war is and the people in the vietnam war.This theme go's with the storys I picked the storys will help understand the theme I chose to write about.The effectiveness of inprisment and savivors.

James Thomson is the author in my first story of "You want me to start world warIII." This story and author relates to my theme by mentioning the war and bombing, I want to bring up president Lyndon Johnson, He is the one who lyed about the bombings and the war because he wanted to start world war III. Johnson acted like he was a good man and a man of his word. He lyed to everyone because he wanted to see a war happen. Johnson then announced he would send fifty thousand troops over to vietnam.He wanted everyone to think he was at peace, He tried to convince the world even his self. Johnson made all the threats of launching a major war.He even used obscenities toward everyone.

After reading the first story and writing about how they relate to my theme, I picked "Air war" author was jonathen Schell.United states tried to get the vietnamese to quit by causing enough pain and all the devastation they caused. Twenty seven thousand bombs were dropped on vietnam. The solution in vietnam was all the bombs,shells so they could make the other side crack and give up. In the south vietnam there was four million bombs that were dropped.Then there was all of the u.s helicopters that were destroyed by the vietnamese. American soldiers went over thinking they were just freeing and enslaving people.they had to drop bombs to protect them selves for one more day. We had a value system

till the vietnam came and destroyed it all. A **value system** is a set of consistent ethic values (more specifically the personal and cultural values) and measures used for the purpose of ethical or others. This story relates to my theme in ways of all the bombing and the hurt and pain. Here are a couple of pitures to go with this.Heres the author and a picture of bombs being dropped.

The last story was "Prisoner of War" This author is a vietnamese women named Truong My Hoa, There was Americans captured and imprisoned in the vietnam during the war. Thousands of family members would try to come see them and bring food and clean clothing. They would go to tiger Island to drop there bombs.Strings of thousand pounds of bombs were layed down by the B-52's. This would devistate the whole area.Then theres Johnson saying they cant bomb a out house without his permisson.But Johnson was the one in ther first story that lyed about everything and lyed to everyone to get a war started and to get what he wanted.Truong My Hoa was born into a revelutionary family Tien Giang was the her hometown. She was arrested in 1964. They accused her of disrupting order.they tried to use prisoners for bait during the vietnam war. Truong My Hoa hands and legs and her fingure tips were hammered with nails and soap water pored down all the womens noses and throats. These women in vietnam had it hard in there, they were tarchered and abused there. This story relates to my theme because of all the pain and hurt everyone caused to others. And just how messed up the vietnam war was back then its terrifying to me. The bombing campain that I chose for my theme is in relations to all these storys I wrote about including the authors of the stories as well the authors even suffered from some kind of pain from being in the vietnam war.

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Jennifer Wilson

Reading through several stories and picking three stories that have a common topic was not easy. There were so many good stories with great underlying topics. The stories I picked were, Jim Soular's from the free-fire zone Pg, 156, Luu Huy Chao a Vietnamese from Air War section, Pg, 212 and Porter Halyburton from the prisoners of war on Pg, 222. There are several common themes of these stories the devastating affects witch I thought to be too broad of a subject because war is hard on every one. But I also found it to be interesting that they all were pilots and this was a different kind of war that what was fought on the battle field running into the jungle with a gun. Their stories are slightly different in their own ways but all is the effects of being in a war and being a pilot.

First let's talk about Jim Soular. His story starts out with a positive note as do all the other stories I will be discussing today. The small town boy who goes war and becomes a pilot is a huge accomplishment to a teenager that might even drove a car before. Jim was a helicopter pilot and took pride in his job and he even says that he loved war and the other stories also have this in common. I thing that back in the sixties that there was not much of a chance for a man to make something out of himself or just to have an adventure I think this is how a lot of the men who joined the war seen this. I have also noticed that in all I my stories that

there is killing going on by the same side. Like with Jim he talks about one of the helicopters got shot down and every one died but later in life he finds out that the gun bent and the helicopter shot itself down. Then in these same stories there are two Americans and Jim in a room and one of the guys shoots Jims best friend in the face. The best part is when Jim looked up this boy's family after returning home. He finds out the military lies about what really happened so they don't look bad I guess. But after someone dies there should be no reason to lie to their mother about the way they died just to save your own ass.

My next story is that of Luu Huy Chao a Vietnamese pilot. I really liked this story because the first quote that the guy says is "Before I trained as a pilot I had never been in an airplane". This also seems to be a common trait for my three stories and for most of the people in this war on both sides. The person doing the interview describes over a dozen metals on Luu's uniform. This story had a lot more details of what really happened when you were up in the air flying for the Vietnamese. The description of how much better the American planes were then there's and that when the American gets shot down that the people on the ground will take care of him at the end of his story he mentions that he got to talk to a American pilot and he told him "we were only soldiers, we didn't cause the war" I think that this is a noble thing to say to another pilot. Luu did not affect him as much as my first story but the guy in my next story was affected more that both of the two stories put together.

My next story comes from a man that lived through so much

during the war and was there for so long. He too started life out in the war the same as the other stories. The events of this Porters life left him in a POW camp from 1965 to 1973. He started out as a pilot and said that he never really seen much action. There is mention of the free fire zone in this story as well. Porter tells us that you are not allowed to return home without dropping of your bombs first, so he would drop them in the free fire zone known as Tiger Island. One day porter was shot down and picked up by the Viet Cong where he is tortured. This is what happens to pilots that don't crash and die this is what happens to who crash and live. I wonder if they tell all the pilots of that time that was what's going to happen to f you crash and live.

The three stories that I just discussed have to do with the theme of pilots in the war. The run doing was from different sides of the story and American that becomes a pilot and Viet cong that becomes a pilot and what happened if you don't make it back to base every time you go out. There were a lot of similarities in these stories about the enjoyment it gave them to fly and do something for there country. And the tragedies of war Is something that will stay with you for the rest of your life no matter what you lived through or how bad it really was.

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During the Vietnam War, the world became divided by many different opinions on the subject of the United States fighting a "just" war in Vietnam. I do not believe in war. I believe that some people do deserve to die, but not on a battlefield as pawns on a chessboard while a small group of people try to outsmart each other. Throughout section three I read about the differences between the Vietnamese views (North and South) and the American views. After reading through the different interviews I did find one trace of similarity that the Vietnamese and Americans were both linked to. This bond they shared was the common relation that they "disagreed with the war."

General Baker Jr. was a conscientious objector around 1969 and did not support the United States involvement in Vietnam. Compelled that he will not be drafted for an "unjust" cause he said, "When the call is made to free the Mississippi Delta and 12th Street here in Detroit, then call me" (Appy, p. 147, General Baker Jr.). This man used his right given to him by the Constitution of the United States of America to voice his opinion even though he faced the consequence of jail time. This is a man who supports his country by speaking his mind even though he may be imprisoned for his actions. I find it amazing that this man said he will fight for his country, but not for a country that does not have a just cause to fight.

At the age of 19, Jim Soular, had been through basic training and three flight schools. Being a 19 year old flight engineer for a Chinook helicopter was a pretty large task for someone his age. Attending college was something he was not interested in at that time and he wanted to be drafted. He remembers, "I was a patriot. I believed in the flag. I believed in serving my country" (Appy, p. 157, Jim Soular). Graduating at the top of two of his classes and in the third finishing second among his class, he was by no means a dumb person. After one of his friends died in a bar shoot out Mr. Soular had to testify at the trial against the man who murdered his friend. Quickly Mr. Soular found out that a man, not qualified to fly a helicopter, crashed a helicopter and received 15 years for his stupidity. While seeing this man sentenced to fifteen years just trying to save a United States helicopter, the man who killed his friend received only five years for cold-blooded murder. Now Mr. Soular recalls, "Everything I'd been raised to believe in was contrary to what I saw in Vietnam" (Appy, p. 161, Jim Soular). Having a great sense of sorrow for what happened in Vietnam Mr. Soular can only show his frustration with the war. At the beginning of the war he might as well have been Uncle Sam himself; however, after his experiences he has a different outlook of the war, coming to believe that the war was not worth fighting.

"We were only soldiers, we didn't cause the war" (Appy, p 215, Luu Huy Chao). This North Vietnamese fighter pilot was a soldier who considered the war a dirty job and he got stuck in the middle of it. On page 215 of the Appy book he says, "The suffering caused by war is immeasurable. . .A dead soldier causes suffering to so many other people." As this statement continues Mr. Chao goes into further detail explaining that every person connected to a soldier is affected by the death of that soldier. I cannot imagine what it would be like to lose a friend to a war, especially a war I did not agree with. This man does not feel remorse for those he killed, but blames the war for the deaths he caused. In the final paragraph of the interview Mr. Chao ends with, "Now my only wish is that there be no war" (Appy, p. 215, Luu Huy Chao). This was a soldier fighting for the independence of his country who never agreed with the war from beginning to end. Throughout the interview Mr. Chao is not a supporter of killing people, and after his experience in the war he concludes that he would not want war to ever exist.

I always had the impression that there were the viewpoints of the Communists and the viewpoints of the Americans. I never thought to refer to the people who actually fought the war for their interpretation until now. Through reading these different stories I definitely felt a small effect of what these people were struggling through. It is very hard for me to believe that this war was fought by people who did not want any part of the war; however, they were forced to fight and they did.

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"Mistakes in History"

By: Jesse Long

Every country in the history of the world has made mistakes, whether you look at a still modern country such as France, England, or The United States etc. I could go down the line with many countries of today that many say the U.S. should model themselves after in many ways, and they all have made bad decisions and paid dearly for them. I know the United States for example has several including slavery, to the Monica Lewinsky Scandal, to obviously the Vietnam War. Every country in time has and will make mistakes, what is important is how we react to the situation. We can appose and disagree in either a respectable way or a way that disrespects and dishonors the country, we have that choice but if we can appose a stance of the country in a way that allows us to respect the country as well(not an America hating frenzy)we will learn from our mistakes and grow as a country for the better through committing of mistakes. I believe people learn the most by going thru tough times and committing mistakes, and I think it will be the same on the national level as well. The three stories I looked at to determine my point that countries make mistakes and that we must grow from it are: "From civil rights to anti war", "free-fire zone", and "they slept at our house".

In the story from civil rights to anti war they talk about civil rights movements and how they handled the way they were being treated. Julian bond talks about how many blacks turned against the war because they felt that there was no reason for them to fight and possibly give their lives and give the same sacrifice as whites when at home they didn't have the same rights and opportunities. I agree that blacks for a while in this country were treated unfairly and I can see where Julian is coming from in this story but I can't help but think that if it is so bad here why didn't they leave to another country where they think they would be treated better? I can sympathize however when I hear of the stories of even when voted in to office by the public several times a black man was not allowed. I don't think that is right. I think regardless of the color of someone's skin the person who is better qualified and better fit for the job should get the job. I think racism is nothing today like it used to be and that people need to get over what has happened in the past and realize it is acknowledged as a mistake and move on. I would like to think that if we reinstituted the draft that all men of this country would be willing to fight regardless of nationality cause everyone has equal rights in this country.

In the story "Free fire zone" Jim Soular talks of some pretty disturbing instances. I however believe that in war things happen and horrible decisions are made, but its easy to look back and judge someone's decision when you did not know what it would be like to fear for your life and because of that make a decision in the heat of the moment that would be looked upon as unacceptable. When people are in a fight they think of there own family and are going to do whatever it takes to survive and get home to their families. With that being said Jim talks about how he would fly into "Free fire zones" and extract villages from there homes so they would not be in harms way in the near future because if they remained would be considered VC. Little did we know that they had ancestors buried there and that they may have rather stayed behind? That is an obvious difference in culture and served as a mistake. They loaded the scared Vietnamese into the Chopper which was a machine never seen by these people before, it is not a surprise that they were scared. Because of this a scared man was thrown out of the helicopter at 60ft and it undoubtedly killed him. This looks as a horrific scene and probably was but I can also see that when a man fears for his life he will do things that he never thought he could do in order to ensure his own survival. As I said my theme would be, regardless of things in history we have to be able to overcome and get these things behind us in order to grow.

In the story "They slept at our house" Vu Thi Ninh talks about her volunteering to work on a road crew after lying about her age in order to be accepted. She said it was because of her patriotism that she wanted to help so badly even if it put her in harms way. I admire the Vietnamese for this. They did not complain and whine and try to skip out on serving, I am sure it happened but far less that the U.S. I think we as a country/people should learn from this. Even our poorest people in our country live better than the average over there, we don't live in grass huts and have to hunt for village food and the Vietnamese were more than willing to fight when back in the U.S. there were many trying to dodge the war. I think that we can learn from the mistake we made and learn from our once enemy and desire to be like them in that aspect. Don't get me wrong I love this country and would never want to live anywhere else and im more than willing to fight but many in our country could learn from the Vietnamese I believe. Life is all about growing and learning from mistakes.

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Perseverance, The act of persisting or persevering; continuing or repeating behavior. To me, an iron will, committed to finishing what you have started or not giving up. I chose perseverance because that is something in life I truly live by and value, I believe that with a little perseverance anything can be accomplished even if its not the outcome you were hoping for or the way you planned it, it still is rewarding in the end to know you have given it all you have physically and mentally. The people you will be reading about in the next couple of paragraphs show amazing strength and perseverance, the iron will in their heart shine through like a full moon in a cloudy haze. They are different races, ages, and genders, raised with different beliefs, fighting for a different country and yet the common thread that ties them together even though they seem worlds apart is perseverance.

Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy was a young Vietnamese girl, who worked in the jungles of the Truong Son as a youth volunteer for four years, during that four years she devoted herself to her country and beliefs knowing that years on her body and soul was going to map out her future and she would sacrifice things little girls dream of such as being married and having children, she was willing to take that risk. She was sent to Truong Son to build trails, She worked in the Quang Binh Province also called the " bombing capital." One day while under seven bombing attacks she saw a bomb drop into a shelter hole, everyone ran screaming and crying to evaluate the situation, as they were on their hands and knees clawing at the dirt, their arms smeared with blood, five people were in the shelter. "Four of them turned to porridge." They could not tell them apart, they divided the parts into separate mounds and buried them. They came across a young woman holding her child trying to protect it, they could not separate them so they buried them together. After that horrific sight, I am sure the emotions were pouring out of there body like water from a faucet, but they had craters to fill, work had to be done, there was no time to have a break down, they continued or persevered on as if nothing had happened. Working in the jungle took its toll on everyone, food was a shortage, and sickness was plenty. Almost everyone got malaria and a lot died from it, she too got malaria. She was told to eat a worm, it was a good "folk remedy" she said she was willing to do

anything to feel better and ate it without another thought. They lost their hair, had ghostly white eyes, pale skin, purple lips and where completely skin and bones. I see a frail, fragile, sickly, tiny woman who showed the strength and "iron will" of a stadium full of linebackers, who at their peak physical and mental strengths would not have the "will" to persevere as this woman in her sick moment. This young woman could have been considered for many different themes such as "strength", "commitment" "courage", the list goes on, however I felt like "perseverance" was the most fitting because she never faltered and continued on with amazing strength and devotion. She had accomplished what she set out to do.

Porter Halyburton was a "back-seater" in a two-man Navy F-4 Phantom, his responsibilities were radar, navigation, and radio communications to name a few. In October 1965, on his seventy-fifth mission, his plane was shot down over North Vietnam. He was imprisoned until 1973, eight years in captivity enduring torture, devastation, pain and on the brink of an emotional break down, this brave soldier persevered. This soldier was taken to many different POW holding areas, prisons, camps, cages, whatever they could possibly put someone in, he was there. Depending on if the soldier cooperated or shall I say "rolled over on their country" was the determining factor on how he was treated. Porter kept his honor and with that, the torture began. The conditions he was in were unthinkable, "ants, rats, mosquitoes by the ton." They would put a bowl of rice outside the cell and leave it there for hours until it had become infested with bugs, that was his dinner. He spent months alone with no other Americans and was getting disheartened. The constant interrogation and indoctrination alone was wearing him down, yet he kept persevering. It only got worse, the torture more brutal. They started by beating him, then setting him on a wooden chair for days, until he fell over from lack of sleep, food and water. After that he says "the torture began," like that was not already enough? They used a method called "max-cuffs" where your arms were pulled up behind your back and then they put these handcuffs on the upper part of your arm. Then they tied a rope around your wrists and pulled it up, Porter says he could actually see his fingertips over the top of his head when they did that. It pressed the nerves against the bone-indescribable pain. He says the psychological damage was worse than the physical torture, he felt like he had failed because he could not take no more torture and gave the Vietnamese a "report." not the kind of reports they were looking for though, with his mental capabilities still in tact he was able to find a happy medium and lie. This man is what perseverance is about, yes they finally wore him down, but they did

not break him. Through the years and countless times of torture and all he endured he came out with his sanity and his dignity. He persevered even when it would have been acceptable and only human to surrender. I can not imagine or fathom what he went through. In my head I keep seeing the bowl full of bugs, and nothing to eat, the hunger pains he was feeling. I can see a clear visual of the torture and how I am sure he wanted to cry, yet no one to comfort him or hold him close.

Dennis Deal, a young lieutenant in the La Drang Valley of the Central Highlands and a battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division, some 450 Americans. It was November 14, 1965 they were surrounded and attacked by three North Vietnamese regiments- a force of more than two thousand. Dennis describes what a beautiful day it was outside and how peaceful it seemed. By the way Dennis talks about his time there at the beginning I see this macho man, who was in for a rude awakening. Dennis and his platoon were ordered to move up this mountain, within a few minutes they could hear firing up front. Henry Herrick's platoon had come under heavy fire, Henry instantly held up his rifle like a true leader and yelled "follow me." His whole platoon broke ranks and followed Henry to where the Vietnamese were, that's the last he saw them, it was an ambush. Dennis platoon moved up to try and help. They got within a hundred yards of Henry's platoon, but the North Vietnamese just "mowed us down." Dennis and his men had to pull back with their injured. Dennis had to regroup and strategize so they could try and get to Henry and his platoon. Dennis endured countless attacks on him and his men, trying to persevere through them all. He was not going to give up on getting to Henry and his platoon. Can you just imagine ducking and dodging bullets all day? I can almost hear his heart beating out of his chest as he is crawling around to find cover. Not your typical days work. November 15th Dennis and his men were back at the task of trying to save Henry's platoon, another attack occurs but the perseverance pays off, they had had enough, Dennis and his men were fighting hard and at the end of this attack, there was no resistance. They made it to Henry's platoon, they were injured and traumatized but a few were still alive. Dennis and his men gathered them and got them out of there. Dennis kept going through the ambushes and the struggles, he was scared to death for his own life but was willing to do whatever it took to save the lives of his comrades. How many friends can you say would endure and persevere through something like that for you? I realize that was his job and his duties, but at what point is enough- enough? It boils down to perseverance.

So whether it be Dennis, Porter or Nguyen, these people showed perseverance to get through their struggles and continue on to what the objective was at the end of the tunnel, and if it was not for that they would have fallen with the weak.

I am proud to be an American. I stand and salute my flag in honor. I respect the men and women who serve and served our country, and any time someone will give there life to defend there country and its people, I stand beside them.

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Commitment stands for many things, but I perceive being committed to binding yourself intellectually or emotionally to a course of action, a purpose that you hold steady and true to. I am a committed person so when I choose to do something or commit myself to something, I do it. It's my word and to me it's as good as a written contract or agreement, you follow through. I have found in my life's journey and travels that commitment does not mean a lot to people and if they want to "quit" or "give up" they do so, maybe because things got a little rough or because they have changed their mind, I was not raised that way and I do not raise my children that way, it gets you nowhere in life. I have chosen stories that I believe show "commitment" even when all the odds were against them or the task at hand was way too rough.

This woman was a prisoner of war in her own country for eleven years, Truong My Hoa was 19 at the time of her arrest, the Saigon Military had accused her of disrupting order and political stability. She was officially sentenced to eighteen months but that turned into 11 years. Her commitment to her beliefs and her family ended up causing her grief, pain and suffering. She was put into a tiger cage about 11/2 meters wide and about 2 meters long, inside this cage housed five women who were tortured for talking with limestone and water, they were not allowed to shower for a year and had one set of clothes for a whole year. These clothes were used for many purposes including their sanitary napkins for their natural given female menstrual cycles. Many times they would end up naked and to a Vietnamese woman that was harsh. Yet for her commitment to her beliefs she did not cave in. Extreme torture was still to come, hands, legs, and fingertips were hammered with nails, they were hung barely off the ground, hoses shoved in their mouths, I could go on for a long time describing the torture she endured. She was committed in her beliefs and would only salute her flag. The prison wardens called the strong ones "tigresses" because not even the tiger cages could tame or subdue them. She was committed to saluting her own flag and could not be broken and absolutely was not.

Most people perceive commitment as being a war hero or a prisoner of war but in reality that is not always the case, Commitment in the Vietnam war came out in many different ways from the smallest of jobs to the biggest of jobs, and this next story will show you commitment in a different but not any less of a significant way, in the form of a 23 year old stewardess named Helen Tennant Hegelheimer. Her job was to transport soldiers in and out of Vietnam. The flights were long, and she knew a lot of these soldiers were not coming home. She tried to give them comfort and be their friend. At one point she started writing letters to some of them that had nobody, she bought magazines and sent them to the men while they were in combat. She listened to their stories and told them how "perfect" they were. Helen explains about how the senior stewardess position was to be at the top of the ramp when the men got off in Vietnam, but how she usually asked for a volunteer to take the forward door. All you had to do was stand at the door and say "goodbye", but nobody wanted that job. Helen always took that job because she was good at it and the men needed that. She never said "goodbye" or "good luck" she would shake their hand, look them in the eye, smile and say, "see you later" or "see you in twelve months". At that moment she says, "I was their wife, their sister, their girlfriend and in some cases their mother." that was the most difficult thing for her to do, but yet the love and commitment that she had for these men, sacrificing their lives for this country, she knew it was the only thing to do. It was the least she could do and she was committed to doing it right.

Sylvia Lutz Holland was an unusual case of commitment, she shows commitment to her job even in the most gruesome of times but she shows commitment to her country and its men even when her heart could have easily taken over, she was committed to doing what she was supposed to do. Sylvia was a triage nurse, serving for the 312th evacuation hospital in Chu Lai, Quang Ngai Province, Republic of Vietnam. Her job was to treat the wounded using a certain type of protocol, severity of wounds and injuries placed you how you were going to be treated, in what order or even if you were, some of the worst did not take precedence because their chances of survival were still slim. In a sense these nurses and doctors "played god" using the knowledge of the job and commitment, not their hearts or human instinct. She talks about the order in how they were treated but also the status of who they were, Americans first always. She talks about the blown off body parts and holes in people's bodies, the gruesomeness that went with

her job, but she always did it with a smile and as professional as possible not letting her feelings get in the way. The one story she tells that rings out in my mind, especially with her being a woman and having a natural born motherly instinct was the story about the Vietnamese woman was injured and pregnant. They treated her injury but moments later she was giving birth, that baby was born alive however premature but could survive. The doctor handed the baby to Sylvia and said " We can't waste the oxygen." Sylvia had to wrap the baby and throw it in the garbage. She knew that they had to save the supplies for the American soldiers. She did just that. If that does not show commitment to her job but first and foremost to our own American soldiers, I honestly do not know what does. That took a strong committed person to do that.

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The theme of my paper was kind of hard for me to come up with; I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do for the first couple of days. Then I finally decided that my theme would be on the failure of leadership and how it affected the outcome of the war. The failure of leadership affected the opinions and views of the American people and greatly affected the outcome of the war. The reason I chose this theme for my paper is because it was the thing that stuck out in my mind most of all.

The first story I read that I thought demonstrated my theme was that of Walt Whitman Rostow, one of the leading "hawks" in the Kennedy and Johnson administration and an advocate of American military escalation. Rostow believed that instead of fighting a war of attrition we should have cut off the supply line to the North Vietnamese and taken the city of Vinh hostage by an amphibious attack. Rostow made these recommendations at a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to the president Lyndon Johnson. Johnson did not take the advice from Rostow because he was influenced by what happened in the Korean War, when the Chinese entered. In this section of chapter three there are more accounts of Lyndon Johnson refusing advice from many of his top advisers and not taking criticism well at all, to me this is a huge flaw in his leadership and if he was willing to take the criticism better the outcome of the war may have been different. Johnson said right before he died that historians would argue whether he used too much strength against the North or too little and Johnson said "I have come to the conclusion that I used to little."

Fred Branfman told a story that was really astounding to me because he was one of the first westerners to expose the fact that the United States had been secretly bombing Northern Laos since 1964. The main failure of leadership that I believe happened is the fact that so much was kept from the American people. Our leader president Johnson wasn't upfront with the people, so when they would find out that our government had been lying to them they were expectedly upset and couldn't trust in what we were actually fighting for. I don't think that every fact and situation needs to be presented to the people during war times, but when the U.S government is blatantly lying about major military actions then something is very wrong. In this section of the book (pg217) Branfman talks about how he later found out that when Johnson declared the bombing halt over North Vietnam just before the 1968 election in November they simply diverted all the planes into northern Laos. To me this is a clear example of deceit and deception on the American people and is exactly what helped turn the view of the people against the war. And without the backing of the American people the war was unwinnable in my opinion.

The story of Truong My Hoa (pg228) is pretty horrific but amazing at the same time. She had to live through some of the most horrible conditions and

horrible torture that anyone could imagine. Hoa was arrested by the “puppet government” of Ngo Dinh Diem in April of 1964. The Saigon military tribunal accused Hoa of disrupting order and political stability. She was officially sentenced to eighteen months of confinement, but they kept prolonging the sentence and held her in prison for eleven years. The type of torture and captivity that Hoa had to endure was unspeakable; she was kept in a tiger cage for up to a year with no shower or any toilet obviously. And on top of that they would pour powdered limestone onto anyone who was caught talking. That is just some of the awful torture that many of these prisoners had to endure. The so called “puppet government” who was carrying out these atrocities was backed by our U.S government. When an American congressional delegation went to South Vietnam on a fact-finding mission they saw the mistreatment of the prisoners of war with their own eyes. It is amazingly sad to me that a government backed by the United States of America was able to carry out the horrible mistreatments against mankind that they did. We were fighting to stop these kinds of atrocities against mankind. In my opinion if we were going to take on a war we have to make sure that our allies are not carrying out those kinds of crimes against humanity. There should have been leadership to make sure that things like that never happened. As powerful as America is they should not let things like that happen on soil that they are backing and if they do it puts us on the same level as the enemy in my opinion.

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The Guts and The Strength throughout the War :

The Guts of the Vietnam War. The theme that I chose shows in a way that one has the strength, bravery and courage to go into some part of the war with the knowledge and the possibility of never coming out of the war alive. What I mean by guts does not actually mean the gruesome guts as body parts, or guts everywhere from a wound coming from the war, it is to mean the war was full of courage and bravery from many people on many accounts. The people that I am going to be talking about had the courage and bravery to step out of their comfort zone, deal with something out of the ordinary and/or step up into a zone that may have been uncomfortable or deathly terrifying. Throughout the stories I have come across, whether it be a wife of a protester to an actual soldier themselves have shown some sort of guts. I believe they all had guts of some sort to take action in what they were doing or what they had to deal with throughout the Vietnam War and had a lot of bravery in the certain actions they took or had to deal with.

The stories that I chose and the people I found that showed some sort of "guts", bravery and strength are ones from Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy, a worker in the jungle of the Truong Son as a Youth Volunteer, Anne Morrison Welsh, the wife of a protester and had to deal with certain aftermaths of his choices and then Porter Halyburton, one of the prisoners of war.

Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy was a person I found that had a lot of guts and strength to keep trucking a long. Throughout her adventures and experiences she had to deal with some pretty intense things that I do not think I would be able to make it through after dealing with certain things. The fact she had to go through seeing people she knew get turned into "porridge" and not be able to tell the difference between any of them because they were so blown up after a bombing is pretty harsh. I find it very impressive to be able to keep pushing through having to see someone get as blown up as they did. Also the fact they would work to their end, and got all sorts of diseases and did not get any sleep what so ever is pretty

impressive. I give respect to how she was able to push through after getting bombed multiple times, seeing close ones get blown up, lose hair and have gotten no sleep what so ever. She showed guts and bravery in not giving up and fighting through what she had to do.

Another person I chose to represent the "guts of war" aspect would be Anne Morrison. She is the widow of the man who killed himself to protest the war. The fact that her husband was a person that felt very strongly about the war and that he killed himself thinking that it would have made an effect on the war that was happening is something so crazy to me and crazy to think about. I cannot imagine going on after knowing my husband killed himself for something that was ineffective and out of his control. This is something she has had to deal with and the fact that her children were fatherless to something that shouldn't have even happened. This story hit home for me and I do not know how she has been able to do it. I recently had a neighbor do something very idiotic and selfish to try and prove something that was out of his control, he shot his two young daughters and then himself to get back at my other neighbor for wanting a divorce. My neighbor now has to deal with this horrific issue and I do not know or understand how she is making it through life... To me it takes a lot of strength to keep going after something like this has happened to someone.

The last story I chose was from the section of "Prisoners of War." I came across the story of Porter Halyburton and found by the certain accounts he had to go through that he must have had a LOT of guts to get through what he had to deal with. Getting shot down and being a prisoner is one thing, but getting torture for years upon years is another. Reading what Porter went through was gruesome. The fact that he was able to push through and go through all of the tortures that he had to go through is just tremendous. He was put through hell and back but he was able to fight through it with bravery and strength. Something I found as a powerful statement that he said was "what if you can't kill yourself and they wont kill you?" The torture was so bad that you would have rather been dead, but he couldn't kill himself and they would not kill him, but torture him enough to be on the edge of death but not quite there. I just find this to put me in awe. I cannot imagine people being able to go through this tragic, terrifying, horrible time and then being able to talk about it.

The stories I chose made an impression on me and I realize after reading these accounts that I am a wimp. I thought I was tough and have had to go through really tough situations and dealt with things, but no...after reading these stories, I have it good, and I

give much respect for these people that had to go through such tough situations, and came out alive. They have Guts.

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Determination and Courage

By: Kristin Maurer

As I read all of these amazing stories, I thought to myself, wow, I might just have given up. It takes a lot of determination and courage to do what these people did in the Vietnam War. They were very lucky to be able to live through it all. I found an amazing common thread between all of the stories. I can point out in almost every story where these people showed courage and determination.

On page 106- Trails to War, Helen Tennant Hegelheimer tells us her story. It is titled "I was their wife, their sister, their girlfriend." Helen was a flight attendant. She always wanted to be one since she was little. After reading her story, I thought, did she still want to be one after this war? It took a lot of courage and strength to fly those boys to possibly their final destination... ever. They may never come back. She knew her job meant much more than just assisting them in the air. Helen had a job of being the last face to a life that would never be the same. Forget about the F-4 Phantom escorts and the fear for her life by possibly being shot down by the enemy. She knew she had it easy compared to the rest. She needed to give those men the strong, courageous encouragement to go and fight, even if that meant their death.

Dennis Deal page 130, "Man, if we're up against this, it's gonna be a long-ass year." Dennis went into Vietnam thinking it was going to be so easy to win. I do not even think he thought about having to survive, it was too easy. He soon found out that he was in an environment he did not know and was going to have to fight for his life the way most people could not even imagine. When he landed in the central highlands, he had no idea what was coming. He was in one of the largest attacks in the Vietnam War. There he stood with thousands of bullets flying by per second. They could not even hear a plane go down, it was so loud. He speaks of how "it was so terrifying. I was terrified almost to the point of insanity. But what you have to do when you are a leader and everybody's looking at you is to figure out a way to pull out that extra millimeter of courage. All you need is one more millimeter than the guys around you and they're okay. But if you show failure, they're going to stampede." He got up enough courage to try and rescue the rest of his platoons. Most of them were killed. I think his strength and

courage is what saved him. He had a shooting standoff with five to six north Vietnamese by himself, he survived with not one single bullet.

Page 228, Truong My Hoa, "They tried to make us say, Down with President Ho!"

Her passion and courage is what kept her alive. She felt so strongly about revolutionary traditions. Her parents showed the way down the path to Vietnamese freedom from the French. Her whole family was so involved in this movement, they were all imprisoned totaling a half of a century. She felt resisting was the only way to achieve peace, independence, and unification. Truong was arrested for disrupting order and political stability and charged 18 months imprisonment. Her imprisonment actually lasted 11 years. She had powdered limestone poured on her that burnt so badly she had to cut her hair using a sharpened tin can. Beaten and bloodied, this woman held on to her life like most cold not. This took strength and courage to stay alive so long when I really have to question if I myself could have done what she did and survived.

Overall, there are three different ways these people had to show strength and courage to help, or survive in Vietnam. Coming from a flight attendant who knew her face was the last face of the past; to an American soldier fighting to save his platoon as well as his life; and to a Vietnamese revolutionist having so much courage and compassion to fight for what she believed in, even if it cost her life.

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In Christian Appy's book *Patriots: The Vietnam War*, the theme I have chosen for Part Three: Escalations is as follows. I decided to choose "Lack of Knowledge" as my theme for this part. By lack of knowledge I do not mean that they are ignorant or stupid, what I am referring too is that they are in the dark. They do not know what is really happening in the war, or they don't know about the combat policies or plans of the war. This lack of knowledge about the war, seemed to affect their decision making, choices, and views of the war. I believe if people had really known what had been happening in the war, or even knew the "reasons" we were over there fighting, they would not have been so supportive.

The first example of this lack of knowledge comes from "Trials To War". It isn't a specific persons story, but rather when Appy is talking about it at the beginning of the chapter. The first thing I noticed was that when they shipped new American soldiers in, most of them where completely unaware of where in Vietnam they would be fighting, with whom, or why. This just shows how the government and our army's did not tell people what were going on. I believe they kind of just brainwashed them to do was they were told, without telling them why. The second thing I saw was when Appy talked about how the soldiers would fly to war as if they were flying to a vacation. They would fly on an air conditioned plane, sitting next to non soldiers. They would fly with no guns or anything, like they weren't even going to war. I feel this was a way to trick the public into thinking we weren't sending as many soldiers overseas as we were, as a way to be sneaky and trick us. In 1968, our amount of soldiers in Nam rose to 536,000. I think because of the sneakiness in how they sent soldiers over, that no one really knew we had that many over there, and if people had known, they would have not been ok with it.

The second example of this lack of knowledge comes from the "You Want Me To Start World War III?" section. The story I chose was that of James Thomson, because I feel it showed a clear example of how the war generals exploited this lack of knowledge and policies of the war. James Thomson signs off on the colonel's armed reconnaissance schedule before he even knows what it is. He is told that "If it looks right to you, sign it." He signs it for the colonel, then after he leaves, he asks what armed recce was, only to find out it means armed reconnaissance. He then thinks armed reconnaissance meant that it was taking pictures, and only firing

back if fired upon first. He then says it took him quite awhile to learn what it really meant, taking pictures and shooting anything that looked suspicious. "Many months later I realized I was authorizing quite a bit of killing with no knowledge of what it was all about and it staggered me"(Pg. 116). This story makes me wonder how many times this actually happened in the white house, generals exploiting this to get war plans passed. It makes me wonder, who in the white house really knew what was happening over their in Vietnam?

For my last example I wanted to find an example on the Vietnamese side that showed how lack of knowledge affected them. I found this to be kind of a difficult task, but in the end I was able to find a few things. For this last example it came from the section "Air War". The story I chose was that of Luu Huy Chao. In his story, he says that before he trained as a pilot, he had never been in an airplane. This makes me wonder how often this was the case for the Vietnamese. How often did they take someone who had no prior knowledge about the war policies, or the war combat, and toss them into some short period of training, then throw them out on the battlefield. For Chao, I would imagine most of the training would have to come from in the field experiences. He says he shot down a plane that he thought was an American plane, and when they investigated the crash site, they found eleven Vietnamese bodies. This is a good example of how they took someone who had no prior knowledge about planes, and made him a pilot. He shot down one of his own planes because he didn't know any better. I wonder how many soldiers, not only Vietnamese, but also American, lost their lives because they were poorly trained and had poor knowledge of the specific tasks they were asked to do.

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Molly Graham

October 30, 2010

HST195: Assignment 2

No Escape

Not every American felt the same way during the Vietnam War as the next did. In the same way, not every American felt differently during it than their enemy, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, did. Whether fighting for communism or democracy, there were similar feelings of pain, pride and commitment on both sides. Many people involved in the Vietnam War were simply trapped, torn by inner emotions or kept by physical circumstances but unable to change their situation or escape from what was surrounding them. The world was closing in on them and all that they could do was press onwards; force themselves to continue, though their torture seemed endless. What is common to this diverse group of people is that they were put through misery which was seemingly both unavoidable and unending.

As a flight attendant for World Ariways which transported American troops into Vietnam and sometimes brought them home as well, Helen Tennant Hegelheimer said "see you later" to thousands of boys that she knew would most likely not be coming home (Appy 106-111). Her account is one of deep pain, knowing that the planes would drop off many young men but would usually leave empty and knowing that she offered a false sense of security to them. It is true that Helen was not physically trapped, as she could have quit her job and removed herself from the situation at hand. However, this repetitive task in which she was sending boys off to be killed was emotionally taxing on her. She had no control over the situation. She could not turn the plane around and send the boys home. She did what she could to make the soldiers feel loved but it did not stop their fate beyond the airway. The situation would continue on whether she was there or not so she might as well do what little she felt that she could. She sounds at times almost haunted by this time in her life, one where she was continuously given a full plane to deceitfully comfort and send on their way.

Nguyen Quang Sang, an artist and member of the Viet Cong, describes running from American helicopters in an area of South Vietnam without the cover of jungle (Appy 215-217). There was no

escape from his situation. The helicopters were so low that the ones on the ground and the ones up above could see each other's faces and all that he and others could do was to jump into a canal, where bullets were repeatedly fired at them and many died. For Nguyen, he was entirely exposed and vulnerable. There were no trees in which to hide and there was nowhere to run. This went on all day long, trying to avoid the fire from helicopters right above. It was also unlawful for anyone outside of the military to shoot at the helicopters so he was left entirely defenseless. Trapped and at the mercy of the door gunner's aim, Nguyen found himself in a situation that was entirely beyond his control; one in which he imagined he would never be able to escape.

Communist Truong My Hoa was imprisoned for eleven years by the South Vietnamese government, two years of which she spent in a tiger cage with other women on Con Son Island (Appy 228-231). This is an obvious example of entrapment as she was physically kept locked up by her captors. Her tale of pain and sickness and physical brutality is heart wrenching. However, Truong's experience was almost the reverse of Helen's as she was actually physically trapped but was miraculously able to mentally stay intact. She and the other "tigresses" never cracked under torture and did not denounce Ho Chi Minh for anything. Powdered limestone was poured on her. She was nearly naked and had not showered all year. She was beaten with electric whips, pounded with nails, and had soapy water poured up her nose. Somehow, her entrapment did not destroy her, as this inability to escape did many others, but instead seemed to even have empowered her, making her stronger and more devoted to her cause than ever.

It is not at all to say that these three people had the same experience. Clearly, the stories become more devastating as one reads through that of Helen, Nguyen, and then on to Truong. What is important though, is to see the ways in which their varied experiences could all contribute to the individual feeling of being trapped. Whether physically or emotionally, this sense of no escape, of helplessness of one's own situation, devastated those on both sides of the war.

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Nicholas M. Schultz

HST 195

Assignment #2

COMMON THEME: People/Government did not want to hear/ignored their accounts of Vietnam.

In section three of Appy, I was having a very difficult time pulling out a common theme from the different subsections of the chapter. The major point that I was able to pull out from the many different stories was that, in many situations, the teller's story was ignored or denied. In two cases, the narrator's stories were ignored by people that could have had a major impact on the way the war played out.

The first interview I read where this theme stood out was the narration by Ward Just on page 135. Ward was a journalist for the Washington Post that was out on a reconnaissance patrol with the "Tiger Force" of the 101st Airborne Division. His patrol was ambushed, taking a lot of casualties. Just was one of the casualties and was fairly badly hurt. In his retelling of the events, Just gives a very poetic narration of what he saw during that battle. It was a story that touched me as he did not appear to be a big supporter of the war and yet he had great respect for the men that he was with. The part of his interview that I saw relating to my recurring theme was that, once he got home, back to the U.S., he was invited to a dinner party at Robert McNamara's house where their primary objective was not to hear Just's story of his time in Vietnam. As Just tells it, he was only invited to "...give him a briefing on what he had failed to see during his year in the war zone".

In the interview of Seth Tillman on page 118, Tillman tells the story of his experiences working for Senator J. William Fulbright. The way Tillman tells it, Fulbright worked to persuade Johnson and Congress that the war in Vietnam was not necessary and that there was a different way to proceed. Unfortunately, Fulbright was not much of a politician and was not great at playing mind games and so many of his messages were brushed off. There was one point where Tillman tells how Fulbright made a stand against President Lynden Johnson and "Johnson was enraged. He struck him

[Fulbright] from the White House invitation list. They never had a personal relationship again.”

Quach Van Phong, who was interviewed on page 186, was an artist for the North Vietnamese Army during the war. He made wartime sketches for the North Vietnamese with anything he had. Sometimes, when a battle would break out, all he had was his spit, dirt, and a piece of paper to create his artwork. As Phong put it, “... a sketch of war must be done on the spot and immediately”. Later, when he took his sketches to the Fine Arts Association in Hanoi, they didn’t appreciate them.

In many accounts I noticed that, people who did not appear to be in full support of the war, were labeled as communists and traitors, most of them having their opinions fully discredited and ignored by people and officials who had some real opportunities to change the outcome of the war. If Johnson had listened to Senator Fulbright in any fashion, he may not have decided to make the U.S. such a large contributor in the war. If McNamara had been open to what Just had seen during his time in Vietnam, maybe the U.S. would have strategized differently before trying to confront the North Vietnamese Army.

What I gather from these accounts is that, this was a war where a lot of extreme and unchanging opinions led many of our leaders from all nations involved, down the wrong path and not enough weight was being given to the testimonies of the people who were actually in touch with what was really happening in the jungles of Vietnam.

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The Many Facets of Patriotism

The Vietnam War spanned 25 years starting in 1950 and continuing until 1975. During that time, there were many facets of patriotism. There were many different people showing their love and support of their country in diverse manners. The soldiers fighting the war were not the only ones exhibiting their patriotism. Many weren't directly in the fight, but did what they could to support their country. In *Patriots: the Vietnam War Remembered from all Sides* by Christian G. Appy, are three examples of the many facets of patriotism in part three of the book. The personal stories from Vu Thi Vinh (p. 103-104), Julian Bond (p. 143-145), and Bobbie Keith (p. 179-183) illustrate the many ways one can show their support.

The first story is of a young Vietnamese girl named Vu Thi Vinh. At just 15 years old, she lied about her age in order to volunteer to work on footpaths and roads to keep them in working condition for Vietnamese troops. She worked endlessly to clear the roads and patch them after bombings. She worked hard for her country. Without her work and the work of the other girls, the Vietnamese soldiers wouldn't have been able to get supplies. She often found herself starving and searched the jungle for food, but through all the hardships, she never quit. She never stopped supporting her country. Looking back now as she retells her story she says, "We were so young we didn't know anything, but our patriotism was very high. We went to war willingly (p.103)." I find it incredible that at 15 years old this girl was willing to volunteer to help her country. This girl's patriotism is strong, she wanted so badly to support her country and when she found a way she stuck to it.

The second story is of a young man named Julian Bond. Julian Bond was a black man who was passionate about civil rights. His attention turned to the war when a black veteran was shot in the back when he tried to use a white bathroom. This didn't sit well with Bond and he soon started to speak out against the war. He didn't agree with the United States involvement in Vietnam and was brave enough to let that be known. I believe that Julian Bond showed his patriotism by speaking out against the unjust. We created this country with the understanding that it was a free country and we could speak out. Bond loved his country enough to

speak out against its unjust ways. He wanted his country to stop fighting. He opened the eyes of many Americans as he brought forth evidence of unfair treatment of black soldiers. He states, "I think the civil rights movement was responsible for raising the percentage of Americans opposed to the war...(p. 145)." Although most would say he was unpatriotic, I feel that he was patriotic in speaking out for what he believed in.

The third and final story is of a woman named Bobbie Keith. This young woman of 19 years old started to do a weather show for the troops in Vietnam. Her and her staff always thought of news ways to liven the show up. She spoke of the things she would do such as dress up for Halloween or wear a bikini and she commented, "Another time I rode in on a motorcycle (p.181)." This young woman became an icon and something to look forward to. The soldiers loved her and often wrote her letters. She visited Vietnam a couple times and was always a moral-booster. Keith did all of this out of the goodness of her heart, support, and love of her country. She was never paid anything for what she did. This was her way of supporting her country. While some may think her effort was ridiculous I think what she did was perfect. The conditions in Vietnam were difficult for the soldiers. They needed something to look forward to and get their minds off of their tough situation. She provided them just that. I think her efforts are just as respectable as the efforts of anyone else.

There are many more ways to show patriotism, each as valuable as the other. There are so many different ways to show support and love for your country. Some people may not always agree with what it is that someone may chose to do, but it is about what is important to that person. I enjoyed all of the above stories and felt that they all showed patriotism in their different ways. They all did something to show how they love their country.

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Samantha McCourt

HST 195

Due:10/30/2010

Assignment 2

Throughout part three I was thinking about what every story had in common, and what this section had in common with the whole book. I believe this theme is coping. How each person is able to cope with the traumas that they faced. I chose this theme because of the tone of the voices I saw presented in each story. All of the people in these accounts sound as though they are explaining how they justified their own actions during this time, either in Vietnam or in America. Even though many of these people may not have known it, they were showing how they coped with their actions. Having to talk about their experiences again brought to the surface all the feelings they have been trying to deal with for years. How they cope is different for each person. They all have a little justification, some talk about how they entertained themselves and others about how they took action to help make things right. Coping is part of any war. Learning to live in any normal way after killing others or watching them be killed is always difficult. No matter which side of the fighting (even non-fighters like doctors and entertainers) they coped as best as they could.

Helen Tennant Hegelheimer did not have to fight on the ground, like many of the others in this book. "I never said "good-bye" or "good luck." I would shake their hand, look them in the eye, smile, and say, "see you later." (Appy, 108). She had an individual relationship with the men who fought in the name of the United States. This was both a way for others to cope with the idea of war and for her to find her own ways of coping with the idea of being a friend and confidant to men who may very well be traveling overseas to face their death, most certainly the death of others. "We were very aware we were sending them to war and that some would never come back. Threrin lies the guilt. I've spent a lot of time wondering if instead of distracting them I should have warned them." (Appy,109) One of her coping mechanisms is talking about what she did in order to try and make sure that she did what was right. Because she never sees the actual fighting, her version of coping is done in a way that deals with fear of the mostly unknown.

This means she copes by telling herself that she is going to be important, and she may well have been. Important to soldiers, which helped her deal with this job.

Chi Nguyen's story is similar to most of the doctor's whose accounts fill this book. He tells of saving the lives of people who had befallen immense harm. His story, on the surface, seems as though he is not talking about coping with the war, but in reality he is "Triage made me develop the bad habit of working very quickly. We neglected details. You asked yourself only one question: how critical is the wound?" He did everything quickly, only navigating by how critical the wounded person was. Horrible as this sounds for doctors to do, he was in a war zone and he coped by finding the best way to save as many people as he could, he says in the end of his section. "Our people endured so much over the years that being wounded was not considered the worst thing that could happen. We amputated the limbs of some men who even expressed relief. For them the war was over." He sees the wounds as a part of the war, the fighting of his people, he can cope by knowing that he is keeping these people alive by helping them, even if that is by amputating a limb, to help the war end for them.

Larry Heinemann speaks not only about his own experience before and after his time in Vietnam, but also about his youngest brother. Unlike many other people Heinemann doesn't cope by pretending things are justified, he tried to avoid talking about his own time there, instead he talks about what he did after to deal with what he saw there. He compares his own way of coping with that of his brother Philip Heinemann, who was wounded in the war, but had to return for a second tour, unlike Larry who managed to come home relatively unscathed. He coped with the war by coming home and trying to live. His brother did the same at first, but then disappeared. "It's not one of those things you like to dwell on. He was just not equipped to deal with this and took off." (Appy, 246) He says that everyone had to find their own way of coping, not everyone is made to deal with the kinds of horrors you see at war. There is a paragraph near the end of his story that I feel shows how he, and probably many soldiers feel after returning home and having to live in the world. "Something happened to him in the war that he just can't get around. There are a lot of guys like Philip who just bumped up against the war like a fly on a screen. The war was devastatingly brutal. This happens after every war and it really does depend on every individual's inner. After living in this wallow, how do you come out and reconnect with your own humanity? Is it possible to love someone knowing that you have done all these

things, and are capable of all these things, and have seen all these things?"(Appy, 247).No one is ever truly the same after and all that they can do is to find out how to cope and live on. He knows that this is possible, but that no matter what he does the war in Vietnam is always going to be with him, like a dark places on your heart.

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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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The theme I have chosen is values, the three stories I read all had different values on human life and war and what this means to certain groups. I feel that personal values made up a huge part of the behind the scenes there was so much more than what really was shared. I think the stories I chose scratch a little bit more off the surface than some of the others. I feel that the different perspectives on value connect the stories I chose. I will be sharing my ideas from the following stories: Quach Van Phong out of Morale Boosters, Jim Soular in the Free-Fire Zone, and Julian Bond in From Civil Rights to Antiwar.

The first story I chose was Quach van Phong from the Morale boosters section of the book. I found this expert to be truly special in a different light than any of the other stories I have read, he had a personal value that he chose to share through his artwork, images of the battles and the way of life. He contributed so much to the soldiers in the camps. He captured images from his own eyes and shared them; I think this was valued because it was a way to freeze the time and the moment, a way to capture what they were feeling from their facial and body language. The fact that Quach Van Phong was not taken seriously by some commanders and chiefs at other posts was felt when he was gone, he was a part of what I believe was food for their soul and partially a remembrance of why they were there fighting. I think it was a way for them to be proud and to be able to look back at these images and remember they are fighting for a way of life; they are fighting for their family and personal values.

The second story I would like to talk about was from Jim Soular in the Free-Fire Zone section of the book. Jim went from a gong ho flight engineer to questioning the value of life and machinery. I was truly moved from this story based on Jim's initial feelings of the war and his change of heart. For a man to have truly had a face to face moment to change their personal views on what they are doing in Vietnam. I found it moving that he was so excited about what he was doing and loved his job and had so much pride in it. I think he placed his self-value in it, to be in a chopper and to feel as one with the machine based on its sounds and movements. As you read further in to this passage Jim starts to second guess what he is doing in Vietnam and what is coming from his work here. I think he is starting to question his values and what is really going on. I feel

that when Jim begins to talk about his friend David who was murdered in Vietnam by one of their own people face to face I think this is where people cannot help but really look at their personal values. To then latter go to a trial of the murder and find out the country you are fighting for places more value in machinery then life must have shook this man to his core. I think that his values and everything in him must have been turned around and begged for reprioritization. To imagine giving your life to your country and to realize that maybe you are not valued as a human or that your value is low on the overall scheme of things would be devastating.

The third story I would like to analyze is about Julian Bond in the From Civil Rights to Antiwar passage. I chose to talk about this story because it is another struggle of values and self-worth. I found it moving to read of a man who is sticking up for his people in one of the most criticized fields in the war, politics. And then to add on to this struggle he is an African American, at this time in the world African Americans did not have equal rights and were treated as a lesser class. To read this story and to have some prior history on civil rights movements is suck a proud time in African American history. For Julian to be able to stand up during this already difficult time in the US and to speak out for equal rights and for values of African Americans is truly an act of bravery. I think that this is a true story of perseverance and value in another level altogether, to fight a fight that is not your own is an unrealistic expectation of any man. But to fight for a fight that is not right to begin with is not acceptable. I truly feel that this is a side of the Vietnam War that was not exposed as it should have been.

The reason I picked these three stories is because they are all uniquely different but they all have a heart to them and I think it centers on value. I think value is sadly underplayed in allot of the stories, to talk about something so personal and to remember your own value and the things that you believe in and to know what you are really fighting for is priceless. If everyone could establish and recognize the value in one another I am sure many a tragedy could have been prevented.

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In sports, everyone loves the underdogs. The word "upset" sends chills down a sports enthusiast's spine. Teams that are completely overmatched, in every category, should not be able to win or even compete. But for some reason it happens, proving that being better in every way that can be recorded doesn't guarantee victory. These rare victories are won with intangibles. In the sport world, intangibles are factors that can't be easily observed or measured. While reading section three of the book Patriots: the Vietnam War remembered, I am reminded of these underdog stories that I grew up watching. The American army had just about every military advantage imaginable over the North Vietnamese, including technology, funding, training, weapons and numbers. On paper most would predict a blow out, but somehow it wasn't. The Vietnamese somehow were able to go toe to toe with a much superior force and compete. What help even the tables were the intangible advantages that the Viet Cong held.

It seems like the US army relied on technology and tactics that turned out to be counterproductive in many situations. Some of their strengths became weaknesses and some of the Vietnamese weakness became their biggest strengths. The Viet Cong knew that there was no way they could survive a war of attrition with the Americans so they had to become creative. Using mostly guerilla tactics and a dedicated support force helped them overcome some of their short comings. In the assigned reading I noticed a couple sections that I felt told of both sides' advantages.

The section titled "Trails to war" describes the paths of soldiers from both armies to the battlefield. The contrast in the two journeys is revealing. The typical American soldiers were flown in by commercial airlines in air conditioned cabins. They were heading into an unknown land to fight an unknown enemy, unaware of the severity of the conditions that awaited them. The war was far from being a personal matter for the Americans, most of them had no idea where they were going and who they were fighting with.

For the Vietnamese, it was the exact opposite. The war was in their backyards and many had witnessed the horrors of war before ever getting to the front lines. Their paths were not in airplanes, but by foot on trails carved by civilians from bombed out villages. The trails were bombed and destroyed and rebuilt regularly. In one of the stories Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy, a road worker, talked about how an unexploded bomb was too close to a bridge. There was so many who volunteered to destroy the bomb that they had have an essay

contest to determine who would get the privilege to perform the dangerous task. These circumstances would provide a tremendous amount of resolve for the average Vietnamese soldier. While the US soldiers were wondering why they were there in the first place and missing home the Viet Cong were fighting for their homes. They were cornered and willing to fight to the end.

The Air War is another example in which the US had a technology advantage but was neutralized by the intangible factors of the Vietnamese. The US dropped more than three times the amount of bombs in the Vietnam War than in all of World War 2. Unfortunately for the Americans, the heavy bombardment gained them little advantage. The problem was that Vietnam had such a weak infrastructure that there were few high profile targets to destroy. They figured that if they continued to bomb, the will of the Viet Cong would break but with every bomb dropped the more support the North gained from the southern villagers. By the end, it would seem that the air raids did more harm than good for the American cause.

An example in where the Viet Cong played to the Americans strengths is in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The highlands split North Vietnam from South Vietnam and if the Americans controlled it, they could easily control important supply lines. The Viet Cong was willing fight the US head on to try to gain it. This is like going toe to toe with Sonny Liston and one of the few times the Americans could fight without searching the jungle for the enemy. Although the battle was horrific on both sides, the Americans could claim victory with the Viet Cong losing almost 10 times the amount of soldiers. A face up ground out battle played perfectly to the US technology and training advantages. This was one of the first and few times the Viet Cong was willing to fight large force versus large force. In such warfare, the Viet Cong lost their intangible advantages.

As history teaches us, what should happen doesn't always. Wars can be won by factors not seen or felt. I think the Vietnam War was a great example of this. The fact that an army of starving troops held off the most powerful army in the world is an amazing testimony to the intangibles that can make a big difference. Sometimes the underdog can pull it off.

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At the heart of every war is fear. Fear manifests itself differently through every individual. Fear can make one man a coward and another man a hero. In war sometimes one's greatest fear is the fear of failure. When a soldier is getting ready to deploy, a lot of times his/her greatest fear is the fear of the unknown. How people deal with their fear can define them as a person. As I read through part three of "Patriots" it became apparent that fear was one of the biggest elements entwined in the Vietnam War. When I step back and look at the war as a whole I can see how fear played a major role in every facet of the war. The fear of communism was the biggest reason we went to Vietnam in the first place. The fear of losing was the biggest reason we stayed for so long. The fear of more troops dying, and our nation revolting was one reason why we pulled out. The reason I chose fear as my theme for this paper is because fear was at the foundation for almost everything that happened in the Vietnam War. Fear can be positive or negative, depending on how one reacts to it. Franklin Delanore Roosevelt once said, "The only thing to fear is fear itself." As I read these stories I realized how true his statement really was.

Helen Tennant Hegelheimer's story revealed a lot about how fear was at the center of the soldier's mind. She also showed that fear was very much a part of the people's lives it was to support these soldiers. She said that, "Our real job was to distract them at all costs, to get their mind away from where they were going. If that meant flirting with them a little bit, so what?" I enjoyed her perspective because she was some one who saw soldier's fears everyday. She saw how different soldiers would react to their fear of the unknown as she states that, "I saw eyes full of fear, some with real terror. And maybe this sounds crazy, but I saw death in some of those eyes. At that moment, at the top of the ramp, I was their wife, their sister, their

girlfriend, and for those troops who had no one else-and there were many-I was their mother.” The women in her crew dealt with fear by sometimes crying when the soldiers left, or drinking themselves under the table when they got to Japan. “We never showed any emotion in front of the troops but we sure drank a lot when we got back to Japan. We substituted booze for crying.” This substitution she talks about was prevalent in Vietnam as well as back home. Drug use or alcohol use is one way to cope with fear. Her story also showed that a fear of going home was also very common in soldiers. When people think of war they usually assume that a fear of the unknown means going into combat, but one dark truth about war is that sometimes coming home is even harder, and her story did an excellent job of portraying that. The fear of coming home is captured in her story as she claims, “They weren’t just afraid of swearing in front of their mothers; they were afraid their mothers would be able to tell everything they had done in Vietnam. I think this was a big reason why so many veterans just shut down and wouldn’t talk about the war to anyone.” Hegalbeimer’s account was holistic in how it portrayed the face of fear. Her account showed that fear has many faces, and that people react differently when fear comes their way.

In my Psychology class we looked over what is called the “fight or flight response.” It occurs when someone is faced with something that threatens them. As I read Dennis Deal’s account I thought about how fear can turn some men into heroes and others into cowards. He talked about how a leader should react to fear, and why it’s so important. He admits that, “It was terrifying. I was terrified almost to the point of insanity. But what you have to do when you’re a leader and everybody’s looking at you is to figure out a way to pull out that extra millimeter of courage. All you need is one more millimeter than the guys around you and they’re okay. But if you show failure, they’re going to stampede.” As he shared multiple examples of bravery, I noticed that he discussed one element fear I hadn’t thought about, and that’s how fear

can be directed into a persuasive weapon when one shows that he/she can stand up and face it. Displaying fear produces fear. Displaying no fear drowns fear. My point is that the only way fear spreads is if it is displayed, if it is hidden, it will vanish. Dennis Deal's story supports this theory.

A few years back I was at Fort Bragg, and my unit was going over what one should do if they became a P.O.W. I thought about the training I received as I read the last story I will discuss, and that's the story of Truong My Hoa. I remember how I was taught to avoid giving up any information to the enemy at any cost. Truong My Hoa was a perfect example of the dedication a P.O.W. should display while being detained. It's also a perfect example of an individual finding a way to cope with fear. I can't think of anything scarier than being detained by the enemy and tortured during a war. The way she dealt with the situation shows that one can smother fear even in the worst kind of circumstances. "Over the years I underwent a lot of interrogation and torture. I was beaten with a police bludgeon and an electric whip. My hands were put in an electric vise. My hands, legs, and fingertips were hammered with nails." Her story shows the darkest depths of fear. Her story also shows that even in the most extreme circumstances, one can overcome their worst fears and be courageous. Once again, it has a lot to do with how much fear is displayed by the individual. Displaying fear produces fear. Displaying no fear drowns fear. Truong My Hoa showed that even the worst things imaginable don't have to produce fear if you don't let them.

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Mistaken

The reason I chose the theme mistaken was that I feel after what I have read that we had mistaken the Vietnamese for who they truly were. We did a lot of stereotyping and grouping between "communists" or "villagers". I also feel that we mistook them for a gullible people that we could manipulate, not necessarily to our advantage-we might have been just trying to help them. None the less, we thought that we could establish a system similar to our own in their country, and it's obvious we didn't even fully understand what they wanted for their country. As the name of the theme implies, many agree that American involvement was a mistake.

Through all the efforts made to arrange for American involvement in the war, the war brought no agreeable solutions. By efforts I try to consider all the strenuous exertion from all involved, as well as the wasted tax-payer's dollars, and loss of American and Vietnamese lives. The section of Appy's Book called "Trails to War" puts this theme into perspective. For example, it describes how the soldiers must have felt sitting on a flight going half way around the world and not even knowing where in Vietnam they would be fighting. Also considering efforts such as building six seaports, and dozens of other military zones such as airfields, which all cost money and lots of it. Although my theme is an obvious one, trying to consider in total the efforts that it takes to go to war half way around the world opens it up to be self explanatory.

Another account for the regret felt about the war comes from the story told by Jim Soular titled "Free-Fire Zone". At the end of the story he admits, that there has never been a day that he didn't think about Vietnam and feel sorry that it occurred. Not just did he lose one of his best friends to a drunken murderer, but he had regret and sorrow for what the citizens of Vietnam went through as well. This is another story that fills me with regretful emotions when I read it.

When reading through the section in the book "Air War" I get the same general feelings about whether or not the war in Vietnam was a good call or not. Imagining all the defoliants being ejected over the hills and valleys of South Vietnam, killing all the natural and cultivated vegetation doesn't give me a good picture. Additionally, imagining all the tons of bombs that were dropped on South Vietnam is unbelievable. Trying to conceive all the combined efforts, losses, and aftershock of this war, the overall feeling I get is that it was all a mistake.

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Decisions

The Vietnam War was made up of many decisions. Ranging from the president and his people making the "big decisions", to the soldiers making decisions that would hopefully allow them and sometimes others to survive another day. From this section 'Escalations' in the Appy book, I took three accounts that show these different type of decisions. Because the decisions that were made in these three accounts are so different, I am choosing to analyze there decision making in different ways, specific to them.

The first story I will analyze is the story of James Thomson, the special assistant of McGeorge Bundy. I chose this story to support my theme of decisions because James had to decide if he was going to allow the armed recce proposed to him every week to go through. I will judge Thomson's decision making on two points; How well did he understood the situation at hand and did he make a well educated decision. What got to me in this story is that James was the man in charge when it came to armed recce. He admitted he wasn't sure exactly what it was, yet he made his own assumptions. In doing so, he had no idea what he was condoning. Therefore this proves that he clearly didn't understand the situation at hand. Because he didn't understand, it makes the next point of whether or not he made a well educated decision quite obvious. He

did not. This is a scary thing to find out. The fact that even a man in charge can make decisions as careless as this makes me wonder how many other decisions in the Vietnam War were made out of lack of understanding.

My next story I chose is that of Chi Nguyen. This story is out of the section triage. The definition of triage is the system of sorting patients for treatment according to the severity of their wounds. Many times this left people with the decision of who lives and who dies. I believe any of the stories out of this section would go along great with my theme of decisions but I chose this one because Nguyen describes it best with these words; 'I remember walking around with a clipboard saying, "this one will go first, this one will go next, and then this one." I felt I held there destiny in my hands and it was a very, very painful situation.' A very painful situation, because of very difficult decisions. As unfortunate as the triage system was, I believe it was the best and only way to help these people make such significant decisions. They had to be logical and that meant putting emotions aside. Therefore I say the decisions Nguyen, and all the others in the same situation, made were the best that they could have done.

My final supporting story is Porter Halyburton's story of his time in a POW camp. I chose this story because it shows a different part of the war with different decisions to be made. A part of the war that is hard to understand completely unless you've been in that situation. I point this out because I want to focus on his decision to talk with the interrogators. Some might be quick to judge him as weak or comment on the fact that he gave up too soon. But if you

weren't there, I don't think you get to have a say in whether he made a poor decision. He did what he could to survive. And it came with a most guilty feeling on his part. I think the first time he spoke the words "*bao cao*" he had finally made his decision. And it devastated him into a depressed state. Analyzing his decision I've decided that he made the best choice. That is because even though they shared information, it wasn't always the truth. Because of that he was able to sustain less torture and give away minimal information. He made the best decision out of the worst situation.

Decisions were a huge part of the war. All these stories are here to show the common-thread of decisions that were made in these individual stories. All three fully support my theme and I hope they gave a good look at the different types of decisions that had to be made in this war.

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Todd Lowry

History of the Vietnam War

Assignment #2

During the Vietnam War, while militaries were engaged in open warfare, there was another group of soldiers and civilians trying desperately to save lives and provide healthcare, often under grueling harsh conditions. Some worked under the umbrella of America's nearly limitless resources; some worked in jungle environments with a trickling supply source; still others toiled in prisons, desperately trying to preserve their fellow prisoners' physical and mental health. The work these men and women did, on both sides of the conflict, was heroic. They showed compassion for their fellow man, courage and determination, and they saved the lives of thousands of sick and wounded people, sometimes even those of their enemies. As a former paramedic, I found the theme of the challenges in providing healthcare in Vietnam was clearly depicted in several accounts in Part Three of Appy's book.

David M. Smith (167-170) worked as a surgeon at the Naval Support Activity Hospital and at sea on the USS Tripoli. He also went out with combat troops on occasion and was decorated for practicing medicine on the battlefield during Operation Meade River (167). Smith's interview with Appy is delivered with the steely matter-of-fact attitude common to most surgeons, until the he talks about visiting the Vietnam War Memorial (170). Only then can we get a glimpse of the gravity and personal impact of his experience. He had a strong respect, even a love, for the combat soldiers he was treating and that was not lost in his interview. He did all he could for those wounded soldiers, no matter their condition.

Smith describes in detail the gruesome realities of fighting a guerilla war with the North Vietnamese. The injuries suffered by American soldiers resulting from mines and improvised explosive devices were nothing short of horrific. Yet, despite the nature of these injuries, an astonishing ninety-five percent of the casualties who made it to surgeons within thirty minutes survived (169). I think this represents a positive aspect of the highly mobile, helicopter-based tactics adopted by the U.S. military in Vietnam. Just as the military was able to quickly deliver troops and supplies onto a battlefield, they were also able to get wounded soldiers out and into the hands of surgeons quickly. Had we been fighting a more conventional war, I think mortality rates would have been much higher. The war also provided surgical training for doctors unparalleled in civilian life (168). The streams of casualties led to new and advanced surgical

procédures. From my experience working with modern trauma surgeons, I know that some of these procedures are still used today.

It is interesting to me that not only did American doctors operate on American soldiers, ARVN troops and civilians, but they were also expected to operate on enemy combatants. As Smith concedes, however, their treatment of wounded enemy soldiers was hardly a noble endeavor. Smith states, "I must confess that I had a great difficulty understanding why we had to perform surgery on people who were trying to kill us ... I really didn't like it, and wasn't doing it for an altruistic reason" (169). Even so, American surgeons were expected to treat anyone who made it to their operating rooms, regardless of their affiliation. As challenging as delivering healthcare was for American medical personnel, soldiers in Vietnam still received a level of healthcare unparalleled in previous conflicts.

Le Cao Dai (138-141) was a physician working for the Viet Minh during the war. His war started with the French in 1966 and continued through the American involvement until 1974. Dai directed the largest jungle hospital located in the Central Highlands. The difference between Dai and Smith was that Dai's hospital was made up of some 250 hand-dug bunkers scattered throughout the jungle. Unlike his American counterpart, there was no rotating back to the world after completing a tour. Dai would stay for the duration of the war.

Dai's story related the fierce determination of the Viet Minh in support of their cause. Dai did not have a monolithic government with seemingly unlimited resources supporting his efforts. Provisions and medical equipment were in short supply, if they had them at all, and only their ingenuity and ability to improvise allowed them to practice effective medicine. Dai gives a stunning account of the shortages when he says, "We didn't even have scalpels or other surgical instruments. We fashioned our own out of used scrap metal from unexploded American bombs and shell casings or pieces of aluminum from planes that had been shot down" (139). Not only did Dai cope with those massive shortages, he had to move his hospital regularly to avoid detection from Southern forces and America's overwhelming air power. Because of the conditions under which they worked, the majority of the patients in the jungle hospital were suffering with disease and infection, malaria being the most prevalent (139). Reading Dai's story, I got a real sense for just how tough an enemy America was facing. The Viet Minh were amazingly industrious and met medical challenges with a gritty determination unlike anything I can imagine. I came to understand that in their minds, they were going to win, no matter the human cost or self-sacrifice it required. They would deliver the best healthcare they could, no matter how challenging the conditions they encountered, for as long as it took.

Porter Halyburton (222-227) flew an F-4 Phantom for the U.S.

Navy. In 1965, he was on a bombing mission over North Vietnam when he was shot down and became a prisoner until 1973 (222). Halyburton refused to cooperate with his captors and as punishment was sent to care for a wounded American flyer, an African American man named Fred Cherry. The Viet Minh mistakenly thought that racial tensions between the two captives would serve as a punishment for Halyburton and he was told, "You must care for him, you must be his servant" (224). Ultimately, however, the two men became good friends and saved each other's lives. Halyburton was tending to the wounded Cherry, and as a result, he found real purpose in a terrible situation. Cherry on the other hand, while he credits Halyburton for saving his life, was responsible for preserving Halyburton's mental health (224). I felt for Halyburton because he was tending to a terribly injured man, when he had no real medical training or supplies. This part, as well as the rest of his story, gave me insight into how captured American soldiers took responsibility for each other's physical and mental health while in captivity. They worked together to maintain and support each other under the torturous conditions found in North Vietnamese prisons. The roles American prisoners played in preserving each other's lives and sanity were just as important to their survival during the war as professional medical attention.

While these three stories clearly outline the difficulties of providing healthcare during the Vietnam War, they do not cover the broad scope of adversity faced by providers. Delivering healthcare was a challenge on all sides of the conflict. Weather, terrain, tropical disease and unsanitary conditions also played a part in adding to the strain on those administering medical attention to people in need. The men and women in Vietnam who provided healthcare, whether professional or untrained, showed remarkable humanity in an otherwise inhumane environment.

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Paper 2

Zealotry

Growing up during the aftermath of September 11th, I am able to see the effects of zealotry firsthand. After the terrorist hijackings occurred, America came together in a wave of fanatical patriotism. Parallels between our war today and the Vietnam war are numerous but none I find more fascinating and important than zealotry. For my generation, America solidified for a time before splintering off into the pro-war and anti-war movements just as it happened in Vietnam. The one recollection I recall the most from our readings is also a prime example of zealotry. In Charles Cooper's recollection where President Johnson explodes in a tirade of outrage at the idea of starting World War III, Johnson appears to be so blinded by his own fury and pent up rage that he can't even think straight. In that one instant, nobody can pretend to know what it felt like to be President Johnson. But at that point the only thing I see is a man caught in the wave of his own war, unable to break the surface, unable to breathe.

Throughout all of the readings that we were assigned, there were many different themes and points that seemed to tie together through all of the stories, but zealotry is the only one that really stood out to me with any real tangibility.

My first selection is from the section Trails to War, and is Nguyen Thi Kim Chuy's recollection. Chuy's memories evoke a sense of despair and finality that are hard to bear upon reading. Her life seems so average for people on the North's side during the war. With literally 5 people eradicated by a bomb in front of her eyes, her abject horror takes the backseat to her duty to her people and the job they have given her. Chuy and the other Youth Volunteers gave up their love lives, health, and frequently their actual lives in their fanatical battle against the south. Chuy wasn't even an actual soldier, yet here she is zealously giving up everything she has in the name of her cause.

My second selection is James Thomson's. The Vietnam war is one of the most controversial topics in recent history and people like James Thomson only ignite that fire of controversy even more. How is an aide to an elected official given so much power without even knowing or understanding what it is that he really is doing? This account boggles the mind and makes me unable to think about what this means for our government now. I am ashamed of Thomson for him being unable to realize what was actually happening, however, his zealousness for peace later on I do approve of. The dichotic pro- and anti-war movements are both given up to fanaticism. Zealousness by one side, say, the numerous people who were so pro war that they couldn't take the time to explain to Thomson what was really happening, is countered by the equally fanatical anti-war movement in the form of his friend Jonathan Mirsky and his students blocking a bus of draftees.

Zeal is around us in all of our lives a part of all of us. My generation can use the thousands of soldiers that enlisted in the armed forces after September 11th as an example of zealotry. On the other hand, there are just as many people whose families lived through the horrors of Vietnam and feared for their children's lives and the thought of a new draft who fervently fought the war with every ounce of gusto they could muster. Being dedicated to a cause does not make it a worthwhile cause by any means, as you can have fanatics on both sides of a war who both believe that what they are doing is right.

My final selection is from Julian Bond. I found the point of view of a person of color to be incredibly fascinating as I had never really given that a huge amount of thought. The final quote at the end of the selection by Muhammad Ali, "No Viet Cong never called me a nigger," was brilliant. I found this to be an eye opener as all of this is happening during the era of civil rights. I like how the minorities were divided as what to do with the Vietnam war and how to go about handling it. It seems that maybe half wanted to announce their firm unsupportive stance of the war, while the other half fervently wanted to not not lob in their cause with the war and wanted to stay completely out of the governments way.

Throughout this war and all wars there is always going to be a wave of fanaticism one way or the other. It is as much a part of history as is the war itself. When you look back at Vietnam, you see Lyndon B. Johnson who was arguably a man of peace before the war, transformed into a caricature of his own over enthusiasm for the war. Zealousness is ever around us, and firmly embedded in to

the annals of history.

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In the dictionary there is no definition for inner strength, it is a difficult thing to describe. The best way to think about it is in the words of this poem written by an unknown author. "It is by trial we find, all that we are capable of, the strength which lies beneath. We are not defined by our trials, but how we face them." That is it concisely; when life gives you lemons make lemonade or make grape

juice to make the world wonder how you did it. All of these are anecdotal descriptions of inner strength but it does not show what it

really is. I picked this theme because the women I read about in these

stories touched me with their strength. Being able to say goodbye with

a smile to people who are most likely going to die, helping wounded soldiers and not cracking under extreme conditions not all of these things are in an average day. It is not something that many people, let alone myself get to train for and yet it is possible. It is the type of person I want to be. I can face any obstacle that crosses my

path because of who I am on the inside, just like the women in these

stories.

"I was their wife, their sister, their girlfriend." That is the first piece of Helen Hegelheiner that we get to see. During the war, she was

a flight attendant. Everyday when she went to work soldiers would give

her letters to read that were for their girls back home. The soldiers talked to her and the other flight attendants on the flight over to Vietnam, which is a long flight so it is easy to get friendly with people. Once in Vietnam the soldiers would get off the plane, and possibly never get the chance to get back on another one to head back

home. Helen was the one who said goodbye to them. She looked them in

the eye, smiled and said, "See you later." While other women hid away

in the bathroom and cried, she faced them. She is an example of inner

strength because it took guts to smile at a soldier who may never get

to go home especially when at the end of the day she did. Nevertheless, she chose to be the one to say farewell, even though it was hard and painful. It is something that I am not sure that I could do.

"We saved their lives but what life?" Sylvia Holland was an Army nurse in Vietnam; instead of fighting the Vietcong, she fought wounds, both physical and mental ones. Here, at home in America today many people have a hard time making eye contact with people who are disfigured. This woman, however saw them everyday, she talked with them and touched them. There were those who lost their arms or their legs and even some who had nothing but a torso left. Many people who work in medicine see this type of mutilation often, so what is it that makes Sylvia special? She has inner strength because when the triage and the death started to wear on her she did not give up and go home. She stayed and did her job even though it was a hard one to bear. There were times when men who were close to death or considered "to far gone" to be saved were just left alone to die because there were other people to take care of. I was an EMT for a while and triage is never easy. I respect her because she did it and in the end, I could not.

Truong My Hoa "They tried to make us say 'Down with President Ho!'"

Hoa began participating in the revolution when she was fifteen, she arrested and spent one year (out of eleven) in a tiger cage. No showers, no bathrooms in a tiny space with four other women, they were

all abused by the guards for talking, tortured for information and pressured to denounce her political beliefs. Yet through all of this, she did not give up hope and neither did some of the other women. They

turned their prison into a school whenever possible, learned poetry and evolutionary ethics. Hoa has inner strength because she did not give up even in the face of insurmountable odds. She stuck to her beliefs and her country even though it was completely possible that she would die because of them. I cannot imagine the horrible things that she went through but she made it. I am proud of her for that.

Helen said goodbyes, Sylvia tried to heal soldiers and Hoa was a tigress trapped in a cage. They faced each of their very different trials in individual ways no way consistent with each other but they all stem from the same thing. Those women had inner strength. They had to ability to face the trials that were set before them without giving up and even sometimes with a smile. This is a trait to be admired and I hope that more people can have it especially in this day and age.

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