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Assignment 3

Turning Point

To me the best example of turning point was Douglas Kinnard's part. I liked that his point of view was one of high up. If you're on the front lines of the war with the possibility of getting killed daily and the likeliness of the soldiers in Vietnam seeing their friends get killed they will have bad outlooks. When a general has bad outlooks on the war it says a lot more. Kinnard states  that he was "gung ho" when he arrived for his first tour in 19 . This is important for this topic because it shows that he did not have a bias against the war. He was not some antiwar activist who is speaking his mind about war and how it is bad in all cases. He is someone who went into the war probably with the thought of what his country was doing was right. He says after his first tour he "decided that the war was a losing proposition, that it could go on forever." For a general to say something like this is a shattering statement. Generals are the leaders of war. The ones who are high up and get a broader outlook than most. They are the ones who should know best what direction war is going in, so of course when one states "that it could go on forever" that is a major turning point. It is amazing to me the disconnection between Kinnard and the people above him (McNamara and Johnson.) Kinnard says "There were so many occasions when senior military should have faced up and told McNamara and Johnson-"look this is a lousy strategy. It isn't going to work..." This statement here says a lot put together with the fact about how he is talking about how the war wasn't working out and it never was going to be won. It is a common theme the Vietnam War has; a war that in retrospect was in the view of many a waste of resources and lives. The problem is that this view was only apparently in retrospect for many.  If Kinnard really did have as strong of feelings against the war as he speaks about now why didn't he speak up more? It's easy to look back on mistakes and say "I should have done this." But that doesn't count for anything. History is solid. Those mistakes are solid. The mistake of not attempting to correct those mistakes will never be fixed. The turning point really is more abstract with this war. It was not a war in my view where some battle (like Tet) really won the war for either side. It is more a war of ideals. When one side realized that it just wasn't worth it, that was the true turning point and Kinnard's story was a good example of it.

ANK

GRA

unrelated

okay I agree

Endings

I chose Daniel Ellsbergs part for "Endings." He showed the most important point of view of the war. One who had access to intelligence about the War, who knew the people who were behind the curtains making the decisions and plotting for self serving unrealistic agendas that would be damaging to others. The fact that he would be "regarded... as a defector and traitor." ~~Shows the insanity behind the decision makers,~~ that he "must be stopped at all costs," when the reason Kissinger is saying these things about him is because he is attempting to show the American people the truth. I think his part really hit the nail on the head of the problem. Even though the people making the decisions were very intelligent, I believe their egos got the best of them. They remained ego-driven despite military failure. Just because defeat is not an option, success doesn't become the only alternative. It is unrealistic and extremely damaging to think in that way when the currency in risk is the lives of others. This section was a good example of Endings because even though the war in Vietnam went on a lot longer than it really should have the importance is those people who stood up against it. That was the real end to the war. There are many who in retrospect, as I pointed out in my last paragraph, who realize the war was a mistake, but those who had the presence of mind to do something about it in the moment were the ones who really made a difference. ~~Without those like Ellsberg the war would have continued.~~ It has been said "The first casualty of war is truth" Ellsberg attempted to resurrect that casualty. In doing so I believe the first casualty of truth was war.

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