



Due date: Saturday, 20 November 2010, 09:05 PM

Last edited: Saturday, 20 November 2010, 03:14 PM (709 words)

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HST 195

Assignment 3

11.20.2010

A Turning and an Ending

In part four Larry Colburn (346-349) recalls the event at My Lai where up to 504 villagers were killed by Charlie Company of the US Army. The war crimes that were committed at My Lai was one of the Army's darkest moment and raised questions about the overall objectives of the war and if we really are there to help save Vietnam from Communism. When reports of the incident reached the public it furthered the anti-war movements back home. I see it as a turning point in that objectives were no longer clear on how to win the war and emotions were driving the soldiers to lash out on anyone and everything. "The only thing I remember feeling back then was that these guys were really out for revenge. They'd lost men to booby traps and snipers and they were ready to engage. They were briefed the night before and I've heard it said that they were going in to waste everything." (348) My Lai was a tragic event and even though it happened it's not right to associate every soldier with this kind of brutality. My first emotion was being ashamed that the Army represented the US as killers. I was only noticing the war crimes and how sad they are. I was reading for the "villains" not the "heroes." The heroes are Hugh Thompson and his crew who went Rouge to save the lives of villagers from the troops. One incident is when he landed his OH-23 in between the troops and civilians to stop them from murdering them. "If they open up on these people when I'm getting them out of the bunker, shoot 'em." (348) The war seems to have started to take a turn for the worst. There are many opinions to why Charlie Company acted the way they did. Maybe it was the inexperience of new troops and leaders? Maybe the everyday edge of war that made them lash out? Or even they just grown to hate the Vietnamese as a whole and didn't regard them as life. I consider this a turn for the troops moral and reputation.



The media depicted the Vietnam war has resorted to this and furthering the US involvement will lead to worse.

Daniel Ellsberg (432-436) was a former Defense Department official who exposed papers regarding events and strategies of the Vietnam War. What was promised by Nixon and his administration was an end to the war, but in actuality was the opposite. "based on information I had from people who worked for Nixon he expected to threaten his way to something close to victory or, if necessary, to bomb his way to it."(435) The relentless attitude by every president during the war was don't lose. The Pentagon Papers were proof that the policies in Vietnam were failing, but they continued no matter how many lives it cost us. "They were willing to send men and women to death to avoid being called losers."(433) ~~Watergate exposed the president of holding information on his ongoing policy for the Vietnam War.~~ Between the Pentagon Papers and Nixon's true policy on the war it exposed to the public why it needs to end and was becoming wrong. At this point I feel since the people truly resented the war enough to force Nixon to resign showing that no one was behind the Vietnam efforts. "Apart from its connection to Watergate, the Pentagon Papers definitely contributed to a delegitimation of the war, an impatience with its continuation, and a sense that it was wrong."(436) The public no longer trusted the government on how it was handling the situation. And once the trust left so did the will to keep the fight going. "Without Watergate I think Nixon might have been able to keep up the bombing of Vietnam indefinitely."(436) This point was an "end" of the government power over the peoples voice to stop the war. Ellsberg used the media to show what the real the plans were for the future of the war and the public put an end to it.

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