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Clark Dougan's story represented the biggest turning point of the war in my opinion. Dougan explains what it was like to be a teenage boy in the 60's. He states that close to 35 kids from his high school died in the war. It wasn't uncommon at his school, and I'm sure many others across America, for the principal to make an announcement over the intercom telling of the most recent student that was lost to the war. It was such a common occurrence in fact, that he recalls how people were forced to develop a sort of "black humor" to cope with receiving this sort of news on a regular basis. He talks about one classmate in particular, Greg Fischer, that he wasn't real close to but had shared a homeroom with for years. He describes Greg as being just an average kid, not real unlike himself. There was one very simple decision however that separated the boys' fate. After graduating high school Clark went on to college, while Greg decided to join the Marines, assuming that he would eventually get drafted into the war anyways. The summer after his first year of college, Clark was stunned one day when he opened the newspaper to find an article about Greg's death. The news hit Clark like a hammer. This made the costs of war feel real to him for the first time. Maybe it was because someone that he knew personally had died, or maybe it was because he realized how easily that could have been an article about his death instead of Greg's. Clark clearly wasn't alone in this realization, he says, "I think that was the moment when 'Middle America' really turned against the war" (Appy, 306). Clark mentions that the newspaper that published Greg's story was known for being conservative and had strongly supported the war up to this point. He says that the newspapers sway in opinion really was the reflection of a feeling that was spreading throughout the working-class in America. I think people were beginning to realize the high costs of war went infinitely beyond national debt. Brothers, sons, husbands, neighbors, classmates, teammates, friends, etc were going to Vietnam without coming back. Any death is sad, but thinking about so many of the boys who were drafted and forced to fight a war that they didn't necessarily understand or support; and then lost their lives doing so, breaks my heart and I have to imagine that I'm far from alone in that feeling. I believe that the U.S. as a whole was naive in thinking that they would go into Vietnam and basically dominate and be done with it in a few years. When expected domination didn't take place and the war seemed to be without progress, I think people began to feel as though the costs were

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beginning to outweigh the potential rewards.

I felt John McCain's story represents the best "ending" of the war. I picked this story because it does so well in explaining that there is no such thing as a cut and dry "end" to war. I think sometimes civilians over-simplify the ending of war, maybe because war is **a** sad to think about so people want to move on from it as quickly as possible. Or maybe it's just because it's hard to really grasp the long-term effects war has on veterans, without living it yourself. McCain made one statement in particular that jumped out to me, "probably the greatest tragedy of the Vietnam War was all those who could never really come back" (Appy, 482). One might assume that he is talking about those who lost their lives in Vietnam, but he isn't. He's talking about those who were so "fortunate" to survive the war and return home. I don't know enough about the Vietnam War to know if PTSD was a recognized condition in the 60's and 70's; but whether or not it had a name, I can only imagine that a large number of veterans were affected by it. McCain mentions that even today, decades after the war officially ended, some Vietnam veterans are still seeking counseling from vet centers. Thinking about those who were drafted at a young age, survived a brutally bloody war and all of its horrors, and came home to face the resentment and anger carried by some who were part of the antiwar movement is again heartbreaking. It's equally depressing to think about those who sacrificed so much during the war, and went on to spend an entire lifetime feeling its' affects. I think his story is a testament to the fact that when a war "ends", that is merely a date that will be marked down in history. The damaging effects of war are still felt long, long after.

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