

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

Last edited: Saturday, 20 November 2010, 06:54 PM (1241 words)

Assignment 3

Part 1

The story I chose as a turning point in the war is the story of John Gilligan in the Appy book pages 309-313. I feel part four of the Appy book had a few great examples of some of the turning points in the war, but I chose this story as the best example of a turning point because it shows the efforts that people went through to try to get the United States out of Vietnam. It shows this through the change of perspective Gilligan goes through as the war progressed.

In the story of John Gilligan, I see the change of heart one man experiences as he goes from supporting the war to trying to find a peaceful resolution. The beginning of the story starts with Gilligan stating, "When I went to Congress I was still going along with the war (p.310)." Gilligan started out supporting the war and feeling that the cause was worthy. The United States thought it had superior weapons and was optimistic that they would win the war. Gilligan speaks of a briefing he had with General Westmoreland and recalls that the General said, "'We have complete air superiority,' which was hardly a surprise (p.310)." He also quotes that the General said, "'And we can do anything we want anywhere we want. We can put our people in and out of any place in the country' (p.310)." Spirits were high, the United States would make a stand and then the war would be won and ended.

Gilligan's support for the war soon ended after a trip to Vietnam. He started to see the rising power of the North and their ability to take heavy hits only to come back stronger and harder. He saw that two American aircrafts were shot down and the pilots were killed and yet a single Viet Cong man on a bicycle took out an entire bridge. Remembering this he says, "I began to think jeez, this ain't the kind of war we're used to. Of the dozen of us on that trip, about nine came home opposed to the war (p.310)." When he arrived back in the United States they were questioned about what they thought, "The wording was different from each individual, but most of us said, 'We're in a helluva mess over there and we gotta get out' (p.310)." This is an important part of his story; this is the catalyst that started his political efforts for a turning point in Washington that would end the war.

JFK 1963

After the assassination of Kennedy, in ~~1968~~, he ran for Senate and proposed that the Democratic National Convention include a "peace plank" in its platform calling for the unconditional stop to all the bombings in North Vietnam and for there to be a "swift conclusion" to the war. Although his "peace plank" was heavily debated and discussed it was not approved. However I believe it was a turning point in the war because it started the rolling motion to end the war and as he comments, "I really think it was the first time that the American people ever saw the issue debated in public by reputable political figures in any party (p. 312)." The fact that the public was able to see this heavy debate helped them to stop and think more about what was going on in the war, the beginning of a change and a turning point.



Part 2

It is hard to find an ending without speaking of the actual end. The story I chose as the best example of an ending to the war is the story of Beverly Gologorsky in the Appy book pages 413-417. In her story, she speaks of her tireless efforts to end the war, a commitment that was so consuming she vowed to herself not to have a child until the war was over and she had the time. Her hard work and the hard work of other's was one of the vehicles that finally got enough attention from Congress to start making a plan to get out of Vietnam.

Gologorsky came from a poor family with little means to cultivate her starving mind. She ended up dropping out of high school and in 1964; she was a typist at a nursing magazine. Gologorsky didn't have much faith in the war efforts and when asked by a fellow co-worker how she felt about the war Gologorsky remembers answering, "I don't like the war at all (p. 413)." That was all it took for her co-worker to invite her to work for a new magazine she was starting called *Viet Report*. Gologorsky started working with them and began participating in antiwar efforts. While speaking of the people that would come to the antiwar meetings, she comments that, "All theses people were talking about how they were going to stop the war (p.414)." She fed off their optimism and her sleepless nights as an antiwar activist began.

Gologrosky and other antiwar activists tried many things to get the attention of Washington in order to end the war. They tried everything from speaking to soldiers on the base and warning them of what was waiting for them in Vietnam to holding child care in the streets to urge the government to give money that would go to the war effort to the children instead. They got some attention with such efforts but it seemed it was only enough to get them to be

quiet and stop their protests. The peaceful protests weren't getting much attention and people started getting violent in order to be heard. The future was starting to look bleak.

Gologorsky participated in the Women's March Against the Pentagon on April 10, 1971. She recalls, "It was one of the highest moments in my entire life (p.416)." The march got some coverage by the media and just one month later in May Vietnam veterans came to Washington to make a stand. She states, "There they were for the world to see--a long, long line of guys in army jackets and other military apparel snaking past the Capitol, throwing away their Purple Hearts and other medals they'd received (p. 416-417)." She remembers how powerful this moment was. The Vietnam veterans made a huge impact on the antiwar effort because they had been to Vietnam; they had seen and experienced it all. They stood before microphones, made statements about why they hated the war so much, and wanted nothing to do with any award they were given from the military.

I believe her story tells of the ending of the war because I think if it wasn't for antiwar activists like her the war would have gone on longer. The veterans throwing their medals away was a huge statement and I believe that if it wasn't for previous antiwar efforts by people like Gologorsky those veterans may not have been so brave to stand up the way they did. With so many being antiwar, the government could no longer ignore them and would have to start ending the war. It may have taken four more years after that May in 1971 when the veterans demonstrated their disgust with the war, but I believe that day was the start of an ending to the Vietnam War.



Close this window

 [Moodle Docs for this page](#)