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To me the entry in part four of the Patriots book that best shows a turning point is the one told by Bob Gabriel. His story depicts the turning point for American soldiers in Vietnam. During the Tet Offensive, his battalion was separated from air support. The fact that

it was just ground troops with no reinforcements is not why this story

is the example of the turning point for this group. It is also not significant that it happened during Tet. What is important, the real turning point is that American soldiers began to question why they were fighting in Vietnam. They began to lose faith in the government

that was telling them to fight and the reasons why they were fighting.

It was not just anti-war sentiments though there was some of that going on as well. Those soldiers did not want to die for a cause that they no longer had faith in and that they did not understand. They watched their comrades die in the green while their commanding officers gave orders from relative safety, and for the first time it was not worth it to many of them. Some soldiers fought back against

their superior officers. Bob Gabriel fired shots at a helicopter that carried his commanding officer (an act that at other times would have most likely resulted in a court marshal and dishonorable discharge) because the orders he was given were suicidal. This and many other

acts of "mutiny" were never punished, as they would have been earlier

in the war. This was the symbolic turning point of the war for American soldiers because so many did not want to fight. It was not

the first time that American soldiers defected in the history of war but when the Generals in charge have to wonder whether or not their

men will follow them out onto the battlefield there is a problem and something at home needs to change.

The account that best portrays an end in the Patriots book is the story told by Steve Sherlock. He talks about the Vietnam veteran

Nice job on part 1

war protest on Capital Hill. "here was this huge encampment of vets. I was used to seeing a couple of token vets in a crowd at a peace demonstration but here the whole Mall was full of hundreds and hundreds of veterans" (428). This was a very important protest because it was abnormal. The people there had already been to Vietnam, they were not afraid of being drafted and their communities and the government had already considered them as patriots. All of these men, some who had been wounded, stood together and threw away the medals that they had won while fighting the North Vietnamese Communists. Some saw the medals as badges of dishonor, reminders of the atrocities that were committed against real people. Others like Steve Sherlock were torn between feelings of "pride in having been recognized with the medal for doing a good job...and hating the war". Each soldier said something about their award and then tossed it. By physically throwing away their medals, many of these men were symbolically and physically ending their service in the military. For Steve Sherlock it was an end to his service in the military and the beginning of his humanitarian work. He founded Aid to Southeast Asia, a program that donates medical supplies and equipment to hospitals in Vietnam. This is the best example because there were many people involved in the war and in the anti-war protests who were just like Steve Sherlock. They loved their country and were proud of serving it but they knew that the war was wrong. These people did what they could to bring about changes in government policy in Vietnam. Many of them ended their careers to stand up for what they believed was right.

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