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Assignment #1

Part 1

The story of Tran Thi Gung caught my attention for numerous reasons. After first reading of her story I had a difficult time believing a tiny woman such as herself could be a killer. After re-reading the passage I truly connected with her and understood why she joined the guerillas at the young age of seventeen. Imagine being told your father was murdered and having to go retrieve his body. It was impressive at that young age she consciously thought that she wanted to "aid in the liberation of her country and continue on her father's cause". Gung continues to explain how she learned how to use weapons of the GI's she killed. It amazed me how the little creature such as herself managed to lead so many attacks against the Americans and be so war savvy. The thing that struck me the most was her kindness but obvious pure devotion to her land and country. She explained how her killings were justified, "if I went to America and killed people there, I would feel very sorry and guilty. Since the Americans came to my country, I don't feel guilty" Gung stated. I believe her story to be very credible. It was unbelievable at first but her firsthand accounts of the war and her injuries, struggles and killings, it was difficult to not believe her and feel her patriotism for her country. Her accounts seemed very factual and to the point. Her last statement as mentioned above proved her to be very level-headed. She killed because they had weapons, they were on her territory and trying to take away everything she believed in.

Part 2

Malcolm Browne was faced with many different hardships as a journalist. He was forced to report from the field itself the horrors of a large Viet Cong unit called the U Minh battalion. He went out with Vietnamese marines to find out what had happened

to the Dam Doi town radio. Not only was it a difficult place to get to the sight he endured was horrid. His personal account of the tortuous things the battalion did to the civilians of Dam Doi had to have taken a large toll on him. The sights and smells were so inhumane. It was so frustrating that he yearly witnessed these slayings and understood that the Dam Doi were helpless against the battalion. It angered me that nothing was done to prevent these slayings. Browne basically stated that America knew that there was torture going on, " but it was a rough war and there were no nice guys in Vietnam."

The attitude of Le Lieu Browne truly inspired me. She had been through so much facing discrimination because of her religion, losing her father because of his "nationalist" beliefs and seeing the rise and fall of a women's rights activist (Nhu). However, after staying so strong she knew in her heart that the Viet Cong would never persevere whilst everyone else was losing trust with the government and sympathizing more with them. She knew what was right whether or not she agreed with it. It showed that there was light at the end of the tunnel for her. After a long childhood she married her friend and the war finally ended. Even after she stated she thought, "That the war would go on forever."

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