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Part 1:

The story of Roger Donlon and the battle in which he got his Medal of Honor award caught my attention in many ways. One quote, which has stuck in my head days after I first read it clearly made this the story I was most attentive so far in this amazing grouping of accounts. The quote "...Partway there a 57-millimeter round caught him right at the knees and took his legs off. He just kept running on the stumps. Within about thirty seconds he was dead. That's one of the things you'd like to forget." This was one of the couple quotes in part one that made me stop reading for a minute and just think about the intensity of what the people involved in this war were going through. There were many other things in this recount that I found amazing, one being the fact of how many of the Vietnamese soldiers who were supposed to be on the side of Captain Donlon and were actually fighting for the enemy. I would assume with this type of situation where some of the Vietnamese would be spies but one third of them being spies was a statistic that astonished me. Just to imagine how tough it would be to fight off a surprise attack when a large percentage of your soldiers actually turn on you. I was also interested in the Nungs, how they stayed a step ahead of communism in China and were recruited by the CIA as militants. Another thing that surprised me and caught my attention was how the Vietnamese soldiers and the Nungs had the fight. For something to be escalated to the point where gun shots are fired at supposed allies is disturbing, let alone close to 500 rounds. Something the story didn't explain is how this fight started. I think possibly because of the difference in pay but since one third of the Vietnamese were actually fighting for the enemy its possible a group of them tried to sabotage them.

The author seemed trustworthy to me. He included some details which led me to believe that he has solid memory of the event. For example he mentioned there was no time to use code while contacting Danang. He also was of higher rank allowing him to possibly know more about the situation of the battle. The fact that there is an official recount because of his medal of honor could have been in favor or against the credibility of the story because in one way it could have allowed him to retain better memory of the event. In another way the truth could have been bent for propaganda purposes. Something that could have made his recount less accurate is that the battle happ4ened in the middle of the

night. Also, the injuries he sustained probably made him a little less than lucid on later details. Since he talked about how bad their communications were with higher officials, this displays to me that he is objective and factual about the events. He is not in the belief that everything they did was right on and perfect.

Part 2:

I was disappointed with the first two stories of part 2. I was not disappointed with either of the speakers I think they were very interesting level headed. I was mainly disappointed in how the Vietnam War played out when it seemed like we could have been great allies. These stories portrayed the Vietnamese as very hospitable and friendly towards the Americans in the beginning. I am disappointed with the case that Henry Prunier was not better listened to when he briefly spoke out against the war in his local paper. Someone who was experienced and had trained the Vietnamese and understood them should have been sought out by the government for counseling about America's Vietnam policy. Instead he was dissuaded to be openly anti-war because of fear of it negatively affecting his daughters. Vo Nguyen Giap's perspective was also disappointing. He said "if American leaders had been wiser I think we could have been spared the war." Of course this should be a great disappointment. With better decision making tragic wars can be avoided. But of course, history is not made of "ifs" as Giap pointed out but past is prologue and America should retain this lesson for the future and present. Giap's last quote showed a very powerful perspective of the war. "...Maybe it was a tragedy for you, but for us the war was a noble sacrifice." It's clear that the war was something from Giap's perspective as a necessity for him to fight in. It wasn't the North Vietnamese Armies goal to be in a war with America, it was their goal to be an independent country. It is disappointing to realize this and compare their fight for independence to America's revolutionary war, both smaller groups fighting for independence against large ones. It disappoints me that we found war to be our answer instead of trying to build a strong relationship with Ho Chi Minh and maybe offer him a better alternative to communism.

With disappointment those who are optimistic can find positive lessons and maybe some reconciliation. I was glad to read that Giap was still in contact with the OSS commander. It seemed from the content of the letter that their conversations were positive. It's clear that Giap thinks Americans need to learn more about Vietnamese history and culture and learn more about the atrocities America inflicted on Vietnamese during the war. He pointed out the My Lai massacre and the bombing of Bach Mai hospital. It is interesting because in a way, that's what this class is doing. Before this class all I knew was small things learned from overall history classes in high school and a little of the anti-war movement during

the 1960s but I don't think that Giap would be close to satisfied with that little amount of knowledge. Hopefully after this class I can meet his goal on my understanding of the Vietnam conflict.

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