

950 words

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History 195

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Part 1

There were quite a few hard-hitting and brilliant stories in Part 1 of this book, and was greatly enjoyable to read. Well, enjoyable as far as eye-opening goes – but it was also quite hard to read at times, so visceral and was almost like being there.

The story I found the most intriguing however was the one by Tran Thi Gung. I didn't want it to end, and I think a whole chapter of her accounts would be fascinating. I think one of the main things that drew my attention to it was, not to be sexist, but the fact she was a woman. As is with all wars, it is such a male dominant world and most films and accounts alike rarely mention much about women, apart from the occasional good-looking nurse falling in love with a GI in hospital. So to read the account of a Vietnamese woman, a young one no less, fighting side by side with her fellow country-men, was truly amazing.

To me, she does not sound like she is suffering from any cases of forgetfulness from the time gone by. She seems very confident in her words, and her memories of the situation. Being that she was still in her teens when the war started is well in her favor, as she is still relatively young in comparison to a lot of the others who have their accounts in the book. I think this makes her story very credible, at least from her point of view. War is different for everyone, but this is the way it was for her and you can't dispute that.

I found her closing statements quite profound, and honest at the same time. She acknowledges the horrors of war, stating here nightmares at what she did and what she went through – but she does not regret it. This to me tells a lot about her personality as an intense patriot of her nation. She may hate the idea of war and having to do it again, but you know if someone ever tried to invade again, she would be right there on the frontline to stop them again. I salute her for that.

Part 2

To be honest, I found it hard to exactly pin-point a story that exactly disappointed me too much. I take everyone I read as knowing they are their own individual person, and understand all will have a different opinion and feel we can't judge too harshly until we know all the facts. However, as far as attitude goes there was one recount in particular that caught my eye - that of Daniel Redmond on page 49.

For the most part, I did agree with him on most things. He seemed like a genuinely nice guy who just wanted to help the people of Vietnam. Being that I'm not a heavily religious person myself, I ignored the parts about religion as I find using religion in a war-time situation is the very essence of irony. War and religion just don't mix for me, as I feel if god really was at work in war, then he/she is frankly an asshole for letting it happen. But, I digress.

Dan was going really well in my mind until he started his rant about the book *Deliver Us From Evil* by Tom Dooley. I feel that Dan really let himself get too personally involved in his recount, and let his own personal bias against Dooley get in the way. Not that it seems he has much of a bias, as he says that at times he acknowledged his genuine kindness – but it also seems Dan didn't agree with everything Dooley said and although

opinion is opinion, he seems to completely dismiss anything Dooley says that he does not agree with.

Now this would of course be okay if I saw Dan make his case, and maybe prove his point about the book – but he does not. He says he hates it, produces one example about the photograph of the deformed guy, but that's it. And that example of the deformed guy was not really backed up too much in my opinion. He seemed to just use the fact that the guy never actually said he was tortured by the Ho Chi Minh as proof that he was nothing more than a regular street beggar. But how was he to know any better, really? He bases his assumption on just that, assumption. Now, Dooley could be just as wrong, I would have to read the book and see how he tells the story – but the attitude of Dan really disappointed me in that he went on a tear about being 100% right, but without any real backup.

To me, in history you need to make sure you back up your points before you release them as gospel. Otherwise, understand that you may be wrong. Dan did not acknowledge that really, to me.

As far as hope goes, there was a lot of positivity as well as the obvious negative points. I found the story of the guy who lost both his eyes and legs, for example, as one that through some utter brutality that happened to him, he seemed to still look on the bright side of life. He didn't show a lot of hatred to anyone, simply mourning the fact the war ever happened and wishing something else had been done. For a man to go through such torment, but still be able to look at things in an objective way, lifted my spirits a little after reading about the horror that happened to the poor man.