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In part one of Christian Appy's *Patriots: The Vietnam Remembered From All Sides*, the story that caught my attention most was that of Tran Thi Gung. From the beginning of her story when she described the soldiers coming to her door and telling her they had killed her father and her vow to avenge his death, I knew she was going to have a powerful story. Other than revenge, I believe her cause for fighting was just. She wanted freedom for her country, and enough food and clothing for her people. How she described fighting against American soldiers was heartbreaking to me as an American, but looking at it from an unbiased point of view, it was very tactful to realize if one American soldier was shot, the others would immediately scramble to his aid, making themselves 'sitting ducks', and what's more is the fact that the soldiers also left their rifles after retrieving their fallen soldiers. It was a weak point Tran Thi Gung targeted and strategically used to her advantage. Her knowledge of use of weapons expanded quickly, and soon she knew how to use any weapon in use from either side. When Tran describes the Cu Chi tunnels, as much as I imagine what it must have been like, I still think there is no way I can do so accurately. When she said she was stuck in a deep dark tunnel for seven days and nights with only a few grains of rice and a few drops of water, and had to dig her way out of the tunnels with a bayonet, I was in shock. I wondered if the Americans operating the tanks actually knew or not if they had closed all the exits to the tunnels, because she described it as an accident. After that, it seemed like nothing as she described her shrapnel wound to the head, and that she 'only' had to stay in a jungle hospital for three or four weeks. I felt terribly sad that she has nightmares every time she talks about the war, and knowing I had read this story of hers, meant she experienced one more war nightmare for my benefit. Overall, I think while stories become a little bit embellished over time, the core story still remains true. While she may have had more than a few grains of rice and a few drops of water a day in the tunnel, the fact still remains there was very little food to go around for everyone stuck down there. I think in general her story is reliable. At the end she says she isn't sorry for what she did, and I think she has every right to say that. She did what she did out of necessity, she didn't blindly shoot people for the fun of it, and she did experience times of compassion for the other side, like when she took the hostage American, or when she recognized someone she knew who fought for the other side. I feel as though the interviewees who talk about emotions are more reliable than not. It's something we all have in common, what makes us all human, and a factor that adds a truly personal touch in a story, one that can't be fabricated.

In part two of Christian Appy's Patriots: The Vietnam Remembered From All Sides, the story that disappointed me the most was Evelyn Colbert. Purely on the basis of its shortness. It makes me wonder why that little flit of a story was included when so many others were not. If anything, I wasn't disappointed in the story itself, I was disappointed in Christian Appy for including it in the first place. It didn't even seem like a story, it could've been a newspaper clipping for all I know! I actually read it several times over, and a few more times just now again to make sure I wasn't missing anything important in it, maybe the used book I bought was missing a page? No. Compared to that, no other stories were that disappointing to me. To be honest I signed up for this class because I had forgotten to register in advance last spring, and needed something, and this one sounded interesting although after the first day I was having second thoughts, seeing that I had two books and a set of DVDs to watch. I surprised myself though, and actually quite enjoy it, especially the Appy book, reading people's actual stories of being there make the DVDs and Herring book a lot more interesting to me. When I got to this short factual story, I was flabbergasted, I had expected so much out of these little stories and got absolutely zip out of Evelyn's.

The a couple of stories that portrayed positive messages to me were John Singlaub's and Luyen Nguyen's. Firstly, through the war and destruction was this guy and his fellow personnel found Veitnamese peoples who were hurt, starving, sick, and nursed them back to health and fattened them up. Even in spite of this huge war, there were these people going around helping the 'enemy'. Secondly, it was really heartbreaking, but romantic that Luyen refused to write letters to his wife and children when they thought he was dead, to save them from any more grief. Then when he came home alive to find his wife had remarried and had another child, and she divorced her second husband to wait for her original. I'm actually pretty surprised Hollywood hasn't decided to make some crappy movie out of it yet.

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