

590 words

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The story that stood out to me the most was Bernard Trainors. What struck me as interesting right away was the fact that Trainors enlisted. Most of my previous education involving the Vietnam War deals with the draft. He states that when he first went to Vietnam he had to become use to the way the Southern Vietnamese fought, "...they always left their enemy an opportunity to escape." (pg. 4) This becomes even truer when Trainors intelligence found out that a building was a communist R and R center. It turned out to be a leper hospital and many people were killed, resulting in nothing more than losing the trust of the Southern Vietnamese. The reason I chose this story though has to be because, although he fights for his country and what she feels is right, he can see the harm that is coming out of it. Trainors states, "We were destroying the North Vietnamese, but we were also destroying innocent civilians and destroying ourselves." Later he describes how he would go after enemy locations biased on intelligence reports. From his descriptions one gets a sense for his trustworthiness, if no enemy was there he could go to the next location. By doing that he saved American lives, because they didn't risk setting off booby traps. Following this philosophy lead General Trainors, then a colonel, to discover the largest find of intelligence in I Corps during the war. Trainors does strike me as a trustworthy person. He didn't blind follow orders but rather found the best way to keep his men alive and achieve his goals. One wouldn't believe that as an intelligence officer his account of what happened would suffer too much, but rather would very factual. Continuing on Trainors theory for American's defeat, how the Viet Cong bleed America dry, and connecting it to how America did the same to England makes sense and adds credibility to his whole account. For these solders to forget about what they experienced, what they witnessed, no measurable amount of time will every pass.

Henry Prunier's story disappointed me the most. Prunier explains that he and other Americans trained the Vietnamese men in the end day of World War Two. While no one could know what would happen in the future, the fact that we trained the very people that we then went to war with is disturbing. We created our own worst enemy. The attitude I received from the entry when reading about the training was one of pride. Prunier explains that the men he taught could almost take apart an M-1 the first time they saw it. Its one thing to be proud of a student, but when those skills later took the lives of American soldiers it's wrong. Finally Prunier seems to go against himself in the last paragraph. He stats, "I was sort of a silent antiwar person," (pg. 40) Prunier was against the war so he should have stood up, however he was too worried about protecting his daughters. It's hard to criticize a father for watching out for his daughters, but not if it means going against what he feels is right.

I found some positive in this story as well. It is a twisted idea of hope. They were friends, in a way. In 1995 when Prunier returned to Vietnam for a reunion, he saw General Giap. General Giap acted like he was throwing a hand grenade. One must

wonder how Prunier felt when he realized that what he taught cost people their lives.