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While reading Part Two of the *Patriots* book, I must say that there was not one entire story that disappointed me. As I made clear in our first journal assignment I have little previous knowledge of the Vietnam War; therefore, as I have been reading this textbook I have been more concerned about obtaining the knowledge presented in the stories rather than critiquing individual stories themselves. When I read what the speakers have to say I am initially drawn into their story and attempt to compare it and parallel it to the other accounts I have read. I do this to try and see the big chronological picture of the war. I have enjoyed the *Patriots* book because after reading each story, I feel like I can add one more piece to the puzzle and begin to visualize the war in its entirety.

I mentioned before that none of the stories as a whole disappointed me. However, there were certain facts, emotions, and instances within the stories that did not appeal to me. For example, Paul Hare's story is a prime example of how foreign Vietnam was to most Americans. Hare talks about the constant "sense of dislocation" and "uncertainty" that he felt all through his time spent in Vietnam. From what I've read this seems to be one of the most common feelings among the Americans stationed in Vietnam, there was a hanging cloud of insecurity that never seemed to fade away. In my opinion, the US was not prepared for such a war as this, there was too much over confidence. Being in a foreign land is one thing, one excuse, but the main reason the Vietnamese won is because of their dedication; it was more powerful than ours. Vo Nguyen Giap touched on this aspect in his story. He states, "We won the war because we would rather die than live in slavery...Our deepest aspiration has always been our self-determination. That spirit provided us with stamina, courage, and creativity in the face of a powerful enemy." My disappointment here is that once this was established midway through the war, the US was no longer fighting to win, but to simply prolong a Vietnamese victory. It's difficult to find honor in that, especially when countless lives were lost in the process.

Another disappointment for me is the media portrayal of the war. Daniel Redmond speaks of a doctor he met, Thomas A. Dooley, who wrote a best-selling book called *Deliver Us from Evil*. Redmond describes the book as being inaccurate and containing exaggerations. An example of this is represented by the book having a picture of a deformed Vietnamese man with a caption under it saying that he was a victim of one of Ho Chi Minh's torturers. Redmond says that this was far from the truth because he would see that man, a beggar, who was probably born that way and "never once did he ever hint that the Viet Minh had tortured him." When looking at the big picture of the Vietnam War this is merely a minor inaccuracy, but it still symbolizes the fact that the truth was often altered. As evidence to Robert McNamara announcing as he steps off the arriving plane from Vietnam: "...We're showing great progress in every dimension of our effort," when initially mentioning before the plane even landed that things were worse than they had been a year prior.

It is very difficult to find any positive lessons involving a concept such as war, especially Vietnam from an American standpoint. There was a significant amount of ignorance on the American side which did not provide any hope or potential for good. On the other hand there were some individuals who understood that sometimes the

right thing to do was completely opposite of what was being done. In Paul Kattenburg's story he accounts when he was attending a National Security Council Executive Committee meeting in 1963, he was astonished by the ignorance and lack of knowledge about the facts of Vietnam. People were talking about building nations and such but what they kept overlooking is the fact that the French had already been there, attempted that, and were defeated. Kattenburg was aware of this and boldly suggested that it would be better if they just left Vietnam with honor. He brought this up again and again but was shut down each time. The good surrounding this is that there were people like Kattenburg who were aware of the fact that continuing to intervene in the Vietnam War was not the smartest idea.

Another thing I found to be more on the positive side was Richard Olsen's story. He was a pilot who was not directly involve in fighting but aided the South Vietnamese troops by flying them into the field. He describes the glorifying feeling he had being able to assist the South Vietnamese troops, and that it was a necessity to have the Americans there to "show them how to do it."

Lastly, one lesson that I found personally that was not said outright in any of the stories, but is subtly hinted at, is the importance of never underestimating the enemy. The experiences that our nation had in Vietnam need to be remembered in case there is any similar type of war in the future. Nothing of this magnitude is ever as easy as it initially seems.

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