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History 195

Part I

"War Heroes" was the story that affected me the most. The kind of affect that causes you to pause and truly empathize with what you are reading. You don't empathize because you even want to, you do it because you are helpless not to. As far as credibility goes, I do not doubt the truthfulness of what was written. There are plenty of reasons to doubt it. Time, too much subjectivity, a narrow point of view. The introduction seemed to paint the main character in a favorable light, almost to the point of melodrama. However, that did not seem to be the theme throughout the story. This story provoked in me what I would label as a "gut reaction". This was partly due to some of the things that he experienced and the way he recounted his experiences. When he talked about hearing someone talking about putting him in a body bag because they thought he was dead. My mind was choked with fear when I tried to envision that. Also, the credibility question is a bit of a double-edged sword. The lack of objectivity may be what lends the most credibility. Although subjectivity may lack facts it is *real*. I think that there are times when it is less about what the facts of what happened, less about what it *was* and more about how it *felt*. The story teller endured and witnessed terrible things, like so many men. I have to feel for a man, for all of those that fought a war that was hardly acknowledged by some as much more than a conflict.

Part II

"History Is Not Made with What-ifs" disappointed me in some ways. It was not just disappointment, it was sadness as well. I was disappointed by this story because it seemed to underline the unfortunate point that there were many stops along the road that made up and led to the Vietnam War. There were few presidents who had the ability to put a stop to the fighting, the tension, and all the ideological misnomers that made up the "conflict" that was Vietnam. I am not going to say or pretend I even properly understand the difficulty of being the one who had to step and say "stop all of this" on such a large scale. To point out that most of the current people involved in Vietnam were unlikely to be able to give a reasonable, logical or viable reason for the continuing war or conflict. Yet three or four presidents later this war continued out what would seem to be nothing more than misplaced loyalty to their predecessors.

So we are all aware of all the "badness" and negative things associated with all that went on during Vietnam. I know I would like to believe that there can be something good that can come from even the worst things. I admit there are times when those things may be harder to find. In our first forum post we picked our history quote. The quote I picked meant, at least to me, that we condemn our past so that we may always learn from it and try to make the present and the future better and brighter. So we must always condemn it lest we repeat it. So what good came out of Vietnam? Education and experience about how much hope can survive. Understanding of how deep the love and respect can go for our loved ones. We, as a people have the knowledge that people are capable of great acts of bravery and kindness as well as atrocities, there were many heroes, some of which would probably never have thought of them as such. We learned of people who would die for their values, morals and beliefs, dedication and a loyalty to oneself is admirable. Out of all the horror and sorrow that took place, rose hope, faith and the desire to do better, to be better, as a nation, as a world and as a people.

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