

Due date:	Sunday, October 7, 2012, 11:55 PM
Last edited:	Sunday, October 7, 2012, 11:54 PM (684 words)

PART 1

George Watkins's story stuck with me. It was the language. It was a reminder of the cross-section of people that you get with a draft. It was a war fought by the kid next door, the everyday Joe. I believe George speaks from the heart. His simple, country language and the way he voices his thoughts, and even questions, makes his reminisces completely believable to me. He is retelling his experiences. He doesn't give much factual information, but what he does give feels like a true account of his experiences in the war. He comes across as honest and sincere. When he says he doesn't hate the Vietnamese I believe him, but wonder if that was his feelings at the time he was in the bush on those long patrols (like that month of December he mentioned), or if it's a product of time passed and reflection. I don't know if I could stay ambivalent to an "enemy", whether i believed in the war or not, that is shooting at me and killing my buddies. I don't know what he may or may not have forgotten, but the things he does speak on, and the small details he remembers makes me feel that a lot of it is still fresh in his mind. Maybe it is the loss of his eyesight that makes the last things he saw stay in his brain. I agree with Appy that there is no way to "fancy it up" as George had requested. In fact, I think to do so what have made it less personal and human (for lack of a better word) in the retelling.

PART 2

Now it would be easy to say it was policy or policy makers that was the big disappointment for me or even the plain ignorance of the region to some (do I remember reading that McNamara Hadn't even been to Vietnam till 65' and though that may be the case what hit me as I read was American ego. I read this section out of order and came across John Singlaub's entry. The kidnapping of civilians for indoctrination rubbed me wrong right off the bat. I thought maybe he wasn't a complete ass when he said he requested a stop to the commando teams being sent north because they weren't effective, and what he said about the effectiveness of jets (which was also overruled), but then he loses me completely. He's starts talking about Tet and how it was a victory for the US because of the he was finally able to "slaughter" the enemy. "Cleaned their clocks" he says, finishing with how high the bodies were stacked. The finally straw was his comments about equating his "good" feelings to a "missionary among heathens" and equating them to Indians attacking his forefathers. I'm part native. I'd have attacked his forefathers too for stealing my land. His comments had the opposite effect for me right there, making me feel for the plight of Vietnamese fighting for their own country against an invader.

The section that gave me hope was Sergei Khrushchev at the end of his entry when he said the antiwar movement was a sign of American awakening. That we started to understand that not everything depended on what our government wanted. I like that he points out after 9/11 we reverted back to that same style of thinking. I believe the country is tired of the current war too, but at least most support the troops and don't spit on them or call names like "baby killer" and such as the Vietnam vets got. It meshes the ideals of peace with the patriotism of our country. The way the Vietnam vets were treated after returning home bothers me. Like we read, alot of folks didn't know why they were there or even where Vietnam was. They were just doing their duty when they were called or like their family expected, but vietnam was completely different from their faters WW2

Close this window