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Assignment 1

Part 1

George Watkins story stood out the most to me in part one of the book. There was something about the way he spoke about his experience that really got to me. My father was in the Vietnam War and was stationed in Vietnam for a year and a half. The whole time I was reading George Watkins' story all I could think about was "what if that was my dad?" I feel like he was very trustworthy and reliable. There was very little negativity in his words about the war. The man lost both of his legs and both of his eyes and the only thing he could say about the war was he wished that it didn't have to have happened. You could tell by the way he spoke that he wasn't highly educated, but rather a "good ol' boy" from the South. Yet, with every word he said, as I was reading, felt like he was telling me about what had happened to him as if it was yesterday. The amount of detail and preciseness he had made me feel like no amount of time could ever weaken his memory of that time he spent in Vietnam.

Part 2

Ngo Vinh Long's story was the most disappointing to me. This was a young man who was very well educated and was raised in such a way as to not have hate in his heart. His father taught him to not hate the French people, but rather their colonial policies. Long became very well known and was hired to work with a group making maps of Vietnam for the United States. Once he started to travel the country and see what was happening he contacted the U.S. embassy and Saigon government to ask them for help, to which they denied his request. Long became a protester to the United States, more specifically, their involvement in Vietnam. The reason I find this so disappointing is because of the treatment Long received from his fellow country men following a large immigration to the United States after the end of the war. Long was one the receiving end of violent attempts aimed at him, Molotov cocktails were thrown at him and he even received death threats. All from people who simply disagreed with his political opinion.

The hopeful part of this story is that Long was accepted to Harvard University and was able to study with professors who would go on to have involvement in the formation of U.S. policy in Vietnam. Long is now a college professor in Maine and is a father.

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