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The story that had the most impact on me was George Watkins. He was a regular soldier who was sent to Vietnam knowing next to nothing about the war and the Vietnamese people. His story was unique because although he lost his legs and eyes when a mine blew up, he was not bitter. Watkins regrets the men that died, and questions what was gained for it? That statement touched me the most. All these brave men had sacrificed their lives and America had not even won the war. What was there to show for all those sacrifices? Watkins believed there was nothing to show and the war was a mistake. He talked about the personal injuries he suffered from the war but he never blamed the Vietnamese. Watkins didn't even mention them in his story, although the Vietnamese were the reason he was there. Even though Watkins story didn't seem biased he has undoubtedly suffered and been changed by the war. This being said his story is more subjective than objective. Not that is necessarily a bad thing, it's his personal subjective view that was appreciated in the story.

No matter how much time passes there is no way you can forget the searing images from war that are burned into your head. Watkins may have told this story to the reporter decades later; but it still holds the same amount of truth in it as if he told it the day he lost his sight and legs. Perhaps the story was clearer to him years after simply because he was able to look back and be a little objective. Watkins's story is believable because he has the battle wounds to prove where he was and what happened to him. Watkins's retelling of his time in Vietnam may be more accurate than scholars, generals, and politicians view of the same time. Unlike these people in positions of power Watkins is just a soldier whose view is less biased by other people's views. His story is more trustworthy and credible than many other stories in this book. There is nothing at all to gain from lying about his experiences. "Why did all these people die? What was gained from it?" (25)

Von Nguyen Giap's story was very frustrating to read especially when compared to a story like George Watkins. Giap was a general who led over 300,000 revolutionary Vietnamese against the French. Giap believed that America should not have involved themselves in the war in Vietnam. He acknowledged that there was really nothing for America to gain. "History is not made of 'ifs,' but if American leaders had been wiser I think we could have been spared a war. In my opinion, the Vietnam War was not in the American interest. It was a big mistake." (42) Throughout his story he mentioned several times that America was approaching the war wrong. Everything from the attitude America had towards the war to the fighting methods we used were all wrong. Giap's story and many other stories in this book tell us that the methods America used weren't effective at all. How can it be that so many people on the Vietnamese side and the American side knew this but nothing was changed? America fought a war everyone knew it was losing and nobody really believed it should be in.

Paul Hare's account of his time spent in Vietnam sounds eerily familiar to many other soldiers and generals. Hare was selected it seemed at random to go to Vietnam. He arrived knowing next to nothing about the Vietnamese and the war there. He spent four years in Vietnam helping rebuild the cities that had been destroyed by war. "I spent four and a half years in Vietnam and I never felt sure about my understanding of the Vietnamese or where they stood with respect to this conflict." (77) How is it that our soldiers could have spent that much time there and still not be aware of all the issues? Our leaders and our soldiers were dreadfully ill informed. Giap's and Hare's stories are frustrating because they are two very different men one a Vietnam general and one an American soldier who both were wondering what America was doing in Vietnam. The fact that two separate men in separate positions were both confused on this important issue seems to attribute to the fact that no one really knew what America was doing.

All the stories in Patriots by Christian Appy have given new perspective on the Vietnam War. These stories have made it more personal. These aren't just soldiers on a page in a history book. These are real men and women both Vietnamese and American who fought for their countries. All of them sacrificed something and their stories ought to be remembered. There are little pieces of good in each of these stories. Not all soldiers were cruel many helped the Vietnamese people. Our country had good intentions for the Vietnamese people. Care packages, food, and programs were orchestrated to help the Vietnamese people. There is good in every story despite how bad the story may seem.

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