

Due date:	Sunday, October 7, 2012, 11:55 PM
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Part One.....Out of the stories I read many had a strong impact on me. To hear what these individuals saw, felt, and went through is heart breaking. I especially felt connected to two stories and had a hard time deciding which one to choose. Dang Vu Hiep fought against America in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam. Heip joined the Veit Minh revolution against the French in 1945 and in 1964 let his wife and 3 kids to South Vietnam to fight against the Americans. Though this story wasn't drama filled and heart breaking but the most informative to me as to how certain battles got started. Dang Vu Hiep had no clue going into the war how to fight Americans. He was very intimidated, yet fought for his life and country. I don't know if it was because he was telling his story by looking at his notes and journals that made his story believable or the facts that were stated in his story but I definitely believed it. This story was appealing to me because it was the point of view of a Vietnam soldier.

Part Two.....So I must admit I have very little knowledge of how wars in history got started or why they were started, that is partly why I am taking this class. In the story "Deliver us from Evil" I learned that the French started the war with Vietnam, with American money and aid. I am very disappointed in Eisenhower and his role in this war. It appears to me that he would have had our country more involved earlier on. So we help the French and lose our men then decide to fund and aid a man that later rigged an election to become the communist leader which is what we as Americans didn't want in the first place? France fails and our government thinks it can prevail? If Eisenhower and the US government would have listened to J.F. Kennedy there might not have ever been a Vietnam war. Another disappointment is the amount of aid we as a country sent over there to later have Vietnam fight us in war killing so many Americans.

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Roger Donlon's story struck the most impact on me with the way he engages the listener and reader of his incredible experiences during the Vietnam War. Although, this is just one small part of his story that could be told; it draws you in with the well spoken vocabulary of a Green Beret captain and hero that he is. As I go along reading his story; I notice that he doesn't use factual statements. This makes him reliable in the sense that he is not trying to base it on fact which cannot be tangibly obtained. First hand experience in a crisis situation or multiple crisis situations can have an affect on you to where you lose your credibility; however, reading his story I do not get the sense that this is the case, and by no means is credibility lost in all situations like these. For example, when Roger Donlon speaks about the soldier who was running and lost both of his legs, and had continued to run on both stubs and dies just seconds after. Well, a situation such as this one would be seared into someone's mind, and one would die of old age never forgetting the image of that brave Vietnamese soldier; I could only imagine but would fail to understand what that image truly appeared to have been like, or the entire tragedies that would continue to be endured by this man or any one of them in the Vietnam War or any war for that matter. There are always going to be pieces of information forgotten in any traumatic experience or multiple traumatic experiences; however, a well trained soldier and captain, such as Roger Donlon is most likely to have most of all the pieces put together and un-forgotten.

Daniel Redmond's story was the most disappointing one that I have read thus far. The way that Tom Dooley is portrayed is disturbing. How he could victimize that young Vietnamese man as a model for what communism and the Viet minh are was just a gain for his own selfish political and self-popularized reasons, and as such it is in poor taste of who Americans really are. It wasn't just the attitude of Tom Dooley but of Daniel Redmond himself. There must have been many tragic sights this man and many more have been succumb to, and I will not tell myself or anyone that I could understand what they have gone through; however, events that have happened or are happening in the present should be considered from both sides. By no circumstances is anything one sided.

Ngo Vinh Long was a very intriguing individual to read about; as he goes through his experiences in the war; he shows that he can relate to what is going on around him; even though, his experiences with the French and the Americans have disadvantaged what his beliefs once were he still comes out with a broad understanding of what is happening in the world around him. He has went on to becoming a successful college professor in the state of Maine and as a fifty-eight year old man; he has a two year old child. His character shows dedication, inspiration, and a willingness to move forward and achieve wonderful accomplishments even when times are so dreadfully wrong in some parts of the world. There is so much goodness that can come out of these stories if we really listen with our hearts to what these men and women are saying. We need to study the history of what has happened to our men and women and to others around the world to not only learn from the mistakes of the past but to appreciate all the exposure these soldiers have gone through, so we can show our appreciation the appropriate way that our past and future soldiers deserve.

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The story that had the most impact on me was Rodger Donlon's "*We were babes in arms in every way.*" What really stood out to me was how he cared about his command position, the people under his command, and his rescue efforts of saving his men. He is very selfless. While being severely wounded himself, he carried his men out of a pit that was getting heavily attacked. While being under attack he went back in after one more man. As he was carrying his comrade, Pop Alamo to safety, they both got blasted back into the trench they were in. He thought that was the end. He was knocked unconscious and when he came to he saw that Pop Alamo had died in his arms. He later says in his story that at the time he thought it was just respect he felt for his fellow comrades, but as the years went on he realized that it was a deep, deep love. He did not think about saving himself at that time. He didn't care about putting himself in danger just the thought of saving others. Rodger Donlon's story was very believable. He was the first American in the Vietnam War to receive the Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration the U.S. can give. According to this Medal of Honor citation he dodged exploding grenades and bullets. Ignored the serious wounds he had gotten from shrapnel wounds to his shoulder, stomach and face. While saving his men.

The story that was very disappointing to me was Daniel Redmon's "The Doctor Who Won the War in Indochina." The story its self was not what disappointed me, it was action of the French towards the Vietnamese refugees and the lies that Tom Dooley wrote about in his book, "Deliver Us From Evil." that many Americans believed. In his book Tom published a picture of a deformed Vietnamese man saying Ho Chi Minh tortured the man which according to Daniel Redmon, was not true. The French abused the innocent refugees because they (the French) knew the Vietnamese refugees were scared. In his story Danimal Redmon says "The refugees were terrified, it broke your heart when you saw the,. They had never traveled a mile or two from their home. They never been on a ship, everything they owned, they carried on balance sticks." They didn't know how to use the bathrooms and they stunk so bad it would make you gag. He even saw a mother give birth and refused their help. She bit off the umbilical cord and took the baby to the dirty river to wash it. That's why this story is disappointing. People who have done nothing wrong, just being in the wrong place at the wrong time, were being treated like cattle. If not worse than cattle. This story had a positive lesson about compassion and hope. Daniel Redmon felt bad for how the refugees were treated by the French. He said "I felt like a war criminal, but at least I got them out of there."

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Although Deirdre English's account of her experience in 1966 was one of the shortest in part one of "Patriots", it was also an important viewpoint of how the war affected those at home, while also showing a great depiction of the awareness and mentality of the American people in the midst of the late 1960's. To millions of Americans the Vietnam War was just coming to light, and most of those who did know of it were not privy to the details of why, or even when we became involved in the war. As Christian Appy wrote, "They found themselves drawn into a war-in-progress, the origins of which seemed distressingly vague and confusing" (Appy 35). And why shouldn't the people have been confused? America's history with Vietnam went back much farther than anyone at the time knew. In the forties America both supported France and helped to train some of Ho Chi Minh's first soldiers, with changing political policy with each new president (Herring 3-13). With all the confusion and no real answers from the government, there is no real surprise that the validity of the war was being protested by millions of Americans in the years that ensued Deirdre's experience at the Chicago museum. Her experience that day seemed to incite her to take an active role in the protests that followed. Of course her involvement as a protestor would have given her a different point of view than someone that supported the war, but her account seemed to be remembered with detail, as if it had happened yesterday. Overall her description seemed to be a factual account of the times that many American people probably experienced during those days of war, and the protests that followed.

Reading through the stories of the people that were actually involved in the Vietnam War it was hard not to feel some sort of emotion with each individual's account. The most disappointing of the stories brought up a large question of, what if? It seems that most of if not all of the years of pain and suffering that came from America's involvement in the war in Vietnam could have been avoided if America had backed Ho Chi Minh's efforts or stayed completely out of Vietnam all those years ago. While reading Henry Prunier's story of how they were sent to train 200 of Ho's guerilla resistance to fight the Japanese invasion of Vietnam during WWII, it was hard not to see the United States as hypocritical and unreliable. Henry says in his account, "One of the greatest disappointments of his life must have been that the United States sided with the French, and then Diem, against him. It should never have happened" (Appy 40). Henry seemed to get a good impression of Ho while he was in his presence, but Ho was under the impression that he had America's support, and it may have been different otherwise. Of course America was so afraid of the communist movement and our own financial gain and world position in Southeast Asia that we had no choice but to get involved.

If we are to learn anything from the Vietnamese people it would have to be their undeniable persistence and fortitude. It seems that nearly every story recorded in the "Patriot" book thus far touches on the resilience of the Vietnamese, which is why they were able to fight off the French and eventually the United States as well. When reading Luyen Nguyen's story all of this fortitude came through in this man's account of torture, loss and his love for his family. Even though he had been locked up for years in solitary confinement he would not admit to being a puppet of the United States to make his time there more bearable. Instead his loyalty stayed with his country and his family. When offered the chance to write his family and notify them that he was indeed still alive, he refused because he did not want to cause his family anymore undo pain. To maintain such personal courage for so many years as a POW is definitely commendable. His ability to keep hope was inspiring. There are not too many people in our entitled culture that would have done the same as this man. This was just one person in a culture of people that overcame many invasions and superpower militaries to fight for their freedom and way of life. For Luyen to tell his story with no real animosity for the United States, who sent him on a failing mission is inspiring onto its self.

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Dylan Curran

Assignment One

Part 1

I was most affected by the story of George Watkins. What stood out to me was his lack of enmity towards the Vietnamese even after being maimed during the war. His detailed descriptions of the booby trap that crippled him and of the injuries he suffered contrast sharply with his respect for the Vietnamese people and understanding that the opposing sides were put in their positions through politics, not moral conflict. It would be easy for a person that experienced what he did to come out bitter and spiteful.

This interviewee is reliable. What he describes is his own experience; life as a soldier, the tactics used against Viet Cong, and his own reactions to the Vietnamese people. He's not reporting an "expert" opinion on the war, only events that he personally witnessed. He has no apparent motivation to fabricate or omit information; he's not in a situation where he's required to represent any official position. He's also able to joke about the war and feel sympathy towards former enemy combatants; he's moved on from his experience and is less likely to falsify information out of shame or remorse.

Part 2

The interview with Le Lieu Browne contains multiple references to the oppressiveness of Diem's government. What disappoints me is the U.S. would have supported a government like this. The government practiced shameless censorship, banning any material related to communism, and restricting journalistic freedoms. Even worse is Diem's willingness to impose his beliefs on South Vietnamese citizens; non-Catholics were harassed and prevented from career advancement. These seem more like the actions of an authoritarian regime than a democratic government.

In the same interview, I appreciated Browne's discussion of Madame Nhu. When I first learned about her, I immediately formed an impression of a callous and sarcastic woman, too aloof and privileged to appreciate the injustices in her country. This is an easy conclusion to arrive at, especially when reflecting on comments such as the infamous "barbequed monk." But Browne explains her behavior as being more the result of ignorance and a language barrier than any real malice, and is able to overcome her own early impressions to appreciate what Madame Nhu did for empowering the women of Vietnam.

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Emerald Jones

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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Analysis of Christian Appy: Part 1 & 2

The story that held the greatest significance in part one of Christian Appy's book is the memoir of Tran Thi Gun. It held the greatest impact because it was a story from a totally different perspective, a northern Vietnamese perspective, rather than an American one. Her story was passionate, harsh, and you could clearly see why she fought in the war. It was this harshness and brutal honesty that made the story memorable because it allowed her to truly share her convictions, reasons for fighting and to paint a truthful image of the war that most people don't seem to talk about.

Tran Thi Gun's story is reliable, trustworthy, and believable because it is her story. Her tale does not have extended action or seemingly outlandish events and therefore it reads honestly. In addition the fact that she was there makes it hard to challenge the information she provided in her story, which lends to her and her story's credibility. Her story does not seem to be either factual or to subjective. Her story isn't one of facts but personal experience, however she does not let her emotions overwhelm the story. Therefore it doesn't seem that her story suffers from lack of objectivity because of time passing or too much forgotten. It is her personal journey and backstory out of many who fought with the Viet Mh in Vietnam.

The story that was the most disappointing in part two of Appy's book was the story of Malcolm Browne. His story was not disappointing because of his actions or who Browne was, but more because of the events he witnessed. More specifically, the disappointment was directed at the actions of the United States and the Diem government, with both their policies and people. There were five specific events that were huge disappointments. The first began when Browne witnessed American planes leaving with bombs and returning without bombs, during a time when America was not supposed to be at war with Vietnam. It was sad not only because American government was lying to its people, but because it was also being duplicitous in its policies abroad.

The second event that was disappointing that also involved the United States, was when John Wayne was partying with marine officers in Vietnam and harassing Browne. The image cast by Wayne in this instance was one that was self-centered, pig headed, and an overwhelming belief that America could do no wrong. The most offensive thing Wayne said was that "the whole country [Vietnam] was grateful," (Appy 70). It was offensive because it reeked of ignorance and self-importance. It was true that at some time America's policy was to help Vietnam, but within this time period that policy was lost. In addition no country should be grateful because America was forcing aid on their people. Lastly this statement was disappointing because of the ignorance, for one should realize that if Vietnam was grateful then there would be no war.

The third and fourth events that were saddening coincide with each other. These events were the repression of the Buddhist religion by the Diem government and a quote Madame Nhu said about Browne after the beginning of the Buddhist demonstration. It was wrong of the Diem government to be repressing any religion just because the ruling family was Catholic. This act also went against one of the standing principles of American government to have freedom of religion and since the Diem government was essentially started by American policies it would have been more positive for Diem to be open about the fact that he governed a predominately Buddhist nation. In addition his repression of Buddhist religion caused people to die and partly for his government to be overthrown, which isn't good politics. The fourth event was when "Madame Nhu, suggested that I [Browne] had bribed the monks to produce a martyr," (Appy 69). For Madame Nhu to suggest this quote shows her ignorance in how the government's policies are affecting her people and how much she truly believed in what her brother-in-law was doing. Madame Nhu needed to see what was happening and to open her mind to other causes. This is why this event was disappointing because it had potential for people to learn or at least possibly change policies before things got worse.

The last event that was disappointing was when Thich Tri Quang, a monk and friend of Malcolm Brown told him "that the human rights problems under the Communists were as bad as they had been under Diem," (Appy 72). It was an incredibly disappointing end after reading so many troubling events, and knowing how hard the Vietnamese people fought for independence, for despite that independence some Vietnamese people are still repressed. Though every government can improve it was sad to see that some people in Vietnam were just as bad off as they were before Vietnam won its independence.

While Malcolm Browne's story had so many disappointing aspects, it also carried many positive qualities that would benefit from being told. These positive qualities were the general compassion and an understanding of the situation that Browne displayed that you didn't see during that time, but one that you see in today's generation. Browne was an American, but despite many Americans of the time he didn't seem to carry the ego that America is all powerful and just. Browne additionally seemed to carry a compassion for the Vietnamese people and the events that were happening in their nation as it relates to them. He saw that innocent lives were being lost on both sides and actually cared, which was refreshing. Browne's attention to all sides was the opposite of what was seen

from America at that time. For it is one thing to be in a war and carry that war mindset of not caring about the other side, but if you don't show any understanding of the other side, or you forget that those opposing you are fighting for a reason, then your reason for fighting can get lost, which is what happened during the Vietnam war.

Citation

Appy, Christian. Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. Print.

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Jacob Pusey
HST 195
10/6/2012

Part 1: Phan Xuan Sinh

When studying the history of the Vietnam war, rarely as an American do you get a chance hear a first hand account of what happened there from the perspective of the Vietnamese. Phan Xuan Sinhs stories are particularly intriguing because he fought for the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. He fought alongside American soldiers against the North. Most Americans seem to forget that this was also a civil war and there were actually three sides fighting. It is always the Vietcong versus the U.S. in American movies and books. Sinh's feelings about the war were similar to what a lot of American soldiers felt as well. Many of them were drafted to fight and saw no potential to benefit personally from the fighting. They fought, killed and died because they had no choice but to participate. After the war, and American troops had pulled out, he and many others had to stay and live in a country that was now to be run by the very people they had been fighting. He talks about the hatred that they felt towards them and mentions the revenge that was enacted upon them after the war. While he does not go into what this was like, we can only imagine how terrible it must have been for so many people who were on the loosing side of this conflict and had to remain living there after the war. Sinh moved tho the U.S. in 1990 so it is possible that he is being overly critical of the communists simply because he is talking with an American and does not want to seem unsympathetic. However, there is little reason to doubt his credibility or the accuracy of his stories.

Part 2:

Malcolm Browne's reporting of his early days in Vietnam offer a glimpse into what he felt while living among South Vietnamese and American soldiers. Because he was a civilian, his experiences were somewhat different from other Americans who were in the country. He made friends with the people and spoke of his time with the Buddhist monks. His story about an elder monk who self immolates to protest their treatment by the oppressive Diem regime is particularly disturbing. This form of protest and self sacrifice is virtually unheard from other groups and while it was/is not common among Buddhists it did happen. Browne's account of the man remaining perfectly still while his body is destroyed by flames is hard to comprehend and difficult to imagine let alone witness firsthand. His telling of the "legend" John Wayne visiting an officers club and complaining that "pantywaist liberals" were preventing the war from going smoother is more amusing than atrocious. Here is a Hollywood big shot, dressed in fatigues as if it were another costume for a movie, visiting real soldiers and firing weapons in their club. He obviously did not fully understand what was happening in this country and it is doubtful that he made any effort to actually appreciate it. Browne remarks that Wayne was "one of the people who did much harm by misleading the public as to what the war in Vietnam was all about".

One particularly positive story that Browne talked about was the time he had spent Christmas Eve at a

Vietnamese Ranger camp. The camp was run by American Special forces advisers. This was before we officially entered the war so, almost all U.S. soldiers in the country were supposed to be only advisers. While celebrating the holiday, both South Vietnamese and Americans drank rice liquor and beer together and began firing mortars in the air like fireworks. When the Viet Cong soldiers nearby began shooting as well, the camp was surprised to realize that they were actually firing tracer rounds which leave behind a trail of fire to make it easier to determine where you are shooting. They were not being hostile but, joining in on the festivities from a distance. This story reminds us that both sides were human beings and while they may have hated each other, they both still enjoy the lighter side of humanity. It is easy to forget when reading about death tolls and bombing raids that killed indiscriminately, that all these people were also mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters to someone and while studying this war we need to keep that in mind.

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Justin Wease

History of Vietnam

Prof. Escobar

10/6-2012

Part one

Roger Donlon's story proved most impacting to me, due mostly to the amount of chaos it contained. Besides being so far away from home and in war time, a large amount of the forces fighting for him turned traitor and attacked him. The many references Donlon makes to a lack of higher intelligence shows just how chaotic the entire experience must have been, to all involved.

"..That shows you how bad our communications were with higher headquarters." (Appy 14)

The few terrible accounts of fellow soldiers being shot and dying serve to Donlon's credibility. He is believable because he was there, first hand, fighting and getting shot at. The information presented in his story is objective and is told according to his best recollection. Of course, A few details are potentially missing due to the sheer terror and confusion of the early morning attack in the complete dark and the traitorous regiment that was expected to be on his side. Donlon's mention of the fact that respect is really just a deep, deep love forces one to conclude that he is not bending reality for any sort of political gain and his story is an authentic one.

Part 2

Of the many disappointing stories contained within the second part of the Appy's book, Tillman and Thomson's remarks appear most troubling to me. These men were not listened to and were at the same time aware of the general consensus being that President Johnson and his administration were unapproachable in certain respects. This shows that a huge amount of confusion and a large lack of checks and balances were used to make major decisions in dealing with Vietnam and the overall attempt to negate communism. In Thomson's account, he admits to signing paperwork which he believed to be reconnaissance but also involved murder:

"They were taking pictures and shooting at anything they wanted to. I was

authorizing quite a bit of killing with no knowledge of what it was all about and it staggered me.” (Appy 116)

It boggles the mind to think that in the making of war on another country, and with the amount of high level people involved in decision making that something like this could happen so easily.

There are positive lessons to be learned from these stories.

Transparency in information is very important before the making of real time war decisions. Checks and balances also should play a huge role in determining if and when striking is necessary. The whole affair should prove that ultimate faith should be placed on the President as he is only a man. Perhaps, even a more limited government would prove more useful to counter confusion and the mob minded mentality that caused such

“crazy and deceitful policy making.” (Appy 115)

The hope that comes out of all this is that we as a nation of people deemed it necessary to protect and purport the freedoms that we have come to love and believe in. Wars, I hope, are fought primarily on good intentions and only when of the utmost importance. I think that lesson was learned in Vietnam.

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Kalyn Simpson

History of the Vietnam War

10/7/12

Assignment 1

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Paying the Price by Ta Quang Thinh is the essay I chose to write about. The instant I read it, it took me back to some memories of my time overseas. And for a story to have such an intimate connection to such a real experience gives it much credibility in my book. I have a very open minded and objective view on my own wartime experiences; so the authors writing also seem very objective and factual. After all, he was an educated man, being a doctor. A man's writing reflects his very thoughts. I found his writing to be very well done, reflecting that of an educated man. All of the facts point to him being an absolutely reliable source. Unlike government and high ranking military officials, whose opinions are purely what they are only allowed to say. Everyone knows that the government tends to hide and ensure that the facts remain undercover; as we have seen in the videos, readings, and supplemental materials, many of the stories, political, military, and civilian, have many contradictions to what actually occurred. This doctor seems to be very honest and forthcoming the events that he incurred, he has no call to lie. But to tell of what really struck me in this story, how alike it is to those on the other side of the war. Americans and Vietnamese alike, both suffering great pains, both wanting the war to end, yet their governments and generals are the ones who keep them in agony. No man enjoys war. For none who endure it come home unscarred.

For my second essay I chose Paradise Island by John Singlaub. It mainly has to do with what seems to be the Communists vs. Imperials on who could spread the most propaganda and try to fool as many indigenous people as possible with empty promises of freedom, prosperity, peace, and hope. Well what lied behind these promises were tyrannical desires of political power and greed. Nothing good came from this. I am going to quote paragraph 3, page 97:

"Many commandos were affected by Communist propaganda. When they were captured they acknowledged that they had fought because they needed the money and they agreed that the Americans were invaders who came to dominate our country. They remembered the U.S. officers who had told them that they were working for the Americans. If the commandos had been told that they were fighting for their own country and their own people, then they might have stayed loyal when they were in the hands of the enemy. But the U.S. destroyed their patriotism, turning them into disloyal people, disloyal even the Americans."

I am truly disappointed that the United States did not bolster the national pride of the Vietnamese people, especially the ARVN fighting alongside our G.I.'s. During my service overseas, our job when we were training Iraqi Soldiers, it was to build their skills and build their pride of fighting for the love of their country. To win a war, you must win their hearts and souls. I think America has lost sight of that true tactic of winning over a people. But then again, why Vietnam?

What good came out of this paper is that we must learn to be truthful about our intentions. Honestly, love, respect, truthfulness, and loyalty are the good traits we can pull from this story. But these are lessons that each individual must learn for himself.

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“War Heroes” was my favorite story because it caught my attention right away with the quote that Roger Donlon started out with, “We were babes in arms in every way.” Roger Donlon's story brings you a little bit closer into what he was dealing with in that five hour firefight. The fear, anger, sadness and destruction that he experienced can haunt you for a lifetime. You tend to acclimate to whatever environment you are around the most as Roger Donlon had to. When his Vietnamese interpreter was killed in such a horrific way, I'm sure he has relived that moment many times throughout his life. When all you see is death and destruction, it can become a very normal mind set to someone who has lived it.

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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

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Matthew Menigoz

10/6/12

Assignment 1

Part 1

I think the story that was most exciting and grabbed my attention was Roger Donlon's story called "War Heroes". It caught my attention because this story was referring to the first American awarded the Medal of Honor. This medal is the highest medal that the American military can confer. He talks about an ambush that the Northern Vietnamese placed on a Strike Force camp. They were sent there to train and teach the southern Vietnamese to be proud of their country and how to protect their land. When it occurred it was early morning on 4th of July weekend. They were getting hit by mortars and gun fire from everywhere. They called for reinforcements before they destroyed their communication building. He was in charge and had to protect this base as long as he could before reinforcements helped. The story talks about he was carrying men from point A to point B, calling orders to the mortars, telling them where to fire. He would run through gunfire to get to mortar holes to help, and then he would run to wounded soldiers and give them first aid. This story just seems like a action movie and I wish I could watch it as a movie like he experienced it. After reading this I believe Roger has a large amount of credibility because of the situation he was put under and he still came out victorious. I believe he did what he and other people said, and I'm sure his as well as their experiences were factual and made sense otherwise they would all be dead.

Part 2

I think an inspirational or more exciting then depressing or sad would be the story of Vo Nguyen Giap. He called his story "The Most Atrocious Conflict in Human History". I think it's interesting because of how he went from a young, promising leader fighting for his land. By the end of the war he was working with us military officers and trying to help rebuild the land and the government as a whole. Vo said in the story that he still keeps in touch with the OCC commander Major Allison Thomas who he worked with. He read part of a letter sent to him by Thomas who says, "Yesterday you were in the jungle, and today you are running an independent country". He wants Americans and Vietnamese to have good relations and for the American people to really understand the history and culture of his people. He never wanted to fight the Americans he says; they gave us no choice to defend our lands and culture. Something that's cool about this story is that it makes you look at something so devastating and a big part of history through the other side's eyes.

The story that made me a little bit upset would be Ngo Vinh Long's story of his life. As he grew up he watched the French murder Vietnamese people and through them in ponds or creeks. His father was brutally beaten and almost killed by the French as well. As he grew up him and his father both looked at the USA as being a place of independence and democracy and wanted to learn everything about it. He made his way to the U.S. and found a job as a military map maker for the government. As he went on his journeys he began to see how the American soldiers and army were treating the Vietnamese people. After seeing this, the slaughter of many Vietnamese and grouping them as if they were slaves he resigned in disgust of the American military. He then turned to join protests against the US involvement in the Vietnamese government. He then was informed by his American friends to leave their otherwise he would get arrested. He then went back to America enrolling into Harvard and being involved in the anti-war movement. It's sad to me that someone as a young child can look at our country in such excitement to later be disgusted with it because of what we were doing to human beings. That's not

something I would like to hear about my own country.

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As I read the first part of Patriots the story of Roger Donlon speaks to me. I was so moved and disturbed by his account of the attack on his special forces camp. I am in the middle of reading a fictitious series about the Navy SEALs so I was already aware of some of the things in his story such as the Nung mercenaries and who they were. I was amazed at the amount of soldiers in this one place who were supposed to be fighting for the south but ended up fighting for the north. This story is the pinnacle of survival in my mind. To be so badly outnumbered and to still give all you have to protect the fellow soldiers with you is true bravery and poise. I was very moved while hearing about the love that he felt for his fellow teammates and how he described it as respect that was later understood as a deep, deep love. I enjoyed the fact that the advisor groups in the early years of the war tried to help the South Vietnamese have pride for their own country. We know now that many soldiers suffer from PTSD, so I feel that this account of someone who was in battle is very pretty accurate and credible. These memories are with soldiers for the rest of their life so to think that they misremember is almost an insult. I believe there may be some exaggeration in the amount of the task force that turned against them, but not enough to discredit Mr. Donlon.

I am disappointed and outraged at the story of Henry Prunier. How is it that American government officials and policy makers keep making the same mistakes over and over again? So In 1945 the American government decided it would be a good idea to supply the Viet Minh with weapons and specific training in how to use these weapons. Then in the 1950's they decided that we shouldn't of done that and now we needed to go in and fight them. Does this situation sound familiar to anyone? How about the Afghans fighting the Russians? Why are we training our enemies? With the feeling in the government that we should be the "democratic police" why do we keep supplying people with arsenals that will only be used against us when we realize that they are not who we "thought" they were. I do not for one second believe that our government did not know that Ho Chi Manh was a communist. This infuriates me as I read it.

The story of Luyen Nguyen pulled at my heart the whole time I was reading it. To keep such faith and loyalty to his country and his wife after being imprisoned for 21 years is an amazing story. I see goodness in this story, to see what Luyen went through and then at the end get to see how he ended up is very inspiring. It is sad to see how the CIA treated this program and to read the footnote of why the commando's were treated this way and for how long. To hear Luyen put this story into his own personal experiences and for him to part with details that he has not even told his wife and children show's an amazing spirt inside him. It brings hope to thought when you realize that he endured all this hardship and now has an amazing life with his wife and has done something amazing with his life.

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Michael Sitterley

Assignment 1

Of the many interviews and testimonials in the first part of Christian G. Appy's book *Patriots*, one of the stories stood out the most. The interview was from Dang Vu Hiep, a former lieutenant colonel and then eventually a general. Hiep recalled some of the tactics they employed to combat the American forces, noting they had to sometimes fight against airborne units with up to four hundred helicopters. He stated that they had to rely on their creativity when fighting the Americans, and he goes on to detail some of their successes. As a leader, Hiep seems to have a lot of credibility and knowledge of what was going on. Although his battle tactics were interesting, it wasn't what caught my attention the most. Towards the end of the interview he recalls the wartime food shortage and how they had so little rice that they had to mix cassava into their rice. The cassava plant was such an important plant and it tied into their daily operations for everyone. The commanders down to the basic soldiers tended to over five hundred plants just to be able to eat and keep fighting. Wherever they fought they grew the plant so they would have a supply of food. They even had a song they composed about the plant and that was how important the plant was to Hiep and his group of soldiers. This is what really caught my attention the most and brought things into perspective.

In the second chapter of interviews, the story that was most disappointing to me was that of Ngo Vinh Long. It was not necessarily the situation that he went through that bothered me, but more his perspective of the world around him. At the age of twenty, he left his home country and moved to the United States to attend Harvard. This would put him at a very young age during in Vietnam. It is not that his story is fictitious; it is just the age at which these events took place. At such an impressionable age it is easy to be misguided by the world around him. He even said that growing up his father was tortured to the brink of death by the French. So he clearly had no love for the French and early on really liked the American presence. His father told him that the United States was supporting the French. He did not believe his father. Later, he became a public relations person for a mapping outfit to get accurate maps of the country. He traveled all over the country and saw some terrible things which led to leaving for Harvard at the age of twenty. There no question of the validity of the work done at and after Harvard, but before that lacks credibility. It is just hard to believe that a teenager did these things, especially compared to today's teens. The story was interesting in one sense but bugged me in another sense.

On a positive note, there is something good that I got out of this story in particular. Even in a tough situation if someone wants to change their future, they just have to want it. Ngo Vinh Long left Vietnam during a rough era and was able to attend Harvard University. Not only was he able to flee his country but was able to attend a very prestigious school. This may have only been one person's success and certainty not the norm, but I would like to think that everyone could make a better life for themselves if they put the effort in and get out of the bad situation they may be in. Unfortunately only a handful of people were lucky enough to make it out of Vietnam and come to America.

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The story of Phan Xuan Sinh in *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* by Christian G. Appy is very impactful. Sinh's story is unique in that he was drafted by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. For those that are not scholars of the Vietnam War, this is a viewpoint that is not often heard. The first memory that Sinh shares is heartbreaking. He talks about an ambush that his company was ordered to set up on the beach at Cam Hai. Intelligence had told them that a company of Viet Cong would be landing there by boat. When the boats approached, Sinh's company thought that they saw rifles silhouetted against the sky. After firing on the boats, they realized that they were fishermen, not Viet Cong. It is stories such as this, of innocent civilians that became casualties of war, which carry great impact. It is also the reliability of the storyteller that carries part of the impact. Having been present at the time makes the story more credible. On the other hand, the personal nature of the stories makes it impossible for them to be objective. Sinh has a great amount of credibility in that these are his stories and his past that he lived, but that also means that they cannot be objective. While they are factual, they are clouded by one person's opinion and personal feelings. Another consideration is the passage of time. As the years pass, details of an event tend to fade while emotions and feelings become what are remembered most clearly.

There are two stories from the second part of Christian Appy's book that stand out as disappointing. The first is that of Malcolm Browne. Browne is a journalist who took the famous picture of a Buddhist monk burning himself to death in protest of the anti-Buddhist policies in South Vietnam. One image taken by Browne has become one of the most well known images of the entire Vietnam War. The act of the monk burning himself to death is not the only disappointing part of this story; the lack of knowledge about his reasons is disappointing as well. This image is widely circulated as a monk protesting the Vietnam War. In reality, there is more to the story. According to Browne, there was a deep anti-Diem sentiment throughout South Vietnam. Ngo Dinh Diem, a Catholic, was the President of South Vietnam. Diem did not allow the Buddhist flag to be flown in a country where a large part of the population was Buddhist. The monk, Thich Quang Duc, was protesting the anti-Buddhist policies of Diem. This is an example of how gross generalizations were made about Vietnam, and still are, without understanding the details.

Another story that is disappointing is that of Paul Kattenburg. Kattenburg was a Vietnam specialist and became head of the State Department's Vietnam Task Force. After returning from Vietnam, Kattenburg attended a meeting of the National Security Council. At this meeting, Kattenburg was struck by the ignorance of those seated at the table with him. He suggested that the US withdraw from Vietnam. Several months later, after returning again from Vietnam, Kattenburg wrote a report stating that the South Vietnamese would lose the war within two years. Rather than choosing to listen to Kattenburg, a man who had spent time in Vietnam and understood the culture and sentiments of the people, he was punished and kicked out of the Bureau of East Asian Affairs. Kattenburg was also excluded from top-level discussions of policy. Again, this story illustrates the lack of knowledge about Vietnam and how a better understanding might have changed the outcome, saving tens of thousands of lives.

Despite how disappointing these stories are, there is a lesson to be learned from them. The story of the monk told by Malcolm Brown demonstrates that there are many layers of motivation that should not, and cannot, be generalized into one idea. Kattenburg illustrates the importance of knowledge and listening to those with knowledge. Vietnam emphasized the importance of understanding the culture of a country and sentiments of its people. Without that understanding, there was no hope of winning the war or winning over the Vietnamese people. This is a lesson that can be carried over to our dealings with other nations in the future, in hopes that we do not make the same mistakes that were made in Vietnam.

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Natasha Haynes

Assignment #1

Part 1:

I never fully understood how unclear communications were in this horrific war, until I read Phan Xuan Sinh story. He recalls his unit opening fire towards what they had believed to be a Viet Cong boat, when in fact it was really a group of fisherman who had taken a late night fishing trip. The amount of lives lost in this war was already evident to me because I had read the dry version of the material. In Herring's book he compares what the Americans had lost versus the Vietnamese. He states, "For the Vietnamese the cost was much, much higher: millions dead..." (XVI). However, when readdressed in a real emotional recollection, it opens up your eyes to just how violent this war truly was. There were so many innocent lives lost. Phan Xuan Sinh should be seen as a reliable and trustworthy source because he does not seem to have a bias opinion and choose a specific side to favor. Yes, he was fighting for the South Vietnamese military, but it is also evident in his stories that he cared about all the people of Vietnam, not just the people of the South. He says, "That's why many of us thought that even living under the other side's authority would be preferable to continuing the war" (Appy 26). He was fighting for the South and along side the Americans, however he wanted the war over. He says, "We just hoped to find a way to live together with our brothers" (Appy 26). Recalling any event completely accurately is by no means an easy task for anyone. Everybody holds different viewpoints. Whether it was Phan Xuan Sinh, one of the innocent fisherman, or somebody who was simply retelling the story, the story is going to be delivered differently each time due to the detail chosen by the storyteller. Whether Phan Xuan Sinh recalled this event completely accurately or not, we still get the main idea. Therefore, I was still strongly impacted by it because it makes you realize how these events affected the lives of so many innocent people.

Part 2:

I really found disappointment in Daniel Redmond's story, but more specifically in a particular sentence that he makes. "We should have just supported the South Vietnamese financially and stayed the hell out of there" (49). Does Redmond really not fully understand that whether supporting the war with any U.S. personal or not, supporting the war financially still results in conflict? Was he also unaware that we had already been assisting the French financially before he was stationed there in 1954? When he talks about how much he dislikes the French and how badly the French treated the people of Vietnam, it suggests otherwise. He states, "They were victims more of the French than the communists. I was as pissed off at the French as I was at the Viet Minh" (48). The strategic reassessment of 1950 that led to heavy financial involvement of the U.S as well as, "established principles that would form the basis for U.S. policy in Vietnam for years to come and would lead to large scale U.S. military involvement" (Herring 21), demonstrates that lending a war financial assistance is by no means solving the problem. Redmond's story is a disappointment because it's evident that Redmond is still misinformed about the war, something that he was involved in first hand.

One positive lesson that I learned in reading Vo Nguyen Giap's story was that Giap himself, who was a military commander for the North Vietnamese Army, was not necessarily in favor of the war, rather it seems as if he would have liked to provoke it from ever happening. I had stereotyped a Vietnamese commander to be ill informed and not well rounded. My perception was changed after reading his story. He states, "History is not made with 'if's', but if American leaders had been wiser I think we could have spared the war"(42). I was not aware of just how much the Vietnamese leaders of the North were informed, intellectual, and well educated in regards to why they were fighting and what they were truly fighting against. They were not just out to kill and harass people that opposed their view, but truly try to fight for their right to be an independent country. I had slipped into a stereotypical American belief, that their mission was a pure takeover of their beliefs around communism. He states, "We won the war because we would rather die than live in slavery" (42). Their mission was focused around independence first and then secondly communism. The positive lesson was being able to see, from a North Vietnamese leaders perspective, what their real goals were.

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Phillip Hubbard

Assignment 1

The story that had the largest impact on me was from Roger Donlon. His story is an account of his heroism during his time in Vietnam. I was moved by his story because of its simplicity. He was there to simply advise the Vietnamese and help them move forward with their countries goals. He was not there as a combatant but showed he was more than capable. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions while under attack on July 6, 1964. For any man to be awarded that medal and to still be alive speaks volumes about his character and strength. His duties while in Vietnam were to train the Vietnamese strike force for combat operations. Of the members of the strike force there were Vietnamese who sympathized with the north. The sympathizers where instrumental in the eventual attack that would earn Donlon the Medal of Honor. He speaks briefly about the problem of having the sympathizers directly involved in the training. He say's "they manipulated us." He also says they were unaware of the magnitude of the sympathizers because of a lack of communication from higher headquarters. The cards where stacked against him from the very beginning and he was not ever aware of it until it was to late. On a larger scale you could say that for the entire American military involved in this war. America never imagined the intense patriotism of the Viet Cong. Their beliefs were deeper than any American made bomb could penetrate.

In the case of Malcolm Browne he talks about his experience as an American reporter working for the associated press. He speaks about the Buddhist protests, the "ding a ling" torture technique, John Wayne, and the Special Forces. He characterizes the native people into a group of simple people expressing their views diplomatically while also calling American Green Berets "glamour boys." Malcolm talks about his time in Saigon where he could go to a nightclub in a suit and tie and later that evening catch a helicopter to a remote part of the jungle. He frequently portrays the American fighting forces as low quality, stating that "the entire camp was roaring drunk" when referring to a Christmas Eve celebration. He also speaks about helicopter missions where they would "land at the edge of a rice patty field and everyone would go charging into a tree line, blazing away like crazy. And there would be nothing there." He was a reporter in a war zone, which is substantially different from being a troop in a war zone. His story contains political views and opinions, which can be subjective and unreliable. I would have liked for him to speak of the men that were being shot at not the celebrities getting drunk. I understand that politics can influence a war but the soldier wins it. I do not understand why they were given so much access to the war in the first place. Why is a civilian with their own political views, allowed to be with American fighting forces? This has baffled me for many years. Perhaps the Duke was right when he said, "If it weren't for those panty waste liberals, things would go much more smoothly."

A positive story about Vietnam is still a sad story. Richard Olsen has many sad stories that are positive. He was a young patriot that was awarded the opportunity to fight for his country during a war. He was a 27-year-old Lieutenant flying with men who had fought in World War 2. He was a romantic during his time in Vietnam saying he flew with the best men in the world and talking about how he celebrated being able to stay alive. His story's are pleasurable to read because of his openness about what he did and saw over there. He is also tremendously patriotic stating "I'm not one of those veterans who's embittered with a whole host of grievances." He understands that the decisions he made while in combat were his choice. He is not angry with a politician for something that is out of his control. He relishes in the fact that he was able to share those experiences with other Americans fighting in the name of Freedom. He enjoys being part of World History. This positive outlook of such a horrandous experience is refreshing. So often with the Vietnam War it is only the horror that is disgust not the historic impact and perhaps positive impact even a publicly negative war can have on our future generations.

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Patriots, The Vietnam War Remembered

Assignment 1,Part 1

The story that had the greatest impact on me was the story of Tran Thi Gung. In 1962, the "Puppet Soldiers" of the South Vietnamese shot her father for being Viet Cong. She was only 16 at the time. I'm sure, if some one came into my house and shot my father. I would want revenge as well. At seventeen she was politically driven into the war. I can't imagine seeing a young girl packing an assault rifle and living underground most of the time. The American soldiers most likely had no idea they would be shooting at young girls when they arrived in Vietnam. The things that this girl did and the things that she saw at such a young age. Even after getting hit and spending time underground in the hospital the determination and courage she showed amazed me. Her recounts of her years fighting to me seem to be very credible despite her being a Viet Cong gorilla,

Assignment 1,Part 2

The most disappointing story I believe was the story of Le Lieu Browne, she worked for the South Vietnamese government as a proofreader for the south's journalist. Her father disappeared when she was young, she did not have the fight inside her, as did Tran Thi Gung in a previous story. Her father was also killed but by the South Vietnamese. Her story or stories did not tell of the fierce fighting and rebellions that were going on, She seemed to be just an office worker to me that worked for the president, at the time I'm sure she lived well, As she was working directly with the president of South Vietnam. I feel she was protected in the most part from all of the bloodshed. I don't feel that she was very credible because of her place of work at the time. She did not live in the fear of death as most of the population did.

In the parts of which I have read, I believe that the lessons learned in hind sight to me was to let the people of Vietnam rule themselves, At the time in the 1960's the fear of communize caused a lot of unnecessary deaths. At the e time with so many countries where involved and how America flip flopped to who ever they though could stop Communizium. The potential for hope? Whose hope The U.S.'s hope or the people of Vietnam?

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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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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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Assignment 1

Part one

The Story of Roger Donlon had the greatest impact on me. Roger Donlon was the first American to receive the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War. Donlon was a Green Beret captain who commanded the Nam Dong Special Forces camp. What impacted me the most about this story is the actions that Donlon showed during a time of crises. In 1964, the Nam Dong camp was attacked by a reinforced Viet Cong battalion. It was a five hour battle but Donlon showed the courage that every person fighting for their life and country should show. Besides what his Medal of Honor citation says, Roger Donlon sounds believable. I know how hard it is to be fast pace in something and then try to relive it and tell about it afterwards, you always seem to forget something. Then there are things you can't forget and the fact that he was humble about the situation shows that he is sincere in what happened. Also there's the citation that said exactly what he did so that is trustworthy to me. Roger Donlon was real patriotic and I respect what he did for his team and his country.

Part two

The story that I chose for Part 2 is Ngo Vihn Long. I am using him for the first and second pieces of part two. Ngo Vihn Long's story disappointed me in the sense of confusion of America and how the French affected Vietnam. Long was a young boy that witnessed many traumatizing things from dead corpses in lakes and ponds, to his father being tortured and contradicting feelings of America. The French affected Long and the whole Vietnam civilization 'treated the Vietnamese like dirt' and his father still tried to teach him morals like don't hate the French people, but French colonial policy. His father also taught him about America and how it was a 'beautiful country' and a 'racially harmonious country'. Long wanted to learn English and go to this wonderful place that his father spoke of and then as he grew his father changed his opinion confusing Long. America siding with the French and eventually bringing harm to Vietnam by engaging in the war Changed Long's perspective of America which is disappointing to me because as America we should have continued to help and live up to are name instead of becoming the bully we were trying to help Vietnam protect themselves from.

I also found that Ngo Vihn Long's story had a positive message. Out of all the hardship he went through as a kid from seeing death and pain around his life, Long still managed to come out of the whole situation with knowledge and courage. He was home schooled by his father and even though the probability of him taking the high school graduation exam was slim; he got special permission in 1959 to take it. Only five percent of the students passed it and he got the highest score in South Vietnam. This ultimately led to his job of public relations person for the mapping of South Vietnam. Even though he learned that America wasn't the country he thought they were and quit the job to protest against the U.S. intervention and the Saigon government, he still managed to apply at Harvard University and got accepted. It shows that even though you can come from a place not exactly fit for success but overcome it and ultimately succeed.

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Part 1:

Roger Donlon's story had an overwhelming impact on me, though I do not quite know why. Could it be because when he tells his story, no physical breaks or emotional pauses enter it? The author tries his best to indicate when an interviewee is pausing, tearing up, or laughing, yet nothing puts a break in Donlon's words. He gives an emotional retelling of the deaths that he saw, the betrayal that he witnessed, all with a supposed calmness flowing through his story. Donlon speaks of the objective reality of the Vietnam War; no one knew what was going on or why. When the Vietcong attacked his camp in the late hours of the night, when no communication could really be reached as *"it was fourth of July weekend, and everybody was celebrating."* He doesn't speak ill of how things were handled but he tells the event as it had happened. People were busy celebrating and instead of having air craft fully fueled, as it was supposed to be, they had to re-fuel causing help to be very late. Communication was very poor, as in the heat of combat you have no time to yell code names for camps or people. He gives these details without his own personal view on how things should have went.

Donlon's credibility is supported by the fact that during many raids and attacks on U.S camps, higher communication was all but cut off. They were alienated and left without hope in the middle of a jungle. It is a common thread throughout many stories. While Donlon tells of emotional deaths, he does so while walking a fine line between indifference and understanding. He tells of a fellow soldier, Pop Alamo, who died in his arms. With this simple retelling of Pop's death; Donlon presents an interesting dynamic – emotional objectivity. Conflicting terms, but interestingly seen within his story. Earlier in his story he says *"You try to keep a cool head, but emotions would get in there."* yet after Pop's death he says *"What keeps you going at times like that is the love you feel for your fellow teammates."* Donlon allows us to see how the balance between emotional subjectivity and objectivity can coexist. He allows emotion to come through and touch upon experiences that need emotion, he refrains from adding that subjectivity to circumstances that call for objectivity and understanding.

Part 2:

Sergei Khrushchev' story was disappointing for me because it reinforces my belief that nothing can change the way the American people think. We are too easily manipulated into believing what the government wants us to believe. We have had chances to change the way our collective consciences think and act during times of crisis. We have had "movements", if you would even call them that. Like with all movements there is a reward at the end of them – hopefully. Unfortunately people are content with the small scraps of a reward instead of the whole reward. We have become passive, idle, and too easily satisfied with taking small incremental changes instead of demanding the big changes we so desperately need. Khrushchev says it point blank that *"American's tend to believe what they read and [see] on television."* and he is right. When he compares the American's to the Russians, I know that he is not just doing so to make a point. It is a solid statement that is, unfortunately, known the world over.

Khrushchev' story also gives a great – albeit small, understanding of the Vietnam War. The only way the government can fully justify its reasoning for actions is by having the support of the people. By feeding into false information and propaganda, we believe it and are supporting such things that if they were told point blank we would have no part of. To blindly support any authority is a sure way to lose sight of independence. Communism and Socialism, as well as Capitalism, are all great theories. Implemented, however is an entirely different element. The Vietnamese wanted their own independence, whether they wanted Communism, Socialism, or Capitalism is entirely up to that people's nation to decide. America should realize that Capitalism is not for every country, it's not even working that well for itself.

The only hope that I see coming out of this story is the hope that more American's realize how stagnant they are. How cheering for the small incremental changes is only giving people the idea that that is all it takes to make us happy. That we are content in chasing the carrot forever, just as long as we can smell it for a second before it is dangled farther out. It is a deeply ingrained flaw that I do not think we will ever overcome. Khrushchev' story gives me the feeling that of all the countries that have fought for independence, we have yet to really fight for ours.

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One story that is particularly striking is that of George Watkins. His story of growing up working-class only to be drafted is probably a common story. What is so striking is his account of not knowing anything about the country he was being sent to fight in, nor any specifics of the war he was expected to fight.

What are the deciding factors of credibility in historical accounts? "Is this story credible?" is a vitally important question to ask. However, how can it be answered, especially in the context of war? On the other hand, this story doesn't seem not-credible. Yes, that is a double negative, however, it can still be a useful question to ask. On a related note, are the Vietnamese accounts more or less credible than the American accounts? In the situation of war, is any side more or less guilty of propaganda and misinformation than any other?

What I found most disappointing was Richard Olsen's account of his experiences. I was disappointed that his perspective was the same as it had been at the time; that nation building with a very different culture was a good and noble thing. It seems much of the argument then and now consists of individualism versus collectivism. At it's essence, this is a cultural disagreement. For one country or culture to "build" another country on the other side of the planet seems presumptuous and arrogant. There is also the observation that many agrarian cultures are, at their core, collectivist as a means of survival. Families, villages, and regions must work and think co-operatively in order to achieve prosperity. Especially when under constant threat from foreign invaders. For a foreign culture to come in and say this behavior is wrong and needs to be flipped on it's head seems to be incredibly disrespectful. It is important to consider other perspectives, which cannot be done without accepting the possibility that ones own perspective could be in-accurate, or wrong. Richard Olsen's account seemed to lack any consideration of other perspectives. Olsen said that the H-21 "was a romantic aircraft." He then proceeds to show a certain romanticism of his own memories. He said he "wanted Communism and totalitarianism to be ruled over by a Free World spirit." Does he not consider Ngo Dinh Diem's policies to be totalitarian? If Ngo Vinh Long's account is accurate -that the South Vietnamese constitution required civilians to quarter soldiers and yield property-rights during war-time as well as public executions without judicial process- does Olsen consider this to be the anti-totalitarian "Free World spirit"?

On the other hand, Olsen also spoke of his experience going back to Vietnam in 1994. His story of feeling an instantaneous connection with his rescuer after his initial reaction brings a certain hopefulness to the human experience. That after all of this pain and suffering, it is possible for those who have seen war to see the "enemy's" humanity. On that same note, Ngo Vinh Long's story of being helped by his American General friend and wife to get out of the country after being black-listed for being a dissident is heartening as well. Again, if his story is accurate and credible, to see U.S. leadership being able to discriminate between enemy combatants and friendly dissidents is a heartening thing. It shows a true desire to help the people of Vietnam, rather than simply obtaining the glory of building a nation.

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