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1. Lyndon Johnson said "If I've lost Walter Cronkite, I've lost Middle America." Barry Zorthain remembers him saying this after the Tet Offensive. When Cronkite publicly said that the war could not be won, it was a major turning point not really in the war but, how it was perceived at home. Cronkite was America's most trusted and popular journalist at a time when we did not have 24 hour news channels. People tuned into his reports every day to see how the war was going. Most historians do agree that Tet was the main turning point of the military efforts, but it also was a pivotal mark when the media and a huge percentage of American civilians began to see the conflict in a different light. Zorthain explains how the military was adamant with the press to put a positive spin on their reporting coming out of Vietnam. With Tet, this was difficult. After the initial offensive and what actually happened became clear, the media really never returned to the positive stories that was fed to them by the military. The started to focus on more of the negative aspects of the war and also began covering more of the anti-war demonstrators. This was a critical turning point of the war. Without the support of the public, it is incredibly difficult to maintain high moral. That goes for the troops, civilians and politicians. Tet was a turning point but, when Cronkite and most of the rest of the media turned against the conflict, it really was lost it just took 25,000 more dead Americans for the government to realize it. I feel that selling a war to the public is almost as important as how well you actually fight it. It is unfortunate that we maintained a military presence after all this occurred in 1968 but, without pressure from journalists and protesters, we may have been there even longer and lost even more lives.
2. John McCain probably had one of the worst experience in Vietnam other than the ones who did not come back. I have a new found respect for the man not only because of what he went through, but how he handled himself once he returned to the U.S. Of all people, I would expect him to have been furious with anyone involved with the anti-war movement but, he recognizes that in a free country it is perfectly okay to disagree with your government. He mentions how divided this country was following the war and I can try to relate how he felt with how I see this country now. When he was released and able to come home, that would be a very different feeling then it would for someone who did not fight or was not a POW. Those soldiers were treated horribly by their captors and deserve our respect and gratitude which they did not necessarily receive upon their homecoming. Throughout his political career, there has been relatively little that I can agree with John McCain about, but I do respect him for overcoming such a tramatic experience and living what can only be described as one of patriotism and valor. The "ending" for him and other POW's was not only life changing, it meant that they were free.

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