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HST 195

Assignment 1

Part 1:

Bernard Trainor was a general in the US Marines and was one of the first soldiers to enter and be apart of what would become the Vietnam War.

I chose Mr. Trainor because I felt his story gave me a very large overview of not just war scenes but also that of culture and politics. What first caught my attention and lead to my choosing this story was when Bernard was not even a part of the war yet, just attending college. His shock at being asked "why" and how this opened his mind was very telling of the time in which this all took place. His amazement at being asked why and establishing his own views showed us a time in which people trusted and followed more. Before World War 1 we were a nation of faith and God, we did not question and what could not be answered would then be excused by God. After World War 1 and 2 and the industrial revolution we as a nation began to question things more. Not so openly or brashly as the story of Mr. Trainor but the seed was planted. When we skip ahead into the peak of the war we have the Hippy counter culture movement and which this movement "why" became the new way to approach the world.

By reading his story and the few parts that had less to do with combat but

the world I was able to see a clear picture of the innocence people had and the image that was AMERICA to what came to be during and after the Vietnam War. A nation that always asked "Why", a nation torn on what is America and the global view of our nation.

To move further I also enjoyed when Mr. Trainor said;

"One thing I learned about the South Vietnamese was that they always left their enemy an escape. When American get into action, you aim to "kill 'em all", but that idea of a battle of annihilation was not part of their culture and I had to accommodate my plans to take this into account". (Bernard Trainor, "Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from all Sides. Pg 5 part 1)

This gave me a lot more insight into the culture of these people. Honestly I mostly have seen movies on Vietnam which I am sure take many artistic liberties. In these films the Vietnamese are always so nameless, faceless, just blurbs of brown and yellow screaming harsh words in a harsh tongue either dying or killing off a beloved American. Knowing more about the Vietnamese culture helps me to identify them as people and understand them.

Bonus to all of this was just how they found the super secret underground lair, Quang Da Special Zone Headquarters.

Part 2:

Ngo Vinh Long was at the time a twenty year old south Vietnamese man

who came to USA to study at Harvard. He later became involved with the hugely important task of making the maps that would later be used by the US military during the Vietnam War.

Like many people he was naive and believed fully in the virtues of the USA, the terrors and evils of Communism and lived upon faith and good intentions.

However his story of his time working for the US military making maps is one that shows clearly the change not just in his own self but the world at large, at how this war ripped the world asunder and heralded in a new age and way of thinking.

What bothered me about this story was not the speaker or their actions but rather the openly speaking about the bad things that happened and that our country did.

I found it interesting when you asked if we believe the people who wrote these stories. It is a good question but also a bold question as you openly ask us to challenge the very stuff we are being told to learn.

This applies to the greater picture, how much of history do we truly know? At least when we are growing up and being spoon fed "facts". Growing up I learned a lot of history and I ever watched History Channel daily. Very rarely was America shown in a negative light. In school this was very rare indeed and in fact we were shown as heroic, powerful, wise. We were the good guys fighting off the great evils of the world and protecting those weaker than ourselves. I truly believed this for a long time. It saddens me that true history is swept under the rug as that is a direct lie and insult not

just to us but the memories of those involved.

In the case of this story I do believe him and I believe that America was not being honest, being open or doing all the right things. I think many of us see this more clearly now and how to interrupt that is difficult. Do we accept that war and running a nation will have to fall into corruption, deceit and shameful acts in order to retain power and image? Or should we be appalled at the stuff our country keeps from us and the heinous acts committed to others and ourselves and fight for change such as the Hippy Movement?

The Korean War from what I have read is much more then a war but was a global social revolution that changed the very way we think, talk and view things forever.