

Part One

George Watkins' account is a subjective view of his time in Vietnam. Exact dates are often omitted and feelings replace them, but that's part of what makes his account so striking. Watkins was drafted into the army in 1967. He admits that at that point in time he "knewed very little about Vietnam." (Appy, 22) He was called upon by his country to do a job and that's what he did. In April of 1968 Watkins stepped on a landmine and lost his eyes and both of his legs. That would be enough to make anyone angry and spiteful, but while referring to his opposition he says, "I don't hate them. They did what they had to do." (Appy, 23) It may have taken him years to get to that point, but that kind of insight makes his account reliable. It shows that he's taken the time to look at both sides, and he realizes that they were human too. Multiple times throughout his account Watkins was very honest with how he felt. Whether it was in the past or at the time of the interview, he told it like he felt it. A pivotal moment of his account comes at the end when he's talking about the time he visited the wall in 1985, "I sat right there and just tried to think, 'Why did all these people die?' The majority were my age. Their lives and their families all messed up." (Appy, 25) Watkins' credibility doesn't come from his ability to recall every date or name of place that he was. It comes from the way he makes the reader feel like that if they lived in that time it could've been them or someone they knew. He makes it real. He makes it believable.

Part Two

Luyen Nguyen was a South Vietnamese soldier sent on a mission that was guaranteed to fail, and because of that he spent 21 years as a prisoner of war. Americans were sent to Vietnam to assist the North in the fight against communism. How could the people in charge continue to send soldiers behind enemy lines knowing that they wouldn't come back? How could their collective conscience allow this to continue for years? Did they even consider the lives they were tearing apart? The officials' lack of consideration for other people's lives and well-being was disappointing and frustrating to read. Luyen Nguyen was an innocent. He was fighting for his people and his country, and in return he was awarded with a "planned failure" mission and years in jail. While he was imprisoned he spent eleven

straight years in solitary confinement and was subjected to numerous torture tactics. One of which required his feet to be shackled to a rod and another shackle placed in a spot that caused his feet to swell up and his body to go numb(Appy, 96). Luyen Nguyen refused to say that he worked for the United States. He believed in South Vietnam. He was proud of his country and saying that he worked for the United States would have gone against everything that he believed in. He survived unimaginable horrors, and after 21 years he was released and reunited with his family.

Luyen Nguyen's account is a reminder of some of the tragedy of Vietnam but other accounts hold moments of hope and morality. Ngo Vinh Long is one of those accounts. As a boy he was homeschooled by his father and he stated, "My father taught me everything I knew"(Appy, 55). At the age of 16 he had the highest test score in South Vietnam. This opened a lot of doors for Long and he met a lot of important people. From 1959-1962 he worked for the Americans on one of their five map making teams. During these years he witnessed things that made him question the way he viewed things. He saw people being torn from their homes and relocated. He saw people starving, and people executed(Appy, 57-58). In 1962 his morals had been pushed to the limit and he resigned. After his resignation he joined the Saigon Student Union and even protested the government(Appy, 58). It is not always easy to stand up for your beliefs, especially when the people you see committing wrong doings are the ones that are supposed to be stopping it. Long did everything he could to stand up for what he believed to be right. That is pretty admirable.