

Dan Duerfeldt

Assignment 1

Part 1:

Dang Vu Hiep

This account by Dang Vu Hiep was very impactful. I thought it was interesting that his account of the attack on Pleiku was not planned to incite an American response, as was claimed by Americans. This story was also compelling because of the desperation faced by North Vietnamese soldiers in regards to food and medical shortages; “In the North, because of wartime food shortages, people had to mix cassava into their rice (Appy, 11).” It makes me think that they had a very strong resolve to go through those hardships.

I believe that Dan Vu Hiep’s account to be reliable mainly because at the beginning of this story, it is noted that the “retired general speaks [as] he flips through a small notebook bursting with inserted pages and note cards, full to the margins with his jottings – tactical principles, statistics, key events, reminders of a history that consumed thirty years of his life (Appy, 9).” I also believe that his rank of General lends to his credibility because he would be privy to more information than your average soldier.

Part 2:

Malcolm Browne

What really disappointed me and disgusted me about this story was that Malcolm Browne, being a journalist, regularly went back to the same village, Dam Doi, to report on the many massacres that took place. Browne goes on to describe his first account: “The Viet Cong had taken twelve or thirteen of the people they’d executed and laid them out like the spokes of a wheel around a flagpole and on the flagpole they had raised the

red, yellow, and blue Viet Cong flag (Appy, 66).”

In this same story by Browne, he discusses “a rare respite” from the conflict that occurred on Christmas eve 1961 in “Trung Lap, a Vietnamese Ranger camp run by a half dozen American Special Forces advisers (Appy, 67).” He recalls that, “at one point, the Special Forces troops broke out sixty-millimeter mortars and fired into the sky, creating a warlike star in the east. To their surprise, firing began from the direction of the Viet Cong tunnel complex, but the guerrillas weren’t aiming at the Special Forces camp. They were shooting tracers up at the star shells as if to participate in the celebration (Appy, 67).” This sort of event could have been hopeful that common ground could have been found to lead to a resolution that never came.