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History 195

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History of the Vietnam War (Assignment #1)

Part 1

The one single story in part one of the “Patriots” book that had the greatest influence on me was Roger Donlon’s “We were babes in arms every way” under the war heroes section. This particular story caught my attention because I thought it described similar military action and tactics that we currently practice in Afghanistan. During the Vietnam War some American soldiers were sent to train Vietnamese soldiers in their homeland and amidst the conflict. Author Roger Donlon describes the lack of faith he had for many of the Vietnamese troops that were being trained by his outfit within this passage. He even goes to the extent of saying that some of the Vietnamese soldiers that were trained by American soldiers in his regiment were aligned with the enemy. These type of tactics used by the Viet Cong described in this excerpt draw parallels to the type of warfare used by Taliban in Afghanistan. Like the Viet Cong, the Taliban has used the opportunity to join national security forces for training and to commit attacks behind enemy lines. Another piece of this story that I found hard to read about was the part about a fellow soldier in the authors outfit that’s wife had a miscarriage following the news of the death of her husband. It really emphasized the trauma that the families of soldiers had to deal with during this war. Roger Donlon puts it’s perfectly by saying, “The casualties of war go far beyond the immediate battlefield.” (Donlon 15) I personally think this phrase stood out within this story because it remains constant to this very day. During these last two wars the United States has most recently been involved in we have more vividly seen the immediate effects of PTSD.

I personally thought that this story was an accurate account of events that this soldier had in Vietnam. While I do believe that the author

displayed a prejudice towards the Vietnamese soldiers that he was training and fighting with I still believe his story was objective. I also believe that the story about the soldier's wife having the miscarriage towards the end of the passage added some real life emotion and credibility to his story.

Part 2

In part two of the book "Patriots" I was disappointed to read the first story of the section entitled "Deliver Us From Evil". This specific story made me upset because I was appalled by the amount of effort our country exerted just to stop country's half way around the world from becoming communist. I personally thought that President Eisenhower's "domino theory" was a sham used to gain support for various military activities against communist countries. Thus, hearing about the amount of funding the United States government spent on deterring this political philosophy was disturbing. Lastly, this story made me upset that the United States didn't learn from Frances military failures in Vietnam. The communists of the North Vietnam proved the power they bestowed and it made me form the opinion that the United States CIA and tacticians failed to recognize this.

The second story in part two of "Patriots" that I found disappointing was Vo Nguyen Giap's "The most atrocious conflict in human history." I found this story upsetting because it gave me the impression that the Vietnam War was avoidable. The author of this passage expresses this same viewpoint within his story, which makes me believe that if there was only more communication between Washington and our communist foes that there would be many avoidable conflicts. Because of this sentiment I was upset with acknowledging the massive loss of life by all sides in the Vietnam War that possibly could have been avoided in the first place.