

“All my ancestors are buried here.” While reading through part one and all of the interviews this quote was, to me, one that struck me with being one of the most meaning full. Its meaning instantly made me feel that there was a great love and a great burden that this war put on the people of Phan Xuan Sinh’s country.

As I have read through these stories and began to learn more about this war, I have definitely been enlightened to a lot of things that I was not aware of. The little bit I all ready knew about the Vietnam war was mostly about the tragedies that happened to our American soldiers. Delving further into the readings, I have started to sympathize for with the Vietnamese. To think that the only thing they had was their land doesn't really hit home until you here first account stories. The simple story about the old man and his wife moving back to their land after Sinh had burned the house down made me feel more trustworthy of him and his personal story. As he said “at the time I didn't fully understand, but of course the land was unimaginably important..” and “With so many experiences like that, our overwhelming hope was simply that the war would end.” He does not over exaggerate, he tells a simple memory that hits home for him and makes you feel apart of what he experienced. I don't think there is much subjectivity in this story, He makes a simple point at how his people lived and what they had to live for. He did not have a choice in what he was doing, he was a drafted soldier, he did what he had to to make it though the war.

Richard Olsen, A man living out his childhood dream as a pilot. A man who thought he was “in the middle of world history” fighting for the better good of Democracy.

One of the more up beat stories told of Vietnam, Richard a pilot of a “Banana” looked at the war as one of his passages into manhood. Being able to fly, land and maneuver his aircraft how he wanted gave him great pride. He liked what he did, he liked being a pilot. His story definitely differed from most, after a long day he got to take a shower, eat a hot meal and then go to the Thunderbird lounge and have a drink. I feel disappointed in how Richard spoke of Vietnam as a almost a good thing in his life. He made it sound almost as if going there was like having a regular job back in the states. This made me not appreciate hime at first, after reading so many sad

and tragic stories this felt like it did not fit into place for me.

Contrary to my first point after reading the ending dialogue and learning about his some what horrid images, I do realize that each account will vary drastically. Yes, most of the stories we read are going to be of the more sad things in war and how each individual will express them selves and how they cope with it. In Richards case A positive outlook when telling his experience in war may be how he deals with what happened. But, The paintings that he does that show gruesome images give us an actual image of what he saw, unlike the image we paint in our own mind from the reading of other individual accounts.

-Kirby Bullinger