

The story from Part 1 that had the greatest impact on me was that of Ta Quang Thinh, from the section "*Paying the Price*". It was so impactful because it really showed that we are all human, and it gives us an idea about the "enemy" that Americans do not often hear from anyone on their own side. Thinh was simply performing his duty and was trying to help a wounded soldier when a bomb was dropped on the building he was in. The explosion left him paralyzed from the waist down. He wasn't even a soldier fighting the Americans; he was just a doctor's assistant. After a period of healing he was literally carried the entire way back to North Vietnam from South Vietnam by interchanging groups of men. It seems that people only really hear those stories from their own side and therefore think that only their own people are so extraordinarily heroic and brave, but really those things happen on all sides, with all groups of people. Thinh was being a healer for the country that he wanted to see grow and prosper, and for that he was given a life in a wheelchair, unable to use his legs. I feel that Ta Quang Thinh's story is reliable and I do not have a problem trusting it. He was not there to hurt the Americans in the first place; he just wanted them out. He never even said anything bad about Americans, so I don't believe that he would have any reason to be dishonest about his experiences. Also, his story came from a place of subjective emotion, but obviously he was going to be emotional about it with all that he lost. At the end of the story we find out that his wife only visited him once a year, so it is understandable to me that he would be coming from an emotional place. He was a victim of the Vietnam War just as many other Vietnamese and Americans were.

The story from Part 2 that I found most disappointing was the one from Evelyn Colbert in the section "*The Emperor Has No Clothes On*". This story addressed the fact that stories telling the Americans how bad things were in Vietnam were, in fact, actually being published even though the secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, said in his memoirs that today we can see that while the war was happening we did not really know how bad things were in Vietnam. Colbert said, "...dissent which contradicted the public optimism was ignored." I found this story disappointing because it is really frustrating to see how hard some people must have worked to try to convince the American government that we were not up to the war, and to find out that they were just ignored and that the public blindly followed the

politicians' words of optimism. Another story that I found disappointing was Richard Olsen's story in the section "*Kick the Tires and Light the Fires*". His attitude about himself and the other Americans among him in the beginning of the war was very off putting. While the Vietnamese were struggling with their own war, all that Olsen was really concerned with was how cool he looked to the older Pilots that he was working with. Also, he expressed disappointment at the fact that he was not allowed to shoot random North Vietnamese people without being shot at first. He had no compassion and did not care to have any sympathetic feelings toward the Vietnamese.

Paul Hare's story from the section "*Kick the Tires and Light the Fires*" gave me some hope. Paul talked about how the entire time he was in Vietnam he was never convinced that what he and the other Americans were doing there was actually helping the Vietnamese people. While there, he treated the Vietnamese with respect, and even "rubbed elbows" with them while enjoying the local life of the small town he was living in. He recalled that even though he had experienced encounters with seemingly nice Vietnamese men that ended up being Viet Cong spies, he still kept a faith in the Vietnamese people and refused to assume the ideal that they were all evil and out to get America. Paul Hare exhibited compassion and a true goodness that people like Richard Olsen did not.