

Part 1

The story by George Watkins grabbed my attention the most in the Part 1 reading. Just reading the subtitle “That sand was probably the only thing that saved me” of his story made me want to read what happened to state that kind of a comment. I am a pre-nursing student and am interested in doing disaster relief when I get my degree, and that is why I think this story had a large first impression on me. I am not sure if it is because he was wounded or if the way that George speaks that makes the story more attention grabbing, but this story really made me think that not all soldiers come home, and then many that did were badly injured physically and mentally. George’s story also reminds me a lot of my grandfathers, one worked in a coal mine and the other was a truck driver and they both went to the Korean War where one of them worked as communication specialist in Morse code and I am not exactly sure what the area my other grandfather worked in. Thankfully both of them came home from the war alive and in one piece. The only problem is they both refused to talk about the war and when it was brought up in conversation the topic was avoided and redirected.

The story is definitely believable since he came home with both of his legs amputated and completely blind. There are parts of the story that seem to be maybe a stretched idea of the truth. For instance, when George was injured he said that “roughly forty people walked by it before I hit it.” He also mentioned that he was placed into the infantry instead of the area that he had trained in as a combat engineer, because there was so much going on in Vietnam this may very well been possible, but this may also be the reason he was hurt because he was doing a job he wasn’t trained for.

Seeing how the speaker was actually there in the war during the time of events experiencing the noises, smells, seeing comrades dying, and fighting against the Vietnamese it gives them more credibility. George seems to have an objective opinion in his story since he stated that “I don’t have much bitterness. Well, I don’t think I do. I just wish that none of it ever happened---for everybody’s sake. It was a bad political mistake.” By reading the detail in George’s story he has not forgotten he has to live with the repercussions every day of his life never forgetting how he went blind

or why he is missing his legs.

Part 2

The most disappointing story was that of Paul Kattenburg and how he was in a National Security Council Executive Committee and how they were speaking in a general manner as if all countries are the same if they were in a predicament or Communist. The committee was comparing Peru and Vietnam, yet they were not seeing firsthand what was happening and were not willing to listen to Kattenburg's idea of "it would be better if we just left with honor." Unfortunately Kattenburg was told that "we haven't gone this far with the whole thing to give it up now." If this little bit of advice was listened to or even pondered over there could have been way less of a catastrophe in Vietnam. Le Lieu Browne's story showed a glimmer of compassion and hope for the love that she and Malcolm had for each other even if it was against the Vietnamese rules. Also in Le Lieu Browne's story she spoke about Madame Nhu the sister-in-law of Diem. Browne mentioned how she admired Madame Nhu for what she did for the Vietnamese women. Nhu was a role model for the Vietnamese women because she encouraged the idea that the Vietnamese women were just as good as the men. There were Vietnamese women doctors, lawyers, politicians, educators, and businesspersons. There was the story of Luyen Nguyen that shows that he was loyal to the army and was tortured and held as a prisoner for twenty-one years. He was given the opportunity to write to his wife and children but he refused to write them because he did not want them to suffer knowing that he was alive. After the end of the war, one of the other prisoners gave news to Nguyen's wife telling her that her husband was still alive. She had remarried because of economic reasons, but when she heard the news that Luyen was alive she divorced her husband and waited for the return of Luyen.