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79/100

HST195 Assignment

1

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Part 1

In our textbook "Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides" by Christian Appy, my attention was caught by the interview with Roger Donlon (12). I found myself incredibly moved by the story of his encounter with the Viet Cong at the Nam Dong Camp on July 6, 1964. Donlon was the commander, a Green Beret, who received the Medal of Honor for his heroics in this attack. As I read his interview I could imagine the attack in my head, somewhat like a movie, it must have been very intense. I find his account to be incredibly believable, the images and experiences of this war are forever burned into his brain. I don't think he could have forgotten it, even if he tried. Some things time can never take from you, and an experience like his he will carry until he dies or loses his memory. I find him to be more credible because he lived it and experienced the battle. The story he told was factual, Roger Donlon did not forget about the attack he survived in Vietnam.

Part 2

The story I found most disappointing to read was that of Luyen Nguyen (94). I was saddened by his story of being a "lost commando", captured by the North Vietnamese soldiers at the age of 33. He lived imprisoned for 21 years, 11 of which were spent in solitary confinement. When Nguyen left for the North he was a married man with 6 children and 1 on the way. When he returned his son, who had been 10 when he left, now had an 11 year old son of his own, and his youngest, the daughter who was in his wife's womb, was now 21 and married. This moved me to tears, he lost so much time, and his family lived so long believing he was dead. As a prisoner Nguyen was treated harshly being forced to lie on a plank with his ankles shackled together. It was disappointing to see how this man lost his life and his family lost a father because he made a promise to his team that he would join them in the mission,

even though no one of his rank went north. He kept his promise and because of it, lived as a "lost commando" from 1966 to 1987.

The story I found a positive message in, was that of John Singlaub (90). At first when I began reading his interview I thought it was horrible that they were "snatching" peasants from the north and bringing them to "Paradise Island," basically abducting them. As I read on I saw that they were in fact abducting these people, and they were doing a form of psychological warfare on them, however the driving force was not malicious. They "...would keep these captives for at least a month and take care of all their physical problems" (91). These abductees were made healthy again and were also slowly indoctrinated to the concept of freedom. They were sent back to the north with a generous gift package, such as fishhooks or sewing supplies, which were hard to come by in the north and a sense of freedom, a "sham resistance". Even though abducting these peasants was not the best way to obtain them, I believe once they arrived at Paradise Island and realized it was help and not harm, their fears could subside. The program may have been rough to start but the outcome of it was a positive uplifting experience. (In my es, I am sure if I were one of the abductees I may feel differently.)

Part one was too brief. Part 2 was better, except for the strained reasoning you used in the second story about "the good in being inducted and indoctrinated".

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