

Due date: Sunday, 10 April 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 10 April 2011, 11:44 PM (470 words)

60/100

Jesse Rowe

History 195

Assignment 1

April, 9 2011

After reading through the many different stories to choose from, the one that caught my attention over all the others was that of George Watkins. I chose this story because to me it is a true testament to the spirit of the American soldier. Even though the nature of his wounds were extremely severe, not once in his story did he seem to feel sorry for himself, nor did he even express animosity towards the North Vietnamese soldiers, aside from stating that he "he would like to get his hands on the one that set the booby trap" that took his sight and legs, an improvised explosive device (IED) made from a 105mm artillery shell set with a pressure sensitive detonator. I truly do believe he saved the other man's life by telling him to spread out and move further away. In combat every soldier is trained to maintain their intervals, this way a whole fireteam will not be taken out by a single mortar or artillery shell. I believe this man's account of the events he experienced to be absolutely true and reliable, not only because he was obviously there, but also by some of the things he said in his story. For example, the way he explained how it felt after the IED was detonated, how he said he felt numb except for the heat in the crater from the blast. I have personally seen casualties in combat and while I have been so lucky to have only been grazed by bullets in both legs, some of my brothers were not so lucky. In having to assist with battlefield triage, I have seen many different wounds. Everything from a sprained knee or ankle, to the tragic loss of life because of a simple mistake or momentary lack of vigilance. I do not believe Pvt. Watkins' story to be subjective, nor had too much time lapsed. Quite the contrary, I found his story to be free of bias or subjectivity. As stated before, I did not feel that he showed any animosity towards the "enemy", and the information he gave was objective to say the least in my opinion. As far as credibility of memory, some things just do not fade with time. I find the fact that he came home, and created the best life he could despite the severity of his wounds, inspirational not to mention extremely

commendable considering that many soldiers that were wounded in the same way were not as fortunate nor as willful, many of them committing suicide in the field by using too much morphine or even their own sidearm. If not later after returning home, especially after the kind welcome that too many of our service men received upon their return.

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Excellent job on part one of this assignment.
Completely missing part 2, but at least you got
something in and avoided the zero.