

Due date: Sunday, 10 April 2011, 11:55 PM
Last edited: Sunday, 10 April 2011, 01:07 PM (795 words)

70/100

After reading Part 1 of Christian Appy's book, "Patriots," I was struck by Roger Donlon's story. Roger was a young Green Beret Captain sent to Vietnam to command the Nam Dong Special Forces camp, and "advise, assist and train the Vietnamese." He was awarded the first Medal of Honor given to a participant of the Vietnam War because of his valiant efforts to help his comrades and friendly Vietnamese forces survive an attack by a reinforced Viet Cong battalion in the early morning hours of July 6, 1964. Even as his story begins, Roger's remarks insinuate that he realized early on that the American troops were ill-equipped to handle a war that had been going on for so long, against a culture they did not understand, and the pride in their country that allowed the Vietnamese to out-maneuver and outlast the French, Japanese, and ultimately the Americans. He referred to his command as "babes in arms in every way." Roger's story goes on to tell about the attack that earned him that Medal of Honor. He has vivid memories about how it started, the message his communications sergeant sent over the transmitter to let another camp know what was happening, and the various scenes that he witnessed during the barrage of mortar shells and bullets. He recounted one particularly disturbing death he witnessed, where a Vietnamese interpreter lost his legs at the knee and kept running to his post before he died 30 seconds later. Roger says, "That's one of the things you'd like to forget." In my opinion, Roger's story is very believable and compelling because he spoke plainly about his experiences, and wasn't sharing a strong opinion one way or another about the war as a whole. Even though he had aged considerably at the time of his interview with Appy, his tour in Vietnam seemed to be burned into his memory as if it was a defining time in his life. He didn't come across bitter, just matter-of-fact. He was there, in the middle of it all, and told his story from a firsthand point of view.

In Part 2 of Appy's book, I was most disappointed after reading Luyen Nguyen's story. Luyen was part of the "lost commandos," a group of 500 South Vietnamese soldiers sent into North Vietnam on top-secret, small-team infiltration missions that were virtually guaranteed to fail. He was captured and imprisoned for 21 years ultimately due to the United States sending these soldiers out, completely unprepared for what they were going into. Luyen was treated poorly by the American advisers and the Vietnamese he was working with, and paid less than the men he

was training. He wasn't even intended to go into the North, but out of loyalty, he went with the South Vietnamese soldiers after they threatened to desert if he didn't go with them. He endured solitary confinement and torture, and his family was told he was dead. Luyen endured all of this, remaining loyal to the United States the entire time. Eventually he was released and returned to his family, and in 1999 he was awarded \$42,500 in compensation from the United States. I think it is disgraceful that he was put through all of that, and barely received a "thank you" from the Americans for whom he sacrificed a large part of his life.

2-1

Finally, in Part 2, I liked Le Lieu Browne's story, and found it to be the most positive one I have read so far. Le Lieu was educated in Europe, and returned to Vietnam to work for the Ministry of Information. She was right in the middle of the political unrest and censorship that was taking place, which was how she met her husband, Malcolm Browne. Malcolm was an AP reporter, and it was Le Lieu's job to let him know if the ministers didn't like something he wrote. These interactions led to an unlikely romance, and they eventually married and moved to the United States. Le Lieu was in a very tough position, balancing her job responsibilities, her relationship with Malcolm, and her belief that Vietnam could someday be truly free. I think this was the best example of someone having hope for the war and for her country, despite all of the adversity going on around her. Le Lieu maintained her religion, her personal political stance, and her role as a woman working in a man's world at the time. And of course, her story had the closest thing to a "happy ending" because she met and fell in love with her future husband in the midst of such a horrendous war.

2-2

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Unfortunately, you focused so much on retelling the stories that you did not focus enough on addressing the analytical nature of the questions.

1-1

Apr 23, 2011 8:45 PM, Joe Escobar

Everything to this point has been narrative, a simple retelling of the text. Only this last part addresses the posed questions.

1-2

Apr 23, 2011 8:45 PM, Joe Escobar

But his story relates the essential failure of his mission. Is THAT why he is so matter of fact? He is willing to relate a single incident of bloody death, rather than focus on the overall failure of his mission.

This first part lacks any depth of analysis.

2-1

Apr 23, 2011 8:45 PM, Joe Escobar

As with the first paragraph, this is the only non-narrative portion.

2-2

Apr 23, 2011 8:45 PM, Joe Escobar

This section has the largest amount of your own contributions to this paper.