

long... but will it be good?

War. War brings us a snapshot of life that we like to think existed only in our ancestors. It shows us a darker side of humanity. A person can spend decades studying philosophy, or devote his entire life to science or religion. Man is taught to value human life above all else, to give his life for his friends when needed. Through the scope of war that same scholar is transformed into a primal man that stands gasping for breath, covered in mud and sweat, towering over the corpse of a man he just killed with his bare hands, adrenaline coursing through his veins, thankful to survive. This scene could be from any century in human existence, because war is our legacy. Boys are taught to fight in some form from their earliest interactions. When they become adults, we send them to war. In war, life boils down to its most basic essence: life and death. How can a person make this stark transition from preserver of life to destroyer of it?

Compelling intro

The theme that stands out to me in these stories is the high emotional cost that war exacts on its survivors years after they come home. War compromises our most basic human principle, the preservation of human life. Of course this dichotomy of ideals is nothing new to war, for centuries nations have given their soldiers powerful reasons to kill. Without an ideal driving the soldiers, the soldiers will not fight effectively. The difference in the Vietnam war is that, when they got home there was no national recognition of valor. There was a lot of antiwar sentiment by the war's end, and many felt that it was not a war we could claim as a victory. In a time in American history where we were seen as the "Shining city on a hill," an example for all nations to emulate, we found ourselves bogged down in a war that did not have an international commitment and support. We fought on our own. We thought we were still fighting a monstrous global enemy bent on world domination, yet the Vietnam War was fought in small villages against a faceless, often unseen opponent. The disparity between the two realities is hard to reconcile and later in life it seems as if the subjects were looking back on a different person. They had to survive by any means necessary. The benefit of history and of these accounts, is that we see the event after it has happened as a whole and we know the outcomes.

-THEME- self-

Philosophical - basis...
okay, I'm with you at this point :)

The most basic thing that soldiers are taught in the military is chain of command. It is their commander that gets them through the day and dedicates himself to sending as many of his soldiers home alive