

similar those of our soldiers. Like our soldiers, the NVA was convinced that they were in the right. They felt like they were fighting for their country and we were the aggressors. They felt it was their patriotic duty to defend their country, just as Jim did. Both sides felt like they were in the right, this is always true in war. Unfortunately, for our purposes, the Vietnamese are less vocal in the book about events that they regret. The general theme however, is the same: they follow orders, but ultimately regret the war itself and its countless deaths. Pilot, Luu Huy Chao is one such NVA soldier.

Luu originally wanted to be an infantryman. However, his country needed pilots so he did his patriotic duty and applied and was accepted. Luu became an ace pilot and personally met Ho Chi Minh on three occasions in appreciation for his valor and skills. Luu followed his orders and rose in the ranks, eventually shooting down six American planes. In air to air combat, every second counts and one second could be the difference between life and death. He was doing his duty to rid his country of foreign invaders and he was willing to kill for his country. Not everything that Luu saw in the war fit with his beliefs.

Luu repeatedly had to speak out against fellow soldiers doing things that he felt was not right. Often pilots would try to shoot down the American pilots after they ejected, Luu ordered them to stop. He said, "He won't attack us again. Let him alone." When a pilot argued that, "Why not? They do it to us?" Luu said, "Well, we're different" (215). Both sides felt they were right and killed each other under orders. Killing bred more killing and eventually both sides didn't need any moral excuse to fight each other.

Larry Heineman summed up how I imagine many soldiers in the Vietnam war felt in just one sentence, "You're driving around with your asshole puckered the whole fucking time" (245). It was a type of warfare that we had never seen before. The soldiers had awesome firepower, amazing technology and dedicated soldiers, however when these factors were combined with guerilla tactics, the casualties were horrendous. Larry points out that as an APC driver, he was sitting on ninety gallons of gasoline and any false move could kill him. All of the technology and innovation poured into that APC, was not enough to save the lives of the men inside against an RPG or landmine.

Although this is less of a combat role than Luu or Jim, Larry did his part in ensuring his friends and fellow soldiers lived. In his case, his fearless driving and willingness to give his life for his friends surely saved many lives. Larry had to fight his desire to preserve his own life, in order to help ensure the deaths of his enemies. This role is

Apply only those observed by the Vietnamese communist officials !!!

there? emotional cost after the war?

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