

~~First, I would like to discuss a story from the section "Morale Boosters". It is the story of Vu Hy Thieu.~~ Vu was an artist who had studied at the School of Fine Arts in Hanoi, and he was also an NVA soldier during the Vietnam War. Vu had made a very long journey to South Vietnam in November 1966 in service to his country and cause. He used his talents to draw propaganda posters and promote Communist literature. Vu was even tasked with drawing anatomical posters for the education of field medics in the North Vietnamese Army as well as the NLF (Viet Cong). His talents did not just give him a sense purpose by feeling needed, it also helped to keep his mind occupied when it otherwise would have been difficult. When he talked of his art, and how he even used it in conjunction with booby traps to kill enemy soldiers, he seemed extremely proud. ~~But~~ also thankful. I believe he was thankful that he had something to focus on to help get through. Also, reading his story gave me a different perspective on how Americans were viewed by the Vietnamese soldiers they fought. Vu held a lot of animosity towards his enemy, most likely due to the carnage he had seen on the Ho Chi Minh trail when in route to South Vietnam in 1966. I think this fueled his motivation to use his art as a weapon. When I think about it from Vu's perspective, it makes sense that he would want to destroy the ones who had caused so much pain and suffering to his people, on his land. ~~Feeling needed for retribution for such acts~~ certainly would have been motivation enough for me.

• Prisoners of War

Porter Halyburton's Story

~~To further validate the idea of a soldier's necessity for a sense of purpose as motivation is the story of Porter Halyburton from the section "Prisoners of War".~~ Porter was a pilot in the U.S. Navy, ~~he~~ ^{and} flew an F-4 Phantom in 75 combat missions before being shot down over North Vietnam in October 1965. He was captured and held captive until 1973. While he was being housed in the "Zoo" facility, he stated ^{- past tense} that, "One day I heard a noise up near the vent. I put my bed board against the wall and climbed up to look. A tree had forced a leaf up between the shutters-a green leaf. I took that as a sign that no matter how isolated I was, God was somehow going to send me a sign". This is exactly what I was referring to when I had stated "something as simple as a leaf" being motivation enough to keep going, to survive what I'm sure can only be described as hell. While in captivity, Porter was also given a job. His job was to take care of Fred Cherry, another pilot who was injured when he ejected at a high rate of speed (600 knots) from his F-105. Porter had raised hell with the authorities at the POW camp for antibiotics when Fred's injuries had become badly infected. Porter later stated that, "Taking care of Fred gave me a sense of purpose outside my own survival. It was very liberating. It was really the beginning of the idea that we were all in a brotherhood. We would do anything for each other". There are many different reasons a soldier is motivated. But having a sense of purpose is one of the most important types of motivation.

• Central Highlands: