

orthopedic surgeon, he saw horrific wounds that most people cannot even imagine. Nguyen recalls a procedure he performed for a young man who'd had a grenade explode in his hands. The young man lost his eyes and his hands. Nguyen took skin from the young man's forearms and wrapped it around bones to create two big fingers. The young man cried when he was able to hold a cup of tea. Were these tears of joy because he could hold a cup, or tears of heartache at what his future would hold? The **difficult decisions** Nguyen made every day were endless. He shared with Appy that he felt as if he'd held the destiny of those soldiers in his hands. Nguyen chose who would receive treatment first. I cannot envision ever being in that situation. It's not within my capabilities to make a choice whether someone may live or die. Chi Nguyen retired from a Veterans Administration hospital in Boston, having caught one of the last flights out when Saigon fell.

From those who sat in the highest positions within their governments to the frontline soldier crawling on his belly in a trench while the enemy rained down death in the form of munitions, each person made **difficult decisions**. Literature is filled with plots and references concerning **difficult decisions** but sometimes truth does outdo fiction and the choices faced during times of war may prove to be the most difficult, and ultimately most controversial, decisions of all.

"No event in American history is more misunderstood than the Vietnam War. It was misreported then, and it is misremembered now."

RICHARD NIXON, New York Times, Mar. 28, 1985

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