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Assignment 2- by: Emlee Martin

As I read chapter 3 in Christian Appy's "Patriots", I found myself flooded with many thoughts as to where I want to take this paper. I saw many themes as I read through "*Escalations*." The one I chose to write about is 'Deception During Wartime.' There were many instances of deception throughout the Vietnam War, but in my opinion the ones during the "escalation" period were crucial. I believe the war started, well really escalated, because of the deception in the Gulf of Tonkin incident. The result of which was the passing of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which gave President Johnson the legal ability to deploy troops and engage in warfare against North Vietnam. This was all based on a lie; a lie that initiated Operation Rolling Thunder and the deployment of many American troops. I will illustrate three more instances of "Deception during Wartime" from stories in the Appy book.

As I read the story of James Thomson (115-17) I was dismayed to find out he had signed off on so many "armed recce" missions without truly knowing what he was authorizing. This is a deception of omission; the colonel who presented the maps for authorization was vague in his description of what they were for. Thomson was authorizing armed reconnaissance, in which anything that looked suspicious was being fired upon. I also question why he did not further investigate what he was signing off on. I believe it is because he was the "new kid" in the office and did not want to "make waves." He also speaks of the "so-called Gulf of Tonkin incident" and the policy planning meeting he attended about it. He reports Walt Rostow, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, stated in this meeting, it was unclear if the attack happened, but it gave the US the opportunity to "really go broke on the bombing" (116). This was deceitful policy making. Thomson was shocked to see after Johnson's election of 1964, the administration was "going for a slow-motion, but systematic escalation and the aerial bombardment of enemy positions north and south" (117). It was as if negotiations or withdrawal were not even options; escalation to war was the only way the Johnson administration saw fit to approach Vietnam. The attack was fabricated, but because of it Johnson was given the green light to start a war.

In the story of Jim Soular (156-61) I was moved to tears by the deception. The death of his best friend David was not at the hands

of the enemy, nor was it an accident. He was fatally shot in Vietnam by another American, Bob Harris. It was a senseless death, David should have returned to his family in Minnesota. At his Harris told the defense he had been drinking when David was shot. He showed no remorse and was sentenced to only 5 years. Soular visited David's mother twenty years after the war and at this meeting she discovered the truth behind her son's death. The military had lied to her and told her David was "accidentally shot." This is a huge deception, this woman sent her 19-year-old son off to war, to honorably fight for his country, and he came home in a body bag with a bogus explanation of his death. The government lied to his grieving family, where is the honor in that? I am ashamed such a thing would take place. I imagine the government was embarrassed that one of their men had taken the life of another, but I still see no reason why they covered up the truth. It was such a deceitful and disgraceful thing to do. It really is tragic that it took so long for this mother to know the truth behind the last moments of her son's life.

The last story I chose was that of Nguyen Duy (256-57). He was on the communist side of the war. He is also a highly regarded Vietnamese poet. We so much talk of who won the war, when in reality no one did. Nguyen states, "In the end, in every war, whoever won, the people always lost" (257). It is true, the people suffered, whether American or Vietnamese. He speaks of his poor but peaceful village, which he so badly wanted to return to. When he got the chance to go home, it had been destroyed, the beauty was gone. The war had ravaged the country and changed the Vietnamese society. Both Vietnamese and Americans lost so much in this war, I don't believe anyone won. In the end war does not really prove who is right or who is wrong, who won or who lost; it just proves who is left alive.

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