

The story of Vietnam is one of tenacity. Homer once wrote that "men grow tired of sleep, love, singing, and dancing sooner than war." Rarely is this statement better defended than in Vu Hy Theiu's story. His matter-of-fact account of a near decade of jungle warfare regales more hardships than sanity should permit. The tale traces a trend of rising militarism, beginning the war as an artist, and moving into booby-traps. By the war's end, he was engaged in full-on jungle warfare against American and "puppet" troops. The story champions resourcefulness and determination to no small degree. It inspires wonder that a person could endure in such a lifestyle for nine years, though Vu is clearly a convicted man. The source of such tenacity is clear in Vu's story, but a less sober account is found in Dennis Deal's account. He recounts not only with his tenacity, and that of those around him, but he explains what it is that he draws courage from. His men drew on one another for strength, looking to commanders and heroes to show more courage than they. The true story of determination, however, comes in the last paragraph, when a mortally wounded Viet Cong soldier booby trapped his own corpse in the hopes of killing an American soldier in the aftermath of the battle.

Both of these stories depict cases of titanic perseverance. In Sylvia Lutz Holland's account, more (or less, depending) mortal resolves are shown. She describes two scenes of doctors hitting their breaking points. In neither case do their breakdowns manifest as failures to kill their enemies, but refusals to save them. Yet again, the greatest display of determination was shown near the end, by a wounded Viet Cong soldier. In this case, his show of insurmountable spite was less impressive, but in line with the more muted scale of the tale.

While not skulking through villages, nor engaging in jungle warfare, nor facing down half a dozen enemies in a firefight, Holland's account shows determination nonetheless, specifically because she is not of immense moral fortitude, and recognizes her terror. In the words of Georges St. Pierre, "courage isn't about not being scared, it's about being scared and still doing it."

Vu Hy Theiu "Nothing was more essential than our sandals." 190

Sylvia Lutz Holland "We saved their lives, but what life?" 170

Dennis Deal "Man, if we're up against this, it's gonna be a long-ass year." 130

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