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As I read part three of "PATRIOTS" by Christian Appy which are stories from 1964-1967 I began to notice the underlining theme that the war starts to seem like a job or business that some things are acceptable or excusable if it serves to better the majority. It appears regard less of your poison in the war. Weather you are Vietnamese, North or South, American, Pro-war or Anti-war. The people who told the stories sound as if there was not a choice in how things are done that this is just the way war works. That war is just part of daily life and you did your best to get though the day. Looked to find whatever you could to comfort yourself during this business of war. That if you had a schedule, regardless of what it was that somehow made the confusion of this war seem more acceptable and worth while. Like a pay check to a bad job.

In Trails To War I have chosen the story by Vu Thi Vinh. A young North Vietnamese girl, who joined The Volunteer Youth Corps that worked on the "Truong Son" known to us as the "Ho Chi Minh Trail." She tells of ten of thousands of volunteers. Volunteers to very harsh conditions, little food and defusing bombs. Filling in craters and rebuilding bridges. Risking their lives daily. Yet, they would volunteer even lie about their age. Why? At least as they worked on the trail everyday they could control some circumstance in the war, that continued work with or without them, putting their lives at risk. The bombs would be dropped by the Americans and they would repair the damage. It was part of the cycle in this business of war, they needed each other to do their jobs. But, at the end of the day she and the other volunteers would sing and put on plays to keep their spirits high. Not so different from us today unwinding after work.

Next I have chosen from "You Want Me to Start World War 3" the story told by Charles Cooper. He was an aide to Admiral David L. McDonald, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He tells of a meeting with President Johnson and JCS. They were to present a quick conclusion to the war. However, President Johnson did not except nor appreciate their offer. He degraded and cursed at them while in the meeting. Like a boss who thinks that your idea to improve productivity is absolutely absurd. They thought of resignation. Just as many would if it were a job in the work world. They did not resign, being concerned with what others would think of them and continued on with the business of war. As in the work world if you quit every time someone disagreed with your ideas or said harsh words to you, others would start to question your value to the business.

Last I have chosen from "Free-Fire Zone" the story told by Jim Soular. He was a fight engineer and states that he loved war at the time. Now he hates war. I am certain that most of us can relate to this, what seemed to great at the time in hind sight maybe not be quite as good as we thought. The free-fire zones, were areas which it was declared acceptable to fire and kill anyone you see. In any other situation other than the business of war this would never be accepted. He tells us of his friend David being killed by another GI, this is

absolutely not acceptable to him nor most people. It's murder. Yet, the person who committed this murder receives less time than that of a man who crashes a helicopter. His behavior is excused do to the situation. Not unlike the worker how is always later or has some other bad habits that are excused because there work benefits the business as a whole. He twenty years later speaks with David's mother and learns that the military had not told her the truth about David's death. He had assumed that they had. But, at the time of David's death it would not have been good for business to give her all the facts. It would have been bad for morale as well as bad for support of the war. This is similar to not giving all the facts to other employee when someone is "let go" from their position. Giving all the facts are just not in the best interest of the business.

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