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History 195 Assignment 3 Martin

By Emlee

Part 1

In part 4 of Christian Appy's "Patriots," there were many "turning points." I chose to write about the story of Vincent Okamoto, the son of Japanese immigrants, who was born in Poston Relocation Camp in Arizona (357). He grew up in the "tradition" of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a Japanese American regiment that was highly decorated during World War II. Okamoto grew up believing "military service was an inevitable rite of passage." He volunteered for Vietnam in April 1968, after being commissioned in the infantry and to "jump school and ranger school."

Okamoto was injured in battle several times. Before Tet, after a 2nd Purple Heart a soldier would receive a noncombat position in the rear, but so many people were getting killed and wounded they changed it 3. Eventually he was awarded his 3rd Purple Heart and nominated for a Distinguished Service Cross award. However to get the award, and the rear-job, he not only needed the Purple Hearts, but also to be hospitalized for 7 days with each injury he had received them for. He was sent back out on the battlefield, as infantry for 3 more months. This was his turning point.

Okamoto was "gun-shy." He "wasn't a very good officer after August 24th." He reached a point where he could not even function. "In my case, it reached a point where I was taking downers when the sun went down and uppers when the sun came up..." (360). He felt he had no choice. He really wanted to go to his battalion commander and say, "I want to be relieved. I don't have what it takes," but he "didn't have the guts to do that."

Okamoto had gone into the war voluntarily, he wanted to be there. He became frustrated after being sent back into the field after injury upon injury and the rule changes as to when a person can receive a Purple Heart or a Distinguished Service Cross, basically extended his duty. He thought his combat days were done after the 3rd injury, but they were not. He may have physically been on the field, but he had checked out of the war after that 3rd.

Part 2

I chose to use the story of George Evans (449) to illustrate an "ending" to the war. He was a "sit-and-polish airman." He was soon the crew chief of the night shift and a staff sergeant. "Once I

was there [Vietnam], though, it did not take long to see how screwed up things were" (451). He was a medic at the air force hospital in Cam Ranh Bay by 1969.

He tells a story of working at the hospital where he had to clean the dead bodies of two young Vietnamese boys, one he guessed was between 8 and 10 years old. As he was cleaning the second boy a woman came running in who worked in the sterilization department who was completely hysterical. As far as he could tell these were her sons, but he never knew for sure. He later found out that the boys had been "hit by an American military truck and there was some kind of game going on in which, supposedly, guys were driving through town gambling over who could hit a kid" (452).

Evans decided about 6 months into his tour to "quit looking like a soldier." He began to make little anti-war posters. With 3 months left in his tour a new company commander took over. He did not approve of the example Evans was setting. One morning he refused to line up in formation for a major military inspection. He was called over and told he was a disgrace and out of uniform. When asked what he had to say for himself he made everyone laugh with his response. This really enraged his captain, who told him one more time to get in line. Evans refused and was threatened with an arrest. He went back to his hooch.

Evans was charged with being out of uniform and not being on time to a squadron formation and was facing a court-martial. He was fined seventy-five dollars after being found guilty of being out of uniform. He was given the opportunity to have the charges thrown out if he would sign a document confessing to the charges, he refused.

The war had ended for Evans when he decided to quit cutting his hair, shaving every day, and shining his shoes. When he started hanging those anti-war posters on the bulletin board for everyone to see he had checked out of the war mentally. When he refused to obey a direct order given to him by his captain, it was really the end for the war for him, physically.

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