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The Vietnam War was lost along with American confidence. There was a turning point in the war, after which American service personnel lost any conviction in pursuing victory. The exact cause of this lies somewhere between escalating war weariness, a lack of clear goals, and a growing sense of impotence. Douglas Kinnard's story encompasses these problems, showing the turning point in American minds, more than on the ground. He cited surveys taken of American soldiers on an operation, who could not place what they were doing inside a grand scheme, nor even conclude that the goals Johnson gave them made any sense. The metric of victory that his own office used was multifaceted simply because there was no clear indicators of progress. In the face of this indefinite progress, new strategies were being lost to political leadership. It is in the line at the end of the article, "What difference would it have made?" that the turning point of the war is illustrated.

The end of the Vietnam War is marked by one of three events: the Paris Peace Accords, the exit of all US troops from Vietnam, or the fall of Saigon. These events, however, meant little to those for whom the war ended long before its resolution. George Evans' account, entitled "I didn't know there was a bad war," depicts the four ways that a soldier's service in Vietnam can end. It is his childhood friend, who got him enlisted, that illustrates the first. For many, the chapter of their life in Vietnam closed no sooner than the casket, and Billy Dick was no exception. Dick had gotten him into the military in an attempt to keep them out of the war, but it was his death, in the end, that brought George to Vietnam. There, he encountered the second avenue by which soldiers left the war. He was threatened, though empty, with a dishonorable discharge, and while delaying his trial, he was presented with the third. A network of deserters offered to shelter him in Australia or Sweden, but he decided to return, only to finish out his tour and returning home. At the beginning of his story, there is a foreboding scene as he and his father decorate the graves of past veterans, and it is left to wonder if George Evans still decorates the grave of his childhood friend.

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