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Part 1 Clark Dougan

I have picked Clark Dougan's story as an example of a "turning point." I think it shows both a personal as well as a group turning point. The sentence itself "He was only 19 – did you know him?" causes you to wonder, did you know him? Did you know some like him? It personalizes the losses of war.

As Clark Dougan stated that many felt the war was not "real." He was graduating high school and going off to college. Others were joining the military and would go to war. This was life, people were taking different path on their journeys. It was just how it was.

Not until reading the obituary for Greg Fischer did he realize that people just like him were ding in Vietnam. They were kids who went to schools just like him. They had families that had to go on with out them. That all the families had left of their loved ones was military life insurance policy, and maybe some letters if they were lucky. That whatever dreams they may have had for their children were gone.

He also states that "middle-America" turned against the war at this time (1968) Everyone(young and old, military and non-military) was asking how high of price would we pay, for a war we understood so little about. Even veterans could no longer ignore the fact that so many of our young men were giving up their lives not knowing what they were really fighting for. Unlike pervious wars there were no clear reasons for us to be there and sacrifice the lives of so many.

Part 2 Judith Coburn

I like Judith Coburn's story as an example of "Ending." I believe it shows not just her personal feelings that the war was heading to an end. That it also shows that government and military in both the US and in Vietnam saw that policies and strategies were not working.

With the conversation between Clifford, Symington and her father at Thanksgiving dinner in 1967 it clearly shows that the military was having trouble with morale. When Symington says that the Colonel's response to " ... what's really going on out there?" was "...I have the feeling that one day soon if I lead my men into battle I might turn around and they won't be there." I

think that statement show how bad it had gotten. Men were not wanting to fight, peace talks were going on and no one wanted to be "last guy to die in Vietnam." Contributing to loss of morale was time it's self, this war had been going on a long time with out clear motives or policies. The military had a hard time even identifying who they were fighting.

After the invasion into Laos in 1971 where the ARVN abandoned military equipment and clung to helicopters to get out of Laos it clearly showed the US and Vietnam that the South Vietnamese military was not strong enough to support the country alone. With the corruption in the government and military there could not be much faith left after such a long struggle with these issues. The South Vietnamese soldiers were going AWOL as well. By the 1970's (if not early to some) it was clear there was no hope to winning the war only the question of how to get out with some sort of dignity.

All sides had to be able see that the results that had hoped for were not coming to pass. The war had spilled into Cambodia and Laos, South Vietnam could not take control of it's self. The US government and military could not defend this war to the American people the cost was running to high, monetarily and in lives lost. An ending had to begin.

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