

Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:41 PM (398 words)

PART 1

I read about Tom O'Hara. The part of this that stood out to me was his similarity to my cousin who was in the National Guard for a period of time. O'Hara talks about how in coming home he saw protestors against the way acting like they had a "great moral position" and he says that he felt like going up to them and "throttling them because he felt like all this so called morality was shit and they were only really saying they did not want to be sent to Vietnam and have their asses kicked. O'Hara knew what was really going on over in Vietnam he had experienced the "ass kicking" and was angry about the way people treated and blamed their time in Vietnam. He says "I have a low tolerance for Vietnam vets who blame everything that's happened to them in the last thirty years on the twelve months they spent over there." Because of my cousin and the stories I heard, saying that war does not traumatize a man is a bit too black and white but I do understand when he says when we take it over the line and blame everything on only that it is exaggerated. He had an experience and he had his own outcome but the rage that was brought out of him in response to the people around him, in my eyes, was a turning point for him.

PART 2

Looking at Chalmers Johnson's view of the end of the way and the antiwar protests it helped me to understand even more the way the two sides were feeling. Johnson felt as if the antiwar protesters were out of their minds and didn't know what they were talking about but he comes about around and says as I look back and as we can to the end I realized that each side had its fall. Each side of peoples were stuck in their thoughts and stuck in their ways but all in all he felt as if though he should have stuck with the antiwar protestors because all in all "they grasped something essential about the nature of America's imperial role in the world that I had failed to perceive." In the end he regretted his decision but yet he looks back and sees where he went wrong.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 10:09 PM (365 words)

part one, assignment three.

A turning point in the Vietnam war is found in Douglas Kinnard's story featured in part four of the Patriot's book. A quote from Kinnard that starts the piece off summarizes the reason behind the change in tide perfectly: "While we had the power, it turned out they had the will". This story represents a turning point because it captures the period of time when both the troops, and the population watching the war from home, began to realize that the Vietcong had a reason to fight; they had a reason to win. The Vietnamese were defending the home of their ancestors and their way of life, while our troops were fighting for a cause they had no passion for. Without passion, without a heart for the cause, defeat is inevitable. Mr. Kinnard sent questionnaires to past army generals; the reason for our overall failure is encompassed well when one of the generals says "The announced reasons by president Johnson didn't wash. What were we really trying to do, whose bacon were we really trying to save?" When the population and the soldiers began to realize that lives were being sacrificed for a relatively unknown reason, any hope for victory was lost. From Kinnard's personal standpoint, he went through his own transformation. He said that he was "gung ho"(pg.322) when he arrived for his first tour, but once he realized that the body count meant nothing when it came to defining who won or lost, he began to question the U.S.'s true motives for being in Vietnam. By the end of the tour he had reached the conclusion that the war was a "losing proposition", which is the same realization that thousands of civilians and soldiers has also reached by that point. After those on the fields of war realized they were fighting an endless battle, they lost any hope for a happy ending. To be trapped in a place of death, fighting for a reason you didn't understand, or perhaps a reason that did not exist, would be truly horrific. Once the gumption is gone, so is the chance of success.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Friday, 20 May 2011, 09:39 PM (953 words)

Darin Richardson

L00527224

May 20, 2011

History of the Vietnam War

Assignment #3

Part 1: Turning Points

To write this particular assignment, I had to think about it and re-read Part Four of the Appy book to find what I thought was the best example of a turning point in the Vietnam War. I felt it didn't have to be a particular event, so I focused on someone whose words caught my attention. I felt the best example of this would be someone either in the US military or in the South Vietnamese army. I decided to go with someone in the US military, preferably someone of considerable rank. In the end I chose Douglas Kinnard's account. He was a brigadier general who did two tours of duty in Vietnam.

Kinnard's views on the war were shared by many American soldiers serving in Vietnam, especially in the latter half of the war. The one passage in his account that caught my attention was where he talked about how it all came down to a war of attrition, and that the assumption was that if they kept hitting the Vietcong and North Vietnamese they would just quit. Then he said that that assumption was wrong, and that the Vietcong and North Vietnamese were never going to quit, no matter how good the United States was. But the one thing he said that spoke to me the most was this: "We had made it a war of wills, rather than a war of power. The problem was, while we had the power, it turned out they had the will." To me, just this one phrase really summed up the thinking during the latter half of the war after Tet. The Vietcong and North Vietnamese had a very strong will to keep fighting. And if there is one thing that is very tough to beat, it is a strong will. The US military could not successfully fight against an enemy who was determined to outlast them at any expense.

Kinnard said that by the end of his first tour in the summer of

1967, he came to the decision that the war was lost for the US and that it could go on forever. And he said this before the Tet Offensive. He had already come to the decision that Vietnam was a mistake even before Tet.

Kinnard discussed a 1974 questionnaire he sent to all the generals who served as combat commanders in Vietnam, and that seventy percent of the questionnaires he got back said that the war's objectives weren't clear. They also questioned what they were doing in Vietnam, and who they were trying to save. So in a way, Kinnard's views on the war had similarities to those of other commanding officers in Vietnam, because Kinnard was also asking the same questions.

When you have a US Army general making a decision, whether they publicize it or keep it to themselves, that a war was lost, that is when the turning point happens. It all boils down to a war of wills instead of a war with weapons. The US' will wasn't strong enough that time to win the war in Vietnam.

While to some my reason for choosing Kinnard's account may not be too clear, I thought it was the best representation of the thinking of how the war had turned, not necessarily in favor of the enemy, but in the eventual withdrawal of all US troops from Vietnam. To me, it all boils down to that one thing Kinnard said that meant the most to me: "While we had the power, it turned out they had the will."

Part 2: Endings

As with Part 1 of this assignment, I had to think about what an "ending" to the Vietnam War was to me. The ending of the Vietnam War was different for each person involved in it. For some veterans, the war is still real to them, and hasn't ended yet. But for me, I feel that the Vietnam War ended when the official American presence finally left Vietnam, which to me is the fall of Saigon in April 1975, when the American embassy was evacuated. I chose Frank Snapp's account of the American embassy in Saigon falling to the North Vietnamese. I feel that Snapp's telling of what happened that day in April 1975 marked the end of the Vietnam War for the US.

Snapp described the last days of the US embassy in Saigon. The best part of his account was where he described the final day of the US embassy, which was April 29, 1975. He described how the CIA and US military personnel still at the embassy were scrambling their helicopters to hurry and evacuate the Americans at the embassy, and some of their Vietnamese employees, as the North Vietnamese

Army was approaching the outskirts of Saigon. Snepp described how he could see the headlights of the North Vietnamese Army's vehicles on the edge of the city, only a half-hour away. When that last American boarded that final helicopter to evacuate Saigon was when the war ended for the US.

To be honest, I really wanted to use a prisoner-of-war account for an "ending" of the Vietnam War for me. But I could not find one appropriate in the Appy book. My first choice was that when the last American POW was returned to America, was when the Vietnam War ended. So I used my second choice, which was the Fall of Saigon. And I felt that Snepp's account was perfect, since he was there on the day Saigon fell.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 07:31 PM (588 words)

Assignment Three

Elizabeth Potter

Part 1

The Bob Gabriel story is a very good example of a turning point in the war. It is a story about a man who realizes the horrors are wrong but doesn't stop them. He talks about how in the war it went from war to massacres. When he says "We burned a lot of villages. We'd just go burn people's houses down. It was sad." It really shows how it went from war to a horror show. Also he talks about how nobody wants to help him when he is lying in the road. The turning point in the war were it was not war but a fight for everyone's own life and it became more about surviving than it did about fighting the enemy. The battalion he was in was full of people and barely any made it back. They all only fought for their own lives not even thinking of leaving one person behind to save the rest of them. The turning point was the lack of fight in all of the soldiers. The lack of honor. The war was no longer honorable at all. It had become a blood bath. When he says, "I mean they just took off. Left me there all by myself." It is written as clear as day that men no longer wanted to win they wanted to survive. The speaker Bob really represents the turn by his whole war experience, after he was drafted. The turning point for him personally was right when he got to the how he burned villages down and nobody wanted to help him so he made it about surviving. And while he killed a bunch of people they rewarded him for it with R&R, he became a hero for murder. He had no reason to be in the war besides his love for his father and no other reason. That was true for a lot of soldiers and so no longer was there pride amongst soldiers, this piece really shows the lack of that.

Part 2

The end of the war was slow in coming but it represented really well in Steve Sherlock's tale. He actually went to Vietnam. During the time he was there was a petition which just said Fuck War. The man who wrote it was said to have betrayed his duty. Also Sherlock got in trouble when he said that the Vietnamese were people. His colonel told him to. He later discussed starting an anti war division in the units. This man who had been there was done with the war.

That is how you know when the war is over. When its soldiers don't even believe what they are fighting for. And how can you have a war without soldiers that believe in the cause. When he got back he continued his protest. They wanted the war stopped they had been there and they knew what was going on and they wanted it to stop. They put themselves together and tried to stop it. That is when you know a war is really over. When the people in it don't believe and when they are no longer fighting they petition to stop what is happening then you really know that it is over. There is no longer a point for a war when the soldiers fighting it and had fought in it are no longer committed to what it stands for and what the reasoning is.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 01:08 PM (812 words)

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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Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 06:44 PM (680 words)

Turning Point: Nguyen Qui Duc

In the opening section of part four, "Tet," the story from a South Vietnamese person named Nguyen Qui Duc had what I would consider a major turning point in his life. Duc's story begins when he was a boy. He was living with his family and other families inside government housing in the town of Hue. The story recounts the moments that passed as Communist soldiers invaded the house Duc and his family were living in. During the invasion, the soldiers took Duc's father and other men, and put the women and children in the basement of the house. That night, Duc and his mother watched through a small window his father being tied up and led away, never knowing if they will see his father again. I feel that in this moment, while Duc and his mother held each other in the dark, they shared a major turning point in their life. Duc called the moment between him and his mother a private grief, something that couldn't be shared with anyone else. The war had finally affected Duc in a very personal way. The war had taken a loved one. This would be hard for anyone to forget easily.

As Duc's story continues, he begins to see Hue and the world around him in a different light. The city was in ruins. Mass graves lay around. He and his mother had to give up looking for his father's body because the stench was so bad. It seems that Duc was starting to show that he had been affected by the loss of his father. Duc was lucky enough to leave Vietnam several years later and came to the United States. Because Duc was brought up with Western ideas, when he traveled back to Vietnam as an adult, he was not seen as Vietnamese anymore. All because of a single night many years ago, the turning point of losing his father caused him go down a path of losing his national identity.

Ending: John McCain

Arizona Senator John McCain shared his experience when he was captured by the Vietnamese in 1967 in the section titled "Prisoners of War" in part five. Obviously, prisoners of war were treated poorly, and so while imprisoned, McCain and the other inmates had to cope with the treatment. The prisoners tried their best to keep some spiritual faith, keep believing that the United States was

trying to bring them all home, and, as McCain says, trying to keep a sense of humor. McCain was declared the entertainment officer by the rest of the prisoners and he would recall the stories of movies he had seen with the rest of the prisoners. The prisoners would also make fun of their captors in effort to bring them down to their own level. They all tried their best to pass the time, trying to put off what ever ending maybe in for them as prisoners.

At one point of him imprisonment, McCain was offered a release, but refused. That refusal led to a long period of harsh treatment by the Vietnamese, eventually breaking his arm again. It seems like this abuse was the straw that broke the camel's back, and spelled the ending point for John McCain's strength of soldier. He was finally broken and gave a confession about the war crimes he had committed. He felt like a failure, unable to live up to the standards of the other prisoners. However, considering the treatment, it was probably inevitable that an ending of his resolve as a soldier to not cooperate with the Vietnamese was coming soon. I doubt there was little that McCain could do. Years later, after being released, McCain still receives criticism from the people for cooperating with the Vietnamese. It would be interesting to see if those people would have a different view of McCain if they were put into the same situation he was in. Situations like that are the ending of anyone, even the strongest, more hardened soldiers we have.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:28 PM (561 words)

Part 1

I think that a turning point that happen in the Vietnam War was when soldier that were drafted into the War sought to go to Canada instead of fight in the war. There were many Americans that thought the war in Vietnam was not needed and that we were not helping them we were just making the fight worse. One story that really got me in Part Four of Appy book was a story from Nathan Houser.

The reason that the story got me thinking that it was a turning point is that in his story made me think that it was a turning point in the war. Was that he was not the only one that went to Canada there were over Fifty thousand American men that went to Canada instead of having to have to go to Vietnam. Nathan was a college student and very involved in politics, he even considered be a Politician himself but the most he got into the political world the more he learned why we were in Vietnam in the first place and he did not like it. When he graduated from college he decided to go Canada instead of having to be drafted into the Vietnam War because he did not believe in what American was fighting for. He also did not want to lose his life for something that he did not believe in or even think it was needed in the first place.

Nathan actually said in his story that he would “go to jail or go underground to resist the war.” Just like many other American men that felt the same way and many other American people they would rather go to jail then see the war continue. Even though many other felt this way it was really hard on the American soldiers that came home from Vietnam either injured or else being booed for fighting the Vietnam War. Many of the men probably did not believe in the war either and they were just doing what they were told to do.

Part 2

The turning point in the Vietnam War to me was Paris. The reason that I thought that Paris was so significant was that it was when the Paris Peace Accords happened that really brought the American soldiers back to America. One of the stories in the Paris section in the Appy book in Part Five by Daniel Davidson made it very obvious to me that Paris was the ending point in the war. Even though the war did not end until two years later I feel it was the major point that caused it to come to an end.

The reason I found Daniel Davidson story so important is that Daniel was translating English to French to Vietnamese and there is one point in his story that he is talk to a

Vietnamese man and explain about the presidential election and tell this man that he was going for Humphrey to become president. Because he was telling Nixon record and the Vietnamese man looks at him and says with plain English for the first and only time that “he would not buy a used car from that man.” Meaning that if a Vietnamese soldier cannot trust Nixon enough to buy a car from him then why they would want to believe anything he said.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 08:33 PM (1389 words)

Jesse Kennedy
History Assignment 3
History 195

The legacy of the Vietnam War, as we have learned over the term, has been one of staying the course. Each American President carried on basically the same war policy of their predecessor, yet thought that they would have a different outcome. In the most basic terms, each President felt that they had to fight the war, but felt that they had to keep it from a public that would not fully understand the importance of the fight. Up to a certain point, each administration was able to keep a large part of the population in general support of the war. There has always been a portion of the population against every war, and Vietnam was no different. As each President escalated the war, the portion of the populace against the war grew. We have discussed the Tet Offensive's effect on the population and it had a huge effect on increasing discontent with American war policy. Despite, Johnson's peace rhetoric, however he continued the war ever more vigorously in secret. His successor, Nixon, pursued the lofty goal of "peace with honor" while ever increasing the scope of the war.

A real turning point in Vietnam came when Nixon's invasion of Cambodia caused outrage across the nation. The days immediately after Nixon announced the "incursion" into Cambodia, students demonstrated at more than 100 universities, including Kent State University in Ohio (Appy, 380). Students demonstrating against the war was nothing new, students were some of the most outspoken opponents of the war. The Kent State demonstration on May 4, 1970, however represented a huge escalation of resistance to these demonstrations by authorities. Demonstrations had increasingly turned violent over the preceding years at many places, especially at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

Kent State, however resulted in the shooting and killing of four students and the wounding of nine more at the hands of the national guard (Appy, 380). This major violence of anti-demonstration activity sparked cries of oppression and an undemocratic government. Demonstrations erupted in opposition to the Kent State killings. 700 colleges and universities were paralyzed for the remainder of the semester as students and faculty protested

this shocking violence and change of American war policy. 100,000 people protested in Washington on May 8th and 150,000 more in San Francisco (generalstudiesdegree.net, pophistorydig.com).

Tom Grace was one of the students shot and wounded at Kent State. His sentiments about Nixon's announcement echoed what many felt, "We hated that war, and as much as we hated the war on April 29, we hated it more on April 30" (Appy, 386). The attack of a sovereign country that was protected by the Geneva Accords was nothing new, but invasion by American troops into Cambodia was a dramatic expansion of the war efforts. Tom's mounting discontent with the government grew as he saw authorities utilizing increasing levels of violence to silence opposition. Tom mentions the "murder" of a member of the Black Panthers by the police as an example (Appy, 387).

Tom experienced the lengths that authorities were willing to go to stop demonstrations when he was shot in the leg at Kent State. He was close friends with one of those killed and an acquaintance of another killed. The events at Kent State created many dedicated antiwar leaders. Tom, who was just another student against the war attending protests, was transformed by the violence at Kent State into an anti-war organizer and public figure (Appy, 389). Students were not the only ones affected by this event either. Millions of people around the country who had previously simply thought that the war was not the best thing we could be doing or ambivalent, hardened their views and openly spoke out against the war in the Kent State aftermath.

Members of the executive branch and legislative branch of American government carried out their own acts of protest as the Senate cut off funds for Cambodia and Congress ultimately passed a resolution barring any American invasion of Laos and Cambodia later that year(history.com). 250 State Department employees signed a letter of protest to Cambodian invasion (Appy, 380). In response to the mounting pressure, Nixon announced that he would withdraw American forces from Cambodia by June. Outrage of the government was also echoed in music, Crosby, Stills and Nash's "Ohio" which peaked at #14 on the charts and had the lyrics, "Soldiers cutting us down" (pophistorydig.com).

It is clear to me that the events at Kent State profoundly affected the nation. It is not possible for our government to maintain legitimacy as a democratic nation when it is willing to resort to this type of violence to stifle dissent. Many soldiers in Vietnam were also increasingly becoming disillusioned with the war. Soldiers in Vietnam acted out their opposition to the war in increasingly overt

and sometimes violent ways. Drug use was rampant and soldiers resorted to "sand-bagging" tactics where they would avoid contact with the enemy, smoke pot, wait for evacuation back to their base, then file a false report claiming high body counts. The loss of American soldiers' will to fight was a major signal of the end for American operation in Vietnam. Without dedicated troops, there is no war. The end of the war came when the soldiers were no longer willing to execute its objectives.

Steve Sherlock was a lieutenant in the 101st airborne. Like many, he was entirely supportive of the war when he joined and wanted to do his best in service of his country. His account in the Appy book chronicles his transition from the idea that the Vietnam war was as noble as fighting the Nazis to a position so staunchly against the war that he threw away his bronze star in protest.

Although Steve was willing to fight when needed to save his life and protect his country, he felt that, "...we didn't have any business being in Vietnam and that if it was wrong to be there, then it was wrong to be killing people there" (Appy, 425). The culture of the military was so bent on destroying communism that Steve was relieved of duty for referring to communists as, "...people like us" (Appy, 426). The mentality that people from one part of the world were less than human, simply because of where they were born, was contrary to what most American were raised to believe. Many American policies were contrary to how young soldier had romanticized warfare was conducted. This was not the war of their fathers and grandfather's, this was a war that large numbers of soldiers felt was not just. Steve felt a huge lack of motivation in taking a life.

The problem of not wanting to seek out and kill the proclaimed enemy was endemic in Vietnam. One commander worried that one day he would go to battle and turn around to find that he had no men left. After Steve's discharge, he created a group called the Veterans for Peace and joined the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (Appy, 427). The feeling that the government was so wrong in their execution and excuses for being in Vietnam, was a motivator for a large all-veteran demonstration in Washington D.C. The veterans, including Steve waited in line, said something short and threw their medals on the steps of the Capitol. These men were so against the war that they threw away the very things they so desperately wanted when they joined the military, their war medals.

These veterans were no different than many of the soldiers still fighting a war that they did not agree with. Steve describes the huge dichotomy that each soldier faced, "I felt the contradiction

between doing your best and hating the war, between having the brotherhood of the unit in the field yet knowing that the war was wrong" (App, 429). As the war dragged on, soldiers simply could no longer serve effectively under these conditions. When a country of patriots, no longer has a military that is dedicated to its goals, victory is not possible. The joining of military with civilian antipathy toward the war marked the end of the war before Nixon had brought himself to realize its reality.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 10:07 PM (602 words)

Kate Kendrick

During her time in Vietnam, Gloria Emerson approached a turning point in her life. Emerson, a reporter for the New York Times, thought of herself as "the bravest woman in the whole world" (Herring 371), and was interested in learning and writing about the Vietnamese people. She was an ambitious, fearless reporter who realized she was not as brave as she imagined she was shortly after arriving in Vietnam. Emerson says, "I realized it (her bravery) was a lie about the second week I was there." (Appy 371). The stress and the sadness that Emerson encountered while reporting in Vietnam was too much for her mind to handle in a positive, healthy way. She met people who were on their way to being tortured and probably killed, she held a dying man's hand right before he was released from his life, and heard about a child who was brutally tortured with water and electricity. These memories haunted Emerson and changed her entire way of thinking about the Vietnam war, and of life. Emerson was quoted, "Before the war...I was profoundly ignorant and believed in the Americans tidying up the world." (Appy 373). Emerson was only one of many Americans who began the war era with much patriotism and faith in their country, but ended the era believing that we had made a grave mistake in initiating our part in war with Vietnam. After her involvement in the war, it took Emerson a long time to pull herself out of the after-war funk and think about much else. She stated, "I didn't know how to climb out of the war. It was like being on the bottom of a crater and I kept slipping as I tried to get up the sides." (Appy 373). The war was so rough emotionally on Emerson that her entire mind was turned around and she looked at American politics and war tactics completely different.

Beverly Gologorsky was an anti-war activist during the Vietnam War who fought long and hard for her voice to be heard. She joined together with many other activists to show the country how they felt about the actions our government was choosing. Gologorsky was feeling frustrated however, because she felt that she and her group had done as much as they possibly could to get their opinion across to the country, and there had been no severe outcomes. She said, "...because the war was around for so many years the frustration was high and we ran out of what to do next. They don't care if we're out of our jobs and running around Washington or

staying up all night. They don't care." (Appy 415). Finally, when a large group of Vietnam vets gathered at the Capitol to publicly discard their medals won during their time fighting, Gologorsky felt that their efforts had been validated, and her helplessness had ended. It was the end of her feeling that nothing her group of anti-war activists did would have any effect on the country, and that no one was listening. Even though it wasn't her idea to have the vets come to the Capitol, Gologorsky felt blessed that they were supporting the same efforts she stood for. She stated, "Their presence was a gift to the antiwar movement." (Appy 417). Although the vets' protest to the war was not the end of the struggle, Gologorsky was overwhelmed with pride that the country, government, and military had been shown the effects of the war on the minds of even the men fighting the war.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 10:15 PM (860 words)

The turning point of the war wasn't just the Tet offensive it was when Vietnam changed people. I chose Vincent Okamoto's story because he told a compelling story of how the war could completely drain someone, causing them to completely change how they reacted.

Vincent had six brothers and each of them had served in the military, so he eagerly awaited his chance to do the same. After attending UCLA and participating in ROTC he accepted a commission in the US Army and volunteered for Vietnam. "My parents often used the Japanese term shi kata ga nai, meaning, it can't be helped. If something is shi kata ga nai, it's inevitable so you just accept it and go on with your life." This philosophy was a great help to him while serving in Vietnam.

In June 1968 he was wounded in an ambush near the Cambodian border. He spent several days in the hospital and received some light duty. On June 16th he was sent back to his platoon; however on June 17th he again was wounded and sent back to the hospital. Before the Tet offensive in January of 1968 when soldiers were wounded twice they were placed in noncombat jobs for the remainder of their tour in Vietnam. Unfortunately so many men had been wounded he was sent back to his platoon. The third time he was wounded would be his turning point in the war.

On August 24th Vincent was wounded again when his company was attacked by a reinforced battalion of the 9th NVA Division. Vincent attempted to stop an enemy mortar team that was devastating his men. "I figured if I crawled along the flank I might be able to get close to that mortar team. And I did. I threw three frags and turned them into long division problems. But I wasn't quite as slick as I thought because a concussion grenade landed in the depression I was in. I tried to jump out, but I wasn't quick enough so I got injured from the waist down." He lost most of his platoon and about 30 percent of his company.

Vincent was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions during the battle. Since he received his third Purple Heart award, Vincent assumed that he would be sent to the rear. However once again the policy had changed so he would have had to of been hospitalized for 7 days each time he was wounded in

order to be sent to a rear echelon unit. He spent three more months in the field before receiving his award.

When he was sent back to the field this was his turning point. After the third wound Vincent was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder which caused him to be very gun-shy. "On one occasion during this period I remember a platoon leader calling me up on the radio saying, "Bravo Six, Bravo Six, we're taking fire, what do we do?" I said, "I don't know about you, you son-of-a-bitch, but I'm hiding behind this tree." I wasn't a very good Officer after August 24." He was taking medications so he could continue to function.

The story that has the best ending is Charles Cooper's. While serving in Vietnam during 1970 he realized that the war wasn't going well and saw how the Vietnamization was affecting his Marines. Since President Johnson had started project 100,000 the quality of people in both the Army and Marine Corps had really deteriorated causing problems for the war effort. According to Cooper the project 100,000 were morons and imbeciles that had difficulty learning which frustrated them and made some become aggressive.

Another problem that Cooper faced was race relations. At one point a fight broke out at the enlisted club and the blacks and whites went back to the barracks and grabbed their weapons. Another Officer stopped the fight before anyone got shot. He had to wedge himself between them, and fire a few rounds from his 45 caliber pistol before he obtained control of the participants.

A major difficulty that Cooper faced was with the replacements he received from the 3rd Marine Division. They had been stationed near the DMZ where the rules of engagement allowed them to shoot anyone they saw. This was because all of the civilians were supposed to have been moved out of the area. Where the 1st Marine Division was located the rules of engagement were different. The replacements had a hard time not distinguishing enemy combatants from civilians.

Charles Cooper wasn't overseeing the end of Vietnam as in the fall of Saigon but he had to command a demoralized battalion that wasn't as professional as the Marines had been earlier in the war. I think he had a difficult assignment that was compounded by President Nixon's decision to pull out of the war even though he escalated the war. The troops didn't want to be the last American killed in Vietnam if they weren't going to be allowed to win.

Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 10:38 PM (664 words)

John Douglas Marshall P.328

John Douglas Marshall grew up in a family that was pro-military but John Marshall made a choice to become a conscientious objector. This choice destroyed his relationship with his grandfather who he looked up to greatly but he felt inclined to follow his own beliefs despite the pressure of his family. Marshall's account, in my opinion, represents a "turn" in the public opposition towards the war. For the most part, a conscientious objector was a privileged middle class "dove" but John Marshall was not; he was part of a military family that felt betrayed by his decision. In *America's Longest War* by George Herring it states, "Indexes of public opinion also revealed a sharp disillusionment. Support for the war itself remained remarkably steady...around 45 percent."(242). in my opinion, this statistic can be interpreted in a variety of ways but it also can represent that the war had taken a "turn" because the public continued to grow dissatisfied with the war. John Marshall graduated ROTC training in 1969 and then consciously decided that all war was wrong. John Marshall, in my opinion, does not represent what most Americans typically think of as an objector of the Vietnam War and that is why, in my opinion; his account represents a "turn" in the war. I believe this because Marshall's account shows that the objectors of the war were now being represented by people with different backgrounds and the war was becoming a huge social debate in the United States eventually leading towards complete withdrawal of all American's from Vietnam.

George Evans P. 449

George Evans was a medic during Vietnam and witnessed a number of tragedies while at Cam Rahn Bay. Evans account, in my opinion, represents the "end" of the war because it gave validation that the troops were no longer in a mental capacity to continue fighting. Evans talks about his experience as a medic and recalls his defiance towards military regulations. Evan's put anti-war posters around the base and was court marshaled for being out of uniform. He recalls washing two dead children who were ran down in what soldiers referred to as "gook hockey." Evan's account, in my opinion, represents an "end" to the war because it validates that our armed servicemen had grown "out of control." The armed

service became increasingly unfit to fight the war, in my opinion, because the American presence in Vietnam created a corrupt way of life in South Vietnam. It seems that American G.I.'s became increasingly insubordinate and began to commit atrocities that would discredit our "cause." The fact that American Soldiers could easily obtain drugs did nothing but weaken our commitment because it fueled an illegal black market. The amount of corruption that began to take place in Vietnam was at its worst towards the end of the war and in my opinion; this represents the "end" because it seems that our cause became completely "hopeless." It seems that with the amount the American presence destroyed the South Vietnamese society and created a society based on corruption. Even if South Vietnam remained an independent nation it would probably would have suffered great inflation and an out of control black market selling U.S. goods. Evan's account, in my opinion, represented the mentality of the armed forces because it showed us that the military discipline was beginning to fail and in my opinion, when discipline begins to fail in the military the war is over. I believe this because without discipline orders can not be executed and goals are unachievable because organization has failed. In order to win any military conflict organization seems important and this is why I believe Evan's account is a fair representation of the "end." Once the armed services began to act chaotically, in my opinion, the war was at an end because the troops had basically "gave up" fighting.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 08:04 PM (1608 words)

Part 1: Charley Trujillo, pages 366-370

Charley Trujillo was a "Chicano" who lived "on one side of town," with whites being on the opposite. He was familiar with racism and oppression, "we were ashamed of taking our tacos and beans to school because that was "beaner" food. So we would hide behind the backstop where the whites wouldn't see us eating." The racial inequality and opposition through this kind of treatment he felt plagued his "generation of Chicanos," for their lifetimes. Due to the if you can't beat them, might as well join them- mind frame, Charley always wanted "to assimilate into white society," which led him to volunteer prior to being drafted, "it was part of trying to be an American and patriotic and the whole romantic notion of war."

The anti-war protest had been going on for some time at home in the US when Charley was, "an infantryman with the Americal Division in 1970 and there had been a general building, "... resentment and hatred," among the US troops towards the Vietnamese because of the "seeming indifference of many Vietnamese, while Americans were dying in the field," (Herring 200). This was not the only racial tension growing because of the war during this time. The PBS series, "Vietnam: A Television History" talk about the segregation among US troops stationed in Vietnam in episode 6 where they talk about the "racial polarization," being "deeper" and it being extremely segregated between white parts and black parts of town; it would be dangerous for the wrong color of person to walk into the other colored side of town. An African-American veteran on this episode talks about them questioning: why blacks were there fighting a war when they had one at home [the United States] they should be fighting [the Civil Rights Movement] while they were in Vietnam and putting their lives on the line for serving a country (the US) that denied them the same rights as whites. It seems there were many people who questioned, for different reasons, the people who were supposed to be fighting with them based on racial issues.

Charley went to Vietnam to prove his patriotism and "Out in the bush I've never felt such affinity and togetherness with men of other cultures and races as I did in Vietnam. But as soon as we got back to rear areas everything changed again. The blacks and some whites used to call us [chingos]," which was opposite of the

integration and acceptance into white peoples 'worlds' he went there to show he was worthy of. Charley talks about when he went to school and could speak "English Only" and was told while serving in Vietnam by a guy who'd overheard him, "you shouldn't be talking like that cause when I first got here some guys heard it through the bushes and thought it was Vietnamese and killed'em," when he was speaking Spanish. This was what I think led him to a 'turning point' within himself.

In particular there was a paragraph in Charley's account that showed a huge turning point in his view and belief of what was right and wrong, whether he was where he was supposed to be:

--"When we got back to the village the South Vietnamese Popular Forces were playing volleyball and having a grand old time drinking Cokes. They were supposed to be on our side and helping us to fight. Meanwhile, the North Vietnamese were kicking our asses. Then some black soldiers started saying, "This ain't our war. Our war's at home. This is a white man's war." This made me start to think."--

Charley states that "after that, my whole idea of the war started to change," but I believe this shows a turning point for the minorities fighting to have the same Civil Rights as white citizens and how the minorities people were no longer able to justify their participation in a war for someone else, the Vietnamese, to have more than the non-white citizens of the US do in their own country. "...are we really the good guys? What am I doing fighting these guys? This is a gringo army and when I get home I'm just another Mexican, so fuck these people." Charley's approach to the war changed to a "search and avoid" where when he was told where the enemy was he would purposefully "go in the other direction." Having to risk his own life and return to the US being "just another Mexican," displeased him and made him have a completely different outlook and approach to the war. Charley's realization of the way he truly felt about the war and the treatment of Mexicans was a true turning point for him. Many other minorities, like the ones we watched in the PBS series and the Appy book, had moments where they questioned the logic of their existence and participation in the war because of the same reasons as Charley Trujillo.

Part 2: Steve Sherlock, pages 425-429

Steve Sherlock went to Vietnam in October of 1968. He proclaimed that at the time he joined the army, in 1966, he was "a super war supporter." Sherlock's thoughts about the war and why the United States was involved were about fighting communism in another country so we wouldn't have to fight communism at home when he

joined the military. His doubts about the war started in 1968, when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated and "it just didn't feel right to be there and Vietnam was somehow connected to it." By the end of the time he spent in Vietnam, he was looked at as a "traitor" and was "relieved."

When Steve Sherlock was relieved it was after a very revealing conversation with a captain. Sherlock had a few weeks previously won a medal after fighting where they "had killed seven and had three prisoners," and when he went out and got into a fight with this particular captain, the "killed two or three people." The Captain had reached into pockets and searched the dead and discovered a rosary in one of the dead people's possession and remarked, "Oh my God, how can this guy be a communist and a Catholic?" and Sherlock replied, "Who knows if he's a Communist or a Catholic? Or if he's both, so what?" and continued, "I hope the rest of them got away. I'd like it even better if they didn't run into us and we didn't have any more fights." The Captain said "Your job is to destroy the Communists," but Sherlock continued and said "No, they are just people like us." This argument had continued between the two but this is the part that got him "relieved" because he wouldn't recant, after the Captain asked him a few days later to change his view or otherwise he was to leave. The Captain thought of Sherlock as a traitor and that is understandable to me because Sherlock was in the military and whether you agree with the fight, it is your job and duty to accept your orders. Sherlock was not saying he wouldn't fight but the heart of him was not into the cause or the fight, and that is where I believe that Captain was correct. Although I don't believe you can fight your best fight when your heart is not in it, I morally agree with Sherlock's decision to say what he believed and his opinions. Either way, Sherlock was relieved because he refused to recant his statements.

Sherlock returned home, helped with a small "Veterans for Peace" organization where he had "a very good experience. People were supportive. They understood the value of veterans speaking against the war, that our having served in it gave us some credibility and moral authority." In 1971 he was invited to a demonstration in Washington D.C. Sherlock went to this demonstration knowing that the Veterans including himself were going to throw their medals they'd received in Vietnam for their service away. The point of this was to "turn in our Veteran medals as a strong symbolic statement that they couldn't buy our silence with decorations," and to show that they opposed the war and "it wasn't unpatriotic to be fighting against a wrong and harmful policy," but for Sherlock it seemed like this demonstration and the experience of it, had rid him of his dishonor from being relieved and called a traitor. "I felt the war was

entirely wrong at a political and moral level, and in that sense you could argue that all the symbols of it, including the medals, were meaningless." When the medals were being tossed through the "wire barricade" onto the stairs of the Capitol, "it was a high-energy emotional thing." I believe this was a way for Sherlock to end his embarrassment or shame for opposing the war and trying to do the right thing; he had fought the war and killed people. Getting rid of the medals that he received during a war he thought was wrong and didn't want to fight, was an end to the torment he felt by being considered a "traitor."

I got all information and quotes from Herring, Appy, and the PBS series.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:54 PM (399 words)

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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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 05:02 PM (1064 words)

Rachel Regelbrugge

Assignment 3

In Christian Appy's book Patriots Part Four there is a turning point; this turning point was Larry Colburn's story of the inconceivable death and suffering of the Vietnamese people at the hands of American soldiers. He tells of his time in Vietnam and the horrors he saw along with the lack of humanity left in American soldiers after fighting this "never ending" war. In Part Five there is a clear ending to the war that would be Steve Sherlock's story of going to Vietnam and being discharged for not agreeing with the murder of the communists, he later helped a movement that would end the war in many Americans eyes. He along with hundreds of other Vets threw their war medals away in hopes of ending the war that had killed so many both Americans, Vietminh, and innocent civilians.

The turning point in Vietnam to me was in Larry Colburn's story and the awareness it created. When Americans were slaughtering innocent civilians it became all too clear that our purpose of saving the people of Vietnam was no longer present. We had become worse than the communist in that we were slaughtering innocent civilian Vietnamese, America no longer seemed an ally to them but an enemy. American soldiers fighting in Vietnam had begun to lose their humanity after years of fighting a guerilla war. Some took to killing innocent women, children, and elders with no sense of remorse, even gunning down those who attempted to hide. Thompson, Colburn's crewman landed his helicopter to save 10 civilians from GIs who were opening fire on them; Colburn took multiple trips in attempt to save these civilians lives. I do not wish to portray that these GIs were horrible men or should be looked down upon for their merciless killing, rather that they had spent too much time in a war they could not win. This to me is a major turning point. Eventually, Americans began fighting other Americans to protect the lives of the North Vietnamese. America was getting nowhere in the war; civilians were against the idea of war along with some of the men who had been fighting for far too long. We had adopted a strategy to keep attacking until the enemy gave up, although most knew the Vietminh might never surrender. Soldiers took out their aggression at first with only the Vietminh and eventually began to kill innocents. Colburn states that he found a ditch full of dead civilians and a live baby was inside the trench

completely covered in blood, this to me meant the war had taken a turn for brutality. Had Americans become worse than the Communist we were trying so hard to fight? Could we as Americans still accurately say that we were still trying to free the North? These GIs were not killing men who attacked but them rather anyone who crossed their path. Colburn states, "I've seen the list of dead and there were hundred and twenty some humans under the age of five. I know what its like to seek revenge but we would look for a worth opponent. These were elders, mothers, and children and babies."(pg.348) How had the war taken this turn of unthinkable events? The knowledge of this once leaked to the media would begin disgusting American civilians towards their own soldiers. This was one of the many reasons we began to pull out of Vietnam.

In Steve Sherlock's anti-war ex vet story he shows the ending of the war. This ending consisted around many soldiers throwing their medals away in front of Americans all over the country to make a point of saying "We no longer support this cause, and yes we would know what its like because we have actually been there." Hearing first hand from someone who served at Vietnam and still didn't agree with the war should send a very clear message. This message to me said we are killing innocent people, all they want is their freedom who are we to hold them back? If our own soldiers didn't agree with the war they were fighting why on earth should we? Sherlock sympathized with the enemy even after fighting them and his compassion was strong enough to make him throw away his medals. Sherlock was discharged for being a disgrace and a bad influence. His Colonel said to him, " Your job is to destroy the Communist. I said, "No they're people just like us." He said, "They are no people. They are the enemy and you're the reason were loosing this war. You're a coward and a traitor."(pg.426) The fact that Sherlock was so set against the war makes you wonder, of all the soldiers dying in Vietnam how many of them didn't believe in the war they were dying for. This statement of the soldiers disregarding their medals was further inspiring because they were experienced soldiers not some over privileged college students rioting who saw everything through a television screen. Not just one vet discarded his medal rather hundreds and hundreds of vets ready to saw that this war had no cause. It was very hypocritical for Americans to say they still supported the war after this statement. If you support the war you also support your troops, and you couldn't do both if your troops didn't agree with the war.

The turning point was the mass amounts of cold-blooded murder of women, children and elders that was happening in Vietnam. The

war was becoming too much for American soldiers to deal with and without media coverage and soldiers speaking out this turning point may not have taken place. When it was clear that the government was losing their support they knew they had no choice but to pull out having wasted large sums of money along with their youths lives. American soldiers protesting against our involvement in Vietnam symbolized the end of the war. This statement could not be overlooked because these soldiers had been there and knew exactly what it was like, therefore forcing Americans to see the truth. America had spent far too many years fighting a war that had lost its cause and now had to pull out, after the deaths of hundreds and hundreds of men.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 04:22 PM (740 words)

“...Our sons need never be soldiers
Our daughters will never need guns
These are the years between
These are the years that were hard fought and won
Contracts torn at the edges
Old signatures stained with tears
Seasons of war and grace
These should not be forgotten years....”

“Forgotten Years” by Midnight Oil

Turning points and endings. A rhetorician may begin a paragraph in obscurity and leave it up to the reader to decipher the unintelligible. What does it mean, *really mean*, to face a turning point? When does an ending really signify an *end*? To me, these terms are only two of innumerable markers on the continuum of human activity, markers defined personally and arbitrarily. They're terms designed to initiate conversation from a very personal point of commencement, the journey of a thousand ideas that begins with the pronoun “I.” But a rhetorician I'm not. The turning points in Appy's book *Patriots* are a departure from one paradigm into a different; the ending describes the open doorway through which a new beginning is visible. The obscurity of turning points and endings is only unintelligible to those who live in “...the years between...” and never need to confront issues of moral and physical courage. But these should not be forgotten years.

Michael Bernhardt was assigned to Charlie Company, notorious for the atrocity at Mai Lai. “When I was assigned to Charlie Company I knew there was something wrong. You could see it and smell it.” [Appy, p. 350] The interview opens with Bernhardt describing his *turning point* in words common to popular fiction. Common words and phrasing, however, doesn't mean inaccurate or poorly chosen. Bernhardt described what he personally saw and felt, based on what he also knew to be normative military behavior. His normative military behavior involved high standards of training and discipline. The men of Charlie Company were, Bernhardt says, like street thugs. The atrocities committed by them at Mai Lai cemented Bernhardt's changing perspective and his collapsing paradigm, one witness to proper organizational structure and adherence to national and corps values, was replaced by one revolving around disappointment, revulsion and feelings of military marginalization. At the completion of this interview, the reader is left wondering if Bernhardt ever found another paradigm to cling to, something to balance what he'd witnessed in Vietnam.

The word *ending* is inherently melded with the idea of a beginning. Medic George Evans crossed through the doorway separating an *ending* into a

beginning at a hospital in Cam Rahn Bay. Given the task of cleaning the corpse of child and facing the raw, mourning emotions of who Evans believed was the child's mother, he accepted that Vietnam was "...a bad war." [Appy, p. 452] Six months from this event marks the point at which Evans embraces his *ending/beginning* and fights back in the only appropriate way he could: he refused to comply with military grooming standards and appearance at designated formations. I state that Evans fought back in the only appropriate way he could because, being a medic, if he failed to perform his duty soldiers would die. With his family history and respect for veterans, such an action was inconceivable, let alone inexcusable. He realized, though, that he needed to have an outlet against a "bad war" and protested in the ways he could. Evans, like his father before him, understood the meaning of *duty* as defined by himself and upheld the definition in the most important aspects – those aspects involving the lives of others.

Turning points and endings. A rhetorician I'm not, nor am I a person who has ever had to face war and its aftermath. I know people who have served in the military and were prisoners of war, been grievously wounded and had members of their family die. I've been privileged; I've been protected; and even more notable, I have lived with no fears of death or imprisonment. I, and generations before me, have thrived on the actions of those who've lived and fought before. Their *ending* passed to me as my *beginning* and, as Peter Garret of Midnight Oil sings,

*"The hardest years, the darkest years
The roarin' years, the fallen years
These should not be forgotten years.
The hardest years, the wildest years
The desperate and divided years
Our shoreline was never invaded
Our country was never in flames
This is the calm we breathe..."*

This is the calm I breathe.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 04:45 PM (1119 words)

A turning point is a decisive moment; the point in which a very significant change occurs, and sends you in a different direction. This type of change took place for Vincent Okamoto when he was stationed in Vietnam. Vincent was a Japanese American, raised in a military family. All six of his older brothers served in the military, and Vincent couldn't wait for his turn. He was brought up with a sense of duty and honor that led him to the ROTC in college, and a regular army commission in the infantry. From there he went to jump school and ranger school, then to recon commando training. In April 1968, he volunteered to go to Vietnam.

Vincent went to war as a 24 year old lieutenant, full of courage and promise, but that soon changed. In most divisions prior to the Tet Offensive, if you were awarded two Purple Hearts for being wounded in battle, you were given a noncombat job in the rear. Vincent was injured twice in June, just one week apart, so he thought he had it made. However, after so many people were getting wounded or killed after Tet, they changed it to three Purple Hearts. Vincent was sent back to his platoon, and was injured again on August 24th by a concussion grenade during a late night mortar and gunfire attack. Again, Vincent thought he was in luck, and that he would be taken off the front lines after being treated for his wounds. But he then found out that not only did you have to have three Purple Hearts, but you also had to have been hospitalized for at least 7 days for each occurrence.

This was Vincent's turning point. He was recommended for a Distinguished Service Cross, which basically guaranteed that he would be able to pick his own assignment, but it had to first be approved. Vincent was sent back to his platoon for three months while he waited, and he was a very unhappy person. He was scared, jumpy, and bitter. He essentially abandoned his status as an officer, and became a war-weary coward. His platoon leaders and soldiers looked to him for leadership and guidance, but he was alright with hiding behind a tree rather than fighting like before. It got to the point where Vincent couldn't function, and was taking drugs to try to maintain his sanity rather than admitting he needed to be relieved of duty. I would guess that those were the longest three months of his life after he was sent back. Combat was terrible, and the soldiers in Vietnam depended on milestones that they had to look forward to. When those milestones were taken away from Vincent, he lost hope and the will to be the type of soldier that he had aspired to be.

Steve Sherlock had a very different experience in Vietnam than Vincent Okamoto. Steve came from a blue collar family, joined the army in 1966 as a "super war supporter," and went to Vietnam in 1968 as a lieutenant in the 101st Airborne.

He believed that the U.S. was fighting Communists in Vietnam so we wouldn't have to fight them on American shores. His view was that the Vietnam War was similar to WWII, except in a contained area, and he likened the Communists to the Nazis. However, Steve began to have doubts about the war shortly before he was sent to Vietnam. After Martin Luther King Jr. was killed, and Steve worked the riot patrol in Washington, D.C., he started to realize that there was something wrong with the problems that were occurring in the U.S., and that they were somehow connected to the Vietnam War. Steve really didn't know about the political details behind the war, but described his stance as somewhat of a "confused neutrality." He had a sense that the United States shouldn't be in Vietnam, and definitely shouldn't be killing people in Vietnam.

While Steve was stationed at Camp Eagle, a large military base near Hue, he decided to sign an antiwar petition. He was questioned by someone from intelligence, who was outraged that an officer would do such a thing. Steve suggested that he be sent somewhere else, and was given an infantry platoon with the 2nd of the 327th at a village called Nguoc Ngot. The first night Steve was there, they were involved in a fire fight with an NVA platoon, for which he was awarded a bronze star. One of the other lieutenants told him he was lucky for having contact so quickly. Later, his captain wanted to go with him on patrol, and they got into a small gunfight that killed two or three people. While they were checking out the bodies, they found a rosary in one man's pocket. This was confusing to the captain, because he couldn't understand how someone could be both a Communist and a Catholic at the same time. Steve didn't think it matter what they were, he just hoped that he didn't encounter them later and have to kill any more people. The captain was incensed because Steve believed these were people just like the two of them, and accused Steve of being the reason why the U.S. was losing the war. Steve was given a chance to retract his statements a few days later, and when he declined, he was relieved of duty.

This was the end of Steve's war. His belief that the Vietnamese people, regardless of whether they were Nationalists, Communists, NVA, Viet Cong, Catholic or Buddhist, they were all *people*- flesh and blood. He still had the sense that he had before he was sent to Vietnam, that we shouldn't have been killing those people. It was his deep-seeded sense of humanity, whether he understood the politics behind the war or not, that got him sent away from his platoon, and ended his combat experience. It absolutely ended any support he may still have felt for the war, just like that. He was eventually reassigned to some civil affairs duty, but when he went back to the U.S., he became an antiwar protestor. Steve felt that the war was totally wrong at a political and moral level, and that it could be argued that all of the symbols of it, including the medals, were meaningless. He actually ended up throwing his bronze star away at a rally in Washington, surrounded by other vets and supporters. It was like that moment in Vietnam, when he was relieved of duty, was the ultimate end of his fight, his support, and his war.

Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:45 PM (563 words)

BOB GABRIEL

"we buried our own men right there". I really feel like Bob felt a personal turning point in the war when his platoon was under fire so badly that nobody wanted to help him get to safety. I am sure the war seemed bad before this point but it seems that this event is emphasized for a reason. It seems that everyone in his platoon was panicking and freaking out, probably because they were being hands down defeated.

It really seemed like Bob had a firm belief when he first arrived in Vietnam that his platoon was prepared, organized and strong. Two or three days after he got to LZ, he and his platoon mowed down about a hundred North Vietnamese during a routine mad minute. It seems like this initial encounter would make the platoon feel a sense of security about their position in the war. Then two or three weeks into their mission they were moved to camp Evans above Hue and all hell broke loose.

Disorder seemed to have taken over; he was left on his own with only a machine gun to fight off the enemy. This is something that I see as being a relevant event and turning point in his experience. An American soldier first denied help from his comrades then left to hold off the enemy when defeat and death was thick in the air. It seems like things just got worse from there, because then they had fourteen guys shot in the head and were unable to get air support. They had no help and the need to "get the hell out of there" so they were forced to bury their fallen men right on the spot. I really think that this single event was the red flag of a turning point in the war for this man.

BARRY ZORTHIAN

"Then—boom!—Tet comes along."As for an ending to the war, I felt like Barry had an interesting analysis of what was an ending to the war for him. He was the official voice of America in Vietnam as director of Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO). It was routine for him to run press conferences at five o'clock every day, he would give daily briefing of statistics and progress.

After and during Tet, the media just went crazy with the situation and the acts of violence that had been cast to all of America. It took all of the progress reports and just threw them out the window. Barry personally recommended getting the South Vietnamese to take more responsibility or the U.S. need to pull out. After losses started to double between 1969 and 1972, the enemy was then able to force withdraw of the United States because of

the severe casualties inflicted to both the U.S. and South Vietnam. I just find it interesting that Barry's war was ended only after he had exhausted all of his credit with both the media and the government.

So, the thing that I recognize in this situation is that instead of referring to the Vietnam War as being over, he was referring to his position in any war. After so long of not making any progress and having a clashing opinion of what progress is, I think he has indicated that he just was not effective any longer.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 08:05 PM (659 words)

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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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 07:25 PM (710 words)

The story in part four that I felt was a good example of a "turning point" for a group of people was the story of Clark Dougan. He had talked about his friend Greg Fischer who had joined the marines because of his belief that inevitably, he would get drafted so why not make the best of it, but ended up getting killed at the age of 19 at Dong Ha. The story was published in the Cleveland Press which allowed many people to partake in the tragedy of his friend. I believe this would have caused a turning point during the war because it was communicating that once again there was another life lost due to an extremely long war and another young American dying for his country on a basis that many people had given up on and no longer believed in. Americans' were sick of feeling like we had no control yet we were shipping more and more men over to Vietnam because nobody could bow out peacefully or come to some sort of agreement. Because of this article, people began to really start asking the questions how much longer are we going to be there, how many more of our children are we going to send to be killed and more simply...why are we still there? I think that this article most likely caused many people to reflect on how many more soldiers just like this one had been killed before ever really beginning his life. This may have been one of the many groups of anti war groups that began to protest and point the finger of blame on the commander in chief in hopes of pressuring him to end the war and allow the soldiers to return home, safely and save which ones we had left. Well knowing we had not and would not win the war, still continuously seeing faces of men dying for no reason caused uproar in America and ultimately, I believe, a huge turning point in the War against Vietnam.

The story of Steve Sherlock was the story that was the best example of an ending to the war. Steve had done his part for his country and fought for something that he had believed in prior to actually being sent to Vietnam to fight in the war. Once he arrived and found out firsthand what was going on, he had decided that we were over there doing wrong and causing harm for no apparent reason other than from more of a political standpoint. Steve had made it out of the war alive and in one piece and started up a chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War or VVAW along with an ex marine that he had run into after he returned home. The next year, 1971 he had a friend of his named Jim Pechin who also had opened a chapter of VVAW at Indiana State, asked him to come to

a demonstration that other members and Vietnam Vets would be. He was amazed by how many people were there who "felt this wasn't just another protest, because they were people who had already served with no danger of being drafted or being sent back to the war, who knew the war firsthand from experience." Because of this demonstration being filled with so many men who had gone over and shown their patriotism to their country, but still felt that we were not over there for a good reason and felt very strongly that we needed to remove ourselves, it felt like this could have caused more of an indent in the leaders ways of viewing the war and possibly causing them to go in a different direction to put an end to the longest war. I believe that that the demonstration that was shown by the Veterans and the way they had given back their medals was a symbol that they were done and no decoration, even if it did make them feel like they did or didn't do a good job, was worth the price we paid in another country fighting such a devastating war for so long.

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Due date: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 22 May 2011, 10:10 PM (1307 words)

To define a turning point for the Vietnam War requires that we understand the trajectory of the war. There was really no point after we soiled our own consciences with support for a corrupt regime in Diem or any point after backing out on hand shake promises of Vietnamese self determination made during the Geneva talks of 1954 where the trajectory of the conflict was in our favor. We were fighting a war labeled as a fight against the "bad" guys, when any critical view of the conflict would have put us on par or worse than our enemy in regards to the question of integrity. This is not to say that overwhelming firepower and mountains of cash cannot buy the temporary setback of your adversary or the temporary support of your supposed allies. This is simply to claim that at no point was the long-term momentum in our favor after 1956.

Defining a turning point from the stories in Chapter four I kept coming back to a simple theme. The enemy had unwavering conviction in their cause, while the American presence started with the usual flag waving optimism born by our history of undefeat as well as our recent success with nation building, it's shine eventually wore off. Eventually morale devolved at all levels of our society and our presence in Vietnam had the unfortunate side effect of undermining the rare South Vietnamese conviction that existed in the corrupt south. Dissent was both justified and fostered by our governments manipulations, and like a virus it spread to efforts in Vietnam.

I found the stories of the two brothers who took such different paths through such turbulent waters telling of the times, and telling of the turning of the American people. As I have said, we hadn't been in Vietnam for the right reasons for nearly a decade before the ingrained support of the American people for their governments actions started to wear thin. Nathan Houser grew up exposed to the kind of indoctrination that gave early support to the war, but eventually failed in the face of the unanswered questions later. "I grew up believing that America was God's chosen country and that the American way of life was the right one and the just one. This was preached to us during the Cold War period." He recounted raising questions to his teacher about whether communists shared any of our values and receiving the response from her teacher "not to bother". While Nathan developed the sense of healthy skepticism that eventually led him to question many of the hand me down truths of our society, his brother, Richard Houser, was more willing to follow the momentum dictated path handed to him. "I had no question I was going to Vietnam. I volunteered. I also volunteered for a seven-month extension in Vietnam after my first tour." While

unquestioning social ethics of the World War Two era were still dominant in the early 1960's they had begun to deteriorate. A sort of American reformation era pervaded and the notion of questioning the establishment resulted in people like Nathan Houser's reaction to the Kennedy Assassination. "That's when I began taking a critical stance toward the government." The skepticism was not focused only on the government but pervaded society. Referring to his time in a religious school Nathan says "I was still saying my morning and evening prayers but at a certain point I started to pray 'Dear God, if you exist...' and then on day I just ceased to believe. I just was finished."

This shift in society's faith in government was not just about the war, but because the war was contentious and LBJ and Nixon were devious in how it was handled, the war became a focal point and rallying cry for questioning authority. I can see reasons for why it took so long for the anxiety and distrust of the public to turn the direction of government. Three or four years after developing a concrete sense of doubt in the government he was still in love with his nation and still wanted to act in ways that he saw as patriotic. "...still patriotic... I decided I would go join the Peace Corps...", but even that establishment fostered his disillusionment by denying him his first amendment rights.

For the American presence in Vietnam the turning point was a loss of moral on every front. Our military establishment lost moral because they felt betrayed by the civilian leadership and the public. Our public lost moral because they realized that the government was manipulating them to a degree and in a manner that questioned the validity of our own sense of democracy. Our soldiers lost moral because they were sprung from a disenchanted public, forced to go by an unfair selection process, and given no viable moral cause or goal. The turning point that I see in this story is not so much a turning point in the eventualities of the conflict, but instead a turning point in the view of American essence. The pessimism introduced into the body politic of the American system during the late 1950's and 1960's eventually undermined the blind faith that we had in our leaders

Closure for a conflict like the Vietnam War is hard to find in the traditional sense. The treaty that was signed in 1973 was not a decisive end of the war, or even a true end of our own involvement. I think that for the American public we can only find an end to such a sullied era of our own history in the taking of responsibility, and the acceptance of culpability.

My favorite example of this is Daniel Ellsberg. His perspective on the war is so sharp and well conceived. In considering the policy makers of a 23-year period He questions how such smart people could have driven themselves into such a position. I really appreciated that he asks this question in its own reflection by

referencing it this way, "And they had to be secret about it because the public wouldn't have accepted it without much better prospects...". He illustrates one of the greatest liabilities of a revolving leadership beholden to an often moody and ill-informed public. "Vietnam showed that American leaders were psychologically unwilling to negotiate a solution that would be called defeat by some people, even if the American people could have lived with it very well."

What is important about his accounting of the war, and specifically about how he finally reconciled himself with it, is in the taking of responsibility. When he made the decision to "...do anything that was non violent and truthful." He decided to expose the motivations and failures of conscience that had led us into the morass in Vietnam. His motivations were not political but were instead selflessly societal. He was making the decision to place the power back into the hands of an informed public at great personal cost. His courageous decision to expose the government to the people was a pivotal step in reestablishing our national sense of identity. Every society must have ties of common values to hold itself together. For the United States our common values are in the Democratic process. The true price that the American nation paid during the Vietnam War era was a loss of faith that institution. People like Ellsberg deserve credit for beginning the process of rebuilding our confidence in our Democratic institutions. I recognize that this is a poor example of an ending to the war for the people of Vietnam, but American closure is ongoing and will come with a sense of self-respect. Those honorable sacrifices, like Ellsberg's, made to bring truth back to the debate are where that closure began.

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