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Reading all of the stories that Appy included should have an impact on anyone that reads them. All of them have at least something that can influence people in one way or another. George Watkins story caught my attention from the rest primarily for the part in the story where Watkins said, "I knowed very little about Vietnam. I mean what I know now about it and what I knowed then is just from scary. I didn't really pay a whole lot of mind to it. I just knowed that we was fighting over there against Communism, so-called. I started doing more thinking about it after I got drafted, in basic training, trying to find out more, but in there it was hard to find out anything." This comment made by Watkins impacted me so much I had to stop reading to think about it. How could the U.S.A. send men and women to fight a war that they knew nothing about? How can you expect someone to give their life for a decision made by politicians and then not educate them about it? Does a doctor just go to school for a couple of years to learn the mechanics of a surgery or do they study countless years to become educated and know why they are performing it? Watkins said that even when drafted it was "hard to find out anything". It sounds like the leaders were purposely withholding the true reason for sending people to war, and scared of Americans turning on the war, they kept everything a secret. I feel Watkins to be a reliable speaker for a few reasons. First Watkins was there in person, to me this makes him more creditable because there is nothing like living an actual event. To see with your eyes the sights, to take in the smells, and sounds and use your senses is the ultimate way of being able to truly know what happened. Second Watkins said "I did not hate them", when talking about enemy forces. Watkins lost both his legs and eyes and still has the courage to say he, "did not hate them." Most experiences I have had with veterans have been negative when they refer to whom they were fighting. Watkins however was different he looked at it in a way taking in both sides. Time has passed since Watkins experience but I do not think what happened over in Vietnam will ever be forgotten no matter how much time has passed. In Henry Pruniers' story it is very frustrating the fact that America sent in troops to help train the very people they would eventually end up fighting against. In history books in high school they do not talk about how America supported the Viet Minh, supplying them with weapons and training, and even worse gaining the trust of the Vietnamese people that they would be supporting their fight against Japan. Henry talks about many years later seeing General Giap one of the most prominent surviving members of the North Vietnamese military, "grabbed an orange and made a motion like he was lobbing a hand grenade. Isn't that amazing? I actually did teach them how to throw hand grenades." This just shows how America dealt with war in Vietnam, they were not sure what they were fighting for, and even when they did, they felt that they could just

switch sides helping the Vietnamese and then in just a short time turn and fight against them. This gave America a bad name and made it seem like a traitor and untrustworthy country. Hearing accounts from the other side of the story is so refreshing. People always hear one side of the story and base their decisions on what they hear. Appy however includes accounts from both sides. Vo Nguyen Giap was a military leader for North Vietnam, who was connected to Henry Prunier when he was sent to train soldiers to fight anti-colonialism. When watching movies and reading books it seems that they always portray the enemy as almost being inhuman. Being able to read what Giap said and how he viewed the war makes the people being fought so much more real, and why they did what they did. Giap said, "Lessons are important. I agree (In response to McNamara's comment about the "lesson which will allow us to avoid such tragedies in the future"). However, you are wrong to call the war a 'tragedy'. Maybe it was a tragedy for you, but for us the war was a noble sacrifice. We did not want to fight the United States, but you gave us no choice." People need to see that the Vietnamese were not fighting us to take over our homes and freedom, just as Tran Thi Gung said, "Wouldn't you shoot me if you saw me holding a weapon and pointing it at you?" They were fighting because we came into their country. Appy does a beautiful job of exploiting both sides of the story so we can truly see what happened.

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