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Part 1:

I found myself greatly impacted by Roger Donlon's story. Being the first American to receive a Medal of Honor immediately caught my attention. I have always stood in awe at the strength of the human spirit, and the ability to overcome even the greatest of obstacles, and I believe Roger Donlon exemplifies this in every way. I was particularly moved by the fact that while he was being interviewed by Appy he would, "take time-outs to entertain his baby granddaughter and to point out his red white and blue bird house in the yard." The fact that he witnessed and experienced the horror and despair of war, and still is able to be a man of family, love and happiness is reason enough to respect Donlon. Then when I add his sacrifice to our country, as well as to his fellow soldiers, it is hard for me not to be in complete admiration of the man. As for his credibility and reliability, I do feel that his recollections are probably very subjective, but I don't believe that this in any way discredits his story. If anything it adds the necessary humanity to the Vietnam War. Too often we are filled with facts and statistics to the point that we forget that the men fighting and dying on the battlefields had left someone behind who loves them, misses them, and was desperate for their safe return home. Roger's story reminds me of the sacrifice of war. It also reminds me that there are people who are capable of truly remarkable and courageous things, and no matter what hell we endure, we have the ability to overcome.

Part 2:

In part 2 of "Patriots" I found myself frustrated a lot. In Paul Hare's story, he talks about how at the age of 23 he was sent to Vietnam, en route he "picked up a TIME magazine...hoping to learn something about Vietnam." I have noticed a common theme among the stories of the soldiers of high up commands dropping the ball in ways that cost many people their lives. I think that Hare's story shows the naivety and ignorance that a lot of the young men, drafted or not, when faced with the reality of Vietnam. Hare's recalls the dislocation and uncertainty that he felt the entire four and a half years he was stationed there. Our country sent inexperienced young men into a war torn, highly traditional nation without any education or understanding of the culture they were about to enter. Hare's explained how he "never felt sure about (his) understanding of the Vietnamese or where they stood with respect to this conflict." He felt conflicted over his purpose for being there. He was told America's plan was to rebuild schools and clinics, as well as help improve agriculture in the area by improving seeds and fertilizers. Instead, Hare's remembers their helicopter base in Soc Trang that would "sometimes shoot up the wrong territory." Hare's and his fellow men would be sent out to the local towns to do damage control and offer the Vietnamese people money for their loss. After reading his story I was left with a haunting feeling, it to me is a clear example of the dehumanization that takes place during war.

After reading Paul Kattenburg's story I felt angry and really frustrated with our Nation's stubborn arrogance surrounding cultures outside of our own. We are too eager to label and define people especially groups of people. This strips them of their individual humanity, and allows us to feel alright about intruding on them. As enraged as all of this makes me, I still can't help but feel hopeful, because there are people like Paul Kattenburg in the world. He is a person who chose to stand for what he believes in, even if it didn't fit in with the "popular" way of thinking. His courageous speaking out of turn, at a National Security Council, on the idea of withdrawing from Vietnam, or as he put it, "get out while the getting

is good.” Unfortunately the council was not willing to budge on the issue. They chose instead to start supporting an alternate group of “rebellious generals to launch a coup to overthrow (Dien).”, and eventually to go to war with a Nation of people they knew nothing about. I don’t think this in any way takes away from the audacity and determination of one man who was willing to speak out for what is right no matter the cost.

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