

Due date: Sunday, 9 October 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 9 October 2011, 09:53 PM (1045 words)

The story in Part 1 of the Patriots book that caught my attention was the story of George Watkins entitled "The sand was probably the only thing that saved me." I emotionally connected to this story because George seemed so candid about his feelings and thoughts which seemed simple when I first read the story but upon further reflection it became complex. During the war his thoughts weren't for something grand or grandiose it was for camping days at a time, little sleep, lack of any real objective while still being told they were making a difference in Vietnam. I do believe the speaker is trustworthy; he still comes across as a person who bears no ill will (for the most part) for people who were considered his enemy. He sounds like he is a live and let live type of person, it is a purely emotional reaction to what he says and the cadence of his voice I hear in my head when he's telling his story. As far as his credibility goes I think that anyone who witnessed an event in Vietnam during The Vietnam War has credibility. People always have different perspectives on the same event and emotional feelings about that event that may or may not differ from others. His story is so simple but also rings with points or truth, and again, it is an emotional reaction but I believe that we often judge others based at times on little fact and purely on gut feeling. His experiences resonate with what I have heard countless others tell me in person and I choose to believe in him although he is just words on a page to me. I think it's hard to be emotional objective about events, especially the events that he experienced. There is always some sort of preset bias that shines through your words that the person you are talking to may or may not be aware of. To fully experience what Mr. Watkins biases are I would have to know more about him and what type of person he is. In my mind I can picture a man who is physically ruined but still has time to thank his sister for dinner with a smile on his face. Maybe when he was growing up his Dad taught him to appreciate what he had instead of lamenting what couldn't be. I just don't know his biases and never can fully know them. I can guess about his feelings and how they might influence his thoughts. He obviously exhibits feelings of remorse (for looking down at his watch when the bomb went off), he states that he didn't feel he was very bitter, but expresses how he

could have it and not be aware of it, happiness that he is still alive, and sadness combined with questioning about why it had to happen, not just to him but to anyone. I think perhaps all these emotions came to him later in life when he had more time to reflect because of his condition. I don't think that if he had retained his eyesight and legs he would be the person he is today because he wouldn't have had to live with a daily reminder of a price he paid and to ask himself why he and others had to pay that price.

I was very disappointed in the attitude of Rufus Phillips. I think his story entitled "Tell'em I'm not French before they lynch me." was one of the worst examples I've seen of arrogance and flippant disregard for human life and ethical way of living. His arrogance shines through especially at the end of his narrative where he espouses his remorse that the United States didn't continue the Vietnam War, and then he goes on to commiserate how we could have run rough shod over all of South-East Asia. It leads me to believe he hasn't grown at all as a person and would have been much happier as a legate in ancient Rome. His disregard of human life relates to his comments about how we shouldn't have pulled out of Vietnam. I don't understand how he could have wanted the United States of America to be a part of such an enormous loss of life that ultimately was because of political and economical matters that could have been resolved with a more isolationist policy on world politics. I think that his arrogance and ethical standards sharply align with how the U.S.A. political system operates and acts and it is appalling.

I think that the lesson I can learn from this story is that people will always have their own opinions and voice them to others. I also have my own opinion and should voice it as well. Edmond Burke said "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing. Do not allow evil to triumph. Do not sit by and do nothing. Stand up." I know his quote is used to justify many points of view and many events in life and history that transpire but there is good to be taken from that lesson. I think that if I heard someone telling me this story I might be compelled to agree with them because he comes across as the type of person who feels very strongly about his opinion of events. When people feel such passion they display a certain conviction in their tone of voice and body language but seeing this story laid out in black and white really illustrates how I should listen more to content than tone of voice and other body cues. Still days later I am aghast at how matter of fact he seems about many of his points. I also didn't really see at first how he wasn't really

telling a story about himself but a story about the man he worked for and the admiration he felt. If any good can come out of this narrative it is the good that comes from more self awareness on my part of how and what is said by those I hear and see every day.

Close this window

 [Moodle Docs for this page](#)