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Assignment #1

The single story that caught my eye in Part 1 was the story of a man named Roger Donlon (Appy, pg. 12). Donlon's story first caught my eyes when I read that he was the first American in the Vietnam War to receive a Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration the United States can confer, is earned by making heroic acts. Which is nothing short of what Donlon did on July 6, 1964. The story is like something out of a movie, for example Donlon witnessed a Vietnamese interpreter get hit in the knees with a 57-millimeter round, which took his legs off. Donlon then explains the man just kept running on the stumps until he died. Things like that are impossible to imagine unless you have been in war. Although hard to imagine, I find Donlon's remarkable story to very believable, and factual. Sometimes in life you encounter things you will never forget, and the day, or moment replays through your mind. Roger Donlon remembered names, details, and presents a story where all you can do is believe what he says. Near the end of the story Donlon states that, "What keeps you going at times like that is the love you feel for your fellow teammates. At the time you called it respect, but as the years go on you realize it was really a deep, deep, love. (Appy, pg. 15)"

When reading Part 2, I came across a story that kind of put things in perspective for me. Paul Hare's story gave me an insight to the thoughts of these men who had no clue what was going on, but were selected to go overseas. He was sent over in 1964, due to his ability to speak French, and stayed until early 1969. Hare mentions his sense of dislocation, and uncertainty that never left him for the four and a half years he was there. The most disappointing aspect of his story, besides being lonely, was Hare talking about the "miss fires". These "miss fires" happened often killing innocent people, the one in which he talks about in particular is when they got the wrong grid coordinates and bombed a hospital. It

puts in perspective that not only troops are getting killed but innocent people in the wrong place at the wrong time. Life is a valuable thing, and should not be taken granted for.

Not a lot of good come from these stories, but Hare presents a side that not many other stories had. No matter how bad things are it's always good to find a "silver lining", or something to keep you going. Hare explains a hobby that he picked up while there, which is cockfighting. He goes on to tell a story where he gambled five hundred dollars on the fight, but ends up losing. It was nice to see a little segment of a story where an American embraces the culture, and tries to have a good time, where much was needed. "This is what we need, Americans who are really out there rubbing elbows with the Vietnamese! (Appy, pg. 78).

- Appy, Christian G. *Patriots: the Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides*. New York: Viking, 2003. Print.

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