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Part 1

The story that captured my attention the most in Part 1 of the Patriots/Appy book was the story of Tran Thi Gung. The summary is what first made me sit up and take notice, both because so far the book had been without female storytellers and because they described her as such a petite woman it instantly made me wonder what her role was that her size would need to be called attention to. I believe her account was very credible in the fact that she didn't seem to spice up matters, she makes no boasts of how many men she killed as some would do, nor does she try and play upon the fact that she's female and claim she really had no choice, the deaths weren't her fault. She simply states that she was in many battles, probably killed many men, some she knew personally, and feels no guilt in her actions because she was fighting for her home land, in her home land. I know that some people on both sides of the war are consumed with doubt and guilt over their actions but I think it is actually inspiring that she can admit she has nightmares over the horror of war, yet doesn't feel the need to lie and claim to feel any politically correct remorse over her contributions to a fight she believed in.

Part 2

When I started reading the story of Henry Prunier I enjoyed it, it was interesting to read about his non-violent interaction with the Viet Minh and how he admits to being terrified at first, then his pride in training such exceptional people. It wasn't until the final couple of paragraphs that I felt deep shame and disappointment with Prunier. Before the war escalated into a full blown bloodbath he had a chance to speak up, he had the authority to say that he was there, that he wasn't just protesting the idea; that he was protesting from personal experience. Prunier knew what we were doing was wrong, yet he stayed silent. How can someone not feel great disappointment and shame with him? It makes me want to ask his daughters if the hundreds of thousands of dead were worth them not getting teased in high school. If a few years of their happiness in school was worth all the death and hatred the United States participated in. Yes he could have spoken up, and nothing could have come of it. In fact it's likely that nothing would have come of his not speaking up. But staying quiet so you can have a pleasant relationship with your neighbors is what leads to children being abused for years in their home, that lets slavery continue for years unchecked, and what leads to war's that should never have happened. I am disappointed with this story because it is the embodiment of everything I hate, shutting up and agreeing blindly because you're afraid of what someone will think of you is quite frankly, disgusting.

On the flip side of the coin there is Ngo Vinh Long whom I feel nothing but pride for. This was a man who grew up in South Vietnam, who at first believed in the government, and the Americans. This was a man who even worked for the government to make maps, and believed that with accurate maps fewer civilians would die. Yet all those years of belief this

man still had the courage and honor to refuse to leave people to die. To stay put in villages to feed those who were starving to death when no one else would do anything. And to then quit when he became disgusted by the policies he had unwittingly supported with his efforts to truly help his people. It is people like Ngo Vinh Long who put hope into this world, because how can you be hopeless when there are people who will risk their own lives to speak against cruelty from anyone, foreign or domestic in origin.

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