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## Assignment #1

Even though all of the stories that I read were attention getting the one that I was really drawn in by was that of Tran Thi Gung. What stood out to me the most was the fact that she was a woman. I feel a little guilty choosing this story because she did fight against the Americans but I believe she was doing what she felt was right. To think that a tiny young girl had the courage to go offend her father's death makes me respect her choices. It was also amazing for that fact that she ended up being one of the top fighters for her group. She was very smart and learned fast, she was a true fighter and a survivor. I am sure that she exceeded others expectations by just staying alive. I almost give her more credibility than I do the Americans. This was her home, her life, her family. She was there fighting for her country her people. I do not think that she was killing Americans because she hated them; she was doing it because she felt it was what she needed to do. The fact that she mentioned she would feel guilty for killing an American here in the US tells me so. I find her to be a reliable and trustworthy source. She was there for it all, the first years of her life consisted of war. She was more than willing to talk about the GIs she killed and never held back the fact that she fought against them. She had more invested in the war then an American would. Even after all the years, I still feel that she remembered things as if they were yesterday. I think that anyone who has gone through such devastations will never forget it. It is too vivid; it is too real, as she said she still dreams about the war in detail. She was a war hero in her people's eyes and that is what really matters.

The story that I found to be most disappointing was that of Luyen Nguyen. What was disappointing was the way he was treated. I found the way that the Americans pushed his beliefs aside to be absurd. I found him to be a strong and prideful individual. He was

fighting for the right for his country and his people. He had no real ill feelings towards people and was just doing his best to support and encourage his troops. I think that if anyone could encourage the troops to fight it would be one of their own people. What was so wrong with Luyen speaking of fighting for their country and their rights? Why would we as Americans put down other men that were only there to help? The US just had no respect for the Vietnamese and did not care what they had to say. It was also disturbing that the commandoes were paid more and given more food. Like Luyen said, they were above the law and there was nothing he could do. The thing is that Luyen was a true leader and a true man. He took on the challenge of going north with his soldiers even though he did not have too. Even though he knew, there was a great chance they would be caught. The fact that they dressed them in black was also a sign of disrespect. Not only did Luyen have to deal with the lack of respect of the Americans he ended up dealing with twenty-one years in solitary confinement. He was a true man of honor and held to his beliefs and chose not to give in. Even in prison, he was treated with less respect than the Americans. This was his country yet he was treated like dirt. In the end he survived and showed he was a true soldier, his wife even divorced her second husband after she found out he was still alive. He must of been a good guy that she truly loved. Its hard to read about such a strong man being treated so poorly.

I think that there were several accounts of hope, compassion and goodness in many of the stories. One that stood out to me was the story of John Singlaub. His story talked about the help they provided to North Vietnamese. The American soldiers gave them food, skills and medical care. They also sent packages back home with them in hopes to help others. Even though the antiwar protest in America left these good doings unnoticed at times the soldiers themselves new of the good they did for the people. They provided some hope and care for the people and that was all that mattered. I also found Vo Nguyen Giap's story encouraging. Not because of the events so much but because of what he had had to say. He talked about winning the war because they would rather die than live in slavery. That their deepest aspirations have always been self-determination. He felt that the spirit provided them with stamina, courage, and creativity. I think that these people were fighting for what they believed in. I cannot really look down on them for that. For anyone to have

that much compassion about their home and their people is a good thing. When it comes to several events in life, it is not just about wealth and power. It is also about heart and I think that the Vietnamese people had a lot of heart.

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