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Clark Dougan relates an event that changed many middle class Americans' views of Vietnam. One day after returning home from college, he notices an article on the front page of the paper regarding the death of Greg Fischer, his high school friend. For the first time, the war became relevant and real for Dougan; no longer was the Vietnam War some far off political skirmish. When he remembered his face, Dougan saw himself. "I understand how easily it could have been me," says Dougan (305). That was primarily the effect of the article which asked, "Did you know him?" He was an average everyday person who was worried about what was going to happen to his roller skates. It is easy to distance oneself from a war involving people who are different, unrelated, or far way. When it affects neighbors and loved ones, the public can no longer turn a blind eye to the war. Thus, the statement made by the article, published in a conservative pro-war newspaper, caused many people to open their eyes to the realities of Vietnam.

Dougan's interview is perhaps one of the best examples of a turning point because he describes the experience of the American public. The large anti-war feeling in the United States certainly played a significant role in the latter half of Vietnam. Although political issues and accusations of deceit against the government irritated the public, the loss of sons, brothers, and friends for a seemingly lost cause is what outraged the American people. The famous chants outside of Johnson's office were, "Hey, hey, LBJ! How many kids have you killed today?" thereby representing the public's feelings about the soldiers' deaths (Herring 209).

According to Herring, the antiwar movement began along three principles. The first principle was founded on the immorality of war (206). People claimed that, "the use of cluster bombs, herbicides, and napalm violated basic standards of human behavior, and in the absence of any direct threat to American security, the devastation wreaked on North and South Vietnam was indefensible" (207). Young American men like Fischer were not the only people suffering in Vietnam. Moreover, thousands of prospective draftees mutilated themselves or found other ways to avoid the draft, which also contributed to the public distaste for war.

part 2

The belief in the Vietnam War ended for Daniel Ellsberg when he read about the Special Forces team who murdered their Vietnamese ally without receiving just punishment. Ellsberg knew the government was deceitful and corrupt, but the fact that it was lying for an unjust war pushed him to act. He began releasing the Pentagon Papers to the local media, infuriating President Nixon and causing significant legal drama. Furthermore, Nixon's actions against Ellsberg eventually led to his involvement in the Watergate Scandal.

According to the interview, Ellsberg believed that if the Pentagon Papers and Watergate Scandal had not occurred, then Nixon would have remained in office and continued the war in Vietnam. Evidence supports this theory, as Nixon planned to escalate the war and threatened the use of “tactical nuclear weapons” in an attempt to intimidate the North Vietnamese (Herring 277-280). Furthermore, Herring concurs with Ellsberg's connection between the Watergate Scandal and the Pentagon Papers (300). His harsh defense of his policy in Vietnam led to the Watergate Scandal, "would eventually force his resignation" (Herring 320). Thus, it is possible that the Pentagon Papers indirectly caused an early end to the war.

Yet, one might note that Nixon successfully escalated the war for 3 years after the Pentagon Papers were released. In fact, more bombs were dropped in Vietnam during Nixon's presidency than ever before (316). He acted almost in spite of Congress' decisions and public opinion. Thus, although the Pentagon Papers and Watergate may have contributed to Nixon's resignation, they did not significantly shorten his presidency nor prevent him from intensifying the war. In fact, his need to protect his injured reputation may have encouraged him to increase the conflict.

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Part 1

The Vietnam War lasted a quarter of a century, so naturally there is bound to be more than just a single turning point during the war's span. In the Patriots book and participants in the Vietnam War from standpoints on all sides of the spectrum. In Part Four of this book there is one account in particular that really stood out to me. Not only does this certain account signify what I believe to be a turn in the Vietnam War, but also I was profoundly moved by the courageousness of the soldiers who stood up against their men for what was right.

Right from the first page, I knew that Christian G. Appy's interview with Larry Colburn was going to be the one I chose for a turning point in the Vietnam War. My Lai was an incident in Vietnam that did not completely come to light until a year and a half after it happened. On March 16, 1968 U.S infantrymen from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, and 11th Infantry Brigade of the 23rd Americal Division murdered around five hundred Vietnamese civilians in My Lai-4, a sub hamlet of Son My. The story of Larry Colburn isn't one of a soldier who ruthlessly killed so many Vietnamese. Instead, Larry Colburn's story is one of a soldier who stood against actions that he knew to be morally corrupted. With the help of the other two crewmen from his observation chopper, Hugh Thompson and Glenn Andreotta, he made a point to land their chopper after he realized that the people on the ground that he was marking with green smoke (saying that it was okay to approach) were still being shot down by American soldiers. Upon landing their helicopter, the three soldiers moved towards a bunker that had just filled up with Vietnamese women and children. American soldiers that had intentions to kill those inside surrounded it, but the three crewmen approached Lieutenant Brooks and confronted him about getting the people out of the bunker. The Lieutenant claimed he could get the people out by throwing a hand grenade in and that was when Thompson told Colburn to shoot the American soldiers if they shot at the Vietnamese while Thompson was helping to get them out of the bunker. The Vietnamese civilians then got flown out by one of the crewmen's friend that piloted a gunship. The three crewmen never had any actual combat with their fellow soldiers, but I think the fact that they were willing to stand up against their own men and risk being killed was a very commendable act.

The reason that I believe this to be a turning in the Vietnam War does not have much to do with the entirety of the war itself. To me, this story symbolizes the turning point for not just a couple American soldiers, but perhaps a turning point for the internal struggle that many of the soldiers found themselves fighting with during the war. By the soldiers taking the initiative to stand up against what they believed to be

wrong, instead of just following the majority, they showed that the American soldiers are not just a group of order-taking zombies. They saved a number of innocent lives. The unpopularity of the war was no longer restricted to the Vietnamese and counterculture Americans, but it now had a stand with the very soldiers the Americans had sent over there to fight it. In all, who knows how far the My Lai incident could have spread if those soldiers had just went along with their comrades.

Part 2

In my personal opinion, Part Five in Christian G. Appy's book, *Patriots*, is filled with many examples of an ending of the Vietnam War. However, in Part Five there was one story that I found to be the best example of an ending of the war. On page 432, I read the story of Daniel Ellsberg. A former Defense Department official for the White House, Daniel Ellsberg's story led to the discoveries of President Nixon's illegal activities and the corruption that he practiced while in office.

Daniel Ellsberg was part of a team that was responsible for compiling the Pentagon Papers, which was a project originally put into motion by Robert McNamara during his last year as the United States Secretary of Defense. The Pentagon Papers were roughly seven thousand pages of secret documents about the history of United States decision making in Vietnam from 1945 until 1968. In August of 1969, Ellsberg began to have his first doubts about the war after attending a conference for the War Registers League. He met a Harvard graduate, name Randy Kehler, who announced that he would be going to prison for refusal to cooperate with the Draft. Ellsberg did not fully decide that he needed to take action against the war until a month later, when he read about a Special Forces team that was on trial for having killed one of their own Vietnamese agents. The men had suspected he was a Viet Cong double agent so they took him out over the South China Sea, then shot and dumped him over the side while he was weighed down with chains. It was after this that Ellsberg concluded that he needed to take action that was both nonviolent and truthful.

He realized that his best choice was to copy the Pentagon Papers that he had in his safe. These documents were evidence of a quarter century of aggression, broken treaties, deceptions, stolen elections, lies, and murder. These papers had nothing to do with President Nixon, although that wasn't what made Nixon have such an interest in Ellsberg. Nixon primarily feared that Ellsberg knew about his plans to escalate the war and that he might be able to expose and prove them. Ellsberg first took the papers to Congress, hoping they would move them to hold hearing and subpoena witnesses that could expose Nixon's strategy. However, no one in Congress was willing to take action. That is what led to Ellsberg's decision to release the papers to the press.

Had Nixon not overreacted to the publishing of the Pentagon Papers, Ellsberg believed that they would have sunk like a ship. Instead, Nixon issued injunctions against the newspapers, which ultimately led to the public paying more attention the

papers especially after Ellsberg was charged with theft, conspiracy, and violations of the Espionage Act. Every time Nixon issued an injunction to a newspaper, Ellsberg made sure to give the Pentagon Papers to another newspaper. The Nixon administration had even gone so far as to illegally wiretap Ellsberg phone and have the Plumbers break into Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office. The Nixon administration's actions led to the dismissal of the case against Ellsberg. Ellsberg believed that Nixon's effort to get him is what set the foundation for Watergate. Which of course, is the scandal that eventually led to President Nixon's resignation.

Even though Ellsberg's story isn't one that takes place at the exact ending of the war I find that it represents an example of the ending of political corruption and silence that seemed such a vital part of the Vietnam War. Although I am not so naive as to believe that political corruption has in any way disappeared entirely, I feel that this story is an example of how the political corruption that supported the Vietnam War for a quarter of a century finally made it's way to an end. An ending of political corruption may have been a vital piece of the United States leaving Vietnam, but I think it hardly compares to how important the exposure of the political corruption affected the American People. Without that exposure, who's to say that America would not be still locked in war with the Vietnamese?

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Turning Point On Monday, May 28, 2012 it will be Memorial Day. Many people will be barbecuing and spending time with their family, others will be spending their time mourning and celebrating the loss of loved ones in Service. Whatever it is we may be doing, we should all take time to think about the men and women who serve our country and who keep us free. When reading about the 'Turning Points' in the Vietnam War, the story 'Memorial Day 1968'(Patriots P.304) caught my eye because of how close Memorial Day is. Clark Dougan coauthor of The Vietnam Experience and editor for a university press tells about an experience he had, when he was just a young man in high school in Parma Heights, Ohio. Dougan recalls a man, or kid, by the name of Greg Fischer, "I played basketball, he played hockey. We didn't know each other very well, but because my last name began with D and his with F, we were in the same homeroom for three years" (Patriots P.304). When Dougan asked Fischer what he was going to do after high school, he said "Ah, I don't think I'm going to college. I'm thinking about going into the marines." (Patriots P.305) A year after attending college, Dougan came home and on Memorial Day 1968 "opened up the Cleveland Press and there was an auditorial on the front page with the title 'He was Only 19-Did You Know Him?'"(Patriots P.305)The article talked about Greg Fischer's death in Dong Ha, and a touching letter he had written to be opened in case he died. Dougan said, "I think that was the moment when 'Middle America' really turned against the war."(Patriots P.306). The Cleveland Press was a conservative group that supported the war, and even they were telling stories of American casualties. I truly agree with Dougan, in that this was the turning point of the war. Unless you were fighting in Vietnam, you could not truly see what was happening. So many people relied on press coverage to tell them what was going on. Press has such a massive influence on our lives, it is the place we look to see what is happening in the world, and thats what the Americans were doing during the Vietnam War. When they saw these horrible stories in newspapers and TV news coverage, they were shocked about how close to home it was, "ordinary kids" were being sent to Vietnam and killed(Patriots P.306). This uproar of the "working class communities" really started turning the events of the war(Patriots P.306). Americans were starting too feel like "Fuck it. Its not worth Greg Fischer's life or his buddies life."(Patriots P.306) Ending To me the end of the War was when Congress overturned the Nixon Veto, to remove all U.S. Activities in Vietnam. Without Congress voting to "end all U.S. activities anywhere in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia."(Patriots P.494) Even though the bill was vetoed by nixon it was again vetoed by Congress, Nixon would have continued to fight the war. In 1973 many people thought the war was over, "news organizations

quickly closed or downsized their Saigon offices and Vietnam fell off the front pages of newspapers and off the TV screen. College campuses grew quiet and the country turned inward, riveted by even more Watergate revelations and the slow-motion collapse of the Nixon presidency.”(Patriots P.493) Nixon deceptively continued to try to fight in Vietnam by using “civilians” most of who were discharged service men(Patriots P.493). He had them advise ARVN forces, and continue reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam. Nixon was purposely hiding his actions from the American public. The president is Commander and Chief one of their main duties is to control our military, but they are in office to represent the people. Nixon knew he was not doing this, so he concealed his continuation in Vietnam. Nixon could have continued even further if it was not for Congress stepping in and passing bills to end the war. This truly was an ending not just to a war but a terrible presidency.

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Turning points in perspective are possibly the most influential type, which is why Clark Dougan's account seemed particularly important. We see in his high school years, that he was exposed to the realities of war. Dougan's principal would announce the some thirty-five death's of people from their town over the intercom. However, it's more of an intellectual awareness of the war, with no emotional awareness. Dougan knew of course that war was going on, and that war has some pretty terrible consequences, but it was distant from anything relevant to his own life, perhaps even surreal. When he began college he was still "Kind of oblivious of the war" (305). This all takes a "turn" when Dougan reads the newspaper and learns that Greg Fischer, an acquaintance from high school, had been killed. What makes Fischer different from the other, some thirty-five soldiers from Dougan's home of Parma Heights? Of course, the fact that Dougan had spoken to him, and about going to war too, makes a difference. Deeper than that though, there is a certain mixture that pulls at one's emotions. First of all, Fischer joined the marines. The connotations of the marines carry a lot of weight: honor, pride, true commitment. These things are elevated in people's minds, and so someone associated with the marines tends to also be elevated automatically as well. Then there is his youth, something that seems especially tragic with the quote "P.S. 'Don't forget to give Joey my hockey skates'" (305). Of course you can be sure that many people who read that felt like that could've been their son, or their brother, or themselves. Combine these two things, and what you have is someone who in people's minds is honorable and brave, yet also innocent, that we thus begin to mentally root for - only to have them cut down before they can really make any progress. It's the same feeling as when you watch a competitive show, and you have a favorite that you think deserves to win, but they are eliminated early in the race. It's different than if your favorite made it to the final round, and then was eliminated. There you at least have the satisfaction of seeing them have a good shot at it. Likewise, if Fischer had been older, lived a little, been married and had kids, earned a few honors as a soldier, then

his story wouldn't have been as hard-hitting. This is also why his story was not just a turning point for Dougan's perspective on the war, but also one of the turning points in this media's perspective as well: from supporting the war to protesting it.

As for endings, again this next account presents more of an abstract, emotional representation of the idea.

At the very end of Beverly Gologorsky's story is a really symbolic ending. It's what Gologorsky describes as Vietnam soldier's casting their Purple Hearts and other medals into a trash can. It's not the literal, physical end to the war. Instead, it symbolizes how all things truly begin to disintegrate: in the mind and heart, when they lose support. Of course there's always people on both sides who support or don't support an issue. But for a person to cross the divide between both sides is usually a much more powerful action. A soldier has to be prepared to sacrifice his or her own life, and what they get in return is respect and honor for that willingness. Therefore, for that same soldier to give up the greatest token they have of their country's respect and honor for their commitment seems quite dramatic. Yes, anyone can oppose an issue, and that doesn't always make a difference. But when someone who was truly invested in one side of the issue then seems to experience a genuine change of heart to join the other side you want to know why. As humans we automatically prefer the easy road, and so when someone chooses the hard road we usually assume it's not solely for personal gain and that there has to be some logic, some reason, some truth behind the decision. Is there? Who knows, but it certainly starts everyone thinking. In short, this type of ending, a symbolic ending of an issue like war through the end of its support, is most influential because it is also the beginning for the opening of minds to alternative perspectives.

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A turning point in Part 4 of Christian Appy's *Patriots*, occurred during the story from the, "Families At War" section. The Vietnam war must have resulted in disagreements in families, causing strain within them. John Douglas Marshall and his grandfather had always been close. John looked to his grandfather with admiration. "Growing up, I thought more about making my grandfather proud than my own father." (*Patriots*: pg 328) John's grandfather was known as "SLAM" Marshall during the war. "SLAM" Marshall was one of the most committed defenders of American policy in Vietnam. He was the author of several books and a published column. Despite how John Douglas Marshall adored his grandfather, he was not a supporter of the war. John did what was "expected" of him in the eyes of his family and joined the army. John soon applied for honorable discharge. He wrote a letter to leave the army as a conscientious objector. Rather than admiring the fact that John stood up for what he believed in, his grandfather accused him of chickening out. "We know why you quite. It wasn't conscience. You simply chickened out. You didn't have the guts it takes." (*Patriots*: pg 329) Hearing such a thing from someone you have looked up to your whole life would be a turning point in Marshall's life, as would be being seen as a failure to the family. Never speaking to your family again because of acting on what you believed in would seem to cause emotional anguish. It would seem concise that a family would feel relief that the loved one does not have to see the horrors of war, but with John Marshall's family, this was not the case. Word's cannot express how John Marshall must have been feeling. An example of the ending of the war in Part 5, from "The World Was Coming To An End" section, was an account by Frank Maguire. Frank served three tours in Vietnam as an advisor. During his time as an advisor, he believed that they were making process with the people of South Vietnam. After his first return home, he felt proud to tell the story of his time in Vietnam. "...I remember making speeches and telling people we weren't just running around killing people, that we were building and trying to improve people's lives. I felt good and so did the country." (*Patriots*: pg. 441) Frank Maguire's tours back to Vietnam were not as rewarding as the first. American's idea of winning the war would be to win the war on their own. The war was being fought for the Vietnamese. After the Vietnamization of the war, the Vietnamese were left to fight a war that had been fought for them for such a long time. Our armed forces' efforts to prepare the Vietnamese for fighting in the war only backfired and set them up to parish. The end of the war seemed to present itself to Maguire when there was no longer positivity coming from the American's being in Vietnam. Whether or not the United States being in Vietnam was it's place to begin with, is still the toughest, unanswered question concerning the

Vietnam War today. According to Frank Maguire's account, many American's carried little or no respect for the Vietnamese. "Some of our young officers and troops didn't identify the Vietnamese as people. It wasn't so much a question of skin color, it had to do with the fact that they didn't have American houses, they didn't have television..." (Patriots: pg. 444) The United States has always done what they believed was beneficial to it's own country as a whole. This outlook on what is good for us, must be good for everyone else, is one flaw that the United States faces when dealing with international affairs. "I think it's a national trait that we always feel we know what's better for everybody. It was an attitude of misguided benevolence---that we know what's good for them and they don't really understand what's happening." (Patriots: pg. 445) This quote summarizes Frank Maguire's idea of the strategies of the United States when becoming involved in warfare. This characteristic of the United States is potentially one of it's biggest flaws and is something that may always be a detail that makes up one of the characteristics of the United States.

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Part 1: Turning Point

Although the following story is centered on the Tet offensive, the journalist that described the events in district 8 during the Tet offensive really hammers home the hopelessness and downright confusion of the Americans, who were simply trying to find something to grasp and hold on to at this point of the conflict.

Philip Jones Griffiths writes in "You're not safe in those cities" about how the Viet Cong worked masterfully in using deception and a clear sign of knowing the enemy in order to use the Americans for their own agenda. As the author writes, and until now, the South Vietnamese were supposedly safe in their towns and cities in the south with this assurance coming straight from the Americans occupying the cities. Once the Tet offensive began, all past promises were thrown out the window. District 8 was maintained for government workers and middleclass, the ones who would ultimately lead the South Vietnamese into democracy, the ones who were the most loyal to the cause. The Viet Cong's plan? Turn the Americans against their enemy. By shooting a few police officers and firing a couple errant rounds, the Americans reacted horribly, and proceeded to lay waste to anything that moved within the district, friendly or foe. Exactly what the Viet Cong had predicted. This was clear sign that the Americans were acting as an army with its back to the wall, an act of desperation. Even with many believing the Tet Offensive was the turning point in the war, the picture painted by Philip Jones Griffiths really shows how desperate the Americans were and how badly the Tet Offensive damaged the American's psychologically. It was also another clear sign that the Viet Cong were not just a peasant militia armed with random weapons and living in the jungle. This showed exactly, the resolve the North possessed and a clear upper hand. Up until 1968, the Tet holiday was observed by both sides as a cease fire. After the Tet Offensive, the South Vietnamese could not only trust the North Vietnamese, but the Americans as well. This fell directly in line with how Ho Chi Minh believed the war would be won, on the American home front. And now, he had the South Vietnamese civilians on his side as well.

Part 2: Ending

The story that best describes the end of the Vietnam War and how dysfunctional the entire conflict was is by Daniel Davidson, "I wouldn't buy a used car from that man". Although they were peace talks, there was nothing constructive that came from these talks. Here were four groups of people, attempting to come to terms with what had happened and what should happen moving forward and they can't even decide on the shape of the table at the delegation, a process that took months to discuss. Here, we are using the body count to measure our success in Vietnam and the some of the

initial dialogue being used was used to debate what shape should the table should be that will be used for these peace talks. Some of these interactions are likened to what one may witness on the playground of any elementary school on any given day, not the voice of nations, attempting to end a senseless war. How many additional lives were lost while these “table” negotiations went on? This entire interaction perfectly sums up and highlights the entire Vietnam Conflict for those opposing the spread of communism. Worthless strategy, poor leadership, the inability to cut losses and the thought that no one (but the NVA) really wanted a hasty climax to the fighting. Fighting which had a profound effect on all nations involved for more than a decade.

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History of Vietnam Assignment Two

Jason McKay

A turning point in the Vietnam War happened on April 20, 1970 when Anthony Lake, special assistant to National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger resigned from his post, in protest to the planned invasion of Cambodia. The election of Richard Nixon as the 37th President of the United States resulted in a new phase of the Vietnam War, as Nixon, along with Kissinger planned to end the war 'honorably'. Instead, Nixon escalated the war with secret incursions into Cambodia, ordered specific individuals to be secretly wiretapped (including those who worked for him), and created a larger, louder anti-war movement.

Anthony Lake's testimony in *Patriots* (pgs. 380-382) delves into his mixed feeling of resigning from his position as an assistant to Kissinger. He no longer could work for an administration which would no longer heed the advice of so-called 'doves', or 'bleeding hearts' as Kissinger personally described his dissenting staff (Appy, page 381). Lake felt there was possibly something more that could be done from the inside, working with the White House, rather than leaving. He explains it himself, in reference to others assuming he was proud of the bold move: "The reason I felt guilty was that I knew I had more of an opportunity to argue about the conduct of war and how to end it by being in the White House than I did by becoming a citizen again. I still believe that". (Appy, page 381)

Anthony Lake's resignation, along with another Kissinger staffer Roger Morris, is a turning point in the Vietnam War because it is a moment in history when many within the White House staff felt compelled to quit due to a growing unpopularity with President Nixon's policies. The incursion into Cambodia which caused such a large rift between the 'doves and hawks' within the White House, resulted not just in individuals leaving, but also created an escalation in the anti-war movement throughout the United States, causing mass demonstration and hundreds of schools to close (*America's Longest War*, page 293). The

anger over Cambodia also caused growing dissent throughout the Congress, including those who were formally sympathetic to Nixon. As the numbers swelled of those who disagreed with the policies of Richard Nixon, his growing paranoia and stress caused him to make irrational personal decisions, such as secretly wiretapping individuals, including Anthony Lake upon his resignation. These factors created a turning point, which would eventually help lead to both the end of the Vietnam War and the presidency of Richard Nixon. Ironically, after leaving the Nixon administration in shame, over two decades later, Anthony Lake would become the National Security Advisor to President Clinton.

A testimonial from *Patriot's* which could be observed as a catalyst to the Vietnam War is that of Daniel Ellsberg, "the most dangerous man in America" as described by Henry Kissinger (Appy, pg. 432). Ellsberg is chiefly known as the Department of Defense employee who released the mammoth secret government documents (7,000 pages), the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times. In his own words in *Patriots*, Ellsberg not only describes his motivation, but proclaims that his contribution not only brought every dirty little secret regarding the Vietnam War (or at least everything from the beginning of America's involvement through 1967) to the public, but it's release directly caused the Watergate scandal, which would lead to Nixon's resignation.

Much of America was 'fed up' with the war by the time the Pentagon Papers were released, but they did give validation to many of the doves that were presently or formally members of the White House, as well as the anti-war movement. The Pentagon Papers gave a shocking revelation of White House lies that led to every escalation of the Vietnam War, including the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964 which gave the Johnson administration congressional approval for war.

Ellsberg insinuates that the Pentagon Papers may have directly helped end the Vietnam War and if not, definitely ended Nixon's presidency. He states, "And without Watergate I think Nixon might have been able to keep up the bombing of Vietnam indefinitely. I think Watergate shortened the war by at least a couple of years and possibly much longer. Apart from its connection to Watergate, the Pentagon Papers definitely contributed to a delegitimation of the war, an impatience with its continuation, and a sense of that it was

wrong. They made people understand that presidents lie all the time, not just occasionally, but all the time.” (Appy, pg. 436)

Reflecting back, it is hard to say what could have happened ... or not, if Nixon would have stayed in the White House, would he tried to continue the war? We do recognize the end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1975, when President Ford declares an end to the Vietnam War in a televised speech on April 25th. On the other hand, despite the public reaction to the Pentagon Papers, Richard Nixon did go on to win the 1972 presidential election by one of the largest landslides in American history (about 60% of the popular vote). The 1973 Case-Church Amendment which prohibited continued military involvement in Vietnam could be observed as the official ending of the war.

1971 was a year of ‘war weariness’, with 71% of the general population agreeing that the United States made a mistake going into Vietnam and another 58% believing the war was ‘immoral’ (Herring, pg. 300). Daniel Ellsberg was one of the individuals who believed both those points, and released the Pentagon Papers with the intention of seeing an ‘end’ to the Vietnam War.

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Part 1

In part four of the Appy book I found that the turning point in the war came in the account of Barry Zorthan (pg. 290-294.) Barry who was the director of the Joint United States Public Affairs Office, was head of all relations involving media and public relations through his time in Vietnam from 1964-1968. Many referred to him as the, "official voice of America in Vietnam," and that he could always find "some way to make it sound good." Barry believes that the media always has the ability to look over the good and find the critics who can stay what they want, and in turn make a more exciting and head turning story despite its accuracy.

Throughout Barry's account and his story about the attack on the US embassy during the Tet, nothing led me to skepticism and disbelief in Barry's story. The point in this section that I found to be the turning point in the war comes when Barry describes the arrival of Walter Cronkite, and his reaction and actions towards the war. Barry states the famous world of Walter that, "this war is at a standstill and we're not going to win." It was also stated previously in the section that when informed about Westmoreland's prediction and advanced preparation for the Tet period Walter ignored the statements and never "ran that story." With Walter not displaying or stating any support or hope for the war what were all the viewers at home suppose to think when their beloved evening news anchor had even lost hope? The loss such a well known and iconic figure in such a desperate time is summed up by Lyndon B Johnson, in that "if I've lost Walter Cronkite, I've lost Middle America." This is where I find the turning point of the war to be. If the government has lost the support of its largest population what support do they have? For many middle class Americans at the time college was not a thought, and it was these middle class that were entering the military. The middle class makes up the majority of the population and with the majority protesting in revolt and disapproval the country was in shambles. I find that the turning point was not the physical attack on the troops during the Tet, but it was the lies and misguided information that was attacking the Americans and the government at home. The lies of progress and movement to secure Vietnam were further expressed during and after the Tet. The attack was the final straw for many Americans who were on the fence about the issues in Vietnam and the sign of an apparent never ending story that Vietnam was unraveling to the American Government.

Part 2

In part five of the Appy book I found the best example of the war coming to an end in the account of Judith Coburn (pg.407-412,) who was a reporter for various establishments. The official end of the Vietnam war came when Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese army on April 30, 1975, yet according to Judith the capital of Saigon had fallen much sooner. When Judith Coburn arrived in Vietnam in 1970 it had not yet fallen to the North Vietnamese Communist, yet the structure and rule that had perviously been holding the capital together had crumbled to the ground. The amount of "corruption and war profiteering were just incredible," Morton exclaims as she tells about knowing a man who ran a string of hookers that where connected with a USO show. It is this type of lack of leadership and apparent corruption that I find to be the end of the war in Vietnam. People not only had home had given up, the men serving had as well. The South Vietnamese government was corrupt and its own military was nothing but, "paper tigers," as Judith exclaims. The way Saigon was disorganized and ran set itself up for and easy take over. Saigon was nothing but layers of corruption and lies, it was even stated that, "there wasn;t anything you couldn't buy." Also In Judith's account she recalls men going into the jungle and calling fake bombing coordinates and smoking, "a little weed." This just points all the fingers to what was always inevitable, the end. Therefore I find the end of the war to be the moment the US lost control of the actions and events that where occurring in Saigon, the lose of leadership and commitment was ultimately the fall of Saigon and the end of the war far before the Communists had set foot inside the city.

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Following the Tet Offensive, public opinion began to shift, especially in the media. William Cronkite's summation, "To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe, in the face of the evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To suggest that we are on the edge of defeat is to yield to unreasonable pessimism. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only reasonable, yet unsatisfactory conclusion." (Herring 241-42) Though Tet is considered to be 'the' turning point of the war, many individuals struggled with their own turning points of various degrees throughout their experiences.

After reading the accounts of Clark Dougan and Samuel Huntington, the heart-breaking story of John Douglas Marshall came to life for me. John Douglas Marshall was a young man who was 'going through the motions' so to speak, with the ROTC and a potential military career. His grandfather, S. L. A. Marshall, "was one of the staunchest defenders of American policy in Vietnam" (Appy 328) and John adored him. His 'Poppy' gave the commissioning speech at his ROTC graduation, and rather than be saluted by his grandson, enveloped him into a bear-hug on stage in front of everyone.

After training as an infantry officer at Fort Benning, Marshall felt it harder and harder to repress his feelings towards the Vietnam War, and immersed himself in the writings and teachings of famous non-violent pacifistic authors such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Thoreau. It was then that he came to his 'turning point' and concluded that all war was wrong. In spite of his family traditions, he could no longer fight for a cause that he did not believe in. He summoned the courage to apply for a discharge from the army as a conscientious objector. Twenty-seven people wrote letters testifying to the sincerity of his convictions. (Appy 329) Marshall's application was approved and he was given an honorable discharge.

Though Marshall expected his family to disagree with his decision, and possibly be angry with him, he never imagined that his beloved grandfather would disown him over his convictions. In the letter his grandfather wrote him, SLAM accuses John, "We know why you quit. It wasn't conscience. You simply chickened out. You didn't have the guts it takes." (Appy 329) He further belittles his grandson by comparing him to the women of the family and claiming that even they are stronger than his grandson. John Douglas Marshall never saw his grandfather again. Their relationship was referred to as 'another casualty of the Vietnam War'. Many families were torn apart by the war, whether in death, draft dodging, or differing of opinions.

Carl Dougan gives an account for when he feels many of "Middle America" really turned against the war, when the war became personal for them. A story was published in their conservative newspaper that dared to ask the question of how many more lives of our own boys were we willing to sacrifice for this war effort. He writes, "I think a lot of World War II

vets who had been sitting around their kitchen tables saying, “You’ve got to fight for your country,” were starting to say, “Fuck this. It’s not worth Greg Fischer’s life or his buddy’s life.” Or maybe they weren’t saying it, but they were starting to feel it.” (Appy 306) If only this was true for the Marshalls.

Though John did not reconcile with his grandfather before his death, he was able to have another turning point of sorts in the remembrance of his grandfather. When an American Heritage article attacked the integrity of his grandfather’s research and accounts of his own life, John decided to investigate the claims. His book, *Reconciliation Road*, details his investigation, and also allowed for him to get to know his grandfather far better than he had imagined. It also helped him to accept the choices his grandfather made, and he forgave the rejection, eventually naming his daughter after her great-grandfather.

In the Appy book, Truong Tran’s story best accounted for the ‘why’ of the ending in Vietnam. Truong Tran got involved in the military, similarly to John Marshall, not out of personal conviction, but out of a necessity. When he was drafted in 1964, he chose to join the regional forces in an attempt to stay close to home. He was assigned to a unit two districts away, so he rarely saw his family. He talks of survival being his only motivation for his military service, not promotions or glory.

What struck me while reading was the realization he made, that they [South Vietnamese Army] were fighting a war that they could only tie or lose, where the North Vietnamese could either tie or win. The worse the North could do, was tie and end up with half of the country, which was the best possible outcome for the south. Even ending up with half the country, there was no fighting in the North, so they had the upper hand. If the country had remained split, the goal of the Vietnamese was unification, and the communists promised a national unification.

“Having U.S. soldiers in Vietnam not only destroyed our political cause, it also destroyed our economy and social fabric.” (Appy 506) The landing of American forces in Vietnam, though having the best of intentions, ended up a huge political disadvantage for the South Vietnamese. The Americans were viewed as another outside oppressor to the Vietnamese people. The threat of communism was an abstract idea that not all of the people fully understood, but the presence of Americans was a physical reminder of the Japanese, French and Chinese that had come before. This allowed the North Vietnamese to capitalize on the use of propaganda in the battle against the American invaders.

The American presence was not just a political disadvantage, the tactics employed by the Americans when clearing the jungles, killed many crops that the people relied on. Some of the poor and elderly members of society had nothing else to get them through, just as Truong’s grandfather suffered the loss of his coconut plantation. “Ninety percent of the population had relied on the land, but during the war people could not grow crops and had to move to the cities.” (Appy 506)

When Truong got out of the military, he worked for an American nonprofit organization, Save the Children, and then for the U.S. State Department as a community development

specialist for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support [CORDS]. While working for CORDS he got a first-hand view of the corruption present in the government.

Yet, most alarming, were his accounts of the efforts that had to be taken to get his family evacuated. The strings that had to be pulled, to get to the embassy, and then ultimately ending with him outside at the fence with the others chanting for someone to “help us” before the Ambassador would come out to talk with them. The why became clear, but the fact that it was indeed an ending, was painted in a vivid picture for me.

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Part 1

While some would argue that the Tet Offensive was the major turning point in the Vietnam War, there are many other events that occurred in the late 1960's that were just as significant. Back home in the United States we were in the midst of the civil rights movement, anti-war protests started gaining momentum, and the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did nothing more than add tension to a volatile situation.

The timing of the Tet Offensive was crucial, not because Tet is the most important Vietnamese holiday, but because it came shortly after General Westmoreland had given his "the end is in sight" speech. During his speech, 'Westy' claimed American and South Vietnamese forces were gaining the upper hand on the Viet Cong. This gave people in the United States the impression our side was winning the war. The aftermath of the Tet Offensive, had a devastating effect upon the American public, many people at home, watching nightly television news, were appalled by the carnage they saw - some believed the Communists had won and the U.S. had lost.

The overall support for the Johnson administration's claims that we were fighting to stop communism in Southeast Asia was widely supported earlier in the decade, however, during the Tet Offensive the shooting of a Viet Cong by a South Vietnamese Police Chief was captured in a graphic photo and dispersed through all media. People were starting to take notice and opposition to the war increased. The United States was fighting a war at home, and a war halfway across the globe, and many were unaware of the impact this conflict would have on our society in the years to come.

From reading Barry Zorthian's entry in Christian Appy's Patriots, the reader is presented with Zorthian's opinions about how the media's coverage of the war changed during and after the Tet Offensive. After General Westmoreland "gave a very strong tribute to the bravery of the soldiers and their victory over the Viet Cong...He (Westmoreland) was heavily criticized for claiming success over the VC at the embassy and saying everything was under control. But he was talking to his troops, not the world" (p.291) The media had sent mixed signals by correctly reporting Westmoreland's words (to his troops), only to accompany them with headlines about the numerous VC attacks in and outside of Saigon.

“You write about what you see...the front page of the Washington Post showed a very vivid picture of dead Viet Cong on the embassy lawn.”. Zorthian makes the point that, the reporters were on the front line during that embassy attack, and were not writing stories from press releases, they WERE the story. Media coverage became more graphic and less edited, which brought the nightmares of war into American living rooms every night. Going from ‘we’re winning the war’ one morning, to very well organized Viet Cong attacks in 40-plus locations overnight, to dead Viet Cong on the embassy lawn, to Eddie Adams AP Photo of South Vietnam’s Police Chief General Loan’s execution of a Viet Cong in broad daylight.

These images and conflicting stories were devastating. For the first time, American people began to really question our involvement in Vietnam. It was no longer a quiet issue and many were left doubting our government. This had a huge impact on the war at home. Television and news media brought the horrors of war into America’s living room every night. So while the Tet Offensive may have been one of the may turning points of the war, the impact of the images and stories of the Vietnam War remain with us today.

Part 2

The ‘ending’ to a war can mean very different things. It can be as simple as defining the important events that took place leading to the end of a conflict, or it can be specific dates such as September 2, 1945 - the day Japan surrendered ending World War II, or for some, it’s an individual and personal decision to find or make their own ending.

For Steve Sherlock, and many other Vietnam soldiers, their ‘ending’ came by way of throwing their medals on the front steps on the US Capitol in Washington DC. Sherlock tells his story in Christian Appy’s book, Patriots, and it gives a quick insight to how the impact of war can change the soldier fighting it. Once a “super war supporter”(p. 425), Sherlock’s doubts started in the racially-charged aftermath of Martin Luther King Jr’s assassination when his unit was sent to Washington DC for riot control, “About three quarters of our platoon were black or Hispanic and they’d all just come back from Vietnam...It just didn’t feel right to be there and Vietnam was somehow connected to it” (p.425)

Once in Vietnam, he was in a “state of neutrality” (p.425) and found himself questioning the United States involvement and whether it was right or wrong to be there. After being interviewed for signing an antiwar petition that simply said, “Fuck War” (p.426), he was sent to an infantry platoon near Danang where a long firefight

with the NVA ensued. In the aftermath, Sherlock says, “The captain wanted an accurate body count...We had killed seven, and had three prisoners. The next morning...they had this medal ceremony. Two guys got silver stars and I got a bronze. This other lieutenant said to me ‘Man, you’re really lucky...you got it on the first day in this unit’”.

While out on patrol a few weeks later and surveying the bodies of their enemies, Sherlock made the comment, “I hope the rest of them got away...and we didn’t have any more fights.” (p. 426) This angered his Captain, who replied, “Your job is to destroy the Communists...they are not people. They’re the enemy and you’re the reason we’re losing this war. You’re a coward and a traitor.” and Sherlock was relieved of his command and charged with evasive action. “I was willing to fight, I just had always hoped we didn’t have to.” (p. 427)

After returning to the United States in 1970, he became involved in the VVAW (Vietnam Veterans Against War) movement, “For me it was a very good experience... People were supportive. They understood ...that our having served in it gave us some credibility and moral authority.”(p.426) During the DC protest, the purpose was to “focus public attention on veterans who actually fought in Vietnam...and that it wasn’t unpatriotic to be fighting against a wrong or harmful policy.” (p. 428) So along with hundreds of other decorated Vietnam veterans in what Sherlock called a “peace army”, he lined up and threw his medal “over the barricade and stepped away.”(p.429)

Turning in his medal may have ‘ended’ the Vietnam war for Steve Sherlock, but it opened new chapters in his life. He would go on to be the founder of the ASA (Aid to Southeast Asia), which is a non-profit organization that donates medical supplies and equipment to hospitals in Vietnam.

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Part 1:

The story that demonstrated a turning point on the lives of someone during the Vietnam War was told by Nyugen Qui Duc. Nyugen was only a ten year old boy at the time of the Tet offensive. His father, who was a Deputy Governor for five of the northern provinces of South Vietnam, Nyugen and his family were staying in Hue at a government guest house. When Northern troops went into the city on the night of January 31st, they captured Nyugen's father and imprisoned him for 12 years. In 1975, Nyugen relocated with his Uncle to the United States where his parents later emigrated in 1984. Nyugen retells the story of he felt an alliance and trust with Americans. Up to that point his life had been what he called "sheltered". He said up to the night of Tet in 1968 "the war had been out in the fields and jungles." When the attack began in the downstairs of his home, he and his family believed it only to be fireworks in celebration of the New Year. Even when they began to see people in uniform advancing toward them, his father thought they were compound guards and nothing to be alarmed by. Nyugen goes on to explain the feelings of betrayal and abandonment by the American troops. Living as a kid in Vietnam he had been raised around American soldiers, and was heavily influenced by western culture. He grew up learning about hippies, and Peace Rallies, and was left wondering who was truthfully representing the Nation. While the men and women he was hearing about in America were advocates for humanity and freedom, the cruelty produced by some of the men in uniform was an entirely different side to the America he felt he knew.

The turning point for Nyugen was when the United States began bombing cities in retaliation to the North Vietnamese advances into the Southern Vietnam Imperial cities despite them being heavily populated with innocent civilians. This act demonstrated the true motive behind our Nation's placement in Vietnam. America showed the citizens of South Vietnam, Nyugen and his family included, just how trivial their lives were in the nature of war. When all is said and done, war is still war, and on the night of January 31st Nyugen realized just how vulnerable everyone is in the face of it. He realized his education, his father's high government status, his money, none of this was enough to protect him from the horrific realities of war and their lasting effects on those who are made to experience it.

Part 2:

For me, the end of the war was represented in Judith Coburn's story. In her account she talks about the anti-war momentum that was beginning to pulse through the American soldiers. Her father recalls his friend who was a colonel with men on the field telling him, "I'll tell you, mainly I have the feeling that one day soon if I lead my men into battle I might turn around and they won't be there." Mutiny had become a real concern by 1970, when Judith went to Vietnam on report. She said, "By then some troops really were openly refusing to carry out orders." She explains that the lack of support and the creation of the Vietnam Veterans against the War (VVAW) back in the United States began to demoralize the troops. Between 1966-1971 the military desertion rate had quadrupled to nearly 70 out of every 1000 troops. By the 1970's American soldiers became the strongest opposing voice of the war. Anti-war movements began all over the place, 71 percent of Americans polled said they "believed intervention in Vietnam had been a "mistake"", and 58 percent considered

the war to be “immoral”.

Because the Vietnam War had already been a long exhausting, unpredictable war, aside from the political agenda behind it, America was tired of fighting an uphill battle. If men and women do not support the reason their country is at war, then most will not sacrifice their lives for it. By the end of the Vietnam War, I feel the soldiers had lost their willingness to lose their life in a war whose motives were so unclear. Not only was there a lack of support for the war in the field, but when the soldiers went home they were received as monsters and murderers, not men of honor. I feel that when our country lost the support of its soldiers, our Nation was forced into reaching a compromise with North Vietnam

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Michael Stockdale
Hst 195
Writing assignment 2

Part 1: Clark Dougan

Clark Dougan's turning point in the war is when a class mate of his dies in Vietnam. As its illustrated in the book by the speaker, he says "I think that was the moment when "Middle America" really turned against the war." Dougan may have seen this as the turning point, and relies on the press as his basis for such. Moreover, Dougan was likely looking at his situation as a microcosm of the United States at the time, when it could have just been his bias and feelings coming into play.

The facts of the press that Dougan brings to light are regarding the fact that the newspaper that had run the controversial editorial on the dead soldier (Fischer) was from a conservative chain of newspapers. At this time the chain was in full support of the war. With this being said, Dougan's claim about "Middle America" turning against the war does have merit. There are multiple reasons that could have been the reason behind the posting of that article, some even in support of Dougan's argument, but then it could have been a publicity stunt to gain a wider readership. Regardless, the article had a profound effect on Dougan and his community. Just as other media sources had a profound effect on the rest of the country, as the Herring book notes, the Johnson administration was responsible at least partially for the disillusionment in the media regarding coverage up to Tet, "television coverage of the war had been overwhelmingly neutral or favorable to the government... and had shown little of the actual horrors of war." (Herring 244) It is no wonder that when the stories hit home, the way they affected public opinion was magnified.

The other side of this story is that Dougan himself had hit a brick wall realizing he did not support the war. He states in his story that he could have been just as likely where Fischer was that day. As well, he mentions that many students at the time felt the pride or need to join the military. The death of Dougan's high school classmate struck a personal note at home. He began to feel a sense of bias concerning the war and those who were sent to fight in it. He realized that had his parents not been as insistent that he go to college, the lure of the military was still present in that time and he may have joined a war that sent him to his death.

Whether or not Dougan's microcosm view of the war, away and at home, was biased, correct or incorrect, it was the turning point for him. He saw that people that had originally

supported the war were faltering in their convictions: the press publishing the controversial piece, local members of the community and later even WW2 veterans saying “Fuck this”. He questioned whether the war in Vietnam was really worth Fischer’s life or his own? He may not have gone to Vietnam but he did not argue the allure to go there or that he supported people that did go there. When everything hits home, he realizes that he may support the soldiers, but not the war. In his closing sentence, and the reason I picked this story, Dougan states “The only tribute you could really pay, and I can still pay, is to remember.” He may have meant a few things by this, but one is that the only ways he can thank him for his service was to remember him and his deeds in life, to respect his memory and maybe change his view of others going over to Vietnam, to remember that it could have just as easily been him.

Part 2: George Evans

The ending of the war to Evans came quick upon entering Vietnam. He says that upon entering Vietnam he planned to be a good soldier, though he quickly saw the negative side of the war. Evan’s view of war was changed from what he thought of it as a child. He quickly realized it was not all sunshine and rainbows.

The actual end of the war for Evans was when he found out how the two boys had died. The war still waged on, but whatever pride he had left in his country had faded with the death of the two boys. He felt “betrayed”. Though Evans still continued to do his job, mentally and emotionally, he had checked out of the war. He was in open defiance of the war, though passively and on a smaller scale, like he says he was a small splinter in the grand scheme of stopping the war. Evans went to Vietnam with curiosity, pride, and a desire to help. What he received was a rude awakening.

Though it took a little bit for Evans to realize that the end of the war for him was upon him, the death of the two boys was the icing on the cake. By the end of his time in the military he was contemplating desertion, was openly defiant, and hated the war in Vietnam along with his countrymen.

From a young age Evans was brought up to have pride and respect for soldiers and the wars they fight for their country. He learned the disrespect and evils that war can bring out in man. Evans’ turning point to the end of the war for him may have been triggered by the death of the children, but it could have been any event. In a different situation he may have supported the war all the way through, though it is more likely that he would have opposed the war in the end either way. Once he realized the evils that war can bring out in a person, he realized that there is likely to be no good war rather than not knowing that there is a bad war.

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Part 1 Many soldiers, Americans, Vietnamese, politicians, and anyone else surrounding the Vietnam War experienced different turning points and experienced them at different times; either turning them towards the war or completely against the war. March 16, marks the date during the Vietnam war when the United States Army sent soldiers from Charlie Company into My Lai on a “search and destroy” mission to locate and a kill civilians. Many innocent civilians including elders, women, children and babies were killed within a few hours. While many Americans were in denial, “65 percent of Americans claimed they were not upset by the massacre,” My Lai turned out to be a definite turning point for most (344). While Americans were coming to the conclusion that the Vietnam War was “fundamentally unjust and immoral,” some of the soldiers fighting in Vietnam were experiencing feelings of guilt. Larry Colburn, a helicopter door-gunner was given the same mission as the other soldiers but his experiences changed his awareness of the what was really happening in My Lai. The pilot, Hugh Thompson and his crew, Larry Colburn and Glenn Andreotta, were sent in beforehand to find armed civilians, on that specific day they only came across one. As they flew around they came across a Vietnamese women who was unarmed and injured; to show the squad they were safe to come near they had marked her with green smoke. “We were hovering six feet off the ground not more than twenty feet away when Captain Medina came over, kicked her, stepped back, and finished her off. He did it right in front of us. When we saw Medina do that, it all clicked. It was our guys doing the killing” (347). This was the exact moment when Larry Colburn became aware of what as happening in My Lai, this was the moment that he experienced his turning point. Larry Colburn felt guilty, he felt that he was “indirectly killing them” by marking the civilians with green smoke (347). Larry Colburn was not the only one that had experienced a turning point at that moment, Thompson and Andreotta also did too. When Thompson spotted a group of women and children, he landed the aircraft and he informed Colburn and Andreotta, “If they open up on these people when I’m getting them out of the bunker, shoot ‘em’” (348). While Larry Colburn took watch, the Americans did not shoot and neither did he. While flying over a ditch full of a hundred dead Vietnamese, Andreotta spotted movement within the group. Thompson landed while Andreotta searched for the child who had been moving around. They did not know if this child was a boy or a girl, but “just a cute little child” (348). This moment had forever changed Larry Colburn, something that he worries about for the rest of his life. Even many years later when returning to Vietnam to participate in the opening of a My Lai Peace Park and the dedication of a new elementary school he was reunited with Do Hao, the young boy who he had once helped save. “I have worried

about Do Hao for thirty-three years. All these years I've prayed he was four or five years old and had no memory of it, that the horror would be erased. Turns out he was eight. He remembers everything.'” These moments were the turning point for Larry Colburn a soldier in the Vietnam War because he experienced and witnessed what the Americans did in My Lai on March 16, 1968. Part 2 When Richard Nixon became president in 1969, he definitely was not handed something pleasant, the Vietnam War had been going on for almost a decade now and was not getting any better. President Nixon was the only president to resign, which may or may not have been because of public pressure. The public pressure began when Daniel Ellsberg, former Defense Department official, decided on what he called ““revolutionary judo”” the persuasion of the public on just how bad President Nixon really was by releasing the Pentagon Papers to numerous newspapers (435). The Pentagon Papers consisted of seven thousand pages of secret documents about the history of the United States decision making towards the Vietnam War, none of the decisions were made by Nixon. Daniel Ellsberg increasingly opposed the Vietnam War, he believed that we were ““stripped away all legitimate rationales for what we were doing’ in Vietnam” (432). Daniel Ellsberg tried putting himself in Randy Kehler’s shoes, a Harvard graduate who was willing to go to prison for refusal of being drafted. It changed Daniel’s viewpoint on the war, because he wondered to himself if he would be willing to go to prison for refusing to collaborate in an unjust war. As Americans we were ““eating our young. We’re relying on them to fight the war and to end it” (434). Daniel Ellsberg knew that the documents didn’t intentionally show what Richard Nixon had planned to do in Vietnam but by releasing them into the newspaper, Nixon’s response is all Daniel needed. Because of Richard Nixon’s response questions amongst the public, the Watergate incident came to bloom. The Watergate incident consisted of the long list of criminal activities that Richard Nixon was involved with. By releasing the papers, “Its made people understand the presidents lie all the time, not just occasionally but all the time. Not everything they say is a lie, but anything they say could be a lie.” Because of the Pentagon Papers being released to the American public, President Nixon’s response led to a deeper investigation of his involvement with Watergate and numerous other accounts involving the Vietnam War which then carved the pathway to the ending of the Vietnam War.

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My Lai is the best example of a turning point in part four. The My Lai massacre caused millions of Americans to see the types of war crimes being committed by U.S. troops. 128 Vietnamese civilians were killed under order by Lieutenant Calley who was charged with killing only 22 of the 128, and got off easy with house arrest after only three years in prison. After news of My Lai became public soldiers who were protesting the war admitted to being witness to "war crimes." These included cutting of ears from dead Vietcong, and systematically burning down civilian villages. This event really caused people to start to question the war. Calley being convicted of killing those 22 innocent people was concrete evidence of the war being immoral and wrong. Soldiers and or protestors had been telling people of these horrible events taking place in Vietnam, but the conviction of Calley was proof that protestors and soldiers were speaking the truth about the war. This was a major turning point for the American public support of the war, and began putting pressure on the government to pull out of Vietnam. A poll saying 65% of people were not upset by the massacre tells me 45% nearly half of the population was upset from the My Lai massacre. After My Lai broke the ice for the war news of war crimes the public learned about "free-fire zones" that caused over 5 million Vietnamese to be mover from their homes to camps. Also the Phoenix Program" were political members of the Vietnamese were captured and tortured. After learning about all these horrible crimes being committed it is hard not to become a protestor of the War.

In part 5 John McCain's account of being a prisoner of war was half about him being in prison and half about after the war and how he felt about his experiences and anti war protestors. I would say he was lucky to survive being shot down and beaten by an angry mob but having to serve years of torture, being forced to admit to committing war crimes is almost worse than death. McCain seems to be at peace though he's not mad at the Vietnamese or Americans who protested the war. He was very smart to keep the best attitude he could while in prison by making fun of the guards and laughing whenever given the opportunity. Also telling stories of movies he had seen or heard of to the other prisoners. McCain talks about how the only people he resents are POW activist who manufactured fake pictures of missing POW's to make money off of family members trying to find loved ones. It is amazing that people could sink that low after all the misery caused from the war to try and make money by causing POW family members more pain. It is also amazing that after all McCain went through he still is not that angry about what happened in the war

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Assignment 2

Part 1 – Turning Point: Out of all the stories in Part Four of Appy's book "Patriots," the story that best illustrates a turning point in the Vietnam War is told by John Douglas Marshall, beginning on page 328 and ending on page 330. Although there are longer, more in depth stories that I could have chosen, I picked Mr. Marshall's story because his personal account of defying his family by withdrawing from the military due to moral objections mirrors the ever growing philosophy of the American public to question and speak out against government institutions and policy, instead of accepting and following it blindly. In his story, Marshall talks about his grandfather, who not only was his role model growing up but was also an outspoken and admired supporter of the Korean and Vietnam wars. Marshall remembers completing ROTC training and enlisting in the military not because he was passionate about defending his country, but because it was what was expected of him by his family. During his first year as an infantry officer, he studied literature and followed leaders of pacifism and nonviolence, and came to the conclusion that the Vietnam War, which he was inevitably going to be sent to fight was wrong, and once coming to this realization he applied to leave the army as a conscientious objector. Marshall knew that by leaving the army he would be disappointing and disgracing his family (once his grandfather found out he had resigned he disowned him), but he stood by his own convictions and did what he felt was morally correct. Even though this is just one person's story, this type of skeptical thinking amongst the American public was a cornerstone of the turning point in the Vietnam War, and was something that was virtually unheard of before the cultural revolution of the 1960's. Regarding anti-war movement and the new mindset that went along with it, Herring states that "Their movement became inextricably linked with the cultural revolution that swept the United States in the late 1960s and challenged the most basic of American values and institutions, leaving divisions that would last into the next century," (Herring, pg. 206). By 1971, the American public's views on the war were obvious,

with the polls showing that 71% of Americans “believed intervention in Vietnam had been a mistake and, remarkably, 58% regarding the war as immoral,” (Appy, pg. 393). In my opinion, it was the American public’s vast disapproval and disgust of the war that motivated Nixon to pull US troops out of Vietnam and that forced us to reach a peace agreement with North Vietnam in 1973. Before the Vietnam War and the Cultural Revolution that coincided with it, American citizens more or less had faith in the government and supported both domestic and foreign policy (this mirrors Marshall’s attitude of joining the military and the ROTC because it was what was expected of him by his family), but during the late ‘60s and early 70’s, we started to question why we were really in Vietnam and realize that maybe it wasn’t in our best interest to be fighting in a war we could not win. Americans spoke out against the policies they believed were impractical or immoral, without regard to the personal consequences they may encounter (as Marshall did when he realized he could not justify fighting a war he believed was wrong, and resigned, knowing the negative impact it would have on his relationship between him and his family). This is why I believe that John Douglas Marshall’s personal testimony is the best example of a turning point in the Vietnam War.

Part 2 – Endings: The best account of the end of the Vietnam War in part 5 of Appy’s book “Patriots” is told by Judith Coburn, beginning on page 407 and ending on page 412. Coburn tells of the mutiny she witnessed while working as a reporter in Vietnam during 1970. Soldiers were unwilling to put their lives at risk for a cause they did not believe in and the majority of the time didn’t even know what it consisted of. Coburn contributed this lack of morale to the Tet offensive and the peace talks that the soldiers knew were underway, but I think it had more to do with the fact that young men were drafted and forced to fight for something they either did not care about or openly opposed. The fact that the Vietnam War has a higher percentage of draft resistance and evasion than any other war in America’s history speaks volumes to back up this claim. The minute that US troops became unwilling to fight the war, whatever their reasons may have been, we lost the war. Coburn sums up this point excellently when she states “When I hear people say we could have won the war, I always think: where were you going to get the soldiers?” (Appy, pg. 409).

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Part One

A good example of a “turning point” in the Vietnam War came out of the story told by Barry Zorthian. What I took from his story was that the way the media portrayed the Tet offensive served only to fuel the fire back home. When the Tet attack made its way to the U.S embassy that’s where the majority of the media lived in Saigon, and that was going to be the majority of what the U.S. public saw.

Lack of visible military progress, dishonest elections in South Vietnam were already changing the view the U.S public, government officials, and congress had toward the war. With the Tet offensive able to hit so many places at the same time only served to further discredit reports of progress in the war. How could an enemy that was being beaten daily on the battlefield be strong enough to make such a coordinated attack?

So now you have an American public that is losing faith in its government, and a government that is losing faith in itself. Next you have a major offensive hit Saigon along with hundreds of other targets, and eventually make its way to the U.S embassy, which around the embassy it is claimed to be where the majority of the media lived. Soon after you have you have photos of dead and wounded marines on an armored personnel carrier, photos of dead Viet Cong soldiers on the embassy lawn, and a film of General Loan’s (South Vietnamese police chief) execution of a Viet Cong prisoner showing up on our 5 o’clock news and newsstands. The final blow that comes out of the story is when Walter Cronkite

shows up in Vietnam, is briefed on fully on what most people had forgotten, which was General Westmoreland had predicted that something was going to happen on Tet and that he had placed his troops accordingly. Cronkite chose not to run that story and instead was taken back by the scale of the Tet offensive and chose to deliver his famous statement, “the war is at a standstill and were not going to win. It was when LBJ replied, “If I’ve lost Walter Cronkite, then I’ve lost Middle America,” that the turning point sticks out to me. This shows how big of a role the media played in not only the American public’s view but also our own government’s view of the war and where it was heading. The Tet offensive was a highly coordinated attack but also perfectly timed. With America’s growing distaste for the war through the sixties, the floods of images, videos, and reports coming out of the aftermath of the Tet offensive served as the crest in the turning point in how America was viewing the war and how we were going to change our policies in the near future.

Part Two

I found it kind of hard to find an example of an actual “ending” to the Vietnam War other than what happened in 1975 and the story of Frank Snepp. One story that I did read that wasn’t actually an “ending” but the possible stop of escalating it even further. This was the story of Daniel Ellsberg. This was a man that rose from the ranks of the marines all the way to top-secret military planning and Pentagon consulting. In his time in top-secret military planning he was able to make a study of the origins of the war that was seven thousand pages long that showed a quarter century of aggression, broken treaties, broken treaties, stolen elections, lies, and murder.

Ellsberg claimed that President Nixon wasn’t really worried about these

documents because of the fact that they only went up to 1968 and didn't really expose any of his involvement or decision making in the war. What Nixon was worried about was the possibility that Ellsberg had knowledge and proof of his policies of threatening his ways to victory in Vietnam or possibly bombing his way to it. Ellsberg of course had none of this information and basically used Nixon's paranoia against him. When Ellsberg released the information to the press all he hoped for was an overreaction from Nixon. Nixon's overreactions lead him right into the Watergate and forced his resignation in 1974.

So if the stories were true of Nixon's plans to escalate the war with more aggressive bombing and the possibility of using nukes, then Watergate definitely brought an end to that. On top of all that with the majority of the American public now questioning or outright protesting our involvement in the war, the release of the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times in 1971 seemed to confirm the reasons for questions and protests and possibly opened more eyes to the truth behind the war.

There is a quote out of the story of Egil "Bud" Krogh, who was one of the "Plumbers" of the Watergate scandal one who ended up doing time over it. He says, "In hindsight, I'd say what Ellsberg did was extraordinarily courageous and I think he was following his highest sense of right. At the time I felt that it was a treacherous act of a traitor, but I've come to see it differently. I came to appreciate that Ellsberg was a patriot."

Again if there was truth to Nixon's plans to escalate the war, the Watergate definitely halted those plans and it also played a more significant role when Watergate forced Nixon to resign in 1974 which would soon be followed by a new congress composed more of democrats who drastically wanted to cut the

war efforts funding. This new Congress immediately voted in restrictions on funding and military activities to be phased in through 1975 and to culminate in a total cutoff of funding in 1976, bringing an end to the Vietnam War for Americans.

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Part 1, the turning point:

The best example of a turning point in part four of the Appy text is the story of Vincent Okamoto. Vincent Okamoto like many Americans seems to have started out with un-questioning faith that the United States of America was doing the right thing. Since Okamoto was the son of Japanese American family that was locked up in a "Relocation" camp during world war two, Okamoto and all his older brothers served in the American armed forces as a way of affirming their status as "Americans". All of Okamoto's older brothers had already served by the time he went into the military and to Vietnam. Okamoto started out eager to fight for his country for many reasons. By the end of his time in Vietnam, his attitude had clearly changed drastically. Although Okamoto mentioned briefly that his attitude started going downhill after he started seeing a few napalmed villages, it's clear that the biggest turning point for him was the night of August 24, which he stated was "the single worst night" of his life. On that night Okamoto came very close to death, and many of the people he was serving with were killed. His description of the events that night are very moving, and it's not hard to see how they along with the dubious nature of the entire war would change anyone's attitude from one of gung-ho certainty to one of this sucks I shouldn't be here.

This new attitude of Okamoto's seems to have become more and more the most common attitude among all combat GI's in Vietnam as the war went on. Gun shy and disillusioned with any "cause" the United States might have to

be fighting for, Okamoto could hardly wait for his tour to be over.

Part 2, endings:

The best story that illustrates an “ending” of the war is the story of Frank Maguire. He ended up serving three tours in Vietnam, and his description of his last tour conveys a strong sense of the end of something in Vietnam. On page 443 Maguire describes Saigon as “dead”, and says that he “felt defeat and loss everywhere”. Maguire admits that he enjoyed his time serving in Vietnam, and volunteered to serve multiple tours. By the time he served his final tour in 1970 the United States had drastically reduced its presence in Vietnam. This means that one of the things that were missing from his previous tours was a large chunk of the American presence that was there when he was previously in Vietnam. The thing that seems to have been missing the most though, was the sense that something good was going to come out of the conflict. Certainly for Maguire, and also for many others, 1970 was a time when the futility of the Vietnam War was becoming obvious to most people. It was becoming increasingly obvious that much of American policy up to that point had been based on illusions and misconceptions, and those illusions were breaking down. The war was widely thought to be a mistake by then, and as John Kerry said, “how do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?” Many people by then didn’t care at all what happened in Vietnam, they only wanted to survive long enough to get out of there. Maguire’s story illustrates not so much the end of the war, but more the end of belief in the war. The end of belief in the war was the beginning of de-escalation, and as such the start of the end.

These were the best two examples of a “turning point” and an “ending” that occurred to me. The reason that I choose them out of all the others was

largely for their emotional content. Both are accounts from the perspective of American Veterans who started out strongly supporting America's role in the war. Each account could be taken as representative of more than just the attitude of the person narrating. They could be seen as what happened to the whole nation. Both are stark, harsh, and obvious examples of either a "turning point" or an "ending".

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