

Maraya Maxson

(767 words)

For part one of the assignment I choose to discuss Clark Dougan's account of the Vietnam War (pg 304-306 of Appy's *Patriots*). I chose this because I felt that it signified the beginning of war's unpopularity to the American public. Although he never experienced the war through the eyes of a soldier he talked about the effects it had on the American people at home, which in my opinion is equally as significant. What Dougan's interview helped me understand, in a way that Herring couldn't was the emotion behind being at home. It seems to me that most everyone not in enlisted knew someone <sup>who</sup> that was. The anxiety that must have been circulating throughout our country must have been unimaginable. Up until 1968 there were a lot of people that disagreed strongly with the war, however I feel like that's when the American public really began to express their feelings against the war.

Careful  
Herring  
was  
alive  
throughout  
the war.

not according to the polls

This being the first real television war Americans got to be up and close to the action in the comfort of their living room making it impossible for the government to completely <sup>dictate/control</sup> form the nation's opinion on the War. It was a factor the sped up the pace at which information was being revealed and the government was being distrusted. "The classic photo of a Vietcong captive by the Saigon police chief brought home to Americans the savagery of the Battle of Tet, and aroused growing concern about the type of government and war they were supporting" (224 Herring). Reading Dougan's interview really supported this statement and brought to light the feeling that were associated with the thought, "it could have been me". Even people who otherwise supported the war were at this point questioning their stance, Dougan spoke of this saying, "I think a lot of WWII vets who had been sitting around saying, 'you've got to fight for your country,' were now saying, 'fuck this. It's not worth Greg Fisher's or his buddy's life.'" Or maybe they weren't saying it, but they were starting to feel it." (306 Appy).

clique

Good

Tet was an obvious turning point in the war but I feel like the impact it had on the people at home had a very important role on our losing the war. After Tet, "an overwhelming amount of Americans (78 percent) were certain the united states were not making any progress in the Vietnam" (243 Herring). After Tet the American public began to feel as though we were in a war we had no chance of winning. A war that isn't supported by its own country has a very strong disadvantage and in my opinion Dougan's story illustrates that well.

nicely incorporated citations.



I chose Beverly Gologorsky's recollection of the anti-war movement for part two of this assignment. The reason I made this decision is two fold, one, I really wanted to discuss a woman's role, and two, I felt like it displayed what I think was a major cause of America's loss of the war. Not only did the majority of the American public turn its back on the war but so did the soldiers themselves. What was being done in Vietnam had an effect on the American public and the American public had an effect on the soldiers in Vietnam. Gologorsky recounts what she saw, "A long, long line of guys in army jackets and other military apparel snaking past the Capitol, throwing away their Purple Hearts and other metals they received"(417, Appy). Soldiers had such little respect for the war that they would throw away the highest honor. *careful*

Gologorsky talks <sup>ed</sup> about the way anti-war protesters were treated by police, "I have a girlfriend who was beaten by cops at a demonstration. She was more stunned than hurt. "How could they do this to me?" You know like, "I'm a privileged white girl. My father runs a hospital"(416, Appy). No one, not even rich white girls were safe to protest the war. The big problem became the war that developed here in response to the Vietnam War. A war in which even the veterans and soldiers are against the government is doomed to fail. I think that things began to get really shaky when the government really realized how unpopular this whole thing was becoming. With the creation of the VVAW and their actions such as the "winter soldier" investigation, Americas moral became so low that winning the war had become apparently impossible to even the most stubborn aggressors.

PT  
★ -  
excellent  
The only  
student  
to point  
this  
out.

Part 2 a bit brief  
but overall, very  
well done.

Much better  
than your  
1st paper.

You included  
citations  
REALLY helped to  
support your positions  
& strong  
choices.



90/100

Nathaniel Hahn

(1968 words)

There were many instances of a "turning point" throughout the stories from the Appy book. Some had to do with a specific incident that initiated turning point, while others were more of a collaboration of events that eventually led an individual or group to change or "turn." While just about everyone from Chapter 4 and even a lot from Chapter 5 had a revelation or turning point, these are a few that stood out to me.

NO NO

11 The assassination of Bobby Kennedy in 68 was a turning point for some; he was young and optimistic and running on a campaign for peace in Vietnam. After his assassination in California, it seems that the entire outlook of the elections, at least for the Democratic Party had been shaken up. While it was pretty much a forgone conclusion that Nixon was going to have the Republican nomination and very good chance to win the elections, the Democratic Party was disjointed and very fragile even before the assassination. Johnson had announced that he would not run again, leaving it a three man race between Humphrey, McCarthy and Kennedy.

While Humphrey was struggling to separate himself from the Johnson administration, McCarthy and Kennedy were running on a campaign of peace. While some were questioning the commitment to the office by McCarthy, it seemed that there was some momentum building behind the Kennedy campaign. According to John Gilligan (pp. 311), Bobby was able to draw support from both the black community as well as the white blue-collar workers and was the only candidate that could "bring them together and inspire them." After his assassination the optimism left the democratic campaign, at least from those who were hoping for peace, or at the very least progress towards peace in Vietnam, and Kennedy being their best chance for that.

Another turning point was the excerpt from John Douglas Marshall (pp. 328-330). This was not so much for the individual, but for the relationship between his-self and his family. Coming from a pro- military family and from the shadows of his grandfather, S.L.A. Marshall, who was a war hero himself, he was expected to fight in the war. He completed ROTC and then trained as an infantry officer but was reading the works of Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Thoreau. He soon concluded that the war was wrong and decided to apply to leave the army as a conscientious objector. The application was approved and he received an honorable discharge, but that is where the turning point occurred.



His family, especially his grandfather could not understand or get over what he had done. John says at the beginning of the story that he "thought more about making my grandfather proud than my own father" (pp. 328). After he received his discharge, his father did not speak to him for over a year while his grandfather had written him a letter pretty much dis-owning him as a grandson. He went from embracing John instead of saluting while giving the commissioning speech for the ROTC graduates, to telling John that he doesn't belong, that he "will not be welcome" and that he is "constrained not to use our family name in any connection" (pp. 329). The fact that John did not agree with or could not support the war was enough for his grandfather to never speak to him again, except for the letter, showing just how divisive the war was. John observes that "the war was divisive to the country, but it was also incredibly divisive in families" (pp. 329).

The last example of a turning point I would like to bring up was the story from Vincent Okamoto (pp. 357-362). A Japanese American who had two brothers serve in World War II in the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental combat team, and all six of his brothers served in the military, he felt that military service was an "inevitable rite of passage"(pp.357).

In the beginning, being a volunteer for Vietnam, Vincent did not seem to object to the war or his duties, saying that "it's inevitable" and "you just accept it and go on with your life", that he was doing the "right thing" (pp.357-358). He does mention that after being there for "six or seven weeks" and seeing some of the violence that occurred he began to question that he was doing the right thing. He still performed his duties though, receiving two purple hearts for being wounded in action. In most divisions, you were assigned to non-combat unit after two purple hearts, but because of desperation of the times, they changed it to three and sent him back out. The turning point for him occurred after he was injured a third time and receiving another purple heart. He was expecting to get a "rear job" but was told that even with his three purple hearts he did not meet the criteria to give him the change of assignment. So they sent him "back to the weeds" (pp. 360) for three months while waiting for his Distinguished Service Cross to be approved and he said that he "was a very un-happy person" (pp. 360) for that time. He no longer wanted to engage in combat and reached a point where he "couldn't function" (pp. 360), and was becoming dependent on drugs to function. It seems that he had had enough with the war at that point. Somebody who was proud to join the military and serve his country, a volunteer for Vietnam, had seen and been through enough that, while he still performed his duties, his heart was no longer behind the cause.



## Part 2

There were many turning points it seems in the stories from *Patriots*; the Tet Offensive, My Lai, the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, the politics of the Nixon Administration, the secret bombings of Cambodia, even the shootings at Kent State all provided the inspiration for a pivotal turning point for not only on an individual basis, but for the country as well. There was not one single event that stood out as "the turning point", but single events compounded with wavering faith and doubts about the war that previously existed may have provided the final push for some, and in those cases it seems it was more of a "breaking point" rather than a "turning point."

Steve Sherlock (pp. 425- 429) provided the first example of an "ending" to the Vietnam War. A decorated veteran of the war, he was part of a group of veterans who had come to oppose the war and join in the anti-war movement. He participated in an anti-war demonstration in 1971 in Washington D.C. by the VVAW (Vietnam Veterans Against the War). During this demonstration many veterans lined up on the Capitol steps and threw away their medals in protest. Sherlock says the purpose of turning in the medals was a "strong symbolic statement that they couldn't buy our silence with decorations" (pp. 427), and that decorated veterans who were in Vietnam opposed the war and that "it wasn't unpatriotic to be fighting against a wrong and harmful policy" (pp.428).

Sherlock says that to him the medals were just a "symbol" of a war that was "wrong at a political and moral level" and that they were "meaningless" (pp.429). He says for some of the other veterans they were "badges of dishonor" (pp. 429). By throwing away their medals, I believe it provided to varying degrees, closure for some of the veterans who were opposed to the war. Sherlock said he had "mixed feelings" about throwing his medal away, but for others it might have been a huge relief. Whether or not it provided complete closure or a complete "ending" to the war for the veterans involved in the protest, it might have at least helped them close a chapter in a portion of their life and maybe allowed them to move on.

Another example of an "ending" of sorts was that of Daniel Ellsberg (pp. 432-436). In 1967 Ellsberg, working for the Department of Defense, was part of a team that compiled the Pentagon Papers. The Pentagon Papers were several thousand pages and contained the history of the United States decision making in Vietnam from 1945-1968. After reading the entire study he felt that it "stripped away all legitimate rationales for what we were doing" (pp.432). He took the Pentagon Papers to the congress and tried to get them to conduct hearings based on them, but no one was willing to do so. So he went public by giving the New York Times a copy which began to publish them in June of 1971.



Reading the Pentagon papers was an end to his faith in the war, and by releasing them, was an end to his political career. This was a man who, early in his career, rose through the ranks of top-secret military planning and Pentagon planning. He had volunteered to go to Vietnam and work with Edward Lansdale. He eventually felt, however, that the war was unjust and that something had to be done to "change Nixon's ongoing policy" (pp.434). After the release of the papers he was deemed a traitor, Kissinger described him as "the most dangerous man in America" (pp. 432). He was eventually charged with theft, conspiracy, and violations of the Espionage Act, but the case was dismissed after evidence came to light that the Nixon administration had wiretapped Ellsberg illegally and that the Plumbers had broken into his psychiatrist's office to try and find dirt on him. He has never worked or been offered a job with a think tank or in the government since releasing the top-secret documents.

*of course* The Paris Peace Accords of 1973 was in a way, the beginning of the end of to the Vietnam War. While the war between North and South Vietnam continued on and the true "end" according to most historians was marked by the fall of Saigon in 1975, the settlement reached in 1973 marked the departure of U.S. ground troops in Vietnam and the release of its prisoners. In a sense, it marked the end of American involvement in Vietnam. Although we continued to have aides in Vietnam until 1975, we stopped the bombing of Vietnam, reduced our spending from \$3.2 Billion to \$700 million (pp.494), and in August of 1973, congress even passed the War Powers Act, limiting the time a president could deploy U.S. troops abroad without congressional approval.

While "turning points" were clear and evident among some of the stories, it was far more difficult finding an "ending" to the war. There are many events that could point to an "ending" of sorts; the Watergate scandal, the Paris Peace Accords, the fall of Saigon all could be labeled as an "end" in a way, but it would be difficult to move on from the war not only as an individual but as a nation as well. I do not think it would ever end. It is something that a person would always carry with them. Was there ever an ending for the prisoners of war, or for the millions of South Vietnamese who were placed into the "detoxification" camps after the fall of Saigon? Or for instance Frank Snepp (pp.496-504) who still has to have any of his writings cleared by the CIA. Even this class being taught at a community college over forty years after the "end" of the war says that while the fighting and combat has been over, the war, or at least the memories and scars of the war has not ended.

*yes*  
Nathaniel, I would normally penalize a student HEAVILY for not following directions. I wanted 1 story for part one & 1 story as an ending. You did 6, I wanted depth of analysis, rather than breadth. You would have had to analyze BETTER if you only had ONE single story. Regardless, since we'll write I decided to only "look at" one story each.



Elizabeth Gambee

(632 words)

< min length

Jim Soular illustrated a good example of a somewhat personal turning point in his "Free-Fire Zone" excerpt. Soular reminisces over the sheer joy that he experienced during his time in Vietnam and explains the almost surreal emotions that he dealt with while piloting his helicopter. "And I loved war. I can't deny that. I loved it...I mean I just loved flying. Every time those turbines started winding up, I just thought, *yeah!* It sounds crazy but after a few months you really became one with your helicopter (157)." Soular described an incredible adrenaline rush associated with chopper combat assaults and their intense addictive nature.

Because the Chinook helicopters that Soular piloted were ~~often~~ so large, he often assisted with the relocation of Vietnamese villagers. The relocation was often the result of the declaration of a new free-fire zone. Villagers inhabiting the area were informed that unless they left their homes within the area's borders by a particular time frame, they were going to be considered Viet Cong members and were vulnerable to any attacks against the Viet Cong. Soular explained the fear of the villagers approaching his helicopter for the purpose of relocation. Many of the villagers had never seen anything like a helicopter and it typically did not resonate well with most of them. The crew members moving the villagers had to take on a somewhat apathetic and callous attitude towards the Vietnamese that they were relocating in order to maintain order and control over the helicopter. Indeed, one man was even thrown out of the helicopter sixty plus feet in the air after he started to panic. "The guy just freaked out. I couldn't control him. I got scared he would cause a riot and crash us. So to make my point, I threw his ass out of there." I said I might have done the same thing (158)."

Soular expressed that even during the war, to some extent, he recognized that the relocation of the Vietnamese villagers truly was a real tragedy. He recalled how during his time as a pilot, he never flew refugees back into their villages, it was always out. The terror that he witnessed on the victims of relocation never left him. These missions assisted in catalyzing a turning point in his view of the Vietnam War. Soular explained the immense lack of understanding and misconception of the Vietnamese culture by the United States. "We didn't understand that their ancestors were buried there, that it was very important to their culture and religion to be with their ancestors...One of my big regrets is that we didn't know anything about the Vietnamese when we went there and we didn't know anything more when we left (158-159)."

What happened?  
These stories are NOT  
from Part 4 or Part 5  
of the APPY text.

50/100

PT



While Soular acknowledged the unforgettable and incredible feelings that he experienced during his time as a pilot in the Vietnam War, he makes it a point to express that these feelings were accompanied by feelings of wrong doing. In the long run, the adrenaline rushes and addictive feelings of combat were overridden by a sense of wrong and right.

Alexander M. Haig, Jr. provides an account that illustrates somewhat of an "ending" of the war. As a notable and high ranking officer in the army, Haig's account presents a rather matter-of-fact point of realization that the United States reached a dead end in its mission in Vietnam. The war seemed to have lost its purpose and the United States was struggling to establish an official reason for its presence in Vietnam. Indeed, Haig's piece held a tone of acceptance and revelation. Additionally, Alexander Haig assisted in attempting to end the Vietnam war through contributing to a series of peace talks aimed at halting its continuance. Jim Soular illustrated a good example of a somewhat personal turning point in his "Free-Fire Zone" excerpt. Soular reminisces over the sheer joy that he experienced during his time in Vietnam and explains the almost surreal emotions that he dealt with while piloting his helicopter. "And I loved war. I can't deny that. I loved it...I mean I just loved flying. Every time those turbines started winding up, I just thought, *yeah!* It sounds crazy but after a few months you really became one with your helicopter (157)." Soular described an incredible adrenaline rush associated with chopper combat assaults and their intense addictive nature.

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Jacob Hutchins

100/100

(1351 words)

Some of them

Part 1 The story "He Was Only 19- Did You Know Him?" represents a turning point for the American people's perception of the Vietnam war. In his story, Clark Dougan opens by explaining the circumstance of his story. As a young man in high school during the Vietnam war, he (and other students) experienced the war through updates of who had died over the school intercom. The principal would interrupt class to notify the students when someone from their town had died. As he puts it "It all seemed like a roll of the dice. Some would go on, some wouldn't, and it depended on accident..." (pg 304). This quote illustrates the position he and others like him were in during the war, as they grew into it as adults from society.

awk

The war was something foreign, something distant, that made interruption into their lives through a disembodied intercom. It was fundamentally separate from them outside of those brief, random moments would remind them of its existence. He then explains that a fellow student at the time, Greg Fischer, had spoken with him about what the future could be like. Dougan was heading off to college after high school, but Fischer was considering joining the military. He told Dougan "...i'm going to get drafted anyhow, so if i'm going to get drafted, why not the best, you know?" (pg 305). At this point in his story, Dougan explains that they went their separate ways after graduation, he to college and Fischer, presumably, into the military. "So I go off to my first year in college" Dougan says, "and i'm really kind of oblivious to the war. The Tet offensive is raging across South Vietnam and i'm trying figure out what the hell *Paradise Lost* is about". From this quote we can draw the conclusion that Dougan was removed from the war not only physically but emotionally as well. All he was trying to do was get through college; the guy from high school that went over there was not occupying his mind, nor the war updates they received over the intercom during high school. Upon returning home for memorial day, Dougan opened a newspaper to find that Greg Fischer had been killed in Vietnam. It is at this point that his perception of the war changes completely: "It just hit me like a hammer. I remember that conversation in homeroom and it suddenly had this profound significance. I had gone off to this cloistered college while he was going off to die in Vietnam" (pg 305). This statement indicates just how sudden and impactful the realization of Fischer's death was on Dougan's perception of the war. Until now, he had been removed from the events. All of a sudden, the one that died is a guy he knew, a guy he sat and talked with, a guy that used to talk about his future. But there was no future for Fischer; instead of going to college, like Dougan, he died in Vietnam. Dougan concludes by explaining the intent of the article that spoke of Fischer's death. According to Dougan, "the editorial was really asking,

sp

Red



how many more people like Greg Fischer are we willing to waste". This is just an ordinary kid we're talking about". This is important because , as a typical person, Greg Fischer had a connection to everyone. The whole country is made of normal people. And taking young, ordinary people like Greg Fischer and sending them off to die in another country was too much. So, in this way, Dougan found a turning point for himself with regards to the war. It was brought home to him in a way he hadn't realized before and, according to Dougan, other people felt the same way: " I think this is the moment 'Middle America' really turned against the war", he says, quite plainly, on pg 306. What Dougan is driving at is that an editorial highlighting the commonality of such a young man grabbed the attention of people all over the country that felt like they could relate. All the working class, middle class, not-quite-for college people that made/make up the core of our country. This editorial reached the American people and brought the reality of the war close enough to home that they saw it had faces that looked just like the people they knew, therefore I interpret this story as representative of a turning point in the American people's perception of the war from distant and foreign to uncomfortably harsh and real.

good x

Part 2 The story "We Could Either Lose Or Tie- Not Win" by Truong Tran represents, to me, and ending of the hope that the U.S. ~~could~~ achieve the goal of preventing the North Vietnamese from eventually conquering the South. While a comparatively short story (only 3 ½ – 4 pages), I feel that it encapsulates the hopelessness that existed on the side of the South Vietnamese. Tran lists a number of reasons why the war was doomed to be lost, specifically the political problems of an American presence, corruption, and the North possessing a much stronger argument to support their cause. Firstly, he explains that Americans being there conflicted with the Vietnamese sense of nationality and their urge to repel foreign invaders from their country. " We could not tell our brothers and sisters that we were fighting for ourselves", Tran states, "as long as American soldiers were in the country fighting for us" (pg 504). So, politically, the United States was fighting uphill from the beginning. This part of Tran's story indicates, to me, that the war was (in a sense) over before it even really began. If the Vietnamese were so resistant to the idea of foreign intervention it only stands to reason that foreign intervention would not have a lot of positive effect. Secondly, Tran discusses the corruption inherent in the system established in South Vietnam. Because the officials were payed so little, and the economy was so wrecked, Tran says, there was a natural tendency for them to embezzle American funding to help feed their families: "Most government officials had a salary of less than twenty dollars a month , while prostitutes made five hundred or a thousand. To support their families many people abused their power to make

excellent



Excellent

more money". This part of the story demonstrates how aid from the U.S. Was ineffective, and how the situation of caring for these people was exacerbated by the very presence of the United States and the disruption of the normal Vietnamese economy. It indicates that there was little hope for an effective aid system, further straining the notion that the U.S. Could achieve it's goals. Lastly and most damningly, Tran explains how the argument and diplomatic position of the North was much more advantageous. His own words summarize it powerfully: "We lost because we agreed to fight a war we could either lose or tie, but not win. The best we could do is keep half the country. ....Since we were never able to fight in the North, the worst they could do was keep half the country. And since all Vietnamese hoped for eventual unification of the country, once again the North had a more persuasive goal." This really hits home because, coming from a member of the South Vietnamese military, it carries the full weight of how hopeless the situation was for him. To stop and simply think about the South never even really had a chance to take the fight to the North, and how the North had so much more powerful of an argument, can only lead my mind to conclude that the war was all but over by the time that the events Tran describes were unfolding. To me this story symbolizes the end of the war very effectively from the South Vietnamese point of view, and how the United States never had any real hope of keeping the North from eventually absorbing the South.

Excellent use  
& analysis of the  
most important parts  
of each SP-1.

I wish every student  
could do that !!!



Jon-wesley McLeod

95/100

(1069 words)

The journalist A.J. Langguth's description of his time and reporting in Vietnam was a great example of a turning point. He actually illustrates a few versions of turning points that I think as a whole represent a larger turning in the war. Early in his text, he describes the willingness of U.S. soldiers to give their life for the cause as waning around 1970. Directly after that, Langguth says he was "really annoyed by the very idea of Vietnamization." citing that a large burden of the war has always rested with the South Vietnamese and "buzzwords" <sup>like</sup> that only sound good in Washington. It demonstrates the skepticism that was growing after the Tet Offensive in the press and our own soldiers as to our real position in the war. Optimism was falling and people on all sides wanted the war to be over. <sup>ww</sup> Doubting the orders given by higher command by a grunt or not regurgitating only what the military or government wanted portrayed in the press was becoming more widespread.

It goes even further with the description of the COSVN headquarters. Langguth describes how the mood in America pushed further into protest when the invasion of Cambodia was discovered and the U.S. was also raising concerns internationally. Nixon and Kissinger were informed by the military that they could get at the heart of the communist operation with initial American strikes and end with the Vietnamization of the operation. In reality, ARVN wasn't prepared for such a long incursion into Cambodia, supply or morale wise. Also, with the numerous policies and operations that have been tried for years before by other competent government officials with little to no result, more were becoming disillusioned; especially with an end-all be-all type of situation. Some policies even had an adverse effect of what was intended. Langguth points out "The idea that somehow you were going to go in and wipe out the source of the infection once and for all was preposterous." It seems as though there were two wars, the war in reality in which soldiers, reporters, and some government officials witnessed, and the war as perceived by Washington. <sup>mk</sup>

Even though ~~before this happened~~, most media portrayed the Tet offensive as a communist win when logistically America did very well to repel the attacks. But, I think the distrust from the press of the American government <sup>by</sup> about the secret invasion of Cambodia was just. A lot of military personnel weren't even informed, and they were in country (Vietnam). I think a majority of people stateside were putting the pieces together and figuring out that they should be more forward in the criticizing of our government's actions, our elected leaders,

examples needed here

but Nixon shared this on TV, map & all

circle



and the war in general. It was harder for American soldiers to protest while on duty and with larger repercussions, but they did it anyway because they stood for their convictions and increasingly got more support amongst one another. Doing it in 1965 would have been really against the grain, but by 1970 and after more soldiers were starting to feel the same cynicisms. *ok dé*

*Awk* Finally when Langguth describes the teenage Vietnamese that were drafted against their will and deserting their service, he states how people were enraged by their actions. "The South Vietnamese draftees were young kids and none of them were gung-ho. Most of them wanted the war over. They didn't want to fight." I can definitely see why people would think these kids are feeling entitled since so many South Vietnamese gave their life or have family members killed but a lot of these kids have only grown up in war, even before the U.S. became involved. I think a young generation of Vietnamese also became a turning point since they were exhausted from the turmoil of an extended war and the culmination of the three swayed the tide.

While reading Appy's chapter *Endings*, I thought that for a great many people, the war would never be truly over. How can one forget a lost child or deal with a debilitating injury on a daily basis and not be constantly reminded of Vietnam? Steve Sherlock's example of turning in his medal was a strong representation of "ending" their own personal war. Vietnam veterans symbolically throwing their medals back at the Capitol was a powerful message against the policies in Vietnam and destroyed the stereotype about anti-war activists being unpatriotic.

Sherlock explained how some veterans believed their medals were "badges of dishonor" but he only felt they represented an immoral war. I understand the importance of war medals having some of my grandfather's medals from when he flew in sixty bombing missions over mainland Europe with the R.A.F. during WWII. They are important as family history and symbols of bravery and merit. My cousin also explained to me about the various medals he has earned during his tours in Iraq in 03-05 and how some soldiers won't even talk to you unless you have certain combat medals. *nice*

To give up their accolades had to be a very hard thing to do but probably helped give some vets closure on that period of their life (the description of the vet camp in Washington seemed surreal). Even though Sherlock kept his in a box, the reminder of what the medals represented to him was something that he was uncomfortable with, and shedding them would help put his connection to the war into a perspective he can live with to be able to start the next chapter of his

*Awk*



life. Some people interpreted the act as unpatriotic or as if the vets were abandoning and turning their backs on fellow soldiers but I don't. I feel they are so deeply involved that they want the war to end, help others come back, and stop the unneeded destruction of Vietnam. Spreading their word with this defiant act "seemed like a good chance to get national attention and credibility for the peace perspective." I think it did.

Vietnam vets against the war had the biggest metamorphosis in mindset that individuals can have about the war. From participation to protest, the journey for them is the farthest and it comes from experience. It probably happened rarely but I don't know of many instances of doves turning into hawks as the war progressed.

← ha! not as it was being lost, no doubt.

Overall very good paper.  
Some awkwardly worded  
phrases slightly detracted  
from readability, so be  
sure to proofread carefully.

Nice work

Much better than your  
first paper.



John Howland

(1096 words)

## Assignment Two – Part One

### The Turning Point

Philip Jones Griffiths

After reading through part four one story stood out, not because of length but because of the reality of human nature was laid bare. Philip described, in two short paragraphs, how the Viet Cong fooled the Americans into bombing District Eight in Saigon. District Eight was populated by those South Vietnamese who worked either in the government or had opened businesses that catered to the Americans that were in-country. Businesses that included bars, strip clubs and prostitution rings along with the resale of products that were traded for or purchased from the Americans. While in the states, Americans were tiring of the war, the South Vietnamese middle class were thriving off the American dollar. These Vietnamese tried to mimic the American middle class, and as Philip stated "they had big backyards and nice carved chairs". One can see this happen anytime an American outpost is set up, whether it is in another country or even in the US. Go by any American base and you'll find these scavengers on the outskirts. While there is necessity for certain support from the locals, there is also a large group of unnecessary businesses that pop up to drain the soldiers of their pay.

*Yep! I keep thinking of that new Trans Am my Air Force cousin bought soon after he went to Colorado.*

The Viet Cong simply used America's words, to these middle class Vietnamese, against them. After being told that they would be safe in the cities, it was the Americans who ended up bombing the area out of existence. These were the pro American Vietnamese, these people believed they would be safe; but in war is anyone really safe? Once you lose the only people who support you, even the ones who only support you because of the money they reap from your presence, what is left but the deaths of innocent people. We were in a country to stop the Communist from destroying it and we end up doing a better job at it. Not only did it wake up these people to the hard realities of waging a war in-country but it also disillusioned them to the government. It's not like they suddenly saw the war as being wrong, they just knew they were not safe anymore. Their big backyards were gone along with their fancy carved chairs. Gone was the safety they felt and gone was their support for the Americans. This was a major turning

*careful  
No hyp-  
?*

*careful. Is this  
Jones-Griffiths  
you or  
stom speaking?*

*100/100*



point for the South Vietnamese middle class and with that the possibility of any victory.

## Assignment Two – Part Two

### Ending

#### Steve Sherlock

Upon reading Steve Sherlock's story one begins to understand that the Vietnam War is just about over, and we lost. Here was an officer who believed, in the beginning, that he was fighting an honorable war. He thought that if we didn't stop the Communist, in Vietnam, we would be fighting them on our own shores. He felt that it was a noble cause and we were fighting an enemy, as he states, "the equivalent of the Nazis".

Reality started to fill his mind, when he went to Vietnam in 1968, and he began to realize that it was wrong for us to be there killing people. When he signed a "Fuck War" petition, at Camp Eagle, he was accused of betraying his duty by someone from Intelligence. Yet his impression of the Intelligence officer's mood was not confrontational and so he requested to be reassigned somewhere else. He was sent to an infantry platoon at a village called Nguoc Ngot near Danang. On the first night he was ordered to set up an ambush at the end of the village; when one of his squad leaders opened fire, because he had heard something, seven people were killed and three prisoners captured. For this he was awarded the Bronze Star medal; something that became meaningless instead of an honor because they were given out for almost any action. A few weeks later while checking the bodies of enemy combatants they found one that had a rosary on him. His Captain couldn't understand how this person could be a Communist and a Catholic. Steve simply stated that no one knows if the man was either or if he was why it mattered. Steve also stated that he hoped the rest had gotten away and that it was better if they didn't have any more fights. This enraged the Captain who screamed "Your job is to destroy the Communists" which Steve replied "No, they're just people like us". To which the Captain stated "They are not people, they are the enemy and you're the reason we are losing this war. You're a coward and a traitor." This type of confrontation amongst the soldiers in Vietnam was happening more and more. Soldiers were disillusioned about why we were there and questioned the orders of their superiors. Soldiers who saw a disconnection between the realities that they witnessed and what they were told. Soldiers who fought hard for their country and who were brave enough to admit that what was happening was wrong. There is a big difference between



someone who is on the front line and those who sit back giving orders from a safe position.

After returning home Steve joined the anti-war protests, eventually joining the Vietnam Vets Against the War, a national veterans' organization that campaigns for peace, justice, and the rights of all United States military veterans. With over 5000 members they held protests to inform the American public to the truth of the Vietnam War. One realizes that the end of the Vietnam War came not with a bang but when thousands of soldiers and the families of those fallen tossed their medals over the wire barricade at the Capitol.

This story was chosen because being a Vietnam Vet I also witnessed the disconnection between the reality that was Vietnam and the information we were fed by the government. We were expected to see the enemy as monsters, and not as people whose land was invaded. We were told to fear Communism for no other reason but it was Communism. Even though I was against the war, I voluntarily joined the Navy as a Corpsman, so that I could help anyone in need, friend or foe, and not to kill. When more and more people saw that even the returning soldiers had become anti-war protestors, support for the war withered away. The only ones left supporting the war were the far right wing who had never set foot in-country.

Very well written and supported.  
I had a feeling you'd choose these  
stories John.



Cameron Cole

(1187 words)

From Johnson to Nixon.

There were two key matters that occurred chronologically in regards to the "turning points" in the United States' occupation in the Vietnam War. With the increased force within the country of Vietnam from the year 1950 all the way to 1968, the turning point could be contemplated to be the tragic death of president John F Kennedy in Texas in 1963 and the confusion of the Watergate scandal just ten years later. These catastrophic events really made it difficult for the people in America to support a war effort and actually made it very easy to oppose it because the United States government was so fragile at this time. The American home front was up against comprehensive political turmoil and a wide-ranging civil movements spree. America itself was classified as being on a "Domino effect" itself with all these re-occurring complications with the office that played a vital role towards our success in Vietnam. I am specifying the "From Johnson to Nixon" article in Part Four of the Patriots book as the turning point because I feel that the Anti war protest's that occurred nationwide due to the constant change in office and assassinations nationwide played the largest rule in contributing to Americas defeat in Vietnam or turning point of the war.

The United States involvement in Vietnam started in 1950, under the guidance and leadership of President Harry Truman. Truman initiated America's involvement when he began to support the French in their quest to maintain power of French colonial rule against the Viet Minh. Following this, throughout the fifties and early sixties, the United States' upgraded its administrative, financial, and military obligations in Indochina. Both President Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy headed this operation up. Due to the increased American involvement in Vietnam, several senators began to disapprove of the administration's decisions that were being made. This essentially was the start of the rebellion of Vietnam war that would later become a lot more severe in regards to the American public. Because of the switch of power between high officials made it difficult to maintain a fluent plan of action as stated in the article. By 1965, this antiwar sentiment was in full swing, as revealed by the mass antiwar movement that transpired in the summer of 1965. The antiwar movement significantly manipulated US military policy, which had great effects on the success of the campaign.

> At this early point I'm afraid you are not going to follow my directions, and instead try to "sum up" the entire war in a 1200 word essay. BAD idea.



Among the summer of 1965, President Lyndon Johnson amplified United States military presence in Vietnam along with ordering more massive wide scale bombings throughout Vietnam. During this time, antiwar activists corroborated to be a power to be reckoned on a legislative level. President Johnson retaliated against all of the protestors by exploiting the legal method to restrict White House strikers. These restrictions made it mandatory for everyone in specified zones to have permits for all anti war activities. 1967 the US military's authority was losing strength considerably due to the fact that the White House continued to be overwhelmed by two wars, the war in Vietnam and the War at home. The Speakers story made it a "turning point" because it was really the main reason why the Vietnam war concluded the way it did. The primary reason why the United States was so unsuccessful was because they were not supported back at home.

*- untrue*

*AFTER  
1968  
only*

The Article "From Johnson to Nixon" was specifying all of the events that contributed to all of the riots/movements that took place because of catastrophes that took place within that ten-year span. For example the Martin Luther King assassination and the anti war protests that were arising nationwide within in scholarly institution from both the high school and college level. Later in the article when President Kennedy was showing success his was assassinated and America was sent back to state of depression. The tone of this article is very gloomy because it is trying to show that whenever a situation has a bright future it is instantly rebottled with disaster, because of this fact, a war is not really wanted by the people. War brings continuous death to a nation that has been through a lot of pain a suffering.

The article also brings to the table that there is not just tension within the United States about the war In Vietnam. It depicts that there are protests all over France regarding the carnage that the war has caused. This definitely indicated that it was a turning point for a large group of people because it is not only in the United States but in France as well. The article is showing to the readers that protests have a huge impact on how things are done in conflict zones. This takes much needed attention away from the war effort and creates a problem when trying to make difficult decisions. For example, when political officials are forced to always find the politically right solution to every problem that is not always the answer.

COLLAPSE



This article struck me as the "ending" of the Vietnam War because it was depicting our soldiers coming home in early spring 1973. When they were home, they began to expose their personal stories about their experiences in Vietnam and all of their hardships they experience in that horrid place. Secondly, the fact that the war was no longer making the front page of the newspapers and big name TV programs was also a strong indication to me that the people of the United States had moved on from the war and were looking towards the future with hopes to rebuild a crippled nation. College campuses were now starting to become quieter and at the same time the Nixon presidency was slowly starting to diminish with the Watergate scandal. In the summer of 1973 the Watergate investigations became to be more pinpointed towards Nixon himself, while congress finally voted to end all military services in Vietnam.

This article had the tone of a conclusion paragraph to the war in Vietnam. One of the biggest examples was when they described how congress forced the white house to reduce annual U.S aid to South Vietnam from 3.2 Billion to 700 million dollars. Following this, Richard Nixon resignation came in August 1974. With this extreme issue happening in Washington, tension in North Vietnam was rising. With the fall of Saigon the war had come back to the mainstream in the United States. A nation that has known nothing but victory has suffered a extreme defeat while leaving behind a poor nation of trampled cities, homeless people, orphan children, and explosive dangerous ordnances everywhere. With all of this information said, it really makes it seem to the reader that this is the ending point that illustrates the end of the Vietnam War with its language and almost weakened tone.

What does this mean?

No

This article seemed a lot like a sum up of the entire war in Vietnam and it seemed like this article was binding up all of the lose ends and providing the readers with a conclusion to all that's happened in the war.

Very poor prer.  
Not the assigned task  
Many, many factual historical errors.