

80/100

713

↑

750  
mm

The story that had the greatest impact on me was that of Bernard Trainor, a retired general from the Marine Corps. I found his account of the bombing of a leper hospital extremely shocking. In his account of the incident he says "One coastal target in the north was identified by Saigon intelligence as a rest and recuperation center for Viet Cong cadre, but the Vietnamese PT skipper said 'No, that's a leper hospital.' My intelligence said it was a communist R and R center so that was that." This is a small example of how far and extreme the U.S. was willing to go to beat the communists, by bombing buildings without making 100% sure that it is what they meant to target. Another aspect of his recount that had an impact on me was the finding of "one of the many entrances to a cave that was the Quang Da Special Zone headquarters for the Hue-Danang-Chu Lai area." It seemed to be a scene right out of a movie, how the two marine infantrymen were lead to the entrance of a cave holding an abundance of substantial information by a fly away Frisbee. From what I have learned after reading about the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War, the bombing of the leper hospital doesn't seem so shocking anymore. That seems to be the M.O. of American policy towards communism, shoot now ask questions later, or as it's put in General Trainors account "kill 'em all". I think that was a major issue with America's fight against communism, they rushed head first into situations such as the leper hospital bombing and didn't fully assess the situation. I definitely believe that ~~the~~ Trainor and/or Appy embellished a bit the part about the Frisbee for the sake of entertainment, however since these were such memorable moments, I believe Trainors recollection for the most part is accurate, especially the bombing. A story later on in the book told by Paul Hare recalls similar incidents, "Sometimes they would shoot up the wrong territory." "...our air force bombed Ben Tre by accident. Apparently they got the wrong grid coordinates. They hit a hospital." This demonstrates Americas trigger happy attitude. *slide*

Be careful about the ability to have 100% certainty in wartime.

The stories I found most disappointing were those of Malcolm and Le Lieu Browne. From their recollection of events it seems to me that America was trying to fight communism with more communism. South Vietnam was inching towards communist rule under Diem. *oops, no PT* - no totalitarian or dictatorial, yes  
Something must seriously be wrong if Buddhist monks are burning themselves in protest. America was so busy trying to fight the North Vietnams' flavor of communism that they didn't seem at all concerned that the south was becoming just as bad. Like Le Lieu states "I strongly believe in freedom and suddenly we were ordered to wear uniforms to work and go to political meetings. It sounded to me more like Communism than democracy." It was very disappointing to read about the harassment that Malcolm went through for his photograph, the monitoring of mail, and the issue with the French/English dictionary that was pushed to the back of shelves for containing the word "communism". That sort of censorship (I hope) wouldn't be tolerated today, but sadly I'm sure that this sort of thing is acceptable in parts of the world. It all seemed like a very reckless crusade against the big bad communists. *proof of this*  
*Hasn't the Iraq/Afghan war been censored?*  
*Yes it is*  
*pwc* - *slide*

At the end of Richard Olsen's account I found a really positive outcome. The small paragraph written in italics gives his account of an event after the Vietnam War ended where Olsen visits Vietnam again to be part of an art exhibit displaying war related art called "As Seen from Both Sides". It's a demonstration of compassion when the Vietnamese man saves him, an American Vietnam War veteran, from a riptide while taking a swim in China Beach. One would think that the Vietnamese would have a bit of a sour attitude towards Americans not too long after the war. It shows that the wounds between the

countries might be healing (and at the end of the day we all have to share the same planet,) we might as well help each other. *very cliché*

Lost # was the weakest, especially since it wasn't directly Olsen's story. Why do you think Appy included it.

Paper okay, but lacking some depth of analysis.

- lack of proof / evidence for some claims
  - mistake about Diem as a communist
  - sweeping statements ~~with a~~ which included abundant "presentism"
- eg. what's our big problem w/ communism?