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Phan Xuan Sinh delivered a poignant and rather lamentable account of a couple of his experiences in Vietnam. Two of his stories were particularly heart-wrenching as they illustrated the destruction and toll that the war took on innocent civilians. When determining the numbers of lives lost in various battles or wars, it can be easy to accidentally disregard or forget about civilian victims as they may be overlooked with the focus being primarily on soldiers and actual war participants. In his first story, Sinh describes a horrific tragedy that he experienced with his recon unit. Anticipating the arrival of a full company of Viet Cong soldiers via boat, Sinh and his fellow soldiers prepared to ambush the enemy as soon as they stepped ashore. Upon the arrival of the first few boats, it was late at night and consequently very dark out. As soon as the boats' silhouettes were made visible, Sinh's group open fired on them for a bit until they realized there was no return fire. To their horror, it was revealed that the victims of their firepower were a large group of fishermen whose fishing poles were mistaken for rifles. The second account presented by Sinh discussed the use of "Free-fire zones". In these areas, it was established that anything that moved within their boundaries could be fired upon. In one Free-fire zone that Sinh came across, he noticed a thatched hut with occupants within residing in the Free-fire zone boundaries. Sinh advised its occupants to move out and relocate, informing them that they were located within a Free-fire zone. Before Sinh and his pilot left the area, they burned down the couple's home to discourage them from returning. A couple weeks later, when Sinh was flying over the same territory, he noticed a brand new thatched hut built in the exact same spot as the previous one with the same couple inside it. Again, Sinh advised them to relocate to which the old man replied "All my ancestors are buried here and this is our land. We're not going to leave."

yes, Determining the accuracy and the reliability of the speaker or author describing a particular war experience can be difficult. Most of the time, war time experiences are extremely traumatic and emotional. As a result, such experiences have the potential to lead to either repressed memories or skewed recollections. However, on the other hand, one could argue that traumatic experiences, such as those dealt with in war, lead to more potent memories as it is likely that a person's senses may be heightened to deal with their intense surroundings. Furthermore, war veteran's memories of specific events may be considered somewhat unreliable because they may be tainted by bias based off of allegiance to one particular side or the other. In general, Phan Xuan Sinh's account of the war comes across as trustworthy because it seems rather objective and free of potential bias stemming from the side that he was fighting for. "People like me didn't hate the other side. We were forced to bear arms and saw no compelling reason to fight. We just hoped to find a way to live together with our brothers (Appy, 260)." The fact that Phan Xuan Sinh actually directly experienced the events that he discussed increases his credibility, but under different circumstances (for instance, if he had a more biased take on things), his credibility could have been lessened. It's important to realize that everybody remembers specific events differently from one another. To get the most credible and reliable accounts of particular historic events, the smartest thing to do would be to gain recollections from a plethora of people rather than just one. *How about his retelling of the fishing boat story, where he was the "bad guy". He didn't*

Paul Kattenburg's account and recollection of his experience in Vietnam proved to be disturbing and disappointing. Indeed, Kattenburg's story portrayed the blatant ignorance of America surrounding the pressing issues and facts of Vietnam. He explained how many of

*try to cover it up.*

the high ranking officials made no distinctions between Vietnam and other places of crisis that they had previously dealt with. In essence, it was not uncommon for countries in crisis to be viewed as synonymous, requiring the same solutions and treatments. "I mean they made absolutely no distinctions between countries with completely different historical experiences (Appy, 82)." Kattenburg emanated frustration in his piece because of his companions' lack of understanding of Vietnam as a place. Kattenburg himself understood to some extent that Vietnam was a difficult place because he had spent time there before. Because of his more developed understanding of Vietnam, he was able to foresee to some extent the impending failure. "Kattenburg was the first person at any high-level Washington meeting to suggest a more fundamental alternative- withdrawal. He said the situation was deteriorating...(Appy, 82)." According to the text, after his recommendation of withdrawal out of Vietnam, Kattenburg was excluded from all top-level discussions regarding Vietnam policy.

A positive lesson that may be gleaned from Kattenburg's account can be the importance of acknowledgment of all perspectives in any given scenario. Kattenburg clearly had more insight into Vietnam as a place than did his companions. His insight definitely could have proved beneficial in the long run in encouraging the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam sooner rather than later. It is too bad that higher ranking officials disregarded his input, as they seemingly viewed it as ludicrous. Kattenburg appeared to have been the voice of reason in the described situations, yet he was constantly overlooked and ignored. Hopefully, looking back at situations such as this one, people can learn to value the opinions and input of others- especially those with more knowledge and insight into the particular subject or situation at hand.

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Using #3 was the weakest  
Another story would have been the  
better choice.

But overall, excellent paper

Convincingly written  
May I have your permission to  
use ~~the~~ it as an "A" example for  
future students?

Made message  
me your answer