

559

Ian MacDonald

below min
length

HST 195

70/100

Assignment #1

Part 1: Out of all stories in Part 1 of *Patriots*, I would have to say the one that stood out in particular and had the most impact on me was George Watkins, partly because it's pretty amazing for someone to have survived walking right over a land mine. It was very interesting to hear Watkins talk about his experience in the war starting from the point when he first entered the 196th regiment and only had about a two minute lesson on how to handle an M-60. Most people going into that war had never been to Vietnam before and knew very little about it and had most likely received very little training. Watkins fell into that group of people who didn't know hardly anything about Vietnam except the reason that they were there fighting. His account of the time he stepped on the land mine was probably the part that hit me the most, not necessarily because of the horror of getting caught in an explosion (that was part of it) but mainly the aftermath. He said that during the whole time after the incident he really didn't even think about his legs even though he knew one was gone and the other was in bad shape. Instead, all he could focus on was his sight, hoping that they were just burned and not totally gone. I definitely agree that most of what he had to say is trustworthy. I'm sure there are always certain things that are hard to recall after that much time has gone by and you have been through that much trauma, but all in all, I felt that most of his account of the experience he had during the war is accurate.

Part 2: I would have to say Malcolm Browne's story out of all the stories in Part 2 of *Patriots* was probably the most disappointing for me to read, because it shows just how horrific and disgusting some of the people were treated during the war. Browne recalls several instances, one in particular where he entered the hamlet Dam Doi with a detachment of Vietnamese marines. They ran across several dead that had been executed and laid out and booby-trapped by the Viet Cong. Browne also described the manner in which the Vietnamese would torture people which was pretty bad to say the least. He also later talked about the monk who burned himself alive and said that all he could do was stand there and take photographs as fast as possible to take his mind off the sight.

On the other hand, I found Richard Olsen's story to have somewhat of a positive outcome. Olsen had been a painter who retired from the University of Georgia, but in 1962, he became a pilot and would fly combat troops into the battlefield at Vietnam on H-21 twin-rotored helicopters. Even though Olsen had to experience the terror of the war, he had the ability to fly with his twin brother who was in the same flight company. He also got to fly with some pilots ("the world's greatest aviators" as he called them) who had flown in

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Korea and World War II. Olsen considered himself lucky to be able to fly with those people.

I'm not sure what is
positive here.

Paper needed More words / length for clarity
& better
analysis.