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Wes McLeod

George Watkins account of his experience in Vietnam had a profound effect on me. I had to stop reading after his passage because of the emotions that hit me. Watkins story of his youth, the inadequate training he received up to and during the war, the terrifying patrols, and ultimately the horrific injuries sustained was over-whelming. Watkins humble attitude and amazing valor is something to be admired. As pertaining to credibility, I don't think anyone can cast doubt on his unimaginable tragedy. The randomness of a re-purposed American bomb used as a landmine and having forty plus soldiers walk by it unaffected, only to have it hit the last soldier in line reveals the arbitrary casualties of the war on all sides. Watkins retelling of the distress he felt over his lost eye sight, even over his amputated legs, was very moving. After the interview, Watkins feels uneasy about the rendition and wants the author to "Fancy it up," (p.25) even though a poet couldn't write prose that sentimental. This modest statement sums up the type of soldiers and their sacrifices during the war.

sure you
can...

→

they were all like George? No

Use came when attempting to analyze the stories that are too emotional for you.

ARK On the contrast, Richard Olsen's romantic narrative on being a helicopter pilot was less sincere and more facetious. Even though the section on military pilot culture was interesting, Olsen was just a little boastful when recalling his glory days during the war. Olsen explains "Vietnam was all about cool pilots" (p.63), after stating he is "not one of those veterans who's embittered with a whole host of grievances." (p.62) both narrow minded statements considering the complexities of the war. This self-aggrandizement and ethnocentrism that plagued some American soldiers probably didn't help the cause of winning over the South Vietnamese. After a recounting of landing in a hot spot and having ten or so South Vietnamese soldiers wanting to ^{be} extract from the war zone to attend funerals for their fallen comrades, Olsen said he restrained his gunner from shooting them, thinking they were abandoning the cause and "had the thought that we needed Americans in there to show them how to do it." (p.64). It's not surprising to hear stories like this but disheartening never the less.

was there a lack of resolve on the part of ARVN?

Sergei Khrushchev's interview was surprisingly positive. Explaining his father Nikita's politics and intentions during the Vietnam War, Sergei Khrushchev's interpretation of Cold War tensions involving China, America, Russia, Vietnam, and Afghanistan seemed a lot more accurate in light of the facts uncovered after the Iron curtain fell. A perspective that seems apparent now but was evanescent then, it seemed as though the power struggles between the leading nations was an omnipotent chess game with everything to gain or lose. Khrushchev's tale of the Russian and Americans trading food and gifts and how the Russians wanted an improved relationship but "as a simple rule of the Cold War... did everything it could to make America's life in Vietnam worse." (p. 88) was somewhat amusing to me. But, "an American blockade... would bring us once again to the brink of nuclear war, so my father didn't want to try this." (p.88) showed me the Russian's deep understanding of America as an enemy at war, and the potential to escalate the conflict but

presentism
fallacy

amusing?

↓

this worsening of which he spoke cost many American soldiers their lives.

the consciousness to avert a disaster and save many lives by not being imprudent and stubborn in its ideals.

Was,

paper length was too brief to analyze these stories well. In short it seems you are saying:

#1 George - poor guy - believable

#2 Richard - jerk

#3 Senzger - son of an unpopular & ousted
Soviet leader - sets everything
"right" because he ~~knows~~ is
interviewed AFTER the fact &
gets everything right,, not good
analysis.