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Part 1 The story of Phan Xuan Sinh included in Patriots-The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides by Christian Appy had the most impact on me. I found his narrative of how his recon unit was serving as an advanced party on a beach where Viet Cong were expected to arrive, and how when boats appeared and the soldiers spotted guns on the boats the soldiers opened fire on what they thought were Viet Cong soldiers, who ended up being innocent fishermen. Included in the dead were women and children. The troops evacuated the wounded via helicopter. What Phan Xuan Sinh had to say about this event was what had the greatest impact on me: I was completely stunned...I helped evacuate some of the wounded children by helicopter and as we flew away I was in tears. It's clear that common people on both sides bore the brunt of the killing and suffering. The fact that Phan Xuan Sinh was present gives him a large amount of credibility in my eyes. I believe that his inclusion of the story of the fisherman adds some objectivity to his story. He included it even though it could have resulted in him being looked at in a negative light. In his narrative I do not see signs of Sinh exaggerating for personal glory. However, since this is his narrative, his view of the events that occurred there will be some subjectivity. He is telling the story how he saw it, and what he experienced while he served his time. He doesn't paint his foes in a demeaning light, but he does have thoughts and opinions that reflect the side he was on during the war. His closing line regarding his enemy was quite moving but also highly subjective "Unfortunately their hatred didn't end in 1975. I never expected them to treat us so harshly, to have such a strong desire to seek revenge". To play the devil's advocate it is a logical idea that the Viet Cong did not view their actions after the war ended as revenge but as punishment for crimes committed against them.

Part 2 The interview with Rufus Phillips contained disappointing information. Rufus explains towards the beginning how one of his first assignments was to ask for medical kits that a Vietnamese psychological-warfare company wanted to distribute in the country side. The American official that Phillips made the request to refused "he said 'they'll only be turned over to the Viet Minh'. His attitude was that the place was already lost, so why the hell should we equip the Viet Minh with our medical kits?" During the Civil War General Sherman said "War is hell". While this is an accurate statement, shouldn't those in leadership make an effort to ease the impact of war on civilians? Though civilian suffering during war time is not a new problem it is still a problem that should be addressed, and whenever possible alleviated. There was also disappointment in the set up of the South Vietnamese government. According to Phillips "The Vietnamese had very little self-confidence. The French had put them down so much and never really let them get into decision making positions." The Vietnamese had the opportunity in the mid 1950's to set up democratic institutions. According to Phillips, Lansdale had a plan to bring democracy to Southern Vietnam. "He believed the only way Communism could be defeated was by offering the Vietnamese people something better". Lansdale wanted to put Diem in a constitutional framework that would force Diem to govern democratically, but according to Phillips "Washington refused to support Lansdale. They thought constitutional checks and balances would make Diem too weak to govern effectively". Daniel Redmond's story was a sad one, but it shows hope and the courage to build hope and create a new life. Redmond was sent to Vietnam to assist in Operation Passage to Freedom, which was to transport nearly a million people from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. He tells of how terrified people who had never travelled any great distance from their homes, and had never been on a ship, left their homes in hope of a better life in South Vietnam. He said "They had never used bathrooms before. I remember one mother gave birth, refused our help, bit off the umbilical

long sentence

sp

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-PT

no

BIG TURN P

not in Vietnam where the line between civilian & enemy was not clear.

great start here, but not well analyzed

true?

Sherman was NOT the correct example to use here

cord, took the baby into the dirty river and washed it off." It is hard to imagine the courage that would be required to leave your home (with people that you have been told are your enemy and that plan to kill you at the first opportunity they get.) But almost a million people had this courage, because they hoped for a better life for themselves and their families.

not accurate at all

☆ I'm confused with the end of Part 1. You were talking about Sinh's credibility, but seemed to conclude that Sinh's harsh post-war treatment of the S. Vietnamese by the N. Vietnamese was justified. This was a strange way to end the part on Sinh. It should have been used to show the N's motivation was stronger than Sinh & his S. Viet soldiers.

Part 2 - both of the negative story ended on very strange notes. The positive story ended abruptly & inaccurately. Catholics in N. Vietnam were leaving persecution. The Operation Passage to Freedom brought them to S. Vietnam where Catholics would not be persecuted by Ho's Communists.