

In the section of the Appy book on Turning Points, the one that stuck out the most was the account of Clark Dougan. The story he wants to tell Appy most is an event that happened over Memorial Day 1968. It starts with Dougan's story of Greg Fischer, a fellow student from high school from the same homeroom. While Dougan pursued a college education, Fischer went to Vietnam. Dougan himself had been oblivious to the war largely, but he also said he sensed that they were all pawns of something larger. When he read The Memorial Day editorial in the *Cleveland Press* on the front page, Dougan learns that Fischer died in Vietnam. He also learns of a letter Fischer left behind. The envelope says, "Open this if I don't come back from Vietnam." It mainly told Fischer's family what to do with his military life insurance. It ended with a P.S., "Don't forget to give Joey my hockey skates." *Cleveland Press* was part of a larger conservative syndicate that had largely supported the war, and the fact that they would show an angry editorial about Fischer's death really highlighted a growing resentment toward the war. This was a turning point that Dougan thinks made even World War II veterans question the war. Incidents reported like this one fed into the growing discontent, and coupled with the other events of 1968 like Tet and My Lai caused people to reconsider the war. It also brought the war home to people. The implication was that anyone could have gone to Vietnam and died. The editorial, according to Dougan, was asking, "How many more people were they willing to waste?" The group that this was a turning point for most was what Dougan called 'Middle America'. Middle America up to this point had generally supported the war. This would have been a wake-up call to reconsider the previous views on Vietnam, that it was a duty to country to fight Communism. This episode was a turning point in that it forced people to reconsider their stakes in sending people to fight in Vietnam.

Daniel Ellsberg's account in the section on Endings was truly an ending. Ellsberg had served in the marines in the 1950's, and in 1959 was hired by RAND, a prominent California think tank. He worked with defense policy much of his life from that point, eventually ending up in the Defense Department itself. During his time with the Defense Department, he helped work on the Pentagon Papers. The papers detailed Vietnam policy from around 1945 to 1968, and had been initiated by Robert McNamara in his final year as Secretary of Defense. Ellsberg was one of the few who bothered to read the papers in their entirety. It convinced him that the United States had no business in Vietnam. Ellsberg initially tried to get Congress to act on them, but when Congress refused, he turned to the newspapers. His new plan was based on his understanding of 'revolutionary judo' employed by the Viet Cong. The Viet Cong would purposely goad the American forces into attacking villages, and in the process some of the surviving villagers of these attacks would become Viet Cong. This helped them maintain support. In Ellsberg's case, it helped him goad Nixon into overreaction. Nixon formed a Special Investigations Unit from the White House called the 'Plumbers.' They're job was to dig up what Ellsberg may have had on Nixon and get rid of it. Ellsberg himself was initially charged with theft, conspiracy, and Espionage Act violations, but these were dropped when it was revealed that Nixon had illegally wiretapped Ellsberg and the Plumbers had broken into his psychiatrist's office. Ellsberg's plan had worked largely because the Plumbers had also broken into the Watergate hotel. Nixon got involved, according to Ellsberg, because he was worried that everything would lead back to his surveillance of Ellsberg. Ultimately, it led to Nixon's resignation, and many people, including Egil Krogh who was part of the

Plumbers, calling Ellsberg a patriot.

However, Ellsberg himself became a whistleblower, and it marked the end of his career with government and with think tanks. When he released the Pentagon Papers, the papers themselves discredited the Kennedy and Johnson administrations in addition to putting pressure on Nixon. If Ellsberg was willing to discredit them, then there was also nothing to stop him from discrediting other administrations. Also, RAND and other think tanks could not take the same risk either, nor could they allow their names to be associated with whistleblowing.

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Hist 195 Assignment 2

Part 1 - Turning Point

To me, Samuel Huntington's story "you had to be pretty stupid to stay out in the countryside" is the best example of a "turning point" in the war. Sam had been to Vietnam twice, first time was in 1962, and second time was in 1967. In 1962, Saigon was 80% rural, but in 1967, Sam just saw that Saigon developed as half-half urban and rural. At that time, according to the situation on the battlefield, Sam thought that U.S. was fighting a conventional war with North Vietnam's rolling into South Vietnam and pulled U.S. out. Otherwise, the Southeast Asia Economies were developing in the countries which was not affected by Communist insurrection, thus the Domino phenomenon will happen in Vietnam soon. Then those cases made Sam think they cannot win the war because Saigon seems like a city in 1967, then Saigon attracted people moving from rural to urban, and U.S. need to face all the problems which caused by rising population and not just a countryside. Sam said an example about collection garbage in Saigon, he asked: should U.S. do it or let Vietnamese do it. To me, it's too obvious that those moved people would push U.S. army from equipment advantage in the war into a dilemma of urban problems.

Part 2 – Ending

In part 5, Daniel Davidson's story "I wouldn't buy a used car from that man" is the best example of an ending of the war to me. Daniel mentioned that both of hawks and doves of U.S. government did not want to give up the war caused the ending of the war. Hawks want to continually fight to beat North Vietnam and doves want to use the method of diplomacy to reach the purpose of ending the war. And in Paris, the meeting took several months to decide the shape of the table, it's obvious that North Vietnam want U.S. recognize NLF is a separated party in the war. I watched a TV program said that some videos of South Vietnam Army indiscriminately killing people was posted, even lived on TV in America, and that was a reason of American wanted their government to stop the war. We can just imagine that a country is fighting outside and its people are opposition of what their government is doing, how can they win the fight? The answer is no, they won't.

The Turning Point – Nathan Houser

Nathan Houser's story to me was the best example of a turning point. Nathan experienced quite a few turning points during his life and especially while the war was going on. His first turning point had to do with how he viewed the government. After Kennedy's assassination he learned that the Secret Service was concerned about the possibility of a coup happening in the United States and this idea had never occurred to him before. He also heard on the radio during an interview with the Dallas chief of police that the person who was suspected of being the assassin had done some work for the FBI. This information caused Nathan to distrust what the media and government was telling the people about that situation. When conspiracy theories start to develop about major events that occur it causes one to question or not believe what they are being told by the media or the government because it could all be a lie or a cover up. The next turning point in his life had to do with politics and his belief in God. While attending a religious college in Indiana he began to realize that he did not belong there. He slowly began to lose his faith in God and then one day he just stopped believing. This turning point, while it may seem small to some is a very big one in my eyes. Religion is a subject that many people are passionate about, whether it is that they believe in God or that they don't, and for someone who has grown up believing in God their whole life to just stop believing one day is a major turning point. I think that learning more about politics also affected him because he realized how selfish and false they could be. Many like to believe that the government is going to do what is best for the people and the country but it can also be perceived by some that they are only concerned with themselves and not what is best for the people. Another turning point in his life occurred when he chose to move to Canada to avoid the Draft. He reasons for not enlisting had nothing to do with fear of war or anything along that route. He simply did not want to fight a war that he did not agree with or believe in. He felt that it was wrong and it seemed that the United States was not really fighting for democracy in Vietnam. It takes a lot of courage for a person to completely leave their family, their country, and everything that they have known in order to stand up for what they believe in. While he tried to visit his family in the United States as much as possible without being caught and arrested he did not move back to Indiana until 1983, fifteen years after he had first left.

The Ending – George Evans

George Evans story is the best example of an ending to me. His ending however dealt more with his belief in the war and the military than the actual ending of the war. George grew up in a family and community that were heavily involved with the military. To enlist in the service or be drafted when they were of age wasn't anything new for kids in his neighborhood. It was something that was expected. He had spent many times with his father and the other veterans when he was young and had come to realize that war had a profound effect on their lives, even after it was over. When it was time for him to be drafted his best friend Billy convinced him to join the air force in order to avoid being sent to Vietnam but Billy failed the physical and eventually ended up serving as a medic over in Vietnam. After being stationed in Africa and returning back to the states George was determined to go to Vietnam. Billy warned him against it and a month after that George received the news that Billy died. George took Billy's death very hard and after

his death George went to Vietnam and discovered how messed up everything there really was. Having grown up around veterans he had certain standards for how men in the military were supposed to be and after arriving in Vietnam his whole perception of the war and the soldiers in it changed. Some of the soldiers were completely opposite of what he expected and it slowly caused him to change how he felt about the military. After having to clean a dead child who had been hit by a military truck he found out that supposedly some soldiers played a game where they gambled on who could hit a Vietnamese child while driving through town. After he found this out he still did his duty as a soldier but he felt betrayed and upset with the war so he chose to stop looking like a soldier and to speak out against it. During the last three months of his tour a new company commander began to target him because of this. He had an altercation with the commander one morning in front of the entire unit because he refused to follow the orders given to him. At this point he decided that he was done with the military and the war. After the altercation he was given the choice of signing an Article 15 admitting guilt or to be court-martialed. George chose the court-martial because he did not agree with the Article 15. Before his court-martial he took a week of R and R and contemplated deserting but by the end of the week he decided to go back for his court-martial and he was found guilty of being out of uniform and fined seventy-five dollars. He realized that all of the threats about being court-martialed and what could happen to him were an act. On his last day of service the captain tried to convince him to confess guilt to the previous charges in order to clear his record but George refused and went back home. George's story clearly defines an ending to me because his childhood, his father, and his community seemed to make him destined to serve his country and he didn't have any objections about it. Yet when he finally went to war in Vietnam and seen what was going on and what it was really like to be in a war it changed how he felt about the military completely and ended what he had believed in while growing up.

Part 1 Turning Point

Wayne Smith an eighteen year old combat medic that took pride in what he was doing, pride in the fact that his men trusted him, pride in saving the lives of those very same men, he was a young man who seemed to face many turning points throughout his career as a medic. He wanted to heal and save lives yet at the same time was turned into a combat soldier with the desire to kill the enemy, even wanted to lie about his desire to kill. He was proud of his country and wanted to help free the Vietnamese from communist control, he believed in what he had signed up for. He speaks with pride of the lives he saved and equally hated his association with the lies perpetrated for the body counts reported.

Smith reupped for six more months and during this time he spoke as if at last he was doing what he signed up for in the first place treating the Vietnamese he stated that "I was proud of some of the work I did." (Appy 366) Allowing him to reconcile his experiences as a combat medic this was "legitimate medicine".(Appy 366)

Smith faced his greatest personal turning point upon returning home. After being in Vietnam witnessing the horrors of combat and then to come home and face the return to normalcy where people only cared about themselves or as Smith put it "All these sons of bitches cared about was who was going to the beach or who was dating who... I hated America. I hated our materialistic superficiality and our indifference." (Appy 366)

I have seen this in my oldest brother who served in Vietnam go into the service proud to be an American and come home unable to reconcile the horrors you've seen with small town USA and the normalcy or what he viewed as its selfishness. This can become a pivotal time in their lives if they are unable to cope with the things they have seen and done.

Part 2 Endings

Life as he knew it ended the day Colonel Earl Hopper Sr. received word that his son Earl was missing in action. The fear and pain a parent or loved one must experience when finding out that the one they loved is missing in action couldn't possibly be put into words, but Colonel Hopper and his wife Patty not only put it into words they are still fighting to find him and all those listed as MIA or POW's founding their own POW/MIA organization and finding evidence that his son did not die when his F-4D Phantom jet crashed close to the Vietnam-Laos border. This interview speaks on behalf of not only LTC Earl Hooper Jr. but all POW/MIA's.

Colonel Hooper made claims of government cover-up, with 550 military personnel missing or taken prisoner in Laos and only eight returned that leaves 442 unaccounted for. Colonel Hooper's continued search for his son has produced evidence that he was alive through the spring of 1984 and offers information that they also had information that Earl Jr. was in the hands of the Russians during the eighties. The government identified three different crash sites with an excavation of the last site that the Hoppers claim to be staged as there was a lack of corrosion; they found five teeth and 23 bone fragments not all identifiable as human, they also found Soviet ammunition at the site

with lends itself to the theory of him being taken to Russia.

The Hoppers will not have a true ending to the loss of their son until he has been found or remains sent home, but as Patty Hopper stated” The hardest thing in this entire issue is to come to grips with the fact that somebody was alive years after the end of the war. The easiest thing is to think them dead, being at peace with their God and not suffering.

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HST 195

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Assignment #2

While the Tet offensive is widely considered the turning point of the Vietnam war, Michael Bernhardt ran into his own during the Mai Lai Massacre. I feel that his account has the same tone that we had been seeing all the way back to 1966. The US soldiers having a harder and harder time convincing themselves what exactly they are fighting for. All the while the north Vietnamese have only been strengthening their resolve to carry the fight to fruition and a unified Vietnam. While this paper must only be on one story from Appy's Patriots, I must reference another for its stark comparison. While Bernhardt talks of the complete lawlessness of his unit prior to the Mai Lai massacre and the confusion regarding what was expected of them, Huynh Phuong Dong sheds light on the north's struggle in the same time frame. Dong explains that "uncle Ho taught us to make a clear distinction between peace-loving Americans and warmongers" and that "we also made a distinction between the ordinary soldiers who carried out orders and the policy makers who initiated the war" (Appy p.330-331). The north was in the war for the long haul. To be completely candid, I believe "the" turning point in the war was when the United States continued to back Diem's corrupt government beyond salvage, as well as committing combat troops to Vietnam and allowing the French to take a back seat. It was a no win situation against an enemy that was fighting for their homeland, as well as their independence from foreign leaders in lands thousands of miles away.

Bernhardt's turning point came unfortunately much later, and under even more unfortunate circumstances. For a man who "was the designated pain-in-the-ass of the company" and who had "spent a lot of time up until that point getting between American soldiers and Vietnamese civilians" (Appy p.352) the Mai Lai massacre must have been emotionally traumatizing beyond measure. Bernhardt speaks of walking into the village and seeing bodies everywhere, and not combatants, villagers, old men women and children mixed in with the dead livestock. Before this he showed concern when speaking of his unit, Charlie Company, and their apparent "lawlessness". He comments in the story that "I think something like My Lai probably had happened many times before. It was just a matter of scale" (Appy p.350). This brings me to the turning point. At this point, Michael Bernhardt ceased caring about the objectives of the war. In a bigger sense, this general theme throughout many of the interviews with vets in Vietnam: a Television history, shows an overall turning point in the whole war. One where one side has no will and the other has more than enough. After My Lai, it was over for Bernhardt. All that mattered was to make it home, alive, and after twelve and a half months he was finally choppered out of his combat posting.

While Bernhardt's story may have been a turning point, Truong Tran's on page 504 of

Appy clearly delineates an end, at least in his eyes, (as well as mine for the record). I know I have already touched on this point above, however I really think it transitions well into the “ending” point of the war. US combat troops being landed in 1965 was in my mind the end. Well to be fair, the beginning of the end. The way I see the Vietnam conflict is this; the beginning involved mainly the french, as the United states gets more and more involved we reach the middle, then (only about half way through the conflict) we see the beginning of the end. Landing of US troops. From here, it was a losing battle. The south was ruined by the introduction of US troops. Tran goes on to say “Having U.S. soldiers in Vietnam not only destroyed our political cause, it also destroyed our economy and social fabric. 90% of the people relied on the land, but during the war people could not grow crops and had to move to cities” (Appy p.506). I saw no feasible way to win the war when the Southern society was in ruins and “prostitutes lived better than high-ranking southern officials” (Appy p.506). In part five, to me this represents the end. the war had to be dragged out as to save face and show a strong hand to communism, as well as to slow the catastrophic collapse of the southern government the U.S. had so freely supported.

Part One

In Part Four of Patriots, Clark Dougan's narrative is a very intimate and relatable piece of work. This narrative shows a turning point in Dougan's life when he returned home from college in 1968 to see that a classmate had died in Vietnam while Dougan was away at college. This turning point in his life was the realization that the war was a tangible, ever present event in which everyday people were dying for the cost of their country. Despite the fact that Dougan wasn't great friends with the deceased Greg Fischer, he was greatly impacted by the death of his peer.

Dougan's turning point of realizing that he could have been Fischer is something that greatly empowered his thoughts on the war. From being a college student without a care in the world to realizing he was greatly thankful for every chance he had and for not being deployed, this turning point was in a way a change of consciousness of himself and the world. The moment in which he read the Cleveland Press editorial on Fischer's death entitled "He was Only 19- Did You Know Him?" to the moment he visited his grave in 1982, he remembered what the war took from his society. There is more than just fighting and strategy going on in any war. There is always a constant battle being fought in personal lives and in everyone who is associated with anyone away at war. Dougan's story was a relatable narrative that showcased the informality of death in war, which helped emphasize this turning point in his life and understanding of the war. The simple editorial article on Fischer and the one worded epitaph imprinted on his mind.

This turning point was probably not an uncommon one for teens and adults in that time frame, or even today. The same type of activity goes on in the brain when you know someone who dies in war or out of war. The death of a peer is an intense and eye-opening experience, especially if it is related to a war setting. Feeling guilty is a part of life, but Dougan shows that this guiltiness comes from unexpected places at unexpected times. The war greatly affects everyone who is (in any way) in its path.

Part Two

In Part Five, Le Minh Khue's narrative entitled "The Merriment Was Short Lived" embraced her experiences in the war as a member of the Volunteer Youth Corps in Vietnam. Her parents both died during the Communist land reforms, so she was sent to live with her Communist aunt and uncle. Khue mentions how in her generation "we learned to distinguish truth from falsehood, rectitude from corruption". This realization played into how all of her experiences led to the end of her involvement of the war and the end of her familiarity in the youth corps.

Khue explains her experiences with death in the war and how most people she met she never saw again. This ending of people she knew was almost constant. She writes about how she would develop petty crushes on soldiers and never see their faces again. As she puts it, "the letters remain, but the senders are gone forever". This ending of constant relationships definitely plays into her overall end of the war. Khue's ending point of the war was constant. As much as people were dying around her, she never gave up.

When the war officially ended, Khue barely celebrated the event. Her personal ending of

the war was more depressing than uplifting- she no longer was helping with the war because it was over, but her world seemed to collapse. The economy and cities were turned on their heads, giving away from the comfort and familiarity of home. Her ending was no happy ending, but rather a maze she couldn't escape. Her ending sentence reads, "It was terrible." They couldn't afford rice or soap and the cities that thrived off of products had no more factories. Her end was no happy ending. The end of any war is at first a happy time, but reality crashes down on happiness and settles into the lives of everyone. What happens when the thing you are working for ends? What does your life have to offer then? Although Khue did not mention specifically that she felt a major difference from her life after the war, it was well implied. War causes havoc on everyone it sets foot by, and she embodied this idea. Her life wasn't necessarily great before the war, but during the war she had purpose. The end of her war was the end of the actual war when she had to go back to living a "normal" life among the economic crisis.

I think Clark Dougan's story was a good example of a turning point in the war, and in more ways than one. For one it represented a personal turning point for the man himself. In reading the editorial about his school acquaintance, it brought the war home to him in a personal way. Prior to seeing it he was aware of the war and of people from his hometown being lost to it; "We've just received the very sad news that Terry Kilbane, a marine lance corporal, has been killed in Vietnam. Let's please observe a moment of silence." But it wasn't really someone he knew even a little. Reading about Greg and remembering the discussion they had had in their homeroom the year before made the war a more personal thing to him. He realized how easy it could have been him in those shoes, and the whole thing was less a faraway thing and more right in front of him, then it was before.

The second turning point was that of the country. Articles like the editorial written about Greg were being written in newspapers and more and more conservative papers. The youth of the country were being stricken down in a war over seas that many people couldn't relate to or stand behind. Clark said after reading the editorial about his school mate, "I think that was the moment when "Middle America" really turned against the war." And it makes sense. Your average Joe American was just seeing casualty after casualty, but not seeing any real benefit to our country to warrant the loss of lives. When even the conservative papers were asking why it had to have had an effect on their audiences. "I think a lot of World War 2 vets who had been sitting around their kitchen tables saying, 'You've got to fight for your country,' were starting to say, 'Fuck this. It's not worth Greg Fischer's life, or his buddies life.' Or maybe they weren't saying it, but they were starting to feel it."

Le Minh Khue's story struck me as a good example of an ending. Though she talks in her story of the end of the war that is not the ending I was as moved by. There were two endings that jumped out at me in this piece. The first is the ending of innocence in a sense, the way the war was romanticized for her at such a young age that she lied about her age so she could become a part of the youth brigade. That in doing so her and her peers grew up so quickly and found "relations in wartime were always temporary." The way she expresses how they just accepted that to be how it would be struck me as a death of their innocence somehow. How they dealt with death and bombings daily as children. Moving dead bodies and carrying ammunition around at such a young physical age, had to mature them quickly. Imagining a young girl facing down an incoming rocket gives me chills. They never had a chance to be children.

The second ending is harder for me to describe. It was in her disappointment after the war had ended. How her expectations of the cities and people were not met. How Danang had been reduced to a commercial pit that was little more than another impoverished city once the consumer products were gone. Her disappointment in how plastic the city had become. How the unity was gone and in its place a craving for shopping had taken its place.

That all strikes me as worst ending possible for someone like her. All those years of fighting in hope for the end of the war, only to find herself disappointed in the people around her when it finally came to pass. The way the desires of the people changed, the

way the landscape changed. Each of those things an ending in its own right. The country was left changed completely. All the way down to each individual person. And that is what I got from this story. A young girl who lost her parents and was raised by family members to fight for the ideas they influenced her with, who at a young age took up the mantle herself, exchanging her childhood for a place amongst those fighting, and who upon surviving through to the end of the war was left with a foreign landscape, and foreign culture over the land she was fighting for. I found her story a powerful and very telling one. And I was sad for her endings.

Assignment 2

TURNING POINT

In John Gillian's story I saw three different turning points. The first was the result of a trip he took with three other WWII Vets from congress. They all arrived in South Vietnam as supporters of the war effort. After seeing the massive build-up, a briefing by Gen. Westmoreland, and the failure of a mission by American pilots to take out a bridge in North Vietnam and the success of a Viet Cong to take out a bridge in South Vietnam by bicycle, he and eight others turned to non-supporters. This by, just seeing for himself, instead of listening to others.

The second turning point came with the assassination of Robert Kennedy. He felt that Kennedy could win the election to be President, end the war and our country would have been better for it.

The third was the failure to get the "peace plank" into the Democrat Platform for the 1968 election. The top two nominees were Humphrey and McCarthy, with the peace plank Humphrey would be able to separate from Johnson's war policies and McCarthy could then throw his support to Humphrey. The peace plank failed, McCarthy didn't fall in line and the election was turned over to Nixon.

ENDING

Alexander M. Haig's account presses the notion that the end actually came at the beginning. Although, through-out his account, he points out on many occasions the war's outcome could have been changed and brought to a swifter conclusion, if only we had used our might and resources against Hanoi and made it clear to Moscow that we intended to win, as Eisenhower had done during the Korean conflict.

With this all said it still comes down to the end came at the beginning. In the first paragraph he says "Either you conduct the conflict with all the assets the United States has at its disposal to bring about a quick successful outcome or you stay out. We didn't do either in Vietnam."

Juncheng Qian

Joe Escobar

Hist 195 Assignment 2

Part 1 - Turning Point

“Quitting wasn’t heroic.” Narrated by Anthony Lake I think this should be a good example of the turning point of the war. He was working for the White House at that time but when somebody asked about his feeling about that, unexpectedly, he said he felt guilt about that and he was doubt himself is right or not working at the white house. He turning to against people he had agreed with, and he felt it is not right that his job is working with what he was against with. I think his idea can be reflect people are tired about war, when U.S. army fight with North Vietnamese for a long time people has loss their passion of fight, more and more has turning back to calm and real think about the true means of this war, this will make the public opinion trend to anti-war and the job of government advertise are harder and harder working in the public and also it will affect the idea of people who working in the White House, so the government will lose the interest of this war. As a result, I don’t think they are not worse at their arms equipment but these long wars makes them have time to think about the value of the war.

Part 2 – Ending

John McCain’ story “Americans like conspiracies.” This story has talked about John McCain remember has no idea what happened in United States mainland when he fight in the battleground, he response that the soldier fight in Vietnamese didn’t know about the trend of public opinion about the war, they didn’t that there are many people against the war and the government has blocked those message about the voice of antiwar has been loud enough to effect the decision of their strategy. This behavior of government did is understandable because those antiwar idea will make their solider feel weak about the war and make them doubt about what they are doing, but that will negatively affect their solider because the irresolution decision cannot sent the accurate message to their troops, so they will feel confuse. And this would shows that government and public have different opinion about the war and because the war are long and cost lots of resource and money, government at last weighed the advantage and disadvantage to decided make the war end.

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Assignment 2

Awakening Towards the End of US Involvement in Vietnam

During the 1960's, American citizens began to question the legitimacy of US military efforts in Vietnam, and simultaneously the country was in a state of turmoil dealing with various social movements such as the Civil Rights Movement. The wide array of non-violent protest and activism was building in numbers, and the American middle class was starting to fully comprehend the reality of losing their sons in the Vietnam War. In Clark Dougan's letter, "Memorial Day 1968," he writes about how an editorial in the Cleveland Press provided him with an awakening sense of reality when he wrote, "It just hit me like a hammer. I remembered that conversation in homeroom and it suddenly had this profound significance. I had gone off to this cloistered college while he was going off to die in Vietnam. (Appy 305) It appears as though Dougan was not alone in his realization that he could die in Vietnam just as easily as anyone else. Furthermore Dougan claims that everyone knows someone, some ordinary everyday person, who ends up going off to fight the war in Vietnam, and he states, "I think that was the moment when "Middle America" really turned against the war. (Appy 306)

Middle class American households becoming more familiar with the tragic loss of life from their own communities and families in the Vietnam War marks a major turning point in the war. Shadowing, or even guided by the prolific leaders for the Civil Rights Movement, American antiwar activists began to flourish all over the countryside, and nonviolent antiwar protests began to take place more frequently. Along with the increase in antiwar protests, the two differences between pro-war and anti-war civilians began to grow, and it began to appear as though the US itself would be one of the dominos to perish from what is known as the domino theory regarding the Vietnam War and Communist rule in the region. Therefore, Lyndon B. Johnson and his staff had to try and manage the conflict in Vietnam with more concern for the American peoples growing distaste with continued American involvement in the war. The American middle class awakening to the real impact of the Vietnam War on their families and communities thus marks one of many shifting points regarding the Vietnam War, especially regarding US involvement in the war.

The war in Vietnam would eventually end in a similar type of awakening that Vietnam Veterans and soldiers alike began to be aware of; Veterans and active duty soldiers began to actively protest the war in Vietnam. In the letter written by Steve Sherlock the increasing numbers of Veterans and active duty military men being fed up with the war in Vietnam could not be more apparent. In particular Sherlock writes about one protest at Camp Eagle where a petition was put up with the words "Fuck war" written on it that he himself signed. (Appy 425)

Sherlock was met by with a man from intelligence who had been outraged by an officer who had, " betrayed his duty by signing an antiwar petition. " (Appy 425) Sherlock was eventually relieved of his duties at Camp Eagle, and he returned to America eventually finding his way back to Purdue in 1970. While in Purdue he met with an ex-marine, and the talks and considerations of starting a local chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. (Appy 429) Different chapters of VVAW began to pop up throughout the country, and with more veterans joining these chapters; it is likely that the government became even more concerned and worried with the unity and safety of its own countryside than ever before. Furthermore, the increase of active duty military men on the ground in Vietnam protesting the war efforts and disobeying orders would make the war much more difficult to win, so the active duty GI's in Vietnam laid some of the groundwork helping to lead the US to withdrawal all of her troops from Vietnam. And in March of 1973, the US withdrew the last ground troops from Vietnam, thus providing an end to the Vietnam War in the eyes of the American public.

Part 1

The support for the war in Vietnam began to turn when Middle America had finally had enough. When Middle America finally began to hear and see the death and destruction in Vietnam and when it became personal. Many, if not all, of the young men sent to Vietnam during the first years had parents or teachers who had fought in World War 2. These young men were taught that to fight and die for your country was an honor. The movies of that era also portrayed the soldier as a hero, so for many young men there was really no choice but to join or go when they were drafted.

In 1967-68 the media was just beginning to tell the “real” story. The clergy were just beginning to talk about the death and destruction and to question the validity of the war. In the colleges there had been dissent for some time, but in the home, in the media and in the churches there had still been support for, and belief in the government’s version of events. Those, who were the dissenter’s were classified as Communists, Hooligans, or Bums, those kids with the “silver spoons” who were spoiled and undeserving, as we heard in the PBS video.

Clark Dougan describes the times of his life and the changes in Cleveland, Ohio. He describes, with accuracy, the “college cloistering” of some, while others who did not have the grades, or whose parents could not or would not pay for college, were fighting and dying in Vietnam. From my own experience, I can say that the draft board “cleaned out” whole towns leaving only those young men with special deferments, college enrolled, or medically exempt behind. He describes his surprise that the Cleveland Press paper would write an editorial about the death of a soldier from their area and put it on the front page. He believes that the paper was really asking “how many more people are we willing to waste” on Vietnam. He thinks that those World War 2 Vets who had been sitting around their kitchen tables saying “you’ve got to fight for your country” were now starting to re think that idea. President Johnson said it well when he said, “If I lose Walter Cronkite, I have lost the American public”.

Clark Dougan describes his friend, who had been killed in Vietnam, as a regular kid. He was not an Eagle Scout, Class President or All-American athlete and apparently he was not the son of an important family. He was the boy we all knew, even if we didn’t know his name.” He was just 19, did you know him?” could have been said of so many, in so many towns across America and that was the turning point for Middle America and maybe the beginning of the end of the war in Vietnam.

Part Two

The end of the Vietnam War came with the Watergate mentality and activities in the Nixon White House. Starting in 1970 when the bombing of Cambodia hit the news and the deliberate deceit of the American public started to become public knowledge and ending with the resignation of President Nixon.

The “Let’s circle the wagons”, by Egil “Bud” Krogh begins to describe the decay in the military in Vietnam when he describes his visit to the troops and the drug problems he encountered along with the lack of honest reports coming from the Military. He tells the

White House that the troops are sick and tired, bored, scared and unhappy and drugs are everywhere.

The publishing of the Pentagon Papers in the New York Times and the break in at Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office in 1971 began to show the public the extent of the decay in our Government. To actually believe that the break in was "a busted operation conducted under the president's national security authority, not a crime or a constitutional violation" showed the extent to which our own government would go to protect its lies and deceptions.

If the Pentagon Papers were correct as they were proved to be, the public had been deceived for a very long time. The Pentagon Papers were released bit by bit, so the long history of White House lies caused even the staunchest supporter of the war to start to question our involvement in Vietnam. While those who had been protesting the war now had support for what they had been saying, more ammunition and other reasons for their demonstrations.

Egil Krogh said that the 'White house Plumbers' were not the most rational group of men, and that Watergate might not have happened had anyone just said "this White House will not accept that kind of activity". It could then be said that had Nixon not been damaged by Watergate and had remained in office, Congress might not have voted to end all military activities anywhere in Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos. The War Powers Act might not have been passed and the aid to South Vietnam might not have been stopped. The war might have been prolonged for an even longer period of time and maybe the outcome of the war would have been different.

There are a few different aspects that could be considered turning points of the conflict in Vietnam. In any war there are so many different decisive battles and moments that can change the outcome of what is going to happen. It can be a hard task to just narrow it down to a single moment. When looking at the stories we've read in the Appy book I couldn't help but realize a turning point may have been mentioned by John Gilligan. A severe mistake and overestimation by America was the significance of air support. We thought having air superiority was going to be the difference in the war. Nobody thought there was a chance to lose with the fact we could bomb the Viet Cong into submission if need be. To bomb the people as well to make them surrender. The reason I look at this as a turning point is the fact that once we realized this wasn't going to be the case, we were in trouble. People at home started to complain more and more about the war, and the leaders started to question the tactics we were using. America had never fought a war against an enemy like we faced in Vietnam. The guerrilla warfare tactics of hiding, using the land and elements around them to their advantage. We had never seen it before, and they were very good at it. I feel that once we really got into the war and saw how it was going to be fought, it really changed a lot. We got demoralized by losses and general ineffectiveness of our plans and attacks. This is why the inability of our attacks to be effective was a turning point. If air attacks weren't going to be successful, then what are we going to do? It caused our leaders to really scratch their heads at the time and wonder what to do next. In a war when you start to question what you are doing, that's when you will start to fall down. Everyone will question each other regarding why we are losing and just why we are even in the war in general.

I believe the beginning of the end of the war for us was our overall ineffectiveness. Everyone starts to turn on each other when things begin to go downhill. I look at the end of the war as when the anti war campaigns really started to turn up at home. In any war if you don't have good support at home it'll start to get to you. Towards the end of the war the war detractors were getting louder and louder. The voices against what we were doing became more and more. When this happens it begins to demoralize everyone from the top down. Including the men fighting over in Vietnam and the leaders at home. A good representation of this from the Appy book was the story of Nguyen Ngoc Bich. It really focuses on the people at home. How fiery and loud against the war people had become. Asking questions like "why should my son die for your country". A lot of people at home disagreed with the war from the beginning. And after things started to go downhill over in Vietnam it got worse and worse. People wondered why we were fighting for somebody else. It was a completely different situation than what we were fighting for in World War Two. Bich's account of being at the university is very telling. All of the people yelling and arguing over the war. If it gets to the point where people at home are arguing and yelling with each other then that is really where things go to the point of no return. When fighting a war you need support from the people at home to be able to keep up morale. This clearly was not the case with Vietnam. It started out poorly and ended even worse. By the time everything was starting to flare up at home, the war was over. There isn't any coming back from a situation like that.

History 195- Assignment #2

Kye Ruddell

Part One:

Clark Dougan experienced a very personal turning point in his view of the war, and in doing so, symbolized the same change in mindset which much of the youth of America undoubtedly experienced as well. This makes his account an excellent example, in its commonality and very lack of originality. Dougan experienced the war much the way young people experienced it throughout the country. While he was aware of the war and the fact that people were going over to Vietnam, fighting and dying, he saw it through the eyes of a young man who felt that the war was removed from his reality. He saw it as names of the fallen and songs to sing when being silly with his classmates. After he went off to college, he didn't think much of it at all. This is the experience of thousands of young men who chose college over the military during the time of the draft.

The choices that Dougan and those in his high school were making about their future were based mainly on the expectations of others and the opportunities they felt were waiting (or not waiting) for them when they graduated. The lack of total understanding that Dougan had for the war in high school increased when he entered the isolation of college, and began his studies, which in no way mirrored that which he would be doing for his career.

When Dougan returned to his small home town on Memorial Day weekend of 1968, he experienced an event which was not only a turning point in how he viewed the war, but was also a major catalyst in the direction his life would turn forever. His turning point came at a time when the nation was going through its own shift in view regarding the war. This was highlighted by government indecision, public scrutiny, and multi-generational protests. Away from the segregation of college, the editorial in the newspaper which Dougan found was a shock to him. Learning that his school mate had been killed created a profound link between Dougan and the war, and allowed him to recall the seemingly innocuous conversation he'd had with this classmate before graduation as an interaction which played a large role in his shift toward a new understanding and feeling about the war.

This interaction he'd had a year or so before, as well as his newly learned knowledge of his classmate's fateful decision, created a decisive moment for Dougan which changed his view of the war from being a far-removed event to having a face and a place in his life. With this, he began to see the changes around him, as with the difference in the tone of the newspaper which ran the editorial, which he'd found to be historically supportive of the war. He stated that he began to see the change in the attitude of Middle America at this time, and whether this had already been happening unbeknownst to Dougan is unclear. What is clear is that this was the turning point which changed his opinion of the war, changed in part his view of the past, and irrevocably

changed the direction of his life, choosing to become a Vietnam War historical writer.

Part Two:

The choices Daniel Ellsberg made, and the reactions they elicited, were a catalyst for several endings related to the era surrounding and including the Vietnam War. These included having a part in the end of the American public's idealization of government officials, the end of journalistic subservience, and the end of the Nixon presidency.

While Ellsberg was assisting McNamara in his compilation of the Pentagon Papers, he found himself speaking with a man who was willing to face prison for his ideals- in this case, dodging the draft he opposed. This made Ellsberg re-evaluate his stance and ended his determination to focus on the personal ramifications of his choices. He learned of the high level cover-up of the murder of a Vietnamese allied agent by U.S. soldiers. This heralded the end of his belief in the sanctity of the government at all costs. It was then that he resolved to release the Pentagon Papers.

Some endings are highlighted by the beginnings they elicit. The release of the Pentagon Papers marked the beginning of a new kind of journalism, which appeared for the first time to be questioning authority and finding integrity in standing up to government pressure. When they were faced with lawsuits to stop printing the Pentagon Papers, 17 different newspapers released excerpts without question, before the courts deemed them legally able to do so.

The Pentagon Papers themselves highlighted the insincerity, rigid thinking, and illegalities of former policy-makers regarding the Vietnam War. It showed the actions and decisions of a few as directly affecting the lives of many thousands of young men and their families. Because Ellsberg demonstrated a willingness to do whatever he found necessary to expose the government corruption concerning Vietnam, President Nixon grew more concerned with the possibility that Ellsberg would bring to light his plan to extend the war indefinitely. Nixon's response to the Ellsberg threat was not proportional to the actual threat. Utilizing "the Plumbers" to spy on Ellsberg and break into his psychiatrist's office led to a connection between Nixon and Watergate- the only concrete connection said to exist at that time. This overreaction by Nixon marked the end of his power in office, as well as the end of the American belief that honesty and integrity are inalienable facets of the presidency.

Overall, Ellsberg's actions marked an ending to the belief that there was anything just and pious about America's involvement in the war, as well as ending for many the idea that all war is the same, and that we Americans are always fighting for a moral and just cause in a moral and just manner. Ellsberg's release of the Pentagon Papers also marked the end of the more docile, sidelined position the media took on events, bringing about the beginning of the new media which was unafraid of the ramifications of getting

to the real truth of a story.

The release of the Pentagon Papers also ended the rose-tinted view many had of the government leaders which came before. While inconsistencies and untruths in the Johnson Administration already existed for many Americans, the information released in the Papers was also the end of their shining view of Kennedy's Camelot, and the beginning of a pervasive cynicism which exists as a given today with regard to our government officials. These are examples of the reason Daniel Ellsberg was a catalyst in the ending of the era marked by the Vietnam War.

Kyle Poirier

HST 195

Spring 14

Turning Points and Ending in the Vietnam War

An example of a turning point came in Clark Dougan's account, "He was only 19 - Did you Know Him?" He talked about how he grew up in a very blue collared area which sent a good size of it's population to the Vietnam War. He talked about how it became routine to hear over the local radio that another kid from his town was killed in the war. He also mentions how he read an article from the *Cleveland Press* about Greg Fischer dying, a boy he sat next to in homeroom for three years in high school. He goes on to talk about how Greg was just an average kid that everyone knows and how this article changed the view of how "Middle America" felt about the war.

I think Greg was the epitome of "Middle America", the hard backbone of the United States. And when this article was published, it touched a part of this big group of people. Many of these people were World War II vets, or have close relationship with them, who used to be big advocates of the Vietnam War. But after awhile they started to realize the difference in the wars

and started wondering if it was worth losing their young.

Clark Dougan said he believes the article about Greg Fischer was the turning point in how “Middle America” viewed the war, I think it added to it but I do not think it was the sole turning point. I think it was a culmination of hearing how many people are dying over there, while also hearing about how little was getting accomplished. Originally they were for the war because they are the conservative Americans who fought in World War 2, which accomplished a lot of good. But when they started noticing that the Vietnam War was looking a kind of unnecessary they started changing their viewpoint on the war slowly.

An ending to the war came from Daniel Ellsberg’s account, “We’re Eating Our Young.” Ellsberg worked for a think tank that helped the government with Vietnam. He copied over seven thousand top secret documents that showed the deceitfulness of the government. He then released these, which are the Pentagon Papers, which led to Nixon’s Watergate Scandal.

If Ellsberg didn’t do this, people wouldn’t have caught Nixon doing anything wrong. The Watergate Scandal plus the added effects of the Pentagon Papers, made the Vietnam War end earlier. Nixon had the plan of hard bombing Vietnam to push

them into submission, but with this scandal it put him out of office where he couldn't do that anymore. Also with the truth coming out with the Pentagon Papers, the majority of the people needed this war to end.

This type of thing is the type of thing that makes history, in his account he talked about how he did this to try to evoke Nixon into doing something wrong. He forgot about his career aspirations and did this for the people that were dying in a war that was based on lies, a very honorable man. This story kind of reminded me of the recent NSA findings, released by Snowden. Both these men were working for similar agencies, and they did it because they hated the deceit that was coming from the government. Yet Snowden's efforts hasn't seemed to stop private information from being viewed like how Ellsberg ended the war. This may be because of the fact that Ellsberg's releases were much more of a material offense people because of all the hardships resulting from it.

In Appy's *Patriots*, the story that best represented a turning point in the Vietnam War in part four titled "A Turning Point" was Clark Dougan's. In his story he talks about growing up in "Middle America" during the war and how the two options for a young man were college or the military and how even in college you had the chance of being drafted. Dougan's main turning point was when he read in a newspaper on Memorial Day while on a visit home from college that a former classmate of his had died in Vietnam. He said that was when it hit him "like a hammer" that while he had gone to college there were people that he had known who were dying in Vietnam.

Not only was this a turning point for Dougan himself, it was a turning point for "Middle America." For the first time, people in small towns and average cities were beginning to question why they were sending their boys off to fight in a foreign country. When it became personal, when deaths like Greg Fischer's began showing up in newspapers was when people began to turn their viewpoints away from supporting the war. The fact that these deaths of average guys, guys that most people wouldn't find special but were the kind of guy that you sat next to during homeroom, was what made these deaths significant. It showed that anyone could be sent to Vietnam and killed and people began to realize that they did not think that it was worth it. It also was a turning point in the mood of the country as a whole. Each city might have had its own time that it turned, but when they turned they were done with the war and many did not care for the reasoning behind it anymore. Conservative newspapers like *The Cleveland Press* that Dougan mentioned had once supported the war began to run stories about the deaths of boys from their towns. These articles reflected the changing position from support to opposition to the war. Dougan put it best when he said, "World War II vets who had been sitting around their kitchen tables saying, 'You've got to fight for your country,' were starting to say, 'Fuck this. It's not worth Greg Fischer's life or his buddy's life.'" Or maybe they weren't saying it, but they were starting to feel it" (306).

In part five titled "Endings" the story that best portrays an end was Beverly Gologorsky. She was a peace activist during the war. In her story she describes how she started participating in demonstrations and got involved with different activists. She talked about her peaceful antiwar demonstrations and her involvement with the Women's Union. One of the events that she talked about was when in May of 1971 the Vietnam veterans came to Washington and helped end the position of supporting the war by reenacting the antiwar movement. Gologorsky describes them wanting to end the war and how they threw away their Purple Hearts and other medals in front of the Capital. The soldiers showing that they were done with the war and wanted it to end showed the country that not even the soldiers backed the war. This ended any idea that what was going on over in Vietnam could be salvaged in any way.

Gologorsky described a soldier that was trying not to cry. "Having thrown the medals away he started to walk off and collapsed on somebody's shoulder. The hardness went out of him. Everything just went soft." (417). This veteran showed the emotions that so many that had gone before him that day felt. He portrayed the emotions that had been bottled up for so many, the release of what he had experienced over in Vietnam. When the soldiers turned against the war was the end of any hope of support for the war continuing on. The country had been boiling and the veterans coming home were what helped them

boil over. The soldiers were done and so was their country. For them, the war needed to end and they knew that they were the end. They had the power to finish the war, because without the support of the country and its soldiers it becomes difficult to continue.

To Gologorsky, there is no true end to Vietnam for her. She said that she does not feel that she needs closure or that our country should have closure. "There shouldn't be closure for the country, because if there's closure, there's just a chance it could happen again (417). The hatred that she had during the war continued on after it had ended. Some are still angry about it. Each person has their own ending to the war but it doesn't mean that we can't learn from it.

After reading Part Four in Christian Appy's book Patriots, the story of Douglas Kinnard in 'From Johnson to Nixon' makes a deep impression on me, and it's a best example of the turning point from my perspective.

Douglas Kinnard is a typical character of Generals in US army and his thoughts could reflect the minds of those generals and soldiers like him.

At that time, the background of war is in the Johnson Administration U.S. strategists thought that weapons in the hands of U.S. Army could easily win the war with such a small country like Vietnam. Thus the United States expanded from special war to local war in Vietnam War. President Johnson's policy made the United States bogged down in Vietnam, resulting in the final ruin in his career.

Former President Johnson's policy in Vietnam from the bombing to chemical weapons, their long-promised victory was out of reach. People could not see any hope of victory. Failed battles raised anti-war sentiment among Americans, no matter soldiers in the front or the people in the United States and the media although they had involvement in the war. The antiwar movement and other social protest movements caused division of American values and social chaos, like the War of Independence and the Civil War the Vietnam War torn from top to bottom in the United States, leading to identity crisis. Many people suspect that the nature of war has occurred and the Vietnam War was a mistake.

Douglas Kinnard said, "I wasn't disillusioned with the military, I was disillusioned with the nature of the war and what it was doing to our country. I was disgusted with the whole thing." He made a questionnaire to 173 army generals who served as combat commanders in Vietnam. The most startling thing was almost seventy percent said they really didn't understand the war's objectives. Someone said, "I'm not sure why the U.S. made such a tremendous effort. The announced reasons by President Johnson didn't wash. What were we really trying to do, whose lives were we really trying to save". He said after the Tet, the American people very rightfully saw the fruitlessness of the whole thing. By the end of his first tour, he thought the war was a losing proposition.

President Nixon's so-called Vietnamization was that the United States gradually withdrew their troops and trained the South Vietnamese army and equipped them, provided air support so American casualties can be reduced, thereby reducing the country's anti-war public opinion. The core of the Nixon administration's Vietnam policy was called Vietnamization. National Liberation Front guerrillas on the border of Cambodia and Vietnam and North Vietnamese in Cambodia's sanctuary constitutes the biggest threat of Vietnamization plan. The United States bombing in Ho Chi Minh Trail in Cambodia for one year did not achieve the intended purpose.

At the end of his second tour, General Kinnard's job was to plan the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. and he found the American had been secretly bombing Cambodia for a year. For Douglas Kinnard, in 1970, at age forty-eight, after two tours in Vietnam, the one-star general retired from the military and went to Princeton to pursue a Ph.D.

As for the ending, the story told by Nguyen Thi Binh is the best example of the ending in my opinion.

In October 1972, Henry Kissinger, concluded a secret peace agreement with North Vietnam's Le Duc Tho. After reviewing the agreement, President Thieu demanded major alterations to the document. In response, the North Vietnamese published the details of the agreement and stalled the negotiations. Nixon ordered the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in late December 1972. On January 15, 1973, after pressuring South Vietnam to accept the peace deal, Nixon announced the end of offensive operations against North Vietnam.

The Paris negotiations were among the longest peace talks in history. It started in November of 1968 and ended on the January of 1973. All of the four negotiating teams were quite different. The NLF had only one head from beginning to end so the media said that with their patience they'd win. The situation on the battlefield would determine the results of the negotiations and the fighting remained quite serious until 1973.

The Paris Peace Accords ending the conflict were signed January 27, 1973, and were followed by the withdrawal of the remaining American troops. The terms of the accords called for a complete ceasefire in South Vietnam, allowed North Vietnamese forces to retain the territory they had captured, released US prisoners of war, and called for both sides to find a political solution to the conflict. As an enticement to Thieu, Nixon offered US airpower to enforce the peace terms. Thus, the war between U.S. and the Vietnam came to an end. It became the civil war between the North and the South Vietnam.

When asking an individual what he or she believes is the turning point in the Vietnam War your answers will vary dramatically, however there is no right or wrong answer and it is totally up to the interpretation of the reader. As mentioned in the instructions TET would be the easiest answer as to the turning point in the war. However, after further reading I have come to the personal conclusion that “From Cambodia to Kent State” is the turning point for me. “From Cambodia to Kent State” begins with President Nixon taking office and immediately goes into details about how the public and congress would not authorize additional troop deployments. This is a big turning point because it is the start of a “scaling back” so to speak in the war, the focus is changing from winning the war to making choices on how to retract soldiers and how to stabilize South Vietnam. Now while this may seem like it is the end of the war, it is far from that. Nixon felt that he must secure a non-communist state in South Vietnam and he nor Harry Kissinger were willing to withdraw without achieving their goal. For me the real turning point of the war was in 1969 when Nixon instated his plan for “Vietnamization” where the Vietnamese would ultimately be responsible for the fate of their country.

A.J. Langguth paints a bleak reality of what the Vietnam War was come the late 1960’s and into 1970. The American public wanted the troops pulled from Vietnam, and the troops that were in Vietnam wanted to go home, and not the last to die in this endless war. To me Langguth’s tone changes when he begins to speak of the COSVN. It was thought that the COSVN was the central headquarters for the communist’s. If the US could destroy the COSVN then the war would be over in essence. While the talk began to grow amongst policy makers and gather more energy it also began to create more un-rest amongst the public. Nixon made the mistake of announcing that US troops would be pulled out of Cambodia within two months, by the end of June even though the south Vietnamese army was still going over the border all summer.

To me this has shown a turning point in the war, because it shows how much un-rest was building and what Nixon and Kissinger were trying to do to save face. And this is the point in the war when campus protests really started to escalate and the public was calling for the removal of troops.

Part 2

I believe that “The End of The Tunnel” best portrays an example of a ending in Vietnam. To me “The End of The Tunnel” signifies a long dark war where a lot of people were kept in the dark as to what was really going in in Vietnam. By the time the 1970’s rolled around there was a lot of un-rest amongst Americans as to why we were still fighting a war in Vietnam, a majority of the population even felt that the war was immoral.

Alexander Haig Jr. says what a lot of people think “if you don’t go to win than don’t go at all” and The United States certainly didn’t do that. He points out that the U.S. didn’t use

hardly any of their assets at their disposal and that was their final demise in Vietnam, they just didn't give it their all. This was a war that was fought from congress and the generals were never given full control.

Morton Halperin was a pro war activist, he even debated for the war at Harvard University. But ultimately he didn't think we could win and thought that the United States needed to withdraw. I think this shows just how fast Americans lost faith in this war and our troops. It may not even be that the public didn't believe in the troops but rather they didn't believe in the policy of our leaders and the actions that they are taking to try to "win" this war.

To me the endings in this section represent a country that has lost all faith in their armed forces and the war they are fighting for. This was a long, dirty, war and they just never saw any end in sight. When people begin to lose faith and start to protest, it creates a level of doubt in the minds of those fighting for the cause and then the ones fighting begin to lose faith. At that point it is just a fast downhill spiral that is almost never stopped.

The biggest turning point in Part Four of the Patriots book was Clark Dougan's story. He told us a story about a kid he went to school with, Greg Fischer. He said Greg was joining the Marines once he graduated because he figured he would be drafted anyway. The narrator went to college. He returned home to visit in the spring and read in the local newspaper, *The Cleveland Press* that Greg died while serving in Vietnam. The editorial's aim struck a chord with the author. It was a conservative newspaper questioning the sacrificed being made in Vietnam. *The Cleveland Press* emphasized that he was a normal kid by including his last requests like "don't forget to give Joey my hockey skates." Middle America began to feel the pain of the war. Ordinary kids were being sacrificed with very little gain to show. The tides were beginning to turn.

In the fall of 1968 the Democratic Convention was being held in Chicago. Demonstrators gathered and soon riots broke out. The police used methods like tear gas against the crowd. All of the chaos played out in the media. The anti-war effort was seen in an unfavorable light. Then in 1969 the Berkley Riots happened and over a hundred students were injured, some killed. Soon the student demonstrators were the majority. The next demographic to oppose the war was the middle class. They began participating in events like the national memorial organized by people like Sam Brown. The memorial had over a million participants. It was clear that a "body count" wasn't proof of the U.S. winning the war and the public was growing tiresome of an endless commitment with countless young American lives sacrificed.

This was a turning point for the author personally, but also for the nation as a whole. It was the first time the public disapproved of a war. Through most of the war the public's opinion had been split almost evenly, but as the war effort began to cost more fiscally and more personally the scales were tipping in disapproval. The author imagines a WWII vet who was once pro-war now saying, "Fuck this. It's not worth Greg Fischer's life or his buddy's life."

The biggest ending point was the story told by George Evans. He was raised in Pittsburg by a war vet. His neighborhood was extremely patriotic. Vets frequently surrounded him. Even at an early age he said he could see a "deep sadness" inside of them. He didn't understand what the sadness was about so, he enlisted with his childhood best friend, Billy Dick, who was drafted. They did the buddy program. Once his friend failed his physical he was left to join alone. Billy became a conscientious objector and traveled to Vietnam. His friend told him to stay away from Vietnam and that it was awful. He didn't listen. He went to Vietnam as a medic and shortly after heard of Billy's death. He worked in a hospital in Cam Ranh Bay. He tells a story of two little boys who were killed. Drunken soldiers killed them while playing a game of "gook hockey". A Vietnamese woman burst in crying over the two dead boys. The image has stuck with the author ever since. He begins letting his hair grow and puts signs of protest on the board. Even after a new company commander tried to get him to adjust his appearance (and attitude) he is resistant.

This story is the ending of George Evans enchantment with the military and war. It starts even as a child questioning the unspoken sadness of the vets he knew. The disenchantment continues with the death of his friend, Billy. The moment when he truly disconnected from the military glorification was when his staff sergeant lifer told him to "Go clean up the gook." Seeing the two boys dead and hearing how senseless their deaths were profoundly affected the author. It was after that moment that he began to feel lied to. The vets he grew up with painted a very different picture of what war meant. The author begins to show his discontent with his physical appearance until he is court-marshaled. He ended up being found guilty, was fined, and left the military. His end of enchantment with the military meant he could start a new life. He lived in San Francisco, has published poetry, and teaches.

Part 1

To me, reading part four in Patriots , the story that told the most about a “turning point” was Douglas Kinnard’s “While we had the power, it turned out they had the will.” This was the time when things changed for Kinnard, he realized the Vietnamese didn’t need the new technology, or the better weapons, they had something worth fighting for. The most perhaps disappointing part of the story to me was when Kinnard reported that “Probably the most startling thing to me was that almost seventy percent said they really didn’t understand the war’s objectives.” (321). It seems disheartening to me that our government officials were keeping the men who were dying in this war so in the dark. Perhaps this is the reason we lost the war, we had no personal interests invested, and all we knew was we were being ordered to fight. The Vietnamese knew exactly what they were fighting for and they sincerely cared for that cause, enough for them to die for it. Douglas Kinnard reported that when he stated “while we had the power, it turned out they had the will.” (322).

Part 2

To me, the best representation of the end in part 5 would be Alexander M. Haig JR.’s “Even the tough guys...caved in.” The first paragraph really illustrated to me how unorganized the war was even in the beginning.

“I’ve always said, if you don’t go in to win, don’t go in at all. And to win you frequently have to break a lot of china. Either you conduct the conflict with all the assets the United States has at its disposal to bring about a quick and successful outcome or you stay out. We didn’t do either in Vietnam.” (397)

The soldiers and even the commanding officers weren’t fully made aware of the fight, they only knew they were sent there to fight ‘the commies’. I believe that was their first mistake, was keeping the ones who were fighting in the dark. That, to me, was when they truly lost the war.

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Turning Points and Endings

There are many events which could easily be classified as a turning point in the Vietnam War; many people think of the Tet Offensive of 1968 as the clearest example. However, one event also stands out high among the others – the My Lai Massacre on March 16th, 1968. The Massacre occurred in one of the subhamlets of Son My Village. Charlie Company went through and killed about 500 Vietnamese civilians, only to later report that they had had “a successful firefight in which 128 ‘Viet Cong’ had been killed in action.” (Appy 343) However, photos were taken, and witnesses came forward to show this atrocity to the world, revealing the many flaws with the war and the necessity of leaving it behind.

One of the biggest problems the My Lai Massacre revealed to the public was the “scale” by which U.S. military officials measured combat success. This scale was the “body count”: the more Viet Cong that were killed, the better off the U.S. military was doing. The only problem was, the Viet Cong had a way of blending in with civilians, and many civilians themselves were supporters of the Viet Cong. So where do soldiers draw the line? Often times it was not drawn, especially when corrupt leaders were involved, such as Lieutenant Calley of Charlie Company. While there were many American soldier who never committed a single atrocity against innocent civilians, the idea of “body count” only made it easier for those corrupt such as Calley to go in and say, “Hey, I hate what these Vietnamese have done, I need to take out my anger somewhere.” As Larry Colburn tells in his account of the My Lai Massacre, ““The only things I remember feeling back then was that these guys were really out for revenge. They’d lost men to booby traps and snipers and they were ready to engage.”” (Appy 348) The sad part was, if there were not witnesses to this kind of atrocity, it was easy for soldiers to tell officials, “Yes, well, today we killed such-and-such number of Viet Cong,” then everything was okay. With this in mind, it became clear that My Lai was probably not an isolated incident, just one that happened to have witnesses willing to come out.

When this senseless violence was revealed to the public, it had not only activists talking, but everyday Americans. “Millions who had believed the war a misguided policy or a tragic mistake began to consider the possibility that it was fundamentally unjust and immoral. That claim had long been a staple of speeches at antiwar rallies and articles in underground newspapers, but now it was debated for the first time in small-town coffee shops, executive offices, and mass-circulation magazines.” (Appy 344) Many more people were becoming less and less comfortable with a war that used body count as a measure of success and which seemed increasingly about imposing U.S. power in places where it was not needed. Therefore, the My Lai Massacre definitely represents a turning point – it brought the idea of the immorality of Vietnam to the forefront of the U.S. population; it was now not consolidated primarily to the antiwar movement.

When it comes to the end of the War, many people look at the fall of Saigon in 1975, but there are many things which were also triggers. The release of the Pentagon Papers by Daniel Ellsberg in June 1971, and the subsequent Watergate Scandal in 1972, can together be considered a final tipping point of the American peoples’ patience with the U.S. government’s intentions. Throughout the entire Vietnam War era, presidents had been hiding motives and plans from the public, (and even from Congress), since the very beginning.

Ellsberg decided it was essentially his patriotic duty to release the Pentagon papers and reveal to the American public what their presidents had been hiding from them. Although he did not release any papers concerning anything more recent than the Johnson administration, his goal was to make Nixon paranoid that he might release something about him, and therefore attempt to change his policy. “Nixon wasn’t worried about the actual release of the Pentagon Papers. They weren’t embarrassing to him. ... The reason he was so preoccupied with me had entirely to do with his fears that I would release information about his plans to escalate the war ... so he had to shut me up.” (Appy 434) Nixon’s increasing paranoia caused by Ellsberg’s actions were ultimately his downfall.

Far before Ellsberg released the papers, Nixon had already “authorized illegal wiretaps to be placed on the phones of government officials and journalists suspected of leaking information about the covert escalation and expansion of the war.” (Appy 430) These activities came to light after Nixon’s “Plumbers” were caught trying to sabotage his Democratic Party opponents. Ellsberg firmly believes that “without Watergate, I think Nixon might have been able to keep up the bombing of Vietnam indefinitely,” (Appy 436) and eventually, leading to further escalation. Essentially speaking, without Watergate, the U.S. could have been in Vietnam much longer. The Pentagon Papers opened the public’s eyes to the fact that presidents lied – and lied very frequently. They lead not only to “a delegitimization of the war, [and] an impatience with its continuation,” (Appy 436) but also contributed to Nixon’s sense of paranoia and desperation not to be the president that “lost” Vietnam, thanks to the undermining of the “doves” or suspected Communist sympathizers.

Therefore, the Watergate Scandal and Pentagon Papers both ended the chance of a prolonging of the war, and possibly even helped shorten it as well. In that way, it can definitely be seen as a trigger for the ending. The public was finally saying, “enough is enough.” The flaws of the Vietnam War and the way in which it was run can be represented clearly in the events of the My Lai Massacre, and the Watergate/Pentagon Papers scandals. The first opened the public’s eyes, and the latter confirmed suspicions and marked an end to patience.

Works Cited

Appy, Christian G. *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides*. New York: Penguin, 2003. Print.