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David Stich Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 05:37 PM

I've said that Vietnam was an unwinnable war just like our present day Iraq war. And by learning about the history of Vietnam and the loss that the US and south Vietnam took, I understand more fully why we lost and are losing.

The Iraqi war and the Vietnamese war are very alike. First, we where/are fighting a state of mind in a culture of people. We have Vietnamese that are communists or nationalists, and we where fighting communism. Not a communist government, but the idea of communism. Where at any time a person of Vietnam could decide to kill Americans cause he belived in communism or stand by Americans and fight against communism. Did the majority of the Vietnamese understand fully what communism is? Even I, a college student fail to know what exactly communism is. Terrorism is an extreamly easy idea to understand. If you take a communist and a terrorist and compare the behaviors of them I doubt that you will find any difference to what they will do to fight for their country, cause ultimately that is what these people are fighting for. They are not fighting atrocities, or for their government, they both are fighting for their land. Which brings me to my second point, popular support. How can we win a war that the people our solders are coming from do not support with a strong majority? If we do not learn from our history we are doomed to repeat it and that is exactly what is happening now. Our presidents approval ratings have hit and all time low of 31%, just as LBJ's and Nixon's approval ratings slumped during wartime. Moral is the single most important weapon a solder with ever have, and we send our troops to foreign contries with little to none.

Bob Gabriel had a very eye catching account of the Vietnam war. He was a man that solely didn't belive in the war but went to honor his father and fight for his country. Another turning point to a war is when commanders ask their solders to do atrocities that their consciences disagree with. Bob's unit was known as a unit cut off from support, with the Tet offensive creating even more caois than that. Tet was the turning point of the war. When an enemy is in your fortifications, you lose the ability to make war.



Feedback: 25 / 30

Late paper

David,
Your introduction was too long and seemed to change the paper topic from my question to a comparison of Vietnam and Iraq, which although it has similarities, is not an exact parallel. For example, you wrote:

If you take a communist and a terrorist and compare the behaviors of them I doubt that you will find any difference to what they will do to fight for their country, cause ultimately that is what these people are fighting for.

Vikes. that is verv. very wrong. There is a tremendous



Michelle Toney Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 05:33 PM

I feel that Barry Zorthian's story in the section of Tet was the best example of "the turning point" in the war. After Tet happened Barry felt the war was over for him. The Viet Cong had penetrated the embassy perimeter but they were unsuccessful, all were killed but some may have escaped death. This was just the start of a wide-scaled assault on Saigon. When these reports filtered through the media in America a lot of the war's credibility was lost. How long do we stay involved in a war that just continues to escalate with no end in sight. Obviously the Viet Cong were not going to give up the fight and that we were only going to kill each other with no progress toward liberating the South Vietnamese.

Before Tet started it looked like things were improving. That we would be able to reduce our troops in South Vietnam LBJ was so afraid that the Soviets and China were going to get involved that he didn't go

after the North full fledged like he could have to end the war much earlier. He was so afraid of starting World War 3 that I feel it kept him from allowing our troops to go in like gang busters to win the war early on. Middle America was done with this war and no longer was supporting it because we had been there for many years and had not accomplished much. More and more people involved with the war were feeling like Zorthian and it just needed to end.



Feedback: 25 / 30

Late paper

Michelle,

A bit more length, detail, and inclusion of outside data would have helped your paper.



Richard Royse Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 05:18 PM

Turning Point: Barry Zorthian "Tet Offensive"

Barry Zorthian during the Vietnam conflict was director of the Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), in charge of all media relations and served as the principal public relations adviser to the U.S. Ambassador and the Commander of U.S. Forces General Westmoreland. Basically, Zorthian was the man with all of the connections and ability to receive information as it came in first. Zorthian was in Saigon as the Tet Offensive took full effect. He witnessed the attacks first hand, and saw the physiological effect that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had accomplished through their coordinated attacks during the Tet Offensive. This where I believe the turning point in the Vietnam War occurred. I believe in Zorthians story to be so credible and true because of how he explains how the video footage and images taken by journalists in Saigon and other cities during Tet has such an affect back home. American citizens, Government officials, and soldiers on their way to Vietnam saw these images and video footage as they were being told by the highest ranking officials in Vietnam as well as by the Johnson Administration that progress was being made.

Americans were subject to everyday reports of U.S. casualties and military accomplishments all over Vietnam, but at no point had they visually experienced the fact of a large scale attack in the heart of South Vietnam so late in the war. Also at no time prior to Tet, had the North Vietnamese or Viet Cong been able to strike the South Vietnamese capitol, let alone in such coordinated force, especially in places in most Americans eyes thought could never be touched, including the U.S. Embassy. Zorthian also touches on the lack of visible military progress in Vietnam. And how General Westmoreland at news briefings would always contend progress and those battles were being won, when in fact they weren't. Overall the Tet Offensive was the major turning point in the Vietnam War. Not only did it visually show Americans that the Capital of Vietnam could be attacked, but that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had enormous strength in numbers and in power. But it also proved to Americans back home that this would not be a war won in a short amount of time but in the future with more casualties and more involvement. Something the majority of the American public didn't want.

The Ending: Nguyen Thi Binh

Nguyen Thi Binh served as the minister of education and as a member of the National Assembly. Today she is the Vice President of Vietnam. I believe her story is the most important is concluding the war in Vietnam because of her accounts. Binh explains how during the Paris Peace conference in November of 1968 through January of 1973 has been very difficult, because in her opinion the American delegates were very cold and rude. What I believe to be the most important and example of the ending of Vietnam was how the Paris Agreement was not honored nor implemented. I believe if it was the amount of losses and hardships could have been avoided on both sides. However as Binh quotes, "if the agreement had been honored, history would have basically have turned out the same, but the losses and damages would be lessened." What I get out of this was that if the Paris Agreement would have been reached American Forces as a whole would have been pulled out and either way the North Vietnamese would have taken Saigon and the war would come to a complete stop like it did three years later after the Paris Agreement.



Feedback: 29 / 30

Late paper

Richard,
Excellent story choices and support.



Luke Todd Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 05:02 PM

Luke Todd

Part Four "The Turning Point"

As I went through part four for the second time I decided that anything that would really sum up the "turning point" of the war must have something to do with tet. I know this is cliché and a viewpoint that has been talked into the ground but I think that's because it's true. A quote from Johnson, taken from the story that I chose to illustrate the turning

point, really puts this into perspective: " 'If I've lost Walter Cronkite, I've lost Middle America.' " I think that is completely true and that that one sentence is itself the turning point of the Vietnam War.

The presidents that waged the Vietnam war would have been completely happy to continue fighting and bombing Vietnam. Unfortunately for them (fortunately for everyone else), they have the American people to answer to. Granted, it takes us a hell of a long time to get together and do something but when we do, we can make a difference.

I chose Barry Zorthian's account because I thought it was quintessential, governmental double speak. He tries to invalidate everything the press was saying to the American public. He goes through and lists many of the major reasons that the American people turned against the war and then tries to discredit them or show how the press twisted them. In actuality it seems to me, after reading his rebuttals, that the press got it right. He seems to think that the press has some sort of duty to report things the way the government wants them to be seen. The press emphasized the fact the V.C. were powerful enough to launch the tet offensive. The fact they were able to attack the U.S. Embassy as well as every other major urban area in the country. That seems to have been the important part and it seems that way to me too, today. After all those years of fighting and claiming progress, the V.C. were still able to accomplish the tet offensive. Yes it was a military loss but that is only a very small part of the whole picture, and that's the way the press portrayed it.

Zorthian then goes on to talk about how even though it didn't look like progress was being made due to the lack of actual "front lines"; progress was indeed being made. Even though as he states "places that were not secure in 1965 were not secure in 1967." Then the little explanation of General Loan's street side execution, as if that made it okay.

A part of his story that really had an impact on me was when he was talking about Walter Cronkite's visit. He talked about how Westmoreland told Cronkite that they had expected something during tet. "Walter was shown on a map how Westmoreland had positioned troops in anticipation of Tet." Then Zorthian complains that Cronkite reported none of this when he went back to the states. I have to wonder if the reason Cronkite did not report any of it was because he saw that Westmoreland had gotten it all wrong. We read in the Karnow book that Westmoreland had positioned all his troops in anticipation of a massive attack at Khesan. He thought tet was merely a diversion for a Khesan attack. That little piece of info is left out by Zorthian.

"Look, we lost the war on the ground, that's all." And Zorthian goes on to wonder how much more it would have taken to actually "win" whatever "winning" would have entailed. "A million American soldiers? Another billion dollars of aid?" I think this highlights the fact that the American people were fed up with what was happening in Vietnam. I think Johnson would have gladly thrown in a million more people or a billion more dollars. Thankfully this didn't happen largely because of tet and the American reaction to it.

Part Five "Ending"

Frank Sneep's Story on the final fall of Saigon really encapsulates the entire Vietnam conflict as well as exemplifying the end of it. What it boils down to is the fact that the end was just more of the same. Utter duplicity on the part of the United States government. The fact that Sneep is no longer allowed to write anything without it going through the CIA first is a good indicator. He states that the CIA had a man high up in the communist organization who was giving them good information. That information was routinely ignored by Ambassador Martin and chief Polgar. Even when it was becoming obvious to everyone that the end was near, Martin would not even begin to plan for any evacuation. There was no contingency plans what so ever. He talks about how Thieu's only concern was his personal safety and protecting himself from a coup. He did not seem to realize that if Saigon fell he would no longer have a regime to be overtaken in a coup. The actions of the U.S. and South Vietnamese government during the end of the war were just par for the course. It was pure folly and the people of Vietnam paid for it with their lives.



Feedback: 29 / 30

Late paper

Luke,

Fine story choices, especially the focus on what came to be known as the "credibility gap" in your first part.



Ronda Wilson Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 04:45 PM

For me the turning point is best exemplified by Tuan Van Ban's story. He was in the North's Army and his company was one of many who were involved in the Tet Offensive. He and his troops snuck up on a US Marine base and placed explosives and prepared for an invasive attack on the marines. These attacks were planned out for weeks and very well thought out by the North. The South

and US did not know these attacks were going to happen as they thought they were on a peace break during the Tet holiday. That's why this was such a calculated and surprise attack that worked very well for the North. These attacks were quick in that the North troops would rush in, do as much damage as they could then get out as fast as possible. This was the turning point because it showed to the South and US how well thought out the North's combat plots were and it showed to the US population that the US soldiers were not simply walking all over them as had been portrayed by the government. This offensive shattered the trust that the US had in the military leaders and their president, making the government officials reconsider how much longer they needed to be in Vietnam.

[Daniel Ellsberg](#)'s story about his release of the Pentagon Papers to the NY Times is what I think helped bring the war to a faster end. Ellsberg had seven thousand pages of top-secret documents that did not show the US government and past president's in a very shining light. Ellsberg thought Nixon wanted him shut up because he had proof that Nixon wanted to expand the war, not get out. The Nixon administration was found to have illegally wiretapped Ellsberg's and that Nixon's people had broken into his psychiatrist's office, thus bringing about Watergate. Without Watergate Nixon might have kept the bombing in Vietnam going indefinitely. Nixon's character was put into question as a liar and support for him lessened. I think this huge event triggered the administration to finally decide to pull out of Vietnam.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Ronda,
Careful with your comments about Watergate. It sounds as if you are implying that the Ellsberg psychiatrist office break-in (in 1971) was, or was the specific cause of Watergate. Not so.
Also, be sure to qualify your statements, such as the part about support for Nixon lessened. You'd be absolutely wrong in 1972, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._presidential_election,_1972
But by the time all of Watergate and the Pentagon Papers came to light and full view of the public, by 1974 (the year Nixon resigned), you'd be absolutely right.
I agree with your story choices.



Ken Starke Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 04:41 PM

The Turning point in the Vietnam War was the Tet Offensive. For the first time the Viet Cong had attacked the south and taken control of the city of Hue. Although the Viet Cong lost control of the City of Hue only after a couple of days, the repercussions rippled throughout the United States. Many people openly objected the war and many riots and protest occurred throughout the country. In the Story, *From Johnson to Nixon*, it talked about all the issues that occurred at home. During the years of 1967-1969 many things happened at home that started to take precedence away from the war. Bobby Kennedy was assassinated and Martin Luther King was assassinated. The assassination of Martin Luther King had a huge effect on the people living in the United States and people serving in Vietnam. Riots occurred over a 150 cities including military bases in Vietnam. This was a turning point because for the first time America needed to focus on home rather than focus on North Vietnam. The Story by Douglas Kinnard, a retired one star General for the Army, recalls the events of how even high ranking officials in Vietnam were not pleased with how the war was going. After his first tour he recalled, "By the end of my first tour, the summer of 67, I think I'd decided that the war was a losing proposition, that it could go on forever." (Kinnard, 322) Even the Generals by this point realized that the war could not be won in the manner Americans saw victory.

The Ending of the War in my opinion was the building agreement by United States soldiers that the Viet Cong had some rights to fight the way they did. The Story by Charles Cooper, *All this Area was Indian Country*, talked about the growing separation of American Military troops in Vietnam. The Black soldiers had distance themselves from the United States and even started taking the side of the Viet Cong. "Then I learned that there was a secret underground society of blacks called the Mau Maus. It went back to the Kenyan story where the Mau Maus rose up and murdered all of the English settlers. At any rate, they were pro-Viet Cong." (Cooper, 445). In my opinion this started to signify the end of the war. When the army started to break apart and be two separate groups, that was the end for the United States. Although the peace talks didn't happen until 1973 in Paris, the end of the war was seen much sooner by many different military leaders. Although the death toll was dramatically lopsided toward the Viet Cong, America still never defeated the ongoing pressure of North Vietnam. America killed ten times as many as they had killed but in America the war was tearing apart the country.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Ken,

I agree with your comments on Tet, but the first paragraph on the turning point didn't spend enough time on your particular story choice. Overall, fine job.



Christa Curfiss Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 04:01 PM

I had a tremendous time attempting to find just one account within the book *Patriots* that would summarize the "turning point" of the Vietnam war, and in-turn, I had an equally difficult time choosing just one essay that would exemplify the "ending" of the Vietnam War. After painstaking deliberation I chose the account of Mr. Bob Gabriel as an example of the "turning point" of the Vietnam War, and Mr. Daniel Ellsberg's account as an example of the "ending" of the Vietnam War.

Perhaps, the reason I choose Bob Gabriel's account as an example of the "turning point" of the Vietnam War was because I connected to his personal story. Like Gabriel I am a native of Southern Ohio, so is my father, and his father, and his father's father etc. My father even went through basic training at the same base as Gabriel. However, it was more than Gabriel's Ohio roots that drew me to his story, it was his account of the moral of his fellow troops, as well as his own, that pulled my attention. If the soldiers fighting a war are discontent with their situation, I believe that there is no way that the war can be "won". As Gabriel's comrades fell dead beside him, he did his best to stay alive. By this point Gabriel was no-longer fighting for his country, but for personal survival. His pals were losing their young minds right before his eyes, causing dangerous mistakes to be made, often with deadly consequences. When Gabriel saw his best friend heading down the same mental road as another friend (who felt his death was eminent and tragically made quick, unthought-out moves that brought his life to an end) he took to the extreme of shooting his best friend in the foot with an M-60 machine gun. Gabriel just wanted his friend to survive, and he knew he would not make it if he stayed in-country. His friends parents would later write and thank him for the shooting. When a human is driving to injure those they love in order to save them, you know that the situation had been pushed to the breaking point. I believe that Gabriel's own

words on McNamara best summarize collectively the "turning point" of the war. On page 302 Gabriel states, " I mean when McNamara just came out and said it was a bullshit war and they were just doing it for political reasons - I'd like to strangle his ass. Like goddamn, man, you just threw us over there and let us die for what?" Gabriel had learned that his friends had died for the political games of Capital Hill. It was the truth that was the "turning-point" of the Vietnam War.

The "ending" or closing years of the Vietnam War were also triggered by truth. The truth of the war was brought out by Daniel Ellsberg when he released the Pentagon Papers. The Pentagon Papers exposed the fact that the policy makers in Washington D.C. were quite aware that their policies in Vietnam were failures. The papers covered the actions taken during four presidencies. Despite the fact that the presidents hailed from different political parties, their policies in Vietnam were all quite alike. On page 433 in Patriots, Ellsberg sheds some light onto why the failing policies did not change, "For all of them, the generals as well as the policy makers, quitting or withdrawing posed questions about their masculinity and courage." With this reality exposed it would have been nearly impossible for Nixon to carry on with the same policies in Vietnam." Though the papers mostly exposed the actions of the Johnson and Kennedy administrations, they showed the U.S. public that the nation's involvement in Vietnam was not for the reasons that they had been given. It was the extreme measures that Nixon took to "nail" Ellsberg that helped to bring the war to a close. As Ellsberg noted on page 436, "...Without Watergate I think Nixon might have been able to keep the bombing of Vietnam indefinitely." I agree with Ellsberg's statement, once the American people knew the truth about the U.S. policy in Vietnam, and Nixon's measures to criminalize the whistle-blower, the war could no-longer continue as it had, the American public would not have allowed it.

Like the old Christian gospel song says, "The truth will set you free." It was truth that caused both the "turning point", and "ending" of the Vietnam War, freeing our nation from the wars tyrannical hold. I only wish that the truth had only been exposed sooner, and I pray that our nation has learned from the lessons of Vietnam.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Christa,
Very well done and compellingly written. Your paper was a true pleasure to read.



Mark Whitcomb II Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 03:57 PM

As I was taking a second and then third glance at the stories in Part Four of Patriots I found myself changing my mind over and over again regarding which story was the best example of the "turning point" in the war. The story that I came back to each time was that by Tom Grace which starts on page 384 with the quote "As much as we hated the war on April 29, we hated it more on April 30."

According to the text, Tom Grace was a sophomore at Kent State University in Ohio when President Nixon announced the invasion of Cambodia on April 30, 1970. In response to the continued escalation of a war that many Americans had been protesting for some time protests took place at Kent State University. On May 3, the governor of Ohio made a speech in which he described those participating in the protest as "the worst type of people that we harbor in America". The next day, May 4, 1970, Governor Rhodes ordered the National Guard onto the campus. By the end of the day four students were dead and nine were wounded, at the hands of their own government.

I believe that the massacre at Kent State is the best example of "the turning point" in the war for two reasons. First of all, though there had been public protests for years against the war in Vietnam, they had been in large part limited to the coasts. Now people in Ohio of all places were protesting their own government's actions. As a person who was raised in the Midwest, I know that people in the Midwest tend to have strong opinions but are largely unlikely to support or take part in public protests. The actions of the students at Kent State were a message of a turning point to Washington, DC: you have lost the support of the heartland.

Second, I think that the impact of the incident at Kent State can be well-summarized by a friend of mine who

was thirteen in 1970. "I didn't understand what was happening in Vietnam, but I knew it was wrong when the military was killing people to keep them from speaking out against it".

I found choosing an individual story from Part Five of Patriots just as difficult. The story that I feel best encompasses the "end of the war" is the story of Nguyen Khac Huynh found on pages 468 and 469.

There are several sentences that really stick out in my mind as being reflective of the theme of the end of the war, "We'd had enough of hostilities and enough of negotiations. We were more than ready for peace. We were more than ready for peace. But only a few days later we had a shocking disappointment. The American side wanted to re-open talks after we had already reached an agreement." Huynh goes on to describe the Christmas Bombings of 1972.

I find it fascinating that negotiations had been taking place between North Vietnam and the United States since 1968 and yet American forces were continuing to escalate the conflict while simultaneously supposedly pursuing peace. Frankly it saddens me.

Ultimately however, as you know the peace negotiations were successful in the sense that the resulted the removal of American troops from South Vietnam. Though Huynh does not explicitly state so, the real objective of the peace negotiations from the American perspective I believe was the removal of American soldiers and at least the appearance of an American victory. This is reflected by the fact that the Saigon government remained intact as America's involvement in Vietnam ended in 1973.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Mark,

I'm originally from the Midwest, too, and fully agree with your assessment of the turning point. Well written.



Joseph Schmidt Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 03:45 PM

There are a lot of events that signify the turning point of the war, from the aftermath of Tet in 1968, to President Johnson's cessation of bombing the North and subsequent refusal to run for reelection. However, the account that stands out to me is General Douglas Kinnard's, U.S. Army retired. Here is a man, the third in his class at West Point to achieve the rank of general. Guaranteed to at least make three stars, he retires after his second tour in Vietnam. These guys live, eat, breath, dream the Army, and he was so disheartened with our fighting and tactics in Vietnam that he chose to leave the military. He was disheartened with the 'war of attrition' on the assumption the enemy was going to quit, but they never did. After his first tour he understood the war was a losing proposition. He made a go of it though and returned for a second tour. He retired in 1970. He wasn't a draftee, or a newly commissioned lieutenant, but a career Army officer that was fed up.

The account that signifies the end of the war to me is Charles Hill's. It is hard to figure out if Hill was for or against the war as he was caught up in the antiwar movement at Harvard, but then worked for the State Department at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. He talks about how the American delegates would have a 'light at the end of the tunnel' party...three years in a row. He tells about how easily he moved about the country after 1970 and that he felt we had won. But the press continued to report the very negative, never letting the public back home learn of the progress made. In his own words, they were very resenting and antagonistic with any kind of government official. He knew it was truly over when the announcement was made of the Paris Agreement. The U.S. would completely withdraw, we would get our POW's back, and the Northern combat forces would stay in the south. It was over.



Feedback: 27 / 30

Joseph,
A bit more length, detail, and inclusion of outside data
would have helped your paper.



Daniel Loverro Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 03:22 PM

Barry Zorthian not only had a very important role as the official voice of America in Vietnam, but during Tet he was right in the middle of it. That's why I trusted and respected his story.

Zorthian served from 1964-68 as director of the Joint United States Public Affairs Office, in charge of media relations as well as principal public relations adviser to the U.S. ambassador and the commander of U.S. forces.

On the first night of the Tet Offensive, most of the residents in Saigon were unaware that the noises they were hearing around the city were actually the beginnings of the attacks. Many presumed the noise as part of the new year Tet celebration. Not until later did especially Barry realize something unusual was going on.

Although there was much devastation when the morning awoke, Zorthian believed the media perceived what happened not all correctly. With the effect of modern communications along with footage of the conflict, news circulated around the world. Many of the journalists lived in the area as the attacks went on, so there were many stories to tell on who saw what. Despite the North and VC being beaten back, nevertheless the attack indicated an enormous strength and power. Barry had to deal with and handle the brutal uncertainty of the American media.

Much of the news and film footage was unedited, so the American public was stunned by what they saw, the impact was enormous. This is what I feel was the real turning point in the war, and only the beginning of later escalated events such as the shootings at Kent State, the protests of the 1968 Democratic Convention, as well as Johnson's announcement of not running for a second term.

The Tet Offensive unfortunately gave the Americans less confidence in its future in Vietnam, and questioned whether or not we were making the significant progress they had been told by the Johnson Administration.

Charles Cooper described the emotions he left later on into the War. After 5 years as battalion commander in Vietnam, he felt "things were going to hell in a handbasket." and that the NVA, [Vietcong](#) were as committed as ever when the U.S. was beginning to pull back. He claims the enemy was just more motivated. Cooper says that late in the war the quality of the people in the Army and Marines had gone down, part of this because of the Johnson Administration's project 100,000. There also a lot of problems racially, many blacks and whites didn't get along and didn't work as a team. Rules of engagement were also not in such control, many marines were in pure blow away mode, basically where anything that moved you killed. There was just so many civilians, and some soldiers weren't always aware of who was actually the enemy.

With Nixon's plan to restore peace in Vietnam with its ally, the North refused to negotiate at first, but eventually American and North Vietnamese representatives met in Paris to come to an agreement. The agreement although collapsed with objection by South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, and the war continued. A little over 2 years later, 30 North Vietnamese divisions conquered the South and restored peace in Vietnam.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Daniel,
This paper looks like your best effort among all four of the journal assignments. Good job.



Chelsea Romney Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 03:21 PM

In terms of public opinion, the war really started to change after the Tet offensive. But it seems that it took policy makers a little while to deal with this and to realize that they could not sustain the war effort. Perhaps the most significant sign of this turning point was when Nixon started his program of Vietnamization. This policy, made to look like a positive transition into Vietnamese control, acted as a major turning point, indicating that the U.S. had clearly begun to give up on the effort. I think that New York Times reporter A.J. Langguth's account best illustrates the mood of this dramatic change in the war. Langguth suggests that despite the effect of the Tet offensive, in 1968, "a lot of officers still thought maybe we could pull it out" (Appy 182). Langguth suggests that this hope didn't last long: "By 1970, hopelessness and despair was commonplace. Nobody wanted to be the last person killed in Vietnam" (Appy 182). Because the ending seemed inevitable, Nixon found a way for Americans to get out of Vietnam: Vietnamization. It was "Nixon's program of troop pull-outs, stepped-up bombing and huge arms shipments to Saigon" which he hoped would give the war back to the Vietnamese and allow America to leave the conflict (www.pbs.org).

Vietnamization was a turning point in the war because it emphasized a stark reality: the Americans were leaving. This affected the morale of the American troops who knew they were fighting in the final stages of a lost cause, but it had an even deeper effect on the South Vietnamese who had had minimal success even with American help. Now they were going to be on their own. Langguth expresses a clear disagreement with the program: "I was really annoyed by the very idea of Vietnamization. By that time well over a hundred thousand South Vietnamese soldiers were dead, crops destroyed, cities in ruins, and we're talking about Vietnamization as though the Vietnamese weren't already bearing the brunt of the war" (382). He writes the term off as "one of those words that gave a reassuring ring in Washington," at the cost of insulting the Vietnamese (Appy 382). At the same time the U.S. invaded Cambodia in a military mission to try to destroy COSVN. Langguth also strongly disagreed with that invasion of Cambodia and the "mythology... about COSVN" (383). He suggests that "the idea that somehow you were going to go in and wipe out the source of the infection was preposterous" (Appy 383). Langguth highlights the fact that the COSV wasn't the "bamboo pentagon" that U.S. officials thought it was. Besides the war was already moving to its close, and one more secret operation wasn't going to fix it.

I think the interview that best dramatizes the ending of the war was one from another reporter, Judith Coburn. In her interview, she talks about the feeling of "mutiny" among the American soldiers. Coburn says, "Nobody wanted to be the last guy to die in Vietnam. They'd drop a whole bunch of guys into the jungle and they'd just sit there for a couple of days calling in fake coordinates, smoke a little weed, and wait to get picked up... it was pretty obvious that the military was losing control of its own men" (Appy 408). A growing percentage of the American troops leftover in Vietnam were turning against the war, and organized anti war demonstrations, refused to follow orders and even introduced "fragging," the term for attempting to assassinate officers with grenades (www.pbs.org). With American progression in Peace talks, it was apparent that the war was ending soon, and the soldiers in Vietnam did not want to be there. From her perspective, there was no way that the U.S. could have won, given the way that public opinion was reflected in the military's ranks. She says, "When I hear people say we could have won the war, I always think: where were you going to get the soldiers?" (408). She also discussed the fact that, even though there were some competent Vietnamese soldiers and leaders, they weren't going to be able to fight the war on their own: "It was pretty clear that Vietnamization wasn't working any better than Americanization" (409). Coburn also reports the fact that the Vietnamese were giving up on the Americans as well when in 1972, they would no longer allow her to receive a visa: "Until 1972 very few journalists were thrown out by South Vietnam, because the Americans told them it would be bad public relations and possible hurt congressional funding" (411). The fact that they were denying those reporters entry meant that the Vietnamese had already given up on the U.S., knowing that, for the Americans, the war was ending. It took Coburn until 1979 to even be able to get back into Vietnam. Even then, she couldn't do it as a journalist.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/series/fd.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/trenches/language.html>



Feedback: 30 / 30

Chelsea,
Solid story choices and one of the best papers to include outside, factual support for your position.



Morgan Hockema Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 03:10 PM

I think the story that most resembled the "turning point" of the Vietnam war was Douglas Kinnard's. His account boldly brings up the fact that most of our military over in Vietnam (not to mention at home in the US as well) did not fully understand the overall goals of the United States. Sure, they knew what each mission was meant to accomplish, but what was the overall reasons for the missions? Mr. Kinnard got this information from a questionnaire he had sent out to all of the army generals and amazingly got a 2/3 return!

The United States had felt reasons for backing out of the war, but what jumps out at me is that the military begins to feel not defeated, but at a standstill. The US was killing thousands of people, but they could not stop the enemy. Several different tactics had been used over the years, but the North would not let their guard down. How COULD the United States win?

Mr. Kinnard's statement sums up why the North won, and why the United States could not conquer such a powerful force, "I think we were always working under the assumption that if you just kept hitting the enemy hard enough he would quit. Everything was based on that assumption. But the assumption was totally wrong. The enemy was not going to quit, no matter how good our statistics looked. We had made it a war of wills, rather than a war of power. The problem was, while we had the power, it turned out they had the will." (pg 322, Patriots)

This story shined on the fact that military officials and many others were beginning to sense loss to the North. Questions were beginning to enter people's minds making them wonder about the goals behind the war and our president's words could no longer comfort and cushion ideas for us.

Judith Coburn's story stuck out most to me in Part 5: Endings. Although she was not actively fighting in the war, she was a reporter for a couple of papers and got to see a lot of the real deal in Vietnam. In 1970 when Judith reached Vietnam, the military on both sides were basically losing control and many officers were beginning to have different opinions of the war. At a Fourth of July party no formal demonstration was held, but "...guys wearing peace symbols and beads and smoking pot..." (pg 408, Patriots) covered the area and Judith said it was hard to find anyone who was against withdrawal from Vietnam. Missions into the jungles often resulted in a few men getting dropped off, hanging out for a few days, then calling in the location to get a chooper to pick them up. They were usually just wasting time and the US money, nothing was being solved, and the ending was inevitable.

The South Vietnamese government was corrupt on many levels and many Southerners who did not know previously were beginning to realize and rebel. So the Americans at home felt against the war, the men serving over in Vietnam wanted withdrawal, and the South did not have a grip on the government issues. It's just like a small child who needs to be told it's naptime. They rebel, slack, and get out of control sometimes before it is noticed and an ending is made.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Morgan,

This paper shows a fine effort. Good job.



DeAnna Morris Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 02:51 PM

For my "turning point" example, I am going to use Tom Grace's account. He was a student at Kent State and was injured during the conflict that happened there on May 4th, 1970. This was only a few days after President Nixon had announced his famous Cambodia bombings. I really thing that this incident is only one of many that happened directly because of those bombings. Tom Grace said "As much as we hated the war on April 29, we hated it even more on April 30". I think that is true for so many people. These bombings were seen in the eyes of the American people, the soldiers, and even many high officials to be unnecessary, cruel and pointless. At this point, Nixon appears to be rather crazy to a lot of people, which made him lose credibility in the eyes of the Americans, but actually frightened the NVA into wondering what he was capable of. Back to Grace's story though, this is the point where the war was truly hitting home to many people in many ways. He knew someone who died in the war, and now because of the war he was injured and friends of his were killed in front of his eyes. The incident at Kent state also opened people's eyes to what the military was capable of.

For my "endings" story, I am going to use Frank Maguire's story. The main reason I am using his account is the last paragraph in his interview. He says "I think it's a national trait that we always feel we know what's better for everybody. It was an attitude of misguided benevolence-that we know what's good for them and they don't really understand what's

happening. We really wanted to win their hearts and minds, except we could never find one or the other". I think this statement is the best summary I have ever heard and it has stuck with me since I read it. He also talks about some experiences he had with some other soldiers like the pilot who was bragging about shooting a bunch of people on the ground and when Maguire asked him if they were VC he said "Who the fuck cares?" That really sums it up. At this point the war was over. I mean, they didn't care who they killed, didn't know why they were there, and it was all pointless. A war cannot be won when there seems to be no reason to fight. No one knew who the bad guy was, or why they even were bad guys. When Maguire first went to Vietnam he was doing a lot of great things for the people there, opening schools, reconstruction, things that seemed to make sense. When he went back things were changing, the economy had fallen out the bottom, the corruption was out of control, no one cared about anything. The only people to still care about their cause were the North Vietnamese Army and that was never going to change. That is why this was the sign the end of the war was coming, and it was not an ending the US or South Vietnam wanted.



Feedback: 30 / 30

DeAnna,

Nicely written and I agree with your story choices.



Joshua Benton Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 12:50 PM

Although, there could be more than one turning point in the war, I believe that the greatest turning point was Vietnamization or De-Americanization. This term was invented by Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird in 1969. The goal of Vietnamization was to make the South Vietnamese rely on themselves and strengthen, rather than depending on American aid. In 1970, De-Americanization started to take effect. US soldiers started being sent home.

The story I found to describe the turning point of the war due to Vietnamization was by A.J. Langguth. A.J. covered the war for The New York Times during 1968-1970. During 1970 he reported that U.S. ground troops were pulling out and being replaced by ARVN soldiers. Now due to the lack of U.S. troop support, the ARVN soldiers' equipment was wearing out and they did not have what was needed to win battles. Another example, he explained, was that the U.S. Army had thirty-five hundred helicopters and only supplied the Vietnamese with slightly more than a hundred. They needed more helicopters because they were crucial for logistics and medical evacuations. He met a Vietnamese doctor that said if he would have had helicopters to medvac his men out he would not have lost thirty men. Also some of the wounded now died because they couldn't get to a hospital in time. A.J. also talked to a general who said that soldiers' were deserting because they were very poor, which was because of the lack of aid from the U.S.

After watching Episode 7, "Vietnamization," I saw the effects De-Americanization had on the South Vietnamese economy and their soldiers. Businesses that used to flourish because of American soldiers now were shut down. The streets were covered in rubbish. The ARVN soldiers who once had confidence because they knew they had the U.S. to fight the war with them now lacked it. They had lost their motivation.

I think this was a good example of the turning point of the war because the South was left to pretty much fend for themselves. Hope of winning or coming to a reasonable agreement was lost for the South.

At first, I thought the end of the Vietnam War was on January 27, 1973 when the all parties signed the cease-fire agreement, but after continuing on in my readings I discovered that it didn't really end at least for the U.S. until April 1975. The story that I found that best supports my conclusion to the war was told by Frank Snepp.

Frank was in Vietnam from 1969 to 1975 as both an intelligence analyst and an operative for the CIA. Frank describes the events that came to an ending of the war. In early 1975 the North Vietnamese captured the provincial capital of Phuoc Long, which is not far from Saigon. The North Vietnamese were expecting the U.S. to respond with B-52s and when they didn't the North became more confident that the war was coming to an end. They were going to win. They North came to a, "Go for Broke," conclusion to win the war. Frank flew over MR-1 (the five northernmost provinces of South Vietnam) in the last days of March and literally saw General Throng's army (South Vietnamese) racing into the surf of Danang. They were swimming for safety and in total panic. On April 23, 1975 one hundred and forty thousand North Vietnamese troops were within an hour or so of downtown Saigon. Defenses were collapsing. On the morning of April 29th they began shelling the edges of Saigon and were to begin shelling the center around 6:00 PM. This was just the start of the end. Americans were being evacuated. Around 6:00 PM Frank received word that the communists had called off their bombardment because they believed that the Americans were all leaving. They were right. This operation to evacuate the last of the Americans was called, "Operation IV." According to Karnow, on April 30th communist forces captured Saigon and Colonel Bui Tin surrenders. This was what came to be known as the end of the war.

What I described above, I didn't feel was the true ending because of the effects the war had on people to this day. A lot of people who took place in the Vietnam War are still fighting it today because of effect it had on them. At my work I witness these effects first hand. Many of the Vietnam Veterans that visit Lane County Veteran Services suffer from PTSD(post traumatic stress disorder), exposure to Agent Orange which causes cancer, diabetes, and other conditions, also it effects their families. To them and me the war is still not over because everyday to them is a battle. Will it ever be over for them?



Feedback: 25 / 30

Joshua,
Wonderful story choices and compellingly written.



Bryant Gooch Last edited: Saturday, 2 June 2007, 10:42 AM

I think the best example of the turning point in the war is Mguyen Qui Duc's story called "I was living a double life." She starts her story off by saying "All night we heard explosions and kept thinking they were just New Year fire-crackers. We could not believe that communist soldiers were fighting in Hue itself. It didn't even enter our mind." I think this shows a very clear turning point in the war because the South was so shocked. Another major symbol and example of the turning point of the war in this story is the blowing up of the bridge. "It was lying in the water. I was so shocked. That bridge was an incredibly graphic symbol of Hue, a symbol of the whole nation."

I think the best example of the end of the war is Judith Coburn's story called "Vietnamization wasn't working any better than Americanization." This story talks about the anti-war dissent of the soldiers. Here is a quote that shows this very clearly -- A Colonel is telling a Senator about the war conditions, "Well Senator, I'll tell you, mainly I have the feeling that one day soon If I lead my men into battle I might turn around and they won't be there." This is the best example of the ending of the war because it shows that soldiers morale is so low that they may not fight. If soldiers won't fight then there can't be a war.



Feedback: 25 / 30

Bryant,
A bit more length, detail, and inclusion of outside data would have helped your paper.

	Nathan Shay Last edited: Friday, 1 June 2007, 10:14 PM I think that the big turning point in the war is illustrated by Philip Jones Griffiths. While he has one of the shortest stories, he paints a vivid picture of not only the intelligence of the Viet Cong but how the Americans were beginning to react to Viet Cong invasions into the south. By sending in just a dozen northern Vietnamese, the Viet Cong were able to entice a favorable reaction from the Americans. Within an hour they were shooting anything that moved in district 8. The American's had apparently told the Vietnamese that they would be safe in the cities. After this documented incident, this was no longer true. It turned the southern Vietnamese on the Americans. I think the best example of the ending of the war is provided by Nguyen Khac Huynh. He tells us how peace agreements were made not one but two times. This alone assures an end in the near future to the war. The treaties themselves illustrate what the war actually did to the Vietnamese people. Huynh tells us that a sheet of paper with the agreements could/would not be signed by all four parties that were part of the peace agreement. This shows the deep division that the war ended up having upon the Vietnamese people. Finally the agreement was signed, but with no party allegiances listed by the signatures. This showed that the Vietnamese people were still people, but now they were people of totally different beliefs and ideologies.
	Feedback: 25 / 30 Nathan, A bit more length, detail, and inclusion of outside data would have helped your paper.

	Christian Ward Last edited: Friday, 1 June 2007, 01:57 PM The best example for me that the war in Vietnam was turning around was the My Lai massacre and Larry Colburn's account in Christian Appy's book. Colburn was a helicopter door-gunner who helped stop some of the killing at My Lai. To me, My Lai was a turning point because it was the first view the American public and world public got into the insanity and genocide of a war that could not be justified. The Vietnam War seemed to be forever hanging on a thread of righteousness that The Americans were saving a free people in South Vietnam from Communist slavery in the North. But when the massacre at My Lai surfaced and the World saw for the first time what America was putting the Vietnamese and its own citizens through to save the South Vietnamese, that last thread of righteousness dissolved. At My Lai we finally pushed our people over the edge and the war could not continue much longer. Colburn writes about My Lai, "Compare it to a little town in the United States. We're at war with some one on our own soil. They come into a town and rape the women, kill all the babies, kill everyone. How would we feel? And it isn't just murdering civilians. They were butchering people. The only thing they didn't do is cook 'em and eat 'em. How do you get that far over the edge?" At My Lai, Americans were asked to go too far over the edge and the whole world witnessed it. Around the time of the My Lai massacre, the antiwar movement was circulating a "moratorium" to end the war and My Lai and other atrocities were making that "moratorium" evermore valid. In Karnow's book this quote reveals a certain turning point : "The 'moratorium' of November 15 was even bigger than the demonstrations of the month before. By now, the American public was being exposed to disclosures that raised uncomfortable moral questions about the war. Colonel Robert Rheault and his special forces team were charged with the summary execution of a suspected Viet Cong spy, the alleged murder being labeled in official jargon as 'termination with extreme prejudice.' And a U.S. military court indicted Lieutenant William Calley and Sergeant David Mitchell for the massacre of South Vietnamese civilians at My Lai, a village in coastal Quangngai province." When you're massacring the people you're supposed to be liberating, the citizens will do what ever they can to end your war. And to me, the Vietnam War was over when I read Daniel Ellsberg's account. Ellsberg, once a staunch supporter of the Vietnam War and star player of California think tank RAND, saw for himself first hand in Vietnam that the politicians were "eating the young" simply to "avoid being called losers." When I read about how Ellsberg put his job, reputation and even his life on the line by leaking the Pentagon Papers for what he felt was right, I could see clearly the war was over. The war was over for Nixon because with the Pentagon Papers, Nixon would doom himself by violating the civil rights of the American people. Essentially Nixon would turn against his own country and the war would have to be conducted in secret in Cambodia and Laos; moreover, his secret bombing and Watergate scandal would oust him from office and the public could no longer trust the once stalwart figure of the American President. Ellsberg writes at the end of his account, "And without Watergate I think Nixon might have been able to keep up the bombing of Vietnam indefinitely. I think Watergate shortened the war by at least a couple of years and possibly much longer. Apart from its connection to Watergate, the Pentagon Papers definitely contributed to a delegitimation of the war, an impatience with its continuation, and a sense that it was wrong. They made people understand that presidents lie all the time, not
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just occasionally, but all the time. Not everything they say is a lie, but anything they say could be a lie.”



Feedback: 30 / 30

Christian,
Wonderful story choices and compellingly written.



Tammie Vieth Last edited: Friday, 1 June 2007, 03:31 AM

The story that best demonstrates the turning point in the war was Clark Dougan story. His story talks about how in high school he was acquainted with a boy named Greg Fischer. Since they were in the same homeroom for three year they briefly new each other. One day while talking Clark Dougan told Greg Fischer that he was going to go to college and Greg in response said that he was going to go to go into the marines. One Memorial Day 1968 Clark opened the newspaper and began to read and article named "He Was Only 19-Did You Know Him?". As Clark read on he realized that this young boy that died was Greg Fischer,the boy he went to high school with. Clark states " I think that was the moment that "Middle America" really turned against the war. Especially since the newspaper that posted the article was The Cleveland Press, a strong supporter of the war. Considering that this article was posted in their newspaper demonstrated the change in how American felt about the war. With Vietnam taking our young soldiers lives perhaps people began to think "Fuck this. It's not worth Greg Fischer's life or his buddies life". - Patriots pg. 306.

I believe that this story is the best example of the "turning point" because it demonstrates one story among thousands speaking about our youth dying in a war that seemed to get nowhere. This story demonstrates the shift in the mindset of the American people. Just the fact that the Cleveland Press printed a tragic story about a young American soldier dying at 19 is powerful. "Maybe they weren't saying it but they were starting to feel it" - (Patriots 306). The turning point of Vietnam was when Americans came to realize "the awfulness, the endlessness, of the war..." The footage of the execution performed by General Loan brought out "the unethical quality of a war in which a prisoner is shot at point-blank range" (Karnow 562) Americas children were dying to a war that wasn't ours and when things didn't get better Americans no longer felt the war should continue.

In Part 5 Douglas Kinnard gives the best demonstrations about the "ending"of the Vietnam War.I think this account is the best description of what contributed to the ending of the war. In his interview Douglas says " I think one of the greatest failures of the war among senior generals officers was not in the field but in Washington" (Patriots 323). I think this quote is very powerful in the aspect that our small amount of military victories in Vietnam were not our greatest failure but rather the power that Washington held. Douglas talks about how the aftermath of the Tet Offensive resulted in the "American people very rightfully seeing the fruitlessness of the whole thing"-(Patriots 322) Without the popular support for the war it had to come to an end. By 1970 the American majority wanted the war to be finished. Douglas himself 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"-(Patriots 320). I feel this statement is a very valid point. In a poll that Douglas conducted his result showed that 70 percent of people didn't even know the wars objectives! Our own people didnt fully understand what we were trying to accomplish in Vietnam and therefore they didn't want anymore of our children dying for a cause that was vague. This is when our country no longer backed up the war, therefore putting an end to the seeming "never ending battle". Douglas Story was a powerful account that was detailed and contained an abundant amount of material that covered why this was came to and end and why it was lost. He stated " I think we were always working under the assumption that if you just kept hitting the enemy hard enough he would quit...we were wrong. It turned out that we had the power but they had the will."- (Patriot 321). The Vietnamese people will was strong and determined and even with the high body counts they still remain strong. American body counts were far lower than the Vietnamese's counts however they were still too high. When Nixon said that we were to invade Laos and Cambodia the American people exploded with protest and riots. Without the support of the people a war cannot be successfully fought. These factors lead to the ending of the war. This story is by far the most interesting account and best demonstrates the ending of the war to me. Without our peoples support the war had end.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Tammie,

Fine story choices and top notch support of your position.
You were the only one to choose the Clark Dougan story.



Robert Meador Last edited: Friday, 1 June 2007, 03:30 AM

In Part Four of Patriots, I personally feel that Tuan Van Ban's account of his experience during the Tet Offensive is the best example of a turning point in the war. Ban describes attacking an American base along with 400 other North Vietnamese soldiers. The Tet Offensive was for the most-part a military failure for North Vietnam, but it did represent a major turning point in the war in that it dramatically changed many Americans' opinions of the war. After the Tet Offensive Americans started to realize that there was no obvious end to the war in sight and that we were dealing with an enemy that couldn't be as easily defeated as many had assumed. After Tet the antiwar movement really gained momentum as the general consensus among the American public was anti-war. People started to realize that while America had the advantage as far as military resources are concerned, the North Vietnamese fought with a genuine devotion and zeal that the American soldiers lacked. Many Americans were fighting in Vietnam because they were simply forced to due to the draft and in some cases didn't even know what they were fighting for. The American military officials thought that they could destroy the will to fight in North Vietnam simply by having a high "body count." and it became more apparent that this wasn't necessarily the case after the Tet Offensive.

I feel that in Part Five of Patriots George Evans' story is the best example of the "end" of the war. Evans was a medic at an Air Force hospital in Cam Ranh Bay. He tells of his transformation from veteran-loving military enthusiast to anti-war militant. Due to his upbringing he always had a passion for the military and "didn't know there was a bad war." During his time in Vietnam his opinions changed and he began to despise the war as he didn't see and point in it and he started to feel that "the war was not a good thing." I think this is significant because it goes to show that in many cases not even the American soldiers supported the war. This goes back to the idea that the North eventually won the war due to their passion for the cause in which they were fighting for. One of the accounts from a South Vietnamese soldier in Patriots (which one specifically, I forgot...) suggested that the South lost the war because they didn't even feel like they were fighting for themselves. They were fighting alongside Americans whose presence they despised. For them, it always felt like they were fighting someone else's war.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Robert,
Fine story choices.



Christina Morgan Last edited: Wednesday, 30 May 2007, 02:00 PM

Such a large contribution to the success or failure of a war is not the actual fighting or strategy, but the state of mind of the soldiers. If soldiers feel as though they are defeated, then the likelihood of that defeat is that much higher. If you don't feel as if you can win, then you probably won't. In part 4, there is an entry by Phillip Jones Griffiths. It's short and sweet, but says everything that I believe about why the Tet Offensive was a turning point-disillusionment. South Vietnam was relying almost completely on the U.S to fight their war for them, provide them with techniques, and fund their operations. They were also dependent on us to know how and where to stay safe. Since the Viet Cong were so countryside saavy, our logical advice was that the S. Vietnamese would be safe in the city, and so the Viet Cong knew exactly where to hit them the hardest when it came time for the Tet Offensive. Now maybe Tet wasn't the most powerful plan to eliminate massive amounts of troops or start revolts, but it certainly broke down the state of mind of both the U.S. and the S. Vietnamese. After being told by various "reliable" parties that the war was coming to an end, the U.S. citizens were bombarded with photos and new stories about Tet and all our dead soldiers, as well as the gruesome slayings of Vietnamese on film. The president and any U.S. military officials lost all credibility at this point, and we felt like we'd been lied to and deceived as a country. The S. Vietnamese felt like they could no longer trust the U.S. to protect and keep the people out of harm's way. The breakdown of trust and unity was the first major turning point in this point of the war.

I know that this isn't exactly what you're asking, but I'd like to argue that for us Americans, Vietnam is NOT over, there hasn't really been an ending for us. I went to a Memorial Day celebration on Monday, and was reminded yet again what an impact this war has had on our lives and on our country. There is a story in part 5 about Colonel and Patty Hopper,

founders of a POW/MIA organization. As the General who was speaking at the celebration said, this isn't over for us, and we won't rest until every last man and woman has been found. In Laos alone, there were more than 550 men missing and according to Hopper, eight were returned. I consider a war over when the troops go home. Back to their families, back to their country. Far too many of our countrymen are either dead in unmarked graves in Vietnam or held prisoner after all these years. Vietnam has yet to end for us, and it may never.



Feedback: 30 / 30

Christina,
Excellent job. Eerie timing for this class, this assignment,
and the Memorial Day celebrations.



Paul Rasmussen Last edited: Wednesday, 30 May 2007, 11:10 AM

To me, the best example of the turning point in the war is the story by Tuan Van Ban (p.302-303, Appy). He was an infantry lieutenant for the North Vietnamese army in 1968. The reason I think that this story illustrates a turning point in the war is because it is a detailed, first-hand account of the tet offensive. Before tet, the Vietcong were thought to be on the verge of defeat. This story clearly shows that this was not the case-the morale of the soldiers was still very high and they still had a lot of fighting left to do in order to reach their goal. Tuan describes how the men were so excited right before the offensive, that they could barely keep quiet. They had planned this offensive for weeks before and knew that it would have a major impact on the war. In the Karnow book (p.560), it says "The tet offensive stunned Johnson. Having swallowed most of the reports claiming that the Communists had been defanged, he had never imagined that they could attack the U.S. embassy in Saigon or assault the cities of South Vietnam." The offensive caused many Americans to see that the Vietcong would never give up. Johnson decided not to run for re-election and Nixon became president later. He withdrew all of the troops from Vietnam in 1973. In my mind, this account of the tet offensive clearly illustrates the turning point in the war. We finally realized that there was a good chance of failure.

The best example of the ending of the war is a story by Le Minh Khue at the end of part 5. I originally was going to choose a story that talked about the Paris agreements that caused the withdraw of U.S. troops from Vietnam, but that was not truly the end of the war in Vietnam. Le Minh Khue's story tells of her entering the city of Danang after the communist victory in 1975. She tells of watching the South Vietnamese army wave to the Vietcong, and then she knew the war was truly over. Vietnam had been unified by the communists and a large portion of the population left the country. She says that the first few days of the war's end were very happy and fun. After that, times were tough. The country was poor and in poverty. This I believe marks the end of the war in Vietnam, there was at last a winner, and the fighting was over. The Paris agreements were the end of the war for American troops, but obviously not for Vietnamese troops. In episode 10 of the video series, it talks about how the North was not satisfied with the Paris agreements. Sure, U.S. troops would leave, but Vietnam was still divided, and that wasn't enough for them. Another part of the video that made me realize this was when the Vietcong P.O.W.s were ripping off the clothes issued to them by the South after they were freed. It just shows that the Vietcong would not accept the South as a separate part of their country.



Feedback: 30 / 30

	Paul, Fine story choices.
	Peter Browning No entry
	Tiffany Parrett No entry
	Sean Urban No entry
	Jacqueline Heady No entry
	Julie Listoe No entry
	Kristina Clark No entry
	Nathaniel Coxon No entry
	William Rigole No entry

	Toni Stormont
	No entry
	Rebecca Merrigan
	No entry
	Leah South
	No entry
	Sharon Wurtz
	No entry

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