

Due date: Saturday, 14 November 2009, 10:10 PM

Last edited: Saturday, 14 November 2009, 08:44 PM (691 words)

Determination, Tenacity, and Honor

The three stories that I chose were first, "The Truong Son jungle gave us life." (p.103) by Vu Thi Vinh, this one was from the section Trails To War. Second, "Man, if we're up against this, it's gonna be a long-ass year." (p.130) by Dennis Deal, from the Central Highlands section. Third, "What would it be like to hide in a cave day after day for five years?" (p.217) by Fred Branfman, from the section Air War.

The theme that came to me from reading these three particular stories is that the Vietnamese people were very motivated. This is how I came up with my title, Determination, Tenacity, and Honor, all of these words mean motivated to me. Let's start off with Vu Thi Vinh story. This story tells us about The Volunteer Youth Corps. The youth wanted to be a part of this war and show that they cared for their fellow countrymen. There is different ages given to when a youth could join, anywhere from sixteen to eighteen, but if a youth was persistent they could join at almost any age. Vu Thi Vinh joined at fifteen, like many of the youth did she lied about her age. This group was formed to repair the "Ho Chi Minh Trail", along with defusing unexploded bombs. They also work mainly through the late night as this is when the trucks would come and they needed to help get them unstuck. They did this even when they did not have food (rice). they would search for crabs or cassava, and when they could not find that they would even eat what they called "aircraft vegetables", or also known as fungus and moss as this is all that was left after air bombings. They were even able to make a broth that was nutritious from the red ginseng trees. Even with all of the trials and tribulations that they went through the were eager to join and help their cause.

Then there is Dennis Deal's story, in this story it tells how the North Vietnamese just kept coming and used tactics that the U.S. was not ready for. The main part in this story that tied it together was towards the end, Deal is telling of a North Vietnamese soldier that he thought was dead as his butt was shoot off and his insides were leaking out from a large hole. What he saw next was amazing this man was so determined that while being so badly wounded, that he was able to take a grenade and booby-trap himself. This is just another showing of honor and determination.

Last there is Fred Branfman story. I liked this story as it is told by a westerner, but it is more about Vietnamese mans story as much as it is his own. He talks about his conversations with a former Pathet Lo soldier named Ngeun. Ngeun was telling him about when they are charging a barbed wire fence how they would have one man lie down across it and the others would use him to get over it. Branfman could not believe it and asked him how they got picked to be the one to do it. Ngeun told him that there were always many volunteers for this as they all wanted to be the first in the battle. There was also the statement that Ngeun said that he wanted to be known as or have someone say is, Ngeun he loved the people. I think this shows how the people were determined to do whatever and endure whatever they had to not only for themselves but for their fellow countrymen.

As I stated above and these stories showed, the Vietnamese people had determination, tenacity, and honor. I can't say that they were right or wrong but if it would have happened here I would like to think that we would have acted with as much determination, tenacity, and honor as they did for their fellow countrymen and their beliefs.

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