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The Douglas Kinnard piece is my choice on which submission best describes the "turning point." To me, the intro line says it all; "While we had the power, it turned out they had the will." Couldn't have said it better myself. While the US and South Vietnam were able to beat back the communists during the Tet offensive, the media coverage drove home to the American public that the costs of deterring Hanoi from its conquest of the South would require a level of sacrifice far higher than what was anticipated. Brig. Gen Kinnard also speaks to the flawed mind set of senior US field Commanders as to the "body count" method of counterinsurgency.

Gen Kinnard doesn't stop the field commander level either; he also justly criticizes the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for their lack of moral courage to tell LBJ and McNamara that only by a mobilization of the reserves could America win the war. The unwillingness of US leadership to exert the same level of military effort and political capital in Vietnam that it had shone during the Korean War is summed up neatly in this article.

For me the Frank Maguire article in Part 5 best describes the final years of America's direct involvement in South Vietnam. His '65-'66 tour in Quang Ngai is described in the most positive terms with the 2nd ARVN division's civil action programs and local security efforts. Maguire's '67-'69 tour with the AirCav highlights the ramping up of America's direct military intervention after the Tonkin Gulf resolution. Maguire's third and final tour in '70-'71 illuminates the rampant anarchy and corruption that was rife in the South Vietnamese government and armed forces.

In closing I find that it is no coincidence that both of my selections for this assignment were written by career army officers. Both men were able to offer dispassionate and well thought out views on both their personal war time experiences and in their critiques of America's military and political policy. This level headed approach in their writing stands in stark contrast to many of the other submissions made in the book by anti-war activists or Vietnamese communist party functionaries.

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