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Extended essay cover

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Candidate session number			
Candidate name			
School name			
Examination session (May or November)	May	Year	2015

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: HISTORY

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: How Significant was Vietnamese Women's Participation during the VIETNAM War to the Victory of Vietnam?

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

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Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

The Candidate made good use of local resources based in Hanoi especially to Women's Museum. All appropriate guiding materials were provided notably the Assessment Criteria and how to structure the research design. She handled the task well especially helped by getting into the essay early in her Diploma Programme years. She followed advice with ease and understood the demands of the research model required. An appropriate amount of time was spent with myself and I can say the whole process went smoothly. The viva voce was held on Feb. 26, 2015. In addition to following a personal interest in the Role of Women in the Second Vietnam War, she gained research skills that she feels will help her in future studies.

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

As per the section entitled "Responsibilities of the Supervisor" in the EE guide, the recommended number of hours spent with candidates is between 3 and 5 hours. Schools will be contacted when the number of hours is left blank, or where 0 hours are stated and there lacks an explanation. Schools will also be contacted in the event that number of hours spent is significantly excessive compared to the recommendation.

I spent 4 1/2 hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: _____

Date: 27 Feb 2015

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number							
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Achievement level

Criteria

	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3
A research question	2	2		2	
B introduction	2	2		2	
C investigation	3	4		4	
D knowledge and understanding	3	4		4	
E reasoned argument	3	4		4	
F analysis and evaluation	3	4		4	
G use of subject language	3	4		4	
H conclusion	2	2		2	
I formal presentation	1	4		4	
J abstract	1	2		2	
K holistic judgment	2	4		4	

Total out of 36

25

Name of examiner 1: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Name of examiner 2: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Name of examiner 3: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

IB Assessment Centre use only: B: _____

IB Assessment Centre use only: A: _____

International Baccalaureate

Extended Essay

History

The role of Vietnamese Women during the Vietnam War

Research Question:

How Significant was Vietnamese Women's
Participation during the Vietnam War to the Victory of
Vietnam? ? N. Vietnam?

"When the enemy comes, even women must fight."

Word Count: 3901

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Abstract

The Vietnam War resulted in the victory of North Vietnam, which could then finally achieve independence and reunification. Although very unknown, the large and active involvement of Vietnamese women is an important fact that needs to be judged how crucial their contribution was to the winning of the war. How significant was Vietnamese women's participation during the Vietnam War to the victory of Vietnam? This is the question that this investigation attempts to answer by exploring their background history and analyzing the various roles that they played as fighters and supporters with diverse examples of female individuals.

Due to the nature of the subject, which has not attracted great attention of historians, there are limited amount of resources available. Thus, as much information related to 'Vietnamese women during the Vietnam War' as possible for the author will be gathered instead of just one particular type of source. One important point to be considered is that, since this study is focused on evaluating Vietnamese women's contribution to the victory of the army which fought against the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (ARVN), the South Vietnamese Army organized by Ngô Đình Diệm and supported by the United States, women in ARVN are not considered.

The investigation undertaken finally leads to the conclusion that Vietnamese women's active participation enormously contributed to the victory of North Vietnam. They initiated uprisings, fought "face-to-face" and as guerrillas, causing damages to the American army. It is said that some of them also led troops and performed revolutionary activities that even male soldiers could not. In addition, they helped the male soldiers and supported the army as supporting personnel. Hence, it seems reasonable to conclude that the women's participation contributed to the victory of Vietnam to a great extent.

Ep - Should have North Vietnam in title (task 1) + work

Word Count: 294

Sc - Deserves better dev + more in method?

Concl ✓

Introduction

Throughout its long history since 10,000B.C., Vietnam has been dominated many times by various foreign controls ranging from China almost for a thousand years (111B.C.~938A.D.), to France, Japan and the United States in the 20th century. When the United States left the country after being defeated in the Vietnam War, Vietnam was finally able to celebrate its independence and unification of the country in 1975 [that lasts until today]. Vietnam's victory was historically momentous, not only as it was generally unexpected by a public for Vietnam to win, but also because it has such major historical significance for the country itself.

There exist many factors that made Vietnam be capable of achieving the victory, such as, but not limited to American troop's own difficulty in adjusting to the fighting in Vietnam with such different environment, the public opinion in America and Vietcong's famous 'Guerilla tactics'. Highly importantly, Vietnam's one of the strengths was that, in an effort to win, North Vietnam militarized the entire population by imposing universal military conscription that included a large number of women.¹ The number of women who were actively involved and fought a war is rarely big. Therefore, defining the extent and significance of women's participation and contribution during the war in Vietnam in winning therefore arises and will have historical merit in understanding the war more deeply.

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There is additional value in studying the role of Vietnamese women during the Vietnam War. Women were needed during the First World War to perform important war work and fill the jobs of men who had joined armies. Even though this gradually gave a rise to a change in the role of females in wars, general histories of wars often ignore women, and the role of women is hardly emphasized. Likewise, very little is well known of the role of Vietnamese women

¹ Tucker, Spencer. *Encyclopedia Of The Vietnam War*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 1998. Print.

during the Vietnam War despite their large involvement.

This paper thus will investigate how significant was Vietnamese women's contribution during the Vietnam War to the victory of Vietnam. It will provide background history related to Vietnamese women that may help to do so and discuss the various roles that they took during the Vietnam War.

Historical background of Vietnamese women

In assessing the significance of women's participation during the Vietnam War, it will be useful to consider their history. Of particular importance that vividly distinguishes Vietnamese women from women in other countries during wars is ~~on~~ the fact that the outbreak of the war was not the only catalyst that encouraged their participation. There is much evidence that shows women in Vietnam historically wanted their opportunity in society be tantamount to that of male and hoped to play important roles in the country as well even by fighting a war.

Such points related to Vietnamese women can firstly be observed in the story of Trung sisters. In 111 B.C., Vietnam was under the control of the Chinese Han Dynasty and adopted Confucianism as its official ideology. Trung sisters, Trung Trắc and Trung Nhị, who were daughters of a powerful Vietnamese lord, opposed the Chinese rule for the first time after years of obedience. Tô Định, a Chinese governor was shocked, partly because Confucianism emphasized subordination of females, and kidnapped and killed Trung Trắc's husband, Thi Sách. Rather than discouraged and giving up, Trung Trắc gathered an army of 80,000 with a large number of women and forced the Chinese commander to leave.² She maintained that "Foremost, I will avenge my country. Second, I will restore the Hung lineage. Third, I will avenge the death of my husband. Lastly, I vow that these goals will be accomplished.", and this encouraged 80,000 Vietnamese rushed into battle.³

Even though they had to face defeat ~~after all~~, Trung sisters are evaluated as heroes of Vietnam and inspired ordinary Vietnamese, not to mention female soldiers, who participated

² Toler, Pamela. 'First Century Revolutionaries: The Trung Sisters Of Vietnam'. *Wonders & Marvels*. N.p., 2014. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.

³ Ww2.edc.org., 'Women's Equity Resource Center'. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.

in the Vietnam War. One fifteenth-century Vietnamese poem states that “All the male heroes bowed their heads in submission. Proudly stood up to avenge the country.”⁴, showing that even males showed reverence toward Trung sisters about their courage and achievement. Indeed, the idea of the old adage saying “When the enemy comes, even women must fight”⁵ is exemplified by them. Even today, a dramatic demonstration of the Trung sisters in Vietnamese Women’s Museum in Hanoi, a pagoda Hai Bà Trưng (two Trung sisters), Hai Bà Trưng Street in Ha Noi and a national holiday of Vietnam in February are dedicated to the Trung Sisters and honour them.

Furthermore, ideological motivation from the promises made by Ho Chi Minh influenced women’s involvement in the war. Ho Chi Minh, who deeply believed in Communism, was highly revered by Vietnamese, even though not many of them actually saw and met him. They used to call him ‘Bac Ho’, which means ‘Uncle Ho’, and this suggests his geniality that Vietnamese people felt. He urged all people work together without any discrimination as to age, sex, or religion.⁶ Ho Chi Minh especially emphasized and infused the idea of equality between men and women, the slogan of the Indochinese Communist Party since its foundation in 1930, and said “Women are half the people. If women are not free, then the people are not free.”⁷ Moreover, at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Eighth Plenum of the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) on August 16, 1945, the party proclaimed its advocacy of “universal suffrage, democratic liberties, equality among all ethnic groups

⁴ www2.edc.org, 'Women's Equity Resource Center'. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.

⁵ Nguyễn Văn Ký.,. *Rethinking The Status Of Vietnamese Women In Folklore And Oral History*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan press, 2002. Print.

⁶ Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print.

⁷ Anderson, David L. *The Columbia History Of The Vietnam War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. Print.

and between men and women.”⁸ Ho also encouraged women to follow the ‘Three responsibilities’ (Ba đảm đang) that include following: to take care of their household and children, to raise food to help feed the soldiers and *to fight*.⁹ Those were then promoted by the Women’s Union for women to fulfill during the war.

While a large number of Vietnamese women were very encouraged and motivated to fight in the war, some women were in fear to do so. This was due to the fact that they were reluctant to leave or prevented from leaving their domestic zones, or worried to fight in a war because of their inexperience.¹⁰ For that reason, the Communist party of Vietnam wished to instill the spirit of women. The following is one of the exhortations that encourage more active participation of women in the war.

“Should we sit idly with our hands in our laps and look at the stars in the dark night and weep? No! That won’t get us anywhere. We must rise up, and turn these sparkling dots into a sea of flames to light up the sky and burn out all the misery of our life of slavery.”¹¹

Proceeding from what has been said above, it ~~should~~ ^{could} be suggested that fighting for the independence of the country against foreign control has been the ideal of women. Numerous Vietnamese women, who fought for the revolution during Japanese occupation and French ^{dates} war (also known as First Indochina War), served as model to be emulated for Vietnamese women. Americans that Vietnamese fought against during the Vietnam War were another foreign control and successors to the French for Vietnamese, and the war against them ~~would have been~~ ^{would} the opportunity to show women’s capacity and ability for the country. The

⁸ Khắc Viện, Nguyen. *A Century Of National Struggle: The August Revolution*. 1947. Print.

⁹ Anderson, David L. *The Columbia History Of The Vietnam War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. Print.

¹⁰ Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print.

¹¹ Mai Thi Tu.,. *Women Of Viet Nam*. Montreal, Canada: Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada, 1972. Print.

conclusion that can be drawn is that the women joined the war for reasons that derived not only from patriotism arisen from the outbreak of the war, but also from Vietnamese history, its Communist ideology and the ideal image of revolutionary women. It is also worth reiterating that, in that way, they would have been able to achieve a more desirable social status and a better way of life by fighting for the war, not just the victory. This Vietnamese women's highly motivated spirit must have been reflected during the war.

OK

Women fighters, “long-haired warriors”

The Vietnamese women during the Vietnam War took an active role in resisting ~~against the~~ Ngô Đình Diệm's forces, even before forming a formal army. They firstly showed their revolutionary aspect by a series of uprisings in 1960 that began in the Mekong Delta province of Bến Tre. Bến Tre uprisings triggered the major uprising in the South and were one of the peaks in the history of the revolution in Vietnam. The uprisings showed that peasants, most of whom were women, could damage and defeat well-equipped American troops. According to ~~the interpretation of~~ Sandra C. Taylor, the author of '*Vietnamese Women at War*', the plans for the uprising were clever, although the enemy captured several key comrades.¹² The Vietnamese women stood up and protested the war around them using their voices, sticks and drums in an effort to overthrow occupation policies of the government in South Vietnam.¹³ Their movement turned out to be so successful that they caused a great deal of damage to the U.S. army and the Ngô Đình Diệm's forces.¹⁴ The term “long-haired warriors”, the appellation Ho Chi Minh awarded to Vietnamese women fighters to praise them is derived from this event.

One of the key leaders of the uprisings was General Nguyễn Thị Định, who later became President of the Women's Union for the Liberation in 1965, Assistant-Commander in Chief of the Liberation Forces in the South and the first woman to become Vice-President of the State council.¹⁵ To use in Mai Van Elliott's words, Nguyễn Thị Định's editor and translator of her

¹² Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print.

¹³ Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print.

¹⁴ English.bentre.gov.vn., 'History | BEN TRE PROVINCE'. N.p., 2013. Web. 9 Oct. 2014

¹⁵ English.bentre.gov.vn., 'Nguyen Thi Dinh (1920 - 1992) | BEN TRE PROVINCE'. N.p., 2013. Web. 18 Oct. 2014

memoir '*No Other Road To Take*' told that Định had told her "she would sacrifice everything for the revolution and for the interest of the masses."¹⁶ Indeed, Nguyễn Thị Định's contribution was especially essential, as she not only successfully prepared and led the uprisings in Bến Tre, but also became active in the creation of National Liberation Front of Vietnam (Vietcong) and the Women's Liberation Association. NLF was formally organized on 20th of December in 1960, and women of all ages were involved and took a large part of the front. According to a document captured in Ninh Thuận Province in 1966, there were 58 women among 367 village guerrillas (15.8% of the total), 285 women among 11,281 hamlet guerrillas (2.53%), 1,238 women among 2,414 militia members (51.3%), 52 women among 159 self-defense and secret guerrillas, showing that a ^{significant} vast number of women joined the army.¹⁷ (Yet, the nature of all statistics is that they are suspect and highly possible to be inaccurate. Moreover, it is hard to generalize women's participation with this statistic, since this document was for particular place, Ninh Thuận Province and particular time period, 1966.)

At the beginning of the formation of National Liberation Front, however, some female soldiers of the army were not highly effective and supportive for NLF. Some women left the Party and the Front during the war, as they were feared being captured and killed.¹⁸ In addition, the girls joining the army, leaving home to work with men, appalled some elderly Vietnamese women, who thought that they were acting "without care or caution".¹⁹ Historian William Duiker ~~also~~ argued in his book '*Sacred War*' that the chapters of the Women's

¹⁶ Nguyễn, Thị Định. *No Other Road To Take*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program, Dept. of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1976. Print.

¹⁷ *Militia Activities During The First Six Months Of 1966*. 1966. Pike Collection.

¹⁸ Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print.

¹⁹ Hunt, David. *Organizing For Revolution In Vietnam*. Cambridge, Mass.: Radical America, 1974. Print.

Liberation Association were “poorly organized and lacked militancy and a sense of direction, and their members lacked ideological commitment”.²⁰ Yet, this might be because not all of the Vietnamese women joining the army were armed and carrying weapons all the time, as only few fought full-time. Also, they needed time to be trained at the beginning and therefore just used primary weapons.

The Vietnamese women began to be not only large, but also effective as the war continued, acting as an integral part of the NLF.²¹ In ~~historian~~ Mary Ann Tétreault's argument, during the Vietnam War, women are not portrayed as victims, but as supporters of the revolution whose contribution is vital to its success.²² In 1960, ‘long-haired warriors’ marched en masse to the local Saigon government headquarters and carried out ‘face-to-face’ battles to demand compensation for people the American army had killed, causing great damages to the enemy.²³ As well known, the NLF fought the American and ARVN forces more as guerillas than head on. The contributions of the Vietnamese women in NLF as guerrilla troops were also highly outstanding. Vietnamese Women's Museum in Hanoi states that 980,000 Vietnamese women participated as guerrilla forces. Working as guerrillas was the most suitable for women; a document from 1966 noted that they “have much capacity for this (type of) war.”²⁴ This is because they could be soldiers when the enemy comes and turn into

²⁰ Duiker, William J. *Sacred War*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995. Print.

²¹ Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print

²² Tétreault, Mary Ann. *Women And Revolution In Africa, Asia, And The New World*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1994. Print.

²³ Nguyễn, Thị Định. *No Other Road To Take*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program, Dept. of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1976. Print.

²⁴ *From A 'Top Secret' Transcript Of Resolutions Passed By A Phu Yen Province Guerrilla Warfare Convention Held In March 1965; Document Captured In August 1966 By 101st Airborne Brigade*. 1965. Pike Collection.

civilians when the enemy leaves. Also, women performing as guerrillas were highly vital to NLF, because they were even more difficult to be identified by Americans and ARVN army than men guerrillas could be. Being aware of this benefit, one Saigon-Gia Dinh Regional Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party appealed to members in the Củ Chi District in 1966. *Law.*

"Every party member, every group member, every youth, both male and female ... become 'a guerrilla'. The motivation of women to accept combat duties should be given due attention.

The criterion, that one-third of the guerrillas should be women, must be reached and exceeded."²⁵

The Củ Chi district mentioned above was of a great importance for NLF with the immense underground Củ Chi tunnels, which allowed NLF to perform guerrilla activity. Although many female guerrillas fought along with male guerrillas, there were also units comprising women only. A guerrilla company, C3 formed in 1965 was one of them. A noteworthy female guerilla in C3 was Vo Thi Mo. Living underground in the tunnels was extremely difficult, even more so for females for sanitary reasons. She told a BBC reporter that "Napalm, bullets and tunnel rats she could cope with. But not being able to bathe was a real disaster."²⁶ However, Vo Thi Mo was motivated to endure all the hardships by a strong desire for revenge Americans killing Vietnamese and destroying landscape. During her first big battle in the village of Cây điệp, she led a squad of teenage girls carrying obsolete rifles and some hand grenades and blew up two U.S. tanks. She later commanded a platoon of female guerrillas and a group of Vietcong males and moved into ARVN military base heavily fortified with wires. When Vo Thi Mo was wounded and staying in the hospital during the Tet Offensive, she received a telegram announcing the award of Victory Medal Class Three to the entire *When?* *When?* *- 1968*

²⁵ Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print.

²⁶ AP News,. 'THE GIRL GUERRILLA OF THE CU CHI TUNNELS'. 1985. Web. 8 Oct. 2014.

female platoon.²⁷

During Tet offensive on 30th of January, 1968, many other Vietnamese women also performed a brilliant exploit. The first exemplar woman, though ^{relatively} ~~very~~ unknown, ^{was} ~~is~~ Hoàng Thị Khánh, who gathered guerrillas and organized troops before the outbreak of the Tet offensive. She further smuggled arms into the city and led troops, 80 percent of whom were women to kill South Vietnamese soldiers. Other exemplary women fighters were the sisters of Thieu Thi Tam and Thieu Thi Tao, two teenagers, who started their revolutionary participation early. They attempted to explode a bomb at the Saigon police headquarters and the CIA. Tam even emulated what Thích Quảng Đức, the monk immolating himself did. After being captured and imprisoned in the infamous ^{expl?} 'tiger cages', their captors called them 'Trung sisters' because of their indomitable spirit.²⁸ Making mention of the women during Tet, one radio broadcast to Eastern Europe stated that they "drove back a whole battalion after nearly a hundred fights inside and outside the city."²⁹

As has been examined, the role of the large number of highly motivated Vietnamese fighters contributing to the NLF army was crucial. They ^{part... did} must have caused damages to the American troops both physically and mentally. Such big participation of women caused ^{meaning} unorthodox miscalculation in planning the strategy of the U.S. troops and gave a huge psychological advantage. It was difficult for Westerners to realize that the women could be killers, so they did not suspect them and were largely unaware of the number of women. Military strategists therefore focused on regular forces mainly with men and overlooked the significant roles that

²⁷ Anderson, David L. *The Columbia History Of The Vietnam War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. Print.

²⁸ Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print.

²⁹ *Women's Contribution To War*. 1969. Liberation Press Agency broadcast to Eastern Europe and the Far East. Pike Collection.

women played. It is known that in 1967, General William Westmoreland refused to accept the argument by intelligence operative of the Central Intelligence Agency that the women, who were often unarmed and fought part-time only, were an integral part of the enemy forces.³⁰

For these reasons, according to Vietnamese Women's museum in Hanoi, Heroes of the People's Liberation Armed Forces were awarded to a group of 200 women and 56 female units in recognition of the women's contribution during the war. The expression for women, "long-haired warriors" later ~~became to be~~ appeared in many documents to honor the Vietnamese women's contribution, such as in emulation tales written by NLF and an article in the journal *Viet Nam Studies* in 1966 for an international audience.³¹

³⁰ Young, Marilyn Blatt. *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991. Print

³¹ Danh, Le Han. 'The Long-Haired Army'. *Viet Nam Studies* 10 (1966): 61-62. Print.

Support personnel for the army

Behind the strong army of NLF, there were the women participants as support personnel. The female supporters, many of whom were civilians, still wished to perform their traditional roles and did not become fighters. Instead, they worked as support personnel for the army, as they still hoped to support National Liberation Front for the independence. They successfully contributed to the victory of NLF not by being part of them, but by working in the rear and supporting the warriors.

To begin with, ~~the~~ women supporters played a leading role in transporting weapons, food, clothing and such. They helped greatly in its building and maintenance during the Hồ Chí Minh trail, which was established to support manpower and material. Thousands of women *Detail...* widened, repaired the trail and even made detours if necessary.³² Without their contribution, the *trial* would not be described as “one of the great achievements of military engineering of the 20th century.”³³ In addition, women in Women’s Liberation Associations provided needed *- Descrie* supplies for the men at the battle sites. Their tasks were necessary to continue the conflict and have favorable conditions for soldiers.³⁴

Another key role that women undertook was caring *for* of wounded soldiers. Vietnamese Women’s Museum in Hanoi states that female medics in the liberated zones not only administered first aid and moved wounded soldiers, but also undertook operated complex *Descrie* surgery. Life in the tunnels under occupied zones by American troops was extremely harsh

³² Stevens, Richard L. *The Trail: A History Of The Ho Chi Minh Trail And The Role Of Nature In The War In Viet Nam*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993. Print.

³³ Hanyok, Robert J. *Spartans In Darkness*. [Fort George G. Meade, Md.]: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, 2002. Print.

³⁴ Taylor, Sandra C. *Vietnamese Women At War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999. Print

with poor sanitary conditions. Many soldiers had to stay underground, yet sickness, especially Malaria, was prevalent among people staying in the tunnels. Women also worked underground in tunnels and were in charge of medication and medical instrument supply. Many civilians and intellectuals, including Dương Quỳnh Hoa, a wealthy Chinese-Vietnamese woman, who studied as a physician in Paris, and Đặng Thùy Trâm, who graduated from the Hanoi Medical University and killed at the age of 27 by American forces, were involved to care of the wounded. Had women not participated as medics during the war, the guerrilla tactics of NLF would have not been that successful for guerrillas' health reasons. *who can
fell?*

Lastly, according to Vietnamese Women's museum in Hanoi, Anti-American Young Volunteers' Force was founded in 1965 to maintain road communications. More than 60,000 women were gathered and worked to repair the roads after bombing by American forces at crucial points such as the Đồng Lộc T-junction in Hà Tĩnh that was a strategic area during the Hồ Chí Minh trail, the Hàm Rồng Bridge in Thanh Hóa and the Bến Thủy Ferry in Nghệ An.

Evaluation of the source

Why 'stand alone' treatment?

As discussed earlier, research on the subject of this investigation, 'the role of Vietnamese women', is still in its early stage relative to other topics of the Vietnam War. Therefore, there were limited sources available and also are a few inevitable limitations in terms of the primary and secondary sources that were used and cited.

Since the author is currently living in Hanoi, Vietnam, primary sources produced in Vietnam and by Vietnamese were more accessible. Firstly, many arguments of this investigation are supported by the data from Vietnamese Women's Museum in Hanoi. They may be valuable, in that they show how Vietnamese women during the Vietnam War are portrayed publicly today, but also limited, because only selected information is displayed. Also, it is very likely that some of resources, especially statistics with numeric data are manipulated to convince people of a large involvement of women for example, although some with raw factual details may have values. Moreover, memoir written by Nguyễn Thị Định was valuable, giving an glimpse into the effects of the war on the lives of her, but memoir from the view of American soldiers regarding Vietnamese women would have been relatively objective and even more valuable. Lastly, this topic about the Vietnam War that is regarded as a sensitive area politically made it even difficult to gain the access to U.S. material. Such material exists, but is subject to government censorship by the Vietnamese authorities. The author had no opportunity to visit the United States or other western countries to get such access to these materials.

There are also limitations with the secondary sources used for this investigation. For example, because the role of Vietnamese women is little discussed among historians, it was hard to look for historiography about the role of Vietnamese women in English. Some of resources were addressing American women during the Vietnam War instead of Vietnamese

women. Furthermore, interestingly, most of the authors of secondary sources gathered are women. This shows that the role of women during a war is indeed not really a common interest to both genders and tells that the female authors might have been already advocates of the idea that Vietnamese women hugely contributed to the victory of Vietnam and thus dealt with and researched only positive aspects of them. These limitations help to explain why it was difficult to provide a ^{profound} ~~deep~~ argument that Vietnamese women's participation did not really have a big impact on the strength of NLF and the outcome of the war. Lastly, some of the secondary sources including the book frequently cited throughout the investigation, '*Vietnamese Women At War*' in particular, are dependent on oral interviews, which provide opinions held by ^{A cross-section?} Vietnamese people, who experienced the war. There is a lack of resources for them as well. Many female veterans were illiterate peasants and did not record any document. Many people, thus dependent on their memories, might have aged significantly and experience physical and mental deterioration. Therefore, some accounts may not always be reliable.

Conclusion

This investigation has sought to answer the question 'How significant was Vietnamese women's contribution during the Vietnam War to the victory of Vietnam'. As has been revealed via evidence and arguments considered thoroughly, the contribution of Vietnamese women was highly significant to the victory of Vietnam. It is worth reiterating that they vividly showed their revolutionary traits during Bến Tre uprisings and later joined NLF to fight against American troops and South Vietnamese government. Women's involvement, especially as guerrillas was beneficial to their army, as women were more difficult to identify as actual fighters than male guerrillas. Women's help and support for the army as transporters, medics and repairmen were also striking and indispensable for the army. When following evidence showing women's revolutionary activities during the war is considered, it is hard to deny that Vietnamese women greatly contributed to the victory of Vietnam.

Nevertheless, my studies demonstrate that there are clearly problems with reaching a final answer to this question. Further research should be directed at determining whether women's participation sometimes impacted rather negatively. At the moment, there are not sufficient resources to judge this. However, it is to be hoped that this investigation contributed to the understanding about the crucial roles that Vietnamese women played.

Carsten

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