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Int. Seminar

December 6,2017

Memories He Had Left Behind

Proposal

Memories He Had Left Behind is about my grandfather, Oh Byung Chul. He was an officer during the Vietnam War. This document is about how the Vietnam War caused mental, emotional and psychological changes to my grandfather and how it ultimately affected his relationship with others. My grandfather was 19 years old when he first joined the South Korean mandatory military. He was twenty-six years old when he fought in the war. My father was four years old when my grandfather volunteered for the war. South Korea was a very poor country because it was not long after the Korean War. The United States government offered my grandfather a lot of money that he could not refuse and therefore volunteered for the war. My grandfather at the time was a soldier in the Korean military. Knowing this was the first war he was going to participate my grandmother was upset. Many of my grandfather's friends who were not soldiers at the time were drafted unwillingly. Many escaped to China, Tai Wan, and even to Japan. My grandfather's closest friends went to the war with him.

The sole reason South Korea went to war and allied amongst the United States was because of the aid South Korea received during the Korean War. Korea and the United States formed a close partnership thereafter. In 1967, the number of American troops in the United States was 500,000 but that was not enough. Therefore, 50,000 men from South Korea had been sent to Vietnam. The soldiers according to a New York Times article, were deployed in the rural areas of central Vietnam. An area that was under the control of the Viet Cong, rivals of the

U.S (Kwon). South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War was crucial as it was useful. Although, some refused and was very much against the war, others sought the opportunity to earn money for their families back home in South Korea. South Korea was suffering from the aftermaths of the Korean War and needed as much help and money. Women and men were working and joining the war to support the country. Modelled after Japan's economic recovery from World War II, South Korea sent all the men the counter could gather.

My grandfather during the war always wrote to my grandmother and tried to send as many as he could. He promised he would return healthy and alive. My grandmother was especially worried because her own father had left her and her family. During the Korean war my grandmother's father abandoned her and settled in Japan and married a Japanese woman. He started a new life and identity leaving my grandmother with her siblings and mother. My grandfather tried his best to come back to South Korea healthy but he was fatally shot in the legs twice during a combat. It was a very frightening point in my grandfather's life because he could have died from losing a lot of blood. My grandfather did not stop fighting immediately and went to seek medical attention much later. He had to help his friends who were still fighting get to a safer location. My grandfather still remembers the exact moment he got shot and his surroundings. He remembers yelling at his soldiers left to right telling them to run and duck. There were also landmines everywhere and therefore they had to be even more careful. My grandfather remembers how the landmines caused some of his friends deaths and is still deeply disturbed by it. My grandfather is still disturbed by the fact that even though him and his friends participated in the same war, my grandfather was amongst the few that had survived. My grandfather's relationship to my father was solely based on my grandfather's lasting post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. After the war, it took my grandfather many years for him to recover. My grandfather is conservative and does not like the idea of "Americanism" and

therefore stays away from all things “American”. Whenever my family goes to visit my grandfather we would have to wear long sleeve shirts and pants to cover our skin and tie our hair up regardless of the temperature. MY grandfather also had trouble sleeping for many years. My grandmother would tell me how his nightmares haunted him and images of his dead friends and citizens appeared in his sleep. My father told me that when he was younger he saw grandfather somnambulate through the house. My grandfather would also wake up in the middle of the night screaming and yelling at nothing. My grandfather would cry and then fall back to sleep. My father when he was young thought our grandfather was ill, After the war my father described how his grandfather looked like a different person after the war. The saying how a war can change a person. My grandfather’s attitude towards life had changed.

I want readers from my age and above to see my documentary and start a conversation with their elders and hopefully reflect on the war. My grandfather and I do not usually talk about wars and how it had an impact on his life but I feel like it is important for me to understand what went on. I also believe that it is important for the younger generations to understand what older generations had to sacrifice to prevent future wars. It is crucial to look back at past wars and conflicts to prevent or suspect future conflicts. I believe that this documentary will help my relationship with my grandfather and help me connect to my grandfather more.

Treatment

Through my documentary, I would like to show how the war changed my grandfather. I also want to show how the war affected his relationship with the rest of his family. I would like to introduce my grandfather first in my documentary.

In the documentary, I am going to interview my grandfather about his life, from beginning middle to end. I am also going to combine images and videos of what it was like back in my

grandfather's life. Through this interview I hope to also find out what had happened to his surroundings in South Korea. Although the war has caused emotional and physical obstacles for my grandfather I would like to ask about how it changed his perspective in life.

My grandfather is currently in South Korea with my grandmother. I will facetime or skype my grandfather and try to get footage from the interview. I am also going to collect facts and information about the war itself through Britannica, resources from the library, and articles from different news sources.

I will also try to get my father to speak about his childhood and how his father influenced the way he grew up. I want to add segments about my fathers perspective of my grandfather. I will also try to get primary sources to get a better understanding of the war. I will try to get war footage from PBS, and YouTube to help strengthen my documentary. I will also be doing a voice over to create a real documentary.

In terms of shot sequences, I would like to focus mainly on the human response to war. I want to capture my grandfather's response to each question I ask about the war. The conflict in this documentary would be my grandfather's willingness to answer my questions completely without getting flashbacks or painful memories. I will try to ask correct questions about his mental health during the war.

Bibliography:

Borowiec, Steven. "Allegations of S. Korean Atrocities Arising 40 Years after Vietnam War." *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Times, 16 May 2015, www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-korea-vietnam-20150516-story.html.

This article contains facts about the lives of South Korean soldiers. This article also talks about the atrocities and crimes committed by the South Koreans at the time of the war. This relates to my article because there are explanations to an everyday soldiers life and the locations of where South Koreans are.

History.com Staff. "Vietnam War." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history.

This article contained all the facts about the Vietnam war. Including photos, numbers and videos. This article helped build the backbone to my proposal.

Kwon, Heonik. "Vietnam's South Korean Ghosts." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 10 July 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/07/10/opinion/vietnam-war-south-korea.html.

This article is about the legacy and stories South Korean soldiers left in Vietnam. This article also contains facts about the South Korean army in Vietnam.

"Site Navigation." *Warfare History Network*, warfarehistorynetwork.com/daily/military-history/south-korean-soldiers-in-the-vietnam-war/.

This article also explains the daily life of an South Korean soldier in detail.