

Teachers' Guide

Module 3

THOSE WHO SERVED

Young men and women made choices to either serve or not serve in Vietnam. This module provides an opportunity to explore the demographics of those who served.

Many who chose to serve sent letters home and kept diaries. In addition, Vietnam veterans have memories of that time. This module encourages the use of primary source material such as letters, diaries, panel discussions, and interviews to help students gain a perspective and understanding of the soldiers' and nurses' experiences in Vietnam. This module also gives students an opportunity to learn about draftees; enlistees; conscientious objectors; and those who chose to leave the United States, rather than serve in the military.

An unfortunate part of any war is atrocity; Vietnam was no exception. This module also contains an examination of the My Lai and Hue massacres and places these massacres in the context of the history of military atrocities against civilians. In addition, you will find activities that help students relate wartime atrocity to peacetime leadership in their own communities.

The POW offers another lens through which to study the soldiers' experiences. This module gives students an opportunity to explore the conventions surrounding treatment of POWs, including documents pertaining to the expected conduct of POWs. In addition, this module provides primary source materials, letters, diaries, and poems of American and Vietnamese POWs.

Hollywood also created many films about the soldiers' experiences in Vietnam. This module contains activities to help students compare and contrast "reel" history to "real" history.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to do the following:

- Read and evaluate letters that were sent to loved ones in the United States by American servicemen and women stationed in Vietnam.
- Use primary source materials, such as letters from U.S. servicemen and women stationed in Vietnam, to study the relationship between the war's progression and morale of the service members.
- Use primary source materials, such as letters from U.S. servicemen and women stationed in Vietnam, to explore themes in warfare that are common to the experience of being a soldier.
- Use primary and secondary source materials to discuss the treatment and experiences of U.S. servicemen who were held as POWs by the government of North Vietnam.
- Examine the role of draft resistance, conscientious objection, and desertion as protest mechanisms.
- Compare and contrast the treatment of American POWs against such internationally recognized documents as the Geneva Convention.

- Identify and evaluate various reasons for refusing or evading military service.
- Chronicle the change in soldiers' attitudes as the war continued on.
- Assess the difficulties faced by those who served in Vietnam as they differed from earlier wars, such as:
 - inability to identify or understand the enemy;
 - the psychological impact of the one-year tour of duty and lack of a clear goal;
 - rotation by individual versus by unit;
 - morale problems in the military in the later years of the war no-win strategy; and
 - decompression problems between the war zone and a sometimes hostile home front.
- Analyze the historical validity of a motion picture about the Vietnam War.
- Assess the problems faced by American women who served in Vietnam.
- Analyze the experiences of minorities serving in the Vietnam War.

Materials

The *Echoes From The Wall* Teachers' Guide should be used in conjunction with a history textbook. You also will need:

- Inviting Vietnam veterans to share their oral histories with your students (module 3, appendix A)
- Women in the Vietnam War (module 3, appendix B)
- African Americans in the Vietnam War (module 3, appendix C)
- Hispanics in the Vietnam War (module 3, appendix D)
- Tables from Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam, by Christian G. Appy (module 3, appendix E)
- Letters by W. Kalwas (1970), T. Pellaton (1970), and R. Ransom, Jr. (1968) from Dear America: Letters Home From Vietnam, edited by Bernard Edelman (module 3, appendix F)
- Book excerpts — "A Pure Love of My Country Has Called Upon Me" (1861 letter by Sullivan Ballou); "Men Mutilated in Every Imaginable Way" (Civil War diary by Kate Cumming); "Our Country Right or Wrong" (a letter by Joseph E. Sintoni); "No Cause Other Than Our Own Survival" (by Phil Caputo); and "Helping Someone Die" (letter by Dusty) from Ordinary Americans: U.S. History Through the Eyes of Everyday People, edited by Linda R. Monk (module 3, appendix G)
- Perspectives on Events at My Lai and the Trial of Lt. Calley (module 3, appendix H)
- Narratives by Van Anh, People's Army of Vietnam; Colonel Norman A. McDaniel, USAF; Colonel Fred V. Cherry, USAF; Sergeant James Jackson, Jr., Green Berets; Larry Guarino; James N. Rowe; and Eugene B. McDaniel from Voices From Captivity: Interpreting the American POW Experience, by Robert C. Doyle (module 3, appendix I)
- Illustrations of American POWs taken from Prisoner of War: Six Years in Hanoi, by John M. McGrath (module 3, appendix J)
- Excerpts from the Hague Convention of 1907 (module 3, appendix K)
- Poems — Like Swans on Still Water, by Dana Shuster and A Veteran Attends A July 4th Barbeque by Stephen Sossaman (module 3, appendix L)
- Beyond the War: Hollywood and the Vietnam War (module 3, appendix M)

ACTIVITY: CHOOSING WHAT TO DO, LEARNING LOG ASSIGNMENT

Have students write an entry in their learning log answering the following questions:

- What do you think a citizen's responsibilities are to this country?
- For what would you be willing to risk your life?
- What are some advantages and disadvantages of entering the military after high school?
- During the Civil War some men paid five hundred dollars to keep out of the military. Should people with money be able to avoid military service in wartime?
- Some conscientious objectors in the Vietnam War served in hospitals or as Army combat medics, while others fled to Canada. Discuss your feelings about each.
- If you were old enough to serve in a war or be drafted, what would you choose to do if a country developed nuclear weapons and threatened to unleash them against the United States?
- Are there things your country might ask you to do that you would refuse?
- Was it fair for young men to legally avoid the draft through a college deferment during the war?
- Do you think many people are willing to suffer the consequences of their decision to disobey the law? Why or why not?
- What are some examples in U.S. history of these kinds of actions (e.g., Henry David Thoreau; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Chief Joseph of the Nez Pierce Tribe)?

Discuss student responses in class.

Or

ACTIVITY: LIVING HISTORY, CHOOSING TO SERVE OR NOT TO SERVE

- Create a panel of speakers to help students understand the reasons behind enlisting, serving after being drafted, choosing conscientious objection, and choosing not to serve. We recommend a panel of three. Possible panelists include:
 - someone who enlisted to serve in the Vietnam;
 - someone who was drafted to serve in Vietnam;
 - someone who went to Canada or Sweden to avoid serving in Vietnam;
 - someone who did not serve in Vietnam because their draft number was never chosen; and
 - someone who chose conscientious objection during the war and performed alternative service.

Hints for moderating a panel where people hold diverse views

One of the hallmarks of a democracy is the citizens' ability to hold diverse views and debate these views publicly. Structure the panel presentation so that each person has an opportunity to tell his/her story without interruption. Give each presenter an equal amount of time. Set the tone for the discussion by suggesting that it is not the object of the discussion to decide who was right or wrong, but rather merely to show that there were many strongly held divergent views about whether to serve the U.S. government by fighting in Vietnam.

Give students an opportunity to ask questions of all panelists after they have presented their stories. Thank all of the panelists for participating in the discussion.

Or

ACTIVITY: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE DRAFT

Lead the class in a lecture discussion of the following points:

- The demographics of U.S. participation in Vietnam
 - This was the youngest army the United States has ever sent to war.
 - The perceived disproportion of minorities in the military and at the front lines.
 - The effect of draft laws on the representation of socioeconomic classes in the military.
- Compare the attitudes of those who went to Vietnam with those of participants in other wars.

Lecture and discussion questions

- How could a young man gain an exemption or deferment?
- What factors might motivate someone to choose to enlist? How would this explain, in part, the fact that the military did not always reflect the population as a whole?
- What was the average age of soldiers in World War II?
- What was the average age of soldiers in Vietnam?
- What might this difference mean in terms of the kinds of men who served and their civilian as well as military experience?
- What percent of those killed in Vietnam were black?
- What percent of those killed in Vietnam were draftees?
- What percent of those killed in Vietnam were volunteers?
- Are there discrepancies or differences in the demographics of those who served in Vietnam?
- Were minorities treated differently?

ACTIVITY: LETTERS HOME

Have students read and analyze letters sent home by soldiers. Students should read and analyze several letters. They should complete their analysis and fill a Historical Head for each letter they have read.

Guiding questions:

- What do the letters have in common?
- How are they different?
- How might these letters differ from what men going into battle might say to each other?
- How might the women to whom the letters were written have reacted?
- What do you know about other wars and the ideals for which men were willing to die.
- What might have influenced the men who wrote these letters?
- Why would they feel the way they did?
- Might their attitudes affect the way they performed their duties? If so, how?
- Might men have felt this way in other wars?
- If there was a major war today, should women be drafted?

Guiding questions — for the women's diaries and letters home:

- Why are these women doing what they are doing?
- Has there ever been a draft for women?
- What would inspire a woman to choose such a job?

Historical Head Worksheet

Directions: This activity is to be completed based on the teacher-assigned readings. Fill in the Historical Head space with ideas and images you have found in your readings and/or research. The images chosen should reflect what students have learned from reading war time correspondence. For example:

1. You may choose several letters to read:

- J. Sintoni's letter and defense of U.S. presence in Vietnam and the Sullivan Ballou letter; or
- W. Kalwas' letter and T. Pellaton's, or
- Dusty's letter and the diary of K. Cumming.

Use the Hollow Head provided to complete the Historical Head assignment for each person chosen.

HOLLOW Head

- How did K. Cumming's situation differ from Dusty's? How was it similar?
- How will the role of women in warfare change as time goes on?
- How will it stay the same? Why?

ACTIVITY: LEARNING LOG QUESTION

- Are there causes or values for which you would be willing to give your life today?

ACTIVITY: THE LESSONS OF MY LAI

At My Lai, U.S. troops were involved in a terrible incident. This section will help students to better understand the tragedy and relevant lessons from this experience.

Direct students to read the overview of the My Lai massacre and related events below. (These items may be downloaded from this site and photocopied for students' use.)

- The Law of Land Warfare, The Uniform Code of Military Justice, and the Geneva Convention.
- Excerpts from the book Four Hours in My Lai and other books and essays on war.
- The Newsweek poll of April 12, 1971, about public reaction to the verdict of Lt. Calley's trial.

Massacres at My Lai and Hue

Even wars have rules for unacceptable behavior. The Geneva Convention has elaborate rules about how prisoners are to be treated. Weapons allowed for use in warfare are even regulated by international agreements. For example, chemical

and biological weapons, such as mustard gas, were outlawed after their use in World War I. Other weapons, such as bullets that expand after hitting a human target, are also outlawed for use in war.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines "atrocities" as "an act of vicious cruelty, especially the killing of unarmed people." Wars in the 20th Century have taken a heavy toll on unarmed civilians. Unarmed soldiers who have surrendered can also be victims of atrocities.

My Lai

On March 16, 1968, Army Helicopter Pilot Hugh Thompson flew over the small village of My Lai. He looked in disbelief as he witnessed U.S. troops seemingly gone mad. The troops were burning the village and firing their rifles at unarmed Vietnamese civilians cowering for cover and begging for mercy.

Men of Charlie Company of the Americal Division were out of control. Their leaders, platoon lieutenants, and a captain were leading them into a day of infamy. As many as five hundred civilians were killed by grenades and automatic weapons fired at close range. The soldiers had suffered many casualties nearby in recent months and were taking revenge.

Thompson yelled from his helicopter, demanding that the massacre stop. When he saw a group of soldiers chasing some civilians he finally landed his helicopter. He instructed his crew to open fire on the U.S. soldiers if they harmed the civilians and risked his life in a successful effort to save a group of civilians and to try to stop the killing.

Not all soldiers with Charlie Company took part in the killing of innocent civilians. Some refused to fire their weapons. However, the carnage would not have occurred if the officers of Charlie Company had not taken part in and indeed led the killing of the civilians.

Few in the unit involved wanted the details of the massacre brought to light; but a former soldier, Ron Ridenour, continued to press for a full investigation. Journalist Seymour Hersh began investigative work that revealed to the American public what had happened at My Lai. He uncovered the details of how a group of angry and poorly led soldiers brought about a bloodbath in a rural, isolated Vietnamese village. A trial was eventually held. A conviction was obtained for Lieutenant William Calley (Calley was later pardoned by President Richard Nixon). The My Lai massacre further eroded dwindling American public support for the war.

Hue

All sides were guilty of atrocities. For example, during the Tet Offensive in 1968 when the VC and North Vietnamese forces captured the city of Hue. After the Communist forces took control of the city, VC soldiers rounded up anyone

sympathetic to the South Vietnamese government. Most victims were shot. Others were beheaded or buried alive. It is generally accepted that Communist forces massacred three thousand unarmed civilians. They held the historic city for 25 days until dislodged by the U.S. Marines.

The VC and the North Vietnamese allowed no published accounts in North Vietnam of the massacre. There were no courts martial or trials of the soldiers who committed the atrocities that have been well documented by many sources, including The Washington Post reporter Don Oberdorfer. Soldiers who committed the murders have not written books or memoirs showing regret. Some apparently feel that the massacre was a necessary step in bringing about an ultimate Communist victory over the South Vietnamese government. In either case, under their form of government, none are free to write about what happened.

When soldiers murder civilians

Soldiers are trained to fight against and to defeat other soldiers. Sadly, modern history is brimming with examples of innocent, defenseless people being slaughtered.

In 1992 in Bosnia, some military forces took part in the murder of unarmed civilians. Some units also took part in the mass, organized rape of women. The United Nations War Crimes Tribunal brought some of the men who ordered the murders and rapes to trial in The Hague. The Tribunal was reestablished for the first time since World War II to prosecute individuals who took part in war crimes. Some convictions have taken place, including that of Dusan Tadic, a policeman convicted of murder, torture, and rape of prisoners in 1992 in Serbian detention camps. Most of the 75 men who were indicted remain at large. They include Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Muslims.

In 1999 in Kosovo, some Serbian soldiers took part in the murder of civilians during a campaign of "ethnic cleansing," ridding the region of people who were culturally different. The Kosovars are largely Albanian Muslims. The Serbs are Christians. During the war in Kosovo, the United Nations began documenting the war crimes so that those who ordered or took part in the atrocities against unarmed civilians could be brought to trial and punished.

Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbia, during the repression of Muslims in Kosovo, was indicted for atrocities by the Hague Tribunal and, along with other Serbian officials, was charged with war crimes in the Spring of 1999.

Military atrocities against civilians

- Lawrence, Kansas 1864 — Confederates known as Quantrill's Raiders invaded Lawrence, Kansas and killed nearly 150 of the town's males.
- South Dakota 1872 — George Armstrong Custer and his men killed over 100 men, women, and children in a Sioux Village.
- Armenia 1918 — Over one million Armenian civilians were killed by Turkish soldiers.

- Germany 1945 — In World War II the German government tried to exterminate the Jews, Gypsies and others in Europe. Over eleven million died from Nazi efforts.
- Cambodia 1977 — Communist Khmer Rouge killed over one and one half million civilians while conquering Cambodia.
- Iraq 1988 — Several hundred civilian Kurds were killed in a chemical weapons attack on their village by the Iraqi Army.
- China 1989 — Hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators were massacred in Tiananmen Square.
- Rwanda 1997 — Up to 200,000 unarmed civilians were killed in warfare between Hutu and Tutsi tribes.
- Kosovo 1999 — Serbian soldiers killed thousands of unarmed civilians throughout Kosovo in what was referred to as "ethnic cleansing."
- SUBACTIVITY 1: Review the overview of the My Lai massacre and statements in Perspectives on Events at My Lai and the Trial of Lieutenant Calley (module 3, appendix H). Lead classroom discussion on whether soldiers and their leaders should be held accountable for their actions during time of war.
 - Why did the soldiers fear the Vietnamese civilians who were sympathetic to the VC?
 - The villagers were unarmed and posed no immediate threat. Is there any justification for the soldiers' actions?
 - Should an unarmed civilian ever be intentionally killed during times of war?
- SUBACTIVITY 2: After reviewing the statements in Perspectives on Events at My Lai and the Trial of Lieutenant Calley (module 3, appendix H) and the Geneva Convention and the Uniform Code of Military Justice, make a list of observations on what happened at My Lai that includes:
 - At least five explanations of why the massacre happened;
 - At least three justifications that could be used to defend Lt. Calley, the men of Charlie Company, or other officers;
 - At least three arguments that could be used to prosecute the soldiers of Charlie Company, Lt. Calley, or other officers; and
 - From the reading they have done, do the students agree that Lt. Calley committed a crime and deserved a "guilty" verdict? Direct your students to write at least a paragraph that explains their own opinion using the reading to support their position.
- SUBACTIVITY 3: In a society with freedoms like those guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the media is free to publish articles critical of the government. The media, largely through the efforts of Seymour Hersh, brought about massive public attention to the prosecution of Lt. William Calley. In communist Vietnam, however, the media is controlled by the government. When the VC and North Vietnamese slaughtered civilians in Hue, the Vietnamese were not informed. Even today most people still do not know.
 - Why would a government want to control all radio, television, and news available to their people?
 - What governments today control and decide what information their people can have?
 - Why were those who organized the atrocities at Hue never prosecuted?
- SUBACTIVITY 4: In the 1999 Kosovo invasion, murders were committed by Serbian soldiers. Some believe that these killings were directed by high-ranking military officers

and civilian leaders. Ask the students to provide an update on the individuals who are being sought for these activities by the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal.

- Are the U.S. pilots who accidentally bombed civilian targets in Kosovo or Iraq war criminals? What could a U.S. pilot do that would make him/her a war criminal?
- What penalty should the War Crimes Tribunal impose for the crime of rape?
- What should be done to civilian leaders who start military conflicts such as the "ethnic cleansing" of Kosovo, knowing that his soldiers will round up and kill civilians?
- SUBACTIVITY 5: Lead a classroom discussion on current military conflicts and internal rebellions throughout the globe.
 - How many wars are ongoing in Africa, South America, and Asia?
 - Is the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal attempting to prosecute everyone who has committed or is committing war crimes?
 - Should the United Nations be making efforts to find and punish war criminals worldwide?
 - Do you think that the people of Iraq or Serbia consider the U.S.'s bombing campaigns as criminal?
- SUBACTIVITY 6: Alex Chadwick, a Vietnam veteran who is now a journalist, offered young people the following advice when he reflected on his Army experience in Vietnam: "You can do things in war that seem alright because it's war and the rules are different. Afterwards you'll go back to normal life, you'll reexamine what you did...remember that. Governments don't have consciences; you do. You will have to live with your conscience." Write the quote so all students can see it, or distribute it to the class. Then have students read the statements in Perspectives on Events at My Lai and the Trial of Lieutenant Calley (module 3, appendix H). Lead a discussion, or have students write a paper that responds to one or both of the following points:
 - Like Chadwick, some men who were in Charlie Company also talk about the "rules" of war being different. One says that the "laws back home" did not matter in combat. Who were those men? What are some of the "rules" that the men of Charlie Company followed? What are the rules or laws that should have applied?
 - Chadwick says that "you will have to live with your conscience." What does he mean? Can you identify some of the men who were at My Lai who are having trouble living with their consciences? Who are they?
- SUBACTIVITY 7: What about the concept of leadership in communities?
 - Are there leaders who get people to commit acts that are wrong?
 - Do leaders persuade young people to use narcotics or resort to violence?
 - How many students in your classroom have done something wrong because of pressure by a group?
 - Suppose your students saw a group of people harassing a handicapped person or assaulting an innocent person. Should they try to stop it?
 - What do your students think motivated Hugh Thompson to risk his life to stop the My Lai massacre?

ACTIVITY: THE POW EXPERIENCE

Have students view pictures and documents relating to the POW experience. They will view pictures of the tiger cages used for solitary confinement, legal documents on treatment of POWs,

and written accounts of the POW experience. Read *Confederates in the Attic* and compare the experience of a prisoner in the Civil War with the POW experience in Vietnam. Materials will include the following:

- Assorted POW narratives (module 3, appendix I)
 - Colonel Norman A. McDaniel, USAF - Larry Guarino
 - Sergeant James Jackson, Jr., Green Berets - Colonel Fred V. Cherry, USAF
 - Eugene B. McDaniel - Poem by James N. Rowe
- Narrative of Van Anh, Member People's Army of Vietnam (North Vietnamese) (module 3, appendix I)
- Illustrations of American POWs in Vietnam taken from John M. McGrath's *Prisoner of War: Six Years in Hanoi* (module 3, appendix J)
- General Order 100 — The Rules of Land Warfare
- Section 1, "On Belligerents," chapter 2, articles 4-20, from the document revised at the Hague Convention of 1907 (module 3, appendix K)
- Code of Conduct for Members of the Armed Forces of the United States

Lead a discussion covering some of the following points:

- Discuss the legal/international criteria relating to POWs and their treatment.
- Explain the difficulty of interpretation and implementation of legal/international criteria relative to POWs and their treatment.
- Discuss specific case accounts of Americans held as POWs in North Vietnam.
- Compare and contrast the attitudes of U.S. POWs of different wars.
- If an American serviceman was captured by enemy forces, how would that individual respond and how might s/he expect to be treated?
- In what ways are these accounts similar? In what various ways did these American POWs respond to their capture?
- How do these accounts reflect the North Vietnamese attitudes toward international agreements pertaining to the treatment of POWs?
- How do you think using the Smitty Harris tap code helped American POWs survive their captivity? If you were a POW, what do you think you might have done to survive?
- James N. Rowe was held in solitary confinement in a small cage. From his cramped prison cell he could see the U Minh Forest. What mood does Rowe's poem convey? Why do you think that Rowe wrote this poem?

ACTIVITY: POEMS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Read the poem *A Veteran Attends A July 4th Barbeque*, by Stephen Sossaman (module 3, appendix L). Ask students the following questions:

1. What evidence suggests that the veteran is troubled by the war?
2. What remembered images appear to the veteran?
3. What two types of rockets are meant in line 7?
4. What is happening in line 12?
5. How does the 4th of July remind the veteran of the Vietnam War?
6. How might the advice given to the veteran by others at the barbeque be ironic?

Read the poem Like Swans on Still Water, by Dana Shuster (module 3, appendix L). Ask students how the metaphor of the ugly duckling applies to nurses in Vietnam.

TEAM LEARNING

TEAM ACTIVITY: HOLLYWOOD GOES TO WAR

This lesson material is developed around a long-term assignment whereby students, for a research project, watch selected film clips on Vietnam, make an assessment of the film clips, and then report their findings to the class. Students should be directed to look for how a film interprets the war and what slants or biases related to the war are present in each film clip.

Since our involvement in Vietnam, the motion picture and television industries have produced several feature-length motion pictures and documentaries related to that topic. As with any art form, these films contain the producer's or director's interpretation of this event. Following are some films you might wish to see when implementing this lesson and research project.

Column A [Hollywood Versions of the War]	Column B [Documentaries about the War]
Born on the Fourth of July	The Anderson Platoon
The Green Berets	Vietnam: Long Time Coming
Apocalypse Now	The Thousand Day War
Full Metal Jacket	Vietnam: A Television History
Good Morning, Vietnam	Vietnam (episode from CNN's Cold War series)
The Deer Hunter	
Platoon	
Heaven and Earth	
The Hanoi Hilton	

Note: You may wish to choose the clips carefully to avoid using any materials that may violate community standards and guidelines concerning profanity in classroom teaching materials. As a class assignment, each student can write a movie review after viewing a complete film. The teacher can assign a "Siskel and Ebert" type of presentation to the class about the movie.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENTS (PLEASE COPY THIS FOR YOUR STUDENTS)

You will be engaged in a long-term research project that explores the Vietnam War through the lens of the feature-length motion picture. You are to view clips from the selected films. View clips from column A and column B. After watching the clips as a group, you are to investigate the place of your assigned film in context to the "real" history of the war as opposed to the "reel" history of the war.

On the day that you are assigned to present your findings, you are to come to class prepared to:

- Provide your classmates with a brief synopsis of the theme and plot of the film.
- Present to your classmates your findings about the film and how it adheres to true historical reality or where the director/producer has taken liberties to interpret the film and the history of the war in a particular way.
- Show your classmates a five- to ten-minute clip from the film that demonstrates some aspect of your findings.
- Compare and contrast the film clips you have chosen from column A with the film clips you have chosen from column B.
- Discuss how films portray women's involvement in the Vietnam War.