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THE HEROES OF VIETNAM—

A LIVING TRIBUTE TO THE SOLDIERS WHO FOUGHT THERE

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Dear Educator:

War has affected every American generation since a band of defiant patriots declared independence from England in 1776. Students today may know someone who has fought in or protested against a war, or they may have heard stories from a family member or friend about the terrible costs incurred and the brave sacrifices made as a result of conflict. Even if students have only seen movies dramatizing the acts of war, or watched television reports of more recent conflicts, they can identify with the youthfulness and hopes of someone their own age sent to fight—and perhaps die—for a cause.

Tales of war survivors, heroes and casualties intrigued Tom Dzicek, a teacher at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School in Coventry, Connecticut. Mr. Dzicek put together a multi-dimensional, multi-curricular program that brought the experiences of veterans of the World War II, Korean and Vietnam conflicts to life through their personal contact with students. This led to a remarkable project where students researched and published a book of biographies of each of the soldiers from the state of Connecticut who died in the Vietnam War. This important project linked generations and gave students a context to better understand the realities of that war and those who fought in it.

With Mr. Dzicek's kind permission, the Weiner Nusim Foundation is pleased to provide this free curriculum guide, **The Heroes of Vietnam—A Living Tribute to the Soldiers Who Fought There**. This guide will give you the tools to replicate Mr. Dzicek's **612 Project** in your community by helping your students interview friends and family of those who died so that they can create a living history of the local heroes who sacrificed their lives during the Vietnam era. It also can be used as a basis for learning about and honoring the heroes of other wars. This program is based on the ideas of Tom Dzicek and other teachers at Nathan Hale whose involvement in the areas of history, music, art, geography and language arts has helped create a comprehensive approach to this project.

You may wish to share this guide with other teachers and decide to enact as comprehensive, or limited, a program as time and school resources permit.

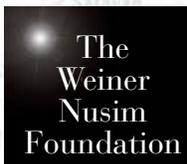
Since America recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of Veterans Day—and the sacrifices of soldiers involved in recent conflicts have been an ongoing national issue for some time—the topics covered in this guide offer excellent opportunities for student analysis of recent events in the light of the lessons of Vietnam and the era during which that war was fought.

The activities in this guide have been developed for high school and middle school students, although teachers of courses about the 1960s or even college history professors can adapt the content for their classes. Middle school teachers may want to use the suggested modifications or may wish to challenge their students using the guide in its complete form.

This is an unparalleled opportunity to bring history alive in the classroom in ways that will forge a meaningful, unforgettable link between students, teachers, and the community at large. We hope you will share these materials with the appropriate teaching staff as a stimulating source of enrichment for your students.



Roberta Nusim
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The Weiner Nusim Foundation



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We welcome your suggestions for ways to improve this program in the future. Please share your comments by contacting us via e-mail or the URL above.

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The 612 Project

The Weiner Nusim Foundation would like to thank Tom Dzicek and the teachers of Nathan Hale Middle School in Coventry, Connecticut, for their inspiration and support. If you would like to contact Mr. Dzicek directly, he may be reached at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School, 1776 Main Street, Coventry, CT 06238, (860) 742-7334 ext. 279, or at dzicek@snet.net.

This guide has been prepared for the study of the Vietnam War era and to commemorate those soldiers in your community who gave their lives in that conflict. You may wish to adapt these materials for the study of World War II, or the Korean, Desert Storm or Iraqi Freedom wars. The year 2003 marked the 50th anniversary of both Veterans Day and the end of the Korean War, and 2004 the dedication of the World War II memorial in Washington, D.C. Refer to the **Extended Activity Ideas** on page 20 for additional activities that can apply to the study of other wars.

CONTENTS

Program Components	1
Program Objectives	1
Target Audience	1
Overview	1
Student Resources	19
Extended Activity Ideas	20
Resources	Inside Back Cover

Curricular Areas

Activity 1	geography, history, social studies	2
Activity 2	history, social studies, critical thinking	2
Activity 3	social studies, history, language arts	4
Activity 4	social studies, history, geography	5
Activity 5	social studies, critical thinking, Web research	5
Activity 6	social studies, language arts	5
Activity 7	social studies, language arts	6
Activity 8	social studies, language arts, music	6
Activity 9	science, social studies, technology, language arts, Web research	7
Activity 10	social studies, language arts	8
Activity 11	social studies, language arts, art, music	8

Student Activities

Activity 1	Places in History—Past and Present	9
Activity 2	The Two (or More) Sides to the Story	10
Activity 3	Events and Issues	11
Activity 4	The Times They Are A'Changin'	12-13
Activity 5	They Came From Here	14
Activity 6	Community Outreach	14
Activity 7	Recording History	15
Activity 8	A Culture of Another Time	16
Activity 9	Heroes of Their Times	17
Activity 10	Living History	18
Activity 11	A Tribute of Your Own	19

Credits

**The Heroes of Vietnam—
A Living Tribute to The Soldiers Who Fought There**
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THE HEROES OF VIETNAM—A LIVING TRIBUTE TO THE SOLDIERS WHO FOUGHT THERE

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- This teacher's guide, which includes activities on the history of the Vietnam War and the Vietnam era as well as suggestions for engaging local war veterans and for finding out about those from local communities who gave their lives.
- Eleven student activity sheets printed on reproducible masters.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. To give students a personal view of American veterans from their state or county.
2. To recognize the contribution of American veterans.
3. To have students compile a book about the Vietnam veterans or soldiers from their area who died in the war.
4. To teach students about the Vietnam War.
5. To give students a cultural context for understanding how and why societal attitudes changed during the 1960s and the effect those changes had on those who fought in the Vietnam War.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program was designed for middle school and high school students in social studies, language arts, music, science, and art classes.

To apply the following approach to other wars, see the box on the **Resources** page (inside back cover).

OVERVIEW

A Basic Approach to Recognizing Vietnam Veterans

- Have students find the names of those from your state who died in the Vietnam War by checking the Vietnam Casualty Data Base (www.no-quarter.org). If your state had many casualties, you may want to focus on those from your community or county.
- Ask students to compile their biographical information into a format of your choosing.
- Contact the American Legion (www.legion.org) or Veterans of Foreign Wars (www.vfw.org) for the names of survivors living in your area.
- Invite one or more veterans to class to speak about their experiences.
- Complete the activities in this guide.

An Expanded Approach to Recognizing Vietnam Veterans

Extend class or school involvement in the above activities in as broad a way as time, interest and resources permit. If the number of casualties in your state is large, you may wish to focus only on those in your county, or another group. You may:

- Create art projects honoring those from your state who died.
- Involve community leaders in Memorial Day or Veterans Day remembrances in which survivors and students participate.
- Publish your own version of **The 612** by raising funds through the sale of commemorative T-shirts or advertising in programs created for community events.
- Schedule a class trip to Washington, D.C., to see the Vietnam Memorial Wall or the World War II Memorial when it is dedicated in May 2004, and/or Arlington National Cemetery.
- Find out when "The Wall That Heals" (the traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall), honoring those who were killed in Vietnam, will be in a community near you (check out www.vvmf.org and click on **The Virtual Wall**).
- Produce a radio or community-access cable television show for local broadcast, inviting veterans and students to participate.

PLACES IN HISTORY—PAST AND PRESENT

Curricular Areas: geography, history, social studies

To give students an understanding of the area of the world that so affected America, we've provided a map for students to complete. Ask them to fill in the map on the activity sheet.

17th Parallel and the DMZ—After Dien Bien Phu, the Geneva Accords of 1954 divided Vietnam. At the 17th Parallel, a Demilitarized Zone separating the North and the South was created.

Hanoi—the capital of North Vietnam during the war and the current capital of Vietnam. Located about 85 miles from the Gulf of Tonkin.

Haiphong—a port city in North Vietnam with a large harbor, subject of some of the most intense bombing of the war.

Saigon—the capital of South Vietnam.

Gulf of Tonkin—Also known as Gulf of Bac Bo, it is in the northwestern arm of the South China Sea, bordered on its west by northern Vietnam, on its north and east by southern China, and on the east by the Chinese island of Hainan. The port of Haiphong lies on the Gulf.

Da Nang—site of one of the first landings of U.S. troops. Became a huge military complex. Located in east central Vietnam, on Da Nang Bay, about 50 miles south of Hue.

Phnom Penh—the capital of Cambodia and a major port with an outlet to the South China Sea through the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. In the 1970s, warfare led to forced expulsion from cities—several million inhabitants were driven to live in the countryside as agricultural workers.

Dien Bien Phu—a town in northwest Vietnam, near the border with Laos. Site of the climactic battle of the Indochina War (1946-1954) that resulted in the French relinquishing control of North Vietnam to a Communist government.

Mekong River—one of the principal rivers of Southeast Asia, forming the border between Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Laos and most of the border between Laos and Thailand. It flows across Cambodia and southern Vietnam, finally entering the South China Sea. It was an important transportation route during the war.

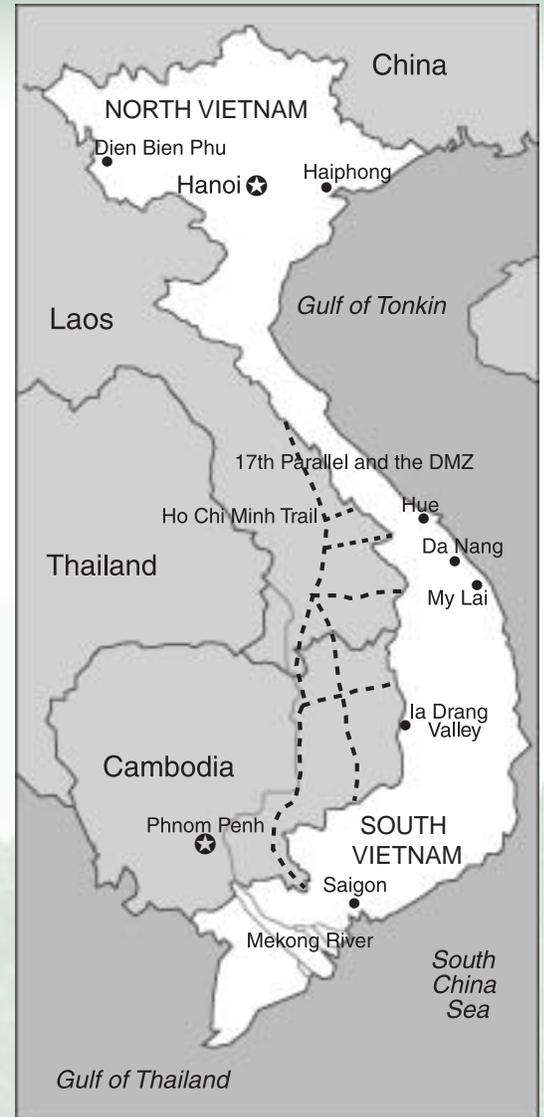
Hue—city in central Vietnam about 400 miles south of Hanoi. During the war it was part of South Vietnam. Located near the 17th Parallel and the site of much fighting during the Tet Offensive. The South accused the North of killing most of the civilians of Hue.

When students have completed their maps, point out these additional sites:

Ho Chi Minh Trail—a network of paths and roads used by the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese to transport supplies into South Vietnam, through Laos and Cambodia (dashes on map show approximate location).

My Lai and the My Lai Massacre—village where members of Charlie Company, 11th Brigade, killed more than 300 unarmed civilians.

la Drang Valley—the first major engagement between U.S. and North Vietnamese forces in the war, with the U.S. Army defeating the North. It forced the North to change battle tactics to hit quickly with surprise and then withdraw quickly, avoiding American firepower.



ACTIVITY TWO

TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE TWO (OR MORE) SIDES TO THE STORY

Curricular Areas: history, social studies, critical thinking

Part A. The Vietnam War (from the late 1950s to 1973), or Second Indochina War, was America's longest and most unpopular war. The first American advisors arrived in Vietnam in 1954 in order to help the French retain control of the country, but the French left in 1956. The first American combat troops arrived in 1965 and fought the war until the cease-fire of January 1973.

Ask students to research, either by themselves or in groups, the following individuals and Vietnamese organizations to get a better understanding of the many players in the Vietnam conflict over the years.

Middle school teachers: If you feel the list is too in-depth for your students, feel free to eliminate as many items as necessary. We've put a at the end of the more advanced listings.

1. **Ho Chi Minh**—Vietnamese Communist leader and principal force behind the struggle against

French colonial rule. Also the leader of the guerrilla group the Viet Minh. President of the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam), or North Vietnam. (e)

2. **Viet Minh**—Nationalist organization in Vietnam that led the struggle against French rule. Founded by Communists in 1941, it included peasants, urban workers, intellectuals, and sectors of the landowning and business classes. It succeeded in driving the French from Vietnam in the First Indochina War (1946-1954). (i)

3. *Ngo Dinh Diem*—The first president of South Vietnam (1955–1963). He returned land given to peasants by the Viet Minh to wealthy landlords, moved rural villagers from their ancestral homes, placed them in controlled settlements and conscripted males into the ARVN (see 5. below). This fostered the growth of what would become the National Liberation Front (NLF) or Viet Cong, a group committed to Diem's overthrow and the reunification of Vietnam. Assassinated November 2, 1963. (n)

4. *Viet Cong* (or the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam)—Name that refers to guerrilla fighters and Vietnamese Communists fighting against the South and U.S. forces. The term is a contraction of Viet-nam Cong-san and was the equivalent of “Commie.” (a)

5. *The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)* in South Vietnam—Using these troops, Ngo Dinh Diem took land away from peasants and moved villagers to controlled settlements to prevent Communist activities. (j)

6. *Premier Nguyen Cao Ky*—South Vietnamese premier who met with Lyndon Johnson in 1965. Johnson pledged continued support but said the U.S. would monitor South Vietnam's efforts toward democracy and improved economic conditions. □ (b)

7. *Prince Norodom Sihanouk*—Cambodia's king, prime minister and head of state. In the 1960s he kept Cambodia out of the turmoil of Vietnam, but was ousted from power in 1970. While living in exile in China, he formed ties with the Communist Khmer Rouge. He returned to nominal power in 1975, but resigned a year later to protest the brutality of the Khmer Rouge regime. □ (f)

8. *Le Duc Tho*—From 1968–1973, the chief negotiator for North Vietnam at the Paris Peace Talks aimed at ending the war. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 with Henry Kissinger, but refused to accept, saying, “Peace has not really been established.” □ (c)

9. *Nguyen Van Thieu*—President of South Vietnam (1967–1975). A strong anti-Communist, he led a dictatorial regime that opposed U.S. settlement with North Vietnam. Shortly before the final Communist victory in 1975, Thieu resigned and went into exile in Taiwan and England. (k)

10. *Khmer Rouge*—the Communist movement that ruled Cambodia from 1975–1979. While in power, the Khmer Rouge murdered, worked to death or killed by starvation close to 1.7 million Cambodians—more than one-fifth of the country's population. (h)

11. *Pol Pot*—leader of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and responsible for the deaths of 1.7 million Cambodians. (g)

12. *Duong Van Minh*—South Vietnamese president who delivered an unconditional surrender to the Communists in 1975. □ (d)

13. *Socialist Republic of Vietnam*—When the National Assembly met in July 1976, it changed the name of the combined North and South Vietnam to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and named Pham Van Dong its prime minister. He took up residence in the nation's new capital, Hanoi. □ (m)

14. *Boat people*—Vietnamese refugees who took to the sea in overcrowded and unsafe boats in search of a better life. The Vietnamese government said they were enemies of the state who had been expelled from their homeland. (l)

Part B. Now have students research the following U.S. leaders and organizations to understand their role in the Vietnam conflict.

President Harry S Truman—33rd president of the United States (1945–1953). Sent \$15 million in military aid to the French for the war in Indochina. Included in the aid package was a military mission and military advisors.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower—34th president (1953–1961). Sent aid and protection to South Vietnam and cited the Domino Theory (if one country in Southeast Asia falls to the Communists, the others will follow) as a reason to be involved in Southeast Asia.

President John F. Kennedy—35th president (1961–1963). Sent the Green Berets to work with ARVN troops in the villages to provide security and win over the Vietnamese people.

President Lyndon B. Johnson—36th president (1963–1969). Became president after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November 1963. Pursued U.S. policy of containing Communism. After the Tet Offensive, opted not to run for reelection.

President Richard M. Nixon—37th president (1969–1974). Expanded the war into Cambodia and Laos. Ordered bombing of the North. Announced a cease-fire on January 23, 1973.

President Gerald Ford—38th president (1974–1977). He announced that the war was “finished” in 1975.

President Jimmy Carter—39th president (1977–1981). He offered a full and unconditional pardon to nearly 10,000 men who evaded the Vietnam War draft.

The Green Berets—Established in 1952, highly-trained Special Forces of the U.S. Army specializing in unconventional or guerrilla warfare.

Robert McNamara—Secretary of Defense under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, he originally supported the war, and encouraged escalation in 1964. In his 1995 memoir, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, he said that U.S. military involvement was “terribly wrong.” He attributed the failure of the war to poor organization, lack of understanding of the enemy and its culture, and military decisions made in the president's office and hidden from the Congress and the American public. His retrospective on the war is the subject of the acclaimed film, *The Fog of War*, released late in 2003.

Lt. William Calley—convicted and sentenced to life in prison for leading the My Lai Massacre. Was paroled after serving only three and a half years.

Senator Eugene McCarthy—U.S. Senator from Minnesota who challenged incumbent President Lyndon Johnson for the Democratic Party nomination in 1968. He argued that Johnson's policies were morally wrong. Though he lost the nomination, his candidacy gave greater legitimacy to the anti-war movement and contributed to Johnson's decision not to run.

Henry Kissinger—As national security affairs advisor to President Nixon, he conducted secret negotiations with North Vietnam to end the war. He shared the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize with North Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho, then served as Secretary of State from 1973–1977 during the Ford administration.

EVENTS AND ISSUES

Curricular Areas: social studies, history, language arts

Part A. Several events and decisions are key to understanding the background of the Vietnam era. In this activity, ask students to find out when the following events occurred and what bearing they had on the direction of the war.

Middle school teachers: If you feel the list is too in-depth for your students, feel free to eliminate as many items as necessary. We've put a at the end of the more advanced listings.

Battle of Dien Bien Phu—decisive battle in 1954 between the French and Viet Minh during the First Indochina War (1946-1954). Dien Bien Phu is in northwestern Vietnam, near the border with Laos. The defeat of the French led to the signing of peace agreements and the eventual departure of France from the region.

Geneva Convention Accords—In 1954, delegates from nine nations convened in Geneva to announce a cessation of hostilities and the formation of a demarcation line at the 17th Parallel dividing Vietnam until national elections could be held in 1956. Neither the United States nor the government of Bao Dai, the new emperor of South Vietnam, accepted the agreement because it was thought that Ho Chi Minh would be elected.

Gulf of Tonkin Incident—In July 1964, the destroyer U.S.S. Maddox was patrolling the Gulf coast undertaking reconnaissance about the North. At the same time, several smaller ships were conducting covert operations against the North. These ships eventually shelled several offshore islands. The North retaliated by attacking the Maddox with three torpedo boats on August 2, 1964. On August 4, the Maddox and the destroyer U.S.S. Turner Joy believed they were under attack and radioed two nearby U.S. aircraft carriers, the Ticonderoga and the Constellation, for retaliatory air strikes. Fighter planes from those ships struck North Vietnamese naval vessels and a major petroleum storage center in the city of Vinh.

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution—Passed by Congress on August 7, 1964, it gave President Lyndon Johnson the authority to take action against North Vietnam. Over the next four years Johnson used the resolution to justify sending troops to fight. Critics argued that the president had exaggerated the attack on U.S. ships and exceeded the authority of the resolution by escalating the war.

Operation Rolling Thunder—sustained American bombing raids of North Vietnam, beginning in 1965 and continuing for three years.

Operation Breakfast—In 1969, President Nixon gave the okay for the covert bombing of Cambodia, in an effort to destroy Communist supply routes and base camps. It was conducted without the knowledge of Congress or the American public, and continued for 14 months.

Tet Offensive—Launched on January 29, 1968, the first day of Tet—the Vietnamese festival of the lunar year—the Communist forces attacked almost every major city and province of South Vietnam. Although the North failed to hold the cities, the offensive helped undermine American support for the war.

War Powers Resolution—Passed in 1973, the resolution limited the president's ability to send troops into war without congressional approval.

Part B. During the 1960s and 1970s, certain events, organizations and ideas changed attitudes toward the war. First, ask students to choose one of the following subject areas and get background material. Then, after they have sufficient knowledge in the area, ask them to imagine that they were at Kent State, or they were a soldier missing in action, or a member of Students for a Democratic Society. Have them write a first-person essay to persuade the American public to their point of view.

Domino Theory—President Eisenhower used the domino analogy to explain the need to stop Communism in Vietnam. "You have a row of dominoes set up. You knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly."

Kent State Incident—fatal shooting of four students by Ohio National Guardsmen during a May 4, 1970, protest against the war at Kent State University in Ohio.

The Draft—All males 18 and over were deemed eligible for military service. A lottery was established to determine order of entry into service.

POWs and MIAs—soldiers deemed Prisoners of War (almost 600 released in 1973) and Missing in Action (1,800 soldiers still unaccounted for).

Agent Orange—herbicide sprayed to kill foliage and deprive the enemy of food and shelter.

Teach-ins—forums for discussion of the war among students and faculty. Begun in 1965 at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin and the University of California at Berkeley. Spread nationwide.

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)—a student protest organization. The first student-led anti-war demonstration drew 20,000 people in Washington, D.C., in April 1965.

Pentagon Papers—a top-secret study, revealed to the public in 1971, that detailed government deceptions about U.S. policy in Vietnam. Publication by *The New York Times* in 1971 led to a landmark Supreme Court decision on freedom of the press and fueled opposition to the war.

The "Imperial Presidency"—the notion that the president of the United States can become increasingly isolated by a combination of factors, including the bureaucracy that surrounds him, a stated "need" that places security as paramount, and the centralization in the White House of decisions about war and peace—essentially overriding Congress. During the Vietnam era, some scholars cited Operation Rolling Thunder and Operation Breakfast as evidence of an increasing "imperial presidency" that ultimately led to President Nixon's resignation because of the Watergate scandal.

THE TIMES THEY ARE A'CHANGIN'

Curricular Areas: social studies, history, geography

In order for your students to get a true picture of the chaos of Vietnam, we've provided a list of important events on page 13 that students should fit into a Vietnam timeline on page 12. The list of events already includes some key dates, and the timeline also includes other milestones that students can look into as they place the numbers that correspond to these events in the boxes on the timeline.

Be sure to photocopy both pages 12 and 13 and give them to students.

Middle school teachers: If you feel this list is too extensive for your students, feel free to eliminate as many as needed. Items marked with a □ are more advanced.

1. Communist forces move into South Vietnam, establishing camps along Mekong Delta. (1958)
2. Viet Cong formed. (1960)
3. President Kennedy authorizes Green Berets to be sent to Vietnam. (1961)
4. U.S. military begins using Agent Orange. (1962)
5. Diem and his brother Nhu are shot and killed by their own South Vietnamese military. (1963)
6. President Kennedy assassinated. (1963)
7. Gulf of Tonkin Incident (1964)
8. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964)
9. U.S. begins secret bombing of Laos. (1964)
10. Operation Rolling Thunder begins. It lasts three years. (1965)
11. First American combat troops arrive in Vietnam to defend U.S. airfield at Da Nang. (1965)
12. First conventional battle of the Vietnam War at Ia Drang Valley. (1965)
13. WWI, WWII, and Korean veterans stage first anti-war rally. (1966)
14. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks out against the war. (1967)
15. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara testifies that U.S. bombing raids against the North have not achieved their objectives. (1967)
16. North Vietnamese launch Tet Offensive. (1968)
17. Norodom Sihanouk, leader of Cambodia, allows pursuit of Viet Cong into Cambodia. (1968) □
18. My Lai Massacre (1968)
19. Paris Peace Talks begin. (1968)
20. 543,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam, up from 200,000 in 1965. (1969)
21. Operation Breakfast, covert bombing of Cambodia, begins and continues for 14 months. (1969)
22. Kent State tragedy (1970)
23. Henry Kissinger announces, "Peace is at hand." (1972)
24. South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu opposes agreement at Paris Peace Talks. (1972) □
25. Last U.S. combat troops leave Vietnam. (1973)
26. Phnom Penh captured by Khmer Rouge. (1975)
27. New Cambodian leader Pol Pot begins period of genocide. (1975)
28. South Vietnamese President Duong Van Minh surrenders. (1975)
29. The last two U.S. servicemen to die in Vietnam are killed when their helicopter crashes. (1975)
30. Pham Van Dong heads Socialist Republic of Vietnam with its capital in Hanoi. (1976-80) □
31. President Jimmy Carter pardons nearly 10,000 men who evaded the draft. (1977-81)
32. Vietnam Memorial dedicated in Washington, D.C. (1982)
33. Washington restores diplomatic ties with Hanoi. (1995)

ACTIVITY FIVE

TEACHER'S GUIDE

THEY CAME FROM HERE

Curricular Areas: social studies, critical thinking, Web research

This activity begins the personalization of this project. Using a few helpful Web sites, students will find out who fought and died in Vietnam from their state or even their own hometown. They'll see how old the soldiers were when they left for Vietnam, when they died, how they died, and who they were as individuals. This information will make the person "real."

Preview the Web site www.no-quarter.org, a Vietnam Casualty Data Base, to see how easy it is to maneuver. The second Web site, www.vvmf.org, gives background information. When your students select **The Virtual Wall**, they will get a short profile of each person and a location of the person's name on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

The purpose of this activity, besides Web research and biographical writing, is to give students a feeling that the people whose names

are on this Wall were real—and in many cases not much older than they are now.

The best way to approach a long list of names is to divide them up, with each small group of students researching around 30 names. They'll be most productive if you can arrange computer lab time for the class to go together. If this is not possible, small groups can work at home, in the school library, or wherever they have access to a computer.

ACTIVITY SIX

TEACHER'S GUIDE

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Curricular Areas: social studies, language arts

Now that your students have done their Web research, they can try to get more personal information from friends and relatives of those soldiers who died during the war. The best way to do this is by contacting local veterans' organizations or by notifying local radio and television stations and newspapers of their project. First, they'll need to compile a list of local

veterans' organizations, and also media outlets, being sure to include the name of the news director or city editor. Help students decide what important information they need to include in their news item, reminding them that they have about 30 seconds worth of airtime on radio and television. Then have them compose, as a class, their letter requesting relatives and friends to contact the school if they want to participate.

Here are a few points for your students to consider mentioning as they draft their letter:

1. This is a school project.
2. Students have already done research on the veterans from your state or county or town.
3. Students are looking for friends or relatives of those who died who might want to share stories.

You may want to put your final draft on school letterhead.

RECORDING HISTORY

Curricular Areas: social studies, language arts

Part A asks students to develop a questionnaire to find out information about local, deceased soldiers.

Part B asks students to participate in The Library of Congress Veterans History Project, the mission of which “is to collect the memories, accounts and documents of war veterans from World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars, and to preserve these stories of experience and service for future generations.” Students may wish to do both activities or just one.

Part A. After students get responses from their public service announcements from **Activity 6**, help students write a questionnaire for their interview.

Here's a sample that has proven successful:

Full name of the soldier you are researching:

The following information about the person you are talking to:

Full Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

1. How did you know the deceased soldier?
2. What were the circumstances surrounding the death?
3. Where is the soldier buried? Is there any special monument dedicated to the soldier? If so, where is it?
4. What would you like other people to know about this soldier and how he or she should be remembered?
5. Please tell us about any humorous incidents you know about the soldier.
6. What other information would you like to share about this soldier?

Remind your students that these are personal and emotional stories and that the person relating these facts may have a hard time sharing this information. Be sure to instruct students that they should be polite, patient and act in a mature manner. Ask them to imagine giving information about someone they loved who had died and how they would feel.

Part B. Students often don't know how veterans affect their own daily lives. They may be surprised to find out that one of their teachers is a veteran. Or the owner of the local pharmacy. Or the man who painted their house. This activity will give students the opportunity to interact with these veterans and at the same time participate in The Library of Congress Veterans History Project. Students are asked to go to The Library of Congress Web site, download the checklist and scripted interview questions and then proceed with the interview. To do this activity, you or your students will need a video camera and a separate videotape for each interviewee. It's important that students follow the checklist and script of The Library of Congress. Make sure students understand that by conducting this interview, they are helping to record history.

Here's a sample letter you can put on your school stationary and send to local veterans' groups to generate participation:

Hello:

Students at _____ are participating in a project sponsored by The Library of Congress entitled **The Veterans History Project**, whose mission “is to collect the memories, accounts and documents of war veterans from World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars, and to preserve these stories of experience and service for future generations.”

The project consists of a videotaped interview in which students will ask you questions. You may also wish to share pictures, letters, documents or mementos from your service days. The interview tape will be sent to The Library of Congress, where it will become part of our nation's history. If you wish, we will make a copy for you to keep for your family.

If you would like more information or would like to participate, please contact:
(Teacher's name, address, telephone number)

Information on the project is available on the Internet at www.loc.gov/folklife/vets.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name

ACTIVITY EIGHT

TEACHER'S GUIDE

A CULTURE OF ANOTHER TIME

Curricular Areas: social studies, language arts, music

The next several activities are designed to help students understand what it was like to be a young person during the decade of the 1960s—whether they were still living at home in America or overseas fighting in Vietnam. The activities recall the sweeping changes that occurred in American culture during the progress of the war that helped make the '60s one of the most turbulent decades in American history.

Part A. This activity introduces students to the early '60s—a very different time than the latter part of the decade. **Middle school teachers:** Ask students to use another sheet of paper to write dialogue and note the key plot twists, including the kinds of clothing the characters wore. They can then “convert” the lines of dialogue into the language of today's TV shows or draw comparison sketches of clothing then versus now. They can even recast the plot in today's terms if they think the storyline seemed particularly outdated.

High school teachers: After students view their choice of show, they can produce their own “That '60s Show” by creating a storyline as it would have appeared on an actual show broadcast during the early '60s, complete with appropriate dialogue, setting and wardrobe. Students can divide tasks according to skills and interests and then choose parts to act out in class.

Students of all ages should be able to discuss the reasons they made the changes they did. What do the shows from the early '60s say about the

culture of that time? You might have them take a scene from a favorite show today and rewrite it as if it had aired in the '60s. What do today's shows say about how culture has changed during the last 40 years? (You might note for students that the debut of *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* in 1968 broke ground for its irreverent reflection of late-'60s culture, and that *M*A*S*H*, which aired from 1972 to 1983, reflected anti-war sentiments even though its setting was the Korean War.)

Part B. Using the Internet or CDs of songs of the '60s, have students listen to as many of the songs listed on the activity master as is practical, and encourage them to share their opinions about the themes reflected in the lyrics. The songs listed from the early '60s deal with a dance craze of the time, love and good times. Those listed from the mid-'60s reflect, respectively: anxiety about the Vietnam War, pride at the accomplishments of the Green Berets, and an increasing paranoia that some young people felt about the means by which the government might track resistance to the war.

The songs listed from the late '60s deal with, respectively: questioning the wisdom of advocating revolution, the utopian desire for peace and love, and the perceived unfairness that those sent to fight in Vietnam were, by and large, among the less privileged and therefore had no way of avoiding the draft.

Point out to students how the mid-'60s became a transitional point in America:

- **Race issues**—Malcolm X's assassination in 1965 and the Watts riots months later ignited and fed a firestorm of African American protest that equality, while the "law of the land," was still far from reality.

- **Involvement in the war**—American combat troops were first sent to Vietnam in 1965.
- **Music**—The Beatles' album *Revolver* in 1966 contained elements of what would come to be known as psychedelia—a far cry from their 1964 hit, "I Want to Hold Your Hand."

By the beginning of 1967, the country's youth began to embrace a hippie culture, with attitudes about everything from fashion to sex becoming much freer, while attitudes towards the conduct of the war became more militant as anti-war protests mounted. The first TV war coverage aired in close to real time showed jungle warfare, body bags being returned to U.S. soil, and the destruction of the Vietnamese countryside and the huts in which people lived. The U.S. government hardened its determination to commit troops to the war, further creating a situation that would divide America by age group and left- or right-wing bias.

The threat of being drafted and sent to fight in an increasingly unpopular war at an age at which the right to vote had not yet been granted inspired draft-card burnings in flagrant defiance of the government's policy. Some young people became "draft dodgers" by fleeing to Canada until the war was over. Meanwhile, a disproportionate number of soldiers fighting in Vietnam were minorities, as they were seldom the "fortunate son" referenced in Creedence Clearwater Revival's song of 1969. All of this turmoil was captured in TV images that helped shape public opinion during the '60s. From the shock of seeing John F. Kennedy's assassin killed on live TV, to the Beatles media frenzy that captured a generation of young people, to anti-war protestors burning the American flag, draft dodgers tearing up their cards for the camera, and race riots in American cities—the media had an indelible impact on public perception and opinion, especially for the youth of

that decade who were the first TV generation. When government officials said the war was going well, the images unfolding on TV were saying something quite different.

Even while in Vietnam, soldiers had access to the music of the day. As students discuss how soldiers might have felt about the themes in these songs, lead them to understand that even while being called to duty and being proud to serve their country, some soldiers might have questioned the need for the war, some might have felt resentful that college kids "safe" at home were able to avoid being drafted, and some might have thought that listening to any anti-war protest song or participating in anti-war protests was akin to being a traitor to the U.S. cause.

Part C. Middle school teachers: Have students write an essay on another sheet of paper in support of or against the statement on the sheet. **High school teachers:** Form two teams to debate both sides of the issue.

Set the stage for this activity by noting that much has changed in the U.S. since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. A host of patriotic songs and expressions of pride in the military accompanied the recent U.S. war in Iraq, and those who protested seemed to find few sympathizers and some backlash. Note that there are two sides to every issue as you position this topic for student debate: Is there still a place in America today for music as an expression of anti-war protest? Why or why not? What do students think it would take to change public opinion? How do they see the differences in the nature of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam in contrast to that of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq?

ACTIVITY NINE

TEACHER'S GUIDE

HEROES OF THEIR TIMES

Curricular Areas: science, social studies, technology, language arts, Web research

Significant events took place on many fronts during the 1960s. Technology and science made a giant leap—and not just on the moon. In **Part A**, students can learn more about John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, Alan B. Shepard Jr., Edward H. White II (who accomplished the first spacewalk by an American, in June 1965), or any other astronauts whose accomplishments furthered the space program. You might note for students that during the mission of Apollo 8 in December 1968 to test

Apollo hardware, crew members James A. Lovell Jr., Frank Borman and William A. Anders focused a portable television camera on planet Earth as they traveled toward the moon and, for the first time, humans saw their home from afar, as a tiny, fragile "blue marble" suspended in the blackness of space.

Coming at a time when America was polarized by the Vietnam War, race relations and other problems, it was an enormously significant accomplishment that went beyond scientific achievement. However, for soldiers mired in the muck of Vietnam, it might have seemed ironic that

humans were fighting over North and South Vietnam on a planet that, from space, had no boundaries, while at the same time, the imagination of America was captured by the idea of escaping the very planet itself. Lead students to imagine that soldiers might have wondered: If they can land a man on the moon, why can't they find a way to avoid war? Help them to understand that this kind of schism reflected the "divided" America that was being created by those opposed to the war and those in support of the government's desire to win the war, at what was beginning to seem to be any cost.

In **Part C**, students can research people such as:

- Sen. Gaylord Nelson, who borrowed the techniques used by students to draw attention to campus teach-ins to gain widespread support beyond Congress for environmental reforms, thus establishing the first Earth Day in 1970.
- Betty Friedan, whose book *The Feminine Mystique* questioned the role of women in society.
- Gloria Steinem, who was an outspoken advocate for women's rights.
- Muhammad Ali, who was stripped of his heavyweight title when he refused the draft because of his religious views.
- Ralph Nader, who questioned corporate America about its responsibility in watching out for consumer safety.

- Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers about the secret decision-making process behind the Vietnam War to *The New York Times*, leading to a U.S. Supreme Court case that upheld the right of free speech.
- Phil Ochs, whose music questioned the futility of war and the disparity between the “haves” and the “have-nots.”

ACTIVITY TEN

TEACHER'S GUIDE

LIVING HISTORY

Curricular Areas: social studies, language arts

The 1971 publication of the Pentagon Papers further turned the U.S. public against the Vietnam War. It would not be until the publication of a book in 1995 that Vietnam-era Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara would admit that the U.S. was “wrong, terribly wrong” about Vietnam. (McNamara’s observations about America’s involvement in Vietnam were featured in the acclaimed 2003 film *The Fog of War*. Check out www.sonyclassics.com/fogofwar/indexFlash.html for details.) Veterans, who fought valiantly and served proudly, had returned home to greetings of derision and shouts of “baby killer,” as the peace movement at home failed to recognize that soldiers had only done what they were being ordered to do. The war left a bitter legacy in American history.

However, as recently as April 2000, a CBS News poll about Americans’ knowledge of the war drew these responses to the question: On whose side did we (the U.S.) fight?

North Vietnam:	18%
South Vietnam:	57%
Don't Know:	26%

Despite the passage of time and the collective fading of memory, the experiences of the Vietnam

War still shadow American government policy today—and the veterans who fought there will never forget their experiences and the horrors they saw, nor, in many cases, the way they were treated when they came home. Encourage students to think about and compare the similarities and differences between soldiers’ experiences in Vietnam and those of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the war on terrorism.

For this activity, first visit the Vietnam Veterans Home Page site at <http://grunt.space.swri.edu/> for sample remembrances by those who fought there. You can choose a poem from this site—<http://grunt.space.swri.edu/gjpoems.htm>—to read to students to set the tone for completing **Part A**. Students may also draw or sketch their thoughts if they wish.

For **Part B**, number index cards equal to the number of students in your class and next to the number, write a “D” on approximately one-third of them. The “D” will stand for being drafted. Then shuffle the cards and distribute them face down. (Remind girls in the class that females were not drafted into the Vietnam War, but if a draft were in effect today, things might be different.) Watch students’ reactions as they turn over their cards to learn their “fate.” **Middle school teachers:** Since students are much younger than “draft age,”

ask them to think of a sibling or another relative or friend who today is 18, and imagine the impact on his or her everyday life if they were drafted to fight today.

News events surrounding the rescue of Pvt. Jessica Lynch and stories of other female soldiers involved in the war in Iraq should provide a good context for student debate in **Part C**. Encourage both male and female students to explore the roles of females in combat and whether they think the absence of a mother from the home has more of an effect on a family than does that of the father. After years of progress in women’s rights and the stunning changes in society that have taken place since the 1960s, do students think that some things haven’t changed as much as one might have imagined? Can they cite personal experiences with family members or with friends’ families to support their observations?

At the conclusion of the activity, ask students if they see any parallels between the Vietnam War and the wars fought in the Gulf in 1991 and in Iraq. How differently are troops treated now than they were in the ‘60s? If there were a draft today, how would students feel about serving in the military? Would it change their attitude toward the war in Iraq?

ACTIVITY ELEVEN

TEACHER'S GUIDE

A TRIBUTE OF YOUR OWN

Curricular Areas: social studies, language arts, art, music

For all three parts of this activity, encourage students to use their imaginations freely to express

their thoughts using their choice of media. **Part C** can be an optional activity, depending on time and interest. You may need to involve teachers in other curriculum areas such as art, music, language arts, etc., and to get the permission of the school

principal, in order to create one of the more ambitious types of projects. The goal of this activity is to encourage students, as a class, to express their appreciation of veterans’ contributions, both during the Vietnam era and now.

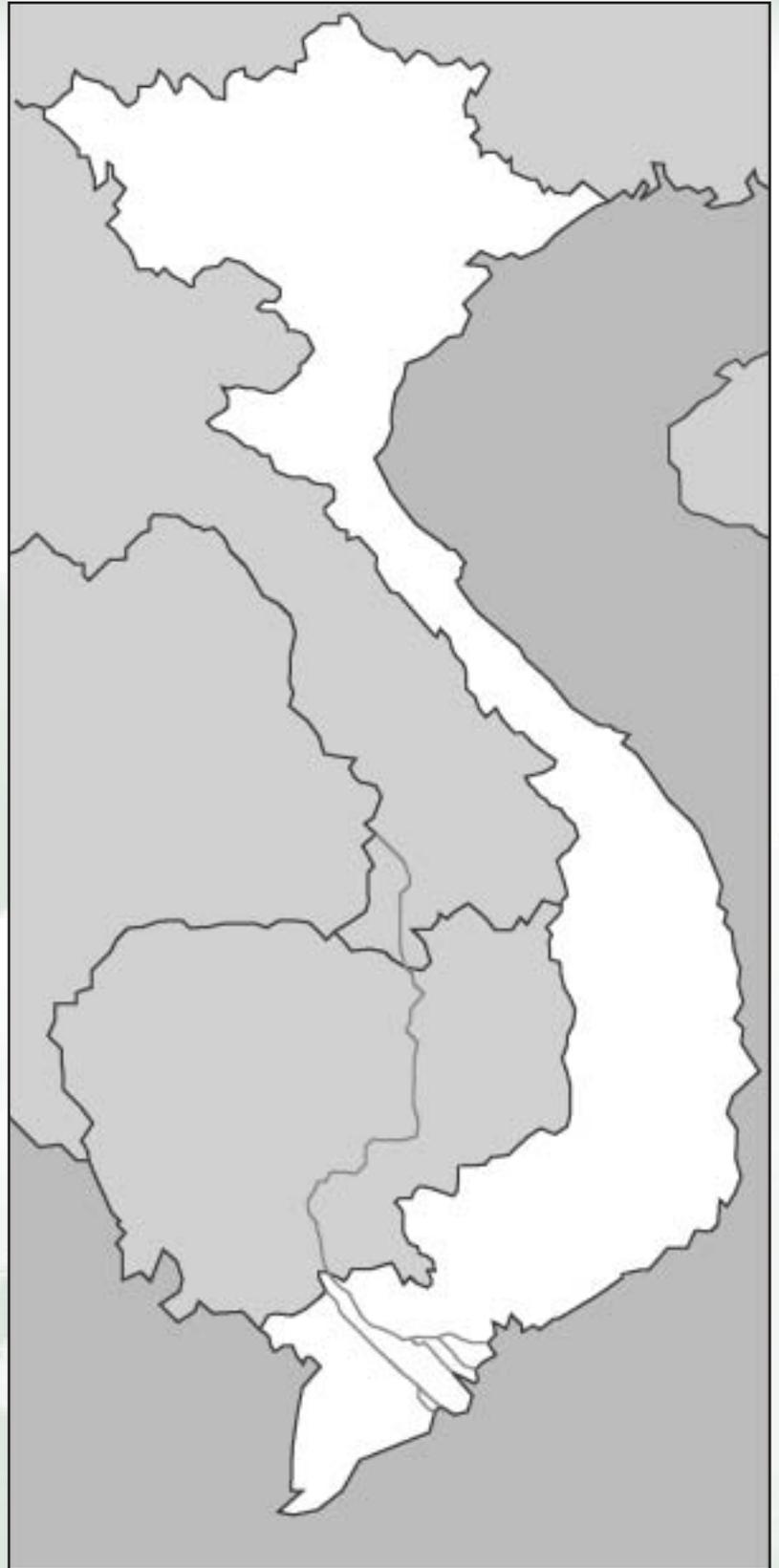
PLACES IN HISTORY—PAST AND PRESENT

The Vietnam War was the longest (from the late 1950s until 1973) and most unpopular war Americans ever fought. Fifty-eight thousand Americans lost their lives. Between three and four million Vietnamese died, as well as almost two million Cambodians and Laotians.

From 1946-1954, the Vietnamese struggled for independence from France during the First Indochina War. When it was over, the country was divided into North and South Vietnam. North Vietnam was under the control of the Vietnamese Communists, who opposed France and wanted Vietnam united under Communist rule. Ho Chi Minh was the principal leader of the North and its guerrilla warfare group, the Viet Minh. The South was controlled by the non-Communist Vietnamese, who were allied with France. The United States supported the South Vietnamese government, but its repressive policies and pro-Communist agitation led to rebellion in the South, and the NLF (National Liberation Front or Viet Cong) aligned with the North.

In order to understand what happened in Vietnam, there are a number of places that you should know. Find out where they belong on the map and write the corresponding number on the location.

1. North Vietnam
2. South Vietnam
3. Cambodia
4. Laos
5. 17th Parallel and the DMZ
6. Hanoi
7. Haiphong
8. Saigon
9. Gulf of Tonkin
10. Da Nang
11. Phnom Penh
12. Dien Bien Phu
13. Mekong River
14. Hue



THE TWO (OR MORE) SIDES TO THE STORY

Part A. There were a large number of influential people and organizations on both the Vietnamese and American sides of this war during more than 20 years of conflict. It's important to understand who they were and their effect on history. In this section, research the Vietnamese "players" and write the number of the appropriate "player" in the space provided.

1. *Ho Chi Minh* _____ a. Otherwise known as the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam, its name refers to guerrilla fighters and Vietnamese Communists fighting against the South and U.S. forces.
2. *Viet Minh* _____ b. South Vietnamese premier who met with President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. Johnson said the U.S. would monitor South Vietnam's efforts toward democracy and improved economic conditions.
3. *Ngo Dinh Diem* _____ c. From 1968-1973, the chief negotiator for North Vietnam at the Paris Peace Talks aimed at ending the war. Awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, but refused to accept, saying, "Peace has not really been established."
4. *Viet Cong* _____ d. South Vietnamese president who delivered an unconditional surrender to the Communists.
5. *ARVN* _____ e. Vietnamese Communist leader, principal force behind the struggle against French colonial rule, and leader of the guerrilla group the Viet Minh. President of Democratic Republic of Vietnam—North Vietnam.
6. *Premier Nguyen Cao Ky* _____ f. Cambodia's king, prime minister and head of state. In the 1960s he kept Cambodia out of the turmoil of Vietnam, but was ousted from power in 1970. While living in exile in China, he formed ties with the Communist Khmer Rouge.
7. *Prince Norodom Sihanouk* _____ g. Leader of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and responsible for the deaths of 1.7 million Cambodians.
8. *Le Duc Tho* _____ h. The Communist movement that ruled Cambodia from 1975-1979. It worked to death or killed by starvation close to 1.7 million Cambodians—more than one-fifth of the country's population.
9. *Nguyen Van Thieu* _____ i. The nationalist organization in Vietnam that led the struggle against French rule. Founded by Communists in 1941, it included peasants, urban workers, intellectuals, landowners and the business classes. It drove the French from Vietnam in the First Indochina War (1946-1954).
10. *Khmer Rouge* _____ j. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam in South Vietnam. Using these troops, Ngo Dinh Diem took land away from peasants and moved villagers to controlled settlements to prevent Communist activities.
11. *Pol Pot* _____ k. President of South Vietnam (1967-1975). A strong anti-Communist, he led a dictatorial regime that opposed U.S. settlement with North Vietnam.
12. *Duong Van Minh* _____ l. Vietnamese refugees who took to the sea in overcrowded and unsafe boats in search of a better life. Many were called enemies of the state by the Vietnamese government, which claimed to have expelled them.
13. *Socialist Republic of Vietnam* _____ m. When the National Assembly met in July 1976, this country named Pham Van Dong its prime minister. He took up residence in the nation's new capital, Hanoi.
14. *Boat people* _____ n. The first president of South Vietnam (1955-1963). He returned land given to peasants by the Viet Minh to wealthy landlords, moved rural villagers from their ancestral homes, placed them in controlled settlements and conscripted males into the ARVN.

Part B. Over the course of the Vietnam era, there were seven American presidents and countless advisors and opposing voices. Find out how each of the people or groups below affected the Vietnam War and write your answers on the back of this page.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. President Harry S Truman | 4. President Lyndon B. Johnson | 7. President Jimmy Carter | 10. Lt. William Calley |
| 2. President Dwight D. Eisenhower | 5. President Richard M. Nixon | 8. The Green Berets | 11. Senator Eugene McCarthy |
| 3. President John F. Kennedy | 6. President Gerald Ford | 9. Robert McNamara | 12. Henry Kissinger |

EVENTS AND ISSUES

Part A. Certain events change the course of history. During the Vietnam era, there were a number of battles, resolutions and international incidents that decided the direction of the conflict. Using the chart below, write when the following occurred, what happened, and how it influenced the course of the war.

	Dates	What Happened	Its Influence
Battle of Dien Bien Phu			
Geneva Convention Accords			
Gulf of Tonkin Incident			
Gulf of Tonkin Resolution			
Operation Rolling Thunder			
Operation Breakfast			
Tet Offensive			
War Powers Resolution			

Part B. A number of movements, revelations and organizations changed the course of history from the 1950s until today. Government secrecy, student protest, and even shootings on college campuses forever altered our society. In this activity, thoroughly research one of the following topics. Then, write a first-person essay or a Letter to the Editor of a newspaper of that period as if you were living during that time, describing your opinion on the subject.

Topics:

1. Domino Theory
2. Kent State Incident
3. The Draft
4. POWs and MIAs
5. Agent Orange
6. Teach-ins
7. Students for a Democratic Society
8. Pentagon Papers
9. The "Imperial Presidency"

THE TIMES THEY ARE A'CHANGIN'

When did it all begin?

At the end of World War II, the French ruled in Indochina. Ho Chi Minh, the leader of Vietnam, wanted the French out of his country. Despite his ties to the American intelligence community and his professed respect for democratic principles, Ho Chi Minh could not convince Washington to recognize his independence movement. French generals and their American advisors expected Ho's Viet Minh guerillas to be defeated easily. But after eight years of fighting and \$2.5 billion in U.S. aid, the French lost a crucial battle at Dien Bien Phu—and with it, their Asian empire. Communist Ho Chi Minh became the leader of North Vietnam.

Part A. Chart the course of the war in Vietnam, as it fit in with other important events, by placing the numbers of the events on page 13 in the small boxes on the timeline below. (Turn your paper sideways to write them in the boxes where they belong.)

Nikita Khrushchev warns Western ambassadors, "We will bury you."	1956
Soviets launch Sputnik I.	1957
Explorer 1, First U.S. Earth satellite, launched.	1958
	1959
Pres. Kennedy elected.	1960
Peace Corps formed. Bay of Pigs operation.	1961
Cuban Missile Crisis	1962
Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Kennedy assassinated.	1963
Lyndon Johnson defeats Barry Goldwater.	1964
Malcolm X assassinated.	1965

	1966
Race riots in American cities.	1967
M.L. King Jr. assassinated. Rbt. F. Kennedy assassinated.	1968
Ho Chi Minh dies. Massive anti-war demonstration in Washington.	1969
	1970
Lt. Calley convicted of murder.	1971
Watergate Hotel break-in. Richard Nixon re-elected.	1972
Cease-fire signed by H. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. End of draft.	1973
Nixon resigns.	1974
Pres. Ford announces the Vietnam War is "finished." S. Vietnam falls to Communists.	1975

Carter elected president.	1976
Vietnam admitted into United Nations.	1977
	1978
Dow Chemical acknowledges toxicity of dioxin in Agent Orange.	1979
Reagan elected president.	1980
	1981
	1982
Sally Ride becomes first woman in space.	1983
Reagan re-elected.	1984
	1985

Challenger explosion.	1986
	1987
George H.W. Bush elected president.	1988
Fall of the Berlin Wall; end of Cold War.	1989
Iraq invades Kuwait; Operation Desert Storm.	1990
Collapse of Soviet Union.	1991
Bill Clinton elected president.	1992
Women gain military combat roles.	1993
	1994
Oklahoma City bombing.	1995

Part B. Determine when the following events happened and place the corresponding number on the timeline on page 12. The box below shows several key events that started things off.

Battle of Dien Bien Phu. (1954)
Geneva Convention Agreements announced. (1954)
17th Parallel divides Vietnam. (1954)
Eisenhower cites "Domino Theory" regarding Southeast Asia. (1954)
Ho Chi Minh becomes leader of North Vietnam. (1954)
Ngo Dinh Diem rejects Geneva Agreements and becomes first president of South Vietnam. (1955)

1. Communist forces move into South Vietnam, establishing camps along the Mekong Delta. ()
2. Viet Cong formed. ()
3. President Kennedy authorizes Green Berets to be sent to Vietnam. ()
4. U.S. military begins using Agent Orange. ()
5. Diem and his brother Nhu are shot and killed by their own South Vietnamese military. ()
6. President Kennedy assassinated. ()
7. Gulf of Tonkin Incident. ()
8. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. ()
9. U.S. begins secret bombing of Laos. ()
10. Operation Rolling Thunder begins. It lasts three years. ()
11. First American combat troops arrive in Vietnam to defend U.S. airfield at Da Nang. ()
12. First conventional battle of the Vietnam War at Ia Drang Valley. ()
13. WWI, WWII, and Korean veterans stage first anti-war rally. ()
14. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks out against the war. ()
15. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara testifies that U.S. bombing raids against the North have not achieved their objectives. ()
16. North Vietnamese launch Tet Offensive. ()
17. Norodom Sihanouk, leader of Cambodia, allows pursuit of Viet Cong into Cambodia. ()
18. My Lai Massacre. ()
19. Paris Peace Talks begin. ()
20. 543,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam, up from 200,000 in 1965. ()
21. Operation Breakfast, covert bombing of Cambodia, begins and continues for 14 months. ()
22. Kent State tragedy. ()
23. Henry Kissinger announces, "Peace is at hand." ()
24. South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu opposes agreement at the Paris Peace Talks. ()
25. Last U.S. combat troops leave Vietnam. ()
26. Phnom Penh captured by Khmer Rouge. ()
27. New Cambodian leader Pol Pot begins period of genocide. ()
28. South Vietnamese President Duong Van Minh surrenders. ()
29. The last two U.S. servicemen to die in Vietnam are killed when their helicopter crashes. ()
30. Pham Van Dong heads Socialist Republic of Vietnam with its capital in Hanoi. (-)
31. President Jimmy Carter pardons nearly 10,000 men who evaded the draft. (-)
32. Vietnam Memorial dedicated in Washington, D.C. ()
33. Washington restores diplomatic ties with Hanoi. ()

THEY CAME FROM HERE

Dale Buis, a 37-year-old Nebraska native, and 45-year-old Texan Chester Ovnand were watching a movie, *The Tattered Dress*, when they turned on the light to change the reel. Seconds later, these unarmed American advisors in Vietnam were dead—killed in their tent. They were the first U.S. casualties to die in Vietnam, and the year was 1959.

During the course of the war, more than 58,000 other young Americans died. Who were these young people who, in many cases, were not much older than you are today?

In this activity, you'll find out who served and died in Vietnam from your state, your county, and even from your hometown. You'll find out where and how they died—whether it was an accident of friendly fire, whether they were shot down in a helicopter, or even if they died of a jungle disease such as malaria.

First, go to **www.no-quarter.org**, a Vietnam Casualty Data Base. You can complete the form just by entering your state's name. Or, you can narrow it further by entering a hometown. The site has a lot of ways for you to find the names you're looking for—by date, by battle, by state of origin. After you have your list, you'll need to go to one of the site's links that will help you get the details you need.

When you're done with this site, switch over to **www.vvmf.org**, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, and select **The Virtual Wall** to find out where a particular person's name is located on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. You'll find a profile of every person on the Wall. On a separate sheet, write a short biography of the people you've researched, including the information above.

Here are some facts you might want to know about a particular person:

Name _____

ID Number _____

Branch of service _____

Rank _____

Job _____

Hometown _____

Birth date _____

Religion _____

Ethnic background _____

When service began _____

When they died _____

Age when they died _____

Where they died _____

Cause of death _____

ACTIVITY SIX

REPRODUCIBLE MASTER

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Now it's time to get up close and personal. You'll be amazed how friends and relatives of those soldiers who died during the war want to tell you more about the people they loved. But how do you find them? One way is to contact local veterans' organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars and ask about their Veterans in the Classroom program, or the American Legion. Another way is to contact radio and television stations as well as newspapers. In this activity, you'll write a short news item to be submitted to the media, asking for information. (You can also do the same kind of research for veterans of other wars.)

Local veterans' organization, address and contact person.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

First, find the names and addresses of local radio and television stations and newspapers in your area. Who is the news director or city editor?

Radio Station: _____ Radio Station: _____

• News Director: _____ • News Director: _____

Television Station: _____ Television Station: _____

• News Director: _____ • News Director: _____

Newspaper: _____ Newspaper: _____

• City Editor: _____ • City Editor: _____

Now, consider the points you think you should make in your announcement.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

HEROES OF THEIR TIMES

Part A. The 1960s are noted for many accomplishments and social movements. John Glenn later became a U.S. senator, but in 1962, he was one of America's first space heroes. The United States was locked in a space race with the Soviet Union, which had already beaten America by sending cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin into the first orbital flight, in 1961. That was the year that President Kennedy declared it to be a goal of the United States to land a man on the moon by the end of the decade—an astonishing challenge. When Glenn circled the earth in a three-orbit flight a year later in 1962, he was welcomed home as a brave pioneer.

Do some research on the U.S. space program and learn about some of the space heroes of the '60s. Then describe what you think it would have been like to experience the moon landing if you had been both a young person at home in the U.S. and a young soldier engaged in military combat in Vietnam. If you had been in the military, how "real" would this experience have seemed to you, given the other activities in which you were engaged on a typical day?

Part B. The 1960s are remembered for both progress and tragedy associated with the advancement of race relations. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech remains one of America's most enduring calls to action, but his dream was cut short by his assassination in 1968, the same year Sen. Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated. Find out about Dr. King's life and legacy and what makes him a hero to Americans today. Then research important civil rights legislation of the '60s and the changes it brought about. Describe what you found below.

Part C. Recycling your family's trash may be something you've come to take for granted, but in the early '60s, little thought was given to the environment—until Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, raised alarms about the effects of pesticides. Only eight years later, the first Earth Day was established—in large part due to grass-roots student activism.

Rachel Carson was just one hero of that decade. Pick an area of interest to you, such as the environment, women's rights, consumer protection, freedom of speech, etc., and research who was considered a hero in that area during the '60s. Write a brief biography of the person and how you think their efforts helped to improve the situation. Then follow up by summarizing how things stand today. Use additional paper if you need it.

LIVING HISTORY

Part A. What makes someone a hero? Think about the young men sent to fight in the Vietnam War. Many had never been away from home. Suddenly they were called upon to fight an enemy in guerilla warfare in hot, humid jungles thousands of miles from their loved ones. Women served in Vietnam, too, in supporting, non-combat roles, and their ranks suffered casualties as well. Think about what would have made someone a hero during the Vietnam War.

Now listen as your teacher reads a soldier's first-person account of the war experience in Vietnam. Imagine what it was like to be sent far away from home, fighting in a strange land with only your fellow soldiers for support—and constantly in fear of death. Then, think about the Vietnamese people whose country was being torn apart by the conflict. Alternatively, imagine that your brother had been sent to Vietnam, or that you were an Army nurse tending to the wounded. Choose to "be" one of these people—the soldier, the Vietnamese villager, the sibling left behind, or the nurse, and write your thoughts below and/or on another sheet of paper about your experiences, your feelings, your fears and your hopes.

Part B. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. government used a lottery system and drafted people to fight in the war. Every male 18 years or older who was not enrolled in college or eligible for deferment due to physical or other reasons, was required to enroll in the draft and was given a number. If your number was called, you were inducted into the Army. The draft was not abolished until 1973, and today the U.S. is served by a strictly volunteer Army. Because of this, young people today are able to enjoy the freedoms fought for by the young people of yesterday, who had no such options.

Put yourself back in time to 1967, and imagine that you are an 18-year-old who is eligible to be drafted. Pick an index card. Will you be drafted? _____ How do you feel? Write your thoughts below.

Part C. Young women were exempt from the draft during the Vietnam War. However, 59 female civilians and nine non-combat female military personnel were killed, some while attempting to transport Vietnamese children out of the country to safety. Today, due to advancements in women's opportunities that arose from the women's movement of the '60s, women can have equal opportunities—and take equal risks—on the battlefield, as we have seen from recent events in the Iraqi Freedom war. Do you feel it is right to send a mother into battle, even if she wants to go? Write your thoughts on this subject in the space below, or prepare to debate the topic if your teacher asks you to take a position on it.

A TRIBUTE OF YOUR OWN

Part A. During the 1960s, artists like Andy Warhol used Campbell Soup cans, comic strips and images from advertising in their art to show what they thought America had become. Using any visual arts medium, create your own painting, drawing, sculpture, or other art form that best sums up your impression of what America was like during the decade of the 1960s for those who stayed at home and for those who fought a war thousands of miles away.

Part B. Now that you have learned about the Vietnam War era and met and interviewed someone connected with it, think carefully about the most important impressions you have formed while working on this project.

Focus on the interview(s) you conducted, and think about what you have learned about the effect of war on people's lives. Using the medium of your choice—you can write, draw, sculpt, paint, shoot a video, write scenes for a play, an advertisement or the outline for a film script, even plot a military or political campaign strategy—record your thoughts about the meaning and impact of war, peace, and the quest for—or defense of—freedom as it relates both to the Vietnam War era and today.

Part C. Decide as a class how you can create a tribute in your school to the veterans and others from your state who fought in Vietnam. You can create a wall mural, draw posters dedicated to the veterans, put on a class play, hold a debate, invite speakers to ceremonies surrounding Memorial Day, shoot a video commemorative, etc.—anything to honor those who fought and died in Vietnam.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Veterans' Organizations and Related Sources

American Legion
www.legion.org

Veterans of Foreign Wars
www.vfw.org

Vietnam Casualty Data Base
www.no-quarter.org

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
www.vvmf.org

Vietnam War History

Vietnam Timeline
www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/time/timeline5.html

Vietnam Remembrances

<http://grunt.space.swri.edu/>

www.abc.net.au/dimensions/dimensions_in_time/Transcripts/s837218.htm

www.lettershome.net/lettershome.html

www.weweresoldiers.com/splash.html

'60s Chronology

www.polytechnic.org/faculty/gfeldmeth/chron.1960.html

'60s Culture and Fashion

<http://kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/decade60.html>

www.fiftiesweb.com/fashion/cool-clothes.htm

'60s Music

www.dntownsend.com/Site/Rock/rcksum.htm

www.scaruffi.com/music/chrono.html

Achievements in Space

<http://history.nasa.gov/SP-4001/intro.htm>

www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/Timeline/100ft.html

www.bestofcolumbus.com/fussichen/otdspac.htm

Civil Rights

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAcivilrights.htm

The Environment

<http://landresources.montana.edu/LRES560/Chronology.htm>

Women's Rights

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/politics/govworks/na68.htm>

www.cwluherstory.com/CWLUAbout/timeline.html

www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm

www.now.org/issues/economic/cea/history.html

EXTENDED ACTIVITY IDEAS AND EXPANSION IDEAS FOR OTHER WARS

Depending on available time and interest, you may wish to pursue one of the following related activity ideas. These go beyond the Vietnam War into other wars, and can help students tie military involvements of one era with those of another.

The Art of War

Students can research paintings and sculptures linked to past wars, then design a new memorial for the recent Iraqi Freedom War.

If the Trees Could Talk...

When was your area first settled? Was there any wartime activity there? Students could research what might have taken place where they live and then write a portrait of the times and the events that took place. They could access archives or sources from their local historical society. If there had been no war activity at all in their area, they could pick another area and a period in history in which troops were active.

From Blue-Star Flags to Yellow Ribbons

The American Legion supplies blue-star flags to families who have a loved one fighting overseas. Often, yellow ribbons also signify someone on active duty. Students could look back at previous wars and find out if there were other similar signs, then they could design their own concept of a flag, banner or other kind of designation. They could also make yellow ribbons and donate them to the local American Legion.

Roads of Honor

Many times we come across roads that bear names of military personnel, and often we wonder: Who were these people? Students can research the nation's Blue Star Highway system to find out how, why and when this tradition was started. Have them check it out at www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/blue01.htm. Can they propose any new highway names based on recent events?

A Matter of Opinion

Students could research the history of anti-war protest. How far back in American history did citizens protest involvement in a war? Which wars had limited opposition? Which had a great deal of opposition? How did the communication methods of the times affect notifying and involving protestors in group demonstrations? Which protest movements spread slowly, and which rapidly?

The Voices of History

There are many noted historians whose work has dealt with various wars, i.e., Shelby Foote is quoted frequently in Ken Burns' epic TV documentary, *The Civil War*. Stephen Ambrose wrote much about World War II. Students could research the writers who have given voice to past wars and delve into their biographies to find out what motivated them to be interested in a specific war and what their point of view was about that war.

Symbols of American Pride

Students could research the reasons behind various military traditions—for example, the specific way an American flag is folded or what the 21-gun salute means (it totals the numbers that comprise the year America won its independence from England, 1-7-7-6). What about the various medals of honor and the military designations such as the Purple Heart worn by highly decorated soldiers?

It's Not So Trivial

Each era has had its own songs, cultural trivia, fashions, slang, prominent television shows or newspapers and other "signs of the times." Students can determine these cultural markers for the various periods during which Americans were fighting wars. How many reflected the war of that time? Then they can make trivia cards and quiz each other on their knowledge of the era.

From Battlefield to Screen

Many important battles have been memorialized through films about the exploits of brave soldiers or legendary military commanders. Students could research the stories behind films such as *We Were Soldiers*, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Patton*, or *Saving Private Ryan*, for example. Can they determine how close to the truth the filmmakers were? Were liberties taken with the historical truth to make the film more compelling? How has war differed in the way it was shown in the 1940s versus now? How was the attack on Pearl Harbor portrayed in films from the 1950s versus the more recent film, *Pearl Harbor*? How differently do films about the Vietnam War portray conflict in comparison to movies of the '40s about World War II? Is the morality of war portrayed as less clearcut now than it once was?

Telling It Like It Wants to Be

During World War II, some filmmakers got their start by making propaganda and training films to encourage support of the war effort and to instruct those who would be sent to fight. Students could find out how this effort was coordinated by the U.S. government, the films' messages, and how effective they think those messages were. They also could research those on the opposing side who had their own propaganda agenda, such as Hitler's filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl.

Entertaining the Troops

What role did entertainers play in boosting the troops' morale during World War II and Vietnam? What famous actors either enlisted in World War II or went abroad to provide moral support? What famous singer drew huge media attention when he enrolled in the Army? What about posters designed to sell war bonds? Students could research and learn about the involvement of the entertainment industry—the USO canteens, the late Bob Hope's commitment to entertaining the troops and the many actors and actresses who gave of their time and talent to bring laughter to those stationed far away from home.

On the Home Front

Students could research the sacrifices American citizens made when supplies and material had to be diverted for use during World War II—i.e., coupon books for rationing meat or gas. They would learn about the invention of nylon because of war needs, and how women went to work in munitions factories because so many men were sent abroad to fight. Long before women's liberation, "Rosie the Riveter" was manning her workpost, keeping the home fires burning by doing traditional "men's work." How different have the sacrifices at home been since World War II? Have there been as many—or any?

Historical Markers

Students could create a large art project showing the geography and battle locations of selected wars. They could even recreate the campaigns of military commanders—i.e., Sherman's march to the sea or the Battle of Gettysburg, the invasion of Normandy, or the bombing of Cambodia. They could overlay their map with another version of the geography showing present-day towns and roads to get a real sense of how places have changed over time.

Memorials of Honor

Students can research the locations of national memorial cemeteries, both in the U.S. and abroad, in which soldiers are buried. They can find out about the cemeteries' origins, how they were authorized, and what the rules of burial are.

RESOURCES

Veterans' Organizations and Related Sources

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Veterans of Foreign Wars
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Vietnam Casualty Data Base
www.no-quarter.org

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
www.vvmf.org

World War II Memorial
www.wwiimemorial.com

Vietnam War History

Vietnam Timeline
www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/time/timeline5.html

Ho Chi Minh Trail
www.vietquoc.com/na110400.htm

www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/AirOps/interdiction.html

la Drang Valley
www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlas/vietnam/vietnam%20war%20index.htm

My Lai
www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/mylai/MYL_MAPS.html

Pentagon Papers
www.vva.org/pentagon/history/history.html

News Coverage and Books About the Vietnam War

www.digitaljournalist.org/issue0304/rsteinman.html

A World of Hurt: Between Innocence & Arrogance in Vietnam, by Mary Reynolds Powell. Greenleaf Book Group, 2000.

Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam, by Bernard Edelman, W. W. Norton and Company, 2002.

Don't Mean Nothing: Short Stories of Vietnam, by Susan O'Neill. Ballantine Books, 2001.

Home Before Morning: The Story of an Army Nurse in Vietnam, by Lynda Van Devanter. University of Massachusetts Press, reprinted 2001.

Inside Television's First War: A Saigon Journal, by Ron Steinman. University of Missouri Press, 2002.

The Best and the Brightest, by David Halberstam. Ballantine Books, 1969.

The Soldiers' Story: Vietnam in Their Own Words, by Ron Steinman. TV Books Inc., 1999.

Vietnam: A History, by Stanley Karnow. Penguin Books, 1984.

Women in Vietnam: The Oral History, by Ron Steinman. TV Books Inc., 2000.

Vietnam Remembrances

http://grunt.space.swri.edu/www.abc.net.au/dimensions/dimensions_in_time/Transcripts/s837218.htm
www.lettershome.net/lettershome.html
www.weweresoldiers.com/splash.html

'60s Chronology

www.polytechnic.org/faculty/gfeldmeth/chron.1960.html

'60s Culture and Fashion

<http://kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/decade60.html>
www.fiftiesweb.com/fashion/cool-clothes.htm

'60s Music

www.dntownsend.com/Site/Rock/rcksum.htm
www.scaruffi.com/music/chrono.html

Achievements in Space

<http://history.nasa.gov/SP-4001/intro.htm>
www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/Timeline/100ft.html
www.bestofcolumbus.com/fussichen/otdspac.htm

Civil Rights

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAcivilrights.htm

The Environment

<http://landresources.montana.edu/LRES560/Chronology.htm>

Women's Rights

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/politics/govworks/na68.htm>
www.cwluherstory.com/CWLUAbout/timeline.html
www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm
www.now.org/issues/economic/cea/history.html

To locate veterans of other wars, use the resources below. Remember that since the Internet is constantly evolving, over time some Web sites may change.

To locate either World War I or World War II veterans **by state**, in association with the **cemetery** in which they are buried, go to **www.abmc.gov**. You can also find Korean War veterans **by state** using this site. To verify the information about an individual soldier, check the following:

Korean War: www.aiipowmia.com/koreacw/kwpw_menu.html
World War II: www.wwiimemorial.com
WWI, WWII, or Korea: www.abmc.gov (follow links from home page)

Another source for finding Korean War veterans by state is to type your state's abbreviation in the state block on the site below:
www.koreanwar.org/html/korean_war_databases.html

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