

The seal of the Brownsville Independent School District is a circular emblem with a scalloped border. It features a central design with a palm tree, a large letter 'B', a globe, and two figures. The text 'BROWNSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT' is written around the top half of the circle, and 'BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS' is written around the bottom half, separated by two stars.

# **High School Social Studies US History**

**Grade 11**

**2019 – 2020**

**Instructional Packet**

# **Set II**

**CHAPTER**  
**22****Section 2****PRIMARY SOURCE** Letter from a Soldier in Vietnam

*Marine Second Lieutenant Marion Lee "Sandy" Kempner from Galveston, Texas, arrived in Vietnam in July 1966 and was killed four months later by shrapnel from a mine explosion near Tien Phu. He wrote the following letter to his great-aunt less than three weeks before his death at the age of 24.*

October 20, 1966

Dear Aunt Fannie,

This morning, my platoon and I were finishing up a three-day patrol. Struggling over steep hills covered with hedgerows, trees, and generally impenetrable jungle, one of my men turned to me and pointed a hand, filled with cuts and scratches, at a rather distinguished-looking plant with soft red flowers waving gaily in the downpour (which had been going on ever since the patrol began) and said, "That is the first plant I have seen today which didn't have thorns on it." I immediately thought of you.

The plant, and the hill upon which it grew, was also representative of Vietnam. It is a country of thorns and cuts, of guns and marauding, of little hope and of great failure. Yet in the midst of it all, a beautiful thought, gesture, and even person can arise among it waving bravely at the death that pours down upon it. Some day this hill will be burned by napalm, and the red flower will crackle up and die among the thorns. So what was the use of it living and being a beauty among the beasts, if it must, in the end, die because of them, and with them? This is a question which is answered by Gertrude Stein's "A rose is a rose is a rose." You are what you are what you are. Whether you believe in God, fate, or the crumbling cookie, elements are so mixed in a being that make him what he is; his salvation from the thorns around him lies in the fact that he existed at all, in his very own personality. There was once a time when the Jewish idea of heaven and hell was the thoughts and opinions people had of you after you died. But what if the plant was on an isolated hill and was never seen by anyone? That is like the question of whether the falling tree makes a sound in the forest primeval when no one is there to hear it. It makes a sound, and the plant was beautiful and the thought was kind, and the person was humane, and distinguished and brave, not merely because other people recognized it as such, but because it is, and it is, and it is.

The flower will always live in the memory of a tired, wet Marine, and has thus achieved a sort of immortality. But even if we had never gone on that hill, it would still be a distinguished, soft, red, thornless flower growing among the cutting, scratching plants, and that in itself is its own reward.

Love,  
Sandy

*from Bernard Edelman, ed., Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam (New York: Norton, 1985), 137–138.*

**Discussion Questions**

1. In this letter, Lieutenant Kempner describes a plant. What does the plant look like?
2. What does this plant represent to Kempner?
3. Based on your reading of this letter, what qualities or traits do you think might have helped Kempner cope with the trials of war in Vietnam?

**CHAPTER**  
**22****AMERICAN LIVES****Robert McNamara**  
*The Legacy of Vietnam***Section 2**

*"Looking back, I clearly erred by not forcing . . . a knock-down, drag-out debate over the loose assumptions, unasked questions, and thin analyses underlying our military strategy in Vietnam."—Robert McNamara, In Retrospect (1995)*

Robert McNamara made the U.S. Defense Department more organized and efficient. Later he led an aid agency that funded programs to help poor people around the world improve their lives. However, he will probably be remembered most for his role in the Vietnam War.

McNamara (b. 1916) graduated from college with honors and attended the famous Harvard Business School. During World War II, he trained officers in the Army Air Corps in management techniques. After the war, he and a team of other managers joined the Ford Motor Company. These "Whiz Kids" led Ford out of difficulty and into new success. McNamara was named president of Ford—the first to come from outside the family. In 1961 he left that post to become President Kennedy's secretary of defense.

McNamara reformed the Defense Department and tightened control of the armed services. He joined in the planning that helped resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis. He also won Kennedy's approval of the new doctrine of "flexible response." This idea reduced the nation's heavy reliance on nuclear weapons. Instead, it based U.S. security on large conventional troop forces that could respond quickly to international crises.

The central issue of McNamara's time in office, though, was the Vietnam War. McNamara visited Vietnam in 1962, talking to leaders and American officers there. He backed the idea of using American troops as advisors and believed that with American help, the war could be over by 1965. After Kennedy was assassinated, he stayed as defense secretary under Lyndon Johnson, who came to rely on McNamara greatly.

McNamara supported the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which gave Johnson sweeping power in Vietnam. When administration planners debated whether to start bombing North Vietnam, McNamara thought it would not work, but he went along with the decision. He agreed with the policy of sending more troops.

As time went on, though, McNamara grew to

believe that the Vietnam War could not be won. In meetings with Johnson and other top advisors, he expressed these doubts. In public, however, McNamara never voiced these concerns.

He became so identified with Vietnam policy that war critics often attacked him personally. They called the fight "McNamara's war" and branded him a "baby burner" for air attacks that resulted in the deaths of children. McNamara persuaded Johnson to halt the bombing at the end of 1965, hoping for a peaceful gesture in return from the other side. There was no response. In 1966, a McNamara peace proposal was secretly sent to North Vietnam. Again, there was no response.

In 1968, McNamara felt he could not continue in the administration. He left the Defense Department to become president of an international aid agency. He served as chief of the World Bank for fifteen years. Before him, that agency concentrated on funding large industrial projects around the world. McNamara shifted the focus. Under him, the bank concentrated on funding programs that worked to help the poorest people in the world more directly.

In 1995, McNamara published his memoirs—*In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*. The book revealed his earlier doubts that the war could be won. He said loyalty to Johnson prevented him from saying anything, even after he left office. Many reviewers criticized him for remaining quiet for so long and not having the courage of his convictions and speaking out at the time of the war.

**Questions**

1. Would you say that McNamara was effective at leading organizations? Why or why not?
2. Why did McNamara come to believe that fighting the Vietnam War was a mistake?
3. Do you agree that McNamara should have spoken out against the war when he left the Defense Department?

**CHAPTER**  
**22**

## Section 3

**PRIMARY SOURCE** Protest Buttons

*These protest buttons from the antiwar movement in the 1960s were worn by Americans who opposed the war in Vietnam. What different views do the images and slogans on these buttons express?*



Photos by Sharon Hoogstraten  
Out Now Button: Archive Photos/Blank Archives

**Activity Options**

1. With a small group of classmates, discuss the slogans and symbols used in these buttons. Then choose two buttons that you think are most effective and explain your choices to the class.
2. Design your own protest button to express your view on the war in Vietnam, on war in general, or on a more recent controversial issue. Borrow symbols and slogans from those depicted on this page or invent your own.

**CHAPTER**  
**22**

**Section 4**

**GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: LOCATION**

*The Ho Chi Minh Trail*

*Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.*

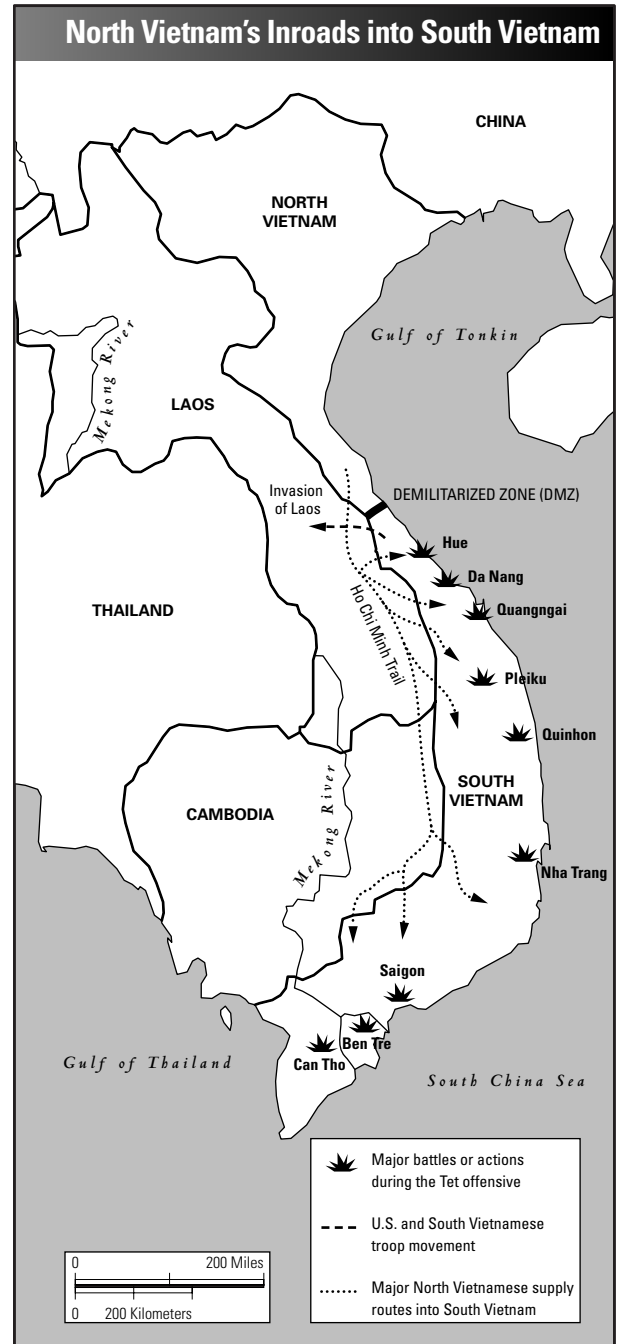
The Ho Chi Minh Trail developed from a network of existing hidden jungle paths. During the 1960s, it became the main route used by North Vietnam to get troops and supplies into South Vietnam in support of the Vietcong's fight against South Vietnamese troops and their U.S. allies. The trail was named for Ho Chi Minh, the leader of North Vietnam at the time. When North Vietnamese soldiers were wounded, they were transported up the trail for treatment.

U.S. and South Vietnamese troops tried repeatedly to cut or destroy this lifeline. They drenched the surrounding jungle with defoliants to kill trees and other vegetation. This effort failed, and North Vietnam continued to use the trail.

The Tet Offensive of early 1968 showed how determined North Vietnam was. The North Vietnamese and the Vietcong launched simultaneous raids on provincial capitals and major cities throughout South Vietnam at the beginning of Tet, the lunar new year celebration. The U.S. Embassy in Saigon was attacked, as were many other supposedly secure sites. The planning and coordination needed to carry out such an action stunned Americans in Vietnam and in the United States. The Tet Offensive, though not a North Vietnamese victory in the sense that it captured territory or inflicted great casualties, still caused many Americans to rethink their nation's involvement in the Vietnam War.

In 1971, South Vietnamese troops invaded Laos in an attempt to cut off the flow of men and supplies along the trail. Despite American air support, the invasion was a disaster, and the South Vietnamese army was defeated by North Vietnamese forces.

The Ho Chi Minh Trail, along which more than 20,000 troops a month could be moved by 1967, was the key to keeping North Vietnam in the war until the United States tired of battle and controversy and pulled out.



**Interpreting Text and Visuals**

- 1. Describe the path of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. What was the purpose of the Ho Chi Minh Trail? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. According to the map, about how many miles long was the Ho Chi Minh Trail? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Describe the 1971 operation directed at interrupting the Ho Chi Minh Trail. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. What might have been the outcome of a successful invasion of Laos in 1971? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Reread the text and then look at the map for the northernmost and southern-most points of attack during the Tet Offensive. What part do you think the Ho Chi Minh Trail played in the attacks? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Section 4

## PRIMARY SOURCE Lyndon B. Johnson on Vietnam and Reelection

*In a televised address to the nation on March 31, 1968, President Johnson outlined changes in Vietnam policy and concluded with the surprise announcement that he would not run for reelection. As you read part of Johnson's speech, consider what he offered to North Vietnam and why he decided not to seek the Democratic nomination.*

Tonight I want to speak to you on peace in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

No other question so preoccupies our people. No other dream so absorbs the 250 million human beings who live in that part of the world. No other goal motivates American policy in Southeast Asia.

For years, representatives of our government and others have traveled the world—seeking to find a basis for peace talks. Since last September, they have carried the offer I made public at San Antonio.

It was this: that the United States would stop its bombardment of North Vietnam when that would lead promptly to productive discussions—and that we would assume that North Vietnam would not take military advantage of our restraint. . . .

Tonight, I renew the offer I made last August—to stop the bombardment of North Vietnam. We ask that talks begin promptly and that they be serious talks on the substance of peace. We assume that during those talks Hanoi would not take advantage of our restraint. We are prepared to move immediately toward peace through negotiations.

Tonight, in the hope that this action will lead to early talks, I am taking the first step to deescalate the conflict. We are reducing—substantially reducing—the present level of hostilities. And we are doing so unilaterally, and at once.

Tonight, I have ordered our aircraft and naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam, except in the area north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) where the continuing enemy build-up directly threatens allied forward positions and where movements of troops and supplies are clearly related to that threat. . . .

I call upon President Ho Chi Minh to respond positively and favorably to this new step toward peace.

But if peace does not come now through negotiations, it will come when Hanoi understands that our common resolve is unshakable and our common strength is invincible. . . .

In these times, as in times before, it is true that a house divided against itself—by the spirit of faction, of party, of region, of religion, of race—is a house that cannot stand. There is divisiveness in the American house now. . . .

What we won when all our people united must not now be lost in suspicion, distrust, and selfishness or politics among any of our people.

Believing this as I do, I have concluded that I should not permit the presidency to become involved in the partisan divisions that are developing in this political year. With America's sons in the field far away, with America's future under challenge here at home, with our hopes and the world's hopes for peace in the balance every day, I do not believe that I should devote an hour or a day of my time to any duties other than the awesome duties of this office, the presidency of your country.

Accordingly, I shall not seek and I will not accept the nomination of my party for another term as your President. But, let men everywhere know, however, that a strong and confident, a vigilant America stands ready to seek an honorable peace and stands ready to defend an honored cause, whatever the price, whatever the burden, whatever the sacrifice that duty may require.

Thank you for listening. Goodnight, and God bless all of you.

from *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 1, 1968. Reprinted in *Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1961–1968: The Burdens of World Power*, vol. 18 of *The Annals of America* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1968), 613–616.

### Discussion Questions

1. What offer did President Johnson make to North Vietnam?
2. Why did he decide not to seek the Democratic nomination for president?
3. How do you think antiwar activists responded to Johnson's speech?



## AMERICAN LIVES

# John Lewis

## *Moral Force for Nonviolence*

## Section 4

*"We got arrested for the first time and I felt good about it. We felt we were involved in a crusade and, in order to do something about it, you had to put your body on the line. We felt we could bring about change in the South."*  
*—John Lewis, recalling his feelings after joining in his first sit-in, 1973*

John Lewis (b. 1940) has worked outside the system in the civil rights movement. He has worked inside the system as the head of a federal agency and as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Wherever he has worked, Lewis has urged the nonviolent pursuit of equal rights.

Lewis was born to an Alabama farm family. He hoped to become a minister one day and listened on the radio to the speeches and sermons of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who became his model. At college in Nashville, Tennessee, he joined workshops to learn the principles of nonviolent protest. These principles appealed to his deep faith.

In 1960, Lewis and other students heard about successful sit-ins being staged in North Carolina. They decided to stage similar protests. Over the next few weeks, they were arrested many times for breaking the city's segregation laws. That spring, Lewis and other students from across the South organized the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

In 1961, Lewis joined in the freedom rides. In the beatings that took place in Montgomery, Alabama, Lewis was knocked unconscious. Nevertheless, he continued with the freedom rides throughout the summer. That fall the Interstate Commerce Commission ruled that segregation was illegal on interstate buses.

In 1963, Lewis was voted chairman of SNCC. He left school to devote himself full time to the movement. In the 1963 march on Washington, the young Lewis joined veteran civil rights leaders King and Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as one of the principal sponsors and speakers. The next year, he organized the voter registration drive called Mississippi Freedom Summer. In 1965, Lewis and King organized the march from Montgomery to Selma, Alabama. In the clubbings that took place on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Lewis's skull was fractured. He recovered enough to help lead the second march two weeks later.

Lewis was feeling increasing frustration. He was tired of being beaten, and the growing war in Vietnam disturbed him. An advocate of nonviolence, he was a conscientious objector—someone who opposed all war on principle. An opponent of racism, he urged African Americans to resist the draft until they had won equal rights.

During this time, Lewis continued to serve as chairman of SNCC. However, many members now wanted a more radical approach to the struggle for rights. In 1966, one of these radicals was elected chairman, defeating Lewis. A few months later, Lewis resigned from the organization he had helped found and had led for three years.

In the next few years, Lewis continued his civil rights work in various organizations. Most noteworthy was his work in a project that helped register a million new African-American voters. In 1978, President Carter named him to head ACTION. This agency had responsibility for such volunteer programs as the Peace Corps and Vista. Lewis changed policy to put the agencies in closer touch with community groups.

In 1986, Lewis won election to the House of Representatives from Georgia. He has been reelected every two years since then, winning his sixth term in 1996. House colleagues have given him great respect due to the sacrifices he made in the civil rights movement and his principled stands on current issues.

## Questions

1. How was Lewis's commitment to nonviolence tested in his life?
2. Lewis said he left SNCC when radicals took control because "violence . . . might deliver some quick solutions, but in the long run it debases you." What did he mean?
3. In 1991, Lewis opposed the use of force against Iraq. How is this stand—even if it was unpopular—not surprising?



## OUTLINE MAP *The Vietnam War*

### Section 5

- A.** Review the maps “Indochina, 1959” and “Tet Offensive, Jan. 30–Feb. 24, 1968” on pages 733 and 749 of your textbook. Then, on the accompanying outline map, label the following bodies of water, countries, and cities. Finally, draw a line to mark the DMZ, the Demilitarized Zone that separated North and South Vietnam.

Bodies of Water		Countries		Cities	
Gulf of Tonkin	Red River	South Vietnam	Thailand	Hanoi	Can Tho
South China Sea	Gulf of Thailand	North Vietnam	Laos	Hue	
Mekong River		Cambodia	China	Saigon	

- B.** After completing the map, use it to answer the following questions.

1. Which natural feature forms much of the border between Laos and Thailand?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why might the United States have been concerned early in the war about China’s attitude toward U.S. involvement on the side of South Vietnam?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What city is located in the delta of the Red River? \_\_\_\_\_  
in the Mekong Delta area? \_\_\_\_\_

4. About how long was the DMZ that separated North from South Vietnam? \_\_\_\_\_

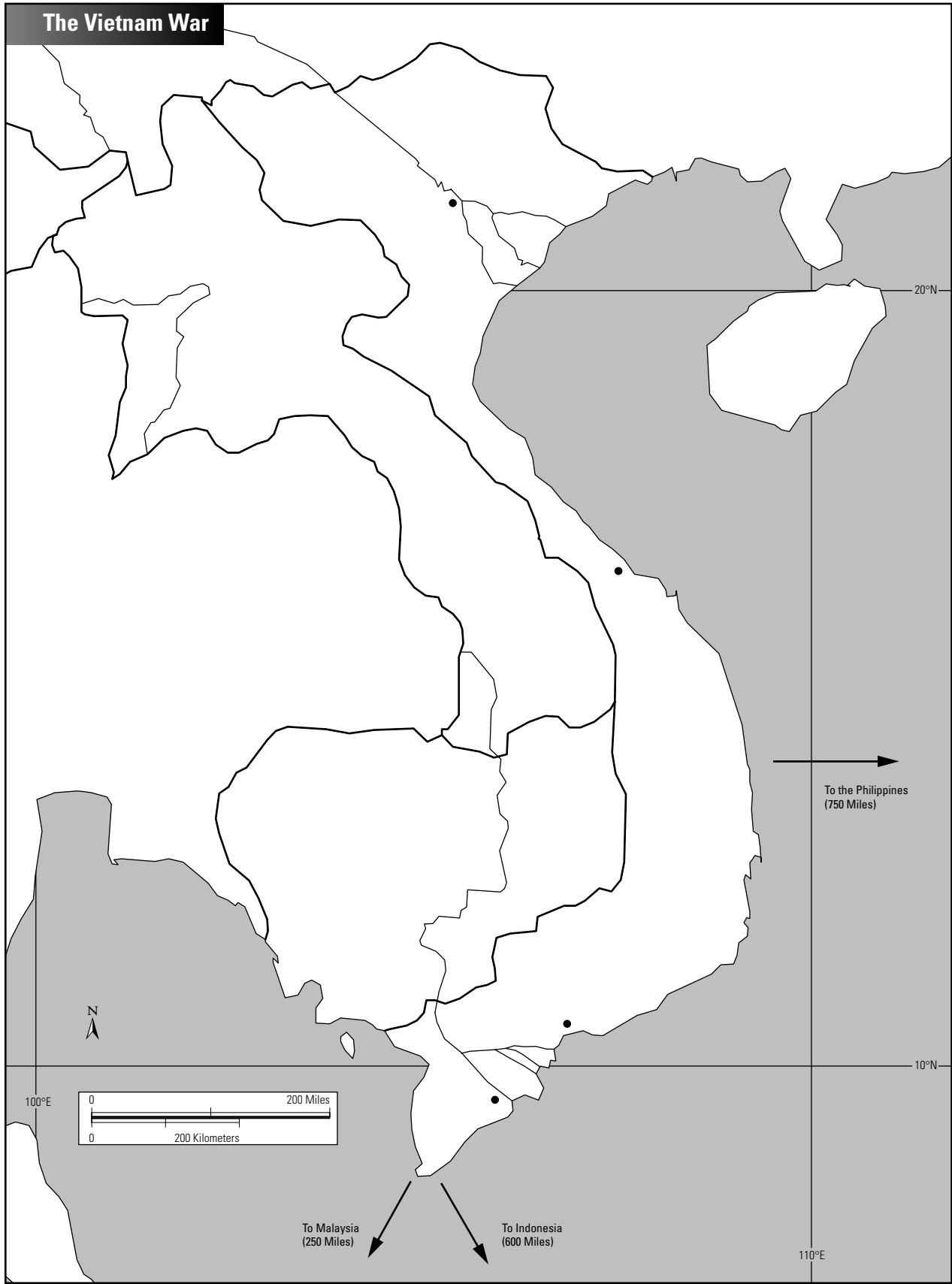
5. What might have been the effect on the Vietnam War if the border of Laos had been closed and North Vietnam had not been able to operate in the country? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. The Tet offensive ranged from Hue to Can Tho. Thus, over approximately how many miles did the North Vietnamese attacks stretch? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Part of the reason that the United States got involved in Vietnam was the domino theory—the belief in the 1950s and 1960s that the loss of even one country to communism would cause all others in the region to fall “like a row of dominoes.” What countries is it likely that the United States feared losing to communism?

\_\_\_\_\_



CHAPTER  
**22**

Section 5

LITERATURE SELECTION *from In Country*  
by Bobbie Ann Mason

*In the summer of 1984, Sam Hughes wants to learn more about her father who was killed in Vietnam before she was born. In this excerpt, Sam, her grandmother, and her uncle Emmett—himself a Vietnam veteran—make a pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., where they visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.*

Emmett holds Mamaw's arm protectively and steers her across the street. The pot of geraniums hugs his chest.

"There it is," Sam says.

It is massive, a black gash in a hillside, like a vein of coal exposed and then polished with polyurethane. A crowd is filing by slowly, staring at it solemnly.

"Law," says Sam's grandmother quietly. "It's black as night."

"Here's the directory," Emmett says, pausing at the entrance. "I'll look up his name for you, Mrs. Hughes."

The directory is on a pedestal with a protective plastic shield. Sam stands in the shade, looking forward, at the black wing embedded in the soil, with grass growing above. It is like a giant grave, fifty-eight thousand bodies rotting here behind those names. The people are streaming past, down into the pit.

"It don't show up good," Mamaw says anxiously. "It's just a hole in the ground."

The memorial cuts a V in the ground, like the wings of an abstract bird, huge and headless. Overhead, a jet plane angles upward, taking off.

"It's on Panel 9E," Emmett reports. "That's on the east wing. We're on the west."

At the bottom of the wall is a granite trough, and on the edge of it the sunlight reflects the names just above, in mirror writing, upside down. Flower arrangements are scattered at the base. A little kid says, "Look, Daddy, the flowers are dying." The man snaps, "Some are and some aren't."

The walkway is separated from the memorial by a strip of gravel, and on the other side of the walk is a border of dark gray brick. The shiny surface of the wall reflects the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, at opposite angles.

A woman in a sunhat is focusing a camera on the wall. She says to the woman with her, "I didn't think it would look like this. Things aren't what you think they look like. I didn't know it was a wall."

A spraddle-legged guy in camouflage clothing walks by with a cane. Probably he has an artificial leg, Sam thinks, but he walks along proudly, as if he has been here many times before and doesn't have any particular business at that moment. He seems to belong here, like Emmett hanging out at McDonald's.

A group of schoolkids tumble through, noisy as chickens. As they enter, one of the girls says, "Are they piled on top of each other?" They walk a few steps farther and she says, "What are all these names anyway?" Sam feels like punching the girl in the face for being so dumb. How could anybody that age not know? But she realizes that she doesn't know either. She is just beginning to understand. And she will never really know what happened to all these men in the war. Some people walk by, talking as though they are on a Sunday picnic, but most are reverent, and some of them are crying.

Sam stands in the center of the V, deep in the pit. The V is like the white wings of the shopping mall in Paducah. The Washington Monument is reflected at the center line. If she moves slightly to the left, she sees the monument, and if she moves the other way she sees a reflection of the flag opposite the memorial. Both the monument and the flag seem like arrogant gestures, like the country giving the finger to the dead boys, flung in this hole in the ground. Sam doesn't understand what she is feeling, but it is something so strong, it is like a tornado moving in her, something massive and overpowering. It feels like giving birth to this wall.

"I wish Tom could be here," Sam says to Emmett. "He needs to be here." Her voice is thin, like smoke, barely audible.

"He'll make it here someday. Jim's coming too. They're all coming one of these days."

"Are you going to look for anybody's name besides my daddy's?"

"Yeah."

"Who?"

"Those guys I told you about, the ones that died

all around me that day. And that guy I was going to look up—he might be here. I don't know if he made it out or not."

Sam gets a flash of Emmett's suffering, his grieving all these years. He has been grieving for fourteen years. In this dazzling sunlight, his pimples don't show. A jet plane flies overhead, close to the earth. Its wings are angled back too, like a bird's.

Two workmen in hard hats are there with a stepladder and some loud machinery. One of the workmen, whose hat says on the back NEVER AGAIN, seems to be drilling into the wall.

"What's he doing, hon?" Sam hears Mamaw say behind her.

"It looks like they're patching up a hole or something." *Fixing a hole where the rain gets in.*

The man on the ladder turns off the tool, a sander, and the other workman hands him a brush. He brushes the spot. Silver duct tape is patched around several names, leaving the names exposed. The names are highlighted in yellow, as though someone has taken a Magic Marker and colored them, the way Sam used to mark names and dates, important facts, in her textbooks.

"Somebody must have vandalized it," says a man behind Sam. "Can you imagine the sicko who would do that?"

"No," says the woman with him. "Somebody just wanted the names to stand out and be noticed. I can go with that."

"Do you think they colored Dwayne's name?" Mamaw asks Sam worriedly.

"No. Why would they?" Sam gazes at the flowers spaced along the base of the memorial. A white carnation is stuck in a crack between two panels of the wall. A woman bends down and straightens a ribbon on a wreath. The ribbon has gold letters on it, "VFW Post 7215 of Pa."

They are moving slowly. Panel 9E is some distance ahead. Sam reads a small poster propped at the base of the wall: "To those men of C Company, 1st Bn. 503 Inf., 173rd Airborne who were lost in the battle for Hill 823, Dak To, Nov. 11, 1967. Because of their bravery I am here today. A grateful buddy."

A man rolls past in a wheelchair. Another jet plane flies over.

A handwritten note taped to the wall apologizes to one of the names for abandoning him in a fire-fight.

Mamaw turns to fuss over the geraniums in Emmett's arms, the way she might fluff a pillow.

The workmen are cleaning the yellow paint from the names. They sand the wall and brush it carefully, like men polishing their cars. The man on the ladder sprays water on the name he has just sanded and wipes it with a rag.

Sam, conscious of how slowly they are moving, with dread, watches two uniformed marines searching and searching for a name. "He must have been along here somewhere," one says. They keep looking, running their hands over the names.

"There it is. That's him."

They read his name and both look abruptly away, stare out for a moment in the direction of the Lincoln Memorial, then walk briskly off.

"May I help you find someone's name?" asks a woman in a T-shirt and green pants. She is a park guide, with a clipboard in her hand.

"We know where we are," Emmett says. "Much obliged, though."

At panel 9E, Sam stands back while Emmett and Mamaw search for her father's name. Emmett, his gaze steady and intent, faces the wall, as though he were watching birds; and Mamaw, through her glasses, seems intent and purposeful, as though she were looking for something back in the field, watching to see if a cow had gotten out of the pasture. Sam imagines the egret patrolling for ticks on a water buffalo's back, ducking and snaking its head forward, its beak like a punji stick.

"There it is," Emmet says. It is far above his head, near the top of the wall. He reaches up and touches the name. "There's his name, Dwayne E. Hughes."

"I can't reach it," says Mamaw. "Oh, I wanted to touch it," she says softly, in disappointment.

"We'll set the flowers here, Mrs. Hughes," says Emmett. He sets the pot at the base of the panel, tenderly, as though tucking in a baby.

"I'm going to bawl," Mamaw says, bowing her head and starting to sob. "I wish I could touch it."

Sam has an idea. She sprints over to the workmen and asks them to let her borrow the stepladder. They are almost finished, and they agree. One of them brings it over and sets it up beside the wall, and Sam urges Mamaw to climb the ladder, but Mamaw protests. "No, I can't do it. You do it."

"Go ahead, ma'am," the workman says.

"Emmett and me'll hold the ladder," says Sam.

"Somebody might see up my dress."

"No, go on, Mrs. Hughes. You can do it," says Emmett. "Come on, we'll help you reach it."

He takes her arm. Together, he and Sam steady her while she places her foot on the first step and swings herself up. She seems scared, and she doesn't speak. She reaches but cannot touch the name.

"One more, Mamaw," says Sam, looking up at her grandmother—at the sagging wrinkles, her flab hanging loose and sad, and her eyes reddened with crying. Mamaw reaches toward the name and slowly struggles up the next step, holding her dress tight against her. She touches the name, running her hand over it, stroking it tentatively, affectionately, like feeling a cat's back. Her chin wobbles, and after a moment she backs down the ladder silently.

When Mamaw is down, Sam starts up the ladder, with the record package in her hand.

"Here, take the camera, Sam. Get his name." Mamaw has brought Donna's Instamatic.

"No, I can't take a picture this close."

Sam climbs the ladder until she is eye level with her father's name. She feels funny, touching it. A scratching on a rock. Writing. Something for future archaeologists to puzzle over, clues to a language.

"Look this way, Sam," Mamaw says. "I want to take your picture. I want to get you and his name and the flowers in together if I can."

"The name won't show up," Sam says.

"Smile."

"How can I smile?" She is crying.

Mamaw backs up and snaps two pictures. Sam feels her face looking blank. Up on the ladder, she feels so tall, like a spindly weed that is sprouting up out of this diamond-bright seam of hard earth. She sees Emmett at the directory, probably searching for his buddies' names. She touches her father's name again.

"All I can see here is my reflection," Mamaw says when Sam comes down the ladder. "I hope his name shows up. And your face was all shadow."

"Wait here a minute," Sam says, turning away her tears from Mamaw. She hurries to the directory on the east side. Emmett isn't there anymore. She

sees him striding along the wall, looking for a certain panel. Nearby, a group of marines is keeping a vigil for the POWs and MIAs. A double row of flags is planted in the dirt alongside their table. One of the marines walks by with a poster: "You Are an American, Your Voice Can Make the Difference." Sam flips through the directory and finds "Hughes." She wants to see her father's name there too. She runs down the row of Hughes names. There were so many Hughes boys killed, names she doesn't know. His name is there, and she gazes at it for a moment. Then suddenly her own name leaps out at her.

SAM ALAN HUGHES PFC AR 02 MAR  
49 O2 FEB 67 HOUSTON TX 14E 104

Her heart pounding, she rushes to panel 14E, and after racing her eyes over the string of names for a moment, she locates her own name.

SAM A HUGHES. It is the first on a line. It is down low enough to touch. She touches her own name. How odd it feels, as though all the names in America have been used to decorate this wall.

Mamaw is there at her side, clutching at Sam's arm, digging in with her fingernails. Mamaw says, "Coming up on this wall of a sudden and seeing how black it was, it was so awful, but then I came down in it and saw that white carnation blooming out of that crack and it gave me hope. It made me know he's watching over us." She loosens her bird-claw grip. "Did we lose Emmett?"

Silently, Sam points to the place where Emmett is studying the names low on a panel. He is sitting there cross-legged in front of the wall, and slowly his face bursts into a smile like flames.

## Research Option

Find out the dimensions of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, how many visitors come visit it annually, and other facts about the memorial.