

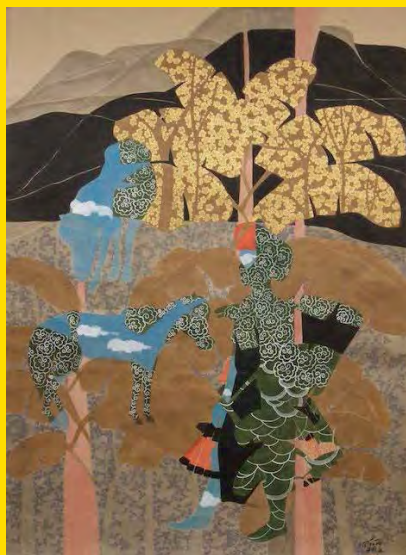
Use this guide to explore exhibition highlights and a variety of perspectives of the war.

Note: This exhibit contains some graphic content and images of war that may not be appropriate for young children.

VIET NAM WAR

| 1945-1975 |

FAMILY GUIDE



Dinh Thi Tham Poong, *Homeland*, 2013. Watercolor, natural color, and gold on handmade paper. Judith Hughes Day Vietnamese Contemporary Fine Art

Look closely at
this work of art.

What colors, textures,
materials, and images
do you notice?

Vietnam is a place, not
just a war. How does
artist Dinh Thi Tham
Poong portray her
country here?

Why Vietnam? 1945-65

How and why did the U.S. decide to fight a war in Vietnam?

Draw lines to match U.S. involvements in Vietnam to the U.S. president (or presidents) who led them.

Truman

Promoting the **partition** of North and South Vietnam

Eisenhower

Financing the **French Indochina War**

Kennedy

Sending **ground troops** to Vietnam

Johnson

Sending **Green Berets** to train South Vietnamese troops

What do **dominoes** have to do with why the U.S. got involved in Vietnam?

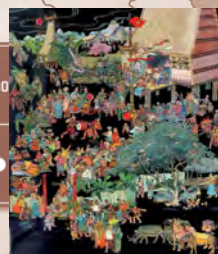


USIA poster. National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, MD

Find **Ho Chi Minh** in each of these images.

How is he depicted differently in them?

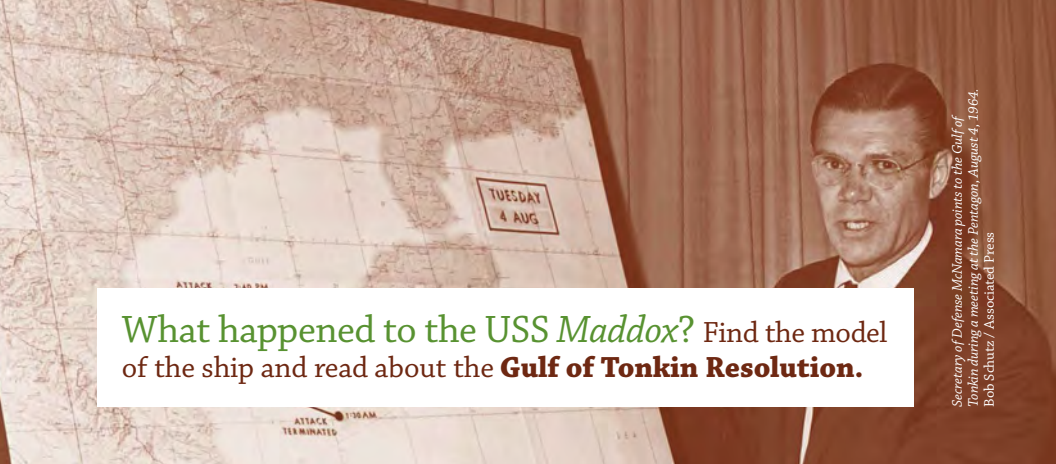
Who was the intended audience for each image?



Tran Huu Chat, *Spring in Tay Nguyen*, 1962 and 2016. Lacquer engraving

WHERE WAS THIS WAR?

The Vietnam War was mainly fought in South Vietnam.
The war also reached Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam.



Secretary of Defense McNamara points to the Gulf of Tonkin during a meeting at the Pentagon, August 4, 1964.
Bob Schatz / Associated Press

What happened to the *USS Maddox*? Find the model of the ship and read about the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**.

In the **Deployment** section, find the ship porthole. It was a 19 day voyage aboard the *USNS Walker* from the West Coast ports to South Vietnam. What thoughts do you think were on the minds of Marines and G.I.s as they made that journey?

PERSPECTIVES

Visit the **What was on their minds?** section and read the words of **volunteer Charles Gentry** and **resister General Baker Jr.**

? Discuss with your family: what shaped their views on whether or not to serve in the military? When there is a draft, should people have to serve if they disagree with a war?

Learn about volunteers, draftees, deferred people, resisters, and conscientious objectors.



G.I. Joe Action Marine. New-York Historical Society

WHO FOUGHT THIS WAR?

☆ South Vietnamese insurgents known as Viet Cong (VC)

☆ North Vietnamese Army (NVA)

VS.

☆ Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)

☆ United States

☆ Small numbers of international forces

War on Many Fronts: 1966-67

What was happening on the U.S. home front and in Vietnam in the first few years of the war?



War Front Mural art by Matt Huynh. New-York Historical Society

Explore the **War Front Mural** showing the four combat tactical zones of the war in Vietnam. Learn about these highlights from each zone using the guide brochure or touchscreens nearby:

Con Thien Dak To Tunnels Game Warden

Discuss with your family: what surprises you about how this war was fought?

Explore the **War Front Case** and find...

- Q Something worn or carried
- Q A letter sent home

Try to lift the U.S. **infantry rucksack**.

How long do you think you could carry this in the heat, through jungles, or in water before needing a rest?

In World War I, a doughboy's backpack weighed roughly 35-50 lbs. Explore the inside of a U.S. "pack" in the Main Gallery.

U.S. doughboys in full field gear. National WWI Museum and Memorial



PERSPECTIVES

Read the excerpt of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "**Beyond Vietnam**" speech.

Compare his message to this poster: ➡

? Discuss with your family: How might Dr. King have reacted to this poster?



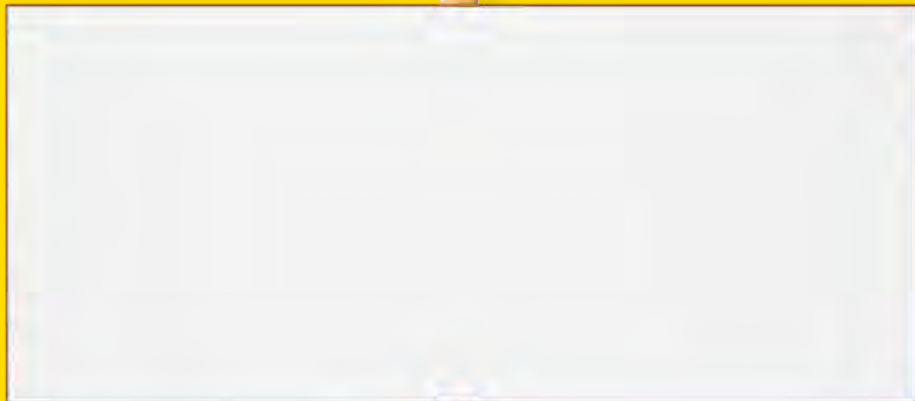
"Support Our Men in Vietnam" poster, May 13, 1967. New-York Historical Society Library



Home Front Mural art by Matt Huynh shows events in New York City in 1967. New-York Historical Society

Now explore the **Home Front Mural**. Read the signs held by demonstrators at the two marches. How did marchers' viewpoints differ on the war?

Choose a march to join. What would your sign say? Write or draw it here:



Turning Point: 1968

Why was 1968 such a turbulent year in the U.S. and a turning point in the war?



Breaking news! Learn about the **Tet Offensive**. Then grab an imaginary mic and pretend you are TV anchor-man Walter Cronkite, who covered the attacks from South Vietnam. Tell your family what American viewers need to know about the war.

National Archives and Records Administration

Explore the 1968 timeline.

WARNING: This timeline contains images of graphic violence.

Share your voice like it's 1968! Design a button that shows your views on something mentioned in the timeline, such as a protest, a politician, or policy.



Buttons, top to bottom: LBJ Presidential Library; Minnesota Historical Society; John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston; Minnesota Historical Society; Public Domain



President Johnson addressing the nation from the Oval Office, March 31, 1968. Yoichi Okamoto / LBJ Presidential Library

PERSPECTIVES

Discuss with your family:
What would you do as President Johnson in these situations?

- ? After the Tet Offensive, General Westmoreland asked Johnson for 200,000 more troops. Would you say yes or no?
- ? Johnson decided not to run for reelection in 1968. Would you have done the same? Why or why not?

1968
1968
1968

Learn about the 1968 U.S. presidential candidates and hold a family election. Ask each person to advocate for a candidate, then tally votes below. Check out the actual election results at the **voting booth**.



VOTES



VOTES



VOTES

Searching for an Exit: 1969-1973

What were the final years of the war like on the war and home fronts?



LIFE magazine, June 27, 1969. P. 22 New-York Historical Society

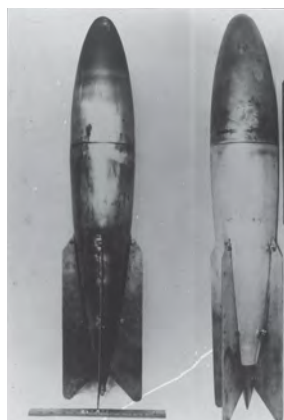
How did *LIFE* magazine choose to report on the American death toll in June, 1969?

Look at the photo spread in **Winning America's Peace.**

Find a **bomblet** like those dropped on Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos during the **Air War.**

True or false: The U.S. dropped more tons of bombs during the Vietnam War than in World War II.

Aerial bombing was used for the first time in World War I. Explore more in the Main Gallery.



WWI incendiary drop bomb.
National WWI Museum and Memorial



Courtesy of Stuart Lutz Historic Documents

Who were the “**silent majority**” and what were their views?

Read the **Supporters** text and look at the political buttons they wore. Why did they support Nixon and the war?



What might they have been thinking as this photo was taken?



PERSPECTIVES

Read about the outcomes of the **Paris Peace Accords** then write thought bubbles for the treaty's main negotiators Le Duc Tho (*left, North Vietnam*) and Henry Kissinger (*right, U.S.*).

At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference to end WWI, Nguyễn Sinh Cung petitioned for the independence of French Indochina. He later renamed himself Ho Chi Minh and his country became Vietnam.




Ho Chi Minh, c. 1919

Le Duc Tho and Henry Kissinger. Rue des Archives / Granger, NYC



What challenges and opportunities did veterans face at home?

 **The War Up Close: The Press** section shows how the American press covered difficult aspects of the war, including **The Pentagon Papers**, the **My Lai Massacre** and the effects of **napalm** bombing on children.

WARNING: This area contains images of graphic violence and death.



Gravel Edition of the Pentagon Papers, 1971, courtesy of Beacon Press

Aftermath: 1973 and Beyond

How did, and does, this war continue to affect people after it ended?



Who was Lê Anh Hào?

Discuss with your family:
How does war effect civilians
who live on a war front?

Portrait of Lê Anh Hào.
Courtesy of Lê Việt
Thắng, grandson of Lê
Anh Hào, and Doug
Hostetter.

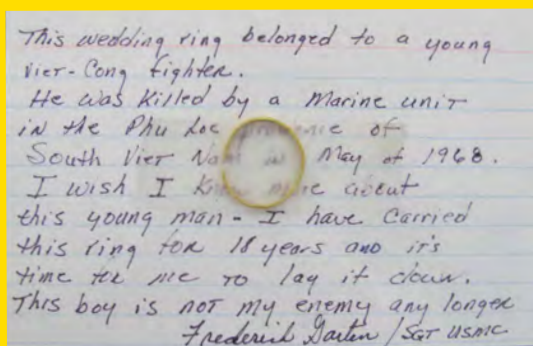


Explore the **timeline** about the aftermath of the war including the following elements:

- Q Read about the **Fall of Saigon** in 1975. Discuss your thoughts on this outcome of the war with your family.
- Q Find two rings and accompanying letters that were left at the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial**. What did these rings mean to the people who left them at The Wall?
- Q What is **UXO**? How do they affect the lives of people in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos today? What do you think should be done about this issue? The Kid



Legacies of War, Washington, D.C.



Item placed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C. Courtesy of the National Mall and Memorial Parks, NPS

PERSPECTIVES

We want to hear *your* perspective. Leave your thoughts in the comment book in the Main Museum Corridor in response to one of the questions on the wall.





U.S. President Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. National WWI Museum and Memorial

On April 2, 1917, the 28th U.S. President, Woodrow Wilson, asked Congress to declare war against Germany saying “**The world must be made safe for democracy.**” This marked a shift in the role the U.S. played in global affairs.



U.S. troops on parade.
National WWI Museum
and Memorial



How are these ideas similar?
How are they different?



In 1961, during the inaugural speech of John F. Kennedy, the 35th U.S. President, he said “... **we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.**”

John F. Kennedy at his desk in the Oval Office taken on Jan. 21, 1961. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

World War I and the Vietnam War share important connections. Discuss with your family: What similarity surprises you most about World War I and Vietnam?

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American infantrymen crowd into a mud-filled bomb crater and look up at tall jungle trees seeking out Viet Cong snipers firing at them during a battle in Phuoc Vinh, north-northeast of Saigon in Vietnam's War Zone D, June 15, 1967. Henri Huet /Associated Press

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