

history theatre

Play Guide



Tim O'Brien's **The Things They Carried**

Adaptation by Jim Stowell



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About the Author: Tim O'Brien



Tim O'Brien was born on October 1, 1946 in Austin, Minnesota and spent his childhood in Worthington, Minnesota, a small community near the borders of Iowa and South Dakota. The first of three children, O'Brien was an avid reader when he was a child.

O'Brien was drafted for military service in 1968, two weeks after completing his undergraduate degree in Government and Politics at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. O'Brien ultimately answered the call of the draft on August 14, 1968 and served a 13-month tour. He was a regular foot soldier and radio telephone operator. His final months of his tour he was assigned a job in the rear echelon. He was wounded twice while in service. O'Brien ultimately rose to the rank of Sergeant.

After returning from his tour in March 1970, he resumed his schooling and began graduate work in government and political science at Harvard University. After Harvard, he went to work briefly for *The Washington Post* as a national affairs reporter before his attention was fully devoted to writing. He began and continues to publish regularly in various periodicals, including *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Esquire*, and *Playboy*, frequently excerpting parts of his novels as autonomous short stories.

O'Brien's first published work was a war memoir and account of his year as a "grunt" in Vietnam, *If I Die in a Combat Zone: Box Me Up and Ship Me Home* (1973). He followed up his autobiographical account with a debut novel entitled *Northern Lights* (1975), which posits two brothers against one another as foils — one brother went to Vietnam and the other did not.

O'Brien's next novel departed from the more traditional form of his first two books. *Going After Cacciato* (1978) is a more surreal and fantastical novel that brought O'Brien to wider public acclaim and earned him the 1979 National Book Award in fiction

Nuclear Age (1985) was O'Brien's third novel and the farthest departure from his own experience. Set in 1995, O'Brien's protagonist, William Cowling, is a middle-aged man who suffers severe paranoia over the possibility of nuclear war. After a two-year interim, O'Brien's short story, "The Things They Carried," the first vignette in the later novel of the same name, was first published in *Esquire*, and it received the 1987 National Magazine Award in Fiction. The short story was also selected for the 1987 Best American Short Stories volume and for inclusion in the Best American Short Stories of the 1980s.

O'Brien published *The Things They Carried* in 1990, returning to the immediate setting of Vietnam during the war, which is present in his other novels. O'Brien's return to the rich raw materials of his own experience proved fruitful, as *The Things They Carried* won the 1990 Chicago Tribune Heartland Award in fiction. The novel was selected by *The New York Times* as one of the year's ten best novels and was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize. In 1991, O'Brien was awarded the Melcher Award for *The Things They Carried* and won France's Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger in 1992.

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The follow-up novel, *In the Lake of the Woods*, published in 1994, again takes up the major themes seen in O'Brien's work: guilt, complicity, culpability, and moral courage. *In the Lake of the Woods* won the James Fenimore Cooper Prize from the Society of American Historians and was selected as the best novel of 1994 by Time magazine.

In his most recent novel, *Tomcat in Love*, O'Brien creates a Vietnam veteran protagonist, Tom Chippering, though the subject of O'Brien's novel is not war, but love. A New York Times Notable Book of the Year, *Tomcat in Love* is a comic novel about a sexist, politically incorrect hero, one that readers love to hate.

O'Brien has received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Massachusetts Arts and Humanities Foundation, the National Book Award, James Fenimore Cooper Prize, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Most recently, he was awarded the Pritzker Military Library Literature Award in June of 2013. He has been elected to both the Society of American Historians and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

O'Brien currently holds the University Endowed Chair in Creative Writing at Texas State University. He lives with his wife and children in Austin, Texas.

The World of the Play: Overview of the Vietnam War

Before World War II, Vietnam was a part of French Indochina, which also included Laos and Cambodia. During World War II, Japan occupied Indochina, but much of it went back under French control after the war.



Trouble started as early in 1946, when Ho Chi Minh led the Viet Minh revolt against the French. In September 1954, British forces arrived; the United States supported their French allies throughout the Truman presidency. Fighting dragged on for seven and a half years until the French were defeated in May 1954. During the Geneva Accord in April 1954, Vietnam was to be temporarily divided into two sections, North Vietnam and South Vietnam. The dividing line was the 17th parallel. Elections were to be held in two years for the purpose of uniting the North and the South. All foreign involvement came to a halt. Even though they did not sign, both the U.S. and South Vietnam announced their intention to abide by the agreement.

Upset by the Geneva accord and to allay the fears of a Communist take-over in South Vietnam, the Eisenhower Administration sponsored a new alliance, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). The purpose of this organization was to stop the spread of communism in that part of Asia. SEATO's members agreed to act together if any country in the region was threatened by aggression.

Following the Geneva agreement, President Eisenhower pledged American support to South Vietnam. This support helped to rehabilitate the country. The support came in the form of economic investments as well as military equipment and training, hoping to curb the expansion of communism throughout the Pacific area.

President Diem, leader of South Vietnam, became increasingly unpopular as he neglected the peasants and showed favoritism to his family. When Diem was supposed to hold elections according to the Geneva Accords, he refused on the grounds that North Vietnam would not permit campaigning on its territory and Ho Chi Minh would gain control of a united Vietnam. He appointed his village officials and ended all local elections. Negative feelings against him mounted.

Viet Cong raids on South Vietnam began as early as 1957. Guerillas began to attack farm villages, particularly in the Mekong Delta. The Viet Cong were under Communist control. They fought against the South Vietnamese government because of its repressive measures and its failure to provide the necessities of life. The Viet Cong won easy victories.

By 1961, Communist forces controlled much of the country. The U.S. was forced to choose between the collapse of the South Vietnamese government and increasing its support. President Diem was constantly appealing for American combat troops and tactical air squadrons.



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President Kennedy believed that the U.S. was engaged in a global conflict with Communism. He felt it was essential to prevent a communist takeover of South Vietnam. During his 34 months in office, he increased the American military advisors from 750 to roughly 16,000. This was accomplished so quietly that few Americans realized what was happening but there was a steadily growing list of American casualties: 14 in 1961, 109 in 1962, and 489 in 1963. This alerted reporters that at least some Americans were in combat situations. The White House insisted that they were attempting to help Vietnam to maintain its independence and not fall under the domination of the Communists.

In 1963, many Buddhists in South Vietnam were protesting treatment they were receiving under the rule of President Diem. They claimed that Diem, a Roman Catholic, was treating them unfairly because of their difference in religion. Special Forces under Diem's brother Nhu raided and wrecked some Buddhists pagodas. The U.S. formally criticized Diem's government and certain types of economic aid were suspended.

The South Vietnamese generals overthrew the Diem government on November 1, 1963 and Diem and his brother Nhu were killed on November 2. A series of short-lived regimes governed South Vietnam for the next two years. In June of 1964, Air Force Commander Nguyen Cao Ky headed a military committee that took power.



Before he left for Dallas in November 1963, Kennedy requested a plan for a total withdrawal of American forces by 1965. He also requested an in depth review of the entire Vietnam situation including whether the U.S. should be there at all.

The much-disputed Gulf of Tonkin incident on July 30, 1964 propelled President Johnson to ask Congress for "powers to take all necessary measures to repel an armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression". Within months, the first combat ready unit was deployed to U.S. Marines headquarters at Da Nang in March of 1965. U.S. involvement continued to steadily increase and by the close of 1967, over a million American troops were or had been in Vietnam.



1969 became the year with the most U.S. troop involvement with an estimate of 541,000 men and women fighting in Southeast Asia.

By 1968, the Vietnam War became the longest war in which the United States had ever been involved and was the most deadly year with an estimated 16,899 Americans losing their lives. More and more Americans became impatient for the war to end. In June of 1968, President Nixon announced the first of several withdrawals of U.S. forces from Vietnam. He said South Vietnamese would replace American troops.

In 1970, the U.S. had been for months mounting secret provocative attacks against North Vietnam and was looking for an incident to justify the bombing of North Vietnam targets. In April 1970, the U.S. and South Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia to attack the North Vietnamese supply depots there. Nixon

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said this action would save the lives of American troops in South Vietnam and shorten the war. Early in 1971, South Vietnamese troops invaded Laos in an effort to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail. U.S. forces provided air and artillery support. The South Vietnamese destroyed many enemy supplies, but they suffered heavy casualties and were forced to withdraw.

During 1971, both the U.S. and the Viet Cong presented new peace proposals; neither side thought the other's was acceptable. On March 30, 1972, North Vietnam launched a major offensive in South Vietnam. President Nixon then ordered the mining of North Vietnamese harbors to cut off war supplies from Russia and China. Bombing of rail and highway networks also took place. By August of 1972, the Communist offensive was halted.

U.S. troops continued withdrawal in 1972. Formal peace talks in Paris continued while secret negotiations between Kissinger and North Vietnamese officials were being conducted. However, when talks broke down, Nixon ordered the full-scale bombings of Hanoi-Haiphong area. Finally, on January 27, 1973, the U.S., North Vietnam and South Vietnam signed a cease-fire agreement in Paris.



However, the Viet Cong violated the cease-fire. The fighting in Southeast Asia continued and intensified. During 1975, Communist troops captured much of the Cambodia. In April 1975, helicopters evacuated the last remaining Americans and the victorious Communist armies took control in Cambodia.

Resistance to the Communists in South Vietnam was crumbling. When the South Vietnamese government ordered a withdrawal of its troops from the north and central highland in March of 1975 entire units retreated. The U.S. Congress felt that the South Vietnamese cause was hopeless and fearing a renewal of American involvement, refused to add support. At the end of April, Saigon was surrounded by the Viet Cong. American helicopters and ships lying off the coast withdrew the remaining Americans as well as over 100,000 South Vietnamese.

The objective of preventing Vietnam from becoming a communist foothold was never realized. With the Communist takeover of South Vietnam in 1976, three tragic decades of fighting in Vietnam came to an end. More than 1.2 million Americans served in the war. The war toll included the deaths of 57,000 U.S. troops, 303,700 wounded and over 780 missing; the death of 254,300 South Vietnamese and 1,027,100



North Vietnamese along with an estimated 1,500 Laos, Cambodian, Chinese and Thailand troops. (National Archives – information purpose only – not official statistics) There are no reliable statistics on civilian war losses, but in 1975, the Vietnamese government estimated between 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 people lost their lives.

The World of the Play: Definitions of Military Terms & Slang from the Vietnam War

AO	Area of operations
Arty	Artillery
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam (Army of S. Vietnam)
AWOL	Absent without leave
Bao Dai	1913-1997, Bao Dai was the last of the Nguyen Emperors
Bivouacked	Encamped in the open, with only tents or improvised shelter
Bouncing Betty	An explosive that propels upward from the ground and then detonates
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
Claymore Antipersonnel mine	A mine that scatters shrapnel in a particular, often fan-shaped, area when it explodes
A couple of clicks	Two kilometers
Da Nang	Seaport in central Vietnam, on the South China Sea; many battalions were stationed there
Darvon	A white, crystalline, narcotic analgesic used for the alleviation of moderate pain
Di di mau	A Vietnamese phrase meaning to move quickly
Dustoff	Medical evacuation by helicopter
EM	Enlisted man
F-4s	A tactical fighter bomber widely used in the Vietnam War
Grunt	A U.S. infantryman
HE	High explosive
Hootch	Slang for a place to live in, specifically a thatched hut
Hump	To travel on foot carrying and transporting necessary supplies for field combat
Illumination rounds	Flares dropped to light up an area during darkness
Joss sticks	Thin sticks of dried paste made of fragrant wood dust, a kind of incense
KIA	Abbreviation for killed in action, to be killed in the line of duty

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Listening post	An advanced, concealed position near the enemy's lines, for detecting the enemy's movements
MP	Military Police
Napalm	Sodium palmitate or an aluminum soap added to gasoline or oil to form a jellylike substance; used in flame throwers and bombs
NCO	Noncommissioned officer
Paddies	Rice fields
Poppa-san	An old Vietnamese man
Pull guard	To be assigned to a sentinel shift, to keep watch
Rear echelon	A subdivision of the military force, farthest from the enemy
Rigged Mortar round	A short range weapon that fires a shell on a high trajectory
Rucksack	A knapsack strapped over the shoulders
Starlight scope	A night-vision telescope that enables a user to see in the dark
Tracer rounds	Harmless projectile that lights a path for soldiers to aim weaponry
Trip flare	A flare rigged to ignite when someone moves a thin wire hidden along the outside perimeter of a encampment meant to signal the approach of enemy troops.
VC	Viet Cong.
Wheelchair wound	A permanently debilitating wound, especially loss of limbs or wounds which would cause paralysis
Willie Peter	White phosphorus mortar or artillery rounds
Zapped	Killed

The World of the Play: Chronology of Conscription in the U.S. Military

Colonial Era – In times of need, each colony called to arms all adult male citizens who grouped together to form colonial militias.

Revolutionary War Era – A regular army was raised by offering enlisted men cash bonuses and a promise of free western land after the war was over. This system, however, did not attract enough men and enlistments often ran out before battles were over. General Washington was forced to call on state militias, made up of poorly trained men who often left service at inopportune times to return home and tend to their farms. Once he became president, Washington tried to remedy the inadequacy of the nation's military system by proposing legislation that men be registered for service and assigned to military units for training. Congress passed neither this nor similar such legislation later proposed by Presidents Adams, Jefferson, or Madison.

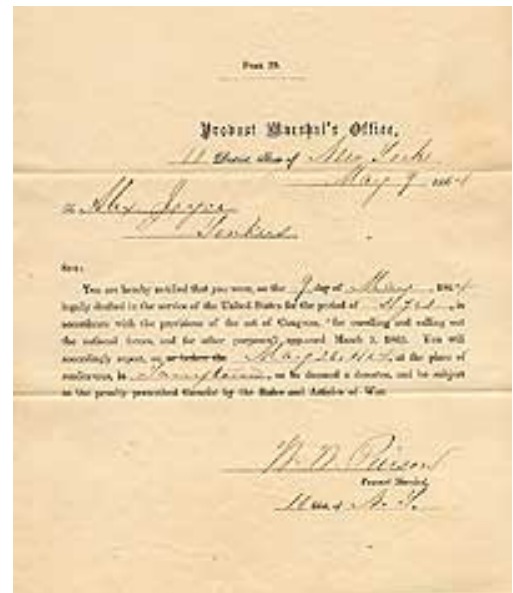
War of 1812 – A regular army was authorized by Congress. Recruitment efforts included thirteen-month enlistment periods, a \$16 sign-up bonus and the promise of three months' pay along with 160 acres of land upon discharge. Despite these enticements, the army was never effectively recruited and Congress authorized President James Monroe to call up 100,000 state militia.

Mexican War – The one-year enlistment period of large numbers of American troops under General Winfield Scott expired just as he is moving into Mexico City. Military action had to wait until replacement troops arrived.

Civil War – The Confederate Army enlisted volunteer troops for one-year stints while troops for the North enlisted for periods of three or nine months. Eventually, each side turned to conscription as a means of keeping its armies in place after enlistment periods ended.

In the North – In March 1863, the Northern Army began its Civil War conscription when Congress gave President Lincoln the authority to require draft registration by all able-bodied men between the ages of twenty and forty-five, regardless of their marital status or profession. To avoid military service, substitute soldiers were permitted to be hired and for a \$300 fee meaning that draft exemptions could be bought, proving the system to be unfair and unpopular.

In 1864, the Northern draft was amended to allow buyouts by conscientious objectors only.



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In the South – The Confederacy passed their conscription law in April 1862. Three years of military service was required from all white men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, except those legally exempted. Exemptions were numerous, leading to widespread non-compliance of the draft; substitutes were allowed at any set price. Poor morale and insufficient numbers of troops resulted. Later, the age limit for draftees was amended to include men between seventeen and fifty, and in 1865, the Confederate Army began to conscript slaves.

1898 (Spanish-American War) – Congress declared that all males between eighteen and forty-five are subject to military duty.

May 1917 – Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which established civilian boards to register, classify, examine, and either induct and ship out or defer men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty for service in World War I. After the war's end, efforts to set up standard military training and service were defeated in Congress.



1920 – The National Defense Act established a system of voluntary recruitment.

Nov. 1940 – Congress enacted the Selective Training and Service Act. All males between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five were ordered to register for the draft and the first national lottery was held. Draftees were shipped to army induction centers in the country's first peacetime draft. Later, as World War II progressed, the draft age was lowered to eighteen and men were called to service not by lottery number but by age, with the oldest going first.

1941 – Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress gave the president power to send draftees anywhere in the world, removing the distinctions between draftees, regulars, National Guardsmen and Reservists, and creating one army made up of all.

Jan. 1947 – President Harry S. Truman recommended to Congress that the 1940 Selective Training and Service Act expire and that the level of required military forces be maintained by means of voluntary enlistments.

Mar. 1948 – In the wake of the escalating Cold War, President Truman asked that the draft be reinstated as the level of military forces fell below necessary numbers. The new Selective Service Act provided for the drafting of men between nineteen and twenty-six for twelve months of active service.

1950 – The Korean War draft, which exempted World War II veterans, called up men between the ages of eighteen-and-a-half and thirty-five for terms of duty averaging two years.

June 1951 – The Universal Military Training and Service Act was passed, requiring males between eighteen and twenty-six to register.

1952 – Congress enacted the Reserve Forces Act, compelling every man who was drafted or enlisted to an eight-year obligation to military service. After a term of active duty is completed, one was assigned to standby reserve and could be called back to active duty upon a declaration of war or national emergency.

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1965 – Opposition to the war in Vietnam led to calls for draft reform and/or the complete elimination of Selective Service. For the first time since the Civil War, anti-draft demonstrations, particularly on college campuses and at induction centers, surfaced and proliferated.

1966 – In response to anti-war sentiment, President Lyndon Johnson appointed a special study commission to recommend changes in the Selective Service structure.



1967-70 – During this period, the number of conscientious objectors recognized by Selective Service grew two-and-a-half times and thousands of young men either destroyed their draft cards or left the country to avoid the draft.

1969 – President Nixon ordered the nineteen-year-old draft: if a young man was not drafted at age nineteen, he would be exempt from future military service except in the event of war or national emergency. Deferrals were allowed for hardship cases, certain occupations, conscientious objectors, clergymen, and high school and college students. Student deferments were a loaded issue, and one year later Nixon argued in favor of ending them.

1969 – President Nixon ordered a random lottery system for selecting men to serve in the war in Vietnam, changing the previous system of drafting according to age.

1970 – In *U.S. v. Welsh*, the Supreme Court added sincerely held ethical and moral beliefs to the definition of allowable grounds for conscientious draft objection.

1973 – The 1967 Selective Service Act, extended through an act of Congress in 1971, expired ending the authority to induct draft registrants.

1980 – The Selective Service System again became active, following the passage of legislation to reinstate draft registration without authorizing induction.

Present – At this time, the U.S. operates under an all-volunteer armed forces policy. However, all male citizens between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six are required to register for the draft and are liable for training and service until the age of thirty-five.

Just War Theory

Jus ad bellum (Latin for "right to war") is a set of criteria that are to be consulted *before* engaging in war, in order to determine whether entering into war is permissible; that is, whether it is a just war.

Just war theory is probably the most influential perspective on the ethics of war and peace. Many of the rules developed by the just war tradition have since been codified into contemporary international laws governing armed conflict, such as The United Nations Charter and The Hague and Geneva Conventions. The tradition has thus been doubly influential, dominating both moral and legal discourse surrounding war.

2.1 *Jus ad bellum*

The rules of *jus ad bellum* are addressed, first and foremost, to heads of state. Since political leaders are the ones who inaugurate wars, they are to be held accountable to *jus ad bellum* principles. If they fail in that responsibility, then they commit war crimes.

- 1. Just cause.** This is clearly the most important rule; it sets the tone for everything which follows. A state may launch a war only for the right reason. The just causes most frequently mentioned include: self-defense from external attack; the defense of others from such; the protection of innocents from brutal, aggressive regimes; and punishment for a grievous wrongdoing which remains uncorrected. Francisco de Vitoria (1486-1546, a scholar who expanded on the original work of Saint Thomas Aquinas whose essay *Summa Theologicae* in the 13th century presented the general outline of what became the traditional just war theory) suggested that all the just causes be subsumed under the one category of "a wrong received."
- 2. Right Intention.** A state must intend to fight the war only for the sake of its just cause. Having the right reason for launching a war is not enough: the actual motivation behind the resort to war must also be morally appropriate. Ulterior motives, such as a power or land grab, or irrational motives, such as revenge or ethnic hatred, are ruled out. The only right intention allowed is to see the just cause for resorting to war secured and consolidated. If another intention crowds in, moral corruption sets in. International law does not include this rule, probably because of the evidentiary difficulties involved in determining a state's intent.
- 3. Proper authority and public declaration.** A state may go to war only if the decision has been made by the appropriate authorities, according to the proper process, and made public, notably to its own citizens and to the enemy state(s). The "appropriate authority" is usually specified in that country's constitution. States failing the requirements of minimal justice lack the legitimacy to go to war.
- 4. Last Resort.** A state may resort to war only if it has exhausted all plausibly peaceful alternatives to resolving the conflict in question, in particular diplomatic negotiation. One wants to make sure something as momentous and serious as war is declared only when it seems the last practical and reasonable shot at effectively resisting aggression.
- 5. Probability of Success.** A state may not resort to war if it can foresee that doing so will have no measurable impact on the situation. The aim here is to block mass violence which is going to be futile. International law does not include this requirement, as it is seen as biased against small, weaker states.

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- 6. Proportionality.** A state must, prior to initiating a war, weigh the *universal* goods expected to result from it, such as securing the just cause, against the *universal* evils expected to result, notably casualties. Only if the benefits are proportional to, or “worth,” the costs may the war action proceed. (The universal must be stressed since, often in war states, nations only tally *their own* expected benefits and costs, radically discounting those accruing to the enemy and to any innocent third parties.)

2.2 *Jus in bello*

Jus in bello refers to justice in war, to right conduct in the midst of battle. Responsibility for state adherence falls primarily on the shoulders of those military commanders, officers, and soldiers who formulate and execute the war policy of a particular state.

- 1. Obey all international laws on weapons prohibition.** Chemical and biological weapons, in particular, are forbidden by many treaties. Nuclear weapons aren't so clearly prohibited but it seems fair to say a huge taboo attached to such weapons and any use of them would be greeted with incredible hostility by the international community.
- 2. Discrimination and Non-Combatant Immunity.** Soldiers are only entitled to use their (non-prohibited) weapons to target those who are, “engaged in harm.” Thus, when they take aim, soldiers must discriminate between the civilian population, which is morally immune from direct and intentional attack, and those legitimate military, political, and industrial targets involved in rights-violating harm. While some *collateral* civilian casualties are excusable, it is wrong to take deliberate aim at civilian targets. An example would be saturation bombing of residential areas.
- 3. Proportionality.** Soldiers may only use force proportional to the end they seek. They must restrain their force to that amount appropriate to achieving their aim or target. Weapons of mass destruction, for example, are usually seen as being out of proportion to legitimate military ends.
- 4. Benevolent quarantine for prisoners of war (POWs).** If enemy soldiers surrender and become captives, they cease being lethal threats to basic rights. They are no longer “engaged in harm.” Thus, it is wrong to target them with death, starvation, rape, torture, medical experimentation, and so on. They are to be provided, as The Geneva Conventions spell out, with benevolent – not malevolent – quarantine away from battle zones and until the war ends, when they should be exchanged for one's own POWs. Do terrorists deserve such protection too? Great controversy surrounds the detainment and aggressive questioning of terrorist suspects held by the U.S. at jails in Cuba, Iraq, and Pakistan in the name of the war on terror.
- 5. No means *Mala in Se*.** Soldiers may not use weapons or methods which are “evil in themselves.” These include: mass rape campaigns; genocide or ethnic cleansing; using poison or treachery (like disguising soldiers to look like the Red Cross); forcing captured soldiers to fight against their own side; and using weapons whose effects cannot be controlled, like biological agents.
- 6. No reprisals.** A reprisal is when country A violates *jus in bello* in war with country B. Country B then retaliates with its own violation of *jus in bello*, seeking to chasten A into obeying the rules. There are strong moral and evidentiary reasons to believe that reprisals don't work, and they instead serve to escalate death and make the destruction of war increasingly indiscriminate. Winning well is the best revenge.

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2.3 *Jus post bellum*

Jus post bellum refers to justice during the third and final stage of war: that of termination.

1. **Proportionality and Publicity.** The peace settlement should be measured and reasonable, as well as publicly proclaimed. To make a settlement serve as an instrument of revenge is to make a volatile bed one may be forced to sleep in later. In general, this rules out insistence on unconditional surrender.
2. **Rights Vindication.** The settlement should secure those basic rights whose violation triggered the justified war. The relevant rights include human rights to life and liberty and community entitlements to territory and sovereignty. This is the main substantive goal of any decent settlement, ensuring that the war will actually have an improving effect. Respect for rights, after all, is a foundation of civilization, whether national or international. Vindicating rights, not vindictive revenge, is the order of the day.
3. **Discrimination.** Distinction needs to be made between the leaders, the soldiers, and the civilians in the defeated country one is negotiating with. Civilians are entitled to reasonable immunity from punitive post-war measures. This rules out sweeping socio-economic sanctions as part of post-war punishment.
4. **Punishment #1.** When the defeated country has been a blatant, rights-violating aggressor, proportionate punishment must be meted out. The leaders of the regime, in particular, should face fair and public international trials for war crimes.
5. **Punishment #2.** Soldiers also commit war crimes. Justice after war requires that such soldiers, *from all sides to the conflict*, likewise be held accountable to investigation and possible trial.
6. **Compensation.** Financial restitution may be mandated, subject to both proportionality and discrimination. A post-war poll tax on civilians is generally impermissible, and there needs to be enough resources left so that the defeated country can begin its own reconstruction. To beggar thy neighbor is to pick future fights.
7. **Rehabilitation.** The post-war environment provides a promising opportunity to reform decrepit institutions in an aggressor regime. Such reforms are permissible but they must be proportional to the degree of depravity in the regime. They may involve: demilitarization and disarmament; police and judicial re-training; human rights education; and even deep structural transformation towards a minimally just society governed by a legitimate regime. This is, obviously, the most controversial aspect of *jus post bellum*.

Activities



Writing Exercises

This series of exercises is set up for you to do as many of the activities as time allows.

- As a class, make a list of the items that the soldiers in the story carried then answer the following questions:
 - Which, if any, of the items is specific to the time period of the Vietnam War?
 - Which items are timeless?
 - Why might the author choose to give each man specific items?
 - What do the items tell us about each soldier's duties and personality?
 - What do we learn about their hopes and desires?
- Have students write a three-paragraph essay about an object they carry now or one from their childhood. The essay should describe the object in detail, the mood it evokes, and reasons for its importance.
- Ask students to imagine that they are going to war and can only take three personal items. Have them write a short essay describing each item and the reason why they want to carry it.
- Go back to the list of the things the soldiers carried. Have the students consider the symbolic weight of these various things. Discuss positive and negative weights; the more important a thing is, the more weight it has and each item's weight is different for each person. As a class, spend some time discussing the things that the students carry every day in their backpacks, pockets, cars, purses, and wallets. What is the symbolic weight of the objects?

Discuss the distinction between concrete and abstract items. Think also about the intangible things they carry – guilt, stress, love, family, memories, etc. and spend some time thinking about how something intangible can have weight both figuratively and literally.

Have your students write a rough draft of a letter about one of their personal items that they are the most interested in writing about. The letter should be addressed to the person who is most connected to that item.

The letter must contain:

- a vivid description of the thing they carry
- an idea of the weight of the thing you carry
- a sense of whether this is a positive pleasure or a negative burden
- an explanation of why you carry this thing
- a story involving the thing you carry, and a clear sense of whom the letter is written to and why they are connected to the item.

Classroom Discussion: Viewpoints of the War

1. Hold a 10-15-minute class discussion to review students' basic knowledge of the Vietnam War.

Use the following questions as guidelines:

- Who fought against whom in the Vietnam War?
- Why did the United States become involved in Vietnam, and why did it increase its involvement into the 1970's?
- What specific events marked the beginning of the United States' active military campaign against North Vietnam? (e.g. the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution)
- What was the initial public sentiment in the United States regarding US involvement in Vietnam?
- What was President Johnson's attitude toward US involvement in Vietnam? What was President Nixon's attitude toward the war?
- How did the war change under President Nixon's administration?

Was the Vietnam War overwhelmingly popular among American civilians? Why or why not?

2. Ask students to describe the things they know, or believe they know, about the ways in which the American public reacted to the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s. What are their impressions of this era? What images have they seen of the activities that went on within the United States during this time?

Inform students that, while they have probably seen many media images of antiwar protests, not everyone was opposed to the war. Ask students if they know of any present-day leaders who were college students during the 1960s and did not participate in such demonstrations. It is important for students to realize that, while antiwar sentiments were strong, some young people agreed with the policies of the United States government or felt ambivalent about the war and its protestors.

3. Have your students, either individually or in pairs, go the following websites to read about some of the reasons that Americans in the 1960s may have favored or opposed the Vietnam War. You may print these documents and have students complete this part of the lesson as homework.

Nixon's Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam, November 3, 1969

"The Silent Majority" Speech

<http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/forkids/speechesforkids/silentmajority.php>

Vietnam War Veteran John Kerry's Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 22, 1971

http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/VVAW_Kerry_Senate.html

Continued >>

As they go through these two documents, ask students to take notes to address the questions on the classroom activity sheet. Students will be answering the following questions on their activity sheets:

- a. What did Nixon believe would be the consequences of immediate U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam?
- b. What specific events did Nixon cite to support his arguments against “precipitate troop withdrawal”?
- c. What is meant by “Silent Majority”?
- d. What did John Kerry believe about the alleged threat that North Vietnam posed to the United States?
- e. What did John Kerry believe were the results of Nixon’s policies as spelled out in the 1969 “Silent Majority” speech?

What did Nixon mean by the “Vietnamization,” and what did Kerry think of this policy?

4. Next, divide the class into pairs, if you have not already done so. Ask each pair of students to pretend they are good friends who are 18-year-old U.S. citizens in 1971. They are both well-educated and aware of major news events (including important political speeches), and they have each given a good deal of thought to how the United States government should handle the Vietnam situation. They have also both received draft notifications and have been called to active duty in Vietnam. One student should pretend that he or she is in favor of the war, and the other should be opposed to the war. Have them work together to write a conversation they might have when discussing their reactions to being drafted. The dialogues should address 1) What each person thinks about the war and 2) How each person justifies his or her opinion about the war. Each side must provide specific examples and rationales to support his or her claims either in favor or against U.S. participation in the war. Students should be sure to provide specific examples from the web documents they have read. For example, the war supporter should cite some of the reasons Nixon presented in his speech.

Mock Draft

1. Hand out index cards to each student. Have each student write their birthdays on their card and turn them in.
2. Tell the students that it is now the year (whichever year most turn 20). Use a scenario such as North Korea has developed nuclear capability. The president is calling for terrorists to be hunted down. Then, say that Congress has declared war on North Korea.
3. Announce that the military needs about 100,000 extra troops to fight. Last night, Congress authorized the president to begin inducting 19 and 20 year olds into the military by using a military draft.
4. Draw about half of the index cards. Have them stand when their card has been called off. Give each one a mailgram (see page 22). Let them read the mailgram. Highlight the following points:
 - They need to report in TEN DAYS.
 - If they pass the physical, they will go to boot camp that day.
 - They have already been classified as 1-A “unrestricted military service.
5. Discuss the options that they have (see page 21). Place posters around the room that say: “Flee the country,” “Apply for exemptions,” “Go to boot camp,” and “Conscientious objection.” Have each draftee vote with their feet by standing in front of the poster with the option they would choose.
6. The non-draftees will prepare to ask each group questions about why they chose what they chose. Examples to get them started are:
 - A. **Flee the country** – *Do you realize you will never see your family again and will not be able to enter the US again? If you are caught, are you ready to serve 5 years in prison and/or pay \$250,000 in fines?*
 - B. **Boot Camp** – *What would you do in this scenario? You are at a checkpoint and you see young girls playing; your commanding officer orders you to shoot in case they are suicide bombers.*
 - C. **Conscientious Objection** – *Do you have proof of your beliefs? What have you done to demonstrate these beliefs?*
 - D. **Apply for an exemption** – *Which exemption do you think could you apply for and why?*

Continued >>

Mock Draft – continued

If you are drafted these are your options:

Reclassifications to avoid combat situations

1. **Conscientious Objection (1-0)** – A sincere objection to participation in war in any form because of deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs.
2. **Noncombatant Status (1-A-0)** – Will serve in the military, but not bear arms.

Deferments or Exemptions from military service

1. **Hardship or Dependency** – A family member requires a draftee's presence for physical care or for income. Applicant must prove beyond doubt there is nobody else to take care of said family member.
2. **Medical** – Applicant must prove that his/her medical condition makes it impossible to serve.
3. **Surviving Son or Daughter** – Applicant's father, mother, sister or brother was a member of the US military and either was killed in action, died in the line of duty, was captured or determined to be missing in action, or is 100% disabled.
4. **Parenthood** – Not a guaranteed exemption, unless one can prove that the draftee is the **ONLY** person who can take care of the child.
5. **Ministerial Student** – If you are studying to be a minister in a recognized church, and you are already enrolled, you may be exempted from service.
 - ➔ **College Student** – *is NOT an exemption.* Students may finish their semester, and then must report to duty. Seniors in high school will be allowed to finish the year, and then must report.

Other Options if you don't want to see combat

1. **Flee the Country** – If somebody leaves the country, it is a felony to then return home to the States.
2. **Refuse to Report/Go to Jail** – If you are put to five years in prison, \$250,000 in fines.

Or...

Report to Boot Camp and Serve – Depending on the length and extent of the conflict, once you have completed your training at boot camp you will be sent to or near the combat zone.

Continued >>

MAILGRAM

THIS IS YOUR ORDER TO REPORT FOR AND SUBMIT TO EXAMINATION AND INDUCTION INTO THE ARMED FORCES FOR THE UNITED STATES. BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT, YOU HAVE BEEN CLASSIFIED 1-A, AND ARE DIRECTED TO REPORT, WITH THIS ORDER, TO THE MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING STATION (MEPS) LOCATION IN TEN DAYS.

IF YOU ARE FOUND QUALIFIED FOR MILITARY SERVICE, YOU WILL BE INDUCTED IMMEDIATELY INTO THE ARMED FORCES AND GO DIRECTLY TO TRAINING. WHEN YOU ARE INDUCTED, YOU WILL BE RECLASSIFIED AS 1-C (MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES).

IF YOU FAIL TO OBEY THIS ORDER, YOU MAY BE REPORTED AS A SUSPECTED VIOLATOR OF THE MILITARY SELECTIVE SERVICE ACT AND, IF CONVICTED, SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT FOR UP TO FIVE YEARS, A FINE OF UP TO \$250,000 OR BOTH.

YOU MAY FILE A CLAIM FOR POSTPONEMENT OR RECLASSIFICATION AT ANY TIME PRIOR TO THE DATE YOU ARE SCHEDULED TO REPORT FOR INDUCTION. INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM ANY SELECTIVE SERVICE AREA OFFICE.

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT:

DIRECTOR OF SELECTIVE SERVICE.

For Further Research and Suggested Reading

Books

Bain, Chester, Arthur, Vietnam, **The Roots of Conflict**. New York: Prentice, 1967.
A general history of the Vietnam War.

Bain, David, Aftershocks, **A Tale of Two Victims**. Metheum: 1980.
Discusses the psychological and emotional effects of the Vietnam War on veterans.

Herr, Michael, **Dispatches**. New York: Avon Books, 1978.
A frank, personal account of the Vietnam War as seen through the eyes of a journalist.

Higgins, Marguerite, **Our Vietnam Nightmare**. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
Traces the American involvement in the Vietnam War through 1965.

Kendrick, Alexander, **The Wound Within – America in the Vietnam Years**. Little Brown, 1974.
Discusses the turmoil going on in the United States during the Vietnam War years.

Kovic, Ron, **Born on the Fourth of July**. New York: Crown Publishers, 1965.
An account of the role of the Green Berets during the Vietnam War.

Podherz, Norman, **Why We Were In Vietnam**. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.
Discussion on the reasons for United States involvement in the Vietnam War

Smith, Julian, **Looking Away, Hollywood and Vietnam**. New York: Scribners, 1975.
A look at the way in which movies have depicted the Vietnam War.

Walzer, Michael, **Just and Unjust Wars**. New York: Basic Books Inc. 1977.
Covers such subjects as the moral reality of war, the theory of aggression, dilemmas of war, and the question of responsibility.

Caputo, Phil, **A Rumor of War**. New York: Ballantine Books, 1977.
An account of a young college graduate's experience in the Vietnam War as a lieutenant in the Marine Corp.

Johnson, Lyndon, **Peace Without Conquest** Public Papers of the President of the US, Volume I.
Washington D.C. Government Printing Office, 1966
President Johnson presents his defense for the American involvement in the Vietnam War.

Merklin, Lewis, **They Choose Honor**. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
Presents the arguments used for those young men who were issued conscientious objector status during the Vietnam War.

Sanders, Jacquin, **The Draft and the Vietnam War**. New York: Walker, 1966
Discusses the various options that were available to young men of draftable age during the Vietnam War.

Continued >>

Santoli, Al, **Everything We Had**. New York: Random House, 1981.

An oral history of 33 Vietnam veterans telling of the experiences they had and the feelings they encountered

Movies

A short list of movies based on the Vietnam War

Apocalypse Now

An American military assassin journeys up river into Cambodia on an assignment to find and kill an American colonel who was gone beyond the limits of the military's code of warfare. Considered by many to be the quintessential anti-war movie. Based on Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness.

Born on the Fourth of July

Powerful and realistic story of Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, who joined the Marines as a gung-ho recruit and came back home paralyzed. He then endured an ordeal of physical and mental rehabilitation before becoming an antiwar activist.

Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam

This classic HBO documentary features reenactments of actual letters written by soldiers during the Vietnam War.

The Deer Hunter

Three patriotic steel workers go to Vietnam and find that the experience alters their sense of self and community. One of the first and still controversial major films about the war.

The Fog of War

Documentary about Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, who subsequently became president of the World Bank. The documentary combines an interview with McNamara, which discusses some of the tragedies and glories of the 20th Century with archival footage, documents, and an original score by Phillip Glass.

Hearts and Minds

This documentary recounts the history and attitudes of the opposing sides of the Vietnam War using archival news footage as well as their own film and interviews.

The Long Road Home: Vietnam Revisited (1969)

The story, photographed and written by a young Army photographer in 1969, reveals the beauty of South Vietnam and captures the customs of its people.

Platoon

A gritty and emotional look at the lives of a platoon of American soldiers as they patrol, fight, and die in the jungles of Vietnam as seen through the perspective of a young recruit.

Vietnam – A Television History

A six-year project from conception to completion, this eleven-hour DVD collection carefully analyzes the costs and consequences of this controversial but intriguing war. From the first episode to the last, it provides a detailed visual and oral account of the war that changed a generation and continues to color American thinking on many military and foreign policy issues.

Help Lines, Websites, and Resources

Make the Connection: Shared experiences and support for veterans
<http://maketheconnection.net/>

Resources for Veterans

Wounded Warrior Project

A Decade of Service. A Lifetime of Commitment.
904-718-1646 | 1-888-WWP-ALUM (997.2586)
resourcenter@woundedwarriorproject.org

Minnesota Link Vet

Customer Service for Veterans and Families
Phone: 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838) | International: 651-556-0896
TTY: 1-800-627-3529

Veteran Crisis Line

Confidential help for Veterans and their families
1-800-273-8255

Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center

3301 Seventh Avenue North, Anoka, MN 55303
651-431-5000

Minnesota VA Health Care System

One Veterans Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55417
Phone: 612-725-2000 or 612-725-2000

Mental Health Association of Minnesota

475 Cleveland Avenue N, Suite 222, St. Paul, MN 55104
Phone: 651-493-6634 or 800-862-1799