

“Forgotten”

Over thousands of years, many dynasties came and went, and many cycles of peace and war shaped the Vietnamese culture. Many ancient legends and beautiful tales are still been told by the old generations, reminding us of who we used to be and where we came from. But there is an event, despite happening less than 50 years ago, rarely talked about in Vietnam today.

Growing up, bits and pieces of Vietnam War were everywhere. National holidays on calendars celebrated the glorious victory, poems and songs in textbooks praised national heroes whose ideology led us to progress, and the blood red Vietnamese flag in the sky continued to remind us of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. However, despite of all the shards of Vietnam War still scattered everywhere in the society, to my generation, the Vietnam War seemed so surreal and removed. And even my parents' generation, who experienced the turmoil of war first hand and witnessed the defeat of America by the Vietnamese people, Vietnam War is rarely a topic of discussion. To the nation, the Vietnam War seemed so vital and celebrated, yet to the people, the Vietnam War felt so distant and forgotten.

Today, with a different perspective on the war, I begin to understand why some refused to talk about the war. For those who experienced the war, the war was more than just a war of win and loss; it was a war where brothers fought brothers, fathers fought sons, and Vietnamese fought Vietnamese. To the generation that lived through the war, it is a war they refuse to pass on to the next generation, and it is a war they want to forget. In their heart, there are still memories of war. But for the next generation, they want to leave behind a society where the hardship of the war is forgotten, an ethnic group undivided by the scar of the war, and a nation where all Vietnamese are one.

—*Mia, Vung Tai, Vietnam*