

Honoring Veteran Legacies Eternal Salute Program

Activity: Vietnam: The War Through Pictures

Primary Document Analysis

Developed By: Brad Vinson

Subject(s): Social Studies/History

Vietnam Veteran: Theron "TC" Dawson

Duration: 55 minutes

OVERVIEW:

Watch the interview from TC Dawson as he recalls his participation as a radar photographer in Vietnam. Use the PowerPoint presentation to introduce war photographer Dickey Chapelle, then have students analyze her photography, answer the corresponding questions, and finish up with a writing assignment focused on perspectives to assess understanding.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Vietnam has long been considered a controversial war, with the primary story always centered on the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union-backed Communist North Vietnamese. Oftentimes, the individual stories of the men who fought and the civilian communities that were affected are overlooked as side notes. To better learn the lessons of this war and its legacy, we can attempt to analyze these personal experiences to reflect on this period in order to better understand the Vietnam War through the lens of their lives.

OBJECTIVE:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain how the war affected multiple groups by analyzing primary sources to garner understanding.



STANDARDS:

CCRA-R.7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCRA-W.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

MATERIALS AND QUESTIONS:











1. Dickey Chapelle's photos of American soldiers tell an intimate story of their experiences during the war. Which of the six photographs stand out to you the most. Why?
2. Name 3-5 emotions that you see the soldiers experiencing in these photos.
3. How do these emotions shown in these photos help you better understand the war?



4. This powerful photo taken by Dickey allows us to see into the mind of an American soldier, and hear his thoughts about the war in which he was engaged. Oftentimes war is portrayed as a glorious event full of heroes and bravery, how does this image push back against this idea and attempt to show us the reality of war?

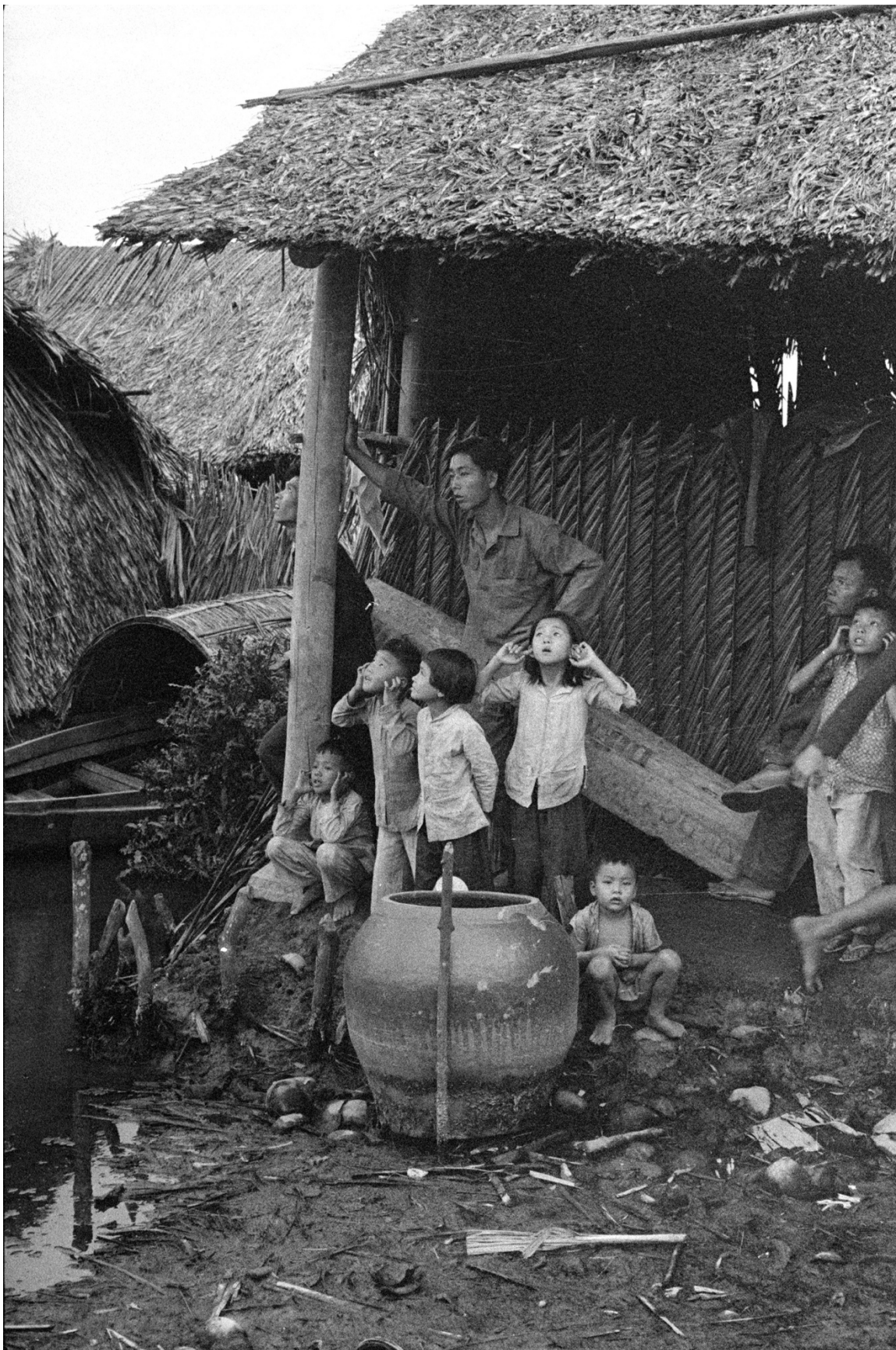








5. Dickey did an amazing job of documenting how the lives of the Vietnamese civilians were affected by the war. Name three different ways American soldiers interacted with the Vietnamese civilians in the photographs.



6. Describe 3 things you noticed after analyzing this photograph of these Vietnamese civilians.



7. Dickey captured these photos of the South Vietnamese soldiers who were trained and fought alongside the Americans against the Communist North Vietnamese Army. What do these photos tell you about this aspect of the war?



Questions:

8. Dickey Chapelle was a woman operating in a man's world during her time as a photojournalist in WWII and Vietnam. Although women's roles were limited during these time periods, Dickey thrived at her job, and was accepted by the male soldiers that surrounded her. Name at least 3 personality traits you believe she must have had to be so successful as a war photojournalist.
9. If you could have a 5-minute conversation with Dickey, what 2 questions would you like to ask her?

10. Do you think photojournalists play an important role during wartime?
Why or why not?

Formative Assessment:

Imagine you are either an American soldier, a Vietnamese civilian, or a photojournalist during the Vietnam War. Write a letter to a loved one detailing your life during this period. Include your experiences, your emotions, and your hopes/outlook for the future.