

A Battle I Cannot Forget

Tai Tran

No other country in the world has had as much war as my country, Vietnam. For example, there were 10 centuries of Chinese rule. Then there were 80 years when Vietnam was a colony of the French empire. But that wasn't all. There was also a fierce war between South and North Vietnam.

I was a soldier in the South Vietnamese army. There is one battle I cannot cross out of my mind.

The battle was the most devastating thing I have ever seen in my life.

families – to enjoy each other and to worship their ancestors. But the North Vietnamese picked this day to attack all the cities of South Vietnam.

When this particular battle started, our unit did not have enough soldiers. The enemy easily ran over us. We had one person for every five of them. The battle was the most devastating thing I have ever seen in my life. Most of the houses were burned, and there were too many dead bodies of soldiers, enemies, and citizens.

It happened in 1969. That was a day of new year, an important day for Asians. Everyone thought they would have three days off to be with their

Tragically, my leader's home was hit by a rocket. It blew up his wife and newborn baby. Miserably, the remains of his wife and his baby were loaded in a small bag. His home had nothing except the blood of his loved ones.

Oh, the war terribly affected all of us. It was too much for humans. There was such huge damage to material and to people. It took a long time to revive. To avoid war, all people need a peaceful spirit so that we can develop a peaceful world.

When the Communists won the war, we had no way to live. I wanted to leave but it took many years. In 1996, my sister sponsored my family to come live in the

U.S. I worked at Whirlpool Corporation for nine years before I was laid off. Before that, I worked at Tyson's Food, a poultry processing plant. Now I am planning to retire.

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Questions For Discussion

Read the articles on this page and the previous page and use the following questions as the basis for discussion:

How is the trauma of war different when the battles are in your own country?

Who, besides soldiers, will have PTSD?

What about those who don't directly experience war? Are they affected by PTSD?

Look on pp. 24 and 33 for more background and facts on the Vietnam War. Look on pp. 25-26 for more information on PTSD.