



MINNESOTA REMEMBERS  
**VIETNAM**

AMERICA'S SECRET WAR  
EDUCATOR TOOLKIT

**Viewing Guide:**  
**Minnesota Remembers Vietnam: America's Secret War**

*In the shadows of the Vietnam War, the CIA conducted a secret war in Laos that relied on Hmong soldiers to prevent the threat of communism from spreading deeper into Southeast Asia. Tens of thousands died, both in the fight and in the escape. America's Secret War explores the untold, turbulent history. [WATCH](#)*



Images from *America's Secret War*

1. How is Lee Pao Xiong's search for parachutes to play with ironic?
2. Where is the Secret War military base?
3. According to Ghanghis Khang, who was General Vang Pao? How do Hmong people view him?
4. Besides Hmong, what other ethnic minority groups were involved in the Secret War?
5. Why was it called the Secret War?



6. According to Lee Pao Xiong, what is the Domino Theory? How does the Domino Theory relate to President Eisenhower's concern about Laos?
7. How did the CIA avoid breaking the Geneva Accord to keep Laos neutral but still involve Laos in the war effort?
8. Hmong boys and men were recruited to serve in the war. According to Dr. Mai Na Lee, why did the Hmong not want to "pay the price"?
9. Xai Nou Vang describes an indelible story of eight Hmong boy soldiers killed by enemy grenade. Given the value Hmong place on family and clan, what is the significance of these boys' deaths?
10. Reflect on Samao Xiong's emotional telling of sending bodies of dead soldiers to their families. Connect your reflection to Xai Nou Vang's earlier comments about becoming a child soldier to avoid being poor and that Hmong "didn't know why they were in this war."
11. While Hmong men were recruited to fight in the war, how did the women cope and survive at home? (Consider Dr. Mai Na Lee's mother's story in your answer.)
12. How does Choua Thao's description of tending to General Vang Pao's injured finger contrast with Ganhis Khang's earlier description of the general? Explain the effect of this contrast in how General Vang Pao is portrayed by different groups of people.
13. Although the Vietnam War officially ended with the Paris and Vientiane Peace Accords, it did not end for the Hmong. What was the Hmong's "next war"?
14. According to the communists declaration, what was the fate of the Hmong because they worked for the United States?
15. For the majority of Hmong who remained in Laos, rather than flee the country, what were their two options for survival?



16. While Hmong men hid in the jungles, Hmong women surrendered to the communists. Describe the Her family's experience living with them.
17. Describe the various threats the Hmong faced in seeking safety across the Mekong River. In your answer, refer to Dr. Mai Na Lee's family.
18. Describe living conditions in the Ban Vinai refugee camp. Provide specific examples.
19. What was the impact of coming to America for Hmong men? Why can't the men explain their struggles with mental health?
20. Describe the different war wounds Hmong men and soldiers still endure. In your answer, reference Lee Pao Xiong's, Samao Xiong's, and Nhiacha Vang's stories.
21. Although Hmong women's stories are not a major focus in the film, speculate war wounds they may still endure.
22. Despite the Hmong's service and sacrifice, Hmong veterans are not considered United States veterans and do not receive veterans benefits. What do you think of this fact?
23. What is the goal of the SGU Veterans and Families of the USA, Inc.?
24. According to the featured speakers in the film, the US CIA Secret War is no longer secret.
25. What are some consequences of the Hmong involvement being secret?
26. What remains unknown, and what questions do you have about the US Secret War?



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This viewing guide was prepared by Chong Thao, a high school English Language Arts teacher for Saint Paul Public Schools, in partnership with TPT and the Minnesota Humanities Center.

To access this guide and additional resources to support teaching about America's Secret War, visit [mnvietnam.org/educator-resources/](http://mnvietnam.org/educator-resources/)

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