

July 14, 2002

Dear History of Vietnam Student,

By now, your summer is well under way, and I hope you are enjoying the leisure and time away from school. But at the same time, I write to you to acquaint you with a reading which will provide an introduction to your course in History of Vietnam.

You are to read over the remainder of the summer the book, The Things They Carried by Tim B' Brian, available in most bookstores and online. The ISBN number is 0-7679-0289-0. The book cost \$14.00 but can be bought on www.amazon.com for \$11.16.

You must have the book read for the first day of school in September. You must, for the first day, also have a notebook (preferably a spiral notebook with perforations so pages can be removed cleanly) specifically for the History of Vietnam course. You must take notes on the book and write one good ('good means not to ask about something obvious) question from each chapter.

In your questions select passages and examples from the book that will explain or demonstrate the following:

Role of Women:	Ted Lavender:
Use of Humor	Tim O'Brien
Place of Drugs:	Henry Dobbins:
Role of Playfulness:	Mitch Sanders:
Value of Courage:	Dave Jenson
Function of Story Telling:	Curt lemon
Place of mental Illness:	Norman Bowker;
Feelings of Peace:	Rat Kiley
Dealing with Death	Mary Anne

What was The Things They Carried?

Despite the regular renewed interest in the Vietnam War, Americans still have a difficult time understanding the war and what it did to the average American. Most citizens grew cynical and wary of the whole realm of the Vietnam War, the politics, and changes it made to average Americans, a fact Tim O' Brian's Things They Carried ably demonstrates.

For the first day of classes in September you must prepare for a discussion of the book. You **MUST** have a notebook with a set of notes as well as your written questions about the book. There is no formal writing and research assignment. Any writing you do about themes from The Things They Carried will develop out of our classroom discussions.

Enjoy the rest of your summer,

Gerald A Miller Jr.