



TEACHER GUIDE: *In The Shadow of The Blade* Learning Activity:

The Stories Behind The Names

As *In The Shadow of the Blade* illustrates, behind each name on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (“The Wall”) is the story of a person who left friends and loved ones behind. This learning activity encourages students to connect with—and perhaps help preserve—those stories in a way that will have lifelong meaning for them and others.

1. Students select the name of an American killed in Vietnam, either *through In the Shadow of the Blade*, through personal knowledge, or through Internet listings (www.virtualwall.org) or www.thevirtualwall.org.
2. Students research information about the individual, including his or her branch of service, unit, dates of service, military occupational specialty (“job”), family, city, cause of death, and another information that brings the veteran “to life.” Factual information related to the war (places, battles, roles) should be included.
3. Students create a history of the person, ideally including written and graphic components. Students should also be encouraged to create a personal tribute. This project is ideally presented in a multi-media slide show, but can also be an opportunity for students to use their artistic skills in other media.
4. The final product is presented to the class and, if appropriate, to the Virtual Wall, or to the family. Students should be advised that, should they have the opportunity to visit the Vietnam

Veterans Memorial, they can leave their tributes, which are collected nightly and stored by the National Archives.

Note: This is a great opportunity for young people to use their individual talents. Those who can write poetry, compose songs, paint, draw, etc. should be encouraged to use their talents in this project.