

The Things They Carried

Vocabulary

“The Things They Carried”

elusive – difficult to express
dictated – commanded
intransitive – not taking a direct object
insecticide – a substance used for killing insects
insignia – a badge Identifying military rank
volition – the power of using one’s will
lingo – vocabulary used by a particular group of people
mortification – extreme embarrassment or shame
negligence – failure to take proper care in doing a task
impose – to force something to be accepted by another

“On the Rainy River”

discredit – harm the good reputation of someone or something
conviction – firmly held belief
maneuver – move skillfully or carefully
isolated – far away from other places or people
acquiescence – reluctant acceptance without protest
gentry – people of high social class
rupture – an instance of breaking or bursting suddenly
pretense – a false display of feelings or intentions
monotonous – lacking in variety; dull
impassive – not showing emotion

“How to Tell a True War Story”

comrade – fellow soldier
rectitude – morally correct behavior or thinking
credibility – the quality of being trusted
preceded – came before
symmetries – consistencies; pleasing proportions
illumination – lighting; glare
implacable – relentless; unstoppable
proximity – closeness
concord – harmony between people and groups
anarchy – state of disorder due to absence of authority

“Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong”

superlatives – exaggerations
casualties – people killed or Injured in war
imprecision – lacking exactness
subdued – quiet and restrained
seduced – persuaded into an action that is foolish
digressions – temporary shifts away from the subject being discussed
encompassed – included
speculation – the forming of a theory without solid evidence
inquiry – the act of asking questions to get information

transaction – an interaction or exchange between people

“Speaking of Courage”

affluent – wealthy

circumference – distance around something

recede – move back or away from a previous position

valor – courage

viaduct – a long bridge– like structure with arches that carries a road across a valley

fatigue – extreme tiredness or exhaustion

flourishes – gestures or actions intended to get attention

prosperous – financially successful

intercom – electrical device allowing two– way communication

reluctantly – unwillingly

“In the Field”

probes – devices used for exploring, testing, or obtaining something

coordinates – a group of numbers used to indicate position

municipal – relating to a city or town

tactically – carefully planned to gain an advantage

salvaged – rescued or preserved from loss or destruction

traction – grip for giving power to pull something over a surface

happenstance – coincidence

submerged – completely covered; below the surface

condolences – expressions of sympathy to family and friends on the occasion of someone’s death

munitions – military weapons and ammunition

“The Ghost Soldiers”

vivid – distinct; bright; clearly perceptible

fraternity – group of men sharing a common interest

credentials – personal achievements and qualifications

terrain – ground or landscape

levitate – to float or rise into the air

distorted – warped or garbled

comportment – proper behavior

atrocities – an extremely cruel act involving violence or injury

resonance – the ability to cause an emotional reaction

lucid – thinking clearly

“The Lives of the Dead”

chronologies – listings of events or dates in order of their occurrences

illusion – a deceptive appearance or impression

perspective – attitude or point of view regarding a subject

animated – full of life or excitement

devise – invent through creative thought

deception – lying

spectator – an observer or witness

translucent – allowing light to pass through

revive – to bring back to life

inhabit – to live in

Military Terminology and Commonly Used Expressions of the Vietnam War Era

1. SOP—standard operating procedure
2. RTO—regimental training officer, also radio technical officer
3. Psy Ops leaflets—psychological operations (warfare) leaflets
4. Toe Poppers and Bouncing Betties—land mines
5. KIA—killed in action
6. MIA—missing in action
7. CO—conscientious objector (one who for religious or other valid reasons was not required to serve)
8. Willie Peter—white phosphorous (a form of firepower that ignites easily and quickly)
9. HE—high explosive
10. LP—long-range patrol
11. booby-trapped 105 round—artillery round that proved a dud or misfired, but was set to explode if touched
12. LZ—landing zone
13. AO—area of operation
14. NCO—noncommissioned officer
15. ARVN—Armed Republic of Vietnam or Army of the Republic of Vietnam
16. EM club—enlisted men's club
17. C-130—a large aircraft, cargo plane
18. VC—Vietcong
19. AK-47—automatic assault rifle
20. M-16 and M-60—automatic rifle and machine gun (use the same size shells)
21. MP—military police
22. CID—intelligence people
23. Claymore—a mine
24. NVA buildup—North Vietnamese buildup for assault
25. LZ (Gator)—landing zone (each had a code name for the location)