**Cambridge English B for the IB Diploma: Teacher resource**

**Audio scripts**

**Audio track 4**

**Journalist:**

Forty years ago today was the Fall of Saigon. The last of those who fought in the Vietnam War were airlifted from the roof of the American Embassy in Saigon, now known as Ho Chi Minh City. Those famous images have been etched into the minds of Americans for decades. On today’s episode of ‘This Day in History’, we will hear the story of Tom Carter, who recently returned to Vietnam with his son, to remember and reflect on his service there.

**Tom:**

I met my son at the Hanoi airport on a Tuesday morning. We had flown half way around the world, from different sides of the world to meet there. We were equally jet lagged, but we didn’t care. And never mind that it was ten in the morning, we needed a drink to start this adventure.

My son asked me about my involvement in the war. And, as always, I was reluctant to answer his questions. Any veteran can tell you that it’s impossible to explain the war to people who weren’t there. We were going to backpack around the country and revisit the places where it all happened, over forty years ago. In due time, I would share my stories, show him where I was stationed, talk to him about what I did.

We flew to Danang after a couple of days of sightseeing in Hanoi. I could sense that we were getting closer and closer to a place and time in history that I had buried a long time ago. I don’t know how to explain it. I almost expected to find a younger version of myself, in my Marine uniform, waiting there to pick us up at the airport. I had heard that the city had changed drastically, but perhaps it hadn’t. Maybe it would be just as I remembered it. But I soon discovered that it wasn’t. It was very different. Tall buildings, motorcycles, bustling shops and noodle bars now peppered the streets.

We hired a driver on the next day to take us to Chu Lai. I was sure I could find the remnants of the military base where I was stationed. Asking around for information was easy. On the streets people were friendly and kind. It was obvious to the locals why I was there. I stuck out a head taller than them, with my white hair and pale skin. They must have known I was a Vietnam vet. I imagine they see more of us vets returning to Vietnam.

The locals pointed us toward the base and waved and smiled. And they didn’t seem to care that I had fought in the war. Their battle wasn’t with me, after all, but with Nixon and America’s Military-Industrial Complex. Strangely, they made me feel at home.

I remembered how they called us ‘G.I. numba one’ if they liked us. And if they didn’t like us they would call us ‘G.I. numba ten’. Their sense of humor hadn’t wavered after all these years.

When we found the base, overgrown with jungle and rusted out, we found the row of hangars where I worked as a clerk. A part of me had always thought that this whole place never really existed; that being stationed here in sixty-eight and sixty-nine had been a strange dream. But it wasn’t. I couldn’t deny it any more. I had lost an innocent part of myself here. And I wasn’t going to find it again. But maybe I could make peace with what had happened here.

As we walked around the abandoned base, I told my son: “I was not a war hero. None of us were.” The problem was, we didn’t know what we were fighting for. I had done things that I wasn’t proud of. I never killed anyone directly, but I was part of a killing machine. My unit dropped tons of Agent Orange on the jungle of that country. I couldn’t help but feel partly responsible for the countless Vietnamese children who were born with birth defects.