

ARLINGTON WEST

An Educational Film By
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A Curriculum Guide

By Ed Sugden, Educator

Terms List
Questionnaires

A Curriculum Guide

ARLINGTON WEST

105 heartfelt interviews with active U.S. Military traveling to and from War zones, grieving Military Families, Veterans, and Children

(74 minute DVD with 10-minute Chapters for Educators)

- I. A Segment-by-Segment Summary of the film, with suggested questions for students
- II. 'Essential Questions' to guide students while they view the film
- III. Vocabulary-Building activities
- IV. Note-Taking strategies to guide students as they record info from the film
- V. Student-Centered Activities to foster interaction and discussion
- VI. List of Terms used in the film (to be defined)
- VII. Survey Questionnaires; a general one, and one for the Humanities



Section I: Segment-by-Segment Summary, with suggested questions for students

(Each entry is marked with the 'Start Time' for the segment in question; chapter titles refer to the 'Chapters' of the film as listed in the 'Menu' section of the DVD)

CHAPTER 1 'Veterans Set Up'

- 0:44 An excerpt from a speech by 'Gold Star Mother' Jane Bright, whose son, Sgt. Evan Ashcraft, died in Iraq. What is her message? What is her solution?
- 1:49 According to carpenter Steve Sherrill, what do we owe the soldiers?
- 2:08 Lane Anderson, a military veteran, discusses the U.S. government directive to not film caskets, funerals or body bags. Why do you think the U.S. government has this rule?
- 2:22 Chuck Nixon, also a military veteran, discusses why 'Veterans For Peace' created this memorial.
- 2:38 A young soldier discusses his reasons for joining the military, and comrades who went AWOL.

- 3:04 A war veteran discusses the lessons of the military. What does the military teach? What does 'de-programming' mean?
- 3:24 According to this Nursing Supervisor at a Veterans' Clinic, what is 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?'
- 4:00 To this Veterans For Peace volunteer and veteran, what is his goal for this memorial?
- 4:53 One soldier's complex views on the war in Iraq: He says, "You have to look at it from their point of view" vs. "we're doin' them a service"...what is this soldier saying about empathy and pride?
- 5:33 "We're nothing more than a paragraph and a line number based on our education and schooling"...what does this soldier mean by this statement?
- 6:29 How does this soldier express his pride in serving his country? He also says, "...What I like to do is just implement my orders that are given from my superiors." Are there times when soldiers should be expected to do more than this?
- 6:56 A female veteran of the Persian Gulf War in 1990, whose duty included ferrying dead and wounded soldiers home...what is she talking about when she refers to '1984?' What do you know about the 'Patriot Act?' (mentioned by this veteran and the one previous)
- 7:43 This young man has some intriguing ideas for increasing world peace. How might these ideas lead to more peace?
- 8:24 A soldier's testimony...what is he fighting for? What does he not want to fight for?
- 9:20 This young woman cites a common reason for joining the military. Is seeking money for higher education a viable reason for joining the military?

CHAPTER 2 'Big Brother'

- 10:12 Father of a Marine deployed in Iraq. What does he mean by the terms 'Big Brother' and 'Cold War?' How do these comments relate to those made by the previous female veteran of the Persian Gulf? (See 6:56)
- 10:29 Two female Marines...according to them, how do we get peace? What do they say about sacrifice? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
- 11:16 This veteran discusses the "good guys" and the "bad guys" in Iraq...why is it difficult to discern between the two? What does he mean by a '60:1' ratio? How much power do the "mothers of America" have during a war?

- 12:14 At the first anniversary of her son's death, Sgt. Evan Ashcraft...what did 'Gold Star Mother' Jane Bright block out of her memory and why?
- 12:39 What do you know about 'Gold Star Mother' Cindy Sheehan? (See glossary) Her son, Army Spc. Casey Sheehan, died in his sergeant's arms (Casey and his sergeant were best friends)...what is she saying about empathy?
- 13:38 A 'Gold Star Mother' at her son's cross.
- 13:53 'Gold Star Mother' Karen Meredith at the funeral of her only child, Lt. Ken Ballard: How does she respond to the folded flag?
- 14:29 The boots of fallen U.S. military in Iraq ('Eyes Wide Open' exhibit) visits 'Arlington West.' Why do the boots make it hallowed ground?
- 14:49 A soldier expresses support for George W. Bush's leadership...to him, what makes Bush a good leader?
- 15:03 Bill Mitchell, a 'Gold Star Father.' His son, Army Sgt. Mike Mitchell, was killed in action in Iraq...why is Mr. Mitchell disillusioned? According to this father, what is ironic about: 1) the work of contractors in Iraq? And 2) U.S. soldiers fighting against Shi'ites?
- 15:55 'Gold Star Mother' Nadia McCaffrey at her son's cross. Her only child was killed in Iraq, Sgt. Patrick McCaffrey. Why are servicemen buying their own supplies?
- 16:37 To Patrick Resta, an Army Medic, what is the war in Iraq about? What is the war *not* about? What do you know about the 'Geneva Conventions?' (See glossary)
- 17:53 This young woman discusses the omnipresence of military recruiters at her school. How often do you see recruiters at your school? How do you feel about military recruitment in schools?
- 18:05 This politician is discussing the ASVAB test (see glossary). Does your school administer this test? If so, is it portrayed as a military-sponsored test?
- 18:52 Two young men discuss military recruitment in schools...what is a 'quota,' and how does it relate to this young man's statement? To these teenagers, what is hopeful about the 'Arlington West' memorial?
- 19:27 A discussion of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)...what is the connection between NCLB and military recruitment in schools?

CHAPTER 3 'First Female Soldier'

- 20:09 A 'Gold Star' family member describes her sister's death, Army Pfc. Karina Lau. What is the difference between supporting the military vs. supporting the war?

- 20:30 A female veteran's views...what is required to join the military at age seventeen?
- 21:05 According to this man who are the 'hypocrites? Why does he use this label?
- 21:47 A 15 yr old girlfriend of Malcolm, 17 yrs old and stationed in Iraq...what solution does she pose for the problems facing the U.S. military and their families?
- 22:34 Two female veterans...what does she say about empathy? Who needs more empathy?
- 23:13 A young Marine: what is 'the ultimate sacrifice' and the 'brotherhood' of the Marines?
- 24:07 A Marine Veteran and volunteer of Veterans For Peace shares his discussions with Marine Corps generals. What does it mean to be "sold a bill of goods?"
- 24:37 According to this woman, how are soldiers prepared for military service? What does she mean when she says, "they sent somebody off to the military or off to war and a different person comes home to them?" How do you feel about cutting the budget for Veterans Hospitals in time of war?
- 25:05 A veteran discusses painful experiences in a Veterans Administration hospital
- 25:58 A Marine machine-gunner discusses un-reported casualties...He says, "We'll never leave (Iraq)"...where does this man's hopefulness come from?
- 27:06 Two young men who want to join the military, critique the U.S.'s treatment of U.S. soldiers killed in battle
- 27:40 An excerpt from President Bush's speech on the deck of the *USS Abraham Lincoln*, May 1st, 2003: What is the president's message about Operation Iraqi Liberation? Do the film's visuals, shown during this speech, tell a different story?
- 28:15 A veteran discusses tragic miscommunication with Iraqis ('stop' vs. 'hello')...according to this twin brother of a soldier killed in Iraq, why are U.S. casualties under-reported?

CHAPTER 4 'Stop-Loss Law'

- 30:09 Nooshin Razani is a 'Gold Star' family member. She discusses her brother's death, Army Medic Omead Razani, a Muslim American soldier. What do you know about the military's "Stop-Loss Program?" (See glossary)
- 30:33 This is Tim Goodrich, a veteran and co-founder of 'Iraq Veterans Against the War.' He discusses 'friendly fire'...also discusses the danger of depleted uranium released from bombs...only one Congress member has a child serving in Iraq (now there are none...State Senator Becky Lourey of Minnesota is now a

'Gold Star Mother'...her son Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Matthew Lourey, died in Iraq): what's the connection to socio-economics or class?

31:50 Parents share discussions they have had with their son, a Soldier/Medic in Iraq. When you see coverage of the war in Iraq on television, what do you see? What do you *not* see? How is the war discussed on the news?

32:16 Iraq war veterans discuss the casualties of war. What is their mood/attitude while discussing this topic?

33:14 A U.S. soldier who lost his leg in combat in Iraq...what's his mood/attitude about his injury and his life now?

34:11 A young man discusses his respect for the military. Do you think that video games desensitize young people to the reality of war?

34:55 A veteran...he discusses witnessing an innocent child's death...describe his mood/attitude as he discusses his experience. Can empathy hinder a soldier during war?

36:27 The 'Arlington West' exhibit is visited by Marine Corps trainers

37:18 Testimony by a homeless veteran...what connection does he make between soldiers and economics or 'class?' What does he say about the quality of health care for vets?

38:06 Testimony from 'Gold Star Father' Fernando Suarez, whose son, Marine Lance Cpl. Jesus Suarez Del Solar, was one of the first U.S. military killed in 'Operation Iraqi Liberation.' Mr. Suarez says: "the gov't lied to me about what happened to my son." What was their lie? According to this father, what lies are told during military recruitment at schools?

39:31 A veteran who joined before 9/11/01...why did he join?

40:26 Two Marines exchange greetings in Arabic

40:58 Two Iraqi men, oil workers...what is their hope for the children of Iraq?

CHAPTER 5 'Begging For Food'

41:40 A young veteran discusses the ongoing problem of hunger in Iraq. How responsible should the U.S. be to provide food and basic services in Iraq?

42:17 Afghanistan War Veteran Nick Przybyla discusses the psychological trauma faced by soldiers like himself. What is his opinion of the slogan, "Support Our Troops?" Do you agree or disagree with him? Explain.

- 43:17 A 'Gold Star' widow discusses the suicide of her husband, an Iraq War veteran. Should his death be considered a casualty of war? Explain.
- 44:45 Why did this veteran join the military? What connection does he make between his religious faith and his military service?
- 45:32 A fourth-generation Marine and a veteran of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, suffering from a permanently injured knee...describe this veteran's emotions as he shares his story.
- 47:07 A war veteran describes the connection between commerce and war. What is the connection?
- 47:56 A veteran of the CIA discusses the connection between "intelligence" and preparation for war. In his experience, what was the connection? What was the "Downing Street Memo?" (See glossary)
- 49:18 A father of three sons who have served in the U.S. military, one of whom was killed in Iraq...to this father, what is a 'pie in the sky?' Describe his emotions.
- 50:26 An Islamic American woman...what is her message about religion?

CHAPTER 6 'Day Is Done'

- 51:02 A young soldier honors his dead comrades
- 53:28 A Nisqually (Native American) veteran...what connection does he make between the wars in Iraq, Korea and Vietnam? What does he think about America?
- 54:06 A veteran describes the transformation of his patriotism. What transformed him?
- 54:41 A man discusses the sacrifices of non-citizens who serve in the U.S. military.
- 55:20 This is Pablo Paredes, Navy Petty Officer Third Class, one of the first U.S. military to publicly refuse to report for duty in the Middle East during the war in Iraq. What reasons does he provide for refusing to serve?
- 55:51 A disillusioned Iraq war veteran (pictured in rehab earlier in the film, see 32:47 and 33:07). Describe his disillusionment.
- 56:26 A critic of the 'Arlington West' monument. To this man, why is the monument a 'sham?'
- 57:08 Why is this veteran of war in Iraq disillusioned?
- 58:01 U.S. Army Brigadier General Janice Karpinski was a commander at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq (see glossary). She discusses the persistence of sexual harassment within the U.S. military.

58:39 This is Army Reserve Specialist Aidan Delgado, who discusses his disillusionment having served at Abu Ghraib prison.

59:45 From this military recruiter's point of view, what is the purpose of his job?

1:00:34 Why did this man want to become a member of the Selective Service board?

CHAPTER 7 'Depleted Uranium'

1:01:30 What are some of this war veteran's symptoms of physical and emotional stress after returning from war?

1:02:37 Testimony from a female veteran of Operation Iraqi Liberation...why does she distrust the military's health care? Why is she disillusioned?

1:03:24 According to this man, what is the 'back-door draft'...describe his disillusionment. What is ironic about the term 'peacekeeping' to this man?

1:04:12 This is Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia, who served a one-year prison sentence for refusing to return to Iraq as a soldier. How does he describe his experience in prison?

1:05:21 This is Marine Corps reservist Stephen Funk, another of the earliest 'Conscientious Objectors' during the war in Iraq.

1:05:45 A veteran makes connections between military service and corporate/labor issues...describe the connection

1:06:04 'Gold Star Mother' Vickie Castro discusses the death of her son, Army Spc. Jonathan Castro, in the Iraq War. How does she define her son's heroism?

1:06:51 A woman who lost her dad in the war in Viet Nam when she was 8yrs old...lost her son who was killed in Baghdad, making her a 'Gold Star Mother.' Describe her emotions.

1:08:07 Why does this veteran say, "God rest my mother, for not signing for me?" Where does his grief come from? What do you think this veteran is thinking about during the long pauses between his statements? What is his advice to young people considering military service?

1:11:21 Should this woman report for military duty? Explain.

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Section Two: 'Essential Questions' to Guide Student Discussion

Students benefit from having 'essential questions' posed to them as they watch a film of this magnitude, or engage in research/inquiry into any historical topic. Essential questions (a term championed by the Coalition of Essential Schools) encapsulate the 'big pictures' of students' study of history.

Some possible essential questions to pose to students before, during and after viewings of this film:

***Is war necessary? If so, when? If not, why not?**

***How do different people experience war?**

***Is war about actions or about feelings?**

***How should we honor those who are killed in war? What is the purpose of a war memorial?**

***How should people protest against war?**

***How can people protest against war *and* also support soldiers?**

Supplemental questions regarding enlisting into the military:

***What were the reasons given for enlisting?**

***At what age did the soldiers enlist?**

***In looking back, did the soldiers have regrets? Why or why not?**

***What might be considered good reasons or not good reasons to enlist?**

***Why do you think statistics bear out that 37% of first time enlistees are 17 and 18 year olds?"**

Also: the content standards for your grade level and state can be adjusted to create essential questions to guide learning and viewing.

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Section Three: Glossary and Vocabulary-Building Activities

Glossary of terms:

-Abu Ghraib- a city about 20 miles west of the center of Baghdad in Iraq, just north of Baghdad's international airport. Also the cite of a notorious prison where former Iraqi president Saddam Hussain held political dissidents. Since 2003, the prison, now under

the control of the U.S. military, became famous for being the location of torture and abuse by U.S. Army reservists against Iraqi prisoners.

-Anthrax vaccination- Vaccines are part of a preventive regimen before, during and after deployment. Soldiers are vaccinated against several common infectious diseases, including Anthrax, which is a bacterial disease. The Anthrax vaccination is automatically given to soldiers without adequate testing or consideration of side effects or allergic reactions. There are have deaths and severe illnesses associated with this vaccination.

-Arlington West- Arlington National Cemetery is a burial ground for soldiers killed in active duty. Arlington West is a temporary remembrance on the Santa Monica beach put up by the Veterans for Peace, in remembrance of the soldiers killed in Iraq.

-ASVAB- the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, or ASVAB, is a multiple-choice test administered by the U.S. military to determine high school students' qualifications for military service. Often administered as a "career interests" test, often not advertised as a military-sponsored exam, and often given as a mandatory test to high school students. See also: **MOS (Military Occupational Specialty)**

-AWOL- (Absent WithOut Leave) Most often known as desertion from the military after signing the military contract. Soldiers fled the country, and as many as 4,000 in the Vietnam War went to prison.

-Conscientious Objector- a person who, for religious/ethical/moral reasons, refuses to serve in the military or to participate in armed conflict.

-Depleted Uranium- the U.S. military uses depleted uranium in some armor-piercing shells and bullets and in tank armor. If depleted uranium enters your system, it can cause permanent damage to your kidneys, or lesions on your bones and liver.

-Downing Street Memo- sometimes referred to as the "smoking gun memo," it is a summary of a July 23, 2002 meeting of high-level British Labour Party officials. In it, the author reports that President Bush wanted to instigate a war against Iraq, and that "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy" of instigating this war.

-Friendly Fire- death from one's own troops. Friendly fire may have been responsible for as many as 15 percent of all American casualties during the last century.

-IED- Improvised Explosive Devices are also known as blast mines targeted to personnel or vehicles. It has been estimated that nearly half of all U.S. deaths are the result of roadside bombs.

-"in country"- a military slang term, meaning "in the country where war is being waged"

-Military Contract- A legally binding document which specifies the laws, regulations and military customs which enlistees cannot change, but which Congress can change at any time. Section C. 9B states, "laws and regulations that govern military personnel may change without notice to me. Such changes may affect my status, pay, allowances,

benefits and responsibilities as a member of the Armed Forces REGARDLESS of the provisions of this enlistment/reenlistment document.”

-Military Draft- Mandatory enlistment into the military based on age, physical and mental health. Deferments and exemptions have been granted to conscientious objectors in the past, based on moral convictions.

-MOS Military Occupational Specialty- as determined by the ASVAB test (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) the admissions and placement test for the US military. Infantry positions in the Army and Marines are engaged in direct combat, and require the lowest scores on the ASVAB.

-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD- is a psychiatric disorder that can occur if you experience or witness a traumatic event such as a killing. PTSD sufferers often relive the experience through nightmares or flashbacks. They have difficulty sleeping, feel detached or estranged. Money for school: –Montgomery GI Bill- military recruiters state that the military pays up to \$70,000 for college. The reality is that 57% of those who sign up for the GI Bill do not receive the benefits, and 23% receive only half their maximum benefit. This is because there are many strings attached to eligibility (including a nonrefundable deposit of \$1200 as stated by Mr. Suarez del Solar). Benefits received, don't pay enough to cover costs at even the most inexpensive schools.

-Cindy Sheehan, 'Gold Star Mother'- became a prominent anti-war activist after her son Casey was killed in the war in Iraq. She was on 350 front-page news stories around the world when she went to Crawford, Texas to meet with the president but was refused an audience. **Arlington West** is one of Ms. Sheehan's first appearances on film discussing her son's death.

-Stop-Loss Policy- also known as the “backdoor draft.” This U.S. military program involves the involuntary retention of troops beyond their previously-agreed-upon term of duty. The policy was created after the U.S.'s war in Viet Nam, first significantly used during the Persian Gulf War in 1990, and a common instrument of re-deployment during the 'war on terrorism' since 2001.

One possibility for using **Arlington West** as a vocabulary-building tool: students can look for evidence in the film of different emotions felt by the interviewees.

The key emotions (or values) expressed by interviewees include: empathy, pride, sacrifice, grief, disillusionment, fear, loyalty...

After discussing the meanings of these 'emotion/value words,' students could look for evidence of one or more of these emotions/values as they are expressed by interviewees in the film. Students can also look for evidence of peoples' mixed emotions when discussing war.

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Section Four: Note-Taking Strategies

How do we help students to organize their impressions of *Arlington West*? Some suggestions:

***A ‘words and thoughts’ graphic organizer:** Similar to an ‘open mind’ graphic organizer, students draw an outline of a person’s head on their paper. Students should leave space around the outside of this ‘open mind’ drawing for dialogue bubbles. Students choose one person from the film. In the dialogue bubbles, students write what their chosen character says. Inside the ‘open mind’ outline of the person’s head, students use pictures/words/statements to express what that person could be thinking and feeling.

***An emotions/evidence chart:** Students create a two-column chart. On the left side, students list key emotions felt by the interviewees. In the right column, students record notes (quotes, summaries of interviewees’ testimony) that relates to each emotion listed directly to the left.

***An ‘essential questions’ graphic organizer:** In the middle of their paper, students copy an essential question, and then draw a circle around the question. In bubbles emanating from this center circle, students record notes that help answer this question (quotes or summaries of testimony).

Or: the class could list several possible answers to the essential question *before* watching the film. Then, each ‘bubble’ is ‘headlined’ with a possible answer to the essential question, and students write notes in the bubbles corresponding to that answer to the question. Now, each ‘bubble’ features an answer to the essential question, along with some evidence from the film that supports that answer....perfect for writing a ‘body paragraph.’ Several ‘bubbles’ could be combined to create an essay that answers the essential question from different points of view.

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Section Five: Student-Centered Activities Related to *Arlington West*

We know that students learn best when they are challenged to apply their learning in interaction with other learners. Some suggested activities:

***Character dialogues:** Students could select different people shown in *Arlington West* and create a dialogue between their characters. Students, in character, could be asked to answer essential questions from their character’s point of view in various configurations: in pairs (out loud or on paper), in small group discussions, in a ‘talk show’ format where a panel of characters holds a discussion and answers questions from the ‘audience,’ in a debate format, or from a ‘hot seat’ where one student is placed in front of the class and asked questions.

Also: before viewing the film, students could look at excerpts of interviews from ***Arlington West*** to familiarize themselves with the voices of the interviewees. Alone or in groups, students could be given ‘sentence strips’ with excerpts from the film, and then answer questions from Section One of this curriculum guide. A transcript of the film can be found on the ***Arlington West*** website: www.arlingtonwestfilm.com Simply “copy and paste” excerpts from this transcript.

***Time Machine dialogues:** based on the ‘character dialogue’ model above, students could be challenged to interact, in character, with people already studied in their history class. This is a great way to make connections between various people and events studied previously, thus serving as a tool for review.

Texts that feature testimony related to war could be incorporated here. An example: *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam*, a collection of letters written by soldiers and family members during the war in Vietnam (also made into an award-winning documentary produced by HBO)

***Oral history project:** students could create questions based on their study of Arlington West and conduct interviews of soldiers, veterans and family members in their community.

***War memorial project:** students could research, compare and contrast war memorials in the U.S. and around the world.

Community film viewing and dialogue:** students could host a viewing of ***Arlington West at school, and based on their discussion of the film in class, students could co-facilitate a community discussion of the film.



Notes

A List of Terms To Be Defined

ARLINGTON WEST

Active Combat

Afghanistan (location on map)

Arlington Cemetery

Anthrax Vaccination

ASVAB Test

AWOL

Backdoor Draft

Battalion

Big Brother (George Orwell's "1984")

Body Bags

C-141's

Christian

City Council (Over 300 major US cities voted against both the war in Iraq & Patriot Act)

Cluster Bomb

Conscientious Objector

Congress (As it relates to War)

Contract (Military)

Constitution (As it relates to War)

Co-signing a Military Contract

Depleted Uranium

Draft (Military)

Downing Street Memo

E3-AWACS

Education (Money promised for College from the Military)

Friendly Fire

Flashbacks (Nightmares, Hallucinations, Waking Dreams)

Geneva Convention

GI Bill

Homeland Security

Homeless Veterans

IED, Improvised Explosive Device

In Country

Iraq (location on map)

Iraq Veterans Against the War

Jewish

KIA, Killed In Action

Korean War

Land Mine

Marine

Military Families Speak Out

Military Recruiter

Mission Accomplished

Muslim

Navy Seal

No Child Left Behind

Opt Out

Operation Iraqi Liberation

Patriot Act

Prison Incidents

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD

Prosthetics

Reservist

Rangers (Army)

Ratio 60:1

Sailor

Salary (Military)

Soldier

Self-Medicare

Side Effects

Suicide

Taps

Transfer Tubes

Video Games (military)

Veterans For Peace

Veterans Administration, VA

Viet Nam War

Wounded/Injured

Survey Questionnaire
ARLINGTON WEST

Your Age: _____

Gender: *Female* *Male*

Was the film beneficial to you? *Yes* *No* Please express your feelings:

What were the main points of the film for you?

What would you like to say to the soldiers in this film?

Has the film affected any of your views? *Yes* *No* Why?

What do you feel about the media today?

Are there subjects related to this film that you would like to know more about?

What other ways can you think of to serve your country and our shared planet?

Arts Questionnaire
ARLINGTON WEST

Your Age: _____

Gender: *Female* *Male*

Was the film beneficial to you? *Yes* *No* Please express your feelings:

What were the main points of the film for you and how could you creatively express this through Art, Dance, Poetry, Film, Music, Theatre, Philosophy, etc?

What would you like to say to the soldiers in this film? Write a poem...

Has the film changed any of your views? *Yes* *No* *Why?*

What do you feel about the media today? How can you be a part of today's media?

What creative ways can you think of to serve your country and our shared planet?