America’s military and veterans in defending freedom during the Cold War

How did America’s military forces defend freedom during the Cold War?
The Service of Men and Women

- A strong military was the key to America’s victory over the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

- Millions of Americans served in the military during the Cold War. Their service was often at great personal and family sacrifice, yet they did their duty.
In President John Kennedy’s inaugural address, he pledged that the United States would

- "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

- In the same address, he also said,

- "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."
American military forces during the Cold War

- Soldiers marching in Vietnam— an “unpopular” war for America

- During the Cold War era, millions of Americans served in the military, defending freedom in wars and conflicts that were not always popular. Many were killed or wounded.
A Nation shaken:

- President Kennedy, a World War II veteran, was assassinated in 1963 in Dallas, Texas, in an event that shook the nation’s confidence and began a period of internal strife and divisiveness, especially spurred by divisions over U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

The still above shows the motorcade driving through Dallas as Lee Harvey Oswald (below) shot the President from across the street. Oswald was later killed by Jack Ruby.
Unlike veterans of World War II, who returned to a grateful and supportive nation, Vietnam veterans returned often to face indifference or outright hostility from some who opposed the war.

Those opposed to the war would sometimes refer to these veterans as "Baby Killers".

There were no real "welcome home" ceremonies for these men and women.
A war finally over:

- It was not until several years after the end of the war that the wounds of the war began to heal in America, and Vietnam veterans were recognized and honored for their service and sacrifices.

The Vietnam War Memorial shows that Americans are finally allowing the wounds left to our national body and pride to heal.
As a result of their service, the United States and American ideals of democracy and freedom ultimately prevailed in the Cold War struggle with Soviet communism.