

1919 – Ho Chi Minh Ignored

Following World War I, a young Vietnamese patriot named Nguyen That Thanh (later known as Ho Chi Minh) arrives at the Paris Peace Conference. Responding to American President Woodrow Wilson's promise of "self-determination" for nations, Thanh hopes to free Vietnam from French colonial rule. But Thanh, like many other advocates of colonial independence who descend upon the Paris peace talks, is ignored.

Sep 27, 1940 – Japan Joins Axis

Japan enters [World War II](#), joining the German-Italian Axis coalition.

Sep 1940 – Japan Seizes French Indochina

The Japanese take possession of French Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam), but retain the pro-Axis French administration.

1941 – Viet Minh Founded

The Viet Minh—the League for the Independence of Vietnam—is founded.

Mar 9, 1945 – Japanese Occupation

Japan sweeps away French rule in Indochina. In Vietnam, it places Emperor Bao Dai in power, creating the illusion of an independent Vietnamese state.

Apr 12, 1945 – Roosevelt Dies

President Franklin D. Roosevelt dies of a cerebral haemorrhage in Warm Springs, Georgia. With the death of President Roosevelt, Vice President Harry S. Truman becomes the 33rd President of the United States.

Aug 6, 1945 – Hiroshima

The United States drops an atomic bomb—the first to be used in warfare—on Hiroshima, killing 75,000 people instantly, and injuring more than 100,000.

Aug 9, 1945 – Nagasaki

A second atomic bomb is dropped in Nagasaki.

Aug 15, 1945 – Japan Surrenders

Japan surrenders to the Allied Powers, officially ending World War II.

Aug 18, 1945 - Aug 28, 1945 – August Revolt

Under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, the Viet Minh revolts against Emperor Bao Dai, Japan's hand-selected ruler.

Aug 30, 1945 – Ho Chi Minh Leads Viet Minh

Emperor Bao Dai surrenders leadership to Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh.

Sep 2, 1945 – Democratic Republic of Vietnam Declared in Hanoi

Viet Minh leaders proclaim the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, with Hanoi its capital and Ho Chi Minh its president. No other countries recognize this regime.

Sep 13, 1945 – Viet Minh Leaves South

The British land in Saigon to disarm the Japanese and to restore French control south of the 17th parallel, in what will become known as South Vietnam. After some fighting, the Viet Minh withdraws.

Jan 25, 1969 – Peace Talks Begin in Paris

Peace talks are held in Paris. Representatives from the U.S., the South Vietnamese government, and the NLF are present.

Apr 1969 – American Casualties in 1969

American combat deaths in Vietnam exceed 33,629, the number lost in the Korean War.

Jun 1969 – Vietnamisation

The number of U.S. troops in Vietnam peaks at 543,000. President Richard Nixon announces his plan for "Vietnamisation" of the war—that is, training and transitioning South Vietnamese troops to assume the roles that have been fulfilled by American troops—and promises to withdraw 25,000 American soldiers.

Jun 27, 1969 – Life Portraits

Life magazine prints the portraits of the 242 Americans killed in action in Vietnam during a single week in May, a week identified by the magazine as "average for any seven-day period during the war." 12 pages feature the faces of young people, mostly working-class black and white men, some in uniform, some posing for high school graduation in cap and gown.¹⁶

Sep 3, 1969 – Ho Chi Minh Dies

At the age of 79, six years before his armies seize Saigon, Ho Chi Minh dies. Rather than cremate his body, as Minh had specified in his will, Minh's family has the leader embalmed and put on display in a mausoleum.¹⁷

Nov 16, 1969 – Nixon Promises Withdrawal

President Nixon promises to withdraw 35,000 additional troops from the war in Vietnam.

Nov 15, 1969 – Washington, D.C. Anti-War Protest

Some 600,000 Americans attend an anti-war protest rally in Washington, D.C.

Dec 15, 1969 – Nixon Promises More Troops Home

President Nixon promises to bring home 60,000 troops from Vietnam by April 1970.

Apr 1970 – Troop Levels in 1970

Over 420,000 American soldiers remain in Vietnam. President Nixon promises to withdraw another 150,000 within the next year.

Apr 30, 1970 – Cambodia Invasion

In a nationally televised broadcast, President Nixon announces that American and South Vietnamese units have invaded Cambodia to destroy bases that have provided aid to the NLF.

May 1, 1970 – Kent State Demonstration

Students at Kent State University in Ohio organize a massive public demonstration against the American invasion of Cambodia.

May 2, 1970 – National Guard Called to Kent State

On the second day of anti-war demonstrations at Kent State University students torch the R.O.T.C. building on campus. In response, the mayor of Kent, Ohio asks the governor to call in the National Guard.¹⁸

May 4, 1970 – Kent State Killings

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Page 10 of 12