Heroes in the Sky

By Kelly Hashway

Jason picked up a model helicopter on his grandfather's desk. “This is cool,” he said, spinning the blade on top.

His grandfather walked over and took the helicopter in his hand. He looked at it for a moment without saying a word. “It’s a Huey. I flew one just like it in Vietnam.”

“You mean the Vietnam War, Grandpa Bill?” Jason asked. He knew his grandpa didn’t like to talk about the war.

Grandpa Bill nodded. “The Huey was equipped with rockets and machine guns. Some of them even had grenade launchers.”

Jason’s first instinct was to say that was cool. A helicopter with all those weapons would be amazing. But then he realized Grandpa Bill was a war veteran. The reason why he didn’t like to talk about the war was because it had been frightening.

“Were you scared?” Jason asked, looking into Grandpa Bill’s eyes.

“Of course. But I had a very important job in the Huey. I had to escort troops for the Army and Marines. The Huey became a symbol of the U.S. forces in Vietnam,” Grandpa Bill said, his voice quiet.

“Did you help wounded soldiers, too?” Jason asked. He remembered his history teacher saying something about the helicopters airlifting casualties to medical facilities.

Grandpa Bill nodded again, but then he smiled. Jason had never seen him do that before.

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1. What did Grandpa Bill do in the Vietnam War?
   a. He was a helicopter pilot.
   b. He fixed helicopters.
   c. He gave medicine to wounded soldiers.
   d. He made maps of Vietnam.

2. Why didn’t Jason’s grandfather like to talk about the Vietnam War?

3. How did Grandpa Bill feel when he talked about his experiences during the war?
   a. confused
   b. excited
   c. proud
   d. annoyed

4. What did Grandpa Bill do in the Vietnam War?
   a. He killed many people.
   b. He could operate a machine gun.
   c. He took risks to save and protect other people.
   d. He knew a lot about helicopters.

5. What did Grandpa Bill mean when he said, “By the end of the war, the Army had an Air Force of their own?”
   a. The Army had beaten the air force.
   b. The Army had many helicopters.
   c. The Air Force gave equipment to the army.
   d. The Air Force and the Army worked together.
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Fill in the missing letters to create words from the story. Then, write the full word on the line. Be sure to spell each word correctly.

1. ____ l i o t __  r
   clue: aircraft with a large spinning blade on top

4. v ____ t e a ____
   clue: person who served in the military

5. ____ a p ____ n s
   clue: things that are used to harm other people, such as guns

6. ____ e r ____
   clue: person who is honored for being brave for doing something outstanding
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2. Why didn’t Jason’s grandfather like to talk about the Vietnam War?

   It was a frightening experience for him.

4. What did Grandpa Bill do in the Vietnam War?
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1. h e l i c o p t e r
   clue: aircraft with a large spinning blade on top
   1. helicopter

2. i e t a m
   clue: country in Southeast Asia
   2. Vietnam

3. u n e d
   clue: injured; hurt
   3. wounded

4. v e t e r a n
   clue: person who served in the military
   4. veteran

5. w e a p o n s
   clue: things that are used to harm other people, such as guns
   5. weapons

6. h e r o
   clue: person who is honored for being brave for doing something outstanding
   6. hero