

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
THE VIETNAM WAR

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VOLUME I
Origins

When, how, and why did the Vietnam War begin? Although its end is dated with great precision to April 30, 1975, there is no agreement as to when it began. The Vietnam War was an enormously complex conflict, and even though any comprehensive reckoning of its causes must include the role of the United States, it did not begin as an “American War.” This volume presents the scholarship that has flourished since the 1990s to situate the war and its origins within longer chronologies and wider interpretative perspectives. The Vietnam War was a war for national liberation and an episode of major importance in the Global Cold War. Yet it was also a civil war, and civil warfare was a defining feature of the conflict from the outset. Understanding the Vietnamese and Indochinese origins of the Vietnam War is a critical first step toward reckoning with the history of this violent, costly, and multilayered war.

EDWARD MILLER is Associate Professor of History and Asian Studies, and Chair of the Department of Asian Societies, Cultures, and Languages at Dartmouth College. He is the author of *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* and *The Vietnam War: A Documentary Reader*. He is the founding director of the Dartmouth Vietnam Project, a student-driven oral history program that documents the memories and experiences of members of the Dartmouth community who lived through the Vietnam War era.

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General editor
LIEN-HANG T. NGUYEN

Split into three volumes, *The Cambridge History of the Vietnam War* brings together seventy-five leading experts on the war from across the world, covering the late colonial era to present-day legacies, using diverse methodologies and approaches. When did the fighting begin, why and how did it escalate, and in what manner did the violence end and the legacies endure? These are some of the fundamental questions that have consumed scholars, whose works trigger more questions than offer definitive answers. The volumes seek neither to reconcile past arguments, enflame ongoing disputes, nor set off new debates – instead, they intend to celebrate the diversity and differences in scholarship and attest to the indisputable importance of this conflict in global history. From decision-making in the corridors of power, to everyday life at war on the battlefield and homefront, to cultural legacies of the war on a global level, the three volumes present the most exhaustive and authoritative treatment of the seminal conflict.

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