

17.3

The Antiwar Movement



As a Young Historian, I will be able to...

- Describe the divisions within American society over the Vietnam War.
- Analyze the Tet Offensive and the American reaction to it.
- Summarize the factors that influenced the outcome of the 1968 presidential election.

Antiwar Sentiment Grows

The war in Vietnam divided Americans more than any conflict since the Civil War

People believed that soldiers were dying in a war that had little to do with U.S. interests



Draftees- Young men drafted into military service in Vietnam

The government had drafted 1.5 million men when they turned 18 & called up draft when troops were needed

Protests

Critics believed local draft boards had too much power & college students & people in certain jobs were exempted

African American troops fighting & dying in Vietnam was disproportionately high with 20% of war deaths

Martin Luther King Jr. spoke out against the war believing it hurt the poor in all races

1967-Draft eligible males began to burn draft cards until a lottery system was implemented



College Protests

Students & professors at college campuses criticized the war for various reasons

Antiwar activities began mostly on campuses due to the large student bases after WWII



University of Michigan & University of California at Berkely became the biggest hubs of antiwar protests

**Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)-
Organization formed to campaign
against the war in Vietnam**

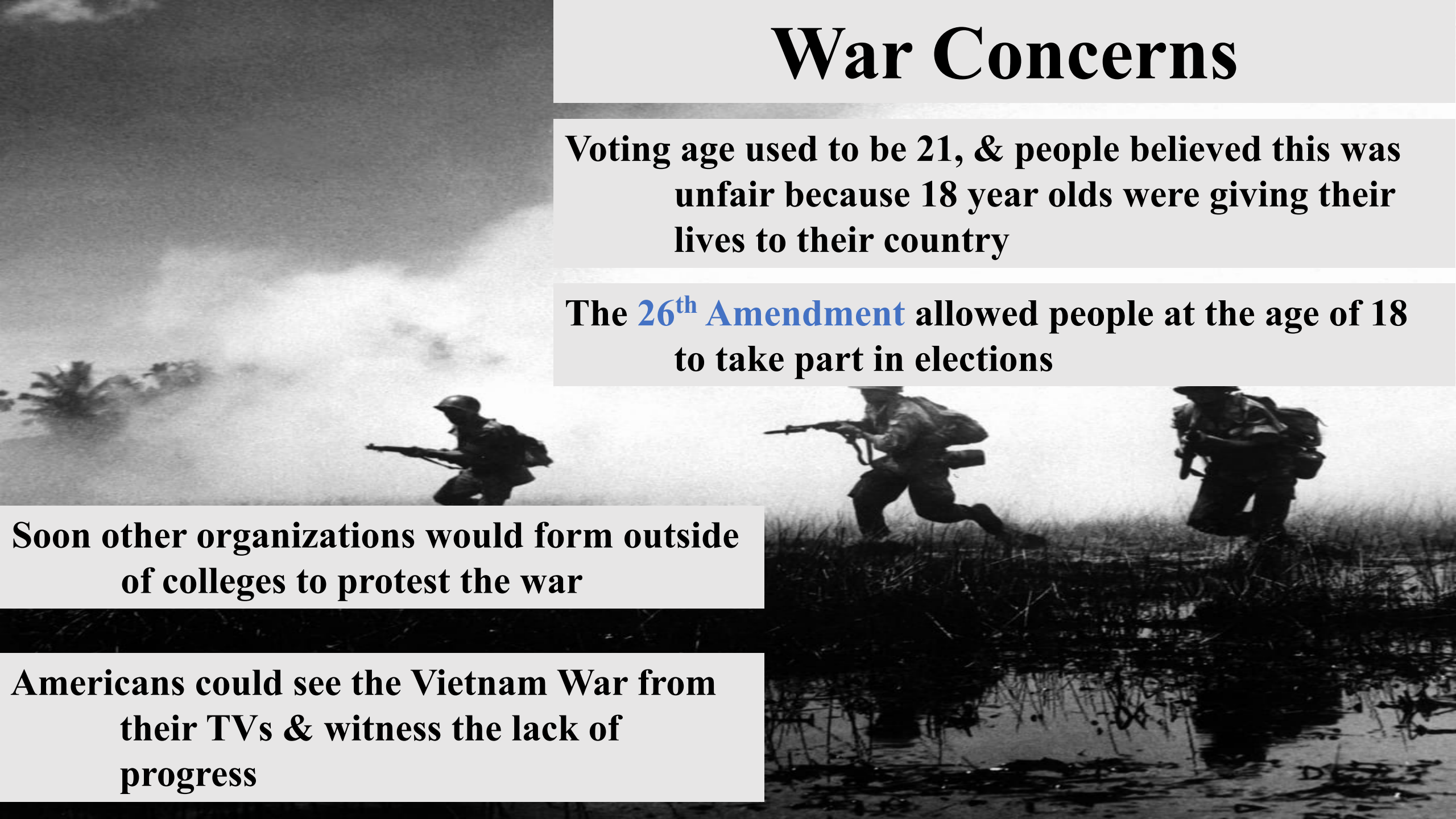
War Concerns

Voting age used to be 21, & people believed this was unfair because 18 year olds were giving their lives to their country

The **26th Amendment** allowed people at the age of 18 to take part in elections

Soon other organizations would form outside of colleges to protest the war

Americans could see the Vietnam War from their TVs & witness the lack of progress



Credibility Gap

The Vietnam War was the first “living room war” as people saw the protests & horrors of war at home

Credibility Gap- What the government said about the war VS what the journalist reported on

A black and white photograph of three soldiers in a field. The soldiers are wearing helmets and carrying rifles, moving from left to right. The background is a bright, hazy sky, and the foreground is a dark, grassy field.

Nov 1967- General Westmoreland said the Vietcong was declining in strength & could not mount a major offensive



The Tet Offensive

Early 1968, the Vietcong forces began an expansive attack through South Vietnam during the lunar new year

Tet Offensive- Named after the lunar new year, coordinated attack over major capitals & cities

While the Americans & South Vietnam pushed them back, it showed they still had a strong will to fight the war

The new Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford, proclaimed the war was a bottomless pit

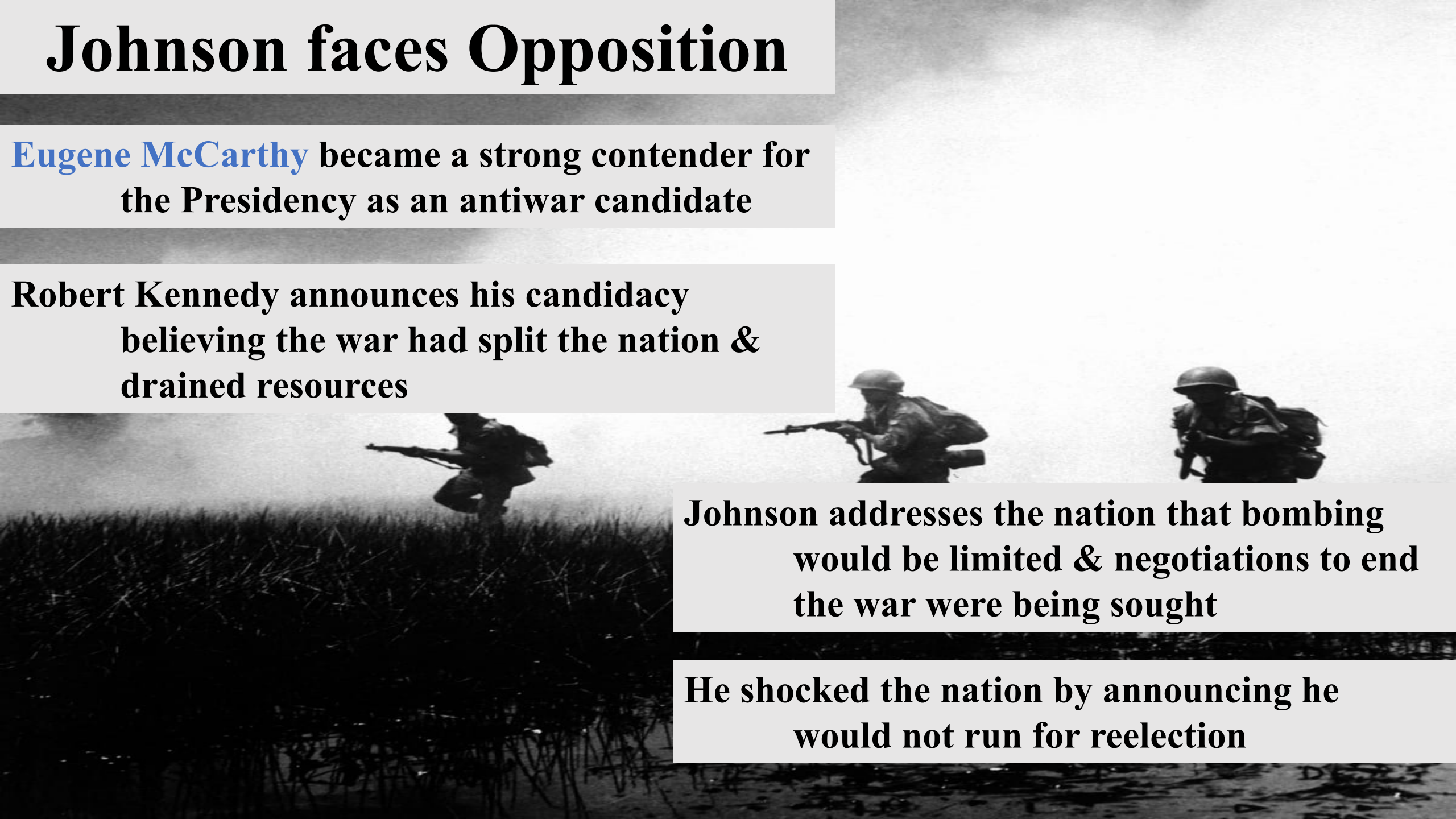
Johnson faces Opposition

Eugene McCarthy became a strong contender for the Presidency as an antiwar candidate

Robert Kennedy announces his candidacy believing the war had split the nation & drained resources

Johnson addresses the nation that bombing would be limited & negotiations to end the war were being sought

He shocked the nation by announcing he would not run for reelection



MLK & Kennedy

MLK & Kennedy began to speak out for peace in the nation & seek social & moral reasons for peace

April 4th, 1968- Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis Tennessee

June 5th, 1968 Kennedy wins California primary & claims the U.S. is compassionate & unselfish...

When a Palestine immigrant angry at the U.S. policy in Israel shoots & kills him



Election of 1968

The Democratic party begins in house fighting in Chicago, choosing Hubert Humphrey as the nominee over McCarthy

A violent protest breaks out outside the convention center shocking America



George Wallace runs on a third ticket & Richard Nixon for the Republican nomination

Nixon wins by a slight margin becoming the next President