

BORN ON THIS
DAY
**Thomas
Jefferson**

VIDEO
**William
Shakespeare**



Robert S. McNamara

Government Official, Military Leader (1916–2009)

Robert S. McNamara was an American business executive and the eighth U.S. Secretary of Defense. He is best known for helping lead the U.S. into the Vietnam War.

Synopsis

Robert S. McNamara was an American business executive and the eighth U.S. secretary of defense, serving under presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. He is best known for helping lead the United States into the Vietnam War during the Kennedy Administration, an act for which he spent the remainder of his life wrestling with the moral consequences.

Early Life

Former U.S. secretary of state, author and businessman Robert Strange McNamara was born on June 9, 1916, in San Francisco, California. McNamara is best known as the secretary of defense in the 1960s and as an important figure in the controversial Vietnam War. In 1937, he graduated with a degree in economics from the University of California in Berkeley. An excellent student, McNamara went to study at Harvard Business School where he earned his master's degree in 1939.

After a short stint on the West Coast, McNamara was back at Harvard as an assistant professor. He took a break from the university to help out his country during World War II. In 1943, McNamara entered the U.S. Army Air Corps, putting his sharp analytical skills and talent for statistics to work on military situations. Not long after the war, he and nine other members from the army's statistical control group went to work for Henry Ford II at the Ford Motor Company.

NAME

Robert S. McNamara

OCCUPATION

Government Official,
Military Leader

BIRTH DATE

June 9, 1916

DEATH DATE

July 6, 2009

EDUCATION

University of California,
Berkeley, Harvard
Business School

PLACE OF BIRTH

San Francisco, California

PLACE OF DEATH

Washington, D.C.

AKA

Robert S. McNamara
Robert McNamara

FULL NAME

Robert Strange
McNamara

Secretary of Defense

Ford hired this group of bright young men—sometimes referred to as "Whiz Kids"—to help reinvigorate his family's company, which was going through difficult times. Over the years, Robert S. McNamara promoted numerous times and advocated for such changes as making small cars and increasing safety. He also became known as a gifted, innovative manager with strong organizational abilities. In 1960, McNamara became the first non-Ford family member to hold the position of pres-