



CO VAN MY/COUNTERPARTS 1462 W. University Mesa, Arizona 85201

Winter 88 Sitrep

Still here, and still moving along, however slowly. 1989 should be year we get moving, and steps have taken to accomplish this.

To date, just over 50 'hard' members, being those who have submitted their ballots for by-laws and have maintained contact. 30 other 'soft' prospects will probably generate several more. Follow up inquiry to their initial response has not yet been sent, as was promised. That is forthcoming.

Letter sent to Dega Association advising of our wish that they link up as an organizational member. Last issue of sitrep was included for their review. No response as of this writing to September mailing. They publish a newsletter themselves:

Montagnard Dega Assn.
P.O. Box 28647
Raleigh, N.C. 27611-8647

Sponsorship donation for same is \$10.00/annum. Will continue to include them in all mailings. Also, please note, and if possible, send them old copies of 'Organic Gardening' or any other helpful publications:

HELP NEEDED

In November 1986, over 200 Montagnard men, women and children were settled in North Carolina as refugees from the Central Highlands of Vietnam. After a year of developing new skills (such as learning English, finding a job, and mastering U.S. high-

ways and supermarkets), some of them are beginning to indicate interest in expanding old talents. In the Highlands, most Montagnard families used their own traditional organic methods in home gardens. Last summer, several began experimenting with small gardens here in North Carolina

but desperately need gardening information.

We would appreciate receiving old OG copies from readers. We also welcome advice from readers who have experience in growing Southeast Asian vegetables and herbs in the United States.

Pierre K'Briuh
Lutheran Family Services
P.O. Box 13147
Greensboro, NC 27415

Initial efforts underway to tap into VN community publications in California area, as well as individuals who write other publications seeking whereabouts of former counterparts. Speaking of same, Hanoi has apparently been releasing re-ed camp inmates, though many of these remain under house arrest of sorts. Among the more notable is former

Gen. Vu Van Giai, former Bde. CO in 1st Div, and eventually CO of hastily formed 3rd ARVN Div, which met with great misfortune, to put it mildly, during Nguyen Hue/Easter Offensive of '72. Giai was made a scapegoat for shortcomings of incompetent Corps Commander (or so most accounts suggest), was imprisoned by GVN, and then by Hanoi. By most accounts, he was, and with luck still is, a highly regarded, respected combat commander, and honest officer. It is possible that some of these recently released prisoners may be coming to the US, so keep eyes/ears peeled; we should try to assist where possible.

Other info from refugee accounts: dependents of former GVN military people have a hard time gaining admission to anything beyond high school; they are tainted, as Hanoi views it, by being a member of former GVN family. Children of officers, if only company grade, are virtually excluded from upper education.

'Curriculum Alert'--Watch what your children or neighbor's children are being 'taught' regarding VN/SE Asia. There is presently a packaged study guide, put out by the National Council for the Social Studies, which is available to high school teachers throughout the country, and which is an abysmally warped version of VN. We should have no problem with discussing VN, or anything else, 'warts and all', BUT, this 'study guide' is historically invalid and erroneous. It simply is not accurate, comprehensive and worthwhile history, yet is portrayed as being just that. VN and SE Asia was and is far too important for any convoluted drivel, from any school of thought. Keep on alert for this, and do not be bashful about requesting equal time.

Lessons of History, Part II: Recent publication by four US Army officers, all with VN experience, critiquing current US policy and implementation in El Salvador:

AMERICAN MILITARY POLICY IN SMALL WARS: The Case of El Salvador, by LTCs Bacevich, Hallums, White and Young. Published by

Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy
Tufts University
Central Plaza Bldg., 10th Floor
675 Cambridge Ave.
Cambridge, Mass 02139-3396.

Saw mention in paper, wrote asking how to obtain, they sent me one. OK, we have learned some things about how to approach these sort-of-VN-type conflicts, but if half of what this book says is true, we are now repeating some of the dumb things we did in VN, and, once again, as a result of inattentive and perhaps obtuse policy makers in DC, who fail to assign the priority deserved. It is acknowledged that our accepted by-laws preclude involvement with policy matters and the like, but our collective history in the advisory realm is being overlooked by someone, somewhere. Submitted as an FYI item only.

Letters to ed./materials/photos: Henceforth, any letters sent in may be included in subsequent sitreps, as well as xeroxes of pictures and the like. There are some who have not anticipated this, so please be advised. If comments/etc. are not intended for possible sitrep inclusion, please so indicate. Also, roster will be included with next sitrep, so anyone desiring to remain in shadows (except for membership committee scrutiny) need request this courtesy. To date, only two have; their credentials appear quite valid.

VN Lit: of thousands of books on VN, few deal with advisors. Ironically, the new book on John Paul Vann is a best seller. Have read excerpts from this work, and a few book reviews, and am not altogether pleased with book, and what some otherwise unformed readers might infer from it. Will reserve judgement until book is read but find author's omissions troublesome. Excerpt I read deals with Vann's early years in Delta, and his problems with the ARVN 7th Div., renowned-then-for its search and avoid tactics. OK, that's true, yet author fails to point out that 7th, under command of the late Gen. Nguyen Khoa Nam from Jan 70, became highly proficient and quite capable of dealing with any/all VC/NVA threats. Nam was held in high regard by VN people as incorruptable and honorable, and there is not the slightest evidence to suggest otherwise. Your clerk-typist pro-tem personally heard him go into a volcanic tirade over corruption (emanating from Saigon) and can attest to Nam's integrity as well as the resultant transformation of the 7th into an outstanding unit. Perhaps author of Vann book brings this up, but I doubt it, and thus leaves readers with picture of 7th Div. forever arrested in its earlier period of sub-competence. Anyone read it yet?



Other books on advisors: SILENCE WAS A WEAPON/Capt. Stuart Herrington; THE ADVISOR/Capt. John Cook; THE VILLAGE/Frances West; ONCE A WARRIOR KING/David Donovan; WAR STORY/Capt. Jim Morris; THE ADVISORS/Curt Rich(F); COASTS OF WAR/Scott Stone(F); STATION IN THE DELTA/John Cassidy(F); THE EASTER OFFENSIVE(G.H. Turley); GREEN BERETS AT WAR(Shelby Stanton); PROVREP(Jan Vanderbie); THE BETRAYAL(about USMC CAPS)/Wm. Corson; FIELD OF INNOCENCE(USMC CAPS); Jack Estes. (F) denotes fiction.

List is far from complete, but you might want to compare it with what is on shelves of local high school/Jr. college library.

Logos/etc.: Next sitrep will have member-submitted suggestions for logos, xeroxed as best can be done from originals. Also need to come up with charter member certificate design, as well as design for certificate of those coming along afterwards. Should be a nice piece of 'archival art' that stands out on the wall. Submittals are requested, welcome. Standard 8½ x 11 picture frame size probably cheapest and most convenient, but larger one, maybe 11 x 14 would be nice. Should include a little color (yeah, there goes cost again), and be usable for post-charter members once charter member designation is taken off the master, without leaving too much of a blank space. Some brief, to-the-point verbiage on purpose, intent, outlook of membership.

AMERASIANS: Bruce Burns, USAF VN Vet and presently an attorney, is running the Amerasian Registry which attempts to link up children with their American fathers (those who wish to do so). He's been back to VN several times to expedite paperwork for Amerasian emigration and says people enjoy seeing Americans. Another western source plugged into things VN says that European Caucasians living in VN, working on aid projects and the like, have written 'Khong Phai Lien Xo' on t-shirts, meaning 'I am not a Russian'. US has no monopoly on rude tourists/visitors. Back to Bruce/his Registry: keep address on file, but be advised he's running a very slim operation and cannot answer or respond to any/all mail unless it directly concerns an 'active case'. Donation or two would not hurt things. Address:

95 S. Market St., Suite 300; San Jose, California 95113.

South Vietnam's war vets fight for survival

□ For many of them, the only salvation is to leave the country

By Susan Manuel 6-21-88

Star-Bulletin HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam — Cooling off in the ocean at Vung Tau, Pho Trang seemed happy enough as he talked helicopters with former U.S. helicopter pilot Dave Price.

As a free-lance photographer in the resort town, Trang, a former helicopter mechanic, had made the transition from the wrong side of the war to survival.

Probably because of the low level of his former job, he had spent only a year and a half in a re-education camp following the war. Now, using ironic bits of English to define his status, he said laughing — "I'm off-limits."

The former members of the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) are the forgotten vets of Vietnam.

Abandoned by the retreating Americans and persona non grata in their own country, the last of those who served against the North Vietnamese emerged from re-education camps during the past Tet (New Year) to find their wives remarried, homes seized and families struggling with the moribund Vietnamese economy. Once commanders of hundreds, often highly educated, they're now banned from government employment and benefits.

A former army colonel who lives in Ho Chi Minh City agreed to meet to describe his plight, which he said hundreds of thousands share. He asked that his name not be used, fearing any possible hindrance to leaving Vietnam.

Small, aristocratic and older-looking than 60, the colonel had spent the past 14 years in north and south Vietnamese camps doing hard labor.

"You should have seen me before the camps," he said. "I weighed 25 pounds more."

His re-education was particularly long, he said, because he had trained as an infantryman in Georgia in 1962. "That's why they suspected me."

None of the colonel's nine children, all 30 and under, can have government jobs because of his army connections. Six were imprisoned after his arrest. Now they work as pedicab drivers, brick masons, and salesmen of scrounged items.

"My wife does everything — including babysitting for communist soldiers."

Two of his children have escaped

on boats to the Philippines. His wife, who remained faithful, has applied for acceptance in the United States, a move that many Vietnamese interviewed claim bars them from jobs and benefits.

"They think that people who are preparing to go don't need to work," the colonel said.

No education went on at the re-education camp: "We were forbidden to read newspapers. We had no speeches or lectures."

"Many died in North Vietnam (camps) because of lack of food and medicine. Many were abused so severely they died."

Once a month his family brought a letter and some food to add to his daily diet of a bowl of rice, salt and a sweet potato.

"I was very sad when I got out and I found the suffering of my family was true. We lived much better before 1975. I had a car. I had everything. Now I have nothing."

One thought sustained him: "We always talked about how we believed the Americans would save us. That hope made the situation bearable. Probably American interference got us out now."

He spends his days reading and waiting — again for the Americans, but with weaker expectations.

"I don't believe the government will let me go, but I can hope."

Doors are open for only a fraction of those who want to leave.

The U.S. Embassy in Bangkok has applications from 650,000 Vietnamese who may be eligible to live in the United States because they worked for Americans or spent time in a re-education camp. Embassy officials say hundreds of thousands more would apply if they felt they had a chance.

Between 1975 and March 31, 1,120,330 Vietnamese, Kampuchean and Laotian refugees resettled in "free" countries. Of those, 609,187 escaped as boat people; and 135,289 Vietnamese left under the Orderly Departure Program set up in 1979, according to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. Since Jan. 1, more than 4,000 boat people have arrived in Hong Kong, up from 500 during the same period last year.

People take to the sea because getting exit visas from Hanoi can take years. Lisa Hong Nguyen, a counselor at the Kallhi-Palama Immigrant Center came here in 1982 with her Amerasian daughter. In 1985, she received U.S. approval for the emigration of her husband, Nguyen Hue, a former South Vietnamese navy officer fired from his job after she left, and their nine children. But no "exit" visas have come.



BỘ CHỈ HUY
LƯU ĐOÀN III NHẢY DÙ

Tet Card from 3rd Airborne Bde.

Human interest story: a Phoenix Arizona VN Vets group lost their meeting place and had nowhere to gather. The local Viet Nameese Community Assn. stepped in and said US Vets could use their storefront office/meeting room anytime.

HI Story #2: The Viet Nameese Community in/around New Orleans built a monument to American and Allied forces who fought and sacrificed in VN. It was formally dedicated 30 April, 1988. US and SVN Vet groups made presentations, both flags were flown, and both national anthems were played.

Locator file: feel free to send in any names or other info. to help locate former counterparts. This will be coordinated w/VN community publications, in California at first, then elsewhere. Be as specific as possible, w/ as much info as possible.

That's it for now. Profuse and sincere thanks to all who have rounded up new members, sent in and offered to do same. Trust

logo submittals, and undertaken other tasks or offered to do same. Trust Merry Christmas, or

Chúc Mừng Lễ Giáng Sinh
Chúc gặp may mắn trong năm mới

Bill

Bill Laurie, clerk-typist pro tem
1462 W. University
Mesa, Arizona 85201

Testimony of DEGA leaders & spokesmen.

Sre Sang Dim:

THANKS TO MEMBER
JIM BARKER FOR
SENDING THIS IN

Post 1975 Condition of Minorities

"Our society met many changes. Day by day people became more poor and miserable. The VC reversed the life of the people. We lost customs habits and freedoms. We were pressed and oppressed by the VC.

"The purpose of our resistance activity was to protect our lives and the lands of our ancestors. We had to stand up to fight them because they were oppressing us. . . to keep culture, traditions and get our freedom back.

" We sacrificed greatly because we didn't have sophisticated means of resisting ,nor did we have any support. Noone knew to help us."

Of the daily life as resistance fighters, we are a farming people of the mountains. Resistance was difficult. We used guerilla tactics because we knew the land. However, we lacked the kind of weapons equal to the VC. Our losses were great. Over the years we were increasingly weakened because we lacked provisions. . We could not continue to fight. We used every means possible to resist but couldn't hold out long. We suffered heavy losses. There was no other Vietnamese help."

"The VC used infantry on a large scale against us. Their strategy was to strangle by military force, to use pressure to destroy our economy. They would surround us, shell us, cut people off, isolate them and destroy them. The VC used many tactics.."

Family conditions grew worse every day. They were forced to the NEZs^{*} and put in jail. The VC separated individual families and placed them in NEZs far away to divide and punish them. One result was starvation."

The average resistance fighter lacked clothes, medicine and bullets. There were no outside contacts from VietNam. We lived off the jungle. "We lived empty handed. .off jungle roots."

"There was noone from the former Republic of VN to help us. Once in a while we met a few small groups of Vietnamese, but we didn't join each other. The Vietnamese couldn't survive the way the highlanders did."

Regarding the greatest changes to our people--was in agriculture. Most people had to go to NEZs. It was just jungle land. We were very controlled and miserable. Another change was the lack of Medicine and medical care. After 1975 there was no medicine. I had two nephews, both 18 who died of sickness in an NEZ. The final greatest change was in Housing. The VC only allowed us to build houses by leaves and branches."

* N.E.Z. = NEW ECONOMIC ZONES IN UNINHABITED AREAS, WHICH "RESIDENTS" ARE FORCED TO CLEAR, CULTIVATE

Sre Sang Dim Testimony Cont'd.

Why did you have to leave VN?

We were freedom fighters. We had to try to get help from the USA." From 1975 we were isolated. There was no one to help. There was a constant attrition of our people. In October, 1980 we crossed Cambodia by foot.

"While crossing Cambodia we met some Khmer. We never met Americans or Freeworld people. We were still afraid of Khmer. They knew we were using their road. We had left in a secretive manner. The first group included 35 people. Casualties occurred by sickness and hunger. Inside Cambodia few people were killed by the VC because we were in jungle. We could detect the VC first and kill them.

"Everyone who left and escaped were men with no wives with them. Those who married did in the camp. While crossing we followed Khmer refugees towards the Thai border. There were about 3,000 Khmer refugees. The walk to Thailand lasted 1½ months. We looked for food while on the way.

We were always weak and lived off leaves. We had to build small boats, to cross rivers. At the Thai camp there were VN and KHmer refugees. We were seen as strangers and different from the others. We felt uneasy. When we met the USA representatives in the Camp, we rejoiced because we felt we had a chance to live again." We accepted the sacrifices necessary in order to reach the USA and Free World."

"one of the high officers in our group was evil as he had killed some of his own men previously. We detest him and could have killed him during the crossing of Cambodia, but we did not because we have a conscience."

(Note: name of Thai border camp was Dong Rek)

The DEGA survivors were held at the above camp nearly 5 years before release and approval to emigrate to the USA.

Rmah Dock Testimony, PRPC, Bataan, Phillipines:

What are your hopes for your people in their forthcoming life in the USA?

"After we study and get the opportunity to cross to the USA we hope there will be the chance to get training and jobs so we can become a useful and productive people in the future. We need chances to study more to make progress. Of our families in VNam. we will raise to the USA a plea to help our families so that they may someday come to the USA. At the same time we want the American government to pay attention that we as a people are increasingly miserable living under a communist regime. . And surely if this process continues with no change, our people will become exterminated by the communist government.

Those are my final thoughts."

"If the minorities had a road, they would all leave the highlands."