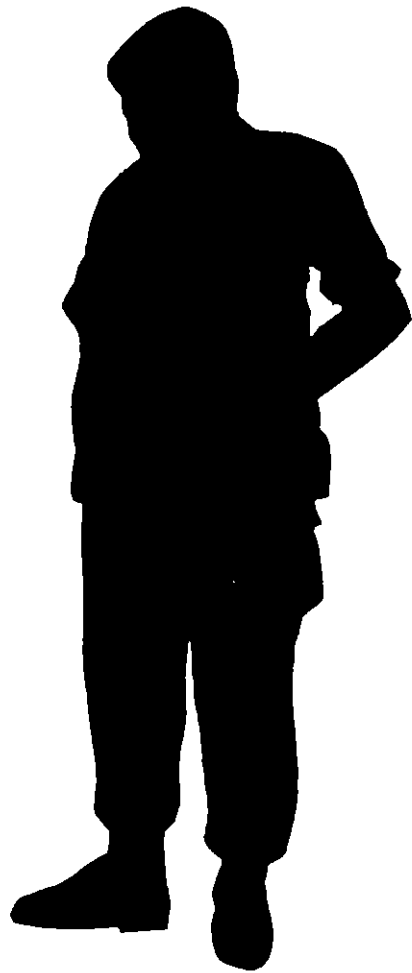


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Peace On Earth
Goodwill To Men

Senang Hari Natal



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Chúc mừng Lễ Giáng Sinh
Và hưởng nam mới vui vẻ

CỔ VẤN MỸ-VIỆT/ĐÔNG NAM Á

BÁO CÁO TÌNH HÌNH/SitRep #10, Winter 1990

Time for another update describing activities of your unique association. Warm welcome is extended to all new members.

Good news: a lot has taken place in last three months. Bad news: there's not enough room to address it all in this SitRep; info excluded this go around will be incorporated into special mid-January mailing which will provide all details of March reunion. More reunion info in this edition. As reverse side indicates, sincere Christmas and New Year greetings to all, and may you and yours enjoy the holiday season. Please watch out for bozo drivers. OK, on to news of past quarter.....

FEDERATION OF VIET NAMESE VETERANS ASSOCIATIONS CONVENTION was held in Houston, 23-24 Nov, 90. At invitation of President Đang Đình Linh, four of your fellow members attended: Stu Beckley, Pappy Hicks, Gene Scales and Jim Cane. Stu gave a brief address, explaining the goals/objectives of CVM-V/ĐNA, our organizational history, bringing along hand out poop sheets and membership applications. Senior member attending was MG Lam Quang Thi, former Dep. Cmdr., I Corps(during '72 Offensive), and author of AUTOPSY, THE DEATH OF SOUTH VIET NAM. Mrs. Đo Cao Tri, widow of former III Corps CG also present. Mrs. Tri had spent eight years in re-ed camps before coming to US.

Our sincere thanks to Đang Đình Linh for the invitation, to Mr. Quach Huynh Ha, and to all members of the Federation. Ha has signed on with CVM-V, and has volunteered to help spread the word, as well as preparing application forms for VN, Lao and Cambodian communities. Also, congratulations to Federation President-elect, Tran Ngoc Đóa, along with our offer to work with the Federation on projects of common interest, primary of which is well-being of former counterparts still imprisoned, or released to de-facto house arrest. Federation members were advised of upcoming reunion. Finally, heart-felt thanks for the plaque presented to CVM-V/ĐNA, and for printing our advertisement in CHIẾN SĨ TỰ DO, the Federation magazine. To all Federation members: Cảm ơn vạn bội.

ARVN ARMOR REUNION was held 13 Nov, 90 in San Jose, w/member Ray Battreall in attendance. This was the first reunion, and was precipitated by recent arrival of several former Armor counterparts, just released from re-ed camps. LTG Vinh Lac, senior ARVN armor officer, gave brief history of the branch, along with several others who provided historical accounts. Those assembled levied dues assessment to aid former counterparts now coming to US, after years in forced labor re-ed camps. A gargantuan feast at local VN restaurant topped things off, with stories told, photos taken, and friends remembered. Thx to Ray for his efforts.

DEGA ASSN. encounters obstacles in delivering medical supplies to Highland hospitals and leprosariums. Highland Assistance Director Kay Reibold was denied permission to accompany supplies, and promised photos of supply delivery/leprosarium conditions were never provided. Senator Terry Sanford raised these points,

and more, in a letter to Nguyen Co Thach. Anyone wishing copy of same please send SASE to this clerk-typist. No further news on apparent impass and/or prospects for resolution. Thx to Dega Assn. Liason Officer Mike Little for update.

LOCATOR: Best wishes to JC. for post-operative recovery. Several requests forwarded to J.C. this past quarter. MG Oliver Dillard(Ret.) is looking for former counterpart Col. Nguyen Hop Doan. Please check w/local VN community and fire off letter to JC. if Col. Doan is located. J.C. will provide address/phone # for Col. Doan's action. Last quarter's SitRep contained search request from Ngoc Phuoc Truong, seeking MSG Hodge H. Hodge(as written) and CWO Dan Sharp. Info filed w/J.C.; letter(in VN) sent to Mr. Truong, eliciting a response not classified as mood-enhancer. Mr. Truong's father saved life of one of these men, and apparently worked with Americans to extent of being eternally damned by powers that be. Mr. Truong's refugee status has been rejected, and he's now faced w/deportation back to VN, and abysmal fate awaiting him as member of 'enemy' family. Efforts continue to locate MSG Hodge/CWO Sharp. More on this general subject on following pages. Bruce Cushing, who served with MACV Tm. 25, '69-'70, in Ban Me Thuot/other areas Darlac Prov., is looking for former tm. members, also requesting info on Montagnard resettlement in US. Latter info forwarded; search request relayed to J.C. Member Jim Vincent, through contacts in VN community, was able to track down counterpart Nguyen Xuan Son, who had mistakenly been reported KIA long ago. Letters/phone calls followed, and Jim passed on info about CVM-V/DNA, inviting Son to sign on and attend Houston reunion. Congratulations fo Jim and Son for linking up again after all these years. Who's next?

HONG KONG REFUGEE WAREHOUSES/VN and NUNG REPATRIATIONS: Hong Kong has tired of refugee population and begun efforts to send people back to VN, despite indications of greater stigmatization and discriminatory policies heaped on returnees. In addition to Ngoc Phuoc Truong's plight, comes notice of forced repatriation of many Nung people, a good number of whom served with US forces and are thereby branded for life. Nungs placed in this position have sent appeal to UN High Commissioner for Refugees, with dozens of individual histories of discrimination in VN, and permanent relegation to lower ranks of society. Copy of Nung letter sent upon receipt of SASE. If inclined to take pen in hand: UN High Commission for Refugees; Palais des Nations; CH-1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland. Also, 25 pp. report on 1990 Conditions in Hong Kong Camps available from: International Rescue Committee; Attn: Susan Stark; 386 Park Avenue S., NY, NY; 10016. A freebie, though donations should be considered as a courtesy. Report will not engender mirth and glee. Hong Kong camps are dismal, and spectre of forced repatriation looms overhead. Some of our former counterparts are there. Takes no more than ½ hour to write a letter, so..... In a related matter, former VC General Tran van Tra visited the US recently and was interviewed by a US Viet Nam Vet, now an author/journalist, and asked if members of the QLVNCH(SVN military) could join the government's veteran association. Response: 'Those who were soldiers are not considered veterans by the people..they are not accepted because they fought for the enemy'. Asked if Americans veterans could bring private assistance to former SVN soldiers, Tra offered no response. Situation ain't rosy.

AMERASIAN CHILDREN are still coming over in small numbers. Recent publication provides disturbing insight into problems they've endured in VN and are encountering here. It's a freebie, 74 pp., from Indochina Resource Action Center; 1628 16th St. NW; 3rd Floor; Washington, D.C.; 20009. Check with local church groups (Catholic Social Services for one), Tolstoy Foundation for Amerasian children/young adults arriving in your AO. Some carry a lot of baggage, and can be hard cases, others respond very well to friendly, firm guidance, and awareness that someone gives a damn. Gotta try and do the right thing, right?

POW/MIA: Member Bob Cunningham represented CVM-V/DNA at November meeting of National Viet Nam Veterans Coalition conference, in which, among other matters, POW/MIA issues were discussed (see Bob's summary on last page), particularly in context of possible policy shift towards normalization of relations w/Ha Noi prior to resolution of POW/MIA matters, a touchy subject w/many. CVM-V/DNA takes no official position, but does advise members to be informed and to express thoughts to Washington. In related area, the book KISS THE BOYS GOODBY, purportedly the inside story of the oft-rumored abandonment of POWs/attendant cover-up, was subject to severe criticism and indictments from two members, George Davidson and Frank Brown. George sent in a review which shreds book's veracity, or attempts thereat, and Frank will have a mini-review in next SitRep. Ed. comment: without having read the book, yet knowing it cites Scott Barnes and the Christic Institute as sources, it is difficult to assign high credibility. Scott Barnes was on a local radio talk show, and your clerk-typist is convinced the man is a pathological liar, while the Christic Institute has yet to do much beyond dream up 'conspiracy' stories having no foundation in substance. The point is not matter of POW/MIAs per se, the point is whether any/all unfounded claims are to confuse the issue. Examine this stuff with the precision you'd call in coordinates for FDF. Related matter: a reliable source reports current hot rumor that several defectors may be returned by Hà Nội, thereby to be received as POWs. This rumor has come/gone in past, and here it is again. Mebbe/mebbe not. Something to watch for. 'Defectors' in question could merely be people who stayed in VN for own reasons, without necessarily having engaged in actions against US/VNCH forces.

ADVISOR BIBLIO.: Frank Brown plugging away, and when final product is compiled will be available on cost-only basis to members, meaning photocopy/postage, meaning not much \$. Cam on rat nhieu Frank oi for your efforts. A certain entry, not previously cited under 'Advisor Lit', is A PERSONAL WAR IN VIET NAM, by Robert Flynn, Texas A & M Press (College Station, Texas, 77843-4354), 160 pp., \$23.50 hardcover/\$11.95 paper, \$2.00 p & h. Factual account of journalists 'tour' w/USMC CAP units in 1970. Good piece of writing, valuable historical work of little known (as far as general public is concerned) USMC and PF Combined Action Platoons. Worth the read.

On the subject of CAPs, Member Tom Harvey is our new Liason Officer (L.O.) between CVM-V/DNA and CUVA (and you thought you'd be rid of acronyms when you left the military!), the CAP veteran association. We are not formally affiliated, merged or any such thing, and do not want this to be, as CAPs were entirely unique and their history should not be blended in, and to some extent diluted by, any unnecessary affiliation with other groups, no matter how similar outlooks and/or experience may have been, and are. We will exchange newsletters, and freely extract info therefrom. Members can

can join each association (CVM-V/DNA as associates in CUVA; CUVA members as Full CVM-V/DNA members). CUVA has a good newsletter, w/good info. We'll scratch each other's back, kicking around in the same retro-psyhic AO as we do. Many thanks to Tom for his joining CVM-V/DNA, and offering to serve as L.O., and contact point. Tom has also sent in some interesting studies, documents, etc. pertaining to CAPs. We do not have an official historian yet, so clerk-typist will have all these documents photocopied and ready for our historian-to-be, whenever he/she assumes the post.

Tom also submitted names of three additional Members in Memoriam:

LCPL Dennis 'Red' Shively CPL Samuel M. Cavins .
LCPL Charles R. 'Rob' Olson.

Remember them.

Once again, we'll be compiling a brief bio and recollection of all Members in Memoriam. Anyone submitting a name is also asked to write up whatever should be remembered. Need not be extensive biography, but if anyone wants to write one, it'll go in just the same. Send write-ups to clerk-typist (B. Laurie; 1462 W. University; Mesa, Arizona; 85201) for inclusion.

PUBLICITY Judd Clemens is the latest member to take initiative and arrange for publicity releases in a number of publications, among them being Anchorage Daily News, Eagle River Veteran, and VFW publication for State of Alaska. Judd wins an Oosik swagger stick for this noble effort (lower 48ers perhaps not familiar w/Oosik, I'm not sure of spelling either, and we better let it go at that.). Cumulative effect of these individual efforts is such that we're now receiving inquiries from those having 'heard from a friend about..'. Good show, feel free to spread the word as Juid and others have. Also, received brief write up in newsletter of Veterans of Viet Nam War, Inc. publication. Special thanks go, again, to Pat Sherman and Owen Kelly, whose latest efforts are described on back page of this SitRep. Members should feel good being associated with people of this calibre.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS Jim Barker was honored as a Distinguished Service Alumnus of his alma mater, Graceland College, citing his long involvement in VN Vet counseling, Amerasian issues, POW/MIA matters, and with VN and SE Asian refugees. Most recently, Jim visited Russia, discussing PTSD experienced by Soviet troops. In his acceptance address, Jim wrote 'Naturally, I delivered message on depth of experience regarding VN.' Nice antidote to conventional wisdom, derived from TV/Hollywood portrayals. Also, your clerk-typist neglected to mention that Jim was among several people whose story was depicted in an April, 1990 TV movie, 'The Girl Who Came Between Them', about VN Vet Barry Huntoon's efforts to find his daughter in VN, and bring her to the States. A hoisted glass of Bia Lon (Biere Larue, AKA Tiger Beer), on the rocks of course, to Jim.

Random quote: 'I would rather command an A detachment in the highlands of Viet Nam than be President of the United States, or win the Nobel Prize for Literature, or ball each Playmate of the Month, for the last five years, in alphabetical order. Jim Morris, SF, as cited in his book, WAR STORY. Reason: '..for first time I was involved in something important enough to make me forget myself.'

PRODUCTS: Timothy Kerr/CPC Productions(P.O. Box 9342; Seattle; Washington; 98109) spent four years in VN, 19 months as a crew chief/door gunner, and snapped some outstanding low level aerial photos during this time. Can Tho, An Khe, Ben Tre, Tan An, Bong Son, Plain of Reeds, Tay Hoa and other locations are depicted in his brochure(send \$1.00) of 10" x 14", 11" x 14", 14" x 20" and 16" x 24" enlargements, ranging in price from \$11.95 to \$16.95. Tim has been kind enough to offer CVM-V/DNA members a special discount, extending through June '91, of 20%. Send \$1.00 for brochure w/both b/w and color photos listed and illustrated in b/w miniature. Recommended, w/thx for special discount.

Error Last quarter's SitRep had typo, and those ordering bound editions of SF magazine reprints are probably cursing returned mail marked 'No such address'. Correct address is: RADIX Associates; 2314 Cheshire Lane; Houston, Texas; 77018. Apologies extended for any inconvenience caused. Will repeat high praise for this reprinting, with indexing, of unique publication. Well worth \$25.00 plus \$2.00 p & h per volume, \$125.00, free postage, box entire boxed set.

VN/SF Video: 30 minute video, w/both training and combat footage, shows SF doing its thing. Narrated by former SFer Jim Morris. Was advertised, in Winter '88 edition of 'The Drop', for \$10.00, pp. from:Special Forces Association; P.O. Box 41436; Fayetteville, North Carolina; 28309-1436. Present availability not known, so letter of inquiry should go out first.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN TOUCH is newly founded organization of children whose fathers were killed in VN. As would be expected, many are young adults having only faint recollections of the fathers they were never able to know. CVM-V/DNA offered its locator services to any surviving children who might wish to contact friends and comrades who served with their fathers, and also advised that surviving kin are eligible for membership, as associates, in CVM-V/DNA. Wanda Ruffin, 'In Touch' director, and widow of naval aviator James Thomas Ruffin, wrote expressing appreciation for the offer, and encouraging CVM-V/DNA to reprint their flyer. Space limitations rule this out on this go around, and brief summary is provided here. The In Touch flyer(available from 'In Touch/Friends of Viet Nam Veterans Memorial; 1224 M. St., NW; Washington, D.C.; 20005) is a check sheet indicating sender's desire to be family, friends, fellow vets of specific people KIA in VN. Usual info is requested: name, unit, nicknames, etc. Service is free, though courtesy dictates inclusion of donation to support In Touch activities and programs. Mrs. Ruffin also included info sheet on Friends of Viet Nam Veterans Memorial, available from address cited above, specifying membership fees, beginning w/\$20.00 for individuals, and services: name rubbings sent at no additional charge, In Touch locator service, and quarterly newsletter, 'Among Friends'. We keep on coming up with ways for members to spend \$, and this seems as good as any. Mrs. Ruffin also sent copy of letter they received from a Mr. Hoa Du Thai, expressing Mr. Thai's search for an old friend, Bernard Hill, who served several tours, both military and civilian. Letter is being sent to Mr. Thai, and another name is added to our locator list.

Random historical item: Roman coins were found near the site of Oc Eo, a former port on the Gulf of Thailand, long since landlocked by eons of siltation, not too far from present city of Rach Gia.

POSSIBLE SOURCES FOR LOCATING CIVILIAN COUNTERPARTS: Several contacts developed for dissemination of CVM-V/DNA info and subsequent increase in civilian service members. Three civilian component associations have been contacted, and sent CVM-V/DNA literature: returned volunteers, USIA, and State Dept. In case of VN/SE Asia, returned volunteers would have been members of International Volunteer Services (IVS), a private 'Peace Corps' in VN and SE Asia, whose members include the late Edgar 'Pop' Buell; USIA refers to US Information Agency; State is just that. Though seldom in the news, civilians often played an important role instructing VN counterparts and villagers in agricultural areas, to include animal husbandry, rural sanitation, and so on. We're looking forward to responses from these outfits, and hope to draw members from their ranks. Many thx to new member Connie Menefee for providing these contacts. Connie has worked w/CUVA and its members for some time, and is quite familiar with organizational 'ambience' found in our ranks. It is with regret however that we advise her membership application is being suspended until she swears a blood oath never, ever, to refer to this letter-banger as 'the typewriter from hell', as she has done in the past.

OTHER SIMILAR EFFORTS: Inquiry sent by Paul Brubaker to Canadian War Museum, requesting our existence be made known to any Canadians who served as advisors. This lead also from Connie, and thx extended once again.

More on ADVISOR LIT: Two recent publications deal with the Phoenix program. One is, by all reports, quite good and a well researched study objective in approach. The other, titled THE PHOENIX PROGRAM, by Douglas Valentine, is, by all reports, an inferior, dense work which fairly wallows in the now-typical bashing of SVN/US. Book to look for is ASHES TO ASHES, by Dale Andrade (D.C. Heath & Co., Lexington, MA), frequently cited as a balanced scholarly effort. Another work dealing w/Phoenix is LOST VICTORY, by William Colby. Any members involved w/Phoenix are invited to provide a more detailed view than is provided here. Ed. comment: seldom, if ever, is mention ever made that the Phoenix Program, in some respects, merely adapted the VC's own 'Phoenix Program' and objective of paralyzing GVN civil administration, and it can be readily argued that 'their' Phoenix Program was far more ruthless and lethal than 'ours' was. Again, member comments welcome.

ANTHOLOGY: A reminder..long promised format outline still just a promise, however you are encouraged to begin jotting things down, in fragmentary bits and pieces if that's the way the ol' memory bank works, and begin formulating ideas now. Effective writing will weave actual experiences/people/places together with personal reactions to same, and reasons producing these reactions/thoughts/impressions. Hardest thing to do is to start. Pick up a 49¢ spiral bound notebook and get in habit making notes.

One individual who may have many such recollections is a former interpreter for the 173rd, name and present location unknown. Last year four VN Vets, with film maker and photographer in tow, returned to VN, traveling about to former base camps, installations, etc. Invariably, a crowd of local VN would gather, and discussions would ensue. During one such instance, a VN middle-aged man was seen on the crowd periphery, before cautiously making his way into the group, asking if anyone had been w/the 173rd. No one had, though no shortage of conversation arose from this fact. The unnamed former interpreter expressed his admiration for his former comrades, and appeared elated for chance to exchange 'war stories'. When US Vets departed, they presented the interpreter with a small enamel US flag pin one had been wearing, generating moist eyes for all. This story related by one in the US party. It is unfortunate we do not, yet, have this unknown interpreter's full thoughts. Something to work for.

DEGA update: this just in from Mike Little.. CBS has completed filming/now editing TV movie, 'Vestige of Honor' about 210 Dega people who were resettled in North Carolina, following epic combat trek across Cambodia to refugee camps in Thailand. No broadcast date available at this time; sometime 'this fall'. Characters include a 'Dennis Scott', an American who played key role in arranging for Dega group emigration. Apparently excluded, at least in article cited here (newsletter of Lutheran Family Services), is contribution of one of our own members, Pappy Hicks, who got the ball rolling by writing President Reagan, and worked with Jim Morris and Don Scott to bring events to a successful conclusion. Once immigration approval was granted, Pappy, Don and Jim went to the Philippines to accompany the Dega contingent, and get them ready for entry into the US. Following through, Pappy and company lined up the Lutheran Family Services as a sponsor. Major obstacles arose from bureaucratic lethargy on part of US Embassy in Thailand. Equally disturbing is fact that none of Dega arrivals were ever debriefed or interviewed by any member of any US agency. We'll see if we can't get Pappy to write up a review once movie is broadcast.

Also, KAY REIBOLD, driving force behind Highland Assistance Project, and in-progress producer of two documentaries about the Dega, w/in-country footage, was recently honored by her selection as one of four outstanding humanitarian volunteers in Wake County, N.C. Congratulations to Kay, and, more importantly, sincere thanks for her efforts to help others. We'll keep you posted on availability of Kay's documentaries and just mebbe can show them in Houston. Worth a try. Fork over some spare change to Highland Assistance Project every now and then.

LAOTIAN COUNTERPARTS: Last quarter's SitRep made mention of probable difficulties former Laotian Counterparts may be having, and recent human rights symposium lends great substance to this concern. 'Laos, Human Rights in a Forgotten Country' was topic of day-long discussion at Yale Law School, 8 Dec, 1990, and addressed by a panel including Laotian refugees now living in US, US StateDept spokesman/analyst, a Hmong community representative, and current

Laotian Charge D'Affairs. Member John Del Vecchio was in attendance, and reports of insipid performance from US StateDept representative who leaned, in typical obtuse StateDept manner, towards Pathet Lao delegate. Approximately 200 plus/minus Lao & Hmong refugees also present, many of whom drove in from the Midwest. Handout documents included approx. 50 pp. compendium of bibliography, documentation of human rights violations, and discussion of re-ed camps in Laos, where many Lao, including members of former Royal Family, have died. Also included was an information booklet published by the Executive Council for Liberation of Laos, which contained graphic four-color photos of Hanoi-Pathet Lao air strike victims. The Council asks American people to apply such influence as they can to raise this issue in the public and international view. Further info: Mr. Lee Dang; 110 Biscaye Court; Sterling, Virginia; 22170. Check with Orville H. Schell Jr. Center for International Human Rights; Yale Law School; 401A Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut; 06520(203 432-7101 or 203 432-4896) for availability of any remaining handout material.

..and, same symposium included panel member Vang Pobzeb, chairman of Hmong American Human Rights Committee, established March, 1987. Mr. Pobzeb, currently a Ph. D. candidate at Denver University's Graduate School for International Studies, presented two papers, each approx 50 pp. in length, detailing Hà Nội expansionist policies in Laos, between 1954 and 1990, use of chemical wpons, and resultant flow of ethnic Lao and Hmong refugees. Not fun reading. Several CVM-V/DNA members worked with Hmong and/or Lao and are rightfully concerned over present fate of these counterparts. Efforts underway to contact Mr. Pobzeb for more info, and to advise of our existence, objectives, locator service etc. Will keep you posted.

Additional publication: FORCED BY AND FORGOTTEN, written by Al Santoli and Laurence Eisenstein, published by Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights(write for publication catalog at 330 Seventh Avenue; NY, NY; 10001), which discusses forced repatriation of Hmong and Lao refugees from Thai camps, and sometimes lethal consequences of returning to Laos. There is little reason to doubt that Hmong are being subjected to campaign of cultural genocide. This publication cites estimates that 100,000 Hmong, from original Laotian population of 350,000-400,000, have been killed, while equal number have fled Laos(Ed.-cannot resist- This is 'Peace with Honor?'). To date, we've not fully addressed situation of Hmong, Laotian, Nung counterparts, and will try to keep you more up to date in these areas. Send off for these publications, and others cited in past, and be aware of situations apparently not considered 'news' by the media as a whole.

HOUSE RESOLUTION 458 Representative Chris Cox, California, introduced House resolution proposing specific human rights adherence standards as condition for normalizing relations w/Hà Nội, in conjunction with acceptable progress in resolving POW/MIA matters, and full withdrawal from Cambodia. Write your representatives and make your opinions, pro or con, known.

SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE comprised of these Senators:

CLAIBORNE PELL, RHODE ISLAND, CHAIRMAN

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., DELAWARE
 PAUL S. SARBANES, MARYLAND
 ALAN CRANSTON, CALIFORNIA
 CHRISTOPHER J. DODD, CONNECTICUT
 JOHN F. KERRY, MASSACHUSETTS
 PAUL SIMON, ILLINOIS
 TERRY SANFORD, NORTH CAROLINA
 DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN, NEW YORK
 CHARLES S. ROSS, VIRGINIA

JESSE HELMS, NORTH CAROLINA
 RICHARD G. LUGAR, INDIANA
 NANCY L. KASSEBAUM, KANSAS
 RUDY BOSCHWITZ, MINNESOTA
 LARRY PRESSLER, SOUTH DAKOTA
 FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, ALASKA
 MITCH MCCONNELL, KENTUCKY
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 CONNIE MACK, FLORIDA

GARYL D. CHRISTIANSON, STAFF DIRECTOR
 JAMES P. LUCIER, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

They will be, and are, discussing question of normalizing relations with Hà Nội, as well as terms under which such an agreement would be reached. Think it over, decide what you think best combines pragmatism and integrity, and write letter expressing opinion. All CVM-V/DNA members are opcon-ed to dictates of personal conscience and intellect. Part of job description as a citizen.

REUNION: New members Huynh Quach Ha and Phil King have volunteered to begin organizing Houston reunion, scheduled for 8-10 March, 1991. A special January mailing will provide further details. Submit any ideas/suggestions to either Paul Brubaker and/or this clerk-typist. Incoming mail indicates very high interest in attending, so please make every effort to be there. It will be something you'll enjoy, benefit from, and remember. All attendees of San Jose reunion will attest to this.

YEAR END MESSAGE: Effusive/prodigious thx to all for efforts, patience, individual initiative. We've covered good deal of ground this year, and have established, at long last, favorable momentum. More goodies planned for coming year, including better SitRep format, and we'll keep on pushing (remember that stuff about maximum exploitation of a tactical victory? Speaking metaphorically here). Keep cards and letters comin' in, w/clippings, news, suggestions, etc. Attending Houston reunion will make whole thing a lot more 'real', so make honest effort to be there. May all of you, and your families, enjoy the Merriest of Christmases, and may your ruck be filled with helium balloons in 1991.

Chúc Mừng Lễ Giáng Sinh và Hưởng Nam Mới Vui Vẻ

HOLLYWOOD'S VIETNAM, NOT MINE

By Toan Truong (to Copyright, 1990, New York Times, Reprinted with Permission)
 I grew up in Vietnam during the war and came to the U.S. in 1975 with the first wave of refugees. It is always with mixed emotions that I watch Vietnam war movies like "The Deer Hunter," "Full Metal Jacket," "Platoon" and now, "Born on the Fourth of July," which has received eight Academy Award nominations.

The average American has never cared about the Vietnamese people and still doesn't; Vietnam has become an abstract symbol for pundits who debate about ideology and politics. These movies, although powerful and moving, are vehicles for men like Ron Kovic, who wrote "Born on the Fourth of July," and Oliver Stone, who directed it, to atone for their past misdeeds.

Mr. Kovic's spine was severed in Vietnam and he is confined to a wheelchair. Watching the movie, I felt his pain and admired his courage. I even cried at his triumph at the end of the film. But I wondered if, even now, he has any idea about the kind of pains the Hanoi Government is still inflicting on the Vietnamese people. For all of us, the suffering continues.

While Americans tend to remember the Vietnam War through images depicting the massacre of innocent civilians by American troops, what is chiseled in my own mind is footage of Vietnamese wailing over the bodies of loved ones who were buried alive in huge mass graves by the Viet Cong during the Tet offensive. In 1968, I will never forget how the Viet Cong killed thousands of civilians who were fleeing toward Hue on Highway 1 in 1975.

Most Americans remember the late 60's as a time in which the forces of truth and righteousness triumphed over the lies and hypocrisies of government and the military-industrial complex. But I remember my parents' concern that anti-war demonstrations would undermine U.S. support for the war at a time when Russian and Chinese support for North Vietnam was stronger than ever.

I cannot even begin to describe the feeling of abandonment my countrymen felt at the start of North Vietnam's offensive in 1975, when our soldiers were restricted to

firing a few rounds a day because the bullets had run out and none were forthcoming.

At one point in "Born on the Fourth of July," the hero says that the U.S. was interfering in the Vietnamese people's struggle for independence. The "Vietnamese people" are always being quoted as supporting the North and rejecting American imperialism. Yet, I know of no public opinion poll on what Vietnamese people really wanted during the war.

I believe that they only wanted to be left alone to farm that ancient piece of land and enjoy the fruits of their labor. They did not want to shoot each other or shoot Cambodians. The Vietnamese people would prefer not to be so oppressed that they feel obliged to seek freedom elsewhere, as they have done since 1975. We tend to forget that, after the American pullout, the free people of South Vietnam succumbed to totalitarianism, and Communists gained control of Laos and Cambodia.

Is defending freedom in the world a worthy goal for the U.S.? Americans do not ask that question about their involvement in Europe during World War II. Why is Vietnam different?

The difference, I think, lies mainly in the fact that Europeans are just plain easier to identify with, whereas Vietnamese are just a bunch of "gooks." What the hell was the U.S. doing there, risking the lives and limbs of good American kids? As casualty figures came in on the evening news, the idea of fighting for democracy in Vietnam became only a vague concept related to some Asians 13,000 miles away.

I visited the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington in November. A similar monument for Vietnamese soldiers would stretch 20 times longer. As I walked down that black slab, scanning the names, it was painful to realize that, although these men gave their lives for my country, I knew nothing about them.

In a guest book at the monument, I wrote a dedication, not only to those who had fallen, but to all American Vietnam veterans still alive: "Thank you all for having fought for my people. We will never forget your sacrifice."

Toan Truong is a physician at the University of California at San Francisco Medical Center.