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W E K L E I M R A N G
SITREP KLEI MRÂW MRANG
BÁO CÁO TÌNH HÌNH

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The SITREP is the quarterly publication of COUNTERPARTS/TƯƠNG HỖ ĐÔNG NAM Á, an association of those serving in in any counterpart role, as part of their assigned duties, during the Indochina Wars of 1954-1975, and beyond. Full membership available to anyone serving in this capacity, in a military or civilian role, in what was perceived as an effort to halt militarist expansion in SE Asia. Associate memberships also available. Membership info and inquiries: P.O. Box 220, LaPlata, Maryland; 20646-0220. Also: <http://www.counterparts.net>.

This special issue of SITREP starts us up after a year in which a number of things fell apart. SITREP absence notwithstanding, our officers have continued to function, with Mike McMunn keeping up with the Members in Memoriam Archives, Grant McClure staying involved in a number of liaison activities(see photo above), and with a number of motivated individuals working to get the ball rolling, as evidenced by the ballot you recently received. Our finances are good(if stagnant), and, thanks to the near-heroic efforts of those involved, things will pick up where we left off....and improve. Your disappointment is regretted; your patience is appreciated. Let's get on with it.

Photo above shows Lao-Hmong Veterans Appreciation Day held in D.C. last year. Counterparts D.C. Liaison Officer Grant McClure was instrumental in handling mound of paperwork necessitated for proper permits and the like. We regret not(yet) having color reproduction capabilities to accurately portray the colorful dress of Hmong women in attendance. Thanks to Grant for shouldering the responsibility and work for this very appropriate event.

OFFICER ELECTION Next SITREP report election results, with all candidates being thanked for throwing their hats in the ring. All candidates are aware of our previous admin shortcomings, and problems arising from skeletal understaffing and resulting management lapses. As William James said, 'A problem clearly stated is half solved.'. We have much left to do, and have unfulfilled responsibilities to our counterparts, our history, and ourselves. All candidates are committed to having us saddle up and move on.

MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM Archivist Mike McMunn continues to compile and catalogue biographical data on our Members in Memoriam, taking this roster beyond a mere list of names. Keep Mike posted on any new entries, and send in any information, to include photos, book excerpts, articles, personal recollections and so on.

We regret to add several new names to this roster: Col. Vo Van Si, Frank Brown, and Pat Sherman.

Col. Si was an F-5 pilot and squadron commander, who passed away of a heart attack. He had been a driving force in the VN community and was always exhibiting energetic leadership in organizing events within the VN Veterans in the greater Phoenix area, among which was the successful effort to block construction of a most distasteful planned 'Jane Fonda Victory Memorial' several years ago. Col. Si was buried in his flight suit, as he wished. His children, several of whom were officers in the US military, sporting jump wings, bore witness to the character and dedication of Col. Vo Van Si.

Frank Brown, one of our charter members, finally succumbed to a brain tumor this past November, after a 2½ battle. Frank served two tours in VN, one in Chau Doc, and another in I Corps. He was an incredibly knowledgeable and decent man, had written numerous articles, and was very well versed in all aspects of the POW/MIA controversy, authoring several articles and bibliographies on the subject. Beyond this, those who knew Frank will always recall his devastating wit, treasuring the value of his friendship

Pat Sherman, another charter member, passed on this December. Pat, with colleague and Member Owen Kelly, were active in veterans's issues, instrumental in having our Counterparts/THDNA flag sewn. Pat served with SF, and remained with us, in all our ups and downs, throughout the association's existence. He will be missed by all.

Our condolences to the families of these individuals. We shall not forget them.

Please send recollections of these members to Mike, at address cited above.

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1999 REUNION Jack Frost, Nevin Williams and Joe West are now setting up the 1999 Reunion, which will be held in July, in southern California, in conjunction with ARVN ARMOR ASSN./Hoi Thiet Giap. Specific date/location to provided shortly in a special mailing. Plans for the 2,000 Reunion also underway, with probable location in general vicinity of Ft. Benning. Mike George working on this one, coordinating w/Adv. Tm 162, the Airborne Advisor Assn. and VN Airborne Assn. Plan to attend, and find yourself in the company of reprobates such as these, who attended the 1997 Reunion. Make plans now.





POW/MIA: No new controversies raging. Recent crash site excavations in VN have produced remains conclusively determined to be those of Cpt. Thaddeus E. Williams Jr. and SP4 James P. Schimberg. Third set of remains, of a Naval aviator lost over NVN in 1965, will not have name disclosed at request of the family.

The Pentagon has published a comprehensive, documented history of US POWs held during VN War. Authors are Frederick Kiley, a professor at AF University, and Stuart Rochester, a DoD historian. The book's 700 pages address, reportedly, a wide range of matters, to include psychological aspects of indoctrination, exploitation of POWs for propaganda, and movement of POWs in China, Laos and Cambodia. Available from: Superintendent of Documents; P.O. Box 371954; Pittsburgh, PA; 15250-7954. Price not indicated in news release. Thanks to San Jacinto VVA Chapter 343 for carrying this info in their publication, 'The Warrior'.

Better-late-than-never-literature THE BLACK BOOK OF COMMUNISM, published in France, is a voluminous 846 page academic(!) study which finds communism responsible for the deaths of between 85.0 and 100.0 million people worldwide. Total may be somewhat underestimated as Hanoi's ventures in SE Asia are tabulated at between 1.3 and 2.3 million in Cambodia, and 1.0 million in VN, excluding any consideration of Lao, Hmong, Boat people, etc. French leftists reportedly apoplectic over assertion that there was not any significant difference between communism and Hitler's Nazis, and that mass murder and terrorism were inherent parts of communism. Book is not known to be available in US, and/or in English.

Ever see a TV 'documentary' with a deranged 'VN Vet' bemoaning his fate, and/or spewing forth bizarre tales of atrocities, drug-dealing, ad nauseum? Ever get the felling that some of these people(sic) were phonies? VN Veteran B.G. Burkett did, followed through on a hunch, checked into some 'vets' profiled on TV, and ended up turning up dozens upon scores of fakes who had peddled their tales of woe to TV producers, and in at least one instance, gained renown as a VN/counter-insurgency academic expert who coned his way into an academic position, even giving symposiums for military groups and institutions. Burkett, working with investigative writer Glenna Whitley, has put his ten years of research into a book, STOLEN VALOR, which rips asunder what many people 'Know' to be true about Americans who served in VN, showing how an unprecedented distortion of history has denigrated if not outright slandered those who served nobly. Word has it Burkett and Whitley could not interest a major publisher, which comes as no surprise. Book belongs on every high school and college library shelf in the country. Available from: Verity Press; P.O. Box 503366; Dallas, Texas; 75250(call 1-800-253-6789). \$31.95 plus \$4.95 postage/handling.

'When the freedom they wished for most was freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free and was never free again.'

-Edith Hamilton

COUNTERPARTS LIT The Naval Institute Press (Customer Service, Operations Center; 2062 Generals Highway; Annapolis, Maryland; 21401-6780...or1-800-233-8764....or.. www.nip.org. or... customers@usni.org) has a number of excellent VN books in print, including a recent publication by Member Peter Scott:



224 pages. 18 photographs.
2 maps. 6 x 9 inches.
ISBN 1-55750-846-1. Hardcover.
November/\$27.95

LOST CRUSADE America's Secret Cambodian Mercenaries

by Peter Scott

When Peter Scott began a 1968 tour in Vietnam advising ethnic Cambodian Khmer Krom paramilitaries, they shared only an earnest desire to check the spread of communism. It took nearly thirty years and a chance reunion for him to realize just how much they had become a part of him. This fascinating chronicle of Scott's experiences with the secret army of brave, disciplined warriors is by far the most moving and richly detailed account ever published of the deep bonds struck in war between Americans and Southeast Asians.

Successfully blending intense combat narrative and stirring emotional drama, Scott vividly captures both the unique village culture of a little-known, highly spiritual people and their complex relationship with Special Forces soldiers, who found it increasingly difficult to match their charges' commitment to the costly conflict. With a novelist's powers of description and reflection, and a professional soldier's keen insight and analysis, Scott raises the standard for literature about the Vietnam War with this searing portrayal of promise and betrayal.

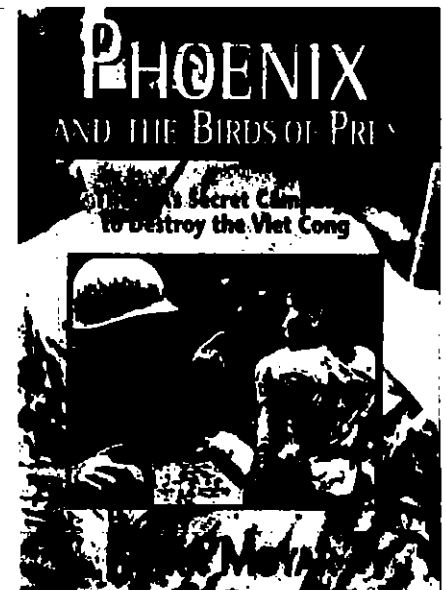
Building on his experiences as a Phoenix Program adviser near the Cambodian border, extensive interviews with Khmer Krom survivors, hundreds of hours of research in government archives, and requests for Freedom of Information Act disclosures, Scott seamlessly reconstructs the six-thousand-strong mercenary force's final crusade against communism, beginning in their ancestral home in 1970 and ending on the U.S. West Coast in 1995. Such a hauntingly evocative and highly readable book will both entertain and shock, and it is assured of a place among the classics on Vietnam.

Peter Scott served in the U.S. Army from 1967 to 1970 and has taught in a prep school in Ohio for twenty years. He is the author of dozens of articles and stories. This is his first book. He lives in Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

Another excellent work is PHOENIX AND THE BIRDS OF PREY, by Mark Moyar, an objective and detailed examination of the Phoenix Program, all too often described in almost hallucinagetic terms by who know little of the subject, and/or rely on now-revealed phonies (see Burkett book described above), several of whom are named in Moyar's book. Book is all the more remarkable given fact that author did not serve in VN, and began smelling a rat when subjected to college VN mythology which common sense told him could not be entirely true. Moyar relied on accurate and honest sources, to include a number of our members, in his research. No, you did not miss him on any TV talk shows, because his findings are not a 'hot topic' or otherwise marketable.

PHOENIX is \$29.95. Best write for catalog or call for ordering information, as US Naval Institute Members get a 20% discount, and a Maryland sales tax applies. Request catalog, which contains a number of other good VN studies, to include....

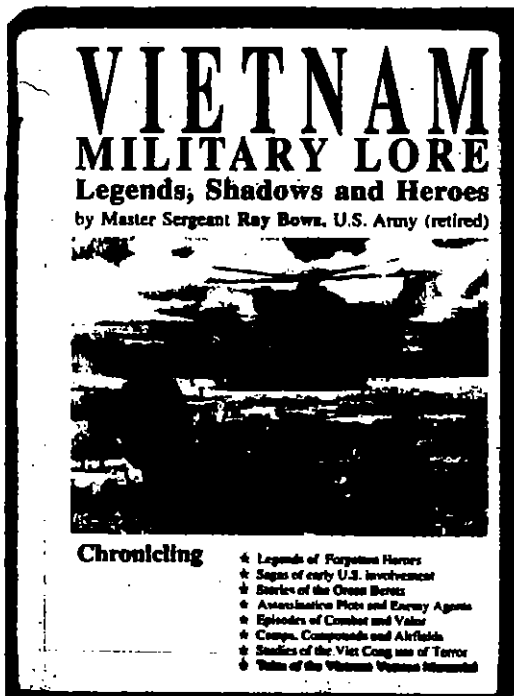
COUNTERPART, A SOUTH VIET NAMESE NAVAL OFFICER'S WAR, by Kiem Do and Julie Kane (280 pp., 17 photos, \$29.95). Do, former deputy chief of staff/operations the the RVN Navy 'recalls many little-known events of the war in this revealing memoir-including his



(Kiem Do, cont.) ..secret, highly successful evacuation of thirty-five ships and some thirty thousand at-risk South Viet Nameese during the fall of Saigon in April, 1975.' Sounds like a good read, and the Naval Institute is to be commended for giving voice to one of our Counterparts. Other current USNI titles: THE COAST GUARD AT WAR, VIET NAM, 1965-1975; OUR WAR WAS DIFFERENT, MARINE COMBINED ACTION PLATOONS IN VIET NAM(\$29.95); PRISONER OF WAR-SIX YEARS IN HA OI by Lt. Cdr. John M. McGrath, USN(\$24.95); THE WRONG WAR-WHY WE LOST IN VIET NAM, by Jeffrey Record(\$27.95); CODENAME MULE-FIGHTING THE SECRET WAR IN LAOS FOR THE CIA(James E. Parker, Jr.); MOBILE GUERRILLA FORCE-WITH THE SPECIAL FORCES IN WAR ZONE D(James C. Donahue); and NIGHT OF THE SILVER STARS-THE BATTLE OF LANG VEI, (William R. Phillips). There is a great deal of informative history here, much of which is of no interest to the major publishing houses and behemoth marketing arms. Get a catalog and order away. Our thanks to the US Naval Institute, and to Member Peter Scott, for preserving long-ignored history.

VIETNAM MILITARY LORE LEGENDS, SHADOWS AND HEROES

IS THE STORY OF VIETNAM FROM THE DMZ TO THE MEKONG DELTA - FROM THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA - FROM THE DEATH OF THE FIRST AMERICAN TO LOSE HIS LIFE IN COMBAT TO THE AMERICAN BUILDUP AND ESCALATION OF THE WAR - AS TOLD THROUGH THE EYES, THE WORDS AND THE DEEDS OF THOSE WHO DID NOT RETURN.



VIET NAM MILITARY LORE, by M/SGT Ray Bows is clearly a labor of love, with author having filled 1,200(rpt: 1,200) pages with stories, anecdotes, and encyclopaedic information on the war, with a significant portion being about US advisors, SF teams, and helicopter companies supporting early advisory teams. Letter received from Ray lists over a dozen: Co Vans KIA, many of whom had compounds, BOQs, BEQs named after them. Adv Tms 2, 22, 51, and 70 are covered in detail. Please note: this volume is not, rpt not, the same as Bows' earlier volume: VIET NAM MILITARY LORE, published in 1989. Books come highly recommended and endorsed by a number of credible VN Veterans and authors, as well our own Member Connie Menefee. \$50.00, plus \$6.00 p/h(\$56.00 total) from:

Bows and Sons Publishing
2055 Washington St.
Hanover, MA 02339.

Priority mail shipment.

Ray currently looking for info on Freeman/Anderson compound in Soc Trang, and Graham/Brown Advisory Compound, to include in a future volume. Help if you can. This is a worthwhile and important endeavor.

A Counterpart story.....

'Knife, one of the mercenary Thai forward air guides, had been killed when he threw himself onto an enemy grenade to save three other men squatting in a foxhole with him. He had seen the grenade come in and scrambled to reach it in the mud, but when he knew it was impossible he threw himself upon it. Such clear-cut heroics would have earned an American the Medal of Honor, but Knife received nothing.

Less than a week later. H. Ownby and Chuck 'Buddha' Hines (Note: USAF FACs, or 'Ravens' in Laos) were in the O club in Udorn having lunch. Ownby had long hair, and both men were in dirty, casual clothes, so the Thai waitress, a dumpy, homely woman, immediately spotted them as Ravens. She went across to their table.

'You know knife?'

'Yeah, works with Mule,' Ownby said.

Great tears appeared in the waitress's eyes, and she tried clumsily to wipe them away with the order pad she held in her hand. 'Knife-him die, him dead.'

'Yeah,' Chuck Hines said. 'Got it up on the ridge at night.'

The waitress said that Knife was her husband, and his death had left her alone with three young children. Ownby mumbled his regrets. The waitress stood with red eyes, waiting to take their order.

'Hamburger and fries, Coke,' Hines said.

'BLT and a 7-Up,' Ownby said. And that was the extent of Knife's memorial service, except for the twenty-dollar tips the Ravens always left on the table when the dumpy Thai waitress was on duty.

From: THE RAVENS, by Christopher Robbins, p. 309.

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Item: While attempting to waffle and otherwise obfuscate his role in the bogus 'Tailwind' telecast, former VN 'correspondent' (?) Peter Arnett stated the US military tried many experiments in VN and found, among others things, that 'armor was ineffective in VN', or words to that effect. Fact: In the 1972 Nguyen Hue Offensive, the NVA had 140 tanks to RVN's 296. Apparently Hanoi had also failed to realize that 'armor was ineffective' (a frequent delusion of those who have never seen/heard armor bearing down on them). Source: -for armor info- VIET NAM AND THE SOVIET UNION, by Douglas Pike, p. 125. Other intriguing statements from this book: '..the Easter Offensive failed not because Moscow was found wanting, but because the South Viet Nameese outfought the invaders from the North', (p. 92). By Arnett's logic, the RVN outfought Hanoi because they presumably had less 'ineffective' armor. Why is it that reporters can be wrong all the time, and keep their jobs, but plumbers can't?

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The Heritage Foundation prepares an annual index of economic freedom, measuring degree to which people are free to make a living in a manner of their choosing. 1998 results: Cambodia is 97th, along Egypt, Pakistan; Viet Nam is 152nd; Laos is 157th. Cuba and North Korea are lowest, ranked at 160th. Given resourcefulness of VN people, and endowment of natural resources, VN's continuing poverty is tragic testimony to Hanoi's corrupt ineptness.

Honoring the Men Who Died for My Freedom

By Q.X. PHAM

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of liberty must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it."

11/11/98

—THOMAS PAINE

The night I left Saigon I thought I'd never see war again. On a dark and humid spring morning, April 24, 1975, my family was rushed onto a U.S. aircraft headed for freedom. A life of joy and happiness amid a war in our backyard came to an end. Had the war continued and had I remained in Vietnam, I would have followed my father's footsteps to become a pilot in the South Vietnamese Air Force. Or I could have been shipped out to fight the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

Instead I came to California at age 10, grew up in a suburban community and graduated from UCLA with a bachelor's degree. My father, who had achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel, was left behind and wound up serving more than 20 years in Communist re-education camps. I wanted more than anything else to uphold his honor, so I enlisted in the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School at Quantico, Va., in summer 1986.

The officer's commission and the accompanying honors faded from my mind after the first week at OCS. I just wanted to graduate. It was a long, hot, tortuous and physically demanding summer. But the heaviest burden was the emotional toll of being one of the first Vietnamese-American candidates to undertake OCS. I knew

the reputation of South Vietnamese as poor soldiers remained on the minds of some OCS staff, especially the Vietnam veterans. The often-used word at OCS—*unsat* (unsatisfactory)—haunted me every time I felt I could no longer keep up on a forced



Vietnam Veterans Homepage

march or a long run through the woods. As I watched training films and recalled Hollywood movies, images of Marines killing Asians on the battlefields of the South Pacific, Korea and Vietnam left an indelible mark on me. I felt Asians had been demonized as a result of the Corps's illustrious combat history.

My classmate Mark Henderson, whose father was a Vietnam veteran, suggested that we visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington during our last liberty weekend before graduation. It was difficult to stand before the names of those who gave their lives to fight for my freedom. They were not even from my country.

Why didn't they go to Canada? Why didn't they question their orders? Where would I be now if they hadn't fought the Communists? What would their lives be like now had they lived?

Up until that point, my main goal was just to complete OCS and return to civilian life. At the wall, I realized that I would not be standing there without the sacrifices of those whose names were inscribed. I accepted my commission a year later, after finishing college. I wound up serving seven years on active duty as a Marine helicopter pilot and flew combat and support missions during Operation Desert Storm and in Somalia. The day the Gulf War ended, I felt I had earned my American citizenship and paid back my debt to our great nation.

When I visited the wall a second time, in 1988, I recognized the name of Second Lt. Terrence C. Graves, a Medal of Honor winner who was killed in action in 1968. Graves was 22 when he died; a portrait of him hung on the first floor of Graves Hall, an officers' quarters. In the painting, Lt. Graves wore his dress blues without any decorations and looked like the rest of the young lieutenants running around Graves Hall 20 years later. During my six-month stay at Graves Hall, I would stare at his portrait and wonder if I could ever live up to his sacrifice.

More than 30 years after the first American combat troops landed in Vietnam, the blame continues. Vietnam veterans say the press lost the war. The South Vietnamese blame the Americans for abandoning them. Antiwar protesters blame "warmongers." But the dead served. The dead did not point the finger at anyone. The dead cannot be blamed. They must be remembered and honored.

I recall something I read about warmongers prior to going to Saudi Arabia in 1990. A warmonger is a person who is invincible in peace and invisible in war. A warmonger is always ready to lay down your life for his country. Those whose names were inscribed on the wall laid down their lives for me and my former country. They were not warmongers. I sincerely hope I have honored their sacrifice with my own service.

Mr. Pham, a major in the Marine Reserve, lives in California.

Printed in Wall St. Journal, 11 Nov 98. Maj. Pham rightfully accords due honors to those US military who died for his freedom. Omitted is mention of the hundreds of thousands of SE Asians who did the very same. RVN KIAs alone are in the neighborhood of 250,000, and this from a country with a population, at the time, of around 17,000,000. Had America sustained the same combat fatality rate, almost 3,000,000 servicemen would have died.

Remember them...all.

Elections results and reunion info forthcoming soon.

HQ/COUNTERPARTS

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