

# 43



# COUNTERPARTS

## THƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

### SITREP

Volume VIII

Issue 1

Spring 2005

## COUNTERPARTS Needs New Officer Nominations

Commander, D.H. "Pappy" Hicks has informed us that due to health problems he will be unable to continue to fulfill his duties. In addition, XO Darryl Nelson has advised us that he will not seek an additional term in his office. According to the Bylaws, The Commander's term of office actually expired in January, 2004, and the XO's term expired in January 2003. Both Pappy and Darryl agreed in the past to stay on beyond their terms in the absence of new candidates for their offices. For the moment, both the Commander and the XO are remaining in office. However, the need to fill these two vital positions has become more urgent than ever.

The last issue of SITREP contained a form for Officer Nominations. To date, Jim Alkek, out Adjutant, has not received any nominations or offers to volunteer for these positions. On behalf of all the Counterparts Officers we are again asking for nominations or volunteers to fill the Commander and XO positions. Nominations and offers to volunteer can be sent to Adjutant Jim Alkek, XO Darryl Nelson, Information Officer Rich Webster, or to the Editors of SITREP. Nominations may be made by US Mail or by email.

### Note From the XO

*Time for a changing of the guard!*

*Ladies and Gentlemen of Counterparts, the time has come: we need to elected Officers to take the Helm for the next couple of years.*

*I chose not to seek another term as Executive Officer and will surrender that position as soon as a replacement is elected.*

*I would like to thank everyone for all the support and hard work.*

*Darryl Nelson*

## No formal Reunion this Spring; Counterparts invited to 30th Anniversary "Welcome Home" Commemoration.

By  
Ken Jacobsen

For various reasons, there will be no formal *Counterparts* Reunion this Spring. We have however, been invited to participate in the "30th Anniversary Remembrance; Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" celebration planned from 30 April- 1 May in Phoenix, AZ. One of the key organizers of this event is *Counterparts* member Lam Q Bui, who for many years has donated printing services for SITREP.

By the time this SITREP is distributed, all *Counterparts* members will have already received an invitation package for this event. Bill Laurie is also distributing a flyer with additional details for members.

Although this is not a formally scheduled Reunion, it is important that we have a meeting soon to plan for *Counterparts* future. There are vital issues to be confronted. Election of new officers and plans for future Reunions must be completed; vacant offices must be filled and we need to find ways to increase member participation in *Counterparts* affairs.

Key 30th year Remembrance events are:

**Saturday, April 30: Dinner, Reception, Ground floor Ballroom, Hyatt Regency, Phoenix.**

Registration 4:00-6:00 PM, Cash Bar 4:00-10:00PM  
Dinner and Program begins at 6:00PM sharp.

**Sunday, May 1: Special Remembrance Ceremony, Vietnam Memorial, Wesley Bolin Plaza, Phoenix.** The ceremony will begin at 9:00 AM. Transportation will be available to and from hotel. The event is expected to last until about 1200.

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# COUNTERPARTS SITREP

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## Commander's Corner

Lately I have been having some bad medical problems I've been carrying around for years. Last summer and this winter has been a bad one for me. I'm trying to work out of this, or at least Little Margie and the doctors are doing their best.

I can no longer hold down the job as Commander. I wish I could. Why? It's damn sure not because I'm so great and you need me. It is because you are a great bunch of men and need someone who can do the job. I like being a part of you and this vet organization. All of the Reunions I've been to, from the start to the last, have all been with men I have enjoyed being around. Comradeship with warriors is the best a man can be apart of.

Keep this thing together. Get some of the guys who can and will do the job and then, help them.

Thank all of you for helping me and not giving me such a hard time. I needed your help, I got. My thanks go to Darryl Nelson for sticking with me as the XO. Ken Jacobsen has always done a great job with anything we've asked, plus added a little gentlemanly charactership for us. Jack DeBoer, good man for his job and a friend I hated to see depart, and is missed. James Alkek has had a job that I do not envy nor could I do. Thanks for holding us together, Administration wise. Of course, the man who saved us money, and did a great job of printing the SITREP is Bui Quang Lam. Ben Meyers has always been a leveler for me. Thanks, older than me. Rich Webster has joined us to be the best PA/ Info man we've had during my time in Counterparts. Thanks to all and press on.

I ain't leaving. I'm just taking a long needed semi-official leave of absence.

Hang tuff,

Pappy

# Editorial

Anyone who has studied Military History knows that all battles have a turning point. Victories have been won because one side stood fast, and have been lost because leaders gave up, just as the tide of battle was about to turn.

Today, *Counterparts* is at one of those turning points. For a number of years our organization has struggled along, sustained by the effort and faith of a handful of members. During many of those years, the story of the Advisory effort in Southeast Asia was rarely told. Americans turned away from the subject of Vietnam, or even worse, left history to be written by those who had a vested interest in portraying the war as an evil mistake, and stigmatizing those of us who fought in Vietnam as either fools or barbarians.

Recently though, there have been signs of change in the air. The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech, once ignored by the "serious" academics, has become an internationally recognized resource for the study of Vietnam and the Southeast Asia war. The last Presidential election brought the issue to the forefront of public discourse and as Rich Webster notes in this issue of SITREP, we may have seen the "Last Battle" of the war fought in the '04 race for the White House.

The new interest in Vietnam has also led to increased awareness of *Counterparts*. Within the last year we have seen articles from SITREP republished by other Veterans organizations, had a Washington-based think tank approach us for our views on unconventional warfare, and most recently, responded to a request from the U.S. Army's Center of Military History for back copies of SITREP, to be used in the Army's history of the Vietnam Advisory program. Our Public Affairs Officer, Rich Webster, has had a number of articles posted in other Vietnam-related fora. The Bulletin board on our Website is becoming a lively forum for exchange of information among former *Covans*. In April, there will be a major event in Phoenix, Arizona, commemorating the 30th Anniversary of Saigon's fall and honoring Vietnam Veterans. One of the primary organizers of this event is Lam Bui, one of *Counterparts*' hardest working members.

Yet, in the midst of all these encouraging signs, *Counterparts* is faltering. Our Commander, Pappy Hicks, XO Darryl Nelson, and Adjutant Jim Alkek, are all long past their DEROS. As he notes elsewhere in this issue, Pappy must now step down as Commander due to health problems. Quartermaster Jack DeBoer, who worked tirelessly for years maintaining the "Village Store", has also had to withdraw from office.

In the last issue of SITREP we requested nominations for new officers and both our Commander and XO have made personal pleas for volunteers and candidates to lead *Counterparts*. The response has not been encouraging. According to Adjutant Jim Alkek, there have been no new nominations submitted, nor have there been any volunteers for the offices.

Many of us have worked for years, often against the grain of popular opinion, to tell our side of the Vietnam story. We of *Counterparts*, and a few others, have been able to keep alive the proud heritage of the Advisor and his Counterpart. Today a new generation of Advisors is serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and other places, meeting each day the same challenges that we met three decades ago. Now, of all times, it is important to preserve that unique heritage we helped create. *Counterparts* must survive.

We urge each member to find some way to contribute to the continuing life of *Counterparts*. Volunteer for any job that might interest you. If you wish, nominate a member (you can nominate yourself) for one of the vacant offices. Keep us alive. We've come too far to quit now.

*Tho' much is taken, much abides; and though  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*

...Tennyson

# THE LAST BATTLE OF THE VIETNAM WAR?

By  
Rich Webster

The last battle of the Vietnam War may have been fought on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004, as John Kerry was defeated in his bid for President of the United States by John O'Neal and the Swift Boat Veterans.

And what was the battle about? It was a battle to recapture the honor of the Vietnam Veteran who served gallantly and heroically in that war.

And who were the adversaries in this battle? On one side was the dishonest old media culture; CBS, NBC, ABC, *The New York Times*, and the *LA Times*, who backed John Kerry's portrayal of our Vietnam fighting men as enemies of humanity. The old media was quick to promote Kerry as a Vietnam hero, as described by his biographer, Doug Brinkley.

On the other side of the battle was John O'Neal and his Swift Boat Veterans, the POWs, and a large contingent of informed Vietnam Veterans who weren't going to lie down and let the media kick them in the face again. They weren't buying John Kerry's version of the Vietnam War and they weren't going to let America forget Kerry's traitorous activities after the war when he became a shill for the Vietnamese communists.

Reminiscent of their actions over 30 years ago when covering the war in Vietnam, the big media continued their harangue against Vietnam Veterans, calling O'Neal and his fellow Vietnam Veterans a bunch of liars. Not one time, did the major media outlets interview O'Neal or write a review of his book, "UNFIT FOR COMMAND," even though it was on the bestseller list of the *New York Times* for many months.

Not once did a major media outlet question Kerry on any of the charges leveled against him by his fellow veterans or call on him to release his military records, which many veterans think contains evidence that he received a less than honorable discharge because of his meeting with the enemy in Paris during time of war.

The reason they didn't pursue Kerry's Vietnam record and his traitorous actions after the war, was quite simply, that they preferred Kerry's version of the history of the Vietnam War, rather than the reality of it. Not once did it occur to them that their chosen Vietnam hero, the one who threw his medals away, might be lying. They couldn't pursue Kerry on this. It would have been an admission that they too had marched lock step with Kerry on the Vietnam War and the defaming of the Vietnam Veteran.

The dominant media culture who took the so-called moral high road in their effort to destroy America's support for the war in Vietnam, doesn't want to be reminded that the communists who promised a heaven on earth in Vietnam if they won, turned Southeast Asia into a holocaust once they came to power.

The fact that almost 4 million of our former South Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian allies were murdered after the fall of Saigon is a truthful reminder that the anti-war crowd and their cohorts in the dominant media at the time were conned by the totalitarian masters in Hanoi. Several North Vietnamese Generals have now written in their memoirs that the anti-war movement in the streets of America was instrumental in helping them win the war.

The anti-war left, with the help of the media, managed to not only help the North Vietnamese win in Vietnam, but they shifted anger against the war onto Vietnam Veterans, America's finest men and women, who fought a distant war for democracy against the totalitarian forces of Communism.

The reason the old media couldn't question Kerry about his actions that supported the enemy in Vietnam was because 30 years ago they were guilty of the same dishonest behavior. It fit their purpose to portray the Vietnam Veteran as a loser. Never mind that the other side had a policy of assassination and torture that killed over 61,000 South Vietnamese public officials during the war and created the concentration camps and genocide after the war.

That's why there is an unbridgeable gap between those who went and those who consciously avoided the war. The only Vietnam Veteran the old media can endorse is a veteran like Kerry who betrayed his fellow veterans with phony charges of war crimes, who refused to allow the Vietnam Human Rights Bill to be called to the Senate floor, who abandoned the POWs in his chairmanship of the POW Senate Hearings, who lied about being in Cambodia to dramatize his testimony against aid to the Contras, and even went so far as to include on his staff, an academic, Gareth Porter, who sang the praises of the Khmer Rouge and denied the Cambodian holocaust.

The media of the 60's and the early 70's had a powerful effect on how the Vietnam War was portrayed. As the war progressed, they chose to portray the Vietnam Vet as a degenerate and a loser- an image that found its way into our movies and culture.

Herman Melville once wrote that when a person who has power over you finds that you are the better man, he will do everything in his power to belittle and destroy you. This observation goes to the heart of the media's portrayal of the Vietnam Veteran.

The old media carries a guilt complex over the Vietnam War, and it's too painful for them to reexamine their actions. It might prove to be that they were wrong and were complicit in aiding an enemy in perpetrating a holocaust in Southeast Asia. It might mean an admission of guilt and that better men went off to fight the war, than the "let's- give- peace- a- chance crowd" who marched under the Viet Cong flag in the streets of America.

I was at a conference in Boston in July about "The Myths of the Vietnam War" which examined the shallowness and the one sidedness of the news coverage of the Vietnam War. On the Thursday night that Kerry made his grand entrance to the democratic convention, I along with 200 anti-Kerry Vietnam Veterans to include former American and South Vietnamese POWs, and Vietnamese Boat People, marched in a protest to the front of the Convention Hall.

Not one major news outlet was interested in asking us an intelligent question, and there were thousands of media people there. We marched to Kerry's condo on the Hill, and had a ceremonial reenactment of his throwing his medals back. POW Mike Bengé and another South Vietnamese POW who had spent 20 years in a prison camp in North Vietnam flanked me in the march. John Kerry's actions betrayed everyone in our protest march. "Good men died while John Kerry lied," we chanted.

It still resonates with a large segment of Americans that in time of war, a military officer shouldn't betray his comrades by meeting with officials of the enemy to attempt to force your own government to yield to enemy demands. Yet John Kerry did that when he met Madame Binh and the North Vietnamese in Paris in 1971.

That's why the Swifts helped defeated John Kerry with their message that he was unfit for command. The Swift Boat ads resonated with the 25 million Veterans in American, and were enough to tilt the election in George Bush's favor.

Some consider that Kerry's strategy should have been to rebut the Swift Boat ads, but how could he? If one reads the book, "Unfit for Command," the Swift Vets nailed Kerry to the cross. He had no rebuttal, except to threaten to sue the publishers of the book and to sue the movie theaters that ran "Stolen Honor." And the old media were covering for him.

I attended a rally of 7000 Vietnam Veterans against John Kerry on Capitol Hill in September organized by former Navy Seal, John Bailey. There were major news outlets covering the event including CNN, but not one network carried a word about the protest. The Washington Times ran a short article, and USA Today ran a photo of the lone Vietnam Vet, Bobby Mueller, who protested our rally. One guy against 7000 and that's the picture a national newspaper chose to run without any comment on the views of the other 7000 Vietnam Veterans there or why they were protesting against John Kerry.

John O'Neill was a speaker along with *Stolen Honor* author, B. G. Burkett. Another speaker, Vietnam Nurse Captain Donna Rowe told the story of how a group of US infantry soldiers had brought a wounded Vietnamese baby to her with shrapnel in her chest. The child's entire village had been murdered by the Viet Cong for being too friendly to the American soldiers.

"We saved that baby's life," she said. "We did not kill babies over there like John Kerry said. We went out of the way to save them."

The old media disparaged the Vietnam Veteran just as they had done over three decades ago, but this time the Vietnam Vets fought back by taking their battle to the internet, talk radio, and the cable news networks. What a wonderful example of diversity of opinion and freedom of speech, but this isn't the kind of press freedom and "diversity" the old media prefers. They want their own version of the history of the Vietnam War.

Those Vietnam Veterans who opposed Kerry were fighting for their honor stolen from them long ago by the media and the anti-war movement. John Kerry was front and center in dishonoring those he served with in the Vietnam War.

Senator Zel Miller recognizes the valor of America's veterans, "Never in the history of the world has any soldier sacrificed more for freedom of liberty of total strangers than the American soldier" Don't those words describe the Vietnam Veteran?

It would have been nice, if John Kerry could have uttered as noble truthful words as Senator Miller. If he could have been honest about his fellow Vietnam Veterans, he might have been President of the United States today. Instead, John Kerry, and his media supporters lost the last battle of the Vietnam War.

## *Christmas in Tan Nhut, 2004*

*By*

*Tucker Smallwood*

Today I would fulfill my purpose in coming here, to visit the village I'd helped defend so long ago. And I would be within a few kilometers of the place where my war and life ended. My emotions seemed fairly subdued as I greeted Van and Cuong, and we departed for the village of Tan Nhut Nam. It is perhaps 35 kilometers southwest of Saigon. I still had my original maps and had scanned and brought copies, but the bloodstains remained evident. It's ironic, you'd think as many times as I called in fire and support, I'd still remember those eight digit coordinates, but I couldn't for the life of me recreate them.

In '69, I'd leave my jeep at the Binh Dinh bridge. My base, on the south side of the Kinh Sang canal could be reached only by boat or chopper. There were now roads in the vicinity, and the drive out of Saigon brought us to a five lane toll road. (Three southbound, two northbound) Once out of the city proper, things seemed less changed, at least vaguely familiar, but Tan Nhut is not a significant suburb, it's an obscure little rice farming hamlet. We stopped several times to ask directions and as we got ever closer, I struggled to see something I could fix onto that said to me, "Yes, this is my place." We stopped yet again for guidance at a local 'store', usually a home which offered goods and supplies in the front area. I wanted to buy some incense and was offered a forearm-sized bundle. We turned down a side road...and then I saw the canal.

I was certain this was my canal...yet this was not as I knew it. Remember returning to someplace you'd known as a child and things seem smaller, somehow, now that you're grown? But I'd known this canal as a man, and there was no illusion at work here. It was smaller. In my day it'd been more than 80 meters across. It was now barely 30, the banks on both sides thickly overgrown with Nipa palm. Apparently it's no longer in use as a medium of transport and has been allowed to recede. The road now ended, we left the car and Van and I crossed over a small bridge to the south side, my side. We passed a school with the village name TAN NHUT printed on a sign and I knew we were back in my AO (area of operation). We turned down a dirt road, paralleling the canal, perhaps 8 feet wide, and walked west. To our right were small homes and garden plots, to our left vast paddies of rice and the occasional tomb. The ponds on both sides have lotus and carp and koi in their murky water. The vibrant green leaves on both sides of the path were coated with that red dust I remembered from each operation, that rich red delta clay. Workers in the fields noted our approach, and watched with curiosity as we passed. I then realized what I was missing seeing. There were no water buffalo. I'd yet to see one since arriving. I remembered tiny children, 50 pounds soaking wet leading those massive beasts of burden by a ring through their nose. Van told me they were no longer used, tractors were more efficient. Progress.



***Mailing a Postcard at Central Post Office  
(Note Counterparts Patch)***

I'd feared that in waiting so long to return, I might find a 7-11 on the site of my CP. No worries, mate... though there were power and phone lines now and in the occasional homes we passed, I noticed color TV screens. We stopped yet again to ask, and were told while we were in the right area, no one could recall any former advisor station anywhere nearby. And I realized that, unable to travel west by boat, I was unlikely to ever be certain of anything, other than that I was within shouting distance of my destination. Van and I continued west and I noticed a small feeder stream to the canal, then past that, a farm house. Something felt right about it and I left the path to walk up to its front. The day's heat was coming on and I was now dripping wet, just like old times. A dog barked aggressively as we flanked his home...and I felt the bite of a mosquito. Remembering "Those that bite by day, Dengue fever; by night, malaria"... and I was immunized against neither. I stopped to slather on repellent. Then thru a break in the Nipa palm, I saw the canal. "Close

enough for military work.” The home was padlocked and I was in a wonderfully private rustic courtyard, shielded on all sides by thick vegetation.

I'd brought with me a gift from my spiritual teacher, given years ago on a September 14th anniversary. *HEALING CEREMONIES*, by Carl A. Hammerschlag. Over the years, I've appreciated reading many of his insights into human behavior, but the intent of this book was to “create personal rituals for spiritual, physical and mental health.” The night before I'd given some thought to what I might do in this place, what words I might speak; offering some semblance of ceremony to acknowledge my grief, my yearning for peace, my sense of loss. I began by lighting bundles of incense and placed them in the four corners that represented the points of the compass. I entered that space, holding still more incense and began to purify with smoke and prayer to the Great Spirit. I bowed to all four directions, then lit a cigarette, to offer tobacco. I removed a small travel bottle of rum, drank some and sprinkled more about the space, offering spirits. (As I write this, those feelings are rising up within me yet again but my tears then and now feel less oppressed, no longer despairing but cleansing.) I spoke of and to my friend, whose picture I've carried with me all these years...and suddenly a dragonfly flew over my left shoulder and hovered within my consecrated space. I prayed for his well being and for all those who'd not come home and for their families. And I asked forgiveness and guidance for that time still left to me. I then removed from my pocket something I'd brought with me, a physical part of me from that time that I might leave here for all time. I will carry Viet Cong shrapnel within me to my grave. I should have died here. I will always belong here. And now I shall remain. I threw it and a silver disc engraved with my initials into the air, falling into the waters of the canal. And with my tears I felt a weight lifted from me. I had finally come home.

After a few more moments, I collected myself, left my circle and rejoined Van, who'd stood by silently, patiently. He's escorted many a veteran to some place of profound personal meaning. We moved to the shade of the house and sat down on the steps. Van is a Buddhist, we share many spiritual beliefs. He mentioned that we had as much time as I wanted, that traditionally one remains until the incense has burned itself out. I reached down to my feet and chose a shard of broken pottery to bring home, something physical to remind me of that time and place. Then for perhaps 20 minutes, I told him tales of the adventures I'd shared with my counterpart, Nguyen Van Dai. Battles, whoring, risks, laughter. For years afterward I'd searched in vain for certainty about him, eventually accepting what I knew in my heart to be true - that he'd crossed over not long after I'd been wounded



**Tan Nhut Airborne Soldier and his Family**

The incense had burned out, it was time to move on to the rest of my life. As we retraced our steps along the red clay path, I noticed children playing, fishing, along the southern side and still more on porches to the north. I stopped to remove some gifts I'd brought at the suggestion of my trip planners, Courtney and Trang of Vietnam-Indochina Tours. “Bring colored pens for the boys, bright hair doo-dads for the girls...just don't run out!” At Target, I'd found bright colored elastic hair ties and at Costco, a collection of multi-colored gel pens in a slim metal briefcase. It was time for Trung uy Den (the Black Lt. as I'd been known) to become Trung uy Santa...and the fun began. As we moved along the road, clumps of children on both sides were called to approach. Van reassured them we had something they might like...and reminded them, “Just choose one.” Their smiles and excitement were such a treat for me. And each, some shyly, some exuberantly said, “Cam on” (Thank you) and I responded, “Khong co chi.” (You're welcome.) Which delighted them even more, that this graying black American (the first any had ever seen) might speak to them in their own language. I had received my Christmas gift. It was perfect and I wanted to remember it in its perfection.

## **Survival of former U.S. allies depends on Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2004**

By Thomas P. Cadmus

*(Mr. Cadmus of Michigan is the National Commander of The American Legion, the world's largest veterans service organization.)*

Thousands of Christians from the remote central highlands of Vietnam gathered in their provincial capitals for a prayer vigil last Easter weekend. As they knelt, according to well-documented reports, communist authorities and soldiers in civilian clothes bludgeoned them with clubs, shovels and nail-affixed boards. The exact number killed and injured is unknown, withheld by a government that keeps its human-rights abuses well-veiled to the rest of the world. After the massacre, access to the highlands by foreign observers was blocked for a two-week period and, following that, was tightly controlled to only certain villages. Hundreds were reportedly arrested, tortured and jailed.

This was no isolated incident.

Severe religious persecution is standard practice in Vietnam, and it is escalating. Hundreds of Christians, Buddhists and followers of other faiths are in jail today, or under house arrest without charges, for peacefully following beliefs not authorized by the government. Vietnam requires government registration of churches and maintains control over their activities - from charity work to ministerial advancement to the content and publication of religious literature.

Religious freedom abuses have intensified in Vietnam despite the 2001 passage of a bilateral trade agreement with the United States and multiple warnings from the U.S. State Department. On Sept. 15, Secretary of State Colin Powell presented a report designating Vietnam as a "country of particular concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act, joining such reviled human-rights performers as North Korea, Iran, Burma, China, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. The report thoroughly chronicled dozens of government-sanctioned abuses, often violent, against many faiths, primarily those followed by ethnic minorities in the central and northwest highlands.

An estimated 400 churches have been destroyed by the government in Vietnam since 2000. One Catholic priest, Father Nguyen Van Ly, was arrested in May 2001 and sentenced to 15 years in prison for "damaging the government's unity policy" by writing a letter critical of the Vietnamese government to a U.S. human-rights commission. He remains behind bars, as do at least a confirmed 44 other religious leaders.

The Vietnam government routinely attempts to force believers of unauthorized religions to recant their faiths. Some reportedly have been coerced to drink animal blood mixed with alcohol in staged ceremonies to promote the revival of ancient tribal rituals that won't compete with atheistic communist doctrine. A new law, set to take effect Nov. 15, will allow Vietnamese authorities greater freedom to arrest anyone whose religious practices differ with government wishes, even in their own homes.

In the crosshairs of these abuses are some of the most loyal wartime allies America has ever known: the indigenous Montagnard people. Approximately half of the adult male Montagnard population was killed in action, fighting alongside U.S. soldiers during the Vietnam War.



After Saigon fell in 1975, most of the Montagnards were landlocked and unable to escape, left to face a vengeful new regime on their own. Only a handful made it out. Since then, while the rest of Vietnam has tripled in population, the number of Montagnards has been culled nearly in half through a process some watchdog groups call "cultural leveling." Others call it genocide. Accusations of government-coerced sterilization, property seizure and harassment are widespread.

Meanwhile, the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2004 languishes in the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The bill would simply freeze non-humanitarian U.S. aid to Vietnam at 2004 levels, meaning no new increases in funding until the communist regime proves substantial progress on human rights and religious freedom. The measure, H.R. 1587, was introduced by Rep. Christopher Smith, R-N.J., and passed overwhelmingly in the House on July 19. The Senate version was introduced Sept. 9 by Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., and was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But without further action, the measure will die with the end of 108th Congress.

A similar Vietnam human-rights bill introduced in 2001 passed by a 410-1 landslide in the House, only to die later in committee. At the time, Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., served as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and opposed the bill. In a widely publicized 2002 letter, Kerry wrote that he and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., alike feared "it may hinder rather than advance the cause of human rights in Vietnam. We are concerned that denying aid to Vietnam would actually slow human-rights improvements."

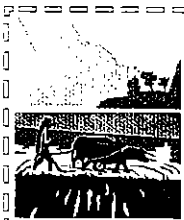
Smith's bill does not deny aid. It merely caps non-humanitarian U.S. aid at 2004 levels until Vietnam proves its human-rights and religious freedom policies are improving.

Since the 2001 version was denied a vote in the Senate, the number of killings, beatings and arrests of innocent worshipers in Vietnam is anyone's guess. Reports of abuses, meanwhile, keep piling up.

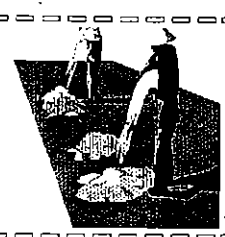
It is unconscionable to fail these prayerful people - so many of whom are allies we left behind in Vietnam - because some members of the Senate won't so much as give this bill its day in court. By failing to act, the committee also sends a message to Hanoi, which covets U.S. aid and trade but, as yet, has been given no good reason to change its draconian human-rights policies.

All these former allies - to whom thousands of U.S. veterans owe their lives - want is the freedom to pray for something better. Their faith rests in us.

Every American who values freedom of religion, basic human rights and support for former allies in their time of need must contact their U.S. senators immediately and demand a vote on the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2004. To neglect our former allies once again is, at best, to subject them to communist thought control. At worst, our lack of action delivers their death sentence. As the world's leading voice of freedom, democracy and human dignity, America simply must do better. All it takes is a vote.



## BULLETIN BOARD



### **John Paul Vann**

(The following was received via email)

*"My mother, for the first time in over thirty years began cleaning her hutch cupboard which contained all the reports of my father's death and this had put me in a melancholy mood, as such I did a search on John Paul Vann and saw your update for 2004.*

*"THANK YOU !!!!"*

*"I don't believe my father has received the recognition he deserves. To this day his service in Viet Nam (while in uniform) is not represented on his tombstone. Nor does his name appear on the "GASH". Additionally, if John Kerry honestly won the Silver Star then my father's action warranted the breaking of a tradition he forbade the transgression of during his lifetime, and he should become the first and only civilian in the history of the United States to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor."*

*"Having grown up in the household I had the unique opportunity of receiving the same briefings as the President and the Joint Chiefs from the time I was 8 yrs old until my 18th birthday. I agree that if he had not died the outcome would have been very different. However, have you considered that if he had not died there would have been no peace treaty. While 99.99% of America was oblivious to the accomplishments of my father it has been my experience, through contacts, that the reverse was true with regards to the enemy."*

*"If you have any desires in furthering your writings in this area I should mention that the Colonel's wife though frail is a treasure trove of information. You will understand that this is a difficult area for her but with the right coaxing I believe she would, for the sake of history, reveal much. We all believe that the work of Sheehan was in many regards a betrayal and an abomination. Reflecting more his own Anti-American and Anti-Vietnam War attitude than it reflected the views of my father. To the end, my father believed in victory and continually warned what defeat would mean."*

**Thomas D. Vann**

**(303) 688-6853**

**(866) 273-3852**

### **COVANS still on Active Duty**

(The following was received via email after the last issue of SITREP)

*"I wonder if you'll receive a lot of mail like this.*

*In the current SITREP, you made reference to LTC Tooker as "probably the last Co Van still on active duty".*

*"As an Army CPT in 1970-71, I was CO of the 25th DARRS, serving with DCAT 99 advising the 25th ARVN at Cu Chi. I was "RIF"fed in '75 along with thousands of other young Captains about to make Major - it was actually the only RIF of RAs. I remained in the Reserves for three years without drilling ("MOBDES") and then resigned. 15 years later I decided to come back to recoup my time and eventually get some retirement pay. The Coast Guard was the only service interested in me. So I started all over again, though I was too old to get another commission. I'll still retire in the highest grade held - O3."*

*"I'm currently on active duty as a Chief Petty Officer at Coast Guard Station Port Canaveral, my 11th year in that status and position. I'm scheduled to retire next year, mandatory because of reaching age 60, but plan to*

*put in for a waiver for two more years, which I may well receive."*

We ain't done yet!

**Ted (Cassin Y.) Stacy**  
**5585 River Oaks Dr.**  
**Titusville, FL 32780**

### ***From the New Generation***

*To everyone:*

*My name is Army Specialist Thao T. Bui. I am currently stationed in Baghdad, Iraq. I would like to wish everyone home front a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2005. Thank you for your supporting me and our coalition force.*

*Thank You*

*SPC THAO BUI*  
*Charlie Company Forward 2-103 Armor*  
*Operation Iraqi Freedom*  
*APO AE 09342*

### ***An October Debate***

#### **Two Sides of an Issue**

When the two sides debated the subject in early October, one side, the "Hasty and Aggressive", insisted that the Tyrant was clearly a threat to his neighbors, whom he had already attacked, to the region, and eventually to all of us. The "Wise and Cautious" side argued that his bluster was mere posturing. They admitted that he had persecuted ethnic minorities and imprisoned tens of thousands, but that his army was, according to the Experts, a shell, virtually destroyed in the previous war, incapable of sustained offensive action.

The Hasty and Aggressive contended that he was rebuilding his forces, and even more ominous, that he was working on weapons of mass destruction that could soon pose a major threat to the world. Stopping him now, they said, could save millions of lives later.

The Wise and Cautions counseled restraint and urged continued diplomatic action short of war, pointing out that an attack now, as the Hasty an Aggressive demanded, would be a violation of international law and an illegal action. Across Europe thousands rallied to oppose War and support the Wise and Cautious.

After the war that followed, Expert investigators carefully studied the evidence found in the ruins of the Tyrant's empire and discovered that the Wise and Cautious had been right all along. At the time of that October debate, the enemy's armies had indeed been greatly over rated, and not nearly as advanced as the Hasty and Aggressive had claimed. And the dreaded weapons of mass destruction had never actually been completed. Most of them were a figment of the Tyrant's overblown imagination.

The early October debate I'm referring to was not the Bush- Kerry debate of October 2004. It was the Munich Conference of October 1938. And The Hasty and Aggressive, led by Winston Churchill, were of course, referring to Adolph Hitler.

*...Ken Jacobsen*

## **Bulletin Board (Cont'd)**

### **History of the MAT Program**

A number of *Counterparts* members have indicated an interest in the history and background of the MAT program. The following is a collection of the information we have received so far. Thanks to Steve Merchant and Rich Webster for providing this information

**From:** Richard Webster [mailto:covanmi@mchsi.com]

**Sent:** Monday, December 20, 2004 10:44 PM

**To:** Steve Merchant

**Subject:** advisor school

*Saw your message on the Counterparts web site. I attended the advisor school at Dian during the last two weeks of November 68. I believe the school was only two weeks long then. Our graduation speaker was William Colby, and John Paul Vann delivered a talk to a classroom full of advisors.*

*the school must have been lengthened a week later on. Most of our attendees were combat vets pulled from the field units-me from the 1st infantry. I'm guessing now-but I think we must have had around 70-90 people in the group.*

*I want to say this, time has a way of fogging your memory, but I think Sir Robert Thompson was there at our little graduation ceremony standing around. Have I imagined this?*

*We had weapons training on the old American weapons the RF/PF's were using at the time, Vietnamese culture classes, language training, and briefings on the various aspects of the Vietnamese military programs-coming from an infantry platoon, I thought the accommodations were wonderful.*

*I'm writing a book about my experiences as an advisor and plan to have a chapter on the Advisory School. Any info you can supply me with I would appreciate.*

*There were 352 MAT teams at one time-is this correct?*

*I first shipped to team 49 in Long Khanh, then later to 86 in Long An.*

*simple question. What were the designations to distinguish between advisor teams, like in Long Khanh they were all tm 49, but surely each team there must have had a further defining number.*

*Rich Webster*

*former Lt.*

*when did the last MAT team leave Vietnam?*

*any ideas of the casualty rate of the teams?*

**From:** Steve Merchant

**To:** Richard Webster

**Sent:** Tuesday, December 28, 2004 3:28 PM

**Subject:** RE: advisor school

*Rich - We started a new 24-day cycle and also graduated a class every 8 days. We were really whizzing you guys through there. I need to dig out that POI from my bookcase. I have all kinds of other material I saved from the School. I remember the Vietnamese language labs in those trailers. RF/PF Vietnam booklet. I'm only estimating now, but I seem to recall cycles consisting of between 50 and 100 men. We used to send out a MAT Survey into the field, but feedback from you guys was sparse - maybe 1/3-1/2 responded. I worked directly for OPNS Officer, MAJ Paul E. Nixon, Jr.*

*When I started there, LTC Vernon Staum was CO (he was on about his 3rd tour at the school - he helped found the school in the mid-60s). Then we had LTC Francis X. Harrison. Lastly, we had a CO LTC whose name I cannot remember, but who was really hard on us, e.g., painting rocks during part of 105 degree lunch periods, having inspections in the barracks, etc. Guess when morale was at the highest? Yep, during the hard-*

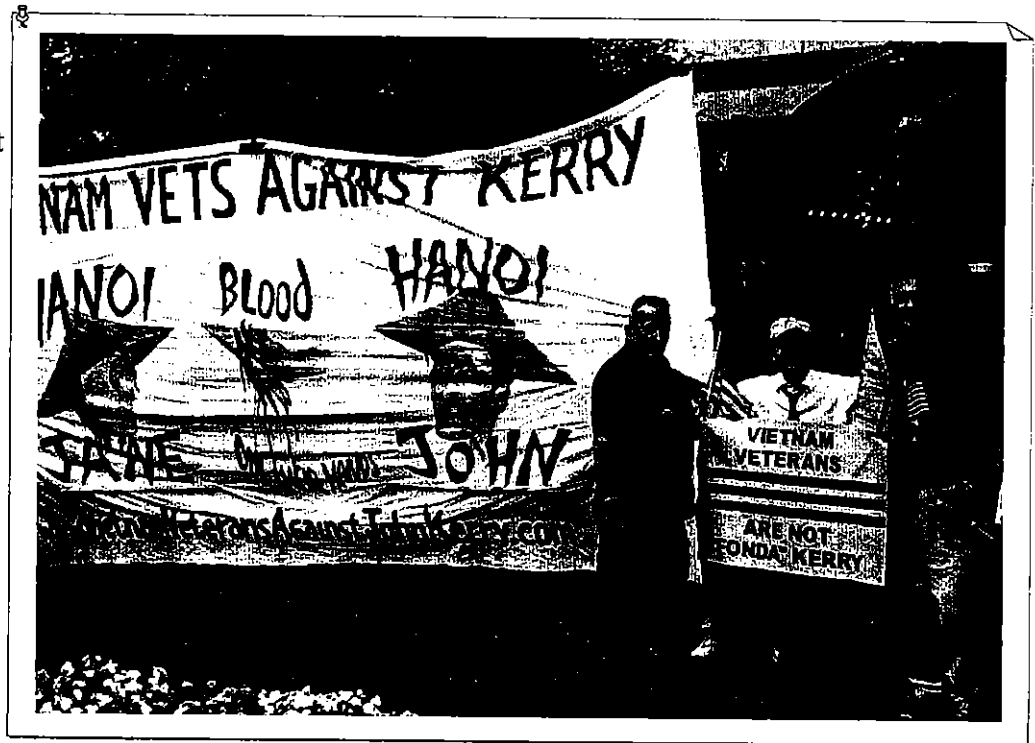
ass's time as CO. Makes everyone quit feeling sorry for themselves and focus their thoughts!

Of course, Di An was 1st Infantry Division Engineers - Bridge. But you said you were 1st Inf. Div. - INF Branch. More later - I'll try to look tonight. Keep in touch - Steve

**NOTE: A reproduction of the US Army Memo on the Background of the USARV Advisory School is printed on page 15**

### ***Vietnam Center 5th Triennial Symposium Notes Vietnam Anniversaries***

This year's Triennial Symposium at Texas Tech's Vietnam Center focused on American involvement in Vietnam in the 1960's and 1970's, a timely subject, since this year brings 3 major anniversaries related to the war; the 40th anniversary of the first major commitment of US ground forces to the area, the 30th anniversary of the fall of Saigon, and the 10th anniversary of "normalization" of relations between the United States and the present government of Vietnam. The Symposium agenda illustrates the continued growth of the Vietnam Center as a primary venue for study and discussion of the Vietnam experience. Symposium sessions included such diverse topics as "Literature and the War", "Voices of the Vietnam Diaspora", and "Teaching about the Vietnam War."



**From Left: POW Mike Benge, unidentified Vietnamese college student, and Rich Webster protesting in Boston at last summer's Democratic National Convention during Kerry's acceptance speech.**

### **SITREP Editorial Policy and Procedures**

#### **Copy:**

- Articles, letters and other news items are welcomed from all members and other subscribers. Copy should be typed double spaced. If you don't have a typewriter legible handwritten copy is OK.
- Electronic submissions via email or on disc are also welcome. Microsoft Word or Word Perfect is preferred.
- Photos or pictures can be submitted by mail or on the internet. For Internet material use one of the standard graphic formats like JPEG, TIFF, MIX, or GIF.

#### **Editorial Policy:**

- We will edit for grammar, spelling and clarity. If we feel the need to edit for length or content we'll contact the author whenever possible. We will NOT edit for political or philosophical content unless it's obscene, illegal, or libelous.

#### **• Send Submissions To:**

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## Counterparts Member Recognized

Below is a reproduction of a 1984 Article published in the *Phoenix Gazette*. The subject is the great success story of our brother member, Lam Q. Bui.



Tom Tingle, *The Phoenix Gazette*

Phoenix printer Lam Bui, who couldn't speak English a few years ago, shows off his family and a Vietnamese friend during an open house at Lam's new building. In his arms at left

is son Toan Bui, 1 1/2. Then come wife Van Bui, infant daughter Kim Bui, Buddhist monk Thigh Thang Hoan, father Nga Bui and mother Dang Bui.

# Vietnam's loss is Valley's gain

By Bayne Freland  
*The Phoenix Gazette*

Lam Bui had an open house the other day at his new printing establishment in Phoenix.

Present were a lot of names including a Buddhist monk, plus no small number of Asians who have become Lam's friends during his few years in the Valley.

Lam Bui got out of South Vietnam in a boat in 1975 with the clothes he was wearing. When he came to Phoenix, he knew no English. But in 1979 he opened his first print shop in small quarters in Tempe. Because of the language had opened and so had his business abilities. Both have kept sharpening.

A few weeks ago, Lam Bui bought a newly constructed building at 4324 E. University. It covers almost 8,000 square

feet, with mezzanine. That's a big print shop.

Lam's business over the past five years hasn't been steady, it's been growing. The new location is his third, each larger than the one before. First, 1,200 square feet; then 1,750, later doubled to 3,500 by going through a wall; now more than that doubled again.

Every step was a challenge that Lam met gladly, as a typical American entrepreneur.

We've written a lot about Lam Bui, but not in the past 2 1/2 years. We reported his entry into the printing business five years ago, at a time he knew very little about printing.

"I work," he said then. "And if something collapses, even bankruptcy, I will start over."

He made money by pricing his jobs competitively, and business kept turning up at his door. He

even got a government assignment from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, one worth \$5,600. Then the government wouldn't pay, because the BIA employee who had placed the print order lacked authority to do so and didn't know it.

Lam had to borrow money on his house in order to buy paper for the government job. He stayed saddled with that debt for about 15 months until somebody in Washington finally figured out how to get a waiver and pay him the \$5,600.

Despite his language problems when he came here, Lam Bui was no untutored peasant. He spoke fluent French. He had been a law student and an officer in the South Vietnamese airborne. His family was influential — but not after the country's collapse nine years ago.

With Lam in the Valley now

are his father and mother, Nga Bui and Dang Bui, who were in Hawaii until less than two years ago. They also fled Vietnam in 1975, with the aid of the United States Embassy. (Nga Bui was a South Vietnamese senator.)

A lavish Vietnamese buffet, including a roast pig, featured Lam Bui's recent open house. Sharing it was a Caucasian who said Lam was his best friend.

The man had been in deep financial trouble a few years ago, he said, and Lam went to the bank to borrow \$3,000 — just to help out. When the banker learned that Lam proposed to hand the money to friend who was broke, he refused the loan.

So Lam phoned a Vietnamese friend in Tucson and his \$3,000 check arrived the next day.

"What Americans would do that?" the man wondered.

**NOTE: The text below is a reproduction of the USARV memo on the background of the USARV Advisory School. Thanks to Steve Merchant for providing a copy of the original memo.**

....Ed.

### USARV ADVISOR SCHOOL

1. ESTABLISHMENT: The USARV Advisor School was formed in February 19681 as a Provisional unit from USARV and USMACV resources. The authorized cadre strength of 116 persons includes 24 Instructors who are selected from Corps Advisor groups and transferred to USARV upon acceptance by the School. The School was activated on 13 Feb 1968 and received its first group of students (25 Mobile Advisory Teams) on 17 March 1968. These teams were deployed on 1 April 1968. By the end of December 1968, the School had trained and deployed 353 MAT and had trained over 2,600 personnel. The school is currently training replacement personnel for the 353 MAT's distributed throughout the four Corps of South Vietnam and from 1 January through December 19 has trained over 2,500 replacements. The USARV Advisor School became a TDA unit on 22 October 1969.

2. MISSION: The mission of the School is to train personnel for advisory duty with RF/PF units, evaluate the effectiveness of the training and. recommends Changes in the RF/PF Advisor doctrine/employment. The School has the capacity of training 200 persons at one time.

3 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: The initial 94 hour Program of Instruction for the RF/PF Advisor Training Program was developed through the joint efforts of USARV and the Corps Advisory Groups. As a result of continual evaluation modifications have been made to the POI which have resulted in an overall increase of 27 hours for a total of 121 hours. Five of these hours have been devoted to village and hamlet defense in support of the 1970 Pacification Plan and include such subjects as Village and Hamlet Organization, PSDF Training, and employment of PSDF. Those subjects were integrated into the POI on 4 January 1970. Additionally, the original 16 day training cycle was increased to 18 days. The POI now includes 39 hours of General Subjects, 25 hours of weapons Training, 20 hours of Tactics and 37 hours of language training. Originally the instructor staff consisted of 17 Majors and 4 NCO. This number has since changed and the School TD now calls for four Majors, eight Captains and 12 NCO. Many former MAT Senior Advisors are filling these instructor slots, bringing with them valuable experience gained from their advisory duties. The Vietnamese Language classes are taught primarily by US instructors as a customary reluctance is noted in the average indigenous instructors to correct the American student. However, the School does have two Vietnamese Liaison Officer assigned who assist in 'me Vietnamese Language training. In late December 1968, the School received a 25-man DLI language school which has proven to be a valuable aid to the Vietnamese Language instruction program. Emphasis is placed on the conference and practical exercise methods of instruction, encouraging the students to share their successful experiences. Critique sheets are provided to each student at the end of the training cycle and a field survey is forwarded six weeks later to a representative number of the class to solicit constructive suggestions, techniques and experiences. The instructors also make periodic liaison trips to the Corps to visit MAT and obtain current information concerning their employment and problem areas. The training objectives of this School are highlighted by the key word MAT-motivation and training - giving each man the will and the way to become a successful Advisor.



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