



# COUNTERPARTS

## TƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

# SITREP

Volume XIII

Issue 1

Spring 2011

## COUNTERPARTS REUNION 2011 A Good Turnout in San Diego

By  
Rich Webster

Once again Advisory Team 31 from Cheo Reo was well represented with 8 members present including their Montagnard interpreter, **Ksor Kuli**, and new members and first time attendees **Charles Briggs**, **Jerry Weldon**, and **John Hackett**. Other new members attending were **Doug Reep**, Team 86: **Dave Pliny**, Team 66, MAT 25; **Bill Nimmo**, CAP Platoon Albita One at Hue, **Ken Delfino**, Riverine Division 533 CPBRS-IV CORPS, and **Don Leavitt**, Naval Advisory Group/Team 19/155 at Quang Tri.

Thursday, April 14, was a day of arrivals and renewal of comradeship from past years. We enjoyed the refreshments provided by Reunion Coordinator **Lewis Grissaffi** in our Hospitality room, followed, for most of us, with dinner at one of the many restaurants within easy walking distance of the hotel.

On Friday, we had the opportunity to tour the USS MIDWAY museum, located just a few blocks from the hotel. After the tour, many COUNTERPARTS spent the remainder of the afternoon recovering from climbing the ship's steep ladders. By evening though we were ready to embark on the Dinner Cruise around San Diego harbor. The weather was perfect, the dinner excellent, and the views lovely. Some of us were even treated to a free round of drinks, paid for by other diners as a small tribute to veterans.

Saturday morning's business meeting brought the formal transfer of the Commander's Office from Ken Jacobsen to J.C. Fischer. J.C. is a Charter Member of COUNTERPARTS and has probably held more Offices in the organization than any other member. (Minutes of the Business Meeting are at Page 4)

During the Business Meeting, the spouses did a special tour of the Cabrillo Monument and Point Loma.

Saturday night the traditional Banquet was held at the hotel. After dinner Commander J.C. Fischer recognized Lewis Grissaffi and Jim O'Malley for hosting the reunion and doing an outstanding job of putting it together.

J.C. then presented a Certificate of Appreciation to John Haseman for his outstanding performance as Membership Chairman and presented outgoing Commander Ken Jacobsen a plaque recognizing his six years of outstanding service as commander of COUNTERPARTS in addition to his duties as editor of the SITREP. The plaque had been custom made by new member Ken Delfino.

Approximately 50 people attended the evening meal at the hotel including Joe Oliver, spotted wearing a MACV ball cap at a San Diego Padres baseball game by member Bob Winzinger and was invited to the Banquet and signed on as a new member.

JC also recognized a Gold Star Mother who was one of the attendants serving the evening dinner. She received a standing ovation from all those present.

A number of members who have written books about their advisory experiences were in attendance including Terry Turner *Once a Warrior King*, Carl Nelson, *The Co Van*, and Mike Little (in conjunction with his son Sean) *They Don't Speak English Here*.

This year's Guest Speaker, Nguyen Phu Truong was introduced by his COUNTERPART in Vietnam, Bob Boyke. Bob was a police Advisor in Vietnam and related how Truong and his wife, Lee, were taken to a safe house before the fall in 1975 and then taken by bus in the middle of the night to Ton Son Nhut AFB in Saigon and flown out in a C-30 to the island of Guam. Because of the nature of his police work, Truong would have been killed by the communists if he stayed behind.

Once he arrived in the USA Truong worked at whatever jobs he could find but eventually, at the age of 41, was able to attend the Police Academy in San Diego. He graduated number one in marksmanship thanks to his training and experience in Vietnam. He recently retired as a police detective with the Asian Crime Task Force.

Truong praised America for accepting him after the war and the Baptist church for sponsoring his family as refugees. In his closing remarks, he noted that "We must be ever vigilant today against the Vietnamese communists in our overseas Vietnamese communities. The communist leaders want to propagandize our Vietnamese youth and create little Ho Chi Minh cities with red star flags flying in America and around the world. The fight is still not over against the propagandists in Hanoi."

Sunday, most of us said our farewells and began the trip home. The most often heard comment? "What a great Reunion!"

As a final thought, We the members of COUNTERPARTS, fought for the freedom of the Vietnamese during our tours of duty in Vietnam, something we should be proud of until our dying day.

Don't miss the next one.

See you in Killeen.

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# COUNTERPARTS SITREP

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## Commander's Corner

Our San Diego Reunion was well attended by 30 members plus many wives and some Vietnamese guests. The Reunion was hosted by Lewis Grissaffi and I say he did a fantastic job of setting up the whole party. Thank you, Lewis for an outstanding job. Lewis and Max Lund also did the midnight radio "watches" for the reunion but I noticed that some of the bottles were lower each morning.

Ken Jacobsen was finally allowed to retire as Commander and I was privileged to present him with a plaque for his outstanding duties performed as the Commander. I now have some very big shoes to fill as I take his place. Ken's plaque was made by Ken Delfino, a former PBR Swabbie who served in My Tho.

I also was privileged to present John Haseman, Membership Chairman, a Certificate of Appreciation" for his outstanding accomplishment of adding to our membership rolls and our bank account. John's only comment to me was "You got me." Thank you John.

The Reunion Dinner was served in the hotel and it was very well prepared. (MY Halibut was outstanding.) I was very proud to announce that the hostess, Penny, was a Gold Star Mother and I got to introduce her to the group. She got a standing ovation from every one.

Bob Boyke brought his former Counterpart as our Guest Speaker. He is now a retired San Diego Detective. He presented some very interesting information on the push by the communist party to recruit young American Vietnamese teens into the party.

A good time was had by all and it was tough saying Goodbyes to all after such a fine reunion.

For information on the 2012 Reunion in Killeen, Texas, see page 3.

See you in Killeen

J. C. Fischer

*Commander*

## **2012 Reunion to be in Killeen, Texas**

Reunion 2012 will be held at Killeen/Ft. Hood Texas, April 18 through 22nd. Hotel is the Shilo Inn. Our Contact person at the hotel is Donna Fischback. Put it on your calendar but DO NOT TRY to make reservations until the end of May 2011 because no contract is signed yet. Donna's contact info: for reservations is 1-800-222-2244, email [donna.fischbach@shilo.inns.com](mailto:donna.fischbach@shilo.inns.com). The hotel will provide pickup service at the Killeen/Ft Hood (GRK) airport ONLY. Room rates are \$90.00 a night, good 2 days before and 2 days after the Reunion. You will have to mention the Counterparts Reunion for these rates.

We will be hosted on Ft Hood by a Bde just returning from a tour in Iraq. Our trip to Ft Hood is still in the planning stages but it will be on Thursday the 19th. It is shaping up to be an event filled day. The 20th Friday we will be at the Texas Veterans home in Temple to meet with WWII & Korean Vets. The staff at the Veterans Home is planning a "big" day for us. Pictures will be taken with WWII, Korean, Vietnam, current Vets from Iraq and 1 future solider in his BDU's.

Friday's Dinner will be at the Saigon Cafe in Temple. Saturday morning is set aside for our meeting. An another activity is in the planning for the afternoon. During the meeting the wives could make a take a trip to Historic Salado for some shopping and lunch at Adelea's Bistro. Adelea's is a great place to eat. Rita & I have taken friends there many times. We must have a count of the number of wives who wish to make this trip because we have to order a bus.

Saturday evening is set for our Annual Dinner. Not sure if this will be at the hotel or on post with our host unit.

The staff from Texas Tech is going to be there to do live interviews with COUNTERPARTS members about our tours in Vietnam. Some of us have already done our interviews, but those of you who have not, please plan on doing so. Also the Texas Veterans Commission may have some staff members thereto give out info to Texas Vets tell about the Vet Homes Project. I am looking into some thing else but do not know yet if it will pan out.

Former Navy Advisors, please note: the Navy Memorial Foundation may be sending an interview team to do live interviews of Naval Advisory personnel. Please plan on attending the 2012 reunion so that they can record your advisory duty for the archives.

If you are interested in buying a souvenir golf/polo white shirt with the Counterparts logo and reunion dates To all Naval Advisors, it please let me know ASAP of the size so I can order them. You can also order one for your wife or girlfriend also. They are going to be between \$15.00 to \$20.00 each with size 2XX \$5.00 more. They will have to be paid for in advance.

I still have much planning to do but I will try to plan it well enough for everyone to have a good time and enjoy themselves. Lewis did such a good show in San Diego I'll have a hard time just matching it. Thanks again Lewis.

That's the show for now but like all good things, something might change for the better.

We'll be updating the info in future SITREP's, on the website, and by email.

JC

Key addresses: Shilo Inn: <http://www.roomstays.com/hotel/79186>

Killeen Ft. Hood Airport: <http://www.flykilleen.net/>

Ft. Hood information:<http://www.hood.army.mil/>

Saigon Cafe: <http://saigoncafetemple.com/>

**MINUTES OF THE 2011 BUSINESS MEETING**

**16 APRIL 2011, SAN DIEGO, CA**

- COUNTERPARTS new Commander, JC Fischer took over from outgoing commander, Ken Jacobsen, who had a tour of duty lasting 6 years. Before handing over command, Ken updated members on the cancelled Advisor symposium scheduled for Alaska. He encouraged those who were scheduled to participate in the event to write up their presentations for the SITREP because their knowledge of the Advisory role in a counterinsurgency is second to none. This invaluable ADVISOR/COUNTERPART experience should be preserved for historical purposes. Publication in SITREP would put them on public record at the Texas Tech Archives.

- Ken also reported on COUNTERPARTS participation in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration. He along with Grant McClure and John Haseman will represent us at a planning meeting on 26 May 2011. He encouraged members to fill out a survey that he will circulate via the internet.

- Ken reported on our IRS 501c (3) status and the State of Illinois Charter which is due for renewal in November.

- JC Fischer gave the treasurer's report: we have a current balance of \$11,587 as of today, April 16, 2011.

- John Haseman, Membership Chairman, reported approximately 25-30 new members this year. He reminded those present that the dues deadline is now Jan 1 instead of the past TET deadline. Yearly dues are \$25 and lifetime is \$250. John has done a tremendous job by reconnecting with members on the roster who were not paying dues in the past. Members who do not pay dues are not deleted from membership except those whose SITREPS are returned with no forwarding address. He encouraged those who have access to the internet to get their SITREP on line as it would save money from the snail mail SITREP. John reminded everyone that our Southeast Asian COUNTERPARTS do not have to pay dues. John also emphasized that one must have military orders or other documentation as an Advisor to be eligible for membership. COUNTERPARTS uses this to weed out phony Viet Vets and "wannabees" who wanted to join.

-Rich Webster gave an update on our COUNTERPARTS Montagnard scholar, *Romas Phana*, a member of the Jarai Tribe from Ratanakiri Province in Eastern Cambodia. Romas is studying Information Technology and is finishing his 2<sup>nd</sup> year of college in Phnom Penh. He was invited to the Philippines this year to participate in a workshop on developing web sites. Our first Montagnard scholar, Broy Makara, is now a practicing Veterinarian for a small NGO that is dedicated to preserving the Asian elephant in Mondulkiri Province. Our money has been put to good use by educating future leaders of the Montagnard nation in Cambodia.

- JC Fischer then assumed the chair of the Business meeting. First item was to decide the amount of money given to the organizations that we support that provide services in Vietnam and Cambodia. Cambodia Corps, Inc (CCI), run by member Tommy Daniels, was awarded \$3,200 to provide for Romas Phanna, and other expenses at the Indigenous Student center in Phnom Penh that currently has 11 Montagnard students in college. Vinh Son Orphanage was awarded \$700-Counterparts member Mike Little assists with this humanitarian effort; and VETS with a Mission was awarded \$200.

- Max Lund was recognized. He and his wife, Carol sponsor a Jarai scholar, Sev Pak, affiliated with CCI. Tommy Daniels reported that COUNTERPARTS members and our organization donated \$8500 last year to CCI. That's a shining tribute to those who gave to help the descendants of those Montagnards the US left behind in Southeast Asia after **the Vietnam War**.

- Discussion was held on how to access our web site on the internet. To be able to access our COUNTERPARTS member roster one must get a password from John Haseman. Otherwise the acronym, MACV, allows one on the bulletin board.

- Max Lund reported that he gave a two hour lecture on his advisory experiences to a group of marines in Michigan that were leaving for a tour of duty in Afghanistan.

- A discussion was held on how COUNTERPARTS could market its expertise and make members available for speaking engagements. Ken Jacobsen, editor of the SITREP urged members to write up their experiences and send them in to the SITREP.

- JC Fischer is hosting next year's reunion at Fort Hood, Texas, April 18-22. Those flying from Houston and Dallas, can catch a shuttle to Temple, Texas. JC will arrange for Texas Tech University to conduct live interviews for the Archives of the Vietnam Institute.

Submitted:

Rich Webster, PAO

### Membership News

Counterparts has done very well in reestablishing contact with members who had forgotten to pay dues or maintain contact after moving to a new address or changing email.

Our efforts over the last two years have brought in new members with new energy, and have improved our financial situation, which in turn enables us to help others and to participate in more initiatives.

We encourage all members to actively recruit for COUNTERPARTS. Most of us have had the experience of meeting other former Advisors not aware of COUNTERPARTS; they are all candidates for membership.

Most active members have taken care of their 2011 dues, but there are still some of you who have not become current in dues. If you have any questions about your dues status, or are ready to send in a check, please contact our Membership Officer, John Haseman. He will be able to give you immediate information and will happily accept your dues!

John's email address: JHASEMAN@EARTHLINK.NET and his US mail address is: 555 West Saddle Drive, Grand Junction CO 81507."

# THE PRIVILEGE OF HONORING VIETNAM VETERANS

By Ross Lewis

*(Note: Ross has done a series of interviews with many Vietnam Veterans, and has done some especially valuable and unique interviews with Counterparts Members. He's used his own funds and resources to travel all over the US to do these interviews. This is the only undertaking of this kind that I know of. He's made an important contribution to the oral history of the Vietnam Experience.)*

*Ed.*

In early 2011, I had the extreme privilege of reaching out to COUNTERPARTS as a means of seeking and contacting Vietnam veterans who had served in the early 1960s. My request was motivated by an idea I had spawned many years ago while I was a professional photographer in New York City. That idea was to produce and dedicate a powerful, elegant "Fine Art" book which sensitively honored the men and women who served in Vietnam. The book would be an indelible contribution and legacy to the dignity and humanity of these men and women and, hence; to our country.

As a former Signal officer I served in the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in South Korea during 1967/1968. As a son of a West Point graduate, Class of 1930 and a brother who graduated from West Point in the Class of '55, there is not a day that goes by that I do not think about my time in Korea and the great opportunity I had to serve in the military. That experience strongly impacted my life forever.

Approximately 20 years ago it occurred to me that I must do this project in my lifetime. As a civilian I was, for 10 years, an Associate Director with WCBS-TV News in New York. Later, following my years at CBS, I became an international professional photographer for large American corporations and the National Football League. That career took me throughout the United States and into Europe, Brazil and Africa.

It was during those careers that it became clear to me that visual images were a window into the sensitivities of people and their feelings in the moment. Photographs were never an "accident"! I was certain that the real human story of Vietnam was not told in the volumes of combat pictures which have been seen for many decades. Instead, the soft moments and gentle pauses were stored away in dusty albums and old boxes in the attics, basements and garages throughout this country. The hearts of proud men and women were frozen in time and resting in those boxes. Those visual and meaningful moments would clearly reveal the humanity of the soldiers. To me, our historical obligation demanded that we present these as a gift to everyone as a means of communicating the essence of those who served in Vietnam.

The journey for this project began last July, 2010. Since then I have traveled to 12 states and have interviewed 51 veterans. More interviews and visits are forthcoming. As I collected hundreds of pictures and met with many men and women, I soon realized that it was incumbent upon me to meet and interview veterans who served and represented all of the multiple eras of the Vietnam war. Their stories and photographs would clearly show the consistent, ever-present humanity of the U.S. soldiers who proudly served during a difficult time in our country's history. It was then that I turned to COUNTERPARTS to lead me to veterans who served in Vietnam in the early 60's.

In February I made three separate trips and traveled to South Carolina and western Arkansas to meet and interview Bill Bartlett, Joe Frankoski and Owen Kelly. Together, Bill, Joe and Owen served a total of 6 tours in Vietnam. What was ever-present was the generosity of all three men and their gracious willingness to share their experiences and photographs.



Capt. Bill Bartlett Advisor 2nd ARVN Cav, 1963

Bill, who is a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel was born in Texas, and was assigned in 1963 to Advisory Team 75, working with the 2<sup>nd</sup> ARVN Armored Cavalry Squadron, based in My Tho with troops in My Tho and Can Tho.

Joe, also a retired Lieutenant Colonel, was born in New Jersey and in 1963 was assigned to Advisory Team 88, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 48<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment operating in Tan Uyen District. Later Joe served as Detachment C.O. in Phuoc Binh Thanh (PBT) Special Zone in Phuoc Vinh.

Owen was a different story. Shortly after I returned from South Carolina I discovered, through COUNTERPARTS that Mr. Kelly, who was born in Michigan, was a possibility for this project. Owen was an expert Air Force mechanic who was sent to Haiphong in 1954 to aid the French in their failing efforts to hold Dien Bien Phu. To me, this was an amazing story; something which I had not anticipated. If I could possibly meet with Owen, the book project would take a dramatic turn and, certainly, his 1954 story would be a powerful early account of the Vietnam experience.

COUNTERPARTS last correspondence with Mr. Kelly was in 2003 and I was apprehensive to make an unannounced call. But I could not pass this up. Reluctantly, I called Arkansas, despite my own reservations.

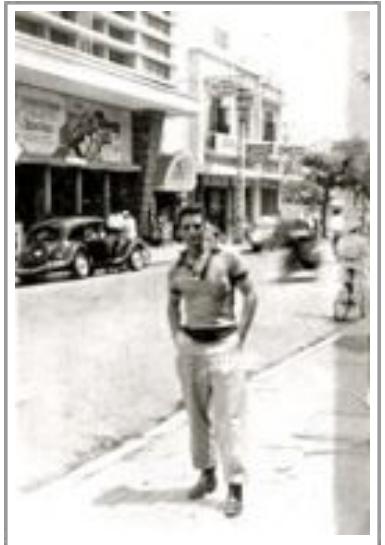
There he was. A gracious, enthusiastic man, extremely excited and willing to meet with me and share his photos and experiences. It didn't take a minute for me to realize that, despite the long distance, I was on my way to Arkansas. Similar to my visits to South Carolina, I was openly welcomed into the families and hearts of all three men.

The experiences with Joe and Bill and Owen were extraordinary. They validated all of my thoughts that there is clear, ever-present pride and dignity throughout the United States within the men and women who served in Vietnam. Their photos are tiny moments which capture the flow of "ordinary" life in a dangerous environment. Yet, through these moments, we see ourselves as appreciative and compassionate to life.

Surely, I could expand this article to include many details of the missions and experiences of all of these men. But that is not necessary here. What is most important is the acknowledgement of the generous openness which these veterans have been willing to share to allow people to know Who They Are as dedicated human beings who served the United States with pride and honor. Through their pictures, they give us a window into their souls and the "little moments" which reveal their humanity.

*Capt Quyen, Joe Frankoski's Counterpart, gets Hot Toc, 1963*

Every day I know how privileged I am to do this project. I have been openly embraced by Vietnam veterans from Owen to Joe to Bill and to all of the soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen and women who served in Vietnam from 1954 through the final days of the 1975 evacuation from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. The journey will continue. I deeply appreciate COUNTERPARTS and the men and women who have made vital contributions to support, what I believe, we are doing together!



*Owen Kelly, Haiphong 1954*



*Capt Quyen, Joe Frankoski's Counterpart, gets Hot Toc, 1963*

## COUNTERPARTS PERSONAL STORIES

*Every member of COUNTERPARTS has a unique and personal story to tell. This section will appear in each issue of SITREP and will contain one COUNTERPARTS member's story, told in his own words. We encourage all members to submit their stories, between 1,000 and 3000 words. We may edit to fit limited space or for clarity, but the story will be yours. It does not have to be a literary masterpiece. Send your material to: Ken Jacobsen, 607 Wampler Drive, Charleston, SC 29412, email [kjacobsen@knology.net](mailto:kjacobsen@knology.net)*

### VIET NAM STORIES

By Steve Leighton

*These stories are being written so someday my grandkids will have the opportunity to know of my experiences while serving in a foreign country in the US Army at the age of 19. It may have been the best year of my life, but I would not want to do it again.*

#### ENTERING THE US ARMY

In the 1965 period, the draft was almost inevitable. If you were not in college or married you would be drafted. Having finished high school and tired of school, I decided to work for a year before going to college. Soon I would learn that a year was too long to be out of school and single. By May 1966, I had received my draft notice and was bound to service. On the day of my pre-induction physical, I decided to enlist in the Army so I would have a better say in what area I would serve. Draftee' seldom got an area of choice and my thoughts were not to serve in the infantry. I wanted to fly and that was the direction I was going. During my physical, the Army determined I was "color blind" and that would preclude me from going into any kind of aviation. While I was greatly disappointed, I had already enlisted and was going anyhow. I decided the communications area sounded like it might be interesting, so that was my selection. Little did I know that it meant I would be on the ground...I just got to carry the radio!

Basic training took place at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. At the end of my 8 weeks of basic training, all of the major airlines were on strike and there wasn't any way of getting home efficiently for 2 weeks leave before going on to AIT (Advanced Individual Training) in Ft. Knox, KY. During those days, my Dad was a pilot for the MN Air National Guard flying the old C97 Stratocruiser. He told me to line up a bunch of guys and he would fly down and pick us up to go home. Well, I soon became the most popular guy in my training company. Eventually, we took 96 guys from the upper midwest home on that flight. We stopped in Sioux Falls, SD to drop off a bunch and then on to Minneapolis. What a great deal that was!

After 2 weeks leave I had to report into Ft. Knox, KY. The airlines were still on strike and again, my Dad was on a trip to the Azores. We too off from MSP and he landed directly on the base at Ft. Knox. I jumped out the back door (they did not shut down the engines) and walked around the wing, gave him a salute and they were off. The Officer on duty that night came out with a jeep and driver to pick me up. This 2nd LT was very impressed that the plane had landed just to drop me off. He volunteered his driver and jeep to take me anywhere I wanted to go. I reported in a day early and was appointed the Class Leader for doing so. During AIT, I also learned Morse code. Once proficient in code, I never used it again...the Army way!

#### OFF TO VIET NAM

During basic training I had applied to OCS (Officer Candidate School). My scores were high and I was quickly accepted (after a tough screening board). I had applied to go to Artillery OCS because they had FO (Forward Observers) in the artillery that flew L19 aircraft (bird dogs). I was still hoping at a shot in flying. At the end of AIT, I received 2 sets of orders...one for artillery OCS and one for MACV (Military Assistance Command-Viet Nam). Knowing now that I would not get into flying, I decided to take the MACV assignment. (I had heard that a MACV assignment would be the best you could hope for in Viet Nam.)

After a short leave, we were sent to Oakland, CA for processing into VN. Our plane had engine problems and we were 4 hours late out of Travis AFB, CA. We landed in Anchorage, AK for fuel and after several takeoff attempts, we were put in a hotel for the night. We promptly went to a bar that was more than happy to serve us (we were 19 and under age, but they knew we were going to war). We drank ourselves into oblivion and then got the last bus back to the airport without having spent anytime in the hotel. I woke up in Tachikawa,Japan the next morning...hung over. Again, we were delayed for about 6 hours due to the usual engine problems. (I was beginning to wonder if I would die en-route before ever getting to the war zone!) FINALLY, we arrived in Viet Nam. As they say, the wind does not blow in VN, it sucks! We deplaned and lined up in formation. The OIC (Officer in-charge), called out several names to step forward. Mine was one of them. Not knowing what this was all about, I got real nervous. As it turned out, we were the MACV guys and we were promptly put in a small van for transport to Koehler Compound...a MACV in-country processing center.

I spent about 5 boring days there going through in-country processing. By the time they were done with me, I was afraid to cross the street without running to avoid a grenade or two. They told us every story about GI's getting shot or blown-up on the street corners trying to cross the street. It was scary. By the way, the air had a bad smell to it upon arrival...and it would stay that way for my year!

#### BAC LIEU/42nd Rangers

My assignment was for Advisory Team 51, Bac Lieu, deep in the Mekong Delta. I took the Caribou flight down into the Delta area and eventually got to Bac Lieu. A short jeep ride from the airport put me into the compound in Bac Lieu. Seemed like a nice place and I was wondering if I needed to load my rifle. I was quickly informed that I was in a "safe" area and a rifle was not necessary...but keep it handy. Finally, I got my assignment as a radio operator at the Division HQ. It was 12 hours on and 12 hours off 6 days a week. Being a radio operator here was quite boring. Static on the radio most of the time and we had land lines, so you really did not need the radio...it was merely a back-up. Morse code...forget about it...it was simply no longer in use. After about 6 months of this, I was ready to hang myself! It was boring at best!

The 42nd Ranger Battalion had a 5 man team of Advisors. I was impressed with the red berets they wore and thought "this is where the action is." A Ranger by the name of SSG Ken Hargrave was killed in a major battle in February, 1967. Ken was a Special Forces (Green Beret, and held the RTO (Radio Telephone Operator) slot and they had walked into a VC regiment on an ARVN 21st Infantry Division Operation (Dan Chi 279B). Ken was killed in the opening barrage of fire and died instantly.

Following Ken's death, they needed an RTO on the Ranger Team. It came down to 2 of us and the other guy was married and scared to death to do the Rangers. I decided to volunteer and join the Rangers. Turned out to be the best decision I ever made in the Army.

#### FIRST OPERATION with Rangers

Eventually, we were given our orders for a Division Operation. I was the RTO and jumped on the slick (Huey Helicopter) like I knew what I was doing. I managed to get the area directly behind the right seat pilot so I could sit in that open door with my legs hanging outside in the air and have something to hang on to. Everything was fine and I had no problem looking down from about 1500 feet at the rice paddies below. We started our descent into the OP area and suddenly, I felt a couple of thumps on the bottom of the ship. Soon I realized that these were incoming rounds of small arms. All I could imagine was a round hitting me in the bottom of the foot and coming out the top of my knee...OUCH! I pulled my legs in the copter so fast I could have wrapped my legs around my neck. We hit the LZ (Landing Zone) and everyone quickly exited the aircraft. All of a sudden, all hell broke loose. There was shooting every where. Small arms, grenade launchers, machine guns...everything we had was firing at the tree line! I thought...what the hell did I get myself into? Soon I realized that the idea was to assault the tree line from an open rice paddy to insure if anyone was there, they would keep their heads down until we got clear of the open rice paddy. Makes sense to me now! With all the shooting going on, I was curious how you could tell if they were incoming or out going? I would figure this out later.

The operation was pretty normal...not much contact, lots of booby traps and pretty uneventful. After searching the area assigned to us, we would group up in the paddies, 5 and 5 stagger trail for pickup. Operation done...a few booby trap casualties, but not very eventful.

While on the same trip to the boonies, it was my 20th birthday. 1LT Loc decided he needed to go to town for something. Since it was my birthday, they decided I should go back to town and have a hot shower and cold drink as a birthday gift. We hijacked a sampan on the main canal and headed for Bac Lieu. In hindsight, probably not the best idea at the time. Again, the VC probably sensed a trap, so let us go! I got my shower and a cold drink and we were back looking for a sampan to take us to our location. Seems there were many volunteers since my Counterpart was armed! Upon arrival back in the bush, I had brought a large chunk of ice for my friend and colleague...SGT Lass...for a cold drink (ice was unheard of in the bush). It was the size of a regular ice cube when we got back, but that was enough to bring tears to his eyes! Ice was very rare no matter where you were...especially in the bush!

Well, upon arrival back in the bush, 1LT Loc decided we should have a celebration for my birthday. He managed to get a gallon of rice whiskey from a passing sampan. We quickly gathered at a "hut" to start the celebration. I was to drink a "shot" for everyone present...there were about 6 of them. While they drank one shot with me, I drank one with every one of them. (They had 1, I had 6.) Soon the sun started down and it was time for bed. The mosquitoes were so bad, that I had a hard time sleeping from the noise outside of my mosquito net. During the night, I suddenly had a come to "Jesus" meeting. I was crawling outside and vomiting in the canal half of the night. You normally did not move during the night, but I was in no condition to stay put. I was actually hoping the VC would attack and put me out of my misery. It was one big hangover the next day!

During the wet season, we were soaked most of the time. We soon learned to wear black cotton pajamas, (the VC uniform of choice). The PJ's were wet and when the sun came out, they would dry in minutes.

They were very comfortable and we wore them in the field many times. One day, I had called the resupply helicopter and asked for a case of .30 cal ammo and a case of grenades. The chopper was available, so they were on the way. I grabbed a couple of Rangers to accompany me to rice paddy for delivery and off we went. The chopper called for smoke on the inbound and we complied. He identified our smoke and was inbound when I saw his gunner draw down on me. While he did not shoot (that is the good news), he was aimed at me. I called on the radio and asked him to pull-up on his gun...it was me. He gave us the ammo and gave me an ice cold coke from under his seat...with tears in his eyes...and they departed. Truth be known, if he knew what I was doing with the ammo, he probably would have shot me! One heck of a 20th birthday!

#### ONE BAD OP

We had many operations, but there are several that stand out. This is one of them. We had assaulted the tree line as usual, and then started our search and destroy mission. We had passed through a small village...no one present...but many chickens and pigs running around. After passing through the village, I noticed the Rangers were all bunched up across the canal from us. (Normally, we put one company on either side of the canal for our sweeps through the area.) There was a side canal flowing into the main canal we were on. One guy had crossed and the others were bunched up waiting to cross the side canal. All of a sudden, there was a huge explosion and bodies were flying everywhere. The VC had set the perfect booby trap! We had 7 KIA (Killed in Action) and about another 9 WIA (Wounded in Action). That was it for MAJ Kiet. He ordered us to back up to that village to destroy it. The Rangers were very disciplined fighters and never took anything from the villages we passed through. This time, the Major ordered the village burned and completely destroyed. He was not happy about the men we lost that day and left that village in shambles. Don't mess with the Rangers!

#### CUTE LITTLE SNAKE

We were on another OP along the canal south of town. We spent the night in a village and in the morning, I was walking around our perimeter checking on the boys. In the Delta, if you dug a hole in the ground, it quickly filled up with water. (Our airport said we were 2 feet above sea level during the dry season and 2 feet below during the wet season.) One of the Rangers had sunk a pot into the ground and sat in it during the night on guard duty...trying to stay dry. He had left his watch station to have breakfast and I was checking out his mostly dry fox hole. In the bottom of the pot, there was about an inch of water and there was a small snake swimming around in it. I grabbed a couple of sticks and managed to get the snake out of the pot. I was messing around with the snake when the soldier returned from chow and he promptly stomped on the snake killing it. This was very unusual because every time I saw a snake, I would shoot it and the boys would get upset with me. The reason they were upset is because we ate the snakes very often and the ones I was shooting were too small...I was killing our future dinner. I was later told by my interpreter, that this snake was a bamboo viper...very deadly. We used to call them "2 steppers" because that is about how far you would go after one bite you. Another lesson learned.

#### RIVER ATTACK

We had been in the bush on a division operation when we got a call to prepare for extraction...we had an urgent mission to go on. When you are already in the field on an OP, I thought it was strange for such a call to come in. We extracted and were sent to a staging area near a major river. We put the entire battalion (400 men) along with our jeeps on large river boat. We headed up to My Tho and were to sit in reserve for the 9th American Division that were engaged in a search and destroy mission in the area. (This would be the closest I ever got to an American unit during my 1 year tour in VN.) We were out of food because we were deployed directly from an OP, so one of our guys jumped on a truck with some RF's (Regional Forces) and a green beret headed for the 9th Division. He bought some c-rations (they charged us \$1/meal) so we had something to eat. The 9th hit no major contact, so after sitting there for 3 days we were released to go back to our home base. We loaded up on the river boat and started back down stream for home. We came around a corner in the river when we started taking small arms fire. This was great because I seldom had an opportunity to shoot back. (My job was to direct air strikes and artillery on the radio...not to shoot.) The boys sat out in the open shooting an M79 grenade launcher...taking turns to see who could come closest to the area where the shooting was coming from. I let loose with all of my ammo from my M2 carbine. I fired all 90 rounds of ammo that I had and started to borrow from the boys around me. Soon the shooting stopped and I had noticed the navy guy on the boat was sitting next to me with quad 50's, but had never fired. I asked (through my interpreter) why he didn't fire the big guns. His answer was he did not want to clean them if he had fired them and the threat was only minor. Some war!

*Steve's story will be continued in the next issue of SITREP*





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## ***"I served" Bumper Stickers***

*From Operation Homefront: <http://www.operationhomefront.net/iservedsticker.aspx>* Since 2009, over 600,000 men and women who have served courageously in our armed forces have received "I Served" stickers. We want to tell them "thank you." Our vision is to give every returning military person that served in Iraq or Afghanistan a FREE sticker that identifies where they served. It is our hope that these stickers will encourage others to express a simple "thank you" for serving our country.

Many veterans and their families have asked for "I Served" stickers honoring those who served in Vietnam. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 1 million veterans who served in Vietnam are still alive today. Many of these veterans did not receive the gracious welcome home they deserved, and for many, displaying a simple sticker like this is their first time publicly acknowledging their service. To these heroes: Thank You! We hope you will request these stickers as a small token of our gratitude for your service and that they will encourage those who see them to express a long-overdue "thank you" for serving our country.

## ***Terry Turner MAT Article***

*From Terry Turner:* As most of you may remember, I used the Counterparts membership list last fall to get email addresses of those members who had been members of MATs. Thanks to Jim Alkek for helping me get that information. I asked all I could contact to respond to a questionnaire I had I made up for a planned article about MATs in Vietnam for an Army history journal. . I wrote the article and submitted it last October to *On Point*, the journal of Army history published by the Army Historical Foundation, which is also in charge of the National Museum of the United States Army now under construction on Fort Belvoir. The article has been published in the Spring issue under the title: "Mobile Advisory Teams: A Legacy Remembered."

If you are interested in Army history you might be interested in getting *On Point*. It comes with a membership in the Army Historical Foundation ([www.armyhistory.org](http://www.armyhistory.org)). It is written for general audiences, is well illustrated, and I have found it worth the membership of \$25/year. Thanks again to all of you for your help. There is an outside chance I'll be in contact again with another survey based on what I learned from the first. I'm thinking about another article for another journal with more emphasis on lessons learned--and how, apparently, they don't stay learned for long.

## ***Jim Reckner Recognized for Vietnam Center Work***

Texas Tech University's President Guy Bailey presented a special Lifetime Achievement Award to Vietnam Center founder Dr. James Reckner during the annual Global Vision Award ceremony to recognize the individual or office especially active in promoting campus internationalization during the previous year. TTU's Office of International Affairs hosted the award ceremony at the International Cultural Center, and this year's event was held on April 21.

The Office of International Affairs selected Dr. Reckner because of his pioneering contributions to establishing the Vietnam Center and his dedication to the institution over many years. Thanks to his efforts, and the dedicated staff he assembled, the Vietnam Center and Archives now hold one of the major collections of related documents in the world, and the Center organizes and hosts major events related to the Vietnam era. Dr. Reckner has also worked tirelessly to create a number of partnerships between Vietnamese institutions and



# BULLETIN BOARD

In addition, he has led initiatives to assist Vietnamese institutes of higher learning in a number of ways, such as establishing scholarships to allow Vietnamese students to attend university in their home country.

The annual Global Vision Award, first given in 2003, was created to recognize a faculty member, administrator or organization whose contributions inspired students to study and experience cultures abroad, as well as encourage a broader understanding of the world. It has since expanded to recognize a broader achievement in promoting campus internationalization.

Jim was a Navy Advisor to a VNN River Assault Group in Vietnam and is a long time COUNTERPARTS member.

## ***50th Anniversary of Vietnam War Commemoration.***

The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and “while conducting the commemorative program, the Secretary shall coordinate, support, and facilitate other programs and activities of the Federal Government, State and local governments, and other persons and organizations in commemoration of the Vietnam War.

The Commission is congressionally mandated and chartered by the Department of Defense to plan and conduct this commemorative program which may include activities and ceremonies to achieve the following objectives:

(1) *To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.*

(2) *To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.*

(3) *To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.*

(4) *To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War; and*

(5) *To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.*

After a slow start, planning for the Commemoration is again moving forward. The Commemoration Commission, set up as an office in DOD, has now opened its website at <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/> and has scheduled a conference for May 26th in Washington, to discuss future planning for various Commemoration events. COUNTERPARTS members John Haseman, Grant McClure and Ken Jacobsen will be our representatives. Information we submitted to the Commission can be seen by clicking on the “Links” button at the website.

One action that has already taken place is the US Senate’s March 8 unanimous Resolution declaring March 30 as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans’ Day”. In regard to the Resolution, Sen. Richard Burr, (R), N.C. the Resolution’s sponsor noted:

*On March 30, 1973, all U.S. troops withdrew from Vietnam under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. This March 30th, the Senate has encouraged Americans across the country to recognize Vietnam veterans for their sacrifice and demonstrate a warm welcome to these soldiers who returned from war to a politically divided country.*



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*I am pleased that the Senate has agreed to set aside a day to give our Vietnam veterans a warm, long-overdue welcome home. I strongly encourage communities throughout North Carolina and across the country to observe this day with activities and events that honor these veterans for their service. It's time they receive the recognition they have earned and deserve. This day also provides our nation with an important teaching moment. Never again should our men and women serving in the armed forces receive the same treatment as those returning from Vietnam."*

## **Killing of Hmongs by Vietnamese Government**

*(from Bloomberg news, May 6, 2011)*

The U.S. Embassy in Vietnam said it is looking into unconfirmed reports of deaths following protests by ethnic minority Hmong people in a remote mountain area near the Laos border.

Vietnamese soldiers clashed with thousands of protesters calling for greater autonomy and religious freedom, *Agence France-Presse* reported on May 5, citing an unidentified military official. Twenty-eight people were killed and hundreds are missing, according to Washington-based humanitarian advocacy group the Center for Public Policy Analysis.

"We urge all parties involved to avoid violence, to resolve any differences peacefully and in accordance with Vietnamese law and internationally recognized human rights standards," the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi stated. The Embassy is inquiring into "unconfirmed reports of possible deaths associated with these protests."

The protests are the third known incident of unrest among Vietnam's ethnic minorities in the past decade. In 2001 and 2004, Vietnamese security forces confronted Montagnards in the Central Highlands protesting religious persecution and the loss of their homelands, causing at least 1,000 to flee the country.

Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said a "large gathering" of Hmong people took place in Dien Bien province in the country's northwestern region after a rumor that a "supernatural force" would lead them to a "promised land."

The crowd was incited to call for a separate territory for Hmong people, "causing disorder, insecurity and an unsafe situation," the ministry's statement said. Local officials have convinced many to return to their homes, it said.

"Significant numbers of Vietnam People's Army troops from Hanoi, and security forces from Laos, have been deployed for special military operations directed against the Hmong minority people," Philip Smith, the executive director of the U.S. advocacy group, said in a statement on its website, citing other non-governmental organizations and people inside the region where the protests were taking place.

*(from Voice of America (VOA), 9 May 2011)*

Two U.S.-based advocacy groups say Vietnamese security forces are continuing a deadly crackdown on thousands of ethnic Hmong Christians along the border with Laos.

The Washington-based Center for Public Policy Analysis and the group Hmong Advance say dozens of protesters have been killed and hundreds of others wounded since the crackdown was launched in late April in Dien Bien province. The CPPA reported 14 additional deaths overnight Sunday, saying the death toll is now 63.

These casualty figures have not been independently confirmed. Most foreign journalists have been barred from the region.

The U.S. embassy in Vietnam said last week that it was looking into the reports. It called on all sides to avoid violence.

Hmong Advance spokeswoman Christy Lee said the crackdown was launched April 30 in the Vietnamese border town of Muong Nhe, when about 8,500 Hmong gathered to pray and demand land reforms and expanded religious freedoms. Lee said hundreds of protesters were arrested, with some of them transported to locations in Vietnam and nearby Laos.

Vietnamese officials last week said troops were used to break up a rare protest in the region. The authorities said only minor clashes had occurred and that no one was arrested.



# BULLETIN BOARD



## ***Ken Burns to do “Vietnam” Series***

(Excerpt from “TIME” website) Arlington, VA – March 28, 2011 – PBS announced today that Ken Burns and his longtime partner Lynn Novick are producing and directing a ten-to-twelve hour documentary film series about the history and meaning of the Vietnam War.

The series will explore the military, political, cultural, social, and human dimensions of what has been called “the war of lost illusions.” It will focus primarily on the human experience of the conflict, using eyewitness testimonies of so-called “ordinary” people – Americans as well as Vietnamese – whose lives were touched by the war. Parallel to the unfolding military narrative, the series will also tell the story of the millions of American citizens who became deeply opposed to it, taking to the streets in some of the largest protest demonstrations the nation has seen.

VIETNAM is slated for broadcast in 2016 on PBS.

*Editors Note: the tone of the TIME article suggests that this could turn out to be another anti-Vietnam effort. COUNTERPARTS members should keep their eye on this project. Maybe we can even offer to provide an input.*  
<http://tunedin.blogs.time.com/2011/03/28/ken-burns-going-back-to-war-this-time-in-vietnam/>

## ***Check Out Sean Little’s Book, “They Don’t Speak English Here”***

Sean’s story chronicles his first visit to Vietnam, back in 2000, focusing on the three days he spent with his Montagnard family-far-away. At age 7, Sean was most likely the first American child to step foot into these remote villages, and probably the last one as well. About a year after our visit, wide scale protests in the Central Highlands resulted in a clampdown, so foreigners no longer had access to Montagnard villages. Sadly, that’s still pretty much the case today. However, because of Sean’s efforts to please his dad by writing this book 11 years ago, he provides the reader with a glimpse into a world that is now hidden from view.

Please feel free to share this story with anyone you think might enjoy a fun read. Sean was only seven when he wrote the book, making his insights unique and honest. Having gone through the process, though, he’s been able to clearly remember all of the special moments he experienced in a place where “they don’t speak English.” By the way, the book is making the rounds in the villages, despite no available *Bahnar* translation...yet.

[http://www.amazon.com/They-Don-Speak-English-Here/dp/1589826418/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?  
s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1298154660&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/They-Don-Speak-English-Here/dp/1589826418/ref=sr_1_1? s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1298154660&sr=1-1)

(Some time ago, these two friends and Counterparts members were kind enough to write the above blurbs for my son’s then unpublished book, but today we’re pleased to announce that Sean’s intimate “little” tale is finally available at Amazon.)

*“They Don’t Speak English Here” is the rarified experience of one boy’s open embrace of an ancient, indigenous people, unknown to most of the globe. Sean takes you on his journey and into his heart without reserve. Through purity of spirit, Sean gains admission to our souls and proves that a child’s perfect vision may be among mankind’s finest implements of diplomacy and healing.”*

-- James Barker - “Battle of Kontum 1972”

I’m still smiling. “They Don’t Speak English Here” is an enjoyable and completely different story about life in Vietnam today. While at moments maddening and bittersweet, overall, it is a story of family, love, honor and hope. The pictures of Sean in-country are priceless.

- John M. Del Vecchio, author of “The 13th Valley”

## *Editors' Note*

*Below is a copy of the Information Sheet on Counterparts that we Provided to the Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commision Conference May 26. We sent them 300 copies for distribution to all attendees.*

[www.counterparts.net](http://www.counterparts.net)



# COUNTERPARTS

Túóng Hữu Đông Nam Á\*

**COUNTERPARTS/THDNA** is a Veterans' Association of US Military and Civilian Advisors who served in the Second Indochina War, and their indigenous Counterparts.

**ADVISORS** -- Served with Vietnamese military and civilian units throughout Vietnam, in cities in remote hamlets, in the countryside and on the water, living and fighting at the side of their Vietnamese counterparts from 1954 to 1973.

**ADVISORS** -- Were The **first** Americans to fight in Vietnam and the **last** to leave.

**ADVISORS** -- Were awarded the **first** Congressional Medal of Honor given in Vietnam (Captain Roger Donlon, US Army, 6 July 1964) and the **last** (Petty Officer Michael Thornton, US Navy, 30 October, 1972).

### **COUNTERPARTS/THDNA--Who We Are**

#### **Membership**

Military, civilian Advisors and Counterparts. Members from US, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Australia, Canada, France.

#### **Purposes**

- Study, Analyze, Record and Preserve the history and promote appreciation and understanding of the Advisory Effort.
- Promote Comradeship among former Advisors and Counterparts.
- Assist former comrades-in-arms and allies in the US and SEA, especially former comrades of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF), and Montagnard and Lao/Hmong fighters
- Commemorate the service and sacrifices of American Advisors and their Vietnamese and Lao/Hmong Counterparts

#### **Continuing Initiatives**

A Locator Service: We assist former Advisors and their Counterparts, and the families of former Advisors and their Counterparts in locating one another and renewing contacts.

The "Counterparts Scholar": We provide full funding support for a college/graduate level student from the Montagnard refugee community in Cambodia in cooperation with Cambodia Corps, Inc. and support other orphanages and humanitarian aid programs in Vietnam.

SITREP: The COUNTERPARTS newsletter provides a forum for discussion and analysis of the Advisory effort, and encourages written accounts of members' Advisory experiences and lessons learned, Reports on current events in Southeast Asia.

The Advisor Symposium: In 2009 we developed a program which a COUNTERPARTS team presented at Ft. Benning, GA to US Army Advisors en route to Iraq and Afghanistan. Five former Advisors and one former Vietnamese Army Officer discussed their experiences and lessons learned.

Lao/Hmong Memorial: COUNTERPARTS sponsors a living Memorial Tree and Plaque in Arlington National Cemetery honoring Lao/Hmong veterans and their American Advisors (<http://www.arlingtoncemetary.net/laosmem.htm>)



American Advisor and Vietnamese Counterpart  
Vietnam/American Monument  
Westminster, California

\*"Friends of Southeast Asia Peoples"



J.C. Fischer presents Certificate of Appreciation  
to John Haseman



Bob Boyke with Guest Speaker and former Counterpart Nguyen Phu Troung, Troung's wife, Lee and Troung's Brother



The Cheo Rio Mafia



The Ladies



Counterparts Reunion 2011 San Diego

## **MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM**

### **Tom Hargrove**

COUNTERPARTS member Thomas Rex Hargrove, whose 11 months of captivity by Colombian guerillas formed the basis for the movie *Proof of Life*, died Jan 24, in Galveston, Texas of heart failure. He was 66. As a 1st Lt, Tom served as agricultural adviser in Chuong Thien Province. Traveling mostly by sampan on canals and rivers, Hargrove spread the newly developed IR8 high-yield rice variety that doubled and tripled crops.

After the war, he visited Vietnam on another agricultural mission and met Viet Cong veterans who told him they had him in their sights but let him live because he was doing so much good.

Tom also began a career as a writer and editor with the International Rice Research Institute and devoted his life to bringing the "Green Revolution" to poverty-stricken areas of the world.

Hargrove wrote two books, a memoir of his Vietnam experience, *A Dragon Lives Forever: War and Rice in Vietnam's Mekong Delta 1969-1991* and a memoir of his 11 months in captivity, *Long March to Freedom*.

In 1991, he went to work for the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, based in Cali, Colombia. As he drove to work Sept. 23, 1994, he was captured at a roadblock by the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia, known by its Spanish acronym FARC. He escaped death several times before his family paid two ransoms and he was released in August 1995. Released in the jungle, he walked for two days and finally stumbled into a house in Cali where he was greeted by his family. Hargrove kept a diary written on scraps of paper that he used to write his book. The movie loosely based on his story — *Proof of Life*, starring Meg Ryan and Russell Crowe — opened in 2000.

### **General Vang Pao**

Vang Pao, a charismatic Laotian general who commanded a secret army of his mountain people in a long, campaign against Communist insurgents, then achieved status as their leader-in-exile in the United States, died January 8 in Clovis, Calif. He was 81.

General Vang Pao was born in December 1929 in a village in northeast Laos, had six years of sporadic schooling and worked as an interpreter for French colonial forces fighting the Japanese in World War II. He became a sergeant in the French colonial army, and, in 1954, an officer in the army of the newly independent Laos.

When the C.I.A. approached him in 1960, he was already fighting Laotian Communists. The next year, he would also fight Communists from Vietnam after they had crossed the Laotian border. The Times in 1971 said that the C.I.A. did not command the general's army at any level, because his pride and temper would have never permitted it.

The general led troops into combat personally, suffered serious wounds and was known to declare: "If we die, we die together. Nobody will be left behind." About 35,000 Hmong died in battle.

General Vang Pao was also skilled at uniting the 18 clans of Hmong. One technique was to marry women from different tribes, as multiple marriages were permitted in Laos. He had to divorce all but one of his five wives when he went to the United States in 1975, settling on a ranch in Montana.

His son Chu Vang once told reporters that General Vang Pao had fathered more than 20 children and had more than 40 grandchildren. Complete information about survivors was not available.

## **MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM**

General Vang Pao lived more recently in Southern California and Minnesota, where many of the 200,000 Hmong that followed him to the United States or were born here live. His picture hangs in thousands of homes

In 2007 he was charged with plotting to provide \$10 million in arms to antigovernment forces in Laos. The charges were dropped two years later.

He also tirelessly worked to gain recognition by the US for the soldiers of his Army. With the aid and assistance of Former Advisors and COUNTERPARTS members including Grant McClure, D.L. "Pappy" Hicks, Dr. Jane Hamilton-Merritt, and Mike Benge, Congress eventually gave recognition to the "Secret Army" and a Memorial was established at Arlington National Cemetery.

### **COL. Nguyen Duc Khoai,**

I Corps Ranger Command 28 November 2010

### **Arnold Henry Widvey, USA,**

Advisory Team 70 (unknown)

### **Lt. Col. Tran Van Manh,**

Province Chief, Phu-Yen Province 2002

### **Albert L. "Buck" Kotzebue, LTC USA-Ret,**

Senior Advisor, Kien Hoa Province (exact date or year not known)

### **John Dalelio**

Advisor, 18th ARVN, 20 October 2007

### **Y Ghok Nie Krieng, a leader in the Montagnard Resistance and Independence Movement.**

Born on August 1, 1944, in, DakLak Province, Central Highlands of Vietnam. He was of the Ede tribe.

1986, the Montagnards laid down their arms and sought political asylum in U.S. and in November came to the United States. Once in the United States, the group was warmly welcomed in North Carolina. Y Ghok Nie Krieng and his family would live in Greensboro, NC. He would never give up his deep love and vision of freedom and self-determination for the Montagnard people. Although his health restricted his life in later years he never forgot his beloved people in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

After long and painful suffering, Y Ghok Nie Krieng, passed away on March 7, 2011, at Cone Hospital in Greensboro, NC USA, surrounded by friends and family who loved him. His beloved wife and three children will miss him greatly, as will the Montagnard community. He was a leader in the historic struggle for Montagnard self-determination, human rights, and freedom in an independent Montagnard homeland.

The former leaders and members of the Montagnard movement will never forget what Y Ghok Nie Krieng sacrificed, nor will they forget his courage, vision and leadership during the long, hard years of struggle in the jungle. He leaves a legacy with an urgent call for action, a call for Montagnards to take responsibility for the future of the Montagnard people.



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