



# COUNTERPARTS

## TƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

# SITREP

Volume XIV

Issue 2

Fall 2012

## Reunion 2013: Viva Las Vegas!

By  
Ken Jacobsen

Counterparts' 2013 Reunion will be held April 17-21 2013 at the **Golden Nugget Hotel**. Reunion Coordinator Lou Rothenstein has obtained some outstanding deals on hotel rates for us. Here they are:

**Carson Tower**      \$42.00,    \$82.00 Fri/Sat  
**Gold Tower**        \$52.00,    \$92.00 Fri/Sat  
**Rush Tower King**    \$42.00,    \$122.00 Fri/Sat

Rates are good two days prior and two days after Reunion dates. Members who need Handicap rooms must make reservations at least two weeks before the Reunion.. You can get more info and see photos of the rooms on the hotel website at [www.goldennugget.com](http://www.goldennugget.com).

To make reservations, contact Barbara Billmyer, National Sales Manager at 702-386-8262 or by email at [bbillmeyer@goldennugget.com](mailto:bbillmeyer@goldennugget.com). Reunion Registration will begin on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 17. Our Hospitality Suite and the Village Market will be open.

For those who are considering traveling by RV, there is an RV Park downtown for retirees. Also check out nearby Nellis AFB.

Lou has also prepared a Pre-Registration form, (See page four of this SITREP) that lists costs for the Reunion. If you plan to attend please complete this Pre-Registration and return it to Lou as soon as possible so he can move forward with planning.

Downtown Las Vegas has been undergoing quite a transformation. For the ladies, there is a lot of good shopping within 10 minutes. Good restaurants abound and there are many shows to see. If you have the time, consider staying a few days more to visit nearby attractions. The Red Rock Canyon National Preserve, Valley of Fire State Park offer interesting vistas and the Grand Canyon, Zion and Bryce National Parks and Death Valley are not far off. Check out [www.visitlasvegas.com](http://www.visitlasvegas.com) and [www.vegas.com](http://www.vegas.com).

We are also planning for a tour of Nellis AFB, the home of the *Thunderbirds*, the US Air Force's Aerial Demonstration Team. There is a museum there that depicts their history.

Other tour stops will include training facilities provided fighter pilots from the U.S. and many foreign nations. Nellis is also the site of the Air Force adversary training program "Red Flag." More info at website, [www.nellis.af.mil](http://www.nellis.af.mil).

A tour to Hoover Dam has also been scheduled. In addition to a tour through the dam itself, there is a museum in Boulder City that depicts the construction process. Another attraction is the Atomic Testing Museum. This new museum has recently become a member of the Smithsonian Institute system. It is unique in the world. Other museums in Las Vegas include the Neon Museum, where signs of some of the original Casinos are displayed. There is also the "Mob Museum" that depicts the past of Las Vegas from both sides of the law. This is within walking distance of the hotel.

### Reunion Schedule

( Trivia Quiz will hopefully be back as a 50/50 fund raiser @ \$3.00 per questionnaire)

**Wednesday 17 April:** Hotel and Reunion Registration

**Thursday 18 April:** Tour Hoover Dam, Boulder City Lunch and Atomic Testing Museum by Coach.

**Friday 19 April:** Tour of Nellis AFB hosted by 99<sup>th</sup> Air Base Wing. **Must have a valid ID or Drivers License.** Lunch at Dining Facility or Club. Cash only. Alternative tour for shoppers is possible. Dinner at a Vietnamese Restaurant in Chinatown. If you want the Vietnamese favorite, 7 Courses of Beef, please indicate number of meals on Registration Form, page 4 of this SITREP. Cost will probably be around \$30.00

**Saturday 20 April:** Business meeting in AM. Banquet Dinner PM. Guest speaker to be determined

**Sunday, 21 April:** Farewells.

Reunion Coordinator Louis Rothenstein can be contacted at [loumicm@yahoo.com](mailto:loumicm@yahoo.com) Tel. 702 368 1065, mobile 702 235 9940, or by mail to Louis Rothenstein, 336 Forest Ridge St. Henderson NV 89014

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# COUNTERPARTS SITREP

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## Commander's Corner

More new Life Member Certificates have been completed and are numbered as such: #027; then #116 through #159. If your number is not included or you don't know the status of your membership you need to contact J. C. Fischer to issue you a certificate. E-mail address is [traindepot@hot.rr.com](mailto:traindepot@hot.rr.com) This is the best means to contact me.

**Reunion in Las Vegas:** PLEASE do not wait till the last minute to let Lou Rothenstein know you are coming. He has a lot of planning to do and much of it depends on how many members are attending. If he is planning some activity for the wives he needs to know how many wives will be attending. Planning is still in the early stages at this point and we're sure that any ideas or recommendations from members will be welcome.

If you were awarded a Combat Infantry Badge in Vietnam (or any other time), there is a national association of the "Blue Badge." Email [sandzc@aol.com](mailto:sandzc@aol.com) The National Commander is Bill Cross a former MACV Team member.

**Recruiting Cards:** If you need more of these cards, send me a self-addressed stamped envelope and I'll send you some. I have found them to be very useful to carry when meeting a former adviser, and an excellent way to provide the opportunity to find out about us through our web site. The Recruiting Cards have already paid off in the form of new memberships. Remember, there are still many former Advisors out there who don't know about us, but might be good possibilities for membership.

**Name Tags.** If you saved yours and your spouse's from the Killeen Reunion and intend to attend the 2013 Reunion in Las Vegas you can use your name tag from last year. If you will not need a name tag this year, let Reunion Coordinator Lou Rothenstein know. The new name tags are also useful to identify you when attending other non-Counterparts Veterans events.

**P.S.** We often get calls or inquiries asking for the name or email address of various *Counterparts* Officers. Many members forget that there is a list of Officers published each SITREP. It is directly to the left of this column, here on page 2.

.....J.C. Fischer  
*Commander, Counterparts/THDNA*

*John C. Fischer  
100 Red Oak Cir  
Temple TX 76502-3503*

## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

**DUES REMINDER. COUNTERPARTS DUES ARE PAYABLE ON 1 JANUARY 2013. DUES FOR 2013 REMAIN THE SAME AS THIS YEAR -- \$25.00, OR UPGRADE TO LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP FOR \$250.00. DUES ARE THE PRIMARY INCOME FOR COUNTERPARTS AND GO TO SUPPORT OUR MANY PROGRAMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES ON TIME AND AVOID A DUNNING NOTICE FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP OFFICER. CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO "COUNTERPARTS" AND MAILED TO MEMBERSHIP OFFICER JOHN HASEMAN, AT THIS ADDRESS:**

*John Haseman  
555 West Saddle Drive  
Grand Junction, CO 81507*  
*Questions? email [jhaseman@earthlink.net](mailto:jhaseman@earthlink.net)*

### ***Welcome Aboard New Members!***

Joseph Oliver 1215 Muirlands Drive La Jolla, CA 92037	Army/AT 86, Long An Prov
Ambrose "Gary" Laverty 16117 SE 254th Street Covington, WA 98042	Army/Adv Tm 51; BCAT Bac Lieu
Thomas Sutterfield 820 Hampton Court Weston, FL 33326	Army 177th Ordnance Det
Jim Parrish 6065 S.W. Regional Airport Blvd Bentonville, AR 72712	Army/Adv Tm 75, Dinh Tuong Prov'; 7th Arvn Div
Adrian L. Vaughn 10 West Old Barn Road Luray, VA 22835-9005	Army/CORDS HQ
Aurel W. Franke P.O. Box 716 Abilene, TX 79604	Army/Adv Tm 95, Bien Hoa
Cyril Appel 61 Hummingbird Lane Whitefish, MT 59937	Army/Adv Tm 88 Kien Hoa Prov
Mr. LeRoy W. Bloom 10561 East Paraiso Road Hereford, AZ 85615	USMC/Adv Tm 2, Tam Ky

**REUNION REGISTRATION FORM**  
**COUNTERPARTS REUNION 17-21 APRIL 2013**

Please Complete and Return to Reunion Coordinator  
Lou Rothenstein, 336 Forest Ridge St. Henderson NV 89014  
[loumicm@yahoo.com](mailto:loumicm@yahoo.com) 702-368-1065 Cell 702-235-9940

**Registration fee will be \$100.00 per person.** This is to help offset the cost of services, primarily bus and van transportation along with name tags and other usual convention type things. **Please make checks out to Counterparts.** Payment in advance is appreciated to assist in ordering and reserving reunion items and planning activities.

**Banquet will be \$55.00 per person.** Entrée choices are as follows. **Please indicate your choice.**

Char-Broiled Filet Mignon wine port wine sauce and roasted mushrooms and salt and pepper baked potato.

**OR**

Char-Broiled Chicken and Scampi Combination with lemon and basil sauce, toasted almond rice pilaf.

(Both entrees served with Salad California Greens with tomatoes, feta cheese, candied walnuts and pomegranate vinaigrette. Dessert: double chocolate cremeux tart, pistachio gelato Assorted Dinner Rolls, coffee, tea)

**Souvenir Shirts.** Souvenir T-Shirts can be ordered in advance for \$25.00 Sizes are S, M, L, XL, XXL Shirts must be Prepaid.

**Name Tags.** The Counterparts Name, Logo will be on the left half. Please provide Names, Team number or assignment and dates served if desired in the blanks below.  
(Note: Space on the name tag is limited to a 1.5"x1.5" area)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information** Please provide a current email address for future communications with you.

**Email address** \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not have a current email address, please provide your mailing address.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary of Reunion Fees:**

**Registration:** \$100.00 x \_\_\_\_ people = \_\_\_\_\_

**Banquet:** \$55.00 x \_\_\_\_ people = \_\_\_\_\_

**Banquet entrée:** Beef  Chicken

**Souvenir Shirts:** Size \_\_\_\_ \$25.00 x \_\_\_\_ people = \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL Enclosed** \_\_\_\_\_

**7 Beef Dinner at Vietnamese Restaurant Friday (Optional) Number of Meals** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pay at Restaurant, probably about \$30.00 per person**

.....  
: *Please send us your registration information and fees as early as possible to ensure that we can make* :  
: *necessary arrangements. Questions? email Lou Rothenstein [loumicm@yahoo.com](mailto:loumicm@yahoo.com)* :  
: .....

## *Voices From the South Seminar*

By  
Rich Webster

In June I attended the “*Voices from the South*” Seminar at Cornell University in New York where former high officials and military commanders in the South Vietnamese Government were, for the first time since the ending of the Vietnam War, given an opportunity to present their views. The symposium was an effort to collect oral history from living witnesses who played a prominent role in the Second Republic of South Vietnam from the periods of 1965-1975.

Dr. Keith Taylor, organizer of the seminar, commented, “They are very apprehensive about presenting their viewpoint on the Vietnam War because they have been treated so badly in the past. It would have been impossible to have this seminar on a college campus in years past.” Dr. Taylor served in the Vietnam War with a military intelligence unit.

One speaker, Rear Admiral Ho Van Ky Thoai, Commander of I CORPS, gave a presentation on the Paracel Islands incident in 1974 when China attacked the Vietnamese controlled Islands killing a number of Vietnamese personnel and capturing one American Advisor. The Chinese took possession of the Islands after Nixon and Kissinger went to China. The US 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet did not offer assistance to their Vietnamese allies. Admiral Thoai said that with the US leaving Vietnam the communists were already violating the peace accords. To Adm. Thoai, North Vietnam’s release of all US prisoners in exchange for the withdrawal of all US combat forces from Vietnam was a clear signal from the US to the RVN that they were on their own against North Vietnam, which had the backing of the Soviet Union and China.

In a private conversation with me, Admiral Thoai related several humorous incidents on the role of Advisors in the Vietnam War. Early in the War, when Thoai was a junior officer in the South Vietnamese navy and after he had already had several *covans*, he got a new Advisor who was an American Navy pilot. Admiral Thoai relates, “My new American Advisor wanted to know why earlier in the War there were only 35,000 reported VC enemy, and now there were 95,000 enemy VC reported in the South. What have you Vietnamese been doing all these years?”, he chided me

“I searched for the right answer to this perplexing question, and then answered, the VC doesn’t have an American Advisor. He doesn’t have to spend half his time explaining what he is going to do. He can fight 24 hours a day. We can only fight 12 hours; then we must spend the other 12 hours explaining to the Americans what we are doing.”

South Vietnamese military officers were confronted with a new American military Advisor on a yearly basis and just when an advisor became trained and acclimated to the military situation, his tour was over. The South Vietnamese military officers had been fighting the war for most of their adult lifetimes and they had their families to consider. They also knew the tenacity and the treachery of the enemy they were fighting. They were fighting a “Long War,” not a one year assignment with a timetable.

Admiral Thoai also explained why the Vietnamese Rangers and Airborne were great fighters. “... their families lived back in Saigon and they knew their families would be taken care of if they died or were wounded.” In contrast, the Regional Force/Popular forces, those front line soldiers whose mission was to defend their local villages and provinces, were very poorly paid soldiers who had to not only fight the war but take care of their families. When the Americans left Vietnam, the affects of inflation on these soldiers and their families was devastating. The annual rate was 75%. A gallon of gas cost \$1.62 a gallon in Vietnam in the early 1970s, the highest in the world.

Asked about their reaction to the assassination of President Diem, all the South Vietnamese presenters lamented the event and viewed it with regret and sorrow even to this day. Admiral Thoai provided one view of why President Diem was murdered in the Coup in 1963. Says Thoai, “Big Minh held a grudge against President Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu. Big Minh was the commander in the 1955 battle that eliminated the Binh Xuyen River pirates who operated the racketeering/gambling enterprises in Saigon. Several large bags of money were confiscated but only one was turned over to the Diem government. Nhu investigated and found that Big Minh had kept one of the bags. Nothing was ever done to Minh but Minh hated Diem and his brother after that. And when he got his chance, he had Diem and his brother killed.”

Regarding President Thieu, Thoai who was a confident and friend, considered him a good man and a relatively good President. “One must remember the turbulent times and that there is no training to be a President.” It was Thieu’s tragic fate to be abandoned by his American allies when congress cut off all aid and supplies.

*continued on page six*

*continued from page five*

The rumor that he left with the country's gold was a lie, Thoai said. "There were only two people in the Saigon who had the keys that allowed access to the country's gold reserves. In the chaos of the last days of Saigon, it was impossible to retrieve the gold. The communists walked in and took it back to North Vietnam."

President Thieu died in the US, in a small rented house, belying the fact that he had plundered his country. Thoai was a pall bearer at Thieu's funeral.

Another topic discussed was Strategic disadvantage. The South had to be constantly on the defensive while the North was always on offense. The South had to defend everywhere, allowing the North to marshal their forces for pinpoint strikes. Former II CORPS commander, LT. Gen. Lu Lan, shared his reflections. "Our cause was clear. It was a fight for freedom and human rights, against communist ideology popularized by Ho Chi Minh, who disguised as a nationalist, deceived much of the world. His atrocities against his own countrymen proved that he was a worthy of Stalin and Mao."

Former Ambassador Bui Diem, South Vietnam's envoy to the US, remarked "We came to realize America had their own agenda. Dean Rusk said the US needs an honorable peace to get out of Vietnam." So we said, "Give us the guns and supplies like you did in North Korea so we can fight."

"The US administration used its enormous weight to lean on us alternating promises and threats to force us to accept the Paris Agreement, and the US Congress failed to honor even the clauses spelled out in the Agreement when in 1974 and 75 it was no longer a matter of American blood but only a matter of resupply costing a few hundred million of dollars."

Said Tran Van Son, former RVN Lower House Representative, "The politicians in Washington bound the hands of their generals, refusing to deploy troops at the Vietnamese-Laotian border and expand into Laos up the Mekong River on the border of Thailand to prevent Hanoi from infiltrating men and materials to the South." Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky had proposed such a plan at the meeting with President Johnson in March 1967.

Tran went on to underline the communist peace talk tactic of, "What's ours is ours, what's yours is negotiable." Tran then pointed out "...In 1975, President Ford pressed Congress to appropriate funds but the US Congress sent Rep a Abzug and Paul McCloskey to Vietnam, the two most vocal opponents to the war. Upon arrival in Saigon, they contacted Vietnamese Congressman Ho Ngoc Nhuan, a National Liberation Front sympathizer, and told him that Congress wasn't going to appropriate the funds to continue the struggle."

Despite its disadvantages, by 1975 South Vietnam was on the threshold of rice sufficiency and the Land to the Tiller program had distributed land to 500,000 peasants thus negating the communists' main propaganda point of absentee landlords controlling the land. Forgotten is the monumental task that faced the South. Not only were they fighting two wars, the conventional and the counterinsurgency, they were also dismantling the French landlord/feudal system where the peasants were virtually slaves to the large landowners. And then the Americans abandoned them.

The general theme from the speakers was that they were betrayed by their ally, and browbeat into signing the Paris Peace Accords which the North Vietnamese immediately violated. President Thieu's Press Secretary, Hoang Duc Nha, said, "We were prepared to continue the fight against the communists if we could receive the aid and weapons to do so. But then America deserted us. Sixty days after the Paris Accords were signed, the US removed the mines from Haiphong Harbor. Then we began to see the T54 tanks that were off-loaded from the Russian ships. We wanted to be like Korea where America continued their military support against a communist aggressor. What we didn't understand was the tremendous political pressure that Nixon and Kissinger were under from the peace movement, the US media and members of US Congress, to knuckle under to the demands of the communists."

*Editor's note: Rear Admiral Thoai has written his memoirs, "Bravery in Defeat: A Soldier's Journey". The book is available (in Vietnamese only) through the following website: <http://www.hovanky.com/cantruong/orderbook.htm>*



**SIGN UP NOW FOR REUNION 2013! SEE PAGE 4**



## ***The Lighter Side of War.***

*These anecdotes and photos were sent to us by Counterparts member Grady Jones. Most of us will find something familiar in at least one of these stories. It makes us wonder sometimes, how we survived it all.*

*.....Editor*

*"The articles in the Spring 2012 issue really tickled my funny bone. The articles were humorous but more than that was reading between the lines at the life style of Advisors. Most people, today, don't realize how primitive it really was. I went through the 12 week Vietnamese Language School in Calif., but that was a long time ago so you may need to get your Vietnamese buddies to help me out with the language. This is in the 1963 - 1964 era. I left from G-3, 101<sup>st</sup> Abn Div (M/Sgt E-8) and was promoted to E-9 by Gen Westmoreland. As such I could have stayed in "safe zones", but I wanted to get out with the troops (Advisors-Co-Vans) and win the war!"*

*... Grady Jones, Byron, GA*

**Running Start:** The day after arriving in Saigon we all went to a theater and BG Timmes ( ADC 101<sup>st</sup> Abn Div) gave us a real gungho pep talk. Go out there and win the war, etc., etc. Well, we got so hyped up that we went out of there running. After about 50 feet running in "the oven" we slowed down and I think the only time I ran, for 2 years over there, was in fire fights.

**Two Step Viper:** On the coast, up near NhaTrang, I was with a Vietnamese Regt guarding a big rice bowl from the VC. A Vietnamese Platoon Sgt. and myself had dug foxholes close together, with a pole and poncho over us. We dug out a shelf above our heads for letters, etc. Somehow the Vietnamese Sgt. had found a puppy and kept it in the foxholes while we were out on combat operations. One night, late, we got back to our foxholes and the Vietnamese Sgt yelled to me to "freeze" that his puppy was dead, in his bunk. With my flashlight I started looking and finally found the two step viper on the shelf over the Sgt's head. Wow!

**Pet Python:** One of my buddies got a python, about 6 feet long and put it in a wire cage. He got the Vietnamese to bring him live rats to feed it. Well, off we went on about a two week combat operation, and no one fed the python. When we got back we were cleaning our gear when we heard my buddy screaming for help. The hungry python had locked onto him for supper. It took several of us to persuade the "pet" not to have my buddy for supper.

**Ambushes:** We constantly taught the Vietnamese that the only way out of an ambush was to attack. We practiced this (with blanks) over and over, spider holes, etc. On an operation I was up close to the point and my buddy, M/Sgt Robinson, was bringing up the rear, walking backwards. This was a red hot zone. The Vietnamese word for ambush was "Phu kik". Well, Sgt Robinson tripped on a vine, fell, and said "f --- it!". The closest Vietnamese heard him and bang, bang - holy mackerel - the madhouse.

**Gorilla Warfare:** Another operation, same scenario - red hot zone. The Vietnamese had heard us calling the VC "guerrillas". Sgt Robinson, walking backwards, again, saw a baby gorilla up in the trees, and called out "Hey, a gorilla." You guessed it - bang, bang - holy mackerel - another mad minute. (M/Sgt Robinson was later on KIA when his Squad was overrun.)

**Airborne Pig:** A Regt of the 22<sup>nd</sup> ARVN Div had outposts (Montagnard soldiers) way up in the highlands above Dak To, watching the Ho Cho Minh trail, and the men had their wives up there. We supplied them by helicopter with groceries, and live pigs, chickens, etc. They put the live animals in man made bamboo baskets. On a trip in the old banana shaped helicopter we were flying along and hit a big air pocket. We dropped quite a ways and the bamboo baskets went up in the air. When they came down, one, with a young pig, broke open. I was manning a light 30 on a swivel at one door and the pig saw the door and headed towards me. I dropped down on the floor to grab it and it jumped over me and went airborne (no parachute) out the door!

*.... Grady*

## MONTAGNARD SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE, September 2012

Our Counterparts Montagnard scholar, Romas Phanna, a member of the Jarai tribe from Ratanakiri Province, is starting an internship with *Building Community Voices*, an NGO in his home province. Phanna will graduate with a degree in Information Technology and will assume the position of Community Media Assistant. One of the goals of Community Voices is to advocate for land reform and fight for Montagnard Human rights, as their traditional way of life is rapidly disappearing in Eastern Cambodia.

Our first Montagnard Scholar, Broy Makara, after several years of working as a veterinarian, has recovered from a serious motorcycle accident. He will begin his second year working with an Italian Aid Organization that provides care to handicapped children in Mondulakiri Province.

Status of other Cambodia Corps Inc students and graduates:

- a. Jarai student, Sev Pak, sponsored by Max and Carol Lund, has just finished his second year studying Veterinary Science in Phnom Penh.
- b. Medical students Ean Sothea and Chey Chanthin are doing internships and nearing the end of their 10-year journey to become physicians.
- c. Two young Phnong men sponsored by the NOMAD village health NGO in Mondulakiri lived in the CCI Indigenous Student Center in Phnom Penh while attending the six-month government Traditional Medicine course. They graduated in March this year.
- d. CCI's 25 university graduates continue working for NGO's and local government agencies that provide aid and assistance to the Indigenous peoples living in the villages of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri Provinces.

CCI is run by COUNTERPARTS member Tommy Daniels, with assistance from Rich Webster and Max Lund, longtime members who have traveled to Cambodia on numerous occasions to support the program.

The latest venture by CCI was to provide special tutors to 14 Montagnard high school students in Grade 12 in Ratanakiri Province to help them pass the exit exams and earn diplomas. The cost of the tutors was \$US40 per student. The students were from the Krueng, Tampoun, Prao, and Jarai Tribes. The tutoring enabled 10 of the 14 to pass the exit exam. Seven of the ten were provided university scholarships by the Don Bosco Foundation, a major international NGO. The remaining three are candidates for CCI scholarships and are being brought to Phnom Penh for interviews and consideration.

As I have written about in past SITREPS, COUNTERPARTS members and our organization have been generous donors for this program and the benefits to the Montagnard nation are invaluable. There are very few Montagnards with even a high school education, and even fewer with college degrees in all of Cambodia. There are jobs available for those Montagnards with college degrees in Cambodia today. Education is the only hope and future for the Highlander population in Cambodia as their traditional way of life is rapidly disappearing.

Anyone interested in sponsoring a student may contact me at [covanmi@mchsi.com](mailto:covanmi@mchsi.com)

..... Rich Webster



*Counterparts Scholar Romas Phanna*





*(The following is a report of a panel discussion recent sponsored by the Army Center of Military History. Counterparts member Jim Willbanks was one of the participants.)*

### **Military Advisors Reflect on Vietnam War Experiences**

*(John Valceanu, American Forces Press Service)*

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29, 2012 – Two former military advisors who served with Vietnamese units during the Vietnam War spoke about their experiences in the Pentagon yesterday and shared their thoughts on advisory programs and counterinsurgency operations.

Retired Marine Corps Gen. Anthony Zinni and retired Army Lt. Col. James Willbanks took part in a panel discussion on “Advisors in the Vietnam War,” along with Andrew Birtle, chief of the Military Operations Branch at the Army Center of Military History. The panel was part of the Historical Speakers Series sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense Historical Office.

Birtle opened the program with an overview of the U.S. advisory effort in Vietnam. An expert on counterinsurgency operations doctrine who authored books on the subject, Birtle outlined the development of the military advisor program from the first U.S. advisors in 1950 until end of the war in the early 1970s.

“Perhaps the most common emotion advisors experienced in Vietnam was the frustration of being held responsible for something they could not control,” Birtle said. “Nothing was more frustrating than the feelings that one’s efforts were falling on fallow ground.”

Zinni spoke after Birtle, sharing his experiences as an advisor to a Vietnamese Marine unit in 1967. The general, who eventually rose through the ranks to lead U.S. Central Command, said his primary duties as an advisor in Vietnam were to help coordinate fire support, air capability and operations with U.S. units. Working, living and eating with the Vietnamese – and operating all over South Vietnam -- gave him an insight into the conflict that he said he wouldn’t have gotten otherwise.

“Those who saw that war from inside a U.S. unit – despite the fact that certainly they saw plenty of combat, as we did – they saw a different war than I did,” Zinni said.

“I saw the war through the eyes of the Vietnamese people. I saw the war through the eyes of villagers that I lived with. I saw the war through the eyes of Vietnamese soldiers and Marines there weren’t there on one-year tours, but were there for the duration,” he said. “I saw the war from the Delta to the DMZ. I saw the war from Cambodia to the coastal plains in the east. And it was a totally different perspective than I was hearing from my counterparts.”

Zinni said he saw the most benefits result from Vietnamese units that built relationships with U.S. units over time, in which U.S. and Vietnamese soldiers could get to know and trust each other over time. He said it worked well with relatively small Marine Corps units, as well as with Army airborne and Ranger units.

“One of the strengths of the advisor unit, besides the fact that we didn’t have advisory teams and we sort of immersed ourselves into their organization and culture, is that we connected to the Vietnamese Marines very closely,” Zinni said.

But Zinni said there was a price to pay for being that close to the local forces.

“The advisory effort, when you were totally immersed in the culture, took a toll on you. By the time my advisory tour was coming neat to its end... I had contracted malaria, mononucleosis, dysentery and hepatitis,” Zinni said. “I was down to 123 pounds.”

This was not an uncommon phenomenon for service members in advisory roles.

“Most of the advisors suffered health issues and very few advisors finished a whole tour without a significant health problem or eventually being evacuated because of a health problem,” Zinni said.



## BULLETIN BOARD

Despite the physical hardships, Zinni said the experience gave him “a sense of what this war was all about” and made him realize that the U.S. was failing to give the South Vietnamese people a good enough reason to put their lives on the line.

“If we didn’t capture the hearts of the people, if we couldn’t give them something to fight for, if we weren’t willing to ensure that the government was responsible to people, and we weren’t willing to cut off a base of supply that was endless, we eventually could not win that conflict, despite all the victories on the battlefield,” he said.

Zinni said he felt military leaders did not pay enough attention to knowledge gained in Vietnam, as attention shifted elsewhere after the war ended.

“Vietnam was rich in the lessons we never learned,” he said.

“The enemy beat us strategically; they didn’t beat us tactically,” Zinni said. “They didn’t beat us in terms of what we were able to develop in military capability with the South Vietnamese, but they beat us psychologically, and they beat us strategically. That lesson was never carried over.”

Willbanks spoke after Zinni. Now the director of the Department of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Willbanks arrived in Vietnam as an advisor in 1971, when only four U.S. Army infantry battalions and a total of fewer than 125,000 U.S. troops were left in the country. He was assigned to an advisory team supporting an Army of the Republic of Vietnam, or ARVN, division.

“I was a captain with two and a half years in service, on my first combat tour,” Willbanks said. “I was being asked to advise a 40-year-old ARVN battalion commander, a lieutenant colonel who had been fighting most of his adult life. “

Because of his lower rank and relative inexperience, Willbanks said he sometimes had difficulty in getting the battalion commanders to listen to his advice. His duties during the early part of his tour involved assisting and training the Vietnamese in staff operations, acting as liaison to the remaining U.S. units in the area, helping with combat operations planning and accompanying the battalions on combat operations in the field.

Willbanks said everything changed when the North Vietnamese launched the “Easter Offensive” on March 31, 1972. He volunteered to replace a wounded advisor in the provincial capital city of An Loc, where a battle raged day and night for the next two and a half months.

“At this point, the focus of my efforts shifted to coordinating U.S. combat support,” Willbanks said. “I spent all my time adjusting artillery – at least in the beginning, and pretty soon we had no artillery to adjust – air strikes, and also coordinating attack helicopters and fixed-wing gunships, calling for dustoff medical evacuation and coordinating aerial resupply.”

Willbanks said being in An Lac at that time was an experience different than anything he had ever conceived. “It was a desperate battle that seesawed back and forth as the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese forces fought each other, sometimes house to house, block to block, room to room,” he said.

The South Vietnamese forces held out, and the battle began to die down as the summer wore on, but Willbanks was wounded for a second time and evacuated from the city. Once he was released from the hospital, he spent the rest of his time helping the ARVN recover from the Easter Offensive. He said he left the country at the end of his tour “feeling pretty good” about what he’d been able to accomplish in helping the South Vietnamese forces.

Speaking generally about advisory efforts, Willbanks said there was less of an emphasis on the advisory effort and a shift away from it once U.S. ground troops started arriving in Vietnam. This eventually meant that not all advisors had the right qualifications, training or ability for the job. The advisory tours were often less than 12 months, which created turbulence and hampered the ability to form a bond between Vietnamese troops and their U.S. advisors.



# BULLETIN BOARD

Willbanks said advisors “walked a tightrope” when it came to their duties. They had to be involved and proactive without stifling the initiative of the Vietnamese commanders. They had to be empathetic to their counterparts and understand their culture while being honest about the units and their leaders.

” Perhaps most importantly, Willbanks said, advisors had to find a way to build a relationship with their counterparts without making them too dependent on the advisor and on U.S. combat and service support. This proved to be a problem when the U.S. withdrew and the Vietnamese were left on their own.

“I have to say, even with all the difficulties involved, and even knowing how it all turned out, I’m proud of what I did as an advisor in Vietnam, and I only wish we could have done more,” Willbanks said. “The South Vietnamese were good people, and they deserved better than they got.”

## *Vinh Son Orphanage announces new Endowment Program*

The Board of Directors at Friends of Vinh Son Orphanages (FVSO) is pleased to announce the creation of an endowment fund called Vinh Son Endowment (V.S.E.), intended to guarantee support for the orphanages well into the future. Since 2005, we’ve been providing much needed assistance to the Vinh Son community, and that commitment must continue in the years ahead. With the help of benefactors like you, we believe that goal can be achieved.

FVSO has been blessed with increasing donations year-after-year. Empty stomachs have been filled, dormitories constructed and teeth cleaned, typhoon damages repaired, sick and injured treated, hungry minds educated...the list goes on and on. Because of you, we have truly made a difference.

None of that changes with this announcement. Your donations, unless otherwise directed, will continue to be added to the General Fund, business as usual.

As the FVSO Board members approach their 70’s, they have become more attuned to their own mortality, prompting the question, “What happens when we’re gone?” That’s the genesis of V.S.E. This year, some Board members have been hospitalized and undergone serious surgeries. One such patient, Clyde Lewandowski, had these thoughts while lying on his hospital bed:

“As I recovered from the procedure, I thought about the kids in Kontum and how much they mean to me. It also struck me how fragile we humans are, how we are aging quicker than we care to admit. I thought a lot about what will happen to the kids if we are no longer around to support them.”

V.S.E. is intended for the future, hopefully many years from now. However, it’s never too early to get started. It’s offered as an option for those who wish to “continue the mission” of bringing hope and love to the children and caregivers of Vinh Son and Sao Mai.

Contributions to V.S.E. could come in many forms, each of which could provide a tax savings. For example, here are a few avenues: 1) A gift of appreciated stock, 2) naming FVSO as beneficiary of a life insurance policy, 3) gifts of property or cash, 4) a charitable annuity, or 5) a simple bequest in a will. Any of these could result in the ongoing funding for the future of the Vinh Son and Sao Mai orphanages. V.S.E. is managed by our Treasurer, who will be available to provide direction and answer questions.

To kick things off, Mr. Lewandowski and family have graciously made a contribution of \$15,000. It’s a beginning and possibly the first step in maintaining the mission of FVSO over the long haul. Again, Clyde adds clarity by summing up, “Hope is what we want to provide for the children. A legacy gift will accomplish that.”

Whether you make a donation to the General Fund or contribute to the long-term goals through V.S.E., know that the children are forever in your debt. You are their “today and tomorrow.” They give you thanks!



# BULLETIN BOARD

## Special Notice

### Texas Vietnam Memorial: Background and Issues

In 2005 The Texas Legislature passed a Resolution to build a Vietnam War Monument to honor Texans who served in the Vietnam war. The initial design for the Monument featured a group of five figures including representations of four US Servicemen representing different ethnic groups in Texas. The fifth figure in the group was of a soldier of the Republic of Vietnam.

Since 2005 contributions have been accepted from individuals, veterans groups and other Texas organizations interested in honoring Texas Vietnam Veterans. The Vietnamese Community in Texas was also invited to participate in the project and many Vietnamese-Americans have participated and contributed to the memorial fund.

Beginning September 1, 2011, donations to help build the monument are matched dollar-for-dollar by the Texas Historical Commission to a maximum \$500,000. Monument groundbreaking is scheduled in March 2013 and dedication is anticipated in Fall 2013. *Counterparts* Commander J.C. Fischer has been in communication with people on the Monument Commission and has requested that other Texas Counterparts and all of us take a look at the plans to see if they want to support the monument as individuals or as an organization, or do Texas members want to make a donation as a Texas group.

If you have any concerns or questions and the web site does not address them you can contact J.C. Fischer who has promised to talk to the movers and shakers on this project. JC also requests that those who are interested in contributing to the Texas Vietnam War Monument individually or as a group, contact him so that he may provide a coordinated response. JC can be contacted at [traindepot@hotmail.com](mailto:traindepot@hotmail.com). or by phone at 254-773-6520 or by mail at :100 Red Oak Cir, Temple TX, 76502-3503

Additional information and background on the Monument effort can be found at <http://buildthemonument.org/> . Members who wish to contribute directly may also use that website for individual donations.

There is one issue concerning the Texas Vietnam War Monument that Counterparts members should be aware of.

In July 2012, the Monument Executive Committee decided to change the name of the Monument to “The Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument” and to replace the figure of the ARVN soldier with a figure of an “Asian Texan” soldier.

There have been objections raised to the decision to eliminate the ARVN soldier from the monument. Counterparts charter member Bill Laurie stated in a recent email that:

*“The country and people of the Republic of Viet Nam were THE reasons we were there. One might as well remove crucifixes from Catholic and Christian churches. To exclude statue of an RVN soldier denigrates our service and only obscures the overall objective for an already abysmally ignorant American populace. Such exclusion will diminish praise due American-born SE Asia veterans. It will do nothing to enhance deserved honor and to a degree detract from it. If the statue is excluded it will insult many who served.”*

A petition to restore the Monuments’ original design, (i.e., to include an RVN soldier in the group) is being circulated online. The website for the petition is :

<http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/please-return-to-the-initial-texas-capitol-vietnam-mon.html>

Members are urged to read the petition and if they agree, sign it. Counterparts members can also comment on this issue directly to J.C. Fischer, who has agreed to forward consolidated comments to the appropriate decision makers on the Monument Committee.



### *More Vietnam Trivia Quiz Questions*

1. How many Viet Cong were KIA inside the U.S. Embassy building in Saigon during 1968 Tet?
2. Which unit made the only American parachute combat assault of the war?
3. Who were the Sneaky Petes?
4. Which unit wore the shoulder patch known as the Electric Strawberry?
5. Which shoulder patch was known as Poison Ivy?
6. Who wore the psychedelic cookie?
7. Name the nations with troops in Vietnam (apart from the two Vietnams and the U.S.).
8. What was Market Time, and who took part in it?
9. Which was the only regular U.S. infantry unit in the Mekong Delta?
10. What was ARA?
11. What was a Spad?
12. Vietnam had a lot of pigs, but in the field, this kind of hog was lovable and loved. What kind was it?
13. Nobody who did a tour in Vietnam would confuse a plate of chicken with a chicken plate. What was the latter?
14. A large, group of people milling about—especially troops in the field—was called what?
15. Saigon police switched uniform style & color because of their nickname (related to the rodent family). What was it?
16. You didn't want to be in the Zee. What was it?
17. "Nails" were used for building hootches, but they also had another meaning. What was it?
18. The communist infested country Southwest of Danang was never really pacified. What did the marines who fought there call it?

*Answers on Page 14*



# BULLETIN BOARD

The Following Book Review, first published in the Fall 2004 SITREP, is republished in honor of Counterparts Life Member Jim McDaniel, who died in October



**Jim McDaniel**

Years Day to *Tet*, 1968, a time of change and fierce conflict. Woven into the main narrative is a classic murder mystery, with some familiar characters and a surprising and dramatic climax. A worthwhile read for anyone who wants to get a sense of the everyday victories, defeats and frustrations of an Advisor's life.

**Counterparts**, *Jim McDaniel*: Writers Club Press, New York 2002. ( Available through Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Borders Books, iUniverse.com.)

It's rare to find a Vietnam-related novel that deals honestly with Advisors and their war experience and even more uncommon to read a book that presents this subject with gritty, uncompromising reality. This book is that rare exception. The author, *Counterparts* member Jim McDaniel, served as Deputy Senior Advisor (DSA) in Quang Tin province. He draws on that experience to evoke the atmosphere of day to day life in a typical province, with all of its undercurrents, contradictions and occasional absurdities. Unlike many popular novels about the Vietnam War which portray Vietnamese people as two dimensional backdrops to the American's experience, McDaniel presents his Vietnamese characters as complex, contradictory, and sometimes tragic figures.

Many of us will recognize the denizens of Quang Tim; the ambitious senior officer, dedicated to furthering his own career, the Vietnamese Province Chief, a man with complex and often conflicting agendas, and a full supporting cast of personalities and characters typical of a Province MACV team. The story is set in the period from New



- Trivia quiz answers*
1. None. The VC entered the compound, but not the Embassy building
  2. 173rd ABN Brigade 1967 Binh Dinh Prov
  3. The Special Forces
  4. 25th Inf Div
  5. 4th Inf Div
  6. 9th Inf Div
  7. Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand. The Philippines also had medical teams and Ag advisors in country
  8. Coastal Patrol and Interdiction operation, using US, allied, and VNN Units
  9. The 9th Inf Div
  10. Aerial Rocket Artillery (fired from Helos and fixed wing aircraft at ground targets)
  11. A1E Skyraider; propeller driven attack aircraft flown by USN in Carrier Version, and VNAF
  12. Huey Gunships
  13. A ceramic armor plate, originally designed as chest armor the helo and L-19 pilots sat on to protect vital parts from ground fire
  14. A Cluster-f--
  15. White mice
  16. The DMZ
  17. Flechette rounds, from rockets or artillery
  18. Dodge City. To the east was Arizona

## WOUNDED MINDS

It's now Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, commonly called PTSD;  
Civil War vets had "Soldier's Heart", you see.  
Termed "Shell Shock" in WWI, and "Battle Fatigue" in WWII,  
early Viet Vet mind casualties suffered "Post-Vietnam Syndrome", like me.

Whatever, we combat soldiers, Marines, sailors, and airmen  
live only a sound, sight, smell, or thought away from war.  
Wounded in mind, with a tortured spirit,  
that which we are, we are.

Many the unfortunate Veteran who tried to settle  
the spirit, and open his mind to peace.  
A cheap bullet thought to solve  
a mentally sick Vet's problem of war vs. peace.

Some of us carry the burden  
of having to destroy others.  
Our conscious mind forgets, our sub-conscious never does,  
what we did to our Mankind brothers.

War, organized violence, the largest, most complex,  
soul-wrenching activity of Man.  
Causing haunting wartime experiences, invisible injuries,  
buried deep in the troubled mind of Man.

Many fell from shot, and shell;  
war truly is a living Hell.  
Others left part of themselves on the battlefield,  
smitten by PTSD, brain trauma, never to get well.

Haunting war memories, locked deep in the mind,  
taking a fearsome mental toll.  
We soldier-on, often self-medicating to manage mental stress,  
fighting to keep our life together, both body, and soul.

Mostly, we mentally disabled suffer in silence,  
wondering what next our mind will do.  
Traumatized brains causing sleeplessness, irritability, depression; .  
few understand just what we're going through.

You go to war with the Country you have,  
not the one you wish you had.  
We fight a meteor shower of thoughts like fear,  
anxiety, flashbacks, guilt and shame - all bad.

For those of us suffering PTSD mental illness,  
Hell is the climate in store.  
We can only hope, and pray that  
after taking the eternal dirt nap, there won't be more.

.....*COL Aurel W Franke, USA Ret*

*(Note: Col. Franke recently became a member of Counterparts. He is a PTSD sufferer.)*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Reviews of Books, new and old, relating to the Southeast Asia experience. Members are encouraged to submit reviews. All reviews will be published as space permits.

### **Matterhorn: A Novel of the Vietnam War. Karl Marlantes; 598 pp. El León Literary Arts/Atlantic Monthly Press. \$24.95**

The novel covers a two month period, in the early spring of 1969, during the monsoon season. The fighting occurs just south of an imaginary line once drawn in Geneva, to denote a temporary boundary of two years duration, until "free elections" were held to reunite the two sections of the country. Two countries were created, at least in the West. Some of the fiercest fighting occurred around a classic misnomer, the "Demilitarized Zone," in the heart of the Annamite Cordillera where even the Vietnamese would not live: too high, too cold, too infertile and too much of the very bad malaria.

Marlantes' novel includes maps, a command "wiring diagram" with the names of the principal characters, and an excellent appendix of specialized military terms, as well as a succinct description of the weaponry used.

*Matterhorn* was the designated American name of a 5,000 foot hill, in the extreme northwest corner of what was once South Vietnam. From there, on a clear day, views into North Vietnam and Laos were possible. The story is, no doubt, thinly autobiographical, told through the eyes of a new "butter bar" lieutenant, Mellas. This is a novel about the Marines, and thus the war experience is much more intense than that which occurred even to most Army units in combat. Much more is, and has been demanded, of what is largely volunteers, with their famous *esprit de corps*, including that extra month, the 13th. Nothing underscores the intensity of the combat experience like the fact that when the novel is finished, Mellas still has 11 months left in Vietnam!

Marlantes writes well. The book is a "page-turner" even though the first 200 pages or so there is little combat. The author develops a cast of characters of all ranks, setting the stage for the later combat scenes. When those scenes finally come, the relentless small unit combat, man to man, what was depicted was a small, but very real minority of the actual fighting in Vietnam, which all too often relied on massive firepower on the one side, and hit and run attacks on the other, in which one rarely saw "the enemy." The small unit infantry tactics, taught on the bases that churned out the officers, are made understandable for those who were never in the military.

The many unique aspects of the Vietnam conflict are depicted with the utmost authenticity. A major sub-theme was the relationship between Black and White marines, as the former were influenced by the heady days of the Civil Rights movement. Another aspect was the "fragging." When we are shown an officer doing this it underscores in bold the madness, and disconnection of the officer caste from the men, and what was being asked of them, like a hill taken at a very high cost in lives, only to be immediately given back to the North Vietnamese. Is it any wonder that more than a few grenades were rolled under some cots? There was the obsession with kill ratios. The author has a brilliant passage where a "probable" kill is escalated to 10 confirmed KIA's by the time it reaches Saigon.

Even the "minor notes" of the novel hit true: the accusation that one character might have been "slumming," since he had a choice of not joining the Marines, unlike those he was making fun of. Another: Every unit had a "numby," who so desperately wanted the approbation of their "buddies," and in this case a father killed in the Korean War, who took one too many chances.

I spent the same two months in Vietnam, the middle part of my "tour," in the same Annamite Cordillera, further south, in the Central Highlands. I too once fought, at night, to keep someone's temperature under that magic 104 degree level, awaiting the dawn, and medevac. The same war? No, radically different. I was in a tank unit, and although we might not have eaten well, we never missed a meal. During my orientation to the 4th Infantry Division, in September 1968, the commanding general (who never got fragged) said there will be no assaults on hills and fortified bunkers in his division. If stiff opposition were met, the units were to pull back, and let the artillery and the Air Force do its job. In the madness of war, all too sensible.

...Review by Dave Tooker

### **The Snake Eaters. Owen West; Free Press, 262 pages, \$26**

(A Published review by Max Boot)

Stateside, they had received the impression that they would be lecturing Iraqi soldiers from the confines of a safe American base. When they arrived, they discovered that such isolation was a formula for failure. Mr. West writes: "Only an advisor's aggressive willingness to share risk—his performance under fire—with local troops gives him credibility with and influence over them."

T.E. Lawrence had grasped this as early as 1917, but it still hasn't penetrated Washington, where President Barack Obama, among others, keeps claiming that the advisory work of U.S. troops in Afghanistan will not be a "combat mission." "The Snake Eaters" shows that if U.S. advisers in Afghanistan are kept from going into action, they will be hard-pressed to improve the performance of their charges. Advisers are most effective when they operate as Team Outcast did in 2005-06 under the inspired leadership of Lt. Col. Michael Troster, a DEA agent in civilian life.

Lt. Col. Troster first moved his team, along with the 3/3-1, off cushy Camp Habbaniyah onto a makeshift base closer to Khalidiya, leaving behind such amenities as Internet access and mess halls. Then he pressed the Iraqi officers to run regular patrols into the city. Task Force Panther refused to accompany the Iraqis, so Lt. Col. Troster offered to have his own, undermanned team do it.

From then on, two advisers would go along on every Iraqi patrol, providing a radio link to American backup in case anything went wrong. Team Outcast men went out as often as four times a day on grueling missions. By the time their deployment was done, three advisers had logged more than 450 patrols each—"an astonishing number," Mr. West notes, "considering how many enemy attacks in their zone awaited them."

Of the 10 original members of Team Outcast, one (the executive officer, who goes unnamed by Mr. West) was transferred for his unwillingness to go "outside the wire." Another, Staff Sgt. Richard Blakley, a medic, was shot and killed by a sniper. Six other advisers were wounded, the most severe case being Staff Sgt. Christopher Watson, who barely survived being blown out of his Humvee by two antitank mines. (It was as a casualty replacement that Mr. West joined Team Outcast in October 2006.)

But the risks that Team Outcast took paid off. Patrolling together, Iraqis and Americans were gradually able to win over the local population and persuade them to turn against al Qaeda in Iraq. A key role was played, it should be noted, by gung-ho Marine battalions, who replaced Task Force Panther at Camp Habbaniyah in June 2006 and who provided more support to the Snake Eaters. Advisers cannot get the job done by themselves.

By the time Team Outcast left Habbaniyah in February 2007, violence had fallen dramatically and the Snake Eaters had become one of the best battalions in the entire Iraqi army. In 2009, back on Wall Street, Mr. West was amazed to hear that Habbaniyah, once a death zone, had again become a popular vacation spot.

It is too soon to know whether this success will last and whether it will be possible to replicate it in Afghanistan. But if Afghanistan does become more stable, it will be due in no small part to the efforts of American advisers working with American combat units to improve the professionalism of local security forces as Michael Troster, Owen West and others did so heroically in Iraq.

*Mr. Boot is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. His "Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare From Ancient Times to the Present" will be published by Norton in January.*

**Survivors. Mike Sutton. Hard cover, 392p. AuthorHouse 2004. Kindle. Available on Amazon.com**

War indelibly brands the minds of its participants and victims. Nothing exorcises war's psychological residue. In that very real sense, there are no survivors. That's the devastating premise set forth by Mike Sutton who spent three tours of duty as part of the relatively unknown Military Assistant Command/Vietnam. No Survivors follows three infantry advisors: Hunter Morgan, a 3-tour vet fighting a war his country is fighting against; Army Medic Henry Small Deer, a full-blooded Sioux, who'd rather fight than stitch; Jesse Edwards, a naïve recruit with a hidden dark side and Samantha Crawford, an Army nurse working in primitive operating rooms and rural hospital wards. A spy has been planted in the advisors' team house and, as a result, the enemy is waiting at every turn. Only luck, skill and combat experience allow the advisors to survive the most inhuman ground assaults and bloody ambushes. Following an unthinkable climax, and in a brilliant piece of writing, the primary characters come to the bitter, painful realization that sometimes the life you give for your country . . . is not your own. *(This review is from amazon.com website)*

**Nationalist in the Viet Nam Wars: Memoirs of a Victim Turned Soldier. Nguyen Cong Luan; Indiana University Press 602 pages. Available on Amazon.com and in Kindle**

"Of all the many books I have read about the Vietnam War, this one pays the ultimate tribute to the incredible sacrifices made by the courageous soldiers and people of South Vietnam. Through the eyes of a true patriot, the history and decisive operations of the conflict are reviewed from the unique perspective of a victim turned soldier. I have known the author for nearly four decades and can attest to his personal courage, his passion for life, and his intense love for his country. This book is a must read for those who want the complete picture and whole truth about a tragic war that consumed the world for over two decades." —Lawson W. Magruder III, Lieutenant General, US Army Retired. Vietnam '70-'71





## MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

**James L. (Jim) McDaniel.** Advisory Team 16. Jim passed away in October, 2012. Jim had an MA in Literature from the University of Oregon, and had been a College Instructor, Newspaper Columnist, Army officer and Corporate Sales Manager. He was the author of two non-fiction books and several magazine articles in addition to his novel, *Counterparts*. As an Army Lieutenant Colonel, he completed two combat tours in Vietnam including one as the Deputy Senior Advisor of Quang Tin Province. Jim lived near Tacoma Washington with his wife, Jan, and their grandson, Christopher.

Jim was an active member of *Counterparts* and was Reunion Coordinator for our 2008 Reunion in Seattle. He was a Life Member.

**Nguyen Chi Thien:** Often referred to as the “Solzhenitsyn of Vietnam” and an indomitable man of iron will, has passed on. He died 2 October. As an idealistic youth Thien supported the Viet Minh in the cause for independence. Later when communist ideologues brought down the iron hammer Thien would not take the safe road and acquiesce. He spoke out, wrote, defied the Party. After being released from his first prison term in 1977, he lived with a friend and wrote down almost 400 poems from memory. He chose Bastille Day, 1979 (July 14) to smuggle his work to diplomats in the French Embassy in Hanoi. Unfortunately, the Vietnamese security detail standing guard deterred him. Two days later, pursued by another security detail, he plunged into the British embassy, shouting in English, "I am not a madman, I am a poet and I have something important to give to you." To their credit, three British diplomats shut out the Vietnamese guards and asked him what he wanted. He gave them his manuscript and three photographs of himself, to establish that he did not seek to hide in anonymity. On leaving the embassy he was arrested. He spent 12 more years in prison and composed a second collection of poems. He paid a high price for his courage; a total of 27 years in prison including upwards of 12 years in solitary.

In 1991, Through the persistent efforts of retired Col. Noboru Masuoka, a USAF veteran, Thien was released and arrived in the U.S. From that day on he continued to speak out, testifying before Congress, and supporting human rights in Viet Nam and excoriating Hanoi's communists. For more information on this true hero of our time go to <http://www.vietnamlit.org/nguynchithien/index.html>

### ***Died in Ha Tay North Vietnamese “Re-education Camp” 1978-1983***

Col. Phan Duy Quan, 9th Inf. Div.

Col. Nguyen Van Hoc, Military Countersecurity, Col. Nguyen Van Ton, Armor/Thiet Giap

Col. Ton That Dinh, Bureau of Military Training

Col. Pham Khac Tuan, Bureau of Military Training

**Colonel William R. (Rich) Higgins, USMC**, disappeared on Feb. 17, 1988, while serving as the Chief, Observer Group Lebanon and Senior Military Observer, United States Military Observer Group, United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. Infantry battalion Advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Corps.

**Ronald Lennon, AATTV** Died May 1, 2012

**Gen. James F. Hollingworth, USA.** Gen. Hollingsworth was CG MR III Regional Assistance Command. Died March 2, 2010

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