



COUNTERPARTS

TƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

SITREP

Volume XVI

Issue 2

Summer 2014

2014 Greensboro Reunion Reaffirms Ties with Montagnards; 2015 Reunion Planned for Washington, DC area.

COUNTERPARTS 2014 Reunion in Greensboro featured both new directions and a renewed dedication to long standing comradeship.

Reunion Coordinators Dave Beck and Max Lund scored a clear success by basing the event at the Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel, which provided a pleasant combination of luxury and friendly service to the 56 members and wives who attended the Reunion.

First stop Thursday morning was at the North Carolina Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall where members and wives honored the 1900 North Carolinians who were killed in the War. Commander JC Fischer, Dave Beck, and Max Lund saluted the memorial as a commemorative wreath was placed at the Wall. Next stop was a visit to the NASCAR Museum in Charlotte, then a final stop to the NASCAR Charlotte Motor Speedway where members got to ride around the track.

Friday started with a trip back to the Old Salem Colony, one of the original settlements in the US. That afternoon members met in the hospitality room with our Montagnard friends who lived in the area. Kay Reibold, a documentary filmmaker, had two films for sale, one on traditional Montagnard culture, the second on resistance fighters and their hopes for their country. Hip Ksor offered his book on the old stories and legends of the tribes' people, and H' Yoanh Ksor Buon Ya presented her book about her escape in 1975, which included joining the resistance, a long struggle to survive and finally, arrival in the USA in 1986. Thomas Y-Ban and his wife provided a jar of traditional rice wine and bracelets so that members could experience a "Rice Wine Ceremony." Members who partook of the

ceremony, were given spiritual guidance by a Montagnard Shaman. CD's of traditional Montagnard music and hand woven items were also for sale. Proceeds went to the Montagnard Human Rights Organization.

Friday evening was set aside for our traditional dinner at a local Vietnamese restaurant. As has happened in the past many of us were pleasantly surprised to discover that Vietnamese Cuisine is *not* limited to rice, odd bits of fish and green leaves, and small unknown animals.

Our Saturday business meeting (see page 4) ended with agreement to hold next year's Reunion, hosted by Commander Grant McClure, in the Arlington/ DC area. Our event will coincide with the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Plans are to coordinate the reunion with a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery to commemorate and recognize the Montagnards and other indigenous minorities in Vietnam who served with American Advisors.

Saturday evening Commander Grant McClure welcomed the 56 COUNTERPARTS members and wives, and over 40 Montagnards from the Rhade and Jarai tribes to the Banquet. (See "Banquet" on Page 6) Commander McClure first spoke in English then repeated the message in Rhade, saying

"We never forgot you after the Central Highlands were overrun in 1975 and as a fellow advisor, we want you to know that we love you, appreciate your culture, and are very sad as to the tragedy that has befallen you and the Montagnard people now in Vietnam," said McClure.



COUNTERPARTS SITREP

The Official Publication of Counterparts/Tướng Hữu Đông Nam Á

Volume XVI

Issue 2

Summer 2014

Commander
Grant McClure
1009 Norfolk Dr
LaPlata MD 20646
grant.mcclure@comcast.net
301 609 6061

XO
(Vacant)

**Quartermaster/Logistics
Officer/Village Market**
Mike McMunn
2310 Newberry St
Williamsport PA 17701-4243
covan2@verizon.net
570 220 8156

Adjutant /Treasurer
Jim O'Malley
P.O. Box 1331
Brawley CA 92227-1331
omalley@usa.net

Membership
John B. Haseman
555 W Saddle Dr
Grand Junction CO 81507
jhaseman@earthlink.net

Web Site Administrator
James F. Alkek
jimalkek@yahoo.com

SITREP Production Manager
Bui Quang Lam
lam@completeprintshop.com

Historian
(vacant)

Public Affairs/Information Officer
Rich Webster
Covanmi@mchsi.net

Locator
Joe West
joe_west41@hotmail.com
209 201 2811

Hmong/Lao Liaison Officer
Grant McClure
grant.mcclure@comcast.net

Montagnard Liaison Officer
Mike Little
littlecrazy3@cox.net

SITREP Editors
Ken Jacobsen
[kjacobson@knology.net](mailto:kjacobsen@knology.net)
843 795 7519
Bill Laurie
bill_laurie@yahoo.com

Commander's Corner

Of Mission and Purpose

Reflecting back...indeed way back, after 20-days of leave in CONUS between tours, an uplifting feeling swept over me when I stepped off the *Freedom Bird* and onto the tarmac at Tan San Nhut Airport in May 1970. Sure, there were potential risks any of us might face volunteering to put ourselves in harm's way. But that was dampened for me by the palpable reality of the war zone where all of one's senses come alive accompanied by the overwhelming satisfaction of being back on mission, and fulfilling a higher sense of purpose that comes with advisory team service. Ascending into the CO position at this year's COUNTERPARTS reunion, and being back on point again with the Association, and enjoying the good fellowship of members and friends, I became infused with the same heightened feelings of mission and purpose. It's great to be back! Twenty-two years later, having embarked upon a long journey with COUNTERPARTS as its first elected Commanding Officer in 1992, I've come full circle.

Unlike many of my fellow members in COUNTERPARTS, I did not remain on active duty to pursue a career in the military. Upon ETS from a second tour of duty in Vietnam in 1971, for me the sense of mission and purpose would be reinforced by pursuing a career in healthcare where efforts directed towards caring for patients in an acute care hospital setting were similar in many ways to my erstwhile wartime service on a MILPHAP team. It has been gratifying to have spent the past four decades in positions of progressive responsibility in healthcare, while at the same time participation in Counterparts afforded the means to remain close to matters of importance and concern in Southeast Asia and share a common bond with fellow advisors with respect to our unique wartime experience. It's good to be back, and an honor to serve the Association.

With a need to put volunteer work on a back burner, I scaled back involvement in COUNTERPARTS from 1997 to 2007 to bolster my career prospects in hospital management completing a master's degree in healthcare administration, followed by an MBA, and culminating in a doctoral degree in health science. At the COUNTERPARTS reunion in 2005 (Phoenix, AZ) I advised Ken Jacobsen that I would welcome an opportunity to assume a vacant officer role in the Association when all of my graduate studies were complete.

From 1997 forward, I remained active albeit with relative low-key involvement as COUNTERPARTS' designated Washington, D.C. liaison officer and Lao/Hmong liaison officer. From 2011 to 2014, I became Association XO/Adjutant. Much akin to the position of "chair-elect" or "president-elect" in other organizations, according to our by-laws the XO assumes the CO position at the end of a three-year term. This is what just transpired at the annual reunion in Greensboro as our outgoing CO, JC Fischer, passed the gavel to me during the Saturday business session.

(Continued on Page 3)

Counterparts/THDNA is an IRS 501 (c)(3) Veterans organization Chartered in the State of Illinois. Registered Agent is Richard Webster, 1019 W Lafayette Ave Jacksonville IL 62650-1860

Commander's Corner (Continued)

COUNTERPARTS Constitution and By-Laws, as originally articulated and set forth in 1991, stipulates an overarching purpose has been established:

1. To promote fellowship and fraternity among eligible members.
2. To commemorate the service and sacrifice of comrades.
3. To foster cross-cultural understanding and perpetuate traditions or customs for greater esteem.
4. To inform members of continuing socio-political changes in Southeast Asia.
5. To compile and preserve archival materials demonstrating historical accuracy about the allied advisory experience during the Second Indochina War.
6. To disseminate historical information about the advisory role to interested persons.
7. To stimulate an appreciation for the advisory experience and accomplishments by educating the general public.
8. To grant necessary aid and assistance to Southeast Asia émigrés and refugees displaced by the war.
9. To lend encouragement and service to the orphans and relatives of former advisors.
10. To inform members of current legislation and veteran's affairs concerning the specific orientation of this organization.
11. To appropriately assist, whenever feasible, any other war veterans or veteran's organizations without regard to their eligibility or relationship with this organization.

As exemplified in the minutes of this year's business meeting in this edition of SITREP, and in the summary of the 2014 Reunion banquet festivities, in each of the aforementioned categories listed above, we have remained true to our mission and our stated purpose, and this is what makes membership in COUNTERPARTS so special and meaningful. Since the very inception of the Association, the spirit of proud service from our prior in-country deployments many decades ago lives on through the activities and the support of our officers and our members.

Gentlemen...I salute you!

Dr. Grant A. McClure
Commander

MACV Team 25, MILPHAP Team 19
Ban Me Thuot, Darlac Province, RVN

COUNTERPARTS Needs Volunteers.
We need a volunteer for the position of HISTORIAN, to preserve
and maintain the organizations History.

MINUTES

2014 COUNTERPARTS BUSINESS MEETING

After three years as Commander of COUNTERPARTS, J.C. Fischer turned over the duties to our new leader, Grant McClure, who served as a previous Commander in the 90's. Grant gave a brief history as to how COUNTERPARTS had been instrumental in supporting human rights issues for our former allies, the Montagnard and Hmong, in Washington, DC. Grant led COUNTERPARTS in advocating for a memorial established at Arlington Cemetery in 1997 for our valiant allies in Laos who fought the secret war supporting the US effort. He represented COUNTERPARTS at the unveiling ceremony of the plaque dedicated to the Hmong.

Membership chairman John Haseman provided updated information on membership. There are approximately 500 names in the advisor database, to include 168 lifetime paid members, 134 active members, 50 active yearly dues paying members, 307 inactive, and 52 known deceased members. The names of advisors are never deleted for historical purposes from the original database that includes approximately 700 names. John shared with members that he received a letter from a student pursuing a Master's Degree in the British War Studies program who is writing a paper comparing the advisory effort of the British SAS in Malaya with that of the US Advisors in Vietnam with lessons learned. He would like to contact any members who wish to provide him information as to their experiences. Contact John at his email if interested: jhaseman@earthlink.net

The new treasurer Jim O'Malley reported that there was \$11,929 in our account at present and with the current spending, money will run out in two years. Commander McClure requested Jim to undertake the position of Adjutant that is more befitting of the comptroller function Jim currently fulfills. Jim accepted the recommendation. It is acknowledged that the Executive Officer position remains open, but it is good to have the CO and Adjutant slots filled at this time. Commander McClure is hopeful that a member will express interest in stepping into the XO role.

Discussion was held on what to do with a large *Advisor Memorial Board* that was designed by and specially crafted for the Association by Paul Brubaker, former Executive Officer and founding member of COUNTERPARTS. Unveiled at the 1992 Reunion in Louisville, Kentucky, the three by five foot plywood board was originally envisioned to have engraved brass plates mounted on the board reflecting names of advisors KIA. Mike McMunn has been updating this roster of deceased that has reached around 3,500 in number, and far too many to place on the spaces provided on the Memorial Board. In 1993, Jack DeBoer volunteered to retrieve the Board from former Adjutant, Steve Herberth, and has stored it in his basement since that time. The idea was to have the Board prominently displayed at annual reunions, but size and weight of the Board combined with the logistics of moving the piece from reunion-to-reunion proved to be too challenging, and it has therefore not been practical to fulfill its intended use.

Commander McClure asked members present for ideas on the disposition of the Board as Jack DeBoer has indicated his preference to discontinue storing it. One principle recommendation was to donate the Board to the Vietnam Archives at Texas Tech University. Suggestions were also made to explore potential placement of the Board at the following locations-the US Army Infantry Museum at Ft Benning; National Museum of US Army at Ft. Belvoir, Special Forces Museum at Ft Bragg; and Vietnam Wall Information Center. The decision for the final disposition of the Board must be made, and Commander McClure will now reach out to Paul Brubaker whose guidance will be key at this juncture given the rationale and the significance of how the Memorial Board was originally conceived.

Ken Jacobsen, SITREP Editor, reminded members to update their home addresses and email contact if they change, and to also send in your advisor stories to the SITREP. All SITREPs are sent to the Texas Tech Vietnam Archives and also are posted on the COUNTERPARTS bulletin board, so that they become a part of the historical record of the Vietnam War and are searchable on the web.

MINUTES

2014 COUNTERPARTS BUSINESS MEETING

Rich Webster gave an update on our Montagnard Scholar program that COUNTERPARTS has supported for nine years in Cambodia. Our newest student is a Jarai, Sev Yem, from Ratakakir Province who is pursuing a two -year program in English studies. Our two previous students, Broy Makara, a Phnong, and Romas Phanna, a Jarai, are currently employed with NGOs helping their people back in the villages. COUNTERPARTS and members have provided financial support to provide 9 Montagnard students with a college education since 2005.

Tommy Daniels, President of Cambodia Corps Inc, updated everyone on the Montagnard situation in Eastern Cambodia in the two provinces bordering Vietnam where the Montagnard population is quickly losing their traditional way of life and their forestland to Vietnamese and Chinese corporations exploiting the rain forests. COUNTERPARTS has been a big supporter of CCI as well as many members who have donated generously to the program and a number of members have traveled to Cambodia to observe the program first hand. Member Jim Ellis and wife just returned from a visit to Phnom Penh where they stayed at the Indigenous Student Center and interacted with the 11 Montagnard students living there who attend various colleges in Phnom Penh.



Sev Yem, our COUNTERPARTS Scholarship student standing on the balcony of the Cambodia Corp Indigenous Student Center in Phnom Penh. Yem is a Jarai from Ratanakiri Province and his father is a farmer.

A Canadian Professor of history, Stephen A Connor is writing a book on the Vietnamese National Police-anyone interested who served with the “White Mice” contact stephenc@nipissingu.ca, or call 705-474-3450.

Mike Benge reported on a new effort to right the record of the Vietnam War to combat the anti-war bias/leftist viewpoint that has permeated the colleges and universities. This new effort to dispel the Myths of the War can be found at the website: <http://www.VVFT.org>

Those present voted to award the following monies to support organizations dedicated to helping our former allies in Southeast Asia. Cambodia Corps Inc, \$4000; Friends of Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage, \$500; and Vets With A Mission,\$200. One Counterparts member made a generous personal donation of \$1,600 to Cambodia Corps, Inc.

Grant McClure volunteered to host the reunion next year in Washington, DC, that will coincide with the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Plans are to coordinate the reunion with a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery to commemorate and recognize our former comrades-in-arms, the Montagnards and other indigenous minorities in Vietnam who served with American Advisors.

Following the business meeting, Mr. Tan Thach, President of the Council of Indigenous Peoples in Today’s Vietnam, gave a presentation describing the extreme violation of the culture experienced by the CHAM, Khmer Krom, and Montagnard indigenous peoples in Vietnam today. The three groups have joined together to lobby for human rights for their people and asked COUNTERPARTS for their support. They noted that there are now 13,000 students from Vietnam studying at US colleges. Not one is an Indigenous student.

COUNTERPARTS BANQUET FEATURES CEREMONIES, FOLK ART AND DANCE,
DEMONSTRATIONS BY MONTAGNARD PEOPLE.

By
Rich Webster

Our new Commander Grant McClure welcomed 56 COUNTERPARTS members and wives and over 40 Montagnards from the Rhade and Jarai tribes to the evening banquet and ceremonies. Commander McClure, who speaks Rhade, first spoke in English then repeated the message in Rhade for our guests, the Montagnards.

Max Lund introduced his old friend, Nay Rong, head of the Montagnard Human Rights Organization, who fled to the jungle after 1975 and led the jungle resistance for 11 years against the Communist government that was trying its best to exterminate the Montagnard Freedom Fighters left behind by the US Government.

Nay Rong thanked all present for their love and care. “The War ended for the US soldier in 1973 but it didn’t end for the Montagnards,” he said. “I was soon captured by Communist forces, and sentenced to be executed after 1975, so I escaped into Cambodia where I led the Montagnard secret army and struggled to stay alive.”

“The Montagnards are the rightful legal owner of the Central Highlands,” He continued. “Over twelve thousand of us fled to the jungle to avoid the Communist oppression. Most of our leaders were imprisoned, but we fought on for 11 years before making our escape to Thailand.”

“We waited for promised help from America but it never came. We were finally repatriated to America in 1986 in the Charlotte area.”

He went on to ask for our continued support;

“Help us today to lobby for human rights for the Montagnard, Cham, and Khmer Krom people who are in Vietnam today. Help stop Hanoi’s extreme persecution of our Montagnard people” he urged. “We have had no other friends in the world like our COUNTERPARTS friends who fought by our side in battle and continue to hold us in their hearts. Today there are no NGOs helping the Montagnards in the Highlands. The secret police are everywhere, and over 400 Montagnard Christians are imprisoned.”

“Our hearts are broken” he said, “and our land has been stolen from us. Help us by calling your Congressman to support the Vietnam Human Rights Act, Bill 1649. As soldiers we fought side by side. We never forget you. You will be in our hearts forever. Thank you.”

COUNTERPARTS Commander McClure then presented Nay Rong with a COUNTERPARTS challenge coin and also a 1986 US Mint “**Liberty Walking**” silver dollar coin, the date signifying when the first group of Montagnard freedom fighters who had escaped the jungle in 1975 made it to freedom in the United States in 1986.

Speaking first in English, then in Rhade, McClure said “I never forgot you, and your friends here never forgot you. I thank God for bringing you and your families here to America to safety and to freedom. But what can we say to a people who have lost everything and have only known abandonment? And, what do we say to soldiers keeping the faith on the battlefield when others did not?” US veterans understand what it feels like to be shunned.

(Continued on Page 7)



1986 Proof “Liberty Walking” US Mint Silver Dollar presented to Nay Rong by Counterparts at the annual Reunion banquet, April 26, 2014.

(continued from Page 6)

At the unveiling of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington in 1982 the salutation "*Welcome Home*" was exchanged among US veterans. What we can say to our Southeast Asia counterparts gathered here with us is "*Welcome to Freedom*,"

Other awards and recognition followed. J.C. Fischer was awarded a beautiful custom made COUNTERPARTS belt buckle for his 3 years service as commander of COUNTERPARTS as well as his many past contributions in a variety of roles for the Association since 1990.

Former Commander Fischer awarded a plaque to Rich Webster for his public affairs work for COUNTERPARTS and the Montagnard Scholarship program with Cambodia Corps, Inc. David Marion received the Commander's Trophy for being Top Volunteer.



Reunion 2014: The REAL Advisors

Dave Beck and Max Lund received certificates for their outstanding job and countless hours of work organizing the 2014 reunion.

Kay Reibold, human rights worker in North Carolina, was presented an award for her many years of service devoted to the betterment of the Montagnard people in America, and the quest for freedom and human rights for the Montagnards back in Vietnam.

Hip-Ksor, Director of the group, explained the meaning of each dance and introduced the individual musical numbers. Ksor, like many other of his people had made a long and difficult journey, spending 10 years in a North Vietnam prison camp before finding freedom in America. The evening ended with a performance by the Montagnard Culture Program. The event included music played on the traditional bronze gongs and handmade ethnic instruments unique to the culture. The program also feature

traditional dances performed by young Montagnard ladies in distinctive Montagnard dress. As the performance continued other members of the Cultural Group joined the dancing, and invited COUNTERPARTS members and wives in the audience to join the event.

Nay Rong then presented COUNTERPARTS with two traditional woven baskets with the COUNTERPARTS logo interwoven into the sides of the basket..

"*Hiam sonak*," said Commander McClure to end the unforgettable evening. "That means very beautiful

in Jarai or *siam sonak* in Rhade." "Tell the Montagnard performers *Hiam sonak*, when you leave."



J.C. Fischer participates in Montagnard Ceremony



Dancers of the Montagnard Cultural Group performed traditional folk Dances, accompanied by Montagnard musical

Treasurers Report

The following is a report of COUNTERPARTS' financial status as of May 22, 2014.

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

	Returned Check Charges	12.00
	Income	
	Life Memberships	1,010.00
	Reunion Income 2014	6,570.00
	Membership Dues	1,750.00
	Member Donations Misc.	180.00
	Village Market	1,060.00
Total Income		10,582.00
Gross Profit		10,582.00

Expenses

	2014 Reunion Expense	6,950.17
	Village Market Expense	740.00
	Bank Service Charges	12.00
	Postage, Mailing Service	251.11
	<u>Contributions</u>	
	Cambodia Corps	4,000.00
	Vets With a Mission	200.00
	Vinh Son	500.00
	Total Contributions	4,700.00
	Total Expenses	12,653.28
	Net Ordinary Income	-2,071.28

Reunion 2014

Income	\$6,570.00
Meals	\$2,514.57
Mic. for banquet	\$25.35
Ice	\$95.87
Hospitality Room	\$268.34
Old Salem	\$448.50
NASCAR HOF	\$804.38
Bus	\$1,700.00
Lowes Speedway	\$250.00
KMD Awards	\$365.23
Room Supplies-Max	\$403.09
Misc.	\$74.84
Total Expenses	\$6,950.17
Net Income	(\$380.17)

We are slowly losing money year by year. One problem is that over the years we have had a lot of guys pay for life membership which is good, but the problem is we have been spending that money instead of investing it for income. Once it is gone it is gone and each guy that does a life membership removes one from the dues paying list. In todays economy investing in a bank account brings zilch for a return so I don't know if we could even come out if we started saving the life memberships. I don't have a solution, the only one may be either an increase in dues or a decrease in spending or both. This is something we need to be mulling over before we get to DC next year.

Any comments are welcome

...Jim O'Malley, Adjutant.

COUNTERPARTS Oral History

The ARVN 21st Division

By

Luis Vargas, US Army, (Ret.)

On my 3rd tour in Vietnam, I was assigned to TM 51, the advisory group of the 21st infantry Division. Our headquarters was in Bac Lieu; the Division forward CP was in Ca Mau and the 31st regiment was located in Vi Thanh, my home was with the 4th Battalion, 31st Regiment.

Thanks to my SP training and experience as an infantryman, I established good rapport with the officers, NCOs and the little *binhsi*'s, which in the long run made my job a lot easier and a pleasant.

Officially, the U-Minh campaign ran from Dec. 1970-Nov. 1971; this infamous "Forest of Darkness," the U-Minh, lies on the shores of the Gulf of Thailand. The highest point in the area is approximately one meter above sea level and is underwater at least 8 months of the year. Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink.

On December 1970, lightning struck the U-Minh; "western lightning," that is, as troopers of the 21st ARVN began to pour into the forest determined to secure the area for thousands of farmers, woodcutters and fishermen that had been denied this vast resource. The men of the 21st ARVN and their US advisors were to bear the brunt of what was destined to become one of the longest, most bitterly contested campaigns of the war. It was a ground war, an infantry war, in its most classical sense. The infantry carried the war to the enemy in some of the most incredibly difficult terrain that has ever been used as a battleground. Of course, the success of the U-Minh campaign could not have been possible without the availability and support of the air assets. The courageous chopper pilots were truly a blessing. God bless their "service and sacrifice."

The U-Minh campaign is the story of a combat division in perhaps its finest hour and it's the story of possibly the most widely underrated soldier in the world: "that little *binhsi*," the ARVN private.

At the conclusion of the U-Minh campaign, a victory ceremony was held at the Div. Fwd CP in Camau. President Nguyen Van Thieu personally came to congratulate the division, a very impressive ceremony. Of course, the victory came with the modest casualties suffered by the division.

Our victory was short-lived because of the three-prong invasion of South Vietnam aimed at three critical areas, Quang Tri, An Loc and Kontum. The NVA called the invasion "Nguyen Hue Campaign," the US named it the "Easter Offensive," since the opening attack started on Good Friday, March 20, 1972.

The 21st ARVN was ordered to deploy to MR III and arrived in Lai Khe on 11 Apr 1972. Our 31st regiment set up in the vicinity of Chon Thanh on Hwy. 13 south of An Loc. It was hoped that the division would be able to eventually fight its way up the highway to relieve the besieged troops at An Loc. The 7th NVA division proved to be a determined and skillful defender.

My tour of duty came to an end on 17 Apr 72 when I was wounded by mortar shrapnel as we were conducting a tank-infantry assault north of Chon Thanh on Hwy 13. To the best of my knowledge, while the 21st failed in effecting the link up with the forces in An Loc, their attacks tied down and ultimately all but nearly destroyed the entire 7th NVA division, making them unavailable for the fight at An Loc. It must be said the 21st suffered heavy casualties also.

Where Dien Bien Phu lasted 56 days before collapse, An Loc held for 70 days before driving the communists out, thanks to all our air assets.

During the An Loc campaign, Advisory Team 51 suffered 4 KIA's and 18 WIA. The US advisor served nobly in the highest and most honored tradition of the army. On the battlefield, the advisors provided continuous encouragement to their counterparts. The American response was always timely, forceful and decisive and provided excellent leadership by example, and was the "glue" that kept the ARVN together.

Memories of my tour with the 21st ARVN are bittersweet. While the sweet memories of funny events that happened to me are precious, in the end, the bitter taste of the war experience, the loss of human life with its pain and suffering, and the fate of the people of South Vietnam now under Communist

control, has taken its toll. Yes, war is hell!



ARVN 21st "Western lightning"
Division Patch

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.

Abandoned Allies. DVD documentary, www.abandonedallies.com *Abandoned Allies* 120 Woodburn Road Raleigh, NC 27605 Cost: \$18.00 cash or check payable to Dr. Surry Roberts

Abandoned Allies is a documentary about the US government's betrayal and abandonment of its closest allies during the Viet Nam War — the Montagnards of the Central Highlands of South Vietnam. Over 50 % of the Montagnards' adult male population was lost fighting alongside the American Special Forces. They died in place of Americans and without their sacrifice there would have been hundreds more names on that somber black granite wall — The Vietnam Memorial. This documentary is narrated by Americans who fought and worked along side the Montagnards in Vietnam and those who managed to escape to the US.

Just before the fall of South Viet Nam in April 1975, the Montagnards were promised continued military aid by the American Embassy if they went into the jungles and continued their fight against the Vietnamese communists. They did what they were asked to do, and never received the promised aid. Our "Abandoned Allies," a group of 212 fighters and their families emerged from the jungles of Cambodia after 11 years of fighting, fled to a refugee camp in Thailand and resettled in the US in 1986. A second group of 400, dubbed the "Lost Battalion," was located in Eastern Cambodia in 1992 and resettled in the US after 17 years of continued guerilla war. Only these few survived of the thousands who fled to the jungles to continue the fight against the Vietnamese communists; the others were either killed or died of disease and malnutrition and were buried in the jungle in unmarked graves.

The final betrayal of our "Abandoned Allies" occurred in February 2007, when Ellen Sauerbrey the Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration, went to Vietnam and proclaimed to the world that the Montagnards were no longer being persecuted by the Vietnamese communists and they should stay in the Central Highlands and not flee to other countries to try to obtain refugee status.

This film also describes the continuing persecution and ethnic cleansing of the Montagnards in Vietnam at the hands of the communist government of Vietnam for their support of the United States.

Montagnard American Music Group. DVD, *Montagnard Culture Group*, 1018 Castalia Drive, Cary, NC 27513.

This DVD was made possible by a grant from the Smith Reynolds Foundation to Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas. It was produced by Kay Reibold, of Raleigh, NC, and is a selection of the Sounds and Songs of the Montagnard people, performed by the Montagnard American Music Group. It's a rare opportunity to hear the unique, and sadly, disappearing, music of the mountain people, performed on their own distinctive instruments. This is the group that performed at our 2014 Greensboro Reunion.

Escaping Vietnam; H'Yoanh's Story. Harriet Hill and Y'Hoanh Buonya, Tate Publishing, 127 E Trade Center Terrace, Mustang OK, 73064 2013. \$27.99

H'Yoanh Ksor Buonya is a Montagnard refugee (now an American Citizen) from the Cheo Reo area of the Central Highlands. In 1975, after the Communist takeover of Vietnam she fled into the jungle to escape the persecution imposed by the NVA/VC government. She survived starvation, danger and years of hardship, while struggling to escape not only the Vietnamese Communists, but also the murderous Khmer Rouge. Her co-author, Harriet Hill, met over several years with H'Yoanh to produce this remarkable book.



BULLETIN BOARD

National Lao Hmong Recognition Day May 14-15

Lao- and Hmong-American veterans who served in Laos during the Vietnam War, and their American advisors, were honored at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) at a special veterans' memorial ceremony held on May 15 by the Lao Veterans of America Institute (LVAI), Center for Public Policy Analysis (CPPA), Members of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Defense, Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force. Keynote remarks were offered by the offices of Congressman Jim Costa (D-California), Alaska Senators Lisa Murkowski (R) and Mark Begich (D), ANC Deputy Superintendent Jack Lechner and other officials.

"We are here to remember and honor our fellow Lao and Hmong soldiers and our U.S. Special Forces, CIA and Air America counterparts and advisors who served and died in Laos fighting invading communist forces from North Vietnam in defense of the Royal Kingdom of Laos and our American allies," commented Colonel Wangyee Vang, President of the LVAI.

Hugh Tovar, former CIA station chief in Laos stated, "I want to thank you for your kind invitation to participate in the memorial events at Arlington National Cemetery. It would be an honor to participate in the memorial events in Arlington National Cemetery. Those soldiers are my own heroes. Their war was my war, against a common enemy, and now they are my fellow American citizens."

Keynote remarks were also given by: Colonel Wangyee Vang, LVAI; Philip Smith, CPPA; Grant McClure, COUNTERPARTS; Mike Benge, USFSO-Ret., and former Vietnam War POW; Jane Hamilton-Merriitt and others

Montagnard Related books, DVD's available

A number of books, pamphlets, DVD's and CD's produced by representatives of the various Montagnard Communities are available for purchase. Many of these were featured at the 2014 Greensboro Reunion. For complete listing and additional ordering information go to the following websites:

Montagnard Human Rights Organization: www.mhro.org

Abandoned Allies: <http://www.abandonedallies.com>

Alaska celebrates Hmong-American Veteran Memorial Day.

In June of 2013 the State of Alaska legislature officially proclaimed May 15 to be Hmong-American Veteran Memorial Day. This year the event was celebrated by a ceremony in Anchorage that included recognition of the Hmong service to the US and various Hmong ceremonies and cultural activities. One of those present at the event was Sgt. Kong Ly an active duty member of the Alaska National Guard 1-143 Airborne Regiment. Ly's father fought in one of the Special Guerilla Units in Laos. For more information see the Alaska Daily News at www.adn.com and look for "Hmong Veterans" or go to: <http://www.adn.com/2014/05/15/3472454/hmong-veterans-honored-in-ceremony.html>

Vinh Son Orphanage continues work in 2014.

Vinh Son Orphanage work continues as the Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage (VSO) operate in the Kontum- Pleiku area, providing help such as a Dental Clinic, and a Childrens Art Project. COUNTERPARTS is a supporter of the VSO, through our members Mike and Marion Little.



White T-shirts all sizes (M, L, and XL. \$12.00 for XXL)	\$10.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Patch (3x 4.75" Oval 7 Color Logogram).....	\$6.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Decal (3x 4.75" Oval 7 Color Logogram).....	\$2.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Lapel Pin (.75x 1.06" Oval, Bronze over Pewter).....	\$12.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Challenge Coin (1.5" dia. solid bronze, Counterparts Logo one side Map of Southeast Asia other side).....	\$10.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Baseball style Cap (direct embroidery logogram).....	\$15.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Coffee Mug (Counterparts color logo)	\$11.00
COUNTERPARTS Knit Polo shirt with collar. (Embroidered Counterparts Logo white only , most sizes)	\$20.00
MACV Shoulder Patch (full color mfg. 1968)	\$3.00

Shipping and handling fee is \$6.00

Please send prepaid orders (including Shipping & Handling Fee) with US bank check or US money order payable to:

**Mike McMunn
Counterparts Quartermaster
2310 Newberry St, Williamsport, PA 17701 USA**

**For information, call 570-220-8156.
covan2@verizon.net**

NOTE

Not all of the items listed are always available. For more info Contact Mike McMunn



MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

Bruce Matthews, US Army, Feb 28, 2014. COUNTERPARTS member Bruce Mathews, age 82. Bruce died of complications from Parkinsons Disease on Feb 16. He was one of COUNTERPARTS hard workers. Many will recall that he and Marianne hosted the Reunion at Tampa in April 2007, one of the most memorable of our Reunions.

He was born in Portland, Maine on September 13, 1931, and at the time of his death lived in Tampa. “Sarge”, Proudly served in the U.S. Army for 38 years, achieving the rank of E-9, Sergeant Major, serving as an Advisor to the South Vietnamese army in the 1960's and 70's. Bruce received his degree in history as a graduate of the University of Tampa. In his lifetime he pursued many hobbies and interests, such as tracing his family genealogy. He shared his love of archeology on treks with his wife Marianne and friends. He tinkered with anything that he could find, always looking for that new adventure. It is sad he did not write a book before he left us.

Bruce is survived by Marianne, his loving wife of 20 years, 5 children, 9 grandchildren and three great grandchildren. In addition, he is survived by his wife's extended family of 6 children and 8 grandchildren. Commendations and medals received during his military career include: the Army Service Ribbon, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Parachute Badge, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with (2) 10 year Device, Overseas Service Bar, Overseas Service Ribbon, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral (3), National Defense Service Medal (1st Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal, Bronze Star Medal (1st Oak Leaf Cluster), Vietnam Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal (6th award), and the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Honor Medal 2nd class). Bruce Served as both a Treasurer and a Judge Advocate for The American Legion Post 5.

Bruce was known as a good and gentle man and for his passionate and detailed stories about his adventures. He will be greatly missed by his friends and family members. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in memory of Bruce Mathews to: The Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church, 3501 W. San Jose St, Tampa, FL 33629, The American Legion Post 5, 3810 W. Kennedy Blvd. Tampa, FL 33609, and the Michael J. Fox foundation for Parkinson's. Final internment, with full military honors, was at Bay Pines National Cemetery in Bay Pines, (St. Petersburg), Florida

Maj. Gen. Homer D. Smith, US Army, March 6 2011. COUNTERPARTS Affiliate member Homer D. Smith Died in San Antonio, TX on March 6, 2011. MGEN Smith, sometimes referred to as the “last soldier to leave Vietnam” had a long and distinguished military career that included service in World War II, the Korean War, and two tours in Vietnam. On his last tour, in 1975, he organized and Commanded “Operation Frequent Wind” which made possible the evacuation of more than 7500 Vietnamese from Saigon as the NVA approached, and Operation “Baby Lift” which was the evacuation of ethnically mixed infants and orphans from Saigon. He held the Distinguished Service Medal with two Oak Leaf clusters, The Legion of Merit, and other awards. He was also the long time Administrator of the Saigon Mission Association, an Affiliate Member of COUNTERPARTS,

LTC Edward St. Clair, Jr., USA, (Ret.), Sr. Engineer Advisor, 21st ARVN Infantry Division, 17 April 2014.

The VC and Me: Two Very Different Experiences

By John B. Haseman

ONE: My VC Bodyguards

When I arrived back at Ham Long District in August 1972 as District Senior Advisor, my District Chief, LTC Son, cleared out the administrative tactical operations center (TOC) and gave it to the three of us for our quarters.

Right away LTC Son sent for two of his NCOs.

“They will be your bodyguards,” LTC Son explained.

The details were, they would guard our quarters in shifts at night, and would be my bodyguards and carry my radio when we went to the field. I could not refuse the bodyguards, but I did keep the radio for myself.

Sure enough, every night one of the two NCOs was on armed guard outside the TOC. One was always there, I could see or hear them before I slept or if I woke up in the night. It was a comfort having the protection even though I was very sure there was no threat to us other than that posed by a mortar attack or ground assault on the compound. But clearly LTC Son thought there might be an enemy agent among his soldiers who might be inclined to attack the American advisors.

During field operations, one NCO or the other was always assigned to protect me. He walked directly behind me in file, and took up a position close to me during rest stops or administrative meetings, meal times in the field, or during outpost construction. When we hit contact with the VC my bodyguard was always on the ground taking cover with me.

One or the other of the two NCO bodyguards was my shadow for the entire three months I was re-deployed to Ham Long District.

Decades later, during one of my visits to Saigon, a former Kien Hoa Province interpreter told me of his post war life and we began reminiscing about “the good old days” in Kien Hoa. I finally got around to asking him who I knew personally who turned out to be a VC.

“Oh, many, *dai-uy*,” he responded. I was surprised at some of the names he gave me, because I knew them quite well. But the real surprise was when he told me that both NCOs who had been my bodyguards for three months had been VC agents all along. That meant that two men, who I had quite literally trusted with my life, had been enemy agents!

“Why am I still alive?” I asked my Vietnamese friend. “Those two NCOs were assigned as my bodyguards and could easily have killed me either while I slept or during contacts on our tactical operations.”

“Well, *dai-uy*,” he said, “there are several reasons.” He went on to explain them.

First of all, the VC did not want to assassinate U.S. advisors because a major investigation would take place. The VC believed that undetected agents were more valuable than eliminating advisors. Even if the assassin escaped detection, a detailed investigation might turn up OTHER VC assets.

Secondly, VC spies/bodyguards were valuable sources of information about advisors’ plans, daily routine, operational techniques, codes, and equipment.

And finally, “*dai-uy*, you are a nice man. Everyone liked you. Many people would have been angry if you had been killed.”

I am very glad I was considered a good person! It may very well have been a major reason why I was able to leave the war zone alive and well.

TWO: A Little Boy’s Face

One of the most satisfying programs run by the U.S. medical staff in Vietnam was a program to repair harelips and cleft palates on young children. The surgery was done at the U.S. Army’s 3rd Surgical Hospital in Saigon and the doctors were volunteer American doctors who came to Vietnam periodically for this project.

(Continued on Page 15)

(Continued from Page 14)

Advisory teams were under instructions to keep our eyes open for children under the age of 12 with this facial deformity (surgery for younger children was very much easier than for older people). In Kien Hoa Province the program was managed by our province medic, a SFC from Louisiana who was imposingly large in stature and even larger in heart. He was a Conscientious Objector and never carried a weapon but was as brave and courageous as anyone, and often went, unarmed, into some very bad country.

One day during an otherwise uneventful tactical operation, we passed through a village and I saw a young boy with a harelip and cleft palate. When we got back to the compound I told the district chief that I would be able to help the boy if he could provide security to go back to that village and persuade the family to let us “borrow” the child. The district chief agreed, and assigned his S-5, an ARVN lieutenant, to run the operation. The process was, the district advisors obtained permission from the child’s family and transported the child to Ben Tre. Then our medic took the child to Saigon and turned him/her over to the doctors there. After surgery and a short period for recovery, he went back to bring the child back to Ben Tre, and the district did the rest. The hard part was persuading the family to let the child go alone – most of the time when someone went to the hospital, one or more of the family went too, to help care for, feed, and look after the patient.

About a week later the S-5 and I, with a platoon of troops for security, went back to the village and found the house where the boy lived. He was with his mother and



Boy with his Mother and our S-5 Before Surgery



After Surgery

his elderly blind grandmother. We

convinced the family that we could “fix” the boy’s face if they would bring him to our compound and trust us to get him to Saigon and back. Then we went back to the district compound and waited.

Another week or so passed, and one day the boy and his mother arrived at the compound. He was dressed in new clothes and both of them were apprehensive about leaving Ham Long to go all the way to “far away” Saigon, but they were ready. And so we began.

Some time later, I don’t remember how long, we got word that our boy was back from Saigon. The S-5 and I went into Ben Tre to pick him up, and then arranged another tactical operation with a platoon of security troops to take him back to his family.

The icing on the cake? At one point the S-5 asked if I knew his father was a VC cadre. My surprised reply was that I hadn’t known and honestly added that it didn’t matter. And it didn’t. The great satisfaction when the boy returned with hardly a mark on his face and the tears in the eyes of his grandmother (and mine) when she felt his face and “saw” the results has lasted a lifetime.

Spread the word. We often get new members from former Advisors who say “I didn’t know this organization even existed!”

Do YOU know someone else who was an Advisor, and who might be interested in Joining us?

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?
AND BY THE WAY..

WWW.COUNTERPARTS.NET

WATCH OUR WEBSITE, TOO

TO BE HELD IN THE WASHINGTON DC AREA

FOR NEWS OF OUR 2015 REUNION

WATCH THIS SPACE....



COUNTERPARTS
TƯƠNG HỮU ĐỒNG NAM A'
SITREP

607 WAMPLER DRIVE
CHARLESTON SC 29412