



COUNTERPARTS

TƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

SITREP

Volume XVI

Issue 3

Winter 2014-2015

Plans for 2015 Reunion Take Shape

Counterparts Commander Grant McClure has been working since Spring to coordinate plans for our 2015 Reunion and can now report that activities are shaping up very well for a memorable event that will recognize both our own organization's heritage and honor the sacrifice of our former Comrades-in-arms.

Here's the latest update from Grant;

The Reunion will begin on April 29, 2015 and end on Saturday, May 2. It will be held at the Westin Crystal City (a newly renovated upscale hotel with a dramatically discounted daily room rate of \$159/night). Hotel shuttle bus service from Reagan National Airport will be available. These rates are available only as part of our *Counterparts* Reunion package. Contact **Westin Crystal City, 1000 Jefferson Davis Hwy. Arlington, VA 22202 (703) 486-1111**. Be sure to specify "**Counterparts Reunion**," to obtain this rate.

Reunion Schedule

Wednesday, 29 April: Check in at hotel.

Thursday, 30 April: The greater Washington, D.C. Vietnamese community will be holding events on Thursday, April 30, 2015, and we will be joining in those activities.

Friday, 1 May: A special tribute will be provided to our allies as we collectively descend on Arlington National Cemetery for the unveiling of a *Living Memorial* dedicated to our Montagnard allies and other indigenous minority groups that served with American Advisors. We will arrive and depart by bus service, although local members can elect to drive. *Counterparts* received permission from the Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery for this memorial, and we will soon be arranging for the selection and planting of a tree and placement of a memorial marker and granite stone to be dedicated by all members present at the Reunion. Our event will include presentation of the colors by an Army Color Guard unit and a bugler from the Honor Guard at Ft. Meyer. It will be a busy day in Arlington National Cemetery, for our plans will include linking with a contingent of Vietnamese Rangers at the nearby site of a

living memorial that was originally dedicated to BDQ and their American Advisors in 1994. *Counterparts* will lay a wreath at this Ranger living memorial. From there, the members will lay a wreath at the Lao/Hmong living memorial site that was originally dedicated in 1997. Members have much to be proud of in sponsoring each of these living memorial tributes. There will be time for members to also visit the *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*, as well as the JFK gravesite.

On Friday evening, we will go to a popular Vietnamese restaurant located in a large Vietnamese shopping center in the heart of their community where you will feel like you are walking a street in downtown Saigon.

Saturday, 2 May: There will be a Business meeting in the morning. Our Saturday evening Banquet dinner keynote address will be provided by **Rufus Phillips**, a significant figure in the history of the advisory effort in Vietnam as an early member of the US mission headed by Col Edward Landsdale. As a notable fellow advisor, Rufus was among the chief architects of pacification operations including the *Chieu Hoi* program. What better time than the 40th anniversary for members to engage in an open forum on "*Lessons Learned*" and to put into perspective our service in Southeast Asia? Be sure to pick-up a copy of Rufus' book, *Why Vietnam Matters*. (See book Review, page 5 of this SITREP.) It is quite a fitting theme to reflect on at the Reunion.

It can sometimes be a bit cool in late April. Bring an umbrella in case of inclement weather. *The event at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) cannot be changed. It is "rain or shine."* Although the plan is for all of us to travel by bus to ANC, and then do a bit of walking, I will need to be advised ahead of time of any member in need of transportation to take them closer to the event sites. Please contact me via home e-mail: **grant.mcclure@Comcast.net**. Use this email address to ask any other questions you may have about the Reunion. More information will follow as detailed plans are finalized.



COUNTERPARTS SITREP

The Official Publication of Counterparts/Tướng Hữu Đông Nam Á

Volume XVI

Issue 3

Winter 2014- 2015

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

Max Lund
lundm@chartermi.net

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
kjacobsen@knology.net
843 795 7519

Bill Laurie

bill_laurie@yahoo.com

Commander's Corner

It's hard to believe how quickly the years are passing. On April 30, 1995, Counterparts hosted an event in Washington, D.C. to pay tribute to our Southeast Asian allies marking the 20th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Special guest speakers at that event included Ambassador William Colby, MG Homer Smith, MG Vang Pao, General Teung Lith, Fulro General Ksor Kok, Sarin Thach of the Khmer Kampuchea Krom, and Dr. Jane Hamilton-Merritt, author of *Tragic Mountains*. A large group of Montagnards, Hmong and Lao veterans and their families traveled from far off locations to be with us as we gathered together on a cold rainy day at Area # 5 adjacent to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial for Counterparts to give tribute to our former battlefield allies.

The purpose of our 2015 reunion is to again give tribute to our allies, and will also figure in proudly for our advisory service. The dates selected (April 29 through May 2) center on events that will take place in Washington, D.C. marking the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War...what the expatriate communities refer to as *Black April*. The war had ended for the United States in 1973 but raged on for our former allies who were overwhelmed in 1975, and later abandoned to bitter reprisals by a vengeful enemy. Many of our former comrades-in-arms were executed or spent years in Communist reeducation prisons. Some sought liberty through a harrowing escape by sea or by land only to languish for years in refugee gulags around Southeast Asia. The greater Washington, D.C. Vietnamese community will be holding events on Thursday, April 30, 2015, and we will be joining in those activities.

In my view, this will be an important reunion for members to participate in at the Nation's Capital where so many decisions were made throughout the period of 1954 to 1975 that ultimately influenced conditions on the ground that American Advisors and our counterparts personally experienced during our time of deployment. Sadly, this includes decisions to discontinue supporting our South Vietnamese, Hmong and Cambodian allies in 1975.

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Thanksgiving Holiday with family and friends, and extend best wishes to you and yours for good Christmas cheer and a wonderful New Year. It is times like this when we can think back to one of the fond memories of our active duty days far away from home, where no matter where one was deployed, the military always seemed to find a way to get a nice warm Thanksgiving Dinner and Christmas Dinner to the troops in the field.

.... Happy Holidays and Best regards,

Dr. Grant A. McClure
Commander
MACV Team 25, MILPHAP Team 19
Ban Me Thuot, RVN

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

COUNTERPARTS Oral History

“Happiness Is A Wide Variety Of Healthy, Interesting Food”

By John Haseman

In addition to routine Vietnamese food and more unusual things like fresh coconut water, *mang cau* milkshakes, three-ways turtle banquets, and our cook's *cha gio*, there were plenty of unforgettable things to eat in Ham Long and Mo Cay Districts in the Mekong Delta province of Kien Hoa. We were never hungry! Our cooks kept us full of good food when we ate in the team house. Lots of fresh vegetables and greens, fresh fish and shrimp, good pork, good (but tough) chicken. The best *bo luc lac* ever at the Ham Long soldiers' club. Good basic Vietnamese or Chinese food almost every day.

But then there were the “special” foods, usually served at very special lunches or dinners, sometimes in our district “town” and sometimes out in the field. And, sometimes, what we were served – and ate – was the only thing available, whether in an outpost or in a village office. Herewith, some food stories.

Happiness is snake soup with the Tien Thuy village council. I only had to do this once! Toward the end of my duty in Ham Long the Tien Thuy village council decided they wanted to give me a farewell lunch. Of course I accepted. But I did NOT expect the main dish to be snake soup. It was a big snake. A REALLY big snake. I'm not sure if it was a cobra or not – I don't think so. But the surprise was, it came beautifully served. The soup arrived in a huge and beautiful ceramic bowl, with the snake coiled neatly around the sides, with a variety of fresh greens to flavor the broth and add color. I did determine, when the village chief began serving, that I did not have to eat the snake skin – it peeled easily away, leaving a flat white flaky flesh that looked just like fish, except it was shaped like a snake. But when flaked off with a fork and placed in your bowl with broth, vegetables and greens, and rice it tasted like a mild salt-water fish. If I had not seen it “in the skin” I probably would have not known exactly what it was. It was tasty and did not make me sick.

Happiness is Strange Meat for Lunch. One of my more memorable outpost visits was during the dry season around January 1972. We made an uneventful walk through dry rice paddies, along dikes with no booby traps, and finally came to a newly built mud walled triangular outpost in northern Tuong Da village. I remember as we walked single file along the paddy dikes there was a PF soldier in front of me with a small puppy dog in his backpack. I thought it was cute that a soldier would bring his pet out to a new outpost.

After the usual inspection of external tangle foot wire defenses, lines of fire for the three machine guns, and sturdiness of bunkers, we were invited to stay for lunch. We were served a ceramic bowl of soup with chopped up bits of meat in typical Vietnamese fashion – just hacked up with a butcher knife with bones protruding here and there, just like they do their chicken. There was no such thing as a “wing” or a “thigh” with Vietnamese chicken, they just hacked the cooked bird up with a cleaver. This soup was the same way, except instead of chicken meat it was beef. But it did not taste like beef. I asked what it was. “I'm not sure,” was the (diplomatic) answer.

It took me about two minutes to put two and two together. I remembered that PF soldier in front of me with the puppy in his backpack. Well of course that soldier was not carrying his pet in the backpack, it was lunch! Actually dog is quite popular in some parts of Vietnam, particularly Hanoi and the Mekong Delta. As far as I know, that was the only time I had dog for lunch.

Happiness is Eating Coconut Tree Larvae and Keeping It Down. One evening in September 1972, when I was back in Ham Long as district senior advisor, I had an interesting dinner. LTC Son, with whom I had worked for almost a year before we closed the team and I moved to Mo Cay, was providing all of our meals, most of which were ordinary Vietnamese or Chinese. He had not come up with anything weird to eat. But on this occasion he did. “We're having something interesting you should eat with us,” he said. So, Sergeant Smith, Sergeant Be and I sat down at a big round table in the open area between our temporary quarters in the TOC and the watchtower. There must have been eight or ten Vietnamese who joined us.

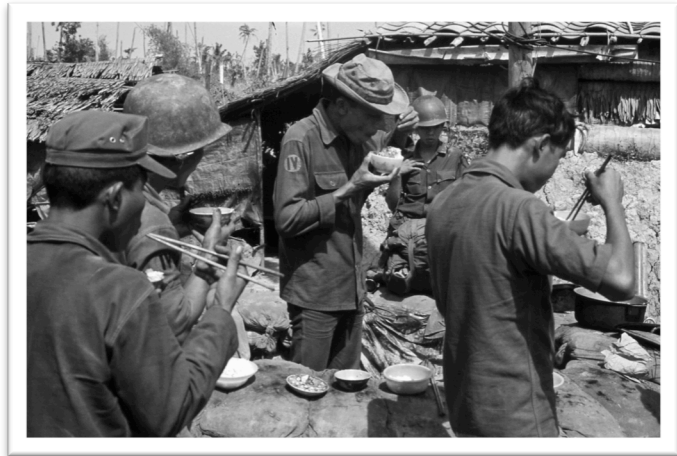
Out came a cook with a huge ceramic bowl filled with round brown things about the size of your thumb. “These are really good,” said LTC Son, and everyone started reaching for them with fingers. So I did too. The brown things were soft and squishy. I popped one in my mouth. It had a disgusting squishy texture but I managed not to barf it back out. It tasted sweet, like coconut. I asked what I had just eaten. Aha! There was some difficulty in translating from Vietnamese to English. “It is a bug that lives inside coconut tree wood,” he said. I got it right away. Not a bug, but larvae! That occurred when that bug bored into the coconut tree and mutated into a fat, squishy larvae. We were eating mutated coconut tree boring bugs before they became butterflies!

The internet explained it this way:

“Đuông” are the larva of beetles, often living in the inside top soft part of areca species of palm trees. They can be found in Mekong Delta, especially in Ben Tre province. Every year, after mating season, the beetles choose a healthy coconut tree, pierce a hole and lay eggs. Larvae are hatched from those eggs, stay inside the top of the coconut tree and eat the inside. Normally there are about 100 larvae in each coconut tree. They will make the tree die gradually. The owner has to chop the body of coconut tree to find the larvae. Each larva is as big as a human being’s thumb. Previously *đuông* was a popular dish; however, it has nowadays been valuable, rare and expensive. The reason is that it is difficult to find them. Even old farmers who have been working on the farm for ages can only enjoy this dish two or three times in their lives.”

So the district chief was doing me great honor by providing this unusual and valuable dish to eat.

Happiness is being served duck’s blood soup and keeping it down. If I had to guess, the big cuisine test given to American advisors was not serving a chicken foot, but rather offering them duck’s blood soup. It looks yucky, it has a nasty texture, and the idea is revolting to many. But especially visiting villages or outposts where food availability is less than in market towns, I learned that everything that is edible is eaten. And duck’s blood is considered a manly food that gives one virility and strength. So being offered duck’s blood “soup” is really a compliment. Sometimes they just hand you a bowl (never a glass) with the duck’s blood there. Most of the time it really is made into a soup, thinned with water or other broth and with vegetables and pieces of duck meat added.



I survived all of these “cuisine tests” with never an upset stomach or frequent races to the “throne.” Though strange foods to we American Advisors, they were almost ordinary to our Vietnamese counterparts. I felt that our willingness to eat what our counterparts ate was one of many keys to effective counterpart relations, both professional and personal.

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?

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.

Why Vietnam Matters, Rufus Phillips, U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2008: 384 pages. ISBN-10: 1591146747, ISBN-13: 978-1591146742

A graduate of Yale then commissioned as a U.S. Army officer, Phillips was first detailed to the CIA and served in the Saigon Military Mission under the legendary and controversial Col. Edward Lansdale from 1954 through 1956. Under Lansdale, Phillips learned that what mattered most was constructing a political cause on the non-communist side worth fighting for. Part of that was supporting “civic action” and pacification campaigns by the Vietnamese Army “to win the trust and support of the rural population by responding to their needs—providing security, medical clinics, delivering relief supplies and digging wells.” For his work, Phillips received the CIA’s Intelligence Medal of Merit.

Later Phillips returned to Saigon as a U.S. Agency for International Development official, and led an unconventional counterinsurgency effort in support of the Strategic Hamlet Program. Subsequently, he served as a consultant to the State Department, supporting the Lansdale Mission in Saigon from 1965 to 1968.

Documenting his story from his own hereto unrevealed private files as well as from the historical record, Phillips paints striking portraits of such key figures as: John F. Kennedy, Robert McNamara, Hubert Humphrey, Ngo Dinh Diem, Maxwell Taylor and Henry Cabot Lodge. A highlight is his face-to-face dialogue with President Kennedy at a critical National Security Council meeting in 1963 in the face of overt disapproval by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara (Halberstam’s “moment of intellectual honesty”).

From Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge’s misunderstandings and missteps, to U.S. agency in-fighting and the political struggles of Ngo Dinh Diem, Phillips shows how a U.S. failure to understand our South Vietnamese allies, the Vietcong enemy or even ourselves led to a highly destructive “big war” strategy based on World War II misperceptions—a war that we could not win ourselves; only the South Vietnamese could.

The author offers a first-hand account of the communications gap between American military and diplomatic strategy and Vietnamese realities and aspirations. Known for his integrity and firsthand, long-term knowledge of what went on in Vietnam, the author also offers lessons for today.

In *Why Vietnam Matters*, Phillips reveals the details of:

- His briefing of President Kennedy about the failures of the counterinsurgency effort in South Vietnam’s Delta. Among other things, he concludes that Kennedy was receptive to the notion that the war was primarily political in nature and that pure military intervention could not win, particularly by inserting U.S. troops directly into the conflict
- The diplomatic wars between Washington and Saigon, and Phillips’ own efforts to save Diem from the coup that resulted in Diem’s assassination.
- The Vietnamese side of the story.
- The extraordinary work and thought of Edward Lansdale, who even in the later years had a more sensitive and useful role than that for which he was given credit.
- Vice President Humphrey’s true position on the war and how—had President Johnson listened to him instead of Secretary McNamara—things might have turned out differently.
- The destructive influence of Ngo Dinh Nhu, Diem’s younger brother and political advisor.
- Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and General William Westmoreland’s misunderstanding of the political and psychological nature of the Vietnam conflict. Westmoreland’s failure to understand Saigon’s vulnerability to Vietcong attack at Tet, even though he was shown conclusive evidence in a memo by Phillips months before.
- The parallels with the U.S. experience in Iraq and Afghanistan and what Vietnam can teach us about intervention and nation building.

2014 COUNTERPARTS Montagnard Scholar Update

COUNTERPARTS currently sponsors *Sev Yem*, a 21-year old Jarai from Ratanakiri Province, while he studies to become an English teacher. Sev will complete his two-year degree program next year and plans to return to his home province and teach English to the Montagnard students in Ratanakiri.

Sev Yem comes from a very poor family and lives in the Indigenous Student Center in Phnom Penh run by Cambodia Corp Inc., a small NGO started by our own COUNTERPARTS member Tommy Daniels. The 1600 dollars per year provided by COUNTERPARTS goes to pay for his housing, food, healthcare, a bicycle, tuition, and other schooling materials.

Sev Yem's parents were so poor they had no money to support him while he attended high school in Ban Lung. Sev Yem has said, "During primary school, I rode a bicycle to school and I took rice with eggs to school for lunch. The road from my house to the school was very bad and sometimes caused me to fall down in the mud, while it was raining. During school grades 5 and 6, I picked cashew nuts and was paid 200 Reil (about 5 cents) per kg."

Two of our former COUNTERPARTS scholars, *Romas Phanna* and *Broy Makara* are employed by NGOs in their home provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri working for the benefit of their Highland people.

Cambodia Corps' new emphasis will be on providing education for females. At present, CCI provides a house and food in Ban Lung for 13 female Montagnard students from the villages who must live there to attend the only high school in Ratanakiri Province. A picture was posted in a past SITREP of these girls.

A number of COUNTERPARTS members have sponsored individual Montagnard students and have been generous donors in the past to the CCI program. To date, there have been 35 college graduates since the inception of the program in 2004. Just recently two students graduated as medical doctors, the first Montagnard doctors in Cambodia. They were students for nine years at the ISC.



Sev Yem with his family

The Cambodian director of CCI will soon travel to Mondulkiri Province to interview a number of Montagnard girls to screen for candidates for the college level programs that will begin next year. Almost all monies to run CCI come from individual donors, many of whom are members of COUNTERPARTS. The only paid CCI employee is Uth Siramaren, the Khmer who is the manager of the program in Cambodia.

...*Rich Webster*



COUNTERPARTS 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).....	\$16.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Coffee Mug (Counterparts color logo)	\$12.00
COUNTERPARTS Knit Polo shirt with collar. (Embroidered Counterparts Logo black or white, with pocket, most sizes).....	\$20.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Jacket (black, lined, direct embroidery logogram)..	\$35.00
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: "Counterparts Association"

Send to:

Mike McMunn

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

Cambodia's History; Tragedy and Sorrow

By
Jim Barker

It was 1987, and the 3rd International Conference on Kampuchea in Bangkok was attracting a diverse group of non-governmental organizations and curious individuals, given urgency by conditions in Cambodia and the plight of a country ravaged by the Khmer Rouge and recent Vietnamese occupation. As a Viet Nam veteran with a language and advisory background, and strong supporter of the justice and freedom movement of the Bay Area nationalist Vietnamese community, I was invited to join a delegation of one of the Vietnamese "resistance groups" to attend the conference. First on the itinerary was a journey to a "freedom & resistance" training camp in a secluded jungle area on the Thai/Lao border. The camp also included "free Lao" nationals, training for infiltration missions into Viet Nam and Laos. Some of this devoted and patriotic population of young and seasoned veterans were to perish in the process of living out their ideals.

Our little delegation made an intermediate stop in Singapore. There we met the spokesman and theorist of the "resistance faction," Mr. Thai Quang Trung, and Dr. Rasha of the University of Singapore, a political scientist and strong proponent of democracy. It felt reassuring to be joined with persons willing to give their lives and resources to the highest ideals of democracy for their Motherland. That night, our group, in united spirit, stretched out on the tile floor of Dr. Rasha's modest home.

On the following day, our Viet Nam Freedom Delegation arrived in Bangkok, and proceeded to the Mandarin Hotel to register for the "3rd International Conference on Kampuchea." To the surprise and shock of many attendees, it was learned that the Vice President of the Khmer Rouge, Khieu Sampham was on site. By fortuitous circumstance, this writer was invited by Dr. Rasha to join a private interview with Sampham, the "right arm," of Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, one of the most heinous butchers in modern recorded history.

The interviewers included Dr. Rasha, this writer, and a reporter from the William Joiner Foundation, New York. (Prior to the interview, the reporter had just interviewed some Cambodian refugees, who remained in abject terror at the thought of any resurgence of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge purging). With Khieu Sampham, as he spoke no English; was his interpreter Pek, a college-aged young man, with a friendly, but rather obsequious bearing.

Khieu SamPham presented himself as a friendly father figure and an unwavering 'true believer' in his theories and dogma. His primary agenda objective was to gain international support for the unilateral withdrawal of Viet Nam from Cambodia. He envisioned uniting disparate groups to form one 'national army,' under the supreme command of Khmer Rouge leadership, of course.

Throughout the interview Khieu Sampham was evasive on two points; what was the status of the missing members of Norodom Sihanouk's family, and what were the primary differences between the Khmer Rouge and the Son Sarim followers? Regarding Sihanouk, he stated: "Sihanouk is needed by the Khmer Rouge Party because he is venerated by the Khmer people." Furthermore, Mr. Sampham added that Sihanouk had previously been invited to join the Khmer Rouge. Nothing definitive was said about Son Sarim. Regarding the Genocide of the Cambodian people by the Khmer Rouge, Mr. Samphan's explanations showed a remarkable degree of denial. His statements included: "whenever new governments come into power, it is expected there will be a number of casualties." "We also took over in a hurry, and were not real experienced." " We had to get ready to face off against the Vietnamese."

Mr. Sampham further stated that after the primarily urban Cambodians were placed in the rural work camps, the "the Khmer Rouge gave people land and water for their own use; this was our collectivization program." Mr. Sampham also vetoed any discussion about Pol Pot saying, "Many of his statements have been distorted and propagandized!" His final statement on the Cambodian Genocide was: "It is Viet Nam who has caused the losses in Cambodia, especially in 1979." Mr. Sampham then noted the policy of the Khmer Rouge towards outside countries. "When talking to them, we have to watch carefully, and not believe necessarily what they are saying." This external paranoia was illustrated by his saying: "When you are offering a man water to drink, his eyes may be on the meat on your table."

(Hanoi leadership has reportedly scoffed at the Khmer Rouge' primitive manner of purging its countrymen. Through internal information channels within the international free Vietnamese community, the following pronouncement became known: "They (the Khmer Rouge) kill openly and display their results; we do our work silently and invisibly.")

As the 3rd International Conference on Kampuchea drew towards closure, it became increasingly clear to the attendees that China's influence was the deep undercurrent in the rise of the Khmer Rouge, and was playing a major, but discreet role in the geopolitics of Indochina.

Other fundamental issues raised included: concerns for access of Free World observers and international relief groups and disposition of human rights and political disobedience in a now different Cambodia possessing some degree of freedom for self-determination. With the Khmer Rouge now broken and its elements scattered, any offering was deemed to be an improvement.

Dr. Haing Ngor: Cambodian Hero

I met him first in 1988 when he was doing signings of his newly published autobiography, "A Cambodian Odyssey," as a special guest at the Vietnam Veterans of America National Convention. Dr. Ngor's book detailed his four years of privation and torture in the Khmer Rouge death camps and labor fields. As a survivor of the Cambodian genocide, his story is a testament to the power of the human spirit. With no prior acting experience, Dr. Ngor became the Oscar recipient of the acclaimed movie, "The Killing Fields." It became the definitive work exposing the horrors of the Khmer Rouge regime, and the Genocide of more than 1.5 million inhabitants of the diminutive nation of 7 million.

Some months beyond this first encounter, a Bay Area social service program planner and I had occasion to spend a focused evening in Los Angeles with Dr. Ngor, and his good friend, Tommy. Below are some excerpts and statements by Dr. Ngor that remain forever engrained and burned into my memory and heart:

Advent of the Khmer Rouge: "When Phnom Penh was coming under KR occupation, I was working as a surgeon." "Because of the rapid spreading reports of their cruelty and abduction of all educated and professional Cambodians, I had to leave my work, and feign to be a taxi driver. I had to even throw away my glasses. As my hands were soft from my medical profession, I had to lacerate them quickly to try to avoid immediate capture and elimination." Finally my family, like many of the Phnom Penh residents was ordered out of the city into the countryside in concentration camps. Eight members of my family were to die under the hands of the KR. Ultimately, I lost the most precious person in my life when my wife also died during childbirth. I was unable to do a proper delivery, because they would have seen I had medical experience, and would have killed all of us. People learned to become very silent, for if someone was heard talking to a friend during the forced labor, the Khmer Rouge might kill them immediately. Since the KR wanted to save their ammunition, victims were killed with blunt objects, or strangled, or suffocated."

"You can see scars on my head where I was beaten, and part of one of my toes was cut off. One time to force me to confess my educated background, I was suspended upside down over a smoldering fire for four days. To confess would have brought death. Some of the punitive labor I had to do was breaking rocks for months, wearing a yoke to plow like a water buffalo, and having to gather and transport human waste with no gloves or medication. After the four years of hell, I finally escaped in 1979. At this time the KR had become scattered from the Vietnamese invasion. I was able to come to America in 1980."

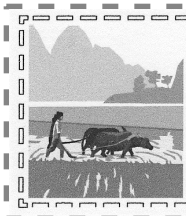
"I had no acting experience, I never dreamed I would become an actor. Actually, I never wanted to become an actor. I never imagined I would be the recipient of an Oscar. One could say that my real acting background came from pretending, i.e. trying to fool the Khmer Rouge for those four years. I am a survivor of the Cambodian holocaust. That is my identity."

Cambodian People: "I see my people as too easy-going and lazy in ways. They are also vulnerable to outside influences. There is this characteristic of behavior in my culture called 'kum.' This means a form of slow-burning desire for revenge against anyone, or force one feels they have been offended by. When revenge is sought, the tendency is to 'over retaliate.' This creates, a deepening cycle of conflict."

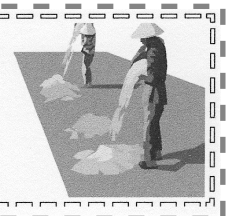
Contemporary Cambodian Leadership: "Now with the coalition government in place, and the fighting reduced, I have had some chance to return. I have had the honor of meeting and sitting with a number of the leaders of this world. However, the Cambodian officials have never invited me. I view them as jealous and petty; and limited in their thoughts. Not even the traditional king's family, the Sihanouks have welcomed me."

His Mission Now: "I support several Cambodian humanitarian organizations, and now with Dith Pran, serve as an ambassador for the Cambodian people. One goal of all is to bring to justice to the Khmer Rouge persecutors. I am not much a political person; my main purpose is to help heal my people. I do not know if I will ever heal. "Every month, I send \$4,000.00 through the humanitarian groups to help build roads and temples, so particularly the widows can have places of solace."

Tragically, one evening in February 1996, Dr. Haing Ngor was murdered by members of an Asian street gang outside his nondescript apartment in San Francisco's Chinatown. They accosted him to rob him. Investigators guessed that the gang attempted to take the gold locket containing the picture of his deceased wife. Perhaps Dr. Ngor's sentiments and love for his lost companion far superseded any personal safety concerns. Like an epic hero in Greek tragedy, Haing Ngor remained true and magnificent in life and in death."



BULLETIN BOARD



Immigration from Vietnam

Within the past four decades, the once-tiny population of Vietnamese immigrants in the United States has grown into one of the country's largest foreign-born groups. Vietnamese migration to the United States has occurred in three waves, the first beginning in 1975 at the end of the Vietnam War, when the fall of Saigon led to the U.S.-sponsored evacuation of approximately 125,000 Vietnamese refugees. This first wave consisted mainly of military personnel and urban, educated professionals whose association with the U.S. military or the South Vietnamese government made them targets of the communist forces. In the late 1970s, a second wave of Vietnamese refugees entered the United States in what became known as the "boat people" refugee crisis. This group came from mainly rural areas and was often less educated than earlier arrivals; many were ethnic Chinese immigrants fleeing persecution in Vietnam. The third wave entered the United States throughout the 1980s and 1990s; unlike earlier arrivals, this group contained fewer refugees and included thousands of Vietnamese Amerasians (children of U.S. servicemen and Vietnamese mothers) as well as political prisoners.

For the rest of this article go to: <http://migrationpolicy.org/article/vietnamese-immigrants-united-states>

Thirteen Ethnic Montagnards From Vietnam Seek Refugee Status in Cambodia

More than a dozen ethnic Montagnards are hiding in the jungles of northeastern Cambodia after fleeing alleged religious persecution across the border in Vietnam, a member of a hill tribe living in the area said Monday.

The 13 Christian Montagnards, who crossed into Cambodia's Ratanakiri province from Vietnam's neighboring Gia Lai province, are seeking protection from the United Nations' refugee agency to resettle in a third country, the ethnic Charai tribe member told RFA's Khmer Service on condition of anonymity

Submitted by Bill Laurie. From Radio Free Asia (RFA) website

[.http://www.rfa.org/english/news/cambodia/montagnards-11242014144636.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/cambodia/montagnards-11242014144636.html)

Military Order of The Purple Heart plans Vietnam Veterans Day in Mississippi.

Chapter 652 of the MOPH will host a "Welcome Home" event honoring the service and sacrifice of Vietnam Veterans on March 28, 2015 at the Copiah County Community Safe house, Gallman MS. The event also needs sponsorship and any help that other veterans can provide. Anyone interested, Contact *Counterparts* member Luis Vargas 601 825 4121/601 214 8760.

Gifts to Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage (FVSO) keep on Giving

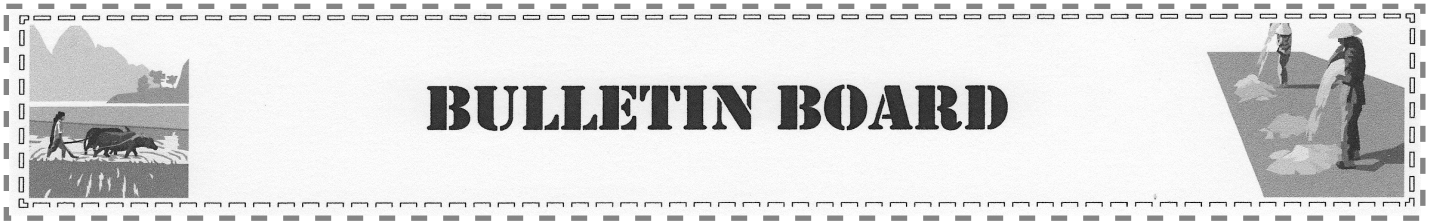
(From The FVSO Newsletter, November 2014. For more info go to www.FriendsofVSO.org)

Most of our loyal Donors know by now that in October we hit the one million dollar mark in money raised for the benefit of the kids at Vinh Son Orphanages. But the benefits from those dollars don't stop there.

Nearly all of the money that is raised is spent locally in Kon Tum supporting the needs of the Orphanages. It is spent at the local markets, businesses and construction trades. It is spent for food, clothing, medicine, and services that make life for the kids so much better.

You may be Eligible for an Army Meritorious Unit Citation

From Jim Alkek: It recently came to my attention that my DD214 included a unit citation that I misread as an individual RVN Gallantry Cross, which I was also awarded. When I checked DA PAM 672-3 (page 99), I found that the US Army Vietnam and the Military Advisory Command Vietnam had also been awarded several Meritorious Commendations. This note is to alert other members to these awards that probably do *not* appear on their DD-214's. The DA PAM 672-3 may be found at http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/pdf/p672_3.pdf



BULLETIN BOARD

Counterparts' Terry Turner book now on e books, and in hard copy *Counterinsurgency; What the United States learned in Vietnam, Chose to Forget, and Needs to Know Today*. By Terry Turner, (writing as David Donovan) is now available from McFarland Publishing <http://www.mcfarlandbooks.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-9769-0> or as an e-book. Print ISBN: 978-0-7864-9769-0, E-book ISBN: 978-1-4766-1921-7. Terry used interviews with several *Counterparts* members as part of this book. A “must read” for students of Counterinsurgency and of the Vietnam War.

Vietnam Travel Agency Recommendation

(From Counterparts member Michael Delaney).

My wife, Kathy and I just returned from a month-long trip to Vietnam and Cambodia. When we were planning the trip, I wanted to visit many of the “standard” stops found on the group tour agendas, but I also wanted to spend a couple of days in Kien Hoa (now Ben Tre) Province where I served with Advisory Team 88. Since I couldn't seem to locate a package tour that met my desired itinerary, I looked around on the Internet and checked with a few prior visitors to Vietnam about arranging a trip through an independent travel agency.

Travel Vietnam had some positive reviews on Trip Advisor, as did another similar agency. I inquired of both about obtaining assistance in putting together a trip and sent both my list of places we wished to visit, our budget, and a couple of specific hotels we wanted to book. Both agencies responded within 24 hours with similar extraordinarily detailed itineraries, complete with hotels, proposed in-country flights, etc. After looking over the proposals, we decided to go with Travel Vietnam.

We have just gotten back from the trip they helped us plan and I can report that the planning and arrangement they handled for us were extraordinarily well done. The itinerary's included activities were fascinating, the hotels they booked were great, the restaurants they included in the itinerary were all terrific as were the others their guides recommended, their drivers were skillful and careful in negotiating the horrendous traffic in Hanoi and Saigon and the guides they assigned were uniformly friendly, knowledgeable, fluent, candid and well educated professionals. Kathy and I typically have not used guides when travelling in Europe, but the experience of having a knowledgeable companion along at each stop on this trip was so illuminating, we may change our practice. The guide we had in Saigon and the Delta was especially good. She was, if anything, even more determined than I to insure that we got to the location where I spent my first 4 months with MAT 22 at a small thatch roofed training center at the mouth of the Ham Luong River.

I could not recommend this travel agency more highly, and would be happy to discuss my experience with any of your readers who may be interested in designing their own itinerary for a return to Vietnam.

mdelaney@spencerfane.com

Note: Counterparts member Bill Ridley also conducts Vietnam Tours through his travel Agency, BK Tours and Travel in Burke, VA. Email info@bktravel.com, website at www.btravel.com

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

WWW.COUNTERPARTS.NET

WATCH OUR WEBSITE, TOO

WASHINGTON DC AREA APRIL 29 - MAY 2

FOR MORE NEWS OF OUR 2015 REUNION

WATCH THIS SPACE....



COUNTERPARTS
TƯƠNG HỮU ĐỒNG NAM A'
SITREP

**607 WAMPLER DRIVE
CHARLESTON SC 29412**