



# COUNTERPARTS

## TƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

# SITREP

Volume XVIII

Issue 1

Spring 2016

### **2016 COUNTERPARTS Reunion will be in San Diego, CA April 27 through April 30 2016**

Our 2016 Reunion will be headquartered at *The Hacienda Hotel* in Old Town San Diego. As many who attended the last San Diego Reunion will remember, the area has a lot to offer, starting with the usually delightful weather. The hotel is right in the middle of Old Town San Diego, one of the more popular spots in San Diego. There are many restaurants within walking distance.

According to Reunion Coordinator Lewis Grissaffi "The hotel itself is quite different from others we have stayed at, it has many levels and all the architecture is Spanish themed. It is a quite comfortable hotel; I have stayed there and thought it was great. It will be a change from the normal big box hotel. There are plenty of elevators from the various levels so getting around is not a problem. Most of the rooms are located with doors that open to the outside as in not a hallway but to the outside atmosphere."

- There are so many things to see and do in San Diego that it is impossible to list them all. Lewis Grissaffi recommends doing research online prior to leaving home to get an idea of what is available in the area. Some of the more popular sites are, the Zoo, Balboa Park, the Cabrillo Monument, and the waterfront, although not all of these places are accessible by public transportation.

- The San Diego "Hop On Hop Off" Trolley which stops right by the hotel visits quite a few interesting places and for the price of a ticket you can get off and visit a site and reboard the next one or just stay on board and listen to the guide. I would recommend it, again, look at this on-line, the reviews are quite good.

- The Trolley has a station a couple of blocks from the hotel. The Trolley takes you to Little India, The USS MIDWAY, aircraft carrier, as well as Seaport Village, a shopping center on the water with a variety of restaurants and shops.

Just walking along the waterfront is an event. You will pass the old sailing ship *Star of India* and be able to admire the many yachts and watercraft against the sparkling background of San Diego harbor. .

- The view from Mt Soledad is spectacular as is the view at Tom Ham's Lighthouse. There is a cross on top of Mt. Soledad that has been in litigation for years. The atheists claim it is a Christian symbol on public land. It was the declared a Veterans site to try to get around the legal battles. The fight still continues but the cross is still there.

- The Naval Base on Coronado also has on display a number of boats and other memorials to the Vietnam War's "Brown Water Navy"

All in all San Diego is a great place to visit and the weather this time of year is perfect. I think this reunion will be enjoyed as one of our very good ones. Don't Waste time! Make your plans and get your reservations in now!

A Detailed Schedule of Events and the Reunion Registration Form is shown on Page 3-4 of this SITREP. Please fill out the form and send it in as soon as possible. If you have any other questions please email Lewis Grissaffi at [luisaffi@yahoo.com](mailto:luisaffi@yahoo.com) or Jim O'Malley at [omalley@usa.net](mailto:omalley@usa.net).



# COUNTERPARTS SITREP

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## Commander's Corner

### Volunteerism Keeps the Association Moving Forward

Meeting with so many *COUNTERPARTS* members over the years since my first reunion in 1990, it is clear that every one of you volunteered for an advisory assignment with one of more tours of duty in at least one of the theaters of operation in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. The spirit of volunteerism is in our hearts, and I have been continually reminded of that over the ensuing decades when so many of you have stepped forward to provide leadership, guidance, fellowship, and great interest/participation in an association of fellow advisors.

One very beneficial outcome of the business meeting at the 2015 Reunion was the creation of an *ad hoc* commission comprised of several very engaged members who expressed a need to volunteer their time to focus on Association finances with greater attention devoted towards the management of charitable gift giving going forward. This will become a primary agenda item at our upcoming 2016 annual Reunion in San Diego, California.

Leading up to the Reunion, I would also like to reach out to the membership at large to encourage some volunteers to help forge a nominating committee that will suggest candidates for consideration for the open *Executive Officer* position. It is important for *COUNTERPARTS* to function with a full complement of officers representing the organization, and the XO post has been open since April 2014. We will plan to transact a vote during the 2016 reunion business session. Anyone interested in putting their name in the hat should prepare to send an e-mail to my attention and to the nominating committee.

Thanks to all for your sustaining membership, and for your advisory service that continues on through *COUNTERPARTS*. Looking forward to seeing you in San Diego, and most grateful to those who volunteered to host the Reunion this year!

*Dr. Grant A. McClure*

*Commander, COUNTERPARTS/THDNA*

*MACV Advisory Team 25, MILPHAP Team 19*

*Ban Me Thuot, Darlac Province, 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 2016 Reunion San Diego Schedule of Events

**Wed 27 April 2016 to Sat 30 April 2016, Hacienda Hotel Old Town San Diego 4041 Harney St. San Diego, CA 92110 619-298-4707 COUNTERPARTS Room Rate \$139.00/night. Contact Person Victoria Price Airport Pick p Number 619-298-4707**

**Wed. April 27<sup>th</sup>**

- Registration:

Hospitality room opens. Get together, decompress after travel, tell taller stories than last year, renew old friendships and make new ones.

**Thur. April 28<sup>th</sup>**

- Bus Tour (\$69.00 per person)

Meet at hotel 0900 for 0930 departure, return at 1430. The tour will include our Veterans Memorial on Mt. Soledad, where we will leave a floral wreath, scenic drive along the Pacific coast including La Jolla cove and other beautiful coastline features. Visit Stephen Birch Salt Water Aquarium and Lunch at Tom Ham's Lighthouse on San Diego Harbor. Hospitality Room open until 2200

**Fri. April 29<sup>th</sup>**

- Explore San Diego on your own.

- Dinner Cruise (\$89.00 per person). Bus departs Hotel 1800 returns at 2230. Cruise beautiful San Diego Harbor while you dine. (This was a BIG hit at the last San Diego Reunion). Hospitality room open 0900 until 2200

**Sat. April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Business Meeting 0900, Banquet 1800 until 2200. Program to be announced.

### DUES NOTICE

Counterparts 2016 annual dues are payable on 1 January 2016. By decision of the membership at the April 2015 Annual Business Meeting, annual dues are now \$35, and life membership is now \$350. This was the first increase in dues for many years. Your dues support our charitable programs in Southeast Asia and we depend on your prompt payment to plan each year's contributions. Please make you check out to "Counterparts" and mail to Counterparts Membership Officer John Haseman, 555 West Saddle Drive, Grand Junction CO 81507.

Best regards,

John Haseman

Haseman John B <[jhaseman@earthlink.net](mailto:jhaseman@earthlink.net)>

Here are some figures on Counterparts membership.

Lifetime active members:	139
Annual-pay active members:	121
Inactive*	291
Known deceased:	95
Miscellaneous#	16

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TOTAL:	662
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\* Unresponsive to various communications, no further info as to live, dead, not interested, etc.

# Vietnamese, Lao, Cambodians registered at one time or another but not responsive, but not included in "inactive".

## COUNTERPARTS SAN DIEGO REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

### MAIL CHECKS TO:

Counterparts (make checks payable to Counterparts)

c/o Jim O'Malley

PO Box 1331

Brawley, CA 92227

Please circle menu choice for Harbor Cruise and Banquet Meal

Registration fee @ \$100/person x number of people \$\_\_\_\_\_

Bus Trip @ \$69/person x number of people \$\_\_\_\_\_

Harbor Cruise @ 89/person x number of people \$\_\_\_\_\_

Brazen Short Ribs-Salmon-Chicken-Veggie Pasta Dish

Banquet, cost included in registration fee, number of people \_\_\_\_\_

Grilled Halibut w/Sherry Wine Sauce-Stuffed Chicken Breast (8oz)

New York Steak (8oz) with Shrimp Scampi (4)

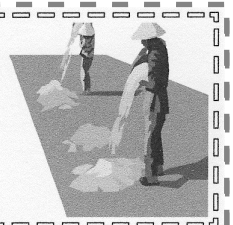
Please respond as soon as possible so we can have a count for the various excursions.

If you want Lewis to send you brochures on things to do in San Diego send him your mailing address.

**DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL ADDRESS  
ON YOUR REGISTRATION FORM**



# BULLETIN BOARD



## ***Vinh Son Orphanage***

2015 Christmas Greeting. On December 20th, the children of Vinh Son and Sao Mai enjoyed their annual Christmas parties, thanks to the many volunteers and contributors who make them possible. No doubt, we'll have some photos to share with you in the January newsletter, but for now, just know that because of your generosity, Santa will visit the orphanages, bringing gifts and joy to the 800+ children who call Vinh Son and Sao Mai home. More information at [www.FriendsofVSO.org](http://www.FriendsofVSO.org).

## ***The Advisor Experience.***

"It has been 46 years since I last saw the shoreline of South Vietnam. I was departing there, having completed my second tour in Vietnam. The first was as an advisor in the province of Go Cong (about 70 miles south of Saigon) and a second year with the 101st and XXIV Corps in I. I returned to the states to become a patient enroute to becoming blind and retiring as an 05. The memories of experiences during those two years have faded slightly, but are still strong enough to last for the duration."

"I found my advisor tour to have two distinct facets. One was that of combat activities and the second was activities intended to support the district chief with projects directed toward the civilian population. My second tour was as a staff officer with an American unit. One lesson I took from the latter tour was a very disturbing understanding that American combat units/commanders had very little knowledge of the importance of the Vietnamese civilians in combat operations."

"One of my observations during my retirement years has been that we have generally under-appreciated the impact of our participation. I note that the last issue of SITREP goes a long way in refreshing memories and giving a stronger impression of the relationship between advisors and Vietnamese counterparts. To say the least, some of the activities described therein are highly encouraging to me. I wish to thank those who brought about these activities.

One thing in my life which may have been fostered by the sharing of my experiences is noted. Our older son took note of my thoughts regarding the importance of "locals" during two one-year tours in Afghanistan. He was assigned to one of the combat divisions during all of this time. He commanded a five-person Human Terrain Team and they concentrated on the relationship of combat troops with locals. This team developed and distributed a handbook which informed readers regarding their local and influential civilians therein. The effect of this "smart book" was such that his Terrain Team was credited with saving lives of US soldiers in those areas of operation. The success of the team was incredibly refreshing for me and his reports indicate that commanders gave close attention to that "smart book".

"I can only hope that my discussions with my son had some influence regarding his approach to being a highly successful assistant to the commanders of those American combat brigades."

"rankly, I take no credit for his success. But: Who knows where the wild goose goes?"

Perhaps other advisors would have similar experiences.

*..Submitted by former COUNTERPARTS XO Charles Stevens, LTC USA, (Ret.)*

## ***...And Another Perspective on Advisors***

Why Do I Do This Infantry Advisor Thing

"Lying on my bunk at the MACV Compound with beer in hand trying to understand. Why do I do what I do? What an idiot I am. The mountainous operations are wringing me out physically, trying to keep pace with the Montagnard Scouts. The terrain is so hard for a flat land boy. I just can't keep up and am a drag on the Scouts and their mission. Maybe I am just not able to do this job correctly. It is getting better though, seems like with each op I get stronger."

"I was trained as a clerk, why am I doing this infantry crap? It was my own doing. The camaraderie between my Highland Scouts and myself is great. They look up to me, believe it or not. I am making good friends. Learning about a new race of people."



# BULLETIN BOARD

"I am lucky there. I do know how to perform the infantry advisor tasks thanks to Sergeant Wolf, Advisor to the ARVN 42nd Regiment, taking me under his wing teaching me how to use a compass and read a map."

"Teaching how to deal with the people and what to expect, teaching me how to use the radio, call and adjust artillery fire and all the other tasks. The combat is stimulating, love the adrenalin highs. Maybe I do like it, better than working behind a desk."

"I must admit the rainforest is beautiful. Scary but actually a neat place. My Highland Scout friends have taught me what is edible to eat, where to find protein and where to get water even during the dry season. Love sitting up at night on a mountaintop objective, staring at the brilliant sky, never saw it so crisp and clear. The bugs, the leaches and the spiders are bad but I have learned to deal with them. I think my hammock is more comfortable than my bunk at the compound. If anything happens during the night I can just drop into my foxhole. Safe and ready to do my job. This infantry advisor thing isn't so bad."

"Why am I doing this? Certainly not for the US of A. No patriotism here. I think it is because I am young and stupid and like the excitement of it. I think I am doing this for the wives and children of the Scouts who live back at the Scout Compound. They mean a lot to me now. I feel a strong rapport with my Scouts and would do anything for them. Even feel a rapport with the Vietnamese Officers. They are really good officers and they seem to care for my opinion on things and ask me questions".

.....Former Advisor Chuck Swiderski

## ***Spy in the Hanoi Hilton***

Information submitted by COUNTERPART David Priddy;

"This is one of the most fascinating of films I have ever seen. It answers any questions I ever conceived or thought about of the Vietnam POWs and way beyond that and more of the intricacies of the network and work that went on behind the scenes."

"I now more clearly understand the awe that all of the POWs have and had for Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale. Awesome, does not even describe it for me! "

"You must use the password given to see it in its entirety. There are other links to the subject via the Internet and the Smithsonian Channel, but this only provides a few minutes and in spurts and jerks.... not the full picture, as this version does. You can halt this film whenever you want. Set aside 50 minutes when you won't be interrupted and watch this. I think it will be the most meaningful 50 minutes you've spent in a long time! Once you start, you will watch it to the end. Guaranteed!"

"The site contains about 50 minutes of heretofore classified material concerning torture and clandestine communications among the prisoners of the Hanoi Hilton as well as with the outside world. These are incredible men who endured unbelievable treatment for years. The clandestine communication techniques between each other and also with the outside world, are a testimony to their resourcefulness."

The password for the site is HANOI <https://vimeo.com/user32618373/review/124635885/cac76f8ca9>

For more information on VADM Stockdale see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Stockdale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Stockdale)

## ***YouTube videos of Steve Leighton's Visit/Reuniting with his Counterpart***

Steve has posted videos of the Minneapolis TV story on his return to Vietnam and on the journey that led him to be reunited with his Counterpart. The links are:

[http://www.youtube.com/attribution\\_link?a=58xodrQQNT0&u=/watch%3Fv%3DjwbGyd0HyY%26feature%3Dem-upload\\_owner](http://www.youtube.com/attribution_link?a=58xodrQQNT0&u=/watch%3Fv%3DjwbGyd0HyY%26feature%3Dem-upload_owner)

[http://www.youtube.com/attribution\\_link?a=NuToT\\_JYi7g&u=/watch%3Fv=YcZkzIu6ZTU%26feature=em-upload\\_owner](http://www.youtube.com/attribution_link?a=NuToT_JYi7g&u=/watch%3Fv=YcZkzIu6ZTU%26feature=em-upload_owner)



# BULLETIN BOARD

## ***Second Book by COUNTERPARTS Member Bob Kay***

Bob Kay has now published *Betraying the Dragon*, the second volume of his Vietnam story. The first Volume *Pass Me the Rice* was previously reviewed in SITREP. This book is the sequel to *Pass Me The Rice*, in which the author described his first two years as an Advisor to the Vietnamese Navy. It ended with his being wounded, and this book picks up the story from there. Although there have been many books written about the Vietnam War, Bob sought to make his view a little different. He included some unique experiences during his eight years in Vietnam until its fall because he felt it was important to present the unseen side of the Vietnamese people. *Betraying the Dragon* can be bought through Amazon.com as a *Kindle* book or in paperback format.

## ***Report on Cambodia Corps***

Provided by Max Lund

Thanks to *COUNTERPARTS* as an organization and thanks too, to many individual members for your continued support of Cambodia Corps. Our small organization continues to produce enthusiastic and grateful college and high school graduates determined to serve their people.

For those who may have missed our reports at the 2015 Reunion or were not present at the Reunion, here is a recap of the report on Cambodia Corps that we gave

My wife Carol and I, and Rich Webster visited our Cambodia Corps graduates in both Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri provinces in February of 2015. As was the case when Tommy Daniels and I visited the CCI graduates in 2013, they were enthused, positive and grateful. It is truly rewarding to interview these young graduates and hear how excited they are to be doing something positive for their people. They all understand that if it were not for the CCI scholarship they would not be where they are today. As one young lady (a veterinarian technician) said "I work hard at my job because I would never want to disappoint my sponsor." So everyone in *COUNTERPARTS*, and all of you who have made individual contributions to CCI, be assured that your money has been well spent.

These young men and women are doing exactly what we had always hoped they would do with their education, they are using it to better their community, act as role models, and become a new generation of leaders. So everyone in *COUNTERPARTS*, give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done

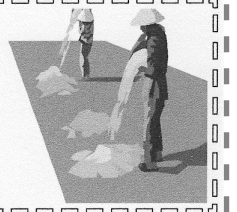
*Ed: For additional information about Cambodia Corps, Inc. (CCI) check out the website at [www.cambodiakorps.org](http://www.cambodiakorps.org) or make a tax-deductible contribution to*

**Cambodia Corps, Inc.  
c/o Tommy Daniels  
915 Goebel Ave  
Savannah GA 31404**





## BULLETIN BOARD



### ***“Welcome Home” from School Children***

(Submitted by *COUNTERPARTS* member Joe Frankoski)

“Prichardsville Elementary School in Prichardsville, SC, hosted a couple of events in 2015 which I attended, i.e. the Vietnam War Anniversary and Veterans Day. The Sun City Veterans Association, which includes a number of Vietnam Veterans, was invited to attend.

Upon arrival I was escorted by a student to the gymnasium where the events were held. Towards the end of the ceremonies, which included singing by the students, each vet was presented with a handmade “Thank You” card. Here are some of the comments on the cards:

*“I thank you for being brave. You are my hero. You are the best.”*

*“Thank you for protecting our freedoms.”*

*“We are proud of you. You are brave and strong.”*

*“You are my hero.”*

What a difference half a century or so makes!

### ***Church Group supports Montagnard Immigrants***

Lutheran churches in Mooresville, NC have joined other groups in offering help and support to the most recent Montagnard refugees to settle in the United States. Through the West Charlotte *A Mighty Fortress* Lutheran church, volunteers are supporting a number of programs, including a Sunday Night Youth Worship, and a Family Support program that provides food distribution, medical referrals, and school supply collection. The mission also provides a tutoring program, where church volunteers help Montagnard kids K through 12 with homework, reading, and special projects. English As a Second Language (ESL) tutoring is also available.

For more information, you can contact: Susan Conlon (Montagnard Mission Council) at conlon family 1 @windstream.net, Tel. 704 905 9401.

***Editors Note:*** *I’m proud to say that Susan Conlon is my daughter. Granddaughter Julia Conlon has also worked closely with this group, which I think makes her a third generation advisor!*

*....Ken Jacobsen*

### ***COUNTERPARTS Members and Facebook***

*(A suggestion from COUNTERPARTS member Tucker Smallwood)* “Members on Facebook should stop by the page of Bill Nimmo. He has created a large network and reconnection for many Marine CAP veterans. A few MAT people like myself visit and contribute but I suspect we have some CAP people among our numbers, yes?”

Facebook can also be an excellent way to contact other veterans organizations, get in touch with old Comrades-in-Arms, or get information on events, reunions and happenings in the world.

***ARE YOUR COUNTERPARTS DUES UP TO DATE? IS YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS CORRECT?  
IS YOUR POSTAL ADDRESS CORRECT?***



# COUNTERPARTS VILLAGE MARKET



COUNTERPARTS/THDNA T-shirts, white, (M, L, and XL, \$12.00 for XXL) .....	<b>10.00</b>
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Patch (3x 4.75" Oval 7 Color Logogram).....	<b>\$6.00</b>
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Decal (3x 4.75" Oval 7 Color Logogram).....	<b>\$2.00</b>
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Lapel Pin (.75 x 1.06" Oval, Bronze over Pewter).....	<b>\$12.00</b>
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Challenge Coin (1.5" dia. solid bronze, Counterparts Logo one side Map of Southeast Asia other side).....	<b>\$10.00</b>
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Baseball style Cap (direct embroidery logogram) .....	<b>\$16.00</b>
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Coffee Mug (Counterparts color logo) .....	<b>\$12.00</b>
COUNTERPARTS Knit Polo Shirt with collar (direct embroidery logogram, <u>black &amp; white</u> , w/pocket, most sizes) .....	<b>\$25.00</b>
MACV Shoulder Patch (full color, mfg. 1968) .....	<b>\$3.00</b>
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Jacket, (black, lined, direct embroidery logogram).....	<b>\$35.00</b>

**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.  
Email: covan2@verizon.net**

## **NOTE**

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

## 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.

### **A Different Face of War; Memories of a Medical Service Corps Officer in Vietnam.**

*James G. Van Straten. 576 pages. ISBN-10: 1574416170 ISBN-13: 978-1574416176. University of North Texas, November 15 2015. Available on Amazon.com in hardcover and electronic format.*

LTC Jim Van Straten has managed to produce a valuable and readable book that overcomes a number of obstacles.

First, he has written a long (576 pages) book about an ostensibly non-combat facet of the Vietnam War; namely, the experience of an Army Medical Service Officer. Second, he has overcome the natural temptation to be either too cool and objective, or too personal. And he has surmounted an even more formidably obstacle for a book about the Vietnam War; he has written about the Vietnamese people and soldiers in a way that is honest, yet compassionate and personal. As a result, he enables us to see the war through the eyes of an American Advisor, immersed in a difficult, dangerous and often baffling environment.

Right from the opening chapter, Van Straten pulls us into his war. His description of his first few weeks in Koepler compound will stir memories in every former advisor who experienced that military twilight zone as an introduction to Vietnam. The frenetic pace of Saigon, the first confusing trip "upcountry" to his assignment in Danang in I Corps, and his early struggles to understand the complex and often Byzantine relationships among US forces, Vietnamese (RVNAF) forces and the people, offer immediate insight into the world that was his for two years.

Van Straten bases much of his book on the 352 letters he wrote home during his year in country, letters that waited unread from 1967 until the author first read them in 2012.

*A Different Face of War* offers a valuable look into the developing confidence, tempered with a growing sense of frustration that characterized the journey of most Advisors, regardless of their assignment, rank, or duties. Van Straten does a good job of capturing this experience, as well as sketching, for those who are still unaware, of the long exhausting "Advisors War" what it was like day after day. One passage, selected by the author, shows, as well as can be shown, how the Advisor's experience often was one of surprising insights, personal frustration, and hard gained knowledge. Van Straten writes:

*"On Monday, 7 November, two physicians from Duy Tan General Hospital and I worked with a senior ARVN officer and several Danang city officials on a project to repair and renovate a road running to the hospital.*

*We had about fifteen minutes of work remaining to complete the review. Suddenly the senior officer got up and announced that it was 1200 hours and that we would resume our meeting at 1500 hours. I more or less blew my top, openly and strongly expressing my displeasure at his taking a three-hour lunch and siesta break when we were so close to concluding our work. I told him that I had other plans for the afternoon and suggested we complete our business first and then go to lunch. I said something like, "Sir, this is ludicrous. Why can't you delay your lunch break for fifteen or twenty minutes and let us conclude the review? We've all got other important things to do this afternoon." He looked me in the eye, smiled, and said something like this: "Major, I'm thirty-nine years old. I was awarded my first medal for valor at age seventeen as an enlisted man. Since that time twenty-two years have elapsed. I've been at war much of those twenty-two years. If I jumped every time an American advisor asked me to jump I'd be an old man in a hurry. Calm down, would you? Tomorrow's another day. Ask yourself, and answer honestly, would you have all of this zeal and energy if you were in my place. I'm very tired of war. I owe it to myself to relax from time to time. I owe it to my family. You advisors come and go. You have one year in which to make your mark and then you're gone. And a new advisor comes to us, usually with different ideas about how we should go about our business. The new advisor, too, must show some achievements during his year of duty in our country or he'll go home with no medals and a bad performance report." His remarks rocked me back on my heels. His perspective was one that hadn't even entered my consciousness. My entire mind set was directed at the urgency of war in which things couldn't wait, they had to be done right now or there would be dire consequences. I began to wonder who had the right mind set, the American officer who served in Vietnam for one year or the Vietnamese officer who had been at war for a long, long time. The ARVN officer's remarks caused me to modify not only my thinking but, to a degree, my approach. I knew I had to back off. Pushing the ARVN officers and non-commissioned officers hard was not getting the results I had hoped for."*

That, in a nutshell was what the Advisory experience was about

....Review by Ken Jacobsen

## MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

### ***Major George Lasley, USAF, (Ret)***

January 11, 2011 at the age of 81. He joined the US Air Force as an enlisted man and was subsequently a gunner on a B-29 and B-36. He was accepted into the aviation cadet program and graduated with a commission. During his 20 years in the USAF he flew several fighter aircraft, one bomber and flew 150 missions in Vietnam. During his military career he flew in the following aircraft: A-37, B-25, B-47, C-47, C-119, F-4, F-86, F-89, F-94, F-104, KC-135, T-6, T-28, T-37, AND T-38. Major Lasley served as an advisor with AFAT-5. He was a *COUNTERPARTS* member.

### ***LTC Martin Marty Benjamin Mait, USA, (Ret)***

May 14, 2010. He served 21 years in the US Army and served two tours in Vietnam, including one tour with Advisory Team 22, CORDS. He was a member of *COUNTERPARTS*

### ***Joseph M. Molina, USMC***

August 4, 2012. He served in Vietnam as a Field Radio Operator in the CAP program with 2 CAG and was discharged as a Sergeant. Joe was a *COUNTERPARTS* member.

### ***Anthony Orlando, US Army***

June 19, 2012. He served in Vietnam with Advisory Team 93 and was a member of *COUNTERPARTS*. His military service was from 1966 to 1972.

### ***Lonnie R. Kiefer, US Army, (Ret)***

January 12, 2012. He served with Advisory Team 19. Lonnie was a *COUNTERPARTS* member.

### ***LTC Francis X. Harrison, USA, (Ret)***

February 24, 2012. He enlisted in the Army in 1947 and retired after 23 years of distinguished service. He served two tours in Vietnam in 1964 and 1969, respectively, as a combat advisor and as commandant of the USA Advisor School. He was a proud member of *COUNTERPARTS*.

### ***Rodney L. "Rod" Hinsch, USAF***

August 18, 2015 at his home in Bargersville Indiana. Rod retired from the USAF as a Sergeant. He was awarded two Purple Hearts for service in Vietnam.

### ***James Yu-B Special Forces***

JAMES YU-B, Special Forces 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 3 2015 in Edmonds, Washington. Yu-B was a member of the *Sedang* Montagnards. His Special Forces Assignments began in 1966 with 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group. He was assigned to Co B, *Hatchet Force* and later to CCC, MACV-SOG at Kontum assigned to RT Vermont. With the fall of Saigon he was resettled to Bellevue, Washington, on 30 May 1975. Yu-B was awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Meritorious Service in 1972 from the US Army Vietnam, and the US Army Presidential Unit Citation MACV-SOG 1964 – 1972. He was respected and admired by all that he came in contact with. Yu-B was a proud member of the Forces Association, and the Special Operations Association. He is survived by his first wife, Thu Ha and three daughters: Anne, Amy and Lan, and one son, Thai; and current wife, Duyen Le, and son Chien.

# **Our Histories of The Advisory War: Personal Stories of *COUNTERPARTS* Members**

***If you have a story of your experience, send it to SITREP Editors at  
kjacobsen@knology.net***

Memories in the Mekong.

By  
Tom Green

On the night of October 28 the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Point White* (WPB82308) was anchored in in the lower Bassac River near our Coastal Group 36 base, A joint op was planned that night with the U.S. Coast Guard and the Vietnamese Navy.

We departed on *Point White* at about 0400 on Oct. 29. Just prior to first light we deployed in 3 small boats (2 Kenner outboards and one Boston whaler) with a 4-man crew in each boat. We headed south from the north end of Dung Island proceeding down the east channel of the island.

Our mission was to intercept Vietcong or North Vietnamese sampans or junks near where the east channel enters the main channel. The lead boat was a 18' Kenner from Coastal Group 36 (CG36) with LTJG Tom Green driving and FN Jim Champion manning a m-60 machine gun forward, along with 2 Vietnamese sailors with M-16 and M-79 grenade launchers.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> boat was also a Kenner from CG36 with Lt. Stephen Mac Vean driving and SK1 Russell LeCompte manning a M-60 forward. The other 2 in the boat were Lt. Thu. Commander Officer of CG36, and the executive officer of CG36. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Boat was a Coast Guard Boston Whaler. There was a chief Petty officer driving, gunners mate Tom Chapman on the forward M-60 and 2 other Coast Guard crew .

The lead boat went out into the main channel to check out a suspicious sampan, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> boat approached a motorized junk, which opened fired on the 2<sup>nd</sup> boat and made a direct hit on the port bow with an RPG-B-40 rocket. The firefight continued with machine guns M-79s, and small arms. The enemy junk fled into a small canal of the main Dung Island channel.

The Point White arrived on the scene about 5 minutes after the initial contact. Boat one then approached boat 2 and LTJG Green boarded boat 2 to find SK1 Russell LeCompte KIA, MacVean seriously wounded and Lt. Thu also wounded. Boat one then towed boat 2 back to the *Point White* awaiting a MEDEVAC helicopter. An air strike was simultaneously called in on the area of land and canal where the enemy fled.

The MEDEVAC helicopter finally arrived and took SK1 LeCompte and Lt. MacVean to the Can Tho medical facility. The medical radioed back that Lt. MacVean died reroute to the medical facility. We all then headed back to CG36, towing boat 2 in reverse as the damage in the port bow caused flooding while moving forward. When we arrived back at CG36, Lt. Steve Lombardo was t preparing to depart. This was the last day of his tour of duty at CG36 Senior Advisor.

Sadly, this was Lt. MacVean's first op and last op. Lt. Lombardo left on a HUEY and diverted to Can Tho to identify the bodies of Lt. MacVean and SK1 Russell LeCompte.

A Picnic To Remember  
As told to  
Jim Barker

It was November 1971, on a typical sweltering Sunday afternoon in Ban Me Thuot, provincial capitol of Dar Lac, home of the largest concentration of ethnic minorities in Viet Nam. One of the sage Rhade tribesman strikers had invited Sgt. Jim Barker and myself to his village for a visit and tribal feast. Thanks Zeus, it was the dry season, as our jeep bounced and leapfrogged on a cross-country romp through the jungle en route to the village. Upon arrival, we were immediately seated in a large circle on the ground under an expansive longhouse. Shortly, the indigenous "haute cuisine" was introduced. In front of us was a buffalo-sized jar filled with water, banana stalks, and a botanical mystery of vegetation. Long straws protruded from the jar. After a few inhalations, our hosts handed us cups filled with the special brew. It was pure silage... with a mule's kick!

After several cups the merriment picked up. I heard the Senior Rhade Sergeant whisper to Barker, "the more you drink, the more we like you."

This was a challenge for Barker, as he was a church guy and teetotaler from the Midwest. He stoically complied but with a widening smile. After a time we noticed some raw meat being chopped up on a piece of wood in the dirt. Spices were added, and it was squeezed into little balls. At first we thought it might be for some of the roving village dogs, but that all clarified when it was placed on a wicker plate. The proud chef proceeded to pick up this uncooked delicacy by hand, and press the offering into our hands. We then refrained asking our hosts what the canine census was prior to the banquet! I began to imagine the trillions of bacteria about to jump aboard. Sgt. Barker then stated: "I'm going for more silage, maybe it will neutralize this main course". Barker's usual modest humor vaulted into scientific affirmation when he suddenly exclaimed, "Now I know why the hogs near my grandfather's corncribs were walking sideways!"

The afternoon lengthened, and everything became a euphoric blur. When the sun began to retreat behind the jungle canopy, we all somehow managed to assemble ourselves, bid farewell, and get all body parts back into the jeep. On the circuitous drive back, my foggy mind realized that any local VC could have ambushed us with easy results. We would've felt no pain!

Finally, nightfall coincided with our arrival into town. As a bachelor of taste, I had promised Kim, the "local lady of my life," that I would come and pay respects to her family at their dwelling. I let Sgt. Barker, who confessed he was about to deflate, off to a nearby alleyway. He proceeded to find relief, probably creating a minor flash flood in the process. I angled my way over to Kim's house. Upon entry, I perceived from her expression that she was trying to tell me something. Nevertheless, I was invited in by the family, and offered the seat of honor. As I embarked on a soliloquy of thanks and goodwill in Pidgin English, I detected a growing rumble deep in my viscera. Suddenly, a tsunami of the day's picnic struck, and I was looking down at a lake in the chair, slowly inching up my fatigues to my crotch. No one ventured a word I somehow got upright, was handed a cloth, and bade my theoretical parents-in-law goodnight.

Memory escapes me as to how I got back to the compound. The next day, Sgt. Barker told me he did the driving.

## Happiness Is Having Good Thoughts And, Sometimes, Deep Thoughts

From John Haseman, DDSA and DSA

Ham Long District, Mo Cay District, Kien Hoa Province

Many of us had thoughts that came to us during our assignments as advisors. Some came in the heat of battle and some came afterwards in relaxation back at the team house or even in reflection years afterwards. I wrote mine down in "shorthand" and then tried to resurrect them after passage of a lot of time. I think they are still a graphic way of depicting what life was like as an advisor out in a district a very long way from a flagpole. These short musings were all written during my 18 months in Ham Long and Mo Cay Districts, Kien Hoa Province, between June 1971 and February 1973. I am confident that many other *COUNTERPARTS* members have similar recollections.

.... My discomfort on the first night in Ham Long -- a welcome party where I am under close scrutiny by all those with whom I'll be working for the next year. Easily eating all the food, not dropping my chopsticks, and being very conscious of the many eyes checking me out.

.... *Remembering the moment when, after two months in Ham Long, I realized I had been accepted as a friend as well as an advisor.*

.... Feeling the sudden peace that came in the one moment when I felt I would never leave Kien Hoa alive, and not minding it.

.... *Discovering myself in the heat of battle, and the fear of myself for liking it.*

.... Climbing the watchtower at dusk for a few minutes of solitude, marveling at the deceptively peaceful sunset over the coconut trees.

.... *The satisfying feeling I get when I realize I've adopted the Ham Long RF/PF as my own troops. Seeing the steel and iron behind the grins and the grimness of honest patriotism and dedication beneath those smiling faces. And realizing that not enough Americans had shared this privilege.*

.... The great understanding of the Vietnamese who realize after a particularly bad day that you want a few minutes alone, and who don't interrupt on the crowded solitude of a concrete bunker roof. And then, at the right time, asking you down to the cau lac bo for a beer.

.... *Bo Xoai Watchtower being attacked by a platoon of VC only 300 meters down the road. Four PF soldiers holding off the enemy by throwing grenades from their bunker. Artillery right on target, driving off the enemy force. The 890th RF Company ambushing the retreating VC and scoring well. Then visiting in the morning and the surprise on the faces of the defenders when they are called "hero." Two weeks later a feeling of quiet pride as the Province Senior Advisor and District Chief award them medals for valor.*

.... Walking 8 clicks in the rain with Dai-uy No to build Tan Bac Outpost, and laughing. Excitement when a coconut fox is caught and eaten for lunch, and really tastes good. Getting a few too many ba-si-de's at lunch and falling off the monkey bridge on the way back. Sharing my poncho liner with a PF whose gear got soaked in the afternoon rain. . . . and helping these men out with four air strikes the sharply sunny afternoon when the VC/NVA decided their outpost would be next, and driving the enemy off. . . .visiting a few days later with the District Chief and getting mobbed by the happy soldiers when he tells them I had called the airplanes.



. . . . *The privilege of observing the ordinary people's lives, the cycle of rice growing, the difficulties of life in a war zone, shopping in the market. And the privilege of meeting the local village officials, many taking jobs that endangered themselves and their families, trying to serve a far-off government that often seemed not to care about them.*

. . . . Visiting with two 17 year old PF soldiers at Phuoc Thanh I Outpost one beautiful day in October, learning their names and their hopes; and helping carry out their bodies on another beautiful day in January, victims of still another traitor.

. . . . *Standing in the smoking wreckage of the Thoi Duc Outpost and wondering how many more there would be. Wishing, terribly, for ten minutes alone with the traitors if they are ever caught.*

. . . . Happiness Is Going On An Operation And Not Getting Shot

. . . . *The cold flash of danger lying with PF soldiers in the grass of a banana grove, the bullets of the enemy ambush force rustling quietly through the banana leaves over our heads. Looking frantically for the enemy, knowing that somebody out there is trying to kill me. Cordite from my M-16, fired in anger for the first time at an enemy I can hear but cannot see. Relief when the firing stops and the wonderful, sensual feeling of adrenaline still pumping. And the feeling of savage, uncontrolled delight at learning we killed four VC and suffered no friendly casualties. The looks of respect from the PF at me, for sharing their danger and doing well. And walking out of the Tuong Da jungle, alive.*

. . . . Dour Captain Tuan deciding that he really didn't dislike EVERY American advisor.

. . . . *the Ham Long District barber, who cut my hair every two weeks. Me, very happy he was not a razor-wielding VC instead.*

. . . . Covey 20, out of fighters, offering to adjust artillery fire for us. Lt Hong's guns firing a perfect line and the amazement in his voice when Covey 20 calls it the best shooting he's ever seen, anyplace. Then another laconic drawl: "Why don't you and those gunners go outside and take a piss break." And then, barrel rolls and a loop over the compound and Covey 20's words "Tell those little guys that was for them." And grins at the artillery compound when I do.

. . . . *The crashing reality of yet another firefight in the jungle, and wondering if this time will be "it." And it's not.*

. . . . Happiness is a Mang Cau Smoothie With Crushed Ice In A Little Plastic Bag Tied With A Rubber Band With A Straw Sticking Out The Top.

. . . . *Gratitude to the alert artillery sentry who spotted a straight line of vegetation in the Mo Cay Canal – then spraying the area with his machine gun and literally turning the canal water red and thus destroying an attempted sapper attack.*

. . . . Running to the bunker at 0100 in the morning and for the first time hearing the unmistakable, disconcerting "whoooooosh" of incoming rocket fire. The grim discovery that there is an NVA battalion attacking from 200 meters south of town; satisfaction when our artillery surprises THEM trying to surprise us.

. . . . *Tromping through dense jungle country in southern Mo Cay, carefully stepping around the enemy booby traps marked by scouts on the point. Wondering how far through the impenetrable thickets the enemy is hiding, waiting for the volley of ambush fire that never comes, or the explosion of a mine that was missed.*

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