



COUNTERPARTS

Thương Hữu Đông Nam Á

SITREP

Volume XIIX

Issue 2

Summer 2017

Lively Reunion in Louisville, Plans made for next year in Pensacola, FL.

By
Ken Jacobsen

This year's COUNTERPARTS Reunion gave attendees the opportunity to meet a number of new members and also to reflect on the past, present and future of our organization. It was the second Reunion held in Louisville. The first, as Commander Grant McClure remembered, in 1992, The very early days of COUNTERPARTS as an organization.

As always, the Hospitality Room was a magnet for members before and after reunion events; thanks to the work of Historian Carol Lund, we can now display, at each Reunion, a series of Albums documenting past reunions and recalling old comrades and friends, many of whom are no longer with us. (Carol has asked, by the way, for copies of any photos of this, and other Reunions that members may have).

We also enjoyed refreshments and snacks thoughtfully provided by Reunion Coordinator Bill Boland and co-host Brenda Johnson. The extensive work done by Bill, assisted by Lewis Grissaffi, our Reunion "Ambassador at Large" helped make the weekend memorable. Bill and Brenda also were on hand to shuttle members to and from the airport, and to points of interest in downtown Louisville.

The Saturday banquet featured a well-received buffet, and we were fortunate enough to have present a number of Vietnamese friends who represented the *Tri An* foundation of Louisville, which is working to raise funds for a memorial honoring the American, Vietnamese, and other nations' sacrifices during the Vietnam War.

Banquet speaker was our Membership Chairman, John Haseman. John gave us a thoughtful, personal, and incisive account of his experience as an Advisor. His presentation also featured a number of photos taken during recent visits to the sites of his advisory work during the war. The "then and now" contrasts were particularly striking.

A number of new initiatives, as well as some continuing projects and agenda items were discussed at the Business meeting. A detailed account of the meeting and associated discussions begins on page three.

As has become traditional, the final agenda item for Saturday's Business Meeting was the selection of a site for the next reunion. After some discussion, Steve Moczary, who hosted a very successful reunion in San Antonio in 2006, suggested Pensacola, Florida as a possible site.

Steve noted that it is an easily accessible location with the benefit of being close to several military installations, such as the National Naval Aviation Museum, rated as a top Florida Gulf coast attraction. He also suggested that since our usual Reunion time would coincide with the Navy's *Blue Angels* time in Pensacola, it might be possible to arrange some activity relating to their presence.

Steve has already outlined a proposed program and schedule of events for the Reunion, although at this early stage of planning we should understand that dates and events are still tentative. The proposed schedule is shown on page 7 of this issue of SITREP.



COUNTERPARTS SITREP

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Commander's Corner

Another great reunion this year, and very nostalgic for those of us who attended the two back-to-back gatherings in Louisville, KY during the association's formative years in 1992 and 1993. It was wonderful to see everyone and bear witness to a palpable sense of elevated membership engagement during the business meeting. A full narrative on the reunion is highlighted in this issue of SITREP.

For the worthy causes we support, annual contributions voted on during the business meeting have been sent by Adjutant Jim O'Malley. We have one more follow-up item from the reunion awaiting further development in connection with interest expressed in a short-term funding drive for a permanent Counterparts plaque for the *Tri An Monument* in Louisville Veteran's Memorial Park. This will get underway in June 2017 by and through the subcommittee of members who volunteered to assist.

Longtime member Steve Moczary has volunteered to host the 2018 reunion in Pensacola, FL and has already hit the ground running on hotel selection, and developing a wonderful/interesting itinerary at this fantastic location.

Information is forthcoming in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

Membership ranks continue to grow, and it's heartening to see the enthusiasm and camaraderie when we gather each year. A new member, Henry Choy, volunteered to serve as XO, and has already enticed us with a grand vision of hosting the 2019 reunion in Hawaii. We shall see how the concept develops, but this would be a great opportunity that I'm sure will be interesting to mix with vacation and extended sightseeing.

Members are encouraged to communicate with me directly should they have an expressed interest in contributing to any particular association-related effort or project. Your ideas are always welcome.

Thanks,
Dr. Grant A. McClure
CO

COUNTERPARTS annual dues for 2017 are due and payable as of 1 January 2017. Annual dues remain the same -- \$35.00. Checks should be made out to "COUNTERPARTS" and mailed to Membership Officer John Haseman, 555 West Saddle Drive, Grand Junction CO 81507. Your dues fund our Southeast Asia charitable projects and are vital to continue those projects.

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

2017 LOUISVILLE COUNTERPARTS BUSINESS MEETING –APRIL 9, 2117

Commander Grant McClure called the meeting to order with thirty-four plenary members present. This was the 28th reunion, and Grant recounted for the group a brief history of the founding of COUNTERPARTS and introduced Steve Herberth, former Adjutant whose range of activity included the Village Market, and who served as host of the 1992 reunion in Louisville where the first slate of officers were voted in. Members such as Max Lund and Ken Jacobsen were recognized as also being present at the 1992 reunion. A great photo was taken in front of the Breckenridge Hotel in 1992 of Grant standing with Max Lund, Steve Herberth, Paul Brubaker and Bill Laurie.

Grant reflected on his ascent into the role of CO in 1992, and how it seemed logical to simply approach the fulfillment of organizational goals and objectives by serving the good purposes outlined in the constitution and bylaws, i.e., to network with our former allies in Southeast Asia to promote human rights; record the history of the War by documenting the advisory experiences of members who fought alongside our allies in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; to promote fellowship through annual meetings for members; to lend assistance to refugees and those displaced by the War, and develop recognition of advisory service and honor our former allies through memorial tributes.

Grant prepared a comprehensive chronology for this reunion highlighting the involvement of COUNTERPARTS members and a wide range of activities since the association's inception in 1989. This chronology reflects much in the way of focused effort in serving a purpose for over two decades on continuing service that in many ways mirrors our past commitment as advisors in Vietnam. For instance, COUNTERPARTS was instrumental in establishing living memorials at Arlington National Cemetery to honor comrades-in arms, the Vietnamese (Rangers and Airborne), the Hmong, Montagnards, Khmer Krom, and Cham. At the 2015 reunion, members laid a commemorative wreath at each of these sites at Arlington National Cemetery. Currently, member Mike Benge is intensely involved in communicating with Congressional representatives to urge State Department/UNHCR intervention to help relocate hundreds of Montagnards to the US who are presently in a refugee camp in Thailand. Grant encouraged members to provide feedback on the chronology and share additional examples of member involvement over the years to insert as a working document.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Membership Chairman John Haseman reported that COUNTERPARTS has 269 active members, 154 lifetime, 115 annual dues paying, and 300 inactive members. There are 102 known deceased and 684 on our historical record. John encouraged members to pay their annual dues without reminder. He had to send out 56 emails and 12 letters to remind members to pay.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Adjutant/Treasurer Jim O'Malley reported that COUNTERPARTS has roughly 19,000 dollars in the treasury before convention expenses. Membership voted to allow Lewis Grissaffi to be on our signature card as he has been instrumental with planning/coordinating reunions and handling the expenses. Jim will provide an updated financial report after the reunion when all expenses are accounted for.

ANNUAL CHARITABLE GIVING

Last year COUNTERPARTS donated \$3000 dollars to *CAMBODIA CORPS, Inc. (CCI)* a small NGO in Cambodia that helps poor Montagnard students obtain a college education in Phnom Penh. The new President of CCI, member Max Lund, reported that presently there are 9 young women living in their house in Phnom Penh attending various colleges in nursing, education, or business schools. CCI also provides a house and food for 17 poor rural Montagnard high school students in Ban Lung, Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia, so that they can finish their high school education. He and his wife, Carol, recently returned from 3 months in Cambodia. COUNTERPARTS and individual members have been supporters of CCI now for 11 years.

To date there are 39 Montagnard college graduates who will, hopefully, become advocates and future leaders of the Montagnard people in Cambodia. Pictures were on display of the students supported.

At the 2016 reunion COUNTERPARTS elected to donate \$2500 to *VIETNAM HEALING FOUNDATION (VHF)*, a small NGO that delivers small sums of money to very poor, destitute former ARVN/GVN soldiers in Vietnam who were our allies. Rich Webster explained how small sums are clandestinely dispersed to these former soldiers to avoid confiscation by communist officials who still deny them any kind of benefits or support. A pictorial display of former ARVN soldiers, many with missing limbs, was on display during the reunion. For more info, see www.thevhf.org, which is run by a former Viet Vet where 95% of the money donated goes to direct aid to destitute former GVN soldiers.

Members voted to donate funds to Cambodia Corps, Vietnam Healing Foundation, and the Disabled Vietnamese Ranger fund in tribute to Bui Lam, former Vietnamese Ranger, who has magnanimously printed SITREP for us at no charge through his print shop in Phoenix since the inception of the association. (Post-reunion funding allocation was as follows: CCI, \$3,000 VHF, \$2500, Disabled ARVN Rangers\$500.),

VILLAGE MARKET

COUNTERPARTS Quartermaster, Mike McMunn, made a request to Adjutant Jim O'Malley, for funding of about \$2,000 to replenish the Village Market supplies, tokens, and emblems. Motion was unanimously approved by the membership to fulfill this request. Coincidentally, XO Henry Choy, expressed interest in initiating an effort to propose an enhancement to the quality, size, and appearance of the association challenge coin. Grant commented that it was high time that the coin received attention as the Vietnamese verbiage, *Tương Hữu Đông Nam Á* was in need of update/revision. Grant requested that Henry collaborate closely with Mike on this revision, and any other concepts that may be derived from the use of the *Cổ Vấn Mỹ* scroll patch (as further elaborated below).

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Rich Webster encouraged those present to send their stories to him or Ken Jacobsen, editor of SITREP, to their emails on inside cover of SITREP. Copies of the SITREP are sent to the Texas Tech Archives and now all issues of SITREP can be found with an internet search. If you want your family to have a record of your advisor service that will survive forever, then write it up and send it into the SITREP.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT

Carol Lund, who puts together a pictorial of each reunion was absent, so please send any photos taken at the Reunion to Max Lund for her to add to our yearly photo album. Carol is also exploring social media to publicize COUNTERPARTS

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Grant volunteered to stay on as CO, and was heartened by the volunteer spirit of Jim O'Malley to continue-on as Adjutant and John Haseman as Membership Chair...both pivotal contributing roles for the association. Grant expressed gratitude to Ken and Bill as co-editors of the SITREP. New member, Hank Choy, volunteered to fill the vacant role of Executive Officer. which has been vacant. He also volunteered to explore planning a future reunion in Hawaii.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

Commander McClure proffered an idea to add a prominent link to the COUNTERPARTS home page that would navigate inquiries with a generic question: ***Were you an Advisor?*** This link would then open to a page displaying an amalgamation of emblems exemplifying a cross-section of many units (both military and civilian) that served with distinction in primary advisory roles in the various theaters of operation during the Vietnam War. A small representative sampling of shoulder patches worn by US advisors in Vietnam are displayed. This helps to emphasize the association's connection with MACV and encourage further inquiry from individuals with prior service in these units that were an integral part of the advisory command.

A motion to pursue this webpage enhancement was unanimously approved. Grant will connect with webmaster, Jim Alkek. It was duly noted that Paul Brubaker created a collage of advisor patches in 1991 to serve the same purpose. Grant also related his observation that COUNTERPARTS had received considerable attention and interest at a 1993 Memorial Day information table set up at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial by simply displaying a large sign asking, "Were You an Advisor?" That sign accompanied by the poster-size collage of patches formed the primary display materials at the 1993 event, and received a remarkable number of inquiries and interested visitors.

An exceptional video about advisors, narrated by member Tucker Smallwood, an established professional actor, which had been presented at the 2015 Kennedy Center recognition event for COUNTERPARTS, was shared by Grant with interest expressed by members to have this also made available as a link on the association home page.

Grant reflected on an effort by Paul Brubaker in September 1991 to introduce an advisor patch for inclusion in the array of related items available via the Village Market. A traditional black and red scroll patch with the words *Cố Vấn Mỹ* was submitted by Paul for reproduction but was lost to follow-up. This was retrieved and displayed with a request for feedback from the membership for developing its potential use further. A motion to accept the patch was unanimously approved. Member, and new XO, Henry Choy, will work with quartermaster Mike McMunn to price this item for reproduction and availability via Village Market.

Member Lewis Grissaffi made note of an impressive number of inquiries about COUNTERPARTS secondary to the introduction of the association via the *MACV Teams* website. Many members are convinced that it is fruitful to maintain an active presence on this website by way of cross-referencing COUNTERPARTS, and it goes without saying that the MACV emblem and those with prior service in connection with the advisory command are more likely to explore COUNTERPARTS further when they can appreciate the organizational connection that exists across all branches of the military and civilian agencies from 1954 to 1975.

TRI ÂN FOUNDATION

The President of the Vietnamese Community of Louisville, and one of the principal organizers of the *Tri Ân* foundation, Mr. Yung Nguyen, was invited to introduce the design concept for a grand veteran's monument in Louisville to be dedicated to Americans, Vietnamese and six other allied countries who fought together during the Vietnam War. The monument will also remember thousands of Americans who are still unaccounted for, and hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese who perished or suffered terrible consequences as prisoners in the communist labor camps after the war. Another purpose of the *Tri Ân* veteran's monument is to create an accurate memory and history of the Vietnam War, a matter that resonates well with our membership.

Mr. Yung noted that his father was an ARVN soldier. He thanked COUNTERPARTS for their unique service in Vietnam, fighting for the freedom of the Vietnamese people. Mr. Yung reflected on his own harrowing experience in escaping through the jungles in 1981, crossing into Cambodia to Thailand, to become a refugee before eventually coming to America with nothing more than the clothes on his back and the shoes on his feet.

Tri Ân, translated from Vietnamese means "deep gratitude," and is a very befitting metaphor of the memorial's purpose. The *Tri Ân Foundation* is presently raising funds to reach their ground-breaking goal for the monument. Interest in supporting this worthwhile endeavor was unanimously expressed by those members present, and a membership committee was formed to develop a plan for canvassing the membership at-large for donations to this important project. Committee members are: Grant McClure, Dave Priddy, Steve Herberth, and Lewis Grissaffi. By unanimous approval of a motion, interest was expressed at the business meeting for setting a fundraising goal of \$5,000 that would be set at a level affording COUNTERPARTS an opportunity to have a large donor plaque prominently displayed at the monument.

OTHER ITEMS

New member Owen Haddock discussed his efforts to counter the myths about the Vietnam War and gave members a fact sheet to refute these myths. He expressed his doubt as to the accuracy of the new Ken Burns documentary which advertises itself as the final definitive history of the Vietnam War. Vietnam Veterans should be alert to this, because Ken Burns' initial presentation of the documentary at the LBJ library recently featured anti-war activist/veteran John Kerry on stage with Ken Burns.

Raffle: Offered for raffle were two beautifully crafted COUNTERPARTS plaques (accompanied by photos) hand-made as a token of gratitude by the Sungei Besi Refugee Camp teen group in Malaysia: the winning bid was from Dave Priddy.

2018 REUNION

Member Steve Moczary proposed a reunion in Pensacola, Florida. He offered to host the next reunion there Member Tom Sutterfield, who also resides in Pensacola, offered to help coordinate the reunion logistics with Steve. A motion was unanimously approved to accept Steve's proposal.

SATURDAY BANQUET

The Saturday evening banquet was attended by 71 COUNTERPARTS members & wives and a table of guests from the Vietnamese Community of Louisville all of whom were affiliated with the *Tri Ân Foundation*.

COUNTERPARTS Membership Chairman, John Haseman, former Deputy District Senior Advisor in Ham Long District, and later Mo Cay District, and District Senior Advisor in Ham Long District, Kien Hoa Province was the keynote presenter. John gave a riveting pictorial account of his advisory experiences, taking us back to Vietnam during his tour of duty as advisor in two very different districts. We saw the pictures of Vietnamese villages in the remote backwater of the delta region intertwined with John going on patrol with his Vietnamese COUNTERPARTS, as he narrated the battles there between the communist forces and his South Vietnamese COUNTERPARTS. From a number of return trips to Vietnam, John also displayed some interesting images of the same areas of towns, roadways, waterways, and military quarters from yesteryear contrasting it with vivid portrayal of how it appears today. It was quite heartrending to hear John's reflections

Also present at the banquet was our earliest serving member in Indochina, Owen Kelly, accompanied by his wife Eleanor. Owen was an expert air force mechanic who serviced French aircraft that provided support during the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Owen wore a blazer adorned with his medals awarded by the French government.

Another early advisor attendee was Thomas Ashley who was attached to MACV Headquarters in 1963/1964 as a courier for General Richard G Stilwell. Stationed in Saigon, Tom flew all over Vietnam delivering messages for General Stilwell. "I lived in a hotel," says Tom. "One night we were told not to go to a local theatre because intelligence said the VC were going to blow it up. Nothing happened in the early evening show, so I disregarded the memo and went. At ten o'clock a bomb exploded that shredded my legs with shrapnel. I ended up in a hospital and that's how I got my purple heart."

Special thanks to Bill Boland, Team 43 member, our host in Louisville. Bill and his friend Brenda were busy Friday ferrying attendees from our hotel to downtown Louisville to visit local museums and historic sites. Gratitude also goes to Lewis who advised and assisted greatly in the coordination of the reunion and also established contact with the



COUNTERPARTS REUNION 2-18 PENSACOLA, FL
Schedule of Events

The Reunion will be held April 11th thru 15th, 2018 at Pensacola Grand Hotel, located at 200 E. Gregory Street, Pensacola, FL 32502 Phone (850) 433-3336. The hotel provides free transportation to and from the Airport. All major Airlines fly into Pensacola International Airport. The room rate per night is \$117.08 including tax. This rate is available for two days prior and two days after the Reunion. All reservations are for a room with two queen beds. The hotel has a very limited number of rooms with King bed, if you desire a King bed the room cost an additional \$50 plus tax. Be sure to tell the reservation person if you want a king room. To make a reservation Call (850) 433-3336, extension 5526 or 5527 and provide Block Code "SEA". The room rate of \$117.08 which includes Tax will be honored if reservation is made before March 19, 2018.

Wednesday April 11th

Registration in the Grand Central Station Hospitality room starting at 12 Noon. The Hospitality room is open from 9 AM to 10 PM daily except on April 14th when the Hospitality room is closed at 2 PM to allow resetting for Banquet Dinner.

Thursday April 12th

Depart with Bus at 9:30 AM to Naval Air Museum. The tour takes about 4 to 5 hours. Food and drink items available in the Museum at the "Cubi Bar Coffee" Return to Hotel at 2:30PM, rest and refresh, depart hotel with Bus at 5:30 PM for dinner at *To Do* Vietnamese restaurant, return to hotel around 7:30PM.

Friday April 13th

Depart Hotel at 10:30 AM to Air Force Armament Museum at Eglin AFB. On the way to Air Museum lunch at East River Smokehouse BBQ restaurant in Navarre. The Museum visit with lunch break will take about 3 hours. Upon conclusion of Museum visit travel by Bus to Harbor Walk Village in San Destin, FL located on the Emerald Coast. Lots of shops and eating places. Depart to Hotel at 6:30 PM the return trip could take over an hour depending on traffic.

Saturday April 14th

Business meeting from 9 AM to Noon at Grand Central Station Hospitality room. The Hospitality room closes at 2 PM for set up for Banquet Dinner. Cash bar at Banquet. Guest speaker TBD.

Sunday April 15

Sunday. Goodbye's, checkout and depart for home or continue a personal vacation. Till next year, God Bless you all.

Registration form

Registration Fee for 2018 Reunion includes Banquet Dinner, Transportation, Drinks/Snacks in Hospitality room is \$166.00 Per Person. \$166.00 X number of reservation _____ = _\$_____

Please Provide name and address of Member, name of Spouse and Guests, make check payable to "Counterparts".

Spouse/Guest: _____

Spouse/Guest: _____

Spouse/Guest: _____

SEND REGISTRATION FORMS TO:

Mr. Lewis Grissaffi
1221 Vegas Street
San Diego, CA 92110
619-922-8682
Luisaffi@yahoo.com

NEW COUNTERPARTS MEMBERS

By

Membership Chairman, John Haseman

We have had a veritable deluge of new members so far in 2017. We are delighted to introduce some of the newest members of Counterparts!

Paul E. Cary joined Counterparts in January. Paul was assigned to Advisory Team 80 as the Phung Hoang Coordinator in Dam Doi District, Ca Mau Province from January to December 1969. He visited Dam Doi and Ca Mau in late 2016. Paul lives in Warwick, Rhode Island.

Henry K.H. "Hank" Choy joined in January. Hank had an unusual advisory career -- assigned to US Navy Advisory Group from October 1971 to October 1972, he was a "Pigs and Chickens" and spent most of his time as an agricultural advisor working with USAID as an expert in animal husbandry. He worked in Saigon and later at Cam Ranh Bay, and in much of the Mekong Delta. Hank is an enthusiastic member of Counterparts -- at the Louisville reunion he volunteered to serve as the Counterparts X.O., for which we thank him. Hank lives in Aiea, Hawaii.

Larry K. Cole joined in May. He was a cavalry officer and served as advisor to 1st Troop, 6th ARVN Cavalry, Advisory Team 75 (Dinh Tuong Province) in My Tho. Larry was introduced to Counterparts by our member Ken Lord via Counterparts member Doug Wilson, and with the help of former Commander J.C. Fischer, who he met in My Tho back in the day. Larry has written a book titled "A Ride in the Sun," about his advisory experiences and lifestyle, including the 1968 Tet Offensive battle of My Tho. The book was released on 18 May 2017 and is available through Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble. Larry is active in the Mounted Warrior Foundation, working to build the Mounted Warrior Museum in where he resides.

James W. "Jim" DeLoach joined Counterparts in April. Jim served on Advisory Team 2, Thang Binh District, Quang Nam Province, from August 1967 to August 1968. Jim lives in Jenks, Oklahoma.

Owen S. Haddock joined Counterparts in March as a Lifetime Member. He was a pilot with the 5th Air Commando Squadron, from January 1966 to January 1967. He was involved in flying psyops missions along the Cambodian border and in the Mekong Delta in support of US Special Forces and DRAC throughout the Mekong Delta. Owen resides in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Charles A. "Charlie" Hansen joined Counterparts at the Louisville reunion. Charlie was a radio operator from 1968 to 1969. He lives in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Edward B. Helm joined Counterparts in April. He served in Duc Hoa and Can Tho on Advisory Team 99, with the 2nd Battalion 46th Infantry, 25th ARVN Division, from October 1968 to April 1970. He lives in Jacksonville, Texas.

John "J.J." Johnson joined Counterparts as a Lifetime member in March. Initially assigned as a Field Artillery officer in the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, he was reassigned to MACV and was Team Leader of MAT IV-5 in Advisory Team 88, Kien Hoa Province, from November 1968 to June 1969. His MAT Team was the province reaction force and he saw considerable "action" in many of Kien Hoa's worst areas. He found out about Counterparts from Bruce Kinsey, who is attempting to compile a book about CORDS. JJ lives in Silver Spring, MD.

Charles E. "Chuck" LaMons joined Counterparts at the Louisville reunion. He was assigned as a radio operator for Advisory Team 70 with the 4th Battalion 7th Regiment, 5th ARVN Division at Phu Loi from June 1966 through November 1968. Charlie lives in Hickory, North Carolina.

A Winter Well Spent

*By
Carol and Max Lund*

After spending nearly three months in Cambodia, living with our students and visiting with graduates and high school kids, we are more enthused than ever about their sincerity and the positive impact of our program.

Staying in the Student Center and interacting with the students on a daily basis allowed us to get to know them as individuals. Carol's afternoon English lessons always had them howling with laughter. Once we got past the initial shyness all our students seem to have, we could see they had a lot of pride in what they were doing. We were invited to go to their schools, to see their classroom, to meet their new friends. Time and time again, in moments of seriousness, a student would say how much the gift of education meant to them and how they hoped they would be able to make a difference when they returned home. It is impressive to hear a young college kid make such a sincere, and mature, statement. I believe it reflects how aware the Indigenous People are of the rapid changes happening to their part of the world, and the impact to their community. To hear a student say they want to do something about the changes, to have a part in shaping the future of their community makes me hopeful for them and for our efforts.

Currently the majority of our graduates are living and working in Monduliri province. They have become our main source for screening and recommending new students from there. In Ratanakiri province we have a somewhat different situation. Five years ago we were asked to help supplement rent for a small house being used to house indigent girls attending high school in Ban Lung, the province capital. The local agency that had initiated the project has since pulled out and left us to support the house and the girls. Because it is a 'safe house' there are many deserving indigent kids who want to qualify for our help. We have used this opportunity to develop a feeder program for CCI for Ratanakiri. We are now interviewing prospective high school students who would like to reside in the house, to determine if they could become candidates for our university program. Using our example of providing shelter, food and tutoring, we are instilling the notion that helping others is something each student should consider doing in the future whether or not they go on to graduate HS or attend college.

So, it was pleasing to hear each of our four HS seniors say that they would like to apply for our college scholarship program and that they wanted to choose a field which would allow them to do the most good for their people. The top two fields? Teaching and nursing.

Last on our list of feel good activities, a meal with program graduates. As Tommy, Rich and I can all attest, to be able to sit down with our graduates as we all have, in a relaxed setting and listen to them describe what they are doing and how proud they are of doing something meaningful is very powerful. It makes all that we do worthwhile. And none of those accomplishments would be possible without our wonderful supporters.

Our fledgling program in Ratanakiri is a great example of how our graduates are going to be able to influence the future of their people. Not only are they already role models, but they each are going to be able to influence others in their careers. And behind that is the fact that as friends and fellow CCI graduates they will have a network of resources and support for each other. Here is what our graduate infrastructure looks like in Oya Dow district, Ratanakiri province, as of March 2017. Two teachers, both local, able to speak the tribal languages and able to help their Indigenous students navigate the Khmer system. One nurse, one midwife, also able to act as intermediaries with the Khmer doctors and patients. One Veterinary Technician, employed by a NGO to improve the health of the local cattle and pigs. One community representative who acts as liaison between the Indigenous community and a foreign mining company now developing what was recently Indigenous land. And last, one business graduate working for a micro loan company specializing in small loans to small farmers. Seven young graduates all able to influence outcomes for their people. Dedicated CCI graduates, all working within the "system" to improve the future of the Indigenous People.

Note: In the above example, one teacher, Sev Yem, was sponsored by COUNTERPARTS, the nurse and midwife were sponsored by Rich Webster, and the Vet Tech was sponsored by Max Lund.



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 Black. (Embroidered Counterparts Logo, Medium, Large, 2XL)	\$20.00
MACV Shoulder Patch (full color mfg. 1968)	\$3.00
COUNTERPARTS/THDNA Jacket, black, Logo. (Large only).....	\$35.00

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

A Visit to Binh An Military Cemetery

By
Lou Rothenstein

COUNTERPARTS member Lou Rothenstein recent visited Vietnam as part of a Vietnam Vets With a Mission (VWAM) team providing medical help to local people. He sends us this report of an unusual "side trip"

Binh An was a site started in 1965 with a design capacity of 30,000. As shown on Wikipedia, there are roughly 12,000 graves or sites at this former Bien Hoa military Cemetery.

My tour guide, a former sergeant in ARVN was an interpreter for both American and Vietnamese units. He was incarcerated in a "Re-education" Camp after the final battles of the war here for some seven years. He has little respect for the regime that has violated so much of Vietnam's heritage and culture and restrictions on those who once opposed them.

What I remember during our support years here that the cemetery was a short drive from the Gia Dinh District of Saigon out past the 519th MI Battalion and 525th MI Group compounds over the old Saigon Bridge and along Route National 1 towards Bien Hoa. Traffic was split between military and civilian vehicles along animal drawn carts, shops, and pedestrians. The moped's predecessor, a motorbike was in abundance as well. What was experienced today was one traffic jam after another on a multi-lane road, mostly commercial trucks, and mopeds. Flyovers and elevated lanes are under construction for miles. About two kilometers past a theme park, there is a turnoff onto a two-lane track that takes one past vehicle repair facilities and traditional Vietnamese Cemeteries. The statue of the seated ARVN Soldier that brought one back the sense of the fatigue and loss of battle was missing, destroyed by the new rulers in 1975.

We stopped to buy some bottled water as it was a bit warm and incense sticks to burn in tribute to those who rested with their fellow soldiers who paid that ultimate sacrifice. A rusty blue painted gate stood ajar and our Toyota SUV drove in. The immediate impression was that of disrepair, unlike the well-maintained North Vietnamese military cemeteries one sees throughout the central provinces south of the old DMZ area. There was noticeable overgrowth of vegetation in several areas. Several security guards were in attendance. The senior one, an apparent sergeant equivalent requested passports but settled on my military ID and driver's license.

I had to fill out a page in their visitor's register book. The workers had what looked like a pretty good chicken farm operation off the entrance to augment their government pay.

After lighting the incense sticks, the tour guide honored the fallen soldiers in the traditional matter then we both placed an incense stick on graves that contained the remains of mostly ARVN soldiers from infantry units. Perhaps 80 percent of the graves with memorial plaques indicated the date of death as connected with the North's Easter Offensive in 1972.

When asked, the security chief replied that there was no registry of graves nor did anyone know exactly how many fallen soldiers were buried there. There was destruction of many gravesites during 1975. Some of the new local government officials made money on the side by selling the bones back to relatives for reburial. Outcry stopped this but one can see some of those gravesites. The government put the cemetery off-limits and under guard until 2006.

Now, the government allows families to restore gravesites for prices ranging from 3,000,000 Dong (about \$133.00) to around 20,000,000 Dong (about \$885.00). There was an on-site crew preparing marble slabs for grave coverings. I have this suspicion that the government found this as an ongoing source of revenue.

As we drove around the cemetery, it was apparent that memorial writings had been removed from the center monument and there has been work at restoring some earlier damage.

A feeling of sadness was lightened when we came across a large grouping of gravesites with artificial memorial flowers at the sites. Most these graves belonged to members of the 8th Parachute Battalion, ARVN Airborne, and the flowers were provided through funds collected by Vietnamese-American War Veterans in the U.S. honoring their former colleagues. There are some stories around



Entrance to Binh An Cemetery



Grave of ARVN soldier, restored by family

about the spirits that roam in this area.

One is of a Marine Battalion aboard trucks enroute to Vung Tau being saved from an ambush near this cemetery site. Visit http://vnafmamn.com/BienHoa_cemetery75.html. For this and other stories and better photographs than mine.

To me, this visit was another lesson in how governments and special interests attempt to rewrite history. One side calls themselves heroes and labels the others as puppets. One's enemy can become one's ally when honor is maintained. Along with revenge type programs, the early denigration of one's own people held up social and economic progress for years.

I became interested in visiting military cemeteries while touring both WWI and WWII battlefields in Europe and was a volunteer escorting veteran groups to visit their fallen comrades. There is a lot of history recorded at the sites and facts rarely read in books. Escorting visitors to old Berlin cemeteries during the Cold War revealed the real character of the regimes on both sides of the wall. Items such as the largest per capita group to serve in the German Army of WWI were Jewish. <http://www.jg-berlin.org/en/judaism/cemeteries/weissensee.html>. Of course, history is even being rewritten in our country, disregarding the sacrifices made by those who died fighting for a cause and flag they believed in. History should be recorded as factually as possible as it might prevent future recurrences of events better avoided. However right or wrong the cause might be thought of today, at the time, it was reality. Removal and destruction of the symbols and record won't change history.

The character of a people can be found on how well former enemy soldiers who sacrificed their lives for what they believed in are cared for. Arlington National Cemetery is an example and its website has the details on how this occurred. <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/csa-mem.htm>.

COUNTERPARTS Member participates in "Black April" Ceremonies.



The event included former members of the RVNAF, RVNAF widows, and other representatives of the Vietnamese-American Community in San Diego.

Community as "Black April" and is marked in communities around the United States by various Vietnamese refugee and Vietnamese-American organizations.

The San Diego community was represented this year by a number of former RVNAF members, RVNAF widows, and others.

Lewis reports that the commemoration included speeches, music honoring fallen comrades, and tributes to those who served. In all, the event was over five hours long.

In April Lewis Grissaffi represented COUNTERPARTS in a memorial ceremony held in San Diego, and organized by the San Diego Vietnamese-American community. The event marked the 42nd Anniversary of the fall of Saigon and the loss of the Republic of Vietnam to the North Vietnamese. The day, 30 April 1975 has come to be known in the Vietnamese-American



Lewis Grissaffi Presents Wreath on behalf of COUNTERPARTS at "Black April" event

My Experience as an Advisor at Vietnam's Central Prisoner of War Camp.

By
Steve Moczary

There is very little known about the Central Prisoner of War Camp (CPWC) its location and operation during the Vietnam War. The CPWC was located on Phu Quoc Island in the Gulf of Siam in close proximity to Cambodia. Most military maps from the period did not show the location of the island. It is reachable by Sea and Air only from the mainland. Most publications, including the Vietnam Order of Battle publication fail to mention the existence of the CPWC.

Phu Quoc island is best known for its production of *Nuoc Mamh* fish sauce a seasoning known worldwide and highly valued commodity sometimes used in trade as money. The production of Nuoc Mamh is done in the Town of An Thoi on the coast. The island is approximately 7 ½ mile long and about 4 ½ mile wide at its widest point. The CPWC was located approximately 2 miles inland from the town of An Thoi.

The base camp for Team 14 was located on the waterfront adjacent to the town of An Thoi and close proximity to the landing area, a PSP runway dubbed the "An Thoi international Airport". All supplies, and mail arrived by USAF C123 aircraft, and prisoners were transported using C130 aircraft when weather conditions permitted their landing. To approach the runway the aircraft had to come over a mountain and cross winds frequently created dangerous conditions. Frequently, our mail and supplies were pushed out the rear ramp during a low-level fly by over the runway.

The CPWC security was provided by the ARVN 9th Military Police (QC) Battalion. The camp was divided into "Enclosures" zones, each enclosure housed different classification of prisoners. The total prisoner population in 1971 exceeded 38,000.

I arrived in country for my second tour in Vietnam in July 1970 with Office of the Provost Marshal, MACV Vietnam specifically, to Team 14 on Phu Quoc. I was assigned to Enclosure 7, where about 5,000 NVA Officers were housed and was the Advisor to ARVN 1Lt Phat Van Nguyen, the Enclosure commander. We got along well and Phat was proactive in supporting me in my duties, as well as ensuring proper treatment of Prisoners in accordance with international law. Phat cooperated to ensure that all Prisoners were provided medical care as needed and in the prevention of infectious diseases.

Phat Van Nguyen was born on April 12, 1940 in Phong Dinh Province, Can Tho City., Phat graduated from high school in 1960. He then attended Law University and upon graduating in 1965, joined the ARVN and attended Officer "Thuduc" training. He was promoted to Warrant Officer and from 1967 to 1969 attended the Military Police school in Vung Tau and became an investigator assigned to the 4th MP Battalion in Can Tho. In July 1969, Phat was assigned to the 9th Military Police Battalion at the Central Prisoner of War Camp on Phu Quoc Island where he served as commander of Enclosure 5 & 7 until July 1971, when he was reassigned to the 4th MP Battalion in Can Tho until April 30, 1975. It took Phat only 6 years to go from Warrant officer to Captain. He was the youngest Captain in the ARVN MP Corps.

The Communist took control of the country after April 30, 1975. A month later Phat was arrested in Can Tho City and taken to a prison in the forest in North Vietnam, near the border of North Vietnam and China. He served 9 years, 3 months, 18 days as a prisoner of war in a "re-education camp" and was released in March 1985. He immediately escaped to Cambodia, then walked for a month to Thailand, where he was interviewed by American authorities. It was relatively easy for Phat to qualify for entry to the U.S. since he had been awarded the US Army Commendation medal.

Phat arrived in San Jose, CA on August 16, 1986. He immediately started looking for a job so that he could qualify as sponsor for his family whom he left behind in Vietnam. Within a couple of days Phat landed a job as delivery man for a furniture store. By July 1987 he had opened his own store and by 1992 owned three furniture stores in the area. On October 22, 1992, Phat was reunited with his Wife Nga, his Mother-in-Law and his five Daughters. All the girls were born in Vietnam. Between 1992 and 1999 the girls attended school and University, all of them graduating as Engineers.

In 2005 Phat sold all his furniture stores and retired. This was the year that Phat and I reunited after 35 years. The reunion was made possible by Col. Khin, the former Provost Marshal of the ARVN who was attending the 30th year anniversary reunion of the ending of the Vietnam War in Phoenix, AZ.

I met the Colonel, showed him photo of Phat and learned that Phat was living in San Jose, CA with his family. Contact information was passed on by Col. Khin to Phat. I was contacted and invited to participate in a reunion celebration with former ARVN Military Police Officers in 2005, in Houston, TX. After the celebration, Phat and his wife Nga visited my family in San Antonio, TX. This was an emotional and memorable reunion.

It is interesting to note that Phat never wavered. The Communists could not break him and he was determined to provide a better life for his family and himself. His perseverance, hard work ethics and dedication paid off. He lives the American dream. He is a dedicated husband, Father and Grandfather, a living example of what can be accomplished if you apply yourself. We maintain regular contact and have forged a friendship for life.

It is interesting to note that there are several similarities between Phat Van Nguyen and my own background. We both fought Communism, had to escape from our home country, immigrated to the U.S. and became successful in our own right.

Editors Note: Steve's escape from Hungary during the 1956 uprising is an inspiring story in itself. Here It is.

"The start of the Hungarian revolution was on October 23rd 1956. I was on my way home and noticed a group of people on "Stalin" Square cutting down his statue. I was shocked at first, but concerned about my safety, so I did not show any emotion or reaction."

"The following morning, I went to the streetcar station to go to work as usual but the streets were empty and no streetcars were running. As I walked along the street, I saw a truck coming in my direction. In the back were numerous armed young people who informed me of what is going on. I was surprised but eager to join the fight. I hated the regime, the Communist party and as an 18 old I wanted to be a part of a movement to free my country from the oppression under Communist rule. So, I joined the group and fought alongside other young men my age, college students and elders."

"The Russian occupation forces stationed in Hungary did not oppose us and relinquished their weapons. Members of the Hungarian military were sent home. They did not oppose the people and they did not help the people fight the Russian military. Most of the Russian forces who entered Hungary to suppress the revolution had no idea what country they were in or why. I had contact with a few who were captured and they did not know that they were in Hungary."

"It became clear that we could not Win and by November 3rd we decided to quit fighting. On the way home, I came across one of our neighbors from the apartment house where I and my Mother lived. I was warned not to go home because the secret police (AVO) had been looking for me."

"I asked this person to tell my Mother that I'm leaving and will be in touch. That same afternoon I boarded a train in Budapest and traveled in the direction of Austria. At one point near the Austrian border the train slowed, so I got off. I met a local elderly man who helped me to understand where the actual border was. I followed his advice and waited in a wooded area. I'm not sure how long I was waiting; it was late at night and I saw lights in the distance. I heard border guards and dogs in the area and decided that it is time for me to go. I did not want to be captured. I ran as fast as I could in the direction of the light source. I carefully approached the village and read the town sign. I was not sure initially if I made it since the border is not a straight line and I could have run back into Hungary at a different location. I eased up to the sign at the town and it was an Austrian town of Deutschkreuz. I was exhausted and collapsed on the side of the road. "I had made it". Shortly thereafter I was taken by Austrian border guards to a refugee camp."

"I had always spoken German, so I had no problem communicating with the authorities. After processing I was asked where I wanted to go, I selected Germany. A couple of days later I was in Germany where Catholic Nuns provided housing, a job and 50 Marks. I was a free man. Not having any relatives that I could locate, a few months later, in September 1957 I arrived in the U.S. I was a green card holder as a legal resident."

"Having absolutely no knowledge of the English language It was a challenge to survive. With the help of a lady (Emma Mavrides) I enlisted in the U.S. Army. What a great opportunity! I had a job, a place to live and money. The offer was that if I served honorably for 5 years, I would automatically become a U.S. citizen."

"I became a U.S. citizen in the federal court of Newark, New Jersey in 1963. I was stationed in Germany at the time and the Army sent me back to the US just for the purpose to receive my citizenship after which I returned to Germany."

“While serving in Germany I came in contact with individuals who agreed to smuggle my Mother out of Hungary for a specified amount. I agreed and later in 1963 I drove to to the main train station in Vienna, Austria where I picked up my Mother. It was a great reunion after 7 years of separation. My Mother lived in Germany for a short period and then Emigrated to the U.S. and lived in North Hollywood, CA until her passing in May 1972. I retired from active duty in the U.S. Army after nearly 22 years in February 1980, Our Son retired from the USAF after nearly 23 years of service. I had a successful career”

Counterparts’ Commitment to Support the Tri Ân Foundation in Louisville, KY

At the April 2017 Counterparts reunion, the President of the Vietnamese Community of Louisville, and one of the principal organizers of the *Tri Ân Foundation*, Mr. Yung Nguyen, was invited to introduce the design concept for a grand veteran’s monument in Louisville to be dedicated to Americans, Vietnamese and six other allied countries who fought together during the Vietnam War. The monument will also remember thousands of Americans who are still unaccounted for, and hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese who perished or suffered terrible consequences as prisoners in the communist labor camps after the war. Another purpose of the Tri Ân veteran’s monument is to create an accurate memory and history of the Vietnam War, a matter that resonates well with our membership.

Tri Ân, translated from Vietnamese means “**deep gratitude**,” and is a very befitting metaphor of the memorial’s purpose. The *Tri Ân Foundation* is presently raising funds to reach their ground-breaking goal for the monument. Interest in supporting this worthwhile endeavor was unanimously expressed by those members present at the Louisville reunion, and a membership committee was formed to develop a plan for canvassing the membership at-large for donations to this important project. By unanimous approval of a motion, interest was expressed at the business meeting for setting a fundraising goal of \$5,000 that would be set at a level affording Counterparts an opportunity to have a large permanent donor plaque prominently displayed at the monument.

This is a wonderful cause worthy of membership support. Contributions to Counterparts should be specifically designated to the *Tri Ân* veterans’ memorial. This funding drive will end December 2017. By example, the funding goal would be quickly reached if only 100 members donated \$50 each. Counterparts members will be invited to attend the unveiling of the new memorial in 2018. Send tax deductible donation to **Counterparts** addressed to **Lewis Grissaffi at 1213 Vega Street, San Diego, CA 92110**. When the goal is reached, Counterparts will send the cumulative total to the *Tri Ân* Foundation.

Thanks,

Lewis Grissaffi

Chair of Counterparts *Tri Ân* Memorial Committee

Committee Members: Dave Priddy, Steve Herberth, Grant McClure

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