



COUNTERPARTS

TƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

SITREP

Volume XXI

Issue 1

Summer 2022

2023 Reunion Set for Rapid City, South Dakota, May 3-6 2023.

At the 2022 COUNTERPARTS Business meeting in San Diego in April, Steve and Kim King volunteered to host the 2023 Reunion in Rapid City, South Dakota. Their proposal was approved unanimously by the members present.

Steve has gotten off to a quick start and much of the planning is already in place. The event will be based at the Rushmore Hotel and Suites, 445 Mt. Rushmore Rd, Rapid City SD. The Reunion will include a Bus trip to the South Dakota Air and Space Museum and Warbird Sanctuary on Thursday, May 4, and as a special highlight, another bus trip on May 5 to Mount Rushmore, one of the most famous and cherished of our nation's National Parks. A guided tour will be included in the Mt. Rushmore trip as well as a Lunch at the Chute Roosters Restaurant in Hill City, SD.

The Detailed Reunion Schedule follows:

Wednesday May 3

Registration, check in, Lincoln Room Hospitality Room, Drinks and Snacks

Thursday May 4

0930 - Bus trip, South Dakota Air and Space Museum and Warbird Sanctuary with guided tour. Return about 1430.

1715-1930 - Dinner *Pho Vietnam* Restaurant (Self Pay) Signup sheet in Hospitality Room.

Friday May 5

0930 - Bus travel to Mt. Rushmore for guided tour, followed by Lunch at Chute Roosters Restaurant. Return about 1430.

Saturday May 6

0900 - Business Meeting.

1700-2200 - Banquet at the Hotel, Washington Ballroom. (Cash bar). Guest Speaker to be announced.

Sunday May 7

Cash breakfast, farewells, at the hotel. Until next year!



COUNTERPARTS SITREP

The Official publication of COUNTERPARTS/Thương Hữu Đông Nam Á

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Commander's Corner

The 2022 San Diego Reunion was *just what the doctor ordered!* The camaraderie was terrific! It was tremendously uplifting to our spirits to gather together after such a long and grueling hiatus of two years dealing with the dreadful personal and societal impact of pandemic conditions that stands out among the most trying experiences of our lives. It was therefore quite heartening for me to see such a great turnout that reunited many familiar faces and most enjoyable welcoming a number of new participants. Lewis Grissaffi is the quintessential reunion wrangler and host: this was truly a masterfully well-planned event with positive feedback as well as some great recommendations from members present.

Everyone was excited by Steve King's location suggestion and willingness to host the 2023 reunion to be held in Rapid City, South Dakota with some phenomenal excursions to sites on the bucket list of many who've never had an opportunity to visit this rugged and interesting region. Most of the details for this reunion have already been planned by Steve and are available for review in this issue of SITREP.

I have received some valuable input from reunion attendees, and we'll be certain to incorporate these great suggestions into future events. Please be sure to reach out to me and share opportunities for improvement.

Best regards,

Grant McClure

Commander, COUNTERPARTS/THDNA

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

2022 Reunion in San Diego

(Report by COUNTERPARTS member Jim Fisher)

The COUNTERPARTS Reunion was held at the Handlery Hotel in San Diego, California, 27-30 April 2022. About 100 Members, spouses and guests attended.

Our bus tour on the 28th of April included a visit to the Cabrillo Monument and lighthouse. This location is also the site of the Fort Rosencranz National Cemetery. A number of those interred are Viet Nam veterans and this was a somber moment. The visit was followed by Lunch at the Bali Hai Restaurant on Shelter Island.

The 29th of April bus and boat provided a tour of San Diego harbor. During this trip we sailed by the U.S. Navy base, and we got a detailed description of every ship in port. We saw the USS Abraham Lincoln, (CVN-72) offshore during our visit. She is a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, fifth ship in the Nimitz class. We heard that Tom Cruise was in San Diego to work on his latest film, "Top Gun II", and many of our group wondered aloud if the Lincoln was involved in photo ops for the Hollywood production. The carrier had just returned from extended deployment overseas and the crew had not seen family and friends for some time.

The tour took us to the Mount Soledad Memorial where we placed a floral wreath to commemorate our lost brothers. The weather was perfect with sunshine and a soft, gentle, warm, breeze. We had a great view overlooking La Jolla and the Pacific Ocean. A brief but powerful ceremony included a solo from one of our Vietnamese COUNTERPARTS, Tom Vo, who sang the "Star Spangled Banner" a capella. As if on cue, a bald eagle soared overhead during the final lines.

Our annual Business meeting on Saturday, April 30, included a round of introductions during which each member had the opportunity to describe himself to our group. This was delicious, and we all reveled in the warmth of the occasion. If someone had shouted "Good morning, Viet Nam" there would have been a number of us enjoying major flash backs. Our group includes some really wonderful people.

There was also discussion of possible initiatives to expand our membership base to include other Viet Nam veterans' groups. We currently have 358 members, and our dues support many worthwhile charities. The reunion for next year is planned for Rapid City, South Dakota. This is a central location in the United States and should facilitate transportation for our members. Side trips will include visits to Mount Rushmore and many other exciting opportunities.

During our Reunion, it was noted that many of our veterans were unaware of the current benefits available through the Department of Veteran's Affairs. For example, any service in Viet Nam is prima facie evidence of exposure to Agent Orange, which is a known factor in prostate cancer, bladder cancer, and other ills. These qualify veterans for handicap ratings which include monthly cash benefits which can exceed \$3,000 tax free, plus PX and commissary privileges. Some states have offices which assist veterans in counseling and pursuit of their entitlements. Also, many American Legion and VFW organizations can assist. Please take advantage of your entitlements. You paid your dues! The Guest Speaker at our banquet, John Haseman briefed us on some of his experiences as an Advisor in the Mekong Delta. John's new Book *In the Mouth of the Dragon*, dealing with his eighteen months as an Advisor in Kien Hoa Province in the Delta, is due for release this Summer. (You can find more information about John's book on page 10)

In his presentation John described one particularly moving episode involved a young, Vietnamese boy with a cleft lip. John had noticed this child during his visits to a nearby village and the image had a profound effect on him. John contacted an American doctor in Saigon who agreed to treat the child. John went back to the village with his interpreter and spoke with the child's mother who was reluctant at first but finally agreed. The child was taken to Saigon, the surgery was successful, and the child returned home after a few weeks. Upon return, the child's blind grandmother came to him and gently touched his upper lip with her fingers. Feeling no trace of the child's previous deformity she began to cry. Then the mother began to cry, followed by the interpreter and John himself. These were tears of joy. Several days later, two soldiers appeared before John and advised him that they were his bodyguards. They stayed nearby for the rest of his duty assignment. John learned later that the boy's father was in fact a senior officer in the Viet Cong and that the two bodyguards were also Viet Cong with orders to protect John from any random attempts at assassination!

Louis Grissaffi was a key to making this reunion a success, but unfortunately, he contracted pneumonia and was unable to attend. Many thanks to Louis and best wishes for his speedy and complete recovery!

COUNTERPARTS/THDNA REUNION May 3-6, 2023

The Rushmore Hotel & Suites 445 Mt. Rushmore Road, Rapid City, SD 57701
605.348.8300

Hotel provides free airport shuttle & free parking

Standard rooms (2 dbl, Queen or King) \$69.00/night, Deluxe rooms upgrade \$79/\$89.00/night. Under "COUNTERPARTS Reunion"

In order to receive these deeply discounted room rates, reservations MUST be made NLT 4/7/2023

Hotel info: Located in Rapid City’s vibrant historic downtown district, just steps away from shopping, entertainment options, the city of Presidents walk, & events at the Main Street Square or Rushmore Plaza Civic Center. Explore art galleries & museums, fashionable boutiques & an array of eateries. You’ll find great entertainment, from music to live performances.

We’ve struck an elegant balance between Earth-friendly & Big City Chic with our sustainable efforts & newly renovated spaces. New eco-luxury bedding, free high-speed Wi-Fi, & a 40-inch flat-screen TV are included in every room. Free airport shuttle service is available to & from the Rapid City Regional Airport.

Guests enjoy our new fitness center or venture to nearby city parks, bicycle paths, golfing & hiking for outdoor activities. An electric car charging station & bicycle rentals are available on site. Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a 30-minute drive from the hotel.

New American cuisine is served for lunch and dinner each day at the onsite **Enigma** Restaurant or **Privé**. Soft lighting, cozy tables, and an atmosphere that is relaxing, fun and a new dining destination on Main Street at the Privé. Breakfast and room service are also available. The 445 Lounge features live music on the weekends as well as dinner.

The Hospitality Room will be staffed by a host couple as follows: Wednesday – 1200 to 2200, Thursday – 0900 to 2200, & Friday 0900 to 2200.

REGISTRATION FORM

Registration Fee: \$195.00: Includes access to Hospitality Room & refreshments, banquet dinner, bus trip to Mt. Rushmore & lunch.

Registration must be received NLT April 17, 2023

\$70: Spouse/Guest for banquet dinner only.

\$45: Optional bus tour on Wednesday

\$45 x ___ per = _____

\$195 x ___ per = _____

\$70: x ___ per = _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Member Name: _____

MACV Team # _____

Spouse Name: _____

Guest Name: _____

Email: _____

Please complete and send to Steve King, 1203 Cedar Creek Ct., Gillette, WY 82718. Make checks payable to COUNTERPARTS and mail to Steve King.

1203 Cedar Creek Ct.

Gillette, WY 82718

Business Meeting Minutes, Reunion 2022

1. Member introductions, name, home, team, AO, year(s), Cparts tenure.
2. Officer Reports
- 3.
- a. **CO—Grant McClure**
 - Recognition of Lewis Grissaffi as reunion coordinator
 - Chronology of events since 2019 Houston Reunion
 - Member Charlie Shaw establishes a presence for COUNTERPARTS on a social media platform
 - At the behest of the Association, Grant (as CO) signs on a letter to President Trump related to a human rights position related to persecution of Montagnards and Hmong Christians in Vietnam.
 - At the behest of the Association, Grant (as CO) signs on a letter to Secretary of State Pompeo to sanction Vietnamese officials with visa restrictions under International Freedom of Religion Act (IRFA) for any SRV officials guilty of committing egregious violations of religious freedom.
 - Grant and Mike Bengé formally support and participate in a BPSOS (Boat People SOS) initiative to develop teams of rapporteurs in Vietnam that advocate for building human rights and justice for Montagnards. In kind donations were made to support group access to material assistance mainly for communication technology such as cell phones.
 - Grant and Mike Bengé engage in meeting with human rights officers in Thailand to further discuss developments and support of strategies and organization that can align advisors such as COUNTERPARTS with a “Civil Society Development” project in Vietnam.
 - Since 2019, COUNTERPARTS suffered the sad passing of COUNTERPARTS Life Member JC Fisher and Bui Quang Lam.
 - Attempt to coordinate 2020 reunion in San Diego
 - Attempt to coordinate 2021 reunion at Columbus, Georgia [Ft. Benning].
 - Question about member participation in:
 - MACV Highland Warriors Reunions (Teams 22, 23 & 24)
 - MACV Delta Advisors Reunions
- b. **XO—Hank Choy: Report**
 - Good morning fellow COUNTERPARTS, I am so sorry that I am not able to attend this year’s reunion due to caring for a family members health needs and recent passing. I was looking forward to attending and renewing friendships after a 3-year absence. But family will always come first. Since becoming your XO six years ago I have made an effort to support you by upgrading items for our Village Market.
 - The first idea was to take our current coin and give it a face lift. Just like all military issue items there will always be an upgrade/version and the coin was the first. When I presented the upgraded coin, it was well received. By no means I am not trying to ignore the efforts of my predecessors but thank them for their design work in creating our first COUNTERPARTS coin.
 - The second item was a collaborated effort by our Commander Grant and myself. Grant had a large *Co Van My* rocker that he had, and I had the size reduced. On my own I had the smaller rocker and MACV patch sew on a black hat. I presented the hats for sale and monies were given to our organization’s treasury. After the reunion Grant and I had an email discussion on creating the same hat that would be embroidered rather than patches sewn on. I found a vendor and had version one created based on our design needs. We wanted a black hat with the *Co Van My* rocker on the top with the MACV patch below. This was done but the vendor also created the same design on a tan hat. I happen to visit Las Vegas and met with the vendor. I asked to have the rocker as wide as possible. When this was done, I sent pictures to Grant for final approval. I also sent out a feeler to selected senior members and received several favorable replies. With Grant’s approval I gave the vendor the green light to make 50 black and 50 tan hats. The hats were finally completed several weeks ago and were shipped to our Quartermaster who will be filling the hat orders after the reunion.
 - Grant has the two original versions and final hat which he will show you shortly. All three hats will be kept as part of our historical archived display.

I am working on a third item but need to address the cost and wants to our members. I am thinking of a vest like the Lions Club member's wear. It would be again subject to approval by our members before going into production. What we would have on the vest depends on our membership, Ray is my inspiration for this idea. I was thinking of a Large Vietnam Rocker on the back with the MACV patch below. On the front left side would be our COUNTERPARTS patch and on the right side would be our name and team(s) number. I would gladly take any suggestion via email to me, Grant of any other of our leadership team.

In closing I hope that you all have had a great time after a three-year absence and have renewed many friendships. Thanks to our reunion committee for putting things together and making it all happen. I wish next year's site committee all the best and hope we can support their efforts in making next year's reunion a successful one.

Aloha and Mahalo from Paradise and see you in 2023.

Other Reports

- c. Adjutant—Jim O'Malley: Treasury Report
- d. Membership—John Haseman
- e. PIO—Rich Webster (unable to attend reunion).
- f. Locator—Joe West (unable to attend reunion).
- g. SITREP Editor—Ken Jacobsen
- h. Village Market/Quartermaster—Mike McMunn
 - Introduction of new hat = **consent agenda item with reference to XO report above.**
- i. Historian/Archivist—Carol Lund (nothing to report).
- j. Website Administrator—Jim Alkek
 - Significant effort undertaken in recent months to upgrade, update and enhance the association website.
 - Will endeavor to add one element discussed at the reunion to offer a clear click-on link that would steer interest in former Co Vans: "Were you an Advisor." The link takes the inquirer to a single page with contact information for membership accompanied by an example of a variety of advisor emblems.
- k. Facebook Administrator—Charlie Shaw (unable to attend reunion).
- l. Royal Lao Veterans of America (SGU's)—Tom Briggs (unable to attend reunion).
4. Annual Support & Sponsorship Initiatives
 - a. Cambodia Corp (CCI) —Max Lund
 - b. Vietnam Healing Foundation (VHF) —Rich Webster
 - This is the latest update that I received from RJ Del Veccio who runs the VHF foundation.
 - *The virus lockdown in Viet Nam has again pushed many of our people into dire straits, they can't earn any money, they can't go out to buy food. The government passes out little red plastic bags of rice in closed neighborhoods, and young people run out and grab up more than their share and old, slow people wind up with very little if any. Then if they have any money or something valuable they have to trade at night to get rice or other food. It's a really terrible situation. We did a special fund raising, I offered a one-to-one match for donations with \$1000 of my own, and we finally got \$8400 together to send over, which is a huge project in itself involving finding Vietnamese with relatives here who we can trust. We give the dollars to the relatives living here, the ones in Viet Nam then give that amount in dong to our network of people there. Who then have to find ways to get permits to drive motorbikes around to deliver medicines, or some such ruse, and then get the envelopes of cash to the people stuck in the isolation neighborhoods. After paying something to the distributing guys (who take a risk, if the cops find out what they're doing, they get into a lot of trouble), the money winds up giving about \$50 each to the 160 guys we're supporting. Not a lot of money at all, but over there it will get them enough basic foodstuff to keep them from starving for at least a few weeks—Del*
- c. **Vets With a Mission—Lou Rothenstein** This organization will be running its last medical mission to the SRV in October 2022. It is suggested that contributions by COUNTERPARTS may be applied to one of the other entities that the association has been supporting.
 - **Consent agenda item—with exception to Vets with a Mission, approval was reached to move forward with amount for each entity at the prior rate from 2021 and to designate an additional amount to CCI of \$500.**

- d. Other: August 2021 Pledge Request for **MACV tribute plaque** in “*Path of Remembrance*” for display in the National Museum of the United States Army in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. It was noted that contributions for this plaque quickly exceeded expectations.
- a. Grant reflected on the status of three leadership positions listed in the Association by-laws; the CO, XO and Adjutant offices, which are three-year terms He invited members present who may be interested in volunteering to serve. (This would entail a vote at the reunion). Grant indicated he would certainly stay on having served as CO for 8-years unless another member was interested.
5. Planning for next reunion:
 - Location suggestions and host: Member Steve King volunteered to host 2023 reunion in South Dakota.
 - **Consent agenda item presented and unanimously approved to hold 2023 reunion in Rapid City, South Dakota with more details to follow.**
6. Open forum for discussion—suggestions on activities: Attending his first reunion, member Len Ganz requested a show of hands to check on the number of members who served in the Mekong Delta.
7. Adjournment—**consent agenda item presented by Max Lund and seconded by Lou Rothenstein.**

Submitted...

Grant M Clure, Commander

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.

Two books by COUNTERPARTS member Bob Worthington. Book Review by John Haseman

Under Fire with ARVN Infantry: Memoir of a Combat Advisor in Vietnam, 1966–1967

COUNTERPARTS member Bob Worthington has written a terrific account of his experiences as an advisor to ARVN commands in I Corps during his first tour of duty in Vietnam, 1966-1967, to MACV Advisory Team 1. 7 follows then-captain Worthington from an earlier enlistment in the Marine Corps including deployment to Lebanon, his move to the U.S. Army, pre-war assignments and pre-deployment preparation for his Vietnam assignment (including Vietnamese language training), through his year-long deployment to Advisory Team 1, Da Nang.

Upon arrival in-country and eager for assignment to an ARVN tactical unit, he was disappointed to instead be assigned as the deputy senior advisor to the Da Nang Garrison, responsible for security and pacification in and around the city of Da Nang. He found the lack of combat operations dispiriting. Promised by the team's senior advisor of a follow-on tactical assignment after six months in Da Nang, Bob turned his "lemon" of an assignment into lemonade, by making maximum use of his Vietnamese language skills to improve communication with his Vietnamese COUNTERPARTS and even teaching English classes to soldiers and civilians.

True to his senior advisor's promise, Bob moved on as senior advisor to the 3rd Battalion, 51st Regiment, an independent regiment headquartered at Hoi An and responsible for security and pacification in Quang Nam Province.

Bob describes in detail many aspects of an advisor's life -- the type of weapons used, organization of U.S. and ARVN units, the equipment he takes on his back during field operations.

But his best work is his descriptions of personal and professional relationships with "his" battalion command and the officers and men of the battalion.

The largest part of the book follows the 3rd Battalion, /51st Infantry Regiment on its field operations, outpost security, a re-training stint at the Lam Son ARVN training center, to its ultimate test in combat.

The most electric segments of the book cover the Battle of Nong Son, a week-long high-intensity battle with a hard-core NVA regiment that was specifically trained to capture and destroy the only operating coal mine in South Vietnam. The several chapters devoted to this battle contain riveting and detailed accounts of the leadership, tactics, initial defeat, and final victory of his battalion in the battle, which he relates as one of the largest and earliest successful major ARVN victories over NVA units.

This book is a terrific account of one man's advisory duty -- from disappointment and "boring" inactivity to the ultimate deadly pace of heavy combat.

Fighting Viet Cong in the Rung Sat: Memoir of a Combat Advisor in Vietnam, 1968-1969,

Fellow COUNTERPARTS member Bob Worthington's second book about his advisory assignments in Vietnam is a great read. Bob gives us a Four-For! He begins where he left off after his first Vietnam assignment ("*Under Fire with ARVN Infantry: Memoir of a Combat Advisor in Vietnam, 1966-1967*") and takes us through a disappointing year at Fort Benning; then his first assignment in August 1968 as a district senior advisor in Trang Bang District, Hau Nghia Province. He was a busy man, with a respected district chief. But he also suffered the problems of having the U.S. 25th Infantry Division operating in the district. The advantages of having heavy U.S. combat operations to assist his mission were more than offset by the numerous continuing problems of indiscipline by the division's soldiers in their relationships with the Vietnamese people of Trang Bang.

His next assignment: in December he is "promoted" to a new assignment in Gia Dinh Province, only to be told that he had been fired from Hau Nghia Province at the insistence of the 25th Infantry Division. He becomes "advisor" to the province's RF/PF units.

After only two months in Saigon, he moves on to his best job: district senior advisor in Quang Xuyen District, deep in the swamps of the Rung Sat. He dealt with an unusual command and control situation -- responsible to the Gia Dinh Province Senior Advisor, but all of his operations were directed by the U.S. Naval officer who was senior advisor to the entire Rung Sat Special Zone. The relationship was excellent, and the six months he spent as DSA in Quang Xuyen were the best of his assignment.

Bob writes in an easy style that is enjoyable, and I found myself spending more time in my reading sessions than I expected. He has a gift for providing extremely detailed descriptions of his circumstances, his equipment, his combat operations that are easy to follow and aptly tell the reader what he was doing, and why.

Bob's book tells us about ground combat near the Cambodian border, the not-so-good relations with the U.S. units he fights with, the comparative luxury of advisory duty in Saigon, and the immensely satisfying but rugged conditions of life and operations in the Rung Sat. It is a good and very well-told read.

R

The details:

Author: Bob Worthington

Titles *Under Fire with ARVN Infantry: Memoir of a Combat Advisor in Vietnam, 1966-1967*

Fighting Viet Cong in the Rung Sat: Memoir of a Combat Advisor in Vietnam, 1968-1969,

Publisher: McFarland & Company, Inc. (Both Books)

Available on Amazon.com in paperback and Kindle formats

A Cruise to Remember

COUNTERPARTS Member Steve Leighton sails with USS Abraham Lincoln

Steve Leighton was among the chosen few Americans to spend 24 hours on board the USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN-72) when it was in port in San Diego in August 2021. Today the ship is sailing somewhere at sea. "It's a nuclear aircraft carrier," said Steve. "We slept on board with 5,000 sailors, ate what they ate, and watched F-35's take off right in front of our eyes; they went from zero to 170 miles per hour in three seconds. The noise is horrendous when the aircraft is launched. We saw every part of the ship except the nuclear engine room.

There were twelve of us in the group. On the ship we were called DV's; "Distinguished Visitors". And how did Steve get selected for the U.S. Navy's Distinguished Visitor program and trip of a lifetime?

"A friend and I applied to the program and we had no idea if we would ever be selected," said Steve. "A year or so had gone by and we weren't sure if anything would ever come of it. Then the program was suspended by the pandemic for almost two more years. Quite honestly, we were pretty sure we didn't stand a chance of being selected." Why did Steve apply to live for an intensive 24 hours on a U.S. aircraft carrier? "I wanted the experience," he stated matter of factly. What is the purpose of the program? Replied Steve, "They want people who will go back home and tell their story, especially to young people who often know little about the seagoing Navy. I am an occasional guest speaker at the Wayzata and Minnetonka high schools which my grandchildren attend or have attended. I tell students about my experience serving the U.S. Army in Vietnam."

Now he can also tell them about the USS *Abraham Lincoln*. "Donna and I and our friends Jeff and Jamie Hoffman flew to San Diego from Minneapolis at our own expense. The cost of the trip was paid by us, including the cost of meals on board the ship, approximately \$75. The ship was approximately 130 miles off the coast of California," he said. "Upon arrival at the Naval Air Station we were greeted and given a briefing on the trip, along with being issued flight gear for our flight out to the ship. We boarded an MV-22 Osprey for our flight to the ship. It was awesome flying in the Osprey as it has a vertical take-off, like a helicopter then transitions into a fixed wing aircraft. There were only 12 of us Distinguished Visitors, and I heard there were over 800 people on a waiting list to do this."



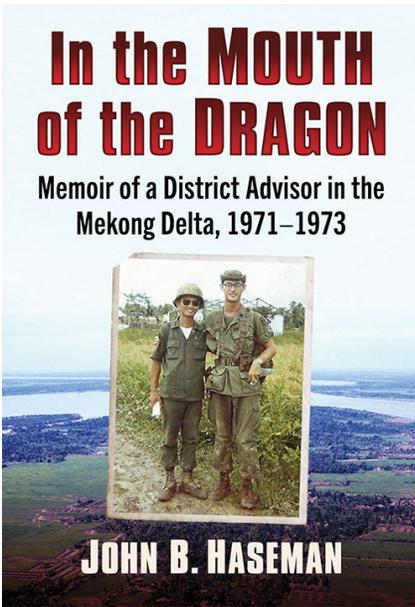
Steve Leighton In Captain's chair, aboard *Abraham Lincoln*

Once we landed on the deck of the carrier, we were non-stop touring every aspect of the ship. We spent time on the flight deck watching F-18's, E-2C Hawkeye's and F-35's takeoff and land. It was awesome to see them up close and personal! The takeoff's go from 0 to 170 in 3 seconds when they launch. We visited the "helicopter briefing room" and met the pilots. We were given night vision goggles and got to experience what it was like wearing them in a dark room. We had lunch with the Captain, dinner with the XO and Senior Officers, breakfast with the Master Chief Petty Officer's and lunch with the Sailors. Everything on the ship is geared towards flight operations. The pilots and sailors train constantly for approximately 6 months before deploying for 9-10 months. There are approximately 100 aircraft onboard at any given time. The Osprey is replacing the old C-2 cargo aircraft (*Lincoln* had replaced to C-2 already), so we did not

have a tailhook landing as we were on an Osprey. Sailors onboard the ship work 12 hours on and 12 hours off while they are underway. There are no elevators on the ship, so we climbed many stairs as we visited the "perch, one level below the bridge" and the bridge. We enjoyed talking to many of the sailors and Marines as we toured the ship. It was great to see so many young military people enjoying their work, working hard and doing such an important job. This was truly a trip of a lifetime that we enjoyed very much.

Unlike many in his generation, Steve also volunteered for Vietnam. "I wanted to be where the action was," he said. I was assigned as a radio operator. They needed a radio operator on the Ranger team in Vietnam. There were two of us but I was single and so I volunteered. I thought it was the right thing to do." "I was with 400 Vietnamese Rangers, the elite fighters of the Vietnamese Military," "I was 19 years old and had never been out of the country before. Steve became very close friends with his Ranger COUNTERPARTS. In 2007, Steve & his wife Donna returned to Vietnam trying to find his Counterpart. As recounted past issues of SITREP he found them alive and living in the USA. It was a great reunion after 40 years!

New Book by COUNTERPARTS Member John Haseman



In the Mouth of the Dragon

Memoir of a District Advisor in the Mekong Delta, 1971-1973

John B. Haseman

\$29.95 softcover (6 x 9) ISBN 978-1-4766-8890-9 2022
Ca. 50 photos, appendices, glossary, index Ebook 978-1-4766-4680-0

On his second tour in Vietnam, Captain John Haseman served 18 months as a combat advisor in the Mekong Delta's Kien Hoa Province. His detailed memoir gives one of the few accounts of a district-level advisor's experiences at the "point of the spear." Often the only American soldier going into combat with his South Vietnamese counterparts, Haseman highlights the importance of trust and confidence between advisors and their units and the courage of the men he fought with during the 1972 North Vietnamese summer offensive. Among the last advisors to leave the field, Haseman describes the challenges of supporting his counterparts with fewer and fewer resources, and the emotional conclusion of an advisory mission near the end of the Vietnam War.

Colonel (retired) **John B. Haseman** spent 18 years of his 30-year army career in Asia, an interest sparked by his 18-month assignment as a district advisor in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. Those months in combat, working with the lowest level of South Vietnamese military forces, formed the base of his interest in Southeast Asia and determined the course of his later career advancement in assignments in Thailand, Indonesia, and Burma. He is the author or co-author of four books and more than 250 published journal articles about political-military developments in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand. He lives in Grand Junction, Colorado.

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A Band Called PTSD—Music That Heals

(COUNTERPARTS Member Michael Ellsworth, who attended the 2022 San Diego Reunion, provided this story on a unique veteran's group he joined.)

WEST HAVEN, CT, —Some bands make good music and some have a mission. A band called PTSD does both: they perform music that rocks while, at the same time, heals. They released their first ever studio-recorded album in the summer of 2021. The album is available on the Horizon Music Group Label and can be purchased on the band's website (www.ptsd-band.com), and at various retailers.

The group, originally the *VA Homefront Band*, has been popular in the world of Veteran's Affairs for years. As part of The Creative Arts Therapies Program, which began at the West Haven VA in 1986, the group, under both its original and new name, has won a total of 12 gold, silver and bronze medals. At the prestigious National Creative Arts Competition, they garnered a first place, for their performance of "Let Them In". After headlining the Veteran's Concert on the West Haven Green in 2019, where they experienced extending beyond themselves as individuals, they saw the positive effect they could have on the community at large. As a result, the band produced a CD of original songs, which in addition to expanding their songwriting and instrumental skills, will give their music a wider reach.

The band originated as part of the PTSD Music Therapy group at the West Haven, Connecticut VA Hospital in 1997. Over time the current roster of members fell into place, with Roberta, "Bobbi" Blake becoming their music therapist. PTSD Band is made up of five members: Lead singer Vanderbilt Thompson, Tom Blake, guitar and bass, Michael Ellsworth, guitar, Tim Johnson, bass and keyboards, and Mike Montecalvo, drums. All five members participate in the writing of the songs they play. All the members share a common bond by having lived through Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from their time in the military and by joining Bobbi Blake's program of healing through music.

Each of the members brings his unique personality to the group, each tempered by their individual times lived under stress. Tim Johnson, a Navy veteran, was part of the rescue efforts during a bombing in Beirut that killed 241 Marines and Sailors. For years, Michael Ellsworth lived with a helicopter ride he missed because the person who was supposed to wake him fell asleep. That flight was shot down and lost in the jungle for 26 years.

Ellsworth joined the music program after the passing of his wife of twenty years. "At my first meeting with Bobbi Blake in 2014, she handed me a guitar and said, 'why don't you play something,' so I played "Something" by George Harrison, and it changed me. I felt better and have been with the program and the band ever since."

Each member has his own story of joining the band. Tom Blake (no relation to Bobbi) is the longest charter member of the group, having started the music therapy program in 1997. Tom, who plays guitar and bass and is one of the band's songwriters, says, "the band has been a positive shared learning experience for everyone." He adds, "including Bobbi."

The unsung hero of the PTSD band is the group's guiding light, Music Therapist Bobbi Blake, who has been with the VA in West Haven since 1991. Bobbi received a Bachelor of Music from the University of Massachusetts. She became a Board-Certified Music Therapist in 1989 encompassing her knowledge of The Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music as well as Neurologic Music Therapy.

The Music Therapy group also recreates the military culture, having a team of veterans working together towards a mission to create music. Bobbi says, "The pride, bonding, sense of belonging, and group identification is similar to the military. Lead singer Van Thompson adds, "we started just as vets just playing music and grew into a family that looks out for each other through the good and the bad times."



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BULLETIN BOARD

Cambodia Corps Spring Update 2022

It was great to see everyone once again at the Reunion, thank you Lewis and Jim. We're already looking forward to Rapid City.

On behalf of Rich, Lewis, Carol and myself we are very grateful for the support of COUNTERPARTS not only as an organization but of many individual members as well. CCI continues to be an effective program for our former friends and allies, the Montagnard people. The past two years slowed us down a little in that our students had their school years extended due to shutdowns and remote learning, but we are now back to a somewhat normal schedule.

Since member Tommy Daniels began CCI in 2003 we have steadily educated and graduated poor but capable Montagnard youth from high school and college programs who have then returned to their communities and true to their pledge began working to benefit their people.

Much of the success and effectiveness of our graduates is due to our selection process. Our in-country manager, Maren, who has been with us for fifteen years, does a thorough job of vetting every candidate who applies for our scholarships, including visiting their home and interviewing the parents as well. Consequently, we now have graduates who are in provincial government, district offices, commune committees, health departments and teaching. Others have made Western NGO's much more effective with their knowledge of local language and culture. To borrow a Special Forces phrase, we have been producing "Force Multipliers". Those force multipliers have enabled we old advisors to 'give back' to those who were so loyal to us so long ago. Again, we thank you as an organization and as individuals for your generous support, but most of all your students thank you for enabling them to help their people.

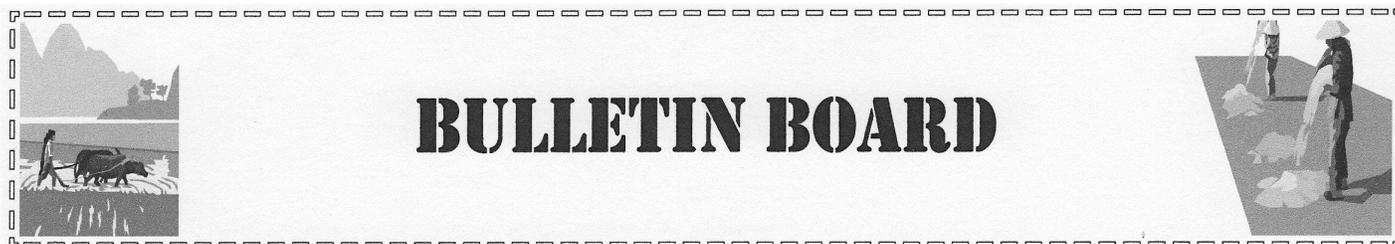
As member Mike Bengé wrote so well of the Montagnard people: "Without their sacrifice, there would be many more names on that somber black granite wall in Washington DC; The Vietnam Memorial.

From COUNTERPARTS Member Terry Turner

(Guys, it suddenly occurred to me that some of you might be interested in this interview I did at for the Atlanta History Museum back in 2019. It's primarily about experiences on a MAT team but touches on some general differences between the MACV advisor experience and the usual USARV experience. They put the interview on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaTgZa05NQ4>. I apologize for its length, but she kept asking questions!)

Terry Turner's interview for the Veterans History Project at Atlanta History Center:

In this interview, Dr. Terry Turner shares his experiences as a United States Army infantry officer leading a MACV District Mobile Advisory Team during the Vietnam War. Turner wrote the 1985 best-seller "Once A Warrior King: Memories of an Officer in Vietnam" under the pseudonym David Donovan.



Items of Interest from Bill Laurie

-- A very good, very honest and well-researched 58-minute documentary on effort to stop Hanoi's war. Drives home point that U.S. failed abysmally by not blocking the Ho Chi Minh trail, preventing hundreds of thousands of NVA regulars from bringing their damn war to Republic of Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia. Ample factual information by author, a US Army veteran, who has "been there, done that". This should be shown in schools across the and. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvypPNFd5Xg>

Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage Newsletter Summer 2022

Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage (VSO) is an organization that COUNTERPARTS, and individual members have contributed to over the years. COUNTERPARTS member Mike Little, and his wife Marion have been a part of Vinh Son since its very beginning.

They have provided their Summer 2022 newsletter on line. It can be found at the Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage, (FVSO) web site at

<https://www.friendsofvso.org>

Don't Forget 2022 COUNTERPARTS Dues!

COUNTERPARTS annual dues were payable as of 1 January 2022. Dues are now \$35.00 for annual membership, or \$350.00 for Lifetime Membership. Your dues pay for the programs that COUNTERPARTS supports to organizations helping our friends in Southeast Asia. Please note: Lifetime Members do not pay annual dues but are always welcome to make a personal contribution. If you want to check your dues status, contact John Haseman by email: jhaseman@earthlink.net. ***Please make checks out to "COUNTERPARTS" and mail to Membership Officer John Haseman, 555 West Saddle Drive, Grand Junction CO 81507.***

New Members

James G. Fisher" Jim is another member of the Phu Bon Province Advisory Team 31 contingent! He served as an intelligence team advisor in Cheo Reo from August 1968 to August 1969. Jim lives in Vienna, Virginia. Jim attended the San Diego reunion and joined then.

Patrick H. Fitzgerald served on Advisory Team 53 and 55, Rach Gia Province, 1969-70 as a MAT Team leader working with RF/PF units. Patrick lives in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

MEMORIES OF THE 2022 REUNION IN SAN DIEGO

Photos Courtesy of COUNTERPARTS Historian Carol Lund



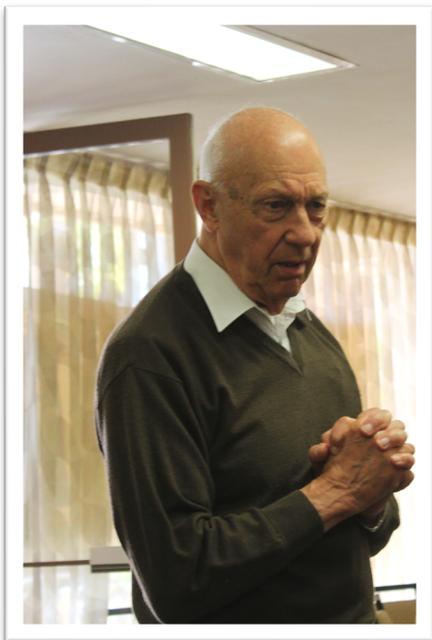
A somber reminder



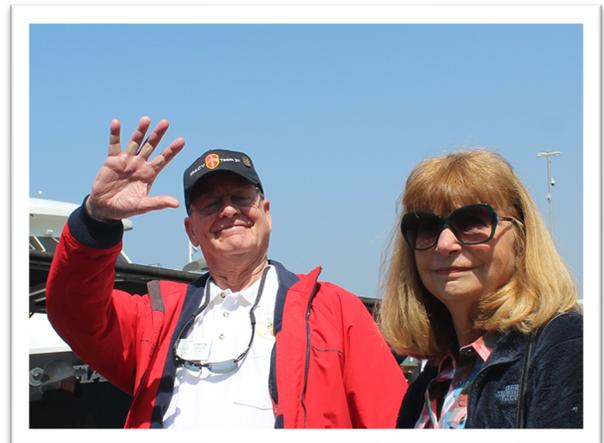
Destroyers at the Naval Base



Old Comrades enjoy the View



Alex Brassert came all the way from France!



Team 31 Strikes Again!

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