



COUNTERPARTS

TƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

SITREP

Volume XXII

Issue 2

Summer 2024

Columbus/Ft. Moore Reunion Renews old Ties and Brings a New Commander.

The 2024 COUNTERPARTS Reunion was held at Columbus, Georgia and Ft Moore (formerly Ft Benning), from April 23 thru April 27. The 81 members and guests who attended enjoyed a power-packed event put together by Reunion Coordinator Len Ganz. Highlights included a selection of tours, individual presentations by advisors who shared their Vietnam experiences, and was capped by the election of our new Commander, Steve King.

Thursday morning, two buses took us from the hotel to the Infantry Museum at Ft Moore (rated the #1 free museum in the US) and then on to the Army mess hall to eat army chow. After Lunch we were given a special briefing from SFAB (Special Forces Assistant Brigade) on post. We returned to the hotel for a short break, we assembled again and headed across the street from the hotel, protected by our own intrepid road guards, to “Big Mama’s” Vietnamese Restaurant for a dinner of traditional Vietnamese food.

Friday morning and Saturday afternoon were devoted to a series of Presentations by members and invited guests. These member Presentations have become a feature of the annual Reunion, and have grown in popularity each year.

Summary of Presentations

John Haseman examined the importance of establishing advisor relationships and discussed his new book, *In The Mouth of The Dragon*.

Gordan Bare talked about his experience as a Military Intelligence service officer in Sa Dec Province and his book, *Sa Dec Province*.

Ham McDonald showed a new Vietnam documentary film produced by the Atlanta Vietnam Business Vets Association, created to combat the bias in the Ken Burns’ *Vietnam* PBS series.

Louis Constantini, former Airborne Ranger, read a moving account of his combat experiences as a lieutenant with an ARVN ranger unit.

Chet Moore Talked about his advisor experiences in Sa Dec Province

Jim Resau of Teams 65 and 94, presented his experiences as an advisor in Sa Dec province and told of a John Paul Vann visit to his site.

Jim Alkek COUNTERPARTS Website Coordinator, explained passwords and how to edit and put names on pictures catalogued on the COUNTERPARTS web site. He was assisted by Patrick Gilles.

Rich Webster gave a power point on Cambodia Corps, which COUNTERPARTS supports. He explained how COUNTERPARTS connected with CCI in 2007, supporting underprivileged Montagnard youth in the Eastern provinces of Cambodia.

Dr. Carie Nguyen presented her PhD research on the Mobile Advisory Teams and thanked the individual MAT team members that she interviewed for the project.. She showed a short video of her commencement speech, “From War to Peace” given at Texas Tech University. She talked about her mother who survived the 1968 TET offensive and her father who died in a reeducation camp.

...Continued on page three



COUNTERPARTS SITREP

The Official publication of COUNTERPARTS/Thương Hữu Đồng Nam Á

Commander

Steve King
cheoreo1@hotmail.com

Executive Officer

Hank Choy
choyh002@hawaii.rr.com

Adjutant/Treasurer

Jim O'Malley
P.O. Box 1331 Brawley CA 92227
omalley@usa.net

Quartermaster//Logistics Officer/Village Market

Mike McMunn
2310 Newberry St Williamsport PA
17701-4243
covan2@verizon.net

Membership

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

Public Affairs/Information Officer

Rich Webster
covanmi@mchsi.com

Historian

Carol Lund
lundc@chartermi.net

Web Site Administrator

James F. Alkek
jimalkek@yahoo.com

Facebook Group Administrator

Charlie Shaw
charlie.shaw@west-point.org

Montagnard Liaison Officer

Mike Little
littlecrazy3@cox.net

SITREP Editors

Ken Jacobsen
kjacobsen@knology.net

Bill Laurie
bill.laurie@yahoo.com

REUNION Coordinator

Dave Priddy
dave.priddy@yahoo.com

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

Commander's Corner

Assuming the role of Counterparts Commander is very humbling to me. Grant McClure has left us a tremendous legacy of committed leadership and dedication to the organization. It is my hope and intention to follow in his footsteps. Just a note: my style of leadership is pretty "hands on".

Len Ganz is to be commended for hosting a great reunion this year at Ft. Moore (formerly Ft. Benning). He coordinated a host of activities, including meetings with the Security Force Assistance Brigade and the Military Advisors Training Academy, as well as a great dinner at Big Mama's Vietnamese Restaurant. Great job Len! Once again, the members' presentations were well done and well received.

The **2025 Reunion** is now scheduled for **April 29 – May 2, 2025** at the Ayres Hotel in Costa Mesa/Newport Beach, CA. Planning is now underway for our 2025 Reunion. Our Reunion hosts are Dave Priddy and Tom Vo, with assistance from Len Ganz.

This reunion, we will be gathering with many South Vietnamese military veterans to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the fall of South Vietnam. If you have never attended a Counterparts reunion or you haven't attended one recently -- this will be THE ONE to attend.

As planning continues and the schedule develops, we will publish the schedule and provide a link for discounted hotel reservations. It is strongly suggested that you fly into John Wayne Airport in Orange County, CA. The hotel is just 15 minutes away by the hotel shuttle bus.

Obviously, at this stage in the life of our organization, we are in a time of transition. Our focus going forward is to foster a sense of community and mutual support among our members, provide a platform for engagement, support the historical preservation of our unique legacy, and cultivate lifelong connections among our members.

I invite each one of you to join me in becoming a community that strengthens our mutual bonds, celebrates our shared experiences, and supports each other along the rest of life's journey.

If you have a personal need or a suggestion, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at cheoreo1@hotmail.com or 307.682.0123.

.... Steve King,
Commander, COUNTERPARTS

Note: This issue will be the first "paperless" edition of SITREP. It will be emailed to members as a PDF file.

.... The Editors

2024 Reunion (Continued from Page one)

On Friday afternoon, there was a special Seminar for COUNTERPARTS at the MATA (Military Advisory Training Academy) on FT Moore which combined presentations from active duty MATA personnel and our own COUNTERPARTS members: John Haseman author of *In The Mouth Of The Dragon*, Terry Turner, author of several books on the Advisory experience, including *Once A Warrior King*; and John Resau, a MAT team advisor in Sa Dec Province. A lively discussion was held as many COUNTERPARTS members in the audience shared their advisory experiences. The MAT course is now 46 weeks long. Graduates remain in the Advisory command for three years. A MAT team now has 12 members. At the conclusion of the event, Certificates of Appreciation were given to Terry Turner and COUNTERPARTS for their participation in the seminar.

For those not attending the presentations, trips were planned to Warm Springs, GA with a tour of the FDR home and to the downtown Columbus River walk.

The Annual business meeting covered a number of areas (see *Business Meeting* page four). Most prominent was the resignation of Commander Grant McClure, after an unprecedented ten year term of Office and an unparalleled record of Service to COUNTERPARTS, Montagnard interests, and the Vietnamese Community. In many ways, Grant has been the heart and soul of our organization from its founding to the present.

COUNTERPARTS were fortunate to have a new leader to step into Grant's shoes. Steve King, who was elected by acclamation at the Business Meeting has been a hardworking and valuable member for years, and in 2023 hosted our Reunion in Rapid City SD with great success. Steve will begin his term helping Dave Priddy to plan the 2025 Reunion in California. More about that Reunion to come in the next few months.

The 2024 Reunion formally concluded with the traditional Banquet. New COUNTERPARTS Commander Steve King introduced LTC Douglas Locke, a 2005 Citadel graduate as the banquet speaker. Tom Vo sang a moving edition of the National Anthem and A Roll Call of the Fallen by Len Ganz. Member Tommy Daniels name was read as well as others. Included also was a Missing Man Table..

In his remarks, Colonel Locke pointed out that advisory missions now deploy to all nations. He also noted that Vietnam Advisors were an inspiration to the advisory community and had paved the way for the present program. He served in Iraq in 2007 and two tours in Afghanistan.

Reunion Coordinator Len Ganz was presented with an appreciation award for organizing the 2024 reunion.

Hank Choy added a new feature to our Reunions with personalized Appreciation and Recognition plaques produced by member Ken Delfino. This year's awards recognized many years of service by John Haseman (Membership Chairman), Jim O'Malley Adjutant/Treasurer), Jim Alkek (Website Administrator), Dr. Grant McClure (Commander), and Rich Webster (Public Affairs).

Chet Moore awarded Colonel Locke a Vietnam era framed original lithograph by artist Colonel George Findley. The well known illustration affectionately depicts the complex duties of a MACV advisor in the field. Terry Turner recognized our two Vietnamese COUNTERPARTS present, Tom Vo and Henry Newin.

Henry Newin and his guitar provided music with his usual fine talent and flair.

If you missed this reunion, you missed one of the best ever, jam packed with non-stop activities.

... Rich Webster PAO

Annual Business Meeting, Saturday May 25, 2024

COUNTERPARTS' Annual Business meeting was held at the Doubletree Columbus hotel at 9:00 AM on Saturday, April 25th. Commander Grant McClure called the meeting to order for his last time as CO and submitted his resignation from the office for health reasons. He gave a brief overview of his ten years as Commander and reviewed the organizations' continuing work in many areas; refugee help to the Vietnamese Boat People, Human Rights advocacy with HR 596, and the Montagnard Living Memorial at Arlington Cemetery

SITREP

Ken Jacobsen, Co-Editor of SITREP (with Bill Laurie) encouraged members to write up their Vietnam experiences and send them for publication. He has produced the SITREP in this form with Bill Laurie and Bui Lam since Volume 1 in 1998. By best estimate, that's over 50 issues, approximately 2 a year. All issues are available on the COUNTERPARTS website and are catalogued at Texas Tech university. Discussion was held on whether to go paperless because it costs over \$800 per issue to send out paper copies. Attendees informally agreed that Future SITREPS will be on line only.

MEMBERSHIP

John Haseman reported that there are 247 active members with 5 new members attending the Reunion. There are 395 inactive members and 183 known deceased for a total of 825 on the roster. Non-dues paying members are kept on the active role for a year. Members are encouraged to send John their password (10 characters) to access the membership data on the website.

CHARITABLE GIVING

Rich Webster gave an update on behalf of Max Lund, Director of Cambodia CORPS, which funds/supports a small international NGO in Cambodia that provides educational assistance to the Montagnard youth of Monduliri and Ratanakiri Province. Since 2007 CCI has funded 65 Montagnard students with college educations. Rich showed pictures of the following CCI students: 22 college students at the Phnom Penh house, 18 high school students in Ban Lung, and 22 high school students in the new Keo Seima house. A new house also will be supported in Stung Treng with 8 female nursing students. Members voted to continue funding CCI with \$4500 dollars.

Members also voted to fund The Vietnam Healing Foundation for \$2500. COUNTERPARTS has now provided \$20,000 over the last 8 years to send to Vietnam for the ailing and forgotten ARVN soldiers who have been marginalized by the communist government. See WWW.THEVHF.ORG for more info.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer Jim O'Malley reports that COUNTERPARTS now has a legal bank account in California. After paying for the Reunion expenses we should have around \$14,000 in our account. Each year we get about \$2500 in dues income, usually a life membership or two. Most of the time we make money on the Reunion but that is not certain The village Market needs to be replenished. Last time it was restocked was in 2017 and it cost \$2400.

QUARTERMASTER

Mike McMunn was absent and there was no village store at the reunion.

HISTORIAN

Carol Lund was absent for medical reasons.

NEW BUSINESS.

- Dr. Ron Milam encouraged members to contact Texas Tech for their oral history interviews related to their Vietnam Experiences. WWW.VIETNAM.TTU.EDU.

- Steve King is working on a Reunion guide to assist future Reunion planners .

- Jim Alkek , Website Coordinator, gave a presentation on the new project of adding Reunion photos to the data base and explained how to add names to it. (Click on the Vietnam ribbon bar) - Bill Boland, the Louisville reunion coordinator, showed a video of the new TRIAN monument in Louisville that honors the South Vietnamese and American soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War. COUNTERPARTS donated \$6000 to the building effort and our name is etched into the monument.

COUNTERPART REUNION 2025. Next year's Reunion will be in California hosted by Dave Priddy and Tom Vo, dates to be determined in April by Reunion planners.

STEVE KING volunteered to be the new Commander of COUNTERPATs. He was elected by unanimous vot



[Book your Reservation](#)

Group Name: Counterparts Reunion, Group #15507

Blocked Dates: April 29 - May 3, 2025

To book your reservation online, please click on the link below:

<https://costamesagroups.ayreshotels.com/?coupon=15507>

Deluxe Room Rate: \$159 (single/double occupancy)

Cut Off Date: 04/08/25

(Please make your reservation before the above cut off date; after this date, rate and availability cannot be guaranteed) (24-hour cancellation policy)

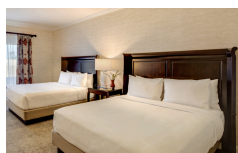
COMPLIMENTARY AMENITIES:

- Parking & Wi-Fi
- Shuttle to/from John Wayne
- Cookies in the lobby each evening
- Shuttle within a 3 mile radius

(Based on Availability)

THINGS TO DO

- Minutes to the Sand in Newport Beach
- Balboa Island
- Newport Dunes
- South Coast Plaza
- Fashion Island
- Restaurants within walking distance
- Trendy shopping & dining at The LAB and The CAMP

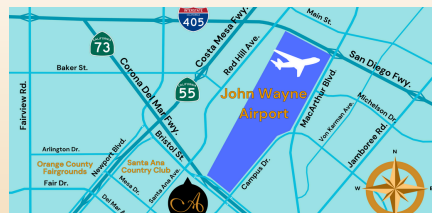


HOTEL INFORMATION

284 deluxe guest rooms and suites, Flat-screen televisions, Irons and ironing boards, hair dryers, Refrigerators and coffee makers, MP3-compatible clock radios, EV Chargers, New Fitness studio, 2 heated pools and spas

OUR OWN LE CHATEAU GARDEN BISTRO ON PROPERTY

Serving Breakfast, Lunch, GREAT Happy Hour, Dinner, Weekend Brunch
(Reasonable Pricing!!!)



*Comfort is our Business,
Hospitality is our Specialty*

325 Bristol Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
TEL 714.549.0300
TOLL FREE 800.322.9992
www.ayrescostamesa.com

2025 COUNTERPARTS REUNION

Start making your plans. Mark your calendars!

***DATES: 29 April 2025 (Tuesday arrival)
- Good byes and departure: 3 May 2025***

We have selected the hotel for next year's reunion and it should be under contract by mid-June 2024.

Our Hotel will be the Ayres Hotel, Costa Mesa/Newport Beach, California. The hotel rate is \$159/night + tax, free complementary shuttle service from John Wayne International Airport (code SNA) as well as to destinations within 3 miles of the hotel. The hotel has a full service restaurant daily from 0630 to 2200 hours and room service.

Event scheduling is underway and we hope to make it a fun and memorable event. I contacted the City of Westminster Council and offered our participation in the program of remembrance of Black April; the 50 Anniversary will be held on Wednesday, 30 April 2025. More details will follow as the City Council develops the program.

Accordingly, we strongly encourage everyone to arrive/check in by 29 April 2025 and our busses will depart for Sid Goldstein Freedom Park and the ceremony around 0845 hours, 30 April.

Other event activities in and around the local area being explored and we anticipate to announce all the reunion details soon.

XO Report

Aloha from Paradise. As I reflect back to our latest reunion in Columbus, GA. I would like to give a big Mahalo (Hawaiian for thank you) to our reunion coordinator Len Ganz for putting the reunion together for us. We really appreciate his time that he traveled from LA to Columbus on several occasions to make all the needed connections with Hotel and the Active Components.

The mini presentations by our remembers were again very informative of their time in country. During one presentation I had to compose myself when I was listening to the audio communication of the Huey pilot on what was going on the ground. I sensed, when I looked around the audience, it brought back some memories of us on the PRC 77. But as always, we all had different experiences that will forever be in our hearts and minds. It seems that each year when we do these presentations it moves up to a higher level. Hamilton Mc Donald who is not a counterparts member did one heck of a presentation. I will get a copy of it and get it out to our members at a later date.

The business meeting went well and Steve King did Volunteer to be our next commander. We did receive a preliminary report by Dave Priddy and Tom Vo on the tentative site for our upcoming 2025 reunion in LA. Check out our Counterparts Home page for reunion updates.

The banquet as always was a success and all did enjoy themselves. But being the XO that I am, I like to pull out a few surprises to our members from time to time. Ken Jacobsen emailed me about do some kind of plaque presentation for our retiring Commander Grant McClure but I also thought of what about the other officers in our Command Section who have for years tirelessly supported Counterparts. I then connected with one of our members Ken D. and worked out a plan to have other recognition plaques made. Well, it k went off as a surprise to our Command section members who were at the reunion banquet. The biggest surprised was when I called up John Haseman. He yelled out "I have been talking to you the past few months and you never mentioned anything about this." We all had a good laugh.

In closing I would again like to thank Len Ganz in coordinating our 2024 reunion and congratulate Steve King on taking on the role as our new Commander. Also, my thanks to Patrick Gilles for being our reunion photographer, thank you Patrick. I hope that someone will make a pitch to host our 2026 Reunion or even beyond.

...Hank Choy
XO

Cambodia Corps Update, Spring 2024

I can hardly believe it myself, but this is the twenty-fifth year of our mission “to help the Montagnards help themselves through education.” The remarkable fact is that every one of the kids we have awarded a scholarship to, and has graduated from a college level program, has returned to their province and is using their education to help their people. It is a 100% success rate! We know of no other organization, veteran or civilian, that has accomplished a similar mission. Thank you, COUNTERPARTS as an organization, and thank you individual members for your support and belief in ‘giving back’ to our loyal allies.

To paraphrase member Mike Benge, “Montagnards fought alongside US forces in many battles of the war, rescued downed aircrews, and in the process sacrificed one-half their male military age population. Without their sacrifice there would be many more names on that black granite wall in Washington DC. COUNTERPARTS as an organization and many individual members have stepped up and fulfilled this mission. Thank you, each and every one of you.

Tommy Daniels started our program in 1999 as a shelter for homeless Montagnard children. It soon morphed into an education program. In 2003 we had our first high school graduate; in 2007 our first college graduate. Our graduates have steadily worked their way into levels of District and Province government, improved the effectiveness of NGOs and served their people in health care as medical doctors, nurses and midwives. Many of our graduates are mentoring others in education from pre-school to adult literacy. Others are veterinary or agricultural technicians advising communes and villages.

In short, the kids you have supported have become what we had hoped for, “Force Multipliers” using their training to influence and motivate many others in their community. They have become leaders who are working to preserve their culture and protect their ancestral lands. They are ensuring an equal part in the government and an equal voice in their future.

Our Montagnard students say thank you for your support. That includes the 67 college graduates, the 17 current college students in our Phnom Penh student center, the 18 high school students in Ban Lung, the 20 high school students in Keo Seima, and the 3 nursing students at Stung Treng. Max, Carol, Lewis, and Rich also convey their thanks.

... Max Lund, President, Cambodia Corps

Celebration of Life for Counterparts Distinguished Member
Colonel Roger Donlon
By John Haseman



Members of the Fort Leavenworth community joined with family, friends, and dignitaries at a Celebration of Life to honor the passing of Colonel (retired) Roger H.C. Donlon, Congressional Medal of Honor, Counterparts member, and dear friend, on the morning of 10 April 2024. Over a thousand students, faculty, and staff from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) and other tenant commands lined both sides of Grant Avenue and rendered honors as the funeral motorcade entered the post. The motorcade proceeded to the Frontier Conference Center for Celebration of Life ceremonies preceding Colonel Donlon's interment in the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery.



Fort Leavenworth personnel lined roads and presented honors to the funeral cortege.
(Photo credit Leavenworth Times)

More than 300 invited guests attended the Celebration of Life Ceremony, and 18 persons spoke during the ceremony, including a former team A-726 member at Nam Dong, fellow Congressional Medal of Honor awardees, and family friends.

Members of Counterparts Mike Delaney and John Haseman, both teammates with Roger on Advisory Team 88 (Kien Hoa Province) in 1972, attended the ceremonies. Counterparts members remember fondly that Roger Donlon was guest speaker at our Branson reunion. He and then Commander, the late Pappy Hicks, were OCS classmates and longtime friends.



*Caisson draws slowly to the burial site.
(Photo credit John B. Haseman)*

Following the Celebration of Life Ceremony, an army band from Fort Riley, Kansas; a bag piper; and a horse-drawn caisson and traditional riderless horse (sent from Fort Cavazos, Texas) led the funeral procession to the nearby Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery burial site.

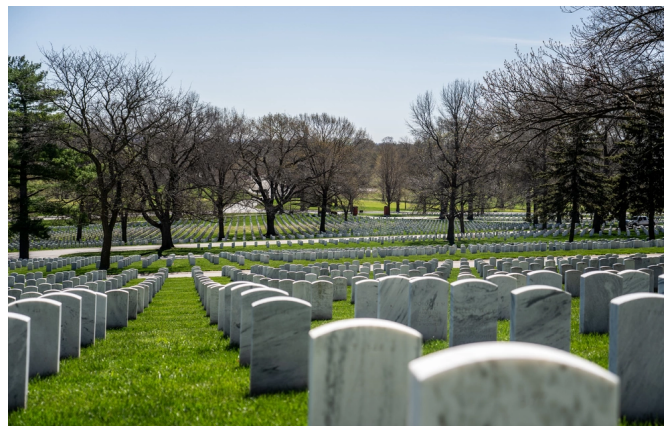
Soldiers assigned to 7th Special Forces Team A-726 – the team led by Donlon at Nam Dong – served as pall bearers.



*Pall bearers move Colonel Donlon's casket from caisson to gravesite.
(Photo credit John B. Haseman)*

After grave-side rites, a 21-gun rifle salute, and a haunting Taps echo, Roger's widow Norma received the folded flag that had covered the coffin.

Our friend now rests in quiet peace on a hillside looking out at his fellow soldiers



(Reprinted By Request)
The Members In Memoriam Webpage

Jim Alkek, Webmaster

Here are a few comments and statistics related to the Members-in Memoriam webpage:

The Members-in-Memoriam (MIM) webpage has been changed to include all Advisor KIA's as listed by <https://virtualwall.org>. A link to each individual's Vietnam Memorial Wall listing which includes any photos, honors, Remembrances, and Military Profile has also been added.

The MIM webpage is now searchable by one or more variables such as name, unit, date, etc. In addition the webpage is also sortable by some of the same variables to make finding and compiling information quicker.

The MIM webpage contains 292 MIM records of US military personnel who died after the war and unfortunately we only have limited information or no information. A lot of these fellows were Counterparts members at one time. Please take a look and see if you recognize any of the names and let me know if you can provide any additional information.

In addition there are 276 MIM records of non-US personnel, mostly Vietnamese, who Counterparts members requested be included. We have extremely limited information on the MIM Honorees so any help to add any information would be gratefully appreciated.

Finally, I have added some totals so you can get an idea of the Advisory personnel lost by various countries, units and teams. I had to limit the number of Advisory Teams and SF Detachments, but assure you that I review all the data and can give you the total for your unit if it not included herein. I will soon attach a live summary to the MIM webpage that will update all units each time you enter a MIM search.

Please let me know what you like and don't like about any of the webpages so I can make improvements as needed. Thanks, jimalkek@yahoo.com.

- There are 3,010 MIM records in the database. This includes KIA and Post War Deaths (mostly Counterparts members). Currently listed there are 2,671 US, 38 AUS, 1 NZL, 287 RVN, Thai, Laotian, or Cambodian Counterparts, and 13 Unidentified by Country MIM records.

- The total US MIM by Branch of Service is currently 2,072 USA, 45 USAF, 477 USMC, 62 USN, and 15 Government Agency Employees or Civilians.

- The total US MIM by Advisory Group is currently:

MAAGV - 96 (Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia)

MACV Advisors - 999

Special Forces - 701 (1st, 5th & 10th Groups)

USAF - 19 (AFAT & Misc)

USMC CAP - 440 (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th CAG)

US NAG - 39

MACV Advisory Teams with casualties in excess of 20 are currently:

Team 70 - 51

Team 88 - 32

Team 75 - 30

Team 1 - 28

Team 87 - 24

Team 3 - 23

Team 21 - 22

Team 60 - 22

Team 99 - 21

The Special Forces Team casualties as listed currently are :

MACV-SOG - 259

Detachments - 410

The Special forces Detachments with casualties currently listed in excess of 9 are:

Det B-52 - 29

Det B-20 - 23

Det B-36 - 14

Det A-411 - 13

Det B-36 - 13

Det A-101 - 11

Det A-302 - 10

Welcome to our New COUNTERPARTS Members

The following members have joined since the last SITREP.

Richard P. "Rick" Cassidy. Rick served on Advisory Team 41 as the last Deputy District Senior Advisor and District Senior Advisor in Dak To District, Kontum Province, from January through July 1972, during the 1972 NVA Easter Offensive. In addition to Vietnam, Rick also served in the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Thailand as a Foreign Area Officer. He retired as a Colonel in July 1995. He was referred to Counterparts by long time friend John Haseman.

Robert R. Gonzales. Robert served on Advisory Team 5 at Phu Bai, March 1972 - February 1973.

Benjamin Hamilton "Ham" McDonald. Ham joined at our Columbus reunion. He served on Advisory Team 1 in Danang from February 1967 to February 1968 as a battalion senior advisor and later as G-3 Air Senior Advisor.

Charles J. McGillicuddy. Charles joined at our Columbus reunion. He served as a corpsman and operating room technician, initially at the 3rd Surgical Hospital at Dong Tam and the 36th Evacuation Hospital at Vung Tau, From , and then from June 1968 to July 1969 as a medical advisor on the 336th MilPHAP (Military Provincial Health Assistance Program) Team in Moc Hoa, Kien Tuong Province.

Robert Landin. Robert joined at our Columbus reunion. He served on Advisory Team 87 as battalion senior advisor, 4/48th Battalion, 10th ARVN Division (later renumbered as 18th ARVN Division) from November 1965 to December 1966.

Robert R. Sarratt. Robert served three tours in the Republic of Vietnam. His first tour was as a logistics advisor on Advisory Team 31, Phu Bon Province (and adding strength to Counterparts' largest Team cohort) from January 1968 to January 1969. His second assignment was as a logistics advisor on the Republic of Vietnam Quartermaster Advisory Team, January-December 1972. His third assignment was as a logistics advisor in the U.S. Defense Attaché Office, Saigon.

Russell Wood. Russell served on Navy Construction Battalion (Seabee) Team 1019 in Rach Gia and My Tho. He was referred to Counterparts by our Deputy Commander/XO Hank Choy

*..... John Haseman
Membership Chairman*

COUNTERPARTS Experiences

29th Civil Affairs Company, XXIV Corps, Danang

By

Don Slesnik, LTC, USA, (Ret)

The 29th CA Company was the last civil affairs unit left in the field as the United States military's participation in the Vietnam conflict headed toward its embarrassing end. The Company was headquartered at Camp Horn in Danang, the home of the XXIV Corps which had war fighting responsibility from the DMZ on the northern border of Quang Tri province to the southern border of Quang Ngai. An area known as "MR 1".

The 29th was composed of various government teams in order to accomplish the civil affairs traditional mission of advising Vietnamese government officials in areas such as public safety, agriculture, public works, public health, education and public safety. In turn, the teams were assigned to work alongside and in coordination with the local USAID/CORDS components that contained civilian advisory personnel with special expertise in those areas of government operations. The combination of the military unit (manpower and equipment) and civilian agency (subject matter expertise) created an effective advisory effort. The novel approach of assigning the Army CA personnel to perform their responsibilities under the guidance and supervision of the USAID/CORDS directorates kept the 29th activated longer than any other CA unit assigned to the Vietnam theater of operations. The 29th was not "stood down" until December 1971.

I was a young Captain having served a two-year tour of duty with the 5th Artillery Group caring for nuclear warheads which, if authorized by the U.S. President, would be deployed by NATO nations' delivery systems (howitzers or missiles). That was followed by three months of CA training at Fort Gordon, Georgia, in preparation for heading to Asia.

Arriving in Danang, I was assigned to be the leader of the 29th's Public Safety Team. I reported both to the Company Commander and to the Foreign Service Reserve Officer in charge of the USAID/CORDS Public Safety Directorate for Military Region 1.

During my tour, I was involved in supervising Special Forces advisors that were working with the "Field Police" engaging the Viet Cong throughout the region; teams that were training city police officers in areas such as traffic control, drug interdiction, and criminal investigations; establishing a regional police academy; educating correctional facility directors on best practices; and interacting with the local civilian judges on matters of "rule of law" and "principles of jurisprudence".

Additional duties included coordination with the Corps Provost Marshall's office to encourage smooth operational transitions between U.S. Military Police and the Vietnamese National Police Force in their interactions with enemy combatants, and civilian disturbances, and natural disasters (typhoons). Our Public Safety responsibilities also included the cataloging of terrorist activities, information which was part of the weekly Corps Commanding General's staff briefing.

Hopefully, this short essay helps to provide a better understanding of the Civil Affairs "advisory" mission in Nam.

...Don Slesnik

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR
SERVICE AS ADVISOR TO VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES
First in a Series
By Colonel John B. Haseman, U.S. Army - Retired

Then-Captain ROGER H.C. DONLON



Counterparts Distinguished Member Roger Donlon was the first person to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War. He served twice as an advisor -- in 1964 when he commanded Special Forces Team A-726 at Nam Dong, and 1971-72 as District Senior Advisor, Binh Dai District, Kien Hoa Province, MR IV, Advisory Team 88, where we served together and became life-long friends.

After retiring from active duty as a Colonel in 1988 he continued to serve in support of many NGOs, schools at all levels, and military units of all types. Whenever any ROTC unit, active duty unit, or service club asked him to speak, he went, and spoke not of himself, but of the importance of patriotism, leadership, national service, and the honor of military service.

He was particularly proud of the trips of reconciliation he made back to Vietnam years after the war. In 1993 he returned to Nam Dong to pay honor to those killed on both sides, and left money at the local village to pay for keeping the grass trimmed around the gravestones of his soldiers killed during the battle. He made a second trip to Nam Dong in October 1995 and I was honored that he invited me and two friends from People to People International to accompany him. We worked with many local villagers wielding machetes and scythes to cut the grass around his former soldiers' gravestones. We learned that our senior Vietnamese escort officer had commanded the VC/NVA forces that attacked Nam Dong, and our lunch companions were all former Viet Cong soldiers. After a lot of tears and a few beers, we all decided we had all been soldiers doing our best, just working on different sides. It was one of the most memorable days in my life.



Mr. Thu, on left, believed to be retired NLF/VC Major General and Political Commissar for the northern half of the Republic of Vietnam, and commander of the joint VC/NVA force that attacked Nam Dong. They stand at the center of the former Nam Dong Outpost.

Photo by John Haseman



Roger Donlon (2nd from left) and John Haseman (3rd from right) with former VC soldiers at lunch, Nam Dong Village, 22 October 1995

Photo from John Haseman collection

Roger made a third trip back to Nam Dong in December 2011 to attend the dedication and official opening of the Nam Dong Library that he helped to fund with assistance from the Special Forces Association and Children's Libraries International. Counterparts and fellow Advisory Team 88 members Dennis Deeny and myself were honored that Roger invited us to join the visit. The new library came complete with computers and a selection of books.

Roger wrote two books about his life: *Outpost of Freedom* (with Warren Rogers), January 1965; and *Beyond Nam Dong*, January 1969.

After a long life that truly epitomized Service to Country, Roger Donlon passed away on 25 January 2024, five days short of his 90th birthday. He was buried on 10 April 2024 at Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery after a profoundly moving Celebration of Life ceremony.

Some Photos from Roger Donlon's Life



Roger Donlon cuts the ribbon to open the Nam Dong Library, 6 Dec 2011.



Nam Dong Library
(photo by John Haseman)



Advisory Team 88 Teammates Roger Donlon, John Haseman,
Dennis Deeny, Hue, Vietnam, 7 Dec, 2011.
(photo from John Haseman Collection)

Date of Action: July 6, 1964

Citation for Award of the Congressional Medal of Honor

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while defending a U.S. military installation against a fierce attack by hostile forces. Capt. Donlon was serving as the commanding officer of the U.S. Army Special Forces Detachment A-726 at Camp Nam Dong when a reinforced Viet Cong battalion suddenly launched a full-scale, predawn attack on the camp. During the violent battle that ensued, lasting five hours and resulting in heavy casualties on both sides, Capt. Donlon directed the defense operations in the midst of an enemy barrage of mortar shells, falling grenades, and extremely heavy gunfire. Upon the initial onslaught, he swiftly marshaled his forces and ordered the removal of the needed ammunition from a blazing building. He then dashed through a hail of small arms and exploding hand grenades to abort a breach of the main gate. En route to this position he detected an enemy demolition team of three in the proximity of the main gate and quickly annihilated them. Although exposed to the intense grenade attack, he then succeeded in reaching a 60-mm mortar position despite sustaining a severe stomach wound as he was within five yards of the gun pit. When he discovered that most of the men in this gun pit were also wounded, he completely disregarded his own injury, directed their withdrawal to a location 30 meters away, and again risked his life by remaining behind and covering the movement with the utmost effectiveness. Noticing that his team sergeant was unable to evacuate the gun pit he crawled toward him and, while dragging the fallen soldier out of the gun pit, an enemy mortar exploded and inflicted a wound in Capt. Donlon's left shoulder. Although suffering from multiple wounds, he carried the abandoned 60-mm mortar weapon to a new location 30 meters away where he found three wounded defenders. After administering first aid and encouragement to these men, he left the weapon with them, headed toward another position, and retrieved a 57-mm recoilless rifle. Then with great courage and coolness under fire, he returned to the abandoned gun pit, evacuated ammunition for the two weapons, and while crawling and dragging the urgently needed ammunition, received a third wound in his leg by an enemy hand grenade. Despite his critical physical condition, he again crawled 175 meters to an 81-mm mortar position and directed firing operations which protected the seriously threatened east sector of the camp. He then moved to an eastern 60-mm mortar position and upon determining that the vicious enemy assault had weakened, crawled back to the gun pit with the 60-mm mortar, set it up for defensive operations, and turned it over to two defenders with minor wounds. Without hesitation, he left this sheltered position, and moved from position to position around the beleaguered perimeter while hurling hand grenades at the enemy and inspiring his men to superhuman effort. As he bravely continued to move around the perimeter, a mortar shell exploded, wounding him in the face and body. As the long awaited daylight brought defeat to the enemy forces and their retreat back to the jungle leaving behind 54 of their dead, many weapons, and grenades, Capt. Donlon immediately reorganized his defenses and administered first aid to the wounded. His dynamic leadership, fortitude, and valiant efforts inspired not only the American personnel but the friendly Vietnamese defenders as well and resulted in the successful defense of the camp. Capt. Donlon's extraordinary heroism, at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty, are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country."

My recollections of Viet Nam, Team 31 Phu Tuc, MAT Team II-9

By
Jim O'Malley

(This is an excerpt from Jim O'Malley's account of his service with Team 31 in Cheo Reo. We will be publishing more episodes in future issues))

I am going to write more or less randomly since I don't have any of the dates. I will start at the beginning.

I was in OCS 50th Co, class 2-69 at Ft Benning. I was assigned to the Ranger Dept. after OCS. I am probably the most non-Ranger type you can imagine, not real athletic not real gung ho, so I met this assignment with some trepidation. Turned out it was the best assignment I could have hoped for. The Rangers for the most part were hang loose and if you do your job you are OK. Plus I spent all my time working on ambushing, patrolling, and various other outdoor Army type activities. With this experience I figured the Army would assign me to the accounting dept. on Okinawa, but surprise! they sent me to a MAT team where my training might actually apply.

I arrived in country expecting to have to fight my way through a battalion of VC to get off the plane; like everyone else all I saw was a crowded, stinking city full of motor bike smoke. After a few days in Saigon it was off to Advisor School at Di An. Can't remember much about the school except there was a helicopter base there and every night I would go drink beer and play poker with the pilots.

Next came Nha Trang, then off to Cheo Reo. I got off the plane and the only guy around was some civilian who started telling me what to do. Luckily, for once, I paused before I told him to go piss up a rope because it turned out that he was the Senior US advisor in Cheo Reo. I almost got off on the wrong foot but for once I kept quiet.

Next stop was Plekiu to check into finance where I ran into some Capt. who had been at Khe San and kind of hit it off with him so I figured he would be a good one to team up with. That night we ate at the mess hall, but instead of bunking in the usual quarters we found a room with a few bunks and set up shop. In the middle of the night there was a huge explosion. Naturally I figured this was it the big battle coming. The Capt. woke up looked around and said it was just a rocket and since it didn't hit us go back to sleep. I guess the guys in the regular visitor compound were up all night on guard while we got to sleep. In the morning we went to breakfast and Lo and behold no mess hall the rocket had scored direct hit, no one hurt but we had to go find our own chow.

Back to Cheo Reo through a storm in a Huey with open doors, rain going through horizontally, bouncing around like a basketball. Finally the gunners pulled in their M-60s and closed the doors, probably the only time I ever rode with the doors closed.

In Che Reo, every time a new guy showed up and after he came back from finance one of the CIA guys would organize a poker game to fleece the new guy. I think his real purpose was to fleece everyone since he was a good poker player and always won. What he didn't know about me was while I not Amarillo Slim, I am not a bad poker player and had been playing a lot just before and even after I went in the Army. I won quite a bit and when I left I told him, I don't remember even what he looked like, next time you have a game let me know maybe I could get here to play. He told me don't worry I would never be invited again. Guess he didn't like me playing in his pool.

Next it was on to Phu Tuc. I wasn't there 30 minutes when the Major indicated we were going down the road to view some dead VC. Evidently there had been an attack on one of the compounds

between Phu Tuc and Le Bac, don't remember the name of the camp, and we were going to check it out. Once again I figured there was a VC behind every bush only this time I could be right. I remember the undergrowth was right up to the road, could have hidden a company of VC in it. Later on in my tour my fear of ambush came 50' from reality but more on that later. We saw the dead VC, stood around and patted the platoon leader on the back and returned to camp.

I was introduced to my team, a Capt., for the life of me whose name I can't remember, SFC (E-7) Young the bac si, SFC Scott and PSG McNally. The Sgts immediately set on me and started telling tales of how lousy the Capt. was, something I had an inkling of just by my introductory talk with him. He was about to rotate out and we were going to get a new 1LT that was senior to me so everybody already knew I would be the asst. team leader. The Sgt wanted to indoctrinate me about the Capt. so I could tell the new team leader, whoever he might be not to listen to him.

When the new team leader arrived it was William T Polston, known as Tom who had been one of my roommates in Columbus Ga. and also assigned to the Ranger dept. on a different team than mine, but we still saw each other pretty much all day every day and had become friends. This made the deal a lot easier and since I had pretty much come to agree with the Sgts assessment of the Capt. I told Tom that when the Capt. gave him his talk nod your head ignore everything he said and when he rotates out we will get it all figured out. Which he did and we did we agreed to split the work down the middle and take advantage of any time we could get somewhere else i.e: R and R trips, or in country R and R we would take to Nha Trang every few months. Great little hotel run by some Frenchman right on the South China Sea, great food, a bar and if you wanted it in room maid service, so to speak,

Around the middle of April 1970 I had noticed that none of our ambushes were getting any contacts. The ambushes always went out the gate about dusk and headed the direction of the ambush. I couldn't seem to talk them into circling around and going a different direction and since I was sure the villagers were telling the VC which way the ambush was I devised another plan. I figured I better send someone I could trust so I got ahold of Ksor Se of 740 Co and asked him to send out a larger than usual ambush and after about an hour send 1/2 of them back and make sure they told the villagers they had changed their minds I had an ambush planed with one of the PF platoons so I didn't go, besides the villagers would realize the Americans didn't come back. We set up our ambush which proved to be another dry run but in the middle of the night I heard Phu Tuc calling in an action report, 17VC KIA only one slightly wounded friendly. I knew immediately that my plan had worked and Ksor Se had done the job. He had hit a NVA Co. claymored the point man and generally laid waste to the front of the column then got the hell out. He brought back a number of weapons so we knew it was true. Capt. Gabriel told me later that at Cheo Reo they got the report and not knowing it was Ksor Se they thought maybe the report was backwards and we had suffered the KIAs, but luckily no.

The next day we had all sorts of VIPs that wanted to pat everyone on the back. To show you how out of touch some of these HQ types were he wanted to know if we could take a jeep out to view the bodies. We told him, probably not a good idea, since first the bodies were probably gone and second if they weren't even if you could have gotten there in a Jeep there were some real mad NVA out there and you wouldn't come back. Gabriel took me on a recon of the area but as we suspected everything was gone.

I again don't remember the dates but we started getting a lot of Intel from Calui, the compound the farthest down the 7B toward Tue Hoa. One day the VC planted mines on the

road, I had to go to Calui for some reason and quizzed the Yards real hard about finding the mines. They said the villagers said the VC had planted 7 mines and they had found them all. I asked them if they had looked for more and they said once they found the 7th one they quit looking because that was all there was. I was skeptical to say the least but the mission was go to Calui so I went. We made it down OK, I don't even remember why we went, on the way back Sgt. Scott was driving and wandering all over the road, I told him to follow our tracks just in case. He seemed to think I was being overly cautious but he did it.

Just as we got back to Phu Tuc we passed a Vietnamese 2 1/2 ton going towards Calui. Soon we heard an explosion. They had hit a mine. It didn't kill any of them right off, we medevacked some that didn't look too good but I never found out how it came out. I looked at their tracks and they had been following ours and their truck was wider than our M151, We just missed it.

The road to Calui or Calui itself was almost my undoing several times. We were going down the road on another occasion, once again me and Sgt. Scott when we came on the road security. Obviously they had not cleared the road ahead of them. This happened occasionally and usually we went ahead with no problem. Sgt. Scott drove through the road security, we were only about 50' beyond them when I told him to stop. He wanted to go on but I told him things were too tense right now. Just as I said it bullets started bouncing off the slight rise in front of us, the road security coming the other way had hit an ambush. The security on our side formed in front of us and began returning fire. I called for artillery and when the rounds started coming I saw the VC disappear over the hill into the brush. Since the artillery was going and we had a jeep we beat a retreat. The road security followed the VC for a little ways but I think they were afraid of another ambush so they came back to the road. Another close call on the road to Calui.

Not long after this incident we once again went to Calui. There wasn't much Intel about any problems when we went. I think we went out on an ambush but I'm not sure. The next day I was in one of the bunkers alone and all of a sudden the bunker was full of Yards, which as you know raised the olfactory quotient quite a bit. Not real big on daily baths they were. Turns out the VC must have been camped on the hill overlooking the camp and had either taken a shot at a passing helicopter or the camp, I never did quite get the whole story in the confusion. The Yards had a 4.2 mortar and several 81mm mortars. They worked the hill over pretty good so I guess the VC left. I always wondered if they were on a sniper mission to try and get an American. Probably not since I don't think they had a clear view through the jungle but I guess luckily I'll never know.

We got a call from Phu Tuc after that saying that there was a lot of Intel that something was going to happen while we were in Calui so that night we were on extra alert. Nothing happened but as the sun came up and the mist lifted we saw something lying on the ground about 100M from the wire. Turned out it was a local official that the VC had drug out of the village and beat to death with a club and then left him there, I guess as a warning to us. The club they used on the guy was not just some stick they picked up but a club that had been cut like they did the long house poles. Kind of an octagonal stick, the sides were well finished, probably took a lot of work. I don't know if it meant anything or was just what they had with them. It sure did a number on that guys face, he wasn't real pretty. I still have the club.

End Of Excerpt One

My First Helicopter Ride

*By
Glade Presnel*

When I went thru Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training, and Infantry Officer Candidate Training in 1967, Counter Intelligence School in 1968, or my assignment in Europe from 1968 to 1970 I never had the opportunity to be on a helicopter. When I got to Vietnam in mid-spring 1970, I was flown from Saigon to my assignment as a Phoenix Advisor in Phu Tuc District, Phu Bon Province (Team 31) on a fixed wing aircraft of Air America, the CIA airline in Viet Nam.

After a couple days in Phu Tuc District I was told to fly by chopper to Pleiku to turn in my personnel records at the headquarters there. I don't remember much about my first ride on the chopper to Pleiku but I sure do remember the ride back!

Pleiku Headquarters sits on a plateau above rice paddies and forests. As the helicopter took off from the plateau it was flying forward at a good speed over the rice paddies, when all at once it sat down quickly in the mud of the rice paddy. I didn't know what had happened and was not alarmed until I quickly looked around and saw, that the two pilots, door gunners and the other passenger had promptly exited the helicopter and were standing about 20 yards from the chopper. I decided it would be wise if I also departed!

I asked one of the pilots what had happened and he said a sniper from the tree line had shot at us and shot off the rear rotor of the chopper. (That is what keeps the chopper from spinning out of control in a counter-direction of the main rotor.) Without that rotor he had to use his forward speed to keep the chopper from spinning out of control and to do that he had to set it down quickly while he had forward air speed.

We noticed a group of Vietnamese about 100 yards away and a medivac chopper came to that group before one came to pick us up. Turns out the shot off rotor had spun across the paddy and hit a woman working in the field, cutting off one of her legs at the knee. I spent many hours on helicopters that first year in Viet Nam, but none as interesting as that first one.

Postlude ...

In 2019, I attended my first COUNTERPARTS Reunion in Houston. The first night I was sitting at a table with about 6 other guys who were sharing stories about their experiences in Viet Nam. I shared my helicopter story. One of the fellows asked when that happened. When I told him he stated that HE was the other guy on the chopper that day and shared how he and the crew had laughed at the FNG (me) who stayed on the downed helicopter.

That fellow was Max Lund and he told me the pilot was probably wrong about being shot at as there had been a problem with choppers losing rotors. It's a small world!

All Members are encouraged to share their unique experiences as Advisors in Vietnam and SEA. We prefer emailed versions, preferably in Microsoft WORD.

Thanks

...The Editors