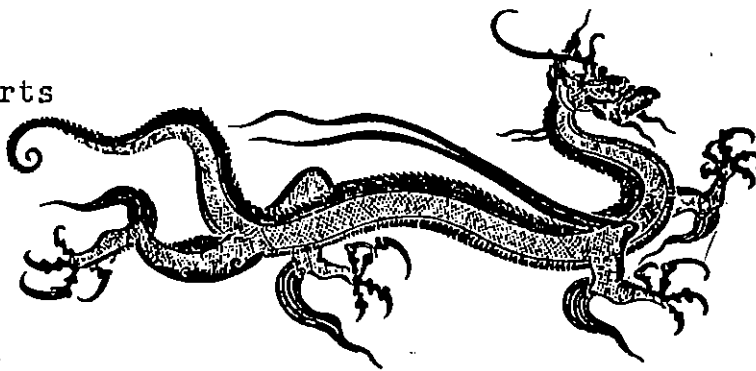


Co Van My/Counterparts
1462 W. University
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Post-Ballot Sitrep June 1988

Charter Members:

Yes, sitrep is late, in part due to somewhat slower response than anticipated, and in part due to time constraints on this end. This sitrep is prelim summary though does clearly point at direction we are headed. Several more ballots are known to be coming in, and reminder notices will be sent to those not returning a ballot. Once a month has passed after these notices, final ballots will be tabulated and results will be it. Subsequent changes, adaptations, additions will be via membership vote.

Still pathfinding in a manner of speaking. Two obstacles of sorts: less than half of 80 ballot respondents sent in completed ballot, and insufficient officer nominations. One nominee for President has not yet returned ballot; the other cannot serve at this time. These offices have no nominations: Treasurer, Archivist, Locator (nominee has not yet returned ballot), and Membership representation for all branches. Role as clerk-typist pro-tem has accorded yours truly with undue influence and several nominations for President. Will have to respectfully decline as my schedule is murder and could not put time in that is required during formative period. Further, I can only claim A-1 membership and it is far more appropriate for a Full member to assume this position. Will continue on with grunt work so long as it is of benefit to the association.

Absence of presidential nominations raises prospects of repeated delays and mailings until this is sorted out, all of which is adverse to getting this show on the road. Will therefore submit that present operational mode be that of newsletter, pending full slate of nominees. Two self-nominations for editor will be contacted to see how this will work. Both self-nominees have word processors, and are accomplished writers.

No submitted funds have been deposited, pending resolution of officer nominations. The \$12.00/annum dues, with \$5.00 initiation fee, was approved by overwhelming majority. If editors-to-be are willing to assume pro-tem editorship, in conjunction with handling newsletter and membership funds, we can move out. If not, another means will be found, and we can move out.

Very good comments/ideas/suggestions continue to come in. One of which pertains to a distinct need for a permanent mailing address/P.O. Box. Perhaps someone who knows they will not be moving could volunteer to

serve as an APO???? This is important, and would facilitate placement of publicity releases as well as handling of incoming mail and distribution to appropriate officers. Again, pending resolution of this question, will serve as mail drop for time being. There is a distinct possibility of my moving within the next year or two however, so it would be best to establish a permanent mail drop.

Comments/critiques contained in ballot response(sampling):

---Referencing 'preamble' and statement of being 'burdened by faulty if not inappropriate strategy, tactical doctrine....': Sentiment expressed that this was someone of a cop-out, and contradicts success many advisors attained. Will plead semantical slip on this one, and intent to underscore fact that advisors often had to deal with policy from above which was not the best, yet succeeded in spite of institutionalized dumbness. Implicit assertion that decision makers should have listened more to, rather than, inadvertently or explicitly, dictated to, advisors. Advisors knew more about on-the-scene situations and lessons to be learned and applied; too often they were ignored. No intention to suggest that advisors were cause of these problems, but rather to suggest they were capable of rising above them, and very often did.

---Paragraph I-C(Purpose), referencing last sentence with phrase that 'members offer no apologies.....': In final analysis, a major apology is due our host country counterparts for failure of our policy makers to do their job, as too often they did not, and US public perceived situation to be inherently worthless as opposed to hampered by poor high level awareness and action. Once again, semantical interpretation which was as unintended as it is evident, now. Yes, we do as a nation owe some apology to victims of our failing to assemble and implement a truly comprehensive strategic approach.

There were others, but these two resulted in most embarrassing unintended interpretations. Am quite sure others had criticisms which may not have been expressed; all can be ironed out as progress is made. Most important of all is almost-achieved task establishing critical mass and functioning as organization with coherent purpose; getting lay of the land will be awkward at first, but increasingly doable following organizational 'recon!.

Highlight summary of voting:

Membership: 77% Affirmative vote for Full membership to military and civilian advisors, as well as host country counterparts. Periodic snide comments submitted regarding CIA people and their possible membership. No CIA people have yet applied, and sentiment is understood, with this clerk-typist having encountered some singularly drippy CIA people in SE Asia, along with a good one here and there.

A-1 Voting Rights: 43% said full voting rights, 30% said half, and 27% said none. No majority; to be resolved.

A-1 Membership Limits: 74% voted for no limits on A-1 members; 26% voted for 50% of Full Membership.

A-2 Membership Limits: 69% said limit to 1/3 Full Membership; 29% disagreed, with specifications of 1/2 and 2/3 suggested as limiting numbers.

A-2 Eligibility for Office: 82% said no office may be held.

A-3 Membership: 86% voted for accepting A-3 members, with 81% affirming proposed limitation of 1/4 of Full Members, no vote, no office.

Honorary Membership: Overwhelming approval, with suggestion that 'reach' be limited to no more than 1st cousin, and that dues be 1/2 of regular membership.

Annual Dues: 96% affirmed suggested \$12.00/year; apparent 100% acceptance of \$5.00 initiation fee.

Patch/Lapel Pin Surcharge: 95% affirmed extra, to-be-determined charge for this option. Suggestions on or connections with vendors anyone?

Lifetime Membership: 95% approval of \$120.00, one suggestion for \$200.00 with no raise, one suggestion that Life Membership funds be placed in interest bearing account, one suggestion that Life Membership be payable on quarterly installments (good idea).

Officer Qualifications/Terms/Etc.: Little in the way of disagreement here, although suggestions submitted limiting officer terms to two, addit by three members, on annual basis, of Treasurer books, and combination of Archivist and Historian roles into one position.

Regional Officers: Basically approved as written, though suggestions that local officers be locally elected, which makes great deal of sense. Also, such State (presumably regional as well) officers as are elected/appointed should serve on overall board of directors, receive lifetime membership upon completing three terms in office.

Resolutions:

Liason Officer for possible joint US/VN Vet Assn: Approved.

Probable Unconstitutional restriction on would-be authors: Approved.

Mongoose/Badger stationery logo: Approved, with suggestion for something more appropriate to advisory effort, such as MACV emblem, US/SVN flags.

Name: 65% Co Van My; 26% Counterparts; 4% Co Van My/Counterparts (combining both). Anyone have problems with last suggestion, which incorporates good points of both, with detracting, perhaps, from either?

Locator: 96% approval

Adoption of charity for encouraging voluntary donations by members: 75% approval, with following recommendations:

- Degas(Yard Assn.)
- Salvation Army
- POW/MIA
- VN/American scholarship
- any Veteran aid/assistance group
- Covenant House
- VN Women's Memorial
- any National Charity
- American Cancer Association
- SE Asian refugees

Obviously, no clear and distinct answer here, and with this being a voluntary, non-binding resolution to begin with, is probably best left open to individuals who should feel free to advise others of suggestions or worthy recipients. Good idea, but needs to be firmed up.

Dega Association Membership: 96% approval.

That's the basic drift, with final vote to be tabulated once several other ballots yet to come, as promised by these prospective charter members.

We'll probably pick up non-respondents(of ballot) in follow up mailing, and have more names coming in, so look for a charter membership of approximately 50 people. Virtually all ballots were returned by those qualifying for Full Membership, with balance being probable A-1s. One A-3, a SE Asian refugee, now US citizen, who well remembers US Co Vans who served with his father.

Roster/logo submittals to be in next sitrep.

Info item: 2 x 3 poster, with Forgotten Warrior statue at former SVN National Military Cemetery(a very moving piece of work) and border containing graphics of 75 SVN unit/branch patches is available for \$10.00(presumably US) from:

Duong Tam Chi
5980 Ave. Decelles, #6
Montreal, PQ
H3S2E1, Canada.

Have not seen copy, but sounds good enough to give a try. Thanks to member Paul Brubaker for sending this in.

Publication dedicated to communicating concerns and experiences of Indochinese refugees, as well as noting present day conditions in SE Asia(quite grim):

(\$8.00/YEAR)

Indochina Journal(in English)
Diem Ngo, Coordinator
P.O. Box 1163
Burlingame, California 94011-1163.

Have seen one issue; it is good.

Letter sent to Wall Street Journal by former advisor who took issue with statement that Hanoi had defeated US, and RVNAF. →

Tried to contact Mr. Driftmier; no phone listed.

Many of respondents to date have expressed similar sentiments.

Excellent idea submitted by Jerry Delwo, member, SF, Ben Het:

Anyone wanting to send in one page summary/overview of their tour(s), for reprinting in this newsletter, should do so. Jerry's suggestion, to save eventual editor's time, is to have these pasted up and printed as is, so please try and submit typed* info. This would be a good way for lessons/experiences to be made known to the membership. Will be interesting to compare province/area conditions, situations over time, as situation changed greatly in 1970-1974 time period (clerk-typist opinion).

*
(SINGLE
SPACE
OK)

I was a U.S. infantry officer and spent my tour in Vietnam as an advisor to the South Vietnamese. Perhaps I am over-sensitive to the word "defeat." The current Vietnamese Premier, Pham Van Dong, was quoted in the article saying "Yes, we defeated the United States."

I observed a different story. We worked with proud troops and people who were willing to take the often-fatal risk to get a chance at a democracy. These were not crooked politicians in Saigon, but men and women in the fight, in the country, encouraged by the concept of freedom as they had never known it.

We fought hard. We were not defeated by the North Vietnamese. We were beaten by the inside out. We were betrayed by politicians, both U.S. and South Vietnamese, by U.S. civilian government officials using Vietnam for the big career move, and by some U.S. military brass who were using the war for their career advancement. Of course the media, then and now, made hype and sold papers by missing the point.

Yes, I am still personally frustrated after all these years. My family does not understand my part in the war, nor do my

business partners or anyone else who did not fight and live with the South Vietnamese. I am not looking for self-gratification. I am one of the lucky Vietnam veterans who has become a successful businessman. I am not sure what I am looking for, but I do know I cannot accept journalists throwing around the word defeat with callous disregard for the facts.

DONALD A. DRIFTMIER

Ontario, Calif.

Early locator requests:

Sgt. Kien Phat, South Viet Nam Marine Corps

(First Names not known): A Major Trapnell, PSA/Quang Nam/'71-'72; and a Major Burnett and Sgt. Kirrely, believed to have served in Duc Duc District, Quang Nam, circa 1965-1966.

Will begin developing contact in VN press to expand reach of locator service. Pending formal selection process, any volunteers for interim Locator? Can lend assistance from this end with proximity and contacts in large California SE Asian community publications.

Amnesty International reports that Nguyen Huu Giao, a South Viet Nameese attorney, has been held in prison, since 1977, for publicly reading a Human Rights Declaration on the steps of the Saigon Nha Tho Duc Ba Cathedral. They request that letters requesting his release be sent to:

Truong Chinh
Chairman of the State Council
Hoi Dan Nha Nuoc
Ha Noi
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Such letters may well be ignored, but worth a try.

Suggestion from membership ranks: Picture swap. Anyone wishing to trade or otherwise acquire VN photos should make this known. Members answering each other can arrange their own terms. To kick this off, clerk-typist has negatives of Duc Hue District, Hau Nghia Prov., including Vam Co Dong; general scenery shots of lower Delta w/some aerials from 1500-2000' altitude.

Letters to newsletter: Feel free. Might as well make comments/thoughts public within the ranks now. Still a tad bit short of full functioning assn., but we'll pretend it is anyhow.

Out-of-place summary on possible meeting/convention, all of which should have come above. Everyone seems to want it, though geographic dispersion and miles/days travel/RON limits reduce potential for anything but regional/state meetings at present.

Subjects for discussion included:

- POW/MIA
- General SE Asia sitrep
- comraderie/fun(sounds good)
- scholarship fund for unaccompanied VN refugees
- Amerasians
- Formalization of Assn. structure/officers/gen. matters
- Locator system
- Media and VI from advisor standpoint
- Phoenix Program--success/failure/or??
- Overall advisor impact/lessons learned(or ignored from above?)
- Talks by members on their specific experience/AO/expertise
- Agent Orange
- VN language/culture sessions/VN lunch/info VN Veterans Associations(VN meaning Viet Nameese)
- Army/Navy/AF/Marine group sessions.

Another newsletter: Southeast Asian Refugee Studies, from SE Asian Refugee Studies Project, University of Minnesota, 330 Humbert H. Humphrey Center, 301 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55455. It is quarterly, free(although small donation to this worthy effort might be nice), and has excellent data/info/summaries on publications available from other sources, Hmong language tapes, etc. More Hmong/Lao/Khmer than VN, but still interesting.

Sitrep format organization is taking a beating here.

OK, best git, get this photocopied, and off in the mail. Thanks to all members who have rounded up more members. Word of mouth is becoming very good source.

Vạn an cho bửa quyền

Người đánh máy lâm thời

Bill Laurie

