



# COUNTERPARTS<sup>#40</sup>

## THƯỜNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

# SITREP

Volume VI

Issue 2

Summer/Fall 2003

## COUNTERPARTS TOUR OF DUTY IN VIETNAM GOES BACK TO 1954

By  
*Rich Webster*

Not too many *COUNTERPARTS* members served in Vietnam before Owen Kelly. Owen remembers the early days in Vietnam in 1954 when we were secretly aiding the French in their final days at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu.

Kelly, along with a small attachment of Air Force personnel was stationed at an air base near Tourane, (Danang) Vietnam. President Eisenhower and John F. Dulles had sent a small contingent of US Air Force personnel to Indochina to try and save the French Army from defeat.

Says Kelly, who was 19 at the time, "We were deployed from the Philippines in April of 1954 to an old airfield run by the French near Haiphong Harbor. I was a loading specialist that packed the crates of supplies to be dropped during the battle of Dien Bien Phu."

"We repacked supplies on pallets and put together the aerial rigging so they could be dropped over Dien Bien Phu. We learned the French packers were putting the tie down chutes over the whole cargo, so they wouldn't open when pushed out and they crashed. We had to redo their packing. The chutes opened that we packed."

"We also had aircraft maintenance personnel and the French pilots loved us because we provided better maintenance on the planes, and better expertise all the way around."

"I've only found three of my comrades who I served with in Vietnam. We were told to keep quiet about it and not tell anyone at the time."

"Now when I go to the VA hospital, and tell them I served in Vietnam, there is no

record of my serving there, because at the time, this wasn't put into our records."

The French at that time had asked Claire Chennault to provide 24 American pilots from his Civil Air Transport to fly supplies into Dien Bien Phu. They flew Fairchild C119's and C-47's. One day before the outpost fell, two American pilots were killed — James B. McGovern (Earthquake McGoon) and Wallace A Buford.

"I remember the day they died," says Kelly. "It was a sad day all around."

This was the first time American technicians in uniform had been loaned to assist a country in a war in which the US was not a belligerent.

Says Kelly, "We were ordered not to talk about the mission to anyone. And now that I am trying to get Veterans Administration benefits, I'm having a hard time proving I was in Vietnam. It doesn't show on my records that I was there or even that my unit was there, because at the time, they were trying to keep the American public from finding out about us."

### BULLETIN

**TENTATIVE PLANNING IS NOW UNDERWAY FOR THE 2004 REUNION, TO BE HELD IN ASHBORO, NC IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ANNUAL PICNICS OF THE SAVE THE MONTAGNARD ASSN.**

**AS PLANNED, THE REUNION WILL BE HELD OVER THE MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND. WE NEED A VOLUNTEER WHO LIVES IN NC TO HELP PAPPY WITH PLANNING**

## VIETNAM MEMORIAL DEDICATED IN CALIF.

*Westminster, CA*

The Vietnam Memorial, the first in the nation to equally honor both American and Vietnamese soldiers, was formally dedicated on April 27. More than 9000 people attended the ceremony, which was the culmination of a seven year effort by the Vietnamese community and American supporters.

At one point in the struggle to build the monument the Vietnamese communist government of Vietnam pressed to have the monument project halted. They were rebuffed by the U.S. State department as well as the Mayor of the City of Westminster who reminded them that while Hanoi may have problems with freedom of expression, America does not.



*Sculptor Tuan Nguyen hugs Westminster Mayor Margie Rice at dedication ceremony in Westminster's Freedom Park*

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# COUNTERPARTS SITREP

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Volume VI

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## Commander's Corner

I was very honored to have the assistance of President Reagan in 1986 and Vice President Quayle in 1992 to bring the first two groups of Vietnamese Central Highlands Mountain people to the US. The French called them "Montagnards," but the real name for all of them is Dega. I also had help from two outstanding people, who I also call my personal friends, Mike Bengé and Jack Jarnigan. We received 212 refugees in the first group and over 400 in the second group.

Both my little brother, Y Pat Buon Ya, and a leader in the exile group, Nay Rong, were in the 1986 group. Since one person could not sponsor the groups, Lutheran Family Services in Raleigh, North Carolina was asked to sponsor them. One of their people, Kay Reibold, had been going to Vietnam to care for the Dega with Hansen's Disease. The times were tough for the Dega but with the help of the Family Services and a few friends, they persevered. As usual, the Dega helped each other and were never a burden to the State of North Carolina or to the United States. Only a very few of the oldest and most infirm ever went on welfare.

Senator Jessie Helms supported the new state arrivals and has become a personal friend of Nay Rong. In the summer of 2002, another 900 Dega were brought over here by the efforts of many, with the main work being done by Carl Regan and his wife.

I also belong to Save The Montagnard People (STMP), a group that was started to help our friends who stood with us and fought at our side in Vietnam. We have bought 10 and 1/2 acres of land 12.5 miles outside Ashboro, North Carolina. Every year on the Memorial Day weekend we hold a "Yard Picnic," where we eat, drink and enjoy our Dega friends. It is a great time and most of us try to be there every year.

We decided at our last *Counterparts* Reunion to hold our 2004 Reunion in Ashboro and to enjoy the company of the Dega people. The time will be from 28 to 31 May 2004 and we'll stay in the Day's Inn.

We are trying to add to the land we already have with the goal of setting up a Dega village with Long Houses and a farming area for the people to come and grow crops. The Dega are a farming people, and although they have learned to work in a new environment, they still long for a piece of land to grow their crops. We should help; *Counterparts* was among the first to assist the Dega when they arrived in the US.

..... Pappy

# HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN VIET NAM

By  
*Bill Laurie*

Last summer a contingent of American and Viet Nam-born veterans and other interested parties met personally with Senator John Kerry's staff in Boston, asking why Sen. Kerry blocked discussion of the Viet Nam Human Rights Bill, which had passed the House in a 408-1 vote. Sen. Kerry's staff representative said "progress was being made" and passage of the Human Rights Bill, as written, would be a "blunt instrument" that would jeopardize this very same progress. When asked to cite examples of "progress" Kerry's staff mentioned cultural groups visiting the U.S. When asked how this helped rice farmers losing their land to Korean development combines, Catholic and Buddhist religious leaders in jail, and Montagnards confronted with ethno-cultural extermination, Kerry's staff was unable to come up with an answer.

"Progress," such as it is, has not benefited Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly, imprisoned for the third time for demanding religious freedom. Father Ly was previously jailed for protesting oppression of Buddhists in Viet Nam. He was arrested again in late 2002. His nephew and nieces are reportedly being charged with espionage for communicating with international human rights organizations. Espionage is a capital offense and can be punished by execution. Little of this has been reported by the mainstream press or TV "news," and the American citizenry remains blissfully ignorant of what is going on.

In addition, Human Rights Watch has recently completed a 195 page thorough examination of Hanoi's oppression of the Montagnards, and that government's increasingly harsh measures to smother Montagnard culture and religion titled *Repression of the Montagnards*. (Human Rights Watch, 2001. Order address below.). Applying the same draconian measures, Hanoi has cracked down on North Vietnamese Hmong who have converted to Christianity. Several Hmong leaders have been jailed. Publications describing this situation are available from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, both of whom are doing the job that the news media should be doing:

**Human Rights Watch**  
**Publications**  
**350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor**  
**New York, NY 10118-3299**  
<http://www.hrw.org>

**Amnesty International**  
**322 Eighth Avenue**  
**New York, NY 10001**

Ask for publications and catalogs from both organizations. For more information on Father Ly, see Amnesty International at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/2003/vietnam04152003.html>. Print out material and send it to local teachers and college instructors who are teaching Vietnam courses. Even better, encourage people to write or call Hanoi's embassy.

**Ambassador Nguyen Tam Chien**

**Embassy of Viet Nam**

**1233 20th Street, N.W., Suite 400**

**Washington, D.C. 20036**

**(landline): 202-861-0737 (fax) 202-861-0917**

This past March Hanoi sent a high ranking delegation to America with the intent of expanding commerce and developing favorable trade relations. Hanoi should be told, and seldom is, that Americans are not enamored with Hanoi's gross and continuing human rights violations, and want improvements in this area before thinking about exporting more jobs to Viet Nam-whose catfish exports to America are currently wreaking havoc with American fish farms. Do something. Congress won't, nor will Dan Rather, Peter Jennings, et al.



## FROM THE EDITORS...

It has been suggested that the spelling of the Vietnamese word for "counterpart", which is presently shown in our Bylaws and in this newsletter as "TU'ÔNG" is incorrect. The correct spelling of the word should be "THU'ÔNG". Unless there are objections or other corrections from the membership, the new spelling will be introduced in this issue of SITREP.

*The following article was written by Counterparts member Tom Morgan after a recent visit to Vietnam  
Thanks to Tom for a great piece of Reporting.  
...Ed.*

## **ONE SOLDIER'S STORY**

### **Life in the "Re-education" Camps**

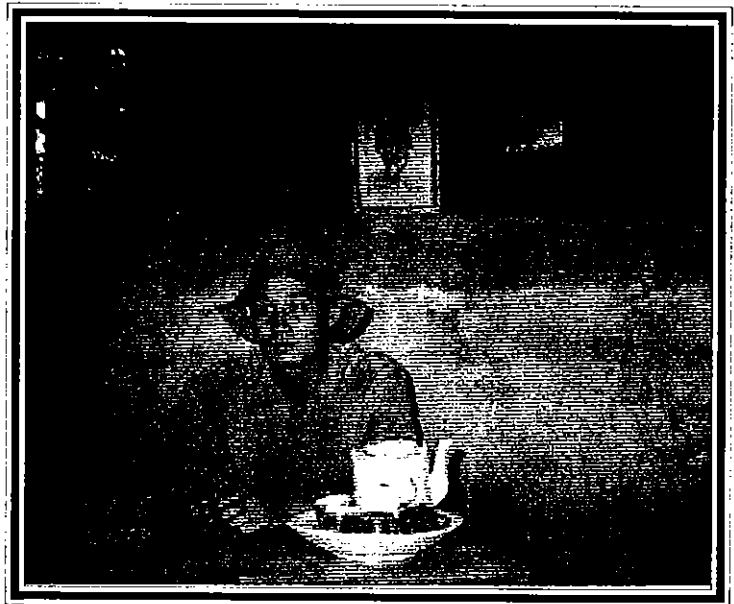
**By**  
**Thomas W. Morgan**

*On a recent trip to Vietnam with a small group of 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division veterans, I became interested in the story of our Vietnamese guide Nam. I had met him before and I knew that he had been a member of the Republic of (South) Vietnam's Armed Forces at the time of the fall of Saigon in 1975. As we were driving back to Saigon from a visit to the Cao Dai Temple in Tay Ninh and the Tunnels of Cu Chi, he told us the story of his re-education camp experience.*

In the late 1960s, Nam was a student at the University of Saigon studying to be a teacher. His father had been a teacher, but he was also a member of the outlawed Vietnamese Communist Party. The father had been imprisoned by the South Vietnamese Diem regime in the 1950s. Beaten in jail, he had died shortly after his release in 1955. Nam was disillusioned with the war in the late 1960s and had participated in some student demonstrations against the US and Saigon regimes.

He was arrested and offered jail or joining the South Vietnamese Armed Forces. He enlisted in the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) as a personnel specialist at the Bien Hoa Air Base and was in Saigon on leave visiting his girlfriend when Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) on 30 April 1975. He did not return to Bien Hoa Air Base and waited to see what would happen. At first the communist government directed all former South Vietnamese officers and government bureaucrats to report to collection stations for processing to re-education camps. Nam was still free, but later all former South Vietnamese Armed Forces members were directed to report for processing. After a few days, Nam was sent to a re-education camp in the Vietnamese Highlands not far from his home of record in Danang. He was not told how long he would be there as his life now took a turn for the worse. For him there was no light at the end of the tunnel.

Life in the re-education camp was austere. Breakfast was simple, a piece of sweet potato or manioc with salt and boiled water to drink. After breakfast, the prisoners were sent to work in the fields as farmers planting crops on the hillside outside of the camp. Some of the prisoners cut trees for logs that went to a sawmill, and others did camp maintenance and administrative work. Nam worked as a barber. The prisoners worked all day and ate a lunch consisting of one bowl of rice with some corn or a potato substitute such as taro root or manioc. It was not enough, but the prisoners received the same as the guards that were called *can-bo* or political cadres.



***NVA Can-Bo (Cadremn)***

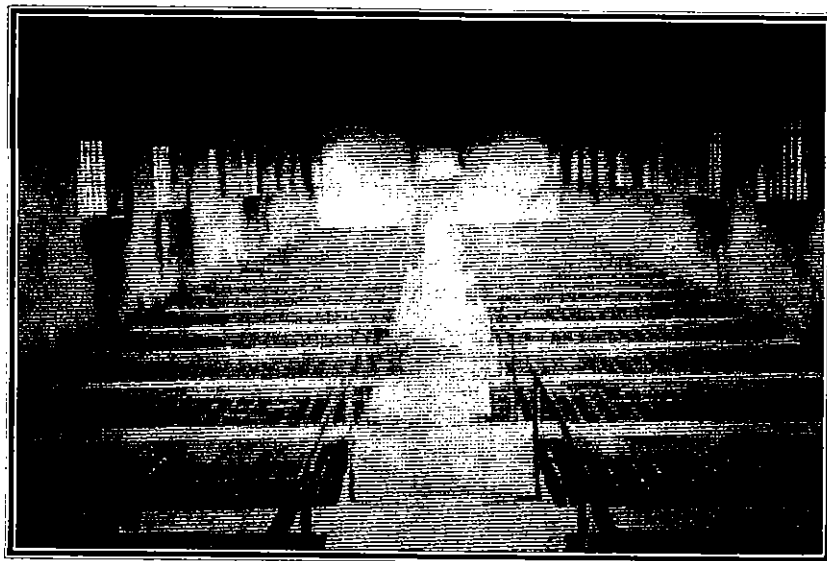
In 1975-76, the whole country of Vietnam was on a starvation diet. The country's rice farmers resisted working on the communist collective farms and the rice that was produced had to go to Russia and China to pay off the country's war debts. There was not enough protein and everyone looked for snakes, lizards, mice, rats, and geckos to eat. Squirrels when found were a great delicacy and a dream come true.

All prisoners wore black pajamas so that they could be identified if they tried to escape from the armed cadres. At 1600 hours each day, the prisoners went back to the camp. They took a bath in a stream and rested for one hour before a communal dinner. Dinner was another bowl of rice and some soup. Sometimes the prisoners received a piece of fish or meat, but rice was the main meal. Some prisoners died from starvation and illnesses such as malaria and amoebic dys-

entry. There were not enough drugs provided to fight the illnesses. Visiting family members who brought extra food and medicines could make the difference between life and death.

After dinner, the cadres assembled the prisoners in the central camp yard for a lecture. The prisoners were required to squat for an hour or two as the cadres explained the policies of the new government and the communist party. Squatting was not a problem, but the repetitive nature of the lectures was. It was a form of brainwashing although Nam called it "conditional reaction." Everyone had to repeat the doctrine and admit their mistakes. Every two or three weeks, the prisoners had to write a paper listing their failures and giving their opinions of the government and the communist party. The prisoners were supposed to admit the mistakes they had made in joining the South Vietnamese armed forces and in supporting the Saigon puppet government. There was no middle ground when it came to communist theory. Nam learned to be very diplomatic in his writings. That got him out of the camp in only two and one-half years. His older brother who was more stubborn had to stay for seven and one-half years, and he has only been allowed to work as a farmer since his release.

He did not know how long he would be in the camp. As a result, he became very depressed and sick. He lost half his weight and thought he would die. His mother spent all her time and money visiting him and his brother. Nam now asked that she visit him one last time before he died. She came to see him after walking one whole day from the nearest bus stop. She brought him some medicine, sweet cakes, and a book from the family library. It was *Gone With the Wind*. Nam credits that book with saving his life. He had read it before in English and knew the plot, but he does not know why his mother brought the book because she could not read English. The cadres were very suspicious of the book because it was in English.



*Prisoners Beds in "Reeducation" Camp*

That night Nam was too ill to go to dinner and the cadre lecture. He lay on his rack in the prisoners' hut and started to read the book. He fell asleep and had a dream. In his dream he saw the face of Scarlett O'Hara. She was walking in a storm, fell down, and managed to get back to Tara, her plantation home. Then she said, "let's wait until tomorrow because tomorrow will be another day." At midnight Nam woke up from the dream as his fever broke. Tomorrow was another day for him because he then started to get better. After about ten days, he had recovered. One month later, he was released from the camp. Nam never asked his mother why she brought the book because he believes it was a miracle and he does not want to break the spell. Nam is not bitter about his experience, but he will never go back to the camp. All of that is history now. However, he vividly remembered the "Ho Chi Minh Song" that he learned in the camp, and he sang us a rousing rendition of it on the bus along with the driver.

On my Air Vietnam flight out of Hanoi for Taipei, Formosa on my way home, I noticed the airplane was full of young Vietnamese women. When I asked the Vietnamese steward about it, he told me that they were going to Formosa to work for two years as "domestics" for affluent Chinese. The women did it to get money for their families. Next to me was a young woman named Nguyen Thi Van. She looked 18, but was 22, and married with a 3-year-old son. She showed me the pictures of her wedding and her family that she was leaving for two years to work in a foreign land. It was her first airplane ride and she became miserably airsick.

History repeats itself. The Vietnamese hated the French *corvée* system that required Vietnamese to do forced labor in the colonial mines and plantations. About 100,000 Vietnamese were sent to France in World War I to do manual labor digging trenches and working on the docks and in the factories. After World War I when resistance against French colonial rule peaked, the communist inspired *Yen Bay* Rebellion of 1930 was a result. After fighting the French for eight years (1946-54), the Americans for even longer (1959-73), and themselves in a civil war (1973-75), the Vietnamese finally got their country back. However, they now have to sell their labor overseas to be able to enjoy economic freedom. The price of freedom is hard even for the communists.

## COUNTERPARTS ORAL HISTORY

COUNTERPARTS members are invited to share their own in-country experience. Your work doesn't need to be a literary masterpiece; we will edit for grammar, spelling and clarity. Your submissions can be handwritten, typed, or sent via email. Each issue, we will publish as many items as space permits.

### MAAG Observers, 1962

by Bob McMahon

In 1961 I responded to a classified message seeking First Lieutenants, with at least one year in grade, to volunteer to go to Vietnam as advisors. The message said we would be trained, receive \$4.00 a day *per diem* and operate in civilian clothes.

There were about 30 First Lieutenants selected. We received four weeks of training in the culture, religion and the Vietnamese language plus training in all the successful counter - terrorist operations in history, at the Military Assistance Training Advisor (MATA) class #4 at Fort Bragg, N.C. Throughout our training, we were instilled with the idea that we were to be MAAG Observers, rather than Advisors, and we were to look at the war effort without having any World War II, Korean War or similar conventional war experience.

Most of us then went to the Army Language School at the Presidio of Monterey, CA for 8 weeks of intensive Vietnamese language training. We arrived in Vietnam in September 1962.

I went to an outpost named Phuoc Lam in I Corps, west of Tam Ky, and worked for a U.S. Army Captain, who spoke French as did the Vietnamese Battalion commander.

I went on lots of company level and smaller operations. I sat out overnight on night ambushes with 9 Vietnamese soldiers, and was also the coordinator for artillery fire for the nearby Tra My Special Forces Camp. I helped supervise the building of the outpost at Phuoc Chau, and on 25 November 1962 I was involved in the biggest ARVN success in 1962. (See *Vietnam Diary*. by Richard Tregaskis, Pp. 224 -230)

We "observers" were largely misunderstood by the in place advisor staff, including regimental and division advisors. We were classified as immature, inexperienced, and suffered efficiency reports along that line. It seems nobody told "the field" what our concept of operation was supposed to be. I don't recall any formal debriefings.

Most of us went back for a second tour, this time with American forces and we made significant contributions because of our previous tour.

A number of questions still remain:

- Who created the "Observer Program"?
- Did any follow-up research and conclusions ever take place?
- When was the program discontinued?
- Was it just a ploy to increase the advisor strength?
- Is this a topic worthy of more research and discussion by the readers of COUNTERPARTS SITREP?

Bob McMahon

#### *Editors' Note;*

*Anyone with additional information on this subject is encouraged to write to SITREP or contact Bob McMahon at the following address:*

1512 Country Club Drive

Lynn Haven, FL 32444

(850) 265-0930

[mcmahonrobertw@yahoo.com](mailto:mcmahonrobertw@yahoo.com)

## ***Support Texas Tech's Vietnam Center!***

*The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech is the only institution in the US devoted solely to the study of Vietnam and the Vietnam conflict. Since the Institute's inception it has developed and expanded its archives and now possesses what is probably the most significant collection of information on Vietnam and the War that can be found anywhere.*

*The archives at the Vietnam Institute are especially important to us as former Advisors because they are, in a way, our historical legacy to future students and historians. Many of us have been dissatisfied with the views of the war that continue to be presented in the classroom, the news media, and in public perception. One of the few means to counter this misrepresentation is by ensuring that "our story" is not lost.*

*The Vietnam Institute's Director, Dr. Jim Reckner (A former advisor and a Counterparts member) will welcome any photos, documents or other material that you offer to the Institute. If you wish, you can set up an Oral history interview with one of the Institute's staff.*

*Contribute! Your voice and your experience are unique. Contact:*

**Jim Reckner**  
**The Vietnam Center**  
**Texas Tech University, Box 41045**  
**Lubbock, TX 79409-1045**  
**[Http://www.ttu.edu/vietnam](http://www.ttu.edu/vietnam)**

## ***SITREP Editorial Policy and Procedures***

### **Copy:**

- *Articles, letters and other news items are welcomed from all members and other subscribers. Copy should be typed double spaced using standard manuscript fonts like Courier, Cobb, or other "plain vanilla" fonts that can be easily OCR scanned. If you don't have a typewriter legible handwritten copy is OK.*
- *Electronic submissions via email or on disc are also welcome. Microsoft Word or Word Perfect is preferred.*
- *Submissions should not exceed "Column length" pieces, i.e.: no longer than 600-1000 words. Members shouldn't hesitate to send short (50-100) word contributions. Remember, brevity is the soul of wit.*
- *Photos or pictures can be submitted by mail or on the internet. For Internet material use one of the standard graphic formats like JPEG, TIFF, MIX, or GIF.*

### **Editorial Policy:**

- *We will edit for grammar, spelling and clarity. If we feel the need to edit for length or content we'll contact the author whenever possible. We will NOT edit for political or philosophical content unless it's obscene, illegal, or libelous.*
- *SITREP will be published quarterly, in January, April, July, and October. Deadlines for manuscripts and photos are the first of the month before each publication date, but we can be flexible if there's late breaking news.*
- *Send Submissions To:*

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**Bill Laurie**  
**1462 West University Drive**  
**Mesa, AZ 85201**  
**Tel. 480 962 4347**

## 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.

**Counterparts**, Jim McDaniel: Writers Club Press, New York 2002. ( Available through Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Borders Books, iUniverse.com.)

It's rare to find a Vietnam-related novel that deals honestly with Advisors and their war experience and even more uncommon to read a book that presents this subject with gritty, uncompromising reality. This book is that rare exception. The author, *Counterparts* member Jim McDaniel, served as Deputy Senior Advisor (DSA) in Quang Tin province. He draws on that experience to evoke the atmosphere of day to day life in a typical province, with all of its undercurrents, contradictions and occasional absurdities. Unlike many popular novels about the Vietnam War which portray Vietnamese people as two dimensional backdrops to the American's experience, McDaniel presents his Vietnamese characters as complex, contradictory, and sometimes tragic figures.

Many of us will recognize the denizens of Quang Tim; the ambitious senior officer, dedicated to furthering his own career, the Vietnamese Province Chief, a man with complex and often conflicting agendas, and a full supporting cast of personalities and characters typical of a Province MACV team. The story is set in the period from New Years Day to *Tet*, 1968, a time of change and fierce conflict. Woven into the main narrative is a classic murder mystery, with some familiar characters and a surprising and dramatic climax. A worthwhile read for anyone who wants to get a sense of the everyday victories, defeats and frustrations of an Advisor's life.

**A Ranger Born**, Col. Robert W. Black. Ballentine Books, 2002.

Col. Black, author of *Rangers in WW II*, and *Rangers in Korea*, covers his life in this book, half of which recalls experiences as DSA in Rach Kien District, Long An Province, 1967-1968. An intelligent, well-written book, going beyond mere "shoot-'em-up" combat literature and explaining why Col. Black viewed his Viet Nam experience as among the most memorable and meaningful in his life. Black's account sheds light on an advisor's multitude of duties, from training RF/PF to improving district health care to using decidedly unofficial "requisition" techniques to better arm his RF/PF. There are side stories about the "phantom," a villager leaving notes in VC roadblocks telling allied forces where to capture a local VC cadre. The "phantom" was sick and tired of being forced to shovel dirt at night by armed VC. After one miscue, the "phantom's" tip-off led capture of several VC. There's also a VC lothario turned in by an angry wife. A good, informative read, written by a good and intelligent man, who came to view his RVN counterpart "as a brother." Get it, read it.

Member *Mike Martin's Warriors of the Sea* Turner Publishing, P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, Kentucky, 42002  
Tel: 1 800-788-3350- \$44.97, shipping included. Visa/MasterCard accepted.

**Warriors of the Sea** is a large 8.5" x 11" 160 page overview of RVN Marines and their US counterparts, with abundant photos and illustrations not found elsewhere. Mike's effort includes contributions from others, US and RVN. It's a unique and valuable contribution to the field of Viet Nam literature and contains material and recollections unavailable elsewhere. There's nothing else like it, which tells you a lot about the book itself, and about the "reporters" and "historians" who supposedly have told all there is to know about Viet Nam. Get it, read it, donate it to a college library, and if you see Mike at a reunion, buy him a beer for writing this one, as well as his earlier books: **The Black Tigers** (RVN Rangers) and **Angels in Red Hats** (RVN Airborne and their US Advisors).

(Unread, member review welcome): **Covert Ops-The CIA's Secret War in Laos**, by James E. Parker, Jr. Originally published as **Codename Mule**, this book has been republished by St. Martin's in paperback with a new title.



## Counterparts/THDNA 2003 Officer Nominations

The Commander, XO and Adjutant are elected for staggered 3 year terms. Currently the Commander's term will expire in 1/2004 and the Adjutant's term expired in 1/2003.

It is imperative that each member step up and contribute to the Association in order to keep it alive and functioning. As an all volunteer Association it is difficult to find and keep good working officers, but we cannot function without them.

If you know of members who would make good candidates for office and are willing to spend a little time working, please nominate them or, if you want to volunteer, nominate yourself.

Each nominee must agree to serve and will be contacted prior to election.

Commander: \_\_\_\_\_

Adjutant: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Counterparts/THDNA 2003 Dues Notice

Annual Association dues are \$20 for all Plenary and Associate Members. Life Members and Honorary Members are being sent this notice for information purposes only. Dues are payable on or before 1/2004.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ *Total due: \$20.00* \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Changes Only): \_\_\_\_\_ *Contributions:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Memorials:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Total Paid:* \_\_\_\_\_

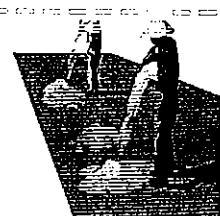
Email (Changes Only): \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Return both to: **James F. Alkek, Adjutant, 4107 Solway Ln, Houston, TX 77025-2913**



# BULLETIN BOARD



## ***OPERATION RICE LIFT/2003 Update***

Member Mike Little, along with wife Marion, went back to VN in April to bring money to the Montagnard families they've been helping. The trip was successful, obstacles notwithstanding. Mike and Marion had their passports flagged upon arriving and they suspect their travels were subsequently monitored by security personnel. Travel to Pleiku was not allowed, and the bus bringing Montagnard friends to see Mike and Marion in Qui Nhon was cancelled for security reasons. This just after Mike's Qui Nhon hotel reservations had been mysteriously cancelled. Eventually things turned out well, efforts of Hanoi's neo-Gestapo notwithstanding.

Operation Rice Lift can always use more donations. ***Write Mike/Marion at 18 Argento Drive, Mission Viejo, California, 92692, or e-mail: littlecrazy3@cox.net.*** Food is a problem in the Highlands. Hanoi authorities have dictated that Montagnards dedicate a portion of their land for coffee cultivation. Coffee is then sold to Communist Party purchasing agents at a low price. Hanoi turns around and sells it at market prices to gain hard currency. This leaves Montagnards with little land to grow food on, and little money to buy food with. Malnutrition, poor health care and extreme poverty describe Montagnard life. Remember these people who stood shoulder to shoulder with us. Send some spare change to Operation Rice Lift.

## ***Vets with a Mission (VWAM)***

This church-oriented organization continues to provide Humanitarian assistance to the Vietnamese people, usually in the form of building projects, Medical assistance teams and a missionary ministry. The organization is run by American and Vietnamese Veterans in the US. VWAM has recently set itself six new objectives for its operations. These objectives are:

1. Recruit a volunteer physician for a period of 2-4 years, and be the primary recruiter of health care professionals, pharmaceutical supplies, and organizer of medical teams.
2. Focus on resources development from both secular and non-secular sources.
3. Encourage the Vietnamese-American community and churches to support VWAM's work, ministry and projects.
4. Work through indigenous contacts to obtain permission and authorization to offer humanitarian and other assistance to Vietnam.
5. Phase out its construction of government clinics and replace it with the building of private clinics.
6. Develop a new partnership with Habitat for Humanity International in Danang in its continued efforts to reach the Vietnamese people.

VWAM's newsletter, *VWAM Messenger*, reported that these objectives were developed in response to the "complexities of working within the existing bureaucratic nightmare and political intransigence in Vietnam, to effect basic human change, to provide relief from suffering, and to share "the truth".

VWAM is an organization that is doing a lot of good in Vietnam, even if its perspective is a bit different from that of many *Counterparts* members. The fact is that VWAM, like our own Mike Little, is on the ground, doing the work, and that's what counts.

If you're interested in volunteering, donating, or otherwise helping this organization, it can be reached at: ***P.O. Box 202, Newberry, SC 29108-0202, Tel.803 405 9926, Fax 803 405 0790, www.vwam.com or email vetswithamission@backroads.net***

### ***Listen to Vietnam Oral History online***

Texas Tech's Vietnam Center has recently established a partnership with the US Naval Historical Center and the USMC History and Museum Division. The Vietnam Center's Oral History Project, in cooperation with the Navy and Marine Corps partners will begin transcribing thousands of Oral History interviews furnished by the Marine Corps center. As the project moves forward, these interviews will become available, free of charge, from TTU's Virtual Vietnam Archive of the Vietnam Oral History web site at: <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu>  
*Counterparts* members are also encouraged to participate in the Vietnam Center's Oral History Project.

### ***Our Thanks to...***

Jim Alkek. Jim has stayed on beyond his term as Adjutant, there being no one else to take his place. This is probably the most time-consuming job we have and duties should be split, somehow. In any event, thanks to Jim for voluntarily extending his DEROS. Gratitude, once again, due Bui Quang Lam (RVN Biet Dong Quan/Ranger), who prints our SITREP at no cost. He has a large commercial print shop in Phoenix, Arizona, and does work for large corporations and government entities. Anyone in need of professional, large volume printing can give Lam a call: 602 437-0207.

### ***Address Changes***

Each issue of SITREP results in a number of copies from members who have changed address. We have recently made a major, ongoing effort to keep our address data base as up to date as possible, but we need your help. Don't forget to notify *Counterparts* if you change address. If you know of other members who have moved and are not receiving SITREP, let us know.

### ***New Counterparts Members***

Welcome Aboard to the following new members

Richard G. Plath, [biet@aol.com](mailto:biet@aol.com), Orlando, FL

Bruce S. Smith, Effingham, IL

Stephen P. Watson, [steveandduanewatson@hotmail.com](mailto:steveandduanewatson@hotmail.com), San Antonio, TX

James F. Gerst, [gerstj@diergs.com](mailto:gerstj@diergs.com), Chesterfield, MO

### ***LOCATOR***

From Member Ha Huu Kieu:

"I was so excited when I read the article telling about MACSOG on "Book review." As the member of the Strategic Technical Directorate that coordinated missions with MACSOG from 1963 to 1972. I used to serve as action Team Leader, Group Leader, and joint operations with MACSOG-OP 32, OP-34, and OP-35. I was so glad when I read the name of Col. Cavanaugh, Col. Sadler, Col. Jarvis.

"As a member of *Counterparts* since 1996, I am looking forward to receive information of my old friends:

Capt. Robert Murrill (last saw in Dallas, 1972)

Capt. Charles Lucker

Capt. Northtimer

Capt. Caristo

Maj. Jim Carter

LTC Kennan.

"All ranks listed above worn in 1970-1972. I do not know what was their last rank when retired."  
Anyone knowing whereabouts of any of these men please call Kieu at 623 979-0472 or write to 7717 Wethersfield Road, Peoria, AZ, 85381

## MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

Counterparts members having information on additional Members In Memoriam are urged to pass their information to Archivist Mike Mc Munn 2310 Newberry St., Williamsport, PA 17701-4243 email [covan@ptdprolog.net](mailto:covan@ptdprolog.net)

### **SFC(ret.) Eddie Bennett**

July 18, 2002. Two tours with 5th SF Group, VN.

### **Richard A. Burns**

Mr. Burns first served as a Pathfinder with the 101st and a second tour as an RVN Airborne advisor. His Pathfinder experiences are detailed in his book, *Pathfinder* (Valentine Books, 2002). Burns eventually retired from Special Forces and was actively involved in veterans issues. A scholarship fund has been set up in Burns' name:

*The Florida State University  
School of Social Work  
Tallahassee, Florida, 32306-2570 Attn: Patricia Handschy*

### **1Lt. Paul Andrew Christensen.**

VN advisor tour, 1962; second VN tour with MACVSOG HQ and CCN

### **Paul G. Donner**

Navarre, Florida. USAF Farmgate, USDAO

### **SGM (ret.) Bertram "Birti" E. Frye**

July 18, 2002. White Star Teams in Laos, 1959-1962, and MR II Mike Force, Viet Nam, 1968-1970

### **Thomas R. McCallum**

Died March 8, 2003, Waukegan Illinois.

### **COL.(ret.) Alexander McColl.**

Two tours in VN, the second as District Senior Advisor, Dong Xuan District, Phu Yen Province, April 1967-November 1968. His book *Valley of Peril* (Tor Books, June 1987) was based on his Phu Yen experiences.

### **MAJ.(ret.) Robert P. Salzman,**

October 5, 2002. Four tours, VN, SF.

### **Harold W. Smith**

Rector, Arkansas. US Army, Advisory Team 9, 33

**MAJ. (ret.) Paul F. Smith.**

Two advisory tours, VN, SF.

**CAPT. (ret.) Darrell Redman**

November 17, 2002. Two VN tours, one with MACSOG, FOB-2, and second tour with PRUs, 1969-1970, Song Be.

**SFC (ret.) Jerry Burnett.**

3 Jan 2003. VN tour, PRU company commander.

**Dr. Charles Weldon.**

Chief medical officer USAID, Laos. Worked closely with White Star teams in Laos, helping the Hmong people.

**LTC (ret.) George Buck**

December 8, 2002. White Star team in Laos and one other VN tour

**Eugene "Bud" Harmsen**

26 February, 2003, Ada, Michigan

**Col. Luu Kim Cuong,**

33rd Air Wing Commander, was KIA, 6 May 1968, leading VNAF counter-attacks against VC/NVA forces near Tan Son Nhut.

**"Sgt. Long,"**

An ex-VC Kit Carson Scout serving with 2nd Platoon, Charlie Co. 1st/5th Mechanized Infantry, 25th (US) Division. "Sgt. Long" — whose full name is unknown — was a respected member of Charlie Co. As described by Roger Hayes in his book *On Point* (Presidio Press, 2000):

"Sergeant Long was a former Viet Cong soldier who defected to our side after the Viet Cong killed several if not all members of his immediate family. He had no love for the VC and was almost anxious to help us kick the enemy's butt. He kicked a lot of butt himself, and the Viet Cong had set a high price on his head, which became for him a source of immense pride.

Long lived with us and accompanied us on operations, serving as both a guide and an interpreter when we needed information from any Vietnamese we encountered. He also performed the initial interrogation of VC prisoners or suspects. Because he was a former Communist soldier, he knew how our enemy operated. He knew the terrain and the areas that would be likely locations for booby traps or high enemy activity. He was of invaluable service to our company.

Sgt. Long was killed during a heavy engagement when he was wounded and fell off an APC. Inadvertently, the driver backed over Sgt. Long with his track, killing him. Roger Hayes reflected: "It was a sad ending for a brave soldier who had endured the better part of a decade engaged in warfare."

**Correction:**

**Commander John Robert Goodrich, USN, (ret), 11 January, 2003 (Commander Goodrich' name was incorrectly reported as "Woodridge").**

## Members without current addresses

Below is a listing of all SITREPS returned after mailing of the Spring 2003 issue of SITREP. If you know the correct address of any of these members, please contact Jim Alkek, our Adjutant or email Ken Jacobsen at [kjacobsen@knology.net](mailto:kjacobsen@knology.net)

John R Baird  
1902 Lake Rd  
Ridgeway, SC 29130

Hugh B Mulvaney  
1419 Evergreen Ave Plainfield NJ  
07060

National Gulf War Vets  
1200 19<sup>th</sup> St NW, 401  
Washington DC 20036

Robert L Estep  
137 runaway Bay Dr  
Virginia Beach, AV 23452

K Son Nguyen  
1801 W Moore Ave  
Santa Ana CA 92704

Families of VN Pol prisoners Assn  
PO Box 5435  
Arlington VA 22205

Robert J Fitzgerald  
1416 Executive Ln  
Glenview IL 60025

Dinh Thanh Nguyen  
8273 Park Place Blvd  
Houston TX 77017

Gen Coactive Montagnard Assn  
Rt 1 Box 296B  
Brevard NC 28712

Richard E. Hanson  
565 Bellvue Ave  
Oakland, CA 94610

Arthur A Radvilas  
CMR 454, Box 3306-R  
APO AE 09226

Vietnamese Armor Assn  
Hang Coa Phong  
San Jose CA 95131

Harry J Hirt  
1440 Palm Bch St  
Chula Vista, AC 91915

Stan Sirmans  
2301 Jefferson Davis Hwy #1228

Save the Montagnard People  
1097 Hanna Ford Rd  
Brevard NC 28712

Theodore T Jagosz

James H Smith  
PO Box 734  
Gaffinville KY 42345

Society of Vietnamese AB  
11722 Stone Bridge Dr  
Houston TX 77064

Danie M Kliendinst  
1906 Breckenridge Ln  
Little Rock, AD 72207

Thomas E Teska  
8120 Lake Park Drive  
Alexandria VA 22309

Vietnamese Rangers (BDQ)  
7481 Anaconda Ave  
Garden Grove CA 92641

George A Lasley  
5724 Coach Lane Wynde  
Louisville, KY 40207

Jerald Washington  
1242 Ingleside Ave  
Jacksonville FL 32205

Montagnard Foundation  
PO box 17064  
Spartanburg SC 29301

Charles E McClusky  
7737 Manassas Dr  
Austin, TX 73743

Steven V Wertz  
2837 Marsala Ct  
Orlando FL 32806

Hmong Council Inc  
4670 E Butler  
Fresno CA 93702

George L McCole  
PO box 330  
Lewiston, CA 96052

James R Wilson  
General Delivery  
Golden CO 80401

Kevin J McGrath  
3063 Signature Blvd F  
Ann Arbor MI 48108

Charles R Wright  
311 S St Marys St  
San Antonio TX 78205

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