



COUNTERPARTS

TƯƠNG HỮU ĐÔNG NAM Á

SITREP

Volume XVII

Issue 1

Summer 2015

2015 Reunion in Alexandria Featured Commemoration, Comradeship

This year's COUNTERPARTS reunion was held in Arlington, Virginia, to coordinate with the 40th anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam War on April 30, 1975. Our Commander, Grant McClure, kept members hopping from event to event for three solid days of activities.

First stop Thursday was a visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial with a group photo taken at the apex of the Vietnam Wall. A Vietnamese television reporter interviewed several members for their comments regarding their role as advisors.

Members then attended a Vietnamese ceremony located on a knoll not far from the Wall to recognize the fall of Saigon, which South Vietnamese refer to as "Black April." The Vietnamese expressed their gratitude to the Vietnam Veterans and we were asked to stand and be recognized. Commander McClure was invited to address the audience. Speaker at the event was Senator James Webb, Vietnam Veteran and author, who said "If there was a wall for the South Vietnamese soldiers killed in the War, it would be 4 times bigger than the Vietnam Wall... We soldiers did our duty and if our political leaders had done theirs, there may have been a better outcome. The "Watergate" Congress in early 1975 cut off 700 million dollars in aid to our allies while the Russians and Chinese continued to back the North Vietnamese."

Also present was ARVN hero and COUNTERPARTS member, Colonel Tran Ngoc "Harry" Hue, the main subject of the book, *Forgotten Army*". After the ceremony our members joined Vietnamese present to share memories of our experiences.

Friday's event was a ceremony honoring our allies at Arlington National Cemetery where an oak tree was planted and a bronze plaque dedicated to the Montagnard, Khmer, Khmer Krom, and Cham allies and their Advisors who fought the communists in the 2nd Indochina War. Grant McClure organized and presided over the ceremonies which included speakers from each of the ethnic groups honored. Commander McClure noted that:

"It's appropriate that this plaque rests here among America's fallen heroes on this hill overlooking the buildings in Washington, D.C., where decisions were made directing the counterinsurgency effort in Indo China. COUNTERPARTS organized this living memorial to honor our partners in battle who gave all and still suffer in Southeast Asia today because of their commitment to freedom over 40 years ago."

COUNTERPARTS Member and human rights activist Mike Bengé was also one of the speakers, reminding the audience that, "The Montagnards still suffer today in Vietnam. At this writing more than 400 Montagnards are languishing in prison there. We also mourn and honor our fallen Montagnard allies who for a small group lost as many soldiers as America in the War."

Montagnard leader Nay Rong who was jailed after the Fall in 1975 and later escaped and became a fugitive in the jungle for 13 years also spoke, saying, "The Montagnard people will never forget our COUNTERPARTS brothers/sisters, our closest friends who stood by us in the War. We don't ask for training now like we did in the Central Highlands, but stand beside us in the human rights struggle in Vietnam today."

Rufus Phillips, an early US Advisor and policy maker recalled his first experiences early in the war with the CIDG and local self-defense forces. "When I visited the villages I found the Khmer Krom armed with machetes and old French rifles. Give us arms to defend ourselves, they pleaded, so I arranged for the CIA to arm them," he said. "These people were fighting for their freedom."

Major General Potter from United States National Defense Corps, with 3-tours in Vietnam, made these remarks: "We're here in brotherhood to bring deep respect and honor to those who have passed away, those who survived communist prison camps, and the Gold Star families."

Cham leader Tan D. Trach also spoke. "We share the same history as the Vietnam Veteran; you are our true friends." He said, "We suffered fighting the communists. Without the Indigenous peoples of Indo China who aligned with the Americans in the fight, there would be many more names on the Vietnam Wall. We love America. Now we want to bring America home to the people of Indo China so they can experience freedom."

The Khmer, Khmer Krom, and the Cham had military units all along the border with Cambodia were advised by American counterparts. This living memorial recognizes them as freedom fighters battling the Hanoi oppressors from the North.

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Commander's Corner

Among the lessons-learned as the 2015 reunion host, my hiatus from the association mainstream from 1998 through 2002 had unintended consequences on loss of precious networking contacts I once nurtured and enjoyed in the Vietnamese community. In a flurry of e-mails that followed the 2014 reunion in Greensboro, NC, some members expressed interest in balancing future meetings by arranging for more inclusion of our Vietnamese comrades-in-arms to the venue.

By volunteering to host the reunion this year, one principle goal was focused on giving tribute to our Montagnard, Khmer Krom and Cham allies with the dedication of a living memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. Fulfilling the request for a balanced venue necessitated the reestablishment of ties to the Vietnamese community that I developed so well from 1990 to 1997. It could not have been more important to connect with Dr. Nguyen Thang, CEO of Boat People SOS in Falls Church. Thang was a key presenter at the Counterparts reunion in 1995, and I had volunteered my time on a couple of occasions to help BPSOS advocacy campaigns on Capitol Hill and the State Department. It was terrific to get together with Thang after 17-years, and to have the wonderful opportunity to again support a major initiative reflecting on the Vietnamese Diaspora that began in 1975, as we report in this issue on, "*Our Journey to Freedom.*"

There is a lot to reflect on in this issue of SITREP with respect to the reunion followed by the recognition Counterparts received at the Kennedy Center on June 19, 2015. Prodigious gratitude is due to Thang for helping us reestablish ties to the Vietnamese community that added greatly to the reunion activities at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial and the Flag Raising ceremony at Eden Center followed by another significant three-day event centered on the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Ascending as the association Commander in Greensboro last year, it was a delight to organize the 2015 reunion, and to linkup with BPSOS and other Vietnamese veteran organizations. There is much that we can and will do to be of support to these organizations going forward...to give of ourselves as we all did during our formative in-country years as advisors.

Worthy of special note in this issue of SITREP pertains to our 2015 reunion banquet dinner keynote address by Rufus Phillips who graciously accepted Distinguished Membership with Counterparts.

I am also very grateful to everyone who attended the 2015 reunion and eager with anticipation for details from Lewis Grisaffi who volunteered to host the 2016 reunion in San Diego, California.

Dr. Grant A. McClure
COUNTERPARTS Commander

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An honor guard composed of former Montagnard soldiers now living in North Carolina presented the colors and laid a commemorative wreath at the foot of the oak tree.

The ceremony closed with a Benediction given by Buddhist Monks, and Pastor Y Hin Nie, chaplain for the Montagnard people and former member of “The Forgotten Army” left behind in Vietnam.

Next stop for our group was a visit to the living memorials previously established by COUNTERPARTS in 1995 to pay tribute to the Vietnamese Rangers, known as Biet Dong Quan, and to the Lao Hmong “secret army” in 1997. After brief remarks at each of these memorials and the laying of a commemorative wreath, Commander McClure called us to attention as we saluted our valiant counterparts. We also visited and saluted the living memorial for the Vietnamese Airborne Division, advised by team 162, MACV. Saturday afternoon COUNTERPARTS was part of a joint flag raising ceremony at Saigon East Eden Center in solemn recognition of the Fall of Vietnam. COUNTERPARTS members were called before those in attendance and saluted by all Vietnamese present. Then each man announced his team number and where he served in Vietnam. All were greeted with applause.

The Vietnamese speaker uttered these poignant remarks, “We remember this dark day 40 years ago when we were betrayed. We lost the battle at the negotiation table in Paris, not on the battlefield. There is no freedom in Vietnam today; no honest person can survive there. Our cause was righteous.”

Andre LeCault, a Ranger advisor, presented a red beret to the Vietnamese Rangers in attendance, in recognition of the strong bond between them that survives today. After the ceremony, COUNTERPARTS and their Vietnamese allies adjourned to a Vietnamese restaurant where they were entertained by 1960’s music that was popular in Vietnam at the time. (Played by Vietnamese entertainers who were there in Vietnam)

Our traditional Banquet was held on Saturday evening. Over one hundred people, including 27 COUNTERPARTS members and wives attended. We were honored by a fascinating after dinner talk by Rufus Phillips, author of *Why Vietnam Matters*. His theme was “Lessons Learned in Vietnam.” Mr. Phillips and Colonel Edward Landsdale, were among the first advisors to work with the ethnic minorities.

“We didn’t understand the enemy, our allies, and ourselves, and how to fight the war early on,” Mr. Phillips explained. “Those back home directing the war disregarded the first hand experience of those of us there and overlooked the Vietnamese people. McNamara was more interested in charts and didn’t understand communist revolutionary warfare.”

Paying the highest compliment to those present, Phillips said, “We advisors were devoted to our allies. They were our best friends and we would lay down our lives for them. To win in war, you must know yourself, know your enemy, and help the local people win.”

Mr. Phillips also donated two of his books which were auctioned for \$150 each, to COUNTERPARTS members.

The after dinner program was provided by the Montagnard Culture Group from North Carolina presenting us with traditional Montagnard dancing accompanied by unique percussion and musical instruments. The Buddhist Cultural center also sponsored the appearance of three Cambodian dancers in their beautiful traditional costumes.

This reunion was one of the best ever. Thanks to Commander McClure for countless hours of planning and organization to bring it together-and starting the process going with Arlington Cemetery to obtain permission for the dedication of the plaque to our allies. Those present became a part of the history of the Indo China War. Don’t miss the next Reunion in San Diego.

Rich Webster, PAO



2015 Arlington Reunion Attendees.

2015 COUNTERPARTS BUSINESS MEETING REPORT

Commander Grant McClure began the meeting with an explanation of how the Hmong memorial was established 20 years ago at Arlington national cemetery to recognize the Hmong's great contribution to the American war effort. In the same way, the new memorial recognizing the Montagnard, Khmer, Khmer Krom, and Cham would be considered sacred ground for them. Only U.S. service members are allowed to be buried in Arlington, but through Grant's efforts, this stipulation was waived for our faithful allies.

Membership chairman John Haseman reported that there are now 238 active members, 120 paying annual membership dues, and 118 active lifetime members. When dues are not paid, John sends out an email reminder to individuals. Last year, of the 60 non-responders, 35 % paid their dues after a reminder. If there is no response to a second reminder, they are taken off the list to receive SITREP. After two years of no response, John sends final notice to non-responders. Every year, there is less money coming into COUNTERPARTS because of our ageing membership.

It was voted to increase dues to \$35 a year and \$350 lifetime to begin in year 2016.

There was a discussion of membership cards and handing out certificates for lifetime members. John will work on this. s. Jim Alkek, Webmaster of our Internet site, maintains a database of all COUNTERPARTS members, alive and deceased. John sends new members a patch and a copy of the last three SITREPS.

The next item was discussion of how to handle future expenses for those planning the annual Reunions. Many register to come at the last minute, making it hard to determine registration fees to cover expenses for transportation, hotel expenses, and banquet fees. It was decided by members that each would pay an additional 140 dollars to cover expenses for the present reunion.

Treasurer Jim O'Malley reported that there was 7,900 dollars in the bank at present and reminded us that every year revenue decreases because of the declining membership fees as those who drop off our roster. This dollar number will change after Reunion expenses are paid and he will report when the figure becomes available.

Ken Jacobsen, SITREP editor, encouraged those to write their stories about their experiences and send to him, as they become a part of the history of the Vietnam War and are forever archived in cyberspace and can be found on Google. A copy of the SITREP is forwarded to the Texas Archives of The Vietnam War. Bui Lam, a former ARVN officer, prints our SITREP, and Bill Laurie mails them to members.

Andre LeCault suggested that COUNTERPARTS members begin publishing a short biographies in SITREP . We are the only witnesses to what we did. We should have a responsibility to do this. Terry Turner added that the stories we tell at our reunion, we don't tell to anyone else, but they are interesting and important to be remembered.

Max Lund reported that his wife Carol, who has become our official historian for each reunion, will continue taking pictures and producing a book of pictures for each reunion. A number of past reunions books were on display in the hospitality suite for those to view.

Tommy Daniels gave a report on Cambodia Corps, the NGO that provides college scholarships to Montagnard students in Eastern Cambodia. Our present COUNTERPARTS Scholar Sev Yem, is a Jarai from Ratanakiri Province and is studying to become a teacher. He stays at the CCI Indigenous Center in Phnom Penh. COUNTERPARTS and individual members have given generously to CCI in the past. CCI has helped 36 Montagnard students to obtain college educations in Cambodia, to include two medical doctors. Members were invited to stay at the center if they ever visit Cambodia. Tommy Daniels reported that 95% of money goes to students.

It was moved to fund Cambodia Corps and Vinh Son Orphanage. Authority was given to Grant and Jim to decide the amount when finances are settled after the reunion. Max Lund reported from his visit in Vietnam that the Vinh Son orphanage was very clean and well run by the Catholic nuns and provides excellent services to Vietnamese and Montagnard kids.

Mike McMunn operator of our Village Market reported that we have 239 MACV patches and a profit of \$400 last year. He noted that the cost of mailing the store's items to Reunions is expensive and eats into the profits.

Mike Bengé reported on the web site that he and others have established to combat the leftist interpretation and history of the Vietnam War. See VVFH.org if you want information to combat the myths of the Vietnam War.

A committee was formed to examine the financial future of COUNTERPARTS and long range plans for our organization and to report at next year's reunion. Volunteers were: Terry Turner, Jim Coolican, John Haseman, Grant McClure, and Tom Polston.

Representatives from the BOAT People SOS gave a presentation at the end of the meeting and are now the proud recipients of our memorial board and will display it at their headquarters.

Subsequent to the Business Meeting being adjourned, Louis Grissafi volunteered to host the 2016 Reunion in San Diego next April (Date to be determined)

.....Rich Webster, PAO

“Our Journey to Freedom, 40 Years of Vietnamese American Experiences” Event held at Kennedy Center, June 19 2015

Report by Grant McClure

COUNTERPARTS had arranged for Rufus Philips and Mike Bengé receive the special box seats at the Kennedy Center’s Eisenhower Theater/concert hall for the Friday gala event sponsored by Boat People SOS (BPSOS). Rufus was unable to attend as his wife had taken ill. Receiving no notification from within our ranks [other than Bill Ridley] of other members that planned to attend, I accepted the other seat next to Mike. These seats run \$500 each, and it was very kind of Dr. Thang to extend this gesture to COUNTERPARTS as special honorees. Mike’s good friend and fellow *Hanoi Hilton* hotel guest, Capt. Red McDaniel, sat to his left, and Dr. Thang and his lovely wife Phuong sat directly behind us. There were a total of eight individuals or groups being honored. They were;

Private First Class Tran Van Bay - posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for saving the life of an American Marine

Captain Eugene “Red” McDaniel - for his extraordinary service to America, his exemplary conduct while in captivity, and fight for the cause of freedom

Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) - for his tireless support of Vietnamese refugees and fight for human rights in Southeast Asia

The ARVN 18th Infantry Division - under command of Gen Le Minh Dao made a heroic stand for two week against overwhelming communist forces in 1975.

COUNTERPARTS

The “Saigon Heroes,” - former government officials at the State Department that tirelessly assisted with the rescue and resettlement of Boat People and those interned in refugee camps around Southeast Asia.

The “Immortals,” - Vietnamese high ranking officers who committed suicide rather than give up to advancing NVA in 1975

Re-education camp survivors

The venue moved quickly from one song to another interspersed with the presentations to honorees. All of a sudden, a large picture of the COUNTERPARTS logo flashed on the huge screen on stage and the deep distinctive voice of Tucker Smallwood began to cogently narrate the U.S. advisory story as a collage of our photos were displayed in rapid succession. Sitting in the box seats as it began, I was tapped on the should by an anxious Dr. Thang advising that we had to quickly get down to the stage. Alas, it took a while to meander through the back corridors to the back of the stage. Mike and I completely missed the presentation by Tucker, and by the time we arrived a stage right, the audience had already applauded and a dance group was on stage.

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(From page 5)

It turns out rather fortuitously that Bill Ridley was sitting in the front row of the orchestra section where I would have also sat had Rufus attended.

Bill was ushered to the stage and graciously accepted the award on behalf of COUNTERPARTS. Bill did not know if we were there, and timing was everything at an event like this.

Mike and I were very pleased Bill received the beautiful award, a crystal facsimile of an Asian phoenix dramatically “rising from the ashes” symbolic of the South Vietnamese people and their power to regenerate, rise above and overcome tremendous challenges and hardships. The artwork was masterfully handcrafted by Nguyen Hung an artist in Atlanta, Georgia. Thang extended an invitation for Hip Ksor’s Jarai dance group to present Montagnard traditional dress, music and dance at the event.

Same goes for the Heritage Banquet that Bill, Mike and I attended on Saturday evening from 6:00PM to 10:30PM at the Crystal Gateway Marriott (hotel right next to the Westin where we conducted our recent reunion).

The Heritage Banquet expanded not only on the theme of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Vietnamese-American experience, but also was an evening spent giving tribute to BPSOS and the many leaders and contributors that played an important role over the course of 35-years assisting boat people, camp refugees, and former re-education camp returnees. Bill, Mike and I were accorded VIP status at this banquet, and many times performers and speakers gave recognition to our service in Vietnam. It was truly an honor to be among these fine people, and it is actually we American advisors that salute them for their courage and their remarkable resilience which can be said to be a major contributing reason they are with us at events in Washington, DC. 40 years later and what they had to go through to survive.

....Grant

The Honoree Dedication to COUNTERPARTS in the Event Program

(Presenter: Ms. Kim-Tai Garcia, an Amerasian resettled under the Amerasian Homecoming Act)

“The Counterparts are the network of former Advisors and their counterparts who served throughout Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Advisors served from 1954 through 1975 and fought shoulder to shoulder with Vietnamese military and civilian units throughout the country, in cities and remote hamlets, in the countryside and in the delta, living and sometimes dying side-by-side with their Vietnamese counterparts. Many Advisors remained with their Vietnamese counterparts to the very end and left on the final flight out of Vietnam, on April 30, 1975. Established in 1990 to reconnect former Advisors with their South Vietnamese brothers in arms, Counterparts now has over six hundred registered members from the United States, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Australia, Canada and France.”

*The link to the YouTube posting of the COUNTERPARTS Tribute is at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3n5gJS21q08>*

COUNTERPARTS Dedicate a Living Memorial to Vietnam War Allies in Arlington National Cemetery

By
Mike Bengé

April 30 is Black Friday, or to some, the Day of Shame. This is a day of remembrance and reflection for the free Vietnamese, for April 30, 1975 is the day that the communist North Vietnamese overran Saigon and gobbled up the Republic of South Vietnam – like a snake swallowing a frog.

Forty years to the day after the end of the Vietnam War, COUNTERPARTS consecrated a living memorial comprising a granite stone bearing a bronze plaque and a Pin Oak tree planted nearby in the hallowed and sacred ground of Arlington National Cemetery. The inscription on the Plaque was:

“DEDICATED IN HONOR OF U.S. BATTLEFIELD ALLIES, THE INDIGENOUS MONTAGNARDS, KHMER, KHMER KROM AND CHAM COMBAT VETERANS AND THEIR AMERICAN ADVISORS, WHO FOUGHT VALIANTLY TOGETHER IN THEIR QUEST TO PRESERVE LIBERTY AND FREEDOM DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. THEY WILL FOREVER BE REMEMBERED FOR THEIR COURAGE AND VALOR...



MOURNED FOR THEIR SACRIFICE

COUNTERPARTS VETERANS ASSOCIATION, MAY 1, 2015”

About 100 people attended the dedication, a mixture of Montagnards, Khmer, Khmer Krom and Cham, some in uniform and some not, along with a few media people and members of COUNTERPARTS. Also present were a number of Montagnards who escaped prison camps in Vietnam and fled to Cambodia to continue their resistance, and fought a guerrilla war against the communists for 16 years. With this memorial, COUNTERPARTS ensured that these allies, often referred to as “The Forgotten Armies,” will be remembered and not forgotten.

COUNTERPARTS Commander Grant McClure said, “We organized this living memorial to honor our partners in battle who gave all and still suffer in Southeast Asia today because of their commitment to freedom over 40 years ago. These people lost a large share of their adult male population fighting alongside Americans continue to suffer generational religious and

human rights persecution by the communist Vietnamese. It’s appropriate that this plaque rests here among America’s fallen heroes on this hill overlooking the buildings in Washington, D.C., where decisions were made directing the counterinsurgency effort in Indochina.”

It is also where the decision was made to concede Vietnam to the communists.

COUNTERPARTS also established living memorials at the Arlington National Cemetery to pay tribute to the Vietnamese Rangers (Biet Dong Quan) in 1994, the Lao Hmong “secret army” in 1997.

Michael Bengé, a member of Counterparts, spent 11 years in Vietnam as a Foreign Service Officer, including five years as a Prisoner of War (1968-73) and is a student of South East Asian Politics. He is very active in advocating for human rights and religious freedom and has written extensively on these subjects.

Dues Notice!

Remember, Dues increase to \$35.00 a year or \$350 for Life

Membership beginning in 2016

Contact John Haseman at jhaseman@earthlink.net

The

Hoà Hào of the Mekong Delta: A Forgotten Minority

By

Gordon Bare

Sadec Province sits smack in the middle of the Mekong Delta between the two major branches of the Mekong River and half way between the South China Sea and the Cambodian border. It is a highly fertile and hence densely settled region with a province population of just over a quarter million in the late 1960s. The Hoà Hào tradition of reformed Buddhism was practiced by about half the population; the rest were other strains of Buddhism and assorted animist and local sects. About three percent were Christian. Much of the history of the province and its status during the war as among the most secure and prosperous in the country hangs on its majority of Hoà Hào and their cohesiveness and political identity.

Founded in 1939 by the charismatic Huynh Phu So, a native of nearby An Giang Province described by Hoà Hào faithful as a living Buddha, the faith appealed to Vietnamese nationalism and to peasant farmers subject to absentee landlords. Huynh Phu So preached in Sadec in 1945 and 1946 and converted thousands. Most villages have one or more Hoà Hào temples in a distinct and austere but attractive architectural style decorated with Buddhist symbols. The sect came to number some two million adherents in the central and western Mekong Delta. After World War II, the movement added a military component and exercised local political control over a large portion of the Delta.

The political-military geography of Sadec reflects both the greater predominance of the Hoà Hào in the western and central parts of the province and the greater percentage of absentee landholding by both the French and the Vietnamese elites in Sadec's eastern district of Duc Ton. There was a high correlation between areas of Viet Minh and later Viet Cong strength on the one hand, and absentee land holding and a relative paucity of Hoà Hào on the other.

After World War II, the Hoà Hào became engaged in a complex three-way struggle with both the restored French colonial government with its substantially Catholic support, and with the emerging Communist insurgency. The Viet Minh viewed the Hoà Hào as a major competitor and threat to its nationalist credentials and peasant support, and in 1947 they captured and executed Huynh Phu So. Against this background, the Hoà Hào became staunchly anti-Communist and cut deals with first the French and then the successor Saigon government for recognition and a degree of local authority. Two Hoà Hào generals, Tran Van Xoai and Ba Cut, ruled much of Sadec in tacit partnership with the French. These generals were brought under tighter control by the Diem regime in the post-independence period and many of the Hoà Hào militias were co-opted into Saigon's territorial forces.

Some units, however, remained outside Saigon's control until 1965 when a Sadec district chief and his American advisor convinced one of the final holdouts, a Major Hieu, to rally to the government with his forces. He and his unit were inducted as a territorial force battalion and given the job of securing the road that leads west from Sadec. Lieutenant Larry Hunt, an Army advisor in Sadec in 1967, reports that Major Hieu asked for his assistance in getting machine guns from the government for his unit which was initially not entirely trusted. A subsequent advisor, LT Merek Musa, reports setting up a VC flag stitchery and belt buckle shop for trade material with the American aviation and other rear echelon units at Can Tho in return for weapons to equip the unit. Some of these weapons were buried for use in the event of a Communist victory or if the alliance with Saigon deteriorated. By my own time in 1969-70, the units were fully integrated into the Regional Forces and among the best fighting forces in Sadec. The Hoà Hào battalion probably did more to make Sadec a secure place than any other unit.

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The anti-Communism of the Hoa Hao continued through the American war and was greatly appreciated by the American advisors fortunate enough to be stationed in their area. On at least one occasion, a MATT team was invited to live in a Hoa Hao temple, a well-built structure and a pleasant alternative to plywood and sandbag hut. It was greatly appreciated. This invitation spoke volumes about local sentiment and the anti-Communism of the Hoa Hao.

Even after their reconciliation with Saigon, the Hoa Hao retained an administrative, social and political structure paralleling that of the central government. They had an elected Hoa Hao provincial committee, district leaders, and farmers' associations as well as their religious bodies. The Saigon government was astute in recognizing the Hoa Hao could be politically co-opted and a useful military ally. Freedom of worship and a share of development monies created a stable and mutually beneficial partnership.

The Hoa Hao had the most potent political organization in the province and exercised major influence in the village elections I witnessed in the late 60s.

After the Communist victory in 1975, there was little reporting in the American press and there is little information available to this day about what happened in Sadec and elsewhere in the Delta. Refugees who made it out have written of their experiences but most of these accounts have received little attention outside the refugee community. At the least, the Hoa Hao did not fare well. An unknown number were among the boat people. The new regime dissolved the sect's charities and organizations for youth, women, and similar groups, seized their facilities, and banned their publications. Hanoi Liberation Radio announced the arrest of Hoa Hao leaders and the regime installed their own compliant *Quisling* as official head. There is some evidence based on Hanoi's propaganda that selected executions of former GVN personnel of the Hoa Hao persuasion were intended as explicit warnings. Some Hoa Hao areas continued to resist for an extended period but were overwhelmed by regular North Vietnamese Army units. Major Hieu and several other Hoa Hao officers were murdered in re-education camps.

I returned to Vietnam and visited Sadec in November 2013. None of the once ubiquitous Hoa Hao temples appear to have survived. In June 2013, Radio Free Asia reported a police attack on a Hoa Hao attempt to celebrate the seventy-fourth anniversary of its founding at a pagoda in An Giang province neighboring Sadec. The State Department's 2013 report on Religious Freedom states "... government practices and bureaucratic impediments restrict religious freedom. Unregistered and unrecognized religious groups were potentially vulnerable to harassment, as well as coercive and punitive actions by national and local authorities. Authorities in An Giang and Dong Thap (which now includes Sadec) provinces continue to harass and abuse followers of the unsanctioned Traditional Hoa Hao Buddhist Church."

Freedom of religion and fundamental human rights are but a distant dream to the people of Vietnam.

COUNTERPARTS member Gordon Bare, Colonel, USAR (Ret), served as a Phoenix and economic development officer in Sadec in 1969-70. He is writing a memoir about Sadec province history and would welcome additional information on Sadec and the Hoa Hao. He can be reached at gordonbare@msn.com.

BULLETIN BOARD

The Soldiers Registry

(Thanks to COUNTERPARTS Member Nevin Williams) The Army Historical Foundation is going to build the U.S. Army Museum at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. When complete it will be the one museum that covers the Army's history and mission since it's founding in 1775. The Army Museum will change that. The Foundation is currently recruiting sponsors and it is happy to accept donations from any source. If you wish to support this effort with a donation, go to armyhistory.org.

One does not have to donate one penny to be recognized by the Museum. If you ever served in the Army, including any of its components, you are welcome to make an entry in the *Soldiers Registry*. The Registry already exists online. Once the Museum is built and open to visitors, the Registry will be available to visitors by means of kiosks throughout the museum. Visitors will be able to look up their friends and relatives and see what they did while in the Army. What a great opportunity for our children and grandchildren to visually see that their kinfolk were a part of the Army's past operations.

Each member of COUNTERPARTS who served in the Army should make an entry in the registry. Some of our members are already listed. I know that, because I put them there! Bill Laurie is there as is Bob Gilbert and Gary Cummings. Go to armyhistory.org, select SOLDIERS REGISTRY, then select SEARCH THE REGISTRY and then enter one of the previously mentioned names—and see what comes up!

While there, you can make your own entry. If you have an award with a citation, you can enter that. Or you can enter your dates of service, dates of combat service, primary military duties, military schooling and awards. You can also enter major battles and/or campaign credits. Remember, that you all earned at least one foreign award, the Vietnam Campaign Medal that was presented to you by the government of the Republic of Vietnam. Also, most units (including MACV) were awarded two Vietnamese Unit Awards, the Cross of Gallantry with Palm and the Civil Actions Medal with Palm. Additionally, you were awarded the National Defense Medal and the Vietnam Service Medal, and most likely, two overseas bars. You can also upload a photograph. Make sure you select the MACV patch; insignia of your grade will automatically be added, assuming you enter that information on the form.

The form calls for an entry "submitted by" and "Relationship to Honoree." You can enter "self" and nothing will show in the Registry or you can enter "*COUNTERPARTS--AN ORGANIZATION OF ADVISORS, SECOND INDOCHINA WAR & THEIR COUNTERPARTS*"

Let's see if we can get all our members in the Registry. Remember, there is no cost involved. Anybody can make an entry for another person, so if you have information on any deceased Army members you can also make entries for them. Before doing so, check and make sure they are not already in the Registry. ***If anybody needs assistance, just email me (Nevin Williams) at phanrang3@gmail.com and I will assist.***



COUNTERPARTS Member, ARVN Hero, Tran Ngoc ("Harry") Hue Subject of Documentary

(From COUNTERPARTS member Bill Ridley) On TUE 16 JUNE I attended, along with Harry, a documentary competition for high schools nationwide. This event was part of the National History Day competition held annually at the University of Maryland. Each contestant had 15-20 minutes to present their documentary and then be questioned by the judges. The documentary subject for two high school girls from Kansas (Andrea Sodergren and Hailey Reed) was Tran Ngoc (Harry) Hue. It was entitled an "**Unsung Hero**" and highlighted Harry's military career with the ARVN and post war period, including,

- Military school experience and years as a young officer
- Heroics in Hue during the Tet offensive and award of the Silver Star
- Capture in Laos in 1971 during Operation Lam Son 719
- The years as a POW and then in the Re-Education camp
- Lastly, the immigration of Harry and his family to the USA

Harry Hue at Ceremony

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Another attendee in addition to Harry and myself was Andrew Wiest, author of "Vietnam's Forgotten Army." This is the book which documented Harry's Vietnam wartime experience and post war struggle.

The documentary was very well done. This link: <http://lowellmilkcenter.org/tran-ngoc-hue/> will provide more information.

Reunion with a Counterpart's Daughter.

(From COUNTERPARTS member John Haseman)

I was the Deputy District Senior Advisor in Mo Cay District, Kien Hoa Province, from 1972-73. The District Chief at the time was LTC Nguyen Van Cu, a complex maverick of an officer, but of great personal charisma and courage on the battlefield. One quiet weekend I took a photo of him and several of his children, who were visiting their dad for the weekend.

LTC Cu was killed in Action in July 1972, and his District Senior Advisor, Major Byron Reed, was wounded in Action in a big enemy ambush. I wrote an article about LTC Cu that was published in Vietnam Magazine (*Nguyen Van Cu: The Maverick of Mo Cay*, Vietnam Magazine, October 1992). Many years later I was surprised to receive an e-mail from Yvonne Nguyen, one of LTC Cu's daughters in that weekend visit picture I took in 1972. She had tracked me down after seeing the article about her father on the Internet. At her urging, I made a short visit to meet her and her family and learn about their lives since I left Mo Cay in 1973. It turned out to be a very interesting weekend.

The short story is, many of LTC Cu's children escaped from Saigon in 1975 and were sponsored by a church in Wichita, KS. In the years since then the family has done just fine, although scattered to Georgia, California, and Kansas. Yvonne is married, her husband, formerly a surgeon in Vietnam, escaped in 1989 (one of the last "boat people") and settled into a new career as a chiropractor.

The one thing I told her I would like to do was visit the Vietnam Memorial in Westminster, a place she knew well. But when we arrived there on a Saturday afternoon the small plaza was thronged with Vietnamese, many wearing the uniforms they had once worn in combat. The date, 19 June, was the RVN Armed Forces Day! As far as I know only two of us were advisors and we were both recognized and thanked by several of the speakers. To me the important aspect of the ceremony was the rise to significance of the third generation of the original Vietnamese refugees. Several young people served as interpreters for Vietnamese-language speakers.

The mayor of Westminster, Mr. Tri Ta, became the first Vietnamese American elected mayor of a city in the U.S. He came to the US in 1992 with his parents and family. Adjacent Garden Grove also has a Vietnamese major -- Mr. Bao Nguyen was born in a Thai refugee camp and came to the U.S. at the age of three months. Three of the five city councilmen in Garden Grove are Vietnamese-Americans.

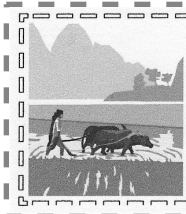
I had the chance to speak with several of the uniformed Vietnamese veterans, several of whom had journeyed to Arlington to join us in our reunion activities at Arlington Cemetery.

For those who have not seen the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Westminster, the statue features two men -- one a Vietnamese soldier, the other his American advisor. It may be the only statuary in the US in which the Counterpart relationship is depicted.

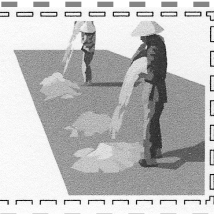
What was to be a quiet visit to a beautiful memorial turned into an even more meaningful ceremony and a highlight of a meaningful weekend for me.



John Haseman with LTC Cu's Daughter Yvonne



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Ride the Thunder: A Vietnam War Story of Victory and Betrayal

(Comment provided by Bill Laurie) It's 40 years later than it should be but at least this got made. Haven't seen it, can't offer comments, but book was good and people involved are very sincere and dedicated. Will be watching for it. Was highly impressed with the RVN TQLC (Marines) I knew in Viet Nam. Great, fine people, dedicated to a free Viet Nam.

The movie website is at <http://www.ridethethundermovie.com/> More information also is at <http://www.wnd.com/2015/05/vietnam-war-story-takes-america-by-storm/>

Books, Events and News of Interest

(Comment provided by Bill Laurie) *True Faith and Allegiance* by Mike McDermott, U.S. advisor to 5th RVN Airborne battalion during An Loc siege, which in a number of ways resembled Stalingrad. McDermott has nothing but high praise for his ARVN paratroop comrades and their tenacity and determination in the face of devastating NVA artillery and ground attacks. Well worth the read. Important addition to advisor genre. McDermott's closing comments reflect his anger and disgust over abandonment of RVN by a fickle U.S. government and ignorant U.S. public.

[True Faith and Allegiance - University of Alabama Press](#)

Team 19 In Vietnam: By LTC David E Millie, MBE, Australian Army, Ret. Describes the operation of the Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam (AATTV) and Advisory team 19 in Quang Tri province. For more info on the book go to:

http://www.kentuckypress.com/live/title_detail.php?titleid=3629#.U0Gyl6JWHFw

Washington Times Editorial on the 40th Anniversary Commemoration; A story of the Vietnam War

(Sent by Mike Benge) The favorite myth of the left survives in a Pentagon scheme of commemoration. Editorial comments from the *Washington Times*

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/11/editorial-vietnam-war-myth-survives-in-pentagon-co/>

Reflections on the Wall

(Comments by Rich Webster)

All,

I wrote this for our local paper when the Traveling Vietnam Wall arrived in my hometown of Jacksonville, Illinois, this week. Most Vietnam Veterans never had the experience that the advisors had with their COUNTERPARTS, so I wanted to let them know how much the Vietnamese remembered and honored their service. The idea sprang from how all the Vietnamese honored us in DC.

As you all know, most of the Vets were beaten down by the media and the anti-war left when they returned home from the War. It could be said that the Vietnam Vet fought two Wars, the one in Vietnam and the other when he returned home.

It's absolutely amazing how many Vietnam Vets emerge out of these small rural towns and communities to put on their Veterans hats when the Traveling Wall arrives. For years they kept their identity hidden, for the image of them crafted in the dominant media was disrespect and contempt.

It's about time the history changes, and that's why our stories that appear in our COUNTERPARTS SITREP are a valuable part of the accurate picture of the Vietnam War. Once there, they became a part of the history forever.

Thanks,
Rich Webster

<http://myjournalcourier.com/article/20150624/news/306249996>

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.

Rice Paddy Recon, A Marine Officer's Second Tour in Vietnam, 1968-1970. Andrew Finlayson. 320 pages, ISBN 978-1-4766-1818-0. McFarland, www.mcfarlandpub.com Available on Amazon.com.

Andrew Finlayson is a member of COUNTERPARTS. This book was given the featured review in the June 2015 Naval Institute *Proceedings*.

A young U.S. Marine officer recounts his experiences of the Vietnam War over a nineteen-month period. He graphically describes what it was like to perform three distinct combat missions: long-range ground reconnaissance in the Annamite Mountains of I Corps, infantry operations in the rice paddies and mountains of Quang Nam Province and special police operations for the CIA in Tay Ninh Province. Using Marine Corps official unit histories, CIA documents, and his weekly letters home, the author relies almost exclusively on primary sources in providing an accurate and honest account of combat at the small unit level. Of particular interest is his description of his assignment to the CIA as a Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) advisor in Tay Ninh Province, where he participated in several secret missions as part of the controversial Phoenix Program. The name and contribution of the CIA's most valuable spy during the war, the famous "Tay Ninh Source," is revealed.

Andrew R. Finlayson served for 25 years in the U. S. Marine Corps retiring as a Colonel and went on to work in the defense industry in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Romania. He is the author of several defense and intelligence related articles and studies. He lives in Morrisville, North Carolina.

Losing Vietnam: How America Abandoned Southeast Asia. MG Ira Hunt, US Army (Ret). Lexington, University Press of Kentucky. \$40.00

This is one of the few books to focus objectively on the period 1972-1975, and to use statistics and figure to demonstrate the influence of US Policy decisions, notably the US withdrawal of support from the RVN in that period. MG Hunt was the Deputy Commander of the US Support Activities Group (USSAG) HQ in Thailand. USSAG coordinated the US Assistance effort to the RVN after US withdrawal. The book uses detailed analysis based on MG Hunt's own experience and presents its conclusions based on this analysis, rather than political opinions. The evidence makes it clear that, to quote the review in the US Naval Institute *Proceedings* "contrary to popular myth, the Vietnamese military did not collapse as soon as Americans left.... In the face of continuing offenses by the NVA the ARVN fought well and defeated a number of determined NVA attacks, often inflicting very heavy casualties. Morale in the NVA during 1974 had seriously deteriorated"

The book's painstaking analysis demonstrates how the most decisive turning point in the War came when the US Congress voted in 1974 to essentially cut off aid to Vietnam. That action and President Theiu's decision to abandon the northern parts of Vietnam in early 1975 set the stage for the ultimate tragedy later that year.

Losing Vietnam shows insights into the War that are worth examining. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger observed in a letter to MG Hunt, "It is the first book I have come across which actually quantifies with solid facts the impact of Congressional aid cuts to South Vietnam and Cambodia"

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MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

John T. (Jack) Quinn, Brigadier General, US Army, (retired)

December 24, 2008. BG Quinn entered military service as a private in 1946, achieved the rank of sergeant and then earned an appointment to West Point. During his long and distinguished career, BG Quinn commanded units at company, battalion, and brigade levels with the 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, the 101st Airborne Division, and the 1st, the 4th, and the 25th Infantry Divisions. His three combat tours in Vietnam included service as an advisor to the 20th Vietnamese Ranger Battalion, XO of the 2/28th Infantry (Black Lions), and commanding officer of the 1/14th Infantry (Golden Dragons). He also served as Assistant Division Commander of the 1st, 2nd, and 25th Infantry Divisions. He was a member of COUNTERPARTS.

Arthur N. Rogers III, Captain, US Army, (retired)

January 2, 2009. He was 67 years of age. Commissioned in 1964, Captain Rogers served in the Dominican Republic and during his second tour of duty in Vietnam in 1969, while serving as an advisor to the South Vietnamese; he was severely injured when his jeep hit a roadside bomb. He served on Advisory Teams 49 and 78. From 1974 to 1977, Captain Rogers was the director of veterans' affairs at Towson University. He served his community on numerous boards and commissions in Baltimore County. He was a COUNTERPARTS member.

Vernon Stubbs, US Navy

March 15, 2015 at the age of 89 in Plymouth, MN. Vernon served in the Navy as a combat decorated sailor and served with the US Navy, Military Advisory Assistance Group-Vietnam (MAAG-V). He was a member of COUNTERPARTS.

Jerry Lee Weldon, US Army

October 13, 2014, in Lincoln, AL. He was 64 years of age. He served in Vietnam as a medic on Advisory Team 31. He was a truck driver for 41 years following his military service. Jerry was a member of COUNTERPARTS.

Carl F. Bernard, Colonel, US Army, (retired)

March 4, 2008 at Fort Belvoir, VA, at the age of 81. Enlisting in the US Marine Corps in 1944, he served in the Pacific and China. Colonel Bernard's long Army career began in 1947 and included duty as a lieutenant on Task Force Smith in Korea in 1950. Landing in Korea with L Company, 21st Infantry, his position was overrun in the first engagement between US and North Korean forces. He led a group of survivors through enemy lines and back to US positions. Rejoining his unit, it was again overrun a few days later at Chochiwon. For his actions, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The citation reads, in part: "Lieutenant Bernard's aggressive attacks on the enemy tanks and machine-gun emplacement inspired the outnumbered men of his command to fight with him, until out of ammunition, against overwhelming odds." In 1960, he was dispatched to Laos, where he worked with CIA officer William E. Colby in villages of the Hmong hill tribes as part of White Star Mobile Training Teams. He developed an affinity for the Hmong people and became their tireless advocate. He also became a persistent critic of what he considered the US government's abandonment of the Hmong to the Pathet Lao communists after the fall of Saigon. He helped develop the curriculum at the then-newly formed John F. Kennedy special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, NC. He was a Counterparts member.

MAJ George "Rick" F. Gandenberger III

May 19, 2015. Former President of Lakeland Personnel, Inc., past President Dover Chamber of Commerce, Graduate of Rutgers University in 1967, MBA, US Army Command and General Staff College 1981, He was a service disabled Vietnam combat Veteran, US Army Ranger Small Unit Advisor, MAT IV-30, MACV 1969-1970, Rick left the Army Reserves after 25 years of service rising to the rank of Major in 1987. He held a Combat Infantry Badge and a Bronze Star. Rick was a member of COUNTERPARTS

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