



THE WESTMORELAND SCHOLAR FOUNDATION

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"Highlands... to the Heartland." Distinguished Veterans Join Drive for Reconciliation with Former Enemy.

One holds the first Medal of Honor awarded in Vietnam. Two others collectively spent 15 years in Vietnamese Prisoner of War Camps. Another, after whom the foundation is named, served as Commander of the United States Military Assistance Command in Vietnam. Each of these men helped wage war against what was then North Vietnam. Each has now committed themselves to rebuilding a bridge of understanding with the people of Vietnam through the formation of the educational, nonprofit Westmoreland Scholar Foundation.

"I want to do something personally in this reconciliation," says foundation Executive Director, and first man to be awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam conflict, Colonel Roger Donlon (Retired). "It's been 30 years and I want the chance to help... if we don't act now, the current situation could reverse itself."

Named in honor of General and Mrs. William C. Westmoreland, the Westmoreland Scholar Foundation seeks to speed the process of reconciliation with Vietnam by providing scholarships for young students active in the Vietnamese-American community who have strong academic ability and high potential for service to the larger community, provide opportunities for short-term study and humanitarian service in Vietnam, and provide opportunities for young Vietnamese students to study in the United States.

Encouraged to take an active role in rebuilding relations between the United States and Vietnam, Col. Roger Donlon was moved to take action after traveling to Vietnam to find the graves of the young Vietnamese who served under him in the mid 1960's. To his amazement, Donlon found his former adversaries eager to help in his quest. "I went back into the mountains of the Highlands with the help of a former adversary and visited the graves of 50 of my soldiers. I couldn't believe this guy would help." Donlon was even more amazed on a second trip to the Highlands when he wanted to establish perpetual care of the overgrown cemetery. "My former adversaries and in some cases the children of my former adversaries joined me in clearing away the jungle, and putting my men's headstones back in place... that's what triggered me to listen to the people who called for reconciliation."

Col. Donlon credits RADM (Retired) Earl P. "Buddy" Yates for conceptualizing the foundation's purpose and focus. Donlon also believes the commitment of the late Ambassador William E. Colby who was the charter co-chairman, former POW's Everett Alvarez and Commander (Retired) Paul Galanti and Foundation Chairman Mr. John Allen all gave him the energy and courage to undertake this important mission.