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*More Than a Soldier's War: Pacification in Vietnam.*  
By Edward P. Metzner. 224 pp. College Station:  
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**U.S. MILITARY ADVISOR RECALLS ROLE IN VIETNAM  
THROUGH FOUR TOURS OF DUTY**

As he volunteered for his fourth tour of duty in Vietnam, Col. Edward P. Metzner's fellow officers joked that he was more of a missionary than a military man. "In fact, they were close to correct," Metzner writes in his new book, *More Than a Soldier's War*.

As a senior official in the Pacification Program, Metzner was an advisor dedicated to making the rural Vietnamese population secure enough to live normal lives and resist the propaganda and terrorism of the Viet Cong. *More Than a Soldier's War* describes his efforts in intimate detail, producing what Douglas Pike, director of the University of California Indochina Studies Project calls "an excellent work . . . mercifully free of abstract pontification." Pike adds that the University of California Vietnam War Archive, "with its sections on psychological warfare; propaganda analysis; political warfare . . . perhaps a total of 150,000 pages—contains nothing that matches [*More Than a Soldier's War*]."

"Advising was new to us," Metzner writes. "To my knowledge, only three such experiences existed previously in all of U.S. military history: in China during World War II, in Greece after that war, and during the Korean War. . . . no guidelines or accumulated wisdom were passed on to future advisors," he adds. For his efforts, the South Vietnam government made Metzner an honorary citizen, and he was probably the American most decorated by the former ally.

Working closely with military leaders in several South Vietnam provinces, Metzner found the best and worst of personalities. General Le Minh Dao and Col. Tran Van Phuc were dedicated men full of integrity, perseverance, and friendship who accepted Metzner as a member of their team. For his actions, Dao served seventeen years in a Hanoi prison; Phuc's fate is unknown. Other officers, such as Lt. Col. Nguyen Van Tai, gave every appearance of being a petty and corrupt opportunist.

Just after the Tet offensive, Metzner notes, "my preoccupation with security and the



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amount of time spent on operations made me all but forget the other side of pacification. Like so many others, I was beginning to equate winning the war with killing the enemy." But in Chuong Thien province at that time, rural development teams under him were training teachers and medical personnel to go into rural areas where the Viet Cong had long-standing control. Some team members spent their own money to buy cement and build a hospital helipad; others started their own effort to distribute clothes to refugees. "I recognized the unwritten courage and dedication required to achieve it," he writes.

Metzner reminds readers that the Vietnam Memorial in Washington lists only the nation's military dead; it does not include the civilians who were there, in a purely humanitarian role. Metzner's own secretary from the <sup>V.A.</sup> U.S. Joint General Staff in Saigon, where he remained until August, 1974, volunteered to escort war orphans to the U.S. and died with them when the transport plane crashed on takeoff.

*More Than a Soldier's War* is dedicated to the author's Vietnamese-American family; in 1974, he married Pham Thi Cam Nhung, a teacher in Saigon, and with desperate but successful efforts, he managed to get her children out of the country so that they could begin new lives together in America.

Robert W. Komer, who was chief advisor on pacification and an assistant to President Lyndon Johnson, says that "*More Than a Soldier's War* is a powerful, affecting story of distinguished service up to a tragic end." According to William E. Colby, author of *Lost Victory* and former ambassador, "Colonel Metzner's account of the workings of the pacification program at the local level of the provinces, districts and villages of Vietnam fills an important gap in the history of the war there, which is otherwise too dominated by the 'soldier's war' which most Americans experienced. He is honest in his frustrations, but also in his recognition that the program did have a major impact in bringing peace and progress to the countryside where most Vietnamese lived."

**About the Author.** Edward P. Metzner's military service spanned nearly four decades. A native of New York City, he attended Fordham College and the University of Omaha, as well as several military institutions. More recently, he has served as coordinator of employment programs for the Private Industry Council of Monterey County. He and his wife live in Salinas, California. *More Than a Soldier's War* is available from booksellers or direct from Texas A&M University Press (1-800-826-8911, M-F 8-5). For further information, contact Maureen Creamer at 409-845-1436.