

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523

SPECIAL TO FRONT LINES

WASHINGTON--Ogden Williams, the newly-appointed director-designate of AID's Vietnam Training Center in Washington, received on May 15 the Agency's Superior Honor Award for civilian service in Vietnam.

The award, presented by Joseph A. Mendenhall, Acting Assistant Administrator for Vietnam, was in recognition of "exemplary performance, outstanding leadership, professionalism, and initiative displayed consistently in the creation, organization and operation of the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program in Vietnam."

In his most recent assignment in Vietnam, Williams was chief of AID's team supporting the Government of Vietnam's Chieu Hoi program. The objective of the program," he said, "is to persuade the Viet Cong dissidents to return to the side of the Government of South Vietnam on a basis of full amnesty."

The rehabilitated returnees provide valuable manpower for the Government of South Vietnam. For example, more than 2,500 returnees are now employed by government ministries. Nearly 4,000 more have enlisted in armed propaganda teams to assist in psychological operations against their former comrades.

During his tenure in Vietnam from July 1966 to March 1969, more than 60,000 Viet Cong returned under the program. Most of them are now actively fighting on the side of the Government of South Vietnam. The Chieu Hoi program reduces the fighting force of the enemy, Williams said, thereby saving many allied lives.

(more)

Williams said the AID program in Vietnam "not only helps support the Vietnamese economy, but also makes possible a wide variety of civil activities to improve the life of the people. These activities, he said, are just as important as military operations in settling the struggle in Vietnam because they help the Vietnamese Government fill the administrative and political vacuum left behind by colonialism."

Williams' first assignment in Vietnam, from 1956-1957, was as a member of the advisory team to then President Ngo Dinh Diem. He returned to Vietnam in 1962 as special assistant to the AID director and in 1964 was appointed officer in charge of all AID provincial representatives throughout the country.

In 1964, he left Vietnam to become deputy director of the AID Mission in Tunisia. He left Tunisia in 1966 and returned to Vietnam for the third time as associate director of the Chieu Hoi program.

Last March, in recognition of his contribution to Vietnam, Williams was awarded the Vietnamese National Order--Vietnam's highest decoration.

Before joining government service, Williams was an attorney with a New York law firm. He is a member of the New York Bar Association. He received an AB degree from Princeton University in 1942 and an LLB from Harvard in 1948.

Now stationed in Washington, Williams maintains a farm home in Lost River, West Va.

He will begin his duties as Director of the Vietnam Training Center in July.

#