

Friends of The Vietnam Center

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PRICES ANNOUNCE GIFT TO VIETNAM CENTER

At ceremonies at the Texas Tech University Board of Regents office on Tuesday, September 1, 1998, Vietnam Center Advisory Board President Phil Price and his wife Victoria announced a \$1,000,000 bequest to Texas Tech University, to be divided between the Vietnam Center and the School of Mass Communications.

Phil earned his bachelor's degree in advertising and marketing from Texas Tech in 1967. He accepted a commission in the Army in 1968 and served in Vietnam in 1969, where he was wounded and medivaced to the United States. After his discharge from the Army, he founded The Price Communications Group, which is now the largest advertising agency in West Texas.

Phil attended the first meeting in May 1989, which led to the establishment of the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech. Despite his many business and civic commitments, he has devoted tremendous energy, time and the resources of The Price Communications

Group to the Vietnam center. His latest gift is but a continuation of his long-term, sincere dedication to the Vietnam project.

All of us at The Vietnam Center and Archive most sincerely thank Phil and Victoria for their great and continuing generosity to our effort. Without them, we would not have progressed nearly as far as we have.

Now, we challenge any other Vietnam veteran to match Phil and Victoria's donation. It is time to ensure there will be a permanent source of funding for the future operations of the Vietnam Center and Archive.



Phil & Victoria Price "showing the colors" at "Parade '98" in Wellington, New Zealand, May 31, 1998.

RECKNER VISITS VIETNAM

Dr. James R. Reckner, who served two tours with the brown water navy in Vietnam, returned to Vietnam in July to attend the International Conference on Vietnamese Studies and Improvement of International Relations in Hanoi, and to meet with the leadership of a number of Vietnamese universities. He was accompanied by the Vietnam Center's Vietnamese Language Specialist, Mr. Khanh Le.

During his two and one-half week visit, Reckner conducted an intense series of meetings with Vietnamese academics and military officers, and signed memoranda of understanding outlining possible areas of future cooperation with the Vietnam National Universities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Some reflections of his visit were published in an opinion piece in August, which is reprinted in this issue of the newsletter.

Among those whom Reckner met were Lieutenant General Nguyen Dinh Uoc, Director of the Vietnam Military Institute in Hanoi. General Uoc has been invited to attend the 1999 Vietnam symposium, at which he has proposed to speak on the topic of the differing American and Vietnamese attitudes toward the war.

MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT JOINS VIETNAM CENTER

Roger Donlon, a retired US Army colonel and the first recipient of the Medal of Honor for actions in Vietnam, has joined the National Council of Texas Tech University's Vietnam Center. Other members of the National Council are: Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., the US Naval Commander in Vietnam, 1968-70 and Chief of Naval Operations 1970-74 (Chairman); General William C. Westmoreland, Commander of the US Military Assistance Command in Vietnam, 1964-68 and Army Chief of Staff 1968-72; Former South Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States, the Hon. Bui Diem, whose diplomatic career spanned from the Geneva Conference of 1954 through to the final demise of the Republic of Vietnam in 1975; and the Hon. William P. Bundy.

Donlon is executive director of the Westmoreland Scholar Foundation based in Leavenworth, Kansas, which is dedicated to fostering reconciliation between the American and Vietnamese people by rebuilding bridges of understanding through offering educational opportunities.

On accepting Admiral Zumwalt's invitation to join the Council, Donlon remarked, "I am pleased, proud, and humbled to join the National

Council of The Vietnam Center." Colonel Donlon then spoke at length about the importance of the tasks of The Vietnam Center and The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University: preserving all aspects of the record of the American Vietnam experience, and of encouraging future generations to study that record. "It is only through mutual understanding that we can hope for a peaceful future. We must be as aggressive and persistent on this front as we were as warriors past on other fronts," Donlon said.

Noting that The Vietnam Project at Texas Tech is being guided and strongly supported by Vietnam veterans, Donlon added that all veterans of service in Vietnam should likewise support the effort. "Now is the time for those of us who served to ensure that the records are preserved for the future. We wish to impose no judgment; rather, we seek to preserve a full and balanced record of our actions in Vietnam and events at home, secure in the knowledge that future generations will reach more balanced, less emotional conclusions about these traumatic events than have the generation of historians who actually lived through them."

"Now is the time, too, for those of us

who served to encourage the younger generation to learn about America's Vietnam experience and about the Vietnamese people. There are many solid lessons to be learned for America's future, not just from our missteps in Vietnam, but also from our many successes. And it is time, too, that Vietnam veterans, following the lead of the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University, reach out to the Vietnamese people through positive, apolitical academic exchanges, to replace the anger and hatred of the war years with a legacy much more in keeping with the high ideals which first took us to Vietnam."

Colonel Donlon won his Medal of Honor "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty" on July 6, 1964, at the Battle of Nam Dong, in South Vietnam. The medal was awarded by President Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House on December 5, 1964. Colonel Donlon has co-authored a book about his experience, *Outpost of Freedom*, which subsequently was condensed for publication in The Saturday Evening Post, and as a condensed book with Reader's Digest. He also is the subject of a video entitled, *One of Those Good Men*.

TEXAS TECH VIETNAM ARCHIVE HELPS EDUCATORS TEACH ABOUT WAR.

(Associated Press, June 13, 1998)

LUBBOCK - For long moments after showing her class a video about Vietnam prisoners of war, high school history teacher Anita Phillips pretended to search for papers in her desk to give her tearful students time to compose themselves.

It was then, she said, that she realized she couldn't deal with the emotionally volatile issues of the Vietnam War, given a textbook with scant few paragraphs about the subject and only two weeks to teach it in. "Right now, many teachers just don't have the tools to answer the tough questions and look at the issues the way then need to be examined," said Mrs. Phillips, who teaches in Lubbock.

"The danger is that teachers will settle for a superficial curriculum, and the truth will be lost."

Mrs. Phillips' frustrations were shared by several of the 120 high school history teachers from across the country who gathered Friday at the Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive to learn better ways to teach about the war, which took about 57,000 American lives and divided the country politically in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The center, the nation's second-largest Vietnam archive outside of Washington, DC, has held seminars before for historians, but this weekend's session is the first for educators of teenagers.

"My problem is that I can't find a textbook that really gives any definitive information . . . they all just gloss over the issue," Mrs. Jones said.

Ms. Jones can't find a worthwhile textbook because there aren't any, said Paul Davis, a teacher at Union High School in Spartanburg, S.C., during his lecture.

"Any textbook really has to be approved of for use by the Texas Board of Education because this is one of the largest markets," Mr. Davis said. "The board has shown that they have a clear policy on the issue . . . don't say anything too controversial and use convoluted language so as not to offend."

Mr. Davis said that the solution is for teachers to take advantage of the nation's few Vietnam archives to create their own material.

"If we're going to get to the heart of teaching about this war we've got to use archives like this one," he said. ". . . where we have access to the newspapers, command orders and military documents that were a part of history."

Seminars at the weekend program included: "Vietnam's Political Culture," "Why Teach Vietnam?" and "Teaching Military Aspects of the Vietnam War."



APPROACHING VIETNAM

James R. Reckner

It had been nearly thirty years since my first "visit" to Vietnam, when I spent two years with South Vietnamese river patrol boats of the "brown water navy" during the war. Thus, last July when I landed in Hanoi, the capital of our former enemy, I was rather apprehensive. What I encountered there truly surprised me: I was treated with the utmost friendliness, not just by official Hanoi, but also by the average individual on the street. And everywhere there was a tremendous drive to learn English. American English.

Later in my visit I traveled to Ho Chi Minh City [which ever will be Saigon to me] and from there visited a number of places where I had spent time during the war. At the first, a former river patrol base, I discovered that the facility which had been my home for nearly a year simply no longer existed. The piers had disappeared and the once-bustling riverfront had been reclaimed by rich tropical plants.

Of course I should not have anticipated anything else. After 1975 there was no further need for naval bases on Vietnam's internal waterways. But somehow the discovery was very unsettling. What had I really expected after nearly thirty years? I suppose I hadn't given that any thought.

Later, walking in Saigon, down near the former headquarters of the South Vietnamese Navy which I had visited regularly during my two years of service in South Vietnam, I passed a familiar French restaurant. I remember well seeing an elderly French colon sitting at a sidewalk table at that restaurant in 1969. At that time, with the American presence in Vietnam at its peak, the Frenchman looked completely displaced, overtaken by events, pitiful.

As I wandered the streets of Saigon, from time to time I encountered other American men of approximately my age, some with wives; a few with younger Vietnamese women; but most, like me, alone. Like me, they seemed to be seeking something. Perhaps like me, they had discovered, as I had at my former base, that

that which they sought is irretrievable; gone forever. I realized then that I had become a future generation's equivalent of that old Frenchman. I also had been overtaken by the course of the tumultuous events that have enveloped Vietnam.

The truth, I realized, is that I was not actually seeking the old base. Rather, subconsciously I was searching for my youthful years in Vietnam — that time of danger and often fear; that time, also, of hope, and optimism not yet tempered by the cynicism bred of future revelations; that time, most of all, when I harbored the delusion of immortality far too common to youth.

All of that is long gone now for all of us who served in Vietnam. And no matter how long we wander the streets of Saigon, no matter how earnestly we seek our old Saigon, it cannot be resurrected. And that is a great pity.

If we Vietnam vets cannot go back to the Vietnam of our youth, what can we do? Of course, we must work to preserve the records of the war; to preserve and honor the memory of those of our comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice there; and we must encourage younger generations to study the American Vietnam experience. There is much to be learned from our missteps there. And our successes, too. In the end, I suspect younger generations of Americans will judge those who served in Vietnam much more favorably than have our peers who for various reasons did not serve.

But now, what can we Vietnam vets do? We might continue to nurture feelings of hatred toward the Vietnamese. This would serve no constructive purpose, and would demean the reasons for and nature of our original service in Vietnam. We might continue to isolate Vietnam, but this would ignore an opportunity to engage and educate the younger generation of Vietnamese who are exceedingly interested in America.

We veterans should play a much more active and positive role. We must approach Vietnam with some vision of the future. First

and foremost, we should support our Ambassador, Douglas "Pete" Peterson, as he continues his efforts to gain a full accounting for our servicemen still missing in Southeast Asia. And we should encourage him, too, in his continuing efforts to ensure the preservation of human rights in Vietnam.

More than that, though, I am convinced that we should take positive steps in the field of education, to reach out to the more than 65% of the Vietnamese population born since the end of the war. They played no role in the struggle in which we took part. A great many of them are exceedingly interested in learning more about American culture. They want to be able to speak American English. And they want to be our friends. Mightn't we who served leave a truly lasting legacy if we could provide the bridge whereby the younger generation of Americans and Vietnamese — those not directly touched by the fire of the Vietnam War — came to know each other better?

I am not suggesting that we condone the Vietnamese political system or the abridgment of individual liberties that routinely occurs in Vietnam. What I do propose, though, is that we provide the opportunity for our youngsters, American and Vietnamese alike, to learn about each other through academic exchanges devoid of political content. Toward this end, Texas Tech University has initiated a dialog with various Vietnamese universities. Toward this end, too, we intend to provide American textbooks which will assist Vietnamese students in their quest for knowledge. Through such measures, we, the former warriors, can ensure that no future generation of Americans will have to repeat our experiences. In the process, too, we will have created a legacy worthy of our high ideals.

The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech invites any retired military personnel or others with an interest in the Vietnam Conflict to contact the Center for further details of its many activities.



PARADE '98: NEW ZEALAND VIETNAM VETERANS WELCOMED HOME

Long overdue was the welcome tendered to New Zealand's veterans of the Vietnam War, who were officially welcomed home on May 31st, in that nation's capital, Wellington. The ceremonies opened with a traditional welcome, or powhiri, performed on a wind-swept Wellington wharf by New Zealand's native Maoris clad in flax cloaks. Despite the cold—for it was mid-winter in the southern hemisphere—the people of Wellington and the surrounding cities gathered in large numbers to greet the large contingent of New Zealanders, followed by a somewhat smaller contingent of Australian veterans. Bringing up the rear of the parade was a small but proud contingent of American Vietnam veterans and their wives, led by VVA National President, George Duggins.

Present at the parade were Vietnam Center Advisory Board President Phil Price and Vietnam Center Director Jim Reckner and their wives, who made the trip specially to participate in the parade

and related ceremonies, to circulate newsletters from the Vietnam Center, and to meet with the New Zealand and Australian leadership. Price and Reckner also examined a small exhibition provided by The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech, which was on display on Queen's Wharf in downtown Wellington throughout the period of ceremonies, and continued on display until July 15th.

The highlight of the Parade for many was an overflight by Royal New Zealand Air Force Huey helicopters, which occurred as the parade wound its way through the downtown of Wellington. Toward the end of the parade, participants passed in review in front of the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia (the latter also a decorated Vietnam vet). Our sincere congratulations to all New Zealand Vietnam vets, and to the citizens of Wellington for their warmth and genuine sentiments. Phil Price and Jim Reckner and the rest of the American Contingent long will remember this most remarkable event.

PARADE '98: WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND



OLD AND NEW FACES OF SAIGON (HO CHI MINH CITY)



VIETNAM CENTER CITED AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HANOI

Reporting on the state of Vietnamese studies in North America, Professor Keith Taylor of Cornell University commented very favorably upon the Vietnam project at Texas Tech. According to Taylor, arguably the most respected American in the field of Vietnamese studies, The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University "is presently the only center at a university in North America that is entirely devoted to the study of Vietnam. . .

. . . This center is unusual in the degree of institutional support it receives from the university. Texas Tech University has made a large commitment to establish and develop The Vietnam Center that is unmatched by any other North American university. What has made this possible is the unusual degree of support this center receives from the people of Texas, both from community and veterans' organizations and from the state legislature. In my estimation, The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University represents a new and important event in the study of Vietnam in North America because it is connected to a large local and

regional constituency and can present Vietnamese studies in a way that is comfortable to the people of North America."

Professor Taylor's kind remarks are a reflection upon all who have supported and encouraged our efforts over the past nine years. Permit the Vietnam Center staff to extend our sincere thanks to each of you who have helped us along. And our sincere thanks to Professor Taylor for his kind comments. It is always exceedingly pleasant to receive recognition, particularly in an international forum such as the International Conference at Hanoi.

For those of you already committed to the Vietnam project, these remarks are a reminder that we need to redouble our efforts. For those who have watched from the sidelines, but who know what we are working for is right, now is the time to get on board. One good way would be to return the "Friends of the Vietnam Center" form included with this newsletter. Your financial support will enable us to continue this important work.

NEW ACQUISITIONS

The past year has been one of very active collection of materials and enlargement of the archive's holdings. Noteworthy among the acquisitions have been the papers of Basil Rauch, Peter Dunn, and the 109th Quartermaster Company. The archive also received a collection of the records of the Westmoreland vs. CBS trial.

Purchases include 75 books from Cornell University, and approximately \$7000 of Vietnamese books published in the United

States and Vietnam.

The Vietnam Archive has doubled its holding on microfilm adding The Peers Commission Records of the My Lai Investigation, the UMI Underground Newspaper Collection, FBI Records on the SDS and Weathermen Underground, and an extensive POW/MIA documentation collection. These acquisitions amount to more than \$70,000 of funding dedicated to archive expansion.

NEWS FROM THE VIETNAM ARCHIVE

Last year's increases in staffing have greatly increased the archive's ability to handle requests from researchers and to provide greater access to our materials.

The Vietnam Archive thus far in 1998 has filled 300 reference requests, two-thirds of these electronically from remote sites. It has done basic processing and preservation on all of its backlog of documentary materials, and has processed and begun cataloguing 8,000 photographs.

In 1998 the archive doubled its holdings of audio-visual material, organized and sorted 1200 maps and catalogued 3000 books. The archive also produced its first printed catalogue of holdings [available on request], updated and redesigned its web site, and helped in the planning and execution of the Vietnam Center's two conferences. The archive also sent an exhibit to New Zealand for Parade '98 and produced a program for Texas Tech's "International Week," 1998.

A MESSAGE TO VIETNAM VETERANS...AND TEACHERS

During a visit to Saratoga Springs High School in Saratoga Springs, New York, in June of this year, Colonel Roger Donlon, USA (Ret), M.H., received the following letter from one of the students, which he shared with our high school teachers at the June conference, and which he has requested we include in this newsletter:

June 4, 1998

I respect you why you wouldn't talk about Vietnam. But it is too bad that you couldn't tell a story of what you saw and felt. I'm positive that kids nowadays would be interested in hearing it. I know I am. And do you want to know why? Because us kids nowadays don't really learn about the Vietnam War.

We learn skimmed over facts and hardly see a film about it. Kids need to know the facts and know how it went.

I know I would like to hear a first-hand account. I know other kids who would like to hear about it too. How can kids learn without real people telling how it went?

You have a story to tell, painful or not, and to me it's a powerful story, a sobering story and probably a story that me and other teenagers would never forget.

Aren't you tired of seeing silly movies that don't tell a real story?

Or silly T.V. shows that depict Vietnam as fun?

Someday generations won't remember and will forget how Vietnam had such an effect on the world. You should tell your story so people won't forget. You survived, man, and for a beautiful reason. You can tell others the truth, not a lie that t.v. or teachers teach, the truth, and you have the country's pride behind you for you won the Congressional [Medal of] Honor. And how can you keep honor if you don't tell your story?

Well, it's something to think about. I am just a 17 year old in school and actually writing this in 4th period Social Studies. I wrote this because my teacher told me you were visiting tomorrow and I just felt I had to tell you something.

Teenagers are interested. They want to learn. They would listen to your story and they'd listen good.

Well, good bye and thank you for visiting our school. Jennifer E.

P.S. I'm sure your buddies that died in Vietnam would also like you to tell your story for it's also their story, too, and who else could tell it?

After the CNN "Tailwind" episode, all of us who served should take a particular interest in ensuring continuing accuracy in reporting and teaching. JR

THE VIETNAM ARCHIVE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The Vietnam Archive cannot continue to grow without your help. We remain vitally interested in preserving photographs, letters, diaries, etc., relating to service in Vietnam. We also are interested in preserving the research papers of authors and academics conducting research related to Vietnam.

The Archive remains committed, too, to preserving the record of

Vietnam veterans' post-war experience. We are interested to receive newsletters from veterans' organizations for preservation for future researchers. We encourage veterans who have saved such newsletters to consider donating them to the Vietnam Archive for permanent preservation. Help us make The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech Vietnam veterans' home of record.

AGENT ORANGE FINDING GUIDE

Among the archive's many new products this year is a guide to Agent Orange-related holdings. Researchers particularly interested in this topic may request a copy of the guide from the Vietnam Center.

REGISTER NOW FOR 1999 VIETNAM SYMPOSIUM

Submit your proposals now for the Third Triennial Vietnam Symposium, slated for 15-17 April 1999 at the Holiday Inn University Plaza in Lubbock. We have already received proposals for complete panels on Laos and Cambodia, and a wide range of individual papers dealing with Vietnam-related topics, post-Vietnam experiences, and also teaching about Vietnam. We encourage anyone planning to present papers at the symposium to send proposals as soon as possible in order to assist the symposium planners in organizing the agenda.

Symposium Schedule: A detailed schedule for the symposium will be published in our January newsletter. In the meantime, for planning purposes, activity will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 14, with the opening of a visit by the Moving Vietnam Wall, followed by a reception at the Vietnam Archive and then a fund-raising dinner at which the plans for our new Vietnam Center building will be unveiled.

Symposium Venue: Holiday Inn Lubbock Plaza, 3201 South Loop 289, Lubbock. This is the same hotel used for the 1996 symposium. Phone: (806) 797-3241. The Vietnam Center has reserved 150 rooms; however, we urge you to contact the hotel and make your personal reservations as early as possible. Our last symposium was sold out, with late arrivals inconvenienced by having to stay at other hotels.

1999 Vietnam Symposium

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone(s): Home _____ Office _____

Symposium registration

(includes 3 luncheons, receptions),	\$75.00	Amount: \$	_____
Fund-raising dinner, 14 April 1998,	\$100/plate	Amount: \$	_____
Symposium banquet, 15 April 1998,	\$30.00	Amount: \$	_____
Evening at V-8 Ranch,	\$25.00	Amount: \$	_____

Total Amount: \$ _____

Please make payable to Texas Tech Foundation, Inc., Attn: Vietnam Center • Mail to: Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409-1045

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I enclose my check for \$ _____ for an annual membership.

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