

# Friends of The Vietnam Center

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SPRING

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VOLUME

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2

## Conference 2003: Three Key Dates to Remember

The Vietnam Center's 10th annual conference — this one focusing on the 40th anniversary of the assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem — is scheduled for this fall. Three key dates associated with the event should be circled on the calendar by those wishing to attend.

**Sept. 15** is the deadline for submitting paper proposals relating to Diem. The format should be similar to an abstract, including title, theme/purpose, and main points, within 300 to 500 words. Include your full name, title/affiliation, and contact information.

Send proposals to us by postal delivery, email or fax.

Mail to: James R. Reckner, The Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University, Box 41045, Lubbock, TX 79409-1045.

Email to [Vietnam.Center@ttu.edu](mailto:Vietnam.Center@ttu.edu) or fax to (806) 742-8664.

**Sept. 25** is the deadline for making reservations at the hotel where all sessions of the two-day conference will be held in October. The location is the Holiday Inn Park Plaza, 3201 South Loop 289, in Lubbock.

For reservations, telephone the hotel at 806 797-3241 and ask for the "TTU Vietnam Conference Bloc." Room rate for the conference is \$80 plus tax per night.

**Oct. 24 and 25** are the dates of the conference. (The conference registration form can be found on page 11 of your Friends of the Vietnam Center newsletter. It is also available on our web site, <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu>.)

## D.C. Seminar: Ia Drang, Abrams, Kissinger and the War...

A seminar hosted in Washington, D.C., by The Vietnam Center offered new insights into the war, including the clash in the Ia Drang Valley between U.S. and North Vietnamese regulars, Gen. Creighton Abrams' intelligence briefings, and Henry Kissinger's diplomatic machinations involving a peace settlement.

Forty-four participants attended the May 13 seminar at the Army & Navy Club at Farragut Square in Washington. They represented the Army Center of Military History, the Naval Historical Center, the Marine Corps Historical Center, the State Department History Office, several universities, and individuals involved in the war, including retired US Ambassador Wolf Lehmann, former South Vietnamese Ambassador Bui Diem, and Vice Admiral E.H. Tidd, USN (Ret.).

Former Vietnam correspondent Joe Galloway, who with Lt. Gen. Hal Moore wrote *We Were Soldiers Once—and Young*, discussed the pair's decision to undertake their notable work about the 1965 Battle of the Ia Drang Valley. The battle was the first major clash

between U.S. forces and regular units from North Vietnam. Mr. Galloway, now with Knight-Ridder News, also spoke movingly about their return to Vietnam to meet with the former enemy soldiers against whom they fought. His remarks about the return visit included an interesting account of their remaining overnight on the old LZ X-Ray.

Dr. Larry Berman, Director of the University of California's Washington DC Center, discussed the manner in which  
(continued on page 2)



Lewis Sorley



# From the Director

Why have we at the Vietnam Center and Vietnam Archive worked so diligently over the past fourteen years to preserve the records and memories of those who served in Vietnam?

Let me answer that question by posing another question. Have you ever visited the battlefield at Gettysburg? Gettysburg, of course, was one of the great battles of the US Civil War, and, arguably, it marked the high point of the Confederacy's military effort. The Confederate Army was repulsed there in a three-day struggle that carried with it a remarkable sacrifice in life on both sides.

Seeking to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, survivors of both sides of that battle built in their later years a forest of monuments, generally locating them near where the memorialized units fought.

Touring Gettysburg a dozen years ago, as part of a West Point "staff ride," I viewed a monument identifying all the Pennsylvania men who died there. Reading that long list, I realized that the names meant little to me. I could not identify with them; they could not tell me their story.

Reflecting on that experience, in the context of our then-new effort with the Vietnam Center, I realized that one hundred years from now, the same probably will be true of visitors to the Vietnam Memorial ("The Wall") in Washington. To those of us who served, The Wall is an intensely emotional reminder of our comrades-in-arms who did not return from Vietnam, who remain ever young in our memory.

I suspect that the Wall will retain its poignancy for another generation or so; inevitably, however, as memory of the Vietnam War recedes, so will the appeal of The Wall.

The thought crossed my mind at Gettysburg: "What would it have been like if the old veterans of the Civil War had, instead of building all their memorials, devoted their time, money and energy to preserving the memories of those who survived, and perhaps their memories of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice?"

One thing is certain: Even today, nearly 140 years after the surrender at Appomatox, Americans continue to formulate questions and seek answers about the Civil War. I feel certain that Americans one hundred years from now will likewise be seeking to understand the American involvement in Vietnam.

And here is the point: Civil War historians cannot find their answers in the monuments marking the battlefields of that war. Similarly, no matter how emotional and evocative the Vietnam Wall is for all of us who served, that monument alone will not provide sufficient answers for future generations of Americans.

Only records, diaries, and oral history interviews will do that.

Ken Burns' wonderful Civil War series on television was noteworthy not for his recounting of the campaigns of the Civil War. What actually endeared people to it was his skillful use of letters and diaries of the participants.

Consumers of history—aside from purely academic researchers—almost always seek to understand the human experience. They strive to be able in some way to "identify" with the struggles, the achievements, and the failures of the characters of history.

The Vietnam Center's skilled staff of archivists and oral historians work daily with Vietnam veterans and anyone who was touched in any way by the fire of the Vietnam War to preserve their records, letters, photographs, slides, and very importantly, their memories. But our staff's success in that effort requires your active participation.

We urge those of you who have records, letters, diaries, or anything relating to any aspect of the war or opposition at home, to contact the Vietnam Archive [(806) 742-9010] to discuss with us preserving those records. We have the technology available to digitize your old Vietnam 35 mm slides, 8- and 16-mm film.

In return, we will provide you, free of charge, a CD-ROM of those materials so that you can access them on your home computer.

To those of you who have the super-8 film that was commonly used in Vietnam, I venture this: You probably haven't seen those films since you sent them home, and you probably no longer have a projector to show them. Furthermore, after a quarter-century, those films surely are deteriorating. They are destined to be lost unless you take action to preserve them.

I appeal to all: Break out those boxes of material that have been lying in the garage or attic for the past twenty years, enjoy one last look at them, and then send them to us to be preserved for the use of future generations of Americans.

And, by the way, your individual records are important! No matter how insignificant you might think they are, such items are the stuff of history. The records of senior officers quite likely will be preserved (and we will help them do that). But equally important are the materials of ordinary soldiers, sailors, Marines or airmen like you and I.

**Jim Reckner**

## DC Seminar *(continued from page 1)*

the Paris peace talks were pursued by Richard Nixon and his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger. The negotiating style and maneuverings of Kissinger especially are detailed in Dr. Berman's latest book, *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger and Betrayal in Vietnam*. He is also the author of *Lyndon Johnson's War: The Road to Stalemate in Vietnam*, and *Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam*.

Dr. Lewis (Bob) Sorley, an author and a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, described MACV tapes and extensive records of Saturday intelligence briefings of Gen. Creighton Abrams, who was commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (ComUSMACV) from 1968 to 1972.

Dr. Sorley is editing the materials for a two-volume book, tentatively entitled "Vietnam Chronicles: The Abrams' Tapes, 1968-1972" (see page 7).





**The Wall**  
 After more than two decades,  
 the Vietnam Veterans  
 Memorial still attracts  
 thousands to honor the nearly  
 60,000 names of Vietnam War  
 dead etched in black granite  
 upon *The Wall*.



# Vietnam Interviews: You Can Listen to Them Online

In growing volumes, the words of war are being preserved for the future by the Vietnam Archive. Its Oral History Project has now conducted approximately 300 interviews with individuals who served in Southeast Asia or otherwise had experiences related to the war. Adding to the potential number of interviews in the collection, Vietnam Archive and Oral History Project staff members continue attending veterans' reunions and conferences. They give presentations on the mission and scope of the Vietnam Archive and the Oral History Project and consistently meet veterans interested in participating in our project to preserve the history of the war from the perspective of the participants.

The Vietnam Oral History Project also has recently established a partnership with the US Naval Historical Center and the US Marine Corps History and Museums Division. Through a private grant,

the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C., purchased an audio digitizing system and their first project is to digitize and record to CD-ROM the thousands of oral history interviews contained in the Marine Corps' Oral History collection.

In turn, the Marine Corps is sending copies of Vietnam War-related interviews on CD-ROM to the Vietnam Archive for inclusion in its collections. In exchange, the Vietnam Oral History Project is transcribing the interviews and will share copies of those transcripts with the USMC History and Museums Division. All the Corps' Vietnam War related interviews (both audio recordings and transcripts) are also being made available to the public via the Internet, free-of-charge. To listen to a growing number of these unique interviews, visit the Virtual Vietnam Archive or the Vietnam Oral History Project web sites (<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu>).

## Vietnam Veteran Group Reunions

In the past three years, representatives of the Vietnam Center have attended more than 100 Vietnam veteran group reunions. So far this year, oral historians Steve Maxner and Richard Verrone have attended or are scheduled to attend the following reunions and conferences:

- ★ Dustoff Association Reunion, San Antonio, TX (20-23 February).
- ★ F Troop, 8th Cavalry Vietnam Veterans Association, Kansas City, MO (3-6 April).

- ★ 29th Assault Helicopter Co., Charlottesville, VA (17-20 April).
- ★ Air America Association Reunion, Jacksonville, FL (5-8 June).
- ★ A-37 Association, Tucson, AZ (25-26 June).
- ★ H Company, 2/26th Marines, Hyannis, MA (6-8 June).
- ★ USMC Vietnam Tankers Association, Seattle, WA (21-24 August).



(1)



(3)

(1) Dr. Larry Berman (left) poses with Vietnamese Ambassador Nguyen Tam Chieu and Jim Reckner at the Vietnamese Embassy, 15 May 2003.

(2) Mr. Chris Cruise (center), Washington Seminar organizer and Vietnam Center supporter, discusses issues at the Washington Seminar reception, 13 May 2003.

(3) Lunch at the Army and Navy Club, Washington Seminar, 13 May 2003.

(4) Counselor Vu Binh, left, retired PAVN Lieutenant General Tran Hanh of the Veterans' Association of Vietnam, and retired Navy Captain Zeb Alford discuss veterans' issues, Houston, 22 May 2003.



(2)



(4)



# Vietnam Archive: 2003 Brings Steady Stream of New Collections

So far this year, the Vietnam Archive has taken in more than 162 collections of Vietnam-related items. Latest contributions include:

**Richard Pinkerton Collection (2.7 linear feet).** Reports on US Prisoners of War by Lt. Colonel John M. Luke, USAFR, 1975; notebook and manuals on debriefing procedures, Operation Homecoming, circa 1973; news clippings on POWs, circa 1973; documents, notes, and resources re Pinkerton's service in Operation Homecoming; information on the National League of Families; Survey of Returned Prisoners of War, 1974; correspondence with Ray Horinek, the USAF major who Pinkerton debriefed; manuscript copy of screenplay *The Pied Piper of Vietnam* by Richard La Doyt Pinkerton and Peter Maris, 2001.

**Books:** 16. *The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia, 1961-1973*; *Aces and Aerial Victories: The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia, 1965-1973*; *I'm No Hero* by Charlie Plumb; *Air War Vietnam*; *Into the Mouth of the Cat* by Malcolm McConnell; *Rice Paddy Grunt* by John M. G. Brown; *From the Shadow of Death*; *In Love and War* by Jim and Sybil Stockdale; *Linebacker II: A View from the Rock*; *Seven Years in Hanoi* by Capt. Larry Chesley; *They Wouldn't Let Us Die* by Stephen A. Rowan; *The Passing of the Night* by Colonel Robinson Risner; *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* by Howard and Phyllis Rutledge; *The Heroes Who Fell From Grace* by Charles J. Patterson and G. Lee Tippin; *Soviet Prison Camp Speech: A Survivor's Glossary*; *The Raid* by Benjamin F. Schemmer.

**Museum Object:** Button "Welcome Home P.O.W's".

**Periodicals:** 3. *Newsweek*, April 28, 1975; *Time*, October 15, 1973; *Time*, October 29, 1973

**I. Richard and Carol Verrone Collection (0.1 linear foot).** Article from the *Wall Street Journal* on SARS in Vietnam. "Survivor Finds Life After SARS Means Onset of New Ordeals."

**Nevin Williams Collection (0.1 linear foot).** CD-Rom: 1 Photographs by Nevin Roger Williams, U.S. Army: Cu Chi and Saigon, 1967; 18th Military Police Brigade, 1967-1968; MACV Advisory Team 45 Ninh Thuan Province, 1970-1971.

**U. Alexis Johnson Collection (0.1 linear foot).** Letter written to the American embassy in Saigon after a failed coup attempt in February 1965. Authors of letter seek transport to neutral country.

**Bryan Grigsby Collection (0.2 linear foot).** Photograph and newspaper clipping documenting the 1986 award given to Harry Breedlove for a photograph taken in Vietnam. Photos and clippings about DASPO photographer Dick Durrance, 1988-1989. Military ID card for Bryan Grigsby.

**Photographs:** 9. Harry Breedlove; Dick Durrance; Lyndon Johnson and Nguyen Van Thieu, Camp Smith, Hawaii; DASPO servicemen photos, Vietnam and Hawaii, 1967-1968.

**Slides:** 5. Vietnam and Fort Shafter Hawaii, 1968-1969.

**Le Van Khoa Collection (1.0 linear foot).** Newspaper articles, exhibit and symphony programs, arts catalogues, and songbooks document career of composer and photographer Le Van Khoa and Vietnamese arts and culture. The collection consists of Le Van Khoa's post-war works produced and published in America.

**Books:** 6. *Selected Prints 2001 Tuyen Tap Anh, Vietnamese Artistic*; *Photography Association (2 copies)*; *The Beautiful Bamboo (Words and music, Vietnamese folk songs)*, *Nhac Viet Men Yeu, My Beloved Vietnamese Music Book, Piano Solo*; *Goi Nho, Ca Khuc Nghe Thuat, Vietnamese Art Songs*; *Giang Sinh Ca, Christmas Songs*.

**Video:** 3. (DVD) *Dem Ngan Khoi, Muoi nam luu niem*; *Dem nhac, Viet Nam, Que Huong Men Yeu*; *Con Duong Cai Quan, Dem Ngan Khoi, A Voyage Through Viet Nam*.

**Audio:** 4. *Hon Vong Phu, Dem Ngan Khoi 3 Con Duong Cai Quan Tinh Hoai Huong, A Concert of Vietnamese Music, Dem Ngan Khoi 10 Nam Luu Niem Ban Hop Xuong Ngan Khoi, Dem Ngan Khoi 4 Excerpts from "Symphonic Suite Vietnam 75" by Le Van Khoa*.

**Michael Mittelmann Collection (2 linear feet).**

Notebooks containing documents, photographs, and newspaper clippings related to Dr. Mittelman's service in Vietnam, 1960-1988, which supplement his oral history interview and 35mm slide collection.

**Museum Objects:** 4. Photograph album, with lacquer finish and artwork; wooden sailing boat model from Dalat; lacquer finish box containing a partially preserved specimen of butterfly lacquer finish and pearl type inlay designs; wall mounting; presented to Mittelmann.

**Victoria McLure Collection (0.1 linear foot).**

Lincoln Parish (LA) Veterans Memorial statue dedication ceremony program, Nov.11, 1991.

**John C. Arick Collection.** Newsletter: *Pop A Smoke*, Winter 2003.

**Tom Harnisher Collection (0.1 linear foot).**

Video: Tom Harnisher talks about Vietnam, American Legion Post 1404, April 15, 2000.

**Veloy Varner Collection (0.3 linear foot).**

Pamphlet, documents, memos, reports, After-action reports, maps related to Varner's service in Vietnam.

**Maps:** DOD evasion maps, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam.

**Joel Halpern Collection (1.0 linear foot).**

This contains material on a variety of topics in Southeast Asia, particularly Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. Includes photocopies from Human Relations Area Files, 1942 concerning women, family, and marriage; Photocopy of Laos: *The Land and the People*, a



## Vietnam Archive: 2003 *(cont'd)*

pamphlet for American families sponsoring Lao refugee families; Computer printout of Library of Congress Vietnam File; Bibliographies concerning Southeast Asia; Booklets on Malaysia by Robert O. Tilman; Articles and papers written by William S. Turlley; Papers and brochures from the American Museum of Natural History; and other articles, clippings, papers, photocopies, and documents relating to Southeast Asian refugees after Communist takeovers in Indochina in 1975.

### **Loy Donley Collection (0.1 linear foot).**

Letter to wounded US soldiers in Vietnam from "America, Land of the FREE," March 18, 1966.

### **Walter Wylie Collection (3.0 linear feet).**

This collection consists of books, periodicals, catalogs, video and audio cassettes, and other documents relating to Vietnam.

**Books:** 40. **Video:** 8. Vietnam: The Ten Thousand Day War, Special Collector's Edition, Six Tapes Why Vietnam? Plus Know Your Enemy - The Viet Cong; Television's Vietnam.

**Audio:** 27. Vietnamese Language Basic Course Tapes.

**Periodicals:** 27. Tien Phong, one issue; International Institute for Asia Studies, one issue, March 2003; Vietnam Today, fourteen issues, April 1994 - January 1996; Destination: Vietnam, five issues, January - December 1995; Heritage, four issues, January - December 1994; Vietnam Business, two issues.

**Garnett Bell Collection (2.0 linear feet).** Books written in Vietnamese and English; Foreign Broadcast Service Reports; Monograph from the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Phrasebook from Thailand; and Telephone Directory from the American Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand.

**Douglas Pike Collection (Personal Papers) (4.0 linear feet).** Books, video, journals, artifacts and a manuscript copy of War, Peace, and the Viet Cong by Douglas Pike donated by Myrna Pike, widow of the late Professor Pike. The artifacts include framed Vietnamese stamps, a brick from the "Hanoi Hilton," where many American POWs were imprisoned in North Vietnam during the war, and two Ban Chiang Pots from Thailand dating to prehistoric times.

**Books:** 51. **Museum Objects:** 5. Brick from Hanoi Hilton; Framed Vietnamese Stamps; Two Ban Chiang Pots from Prehistoric Thailand.

**Video:** 11. The Real Deal; An Evening at Cantigny with Robert Timberg; Pete Peterson: Assignment Hanoi; Battlefield Vietnam: The Undeclared War; Battlefield Vietnam: Air War Vietnam; Battlefield Vietnam: Rolling Thunder; Battlefield Vietnam: Search and Destroy; Battlefield Vietnam: Showdown in the Iron Triangle; Battlefield Vietnam: Siege at Khe Sanh; Battlefield Vietnam: Peace with Honor; Battlefield Vietnam: The Fall of Saigon.

**Periodicals:** 2. Foreign Affairs, May/June 2001; The Journal of Asian Studies, February 2001

### **William A. Buckingham, Jr. (.1 linear feet).**

This consists of an article titled, "Operation Ranch Hand: Herbicides in Southeast Asia, 1961-1971" published by Dr. Buckingham at [www.cpcug.org/user/billb/ranchhand/](http://www.cpcug.org/user/billb/ranchhand/).

### **Rodney L. Hinsch Collection (0.2 linear foot)**

This consists of photographs, poetry, newspaper articles, a videotape, "Steel Dreams," and photocopied excerpts from Hinsch's book, "Shadows of the Sun, Dark of the Moon." Photographs: 4. Special Forces. Video: Steel Dreams.

**Minh Duc Hoai Trinh Collection (0.4 linear foot).** Collection consists of seven books written in Vietnamese and one book written in English that concern Vietnamese culture.

**Books:** 8. Ngo Truc; Bien Nghiep; Tra That; Bat Dao Truong Thanh; Niem Thu; Tho Minh Duc Hoai Trinh; Ben Ni Ben Te; This Side... The Other Side.

### **Quang X. Pham Collection (0.1 linear foot).**

This collection consists of a program and a special acknowledgements page for the dedication of the Vietnam War Memorial on April 27, 2003 in Westminster, California, and a business card from Quang X. Pham.

### **John Peter Condon (0.1 linear foot)**

This collection consists of an Order of Merit, First Class (Chuong-My Boi-Tinh) awarded to John Peter Condon by the South Vietnamese government on August 22, 1966.

### **Jackie Wright Collection (0.4 linear feet)**

Slides: 92. Unidentified slides, 1967-1968.

### **Dale Fillmore Collection (1.0 linear foot).**

24 recorded letters from Dale Fillmore to his family, 1967-1968, 1970-1971.

**Audio:** 24. Audiotape letters

### **Tom Lacombe Collection (0.1 linear foot).**

Light Ruck: Vietnam 1969 by Tom Lacombe, a memoir of Lacombe's service as a rifleman in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

**Book:** Light Ruck: Vietnam 1969 by Tom Lacombe.

### **B Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division Collection (0.2 linear foot).**

The collection contains two videocassettes, one documenting an April 2003 reunion of the B/229th, 1st Cav group, and one containing home movies taken by Al Demailo, 1967-1968 and an interview of Tom Harnisher done by the American Legion.

**Video:** 2. Demailo/Harnisher; Gathering 4/19/03.

**Nguyen Ngoc Linh Ngay Nay Newspaper Collection (0.2 linear foot).** Four issues of Ngay Nay newspaper, October 15, 2002; October 1, 2002; September 15, 2002; September 1, 2002.



## Vietnam Archive: 2003 *(cont'd)*

### **Ron Miriello Collection (0.3 linear foot).**

*Slides:* 140. Unidentified, undated slides.

**Embassy of Vietnam Collection (0.2 linear foot).** Tourism brochures promoting Vietnam, information booklet on Vietnam.

**Naval Historical Foundation Oral History Collection (0.1 linear foot).** Transcript of March 7, 2003 oral history interview of the Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of the Department of Veteran Affairs on Sensor placement and monitoring Operations in Vietnam, 1970.

**Senator Chuck Hagel Collection (0.24 linear foot).** Four copies of *The War and The Wall: Service, Sacrifice and Honor*, collected writings of Vietnam Veterans, compiled by Jan Scruggs, founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial fund. *Books:* 4. *The War and the Wall.*

**1/92nd Field Artillery Association, Vietnam Collection (0.1 linear foot).** Copy of *Brave Cannons: WWII Relic in Vietnam*, 1st Battalion 92nd Artillery by Bohdan Prehar, Ph. D. Book focuses on the uniqueness of the unit and how they relied upon the Howitzer, Medium, Towed: 155-MM, M114A1. *Book:* *Brave Cannons.*

**Vietnam Center (1.3 linear feet).** *Periodicals and Newsletters.* Items to be placed in central files include Strategic Effects of the

Conflict in Iraq: South Asia (2 copies); Strategic Effects of the Conflict in Iraq: Southeast Asia (2 copies); Strategic Effects of the Conflict in Iraq: Latin America; U.S. Army War College and the Asia/Pacific Research Center, Stanford University Conference Brief: Prospects for Peace in South Asia (2 copies); United States Commission on International Freedom: Report on Vietnam, May 2003; ACDIS Occasional Paper - Building Lasting Peace: Issues of the Implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord, August 2002; ACDIS Occasional Paper - U.S. Interventions in Latin America: "Plan Colombia." Contemporary Southeast Asia, Pacific Affairs, Phnom Penh Post, Vietnam Investment Review, Asia-Inc, Far Eastern Economic Review, and The Economist. Compact Disc containing the song "Two Soldiers" by Amy Jo Ellis and a program for the Dedication of the Vietnam War Memorial in Westminster, California. Ellis sung "Two Soldiers" at the Dedication. Material from the Library of Congress. Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments. All to Central Files: (Publications of the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College) Strategic Effects of the Conflict with Iraq: Post Soviet States by Dr. Stephen J. Blank; Strategic Effects of the Conflict with Iraq: Australia and New Zealand by Dr. Andrew Scobell; Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario, by Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill. Ready to Study, Ready to Work, Ready to Fight! An Exhibition of North Vietnamese Propaganda Posters at the Virginia War Museum, exhibit guide.



*The Vietnam Archive's Oral History Project is a partner in the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project.*

## Abrams' Intelligence Briefings: A History in the Works

Extensive excerpts of Gen. Creighton Abrams' intelligence briefings in Saigon form the basis for an important historical work now being prepared for publication.

Tentatively entitled "Vietnam Chronicles: The Abrams Tapes, 1968-1972," the two-volume manuscript comprises 450,000 words excerpted from tape recordings made at headquarters of the US Military Assistance Command (MACV) during the years Gen. Abrams was in command.

Excerpts from the tapes were transcribed, selected, edited and annotated by Dr. Lewis Sorley, author of "A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam." Sorley will also include an introductory essay.

"The material," Dr. Sorley says, "provides valuable insights into every aspect of the war, from changes in tactics and the pacification

program to high-level decision making and dealing with the South Vietnamese."

The bulk of the tapes were made at periodic MACV strategy sessions known as the Weekly Intelligence Estimate Updates. In those sessions, Gen. Abrams and his principal aides reviewed the state of the war and their plans to conduct it. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and William Colby regularly joined MACV's senior field commanders in wide-ranging discussions of all phases of the war.

Other excerpts to be included in "Chronicles" involve high-ranking officials who visited Vietnam, such as Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, and Sir Robert Thompson, the British counterinsurgency expert.

Publication date is uncertain, but the book is expected to go to press in early 2004.



The Wall: an important site for students visiting the nation's capitol.

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## Retired Ambassador Visits Center and Renews Friendship

John P. Condon, a former ambassador to Fiji who also served in the U.S. Embassy in Saigon in the 1960s, recently visited The Vietnam Center to learn about its activities and to renew ties with an old friend from the war years.

Mr. Condon, now retired from the U.S. Foreign Service, found himself involved in a busy schedule of events during his three-day visit to Lubbock and Texas Tech University, where The Vietnam Center is located.

Among other things, he received a briefing and was given a tour of the Vietnam Archive, visited Tech's International Cultural Center, sat for a lengthy oral history interview as part of the Archive's Vietnam Oral History Project and spoke to a class of French students at a local junior high school.

A special part of Ambassador Condon's visit was his reunion with Nguyen Xuan Phong, Senior Research Associate at The Vietnam Center, who he had not seen in 20 years. The two have been friends dating back to the mid-1960s when they were closely linked by their assignments in Saigon. At that time, Mr. Condon was labor

attaché at the U.S. Embassy; Mr. Phong was minister of labor in the Government of South Vietnam. They had frequent contacts involving labor relations and legislation.

The friendship continued over the years, including the period of the 1970s when Mr. Phong headed Saigon's delegation to the Paris peace talks.

Mr. Condon once recalled how highly regarded Mr. Phong was among his peers and among Americans. "I had opportunities to observe at the time the respect in which Ambassador Phong was held by such great figures as Ambassador Averell Harriman and the legendary Philip Habib," Mr. Condon said. "Countless times I had heard Habib tell his staff 'check with Phong to see what he thinks.' Habib was not a man to waste time with people he did not respect."

Later, the two men would find themselves in considerably different situations. After the fall of the South Vietnamese government to North Vietnam, Mr. Phong was sent to Hanoi for "re-education" in May 1975. He spent nearly five years in prison there.

Mr. Condon went on to increasingly important diplomatic assignments. In the late 1970s he became the first resident U.S. ambassador to Fiji, with accreditation as well to Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, and consular responsibilities for Tahiti and New Caledonia.

Mr. Condon retired in 1980. Since then he has lived mainly in France and Greece but frequently returns to the United States to visit a daughter.



*Ambassador Condon and close friend Phong.*



*(l-r) Dr. Erik Villard (CMH), Ms. Jeannine Swift (Nat'l Archives), Mr. Dale Andrade (CMH). Washington seminar.*

**Have You Been Missing Us?**

Has your *Friends of the Vietnam Center Newsletter* been failing to arrive? Or has it shown up late? Perhaps we have lost track of you. Keep up with us by helping us keep up with you—please advise us of any change in a mailing address. Notify us by any of the following:

Email [vietnam.center@ttu.edu](mailto:vietnam.center@ttu.edu)  
Fax (806) 742-8664, or Phone (806) 742-3742  
Mail:  
The Vietnam Center  
Texas Tech University  
Box 4105  
Lubbock, TX 79409-1045



*Dr. John Carland of the State Department Historical Office makes a lunch time point. Washington Seminar.*

# Letter From a Thankful Young Cambodian Student

For the past three years, Texas Tech University has been helping young Cambodian and Vietnamese students to continue their education in those countries at the university level. The effort involves Tech's using private donations to provide scholarships to Cambodian students, and foundation grants and a small private endowment to aid Vietnamese students.

The scholarships are small in terms of US dollars, but are a big help to needy students in the two Southeast Asian countries.

A recent letter to James R. Reckner, director of The Vietnam Center, expressed the gratitude of one such student. Sal Sos, who is studying physics at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, wrote in part: "I'm in second year now. How nice of you in providing scholarship to me. Thank you very much for your kindness. I am very happy and I would like to express my deep thank to you for your contribution to support my study. Your money you gave me is to study English that is the first step to get knowledge of my physics in English and buy some books that is particularly important for my course.

"With my special gratitude to you I would like to salute your wonderful generosity and I hope that one day I will be able to have you here in Cambodia again."

In 2002 and 2003, 35 Cambodian students have received four-year scholarships of \$125 per year, funded exclusively from private donations. Our Vietnamese scholarships have been made possible largely through generous support of such private foundations as the William C. Westmoreland Scholar Foundation and the Plum Foundation. With their help, Texas Tech since 2000 has awarded 300 such scholarships worth \$100 (US) each to Vietnamese students.

While it might seem a small amount to Americans, \$100 (U.S.) in Vietnam equates to roughly a full year's tuition for a student. In Cambodia, tuition is only \$5 a year, yet students outside Phnom Penh usually cannot afford to attend its Royal University because of the high cost of living in the capital city. Thus, a \$125 scholarship in Cambodia represents a significant contribution toward the education of a needy student there.



Sal Sos, Cambodian Student.



Scholarship presentation ceremonies, Cambodia and Vietnam.

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# REGISTRATION FOR THE VIETNAM CENTER'S 2003 CONFERENCE

## 24-25 OCTOBER 2003



*Diem*

*“The Rise and Fall of Ngo Dinh Diem: Its Implications for the United States and for Vietnam.”*

Please complete the registration form by clearly printing or typing the information.

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