

Friends of The Vietnam Center

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Gamewardens Share History with the Vietnam

The Gamewardens of Vietnam Association has designated the Vietnam Archive as its official repository for papers, pictures and other items of the organization's members. The action adds to the reputation and relevance of the archive as the world's largest non-federal government holder of historical materials related to the war.

"Thank you for all of your wonderful help and the fantastic service you provide to the world," Gamewardens' Vice President Jim Davy said in forwarding his association's collections to the Vietnam Center in August.

Some of the Gamewardens' materials were delivered to the Archive by John Woody, President of the Gamewardens of Vietnam Association. The Vietnam Archive is part of Texas Tech University's Vietnam Center. The university is located in Lubbock, TX.

The Gamewardens' collection is of particular relevance to historians seeking to understand the U.S. Navy's role on the inland waterways of South Vietnam, or the larger history of the Navy in inland waters, which stretches back to the Revolutionary War. Further, the collection should prove useful to those interested in evolution of the Mobile Riverine Force In Vietnam.

Archive Director Steve Maxner noted the importance of the continuing contributions to the Archive by groups such as the Gamewardens: "The Gamewardens collection, like so many other veteran association collections, is essential to a more complete understanding of the Vietnam War. These unique



Gamewardens' Woody eyes collection with Archive' Director Maxner

materials depict both the history of individual and collective service and sacrifice in Southeast Asia as well as the history of how this war continues to impact people's lives. By providing researchers with a better understanding of the human elements of the war, the Gamewardens collection makes more rich and full our understanding of these remarkable historical events."

Gamewardens is the oldest of the Vietnam veterans' associations. It was established in 1968 by veterans of the U.S. Navy's Task Force 116, which operated from 1966 to 1971 along waterways of the Mekong Delta. The task force, known as "the brown water navy," operated to keep Vietnam's rivers and canals open to peaceful trade while keeping the Viet Cong out.

Calling All Conference Papers
(Deadline: Jan. 15... see story p.6)



From The Director...by James Reckner

The canal we visited was hardly out of the ordinary, except that I had spent nine months on it in 1969. The South Vietnamese Navy assault boats on which I as a U.S. Navy officer served were unremarkable and decidedly aged. Yet returning to that setting brought back a vivid memory that I found difficult to express to those who were accompanying me on that particular summer day.

It happened this past June as I was escorting Texas Tech doctoral students around Vietnam to gain a first-hand experience of the country where the United States was once engaged in a prolonged war. I found it difficult to explain to those who weren't there—weren't even born yet in most cases—the feeling I experienced one day in 1969 on the Vinh Te canal. The boat on which I was patrolling had grounded late in the afternoon, and we were having difficulty getting her moving again. The area was dangerous: a remote canal between the Cambodian border and a series of hills we called "the Seven Sisters." There the Viet Cong held sway. It was a bad place to be stuck as the sun began to set.

As we struggled, to my great relief two shallow-draft American river patrol boats (PBRs) rounded a turn in the canal at high speed. The late afternoon sun illuminated the Stars & Stripes flying on the rapidly approaching vessels. And those two beautiful flags rippled and stood out.

Never in my life, no matter how long I live, will I see a more beautiful sight.

Brilliantly lit by the sun, the vibrant red, white and blue stood in stark relief against the green of the jungle and the brown of the canal. *Help had arrived!* We would make it through that difficult moment.

Thirty-five years later, whenever I see the United States flag whipping in the breeze—and in West Texas it is almost always whipping in the breeze—the sight causes me again to experience that feeling of relief that I felt that day on that distant canal. But it is difficult to explain all that to students who have lived their lives thus far in safety and security.

Some of my colleagues in academia are certain I know nothing about the Vietnam war as they knew it here at home. And they undoubtedly are correct. But I can say

with equal certainty that they know nothing about my war, my Vietnam. In each case, you had to be there. The chasm between us, even after three decades of "peace," remains unbridgeable.

Curiously, I find it easier to discuss these issues with our former enemies than with many Americans. I don't know what to say about that. Perhaps it is because we once shared the battlefield. Perhaps it is because they, like my own comrades-in-arms from the war, were prepared to lay down their lives for that in which they believed. That is something I can respect.

But what might I say to my students about the war? In the end, I suspect that everyone on every side lost. In the final days of the war the supporters of the South Vietnamese government, tens of thousands of them, took to the sea in unsafe boats, and risked all to achieve personal freedom in foreign lands. Thousands more who remained in Vietnam were incarcerated for long years in cruel prisons euphemistically called "re-education camps."

The "victors" imposed a failed economic system upon their people. Collectivization and removal of the profit motive resulted in a precipitous decline in the production of rice; a decade of hunger stalked what should have been a prosperous land. Even today, many personal freedoms we take for granted are routinely denied in Vietnam. As one Vietnamese official confided to me during one of my trips, "We sacrificed all for the Revolution and got nothing. Sometimes I wish we had lost."

Americans remain divided about Vietnam. Some see in our Vietnam failure a sort of cosmic justice for a nation grown too affluent, too powerful and too self-assured. I cannot accept that view. To me the American effort in Vietnam was a noble cause unrealized. I believe Vietnam was a necessary, extended skirmish in the global struggle that contributed significantly to the larger American success in the Cold War. It was one factor, I believe, in the ultimate defeat of a greater "evil empire." Nevertheless, I will encourage my students to research it all fully and arrive at their own conclusions. That is what a liberal education—liberal in the classical education sense and not the political sense—is all about.



Among Latest Additions to the Archive

Forward Air Controller Association Collection

CD-ROM detailing the history of the Forward Air Controllers beginning with the deployment of Detachment 2 Alpha (Jungle Jim) to Bien Hoa, South Vietnam on November 16, 1961 and ending with the Mayaguez Incident on May 15, 1975.

Peter Swartz Collection

97 Books, field manuals, government documents and reports document U.S. activity in Southeast Asia. Films include footage of a V.C. attack, air strikes, bombings, during the Tet Offensive, 1968, the May offensive, 1968, Air America, refugees

Robert E. Potts Collection

Flack jacket worn by Robert E. Potts during his tour of duty in Vietnam with the Seabees. The flack jacket saved Potts' life in October 1969 in downtown Saigon when a Vietnamese riding a Honda motorcycle threw a fragmentation grenade into the back of his pickup truck.

Jan Churchill Collection

Forward Air Controller research material and study guides, US Air Force CHECO Reports, Interviewss, Manuscripts, Short stories, Internet printouts, Original and copied articles, Slides, Periodicals, Newsletters, and Artifacts document research which led to her book, Hit My Smoke: Forward Air Controllers in Southeast Asia.

Doris Linebarger Collection

Newspaper clippings and 8mm film document the Air America career of James Linebarger, 1967-1968 and undated. Film includes footage of Hong Kong, Phnom Pehn, Saigon, Dalat, Singapore, Nha Trang, and footage of the Tet offensive of 1968.

Milton Thomas Powers Collection

Military records, two personal diaries and a Catholic Military Missal document Powers' service with the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam, 1967-1968.

Bruce W. Horton Collection

Annotated photocopies of military documents relating to the awarding of a Medal of Honor to Marine Lance Corporal James L. Stuckey in 1967. Handwritten annotations on the documents question the validity of the eyewitness accounts of Stuckey's actions.

William Holmes, Jr. Collection

Lyrics to song, "The Arrogance of Ignorance," written by Bill Holmes, Christmas 2002.

Rod Metzler Collection

Original painting on canvas and book of paintings by Helen White, a nurse who served in Vietnam who suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and paints as part of her therapy. This painting was produced in 2001. Metzler purchased the painting and book at an auction. The book is numbered 198 of 1000 and is signed by the author.

Lindy Poling Collection

Books, manuscripts, newsletters and brochures document Lindy Poling's experiences teaching classes about Vietnam at Millbrook High School in Raleigh, NC.

Hans Nohr Collection

Documents, photographs, slides, negatives and 16mm film document Hans Nohr's experiences as an Army Photographer with the Department of the Army Special Photographic Office (DASPO) in Central and South America from 1964-1967.

Ralph C. Erchinger Collection

Papers, maps, slides, films document Erchinger's experiences as a C7-A Caribou pilot in Vietnam in 1967-68, as well as his military training and home life.

Duane Keele Collection

Mannequin named "George" and an Air America uniform displayed at Air America reunions.

Dominick Cirincione Collection

Special Edition DVD of Oliver Stone's Platoon, Books; Internet book reviews; Smithsonian National Museum of American History Internet Press Releases for "The Price of Freedom" exhibition on November 11, 2004; Internet printout - "Communist Vietnamese Honor John Kerry, the War Protester, as a Hero in the Communist Victory over the United States in the Vietnam War"; American Museum of Natural History - Southeast Asia Unveiled: Laos, Vietnam & Cambodia, January 22 - February 8, 2004; "Photos Bring Our Agony Into Focus" USA Today, May 10, 2004; "Hmong Get Last Chance to Immigrate to USA" USA Today, June 14, 2004; Articles on Prisoners of War from The Dallas Morning News, May 21, 2004, DVD - The Fog of War; Two photocopies of "Beyond 'Fahrenheit': Go rent 'Fog of War' "; Two Playbills for Miss Saigon; Miss Saigon brochures and a ticket to the June 4, 2004 performance in Dallas, Texas; Two calendars from "In The Shadow of the Blade."



More Acquisitions of the Vietnam Archive

Frederic Whitehurst Collection

CD-Rom copy of captured diary of female North Vietnamese doctor Dang Thuy Tram and an essay, "Collage of War" written by Dr. Frederic Whitehurst. The CD-Rom contains diary in its original Vietnamese as well English translations, photographs, and email copies. Dr. Dang Thuy Tram apparently practiced medicine in the Duc Pho District of Quang Ngai Province with the North Vietnamese Army from 1967 to 1970.

Billy Hopper Collection

The Observer, Vol. 6, No. 14, August 9, 1967; The Jackstaff News, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 4, 1967; Con Son Loran Transmitting Station patch; Nine Rules for Personnel of US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam; Twenty Dong bill; Ten Cent Military Payment Certificate; and The Lesson of Vietnam, edited by W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson D. Frizzell. Photographs printed from a CD of Troopship Walker in the North Pacific and some artwork.

Bach Tuyet Collection

Vietnamese book - Nghe Si Bach Tuyet: Cai Luong Chi Bao, written by Bach Tuyet.

Robert F. Szul Collection

Slides from Szul's service in the US Air Force in Southern Laos, Western Cambodia, and the Pleiku area, August 1970 to August 1971 and three audio tapes from Szul's B-52 bombing missions over Hanoi, Dec 20, 27 1972.

William Foulke Collection

Slides and essays from William Foulke's Army career in Vietnam with DASPO and MACV Photo Team "A". The essays were written by Foulke in 2004 and include "DASPO/MACV Army 'A' Photo Team Meets Odd Events and Execution Jobs," "DASPO Films 1st Infantry Division," "DASPO/MACV Photo Team Size and Equipment," and "DASPO Covers Scout Dogs."

Ron Leonard Collection

Photocopies of After-Action Reports, Operational Reports - Lessons Learned, Army Aircraft Accident Reports, and Daily Staff Journals from the 25th Infantry Division, 1966-1970 collected by Ron Leonard. Collection also contains an essay, "Mole City" by Ron Leonard; a World Affairs file from 1969; Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for Henry L. Quigley; and photocopies of Tropic Lightning News (25th Infantry Division, Vietnam) from the following dates: September 22, 1969, September 7, 1970, September 14, 1970, September 28, October 5, 1970,

October 12, 1970, October 26, 1970, November 9, 1970, and the Orientation Edition.

J. C. Campbell Collection

Green blanket used aboard the USS Frank E. Evans. Campbell's name is stitched onto the blanket.

Vice Admiral Emmett Tidd Collection

January 2004 issue of Veteran: The Official Voice of Vietnam Veterans of America, and a photocopy of an article from that same issue about the Frank E. Evans titled "A Forgotten Tragedy: Death on the Evans." Internet printout from Washingtonpost.com Letters to the Editor titled "I Was There in the Gulf of Tonkin" by Kenneth W. Loveland. The article explains that despite rumors to the contrary, the North Vietnamese's second attack did take place during the Gulf of Tonkin Incident.

Eldon Kiehler Collection

Letter, computer prints of scanned photos of the Frank E. Evans, and printout from a Destroyer Profiles website.

Florentine F. & Susie Macayan Collection

August 14, 2003 issue of Beachweek: Coastal Community News newspaper containing front page article about the Frank E. Evans

Doug Legg Collection

Photocopy of article "Death of a Destroyer" from the December 2003 issue of Naval History, produced by the United States Naval Institute

Harold Higginbottom Collection

Email from Jack Druckemiller, photocopy of Floyd T. Sproles obituary, and photographs, both original and prints from scans, of USS Frank E. Evans sailors. Video of news report concerning efforts of Frank E. Evans Association to have a US naval destroyer named after the USS Frank E. Evans and correspondence between Richard Gleason and various government officials concerning these efforts.

Ed Schramko Collection

A Pocket Guide to Vietnam; Happy Happy Massage & Bar business card; Four H.P. Turkish Bath & Massage business cards; South Vietnamese government publication warning against selling heroin; Guide to the National Museum, Bangkok; Invoice from Young Designer's Jewelry; Thai Currency Conversion Reference; Two menus for Christmas Day Dinner in Vietnam, 1971; The Northern Log, 1971 and September 15, 1971.



Archive (cont.)

Lynn Steele Collection

Slides, military documents, and The Salina (Kansas) Journal Sunflower document Lynn Steele's Tour of Duty in Vietnam with B and C Battery, 13th Artillery from October 1960 to April 1970.



Gerald A. Brown Collection

Photocopies of newspaper articles, correspondence, and Texas Tech Army ROTC News, 1962-1974; Medals; an oil painting; and a framed photograph document Gerald A. Brown's life from his days in ROTC at Texas Technological College (now Texas Tech University) to his death in the Republic of Vietnam in 1967 and the efforts to preserve his legacy.

Robert Singer Collection

Book - The Village by Bing West and Life Magazine, August 25, 1967. The book and the magazine focus on Combined Action Platoons (CAPs), who were Marines assigned to live in Vietnamese villages to protect the villagers and Marine bases from the Viet Cong. CAP MOT: The Story of a Marine Special Forces Unit in Vietnam, 1968-1969 by Barry L. Goodson and Virginia Vietnam Veteran: The Virginia State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America, Vol. 9, No. 1.

Duc The Kieu Collection

Vietnamese book - Doi Duc Phat (The Life of the Buddha) by Duc The Kieu; Letter written in Vietnamese from Hoa-Thuong Thich-Tam-Chau to Duc The Kieu; and a passage in Vietnamese about Buddha.

David Lamb Collection

National Geographic, May 2004 with the article, "Hanoi, the Soul of Vietnam" by David Lamb.

Lady Borton Collection

Dien Bien Phu: Rendezvous with History (A Memoir) written by General Vo Nguyen Giap with assistance from Huu Mai and with an annotated translation by Lady Borton, 2004.

Robert M. Rankin Collection

Military resume; Essay - "A Sailor's Life"; Letter from Robert M. Rankin to his family and friends after a trip to Vietnam upon his retirement from the U.S. Navy, December 22, 1996; Correspondence concerning a firefight between NVA shore batteries and the USS O'BRIEN (DD-725), 1966-1967; Liturgy from "Honoring Our Fallen American Veterans for Equal Rights," May 23, 2004.

Vietnamese Author Visits Tech

Nguyen Thi Xuan Phuong, author of a Vietnam War memoir, is flanked by some of the more than 100 Texas Tech students she addressed during a September visit to the Vietnam Center. Dr. Phuong's "Ao Dai: My War, My Country, My Vietnam," was recently translated from French into English.

Other scheduled visitors to the Vietnam Center this fall include Cornell University's Dr. Keith W. Taylor; "No Peace, No Honor" author Dr. Larry Berman; Army Maj. Gen. Ken Bowra (ret.), a former military attache in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; former South Vietnamese Ambassador and Minister of State Nguyen Xuan Phong; and Vice Admiral Emmett H. Tidd (ret.).



'Secretary of State' Khanh Le

The Vietnam Center's Khanh Le was hailed for aiding a Texas trade mission to Vietnam.

Texas Secretary of State Geoffrey S. Connor commissioned Khanh "Honorary Secretary of State" of Texas, saying: "You certainly fill that role when you go abroad and make Texas look so good to others."

Papers Now Sought for 5th Symposium

The Vietnam Center's 5th Triennial Vietnam Symposium is approaching next spring—and the call is out for papers examining aspects of America's involvement in conflicts in and around Vietnam during the 1960s and '70s.

The Symposium will be held in Lubbock, TX, on March 17-19, 2005, at the Holiday Inn Park Plaza, where the Center sponsored the first three triennial events.

An impressive array of speakers is being lined up for the three days of sessions. The year 2005 happens to bring three major Vietnam-related anniversaries: the 40th anniversary of the first major commitment of U.S. ground forces to Vietnam; the 30th anniversary of the end of the war; and the 10th anniversary of the normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam. One or more of these benchmarks will likely be among topics chosen as the basis for papers and discussions at the Symposium.

Those interested in presenting papers should begin preparing now to submit a one-page proposal to the Vietnam Center. The Center's deadline for receiving proposals is January 15, 2005. Submissions should be formatted to resemble an abstract, with title, thesis/

purpose, and main points, up to 500 words. Graduate students are encouraged to offer proposals.

Proposals should include the author's name, title/affiliation, and contact information. The proposals may be sent : by email to Vietnam.Center@ttu.edu; by fax to (806) 742-3742; or by mail to The Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University, Box 41045, Lubbock, Tx 79409-1045.

It is advisable to make reservations early for lodging at the hotel where panel discussions and other activities of the Symposium will be held. The Center has arranged for a bloc of rooms to be set aside for those attending the Symposium, but reservations must be made before Feb. 15; after that, reservations can be made only if rooms happen to be available. (When you contact the hotel, tell them that you want one of the rooms blocked for The Vietnam Center's Triennial Symposium.)

Single-occupancy room rate, including tax, is \$90.40. A first-night room deposit is required to guarantee individual reservations. To make those reservations or to obtain other hotel information, contact Holiday Inn Park Plaza, 3201 South Loop 289, Lubbock, TX 79401. Telephone: (806) 797-3241. Fax: (806) 791-3781.

'Priceless' Scholarships

Students in Cambodia are beneficiaries of scholarships from Texas Tech—assistance that an official at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) calls "priceless."

Vietnam Center Director Jim Reckner informed RUPP in June that in addition to 35 scholarships awarded last year, Tech could now grant another six to Cambodian students. The aid is made possible through donations to the Cambodian Scholarship Fund administered by Tech.

The Royal University's gratitude was expressed in a message to Reckner from its Vice-Rector Lav Chhiv Eav.

"First and foremost, let me express my whole-hearted gratitude to you for your kind and continuous support for the 35 students at RUPP," he said. "Without your generous assistance, they would not have been successful as they are now. I am also thrilled to hear that 6 more scholarships are granted to our students this



A 1960s era M151 Jeep, still in vintage shape today

coming year. This means another 6 lucky Cambodians will be able to see the world better through this charity...Once again, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you, a representative of Texas Tech University and donors who put great efforts, time and funds to make this priceless charity possible, especially this charity has come to the right people, place and time. This good deed will always remain in the heart of every scholarship holder as well as the management team at RUPP."

The scholarships provide each student \$125 a year for four years. While \$125 seems a small sum—one high school student recently told Reckner she could "blow that much in an hour at the mall"—it actually is enough to support a student in Cambodia for most of a year. If any readers would like to help the program, contact Reckner at (806) 742-3742 or james.reckner@ttu.edu.



Texas' Summer Campaign in Vietnam

Call it Texas Tech's "Summer Campaign" in Southeast Asia. Three trips that were unrelated but important in different ways took four dozen individuals into and around Vietnam—some to Cambodia and Laos—at various times from June through August.

The groups consisted of a variety of individuals and interests, including graduate students, Tech professors, Texas state officials and businessmen, and staff members of the Vietnam Center and Vietnam Archive.

In August, Texas Secretary of State Geoffrey Connor headed a group seeking to boost Texas exports, including cotton, to Vietnam. The Vietnamese have been expanding production of textiles and garments, with demand for cotton and other raw fibers outstripping their own supply. Vietnam Center Director Jim Reckner accompanied the 22-member group. "Doing Business with Texas" workshops were a key part of the group's activities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

In July, 13 Tech faculty and staff members traveled to the region on a curriculum development mission under the U.S. Department of Education's Fulbright-Hays program. Co-directors of the group were Dr. Patricia Pelley (History) and Dr. Diane Oliver (Vietnam Center). Besides a busy round of visits to universities and other offices in Vietnam, the group went to Cambodia to present 40 scholarships to students at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, and to Laos. The scholarships are funded by donations to Texas Tech University's Cambodian Scholarship Fund.

In June and July, Dr. Reckner escorted a group, including five Tech doctoral students, on a tour (photos below) designed to provide them with information and insights for their dissertations related to the Vietnam War. Members of the group toured historic battlefields and were able to speak first-hand with Vietnamese involved in the war. The students kept daily journals of their impressions of sights and sounds along the way.



Sights and Sounds of 'Campaign'

Above: Tech students with People's Army of Vietnam Lt. Gen. Nguyen Dinh Uoc at entrance to site of Giap's Dienbienphu headquarters.

Upper right: Tech doctoral student Son Mai was a solemn visitor before a display of skulls from the war at the "Bone Pagoda" at Ba Chuc, near the Cambodian border in Vietnam.

Lower right: Student teachers from Ho Chi Minh City delight in meeting a visiting graduate student from Tech at the Hai Van Pass, near Danang.





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Where veterans meet ...

Frank E. Evans Association Reunion - Lubbock - 23-26 September ... C7-A Caribou Association - Odessa, TX - Sept 30-Oct 2 ... DASPO Association Reunion - Las Vegas, NV - Oct 6-10 ... New Jersey Vietnam Veteran Memorial and Education Center - Holmdel, NJ - Oct 21-23 ... National Social Studies Supervisors Association Conference - Baltimore, MD - Nov 17-21

Vietnam Archive's Mary Saffell (below) samples Vietnam delicacy: chicken head



Tech's Robert Tidwell in MIG21 in Hanoi museum



Tech students eye traffic on the Vinh Te Canal

