



FRIENDS OF THE VIETNAM CENTER



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2008 Triennial Vietnam Symposium



The 2008 Triennial Vietnam Symposium attracted more than 200 guests from around the globe.

On March 13, 14, and 15, 2008, the Vietnam Center hosted its Sixth Triennial Vietnam Symposium. During those three days, more than 220 guests attended nearly 100 presentations on a variety of topics regarding the Vietnam War. While the Vietnam Center symposia are open to all topics, the 40th Anniversary of the Tet Offensive of 1968 provided an opportunity to explore subjects related to those fateful events.

The symposium started with two plenary sessions on the media and the Vietnam War, focusing on two areas – the media during the Tet Offensive and the media during the war, more broadly. These two sessions featured senior veteran reporters from the war as well as scholars of the period.

The first panel featured Mr. Barry

Zorthian, who served with the US Information Agency and as the Joint US Public Affairs Officer in Saigon for the Johnson Administration. Joining Mr. Zorthian on this panel discussion were Mr. Don North, a war correspondent with ABC and NBC News, and Dr. William Hammond, an historian with the US Army Center of Military History. Mr. Zorthian, Mr. North, and Dr. Hammond discussed the role of the media during the Tet Offensive and its effect on domestic public opinion as well as their personal roles the war reporting of these events.

The second session featured three senior journalists who discussed the Media and the Vietnam War more broadly to include Mr. Peter Arnett, war correspondent with the Associated Press, Mr. Richard Pyle, war correspondent with

the Associated Press and the Saigon Bureau Chief for several years, and Dr. George Esper, a war correspondent with the Associated Press and Saigon Bureau Chief from 1973 to 1975, serving in that role during fall of Saigon in April 1975. Dr. Esper is also a professor of journalism

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What's Inside...



Award-winning Vietnam Journalist Peter Arnett Speaks at Conference



Meet the new faces at the archive: Amy Hooker and Kelly Crager



Conference Call for Papers

Letter from the Director

By Steve Maxner, Ph.D.

I want to start this article by thanking all of you, the Friends of the Vietnam Center. Your generous support and donations each year contribute directly to the success of our project. This is especially the case regarding the Vietnam Center scholarship programs.

The Vietnam Center currently manages scholarships for students in Vietnam, Cambodia, and, of course, Texas Tech. The scholarships for Vietnamese and Cambodian students studying in their own countries are quite modest by American standards. \$100 per year in Vietnam covers a student's tuition and fees. \$125 per year in Cambodia covers their living expenses for six months. This is remarkable given that an American student studying in the US could spend that much on iTunes downloads in a matter of minutes.

Scholarships in Vietnam are distributed to students in Thanh Hoa Province, Hue, Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho, Rach Gia, and An Giang. Scholarships for Cambodian students are distributed at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. The Vietnam Center works very closely with the rectors and university officials at these institutions to ensure these scholarships are provided to students who show academic promise, have genuine financial need, and we insist on gender parity distributing scholarships to male and female students, equally. The Vietnam Center is also working with the National University of Laos and hopes to expand our scholarship program into Laos this year. There is 100% flow through on donations made to these scholarships. Neither Texas Tech nor the Vietnam Center assesses any fees or administrative charges for managing these scholarships – every penny goes straight through to students in Vietnam and Cambodia!

Vietnam Center scholarships for Texas Tech students include the Lee Roy

Herron Scholarship, which supports annual summer study abroad for Texas Tech students where we spend a month with them traveling throughout Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. The Lee Roy Herron scholarship funds student airfare to and from Southeast Asia and the students cover the remainder of their expenses. Like the scholarships in Vietnam and Cambodia, all funding from the Lee Roy Herron Scholarship



Steve Maxner distributes scholarships to students in Vietnam.

goes only to the students. The Vietnam Center uses internal funds to cover staff and faculty travel in support of this trip so no scholarship funds or student fees are used to cover staff travel. Students only cover their own travel expenses. Other Vietnam Center scholarships for Texas Tech students include the Gerald Hickey scholarship for a TTU anthropology student studying Montagnard history and culture. We also have the Rein/Yoho DASPO Scholarship and the Guy LaPointe B Troop, 2/17th Cavalry Scholarship to help military history students studying various aspects of the Vietnam War at Texas Tech and these are all administered in the same way – all money directly supports the scholarship – no administration fees are assessed.

The effects of these scholarships on the lives of students in Vietnam, Cambodia, and at Texas Tech are incalculable. A rector at Can Tho University once helped his students to put into per-

spective the \$100 scholarships they were about to receive. He told them that their families would have to farm and harvest the rice of more than 10 acres of land in order for them to net a profit of \$100US. As a result, it is both amazing and humbling to see and hear the appreciation of young Vietnamese and Cambodian students who receive such modest levels of support. Texas Tech students are equally appreciative for the support they receive as they never again view the world or the US in the same way after they study abroad for 30 days in several developing nations of the world. They gain knowledge and respect for the peoples of Southeast Asia and a newfound appreciation for the countless blessings we enjoy in our own country.

The impact of Vietnam Center scholarship programs, however, is beginning to decline. The economies of Asia are changing and inflation in Vietnam and elsewhere means that \$100-\$125 per year is not going as far today as it did yesterday. In the past year alone, from March of 2007 to March of 2008, on average, prices for goods in Vietnam rose nearly 20%! The food a student purchased last year for \$100 now costs them \$120. As this trend continues, the Vietnam Center will have to evaluate our scholarship distributions to make sure they remain relevant and of genuine assistance to the students who receive them.

Your continued support for our project and especially our scholarship programs is appreciated beyond measure, both by us and by the many students whose lives are forever changed by your generous contributions. We hope that we may continue to count on your support this year as the Vietnam Center continues its missions to educate and help students at Texas Tech and in Southeast Asia. Again, thank you very much for your support and contributions to our project. ★

Call for Papers: 2009 Vietnam Center Conference March 13-14, 2009

Most historical examinations of the Vietnam War tend to focus on the effects of the war on the principal participants to include the Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the United States. The events that took place in Vietnam from 1955 through 1975, however, had a tremendous impact on the entire region.

The purpose of the 2009 Vietnam Center Conference will be to examine the effects of the war on the neighboring nations of Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. The Vietnam Center invites both individual paper proposals as well as complete panels that will examine a wide range of topics to include the effects of the war within these nations either individually or collectively; specific events and activities that took place within each of these nations; the participation of US and other military, diplomatic, and civilian organizations within these countries, issues of regional and international diplomacy and diplomatic relations; the participation of these nations' military, diplomatic, and civilian organizations within Vietnam and each other, postwar issues for each nation, etc...

Persons interested in participating should provide a proposal

as soon as possible. Please format proposals to resemble an abstract to include the author's name, title, and affiliation, contact information, along with a 500 word abstract. Complete panel proposals should include brief biographies of each speaker, their contact information, as well as a 500 word abstract that describes the theme and purpose for the panel.

Please submit proposals to:

Stephen Maxner, PhD
Director, Vietnam Center
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX 79409-1041

You may also submit proposals via email to steve.maxner@ttu.edu. If you make a submission but do not receive notification of receipt within 14 days, please call 806-742-9010.

The deadline for submitting proposals is October 1, 2008

This event will take place at the Holiday Inn Park Plaza in Lubbock, Texas. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you! ★

Reference Archivist Amy Hooker Joins Our Team

Hello, my name is Amy Hooker and I recently joined the Vietnam Archive staff as the Reference Archivist. My first week here was in early March during the triennial symposium, and what a first week it was! During the symposium and my short tenure here at the Vietnam Archive I have met some of the most fascinating and nicest people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. I am excited to be a member of the Vietnam Archive team and inspired by the people who are involved in the project.

In my new position I have the privilege of helping all of the researchers who visit or email the Vietnam Archive. Already I have met people from all over the world and learned much about the Vietnam War and the people who study it. I look forward to meeting future researchers and am happy to help people locate the records they need to complete their studies.

Of course, I will not just be sitting around waiting for someone to show up in the reading room or send me an



email. I also have plans to create some tools that will hopefully make researching on our site easier and more accessible for everyone who visits. New subject guides and some online exhibits are on the agenda; so watch the newsletter for announcements of these new devel-

opments as they become available.

I will close by saying, it is a pleasure to be working at the Vietnam Archives and I am looking forward to working with our researchers, helping them develop their projects and hopefully making their lives a little easier. ★



Ambassador Charles Ray, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for DPMO discusses MIA recovery issues with attendees.

Revisiting the surge

2008 Vietnam Symposium examines the Tet Offensive 40 years later

Continued from page one

at West Virginia University. All three gentlemen provided profound insights into their work as journalists throughout the war from a more personal perspective.

Mr. Arnett, who became much better known while reporting from around the world with CNN, also provided the Thursday luncheon presentation. Mr. Arnett reported the war in Vietnam for thirteen years and won a Pulitzer Prize for his war reporting in 1966. At lunch, he discussed the more personal experiences and relationships he developed with American men serving in Vietnam and the impact they had on him and how he reported the war. The remainder of Thursday also featured presentations that reexamined and reevaluated a number of important and interesting historical topics to include Colonel Edward Lansdale, Agent Orange,

the Republic of Vietnam and Ngo Dinh Diem, and many others.

The many presentations provided on Friday refocused some attention on the Tet Offensive to include the Hue Massacre. One of the more important aspects of this discussion is that it included excellent presentations by Vietnamese Americans who provided first person descriptions and assessments of these events of early 1968. Friday's presentations provided some informative discussions on teaching about the Vietnam War and the Tet Offensive, legal and medical issues and the war, personal recollections of the war, the role of naval intelligence in the war, and comparative studies between the wars in Vietnam and Iraq.

Friday also featured two special guest speakers for lunch

and dinner. At lunch, Dr. Mark Moyar discussed the "Major Debates on the History of the Vietnam War." Dr. Moyar is the Kim T. Adamson Chair of Insurgency and Terrorism at the U.S. Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia. He is also the author of the recent book *Triumph Forsaken*. Somewhat belying the title of his presentation, Dr. Moyar focused less on the major historiographical debates as they relate to the Vietnam War and focused more of his presentation on the issue of the politics in American academia and his interpretation on how they affect the history of the war, especially the hiring of faculty at US universities.

Ambassador Raymond Burghardt of the East West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, provided the Friday evening banquet presentation. Ambassador Burghardt served with the US State Department in Vietnam in the early 1970s and returned in 2001 to serve as the second US Ambassador to return to Vietnam since the normalization of relations. Ambassador Burghardt discussed his impressions of the relationship between the US and Vietnam as it has evolved since the end of the war.

Saturday provided another set of excellent presentations about many subjects to include special operations and missions, the Vietnam War in literature, US naval operations, the experiences of US soldiers, and some of the post-war issues. Saturday's luncheon speaker was Ambassador Charles Ray, former US Ambassador to Cambodia, and currently Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office in Washington, DC. Ambassador Ray discussed his current work and that of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI). Ambassador Ray was followed by a final plenary session that featured members of his staff from Washington, DC, who discussed some of the challenges in their ongoing work.

The Vietnam Center extends our sincere thanks to all of the presenters and participants who travelled to Lubbock, Texas, to join us for this symposium and who helped us to make this event a success. As with previous conferences



Left photo: Ambassador Raymond Burghardt discusses his impressions of the relationship between the US and Vietnam since the end of the war. Right photo: Representatives from Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office in Washington DC discuss their work in recovering US MIAs from the Vietnam War.



AP War Correspondent Peter Arnett, who reported for 13 years from Vietnam and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1966, served as one of our special luncheon speakers.

and symposia, the discussion that took place showed how close to the surface the passions of the Vietnam War remain. While always remaining civil, commentary, at times, became somewhat heated, especially as veteran participants were able to provide their perspectives in juxtaposition to those of presenters somewhat more detached from the actual events. We believe the end result is one more important contribution to the ongoing historical discussion and debate about one of the most significant events of the latter half of the 20th Century. All sessions and presentations were video recorded and, by the summer, will be made available via the Vietnam Center website at www.vietnam.ttu.edu.

The Vietnam Center's next conference will be held in March 2009 and will focus on the Vietnam War in Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. The call for papers is provided in this newsletter and we look forward to your participation and hope to see you here! ★



Want to see more?
Additional photos from the symposium can be found at http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/vietnamcenter/events/2008_symposium/photos.htm

Crager continues efforts of oral history project

By Kelly Crager, Ph.D.

The Oral History Project at the Vietnam Center and Archive has undergone important changes in the past several months. Dr. Richard B. Verrone, former Head of the OHP, and oral historian Dr. Laura M. Calkins have accepted new positions at Texas Tech University. Richard has moved to the university's Honors College, and Laura is now the Director of the Women's Studies Program at TTU. Please join me in wishing them the absolute best in their future endeavors. I joined the Vietnam Center and Archive in January 2008 as the new Head of the OHP, and I am very excited about this opportunity.

After spending the last decade teaching in the departments of history at the University of North Texas and at Texas A&M University, I come to the OHP eager to help fulfill the mission of the Vietnam Center. Having gained years of invaluable experience in the Oral History Program at UNT, I very much look forward to applying my abilities in an effort to record the voices of the Vietnam War Era. It is essential that we continue to reach out to war veterans and wartime civilians in both the U.S. and in Vietnam to capture their recollections for use by researchers, as well as for anyone who is interested in a more thorough understanding of the Vietnam conflict. It is imperative that we record those voices before time takes them away, leaving future generations without that vital personal connection to one of the 20th Century's most controversial, tragic, heroic, and enduring events. I ask that you please continue to offer the OHP the overwhelming support that you have in the past. I am confident that you will.

I am very pleased to be a part of the Vietnam Center and Archive. In a very short time, this organization has earned a remarkable reputation in the halls of academia as a research institution, as well as in the eyes of Vietnam War vet-

erans who seek to preserve their legacy. It is, and will continue to be, the nation's preeminent entity promoting the study of the Vietnam War Era. Through its outreach programs, such as providing scholarships for Vietnamese college



“It is essential that we continue to reach out to war veterans and wartime civilians in both the U.S. and in Vietnam to capture their recollections ... It is imperative that we record those voices before time takes them away ...”

Dr. Kelly Crager, Oral Historian for the Vietnam Center and Archive

students, its conferences and symposia, and its myriad other efforts, this organization has helped to promote not just a greater understanding of the war, but has also promoted reconciliation, and through this, healing. None of this could have been achieved without the tireless efforts of the talented and devoted staff

here at the Center and Archive, and I am honored that they have asked me to join them in their efforts.

Please allow me to discuss our recent progress in the OHP, as well as inform you of the initiatives we will undertake in the near future. Since January, we have completed and added to our website over 160 interview audio recordings and interview transcripts, and we are in the process of editing and posting an additional 30 interviews. We will also bring on board another full-time oral historian in the coming weeks to help conduct interviews and to build upon the considerable success of our predecessors, Richard and Laura. I was fortunate to meet many U.S. veterans at our most recent symposium, as well as to make the acquaintance of a number of Vietnamese who are interested in our oral history project. In an effort to conduct and record as many interviews as we can, I plan to arrange a series of oral history workshops with interested groups who will conduct interviews on behalf of the OHP, in addition to the interviews that we will conduct. If you are interested in participating in or scheduling a workshop, please let me know. I will be happy to work with you, and you will be performing a great service for the OHP.

Once again, I am very pleased to be a part of this organization, and I look forward to meeting and working with you in the future. ★

If you are interested in participating in The Vietnam Archive's Oral History Project, please contact Dr. Kelly Crager by email at Kelly.Crager@ttu.edu or by phone - (806) 742-9010.

About Us

The *Friends of the Vietnam Center* newsletter is a quarterly publication produced by the Vietnam Center and Archive at Texas Tech University. You can direct questions to Victoria Lovelady victoria.lovelady@ttu.edu.



A Special Forces Bronze Statue donated by Robert Crager

Additions to the Archive

12th Cavalry Regiment Association ★ U.S.S. Frank E. Evans Association ★ Vietnam Archive

★ Vietnam Center ★ Ted Acheson ★ William Badger ★ William Bruce Bartow ★ Jerry

Benson ★ Dorothy Reese Bloomfield ★ Richard Brown ★ John Buesseler ★ Laura Calkins

★ Chris Densmore ★ Birdie Childs ★ Ralph Christopher ★ Dominick Cirincione

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