



The “AZ-LZ”

September–December 2017

Volume 11–Issue 3

The End of Another Year—2017, and What Does 2018 Bring Us?

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To look back on the year of 2017 and look ahead into the next year 2018, there is not enough paper in this document to fulfill all that took place and coming up in the next year. The one thing that seems to have taken place the most is “the warfare” throughout a lot of the world and more and more people dying. We know we all have our date with God as our name and death date is written in His book when we shall pass on. In the mean time, we need to live

for Him and support our families and raise our children and help oversee our grandchildren so they don’t fall into the same traps that so many people have before that wind up ruining their lives. As Vietnam Veterans, we should make it a priority to teach our grandchildren as much as we can about life, as they have not begun to live it. Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will always be 40-50+ years behind us (veterans) and it should be our obligation to help them out so they live their lives in the right way and avoid the terrible tragedies that so many run into without knowing what might take place. Needless to say, we are in our last years of life and we need to take advantage of the time we have left to make a difference in the lives of others. We all have the opportunity to talk to schools and explain what Vietnam was all about. So many don’t know.

Grandparents, make it a point to spend as much time with your family as you can. Make it a point to do for your families as much as you can. And make it a point to help them throughout their life so they make the right decision. Invest in them with as much as you can to help them, be there for them. Talk to them, tell them what went on your life back in the 1940’s & 1950’s and how life was then. You know as well as I do that people were a lot different back then and people today are also a lot different and often times we need to be more careful in today’s world. Young people look up to someone that “has been around the block a few times” and we Vietnam Veterans all fall into that category.

We’ve seen a lot, done a lot, forgotten a lot and need to ensure that our families don’t make the same mistakes we did. Just imagine the faces of your family. Those sons, daughters, grandsons, grand-daughters and those great grandchildren, nieces, nephews. **Do your bit, and be there for them in all ways.**

Points of Interest

- About Pre-Vietnam
- What Others Think of the US Armed Forces
- Holiday Season for 2017 and Year 2018
- The WA Convention
- World Photos
- 50th Events
- Vietnam-Yesterday
- Vietnam-Then
- Vietnam-Today
- Why A Newsletter?
- 2018 Is Almost Here

Vietnam Veterans 50th Commemoration Events

Little does one know about "Commemoration Events" or the difference between "Memorial Day" and "Veterans Day". How about the "4th of July" and when America became free from Britain. Do you know the difference between "The War of 1812" and the "2nd Revolutionary War"?"


It is a shame that history has come and gone in almost a flash, but it has and it is mostly our own fault for NOT teaching it to the families members of ours, or in the schools that we support with our taxpayer monies. All it takes is ONE generation to NOT know what is going on in the world because of "apathy" or the "*I don't care attitude*", so may I recommend that you, the reader of this publication teach your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren (that is three generations right there in your midst teach them what "*Vietnam history*" is all about?

You know it will only be a few more years (likely) that we'll be gone from our families and on our death bed, we'll likely regret many things we've done in our lives, so, while we (or most of us) still have health and the wherewithal to do, say, think and act, TEACH, TALK, ACT and DO.


Definition of commemoration

the act of commemorating or something that commemorates


There are only so many years left in our life on "Being Commemorated" and "Attending a Commemoration", thus make it a point to go to your local Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and see when they are sponsoring a "50th Commemorative Event" where you live. If it's out of town, make it a small vacation. During the time of between September and November there are two 50th events being held in Arizona. One in Sierra Vista on the 30th of September and one in Yuma on the 3rd of November 2017.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER 1093, COCHISE COUNTY



Funded in part by the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services as made available through the Arizona Veterans' Donation Fund.



Painting of Cochise, Mountain Warrior on canvas valued at \$1200
\$5 PER TICKET OR \$20 FOR 5.
Tickets are available from any VVA 1093 member.

Drawing to be held at 50th Commemorative Event 30 Sept 17; 1100 – 1430hrs (Need not be present to win).

S.V. United Methodist Church, 3225 St Andrews Drive, Sierra Vista

FREE luncheon for all Vietnam and Vietnam Era veterans and their immediate families. Free Door Prizes and table gifts.

Artist: Jim Covarrubias, Phoenix Arizona

Special guests and featured speaker will present Vietnam Service Pins to anyone who hasn't received one previously along with a personal "Welcome Home" for which many of us have waited a lifetime.


For more information call: 520-559-1193/520-559-5377/520-249-8898

Vietnam Era Music, Vet info tables. Hats, stickers/pins available for purchase.


VVA is the only national Vietnam Veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam and Vietnam Era veterans and their families. VVA is a 501-C (19) not for Profit Corporation. We are solely funded by donations, fund raising events and dues.


"Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another"







VVA knows what returning veterans face. We have been through it, and despite the rhetoric, returned veterans face major problems. VVA will be here for as long as it takes to ensure that those who served our country receive the care and respect they have earned.



Welcome Home





All Vietnam and Vietnam Era Veterans are invited to join the Vietnam Veterans of America, Yuma Chapter 835 and the Arizona State Council for a

Vietnam Veterans Dinner

in honor of the




50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War

Friday, November 3, 2017
5:30pm to 9:00pm

Faith Baptist Church
(Commemorative Partner)
1535 S. 8th Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85364

Visit http://vvaarizona.org/st_events.php to register

If no computer, RSVP NLT October 26th to Andy Noriega at 928-580-5190

Yuma's 50th Commemorative Event



The Arizona State Council, Yuma Chapter 835 and Faith Baptist Church, a Commemorative Partner are hosting a 50th Vietnam 50th Event on **November 3, 2017** at **Faith Baptist Church** located at **1535 S. 8th Avenue, Yuma, AZ 85364** from **5:30 to 9:00pm**.

Our guest speakers will include COL. Wanda Wright, Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services, COL. Ross Poppenberger, new commander of Yuma Proving Ground and Pastor John Goetsch of Faith Baptist Church.

A superb dinner will include an Olive Garden Lasagna Combination with Fettuccine Alfredo, bread rolls, a tossed salad, fresh brewed iced tea and a delicious dessert. It will be meal you won't want to miss and you'll thoroughly enjoy it very much.

In addition, there will be some special presentation's to various personnel and all of the Vietnam Veterans in attendance.

The only requirement is to sign up on the "VVAARIZONA.ORG" web at: http://www.vvaarizona.org/st_events.php to register your reservation for the attendance. We are asking for the Vietnam Veteran and their spouse or companion.

At our age, we need to look at Vietnam from a different perspective. So very of us only know about the war from 1960 to 1975, but who knows about the "Vietnam" well before Vietnam War, much less before World War II?

A special video will also be presented to the audience showing what Vietnam was like from the early 1900's to current day. And may I say for those of you have not returned to Vietnam, you should seriously consider that before you cannot do so. It is a country that has a lot going for it. The people are tremendous, very honest and forthcoming and it could be a very worthwhile trip you would not forget.

The talks will include what Yuma Proving Ground did for the cause of the Vietnam War. After all, there were many federal agencies in the military sector and civilian agencies. To say the least, they were very instrumental in preparing the ground troops with weapons, artillery and other means of fighting the enemy. Certain weapons such as the M-60 machine gun was developed and tested there.

As with any conflict in our own lives or that of the country, God was with us and we certainly counted on Him to get us through this 15 year conflict.

We encourage you to sign up before it is too late as we have limited space. For questions, call Andy Noriega at 928-580-5190 or



Another Side of Vietnam – Indochina



Looking back when I went into the service, you could put in a thimble as to what I knew about Vietnam. However, over the years, I have studied the country and what the area was all about, the military that attempted to make it a free country.

Frankly, it is not a country or region in the world that many know much about. But then there is that time, frankly really, a long time where it was not called “Vietnam”, but Indochina and before that it was referred to as something else as was called Indo-China with the hyphen in the middle of the word.

And before that it was referred to as three regions known as: TONKIN, ANNAM and COCHINCHINE and before that it was yet something else.

The pages that follow will illustrate what Vietnam was during the last 600 plus years and all that took place with “Rulers”, “Colonizers”, the language, the food, infrastructure, ideology and on and on. This is something every Vietnam Veteran should know. Read carefully, you’ll enjoy it.

As you look at the map above which is about 250 years old, please observe carefully with the “odd names” located on the map which, to me anyway, are unusual. There are names that have not been around for many decades of years, along with the country names being different from their known names of today. And something a little unusual to me is that this is our spelling of “SAIGON”. Today, the Vietnamese spell it “SAI GON” with a space. Instead of Hanoi, they spell it “HA NOI”.

Study the map and pick out the country-name-change, the spelling of cities within Indochina and the regions of various countries within Indochina. You’ll find a great lesson in this to be sure. By the way, show it to your family as they too, may be interested in knowing this.

The History of Vietnam



The history of Vietnam can be traced back to more than 4,000 years ago. Archaeological findings from 1965 showed the remains of two hominins closely related to *Sinanthropus*, dating as far back as the Middle Pleistocene era, several thousand of years ago. Ancient Vietnam was home to some of the world's earliest civilizations and societies—making them one of the world's first people who practiced agriculture. The Red River valley formed a natural geographic and economic unit, bounded to the north and west by mountains and jun-

gles, to the east by the sea and to the south by the Red River Delta. The need to have a single authority to prevent floods of the Red River, to cooperate in constructing hydraulic systems, trade exchange, and to fight invaders, led to the creation of the first Vietnamese states approximately 2879 BC. Another truly influential part of history in Vietnam occurred during the late Bronze Age, when the Đông Sơn culture dramatically advanced the civilization. Vietnam's peculiar geography made it a difficult country to attack, which is why Vietnam under the Hùng kings was for so long an independent and self-contained state. The Xích Tys and Qins were among the earliest foreign aggressors of Vietnam, but the ancient Vietnamese managed to regain control of the country soon after the invasions.

Once Vietnam did succumb to foreign rule, however, it proved unable to escape from it, and for 1,100 years, Vietnam had been successively governed by a series of Chinese dynasties: the Han, Eastern Wu, Jin, Liu Song, Southern Qi, Liang, Sui, Tang, and Southern Han; leading to the loss of native cultural heritage, language, and much of national identity. At certain periods during these 1,100 years, Vietnam was independently governed under the Triệus, Trưng Sisters, Early Lýs, Khúc and Dương Đình Nghệ—although their triumphs and reigns were temporary.



During the Chinese domination of North Vietnam, several civilizations flourished in what is today central and south Vietnam, particularly the Funanese and Cham. The founders and rulers of these governments, however, were not native to Vietnam. From the 10th century onwards, the Vietnamese, emerging in their heartland of the Red River Delta, began to conquer these civilizations. Millions upon millions were lost to these lengthy wars over a fifty year period.

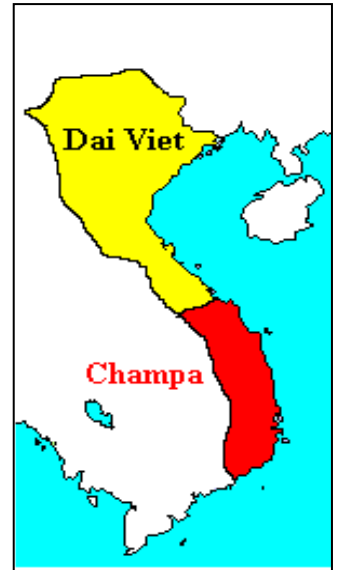
When Ngô Quyền (King of Vietnam, (939–944) restored sovereign power in the country, the next millennium was advanced by the accomplishments of successive dynasties: Ngôs, Đinhs, Early Lês, Lýs, Trầns, Hồs, Later Trầns, Later Lês, Mạcs, Trịnhs, Nguyễns, Tây Sóns and again Nguyễns. At various points during the imperial dynasties, Vietnam was ravaged and divided by civil wars and witnessed interventions by the Songs, Mongol Yuans, Chams, Mings, Dutch, Manchus, French, and the Americans. The Ming Empire conquered the Red River valley for a while before native Vietnamese regained control and the French Empire reduced Vietnam to a French dependency for nearly a century, followed by an occupation by the Japanese Empire. Political upheaval and a Communist insurrection put an end to the monarchy after World War II, and the country was proclaimed a republic. It became a fully free country in 1975. Vietnam would become a major player soon.

Kings and Emperors of Vietnam



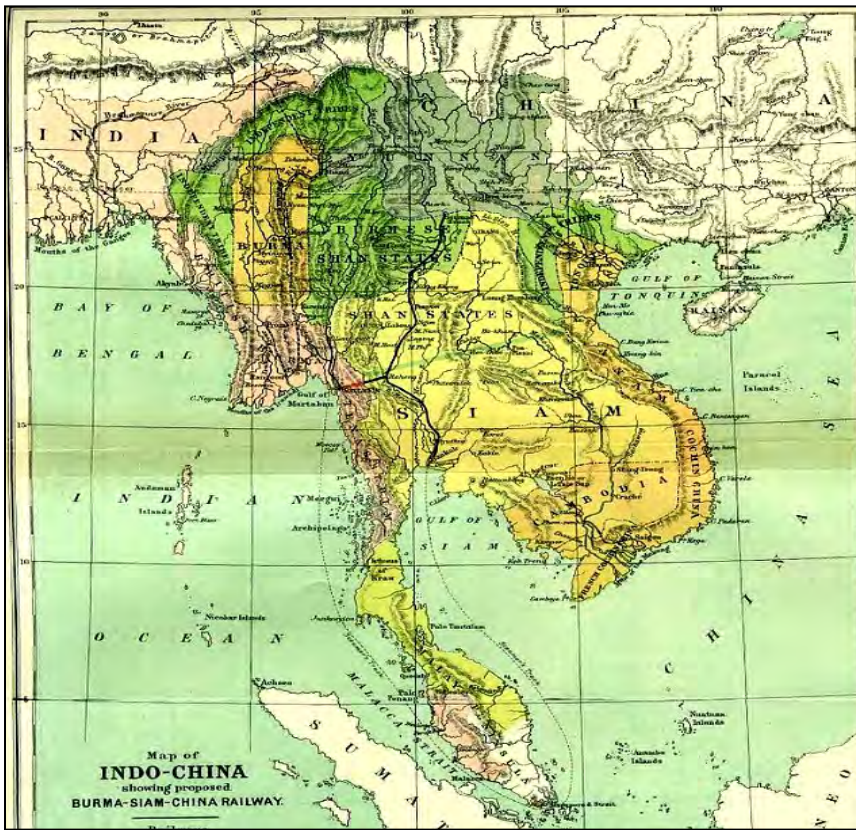
越南

Viet Nam, *viêt nam*, began as two states, a northern one, **Annam**, Nam Viet, or **Dai Viet**, that was primarily under Chinese influence, and for a long time and was part of China, and a southern one, **Champa**, where there was a strong Indian influence. This can be seen in the names of its kings (e.g. Rudravarman, much like the names of Cambodian kings). Indeed, Champa even spoke a Malayo-Polynesian language, **Cham**, which still survives, in a population mostly Muslim. There are some distant relatives among the "Montagnards," in the mountains, and elsewhere. Having won its freedom from China, the northern kingdom conquered the southern one -- a bit of history that seems to have repeated itself in the 20th century -- and the Chinese cultural influence overwhelmed the Indian. From the small map, it can also be seen that the Mekong Delta region was not originally part of the Vietnamese states. It was Cambodian and was absorbed by Vietnam as Cambodia declined.



Hue became the provincial capital of Vietnam in the 1600's and in some ways still is. It is a beautiful city with a lot of old time "Emperor Glamour" characterized Vietnam back then. Life was obviously a lot different where the "Vietnamese Royalty" spent much of their time alone praying to their gods to help their own ruled people.

Where and What Was “Indochina”?



Indo-China became a colony of France in the late 1840's which allowed France to gain access to the spices and delicious and delicate foods that were only grown in that part of the world. It would become an exotic place to visit by the rich French who wanted "something different" in the way of being waited on, "spoiled", enjoying the drink, foods and other delicacies of "anything" that France did not have and that by the way, was not much. The people in Europe, the French were (by far) the most spoiled, if I can use that term. And they, like a lot of us wanted more, different experiences, and exotic things and that they got in Vietnam. It was practically half way across the world and about "500 years different" than France or any other European country of that era in time.

Indochina, originally spelled **Indo-China**, is a geographical term originating in the early nineteenth century and referring to the continental portion of the region now known as Southeast Asia. The name refers to the lands historically within the cultural influence of India and China, and physically bound by the Indian Subcontinent to the west and China in the north. It corresponds to the present-day areas of Myanmar, Thailand (Siam), Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and (variably) peninsular Malaysia. The term was later adopted as the name of the colony of French Indochina (today's Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos), and the entire area of Indochina is now usually referred to as the Indochinese Peninsula or Mainland Southeast Asia. The origins of the name Indo-China are usually attributed jointly to the Danish-French geographer Conrad Malte-Brun, who referred to the area as *indo-chinois* in 1804, and the Scottish linguist John Leyden, who used the term *Indo-Chinese* to describe the area's inhabitants and their languages in 1808. Scholarly opinions at the time regarding China's and India's historical influence over the area were conflicting, and the term was itself controversial—Malte-Brun himself later argued against its use in a later edition of his *Universal Geography*, reasoning that it over-emphasized Chinese influence, and a possible suggested *Chin-India* instead. However, *Indo-China* had already gained traction and soon supplanted alternative terms such as "*Farther India*" and the *Peninsula beyond the Ganges*. Later, though, as the French established the colony of French Indochina, use of the term became more restricted to the French colony, and today the area is usually referred to as Mainland Southeast Asia.

French Indo-China From The Start

First French Intervention



France–Vietnam relations started in early 17th century with the mission of the Jesuit Missionary Alexandre de Rhodes. At this time, Vietnam was only just beginning to occupy the Mekong Delta, former territory of the “Indianised” kingdom of Champa which they had defeated in 1471. European involvement in Vietnam was confined to trade during the 18th century. In 1787, Pierre Pigneau de Behaine, a French Catholic priest, petitioned the French government and organised French military volunteers to aid Nguyễn Ánh in retaking lands his family lost to the Tây Sơn. Pigneau died in Vietnam but his troops fought until 1802 in French assistance to Nguyễn Ánh.

In the 19th century

France was heavily involved in Vietnam in the 19th century; protecting the work of the Paris Foreign Missions Society in the country was often presented as a justification. For its part, the Nguyen dynasty increasingly saw Catholic missionaries as a political threat; courtesans, for example, an influential faction in the dynastic system, feared for their status in a society influenced by an insistence on monogamy. In 1858, the brief period of unification under the Nguyễn dynasty ended with a successful attack on Da Nang by French Admiral Charles Rigault De Genouilly under the orders of Napoleon III. Due to Diplomat Charles de Montigny's mission having failed, De Genouilly's mission was to stop attempts to expel Catholic missionaries. His orders were to stop the persecution of missionaries and assure the unimpeded propagation of the faith. In September 1858, fourteen French gunships, 3,000 men and 300 Filipino troops provided by the Spanish attacked the port of Tourane (present day Da Nang), causing significant damage and occupying the city. After a few months, Rigault had to leave the city due to supply issues and illnesses. Sailing south, De Genouilly then captured the poorly defended city of Saigon on 18 February 1859. On 13 April 1862, the Vietnamese government was forced to cede the three provinces of Biên Hòa, Gia Định and Định Tường to France. De Genouilly was criticized for his actions and was replaced by Admiral Page in November 1859, with instructions to obtain a treaty protecting the Catholic faith in Vietnam, but refrain from territorial gains.

French policy four years later saw a reversal, with the French continuing to accumulate territory. In 1862, France obtained concessions from Emperor Tự Đức, seceding three treaty ports in Annam and Tonkin, and all of Cochinchine, the latter being formally declared a French territory in 1864. In 1867 the provinces of Châu Đốc, Hà Tiên and Vĩnh Long were added to the French-controlled territory. In 1863, the Cambodian King Norodom had requested the establishment of a French protectorate over his country. In 1867, Siam (modern Thailand) renounced suzerainty over Cambodia and officially recognized the 1863 French protectorate on Cambodia, in exchange for the control of Battambang and Siem Reap provinces which officially became part of Thailand. (These provinces would be ceded back to Cambodia by a border treaty between France and Siam in 1906).

The “When” and the “Where” of the French?

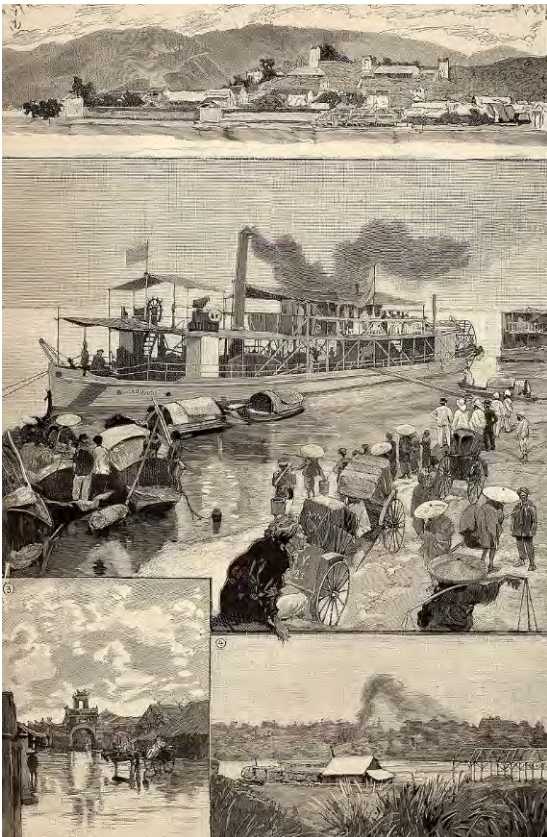


French Indochina (previously spelled as **French Indo-China**) (French: *Indochine française*; Vietnamese: *Đông Dương thuộc Pháp*, IPA: [dōwŋm j̄əŋ t̄h̄ək fãp], frequently abbreviated to *Đông Pháp*, officially known as the **Indochinese Union** (*Union indochinoise*) after 1887 and the **Indochinese Federation** (*Fédération indochinoise*) after 1947, was a grouping

of French colonial territories in Southeast Asia.

A grouping of the three Vietnamese regions was by this time formed within the country of Vietnam named **Tonkin** (north), **Annam** (center), and **Cochin china** (south) with Cambodia was formed in 1887. Laos was added in 1893 and the leased Chinese territory of Guangzhouwan in 1898. The capital was moved from Saigon (in Cochin china) to Hanoi (Tonkin) in 1902 and again to Da Lat (Annam) in 1939. In 1945 it was moved back to Hanoi.

After the Fall of France during World War II, the colony was administered by the Vichy government and was under Japanese occupation until March 1945, when the Japanese overthrew the colonial regime. Beginning in May 1941, the Viet Minh, a communist army led by Ho Chi Minh, began a revolt against the Japanese. In August 1945 they declared Vietnamese independence and extended the war, known as the First Indochina War, against France. In Saigon, the anti-Communist State of Vietnam, led by former Emperor Bảo Đại, was granted independence in 1949. On 9 November 1953, the Kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia became independent. Following the Geneva Accord of 1954, the French evacuated Vietnam and French Indochina came to an end.



Saigon above in 1875 and Hanoi (left) in 1891

In many ways, Indo-China was more or less a “slave labor” living environment for most, if not all of the Southeast Asians in that part of the world. If people (the French and others) needed someone to be there for them and do for them, then it was those native people that attended to their every need. Often times, it took the lives of these people as pride set in to have them do what it took at the risk of their life.

The Settlement of France in Indochina

Its Establishment



France obtained control over northern Vietnam following its victory over China in the Sino-French War (1884–85). French Indochina was formed on 17 October 1887 from “Annam”, “Tonkin” and “Cochinchina” (which together form modern Vietnam) and the Kingdom of Cambodia; Laos was added after the Franco-Siamese War in 1893. The federation lasted until 21 July 1954. In the four protectorates, the French formally left the local rulers in power, who were the Emperors of Vietnam, Kings of Cambodia, and Kings of Luang Prabang, but in fact gathered all powers in their hands, the local rulers acting only as figureheads.

Vietnamese Rebellions

French troops landed in Vietnam in 1858 and by the mid-1880s they had established a firm grip over the northern region. From 1885 to 1895, Phan Đình Phùng led a rebellion against the colonizing power. Nationalist sentiments intensified in Vietnam, especially during and after World War I, but all the uprisings and tentative efforts failed to obtain any concessions from the French overseers .



The First Indochina War



After the World War I, France petitioned for the nullification of the 1938 Franco-Siamese Treaty and attempted to reassert itself in the region, but came into conflict with the Viet Minh, a coalition of Communist and Vietnamese nationalists led by Hồ Chí Minh, founder of the Indochinese Communist Party. During World War II, the United States had supported the Viet Minh in resistance against the Japanese; the group had been in control of the countryside since the French gave way in March 1945. American President Roosevelt and General Stilwell privately made it adamantly clear that the French were not to reacquire French Indochina after the war was over. He told Secretary of State Cordell Hull the Indochinese were worse off under the French rule of nearly 100 years than they were at the beginning.

All was over with in 1954.

The Economy

French Indochina was designated as a colony of economic exploitation by the French government. Funding came by means of taxes on locals and the French government established a near monopoly on the trade of opium, salt and rice alcohol. The French administration established quotas of consumption for each Vietnamese village, thereby compelling villagers to purchase and consume set amounts of monopolized goods, including alcohol and opium. The trade of those products formed about 44% of the colonial government's budget in 1920 but declined to 20% by 1930. The colony's principal bank was the Banque de l'Indochine, established in 1875 and was responsible for minting the currency, the Indochinese piastre. It was the second most invested-in the colony by 1940 with investments totaling up to 6.7M French Francs. In the 1930s, France began to exploit the region for its natural resources and to economically diversify the colony. Cochinchina, Annam and Tonkin, which encompassed modern-day Vietnam became a source of tea, rice, coffee, pepper, coal, zinc and tin, while Cambodia became a center for rice and pepper crops. Only Laos was seen initially as an economically unviable colony. At the turn of the 20th century, the growing automobile industry in France resulted in the growth of the rubber industry in French Indochina, and plantations were built throughout the colony. France soon became a leading producer of rubber through its Indochina colony and rubber became prized in the industrialized world. The success of rubber plantations in French Indochina resulted in an increase in investment in the colony by various



The Indo-Chinese By The Turn of the Century



The Indo-Chinese people were, you might say were “different than the French colonists” that expected a lot from people. Vietnam peasants were a solitary people, didn’t do much except worked extremely long days and helped their neighbors out. To put it mildly, they were and still are a very ingenious people who use anything to make anything work. They are thinkers and doers to provide a living for their family.



Education was not important but learning how to perform a myriad of jobs was. They had many ongoing struggles with health and of course when the French came in and they became bonded slaves. Their music, religion, family (of children and parents) and having nothing in their possession was a blessing to them.



All in all, this was a people that was determined to do what they can and live the way they desired and please the Emperors of the day.



Indochina in the Early-to-Mid 1900's

Indochina, including Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia all had their "specific look" as they were by the early 1900's to the middle of the century. The people in the country were hard working, taken advantage of, didn't have much to eat, live with or live in and performed a lot of things that even today we know as "backward". But, they were honest people, very hard working, and knew what to do with "not very much". Having been back to Vietnam as late as 2011, "some of Vietnam" is still in the same way.

Basically, they arise at 4:00 am and they quit work at 10:00 pm and they work, work and work. Inventive? Yes; do without? Yes; live in trivial means? Yes, and the list goes on and on.

Life for the Vietnamese has been a real struggle for a several hundred years and in some cases it is better but for many, it is the same.

Cities like Saigon, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh Bay, and some of the Me Kong Delta cites are fairly modern, but you get to the villages and small towns in the Central Highlands around Pleiku, An Khe, Bong Song, and the like, life is a little different and the labor of the Vietnamese is quite different than in the larger cities.

All in all, the Vietnamese are a hard working class of people where having a lot is too much and having little to include, food, clothing and shelter is just enough. They are a very satisfied people.



The French Military



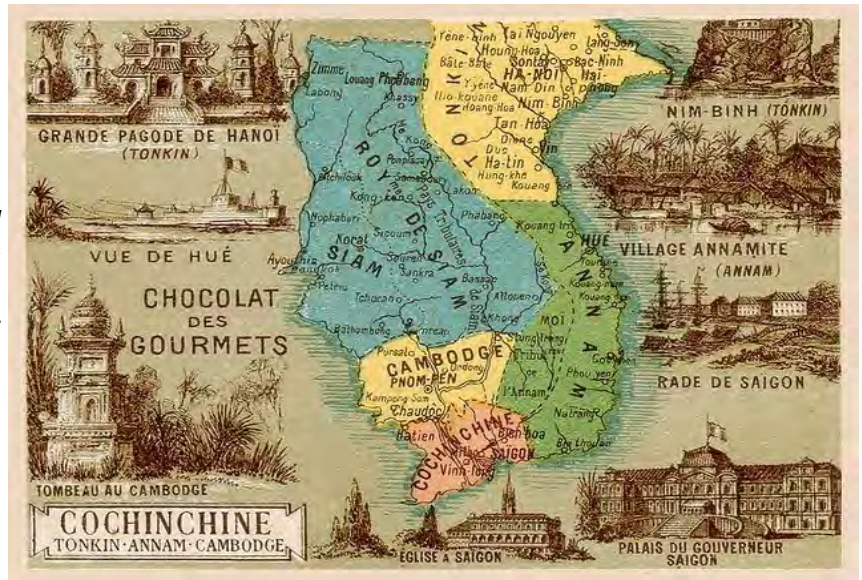
The French military was something to be reckoned with quite some time ago and when they “made their mark”, no body, but nobody messed with them. They were a forceful Army and sometimes maybe a bit too much. During the 1700 and 1800’s they were a world leader when it came to locating and colonizing land from other continents.



When it came to bravery and honor the French were always on top of that. They dutifully recognized their men and awarded them with the appropriate medals. In many cases the Commander in Chief himself made it a point to make the awards which was Charles de Gaulle, the Commander of all for the forces even through World War II and then he became the Premiere of France for a time. The soldiers in the French military were extremely astute and serious about their work and were well recognized for it.



Needless to say, France had its hands full when it came to defending French Indochina. There was a lot of land to defend and prepare it to be a “French Colony” and France thought it would be easy to convert to be that “*Esteemed Colony across the Pacific*”, but they learned the hard way when their three major colonies in the three regions of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchine, Siam (now Thailand) and Cambodge (now Cambodia), Laos did not exist as yet. It basically took about one hundred years for France to basically lose all of it Eastern Hemisphere territories.



The French military drew conclusions from the government of France thinking all of the Indochina colonies would be France’s forever. Setting up currency, stamps, a flag, the language in which 70% of the Indochinese people spoke it made it clear in their minds this would be a get-away for the rich and famous to go to their exile and “live it up”.

Indochina's "International Infrastructure"

International Infrastructure

When French Indochina was viewed as an economically important colony for France, the French government set a goal to improve the transport and communications networks in the colony. Saigon became a principal port in Southeast Asia and rivalled the British port of Singapore as the region's busiest commercial center. By 1937 Saigon was the sixth busiest port in the entire French Empire. In 1936, the Trans-Indochinois railway linking Hanoi and Saigon opened. Further improvements in the colony's transport infrastructures led to easier travel between France and Indochina. By 1939, it took no more than a month by ship to travel from Marseille to Saigon and around five days by aeroplane from Paris to Saigon. Underwater telegraph cables were installed in 1921 and French settlers further added their influence on the colony by constructing buildings in the form of Beaux-Arts and added French-influenced landmarks such as the Hanoi Opera House (modeled on the Palais Garnier), the Hanoi **St. Joseph's Cathedral (resembling the Notre Dame de Paris)** and the **Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica which resembled the Notre Dame Cathédral in Paris, France**. French businessmen also set out to make many of the streets especially those in Hanoi to look like that Paris with the outside tables and bakeries and restaurants which would bring and keep memories of those back home. The French colonists also built a number of cities and towns in Indochina which served various purposes from trading outposts to resort towns. The most notable examples include Đà Lạt in southern Vietnam and Pakse in Laos.



The photo to the left illustrates "Notre Dame" in **Saigon** that look fairly similar in structure.



France made it a point to bring "Paris" to Saigon in a way of many things such as the language, some of the food and some of their very favorite buildings and the ambiance of the French Republic to Southeast Asia.

The photo to the right illustrates "Notre Dame" in **Hanoi** that look fairly similar in structure.



France made it a point to bring some of "Paris" to Hanoi, however, the current capital of Vietnam has a very much different "French look" to it than its lights, streets, buildings, etc".



Indochinese Languages

The Language

Although powerfully influenced by Chinese vocabulary, the Vietnamese language is unrelated to Chinese. They both use tones to differentiate syllables is a character that Chinese itself may have picked up from Vietnamese's own Austro-Asiatic language group, or both of them may have gotten it from a neighboring group, the Thai-Lao, where every language is tonal, sometimes with up to 15 tones. It is a little hard to sort this all out in the *Sprachbund* of Southeast Asia, where languages pick up features even from unrelated languages.

Việt Nam
越南
Yūtnăm
Cantonese
Yuènnán
Mandarin

Vietnamese borrowed a great deal of Chinese vocabulary and even analyzed its syllables into "initials" and "finals" like Chinese (as did the, equally unrelated, Korean). The character that wrote "Việt," pronounced *Yuè* in Mandarin and *Yūtn* in Cantonese, still means "to overpass, exceed" in Vietnamese just as in Chinese. It also has a geographical application in the south of China, but probably originally had an ethnological meaning of non-Chinese in both the south of China and Vietnam. "Nam" (as in Cantonese; *nán* in Mandarin) just means "south." After a period of division starting in the 16th century, Viet Nam was reunited by Gia Long, who proclaimed himself Emperor (*Hoàng Đế*, Chinese characters and reading at right) in 1802. This was already with the help of the French, who by the end of the century had reduced Vietnam to a French dependency.

Official Languages of Vietnam

Vietnamese is the both the national and official language of Vietnam. The majority of the population of the country speak this language. Vietnamese is an Austroasiatic language that has its origin in northern Vietnam. Originally, Vietnamese was written using a modified set of Chinese characters but later the natives of Vietnam developed their own script which was known as *Chữ nôm*.

Minority Languages of Vietnam: *Tày* is Vietnam's major Tai language that is spoken in the northeast of Vietnam near the Vietnam-China border.

Mường-The Mường people of Vietnam speak a group of dialects known as Muong. This language belongs to the family of Austroasiatic languages. Mường is also closely related to the Vietnamese language.

Cham-The Cham people, a minority group in Vietnam, speak the Cham language, a language belonging to the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian family. This language was formerly the language of the Kingdom of Champa located in central Vietnam.

Khmer-The Khmer minority of Vietnam speak the Khmer language in Vietnam. The language is the second most popularly spoken Austronesian language after the Vietnamese. The Khmer language is also the earliest written and recorded language of the Mon–Khmer family.

Chinese language is spoken in Vietnam by the Chinese minority group in the country.

Nùng: the Tai–Kadai language of Nùng is spoken in the Lạng Sơn and the Cao Bằng provinces of Vietnam.

H'Mông is a dialect spoken by the Hmong people of Vietnam.

Foreign Languages of Vietnam

French is the most spoken foreign language in Vietnam. A legacy of the colonial rule, French is spoken by a significant section of the Vietnamese as a second language. Russian, Czech, German, and Polish are also spoken by small sections of the Vietnamese population. With greater contacts of the Vietnamese with the Western world, English has also attained popularity in the country.

Flags of Indochina



Annam—1874—1949



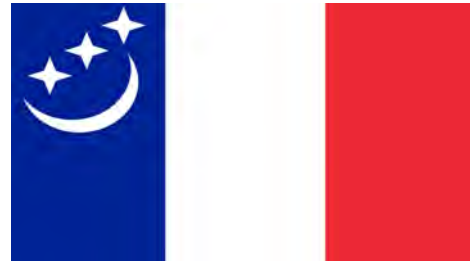
Laos - 1893—1953



Montagnard Confedera-



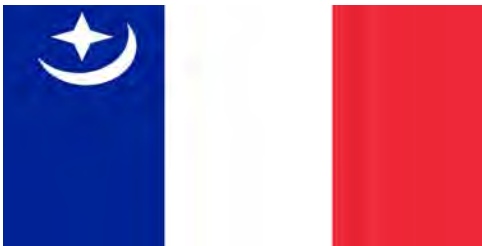
Tay Don People 1944—1953



Montagnard Country 1946—1950



Indochina



Tai Autonomous Territory-1946-1950



Sip Song Chau Tai -- 1950-1955



Cochinchina - 1862-1949



Muong People 1946-1954



Indochinese Democratic Republic



Vietnam del Sur -1945-1948



Alternate Socialist Vietnam



South Vietnam — 1948-1975



Vietnam—1975-2017

Establishment of South Vietnam

World War II — Then “War”



During the era of conquest in East Asia, France focused on the fortune withheld in Indochina. The French had been in the area for centuries, yet policies changed when other Western European nations began to colonize and claim their own pieces of Asia. The French corrupted the Vietnamese sovereignty by colonizing and dividing the nation. It became known as a French “protectorate” from 1883-1939 and remained a colonial empire or “possession” until about 1945. The Vietnamese people strongly resented the tyrannical rule and political and social implementations of the French. Thus, a guerrilla-type revolutionary organization, the Viet Minh, formed to drive out the French. They were led

by Ho Chi Minh, the recently elected leader of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (then known as North Vietnam). The First Indochina War was virtually a stalemate between the French and the Viet Minh from 1946 – 1950; then towards the end in 1954, the Viet Minh gained significant advances in driving out the French.

In 1949, France set up the State of Vietnam (currently known as South Vietnam) as an “associated statehood” under Bao Dai because he had been cooperative with France in the past. But this government clashed with Ho Chi Minh’s Democratic Republic of Vietnam in its political and social ideals as well as his nationalistic goals. The Vietnamese and other nations felt that this attempt was not a significant step towards Vietnamese independence, but rather just a cover up of the fact that Vietnam was to remain a “puppet nation.” The Viet Minh, supporters of communism, also focused heavily on the ideas of nationalism in their fight for freedom from France; this broadened their pool of allies within Vietnam. Although the French had superior weapon technology and financial aid from the United States, they were greatly outnumbered by the Viet Minh in manpower. The French also suffered from unfamiliarity with fighting in a jungle environment against a guerrilla soldier waiting in the tall grass. Enemies were hard to identify, for they looked no different than civilians; in fact, some were, during the day as they wore “Black Pajama’s. The Viet Minh easily recruited local fighters, and because of the Vietnamese hatred of the French occupation, the Viet Minh also benefited from the intelligence information the civilians provided them. When the Chinese Communist Party won control of China in 1949, the advanced weapons gap between the two opposing sides slowly closed because China, along with the Communist Soviet Union, began to supply the Viet Minh with artillery. Yet, the most impressive feat of the Viet Minh guerilla fighters was that they overtook the Red River Delta without any major battle. Their guerrilla tactics and civilian intelligence allowed the Viet Minh to defeat the French.

At the end of 1953, the French settled in Dien Bien Phu, a city in northwestern Vietnam. Hoping to fight the Viet Minh, the French built up their garrison. The attack at Dien Bien Phu began on March 13, 1954, with a strong Viet Minh attack, continued through May. The first French victory of the Battle of Dien Bien Phu was on March 22nd as the tanks were used to attack the Viet Minh. After another French success on March 26th, the Viet Minh, commanded by Giap, started to lose faith in themselves. The tables turned, though, after a Viet Minh assault of the French troops at the end of April, continued until French defeat in early May. After years of fighting this gruesome war, the French surrendered at Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954. The defeat of the French denoted the end of the First Indochina War.



The First Indo-China War (1946-1954)



COOPER'S MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES 322



World War II ended in September 1945 and Vietnam was loaded with troops from France, America and Australia. France, now had the idea of getting back to business with its colony “old Indochina”. However, they were somewhat unaware of Ho Chi Minh and his intentions of his desire and intention to free Vietnam and ultimately Cambodia and Laos as well. In 1941, with the help of Russia and China as well as their own people in the North and the creation of the Viet Minh or a “League for Independence of Vietnam” war was inevitable. By 1950, France had suffered multiple defeats and the USA sat up the Military Assistance Advisory Group to aid France. This, allowed France to control all of the cities while the Viet Minh controlled the countryside.

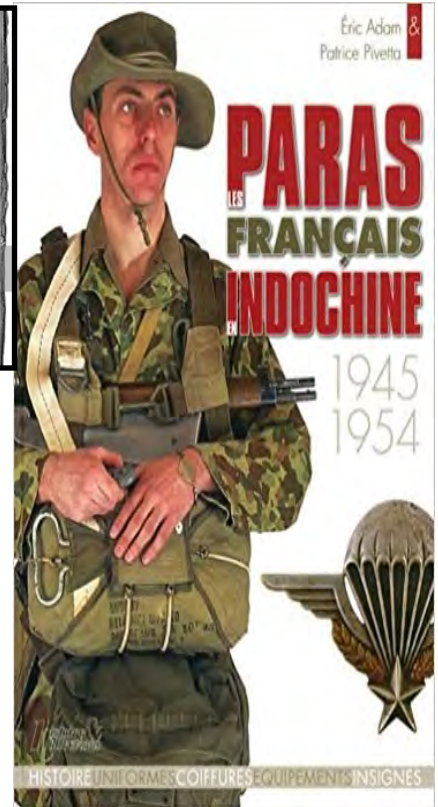
For nine long years and the loss of men, women and children on both sides, it became a reality that France had to give up. This ended in May 1954 at Dinh Bien Phu (in North Vietnam). The First Indo-China War was over.

But, as we all know the end was not over with as yet as Vietnam was divided in half becoming North and South Vietnam. This was the result of a Swiss Government Panel. A South Vietnam official and one from North Vietnam is now formed and both leaders are going to desire to change things. Currently, it was Communism in the North and Capitalism in the South.

For the next 5-6 years, South Vietnam appealed to President’s Eisenhower and Kennedy to “Save South Vietnam “ as a result, we all know that from 1960 to 1975, in their eyes, the “Second Indo-China War” was coming for another fifteen years.



“French Indochina News—1954”



After nine long years, France lost their own colony of Vietnam to retreat out of the country. Right after World War II, Ho Chi Minh wanted a free Vietnam and was determined to get it. It became a long hard road as they did not know then what was about to come with the United States over a long fifteen years.

The Cultural Side of French Indochina



Between the currency, coins and stamps, you see that it is informational, colorful and “says something”.

These are all items from the early to middle 1900’s that said something about France and its relationship with Indochina. Very different.



The Next 15 Years—1960 to 1975



The Vietnam War was a war that was won politically by having prevented the spread of Communism throughout Southeast Asia. In fact Ho Chi Minh's thinking in 1945 when he was talking to Russia and China was to include all of Oceania, Australia, New Zealand and all of Southeast Asia in the "Communist grab". At the time frame of 1975, it had become America's longest war, however the Global War On Terror (GWOT) has now surpassed that number of years of fighting off the enemy.



It was one of their proud moments when Vietnam kicked France out of the area in 1954 and it was clear in the minds of everyone in the region of Asia that Vietnam was going to muscle everything they could to keep "foreigners" out of their country and in 1975, they did just that. Vietnam, today while Communist in their state it is really operated under a socialist status and their country is truly run under a capitalist operation similar to any western democracy.

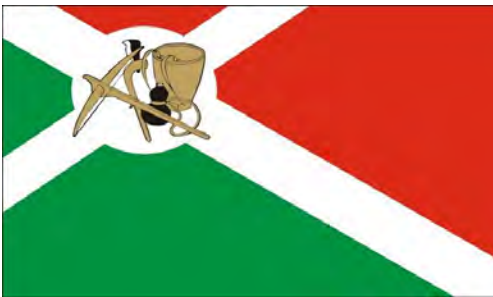
Under President Clinton, we became trading and military partners with Vietnam and have a good relationship with them and they with us. This tells us all that we can get along with former "warring neighbors" even though we may not agree with the ideology of their government.



Vietnam's Indigenous People—The Montagnard's

The Dega, also known as the "**Montagnard**", are the indigenous peoples of the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The term Montagnard means "people of the mountain" in French and is a carryover from the French colonial period in Vietnam. In Vietnamese, they are known by the term người Thượng (Highlanders)—this term now can also be applied to other minority ethnic groups in Vietnam or *Người dân tộc thiểu số* (literally, "minority people"). Earlier they were referred to pejoratively as the Mọi. In 1962, the population of the Montagnard people in the Central Highlands was estimated to number as many as one million. Today, the population is approximately four million, of whom about one million are Degars. The 30 or so Montagnard tribes in the Central Highlands comprise more than six different ethnic groups who speak languages drawn primarily from the Malayo-Polynesian, Tai, and Austroasiatic language families. The main tribes, in order of population, are the Jarai, Rade, Bahnar, Koho, Mhong, and Stieng.

Originally inhabitants of the coastal areas of the region, they were driven to the uninhabited mountainous areas by invading Vietnamese and Cambodians beginning prior to the 9th century. They have a long history of tensions with the Vietnamese majority. While the Vietnamese are themselves heterogeneous, they generally share a common language and culture and have developed and maintained the dominant social institutions of Vietnam. The Montagnard do not share that heritage. There have been conflicts between the two groups over many issues, including land ownership, language and cultural preservation, access to education and resources, and political representation. By the way, the Montagnard tribes were allies to the American forces during the Vietnam War and helped us immensely in locating the enemy.



Montagnard Flag



Montagnard Women



Spiritual Bracelets



A Typical Home



Montagnard Kids



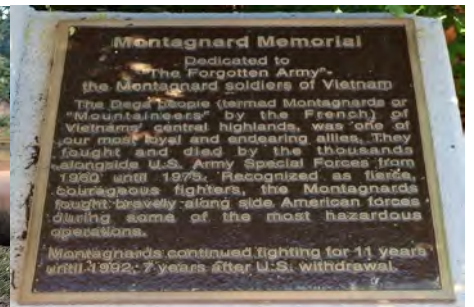
Montagnard Village



Montagnard People Group



Kids on a Water Buffalo



Montagnard Memorial

The "AZ-LZ"

The Vietnam We Know—Today



The **VIETNAM** we know today is a country anyone would want to visit. From the most modern to the most primitive, this is a nation that since 1975 has advanced from an uncomplicated colony-homeland to a very sophisticated nation-state.

From a non-structure to tremendous infrastructure country and from an unknown “IT world” to a Mega-technology center of Southeast Asia, Vietnam has turned into a monumental assembly of “true possibilities” for their region of the world. The prospect of “getting Vietnam into the world” was a priority for Vietnam for a couple of decades and they have finally succeeded in doing it.

For five or more decades, the Me Kong Delta has fed Southeast Asia all the rice they desire and still doing it. Bordering countries such as Laos, Cambodia, Thailand (former Siam) and Myanmar rely heavily on Vietnam to supply them with an abundance.

On the other hand, the water ways that are attached to the southern portion of Vietnam along with the Me Kong River, the Saigon River and the South China Sea provide the “Ins-and-Outs” of import and export of everything in the region and even on to the Philippine Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and the hundreds of the Oceania Islands.

Vietnam has become sort of a “***Time-Warp***” as you travel the country from South to North. With the multitude of people living in Vietnam, the country has its mass development of expansion and non-growth areas throughout the country. Obviously, the large cities located inland such as Saigon, and those on the water near the South China Sea have materialistically developed over the decades.

To say the least, Vietnam is quickly becoming one of those up-and-coming nations that will make a vast difference in the Eastern world. It is the type of the nation-state that can make an absolute transformation for the peoples of that particular region of the world. The kind of population that Vietnam has, are very strong minded, strong working, extremely mindful of what needs to be done to take care of their elderly. They are a mindful people who desire to do the right thing by whom they deal with.

The “War Remnants Museum”

Vietnam today, has a very young population (median age is 30) where most “*sort of know*” about the Vietnam War (1960-1975) with America. They refer to it as the “American War” and in their minds they won the war against the most powerful nation in the world. The average age today of the Vietnamese is around 30 years old. There are very few (by comparison) older people as we have here in the United States. The Vietnam War is not talked about as that was three to four (3-4) generations earlier and there is only one museum in Saigon that has any representation of what took place. Called “The War Remnants Museum” and it has on its inside the atrocities (if you please) that America and its allies (South Vietnam, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Phillipines and Thailand) did to their country. To say the least, there is too much exaggeration and a different perspective when seen from their point of view.



War Remnants Museum in downtown Saigon



American rebuilt M-60 Tank



A rebuilt Huey UH-1 Helicopter



Pictures of various situations in the Museum

How Did Vietnam Feed Southeast Asia?



Vietnam's government is banking on agricultural reforms in its main rice producing region to meet the challenges posed by climate change and disrupted water flow on the Mekong River. The reforms aim to produce higher quality climate-adapted rice, and boost alternative crops to ensure sustainability in the Mekong Delta, home to 18 million of Vietnam's 95 million people.

The region, which produces more than half of Vietnam's rice and feeds over 145 million people in Southeast Asia, covering thirteen provinces in Vietnam's south where the river flows into the South China Sea. The Mekong, with its source in the Tibetan plateau, runs 4,300 kilometers through six countries from China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and Cambodia before reaching Vietnam.

Climate Change



Heightened concerns over the Delta's future followed an extreme drought this year that resulted in sharply higher salinity levels intruding into the delta. Rice production fell 1.1 million tons according to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization. Between climate change, sea level rise in particular, but also increasing frequency of storms has implications for the Delta. One of the big concerns is the amount of salt water and the distance the salt water moves up various Mekong tributaries into the delta, which again threatens the viability of rice farming," said Hirsch, of the university's school of geo-sciences.

Feeding the "New Indochina"

With the Saigon and Me Kong Delta Rivers close at hand, the entire lower part of Vietnam is the "breadbasket" that fed and still feeds much of Southeast Asia, which long ago, was referred to as "Indochina".

Vietnam's dedication to the region of Asia has proven that they (Vietnam) will always be there for those surrounding countries in providing rice and other goods that are grown in their country. Not to mention the raw materials such as sand being shipped all over the area for eventual concrete and cement jobs for building. They have manufactured many different items which are fairly unique to Vietnam.



What Vietnam Offers The World

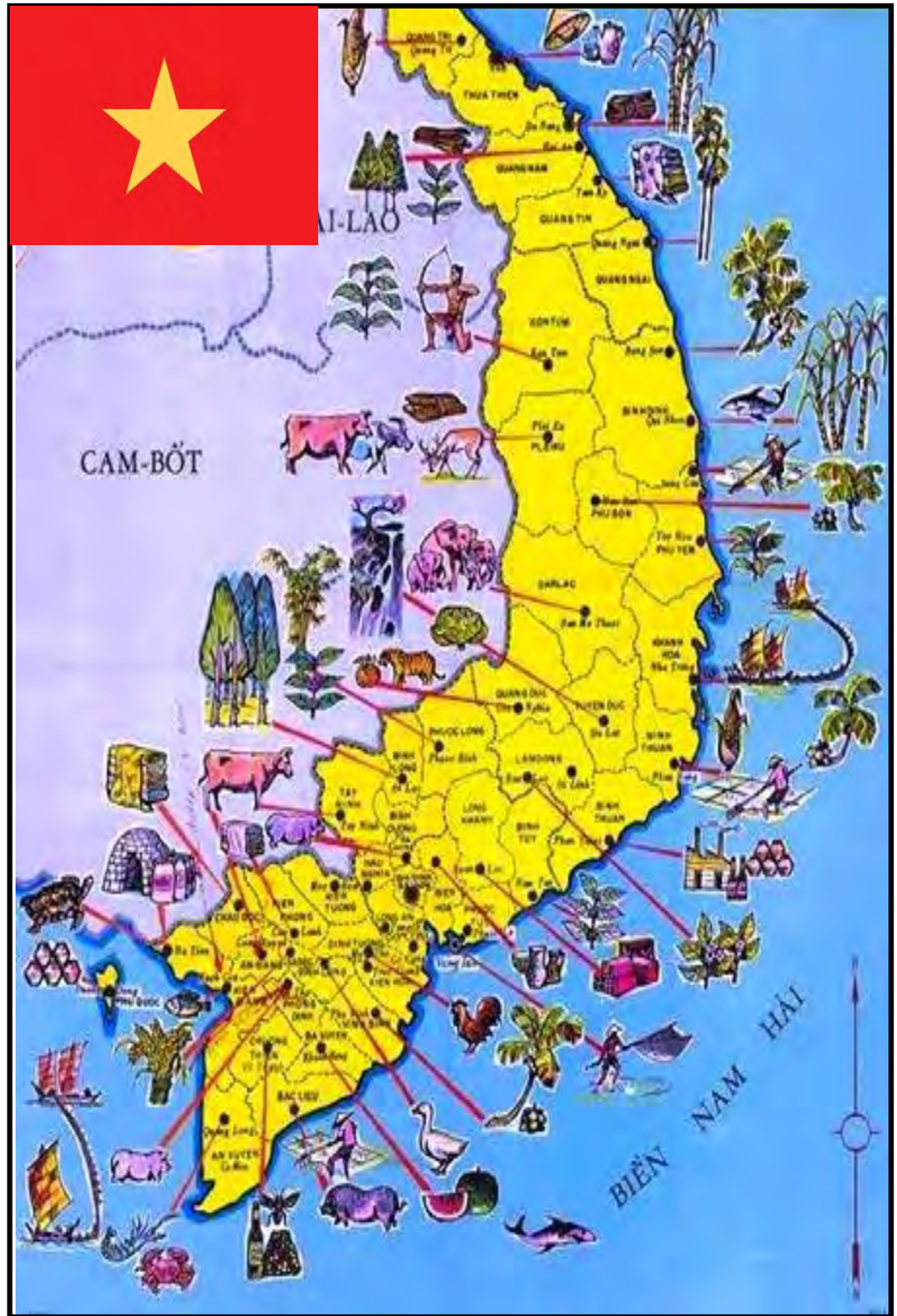
Looking at the map of Vietnam provides numberless amounts of products some of which are only grown and found in Vietnam

For example, 90+% of the world's cinnamon is grown in the south-east Asian country. They produce about 70% of the under clothing, we all wear, not to mention the varying production of the following:

- 1.) Oil and Gas production
- 2.) Consumer goods
- 3.) Telecommunications
- 4.) Financials
- 5.) Basic Materials
- 6.) Personal Products
- 7.) Utilities
- 8.) Technology
- 9.) Industrials
- 10) Consumer Services

For instance, consumer services might include: Automobiles themselves, automotive parts, tires, farming and fishing products, durable household products, non-durable household products, furnishings, home construction, consumer electronics, toys, clothing accessories, footwear and personal products.

This is just a start of what Vietnam has to offer the world in the way of any kind of production. The two words they rely on to describe their people and population that produces so much for the rest of the world is one that all nations should utilize and that is having their workers and their work be "RELIABLE", and "HONEST". And it seems to have worked for Vietnam.



Looking at the map above illustrates visually, a lot of the products that it manufactures or fabricates. For a population of 95,000,000 people with an median age of 30 years old, they should have a long way ahead of them to generate quite an abundance of goods and income for many years to come. They also capitalize on vacationing in Vietnam and to say the least it is and can be the "cats-meow" of a place to go and spend a couple of weeks. It is a fascinating place to visit.

The Vietnam Industries of Tomorrow

The International Companies that have invested in Vietnam have made quite a difference in South-east Asia and particularly that of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and the surrounding island nation's of Oceania. Look below to glean those types of industries and organizations that have invested themselves in Vietnam.

**IN FOREIGN
TRANSIT
VIETNAM**

**TEACH FOR
VIETNAM**
Giảng dạy vì Việt Nam



Vietnam
A Different Orient



Vietnam Airlines

**VIETNAM TECH
CONFERENCE 2016**

VIETNAMESE Store

Vietnam net

The Vietnamese Age—Population Structure

As of 2017, Vietnam has an age structure of quite unlike any other country. 25% are under 15 years old, while 69% are between 15-64 years of age and 5% are over 65+ years old. Males and females are split about 50-50 when it comes the numbers of each,

- There are about 95,587,116 people today
- 47.2 million males and 48.3 million females
- Over 2 million births per year
- About 500,000 deaths per year
- About 2,000 deaths per day
- About 700,000 population per year
- About –35,000 net migration in a year
- About 2,268+ population growth in a day

For one country after multiple decades of war, Vietnam has struck back to become one of the most impressive countries anywhere in the world. The dedication of the people, this young generation that the country before it was and the “brain-power” has become extraordinary.

- The Vietnam population is 1.27% of the world population.
- It ranks 14th in the countries of dependencies
- Population density is 800 people square mile.
- Total land area is 119,715 square miles or the length of California and half of Oregon
- 34.7% live in urban areas or 33,121,357 Vietnamese people.
- Internet users' total are 51 million
- Social media users are 46 million
- Mobile connects' are 125 million
- Mobile social users are 41 million

Living in Vietnam

Vietnam is quickly becoming the most popular destination in Southeast Asia for digital nomads and expats. The low cost of living plays a major factor, and the deliciously cheap street food helps as well. Most digital nomads and entrepreneurs prefer to establish a base in Saigon, while retirees prefer locations like Hanoi and Hoi An. You will, however, find digital nomads and entrepreneurs on both those locations, but the communities are smaller.

Another reason Southeast Asia is a hotbed for the life of being an “expat”, is that short and long-term rentals are generally easy to find. This proves true across the region, from Thailand to Vietnam. When looking for a place to live, it’s a painless process. While Craigslist can be helpful, it is not necessary. Simply choose a neighborhood/district and walk around. You will find plenty of buildings renting rooms or apartments. There are also modern, Westernized condominiums in the larger cities. Similar to other Asian cultures, Vietnam culture is very family/community based. Some expats also use the affordable real estate agencies. Unlike in the West, these real estate companies also negotiate rentals and the fee is often minimal, with their fee coming out of the renter’s side of the price. In addition to the ease of simply getting set up over there, the food and culture is a huge draw. Street food is a fact of life in Southeast Asia, and on a Western budget it’s very affordable. Note that the local wages are very low — \$148 in some cases — and as such, prices are pegged accordingly. One of the drawbacks for older retirees is the lack of medical infrastructure. Though Saigon has quality hospitals, they are still behind nearby Thailand’s strong medical tourism industry, which guarantees high quality medical facilities. For retirees with health concerns, this fact is a determining fac-

Enjoying The Cuisine in Vietnam

tor for choosing Thailand over Vietnam.

Vietnamese cuisine encompasses the foods and beverages of Vietnam, and features a combination of five fundamental tastes (Vietnamese: *ngũ vị*) in the overall meal. Each Vietnamese dish has a distinctive flavor which reflects one or more of these elements. Common ingredients include fish sauce, shrimp paste, soy sauce, rice, fresh herbs, fruit and vegetables. Vietnamese recipes use lemongrass, ginger, mint, Vietnamese mint, long coriander, Saigon cinnamon, bird's eye chili, lime, and Thai basil leaves. Traditional Vietnamese cooking is greatly admired for its fresh ingredients, minimal use of dairy and oil, complementary textures, and reliance on herbs and vegetables. With



the balance between fresh herbs and meats and a selective use of spices to reach a fine taste, Vietnamese food is considered one of the healthiest cuisines worldwide.

Vietnam—The Vacation Hotspot

Vietnam is quickly becoming the most popular destination in Southeast Asia for digital nomads, Americans and those living in Europe. The low cost of living plays a major factor, and the deliciously inexpensive food helps. Most prefer to establish a base in Saigon, while expats, retirees and those “new to Vietnam” prefer locations like Hanoi and Hoi An.

Short and long-term rentals are generally easy to find. When looking for a place to live, it’s a painless process. Simply choose a neighborhood and walk around to locate what you want or need. You will find plenty of buildings renting rooms or apartments. There are also modern condominiums in the larger cities. Vietnam culture is very family based. In addition to the ease of simply getting set up over there, the food and culture is a huge draw. Street food is a fact of life in Southeast Asia, and on a Western budget it’s very affordable. Note that the local wages are very low — \$148 in some cases — and as such, “prices are pegged” accordingly. One of the drawbacks for older retirees is the lack of medical infrastructure. Though Saigon has quality hospitals, they are still behind Thailand’s strong medical industry, which guarantees high quality medical facilities. Possibly the most popular destination among most is Hanoi is home to a large community, many of whom are teachers. There are influences in Hanoi, making it easy to find international foods, as well as English-friendly businesses and health services. Hanoi still maintains a “French look and feel” about it. Weather in winter, however, is dreary and temperature are a cold, damp, 50°F.

One of Vietnam’s largest cities, Saigon, is a “go-to destination” for the young travel bloggers, to see the world and budget travelers. Hoi An is a great town that is both less chaotic but still a very popular tourist destination. For that reason, you’ll find all the needed amenities such as Wi-Fi, foods, and also a community of digital nomads. As this small coastal town grows, the retiree community is also growing. Though it’s popular with tourists, it’s small enough that living outside of the city center is still a short, convenient drive or walk into town. The nearby beach also gets a big thumbs up for the quality of life. As a town, you have the quaint, pretty architecture, but still access to a beach and delicious foods. It’s an excellent small-town option if the two big cities don’t quite sound appealing.

If you have a “beach city” in mind, some top spots for you might be in Nha Trang. This has a long stretch of gorgeous beaches. It’s in southern Vietnam, so the weather is warm year-round but the coastal position makes it cooler than the city. And even more, it has a laid-back vibe that locals and expats love. Although there are some touristy spots, it is far less congested than Hanoi or Saigon, and the tourist-factor ensures that you’ll find any amenity that is desired or needed. The number one thing about “driving” and “walking in Vietnam”, there is a great deal of safety.



The Vietnamese Family

The Vietnamese language is very much “tonal”, and so are Vietnamese names. Names with the same spelling, but with different tones are different names, which can confuse non-Vietnamese people when the diacritics are dropped, in usage outside Vietnam. Anyone applying for Vietnamese nationality must adopt a “New Vietnamese Name”:

The family name, positioned first, is passed on by the father to his children. It is estimated that there are around one hundred family names in common use, although some are far more common than others. The name Nguyễn is estimated to be used by almost 40% of the Vietnamese population. The top three names are so popular because people tended to take the family name of emperors, to show their loyalty. Over many generations, the family names became permanent.

The most common family names among the Vietnamese are the following (the Chinese characters following each name are Hán tự). Added together these 10 names account for 90% of the people.

Nguyễn (39%)	Phan (4.5%)
Trần (11%)	Vũ/Võ (3.9%)
Lê (9.5%)	Đặng (2.1%)
Phạm (7.1%)	Bùi (2%)
Huỳnh/Hoàng (5.1%)	Đỗ (1.4%)



The Family

The family unit is very important in Vietnamese culture. This emphasis on collectivity includes an obligation to provide for the welfare of family members. Family members are expected to work and behave for the good of the group. Families may publicly denounce a member who is ill behaved; they may also pronounce family achievements. Each member has a kinship term, and these are used when addressing one another. Even though the family is viewed as a unit, the father or an older male has the ultimate responsibility and acts as an authority leader while delegating tasks and involving others in the decision making. From a very young age the father and other family members educate the children on “filial piety,” a key part of Vietnamese culture which requires that children give parents and elders respect, love, and care.

In Vietnam, the family is patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal, often with two to four generations under one roof. There is the immediate family and the extended family. In Vietnam, the immediate family is the nuclear family plus the husband's parents and the grown sons' spouses and children. The extended family is the immediate family plus family members of the same name and relatives residing in close proximity. Grandparents help with child care and children help with chores. Younger siblings are to respect and obey older siblings, and aunts and uncles are treated as parents.

The “AZ-LZ”

Vietnam's #1 Industry

Concrete

Vietnam has a huge outlook in the manufacturing of construction and infrastructure sector and it remains positive for the next ten to twelve years. It is supported by strong economic growth, regulatory changes, large inflows and strong project pipeline. Vietnam's construction industry patterns remain extremely positive and is forecasted real growth of 5% to 6% in 2017 and 2018. Vietnam has a myriad of raw materials which assist them greatly in ensuring that the construction of anything using concrete appears to be its number one material.

In first half of this year, the enterprises throughout the Southeastern Asia region booked revenues at about VNĐ 76.1 trillion or US\$3.45 billion while the rate of urban and rural construction hit 100 percent, and urbanization nearly 35.7 percent of their respective targets for the period.

Vietnam has the largest cement industry rating number eight in the world after China, India, Russia, the US, Japan and South Korea. In 2012, the US Geological Survey reported that Vietnam had a clinker capacity of closer to 55 metric tons per year in both 2010 and 2011. Moreover, cement production in Viet Nam was in the region of 50 metric tons per year placing it in the company of countries such as Indonesia, Brazil and Saudi Arabia. There is a capacity utilization rate of approximately 85%, assuming clinker to cement ratio of 0.95. However, the cement industry of Vietnam actually is still in the process of adjusting from a centrally-planned, state-run enterprise into a market economy.

The sand in Vietnam is of quite a delicate ratio needed for the concrete and consequently in Vietnam's Me Kong Delta region is enough sand for concrete mx equal to that of New York City. Between the Saigon and Me Kong Delta Rivers and the connection with th South China Sea, they are raising and forging sand from the bottom to cover their supplies and have much more than needed.



The "AZ-LZ"

What You Didn't Know About Vietnam

Cost of Living Range: \$700 to \$1,400 per month

Currency: Vietnamese Dong; pegged roughly 1:22,400 with the US dollar

Expatriate Scene: Vietnam is a popular destination with budget backpackers, travel bloggers, digital nomads, and young entrepreneurs. While there are some older expats and families, the majority of expats in Vietnam are in the 18-35 age group.

Average Local Salary: The average monthly salary of a worker in Vietnam is about \$148 per month; those in high paying jobs bring home around \$500 per month.

Visas: The most common visa for Vietnam is a single-entry three-month visa. However, six month and twelve month visas are also available, both single entry and multi-entry. Depending on your plans, it may be worth to get a twelve month multi-entry visa. Always ask for the visa to be attached to your passport as there have been instances where travelers with valid visas have been denied entry to Vietnam. Visit the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam website for more information. If you're visiting on a shorter visa, it can be easier to use an online visa agent.

Internet: High speed internet is very common in large cities like Saigon, especially in cafes. It is faster and more reliable than high speed internet in Thailand. Smaller towns also have internet access, but it can vary a bit more than in the larger cities.

Safety: Relatively safe. Petty theft is common, as well as scams involving taxi cabs, charities, and visas. Traffic is intense in big cities and motorcycle accidents are also common; it's advisable to carry an insurance policy that covers such accidents.

Possible Issues: Regional flooding can occur during the rainy season. Foreigners cannot own land in Vietnam; for expats hoping to buy and build a legacy, this is nigh impossible. While you can purchase a dwelling house, you must lease the land from the government.

Water: Tap water is not drinkable. When you live there, you will buy reusable 19-litre jugs for about 10,000 VND.

Some Average Prices: A typical cup of coffee is about 50¢, but extremely strong. Breakfast is about \$1.50, a small room in a nice hotel is about \$10.00. Taxi rides are about \$2.00. And the train from Saigon to Nha Trang is approximately \$20.00 and to Hanoi from Hue is roughly \$45.00.



Vietnam Coffee



Vietnamese Food



Vietnam's "AMTRAK"



Helping American's get around

The NEW and the OLD of Vietnam—Part 1



Vietnam has come a long way since the days of the First Indochina War and the Vietnam War. The year 1975, gave them their break to be “part of the world” in their own way. The gifts and talents of the Vietnamese are really pretty rich in their own way and they utilize them in a way that you see in the picture to the left. These ladies are wearing a cloth material made from silk worms and hand woven in a special way to form a superb silk fabric to create what you see in the photo of different colors of the **Ao Dai dress** that is “spreading all across southeast Asia”.



The **manufacturing** is tremendous in Vietnam. All the way from micro chips to everything else including electronic. They are nearly the number one choice in the world for determining the best methods and performing it over many other countries in their region. For that part of the world and the size of that country, it is remarkable choice to build and manufacture anything from clothes, chips, fruit, liquids, spices and the list goes on. Vietnam produces most of the world’s cinnamon



The **beaches** of Vietnam are simply superb. The sand is warm, not hot and the water is just right. Nha Trang is one of the very best beaches to visit. We discovered the beaches to be safe, entertaining by folks trying “goofy things”. The hotels ran about \$10-12.00 per night with a nice breakfast and very strong coffee, and we had an enjoyable time. Swimming out to islands, enjoying exotic foods made those days great.



The **night highlights** of Vietnam is simply out of this world. A typical Vietnam veteran might never think Vietnam could pull itself together and see a sight like this practically all over the country. Cities such as Saigon pretty much has it all. Hanoi on the other hand has that “somewhat French look” to it with a lot of “On-the-sidewalk-manufacturing” that it does all day and somewhat into the night time hours. This 24 hour per day metropolis was certainly superb to see.



The days of old under the **Emperors** from several hundred years ago still exist. This quickly brings back the past of Vietnam of which people today living there would have no idea what it could have been like. Many still follow the old-time religions that have been around for a few thousand years and others have changed to more modern ones. The buildings by-and-large are still in very nice shape and interesting to see.



Ha Long Bay is a sight out of a “**different world**”. It appears you’re in the middle of nowhere and in the middle of somewhere. Traveling on the boats is a trip one would do every few months. Between the food and the local tours you receive from this two or three excursions is something you’ll never forget. The peace, quiet and tranquil beauty, this

The “AZ-LZ”

The NEW and the OLD of Vietnam—Part 2

Vietnam's **outback** is one to wonder in awe about as you glance at the mountains that form the levels for the plants grown in the northern region of Vietnam. The beautiful part of Vietnam seems to provide a lot of natural beauty for the residents and tourists to have a grandeur look at. This area is simply beautiful in its geographical state. The effortless abilities of the Vietnamese that live in this region provide a lot of insight for growing anything and everything they need to.



In the middle portion of the country is what is considered the “**poorer Vietnamese**” who live off of the river, their rice paddies, growing whatever they can and living in whatever they can. They are very dedicated and satisfied in making what they have for their living for themselves and their families about them and are graciously happy to do and glad to have what they have.



In the larger city placements are what we would label “**Interstate highways**”. Throughout the Saigon, Me Kong Delta vicinity, the high paced roads are very professionally done to create the ability to get from one large city to another. It will take several years to equal any other country, but they are making great headway with it. With the inexpensive automobiles available from anywhere in Asia, this young population will be driving soon.



The rural Vietnamese that live in the smaller towns and villages do a truly wonderful job in **supplying vegetables and fruits** to the local people and even those in the bigger cities. It is simply amazing what they are able to grow at any given time of year. With the abundance of magnificent soils and plenty of some of the best water in the area, their output and quantities are amazing. They're able to feed their family and six to eight other families in their area for a few months over time.



Vietnamese housing has been a questionable item depending on where you live. Saigon has metal shacks to wooden houseboats to small huts. On the other hand, very modern buildings in the way of apartments and individual dwellings are shooting up everywhere, especially in the larger cities of Saigon, Nha Trang, Hoi An, Da Nang, Hue and Hanoi. This was basically unheard of a decades ago. During the 1960's, people lived in palm leaf built homes with dirt floors and sleeping on them.



The “AZ-LZ”

The NEW and the OLD of Vietnam—Part 3



Vietnam in 2017 has become a country of stark changes and is one of the fastest changing ones on the Asian continent so close after having endured decades of war a short time ago. Their aptitude and “Can-Do Attitude” of making Vietnam into one of the most vibrant and objective nations to deal with has proven to be on a very positive note. Their ability to construct anything with their own materials and develop pretty much anything they choose has proven on a positive note based on the culture and eagerness of their population and talents within the people. Everything for their low cost of living can be found right here with an abundance at a good price.



Tourism has crept up quickly within Vietnam as they provide good prices to get there, good prices to stay there, good food, tourist places with guides, safety is immanent for them. The ruggedness of getting around Vietnam (at times) is quite unique compared with that of the United States. The one thing the Vietnamese do is provide the tourist with a trip “You’ll Never Forget”. The photos in Hoi An, a tourist town provides something from the “1940’s to the 21st Century” and everything that goes with it. This location is a trip you’ll not forget.



Living in the Central Highlands of Vietnam is like “another world”. Simple, but nice, a little complicated, but easy (once you figure it out). They’re located about in the middle of South Vietnam and there are abundance of small villages in which live very simple and everything in there is somewhat “*in manual mode*”. They make the most of everything, live well and “out of the IT world” of phones, computers and the like. Their kids are brought up in appropriate way and they live day by day. School is up to possibly the 8th grade and the rest is learned by teaching and doing. Not bad way to function.

This is your grocery store on water. These ladies and the occasional man are on the water everyday selling their great vegetables, fruit and wonderful and distinct souvenirs of their country to anyone desiring that wonderful “*Stop-Light-Bananas*” which are in color, red, yellow and green. Not to mention fruits and the vegi’s that you’ve never seen before. If you’re hungry for lunch? Well, a container of Pho is right up their alley and it tastes as good as if you are sitting down in a restaurant for 50% of the price. They know what they're doing.

The “AZ-LZ”



How The Pledge of Allegiance Made Its Mark

I pledge of the United States of America, and to the Republic to the flag for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

I wonder what the man who composed the original pledge 111 years ago would make of the problems some have with the “Under God” portion of the verse. Francis Bellamy was a Baptist minister's son from upstate New York. Educated in public schools, he distinguished himself in oratory at the University of Rochester before following his father to the pulpit, preaching at churches in New York and Boston. But he was restive in the ministry and, in 1891, accepted a job from one of his Boston congregants, Daniel S. Ford, principal owner and editor of the *Youth's Companion*, a family magazine with half a million subscribers.

Assigned to the magazine's promotions department, the 37-year-old Bellamy set to work arranging a patriotic program for schools around the country to coincide with opening ceremonies for the Columbian Exposition in October 1892, the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the New World. Bellamy successfully lobbied Congress for a resolution endorsing the school ceremony, and he helped convince President Benjamin Harrison to issue a proclamation declaring a Columbus Day holiday.

A key element of the commemorative program was to be a new salute to the flag for schoolchildren to recite in unison. But as the deadline for writing the salute approached, it remained undone. "You write it," Bellamy recalled his boss saying. "You have a knack at words." In Bellamy's later accounts of the sultry August evening he composed the pledge, he said that he believed all along it should invoke allegiance. The idea was in part a response to the Civil War, a crisis of loyalty still fresh in the national memory. As Bellamy sat down at his desk, the opening words—"I pledge allegiance to my flag"—tumbled onto paper. Then, after two hours of "arduous mental labor," as he described it, he produced a succinct and rhythmic tribute very close to the one we know today: **I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands—one Nation indivisible—with liberty and justice for all.** (Bellamy later added the "to" before "the Republic" for better cadence.)

Millions of schoolchildren nationwide took part in the 1892 Columbus Day ceremony, according to the *Youth's Companion*. Bellamy said he heard the pledge for the first time that day, October 21, when "4,000 high school boys in Boston roared it out together." But no sooner had the pledge taken root in schools than the fiddling with it began. In 1923, a National Flag Conference, presided over by the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, ordained that "my flag" should be changed to "**the flag of the United States,**" lest immigrant children be unclear just which flag they were saluting. The following year, the Flag Conference refined the phrase further, adding "**of America.**"

In 1942, the pledge's 50th anniversary, Congress adopted it as part of a **national flag code**. By then, the salute had already acquired a powerful institutional role, with some state legislatures obligating public school students to recite it each school day. But individuals and groups challenged the laws. A decade later, following a lobbying campaign by the Knights of Columbus—a Catholic fraternal organization—and others, Congress approved the addition of the words "**under God**" within the phrase "one nation indivisible." On June 14, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the bill into law.

Foreign Thoughts About The U.S. Military

Everyone complains about the quality of 'the new guys.' Don't. The screw-ups of this modern generation are head and shoulders above the 'high-medium' of any group.



When we were in Vietnam, 50+ years ago, what the Australians, Koreans, Philippine or South Vietnamese military think of the United States military? I truly never thought about it until I read this article, and I can only hope that back then, (they) thought he same of us Americans.

"We have shared our daily life with two US units for quite a while - they are the first and fourth companies of a prestigious infantry battalion whose name I will withhold for the sake of military secrecy. To the common man it is a unit just like any other. But we live with them and got to know them, and we henceforth know that we have the honor to live with one of the most renowned units of the US Army - one that the movies brought to the public as series showing "ordinary soldiers thrust into extraordinary events". who are they, those soldiers from abroad, how is their daily life, and what support do they bring to the men of our OMLT every day? Few of them belong to the Easy Company, the one the TV series focuses on. This one nowadays is named Echo Company, and it has become the support company. They have a very strong American accent - the language they speak seems to be not even English. How many times did I have to write down what I wanted to say rather than waste precious minutes trying various pronunciations of a seemingly common word? whatever state they are from, no two accents are alike and they themselves admit that in some crisis situations they have difficulties understanding each other.

"Heavily built, fed at the earliest age with Gatorade, proteins at places like waffle House and McDonalds - they are all heads and shoulders taller than us and their muscles remind us of Rambo. Our frames are amusingly skinny to them - even the strongest of us - and because of that they often mistake us for Afghans. Here we discover America as it is often depicted: their values are taken to their paroxysm, often amplified by the loneliness of this outpost in the middle of that Afghan valley. Honor, motherland - everything here reminds of that: the American flag floating in the wind above the outpost, just like the one on the postage parcels. Even if recruits often originate from the heart of American cities and gang territory, no one here has any goal other than to hold high and proud the star spangled banner. Each man knows he can count on the support of their whole people who provides them through the mail all the things that an American could miss in such a remote front-line location: books, chewing gums, razorblades, Gatorade, toothpaste etc. in such way that every man is aware of how much the American people backs him in his difficult mission. And that is a first shock to our preconceptions: the American soldier is no individualist. The team, the group.

"And they are impressive warriors! We have not come across bad ones, as strange as it may seem to you when you know how critical French people can be. Even if some of them are a bit on the heavy side, all of them provide us everyday with lessons in infantry know-how. Beyond the wearing of a combat kit that never seems to discomfort them (helmet strap, helmet, combat goggles, rifles etc.) the long hours of watch at the outpost never seem to annoy them in the slightest. On the one square meter wooden tower above the perimeter wall they stand the five consecutive hours in full battle rattle and night vision goggles on top, their sight focused in the directions of likely danger. No distractions, no pauses, they are like statues nights and days. At night, all movements are performed in the dark - only a handful of subdued red lights indicate the occasional presence of a soldier on the move. Same with the vehicles whose lights are covered - everything happens in pitch dark even filling the fuel tanks with the Japy pump.

And combat? If you have seen Rambo you have seen it all - always coming to the rescue when one of our teams gets in trouble, and always in the shortest delay. That is one of their tricks: they switch from T-shirt and sandals to combat ready in three minutes. Arriving in contact with the enemy, the way they fight is simple and disconcerting: they just charge! They disembark and assault in stride, they bomb first and ask questions later."

What Are You Doing For The Christmas Season?

Well, my intention is to attempt to do for others. There are plenty of people in my city and likely in my neighborhood that will not have a nice Christmas. And some of it will be because of me. Between birthdays and Christmas, these are the two holidays that mean a lot to everyone. I've mentioned before that everyone has a birthday and even the simplest of things such as card with a gift card in it would be so nice for that person. Nearly everyone I know can afford \$10.00. When it comes to Christmas, that is the world's holiday honoring the birth of Jesus Christ. And who likes to be left alone on Christmas Day much less Christmas Eve? Answer: **No one**.

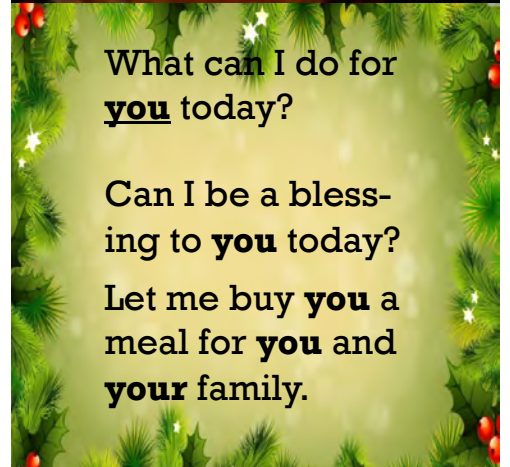
Not having done this before, I will ask everyone reading this newsletter to invite one or two people over for the holiday season. What does this mean? Well, let's include Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner or a gathering that you might be having at your home on both holidays. Get to know your neighbors and they may become close friends for you over a lifetime.

Most of us Vietnam Veterans can remember spending at least one Christmas in Vietnam alone and with our branch of service. It was okay, but not like with family and friends. It's always nice to spend the time with people you can look to and confide in and be a part of. I've mentioned this before as well and that is "This whole world is all about people". To me, that appears to be a true statement.

Let's make it a point to remember those that have no one. There are likely mission organizations for the homeless and helping them with meals and "necessary gifts" would be good for them and good for you. Is there someone on your street that appear to be without? You could be their answer. I've often said, "if you can afford a Starbucks for yourself, you can afford one for someone else."



We want to keep the culture of America the way it was when we were little and this passing on the trust, the kindness, the sensitivity, the willingness to be there for someone. Passing on the



Thanksgiving Day is for FAMILY



-I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High. Psalm 7:17

-Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. Psalm 100:4

-As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. — Colossians 2:6-7

Consider the word “Thanksgiving”, and invariably images of family gatherings come to mind. Such gatherings with turkey dinners, pumpkin pies, fall decorations, football, and tryptophan grogginess are all too common in American homes. This may be what Thanksgiving has become but it is not the purpose of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving the holiday was designated by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. He sat aside the fourth Thursday of November, and described the purpose of Thanksgiving as a national day of “Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.” America’s vision of Thanksgiving mimics our idea of the meal, which occurred between the Wampanoag tribe on Native Americans, and the Pilgrims. Following a difficult winter and a shortage of food, Squanto, who was residing with the Wampanoag, taught the Pilgrims how to farm more effectively in the new world. The purpose of their Thanksgiving was to dedicate themselves to God. It was a day of prayer and humility, giving thanks for God’s Providence. Giving thanks to God was a regular focus of the Pilgrims, as well as the Wampanoag people. Giving thanks to God has taken place since the creation. There is a unique repetitive term that runs through much of the Old Testament: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; His love endures forever.*

Repeating such a phrase can bring joy to followers of God, through any circumstance. This quote came from 1 Chronicles 16:34, but the exact phrase is repeated in 2 Chronicles 16:41, Psalm 106:1, Psalm 107:1, Psalm 118:1, and Psalm 136:1. Giving thanks for God’s goodness and his enduring love was a theme that the Old Testament writers wanted the children of Israel to remember. A second notable repeated phrase occurs five times in Psalm 107: *Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love; And his wonderful deeds for mankind.* The phrase is found in verse 1, 8, 15, 21, and 31 in the NIV. The Voice translation helps to bring the phrase an even more basic expression: “Erupt with thanks to the Eternal, for He is good and His loyal love lasts forever.” But why does this phrase repeat throughout the Psalm?



There is always someone out there that is ALWAYS hungry. You and I could do something about it. If you’re going to eat a Thanksgiving meal, then about providing one for someone else that does not enough food for himself or his family everyday much less than Thanksgiving?

Fellowship and relationships are IMPORTANT. God gave us each other to look out for each other and to befriend one another. Friends and family are so important, for it will be over soon enough, make and keep them.

Vietnam Wall Comes to Bisbee Arizona

On 25 May 2017 the Vietnam Traveling Wall left Lordsburg New Mexico en-route to Bisbee Arizona. The Wall was accompanied by law enforcement, motorcycle escort, and a contingent of its supporters including members of VVA 1093 as it made its journey to Vista Park in Bisbee for the Memorial Day weekend 26-29 May 2017.



VVA Chapter 1093 in Cochise County setup a display in support of the Wall and to make contact with fellow Veterans along with the southern Arizona general public. Approximately 2,500 people visited the display over the four day event. Numerous dignitaries stopped to visit that included the Fort Huachuca Commanding General, local Mayors, and Congresswoman Martha McSally.





Remembering Yesterday

You Didn't Know . . .

But, we all have had that special relationship with someone that we truly care about. That may have been in grammar school, high school, college, at home or even in in the military service. Well, that is what happened to me when I “drafted myself” into the U.S. Army in January 1967 and there were several of us to onto Basic Training to any given post, camp or station and in my case it was Fort Ord, California. Well, we got through the physicals, shots, paperwork and off we went on a bus to Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix, Arizona and we flew to Monterey, California for our first steps on “military soil”. Off the bus onto our new company we called C-3-3 in cloudy-sunny-cool-cold Monterey. But let’s back up a few days, and I’ll tell you about someone I would know and have a relationship fifty years later. This guy became the “Squad Leader” at Local Board 28 in Phoenix who was assigned to take our orders to Fort Ord the next day, he also became the squad leader in the barracks of our BCT squad. Many of us could see the leadership skills built into him already and I was thinking, he’d make a great officer. Wow, maybe he’d be a Colonel or General, that is if he spent 30+ years in the military. At that point none of us knew what we’d be doing except for “likely” going to Vietnam as that was the “new tropical destination” for 90% of us going into any branch of service.

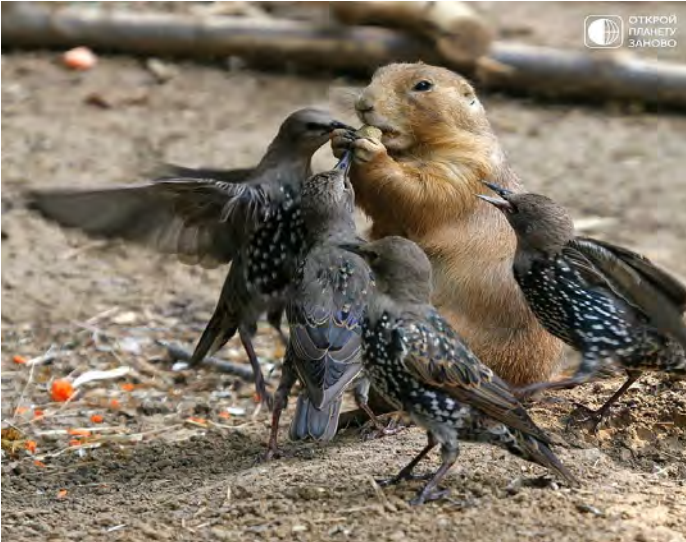
We all enjoyed each others company day after day as we trained, jumped thru hoops to get to eat right before the mess hall. We all did “KP”, and we quickly learned how to peel 100# of potatoes in just about 30-45 minutes. We+ also learned how to put on and change bandages, fire the M-14, ran like we never ran before. We cleaned up our barracks to the point we could all eat off of the floor or anything else. And did I mention the “head”? (Why do they call it that anyway?) And guess who was there with us helping us to do what some of us called “nonsense” was this guy we called our squad leader. I’ll say this much, he (our squad leader) was not lazy. In fact he was helpful, joined in on any task, encouraged us to do it right the first time so the Drill Sergeant (SFC Irving) would not find anything to make us do it over again. Now, he was our Drill Sergeant, one of the best ones we’ve ever known and very respected. In any event, our squad leader was the best. He had this sense of being there for those he cared for.

This squad leaders personality was very inspiring, at least to me, but then I’d have to say, it was to all of us. One day we were inspected for our shaving, and if the Platoon Sergeant found any “extra whiskers” on our face, we had to dry shave and all with the same razor. That is not all, we then had to pick up our shavings from the sidewalk so we “had a clean sidewalk”. Well, you can only imagine what that must have been like. But our squad leader was right there and came up with a process to clean them up quickly, and guess what that was: “A wet wash cloth”, and it did the trick.

In the end, we all had to qualify with passing the PT Test and that was to say the least difficult and we also had to pass firing the weapons we trained on for several weeks. In any event, our squad leader was there for us in every way and every day. You, usually you don’t find in a man that you just met, in situations like what we all went through and still had to go through in Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) and then in Vietnam in actual combat. But, our squad leader could see the forest through the trees and saw what was at hand in all cases, and therefore he earned our respect and devotion to being the kind of man we would like to become and hopefully would, after all , we were only 20-21 years old and had our life ahead of us.

Animals in a Different Light

We all see things a little differently and to see the kinds of animals that act and do differently than what we normally see is quite something. Take a look at these and pass it on to your grandchildren. God provides for everyone and everything.



You Don't See This All The Time



Beautiful Sights of the World



HOHENZOLLEBN CASTEL



PROCESSION OF PRINCES, DRESDEN



REICHSTAG



PERGAMON MUSEUM, BERLIN



SANSSOUCI PALACE, POTSDAM



NEUSCHWANSTEIN CASTLE



BERLIN VICTORY COLUMN



WRAPPED REICHSTAG

Beautiful Sights of the World

Polar opposites



Road in the Netherlands



Royal Navy Celebration in the UK



Sun setting in the mountains



Traffic jam in Beijing



A game of shadows (the camels are the small white lines on the sand)



No Picture Taking Allowed??



Visitors to a village in the canton of Graubünden will no longer be able to take photos of their trip after the local authorities imposed a photography ban, saying it will issue a “symbolic” five-franc fine to anyone who contravenes it. The community of Bergün, in Switzerland not far from St Moritz, voted to bring in the new law in its municipal assembly



recently. And it had to do with taking pictures of their village. Why? Because the people of Bergün think their village is so beautiful that if people see photos of it on social media they will feel miserable because they aren’t there themselves. “It is

scientifically proven that beautiful holiday photos on social media make the viewer unhappy because they cannot be there themselves,”



Bergün has a particularly picturesque landscape to offer, so it risks making people particularly unhappy, it feels. “Bergün is beautiful. We don’t want to make people outside the community unhappy by sharing social media photos of our picturesque landscape, and we cordially invite you to visit Bergün to experience it for yourself,” said the Mayor Peter Nicolay. “I am very pleased that the inhabitants of Bergün have the happiness of all people at heart. That makes me very proud,” he added. This might be a bad idea in that, if you really, really, want to see a beautiful village in the Swiss Alps, then book a trip to Switzerland for a week or more and tour the entire country and you’ll see beauty beyond belief.

Why A Newsletter?



The purpose of any newsletter is to provide specialized information in the form of **HISTORICAL, PERSONAL and INFORMATIONAL** to readers like you. The audience is always one that is willing to read, willing to learn and willing to put some of it to use in their lives. Newsletters can be a great way to market your organization and in this case” VVA to create credibility and build awareness for you and what it (VVA) can provide you. We hope that this newsletter provides “**YOU**” the reader with some timely, helpful, problem solving (to a point) information about “*things in your life and maybe someone else’s*” We all have someone in our lives, wives, parents, children, grandchildren, great-grand-children that we can pass onto them something about “things they may not know about” and your military service. Details about anything is and can be critical in any discussion and often times, we possibly have not ever had the time, occasion to thought to consider looking up an item you found in the “AZ-LZ”. Therefore, skim it once, read it once and then read it again and you’ll be surprised at what you’ll find that just might make a difference in your life and someone else’s that you truly care about. So, the whole purpose of this newsletter is to bring you historical, informational and personal items that you might find interesting and willing to pass on, those articles for you personally and those ever so interesting that you never, never learned in school and neither did your family. And we all know that there are hundreds if not thousands of things, we never knew and never will know at least in our life time. So, good reading and we hope you enjoy this issue of the “AZ-LZ” — **The Arizona Landing Zone**.

Vietnam Veterans of America Convention—2017

Vietnam Veterans of America held its 18th National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana from August 8-12, 2017, at the Sheraton New Orleans and the New Orleans Marriott hotels. “We were excited to be in New Orleans for what was to be our largest Convention ever,” said VVA National President John Rowan.

More than 900 delegates from VVA chapters across the nation were on hand to join hundreds of other Vietnam veterans and guests in New Orleans, along with members of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA), which held its National Convention in conjunction with the VVA event. The delegates set the organization’s course for the next two years, hearing from an array of speakers, attended information sessions, and took part in special events.

That included the awards banquet, which honored Vietnam veterans and others in the arts and sciences, on that special Saturday evening, August 12th. **Charles Figley**, a Vietnam War veteran who has done pioneering work in recognizing and treating Post-traumatic Stress Disorder since the mid-1970s, delivered the Keynote Speech at the August 9th Opening Ceremonies.

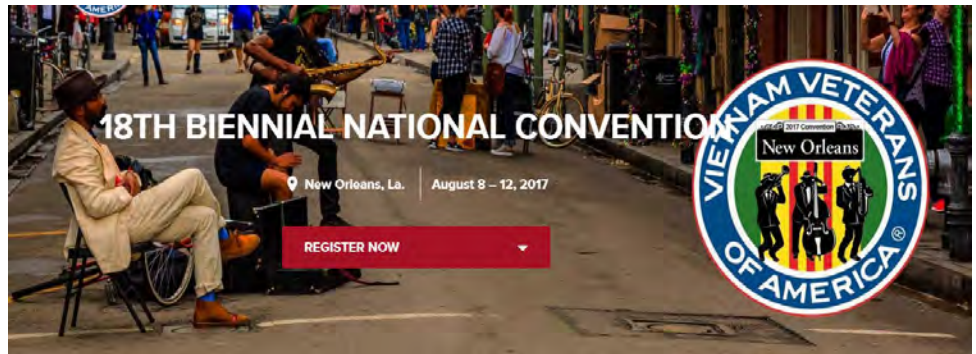
The actor **Wes Studi** and author/environmentalist **Doug Peacock**, both of whom served in the U.S. Army in the Vietnam War, received the VVA Excellence in the Arts awards at the Awards Banquet.

Recently retired Associated Press photographer **Nick Ut** received the President’s Award for Excellence in the Arts, and the three women who entertained the troops in Vietnam with the Bob Hope USO tours in 1969 and 1970—**Paula Cinko**, **Rosetta “Rosie” Gitlin**, and **Jackie Chidsey** members of “The Dean Martin Show” ***Golddiggers***—also were honored at the Banquet. Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation’s only congressionally chartered veteran’s service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam Veterans.



Vietnam Veterans of America Election—2017

Needless to say, the VVA Convention is always a good time. It's an opportunity to meet some new folks, see those that you haven't seen for quite some time and just enjoy the "mechanics of how VVA is run". This year's was held in New Orleans, LA and it was a great time enjoying all of the festivi-



ties, the southern food, the discussions, elections and so forth. We'll have some new people being elected, others taking their place and hopefully we'll get a perspective of what goes on within VVA.

John Rowan was reelected to a seventh term as National President of Vietnam Veterans of America on August 11th at VVA's 18th National Convention in New Orleans. Rowan, who was elected to VVA's highest office in 2005, has served as the chairman of VVA's Conference of State Council Presidents, for three terms on the organization's Board of Directors, and as president of VVA's New York State Council. He served as a linguist in the U.S. Air Force's 6990 Security Squadron in Vietnam and at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, providing the Strategic Air Command with intelligence on North Vietnam's SAM sites to protect their bombing missions.



Marsha Four of Springfield, Pennsylvania, was reelected to serve as Vice President; **Bill Meeks, Jr.**, of The Woodlands, Texas, was reelected as Secretary; and **Wayne Reynolds** of Athens, Alabama, was reelected as VVA's Treasurer.



The Ten At-Large Directors are:

Dottie Barickman (IA); Richard C. DeLong (LA); Gumersindo Gomez (MA); John Margowski (WI); Charlie Montgomery (VA); Felix Peterson (OK); Dave Simmons (WV); Dan Stenvold (ND); Kerwin Stone (TX); and Sandie Wilson (MI).



The nine Regional directors elected to serve a 2017-2019 term are:

Region 1, Skip Hochreich (MA)
Region 2, Ted Wilkinson (NY)
Region 3, Sara McVicker (DC)
Region 4, Spence Davis (GA)
Region 5, Tom Burke (OH)
Region 6, Bob Grabinski (WI)
Region 7, Allen Manuel (LA)
Region 8, Francisco Ivarra (WA)
Region 9, Dick Southern (CA)

2017 Elected—At Large Directors



Dottie Barickman



Richard DeLong



Dave Simmons



G. Gomez



Chas. Montgomery



John Margowski



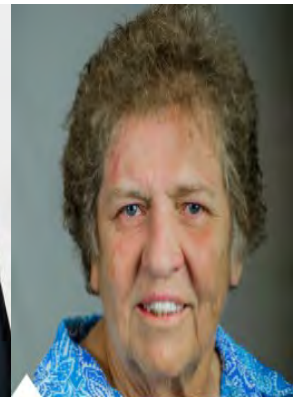
Don Stenvold



Kerwin Stone



Felix Peterson



Sandie Wilson

2017 Elected—Region Officers



S. Hochreich-R1



T. Wilkinson-R2



S. McVicker-R3



S. Davis-R4



T. Burke-R5



B. Grabinski-R6



A. Manuel-R7



F. Ivarra-R8



D. Southern-R9

Swearing In Of Officers and Directors



Honoring A Fellow Vietnam Veteran



We all met a lot of different people from various chapters and State Councils throughout our time in New Orleans and it was no different for me as I traveled through the General Convention Hall, the Marriott or Sheraton Hotels or the VVA Mall. We all ran across someone we either knew or knew us or we *“thought we knew”*. In any event, this gentleman to my right was a fellow I had just met and we exchanged *“things about our State Council and Chapters in our home state”*. This fellow is named Mike Schneider, Secretary of Chapter 154 in Clinton Twp, MI. We got to know each other for 30 minutes.

Tallying Up The Numbers

Total Counts for National Officers

John Rowan-660 Marsha Four-655 Bill Meeks-657 Wayne Reynolds-647

Total Counts for Region Officers

Wayne Hechreich-Reg1-33, Ted Wilkonson-Reg2-78, Sara McVicker-Reg3-98, Spence Davis-Reg4-58, Tom Burke-Reg5-120, Bob Grabinski-Reg6-33, Allen Manuel –Reg7-50, F. Ivarra-Reg8-18, Dick Southern-Reg9-85

Total Counts for At Large Officers

Dottie Barickman-508, Pete Peterson-504, Dan Stenvold-491, Sandie Wilson-464, Kerwin Stone-415, John Margoswki-378, Gumersindo Gomez-369, Charles Montgomery-345, Richard DeLong-342, Dave Simmons-338

Total Delegates On Hand—816 total

Ages of Vietnam Veterans at 2017 Convention-Youngest age-61 years and oldest age-83 years.

Best VVA Website-Chapter 1071

Best Chapter Newsletters– Chapters 12 and 933

Best State Council Newsletter-California

Missed It By One



Gene Crego, Arizona's current State Council President applied to be one of the At-Large Directors and missed it by one. We're sure he put into it what he could, but only ten Directors were selected and Gene came in at number eleven.

Gene has been quite the candidate in many ways as a chapter member, then chapter president, then a State Council President and has made it to the top of the ladder within Arizona. However, he decided to take that last step up the "VVA ladder" and within our southwestern state, but "it broke". For now, it is back to work, enhancing a great State Council and provide for the over 1,000 members within Arizona.

To A Great Guy In The U.S.M.C.

Sometimes you only get one chance to do something for a man who has truly made something for himself and this Marine has done that. CW5 (a PhD) James Averhart Jr. who is head of the USMC Corrections was a man that I truly look up to. Having had seen him once or twice in New Orleans during the VVA Convention in NOLA caused me to react and provide something for him. I learned a long time ago that "it's better to give than receive". And this gentleman has truly made something of himself and was honoring to me. He became the recipient of a 50th challenge coin to cause us "to remember this day in each other."



We're All One Step Away From Homelessness



We all need to eat everyday and that gift card or what you can afford for someone less fortunate is the way to go. More than we know, you'll be remembered and blessed by such a small act of kindness, needed to be done by everyone.

When we would be walking around New Orleans during this VVA 18th Convention, one thing was very obvious, and that was the those men and women that were homeless. We ran across them when we went to a favorite Scottish restaurant "McDonald's". Right outside the door or inside the eatery were plenty of people who had not eaten for some time. Needless to say, we're all one step away from being homeless. We ran across this man in a wheelchair who we enjoyed some conversation and provided a gift card and bought him a meal. He lives in and out of a shelter on a weekly basis, but many are outside most of the time. Sometimes, a physical condition can change your life a lot and then where are you? And it can happen to any one of us and in fact it has. This man was a medical doctor and cab driver who had no one in his life. At 62, he hopefully has a few years left of life.

Dr. Charles Figley



Dr. Charles Figley, a Vietnam veteran who has done pioneering work in recognizing and treating Post-traumatic Stress Disorder since the mid-1970s, delivered the Keynote Speech at the August 9th Opening Ceremonies. It's those experiences that Figley said will come out of the healing of trauma. There is no reason to go through life suffering from past trauma. "Here we get into the miracles of human existence," he said, "where humans can and do get better after trauma. Not just better, but transformed, almost like being born again."

The memories of trauma are still there, Figley explained, one's own or those of others. But that's all they are—memories. There is no longer the compulsion to re-live the trauma. The events take their proper place with all the other memories, integrated into a whole, not standing alone to plague and disrupt life. When memory stands alone, in flashbacks or in nightmares, fragmentation is inevitable. Memories repeat over and over, pulled apart from the rest of living, isolated in past trauma. When those same memories become integrated, one is again complete, whole, and unbroken. People see, maybe for the first time, all the things they did right in order to live and survive. They understand they haven't been weak; they realize they have been resilient because they have survived. It becomes easier to relate to others because of the deep knowledge of what it is to be fragmented. There are new possibilities, new importance, new priorities. Figley said that most people experience spiritual changes, maybe in religion, maybe in existential change, or in living in different ways. "There is a sanctity of life," he said. "Nature and music, for example, become elevations of the spirit and mind. Awe and wonder renew and transform in ways never before experienced." People with PTSD, including compassion fatigue, have been through grief and have learned hard lessons, many of which cannot be articulated.

Rep. Mike Coffman Honored as 2017 VVA "Legislator of the Year"

We were proud to recognize [Congressman Mike Coffman](#) as Vietnam Veterans of America 2017 Legislator of the Year." "We are recognizing Congressman Coffman for his leadership in introducing and fighting for bills that will have a profound impact on veterans of all eras, as well their children and their children's children." *"I'm so honored to receive this award from the Vietnam Veterans of American. My heart has always been with them for having fought such a difficult war without the full support of the American people,"* who is a Marine Corps combat veteran. Congressman Coffman, representing Colorado's 6th congressional district, has been a leader on Veterans' issues. He recently introduced H.R. 918, the '[Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act](#)', a bipartisan piece of legislation that recently passed the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs with unanimous support and seeks to give combat veterans with 'other-than-honorable' discharges, as well as military sexual assault victims, access to VA mental health care services. The bill also calls for the VA Secretary to establish a formal character of service determination process to rightfully trigger reviews of the character of discharge for potential eligibility of VA benefits. He is cited for having sponsored the '[Fairness for Veterans Act](#)', which offers hope to veterans discharged by the military with OTH discharges, and which was included in the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act, which was signed into law last year. Coffman, a Marine veteran, is a sitting Member of Congress to have served in Iraq Wars. Coffman has a diverse military backgrounds in Congress and has been able to bring his 21 years of military experience to both the House Armed Services Committee and the Veterans' Affairs Committee.



Louisiana Governor—John B. Edwards



Louisiana Governor John Bell Edwards to Address Delegates At Vietnam Veterans of America's National Convention (New Orleans, LA)--Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards welcomed delegates and guests to New Orleans at Vietnam Veterans of America's 18th biennial National Convention in New Orleans. The Governor spoke at the Convention's General Session. "We are particularly pleased that Gov. Edwards—a West Point graduate who served as an Army Airborne Ranger—will be addressed his fellow veterans," said VVA President John Rowan. "Gov. Edwards knows what it's like to serve your country in uniform—and he spoke to the group of men and women who share that knowledge and experience." Following his military service, Gov. Edwards was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives, where he served for eight years. He became the state's 56th Governor in January 2016. More than 900 delegates from VVA chapters across the nation joined hundreds of other Vietnam veterans and guests in New Orleans, along with members of AVVA.

VA Sec. Shulkin On OTH, Urges Support of Congress

"VA Secretary Shulkin leads with the heart of a physician, and takes seriously his oath to 'do no harm. That's why he's working to correct the VA's self-imposed policies, which have denied care to our most vulnerable veterans for decades. We are heartened that as of July 5, every VA emergency room will be prepared to receive veterans with a 'bad paper,' OTH discharge, who are experiencing a mental health crisis, and that they are now eligible to be treated for an initial period up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential, or outpatient care." By law, the term "veteran" is a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. By VA regulation alone, the VA has denied access to healthcare of thousands of veterans who meet the definition of "veteran." A Brown University Study, released June 20, "Bad Papers": The Invisible and Increasing Costs of War for Excluded Veterans," by Ali R. Tayyeb and Jennifer Greenburg, finds, "one of the most invisible and devastating costs of the post-9/11 wars for our nation's veterans is the denial of benefits and services to a growing portion of former service members who are most in need of support. Six percent of the entire veteran population of this era. And that most of these military discharges result from minor infractions which are symptomatic of trauma sustained during military service." VVA, in partnership with Swords-Plowshares have developed a proposal called Leave No Veteran Behind Act.



VVA Chapter 1116 Comes Into Being



Chapter 1116 of the Vietnam Veterans of America officially came into existence Monday evening. Serving Burke County and the surrounding area, the chapter held a special chartering ceremony at Timberwoods restaurant to commemorate the occasion, featuring state representatives from the national organization. Rossie Nance, the North Carolina state council president; Joe Kristek, former state council president; and

VVA state board member Allan Perkal traveled to Morganton to present the new chapter with its charter and articles of incorporation. Nance also swore in the officers. Larry Britt will serve as president of the organization, with Wayne Rodgers serving as vice president, Champ Ray as secretary, Gary Jennings as treasurer and Jim Mace as chaplain. Britt said the group has been meeting and attracting interested veterans for several months now, and recently got enough at-large members to apply to become a chapter.

Sen Gary Peters—Legislator of the Year



“Vietnam Veterans of America is proud to recognize **Senator Gary Peters** as Legislator of the Year,” He served in the U.S. Navy Reserve and rose to the rank of Lt. Commander, continues to lead in the fight for justice on behalf of all veterans. His effort to pass the *Fairness for Veterans Act* in the United States Senate offers hope to those veterans discharged by the military with less-than-honorable discharges, without due process,” said Rowan. “The lasting legacy of Vietnam veterans has been their steadfast commitment and service to our country and to their fellow veterans,” said Senator Peters upon receiving the award. “Advocates from Vietnam Veterans of America, working together with Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, first brought this issue to my

attention, and their support and hard work helped ensure that this important provision was signed into law. I am humbled and honored to be recognized by the Vietnam Veterans of America, and I look forward to continuing to work with this incredible organization to ensure that every veteran is treated with the respect and honor they have earned.” The ‘Fairness for Veterans Act’, which offers hope to veterans discharged by the military with OTH discharges, and which was included in the FY17’ National Defense Authorization Act, which was signed into law last year. Coffman, a Marine combat veteran, is the only sitting Member of Congress to have served in both Iraq Wars. Coffman has one of the most diverse military backgrounds in Congress and has been able to bring his 21 years of military experience to both the House Armed Services Committee and the Veterans’ Affairs Committee. He stated “The USA is grateful for all the veterans over time and no veteran should have to bear the wounds of their time without help from the VA”. “*We are working on getting help as quickly as we can to all of those needing it and shall not stop until we do so*”.

Sen Richard Blumenthal—Legislator of the Year



We are proud to recognize **Senator Richard Blumenthal** as Vietnam Veterans of America 2017 Legislator of the Year,” VVA applauds Senator Blumenthal for his leadership in introducing and fighting for the *Toxic Exposure Research Act*, which passed on the last day of the 114th Congress, ensuring the Department of Veterans Affairs can no longer ignore the impact of military toxic exposures on the health of our children and grandchildren.” On Friday, August 11th, Senator Blumenthal was welcomed from the over 1,300 Vietnam veterans and their supporters gathered at the VVA’s 18th National Convention.“ Our veterans, our families, and our survivors are indebted to Senator Blumenthal for his efforts to translate this act, VVA’s highest legislative priority for several years, into black-letter law,” Rowan said. “We will not rest until we see the second phase of the law implemented and the research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions affecting our children and grandchildren begin,” “All of us in VVA are also grateful to Senator Blumenthal for providing the strong leadership and effective advocacy assistance we need to ensure confidentiality of our military and veterans records, and *it is an honor to stand with Vietnam Veterans of America today to discuss achievements we have made to honor our nation’s promise to our veterans. Passage of the bipartisan Toxic Exposure Research Act could not have been possible without the steadfast, dedicated advocacy of these brave patriots. I remain committed to the serious work ahead to ensure all veterans have access to the full benefits, affordable, quality healthcare and support they need and deserve.*”.

He stated there are over **20** veteran suicides everyday due to the invisible wounds such as PTSD with one third to one half of the veterans having it.

The Caucuses of Region 9



Having candidates come into the Region 9 Caucus was very interesting and informative, providing a lot of insight to the listeners. Gene spoke of “ideas”, while Dave spoke of “raising funds and how to do it”, while Bill gave us thoughts of the next two years on secretarial duties and Dottie provided us with what she would do “for the sake of the chapters and State Councils”.

A Check for the Volunteers of America



Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) has always been a big giver when it comes to donations and they made no exception when it came to this \$14,000.00 check to the Volunteers of America. There are hundreds if not thousands of organizations such as Volunteers of America and this money used for scholarships will be used wisely to be sure when it comes to the worthy students of whom will receive this this money. We appreciate those that have made the effort to give as well as use the funds for the good of the next generation.

Veterans and Spouses Gathering



The VVA Convention Banquet Room



Dinner and Desert

A Superb 18th Biennial VVA Dinner in New Orleans



Enjoying The Food And Fellowship in New Orleans



The Gold Digger Entertainers

It was *Dean Martin Show* producer that came up with the idea of a series with a nostalgic 1930s motif. Another director provided the idea known as "The Gold Diggers" that was featured in a film from the 1930's. These talented young ladies provided 1930's music and song from that era and then went to Vietnam with Bob Hope to perform in song for the American troops during the latter part of the 1960's. Three women among the twelve ladies who entertained the troops in Vietnam with the Bob Hope USO tours in 1969 and 1970 were Paula Cinko, Rosetta "Rosie" Gitlin, and Jackie Chidsey, members of "The Dean Martin Show Golddiggers"—were honored at the banquet.



Paula Cinko

Jackie Chidsey

Rosetta Gitlin



Wes Studi Recognized and Awarded



The actor **Wes Studi** served in the US Army in the Vietnam War, received the VVA Excellence in the Arts awards at the Awards Banquet. Studi was born in a Cherokee family in Nofire Hollow, Oklahoma, a rural area in Tahlequah named after his mother's family. He is the son of Maggie Studie, a housekeeper, and Andy Studie, a ranch hand. Until he attended grade school, he spoke only Cherokee at home. He attended Chilocco Indian Agricultural School for high school and graduated in 1964; Studi was drafted into the U.S. Army and served 18 months in Vietnam. After his discharge. He was an actor in many movies.



Wesley "Wes" Studi is a Cherokee actor and film producer from Nofire Hollow in Oklahoma. He has won critical acclaim for his portrayal of Native Americans.

Nick Ut—Photographer



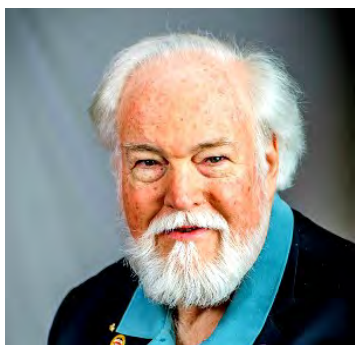
Recently retired Associated Press photographer **Nick Ut** will receive the President's Award for Excellence in the Arts. Nick Ut, the Pulitzer-Prize-winning Vietnam War photographer who was scheduled to receive the President's Award for Excellence in the Arts, will not be able to attend the Convention. "I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the invitation," he wrote in an email to us on July 15. "I know your event will be an unforgettable experience. I sorrowfully I regret that I will not be able to attend your event. *I am deeply sorry that I cannot spend time with such amazing people that weekend and I am grateful to everyone for inviting me. Please give my best to everyone involved.*"

Doug Peacock—Author and Environmentalist

The author and environmentalist **Doug Peacock**, who served two tours as an Army Special Forces medic in the Vietnam War, received the VVA Excellence in the Arts Award. Best known for his best-selling memoir, *Grizzly Years: In Search of the American Wilderness*, Peacock's other books include his war memoir, *Walking It Off: A Veterans Chronicle of War and Wilderness*. A former Guggenheim fellow, Peacock was the subject of a feature film, *Peacock's War*, about grizzly bears and the Vietnam War. He has appeared on many TV shows, including the Today Show, Good Morning America, and NBC Evening News. A close friend of the writer Edward Abbey, a leading voice in the Western environmental movement, Peacock—who calls himself a "renegade naturalist and grizzly bear biologist" – lectures regularly about the wilderness and veteran issues. He is chair of the Board of Directors of Round River, which works with indigenous peoples in Africa and North and South America on environmental and conservation issues.



A Message to John Rowan



I'd like to take a moment and provide John Rowan with a wonderful thank you for all the years he has put into Vietnam Veterans of America. Having been with them over twenty years and performed nearly every role possible within this organization, we as a fraternal organization such as ours are very fortunate to have John Rowan at the helm who is a very responsible man and team that is running VVA the way any of us would or at least would try.

As most of us on board with VVA, we can look back and see what has been accomplished and now we are looking at the not to distant closure of our most memorable times in our life. It seems many of us have spent as much or more time in VVA as we spent in the Armed Forces. And needless to say, we have certainly enjoyed it.

John has provided us with a superb team that has been in the national leadership of VVA in Maryland for a number of years. VVA, at the national, state and chapter levels have provided a lot of insight for each of us to spread to our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Hopefully, we have done that by teaching and showing them what Vietnam was like from a combat perspective as well as a country that has come aboard with American concerns and being a trading partner.

A very important fact was and is to continue to spread patriotism among the thousands of cities and towns throughout our America. It also provides us with a form of patriotism as we wear the VVA uniform in parades, gatherings along with the honoring of those that have gone home. John has provided us with the wherewithal to keep that tradition up year after year.

Since 2010 to year 2025, Vietnam Veterans of America through VVA National and the Department of Defense with the 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War Program Office has provided scores of "50th Commemorative Events" that John has supported and spoken at. That is always appreciated.

John has been an integral part of the Veterans Administration when it comes to the health of the Vietnam veteran with the scores of illnesses that seem to be coming out of the blue as we age. Bill after bill from the House and Senate have been passed along with new and upgraded policies to help the Vietnam Veteran.

The VVA Conventions held every two years provide a grand time for hundreds of us to share time and fellowship with each other in unique places and perform some "VVA Business" to make better our organization the best it can be. John and his team are of courses responsible for that and we thank you all.

We have as of late, been "named the new WWII Veteran" and of course as we age, and that will of course be the case. With John's insight, we are doing something about that early on to ensure that the legacy, memories and other important things that are too many to mention will be left in good hands for generations down the road.

As the paragraphs go on with this page, I am quickly running out of room and at the bottom, therefore, to John, you have been told many times for things you have done within VVA, so, we shall not break the tradition of those two words. What else can we say? If we had more paper, likely a lot more, however, we don't, but we want the readers of this AZ-LZ to know you are important to VVA, you're important to your family, and you're important to America. So, John to you: A VERY BIG THANK YOU for devoting your life to VVA and the Vietnam Veterans that you have.

“Touring New Orleans” In All Its Charm



Enjoying A Breakfast – “Daisy Dukes”



Daisy Dukes was quite the place with having original food and enjoyment of the “traditional food of the city of New Orleans”. The line was about 12-15 people waiting to get in, but the service and food was pretty good. The wait was certainly worth it and the fellowship inside with the various Vietnam Veterans was also worthy of the wait and to see how the “New Orleaners” eat. A very charming city to enjoy for the week was most enjoyable. We also enjoyed 99 temps and 100% humidity. ☺

Where To Have Lunch? – “Mothers”



We asked one person about a great “New Orleans Lunch” and several people stated “MOTHERS” was the best place. And it was with original food such as the “Po Boy, red beans and rice from 200 years ago, a great dessert named bread pudding not to mention the service was terrific and they insist that customers do not want the servers tipped. Was that the best place? I’d say it was, very good.

Dinner? The Best Was – “Drago’s”



Our lovely server Latrishia Gary who provided us with a great meal of salad, fish, beans, rice and a superb bread pudding dessert. Many thanks to her always.

A Good Friend Of Mine—And Yours

For those of you who have seen and given out the “Arizona 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War Challenge Coin”, we have contracted with Northwest Mint out of Washington State and our point of contact is the man you see in the photo. A dear friend whom I’ve know for many years. Read on as to why he is who he is: Russ Wilson.

“I love doing my job and especially your project. Every time I start something new I am surrounded by positive energy as the customer is excited to commemorate an achievement, milestone or something that they are proud of. During the course of the project I become emotionally invested and really enjoy tweaking customer concept designs to make them better and ensuring that I am providing the best quality available. I have thoroughly enjoyed interacting with you while producing the Arizona State Council Vietnam Veterans of America coin. I have so many personal connections to this coin because I am a veteran (although far later), I grew up in Tempe, Arizona and I recently had a very dear friend (a true father figure) pass away a couple years ago from exposure to Agent Orange. There is nothing better than to be involved with something bigger than myself and to honor those who served during the Vietnam War. I’ve been lucky to have had an exciting life in the military, state police, Air Marshal and the FBI but I love this job the most because every day is a good day



The 2017 Eclipse

The eclipse of 2017 came and went in about 15 or so minutes. But was “*something to see*” considering we won’t see another one for several more years. Make this a history lesson for your little ones as time “eclipses by” for us and them.



A Few Words From Our President

Attended the American Legion Department of Arizona Convention in Carefree. Presented Judi Beischel with VVA National Achievement Medal.

Attended the Region 8 & 9 Conference in Denver. Discussed the VVA National Convention in August. Reports from Regions 8 & 9 Directors, and State Council Presidents. Afternoon only two candidates addressed the members. Dennis Howland (Utah) and myself for At-Large BOD. Attended the VAMC Phoenix monthly meeting.

Attended Chapter #106 meeting. Presented Chapter President Melvin "Butch" Morgan with the VVA National Achievement Medal.

Attended Congresswoman Sinema and staff Veterans Committee meeting at Mesa Community College.

Attended the VVA National Convention in New Orleans, LA. We had 22 delegates attend. That is the most Arizona has ever had attend. I want to thank all delegates attending.. The Election of At-Large BOD. The West ended up with no At-Large BOD. This hadn't happen for at least 12 years. Hope to correct it in 2019 in Spokane, Washington. There is talk of term limits, and not being able to run from the floor.

Attended the Mississippi State Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Ocean City, Mississippi. On August 18th Late in the afternoon notified of being inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame.

Attended the monthly VAMC Meeting in Phoenix.

VVA Arizona's membership is still growing. The new total is 1,207 for the end of July. Chapter #1093 showed a good increase. Chapter #106 moved up to 209 members.

Networking is one way to increase membership. Try to always have a business card and /or application. Attending veteran events in your area.

Making VVA presence known. Working with other Veteran Service Organizations, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, VA, and the community. The main office at the VARO in Phoenix is starting to stay open 3 days a week. Usually, Tuesday Wednesday, and Thursday. The SE Clinic in Gilbert is open all day, Monday. The VA Building #13 in Tucson has been trying to be open Monday - Thursday. Exception is one of the VSO's is off for vacation or emergency.

Congratulations to all 24 veterans being inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame. Especially the 5 VVA members. Please if possible attend the ceremony to support the veterans. Please put down on your calendar. Saturday, October 14th at the VAMC Phoenix will be our next State Council Meeting. So far there are no guest speakers. Chapter #1093 will be bringing in the morning refreshments.

The following being inducted are members. **Billee Culin, John Fontana, Ed Mangan, Lewis "Gene Wood Sr. and myself.** We hope to have more be inducted next year. This was my 2nd try. The first try was in 2009. If you didn't make this year. Please keep putting in for it. There are members it