THE PHILIPPINES, THE FIRST VIETNAM AND THE NEXT VIETNAM

by David Curry
Chicago Chapter
National Staff
VVAW

"REBELLION!" shouted the headlines of newspapers around the world. The dictator Ferdinand Marcos, whose reign seemed infinite, had been replaced by a comparatively diminutive female leader whose aristocratic charm was cloaked in democratic rhetoric. There was just enough hesitation in supporting her from the Reagan administration to make all of us who had opposed Marcos feel that some degree of victory had been won. I clipped my copy of the "REBELLION" headline from the Chicago Sun Times, tacked it on my bulletin board, and breathed a sigh of relief that what had seemed an inevitable Vietnam-like military involvement for the United States had been avoided.

As the months passed, my earlier uneasiness returned. News from the Philippines revealed an Aquino balancing act of increasing civil unrest and rightist coup attempts. While I was getting a routine blood test, a Filipino hospital technician, who noticed my VVAW pin, told me that he had served in Vietnam, too. After a brief conversation "feeling out", he told me that he had recently left the Philippines out of fear for his life. His teenage brother had been tortured and murdered by government soldiers. I naively suggested that the situation had probably changed since the fall of Marcos. He told me that these events had transpired since Aquino had come to power. This fall, The World, the church magazine of Unitarian-Universalists reported that head of the Unitarian Church in the Philippines, a critic of Marcos and later Aquino, had been murdered. The suspected perpetrators were right-wing death squads.

My old fears have returned. The Philippines were the first Vietnam. The Philippines can be the next Vietnam. The Philippines may be the last Vietnam.

The First Vietnam
The Spanish began their conquest of the Philippines in 1565. Spain's total destruction of the indigenous Filipino culture was so absolute that little is known of the pre-Spanish era. One description says, "Filipinos...lived in many separate communities, linked by a well-developed system of trade and some loose political compacts, with widespread literacy." As with the French conversion of the pre-colonial languages of Vietnam into a Roman character script, the Spanish destruction of the "old" literature served as an important component of the total and brutal destruction of a culture in order to facilitate colonization. Almost unending violent uprisings of the peoples of the Philippines testify to the need for Spanish concern. Spanish domination was fundamentally tied to the tyrant's ability to divide the Filipino people into two classes: one class who benefited from Spanish rule and one class whose suffering and laboring made Spanish rule profitable for both the Spanish and the Filipino upper class.

The first of the popular uprisings to merit the Western designation of "revolution" occurred at the end of the nineteenth century. Perhaps, the difference in this case was that the sons of wealthy Filipino landowners educated in Europe provided an ideological base for the rebellion. They had realized...
I suppose many of you are disappointed that you’ve got George Bush for president now. You think you’re going to have four more years like America under Reagan. I know that’s a depressing thought, but maybe it won’t be as bad.

Look at the bright side. You won’t have a president who falls off to sleep during meetings and lets wacko aides make policy. You’ll be rid of an administration which probably set the record for having the most sieveballs out to use their government positions for personal gain. Maybe this new guy will have at least some intelligence.

What did Iron Lady Maggie Thatcher say about Ronnie Boy? Something about him being a kind of the dear boy, but he doesn’t have too much upstairs. Then again, maybe that’s better than having a smart schemer who might do a better job of screwing us.

But, on the bright side again, we get rid of the Iron Lady Nancy Reagan. I don’t know about Barbara Bush but That Nancy chick was weird, man. I mean, like she had the old boy running the country according to the dictates of her astrologer. And her clothes—she collected clothes like Imelda Marcos collected shoes. Some fashion잡지 mentioned she had, you know, a magazine as to the value of dresses she wore at public events. They figured that the cost of all different dresses draped her anorexic body was over a million dollars.

The borrowed earrings Nancy wore overseas were supposed to be worth $800,000. Her dresses were borrowed, also, since there is a law against elected officials accepting gifts, which includes such opulent gifts. Supposedly, she has even more dresses hidden away. They say she turned Amy Carter’s bedroom into a walk in closet for all the dresses she “borrowed” from fashion designers.

Well, I’m glad weird Nancy is gone. Maybe now that she’s out of the White House she could get together with Imelda Marcos and go shopping. Imelda, famous for her three-thousand pair of shoes, also liked dresses. She bought them by the rack just like she bought diamonds by the case.

Maybe they could brighten their husbands along on a double date. These guys should like each other when it comes to story-telling. Much of his professional career was based on his image as a heroic guerrilla fighter against the Japanese during World War II. But thanks to the U.S. Army (bless its little stone heart) we find out different. The Army released a report on Marcos’ military career which exposes the lies he told about his military career. It seems that his unit wasn’t really battle adept during the war “because of the desertion of its commanding officer.” And who was the commanding officer? Why, it was Ferdinand the Hero, now famous for being the husband of a woman with 3,000 pairs of shoes.

I imagine a shrinking could have fun with the Reagans and the Marcoses. But let’s get back to today. We’ve got a new President now. He can’t be as bad as Reagan, can he? His vice-president, on the other hand, is a real loser. How many vice-presidents have we had who were cabbyboys? The only one I can think of is Richard Nixon when he gave his famous Checkers speech.

Danny Quayle cried because those nasty media people found out he dodged military service in Vietnam which was not a cool thing to do when one is a hunk. But at least he can say that during his service in the Indiana National Guard, there was not one VC attack. But Danny never measure up to the standards that what’s-his-name set during the Reagan years.

So Bush can’t be as bad, can he? They say an optimist sees a half glass of water as half full. A pessimist sees it as half empty. Reagan is gone now, and so is his weird wife. That’s reason for optimism. We might have some plain old normal clothes fashions in the White House now. So maybe the glass looks one-eighth full instead of seven-eighths empty.

GRENAD

GRENAD

Dr John Froswall, the Veterans Administration’s Chief medical officer is the recipient of our grenade of the month. A survey revealed that they had an abnormally high death rate. Dr John ordered another survey which was to be restructured so as to not have a result with such a large number of hospitals with an abnormally high death rate.

Now maybe the good doctor didn’t want such a high rate made public because he’s a friend of veterans and didn’t want to scare us about VA hospitals. But I doubt it. More likely he didn’t want to deal with the problem. Better to cover up the situation, cover up, and cover the VA’s while vets die.

WHO SAYS WE’VE GROWN UP

America’s Great Satans

Last October 6th, armed agents of the U.S. Treasury Department raided the office of a travel agent in Winston, Connecticut. They confiscated some of his records and $200,000 from one of his bank accounts. A spectacular drug bust, you think? A travel agent busting his connections to bring cocaine in from Columbia? Well, no. It was nothing so spectacular.

The travel agent involved is Lani Eric Lindblad of Lindblad travel—an agent highly respected by his peers in the travel business. He was even voted to the Travel Hall of Fame by the American Society of Travel Agents. So what was this elderly gentleman’s crime? He did his job, and he arranged tours to Cambodia and Vietnam. The justification the Treasury Department used to go after Lindblad was the “Trading with the Enemy Act.” Damn! I thought the Vietnam War was over. This is bad news for a lot of stressed-out vets. I know they’ve been trying to re-write what happened in Vietnam. Maybe next they’re gonna
OBITUARIES
FOUR MORE CASUALTIES

VVAV lost three long time activists-out friends and fellow fighters.
Mike Cornmoldly, one of the founders of the Kent State, Ohio, VVAV
Chapter, died of cancer this year. He
moved to Chicago in the "70s and
going on, more and more person
and politically. During Washington's
first mayoral campaign, Mike was
working in Bridgetor. He sat in a bar
wearing a "Irish for Washington" T-
shirt. After a drink or three someone
hit him in the head with a bottle from
the table. He took out anotherigger lover." Mike
turned on ... the stool, looked to
his assitant in the face and said, "If that's
your best shot, you're in trouble." The
asshole left. Mike played his cards well—he was blind for 15 more minutes and
he'd only guessed where his
enemies face was.
His death appears to be tied to
Dioxin poisoning from Agent Orange.
David Stroup, former President of the
APWU local and member of VVAV
died after more than a year's illness. A
former Lieutenant with the Ist Infantry
Division, he won the Distinguished
Service Cross. He was proud to have
voted for Jackson and prouder still that he
got some of his "highbelies"
relatives to do the same. Even after
he could no longer walk, he returned to
the post office and wheeled around the
workroom saying, "I always wanted
to say this, "Want to make a dng man
real happy?!"

Wayne Field's execution by the state of
Louisiana ended a 10 year
involvement by VVAV to have his
sentence commute because of Post
Traumatic Stress Disorder.
In 1978, Wayne tried to kill himself.
Police became involved and a ricochet
hit and killed an officer.
His last statement before execution:
"You and kill the messenger, but you
can't kill the message [of what the
Vietnam war did to its vets]. Someday
you will all have to recognize
this problem for what it is, not for what
you want it to be."

Harold Davis, 66, veteran of World
War II Navy and Korean Air Force,
died on December 7, 1988 of
complications from a kidney transplant.
Harold will be missed. He was one of
the eldest active members of VVAV
in Milwaukee. Despite living with the
pain of diabetes and other complications from a kidney transplant,
he was active. He camped on the mall
and marched and leafletted with VVAV
at Dewey Canyon IV, did outreach to
all our activities, helped out at the VA
hospital. We say him at every camp
out at the Otts. His life was immersed
in music and art. As a young man, he
was a vocalist in various bands, and
later in life, he was an artist.

Brother Mike, we will remember you
for the early work in forming VVAV,
for your work for Harold in Bridgetor,
for a United Ireland and for your
friendship.

Brother Dave, you could make even
Scrooge laugh, drink us all under the
table and appreciate living. You served
Jesus, the working class and your family
well.

Brother Wayne, we should have done
more but you kept fighting and
educating even from your jailcell.

Their memory lives in our struggle.

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

Enemies
Libya and Nicaragua. This is all a way
to have a giant public masturbation
without having to pull their pants
down. And the preacher says it's okay.
And they're proud of themselves.
Damn the innocent people who get
cought in the middle. They've found a
real, live, big, bad Enemy.

I have to say a word about poor
Libya. Now, the dude who runs Libya
is not wrapped too tight. And I'm sure
he's involved in some things—maybe
many things—that are not very nice.
But play the poor Libyan people.
They've become punching bags fro the
United States whenever something goes
wrong.

The U.S. never proves anything on
Libya. There are a lot of charges, but
no proof. Remember the Libyan
assassination team roaming around
America a couple of years ago? What
happened to them? The U.S. never
proved it was Libya that did the Disco
bombing in Germany, or anything else.
But we shoot their planes out of the
sky and bomb their country. That's
because our Ayatollahs need to
maturbate once in awhile.

Libya shows how the Ayatollahs are
simple bullies as well as fanatics. They
pick on Libya because Libya is a
hassled, out-of-the-way place. If they
attacked some of the other countries
who play terrorist games, there might
be a major war or a shortage of oil.
So, they take it out on the poor
Libyans.

Our Ayatollahs like to use the word
"conservative" to describe themselves,
but they're not even that. The trials of
Oliver North serves as an example of
this fanaticism that goes beyond old-
time conservatism. The old
conservative may have stood in the way
of progress and used too narrow
interpretations of the Constitution, but
he upheld the law. The new breed gets
self-righteous and asks, "Since when do
you prosecute a man for fighting
Communism?" They feel that the laws
are theirs to break. And the coverup
gets on, and they won't release
anyone in the name of National Security! Give us a break— it isn't
national security but cover-your-ass.

What so much of U.S. foreign
policy is dictated by the military and
confrontational desires of our right-
wing fanatics, during the 1970s, the
1980s, and most of the 1990s because
economic growth has slowed in
developing countries, and spending on
social services has decreased. And while
can't stop spending, much more of
the dollars of U.S. aid to foreign
countries are going there as security
assistance (military and police) rather
than needed developmental aid. Or to
put it another way, here's a quote from
an editorial in the Washington Times,
"A mouthpiece of the new Ayatollahs."
"Any aid directed at overthrowing
communism is humanitarian aid. And

so, while the bloodlust appetites of our
Ayatollahs are satisfied, things become
worse for people around the world as
well as at home.

There are economic and political
reasons why countries go to war or
promote wars among their allies. These
reasons may always be with us. But
sometimes wars are started or
promoted by fanatics. The recent Iran-
Iraq War seems like one. These kinds of
wars are the saddest kind because they
involve weapons, weapons because
economic growth has slowed in
developing countries, and spending on
social services has decreased. And while
can't stop spending, much more of
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"Any aid directed at overthrowing
communism is humanitarian aid. And

Wayne Robert
Felde
OBservations IN Guatemala

Massacres, Poverty and Dow

by Evan B. Douthit

[Evon Douthit, a VVAW member in Chicago and editor of Central America News Update, recently spent ten days in Guatemala. The following are his impressions.]

The first impression one has when flying into Guatemala City is how familiar everything seems. I had not expected to find Guatemala City to be "American." I found out soon enough that this was one-sided. Once away from the more modern, built-up sections of Guatemala City, one could see the differences between the city and the countryside, between the rich part of the city and the poor areas, between the Indian and non-Indian populations. (50% of the populations is make up of Mayan Indians.)

Four out of five Guatemalans live in poverty, or extreme poverty, according to UN figures. Three out of five cannot read. Two out of five are unemployed or underemployed. The infant mortality rate is one of the highest in Latin America. 75% of the land is owned by 10% of the farmers while 60% of peasant families lack any land at all. The country is deep in a terrible economic crisis caused by the world collapse of commodity prices and heavy foreign debt.

We saw results of this crisis and desperation as we drove along the roads. Small peasant plots were being pushed up mountain slopes, almost up cliffs, in an attempt to grow corn, so that peasants might be able to buy something to eat, in reckless disregard for the environmental consequences. Signs of deforestation could be seen almost everywhere. (One ultra-rightist analyst even admitted to us that parts of the east near the Atlantic coast have been turned into desert.)

An article in the Mexican press recently told how peasants have been fined hundreds of dollars for cutting wood for their cooking fires while the army often burns down entire mountains and dumps large amounts of herbicides on the forests in pursuit of guerrillas. Meanwhile, industrial loggers often destroy entire forests of immature trees which had been left as a natural stand of mature, marketable wood.

Everywhere we went there were soldiers, often teenagers, carrying galling assault rifles. The guerrilla war in Guatemala is heating up again. The army says they won the war, but they are wasting the US military aid. One million peasants are forced by the army to take part in "civil self-defense" patrols. Peasant organizers told us that the peasants want out of the patrols, because they cannot afford to lose so much time from trying to earn money. But when they try to stop patrolling they are threatened by the army. People still remember the genocide of the early years of the eighties, when 800 villages were wiped off the map by the army, and tens of thousands killed.

Since 1980 some 100,000 Guatemalans have been killed and 35,000 displaced. 40,000 Indians took refuge in camps in Mexico escape. The guerrillas say there can be no military solution to the problems of Guatemala, and have called again and again for negotiations, and in 1987 they met with the government in Madrid, and recently they met in Cost Rica with the National Reconciliation Commission. But the army has ordered the government to break off talks, and pointed out that whenever Americans came to visit people in his position that it helps to protest such people. "Report an arrest going on everywhere that you have come here," Father Giron told us in perfect English, which he learned while studying in the US in the 60's. He worked with Dr. Martin Luther King then and had been deeply moved and inspired by King's non-violence and civil disobedience.

The next day we drove down to the ocean and passed thousands of cotton workers walking to work. Simply looking at the migrants we understood why a government official told several of our group that they would like to get rid of the cotton plantations "since they only bring misery." Among the workers were hundreds of children. There was no doubt in my mind that they were not going with their parents into the field just to keep them company, that it was just another manifestation of the child labor that we saw everywhere.

Guatemala City, as noted, at first seemed to be very American. The streets are crowded with vehicles, including diesel buses producing some of the worst pollution I had ever seen. Half a mile from our hotel in downtown there was a ravine. In this ravine was a shanty town where thousands lived in shacks. Even in the downtown area one would occasionally pass homes thrown together out of scrap wood and metal by squatters.

We visited one of the "colonias" on the outskirts later on. It was one of the better colonias. It had water available, and people had some electricity. There, packed in, thousands lived in shacks with dirt floors and tried to survive. There was a small school built by the residents, which was supposed to serve thousands of school age children. At the local "church" the community organizer told us some of their needs: clean water, playground, children's library, and a planning so that single women unable to afford even the most basic housing would not have to try to support that of more children. The government was nowhere to be seen in this barrio.

We visited the Petrofrito factory, which was nothing but a barracks on the outskirts. At one point by striking workers. The company had refused to negotiate, and since then we learned that the strike had been declared "illegal" by the government, which strikers of the even the little protection they have under the law. As we walked through the factory we say bags of vinyl from DOW, Union Carbide and EXXON.

We also visited Nineth de Garcia Montenegro, the leader of the Mutual Support Group, GAM. Her husband, a trade union organizer, was

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HOW ABOUT YOU?

Chomsy & Cockburn use it and like it...

VVAW, Pledge of Resistance & The Mao recommends...

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IN ANOTHER "VIETNAM"
AGENT ORANGE

By Barry Roma

With much fanfare, Vietnam veterans and their families in 1984 supposedly won $180 million in compensation from the six chemical companies who produced Agent Orange, the poisonous defoliant, for military use in Vietnam. More than 20,000 vets are affected. So far they have yet to see a penny, even though the pretrial settlement was the largest class action settlement at that time and was seen as tacit admission about the defoliant's dreadful human consequences. Only the lawyers have been paid—to the tune of $50 million.

Why the nearly four-year delay? One explanation for the official footdragging is that the military was afraid to use this poison again. According to the Feb. 25 Wisconsin State Journal, the Air Force announced on the day of the settlement that use of Agent Orange and other defoliants would not be affected by the chemical companies' concessions. Air Force Deputy Surgeon General Murphy A. Chesney said he "would be confident about using Agent Orange in another war." That not only was there nothing wrong in using dioxin-based chemicals in Vietnam, this suggests that defoliants have a great military future for operations in Central America. Last it be forgot: Agent Orange is one of the most deadly of all man-made chemicals. The side effects are spontaneous abortions, miscarriages, birth defects, cancer, liver damage and more. Agent Orange was not primarily a "weekender" used for jungle "deforestation." Rather its purpose was to destroy crops in guerrilla-controlled provinces. This denied "the enemy" food and forced the civilian population into government-controlled camps. I visited Vietnam last year and saw how Agent Orange continues taking a toll on ordinary people through rare cancers, birth defects and other diseases.

Most veterans here merely saw the Air Force statements as clap-trap evading responsibility for GI disabilities. Unfortunately, there seems to be a lot more to the story. Word is now reaching the U.S. from refugee camps in Mexico of aerial spraying in Guatemala. While the U.S. says it is destroying marijuana, the defoliation is taking place in zones with rebel activity and over the protests of Guatemala's congress. The Mexican newspaper Excelsior carries a June 24, 1987 Inforpressa report claiming U.S. aerial spraying in Guatemala killed 14 peasants and inflicted wide crop damage. Long one of the most brutal guerrilla wars in Central America, Guatemalan Indians must now apparently suffer chemical warfare as well as massacres. In El Salvador, too, the military is reported to be using chemicals killing crops and cattle in rebel-controlled areas, according to May, 1987 reports in Excelsior.

We know the carte blanche for covert wars was given to Reagan's CIA. Still even the thought that the president has resurrected the use of defoliants banned since Nixon is abhorrent.

The ratsches leading to deformed children are all too familiar to those of us acquainted with Agent Orange. An American Vietnam veteran with medical problems due to dioxin poisoning, the thought of any child dying or suffering defects because of its reintroduction in a "Second Vietnam" holds only shame for all Americans. Let's not worry so much about building pretty monuments to Vietnam veterans, but work to solve real problems and prevent new outrages in the potential Vietnams of the future. That would be the best monument of all.

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disappeared eight years ago. She organized the relatives of other disappeared into GAM to demand justice and an accounting. There were preparing a demonstration for that weekend to protest the massacre at Agua at and to demand that they be investigated and the real killers be punished.

The Guatemalan army security forces claim to be representing Western values and civilization in the fight against anarchy, but days before the army formally turned over power to Cerezo in January 1986, they passed a law giving all soldier amnesty from prosecution for any acts they had committed. There have been almost no prosecutions of human rights violations. And that is where the situation remains today. A powerless civilian government, an army and death squads that kill and disappear with impunity, a desperately poor and terrorized population, and a smoldering guerrilla war that threatens to engulf the entire country, while US corporations are everywhere.

Good News from Nicaragua!

Now the Canadian solidarity network can guarantee the prompt arrival from Toronto of the English language edition of Barricada Internacional, the FSLN bimonthly. Defend the Revolution! Break the information blockade with firsthand news from Nicaragua. Subscribe now! And encourage everyone you know to subscribe.

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AGENT ORANGE LAWSUIT

THIS SETTLEMENT WASN'T MADE FOR ME AND YOU

by John Lindquist
VVAV National Office

The longest struggle in VVAV history began in March, 1978—the battle for testing, treatment and compensation for those exposed to the chemical defoliants used by the U.S. government in Southeast Asia. We fought longer on the issue of the class-action lawsuit filed against the manufacturer of Agent Orange than we did to end the war in Vietnam. And, unlike the final victory in Vietnam, bringing our brothers and sisters home, we never did win the Agent Orange lawsuit. Even today we are still fighting against the continuous stream of new chemicals, and the just medical care and treatment for our affected children.

In March, 1978, the Maude DeVic-

tor story, "Deadly Fog" broke in Chi-
go. The Agent Orange story was pick-
ed up by veterans groups around the
country. VVAV and the National meet-
ing in Chicago in 1978 started our battle for testing, treatment and com-

pensation for Agent Orange victims. At the same time, Dr. Robert B. Reiner, was dying of cancer from exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. With the help of Victor Yanezco, a class ac-

tion lawsuit against the chemical com-

panies which manufactured the her-
bicide was filed in federal court. The

lawsuit and the exposure of Viet-

n

ans and the world about Agent Orange

formed the main thrust in organizing veterans to fight for testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange poisoning.

VVAV was one of the leaders in this

fight. 1978 saw demonstrations and
takeovers at VA offices and med-
cal centers demanding action and medical care for exposed veterans. In

1979 the organization joined with other groups which had already formed the
tional task force on Agent Orange.

Our main goal was organizing, nation-

al meeting, agitating and signing up as

many vets as possible for the class

action lawsuit against the chemical

companies.

While the early 1980s saw vets organiza-
tions popping up around the country to fight Agent Orange in Vietnam, a

A National Association of Concerned Veterans (NACV) protest in Missouri, a national convention, and finally, even the traditional veter-

ans organizations called for the govern-

ment to ban Agent Orange.

1982 saw VVAV once again occu-

pying land on the Mall in Washing-

ton, DC. "Operation Dewey Canyon IV" had 300 veterans from the four

corner states honoring 40,000 veterans around the country. Our day in court was coming and the veterans of America had gotten the whole world talking about Agent Orange. Just maybe—veterans, our children who were af-

ected and the Vietnamese would get some justice.

This brings us almost up to date.

During early 1984, a group of money-
hungry lawyers took control of the class-action suit by forcing Victor Yane-

zco out of the case. Thirty minutes before the start of the Agent Orange trial, an "out-of-court settlement" was reached. Even though over 85% of the veterans who gave testimony were against the settlement, the lawyers and the court rammed it down our throat. In 1988 the settlement was upheld by the Supreme Court.

Relevant portions of the letter from the
court follow:

"For the over 280,000 veterans who had already signed up for the 'Agent Orange' suit, you should have received in the mail from the court your certificate of enrollment along with cover letter. The $180 million is now $240 million and the court for distribution the settlement fund creates the first program. The Agent Orange Veteran Payment Program will distribute cash payments to certain disabled Vietnam veterans and to survivors of certain deceased Viet-

nam veterans. The second program, The Agent Orange Class Assistance Program, will use a portion of the settlement ($52 million) for the class members—that is, Vietnam veterans. To be eligible to receive the payment, you must have:

A Vietnam veteran who is long-
term disabled, or

A surviving spouse or dependent child of a deceased veteran Vietnam. In addition, to receive a payment, both veterans and survivors of Vietnam veterans must show that the veteran was ex-
posed to Agent Orange using an exposure test adopted by the court and must show that death or disability did not result from an accidental, trau-
matic or self-inflicted injury."

Whether you already filed a prelimin-
ary claim form or are signing up for the first time, you must submit an application for payment. Either detach and mail the lower portion of the cer-

ificate the court sent you or call 1-800-

225-4712 and they will mail you one.

"The goal of the payment program is to distribute these (tiny) funds quickly to those class members with the greatest needs."

The summary of the court's form letter continues with questions and answers.

Q: Who may apply for this pro-

gram?

A: Nam vets who were exposed to Agent Orange while serving in or near Vietnam at any time between January 1, 1962 and December 31, 1971, and who became totally disabled before their 60th birthday.

Q: Surviving spouses or dependent children of deceased Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange...

It is very important that if you are not a member of group described, please do not request an application for payment kit right now. Your coop-

eration will keep the administrative costs of the program down, and help ensure that your fellow veterans or their families will receive their pay-

ments as quickly as possible. You may request an application kit in the future if you become eligible before the pro-

gram ends on December 31, 1994.

Q: What kind of evidence must I submit to show that the veteran was exposed to Agent Orange?

A: To meet the courts test of ex-

posure, you will have to supply infor-

mation about the veterans activity locations and movements within Viet-

nam. You may submit other evidence of exposure if you wish. You will not be required to present evidence of exposure of the veteran. You will not be required to prove that the veteran's death or disability was caused by Agent Orange.

Q: How will payments be made under this program?

A: Veterans who are eligible to receive disability payments will receive payment for each year they are dis-

abled during the life of the program. The size of each payment will depend

on the number of eligible applicants, the age of the veteran, and the health of the veteran. The settlement is lacking in true compensa-

tion, it is restrictive with nothing awarded to children born with birth defects, and is practically a state secret. VVAV fought against this settlement along with thousands of other veterans.

NYC/NJ VVAV members give blankets and warm clothing to the homeless at the "Homeward Bound" encampment as part of the Veterans Day activities. Photo: Dennis Lund.

We will save the explanation of the actual text to be filled out on the next issue of THE VETERAN, but I would like to summarize a letter from Ashcraft and Geler about their loss of the suit.

"The Supreme Court, on June 30, 1988, denied petition for appeal. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the government contractors, which, the chemical companies were at the time of the suit, who made the Viet-

nam immune from suit when they manufac-

ture products for the government. The same government that betrayed us in Vietnam won't accept responsibility for the decision to use Agent Orange in Vietnam. It would have been too burdensome for the courts to accept such cases and too expensive for the government to pay compensation.

Because of these pragmatic reasons they have turned their backs on the Vietnam veterans. We are back to square one and must begin to fight the battle on another front.

"All deceased veterans families will be entitled to between $5,700 to $7,200. Second, all veterans who are now permanently and totally disabled based on the social security definition of total disability will be entitled to between $3,800 to $3,900."

History and the future will prove that Agent Orange caused countless human misery. Maybe action through Congress and a new government will know that having normal diplomatic relations with Vietnam—where research into Agent Orange continues in a country which has all the herbi-

cides—a must for veterans and their famil-

ies, for our country and the people of Vietnam. This would help further the fight for testing, treatment and compensa-

tion for Agent Orange victims.
AGENT ORANGE STILL KILLS

VAW Delegation Returns to Vietnam

From November 30 to December 8, a delegation representing the Vietnam Veterans Against the War went back to Vietnam. This is the second VVAW delegation to return in recent years. The group was made up of David Cline from Jersey City, NJ; Stanley Campbell from Rockford, IL; Greg Payton from East Orange, NJ; and John Zutz from Milwaukee, WI.

We met in Bangkok and from there we obtained our visas and flew to Hanoi, the capital of reunified Vietnam. During our five days there we met with heads of representatives of the 10-80 Committee (Agent Orange), Bach Mai Hospital, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Invalids and Social Affairs and the Vietnam-US Society. We also visited the War Museum, Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and the Hang Ma Circuit.

After this we flew to Ho Chi Minh City where we visited Tu Do Gynecological hospital, several orphanages, an industrial exhibit and attended a concert of Vietnamese traditional music. One day we drove to Cu Chi where we saw the tunnels and Tay Ninh where we met with a number of Vietnamese veterans.

Throughout the trip we pretty much did what we wanted when we had the time and got to see a lot of things and meet a lot of people we would have missed otherwise. We met people from various western embassies, business people and foreign teachers. In Hanoi, we talked with a team from the Joint Casualties Resolution Committee searching for MIA remains. In Ho Chi Minh City we talked with former ARVN and bar girls as well as numerous Americans.

While we were only in the country a short while, we felt we got a glimpse of Vietnam today—a much different place than we had seen before. We urge all Vietnam veterans to make this journey. And we hope that we will see the day soon when there is friendship and normalization of relation between our two countries.

by John Zutz
VAW Milwaukee

The Vietnam Veterans Against the War Delegation to Vietnam in December of 1988 found that some questions about the effects of Agent Orange and related chemicals used during the war are starting to be answered.

The Vietnamese, pursuing basic research on herbicides and dioxin, have developed statistical techniques for birth defects. They have also discovered why dioxin is toxic and how it causes dioxin. They have investigated the ecological effects on the forests, and possible recovery methods. The U.S. sometimes has waffled and fumbled over the simplest research, spending years arguing which questions to ask, and when the answers don’t please them, denying the results of their own research.

Tetrachlorodibenzo para Dioxin (TCDD), the most toxic known man-made chemical, is one of a family of over 80 related chemicals called “dioxins.” It is the inevitable by-product of the production of chlorinated

David Cline, Greg Payton, Stanley Campbell, John Zutz and Mr. Quat.

photonls which were widely used by the U.S. and our allies in Vietnam to kill food crops and other vegetation. The herbicides, known as Agent Orange and Agent Perpetual, were made from chlorinated phenols, and contained dioxin. Millions of gallons of these herbicides were sprayed over Vietnam. Accordingly, the Vietnamese have the largest known amount of dioxin in their environment, many times more than Seveso, Italy, where an industrial accident spread more than a pound of dioxin over the city with devastating results.

The recent VVAW delegation to Vietnam learned directly from researcher Dr Nguyen Van Tri how he used electro-magnetic resonance to detect dioxin in blood, fat, and liver tissue. He then showed how the symmetrical structure of TCDD acted to resonate the magnetic fields generated by its free electrons. He explained that when the magnetic fields resonated, they actually amplified each other causing the molecule to be attracted to iron atoms, particularly in hemoglobin. The dioxin deforms the molecules preventing them from functioning. Hemoglobin carries oxygen throughout the body; if it can’t perform this function, the body dies.

In the U.S., the National Cancer Institute (NCI) found that 2-4D causes cancer in Kansas farmers, when their findings were questioned by the EPA, they reconfirmed their study. 2-4D composed 50% of Agent Orange; the other half was 2,4,5-T which has been effectively banned in the U.S. for causing birth defects. No action has followed the NCI studies.

In Hanoi a recent publication by the National Committee for Investigation of the Consequences of Chemicals used in the Vietnam War (the “10-80 Committee”) details the results of 26 separate research programs. The Vietnamese had to use relatively limited resources and primitive equipment to gain their results. For some U.S. scientists, the first reaction is to question the data—it comes from a Communist country, you know. But those who do should have their own scientific credibility questioned. All data is questionable; but, until you do research to disprove it, it must be accepted.

The Long-Term Effects of Herbicides and Detractors Used in the Vietnam War, the 10-80 Committee publication, includes studies of:

-4,064 couples in the North with 154,062 pregnancies and 140,497 live births, which divides the couples into two groups: one in which both parties stayed in the North, and the other where the husband served in the South.

The second group had higher rates of spontaneous abortion and higher rates of birth defects.

-1,339 women, some from the North and some from the South showing higher rates of spontaneous abortions and still births in the group from the South.

-Monstros birth defects to children of men who had served in the South, some of which have never been described in world medical literature. Comparisons between those defects and those caused by Thalidomide, and those caused by Dioxin in experimental animals (Thalidomide has been shown to cause birth defects if taken by the male as well as by the female).

-Environmental effects of herbicides on various types of forests and soils, and methods of reforestation.

-Degradation of Dioxin.

-Measures to overcome consequences of toxic chemicals used in the war.
TOUR REPORT
"It's time to recognize that...Vietnam's problems are caused by us."

by John Zatz
VVAW Milwaukee

The recent "Friendship Tour" made by four VVAW members must be judged a success. In fact, if asked to describe the trip in one word, "friendly" would have to be the word. The people were very friendly until they found out we were Americans—then, they were in love with us.

Though only in Vietnam a little over a week, we saw and met a wide variety of people and encountered many new aspects of the country. We learned more about the country in a week than we had in a year on our first trip. Of course, we were discouraged from associating with the natives on our first trip.

We spent five days in Hanoi and three in Ho Chi Minh City. They are like two different worlds. The people of Hanoi still seem very naive, unspoiled, spontaneous, with very high morale. The city is very colonial both in architecture and in attitude. Almost all foreigners work in embassies.

Ho Chi Minh City is much more cosmopolitan in attitude and architecture. But, the population was less joyless exhibiting a defeated outlook. Everything was measured by the watershed of 1975; there were many homeless and jobless.

Wherever we went we were curiosities. In the North, people would spontaneously break out laughing as they passed us on the street. In the South, if we stood still for three minutes there would be a crowd gathered around us five deep. They would all be gazing up at us with their mouths hanging open. Hundreds would gather to stare if we stopped in a cafe for a cold drink.

While there, we met government representatives, Amerasian children and their mothers, workers, teachers, education camps, and hundreds of ordinary people. We also met a number of other Americans and Europeans, particularly in Hanoi. The Russians and East Germans were numerous in Ho Chi Minh City.

Vietnam was changing. Our initial reactions were confirmed by Mr. Dung Nghiem Bai, head of the North American Desk of the Foreign Ministry (equivalent to a Deputy Secretary of State). They are changing from the strictly controlled socialist economy to what he called a 'market economy.' The government will no longer attempt to control prices. This allows merchants to set their own prices according to the market; effectively, it eliminates the black market, a longstanding problem for Vietnam. And it sounds much like capitalism. Local goods seemed to be readily available in one or the other of thousands of stands in hundreds of marketplaces, if you had the cash. Imported goods were harder to find but were available— we bought Marlboros in Ho Chi Minh City.

Services are also a matter of having the cash. Cyclos, three-wheel cycles which act as taxis, staked out the hotels and embassies hoping for a foreign fare. Restaurants and cafes were frequent and by U.S. standards, very inexpensive; some had women available. Every corner had someone who would fix your flat bicycle tire.

The Vietnamese have made strides technologically. They have determined why dioxin is toxic. They are doing gene-splicing experiments. They are building dams and irrigation projects. A nuclear reactor left by the U.S. is being brought on line.

At the same time there is great need for health facilities and medicines. Much of the technological work is done with primitive equipment and methods due to lack of foreign exchange.

There is no doubt that Vietnam is one of the poorest countries in the world. Mr. Xuan Oanh of the Vietnam-U.S. Friendship Society told us that living conditions are crowded, sanitation is primitive at best, unemployment is increasing, transportation is unreliable, population is growing, and the government is stagnant and unable to address these problems. He told us that though the government has changed recently, it must become more responsive to the needs of the people.

Our government also has contributed to their problems. The massive destruction caused by the war has been largely repaired, but the cost must have been enormous. Our current shilling of the Vietnamese government includes actively discouraging other countries from trading with them. Though they recently changed their investment laws so that a foreign investor retains 100% ownership of his company, our lobbying keeps many possible investors away.

The Vietnamese have come a long way in an attempt to get closer to us, to meet many of the conditions set forth by the U.S. government for improved relations. The Vietnamese are withdrawing their troops from Kampuchea-troops will be out completely this year whether there is a political settlement or not.

The Vietnamese are cooperating with our request for the return of MIA's. We talked to the search team in Hanoi. Shortly after we returned home, over 300 bodies were returned with the search team. One of the most obvious signs of change is the fact that the Vietnamese are teaching their children English; we were told that the Russian language fences were switching to English since there is no demand for Russian. Everyone wants to learn English.

It is time to recognize that many of Vietnam's problems are caused by us. It is time to begin at least limited humanitarian aid. It is time to normalize relations.

by David Cline
East Coast Coordinator
VVAW

December 20, 1967 was my last battle. That night I received a gunshot wound that got me med-evac out of Vietnam. On New Years Day, I found myself on a plane headed for Japan and all I could think was "Goodbye, Vietnam, this is the last time you'll ever see my ass."

But 21 years later, almost to the day, I was back in Naha. Only this time I wasn't part of a military operation, instead I was part of a veterans delegation for recognition and friendship. For me the trip was important personally as well as politically. Personally I wanted to go back and come to terms with those who I had fought against. Politically I hoped to play a part in getting our country to face up to its responsibility for the war and its after effects.

Greg Payton and Dave

Since 1975, Vietnam has been virtually ignored in America. Before that it was nightly news. Then it became a place that politicians could denounced to prove that ours was a "noble cause." In this barrage of rhetoric, the people were forgotten. But for myself and many others, Vietnam could not be forgotten.

In preparing for the trip, I had heard that we would receive a friendly welcome and would encounter little hostility. But as our flight approached the Hanoi Airport, I began to feel tense. Here we were flying right into Ho Chi Minh's headquarters. As the plane came in for a landing, the site of bomb craters and the end of the runway didn't help to reassure me.

But once we stepped off the plane, I found the people seemed glad that American veterans were coming back to their country. Throughout our stay there, we talked to people from different walks of life—government officials, directors of hospitals, soldiers, workers, people on the street. Surprisingly, many people spoke a little
 WAS OUR WAR THEY PAID THE PRICE

"OUR LEGACY" AMERASIAN KIDS

by Greg Payton
VWAV New York

One of my primary purposes in going to Vietnam was to investigate the situation of Amerasian children. Having seen several while American children on TV talk shows and in newspapers, I was concerned about what life might be like for Black Amerasians in an oriental country. And, honestly not knowing whether I might have left a child in Vietnam, I felt I might act as some kind of liaison between the children and a U.S. government agency.

Upon landing at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Ho Chi Minh City, I was terribly excited about returning to South Vietnam. As we were waiting for our baggage, I looked over my shoulder and there stood a Black kid who looked like any number of boys who might pal around with my own teenager son. I was in complete shock. This young man didn't seem to have any strong oriental features. I tried to observe him further but he disappeared into the crowd.

After we got settled in the Vietnamese government guest house, I went on a short walking tour of the area. Several blocks away in a small park across from the Ho Chi Minh City Main Post Office, I encountered a group of American kids, all of whom I recognized. Apparently this was a gathering place for them. As I approached, I could see the faces of the Black kids light up. One attractive young lady pointed to me and said, "Number One!" It was in this park that I met two Vietnamese women "mamans," who act as surrogate mothers for these children, many of whom are homeless and orphaned. A strange feeling came over me along with a feeling of guilt: I had some memories of being a street kid myself, raised without knowing my own father.

Returning to the park the following day, I was able to meet and talk with both Black and white children through an interpreter, who translated from their faces they were glad to talk to an American. They were very friendly and interested in the U.S. Some wanted to continue their educations in the U.S. (high education being difficult in Vietnam) and many talked of improving living conditions in Vietnam. I was surprised that many had basic information about their fathers. Most knew the names and area of the country where their dads had been.

I promised a group of five young people that I would take them to dinner that evening. When I returned, I was surprised to find about twenty kids in the park. The "mamans" knew I couldn't afford to take all these people to dinner. But the young people got together and asked if I could take this one kid, Nguyen Van Hai, because he was homeless and really needed help. That moved me deeply.

When I returned to Bankok, Thailand, I met with Mr. Randall Rice, who is affiliated with the IndoChinesse Refugee Center. He informed me that over 500,000 people want to emigrate from Vietnam but because of political red tape, only 100 per month are processed and 50 actually leave. Mr. Rice suggested that I contact refugee agencies in the U.S. and try to help from that vantage point. Below is a list of some of the children I met and a list of agencies that may be useful in helping them.

Amerasian Children
Leslie Floyd
Nguyen Van Dung
Nguyen Thanh Binh
Nguyen Thanh Tung (born 1968)
Nguyen Van Hai
Tran Huu Hung (born 1967)
Duong Hoan Vu (born 1968)
Nguyen Thi Ruong (born 1972)
Tu Thi Kim Anh (born 1976)
Pham T. H. Loan (born 1970)
Le Minh Hieu (born 1972)
Nguyen Thi Kim Lien (born 1968)
Duong Thi Ly (born 1970)
Thach Thi My Lan (born 1976)
Le Van Hoang (born 1971)
Duong Thanh Nhan (born 1970)
Nguyen Thi Xinh (born 1970)
Phan Thi My Loan (born 1971)
Nguyen Thi Trac (born 1967)
Nguyen Thi Minh Thu (born 1967)
Huyi Thi Thy

U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES
American Council for Nationalities Service (ACNS)
Buddhist Church for Refugee Rescue and Resettlement (BC)
Church World Service (CWS)
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)
United States Catholic Conference (USCC)
World Relief Service (WRRS)

the Ministry of Invalids and Social Affairs (their Veteran Administration) we were told that the consequences of the war were:

- 152 million dead or invalid.
- 15 million civilian handicapped.
- 2 million affected by Agent Orange.
- 1.2 million orphans.
- 400,000 ARVN invalids.
- 300,000 Vietnamese MIAs.

At Bach Mai Hospital, a central training facility for their national health care system, the director told us how it had been bombed three times during the war. As we toured the wards, we were shown equipment that had been donated by various governments. The American government had not helped at all, the only reminder of anything from the U.S. was the monument in front with the names of the 28 people who were killed in the bombings.

Official U.S. policy is that there will be no relations with Vietnam, until the American MIAs are accounted for and Vietnamese troops leave Kampuchea (Cambodia). While we were in
"RETURNING TO VIETNAM WAS A JOYFUL EXPERIENCE"

by Stanley Campbell

VVAV
Rockford, IL

I first went to Vietnam in 1979 thinking this would be a noble cause, but I return knowing it was a horrible mistake. I remember serving with the best group of men and women our country had to offer. I’m glad I went. I am glad I served in Vietnam because I learned to hate war. So I am very happy to return to Vietnam, to lay some ghosts to rest, to work for the rescue of my country’s remains, and to seek reconciliation, if not between our two countries, then perhaps, between the people who actually did the fighting.

Returning to Vietnam was a joyful experience, for this is where I learned to live peace, to rejoice in the humanity of all, and to begin seriously questioning my government’s foreign policy.

Our country dumped more bombs on Vietnam than on any other country, so I was really surprised when people greeted us with joy and laughter when we told them, “No, we are not Russians, we are Americans.” And when they discovered that we were veterans, they quickly ran to get something to say to us—something better than English, sat us down, and peppered us with questions:

“What do you think of our country?”

“Why are you here?”

“Will more of you visit?”

The days were full of meetings and site seeing, but we had plenty of time to ourselves. House in government guest houses, we soon found English speaking cyclo drivers (bicycles with bag seats) who took us on unescorted tours. The beauty of the countryside—the green beyond any green—left impressions on me. The poverty is appalling, especially in the south. Former ARVN (South Vietnamese Army Veterans) are not treated well, and there is a general malaise on the economy. “We learned the hard way that you cannot disobey the law of the market,” said Foreign Minister Dang Ngiem Bai, director of the American Department. “You cannot build socialism while people are walking around without pants.” “We tried to build a country the same way we fought the war. We won the war, but lost the economy.” The government cannot forever subsidize businesses that lose money. We lost 80% through subsidies; now, with a quasi-market economy, we only lose 20%.” Hard words, but you wonder if the government will respond to the challenge. The Vietnamese economy sucks. Everyone knows it. The remarkable thing, everyone has an opinion. Hard-liners say the Vietnamese people can reconstruct the country themselves, with the help of our friends. “Our friends” does not include the U.S.

The head of the VN-US Friendship Society, was blant when he said “We have had to fire heroes of the revolution from economic positions because they could not run the country.”

Outdoors, I shopped. I loved the markets, and the prices were amazingly low. The market place has had a boost from the government’s new “hands-off” (comparatively)-lots of people buy in bulk and sell on the street. Cafes open as houses over-turned on a street corner, the patrons sitting at the sludge called coffee, purchasing tobacco by the cigarette or by the “bowl” for their individual “bongs”. Marijuana is cheaper than tobacco and we caught a whirl of the illegal memory down some of these back streets.

I bought a pair of scissors that were cut, themselves, by and pounded into shape: primitive hand-made scissors! They had drop-forged stainless steel scissors at government shops (at high prices—no more subsidy). People will set up shop selling anything! and they seem to locate themselves in “districts”: One street dedicated to shoes, the next stocked with larger items: furniture, televisions (assembled in Vietnam for Japan), but, in Hanoi, it was spartan living.

Ho Chi Minh City is more a tourist town. The climate and the people are warmer (all Vietnam is friendly). Bars are more prevalent, but Hanoi is more quiet. It is beginning to swing—with a disco, some dancing, western dress (coming from the south?), and even bar girls. Just for the sake of investigating decadence in the capital of Marxism-Leninism we allowed ourselves to be taken, and we were thirty bucks for a short time with h-girls, American coke, and Asian rock and roll at the “Cafe Madeleine”, our hosts: the cyclo drivers!

You can see a worn, almost desperate, Saigon. We ate well: five course meals for six people for ten bucks. But there were beggars on many streets, and the streets closed up after eleven pm, leaving it to the many homeless men, women and children. We were approached many times with appeals for help, and sometimes with appeals to “help me leave.”

Vietnam is going to get a good dose of capitalism. While I was eating dinner at the Cuban-built Liberty Hotel a swarm of 25 Japanese businessmen descended on the place. The American embassy official we spoke with in Bangkok, Thailand, said the U.S. was having a fit keeping Australia and Japan from buying up Vietnam. Lumber, shrimp farms, tourism, cheap labor, and undeveloped natural resources make Vietnam a dream for venture capital.

If anything can bring Vietnam and the United States together, it will be the chance to make a buck!"
Where We Came From, Who Are We, Who Can Join
VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR began in 1967 when veterans of the Vietnam war took up the cause of ending that war. Since then, VVAV has continued to fight against unjust wars and military adventures, and for the rights and needs of veterans. Today, VVAV stands firmly for peace and for social justice at home and around the world.

As the oldest organization based primarily among Vietnam vets, VVAV confronted the problems of post-traumatic stress among veterans early in our history; we took up the cause of testing, treatment, and compensation for victims of Agent Orange poisoning, and still are fighting that battle which has grown to include use of dioxins around the country. We continue to believe in the rights of veterans of all eras to be treated with respect and dignity, especially by the government and Veterans Administration.

Although based on Vietnam veterans, membership in VVAV has expanded to include veterans and friends of veterans from all eras, all of whom bring their own ideas and perspectives to the organization. As the time of the Vietnam war recedes into history, VVAV members try to keep alive the lessons from that war. We share with others the hope that our children—and any of America's young—will never again have to fight a war such as the one we fought, and that the lives of our friends who died in Vietnam will serve to make another such venture more difficult. To that cause VVAV stands dedicated.

VVAV is a national veterans organization; donations are tax-deductible.

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The Last Vietnam?
The Philippines

that their upper class status and European education did not provide them with social and economic equality with the Spanish. In 1896, the central intellectual leader of the insurrection, Jose Rizal, was executed by the Spanish, and the revolution became a military campaign. By 1899, the Spanish had been driven by the Filipinos into the besieged city of Manila. Only the Spanish fleet prevented the fall of Manila.

Half a world away, historical forces conspired to thwart what might have been the emergence of an independent nation of the Philippines. The United States of America in its stated desire to bring independence to the people of Cuba entered with great enthusiasm into the Spanish-American war. Second only to Teddy Roosevelt's charge up San Juan Hill in that brief burst of American war-making tradition was Admiral Dewey's destruction of the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. For the Filipino people, the strategic situation changed. Instead of imperial Spain occupying besieged Manila, the Filipino insurgents faced U.S. military forces. The U.S. was regarded by many Filipino and American intellectuals as the birthplace of republican democracy in the Western world. Many of the better-educated among the Filipino forces must have felt a sense of optimism.

President William McKinley spoke for those who defined American foreign policy when it came to the "Philippine Question." He said: "When I think of the Filipinos I think of the United States of America, as the United States of America is a republic, as the United States of America is a democracy, as the United States of America is a nation..." So the Filipinos must think of themselves as part of the United States.

On February 4, 1899, the education and Christianization of the Philippines began. American gunboats were poised into Manila Bay, firing 500-pound shells into the Filipino trenches. According to Luzviminda Francisco..."...the American troops jokingly referred to it as a 'quail shoot' and said they had pulled so high that the Americans used the bodies for breastworks..." Given the hopeless inferiority of their enemy whom the Americans called 'niggers,' 'savages,' and 'barbarians,' the invading forces showed no tendency to display the least demonstration of humanity much less follow the rules of war. Ironically the American military had just culminated a similar war against the native American population who had likewise stood in the way of economic development.

The battered Filipino force remembering their hard fought victories over the Spanish mustered their courage and reorganized their revolutionary units into guerrilla bands. This effective retreatment and the almost universal support for the insurgents among the Filipino population led the Americans in a situation that they would face several decades later in Vietnam. The further the Americans were drawn from their areas of fortification and control, the more vulnerable they became to ambush, harassment, and "suicidal" military attacks by massed insurgent forces. The American military was "bogged down" in its first Asian war. Bloody, ruthless, and costly in Filipino life was the campaign to subdue the Philippines.

In the campaign, an American general observed, "It may be necessary to kill half of the Filipinos in order that the remaining half of the population may be advanced to a higher plane of life than their present semi-barbarous state affords." As a year passed, it became more evident that the enemy was not a "faction" of the Filipino people but the entire population. In early 1901, the entire population (51,000) of Marinduque Island was forced into concentration camps. The torture and slaughter of civilians was not an uncommon feature of the campaign. As General J. Franklin Bell said in late 1901, "All consideration and respect for the inhabitants of this place cease from the day I become commander. I have the force and the authority to do whatever seems to me good and especially to humiliate those in the Province who have any pride." Though the war was declared "over" by President Roosevelt in 1902, it really has not ended until this day. Estimates of the Filipino death toll by that date range from 600,000 by General Bell to 1,000,000 by contemporary Filipino historians. The uneasy peace gave the American government a false sense of security that they were now a significant actor in the Asian theater. It was assumed that military force could attain any U.S. strategic or economic objective in Asia. America's first Vietnam in the Philippines became the fatal saviour that so seriously cost the American people in Korea and Vietnam.

The Next Vietnam

The continuation of American domination in the Philippines is not one marked by fair play and democratic nation-building. The formula remained the same -- before and after the Japanese occupation -- duplicity, injustice, and sometimes murder, but always the old Spanish strategy. To retain foreign control of the Philippines, two classes of Filipinos are needed -- one small class loyal to the foreign controllers and one larger class serving the interests of both the other class and their foreign overlords. Oppression alone does not make a Vietnam-like military adventure. The other necessary element is an organized local opposition with a united ideological focus. During the Japanese occupation, the Hukbalahap came into being as the People's AntiJapanese Army. When the U.S. regained control of the islands, it did not hesitate to invest its trust in Japanese collaborators rather than risk providing any legitimacy to the Hukbalahap or even neutral elements in the Philippine government.

Despite a low intensity war waged against rebellious elements in the "independent" Philippines during the late 40's, 50's, and 60's, the U.S. came closest to losing its control through its partnership with Ferdinand Marcos.

Continued on Next Page

Source: U.S. Dept. of State, Background Notes: Philippines, August 1985
Two crises came to a head in 1972, one for the U.S. and one for Ferdinand Marcos. For the U.S., civil liberties guaranteed by the Philippine constitution had led to unforeseen consequences, including a growing opposition to the U.S. military bases in the Philippines and a readiness to use non-traditional barriers with Japan. For Marcos, the Philippine constitution forbade his election to a third term as president. The November election seemed to confirm the basis of Marcos's early economic miracles, we know that his more recent "economic miracles" are the object of federal indictments for which his only defense seems to be his flagging health.

Goals of this article. On February 25, 1986, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos left the Philippines.

Some time has passed. The World Bank has evaluated Mrs. Aquino's land reform policy as "fundamentally flawed." Human Rights Watch's Annual Report revealed that in 1988 the Philippines passed Columbia to become the number one nation in the world in disappearances and murders of human rights workers. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines which originally supported Aquino's election reports that 11,000 persons were arrested for political crimes in the Philippines in 1988. The top issue on Aquino's earlier political agenda was the struggle against poverty, embodied in the widow of the slain Aquino -- Corazon "Cory" Aquino.

As Raymond Bonner notes, "The Aquino assassination was ..., as great as it impact was in the Philippines, it did not, contrary to conventional wisdom, precipitate a fundamental change in the Reagan administration's pro-Marcos stand." What mattered according to Bonner's quotation from an unnamed senior State Department official is something else. "The Reagan administration didn't care. The assassination didn't cause him out because he was corrupt. They used him out because he lost control of the country." However, the mechanics of this may have been someone who could control (or, at least, appear to control) the Philippines. Bonner describes the events at the end of 1982 that projected Cory Aquino into the struggle for power in the Philippines. Before she advanced on Marcos, Aquino's political entity was created by a staff of U.S. supporters and advisors. Her whole campaign was tailored to the American audience long before it was distributed to its Filipino consumers. The crucial election that gave Aquino her source of legitimacy was carried out under U.S. spectacles. Filipino allies were not too difficult to obtain, but the complete charade that effected the departure of Marcos was a complex process that goes beyond the

Americans and the Soviet have each invested a nuclear commitment to containing the Pacific theater. No longer takes two to make a nuclear holocaust. The U.S. is unequivocally committed to contain the Soviet's nuclear hold on the Philippines. There was no such commitment or tradition in Vietnam. The U.S. will not give up the Philippines as long as it is Vietnam -- as if that were not cost enough. Those nuclear weapons in the Philippines, though originally deployed to disturb the Vietnamese, might just as well be turned on the "enemies" who are blessed with their protection. And the Filipinos know what is at stake there more than any other. These excerpts from a poem by Ruben Anin, an NPA guerrilla say it well.

Never shall you cease to serve
Future is longenirg arriving You must give yourself unto death openes us earth

Cracks we rockland death shall have no dominion

In 1950, the Spanish conquistador Ferdinand Magellan captured the imagination of would-be explorers and adventurers of many generations to come. Magellan was the first European to sail around the world. At least, he was the first European to leg an expedition that sailed around the world. Magellan himself didn't complete the voyage. There were two multi-color illustrations of Magellan in my fifth-grade history book. One showed the gallant explorer striking a majestic pose looking across the bow of his ship. The caption read "Magellan: The First Man to Circumnavigate the Globe." The other illustration showed Magellan face down in the mud in a jungle setting. Its caption read "Magellan: Killed by Savages in an Island in the South Pacific.

Magellan was killed by Chief Lapu-Lapu on the Philippine island of Mactan. It was after a battle since all. The event as recorded by the people of the Macon were later destroyed by their Spanish conquerors, we can't know now the Spaniards' account of the battle to measure up in the eyes of the Philippine inhabitants. (The Christian Spaniards destroyed all existing Filipino written documents on the basis that they were "pagan."). We only know that Western European culture's conquest of the world for God, glory, and gold came to an end for Magellan in the Philippines. Unless modern day conquerors grow in order by those of us who do grow and learn, and we of all humankind will join Magellan in his fate.


IMAGES OF OLONGAPO

For three and a half years, from 1984 to 1987, I lived in Olongapo City, the Philippines, on the U.S. Subic Naval Base and home of 12,160,000 hospitality women (prostitutes) and 3,000 U.S. street children. Some of my women and children became my friends and images of them and their lives stay with me even after a year back in the U.S.

I am in a bar that feels like home to me, the Hole in the Wall—a descriptive name if there ever was one. I am talking with some friends when Maria, the two-year-old who lives there, is brought downstairs. Maria's mother is one of the hospitality women who works in the bar. Everyone watches over Maria—the women and men who work in the bar, the vendors on the street, the sailors.

When someone plays a song on the juke box, everyone says, 'Dance maria, dance,' and she does, showing off as if she were two years-old. Maria dances and plays while sailors get drunk around her, while men and women pair off before leaving to have sex, while others return and sit together kissing and touching each other. Maria dances for the Americans in her bar, not for the sailor who looks like the father who no longer is in her life. Dances to 'We are the world'—Maria's face mergers in Gloria's.

Gloria, 12-year-old Gloria when she was selling plastic bags in the market in Olongapo. She lives across the river from Subic Naval Base in one of the 500 shanties built on Olongapo's garbage dump.

Gloria was working in the market every day to earn money to help her family survive. After our first meeting we exchanged friends and I looked for her each time I went to the market.

Then one night a year later, I saw her on the street leading from the main gate of the Subic Naval Base. She was wearing makeup and a frilly dress. She said she and her friends were looking for us because she was one of the American sailors who were on leave.

A few months later, another 12-year-old street child named Rose went up to me in a bar. She was wearing a fedora and a frilly dress. She said she and her friends were looking for us because she was one of the American sailors who were on leave.

The young American sailor comes off the ship. He has been on that aircraft carrier with 6,000 other men for three months. He walks through the gate and crosses the bridge leaving Subic Naval Base behind him. He is heading for Olongapo's strip—over 500 clubs and its estimated 15,000 "hospitality women" (prostitutes).

He sees himself as macho, entitled to whatever is powerful American dollar can buy—beer, a souvenir T-shirt, a women, the illusion of intimacy for a night for less than 15 American dollars. He has heard about Olongapo from the men who have been here before him. He has heard their stories of sexual prowess.

Even if he is scared, he thinks he can make his own memories of this place. He is over 10,000 miles from his home in the midwest, 10,000 miles from his head at the flag in his last bar fight, violence seems very close to the surface.

He says that now sometimes he feels like the real choice for him is between God and country, a choice he mostly tries not to think about. His illusions began to evaporate the day he left Vietnam and knew the villagers who had lived near his company might be killed as American sympathizers as
CONTINUED

TONKIN GULF

questions were beginning to form in my mind. Official statements said that our destroyers had not provoked the North Vietnamese in the Tonkin Gulf, but I knew otherwise, and it began to bother me.

Some days after all the action, the Ticonderoga had occasion to refuel and resupply the Maddox. During these operations, it was one of my duties to be on deck during the entire time themselves. As I stood there, I could hear someone shouting out my name from the deck of the Maddox. I looked across the expanse of the South China Sea, where two destroyers had separated out two ships, and I recognized a few of my former intelligence workmates from the Naval Security Group on Taiwan. Then it dawned on me what the Maddox had been doing off the coast of northern Vietnam—it was a Desoto patrol.

Desoto patrols in the Western Pacific had actually been going on since sometime in 1963, a couple had been sent out while I was on the USS George Washington Detachment in Taiwan, and, if I had not been removed from intelligence work for my political rights, perhaps I would have been sent on one. I have often thought that I might have been on the Maddox during its most infamous period.

The question was whether operations carried out by regular destroyers which were fitted with a temporary working space, an intelligence van (or "black box," right), could alter the political landscape. The additional intelligence personnel, Communications Technicians, were picked up from shore stations in the Western Pacific and carried on board for a couple of weeks while the ship would make certain maneuvers in an attempt to get some sort of reaction from enemy coastal installations. The personnel who worked in the intelligence van included people who were trained in the lan-

Continued from last page

Bases

soon as his unit was gone.

The older hostility women sits in her bar. Her illusions, too, have faded. An aircraft carrier has just left, now that the long, long time—no customers, no money. She has no illusions about fitting back into her family anymore. She is no longer as attractive as she once was, and now younger women are often chosen instead of her.

She has faced pictures of many men she has known, and carries memories of others in her head. Even now one American claims to have married her, but she is no longer so sure she wants to leave the Philippines. She knows women who have gone to the United States, to find a better life in the bars of Olongapo when their marriages failed.

Soon she will be too old to have the child she wants. She knows she is just one among thousands of hospitality women—really no different from any other.

Olongapo City, a city of illusions and pain. The lights flash and the music blares, the bars are open, and the couples each other on the street, sit in bars looking at each other, trying to choose the one that will make their illusions become reality. Each uses the other to ease the pain and to keep the illusions alive.

shipmates, trying to prod them into questioning more about its origins as I had. We had some informal debates about the bombing, its impact on the civilian population throughout Vietnam, the real reasons behind our involvement, and so on. I was not only a massive propaganda effort—I was neither that sophisticated or that brave. I merely tried to cause questions in the minds of my listeners. I was never so much among the people, I was never so much on the people. I was always trying to figure out what they were doing, how they could lead some to search for their own answers. By the time I was transferred from the Ticonderoga to my next duty station, I felt I had had some success with a few individuals, but I would never really know.

My final duty station was at Helicopt-

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REMEMBERING THE TONKIN GULF AND AFTER

by Joe Miller, VFW Chicago (Champaign, IL)

I share with many thousands of other veterans a dubious distinction: being of a Vietnam veteran who never saw Vietnam. That’s not quite right—in December 1962 our ship was once passed by 50,000 miles of coastal Vietnam coast at Cam Ranh Bay, with the land in clear view. We had to move in close, not for any military purpose, but to make it a little easier for the helicopters to bring Bob Hope’s Christmas Show troops out to U.S. Christmas in the tropics, 1965. Boy, it was war, and war sure was Hell!

We carrier-based sailors were recipients of the Vietnam Service Medal, combat pay (when the ship was operating in a designated "combat zone"), and the free mail privilege, along with any other documentation, that we threw at our mail to make us feel we were doing something worthwhile in that part of the world. Of course, some of those goodies would be thrown back by antiwar veterans who converted to Washington, D.C., in 1971. Most of us never learned, nor would we be directly involved in any sort of real combat. We thought it was rough when we had to stand twelve-hour watches during general quarters. Of course, we did lose ships and pilots, many unseen and many the result of stupid accidents due to the pressures of a war time level activity during an official “peace time.”

All in all, Vietnam was a very "clean" war, for most of us at least during this early period. The ship’s aircraft and pilots (A-4s, F8s, A3Bs) did all the dirty work. We did not see any explosions (from practice gunnery exercises), hear any screams, nor did we have to take any body count. If we were lucky, the CO would inform us each evening (just before the evening prayer—because we were doing God’s work) of the day’s "successes." I recall one evening when a couple of us rang through and our chief of the ship’s crew of some three thousand men, as the CO announced one particularly strategic dill-a-water buffalo.

When I enlisted in the U.S. Navy in April, 1961, Vietnam, as an issue, simply did not exist. In those days there were not many with visions of necessarily doing any part of the war effort—"this was our time." Our enemies were far away, behind "true" or "bamboo" curtains, and all most of us knew about them came through media images. My generation had been raised on the TV show "Navy Log,” "Victory at Sea," "Annapolis," or "West Point," not to mention those postwar Hollywood productions which always glorified war and military service and starred some "real" war heroes like Ronald Reagan and John Wayne. A so-called "draftee" was the man in these days simply looked like some sort of ramp. Surely, nothing would happen to any of us. Of course, all of us healthy, enthusiastic, young men had our military duty to perform in any case; all were required to serve at least six years, according to Selective Service rules of the day. No one really thought to question the situation, back then, so joining up was the thing to do, and I did, as an eighteen-year-old kid just out of high school. In many ways it was also an escape from a humdrum existence, a search for some sort of adventure.

Upon completion of basic training at Great Lakes, I was designated to work as a Communications Technician (CT) in the Naval Security Group, a military intelligence organization which reported directly to the ultra-secret national Security Agency (NSA). As part of my training, I was sent to the Army Language School in Monterey, California, to study Chinese-Mandarin. While I was there, Vietnam began to have a bit more relevance. We, who had to struggle with one to one-and-a-half years of language training, were appointed at the Green Berets and Rangers who were going through the school for six-week “quickie” courses in Vietnamese.

How much could they learn in six weeks, when we were barely able to carry on any sort of conversation after six months? Also, why was Vietnamese so important all of a sudden? Remember, this was now 1962, and who among us knew much of anything about Vietnam then?

I completed language training in 1963 and was sent to the island of Taiwan to work with the Naval Security Group Detachment at Linkau Air Station, about fifteen miles outside Taipei. Though I considered myself a "China specialist" and was mainly concerned with analysis of materials about both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (yes, Virginia, we also spied on our allies), we also received daily reports on troops and ship movements in and around Southeast Asia—Vietnam was still a "presence." One of the senior noncoms used to regale us with stories about having been shot at while working in a spy plane over northern Vietnam. That sort of possibility was new to many of us "greenies," since the running joke had been that in any sort of emergency the CTs would be evacuated even before the women and children. (Of course, later there would be the USS Liberty in 1967 and the USS Pueblo in 1968 to put that same point another way.)

Well, as it happened, about six months into my tour on Taiwan, I was pegged as a "security risk" due to my and forth between Japan and the Philippines and his daily drive over the coast of Vietnam (our planes flying spotting missions) once in awhile. Suddenly, Vietnam was "real," though still distant.

On August 2, 1964, the Ticonderoga received word that one of our task group’s destroyers, the USS Maddox, was under attack by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. Planes from our ship were already in the air, and they were sent to the convoy’s collection point. When the pilots had the "honor" of firing the first salvo in a new, naval side of what was fast becoming an American war against Vietnam. Two days later there were reports of another attack, this time against two U.S. destroyers, the Maddox and the Turner Joy. Once again, our planes, as well as those from other carriers, flew off to the rescue, just as John Wayne would have done.

Much of the Ticonderoga’s crew was frustrated and angry because the United States seemed to be letting the "goons" get away with these so-called "unprovoked" attacks. Keep in mind, there were no real U.S. casualties in these encounters, only those Vietnamese who had their boats shot out from under them. Tension was high. The Ticonderoga for we had been at sea for more than sixty days straight, the longest continuous sea period many of the younger guys had ever experienced. Mail deliveries were extremely slow or nonexistent, ship’s supplies, like fresh milk and soda pop, were low. We all wanted to see something done, anything.

On the 5th of August, President Johnson ordered retaliatory air strikes against North Vietnam. Well, you would have thought that everyone on that ship was a little bent zed to hit the "goons" and hit them hard. Then Johnson managed to push the Tonkin Gulf Resolution through Congress, and that opened the gates for further direct U.S. involvement. It had begun and we felt the release, not realizing or caring what the consequences might be for anyone. Later that same year, some of us would even vote for Barry Goldwater because he promised to end the "war" and Johnson would run again.

In the end, all of us felt a sense of letdown, not realizing or caring what the consequences might be for anyone. Later that same year, some of us would even vote for Barry Goldwater because he promised to end the "war" and Johnson would run again.

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