



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC

PO Box 355, Champaign, IL 61824-0355 (773) 569-3520

www.vvaw.org

vvaw@vvaw.org

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The first post-war VVAW delegation to Vietnam spent 10 days in country; it is much better to visit Vietnam as guests of the government of Vietnam than as invaders sent by the US government. Of course we all went with questions ... a fundamental question—how would we be received by people we once tried to kill, and who had once tried to kill us—was resolved almost immediately. We were in Vietnam as friends, and we were treated not only as friends but as honored guests.
— Pete Zastrow, Fall 1987 issue of *The Veteran*

Dear Friends,

VVAW has felt a connection to the people and the country of Vietnam ever since we came back and began the fight to end the US war. 50 years ago, in 1972, VVAW National Coordinator Barry Romo returned to Vietnam on a peace delegation to Hanoi that included Joan Baez. 35 years ago in 1987, a VVAW delegation spent over a week meeting with Vietnamese people and leaders. 31 years ago in 1991, six VVAW members went on a couples trip delegation with two main goals. First, to work towards normalization of relations between Vietnam and the US, secondly, to meet with vets organizations there.

In all these years, countless vets and VVAW members have gone back to the country we fought in, carrying messages of reconciliation, healing, and solidarity. Have you gone back? More than once? These days, the possibilities of traveling back are more limited for many of us. We would love to hear from those who have gone back. Share your memories and photos with us. Share on our FaceBook page at www.facebook.com/groups/vvawinc or email us at vvaw.org.

"The emotional trip involved in our ten days in Vietnam was longer than the physical trip, and that was long enough. I suspect that other vets should consider a similar trip. The Vietnamese welcomed us and asked us to arrange more such trips. There is a sense of completion: somehow, my tour of duty in Vietnam is now over. When I left after my year, I left behind friends who were still fighting the war. I left behind a sense of incompleteness, as if the final pages of the book I was reading had been torn out and I never knew the ending. The return to Vietnam was, for me, very much the end of my tour. Now I have seen what I did and what my government did to Vietnam. More importantly, I have seen that the Vietnamese have gone beyond all that and are able to welcome me back as a friend. I learned from them what it means to distinguish between the war and the warrior, between those who carried out the policies of the US government and those who made these policies. We came away from Vietnam with even greater respect for the Vietnamese people."

"You may remember—as I do—thinking, when I was in Vietnam the first time, what a beautiful country Vietnam was, and how nice it might be to come back someday when there was no war. For me that day had now come—I hope you get the chance and take it."— Pete Zastrow, Fall 1987 issue of *The Veteran*



The 1987 VVAW delegation with leaders of the Tam Tom Siep commune, south and east of Ho Chi Minh City.

We are working out the details of our next project, funding a Small Dream library in Vietnam. This is a great chance to bring some joy into our lives by helping the children and grandchildren of people we once wronged. We hope to raise \$20,000 to get this project started later in 2022 or early 2023. This amount of money may not seem like a lot, but in the remote war-torn, poverty-stricken areas every dollar goes a long way to making big improvements for the people of Vietnam. We want to start the fundraising now, so that once a site is located and all government entities sign off, we can begin construction as soon as possible

We are deeply thankful when our members and supporters make tax-deductible donations to VVAW's work, at whatever level. Your contributions to VVAW help us keep distributing *The Veteran*, to our members, friends, and supporters. Your donations also keep our website going, where we have every issue of VVAW's newspaper online as well as archives of many other articles, photos, and videos. Your donations allow us to make VVAW's legacy not only accessible to all through our website but also to archive them for generations to come. **Funds raised will also continue to support the Library of Vietnam Project.** We thank all of you for your continued support.

In solidarity,

William Branson

Bill Branson

VVAW Board member

I am sending Vietnam Veterans Against the War ☐\$35 ☐\$50 ☐\$100 ☐\$250 ☐\$500 ☐Other to support its work for peace, justice, and for decent benefits for all veterans. Donations to VVAW are tax deductible. You can also donate online at www.vvaw.org.

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