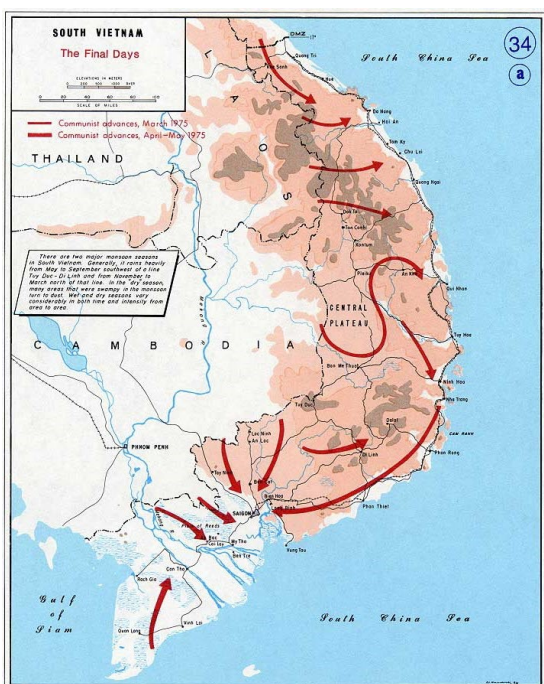
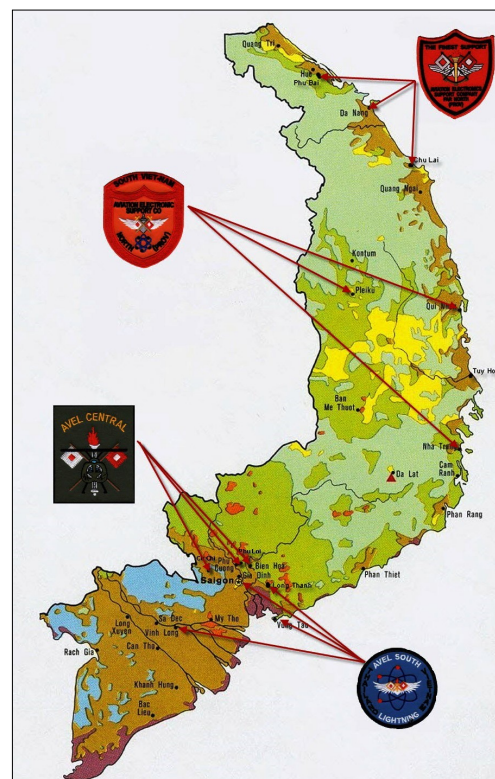


# FALL OF SAIGON 1975

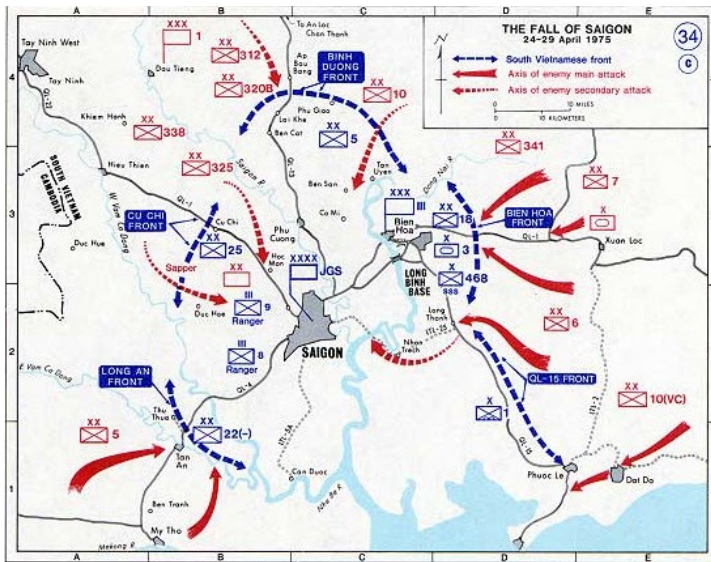
It is hard to believe that it has been 40 years since the fall of Saigon. I remember watching it on the black and white TV in my father's family room.

Following the Easter Offensive in 1972 the NVA was too weak to launch another full-scale offensive in 1973. But, Hanoi was aware that it could do so without the threat of American bombing. Smaller Viet Cong operations and sabotage continued, creating diversions and lowering morale in the ARVN. Through 1974, the North prepared itself for a final invasion of South Vietnam. In the US, Richard Nixon departed the White House, resigning in August 1974 as a result of the long-running Watergate scandal. The new president, Gerald Ford, went to Congress seeking \$1.45 billion in aid for South Vietnam, but was given only \$700 million. In December, Hanoi tested the new president's mettle by launching an attack in Phuoc Long province, in clear violation of the Paris treaty. Ford protested but took no military action. The path was now clear for North Vietnam to invade the South.



The final offensive began on March 10th 1975. Hanoi's military leadership expected the reunification of Vietnam to be a long and bitter struggle, lasting between one and two years. Instead, they were stunned by the rapid collapse of South Vietnam's military. Without US air support, ARVN divisions scatter and flee, or are quickly captured. Within a week, Saigon had surrendered two more northern provinces and thousands of ARVN soldiers had deserted. Sensing a rapid victory, Hanoi immediately expanded the offensive. By the end of March, both Hue and Da Nang had been captured and more than 100,000 ARVN had been taken prisoner. Over the next three weeks, several divisions of NVA and Viet Cong moved south towards Saigon.

On April 21st, an upset president Nguyen Van Thieu appeared on Saigon television to announce his resignation. He gave a long and disjointed speech, much of which was dedicated to lambasting the United States for its treachery and broken promises.



Thieu then fled to Taiwan, assisted by the CIA, while NVA tanks rumbled towards Saigon. By April 27th the city was surrounded and under fire from North Vietnamese rockets. There were thousands of ARVN in Saigon but they lacked orders and effective leadership. Two days later, the US began Operation Frequent Wind: the evacuation by helicopter of several thousand US and South Vietnamese military, diplomatic and civilian personnel. Fearing a communist massacre, thousands of Saigon residents rushed the US embassy, which was guarded by a few Marines. They too are airlifted out on the morning of April 30th. By midday, the NVA and Viet Cong controlled Saigon. The make-shift president, Duong Van Minh, surrendered. The war was over.

## NEW AVEL & AVIONICS VETERANS FOUND

None submitted

## TAPS

**Clyde Hooks (SSG)**

*Avel South, Tan Son Nhut*

**Died 9 March 2014**

Clyde attended the 2011 Reunion in Charleston.

Clyde was a 22 year Army veteran having served in the Korean War and Vietnam. Clyde retired from the Army in 1972 as a Sergeant First Class. He served in Vietnam with Avel South from Dec. 1966 to Nov. 1967. He also served tours with 98th Maint. Co., Qui Nhon and 62nd Maint. Bn., Pleiku.

**Billy Hill (SSG)**

*Avel South, Tan Son Nhut*

**Died 19 May 2014**

Billy died of congestive heart failure. He was a registered Avel veteran.

Billy was a career Army soldier and retired as a Sergeant First Class in May 1973. He served three tours in Vietnam. 1962-1963 as an Advisor, Avel South, 1966-1967 and 5th Transportation Company 1969-1970.

## PHOTOS

No photos submitted

## AVEL REUNION 2015 UPDATE

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If you wish to donate to the Reunion, you can send your check payable to **"AVEL Reunion"** to:

Russ Mason

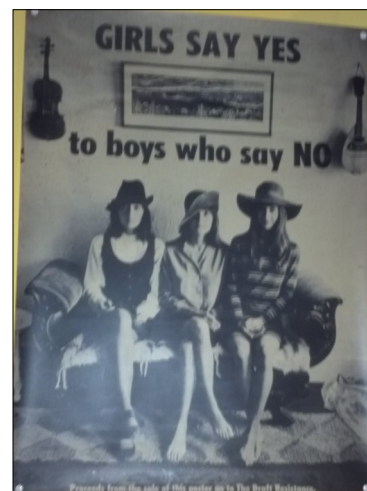
1083 Renwood Dr.

Charleston, SC 29412

## GIRLS SAY YES To boys who say NO!

Yes, this was a real poster. I went to an exhibition on 1968 at the Chicago History Museum. The exhibit was actually a lot of fun. This poster was on display. Hard to read, but at the bottom it says "Proceeds from the sale of this poster go to The Draft Resistance". Kind of sums it up I guess.

The exhibit covered the War in Vietnam, women's liberation, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, the Black Panthers, Apollo 8, and the explosive Democratic National Convention held in Chicago. There was even the cabin of a Huey.



## PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR VETERANS



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<http://www.veteransunited.com/futurehomeowners/veteran-property-tax-exemptions-by-state/>



## LAST DAYS IN VIETNAM

Academy Award® Nominee for Documentary Feature. In April of 1975, the North Vietnamese Army was closing in on Saigon as South Vietnamese resistance was crumbling. Approximately 5,000 Americans remained with roughly 24 hours to get out. Their South Vietnamese allies, co-workers, and friends faced certain imprisonment and possible death if they remained behind, yet there was no official evacuation plan in place. Still, over the last days in Vietnam, with the clock ticking and the city under fire, 135,000 South Vietnamese managed to escape with help from a number of heroic Americans who took matters into their own hands, engaging in unsanctioned and often makeshift operations in a desperate effort to save as many people as possible.

**LAST DAYS IN VIETNAM will be shown on your local PBS station on April 28th. Check your local guide for times.**



# AVEL VIETNAM



**April 2015 Newsletter**



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