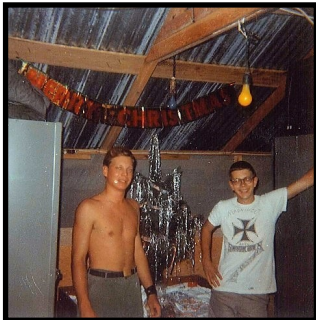
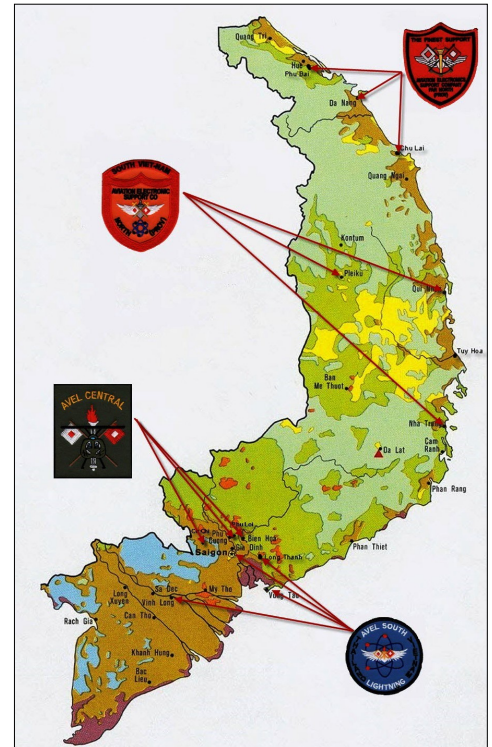


# AVEL VIETNAM

Newsletter - December 2019

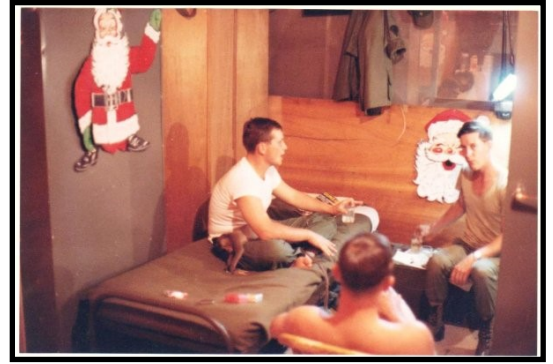
## Merry Christmas AVEL!



Don't forget to join us on Facebook. Search for the group: AVEL Vietnam.







## Veteran Suicide

The holidays can be warm, fun and a wonderful time to get together with family and friends. But, for those suffering from PTSD, loneliness and depression it can be horrible. Remember that we lose 22 veterans a day to suicide. In actuality we lose more than that as some are categorized as automobile accidents, etc.

**If you know a veteran who is suffering call them. Just be yourself and let them know someone is thinking of them. If they seem at risk of harming themselves take action. Don't let our fellow veterans become a statistic.**



Confidential crisis chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net)  
or text to **838255**

### RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF SUICIDE RISK

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.
- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

**The presence of these signs requires immediate attention. Call us if you experience any of these warning signs.**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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## 1973 - The End Is Here

1973 in the Vietnam War began with a peace agreement, the Paris Peace Accords, signed by the United States and South Vietnam on one side of the Vietnam War and communist North Vietnam and the insurgent Viet Cong on the other. Although honored in some respects, the peace agreement was violated by both North and South Vietnam as the struggle for power and control of territory in South Vietnam continued. North Vietnam released all American prisoners of war and the United States completed its military withdrawal from South Vietnam.

On March 29<sup>th</sup> the last American combat troops left Vietnam as per the Paris Peace Accords. The U.S. military command in South Vietnam, MACV ceased to exist. Fewer than 250 U.S. military personnel remained in Vietnam assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Saigon for advisory duties plus a few marines for protection of the Embassy. About 8,500 civilians working for the U.S. government remained in South Vietnam.

An official publication of North Vietnam summed up the pluses and minuses of the peace agreement. On the positive side for North Vietnam, the U.S. had ended its military operations in both South and North Vietnam and had begun to remove mines from coastal waters of North Vietnam.



On the negative side, the cease fire had not been effective, although combat was not as intensive as before, and the U.S. continued to support South Vietnam by turning over its military bases and providing weapons and other military material to South Vietnam.

U.S. Congressional opposition to the Vietnam War forced the U.S. to cease bombing communist forces in Cambodia in August and in November Congress adopted the War Powers Resolution which limited the U.S. President's authority to wage war.

**And so it ended**

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## Top Hits From 1973

Troop strengths in 1973 shrunk from 24,200 to the last few troops in Vietnam at the end of March. In 1973 there were 46 deaths in Vietnam. Even though the war was over there were 646 men drafted.

### Check out the Top Ten songs of 1973!

- #1 Tony Orlando and Dawn "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree"
- #2 Jim Croce "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown"
- #3 Roberta Flack "Killing Me Softly With His Song"
- #4 Marvin Gaye "Let's Get It On"
- #5 Paul McCartney and Wings "My Love"
- #6 Kris Kristofferson "Why Me"
- #7 Elton John "Crocodile Rock"
- #8 Billy Preston "Will It Go Round in Circles"
- #9 Carly Simon "You're So Vain"
- #10 Diana Ross "Touch Me In The Morning"





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## Top Ten Albums of 1973

- #1 Pink Floyd "The Dark Side of the Moon"
- #2 Led Zeppelin "Houses of the Holy"
- #3 The Who "Quadrophenia"
- #4 Bruce Springsteen "The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle"
- #5 Elton John "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road"
- #6 Paul McCartney & Wings "Band on the Run"
- #7 Lynyrd Skynyrd "Pronounced Leh-Nerd Skin-Nerd"
- #8 David Bowie "Aladdin Sane"
- #9 Jackson Browne "For Everyman"
- #10 Mott The Hoople "Mott"



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## Prayers Needed

I hate blowing my own horn and being the center of attention but I need your prayers. I have been diagnosed with colon cancer. Surgery will most likely be next week. I will keep you informed.



## The Baby Boomer War

By James Wright  
April 11, 2017

Of all the tropes about the Vietnam War, one stands out far above the rest in American memory: It was the baby boomers' war. By the spring of 1967, most American soldiers being killed in combat had been born in 1946 or after.

To understand the war, we have to understand what motivated that generation of Americans not only to protest but also to fight, and later to seek some sort of closure. Wars are far easier to initiate than to conclude. And for those who serve, the memories endure long after the fighting stops.

At his inauguration in January 1961, President John Kennedy said, "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we will pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

Those born after the boomers may find it quaint to read about a president asking citizens to sacrifice, to "pay any price." Nonetheless, their parents or grandparents, the baby boomers, will most likely remember a brief shining moment of energized promise and of unfulfilled dreams. It was the echo of that call, just a few years later, that motivated hundreds of thousands of young men to enlist for Vietnam, for the chance to ensure "the success of liberty" — and many others back home, at least at the outset, to support the fighting.

In popular memory, the boomers quickly turned against the war. Many did, but many also served. Over 10 million boomers served in the military, some 40 percent of the males of their generation. Many of them served in Vietnam. More baby boomers died in Vietnam than went to Canada or to prison for refusing to serve. Those boomers in uniform were more blue-collar and minority than their generational median, but they were not some marginal part of it, nor were they the only ones to fight. So did college dropouts and graduates — and not only as officers.

The profile of those who served was more complicated than their stereotype — the men and women in Vietnam were not defined by peace symbols and love beads, although some displayed them. They were not a group of mutinous draftees, although many were drafted, and if they did not begin their tour disillusioned by their war, they most likely concluded it with that view.

*Continued on Page 5*

They were not a band of rebellious “fraggers” assassinating their officers or marauding killers piling up body counts of the innocent in a haze of marijuana smoke.

They were soldiers and marines, sailors and airmen, doctors and nurses, who learned about survival, about protecting buddies, about cruel death. They witnessed the suffering of the Vietnamese and they served even when an ending to their war and a clear meaning for it seemed increasingly elusive. Their favorite song was the Animals’ recording of “We Gotta Get Out of This Place.” But when they did get out, their homecoming was often difficult and lonely. The impact of their indifferent, if not hostile, reception was all the greater because they had assumed the responsibility of citizenship they understood was theirs.

The baby boomer generation grew up in the world of the 1950s, a world of “duck and cover” drills in schools in preparation for a nuclear attack, of reminders of the threat posed by Soviet and Chinese Communism, of the fear of the near-inevitability of war, and of their obligation to serve in this war. It was a time of fear, but also an era of national confidence and of individual obligation. These children of World War II veterans learned their responsibility to serve when called — or to volunteer before being called.

The journalist Philip Caputo was a young Marine officer who went ashore with the first American combat units in Vietnam, in 1965. He recalled, “For Americans who did not come of age in the early 1960s, it may be hard to grasp what those years were like — the pride and overpowering self-assurance that prevailed.” When they marched across rice paddies, he said, they carried, “along with our packs and rifles, the implicit convictions that the Vietcong would be quickly beaten and that we were doing something altogether noble and good.”

Few could have anticipated the duration and cost of this commitment. Their leaders did not, although they were seldom honest about this. So when President Kennedy proclaimed at his inauguration that the torch had passed to a new generation, his World War II generation, it was a torch that few held very long. Within a few years, they quickly passed it along to their children.

In 1965, when President Lyndon Johnson sent in ground combat troops, there was criticism and dissent, but the dominant image was of young Americans taking a stand in the jungle, a heady sense of Americans defending the “free world.”



This changed as the numbers of troops grew, their casualties increased, as draftees made up more of the units, and as the rationale for the war and its conduct were more broadly challenged and unpersuasively defended. As Americans became disillusioned by the war, some of their sons and daughters, siblings and friends continued to go to Vietnam. To the protesters and critics, by 1967 the troops had become objects of pity for serving on a dangerous assignment in a cruel and unjust war.

In 1968, the chant from protesters was “Hey, hey, L.B.J. How many kids did you kill today?” But by late 1969, when Americans learned of the atrocities committed against an estimated 600 civilians at the village of My Lai, some protesters focused on those who were serving in Vietnam, not as victims but as willing participants in their cruel and unjust war. Johnson was back in Texas, and the young men serving now were the baby killers. Pity became contempt. More people probably knew Lt. William Calley, the man in charge at My Lai, than knew the name of any other combat officer who served in Vietnam. This left little room in the Vietnam narrative for stories of courage and sacrifice.

My Lai framed the image that for too many retrospectively described the Vietnam generation. Theirs was the “Apocalypse Now” war. That movie bore as little relation to the conduct and experience of the Vietnam War as “South Pacific” did to World War II — except the latter was kinder to those serving. An overwhelming majority of Vietnam veterans served honorably and bravely.

As Americans turned against the war, as political leaders danced around the subject, these young men and women slogged through it. Out in the field, Vietnam was a caldron of heat and humidity. It was about walking through jungles and rice paddies and elephant grass, and about being wet, infected and dirty. It was searching for elusive enemy forces while encountering Vietnamese civilians who just wished the Americans would leave and the war would end.

We cannot come to terms with the Vietnam War until we acknowledge the story of the generation who served there and understand the emotional complexity they confronted. In the years after the war, as civilians they have continued to serve their country and their world and to make a difference. Powerful, often unshared, memories remain.

Understanding this is essential: Those with responsibility to send the young to war need always to consider the enduring consequences of war and the human cost of undertaking this action. Winston Churchill, reflecting on the Boer War, understood it a century ago, and the Vietnam generation experienced it a half century ago. As Churchill wrote, "The Statesman who yields to war fever must realize that once the signal is given, he is no longer the master of policy but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events." He argued, "Let us learn our lessons."

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## **NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERAN REGISTEREES**

None Submitted

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## **TAPS**

None Submitted

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## **PHOTOS**

None Submitted

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## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL**

None Submitted

Submit changes to Jack McCabe so you can continue receiving updates and Newsletters.

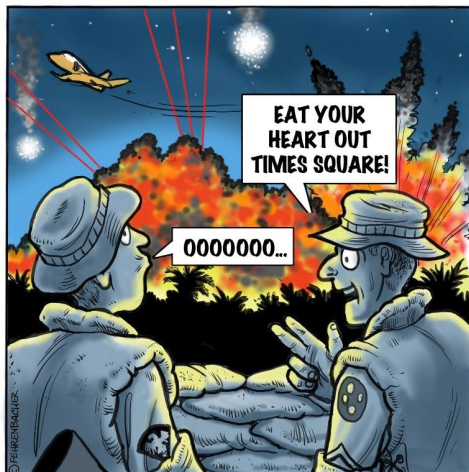
[www.avelvietnam.com](http://www.avelvietnam.com)

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**IN-COUNTRY**



**NEW YEAR'S EVE IN VIETNAM.  
(OR MOST ANY OTHER NIGHT!)**



**IN-COUNTRY**



**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
and  
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**to all of our AVEL Brothers Donut Dollies and  
the Flight Attendants who brought us home.  
Have a happy and healthy 2020!**



**AVEL  
VIETNAM**



**December 2019 Newsletter**