

AVEL VIETNAM

Newsletter - December 2022



Merry Christmas!



Merry Christmas to all our veterans, Donut Dollies and flight crews who brought us home. I hope you all have a safe and healthy Christmas!

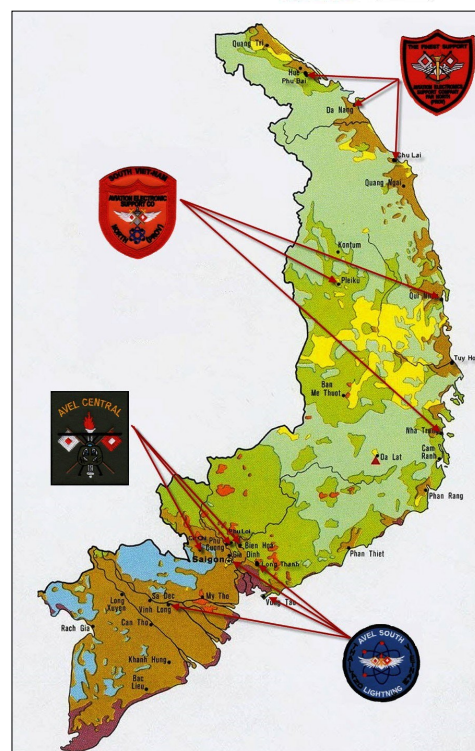
The holidays can be warm, fun and a wonderful time to get together with family and friends. But, for those suffering from PTSD, loneliness and depression it can be horrible. Remember that we still lose 22 veterans a day to suicide. In actuality we lose more than that as some are categorized as automobile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



**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

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



Vietnam Christmas Songs

Do you remember any Christmas songs about Vietnam? I remember maybe one. Kinda.

Well, it appears there have been a bunch of Christmas songs referring to Vietnam. I know what you are thinking ... Bing Crosby? Frank Sinatra? Mariah Carey (yuk)? Nope, none of these. Actually many you have never heard of.

The role of music during wartime was well established by the turbulent sixties. The longing, the fear, and the bravery of soldiers and their loved ones were often reflected in popular songs during wars, and at least one Christmas song, "I'll Be Home For Christmas," played a significant role in World War II.



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



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Let's take a look at some of the Christmas songs during our time in Vietnam. I am sure you pull most of these up on Spotify and listen for yourself!

Christmas In Vietnam
by Johnny and Jon

Is It Christmas Time In Vietnam?
by Jim Franklin

Christmas At Home
by Webb Pierce

A Soldier's Christmas
by Johnny Slate

Soldier In Viet Nam
by Sue Simpson

I Won't Be Home This Christmas
by Barry Sadler

Little Becky's Christmas Wish
by Becky Lamb

Another Christmas Without My Son
by Reverend Oris Mays

No Christmas Tree In Vietnam
by Rusty Wellington

There Won't Be Any Snow (Christmas in the Jungle)
by Derrik Roberts

I Want Daddy For Mommy (And Me This Christmas)
by Don Vest

Soldier Boy / (Mama) My Soldier Boy Is Coming Home
by The Shirelles

V.C. Blues
by Allen Orange

7 O'clock News / Silent Night
by Simon & Garfunkel

Country Christmas
by Loretta Lynn

I Want To Come Home For Christmas
by Marvin Gaye

A Christmas Prayer
by Susan Wheeler

Merry Christmas From Vietnam
by The Sullivan Family

Well, you get the idea. Merry Christmas

The Christmas Bombing - 1972

Nixon announces start of "Christmas Bombing" of North Vietnam

Following the breakdown of peace talks with North Vietnam just a few days earlier, President Richard Nixon announces the beginning of a massive bombing campaign to break the stalemate. For nearly two weeks, American bombers pounded North Vietnam.

On December 13, peace talks between the United States and North Vietnam collapsed. The North Vietnamese and American negotiators traded charges and countercharges as to who was to blame. Infuriated, President Nixon ordered plans drawn up for retaliatory bombings of North Vietnam. Linebacker II was the result. Beginning on December 18, American B-52s and fighter-bombers dropped over 20,000 tons of bombs on the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong. The United States lost 15 of its giant B-52s and 11 other aircraft during the attacks. North Vietnam claimed that over 1,600 civilians were killed.

The bombings continued until December 29, at which time the North Vietnamese agreed to resume the talks. A few weeks later, the final Paris Peace Treaty was signed and the Vietnam War came to a close, ending the U.S. role in a conflict that seriously damaged the domestic Cold War consensus among the American public. The impact of the so-called "Christmas Bombings" on the final agreement was difficult to assess.

Some historians have argued that the bombings forced the North Vietnamese back to the negotiating table. Others have



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suggested that the attacks had little impact, beyond the additional death and destruction they caused. Even the chief U.S. negotiator, Henry Kissinger, was reported to have said, "We bombed the North Vietnamese into accepting our concessions." The chief impact may have been in convincing America's South Vietnamese allies, who were highly suspicious of the draft treaty worked out in October 1972, that the United States would not desert them. In any event, the final treaty did not include any important changes from the October draft.

Vietnam Seeks Continued US Assistance In Dealing With War Legacies



Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh has expressed the hope that U.S. congressmen will continue to promote bilateral efforts to deal with the legacies of the Vietnam War.

Chinh, who was on a visit to the U.S. from May 11 to 17, conveyed the message at a meeting with Patrick Leahy, the president pro tempore of the U.S. Senate and several other key senators on May 11, a press release from the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

At the meeting, he appreciated the tireless efforts by senators, especially the leading role played by Leahy, in strengthening a bipartisan consensus in favor of developing relations with Vietnam.

He emphasized that their support and cooperation in dealing with war legacies are an important and meaningful part in the process of reconciliation, healing and building trust between the two peoples.

He hoped that Leahy would continue to inspire future generations of U.S. congressmen to continue the work of providing financial assistance to victims of dioxin, unexploded ordnance (UXO), Agent Orange, and to the search for Vietnamese soldiers who died in the war.

Leahy, whose Senate term expires in January 2023, said the U.S. Congress has had generations of members supporting Vietnam - U.S. relations.

The other senators pledged to continue the work of Leahy after he retires to effectively resolve issues of mutual concern and promote the comprehensive partnership between the two countries.

Chinh expressed appreciation for the senators' support for ASEAN's central role and its views on regional issues.

He underlined Vietnam's consistent stance on peacefully settling disputes on the basis of international law, not using or threatening to use force, and ensuring freedom and safety of navigation and overflight in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Vietnam Tourism

Several Southeast Asian countries have fulfilled their target of foreign tourist numbers for 2022, but Vietnam lags far behind this year's goal.

In late August, Malaysia announced that it had already fulfilled its target of 4.5 million international visitors in 2022 and the country was instead aiming at a new target of 9.2 million.

Singapore, which expects to receive 4-6 million international visitors in 2022, had received 3.74 million as of September.

Thailand, where tourism is a main economic sector, had welcomed about 7.35 million international visitors as of October 26, and has expressed confidence in reaching its 10 million target for the year.

Vietnam, which reopened international tourism mid-March, received over 2.35 million foreign visitors in the January-October period, less than half of this year's five-million target. I wonder how many vets go.

Duc Tu Le, A Viet Poet For Peace

He was born in 1942 , in Kim Bang district , Ha Nam province . After the Geneva Agreement, 1954 , Le Cu Phach emigrated to the South with his family. He first settled in Hoi An , Quang Nam , then Da Nang . In 1956 , he went to Saigon and attended Tran Luc School, Chu Van An School , and finally Van Khoa University .

He started writing poetry at an early age, while still studying at Hang Voi primary school in Hanoi . After immigrating to Saigon, Du Tu Le began composing many works under different pseudonyms. The pseudonym Du Tu Le was first officially used in 1958 (the name "Du Tu" was taken by him from the poem "Du Tu recited" by the poet Manh Giao of the Tang Dynasty, meaning "a child far from his mother". and "Le" is his last name) for the article "Ben soul", published in Mai magazine .



Du Tu Le was an officer in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam , a former war correspondent , the last editor of the monthly Tien Phong (a magazine of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam), and a professor teaching hours for some Saigon high schools .

In 1973 in Saigon , he was awarded the National Prize for Literature , in Poetry with the work Du Tu Le Love Poetry 1967 - 1972 .

On April 17, 1975 , Du Tu Le, along with Mai Thao and Pham Duy , were sentenced to death in absentia on the radio of the Southern Liberation Front for their fierce opposition to communism . After the events of April 30, 1975 , he went to the United States as a refugee .

He moved to Southern California , continued his writing career , and has been a contract employee of the Voice of America since 1996 . He also served as the editor of Vietnamese-language newspapers Witness , Right Hand , and Arts in the United States.



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In 2016, he participated in an exchange with readers in Hue in the program Exchange with Dao Tu Le and friends organized by Song Huong Magazine and Thua Thien - Hue Writers' Association.

He died on October 7, 2019 at his home in Garden Grove , California , USA .

His Poems:

There is no war, but also a couple

How Own Song

Night, miss the Saigon moon

Thank You

The Hai Van Pass

Rutted, crumbling Highway 1, made famous by Bernard Fall's *Street Without Joy*, is now four lanes between Phu Bai and Hue with a median strip sporting palm trees and flowering plants, the road lined with houses, noodle shops, sundry stores, repair shops, dress shops (western-style dresses seem to have largely replaced traditional ao dais except for jobs like hotel receptionists, restaurant hostesses, and airline employees), and billboards advertising cellphones, banks, cars, gasoline, scooters, resorts, insurance companies, clothing, restaurants. Hard to believe I know.



Located between the cities of Da Nang and Hue, the Hai Van Pass was a crucial logistical chokepoint during the war and prominent landmark along Route 1. Fortifications had been built hundreds of years ago to offer safe passage through the mountain pass, and during the 1st Indochina war the French military reinforced these outposts with bunkers and watchtowers, which the American military later took over in the 1960s. Back in our day the best way to view the pass was from the air, not by convoy. Ambushes were common when the French were here and during our time. Obviously that's not the case anymore.

Canadian travel site *The Travel* has listed Hai Van Pass and Ha Giang Loop in its list of 10 'most thrilling scenic drives' in Asia. It cuts through the Bach Ma mountain range and lies 500 meters above sea level. The 25-kilometer pass challenges even thrill-seeking motorcyclists due to its winding roads, sudden curves and blind corners.

"This is the most thrilling road one will find and use in Vietnam. The exciting part is in the snaking nature of the road, plentiful vegetation around covered by forest, amazing views of the ocean on the other side, and various destinations it passes through," the magazine wrote.

Along the pass, tourists can admire the Indochina-era Hai Van Gate and the remains of several French fortifications as well as explore the beauty of Lang Co, one of the world's most beautiful bays.

Between 1945 and 1975, many military guard points and bunkers sprung up for soldiers to guard the north-south arterial road, including fortifications and storage depots. Right now the old crumbling bunkers, buildings and the outlines of trenches, are still visible but who knows for how long. The Vietnamese have a bad habit of tearing these down.

After a year of renovation, the Hai Van Gate, abandoned for years, is gradually being returned to its original shape as a 'defensive citadel' under the Nguyen Dynasty. Standing on top of the Hai Van Pass, the Hai Van Gate is about 490 meters above sea level.

It was constructed in 1826 during the reign of King Minh Mang (1791-1841), who ordered the construction of several defensive structures along the pass to protect the imperial capital of Hue. The structures included fortifications, store houses and cannon forts.

The gate used to be dubbed as 'pharynx' of the Hue Imperial Citadel.



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Artist rendering of the completed project

However, it stood abandoned for over 20 years until 2017, when the government recognized Hai Van Gate as a national relic, prompting authorities in Hue and Da Nang to join hands for a major renovation project.

Renovation work on the gate began in December 2021.

The gates doors will be repaired based on the original architecture and its walls built with terracotta bricks. Some structures and bunkers used during the wars against France and the U.S. will be kept for the purpose of preserving their historical value. Construction workers have been working from dawn to dusk to complete the project on time.

For years now, the pass has been a popular tourist attraction.

Pieces Of US Navy Plane Found Under Mekong Delta Pond

Military engineers are examining the remains of a U.S. Navy plane found under a pond by a local man and sold as scrap in Tra Vinh Province.

Colonel Tran Quoc Khanh, deputy head of the 9th Military Region staff department's engineering division, said Wednesday a team checking metal pieces and parachutes found on land owned by Le Van Cham, 54, in the southern province found 'US.NAVY' written on the latter.

"We believe these are the remains of a plane shot during the war."

But the team has yet to identify the aircraft, he said.

The division has suggested to the Ministry of National Defense that a search has to be made for the remaining debris.

On July 8, while working in his shrimp pond, Cham saw oil stains rising to the surface. He used machines to dredge the bottom and found several pieces of metal. Since they had rusted, he sold them as scrap.

When the military caught wind of the incident, they cordoned off the area and sent personnel to the site to look for more remains.



What Did You Call "Vietnam"?

Soldiers who served in Vietnam usually called it just that, Vietnam. I've rarely heard a vet say 'Nam' not at reunions or other venues. In fact if someone noticed your ball cap with your outfit on it, right away they could usually tell where you served. When describing the place you were in, Vietnam, some called it 'in-country.'

"Hey, long have you been in-country?" And the place where they came from, home, all called 'the world.'

"Going back to the world in 21 days." Many found 'the world' was not the same place that they left, mostly because they felt alone and unprotected, even with family. No one had their backs anymore and a lot of times there was no one to talk to who would know what the hell you were talking about.

If someone in an M65 field jacket wearing a Vietnam veteran cap walked up to you and asked you where you served in 'Nam' then started telling you how many times he was spit on, beat up, pee'd on by hippies and called a baby killer, right away you knew full well that he wasn't there. I am sure you have run into these guys. It seems it is the "in thing" to be a Vietnam veteran now.

Now I've heard vets sometimes call it 'the Nam.' But don't get me wrong, there are some vets out there that do call it Nam. I think it's just an individual thing. Personally, I've always called it Vietnam.

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERAN REGISTEREES

None Submitted

TAPS

None Submitted, Thank God

PHOTOS & WEBSITE UPDATES

No photos were submitted. All Newsletters are now on the website: avelvietnam.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS, PHONE OR EMAIL

Frank Repinski (*Avel North*) has moved. His new address is: 1004 Coast Grade St., Wake Forest, NC 27587
Ron Wheeler (*Avel Central*) has moved. His new address is: 23233 Song Bird Hills Way, Parker, Co. 80138

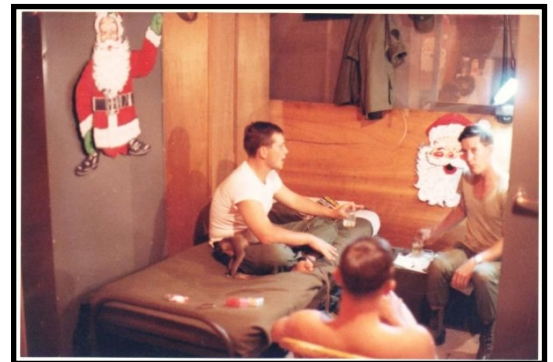
MERRY CHRISTMAS

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 2023! STAY SAFE!

Here are a few photos of Christmas at Avel Vietnam





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