

# AVEL VIETNAM

Newsletter - February 2019

## Top Hits Of 1965



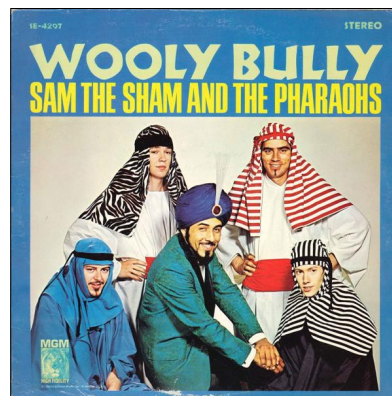
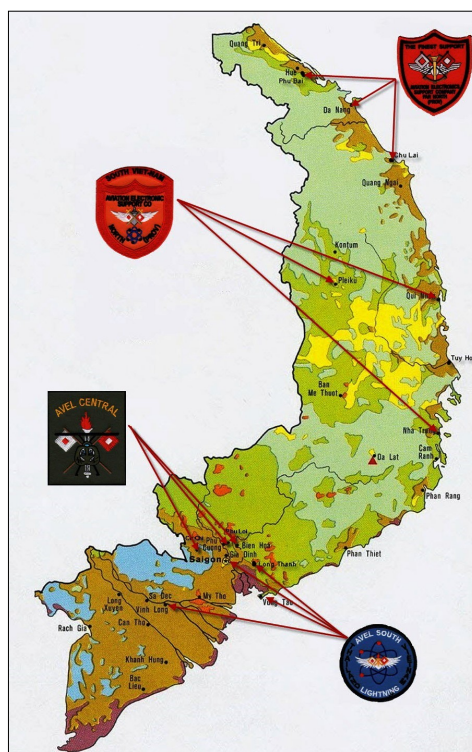
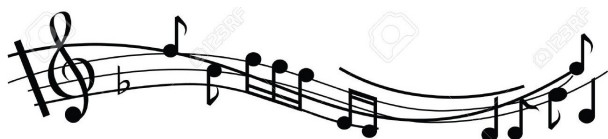
At the start of 1965 there 23,300 American troops in South Vietnam. On March 8<sup>th</sup> two battalions of U.S. Marines began to land on beaches near Da Nang. The arrival of the Marines heralded the direct involvement of American combat units in the Vietnam War. The Marines had the responsibility of guarding the Da Nang airbase but were ordered to "not, repeat not, engage in day-to-day actions against the Viet Cong." But this directive would shortly change.

By the end of March the Marines at Da Nang numbered almost 5,000 and the total troop strength was 184,300. There were 1,928 service deaths that year. Things were heating up in that mostly unheard of country of South Vietnam.

The music scene was hot too. Check out the Top Ten songs of 1965!

- #1 "Woolly Bully" by Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs
- #2 "I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie Honey Bunch)" by Four Tops
- #3 "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones
- #4 "You Were On My Mind" by We Five
- #5 "You've Lost That Loving Feelin'" by The Righteous Brothers
- #6 "Downtown" by Petula Clark
- #7 "Help" by The Beatles
- #8 "Can't You Hear My Heartbeat" by Herman's Hermits
- #9 "Crying In The Chapel" by Elvis Presley
- #10 "My Girl" by The Temptations

This will be a regular feature on the Newsletter covering the Top Ten Hits until the end of our war in 1973.



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



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## VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND PRESENTS GRANITE FROM THE WALL TO AUSTRALIAN ALLIES

On Wednesday, Jan. 23 VVMF presented its Australian allies with granite from The Wall to recognize 100 years of mateship between the two countries and to thank them for their service during the Vietnam War.

In a brief event at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, VVMF President and CEO Jim Knotts presented two pieces of original Wall granite as a token of appreciation to the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Museum in Victoria and the government of Australia.



“We have been honored to have our allies from Australia stand alongside Americans in almost every major military conflict for the last 100 years,” said Jim Knotts. “It is an alliance that is stronger than ever and extremely important to all of us who have worn our uniform and have had the pleasure to have served alongside our Australian mates.”



Kingsley Munday AM, Chairman of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum at Phillip Island in Victoria and Brigadier Shane Gabriel, Australian Military Attaché to the United States accepted the pieces. The granite helps illustrate the ongoing partnership between America and Australia, and those who served together.

“The National Vietnam Veterans Museum in Australia is about to be rebuilt to create a great legacy for Vietnam veterans,” Munday said before receiving the granite. To have a piece of granite coming back to the museum demonstrates the strong foundation and great strength between Australia and US troops. “It will be placed in our museum with a deep gratitude and deep respect,” he added.

Following brief remarks, a wreath was laid at the apex of The Wall to remember those who gave their lives in Vietnam. The event ended with the playing of Taps.

Australians have fought beside U.S. service members in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Sinai, the Persian Gulf, Kuwait, Somalia, East Timor, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Iraq. During the Vietnam War, Australia sent its Army, Navy and Air Force to assist in the war effort, including nearly 42,000 Army, just under 13,000 Royal Australian Navy (RAN), and over 4,700 Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) personnel. In all, 521 Australian service members died as a result of the war, and more than 3,000 were wounded. The photos of Australians who lost their lives in the Vietnam War are displayed on VVMF’s Australian Wall of Faces.

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### **America Lost Vietnam but Saved Southeast Asia**

*By William Lloyd Stearman, Wall Street Journal, Jan. 27, 2019*

Had the U.S. stayed out of Indochina, it might have had to intervene in the Philippines at greater cost.

America got into World War II because of Vietnam. When the Japanese conquered what was then French Indochina in September 1941, the U.S. replied with severe economic sanctions, which convinced the Japanese that America was hostile and might use its fleet to block Tokyo’s conquest of Southeast Asia. In December the Japanese attacked the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor.

*Continued on Page 3*



President Dwight Eisenhower, remembering that Indochina had been a base for conquest, declared on April 7, 1954, that a communist victory there could topple the newly independent countries of Southeast Asia like dominoes. The containment strategy against Soviet communism dictated that Washington prevent this. U.S. involvement in Vietnam followed, step by step.

The military presence began with advisers, whose numbers continued to grow. When the threat from North Vietnam increased in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson decided to introduce combat troops—first Marines, then a far greater number of soldiers.

Things seemed to be progressing well until the Tet Offensive of Jan. 30, 1968, in which North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces attacked much of South Vietnam. Even the U.S. Embassy grounds were occupied. Negative television coverage had a decisive effect on U.S. public opinion—yet the offensive ended badly for the communists. Hanoi was delighted that the U.S. media had turned its defeat into victory.

President Richard Nixon began “Vietnamizing” the war in 1969 by withdrawing combat ground troops. This phase was largely completed in 1971. America did, however, continue to provide air, naval and logistical support and advisers. On March 30, 1972, Hanoi staged a huge offensive aimed at final victory. Initially it seemed certain to succeed. But with massive U.S. air support and good advice, South Vietnamese troops were soon on the offensive. By autumn, “on the ground in South Vietnam the war had been won,” former CIA Director William Colby wrote in his 1989 book, “Lost Victory.”

Hanoi thus asked for negotiations, which interfered with continued fighting. The war ended with the Jan. 27, 1973, Paris Peace Agreement, which was immediately met with gross violations, mostly by the communist side.

After U.S. troops and prisoners of war returned, Americans lost interest in South Vietnam’s fate. Congress greatly reduced aid and banned further U.S. military involvement in the region, effectively ensuring a communist victory. Saigon fell April 30, 1975.

It is widely believed that the Vietnam War was unwinnable. But a 2004 History Chanel documentary featured interviews with knowledgeable North Vietnamese who thought otherwise. They said U.S. and South Vietnamese ground troops could have effectively blocked the Ho Chi Minh Trail in eastern Laos, denying its enemy essential supplies and troop reinforcements. Other North Vietnamese said they were puzzled that the U.S. failed to do so. This logical, war-ending move was ruled out by decision makers in Washington because it would “broaden the conflict”—never mind that the enemy had already broadened it by using Laos as a base and supply chain.

The defeat created more than a million South Vietnamese refugees, who escaped by sea. More than 300,000 drowned, according to a Red Cross estimate. Large numbers also died in concentration camps or were executed.

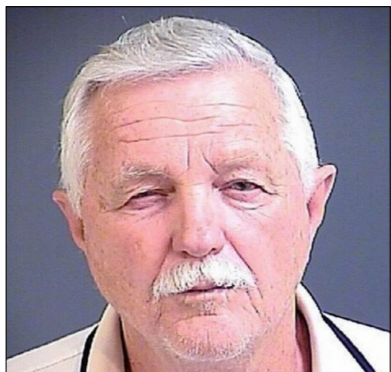
Yet even the defeat in Vietnam accomplished a lot. “In 1965, when the U.S. military moved massively into South Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines faced internal threats from armed insurgencies and the communist underground was still active in Singapore. Indonesia [was] in the throes of a failed communist coup,” Singapore’s founding father, Lee Kuan Yew, wrote in his 2000 memoir, “From Third World to First.” “America’s action enabled noncommunist Southeast Asia to put their own houses in order. By 1975, they were in better shape to stand up to the communists. Had there been no U.S. intervention, the will of these countries to resist them would have melted and Southeast Asia would most likely gone communist.”

The 1965 combat-troop buildup had a bracing effect in Southeast Asia. It reportedly encouraged the British defense of Malaysia. Far more important was its effect in Indonesia. In 1970, President Suharto told U.S. officials and columnist Robert Novak that the large-scale introduction of combat troops substantially encouraged Indonesian forces to repulse a major, and nearly successful, Chinese-dominated communist coup that began the night of Sept. 30, 1965. Coup assassination squads had already murdered six top generals, and Suharto—then the army’s strategic reserve commander—must have been tempted to flee to safety. Instead, he rallied his units and suppressed the coup.

Had the coup succeeded, it probably would have spread to the Philippines. That would have triggered the 1951 Defense Agreement, which would have obliged the U.S. to help in its defense. Such a conflict might have been far worse than Vietnam. The U.S. intervention in Vietnam achieved a strategic victory by saving South-east Asia—albeit not Vietnam itself—from communism.

*Mr. Stearman, who served on the National Security Council staff under four presidents, is the author of “An American Adventure, From Early Aviation Through Three Wars to the White House” (Naval Institute Press, 2012).*

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## **SCAMMER!**

**He collected nearly \$200K posing as a Vietnam vet with 2 Purple Hearts — but he never served**

A Charleston, S.C. man collected nearly \$200,000 in VA benefits over the past few years while listed as a Navy medic who received two Purple Hearts for his service in Vietnam.

But Keith R. Hudson, 70, was never in the military, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of South Carolina said Wednesday.

Chapter members were heartsick when they realized the truck and trailer were missing. Schneider said he believes it was stolen sometime between Sunday and Monday from outside the chapter’s Veteran’s Support Center on 15 Mile Road in Clinton Township.

“This is a particularly awful type of white collar crime,” U.S. Attorney Sherri Lydon said in a news release. “Veteran health benefits are for those who served our nation in the military. The VA has limited numbers of physicians and resources. There is not much to spare.”

Hudson pleaded guilty in federal court to defrauding the VA of \$197,237. He faces up to 10 years in prison.

Hudson in 2015 falsified a report of separation of active duty – called a DD-214 – on which he “represented that he was in the Navy and saw combat as a medic, suffering wounds and other trauma,” according to the release. He said he received two Purple Hearts over the course of his service, from 1967-1971.

But an investigation revealed several problems with the report, including a ranking that did not match his listed pay grade. The typeset of Hudson’s Social Security number didn’t match the rest of the document, according to the release.

“In the awards section, it stated that he received a Combat Medic Badge. However, this is an award which is only given for service in the United States Army,” the release said. “And the form stated Mr. Hudson received the Fleet Marine Force Medal with Marine Device. There is no such medal.”

The investigation found that Hudson had not served in the military, while also showing he held a variety of jobs in New York and Maine at the time he claimed to see combat in Vietnam.

Investigators also found Hudson was prosecuted for the same scheme in Connecticut in 2005, and entered the pretrial diversion program.

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## **Lost In Superstorm Sandy, Vietnam Veteran Gets His Medals Back**

On the 6th anniversary of Superstorm Sandy a Vietnam veteran in New Jersey was reunited with his awards that were lost during the storm.

Veteran Bernard Ebner was honored with the presentation of replacements of his original awards that were lost when his house was destroyed during the hurricane.



Continued on Page 5

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Ebner's family home was flooded by nearly 12 feet of water that reached the second floor of the house. Everything inside was washed away. It was deemed unlivable and had to be demolished.

"You live in the home 45 years and you have thousands of possessions you just don't know how many until you're put in this situation. Took about a year and a half to realize they were gone," Ebner explained.

When he did realize they were gone, Ebner reached out to Rep. Chris Smith for help. Smith took the request to the Pentagon and Ebner was re-presented with the lost awards.

Ebner says for now he'll proudly display the medals in his new home, but eventually he'll pass them down to his daughters and grandchildren.

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## **NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED**

None Submitted

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## **TAPS**

None Submitted

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## **PHOTOS**

None Submitted

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## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL/PHONE**

None Submitted

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## **ALL AVEL REUNION/GATHERING 2019**

### **Join us at LZ Tucson!**

Thursday September 26th to Sunday September 29th 2019

Homewood Suites *by Hilton*

St. Philip's Plaza  
4250 N. Campbell  
Tucson, AZ 85718

***RESERVE YOUR ROOM NOW!***



### **2019 All AVEL Gathering/Reunion Itinerary**

#### **Early Bird, Tuesday, 24 September 2019**

Explore Tucson on your own

#### **Wednesday, 25 September 2019**

Explore Tucson on your own

17:30: Hamburger BBQ on the patio

Hospitality Room is open after dinner

#### **Thursday, 26 September 2019**

Hospitality Room open until 23:00

Group activity will be announced

#### **Friday, 27 September 2019**

Hospitality Room open until 23:00

John Veers Martini Golf Outing (Course to be announced)

Ladies Luncheon (Paid by Avel)

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**Saturday, 28 September 2019**

Hospitality Room open until 17:00

Group Activity to be announced

Hospitality Room will be closed until 17:30 to prepare for dinner

Group Dinner

Hospitality Room open until 23:00

### RESERVE YOUR ROOM

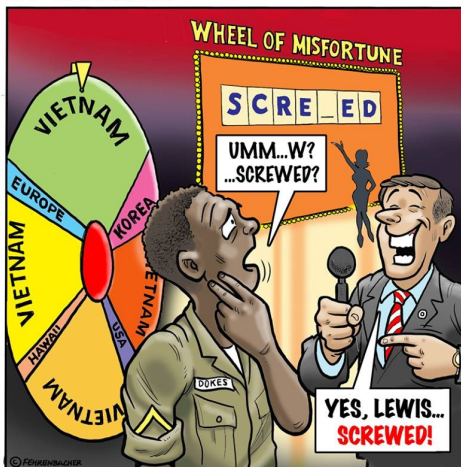
If you think you can come please reserve your room. You can cancel anytime up to 24 hours prior to scheduled arrival. Call the hotel at 520-577-0007 and tell them the Group Code "VNR". Room rate is \$139.00/night.

### REGISTER AT THE WEBSITE

Once again, if you even think you can make it, please register at [www.avelvietnam.com](http://www.avelvietnam.com). We need an approximate count in order to make arrangements for group activities. **Please register!**

*Hope to see you there!  
We will have some great activities planned!*

IN-COUNTRY



"JOHNNY, TELL LEWIS WHERE HE'LL BE TRAVELING!"



*Any of you AVEL troops  
qualify for this award?*

IN-COUNTRY



CURRENCY EXCHANGE  
WHO/WHAT'S THAT ON MY NEW MPC?



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