

Celebrity Vietnam Vets

Dan Lauria

Dan Lauria, was born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 12th, 1947. He grew up in Lindenhurst, New York and graduated from Lindenhurst Senior High School in 1965 where he was a varsity football player. He developed his interest in performing from his aunt who used to awaken him to watch old movies on TV. A joke cracked on the football field in college led to acting lessons with Yale's Constance Welch.

Lauria joined the Marine Corps and attended Officer Candidate School. He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant and sent to Vietnam. He was initially assigned aboard a helicopter assault vessel in the South China Sea, then a platoon commander with the 4th Marines.

He survived intact, he says, but not unstained. Lauria says he and friend Franz carry mild double doses of survivor guilt because, Lauria explains, "We not only survived a war where so many were killed, we came home and became successes." Yet it was having a career, believing he could succeed as an actor, that sustained him in Vietnam. "I always knew what I wanted to do, to act, and the love of that, the drive to succeed kept me going," he says. "Also, I was a volunteer. If things got bad, I could always look in a mirror and say I asked for it." He left the Marine Corps as a Captain and began his acting career.

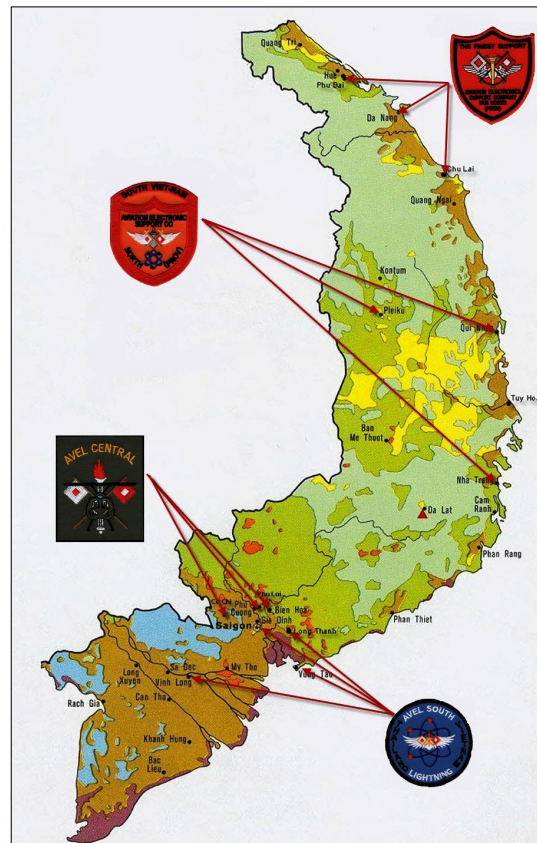


Lauria returned to school and earned an MFA in playwriting. He joined the Washington Theatre Club where he performed in over 50 plays before decamping to NYC and a stint on the CBS soap opera "Love of Life". He wrote and starred in the Off-Broadway production "The Game Plan" and spent several years in touring companies and in off-off- and off-Broadway shows. Lauria had a regular role on the ABC soap "One Life to Live".

In 1985, the actor moved West to film the busted pilot "Brass", with Carroll O'Connor. He began making guest appearances on series like "Moonlighting" and "Hill Street Blues" and finally landed a regular berth with "The Wonder Years". Once cast on that show, he moved to higher profile TV-movies, including the well-reviewed "David" (ABC, 1988) and the controversial "Howard Beach: Making the Case for Murder" (NBC, 1989). Lauria starred opposite Joanna Kerns in the NBC miniseries "The Big One: The Great Los Angeles Earthquake" (1990) and was featured in several of the network's "In the Line of Duty" TV-movies.

He briefly returned to series TV in support of Patty Duke in "Amazing Grace" (NBC, 1995) and has continued to lend his considerable weight to various shows in guest shots.

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On the big screen, Lauria made his debut in "Without a Trace" (1983) and had small roles in "9 1/2 Weeks" (1986) and in the blockbuster "Independence Day" (1996). His best known role, however, may be as the police captain to undercover cops Richard Dreyfuss and Emilio Estevez in "Stakeout" (1987) and its sequel "Another Stakeout" (1993).

Lauria is best known for his portrayal of Jack Arnold, the money-conscious father on the TV series The Wonder Years, that ran from 1988 to 1993. He also played James Webb in the 1998 TV miniseries From the Earth to the Moon and Commanding Officer, USA in 1996's Independence Day. More recently he has appeared in a War Veterans public service announcement and as Police Commissioner Eustace Dolan in The Spirit.

Lauria continues to act in film and on the stage.

Welcome Home Dan!

VA Compensation & Pensions Update

Report Recently, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) completed a "think tank" report on veterans' disability compensation. The ranking member on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs asked for this study, which looks in detail at trends and policy options in regard to future veterans' compensation. Though the study looked at many areas, the report was primarily focused on potential ways to save future budget dollars (2018 through 2024) in regard to compensation by modifying current compensation to all veterans. Listed below are the areas they reviewed:

- Limit the time in which a veteran can file an initial claim for service-connection after leaving the military. The CBO looked at 5-, 10- and 20-year time frames. As expected, the less time afforded to file a claim resulted in the greatest budgetary savings.
- Increase VA reexaminations on veterans already service-connected. · Reexamine the standards for declaring something a presumptive condition.
- Change the rules about individual unemployability (IU) in that only those veterans younger than the full social security retirement age will be able to receive this benefit.
- Reexamine the rules as to how compensation payments are determined for veterans with service connected mental disorders.
- Change cost-of-living adjustments.
- Eliminate concurrent receipt for military retirees. This results in the greatest savings in regard to future VA budget dollars.
- Tax VA compensation disability payments.

All of these are ideas that have been bantered about for some time. Just because the CBO released this report does not mean it will become a reality; however, remember the study was requested by the current administration to determine ways to save future VA budget dollars, and streamline spending. Again, none of the above has become law.

Vietnam: The Fastest-Growing Golf Nation in the World

Japan, China, Korea, even Thailand. When it comes to golf in Asia, those are the countries that typically come to mind.

But Vietnam is trying to change that. Over the last decade, numerous courses designed by some of the biggest names in world golf have opened here. And by 2020, there could be as many as 100 layouts in this nation of almost 93 million people.

That's according to Golfasian, one of Asia's leading golf tour operators. And that seems realistic, especially when contracts like the one Jack Nicklaus's design firm recently signed with top Vietnamese golf developer BRG Group—a whopping 10-course deal—are considered.

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Of course, Vietnam also has a history that may make it a difficult—if not impossible—destination to visit. Many Americans still can't separate the country from the long and gruesome war we fought there. There are numerous reminders of the war years—including some of the most prominent and affecting tourist sites. But it's immediately obvious that the majority of the population has moved on, and life today flourishes with positive energy and overall happiness, which is evident in its respect and appreciation for visitors.



Ba Na Hills Golf Club, Da Nang



Dalat Palace Golf Club



The Bluffs at Ho Tram (near Vung Tau)

Golf has the capacity to help heal some of the wounds. The French built the first course in Vietnam in the 1920s, during the colonization period. But it wasn't until the mid-1990s that the government saw golf as a way to attract international commerce.

The game has since grown rapidly, especially since 2009, when the first course along the central coast—a naturally perfect template for golf course development—debuted. Although the numbers are still small, more Vietnamese (about 10,000) than visitors (7,000) are playing the country's courses now, according to the Financial Times.

Playing in Vietnam is quite different from playing in the U.S., and in many ways more like the UK. Having a caddie is mandatory at most courses, which helps tremendously—especially in reading the often offbeat, sloping greens. Caddying is seen as a well-paid job among youngsters, who typically live in nearby towns. You'll find the caddies, predominantly women, to be dedicated and hard working.

Pace of play is generally very fast. Since the game is still relatively new and played almost exclusively by the wealthy, most courses are pretty empty. It's not unusual to go around without seeing a group within three holes of you.

Golf here is very seasonal, too. Try to avoid the rainy season (June–September), because when it rains, it pours. The best time to play is from October–April. And don't worry if it starts getting dark, because most courses have bright lights over the fairways and greens. Greg Norman has designed a course in Cam Ranh (KN Golf Links) which is slated to open in the next few years.

What do you think guys? Next Avel Reunion?



Montgomerie Links, Da Nang



Vietnam Golf and Country Club, Saigon



Vietnamese Caddies

Hanoi Hannah Voice of Vietnam

Her name was Trinh Thi Ngo, but she called herself Thu Huong, “The Fragrance of Autumn.” We called her Hanoi Hannah. She was North Vietnam’s chief voice of propaganda, reaching out over the airwaves to American servicemen across South Vietnam, attempting to convince them that the war was immoral and that they should lay down their arms and go home. Her job was to chill and frighten, not to charm and seduce. Her English was almost impeccable; men would stumble across her while tuning their radios and be unable to turn away. “How are you G.I. Joe?” she asked in a June 1967 broadcast. “It seems to me that most of you are poorly informed about the going of the war, to say nothing about a correct explanation of your presence over here. Nothing is more confused than to be ordered into a war to die or to be maimed for life without the faintest idea of what’s going on.”

She was born in Hanoi in 1931. Her father owned the largest glass factory in Vietnam. She took a liking to American films. Her favorite was “Gone with the Wind,” which she watched five times. She wanted to enjoy films without the French or Vietnamese subtitles, so her family gave her private English lessons.

She joined the Voice of Vietnam, the country’s largest radio broadcaster, in 1955 as a volunteer. Her unaccented English, correct intonation and her large vocabulary soon got her a staff job reading the news to Asia’s English-speaking countries.

When the first American ground forces, the Marines, landed at Danang in 1965, V.O.V., which was based in the north, started propaganda broadcasts to the troops. By then the airwaves over North and South Vietnam had become a confusing battleground of conflicting propaganda voices. Working on the premise of “capture their minds and their hearts will follow,” both sides supported dozens of radio stations spewing malice and disinformation 24 hours a day. Hannah’s scripts were written by North Vietnam Army propaganda experts and advised by Cubans. Her programs were soon extended to 30 minutes and broadcast three times a day.

She was a source of news, as well. Hanoi Hannah broke one of the most shocking stories of the Vietnam War — the massacre of several hundred civilians in the village of My Lai in 1968. Just weeks after the massacre, Hannah accurately named the location and estimated the civilian death toll, but she misidentified the American Army division involved, enabling the Americans to deny the report and treat it like another example of disinformation from North Vietnam.

Her broadcasts were mostly exaggerated war news, encouragement to “frag” — assassinate — an officer and go AWOL, or suggestions that the soldiers’ wives or girlfriends were cheating on them. She was mostly greeted with loud laughter. But taped interviews with downed pilots or from American antiwar advocates like Jane Fonda were heard with anger. For bored G.I.s, Hannah’s broadcasts were often rare sources of amusement. Troops would laugh over Hannah’s attempts to scare them into defection or suggestions to frag an officer. However, they did wonder if she was as lovely as she sounded, and many considered her the most prominent enemy after Ho Chi Minh.

Hannah regularly addressed her comments to black American G.I.s. In one broadcast, she said, “A Vietnam black G.I. who refuses to be a victim of racism is Billy Smith. It seems on the morning of March 15th a fragmentation grenade went off in an officer’s barracks in Bien Hoa killing two gung-ho lieutenants. Smith was illegally searched, arrested and put in Long Binh jail and brought home for trial. The evidence that showed him guilty was this: being black, poor and against the war and refusing to be a victim of racism.” When violence broke out in Detroit on July 23, 1967, Hannah jumped on the news. American military stations were quiet; she broadcast every detail she had available.

Trinh Thi Ngo died on Sept. 30, 2016 at the age of 85. She was interred in Long Tri, Chau Than District, Long An province, following the Vietnamese custom of burial next to her husband and his family.

Her only son escaped Vietnam in 1973 and now lives in San Francisco.



NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

None Submitted

TAPS

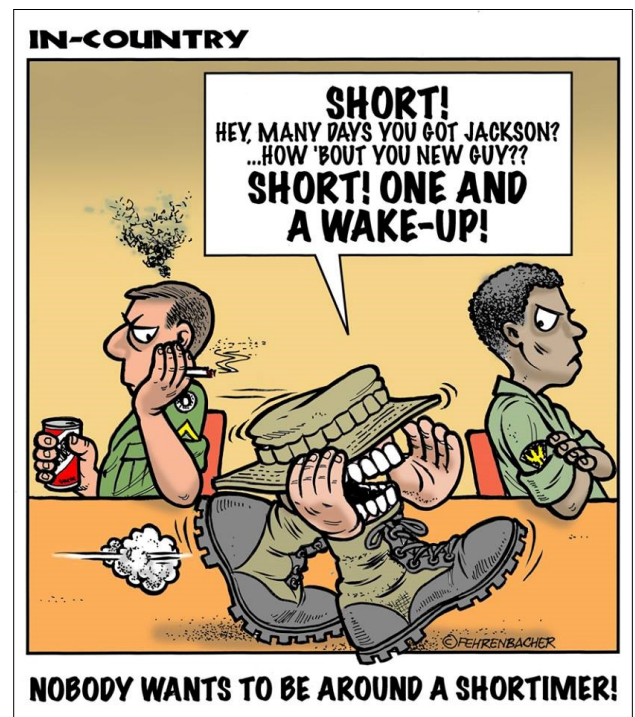
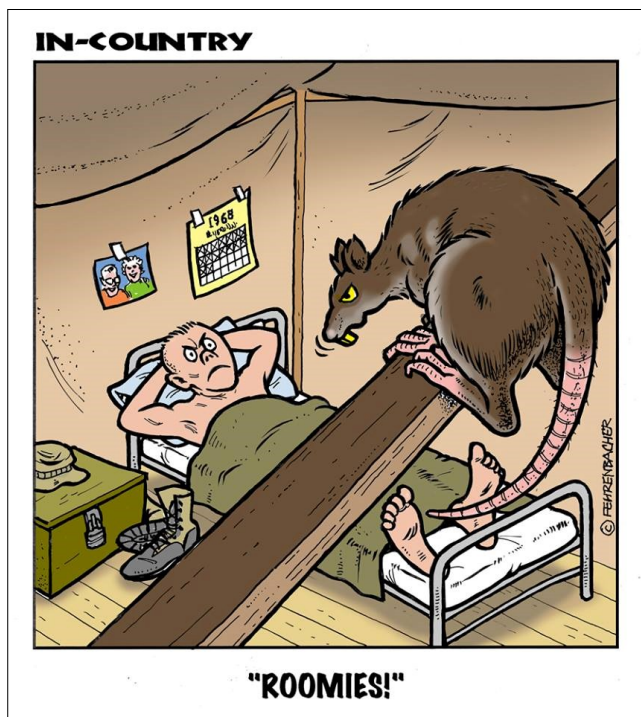
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PHOTOS

None Submitted

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL

None Submitted



AVEL VIETNAM



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