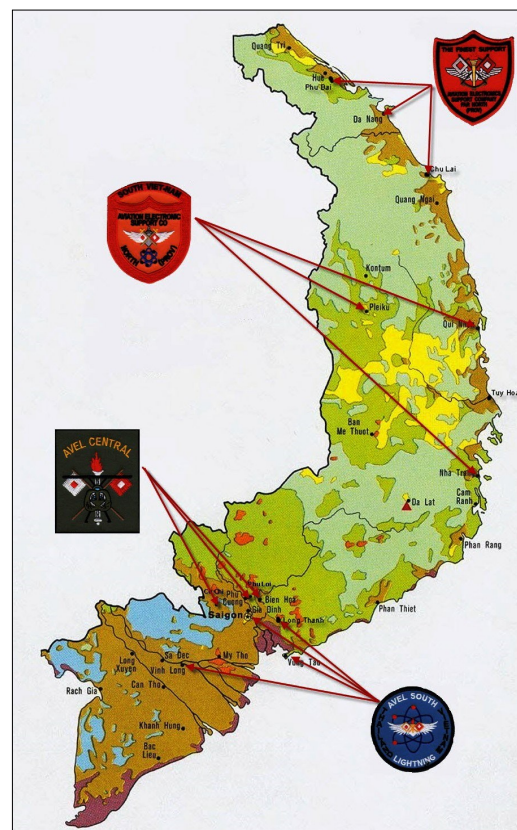


NOVEMBER!

The time is just flying by. I find it hard to believe that the Reunion is over and Veterans Day and Thanksgiving are rapidly approaching. As I look back I am almost shocked to realize that it has been over 50 years since we all came home from Vietnam. Unfortunately we have lost quite a few men since our Vietnam days. We are the survivors.

I don't remember the 1970 Thanksgiving in Phu Loi. It is lost in all the dusty memories in my mind.

I want to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving! I hope you can enjoy this holiday with family and friends, surrounded by warmth, friendship and love. No risk of rockets this Thanksgiving so relax and enjoy!

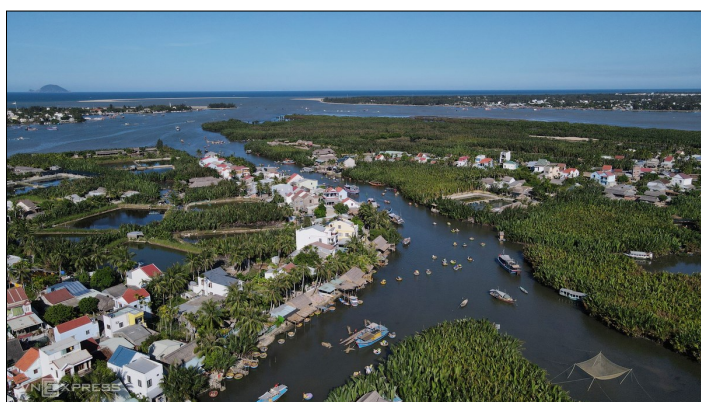


Nipa Palm Forest: War-time Shelter Turns Tourism Hotspot

The Bay Mau nipa palm forest near Hoi An, just south of Da Nang, a war-time revolutionary base, has become a peace-time eco-tourism hotspot famous for coracle tours.

The forest is around three kilometers from the UNESCO heritage town of Hoi An, in Cam Thanh Commune. It once sheltered North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops from shelling and raids during the Vietnam War.

In 2009, Quang Nam Province recognized the Bay Mau nipa palm forest as an eco-tourism site and allowed locals to offer coracle tours and homestay services to boost tourism and their income.



Locals say their ancestors brought nipa palm trees from the Mekong Delta 200 years ago. Over the years, as people noticed their ability to protect the coast from erosion, strong waves and winds, more nipa palm trees were planted.

Continued from Page 1



The nipa forest area was only around 8.6 acres at the beginning. Today, the total area has expanded to 296.5 acres.

The government has categorized nipa palms in Cam Thanh as a protected forest, which means they cannot be chopped down or otherwise exploited.

Coracles are small round boats that are used to explore the forest. The coracles are still used by fishermen all over the country.

A coracle tour that takes about 45 minutes costs \$6.44 per person including entry fees. Visitors can watch crab fishing and fishermen performing a unique dance on their coracles.

They can also learn about the daily life of local farmers while participating in traditional activities including fishing and enjoying dishes made with freshly-caught seafood.

Travelers who wish to explore the forest but stay off the water can also rent a motorbike for about \$5 a day or request a complimentary bicycle from the hotel reception.

Do you remember Vung Tau?



Anyone stationed at Vung Tau or lucky enough to receive an R & R there will remember the uncluttered beach. It was called Back Beach.

The photo below shows it in 1972 while the photo at left is it today. Hmm, seems they did pretty well after the war.

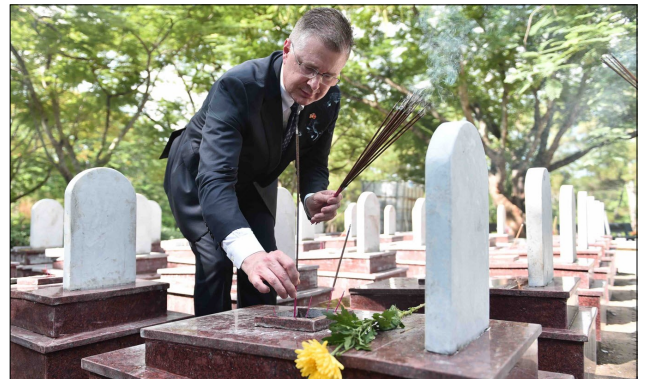


US Ambassador Pays Respects at Vietnamese Military Cemetery

Daniel Kritenbrink has become the first ever U.S. ambassador to Vietnam to visit the Truong Son Cemetery for North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers killed during the war.

More than 10,000 Vietnamese soldiers killed during the war (1955-1975) were laid to rest in the cemetery in Gio Linh District, Quang Tri Province in central Vietnam.

Kritenbrink's visit paid respects to the fallen troops in August 2019 came as part of an official visit to the province, a major theater of war.



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He performed traditional Vietnamese rituals including burning incense sticks and striking a bell.

Joining him was Quang Tri's Vice Chairman Hoang Nam.

As we all know, Quang Tri was a center for American military bases and principal battleground during the 1968 Tet Offensive, as well as the location of the demilitarized zone that separated North and South Vietnam.

Kritenbrink also visited Hien Luong Bridge on the Ben Hai River, once the boundary dividing the country.

The Geneva Agreements signed in 1954, which led to the French withdrawing from Indochina, including Vietnam, also divided Vietnam at the 17th Parallel. The division lasted 21 years.

The ambassador said the key message of his visit was for the two nations to heal the wounds of war and work together to overcoming its consequences.

Tim Page, Vietnam War Photographer, Dies at 78



British photographer Tim Page, one of the pre-eminent photographers of the Vietnam War, died at 78 on August 24, 2022 at his home in New South Wales, Australia.

His death, from liver cancer, was confirmed by his longtime partner, Marianne Harris, according to The New York Times.

Page was a freelancer and a free spirit whose Vietnam pictures appeared in publications around the world in the 1960s. Page was seriously wounded four times, most severely when a piece of shrapnel took a chunk out of his brain and sent him into months of recovery and rehabilitation.

Arriving in Vietnam in 1965 at 20, Page spent much of the next four years capturing the fighting with his camera, becoming one of the war's most renowned and fearless photojournalists, said The Washington Post.

Published in 1997 and co-written by his fellow photographer Horst Faas, "Requiem" was a memorial that he considered one of his most important contributions. The collection was put on permanent display in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Tim Page was born in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, in Britain on May 25, 1944, the son of a British sailor who was killed in World War II. He was adopted and never knew his birth mother.

2022 All AVEL Reunion in Charlotte (Huntersville)

The Reunion was a great success. I think everyone had a good time. There were some new faces this year and connections 50+ years in the making. There were 65 veterans and their guests in attendance. Our guest speaker was Grace Galloway, wife and widow of legendary Joe Galloway, reporter and author.

We presented a wreath at the Traveling Wall. We will never forget.

This was the last formal reunion. If you didn't make I am sorry. Time is marching on and though I am sure there will be some formal get togethers the large reunions have run their course.

WELCOME HOME



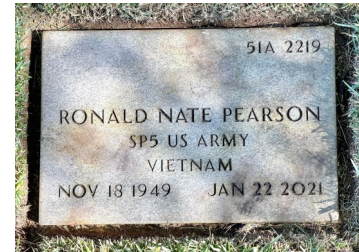
NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

None

TAPS

Ron Pearson

He served with the 263rd Maint. Co. LEM (Far North) at Chu Lai
from January 1970 to July 1971.
He died on 22 Jan 2021



PHOTOS

Gary Roth posted a picture of himself at Tuy Hoa in 1970
The reunion photos have been posted to the website.

Log on www.avelvietnam.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL/PHONE

Pete & Gloria Hoekema have moved
1435 Woodlawn Commons
Grand Haven. MI 49417
231-740-7013

Frank & Mei Repinski have moved
1004 Coast Grade Street
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Bill Toland has a new email: dtoland1@hotmail.com

CHANGES TO THE WEBSITE

The In Memoriam "Died After Tour" slide show has been posted to the website.
I had removed the contact pages from the website due to hackers. They are now back up and running.
If the hacking begins again I will take them down.

From War to Peace: Vietnam's Rubber Sandals March On

Made from recycled military truck or aircraft tires, Vietnam's hand-made rubber sandals, the famously rugged footwear of the Viet Cong, have travelled vast distances over the decades.

In the capital Hanoi, all kinds of shoes are on sale: from \$1,000 Gucci heels to \$2 plastic slippers.

But for those seeking a nod to yesteryear, the hard-soled rubber sandals -- evocative of the communist state's time under fire -- are available at markets and small stores alike.



For \$8 you can buy a standard pair at a shop outside a Hanoi museum.

The Vietnamese first began making rubber sandals in the late 1940s, during the First Indochina War against the French, using tires from an ambushed army truck.

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They found the sandals were cheap to make and survived well in wet, muddy and hilly conditions, as soldiers marched through thick jungle.

Later, during the Vietnam War, the simple but sturdy footwear became the standard footwear of the Viet Cong forces.

Even in peacetime, the design remains popular for sustainability reasons, said Nguyen Duc Truong, who has spent his life crafting the shoes.

"I think there is still much potential for rubber sandals," the 58-year-old said.

US-built Aircraft Revetments to be Removed

The Air and Air Defense Force of Vietnam planned to remove the old revetments in Ho Chi Minh Cities' Tan Son Nhut airport. Each of the revetments, built during the Vietnam War (1955-1975), is 20m long, 10m wide and 3m high. They are currently managed by the Vietnam People's Air Force.

The revetments are placed in the area where a drainage system and a taxiway have been built. Since the revetments prevent the taxiway from being used by large aircraft, the whole operation has been affected.

The work began in 2020 cost approximately \$4 million.

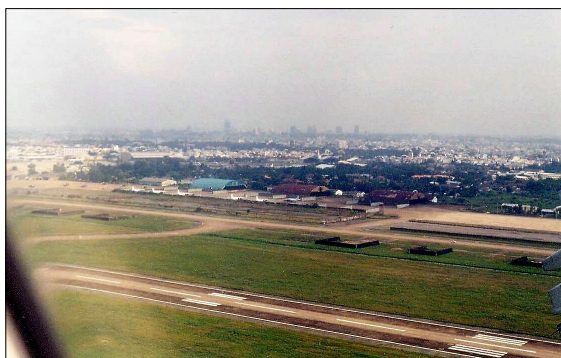
The revetments were a parking area for one or more aircraft surrounded by blast wall on three sides. The walls are as much about protecting neighboring aircraft as it is to protect the aircraft within the revetment.

The work also included the construction of a new taxiway.

New revetments serving both military and civilian aircraft will be built a distance away. Are they expecting rockets and mortars?

Tan Son Nhut is the largest and busiest airport in Vietnam, handling up to 840-850 flights and 130,000 passengers a day. It has been serving 36 million passengers a year since 2020 as opposed to its designed capacity of 25 million. The usage has increased approximately 10 percent a year since 2017.

In late April 2020, the project to upgrade Tan Son Nhut airport was completed costing more than over \$87 million.



A Classic Mike Royko for Veterans

In 1993, the late, great Chicago columnist Mike Royko wrote what may be the best column on Veterans Day ever. It's reprinted below.

I just phoned six friends and asked them what they will be doing on Veterans Day.

They all said the same thing: working.

Me, too.

There is something else we share. We are all military veterans.



And there is a third thing we have in common. We are not employees of the federal government, state government, county government, municipal government, the Postal Service, the courts, banks, or S & Ls, and we don't teach school.

If we did, we would be among the many millions of people who will spend Monday goofing off.

Which is why it is about time Congress revised the ridiculous terms of Veterans Day as a national holiday.

The purpose of Veterans Day is to honor all veterans.

So how does this country honor them?...

By letting the veterans, the majority of whom work in the private sector, spend the day at their jobs so they can pay taxes that permit millions of non-veterans to get paid for doing nothing.

As my friend Harry put it:

"First I went through basic training. Then infantry school. Then I got on a crowded, stinking troop ship that took 23 days to get from San Francisco to Japan. We went through a storm that had 90 percent of the guys on the ship throwing up for a week.

"Then I rode a beat-up transport plane from Japan to Korea, and it almost went down in the drink. I think the pilot was drunk.

"When I got to Korea, I was lucky. The war ended seven months after I got there, and I didn't kill anybody and nobody killed me.

"But it was still a miserable experience. Then when my tour was over, I got on another troop ship and it took 21 stinking days to cross the Pacific.

"When I got home on leave, one of the older guys at the neighborhood bar — he was a World War II vet — told me I was a shithead because we didn't win, we only got a tie.

"So now on Veterans Day I get up in the morning and go down to the office and work.

"You know what my nephew does? He sleeps in. That's because he works for the state.

"And do you know what he did during the Vietnam War? He ducked the draft by getting a job teaching at an inner-city school.

"Now, is that a raw deal or what?"

Of course that's a raw deal. So I propose that the members of Congress revise Veterans Day to provide the following:

All veterans — and only veterans — should have the day off from work. It doesn't matter if they were combat heroes or stateside clerk-typists.

Anybody who went through basic training and was awakened before dawn by a red-neck drill sergeant who bellowed: "Drop your whatsis and grab your socks and fall out on the road," is entitled.

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Those veterans who wish to march in parades, make speeches or listen to speeches can do so. But for those who don't, all local gambling laws should be suspended for the day to permit vets to gather in taverns, pull a couple of tables together and spend the day playing poker, blackjack, craps, drinking and telling lewd lies about lewd experiences with lewd women. All bar prices should be rolled back to enlisted men's club prices, Officers can pay the going rate, the stiff.

All anti-smoking laws will be suspended for Veterans Day. The same hold for all misdemeanor laws pertaining to disorderly conduct, non-felonious brawling, leering, gawking and any other gross and disgusting public behavior that does not harm another individual.

It will be a treasonable offense for any spouse or live-in girlfriend (or boyfriend, if it applies) to utter the dreaded words: "What time will you be home tonight?"

Anyone caught posing as a veteran will be required to eat a triple portion of chipped beef on toast, with Spam on the side, and spend the day watching a chaplain present a color-slide presentation on the horrors of VD.

Regardless of how high his office, no politician who had the opportunity to serve in the military, but didn't, will not be allowed to make a patriotic speech, appear on TV, or poke his nose out of his office for the entire day.

Any politician who defies this ban will be required to spend 12 hours wearing headphones and listening to tapes of President Clinton explaining his deferments.

Now, deal the cards and pass the tequila.

Pasteur Street Brewing Company - Jasmine IPA Beer

Beer in Vietnam seems to have come a long way since good old "33" and "Tiger" Beer. Even John Veers may approve.

John Reid was the co-founder of Pasteur Street Brewing in Saigon (I can't use Ho Chi Minh city, sorry). He was traveling the U.S. trying various micro beers while looking for a master brewer. Alex Violette was a brewer for Upslope Brewery in Colorado. Alex was making small batch beers. John tried his Thai IPA and immediately loved it.

Alex was lured away and moved to Saigon, initially to be a consulting brewer. But, fate took a hand and he stayed.



Alex soon found himself envious of whoever would actually be living and working in Saigon, with access to so many exciting ingredients he'd dreamed of brewing with. Before he even left the USA to take the position, he knew he wanted to brew a Jasmine IPA, and had already started making recipe notes.

As soon as he arrived in the city, he began experimenting. When trips to nearby Bến Thành Market for 10 grams of jasmine flowers gave way to requests for 10kg, he was told to go directly to the distributor. It wasn't long before his orders were large enough that he was put in direct contact with the farmers outside of Sa Pa. Now, Pasteur Street orders 500kg of fresh jasmine flowers every year to satiate the country's thirst for Jasmine IPA.

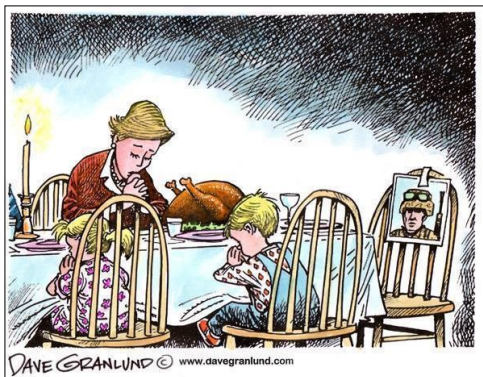




Alex wasn't sure how Vietnamese were going to respond to the Jasmine IPA. Craft beer was almost completely unknown in the country at the time, and IPAs are considerably more bitter than the light lagers locals were used to drinking. The Pasteur Street team prepared to bring their unique beers that combine American brewing techniques with fresh and local Vietnamese ingredients to the local public. They hoped that customers' familiarity with Jasmine via tea would be a helpful means to introduce them to the world of craft beer.

On the day the brewery opened, the Jasmine IPA was the top-seller, and since then it has been number one every single month. One bartender we spoke with said he thinks it's so popular because of how easy it is to drink. It's always the first beer he offers to any customer who has never had Pasteur Street before, telling them "this is our famous, most popular beer."

There are several Jasmine IPS beers on the market in the U.S. Strange Brew, Steamworks Brewing Company and Drizly all make one. Maybe we can get a review from our Brew Meister John Veers.



AVEL VIETNAM



Happy Veterans Day!

November 2022 Newsletter