

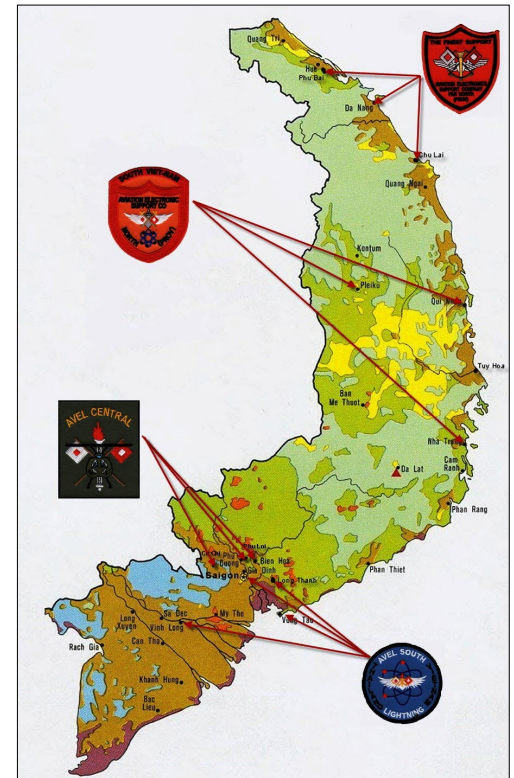
AVEL VIETNAM NEWSLETTER

October 2014

BRIGADIER GENERAL VIET XUAN LUONG



1st Cavalry Division Assistant Division Commander



Talk about history coming full circle--The new Assistant Division Commander of the 1st Cavalry Division is a refugee from Vietnam. Brigadier General Viet Xuan Luong emigrated from Vietnam with his family to the United States in 1975 as a political refugee. He began his military career upon graduating from the University of Southern California.

His first assignment was with 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment at Fort Carson, Colorado, where he served as Rifle Platoon Leader, Anti-Tank Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer, and Battalion Maintenance Officer. In 1993, Luong was assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and served in the 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, as the Battalion Assistant S-3 (Operations) and Commander of Alpha Company. While commanding Alpha Company, he deployed to Haiti in support of Operation Uphold Democracy as the Commander of the Theater Quick Reaction Force. Following his assignment at Fort Bragg, he was assigned to the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La., as an Observer Controller.

Following his assignment at JRTC, Luong attended the Command and General Staff College and then was assigned to the Southern European Task Force (SETAF). Luong served as SETAF G-3 Chief of Plans, and the Operations Officer and Executive Officer of 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade, in Vicenza, Italy. During his assignment at Southern European Task Force, Luong deployed to Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina on several occasions as part of the NATO Strategic Response Force.

Following this assignment, Brigadier General Luong was assigned to Joint Task Force North at Fort Bliss, Tx., where he served as a plans officer and Chief, Targeting and Exploitation Division in support of the Department of Homeland Defense. In 2005, he assumed command of the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division. During this command, Luong deployed his battalion in September 2005 as the Division Ready Force 1, in support of Operation American Assist, the Hurricane Katrina Relief efforts in New Orleans, and Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08, in support of the War on Terror.

In February 2009, Brigadier General Luong assumed command of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team (Rakkasans), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). In January 2010, 3rd BCT deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom 10-11. Following BCT command, Luong attended Stanford University as a National Security Fellow and subsequently served as the Deputy Director, Pakistan Afghanistan Coordination Cell, J5, The Joint Staff.

Brigadier General Luong holds a degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Southern California and a Master of Military Arts and Science.

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



"From Saigon, Ladies & Gentlemen, the Beat Goes On"

A frequently-heard AFVN-AM "liner" voiced by Gary Gears and Sebastian Cabot

Billy Williams worked at WJAX in Jacksonville before being drafted in the Army. He was trained at Ft. Gordon and received a 35L20 MOS. Of course he was then sent to Vietnam where, in October 1971 he joined Avel Central at Phu Loi. When a slot opened up at AFVN Billy enlisted the help of his CO, Major Joe Matos. Billy got the job and left Avel Central in November 1971. The following is from an article he wrote for the North Florida Amateur Radio Society. It has been edited.

After being drafted away by the Army from a daily shift at WJAX, I wound up doing music radio on AFVN-AM starting at the station on Monkey Mountain near Da Nang then going to network HQ in Saigon, the capital city.

From Saigon for six hours daily, my broadcasts went out over a chain of 50 KW and 10 KW AM transmitters covering South Vietnam from the Mekong Delta at the southern tip of Vietnam to the demilitarized zone bordering North Vietnam.

The Saigon-area transmitter was 50KW on 540 kHz. located in Cat Lo near Vung Tau, a seaside resort area on the South China Sea which was also a popular in-country R&R spot. Its signal strength provided booming coverage over a wide area. At night, signals reached Australia, India, Indonesia and even Hawaii occasionally. We got a reception report from California at least once. Along with other powerful transmitters on several frequencies in the Central Highlands and Da Nang, over 90% of South Vietnam was within AFVN's beam. AFVN had a staff of military and civilian broadcast engineers to maintain these far flung detachment sites. Several were also American Amateur Radio operators.

Several AFVN detachments were located near mountaintop Signal Corps sites close to larger towns. These were not huge mountains, maybe 2,000 or 3,000 ft. elevation. Driving a jeep or truck from ground level up a winding clay hardpan road took 20 minutes or so. But the added altitude enhanced signal propagation. Some signal sites and AFVN detachments had occasional danger from infiltrators, snipers, rocket and mortar attacks. Other hazards included mines, booby traps, B40 RPGs and exploding taxi cabs.

MOSTLY A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

Few aural entertainment alternatives existed for Americans in the Vietnam combat zone. A few soldiers owned short wave receivers. Some listened to records and tapes purchased at the PX or sent from home. But for most, a small AM transistor radio tuned to AFVN was the link to current hit music and to what was happening back in "the world." (U.S.)

Besides American & Allied military along with civilian contractors, a huge shadow audience of Asians who adored American music listened to AFVN-AM. Close to three million residents lived in or near Saigon and the station sound played everywhere.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST

Besides hosting a daily music DJ program live on AFVN-AM, my shift also included airing prerecorded music program segments from stateside luminaries including Wolfman Jack and Casey Kasem.

On AM, we rocked to Led Zeppelin, Steppenwolf, Jimi Hendrix, Animals, CCR, Rolling Stones and the like. The Vietnam War had its anthems which generated requests from the troops and these songs played on AFVN-AM. Hits like We Gotta Get Out Of This Place...Magic Carpet Ride...All Along The Watchtower....The Letter and Paint It Black which also were hits in the United States. Let's not forget Peter Paul & Mary's Leaving on a Jet Plane and yes, Barry Sadler's Ballad of the Green Berets, another favorite that produced numerous requests which I honored often.

Also, popular "regional" favorites. Jimmy Cliff's 1970 rendition of Vietnam comes to mind along with Cathy Gregory's After Cambodia and Jaimie Brocket's Talkin' Green Beret New Yellow Hydraulic Banana Teeny Bopper Blues--a challenge to say in one breath.

To country music listeners, Merle Haggard's Okie From Muskogee appealed on multiple levels both to those with pro-war outlooks and others with anti-war sentiments. For comic relief, AFVN-AM transmitted daily short serials like Chickenman and the Tooth Fairy--Benton Harbor and Newton Snookers respectively.

FINAL YEARS OF AMERICAN RADIO IN SAIGON

By 1972, progress in stabilizing the Thieu administration and South Vietnamese military was minimal at best. Many more years of U.S. participation were still needed to make South Vietnam a viable nation on its own. It was obvious that Vietnam was becoming a bottomless money pit for American dollars. Vietnamization, with former American responsibilities assumed by the South Vietnamese, seemed the only option short of an expensive long-term U. S. recommitment. Vietnamization success seemed to be unrealistic optimism, not unlike more recent American efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Paris Peace Agreement took effect in early 1973. All AFVN detachments closed. AFVN-AM and TV signed off. AFVN-FM Saigon became the American Radio Service to serve a small residual group of Americans allowed to remain under terms of the peace agreement.



Billy Williams at work!



Billy Williams on the left

NEW AVEL VETERANS FOUND

Wheeler, Ronald (SP/5)

13434 Marion St.

Thornton, CO 80241

Avel Central, Bien Hoa: April 1969 - April 1970

rbwheeler@live.com

MOS: 35L20

AGENT ORANGE

TAPS

No deaths reported

PHOTOS

None submitted

AGENT ORANGE AWARENESS

October was Agent Orange Awareness Month. Have you had your Agent Orange Assessment at the VA?

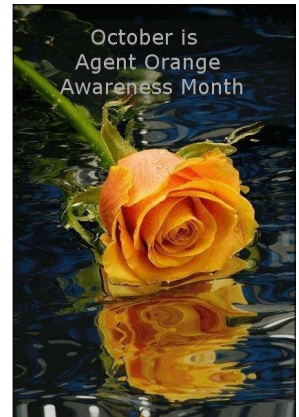
I can't stress enough how important it is that you get to the VA and have this done. We are losing guys every day of Agent Orange related illnesses. Just look at our roster and see how many of our troops have Agent Orange related illnesses. **DON'T DELAY! GET TO THE VA!**

Please phone your U.S. Senators, in their D.C. offices and ask them to support **SB 2738 "The Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2014"**.

This is a Bi-partisan Bill sponsored by Richard Blumenthal (I-CT). The Vietnam Veterans of America is really pushing for research and care for the following four or five generations of Vietnam Vets. Many veterans and their children are speaking out about the medical problems they have had. This Bill, and several others to follow won't help Vets, but it will help do the research to help our children and grand children and beyond. They are the ones we can help. Since the Government sprayed thousands of G.I.s without telling what it was, or giving us warnings, the Government has screwed-up our families for generations.

CALL YOUR SENATORS TODAY! You know it's only the squeaky wheel gets the grease.

Check the website www.avelvietnam.com for links on Agent Orange.



JOKE OF THE DAY

On some airports civilian aircraft are on one side of the field and military aircraft use the other side, with the control tower in the middle. One day the tower received a call from an aircraft asking, "What time is it?"

The tower responded, "Who is calling?"

The aircraft replied, "What difference does it make?"

The tower replied, "It makes a lot of difference... If it is a commercial flight, it is **3 o'clock**. If it is an Army aircraft, it is 1500 hours. If it is a Navy aircraft, it is 6 bells. If it is a Marine Corps aircraft, the big hand is on the 12 and the little hand is on the 3. If it is an Air Force aircraft, it's Wednesday afternoon and 120 minutes to "Happy Hour."



AVEL VIETNAM



Octoberber 2014 Newslet-



AVEL Vietnam
2103 E. Robinhood Lane
Arlington Hts., IL 60004

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Mail To: