It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.

Charles Dickens

- Rock and Roll
- Free Love
- Drugs
- Race to the Moon
- Vietnam War
- Protests/Demonstrations
- Race Riots
- Women’s Lib
- Assassinations
- Segregation/Integration
- Busing
- Selective Service

The Lincoln Memorial has been the site of civil rights demonstrations for nearly six decades. On its steps Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke of his dream for America:

...I have a dream...

...I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama...will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls...I have a dream today.

...From every mountain side, let freedom ring.

...Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we’re free at last!
27 Jim Crow laws were passed in the Lone Star state. The state enacted one anti-segregation law in 1871 barring separation of the races on public carriers. This law was repealed in 1889.

1915: Miscegenation [State Code]
- The penalty for intermarriage is imprisonment in the penitentiary from two to five years.

1919: Public accommodations [Statute]
- Ordered that Negroes were to use separate branches of county free libraries.

1922: Voting Rights [Statute]
- “...in no event shall a Negro be eligible to participate in a Democratic party primary election held in the State of Texas...” Overturned in 1927 by U.S. Supreme Court in Nixon v. Herndon.

1925: Education [Statute]
- Required racially segregated schools.

1925: Public accommodations [Statute]
- Separate branches for Negroes to be administered by a Negro custodian in all county libraries.

More than 400 state laws, constitutional amendments, and city ordinances legalizing segregation and discrimination were passed in the United States between 1865 and 1967.

Jim Crow Laws: Texas

Dallas, 1955
Protesting segregation of the Texas state fair—R.C. Hickman Collection

Richmond, VA
Historical marker posted in the 1920s

This 1911 photo shows an example of the repression faced by African Americans during the days of white supremacist rule. This graffiti was found at the county line between Edwards and Kimble Counties. R.S. means Rock Springs in Edwards County. J.C. means Junction City in Kimble County. African Americans were not welcome in either county. Photographed July 8, 1911 by L.K. Smoot and presented to the Texas State Library the same year. Prints and Photographs Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.
It fell to President Kennedy to take the space race seriously. "I believe this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the Earth," he said, in what became one of the most famous speeches of his presidential career.

In May 1961, President Kennedy grasped the nettle, and set the USA on course for the moon. The United States and the U.S.S.R. spent huge amounts of money trying to outdo each other in the 'race for space', a contest which drove scientific advancement along at a phenomenal pace, providing new materials and technologies such as 'Teflon' and the laser. The spaceflight program also brought us new heroes, tragedy and excitement which peaked with the first manned lunar landing on the Sea of Tranquility at 09:18 BST on 20th July 1969. Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the surface of the moon at 03:56 BST on 21st July 1969, causing millions of us to stay up all night watching the television reports and live picture coverage.

John Glenn shows Kennedy the space capsule in which Glenn circled the globe three times.

http://www.sixtiescity.com/Events/SixtiesEvents.shtml

Do not hallucinate.
The National Organization for Women is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States. NOW has 500,000 contributing members and 550 chapters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Since its founding in 1966, NOW's goal has been "to take action" to bring about equality for all women.

**TIMELINE**

**1960**
- North Vietnam Imposes Universal Military Conscription
- Soviets Shoot Down US Spy Plane, Capture Pilot
- Vietcong Formed
- Kennedy Meets Khrushchev in Vienna
- US Air Force begins using Agent Orange
- Bay of Pigs Debacle
- President Kennedy authorizes "Green Berets," a Special Forces

**1961**
- Battle of Ap Bac
- Peace Corps Program Launched
- JFK's "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country"
- Bay of Pigs Debacle
- Kennedy Meeting with Khrushchev

**1962**
- US Military Employed Agent Orange
- Nuclear Pledge BWB
- US-Soviet Showdown over Cuban Missile Crisis
- Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner"
- Vietnam Pham Van Dong
- Bay of Pigs Debacle
- President Kennedy assassinated in Dallas
- Kennedy's death meant that the problem of how to proceed in Vietnam fell squarely into the lap of his vice president, Lyndon Johnson
- Buddhists Protest Against Diem
- Kennedy's death meant that the problem of how to proceed in Vietnam fell squarely into the lap of his vice president, Lyndon Johnson
- Buddhists Protest Against Diem
- Vietnam Pham Van Dong
- Vietnamese government overthrown and replaced with Diem
- Diem was overthrown and replaced by the US-supported government
- Buddhist monks protest Diem's actions against religious minorities and the measures he took to silence them. In a show of protest, Buddhist monks start setting themselves on fire in public places.
- Diem Overthrown, Murdered
- With tacit approval of the United States, operatives within the South Vietnamese military overthrow Diem. He and his brother Nhu are shot and killed in the aftermath.
1964

- General Nguyen Khanh Seizes Power in Saigon
  In a bloodless coup, General Nguyen Khanh seizes power in Saigon. South Vietnam's junta leader, Major General Nguyen Van Nhu, is placed under house arrest, but is allowed to remain as a figurehead chief-of-state.

- Gulf of Tonkin Resolution
  On August 2, three North Vietnamese PT boats allegedly fire torpedoes at the USS Maddox, a destroyer located in the international waters of the Tonkin Gulf, some thirty miles off the coast of North Vietnam. The attack comes after six months of covert US and South Vietnamese naval operations. A second, even more highly disputed attack, is alleged to have taken place on August 4.

- Debate on Gulf of Tonkin Resolution
  The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution is approved by Congress on August 7 and authorizes President Lyndon Johnson to "take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression." The resolution passes unanimously in the House, and by a margin of 2-1 in the Senate. The resolution allows Johnson to wage all-out war against North Vietnam without ever securing a formal Declaration of War from Congress.

- Vietnam Attack Bunkers Air Base
- US Defeats Goldwater
  Lyndon Johnson is elected in a landslide over Republican Barry Goldwater of Arizona. During the campaign, Johnson's position on Vietnam appeared to lean toward de-escalation of US involvement, and sharply contrasted the more militant views held by Goldwater.

1965

- Operation Rolling Thunder Deployed
  Sustained American bombing raids of North Vietnam, dubbed Operation Rolling Thunder, begin in February. The nearly continuous air raids would go on for three years.

- Madness at Danang
  The first American combat troops, the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, arrive in Vietnam to defend the US airfield at Danang. Scattered Vietcong gunfire is reported, but no Americans are injured.

- Heavy Fighting at Ia Drang Valley
  The first conventional battle of the Vietnam war takes place as American forces clash with North Vietnamese units in the Ia Drang Valley. The US 1st Air Cavalry Division employs its newly enhanced technique of aerial reconnaissance to finally defeat the NVA, although heavy casualties are reported on both sides.

- US Troops Reach Top 250,000
  The practice of protesting US policy in Vietnam by holding "teach-ins" at colleges and universities becomes widespread. The first "teach-in," featuring seminars, rallies, and speeches -- takes place at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor in March. In May, a nationally broadcast "teach-in" reaches students and faculty at over 100 campuses.

1966

- B-52s Bomb North Vietnam
  In an effort to disrupt movement along the Mopas Pass -- the main route used by the NVA to send personnel and supplies through Laos and into South Vietnam -- American B-52s bomb North Vietnam for the first time.

- South Vietnam Government Troops Take Hue and Danang
  US President Lyndon Johnson meets with South Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Cao Ky and his military advisors in Honolulu. Johnson promises to continue to send South Vietnam on its path to self-defense from the North, but adds that the US will be monitoring South Vietnam's efforts to expand democracy and improve economic conditions for its citizens.

- Vietnam War Commemoration
  Veterans from World Wars I and II, along with veterans from the Korean war stage a protest rally in New York City. Discharge and separation papers are burned in protest of US involvement in Vietnam.

- Congresswoman Warren and the US Draft
  The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) issues a report claiming that the US military draft places "a heavy discriminatory burden on minority groups and the poor." The group also calls for a withdrawal of all US troops from Vietnam.

1967

- Operation Cedar Falls Begins
  In a major ground war effort dubbed Operation Cedar Falls, about 16,000 US and 14,000 South Vietnamese troops set out to destroy Vietcong operations and supply lines near Saigon. A massive system of tunnels is discovered in an area called the Iron Triangle, an apparent headquarters for Vietcong personnel.

- Bancroft Replaces Cabot Lodge as South Vietnam Ambassador
  Calling the US "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world," Martin Luther King publicly speaks out against US policy in Vietnam. King later endorses peace, evasion and suggests a merger between anti-war and civil rights groups.

- University of Wisconsin Students Demand Corporate Recruiters for Now
  Chemical companies protest a "teach-in" at the University of Wisconsin, considering it a threat to their recruitment efforts.

- McNamara Calls Bombing Ineffective
  Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, appearing before a Senate subcommittee, testifies that US bombing raids against military objectives. McNamara maintains that movement of supplies to South Vietnam has not been reduced, and neither the economy nor the morale of the North Vietnamese have been broken.

1968

- News Breaks: Secret Bombing of Cambodia
  In an effort to destroy Communist supply routes and base camps in Cambodia, President Nixon gives the go-ahead to "Operation Breakout." The covert bombing of Cambodia is not revealed to the American public.

- Asian American Movement Takes Root
  The Asian American Movement, a coalition of groups representing the interests of Asian Americans, is formed.

- Heavy Fighting at Ia Drang Valley
  The US 1st Air Cavalry Division employs its newly enhanced technique of aerial reconnaissance to finally defeat the NVA, although heavy casualties are reported on both sides.

- My Lai Massacre Reaches US
  The first time of the atrocities committed by Lt. William Calley and his men is public. The incident is known as the My Lai Massacre.

- Dow Recruiters Driven From Wisconsin Campus
  Dow Chemical recruiters are driven off the Wisconsin campus by students protesting US policy in Vietnam.

1969

- Vietnamization Announced
  Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird describes a policy of "Vietnamization" when discussing a diminishing role for the US military in Vietnam. The objective of the policy is to shift the burden of defeating the Communists onto the South Vietnamese Army and away from the United States.

- Ho Chi Minh Dies At Age 79
  Death of the controversial Vietnamese leader is announced.

- Through the Eyes of the President: Lyndon Johnson
  Through the reporting of journalist Seymour Hersh, Americans read for the first time the thoughts and actions of President Lyndon Johnson.
1970

Shah趙 Oužted in Cambodia
Prince Šah’s attempt to maintain Cambodia’s neutrality while waged in neighboring Vietnam forced him to make opportunistic alliances with China, and then the United States. Such vacillating weakened his government, leading to a coup orchestrated by his defense minister, Lon Nol.

National Guardsmen open fire on a crowd of student antiwar protesters at Ohio’s Kent State University, resulting in the death of four students and the wounding of eight others. President Nixon publicly deplores the actions of the Guardsmen, but cautions:

"...when dissent turns to violence it invites tragedy." Several of the protesters had been hurling rocks and empty four-liter cans at the Guardsmen.

Kissinger and Lt. Col. Begin Secret Talks

President Nixon announces his intention to visit The People’s Republic of China. Nixon’s gesture toward China is seen by the administration as a move to create discord between themselves and their Chinese allies.

1971

In a move that troubles the North Vietnamese, President Nixon announces his intention to visit The People’s Republic of China. Nixon’s gesture toward China is seen by the Nixon administration as an effort to create discord between themselves and their Chinese allies.

1974

Trênh Announces Renewal of War

According to a report issued by The National Academy of Science, use of chemical herbicides during the war caused long-term damage to the ecology of Vietnam. Subsequent inquiries will focus on the connection between certain herbicides, particularly Agent Orange, and widespread reports of cancer, skin diseases, and other disorders on the part of individuals exposed to them.

Nixon impeachment Hearings Begin

In May, impeachment hearings against President Richard Nixon are begun by the House Judiciary Committee. Among the articles of impeachment introduced is a resolution condemning Nixon for the secret bombing of Cambodia.

Nixon Resigns

Commendants Plan Major Offensive

With North Vietnamese forces in the South believed to be at their highest levels ever, South Vietnamese leaders gird themselves for an expected Communist offensive of significant proportions.

1975

Communist Forces Captured Phuoc Long Province

The South Vietnamese Army loses twenty planes in a failed effort to defend Phuoc Long, a key province just north of Saigon. North Vietnamese leaders interpret the US’s complete lack of response to the siege as an indication that they could move more aggressively in the South.

Trênh Falls to Community

Commendants Take Aim at Saigon

The North Vietnamese initiate the Ho Chi Minh Campaign — a concerted effort to "liberate" Saigon. Under the command of General Dung, the NVA sets out to capture Saigon by late April, in advance of the rainy season.

Ford Calls Vietnam War "Finished"

Anticipating the fall of Saigon to Communist forces, US President Gerald Ford announces in New Orleans, announcing that as far as the US is concerned, the Vietnam War is "finished."

South Vietnamese President Duong Van Minh delivers an unconditional surrender to the Communists on April 30. North Vietnam Commander Do Tai accepts the surrender and assures Minh that, “...only the Americans have been defeated.” NVA soldiers, North Vietnamese Americans, and Saigonese, the last two US servicemen to die in Vietnam are killed when their helicopter crashes.

1972

President Nixon’s visits to China are often called "historic." Responding to charges by Democratic presidential candidates that he is not moving fast enough to end American involvement, President Nixon orders a massive reduction in the American presence in Vietnam. He proposes "peace talks" to be held in Paris, France. In an attempt to force North Vietnamese to make concessions in the ongoing peace talks, Nixon administration officials allow bombing and support to continue in Cambodia, an action that makes it clear to the North Vietnamese that no section of Vietnam is off-limits to bombing raids.

Kissinger says: "Peace Is At Hand"

Henry Kissinger and Lt. Col. The Paris agreement in principle on several key issues leading to a cease-fire in Vietnam. Kissinger’s view that “peace is at hand,” is denied subsequently by South Vietnamese President Thênh’s opposition to the agreement.

1973

A cease-fire agreement, in the words of Richard Nixon, “brings peace with honor in Vietnam and Southeast Asia,” is signed by him on January 28.

1974

Last American Troops Leave Vietnam

United States Weaponry

VIETNAM WAR

Commanded US military operations in Vietnam from 1964-68. His highly publicized, positive assessments of US military prospects in Vietnam were shattered by the 1968 Tet offensive, in which Communist forces boldly attacked cities and towns throughout South Vietnam. Westmoreland later served as the Army’s chief of staff.

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The Soviet MiG-21 served as the primary high-altitude fighter in the North Vietnamese arsenal. Although most of their weapons, uniforms, and equipment were provided by the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, the North Vietnamese also carried arms captured from the French and even the Japanese in the earlier Indochinese wars. NVA troops more often used standard-issue gear; their Viet Cong counterparts dressed as the peasants in whose villages they sought harbor, and frequently employed improvised weapons.

**SK-47 rifle**

You did not want to get too close to the PNH’s cause they probably wouldn’t survive very long.

**THE ONGOING AND escalating war in Vietnam was the focus of many of the major protests during the sixties. At the time of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, United States military forces in Vietnam numbered less than 15,000. Under President Lyndon Johnson the numbers grew dramatically, and by 1966 more than 500,000 troops were deployed in the area.**

**Napalm, or jellied gasoline, is a flammable liquid fuel weapon invented in 1942. It is usually deployed as an incendiary bomb. The liquid is formulated to burn at a specific rate and stick to objects and people. In 1980, its use against civilian populations was banned by a United Nations convention. The name is a portmanteau of naphthenic palmitic acids which were added to gasoline to create the original napalm developed by the United States during World War II.**
forgotten. Of all of our mistakes in Southeast Asia, this is the most tragic.

of thousands. Technically, those children are American Citizens left abroad and

Agent Orange

Agent Orange was a herbicide developed for military use. Chemically, the product was a 50/50 mix of two herbicides, 2,4-D (2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) and 2,4,5-T (2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid). These herbicides were both developed as weed killers in the 1940’s, and were effective against broad leaf plants and several crops.

NAPALM - a blend of jet fuel and adhesive

Kim Phuc

No one in the Vietnam veterans exposure to dioxin through Agent Orange presents the same pattern, developmental or medical condition was developed. The best is this: how does one measure exposure? How do we determine the effect of Agent Orange to what degree and extent, and what if any, is the resultant harm of that exposure?

Some of the key elements of an accurate measuring the problem include:

1. An estimated 9 million men and women served in Vietnam. During their tour or tours, they may have been exposed for a period of time. Whether this exposure was a one-time event or a chronic condition is impossible to determine.

2. Agent Orange was sprayed in what was called the "arsenal" of chemical warfare. It was a mix of jet fuel and adhesive, but also contained dioxin.

3. Agent Orange was not sprayed with precision. It was sprayed in areas where the person was "overexposed" to Agent Orange. It was not limited to specific areas or times.

4. Degree of exposure: This is sometimes called the dose response factor in science, and it is determined by the health effects of an exposure. In other words, it may be difficult to determine the health effects of an exposure.

5. Delay: Many diseases, including cancer, have long latency periods. It is possible, therefore, that a person may get cancer, and then be exposed to Agent Orange, and then be exposed to other additional factors, and then develop cancer.

CASUALTIES OF WAR?

These little girls were having a going away party. It was their time to leave. These little girls were having a going away party. It was their time to leave. They would soon be forced into prostitution for the new children coming in. They would soon be forced into prostitution for the new children coming in.

What happened to all of the War children that GI’s left behind. There were literally tens of thousands. Technically, those children are American Citizens left abroad and forgotten. Of all of our mistakes in Southeast Asia, this is the most tragic.

John F. Kennedy

A senator from Massachusetts, Kennedy was elected president of the US in 1960, becoming the youngest ever to hold the post. Kennedy tripled the amount of US aid to Vietnam and increased the number of US military advisors there. His administration supported the overthrow of South Vietnam’s Ngo Dinh Diem. Three weeks after Diem died in a murderous coup, Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.
Democratic Republic of Vietnam from 1945-69. Ho embraced nationalization policy, leading to a nearly continuous war against the French and, later, the United States. He founded the Indochinese Communist Party. After adopting equal rights in Indochina, he later moved to Hong Kong, where he led anti-French struggles. In 1919, he petitioned the powers at the Versailles peace talks to recognize Vietnam as an independent country.

In 1961, Ho was elected as the president of Vietnam, and he remained in power until his death in 1969. He led the Vietnam war against the United States, and his popularity plummeted. On March 31, 1968, Johnson publicly announced that he had reduced bombing campaigns in North Vietnam and that he would not seek reelection.

John F. Kennedy’s vice president, Johnson assumed the presidency when Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Johnson’s administration increased US involvement in Vietnam, and his popularity plummeted. On March 31, 1968, Johnson publicly announced that he had reduced bombing campaigns in North Vietnam and that he would not seek reelection.

Lyndon B. Johnson

Richard M. Nixon

Nixon served as a senator from California, then as Dwight D. Eisenhower’s vice president. Defeated by John F. Kennedy in the presidential race of 1960, he came back to win two terms as president in 1968 and 1972. In his first term, Nixon carried out a Vietnamization policy, whereby many US troops were withdrawn from Vietnam and replaced by members of the South Vietnamese army. Nonetheless, US troops remained on the ground, and the Nixon administration continued to provide supplies and air support for the Vietnamese, and expanded the war into Laos and Cambodia.


My Lai Massacre

On March 16, 1968, the angry and frustrated men of Charlie Company, 11th Brigade, American Division entered the village of My Lai. “This is what you’ve been waiting for—search and destroy—and you’ve got it,” said their superior officers. A short time later the killing began. After news of the atrocities surfaced, it sent shockwaves through the US political establishment, the military’s chain of command, and an already divided American public.

My Lai lay in the South Vietnamese district of Son My, a heavily mined area of Vietcong entrenchment. Numerous members of Charlie Company had been killed or injured in the area during the preceding weeks. The agitated troops, under the command of Lt. William Calley, entered the village poised for engagement with the elusive Vietcong.

As the “search and destroy” mission unfolded it soon degenerated into the massacre of over 300 apparently unarmed civilians including women, children, and the elderly. Calley ordered his men to enter the village firing, though there had been no report of opposing fire. According to eyewitness reports offered after the event, several old men were bayoneted, praying women and children were shot in the back of the head, and at least one girl was raped, and then killed. For his part, Calley was said to have rounded up a group of the villagers, ordered them into a ditch, and then opened fire with a fury of machine gun fire.

My Lai Massacre

Kent State - Massacre

May 4

43 windows are broken in downtown Kent during a spontaneous, militant rampage by hundreds of angry anti-war students and some anti-war Vietnam veterans. Most banks, loan companies, public utility offices and other “political” windows were vandalized. Only $5,000 worth of damage occurred but major anti-war sentiment was created that continued until May 4.

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May 2

Kent State - Massacre

Kent State University’s ROTC building was set on fire on May 6, 1970, an event that sparked the Kent State Massacre. The university’s Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) building, a faculty, and students were inside, and the fire spread to the nearby Prentice Hall dormitory. The building was occupied by students and faculty, making it a target for the National Guard.

May 3

Kent State - Massacre

The conservative Republican, pro-war, Ohio Governor James Rhodes arrived at Kent State University’s ROTC building on May 3, 1970, to deliver a commencement address. His speech was met with protests, and students began to march on the campus. The National Guard was called in to disperse the crowd, using tear gas and live ammunition.

May 4

Kent State - Massacre

On May 4, 1970, a mass protest was held on the Kent State University campus, with over 1,000 students and guardsmen present. During the protest, a National Guard sniper fired into the crowd, killing four students and wounding nine others. The incident caused widespread backlash and international controversy.

May 5

Kent State - Massacre

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May 6

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Woodstock '69

On the negative side, according to police reports, there were 2 deaths (but there were also 2 births!). Although there were more than a few drug busts, there were no reports of burglary or violent crime in the surrounding communities. (Trespassing was a definite problem though and one judge did get his lights knocked out!). On the positive side, 500,000 young citizens were virtually left on their own and discovered the words Sharing, Helping, Consideration, and Respect to be very powerful. Thousands left the Woodstock event with a totally different outlook on life. And through it all, the Music Flowed...

Awesome Musicians!

- Joan Baez
- Arlo Guthrie
- Tim Hardin
- Incredible String Band
- Ravi Shankar
- Richie Havens
- Sly and the Family Stone
- Bert Sommer
- Sweetwater
- Quill
- Canned Heat
- Creedance Clearwater Revival
- Jefferson Airplane
- The Who
- Grateful Dead
- The Band
- Ten Years After
- Johnny Winter
- Jimi Hendrix
- Janis Joplin
- Joe Cocker
- Mountain
- Melanie
- Sha Na Na
- John Sebastian
- Country Joe and the Fish
- Paul Butterfield Blues Band

If you really love a balloon, you will set it free. Bus for sale – wipers don’t work and neither does guru. Legalize what, tie-dye or pot?

The following public domain information is a transcript from the US Congress House Committee on Internal Security, Travel to Hostile Areas, HR 16742, 1972, page 7671. From the CompuServe Military Veteran’s Forum.) [Radio Hanoi attributes talk on DRV visit to Jane Fonda; from Hanoi in English to American servicemen involved in the Indochina War, 1 PM GMT, 22 August 1972. Text: Here’s Jane Fonda telling her impressions at the end of her visit to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam: ‘Talons recorded female voice with American accent:]
But now, despite the bombs, despite the crimes being created, being committed against them by Richard Nixon, these people own their own land, build their own schools, the children learning literacy. Illiteracy is being wiped out, there is no more prostitution as there was during the time when this was a French colony. In other words, the people have taken power into their own hands, and they are controlling their own lives.

And after 4,000 years of struggling against nature and foreign invaders—and the last 25 years prior to the revolution, of struggling against French colonialism—I don’t think that the people of Vietnam are about to compromise in any way, shape or form about the freedom and independence of their country, and I think Richard Nixon would do well to read Vietnamese history, particularly their poetry, and particularly the poetry written by Ho Chi Minh.

I cherish the way a farmer evacuated from Hanoi, without hesitation, offered me, an American, their best individual possessions while US bombs fell near by. The daughter arms, cheek against cheek. It was on the road back from Hanoi, where I had witnessed the systematic destruction of Vietnamese targets—schools, hospitals, pagodas, factories, houses, and the rice system.

As I left the United States two weeks ago, Nixon was again telling the American people that he was winding down the war, but in the rattle-strewn streets of Hanoi, his words echoed with sinister (words indelible) of a true killer. And like the young Vietnamese woman I held in my arms, clinging to me tightly and I pressed my cheek against hers—I thought, this is a war against Vietnam perhaps, but the tragedy is America’s.

One thing that I have learned beyond a shadow of a doubt since I’ve been in this country is that Ho will never be able to break the spirit of these people; he’ll never be able to turn Vietnam north and south, into a new colony of the United States by bombing, by invading, by attacking in any way. There has only to go into the countryside and listen to the peasants describe the lives they led before the revolution to understand why every bomb that is dropped only strengthens their determination to resist.

But no moral issue ever trumps the issue of survival. Mr. Kerry, in the 1970 rally, the culmination of a three-day protest hike from Moorestown, N.J., to Valley Forge, which featured a speech by Miss Fonda, said that he was a close friend of her father Henry Fonda.

Ho Chi Minh said that he won the Vietnam war not in the jungles of Vietnam but on the streets of America where protesters fought the war for him.

In his 1985 memoir about the war, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap wrote that if it weren’t for organizations like Kerry’s Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Hanoi would have surrendered to the U.S.—according to Fox News Channel war historian Oliver North.

I will go to my grave regretting the photograph of me in an anti—aircraft aircraft, which looks like I was trying to shoot at American planes. Kerry led the Vietnam protests. I will go to my grave regretting the most horrible thing I could possibly have done, it was just straightforward.

Sen. John McCain revealed that his North Vietnamese captors had used reports of Kerry—led protests to taunt him and his fellow prisoners. Retired General George S. Patton III angrily noted that Kerry’s actions had “given aid and comfort to the enemy.”

“I want my war—mypaged me, I didn’t ask you, and I did what I had to do to win... Then I came back to the world and I saw all these maggots at the airport, protecting me, spitting on me, calling me a baby killer.”

John Rambo


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On 23 August, Wiltsie became part of TG 75.9, operating off the Northern Military Region I. While providing gunfire support for Operation “Lam Son 72,” the destroyer fired some 1,803 rounds of 5-inch shells to support the ARVN 147th Brigade in efforts to destroy enemy forces in their area. Typhoon “Elsie,” which was approaching near the DMZ, temporarily suspended Wiltsie’s gunfire support operations while she sidestepped the tropical disturbance by moving to safer waters. Resuming her operations after three days of typhoon evasion, Wiltsie returned to the “gun line” and supported ARVN operations around Quang Tri City. Ordered to proceed south on 6 September, Wiltsie departed the waters off northern South Vietnam to fire gunnery missions supporting the 2nd ARVN Division in the vicinity of Chu Lai.

Terminating her operations supporting the 2nd ARVN Division to shift to interdiction of waterborne logistics craft and surveillance of merchant ships in the Hon La anchorage in North Vietnam, Wiltsie found diversified operations and hostile fire in store for her. Her 5-inch guns wreaked havoc on storage installations, and supply routes. On 14 September, she spotted a crippled A-7 Corsair plunging into the Gulf of Tonkin and soon thereafter rescued the pilot from the water. Two days later, she conducted a single-shoot raid against a bridge on a major North Vietnamese supply route. During the action, she came under fire from North Vietnamese shore batteries that fired some 70 rounds at the destroyer. This was the only time that the ship came under hostile fire in Vietnam. The next day, Wiltsie and two other ships conducted a “reactive strike” on the coastal defense site, pounding it with 5-inch gunfire. Supply route and waterborne supply interdiction continued thereafter until Wiltsie, relieved by Henry W. Tucker (DD-875), departed the area on the 20th.

After a week of upkeep at Singapore, Wiltsie resumed gunfire support operations in Military Region I near the DMZ. She spent a week firing round the clock on support missions before joining Saratoga (CVA-60) with Tu 72.0.1, as plane guard destroyer. Between 21 November and 8 December, she escorted the attack carrier as she launched air strikes against enemy forces ashore. In the predawn hours of 28 November, an A-6 Intruder crashed upon return; and Wiltsie proceeded to the scene of the accident, pinpointing the location and vectoring rescue helicopters from Saratoga to the point. One of the aircraft’s crew was rescued quickly and returned to his carrier, but the other pilot, despite the combined efforts of Bainbridge and helicopters from America (CVA-66), was never found.

Returning to Subic Bay for upkeep on the 21st, the destroyer remained in port until 23 September when she sailed for the Gulf of Thailand for gunnery support duties off the west coast of Vietnam. Between late September and early November, Wiltsie operated on station in the Gulf of Thailand. During the gunnery operations, she expended 1,340 rounds of 5-inch into the U Minh forest, supporting the ARVN 21st Division. Gunfire direction was provided by air spotting, but the dense foliage of the U Minh forest often prevented assessment of results.

In addition to her gunfire support duties, Wiltsie was given the task of detecting and tracking waterborne supply traffic. Supported in this operation by A-3 Orion patrol planes, Wiltsie discouraged the enemy from attempting supply by sea along the western coastline of South Vietnam. Henry W. Tucker relieved Wiltsie on 2 November.

Wiltsie proceeded to Hong Kong for rest and recreation and to Kaohsiung for an upkeep alongside Bryce Canyon (AD-86). During this availability, all four of her 6-inch guns were rebarreled due to the excessive wear experienced during her gunnery support deployments. The ship departed Taiwan on 27 December to return to the “gun line.” Arriving on station two days later, she resumed her operations off Quang Tri City, south of the DMZ, and continued these operations until 23 January 1973, when she was detached from TG 75.9 to proceed to Yokosuka. From there, the ship sailed for home, arriving at her new home port, San Francisco, on 16 February.
VIETNAM PRISONERS OF WAR

Shot down over Hon Gai Harbor on August 5, 1964, Navy pilot Lt. Everett Alvarez, Jr. became the first American prisoner of war in Vietnam. He would not be the last.

During the course of the conflict, hundreds of Americans served time in Vietnamese prisons in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and China.

Mike McGrath spent five years and nine months as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. He was captured after a failed reconnaissance mission sent his aircraft to the ground. His captors transported him to the Hanoi Hilton where he endured a life of isolation, torture, and misery. As the war came to an end, Mike and other prisoners who survived were released.

Within ten hours of my capture, I was en route to Hanoi. At a pontoon bridge, I was taken out of a truck and jammed into a narrow ditch. The soldiers who were guarding the bridge took turns to see who could hit my face the hardest. After the contest, they tried to force dog dung through my teeth, bounced rocks off my chest, jabbed me with their gun barrels, and bounced the back of my head off the rocks that lay in the bottom of the ditch.
Immediately after my arrival in Hanoi, I was taken to the New Gu Village, a section of the Hanoi Hilton, where new arrivals were tortured and interrogated. I was delirious with pain. I was suffering from a badly dislocated and fractured left arm, two fractured vertebrae and a fractured left knee. The Vietnamese dislocated both my right shoulder and right elbow in the manner shown in the drawing.

I wished I could die! When the Vietnamese threatened to shoot me, I begged them to do it. Their answer was, "No, you are a criminal. You haven't suffered enough." Some men were tied to their beds, sometimes for weeks at a time. One man made a superhuman effort to resist. He lasted 33 days on the stool before giving in!

Here, I tried to depict the "Vietnamese rope trick." The arms are repeatedly cinched up until the elbows are forced together. Sometimes at this point the "hell cuffs" are applied. The "hell cuffs" are handcuffs which are put on the upper arms and pinched as tightly as possible onto the arms, cutting off the circulation. This may last for as long as 18 hours. If the prisoner has not broken down by this time, his arms are rotated until shoulders dislocate.

I was set free on 4 March 1973, and immediately flown to Clark Air Force base in the Philippines. Hot showers, steaks, peanut-butter sandwiches and thousands of smiling faces were on hand to welcome me back.