



For the Marines and their Descendants...

Colonel: **Pham Van Chung**

One day, a twenty year old second generation Vietnamese American asked a question of a group of veterans: *"We've heard of how bravely you fought against the Communists, but why aren't there any books about the South Vietnamese fighters? How are we to understand what you went through?"*

"But there are many texts written about the Vietnam war..." one of us responded.

"But we - the generation born after the terrible war - want to know how the ARVN fought. We would like to understand the ideals that drove you. We need first hand accounts to empathize. There are many books on the war... but they are all written by Americans, Englishmen, pro-Leftist critics, or reporters who sensationalize. We need to hear your side of the story. You need to leave something tangible for us to hold on to..."

We became pensive. The young man was right. We, the surviving Marines, are all old now. The youngest of our brothers is already 45 years old. It is indeed a shame to keep our painful memories to ourselves. It was time the younger generation and the world saw the Vietnam War through our eyes.

Our goals are simple:

- To recount the Battles those Marines took part in, and in doing so, to encourage our brothers in other Army Corps to put pen to paper.
- To give our children, grand children and great grandchildren... insight into the lives their forefathers.
- To return pride to the men who remain, and to the families of those slain.
- To offer our children and the world a balanced view of the Vietnam War.

We need to move away from the narrow perspective that has long been propagated by the media and pop culture. The younger generation should not identify the '60's and '70's with hippies and Peace Demonstrations... they should not view the Viet Nam War as a war of American aggression, or worse, a war "the noble Communist fought against the Corrupted South". Such propaganda and anti-war sentiments are lies that have been used to paint the South Vietnamese people and the ARVN in a negative light. Pro-Communist writers and the media, by presenting biased images of the war, have done much damage in portraying South Vietnam as the aggressor. Many have forgotten that it was the Communists who initiated the war. No one has the right to condemn the War, for we were justified in defending our country.

We write these memoirs to remind our children that their fathers fought for Freedom and Democracy. We fought so that our sons and daughters would never have to suffer the injustice and cruelty of the Communist regime. We struggled to repair our tattered lives in foreign lands for the same reason so that future generations can flourish and excel without fear of persecution. Young people must be given the chance to access unbiased information. They must understand that South Vietnam had to contend not only with the internal enemy, but with the fickleness of international policy makers. External forces and foreign politics tore the South Vietnamese Government apart as much as internal strife did. Plagued on all fronts, the South succumbed to the cancer that had spread from the North.

We write also, to remind young Vietnamese of their proud heritage. In many families, a cultural and communication chasm separates parents from children. We hope that the young men and women who read these memoirs will realize that the broken father, disabled uncle, or frail grandfather was once a proud, patriotic, and brave young man. We trust that they will see the unsightly wound, the war-deafened ears, the useless or absent limbs, as a badge of honor... a symbol of the sacrifices that were made. We ask them for understanding, pride, and compassion.

All pieces within this book are first hand accounts of the battles fought by the Marine Corps. The truth is presented in its entirety. All characters, events, and battles are real. Some battles have received more coverage than others for a number of reasons. In the battles where many Marines were lost, we have tried to incorporate as many accounts as possible so that a widow, a son, a daughter, or a mourning mother may have the chance of reading about their beloved - or at least the battle in which he was involved. In other battles, we have fewer accounts as the participants have been dispersed worldwide, killed in action, or perished in concentration camps.

There are accounts from all levels of the Marine Corps - from privates, members of supporting units, to brigade commanders... We do not aspire to being poet laureates. Many contributors are new to writing, and many have kept their heroism and the heroism of their friends, brothers-in-arms, and leaders to themselves for years. A quarter of a century later, emotions are still raw. Putting pen to paper has been a catharsis for some, but a painful rupture of old wounds for others. Tears still run to this day for slain brothers, and bitterness and hatred towards the enemy is still strong. No amount of propaganda that the Communists spout could possibly blind us to what they are and what they have done. They have our country in an iron fist, they have history on their side, and they have the ear of a world dazzled by trade prospects - but in our eyes, they will always be the devious, bloodthirsty murderers and torturers who ravaged our country.

This book, though modest in size, is a symbol of our resistance. And we dedicated it to the Marines and their descendants.

May this book remind the Living of Dead, and re-ignite Pride in the hearts of all Marines... wherever they may be.

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