

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NAVAL CADET CATALOGUE.....	8
Nguyễn A.....	11
Nguyễn Văn Anh	14
Phạm Duy Anh	15
Nguyễn Phú Bá.....	16
Trần Hữu Bân.....	17
Trần Ngọc Bảo	19
Hoàng Đình Báu	21
Hồ Ngọc Báu	26
Võ Văn Bảy.....	27
Nguyễn Hoài Bích	29
Trần Ngọc Bích.....	30
Trần Đình Bình.....	31
Trần Đỗ Cẩm	33
Lê Thượng Chiêu.....	39
Lưu Lương Cơ	41
Nguyễn Văn Cự.....	42
Hồ Đắc Cung	45
Hoàng Dân.....	46
Đặng Diệm	47
Trần Thế Diệp	49
Trương Văn Đăng.....	81
Nguyễn Tấn Đơn	86
Nguyễn Châu Giám	87
Phan Tứ Hải	92
Trần Trọng Hải.....	95
Phạm Văn Hàm.....	97
Trần Văn Hoa-Em	100
Lê Văn Huê.....	102
Đinh Mạnh Hùng.....	107
Phạm Văn Hưng	112

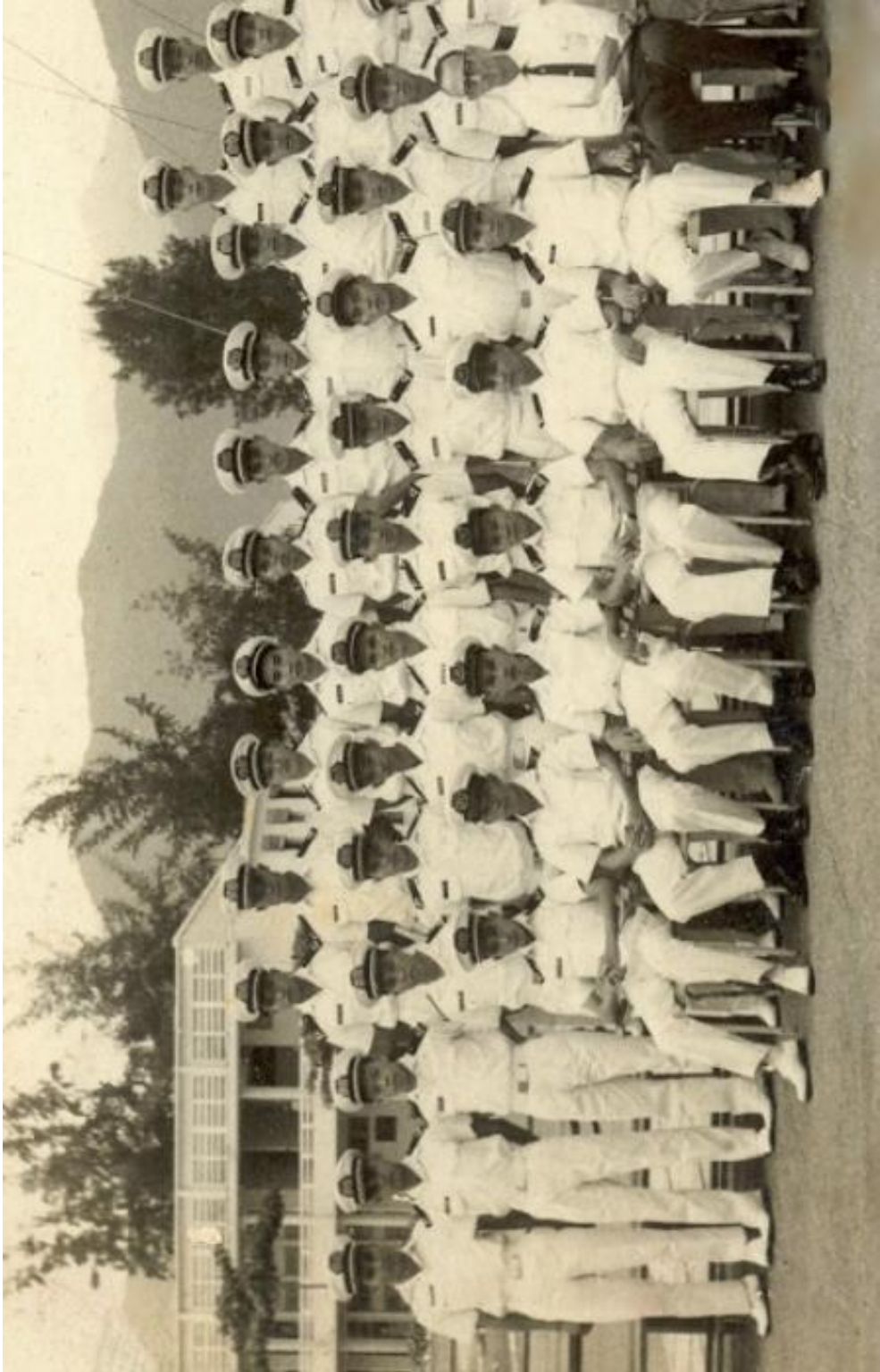
Nguyễn Xuân Huy	114
Nguyễn Kim Khánh.....	116
Trần Hữu Khánh	120
Lý Anh Kiệt	122
Võ Duy Kỳ.....	125
Nguyễn Xuân Lang.....	127
Lê Quang Lập.....	128
Trần Đình Liệu.....	132
Nguyễn Văn Lộc.....	135
Lê Kim Lợi.....	139
Vĩnh Lợi	141
Nguyễn Ngọc Long	142
Nguyễn Ngọc Luân	143
Đặng Vĩnh Mai.....	146
Hứa Hồng Minh	149
Phạm Văn Minh.....	151
Lê Thành Nam	152
Mai Quang-Nấm.....	155
Nguyễn Nghĩa.....	157
Nguyễn Nguyên.....	159
Nguyễn Văn Ôn	160
Ngô Tấn Quanh	162
Võ Văn Quọt.....	163
Nguyễn Ngọc Quyên.....	164
Trương Hữu Quỳnh.....	167
Phạm Trọng Quỳnh	172
Phạm Đức Riễn.....	175
Nguyễn Thành Sắc.....	176
Vũ Hữu San.....	177
Dương Quang-Sang	182
Nguyễn Văn Tánh	184
Nguyễn Minh Thành.....	188
Trịnh Đình Thiện	189
Trần Quang Thiệu	190

Trương Văn Thịnh	193
Nguyễn Ngọc-Thông	196
Võ Quang Thủ	197
Phan Thành Thuận	199
Phạm Văn Thụy	201
Phan Lạc Tiếp	202
Nguyễn Văn Tính	209
Nguyễn Cao Toàn	213
Nguyễn Chí Toàn	214
Vũ Bá Trạch	217
Trần Văn Trung	221
Nguyễn Tường	223
Bùi Quang Vinh	224
Ngô Xuân Ý	226
Chu Bá Yển	228

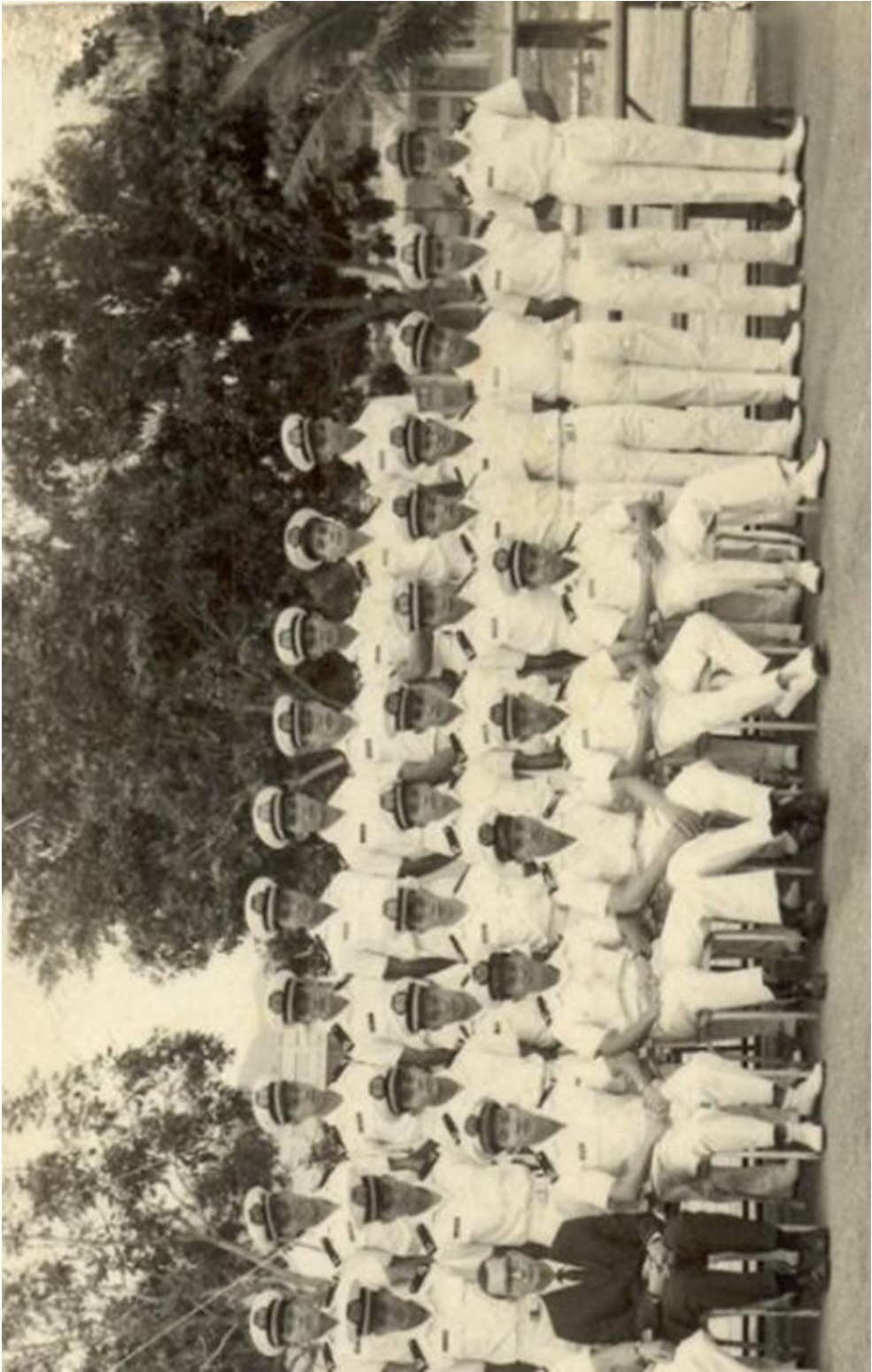
**Naval Cadets – Class Xi – The First Aquarius Class
&
The Teaching Staff**



The picture was taken at the front of the dormitory
On the occasion the cadets were promoted to the Senior Year









































NAVAL CADET CATALOGUE

Class XI – The First Aquarius Class

Portrait of Naval Cadets - Class XI

The First Aquarius

 Nguyễn A	 Phạm Duy Anh	 Nguyễn Văn Anh	 Nguyễn Phú Bá	 Trần Hữu Bản	 Trần Ngọc Bảo
 Hoàng Đình Báu	 Hồ Ngọc Báu	 Võ Văn Bảy	 Nguyễn Hoài Bích	 Trần Ngọc Bích	 Trần Đình Bình
 Trần Đỗ Cẩm	 Lê Thượng Chiêu	 Lưu Lương Cơ	 Nguyễn Văn Cự	 Hồ Đắc Cung	 Hoàng Dẫn
 Trương Văn Đăng	 Đặng Diễm	 Trần Thế Diệp	 Trương Quý Đồ	 Nguyễn Tấn Đơn	 Nguyễn Châu Giám
 Phan Tử Hải	 Trần Trọng Hải	 Phạm Văn Hàm	 Trần Văn Hoa (Em)	 Lê Văn Huệ	 Đinh Mạnh Hùng
 Phạm Văn Hưng	 Nguyễn Xuân Huy	 Nguyễn Kim Khánh	 Trần Hữu Khánh	 Lý Anh Kiệt	 Võ Duy Kỳ
 Nguyễn Xuân Lang	 Lê Quang Lập	 Trần Đình Liệu	 Nguyễn Văn Lộc	 Lê Kim Lợi	 Vĩnh Lợi

Portrait of Naval Cadets - Class XI

The First Aquarius

 Nguyễn Ngọc Long	 Nguyễn Ngọc Luân	 Đặng Vinh Mai	 Hứa Hồng Minh	 Phạm Văn Minh	 Lê Thành Nam
 Mai Quang Năm	 Nguyễn Nghĩa	 Nguyễn Nguyễn	 Nguyễn Văn Ổn	 Ngô Tấn Quanh	 Võ Văn Quốc
 Lê Văn Quý	 Nguyễn Ngọc Quyên	 Phạm Đức Riển	 Trương Hữu Quýnh	 Phạm Trọng Quýnh	 Nguyễn Thành Sắc
 Vũ Hữu Sơn	 Dương Quang Sang	 Nguyễn Văn Tấn	 Nguyễn Minh Thành	 Trịnh Đình Thiện	 Trần Quang Thiện
 Trương Văn Thịnh	 Nguyễn Ngọc Thông	 Võ Quang Thủ	 Phan Thành Thuận	 Phạm Văn Thủy	 Phan Lạc Tiếp
 Nguyễn Văn Tính	 Nguyễn Cao Toàn	 Nguyễn Chí Toàn	 Vũ Bá Trạch	 Trần Văn Trung	 Nguyễn Tường
 Bùi Quang Vinh	 Ngô Xuân Ý	 Chu Bá Yến			



Nha-Trang, 1963

NGUYỄN A

Military ID: 50A 700 396

Final Rank: Commander



San Jose, 1999

Date of Birth:

January 13, 1930

Place of Birth:

Quảng-Bình, Central Vietnam (in a village about 15 km south of Đồng-Hới town)

Current Address:

Milpitas City, Northern California, USA

Family Status:

Married with 4 children (2 sons and 2 daughters). The oldest child is 37 years old; the youngest is 27, all residing in the USA.

Activities before joining the Navy of the Republic of Vietnam:

- Enlisted in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam in January 1952 and was discharged in June 1956 to take the entrance exam to the National Land Survey School.

- Specialist at the National Land Survey Office in Đà-Lạt. Re-enlisted as an NCO in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam.



Ảnh chụp ngày thành hôn trường nữ Thái-Lan, BS CS, con rể Trần Nhuận, BS CE. Đứng cạnh là em gái Thanh-Lan, đang học Pharm. Doc., kể là anh trai Tuấn-Anh, MS EE, và bên phải là em trai P.-An, BS CE. Tất cả đều ở San Jose, California, USA.

Rank and Positions in the Navy of the Republic of Vietnam:

- 1963: Third Officer of the PC Tây Kết HQ-05.
- 1964: Executive Officer and then Acting Commanding Officer when the ship was converted into a training ship and awaiting disposal.
- 1965: Commanding Officer of Coastal Group 44 in Rạch-Giá.
- 1966: Commanding Officer of Coastal Group 46 in An-Thới, Phú-Quốc.
- 1967: Commanding Officer of the Phú-Quốc Naval Base, Coastal Zone 4.

- 1968: Personnel Officer at the Coastal Zone 4 Headquarters.
- 1969: Executive Officer of the PCE Nhật-Tào HQ 10.
- 1969: Legal Officer in the Personnel Department of the Navy Headquarters.
- 1970: Head of the Research and Operations Section of the Naval Training Center in Saigon until 1972.
- 1973: Director of the Naval Officer Cadet School at the Naval Training Center in Nha Trang until 1975.

Activities after April 1975:

- Detained in a communist re-education camp: May 1975 - January 1985.
- Escaped by boat to seek freedom on October 13, 1985, and temporarily resided in Bidong, Malaysia.
- Resettled in California, USA on June 17, 1986.
- Retired in May 1998 after 12 years of work.

Wishes:

My wish is soon to see the communist regime in Vietnam dissolved so that I can return to my homeland and be buried in the land of my ancestors.

A Few Lines of Thoughts

Nguyễn A

San Jose, Winter 2000



Ngày 30/4/75 tôi rời thành-phố Nha Trang
bỏ lại tất cả, chỉ mang được vợ con và tấm ảnh này

Growing up in the long years of the ideological war between the Nationalists and the Communists, my family was torn apart, and we had to abandon our homeland and struggle every hour to survive. Living in exile, from a village devastated by war, I lost a part of my youth. Then gradually, it pushed me to an unknown land with only an elementary school diploma in hand. Eventually, I had to abandon it to follow the call of the August Revolution in 1945.

The remaining years of my childhood were spent in turmoil. I enlisted in the army in late December 1951 at the Thanh Mang Ca, Hue and faced life and death since then. There was no time for even the simplest joys of attending a college or university. It wasn't until early 1961 that I had the opportunity to join 80 friends at the Naval Academy of TTHL/HQ/NT, with the hope of "upholding the honor of the Army, sacrificing for the Nation, and being loyal to the Country." But alas, the mission was not completed.

On April 30, 1975, darkness fell over the entire South, and once again, my family was separated for over 10 years. As the family's pillar, I was exiled to the North, while my wife and children suffered in the South with a life full of hardships.

But time passed, and in early 1985, the ruthless Communists released me back to the South with my family. In October 1985, I found a way to escape by sea, arriving in the United States in June 1986, and by July 1992, my family was finally reunited. I can say that in my 70 years of life, 60 years were spent struggling with hardship. Only the years 1958-1959 in Đà Lạt and the years from 1992 until now in the free land of the United States have been truly happy and peaceful.

Entering the naval career was probably also due to fate. 45 years ago, when I was still studying for the Second Class Honors diploma, I was passionate about astronomy taught by Nguyen Xuan Vinh and excelled in space geometry in Junior class. So, I chose the path from the mountains to the sea. During my years working at the Da Lat Geology Department, I thought about going into space, but that dream was not fulfilled because at the end of 1959, the Communists from the North began to invade and occupy the South. So, I had to re-enlist, donning my battle gear once more to roam the forests and streams. Then a great opportunity came.

I was accepted to join the 11th class of the Naval Officers School. Thus, my dream was half realized. There were nights I measured the stars with my sextant and accurately navigated the ship, thinking that the path to space might not be far, even though my ambition was not fully realized, it was satisfying enough.



*25 năm sau, dù rằng tuổi già sức yếu nhưng vẫn muốn dẫn thân
góp một bàn tay nhằm giải thể chế độ CSVN phi nhân
(Lễ kỷ niệm ngày LLCS/HQ Bắc California ra khơi vừa tròn một tuổi)*



NGUYỄN VĂN ANH

Military ID: Unknown
Final rank: Naval Cadet

Date of birth:
Unknown

Place of birth:
Southern Vietnam

Current address:
Vietnam, but possibly emigrated to Canada

Family situation:
Had a family before becoming a Naval Cadet, Class XI

The Activities before joining Navy, Class XI:
Originally a Non-Commissioned Officer in the Navy, Accounting sector

Position in the Vietnam Navy:
Unknown

Activities after April 1975:
Unknown

Editor's note:

Nguyễn Văn Anh was one of two Class XI Naval Cadets who left the school very early and did not maintain close contact with classmates, making news about him after 40 years very vague. Our memories of him are also very limited. He was more experienced than most classmates because he was originally a Non-Commissioned Officer in the Navy, Accounting sector. He self-studied, passed the Baccalaureate, and attended Class XI for only four short months.

During his time at school, he was elected as the first Manager of the XI Class Dining Association due to his proper and cautious personality. Unfortunately, the curriculum in the early stages was too heavy on culture, and he was one of nearly 20 cadets who did not pass, nor were they given any leniency.

It is said that Anh was very successful after leaving the Navy in the bidding services. We are unsure whether he evacuated in 1975. Some believe he still resides in Vietnam, while others suggest he has settled in Canada. If he reads these lines, we hope he contacts us because, no matter where he is, we always remember him as a Class XI member and wish him good luck and success.



Sài-Gòn, 1972

PHẠM DUY ANH

Military ID : 58A 700 524
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



Tucson, March 1999

Date of Birth:

December 30, 1938.

Birthplace:

Phù-Tải Village, Yên-Đỗ District, Bình-Lục District, Hà Nam Province.

Residence:

Moved to the South in 1954. Student at Phu-Tho Lều.

Current Address:

Tucson, Arizona, USA.

Family:

Married in 1967.

Daughters: Hoang Quyen, Hoang Dung, Thai Hien,
All have graduated and established families.

Son: Duy Khoi is in High School.

Grandchild: Little Duy is over one year old.

Activities before joining the Navy Đệ Nhất Bảo Bình – The First Aquarius Class:

Studied at Trần Lục and Chu Văn An High Schools, Saigon.

Served in various units in the Navy:

HQ-10,
HQ-329,
Navy Headquarters, Training Department
Coastal Group 28
4th Riverine Zone Headquarters
Sea Operation Forces Headquarters.

Activities after April 1975:

Worked at IBM since 1979. Waiting for retirement.

Future aspirations:

Enjoying old age in Vietnam when the homeland is truly free of communism.



Christmas 2000, Tucson Arizona



Nha-Trang, 1962

NGUYỄN PHÚ BÁ

Military ID: 60A 700.652
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Date of Birth:

Year 1940

Place of Birth:

South Vietnam

Current Address:

St Albans, Australia

Family Situation:

Married with children

Activities before joining Navy:

Unknown

Last Position and Unit in Navy:

Commanding Officer of HQ-801

Activities outside Navy:

Unknown

Activities after April 1975:

See Editorial Notes



Editorial Notes:

Bá escaped by boat and is currently residing in Australia. He rarely contacts friends in the United States directly. Indirectly, through friends, it is known that Bá attended university in Australia, graduated, and is now working in education, similar to Vũ Bá Trạch in the U.S. Bá participates in some local Navy activities, as seen in photos, but limits his interactions to close friends. He is very family-oriented, and during the evacuation in 1975, he was compelled to return to Vietnam.

For Bảo-Bình, Bá is always a friend, a likable, handsome, and intelligent cadet, the dream of many beauties in Nha Trang in the past. We hope that someday, when Bá is less busy with life and his thoughts have settled, he will reconnect with his friends. The United States and Australia are separated by an ocean, but the friendship of Bảo-Bình transcends even the stars.



Sài-Gòn, 1971

TRẦN HỮU BÂN

Military ID: 60A 700.717
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



San Jose, 2000

Date of Birth:

August 1, 1940

Place of Birth:

Xuân Trường, Nam Định, North Vietnam

Residence:

South Vietnam, 1951 – 1980, San Jose, Northern California, USA, since Dec. 1980

Family:

Wife: Lê Mỹ-Khương, passed away in 1973

Son: Quốc-Bình/Benison, BS in Civil Engineering, works at City of Santa Clara

Daughter: Diễm-Hồng/Jana, BA in Social Work.

Son-in-law: Đỗ Khánh-Kevin, Sr. Counselor, Oak Hill Memorial Park

Grandson: Đỗ Trần Nam/Anthony.

Daughter: Diễm-Hằng/Angela, BA and MS in Math.

Son-in-law: Nguyễn Gia Tú-Anh, Marine Engineer (VN)

Activities before joining HQ, First Aquarius (Bảo Bình) Class:

Military School for Children, EETI, Vũng Tàu, 1951-1957

Võ Tấn High School, Nha Trang, 1957-1959\

(classmates with BB L.Q. Lập, Đ.V. Mai, V.V. Quọt)

Chu Văn An High School, Saigon, Senior year, 1960

Positions in the Navy:

Artillery Officer, LSM-HQ400, 1963

Executive Officer, LSIL-HQ330, 1965

Head of Coastal Control Center/HQ/V2, 1967

Commanding Officer of Coastal Team 24, 1968

Head of Department 3/BTL/HQ/V1ZH, 1969

Injured by VC grenade, Đà Nẵng, 1970, Demobilized in December 1971.

Activities after April 1975:

Re-education Camp until 1978

Led son to escape by boat to the Philippines, 1980

Settled in the United States, December 1980

Studied at De Anza College, 1982

Certificate of Proficiency in Data Processing, 1983

Sponsored family reunion - ODP two daughters from Vietnam to the USA, 1991



Sài-Gòn, 1971



Nha-Trang, 1969

Future Aspirations:

Wishing a bright life for children and grandchildren. Family, friends, and fellow Vietnamese living in peace and happiness. Peaceful, free homeland of Vietnam, without Communist dictatorship. World peace, free from war, hatred, and disease.

A few memories about family and First Class Bảo Bình friends.



Sài-Gòn, 1972. Bố và Bình, Hồng, Hằng



Sài-Gòn, 1972. Mẹ và Bình, Hồng, Hằng



San Jose, 2000. Diễm-Hằng Graduation (MS in Mathematics)



San Jose, 2000. Bố và út Hằng, chị Hồng, anh Bình.



San Jose, BB bác Cali dự lễ cưới con gái BB Lê Quang Lập.



Cặp BB suôi-gia "Chuối & Xi Dấu", San Jose.



Các bạn BB Nam California, 1999.



San Jose 1999, lễ cưới cháu Phan X. Mai, con gái BB Phan Thành Thuận.



TRẦN NGỌC BẢO

Military ID: 54A 700.706
Final Rank: Navy Lieutenant

Date of Birth:

1934

Place of Birth:

Northern Vietnam

Current Address:

Fell in battle at Mỹ Tho in 1965.
Please read 'Editor's Note.'

Family:

Single.

Activities before joining the Navy, First Aquarius Class:

Former Air Force NCO.
Self-studied to pass Baccalaureate and passed the selection exam for the Naval Officer Cadet School.

Positions/Units in the Navy:

Fleet and Riverine Assault Group 27

Editor's Note:

The late Lieutenant Trần Ngọc Bảo was originally an Air Force member who joined the Navy, First Aquarius Class. As an intelligent and disciplined Officer Cadet, he always ranked among the top 1/4 to 1/5 of the class.

Like all Bảo Bình cadets after graduation, Ensign Bảo volunteered to fight in Riverine Assault Group 27. His unit operated throughout Tactical Zones 3 and 4. Riverine Assault Group 27 consisted of entirely new assault craft like LMC8 and RPC with speeds up to 14-15 knots, which was 1.5 times faster than boats of the other Riverine Assault Groups at the time. Its landing capability was also high, with up to 6 missile-launching vehicles or 12 M113 armored personnel carriers.

In a coordinated operation where our forces inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, he bravely sacrificed his life at Ba Rài Canal, Mỹ Tho, on September 29, 1965. Bảo Bình



Trần Ngọc Bảo was posthumously promoted to Navy Lieutenant, awarded the National Order and the Gallantry Cross with Palm. The eulogy for the "National Hero" was drafted by Lieutenant Hương, a political warfare Officer of the River Forces. It included a rather long poem. We remember a few lines related to his ideals. The author also sent farewell words from Aquarius Classmates as follows:

When the homeland was shrouded in smoke and fire,

You left to avenge our sorrows

Bảo, you have gone,

We all bid farewell to you at your grave.



Nha-Trang, 1962

HOÀNG ĐÌNH BÁU

Military ID: 56A 700.769
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



California, 2000

Date of Birth:

January 20, 1936

Hometown:

Thừa Thiên, Huế

Naval Positions:

1963: Served on HQ-02 and HQ-327
1964: Served on HQ-404 in Guam for overhaul
1965: Liaison officer on the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Pacific
1966: Chief of TTKS/V3ZH Center in Vũng Tàu
1967-1968: Chief of Coastal Group 37 in Ba-Tri, Kiên Hòa
1969: Served on Whec-2 in the Philippines
1970: Commanding Officer of HQ-608
1971: Commanding Officer of HQ-331
1972: Commanding Officer of HQ-403
1973-1975: Commanding Officer of HQ-09

Activities after April 1975:

Reeducation camp for 7 years in northern Vietnam (1975-1982)
House arrest in Saigon (1982-1983)
Second reeducation camp for 4 years at Chí Hòa and Tổng Lê Chân (1983-1987)
Street vendor selling liquor in Saigon/Chợ-Lớn (1988-1990)
Moved to the U.S. under the HO-9 program (1991)
Studied at Golden West and Fullerton Cal. State University (1992-1995)
Security Guard in Orange County (1995-1997)

Began writing in 1998:

Author of the poetry collection “Mother and Homeland” under the pen name Tam-Giang (1999)
Author of the novel “Dark Night, Red Demon” (2001)

Editorial note:

Hoàng Đình Báu is perhaps the most unfortunate among the Bảo-Bình. His wife and four daughters perished in the Saigon River during an unsuccessful attempt to escape from

Vietnam. His mother also recently passed away in Vietnam. The seemingly endless pain is expressed by Bái under the pen name Tam-Giang in the poetry collection 'Mother & Homeland,' published in California in 1999. On the occasion of the release of 'First Báo-Bình – 2001,' his classmates pray for the souls of the departed and ask his late wife to protect him so that he may live the final days of his life in peace.

Article:

A Love Story

Hoàng Đình Bái

The vivid images that I still hold of my mother from my childhood are the golden rice fields, the small fields beside the village dike, or a boat full of rice bundles. Back then, as the eldest son in the family, my mother had me accompany her in all the family's farm work. The purpose was to show me the fields she had bought, scattered all over the countryside, and teach me the muddy, backbreaking labor of farming. I often followed my mother, carrying two bottles of green tea while she carried a heavy basket of rice with full bowls and food out to the fields when the sun was almost overhead, where the reapers were sweating heavily in the fields. Sometimes, I went out to the fields alone, carrying long bundles of bamboo to tie the rice sheaves the size of a grown man's arm. Once bundled, they were carried down to the boat docked beside the small canal. When the boat was full of rice, everyone pushed the boat out of the rift. The boat went to the big river. From there, my mother and I rowed the boat back to the dock while the reapers lay down, exhausted, smoking "Cầm Lê" cigarettes. The heavily loaded boat sank deep into the water, only a hand's breadth away from the edge. Back then, no one thought about the dangers of overloading. My mother and I couldn't swim, and this river was too big for me. The boat docked, the reapers carried the rice into the yard, stacking it in a circle for the buffalo to tread. The reapers' work was done. Everything else was done by my family, like leading the buffalo to tread, threshing the straw, and stacking it into heaps. We worked until midnight. The next morning, the whole family went out to thresh the straw and rake the rice to dry. The next afternoon, when the rice was dry, we gathered together to scoop it into storage bins... Thanks to hard work, enduring the sun and rain, my mother built a house, and her children were all well-educated.

Then April 1975 came. My mother was forced to donate the fields and gardens that she had spent her life building. She bitterly handed over more than 3 hectares of fields and 5 sào (a measure) of land to the "revolution". My mother's sun-tanned hands became empty. The active and cheerful person she once was, now had to sit and wait for orders to buy rice and bo-bo (a type of food). My father passed away before 1975. My siblings each went their own way. My mother's spirit fell into a severe crisis. Living alone in the old house, she wandered around the garden, pulling weeds around the roots of apricots and roses. Occasionally, someone came to ask to buy antiques like bowls, cabinets, etc. Gradually, my mother sold everything to live. My sisters said that by selling those things, my mother had money to visit me in prison. The image of mothers and wives visiting their children or husbands in "reeducation" camps at that time is indescribable, even more difficult and arduous than the ancient long marches. Once, I saw my mother carrying two bags of food, climbing up the hill to the camp to visit me. She had crossed hundreds of miles, wading streams and climbing mountains to find me. How could I forget when she

met me at the "visiting room", she gave me a bowl of white rice with chicken stir-fried with lemongrass and chili and asked the officer for permission for me to eat there. She wanted to see me really eat. Being able to do that probably made my mother very happy. Time passed quickly. My mother lived almost a century. I thought if my mother lived to that day, I would return to Vietnam to celebrate her 100th birthday. Time did not allow. My mother fell ill and entered a deep coma. Three days after hearing the news, I was at home in a village in Phú Vang district, between Huế city and the Thuận An sea gate. Nearly three weeks I lived beside my mother, along with my sister and siblings, taking care of her. My mother couldn't speak; half of her body was paralyzed. Occasionally, she opened her eyes wide, blinking her eyelashes. I thought she wanted to tell her children something.

In her old age, my mother remained the bright star of the family. Everyone still respected and loved her. Her decisions were followed by everyone. The grandchildren were very happy to visit her because she loved them dearly and often shared everything she had. Although she couldn't hear, she knew everyone was caring for her from food to sleep, from medicine to tea. In her last days, my mother lived fully, both materially and spiritually, not having to go to a nursing home like some people in America or wander like some unfortunate elderly in Vietnam.

In the evenings, my siblings and I often sat and prayed for her in front of the Buddha altar, and then the Buddhists from the surrounding areas came to read scriptures. They came with sincere hearts. I paid for their services, but they all refused. They were truly poor, but they taught me that sometimes the feelings between people blossomed when we didn't even realize it.

While I was in Huế, the struggle of Father Nguyễn Văn Lý at Nguyệt Biều parish broke out. My wife called, wanting me to return to America early. I stayed for another week, but when I asked the airline, they said there were no more seats. I returned to America on December 25, 2000, after three weeks in Vietnam. Before leaving, I went to my mother, held her hand, and kissed her forehead. Her deep, black eyes were the same as ever, only her gray hair had been cut short by my siblings for easy bathing. I looked at my mother's body like a dry skeleton wrapped in white cloth. I carried that image with me until the plane landed in Los Angeles.

In America, I lay down, occasionally turning on the internet to see if there was any news about my mother. My nieces and nephews in Huế often contacted me that way. Suddenly, the doorbell rang. BB Quyên came to visit me. Among the BBs in Southern California, Quyên was the one who visited me the most because Quyên was training me on the internet after BB Luân gave me his computer. Quyên told me about the urgent meeting of the Southern California BBs at the Paracels restaurant after hearing that I had returned to Vietnam. He gave me an envelope with contributions from the BBs to help with my plane ticket. I said I had enough. I held the envelope, deep in thought. I silently thanked my friends. What else could I say when people thought of me? Meanwhile, Quyên opened the internet to find emails. The first message Quyên showed me was the news that my mother passed away on December 27, 2000, at 11 PM, which was 8 AM California time.

I was stunned, tears streamed down. I blamed myself for not staying a few more days. Quỳn comforted me and then left.

Since that day, I have received many condolence calls from the BBs from North to South California, from East to West USA, as well as on the internet. Truthfully, I didn't want anyone to know my mother passed away, but everyone found out.

While writing this article, I received news that BB Hoa Em's father-in-law also passed away like my mother. In the end, everyone must go, some sooner, some later. Everyone has a family to love, to remember, and to mourn when a loved one passes away. Besides our individual families, we also have a shared family, the BB family.

The BB family was born 40 years ago. Although there are more differences than any other naval class, the BBs have courageously advanced strongly in their naval careers. Evidence is that in all the main forces of the Navy, BBs are present, especially in the Fleet, from the largest warships to the smallest, most are commanded by BBs. Today, after 25 years away from the homeland, BBs have come together sincerely, evidenced by the meeting in July 2001 marking 40 years of the BB family's birth. BBs contributed to completing the 'BB-2001 Yearbook'. Outstanding are the BBs in the editorial team like Thiệu, San, Cẩm, and K. Khánh. After several months of operation, friends have shown their abilities and goodwill.

Looking back at 40 years of life, it seems like just yesterday. Today, some friends are over seventy, the youngest are nearly sixty. Some friends are dedicated to their work, some are retired, and some are wandering beside the sickbed.

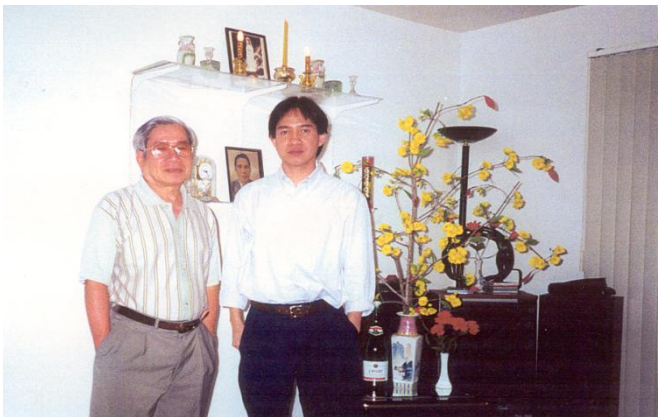
Only one love remains: the love of friendship and family... These loves will embrace us until the end of life.

Hoàng Đình Báu

Some Pictures in My Life

Hoàng Đình Bái

From top to bottom: Newlyweds (1961), current family (1997), with son Hoàng Đình Quốc (1999)





HỒ NGỌC BÁU

Military ID: 58A 700.335
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Date of Birth:

1938.

Place of Birth:

Central Vietnam.

Current Address:

Passed away in 1971 at Rừng Lá.
Please read the 'Editor's Note'.

Family Background:

Married with children.

Activities before joining the Navy, First Aquarius Class:

Originally an NCO in the Navy.

Positions/Units in the Navy/Republic of Vietnam:

Served in Sea Fleet, Naval base, Riverine Group.
Last unit was Riverine Patrol Group 51, stationed at Rạch-Sỏi Support Naval Base.



Editor's Note:

Hồ Ngọc Báu was originally a Petty Officer. He had previously lived and studied in France. While many cadets from the first Aquarius Class entered the school at the end of August 1961, he only reported for admission at the end of September, making him the 81st member of the Class XI. Despite being related to the then CNO, he did not rely on his connections and was very kind to his friends. In 1968, he was transferred from Coastal Zone 2 to Kiên-An to take on the role of Commanding Officer of the Riverine Patrol Group. In 1971, during his annual leave, he drove a Jeep from his unit to Nha-Trang to visit his family. On the way back to his unit, he had a car accident at Rừng Lá, Phan-Thiết, and unfortunately passed away. Báu was also known for his elegance and romantic nature.

Sadly, as the saying goes, "Precious gems can be shattered." Hồ Ngọc Báu was the fourth person with the name "Ngọc" to pass away after Ngọc Long, Ngọc Bảo, and Ngọc Thông.



VÕ VĂN BẢY

Military ID: 60A 700.653
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



Nickname:

Bảy Xe Ngựa, Mã Xa

Date of Birth:

July 27, 1940

Place of Birth:

Tân Châu, Châu Đốc, Southwestern Vietnam.

Residences:

Tân Châu, Cần Thơ, Vĩnh Long, Mỹ Tho, Sài Gòn, Nha Trang

Current Address:

Gaithersburg, Maryland, U.S.A

Family Background:

Wife: Trần Thu Nguyệt, Data Entry Operator for Hughes Network Systems.

Children:

- Võ Trần Anh Thư, Accountant for Hughes Network Systems and a student at UMD.
- Võ Trần Thùy Anh and her husband Trần Hoàng Trung, both graduated as electrical engineers from the University of Maryland, currently working for WebMethods and Nextel.

Positions/Units in the Navy:

- LSM Tiền Giang HQ 405: Artillery Officer, Transport Officer, Executive Officer (63 – 65).
- PCE Kỳ Hòa HQ 09: Communications Officer (65 – 66).
- LSSL Đoàn Ngọc Tảng HQ 227: Executive Officer (66 – 67).
- Riverine Assault Group 23: Deputy Commander (67 – 68).
- Navy Headquarters Psychological Warfare Department: Civil Affairs Unit Chief, Deputy Department Head (68 – 69).
- Riverine Patrol Force Command: Chief of Planning, Operations Department (69 – 70).
- Tân Châu Naval Base: Commanding Officer (70 – 71)
- PGM Hoàng Sa HQ 616: Commanding Officer (71 – 72)
- Riverine Operations Task Force: Chief of Operations (72 - 73)
- Central Forces Command: Deputy Chief of Operations (73 – 74)
- 3rd Interdiction Brigade: Commanding Officer (74 – 75)

Activities outside the Navy: *Writing*: Pen name: Vũ Thất

- Novels:
 - "Đời Thủy Thủ" (Sài Gòn, 1969). Reprinted in the U.S. without the author's permission.
 - "Trong Cơn Bão Biển" (Sài Gòn, 1970)
 - "Một Dòng Sông Cho Chiến Đỉnh" (Sài Gòn, 1973). Reprinted in the U.S. without the author's permission.
- Poetry: Pen name: Cung Hoàng
 - Unpublished poetry collection: "Người Yêu Thủy Thủ"

Activities after April 1975:

- Imprisoned in a re-education camp until 1982.
- Escaped by boat and reunited my family in the U.S. in 1984.
- Worked as a Mail Clerk for E.D.S. and GETRONICS.

Future Aspirations:

- To return to visit a homeland free of communist influence.
- Plan to retire in 2002 to have enough strength to travel, write, and read.

The whole family war together during a happy day of their daughter.





Nha-Trang, 1963

NGUYỄN HOÀI BÍCH

Military ID: 60A 700.654
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Hy Sinh Vì Lý Tưởng



Sài-Gòn, 1973

Date of Birth:

Year 1940.

Place of Birth:

Northern Vietnam.

Current Address:

He passed away in the East Sea in 1982 while seeking freedom. See the 'Editor's Note'.

Family Background:

Engaged but did not have a family when he passed away.

Activities before joining the Navy:

Studied at Chu Văn An High School.

Positions/Units in the Navy:

HQ-08, HQ-10, HQ-404.
River Patrol Group 26.
Merchant Marine.



Editor's Note:

We (TQT) have many memories with Nguyễn Hoài Bích, a tall, handsome, and kind-hearted Officer Cadet Company Commander, well-liked by the whole class. In the final year at the school, Bích and I shared a small room at the end of the row. After graduation, Bích and I went to Trường Sa to place sovereignty markers on HQ-08 and HQ-09. Later, we went to Philadelphia at the end of 1963 to receive ships (HQ-10, HQ-11). He was also my best man and the last person to 'beat' me in single life.

Hoài Bích was very filial to his mother, loved the Navy most in life, and had a loyal fiancée even during his time in re-education camp. Unfortunately, he and his family perished (Thai pirates) while fleeing in 1982, leaving many friends in deep sorrow. We lost one of the most precious individuals too soon. For more about Bích, please read "A Trip to Guam with Nguyễn Hoài Bích" by Hoàng Đình Báu in "**The Literary Garden – First Aquarius Class**".



TRẦN NGỌC BÍCH

Military ID: 60A 700 620

Final Rank: Commander

Date of Birth:

1940.

Place of Birth

South Vietnam

Current Address:

Arlington, Texas, U.S.A.

Please refer to 'Editor's Note'

Family:

Married with small child.

Activities before joining Navy, First Aquarius Class:

Unknown

Position/Unit in HQ/VNCH:

Navy Fleet

Capital Special Zone Headquarters.



Editor's Note:

In the mid-90s, Trần Ngọc Bích immigrated to the United States under the H.O. program after enduring many years in communist reeducation camps. Together with Hoa-Em, Bích settled in San Diego, California, and participated in some pocket meetings of classmates in the Los Angeles area. Bích also remarried while still in Vietnam. His family serves as a strong support system, and he has a grandson. Like many other H.O. members, Bích continues to face challenges in life. Recently, Bích relocated once more to Arlington, Texas, and may eventually move to another promising land. The editorial



board always remembers him and hopes he and his family will soon settle and re-establish close contact with classmates.



San Diego, 1971

TRẦN ĐÌNH BÌNH

Military ID: 59A 700.628
Final Rank: Navy Commander



Washington D.C., 1994

Date of Birth:

January 11, 1939

Place of Birth:

Đà Nẵng, Vietnam

Current Address:

Washington, D.C

Family:

Wife: Lâm Ngọc Tuyết

Children: One son and two daughters, all of whom have graduated from college and have their own families.

Activities before joining the Navy:

Studied at Lycée Yersin, Đà Lạt, Vietnam.



Trên Đường Phố D.C., 1994

Positions in the Navy:

Executive Officer of the patrol boat PGM HQ-608, 1963
Internship on a U.S. Navy ship around Okinawa - Sasebo, Japan

Liaison Officer on a U.S. Navy ship patrolling the coast of Vietnam

Staff Officer at the Second Coastal Zone Command Headquarters, Nha-Trang

Ceremonial Officer, Operations Department Navy Headquarters, Saigon

Further studies in the Amphibious Landing Course in Coronado, San Diego, 1971

Liaison Officer, IV Corps

Director of the Operations Center, Navy Headquarters, Saigon, 1975



Activities after April 1975:

Settled in the Washington D.C. area, USA, since 1975 until now.
Managed the family businesses (restaurant, jewelry shop).

Future Hopes:

Happiness already attained. Nothing else to wish for.

Editor's Note:

While studying at the Nha-Trang Naval Academy, Bình was known as 'Bình Con Gái' (Young Girl Bình) for his fair complexion, good looks, and gentle manner of speaking. Upon graduation, he was nicknamed 'Bình Thầy Cúng' (Ceremonial Master Bình) for his tenure as the Chief of the Ceremonial Office at the Navy Headquarters. After migrating to the U.S., Bình has always been a successful entrepreneur and never had to work for others like many of his peers. Bình always exudes elegance and charm as in the past. Perhaps we should add another nickname for Bình: 'Bình Công Tử' (Prince Bình), as he seems to have been born with a golden spoon.

TRẦN ĐỖ CẨM

Trần Đỗ Cẩm Website: <http://doanket.orgfree.com/>

I was born in Nam Định province (North Vietnam) in 1942. At that time, my family had a bookstore on Paul Bert Street, near Rong Market. I don't remember much about my childhood, except for the times we evacuated to my paternal hometown in Đồng Nghĩa village, Nghĩa Hưng district, near Phát Diệm. During the Vietnam-French war, my family had to move to many places such as Hà Nam, Phủ Lý, etc. By 1950, my family temporarily resided in Bùi Chu, which was a newly established province. My family returned to Hanoi, my maternal hometown, in 1953 and lived at 4 Yết Kiêu Street, opposite the Exhibition Center near Hàng Cỏ train station.

In 1954, I followed my family and migrated to the South by air from Bạch Mai Airport, Hanoi. At that time, my father was serving in the army. When we arrived in Saigon, my family resided in the Kiến Ốc Cọc housing area near the Phú Thọ horse race track. Later, the housing area was called the Thăng Long Church area. I attended Nguyễn Trãi High School, which was then headquartered with Trương Minh Ký Primary School near Cầu Ông Lãnh Market (at the intersection of Kitchener and Gallieni streets, which were later renamed Nguyễn Thái Học and Trần Hưng Đạo streets), Saigon. In my class, there were two fellow students, Phạm Văn Hưng and Nguyễn Tạ Quang, who later joined the Navy as well.

In 1955, my father was transferred to serve at the Geographic Office in Đà Lạt, so my family followed him. There, I attended Quang Trung High School. When Quang

Trung High School was renamed Bùi Thị Xuân School for female students, we male students were transferred to Trần Hưng Đạo High School, previously known as Bảo Long School. Trần Quang Thiệu, who was also a classmate of mine in the First Aquarius class, was a fellow student in the senior year at Đà Lạt with me.

In 1961, I voluntarily joined the army and applied for the officer training program of both the Navy and the Air Force, with the intention that I would



join whichever called me first. I took the entrance exam for the 11th Naval Officer Training Class in Saigon. After passing, I, along with my friends Phạm Trọng Quỳnh, Nguyễn Ngọc Thông, and Phan Thành Thuận, took the same train from Saigon to Nha Trang.

After my training period, I was transferred to the escort ship Kỳ Hòa HQ-09, under the command of Navy Lieutenant Nguyễn Xuân Sơn, along with my friends Trần Quang Thiệu, Trương Văn Đăng, Phan Lạc Tiếp, and Trịnh Đình Thiện. At that time, Kỳ Hòa was a relatively new warship in the Navy, equipped with Sonar and anti-submarine depth charges still in use. During this time,

the warship often undertook patrol duties in the First Coastal Zone, giving us the opportunity to become familiar with the Đà Nẵng area as well as the central coast. In addition, the warship frequently conducted training in the waters of Phú Quốc and Cù Lao Thu. Notably, in 1964, the warship participated in the mission to place sovereignty markers on the islands of the Spratly Islands group, along with HQ-08 and HQ-403.

At the end of 1964, I received orders to transfer to the 26th Riverine Amphibious Group. This was a big surprise, as I knew nothing about the amphibious groups or the Mekong Delta region. Holding the transfer order in my hand, I did not even know where the new unit's base was located. However, it was a pleasant surprise because the 26th Riverine Amphibious Group was stationed at Vân Đồn camp in Long Xuyên province, a very peaceful and prosperous town in the South. The Commander of the 26th Amphibious Group at that time was Navy Lieutenant Hoàng Nam. Shortly after, more classmates from my class, including Mai Quang Năm, Nguyễn Xuân Huy, and Nguyễn Tường, were also transferred there. As a River Patrol Officer, I had the opportunity to conduct military operations in the regions of Cà Mau, Thới Bình, Khai Quang, Biên Nhì, Cái Ngay, Cái Nước, Đầm Dơi, Gò Quao, U Minh, Xẻo Rô, Tắc Cậu, Vị Thanh, Hòa Lự, Trèm Trẹm River, Cái Lớn River, Ông Đốc River, Gành Hào River, Xà Nô Canal, Cần Gạo Canal, Tân Châu, Hồng Ngự, etc. Thus, within just one



year, I became familiar with most of the remote and secluded locations in the Cà Mau and U Minh regions that I had previously only known from maps.

In 1965, the Navy Headquarters sent a telegram recruiting volunteers to serve in the Naval Patrol Force, a "Naval Special Operations Forces" unit stationed in Đà Nẵng. At that time, life on small river patrol boats operating in narrow canals, often making us easy targets for the enemy, had become tedious. On one occasion, my patrol boat unit was ambushed at the Tam Giang junction near Đầm Dơi in the Cà Mau area. When we started to return fire, we saw many villagers, mostly women and children, kneeling on the riverbank. It turned out that the cunning enemy had driven the civilians to act as human shields and set up ambush positions right in their homes. I had to order the use of 50 and 30 caliber machine guns to fire at the tall trees to intimidate the enemy because if we used fragmentary explosive rounds like 20mm or 40mm cannons or mortars to eliminate the enemy, the houses would be destroyed, and many civilians would be killed. Fortunately, our patrol boat unit managed to get through the ambush with only minor damage. I was very frustrated because patrol boats moving in the narrow rivers and canals in the South often lost the initiative. Besides, nearly two years of struggling in the salty swampy areas where "mosquitoes buzzed like flutes and leeches swam as thick as rice noodles" were enough, so I decided to volunteer for the Naval Patrol Force with the hope of engaging in naval battles and taking the initiative to fire at enemy ships and participate in new adventures.

Leaving behind the "sluggish flowing waters of Cà Mau, under the river the catfish linger, on the shore the Chaozhou people," I returned to the Navy Headquarters in Saigon and was selected as the Commanding

Officer of the PTF (Patrol Torpedo Fast) at the Naval Patrol Force. During this selection, there was also Nguyễn Mạnh Trí from the 10th class. We personally selected two crews to bring to Đà Nẵng.

At the Naval Patrol Force, I was appointed as the Executive Officer of PTF-1 under Navy Lieutenant Trịnh Kim Thanh, alias "Trịnh Nguyệt." There were many seasoned officers such as Navy Lieutenants Trần Văn Lâm, Nguyễn Thiện Nhật "Noel," Lưu Chuyên, Mai Mộng Liễn, etc. Shortly after, Navy Lieutenant Phạm Đình San from the 10th class replaced Navy Lieutenant Trịnh Kim Thanh as the Commanding Officer of PTF-1. At the Naval Patrol Force, there were also classmates from the 11th class, including Trần Quang Thiệu, Phạm Văn Hưng, Nguyễn Minh Thành, Lê Thượng Chiêu, Phạm Đức Riễn, and Phạm Văn



Minh. After serving on PTF-1 for some time, I was successively appointed as the Executive Officer of PTF-2 under Navy Lieutenant Nguyễn Hữu Phú, then Commanding

Officer of PTF-2, and finally Commanding Officer of PTF-9. During my five years of service at the Naval Patrol Force, I participated in about 300 missions in the Gulf of Tonkin and witnessed most of the memorable events such as sinking Việt Cộng ships at Sầm Sơn estuary, blockading Hòn Cọc, and attacking radar stations at Vinh Sơn and Hòn Mê. The farthest mission I undertook was around Bạch Long Vĩ Island near Hainan Island, reaching the Hải Phòng estuary. The most memorable

mission was when Navy Lieutenants Lưu Chuyên and Liên Phong were killed off the coast of Nghệ An in the North Sea.

By 1970, after five years of service at the Naval Patrol Force, I requested to transfer back to the Navy and was appointed as the Deputy Commander of the 23rd Riverine Amphibious Group in Vĩnh Long, under Lt. Commander Nguyễn Thái Lai. In Vĩnh Long, there was also the 31st Riverine Amphibious Group forming the 23/31 Amphibious Task Group responsible for operations in the Cổ Chiên River, Vĩnh Bình, Kiến Phong, Đồng Tháp Mười, and Kiến Hòa. Upon my arrival, the 23/31 Amphibious Task Group was assigned to participate in a cross-border operation into Cambodia, supporting the Marine Corps in capturing the Neak Luong ferry. After the Cambodia operation, the unit was assigned to participate in the Trần Hưng Đạo operation in Kiến Hòa, supporting the 10th Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division. During this time, my first son, Trần Lương Giang, was born on July 20, 1970, in Vĩnh Long.



In 1972, I was appointed as the Commander of the 31st Amphibious Group, replacing Lt. Commander Lê Văn Huê, a classmate. The unit was reinforced for the Trần Hưng Đạo operation in Kiến Phong, Đồng Tháp Mười,

and Kinh Đông Tiến. Later, the 31st Amphibious Group was sent to support Vĩnh Bình Province, responsible for the Mang Thít Canal and Cồ Chiên River from Vĩnh Long to the estuary. During this time, I was wounded by B-40 shrapnel while operating in the Chet Say Canal in Vũng Liêm district, near Bắc Cồ Chiên 2. My second son, Trần Lương Vũ, was born on November 10, 1972, in Vĩnh Long.

In 1973, I was transferred to serve as the Commander of the 26th Riverine Amphibious Group in Long Xuyên, replacing Lt. Commander Nguyễn Hoài Bích, a classmate. Due to operational needs in Vĩnh Bình, I arrived at the new unit a bit late, so Lt. Commander Bích had already left the unit without time for a handover. The 26th Riverine Amphibious Group was then attached to the Surveillance Force, operating in the Hồng Ngự area to clear the Mekong River waterway. In this operation, the naval forces were under the command of classmate Lt. Commander Trần Ngọc Bích. The Naval Task Force Command was located at Mechanical Service Ship 9613 anchored at An Long's southern end in Hồng Ngự. The 26th Riverine Amphibious Group was assigned to coordinate with the 15th Regiment/9th Infantry Division under Colonel Hồ Ngọc Cẩn to relieve enemy pressure in the Hồng Ngự canal area and the eastern bank of the Mekong River from Hồng Ngự to the Vietnam-Cambodia border. In this operation, I was wounded twice.



Once in the left leg while disembarking in the Hồng Ngự canal and once in the left arm while escorting merchant ships to Phnom Penh.

In 1974, I was ordered to transfer to Coastal Region 2, based in Cam Ranh. There, Commanding Officer Trịnh Quang Xuân appointed me as Acting Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Head of Section 3, so I had many opportunities to visit the coastal detachments from Đê Gi in Bình Định province to Phan Thiết. Additionally, I often visited radar stations and patrolled the sea on WPB and PCF patrol boats of Coastal Fleet 2.

At the end of April 1975, my family and I left Vietnam from Cần Thơ with the mission of evacuating the Consulate General there. Around noon on April 19, we left the Shell pier, carrying over 30 American personnel and about 200 Vietnamese people on two LCM 8 boats, heading out to the Đĩnh An estuary. By midnight, we met the merchant ship Pioneer Contender at sea and were picked up by the ship. On the morning of April 30, on the merchant ship Pioneer Contender outside the territorial waters of Vũng Tàu, I heard President Dương Văn Minh's order to surrender on the radio!

The merchant ship Pioneer Contender brought my family to Subic Bay in the Philippines a few days later. Shortly after, from the mainland, I witnessed the scene of the Republic of Vietnam Navy warships performing the last national flag salute, and I met some acquaintances in the refugee camp there. From Subic, my family was flown to Guam, temporarily residing at Orote Point camp. Around June 1975, we arrived at Indiantown Gap camp in Pennsylvania. My family left Indiantown Gap camp at the end of June 1975 to settle in Austin, Texas. My youngest daughter, Trần Lương Duyên, was born in Austin on April 5, 1976.



In Austin, like other Vietnamese refugees who had just arrived in the United States, I did all kinds of "non-specialized" jobs such as mowing lawns, working in Chinese restaurants, driving private cars, etc., to earn money to support my family and integrate into the new life. I also visited the coastal areas of Texas to learn about the fishing industry.

However, after realizing that despite having a driver's license and driving for dozens of years in Vietnam, I still had to study and retake the driving test in the United States, I understood that I needed to be "retrained" to adapt to the new circumstances. So, I decided to go back to school. But what should I study? Regarding language, new

refugees could not compete with the locals, so I chose a specialized field, heavily technical. Seeing that everyone in America had a car, I enrolled in an auto repair class. After nearly two years, I learned more about life in the United States. Although the auto repair profession could provide a living, without capital and especially a partner, one could only work for others for life. Moreover, auto repair is relatively heavy work, and I might not be able to handle it. Therefore, I studied English and switched to the computer science field. I thought that Vietnamese people have the virtues of diligence, meticulousness, and especially keen observation, which are very suitable for computer science. Moreover, even Americans have to start from scratch if they want to communicate with computers, so we can compete "fairly." While studying, I got a part-time job as a "computer operator" for a real estate company in Austin. After graduating, I began working for the city of Austin in 1978 and have been there ever since. Currently, I am a Network Engineer specializing in Wide Area Networks and Fiber Optics. Almost 40 years have passed since I joined the 11th Naval Officer Training Class. With nearly 15 years in the military and about a third of a century of continuous work in the United States, I think it is time to slow down and enjoy the rest of my life. I am writing these lines to remember the beautiful memories of my youth and to leave a legacy for my children. Drifting along the flow of life, I am very fortunate to have a faithful partner who has lovingly shared joys and sorrows with me for so many years. I also have a warm family where husband and wife support each other, with obedient children who understand and sympathize with their parents. I also have good friends from the Bảo Bình group to reminisce about our naval days.

For an ordinary person like me, having all this is more than enough; what more could I wish for?

Austin, Texas,
early 21st century.

The Tran's Family Pictures





LÊ THƯỢNG CHIÊU

Military ID: 61A 700.529
Final Rank: Commander

Date of Birth:

1941

Place of Birth:

Central Vietnam

Current Address:

Gardena, California, U.S.A.

Family:

Has a family. Children have graduated and grown up.

Activities before joining the Navy:

Studied at Vo Tanh High School, Nha Trang and Saigon University of Science.

Position/Unit in the Navy:

Fleet, Special Force,
First Coastal Zone Headquarters,
Second Coastal Zone Headquarters

Editor's Note:

Lê Thượng Chiêu is a special phenomenon



of the first Aquarius class. He is tall and strong, but sometimes gentle and careful like a kind mother. Chieu was a hero in the North Sea (Naval Forces) and was long hated by the Communists. After crossing the sea and settling in the U.S., Chieu sometimes appears and sometimes disappears, hard to find like a bird, even though he is in the L.A. area, where there nearly twenty Bao Binh. He was present at the 30-year reunion in San Jose, and at several other 'pocket' reunions. Chiêu has

done many jobs, including fishing in Louisiana and construction in L.A.

His children have grown up, so Chieu seems to take life lightly, still wandering around. However, we know that he will return to the reunion. It has happened many times and he always returns. The Editorial Board wants to give him a picture of Nha-Trang beach, where we became friends and also his hometown. Surely he will never forget the old house in Phương Sài.



LƯU LƯƠNG CƠ

Military ID: 59A 700.620
Final rank: Lieutenant Commander

Date of birth:

1939

Birthplace:

Central Vietnam

Current address:

Missing since 1986 while seeking freedom.

Family status:

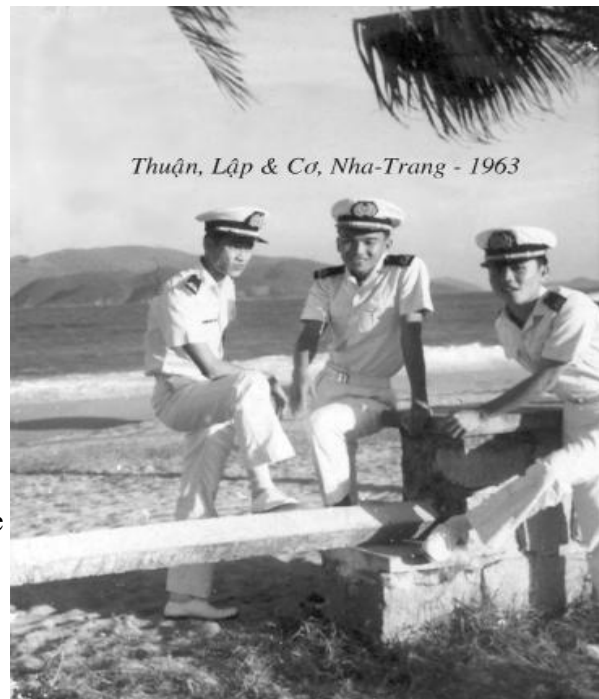
Has a family currently living in Vietnam.
His children have grown up.

Activities before joining the Navy:

Studied at Quốc Học High School and the University of Science, Huế.

Positions/Units in the Navy:

Fleet,
Riverine Force,
Coastal Force Central Region,
Navy Headquarters Research and Training Department.



Editorial Note:

Cơ was wounded in battle before being transferred to serve as Deputy Head of the Research and Training Department, Navy Headquarters, Saigon. Unfortunately, he did not evacuate in 1975. After being released from re-education prison, Cơ went missing while attempting to escape. The family of BB Lê Quang Lập and the child of BB Trần Đình Liệu also went missing during this escape attempt. The animal farm lost a gentle ox. Perhaps in the next life, you will be worshipped in India.



Sàigòn, 1968

NGUYỄN VĂN CỰ

Military ID: 57A 701-414
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



New York, 1999

Date of Birth:

July 28, 1937

Place of Birth:

Ninh-Hòa, Khánh-Hòa, Vietnam

Current Residence:

Trại Cửu-Long Apartment, Thị-Nghè, Saigon

Current Address:

Jackson Heights, New York, NY 11370, USA

Family:

Wife:

Lê Thị Cát, US Post Office window-clerk.

Daughter:

Nguyễn Anh-Trâm, Ph.D. in Computer Science, currently working for Computer Associates in Long Island, New York.

Daughter:

Nguyễn Anh-Thư, Pharmacist, currently working in New York.

Son:

Nguyễn Trí-Dũng, currently a Resident Doctor at Brooklyn Hospital, New York.

Son:

Nguyễn Trí-Toàn, graduated from UC Berkeley with a BS in Computer Electronic Engineering, currently working at Altera, San José, California, Pursuing an MS in Computer-Electronic Engineering.

Maternal Grand Children:

Kathleen Esfahany graduated BS on May/2023 from IT, Massachusetts Institute and is attending Harvard, Medical School.

Jennifer Esfahany is attending MIT, Massachusetts Institute.

Activities before joining the Navy, First Aquarius Class:

Student at University of Science, Saigon, graduated with Certificate 1 MPC.

Positions in the Navy/Vietnamese Republic:

Executive Officer of HQ 451, 1963-1965.

Assistant Officer, TTHQ/ BTL/HQ/ P3, 1966.

Head of Political Warfare Officer, Second



Toàn gia, New York 1999

Coastal Zone, 1967.
Commander of Coastal Group 25, 1968.
Executive Officer of HQ-07, 1969-1970.
Commanding Officer of HQ-600, 1971.
Deputy Chief of Operations, Central Force Headquarters/THD 39.
Executive Officer of HQ-5, 1973.
Commanding Officer of HQ-229, 1973-1974.

Activities after April 1975:

Imprisoned in re-education camp from May 1975 to September 1982.
Escaped to Singapore in June 1983.
Settled in the United States from March 1984.
Graduated with a BS in Computer Science. Worked for IBM in New York from 1988 to 1996. Currently working for the US Post Office in the IT sector.

Future Aspirations:

A peaceful, prosperous, and truly free Vietnam without communism in any form. I hope to return to my beloved homeland when it is free of enemies.



Sacrifice and Loyalty Nguyễn Văn Cự

*"Those early days of attachment,
Who could bear to easily forget!"*

It was truly miserable after the Viet Cong captured Saigon. I had to go to a re-education camp from May 1975 to September 1982. My wife was left alone, with no support, living in poverty, lacking everything, and had to care for four young children, the eldest being 7 years old and the youngest only 3 months old. With her teacher's salary, my wife could not make ends meet. So, outside of her working hours, she, along with our three eldest children, stayed up late and woke up early to sell street food to earn extra money to support the family and to visit me in prison. I was deeply moved and grateful to my wife and children. Despite living in difficult and

deprived conditions, my wife remained faithful to me.

After being released from prison, I attempted to escape with my family several times but failed. In the last attempt, my wife sacrificed herself to stay behind as a decoy so that I could escape with our four children, and we successfully reached Singapore. My wife was left alone, suffering immensely, longing for her husband and children, and tried to escape with Mr. Nguyễn Phú Bá, but they were tragically unsuccessful! My wife had to endure 6 months in prison at Năm-Căn, where she was severely tortured and treated cruelly. In the last attempt, my wife escaped with Mr. Nguyễn Tấn Đôn, facing

imminent death, but fortunately reached freedom and reunited with our family. Our family is immensely grateful to Mr. Nguyễn

Tấn Đơn. We pray to Heaven and Buddha for saving our family and helping us reunite.

*Nguyễn Văn Cư
December 2000*



Nha-Trang, 1961

HỒ ĐẮC CUNG

Military ID: 57A 701.062
Final Rank: Navy Lieutenant



Date of Birth:

1937

Place of Birth:

An Truyên Village, Phú Vang District
Thừa Thiên Province, Vietnam

Current Address:

Killed in action in 1969 at Coastal Group
26, Second Coastal Zone

Family:

Survived by wife and one son
Please see 'Editor's Notes'



Activities before joining the Navy, First Aquarius Class:

Attended Quốc Học High School and the University of Science (MPC), Huế

Positions/Units in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Fleet, Commander of Coastal Group 26

Editor's Notes:

In 1969, Navy Lieutenant Hồ Đắc Cung was appointed as Commander of Coastal Group 26 (ZD 26). During a military operation organized by ZD 26, our troops landed on a coastal area within the Vĩnh Hy Secret Zone, located inside Mũi Đá Vạch, Cam Ranh. The Viet Cong, stationed on high ground, shot him in the head, resulting in his death. His body was transported to the mortuary in Nha Trang. His wife and four-year-old son requested that the coffin be moved to Huế for burial.

Lieutenant Cung achieved the highest entrance exam score among all recruitment centers in Central Vietnam. As a result, all officer cadets from Central Vietnam, including those from Huế and Nha Trang, were under his command during the initial days, until the entire group of cadets from Saigon joined the training. As one of the first three cadet platoon leaders of the class, he was beloved by his peers for his gentle and kind personality. Tragically, his life was cut short, leaving behind a young wife, a small child, and deep sorrow among his friends.



HOÀNG DÂN

Military ID: 58A 700.523
Final rank: Navy Lieutenant

Date of Birth:

1938

Birthplace:

Southern Vietnam

Current Address:

Deceased in 1970 while serving in the Frogman Unit

Family Status:

Married

Activities before joining the Navy, First

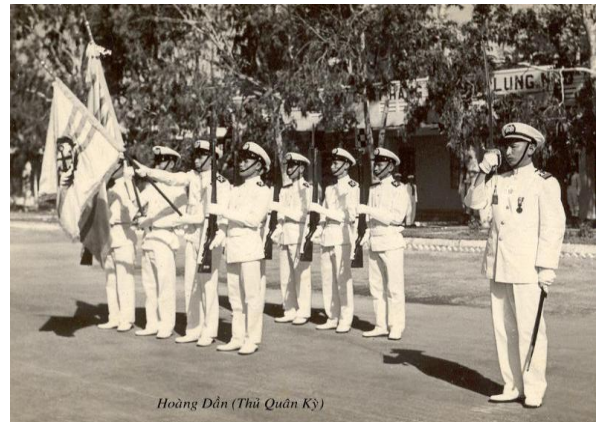
Aquarius Class:

Unknown

Position/Unit in the Navy:

Fleet.

Last Unit: Frogman Unit.



Editor's Notes:

He was born in the year of the Tiger and was the "Golden Tiger" of the class. Tall and handsome, he was part of the squad assigned to carry the national flag. Physically strong like a "tiger," flexible like a "frogman," yet possessing artistic tendencies. He loved the song "... Chiều đi lặng lẽ màn đêm dần trôi ..." sung by Thanh Thúy. After graduating and serving on a ship, he volunteered to serve in the Frogman Unit.

Hoàng Dân sacrificed for the Nation in 1970. His passing left deep sorrow among his classmates. The following two verses are dedicated to his memory:

*Golden Tiger, you have passed away,
We remain, thousands mourn you.*



Nha-Trang, 1972

ĐẶNG DIỆM

Military ID: 56A-700.762
Final Rank: Commander



San Diego, 1996

Educational background:

Graduated with a Bachelor of Law from Saigon University of Law (1972)

Master degree in Management Science from the US Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California (12/1975)

Personal Information:

Date of Birth: 4/1936, Ninh Bình, North Vietnam

Current Address:

Cerritos, CA 90703

Occupation:

Senior Programmer Analyst

Family:

Wife: Phạm Thị Ngọc-Dung, Accountant;

Son: Đặng Đình Hiệp, MD;

Daughter: Đặng Vân Khanh, PharmD (2001)



Vietnam Navy Final Position:

Director of Military Training Department,
Nha Trang Naval Academy

Memories of Serving in Nha Trang:



Dear Friends,

At the Nha Trang Naval Training Center, more than 40 years ago around August 1961, fate brought 81 of us together in this place. Some were thin, some were stout, some were tall as a tree, and some were short. Each had different backgrounds, but we were all there for one common reason: to fulfill the duty of young men in a chaotic country. Despite different personal ambitions, we shared a collective journey filled with unique experiences.

Over the years, the hardships, losses, and bittersweet moments have stayed with each of us. Today, I write this to reminisce with some friends about those unforgettable memories from a specific time and place.

First, I recall friends Khánh and Tiếp during our time at the Riverine Group. Those were days of youthful adventures when responsibilities were lighter, and danger was met with a sense of fearlessness. I remember navigating the narrow and winding canals to retrieve the bodies of comrades or to rescue and support isolated units along the rivers like Chợ Gạo, Kiến Hòa. I also recall with fondness, the times when Khánh and I would go on land missions to hunt down hiding enemies or those nights of ambushes in pitch darkness, drenched in cold sweat.

Although San and I were not in the same unit, we often participated in joint operations in areas like Cái Bè, Rừng Sát, and especially Barai, where we left behind some comrades, including Trần Ngọc Bảo. I also appreciate San for the memorable summer vacation days I spent with his family in the idyllic Đà Lạt before he returned to his beloved sea.

Lastly, the dark months at Monterey during continuous turmoil back home were a time of shared anguish and concern for our families and friends left behind. The familiar scenes of the school now felt distant. We reluctantly left the military, abandoning our plans and future aspirations.

Over 25 years after that dark period, some friends have passed away, and my remaining friends and I have aged. My wife is no longer young, and my children have grown up and become successful. Despite everything, I still consider myself fortunate. Now, I can leisurely go fishing with Võ Quang Thủ while waiting for the day to return to a peaceful and free Vietnam, hoping to see the Training Center still quietly standing by the shores of Nha Trang.

Best regards,
Đặng Diệm



Vietnam, 1969

TRẦN THẾ DIỆP

Military ID: 59A 700.619
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



Australia, 1999

Date of Birth:

October 8, 1939 (actual birth year is 1937).

Place of Birth:

Quảng Ngãi, Vietnam.

Current Address:

Lidcombe, NSW 2141, Australia

Family Background:

Wife and nine children
All reside in Australia.

Positions Held in the Vietnam Navy:

HQ-405
Naval Supply Center
Naval Shipyard
Command Headquarters of the Capital Special Zone
Waterway Control and Operation Center (Saigon Commercial Port)



Activities after April 1975:

1975 - 1978: Re-education camp with fellow soldiers at Long Giao, Suoi Mau, and Trang Bom camps. April 1978: Released from prison on April 3, fled on April 9, and resettled in Australia (Sydney) on August 7, 1978. 1978 – Present: Freelance work, construction, investment, etc.

Future Aspirations:

A) Hope for the collapse of the harsh regime of the Communist Party of Vietnam soon.
B) Plan to retire at the age of 65, which is in 3 years. Will enjoy a leisurely life and travel without intending to return to live in Vietnam, even if it is peaceful and non-communist by then.

A Few Lines About My Life

I was born and raised in a poor family in the countryside of Quảng Ngãi province. As a child (1945-1954), I lived with my parents in an area controlled by the Viet Minh (Liên Khu Năm).

After finishing elementary school in 1950, I had to stop studying because my parents couldn't afford to keep me in school. In 1953, thanks to the help of a kind benefactor, I was fortunate to return to school, and by 1954, I continued studying in grade 6 at a secondary school, also in Quảng Ngãi.

In July 1954, the Geneva Agreement was signed, and in October 1954, the Communists handed over my hometown to the national government. At this time, I left my hometown for the city, seeking a livelihood through manual labor. A year later, in December 1955, the Ngô Đình Diệm government opened the first lower secondary school in Quang Ngai and named it Trần Quốc Tuấn.

Being diligent and eager to learn, I seized the opportunity as soon as it arrived. I negotiated with my employer to allow me to work at night, reduce my working hours, and voluntarily accept half of the previous wage. My employer, understanding my situation, agreed, and once again I returned to school. In 1957, I graduated from lower secondary school and "struck while the iron was hot" by going to Hue to continue my studies. Here, I supported myself by working, though it was less arduous than in Quang Ngai. I no longer did manual labor but worked as a tutor. My friend Phan Tứ Hải and I studied together from grade 9 to grade 12 at Quốc Học Huế.

In 1960, I passed the Baccalaureate II and continued my studies at the University of Science in Huế with friends Phan Tứ Hải, Hồ Đắc Cung, and Lưu Lương Cơ. In 1961, I was drafted and called up to attend the Thủ Đức Officer Candidate School. In a pinch, I joined the Navy. There, I reunited with friends Hải, Cung, and Cơ.

To be honest, I didn't like the "soldier's life"! When we were in grade 12 (1959-1960), friends Lê Bá Thông and Nguyễn Mạnh Trí left to join the Navy (First Capricorn Class). Trí, cheerful, quick-witted, and kind, urged the whole class to join. At that time, I firmly refused. Ironically, I ended up joining the Navy, and as their junior, they put me through three months of rigorous training (but it was fun).

My childhood dream was to escape poverty and ensure that my wife and children would not suffer because of it. I achieved that dream. Now, with graying hair, reflecting on life, I find that there are very strange things in life. "In misfortune, there is still some luck, and sometimes in luck, there may be some misfortune." These are the experiences of my life. The soldier's life that I disliked was what strengthened my endurance and taught me patience and harmony. Of course, my life depended on many other factors, but Patience, Endurance, and Harmony were the main factors that helped me achieve my goals and escape poverty to reach today.



Trần Thế Diệp



Sai-Gòn, 1972

TRƯƠNG VĂN ĐĂNG
Military ID: 57A 701.028
Last rank: Lieutenant Commander



Malaysia, 1980

Date of birth:

September 1, 1937

Place of birth:

Gò Công, Việt Nam

Residence:

Studied in Saigon since 1948

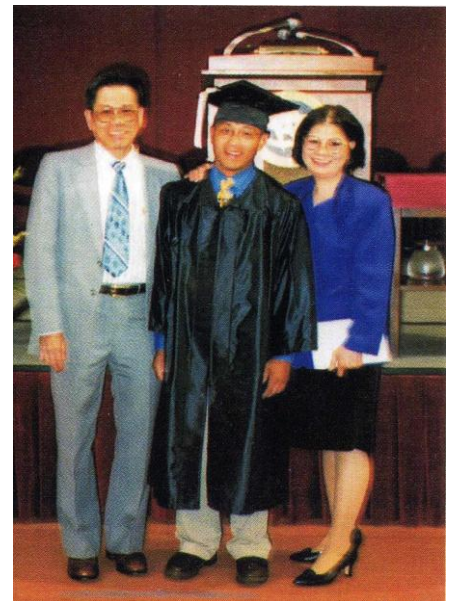
Current location:

Plymouth, Minnesota, USA

Family:

Wife: Trần Thị Kim Sang, Electric Repair Specialist for Sauer-Danfoss Co.

Son: Trương Đăng Lâm, graduated with a BS in Sociology at U.R.F. Wisconsin, a Master in Social Science at the University Wisconsin, 1998, currently working in Minneapolis



Activities before joining the Navy:

Graduated from College Technique Saigon

Due to the war in Southern Vietnam:

Joined the Vietnamese Air Force, studied abroad at Rochford Military School in France in 1955

Returned and served in the First Squadron Unit Bien Hoa; and the Technical Division of the Vietnamese National Air Force at Tan Son Nhat, Saigon.

Enrolled in the Naval Officer Cadet School, the First Aquarius class, at Nha Trang in 1961

Positions Held in the Navy:

Officer on internship with the U.S. Seventh Fleet alongside Bảo-Bình Trần Hữu Khánh upon graduation, visiting the Philippines and Japan in 1963

Artillery Officer, Escort Ship Kỳ-Hòa HQ-09, 1963

Navigation Officer, Escort Ship Kỳ-Hòa HQ-09, 1964

Assistant to the Commanding Officer of Saigon Naval Base, 1964
Aerial Reconnaissance Team Leader, 1965
Assistant Chief of the Medals and Promotions Department, Navy Headquarters / General Administration Department, 1966
Personnel Department Head, Fleet Command Headquarters, 1967.
Studied abroad at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, USA, in the Electronics Maintenance Officers course, 1968
Instructor of the following subjects at the Naval Academy in Nha Trang, 1969:

- Theoretical Navigation
- Practical Navigation
- Electronics

Concurrently held the following positions until 1971:

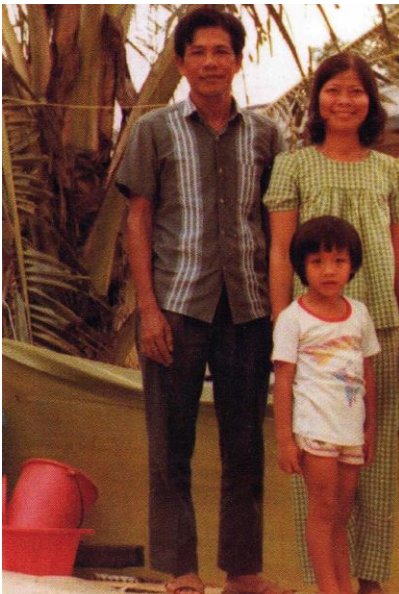
- Company Commander of Naval Officer Cadet Class 20
- Director of Training Operations, Command Headquarters of the Naval Academy
- Principal of the Naval Technical School in Nha Trang
- Electronics Training Officer, Naval Academy in Nha Trang

Chief of Technical Department, Navy Headquarters, Division Six, 1971
Chief Inspector, Navy Headquarters / General Inspectorate Division, 1973

Medals and Honors:

National Defense Service Medal, First Class.
Navy Distinguished Service Medal, First Class.
Staff Service Medal, First Class.
Training Service Medal, First Class
Technical Service Medal, First Class.
Air Service Medal, First Class.
Campaign Medal, First Class.
Honorary Medal for Air Patrol Services, awarded by the US SP2V Patrol Squadron

Activities after 1975:



Underwent correctional camp I create farming tools such as pickaxes, shovels, sickle, hammer, pliers, chisels, and saw with limited resources.

After being released from the camp, I escaped in 1980. With knowledge and experience from the Navy, we safely arrived at a Malaysian-American oil rig with 178 other people on a boat. We got to stay at a refugee camp on the island of Pulau Bidong.

A memorable moment on the way to Malaysia: The procedure to pick up people from the sea taught by Captain Đỗ Kiêm in Logistic was finally put to use. One afternoon, 2 days after leaving Cửa Đại (Cửu Long

River), the sea was calm, and then I heard voice of a woman, crying and yelling “my husband jumped into the water!” I immediately turned the boat around. Within 5 minutes, I found the husband. A good swimmer went out with a rope to help. They asked him why he did such a crazy thing. He said that he was walking toward a voice inviting him for food. He walked off the ledge before he could realize what he was doing.

While waiting for an interview with UNHCR Delegations, responsibilities included:

- Head of the Piracy Documentation and Social Affairs Committee at the refugee camp: regularly communicated with UNHCR officials to provide and collect documents, assisting refugees in gathering evidence to present to the Malaysian government regarding incidents of piracy, murder, this helped them receive priority at the camp.
- Established the first Naval Association on the island: the main goal was to help naval officers and their families stranded on the island. They provided daily necessities, assisted families in preparing documents for resettlement.

Arrived in Minnesota, USA, in early 1981, sponsored by his brother, Naval Doctor Trương Văn Đắt. Studied Computer Technology and earned an F.C.C. license, electronic

I Worked as an Electronics Specialist at Northern Ordnance Division FMC Corporation until 1985. Later became a Telecommunications & Electronics Specialist at the Department of Transportation of Minnesota, until retirement.

Hopes for the future:

Looking back at my life, from childhood witnessing Japanese soldiers occupying villages to growing up, I was never experiencing the joy of “carefree youth”, instead walking the difficult path of defending freedom until its last day.

My ultimate wish is for Vietnam to be a free and peaceful nation, where people no longer live in exile, where families have all the necessities, where next generations can enjoy a prosperous and happy life, keeping pace with the rest of the civilized world.





Nha-Trang, 1962

Trương Quý Đô

Military ID: 58A 700.516



California, 1999

Hello former classmates from Nha Trang,

I would like to share some brief details about my life with you. I left Hue with a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics to join the First Aquarius Class at Nha Trang Naval Academy. Upon graduation, I was assigned to HQ-501, commanded by B.C.V., along with friends Chu Bá-Yến and Trần Văn Hoa-Em. B.C.V. was a kind commander.

My next assignment was Fourth Coastal Zone under the command of Nguyễn Hữu Chí. I was assigned to Kiên Giang to take up the position of Inland Station Chief and act as a Navy representative there. A year later, I was transferred back to the fleet to serve as the Executive Officer of HQ-403. At that time, the Merchant Marine was in great need of personnel, so I applied and in 1968, I was assigned as the First Mate of the commercial ship Tien Phong. I continued to serve on various commercial ships, eventually becoming the captain of the Tiên Phong and Thống Nhất ships. I got married in 1971, and by 1974, we had two children.

On the day of the fall of Saigon in 1975, I lost my ship and was sent to a reeducation camp. I regretted not evacuating. However, during my time in the camp, I didn't face severe difficulties. Once, I almost became paralyzed due to a severe flu, but my fellow inmates carried me to Dr. Truong Thin, also an inmate, who performed acupuncture on me until I recovered. I continued to do hard labor for two years.

After being released, I sought to escape the country. The first attempt in Phan Rang failed, so I returned. On the second attempt, I went to Mỹ Tho and successfully escaped in 1979.

In the U.S., like many other former military personnel, I had to take on jobs below my qualifications while attending Santa Ana College at night to advance my career. I was fortunate to work for a good company with kind employers, so I worked diligently.



Party Time!

Our family life has been very happy. My wife managed everything both inside and outside the home. Our two children were successful. My son, a Civil Engineer, works for

Caltrans. My daughter, a Doctor of Internal Medicine, completed her residency at Cornell University in New York.

Enclosed are photos of my wife and me at a friend's party and two other photos from a reunion with Bao-Binh classmates and a Navy reunion with officers and families in Southern California.

Best regards,
Trương Quý-Đô

Some Activity Photos with Navy Friends

Trương Quý-Đô



Họp Mặt Bảo Bình



Họp mặt với gia-đình Hải-Quân miền Nam California.



NGUYỄN TẤN ĐƠN

Military ID: 61A700.526
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander.

Date of Birth:

January 6, 1941.

Place of Birth:

Nha-Trang.

Family Status:

Married.

Activities before joining the Navy:

Former student of Võ-Tánh High School, Nha-Trang.

Positions in the Navy:

Fleet, 1963.

Special Task Forces, Unit 213, Cam-Ranh, 1969.

Naval Training Center, Nha-Trang, 1971.

Commanding Officer of HQ 490.

Commanding Officer of HQ 404 Hương-Giang Transport Ship.

Research Department, Navy Headquarters, 1975.

Activities after April 1975:

Re-education camp until 1983.

Escaped by boat and resettled in Australia, 1984.

Current Address:

Cabramatta West, NSW 2166, AUSTRALIA.

Editor's Note:

Nguyễn Tấn Đôn was initially very enthusiastic in working with the editorial team. However, he later withdrew from activities because the team did not agree to list and publish the biography of a person that he mistakenly believed that person is the "Number 82" of our class. He wrote: "...we do not want to participate when our friend is not acknowledged. All evidence from all sides is incorrect!"

We respect his personal opinion and wish him good health and vigorous participation in activities of his choosing.



San Diego, 1971

NGUYỄN CHÂU GIÁM

Military ID : 55A 700.828
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



California, 2000

Date of Birth:

January 2, 1935

Family:

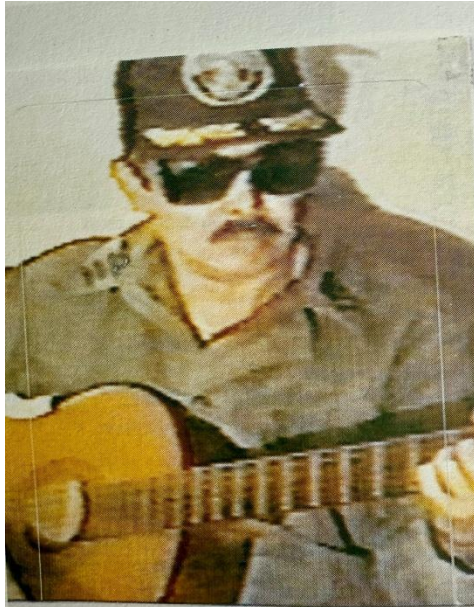
Resettled in the United States in 1975, with a family of four children named after mythical creatures: Long (Dragon), Lân (Qilin), Qui (Turtle), Phượng (Phoenix).

- **Long Châu:** Very intelligent, graduated "Top RHS" with 6 scholarships, attended U.C. Berkeley, graduated in 4 years, married with 2 children (1 son, 1 daughter), praised by Bảo-Bình Lê Quang Lập, working at U.C. Berkeley.
- **Lân Châu:** Enjoys playing like his father, hasn't achieved much.
- **Quý Châu:** Graduated in 4 years with a degree in Electrical Engineering from U.C. San Francisco.
- **Phượng Châu (G. Châu):** Graduated in 4 years from OKL University, married with 2 children (1 son, 1 daughter).

Special Notes about Nguyễn Châu Giám:

- **Most Admired:** After God, his most admired person is his father, Nguyễn Châu Tiên, who sacrificed his life for his family, country, and society. As a politician, he was imprisoned by the French, Japanese, and finally sentenced to death by the Communists (landlord?!), with his assets confiscated.
- **Most Dreamed About:** His first love at the age of 14-15 with Nguyễn Thị Nho (later the wife of Air Force Colonel B.H.), who was unhappy and passed away early after giving birth to their third child.
- **Saddest Moment:** The passing of his close friend, Bác Sĩ Hà Thúc Nhơn.
- **Most Memorable:** The last moments in the bunker during a shelling at BTL/HQ/V1ZH, Đà Nẵng, with General Trường, TL/V1CT, and Đ/Đ H.V.K. Thoại, TL/V1ZH.
- **Most Loved:** Kim-Chi, who gave up everything to comfort him in his final days.
- **Least Liked:** Deception and politics, so he absolutely avoided studying related fields like Law; only interested in medicine and engineering. Therefore, he didn't pursue military medicine and switched from the Air Force to the Navy, studying the Bảo-Bình course.
- **Luckiest:** Becoming an early ship commanding officer of the course (Patrol Boat HQ-605). During a visit to Phan-Thiết (BB Lê Quang Lập was the Patrol Squadron Commander), he had a beautiful romance with the beauty queen Ng. T. Lan.
- **Favorite:** Dreaming of harmony, always ready to study abroad, even if it meant taking the second-level baccalaureate exam the next day (should have taken the full baccalaureate exam earlier in 1959).

A Few Images of Nguyễn Châu Giám



Trên 20 năm trong Quân-Ngũ VNC

Over 20 years in Republic of VietNam



Over 20 years at US Railway



Theresa (P. Châu) chụp chung với Ba

Theresa (P. Châu) with her
Parents



Giám with Long Châu, Lân
Châu, and Quý Châu

Autobiography: RETURNING TO DUST

Nguyễn Châu Giám

Although my family was in Saigon, my ancestral roots likely come from Central Vietnam. I clearly remember that my paternal grandfather lived in Đôn-Điền village, Điện Bàn district, Quảng Nam province.

My hardships began from the time of my grandfather, as I was heavily influenced by his thoughts. I lived in a nation that was first dependent on the Chinese, then enslaved by the French, and experienced constant pain and suffering from wars until 1975. My grandfather had instilled in my young mind an ideal from before I was born. He named my aunts, uncles, and parents with names like Cô, Đoà, Mòuì, Lập, Lạ, Chừ, Chưạ! My father was named Đoà but later changed it to Nguyễn Châu Tiên. He passed the Han's second-level baccalaureate exam and was given the title of "Cửu Phẩm," so he was often called "Cửu Tiên." People often say Quảng Nam folks are argumentative (who knows why?), perhaps that's why my entire paternal family went into politics, refusing to bow down to anyone!

Looking back at the rich lifestyle of a merchant family, a landlord, and the talented and extraordinary life of my father, I felt like a prince in a Chinese novel. Until my father was captured and imprisoned by the French, then liberated by the Japanese, and finally executed by the Communists with his assets confiscated, I felt like the most wretched person in the world!

At barely 10 years old, I wandered the streets, not only having to gather firewood for a living but also take care of my sick elderly mother. Friends and acquaintances avoided my family for fear of implicating themselves! Until I finished elementary school and passed the entrance exam for Nha-Trang high school with a small scholarship for books and supplies, I felt utterly miserable. I had to teach elementary school children to earn my meals. Friends said I was from Phan Rang because my mother, Nguyễn Thò Tiêm, was the daughter of Nguyễn Thành Châu, Chánh Tổng of Mỹ Tường, and the same village as Nguyễn Văn Thiệu.

Influenced by the phrase "Luật chi mi?" and the fiery personality of my friend, Hà Thúc Nhon, I was very rebellious and defiant. During a punishment session at school, I refused to kneel before the principal, so I didn't want to stay in Nha-Trang anymore, even though I had a scholarship.

I moved to Saigon in 1951. Realizing that studying like wealthy kids was too expensive, I sought accelerated studies and immediately took the high school exams. At that time (1953), the police were rounding up soldiers everywhere. High school graduates were encouraged to enter the Thủ Đức Military Academy. Personally, I detested killing and war, but knowing I couldn't avoid conscription, I decided to join the Navy, hoping to serve on ships and avoid direct combat, and still pursue my dream of peace. But when I went to submit my application, I met my former teacher, Mr. Phan-Ngoà, then a lieutenant in the Air Force. He persuaded me to join the Air Force to have fun writing newsletters. At that

time, the military was still under French control. Due to my anti-colonial sentiment, I didn't like the French, and they didn't like me either! So as soon as the Americans arrived in Vietnam, I quickly joined them. I was among the first 23 Vietnamese selected to study abroad in the United States (1955).

I attended the Mechanical Engineering class at Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, Texas. After returning to Vietnam, my mind was constantly dreaming of going back to the U.S., reminiscing about the love I had refused for the sake of heroism, wanting to forsake personal love to repay the debt to my country! From then on, I felt Vietnam was too small, even the European capitalist countries didn't appeal to me as much as the U.S.! However, I was always eager to study abroad, anywhere, to enjoy the feeling of "My hair fluttered in the four winds."

Tired of war, after returning from studying at Clark Field AFB (Philippines), I decided to switch to medicine (1959) after passing the second-level baccalaureate. Perhaps due to studying

and working too much, and taking care of two younger brothers, I became seriously ill and had to be hospitalized for a while. After recovering, I no longer wanted to stay in the Air Force, so I joined the 11th class of the Naval Officer School, Bảo-Bình. The joys and sorrows of the Navy began...

I graduated and interned on the large oil tanker USS NECHES, AO-47, which frequently docked in Hong Kong and Japan. After my internship, I continued serving on warships for a while before transferring to become the camp commander of Bạch-Đặng II camp. This was an enjoyable time as I was in Saigon, enjoying life and learning a lot, especially martial arts. At Bạch-Đặng II camp, I learned like Duong Qua, disregarding the basics and only focusing on what I liked from the masters!

I returned to ship duty until I left the position of ship commander of the Kim-Quy warship (HQ-605) to become the Commander of the 36th Coastal Squadron in Long-Phú, a place with many naval landmarks. In 1970, I was transferred to Phú-Quốc, serving as the Deputy Operations Commander, leading

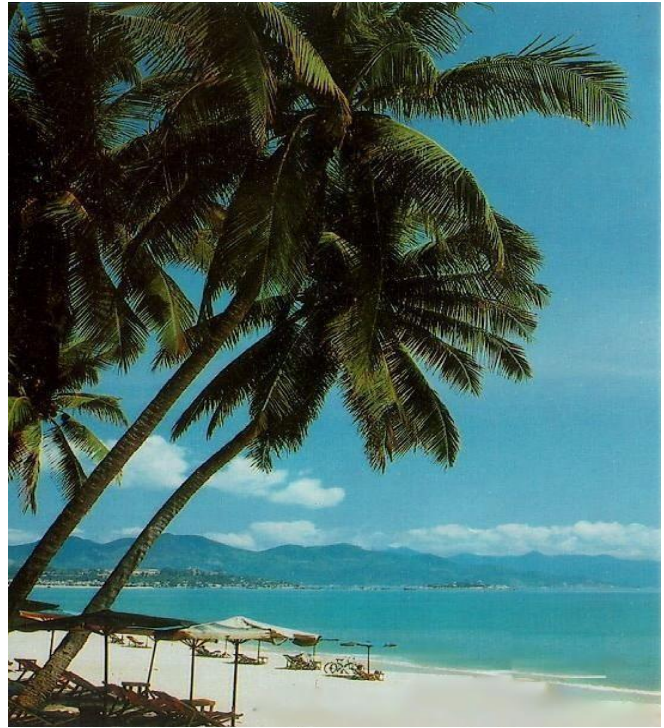
combined Vietnamese-American naval operations with Cmdr Storm under the command of Admiral Zumwalt at that time, and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. In 1971, I attended a staff course in Colorado, San Diego, California. In 1972,

Commander at HQ/V3SN in Long-Bình, then was assigned to Cát-Lái as the Commander of the Training Center until February 1975, when I was transferred to Đà-Nẵng to serve as the Deputy Operations Commander at HQ/V1ZH for a short month before the central region fell. The evacuation forces retreated to Vũng-Tàu and then evacuated again to the sea!

Thanks to some experience studying abroad and knowing the U.S. since 1955, I quickly integrated into civilian life and worked for the Federal Railroad Administration until retiring at the age of 62 (1997). During the twilight years of my life, I realized that "Everything is transient, dust returns to dust," but there is something people say "remains after passing away." Up to now, I still find it vague and unclear, but I still believe it exists.

Scientific experiments are easier to understand, but regarding the vast, infinite universe, where science hasn't even reached Mars, when will we fully understand it? Perhaps when I close my eyes and leave this world, I will find the answer to understand the true essence of life.

Nguyễn Châu Giám





PHAN TÚ HẢI

Military ID: 61A 700.527
Final Rank: Navy Commander

Date of Birth:

January 15, 1941, in Thừa Thiên, Vietnam

Current Address:

Houston, Texas, U.S.A.

Family:

Married in 1967 in Vĩnh-Long.
Wife and four children, including two daughters.

Eldest son is 30 years old, married with a 6-year-old daughter.

Youngest daughter was born in the United States in 1977.

Currently, the children, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter all live together in one house.



Activities before joining the Navy:

Student at the University of Science, Huế.

Admitted to the Agricultural Engineering School in Bảo Lộc but chose the Navy as if it was destined.

Some positions and units in the Vietnamese Navy:

1963 - 1964: HQ 402: Transportation Officer.

1963 - 1964: Naval Junk Boat Force Training Center, Deputy Commander. Later transferred to Naval Junk Boat Force Headquarters in Saigon, as political warfare officer responsible for recruiting singers and musicians for the music group. Composed the Hải Thuyền March for the unit.

1966 – 1967: Riverine Assault Group 23 Officer.

1966 - 1967: Executive Officer, HQ-405.

1967 - 1968: Deputy Commander of Riverine Assault Group 31, Vĩnh Long. Also acted as the temporary Deputy Commander of the Riverine Assault Group 23 while waiting for



the new Deputy Commander arrival.

1968 - 1970: Commander, Coastal Group 14 at Hội An.

Also commanded the combined naval force consisting of Coastal Group 14, several boats from Riverine Assault Group 32, Riverine Patrol Group 60, and PCF from Coastal Defense Fleet 1.

1970 - 1972: Commander, Coastal Minesweeping Group 92. Also commanded the combined naval force consisting of Minesweeping Group 92, Coastal Group 11 at Naval Base Cửa Việt, and the demolition team from Central Task Force. This period was to prepare for the Lam Sơn 719 campaign in Laos.

1972 - 1973: Commander, Third Interdiction Division. Also served as Chief Of Staff of the Trần Hưng Đạo 26 operation.

1973 - 1974: Commander, First Amphibious Division after graduating from the 2nd Naval Tactical Management course.

1974 - Evacuation: Commander of Combined Riverine Patrol Groups 6.

Special Achievements during Military Service:

Promoted to Lt. Commander on the battlefield on October 1, 1970, at Cửa Đại (Coastal Group 14).

Awarded the Gold Medal in the Lam Sơn 719 campaign.

Awarded the Silver Star and Bronze Star by the U.S. military (Coastal Group 14).

Narrowly escaped death Many times at Coastal Group 14, Riverine Mine Sweeping Group 92, and the Special Forces on the Thu Bồn River, Cửa Việt River, and Cái Tàu River, etc.

Activities after April 1975:

Evacuated to the United States in 1975. Initially settled in the East Coast but later moved to Houston, Texas.

Worked as a furniture restoration specialist.

Family owned and operated a beauty shop.



Editor's Note:

Phan Tứ Hải was nicknamed "Hải Chó" (to distinguish him from Hải J, see the article 'The Constellation of Aquarius) because of his witty nature, playing Spanish guitar left-handed, and singing sorrowful songs during the camp days at school. In the U.S., Hải also gained another nickname, "Hải Say," because he often drank and passed out after a few beers. Perhaps Hải still harbors some unresolved feelings. He is a loyal member of the Vietnamese Nationalist Party, Hà Thúc Ký faction, and was a feared opponent of the Communists on rivers and coastal areas. Hải was one of the First Aquarius class members promoted on the battlefield and the first to reach the rank of Commander. Although Hải rarely participates in class activities, friends visiting from afar are always warmly welcomed and invited to drink and forget their worries! We look forward to seeing him at the reunion to celebrate his 60th birthday with a toast.





L.V.Quí, T.T.Hải & L.V. Huê

TRẦN TRỌNG HẢI

Military ID: 61A 700-438
Final Rank: Commander



Date of Birth:

October 12, 1941

Place of Birth:

Lào Kay, Vietnam

Current Address:

Southern California

Family:

Wife:

Nguyễn Thị Bạch-Yến:

Children:

Trần Quốc Andy (USA)

Trần Thị Minh-Châu (Vietnam), with her husband
and two children

Trần Nguyễn Amy (USA)

Trần Châu Angie (USA)

Career in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

1964–1966: Officer HQ-07, HQ-610, HQ-328

1966–1967: Commander of Coastal Group 15, Chu Lai

1967–1969: Commanding Officer HQ-608, HQ-114

1969–1970: Studied abroad in the USA

1970–1972: ACTOVRAD Project Manager (US Navy/VN Navy)

1972–1975: Commanding Officer HQ-13, HQ-503, HQ-16



After the April 1975 Incident:

1975–1989: 14 years in Vietnamese Communist re-education camps

1989–1993: Electrician, carpenter, writer, and English teacher

1993 to present: Resettled in the United States

Current Profession:

Construction Field Manager, Builders Appliance Supply for Southern California



Family Picture: Taken on Angie’s birthday, June 25, 1999. Members: Bạch-Yến, Trọng-Hải, Amy, Angie, and Andy

Notable Achievements:

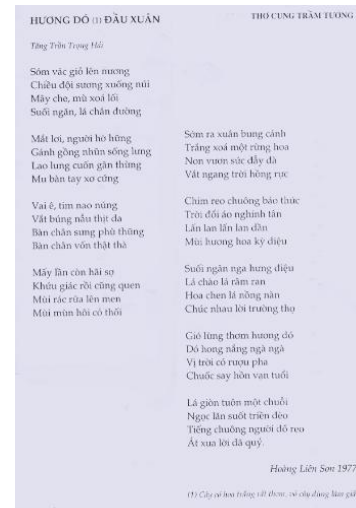
Pen Name: Tuấn-Anh Trần Trọng Hải

Authored Works:

- Vietnamese So Easy* (Bilingual), 1991
- The Use of Tenses in English* (Vietnamese version), 1992
- Essentials of English Grammar* (Vietnamese version), 1992
- Common Mistakes in English* (Vietnamese version), 1993

Translations:

- The Case of The Screaming Woman*
- The Case of The Duplicate Daughter*
- The Case of The Ice-Cold Hands*
- The Case of The Spurious Spinster*
- The Case of The Daring Decoy*
- The Case of The Lucky Loser*
- The Case of The Stuttering Bishop*
- I, The Jury*
- The Firm*



Hai đoạn của một bài thơ Cung Trầm Tưởng tặng Hải

Published in News papers and magazines:

- Việt Báo Kinh-Tê: *The Case of The Stuttering Bishop*
- Saigon Post: *The Case of The Screaming Woman, I, The Jury, The Case of The Spurious Spinster.*

Editorial Notes:

Trần Trọng Hải was nicknamed "Hải J" by his classmates to differentiate him from "Hải Chó" (Phan Tứ Hải). "J" represents an imaginary number in mathematics, symbolizing the challenges in Hải’s life—where dreams often seemed real but turned into illusions. Nonetheless, his achievements, as listed above, are 100% real. Congratulations to Hải for his success, and best wishes for even more accomplishments in his new home.



Nha-Trang, 1962

PHẠM VĂN HÀM

Military ID: 60A 700.735



California, 2000

Current address:

Los Angeles, California, USA.

Family:

Wife and 3 children, three grandchildren.

Activities before joining the Navy, enrolled into First Aquarian Class (Đệ Nhất Bảo Bình):

Studied at Chu Van An High School, Saigon and Hue University of Science.

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy :

HQ-327, 1963-1964

HQ-02, during the time of decommissioning this warship, 1965

HQ-10, 1966

Commanding Officer HQ-604, 1967-1968

Central Special Task Force 214 Headquarters, Cat Lai, 1969



Activities outside of Navy:

Studied at Saigon University of Law. After graduated with a Bachelor of Laws then was transferred to the Ministry of Justice and served at the Saigon and Da Nang Supreme Courts from 1969 to 1975.

Activities after April 1975:

Imprisoned in re-education camps from the South to the North, 1975-1983.

Crossed the ocean by boat to Indonesia, settled in Australia, 1984.

Migrated to the United States, 1990.

Life's Changes

Phạm Văn Hàm

The old people often say that choosing a career, getting married, and buying a house are three important changes in a person's life. In each of these three decisions, one must think carefully before making any decision.

Maybe I'm just a lucky person, so I had to do each of the three things above twice, and sometimes even three times.

Like most of my classmates and the same age, I was born and grew up when our beloved Vietnam was in the midst of war. When I was only in my early teens, I had to leave my hometown and follow my parents to migrate to the South. Then the war happened again when I was just over twenty years old, and the general mobilization order was issued. So, the young men only had one path: Join the Army.

Since you have to join the army, I think you should choose the army you like and join. I chose the Navy because many people, especially women, really like the Navy because in addition to being well-dressed and elegant, the soldiers often get to 'go here and there',

and also because of the group of people. The thing is that I had two school friends, Quyên and Trạch, and all three of us planned to go to the Navy together for fun. So all three of us later became Navy, but our achievements in life were different.

Ever since I was in the military academy and during my first practical training trip on the HQ-500, which was commanded by Lieutenant Nguyen Ngoc Quinn, I had a vague feeling that I had chosen a poor job, because of the seasickness and the continuous rain for several days on the ship, I was never creative. Then after graduating, on my first warship, I was constantly taught by the young Captain about professionalism and manners (like when going to the dining table on the ship, I had to wait for the Captain to come in before I could hold the chopsticks, and only when the Captain brought the chopsticks in could the officers serve them), plus long business trips. The loneliness, loneliness, lack of hope and sadness made the Navy halo fade away in me. So, the thought of leaving the Navy started to

grow and grow. But how can I leave the Navy legally? I could not answer this question until one day I heard that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had announced that the Attachés to Vietnamese embassies abroad and military personnel also had the right to take the exam. So, I started studying Law to have a chance to fulfill my wish!

The most important event in my Navy life was probably the incident where my Executive Officer of HQ 604 ran aground on a reef off the coast of Đả Nẵng in 1968 while I was reading a martial arts novel by Kim Dung. This incident made me determined to leave Navy because there was no future there anymore.

I devoted all my free time to studying. Finally, God allowed me to successfully complete my studies at Law School just as the Ministry of Justice held its Bar Examination and I passed. Thus, my hope from Navy came true.

I ended my life in Navy, regretting my friends and some good people there, including Mr.

Đỗ Kiêm (this is my
subjective opinion,
because there were many
people who did not agree)
and went to serve at the
Ministry of Justice in
December 1969.

Someone told me that if
I had stayed in the Navy, I
probably wouldn't have
had to go to Communist
prison for nine years. I
didn't believe it, because
there were many Navy
brothers who also went to

prison for long terms like
me. It was simply fate,
and fate had
determined the events
of life.

Phạm Văn Hàm



Nha-Trang, 1962

TRẦN VĂN HOA-EM

Military ID: 60A 700 622
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



San Diego, 2000

Personal Information:

Date of Birth: July 20, 1940
Place of Birth: Long-An, Southern Vietnam
Residence: Saigon, from 1952 to 1991
Current Address: San Diego, Southern California

Family:

Both parents have passed away, and there are no siblings.
Wife: Phạm Thị Hồng-Hoa (born in 1946)
Three children and one son-in-law:
Trần Anh Tuấn (born in 1969, B.S. in Nursing)
Trần Thị Hồng-Loan (born in 1970, B.S. in Computer Science)
Trần Anh Huy (born in 1974, B.S. in Computer Science)
Son-in-law: Trần Tấn Hiền (born in 1964, B.S. in Computer Science)



Pre-Navy Activities:

Primary school in Long-An
Secondary school at Petrus Ký, Saigon. Completed High School Diploma (Mathematics)

Roles/Assignments in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Graduated from the Naval Academy in 1963 and served until 1975

Sea Units:

HQ-501, HQ-502, HQ-16

Shore Units:

Coastal Zone 2
Riverine Zone 3
Coastal Zone 5
Central Force
Patrol Force
Amphibious Force



Civilian Activities:

Passed professional merchant marine qualifications

Activities Post-April 1975:

Discharged on February 1, 1975

Imprisoned in Communist re-education camps (1975–1981)

Immigrated to the U.S. on August 20, 1991

Changed name to Trần Văn Hoa upon arriving in the U.S.

Currently receiving disability benefits (SSI) due to injuries sustained during imprisonment

Living happily with children who retain traditional Vietnamese values

Faithfully worshipping Jesus Christ, leading to peace and joy in life

Future Aspirations:

Becoming a grandfather

Traveling to France, England, Japan, etc.

Attending annual or biennial reunions of the First Bảo-Bình Cohort

Words of Gratitude:

To God: "With deep respect and gratitude, I offer my thanks to God for His blessings on my family. He has always protected us with peace in the past, present, and forever."

To the U.S.: "Heartfelt thanks to the American people and government for sheltering, assisting, and providing us opportunities to live in freedom, happiness, and prosperity."

To Bảo-Bình Members: "Finally, sincere thanks to all Bảo-Bình siblings who visited, comforted, and supported my family during hardships, imprisonment, and early days in the U.S."



Nha-Trang, 1963

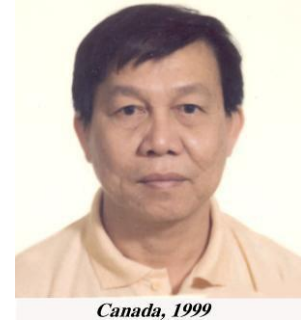




LÊ VĂN HUÊ

Military ID: 58A 700-545
Final Rank: Navy Commander

Date and Place of Birth:
March 2, 1938, at Chợ Lớn



Coming from a family of civil servants, I followed Western education from a young age. My military career was not remarkable, just as ordinary as most of my peers. After graduating and taking the oath, I left the school with the rank of Navy Second Lieutenant. Since then, I have gone through four main forces of the Republic of Vietnam Navy. There were times of great danger, breaking out in cold sweat, and tearful moments bidding farewell to a comrade. I experienced all the sweet and bitter flavors of a sailor's life.

Serving as a deputy on a patrol boat during rough seas, with waves breaking over the deck and strong winds on the command bridge, I once vomited all the food from my stomach to feed the sharks of the waters of Bến Hải, Đà

Nẵng, Quy Nhơn, and the Gulf of Thailand.

During my time as the commander of Coastal Group 21, I often went on Yabuta motorboats exploring the mountains and waters for four consecutive days and nights without bathing. Sweat soaked my clothes, blending with the salty mist of wind and seawater, tanning my skin even more.

Spending a little free time in the rear of the coastal group, every afternoon I practiced martial arts with the sailors or threw knives into the coconut trees or drew my pistol to shoot dried coconuts. Fortunately, when a strong wind blew through and a coconut fell, I fancied myself a cowboy sharpshooter of Texas.

In the Mekong Delta, where the Cửu Long River flows gently, I took on the role of Commander of the Assault Group 31. During joint operations, day and night on the command boat, I often applied unique tactics of the "Swordsman Listening to the Wind," cutting off the heads of the rice grain-sized mosquitoes in the Cà Mau, Năm Căn, Chương Thiện areas, and selling their dried eyes to the pharmacies.

Finally, back in the planning staff, I held the position of Chief Inspector of the Navy Headquarters, which my friends jokingly called "The Inspector General." Daily, I carried the "clapperboard" across the Navy units, from Bến Hải to Cà Mau, to objectively evaluate the implementation and results

of the plans of the units. The task of overseeing the work of others, to say 'Good' or 'Bad,' often caused some superiors to dislike me.

Fourteen years in the Navy, I completed all assigned tasks satisfactorily, without any mistakes that made me regret today because of my own errors that caused pain and sorrow to subordinates or friends.

Commanders on the battlefield, at decisive moments, must make quick and wise decisions. Military life never allows us a second chance to correct mistakes. Unfortunately, I made a wrong decision once, and only once in my life. That was the decision to stay in Vietnam on April 30,

1975. This decision was a self-imposed sentence: "Stripping Navy Commander Lê Văn Huê of his military rights and exiling this long-named officer to 10 years of re-education camps and 3 years of imprisonment in the border camps of the communist regime in northern Vietnam." Not only that, my family was classified as 'reactionary,' blacklisted, and subjected to severe discrimination. My wife and children struggled to survive, alienated by relatives and friends. Those who once fawned over us now feared being implicated. The pain and humiliation lasted for five long years until my family found a way to escape the communist regime's chains.

God and Buddha had mercy on me, allowing me

to survive and be reunited with my family in Canada in 1994. In my old age and weak health, I applied for manual jobs but was rejected everywhere. Fate did not allow me to be a laborer; it only reserved for me the title of "Retired General," living peacefully in my old age.

There are two significant events in my life that profoundly impacted my inner self and completely changed my life. They came to me unexpectedly and beyond my imagination. Let me recount them briefly. These are not thrilling stories but just a few novel aspects. I hope my friends consider these lines as a heartfelt letter of sharing and not a literary work. Please forgive any language shortcomings and my awkward writing style.



Lê Văn Huê
Nha Trang, 1963, upon graduation.

I pick up the pen to write a few lines about my life on the occasion of the 40th anniversary reunion.

That day, I threw away my pen and paper, stepping into the military school. When looking back at the memories, images gradually appear...

Like just yesterday, in a white uniform, I proudly put on the badge of the 11th Navy Cadet Class. I immediately remember the girl who later became my life partner, a steadfast companion through hardship without any change. She is a gentle mother who single-handedly navigated the seas, raising our daughter to adulthood. Our daughter holds two university degrees (lawyer and pharmacist). This is the most sincere and profound emotion from the depths of my heart. Besides, I do not mean to boast to my friends.

Ten years in re-education camps, three years of border camp imprisonment, enduring numerous hardships and humiliation. I cannot believe that life is only an endless journey of suffering. Did not Buddha come into the world to liberate living beings from the cycle of birth and death and eliminate human suffering? So, what path did He take? Following Buddha's teachings, I sought the "Truth."

Finally, my dream became a reality. Luckily, I met a Master. The most memorable saying from the Master was, "Illusions do not exist, do not fear them. Just look back at them, and they will disappear." The Master's short words made me realize... and just like that, I suddenly found myself in meditation. Meeting the truth. How can I describe this moment of awakening? Whoever can see within me the silent mind, absolute stillness in tranquility, intelligence,

clarity, and illuminating insight. I cannot find the right words to describe it. The truth within me is no different from the truth within you. With effort and determination, one day, you will also awaken.

From here, I began to apply the truth to my daily life. It is not easy to achieve this overnight. Living with my "true self" requires many years. Outwardly, my life seems no different, a very ordinary life like everyone else. However, my heart is always at ease. I no longer dwell in internal conflicts. Form or Emptiness does not hold me down or drown me in joy. Troubles, worries, and fears come to me like a passing wind... I live in the present, moment by moment. Life is a lively picture, multi-form, multi-color, harmoniously intertwined, ever-changing. I blend into it, watch it, enjoy it without judgment. When things come to me, I accept, solve, and act. When things are done, I do not worry or obsess over them anymore. Glancing back at the past is like waking from a dream. Why regret it?

*The ocean wave's call, sails full of wind,
Marks of heroes, history records.
Awaken from the dream, all illusion!
Why shed tears, why mourn?*

Heroes laugh, lovers also smile, Love, cry,
suffering endless.

*Wind rustling leaves, eyes watching distant
clouds,*

*Listening to the song, the river flows to
where?
Enchanted lover and hero, Laugh, love, cry,
sorrow greatly!
Sober and dreamer are different, Only an
echo of "lonely sadness"*

Spring comes, spring goes, flowers bloom,
flowers fall, just the law of nature.

*Spring fades away, only today's branches,
Peach blossoms sway in the wind, flowers
smile.
Spring sunshine warms inside,
Spring heart never fades with time.
Golden light glistens on the dewdrops,
Sparkling sunlight spreads over the green
grass.
Birds chirping on the branches, The clear
sky reflects the mountain.*

And:

*Spring comes, snow melts, rivers flow
The sun reveals the light of dawn.
A thousand years of searching for the
mind's stillness,
Serenely witnessing the scenes of life, like a
calm and wise person.*

Summer returns with the chorus of cicadas
echoing through the trees.

*The blazing midday sun is silent, shaded by
the cicadas' song.
Leaning against an old maple tree for a nap,
Awakening suddenly from a Nam-Kha
dream.
No rush, no hurry, walking leisurely,
The road ahead seems both near and far.*

Autumn comes again as I write these lines to
send to my friends. Deep autumn brings
nostalgic longing, poet Tản-Đà felt autumn:

*The fragrance of autumn faintly in the azure
sky,
Leaves turning yellow with longing sorrow?
No words of farewell from the trees,
Leaves detach and gently flutter away.
Fire extinguished, ashes remain without
smoke,
Coldly indifferent to future dreams.
Hands plowing and hoeing, resting when
weary,
Gazing at mountains, clouds drifting by.*

Autumn 2000



Concluding my nostalgic memories with the image of the wedding of Hứa-Minh-Hung and Lê Thị Thủy-Dương Jasmine (also known as Little Xi-Dầu and Little Chuối)

*This wedding marks the end of loneliness for my child,
A cup of wine offered to welcome new joys.
The strong wine, reddening cheeks,
The love burning deep, lasting forever*

This union tightens the bond of classmates and the friendship of two re-education comrades who once shared a boiled cassava, dividing it on the highlands of northern Vietnam.

*Winter CANADA Year 2000
Lê văn Huệ, AKA CHUỐI*



ĐINH MẠNH HÙNG

Military ID: 58A 700.546
Final Rank: Commander



Date of Birth:

February 13, 1938

Place of Birth:

Hà Nội, Northern Vietnam

Residence:

Migrated to the South in 1954, grew up in Sài Gòn
Current Address: Woodinville - Washington - U.S.A.

Family:

Wife: Ngô Tuyết Nga. Billing Department
Representative for General Telephone Northwest,
retired in 1999

Son: Đinh Công Tuấn, graduated as a Civil Engineer
from the University of Pullman, currently
working for Snohomish County Public Works

Daughter: Đinh Ngô Mai-Loan, graduated in
finance from the University of Seattle, currently
working for Microsoft Corporation

Daughter: Đinh Ngô Mỹ-Phương, graduated in
finance from the University of Seattle, currently working for Washington Mutual Bank.



Activities before joining the Navy, First Aquarius Class (Đệ Nhất Bảo Bình):

Studied at Nguyễn Trãi High School, Hà Nội and Chu Văn An High School, Sài Gòn.

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Artillery & Transport Officer HQ-328, 1963

Assistant Supply Officer, Logistics Office, HQCX, 1964

Operations Officer, Vũng Tàu Coastal Zone, 1964

Executive Officer of HQ-403, 1965.

Commanding Officer of HQ-609, 1967

Commanding Officer of HQ-472, 1968

Commanding Officer of HQ-229, 1969

Executive Officer HQ-504, 1970: Received the Landing Ship HQ Thị Nai in San Diego,
California.

Commanding Officer of HQ-401, 1971

Commanding Officer of HQ-502, 1972
Commanding Officer of HQ-2, 1973

Activities after April 1975:

Worked for Safeway, Inc., 1975-1987.

Worked for Employment Security Department, 1987-1995.

Graduated with a B.S. in Sociology from Seattle Community College.

Currently a Social Worker for the Department of Social & Health Services since 1975, scheduled to retire in 2002.

Future Aspirations:

A peaceful Vietnam, free of communism, so I can return to live in the North and enjoy a peaceful and simple retirement life.

Editor's Note:

Đình Mạnh Hùng has been residing in Washington state since 1975. He has visited California many times and was present at the last reunion at Trần Văn Hoa (Em)'s house. This time, 'the cat climbed the areca tree,' hiding from the snow and ice, so although he promised to send a piece for the Annual Yearbook, it is now February and Hùng has just 'meowed.'

Like Trương Hữu Quỳnh, Commander of the largest landing ship in the Republic of Vietnam Navy, Hùng might still be dreaming of the sea, of the waves crashing, of the bright lighthouse, and the drifting days that his life working at Safeway or the Social Services Department cannot replace. Well, my friend, one day we will cross the Pacific Ocean to reunite in Nha Trang. For now, like us, you only have a little nostalgia. Hearing that you are well is enough joy for the Bảo Bình comrades, and we give you the following photo to keep as a memory.





PHẠM VĂN HƯNG

Military ID: 58A 700 259
Final Rank: Commander



Date of Birth:

April 17, 1942

Place of Birth:

Hanoi, Northern Vietnam

Residence:

Migrated to the South in 1954.

Studied at Nguyễn Trãi and Chu Văn An high schools, Saigon (1955-1961).

Lived in Đà Lạt for a period before joining the Republic of Vietnam Navy.

Current Address: Saint Petersburg, Florida, USA.

Family Background:

His later family currently resides in Florida with his wife and one daughter. His children from his first marriage have all grown up.

Three eldest daughters:

Thùy-Trần (LyLy): JD, Practicing law in Orange County, CA.

Quỳnh-Thư (ThuThu): USN Lieutenant, Serving at Naval Base San Diego.

Quỳnh-Thy (Cathy): Studying Law in California, expected to graduate with a JD in 2002.

Three sons: All have graduated, started families, and are working in Hawaii and California.

Military Service in the Navy :

1963: Navigation Officer, HQ 08

1964: Executive Officer, B-3, Special Operation Naval Force

1965: Commander, Coastal Group 23

1968: Executive Officer, HQ 502

1969: Commanding Officer, HQ 609

1970: Commanding Officer, HQ 328

1972: Studied at Naval Destroyer School, Newport, Rhode Island, USA



1973: Executive Officer, HQ 4 (Acting Commanding Officer in March 1973, replacing the late Captain Nguyễn Ngọc Rắc, who passed away from cancer).

1974: Commander, Tân Châu Naval Base.

One week before the Fall of Saigon (April 23, 1975), he was promoted to Navy Commander and appointed Commander of Special Naval Forces LLDN-212.2, but he never had the chance to wear the rank. In his words, at least he wasn't posthumously promoted.

Post-April 1975 Activities

1979: Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering, University of Florida

1983: Master of Science in Electrical Engineering, University of South Florida

1984: Specialized training in Aerospace Engineering

Currently working as an Avionics Design Engineer for Smiths Industries Aerospace in Clearwater, Florida, on contracts with NASA and Boeing.

Hobbies & Artistic Endeavors:

Writes music, articles, and literature.

Paints (specializes in pastel and watercolor) under the pen name Thụy Lữ (a name previously used in Special Operations Naval Force).

Regular contributor to Florida Việt Báo and other literary/art groups since 1992.

Editorial Note:

If Lê Thượng Chiêu is considered a unique character, then Phạm Văn Hưng is a phenomenon of Class XI. He is talented yet faced many hardships—marrying again at almost 60 years old. Lê Quang Lập once wished for just a fraction of his talents, as Thụy Lữ is gifted in literature, holds multiple university degrees, composes music that wins hearts, and paints artwork that Americans compete to buy. Unfortunately, he is also an expert in submarines, meaning he often "disappears" without a trace. The editorial team is still waiting for him to fulfill his promise of redesigning the Bảo Bình emblem.

Leaving Tân Châu Base in haste, he fled the country so quickly that he never had the



chance to purchase his Commander insignia before becoming a refugee. But such is fate. Perhaps his later years will be more prosperous than before. Rumor has it that he has decided to leave Chu Bá Yến behind in Florida and move to sunny California, where love and warmth await him, to enjoy his "old age" with his children. Wishing him happiness, heartfelt singing, and hoping he will attend the next reunion.



Việt-Nam, 1963

NGUYỄN XUÂN HUY

Military ID: 59A 700.618
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



Connecticut, 2000

Date of Birth:

December 25, 1939

Place of Birth:

Hue, Vietnam

Current Address:

Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606

Family Situation:

Married with four children. The eldest son, Nguyen Xuan Binh, along with his wife and two children, is currently living in Saigon.

Activities Before Joining the Navy:

High school student at private schools Bo-De and Quoc-Hoc, Hue.

Military Service and Positions in the Navy:

Transport Officer, HQ-116, 1963-1964

Operations Officer, Riverine Assault Group 26, 1964-1965

Commanding Officer, Coastal Group 26, 1966-1967

Commanding Officer, Coastal Group 28, 1967-1968

Executive Officer, PCE Ngoc Hoi (HQ-12), 1969-1970

Commanding Officer, PGM HQ-601, 1970-1971

Commanding Officer, Naval Base Cua Viet, 1972

Training Officer, First Coastal Zone Headquarters, 1973-1974

Navy Liaison Officer to Department 3, Army General Staff/Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, 1975

Activities After April 1975:

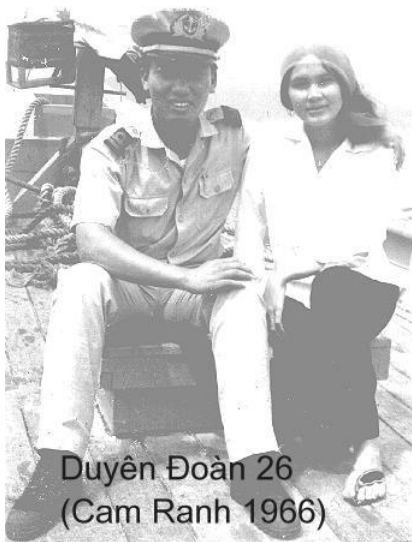
Held in re-education camps, from the South (Suoi Mau Camp, Bien Hoa) to the North (Yen Bai, Hoang Lien Son, and Vinh Phu, Tam Dao camps), then returned to the South (Z36A Camp, Xuan Loc, Dong Nai).

Released from prison in September 1984 but continued to be under local residence control.

Emigrated to the United States in April 1994 with his wife and three children.

Future Aspirations:

Hopes for a Vietnam that is truly peaceful, free, democratic, and non-communist.



Duyên Đoàn 26
(Cam Ranh 1966)



Feb. 2001
U.S.A.



Xuân Tân

Vợ

Vợ

Xuân An

Xuân Huy

Mai Lê

Cháu Ngoại
Kenny



Con gái Xuân Kiều, con rể Kelvin Phùng
cháu ngoại Kenny Phùng



Sài-Gòn, 1975

NGUYỄN KIM KHÁNH

Military ID: 58A 700.494
Final Rank: Commander



Fate Was Predestined

During our first meeting with the new officer cadets of the 11th class at the Nha Trang Naval Academy, Lieutenant Commander Vương Hữu Thiệu advised us:

"Dear officer cadets, always remember this: you have chosen the sea as your lover. This lover can sometimes be gentle and kind, but at other times, she can be extremely temperamental."

(Please imagine this being said with a Huế accent.)

That statement haunted me for the rest of my life.

Why did I choose such a difficult lover? The answer was simple: I had no choice.

In 1958, after passing the full Baccalaureate exam in Mathematics (read this in the style of Dương Quang Sang), a new horizon opened before me, giving me two career options:

- Pursue military medicine to become a military physician.
- Advance in the administrative sector.

To fulfill one of these aspirations, I took entrance exams for both the Military Medical School and the National Institute of Administration. The results came in—I was selected as one of thirty students for military medicine with the rank of active-duty Sergeant First Class (one silver insignia). Meanwhile, for the National Institute of Administration, I was placed on the waiting list with little hope of being called up. With that, I signed my enlistment papers as a military medical cadet.

In my first year, 1959, I passed the Physique, Chimie, Biologie (Physics, Chemistry, and Biology) certificate (commonly known as PCB) and was admitted to the first year of medical school with the rank of active-duty Second Lieutenant. Fate had its way. By the end of that year (1960), I failed my first year and had to retake it. Just before the second



exam, I contracted severe typhoid fever and was hospitalized at the Republic National Hospital for over two months, preventing me from taking the retest.

Worried about my future, I knew that according to the military medical school regulations, if I failed again the following year, I would be forced to leave (*sortir latéral*) and transfer to the administrative military medical branch—a career path that seemed bleak and uncertain.

At that time, my close friend, Dr. Nguyễn Tiến Hưng, a relative of Dr. Trần Kim Tuyền, a highly influential figure back then, promised to help me transfer from active duty to reserve status by joining the Navy. This way, after graduating, I could easily leave the service. But fate intervened again.

The coup against President Ngô Đình Diệm took place. Dr. Trần Kim Tuyền escaped, while Dr. Nguyễn Tiến Hưng was stuck in the U.S. Ironically, despite a decree signed by the Minister of Defense and published in the official gazette approving my transfer to the Navy, the Naval Command still required me to pass an entrance exam like civilian candidates. If I failed, I would be assigned as a reserve Second Lieutenant in the Navy (Military Medical Administration).

Determined, I rigorously prepared for the exam. My English was quite poor, and I dreaded the English test, though I was confident in my French. Luck—or fate—was on my side again.

I happened to sit near an English PhD (whom I later learned was Nguyễn Cao Toàn). The first sentence in the English-to-Vietnamese translation section was: "WE DECLARE FOR THE FREEDOM."

I didn't know how to translate it correctly. If I translated it literally as "*Chúng tôi tuyên bố cho sự tự do,*" it sounded ridiculous. Just then, while the proctor stepped outside, the PhD in front of me whispered: "*Translate it as 'Chúng tôi tuyên bố ủng hộ tự do.'*" I was deeply impressed and admired him ever since.

Later, at the Naval Academy, I was placed in the same English proficiency category as this PhD. However, I soon discovered that his true talent was not in English but in something that required even greater intelligence—gambling.

I praise the will of fate and the providence of God.
I am grateful to the Navy.

Military Service and Positions Held:

Executive Officer, HQ-609 (PGM To Yen)
Executive Officer, HQ-230 (Landing Support Ship Nguyen Ngoc Long)
Executive Officer, HQ-405 (Landing Ship Tien Giang)
Executive Officer, HQ-4 (Destroyer Tran Quoc Tuan)
Commanding Officer of HQ-471 (Supply Ship)
Commanding **Officer of** HQ-406 (Landing Ship Hau Giang)



Commanding Officer of Riverine Assault Group 28
Commanding Officer of Combined Unit 33.3, which included:
Riverine Minesweeping Group 91
Riverine Patrol Group 51
Riverine Assault Group 30 and 28

Brief Biography

Nguyễn Kim Khánh was born on February 28th, in the year of Mậu Dần, in Hương Đạo village, Kim Sơn district, Ninh Bình province.

Mentioning Kim Sơn district, many of you may be familiar with this name, as it was one of the districts established and developed by the great poet Nguyễn Công Trứ, a historical figure we all have learned about from the late 19th century. Kim Sơn district in Ninh Bình province is also well known through the famous "Bùi Chu – Phát Diệm" region. Bùi Chu and Phát Diệm are two entirely separate locations, far apart from each other, but both are known for their strong anti-communist stance, with the majority of the population being members of the Catholic Church. I am from Phát Diệm and have no connection to Bùi Chu, just as people often refer to "Cao Đài – Hòa Hảo," which are also two distinct religious groups—one based in Tây Ninh and the other in An Giang—yet both share the same anti-communist ideology.

My hometown is a poor and rural area, where people have a distinctive accent that is often mocked or imitated. However, this unique characteristic has shaped the identity of Phát Diệm's people, and I take pride in belonging to the "Giai Phát Riệm" lineage.

It is said that when Nguyễn Công Trứ, a royal land developer, was assigned by Emperor Minh Mạng to reclaim and establish new settlements, he founded Kim Sơn district in Ninh Bình province. A local man, well-versed in the terrain, took the lead in guiding him during those early days of land reclamation. This man was my village's ancestor, named Nhuong, commonly referred to as Cù Chiêu Mộ (the Pioneer Elder). He guided Nguyễn Công Trứ in surveying the region before officially establishing the district. Although described as traveling, in reality, my ancestor placed Nguyễn Công Trứ on a flat wooden plank with curved ends and pushed him around for inspection. This wooden plank was called a "Giầy", which is still preserved at the Nguyễn Công Trứ temple in my village.

As a reward for his contributions, my ancestor was given the surname Nguyễn (since his original surname was unknown or possibly nonexistent). In recognition of his guidance, Nguyễn Công Trứ named our village Hương Đạo, meaning "Guiding the Way." This term was later adopted by the Scout movement from Europe when it was introduced to Vietnam in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The name Hương Đạo was originally coined by Nguyễn Công Trứ himself.



My Family:

Formation of my military unit on October 31, 1965

Wife: Hoàng Thị Minh, from Hanoi

Children:

Nguyễn Khánh Hải Long (1966)

Nguyễn Khánh Hải Linh (1968)

Nguyễn Khánh Hải Lan (1970)
Nguyễn Hoàng Tố Nga (1971)
Son In Law : Nguyễn Công Thiết



Nguyễn Kim Khánh Family

Celebrated the wedding of his child, Tố Nga, with Nguyễn Công Thiết



Viet-Nam, 1966

TRẦN HỮU KHÁNH

Military ID: 61A 700 588
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



California, 1997

Date of Birth:

November 1941

Place of Birth:

Gò Công, Tiền Giang (Mỹ Tho)

Same hometown as fellow servicemen: Kiệt, Đăng, Sắc, and Thuận.

Residence Before 1975:

Saigon (since 1949).

Current Address:

Anaheim, Orange County, California, U.S.A.

Family:

Married with four sons.

Three reside in California.

One remains in Vietnam.

Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Deck Officer, HQ-500 (1963)

Intelligence Officer, River Assault Group 21 (1965)

Intelligence Officer, Navy Headquarters (1966)

Officer Assignment Department, Navy Headquarters Personnel Division (1966)

Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer (NILO), Third Riverine Zone Headquarters (1967)

Chief of Intelligence, Third Riverine Zone (BTL/V3SN) (1968)

Commander of Operations and Chief of Intelligence, Third Riverine Zone Headquarters (1968)

Commander, Riverine Amphibious Group 74 (1969)

Commander, Riverine Escort Group 81 (1970)

Commander, Châu Đốc Naval Base (1972)

Operations Deputy Chief, Third Coastal Zone (1973)

Executive Officer, HQ-6 (1974)

Post-Navy Activities:

Honorably Discharged (1974)

Captain of the Việt-Đức 12 Ship (1975)

Post-April 1975 Life:

Imprisoned in re-education camp until 1983
Worked in construction in Saigon after release
Immigrated to California, U.S.A., in late 1993
Currently working as a machinist

A Few Memories with Friends in California
Trần Hữu Khánh



Với các bạn tại miền Nam California, 1999.



Với T.D. Thiện, T. V. Giốc và T.H. Thu



Ngày họp mặt với K-12. Quang, Thiệu, Kiệt, Đào & Khánh





Đà-Nẵng, 1963

LÝ ANH KIỆT

Military ID: 56A 700 228
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



San Jose, 1991

Date of Birth:

November 22, 1936

Place of Birth:

Gò Công, South Vietnam

Residence Before 1975:

Saigon

Current Address:

Covina, Southern California, U.S.A.

Family:

Married with two children (one son, one daughter)

Both children have graduated and are working.

Daughter is married.



Sài-Gòn, 1968

Pre-Navy Activities Before Joining the First Aquarius Class:

Education: Studied in Gò Công and Saigon until 1954.

Joined the 10th Radio Communication class of the Republic of Vietnam Navy (RVN Navy, enlisted as a sailor) (1954).

Served on HQ-226 (Linh Kiếm) and at the Naval Communication Center (1954-1958).

First Discharge: August 31, 1958.

Continued studies, passed the Baccalaureate exam, and attended Saigon University of Law (1958-1961).

Principal of Đức-Thạnh Private Elementary School before re-enlisting for Naval Officer Class 11 (1961).

Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Officer on HQ-05 and trained with the U.S. 7th Fleet in Japan and the Philippines (1963).

Officer on HQ-602 (1964).

Officer on HQ-229 (1965).

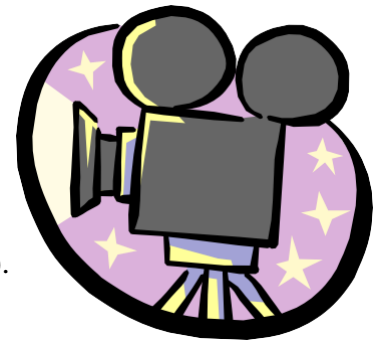
Commander of the Naval Communication Center (1966-1969).

Commander of Riverine Escord Group 81 (1969-1971).

Commander of Riverine Assault Group 27 (1971-1973).

Chief of Operations, Special Task Force 211, commanded by Rear Admiral H.C. Minh (1973-1975).

Second Discharge with the rank of Lt. Commander: February 1, 1975.



Post-April 1975 Activities:

Captain of the Việt-Đức shrimp fishing vessel (1975).

Imprisoned in communist re-education camps in Yên Bái, Vĩnh Phú, Thanh Hóa, and Nghệ An (June 15, 1975 - November 13, 1982).

Escaped by boat and arrived in Kuku, Indonesia, on February 23, 1983.

Resettled in California, U.S.A., on November 18, 1983.

Currently operates a photo studio in Hollywood, specializing in photography for models.

Kiệt and Fellow Bảo-Bình Members in California



Naval Communication Center

Quan-Ta

Kiệt hasn't been feeling well lately, so we are writing these lines to remember the days when he was the Commander of the Naval Communication Center, located at Navy Headquarters in Saigon.

In 1966, while most of our fellow Bảo-Bình classmates were scattered across the country, Kiệt, due to his radio communication expertise, was transferred to Saigon to oversee the Naval Communication Center. He had a personal car, staff, and—most importantly—a private office on the top floor of the Navy Headquarters. Since his office was at the top floor, high-ranking officers rarely climbed up to check on what he was doing. For us young officers in our twenties, that office became our unofficial Club K-11 in Saigon.

Whenever our ships docked at the port or we had business at Navy Headquarters, we would visit Kiệt, chat for hours, drink endless cups of coffee, and chain-smoke like there was no tomorrow!



Kiệt back then was addicted to Pall Mall cigarettes—he was always holding a half-burnt cigarette in his hand. Whenever one of us dropped by, he would call a few others to join in so we could all catch up.

By 1968, when things got tense and we were put on 100% lockdown, Kiệt's office turned into our hideout. We ate, slept, and even gambled there. As for other activities, well... only Kiệt himself can confirm if those happened there or not!

At Navy Headquarters, there were civilian female staff members. Whether they were also on lockdown "100% em ơi" with the Commander is something we will have to wait for Kiệt's memoirs to reveal. His story is currently being polished by writer Vũ-Thất (aka Mã Xa) and will be published soon.

We have a few words to check in on you, Kiệt. We remember the good old days and hope you get better soon so we can meet up again, just like before.

California, January 2001.



Nha-Trang, 1962

VÕ DUY KỶ

Military ID: 62A 700.353

Final Rank: Commander



Sài-Gòn, 1992

Date of Birth:

1942

Place of Birth:

Đà Nẵng, Quảng Nam

Current Address:

8664 Cassieri Circle, Sacramento, CA 95828

Family Background:

Married with five children.

All children, daughters-in-law, and sons-in-law have graduated from university with a B.S. degree or higher.

They have integrated into the middle class of American and Swiss society and hold stable employment.

Activities Prior to Joining the Navy, Class: First Bảo Bình:

Attended Quốc Học High School in Huế

Completed Baccalaureate II in Mathematics, 1959

Student at MPC, Faculty of Science, Saigon University, 1959–1960

Taught Physics and Chemistry at Bình Minh High School, Huế

Positions Held in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Officer on LSIL, HQ-331

Commander of Coastal Group 12, Thuận-An

Executive Officer, PCE, HQ-10

Commanding Officer, PGM, HQ-602

Commanding Officer, LSIL, HQ-327

Commanding Officer, Medical Ship LSM, HQ-400

Studied at Naval Training Center, San Diego, CA – Combat Information Center Watch Officer

On-the-job training as Anti-submarine Warfare Officer with Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

Third Officer, Operations Officer, Destroyer Escort DER, HQ-1

Commanding Officer, PCE, HQ-13

Captain of Merchant Vessel **TIỀN-PHONG**

Commanding Officer, LST, HQ-501

Post-April 1975 Activities:

1975–1984: Interned in re-education camps under the Communist regime, transferred through multiple camps in both southern and northern Vietnam.

1992: Immigrated to the United States in October.

1996: Graduated with an A.A. Degree with an emphasis in Mathematics from San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton, CA.

1997: Civil Engineering Technician (CALTRAN).

Writings: A Little Reflection:

Thâm rừng sơn tuyết, du kiên uyển
Hải thiên nhất sắc, biển tam thiên
Hư Vân Monk in the heavenly realm of Đâu-Suất

Loose Translation:

In deep pine forests, snowy and still,
Ancient pines stand solitary, resilient, and green.
Until the sea meets the high sky,
One deep blue hue stretches far and wide.

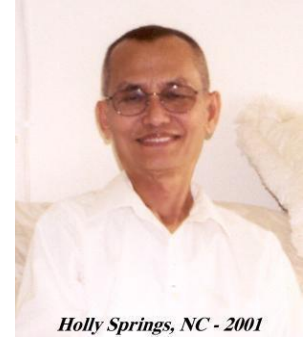
Vô-Kỹ





NGUYỄN XUÂN LANG

Military ID : 55A 700
Final Rank: Navy Lieutenant



Year of Birth:

1934

Place of Birth:

Southern Vietnam

Current Address:

Holly Springs, NC 27540, U.S.A.

Family:

Married, with grown children.

Pre-Navy Activities before joining the First Aquarius Class:

Former Non-Commissioned Officer in the Air Force.

Self-studied, passed the Baccalaureate exam, and was accepted into the Naval Academy entrance exam.

Service in the Republic of Vietnam:

Served on HQ-116 (alongside Nguyễn Xuân Huy).

Operations Officer, Riverine Assault Group 24.

Escort Officer, River Transport Unit (Đoàn Giang Vận).

Deputy Commander, Riverine Assault Group 30 .

Deputy Commander, Riverine Assault Group, stationed at Thuận An.

Commanding Officer, Coastal Group 16.

Executive Officer, HQ-500.

Head of Personnel Department, Coastal Zone 4 Headquarters.

Honorably discharged after being elected to the Provincial Council of Phú Quốc.

Editorial Note:

If destiny truly exists, then the fate of Nguyễn Xuân Lang remains a journey full of twists and turns. From the very moment Bảo Bình classmates planned to reunite for the 40th anniversary of their enlistment, Lang was one of the most enthusiastic supporters encouraging friends, sending letters and emails, and even being the first person to contribute a check to the annual journal fund. However, an unexpected serious illness struck him. After a long period of treatment in the hospital, Lang has temporarily stopped working and is now staying with his daughter for better care. Fellow Bảo Bình members Đặng Diễm and Trần Hữu Bân frequently call to check in on him on behalf of the group.

North Carolina is cold and snowy this season, but Lang can surely feel the warmth of the Bảo Bình brotherhood. As we write these lines to be included in this year's journal, we quietly pray for his recovery, hoping that this July, we can meet again—just like that unforgettable year when we shared stories at Trần Văn Hoa (Em)'s home in San Diego, California.



Nha-Trang, 2-1962

LÊ QUANG LẬP

Military ID: 62A 700.260
Final Rank: Commander



San Jose, 12-2000

Date of Birth:

Late August, Year of the Snake (Tân-Ty).
Officially recorded as January 1, 1942.

Place of Birth:

Ninh Thuận, Vietnam.

Residence Before 1975:

Saigon, Vietnam.

Current Address:

San Jose, Northern California, U.S.A.

Family:

Wife: Dương Thị Sâm, employee at Agilent Technologies.

Children:

Quỳnh-Trang – Graduate of UC Berkeley, employee at Hewlett-Packard.

Married with two children.

Việt – Graduate of UC Berkeley, employee at Agilent Technologies. Married.

Quỳnh-Như – Graduate of UC Berkeley, currently pursuing a specialized profession.



Monterey, California, 1994

Education Before Joining the Navy:

Attended Duy Tân High School (Phan Rang), Võ Tánh High School (Nha Trang), and Quốc Học High School (Huế).

Studied at Saigon University of Science.

Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Fourth and Third Officer, HQ-115 (1963-1964).

Liaison Officer, U.S. 7th Fleet (1965).

Coastal Group Commander, ZD 28, Phan Thiết (1966).

Executive Officer, HQ-401 (1967).

Commanding Officer, HQ-610 (1968).

Commanding Officer, HQ-472 (1969).

Advanced Training, San Diego, CA & Honolulu, HI (1969).

Fifth, Fourth, and Third Officer, HQ-1 (1970-1971).



Advanced Training, Newport, RI (1971).

Executive Officer, HQ-1 (1972).
Commanding Officer, HQ-08 (1973).
Commanding Officer, HQ-500 (1974-1975).

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Evacuated and sent to transit camps in Guam and Indian Town Gap, Pennsylvania.
Resettled in California, living in Alameda, Oakland, and currently in San Jose.
Worked at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (UC Berkeley) from 1975 to 1985.
Ran a Nail + Hair + Beauty Supply business (1986-1992).
Operated a Dry Cleaning business (1993-2000).

Future Aspirations:

For his children and grandchildren to become successful and upstanding individuals.
For the Vietnamese people to achieve freedom and prosperity.
For world peace.

A Moment of Reflection

By Lê Quang Lập

I was born in a coastal village in Central Vietnam. My childhood was a series of days running from French military raids. Living with my mother and grandmother, I remember that my grandfather, father, aunts, and uncles were all somewhere deep in the mountains—far, far away.

At age 12, I was sent to the provincial town for schooling. From there, I moved from one high school to another, each time to a larger city. Looking back, I have been away from home since the age of 15, and even now, I remain distant.

Having grown accustomed to moving and being far from home, I began dreaming of long journeys—to faraway places where life might be calmer and more peaceful. This longing led me to the Navy.

The majestic image of the sword emblem and its mottoes deeply inspired me:

"A life at sea."

"A field of profound knowledge."

"A noble profession."

These words compelled me to make my choice. I left behind my studies in mathematics education and public administration to pursue the Navy.

Navy life changed me profoundly:

Physically stronger.

More open-minded and free-spirited.

A greater sense of responsibility.

Constant patrol missions at sea taught me patience.

The vast ocean, endless clouds, and open sky inspired me to contemplate the infinite world.



Raging storms and towering waves taught me resilience and that a true gentleman must always rise again to face challenges.

The 1973 Hester Typhoon, with 130-knot winds, revealed the fury of the sea—my unpredictable mistress. That storm forced me to confront mortality for 20 hours straight, making split-second decisions that determined the survival of my crew. In the end, the right choice was made: the warship pulled anchor, braved the storm, and navigated to open sea to escape disaster.

Amidst the vast universe, humans are small and fragile, our lives fleeting—mere dots in the infinite passage of time.

Yet within this tiny dot of time, I have learned so much from my Bảo Bình brothers.

If only I could have:

A bit more patience and humility like Cự Diễm.

A touch of artistic flair like Cự Thôn.

A bit of maturity and kindness like Cự Voi.

A sense of selflessness and detachment like Prime Minister Lộc.

A sense of honor and genuine dedication to the Navy like Admiral San.

Even just a little from each of them, I would be immensely happy.

14 years of youth—a sailor's life.

The voyage has ended.

The ship has dropped anchor.

My naval career is over.

I miss the beloved seas, the familiar islands, the splendor of the ocean, the bright sunrises, and the vivid sunsets. A painful goodbye.

26 years of middle age, a refugee life.

Drifting in a foreign land.

Just another ordinary man, scavenging for daily survival.

Nothing to be proud of.

My homeland and the open sea are still so far away.

I only dream of a few simple things:

To have moments of peace every night before I sleep, lying still with my eyes closed, reflecting on what I have done today, what I did yesterday...

To return to my old village, where I can walk slowly along the rice fields, breathing in the fresh scent of young rice paddies and the aroma of newly sprouted grains.

To bathe in the old river, at that familiar bend, lying in the water and gazing across at the bamboo grove curving around my village. At the far end of town, I would see the wide sandy banks lined with green coconut trees—a place I had visited so many times.

Lê Quang Lập

December 20



KHẮC KHOẢI

tặng quý chiến hữu thuộc chi bộ HQ., XI13

Làm sao nước trở về nguồn?

Làm sao tôi gọi quê hương chuyện mình.

1988

BỊ CẤM TRẠI I

tặng các bạn trung đội 6 Bảo-bình

Sáng chỉ nhất anh buồn không đi phố

Ngồi thần thò hút thuốc nghĩ mông lung

Gọi tên em, khi hỏi : nhớ anh không?

Mong khói thuốc về thành : vâng, em nhớ.

1962

Vinh-Tung



Sài-Gòn, 1968

TRẦN ĐÌNH LIỆU

Military ID: 60A 700.695
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



Anaheim, 1992

Date of Birth:

May 2, 1940

Hometown:

Di Luân Village, Thuận Hòa District, Quảng Trạch Prefecture, Quảng Bình Province

Residence:

Migrated in 1954 – Grew up in Southern Vietnam

Family Background:

Wife: Nguyễn Ái Lan (married in 1966), currently a nail technician

Children:

Son: Quảng Điền (born 1967), owner of DARLING NAILS – Mesa, AZ

Son: Liêu Bảo (born 1968), owner of KAYLA NAILS – Mesa, AZ

Son: Liêu Phong (born 1970), lost at sea with uncle Lưu Lương Cơ

Daughter: Liêu Vũ (born 1973), owner of VAN NAILS – Mesa, AZ

In-laws:

Daughter-in-law: Lương Mỹ Vy, wife of Quảng Điền

Son-in-law: Nguyễn Phi Hùng, husband of Liêu Vũ

Grandchildren:

Paternal: Trần Đình Đạt, Trần Việt Thắng

Maternal: Nguyễn Thúy Kim, Nguyễn Trọng Thành, Nguyễn Khai Tri

Pre-Navy Activities (First Aquarius Class)

Attended Quốc Học Huế but dropped out in the third year to work various jobs

Self-studied and passed the Baccalaureate II B exam

Joined the Navy

Naval Service Positions

HQ 226

Aide to Admiral Hồ Tấn Quyền

Naval Special Operations Force

HQ 4

Commanding Officer of Riverine Assault Group 22

Fourth Coastal Zone
 Commanding Officer of Coastal Group 41
 Minesweeping Squadron Officer
 Naval Support Logistics Division, at the General Joint Staff Operations Center.
 Executive Officer, HQ-11
 Commanding Officer of Riverine Amphibious Group 70
 Navy Representative at Second Military Zone at Pleiku
 Second Naval Coastal Zone
 Naval Central Force 214
 Third Officer, HQ-1

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Sent to re-education camp until 1984
 Moved to the U.S. under HO 8 program in September 1991
 Took on various jobs, including labor work, gardening, and fishing
 Eventually worked with his wife and children in the nail business
 Planned to retire by the end of 2001

Future Aspirations

*"Happiness and misfortune are not random occurrences of a single day.
 The regrets of heroes may last for thousands of years."*

(Nguyễn Trãi lamenting Hồ Quý Ly)



1996

One day, decades or even centuries from now, the descendants of Vietnamese refugees will take control of the destiny of the United States—just as the U.S. once controlled the fate of South Vietnam in the 1960s and 70s.

*"Heaven and earth are ever-changing,
 Vietnam has suffered much hardship,
 Oh, the sorrow of exile—who will bring justice?"*



Cháu Nội
 Trần Đình Đạt

A Few Words to My Descendants



Cháu ngoại Ng. T. Thành

Someday, I too will leave this world,
 Why chase after fame and fortune?
 Life's drama is but an illusion,
 The rise and fall of power bring sorrow.

Life and death are endless cycles,
 Caught in fleeting pleasures time and again.
 One time facing death leaves a lasting scar,
 Yet the pain of loss is boundless.



Con dâu Mỹ Vy
 Cháu nội Trần Việt Thắng

Living in a burning house without realizing,
My children, heed my words and escape,
Break free from the cycle of birth and death,
Leave behind the dust of this fleeting world.

Trần Đình Đạm – A Confucian scholar who practiced Eastern medicine

Trần Đình Xu – A Confucian teacher (blind before 40, had two wives)

Trần Đình Tháp – A Southern Court official (has 14 children, one wife)

Trần Đình Liệu – Navy Officer, married to Ái Lan

Children: Quảng Điền, Liêu Bảo, Liêu Phong, Liêu Vũ

Quảng Điền, married to Mỹ Vy, father of Trần Đình Đạt and Trần Việt Thắng

Liêu Vũ, married to Phi Hùng, mother of Nguyễn Thùy Kim, Nguyễn Trọng Thành, and Nguyễn Khai Trí

For six generations, from Trần Đình Đạm to Trần Đình Đạt (born in the U.S.), no firstborn daughters were born—all were eldest sons.

Trần Đình Đạm, a wealthy Eastern medicine practitioner, but his descendants struggled—a testament to the saying: *"A doctor's wealth lasts only one generation; three generations later, the family declines."*

Trần Đình Liệu, the third generation, bears the full weight of this fate.



Đâu, rể và các cháu nội ngoại

Daughter-in-law, son-in-law and grandchildren



*Cháu ngoại
Nguyễn Khai Trí*



Sài-Gòn, 1972

NGUYỄN VĂN LỘC

Military ID: 58A 700-517
Final Rank; Commander



California, 1986

Date of Birth:

November 1, 1938, in Huế, but his actual birth year is 1937.

Hometown:

Lived in Huế from childhood until joining the Navy in 1961. After graduating in 1963, he moved to Saigon and lived there until 1975.

Family:

Married, with three children (two daughters who are married and one unmarried son).



Positions held in the Navy:

Transport Officer, HQ. 225
Assistant Officer, Duty Officer in the
Operations Room at the Navy Headquarters
Executive Officer, HQ. 116
Commanding Officer, HQ. 608
Commanding Officer, HQ. 115
Executive Officer, HQ. 505 (received in
San Diego)
Chief of Operations, Fleet Command
Headquarters
Commanding Officer, HQ. 404
Commanding Officer, HQ. 12
Commanding Officer, HQ. 503
After the events of 1975, he worked as a technician until he became disabled in August
1996.



Note:

The editorial team prays for Lộc, hoping his soul finds peace like the gentle Perfume River. To Mrs. Lộc, we express our deepest admiration. You have shown us the true meaning of "eternal devotion." These flowers are dedicated to you.

Dreams of the Sea

Nguyễn Văn Lộc

Dear friend,

You asked me to write my biography? What else do I have to say, other than this frail, disabled body tormented by an "incurable disease" that has afflicted me for nearly a quarter of a century? Day and night, I struggle against the illness—not hoping to win, but simply wishing for a single moment of relief, just one minute where the pain subsides so that I may once again love life, love the sea, and love my dreams of the ocean.

I still remember a summer during high school when my brother and I visited Đà Nẵng. We admired the majestic Marble Mountains and the ancient Non Nước Pagoda. In the evening, standing at the harbor, we watched the boats passing by. My eyes were suddenly drawn to a magnificent merchant ship, pure white against the deep blue sky, floating on the vast ocean. It was enormous—many times larger than the small fishing boats crossing the Như Ý River in my hometown of Ngọc Anh, and even grander than the ferryboats lining the banks of the Perfume River.

I wondered what it would feel like to stand aboard such a vessel. Would it be like standing on the banana-raft that my brother and I used to navigate through flooded rice fields? Surely not. A ship sails across oceans, docking at bustling ports filled with lights and people, unlike a raft that merely drifts among wild grass and fireflies in the dark.

As I was lost in thought, a naval officer appeared on the deck. He looked majestic in his spotless white uniform, crisply ironed, with golden stripes shining on his shoulders. He noticed us and motioned for us to come aboard. Our excitement was overwhelming—like the joy of receiving ginger candy wrapped in dried banana leaves from our mother, or the anticipation of being taken to a family feast by our father.

We hurried up the gangway, afraid that he might change his mind. After learning that we were students from the imperial city, where "examinees from the Capital arrive and

can't bear to leave the Hue girls behind," his gaze softened. He graciously showed us around the ship. Every cabin was immaculate, with gleaming brass beds and pristine white linens. I secretly touched one, feeling its cool surface under my fingertips.

Finally, he led us to the highest room—the command center. Looking out through the windows, the city seemed to shrink beneath us, and the harbor lay far below. On the other side, the vast sky stretched endlessly. The officer introduced this as the command room, where he, as the Captain, sat to navigate the ship.

Dear friend,

It was in that moment that my dreams of the sea were born. Fate then took its course. When I entered university, the professors who had returned from France taught entirely in French. Despite excelling in mathematics, I struggled to understand. At the end of the year, I failed my MGP exams—just as I

received my military draft notice.

The image of that merchant ship and its dignified Captain flashed through my mind. By chance, the Navy was recruiting in Hue, and without hesitation, I enlisted. Little did I know that I would meet many classmates there, all in the same situation. As you know, we eventually became the First Class of *Bảo Bình*, reigning over the seas, patrolling the coastline of our homeland with the pride of knowing: *"Above us is the sky, below us is the earth, and in between, we stand proud."*

But fate is cruel. The fall of 1975 shattered my dreams of the sea. I bid farewell to the ocean, rescued by friends who brought me to a foreign land. The pain I felt was greater than the wound on my head caused by a 105mm shell when I brought my ship to the shore of Phan Thiết to rescue our comrades. My ship was bombarded by enemy artillery. The command room exploded. Several officers and sailors died instantly.

I stood just outside and was spared, but I lost consciousness from the

force of the blast. A shrapnel fragment sliced through my head, drenching my uniform in blood down to my waist. Yet I felt no pain. In the face of danger, we all forgot ourselves. When I regained consciousness, I resumed command, shouting orders through a megaphone, directing the ship to zigzag back out to sea to evade further shelling.

Oh, that cursed shrapnel! It didn't end my life, allowing me to stay true to my twenty fallen comrades, who perished without ceremony, without wreaths, without even a eulogy. But they belonged to the sea, and they returned to it with pride, embraced by its endless symphony.

Yet that same piece of shrapnel did not take my life—it merely damaged my brain, disrupting the production of dopamine, leaving me with an incurable disease. It has worsened over time, and now, I may be reaching the final stage. My friends know of my condition. Some have visited me, only to turn away in silent tears. I joke, "I'm enjoying my illness!" One friend sadly replied, "You are the

only person in the world who can find joy in pain."

Dear friend,

I have nothing left—except for my wife. She was born to sacrifice for me. I remember, as a young officer, each time I returned from the sea, she would wait anxiously. But the moment I set foot on land, I would spend all my time playing mahjong with friends. Even after 1975, when we struggled in a foreign land, I still wasted my weekends gambling, while she sat alone, knitting in silent patience.

She never complained, never shed a tear in front of me. Any sorrow she had, she kept in the dark or buried within her heart. Now, I regret it. If only I could be young again, to care for her for just one day—just one day. But that is impossible.

Every morning for years now, she dresses solemnly, sits before the Buddha altar, and prays for my peace. Her chants and the rhythm of the prayer beads soothe my pain like medicine. And in those moments, I dream that her devotion weaves together a ship—one that will carry my soul into eternity.

Will my dreams of the sea finally come true then? Will my spirit drift back to Vietnam, to my childhood home where my father prayed every night for our survival, and my mother begged the gods to let her suffer in my place? Will I return to Nha Trang, where my dreams first became reality?

Finally, will my soul journey among the stars, searching for the Source—the place where, long ago, I strayed from, lost in the distractions of life, laughter, and mahjong, only to find myself here, in this fragile existence?

Nguyễn Văn Lộc

Because my memory was worn out and my hand could no longer write much, I remembered and read this article for my wife to record. So what's wrong, please ignore it.



Vietnam, 1968

LÊ KIM LỢI

Military ID: 61A 700-528
Final Rank: Commander



San Jose, 1998

Date of Birth:

November 2, 1941

Place of Birth:

Hue, Vietnam

Residence:

District 3, Saigon

Current Address:

Milpitas, California 95035

Family:

Resettled in the United States with his wife and three children in May 1990.

Wife: Lê Thị Cương

Children:

Lê Kim-Phượng: Graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering from UC Davis, currently working in Sunnyvale, CA.

Lê Kim-Thịnh: Graduated in Biochemistry from UCLA, obtained an MD from Penn State, currently a medical resident specializing at the University of Wisconsin.

Lê Kim-Vượng: Graduated in Electrical Engineering from UC Berkeley, currently working in Sunnyvale, CA.



Activities Before Joining the Navy (First Aquarius Class):

Studied at Quốc Học High School, Hue, and the University of Science, Huế.

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

1963: Transport Officer, HQ-401

1966: Commander of Coastal Patrol Unit 11

1968: Commander of the Naval Service Company (Bạch Đằng Camps 1 & 2)

1970: Commander of Riverine Assault Group 32

1973: Commander of Đà Nẵng Naval Base

Activities After April 1975:

1975 – 1982: Imprisoned in a re-education camp

May 1990: Resettled in the United States with his family

1991 – Present: Working at CalTrans

Future Aspirations:

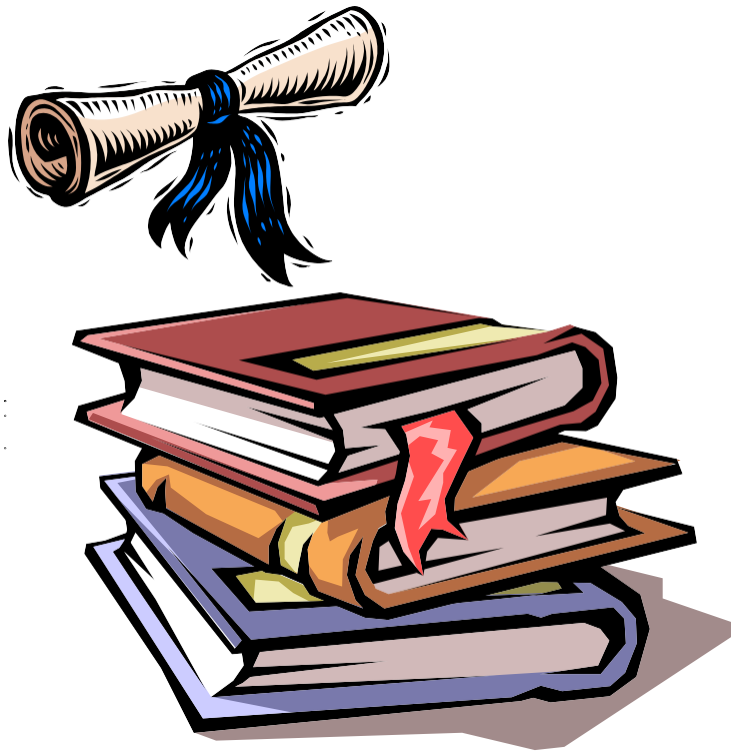
To see a Vietnam free from communist rule, where the people, including those left behind, can enjoy a prosperous life and a bright future for their children, just as our own children have here.

Editorial Note:

The children of Vietnamese families in America have achieved remarkable success in education, fulfilling their parents' hopes by becoming doctors, engineers, professors, and holding important positions in society. Notably, the children of Bảo Bình members from Central Vietnam, such as Lê Kim-Lợi, Nguyễn Ngọc Luân, Trương Hữu Quỳnh, Lê Quang Lập, Nguyễn A, and many others, have thrived despite the hardships they endured. Rising from the ashes of the Mậu Thân Massacre in Huế our people have overcome adversity to survive and flourish. With that same indomitable spirit, our descendants are thriving in foreign lands, preparing for the day we can return home.

"The old bamboo falls, and new shoots grow. The young shoots are green and full of promise."

The Editorial Team sincerely congratulates you all.





VĨNH LỢI

Military ID: 57A 701.083
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Date of Birth:

1937

Place of Birth:

Huế, Central Vietnam

Current Address:

Đà Nẵng, Vietnam

Family:

Married with children.

Activities Before Joining the Navy (First Aquarius Class):

Unknown.

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Fleet Command.

Activities After April 1975:

See 'Editorial Notes.'

Editorial Notes:

Vĩnh Lợi is one of the three Bảo Bình members who remained in Vietnam. During the 1980s, the Bảo Bình Assistance Fund, managed by Đặng Diễm and Vũ Hữu San, sent multiple care packages to Vietnam through Bùi Quang Vinh to support Lợi, who was then residing in Da Nang. However, in recent years, Vinh has lost contact with Vĩnh Lợi, and the latest gifts from Bảo Bình members in Southern California were unable to reach him.

Lợi was perhaps one of the most gentle and kind-hearted members of the Bảo Bình class. He never got angry, even when his fellow classmates playfully teased his royal-sounding name or mispronounced it (see 'The Zodiac Signs of Bảo Bình'). He was deeply influenced by Buddhist teachings, had a romantic soul, and was once in love with a famous poet. Rumors also suggest that his son became an international chess master and, for a time, was favored by the government to run a pharmacy business, allowing the family to live relatively comfortably. Unfortunately, little is remembered about his military career, but we fondly recall him as a true Bảo Bình—whether he is over there or over here.



NGUYỄN NGỌC LONG

Military ID: 60A 700-696
Final Rank: Lieutenant Junior Grade



Date of Birth:

1940

Place of Birth:

Đà Nẵng, Central Vietnam

Current Address:

Killed in action in Vĩnh Bình, 1965.

Family Status:

Was single at the time of his passing.

Activities Before Joining the Navy:

Studied at Phan Chu Trinh High School, Đà Nẵng.

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Fleet Command
Coastal Group 35

Editorial Notes:

Ngọc Long, unfortunately, was the first member of his class to sacrifice his life for the nation while on duty in Vĩnh Bình in 1965. He was also the only one in his class whose name was honored by being given to one of the most heavily armed combat ships as Nguyễn Ngọc Long HQ 230.

Former Navy Lieutenant Nguyễn Ngọc Long was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Nguyễn Ngọc Tuyền. He studied at Phan Chu Trinh High School in Đà Nẵng and gave his life for the country in Vĩnh Bình while accompanying Lưu Phú Thọ on a command boat to officially take over Coastal Group 35. The boat was struck by a mine on the Cỏ Chiên River.

Born and raised in Ngũ Phụng Tề Phi, his name was the most elegant in the class, and he carried himself with the grace of a "Jade Dragon." Throughout two years at the naval academy, he never had conflicts with anyone. He was also one of the first in his class to be assigned the position of Coastal Group Commander.

A poetic tribute to him reads:

*Ngọc Long soars high into the sky,
Does he still remember the days spent sailing the seas?*



Vietnam 1974

NGUYỄN NGỌC LUÂN

Military ID: 57A 701.061
Final Rank: Commander



California 1988

Date of Birth:

November 16, 1937

Place of Birth:

Huế, Central Vietnam

Current Residence:

Settled in Anaheim, Orange County, CA

Family Status:

Married with seven children (two sons, five daughters), all of whom graduated from university.

Early Life Before 1961:

Former student of Quốc Học High School and a university student in Huế.

Military Service (1961-1975):

1961-1963: Naval Officer Cadet, First Aquarius Class

1963-1964: Office and Medical Officer, HQ-404

1965-1966: Intelligence Operations Officer, Riverine Zone 4 Headquarters

1966-1969: Head of Intelligence Section 2, First Coastal Zone Headquarters

1969-1975: Deputy Head of Intelligence Section 2, Navy Headquarters, Saigon

Specialized Military Training:

Advanced Intelligence Alliance Course, Arizona, USA

Advanced Command and General Staff Course, Long Binh, Vietnam

Post-1975 Refugee Period:

Arrived in the U.S. on May 5, 1975, and was placed in Camp Pendleton, CA.

August 1975: Resettled in Orange County, City of Orange, CA.

Worked full-time during the day and attended Santa Ana Community College and Electronic Digital School at night.

Earned a Technical Degree in Electronics and worked at Beckman Scientific Instruments, Western Digital, and Beckman-Coulter.

Took early retirement at age 62 on December 31, 1999.

Family Photo (1996):



The family photo was taken during Ngọc-Hà's wedding in 1996. From left to right: Hoàng (son-in-law), Ngọc-Hương, Thành, Cường (son-in-law), Ngọc-Hà, Kim-Huyền, Tuấn-Anh (son-in-law), Ngọc-Mỹ, Tuấn, Tú (son-in-law), Ngọc-Thúy, three grandchildren, Luân, Kim-Chung.

Autobiography: A Few Highlights

By Nguyễn Ngọc Luân

Some friends and family members have said my Navy career ran aground. Throughout my service in the Navy, up until the evacuation, I had only nine months of sea duty (April 1963 - February 1964). The only ship I served on was HQ-404, under the command of Acting Captain Nguyễn Quang Dật.

Though I was at sea for only nine months, I had the opportunity to visit most of the islands under the Republic of Vietnam's sovereignty.

First mission: Participating in an operation to establish sovereignty markers on the Spratly Islands (Trường Sa).

Second mission: Transporting supplies to Côn Sơn.

Third mission: Resupplying and rotating troops on the Paracel Islands (Hoàng Sa).

Another mission: HQ-404 and HQ-06 conducted hydrographic reconnaissance along the coasts of Rạch Giá, Cà Mau, and Phú Quốc.

So why did I transition to shore duty? Two main reasons:

1. The Navy Headquarters needed to expand intelligence operations in strategic coastal areas.
2. Severe seasickness.

During a resupply operation in the Paracel Islands, our ship received an urgent order from Navy Headquarters requesting a candidate for Rapid Intelligence Training. That morning, during breakfast in the officers' mess, Captain Dật read the dispatch and called me into his office. He said:

“Luân, you're too weak for the sea. This is a good opportunity—Navy Headquarters is asking for a nominee to attend Intelligence training, and I'm putting your name forward.”

Hearing that, I was secretly relieved and thanked the Captain. He continued:

“This is also a great chance for you. You're getting married soon, right? It's perfect to have a shore duty job.”

Indeed, on February 2, 1964, I officially married my wife and was transferred to Fourth Riverine Headquarters in Cần Thơ. That was the beginning of my land-based naval career.

Time passed, and I was transferred from Fourth Riverine Headquarters to First Riverine Headquarters, then to the Department 2 of the Navy Headquarters in Saigon. In the process, I earned a new nickname: “The Study-Abroad Specialist.” It was well-earned—I was fortunate enough to study abroad five times:

One practical training trip with the U.S. Seventh Fleet in Japan (October 1963).

Three courses in Okinawa.

One course in the United States.

One course in Thailand.

Regarding promotions, my classmates used to joke: “Luân never served on ships or commanded a unit, yet every promotion cycle, he still made it through—always in the second round of annual promotions. Everything about him is just average.”

In my military career, I was promoted every three years, always in April:

April 1965: Lieutenant Jr Grade

April 1968: Lieutenant

April 1971: Lieutenant Commander

April 1974: Commander

Perhaps the waves of the ocean pushed me up the ranks. I feel truly blessed for the opportunities I had.



Nguyễn Ngọc Luân



Vietnam, 1967

ĐẶNG VĨNH MAI

Military ID: 59A 700-621
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



San Jose, 1999

Date of Birth:

October 13, 1939

Place of Birth:

Bình Định, Central Vietnam

Current Address:

San Jose, CA 95117

Family:

Wife: Lê Thị Nở (Separated, currently living in Germany)

Son: Đặng Thế Hùng, 33 years old, engineer, married with one child

Daughters:

Đặng Thị Lan-Đài, 30 years old, single, university graduate, currently working in Germany

Đặng Thị Phương-Đài, 26 years old, single, university graduate, currently working in Germany

Activities Before Joining the Navy (First Aquarius Class):

Attended Võ Tánh High School, Nha Trang (1957-1961)

Joined the Navy immediately after passing the Baccalaureate exam

Schoolmates who joined the First Bảo-Bình Class: Lê Quang Lập, Nguyễn Tấn Đon, Trần Hữu Bân, Võ Văn Quọt, etc.

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

1963 - 1965: Third Officer, HQ-225

1965 - 1967: Executive Officer, HQ-116

1967 - 1969: Operations Department Head, Naval Fleet Headquarters

1969 - 1975: Naval Security Bureau, National Security Agency

Post-April 1975 Activities:

1975 - 1992: Imprisoned in Communist re-education camps

Immigrated to the United States in 1993 and has lived in San Jose since then

Diagnosed with kidney failure, received a kidney transplant in 1995, unable to work, receiving health benefits, living a stable life.

Future Aspirations:

A Vietnam free from Communism, so he can live and die in his homeland

*"Water lilies gather only to scatter,
The moon waxes only to wane."*

The Years of a Bảo-Bình

Đặng Vĩnh Mai



Reunion, 1967: Our family and fellow Bảo-Bình members



Đặng, Cự, Ý.

Separation, 1990: In Hàm Tân re-education camp, Rừng Lá. Seated from left: Major General Đào, Colonel Chương, Mai, Lt. Colonel Hiếu, Colonel Lộc.

Partial Reunion, April 14, 1992: Fellow Bảo-Bình members reunited in Saigon.



Reunion, 1993: First time seeing wife and daughter 15 days after arriving in San Jose.

Another Reunion, 1997: Met wife and two daughters in Frankfurt, Germany, only to part ways again...



Unfulfilled Circle: Alone in the hospital, reflecting on the future.



Continuing Solitude. Darkness behind, hoping for light ahead.
October 1999



HỨA HỒNG MINH

Military ID: 61A 700.557
Final Rank: Commander



Date of Birth:

October 25, 1941

Place of Birth:

Saigon, Vietnam

Activities before joining the Navy:

Student at Pétrus Trương Vĩnh Ký Public High School - Saigon

Family Background:

Married on December 9, 1964

Wife: Nguyễn Thị Lê Hương

Born: January 2, 1944

Place of Birth: Khánh Hoà, Vietnam

Education: Student at Nha Trang Girls' High School

Children:

Son: Hứa Minh Nhựt (eldest son)

Wife: Đoàn Thị Hương Bình

Grandchildren: Hứa Nhựt Tân,
Hứa Nhựt Tiên

Son: Hứa Minh Hưng

Wife: Tô Thu Huyền

Grandson: Hứa Gia Bảo

Daughter: Hứa Thị Hương Nguyệt

Husband: Trương Đức Minh

Grandchildren: Trương Hứa Valerie, Trương Hứa Brian

Youngest Daughter: Hứa Thị Hương Thảo

Husband: Phạm Trắc Chương

Grandchildren: Phạm Hứa Dylan, Phạm Hứa Yvonne



San Jose, 1995

Military Activities and Service Units:

Joined the Navy: Naval Academy (The First Aquarius Class)

Candidate ID Number: 534

Joined: September 11, 1961

Graduation Date: April 16, 1963



Thứ nam Minh-Hưng, 1997

Graduation Rank: Ensign (Hải Quân Thiếu Úy)
 Executive Officer of PGM HQ604
 Chief of Personnel Management Office of the Naval Fleet Command
 Head of Personnel Transfer and Assignment
 Division/ General Administration Department/
 Navy Headquarters
 Base Commander of Phú-Quốc Naval Base,
 concurrently Head of Personnel and Training
 Division/ Navy Headquarters
 Head of Personnel Training Department/ Naval
 Logistics and Support Command



Hai cháu ngoại, San Jose, 1999

Activities after April 1975:

Underwent re-education for 10 years following the fall of South Vietnam
 Escaped by sea with two sons: June 30, 1986
 Arrived at Pulau Bidong Island, Malaysia: July 2, 1986
 Resettled in the United States: May 13, 1987
 Sponsored wife and two daughters under the ODP program
 Family reunited on September 17, 1991



Trưởng nữ Hương Nguyệt & chồng, San Jose 1995



Trưởng nam Minh Nhật & vợ, San Jose 1995



Hải BB sĩ giả Lê Văn Huệ & Hải Hồng Minh



Thứ nữ Hương Thảo & chồng, San Jose, 1995



Nha-Trang, 1961

PHẠM VĂN MINH

Military ID: 59A 700.659
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Year of Birth:

1939

Place of Birth:

Southern Vietnam

Current Address:

Flowery Plant, Georgia

Family:

Married with four children

Pre-Military Activities

Unknown

Positions/Units in the Navy:

Fleet Command
Maritime Patrol Force
Post-April 1975 Activities
See 'Editorial Notes'



Editorial Notes

Phạm Văn Minh was also considered an ‘extraordinary figure’ of Class XI. He would appear and disappear unpredictably, and like Nguyễn Nguyên, he left no trace for his fellow comrades to track.

Minh and his son escaped by boat and were sponsored by Chu Bá Yến and a Vietnamese organization to resettle in Florida. However, like many other Vietnamese exiles, he sought out the warm climate of California, settling in the Los Angeles area. He attended the 30th-anniversary reunion of Bảo Bình in San Jose (see photo). Afterward, he moved several times, first to Sacramento, the capital of California—where BB Võ Duy Kỳ was located—and later to Georgia, in the southern United States.

Since his last appearance at the 30th-anniversary event of Bảo Bình, ten years have passed. We sincerely hope he will return for the 40th-anniversary reunion on July 5th.



LÊ THÀNH NAM

Military ID: 61A 700.556
Final Rank: Navy Lieutenant



California, 2000

Date of Birth:

November 12, 1941 (Tân Ty)

Place of Birth:

Bắc Giang, Northern Vietnam

Ancestral Hometown:

Bắc Ninh (paternal side), Quảng Yên (maternal side)

Current Residence:

Pleasant Hill, North California, U.S.A.

Family:

Wife: Trịnh Thị Thơm, works at Bank of America.

Daughter: Lê Thị Nam Phương, works at Bayer, married to Charles Ward who works in Computer, with two children: Tristan Trường (son) and Thalia Thảo (daughter).

Son: Lê Thành Thắng, works as a P.E. Instructor at an elementary school.

Son: Lê Thành Đạt, studying in Saint Louis, Missouri.



Toàn thể gia đình, các con và các cháu

Military Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Officer on LSIL HQ-329 , 1963.

Operations Officer and camp commander at Tây-Kết Duyên Khu II (Nha-Trang, later BTL/HQ/V2ZH).



Biệt phái Tiểu-Đoàn Trâu-Điền

Deputy Commander of Coastal Group 21 (Cù Lao Xanh).

Frequently assigned as a liaison officer at various military units including Military Zone II (Pleiku), Division 22 (Qui-Nhon), and Marine Corp Battalion II TQLC, Trâu-Điền, participating in operations at Bồng Sơn, Tam-Quan, Sa-Huỳnh.

Commander of Coastal Group 23 (Sông Cầu), injured during a joint operation with infantry at Xuân-Lộc front.





Thăm viếng Duyên Đoàn 27, Phan Rang

Treated at Qui-Nhon and Cộng Hòa hospitals.

Commander of Coastal Group 27 (Ninh-Chữ, Phan Rang).

Operations Officer at Third Riverine Zone Headquarters at Cửu-Long camp.

Special assignment with the Inspector General's Office at Navy Headquarters, visiting various naval units and supporting units around Saigon while awaiting discharge due to war injuries. Also served as an assistant judge at the Military Court. Discharged at the end of 1969.



Tổng Y Viện Cộng-Hòa, 1966

Post-Military Activities:

Officer at Saigon Port.

Deputy Captain of the merchant ship Sao Mai.

Tugboat captain and Port Captain for U.S. contractors at Cam Ranh and Đà Nẵng.

Contractor for waterway transportation services in Saigon, Núi Sập, Long Xuyên, Rạch-Giá, and Cần Thơ.

Marine Transportation Specialist for D.A.O., Saigon, visiting various military logistics units from Đà Nẵng to southern provinces, and revisiting LST/LSM ships of the Republic of Vietnam Navy.

Activities after April 1975:

Left Saigon by U.S. Air Force plane (April 25, 1975) to the Philippines (Clark Field) then moved to refugee camps at Wake Island and Fort Chaffee (Arkansas).

Settled in the San Francisco Bay Area since then. Worked various jobs: Receptionist (BOA), boat painter, LCM boat operator for contractors painting bridge piers in San Francisco Bay, deckhand for tourist boats, machinist for electronics companies, opened a Vietnamese restaurant for Americans, and finally opened a gift shop in a shopping center (since 1986, possibly until retirement).



Nha-Trang, 1962. Với cha và em.

Final Thoughts:

Grateful to God for protection from childhood to now, and hope for continued protection for the rest of life. Thankful to parents, siblings, and relatives on both paternal and maternal sides. Grateful to teachers, mentors, juniors, and fellow naval officers, friends from the First Aquarius class, friends outside the navy,

and especially grateful to the lifelong love and wife, who always brought joy and helped life pass without worries. Thankful for the love that taught the meaning of longing and allowed writing hundreds of love letters, always starting with the three letters KBC on many roads of the homeland, providing moments of innocence and pride during visits and care at Cộng Hòa hospital, and during walks in Saigon with the wounded naval officer, blending into the emotional and heroic songs of the wounded soldiers.

Pleasant Hill, CA,
Late winter - 01/2001

Friends Then and Now



Quân trưởng Nha-Trang, 1963



Họp mặt với bạn bè tại tư gia, 1996.



Nha-Trang, 1962

MAI QUANG-NĂM

Military ID: 60A 700.814
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Date of Birth:

November 20, 1939 (Official records: July 15, 1940)

Place of Birth:

Huế, Thừa Thiên, Vietnam

Residence:

Huế

Current Address:

Highland Ranch, CO 80129, USA

Family

Wife: Trần Cẩm-Bình

Sons: Mai Quang Vinh, Mai Quang-Việt

Daughters: Mai Phương Uyên, Mai Phương Hằng, Mai Phương Loan

Education & Early Life:

High School Student at Quốc Học, Huế

Medical Student at Huế University of Medicine

Military Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

1963: Food Supply & Transportation Officer, HQ-08

1964: Operations & Personnel Officer, Riverine Assault Group 26

1966: Personnel Department Head & Internal Affairs Officer, Cam Ranh Naval Training Center

1969: Personnel Department Head, RVN Navy Regional Command 1 (V1ZH)

1974: Personnel Department Head, RVN Navy Regional Command 3 (V3SN)

Post-April 1975 Activities:

1975-1982: Imprisoned in re-education camps

1983: Worked as a cyclo driver

1993: Resettled in the United States

Current Occupation:

Employee at ASPEN ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING INC., awaiting retirement

Future Aspirations

Hopes for a peaceful Vietnam to return and spend his remaining years in his homeland.

Letter to Mai Quang-Nấm

Editorial Team

We looked at the two photos you sent and were deeply moved. You now have the appearance of a wise elder, with graying hair, white-rimmed glasses, and gentle eyes—so different from the image of you we still hold in our memories.

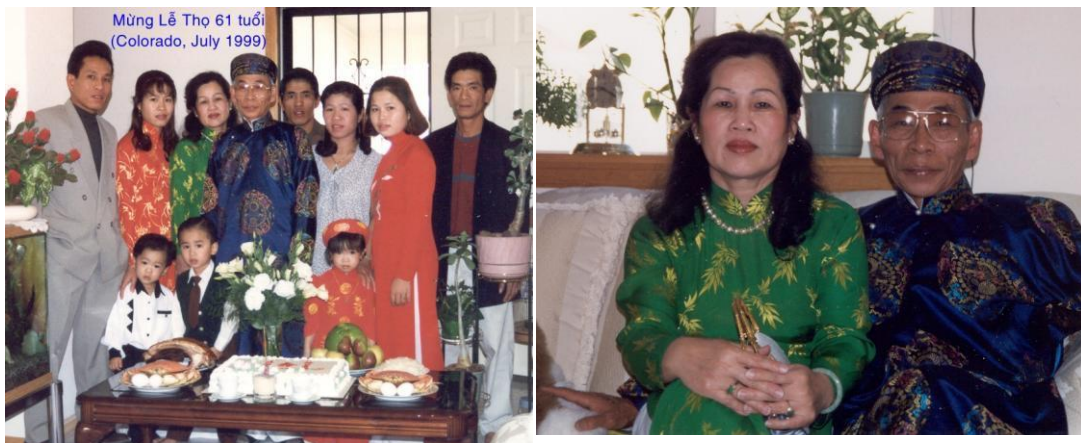
Back then, you were in the "animal pen" in the "thatched-roof village," alongside San Vịt, Hùng Mèo, Quỳnh Voi, and many other skilled individuals representing the twelve zodiac animals. You were as strong as a bull, but since we already had Lư Lương Bò, everyone called you Mai-Quang-Trâu—the gentle, kind-hearted buffalo who never troubled anyone.

Do you remember Sergeant Minh, the basic drill instructor? One time, he stumbled upon the student list and mistakenly called you "Anh Mắm"! From that moment on, you were "Anh Mắm," and that name, along with the image of a gentle buffalo, became inseparably linked with the First Aquarius Class over 40 years of life's ups and downs.

When we heard that you had to support your young children by pedaling a cyclo in Saigon, we were deeply saddened. From a medical student and naval officer to a rickshaw driver—you endured a long and bitter journey, yet you showed more courage than any of us from the First Aquarius Class. Now, in a foreign land, you have found a peaceful life, and we are happy for you. At the same time, we regret that we couldn't do more to help you during those difficult times.

We know that, like many other classmates, you dream of one day returning to Vietnam. We hope that dream will come true. For now, we wish you good health and look forward to seeing you in L.A. in July 2001 to reunite with old friends. Life has scattered us, but our bond remains unbroken.

With affection,
Editorial Team





NGUYỄN NGHĨA

Military ID: 57A 701.067



Date of Birth:

December 31, 1937

Place of Birth:

Bách Tín, Nam Định, Vietnam

Residence:

Sài Gòn

Current Address:

San Jose, Northern California, USA

Family:



Wife: Trần Thị Xuân (passed away on June 12, 1992, in San Jose)

Daughter: Christine Oanh Nguyễn (born 1983)

Son: William Hải Nguyễn (born 1984)



Christine Oanh Nguyễn, Lớp 8

Pre-Military Activities:

Self-studied and passed the Baccalaureate exam

Attempted to avoid conscription but later joined the Navy; however, he was unsuccessful at the military academy

Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy (RVN Navy)

Final Assignment Before Discharge:

Situation Room, Naval General Staff, Section 3, General Staff of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces.

Non-Military Activities:

Graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the University of Law, Sài Gòn, in 1972

Worked at the National Bank of Vietnam from 1966 to 1975



William Hải Nguyễn, Lớp 8

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Evacuated to the United States in 1975

Wandered in search of work from Buffalo, New York, to San Jose, California

Future Aspirations:

Now retired, he wishes only to support his children as they grow up so they can have a better life than he did

Editorial Note

Nghĩa was one of the three members of the Bảo Bình class who graduated early. However, he has remained closely connected with his classmates and has attended all reunions overseas. When he got married, his Bảo Bình friends acted as the groom's family. Unfortunately, his wife passed away early and never had the chance to see their two children, Oanh and Hải, grow up.





NGUYỄN NGUYỄN

Military ID: 57A 701.070
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Year of Birth:

1937

Place of Birth:

Southern Vietnam

Current Address:

California, USA

Family:

Married with children

Pre-Military Activities:

Unknown



Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Fleet Command
Coastal Region III

Post-April 1975 Activities:

(See Editorial Note)

Editorial Note:

In 1986, Nguyễn Nguyễn traveled from France to California for a Bảo Bình reunion, celebrating the 25th anniversary of their enlistment. (See photo.) This was not his first time visiting the U.S. After 1975, he was the only Bảo Bình member who continued working at sea, and his ship docked multiple times in Oakland, California.

During the reunion, he was accompanied by a woman he introduced as his wife. After returning to France, he later immigrated permanently to the U.S., living in Florida for some time while keeping in touch with Chu Bá Yến. However, in recent years, we have lost contact with him. Some people have spotted him in Little Saigon, but it seems he prefers not to reconnect with old classmates. Perhaps he has his own personal reasons.

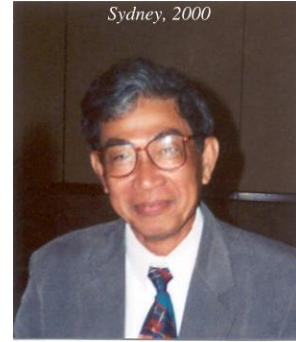
No matter what, we are all "a wandering bunch scattered across the sky." We hope he reaches out to reconnect and rekindle old friendships. Does he know that in 1986, he was the star of the reunion—the loudest and most cheerful presence there?



Sài-Gòn, 1970

NGUYỄN VĂN ƠN

Military ID: 59A 700.664
Final Rank: Navy Commander



Sydney, 2000

Date of Birth:

October 2, 1939

Place of Birth:

Sài Gòn, Vietnam

Current Address:

Carramar, NSW 2163, Australia

Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Commanding Officer : HQ-610, HQ-470, HQ-02, HQ-330, HQ-400

Deputy Chief of Division 5, Navy Headquarters

Commanding Officer of Coastal Patrol Maritime Group 5 (1975)

Non-Military Activities

Contributed as a writer for *Chiến-Sĩ Cộng-Hĩa*, *Lướt Sông*, and *Việt-Luận* under the pen names *10H10*, *Độc-Hĩnh*, and *Miên-Đen*

Published works:

Đi Biển Đỡ Buồn, Volumes 1 & 2
(Nhà Xuất Bản Đời Mới, 1972 & 1973)

Post-April 1975 Activities

Resettled in Australia
Retired in October 1999

Future Aspirations

"Please wish on my behalf."

Editorial Note:

Nguyễn Văn Ôn is a unique figure in Class XI. He was the only one among more than ten cadets who failed the class advancement exam, preventing him from officially becoming an officer cadet (SVSQ) with the Alpha rank insignia. However, he graduated as a Navy Ensign and was promoted to full Commander ahead of more than half of the First Aquarius classmates.



Cùng lắm
thì lại là 'Cái'!

Frankly my dear,
I don't give a ...

10 H 10

Though often solitary, he had a great sense of humor and was the go-to source for jokes among his friends.

While serving as Deputy Chief of Division 5 at Navy Headquarters in Sài Gòn, he also acted as the "Executive Director" of the *AKEHUO* film company, producing over 30 color 16mm films. For more insights into him, read *Đời Em Lữ* by *Độc-Hình* in *Vườn Hoa Văn Nghệ*—a story about a man who "seems like this, but is actually not. One lingering question remains: Does he still smoke those green Basto cigarettes?"



NGÔ TẤN QUANH

Military ID: 57A 700.958
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Year of Birth:

1937

Place of Birth:

Southern Vietnam

Current Address:

Australia

Family:

Married with children
Unknown



Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy

Navy Fleet

Post-April 1975 Activities

(See Editorial Note)

Editorial Note:

Ngô Tấn Quanh was originally a cadet of Class X but later rejoined Class XI, which may explain why he was closer to his Class X peers than to those in Class XI.

He was known for his honesty but was a quiet individual, and we have very little information about his personal life or military service. The only news we have heard is that he might be living in Australia, though classmates like Đon, Diệp, Ôn, and Bá, who also reside there, have never met him.

What more can we say? Whether he was part of *Đệ Nhất Nam Dương* or *Đệ Nhất Bảo Bình*, he remains our classmate—someone who endured the storms of training alongside us, shared the hardships of Fleet life, and breathed the same air of freedom.

In the *Bảo Bình* roster, Nguyễn A holds the first number, Chu Bá Yên, now in his later years, holds number 81 (and there are only 81). As for you, you are number 53. You are forever a part of *Bảo Bình*'s history.



VÕ VĂN QUỘT

Military ID: 59A700.622
Final Rank: Navy Lieutenant



Year of Birth:

1939

Place of Birth:

Central Vietnam

Current Address:

Fallen in Service to the Nation
aboard HQ-231 in Kiến Hòa, 1967

Family:

Single at the time of passing



Pre-Military Activities

Studied at Võ Tấn High School, Nha Trang

Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

HQ-114, 1963

Executive Officer, HQ-231, 1967

Editorial Note

Võ Văn Quột gave his life in service to his country aboard HQ-231. While traveling from Coastal Groups 37 & 34 to Kiến Hòa, the warship was ambushed by Viet Cong forces at Cù Lao Óc in early 1967. The Coastal Zone 2 Command informed his father, Mr. Võ Phái, at his residence on Phương-Sài Street, Nha Trang.

His classmates personally accompanied his casket from Saigon to Nha Trang, where he was laid to rest according to Buddhist funeral rites. The Naval Training Center in Nha Trang assigned several officers, including members of Class XI, to stand guard over his remains. However, his father declined the formality and instead invited the officers inside to sit with the family.

At the funeral, his fiancée came to mourn the man she was to marry; honoring the love and life they had planned together. He was buried in Phương-Sài Cemetery, Nha Trang, with a large presence of naval officers from Coastal Zone 2 in attendance.

His name was unique—so rare that even Nguyễn Văn Khôn's dictionary did not include it. During his cadet days, he was a sharp and agile corner forward on the Nha Trang Naval Academy's soccer team. Sadly, his bright smile and kind spirit were lost too soon, leaving behind deep sorrow for his family and, most heartbreakingly, for his fiancée, with whom he had promised to grow old together.



NGUYỄN NGỌC QUYÊN

Military ID : 59A 700 598
Final Rank : Lieutenant Commander



I was born in 1939 in a small village in Nam Định province, Northern Vietnam. I studied at the village school in the primary school program. I was invited to have a private tutor at home. Then when I was in high school, I had to leave my family to study at Hồ Ngọc Cẩn School, Trung Linh, Bùi Chu. My parents were classified as landlords by the Communists, so they abandoned all their assets and fled to Hải Phòng, so I continued my studies at Bạch Đằng School, Trại Cau, Hải Phòng. In 1954, I migrated to the South, lived in Phú Thọ area of Saigon, and studied at Nguyễn Trãi and Chu Văn An schools. Vũ Hữu San studied in the same Junior Year class and Vũ Bá Trạch in the same Senior Year class at Chu Văn An school. Phạm Văn Hàm also studied at Chu Van An but in a different class; however, we lived together and studied together for almost a school year.

After completing high school, I studied at the University of Science. I failed the MG certificate and joined the Navy or else I would be drafted (later I got the MGP (Math General Physic) certificate while holding the rank of Lieutenant Jr).

My family did not believe that the army would accept me because I was small and frail, but perhaps it was because the military doctor Tuyết was also small like me. After entering the military school, I found out that there was a young and short men like me. It was not arranged, but naturally San, Trạch, Hàm and I met each other at the Nha Trang Naval Training Center.

When we graduated, we each went our separate ways. I was transferred to HQ-403 right after I graduated. Later I became the chief of the Intelligence Division of Riverine Zone 3, and then returned to sea on PGM HQ-604 as Commanding Officer, the same ship that Hàm's Executive Officer had driven into the reef at Đà Nẵng. The last warship I commanded was the Landing Support Ship HQ-225.

After a mission to Phnom Penh to protect Vietnamese nationals trapped in Cáp Duồng, HQ-225 was sent to Năm Căn in Operation Trần



Hung Đạo (Sea float) and this warship was attacked by Viet Cộng with mines and sunk on July 30, 1970 at 02:15 AM. My career was over from there. The long days of lying on the Lieutenant rank had faded. Until I was transferred to the Navy Amphibious Force, as Commander of Riverine Group 75, now Cà Mâu, tomorrow Chương Thiện, then Tân Châu, Hồng Ngự, Rạch Sỏi, Xẻo Rô, moving day and night non-stop on the river following the military operations of the tactical zones. This period was considered the most successful but also the most difficult and dangerous.

I was released from the 4th Riverine Force thanks to Thiệu, who was then the Chief of Naval Training Department of the Navy Headquarter, who called me to attend the Senior Staff Course in Saigon.

My last unit was the 2nd Coastal Zone. I had been in the new unit for a month when Hoàng Cơ Minh, my former Commander in the Naval Amphibious Force, was appointed Commander of the 2nd Coastal Zone. We still retain the old friendship.

Until the loss of Ban Mê Thuột, Pleiku, then Region 1, and then Region 2, the entire force of the 2nd Coastal Zone and the soldiers' families withdrew to camp in Cát Lái.



After April 30, I was fortunate to move to the United States with my wife and four children in 1975 while hearing the news that Hàm, for some unknown reason, was struck in VN. The first few days in America were not so hard. The Jewish Society helped me find a relatively easy job selling guns at a store that had all kinds of guns including Carbines, AK47s and M16s.



After living in Kansas City, Missouri for a little over a year, our family moved to Santa Ana, CA because my wife could not handle the cold weather there. I got a job the first day I arrived in California, as an Electronic Technician at Burrough in Mission Viejo, CA. After two years I transferred to MAI Basic Four in Tustin, CA. I worked there as a Technician and then a Test Engineer and Senior Test Engineer for 12 years before being laid off. And now I am working at Fujitsu, hopefully until retirement.

Now that I am in my late sixties, sometimes when I sit outside in the bonsai garden, in the backyard, I think about my friends, the memories in the military school. I also think about life and feel like I am being pushed endlessly in the river of fate. I am still alive because I still have hope and believe that without a spiritual life, life will be meaningless. I have been a vegetarian for the past eight years and have been trying to find myself through Zen. But also realize that what you are looking for is within yourself under many layers of dust.

How can you bring your mind back to “Original” because “Original mind is the path”. How can you go beyond the relative to reach the absolute without denying the relative?

Santa Ana, CA Winter 2000

A fleeting moment of misty blue haze
Drifting in from countless directions
Whose heart is open wide?
Returning to the old home.

Golden sunlight through the window frame
Roses swaying in the breeze
Greenery smiling, vibrant
Gently permeating into the mind.





TRƯƠNG HỮU QUÝNH

Military ID: 57A 701.069
Final Rank: Commander



Date of Birth:

October 10, 1937

Place of Birth:

Huế, Vietnam

Residence:

Cửu Long Housing Complex, Thị Nghè, Sài Gòn

Current Address:

Lincoln Ave, Vancouver, WA 98663

Family

Wife: Lê Thị Phương Hoa, Nurse

Daughter:

Trương Diễm Phương, OB/GYN

Trương Uyên Phương, Pediatrician

Son:

Trương Hữu Tuấn, Dental Student



Activities Before Joining the Navy:

Student at MPC, University of Huế

High School Teacher in Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry

Positions Held in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Executive Officer of HQ-602

Logistics Officer on HQ-404, HQ-502

Executive Officer of HQ-331, HQ-11, HQ-15

Commander of HQ-602

Chief of Staff, Naval Transport Fleet

Commander of HQ-228, HQ-405, HQ-09, HQ-502, HQ-17

Post-April 1975 Activities:

AS in Process Engineering

Chemical Lab & Equipment Technician for Dow Chemical Co.

Polysilicon Process R&D Technician for Union Carbide Corp.

Crystal Growth R&D Technician for Saint-Gobain Corp.

Vice Chairman of the Supervisory and Advisory Council of the Vietnamese Community in Clark County

Future Aspirations:

Hoping that future generations will always look toward their homeland to serve the nation and society.



Half-Fulfilled Dream

In late autumn of 1957, students of Quốc Học Huế were honored to listen to naval officers in white uniforms from Nha Trang who had come to recruit cadets. Along with many classmates, I submitted an application. However, on the day I prepared to leave, my mother said, *"Our homeland is closer to the mountains than the sea. The Thuận An shore is shallow, and the Hương River is even shallower. I have never seen sailors; they seem to be mostly from the South. If you follow them, you may never see me again."* Out of love for my mother, I abandoned my maritime dream and continued my studies.

Nearly four years later, in early summer of 1961, university students in Sài Gòn were anxious about the military draft. As I was within the eligible age group, my long-lost dream of the sea suddenly returned. After completing my personal information at the District Two Police Station, I wandered down to the Saigon River, where I found a recruitment notice for the Naval Officer Candidate School (Class XI) at Bạch Đằng Barracks.



Without much thought, I submitted my application. At the naval academy, I met Lieutenant M.M.

Liên, a former classmate from Quốc Học Huế. He greeted me warmly and advised, *"Remember to address me as 'Lieutenant' in class, for my sake."*

The traditional initiation by upper classmen abruptly woke me up from my maritime dream and confronted me with reality. My time in the academy instilled in me new

habits, and whenever I encountered senior officers from Class VIII—who were my old classmates from Quốc Học—I had to be mindful of my words and behavior, knowing that I was now part of a junior class.

Serving in the navy for nearly 14 years, with 11 years at sea, I had the honor of working on nearly every type of ship, twice—once as Executive Officer or Department Head and once as Commanding Officer. My hope was that after sailing on every ship, I would finally be stationed onshore. During my long periods away from home, I would reassure my wife and children with a simple dream: *"The husband serves the country, the wife serves society. The son follows the father's path, and the daughter follows the mother's example."*

The frigate Ngô Quyền HQ-17 was the last warship I had the honor to serve on. Unfortunately, after my term ended, I was not reassigned to shore duty, nor did I have another opportunity to serve my homeland directly.

Years of labor in exile have helped my children understand our struggles, and they have all pursued careers in healthcare, hoping to serve society and humanity. I want to express my gratitude to them through these words inscribed in their graduation yearbook:

"When we first married, we told each other, we have a dream—two lives dedicated to serving our country, and we will have children who serve humanity. We lost our home in our motherland during the Vietnam conflict and couldn't complete our duties to our country, but you and your siblings are on your way to fulfilling the last part of our dream."

Thank you and congratulations."

The Commander Without a Ship

On that dark April night, our ship returned from the Spratly Islands to Vũng Tàu, only to find that there was no longer a way to enter the Saigon River. My crew of 187 men had to part ways at sea—half disembarked on smaller vessels to return to land, while the other half continued on. Upon arriving at Subic Bay, our unit disbanded, and only a few of us remained together in exile.

In Vancouver, Washington, a chemistry professor at Clark College introduced me to a job at Dow Chemical USA. I became a Lab Technician on mobile laboratory trucks equipped with massive chemical tanks. In addition to my lab duties, I was trained to drive these heavy-duty trucks, transporting laboratory equipment and chemical containers across industrial zones from Kalama, Washington, to the western banks of the Mississippi River, a journey that took 4 to 5 days.

Each trip, I set out with work orders, operating manuals, related documents, and detailed maps. It reminded me of my days back home—before each mission, I would go to headquarters to receive orders, return to the warship, and discuss the navigation route with my officers. But unlike in Vietnam, where I had an entire crew, here, I was alone. When uncertain about a turn, I had to stop and check the map. In tight spaces, I missed the skilled port officers in Saigon who helped maneuver our ships through challenging waters.

After each mission, I would return to base and reunite with two former shipmates. One morning, we arrived at a Pacific harbor, ready for a deep-sea fishing trip. As I climbed the gangway onto the boat, I instinctively saluted toward the stern, where the national flag would have been. A group

of American veterans standing nearby, out of reflex, saluted me back in proper military form. As I passed the gangway, I heard someone ask,

"Who is that man?"

"He's my commander," my two shipmates replied in unison.

Out at sea, gazing at the endless horizon, my memories drifted back to my homeland. I imagined seeing the familiar lighthouse beacons of Tiên Sa, Kê Gà, and Vũng Tàu. My mind painted vivid images of my beloved country—its islands, mountains, bays, rivers, rocky shores, and piers.

"Commander, how many fish have you caught? We've reached our quota!" My shipmate's voice snapped me back to reality. *"I didn't catch anything—I was too busy dreaming. I want to sail home on this boat. Will you come with me?"*

"Of course, Commander. But we don't have enough fuel or supplies yet."

"One day, we will return," my other shipmate reassured me.

That evening, back onshore, as we stopped by a seaside café, I told them, *"We've been together for so long. We're no longer in the military—call me 'Brother' instead of 'Commander' for familiarity."*

"Commander, you've forgotten our traditions," they firmly replied.

Raising my glass, I declared, *"O ho! Je suis le Commandant sans bateau. I am the Commander Without a Ship."*

From then on, I accepted the title "Commander" as a permanent part of my life, much like how family members affectionately call each other Uncle, Aunt, or Brother.

Trương Hữu Quỳnh

Editorial Note:

"Dear Quýnh, our editorial team gifts you a ship. From now on, you are 'Commander with a Ship'—and an eternal Commander."





Sài-Gòn, 1973

PHẠM TRỌNG QUỲNH

Military ID: 56A 700.773
Final Rank: Navy Commander



San Jose, 1999

Date of Birth:

January 5, 1936

Place of Birth:

Hà Đông, Northern Vietnam

Current Address:

Sunnyvale, Northern California, U.S.A.

Family:

Wife: Nguyễn Thị Bạch-Mai

Children: Two daughters and two sons. Three older. Children are married, and the youngest son is about to finish his education.

Grandchildren: Two grandsons and one granddaughter.

Education & Early Career:

Studied at Lycée Albert Sarraut in Hanoi and Lycée Yersin in Đà Lạt.



Bạch-Mai

Quỳnh

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

- 1963-1964: Third Officer of HQ-451 (Captain: HQ Lieutenant Nguyễn Hữu Tô). Later became Executive Officer under HQ Lieutenant Hà Văn Ngạc. Served alongside officers nicknamed 'Nước Mém' and 'Mệ.'
- 1964-1966: Fourth Officer of HQ-406. Served with BB Nguyễn Tấn Đôn (Third Officer). Under Lieutenant Trần Bình Phú. Promoted to Lieutenant Jr in April 1965 and served as Executive Officer under three captains: Nguyễn Ngọc Rắc, Trần Văn Lâm, and Quân An.
- 1966-1967: Deputy Commander of the Naval Training Center in Cam Ranh, serving alongside officer 'Trâu Năm.'
- 1967-1968: Commanding Officer of HQ-611.
- 1968-1969: Commanding Officer of HQ-471.
- 1969-1971: Commanding Officer of HQ-230.
- 1971-1972: Commanding Officer of HQ-406.
- 1972-1973: Commanding Officer of HQ-12.
- 1973-1974: Commanding Officer of HQ-800.
- 1974-1975: Commanding Officer of HQ-5.

Memorable Experiences in the Navy

Throughout my naval career, I experienced many highs and lows. In 1968, I nearly lost my ability to serve at sea after almost sinking HQ-611 due to a collision with underwater rocks southeast of Phú Quốc Island. However, I continued my career as the captain of seven different warships, from the smallest to the largest in the Republic of Vietnam Navy—an uncommon achievement.

At that time, senior officers had yet to command large vessels, while junior officers lacked the seniority to take charge of major warships. I was in the right place at the right time. In terms of total years at sea, many surpassed me, but continuously commanding seven warships was a unique distinction.

Additionally, while serving as Captain of HQ-406, when the ship was docked for repairs, I was assigned as temporary captain for two larger Escort Destroyers, HQ-13 and HQ-09, as both were without a captain. This was also an unusual occurrence—having a small-ship captain temporarily command a larger vessel.

A Lighthearted Memory:

At the end of 1974, on Patrol Ship HQ-5, there were three "Bảo-Bình" officers: myself, Executive Officer 'Nước Mém,' and Third Officer 'Fernandel.'

Once, while docking at the Naval Base in Đà Nẵng, 'Nước Mém' whispered to me, "Let me handle this docking." Without waiting for my response, he took command and executed a flawless maneuver, looking at me with pride afterward.

Meanwhile, 'Fernandel' had a habit of sneaking into my cabin to ask my steward to cook him instant noodles when he was on night duty and hungry. Soon, the crew started joking that HQ-5 had three captains—and naturally, they feared 'Nước Mém' and 'Fernandel' more than me. When 'Nước Mém' transferred, 'Fernandel' was promoted but later left to become the captain of a PGM. Finally, my sole command of HQ-5 was restored.

The Final Mission & the Fate of the Nation:

At the end of March 1975, HQ-5 received urgent orders to deploy to the First Military Region for an operation. Upon reporting to the Regional Admiral, the ship was directed to Thuận An to pick up Lieutenant General Lâm Quang Thi and assist in the evacuation of troops from the area.

As Huế and Thuận An fell, we returned to Đà Nẵng to offload the soldiers. However, under President Thiệu's withdrawal plan, Communist forces quickly advanced. When they began shelling the Navy Headquarters at Tiên Sa, HQ-5 had to depart to avoid enemy artillery. If I recall correctly, this was March 29, 1975.

That night, the Naval Command instructed all ships in the area to assemble at Mỹ Khê for the Marine Division's evacuation. However, I kept HQ-5 stationed outside Đà Nẵng, concerned for the safety of Rear Admiral Hồ Văn Kỳ Thoại, a dedicated and courageous officer.

My instincts proved correct—around 1 or 2 AM, Admiral Thoại escaped on a small boat with Al Francis, the U.S. Consul General in Đà Nẵng, along with other foreign personnel. We picked them up and raised the one-star admiral's flag. Frank Snepp, a CIA analyst in Vietnam, later wrote in his book *Decent Interval* that "one was only truly safe once aboard HQ-5."

Without HQ-5's presence, Admiral Thoại and Consul General Francis would have continued south in an uncertain fate. This moment cemented HQ-5's critical role in history. From that point

on, the ship maintained direct radio contact with Saigon, receiving orders from President Thiệu, the Naval Command, and the U.S. Embassy.

After the fall of the First Military Region, HQ-5 and HQ-2 returned to Cam Ranh to unload the Marines. Rear Admiral Hoàng Cơ Minh then boarded HQ-5, raising the one-star admiral's flag again, and led an operation to rescue trapped soldiers in Qui Nhon.

Upon completing that mission, HQ-5 returned to Cam Ranh, then received orders to Vũng Tàu to pick up Rear Admiral Vũ Đình Đào for another rescue operation, this time for Lieutenant General Nguyễn Vĩnh Nghi, who was surrounded in Phan Thiết. However, by the time we arrived, Phan Thiết had already fallen, and General Nghi had been captured.

As South Vietnam crumbled, on April 30, 1975, when President Dương Văn Minh announced the surrender, Fleet Commander HQ Captain Phạm Mạnh Khuê escaped on a PGM and directed HQ-5 to rendezvous outside Vũng Tàu. Upon boarding, his commander's flag was raised, making HQ-5 the flagship of the Republic of Vietnam's last naval command—until we officially handed over our ship to the U.S. Seventh Fleet at Subic Bay, marking the true beginning of our exile.

A Personal Chapter:

In 1987, due to irreconcilable differences, my first wife and I decided to separate. I continued raising my two younger sons.

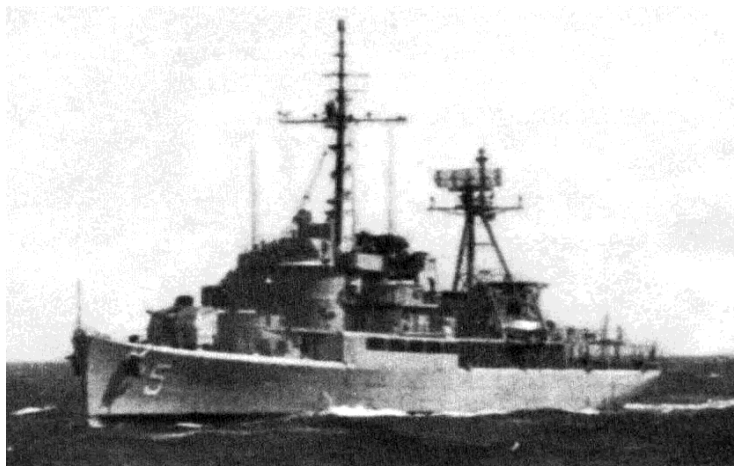
In 1991, at a reunion, I was introduced to Bạch-Mai, who had also been through a similar situation. We became close and eventually fell in love.

During a Bảo-Bình gathering in San Diego on July 4, 1992, we visited Las Vegas and pledged to be together for life. I jokingly reminded her of something her brother (a Lt. Commander) once said: "If you ever became single, there'd be a million men lined up for you." She smiled and replied, "But out of a million, I only choose you."

She also promised that if I ever ended up in a wheelchair, she'd take me out for steak, wine, and movies—since I enjoy Western films. When I shared this with my friends, one joked, "I just hope she doesn't wheel you up a hill and let you 'captain' yourself one last time—rolling straight down!"

We have now been together for ten years and hope to stay that way forever, easing the sorrow of our lives in exile.

Phạm Trọng Quỳnh





Nha-Trang, 1961

PHẠM ĐỨC RIỄN

Military ID: 59A 700.627
Final Rank: Navy Lieutenant

Year of Birth:

1939

Place of Birth:

Northern Vietnam

Current Status:

Passed away at the Naval Training Center in Cam Ranh in 1968

Family:

Was married at the time of passing away.

Pre-Navy Activities:

Unknown

Positions/Units in the Navy:

Naval Fleet
Special Operations Naval Force
Director of Military Training, Naval
Training Center, Cam Ranh



Editorial Notes:

During his time as the duty officer at the Naval Training Center in Cam Ranh, Riễn was involved in a dispute with Army Captain H., a fellow officer in the combat unit. This altercation tragically escalated when Captain H. drew his Colt 45 pistol and fatally shot Riễn on the spot. At the time, Riễn had only recently started a family.

Twenty years later, in 1988, classmate Trần Hữu-Khánh visited Riễn's family.

For more details about this solemn incident and Phạm Đức Riễn's life, please refer to the article "*Những Con Giáp Bảo-Bình*" and the special article written by classmate Trần Đỗ Cầm in the Literary flower Garden section ("*Vườn Hoa Văn Nghệ*") of this book.



NGUYỄN THÀNH SẮC

Military ID: 59A 700.658
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Year of Birth:

1939

Place of Birth:

Southern Vietnam

Current Location:

Germany

Family:

Had a family before joining the Navy

Pre-Navy Activities:

Unknown

Positions/Units in the Navy:

Naval Fleet



Editorial Notes

What we remember and know about Nguyễn Thành Sắc is quite vague. Following the heroic naval battle of Hoàng Sa, he was the only one included in the list for a special promotion to the rank of full Commander (HQ Trung Tá Thực Thụ).

It is believed that he currently resides in Germany. Was he one of the fortunate (or perhaps less fortunate) individuals rescued by a German ship in the South China Sea and later settled there, or did some other fate lead him to this country? If he is indeed in Germany, he may be the loneliest *Bảo Bình* (Aquarius) among us, as no other *Bình*, not even a "cracked *Bình*," lives under that foreign sky.

During our time at the Naval Academy, we never heard him "speak German," yet now, German has become his daily language—what an ironic twist of fate. Near him, in France, live Nguyễn Tường and Nguyễn Minh Thành. Hopefully, one day they will reunite in a Vietnamese market on the outskirts of Paris, just as we in the U.S. often run into each other in Little Saigon. It may be just a hope, but *Bảo Bình* dreams never die, my friend.



VŨ HỮU SƠN

Military ID: 60A 700.706
Final Rank: Commander



Date of Birth:

December 8, 1940

Place of Birth:

Hoa Lư, Ninh Bình, Northern Vietnam

Current Address:

Southern California, USA

Family Status:

- Married with three children, all unmarried and pursuing postgraduate studies:
- Vũ Hữu Sơn: Studying MBA in Management at SJSU
- Vũ Thanh Thảo: Holds a BA and MFA in Costume Design from UCLA, specializing in stage costume design
- Vũ Hữu Luyện: Holds a BA in Philosophy and is pursuing an MFA in Film Directing at USC



Education & Early Activities Before Joining the Navy:

Studied at Chu Văn An High School

Attended universities in Đà Lạt, Saigon, and Huế

Positions and Units Served in the Navy:

- Fourth and Third Officer aboard Patrol Craft HQ-04 under Ship's Captain Nguyễn-Tam, a classmate from Tân-Đà School 1951 (Làng Cối, Nho Quan, Liên-khu 3).
- Participated in the Vũng Rô battle (awarded the US Naval Unit Citation) under the command of Ship's Captain Trần-Văn-Triết.
- Deputy Commander of Task Force 27 Assault Group (later renamed Riverine Assault Group 27), participated in the Bà Rai battle (Trung Úy Trần Ngọc Bảo KIA (Killed In Action)).



- Commanding Officer of PGM (Patrol Gun Motor) Thị Tứ HQ-613, famously drove out an American advisor from the ship in defense of Vietnamese officers' honor. Nicknamed the "Captain without an American Advisor for life." Recognized as the most decorated Navy Lieutenant and selected as a naval representative in the "National Council of Civil-Military Affairs," alongside Lt. Commander Phạm-Văn-Côn.
- Commanding Officer of LSSL (Landing Ship Support Large) Lư Phú Thọ HQ-229, led the ship on long-distance missions, flying the national flag in Guam. This was the peak of youthful pride and strength! Armed with formidable firepower, engaging in riverine combat, their prowess was unmatched. Adorned with the motto "magistrate post deum" and eight stars of valor, the crew proudly docked in foreign naval ports. Allied officers, curious about the so-called "Out-Advisory Little Captain," saluted with "Yes, Sir... Yes, Yes, Captain!" Success often comes from knowing one's capacity, like "fire melting cool steel."
- Graduated from the Joint Command and Staff Course at the Military Academy in Đà Lạt.
- Deputy Head of Operations Department, Navy Headquarters; Director of the ACTOV (Accelerated Turn-Over Vietnam) Navy Program.
- Operations Officer for the Trần-Hung-Đạo Campaign. Assumed operational command during cross-border missions to Phnom Penh and Kongpong Cham when the Naval Commander was not appointed. The task force, consisting of 110 warships and vessels, was the largest and most powerful riverine fleet in Southeast Asia's history until 1970.
- Commanding Officer of Escort PCE (Patrol Craft Escort) Chí-Linh HQ-11, significantly contributed to the recapture of Sa-Huỳnh during the Red Summer Offensive (Mùa Hè Đỏ Lửa).
- Commanding Officer of LST (Landing Ship Tank) Quy-Nhon HQ-504, served four terms as Field Commanding Officer for the Defensive Construction Campaign of the Spratly Islands. Awarded Bảo Quốc Huân Chương (National Order 5th grade)
- Commanding Officer of DER (Destroyer Escort Radar Picket) Trần-Khánh-Dur HQ-4, frequently doubling as Task Group Commander. This role, not officially listed in the Navy's organization, was referred to by the French as "Commandant de Division" and by Americans as "Commodore." This position came with ceremonial honors, such as a 15-cannon salute. HQ-4 Captain played a leading role in defending the Paracel Islands in the early phases of the operation and was later appointed Division Commander II during the naval battle. The crew of Trần-Khánh-Dur earned two commendation ribbons—one for the Naval Service and one for their ship. Awarded the National Order of Merit and the Financial Order of Merit during operations intercepting drug-smuggling vessels near international waters off Côn Sơn.
- Senior Advisor for Fleet Tactical Operations, assisted by Commander Võ-Quang-Thủ



and Lt. Commander Phan-Thành-Thuận.

From January 1, 1973, until the fall of the Republic of Vietnam in 1975, consistently the longest-serving senior ship commander in the fleet. Promoted in rank on the same day as Commander Phạm-Ứng-Luật, the Patrol Flotilla Commander and on the ocean missions departing Saigon, held the title of Senior Officer Present Afloat, commanding tactical operations across the South China Sea—a domain humorously referred to as "my kingdom," stretching from the 17th parallel to the Cambodian border near Sihanoukville Port. Though officially empowered by naval authority, actual power often fell short. Undoubtedly, the burden of responsibilities frequently haunted me with nightmares of uncertainty, even in the dark, endless abyss of the subconscious.

Activities After April 1975:

Evacuated on HQ-801 (Ship's Captain, Lt. Commander Nguyễn-Phú-Bá) on April 29, 1975. I settled in Salt Lake City, Utah, San José, and then San Clemente, California, to date. While I was working as a design engineer at Touché Manufacturings, my eldest son pursued a Mechanical Engineering degree.

When my foundational research on "The Philosophy of Water in Vietnam" was developed, my youngest son enrolled at UCLA, majoring in Philosophy. My daughter, who had artistic talent since childhood and loved music and painting, studied Fine Arts at UCLA. As the field of computer graphics progressed, my daughter and I, despite living in different locations, often spent up to a dozen hours a day working together on computers. Currently, to promote the hypothesis that "civilization originated from the water regions of Vietnam," I've unexpectedly become a self-made webmaster. Coincidentally, I also changed careers, following classmate Trần-Quang-Thiệu into the IT industry. A big thank you to Thiệu!

About Me:

I was born in the homeland of Emperor Đinh Tiên Hoàng, in the dry Halong region. Back then, my maternal grandparents' hometown was flooded for 4 to 5 months each year. Boats came right up to porches and yards. I am the last of the Vũ family line in the Hoa-Lu area, and my name carries the "Khẩu" (mouth) Chinese character, symbolizing eloquence. My grandfather, Đàm, witnessing the outbreak of World War II, named his grandchildren Lam (my uncle's child) and San (my name, from the word Son with the Khẩu added). Grandfather instilled in our family the phrase: "Lam Son uprising, ten years of hardship."

My father, Soạn, Chairman of the Resistance Committee in Ninh-Khánh Commune, organized militia forces in 1945, taking power from the "chief village officials" and maintaining local security. In the early challenging stages of the anti-colonial uprising, the Communist Việt Minh took credit. Seeing this as problematic, my father opened a school to educate our extended family's children. After failing to recruit him, the Communists jailed him. Luckily, with evidence of a falsely



planted pennant left in the buffalo shed—a triangular flag could not represent an opposition organization—my father defended himself successfully and was released. To avoid perishing in the rivers Hoàng-Long and Đáy, we embraced life in exile. Fifty years later, on a recent visit to our old village, even the current Chairman showed respect, welcoming my father, a dignified elder of nearly 90, as a trailblazer. The village's records still document these events.

Born into wartime, my life was not only marked by "ten years of Lam Son's hardships," but destiny seemed to ordain that we should endure "a lifetime of steadfastly fighting Communism." Like other children from "prestigious families," I was sent to study at the age of five. With the nation resisting colonial oppression, the poor Vũ family children didn't even have paper books to write on, let alone toilet paper.



During my 16 years as a student, I moved across many regions: Liên Khu III, Bù Chu, Hành Thiện, Nam Định, Hanoi, Quảng Yên, then Saigon, Đà Lạt, and Huế. My generation constantly switched schools. Sometimes I moved up a grade, but other times I was placed lower as there were no higher classes available. I always understood my teachers' explanations clearly, yet I was lazy with homework and never excelled at memorization.

Our family fled from invasions and lost our homes repeatedly. As we grew older, my siblings and I enlisted in the military. For the ideal of protecting the homeland, we wholeheartedly opposed both colonialism and the dictatorship of single-party rule. As officers in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), we fought for freedom, survival, our families, and our nation, hoping to reclaim the homeland lost to the Communists.

The Vũ family soldiers were dedicated to their duties. Whatever task was assigned, we completed it diligently. If a captain delegated command, they could sleep soundly. If a commander entrusted the warship, there was no need for constant supervision. Naturally, like many, I sometimes secretly wished for power and prestige, but I always feared that higher ranks would come with heavier responsibilities.

I have led warships, embarking on many long-range ocean missions spanning thousands of nautical miles. The estimated arrival and departure times (ETA) were always exact. However, if I've reached "this form" today, it's truly because my parents guided the way, and my life's achievements are thanks to a strong family foundation. Above all, I owe my parents' immense protection. After ten years of self-reliance (1960-1970), my later years unfolded with unexpected fortune: my wife handled everything inside and out. Like those blessed with good fortune regarding children, all three of my kids grew up quickly, keeping pace with their peers, without needing strict education or the dreaded homework battles between parents and kids.

My Wife and Yearbook:

Reading articles by Bảo Bình authors, my wife felt a little disheartened. She said, "I see that you haven't accomplished much. This person got a bachelor's degree in Vietnam.

That one studied abroad and earned a master's degree. Another is wealthy. Yet another stayed on the shore..."

It's true. My parents sent me to university, but I didn't graduate in Vietnam. I also don't have a high academic degree in the U.S., even though I was born into a scholarly family. I don't own a home; I've spent nearly my entire life renting. When we evacuated, my wife and I truly had nothing—not even a single penny—to our names (I can swear solemnly on this). Despite my ancestors once owning mountains and rivers in Hoa Lu, my wife and I began life in exile with absolutely nothing.

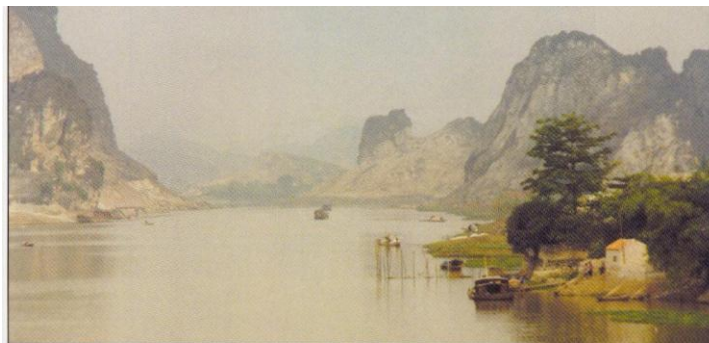
Yet, in the deepest despair of losing our country, I sometimes still proudly lift my bald head and declare: "I have never relied on anyone's charity." I've never sought favors from priests, monks, or officials—whether for money, rank, or position. I told my wife, "The fact that we've built our family as it is today without ever asking for anything is thanks to your good fortune."

After over 30 years together, my wife has realized that each family's circumstances are different. Even if I had urged her to try harder, neither she nor I would have succeeded. We share the same laziness. Understanding this, my wife joyfully returned to a life of simplicity, enjoying our frugal yet contented existence.

Future Aspirations:

Now that I am over 60, my grandfather's aspiration—passed down through two generations of children and grandchildren—has not yet been fulfilled. I will strive tirelessly until the day I die. While my physical capabilities for outdoor activities have declined, I hope to continue advocating for my ideals through cultural pursuits via writing and computers in my later years. My enthusiastic involvement in the Faculty of History, Geography, and Culture at the Vietnamese Cultural Institute in Southern California stems from this motivation.

I wish for the remaining years of my life, whether spent mentally or physically laboring, to continue as simple as before—peaceful, relaxed, and serene—allowing me to pass through life's final doors with ease.



Nhạc trông sơn thủy hữu tình,
Bút trần khôn tả bức tranh nào bằng.

Ảnh Nguyễn Huy Trục - 1995



DƯƠNG QUANG-SANG

Military: ID: 57A 701.027
Final Rank: Commander



Date of Birth:

January 18, 1937

Place of Birth:

Tương Bình-Hiệp Commune, Thủ Dầu Một Province, South Vietnam

Current Address:

Garden Grove, California, U.S.A.

Family:

Wife: Thai Thi Minh-Dung, homemaker.

Children:

- Dương Thái-Bảo, wife, and three children. Occupation: Worker.
- Dương Lê-Quyên, husband, and two children. Occupation: Worker.
- Dương Thúy-Hằng, husband, and two children. Occupation: Worker.
- Dương Thái-Huy, MBA.
- Dương Thái-Bình, Worker.
- Dương Thái-Hoa, Worker.



The entire family lives together under one roof, large and joyful.

Activities Before Joining the Navy (First Aquarius Class):

Education:

Attended Nguyễn-Trãi Secondary School, Bình Dương (1950-1954).

Attended Hưng-Đạo and Nguyễn Bá Tòng High Schools (1954-1959).

Sports & University:

Played for the Gia-Định Star Soccer Team (A-level team at the time) (1955-1959).

Student at MPC, University of Science, Saigon (1959-1960).

Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Transportation Officer, HQ-405 (1963-1964).

Executive Officer, HQ-600 (1964-1965).

Executive Officer, HQ-329 (1965-1966).

Commander, Coastal Group 34 (1966-1968).

Commanding Officer, HQ-700 (1968-1969).

Head of Operations, Third Naval Coastal Zone Headquarters (1969-1970).

Head of Logistics, Naval Logistics Command (1970-1972).

Head of Supplemental Food Supply, Naval Logistics Command (1972-1973).

Head of Naval Transportation, General Logistics Directorate, General Staff (1973-1975).

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Re-education camps: Interned in a total of eight prison camps (1975-1982).

Escape & Resettlement:

Fled by boat to Galang Island in December 1983.

Resettled in Arizona, U.S.A., in January 1985.

Moved to California in 1986. Unable to return to school, had to enter the workforce.

Worked as a laborer for Garden Grove Unified School District until now.

Planned retirement in January 2002.

Dreams & Aspirations:

One of my greatest dreams is for the Communist Party of Vietnam to collapse, allowing Vietnam to rise as the "Golden Dragon" of Southeast Asia. In my view, this dream is close to becoming a reality. The Communist Party will not fall due to external pressure or military force but rather from internal transformations that will ultimately destroy the regime.

Today, government officials—from central leadership to local levels—are wealthy individuals who have turned themselves into capitalists rather than communists. They have become exploiters and oppressors of the people, completely contradicting the ideology that "the government is the servant of the people, and the people are the masters."



The wealth they possess theoretically belongs to the Communist Party. Thus, the only path forward for the rich Communist officials is to advocate for the removal of Article 4 of the constitution, which grants the Communist Party a monopoly on power. This will pave the way for a multi-party system in Vietnam. Eventually, these wealthy Communist elites will abandon the Party and join newly established political factions, legalizing the wealth they accumulated through exploitation while they were Party members.

If they do not take this strategic path, and should the poorer Communist Party members manage to seize power, these wealthy elites will have all their assets confiscated.

This is my dream. If that day comes, with the life and career I have built in this foreign land, I hope to return and contribute to improving the lives of my fellow countrymen. My only

wish is for my people to prosper, for my homeland to be strong, and for Vietnamese citizens to be respected worldwide—no longer seen as slaves under Communist rule.

Editorial Note:

Dear Sang,

You are one of the few who remain deeply concerned about the political future and survival of a non-Communist Vietnam. We wish you great success and congratulate you on having a warm and supportive family standing behind you as you continue your journey of rebuilding your career and aspirations.



NGUYỄN VĂN TẤN

Military ID: 46A 700.011
Final Rank : Commander



Place of Birth:

Cái Mon, Mỏ Cày District, Bến Tre Province

Education:

Studied at Saint Joseph Brothers School, Mỹ Tho. Earned the French Elementary Certificate 'Certificate d'Etude Primaire Complémentaire Indochinoise.'
Attended Saigon Seminary for three years until the Fourth Modern grade. Had to leave school due to World War II and returned to a plantation in Cần Thơ.

Joining the Vietnam Navy:

Enrolled in the Seamanship School, Class IV, Deckhand Branch (Vận Chuyển).
Graduated as valedictorian.
Attended the Naval Professional School, Maistrance Class, Deckhand Branch. Graduated as valedictorian.

Military Service Units:

HQ-330: Served in Northern Vietnam, operating on the Red River and in provinces such as Nam Định, Bùi Chu, Phát Diệm, Hoàng Xuân Phi.
HQ-331: Operated in the Mekong Delta, based in Mỹ Tho.
Deployed to Subic Bay for six months.
Discharged after completing five years of service.

Re-enlistment:

Due to the resurgence of war, was recalled to active duty. Served in the following units:

HQ-401: Senior Non-Commissioned Officer, Logistics Branch.

HQ-403: Senior Non-Commissioned Officer, Logistics Branch.

HQ-536: Executive Officer

During this time, self-studied using French textbooks and obtained the Brevet and Baccalaureate in Mathematics.



Officer Training & Promotions:

Attended the Naval Academy, Command Branch, Class XI:

Ranked 4th in the Alpha rank exam.

Ranked 5th in the Ensign exam.

Ranked 6th in the Sub-Lieutenant exam.

Post-Graduation Assignments (Chronological Order):

HQ-6: Fourth Officer.

HQ-471: Deputy Captain.

BVH HQ-401: Deputy Captain.

GĐ/XP 26: Deputy Commander.

Studied in the USA, Foreign Officer Course. Visited the Pentagon, U.S. Congress, and NASA Space Center.

Liaison Officer with the U.S. 7th Fleet, stationed on warships USS Forster DER 334, USS Boyd DD 544, USS Kretmer DER 329, USS Brister DER 327, and USS Southern Land DD 734.



Ship Commanding Positions:

HQ-600: Patrol operations in Zone I and Zone IV.

HQ-327: Regular operations in Năm Căn.

BVH HQ-400: Civil affairs operations throughout tactical regions. Deployed to Singapore (1972-1973).

HQ-11: Cruiser, participated in the Battle of Hoàng Sa (Paracel Islands).

HQ-502: Full-fledged Ship Commander.

HQ-500: Temporary duty, two missions to Đà Nẵng.

HQ-503: Temporary duty, one mission to Đà Nẵng - Qui Nhon.



Evacuation - The Final Voyage (April 30, 1975):

His naval career ended with one final voyage aboard his beloved Thị Nại HQ-502, which was still undergoing incomplete repairs:

- Two main engines installed but untested.
- Two electrical generators not synchronized.
- Freshwater and firefighting pumps not installed.
- CO2 cylinders still on HQCX.
- Both front and rear anchors were inoperative.
- Ship deck was cut open for engine maintenance but not yet welded back.

Only nine crew members remained, including Deputy Captain HQ Lt. Commander Đỗ Trừ, two mechanical officers, and six mechanics. The ship was docked at Pier H, in front of Naval Fleet Headquarters, alongside HQ-501, HQ-503, HQ-504, and HQ-11. As news spread that only HQ-11 was scheduled to depart, thousands of evacuees—including soldiers from various military branches and their families—overwhelmed the four LST ships. Eventually, all shifted to HQ-502, leading to severe overcrowding on the ship. Every inch was filled, from the command deck to LCVP boats, crew quarters, storage

rooms, and tank compartments. The scene was chaotic and terrifying, with panic-stricken people fearing an impending assault amid deafening explosions and smoke-filled air.

Desperate Efforts to Escape:

Facing this hopeless situation, he joined three other naval officers to devise an escape plan: Navy Commander Trần Đức Cừ Navy Commander Lê Văn Quý Navy Lieutenant Commander Phan Lạc Tiếp. First priority: Clearing the dock to set sail. They successfully relocated three LST ships, then recruited stranded Navy personnel to form essential operation teams.

Critical Emergency Repairs:



Just before departure, the steering system failed, revealing that its cables had been sabotaged. With no tools or time, he and Trần Đức Cừ worked under extreme pressure, manually reconnecting cables using metal clamps.

At 2:30 AM on April 30, 1975, with one operational engine and makeshift manual steering, HQ-502 departed. The rudder, only

capable of turning 10 degrees instead of the usual 35, required five men to operate. After four grueling hours, they reached Nhà Bè.

Rescue & Survival at Sea:

On their way out to sea, they rescued hundreds of people from smaller vessels, including Rear Admiral Nghiêm Văn Phú.

Two reconnaissance helicopters landed on the ship's deck, with one pilot drowning during an emergency jump into the sea.

At 20 nautical miles offshore, they rescued a barge full of women and children. The total onboard exceeded 5,000 people.

Challenges at Sea:

With insufficient food, medical supplies, and sanitation facilities, the situation was dire. Fortunately, after a night of fear and exhaustion, they encountered the U.S. 7th Fleet. Relief arrived, and they finally felt safe.

The ship was escorted to Subic Bay at reduced speed. The U.S. Navy transferred excess passengers onto nine other ships and towed HQ-502 to keep pace with the convoy.

At this point, Phan Lạc Tiếp took charge of organizing onboard operations, setting up a makeshift clinic with volunteer doctors and medicine supplied by the 7th Fleet. As conditions improved, relief and even smiles emerged among the evacuees.



Freedom & Resettlement:

At Subic Bay, they transferred onto the Green Wave for Guam.

Stayed in Guam refugee camps for one month before moving to Camp Pendleton, USA. Lived at Camp 4, Camp Pendleton, for another month before resettling.

Life in the U.S.:

He settled in Utah, sponsored by Don Lyon, a former U.S. Navy serviceman who, despite his modest means, generously supported new Vietnamese refugees.

Thanks to Lyon's help, he invited fellow classmates Phan Lạc Tiếp, Nguyễn Kim Khánh, Lê Văn Quý, and Vũ Hữu San to Utah. Over time, his friends pursued different careers and moved elsewhere, leaving only him and Lê Văn Quý in Utah to this day.





NGUYỄN MINH THÀNH

Military ID: 56A 700.784
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Year of Birth:

1936

Place of Birth:

Southern Vietnam

Current Address:

France

Family Status:

Married

Activities Before Joining The Navy:

Originally a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in the Air Force, he was self-taught, passed the Baccalaureate Examination, and was accepted into the Naval Officer Cadet School, First Aquarius Class.

Roles/Units in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Fleet Command
Special Operations Naval Forces

Editorial Note:

Class XI had a significant number of members joining the Coastal Patrol Force, including Nguyễn Minh Thành. However, unlike the typical lifestyle associated with Coastal Patrol officers, Thành (along with Phạm Đức Riển) lived in a completely different manner. That means Thành did not gamble, drink, wander the streets, worry, overthink, or even have many friends. Instead, he spent his time studying English or tinkering with electronic devices he bought from the flea market. (See *The Bảo Bình Zodiac*).

We do not know much about Thành after his time in the Coastal Patrol Force—where he was stationed or his achievements. We acknowledge that it was an oversight on our part to have almost forgotten such a simple and unassuming friend for so long. In 1975, we heard that he left Vietnam and went straight to France to start a new life. Before joining Class XI, he had previously served as an Air Force NCO and had undergone training in France, so it seems he had already mapped out his future path long before his time at the Naval Academy.



Nha-Trang, 1962

TRỊNH ĐÌNH THIỆN

Military ID: 57A 701.098

Final Rank: Commander

Year of Birth:

May 10, 1938

Place of Birth:

Northern Vietnam

Current Address:

Texas, U.S.A.

Family Status:

Married. His wife was formerly a Supervisor at Trung Vương Girls' High School, Saigon.

Activities Before Joining the Navy:

Unknown.

Units and Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

PCE HQ-09 and LSSL HQ-225

Activities After April 1975:

Unknown.

Editorial Note:

According to a source from Los Angeles, Trịnh Đình Thiện initially left Vietnam and then settled on a French island in the Atlantic Ocean. Later, he immigrated to the United States, settling in Southern California, where he studied Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture. Thiện attended several Bảo Bình reunions in the 1990s (*see photos*). However, after graduating, he moved to Texas, and since then, he has lost contact.

Texas is vast, and currently, only four Bảo Bình members reside there (Cầm, Tú-Hải, Ngọc-Bích, and Thiện). Who knows, one day, they may unexpectedly cross paths. Cầm and Thiện once served together on HQ-09, so they would surely have plenty to reminisce about if they met again. If you happen to meet anyone from Hà Tiên or Rạch Giá, please send them our regards. The days we spent together aboard HQ-225, patrolling the Gulf of Thailand with Captain Quân An, remain some of the most cherished memories. Finally, we wish Thiện great success in his practice—may he continue to heal and help others for many years to come!



Sài-Gòn, 1973

TRẦN QUANG THIỆU

Military ID: 63A 700-117
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



San Jose, 1999

Date of Birth:

March 20, 1943 (official records state August 25, 1943)

Place of Birth:

Bắc Ninh, Northern Vietnam

Residence:

Emigrated to the South in 1954, grew up in Đà Lạt

Current Address:

Carlsbad, Southern California, U.S.A

Family:

Spouse: Phạm Tuyết-Khanh, Software Engineer, retired from Hewlett-Packard

Daughter: Uyên-Thanh, graduated in finance from UCR, currently working in San Diego

Son: Gia-Tiết, graduated in Computer Science from UCR, currently working in Irvine

Activities before joining the Navy (First Aquarius Class):

Attended Trần Lục High School, Saigon, and Trần Hưng Đạo High School, Đà Lạt

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Deck Officer, HQ-09, 1963

Communications & Navigation Officer, HQ-11, 1964

Executive Officer, B-11, Special Operation Naval Force, 1965

Executive Officer, HQ-225, 1965

Commanding Officer, HQ-600, 1967

Commanding Officer, HQ-472, 1968

Personnel Department, Section Leader, Navy Headquarters, 1969

Liaison Officer, Military Affairs Head, OCS, New Port, RI, 1969

Military Training Department Chief, Navy Headquarters, 1971

Studied at Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, USA, 1973



San Jose, Christmas 1999

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Graduated with B.S. (Math.) and M.S. (Management Science), 1975

Programmer/Statistician at B.D.M, Fort Ord, California, 1975

Various IT positions at several high-tech companies in Silicon Valley, including SUN Microsystems, from 1977 to 1988

Founded Theta Information Services, Inc., developed commercial software, and worked as an Independent Consultant until 1999.

Currently working as DBA/Technical Consultant for McClatchy in San Jose, waiting retirement

Future Aspirations:

A peaceful, non-Communist Vietnam, so that I may return to teaching as per my childhood dream

The Childhood Dream

As a child in Đà Lạt, the city of fog in the Central Highlands, my heart became very sensitive. Although I studied mathematics, I also had a deep love for literature and philosophy. I want to follow Pascal's path, becoming a philosopher, teaching mathematics, and writing poetry praising human kindness.



Nha-Trang, ngày mãn khóa, 1963

Joining the Navy was like a love affair for me, a destiny but also a choice I never thought of during my student days at Trần Hưng Đạo High School. Studying with me was Trần Đỗ Cẩm. We were both excellent students, ranked first and second of the class. We saw a bright future, looked like golden Mimosa

flowers on the hills around the city. Unfortunately, during the year-end festival, due to an argument with a school administrator over the seating arrangements in the theater, we were falsely accused of 'assaulting a teacher' and were banned from taking the second part of the national Baccalaureate exams. Our class was the first senior class in a small town. The school administrators often felt inferior to the senior students on academic matters, so they disliked rebellious youth. Small incidents were exaggerated. Cẩm and I were just victims. The following year, Cẩm went to Saigon, while I was sent to College Adran, to study for the French Baccalaureate exam because even that I graduated from high school I still needed to pass the

national-wise Baccalaureate exam to attend any university. My major was English, so I was very weak in French, and I often failed the philosophy essays!

After a few months, I left the sad highland city and moved to Nha Trang, taking the entrance exam to the Naval Cadet School. Coincidentally, I met Cầm again in the military environment. We followed the flow of destiny, looking towards the sea as a new lifeline.

That same year, due to our family's complaint, the ban on us taking the Baccalaureate exams was lifted. But it was too late; we had to wait until the following year to take the national-wise exam, and both Cầm and I passed it with honor. Cầm continued his academic path while he was in the Navy, completing his Bachelor's in Literature at Saigon University. As for me, I had to wait until 1973 to have the opportunity to go to the United States to pursue the dreams of my youth. The days at the Naval Postgraduate School were tough. Without a Bachelor's degree in Vietnam, I had to earn both a BS in Mathematics (even though it was not required because I had credits from other places) and an MS in Management Science within seven quarters!

Aside from my obsession with learning, I often had to take extra classes in mathematics that I had learned in Vietnam to have enough credits to graduate with both degrees. My dream was to get a Ph.D. in Operations Research to return to Vietnam to teach. My dreams of youth, few knew why I joined the Navy. When I was young, I occasionally thought about a maritime career because our mathematics and physics teachers in the senior year at the high school were two naval officers who came to Đà Lạt. I was often mesmerized by their storytelling. The incident in 1961 pushed me towards the



NPS, California 1974. Bên trái là Trần Trọng Ngà (K-12)



sea, possibly as fate. Many years have passed, and I still haven't realized the dreams of my youth, but I no longer resent people or life. Perhaps I should be grateful for fate because, during the war, I was a fortunate person. I also take this opportunity to thank my lifelong friend, who gave me 28 years of happiness, shared the hardships during the early years in the United States, someone with three university degrees who once forgot themselves to work as a hotel maid, McDonald's counter person, restaurant waitress, assembler, technician, before becoming a software engineer.

Now, my heart is very calm. If there is any wish left, I hope that my friends of the Bão Bình class, including myself, can find peace and happiness in the fragile remaining years of life.

Trần Quang Thiệu
November 2000



Sài-Gòn, 1972

TRƯƠNG VĂN THỊNH

Military ID: 57A 701.060
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



New Jersey, 2000

Date of Birth:

May 6, 1937

Place of Birth:

Vinh Tinh City, Nghệ Tĩnh

Ancestral Hometown:

An Dương Village, Phú Vang District, Thừa Thiên Province

Residence Before 1975:

Quảng Trị Town, Quảng Trị Province

Family:

Wife: Hoàng Thị Thu-Cúc

Children:

Trương Như Trí, BSEE (1998)

Trương Thị Diệu-Ái, BSEE (1987), MSCE (1991) (*Master of Science in Computer Engineering*)

Trương Thị Diệu-My, BS in Biochemistry (1997)

Trương Như Bảo-Bình, BSEE (1989)

Trương Thị Diệu-Huyền, BS in Pharmacy

Trương Diễm-Thúy

Trương Quang Thoại

Education Before Joining the Navy:

Attended Quốc Học High School, Huế

Studied at the University of Science, Huế

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

1963: Mechanical Officer: HQ-401

1964: Communications & Operations Officer: HQ-08

1965: Executive Officer: HQ-327

1966: Executive Officer: HQ-10

1967: Commanding Officer: HQ-619

1969: Deputy Commander: Riverine Assault Group 22

1970: Executive Officer: HQ-13

1971: Commanding Officer: HQ-228

1972: Commanding Officer: HQ-401

1973: Commanding Officer: HQ-13

1975: Commanding Officer: HQ-800



Với các con cháu trong một ngày vui.

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Imprisoned in a re-education camp until 1985

Immigrated to the United States in 1990 (*Philadelphia*)

Worked at an entertainment casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey from 1991 until present

Future Aspirations:

Dreams of a simple life, preparing for the day he returns to the earth.

THE ANCHOR WITHOUT A CHAIN

Truong Văn Thịnh

After the Tết Mậu Thân (1968) Offensive, my ship (HQ-619) was assigned to the Special Zone of Rừng Sát. One Saturday morning, the Operations Department of the Special Zone ordered me to be present at Cần Giờ by 3:00 PM to pick up the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and a delegation of congressmen, and to arrive in Saigon by 6:00 PM.

As scheduled, the CNO and the delegation boarded the ship, and we began our journey toward Saigon. After completing the necessary procedures while navigating the Saigon River, I went to greet the CNO and inquired about the purpose of today's mission. I was about to shift the conversation to bring up my personal request when he suddenly asked me:

- "Thịnh, if an anchor has no chain, how do you anchor your ship?"

The unexpected question surprised me. I thought for a moment before replying:

- "Sir, my ship does have an anchor with chain, but instead of a metal chain, we use a large nylon rope, stored in the forward compartment."

He stared toward the bow of the ship, stroking his chin with a slight smile. I suspected that my answer had missed the point—but what exactly was he referring to? I scanned the area for clues. My eyes landed on the rank insignia of the Sergeant steering the ship, it had an anchor without a chain! Ah, so this was what the CNO was talking about! I said:

- "Sir, are you referring to the Sergeant's insignia, which has an anchor without a chain?"
- "Exactly. As the Commanding Officer, you should have noticed that your subordinate is wearing an incorrect insignia." He replied.

His remark struck my pride. Most commanders never paid attention to such minor details on rank insignias! So I responded:

- "Sir, I believe the Sergeant's insignia, with the anchor without a chain, is actually correct."
- "Then are you saying that the anchor on my insignia, which has a chain, is incorrect?"
- "Sir, I've never actually examined your insignia closely, so I wouldn't know whether the anchor has a chain or not. However, I am certain that the Sergeant's insignia was issued by the Supply

Department, so it should be correct. Meanwhile, all officer insignias are purchased from a shop called Thích Phú, which means they could either be correct or incorrect."

At that moment, the Lieutenant Commander, Commander of the Special Zone, who had been standing nearby, gently nudged me as if reminding me to stay calm. But what could I do? The conversation had already unfolded this way, and I needed to find a way out of this situation. Five or ten minutes passed, and I still hadn't found a solution.

I suspected that the CNO wasn't fully informed on the matter, but I wasn't entirely sure either. The only way to confirm was to check the official documentation.



Just then, the maître d'hôtel respectfully brought a plate of crabs for the CNO. I glanced at the attendant's rank insignia and sighed in relief.

- "Sir, your own personal attendant is also wearing an insignia with an anchor without a chain."

A few weeks later, I received an official memorandum clearly defining the proper insignia for each rank. I am sharing this story in memory of the CNO, a man with

immense power yet worthy of respect, for he knew how to discern right from wrong and did not let personal pride cloud his judgment.

Truong Văn Thịnh



NGUYỄN NGỌC-THÔNG

Military ID: 62A 700.320
Final Rank: Navy Lieutenant



Date of Birth:

February 27, 1942

Place of Birth:

Northern Vietnam

Current Address:

Sacrificed for the Nation in 1967 at Coastal Group 16,
Cố Lũy, Quảng Ngãi.

Family Status:

Unmarried at the time of death.

Activities before joining the Navy:

Unknown.

Position/Unit in the Navy:

Fleet Command.
Commander of Coastal Group 16.



Editorial Notes:

Author Phan Lạc Tiếp wrote a detailed article about the life and career of Nguyễn Ngọc Thông, published in “*Vườn Hoa Văn Nghệ*”. The editorial team also included a message titled *Nhắn Thông Về Họp Khóa* (“Calling Thông to the Reunion”). In that peaceful paradise above, perhaps there are moments when you remember your boisterous and adventurous Bảo-Bình classmates are still wandering this earthly realm, don’t you, Thông?



Nha-Trang, 1973

VÕ QUANG THỦ

Military ID: 57A 701.097
Final Rank: Commander



California, 2000

Date of Birth:

1937 (as per documents), but actually 1938

Place of Birth:

Ninh-Hòa, Central Vietnam

Current Address:

Garden Grove, California, U.S.A.

Family Situation:

Married with three daughters, born in 1971, 1973, and 1976



Thủ và bọn bè tại tư gia H.H. Minh, 1991

Positions in the Navy:

Executive Officer, HQ-605 (1963–1965).

Executive Officer, HQ-226 (1965–1967).

Commanding Officer, HQ-616 (1967–1968)

Nha Trang Naval Training Center (1969–1973):

Company Commander, Officer Cadet Class K-19

Principal of the Officer Cadet School and Maritime Instructor

Director of Cultural Affairs

Commander, Đồng Tâm Naval Base (Sept. 1973–Mar. 1974)

Attended Advanced Staff Training (Apr.–Aug. 1974).

Deputy Commander, DER HQ-1 (Sept. 1974–Jan. 1975).

Commander, LSM HQ-400 (Feb.–Apr. 1975)

Activities After April 1975:

Education:

Graduated from CSU, Los Angeles, with a BA in Mathematics and a BS in Computer Science (1980–1984)

Career:

Various labor-intensive jobs (1975–1977)

Computer Technician, Burroughs Group (1978).
Technician & Software Engineer, Northrop Group (1979–1993)
Worked in water filtration and real estate sales (1995–2000)
Since 2000, focused solely on real estate

Editor's Notes:

Soccer was also his thing—not to mention tennis, sprinting, and various other sports.

Writings:

Final Mission of HQ-400 in 1975

Memoirs of Võ Quang Thủ

I. March 15, 1975: HQ-400 was assigned to transport a variety of artillery ammunition from Cam Ranh to Quy Nhon for the 22nd Infantry Division. This was my final opportunity to visit my elderly parents in Nha Trang and Ninh Hòa. Around the evening of March 25, HQ-400 docked at Quy Nhon to unload ammunition the next day. That night, while I played cards with a few officers, a sailor on duty yelled "Viet Cong frogmen!" as he spotted an intruder with a mine approaching the ship. I ordered grenades to be thrown and rounds to be fired around the ship. Eventually, we captured a 15-year-old Viet Cong frogman holding a magnetic mine. He revealed during interrogation that there were three frogmen carrying mines; only one was caught, while the others escaped. We withdrew to open waters under the command of Vice Admiral Hoàng Cơ Minh. Imagine the devastation if a ship loaded with ammunition had exploded!

II. March 27, 1975: At night, HQ-400 was ordered to dock near the Teacher's College in Quy Nhon to evacuate the 22nd Infantry Division. As the ship approached 200 meters from the shore, it was heavily attacked, forcing a retreat. Soldiers swam to open waters and were rescued by PCFs (Patrol Craft Fast). Among the rescued was General Niệm, Commander of the 22nd Infantry Division. HQ-400 transported them to Vũng Tàu. Along the way, the ship endured artillery fire but managed to evade damage. Passing through Nha Trang on March 31, we saw the city engulfed in smoke. Thankfully, my family had safely evacuated to Saigon.



III. April 17, 1975: HQ-400 departed Saigon for the final time to transport ammunition to Thành Tuy Hạ. The mission was unsuccessful, and the fleet retreated south. HQ-400 was reassigned to evacuate refugees from Bình Tuy to Vũng Tàu.

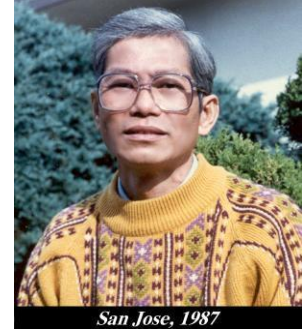
IV. April 29, 1975: At 3:00 PM, while anchored at Vũng Tàu, HQ-400 was shelled by the Viet Cong. The ship urgently departed amidst continuous bombardment, carrying over 600 soldiers and civilians to safety. At 7:00 PM, HQ-400 lost contact with higher command and sailed towards Subic Bay, Philippines, reaching it on May 3, 1975. HQ-400 was the first ship to arrive, marking the beginning of my life in exile.



Việt-Nam, 1973

PHAN THÀNH THUẬN

Military ID: 57A 701.082
Final Rank: Navy Commander



San Jose, 1987

Date of Birth:

December 17, 1937

Place of Birth:

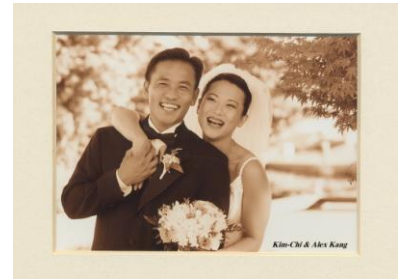
Gò-Công, South Vietnam

Residence:

South Vietnam (1937–1986)
San Jose, California, U.S.A. (1986–1987)

Current Address:

Passed away on September 17, 1987.
Buried at Oak Hill Cemetery, San Jose, California.



Kim-Chi & Alex Kang

Family Background

First Marriage:

Wife: Lê Thị Thu-Hương (Former professor in Vietnam, currently a Social Worker in Washington State)

Children:

Kim-Chi: Dentist, married to Alex Kang, a dental student.

Lan-Chi: Senior Computing Specialist, University of Washington Hospital.

Quỳnh-Chi: B.A. in American Ethnic Studies, currently studying Fashion Design.

Second Marriage:

Wife: Hoàng Thị Vượng

Children:

Son: Phan Hoàng Việt-Thanh, B.S. in Genetics from U.C. Davis, currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Medicine at the University of Houston.

Daughter: Phan Hoàng Xuân Mai, B.S. in Business Administration, currently working for the City of Palo Alto.

Husband: Nguyễn Ngọc Hữu, B.S. in Business Administration, currently employed in Santa Clara.

Daughter: Vivian Nguyễn Ngọc Vy.



*Kim-Chi, Thu-Hương, Lan-Chi & Quỳnh-Chi
ngày Lan-Chi tốt nghiệp*



Military Service & Positions in the Navy:

Special Operations Naval Forces
Executive Officer of HQ-402
Commanding Officer of a LSIL (Landing Ship, Infantry, Large) (Giang Pháo Hạm)
Commander of a Riverine Patrol Group
Chief of Division 3 at Riverine Zone 4 Navy Headquarters
Commander of Coastal Patrol Maritime Group 4

Post-April 1975 Activities:

First attempt to escape by boat (1980–1983) – Imprisoned.
Second attempt to escape by boat (1984–1985) – Imprisoned.
Successfully fled to Indonesia in January 1986.
Resettled in the U.S. in August 1986.
Passed away due to illness in September 1987.

Editorial Note:

Some people speculated that Phan Thành Thuận did not evacuate in 1975 due to family ties with "the other side." However, we can affirm that with his easygoing and at times carefree nature, Thuận could never accept the way of life imposed by the Communists. His multiple escape attempts and subsequent imprisonments were driven by his desire for freedom. We have always thought of him as an Aquarius—free-spirited and untamed.

In 1987, when we laid him to rest, we knew he had finally found peace, free of resentment. We only regret that he couldn't stay with us longer, our dear 'Tôm,' to witness his little 'Shrimps' swim freely through life's currents.

A Few Images of Thuận's Family After Leaving VN





Nha-Trang, 1961

PHẠM VĂN THỤY

Military ID: Unknown
Final Rank: Naval Officer Cadet

Date of Birth:

Unknown

Place of Birth:

Northern Vietnam

Current Address:

Believed to be in the United States, but no confirmed contact has been made.

Family Background:

Married before becoming a Naval Officer Cadet, Aquarius Class.

Pre-Navy Activities (Before Joining the First Aquarius Class):

Unknown.

Service in the Navy:

Served at the Navy Headquarters for a short period before transferring to the Army.
Attended the Thủ Đức Military Academy.

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Unknown.

Editorial Note:

Phạm Văn Thụy was one of two cadets from the Aquarius Class who left the academy early. Afterward, he had little contact with his classmates, making information about him over the past 40 years quite vague. Our memories of him are also limited.

He was the first Cadet Company Commander of the class, having achieved the highest entrance exam score. Unfortunately, the early phase of the curriculum was heavily focused on academic subjects, and despite being among nearly 20 cadets who did not pass, he was unlucky enough not to be given a second chance.

It is said that Thụy transferred to the Army, attended the Thủ Đức Military Academy, served in the Quartermaster Corps, and was promoted to the rank of Major. However, it is unclear whether he evacuated in 1975. Some believe he resettled in San Diego, USA, but all attempts to contact him have been unsuccessful.

If Thụy happens to read these lines, we urge him to reach out. No matter where he is, we still remember him as a member of the Aquarius class and wish him luck and happiness.

PHAN LẠC TIẾP

Letter to Friends



Dear Bảo-Bình Friends,

My first assignment after graduating was on HQ-09, alongside friends Thiệu, Đăng, Cẩm, and Thiện. I stayed there for quite a while—18 months—serving first as the Mess Officer and then gradually taking on the role of Executive Officer. After leaving HQ-09, I worked in the General Administration Office for a few months before transferring to Riverine Group 21 in Mỹ Tho. There, I was with friends Đặng Diệm, Trần Hữu Khánh, and Vũ Hữu San, who were in Group 27, also stationed in Mỹ Tho.

After a year of operations in Mỹ Tho, facing many dangers, I was called back to lead the Mobile Psychological Operations Unit, which took me to almost every Navy unit. Later, I was detached to serve on a marine vessel of the Railway Bureau for two years. Upon returning to the Navy, Commander Hoàng Cơ Minh requested that I work at Navy Headquarters, but Captain Nguyễn Văn Anh asked the Headquarters to assign me to Region 4 Riverine Forces as Chief of Psychological Operations.

After a year there, I went to the U.S. to take command of HQ-504, under the leadership of Lieutenant Commander Phan Phi Phụng. Among my classmates, Đinh Mạnh Hùng (a.k.a. Hùng Mèo) was the Executive Officer. When Hùng was reassigned, I took over as Executive Officer and completed 16 missions transporting ammunition and weapons to Phnom Penh, as well as repatriating Vietnamese refugees fleeing Cambodia. I was preparing to take over an oil tanker when I received an urgent telegram from the Chief of Operations (CNO) Office: "Send Lieutenant Phan Lạc Tiếp to report immediately to the Navy Headquarters. The reason will be explained later."

I reported to the CNO on the fourth day of Tết in 1971 and was assigned as Chief of Psychological Operations at Navy Headquarters. I held this position for two years, which was extremely busy and complicated, so I requested to attend the Intermediate Staff Course. After completing the course, I was reassigned as the commanding officer of HQ-601, a post I held for 18 months—too long—before handing the ship over to Lieutenant Commander Trần Văn Chánh, the eldest son of Rear Admiral Trần Văn Chơn, the Navy Commander, at the end of 1974.

Following a proposal from the General Administration Office, I was supposed to be reassigned as the Commanding Officer of the Naval Base at Năm Căn, in accordance with my promotion to full Commander in the annual list for 1975. However, the CNO kept me in Saigon for convenience, saying, "It's easier to call on you when writing is needed." Because of this, I was transferred to the Inspection Division. Thanks to this, I was not burdened with specific command responsibilities, which allowed me to evacuate my wife and children on HQ-502, under the command of Nguyễn Văn Tấn. This was a broken-down ship with only one functioning engine, under repair, and carrying over 5,000 people.

After arriving overseas, I and my family, along with Nguyễn Văn Tánh's family, Nguyễn Kim Khánh's family, Vũ Hữu San's family, and Lê Văn Qui's family—my fellow classmates—settled in Salt Lake City, Utah. After a year there, my family moved to San Diego to be closer to my wife's relatives, and I began working to support my family. I took on many jobs, sometimes as a blue-collar worker, sometimes as a white-collar worker—there's too much to list. At one point, I worked at the Nassco shipbuilding company in San Diego as a salaried foreman with a good income. One day, while inspecting a piping system, my left hand was caught between an iron pipe and the ship's hull, severing two fingers. I was on leave for over three years for treatment, receiving 70% of my salary while waiting for my fingers to heal.

Coincidentally, during this period, the Committee for Alerting and Aiding Boat People partnered with international organizations such as Médecins du Monde, Cap Anamur, and billionaire Andre Gills to send ships to rescue refugees at sea. This organization, led by Professor Nguyễn Hữu Xương, allowed me to contribute my naval knowledge and media expertise. The news reports I wrote about the plight of the boat people received strong and passionate support from the Vietnamese community. Thanks to these efforts, 3,103 refugees were rescued at sea by ships sponsored in cooperation with this committee. These refugees were welcomed by third-world countries in Europe and honored as Freedom Fighters.

As for my family, my wife opened a reweaving business—a trade that requires precision and skill—which provided steady income for our household. Our four children—one son and three daughters—completed their college education and now have stable careers. The two eldest are married, and the third is preparing for her wedding. We recently welcomed our first grandchild, who is now seven years old.

I have reached retirement age, but I continue to work to avoid boredom and health issues. My workplace is near home, making things easy and convenient.

Beyond these main aspects of my life, I have always recorded and written about my experiences. This has led to the publication of four books, mostly memoirs. *Bo Song La Muc* recounts my days operating in the rivers. *Noi Nho* documents the hardships and tragedies aboard the Thi-Nai, HQ-502, under Captain Tanh, and my time in refugee camps. *Canh Vac Lung Troi* (a novel) captures the experiences of Vietnamese refugees at sea and during our early days in foreign lands. *Que Nha 40 Nam Tro Lai* reflects on my emotions and observations during my 1994 visit to my northern homeland after 40 years.

As I wrote about real people and events, my works also reflect the society we lived in, shaped by war, suffering, and displacement. Perhaps this is why *Bo Song La Muc* is categorized as a war document in the U.S. Library of Congress and was referenced in Vo Phien's *General Overview of 20 Years of Southern Literature*. Professor Nguyen Dinh Hoa introduced *Canh Vac Lung Troi* in an English article published in the fall 1993 issue of the University of Oklahoma journal. Other works were used by Professor Dr. Pham Cao Duong as teaching material at UCLA and UCI for courses on Vietnamese literature and the Vietnam War. Among my books, *Que Nha 40 Nam Tro Lai* received the widest recognition, widely reviewed by scholars and media. In late 2000, coinciding with President Clinton's visit to Vietnam, Voice of America aired six interviews with me about this book.

I was born and raised in a rural village in Son Tay Province, northern Vietnam. As a child, I dreamed of becoming a village school teacher. However, war forced me to leave my hometown for Hanoi, where I worked while studying. With an interest in literature and philosophy, I aspired to become a high school teacher. In Saigon, I studied at the Faculty of Literature while also enrolling in Law School (sitting daily beside Colonel Tran Van Chon, later Rear Admiral Chon). Eventually, I dropped Law to focus solely on Literature. Though I passed the preparatory exams with high marks, the war diverted me into the military.

Now, as time inevitably passes, I have learned to be content with what I have. Despite my reluctance toward military life, I am grateful to the Navy—it saved my family from immense suffering had we remained in Vietnam. Today, we live peacefully in San Diego.

In Christmas 2000, my children quietly performed a meaningful act. Instead of exchanging gifts, they donated their Christmas budget to St. Michael's Parish in Poway, the church that sponsored our family 25 years ago. Their letter stated:

"We have each progressed at our own pace, but this millennial year marks the first time that four of us have become firmly established in our careers. To mark this event, in lieu of exchanging gifts, we have decided to contribute to St. Michael's. This contribution is not repayment for past gifts, for no repayment would be adequate. It is in memory and honor of the spirit that was extended to us during those fragile times."

The letter appeared in the church's News. I think my children have really grown up.

Over 10 years ago, due to a twist of fate, my spouse and I, along with some fellow practitioners, participated in meditation retreats. During one retreat in the mountains, amidst the forest, I listened to a lecture on the interrelationship between humans and all phenomena in the spirit of the Prajnaparamita Sutra, which inspired me to write the following poem:

Morning Meditation Walk in the Forest

*Morning in the forest
Awakened with birds' invitation
Morning in the forest
A heart as clear as mountain breezes
Coolness embraced by a thousand trees
A sky blue as newly sprouted leaves
Gentle steps at the start of the day
On ancient green rocks
Flowers by the stream
Quietly holding joy
Greeting a day without expectations
Dew drops shimmering as they fall
Walking without haste*

Days and months drift like clouds

*The forest and I share an age
A snake in the tree hollow Sleeping,
unawakened Gentle
steps at the start of the day
Sunrise in the high blue sky*

This poem was set to music by a fellow practitioner and sung during meditation sessions. In the same spirit, at the "Rose on the Lapel" ceremony held in Malibu, California, in 1990, I wrote a piece on fatherly love titled "My Father's Robe" upon request. (The piece on motherly love was written by Thich Nhat Hanh.) At this ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Nguyen Ngoc Luan attended. "My Father's Robe" is based on a true story. I was deeply moved while writing it, and upon reading it, my children were equally touched. My daughter, Ngan Ha, and my son, Tuong Huan, translated it into English. Radio stations in San Jose, Santa Ana, and Houston have repeatedly broadcast this piece with accompanying music as a special theme for Vu Lan Day. As such, I am sharing both the Vietnamese and English versions of this work as a tangible and positive contribution from my family alongside other Bao Binh families.

Like many friends who conclude their writings with their aspirations, I too, at an age described by elders as "heavenly days and Buddhist months," have a humble and modest wish: to have good health, avoid illness, and, in leisure, continue writing the unfinished books such as *One Piece of Hanoi Sky*, the sequel to *Returning to the Homeland After 40 Years*, and *Rescuing People on the East Sea*, chronicling the tragic situations of compatriots escaping by sea, as well as the events during the 11 years of activity of the Committee for Alarm and Aid for Boat People, which I and Professor Nguyen Huu Xuong co-founded and directly managed. A collection of poetry, compiling pieces I've written since my youth. And now, as mentioned above, to repay the Navy, to honor the comrades who fought and sacrificed, I continue to gather data in hopes of shedding light on the contributions of HQ/VNCH (Republic of Vietnam Navy) during over 20 years of combat and the meaningful bonds among those who shared the same uniform, as well as with fellow compatriots on the journey toward freedom.

The above summarizes my life and family, sincerely sent to friends. Wishing you and your family joy and fulfillment.

Phan Lac Tiep
San Diego January 10, 2001

Phan Lạc Tiếp Family



My Father's Coat

Written by Phan Lạc Tiếp

(Translated from Vietnamese by Ha & Huan Phan)

My mother passed away when I'd just turned 10. From that point on, I've always been close to my father. Every morning, I carried water for my father to water the vegetable patch in the small yard up front. In the evening, I would lay next to my father and listen to him chant. The rhythm of my father's voice chanting is regular and calming, like sounds from a lullaby, lulling me to sleep. When waken to get into bed, my body had been entirely covered in my father's coat. I remember, the coat was long and very warm. Years later, when the coat could no longer cover me from head to toe, I realized then, that life without a mother is a forsaken one.

During the days before Tet, my father would tell me to tidy up the ancestor altar, change the sand in the incense burner, then follow him to visit the graves. My father would carry a hoe with him, and I -- I would carry along a large bundle of incense. We two would begin the day very early, crossing all the rice fields of the village. My father would always visit the burial site of our eldest ancestor first, before the others. At each tomb, my father would weed, pile the earth up high, wipe the tombstone clean, light incense, and murmur a soft prayer. He would also tell me whose gravesite it was, when the person died, how many children the deceased left behind, who are the descendants, and how they are related to our family. My father never forgot to remind me of the good deeds the deceased has done for the family, his or her descendants, and our village. He often said, "Our family is what it is today, thanks to the good karma of our forefathers."

Because my mother's gravesite had not yet been contracted with a marker like our forefathers', my father would hoe the earth around the gravesite, stack the dirt up high, squaring it off, and place three sticks of incense there. He would tell me, "Ask your mother for her blessing -- so that you'll have good health and excel in your studies... and don't forget to ask her to come home for Tet."

On our way home, my father would often stop at the deserted gravesites and fill the holes left behind by the hooves of water buffaloes, then place a stick of incense there. He'd say that he knew whose grave this was, but now the descendants have left to work far away, drifted elsewhere, and long since have not returned. My father would even stop at the burials on the side of the roads, the final resting place of desolate indigents. He'd ask me to light the remaining incense and place them on the soft earth. By then, the evening light had begun to descend, and the wind was already cold. Looking at the sparks of incense, each flashing a red glow in the twilight, I felt as if those wasted lives, those lost souls were lingering somewhere around me and I was afraid. I was afraid and I grieved for the fragile fates of people.

When I could almost fit into my father's coat - it was the same time when the atrocious war had spread to my village and home - my father was captured by the French. When he came home, my father was already haggard and weak. Only a few days had passed since his release, whilst one night a few men from the mountains came down and seized him, claiming they must take him to the land of

revolution. At the time we parted, I quickly gave my father his coat, my tears overflowed. He turned to me and said, "You're grown now. Be brave." When they finally sent my father home, he was still wearing that same coat, now with many worn and torn spots. He was shaking and could no longer stand. I knew then that my father could not live much longer, and I left school to be with him. Before my father died, he said, "I have no regrets. Let me lay next to your mother, pile the earth up high, so that it becomes one large tomb, easy to identify. Because you children will go very far. It will be a long time before you return." That torn, tattered, ridiculous coat of my father's, now lay rolled-up in a pile. It was 1:00 a.m., the 21st day of the twelve lunar month, only a few days til Tet.

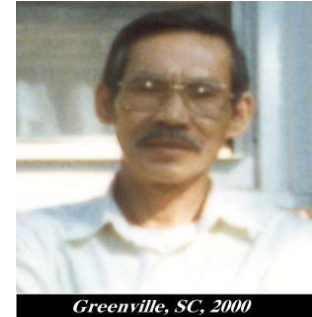
Forty years have since passed. Following the stormy fate of our country, I have since left the North and move to the South. Yet, every year before New Year's Day, I would remember it all. I remember my father's last words as if they are imprinted on my consciousness.

I can almost inhale the warmth of my father's old coat. In life, my parents lived with each other no more than twenty five years. But since the day my father passed away, my parents have lain next to one another in the womb of the earth for forty years. Forty years since those last words, forty years of waiting for their children to return home. In those forty years, what have the wind and rain poured onto that rice field, what miseries have flooded our native homeland. During that expansive time, despite my desires, I've not once been able to visit my parents resting place. Now that I live half the world away, separated by a vast ocean, my desire to return grows stronger. I truly want to return home. Eventually I must. I believe there will be changes within my homeland, then I will return. I will return so that brothers and sisters can reunite, so that kinfolks will bond and cherish each other as they did those years ago. I will walk on the old roads, pad across those ancient fields. I will visit my parents' gravesite. I will light incense, place them atop the grave, and I will say, "Mother and Father, I have returned. Your children have returned." And I know that I cannot keep myself from crying. I will cry as I did during those years of my childhood.



NGUYỄN VĂN TÍNH

Military ID: 60A 700.694
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



Date of Birth:

July 7, 1940

Place of Birth:

Thanh-Phước, Thừa-Thiên, Vietnam

Residence:

Saigon, Vietnam

Current Address: 402 Pine Knoll Dr., Greenville, SC 29609

Family Details:

Wife: Nguyễn Thị Kim-Thoa

Children:

Nguyễn Song Đài-Trang

Son-in-law: Nguyễn Đăng Nghĩa

Grandchildren:

Anthony Nguyễn, Stacy Nguyễn

Nguyễn Song Trang-Nhã

Son-in-law: Hầu Lâm Tuấn

Grandchild:

John Hầu

Nguyễn Thành Đạt

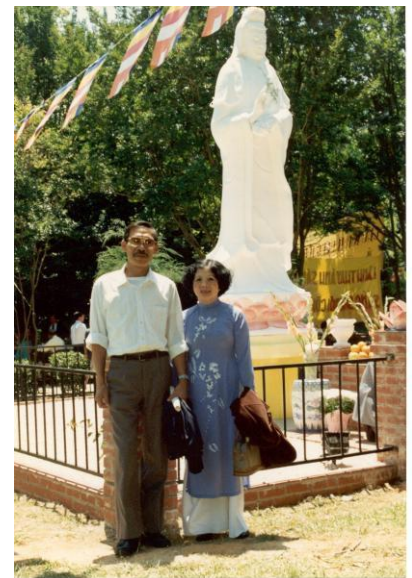
Daughter-in-law: Tôn Nữ Minh Phượng

Nguyễn Song Cẩm Hằng

Activities Before Joining the Naval Academy (1st Aquarius Class):

Secondary Education: Quốc-Học High School, Hue

University: Faculty of Law, Huế University



Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Supply and Transport Officer, Naval Gunnery, HQ-07 (1963-1965)

Commanding Officer of Coastal Group 12 (1966-1968)

Executive Officer of B6, Special Operation Naval Forces (1968-1970)

Commanding Officer of River Patrol Group 60 (1970)

Tactical Operations Commanding Officer of LLĐN 218 (1970-1971)

Commanding Officer of River Patrol Group 63 (1972-1974)
Commanding officer of River Patrol Group 61 (1974)
Executive Officer of HQ-3 (1974-1975)

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Imprisoned for re-education and hard labor by Communists (1975-1985)
Imprisoned for attempting to escape to freedom (1985-1989)
Resettled in the United States (South Carolina) under the HO program (April 1992)
Graduated with an Associate Degree in Electronic Engineering Technology (1996)
Currently working at Spring Lyman Industries until planned retirement age

Future Aspirations:

I hope to go back to Vietnam when the country is free and peaceful, without Communism, and to live out the remainder of life simply and serenely.

Reflections

By Nguyen Van Tinh



I was born and grew up in Thanh Phước, a suburb of Hue City. Thanh Phước is my hometown, where two tributaries of the Huong River and Bo River meet. During summer, the river water is clear and refreshing, bathing my childhood. In flood season, the river rises and turns murky yellow with strong currents from the mountains, bringing rich sediment that nourishes the trees and fields year-round. I imagined life flowing peacefully as I grew up with dreams and hopes. Then, one day, small French boats bearing the tricolor flag sailed upstream, emitting black smoke and the smell of oil that filled the rivers. At that moment, I realized my homeland was still in the grip of war.

By 1960, I graduated from the beloved Quoc-Hoc High School in Hue. The North-South conflict between the Free South and Communist North, following the Geneva Accords of 1954, had intensified. To protect the territory and freedom, South Vietnam had to strengthen its military. As a result, a draft was issued, calling young men to enlist and defend the South. Destiny led me to part



with books, friends, and the university's law classrooms to join the military in the summer of 1961. I arrived at the Nha Trang Naval Academy on August 21, 1961, on a warm afternoon with sunlight fading, and the sound of waves from the sea echoed like whispers from a lover's farewell still resonating in my heart. This was the turning

point of my life. In the academy, I studied theoretical and practical naval subjects, basic military principles, discipline, and regimented routines—different from civilian life.

The "Eight Weeks of Rigorous Training" was a challenging period, with senior trainees responsible for preparing the program to instill discipline, professionalism, and the traditions of Tran Hung Dao's descendants in cadets. Forty years have passed since those academy memories; what remains? At sixty years old, youth seems like yesterday. Sometimes, in fleeting moments, people forget the present to relive the past—a time to remember and cherish. It has been 40 years, filled with countless memories of military school—what remains for us now? Youth has reached sixty, yet it still feels like the days of our youth. Yes, at times, in fleeting moments, people forget the present and live in the distant past—a time to remember and cherish.

Right here, without knowing exactly how it originated, my friends gave me the nickname "Tinh Ngựa" (Horse Tinh). That funny name followed me throughout nearly two years at military school, and even now, as I near the twilight of my life, it remains etched in my memory and in the minds of my friends.

How could I ever forget names like Thiệu Tào Tháo, Cẩm Cá-Heo, Khánh K.K, San Vịt Trời, Hải Chó, Hùng Mèo, Quỳnh Voi, Dân Cọp, Năm Trâu, Cơ Bò, Báu Heo, Lang Cá Trê, Yên Gân Đất Xa Trời, Hưng Thộn, Toàn Fernandel, Nam Đĩ, Bích Cà Chua, Bích Bò Cạp, Liễu Lumumba, Hải J, Quỳnh Cá Sơn, Quý Nông Dân, Tường Campagnard, Bân Thợ Mộc, Trịnh Đình Thộn, and many more?

Isn't this a unique characteristic of the First Bảo Bình class? After graduation, each of us went our separate ways—roaming rivers, crossing seas, facing dangers without

hesitation, for our homeland was still engulfed in fire and smoke. Yet, those nicknames have remained with us forever.

The history of April 30, 1975, is a bitter and profound wound for millions of South Vietnamese left in their homeland, with hatred and bloodshed staining the era's legacy. Millions fled in chaos. Hundreds of thousands escaped by sea seeking freedom, risking peril. Many South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were forced into labor camps for ideological indoctrination.



With a heavy heart, I arrived at the designated gathering point without bidding farewell to my wife or young children. My wife was unconscious in the maternity ward, and our newborn tragically lived only twelve hours.

Years in Communist prison taught me life lessons: "Willpower is the key to survival in adversity." "Endure without cowardice" was my compass in difficult times.

Fourteen years in the Republic of Vietnam Navy and fourteen years in Communist prison are the defining chapters of my life. Only awakening brings inner peace to discern truth from falsehood.

To my Bao Binh friends in Southern California, I'm grateful for the chance to meet again after forty years apart. Let us cherish this reunion and share our joy, even if only once. Together, let us remember our classmates who have passed away and wish them eternal rest.

On this occasion, we cannot help but feel

sorrowful as we remember our classmates who have passed away: Nguyễn Ngọc Long, Nguyễn Ngọc Thông, Hồ Đắc Cung, Hồ Ngọc Bái, Trần Ngọc Bảo, Võ Văn Quạt, Hoàng Dân, Phạm Đức Riễn, Lưu Lương Cơ, Nguyễn Hoài Bích, and Phan Thành Thuận. May they rest in eternal peace.

The class reunion and the completion of the commemorative yearbook for the First Bảo-Bình Class are two significant endeavors that fulfill our heartfelt wishes. How fortunate we are to have had the opportunity to come together and make this possible.

Personally, I am grateful to the United States for giving me the chance to be here and contribute a few heartfelt words to the Bảo-

Bình yearbook. Nearly ten years have passed, and the differences in culture, society, language, and customs continue to pose challenges for HO families in their daily lives. If one does not learn to adapt and integrate, these challenges can become overwhelming in this modern and advanced land.

However, this does not mean we should forget the beautiful cultural traditions of Vietnam, which our ancestors worked so hard to build. On the contrary, we must preserve and cherish them forever in our hearts and minds, just as my longing for my homeland remains ever present, never fading.

Greenville, South Carolina
December 30, 2000



NGUYỄN CAO TOÀN

Military ID : 59A 700.599
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Date of Birth:

1939

Place of Birth:

Northern Vietnam

Current Address:

San Jose, California, USA

Family Situation:

Married. Children have become successful.

Activities Before Joining the Navy:

Unknown.

Rank/Unit in the Navy:

Fleet

Phú Quốc Naval Base

Editorial Notes:

Namo Amitabha Buddha. Nguyễn Cao Toàn is now deeply immersed in studying Buddhism, having let go of all worldly concerns, including his own body and "the filth of the past." There was a time when Toàn was known as "Big Brother Toàn" of Phú Quốc, Coastal Region IV. Those were nights of strategic battles with friends and days filled with "birthday celebrations" for "Big Brother," as he always emerged victorious.

Time has passed, and Toàn's life has seen its ups and downs. He moved from Texas to California, following in the footsteps of his children's success, and became in-laws with Lê Quang Lập, paving the way for Hứa Hồng Minh and Lê Văn Huê to strengthen their bonds with Bình. Now, Toàn's health has declined. His spine has been reinforced with platinum, and he no longer stays up all night worrying about gambling. His mind has found peace. He writes poetry, but his poems carry a Zen-like and mysterious essence, making them difficult to share with the Aquarius community. Toàn, life is all about impermanence. Whether Aquarius exists or not, it makes no difference to him. He has transcended his ego and achieved enlightenment beyond us all. *Namo Amitabha Buddha.*



Sài Gòn, 1972

NGUYỄN CHÍ TOÀN

Military ID Number: 61A 700 434
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



Date of Birth:

January 13, 1941

Place of Birth:

Hai Phong, Northern Vietnam

Current Address:

Washington D.C., USA

Family Status:

Married with three children, all children have graduated from university and started their own families

Education and Early Activities before Joining the Navy:

Attended Van Trinh Primary School (1949) and Ngo Quyen High School (1952) in Hải Phòng



Steve & Phuong



Ngọc, Huy, Robin & Nicolas

Military Service and Assignments:

Attended the 8th Company Commander Course at the Thủ Đức Infantry School, 1964.

Commander of the Navy Assault Force, 1965

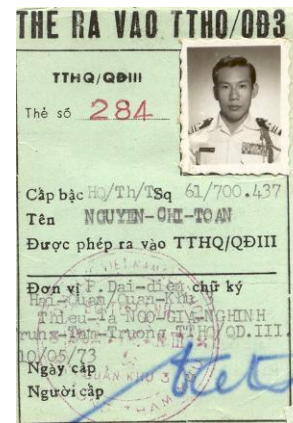
Commander of Coastal Group 14, Cua Dai, Hoi An, 1966

Commander of the Naval Base at Kien An, Rach Gia, 1970.

Deputy Chief of Logistics, Riverine Zone 3 Headquarters, 1972

Attended Intermediate Staff Course, Joint General Staff School,

Saigon, 1973



Executive Officer of HQ-5 (participated in the Battle of the Paracel Islands), 1974

Executive Officer of HQ-4 (under Captain Vu Huu San), 1974

Commanding Officer of HQ-613, 1975

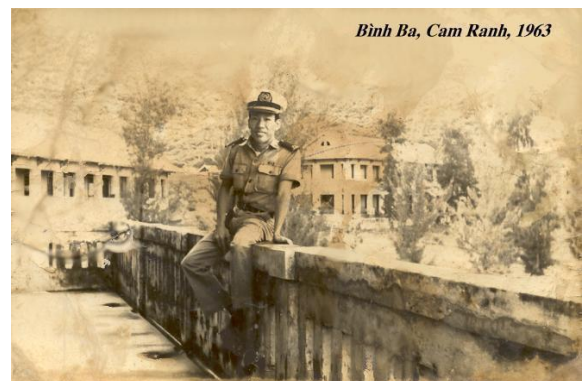
Post-April 1975 Activities:

Tactical evacuation aboard HQ-2 on April 29, 1975

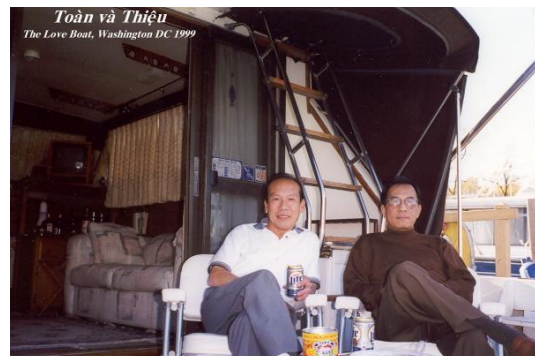
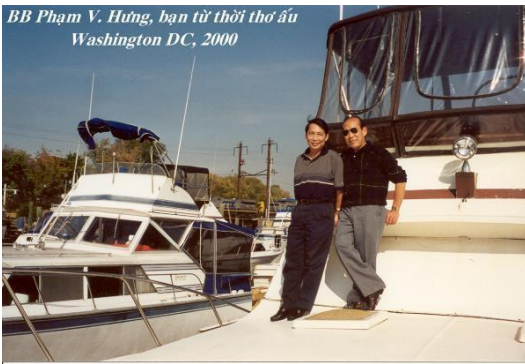
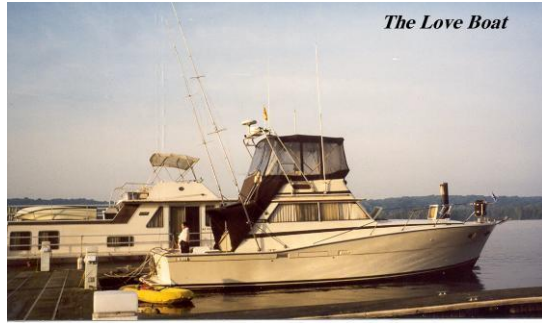
Resettled in the Washington D.C. area from 1975 to the present

Nguyễn Chí Toàn

Photos & Old Memories



Photos and Social Activities with Friends





Nha-Trang, 1962

VŨ BÁ TRẠCH

Military ID: 59A 700.642

Final Rank: Commander



Kansas, 1999

Place of Birth:

Trúc Ninh District, Nam-Định Province, Northern Vietnam.

Current Address:

Holcomb, Kansas.

Family Status:

Married, five children (2 daughters and 3 sons). All children are grown. One son is a Medical Doctor.

Positions in the Navy:

Executive Officer, HQ-603

Security and Intelligence Officer and Political Warfare Officer, Marine Corps Command, Saigon

Commanding Officer of Coastal Group 46 and concurrently Commander of Coastal Group II, Phú Quốc

Executive Officer of River Group 25 and concurrently Executive Officer of Naval Base Cần Thơ

Executive Officer HQ-404

Commanding Officer HQ-616

Commanding Officer HQ-471

Commanding Officer HQ-472

Acting Executive Officer WHEC 2

Commanding Officer of River Group 61

Commanding Officer of Patrol River Group 5

Navy Representative to the 1st Military

Region, Đà Nẵng

Head of Personnel Department, First Coastal Zone



Activities after April 1975

Evacuated to the United States. Studied at university, earned a BS in Mathematics and an MS in Counseling. Currently teaching in Kansas

Preparing for retirement, planning to move to Florida to grow fruit trees

Editorial Team's Note:

Vũ Bá Trạch is likely the only person to have commanded two oil tankers (HQ-471 and HQ-472).

We should call him 'Oil Tanker Commander' to be proper.

The Bảo-Bình brothers also wonder if Trạch, now a teacher, tells funny stories to his students.

Joining the Navy

Vũ Bá Trạch

I still believe that people have to follow a path predetermined by destiny, mapped out on the chart of life. From childhood to adulthood, going to school, I never thought I would join the military. No one in my family had ever been in the military before me. My parents wanted me to become an exemplary teacher to guide the young ones, as I was their eldest child. However, destiny and the circumstances of the country led me down a different path, one that took me to the Naval Academy Training Center in Nha Trang.

After passing the Second-Class Baccalaureate Exam, I lost interest in mathematics. I didn't want to spend hours in front of a sheet of paper or stand before a blackboard all day trying to solve difficult math problems. I wanted to become a literature professor because, in my opinion at the time, teaching literature was fascinating. During my free time, I could stroll, jotting down poems and literary pieces, reading them while walking. I would no longer have headaches caused by challenging math problems if I became a literature professor. With that decision, I applied to the Pedagogical University, Vietnamese-Han literature department. I chose this department because I had studied four years of Han literature when I was young. Partly because it had been too long and partly because the Han script translation was too difficult, I was not accepted, while my classmates who applied to departments like Physics-Chemistry-Biology, Mathematics all passed.

Not being accepted into the Pedagogical University didn't make me sad. I went to the central region to teach because I had always loved the landscape there with vast sand dunes, majestic mountains, and the shadow of my beloved under the endless rows of coconut trees. While teaching, I continued to enroll in the Faculty of Literature in Hue, and at the same time, my younger brother registered me at the Law School in Saigon.

In the summer of 1961, I moved to Nam-Giao Student Hostel to prepare for my second attempt at the Pedagogical University entrance exam. There, I met many old friends from Chu Van An High School in Saigon, including Pham Van Ham. Ham was studying PCB at Hue University because his parents wanted him to become a doctor, but Ham didn't like being a doctor, so he didn't put much effort into his studies. While staying at the hostel, Ham often invited me to play cards or chess.

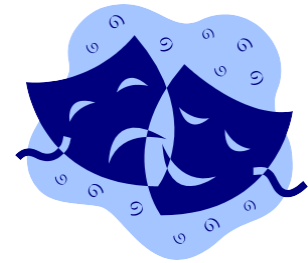
Two important events pushed me away from student life and onto the military path. The first event was the new conscription order. According to this order and given my age, I would be drafted soon. The second event was a recruitment team from the Naval Academy, consisting of an officer and a warrant officer, coming to recruit students at Hue University. They wore white

uniforms, spoke charmingly, and most importantly, described the fascinating life of a naval officer, an image idealized by all young men and Vietnamese beauties.

Ham and I encouraged each other to apply to the Naval Academy. In 1961, it was the first year that students with a Second-Class Baccalaureate Exam still had to take an entrance exam. However, the officer reassured us that if we had a Second-Class Baccalaureate Exam in Mathematics, we would definitely be accepted. With that assurance, Ham and I took the exam at Pellerin School in Hue. There were very few students taking the exam in Hue, so we were divided into two rooms; I was in one room, and Ham was in another. I remember sitting next to Mai Quang Nam. In any exam, Ham would barely answer his own paper, then he would turn in my answers and say, "Do you want to be valedictorian?" Then we would go out to eat Banh Khoai or Banh Xeo near the train station. After the exam, I returned to Saigon because I had something important to do and didn't care about the exam results.

The results came, and both Ham and I were on the reserve list. As the officer had said (Lieutenant Chi), we were called up. My draft notice was sent to the hostel Nam-Giao, a friend sent me to Saigon. To this day, I still don't remember what motivated me to decisively join the Navy.

I went to Da Nang, first to Ham's parents' house. Ham was still in Hue. I didn't mention anything about Ham and me taking the Navy exam. I reported to the Navy recruitment office at Bach Dang Pier, and that night, I was transferred to the Tien Sa Naval Base, which was under the command of Captain Nguyen Thanh Chau at that time. I had to sleep at the base, specifically in Captain Chau's office. I carelessly left my leather briefcase on Captain Chau's desk. Unfortunately, early the next morning, Captain Chau arrived at his office very early. When he saw my briefcase on his desk, Captain Chau got angry and shouted, asking who left the briefcase there. From a corner of the room, I stepped forward and replied, "That's my briefcase, I'll take it away slowly, why are you so upset?" Captain Chau looked at me with fiery eyes but remained silent, perhaps realizing that I didn't know anything about military life yet.



After completing all the procedures, I was sent to Nha Trang by second-class train. First Class Petty Officer Nhat, who worked at the Navy recruitment office at Bach Dang Pier, saw me off at the train station. He was a very kind and friendly person, though I regret that I forgot his name. On the train, I dreamed a lot and imagined a wonderful image of a NAVY OFFICER.

I arrived in Nha Trang at midnight on Saturday, unsure of where I would sleep. Carrying my suitcase out of the station, I walked past a Jeep belonging to the Navy. I heard someone say, "If he's wearing civilian clothes, how do we know who to pick up?" I stepped closer and asked who they were picking up, and found out they were there for me. I introduced myself as the student they were waiting for. They quickly loaded my luggage into the Jeep and took me to the Naval Academy in Nha Trang. I was led to a room at the top of the student building, where there was a bed with enough blankets. It was late, so I lay down and slept without questioning anything about life. Around seven the next morning, I heard the sound of a ball being kicked outside. I woke up, looked out the door, and saw the sign on my room: "Introductory Room." The person

playing ball outside was none other than Nguyen Ngoc Quyen, a classmate of mine from Chu Van An High School. Seeing Quyen made me happy, and I asked if I could go out and play and come back on Monday. Quyen laughed heartily and said that once you're in here, going out to play is a long shot. At that moment, I regretted being so quick to ask the Navy people waiting for me at the Nha Trang station. (One of the two people picking me up was Petty Officer Dinh).

About a week later, while gathering to go for lunch, I saw someone swaggering with their belongings. Even from a distance, I knew it was Pham Van Ham. Ham had given up his parents' dream of becoming a doctor to become a Navy officer. I, Quyen, Ham, and Le Quang Lap formed a close-knit group, eating together and sharing both sweet and bitter moments over nearly two years. We shared joys and sorrows with all the other classmates, who mostly came from the same school, experiencing the ups and downs of a Navy officer's life. We came from different schools. We were students, so we still carried the characteristics and behaviors of students: straightforward, honest, without deceit, and we kept that way throughout our lives.

Vũ Bá Trạch



TRẦN VĂN TRUNG

Military ID: 61A 700.594
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander



Florida, 2000

Date of Birth:

July 5, 1941

Place of Birth:

Ba-Xuyên, Bạc-Liêu, Southern Vietnam

Residence before 1975:

Saigon

Current Address:

Tequesta, FL 33469, USA

Family:

Wife and six children

Activities Before Joining the Navy (First Aquarius Class):

Student at Pétrus Trương Vĩnh Ký High School

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

- 1963: Officer, Third Division, HQ-470
- 1964: Officer, Fourth Division, HQ-502
- 1965: Aerial Surveillance Officer, Naval Headquarter
- 1968: Executive Officer, HQ-400
- 1969: Commanding Officer, HQ-600
- 1973-1974: Commander, River Minesweeping Squadron 93
- 1974-1975: Commander, First Reconnaissance Task Force



Post-April 1975 Activities:

- 1975-1985: Shipyard Mechanic
- 1985-1996: Mechanical Technician, Philips Component
- 1996-Present: Self-Employed

Future Aspirations:

Hopes to return to his beloved Vietnam once it is free from Communist rule.

Letter to Friends:

Dear First Bảo-Bình Classmates,

I feel incredibly excited thinking about the moment when I will hold the *First Aquaris 2001 Yearbook* in my hands—a project we are all working on together.

It will allow us to see each other's faces again and catch up on each other's lives after so many years of separation due to the national tragedy of April 30, 1975. On this occasion of "reunion" through our yearbook, I warmly greet all of you and extend my best wishes



to you and your families.

It feels like just yesterday that we left behind our student lives to train together under the roof of the Naval Academy in Nha Trang, chasing our shared dream of a life at sea. Now, forty years have passed. That span of time has turned our once-youthful black hair into the silver of ocean waves, yet it has never erased the memories of those days we spent at our military school. These memories remain deeply imprinted in our hearts. That is why the bonds of friendship between us classmates will never fade; they will always be as strong as the ties of brotherhood.

I have heard about the many reunions you have organized over the years, but unfortunately, circumstances have never allowed me to attend. I did, however, receive a video tape of the *First Bảo-Bình Reunion* in 1991. I treasure this tape as a priceless keepsake. I sincerely thank you all for remembering me and for forgiving my "unauthorized absences" from these roll calls.

I dream of the day when our homeland is free from Communist rule so we can gather once again at our old military academy. After that, we will "go ashore" and stroll through the streets of Nha Trang, then return to Cầu Đá in the evening for a bowl of *Chutt's* famous pho, reliving our cadet days. I solemnly promise that I will not be absent on that day.

With warmest regards to all of you,



Trần Văn Trung

P.S. 40 years have passed, let's see where I stand in the 2 commemorative photos



Nha-Trang, 1962

NGUYỄN TƯỜNG

Military ID: 56A 700.778
Final Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Year of Birth:

1936

Place of Birth:

Central Vietnam

Current Address:

France

Family Status:

Married

Activities Before Joining the Navy:

Unknown

Positions/Units in the Navy:

Navy Fleet

Editorial Notes:

Tường was the most humble person in Class XI. He could sit for hours strumming his guitar—for himself! While repairing ships in Guam, he was the only one curious enough to wonder if there was "someone inside" the Coca-Cola vending machine giving him his change. However, he was a highly regarded officer, loved most by Captain Bùi Hữu Thư during his time serving on the LSM ship for his honesty and diligence.

After 1975, there was a time when some of his fellow servicemen saw Nguyễn Tường selling lottery tickets and Western medicine on the streets of Saigon. Life changed—Tường became a street vendor, Năm pedaled a rickshaw, while in the U.S., Cẩm mowed lawns, drove trucks, and BB, once a proud naval officer, ended up painting ship engines, getting scolded by his boss, and hiding in the restroom to cry—remembering the days when he wore a white uniform, walked up the gangway, and heard the salute whistle. We all have moments in life "to remember and to cherish." It is said that he now resides in France. We have no further updates on him, only hoping that he has preserved his humble soul as always





BÙI QUANG VINH

Military ID: 58A 700.496
Final Rank: Navy Lieutenant



Date of Birth:

December 9, 1938

Place of Birth:

Điện Hòa, Điện Bàn, Quảng Nam

Hometown:

Vĩnh Trinh, Duy Xuyên, Quảng Nam

Residence Before 1975:

Saigon

Current Address:

Chu Văn An Residential Area, Ward 26, Bình Thạnh District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Family Background:

Wife: Trần Thị Hồng-Hạnh (born 1942), retired teacher

Son:

Bùi Quang Thành (born 1969), Telecommunications Engineer, currently working for Vinaphone

Bùi Quang Đạt (born 1973), Aquatic Product Processing Engineer, Bachelor of English Studies

Daughter:

Bùi Thị Như-Ý (born 1971), Bachelor of Mathematics, currently residing in Oklahoma, USA



Education and Early Activities Before Joining the Navy (First Aquarius Class):

Student at Khải Định School (later renamed Quốc Học), Huế (1952-1956)

Student at Chu Văn An School, Saigon (1956-1958)

Student at the University of Science, Saigon (1958-1961)

Positions in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Executive Officer of HQ-606 (1963-1965)

Executive Officer of HQ-327 (1965-1966)

Deputy Commander of the River Transport Fleet (River Squadron 81 Escort) (1966-1967)

Commanding Officer of HQ-614 (1967-1968)

Discharged due to war injuries on January 19, 1970

Activities Outside the Navy:

Taught Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry at various schools:

Đạt Đức, Tân Phương (Gia Định)

Nguyễn Công Trứ, Văn Hiến, Hồng Lạc (Saigon)

Chu Mạnh Trinh (Phú Nhuận)

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Attended re-education camp at Don Bosco School (Gò Vấp)

Taught Mathematics at Nguyễn Công Trứ, Đoàn Thị Điểm, Trần Quý Cáp, and Lê Quý Đôn schools



Editorial Note:

Vinh did not write about his future aspirations, but we believe that in his heart, he always thinks of his friends and hopes for peaceful years ahead for all Aquarius members worldwide. He chose to remain in Vietnam voluntarily (while his daughter Như-Ý has settled in the United States).

As a teacher, perhaps he felt that his homeland, regardless of its political regime, would always need people like him. We also extend our congratulations to him on the success of his children. Wherever they are and whatever they do, the younger generation has achieved and continues to achieve far more than their predecessors. The Vietnamese people must rise to keep pace with the development of other nations worldwide. We believe that his family, like many other Aquarius families, has contributed to this sacred mission.

Some Old Memories Vinh Shares with Bảo Bình Friends:



Với các B.B. Liệu, Huệ, Hải, Tinh, Bầu, H.Khánh và N.Bích



California, 2000

NGÔ XUÂN Ý

Military ID: 55A 700.847

Final Rank: Commander

Date of Birth:

May 1, 1935

Place of Birth:

Hanoi, Northern Vietnam

Residence Before 1975:

Migrated to South Vietnam in 1954

Current Address:

Hawthorn, South Bay, California,
U.S.A.

Family Background:

Wife: Lê Thị Quý

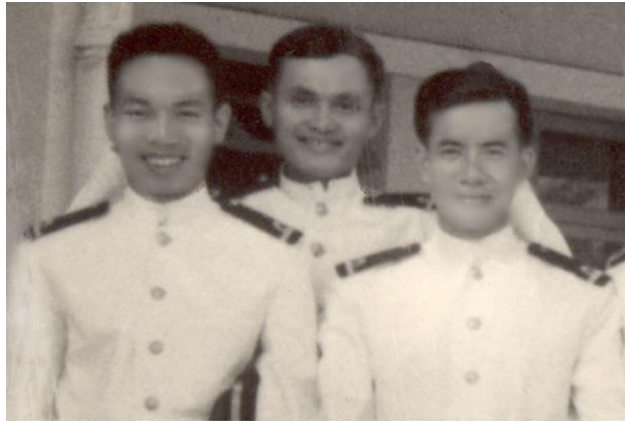
Children:

Ngô Thị Thanh-Trúc

Ngô Thị Thùy-Trang

Ngô Xuân Thúc and his wife

All children have graduated and currently reside in California



*Ngô Xuân Ý, Nguyễn Xuân Lang & Trần Ngọc Bảo
Nha-Trang, 1962*

Education and Early Activities Before Joining the Navy (First Aquarius Class):

Attended Nguyễn Trãi High School, Hanoi, and Chu Văn An High School, Saigon

Military Service in the Republic of Vietnam Navy:

Executive Officer, HQ-600 (1963)

Executive Officer, HQ-471 (1965)

Operations Duty Officer, Navy Headquarters, Saigon (1966)

Studied "Amphibious Operations" in San Diego, CA (1967)

Resumed duties at the Naval Operations Center, Saigon (1968)

Served at the Nha Trang Naval Training Center (1970-1975) in various roles:

- Principal of the Naval Technical School
- Principal of the Naval Officer Cadet School
- Head of the Military Affairs Division and instructor for the "Amphibious Operations" course
- Completed "Military Training Management" coursework in San Diego, CA (1973)

- Continued serving as Head of the Military Affairs Division until the Communist takeover of South Vietnam

Post-April 1975 Activities:

Imprisoned for nearly six years in various re-education camps, moving through:

Long Khánh and Suối Máu in South Vietnam

Transferred to the North via Sông Hương vessel: Yên Bái, Hà Tuyên, Hà Sơn Bình

"Graduated" from re-education camp in 1981

Attempted escape by boat in March 1981 but failed

Successfully escaped on the second attempt in May 1981, rescued by the German ship *Cap Anamur* in international waters

Stayed in the Philippines for 17 months before resettling in the U.S. in September 1982

Studied electronics and worked in related fields until early 1990

Transitioned to a civil service career in the welfare sector, currently working for DPSS (Department of Public Social Services) in Long Beach, CA

Future Aspirations:

To live in a Vietnam free from Communism





CHU BÁ YẾN

Military ID: 56A 700.761
Final Rank: Commander



Spouse:

NGHIÊM HỒNG NHẬT

Children:

Phuong-Trang, Minh-Tâm, Bảo-Lộc, Bảo-Kỳ, Bảo-Anh
Married child: Phuong-Trang & Duane Kolensky

Grandchild:

Higuera-Chu Minh-Huy (Mother: Minh-Tâm, Father: Victor Higuera)



Chau Ngoai Minh-Huy

A - MILITARY SERVICE

- 1955: Joined the Air Force and trained in Aircraft Engine Maintenance at Sheppard Air Force Base and James Connally AFB, Texas.
- 1956: Returned to Vietnam and participated in the transfer of Observation Squadron 1 in Đà Nẵng and Fighter Squadron 1 in Biên Hòa from the French Air Force to the Republic of Vietnam Air Force.
- 1961: Transferred to the Navy, attending the 11th Officer Training Class at the Nha Trang Naval Academy.
- April 16, 1963: Graduated as an Ensign and assigned to the Landing Ship Tank (LST) Đà Nẵng HQ 501 as the first post.
- 1965: Transferred to the Military Security Office, later renamed the Military Security Directorate.
- June 16, 1965: Promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade.
- June 19, 1968: Promoted to Lieutenant.
- Early 1969: Received three Gallantry Crosses, and promoted on the battlefield to Lieutenant Commander.
- May 5, 1970: Awarded the National Order Fifth Class, signed by President Nguyễn Văn Thiệu (Decree No. 427/TT/SL).
- August 4, 1970: Awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", signed by U.S. Navy Secretary John H. Chafee.
- 1971: Assigned to the Vietnamese Military Mission in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- January 7, 1972: Studied in the U.S., returning on May 16, 1972, and assigned to Naval Headquarters Special Zone Command as Deputy Chief of Operations and Logistics.
- December 16, 1972: Transferred to Naval Headquarters, leading the Intelligence Collection Unit.

- Mid-1973: Reorganized the Intelligence Collection Unit into "Unit 701", operating throughout South Vietnam.
- 1974: Promoted to Commander.



Gia đình Chu Bá Yến & gia đình Trần Quang Thiệu, Golden Gate - 1986.

B - EXILE

- April 30, 1975, 1:00 AM: Left Vietnam, arriving at a special refugee camp in Guam, then transferred to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.
- July 1975: Resettled in Florida, U.S.A.
- September 1975: Received a government scholarship to study at Miami-Dade Community College.
- December 1975: Hired by Eastern Airlines as a worker, working 48 hours per week, night shifts, while attending school full-time.

Education Achievements:

- June 1977: Earned three Associate Degrees (AS) in:
 - Computer Science
 - Business Data Processing & Computer Programming
 - Accounting
- March 22, 1980: Earned a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Computer Science at Florida International University.



Began a Master's program in Computer Science but decided to stop studies to help Vietnamese refugees and advocate for human rights.

Career Progression:

- After obtaining a BS in Computer Science, transferred to Eastern Airlines' Miami Computer Center, working on aviation software (Navigation, Flight Operation, Weight & Balance).
- Later joined System One when Eastern Airlines merged with Texas Air.
- 1991: Became an employee of Electronic Data Systems (EDS) after it acquired System One.
- 1994: Managed Datalink Systems for Continental Airlines, implementing ACARS for modern aircraft like Boeing 757, 767, 777.



Notable Software Contributions:

1. 1982: Developed a shortest flight path algorithm using Great Circle Navigation principles, now used by airlines in the U.S. and Europe.
2. 1983: Created a flight corridor safety system after the Soviet Union shot down Korean Air Flight KE007.
3. 1995: Designed a Cyclic Redundancy Check (CRC) system for Datalink communications between ground-based computer and aircraft Flight Management Computers (FMC).

Community Activities:

- 1976: Co-Founded the Vietnamese Mutual Association of South Florida.
- 1980: Joined its Board of Directors.
- 1981: Co-Founded the South Florida Buddhist Association.
- 1987: Founded the Vietnamese Veterans Association of South Florida, elected President.
- 1988: Founded the Vietnamese Veterans Federation of Florida, elected President.
- 1990: Founded the Vietnamese Community of Florida, elected President in 1992.
- 1992: Co-Founded the Vietnamese Community of the U.S.A.
- June 19, 1993: Led the National Vietnamese Community Congress in Orlando, Florida, to approve a Charter & By Law and elect the first Vietnamese Community of the U.S.A.
- 1994: Founded the Vietnamese Community of South Florida,
- 1995: Founded the Lạc Hồng Academic Achievement Award for outstanding Vietnamese high school graduates in Florida.
- 1997: Co-Founded the Vietnam Human Rights Network, serving as a Board of Director.
- 1998: Founded the Lạc Hồng Foundation, managing the Scholarship Awards.

Acknowledgments:

"I sincerely thank my parent, Chu Bá Loan - Đỗ Thị Thìn, my family, and my fellow veterans for their support on my journey to serve my community and homeland."



My Parent and Our Grandsons: Minh-Huy & Minh-Văn



Minh-Huy, Eagle Scout



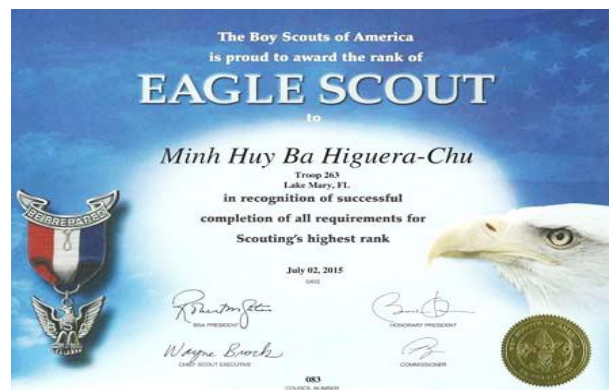
Minh-Huy at a Senior Housing



Minh-Văn Graduation



I love this flag



Once an Eagle, always an Eagle



I'm an honor student