



VFP CHAPTER 160 VIETNAM TOUR 2017

ITINERARY

MARCH 5 - MARCH 21, 2017

DAY 1 / SUN 05 MAR / SFO - TAIPEI - HANOI



Upon arrival in Ha Noi at Noi Bai International Airport, you'll get a warm welcome from VFP Chapter 160 members. U.S. dollars can be exchanged for Viet Nam Dong, or cash can be withdrawn at airport ATMs using most credit and debit cards. Exchange rate is approximately 22,000 VND to \$1.00 USD.

Arrive Noi Bai Airport in Ha Noi at 10:35 a.m. (flight CI 791 from Taipei), welcome from VFP Chapter 160 members and Vietnamese colleagues. Airport coach ride to Ha Noi, 35 minutes, check in at Artisan Boutique Hotel. Drop bags and quickly refresh in room, then enjoy Vietnamese lunch with host VFP Chapter 160 members. Group introductions and briefing. Free time on your own for sightseeing, neighborhood walks around hotel and Hoan Kiem Lake, Old Quarter. Tour guide will lead tour for those who prefer. Informal early dinner near the hotel, and optional evening stroll. (Week-end evenings in Hoan Kiem Lake area are for pedestrians only.) *Good night's rest.*

DAY 2 / MON 06 MAR / HANOI



Viet Nam's kids are wonderful ambassadors.

8:00 a.m. breakfast at hotel, then visit Van Canh Friendship Village for Agent Orange treatment and rehabilitation, lunch with children and Viet Nameese veterans. Meet with Vietnam Association of Victims of Agent Orange (VAVA). Visit Army Museum, Hoa Lo Prison ("Hanoi Hilton"), Women's Museum. Traditional Vietnamese dinner in elegant French colonial villa at Wild Lotus Restaurant, 55A Nguyen Du.

DAY 3 / TUE 07 MAR / HANOI



Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum in Hanoi is on the site where President Ho read Viet Nam's Declaration of Independence in 1945. All Viet Nameese hope to visit here at least once in their lifetimes.

8:00 a.m. tour Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, gardens, house on stilts. Welcome meeting with Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO), Veterans Association of Viet Nam (VAVN), VN Agent Orange Victims Association (VAVA). Topics may include US-VN relations, role of veterans in reconciliation, dealing with remaining war legacies such as UXO (Unexploded Ordinance), and AO (Agent Orange). Lunch at Koto Restaurant, visit to historic Temple of Literature. Afternoon tea with American Ambassador Ted Osius at U.S. Embassy residence.



Cyclo ride in the Old Quarter, around St. Joseph's Church, Hoan Kiem Lake, and the Opera House.



Turtle Tower at Hoan Kiem Lake, made famous by the Legend of the Returned Sword.

DAY 4 / WED 08 MAR / HANOI - HUE - QUANG TRI



Hung Long Church ruin is a grim reminder of the 1972 battle of the Quang Tri Citadel.

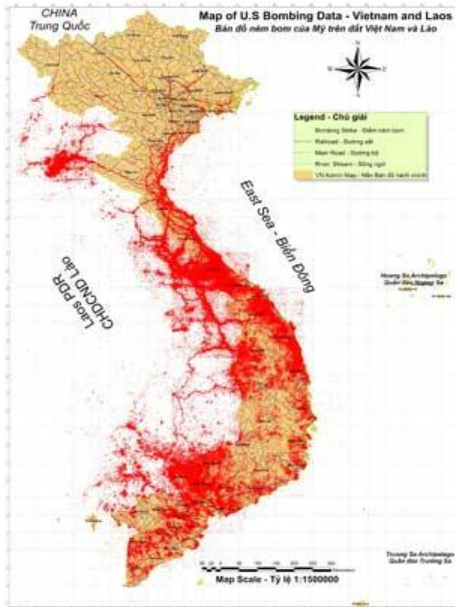
Breakfast at hotel, check out and depart to Noi Bai Airport for flight to Hue. Board coach at Hue airport for 1.5-hour drive to Quang Tri Province. Stop at Long Hung Church, relic of 1972 battle of the Quang Tri Citadel. Tour the former DMZ and historic Vinh Moc Tunnels. Check in at Huu Nghi Hotel in Dong Ha and enjoy Viet Nameese dinner at the hotel restaurant, early to bed for a long day tomorrow.

DAY 5 / THU 09 MAR / DONG HA - QUANG TRI - DMZ



Controlled field demolition of ordnance destroyed by Project RENEW EOD team.

7:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel, 8:30 a.m. visit Quang Tri Mine Action Visitor Center for briefing and video. See Project RENEW Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams in the field and possible UXO detonation at the site. Lunch with officials in Cam Lo District. Visit Agent Orange / UXO victim families. Visit vocational workshop supported by Project RENEW for blind victims of UXO accidents. Dinner with Department of Foreign Affairs officials and Project RENEW staff at the hotel.



Map shows contamination of UXO from wartime bombing, north to south.



Now harmless weapons at Mine Action Visitor Center, where flowers grow peacefully.

DAY 6 / FRI 10 MAR / DONG HA - KHE SANH - A LUOI



Road traces Ho Chi Minh Trail.

7:00 a.m. breakfast, check out and travel west toward Laos. Stop at Truong Son Cemetery. Lunch on the road, then Khe Sanh U.S. Marine base, site of VC-NVA siege in 1968. Travel scenic route along the Ho Chi Minh Highway through beautiful forested mountains near the Lao border. Check in at Do Thanh Hotel in A Luoi, dinner at the hotel.



VFP members pose with Vietnamese veterans visiting Truong Son National Cemetery, a place of serenity where veterans and families pay respects to loved ones lost in battle.



VFP member reflects while strolling through Truong Son National Cemetery, site of 10,000 graves of Vietnamese soldiers nestled among hills and pine trees near the Ben Hai River.



Workshop for blind UXO victims funded partly by VMF 160 tour donations.



Family with four severely disabled children whose home has been repaired by VFP donation.



Young couple whose father is affected by Agent Orange were given a cow by VFP.

DAY 7 / SAT 11 MAR / A LUOI - HUE



Woman of Pa Co indigenous tribe living in western areas of Hue and Quang Tri Province, near the Lao border.

7:30 a.m. breakfast at hotel. Visit ethnic minority families, Van Kieu and Pa Co, who have received support from VFP Chapter 160 and previous tour members. Professor Ba of Hue University and Mr. Khanh Truong of Hearts For Hue will brief the group. Local VAVA representatives will be on site. Check out of hotel, have lunch in A Luoi, then drive to Hue for check-in at the Thanh Noi Hotel inside the walls of the historic Citadel.



Two families in A Luoi who are receiving support from VFP for livelihoods and home improvements through the Hearts for Hue organization. Agent Orange is presumed to be a factor in the disabilities and poverty these families must live with.



Hue is famous for its Citadel.

After checking in at the hotel in Hue, join a guided tour of Hue's historic Citadel, the imperial city for Viet Nam's emperors, then wander the pleasant streets of the Citadel and city, along the Perfume River, on your own. Or relax by the hotel pool. Enjoy an informal dinner at Ushi's Café, 42 Pham Ngu Lao, in the back-packer section of town.

DAY 8 / SUN 12 MAR / HUE



Thien Mu Pagoda was built in 1601. On display is the car driven by monk who burned himself to death in Saigon to protest Diem regime.

7:30 a.m. breakfast at hotel. Visit Chua Duc Son Pagoda and orphanage where Buddhist nuns care for abandoned babies and orphans, some thought to be suffering from Agent Orange. Then Thien Mu Pagoda, Emperor Tu Duc's Tomb, and lunch at Buddhist vegetarian restaurant, Lien Hoa. Optional guided tour of the Citadel, scene of fierce fighting during 1968 Tet Offensive. Much of the site has been rebuilt with support from UNESCO. Afternoon free. Dinner at Les Jardins De La Carambole in lovely villa inside the Citadel.

DAY 9 / MON 13 MAR / HUE - DA NANG



Balmy breezes and white beaches.

Breakfast at Thanh Noi Hotel, check out and meet with local VUFO and VAVA representatives. Lunch at Mandarin Café hosted by photographer Mr. Phan Cu, former ARVN soldier and entertaining story teller. Drive over spectacular Hai Van pass to Da Nang, check in at Chu Hotel a few meters from My Khe Beach.

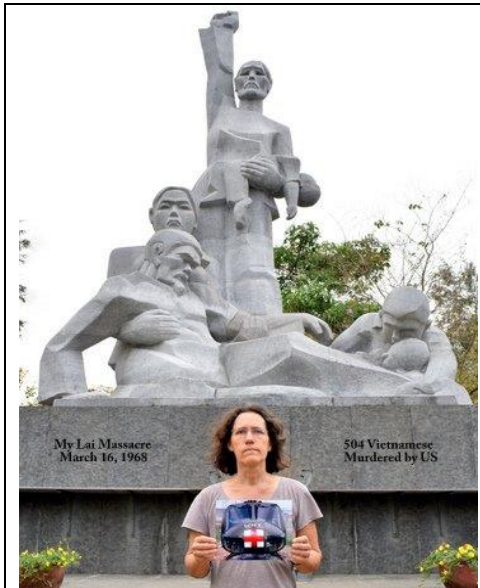
DAY 10 / TUE 14 MAR / HUE - DA NANG



DAVA Center #3 in Da Nang.

8:00 a.m. breakfast at hotel, roundtable discussion with VUFO and VAVN in Da Nang. Open topics, US-VN relations, role of veterans. Lunch. Spend time at Da Nang VAVA Center 3, visit Agent Orange families who live nearby. Dinner at My Khe Beach (known to GIs during the war as China Beach, but the Vietnamese do not acknowledge that name).

DAY 11 / WED 15 MAR / DA NANG - HOI AN - MY LAI



Becky Leuning at My Lai Memorial.



Hoi An: history, charm, and unique shopping with fine dining.

For the first time on a VFP tour, we are offering an optional day trip to the My Lai Memorial site in Quang Ngai Province, about 3 hours' drive each way. You must sign up in advance. Photographer Mike Hastie, along with Sandy Kelson, Becky Leuning, Brian Wilson, and other VFP members are raising funds to help restore the mural at My Lai which has deteriorated in recent years. The VFP website has all details. This trip offers a rare opportunity for those interested to visit this important site.

For others it's beach time, relaxing, or a shopping excursion to Hoi An, a 15th century trading port reflecting Chinese, Japanese, and European influences, with historic pagodas and family cult houses. Hoi An is a popular tourist and shopping destination. Custom tailoring, same day delivery.

Or take a side trip to the nearby My Son Cham ruins, a 4th century religious sanctuary that is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

DAY 12 / THU 16 MAR / DA NANG - HOI AN - MY SON



The My Son Cham ruins, about an hour's drive from Da Nang, are among several UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Viet Nam.

Breakfast at hotel until 9:00 a.m. followed by free time, beach time. Optional day trip to My Son Cham ruins, another UNESCO World Heritage site where baked brick towers bear mute testimony to a Hindu-based civilization and culture that still claims a few adherents, numbering only about 100,000 among Vietnam's 54 indigenous peoples. Also optional: another day in Hoi An, for tourism, shopping and a leisurely lunch by the river, or at the beach. Dinner on your own (with suggestions from tour guide).

DAY 13 / FRI 17 MAR / DA NANG - HCM CITY



The Saigon City Hall is an ornate French colonial landmark in modern Ho Chi Minh City.

7:30 a.m. breakfast at Chu Hotel, check out at 8:30 a.m, airport coach to Da Nang International Airport for 10:00 a.m. flight to HCM City. Check in at Saigon Hotel, downtown, 41-47 Nguyen Du Street (848 3829 9734). Lunch on your own. Afternoon optional guided tour of War Remnants Museum, Reunification Palace, Catholic Church, Post Office, City Hall – or wander the streets of Saigon on your own. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. at a restaurant near the hotel.

DAY 14 / SAT 18 MAR / HCM CITY



Tasty food and unique venues for VFP dining options in Saigon.

8:00 a.m. breakfast at the Saigon Hotel. Optional day trip to Cu Chi Tunnels, Cao Dai Temple, Tay Ninh Province near the Cambodian border. Travel by air conditioned coach. Lunch along the way. For those who stay in Saigon, enjoy sightseeing, shopping, relaxing on your own. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. at nearby riverside restaurant.

DAY 15 / SUN 19 MAR / HCM CITY



Tradition and culture play a role even as the city skyline changes.

Breakfast at the hotel until 9:00 a.m., followed by city tour, shopping, free time. Tour guide will be available for those with special requests. Optional river cruise available around the port of Saigon. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

DAY 16 / MON 20 MAR / HCM CITY



Final meetings in HCM City to recap trip experiences and share lessons learned with Vietnamese hosts such as national Veterans Association of Viet Nam.

7:00 a.m. breakfast at the hotel, followed by 9:00 a.m. meeting with VUFO. Visit Tu Du Hospital, center for disabled orphans, assumed to be Agent Orange victims. Meet Veterans Association of HCM City followed by lunch at Saigon Hotel. Group meeting after lunch to share observations, evaluate trip, and vote on funds distribution. Remainder of the day for sightseeing, shopping, relaxing. Final group dinner hosted by VFP 160 members at 6:30 p.m.

Tu Du Hospital's Hoa Binh Peace Village, established in 1990, has been home to some 400 children, most of them suffering effects of Agent Orange. There are usually about 60 children living in the village, from newborns to about 15 years of age. Many suffer from brain damage, as well as physical disabilities, some extremely severe. Some children were abandoned at birth. Now they have a home, medical treatment, schooling and vocational training. It is estimated that today still 1.5% of babies born at Tu Du Hospital are affected by Agent Orange. VFP tour delegations have always opted to provide some modest support to Tu Du Hospital.



DAY 17 / TUE 21 MAR | HCM CITY - TAIPEI - SFO



Final stroll through Saigon streets – then it's homeward bound!

Breakfast at hotel, free time on your own for last minute sight-seeing and shopping. Late morning checkout, leave luggage with hotel concierge, enjoy light lunch before flight departure. Delegation boards airport coach at 3:45 p.m. to Tan Son Nhat International for 5:45 p.m. flight back to the USofA.

For more information, and to reserve your seat for the tour *now*, contact:

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More information about past VFP tours, to include blog postings, comments and tips from previous participants, and recommended books and articles to make your trip more meaningful, will be provided to you when you book your tour.

MEMBERS OF CHAPTER 160, AND OUR VIET NAMESE FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES, LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO VIET NAM!