

Schedule & Itinerary

VFP Viet Nam Peace Tour 11-27 October 2024



Chapter 160 — Hoa Binh

Sat Oct 12	Arrive Ha Noi by mid-day, 1st briefing, relax, enjoy Old Quarter, stroll Hoan Kiem Lake.
Sun Oct 13	Hanoi National-Center tour, Hanoi Hilton (Hoa Lo) Prison.
Mon Oct 14	Visit Friendship Village for AO/dioxin kids and vets. Afternoon policy roundtable, open dialogue with vets, VUFO, VAVA, expats, and media.
Tue Oct 15	Ha Long Bay, cruise on luxury junk overnight.
Wed Oct 16	Fly Haiphong to Da Nang. Check-in at Riverside Hotel in Old town Hoi An.
Thu Oct 17	Visit Agent Orange/Dioxin Center. Lunch Happy Heart Café. Free time for sights.
Fri Oct 18	Free time and optional tours: Marble Mountain, My Son Ruins, etc.
Sat Oct 19	Drive to Hue across Hai Van Pass, visit Citadel, emperors tombs, Thien Mu Pagoda.
Sun Oct 20	Meet HUFO, visit Chau Duc Son Buddhist orphanage, free time (more Citadel?)



This will be **VFP's Viet Nam Hoa Binh (Peace) Chapter 160's** tenth, fifteen-day custom tour of Viet Nam, the place that resonates with most of us vets as an unforgettable part of our lives. For many, the memories are painful; for others, not terribly unpleasant but the experience is not one we'd want to repeat. Others – spouses, friends, anti-war activists, children of veterans, ordinary citizens – have experienced Viet Nam in their own formative ways as well. Viet Nam is part of us.

Viet Nam is a country now at peace, a place of natural beauty, a land of mountains as rugged and resilient as the people who inhabit them, of white sand beaches and inviting palm trees that sway in gentle sea breezes. The people, too, are gentle, and generous in spirit. They welcome Americans today – and especially veterans – with open arms, and forgiveness. A visit to Viet Nam can be heartening, even inspiring, for American veterans.

Mon Oct 21

Drive to Quang Tri and DMZ. Visit workshop for blind, La Vang Church, Mtg with Quang Tri leaders. Visit UXO and AO/dioxin families.

Tue Oct 22

Briefing at Project RENEW Mine Action Center. Drive to Truong Son National Cemetery, Rockpile and Khe Sanh.

Wed Oct 23

Drive to Hue for flight to HCMC/Sai Gon, Free time for relaxing and shopping, tour guide available.

Thu Oct 24

Mtg with Veterans Association, VAVA. Visit Peace Village/Tu Du Hospital (Agent Orange Community).

Fri Oct 25

Free time, tours of Reunification Palace, War Remnants Museum, Cu Chi, Southern Viet Nam Women's Museum, etc.

Sat Oct 26

Visit Mekong Delta Floating Market. Final dinner cruise hosted by VFP 160.

Sun Oct 27

Morning vote on disbursing tour funds. Afternoon hotel check-out, and transport to Tan Son Nhat airport for flight to USA.

NOTE:

Participants are welcome to arrive early for tour, or stay afterwards. Our tour company can assist with arrangements.



Chau Duc Son Orphanage, Hue

VFP Chapter 160 addresses the legacies of America's war. We help veterans and their families struggling to keep safe from unexploded ordnance (UXO), recovering from UXO injuries, and dealing with the tragedy of Agent Orange/Dioxin.

One purpose of our annual tours is to make a tangible financial contribution to VFP 160's mission. Each tour member will donate *at least \$1,000* to a pool that we will collectively decide how to distribute it at the end of the trip. Participants will decide how to disburse the funds – for bomb clearance, to help Agent Orange victims, to support hospitals, orphanages, schools, and other community needs.

The \$1,000 donation is mandatory. Some participants raise additional funds from their extended families, communities and neighbors, which we encourage. Since Chapter 160 was formed in 2010, some \$325,000 has been donated by tour participants and distributed to projects supported by VFP 160 throughout Viet Nam.

TOUR DATES: IMPORTANT! Most tour participants depart San Francisco (SFO) **Thursday, Oct 10, just after midnight (i.e. very early in the morning of Oct 11).** Folks from the east coast or other routes may choose other routes and flights—as long as everyone gets to Hanoi by midday October 12 (Vietnam time). At the end of the tour, you will leave Sunday Oct 27 from Ho Chi Minh City and arrive back in the US the same day, Sunday Oct 27.



Meeting with friends—former enemy—Hanoi.



Filling Ho Chi Minh's Shoes, Hanoi

Note: VFP organizers and in-country hosts receive no compensation. The Hanoi travel company which handles in-country logistics, Viet Dreamland Travel Co., Ltd., has always given us generous discounts and sometimes separate donations to allow the maximum amount possible to go to VFP 160's beneficiaries.

COSTS:

- **Tour Fee: \$2,950 USD**, which covers all in-country Viet Nam travel (domestic flights, trains, buses, boats, but not tire sandals); single occupancy hotel accommodations; food (drinks not included); and event tickets.
- **Donation: \$1,000** required minimum charitable donation.
- **Airfare: less than \$1,000 (China Air round trip from San Francisco; currently coach fares are \$997 and premium economy \$2,097)**, plus airfare from your home to our departure point at SFO. You can, of course, arrange your own direct flight to Viet Nam as long as you are in Ha Noi when the rest of the group arrives October 12.
- **Visa:** All visas now online. \$25 for a 30-day, one-entry tourist visa. <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/web/guest/trang-chu-ttdt>. Make sure your passport will be valid through at least April 2025.



Trung Son National Cemetery, Quang Tri, in old DMZ



Did we mention the excellent food? Vegetarian/vegan? No problem.



Meeting with the leaders of HCMC Vietnamese Association of Victims of Agent Orange/dioxin (VAVA)

PAYMENT, DEPOSIT, AND DONATIONS: To reserve your booking for this tour, an initial (refundable) deposit of **\$300 is due by Wednesday, May 31st to:**

Paul Cox
890 Camelia
Berkeley, CA 94710
(C) 510-418-3436
paulcox@sonic.net

IMPORTANT: Make checks payable to Veterans for Peace, San Francisco Chapter 69 (or **VFP 69**) with **Viet Nam Tour 2024** on the memo line!

FINAL PAYMENT (Tour Fee \$2,950 + Donation \$1,000 - Deposit \$300 = \$3650): due **Thursday Aug 9.**

FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS: Contact Paul Cox. Because our tour fee has no slack in it, and the credit card company takes their bite, there will be a **3.5% surcharge for credit card payments (or an additional \$138.40. i.e. (\$2,950 + \$1,000)+ \$138.40 = \$4,088.40.**

FINAL REMINDER: Be sure your passport is current, and good for at least 6 months after the tour. Apply for your visa early. Vietnam visa are available by mail, email, or online: <https://vietnamembassy-usa.org/consular/visa-application-process>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Long Hung Church, Dong Ha. One of only two structures in Quang Tri Province by the end of the war. Destroyed, but still standing,



The Citadel, Hue, partially restored after the war

PHOTO GALLERY:



Oct 15: Overnight on a ship on Ha Long Bay, a World Heritage Site!!!



Da Krong Bridge, leading from Khe San to A Luoi, built for Viet Nam by the Cubans after the war, twice.



Khe Sanh



Local market, Dong Ha



Thich Nu Minh Tu, Buddhist monk and founder of Chau Duc Son Orphanage charms and delights tour while raising 200 orphans, Hue.



Agent Orange victim, Thua Thien



Agent Orange victim, Tu Do Hospital, HCMC



Chau Duc Son Orphanage, Hue.



Project Renew demining teams haul away the American War, one bomb at a time.



One of Project RENEW's all-woman demining teams.



Too late for this farmer,



or this boy.



One less munition!



Explaining planned demining operation near Dong Ha



Project RENEW created this incense factory for blind persons in Quang Tri so that they can earn a living. At their request, VFP 160 built them an on-site kitchen.



Ho Van Lai, UXO victim and teacher at RENEW Mine Education Center, with class of minority children



RENEW's prosthetics center, Dong Ha, Supported by VFP 160