

VFP Viet Nam Peace Tour Commemorating 50 Years since the end of the American War

26 Apr-11 May 2025



Chapter 160 — Hoa Binh

This will be **VFP's Viet Nam Hoa Binh (Peace) Chapter 160's** eleventh, fifteen-day tour of Viet Nam, the place that resonates with most of us veterans 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.

This year's tour will center on Viet Nam's commemoration of the end of the American war. We will be in Ho Chi Minh City for this historic day on April 30, and we will be well received as allies in peace making, reconciliation, and solidarity.



Meeting with Vietnamese veterans, Ha Noi, at US/Vietnam Friendship Village, founded by Vietnam Veteran George Mizo.

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.

Schedule & Itinerary

Sat Apr 26
Ho Chi Minh City

Arrive by midday, 1st briefing, relax, stroll Saigon (District 1).

Sun Apr 27
HCMC

Tu Du Hospital and AO/dioxin children. Afternoon policy round-table, open dialogue with vets, VUFO, VAVA, expats, and media.

Mon Apr 28
HCMC

War Remnants Museum, Ben Thanh Market. Cu Chi tunnels.

Tue Apr 29
HCMC

Bien Hoa dioxin hotspot where US-funded cleanup has just begun.

Wed Apr 30
HCMC

Attend celebration making 50th Anniversary of Reunification of Vietnam.

Thu May 1
Da Nang

Flight to Da Nang. Visit DAVA daycare center for AO-affected kids. Free time.

Fri May 2
Da Nang

Free time with opportunities to visit Hoi An, My Son Champa Ruins, Marble Mountain, My Lai, beaches, etc.

Sat May 3
Hue

Train ride to Hue across Hai Van Pass, Hue City tour by bus. Visit Chua Duc Son Pagoda orphanage.

Sun May 4
Hue

Thien Mu Pagoda, Citadel. Free time, dinner in Old Hue.



Thien Mu Pagoda, Hue

Mon May 5
Quang Tri

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 May 6
Quang Tri

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

Wed May 7
Quang Tri

Drive to Dong Hoi, Fly to Ha Noi, Free time in Old Quarter

Thu May 8
Ha Noi

Mtg with Veterans Association, VAVA. Visit Friendship Village. Free time.

Fri May 9
Ha Noi

Tour of National Center, HCM Mausoleum, National Museum. Free time.

Sat May 10
Ha Noi

Hanoi Hilton (Hoa Lo) Prison, Women's Union Museum, Temple of Literature. Free time in Old Quarter.

Sun May 11

Morning meeting to disburse tour funds. Afternoon hotel check-out, and transport to No Bai (Ha Noi) airport for flight to USA.

NOTE:

Participants may want to arrive early for tour or stay afterwards. Our tour company can assist with arrangements.

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 at the end of the trip, such as – for bomb clearance, to help Agent Orange victims, to support hospitals, orphanages, schools, and other community needs.



Chua Duc Son Pagoda Orphanage, Hue

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, Apr 24, just after midnight (i.e. very early in the morning of Apr 25). Folks from the east coast or elsewhere may choose other routes and flights—as long as everyone gets to Ho Chi Minh City by midday Apr 26 (Vietnam time). At the end of the tour, you will leave Sunday May 11 from Ha Noi and arrive back in the US the same day, Sunday May 11.





Filling Ho Chi Minh's sandals, Hanoi

Note: VFP organizers and in-country hosts receive no compensation. The Ha Noi 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: \$3,400 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 \$932 and premium economy \$2,017)**, 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 HCMC when the rest of the group arrives Apr 26.
- **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 October 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, Feb 12, 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 2025** on the memo line! Contact Paul Cox for Zelle transfers.

FINAL PAYMENT due Thursday April 3: (Tour Fee \$3,400 + Donation \$1,000 - Deposit \$300 = \$4,100).

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 **4.95% surcharge for credit card payments (or an additional \$217.80)** i.e. **(\$3,400 + \$1,000) + \$217.80 = \$4,617.95.**

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:

US Tour Coordinators

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and

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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:



May 3: the Citadel, Hue



May 6: Da Krong Bridge, leading from Khe San to A Luoi, built for Viet Nam by the Cubans after the war, twice.



May 6: 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