

# VIETNAM

**FRESH, POSITIVE INSIGHTS  
FOR ALL WHO SUFFERED LOSS  
IN THE VIETNAM WAR.**

**Joe Hartt & Barney Visser**



### Joe Hartt

Joe Hartt spent 3 years serving his country as a Naval Aviator primarily aboard CVA-31, U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard, flying A-Skyhawks with Air Groups 12,19, and 4. Joe logged thousands of hours of flight time and hundreds of day and night carrier landings. This experience, together with extensive night and instrument flight time subsequent to Navy days, has guided his thinking toward development of improved lighting to aid the critical IFR and VFR transition.

Subsequent to his service with the Navy, Joe joined the IBM Corporation, Data Processing contractors to NASA at the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas. From 1967 to 1973, he performed a range of tasks in support of the Apollo and early Skylab programs. These included technical and programming requirements definition, systems integration, computer simulations, and actual mission support. He was Manager, Mission Support, and directly responsible for all computer processing functions within the Real Time Computer Complex (RTCC) of the Missions Operations Control Center during all Apollo missions with the exception of Apollo 17.

Joe was the sole or joint holder of several patents, including the Hypersonic Vertical Take-off and Landing Aircraft, Pneumatic Surgical Hand Scrubber, Stratified Change Chamber and Spark Plug, Skateboard Ice and Snow Runner and the Light-R-Lite. Joe Hartt died in 1997.

### Barney Visser

In 1967, during the height of the Vietnam War, Barney Visser volunteered for the army draft. After his placement testing he was given an option of attending his choice of safe, prestigious, stateside service academies. Instead he volunteered for active duty in Vietnam. He served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade as a paratrooper for 11 months, from July 1968 until June 1969. He served a total of 21 months.

Since Vietnam, Barney, an entrepreneur, founded and built a series of retail stores which today employ over 2,200 full-time team members.

Barney and his wife, Carolyn, are the parents of 7 children.

NOTE: To avoid confusion in a book written by two authors, it has been less confusing to use I, me, mine instead of we, our, ours. We hope you understand me.

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## Early reactions to VIETNAM

VIETNAM will be given to every friend I know who suffered loss in Vietnam. I have already seen it bring resolution to hearts that have been heavy since 1968. Join me in passing it on!

*Bobb Biehl Founder/President Masterplanning Group International*

For years I felt we failed in Vietnam. Now I see Vietnam was not in vain. Lessons we learned can save our children's lives. VIETNAM puts value on all we have lost!

*Karen Kimbel Homemaker Laguna Wools, California*

VIETNAM is a clear positive presentation of the freedoms and benefits every American enjoys today... BECAUSE ... of the Vietnam War!

*Bo Mitchell President/Co-Founder Tonch'em All Foundation Denver Colorado*

In many respects, Vietnam was inevitable. The "old style" always provided conventional victory. Once that string was broken, we all could rethink the selective use of power. Kosova and the Gulf War notwithstanding, prolonged conflicts in distant locations will probably not be visited upon our children. Economic wars now replace ideological ones, and communism will never effectively compete again. Vietnam was worth this learning. Thank you, Barney and Joe, for such helpful insights.

*Robert A. Seiple Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Washington, D.C.*

Our family lived with and served among the beloved Vietnamese people for 28 years. We suffered and sobbed the loss of family and friends during that ugly war that no one wanted. I'll never forget being evacuated that last sad day from the U.S. embassy rooftop. The pages of VIETNAM bring new perspective, solace, sense and significance. VIETNAM is a must-read for anyone seeking answers to the question "Why?"

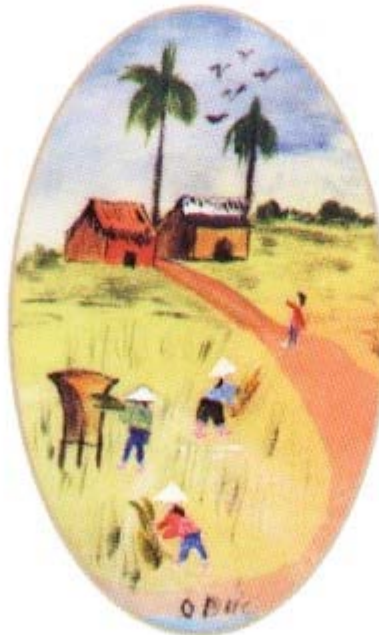
*Dr. Thomas H. Stebbins Missionary /Author Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

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# VIETNAM

FRESH, POSITIVE INSIGHTS FOR ALL WHO  
SUFFERED LOSS IN THE VIETNAM WAR.





### FRESH INSIGHTS INTO THE VIETNAM WAR

Like hundreds of thousands of others within this generation, my life, plans, and hopes were interrupted by an event which most of us have tended to look back upon with puzzlement, frequently with deep resentment, all too often with shame. More than enough of us who participated in it don't care to look back at all, choosing rather to seal off those often painful memories and get on with the business of our lives. The sad fact, however, is that this event, the Vietnam War continues to this day to affect the lives of thousands of those who fought there.

About 58,000 Americans fell in the fighting. But to the final body count must be added the estimated 100,000 - 200,000 suicides which have grimly followed in the years since combat ceased. For my part the personal confusion, distress, and quest for understanding have led me in a different direction. What, I have asked myself, *was* the real objective of our war, the Vietnam War? What were we Americans really trying to do there? And above all, why? The answers to these simple questions have for me become much more remote and difficult to dig out than one might suspect for we now understand that perhaps more than any other war in history, the entire texture of the Vietnam War was characterized by levels of official lying, cover-ups, and intentional deception within the top posts of our military organizations, and even more distressing, at the very highest levels of our government.

Frustrations brought about by difficulties in tracking down the truth about the Vietnam War led to another search, this one in many ways even more fascinating and rewarding than the original.

I began to ask myself: So what about the concept of war itself? Why do we fight wars?

What is the function of war, anyway?

This question directed my thinking far back into human history and led to an entirely unexpected conclusion.



### **HISTORICALLY SOCIETIES HAVE BEEN HELD TOGETHER BY EXTERNAL THREAT**

Human society has always been a matter of life and death, and war has always been society's best means for demonstrating this fact. At its core, human society requires that its participants

exchange freedom for survival, individual rights for the right to be a part of the tribe or family and sit with others around the fire for warming and sharing the venison to stave off starvation. But when called upon to defend the tribe or family, then war it is which most starkly defines the life-and-death foundation upon which human society is structured.



### THE BANANA TREE STORY

Picture the banana tree, which can support one family. All is well. Although that family will join to protect its tree, anybody from the family can pick a banana anytime it happens to ripen. The tree grows and begins to yield more fruit than the one family needs. Bananas are falling to the ground and spoiling.

A second family observes, circles in, and eventually works out an arrangement with the first family that could go something like this:

Family #1 picks bananas on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Family #2 picks on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Nobody picks on Sundays.

And as a bonus, Family #2 will help Family #1 to protect their mutually beneficial banana tree. Both families agree to this arrangement, and the foundations for human society are already subtly visible.

For in making this pact, Families #1 and #2 have agreed to surrender certain freedoms in return for ensuring the availability of food for survival. Consider our own experience at a traffic light. When it's green, we go; when it's red, we stop. We have agreed to restrict our absolute freedom to proceed in order to avoid the prospect of being hit or hitting someone or of getting a traffic ticket.

But back to the banana tree. Say there is not one tree, but an entire grove of them, sufficient to sustain many families, an entire tribe. Now we see an extension of the principle, though more complex. The problem becomes, how does the tribe accurately identify their membership?

Who is entitled to pick and survive, and equally important, who is obligated to defend? Many tribes resolved this matter by marking their bodies in some unique way - curved scars on the forehead, stripes scarred onto the cheeks. We've cleaned up the process a little by moving the stripes onto a piece of cloth which we call a flag, to which we pledge our allegiance.

But the principle of identification is still there, and we tend to view ourselves as members of the American Tribe when marching under that flag. Certainly the flag carries all the non-subtle implications of life and death within our society.

And here we begin to note an interesting phenomenon: the warrior kingdoms of ancient China who were always threatening or being threatened from without were the most successful; Greece at its peak was threatening or successfully dealing with external threat; Rome was never stronger nor better structured than when expanding its borders. Short, then, of a disastrous collapse of external defenses leading to the collapse of the society itself, it seems clear from history that external threat tends to strengthen the society; lack of external threat tends to weaken it.

Why should this be? What is it about external threat that could actually strengthen a society? The answer seems to be that external threat reminds the society of its life-and-death foundation, and thereby achieves

new power to bond that society. Vietnam proved that we can never fight a prolonged war without an external threat to our own survival as a society.



## **ONLY THREE SOCIETIES HAVE SUCCEEDED WITHOUT EXTERNAL THREAT**

So now the question arises: Have there been or are there today any successful societies that have survived for any length of time without external threat? My search has yielded three. Alexander the Great's Empire lasted for about 150 years without major wars, partly because of the brilliant marriage and trading compacts which Alexander and his staff managed to work out and enforce.

But after that relatively brief period had passed, the empire quickly dissolved once more into the smaller, more familiar, and much more manageable units which could then return to the old external threat model which had worked so well in the past and which would survive to this very day.

Next, the Inca Empire, which arose around 1021 A.D. and went on to swallow up most everything around it. By the early to mid 1400s the Inca Empire spread over about one-third of what we know as South America. The vast kingdom had run out of enemies. And until its disastrous civil war between the royal brothers Huascar and Athualpa just prior to the arrival of the Conquistadores in 1533, it was a society substantially without significant external threat. But here we note the appearance of an interesting phenomenon. Within a generation or two of the completion of the Inca conquests, the ritual of human blood sacrifices was elevated to top priority and honor. Time had come to remind the society of its foundations, and if external threat were not present to accomplish this, then the high priests were at hand to step in and perform the reminder rite.

Legend and ancient blood stains appear to agree that in one of the great stadiums, priests stood in blood to their ankles as they opened the chests of young warriors and ripped out their hearts to be held up to the sun and to the Inca. Serious reminder.

Examining the Inca model, then, as a society which lasted on without serious external threat, what can we learn about the defining characteristics of such a society?

1. It was an absolute totalitarian monarchy.
2. The Inca owned everything.
3. The Inca was god.

In every practical sense, the Inca embodied the three tap-roots of society- politics, economics, and religion. For most of us, there isn't much about this model of society that we would find appealing today. The third example of a society which has existed for hundreds of years pretty much without the external threat of war is still going today. Eskimos have a remarkably war-free history. But a cursory examination of their society makes it clear that while they may not be externally threatened by war, they constantly face external threat in the form of nature, a threat real enough and serious enough to remind them of the essential life-and-death nature of their society. Outside of it they face freezing and starvation. None could realistically expect to make it on their own.

So, aside from our Eskimo society, we are left with a history that has relied heavily upon the element of external threat to force the ultimate exchange of personal freedom for survival. And which has most readily demonstrated the life-and-death nature of that personal exchange in the function of war. For the society has always demanded and has always received the absolute commitment of its members to the defense of their "homeland," "flag," "way of life," and interestingly enough, "freedom." This term is particularly significant in that freedom to fly and escape imminent death is not a option.

And of course, each of us who has served our country has taken the oath which, in effect, says it's OK to hang a target over our heart and for the enemy to take his best shot. For its part, society says that if the enemy succeeds in that shot, then the society is pledged to insure that our seed survives-a pension for the widow and children. With this reassurance, we have willingly gone to war.



### **SINCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WE NO LONGER HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF ALL-OUT WAR WITHOUT SELF-DESTRUCTION**

This model seems to have worked remarkably well throughout the ages. Up until 1945 when a completely new element exploded onto the scene of human society.

The advent of nuclear weapons suddenly vaporized the entire concept of war and forever altered the function which it had been expected to perform.

Suddenly, particularly with the quick and inevitable spread of these weapons, the option of external threat became untenable, for threatening and threatened became one and the same. No longer could you expect to burn down your enemy's society without seeing your own go up in flames.

This concept came to be known as MAD, Mutually Assured Destruction, hardly a reassuring term to any society. It now appears that we approached this bleak prospect in 1962, during what history calls the Cuban Missile Crisis. And to the everlasting credit of all who made those profound decisions, human society managed to back away from the precipice. But old habits die hard. How can we really expect in one single generation to renounce and abandon the old models upon which human society has rested for virtually its entire history?

War has always held the stellar place of honor and dignity. Testimonials abound everywhere. Witness our proud wearing of the old uniforms, the ribbons, medals. Witness the lofty statues, memorials, naming of parks and famous battlefields.

These have been and continue to be held as important, even sacred, within our society and those of others.

And if the old symbols still command respect and deference, can it be so surprising that we elected to fall back upon, at least once more, the old order?

It seems almost inevitable that sooner or later, the old order had to be tested, if only to see whether or not there was still any merit to the concept. Thus it can hardly be surprising that our national leadership elected to undertake a war in the old style, one that we have come to know as the Vietnam War. While it is true that the Korean War intervened between World War II and the Vietnam War, there were major and fundamental differences between the two which bear noting. The Korean War was in both participation and support an action of the United Nations which pitted the rest of the world against North Korea, China, and the U.S.S.R. Furthermore, the world in general recognized the North Korean move south as outright aggression which ought not be tolerated.

After considerable bloodshed and expenditure of munitions, the territorial issue was ultimately settled at the original 38th Parallel border.



### **NOT ONE SINGLE COUNTRY HAS FALLEN TO THE COMMUNIST DOCTRINE SINCE VIETNAM**

Vietnam, on the other hand, was a war entered into by the United States Government for purposes which were never that clearly defined. Most of us who were in service at that time were told that we were fighting this war to stop the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia.

There was the Domino Theory-

If North Vietnam were to succeed in taking over South Vietnam, then one by one the rest of the nations of the area would in turn choose a Communist form of government. And while history has proven how hollow this theory was, at the time it had a ring of authenticity about it, one which was vitally important to the one actually doing the fighting in order to give some reason for the sacrifice he was making for his country.

So in a very real sense, it can be said that the Vietnam War was one which was fought over ideas, rather than territories or rights to land per se. It's important to remember that the Vietnamese Regular and the American Soldier were never really fighting the same war.

His was a continuation of the war which the Vietnamese had been waging for years against a string of invaders- Chinese, Japanese, French, and finally, the Americans.

He was fighting for his homeland. And although he failed to win a single decisive battle, for reasons we all know and understand, America chose not to exercise its full power and withdrew.

What about our war, the war of the American Soldier? Ours was a war of ideas and idealism. We were told we were over there to stop Communism from taking over Southeast Asia. As we look at today's reality, an interesting question comes to mind: how many nations in Asia, or in the entire world for that matter, have gone Communist since the Vietnam War?

Look at the reality which now prevails in Vietnam itself.

But the form which this war of idealism took in Vietnam was the classic model for winning land and territories. Saturation bombing, rocket attacks on targets of opportunity, strafing of troops. Rifles, hand grenades, howitzers. River gunboats. Patrols. Sweeps. Campaigns.

All brought forward from the models of war as we have known it, from antiquity to its most modern derivatives. Except, of course, any use of nuclear weapons. This application of classic war technique to a war of ideals could only further add to the confusion surrounding the Vietnam War. While it has been said that Truth is the first casualty of war, the Vietnam War was in some respects unique in this regard. Maj. H.R. McMaster has written a book entitled *Dereliction of Duty* in which he makes a strong case regarding how truth was stifled, even subverted, during the Vietnam War.

He maintains that instead of carrying out their duties as military leaders, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were restrained by President Lyndon Johnson's "bullying, flattery, and fear of dissent." They "became enamored with the trappings of power of the president" and went along with Johnson's deceptions about actual war objectives.

Given this backdrop of confusion and outright deception At the very highest levels of our government against which the Vietnam War was prosecuted, it is hardly surprising that battle commanders in the field and the American soldier himself found the entire experience in Vietnam to be embittering and character rending.

To large degree, the results of the calculated lying and deceptions hatched and propagated from the highest levels of our civil and military government were borne on the shoulders of the fighting men who did their best to carry out their orders. The results of this huge miscarriage of justice have been disastrous for Vietnam veterans. A large percentage have never been able to understand why they were singled out to bear blame for something they never understood and continue to view with confusion and despair.

Countless tens of thousands have been unable to hold a steady job. It is estimated that between 100,000 and 200,000 have committed suicide rather than continue in their personal agony. Much of this agony stems from a fundamental mismatch in what they did as opposed to why they were doing it. These unfortunate soldiers could never really understand the nature of the sacrifice they were being called upon to make in view of the fact that the Vietnamese Army was not bombing San Francisco or in any way raising a serious EXTERNAL THREAT to the folks back home.



## THE KEY ROLE TELEVISION PLAYED IN THE WAR

For the first time in history, the realities of war were seen in the homes of the nation at war, including those who had given children to fight in the cause. And while most of what was actually shown was strictly censored to suit the objectives of the senior officials who were prosecuting the war, occasionally a rogue source would bring something approaching reality to the TV screen, increasingly so as the war ground relentlessly on toward no definable conclusion.

These rogue reports were highly distressing, and called into question much of the general information being circulated by the nation's leadership and ultimately played a significant role in bringing about the cessation of hostilities and the ultimate withdrawal of American forces.



## THE SHATTERING EXPERIENCE OF COMING HOME

But nothing could prepare the Vietnam veteran for the shattering experience of coming home again to the disapproval, ridicule, even hate of many of his fellow citizens, often enough from members of his own family. Here we see a nation in shock, not understanding

either the war or those who answered their country's call and did their duty to the best of their ability.

The Americans who fought there returned to a nation who showed them a face of outright hostility. Many returning soldiers were booed. Some were spit upon. Few were welcomed home as dedicated Americans. Fewer still as heroes who had endured a kind of hell in trying to do their duty. This nation to large degree abandoned its own children. It puts us in mind of the mothers of Sparta who would charge their sons as they gave them their shields, "Come back carrying it or on it, but don't come back without it."



### **VIETNAM WAS A WATERSHED EVENT IN THAT IT HELPED US DEFINE WHO WE ARE AS A PEOPLE**

Despite the fact that it was executed under the dark wraps of perhaps the deepest deceptions and lying of any war in history, perhaps even to some degree because of this fact, the Vietnam War will stand out in history as a watershed event for many reasons.

**THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER VIETNAM BECAUSE WE HAVE LEARNED THESE PROFOUND HISTORIC LESSONS, NOT JUST IN A CLASSROOM BUT ON THE BATTLEFIELD!** As we have noted previously, it was a war planned and executed on the old classical models of ground troops.

Finding and exterminating the enemy (ancient history) the best of traditional hand weapons (ancient through modern history) precision and saturation bombing (World War II). Fastidiously avoided were nuclear weapons. The circumstances surrounding this withdrawal and the humiliations associated with it led to the coining of a new slogan:

"No More Vietnams."

In its thinnest meaning these words could imply, "Let's not lose anymore wars." But the broader meaning here is truly profound: "Let our nation and humanity end our ancient dependence upon classical war as a means to effect the survival of our societies." The implications of the latter interpretation are obviously huge, and single out that Vietnam was a Watershed Event in Human History. For if indeed that war, despite (or perhaps to some degree because of) the lies, deception, confusion, and heartbreak which it embodied, accomplished the stunning objective of teaching our society that classical war no longer works, then it will have taught us a massive and historic lesson. In a single generation our society will have unlearned thousands of years, thousands of generations of dependence upon the old war model. Because of the Vietnam War few, if any, of our sons or daughters will ever have to die in a distant country fighting a war against an enemy that is no real threat to us at all!

#### **B. VIETNAM PERSONALIZED WAR**

Several major items can be cited. First, this war for the first time personalized war and ripped away the mask of depersonalized dog-tag numbers. Witness the huge anti-war demonstrations of the late sixties and early seventies, organized and executed for the most part by independent-thinking citizens who were not buying into the general party line propagated by their own government. Witness the Vietnam War Memorial - a wall honoring by individual name those who fell in Nam. True, a small statue of three American troops, one an African American, one a Hispanic, and one a Caucasian, was later located some distance from the wall. But the men are peering toward the wall, as though with a premonition that their names, too, will appear on the grand and solemn memorial to the men who died or remain missing there.

## C. THE RULES OF WAR HAVE CHANGED FOREVER

A further accomplishment of the Vietnam War was its effect upon the nation's view of its relationship to the government and military establishment. While it was never a widely held objective of the protesters to "bring down the government," there was a widely held objective: to bring down a particular governmental policy.

In this, the citizens of this nation were successful. Thus, it may be fairly said that the Vietnam War brought to our society a new definition of who we are and what our powers and responsibilities are. The Russians took note of the American experience in Vietnam but apparently judged themselves capable of succeeding where we had failed.

Their long and dismally unsuccessful military foray into Afghanistan was patterned along the same classical military lines—troops on the ground supported by attacks from the air. Russian losses were high. Back home, support for the campaign melted away. Eventually, the fighting ceased altogether when the sobered and bloodied Russians withdrew, having learned for themselves that the rules have changed. Their experience only substantiated what the Vietnam War had previously burned into the annals of history of human society: it is time for us to end our ancient dependence upon classical war as a means to effect the survival of our societies.

About ten years later, in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was discussing the concept of Perestroika and Glasnost with the Soviet leadership. Two years later he announced it to the world. To some degree at least, our shared national experiences in Vietnam and Afghanistan pointed toward Perestroika.

It was past time for Soviet society to reexamine their roots of secrecy, imprisonment for dissident views, suppression of personal freedoms, and above all, dependence upon a military and police establishment to make their society work.

## D. HELPED US UNDERSTAND THE VERY NATURE OF WAR

In today's world, while many are deeply concerned about their economy and the role that we may be playing there, it would be hard for most Russians to believe that the United States is out to get them militarily. By the same token, power brokers in the United States no longer even attempt to play off our military powers against countries who remain Communist.

As we noted earlier, the spread of that doctrine has come to a virtual standstill. The general expectation is that in those few nations (Cuba, North Korea) who still cling to the discredited ideas, much of the reason that they do so can be traced to the strong personalities who dominate their society's political landscape.

The further expectation is that when these individual personalities are gone, barring the emergence of an equally powerful successor, a general overhaul of the society may well take place which could bring about a more reasonable and successful society model.

It is interesting to note that substantially all conflicts and wars now flaring around the world are either religious or economic at their roots. Far and away the most significant in terms of peoples involved and commitment to death are those conflicts based upon religious differences. It is significant that in the most recent confrontation between the U.N. and Saddam Hussein of Iraq, not a single Arab/Moslem voice has been raised in criticism of Saddam or of his decision to flout the U.N. inspection team mandate which

for years has been understood and accepted by Iraq. And the "ethnic purification" which we witnessed pretty much across-the-board in the formerly communist nation of Yugoslavia in which uncounted citizens died merely because they were of the "wrong ethnic stock and religion," was nothing more than religious passion out of control. And while American servicepeople joined their counterparts from other U.N. nations, it was understood by everyone involved that Americans would never allow another Vietnam. **Vietnam forced us to establish the Limits of what we would and would not do in time of war.**



## VIETNAM: WON OR LOST?

While on a recent visit to Vietnam, I was astonished at the friendliness, even affection, which the Vietnamese people showed when they learned that I had been there as an American soldier. Why the remarkable friendliness? Just outside My Lai stands a monument. It was intended to memorialize the savage brutality of the American troops who came through, searching for the Viet Cong they knew were hiding among the villagers. To those of us who were there, it commemorates exactly the opposite. We, and I now sense that many Vietnamese as well, view it more as a symbol to the restraint which our troops exercised a thousand times for the one terrible venting of frustration and rage upon My Lai. These villagers candidly admitted to me that they were far more terrified of the

Viet Cong among them than of our soldiers, who, by refusing to repeat My Lai, became virtual sniper bait for the V.C.

To my own great personal distress and to that of most of us who fought there, for years now it's been said that the Vietnam War was lost, that it constituted nothing more than a huge waste of life, time, goods, and that from it sprang nothing but the bitter fruit of frustration and despair and endless suffering of mind and spirit. Why? What has driven these good and worthy men to such an end? My sense of this tragic reality is that it stems from a deep and deadly guilt which feeds upon a massive misinterpretation of history, officially sanctioned and accepted for years pretty much without question. These late casualties are convinced that they lost the War for their Country. And given the line of thought which has prevailed, what else has there been to believe?

But wait. Is this the true picture that emerges today when we take a step back to gain a realistic historic perspective of the event? Was this war won or lost?

And if so, who won, who lost? It is long past time to end the delusion of a war lost, and for a general overhaul of American perception of this watershed event in history which we have tended to look back upon with confusion and even shame.

We need to open our eyes and end 25 years of nonsense. Today's reality testifies mightily that the American sacrifice in Vietnam not only accomplished its stated objective, but that it also moved our culture and society along a pathway to understanding war in a far different, less romantic, hard reality sense.

Notice. No more Vietnam Wars.

Our children have not been dying by the thousands in Rwanda, Uganda, Haiti, Yugoslavia. Military action often becomes policing action. How to get food to people left to starve by their own leadership has now become a major function of military effort and responsibility since Vietnam.

We learned, as did the Soviet Union in their own crushing experience in Afghanistan, that war is no longer the stuff of heroes on horses, monuments, parades and high ceremonies. As so intensely conveyed by the Vietnam Wall in Washington, war must ultimately be viewed as a highly personal act.

Oddly enough, it was the advent of Nuclear Weapons of mass destruction which lies at the core of this personalization. The Vietnam War became our teacher and our conscience. It gave us definition of who we are.

It is now time for the pain to end. Lincoln's words at Gettysburg seem remarkably applicable to Vietnam: "It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us-that from these honored dead we take increased devotion-that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain..."

**VIETNAM SOLDIERS DID NOT DIE IN VAIN!** In Vietnam today, the seeds of freedom and free enterprise are taking root and growing. This, after all, is what the American Soldier's Vietnam War was all about.



**VIETNAM SOLDIERS DID NOT DIE IN VAIN . . .**

1. Historically societies have been held together by external threat.
2. Since nuclear weapons we no longer have the possibility of all-out war without self-destruction.
3. Therefore, the rules of war have changed forever.
4. Vietnam proved that we can never fight a prolonged war without an external threat to our own survival as a society.
5. VIETNAM SOLDIERS DID NOT DIE IN VAIN!
  - A. Vietnam was a watershed event in that it helped us define who we are as a people.
  - B. Vietnam forced us to establish the limits of what we would and would not do in time of war.
  - C. Not one single country has fallen to the communist doctrine since Vietnam.
  - D. There will never be another Vietnam because we have learned these profound historic lessons, not just in a classroom but on the battlefield!
  - E. Because of the Vietnam War, few, if any, of our sons or daughters will ever have to die in a distant country fighting a war against an enemy that is no real threat to us at all!

# **NEWSPAPER AD YOU CAN RUN IN YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER**

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Vietnam was a watershed event in that it helped us define who we are as a people.

Vietnam forced us to establish the limits of what we would and would not do in time of war.

Not one single country has fallen to the communist doctrine since Vietnam.

There will never be another Vietnam because we have learned these profound historic lessons, not just in a classroom but on the battlefield!

Because of the Vietnam War, few, if any, of our sons or daughters will ever have to die in a distant country fighting a war against an enemy that is no real threat to us at all!

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