

Shotgun Blasts



Volume 2, Issue 10

October 2010

Ramblings

...the difference between socialism and communism.

By Quang Nguyen

In a departure from our normal content in Ramblings we are presenting the following content which many of you may have seen elsewhere. This may help all of us to remember why we were in Vietnam and answer that question that has been in the back of our minds all of these years, "Did we do some good in Vietnam?" The Editor On Saturday, July 24, 2010 the town of Prescott Valley, Arizona hosted a Freedom Rally. Quang Nguyen was asked to speak on his experience in coming to America and what it means. He spoke the following dedicated to all Vietnam Veterans.

"Thirty five years ago, if you were to tell me that I am going to stand up here speaking to a couple thousand patriots, in English, I'd laugh at you. Man, every morning I wake up thanking God for putting me and my family in the greatest country on earth.

I just want you all to know that the American dream does exist and I am living the American dream. I was asked to speak to you about my

experience as a first generation Vietnamese-American, but I rather speak to you as an American.

If you hadn't noticed, I am not white and I feel pretty comfortable with my people.

I am a proud US citizen and here is my proof (holding up his Naturalization certificate). It took me 8 years to get it, waiting in endless lines, but I got it and I am very proud of it. I did it legally and it ain't from the state of Hawaii.

I still remember the images of the Tet offensive in 1968, I was six years old. Now you might want to question how a 6 year old boy could remember anything. Trust me; those images can never be erased. I can't even imagine what it was like for young American soldiers, 10,000 miles away from home, fighting on my behalf.

Thirty five years ago, I left South Vietnam for political asylum. The war had ended. At the age of 13, I left with the understanding that I may or may not ever get to see my siblings or parents again. I was one of the first lucky 100,000 Vietnamese allowed to come to the US. Somehow, my family and I were reunited five months later, amazingly, in California. It was a miracle from God.

If you haven't heard lately that this is the greatest country on earth, I am telling you that right now. It is the freedom and the opportunities presented to me that put me here with all of you tonight. I also remember the barriers that I had to overcome every step of the way. My high school counselor told me that I cannot make it to college due to my poor communication skills. I proved him wrong. I finished college. You see, all you have to do is to give this little boy an opportunity and encourage him to take and run with it. Well, I took the opportunity and here I am. This person standing tonight in front of you could not exist under a

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Ramblings by Quang Nguyen
- 3 Calendar of Events
- 3 Calendar of Events
- 4 Chaplain's Corner by Ned Moore
- 6 Reminiscences by John Theiler

socialist/communist environment. By the way, if you think socialism is the way to go, I am sure many people here will chip in to get you a one way ticket out of here. And if you didn't know, the only difference between socialism and communism is an AK-47 aiming at your head. That was my experience.

In 1982, I stood with a thousand new immigrants, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and listening to the National Anthem for the first time as an American. To this day, I can't remember anything sweeter and more patriotic than that moment in my life.

Fast forwarding, somehow I finished high school, finished college, and like any other goofball 21 year old kid, I was having a great time with my life. I had a nice job and a nice apartment in Southern California. In some way and somehow, I had forgotten how I got here and why I am here. One day I was at a gas station, I saw a veteran pumping gas on the other side of the island. I don't know what made me do it, but I walked over and asked if he had served in Vietnam. He smiled and said yes. I shook and held his hand. The grown man began to well up. I walked away as fast as I could and at that very moment, I was emotionally rocked. This was a profound moment in life. I knew something had to change in my life. It was time for me to learn how to be a good citizen. It was time for me to give back.



Quang Nguyen and Family

You see, America is not a place on the map, it isn't a physical location. It is an ideal, a concept.

And if you are an American, you must understand the concept, you must buy into this concept, and most importantly, you have to fight and defend this concept. This is about Freedom and not free stuff. And that is why I am standing up here. Brothers and sisters, to be a real American, the very least you must do is to learn English and understand it well. In my humble opinion, you cannot be a faithful patriotic citizen if you can't speak the language of the country you live in. Take this document of 46 pages...(holding a copy of the US Constitution) last I looked on the internet; there wasn't a Vietnamese translation of the US constitution. It took me a long time to get to the point of being able to converse and until this day, I still struggle to come up with the right words. It's not easy, but if it's too easy, it's not worth doing.

Before I got to know this 46 page document, I learned of the 500,000 Americans and so many South Vietnamese soldiers, including my two brothers, who fought for this little boy. I learned of the 58,000 names scribed on the black wall at the Vietnam Memorial. You are my heroes. You are my founders.

When I was eligible to vote, I went out and performed my civic duty. For all of you young people out there, who just turned 18, I encourage you to exercise your duty as an American to be an informed voter no matter where you are or what you do. America fought and died for your rights. **DON'T LET HER DOWN!!!**

At this time I would like to ask all the Vietnam veterans to please stand. I thank you for my life. I thank you for your sacrifices, and I thank you for giving me the freedom and liberty I have today. I now ask all veterans, firefighters, and police officers, to please stand. On behalf of all first generation immigrants, I thank you for your services and may God bless you all and may God bless America.

Quang Nguyen
Creative Director/Founder
Caddis Advertising, LLC
quang@caddisad.com

An addendum to this article is shown on page 3 of Shotgun Blasts.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ARMY OTTER-CARIBOU ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

OCTOBER 6 - 10

COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVANCE

OCTOBER 11 (12?)

DELTA BIRDDOG REUNION PLANNING MEETING

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

OCTOBER 15 - 17

MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY

OCTOBER 24

ELECTION DAY 2010

NOVEMBER 2

2011 Delta Birddog Reunion

The reunion will have more coverage once the Organizing Committee completes their meeting in mid-October. Watch for news of the reunion in the next issue of *Shotgun Blasts* and on the unit web sites. A **Special NOTAM** may be issued as well. See you at the Alamo.



“Airplanes are fascinating toys but of no military value.”

Marshal Ferdinand Foch

On September 13, 2010 Hank Collins wrote:

Dear Quang Nguyen,

I have just received an e-mail containing a copy of your speech given at the Prescott Valley, AZ, Freedom Rally. Thank you very much – I only wish I could have heard it in person. You have in a few words grasp the reason for America and why it is, and what it is. It was my good fortune to serve with the 21st ARVN Division in the Mekong Delta during 1965 and 1966. As such, I had much more interactions with the Vietnamese soldiers than did my comrades serving in American units. These associations confirmed to me that the South Vietnamese people did indeed deserve the right to govern themselves, and I was proud to have a small part in helping them accomplish this. For over forty years that belief has not changed. Your speech in fact validates it. Congratulations on your accomplishments...and Welcome Home!

Hank Collins
Shotgun 46 1965-66
221st Aviation Company

The reply read:
Good morning, Mr. Collins,

I am so glad and honored that you wrote to me. Thank you for your time in Viet Nam. I cannot find enough words to thank you.

I also have so much respect for those in the RVN army. My brother who served from 68-75 as a paratrooper and was wounded three times. Another one served as an army medic. You have all made it happen for kids like us.

You said that you only wish you could have heard it in person. Luckily, someone did make a video of the speech for me. You can see it here.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7idswNHEY9g>

God Bless you sir and your family, Mr. Collins.

Quang

Chaplain's Corner

I never really liked the Month of October...

By Ned Moore, Shotgun Chaplain

Have you ever wondered what would happen if you put a random word into a Bible search website?

In one of the online discussion groups I visit, one of the people referenced this website - <http://bible.cc/>. It is a site with 30 Scripture versions (Not all English) and 28 other "Helps" – versions commentaries and such. Well, for no other reason than I had been asking myself "What will I write about for October?" So, I put the word "October" in the search window – and got these 6 references: I edited the addenda following the links into parentheses.

[Haggai 2:1 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word ...](#) (...Then on **October** 17 of that same year, the LORD sent another message through the prophet Haggai)

[Nehemiah 6:15 So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of ...](#) (... So on **October** 2 the wall was finished--just fifty-two days after we had begun. ...)

[Nehemiah 7:73 The priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the ...](#) (... In **October**, when the Israelites had settled in their towns ...)

[Nehemiah 8:13 On the second day of the month, the heads of all the ...](#) (... On **October** 9 the family leaders of all the people, together with the priests and Levites, met with Ezra the scribe to go over the Law in greater detail. ...)

[Nehemiah 8:2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the ...](#) (... So on **October** 8 Ezra the priest brought the Book of the Law before the assembly, which included the men and women and all the children old enough to understand ...)

[Nehemiah 9:1 On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the ...](#) (... On **October** 31 the people assembled again, and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads. ...)

As I looked thru these references and the contextual verses following, I was struck by the parallels in our world today:

- The struggles to rebuild our economy in the "eleventy-seven" different competing factions... public and private.

- The various cries to return to our roots by different groups regarding: immigration, political upheaval, attempts to solidify conflicting ideologies and the life styles surrounding them, and the propagating of them - as well as the drives to take over and assimilate or eliminate all who oppose. These have many faces today – even as there were in Haggai's and Nehemiah's days.

Granted, one must not be too stringent in the attempts to overlay one people's histories with another from differing time and place as teaching points. Nevertheless, I was impressed by the chance (?) discoveries of the similarities. Perhaps human nature has never really evolved out of the gut levels of selfishness, greed and perniciously blinding self interests which keep stirring peoples' minds in the turmoil of fear, hatred, suspicions and just plain cussed meanness. We have made no progress on correcting the drive to "kill all who disagree" in one form or another.

Were I able, as in Neh 9:1ff, I would send all of the belligerents in the various conflicts - be they immigrant, religiopolitical, economic, or what have you – to their respective "Corners of the Ring" for some serious repentance and forgiveness.

Yes, I know – It just flat ain't gonna happen.

I am writing this in the period of Rosh Hashanah – the Jewish New Year for 5771 - their "Look Back and Look Ahead" time.

I am aware that even after rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem and the replacement Temple, after returning from the Exile in Babylon, the People of Israel fell off the wagon, so to speak, in many ways and at many times, of obedience to God and His Word.

Are we that different? One writer has said (I have searched unsuccessfully for the source . . .) that the USA has degenerated in the last 50 years as much as Rome took 200 years to do. I am not sure I buy that, but still I admit, as I sit here writing this, thinking about all that is going on in our world today; thinking about all of us and our children and their children; I am feeling quite pessimistic

continued on page 5

continued from page 4

regarding our chances for improvement in our society or anyone else's for that matter.

I admit, as well, that I have never really liked the Month of October. Now, with these (chance?) scriptures in one hand and the calendar in the other – it feels to me like our world is sliding into a proverbial ghoulishness of Halloween.

What my heart is doing now, and shall continue to do – is to cry out to The LORD, “Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!”

Ned



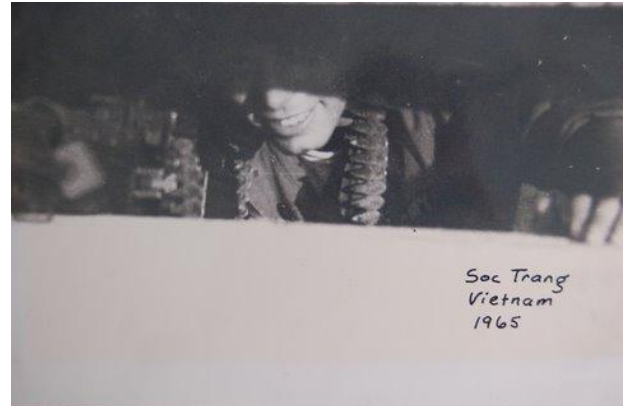
“Aviation is proof that given, the will, we have the capacity to achieve the impossible.”

Edward Rickenbacker

It Just Runs In the Blood

That is an adage that we hear quite often and it may aptly be applied here, as you can see.

First, shown below, is Bruce Griffith '65 – '66 in a bunker with an M60, an M79 and thousands of rounds



Now, we must move on. As you can see, times have changed. Bruce and Ines Griffith's daughter Charlene (her nickname is “General Patton”) is following in her Dad's footsteps.

Charlene is shown below with a Blackhawk mounted M60.



Thanks Griff for sharing your photos with us, we know that you are proud of your daughter...and, thanks Charlene (or should I say “General Patton”) for your service.

With families like this how can our Nation go wrong...Ed.

REMINISCENSES – Part II:

Medical Field Service School

By John L. Theiler

To continue with my personal saga, in Jan. 1964, I, along with the other men of “D” Co. graduated from Basic Training at Fort Jackson, SC. The ceremonies were replete with a parade and all the “brass” on a reviewing stand. “Eyes right”.

I was so pleased with myself considering the fact that I doubted I’d be able to survive the training ordeal. I had thoughts of being re-cycled, i.e., starting all over again. That would have been too much to bear. But I made it. Now what?



The Student

At some place and point in time, maybe on the bus leaving Fort Jackson for the airport, I read the orders for my next duty station. I was being sent to Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, near San Antonio, TX. Some sort of medical training; the orders weren’t specific. My first thoughts were I was going to be a bedpan

orderly in some hospital or worse yet, a combat field medic.

That unsettled me. However, my spirits lifted when I read my next set of orders. I was being assigned to MFSS, the Medical Field Service School at Fort Sam. And I’d be going to classes to become a Pharmacy Specialist, MOS 932.2. I was elated! To this very day, I wonder how it came about. I had been at the total mercy of the Army and their needs; they could have placed me in any sort of job.

I was a drafted high school graduate with no college. But I did have some interest in medicine and chemistry. What a stroke of “luck”. This was wonderful - perfect for me. I was happy. My family members were pleased. My friend Dolores was happy. And so began a five-month course, five and a half days a week of classes and lab work. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and learned strictly pharmacy. Didn’t have to deal with shampoo, greeting cards, and breath mints, cigarettes, or other sundry items found in a civilian drug store.

Towards the end of the course, students were required to submit a project. Shades of high school! I can’t say I was inspired to offer anything original. I was going to turn in something easy and simple just to get by. My contribution: “Back Lotion” that I’d compound and submit for a grade. Had it been accepted, I would have actually cheated myself by not making more of an effort. Well, once again Fate stepped in, and I was called to the Pharmacy School Commandant’s office.

He had read my proposal and thought I could do something better than “Back Lotion” (comical now). Rumor had it that I was an artist. Yes, true, and I admitted it to the Captain. And...he made his own proposal, suggesting that I do something artistic in connection with pharmacy, i.e., paintings, illustrations. I was being put under pressure; I felt stressed, something I detest and try to avoid. At the very same time I was flattered and honored. But what would my project be?

It could have been the suggestion of the Commandant (do Commandants “suggest”?) that I began to think about a series of small, painted

continued on page 7

continued from page 6

illustrations in color, depicting the manufacture of an ointment in a pharmacy lab. I would do it in such a way as to allow the art to be photographed and made into slides. It would be a teaching aid, in theory. What a daunting task! How could I do it living in an open-bay barracks with a platoon of soldiers? I had no equipment, no facilities. I was challenged for sure.

Well, ideas began to occur to me. To start, I only needed paper and pencil to make small sketches of the proposed series of paintings. I could do that lying in my bunk. I would design each illustration, eight of them, before ever thinking about painting. And when I could get into San Antonio on pass, I would buy art supplies: illustration board, paint & brushes. Never before had I done such a project, and certainly never

worked under such limited circumstances. And no one could assist me. I had only an inner sense as to how I should proceed.

When it came time to do the 6"x 6" gouache paintings, I set my buddy's footlocker atop mine as a makeshift table, and worked sitting on my bunk. Surprisingly, I was able to concentrate on my task despite the noisy ambience of an Army barracks.

My project was, arguably, the most demanding of any in my class. But under pressure, the best was being brought out of me. After several days, I completed the illustrations to my satisfaction. Now, it was time to submit my work. What would the grading committee think?

Next: Graduation

Our Submission from Shakespeare for October is:

The Bird Dogs' Tale

By Bobby Jack Woolley

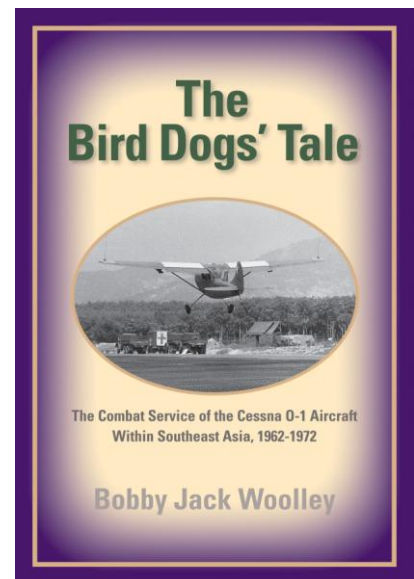
The author has presented the combat service of the Bird Dog aircraft in a comprehensive manner that covers the ten-year period, 1962 – 1972. The intent is for *The Bird Dogs' Tale* to serve as a record of how O-1 service contributed to the overall combat effort that occurred in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam era.

Information concerning the disposition of each O-1 that served in Army, Air Force and Marine aviation units is presented. A brief history of each aviation unit is also included. Of significance, an accounting of service members who lost their life while participating in Bird Dog combat service is also recorded.

This accounting of each aircraft, and those who lost their lives, is an important and unusual content for a combat related book.

The Bird Dogs' Tale is that story.

The book is \$24.95 and you can purchase it at:
feeder-feederpubs@comcast.com
253-874-3982



The 2010 Birddog Roundup is History Now

Wow! What a site to see, 34 Birddogs in the sky over the Texas Hill Country and parked on the ramp in front of the unique Hangar Hotel located in Fredericksburg, Texas.

I have not seen so many Birddogs in one location since flight training at Lowe Field, Fort Rucker and it sure did bring back a flood of memories. It is at times difficult to explain what you recall but the first thing that came to mind was the tie down area at Soc Trang and what we accomplished in the time we were there.

The Delta Birddog group had a fair showing at the Roundup, representing the 199th Swamp Foxes we had Gary Simon, Sam Givhan, Jim Strye and Bobby Woolley. John Francis, Jim McGraw and Don Smith represented the 221st Shotguns. We would have liked to have a few more folks on hand to demonstrate our support for the IBDA but, maybe next time.

Once again, I am going to climb on my soap box and urge you to support the IBDA, they have been a big factor in the success of our previous reunions and have pledged their support of the 2011 reunion. These are the folks responsible for maintaining the history of the greatest little Warbird ever to fly, support them by joining.



Just can't wait to see all of you in San Antonio next year. Put it on your calendar **NOW**.
October 13 – 16, 2011



CORKY'S STUDIO GRAPHICS

Military Unit Wear
Embroidered Caps & Shirts
Collectibles
Patches
Knives

PERSONALIZED K-BAR
LASER ENGRAVED

PERSONALIZED UNIT WEAR * KNIVES * PATCHES & MORE
EVERYDAY WEAR * REUNION WEAR * COLLECTIBLES

corkysstudiographics.com/Military-Unit-Wear.htm