



Website: <http://6thbattalion56thartillery.com>

Email: [john@6thbattalion56thartillery.com](mailto:john@6thbattalion56thartillery.com)

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The first edition of the "Night Hawk", the battalion newspaper, was published on 18 January 1963 at Fort Bliss, Texas and continued throughout the battalion's time in Vietnam. Throughout the years it kept the personnel informed on all events, especially those within the battalion.

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## **The Vietnam Myths Busters Edition**

There are numerous myths pertaining to the United States involvement in Vietnam. The purpose of this edition of the NIGHT HAWK Battalion Newsletter is to put some of these myths to rest. And set the record straight.

It's been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. And as we know one picture can spread thousand lies. I will not attempt to address all of the myths and lies pertaining to our honorable service in the Republic of Vietnam. To do so would require the writing of a document the size of an encyclopedia not a Battalion newsletter. I shall address a few of the myths and lies that members of this Battalion have brought to my attention.

**MYTH: The American military was running for their lives during the fall of Saigon in April 1975.**

The **fall of Saigon** happened on 30 April 1975, **two years AFTER the American military left Vietnam**. The last American troops departed in their entirety 29 March 1973.



The roof of 22 Gia Long Street, not the U.S. Embassy

This picture was of the Pittman apartment building for the employees of the United States Agency for International Development, its top floor reserved for the Central Intelligence Agency's deputy chief of station. The address was 22 Gia Long Street, about a half mile from the American Embassy. The platform is the top of the elevator shaft for the building and was not designed as a helipad.

The helicopter was an *Air America* Huey, not Army or Marines. The person who can be seen aiding the refugees was CIA operations officer, Mr. O.B. Harnage, who retired in Arizona. The pilots who were flying this helicopter, tail number N4 7004, were Bob Caron, and Jack "Pogo" Hunter, who died in 1997. The evacuees were Vietnamese, not American military.

**Myth: Kim Phuc, the little nine year old Vietnamese girl running naked from the napalm strike near Trang Bang on 8 June 1972, was burned by Americans bombing Trang Bang.**



**The common belief that Kim Phuc, the little nine-year-old Vietnamese girl running naked from the napalm strike near Trang Bang on 8 June 1972 (shown a million times on American television), was burned by Americans bombing Trang Bang. Fact: No American had involvement in this incident near Trang Bang that burned Phan Thi Kim Phuc. The planes doing the bombing near the village were VNAF (Vietnam Air Force) and were being flown by Vietnamese pilots in support of South Vietnamese troops on the ground.** The Vietnamese pilot who dropped the napalm in error is currently living in the United States. Even the AP photographer, Nick Ut, who took the picture, was Vietnamese. The incident in the photo took place on the second day of a three-day battle between the North

Vietnamese Army (NVA) who occupied the village of Trang Bang and the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) who were trying to force the NVA out of the village. Recent reports in the news media that an American commander ordered the air strike that burned Kim Phuc are incorrect. There were no Americans involved in any capacity. "We (Americans) had nothing to do with controlling VNAF," according to Lieutenant General (Ret) James F. Hollingsworth, the Commanding General of TRAC at that time. Also, it has been incorrectly reported that two of Kim Phuc's brothers were killed in this incident. They were Kim's cousins not her brothers.

## Statistics about the Vietnam War



*"No event in American history is more misunderstood than the Vietnam War. It was misreported then, and it is misremembered now. Rarely have so many people been so wrong about so much. Never have the consequences of their misunderstanding been so tragic." [\[Nixon\]](#)*

### Facts:

- There is no difference in drug usage between Vietnam Veterans and non veterans of the same age group (from a Veterans Administration study)
- 85% of Vietnam Veterans made a successful transition to civilian life.
- Vietnam veterans' personal income exceeds that of our non-veteran age group by more than 18 percent.
- Vietnam veterans have a lower unemployment rate than our non-vet age group.

***Myth: Most Vietnam veterans were drafted.***

2/3 of the men who served in Vietnam were volunteers. 2/3 of the men who served in World War II were drafted. [\[Westmoreland\]](#) Approximately 70% of those killed were volunteers. [\[McCaffrey\]](#) Many men volunteered for the draft so even some of the draftees were actually volunteers.

- 91% of Vietnam Veterans say they are glad they served.
- 87% of Americans hold Vietnam Veterans in high esteem.
- Vietnam Veterans are less likely to be in prison - only one-half of one percent of Vietnam Veterans have been jailed for crimes.
- 85% of Vietnam Veterans made successful transitions to civilian life.

**The term wanabee –Urban Dictionary**

This word originated in the 80's when the urban clothing style (long, tall ski caps, bright colors, baggy style, backwards baseball cap, etc) was made popular by gang members. People who wanted to look cool began to copy this style even though they were not in a gang. These people were given the name 'wannabes' for wanting to look like they were in a gang. Now this term is used to describe many people in various groups who want to look a certain way b/c of its appeal, not because it reflect who they truly are.

**From Wikipedia**

A **wannabe** (slang for "want to be") is a person with an ambition to be someone or something that she/he is not. The term is pejorative and intends to convey the foolish nature of the desire due to the incompetence of the "wannabe" to accomplish the goal.

This last bit of 1995 US senses figures information I found most interesting. I am quite sure that we all have come in contact with the Vietnam Veteran Wanabees. I am no statistician, but I think these figures have quadrupled since the 1995 US Census. I asked this question. If your service in Vietnam was not honorable why to so many men today want to be known as Vietnam veterans? The marks of a job well done are the Army of Wanabees who can never be.

### **Interesting Census Stats and "Been There" Wanabees:**

1,713,823 of those who served in Vietnam were still alive as of August, 1995 (census figures).

- During that same Census count, the number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in-country was: 9,492,958.
- As of the current Census taken during August, 2000, the surviving U.S. Vietnam Veteran population estimate is: 1,002,511. This is hard to believe, losing nearly 711,000 between '95 and '00. That's 390 per day. During this Census count, the number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in-country is: 13,853,027. By this census, **FOUR OUT OF FIVE WHO CLAIM TO BE VIETNAM VETS ARE NOT.**

The Department of Defense Vietnam War Service Index officially provided by The War Library originally reported with errors that 2,709,918 U.S. military personnel as having served in-country. Corrections and confirmations to this errored index resulted in the addition of 358 U.S. military personnel confirmed to have served in Vietnam but not originally listed by the Department of Defense (All names are currently on file and accessible 24/7/365).

I hope this newsletter puts to rest some of the myths and lies pertaining to your honorable service in the Republic of Vietnam.

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## SOURCES

[Nixon] *No More Vietnams* by Richard Nixon

[Parade Magazine] August 18, 1996 page 10.

[CACF] (Combat Area Casualty File) November 1993. (The CACF is the basis for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, i.e. *The Wall*), Center for Electronic Records, National Archives, Washington, DC

[All That We Can Be] *All That We Can Be* by Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler

[Westmoreland] *Speech by General William C. Westmoreland* before the Third Annual Reunion of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) at the Washington, DC Hilton Hotel on July 5th, 1986 (reproduced in a Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association *Historical Reference Directory Volume 2A*)

[McCaffrey] *Speech by Lt. Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey*, (reproduced in the *Pentagram*, June 4, 1993) assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to Vietnam veterans and visitors gathered at "The Wall", Memorial Day 1993.

[Houk] *Testimony by Dr. Houk*, Oversight on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, 14 July 1988 page 17, Hearing before the Committee on Veterans' Affairs United States Senate one hundredth Congress second session. Also "Estimating the Number of Suicides Among Vietnam Veterans" (*Am J Psychiatry* 147, 6 June 1990 pages 772-776)

[The Wall Street Journal] *The Wall Street Journal*, 1 June 1996 page A15.

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[1996 Information Please Almanac] *1995 Information Please Almanac Atlas & Yearbook* 49th edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston & New York 1996, pages 117, 161 and 292.

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[People.com] *Vietnam 25 Years Later*, by Joe Treen, People.com, 21 April 2000.

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I look forward to publicly recognizing great events in your life, your stores and pictures. I am anxious to publish your submissions. Email:

[john@6thbattalion56thartillery.com](mailto:john@6thbattalion56thartillery.com) Mail: John Mayfield, PO Box 901358, Palmdale, CA 93590-1358

### Newsletter Editor:

John A. Mayfield, SFC  
US Army, Ret.