

VSO Friends of Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage

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Contact & Donation Information

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Challenge Update

The Matching Fund program has been reached with a total of \$74,000 in donations (Aug-Oct). That's nearly half of our annual budget!



THANK-YOU!!

Your continued support brings smiles from the children and their caregivers. Without you, their lives would be much different.



The Road led to Vinh Son A Convoy Commander's story

Jack Horvath

I served in Vietnam in 1967-1968 as a truck Company Commander based in Qui Nhon. Our trucks made a daily convoy run to Pleiku and back on the infamous Highway 19, known as the Road. It was a dangerous and challenging job, and I figure we truckers logged 2 million miles during a nine month period. Little did I know that this experience was the beginning of a lifelong interest in Vietnam.

My wife Pat and I have enjoyed the trucker reunions since attending our first one in 2002. We certainly had a continued interest in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. In the fall of 2017, we learned that one of our friends from the annual reunions was planning to take a few veterans back to Vietnam. As an experienced guide, he assisted with all the planning details and the dates were set. Pat was also very interested in seeing the areas where I had served 50 years ago, and would be my constant companion on this journey. So, with much excitement and a little apprehension, our group departed for Vietnam on March 31.

After a full day of sightseeing in Ho Chi Minh City, we flew to the former Phu Cat Airfield near Qui Nhon on the coast. For me, this was the beginning of my "return" to the War. We visited the local port area, which was strategic because it was the source of all the supplies that would find their way to An Khe and Pleiku. Today, the port has container cranes overhead, local fishing operations, and a shipyard.

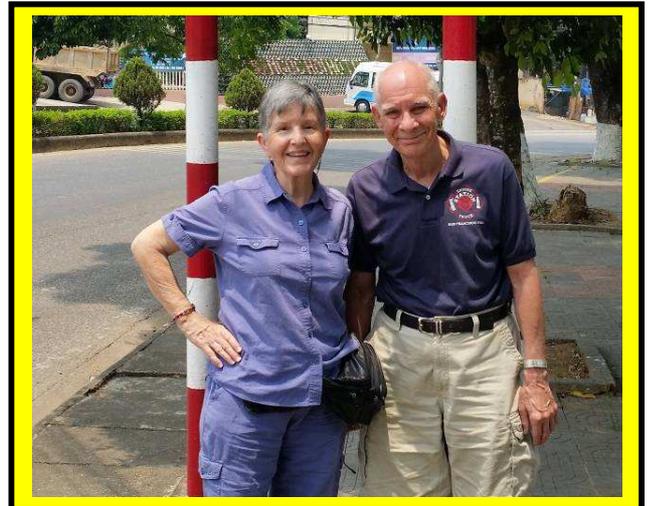
Jack's story, continued

Saying goodbye to Qui Nhon, we drove westward on the storied 100 mile long Highway 19 towards Pleiku. This is what we came to see...the twisting An Khe Pass, the town of An Khe, and the ominous Mang Yang Pass. We were allowed to stop and take pictures in the middle of the Devil's Hairpin, the vicious, steep, switchback curve in the middle of the An Khe Pass. No longer remembered for its deep potholes, off-road bypasses, and one-way temporary bridges, the Road has been widened, straightened, re-paved, and re-graded throughout its length. Today, it's filled with every mode of transportation. Although "my road" had changed much over the years, I could close my eyes and be transported back in time.

The itinerary also included a trip via Highway 14 north to Kontum. Historically, this was Montagnard country, and everyone was quite impressed by the old Wooden Church in Kontum, whose congregation is Montagnard (the Vietnamese have their own church). Little did we know at the time that there was a Montagnard orphanage community right behind the church, called Vinh Son. The Road had brought us to this point, and it was up to us to bring us together.

It had been a very rewarding and emotional visit. However, it was the unexpected encounter with the Montagnards that moved Pat and I to learn more about the Montagnard orphanages in Kontum. We connected with an organization called FVSO (Friends of Vinh Son Orphanages) and learned about their ongoing support of 6 Vinh Son orphanages. The more we discovered, the more we wanted to help. Today, we are proud supporters, and we invite others to join with us. The Road filled me with ton of memories...good and bad...but now there's room for so much more, the children of Vinh Son.

RIGHT: Pat & Jack and their new friends



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