

TO ALL VIETNAM VETS,

I came to the USA in 1969. I came for a college education and I hoped to return to work in South Vietnam and reunite with my family. The 1975 takeover by the North Vietnamese Communists crushed that dream.

When I got here, I was shocked to see how many people were against the war in Vietnam for the wrong reasons. Most didn't know the difference between South & North Vietnam. I was even more shocked to find out what people thought about Vietnam Vets and how they treated you. You should have come home with a warm welcome and great honor because of your sacrifice, not only for our freedom, but also for the benefit of the USA in the long run. As you know all too well, that never happened. From that time on, I promised myself that I would make a point to thank every Vietnam Vet that I met.

I lost my brother to the war in 1972, but I am sure my brother preferred death than giving up fighting for our precious freedom. The politicians, the "hippy" generation, have no idea how lucky they are to have the freedom to act, to speak, and to live the way they want. They have that freedom because of people like you - the Vets - who had to leave the safety of your homeland to protect our freedom in a faraway place.

I have the honor to write this letter to thank you for your service to South Vietnam. Your service will stay forever in our hearts - the Vietnamese people. Although the people in the US gave up to the Communism of North Vietnam, the war was never really lost. It was won by the way the Vietnamese people live right now in Vietnam. During the 20 years Americans were there, you spread the idea of freedom. Even the Northern people now copy how we live, how we market our products and services, and how we compete.

My husband Chris and I have witnessed these changes first hand. People in the South still talk about American veterans with much affection. Coming to the South after the war, the North Vietnamese people were shocked to find out how rich the South was compared to the North. They said they did not realize how much Americans had helped to build up the South. They said their government had lied to them, that the Americans had destroyed the South. As a result of what they saw, the Northern people moved to the South to live and build their businesses, even as the South tried to escape in search of freedom at any cost. Many Vietnamese and their children found success in the US and tried to influence the market & economy in South Vietnam.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your service to my country. Despite what protestors and politicians would have us believe, in the long run, the war was won by you who came to Vietnam and spread the ideal of freedom that many Vietnamese enjoy today despite the different form of government. The thought of FREEDOM stays in the heart of every Vietnamese and is far more important than the form of government.

Thank you and may God bless you all.

Chi Potter

