

Veteran travels to Vietnam Investigates Agent Orange, missing soldiers

By Mary Rodrigue staff writer

When John Terzano stepped off a plane in Vietnam on Dec. 18, the reception he and three other war veterans received was far different than the one they remembered a decade earlier.

Terzano, who left Redford Township for Washington, D.C., and a job as director of Vietnam Veterans of America, was among the first delegation of veterans to go back to Vietnam to investigate soldiers missing in action and Agent Orange, a chemical defoliant used to clear the jungle that many veterans now blame for serious health problems.

"It was an amazing, remarkable experience," Terzano said recently during an interview in his sister's Fox Street home.

The contingent's initial apprehension coming into Hanoi's International Airport disappeared at the warm reception they got from government officials who met them in a parade of Russian-made limousines.

WITH TERZANO, 30, were Robert Muller, founder and executive director of the veterans group; Tom Bird, a member of the board of directors and founder of a New York City-based theater group of Vietnam veterans; and Michael Harbert, also on the board of directors and a political consultant.

Until their Christmas Eve departure for home, the group spent most of their time in meetings in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon).

"Nothing has changed, the countryside looks the same," said Terzano, who dropped out of Schoolcraft College in 1970 to enlist in the Navy. He spent 13 months in Vietnam in 1971 and 1972.

"We all had our own flashbacks of mortar shells, of fields on fire. It brought back unresolved feelings about the war."

It was nine years to the month since Terzano had left Vietnam. For the others, like Bird, who left in 1966, the time lapse was greater.

"THE PEOPLE were tremendous," Terzano said. "I was involved in strike

missions in the north — cutting off the food supply and the Christmas bombing in 1972.

"I didn't know what to expect now, but the one day we walked the streets of Hanoi, the people were very friendly. By the time we left Hanoi, the war was finally over for all of us in our minds."

Created by Muller four years ago as a lobby group to promote the interests of Vietnam veterans, the organization first attempted to meet with Vietnamese officials last October after talks in Bangkok between the two sides reached an impasse on joint casualty resolution issues.

"In July, the Vietnamese returned three sets of remains of soldiers (MIAs) and the response of the U.S. government and organizations here was anger and recrimination," Terzano said.

"The Vietnamese, who felt they had undertaken a humanitarian effort, decided not to do anything further and quit talking to the Americans."

"Our goal was to re-establish a dialogue and open up the two issues so they can be resolved."

ON DEC. 7, they received the invitation from Vietnam. Whirlwind briefings at the U.S. State Department and Department of Defense followed.

"We didn't go with lots of expectations," Terzano said. "We just went as former soldiers talking to other former soldiers."

During their week-long stay, the contingent met three times with Vu Hoang, chairman of the committee investigating the 2,500 American soldiers listed as missing in action; Dr. Ton That

Tung, chairman of the committee probing the effects of Agent Orange, and several times with Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Tech.

The Vietnamese promised to receive continuing delegations from the veterans' group, to pass along all further information on MIAs, and to allow American scientists to collaborate on epidemiology studies conducted in Vietnam regarding Agent Orange.

"Dr. Tung has been doing studies for 10 years on the effects of those exposed to the chemical measured against control groups not exposed to Agent Orange," Terzano said.

"But his work hasn't been held up to the scrutiny of American scientists."

One attempt to conduct a full-scale study at the University of California at Los Angeles failed because experts had difficulty constructing a group of veterans exposed to the chemical, Terzano said.

"The Veterans Administration says everyone who served in Vietnam during the years of spraying could have been exposed to it. It's unclear if it really causes problems," he said. "It's still sticky."

Tung has agreed to allow individual American doctors and scientists to work and do the studies necessary in Vietnam to obtain more information about the chemical.

The Vietnamese also agreed to a cultural exchange program in which poetry, sculpture and paintings of Vietnam veterans could be exhibited in Vietnam.

"The fact that they welcomed us was really surprising," Terzano said.

"But what was even more amazing

was the level of existence these people live in. Hanoi is like Bangladesh on a good day.

"WE MET an American there working at the Swedish Embassy who said 50 percent of the people she sees are malnourished."

"If they get more than one bowl of rice a day, they're lucky. There's no milk for anyone over age 1. Yet the people seem happy and manage to maintain their character, will and patience."

Terzano says the Vietnamese would

love to re-establish ties with the U.S. but not at the threat of loss of their independence.

"Who best but their former enemies can help turn them around, such as we did with Germany and Japan?" he said. "I don't want to wait 30 years to heal the wounds. I think Americans are upset because we lost the war. The American ego was hurt a bit. Whether that has bearing, I don't know."

Terzano, a graduate of George Washington University with a degree in public affairs, plans to return to Vietnam for more talks later this year.

Karate lessons for Our Lady of Sorrows ushers?

By Craig Piechura staff writer

Farmington Police were called to Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church Sunday when three men disrupted the 10 a.m. service.

The men called parishioners "idolaters" and read aloud from the Old Testament.

One of the three men reportedly received communion and then either dropped or threw down the wafer, which Catholics believe is the consecrated body of Christ, saying "This is what you worship!" The incident occurred while the man was being led out by ushers after he began loudly reciting Bible passages.

Police and church members in attendance said no force was necessary to remove the disrupters.

No charges will be brought against the three because Pastor Kean Cronin requested that they be released. It is not known what religious ideology the protesters espouse.

"It was just somebody who thinks they have the right to disrupt and interrupt," Cronin said. "My concern with people like that is that they love publicity. It's just as soon give them the impression that this is not a biggie. They're not throwing us for a loop or sending us up a tree."

One person in church at the time, parishioner Bill Dillon of Farmington

Hills, complimented the priest who conducted the Mass, the Rev. Edward Belzac, for the way he handled the awkward interruptions.

"IT WAS REALLY ludicrous, but Fr. Belzac handled it real well," Dillon said. "He handled it beautifully. In fact, his remarks broke up the congregation."

Dillon said the priest mentioned that the three men made their appearance on the same day the church celebrates the Three Wise Men's appearance as part of the Epiphany Feast.

At the end of the church service, Dillon said, the priest made a tongue-in-cheek announcement to the congregation that all church ushers were to report Tuesday evening for karate instruction.

A similar disruption took place Christmas Day at Our Lady Queen of Apostles Catholic Church in Hamtramck. A man stood up and announced that he wanted to talk about the second coming of Christ, then ushers escorted him out.

The Rev. Ted Blaszyk, the priest who performed the Mass at the Hamtramck church, said he doesn't think the two incidents are connected. He said he has seen three recent disruptions at Our Lady Queen of Apostles and believes the three disrupters "were people who were mentally ill."



John Terzano, director of Vietnam Veterans of America, talks about his recent trip to Vietnam. He was part of the first contingent of Americans invited there to talk to the Vietnamese about Agent Orange and the MIAs.

Traffic accident claims man's life

Gerald Hall, 43, of Ferndale was killed last Tuesday afternoon in Farmington Hills when his van was struck by a truck on Orchard Lake Road near Hall Road.

Police said Hall's van was struck by a delivery truck driven by Robert Mann, 19, of Allen Park.

Mann told police he was southbound on Orchard Lake, just south of 11 Mile, when his brakes failed. His vehicle crossed the center line and struck the northbound van which then spun over

to the shoulder where it was struck by a third vehicle.

Hall was pronounced dead on arrival at Botsford General Hospital. Mann was treated for multiple trauma and a cut to the left wrist and was released last Thursday, according to hospital officials.

The accident is still under investigation. Details are to be turned over to the Oakland County's Prosecutor's office for evaluation at the end of this week.

INSIDE ANGLES

BEGIN THE NEW YEAR with a blood donation. The American Red Cross says some citizens have made a resolution to donate blood every eight weeks in 1982. Such a commitment, however, isn't necessary for all. First-time donors will find there are many advantages to donating blood. First, there is the free physical examination including an iron blood count. Secondly, there is the satisfaction in knowing that your donation means life blood for the recipient. Blood can be donated by anyone in good general health between the ages of 17 through 65. The Bloodmobile will be in the area four different times and three different places this month. Donors can report to the Farmington Hills Holiday Inn, 36123 10 Mile, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Jan. 11; the Mercy Center, 26500 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, from 1-7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 14; and Botsford Hospital from 6 a.m. till 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 20, and from 9 a.m. till 3 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21.

BLIND PERSONS of all ages can learn to ski cross country with the help of guides at several clinics being offered at Oakland County Parks. Cross country skiing for the blind is one of the programs for the handicapped being developed by Monica Walch, therapeutic recreation coordinator for the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission. To participate in the clinics persons must register in advance over the telephone by calling Ms. Walch at 859-1441. She will need to know your shoe size. The fee for the instruction is only \$5 and can be paid at the time of the class. Clinics will be conducted from 1-3 p.m. Jan. 16 and Feb. 6 at Glen Oaks Golf Course, on 13 Mile Road between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt roads in Farmington Hills. Instruction will take place Jan. 30 and Feb. 13 from 1-3 p.m. at White Lake Oaks Golf Course on S. Williams Lake Road, near M-59 in Pontiac.

SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING and water ballet lessons will be taught from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Jan. 23 through March 27 at North Farmington High School pool. There is a \$15 fee for eight weeks of lessons. The class won't meet on Feb. 20 or 27. Registration begins Monday, Jan. 4, at the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation office, 3155 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Some of the skills taught in the class include doing swim strokes to music, breath control, finning and swimming and underwater stunts, said Barbara Wild, program director.

A **BENEFIT "ski Trek"** takes place from 1-5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 17, at Glen Oaks Golf Course in Farmington Hills. All proceeds from pledges and donations will go to the March of Dimes to fight birth defects. Much like a walk-athon, skiers are sponsored by persons who pledge to donate a certain amount of money for every kilometer skied during the event. In addition to the skiing there will be musical entertainment, an appearance by the OAKlowns clown troupe, a film and a clinic by the Oakland County Parks Nordic Ski Patrol. Sponsors of the event are the Oakland chapter of the March of Dimes, the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, the city of Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department, Bavarian Village Ski Shops, WOMC radio and Vernor's ginger ale. Pledge forms are available at the ski shops and the March of Dimes office at 5541 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. For more information, call the Oakland County chapter of the March of Dimes at 851-8000.

IN SONYA FRIEDMAN'S TV show audience Jan. 12 will be a contingent from Farmington Hills. The city parks and recreation department is organizing a trip that includes viewing and participating in the live Sonya Friedman broadcast and shopping at the Renaissance Center. The bus leaves Farmington Hills' city hall at 9:15 a.m., Tuesday, Jan. 12, and return at 3 p.m. The deadline for reserving a place on the bus was yesterday. Watch the show, though, and you may see your neighbor.

CHINESE NEW YEAR is Jan. 25 this year, the year of the dog. In conjunction with the holiday, the Community House in Birmingham is sponsoring a special cooking class by Elizabeth Chu King at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 27, in the center at 380 S. Bates, Birmingham. Ms. King is author of "Eating the Chinese Way in Detroit" and has been a guest on many radio and television talk shows. She'll teach students all about Chinese regional cuisine: cooking with a wok, a steamer and a Mongolian fire pot. Guests will enjoy sampling fried won ton, shrimp chips, shrimp toast and a very special sweet egg-roll cookie served for the Chinese New Year.

USED BOOKS are being sought by the Farmington branch of the American Association of University Women. Donations are accepted at either the Farmington or Farmington Hills library, or pickup service can be arranged. It could be a good way to clean out an attic or make some space in a cramped bookshelf. For more information, call Ellen Harper at 553-2408 or Gail Tusley at 553-2886. Proceeds from the book sale go to scholarships and aid community projects in the Farmington area.

Cast yourself in the role of snake charmer

Your main accessory, a clutch in sensuous snakeskin.

Or peacock shimmer shades gleamed to a high sheen and very up-to-date finished off strikingly with a bone shell frame. By RUTH SALTZ in taupe, bone, mother-of-pearl \$132. Bewitching everyone within its realm in Hudson's Designer Handbags, Northland Eastland, Oakland, Fairlane, Twelve Oaks, Pontiac and Ann Arbor only.

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