



# Bridges

## THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM



### With Great Appreciation...

**Editor's Note:** We would like to share with you a letter written by Dawn Duterte to Vice Admiral and Mrs. Emmett Tidd following their recent classroom visit. The Tidds have been devoted supporters of the MHS LOV Program since 1998.

Dear Vice Admiral and Mrs. Tidd,

Thank you so much for coming to speak to Ms. Poling's second period LOV class on Tuesday. What an honor it was to have you, a naval officer who served his country for 33 years and served under Admiral Zumwalt, visit us!

I loved your presentation because it was to the point, and your experience was so different from those of our previous speakers. I can see why Admiral Zumwalt thought so highly of you! You are a man of outstanding character, and your service to the United States, the Navy, and this LOV class is inspiring.

Mrs. Tidd, you are such a charismatic and charming woman! Your

love story was touching, as well as your role as the "mother hen" for the other Navy wives. I truly admire how you have always helped other people.

The most important thing I learned from your visit is that history is extremely valuable. Your patriotism and strong character greatly affected me. You have made me want to contribute more to our society.

Thank you for all that you've done for our country and for our Lessons of Vietnam class!

~ Dawn Duterte



VADM & Mrs. Tidd welcome  
MHS LOV students

### A Wall of Reflections

By Amanda Goldfarb

As the names of the Wake County soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice were read one by one, I could see tears in the eyes of my classmates. At that moment, the young men and women who gave their lives in Vietnam were very real to us. We stood in a circle at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial that night, the air misty and cool. As one student later said, "I have learned the importance of honoring those who have served our country."

Earlier in the day, our *Lessons of Vietnam* class had visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial with Mr. Jan Scruggs, the Founder and President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. As we walked alongside him, we learned things that only he could have known about the Memorial. For example, he told us that there is one imperfection in the statue of the Three Servicemen: the bullets on the belt worn around the soldiers' necks point up toward their faces, instead of away from them, as is customary in the military.

Mr. Scruggs then described his vision of the newly proposed Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center. He hopes that in addition to educating about the history of the Memorial, the Center will encourage and foster patriotism and an appreciation for those who serve in our Armed Forces.

After Mr. Scruggs departed, our Vietnam Veteran chaperones, Mr. Phil Beane, Dr. Ric Vandett, Mr. Pat McGrath, and Mr. Bill McGrady, helped us find specific names to rub on The Wall. Some of us decided to rub a name for a link or family member. Others found names of people who shared birthdays or hometowns. Melissa DiBenedetto rubbed the name of 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Sharon A. Lane, the first woman to have her name etched on The Wall. Melissa said she rubbed Lt. Lane's name, because LOV speaker Mrs. Larry Hines shared her story in our classroom, and Melissa wanted to honor her.

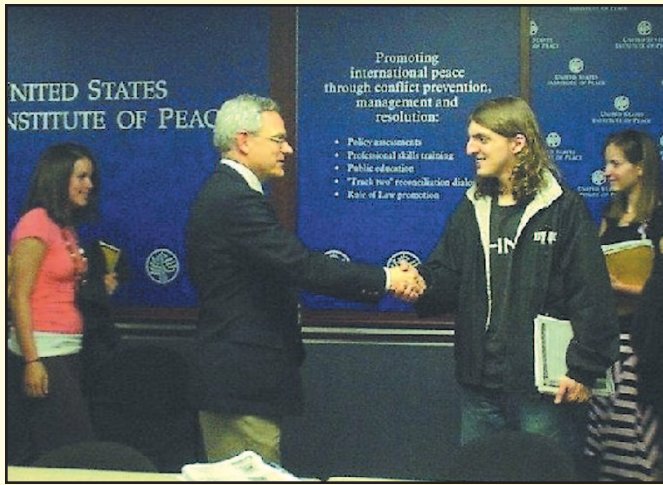
LOV student James David reflected, "I have come to The Wall before...but now I see it differently. These are no longer merely names to me, and I really appreciate what they did."

Our chaperones were also deeply affected by the experience. Millbrook Dad, Veteran Bill McGrady, said, "I came when it was initially dedicated, and it is still a moving experience 24 years later. There are guys on that wall that I flew with, and I think about the fact that they gave their lives, but I'm still here. I remember how fragile life is. People come to The Wall so they don't forget the sacrifices made at a time when people didn't appreciate it."



Artwork by Samantha Wilkerson





*Dr. Helsing greets Ben Al-Abdalli*

## Peacemaking in the Real World

*By Cristina Chenlo*

LOV students started our 2005 Washington, DC Field Trip with an eye-opening stop at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). An independent national institution established and funded by Congress, the USIP's role is to help prevent, manage, and resolve violent conflicts by empowering others with knowledge, skills, resources, and a direct involvement in peacemaking efforts. Our first speaker was USIP Chief of Party Ms. A. Heather Coyne, whose role in Iraq was to help reduce the violence occurring at the moment, train the Iraqi people to resolve their conflicts, strengthen civil society, and bring the lessons learned in Iraq to the U.S. Ms. Coyne mentioned that the Iraqi people, initially enthusiastic about democracy, soon became frustrated as they realized that the process of building a democratic government in Iraq would take many years. "The Iraqis were surprised by this realization, but not depressed," she shared. "They actually seem re-energized now, and they are starting to think in the long term in order to affect the minds of the next generation." Ms. Coyne also spoke about the need to adjust U.S. priorities in Iraq to matters that the Iraqi government cannot or does not wish to deal with, which will benefit the creation of a democracy in the long run. These include advocacy training for minority groups, teaching the concept of political parties that are not based exclusively on identity, developing small businesses, building universities and centers of dialogue and debate, and setting up an independent media.

Next, we took part in a discussion with Dr. Jeff Helsing, who discussed the parallels existing between the Vietnam War and the situation in Iraq. He stressed that in both cases, our country became involved in something that was hard to accomplish, with both President Bush and President Johnson trying to do the minimum possible to achieve their goals and preserve their domestic agendas by not committing the country to full scale war. "Iraq was an opportunity—not because of its direct threat to us, but because it was intended to start a reverse domino effect," submitted Dr. Helsing. After explaining the original intent of the *Democratic Peace Theory* in Iraq, the concept that democracies do not go to war with each other, he also pointed out that "at the root of democracy is conflict." Overall, Dr. Helsing seemed to possess a positive outlook on Iraq's future, but he reiterated the importance of time and the realization that perfect democracies cannot exist if internal conflict cannot be controlled.

Our interactive discussion with these foreign policy experts was truly enlightening. Every student came away with a greater appreciation for the innovative role played by the USIP in preventing, managing, and resolving threats to international peace.

## Students Speak Out on Iraq—2006

- *The question should not be, 'When can we leave?' but 'How can we help to leave the Iraqi people with a sense of security and a form of government made for the people, and by the people?'* —Ben Al-Abdalli
- *"I think that enough damage has already been done, and we should be figuring out a solution so that we can at least have an end in sight and eventually retreat."* —Nadia Aboulhossn
- *"I learned at the USIP that the U.S. is in Iraq to show that we can help all Middle East nations. In return, they will hopefully become democracies. However, that goal is a bit idealistic. It seems to be having unintended consequences."* —Amanda Goldfarb
- *"The war is not a conflict between America and terror. It is a civil war in Iraq."* —Melody Lee
- *"Patience and commitment are two necessities for victory that the U.S. is lacking."* —James David
- *"I believe that the U.S. must finish its job in Iraq. Regardless of the outcome, our troops must be praised."* —Alaina Alevizatos

## America's Most Hallowed Burial Ground

*By Melissa DiBenedetto*

To many, Arlington National Cemetery is merely a name or a tourist attraction. However, a few of us have seen and heard the rifle volleys followed by the famous playing of "Taps." Some of us have even been presented with the folded triangular American flag, because we are the next of kin to an American hero. My first visit to Arlington was for the funeral of my grandfather, a World War II Navy pilot, on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. As my family and I followed the caisson, I could not help but be captivated by the rows and rows of polished tombstones. I looked at the names of the soldiers and wondered what their lives had been like, and then I whispered "thank you."

I recently had the honor of going back to Arlington with my *Lessons of Vietnam* class. Our first stop was The Women in Military Service to America Memorial. My classmates and I were strongly impacted by *The Faces of the Fallen* exhibit, which portrays the 1,300 soldiers who were killed in Afghanistan and Iraq between October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

Visiting the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and witnessing the Changing of the Guard ceremony was also an emotional experience. We observed that on the sarcophagus there is an inscription that reads, "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God." The Tomb contains the remains of unknown American soldiers from WWI, WWII, and the Korean War.

Our pilgrimage to America's most hallowed burial ground was a memorable conclusion to our Washington, DC Field Trip. I believe I speak for all of my classmates when I say that we owe soldiers like my grandfather a sincere debt of gratitude for their service to our country and their willingness to defend our way of life.





*They were grunts, airmen, sailors, engineers  
And they left home with high hopes and cheers.*

*They were fathers, brothers, husbands, sons  
And were trained and taught to shoot guns.*

*They were old, young, brave, scared  
And the jungle mud was the bed they shared.*

*They were farmers, doctors, students, "average joes"  
And through booby-trapped jungles they were told to go.*

*They were black, white—men of many colors  
And they shared the strongest bond of a band of brothers.*

*They fought in the jungles, airfields and from ships  
And they missed the feeling of a woman's lips.*

*They were captured, killed, missing, lost  
And the price some paid was of the highest cost.*

*The dead came home in caskets and body bags  
And the living came home to disdain and burning flags.*

*And for those who heard and answered the call  
We are here to honor the soldiers on The Wall.*

—By John Ng



Artwork by Jacob Fields

## An Unforgettable Experience

By Cristina Chenlo

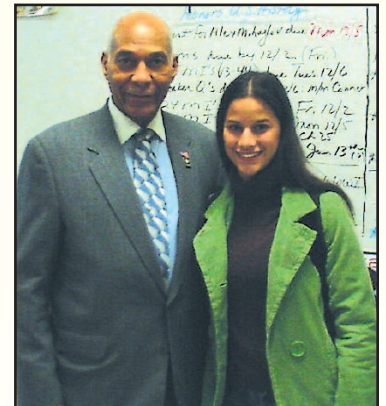
As our *Lessons of Vietnam* class concludes each semester, students take time to reflect on the course through unique surveys. These reflections demonstrate that special elective courses like ours have an equally important place in a well-rounded high school education, as do standard courses, such as math, science, and language arts. "Diversity is the key to intelligence," reflected one *LOV* student. "Special elective courses have a direct effect on the quality of a person's education."

Many students have come to realize how valuable the *Community-in-the-Classroom* approach is! Every single speaker who visited our classroom this year was mentioned in the surveys, and students shared how each one's story impacted their outlook on life. "It seems as if each visitor helped me to realize how much I, as well as the majority of Americans, take our freedom for granted," reflected one classmate. "I have gained a greater appreciation for the country in which I live," commented another. We were reminded many times of how important it is to take full advantage of our rights and responsibilities. A *LOV* senior submitted, "General Price was an inspiring speaker, and his straightforward, no-nonsense patriotism and service made me more aware of the value of my right to vote. Now I look at voting as a positive way to continue to make our country what we want it to be."

This class has also changed many students' interest in history. We are more motivated to follow current events, keep up with international news, and discuss relevant topics with our family and peers. "History doesn't

seem pointless and boring anymore," said one student. "There is no question that we witness history every single day, and it should be our duty to be well-informed." *LOV* even helps some students discover future career possibilities. "Because of this class, I found out that I want to major in international relations," wrote a determined Millbrook senior.

The *LOV* program at Millbrook High School has become extremely popular, because it challenges each one of us to grow academically and personally. "Besides exposing me to the Vietnam War and its lingering consequences, this course taught me things that I cannot find in a textbook, such as character, values, morals, and critical thinking skills," offered another *LOV* student. From the amazing speakers and the challenging projects, to the unforgettable link correspondences and our culminating Washington, DC Field Trip, this experience has stirred within all of us an ongoing passion for civic, intellectual, and moral engagement.



General Price and Cristina Chenlo



## Darfur Awareness Week

By Kevie Malek

Darfur—Does it sound familiar? A few months ago, many Millbrook High students had no idea that there are hundreds of thousands of civilians dying in Darfur, an area in western Sudan. The goal of the members of the Darfur-Awareness Club was to spread awareness—and that is exactly what we did.

From March 13<sup>th</sup> - March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the Darfur-Awareness Club hosted numerous activities. On Monday, club members tied green ribbons to cars and attached fliers of information on Darfur. Tuesday through Thursday, booths were set up in the cafeteria and the media center with information regarding the history of Darfur, the women and children, and ideas relating to what the public can do to help. Many students stopped by the booths and picked up information—including postcards which were later sent to President Bush to encourage him to take action on the situation on Darfur.

The concluding activity—and the highlight—was a showing of the film *Hotel Rwanda*. Approximately 40 Millbrook High School students attended. Club officers paused the movie at appropriate intervals to discuss the issues relating to genocide. Attendees were strongly impacted by the movie. NCDPI Social Studies Consultant Steven Weber commended the audience for their interest in this very crucial subject. MHS junior Emma Mazur, commented, “Before the Darfur-Awareness Week, I had little prior knowledge to the issues going on in Darfur. Now I am even more motivated to make a difference.” The North Carolina Holocaust Council has also recognized our efforts.

With the school year coming to an end, Darfur-Awareness Club members are making plans for next year. We are very hopeful that our grassroots organization can make a *real* difference!

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## Does Iran Pose a Threat?

By Sheelah Iyengar

For those who are unfamiliar with the history of Iran's nuclear development, here are some basic facts: Iran is a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), under which countries without nuclear weapons agree not to buy or build nuclear weapons. In return, these countries can create and use nuclear power for peaceful purposes, encouraging those member states with nuclear weapons (U.S., Russia, France, U.K., China, Israel, India, and Pakistan) to make non-military nuclear technology available. Iran has maintained the right to have access to all of this, and has been under international scrutiny for many years. The question is: Does Iran pose a threat to the United States? The World?



Artwork by Jessica Carrick

Suspensions arose for two reasons:

Iran was discovered to have concealed her nuclear development for nearly two decades. Even though the U.S. does not claim Iran is violating the NPT, the Bush administration claims Iran is not to be trusted, as Tehran has failed to be open about its nuclear activities and, therefore, should be denied rights granted under the treaty. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, President Bush stated: (1) Coalition forces have seized IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and components that were clearly produced in Iran; (2) such actions, along with Iran's support for terrorism and its pursuit of nuclear weapons, are increasingly isolating Iran; and (3) America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats. President Ahmadinejad of Iran, fearful of a U.S. attack, says he may have reason to authorize and initiate nuclear weapons programs.

The situation in Iran remains uncertain. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, has considered a possible military strike, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is pushing for \$75 million to fund Iranian opposition groups to try to achieve regime change from within. Vice President Dick Cheney last year ordered planning to begin for a potential military strike against Iran. Senators John McCain of Arizona and Joe Lieberman of Connecticut oppose these plans wholeheartedly.

Clearly, the clock is ticking. Iran's nuclear power program is heading down the train track at full speed. The only question now remaining is whether the train will be stopped via the voluntary actions of Iran or derailed via the voluntary actions of other members of the world community.



MHS LOV Class Field Trip—Washington, DC—2006