Millbrook High School



# Bridges

### **Lessons of Vietnam**



Volume XI, Issue I Fall 200

#### An Evening Aboard the LOV Train

By Stephanie Wakeford

Everyone was quiet as we all gathered under the bright yellow banner anxiously awaiting Mrs. Lindy Poling's arrival. When the signal was given, the group greeted Mrs. Poling with open arms and capacious smiles. She understood the event to be a small gathering in honor of Lt. Col. Zumwalt's son, James, as he prepared for deployment to Iraq. But as my teacher entered the room, she quickly realized she had been fooled.

"Thank you, Lindy, for 10 years of LOV!" echoed throughout North Ridge Country Club, as Mrs. Poling was greeted by the smiling faces of more than people sixty who had come from all over the country. Tears delicately rolled down her cheeks as

Photo by Ron Weathers

Former and current LOV students, LOV links, speakers, and advisors gather together at the "10 Year LOV Salute" to Mrs. Poling.

she began hugging each of her former and current students, as well as the Veteran links and speakers who attended the surprise dinner.

Lt. Col. Jim Zumwalt, who planned the gathering with his sister, Mrs. Mouzetta Zumwalt-Weathers, and 2008 *LOV* grad, Lisa Huynh, welcomed the group. His words were articulate and charismatic when describing our extraordinary teacher. Our host announced that throughout the four-hour evening, there would be a delicious dinner, interspersed with the words of a dozen speakers who have been involved with her *LOV* Program over the years. Then he advised everyone to "come aboard the *LOV* train; sit back, and enjoy the ride!"

Nada Milkovich and I served as the first speakers. I happily recounted the moment in Mrs. Poling's Honors U.S. History class last year, when I realized that I was enjoying history for the first time! Dan Ya, a current *LOV* student, shared his family's harrowing escape from Vietnam's Central Highlands to a refugee camp in Cambodia many years ago. Thanks to the Global Missions Committee of Hudson Memorial Church, chaired by Dr. Barclay Poling, Dan and his family arrived safely in Raleigh, NC in 2003. Dan generated much laughter by addressing the group as "ya'll." Lt. Col. Zumwalt wasn't the least bit hesitant, adding, "He is from *South* Vietnam!" Yet, perhaps one of the most memorable moments was provided by former Millbrook High School graduate (1992) and now U.S. Marine Captain, Sean Keenan. While sharing humorous anecdotes about his notorious high school escapades, he captivated the audience with his moving trib-

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ute to Mrs. Poling. He shared the moment back in his U.S. History class in which he first came to realize Mrs. Poling was a *true teacher*. In his closing, he said with great emotion, "You're *still* my teacher."

Several poignant presentations occurred throughout the evening. Mr. Lee Wahler awarded Mrs. Poling a PBR-FVA *Lifetime Membership*, which included a lovely plaque and several mementos. Mrs. Mouzetta Zumwalt Weathers presented the tribute honoree with

a Lone Sailor golden pin. This gift served as a stark reminder of the difference one person can make. Mr. Zumwalt presented Mrs. Poling with a "Book of LOV Letters"—tributes from links and classroom speakers thanking her for her hard work sacrifice and over the past

decade in helping students understand a difficult era in our history.

Nada and I had the honor of conversing with Veteran links,
Mr. Jim Nesmith, Dr. Robert Ordonez, and Mr. Dan Sheehan, all of
whom had traveled from New Mexico, Texas, and Pennsylvania respectively! Making such a long journey served as a true testimonial as
to how much Mrs. Poling and her students have meant to each of them.

Mrs. Poling's daughter, Ashley, who recently graduated from the College of William and Mary, delivered a loving tribute which immeasurably moved the audience. Ashley concluded by saying, "I am a lifetime student in my mom's *LOV* class."

Some of my favorite words came from the distinguished General George B. Price. He remarked, "Thank you for helping our country get out of denial about this era. Much obliged to you, Mrs. Poling, for being one in a million!" He couldn't have said it any better.

Thank you, Mrs. Poling, for all that you do. Thank you for your high expectations and for helping your students reach their potential. Thank you, Mrs. Poling, for not only spreading the *LOV*, but inspiring the minds of many and enabling our dreams to come true.

**Editors' Note:** Respected Veteran link and frequent guest speaker, Mr. Larry Stogner, wrote and produced a wonderful segment about this special event which aired on WTVD-ABC News Oct. 19, 2009

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Here is the link: http://abclocal.go.com/wtvd/video?id=7072630

### Two Perspectives: President Obama's Report Card

#### Grade: "H" for Hope

By Rashaad Toney

Grade: "U" for Unrealistic

By Emily Bower

Former President Franklin Roosevelt's first year in office was tumultuous, similar to President Barack Obama's. On January 20, 2009, President Obama inherited at least four, and possibly eight, years of horrific challenges pertaining to our nation's economy and international reputation. But now, the presidential honeymoon is over. The right wing, and even some members of the Democratic Party, are pouncing on the President. It is much too early in his term to pull out the "promises made, but not kept" checklist, as the problems he faces could take eight years to remedy.

Mr. Obama's popularity generated a high level of anticipation when he took office. Some expected a miracle worker, although he gave fair warning he was not. During the course of his presidential campaign, he greatly emphasized the enormity of our nation's challenges.

In President Obama's September speech at the United Nations, he asked world leaders, who once accused the United States of acting alone, to now join us in solving global crises. He stressed that in order to find solutions, we must have a global response--not just an American response. Polls taken both nationally and internationally have shown that most countries, including our own, are operating on their own agendas. President Obama is working diligently with other countries to identify common interests and address common threats. But, this task is not easy when dealing with nations whose ideas are diametrically opposed to America's. Surveys around the world have

indicated that our President's popularity is growing based on his new approach to foreign affairs. This approach did not go unnoticed by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee which honored him for his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples."

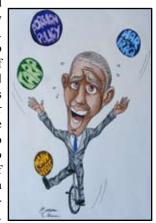


President Obama's ideas

have great merit, as was recognized by his Nobel Peace Prize award. It is too early to expect all of his campaign goals to be met. He has great promise and tremendous ability. While too early to award a passing or

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or Stimulus Plan, has matured into a \$787 billion law that will plague future

generations for decades. The United States' debt has risen astronomically to about \$1.75 trillion this year alone. The Obama administration has also been handling the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), known as the Wall Street bailout, poorly. Some members of Congress are unhappy, and speak for the general public when they say, "The plan will leave U.S. taxpayers with too much of the risk." This is something no one can afford, as these initial months of Barack Obama's presidency have given rise to the greatest increase in unemployment for a generation (*msnbc.msn.com*).



Artwork by Bridgette Williamson

The President's inability to deliver on his visions of foreign policy

also has critics worried. Many are saying his attempts to bridge gaps with other allies are gambles that have failed to pay off. Iran and Cuba have yet to change their behavior towards the United States, suggesting that the policy of contrition is not working. In truth, violence has risen since his visits to Mexico, Pakistan, and Iraq (news.bbc.co.uk/).

Regarding Iraq and Afghanistan, the growing opinion is our troops should come home. If we simply provided weapons and resources to the Iraqis, other countries might be more likely to pitch in, since the United States would no longer be an occupying force. We also need to pay attention to the military threats coming from North Korea, Russia, and China. However, we are unable to do this until we have more military resources at home. Perhaps President Obama has not heard the adage "hindsight is twenty-twenty." Both the British and Soviet occupations of Afghanistan which took place in the previous two centuries have spelled out the futility of getting involved in that country. European public support for this war is declining. As the cost of the war waxes, the President's report card grade failing grade, for the moment, he has earned a grade "H"-- for "Hope." | wanes. He just can't seem to make his idealistic aspirations a reality.

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With hopes that President Raul Castro will bring economic and agricultural reforms to Cuba, the United States hopes to improve diplomatic relations with its communist foe. However, it is unclear whether relations will improve between the two countries.

When President Castro met with President Obama this past April, he said that he was willing to talk about the countries' differences and try to begin working through them. He wanted to discuss transitioning to an economy structured similar to China's, as well as civil reform. The latter would include human rights initiatives, such as lifting travel restrictions and improving basic rights, removing the wage limit restrictions, and allowing civilians to purchase state-owned housing. President Obama conditioned U.S. cooperation on Havana first releasing political prisoners imprisoned simply for advocating human rights. The Cuban leader also would have to reduce the tax rate for money entering Cuba sent to citizens by fam-

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ily members residing outside Cuba. This dialogue between the two leaders initially suggested progress might be made in the near future.

Yet, in recent months, President Castro has been "robbing Peter to pay Paul" by making budget cuts from education and health care in order to keep his country's communist system alive. He says that he still wants to work with the U.S., but he is refusing to change his wavs. "I was elected to defend, build, and perfect socialism, not destroy it," he stated at a press conference with Fox News in early August.

It seems that the two presidents would like to work out their differences; however, they would each prefer to resume relations only after initial demands are met. President Obama attempted to resume diplomatic relations by inviting Cuba to join the Organization of American States, but the Cuban leader refused the offer. Therefore, it seems until Raul Castro indicates a willingness to make some changes, relations between Cuba and America will be on hold. \* \* \* \* \*

#### The Legacy of McNamara's War

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By Aby Stoner

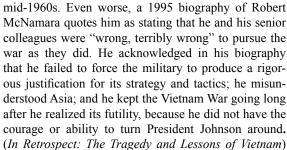
Robert McNamara served as America's eighth Secretary of Defense under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Under President Kennedy, Secretary McNamara began restructuring our Nation's defense system to adequately defend itself from nuclear attacks. As tensions overseas escalated, the Kennedy administration emphasized improving our ability to counter Communist

wars of liberation. As a result, the United States began to train and equip military personnel and our allies, like South Vietnam, in counterinsurgency techniques.

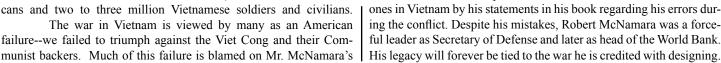
In light of the military upheavals feared worldwide, Mr. McNamara played a key role in developing America's strategy to counter an increasing Soviet nuclear threat. In addition, he headed a huge U.S. military buildup in Southeast Asia. As the Vietnam conflict grew, Mr. McNamara employed technology, statistics, weaponry, and organization charts to fight a peasant enemy in this impoverished nation. However, some critics say his reliance on technology brought about our undoing in Vietnam. He made disastrous miscalculations that led to the deaths of more than 58,000 Americans and two to three million Vietnamese soldiers and civilians.

The war in Vietnam is viewed by many as an American failure--we failed to triumph against the Viet Cong and their Com-

poor choices and improper handling of facts that he personally observed. He once acknowledged that the bombings of North Vietnam and the Ho Chi Minh trail supply line could not cripple the Viet Cong because the Viet Cong hardly needed supplies beyond ammunition. However, he proved unable to translate this into a rationale for the Johnson Administration to extricate itself from the conflict by the



Robert McNamara died on July 6, 2009. Many will remember him as an icy-veined, cold-hearted, rigidly intellectual man. Many more feel as though he poured salt on the still painful wounds of the families who lost loved





Robert S. McNamara

#### \* \* \* \* \* \* Troop Surge in Afghanistan

By Morgan Carstens

As American public support for the war in Afghanistan drops below 40%, President Barack Obama plans to deploy more troops on top of the 20,000 deployed earlier this year. The BBC reports he has already decided to deploy 40,000 more troops to Afghanistan, although no official announcement has been made. Many Democrats and even some Republicans in Congress are not sure if the troop surge will be effective in removing insurgents from Afghanistan.

Many feel that something has to be done differently. General Stanley McChrystal's report makes it clear. "The status quo will lead to failure," he said, as he went on to request 40,000 more troops. In 2006, President George Bush approved a troop surge in Iraq, now considered to have been successful. But, that does not necessarily mean one will work in Afghanistan. Afghan insurgents differ from those in Iraq. They use more roadside bombs, attack in smaller groups, and use the rural mountainous terrain to their advantage. Afghan insurgents also make use of the tribal areas in neighboring Pakistan to conduct hit and run attacks back into Afghanistan, where they blend in with the local population very easily. Walking down village streets, one cannot tell the difference between an innocent civilian and a militant. Although such challenges could possibly make the war in Afghanistan unwinnable, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said, "I don't think we have the option to leave. That's quite clear."

Success in Afghanistan will require more help from our allies, especially Pakistan. Britain plans on sending about 500 more troops to Afghanistan--"if they are properly equipped." This is not significant militarily, but it shows that Britain supports the war. In 2008, President George Bush ordered attacks against insurgents in neighboring Pakistan. The Pakistanis refused to allow U.S troops into the country, threatening to fire on U.S. soldiers crossing the border. The Pakistan – Afghanistan border is a very critical area in this war. Insurgents take refuge in Pakistan's western mountains where

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the U.S is prevented from attacking them, even though we know they are there. A Pakistani military force of 30,000 recently launched an offensive against an estimated 10,000 Taliban fighters in South Waziristan, bordering Afghanistan. A victory will strongly assist U.S. and NATO forces fighting the Taliban on the Afghan side of the border.

Important questions remain. What happens when/if the insurgents are defeated? Will we need to ensure a more stable democratic government, stronger military, and growing economy are in place before we leave? President Obama is debating whether to persue such goals, or whether just to focus on defeating the insurgents. General McChrystal's report said if we want to be successful in Afghanistan there needs to be "a dramatic change in the way we operate." A new combat plan called *restraint* was put into effect this year. Restraint stops U.S. soldiers from fighting the Taliban if there are civilians around. Most soldiers oppose these new rules of engagement, but it could help turn the war around. As one officer has said, "Killing 1,000 Taliban is great but if I kill two civilians in the process, it's a loss." General McChrystal reported, "Civilian casualties and collateral damage to homes and property resulting from an over-reliance on firepower and force protection have severely damaged ISAF's (International Security Assistance Forces) legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people." 60% of the Afghan population has been directly affected by armed conflict, and the U.S. needs their support. The Afghan people will cooperate with the Afghan army if they get security. Without it, they will be punished or killed for cooperating with the enemy.

Some say, because we shifted our focus from Afghanistan to Iraq in 2003, we lost many villages and vital positions to the Taliban. Since then, a weakened Taliban has regrouped to become stronger. Almost everyone agrees that if we want to win in Afghanistan, we need more U.S. troops, continued Allied support, a strong commitment from Pakistan, and a stable Afghan government. \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

#### **Universal Healthcare: A Universal Solution?**

By Michael Doudnikoff

the death of pop legend Michael Jackson, many Americans ponder | may sound appealing on the outside; but the truth is that, under this

the fate of their own situation. Recent talks of healthcare reform have many Americans wondering if they will be able to keep their current healthcare or not. The proposed government plan addresses the main issues facing Americans, but Americans want to know whether or not they will be able to keep their current family doctors and coverage. President Obama and the Democrats in Congress are working long hours to try to push their proposed bill through. When all is said and done, will this bill be the answer to our country's needs? Will it benefit the majority of Americans?

Possibly one of the most important issues facing the Obama administration is how the government can provide coverage to those without healthcare insurance. There are currently about forty million Americans without healthcare insurance, but this number may be larger than the real number of Americans who simply cannot afford or obtain it.



Artwork by Lizz Alfano

With healthcare as the hottest topic in recent news since | but is this the solution? The Canadian universal healthcare system

model, it may take longer than one may expect to receive the care he/she desires. Investigative journalist John Stossel reports that the Canadian government rations healthcare. For example, a pet can get a CT scan within a day, but the wait for a person is a month. In the United States, many of us want things in life fast and simple. This, however, may not be true if the government takes control of the healthcare industry. The proposed plan states that those currently uninsured will be provided with health insurance; but at what cost to the American taxpayer?

The national debt is rising at an alarming rate, and many of those skeptical about the government's plan to take over healthcare fear that this bill will add to it. President Obama claims that he will not add to the national debt or raise taxes for the middle class to pay for healthcare reform. The looming question is how the presi-

Many of those hoping to solve this problem look to universal health- | dent will be able to pay for the plan without adding to the national care systems, such as Canada's, as a model for the United States; debt. The final chapter of this saga has clearly not yet been written.

#### The War Within a War

By Allie Haywood

For more than a decade, the political and social rights of Afghan women have been severely limited. Forbidden to work, for-



bidden to leave home without a male escort, and forced to wear clothing which covers them from head to toe, the rights of Afghan women continued to deteriorate throughout the rule of the Taliban, which began in 1996. Since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, and the adoption of a new Afghan constitution in 2004, which guarantees both men and women equal rights and duties before the law, one would ascertain that the basic rights of women have improved.

But the struggle for achieving gender equality in Afghanistan remains, as the repression of women is still prevalent, especially in rural areas. Taliban forces are

responsible for several deadly attacks against women, specifically targeting women's aid and relief workers, schoolteachers, and female students. Women who invoke the rights guaranteed to them in the equal rights provision of the Afghan constitution, such as participating in public life or holding jobs, are almost routinely threatened, harassed, and attacked. Particularly brutal attacks against Afghan women have recently received national attention. Sitara Achakzai, a politician and women's rights activist, was murdered outside her home in Kandahar. And who could forget the despicable acid attacks on young girls for attending school in November of 2008?

Yes, the road to equality for Afghan women is a rocky one at that; moreover, U.S. troops in Afghanistan are virtually powerless to stop discriminatory forces. When the United States declared war against the Taliban in 2001, helping the oppressed women of Afghanistan was a top priority. Seven years later, there is little evidence of progress made on a permanent level for Afghan women.

The blame, however, cannot be placed entirely upon the shoulders of American troops. The contents of certain laws recently passed in Afghanistan suggest that the government is reluctant to fully relinquish the sexist mindset previously instated by the Taliban. Shiite Muslim men now have the legal rights permitting them to starve their wives if they refuse to submit to sex. Before parliamentarians had a chance to discuss revisions, President Hamid Karzai hurriedly approved the law by decree during a legislative recess. "I think the chances of this being discussed in parliament in the next year or so are low and the chances of im-



provements being made are lower," affirmed Rachel Reid, Afghanistan researcher with Human Rights Watch.

The situation of the women of Afghanistan is becoming more urgent. Their rights are being legally degraded, and certain political figures seem to be making backward strides away from equality. So what is the fate of the courageous Afghan women? Only time will tell.

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### The Beast at Our Doorstep

By Caitlin Shaw and Courtney Hausfeld

9,900 lives. For generations, Mexico has been a popular breeding and Boston, Massachusetts. "The violence follows the drugs," said

ground for manufacturing and selling illegal drugs, thus laying the ground work for the current war between the drug cartels and the government. But this drug problem has spread beyond the Mexican border.

After many years of turmoil, Mexican President Felipe Calderon, who took office in 2006, deployed approximately 36,000 troops in order to partner with the federal police in nine different states throughout the country. As federal, state, and local police had already been corrupted by the drug cartels, citizens were concerned whether President Calderon's military forces were just as susceptible to corruption as the police.

The drug problem in Mexico has far reaching ramifications. For years, the United States government has feared Mexico's corruption would spill over into our country. Official reports, showing a rise in killings and kidnappings in the United States, have been associated with these vicious drug cartels. Contrary to popular belief, the violence is ac-



Artwork by Peyton Long

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Since January 2007, the Mexican drug war has claimed over | tually escalating in areas all over the U.S., such as Anchorage, Alaska,

David Cuthbertson, agent in charge of the FBI's office in the border city of El Paso, Texas. U.S. violence is nowhere near the magnitude existing right now in Mexico. Mexican authorities have seen "beheadings, assassinations of police officers and soldiers, and mass killings in which the bodies were arranged to end a message," according to the Huffington Post. Officers in the United States fear that drug violence is on the rise.

But the cartels cannot be totally blamed. as some Americans actually contribute to the violence. According to United States authorities, Americans are providing 95% of the weapons used by the cartels and are also among their best drug customers. Annually, we send an estimated \$28.5 billion in drug money across the Mexican border.

There is no doubt that Mexican authorities will be unable to slay the drug cartel beast as long as Americans continue to feed it. \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

#### \* \* \* \* \* \* \* Why LOV/RIR?

By Meredith Elsea

LOV/RIR is one of the most popular senior electives offered at Millbrook High School. In LOV/RIR, there are many unique assignments, such as projects, book reviews, movie reviews, web reviews, and a three-month pen pal linking project. Even though many seniors are prone to catch "senioritis" and often tend to take a less rigorous schedule, there are a total of sixty seniors who are taking LOV/RIR this semester. So a question comes to mind: Why are so many seniors taking this challenging history course?

After conducting a survey in Mrs. Poling's LOV/RIR classes. I found that the majority of students decided to take this class because of encouragement from older friends and siblings who were previously enrolled. Some students chose to take this class because they want to learn more about current national and global issues. Senior Sarah Kim wrote, "I didn't understand, nor really tried to understand, international or even domestic affairs. I felt this left me behind in my knowledge of history and past and current news." Some have family ties to this region of the world. Senior Hniem Siu shared, "I was born in Cambodia and my family grew up in the central highlands, but we came to America when I was really young. I am proud to say I am an American; but sadly, I do not know the history of my homeland."

Interestingly enough, a majority of students in both classes did not know a lot about the Vietnam War. A large percentage said that they really did not know much about the Vietnam Era due to the fast pace and massive curriculum in U.S. History last year. Senior Peter Le commented, "I knew one perspective about the war, but I wanted to learn about another since my dad served in the war."

This raises the final question: What do students hope to gain from taking this class? A vast number really wish to learn more about the culture of the Vietnamese people, develop a better understanding of what happened in Vietnam, and find out why this war affected so many people. Louis Zuniga wrote, "I want to learn about the history and learn about the culture and know Vietnam as a country."

> So much for "senioritis" when it comes to LOV/RIR! \* \* \* \* \* \*

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#### The Great Cultural Divide

By Sarah Kim

A variety of distinct cultures exist in the world today. Despite the profound differences in these cultures, we often can find similarities as well. However, as students in the LOV class compared the cultures of Vietnam and America, we discovered a great divide exists regarding lifestyles, social aspects, and beliefs.

In Vietnamese society, family and the community are extremely valued. Extended families often live together, and ancestors are remembered, as well as highly praised. Loyalty and respect towards the community and family are continually expected. Contrast this with Americans who seem to have a more relaxed attitude toward the community, family, and deceased relatives. Many Americans are unaware of whom their distant ancestors were. Homes across the United States are generally occupied by immediate family members only. It also appears Americans seem more concerned with their own personal satisfaction, such as school, work, and a social calendar that revolves specifically around the individual. The Vietnamese, on the other hand, have very tight knit relationships with family and community members who are always put first.

Large families are typical in Vietnam. Younger generations are also subject to an elder's views, and marriage is strongly determined by one's parents. Many American families have two children-or less, and decisions on marriage are based more on individual choice.

Harmony with the natural environment is greatly treasured by the Vietnamese. For hundreds of years, they have cultivated the land striving for a balance with nature. In America, for over 200 years, we know nature has not been respected in the same way.

With these differing aspects of each culture, Vietnamese and Americans could be seen as polar opposites. However, understanding the differences between them helps students in our Lessons of Vietnam class better appreciate what each culture has to offer. This concept of keeping our minds open, indeed, helps us better understand some of the significant global problems we are facing today. And, it is when we keep an open mind, we can learn the most.

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#### A Tribute to a Special Hero

By Lindy G. Poling



"Mr. James" teaching LOV students in the fall of 2000.

For the past sixteen years, I have been honored to call Mr. James Sarayiotes my friend. This amazing gentleman passed away on September 10, 2009, at age 89. I have always been grateful that "Mr. James," a proud World War II Veteran who served under General George Patton in the 6th Armored Division in the Third Army, eagerly volunteered to substitute for my U.S. History classes when I journeyed to Vietnam in April, 1996. My students were studying WWII at the time, and I will never forget their enthusiastic re-

counting of learning about the War from someone who had lived it!

For many years, Mr. James was a frequent guest speaker in our

Lessons of Vietnam (LOV) classes sharing his WWII experiences and
his insights about war and peace, as well as reminiscing about his WWII
reunions. He greatly appreciated our LOV Program; and as a member
of our Bridges Advisory Board since 2001, gave welcome reviews
and suggestions relating to articles written by Bridges staff members.

Over the years, Mr. James presented me with several books bearing meaningful inscriptions. On December 1, 2005, he wrote: "To Lindy Poling, whose professional dedication has taught her students to truly understand the value of history and to appreciate the sacrifices of the Armed Forces." It means a great deal to me that a member of the Greatest Generation, a real hero, was so devoted to our Lessons of Vietnam Program. Sadly, he has now left us to join so many others of that generation who have also passed. We will miss him, but we also know how fortunate we were to have had him in our lives for a small part of his—one marked by personal sacrifice and dedication to our country and to our students.

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#### **Taps for Ted**

By Matthew Knudson

In 1962, the citizens of Massachusetts elected a man who would become one of the Nation's longest serving U.S. Senators. He was Edward ("Ted") Kennedy. While having a brother as President may have helped him gain supporters, the two brothers did not necessarily hold the same opinion on many issues. A major conflict for the United States during this time was the war in Vietnam. Ted Kennedy opposed the war in Vietnam while his brother increased U.S. involvement. Nonetheless, Ted Kennedy held the utmost respect for our soldiers and their mission. It wasn't until he joined the Armed Services Committee that he found he could truly have an impact on improving the lives of those in uniform.

Upon joining the Armed Services Committee in 1983, Senator Kennedy became Chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee—a position he would hold until his death in August, 2009. One of his first major efforts was to work toward ending the production and testing of nuclear weapons. While this bill was not passed at the time, today above-ground testing of these weapons is illegal. During the late 1980's, Senator Kennedy worked tirelessly to help military spouses find jobs, raise military pay, and provide child care for the children of military families. These benefits continue today.

The similarities between the Vietnam War and the War on Terror were not lost on Senator Kennedy. While opposed to the 2003 Iraq invasion, he never stopped fighting to improve the conditions under which our military was forced to serve. On October 18, 2003, Private First Class John Hart was shot and killed. He was a casualty of limited armor available to those serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. Shortly before his death, he was talking to his parents back home in Massachusetts, asking their help in getting more armor shipped overseas. Upon hearing this story at the soldier's funeral, Senator Kennedy set off to answer his plea, securing over \$1 billion for armored vehicles. In 2005, he found a way to get another \$835 million for protective gear and additional armored vehicles.

The Senator cherished the opportunity to help people. While he loved everyday citizens, he shared the utmost respect for the men and women defending our freedom. He continued to work for their safety until his death.

When "Taps" played for Ted Kennedy at Arlington National Cemetery, the military laid to rest a very good friend.



Welcome to our 2009-2010 *Bridges* Newsletter! Our staff is comprised of an intelligent, creative, hard-working group of students who will share their perspectives on the Vietnam Era and important global issues. We invite you to read, reflect, and enjoy! ~ *Nada Milkovich & Stephanie Wakeford, Editors*