

***“So often, from within the depths of my mind I hear the sounds of approaching helicopters; like trumpets, the blast from their engines announced the battle is near.”***

BACKGROUND:

“Each day my thoughts briefly return to so many now forgotten battlefields, so many venues of terror, each harboring its own unique nightmare. I often wonder about the brave young Americans who survived. What are their reflections?... Are they visited by similar demons?... What brought them to this far-away land?... For what cause did they fight to defend?... So many questions? So many answers?

Yes, and there is also resentment, not a hatred of my former enemy, but bitterness toward my own country. This anger surfaces when I witness the lack of concern our government displays toward our veterans. I am angered that so many who gave so much receive so little; medical care is minimal at most. I am also angered when I see the treatment of the ARVN veterans; our nation is one, her sons should be treated as one. For these brave men, there is no medical care, their children are unable to find decent jobs. They are treated as outcasts.

I am saddened that so little of our struggle is fully appreciated by my students, there are many lessons to be learned from those difficult times and the unselfish deeds of so many young poet-warriors.

The majority of my country’s population was born well after 1975; they want to move ahead, perhaps I should encourage this...I don’t know. The goal of our nation is to have a generation who lives in peace. This is something that has never occurred in our history.

Each day I see a growing change enveloping Vietnam. I see a growing division between them and the government and the people. In time I believe our nation will become truly democratic and embrace the freedom that we have sought for so very long. But the time is not yet at hand. The old are departing, the young are emerging, fresh ideas arrive daily, our homeland is again approaching a crossroad that will again determine our destiny.

As a simple teacher I can only pray we take the proper path...and with each meditative breath during morning prayers, implore mankind to somehow live as one.

This, my friend, is my plea...and...my story..” John E. Delezen

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**Note:** John E. Delezen is a Marine, a veteran of the siege at Khe Sanh and the author of the book, “Red Plateau: Memoir of a North Vietnamese Soldier.”