



The World Looked Away: Vietnam After the War

Dave Bushy

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What happened to the people who remained in the former South Vietnam after the war ended in April 1975? Few of us know.

The war-weary United States had turned its attention away from the region, and the Communist leadership closed Vietnam to Western journalists.

For more than a decade, little was heard, but retribution against the South Vietnamese was swift and unending. Hundreds of thousands of former South Vietnamese military officers were sent to Reeducation Camps. Expecting a confinement of just ten days, most were incarcerated for years, suffering brutality, starvation and death.

The families of prisoners had property and savings confiscated. They were denied jobs and medical care. They lived in poverty.

Ultimately, nearly a million Boat People chose to escape Vietnam by sea, taking their chances in fragile overcrowded vessels. Thousands died at the hands of pirates and the unforgiving ocean.

This is the true story of Quoc Pham, a former South Vietnamese naval officer, and his wife Kim-Cuong. It tells of the love between a man and a woman and their courage in the face of hopelessness.

It is a story of a people of what happened in Vietnam while the world looked away.

The World Looked Away: Vietnam After the War Details

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Betty says

Excellent book! I couldn't put it down. Makes you wonder what we should have done differently in the Vietnam war that might have helped the south. Book also shows the humanity of some people. I highly recommend this book.

Ed Sternstein says

Whether or not you lived through the Vietnam era, *The World Looked Away: Vietnam After the War* is a must read. Extremely well-written, this real-life story of love, compassion, fortitude, and survival is absolutely captivating. Many of us learned the historical facts, some of us know about the decorated heroes, but few of us understand the post-war personal challenges and consequences of the individuals and their families directed affected by wars. All parents desire a better life for their children. After the war ended in 1975, a better life for millions of Vietnamese became hopeless. This superb book documents how the Quoc Pham family, through their true grit, tenacity, ingenuity, and perseverance, endured years of deprivation and sacrifice to control their own destiny and improve their lot in life. Author Dave Bushy's narrative is clear, concise, compassionate and truly inspirational. Read this book today. Ed Sternstein

Richard Magner says

I much enjoyed the re-telling of Pham Quoc's story by Dave Bushy. It often struck a very emotional cord. It is a true story of survival aided by hope, faith, fortitde & love- that Pham Quoc and his family, focusing primarily on the five years following the Fall of South Vietnam. Anyone with the slightest interest in learning about the Vietnam experience should read this book.

David says

Bushy tells of the years following the Vietnam war via the presentation of Quoc Pham's story. Quoc was an officer in the South Vietnamese navy who was sent to a reeducation camp in 1975 supposedly for 10 days, it ended up being more than 4 years. He and one son escaped the country in 1980 and was joined in 1989 by his wife and other children. Brutal story of illness and cruelty but lots of hope. Very uplifting story. A must read for anyone interested in that era.

Clay says

I read this biography because the author and Quoc Pham, the subject, came here and spoke in a book talk. The book is a gripping tale of South Vietnam after the war, focused on Quoc Pham, a Naval officer in the

former South Vietnamese navy and his treatment by the winning forces. It's not a pretty picture, the story of 3 years in unspeakably awful prison camps, and two more years on hiding out in Saigon. The worst was when prisoners were put on mine clearance duty to open a road for a Vietnam invasion of Cambodia. About 15% of the prisoner mine clearers were blown up every day doing this work. Vietnamese prison guards were unconcerned since traitors were expendable.

Ends with the treacherous escape on an overloaded boat, captained by Quoc, and rescue by the US Navy. The former captain of the Navy ship was at the book talk since he lives nearby in Bonita Springs. The boat refugee narrative is relevant today with Rohingya people leaving Burma for a better life by the same high-risk strategy.

Going back and forth for the last 20 years to Vietnam, now a prosperous middle-income country, no one ever told me this story. Although Vietnam seems stronger now than ever combining the cultural advantages of north and south, the first post-war years were bleak, and something as Americans that we should be ashamed about due to our role in what Vietnamese today call "the American war". Still, there is some redemption at the end, as Quoc Pham and his family were rescued and welcomed to resettle in the USA.
