
XUAN PHAM, SOUTH VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE PILOT 1968 -- 1973 (escaped to U.S. '75)

XUAN PHAM: My name is Xuan Pham. Spell is X-U-A-N is the first name. My first name been Americanized, so American friend called me Song, like the bird. Last name is Pham, spelled P-H-A-M.

PRODUCER : When were you flying in Vietnam and what was your unit?

XUAN PHAM: In 1968 I volunteer in to the Air force. Then they send me to the basic training, that the first phase, at the military academy. After that, the second phase is Vietnamese Air Force they call VNAF for abbreviation, send me to United States for basic aviation training on T-41 at Texas Randolph Air Force Base. Then after we graduate from that basic training, we still do not earn the wing yet, and they send us to [Keesler 00:01:20] Air Force Base to training on little bit more powerful engine, T-28 for acrobat, navigation, instrument fly, all kind of maneuver. When we graduate we call undergraduate pilot. We earn the wing. We have we call certificate. Diploma.

After we finish that they send me to the tactical training on the assignment aircraft I will have to fly when I get back to Vietnam. That tactical training on A-1 Sky Raider in Eglin Air Force Base in Panhandle of Florida, Fort Walton Beach. We been training on the basic called SOZ, S-O-Z at Herbert Field, they call. Actually that base they set up and training for Son Tay mission at the time I was training there. My instructor pilot also participate in that Son Tay rescue, try to get the POW from North Vietnam. Yeah.

PRODUCER : How long did you fly in Vietnam?

XUAN PHAM: I have to tell this as long story. Add a little bit more.

PRODUCER : All I need is the year-

XUAN PHAM: Okay.

PRODUCER : You flew from?

XUAN PHAM: 1968 until the end of 1973. Yeah.

PRODUCER : Okay. Now we're going to go back and we're going to start at the beginning.

XUAN PHAM: Oh boy.

PRODUCER : You're going to tell me where you were born, grew up, a little bit, you know, of your family?

XUAN PHAM: I was born in Hue, Hue the center of Vietnam. I grew up at the elementary school in there, and my father is the veterinarian. He been transferred to Quy Nhon. From there I attend the high school. I graduate high school in 1965. All of family member in military at the front line, a little. My father, you know, he does not want me to involve in military. They send me to United States to study business and administration in 1967 at New Mexico Albuquerque. Unfortunately, at the time I have my roommate is anti-war. At the time they call [Vietnicht 00:04:21]. I'm so depressed. A young man, first time live far away from family and I see something, you know, I don't like it, so I very depressed. I, you know, just buy the airplane ticket and get home.

Then Tet Offensive happen. The government start draft the young men in to military. I rather volunteer to become a pilot because in my childhood I already, I have passion to become fighter pilot, so that's why I volunteered into the Air Force. It end up, you know, to being sended to military academy, then, you know, flight training school, language training school, and combat. My first unit I been assigned to high land of Vietnam they call Pleiku. The first fighter squadron over there is the 530 Squadron, A-1 Sky Raider, at the end of 1970. I flew until the Eastern Offensive, April of 1972. I got shot down at Pleiku. Actually I got shot down at [Nac Do 00:05:54] North of the Pleiku and Kon Tum. And I crashed my aircraft there.

At the end of 1972 I been transferred to Bien Hoa Air Force Base and serve in 518 Squadron, still A-1 Sky Raider. The end of 1973 I have another dream when the Korea changed, to have opportunity to fly for commercial airline. I run a campaign and become district councilman so I be able to be honorably discharged without physical health problem. I apply for Air Vietnam, unfortunately. I'm waiting for go to Taiwan to training on the turbo-prop commercial airline and April 30th disaster happen, so I get out of the country. Not by airplane, but by boat because I have a brother and sister, a big family, and I try to help them to coordinate to get out of the country, and then to end up in United States. Yeah.

PRODUCER : When you were growing up, did you see much activity, were the Vietcong very active, and was the fight going on around you?

XUAN PHAM: Yes. When I was in high school at Quy Nhon, Vietcong had attacked Quy Nhon couple a time, so I witness a lot of cruel in the Vietcong did inflict in to the Vietnamese, civilian as well as military.

PRODUCER : How did you view the Vietcong? Were they ... They were a communist organization, but they were a South Vietnamese communist. What was your opinion of what was going on?

XUAN PHAM: Well at the time I think because I was grow up in military family. All of my brother in military, so my point of view is quite clear. I see is not a civil war, but the National Liberation Army is just a surrogate. Is a surrogate force. Is a proxy force. They create it,

you know, to the whole world see like a civil war, but it is not civil war. Be honest with you at the time I do not know that United States use a Vietnam at the front lines stop Communist. I just see the Communist and South Vietnamese conflict. After Geneva Convention and, I view as the aggressive act of the North Vietnam. We never go to the North, invade the North. The North invade the South. That what I see, very clearly, is the invasion.

PRODUCER : When were you aware that Americans were in Vietnam?

XUAN PHAM: I aware of the American in Vietnam when I was in high school because I read quite a few book. That's why I see the opinion, one opinion, in the United States think that the war at Vietnam is the wrong war. At that time I already realized is not the wrong war, because the war involve five presidency of the United States. If I'm not including Harry Truman, from Ike Eisenhower all the way to Henry Ford, Gerald Ford, I'm sorry, and involve both party, democrat as well as republican. I keep talk to friend of mine, I say, how dare they call it that, is the wrong war. If the war involve both parties and five presidencies United States, it's not the wrong war. Is something wrong, is the wrong in Washington D.C., but not wrong at the battlefield. That was my view at the time. I'm very clearly see that. Yeah.

PRODUCER : You saw the Americans now, I mean, when they came- You were too young really to experience the French being there. Did you see the Americans as allies, as invaders, as, just another army passing through? What was?

XUAN PHAM: Well I see the American as ally come and help us. I see the young man come from United States come and sacrifice at the foreign country like that, I see as a noble, noble cause. A noble action to help my country. I first see the massive operation campaign of the American forces, United States Armed Forces in Vietnam, is when the marine corps landing at Da Nang, and Quy Nhon too. I still in high school and love military equipment so I run around and see the marine corps landing. That's the first time I see the, a big United States Armed Forces in Vietnam. Yeah.

PRODUCER : You, happy to see them?

XUAN PHAM: Yes. We very happy to see them. It does not mean we agree with it because at the time I'm still young, but I heard the conversation in family between my brother and my father and that kind of thing. We foreseen something is not a good idea because we wish United States just help us the resource. Resource, I mean, equipment, money, to fight, you know, the North, because we the Vietnamese. We know when you involve another country, another race involve into the war, to many the people upset. It very difficult to win the war like that. Beside that, is like we build the structure over the quicksand. It will collapse very easily. I do recall at the time, is U.S. Armed Forces is still draft the young men into it. It's not sophisticated like that, lately, in the Afghanistan or Iraq war. The U.S. troop is not been educated or training equipped strong enough, you know, to deal with that kind of warfare.

Section 1 of 3 [00:00:00 - 00:14:04]

Section 2 of 3 [00:14:00 - 00:28:04] (NOTE: speaker names may be different in each section)

XUAN PHAM: ... That kind of welfare, because we could have been won the war through the, I call heroic, moral, discipline. We don't see that. The way the US troop cursed the people on the road, scold the Vietnamese Officers, soldiers, that kind of thing has to be seen as not right, because it's like you give oxygen to our enemy. They have good reason to propaganda and that kind of thing.

Unfortunately ... What I'm say here is it does not mean the Monday morning quarterback, but we have a chance to live in the United States for [forty 00:15:13] years. Have a chance to look back, and learned a lesson and that what we see at the time, unfortunately.

PRODUCER : You said that you grew up in [Hue 00:15:26] in '68, and that the Tet Offensive changed everything. Hue was one of the cities that suffered the most during the Tet Offensive. Were you able to ever go back and see what has happened during the Tet at Hue?

XUAN PHAM: I did. I did come back to Vietnam, visit Vietnam couple of times. Hue City is now at the Tet time, is very ... It's a time for the people celebrate, but at Hue the air is so heavy in Tet, because too many people get killed and tortured. The Vietnamese, they live with the past, and they live with ancestor a lot, so if their family member got killed, they cannot forget that day. Tet no longer a celebration day in Hue, but is a mourning day at Hue, as of till now, yeah.

PRODUCER : Let's jump back to flying an A-1. It was a plane that was developed in WWII, with a prop engine. What was it like to fly?

XUAN PHAM: Actually, the A-1 Skyraider involved into the battlefield at the Korea war, and in the WWII it just start to develop, if I not mistake ...

PRODUCER : Back in '45 I think.

XUAN PHAM: Right, right. At the end of WWII, Navy just want to have an airplane capable to delivery small nuclear bomb, so they design that A-1 Skyraider. Very powerful with 2,800 horse power, single engine, tail drag. The US Air Force calls it their flying dump truck. The Vietnamese Air Force calls it the crazy buffalo. The crazy water buffalo, because with 2,800 horse power with a tail drag, when you full power to take off, the torque is pull you to the left.

When you lift the tail the torque pull you to the right, so we have to struggle fighting and most of Vietnamese pilot is small size, is very small. We joke, we used to have a right leg that's bigger than the left leg, because we have to apply a lot of pressure on

right pedal, but the A-1 Skyraider lasts very long in the Vietnam or Korea theater, because they very precise and powerful. 8,000 pound bomb under the wing at the time.

They are very powerful aircraft, and we be able to delivery the ordinance within 50 feet with the napalm. We can delivery the explosive bomb a little bit further, it's about 300 feet, we don't dare to drop the bomb, explosive bomb like MK82 500lb bomb that close to the friendly troop. Napalm we be able to drop within 50 feet, yeah.

PRODUCER : Did you support South Vietnamese troops, or did you also fly in support of American troops?

XUAN PHAM: The major mission is support the South Vietnamese troop, however when we up in the air, we also taking care of search and rescue mission. At one time myself, and my leader, and the wing man at the time, when we're up in the air we be [inaudible 00:19:26] scramble to go across the border to Laos Plateau in order to rescue 2 Phantom F-4 pilot got shot down over there. We had very unique mission.

We have opportunity to work with a very, very professional group. It's the Green Beret. We call a soft mission. Somebody call it special operation group, but it's also called Survey and Observation Group in order to mask the secret mission at the time. We flew to Ho Chi Minh City. Not Ho Chi Minh City, I'm sorry. Ho Chi Minh Trail to support a commando [hunter 00:20:16] mission.

We fully admire and honor to the US Air Force when we have an opportunity to work with them, so professional. We treat each other like a brother.

PRODUCER : When you were flying the [inaudible 00:20:43] mission there would be an American back that would be directing you [crosstalk 00:20:49]?

XUAN PHAM: Correct, because we was training in the United States, but we come back. We are young generation considered in Vietnam. We speak English a little bit better so we be able to talk to forward air control, FAC they call. [inaudible 00:21:12] the call sign like a raven at Ho Chi Minh Trail. Budweiser, that is their call sign. Tamale.

They flew the Bronco AV-10 as well as the L-19, but we have a lot of trail mission with them, because the A-1 Skyraider beside drop precise, very precise bomb, and a lot of heavy bomb, we also have an advantage, as be up in the air a very long time.

As we learn the mission we can fly 3 hours for air cover, so they have time to drop the ranger, or the special force to the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and when they come and pick it up, we have to stand by in the air for 3 hours. As soon as they have contact, then we roll in and support them.

PRODUCER : The bombs that you carried, you also carried cannons. You had onboard cannons on the wing.

XUAN PHAM: Yes we have 4 13mm cannon. We have total of 6,000 rounds under the wing. We can carry mix ordinance, even with a CVU 55, that is the pressure bomb, and very effective, because the enemy under the bunker, and when the bomb explodes the first bomb explode, every bomb have 2 sections. The first one drop first, explodes first and create the vacuum, and the second bomb explode a fraction of second after that to create a shock. It kill a lot of enemy under the bunker.

PRODUCER : You said that you were shot. Do you remember what happened?

XUAN PHAM: Oh, yes, I remember vividly. April 5 of 1972. We been [inaudible 00:23:36] scramble to support the Red Beret, the South Vietnamese Elite Airborne Troop, and Charlie [fly base 00:23:47]. Charlie fly base is the tactical fly base because they can look down to Cong, look down to the Highway 19, and the Viet Cong tried to use that route in order to open the campaign to what they call Eastern Offensive.

It very early in the morning, it's 8:00. I carry napalm. My leader carry explosive bomb. We come support and we hear on the radio, because we have 3 radio, VHF, UHF, and FM, and most of the time we monitor the FM and listen to the ground troop. We hear the airborne [scold 00:24:36] on frequency and say they're being overran at the south of the Charlie fly base.

My leader, because he carry an explosive bomb, I carry napalm, so we cannot get into the same flight pattern, because he has an I bomb, I have the napalm. After he finished his explosive bomb, he go up to 10,000 feet and waited for me up there. When I coming in, I'm young pilot, make I consider a stupid mistake. I coming in the same heading from west to east, and they got me in the third pass when I went through there.

I go real low in the treetop because I can look up to the hill. I can see the friendly troop standing on top of the defensive perimeter and waving at us. Again, in a third pass I feel, I hear the sound, and I don't know what happened until the engine is [inaudible 00:25:53], and I'm at the treetop so I have to pull it up to be in altitude, and I can't put more power in.

If I put more power in the engine is quit, so I had to pull the power back, When I pull the power back I lost altitude. I tell my leader I can see it back to, I'm prepare the surface runway, far away, and I tell my leader ... I see 2 helicopter landing on that air field, so I ask my leader coming in, kick those helicopter out of the runway. I glide the aircraft. The A-1 Skyraider is not the aircraft to glide. It fall like a rock, and when I got into the low key, low force landing, the gear does not come out, and the smoke in the cockpit.

I had to open the canopy, [inaudible 00:27:00] the aircraft in order to blow the smoke. The wind blow the smoke out of the cockpit. Again, the first time I crash, so, scary, because I thought the wheel would touch the surface, but I don't have wheels, so it sink. The whole aircraft hit the ground all over the place and when the aircraft stopped, I see I'm about 20 feet away from a mine field.

I see a lot of beer can and the [inaudible 00:27:38] lunar cross mine field, and I tell the truth, I climb out the cockpit, my knees ... I cannot control my knees, is trembling, because so intense during the last minute of crashing, yeah.

PRODUCER : Any American forces on the ground? We're you able to ...

Section 2 of 3 [00:14:00 - 00:28:04]

Section 3 of 3 [00:28:00 - 00:53:47] (NOTE: speaker names may be different in each section)

PRODUCER : ... on the ground were you able to ... You weren't able to do it efficiently. Were there any opportunities to socialize with guys, pilots, those same kind of officers, any officers?

XUAN PHAM: Oh, yes, many times, especially in [Glaco 00:28:19]. Again, we have, our unit have an opportunity to support the Green Beret. The headhunter, they call it, the headhunter helicopter operated by the American pilot, every time they have party they call us and we join them, drink the Chivas Regal with the flames and that kind of ... We have fun. We have fun [inaudible 00:28:48]. We very proud to have a friend, love each other that much during the war.

PRODUCER : What did you think when the Americans finally pulled out? What was the feeling?

XUAN PHAM: The feeling I had again here is Monday morning quarterback. Look back is we feel beated, a lot of beatedness because we feel we been abandoned at the last minute. Too much politic happened in Washington DC. At the times people like Barbara [inaudible 00:29:38] the representative of New York, Fran Church, even our current president Joe Biden against the war in Vietnam. At the time he does not welcome the Vietnamese refugees coming to the United States. We feel we're not being abused by US congress or US, Washington, but we do feel like we're being molest, the right word. We feel very sad because the lost country is, it have very, very different feeling.

Fortunately now, after 40 years, as a matter of fact after 9/11, it's a litmus test. The whole families sit and watch the tragic in the 9/11 and the whole family cry. We know. We look at each other and we say, "We are American. We're truly American because we love this country dearly." Sometimes, unfortunately in the past become very fortunately in the future. We really appreciate United States, especially the American people. Politics, business as usual, we learned a lesson.

PRODUCER : You said that you got out by boat when the South Vietnamese government fell back in '75. How did you get out and where were you from? Where did you end up?

XUAN PHAM: My brother at the time, he's son-in-law of the secretary of defense of South Vietnam. He be able to access to the, how they call, small mansion belong to his father-in-law in hometown. A month before that, I don't know why here as of to now, I don't know why

the secrecy's been leaked out. I personally heard, "At the last minute if you hear the song White Christmas, that means we got to go." I thought it a rumor, but now with all the documents and everything is come to light now, that is true. I don't know somebody throw that out in order to create panic stricken or some of the irresponsible people that leak it. We heard that.

I made one decision that I'm still proud, very proud about, my decision at the last minute. I talked to my brother, the son-in-law office secretary of defense. He's a major in airborne, Vietnamese airborne. I told him, I say, "We've got to move to [inaudible 00:33:06] because the last minute will be chaos is number one. Second we will have a curfew. If you have a curfew, nobody let you run on the street. We got to be there before it happen." That is my decision and we went there a week before that.

At April 29th, we see chaos at the forts. We decide to pull the anchor and head into the sea. We see nobody get out of the country yet. We still afraid that the enemy's navy can stop us and arrest us. We anchor, is about a half mile away from the port so that nobody can get on our boat. In the morning after, we decide. We say, "We're heading towards the sea." We the first one when we see the US navy ship, the name with Greenville Victory. They wave us toward the ship and they pick us up in noontime of April 29th, 1975. We are the first boat being picked up by US navy.

They interview us and most of the, my family members, they speak English well. We become helper to evacuate the people the day after. We stand on the ship and we could see the flares, the fights, everything that happened at the horizon. Very depressed, different feeling when we see the country, the capital of Vietnam is being blown down.

On my boat is my sister's family, is five members. My brother's family is three, so there was eight, and some of his friends. Actually, it's around 20.

PRODUCER : How big of a boat were you on?

XUAN PHAM: The boat is, I say, it's about 30 feet long and about 8 feet wide. It's a new boat. It's a new boat and we have on the compass the radial, the whole nine yards. A matter of fact, we also have some anti-tank weapon on the boat because we hear about pirate, a pirate. We decide. We say we don't let the pirate stop us. If we see the pirate we will start first. Fortunately we don't have a chance to use automatic weapon because the Greenville Victory just pick us up.

PRODUCER : How many people ended up on the Greenville?

XUAN PHAM: Eventually, I think thousands of people. Of course I cannot know precisely.

PRODUCER : It was ...

XUAN PHAM: I'd say that at least a thousand because we had to sleep in the lowest level of the boat, very hot. It's very hot. I think it's about 130 degree, 150 degree in there. Then start

epidemic. People start develop red eyes, sore throat, all over the place. They have to evacuate a half of it to another boat before we headed toward Philippines.

PRODUCER : The convoys that went from South Vietnamese boats that evacuated out of Saigon along with the US [inaudible 00:37:20] was the ship. Were you involved? Did you see any of that or were you [crosstalk 00:37:26]

XUAN PHAM: Definitely. We saw that. We saw all of that boats. All of that boats, they be able to get out by themselves, so the US navy does not allow them to get close to the US navy ship because they used to send the people to those boats to make a quick appraisal, evaluate, to see does they have enough food, does the have enough fuel. The engine is good to go to Philippines. Then they will not allow anybody to the US navy ship and just point the directions to them, hand them the directions to go.

PRODUCER : What happened once you got to America and how were you received?

XUAN PHAM: We got to the United States, because that is another long story because it's start new life. I think about to write something for my children and our grandchildren to know in future. We'd been in this refugee camp and then the Lutheran Church sponsor or family to Elba Lee, Minnesota, very small town in Minnesota. I just have in my pocket just ten dollars in my pocket. That's all I've got. The USCC, the Catholic diocese, gave each of us a hundred dollars. My family, five members, my two brothers, myself, and my parents, we have total five hundred dollars.

When we went, we stop over Chicago airport. My mother gave a half of that, two hundred fifty dollars, to Hari Krishna because she thought that is a Buddhist monk. Traditionally the Vietnamese respect the Buddhist monk and a lot of Buddhist monk, a lot. She donates two hundred fifty dollars for Hari Krishna. We have another two hundred fifty dollars and start new life in Minnesota.

It's too cold. Within two months, my mother start develop some health problems. Myself, my brother, decide to rent U-Haul truck and move east to Virginia. Matter of fact, I landed in the first job in naval academy of Maryland first, as a supervisor in dining hall. Then I start as the janitor for [Ambrick 00:40:20] Chevrolet in Richmond, Virginia, clean up all the car in the parking lot every day. Very depressed, especially when I was in naval academy. I saw all the midshipmen with the half wing, pilot wing, on their chest and I stood over there and looked and said, "Hey, yesterday I'm pilot like them. Now today I work in the dining hall."

The war, we benefit from the war. The war taught us a lot of good lessons. We have the will, eventually everything will prevail. I decide to go back to University of Maryland, as a matter of fact. I'm the top at the University of Maryland College Park. I spent four years, got the degree in engineer. First I got the aerospace engineer because I thought with my background with aviation it help me some. After I graduated in 1982, you know, Jimmy Carter time, very difficult to find a job. Gas line is long at the gas station. I apply for the job and most of the aviation job is related to defense industry, require US citizenship. I don't have a US citizenship, so I come back to talk to my counselor. She told

me, "Why don't you switch to mechanical engineer?" I just spend one extra year and got mechanical engineer degree and commercial art degree. Then I end up the co-op for great company, Phillips Morris, cigarette company in Richmond, Virginia. That company made, taught me a lot of good lessons and start a new life in the United States. I retired eight years ago.

PRODUCER : [inaudible 00:42:42]

XUAN PHAM: Thank you.

PRODUCER : There's a couple of things that come to mind. [crosstalk 00:42:55] continued looking at [inaudible 00:42:52]. Have you been back to Vietnam?

XUAN PHAM: Yes. I went back to Vietnam a couple of times, yes.

PRODUCER : Do you have family still there?

XUAN PHAM: No. I have just one sister-in-law still there. Her husband, my brother, pass away. She decide to stay, in the last minute in chaos. They'd been separated. Unfortunately she'd been left behind.

PRODUCER : The one thing I wondered was when you do return to Vietnam on these occasions and you meet men you're certain about of you age and they're particularly communist officials, how do they look at you, treat you, as somebody who has left their country, expatriate?

XUAN PHAM: The first couple of times is not so friendly. They can act ... I can see they're not welcome me because the dilemma is when I come back they look at me like I'm American. A lot of discrimination, jealousy is part of it. Ideologies, they know it, especially when they know I flew the A-1 Sky Raiders. They can see I was the number one enemy. In the last couple of trips we start very friendly. We have a drink together and talk. I think the young generation in Vietnam now, they don't know much about the war. They don't know much. We still, I myself, still have a problem to adapt to the life over there because we've been in United States for 40 years. The time I spent in the United States, live in United States, has longer than the time ... I get out of country when I was 27 years old. 27 years there versus 40 years over here, I feel I'm 90, 95% is American.

I see corruption. I see a lot of bad things happen. They live very high paced over there now. Saigon have 12 million people in that town now. Every day is, I call it a zoo over there. It's hard for me to adapt with life over there. Every time I come visit and go back to United States, I say, "Home sweet home."

PRODUCER : You'll never call Ho Chi Minh City?

XUAN PHAM: I still call Saigon. I love the aviation because they don't want to change abbreviation to Ho Chi Minh City. They still call Saigon, yeah. That is the only thing they cannot change because the international it says Saigon.

PRODUCER : What I want to ask you is that obviously you must pat yourself on the back for that decision to get on that boat and get out of there when you did, particularly after you heard what happened to men of your caliber with your military experience about those folks who were sent to the reeducation camps sometimes for a decade or more. Have you met some of those people and have you shared your story with them? How do you look at the folks that had to do all that terrible time in those reeducation camps which were more or less prisons?

XUAN PHAM: I fully sympathize with them because if you endure that much of hardship, it's amazing, including one of my brothers in the concentration camps. He come now and he made some statement I never forgot. The hardship he went through he described and say, "Every doctor say the brain control your behavior." He say, "All the doctors wrong. His belly control the head." He say he never thought some day when he was in concentration camp ... They call reeducation camp but to me that is concentration camp or if I'm not say that is a torture camp because I heard too many people, especially the pilot, get killed. They cannot survive through a couple of years in there with all the torture that they got.

He say he had to steal the food of the dog because the camp, what you call, the camp guard give him as a favor to go to their house and take care of their dog. He say every time he went over there, he have a chance to steal the food of the dog and all to dry and save so that he can eat later. He say he never thought some day he steal the food from the dog.

I fully sympathize and right now a lot of those people, they hate communism so bad. I don't hate communism same degree with them because I think that the time has changed. You can heal. Just right now the government over there, the communist party over there, come and visit our president at the White House. Things change. I see the opportunity always there. With them, they say, "Absolutely zero." They cannot accept the communists. I sympathize with them. I understand for them because if I went through that to get into my school, I can afford. Forget it. Again, I forgive but I not forget. They not forgive and not forget because they went through terrible time with that, unfortunately.

I have a chance to share one of my, matter of fact many times, with friends and relatives come from Vietnam. They come see us first in Virginia. I keep introduce them to confederate museum in Richmond, Virginia. I show them in the museum they talk more about Robert Lee, General Lee, than talking about Ulysses Grant, even Robert Lee is the, have been defeated. I say that's the way to heal, to unite the synergy, forgive and unite a whole country. I share with them, I say, "Even after the Civil War in the United States, the union forces give back even the horse for the southern troops to be able to go back home and harvest, to farming and that kind of thing. No country after the war had but brother into the concentration camp. After the World War II, American and allied troops never put the Japanese or the German into the prison. They free all of those in order to start a new chapter with the all the countries. That's why I say no, on earth is the communist, Vietnamese communist, after victory arrest and torture all the brothers and sisters. They missed a golden opportunity.

Right now is very good life over there. However, if they united with a thousand people at the time, maybe even better than what we see today because you missed 20 years, 30 years. It's a lot of years to improve, make the country stronger. I think they will learn the lesson. They will learn the lesson. I hope everybody learns the lesson.

PRODUCER : Thank for taking the time to share with us and the service you did for your country and for your country now. I know we didn't talk much about serving in the military here once you got here. You did that as well.

XUAN PHAM: No, I just flew for National Guard. That would come, I guess ...

PRODUCER : That counts. I appreciate it. Thank you for coming in.

XUAN PHAM: Likewise. Thank you for to having me in the interview. Thank you very much.

PRODUCER : Thanks.