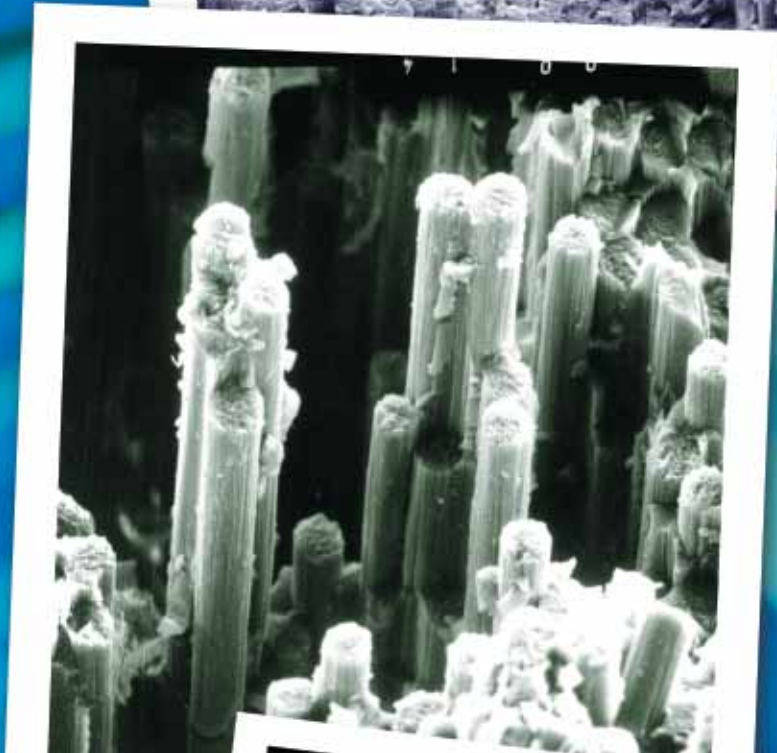
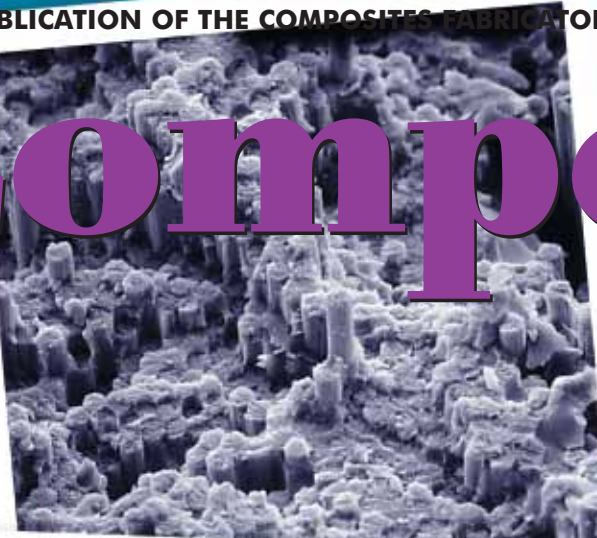


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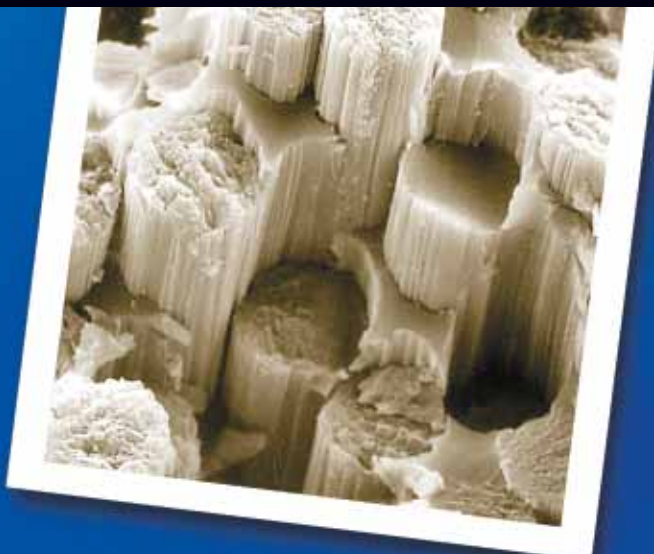
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“Make me whole Dai Uy”

A Search for the Man in North End’s Wes Hoch

Part II

This is the second and final installment of the Wes Hoch story. Hoch was awarded CFA’s Lifetime Achievement Award in October of 1999. Part one ran in the May issue

By Andrew Rusnak
Editor, *Composites Fabrication* magazine

The First Notebook

It is not good for the Christian’s health to hustle the Asian brown, for the Christian riles and the Asian smiles and he weareth the Christian down.

— Rudyard Kipling,
an aphorism Hoch kept pinned
over his desk in Vietnam

If I should never do anything else in my life, I will be content knowing happiness I have given these people. I get medical supplies for them. I treat the sick, help the very poor, show love to those who need it. How little we Americans know of what we have, the freedom, liberty, and greatest government in the world. But all too many come and go and never know that they live in the dream world of millions of people such as those in this country.

— Hoch in a letter
to his mother

Compelled, I made one last desperate attempt to find traces of Wilson in Hoch’s Vietnam era, the dark, idealistic hero of the American 20th century, some covert, nocturnal, John Wayne Rambo recon mission grunt, something apocalyptic. In Vietnam, Boston Sunday Herald reporter Stanley Eames called Hoch the “Great White Father.” More malarkey? “Hoch is a good sailor and a good fighting man,” he wrote in a May ‘64 article. “But his major contribution has been (he would blush

and then curse at the label) as a social worker.”

Before I left Maine, I asked Wes to send me some of the photos and clippings of those most formative, “fabulous” experiences of his life, including a copy of his unpublished book, *Dai Uy*. I sensed a little hesitation, as with all Vietnam Vets, the heart of darkness seizing the hero myth and torturing it, but the material was critical to the story, to who Wes Hoch is, or who else Wes Hoch was.

About a month after the interview, I found an email message from Wes titled, *Material for your Saga*:

Hope to have all the material in the mail to you on Monday, but just remembered it’s a holiday, so it will be Tuesday morning. Once you get it, let us know what else you need and we’ll try to get it to you. I’m doing fine. Will see the doctor this Friday and get the final results of all the testing. Basically, I was not taking my pills properly, only half of what I was supposed to take. I’ll fill you in on “How to be stupid as you grow older” the next time we talk.

Wes.

With his signature comic spin, it immediately reminded me of something else I’d read in that same Boston Herald article written almost 40 years ago: “Last month, spurred by a \$100 gift from Rockland’s First Methodist Church, [Hoch] got some government cement and local labor and built a four-bed





Vietnam Veterans Feted At Rockland

ROCKLAND—This city honored its hero of the war in Vietnam with a testimonial banquet at the Thorndike Hotel Wednesday evening, and Lt. Cmdr. Wesley Hoch said before the dinner he would "rather face the Viet Cong than all those people out there. I'm not used to all this . . ."

But he came through with flying colors, and gained a standing ovation from 100 fellow citizens and visiting dignitaries for his accomplishments during the past 18 months in a remote jungle halfway around the world.

Hoch, son of Mrs. Ruth Hoch of Glen Cove, told the audience, "because of your efforts some people in Vietnam are warm tonight; because of your efforts there is a hospital . . ."

He referred to the Rockland Junior Chamber of Commerce project, Operation Cover, which resulted in sending some 300 blankets to Hoch for use by members of his Vietnamese task force; and funds sent by the Pratt Memorial Hospital of Rockland for construction of a small hospital on the Island of Phu Quoc.

"You people supplied these things," he said, "and I was just the tool with which they were solicited . . ."

He didn't mention the fact that it was his initiative which secured for villagers on the Island of Phu Quoc the following items in addition to the blankets and the hospital: Four tons of clothing from the Norfolk, Va. area; three tons of medical supplies from a number of major pharmaceutical houses; 555 pairs of shoes; contributions from lollipop and doll manufacturers; and motion picture films from Walt Disney.

The young naval officer assured the gathering that the State of Maine has received world-wide acclaim through the projects, but pointed out that the most important thing accomplished by the deeds was the fact that "it made it very difficult for the Viet Cong to come in and talk about the American capitalists and war-mongers."

"There are 15,000 over there," he continued, "some of them are going all by dying for the cause is a war that must be won . . ."

Hoch was presented the city by City Councilman Dale W. Lind earlier read a proclamation claiming Wednesday "Hoch Day" here and presented that framed page guest of honor.

Hoch, introduced by Look Jr., after a number of speakers paid their tributes, was named an honorary member of the Rockland Junior Chamber of Commerce by its past Jaycee President, Foote Jr., and notified will be the local club's three outstanding young men to be designated one of the state when that annual competition arrives.

Bringing greetings from John H. Reed was Nava Dyer of Rockland representative, and the Maine Maritime Academy, of which Hoch graduate, was represented by its executive officer, Lt. C. A. R. Philbrook.

Chamber of Commerce President W. David Verrill introduced the audience to "take a few minutes to reflect upon this young man stands he exemplifies our American way of life . . ."

Master of ceremonies Paul Huber. Also seated at head table were Hoch's mother, and his brothers and sisters, Mr. and Mrs. David Hoch and Mr. and Mrs. William Hoch.

Telegrams from guests unable to be present were read by Verrill and came from Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, Sen. Edmund S. Muskie, Congressman Clifford G. McIntire, Army Redeployment Administration Field Representative Jerome Barnett, who formerly was executive secretary of the Rockland Chamber of Commerce and Mr. and Mrs. James McCamant.

dispensary which was dedicated with solemn ceremonies [on Phu Quoc Island]. Hoch is high on medicine for he believes, "You can do as much with a bottle of pills as a company of rifles."

I finally received two packages about a month after the email. I opened one of the old vinyl scrapbooks Wes dug out of his attic, the same garret where Captain Gregory stored his logbooks and that overlooked Glen Cove. A damp, aged, fusty smell, like the cold rice and fish Hoch ate with his troops, exploded from the dozens of black and white photos, letters, yellowed newspaper and magazine clippings, telegrams from U.S. Senators, and Congressional Record entries. Everything in this first collection has a similar remarkable flavor, compressed over time, glue bleeding from the ink and film causing some mem-

ories to be bonded together to where peeling them apart threatens their legibility and, thus, their recollection. Black pajamas and barefoot, unique and unorthodox, Hoch dazzled the Vietnamese as well as his superior officers. Perhaps it was early enough in the conflict, he was an "early advisor," or, perhaps it was just his way of getting things done—Hoch emerged a true hero, no small feat compared to what later Vietnam vets went through when they returned home.

After high school Wes attended Severn Academy in Annapolis while Dave went to the Naval Academy nearby. Wes left

Maryland and spent the next four years at the Maine Maritime Academy, Castine, graduating in 1953 with honors and a BS in marine engineering. Dave eventually left the Naval Academy and served a combat role in

the Korean War. Following several years at sea as a merchant marine on an around-the-world crew, Wes joined the Navy where he served until 1960 installing the distant early warning network before re-enlisting for merchant maritime service. In the middle of 1961 the Navy called him back for duty in Vietnam. By November of '63, as reported in the Navy Times, he'd made Lieutenant Commander. He received the Bronze Star with Combat and Distinguishing Service and the Vietnamese Medal of Honor, an unheard of accomplishment for an American.

Irate over the growing number of "derogatory remarks made about U.S. military officers in Vietnam," U.S. Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith from Maine, implored the Senate to place into the record for October 21, 1963, a story written by Boston Sunday Globe reporter Orville Schell. The article, *A Legend in Remote Seas: Maine Navy Lieutenant Leads Viet Junks*, was received without objection. Schell wrote: "He has a rare rapport with the junkmen with whom he works. They, in turn, are devoted to him. For Dai Wei Hoch (their name for him) is one of them—24 hours a day. He wants no escape to separate quarters, clean restrooms, Western food, military clubs, and air-conditioned rooms when 5 O'clock rolls around. Unlike so many other American advisors in Vietnam, Hoch lives, sleeps, eats and fights 24 hours a day, every day, with his junkmen. He refuses to accept any privilege he cannot give his men. He says he hates to see stuff sit in Saigon warehouses rotting when his men are cold at night, wet during the day, undernourished, and manning junks that are short of arms."

Going through the contents of the first notebook, my gullible mind acted up again. This time it was Lieutenant Willard (played by Martin Sheen) reading the dossier of Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando), in the back of a patrol boat making its way up the Mekong River in Francis Ford Coppola's film, *Apocalypse Now*. Willard was on a search and destroy mission, Kurtz's brain cells were locked in a little Nietzschean tango, blurring universally accepted boundaries for what makes common moral ground. Lieutenant Commander Wesley Hoch of Glen Cove, Maine, and now Phu Quoc Island, Vietnam seemed, according to all the press coverage, the antithesis of Kurtz, who could even be interpreted as a Wilson-gone-over-the-edge. Despite the reality-plus conditions beyond the big screen, Hoch closed a letter to his

commanding officer with, "you always seem to be fighting for your principles and what you think is right. I'm sorry I don't have time [to write] much more, but we must get out of here before night for our present location isn't secure because of the Vietcong. I'll get this letter on a helo that is coming now."

Imagine driving the brass in Saigon crazy enough to draw a remote assignment as advisor to the Vietnamese Fourth Naval District Junk Fleet, being dropped from a plane onto the 40-mile long island of Phu Quoc at the southern tip of Vietnam, totally unaware of what to expect. "What the hell," Wes laughs. "The VC could have come up to me and said let's go, and I would've gone with them. I didn't know what was going on, nobody did."

Imagine finding six out of 60 junks in any kind of working condition, some of them rotting on the beach. Imagine taking responsibility with your men, fearless men with "Sat Cong" (kill communists) tattooed across their chests, to patrol an area from the tip of the Cambodian border to the tip of the Camau Peninsula, Gulf of Siam—thwarting insurgent amphibious assaults, attacking villages, confiscating enemy junks, disrupting supply lines, taking more prisoners in one month than an entire Army Corps. Imagine having to defend the primitive outpost-village-headquarters of An-Thoi with, at any given time, 30 junk force sailors against an estimated 250 Phu Quoc Vietcong. Hoch did this with an exorbitant price on his fiery red-topped head, a 500,000 piaster reward (about 7,000 1963 US dollars) for his death and another 500,000 for his Gunner's Mate First Class, Joe Pritchard, in a place where the locals wear torn rags, sleep on the ground, and eat a little rice when they are fortunate enough to have it. Imagine not being able to go anywhere, even to Saigon, without your bodyguard, Hai. Hoch attacked the Vietcong's means of survival—the faith of common villagers, the VC's source of food, shelter, and transportation.

Imagine the surprise of Stars and Stripes reporter Al Kramer when he visited Hoch and Pritchard for a story and was given red carpet treatment—a Jerry Lewis movie on a torn bed sheet, the real entertainment coming in the middle of the show when the VC started to attack. Hoch grabbed his carbine and spent the next 15 minutes in the chaos of exploding grenades and tracer fire. Imagine Deputy Senior Naval Advisor,

Captain Phillip W. Porter's consternation when he decided to pay Hoch a visit and found him playing dentist, filling the teeth of local villagers. "I learned it at the Saigon dispensary on a two week leave, borrowed the equipment, and if I don't do it, who will?" Herald reporter Eames recorded Hoch's response to Porter's inflamed inquiry.

Imagine even more surprise on the faces of executives at Walt Disney, and toy and candy companies, when they received requests from Hoch for supplies, gifts, and entertainment for his adopted Vietnamese people. One Thanksgiving he bought and distributed 300 dolls that became more like treasured relics than toys for village kids, and his letter to Walt Disney claimed, "Mickey Mouse can stop this war." Eames wrote: "Fighting the eerie Vietnamese war in junks is strange by itself. Fighting it Hoch's way is a direct violation of every rule in every military book. He has all the ingenuity of a Sgt. Bilko, and he uses it ruthlessly to help the people he protects. He has reversed military practice far more drastically than the planners who advocate winning the hearts and minds of the people. And he demonstrates that what officialdom calls Psychological War and Civic Action help people and help win wars."

Imagine Ruth Hoch's expression when she received a letter from her son who wrote in part: "You ask if I need anything. Well, I could use the garbage to feed some of these poor people. I suppose it's difficult to understand there are people in the world who have nothing except one old dirty shirt and a pair of old torn pants you wouldn't use as rags. When it's time to sleep, they just lie down. If it rains, they get wet." And in another letter home: "It is hard when they carry the killed back or they get shot protecting me, for it's losing a friend and never seems right. But that is the price they must pay for freedom. Tomorrow I will bury another of my boys who died never knowing what it meant to live in a free civilized world. He only knew hunger and want." Imagine being called the "Santa Claus of South Vietnam Island"; being visited on Phu Quoc by General Stillwell and asked to join the Army; the Vietnamese Navy requesting a six-month extension on your tour of duty. Imagine an 80-year old Maine woman sending Hoch the blankets off her bed; Hoch playing with pet monkeys and a boa constrictor named Alice; capturing a VC junk, painting a red cross on it, calling it the Blue Goose and using it as a hospital ship.

Imagine...imagine...imagine...

(“Wes Hoch” from p. 4)

The communion with time and its lazy distant comfort, the first notebook became a utopian paradise of stories, a hard to leave island with hidden treasures in the middle of the century, the New Testament of Phu Quoc. And Wes Hoch became what mankind, if not men, should be in a place where the best and the worst of what we are compete for milk and blood in every thought, dream, and movement.

Notebook Number Two

The bull is gone. Hoch's growling, sometimes burlesque dismissal of his deeds leads one right to the door of his philanthropy. But by now I was almost afraid to open the second notebook, another vinyl folder with the U.S. School of Music monogrammed on the front containing 541 single-sided, double spaced, type written pages of Hoch's memoirs. Was Wilson hiding somewhere in these pages? Is he still important, even as myth? What about Kurtz? History has proved war plays havoc on a soldier's mind—life and death squeezed so close together. What about 'acts of Kurtz,' like Lt. Calley's My Lai massacre? Hoch told me during the interview he had his troops dress like Vietcong, go into villages, burn them down only to return the next day as South Vietnamese junkmen and rebuild them in a ruse of propaganda. The world, press, junkmen, and villagers new Wes Hoch one way, but how well did he know himself?

On the deck of the USS Monrovia APA-31, Operations Officer and Boat Group Commander Wes Hoch listened hard to the loudspeaker as President John Kennedy told the world the US would “halt Cuba's offensive build-up by a strict quarantine of all offensive military equipment.” Hoch had just put 2500 US Marines on the beach in Guantanamo, and the Monrovia was poised in a “modified battle condition and anything the blockade might bring.”

Sometime earlier, bored with routine, Hoch had put in for a new assignment as a member of a military advisory assistance group, something like France or Germany. With the Cuban missile crisis heating up, a radio messenger handed him transfer orders, and in the dim red light of the combat ready bridge of the Monrovia, Hoch learned that he was to report to the Commandant of the Eighth Naval District for transportation to Saigon, South Vietnam, as numerical relief to Lt. John Smith.

“I leaned over the wing of the bridge and wondered what the hell I'd done to get an assignment like this,” wrote Hoch. “I wasn't even sure where Vietnam was. Vaguely I remembered reading something about it in the papers, but I hadn't paid much attention. I was mad as



**Fighting the eerie
Vietnamese war in
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military book.**

hell. If they wanted me to advise them on how to plow fields, I might be able to help them, for as a boy I grew up on a farm. But, I didn't have any idea what a junk force was.”

Through the scratched window of a beat-up old Beechcraft, war far from his mind, Hoch marveled at the lush beauty of thick jungles separated by meticulous rice paddies and tiny rivers squirming every which way.

“I've never been here before, but I hear the Vietcong fire at anything without feathers, so we're going in low over the coast, and when we stop, get off fast,” the crew chief shouted from the front of the plane. “I hope you make it.”

Hoch's gear hit the makeshift runway in the jungle and he was pushed out after it.

“There I stood with my duffel bag, a first aid kit, some rations, and a roll of maps printed in French,” wrote Hoch. “I sat down and yelled ‘Hello,’ then remembered the VC controlled 95 percent of the island.”

With orders to report to An-Thoi, Hoch first confirmed his position on Phu Quoc, then figured the village of An-Thoi to be 35 miles to the south. In the blistering heat, he hoisted his duffel and weapons, and staggered a mile down the path to the village of Doung Dong where he finally convinced two Vietnamese boys, about 12 years old, with a broken down junk, to give him a lift. When they reached the Bay of An-Thoi, another young boy paddled out to get Hoch in a straw basket held together with buffalo dung and mud.

“Finally, out of desperation, I let go of the junk and lunged into the basket,” Hoch remembers. “I landed in the bottom

with water gushing in from all sides, and scurried to the center so it wouldn't capsize. For a moment, I thought I'd have to swim after all, but then the water stopper. Sticking my head over the edge of the basket, I saw at least a thousand people, dressed in black pajamas, and when they saw my head bob up they gave a great cheer.”

Hoch'd retrieved the tethered basket from the young Vietnamese boys who'd gone to shore before him. He found a piece of wood and started paddling only to spin round and round in circles, making no progress toward shore until a five year old girl waded out and pulled him in. More cheers.

And so it begins, a detailed narrative laid bare... chicken feet and heads floating in soup, disturbing dreams of firing squads, octopus and beetle bugs piled on counters, hoards of vampire mosquitoes, pet puppies most villagers wanted to eat, “sticky gobs of sweets on banana leaves,” and everything covered with flies.

Through much of the story, Hoch wrestles with red tape to win the trust of the Vietnamese villagers of Phu Quoc, people he came

to love and admire. There were, however, trips up river into the beating heart of darkness: "At exactly 5am ... we boarded our junk for Nam Can [where] an operation was in progress designed to bring the area under government control. The trip through Vietcong territory was something I didn't look forward to, for it was 13 miles up the Song Cua Lon river, a narrow river where we would be at their mercy. As we cautiously proceeded up the murky waterway, the sounds of the jungle were enough to scare you. Streaks of dawn were inching their way across the sky. In a small opening ... I saw three men and before I could yell to Sang, they opened fire and ripped holes in our cabin. I hit the deck and could feel the bullets ripping into the side of the junk."

And Wilson, with gun in hand, did indeed appear in flashes (how could he not, the untroubled side of the hero myth) between the lines that recounted blistering firefights: "Around midnight the stillness of the jungle was cracked wide open by the staccato of machine gun fire and the small compound resounded with explosions. We poured machine gun fire into the jungle. In the intervals, between rounds, I could hear drums in the background [which] made the whole episode more chilling. We dashed across the open ground and dove headfirst into our command junk ... the motor chugging, machine guns clattering. We revved up the diesel and came driving back behind the Vietcong position, opening up with every gun on the boat."

But at the end of the journey no trace of Kurtz appeared, no convenience in the surreal, only Hoch and his hard earned Christian morality. After a routine mission that included building a school in the village of Song Ong Doc, Hoch was glad to reach the provincial capital of Rach Gia, a place reported to be infested with the enemy. He managed a shower and invited several South Vietnamese officers out to a dinner of con-cur, tiny crabs first boiled then fried with fresh black pepper. Small, twisted and deformed children squirmed and begged around the entrance of the restaurant.

"They affected me deeply," Hoch wrote. "From the time they learned to move about they were alone, neglected, hungry, and forgotten in a land that has nothing to offer."

Much to the annoyance of his South Vietnamese counterparts, Hoch emptied his pockets and gave the children all his money.

After dinner, halfway to the base, Hoch returned to the restaurant to retrieve his sunglasses. He stopped along a dark canal and chucked a pebble into the still oriental pool. He followed the ripples into images of beggar kids and thoughts of his reputation for making waves wherever he went. For several months, he's contemplated bible verses learned as a child in Maine, verses that seemed to have no power 10,000 miles away. As he turned to leave, he heard rustling in the brush and reached for his .45. It wasn't there, he'd left it on the Blue Goose. Remembering he never carried a gun in the provincial capital, he moved quickly toward a dimly lit street, ready to break into a full run to save his life. Something inside, however, caused him to whirl around.

"Who's there?" he shouted.

As the bushes parted, a gnarled, hunchbacked adolescent girl on crutches stumbled out, her bare feet "shapeless lumps, swollen, disfigured, almost useless."

Hoch's urge to run, he discovered, only vanished for a split second, for now he faced what he felt in his heart was a bigger danger.

"I'm sorry if I frightened you Dai Uy," she said, brushing aside her straggling hair.

In the shadows of the hot, vaporous alley, Hoch's spirit slumped to

the ground. He knelt, held out his hands. "Come, come to Dai Uy," he said. "Where is your family?"

"Anyone who is kind to me is my family," she answered. "Tonight, you were my family when you gave me money at the restaurant."

"Little one, what is your name?" Hoch asked.

"Chu Lou," she responded.

"Well Chu Lou, I am going to take you and find you a home with one of my junkmen."

Chu Lou started to cry, pressed her hand to her face and said, "Dai Uy, I am not like other children. I cannot bring my troubles to others."

"I don't understand," Hoch said. "What do you want me to do?"

"Dai Uy, I wish to be like other children. I wish to walk and play. You can make me whole. I have heard of you from many in the city. They say you are like Buddha. Please, Dai Uy, make me whole."

Life is a constant adventure, I can't remember when it wasn't," Hoch said, as he parked the Bimmer. "Those people who retire and say they have nothing to do? There's so much to do I get a headache thinking about it."

We walk toward Main Street, turn the corner into the Thomaston Café and Bakery and, before ordering a couple Rubens, Hoch's niece, Jennifer, a pastry chef, engages her uncle by marriage in lively chat.

Everybody loves Wes, and it seems ridiculous to imagine this man holding, aiming, firing a gun at anyone. The night before he even accused me of being a "good person" because I picked up Spaulding's cat Ruger and stroked it.

"If I had it to do over again, I would've studied the arts, especially music," Hoch told me later in the car. Here's the man who befuddled his sailor buddies and went to the museum or opera during shore leave, instead of the bar. Here's the man who said, "Pie-R-squared means nothing to someone starving in Ethiopia, but if you can sing them a lullaby—that's universal." Here's the man who's completely taken with what makes us mortal.

Back and forth, soldier/missionary.

When meeting an exceptional person, one always expects to form some grand conclusion. Hemmingway's myth, the struggle, what I'd been carrying around since I first heard of Wes Hoch and his stories, now seems tantalizingly simple.

"Once he killed himself, I lost a lot of respect for him," Hoch says of the man who penned the Wilson and Macomber characters. "The way he supposedly hated his mother. My mum was the center of everything, it's hard to understand. I know it's a very complex all-or-nothing kind of thing. But he is on the list of things to do, to go back and re-read between the lines of his works."

Then, addressing me directly, Wes said, "I'm sure someone like you has a lot of respect for him, since he's a writer's icon."

Was I Macomber searching for manhood through journalism? It is complicated and, unlike Hoch's generation and maybe to our peril, too complicated for grand conclusions. In a simpler world, younger men can still admire older men—teachers, chiefs—even if they can no longer become them. Dai Uy means officer, chief, boss, depending on context. "Dai Uy number one," Lo claimed of the man who thrived on small, strenuous, and, to many of us, mysterious victories.

Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitzer, in Hoch's bronze star citation, put it in military terms: "For meritorious achievement... resulting in... denial to the Vietcong of ... effective bases of operations... furthered by continued harassing pressure... attacks against Vietcong lines and

numerous personnel and material casualties were inflicted...”

And Wes, in between bites of his sandwich, thoughts of the bronze star 10,000 miles to the west, put it in his terms: “The best advice I ever got was from an old fisherman in Vietnam. He said your success in life is measured each night, if before you go to bed, you can say someone else is better off because of you. Vietnam changed me. I learned that possessions are not important. If I had a million dollars over there, there was nothing to buy. If a Vietnamese family lost their home in a storm, they’d cut some palm fronds and build a new one by nightfall. If you stop a minute and think, what’s your life right now without people?”

A short while ago, a suspected heart complication thrust Hoch into a coma. Doctors told his brother Dave he wasn’t expected to live and that he should maybe start making arrangements. The outlook appeared certain when Wes’ kidney’s started to fail. In an ambulance, on the way to Portland, however, everything miraculously started working again. Hoch came out of the coma expecting to remember a near-death experience. A devout Born Again, Christianity played a huge role in his life, from the time his mother held Sunday school classes at home to the time he sat distressed on a beach in Vietnam and a scrap of paper with the St. Francis of Assisi prayer blew into his lap.

“I didn’t get all the lights and things, there was no long tunnel,” he said disappointedly. “What I got was this gorgeous island, with blue-green water, and these big old red parrots all over the place.”

When, several months later, I heard the poet Robert Bly declare that more Vietnam vets have died from the hands of suicide since the war ended than died fighting the war, I was handed a free ticket to Hoch’s paradise. It can be a gorgeous place. —CFA

Andrew Rusnak is Editor of Composites Fabrication magazine. He can be reached at 703.525.0511; email: arusnak@cfa-hq.org

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