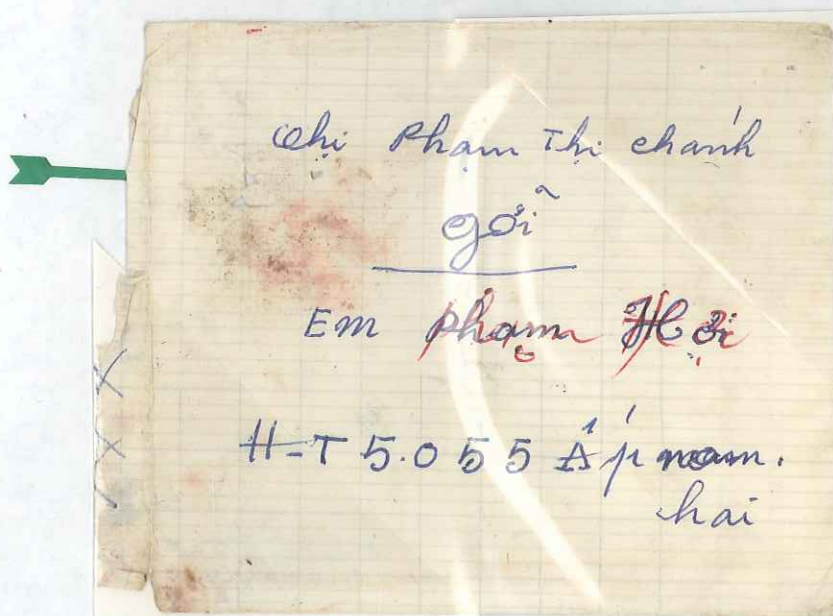


VIETNAMESE MILITARY MAIL

NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC CONTENTS

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Frame 7:	Page 1-16	Free Frank Stamps & Usages
Frame 8:	Page 1-9	Free Frank Stamps & Usages
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A "Showpiece" Cover



This cover has no postal markings, no postage stamps, and is beat-up and ratty. But it took nearly five years to talk the ex-GI and non-collector into letting me have it for my collection. Emotionally, this cover is a piece of history that the GI lived through and has kept tucked away for 30 years. The non-collector does consider the cover cancelled - the arrow points to where his M-16 bullet passed through the cover - a perfect 5.56 mm hole.

And this is why VC and NVA mail is difficult to collect.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

VIET CONG

CONDITIONS IN THE FIELD

It is easy to understand why the condition of most military mail is so rough when this watercolored painting is examined. All troops in the field, North or South, lived in a hot, wet and humid environment. The paper rotted, as did your clothes and nearly everything else. To save a letter, you folded it in half and put it in your pocket. You slept in the open in the rain, waded through swamps and forded rivers. Keeping your mail pristine for a stamp collector was not a prime consideration.

The card shown below was produced by the government of North Viet-Nam to show troops in the field, beginning in 1970. Note the similarity to cards produced by Japan during World War II.

Produced by "Liberation Printer, Liberation Publishing House, Central Viet-Nam".

Mien Nam Viet-Nam refers to the so-called liberated area of South Viet-Nam. There is no way that these cards were produced in some jungle cave! Used to England.



Reduced copy of post card. Nothing postally great - the picture side is the point.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

THE COMMUNIST MILITARY MAIL SYSTEM IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

The Viet Cong (VC) and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had an elaborate system to support both personal and official correspondence. It was simple, effective, and applied stringent security practices to help ensure secrecy.

The following is the typical postal service system set up in each province of South Viet-Nam.

Command Section: Chief and Assistant, Political Officer, two Liason Agents.

Mail Section: Three Clerks.

Postal Route Section: 10-15 Runners plus Security Guard Squad.

Flash (urgent) Message Section: 9-10 People.

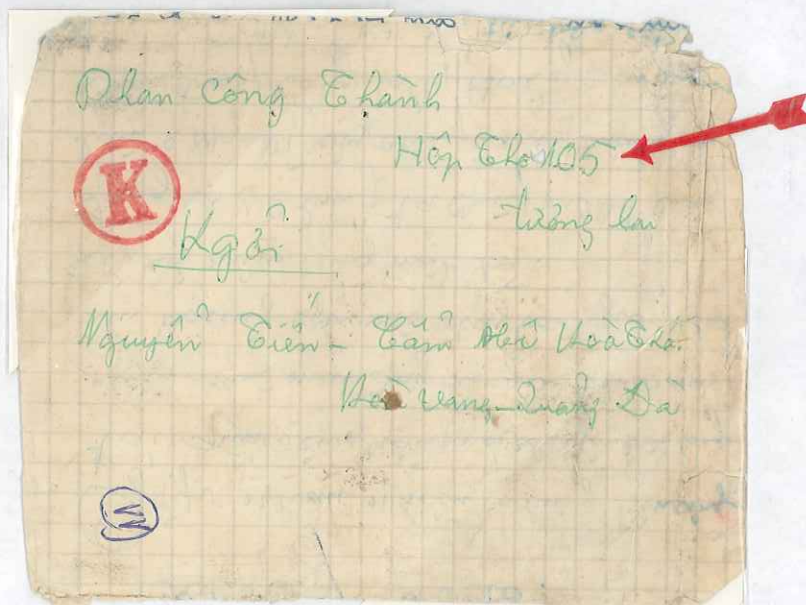
Food Production Section: Three People.

Medic & Foster Sister (cooks) Section: Four Women.

Mail distribution ran from the province level down to each district, with a mail handling station at each. The district station, in charge of mail distribution, received mail from the postal route couriers, sorted it and forwarded it as either ordinary mail or flash mail. Provincial mail service headquarters was usually in the jungle while the other sections were located in villages throughout the province.

Mail was addressed between individuals and/or agents through the use of "Hom Tho" or "letter boxes". Letter box numbers were assigned for units down to company level and also to major staff elements. The numbers assigned were numerical or alphanumeric and were changed when the postal communications officer believed a location had been compromised.

Below is a fairly pristine cover, all things considered. The small size is normal as the letters were wrapped in small bundles of cloth or plastic and tied around the waist. The red arrow points to the "Hom Thu" number. The black circle at lower left is the censors initials. The red circled "K" means "Kin" (secret/confidential mail).



For security, mail was transported by hand on trails separate from those that carried supplies. The mail was one of the most secretive and secure operations of the communist organization.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

MAIL TO NORTH VIET-NAM FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM

Undated letter from NVA unit in the south, addressed to father in Ha Tinh, North Viet-Nam. Not censored, but marked with "K" denoting "secret" mail.

American wrote on the letter "II CROPS TAKEN FROM BODY 17 MAY '68". He means "CORPS". The dead NVA could spell better than the American GI! South Viet-Nam was divided into four military regions, or "Corps", 1 to 4 by the South Vietnamese and I to IV by the Americans. The map shows the military regions, I at the top and IV at the bottom. The arrow shows where the cover was found.



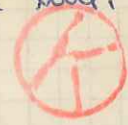
II CROPS
TAKEN
FROM
BODY
17 MAY '68

Cái con hiện
về từ lính
cũng lính thối
vui có nhiều - là
con bé hiện ở
thời điểm người
nghĩ năm có sự
thần lực có

Con người thì thanh đạm
Hồi khu 1. 106 H. hững hờ

Đi về ba,
Nguyên gia An

1220 hà tinh.



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

VIET-CONG FORCES

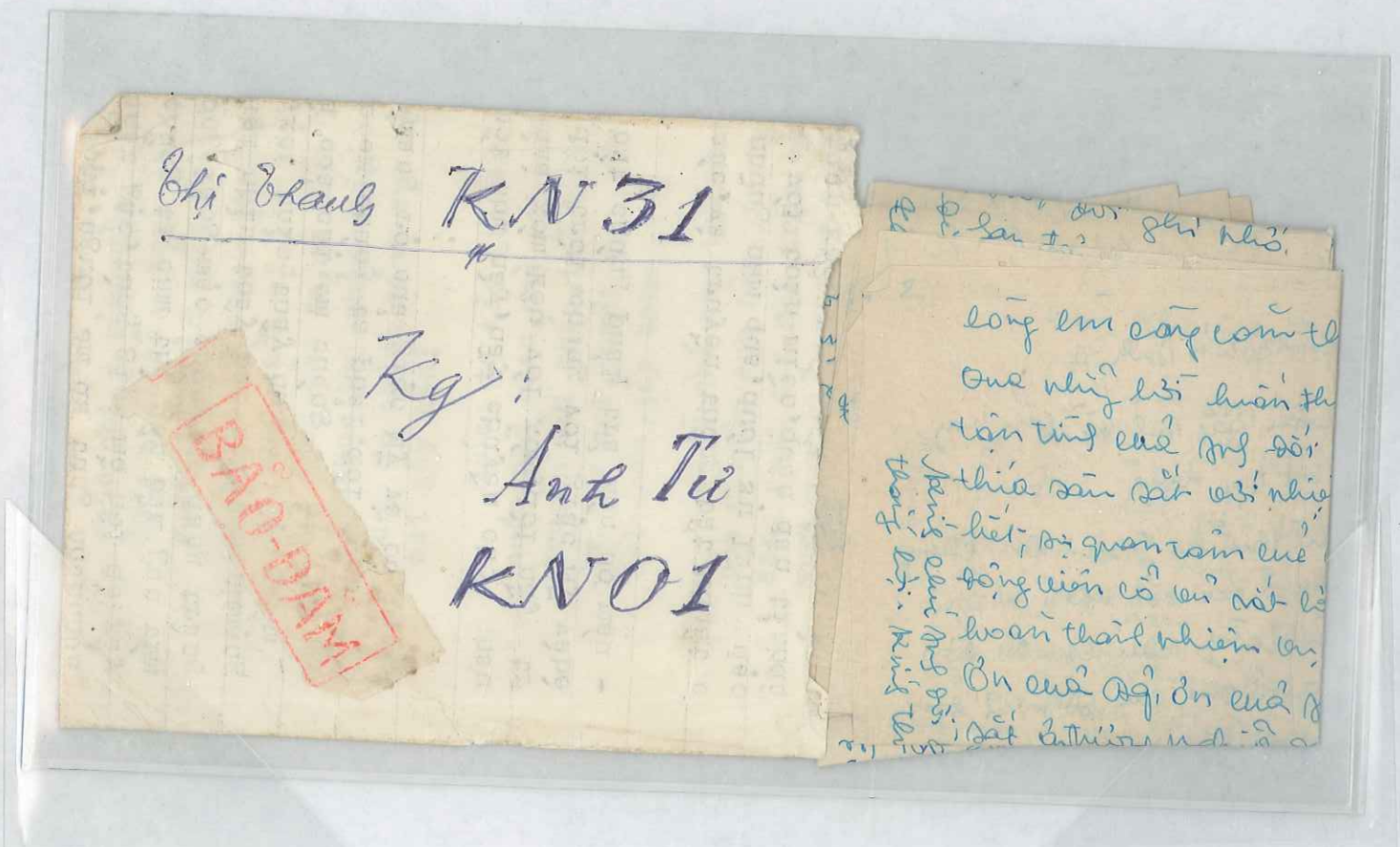
"FLASH" MAIL

This cover with the red and white label "BAO-DAM" is one of two known covers in civilian hands. The other cover belongs to a former US Army Intelligence officer, now living in Colorado, who happened to be a stamp collector at that time. Mail bearing these labels was to be destroyed after reading.

"BAO-DAM" means "secured" or "warranted" (not "registered"). The labels were used on mail from the "flash" or "urgent" section of the provincial command structure of the Viet Cong military postal section.

The letter was sent from one high level of command to another high level. This is shown by the two digit address number and the fact that there is no "HT" routing.

There was no censorship applied. The letter is from a female leader to a male leader in the VC command structure. Most of the letter is personal, however, she mentions the upcoming "rising up to drive the aggressors from our land..." which is a reference to the January, 1968 Tet Offensive to capture all of South Viet-Nam.



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

CIVILIAN LABOR SUPPORT SERVICE ON THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL

Not everyone in North Viet-Nam served in the Armed Forces and carried a weapon. A large number of people were required to support the troops fighting in South Viet-Nam. Many of these people were too old to be in the Armed Forces. Some people were not totally trusted because they had relatives highly placed in the South Viet-Nam government or military.

These people supported the war effort by transporting supplies from North Viet-Nam to South Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia. The Labor Support Service had free mail service when outside of North Viet-Nam.



The above cover was mailed to an NVA or VC unit in the field in South Viet-Nam from a man in a "Marine Transportation Company". This unit was located somewhere on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and was responsible for river crossings and the like.

It is extremely unusual to see a unit description in a return address and even more so from a civilian worker, as these workers rarely wrote to anyone (if they were even permitted to write).

Rogois M572

2/15/2008

200

VIETCONG

The following Viet Cong/North Vietnamese covers are what is referred to as "Jungle Mail". They were consigned by the son of a U.S. Vietnam Veteran from the 3rd Signal Brigade who was there during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Translations done by a Vietnamese interpreter. Condition varies as is typical. Rare postal history items.

3 TẮC Đ. P. Q. (Địa Phương
Quân - Local Soldier)
Đức Hòa District.
To: MR Ba Tân Quý.
Bà Thu - Đồng ông yên.
Đức Huệ District (Long An)

on back: Kiểm duyệt
(checked / censored)
16/8/68.

(2 pictures)
Huyện Đức
Huà

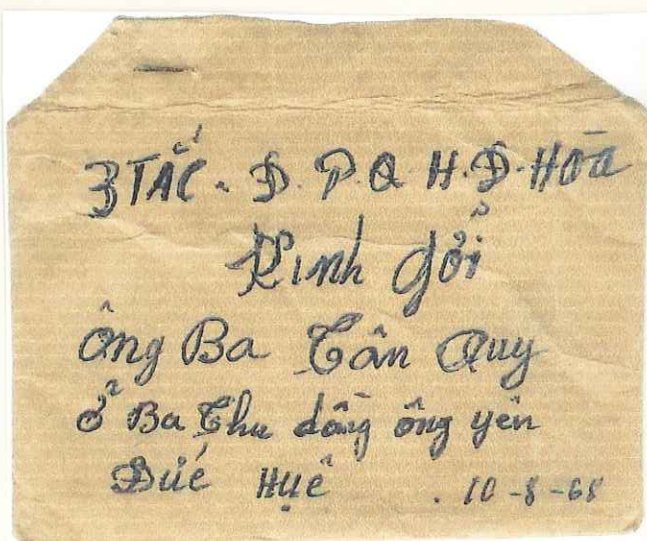
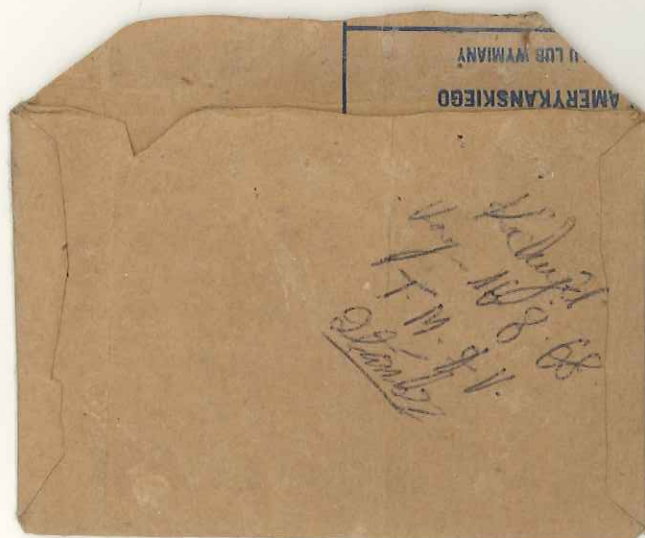


Photo of Front



1968, August 16, Small
envelope made from Eastern
European package wrapper. From local Viet Cong
village defense force (DPQ) at Huyện Đức Hòa
to Long An. Censored on reverse w/
manuscript "Kiểm Duyệt" (censored) plus date
and notation that contains "2 pictures" Mekong
Delta usage.

LOT# 3125

Ha. Chuking-Pat. nam-Sach's Hai-Dubong

Gi' anh

Don't the 92159 L.T.

Can Sam

Sorting Office is
Nokong Delta

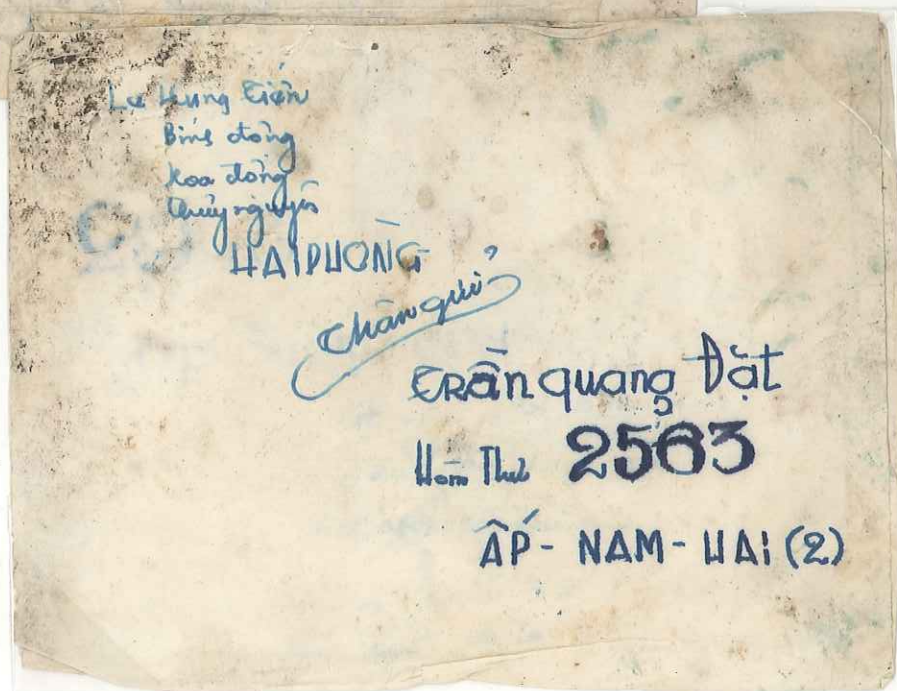
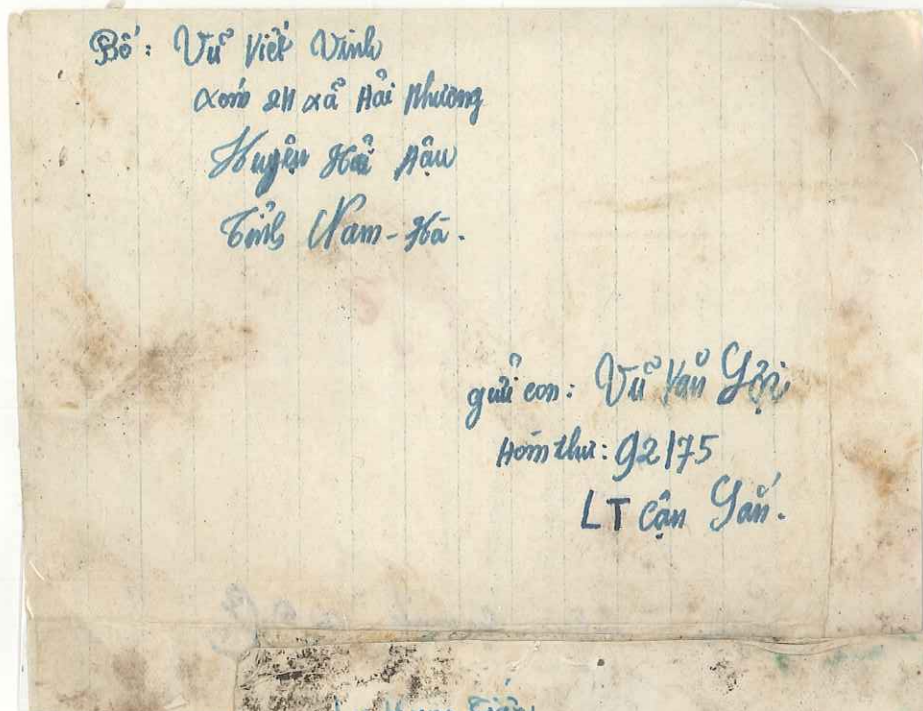


Mail From the Trail 1945-1975
NVA Main Force Mail



Very rare usage from the 1964-1966 period before build-up of U.S. forces. The enemy was just beginning to organize a battlefield mail system to meet demands. Nam Dong is located near Dalat. Later usages would use transfer station locations and not specific geographical locations for security purposes. This envelope originally had an adhesive stamp that was removed for intelligence purposes.

Mail From the Trail 1945-1975
NVA Main Force Mail



Both pristine examples of mail from home (North Vietnam) to deployed units in South Vietnam. Addressed to Hom Tho Numbers 92175 and 2563 via Laos into II Corps, Circa 1967-1968 and captured by U.S. Forces.

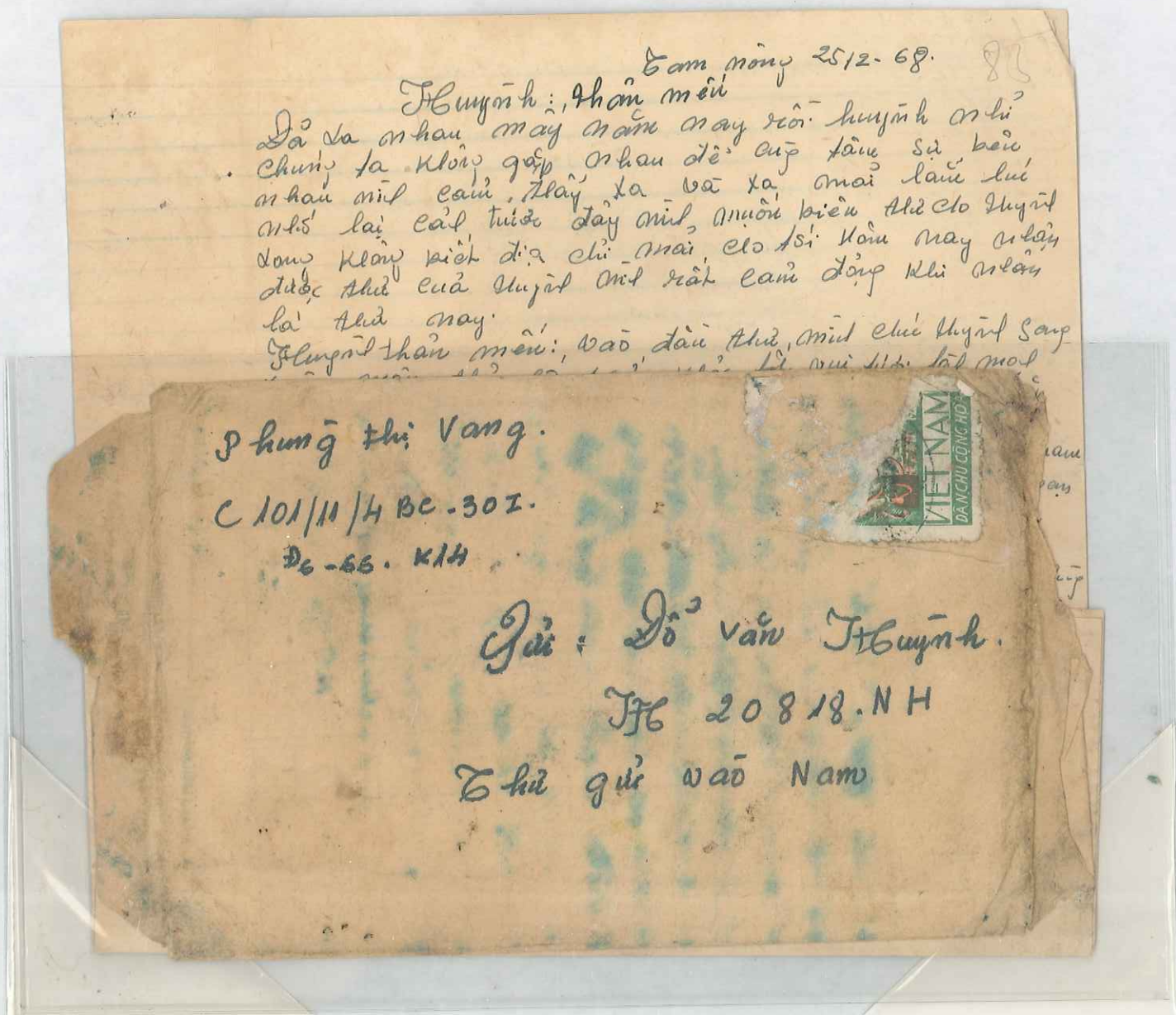
NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

MAIL FROM NVA IN NORTH VIET-NAM TO NVA UNIT IN SOUTH

Letter sent by female NVA soldier in North Viet-Nam to male NVA comrade fighting in South Viet-Nam. The long number and letters in the upper left are the unit "address" in North Viet-Nam while the "HT" number is in the middle. The last line, "Thu gui nao nam" means "somewhere in the south".

This letter was not censored after mailing. Before sealing and application of the postage it would have been read by the unit political officer. The letter was written on Feb 25, 1968 - the day US forces captured the city of Hue back from the communists after losing it on Jan 31, 1968 - the start of the Tet Offensive. The cover and letter were found on an NVA body near Hue. The stamp was torn by the South Vietnamese because of the political theme. The envelope and contents are made from recycled government forms with the ink handwriting washed off.



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

MAIL FROM CIVILIAN IN NORTH VIET-NAM TO NVA UNIT IN SOUTH

This letter below went from Hai-Phong, North Viet-Nam, to an NVA soldier in South Viet-Nam at "Village South 3". There was a stamp, but it may have fell off somewhere on the Ho Chi Minh Trail during the three or four month trip to the south.



STATEMENT FROM CAPTURED NVA MILITARY POSTAL LIEUTENANT:

"In the South, the hamlets would send the letters to the village, than the village to the district; the district would send them from one station to another and the letters were very liable to be mislaid or lost. The letters we (the soldiers in the South) sent back to our family were in the same situation, going from the unit to the regiment, than from the regiment to the division, then they would be sent back to the hamlets or the villages where our families stay"

"To send letters to the North... send our letters according to a special fixed route, for example to Kontum, from Kontum to Quang Ngai, from Quang Ngai to Quang Nam, to Thua Thien, then to Laos. (then north on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the reverse when going from North to South)."

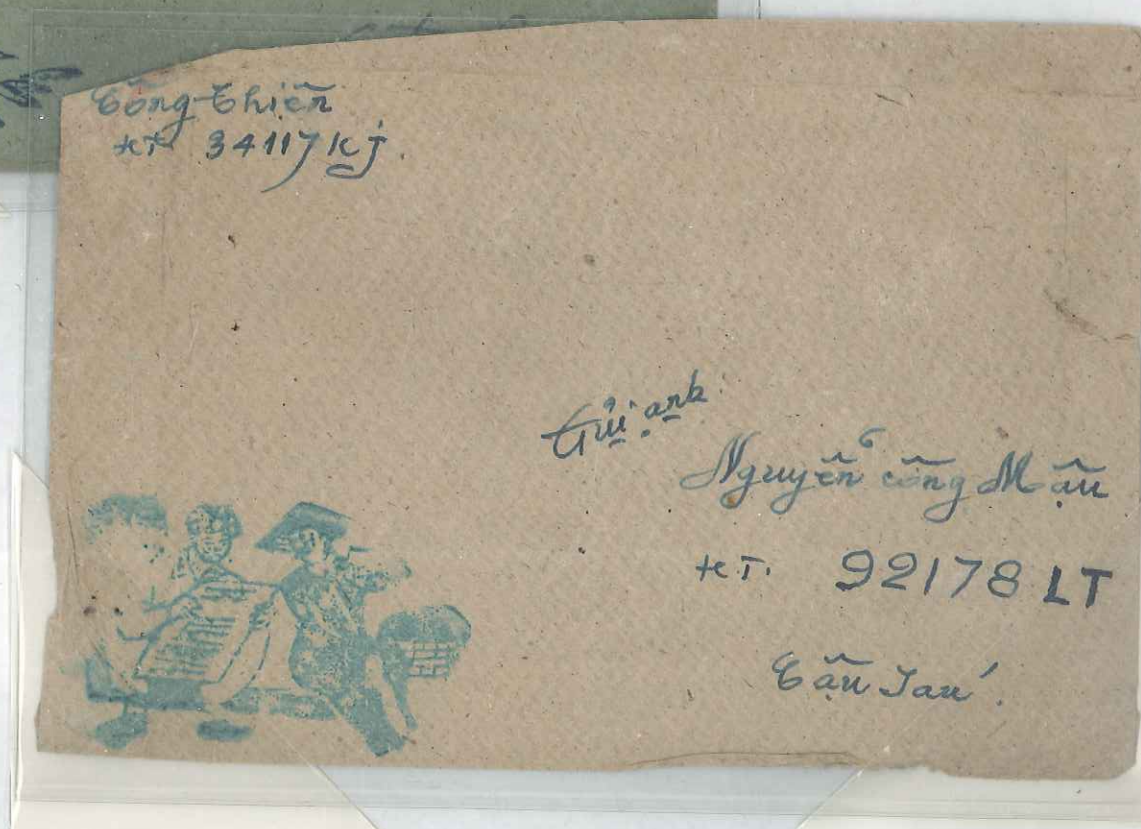
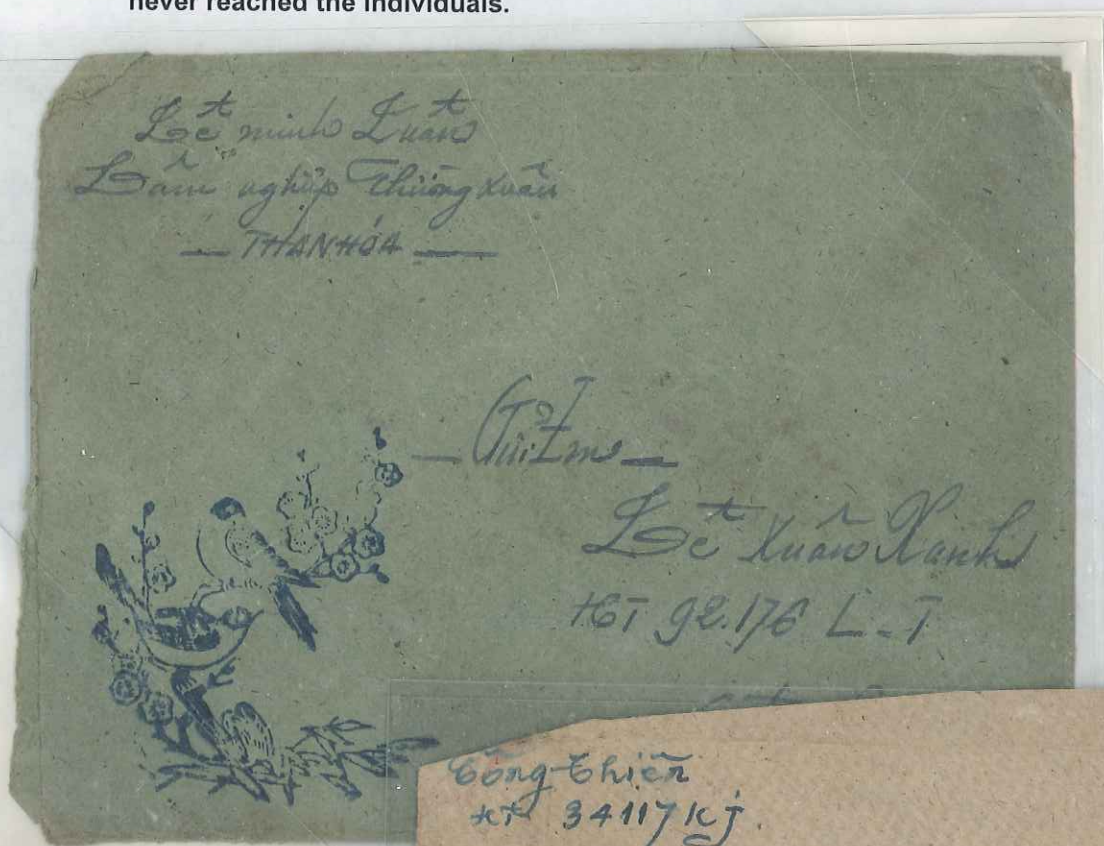
NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

"THEY SHOT THE POSTMAN" MAIL

One day up in I Corps, a Vietnamese carrying a weapon was walking down the trail. As he walked into the killing zone, US troops shot him. Upon examination, a packet of 20 envelopes was found tied to his waist. All were addressed to various names at "HT 92178 LT". The contents were turned over to intelligence and the ambushers were allowed to divide the envelopes as souvenirs. This is the only way "trail mail" was obtained and explains why these items are so elusive to collectors.

Two of these are shown below. The top cover is from the village of Than Hoa in North Viet-Nam. The lower cover is from another NVA unit fighting in the South. Both covers are very clean as they never reached the individuals.



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

VIET CONG CODED CORRESPONDENCE

The Viet Cong had a system of delivering coded messages that fit in to the rural countryside of the delta region of South Viet-Nam.

In the rural regions, when a person talks about someone they need to make sure that the other person understands exactly who you are referring to as there are only a couple of dozen family names. The person's job title and location are added after his name to differentiate that person from another with the same name.

This cover is addressed as follows:

"Mr Nam Quit sends for:

Please my friend Chac give this letter to Mr Chin Chua Xe Loi

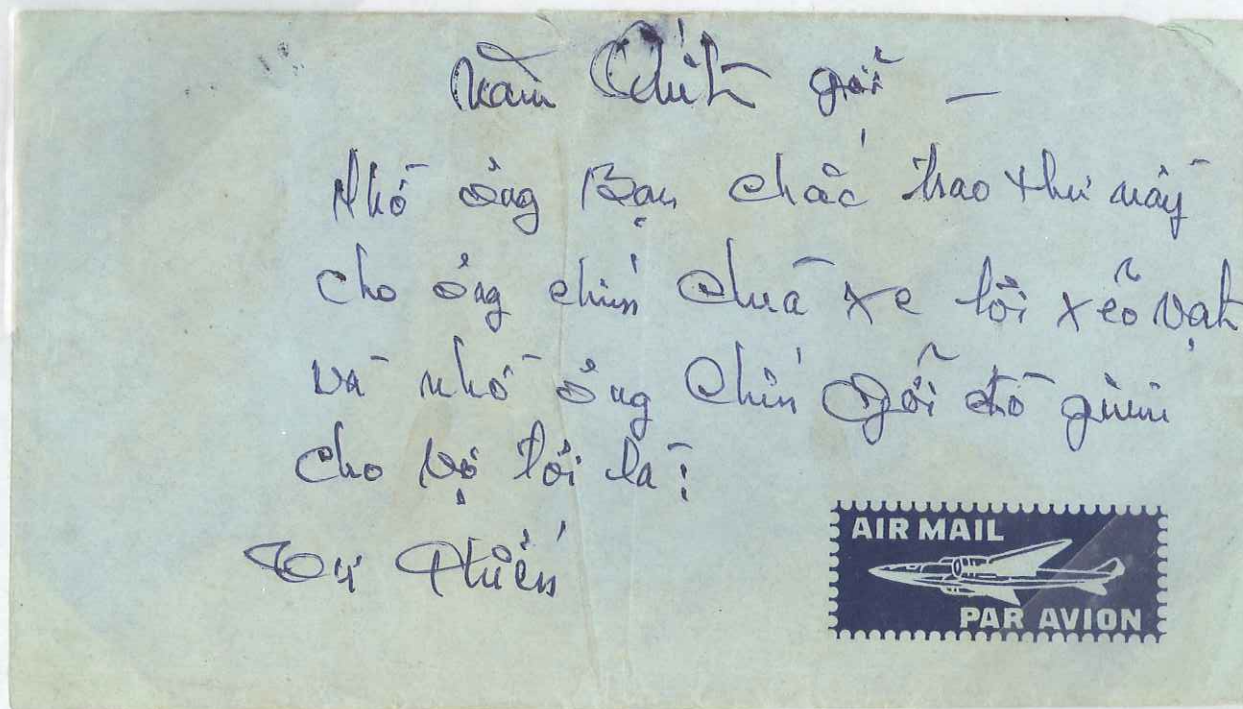
Xeo Vat and tell him to send this letter to my wife, Mrs Tu Phien.

Mr Chin will send this letter to my wife through the sampan sailor."

The long Vietnamese name means:

(1) Ong (2) Chin Chua (3) Xe Loi (4) Xeo Vat

(1) Mr (2) the 9th person in the Chua family (3) whose job is the tri-cycle driver (4) he lives near the river bend



A method for the VC to deliver coded messages and blend into the rural areas
This cover was seized by members of the ARVN 21st Inf Div in the Mekong Delta.

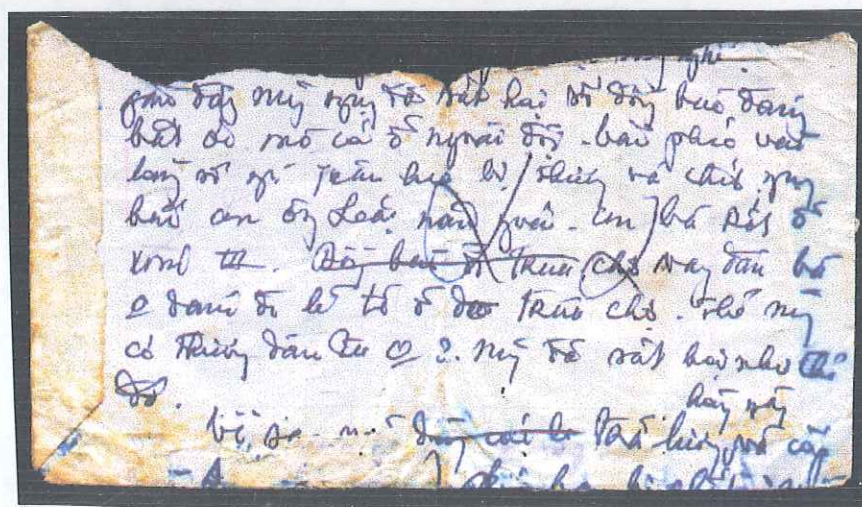
NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MAIL FROM A VIET CONG VILLAGE TO A VC UNIT

Most mail without a return address is difficult if not impossible to ascertain origin. This cover, however, without any real return address, can be identified as having come from a Viet Cong controlled village in South Viet-Nam.

The partial contents (photocopy shown) states "...US and illegal units (SVN troops) killed many of our brother citizens. They mortared us while our citizens were catching fish in the rice paddy."

While dateless, this cover is from before January, 1968. At that time, the VC rose up to overthrow the SVN government and in the process were decimated and eliminated as a fighting force. The North Vietnamese Army took over the war and did not participate in local activities such as farming and fishing.



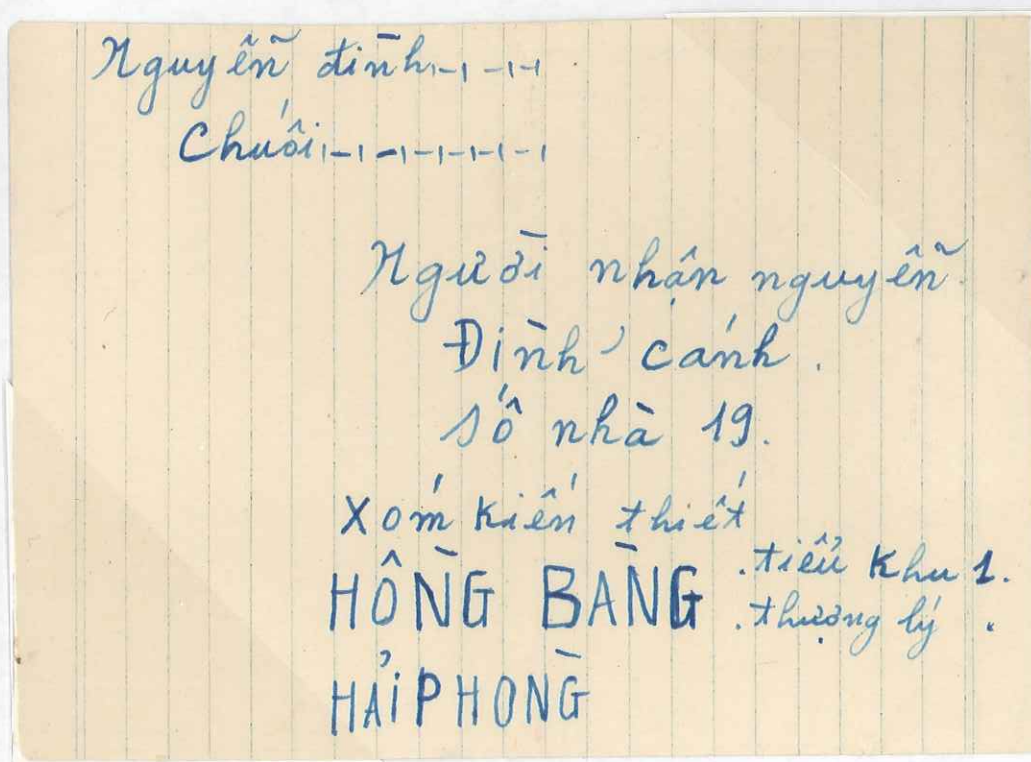
NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

LATE PERIOD NVA COVER

This captured cover was found among personal possessions of a Viet-Nam veteran. It has been sold a few times, fairly cheaply, because it has no enclosure or markings to help identify the time period.

By analyzing the address, however, this cover can be identified as having been addressed after May 23, 1972. On this date, President Nixon ordered the bombing of Haiphong and Hanoi and included non-military targets.

The cover is addressed to Nguyen Dinh Chuoi, home number 19, Hong Bang Rebuilt Section (Xom Kien Thiet) Section 1, Haiphong. The reference to "Rebuilt Section" is a reference to the reconstruction done after the bombings of 1972. The only other time this reference was used was during the 1945 August Revolution against the French, which resulted in the naval bombardment of Haiphong. This cover is not that old.



Based on the time it took for a North Vietnamese soldier to get from the North to the South, this cover was probably addressed at the end of 1973 or 1974. Most captured covers exist from the 1968 to 1971 period of time when the Americans were at their highest numbers.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

NVA STAMPLESS MILITARY MAIL

Before the first military postage-free stamp was issued on July 15, 1959, North Vietnamese soldiers on active duty used a stampless mail system.

This cover was sent from Nam Dinh to Ha Noi and is postmarked 8-9-58 with a "Nam Dinh T.P." The small red circle containing a star reads, "THU BIN SI/TRAN 54" or "Military Letter/Bureau No. 54" Ha Noi machine backstamp.



Very few covers from the pre-1960s survive from North Viet-Nam. Paper was scarce after the first Indochina War ended, with nearly all being recycled in one way or another. Stamp collecting was not widespread - and besides, there are no stamps to save from stampless covers!

Note the early use of the "Hom Thu" (letter box) number in combination with the town name (mail distribution location).

W996

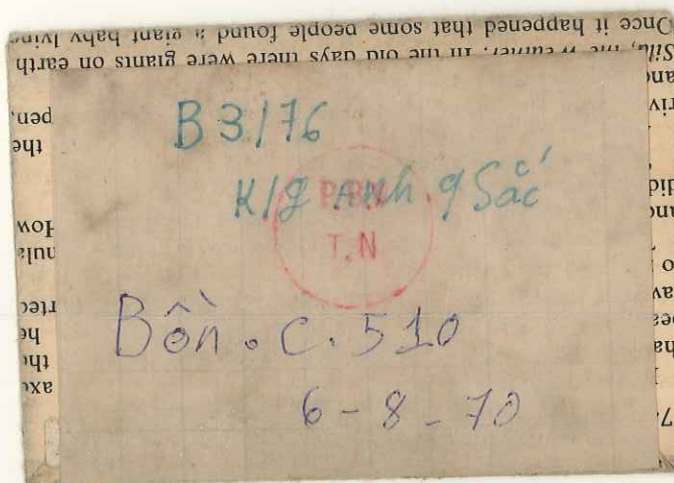
418724

144-09000-100337

9335

North Vietnam ☒ North Vietnam Military Letter dated June 8, 1970 this sm homemade env was carried thru the Cu Chi Tunnels by mailman, this cover has a seldom seen cancel in red "P.V.B./T.N." meaning "Postal Office/Tay Ninh", w/ letter enclosure requesting rice be sent to a VC unit in the field, VF (PH)...\$125

Nutmeg sale 144 5/07 270.





Really great cover - I hope I did not sell it to you!!

Red cancel means "Peoples Security Police/Station K 35/Military Mail" I've never seen this before.

It is from a girl to her boyfriend - She says winter is very cold (she is up at a village outside Hoa Binh City - Near the China-NVN border) and wants to know if he is studying hard, she misses him, etc.

Written in Jan 1975 - no mention of the war or other patriotic stuff - difficult times in the North, everyone was going South for the big offensive.

Chuong My is a small village.

Retail of this cover is about \$100.00 - this item should be in your military mail collection.

Hope this helps

Joe

Viet



Nam

Military letter.

Stampless military letter sent from Hiep-Hoa to the Ministry of Commander in Chief on January 6, 1950, with manuscript "Tho Binh Si - M.B.P." (Military letter - free franked) at left side, and "TB" (Invalid) at upper right. Cancelled by Hiep-Hoa January 6 dated stamp, unclear Yen-The January 7., Thai-Nguyen January 8 transit, censor handstamp and censor's signature mark. **Propaganda** manuscript on back side.

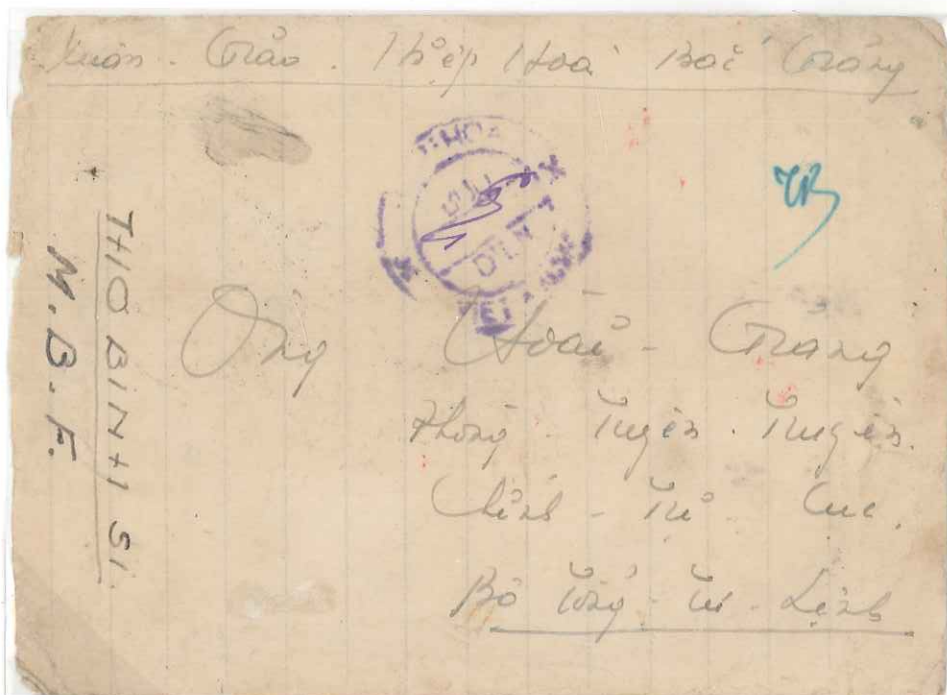


photo of reverse

VIET-NAM



most stamps have
the "united
nations" flag
plate from



These two franchise stamps were issued on July 27, 1975⁶
for use by disabled veterans. July 27th was Invalid's
Day. It is not known why the date on
the stamps is "1975" instead of 1976



Top portion of "VIET NAM DÂN CHỦ CỘNG HÒA" missing

VIET-NAM



The stamp on this 1983 cover seems to be a different shade of blue. It does not have a white dot below the "5".

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

DISABLED VETERAN STAMPS

On July 2, 1976, the two Viet-Nams were officially reunified into the Socialist Republic Of Viet-Nam. On July 27, 1976 the first issue of free frank stamps for disabled veterans was issued. These stamps were prepared before the reunification date was known, as they are inscribed "Viet-Nam Dan Chu Cong Hoa" as were the North Viet-Nam issues. The green stamp shows a disabled worker while the other shows the emblem of the disabled veteran.

Registered cover from disabled vet in Can Tho Province, added mixed franking on reverse.



Cover from wounded soldier (or veteran) to civilian. Forwarded to recently drafted civilian at 45th Battalion, 477th Division at Song Be (staging area for Cambodia).



VIET-NAM



The military frank stamp on the left was issued on October 21, 1976. The darker red one was, according to Steve Carol, issued for Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea probably at a date after 1976. (Michael says 1977)

They depict a soldier and a map of Viet-Nam. They were designed by Nghiep and printed in panes of 100.

See ICB #110 page 112
See ICB #79 page 80-81

Michael #286 10.00
MF 110.15

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

WOUNDED SOLDIER - INBOUND ARMY HOSPITAL

This cover has no return address to indicate origin, but the use of a military tends to lead one to guess that it originated from a unit in Cambodia.

The addressee is a soldier/patient at the 7th Tactical Region Army Hospital in TP Ho Chi Minh. This hospital handled the troops injured in Cambodia.

The stamp used is the reprinted popular "Defend the Homeland" issue. First issued on Sept 21, 1976, in brick red & black, it was reprinted in scarlet & black sometime in 1979. With no face value, it had the equivalent value of 12 xu.

The cover is postmarked May 17, 1979 and has transit marks dated May 13 and May 16, 1979. All postmarks are TP Ho Chi Minh.



First Print
Brick Red



Second Print
Scarlet

HO CHI MINH, October 19, 1980
Backstamped at GO CONG TAY on October 22, 1980



GO CONG TAY, January 21, 1981
Backstamped at HO CHI MINH on January 24, 1981



Gocong is about 30 miles south of Ho Chi Minh City and is not near Kampuchea.

VIET-NAM



Issue October 10, 1978



Issue Oct 10, 1978



Issue June 3, 1978

These military frank stamps were issued in 1979.



Postage stamps of
military theme



Printed on both sides

See ICB #112 page 21

MF310 "sing" 25.00

MF 310 8.00

MF 309 30.00

MF 308-310 1.00

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

Issue of October 20, 1978. Design shows members of the three main branches of the armed forces; Army, Navy and Air Force. The Army issue occurs on both smooth, white paper and a second printing on rough, greyish paper. The other two designs occur only on the white paper.



Rough greyish paper variety.

Tied by Son Luc hand cancel. Used for free franking to soldier fighting in Cambodia, 1980.

Scott M19

150 -

water damaged



Nguyen Thiệp

Nguyen Thiệp

VIET-NAM



Essay Proof with Positional Markings

VIET-NAM

CHAU THANH, 71200 - June 27, 1980 Military Cover



This cover was backstamped at T.P. HO CHI MINH-?, 1500 on June 28, 1980 with a machine cancellation.

VIET-NAM

TP HO CHI MINH 2, 70000 - April 24, 1981

QUÂN-KHU 7

Số 59 KS



24ⁿ 4ⁿ 81

Kính Gửi:

Phạm Đình Gili
B/15 - xã Lê Đại Hành
P: 14 - Q: 11 - TP: Hồ Chí Minh



This cover was backstamped with a machine cancellation from TP. HO CHI MINH, 15250.

VIET-NAM

THANG BINH, 51350 - January 16, 1979 Military Cover



This cover was backstamped in HOAVANG, 51450 on January 22, 1979.

VIET-NAM



These four stamps were issued on December 22, 1979 to mark the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Viet-Nam People's Army. Viet-Nam previously issued stamps on December 22nd of 1959 and 1964 to commemorate this event.

After the Communist Viet Minh lost support of China in 1944, they turned to the consolidation of fragmented guerrilla units inside Viet-Nam. The Viet Minh entrusted the tasks of military and organizational preparation for the anticipated Japanese collapse to Vo Nguyen Giap. It was only 2½ months before the Japanese coup de force that Vo Nguyen Giap launched the first platoon of the "People's Liberation Troops". Formed on December 22, 1944, in a Tho settlement in Cao Bang province, on the border of China, this "army" consisted of 34 men equipped with 2 revolvers, 17 rifles, 14 flintlock rifles and 1 light machine gun.

The two pink stamps are military franf stamps and therefore have no denomination. The Vietnamese Post Office described the two designs as "defending the sea, the air and the isles of the Fatherland" and the "badge of the Viet-Nam People's Party". They were designed by Huy Toan and Quoc Thu, respectively.

The two green stamps were described as "The Army and the People are one" and "Defending every inch of ground of the Fatherland". They were designed by Huy Toan and Quoc Thu, respectively.

These stamps were printed in sheets of 100.

See ICB # 112 page 23

See M28, 1033

MF904-05 ; 306-07

.65

VIET-NAM



Misplaced Perforations

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

The first military free frank set to be issued in pairs. December 22, 1979. One stamp shows a naval gunner plus ships and guns in the background. The other stamp continues the theme of "defend the homeland". A similar design, in green, was issued for civilian use and contained a face value.

The airmail cover shows usage by a soldier in 1981. He is sending a letter to TP Ho Chi Minh in search of a girl he saw at a bookstore.



Cover with Van Yen postmark to TP Ho Chi Minh. The zip code of the cancel (26760) is from an unrecorded series. There is a TPHCM machine cancel and a Quan 10 handstamp as a transit.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

August 5, 1981 saw the issuance of a military free frank "especially for the navy" and bearing a portrait of Ho Chi Minh in a navy uniform. This was to honor Ho's service in 1955 as a "member" of the navy (per the communists). The stamp itself is inscribed to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Vietnamese (North Viet-Nam) navy.



Only three postally used covers have been examined with this stamp used. None had any indication that the sender was in the navy. In fact, as the above example shows, the sender was in the mountains near Laos, in Ban Me Thout (Dak Lak Province), not a naval town.

VIET-NAM



On August 5, 1981, a new military stamp was issued especially for the navy. It bears the portrait of Ho Chi Minh in a naval uniform. The stamp was printed with 117 copies per sheet (13 x 9).



This same date, August 5th, saw the issue of a very small postage free stamp, but for members of the militia. The stamp shows a militia woman with a large industrial plant in the background.

The stamp was printed in large sheets bearing 250 stamps. Because the sheet had 256 fields, 6 fields were left blank. The stamps were usually printed on white paper, but some exist on yellowish paper. Plate flaw varieties exist with the flag on the factory missing, and other stamps exist with a scar on the woman's right cheek.

The exact date of issue of the 12 xu stamp is not known. Michel says August of 1981. There was nothing published in the Western press about this stamp until 1985. The rate for a domestic letter was increased from 12 xu to 30 xu during mid 1981.

The design of the 12 xu stamp is the same as the military stamp except the inscription reads "BUU CHINH" instead of "TEM QUAN DOI" and, of course, the different colors and the addition of the "12 xu".

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

MILITIA MAIL

On Aug 5, 1981 a new type of stamp appeared for use by the Militia. It was a very small stamp, compared to the normal size stamp issued for use of the military. In the years following the unification of North and South, many shortages existed including paper.

This stamp was an experimental issue, printed in Hanoi (as opposed to Cuba or Hungary). The design shows an armed Militia woman in front of an industrial plant.



Locally Produced Issue



Postage Free Militia Mail
From Militia Woman in Hanoi to Sister in Saigon (TPHCM)

VIET-NAM



These two undenominated military frank stamps were issued on April 22, 1982. They have the theme of "Defending the Motherland" (BAO VE TO QUOC). They picture a soldier of the regular army with a militia-woman on the green stamp and a militia-woman in a maritime region on the blue stamp. Each stamp is inscribed "TEM QUAN DOI" meaning military franchise issue.

These miniature stamps were printed offset in sheets of 250.



Bottom Stamp has all Colors Missing

This is the common "Soldier is Wounded" variety with a red point on the militia-woman's neck

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

MILITIA USAGE

On April 22, 1982, two more of the "economy" stamps were issued. The first, featured a woman member of the People's Militia with slung rifle. The second featured a male member of the regular army with a female member of one of the ethnic minority tribes. These stamps were mainly issued to members of the militia and are nearly always found on covers without "Hom Thu" military addresses. Instead, there are regular home addresses as militia members normally served in their home village or province.



Two covers, both sent by militia members. The airmail cover is sent from Dong Thap Province to TP Ho Chi Minh while the blue cover is sent locally within the TP Ho Chi Minh area.

VIET-NAM

Varieties



Colors Shifted



Girl Looking Towards Right

VIET-NAM



Green Color is Lighter

From: Ng^o - Th^{ang}
T.P. H^o Chi Minh

\$15-



Mi M37
To HT 1C
(China border)
Via Saigon HQ

To: Nguyễn Ngọc Hùng
Hẻm H^o: 1C 2780 BX
Thị trấn H^o Chi Minh

See Reverse

Mi M38 - 1983 usage

\$15-

Đoàn Tâm (See reverse)

Clean & attractive



Trần Thị Kim Oanh
Kí nghiệp sửa chữa và Bảo dưỡng
Xe Bus Thành phố
Thị trấn H^o Chi Minh
~~Xe Tân Bình~~

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

DISABLED VETERAN STAMPS

On November 9, 1982, a commemorative free frank stamp was issued honoring the 35th anniversary of "Disabled Veteran Day". The stamp had the anniversary inscription and showed the Disabled Veteran Badge and a disabled veteran at work.

The stamp comes in two color types: light lilac (more pink) as the single stamp, or dark lilac as the stamp on the cover.



Most of the stamps printed were kept as souvenirs. Despite being common as mint or CTO singles, this stamp is not commonly found on cover. This cover was sent by a disabled vet in Haiphong to a relative in TP Ho Chi Minh.

MICHEL #43 Yvert #14

(NON CATALOGUED IN SCOTT)
(sans cataloguer dans Scott)

25th ANNIVERSARY OF CREATION OF ARMY FORCES AT FRONTIER
25e Anniversaire de la creation des forces militaires de frontieres

IMPERFORATED
Non-dentele



SCOTT #M34 Yvert #11

35th ANNIVERSARY OF VETERANS DAY
35 Anniversaire de la journee des invalides de guerre

PINK MISSING
Pink manquant

NORMAL
Normal



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

Issued March 30, 1983. Large quantities were printed for the large number of troops still on the Cambodian-Vietnamese border areas. The normal stamp is perforated 10.75, however varieties exist. The varieties are not philatelic as they exist on genuine military covers.



Perf 10.75



Imperf Pair



Perf 12

*Trần Văn Hai
Quân 5*



*Ô Lê Tiến, Nguyễn
82/206 C. Bùi Xá, Nghệ
05 T.P. H.C.M.*

Perf 9.5 Emergency Perf
horiz x perf 12 vert
Late usage 2x rate.
Vert Perf Error (arrow)

This cover illustrated in The Indo-China Philatelist, March/April 1992.

SCOTT #M35 Yvert #12

VIETNAMESE ARMY
Armée Vietmanienne

NORMAL
Normal



BLACK MISSING
Noir manquant



ALMOST MISSING
Presque manquant



DOUBLE PRINTING & COLOR SHIFTED
Double impression & couleur déplacée



WHITE LINE
Ligne blanche



SOME WHITE SPOTS SHOW AS
BOMBS FROM THE AIRPLANE
Quelque taches blanches comme
les bombes tombées de l'avion



WHITE SPOTS
Tache blanche



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

Issue of March, 1984. This stamp shows a soldier and a woman militia volunteer with a background showing industry.

In addition to no known exact date of issue, little is known of its usage. So far only three covers have been reported postally used, with all three either in or out of Cambodia and with 7th Tactical Zone notations out of Ho Chi Minh City.

This stamp always has rough perforations and is known imperforated.

Of interest is the fact that the major East German collectors did not obtain examples of postally used covers or even philatelic covers as was usually the case.

The cover below is addressed to a soldier in Cambodia.



MICHEL #41 (1984)

NON LISTED, IN SCOTT & YVERT PROBABLY NON-ISSUED
No catalogue dans Scott & Yvert Probablement non-émis

MILITARY STAMPS
Franchise militaire

PROCEDURE OF PRINTING
Procédure de l'Imprimerie



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

May 7, 1984, saw the 30th anniversary of the communist Vietnamese victory over the French forces at Dien Bien Phu. On this date, a commemorative military free frank stamp was issued. But, for the first time in communist history, there was a first day ceremont, complete with a cachet and a special cancel. Souvenir imperf stamps were also made available to the troops.



Also available were patriotic envelopes showing the flag raising over the French command bunker available for general use.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

BORDER GUARD MAIL

Issue of August 30, 1984. Design shows Border Guard Service patrol along seashore, plus offshore patrol vessel. The two small burning vessels represent the enemies of the state.

The stamp comes with smooth perforations all around and rough perforations on one or more sides. It appears that the smooth perf stamp was for collectors while the rough perf issues went for use on mail of the Border Guards. The Border Guards were formerly called "Frontier Guards" or "Frontier Police".



Smooth Perforations



Rough Perforations



Rough Perforation Variety Used To Border Guard Station
(Observation Post) At Hau Giang River
Free Franks Were Allowed On Mail To Those In The Field

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

DISABLED VETERAN STAMPS

THE LAST ISSUE

The last free frank issued for use by disabled military veterans was issued on Nov 10, 1984. This day (Nov 10) was declared "Day of the Disabled Veteran".

The stamp shows a disabled soldier teaching children. Many of the disabled were used to settle the border areas of Viet-Nam.



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

December 22, 1984 saw the issuance of a stamp to be used by both the Army and the Militia. The stamp was printed in two shades, a dark and a light. Both printings actually saw usage by the troops.

Double rate letter (w/ dark shade) went from Hanoi to TP Ho Chi Minh and took one month in transit. The fact that it is an airmail envelope does not matter.



Single rate cover (light shade) from Da Nang to TP Ho Chi Minh.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

MILITARY TECHNICAL SCHOOL USAGE

On August 30, 1985, a commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Police (a branch of the military) was issued. The design shows four members of the branches of the police.

This stamp is also overprinted "TEM NOI BO" which translates as "INTERNAL" meaning "Internal Usage" as within the police department.



Basic Stamp



Tem Noi Bo Overprint



Police Officer At School
Free Franking From Student Attending "Military Region 9 Technical School" (TKTQK9).

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

INFLATIONARY RATES - 1 Dong

On October 1, 1986, a Free Frank Stamp for the military was issued bearing a face value of 1 d(ong) which was the recently adopted inland rate for civilian mail. Previous rate was 50 xu or half of 1 d. Inflation for postal rates was spiraling, causing confusion as many previous military free frank stamps without a denomination (worth 6 or 12 xu) were still available.

The first printing of this stamp was in a dark olive (top cover). A second print was issued in brown (lower cover).

This cover is from a military unit at Dong Da, near Hanoi.



Homemade cover mailed from HT 9R (in Cambodia) with second printing of stamp in brown.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

INFLATIONARY RATES - 5 Dong

On September 23, 1987, a Free Frank Stamp for the military was issued bearing a face value of 5 d(ong) which was the new inland rate for civilian mail. Previous rate was 1 d, adopted only 11 months earlier.

As the highest valued military free frank stamp was only 1 dong, a new issue at 5 dong was needed. This was a practical matter as there were still paper shortages in Viet-Nam - it took 5 stamps of the previous issue to mail a letter, a waste of paper to the communist economists. See top cover below.



The last of the military free frank stamps issued in Viet-Nam.
From a medical doctor with an army unit at Hai Dong (near Hanoi)

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

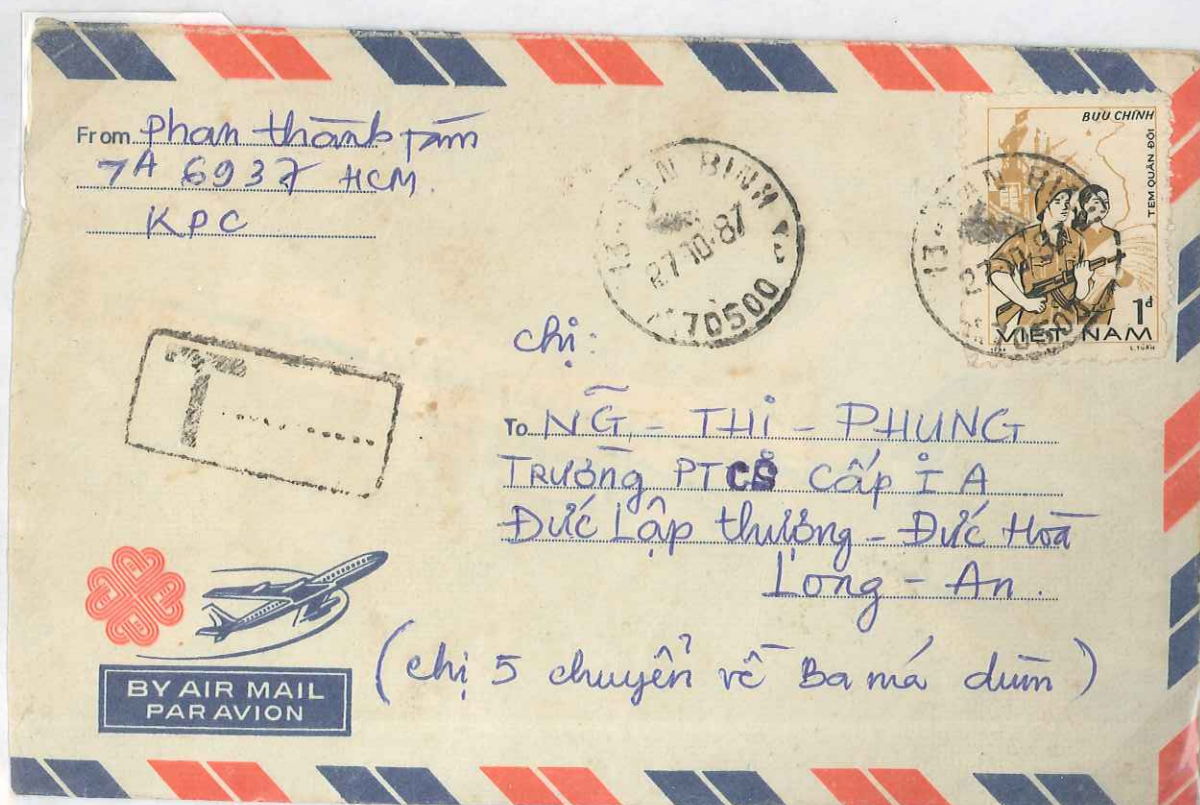
MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS

THE FINAL ISSUES

The last two military free frank stamps issued by the Viet-Nam Socialist Republic had face values added to them as follows:

- 1 Dong - October 1, 1986, for Militia usage.
- 5 Dong - September 23, 1987, for Army usage.

Each face value represents the current inland postage rate.



Letter from Cambodia ("KPC"). To student at school in Long-An. Postage due was noted but appears to not have been collected. Inland (or domestic) rate had just changed to 5 Dong.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY FREE FRANK STAMPS



Two 5 Dong stamps (10 Dong) postage plus postage due noted. In 1988-89, two military stamps were required for the inland rate up to 20 grammes. This cover appears to be over that rate. The return address is Hanoi, but the stamps are postmarked "TP Ho Chi Minh" and "Tan Son Nhut" which is Tan Son Nhut to the South Vietnamese.



1.5 times rate cover from Binh Xuyen to Ho Chi Minh City. Reduced photocopy shows postage on reverse.

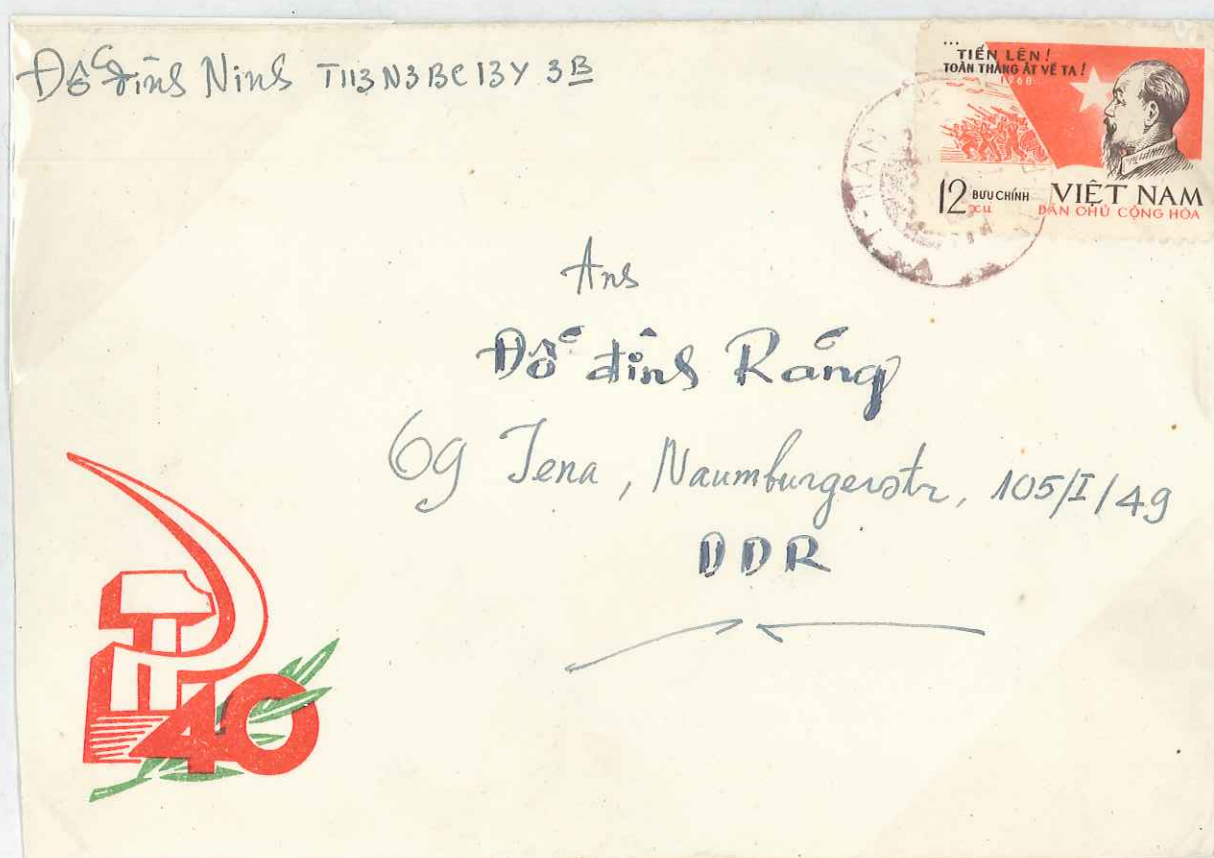
NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY RATE

Members of the North Vietnamese military stationed in North Viet-Nam had free franking for mail within North Viet-Nam or the areas of struggle in South Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia.

For letters outside of these areas, postage was required, but at a discounted rate. Mail to a "Socialist Nation" was sent at the rate of 12 xu per letter.

This cover was sent around 1968 to East Germany by an active duty soldier to his brother in Jena, probably the university there. Many North Vietnamese went there for advanced education or technical training.

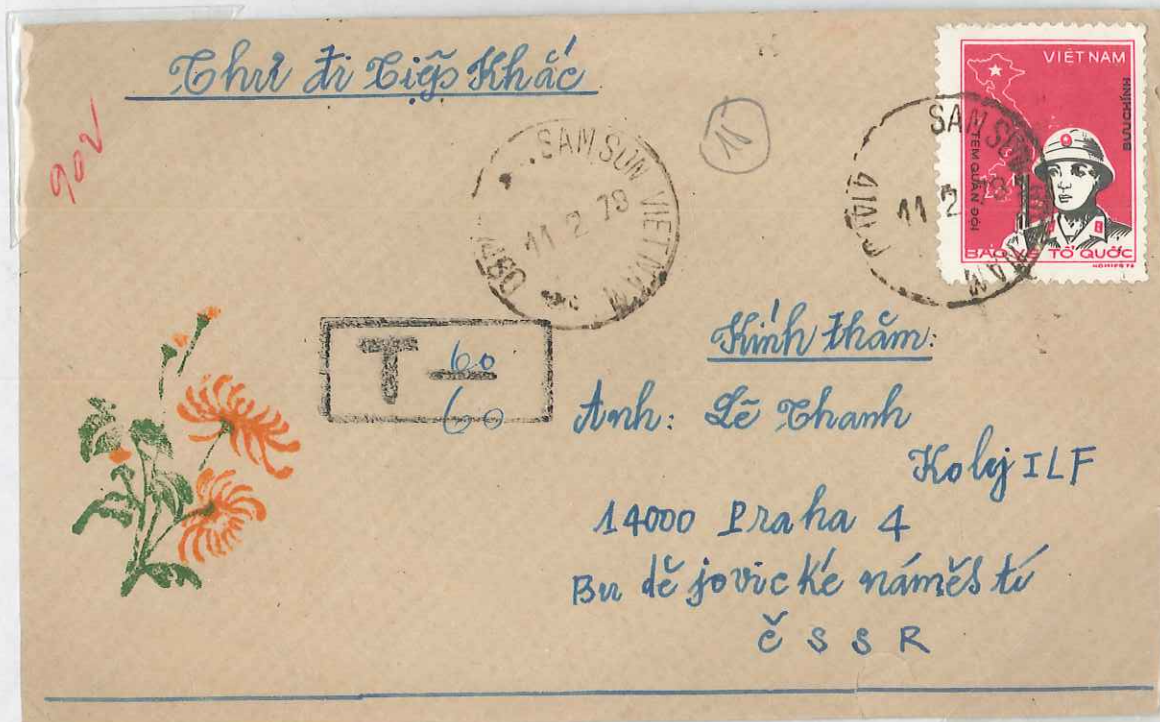


Cancelled with a purple VIET-NAM/YEN BAY military postmark. The envelope is a patriotic to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL USAGE OF FREE FRANK STAMPS

Both Invalid (Disabled Veteran) and Military free frank postage stamps were valid for international mail. The rate was as follows: Based on one stamp for inland postage. Overseas surface mail - 2 stamps. Overseas airmail - 4 stamps. Added services such as registry required added civilian postage.



Cover to Prague, Czech Rep. Short paid by "one stamp". Postage due noted by Vietnamese Postal Officials and collected in Czech funds.



Four military free frank stamps used to pay international air rate to West Germany.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

US PRISONER OF WAR CENSORSHIP

There were at least eleven POW camps in North Viet-Nam. They were all run by the Peoples Army with strick supervision by the higher levels of the Communist Party.

There were no censor markings applied to incoming mail to an American prisoner. Instead, a docketing system was used, consisting of handwritten notes on the back of the envelope.

Outbound mail has no markings at all, other than a Hanoi postmark. Mail to a POW, on the front of the envelope, normally had no US stamps or markings. Mail to a POW was collected by the US military (Department of Defense) and handcarried in a pouch to whichever nation was handling the North Viet-Nam bound mail at the time.

Army guards recorded approval of contents and date letter was shown to the POW.



RICHARD C. BRENNEMAN
Camp of Detention for U. S. Pilots
Captured in the D. K. V.
40 Hanoi Postoffice
Democratic Republic of Vietnam

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

US PRISONER OF WAR MAIL

HAND-CARRIED MAIL

The three items were obtained at one time. The letter and the folded form were inside the airmail envelope. The letter is from Mrs Eugene McDaniel, the wife of a US POW in NVN. The photocopy, she explains, is of the first letter delivered to her in 1970, three years after Eugene McDaniel was shot down over the North.

The airmail envelope was hand carried from Hanoi to her in Jan, 1973, just before her husband was returned. There are no markings of any type on the envelope as there were on the inbound envelope on the other page. Still, very difficult items to obtain because of the emotional attachment.

EUGENE BARKER McDANIEL
CAMP OF DETENTION FOR
U.S. PILOTS CAPTURED IN THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
VIETNAM

MRS. EUGENE BARKER McDANIEL
116 SOUTH WOODHOUSE ROAD
VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA 23454.
U.S.A.

*years I with a Shinai post mark
only one with a Shinai post mark
and I am reluctant to part with
it and so am sending you a*

or)

(full):

Barker McDaniel

number): 602046

(date & place of birth):

October 1931 New Bern North Car

GIAM PHI CÔNG MỸ BỊ BẮT TẠI
VIỆT - NAM DÂN CHỦ CỘNG HÒA

(Camp of detention for U.S. pilots captured
in the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of VIETNAM)

NORTH VIET-NAM VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

ARMY

"THE ARMY OF LIBERATION"

This cover was mailed from Giao Phong, Nam Ha Prov, to a soldier Saigon, on July 17, 1975.

The address, after the military numbers, reads "Quan Giai Phong" or "Army Of Liberation" Saigon, Gia Dinh (Province).

The original North Vietnamese troops that took Saigon on April 28-30, 1975, were given the honor of using the title "Army of Liberation".

The "Z8" in the address appears to denote the 8th Independent Infantry Regiment with attacked Saigon from the south out of the Mekong Delta area.



The stamp used is a military free franking issue of December 23, 1973. It is a first printing as indicated by the perforations (11). Later issues are perf 12.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY CENSORSHIP OF CIVILIAN MAIL

The Communists, after occupying South Viet-Nam, restricted mail to the United States. At first, From April 30, 1975 to about October, 1975, no mail came out of Viet-Nam to the USA. The earliest known cover (see Indochina Philatelist, May-June, 1976) from Viet-Nam to the USA, see below, was posted in October, 1975. The exact date is not known as the meter used has no day shown.

To mail a letter to the USA, a person had to travel to Saigon, to the main post office. The addressed, unstamped envelope along with the letter was presented to the military censor. The postage charge was collected and the sender went home. The censors would read the letter and determine if everything was "politically correct", if not, the letter was destroyed. If everything was acceptable, the letter was initialed, the meter postage was applied, and the letter sent on what could be a six month journey.



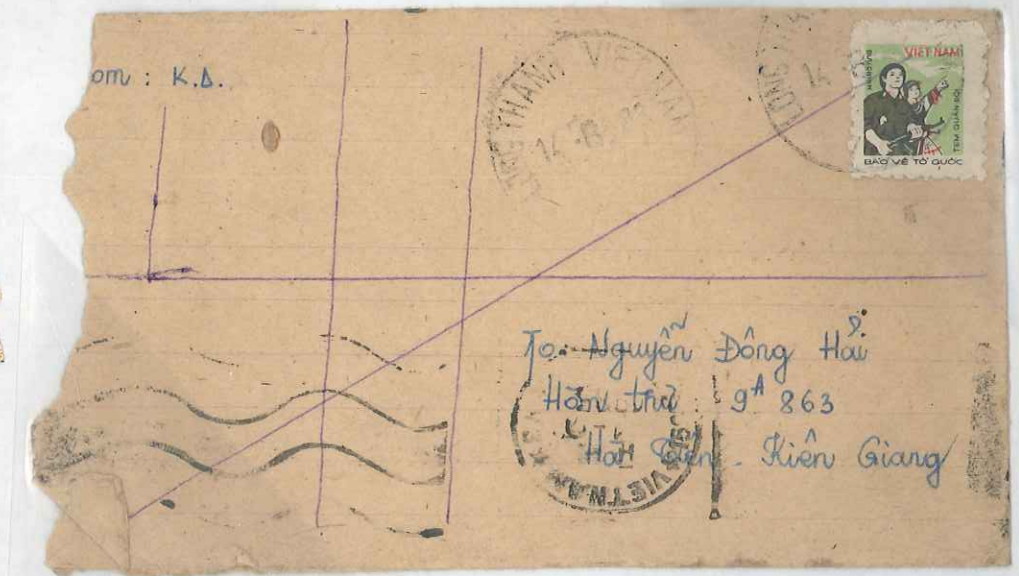
Envelope Showing Military Censor Initials (arrow).

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY ADVERSITY COVERS

Paper shortages were widespread all over Viet-Nam. Envelopes were reused and were made from scrap paper.

The top cover with the small military stamp was sent to Tactical Zone 9 for troops fighting in Cambodia. The envelope was turned over and reused back to TPHCM with civilian postage used to pay the military inland rate.



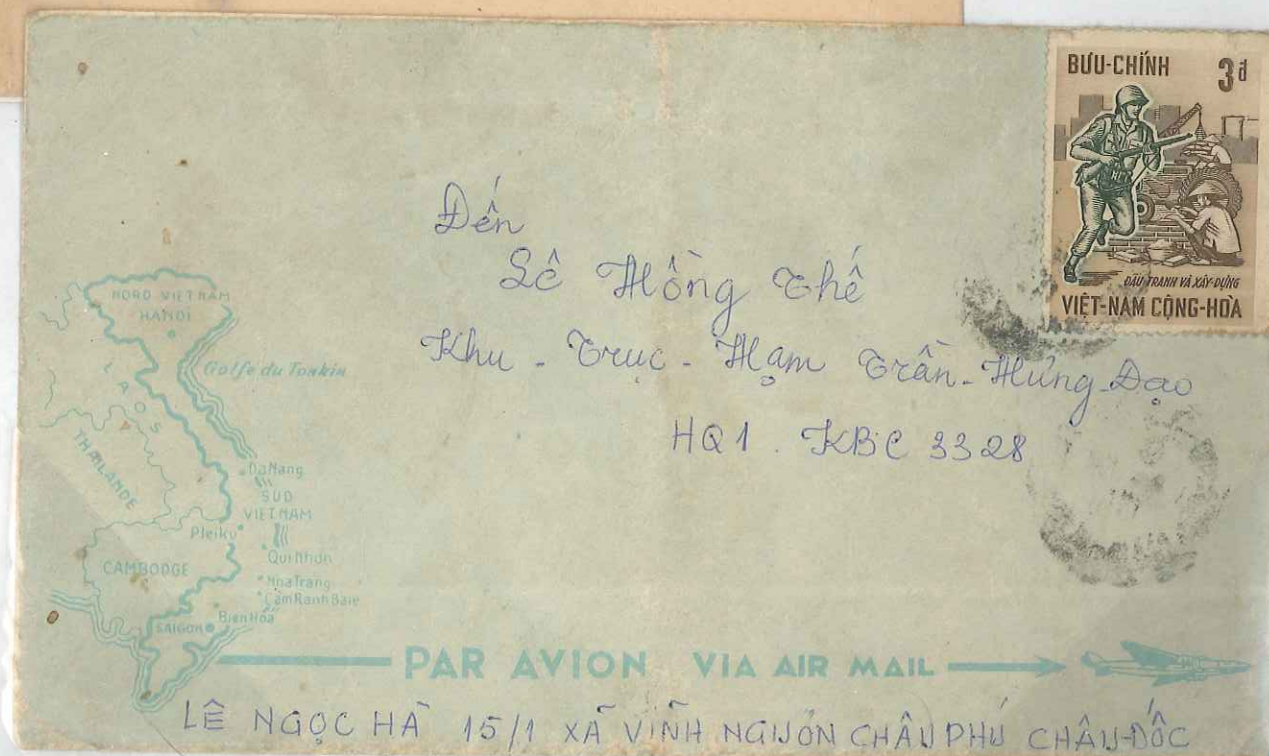
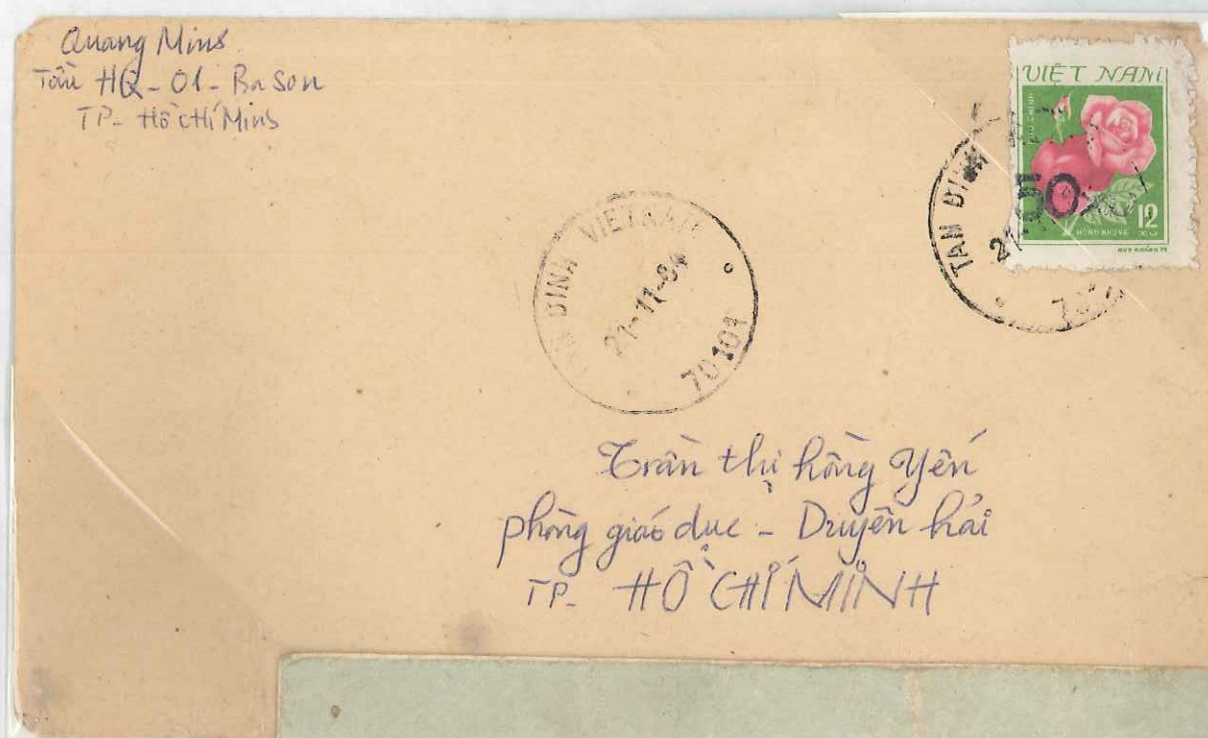
This cover is made from a military map and was sent from a training school in Tactical Zone 7B. Postage is paid by a locally printed 12 xu rose design. It should be noted that these locally produced stamps were never available through normal philatelic sources.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

NAVY MAIL - DISCOVERY COPY

The communist military never really had much of a navy to speak of, mostly patrol boats. When the South fell, however, many of the naval vessels were seized. The largest ship in the South Vietnamese Navy was a destroyer, called the "Tran Hung Dao" with bow number "HQ-01". This vessel was captured when abandoned by the SVN naval forces.

The cover below is the first naval ship cover from the post-liberation communist period to be found. The 50 xu provisional stamp (military rate) carried the local cover from the ship at "Ba-Son" (Saigon Naval Shipyard) to a civilian address in TP Ho Chi Minh. Postmarked Nov 21, 1984, from Tan Dinh, a suburb of Ho Chi Minh City.



For comparison, an inbound cover to the HQ-01 when under SVN control.


NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

RE-EDUCATION CAMP MAIL

OVERVIEW

When the South Viet-Nam government fell on April 30, 1975, everyone was told to go home and wait there. A few days later announcements telling various types of people where to report were made. You were told to bring enough food, personal effects, etc for three days. If you showed up you were fine - if not they came and took you. During the three days, you were told what the new Communist government was about and how they would help the average person.

Upon completion of this indoctrination, you were sent home and told to await further instructions. The identification card below was given to the man who completed his three day stay. The reverse of the card has thumb prints and other personal data. You were required to carry this card all of the time and show it to military and police when requested.

Ủy Ban Quân Quản Thành Phố Sài Gòn - Gia Định	CỘNG HÒA MIỀN NAM VIỆT NAM Độc Lập — Dân Chủ — Hòa Bình — Trung Lập
Số 012472 /CN	GIẤY CHỨNG NHẬN ĐÃ HỌC TẬP CẢI TẠO
	Họ và tên thật <u>Đỗ Hồng Hồng</u> Tên thường gọi Ngày sinh <u>15 - 2 - 1934</u> Quê quán <u>Quảng Ngãi Bay Vết</u> Chỗ ở hiện tại <u>3.35 Công Lý Sài Gòn</u>
Số căn cước <u>03914201</u>	Cấp bậc
ĐOÀN VĂN QUÂN Hộp thư 7730-LH-T17 Đội 8 - Nhà 13	

- Caffe, thuốc
- thuốc hút, giấy
- Sữa mẹ bồng con



Hình gửi: Ông ĐOÀN VĂN SẮT
28/20 Cù-xá-lư-kia - phố ng 15 -
Quận 11 - Thành Phố Hồ Chí Minh

The above cover, franked with a Viet Cong stamp, was mailed in January 1977. The sender included a list of food, cigarettes, etc he would like for the upcoming Tet (New Year). The cover was prepared by the camp guard. The writer wrote the address the letter was to go to on the back of his letter and the guard addressed the envelope and applied the stamp - if the letter was not politically correct, the guard just threw it away.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

RE-EDUCATION CAMP MAIL

COVER AND CONTENTS

All of the Re-Education Camps used a return address with a Hom Thu (HT = Letter Box) and a province name. Various numbers signifying barracks, platoon and company are all part of the number or return address. There is never a street address.

"Inmates" would write a letter and fold it into a small square. On the blank side, they would write the address and person the letter was to be sent. The letter was turned into the guards. This letter states how thankful the writer is that the military allowed his parents to visit him... plus other politically correct writings.

The military officials would read and mail the letter if all was correct. Note that the handwriting on the envelope is different from that on the letter.



Re-education Camps should not be confused with "Concentration Camps".
Concentration Camps were for political prisoners and criminals.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

RE-EDUCATION CAMP MAIL

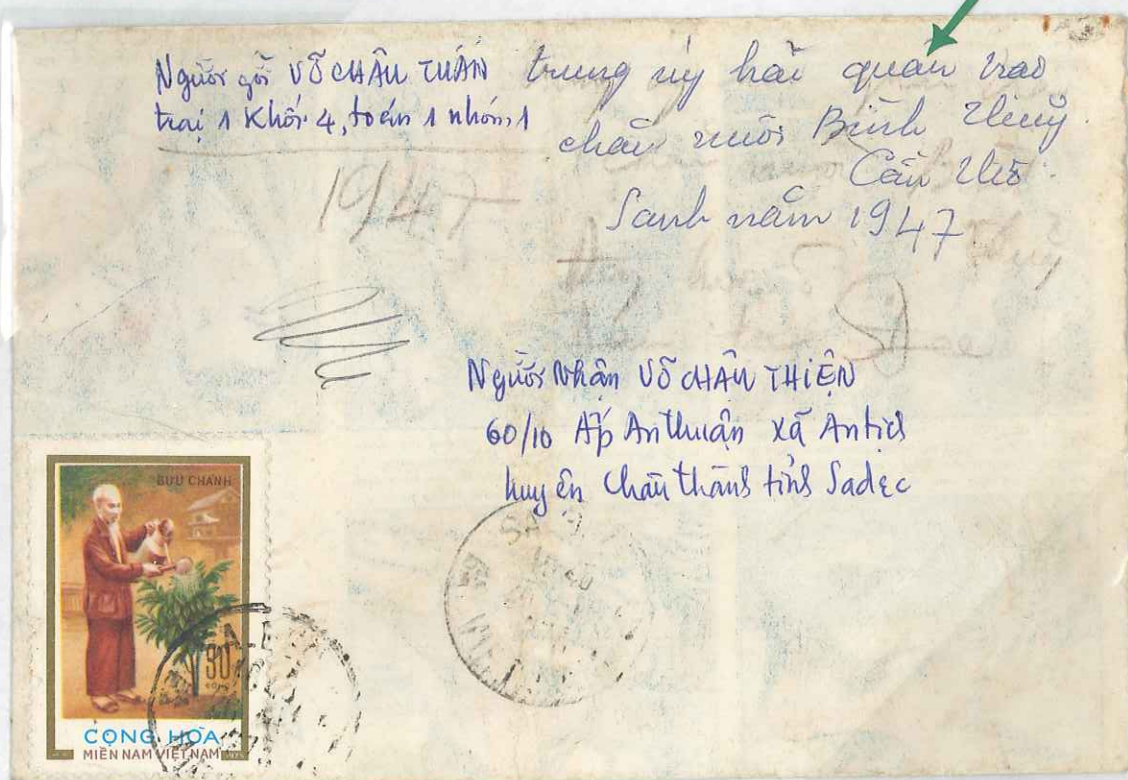
CENSORSHIP

Censorship with the Vietnamese has always been informal. This cover, from the re-education camp at Sa-Dec is censored as indicated by the pencil notations at the upper right.

The manuscript notes verify the prisoners identity and particulars. Stated is year and place of birth plus the fact that the addressee is a brother. Normally such notations do not appear on the outgoing envelopes as the procedure was for the prisoner to write the letter and turn it in for approval. The camp staff would read it, approve the contents or else throw it away. If approved, the staff would address, add postage and mail the letter.

This cover is homemade from a color calendar page. The stamp is a "Viet-Cong" stamp, as the catalogues like to call them. Stamps with the inscription "Mien Nam" refer to the liberated areas of South Viet-Nam and have nothing to do with a Viet Cong mail system.

The cover is postmarked from Sa-Dec, 26/??/77, local to Sa-Dec.



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

RE-EDUCATION CAMP MAIL

CENSORSHIP

This censor marking is a NEW DISCOVERY NOT YET REPORTED IN THE PHILATELIC PRESS.

The orange-red handstamped marking is from the re-education camp for Hau Giang Province in the newly liberated area of South Viet-Nam. The top line "KIEM DUYET" means censored or examined. The second line, in italics, has spaces for the date. The large open space is for the signature, while the last line is the military censors name.

One other censor handstamp has been seen from the same camp. The date line is in block letters instead of italics, and the name is different.

The two markings were found in a large group of covers brought back to America by a young Vietnamese- American engineer working on a project in the Mekong Delta.

This discovery has been reported to the Soc Of Indochina Philately and will soon be published.



The cover appears to have been addressed and franked by the sender, not a guard.

The stamp has been removed to look for hidden messages.

See reduced photocopy.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

RE-EDUCATION CAMP MAIL

CAMP GUARDS & STAFF

All guards and staff at the various re-education camps were either military or police, thus, having military free frank privileges.

The top cover is sent by the "Head of Criminal Investigations, Re-Education Camp Investigations of the 7th Tactical Zone, Katum, Tay Ninh Province". He is police and has "Field Police" with his signature at the end of the letter. Katum was known as a "death camp" for enemies of the state. Letter dated October 28, 1985

FROM: Quốc Dũng
Phòng điều tra hình sự & K7
K 45 Katum Tân Biên Tây Ninh



TO: Nguyễn Hồng Xếp
7A 4203 phố Vĩnh, Sông Bé

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

VIA AIR MAIL PAR AVION

Nội dung
Nguyễn Văn Lâm
Nhà 4 Đội 20
Trại cải tạo Long Thành
Tỉnh đồng nai Lâm số K-765



Kính gửi
Anh: Lê Hồng Sơn
33/12 đường Hoàng Diệu phố Nguyễn
Gia đình

Mã đem theo này qua anh Sơn đem con về nhà

Cover sent by military guard at Long Thanh re-education camp near Bien Hoa, 1/12/78. Bottom line is instruction to addressee's mother to forward letter to her son. These two covers are the only identified covers from camp personnel.

NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY PRISONS

PRISON CAMPS FOR POLITICAL CRIMES

Recently, access was made, via the Internet, to a list of political prisoners, their sentences and their prison locations in Viet-Nam. Article published in *INDOCHINA PHILATELIST*.

"Z 30D" is a prison camp in Ham Tan, due east of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) on the coast. Other prisons are also noted such as Z 30A at Xuan Loc and Z30C, also at Ham Tan.

Anti-communist organizations report that these camps are secret, which explains why most Vietnamese do not know about these addresses. Inmates of these camps include protestors, monks and high ranking South Vietnamese generals and government officials sentenced to life in prison.

These prisons are run by the military under direction of the Vietnamese Communist Party, nothing else is known.



Covers from Camp Z30C (1984) and Camp Z30A (1979). The Z30C cover uses a mixed franking of North Vietnamese and Viet-Nam Socialist Republic postage stamps. The Z30A is stampless, the only known cover thus. Possibly this cover was paid by cash.

NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

MILITARY PRISONS

PRISON CAMPS FOR POLITICAL CRIMES - CENSORSHIP

Z 30A prison camp at Xuan Loc. Interesting use of locally produced definitive along with a "philatelic" issue. There are no indications of censorship on this cover. The contents were probably just read and sent out when politically correct.



Cover from camp Z 30D at Ham Tan. Arrow indicates military censor manuscript notation "Di xem" for "examined" plus his initials.

INVASION OF CAMBODIA

PRE-DEC 1978 COVERS FROM THE BORDER WAR PERIOD

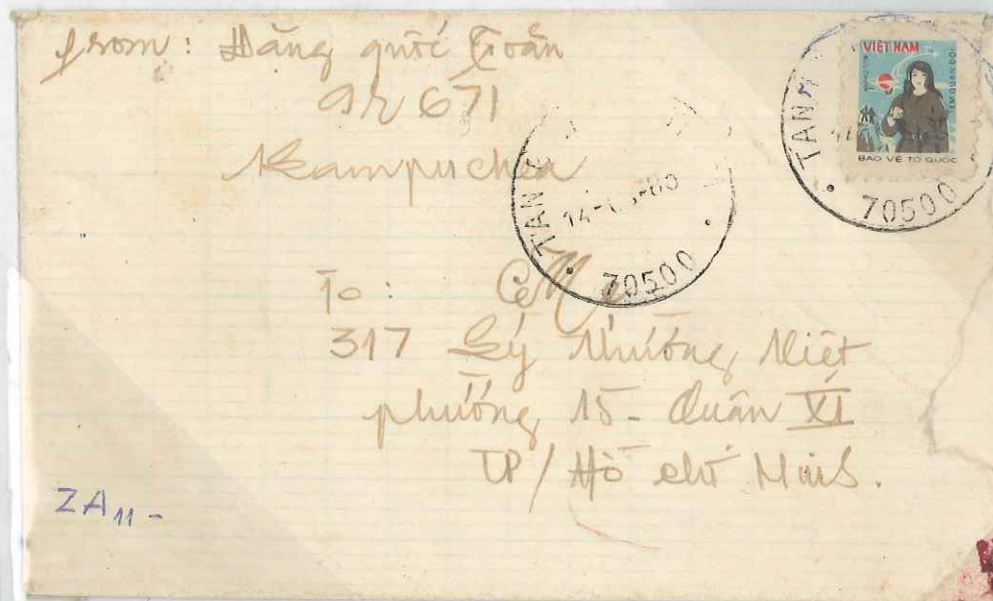


NORTH VIET - NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

INVASION OF CAMBODIA

POST INVASION PERIOD

After Dec 1978, more troops were needed. Troops from areas other than the 7th Tactical Zone were called up. The "war" lasted until the end of Sept 1989. This phase of the fighting had cost the Vietnamese another 25,300 dead and another 55,000 wounded.



Militia Unit Cover - Aug 14, 1985, w/ "Kampuchea" in Return Address
From 9th Rung (Forest Area on Cambodian Border)



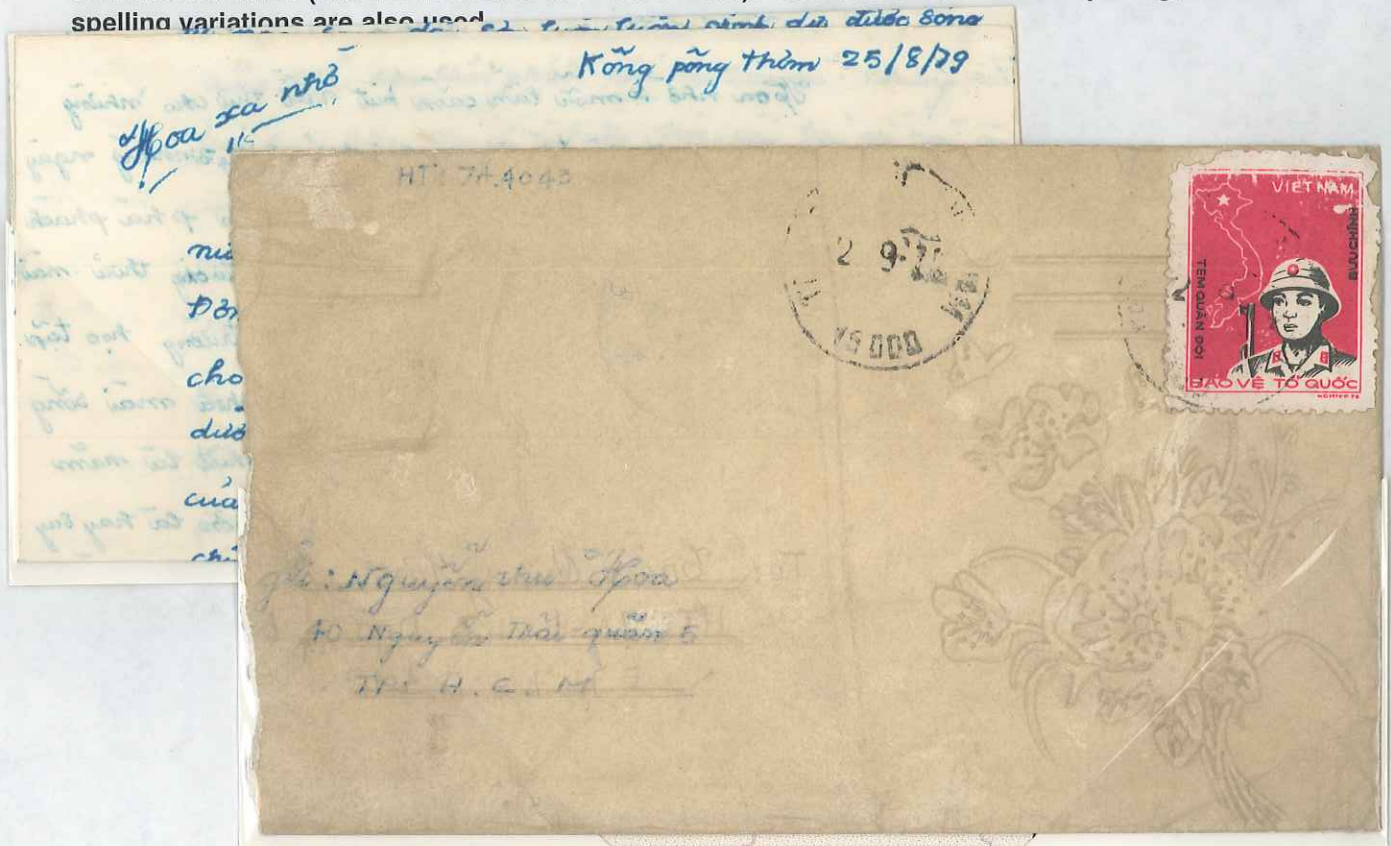
Air Letter w/ Descriptive Contents About the War - Unit From Dong Hoi Prov. April 17, 1985
50 xu Civilian Postage Applied (Normal Internal Rate)

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

INVASION OF CAMBODIA

POST INVASION PERIOD

Toward the last half of 1979, a headquarters was established at Cong Pong Cham in the Province of the same name (180 km northeast of Phnom Penh). This is the Vietnamese spelling, but other spelling variations are also used.



Map of Cambodia - Orange color shows area of the Pre-December 1978 Border War.



#13 ebay
 7102



#45 Indigo cover #11
 3/01 [sheets not marked]
 1979 Military Cambodia
 Invasion Hdgtr at
 CONG. PUEB CHAM on cv
 to HCM where stamps were
 cancelled

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

INVASION OF CAMBODIA

POST INVASION PERIOD

A major goal of the Vietnamese was to control the Tonle Sap (a large lake meaning "Freshwater River") and the town of Siem Riep (also called Xiem Riep in Vietnamese. This goal was accomplished by 150,000 Viet troops driving straight through the center of Cambodia, through Cong Pong Cham (Kampong Cham), to Siem Riep and then spreading out and turning back, "like a fountain".

Cover (indistinct date) from a "disabled veteran" relocated to Siem Riep to settle the area. Civilians with military experience were settled here and along the border areas.



Cover to soldier stationed at Siem Riep (1984)

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

INVASION OF CAMBODIA

A LETTER SHEDS LIGHT ON AN OCCUPATION

A plain looking cover that most collectors did not give a second look . Very few Americans realize that this was a military cover let alone a Cambodian occupation cover.

But valuable information can be learned from covers with contents. The letter talks about life in the army, Cambodian countryside, etc.

The cover is also docketed - the letter was written March 23, 1980 and arrived on April 14, 1980. A full 22 days in transit.

Mail went by truck as shown by the time in transit, not air plane as some thought.

So look into your covers! You never know whats there.



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

VIET-NAM - CHINA WAR

Most of the Vietnamese troops involved in this border war were Local Militia from the northern areas of Tonkin. Most of the regular troops were otherwise engaged in the war in Cambodia. Although this "war" lasted for seven years, 1979 to 1986, there is very little mail known in collectors hands. Illiteracy in the North was still a problem, so there was not much letter writing. Also, since most militia members were from the local area, they did not write to the larger metropolitan areas.

**Top envelope with
uses the special
Son.**

by militia member to Hanoi and
ing with the Chinese at Lang



Cover mailed in 1986 from Lang Son, made from South Vietnamese government form.
Lang Son & Cao Bang are the two major areas of combat during this conflict.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

VIET-NAM - CHINA WAR

China invaded Viet-Nam in February, 1979, as Viet-Nam's armed forces were involved in their own invasion of Cambodia. China was at this time sustaining the Pol Pot government of Cambodia. Deng Xiao Ping decided to "teach the Viets a lesson". Dang Nghiem Bai replied that "the Chinese have come to teach us a lesson - for the 17th time".

The Chinese came south into the border town of Lang Son. The Chinese held the town for four days before pulling out in defeat.

The Chinese were beat by local militia, frontier border guards and regional forces - not even the regular army. The war continued until 1986 and consisted mostly of artillery duels and small unit border attacks.

On Aug 5, 1981, Militia members were given free franking while on duty and special stamps were issues inscribed "BAO VE TO QUOC".



Forerunner Cover

Letter from officer in Unit 5 (Border Police responsible for northern border area) to relative in Ho Chi Minh City. Writer complains that the Chinese police just walk into Vietnam whenever they feel like. The Chinese try to "excite" the Vietnamese, meaning "provoke" or "provoke". There is much stress, especially since the recent Sino-Russian Agreement. Note HT 1A in address.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

VIET-NAM - CHINA WAR

Soldier letter from Lang Son, written Sept 30, 1984. Description of border clashes and the rebuilding activity.

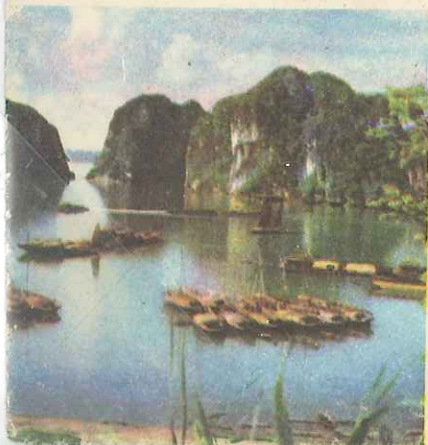
Handcarried to Ha-Noi where it was airmailed to Ho Chi Minh City. Postmarked Oct 4, 1984.

Postage paid by two 50 xu provisionals.

Lang-Son Ngay 30-9-1984

Cái con Khui - Tony - Oa

Nguyễn Văn Chanh
25- Phố Cửa Đông
Quận Hoàn Kiếm
Hà Nội

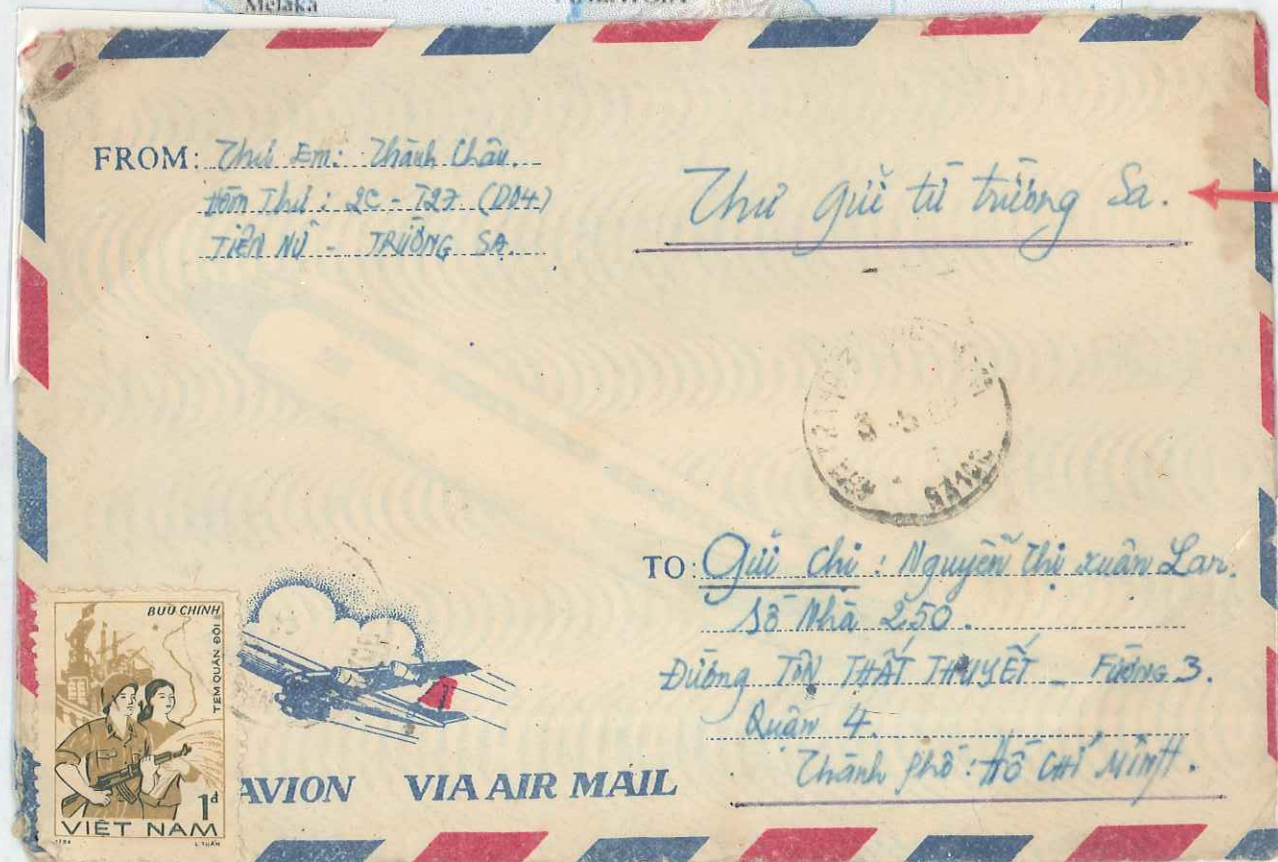


Anh Cường Khui
Vân Phong Bồ
Công Nghiệp Nhu
700 Trần Hưng Đạo, 700
Quận V
T. P. Hồ Chí Minh

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

THE SOUTH CHINA SEA WAR

Since 1976, Viet-Nam has claimed the Paracel Islands (blue circle) and the Spratly Islands (red circle). No mail has been found from the Paracel Is, but two covers have been recorded from forces occupying Tien Nu of the Trung Sa (Spratly Is). The Vietnamese have fought the Chinese on the Paracels and the Chinese, Filipinos, Malays, and Indonesians on the Spratlies - all over oil rights.



Cover sent from Trung Sa (as indicated by arrow), sometime after Oct 1986.
These islands are part of Tactical Zone 6 . Mail is carried nearly 600 km to TP
Ho Chi Minh for sorting and postmarking. One of two covers reported.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

THE SOUTH CHINA SEA WAR

The Spratly Islands are basically just rocks jutting up from the water. They are not suitable, in general, for residence. To have people there and to also defend the Vietnamese foothold in the islands, Hanoi decided to establish a training school for the "Naval Underwater Demolition Swimmers" - a commando type unit similar to the US Navy SEALs.

See Frame 10, Page 15 for a third Spratly Island cover.



Airletter Sheet franked with March 1984 Military Free Frank Stamp.
From naval trainee at the newly founded school,
Contents about how tough school is and how difficult life is on island.

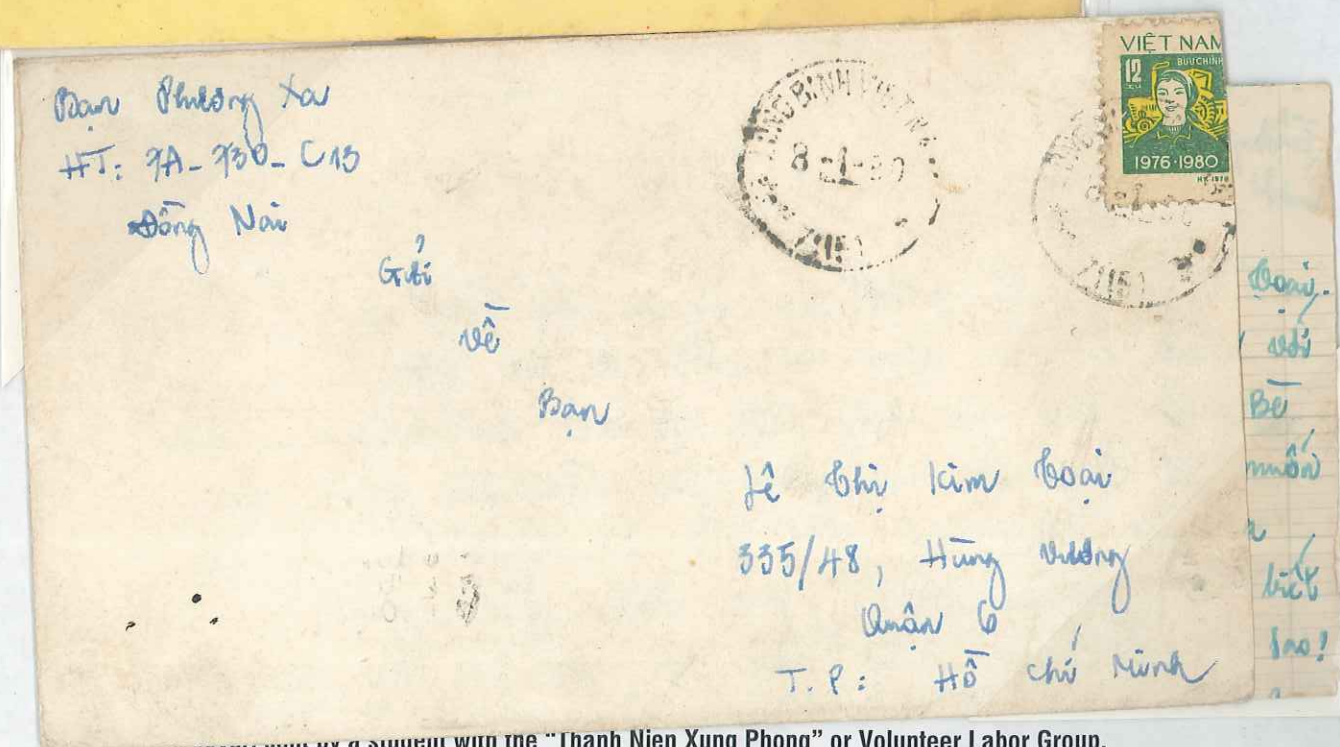
NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

ALTERNATIVES TO MILITARY SERVICE

VOLUNTARY

This inland rate cover is sent to a volunteer worker with the military in 1979, via the Hom Thu letter box system. After the "liberation" of the south, most adults went into the military to fight either the Chinese on the northern border or the Cambodians to the west. Those with ties to the old government were not trusted with weapons. "Support Units" were formed to transport supplies, construct barracks, etc.

These people actually did volunteer in order to avoid being branded anti-government and sent to a much harsher assignment - or jail.



... sent by a student with the "Thanh Nien Xung Phong" or Volunteer Labor Group, is writing from Cambodia where he is carrying supplies for the troops.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

ALTERNATIVES TO MILITARY SERVICE

INVOLUNTARY

In order to pay for the material support given to the Communists by the Soviet Union, the Vietnamese government gave the USSR "workers" to help repay the debt. Some mail to Viet-Nam came via the Vietnamese embassy by pouch. Postage was applied in Hanoi. Mail could be sent direct, but as shown by the red box on the lower cover, overseas mail was surcharged when coming into the country. The enclosure for the top cover gives the Hom Thu address in Saigon (TPHCM) for mail to Russia.



NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

SCHOOLS

Very little is known about military schools in North Viet-Nam or the Viet-Nam Socialist Republic after April 30, 1975.

There have been reports of technical schools with military addresses, but nothing devoted to the training of officers. Before the war ended, most officers were trained in other socialist nations, especially Russia and East Germany.

The cover below has the return address of Quan Truong (Military Academy) and a name. No city or other address is given. The postmark is from 1985 and is from TP Ho Chi Minh (Saigon). No other information is known. Perhaps this is a reopened South Vietnamese Military school, possibly at Thu Duc outside Saigon.

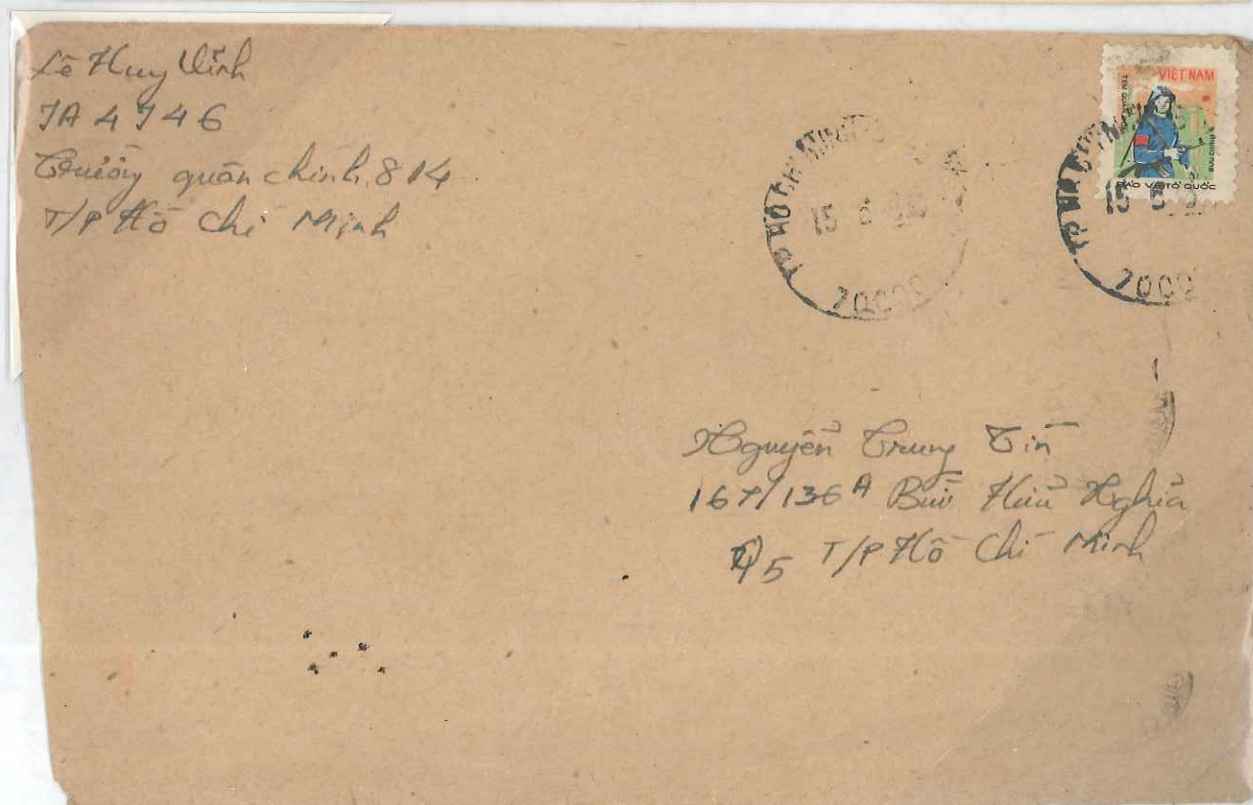


Postage is paid by two free frank stamps, one on the front for war invalids and the other on the reverse, the bluish green unlisted stamp from 1984.

NORTH VIET-NAM / VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

SCHOOLS

1978 usage of the 1976 Disabled Veteran Free Frank stamp. Return address is from the Hanoi School for Disabled Veterans. This is one of the schools founded in 1975, to retrain disabled veterans in a useful trade, mainly agriculture, so that they could be resettled in the border regions. Hanoi reasoned that the vets would be well suited to the harsh life on the borders, after surviving being wounded in combat and surviving the journey back to the north on the Ho Chi Minh Trail with little or no medical care.



1982 cover with small militia stamp used from the Psychological Warfare School headquartered in TPHCM. 3rd line of return address is school designation.

NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

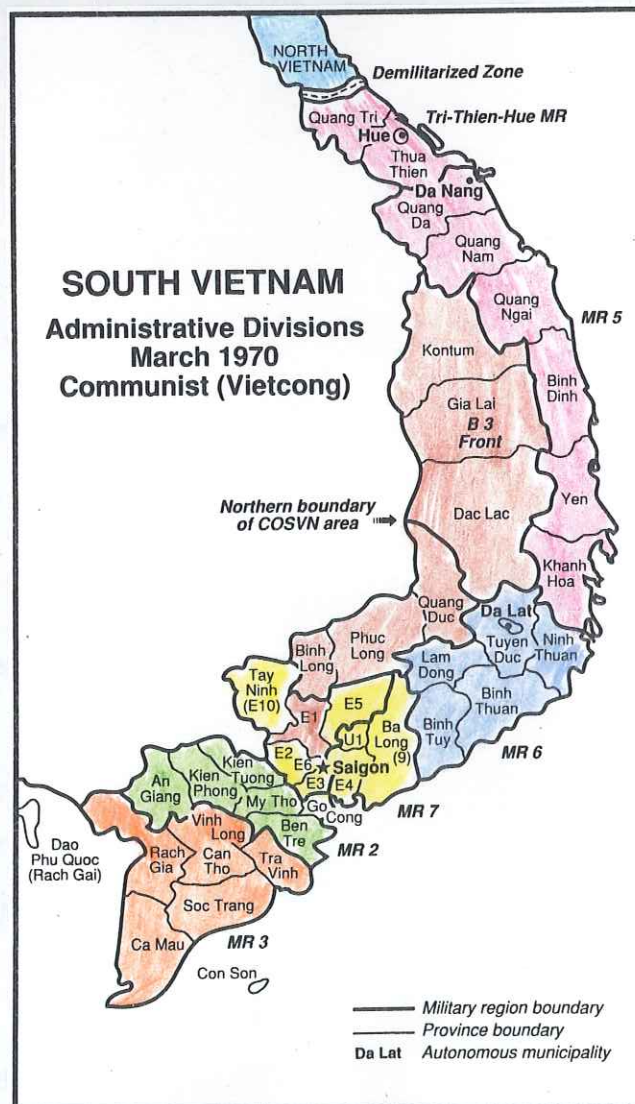
TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

The Military Regions (MR) of the Viet Cong/NVA are now called "Tactical Zones" (TZ) The Tactical Zone follows the "HT" (Hom Thu) and may or may not have a letter, as "HT 7A....". This refers to Letter Box at Tactical Zone 7A. To date, the following Tactical Zones, listed below, have been identified. The following results of the research are shown on the map, except for TZ 6 and TZ 8.

- Tactical Zone 1 - Northern Viet-Nam, except for Hanoi metro area.
- Tactical Zone 2 - Old VC MR 2, shown light green.
- Tactical Zone 3 - Old VC MR 6, shown in blue.
- Tactical Zone 4 - Shown in brown (up to Darlac Prov).
- Tactical Zone 5 - Old VC MR 5, shown in red.
- Tactical Zone 6 - Offshore Islands, navy in South China Sea. *
- Tactical Zone 7 - Old VC MR 7 and COSVN Area, shown in yellow, includes Saigon/Ho Chi Minh City.
- Tactical Zone 8 - Hanoi Area, including Nam Dinh *
- Tactical Zone 9 - Old VC MR 3, shown in orange.

* These two TZs discovered at FLOREX 1998 by exhibitor.



Original map of Communist Military Zones from 1970 to 1975.
Colors show new designations of Tactical Zones after 1975.

NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

There are less than 10 reported covers from one Tactical Zone to another. No other covers have been reported between two fighting fronts, i.e., the China front and the Cambodia front.

This cover has a return address of HT 1C and the word "Quan" for "army". This cover originated on the northern border of Viet-Nam (next to China). It has a postmark of Da Nang and a transit backstamp from TP Ho Chi Minh (7/20/79).

The cover was sent to HT 7a. The low number, "305" indicates a higher command level, such as regimental.



China front to Cambodia front.



NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

Tactical Zone 7 has supplied the most information on the HT locations, as most troops tend to be assigned to either HT 7 or HT 9 addresses.

HT 7 (either A or B) show location in either TP Ho Chi Minh or Dong Nai. Certain covers from the early period of the Cambodian fighting also show the word "Bac" (elder) for TPHCM. This may be a carryover from the VC/NVA of calling distribution points by names of people, such as "Uncle Sau" (main distribution center for mail from the North to the Mekong Delta).

Both covers use civilian franking. The 12 xu red stamp is used by a soldier to a civilian while the 24 xu pair is to a soldier from a civilian.



NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

Tactical Zone 9 has supplied the second most information on the HT locations, as most troops tend to be assigned to either HT 7 or HT 9 addresses. Most HT 9s have "R" attached to them. Many feel that "R" equals "Rung Sat", "jungle" as in the area near Ca Mau.

Some of HT 9 borders on Cambodia and has been settled by disabled veterans, as illustrated by the green free frank stamp used on the cover below.



A cover with contents shows a young artillery soldier preparing to leave from TPHCM for the war in Cambodia, in two hours. He writes about the labor work and the six months training for the Cambodia invasion.

NORTH VIET/NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

Tactical Zone 4 has only been seen with the "B" after the HT 4. Reports from other collectors all state that the routing is always Song Be in Binh Duong Province.

No covers with contents have been found, so we have no mail to read (to learn what is going on there). With an indistinct cancel, the only way to date this cover is from the docketing on the reverse - Nov 22, 1984.



Newly discovered (Sept 18, 1998) Tactical Zone 4 cover with "R" after the numeral. Possibly a reference to "Rung" or jungle as a field location. The postmark is from Tay Ninh, April 24, 1979. An April 25th machine transit is on the reverse from TPHCM. The zip codes on the two front cancels are 7210? and 72153, both unreported zips but from Song Be Province as indicated by the "72".

NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

Tactical Zone 2 covers are not common - this being the only one I've seen, and one more has been reported. This cover is the only one with a routing city. Dalat, the routing city, may not require many troops to be stationed in the area, thus explaining the lack of covers to examine. No covers with contents have been found.

With August 31, 1986 cancel from Ben Chanh - suburban Saigon/TPHCM.



Third reported Tactical Zone 2 cover, found Sept 25, 1998. With HT 2H designation instead of HT 2B. Cancel from TPHCM on Dec 1, 1986 plus two transit marks of TPHCM on reverse. The envelope is made from a captured US Army map. See lower right edge.

NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

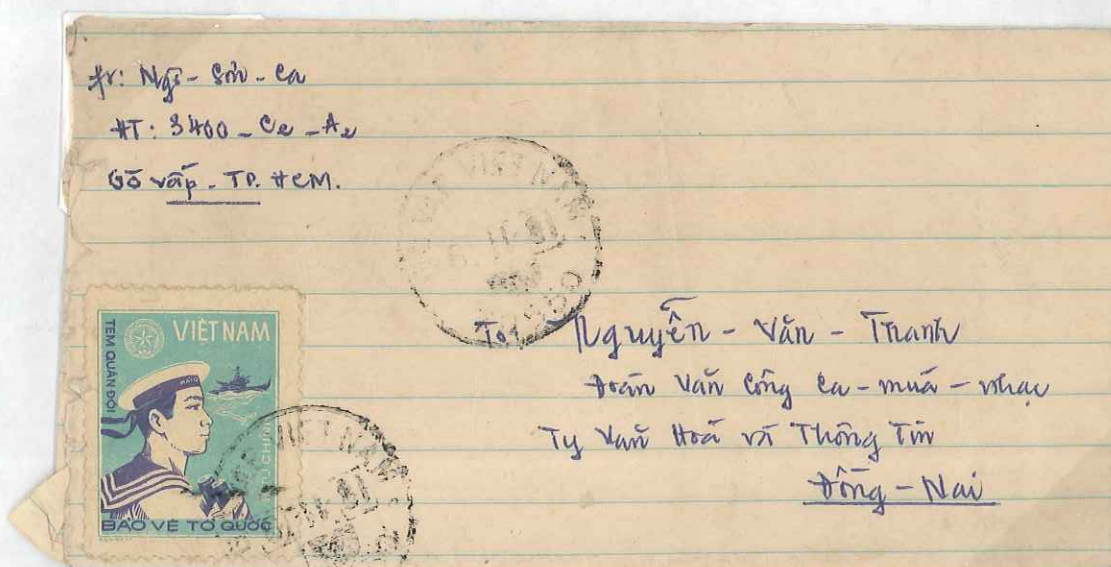
TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

The only cover found to date in (or out of) TZ 3. This cover is confusing in that the address starts with the soldiers service number (So: 86.111.407) and then has the HT 3 written together with the rest of the designation.

The "D3-C8-B1-A1" is the location of the soldier down to squad level.

The stamp is canceled by a sub-office in TP Ho Chi Minh, 10/24/86. An interesting cover with no indication of routing.



A very recent discovery (Sept 18, 1998), is this cover from a soldier in HT 3 with a headquarters listed as Go Vap (metro Saigon area). The two cancels on the front have the zip code 70550 (Go Vap) while a transit mark on the reverse shows 71100 (Bien Hoa) in Dong Nai Province.

NORTH VIET-NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

The cover below is the first cover reported to date from Tactical Zone 5. Enough covers have not been found to determine the meaning of the "T" after the "5".

The stamp used was issued for use by the Army on March 30, 1983. The military cancel is dateless from Nha Trang. A backstamp is dated 12/26/85. The stamp is the 10.75 line perf variety.



A second cover discovered for TZ 5 (with "A"). Return address states "Da Nang" and the postmark, 3/12/78, shows a zip code of 51450 for Hoa Vang in Quang Nam Da Nang Province.

NORTH VIET/NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

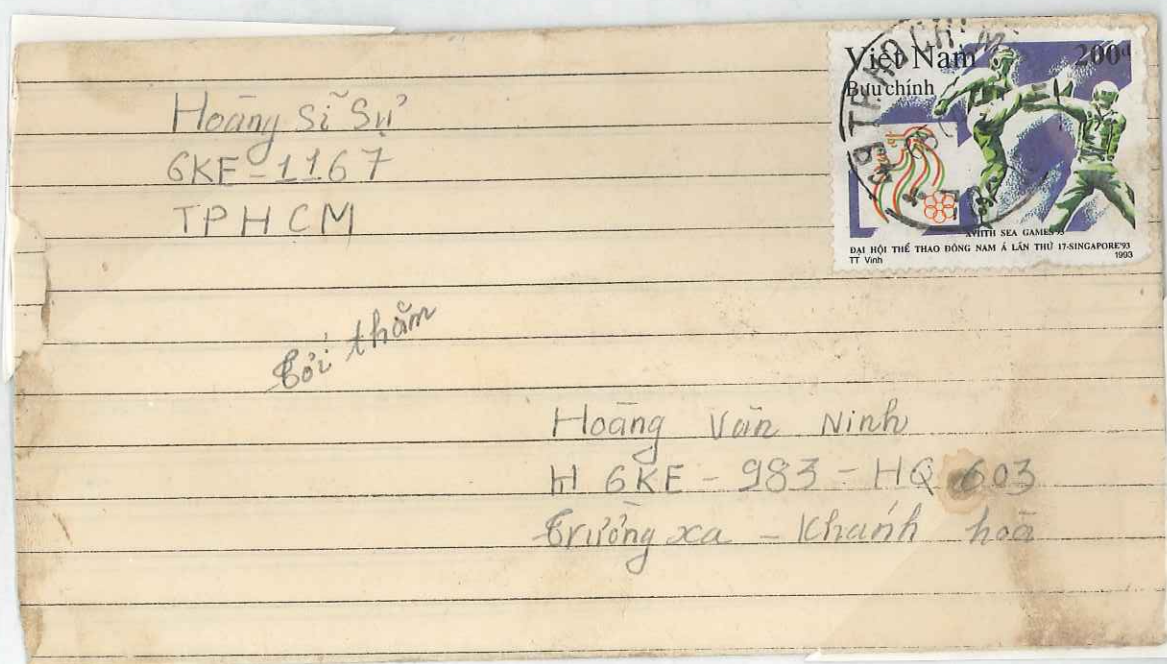
TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

Tactical Zone 6 (HT 6) has turned out to be the least common of all of the TZs. Based on the three covers discovered by this exhibitor bearing HT 6 addresses, HT 6 includes the naval forces in the South China Sea and the Vietnamese military forces on the Spratly Islands.

This exhibit contains two covers (Frame 10, Pages 1 & 2) from the Spratly Islands. One cover has the return address as HT 2 while the second has no HT designation. The use of HT 2 may have been a temporary measure.

The other two covers seen were sold in the Spring 1999 Asia Auction by Michael Rogers, Inc. One cover was sent between two warships in Spratly Island waters, while the second cover was sent from the Spratly Islands to a warship in the local waters. To date, only five covers relating to the Spratly Islands have been found, with three of them being in this exhibit.



Cover from a sailor at HT 6 with headquarters in TP Ho Chi Minh to another sailor at sea via Trường Xa - Khanh Hoa (Spratly Islands - Khanh Hoa Province). The letter is to ship "HQ-603" which is a Medium Patrol Gunboat named "Kien Vang".

NORTH VIET/NAM/VIET-NAM SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

TACTICAL ZONES

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON LOCATIONS

The first cover ever found for HT 8 is probably the ugliest cover in any stamp show, however, it is here because it is the discovery copy for this Tactical Zone. It is postmarked Nam Dinh (near Hanoi) and has a weak TP Ho Chi Minh backstamp. Until this cover was found, it was thought that all of North Viet-Nam was Tactical Zone 1. No one has yet to determine the meaning of the abbreviation "K.C.D."



A 1980 cover with contents was sent from HT 8, headquartered at Ha Nam Ninh (Province). The cancel is from Nam Dinh, provincial capital of Ha Nam Ninh. The sender complains about life in the north and problems in his military unit. The letter was postmarked 5/22/80 and backstamped 5/29/80 in TPHCM.

UB HO TINH LAI CHAU
CON TINH BI
Ngày 15/2/19
58 28 /KS



Hg. Ông Chu quý Thập
Lâm Long
Xã Quảng Minh
Huyện Việt Yên
2/Tha Bắc

