

The Vietnam War in the Pacific World



Thursday 15 and Friday 16 August 2019
Level 3, Australian Hearing Hub
16 University Avenue
Macquarie University



MACQUARIE
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The Vietnam War in the Pacific World
15-16 August, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which this university is situated, the Wattamattagal people of the Darug nation, whose cultures and customs have nurtured, and continue to nurture, this land, since the Dreamtime. We pay our respects to the Darug people and the Wattamattagal clan.

We also wish to acknowledge the Elders of the Darug nation, past, present and future, and pay our respects to them. We further wish to honour and pay our respects to the ancestors and spirits of this land, and humbly ask that all members of the Macquarie University community are granted with the capacity to wingara – to think, to learn and to walk safely upon this pemul – this land.

The Vietnam War in the Pacific World

15-16 August, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Most Americans and many non-Americans know it as the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese refer to it as the American War. And some historians prefer to label it the Second Indochina War, both to distinguish it from the French struggle to re-establish empire after World War II and to acknowledge the central place of Laos and Cambodia in the conflict. But the war waged in those countries during the 1960s and early 1970s also had a ripple effect across the broader Asia Pacific region.

South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand all contributed troops to the “Free World Forces” in support of the American and South Vietnamese effort to maintain an anti-Communist regime in Saigon, prompting new intra-regional military, social, and cultural dynamics between troops and hosts on the ground in Indochina. Other such dynamics also emerged in the variety of Asia Pacific locations where US military personnel spent their R&R time, including Bangkok, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Manila, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, Sydney, and Hawaii. Shifting from the interpersonal to the international, the war and its aftermath led to a reconfiguration of American power in the region, both in tone and substance, and to altered patterns of engagement in the region by China, Vietnam, and other states. Not least, the war was also implicated in the changing character of domestic political regimes, economic frameworks, and group identities within Asia Pacific nations and cultures.

Given renewed debate in the twenty-first century about the arc and impact of great power competition in the region, it is especially timely to reconsider these and other aspects of the Pacific World experiences and legacies of the Vietnam War. This conference draws together an international group of historians to assess the geopolitical, diplomatic, economic, cultural, and social significance of a conflict that continues to shape the Asia Pacific region today.

The Vietnam War in the Pacific World conference has been made possible by Macquarie University’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), through funding the 2019 Macquarie University Distinguished Visiting Fellowship, and by the Faculty of Arts Research Office, through a Themed Research Workshop Grant. The organisers would like to thank both entities for their support of the conference.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August

Venue: All sessions will be held on **Level 3 of the Australian Hearing Hub**, 16 University Avenue, Macquarie University

9:00-9:30am Registration and Coffee/Tea

9:30-9:45am **Welcome to Country**

Aunty Julie Janson, Darug Elder

Introductory Remarks

Brian Cuddy, Macquarie University, Australia

9:45-10:30am **Keynote Presentation #1**

“‘One Little Country Obsessed with Its Suffering’: How Henry Kissinger’s Feelings about Vietnam Shaped the Peace Negotiations”

Barbara Keys, University of Melbourne, Australia

10:30am-12:00pm **Panel #1 The American War: GIs in the Pacific World**

Chair: Michelle Arrow, Macquarie University, Australia

“The U.S. Military’s Rest and Recreation Program during the Vietnam War”

Zach Fredman, Duke Kunshan University, Jiangsu, China

“Destination Downunder: American Servicemen in Sydney, 1967-1972”

Jon Piccini, Australian Catholic University, and Chris Dixon, Macquarie University, Australia

“GI Resistance and Transpacific Activism in Japan during the Vietnam War: A Piece of Forgotten (or Suppressed?) History”

Noriko Shiratori, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, United States

12:00-1:00pm Lunch

Day 1, Thursday 15 August

1:00-3:00pm **Panel #2 The American War: Emotions, Motivations, Effects**

Chair: Helen Anderson, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California

“‘The War of Southeast Asia’: Falling Dominoes, the 1967 Clifford-Taylor Mission, and the Fight for the Stability of the Pacific World”

Gabrielle Westcott, University of Connecticut, United States

“An American Sergeant’s Sojourn in Sydney, 1970”

David Anderson, California State University, Monterey Bay, United States

“The U.S. Intelligence Community’s Evolving Assessment of Asia Pacific Threats after the Vietnam War”

Brian Cuddy, Macquarie University, Australia

“Between Ku and Lono: Hawaii’s Role in the Vietnam War and its Aftermath”

Marc Jason Gilbert, Hawaii Pacific University, United States

3:00-3:30pm Afternoon Tea

3:30-5:30pm **Panel #3 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Australia, Korea, Taiwan**

Chair: Sean Brawley, Macquarie University, Australia

“‘Barrier Reef’: The Australian Government’s Attempt to Turn Back the Tide of Pacific History during the Vietnam War”

Greg Lockhart, Independent Scholar, Australia

“LBJ’s Hessians? Korean Troops’ Dispatch to Vietnam”

Christopher Lovins, Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology, South Korea

“The Korean ‘*Wolnam ch’ima* (Vietnamese skirt)’ and Transpacific Wartime Culture under U.S. Imperialism in Asia”

Alice S. Kim, Independent Scholar, South Korea

“Taiwan and South Vietnam: Forging Cultural and Economic Ties, 1955-1975”

Jason Lim, University of Wollongong, Australia

7:00-9:00pm Conference Dinner for Presenters and Chairs: Hattrick, 84 Waterloo Rd

Day 2, Friday 16 August

9:00-11:00am **Panel #4 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Southeast Asia**

Chair: Kevin Jon Heller, University of Amsterdam and Australian National University

“British Neocolonialism in Malaya and Singapore and U.S. Empire in the Pacific”

Wen-Qing Ngoei, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

“Buying Time? The Vietnam War and Southeast Asia”

Mattias Fibiger, Harvard Business School, United States

“Strengthening the Regime: Singapore, the United States, & the War in Indochina”

S. R. Joey Long, National University of Singapore, Singapore

“The Ultimate Domino: Indonesia and the Vietnam War”

Mark Lawrence, University of Texas, Austin, United States

11:00-11:30am Morning Tea

11:30am-1:30pm **Panel #5 Crossing and Constructing Borders**

Chair: Adele Garnier, Macquarie University, Australia

“Americans in Australia: Migrations and Radical Thought, 1961-1975”

Kyle Harvey, University of Tasmania, Australia

“Politicizing Ethnicity: The Chinese Exodus from Vietnam, 1978-80”

Lisa Tran, California State University, Fullerton, United States

“‘I wish I could wave a judicial wand’: Vietnamese Refugee Status, the Law, and Hong Kong, 1988-1997”

Jana Lipman, Tulane University, United States

“Those who learn from history can still repeat it: The challenges of learning from the Cambodian Genocide”

Hoang Vu, Cornell University, United States

1:30-2:30pm Lunch

Day 2, Friday 16 August

2:30-4:00pm Panel #6 Remembering and Representing the Vietnam War in the Pacific World

Chair: Alexandra Kurmann, Macquarie University, Australia

“Colonial legacies of Agent Orange in Vietnam and Australia”

Helary Ngo, University of Technology Sydney, Australia

“Return to Vietnam: Veteran Reflections on War Legacies in Vietnam at Peace”

Mia Martin Hobbs, University of Melbourne, Australia

“The Weight of the Past: Vietnamese Australian Intergenerational Perceptions”

Nathalie Nguyen, Monash University, Australia

4:00-4:45pm Keynote Presentation #2

“Reflections on the Vietnam War in the Pacific World”

Fredrik Logevall, Harvard University, United States

4:45-5:00pm Concluding Remarks and Farewell

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 9:45-10:30am

Keynote Presentation #1

Keynote Presentation #1

“‘One Little Country Obsessed with Its Suffering’: How Henry Kissinger’s Feelings about Vietnam Shaped the Peace Negotiations”

Barbara Keys, University of Melbourne, Australia

Barbara Keys is Professor of U.S. and International History at the University of Melbourne. Her most recent book is the edited volume *The Ideals of Global Sport: From Peace to Human Rights* (Penn Press, 2019). She is the author of *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (Harvard, 2014), *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s* (Harvard, 2006), and over two dozen articles and chapters on topics ranging from financial crises to the use of the telephone in human rights activism. She is currently finishing a book tentatively titled "Broken Dreams: Human Rights and the Struggle to Ban Torture" and working on a new project about the relationship between Henry Kissinger and Zhou Enlai. She is the 2019 President of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 10:30am-12:00pm
Panel #1 The American War: GIs in the Pacific World

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Chair: Michelle Arrow, Macquarie University, Australia

“The U.S. Military’s Rest and Recreation Program during the Vietnam War”

Zach Fredman, Duke Kunshan University, Jiangsu, China

“Destination Downunder: American Servicemen in Sydney, 1967-1972”

Jon Piccini, Australian Catholic University, and Chris Dixon, Macquarie University, Australia

“GI Resistance and Transpacific Activism in Japan during the Vietnam War: A Piece of Forgotten (or Suppressed?) History”

Noriko Shiratori, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, United States

Chair: **Michelle Arrow** is an Associate Professor in Modern History at Macquarie University. She is the author of three books, most recently *The Seventies: The Personal, the Political and the Making of Modern Australia* (New South, 2019), and together with Leigh Boucher and Kate Fullagar, edits the Australian Historical Association’s journal, *History Australia*. Together with Barbara Baird, Leigh Boucher and Robert Reynolds, she is a Chief Investigator on the ARC DP17 grant: Personal Politics: Transforming Citizenship in Contemporary Australia.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 10:30am-12:00pm
Panel #1 The American War: GIs in the Pacific World

“The U.S. Military’s Rest and Recreation Program during the Vietnam War”
Zach Fredman, Assistant Professor, Duke Kunshan University, Jiangsu, China

In 1962, the U.S. military commenced a rest and recreation (R&R) program for American military advisors in South Vietnam, which entitled each man to six days of R&R leave per year. The program expanded as more troops deployed to the region. In 1968, approximately 401,000 American personnel took R&R trips to one of ten locations: Honolulu, Bangkok, Manila, Hong Kong, Taipei, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Singapore, or Sydney. While scholars have discussed elements of the R&R program, no one has written a comprehensive history of the program, which will be the topic of my second book project. For this conference, I’ll present on preliminary research in Chinese and English-language sources from archives in Taiwan, Australia, Singapore, and the United States.

My paper explores why U.S. military commanders and host country officials supported the R&R scheme. They knew that many, if not most, American personnel would spend much of their R&R visits binge drinking and looking for sex, the two leading sources of tension between the U.S. military and host country populations during World War II and the early Cold War. U.S. commanders deemed R&R essential to upholding troop morale and they also believed it would reduce inflationary pressure on South Vietnam. Host country officials, for their part, sought to use the scheme to advance various political and economic goals. Australian officials hoped R&R would rehabilitate the slumping Gold Coast tourist industry. Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, keenly aware of the potential for negative social consequences, hoped to limit R&R visits while still using the program to foster well-rounded economic development and better ties with the United States. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, on the other hand, shared none of Lee’s concerns. He urged U.S. Ambassador William McCormick Blair to send as many soldiers as possible and laughed off objections to the program among Filipino intellectuals and the political opposition.

The paper will also address the personal experiences of American personnel and the locals with whom they interacted in Taipei, where I will be making a research trip in June.

Zach Fredman is an assistant professor of history at Duke Kunshan University (DKU), where he teaches classes on U.S. foreign relations and modern Chinese history. Prior to arriving at DKU, he held postdoctoral fellowships at Nanyang Technological University and Dartmouth College. His forthcoming book, *From Allied Friend to Mortal Enemy: The U.S. Military in Wartime China* (UNC Press, 2021), won the Edward M. Coffman First Manuscript Prize from the Society for Military History. His research has appeared or will be appearing in *Diplomatic History*, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, *Frontiers of History in China*, and *The Journal of Modern Chinese History*.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 10:30am-12:00pm
Panel #1 The American War: GIs in the Pacific World

“Destination Downunder: American Servicemen in Sydney, 1967-1972”

Jon Piccini, Lecturer, Australian Catholic University, and Chris Dixon, Professor, Macquarie University, Australia

During the 1960s and 1970s tens of thousands of American service personnel stationed in Vietnam spent their allocated “Rest and Recuperation” period in Sydney, Australia. As tangible symbols of the massive American commitment to the Vietnam War, American servicemen’s presence in Sydney highlighted the growing tensions regarding Australia’s role in the Vietnam conflict. Equally significantly, while Sydney attracted fewer Americans than destinations such as Bangkok or Tokyo, and although the impact of the visiting Americans was less dramatic than that of the estimated one million Americans who spent time in Australia during World War Two, they played a part in the dramatic social, sexual, and cultural transformations that swept Australia during the late 1960s and early 1970s. And, as had been the case a generation before, the presence of visiting African American service personnel challenged the racial values and practices of a nation in which principles of white supremacy remained enshrined in both law and custom. In examining a neglected aspect of the Vietnam War, this paper thus addresses important questions regarding the transnational legacies a war that simultaneously exposed the limits of American globalism and underscored the social and cultural impact of American military power.

Jon Piccini is a historian at the Australian Catholic University, Brisbane. He wrote *Global Radicals: Transnational Protest, Australia and the 1960s*(2016) which looks at Australian protest movements in the transnational 'Sixties', co-edited a collection of essays entitled *The Far Left in Australia since 1945*(2018) and his monograph on human rights in twentieth-century Australia will appear in late 2019.

Chris Dixon is a Professor of History at Macquarie University. His current research focuses on the part played by African Americans in the Pacific and Korean wars. *African Americans and the Pacific War: Race, Nationality, and the Fight for Freedom* was published by Cambridge University Press in late 2018. After completing his BA (Hons) and MA at the University of Western Australia, Chris completed his PhD at the University of New South Wales. A revised version of his PhD thesis, *Perfecting the Family: Antislavery Marriages in Nineteenth-Century America*, was published by the University of Massachusetts Press. His next book, *African America and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* was published in 2000 by Greenwood Press. Subsequently, Chris’s research has focused on the social and cultural dimensions of war; his publications in that field include coauthored textbooks examining the Vietnam and Pacific wars, and *Hollywood's South Seas and the Pacific War* (coauthored with Professor Sean Brawley). He has also coauthored *The South Seas: A Reception History from Daniel Defoe to Dorothy Lamour*. Prior to arriving at Macquarie in 2016, Chris held appointments at the University of Sydney, Massey University, the University of Newcastle, and the University of Queensland. Chris has served two terms as President of the Australian and New Zealand American Studies Association, as well as President of the International Society for Cultural History. In 2016 he held the Fulbright Scholarship in Australian-U.S. Alliance Studies.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 10:30am-12:00pm
Panel #1 The American War: GIs in the Pacific World

“GI Resistance and Transpacific Activism in Japan during the Vietnam War:
A Piece of Forgotten (or Suppressed?) History”

Noriko Shiratori, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, United States

When Ken Burns’ PBS series on the Vietnam War aired in 1983, the American public was not ready. When Burns attempted the 18-hour documentary series on the Vietnam War again in 2017, the reception was warmer, but not without mixed reactions. In stark contrast with America’s love of World War II, the Vietnam War remains one of the most uncomfortable narratives in the United States to this day. While there have been studies on GI resistance during the Vietnam War, few such studies in the Asia Pacific region have been done. This paper is about the unprecedented scale of anti-Vietnam War movement that played out in Japan—a launching pad for America’s war in Southeast Asia. The widespread presence of US bases throughout Japan allowed American soldiers to be transported and carry out missions to kill Vietnamese people from Japan and (then) American occupied-Okinawa. At the center of the movement in Japan was Beheiren, a decentralized civic movement that was launched by Japan’s postwar intellectuals who were rooted cosmopolitan. It was the emergence of American deserters on the streets of Japan in the late 1960s that transformed Beheiren into a transnational underground operation that sheltered American deserters and moved them out of Japan to Sweden in cooperation with the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War. By 1970, as GI uprisings started to erupt in every major US base worldwide, a wide variety of American activists, including civil rights lawyers, drifted into Japan to get the active-duty ‘antiwar’ GIs legally out of the military system. Through archives, qualitative content analysis, participant observation, and interviews with the remaining key activists of Beheiren, this paper examines GI resistance in Japan, particularly around the Iwakuni Marine Corps base, one of the largest US Marine Corps in Asia-Pacific, where transpacific activism flourished in the early 1970s.

Noriko Shiratori completed her Ph.D. in political science at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in August 2018. Her research interests include transnational civic activism, social movements, peace research, civil societies, postwar thought and behavior, and the global sixties. She is currently working on a book manuscript based on her dissertation, “Peace in Vietnam! Beheiren: Transnational Activism and GI Movement in Postwar Japan 1965-1974.” She is a research fellow at the Research Center for Cooperative Civil Societies in Rikkyo University. She also holds a Master of Social Work (2005) from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 1:00-3:00pm
Panel #2 The American War: Emotions, Motivations, Effects

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Chair: Helen Anderson, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California

“‘The War of Southeast Asia’: Falling Dominoes, the 1967 Clifford-Taylor Mission, and the Fight for the Stability of the Pacific World”

Gabrielle Westcott, University of Connecticut, United States

“An American Sergeant’s Sojourn in Sydney, 1970”

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“The U.S. Intelligence Community’s Evolving Assessment of Asia Pacific Threats after the Vietnam War”

Brian Cuddy, Macquarie University, Australia

“Between Ku and Lono: Hawaii’s Role in the Vietnam War and its Aftermath”

Marc Jason Gilbert, Hawaii Pacific University, United States

Chair: **Helen Anderson** is a retired senior lecturer, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, where she taught in the Department of National Security Affairs. She is a historian whose fields include modern East and Southeast Asia and U.S. foreign relations.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 1:00-3:00pm
Panel #2 The American War: Emotions, Motivations, Effects

“‘The War of Southeast Asia’: Falling Dominoes, the 1967 Clifford-Taylor Mission, and the Fight for the Stability of the Pacific World”

Gabrielle Westcott, PhD Candidate, University of Connecticut, United States

In July 1967, President Lyndon Johnson sent Clark Clifford and General Maxwell Taylor on a mission to meet with the leaders of troop-contributing allies in South Korea, Thailand, New Zealand, and Australia (a trip to the Philippines was also planned, but was canceled). After a quick stop in Saigon to review the situation in South Vietnam, Clifford and Taylor were tasked with briefing allied leaders on the war and discussing the possibility of increasing allied troop commitments. This paper explores how the Clifford-Taylor mission shaped U.S. foreign policymakers’ understanding of the Pacific allies’ commitment to the war effort, the importance of Vietnam to the stability of the Pacific region, and the legitimacy of U.S. involvement in the conflict. In 1969, Clifford recalled the “nagging, not-to-be-suppressed doubts” that emerged in his discussions with Pacific allies, particularly in response to their hesitancy to commit to sending more troops to Vietnam. He noted, “I returned home puzzled, troubled, concerned. Was it possible that our assessment of the danger to the stability of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific was exaggerated?”* This paper will examine the following questions: To what extent did policymakers view the conflict as a war for the stability of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific? What about Clifford’s discussions with Pacific allies led him to question the legitimacy of the U.S. commitment to Vietnam? Why didn’t the mission raise similar doubts for Taylor, Johnson, or other senior foreign policy advisors? What can the Clifford-Taylor mission reveal about the U.S. relationship with its allies in the Pacific?

* Clark M. Clifford, “A Viet Nam Reappraisal: The Personal History of One Man’s View and How It Evolved,” *Foreign Affairs* 47, no. 4 (July 1969), 607.

Gabrielle Westcott received her B.A. in history at Whitman College in 2012 and her M.A. in history from the University of Connecticut in 2015. She is currently pursuing a PhD in American history at the University of Connecticut with a focus in 20th century U.S. foreign relations under the direction of Frank Costigliola. Her dissertation is titled, “Struggling for the Soul and Mind of a President: How Emotions and Personality Shaped Lyndon Johnson’s Vietnam Policy in 1968.”

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 1:00-3:00pm
Panel #2 The American War: Emotions, Motivations, Effects

“An American Sergeant’s Sojourn in Sydney, 1970”

David Anderson, Professor of History Emeritus, California State University, Monterey Bay

When a soldier goes on R&R from a combat zone, he does not usually make that leave the subject of a scholarly conference presentation. I will, however, begin my presentation with a discussion of my memorable R&R experience in Sydney in July 1970. I served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam from January to September 1970, and I still remember the genuine hospitality of the good people of Australia during seven winter days almost a half century ago. Upon arrival in Sydney, the R&R reception center assigned me and another GI to a hotel near Bondi Beach because the usual hotels near Kings Cross were full. The people in the neighborhood gave us an incredible welcome, repeatedly expressing appreciation for the United States and American soldiers. In South Vietnam, I also had the opportunity to observe Republic of Korea units in two different areas of operation. I challenge Robert Blackburn’s characterization of Korean, Filipino, and Thai troops as “mercenaries.”

My 1970 Sydney experience and my knowledge of the ROK troops will act as a point of departure for an assessment of some of the “More Flags” and alliance scholarship by George Herring, Gary Hess, Eugenie Blangs, Nicholas Sarantakes, Peter Edwards, and others. In Herring’s 2002 essay, “Fighting without Allies,” he used as one source a conference paper, “America Isolated,” by a young historian named Frederik Logevall. Although I agree with Herring’s general statement that “all European and some Asian allies saw, in a way that Americans never seemed to, the dubiousness of the U.S. cause in Vietnam,” I plan to examine in particular the Australian and South Korean participation as reflections of their own histories and calculations of their national interests. They partnered willingly with the United States in various ways for their own reasons.

David L. Anderson is Professor of History Emeritus, California State University, Monterey Bay. Since 2012 he has been a Senior Lecturer in the Department of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. He is a specialist in the history of U.S. relations with East and Southeast Asia. A past president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR), he has served on the editorial boards of *Diplomatic History*, the Vietnam Documentation Project of the National Security Archive, and the series “Studies in Conflict, Diplomacy, and Peace,” published by the University Press of Kentucky. He is general editor of the series, “Vietnam: America in the War Years,” published by Rowman and Littlefield. He is the author or editor of twelve books: *Imperialism and Idealism: American Diplomats in China* (1985), *Trapped by Success: The Eisenhower Administration and Vietnam* (1991), *Shadow on the White House: Presidents and the Vietnam War* (1993), *Facing My Lai: Moving Beyond the Massacre* (1998), *The Human Tradition in the Vietnam Era* (2000), *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (2002), *The Human Tradition in America since 1945* (2003), *The Vietnam War* (2005), *The War That Never Ends: New Perspectives on the Vietnam War* (2007), *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War* (2011), *The Lowdown: A Short History of the Origins of the Vietnam War* (2011), and *Vietnamization: Politics, Strategy, and Legacy* (forthcoming November 2019). He was in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1970, served in Vietnam as a sergeant in the Signal Corps, and received the Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medals.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 1:00-3:00pm
Panel #2 The American War: Emotions, Motivations, Effects

“The U.S. Intelligence Community’s Evolving Assessment of Asia Pacific Threats after the Vietnam War”

Brian Cuddy, Lecturer, Macquarie University, Australia

The U.S. Intelligence Community has received mixed reviews of its performance during the Vietnam War. The CIA’s participation in the Phoenix Program during the war provoked controversy and helped feed a view of the agency as a “Rogue Elephant,” a view which in turn led to several formal reviews of U.S. intelligence in 1975, the so-called “Year of Intelligence.” The controversy over the alleged manipulation of enemy strength estimates surfaced by the 1982 CBS documentary, *The Uncounted Enemy*, and resulting court case *Westmoreland v. CBS*, added to the sense of an intelligence apparatus adrift from its core mission of gathering and analysing information for policy-makers.

In recent times, some historians and intelligence studies scholars have painted a more favourable picture of U.S. intelligence, or at least some U.S. intelligence agencies, during the war. Intelligence assessments from the CIA, the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), and other parts of the U.S. Intelligence Community argued that there was little chance of success, both regarding the war overall, and regarding component parts of the war effort such as the aerial bombing campaign of North Vietnam known as Operation Rolling Thunder. These well-reasoned and researched assessments, these scholars argue, were ignored by LBJ and his key advisors.

These debates over U.S. intelligence performance during the Vietnam War serve as a point of departure for this paper, both temporally, as the paper considers U.S. intelligence assessments of the Asia Pacific in the years after the war, and historiographically, as the paper attempts to move beyond debates over whether or not U.S. intelligence got it “right” and towards an understanding of how, and to what effect, the U.S. Intelligence Community constructed its picture of threats in the Asia Pacific region. In particular, it examines the shift from a Cold War logic of anticommunism to a counter-terror logic of instability and chaos. In this reframing of the stakes of intelligence history, the paper also reacts to a tendency within some of the intelligence studies literature to accept the premises of the function of intelligence as understood and practised by the U.S. Intelligence Community.

Brian Cuddy is a historian of American foreign relations and twentieth century international politics, and a Lecturer in Security Studies at Macquarie University. His current research examines the role of international law in the making of contemporary war, and includes the preparation of a book manuscript based on his PhD dissertation, “Wider War: American Force in Vietnam, International Law, and the Transformation of Armed Conflict, 1961-1977.” His article in the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, “U.S. Foreign Relations and International Law,” was published in April 2019. Brian is also beginning work on his second project, a critical history of transnational intelligence reform in the late twentieth century. Prior to his academic career, Brian prepared assessments of regional strategic and political affairs as an analyst in New Zealand’s Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 1:00-3:00pm
Panel #2 The American War: Emotions, Motivations, Effects

“Between Ku and Lono: Hawaii’s Role in the Vietnam War and its Aftermath”
Marc Jason Gilbert, Professor of History, Hawaii Pacific University, United States

Hawaii holds a unique place in the annals of the American War in Vietnam. Certainly, its location and history meant that it played a role in wartime force projection as did other American possessions and bases in the Pacific, the most significant being its role as the home base, then and now, for the 25th Infantry Division (“Tropic Lightning”). Like Guam, it was a site of a major conference on the war’s conduct, and, as with U. S. bases in the Philippines, it was a site of rest and recreation for war-time American soldiers and sailors. As with New Zealand’s participation in the war, Hawaii’s contribution to the war effort was and remains controversial.

However, Hawaii’s role in the war, unlike New Zealand’s, was deeply influenced by its Polynesian roots, from its warrior culture to kava circles used to address post-war PTSD. Due to its locale, Hawaii became and remains the foremost field of engagement with the war in film and television production, from the drama of the flashbacks of the all Vietnam-veteran lead characters in the original long-running series *Magnum P.I.*, to the trauma of betrayal in *The Flight of the Intruder*, to the satirical *Tropic Thunder*. More important, its ancient tradition of providing a “place of refuge,” its tolerance for remote post-war squatter encampments built by troubled Vietnam veterans, and, via the spirit of aloha, literally a sharing of breath, has insured that local veteran’s organizations were and remain healing places they often were not, as post-war, older war-winning veterans of the Second World War shunned Vietnam veterans “who had lost their war.” Moreover, the current reconfiguration of power in the Pacific is accelerating Hawaii’s role in Pacific military and strategic affairs not seen since the Second World War in ways increasingly visible (especially since the false report of an imminent Korean missile attack) and not entirely welcome, which this work will also address.

This study will draw on my many publications on the American War in Vietnam, my local contacts with the military officers, retired and active, and my oral history work among local veteran’s groups in Hawaii. I also offer talks that address Hawaii’s place in the war for civic groups and in courses at my university’s downtown Honolulu campus and its campus on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, whose student body is mostly composed of active duty personnel or veterans.

Marc Jason Gilbert is Professor of History and NEH-supported Endowed Chair in World History at Hawaii Pacific University. He is also editor of the journal *World History Connected*. His recent publications relevant to the Vietnam War include: “PROVN’s Integrated War Strategy for Vietnam, 1966,” in Pierre Asselin, Marc Jason Gilbert, Lewis Sorley et al, *Indochina in the Year of the Horse, 1966* (Houston, TX: Radix Press, 2016), pp. 59-121; “Persuading the Enemy: Vietnamese Appeals to Non-White Forces of Occupation, 1945–1975,” in Wynn Wilcox. ed. *Vietnam and the West: New Approaches* (Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. 107-142; and “Next Stop, Silicon Valley: The Cold War, the Vietnam War, and the California Economy,” in Marcia Eymann and Charles Wollenberg, eds. *Next Stop Vietnam: California and the Nation Transformed* (Berkeley: CA: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 122-141.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 3:30-5:30pm
Panel #3 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Australia, Korea, Taiwan

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Chair: Sean Brawley, Macquarie University, Australia

“Barrier Reef”: The Australian Government’s Attempt to Turn Back the Tide of Pacific History during the Vietnam War”

Greg Lockhart, Independent Scholar, Australia

“LBJ’s Hessians? Korean Troops’ Dispatch to Vietnam”

Christopher Lovins, Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology, South Korea

“The Korean ‘*Wolnam ch’ima* (Vietnamese skirt)’ and Transpacific Wartime Culture under U.S. Imperialism in Asia”

Alice S. Kim, Independent Scholar, South Korea

“Taiwan and South Vietnam: Forging Cultural and Economic Ties, 1955-1975”

Jason Lim, University of Wollongong, Australia

Chair: **Sean Brawley** is Pro Vice-Chancellor (Programs and Pathways) and a Professor of History at Macquarie University. His research explores the themes of migration, war, sport and terrorism in the Asia-Pacific in transnational focus and especially Australia’s Asian context. He is the author or co-author of 8 monographs, 2 textbooks and two edited collections plus a large number of other scholarly publications. His latest book (co-authored with Chris Dixon) *The South Seas: A Reception History from Daniel DeFoe to Dorothy Lamour* was published by Lexington Books (Baltimore, 2015). He is currently working on an ARC Discovery funded project (with colleagues from Monash University) on Australia’s Asian Garrisons.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 3:30-5:30pm
Panel #3 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Australia, Korea, Taiwan

“‘Barrier Reef’: The Australian Government’s Attempt to Turn Back the Tide of Pacific History during the Vietnam War”

Greg Lockhart, Independent Scholar, Australia

On 29 April 1965 Australian Prime Minister R.G. Menzies announced that the take-over of South Vietnam would pose a direct military threat to Australia. ‘It must be seen as part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans,’ he said. My paper will deal with the origins of this misunderstanding in Asian-Pacific history and raise its primary strategic outcome: the manifestation of a barrier mentality in Australian political and military thinking in relation to the countries of that region, particularly China.

As leader of the opposition, Menzies attacked the Australian government in 1946 for supporting the rise of President Sukarno in an independent Republic of Indonesia. ‘Instead of having, in a political sense, a barrier reef in the north-west,’ he exclaimed, ‘Australia will have a potential base of attack against itself.’ In 1949 when Mao came to power in China, and Menzies and his conservative Liberal-national coalition came to power in Australia, it imagined that communist forces in China would develop such an attack. Chinese communist forces were indeed thought to be ‘thrusting their red spear-points towards Australia’ – through Vietnam, Malaya and Indonesia. From this point, the primary driver of post-1945 political change in the region, which was the emergence of independent nations in anti-imperial struggles in those countries, was occluded in Australian politics by anti-communist rhetoric and race fear. Steeped in the technicolour nightmare of the ‘red’ and ‘yellow perils’, the ‘Domino theory’ shaped official threat construction and the resulting political and military policies wherein the Menzies government sought to draw US power into the Asia-Pacific to create a barrier against the process of decolonisation there.

An analogue to this argument is that, while Australia sent forces to the Vietnam War ‘in fear of China’ (Gregory Clark’s words) and to block its independent national influence in the Asia-Pacific region, Australia’s response to China’s major global as well as Pacific profile today is still much dictated by irrational race fear. The anti-communist rhetoric did not outlive the end of the Vietnam and Cold Wars. But still, we might well ask why Australian forces have been operating continuously in support of US wars in the Middle East sixteen years after the beginning of the Iraq War? It can certainly be argued that they are doing so because, far away in the Pacific, Australia is still in fear of China.

Greg Lockhart is a Vietnam Veteran and Historian of the Vietnam War. He graduated from the University of Sydney with a BA Hons I in History (1979) and a PhD in History (1986) and was an ANU Research Fellow in Vietnamese history from 1986 to 2001. His books include two internationally acclaimed works: *Nation in Arms: the Origins of the People’s Army of Vietnam* (1989) and *The Minefield: an Australian Tragedy in Vietnam* (2007).

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 3:30-5:30pm
Panel #3 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Australia, Korea, Taiwan

“LBJ’s Hessians? Korean Troops’ Dispatch to Vietnam”

Christopher Lovins, Assistant Professor of Korean History and Civilization, Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology, South Korea

South Korea was the largest contributor to America’s war effort in Vietnam, maintaining 50,000 troops in South Vietnam for the majority of the war. These troops continue to be disparaged as mercenary soldiers into the current decade, both in Korea and in the United States, because of the enormous aid packages South Korea received from its American patron in exchange for the dispatch of first one and then a second division of front-line combat troops to Vietnam. They have also been characterized as a “bribe” to ensure the United States would not withdraw troops stationed along the 38th parallel. This paper argues that the characterization of Korean troops in Vietnam as mercenaries is inappropriate and serves to distract from and obscure our understanding of Korea’s involvement in the war. It also argues that, while the Park Chung Hee government did take advantage of America’s offers of aid in exchange for boots on the ground and that Park was deeply concerned about the possibility of American withdrawal from Korea, neither of these was the primary impetus behind Park’s decision to involve Korea in the war. Rather, Park was most concerned with shoring up his legitimacy at home. Park had seized power through a military coup in 1961 and only after enormous US pressure resigned his commission and won election as president in 1963. The next year, Park was in negotiations to dispatch troops. Sending Korean troops to Vietnam guaranteed US support for his regime, distracted Koreans’ attention from the deeply unpopular restoration of diplomatic relations with Japan, and galvanized anti-Communist fervor that was the legitimizing basis of Park’s coup, greatly strengthening Park’s hand against his domestic opponents.

Christopher Lovins is Assistant Professor of Korean History and Civilization at the Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology. He specializes in the political history of early modern Korea and has taught history and culture at the University of British Columbia and Oberlin College. His first book, *An Enlightened Despot in Early Modern Korea* is an examination of King Chǒngjo (r. 1776-1800) as an absolute monarch. His interests include political legitimacy, early modern kingship, evolutionary approaches to the humanities, and teaching history through film and science fiction.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 3:30-5:30pm
Panel #3 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Australia, Korea, Taiwan

“The Korean ‘*Wolnam ch'ima* (Vietnamese skirt)’ and Transpacific Wartime Culture under U.S. Imperialism in Asia”

Alice S. Kim, Independent Scholar, South Korea

The “Vietnamese skirt,” referred to as “*Wolnam ch'ima*” in Korean, was a ubiquitous new fashion item introduced to South Korea by the many Koreans, mainly soldiers, returning from the Vietnam War. These long slim skirts, bearing colorful prints or bright solids and fitted with elastic waistbands were not Vietnamese skirts per se, but their moniker is often presumed based on their slight resemblance to the Vietnamese áo dài. At the same time, they were not considered high or even formal fashion, and stood in between the customary binary divide of “traditional” Korean *hanbok* vs. “modern” Western dresses and suits. Largely invisible among the proliferating numbers of women’s fashion magazines, they appeared, rather ubiquitously, worn by the new women featured in casual, domestic, everyday news and magazine stories and chronicles. As such, the “*Wolnam ch'ima*” resides, to this day, primarily in living memory and oral histories rather than in official symbolic narratives of Korean postcolonial modernity.

In this paper, I examine the regional identity of the Korean “*Wolnam ch'ima (Vietnamese skirt)*” as the product of a transpacific history and culture of Korean-Vietnamese relations in Cold War Asia via the mediation of US militarized imperialism in the region. I argue that the meanings associated with *Wolnam ch'ima (Vietnamese skirt)*” can only be gleaned in relation to the chain of signifiers that the adjective “*Wolnam (Vietnamese)*” came to be associated with, as they were attached to clothing and other everyday objects, produced across this intricate, hierarchical transpacific wartime culture. In so doing I elucidate the production and circulation of transpacific wartime culture in the region, while interrogating the politics of its marginalization and invisibility in official nationalist narratives of South Korean modernity and development.

Alice S. Kim received her MA/PhD in Rhetoric from UC Berkeley (2013). Her publications include “*Left Out: ‘People’s Solidarity for Social Progress’ and the Evolution of South Korean Minjung After Authoritarianism,*” in *From Democracy to Civil Society: The Evolution of Korean Social Movements* (Routledge, 2011), and *Globalization and Art* (Co-editor, Penn State Press, 2010). She was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the International Center for Korean Studies at Kyujanggak, Seoul National University (2014-15), and taught at Underwood International College at Yonsei University in Seoul (2016-2018). She has also worked as Media and Communications Manager for the Gwangju Biennale (2010-2013) and Shanghai Project (2015-16), and as freelance writer and translator. She is currently working on her dissertation-based book in progress, *Airport Modern*, which explores the genealogy of the modern postcolonial airport and air travel in South Korea focusing on the interlinked dynamics of colonial modernity, developmentalism, and capitalist globalization.

Day 1, Thursday 15 August, 3:30-5:30pm
Panel #3 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Australia, Korea, Taiwan

“Taiwan and South Vietnam: Forging Cultural and Economic Ties, 1955-1975”
Jason Lim, Senior Lecturer in Asian History, University of Wollongong, Australia

Taiwan (officially the Republic of China, ROC) and South Vietnam faced communist rivals during the Cold War. In 1949, the ROC lost the civil war in China and the Kuomintang government of President Chiang Kai-shek moved to Taiwan where it continued to claim to be the legitimate government of the whole of China. In 1955, with the conclusion of the Geneva Conference, Vietnam was divided into two. The southern half of the country organised a sham referendum that resulted in the declaration of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) and with Ngo Dinh Diem later elected in fraudulent polls as the new President. In the search for allies, both the ROC and RVN found each other and attempts were made to forge closer ties, largely through perceived common culture (such as history and Confucianism) and greater economic and business ties. The Chinese community in South Vietnam, however, remained a stumbling block to ROC-RVN relations. In 1956, the ROC and the RVN exchanged ambassadors. By the time the Vietnam War broke out, the ROC also sent a Military Advisory Group to Saigon. My presentation will examine these economic and cultural ties between both countries during this twenty-year period, largely through the use of declassified archival records held in Taipei. It will look at how the relationship was forged, the activities conducted in both countries, and the attempts by both the ROC and RVN governments to work towards cultural and economic solidarity. It will also examine how President Chiang (who died two weeks before the fall of Saigon) and his ministers viewed the South Vietnamese government and state.

Jason Lim is Senior Lecturer in Asian History in the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry at the University of Wollongong. His research interests include China-Taiwan-Southeast Asia relations during the Cold War and the history of the Chinese community in Singapore. His current work looks at the Republic of China’s relationships with Southeast Asian nations during the Cold War.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 9:00-11:00am
Panel #4 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Southeast Asia

Panel #4 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Southeast Asia

Chair: Kevin Jon Heller, University of Amsterdam and Australian National University

“British Neocolonialism in Malaya and Singapore and U.S. Empire in the Pacific”

Wen-Qing Ngoei, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

“Buying Time? The Vietnam War and Southeast Asia”

Mattias Fibiger, Harvard Business School, United States

“Strengthening the Regime: Singapore, the United States, & the War in Indochina”

S. R. Joey Long, National University of Singapore, Singapore

“The Ultimate Domino: Indonesia and the Vietnam War”

Mark Lawrence, University of Texas, Austin, United States

Chair: **Kevin Jon Heller** is Associate Professor of Public International Law at the University of Amsterdam and Professor of Law at Australian National University. He was previously Professor of Criminal Law at SOAS, University of London, and Associate Professor and Reader at Melbourne Law School. He holds a PhD in law from Leiden University and a JD with distinction from Stanford Law School. Kevin’s books include *The Nuremberg Military Tribunals and the Origins of International Criminal Law* (Oxford University Press, 2011), *The Hidden Histories of War Crimes Trials* (Oxford University Press, 2013) (edited with Gerry Simpson), and the *Handbook of Comparative Criminal Law* (Stanford University Press, 2009) (with Markus Dubber). He is currently co-editing the *Oxford Handbook of International Criminal Law*, which will be published by Oxford University Press in 2019, and co-writing a book with Sam Moyn (Yale) provisionally entitled *The Vietnam War and the Transformation of International Law*. Kevin has been involved in the International Criminal Court’s negotiations over the crime of aggression, worked as Human Rights Watch’s external legal advisor on the trial of Saddam Hussein, served for three years as one of Radovan Karadzic’s formally-appointed legal associates at the ICTY, and was the plaintiffs’ expert witness concerning medical experimentation in *Salim v Mitchell*, a successful Alien Tort Statute case against the psychologists who designed and administered the CIA’s torture program. He consults regularly with a variety of UN organisations (such as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic) and human rights groups (such as Al-Haq and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights) and is a permanent member of the international-law blog *Opinio Juris*, which is sponsored by the International Commission of Jurists.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 9:00-11:00am
Panel #4 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Southeast Asia

“British Neocolonialism in Malaya and Singapore and U.S. Empire in the Pacific”
Wen-Qing Ngoei, Assistant Professor, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

London’s neocolonial strategies in Southeast Asia, coupled with the efforts of its local allies in Malaya and Singapore, saw Britain’s imperial influence endure in the region well into the 1970s, some two decades after France had retreated from Indochina. Historians have typically analyzed this long overlap of British and U.S. empires in post-1945 Southeast Asia in a piecemeal fashion, focusing on either the early or late 1960s, and often through the prism of the Vietnam War.

This paper situates the Vietnam War within a wider regional context, examining the long shadow that the British Empire cast over U.S. involvement in Asia from the end of the Pacific War to the American withdrawal from Vietnam. It examines how British officials contributed to the emergence of the domino theory and U.S. commitment to Vietnam and the region. Importantly, this paper will showcase Malaya’s and Singapore’s roles in undermining the left-leaning Sukarno regime, paving the way for Indonesia’s rightward shift in the mid-1960s and U.S. predominance in the region just as U.S. troops were being deployed to Vietnam. Additionally, it will reveal how Britain’s regional allies cast their lot with the United States as British power waned, ushering Southeast Asia from a period of Anglo-American predominance into U.S. hegemony. With this longer history of the British-U.S. relationship in view, paying particular attention to the agency of Britain’s conservative regional allies, this paper sheds light on the transition of Southeast Asia from European-dominated colonialism to American empire. In so doing, it underscores that U.S. failures in Vietnam were something of an anomaly given the region’s overall pro-U.S. trajectory after World War II.

Wen-Qing Ngoei is assistant professor of history at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He received his PhD in History from Northwestern University and completed postdoctoral stints at Northwestern and Yale University before joining NTU. Ngoei’s first book, *Arc of Containment: Britain, the United States, and Anticommunism in Southeast Asia* (Cornell UP, May 2019), argues that British decolonization intertwined with Southeast Asian anticommunism to shape U.S. policy in the wider region. He has published in *Diplomatic History* (2017) and his prize-winning essay on the domino theory appears in the *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* (2014).

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 9:00-11:00am
Panel #4 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Southeast Asia

“Buying Time? The Vietnam War and Southeast Asia”
Mattias Fibiger, Assistant Professor, Harvard Business School, United States

The mid-to-late 1960s witnessed the rise of a curious but enduring argument about the Vietnam War. As early as January 1965, a full two months *before* the Americanization of the war, the indefatigable *New York Times* columnist C.L. Sulzberger wrote that “We have lost most of the space in South Vietnam; but we can still buy time—time to reinforce the anti-Communist positions in Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines.”* The “buying time thesis,” as this argument became known, proved remarkably durable. As recently as January 2019, the *Wall Street Journal* published an op-ed claiming “U.S. intervention in Vietnam achieved a strategic victory by saving Southeast Asia—albeit not Vietnam—from communism.”† The persistence of the buying time thesis owes to its ability to rhetorically transmute the American failure in Vietnam into success, and also to its decidedly speculative nature. To answer definitively what would have transpired in Southeast Asia had the United States not intervened in Vietnam is an impossible counterfactual: the variables are too numerous, the time period too protracted. The best refutation of the buying time thesis to date comes from Robert McMahon, who argues that its supporters could marshal little evidence for their claims and often conflated intentions and outcomes.‡ This paper uses new evidence, including archival documentation from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and the United States to evaluate the buying time thesis. It finds that there is *some* evidence that the war helped lead to the creation of ASEAN, to Southeast Asia’s “miraculous” economic growth, and to the deepening of the Sino-Soviet split, all of which left the region more stable. But the war was in other ways a vehicle of instability. It led the United States to funnel vast quantities of military and economic aid to dictatorial regimes elsewhere in Southeast Asia whose repressive practices fueled a resurgence of communist, Islamist, and separatist insurgencies. Ultimately, then, the buying time thesis masks the complexity of the war and its contradictory legacies for Southeast Asia.

* “The Loss of Options in Vietnam,” *New York Times*, January 11, 1965.

† “America Lost Vietnam but Saved Southeast Asia,” *January 27, 2019*.

‡ Robert McMahon, “What Difference Did It Make? Assessing the Vietnam War’s Impact on Southeast Asia,” in Lloyd Gardner and Ted Gittinger, eds., *International Perspectives on Vietnam* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999).

Mattias Fibiger is an assistant professor in the Business, Government, and International Economy (BGIE) unit at Harvard Business School. Professor Fibiger conducts research on twentieth century international history. His geographic areas of expertise include the United States and Southeast Asia, and his thematic interests span political economy, authoritarianism, foreign policy, and Islam. Professor Fibiger’s current book manuscript examines the international and transnational construction of authoritarian rule in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore in the 1960s and 1970s. Professor Fibiger received his B.A. in history from the University of California at Santa Barbara and his Ph.D. in history from Cornell University. Before joining the faculty at HBS, he was a visiting researcher at Universitas Indonesia.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 9:00-11:00am
Panel #4 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Southeast Asia

“Strengthening the Regime: Singapore, the United States, & the War in Indochina”
S. R. Joey Long, Associate Professor of History, National University of Singapore

This paper examines the endeavors by politicians in Singapore to strengthen their control of the city-state between 1965 and 1975—a period marked by the intensification of the hot war in Indochina, a cold war in the region, and rapid sociopolitical change across Southeast Asia. The existing scholarship has documented the moves made by People’s Action Party politicians to develop the newly independent country economically, build a viable state, and consolidate their hold on domestic political power. It has neglected to examine, however, the economic and political benefits that the political actors in Singapore reaped from their public and private support of the U.S. intervention in Indochina.

This paper argues that the Singaporean leaders exploited the American concerns with the hot war in Indochina to advance their regime interests. Cultivating U.S. policymakers, Singaporean politicians reached out to Washington to procure military weapons for the Singaporean military. They also engaged U.S. business leaders and pulled American capital to the city-state. The flow of American military equipment and investment to Singapore enhanced the capacity of the Singaporean regime to defend its interests against adversarial neighbors, further its development strategies, distribute rewards to supporters, neutralize or win over detractors, and consolidate its control of the city-state. At the same time, a close and cordial diplomatic relationship between Singapore and the United States would obtain. The interactions between the two governments and the American presence in Singapore also intensified. Thus, even as Washington retreated from a devastating war in Vietnam, its defeat did not lead to a significant diminution of U.S. power in Southeast Asia. Rather, the Vietnam War years actually saw the continued advancement and preservation of American influence in other parts of the subregion such as Singapore.

S.R. Joey Long is associate professor of history at the National University of Singapore. He received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Cambridge. His main fields of interest are the cold and hot wars in post-WWII Southeast Asia, the history of American foreign relations with Asia, the history of Singapore, and Asia-Pacific security. In addition to articles published in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *Diplomatic History*, *European Journal of International Relations*, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *South East Asia Research*, and a number of edited volumes, Long is the author of *Safe for Decolonization: The Eisenhower Administration, Britain, and Singapore*. Fellowships and awards he has received include a Fulbright Grant and the Lawrence Gelfand-Armin Rappaport Fellowship from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 9:00-11:00am
Panel #4 The Vietnam War as Pacific War: Southeast Asia

“The Ultimate Domino: Indonesia and the Vietnam War”

Mark Lawrence, Associate Professor of History, University of Texas, Austin, United States

In his 1995 memoir *In Retrospect*, Robert McNamara lamented the fact that he and other U.S. leaders had failed to recognize the importance of the 1965 coup in Indonesia for U.S. policy toward Vietnam. The sudden marginalization of the left-leaning leadership in Jakarta and the rise of the pro-U.S. Indonesian military should, in McNamara’s view, have inspired a fundamental reappraisal of Washington’s policy toward a rapidly widening war fought largely in the name of preventing the loss of Southeast Asia to communism. With the sudden lurch of the region’s most populous and resource-rich country into the Western camp, that goal had been largely achieved and the Vietnam War perhaps rendered unnecessary.

It’s a tantalizing suggestion that provokes two interrelated questions: Precisely how were Vietnam and Indonesia related in the minds of Western policymakers, and why didn’t the coup – by any account a watershed in Southeast Asia’s Cold War – have any significant effect on the war in Indochina? Drawing on U.S., British, and Australian sources as well as secondary studies of Vietnamese and Indonesian policymaking, this paper will attempt to answer these two questions.

The essay will argue that U.S. and other Western policymakers readily embraced the domino theory in the early years of the Cold War and consistently viewed Indonesia as the most important of all the dominoes that might tumble if Vietnam fell. But the paper will also argue that the connections among different Asian territories lost their centrality in U.S. policymaking by the early 1960s as concerns about credibility and political pressures increasingly drove U.S. decisions. In this way, the regional vision that underpinned the early phases of U.S. escalation (and remained central in the minds of leaders elsewhere in the Pacific region) tended to fade as time passed, giving rise to one of the peculiarities of the American war: The United States drastically escalated its involvement at precisely the moment when the region swung dramatically toward the West.

Mark Atwood Lawrence is Associate Professor of History, Distinguished Fellow at the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law, and Director of Graduate Studies at the Clements Center for National Security at The University of Texas at Austin. He received his B.A. from Stanford University in 1988 and his doctorate from Yale in 1999. After teaching as a lecturer in history at Yale, he joined the History Department at UT Austin in 2000. Since then, he has published two books, *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (University of California Press, 2005) and *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* (Oxford University Press, 2008). He has also published an edited collection of primary sources entitled *The Vietnam War: An International History in Documents* (Oxford University Press, 2014) and four co-edited books. He is now at work on a study of U.S. policymaking toward the developing world in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 11:30am-1:30pm
Panel #5 Crossing and Constructing Borders

Panel #5 Crossing and Constructing Borders

Chair: Adele Garnier, Macquarie University, Australia

“Americans in Australia: Migrations and Radical Thought, 1961-1975”

Kyle Harvey, University of Tasmania, Australia

“Politicizing Ethnicity: The Chinese Exodus from Vietnam, 1978-80”

Lisa Tran, California State University, Fullerton, United States

“‘I wish I could wave a judicial wand’: Vietnamese Refugee Status, the Law, and Hong Kong, 1988-1997”

Jana Lipman, Tulane University, United States

“Those who learn from history can still repeat it: The challenges of learning from the Cambodian Genocide”

Hoang Vu, Cornell University, United States

Chair: **Adele Garnier** is a Lecturer in the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations at Macquarie University. Her research investigates the interplay of regulatory levels (local to global) in migration and refugee policy in a comparative perspective, with a current focus on refugees' participation in the labour market and on the governance of refugee resettlement. She has published in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Refugee and World Trends* and is the co-editor of *Refugee Resettlement: Power, Politics and Humanitarian Governance* (with Liliana Lyra Jubilut and Kristin Bergtora Sandvik, Berghahn Books, 2018).

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 11:30am-1:30pm
Panel #5 Crossing and Constructing Borders

“Americans in Australia: Migrations and Radical Thought, 1961-1975”

Kyle Harvey, Research Fellow, University of Tasmania, Australia

This paper focuses on the migration of Americans to Australia in the 1960s and 1970s, and how their introduction and distribution of radical thought influenced the Australian left's response to the Vietnam War. The presence of US citizens who arrived in Australia as permanent migrants, rather than just temporary visitors, infused the anti-war movement with experience, contacts, and ideas that operated differently to tours from American anti-war speakers or the experience of Australian anti-war organisers who went to the US for holidays, study, or research. The experience of migration, of adapting to life in Australia, and of ensconcing themselves within a growing and experimental anti-war movement, is one that is frequently missing from histories of the anti-war movement and of the left in Australia.

This was not merely a process that begun in 1965 with the entry of Australian troops to Vietnam. American migrants had been arriving in Australia since 1961 as so-called “nuclear migrants”, fleeing the cloying environment of Cold War patriotism and paranoia back home for a less restrictive life in Australia. Their backgrounds as anti-nuclear activists and proponents of radical pacifism lent a unique edge to the Australian peace movement which continued as its focus shifted from nuclear testing to the conflict in Vietnam in the mid-1960s. This paper extends scholarship by Jon Piccini, Kate Murphy, Sean Scalmer, and Nick Irving by focusing less on visits of US radicals, the distribution of radical literature, or the mimicry Australian activists lent to American ideas of radical protest. Instead, it takes a wider look at the presence of Americans living in Australia, and how their backgrounds in the United States, their ideas of radical protest, and their involvement with various anti-war causes encouraged a richer, more critical approach to radicalism amongst the Australian left. This was part of a broader trans-Pacific flow of individuals and ideas, nurtured in social groups and in anti-war organisations, that helped radicalise Australian thought and action against the war.

Kyle Harvey is a Research Fellow at the University of Tasmania and an Honorary Fellow at the University of Melbourne. His research interests span migration history, media studies, social movement history, memory, and biography. Kyle's first book, *American Anti-Nuclear Activism, 1975-1990: The Challenge of Peace* was published in 2014 by Palgrave Macmillan.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 11:30am-1:30pm
Panel #5 Crossing and Constructing Borders

“Politicizing Ethnicity: The Chinese Exodus from Vietnam, 1978-80”

Lisa Tran, Professor of History, California State University, Fullerton, United States

The war in Vietnam and the ensuing refugee crisis have been conventionally interpreted within the context of the ideological and geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. But how did the Cold War affect the people in Vietnam, especially those who fled the country in the late 1970s? Using the lens of ethnicity, my paper focuses on the Chinese who left Vietnam in boats that made their way to countries throughout Southeast Asia. How did they frame their departure, and how do their narratives confirm or subvert prevailing views? To what extent did Cold War agendas and rhetoric shape experiences at the personal, local, and national levels as well as throughout Asia?

By centering the story on the Chinese refugees who left Vietnam, my paper analyzes the intersection of ethnicity with socialist construction and border control. In 1978, the Vietnamese government nationalized industry and commerce, which had a disproportionately negative effect on the Chinese community. The following year, clashes on the Sino-Vietnamese border erupted into full-scale war. The Vietnamese government regarded ethnic Chinese as economic and political liabilities and loosened border controls to facilitate their departure. Yet the vast majority of Chinese who left Vietnam did not head north to China but rather south, with most ending up in Malaysia. As the refugees sought asylum in countries throughout Southeast Asia, they faced increasing resistance from governments invoking ethnic arguments to turn the refugees away. By analyzing the ethnic implications of the exodus of refugees from Vietnam, my paper shifts attention away from the geopolitics and ideologies that have dominated scholarship on the Vietnam War and offers an alternative view centered on ordinary people whose ethnic identity, more than ideological or political views, shaped experiences of and perspectives on the Vietnam War.

Lisa Tran is Professor of History at California State University, Fullerton in the United States. She is the author of *Concubines in Court: Marriage and Monogamy in Twentieth-Century China* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) as well as numerous articles on women and the law in modern China. Her current project focuses on the ethnic Chinese who were part of the “boat people” exodus from Vietnam in the late 1970s. She has presented her research at national and regional conferences. She teaches courses on the Chinese diaspora, modern Asia and world history.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 11:30am-1:30pm
Panel #5 Crossing and Constructing Borders

“I wish I could wave a judicial wand’: Vietnamese Refugee Status, the Law, and Hong Kong, 1988-1997”

Jana Lipman, Associate Professor of History, Tulane University, United States

My current book tackles the question of refugee status, repatriation, humanitarianism, and human rights after the U.S. War in Vietnam. This is a history firmly placed in the Pacific. It decenters the United States and resituates the main story in Southeast Asia, Guam, and Hong Kong. This is a story of what happens in between. I argue that the local politics in Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong shaped the contours of who would and who would not be considered a refugee between 1975 and 2005. In other words, local and regional politics, and not just international norms, drove refugee policy at the end of the war.

In this paper, I will analyze Vietnamese legal claims in Hong Kong from 1988 through 1997. In 1989, there were approximately 55,000 Vietnamese in camps throughout Hong Kong. The imminent transition from British to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 defined the decade for Hong Kong Chinese and created specific anxieties over refugee status, citizenship, and human rights. As a result, Hong Kong instituted a controversial “screening process” for Vietnamese, later adopted by the UNHCR, whereby it would determine whether an individual Vietnamese met the threshold of being a “refugee.” If the Vietnamese was “screened in,” he or she would be resettled in a third country; however, if the individual was “screened out,” he or she would be repatriated back to Vietnam. The result was fierce contestation between Vietnamese who demanded that they were refugees and a bureaucratic process meant to “screen out” non-refugees. By 1997, Hong Kong had repatriated 66,000 Vietnamese.

This paper examines dozens of Hong Kong legal decisions and analyzes the language, rights claims, and strategies used to gain refugee status. Vietnamese took their cases to court and brought habeas corpus petitions and appeals to the Hong Kong legal system. Their legal activism reveals a dispute between their claims for human rights in Hong Kong and Hong Kong’s more limited goal of humanitarianism or simple protection. Finally, these stories reveal how Hong Kong, China, Great Britain, and Vietnam (and not just the United States) drove refugee and resettlement politics and how Vietnamese often found themselves caught in between powerful and changing regional geopolitics.

Jana Lipman is a specialist in the 20th-century U.S., especially foreign relations, social and political history, Cuba and Vietnam. She is interested in US foreign relations broadly construed, including the fields of refugee studies, human rights, and US military bases in the second half of the twentieth century. Her work on the US naval base in Guantánamo Bay (GTMO) demonstrated how neocolonialism, empire, and revolution functioned in working people’s lives. Through extensive field and archival research in Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo, Cuba, she analyzed how Cuban base employees navigated the politics and contradictions of living in Cuba and working for the US military. Her current book project examines the history of Vietnamese refugee camps in Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 11:30am-1:30pm
Panel #5 Crossing and Constructing Borders

“Those who learn from history can still repeat it: The challenges of learning from the
Cambodian Genocide”

Hoang Vu, Ph.D. Candidate, History, Cornell University, United States

Historians, politicians, and laymen alike are fond of quoting George Santayana’s famous dictum, “Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.” Yet, the lessons drawn by the major domestic and regional state actors involved in the 1970s-90s Cambodian crisis, a direct consequence of the Second Indochina War, have in fact lessened the chances of an effective international response to another genocide in the region. Based on interviews with Vietnamese leaders and Vietnamese archives, I contend that Vietnam knew far more than it admitted about the ongoing genocide in Cambodia between 1975 and 1978, but did nothing until forced to defend itself from Pol Pot’s aggression. Its long and costly military adventure in Cambodia has convinced many Vietnamese leaders that it should either not have invaded Cambodia at all. Similarly, the writings of most historians of ASEAN and contemporary leaders of the five original ASEAN member states still portray the Cambodian crisis as a landmark test of the cherished values of non-intervention and mutual respect that is so central to the “ASEAN Way”. China, for its part, never publicly admitted to and apologized for materially and diplomatically aiding the Khmer Rouge regime, nor has it publicly and unequivocally condemned this regime, and continues to advocate for the absolute sanctity of state sovereignty. In the West, the standard narrative largely credits Cambodia’s rejuvenation to the influx of capital from the UNTAC and subsequent liberalization, whitewashing the role of the Vietnamese intervention in ending the genocide and the massive socialist bloc aid that rebuilt the basic infrastructure and headed off an imminent famine in the immediate aftermath. I argue that the first step to drawing the kind of historical lessons that would actually prevent history from repeating itself is for scholars to be bold in expressing their opinions, to dare to question established tenets like the ASEAN Way, and, from there, to discuss in practical and specific terms the real lessons of the Cambodian Genocide for dealing with ongoing and future genocides in the region.

Hoang Minh Vu is a Ph.D candidate in History at Cornell University. He received a BSc. in International Relations and History (First Class, winner of the Stevenson Prize) in 2014 from the London School of Economics and Political Science with a dissertation entitled “Facing the Inevitable Vietnam’s Decision to Invade Cambodia, 1977-78.” He is currently working on his dissertation, “The Third Indochina War and the Making of Present-Day Southeast Asia, 1975 – 1995” under the guidance of Professors Keith Weller Taylor, Fredrik Logevall, Peter J. Katzenstein, and Tamara Loos.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 2:30-4:00pm

Panel #6 Remembering and Representing the Vietnam War in the Pacific World

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Chair: Alexandra Kurmann, Macquarie University, Australia

“Colonial legacies of Agent Orange in Vietnam and Australia”

Helary Ngo, University of Technology Sydney, Australia

“Return to Vietnam: Veteran Reflections on War Legacies in Vietnam at Peace”

Mia Martin Hobbs, University of Melbourne, Australia

“The Weight of the Past: Vietnamese Australian Intergenerational Perceptions”

Nathalie Nguyen, Monash University, Australia

Chair: **Alexandra Kurmann** is the Head of French and Francophone Studies and the Director of Research in the Department of International Studies at Macquarie University. She completed a PhD in Comparative French and German Literature in 2014 at the University of Melbourne and a Masters in European Comparative Literature at the University of Kent at Canterbury, UK. She is a specialist in Vietnamese-Francophone and Diaspora Literature, and works more broadly in refugee, migrant and exile writing in French, English and German. Her first monograph is entitled *Intertextual Weaving in the Work of Linda Lê: Imagining the Ideal Reader*.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 2:30-4:00pm

Panel #6 Remembering and Representing the Vietnam War in the Pacific World

“Colonial legacies of Agent Orange in Vietnam and Australia”

Boi Huyen (Helary) Ngo, University of Technology Sydney, Australia

Agent Orange contamination has a history and has current repercussions within the Vietnamese society. The use of ecocide in the Vietnam War as a method of war with the spraying of Agent Orange has affected, in both tangible and haunting ways, the health and livelihood of the Vietnamese people and veterans for generations, including the diasporic communities. Agent Orange contamination is a form of what Rob Nixon described as slow violence, the violence that is hidden and invisible yet seeps into the everyday life of the people; “A violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales.”*

Through a postcolonial angle, language and practices around the spraying of Agent Orange as a war weapon will be analysed. Historian Michael Yellow Bird wrote “During the Vietnam War, the United States often thought of Vietnam in images of the American West and cast the Vietnamese in the role of Indians”.† The operation name of Agent Orange spraying are Operation Ranch Hand and Operation Trail Dust, indicating a colonial discourse within modern warfare. During the Vietnam War, Union Carbide Corporation, now owned by the Dow Chemical Company since 2011, was one of the main manufacturers of Agent Orange and had a factory manufacturing Agent Orange in Rhodes, NSW.‡ This paper will explore the connection between the Agent Orange being manufactured in Australia and the implications and ethics of responsibility that comes with being part of the process of ecocide.

* Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011) p. 2

† Michael Yellow Bird, ‘Cowboys and Indians: Toys of Genocide, Icons of American Colonialism,’ *Wicazo Sa Review* 19 (2004), p. 43

‡ Chris McGrath, ‘Sydney Harbour’s toxic legacy shows value of green safety net,’ *The Conversation*, December 17, 2012, accessed February 23, 2017, <http://theconversation.com/sydney-harbours-toxic-legacy-shows-value-of-green-safety-net-11197>

Boi Huyen (Helary) Ngo researches and writes connecting issues around the environmental humanities with the lived experiences on Vietnamese Australian migration. She completed her PhD at the University of Technology Sydney. Titled ‘Memory and water: A Vietnamese Australian family’s sense of loss and homeliness,’ the dissertation was about the poetic presence of water within Vietnamese Australian memories. She teaches in UTS for the Faculty of Social Science and is a research assistant in Macquarie University for the Department of Geography and Planning, researching climate change and migration in Vietnam. Her writings encompasses materialities, species and relationships interconnected to water: ranging from water contamination, floods, water buffalos, fishing, boats, drowning.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 2:30-4:00pm

Panel #6 Remembering and Representing the Vietnam War in the Pacific World

“Return to Vietnam: Veteran Reflections on War Legacies in Vietnam at Peace”

Mia Martin Hobbs, University of Melbourne, Australia

Vietnam veteran identity is entwined with war legacies. After war, veterans carry their memories with them, endure the physical and psychic costs of war, and often find their identity as individuals caught up with meanings and debates around “their” war. For Vietnam veterans, these legacies are particularly fraught. The Vietnam War was deeply controversial in Australia and the United States, forcing veterans to grapple with complex and politically charged narratives. Since 1981, thousands of veterans from Australia and the US have returned to Vietnam: to reconcile with their former enemy, to revisit their own memories, to heal from trauma, to understand why and how they lost. Those who returned faced new stories and memories about the war that often undermined or contradicted the narratives that had shaped their post-war identities.

Drawing on oral history interviews conducted with over fifty returnees, I explore veterans’ reflections on the war in light of their returns. In this paper, I examine veterans’ views on four war legacy issues: perceptions of defeat (or victory) in Vietnam; the anti-war movement; the association between “their” war and war crimes; and the justness of the war. I demonstrate that rather than challenging veterans’ pre-return views, the experience of returning to Vietnam often reinforced their existing values and beliefs around the war. I show that veterans from both countries and across the political spectrum drew from Vietnamese narratives and memories to support their views on the war, and argue that veterans’ reflections indicate that debates around these topics are far from settled. On the contrary, the force and passion with which veterans discussed these topics demonstrated how polarizing and contentious the Vietnam War continues to be.

Mia Martin Hobbs completed her PhD in History at the University of Melbourne in 2018, where she teaches American and Southeast Asian history. Her dissertation, based on fieldwork conducted in Vietnam, Australia, and the US, explored why American and Australian returned to Vietnam and how they responded to their former warzone home. She has published on veteran memories and war narratives in *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* and written on contemporary issues surrounding veterans’ returns to Vietnam for *The Conversation*.

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 2:30-4:00pm

Panel #6 Remembering and Representing the Vietnam War in the Pacific World

“The Weight of the Past: Vietnamese Australian Intergenerational Perceptions”

Nathalie Nguyen, Associate Professor of History, Monash University, Australia

The Vietnamese community is the largest refugee community in Australia. From 1,000 people in 1975, the community grew to 277,400 in 2016 or 1.2 per cent of the Australian population. In one of the most significant diasporas of the late twentieth century, more than two million Vietnamese left their homeland in the two decades following the end of the Vietnam War. The exodus was driven by widespread state repression in postwar communist Vietnam, including the internment of one million people in re-education camps, the forced de-urbanisation of another million to the New Economic Zones and discrimination against all those associated with the former South Vietnamese government as well as against ethnic Chinese and Amerasians. The scale of this exodus was unprecedented as was the international response. Vietnamese were resettled in 50 countries worldwide.

In Australia, veterans of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) have marched on Anzac Day since 1981. Their war service represents a vital part of their identity, one that is remembered on a personal and communal level through a range of commemorative practices including membership of service associations, interactions with other veterans, and recording their experiences in service magazines and unit histories. Australia has formally recognized their military service as RVNAF veterans are entitled to an Australian service pension and full membership of the Returned and Services League Australia (RSL).

Oral history interviews with second generation Vietnamese Australians serving in the Australian Defence Force reveal the links between the generations as well as the differing weight of the past.

Nathalie Nguyen is an Associate Professor in the School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies at Monash University. An Oxford graduate, she held 4 fellowships in 2005-2015: 2 major Australian Research Council (ARC) Fellowships including a Future Fellowship (2011-2015), a 2007 Harold White Fellowship at the National Library of Australia, and a 2011 Visiting Fellowship at the University of Oxford. She is the author of 4 books and the editor of *New Perceptions of the Vietnam War* as well as special issues on Southeast Asian Diasporas and on Vietnam of the journals *Crossroads* and *Intersections*. Her third book *Memory Is Another Country: Women of the Vietnamese Diaspora* was a 2010 Choice Outstanding Academic Title and her fourth book *South Vietnamese Soldiers: Memories of the Vietnam War and After* (2016) has been translated into French. Her latest ARC grant is a Discovery Project on “The Refugee Legacy for the Second Generation: The Vietnamese in Australia” (2018-2021).

Day 2, Friday 16 August, 4:00-4:45pm

Keynote Presentation #2

Keynote Presentation #2

“Reflections on the Vietnam War in the Pacific World”

Fredrik Logevall, Harvard University, United States

Fredrik Logevall is the Laurence D. Belfer Professor of International Affairs and Professor of History at Harvard University, and a specialist on U.S. foreign relations history and 20th century international history. He is the author or editor of nine books, most recently *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (Random House, 2012), which won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for History and the 2013 Francis Parkman Prize, awarded by the Society of American Historians to the book that “exemplifies the union of the historian and the artist.” It also received the 2013 American Library in Paris Book Award and the 2013 Arthur Ross Book Award from the Council on Foreign Relations.

Logevall’s commentary has been featured on BBC, CBS, CNN International, and National Public Radio, and his reviews and essays have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Politico*, and *Foreign Affairs*, among other publications. He is a past president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, and is currently writing a biography of U.S. President John F. Kennedy.

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