

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Bon Bui

Part of the Illinois Public Media ([WILL radio.tv.online](http://WILL.radio.tv.online))

Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project

Interview # VRV-V-D-2015-067

Bon Bui, a commander in the South Vietnamese army and a Vietnamese POW, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: April 29, 2015 Location: WILL-TV Studio X, Campbell Hall, Urbana, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Cassidy Williams

Technical Support (cameraman, etc.): WILL Staff

Transcription by: Illinois Public Media staff

Total Pages: 25 pgs. Total Time: 1:32 / 1.54 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 3, 2016.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Bon Bui, *Veterans Remember*, VRV-V-D-2015-067

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Bon Bui was born November 8, 1946 in Quảng Bình province in North Vietnam, the son of Roman Catholics. His family fled North Vietnam in 1954 after the Communists took power. The country was divided at the 17th Parallel at the Geneva Conference of 1954. When Bui came of age he joined the South Vietnamese military to defend his country. He attended the Vietnamese National Military Academy for four years, graduating in 1966 as a second lieutenant. He was selected to be trained in the United States in the Marine Corps from 1968 to 1970, first in San Antonio, Texas then at Quantico, Virginia, then returned back to South Vietnam. He was injured during the Tet Offensive in early 1968, and returned to combat after he recovered. Bui fought defending his country until Saigon fell the North Vietnamese communists in 1975, a battle in which his unit lost 200 men. After the war, Bui became a prisoner of war and spent the next ten years in the communists' 're-education camps.' With very little food and no medication, he says his faith in God and his lack of fear of death kept him going. After being released from prison in December, 1985, he tried to escape Vietnam by boat, but was captured and sent back to prison. He was eventually granted refugee status by the United States government in 1990 and relocated with his family to Urbana, Illinois. Bui provides insight into living under communist rule in Vietnam and says he wants to make sure future generations know communism is a terrible thing.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Bon Bui; Vietnam War; refugee; Marine Corps; Saigon, South Vietnam; Surrender of Saigon; Communism; Quảng Bình, North Vietnam; Tet Offensive; 17th Parallel; Urbana, Illinois; prisoner of war; military training; Huế, South Vietnam; re-education camp; concentration camp; International Organization for Migration

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