

# Land of Childhood's Fears

Faith, Friendship, and The Vietnam War



*David John Todeschini*

David John Todeschini

The author, a Cryptographic Systems Specialist in the US Air Force, gets involved with the Medical Civic Action Program in Vietnam after fighter jets bomb a schoolhouse in Cambodia, burning 40 children alive.

"... His discussion of Operation Phoenix is revealing; his information on Agent Orange is disheartening; his assessment of the massacres that took place at My Lai and My Khe are distressing; his revelation about the CIA's involvement in drugs is discouraging, but all must be addressed. You will never look at these, and many other issues, in the same way after you read this book; it is a powerful portrayal of the emotional impact the war had on an American soldier.... This is a story of horror and hedonism, depravity and indifference, courage and compassion, humanity and heroism. The author tries to explain the paradox; he answers some questions and raises others ..."

- Dr. Stan Monteith, Radio Liberty



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## Foreword by Dr. Stan Monteith

[www.RadioLiberty.com](http://www.RadioLiberty.com)

I've read dozens of books about Vietnam - the reason for the conflict, the impact of the war on American society, and the impact of the war on the men who fought there. David Todeschini's book, **Land of Childhood's Fears**, provides information you won't find discussed elsewhere. David was sent to Vietnam, and thrust into a war he didn't understand, when he was 19 years old. His discussion of Operation Phoenix is revealing; his information on Agent Orange is disheartening; his assessment of the massacres that took place at My Lai and My Khe are distressing; his revelation about the CIA's involvement in drugs is discouraging, but all must be addressed. You will never look at these, and many other issues, in the same way after you read this book; it is a powerful portrayal of the emotional impact the war had on an American soldier.

The conflict brought out wonderful traits in some men, inhumanity in others. Some of our soldiers committed atrocities; most of them were concerned about the plight of the Vietnamese people, and the 3 million Vietnamese who perished during the war. This is a story of horror and hedonism, depravity and indifference, courage and compassion, humanity and heroism. The author tries to explain the paradox; he answers some questions and raises others.

I want to thank you for visiting my web site. This book is the product of over seven years of work... it was a labor of love, and a therapeutic undertaking at the same time. What is in this book has never been disclosed before. It is the soldier's heart struggling with his faith; it is the love of country in conflict with the desperate evil all around.

There is no way to describe in a sentence, in a paragraph, or even in an 8-page flyer what is in this book - it is every aspect of the war - any war. It makes no difference what war; they're all the same; they all have something in common - they are all unnecessary and all the wars since 1914 were NOT fought to defend the United States, although that is what the historians will have you believe if you're not careful.

The book will grip you. If you've been there, it will take you back, and if you've never been there, you're in for the adventure of your life. Your emotions will never be the same after you get through these 506 pages.

*WebPastor David Todeschini*

# REFLECTIONS

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In the days of my youth long past,  
With my hand over my heart,  
And with the innocence of tender years,  
I pledged allegiance and played the part.

A few more years of those days went by,  
And as I listened to the NEWS,  
I learned of a place called Vietnam,  
And that young men went there to die.

Later on, as I grew older,  
And more a man for those eighteen years,  
I went to fight for Freedom's calling  
In the land of childhood's fears.

But in the middle of that long battle,  
I found the war could not be won,  
So I turned the ramparts inward,  
And sang the songs of peace and love.

And as much as I tried to fight it;  
And as badly as I longed to win,  
The drugs of Southeast Asia  
Had caused the best of us to sin.

And of course there were the children,  
Who by destiny were born  
In this land of mystic beauty,  
That which by the war, was torn.

If it wasn't for the killing fields,  
And the air-strike that went wrong,  
I would not have felt the pangs of guilt,  
And wouldn't do what I had done.

And the memories of my youth long past;  
The sweet kisses I used to steal,  
Mixed with Napalm, bombs,  
And love's sweet charms,  
And now I don't know what to feel.

The most tragic sight of a soldier's sorrow  
Were shiny boxes loaded on the plane;  
C-130's full of death's grim cargo,  
Taking home those who died in vain.

Amid the bullets, bombs, and battles;  
Among the flowers and the stars,  
Children frolicked in the rain-soaked streets,  
And sold their bodies in the Saigon bars.

And amid this tragic sorrow,  
There was a day beyond compare;  
A sweet little angel stole my heart,  
And wiped the chocolate in her hair.

## "Land of Childhood's Fears Faith, Friendship, and The Vietnam War"

ISBN # 1-4116-2452-1

My beloved country made me angry,  
And Vietnam had made me sad,  
The Homeland I was defending  
Had turned its back on me and dad.

I tried to be a Christian, first;  
An American, most of all,  
But my country had eaten Eden's apple,  
And was destined for the fall.

Many of us had burned their draft cards,  
Our civil rights, there were but few,  
We sang of peace and love,  
and played Rock n' Roll;  
There was little else that we could do.

And when the Kent State protest gathered,  
The National Guard was called out, too.  
And the bullets that killed the four of them  
Were also aimed at me and you.

The entire country mourned the lives  
Of the students who had died;  
In Vietnam, and on Kent's front lawn,  
With the tears their mothers cried!

The whole country rose to anger,  
And the anger turned to rage  
When NEWS of the My Lai massacre,  
Made the New York Times' front page.

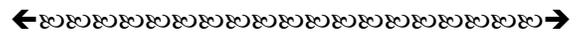
With little hope of negotiation,  
And a purpose quite unknown,  
We had fought ten years, and cried the tears,  
And came home in disgrace, alone.

And it took another decade, still  
For the country to hear their call;  
To respect the dead, and make amends,  
And put their names up on the wall.

The war there has long-since ended,  
But some of us are suffering, still;  
I remember in my dreams  
The silent screams,  
And I guess I always will.

And I pray the world has learned a lesson,  
By the pain and the lives we lost;  
That war ain't worth the trouble,  
And the untold human cost.

And America can be reminded  
On that one special Veteran's Day,  
Of the price we paid for freedom,  
And for those of us, to pray.



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*"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away".*

- Revelation 21:4 (KJV)

From my book:

# FLASHBACKS

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What the hell am I doing here?  
I've never been this far from home...  
And it's just not the distance; not just the miles,  
But the isolation, and the fear of being alone.

Jesus! I'm lonely already, and the plane just landed.  
As I spend in-country, my very first night,  
I miss Rebecca, my family, my friends, my delight.

Just look at this place! Observe these poor people!  
They have nothing to die for, nor reason to fight.  
The sunset is gorgeous, and fills the evening sky...  
Fills the mind with wonder;  
Makes the spirit ask "why?"...  
Has this conflict not ended, or why it even began;  
Why the Devil has invaded and ravished  
This beautiful land.

Children want their pictures taken;  
Photos they'll never see...  
And this one barefoot angel, ran up and kissed *me!*  
Just like that! - by sweet innocence, branded!  
What else could I do but smile  
And give her the chocolate she wanted?

It's hard, still, to imagine myself here  
Amidst this pain and this war.  
I pray for peace, smoke pot,  
And drink Red Tiger beer.

And I'm torn between the loneliness,  
The helplessness, and the fear.  
Being only 19 years old; a child,  
And nobody I know, and no one I love, near.

While short-timers are packing up for 'the World',  
Leaving, to go home, finally, and at last!  
And some leave too early, their lives suddenly stilled;  
Loved ones home being given the news,  
That by a VC mortar, their son had been killed.  
To what cause, and to what purpose  
Shall they attribute his loss?  
To what honor or glory shall his memory be tied?  
And how many others like *our* boy  
Have suffered and died?

To what God in which Heaven,  
Their prayers should they bring?  
What comfort a flag-draped coffin?  
Or the medals, or the gun-salutes give?  
For the man and the boy;  
For his dream of freedom to live?

And does the sound of 'Taps' comfort his family,  
Or his best friend,  
When corrupt politicians his life ordered to end?

And with a year left to go on my tour,  
Having made the commitment and opened the door;  
Begin to fight a war within the war,  
A struggle within myself to pretend,  
That the reason for our being here,  
Was freedom to defend.

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The sweet smell of incense, the bomb fires burning;  
A study in contrast in a land for peace, yearning.  
The innocence lost with nothing to gain,  
I can't solve the riddle; can't kill the pain.

I am ordered to serve like the others,  
But unlike me,  
They go to fight, and to suffer,  
And to die in the rain.

I saw what I witnessed; know what I've seen,  
'Was for the marihuana I smoked,  
It seemed just like a bad dream.

Until a pilot reported an errant target strike,  
I was safe in an underground bunker;  
Well away from the fight.

When the reports that came in, is when we knew well,  
Of *our* part in the trauma, of the drama in hell.  
We could not deny it; it was already done.  
Napalm hit a schoolhouse,  
And forty children were gone.  
My heart reached out to those perished young ones  
And we tried undoing the wrong;  
To un-sing our part in the harmony  
Of death's ugly song.

When a child of age eight had died in my arms,  
I could do nothing to save him;  
The Lord's plan from the start.  
When the last of his life oozed into my hands,  
It was hard to stop crying,  
As his eyes touched my heart.

I could never forget, nor ever make amends,  
For the war that was started,  
And that seemed never to end.

And the pain of that loss, I had buried, somehow,  
And I could never let go of that day, until now.

I was soon to be Stateside,  
And in my short-timer's pride,  
I had put the memory, the grieving,  
The hurt, to the side.

The pain it had caused me, I always managed to hide  
Even from those who had loved me,  
And to whom I told the stories in stride.

In my work, I excelled,  
And the DEROS dream had come true,  
For the training I had, it was Red, White, and Blue.  
'Till the traumas I carried  
That had been long shut away,  
Arose in a torrent, suddenly, one day.

The ones I loved most dearly, I hurt, and hurt badly,  
With the acts that had followed good intentions, sadly.  
The mystery solved, but for the unanswered question.

One day came the answer  
After thirty years that I'd been home,  
And I finally made peace with my God  
For *my* part in the drama that inflicted the trauma,  
And was forgiven by grace for what *I* had done.

# ORPHAN

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I'm all alone, a child of war  
In this God-forsaken land.  
My father was a GI soldier,  
And for a mom, I must pretend.

And now I'm only four years old,  
And I play beneath the stars.  
My brothers died in battle,  
And my sisters work in bars.

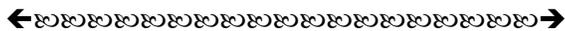
So I put my tiny hands together,  
As I lay me down to sleep,  
And pray the Lord to end the war,  
And for tonight, my soul to keep.

Tomorrow I'll wake up one day older,  
And perhaps the pain I feel;  
The burns from Napalm yesterday,  
And the scars of war to heal.

Perhaps tomorrow GI's come  
Bringing Hershey bars for me.  
I like my picture taken  
On GI-Joe's big knee.

And as I lay me down to sleep  
Tonight in my sweet dreams,  
My dad comes back to find me,  
And brings me *beaucoup* big ice cream.

And Lord, please help me find my mom;  
The one I never saw,  
And make us all a family,  
Together, safe, once more.



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# SILENT BROTHER

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My little silent brother,  
Whose name I never knew,  
Your deep black eyes had touched my heart  
When wounded, we found you.

Under the deluge, the flames were gone,  
But the aftermath remained,  
Your silent eyes embraced my heart,  
For I knew you were in pain.

And we carried you to safety,  
Right through the day's monsoon,  
For if we reached the MASH in time,  
You were sure to live, we knew.

A shot of morphine eased the pain,  
The flight deck turned crimson red.  
I prayed to God to spare your life,  
And to take *my* life, instead.

And when I looked into your eyes,  
I didn't mean to cry,  
But I lied to you. I *lied* to you,  
'cause I knew that you would die.

And when the second ampoule hit,  
Shot the morphine in your thigh,  
I'll never forget the words you said:  
"*Beaucoup Numbah One, G.I.*"

Your little life had meaning, son,  
Of this you can be sure.  
For I won't let the world forget you,  
And the pain you had endured.

And as we held your tiny hands,  
Your life had slipped away.  
And thirty long years later, friend,  
I write about that day.

Perhaps the people reading this  
Will soon enough get smart.  
Perhaps the impact your life had  
Will melt a cruel, cold heart.

The world now knows the suffering,  
And shares a small child's pain.  
Perhaps the world will come to reason,  
And we won't see war again.



# VENGEANCE IS MINE

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There are times in every day,  
That I recall a place so far away,  
A distant memory I do hide,  
Of friends of mine, who there, have died.

Out on patrol in the jungle night,  
We engaged *Charlie* in a firefight.  
VC snipers all around,  
We kept our cool; held our ground.

Muzzle flashes off in the distance,  
Returning fire with much resistance.  
And bullets crashing next to me,  
One caught Steven in the knee.

Another fired from far afield,  
My buddy John, his life did yield.  
Should I have been there in his place?  
I can't forget my good friend's face.

Single shots had found their mark;  
AK-47's with their distinct bark.  
And now Tom lies wounded in the dirt,  
Splashes of crimson on his shirt.

I picked him up off the ground,  
When screaming past, came another round.  
By the time the sound had reached my ears  
The nightmare flashed before my eyes.

I saw the bullet hit his head;  
My best friend Tom, and now he's dead.  
I'll re-enlist for one more tour,  
I'll get you, *Charlie*, that's for sure!

I'll kill you all, and take your ears,  
This second tour, I have no fears.  
And when I fight, I don't fear death.  
Vengeance is mine, 'till my dying breath.

And when it comes my time to go,  
The Lord will call, and let me know.  
As this year's tour quickly passes,  
I blow them up and kick their asses.

For I am vengeance; I am right,  
And not a one of you, like me, can fight.  
As I get short now, drawing near,  
The anger fails me; now I fear.

And one day, careless, full of pride,  
I caught a bullet and almost died.  
I gave no credence to the Word:

***"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord".***

# ANGEL

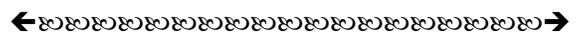
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My sweet little angel in the white pinafore,  
You're a cute as a puppy, and all the much more,  
As I handed out candy to all who were first,  
It was all in your plan; you didn't mind being last.

When it came to your turn, all the candy was gone,  
And the look in your eyes... so sad, so forlorn,  
I didn't expect that spontaneous peck,  
Or the touch of your hand on the back of my neck.

And as I was taken by you, completely by storm,  
Being touched by an angel, my heart was reborn.  
A sweet little cherub, and how was I to know?  
You're a lovable con artist; a Hershey Bandito.

And of all of the memories I have of that place,  
The fondest of all, is your sweet little face.  
When you kissed me that day, back during the war,  
My heart was touched,  
And made fonder than ever before.



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# KRISHNA'S SONG

Pacific Stars & Stripes, Wednesday, Dec 2, 1970, pg. 23

O matchless love, creation's soul  
Who wears the worlds like beads,  
The Galaxies sing out your praise  
And glorify your deeds.

Infinite source of all that is,  
And all that e'er shall be,  
The wheel has turned, an age is done,  
Now hearken onto Me.

Thy Cosmos still is perfect Lord,  
Still flawless in each part.  
All things still pulse in unison  
With Thy great all-loving heart.

The worlds still shine in splendor  
As they did when they began  
The only discord in Thy cosmic harmony is  
Man.

He learns to kill his brothers  
In a million different ways.  
His too-short rest is haunted  
By the nightmare of his days.

His blind and selfish leaders  
Preach hypocrisy and hate  
While uncounted hosts of young men  
March on blindly to their fate.

To fight and die in vain  
For the vanity of fools,  
Consigning friends and brothers  
To the graveyards and the Ghouls.

I know his sins are numberless,  
His follies without end.  
The time has come when you again  
A messenger must send.

I brought Him Truth a thousand times  
To every Godless age,  
And saw it slain a thousand times  
By lust and greed and rage.

Yet ever must I go again  
While men still do not see  
For though they slay Me, they are still  
Most precious onto Me.

Each man is but a God asleep  
Enslaved by darkened dreams.  
I come and show unto him Truth  
From which all glory shines.

For if he see reality  
He shall in glory rise,  
Ascending from the death-bound world  
To the realm where nothing dies!

So soon I'll gather form again  
And to the earth descend  
To teach Thy law of Truth and Joy,  
And Love which has no end.

Infinite God! All praise to Thee,  
Unending Fount of Love.  
Before I go, but shine once more  
Upon me from above.

Fill me with Thy Spirit as  
I go to teach Thy Word  
As ever I shall go again  
Until all things have heard.

For though they burn Me with the torch,  
And put Me to the sword,  
I'll laugh at death, and come again  
To manifest Thy Word.

So ever, ever praise to Thee  
Who sendeth Me to men  
That they might learn to seek their soul  
And find Thee there, within.



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# "I AM THE NATION"

*By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.*

I was born on **July 4, 1776**, and the Declaration of Independence is my birth certificate. The bloodlines of the world run in my veins, because I offered freedom to the oppressed. I am many things and many people. I am the nation.

I am **290 million living souls** - and the ghost of millions who have lived and died for me. I am Nathan Hale and Paul Revere. I stood at Lexington and fired the shot heard around the world. I am Washington, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry. I am John Paul Jones, the Green Mountain Boys and Davy Crockett. I am Lee and Grant and Abe Lincoln.

I remember the Alamo, the Maine, and Pearl Harbor. When freedom called, I answered and stayed until it was over, over there. I left my heroic dead in Flanders Field, on the rock of Corregidor, on the bleak slopes of Korea and in the steaming jungle of Vietnam.

I am the Brooklyn Bridge, the wheat lands of Kansas, and the granite hills of Vermont. I am the coal fields of the Virginias and Pennsylvania, the fertile lands of the West, the Golden Gate and the Grand Canyon. I am Independence Hall, the Monitor, and the Merrimac.

I am big. I sprawl from the Atlantic to the Pacific - my arms reach out to embrace Alaska and Hawaii. I am more than five million farms. I am forest, field, mountain, and desert. I am quiet villages - and cities that never sleep.

You can look at me and see Ben Franklin walking down the streets of Philadelphia with his loaf of bread under his arm. You can see Betsy Ross with her needle. You can see the lights of Christmas and hear the strains of *"Auld Lang Syne"* as the calendar turns.

I am Babe Ruth and the World Series. I am 110,000 schools and colleges and 330,000 churches where **my people worship God as they think best**. I am a ballot dropped into a box, the roar of a crowd in a stadium and the voice of a choir in a cathedral. I am an editorial in a newspaper and a letter to a congressman.

I am Eli Whitney and Stephen Foster. I am Tom Edison, Albert Einstein, and Billy Graham. I am Horace Greeley, Will Rogers and the Wright Brothers. I am George Washington Carver, Jonas Salk and Martin Luther King, Jr. I am Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Walt Whitman and Thomas Paine.

Yes, I am the nation, and these are the things that I am. I was conceived in freedom and, God willing, in freedom I will spend the rest of my days.

When the USA was attacked on **September 11, 2001** by Terrorists, and I like millions watched on television as the World Trade Centers crumbled - I responded along with our allies to put down evil as I always have. I have always been proud to lead the world in overcoming evil and lifting up righteousness.

When some liberal judges wanted to delete the words from our Pledge Of Allegiance, *"Under God"* I was quick to voice my opinion of such to my Senators and Congressman to overturn this decision, because I am the nation.

When I became aware of the low salary of our military personnel I was quick to voice my opposition to those in charge in Washington, D.C. who could change such, because we need to have a strong and well paid military, and because I am the nation.

May I possess always the integrity, the courage and the strength to keep myself unshackled, to remain a stronghold of freedom and a lighthouse of hope to the world.





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## Sample text from the book:

... After the Army medics had inoculated over 200 small children, including shots for polio, the Viet Cong stormed the village after the GIs left, and hacked off the arm of every child who had received the immunizations, throwing the severed limbs into a pile in the street. The children all perished from their wounds....

...As the fires burned, the sniper continued firing; single, well-placed shots that fell just long or short of their mark, deterring anyone from attempting to leave the cover of that Benjo ditch. It was at least 200 feet back to the buildings over flat ground, slightly rising, with no cover except an occasional skinny tree....

...Now with the scandal of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, we see the same mentality – either that, or the identical factors operating on the collective ethics of a military unit. There is much more than meets the eye here. I cannot emphasize that enough – there is much more than meets the eye with Abu Ghraib than what the media is telling us....

... Drugs played a major role in reducing the number of apparent psychological casualties in Vietnam, as compared with previous wars, at least at first. However, since most of us were so young, the drug use masked the effects of the emotional trauma, and kept us from reacting “normally” to the environment, and to things that happened. Later on, and sometimes much later on, the failure to deal with the emotional injuries many of us suffered, came back to haunt us, or cause problems in our relationships, and in our lives in general....

...Particularly telling was George Bush's reaction when he was told about the planes hitting the World Trade Center. This is what has come to be known as “plausible denial”. Bush, who is a member of an occult organization called “Skull and Bones”, has an agenda. His opponent John Kerry is also a member of that same Satanic fraternity. Enemies of freedom seek to generate conditions and excuses to justify passing laws such as the USA Patriot Act that nullify the Constitution, and eventually enable the imposition of Martial Law, just as Adolph Hitler did immediately following the burning of the Reichstag....

...The combined effect of all these factors, drugs being the pivot point around which most of the coping mechanisms of those who did indulge revolved, served to irreparably damage and seriously affect most of us who were there, each with varying degrees of severity, and each with his or her own unique problems and personal issues. This is just the tip of the iceberg of the tragedy of Vietnam, and it will be a similar tragedy for those returning from the quagmire of Iraq....

...What we have, at least since the assassination of JFK, is a government that is a total apparency; that is, it appears to be, but it is actually not what it appears to be. The government has its own agenda, and the agenda does not care about the well-being of American citizens – it is a Satanic “New World Order” – “*Novus Ordo Seclarum*” – look at the back of your dollar bills....

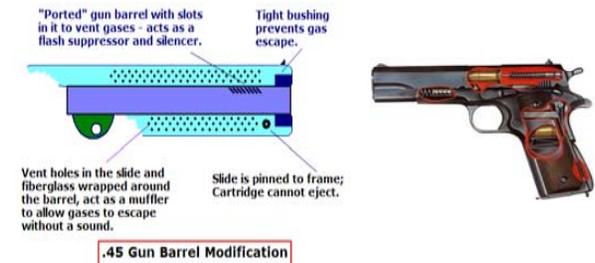
... “*We unloaded all we had on 'em*.” Sox told me, “*and even though some of 'em had their arms blown off, some had holes in 'em from the quad '50s in the towers, the only way to stop the sons-a-bitc-s was to blow their legs out from under 'em, so they'd be like the Black Knight in the Monty Python movie*”....

...If it weren't for a team of lawyers successfully pounding the truth down the government's throat, there would be no recognition of valid complaints about Agent Orange even to this day. We are starting the same process with this so-called “Gulf War disease”, as we did with Agent Orange....

...It is as if the trauma of growing up in a war zone was not enough. Now, over 30 years after the end of the war, those who were fortunate enough to survive the battles in the jungle, now have to face a terror they cannot even run from. Not only are they haunted by the memories of those days, the innocent now bear another burden – the failing health and birth defects of their children, caused by criminals who are half a planet away, who have taken their blood money, fled the scene, and covered their tracks long, long ago....

...Here comes an innocent child running down a dirt path, barefoot, and carrying about five or 6 pounds of high explosives heading right for you. The child may be racing several others to get there first; to be the first to get a Hershey bar. You know that in 10 seconds, you, your comrades, and the children will die. Retreat is out of the question, since you've walked into a trap, and the VC have already covered your only way out. You raise your weapon, sighting the child's chest in your open peep sights – less than 50 yards – he will die instantly. Even if you could retreat, the child will die anyway – in only a matter of seconds the explosion will kill him. You click off the safety... 30 yards... any closer and you'll die too. Do you pull the trigger? What if the child is not booby-trapped as you suspect? How can you possibly resolve this issue later?...

...The surgeon walked out of the hall from one of O.R.s. He came up to us, pulled the white surgical cap off his head and said, “*Sorry guys, but your little friend didn't make it. Shrapnel tore his spleen and intestines up pretty bad. There was nothing we could do... nothing more we could do*”. The metal fragment was a flattened piece of steel from makeshift roofs constructed out of tin cans or scrap metal. “*The x-rays*”, the doctor said, “*showed that the fragment was bent inside him. It was too well integrated to remove. We tried... it was no use*”....



## THE MODIFIED .45 USED TO KILL JOHN F. KENNEDY

If what I, or any of the many previous writers have written about the JFK assassination is true; that there is some sort of government “elite” that decides the fate of Presidents and civil rights leaders, then it is reasonable to conclude that our votes mean nothing... Our votes are allowed to stand only if the ones we appoint to office to represent our best interests, do not get in the way of the “Illuminati” elitist agenda; whomever you believe the “elite” to be. ...

... I really am at a loss for the word that would adequately describe exactly what it is we have in place as a government in this country. I say it with great trepidation, because I really love my country; I risked my life to defend it against what I was led to believe were its enemies. I guess I hate feeling like a damn fool.