

Contributors

DON KUNZ is Professor of English at the University of Rhode Island where he has served as Director of Graduate Studies in English and Director of the University Honors Program. Professor Kunz teaches courses in British and American literature and film studies, including a course in literature of the Vietnam War. He has published satire, narrative, and poetry as well as essays on British drama, American fiction, American film, and pedagogy. His work has appeared in *Confrontation*, *Critique*, *Forum for Honors*, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *Studies in American Fiction*, *Western American Literature*, *Vietnam Generation*, and other small magazines.

JOSEPH S. MEISEL is a Financial Operations Analyst in the Office of University Planning and Budget and a graduate student in the Department of History at Columbia University.

ROGER PRESTON is Chairman of the Art/Interior Design Departments at Atlantic Union College. His series of computer drawings, "Visions of the Holocaust," has had a number of showings. The prints featured in this journal are a part of that series.

WAR, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS

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Singing The Vietnam Blues

Songs of the Air Force in Southeast Asia

Joseph F. Tusso spent fifteen years collecting the lyrics for more than a hundred songs written or sung by U.S. Air Force flyers from about 1966 through 1969. These songs reflect the stark emotions and black humors of the Vietnam War. Although many of the songs' authors are unknown, their lyrics, even such jarring lines as those of "Chocolate-covered Napalm," are often set to popular melodies such as "Puff the Magic Dragon":

Puff, the Magic Dragon
(Verses 1, 2, 5, and 6)

Well, Puff, the Magic Dragon
A bird of Cam Ranh Song,
Came to fly the evening sky
In a land called Vietnam.

Puff, the Magic Dragon
Came across the sea,
To write his name in tongues of flame
In the hearts of all VC.

Yes, Puff will still be flyin'
From One Corps down to Four,
Till Charlie's gone and the evening sun
Is like the year before.

But I'll remember always
The ground troops' grateful cry
When fire streamed and Charlie screamed
At the Dragon in the sky!

Singing the Vietnam Blues begins with a personal overture that sets the stage for a play of war-evoked emotions and lines that are less than sacred, more than profane, and often poignant. Some songs, such as the "Phu Cat Alert Pad," are based on historical events, while others have their origins in popular myths, such as "Wolf Pack's House-boy." Whatever the direct source of the songs, it is the daily combat, rescue, or transport missions; the possibility of death; and the fear, bravado, and competition between pilots, navigators, planes, and enemy flyers or "bandits" that generated these lyrics. Many of these songs contain language and subjects that may be offensive to some.

Most of the songs are preceded by Tuso's explanation of each song's origin, other versions, references to current events or "inside jokes," and sometimes personal insights and memories. A glossary is also included.

JOSEPH F. TUSO flew 170 combat missions in Southeast Asia as a weapons systems officer in the F-4D Phantom. He retired from the Air Force in 1976 and is now academic dean and professor of English at New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell.

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**Oliver Stone's Film Adaptation of
Born on the Fourth of July:
Redefining Masculine Heroism**

by Don Kunz

**The Germans are Coming!
British Fiction of a
German Invasion 1871-1913**

by Joseph S. Meisel

The Artist and the Holocaust

by Roger Preston

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