

## SEMPER FIDELIS: How I Met My Father

TOM HUBBARD



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September 21, 1966 – USMC – Republic of Vietnam – KIA  
Until recently, this is how I knew my father. A few scattered facts, flowers on his headstone at the cemetery, and stories told by my mother that I couldn't or wouldn't hear. For over thirty years it was easier not to talk about it, not to confront it, and definitely not to feel it. In 1996, my father's body was disinterred in Indianapolis and he was given a full military funeral at Arlington National Cemetery. Unable to grant his final wish in 1966, my mother was able to do so thirty years later. This event marked an end and a beginning. For my mother and the rest of my family it was "closure", for me it was the beginning of a quest to come to know my father.

*Published on the occasion, **Semper Fidelis: How I Met My Father**,  
an exhibition by Tom Hubbard at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio  
March 28 – May 12, 2012*

Ed Henry  
U.S. Navy Corpsman, Vietnam, 1965-1966  
Consultant to Asian Business Interests

By what authority shall I speak today? As a Vietnam Veteran? A man who's spent most of his adult life traveling in Asia? A gadfly who spends time dabbling in the arts and music? The proud father of a loving son? The difficult choices cross my mind as I lay down the phone after another enlightening conversation with Tom. My life experience is scorched and seared by an incident that happened in Quang Ngai Province in April of 1966. Machine gun fire broke out in the middle of the night as frogs croaked. There was shouting and some laughter and it was all over in a split second. Flashlights revealed two figures crumpled in the middle of a trail leading back to a farmer's thatched hut that we had surrounded earlier that evening. It was obviously the farmer and his teen-aged son. Already their bodies were turning that sickly, yellow, waxy color that became a sign of death for all of us while we were so far away from home. There was blood everywhere. The father nearly had his head gone. Both carried weapons, hand grenades, and enough ammo to confirm that they weren't part of 'friendly forces.' Somebody in the dark, maybe the Gunnery Sergeant or the Lieutenant distinctly said, *"Well, they had no right to be here."* There was something about this particular incident and those words that forever changed me. I wanted it done with. After spending five years away, I wanted to go home.

On September 21, 1966, or just six months later, another father lost his life after his U.S. Marine Corps CAP unit was ambushed and overrun at a village called Kim Lien, just outside the limits of Da Nang. He never got the opportunity to see his son mature into the fine young man he is today, or to see his wonderful grandchildren. Thomas Patrick Kindt, Sergeant, USMC, gave the ultimate sacrifice for a cause that is now questioned ad nauseam by all the arm-chair warriors and historians. Each father, Vietnamese and American, followed the course of their own choosing and destiny played out a cruel fate to both. I have a duty to never forget them. My bond to not forget the Vietnamese farmer is just as strong, as it is to not forget Sergeant Thomas Patrick Kindt. Those who've never served in a war have no understanding of this compact. Those of us who have, keep it close to our hearts as a daily promise.

It's never an easy or casual matter to talk about personal loss. My first encounter with Tom Hubbard occurred on a hot and uneasy day in May, 1999. It was Memorial Day at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. As a veteran it's taken me years to feel any kind of positive emotion about that particular day of the year. But this young man interested me. He introduced himself as an artist from Maine, the son of a Marine, and someone who might be interested in going back to Vietnam. He also told me his father's name was on the Wall. I was struck with silence in the first moments of this encounter. The first fear is that the mention of a name might be a name remembered from serving almost six years in Marine Corps units. What do you say? Are there any words to cover a lifetime of searching for answers that may never be discovered?

< *Palm Shadows (2000)*  
*Kim Lien, Vietnam*

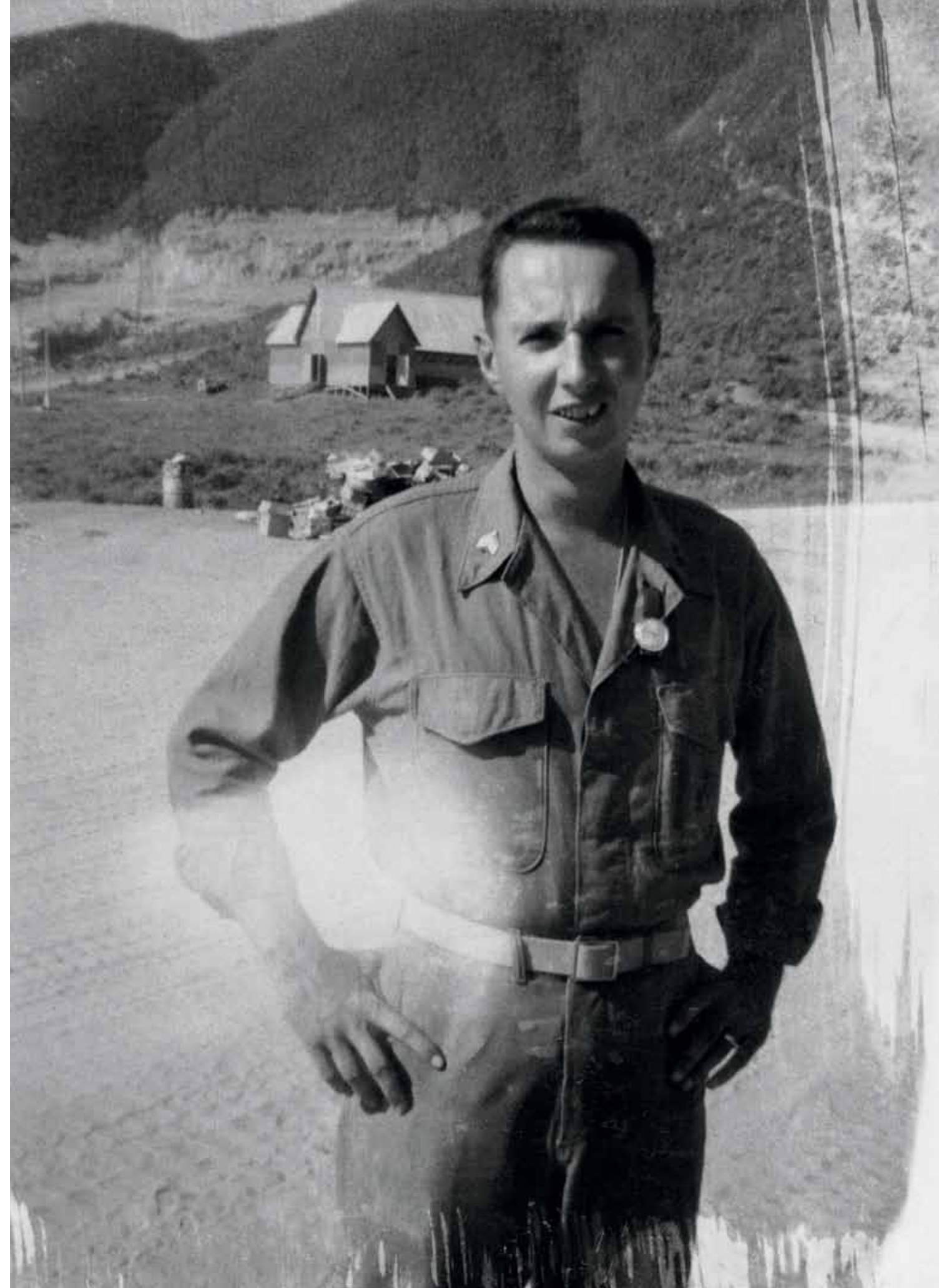
Being a father myself, I had to tread lightly as Tom stood before me. I looked at Tom and that old nagging pain came back – all the friends I had lost during the Vietnam War, all those good Marines and Navy Corpsmen who will never get to know their children or grandchildren. It strikes me deeply that my name could also be up on those black panels. I was one of the lucky ones. There is too, the affinity of knowledge that every son or daughter of a Marine is also your son and daughter by connection of a traditional unspoken bond of Marine Corps blood. No other branch of the military can even begin to fathom the connection.

The Artist always issues us the right and privilege to share in his personal view of the world – unless his work is so obscure and cluttered that his point is lost on us. Each of us remembers that one point in time when a painting or a piece of music stopped us in our tracks. We somehow had to engage our thoughts just a bit deeper. The Romantics called it the moment ‘of the sublime’. Tom Hubbard’s work presents us with the right and privilege to share in his own personal quest to know and honor his father. He knows exactly what he is doing with his presentations. Cylinders of ghostly white potter’s clay become the detritus of war, and a Vietnamese Altar for deceased family members is transformed into a memorial to his father. Tom did make his journey back to Vietnam in 2000 and was able to capture and assimilate the ideas behind the main pieces and thoughts that went into the work you’ll experience.

I was there at the first exhibition of Tom’s work in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I walked through the exhibit with other veterans, young fathers holding the hands of their children, interested visitors to a lovely Museum of Modern Art in an otherwise dull town on a flat, Midwestern landscape. It was the perfect venue for Tom’s work. They came quietly and walked through it with a sense of reverence. There were a lot of pointed questions. Sometimes the answers are hard to swallow. War causes loss, grief, and broken families no matter what side you’re on. The artistic difficulty arises in attempting to make a non-political statement about a time and place and set of circumstances that were totally charged with politics. Leave those thoughts at the entrance of the exhibit.

What a strange odyssey. Few people in this existence are granted the rights and privileges I’ve been handed. Or let me show my age and say that most people don’t know what they have until they lose it. I came home from the war alive and in one piece, forever haunted by those words, “*They had no right to be here.*” Tom and I have shared many deep conversations since that Memorial Day in 1999. Never in my wildest imagination did I envision the methods he would incorporate to tell his father’s story – the finished product – the quest for a father who was never really known except through stories and the memories of others. The starting point is ceramics, raku to be exact, all else flows from that. The conceptual starting point goes much deeper on a human level, and is as old as the story of Telemachus waiting for the return of his father.

> Sgt. Thomas P. Kindt  
Kim Lien, Vietnam, 1966



> HOW TO TELL A WAR STORY

Richard Emery Nickolson  
U.S. Army, Combat Artist Team XI,  
Vietnam, 1970-1971  
Professor Emeritus, Herron School of  
Art & Design, 1973-2010

*“What answers will you find  
What armor will protect you  
when your children ask you*

*Why?”<sup>1</sup>*

During the fall semester of 2000, while preparing for the very first lecture that I gave at the Indianapolis Art Center on the ‘art’ of war, I recruited a couple of senior fine arts majors at our school to help me in shooting slides from several books and magazines. Amongst them was the Time-Life® book on “The Combat Photographer.”<sup>2</sup> Photos of many, many bodies lying next to the sides of roads and villages engulfed in flames. One of my students noted how beautiful the woven baskets and huts in the villages were, they were like art. “But,” he asked me, “Why were they burning these things?” I answered immediately, “Because it was My Lai!” He then asked, “What was that?”

Well, I just had to tell that story! As both a teacher and a veteran, I had to tell that story. Bill Weber, the radio operator for Charlie Company, had been killed by a sniper at My Lai 3. He was too young. Their mascot in a way, he was definitely their voice, their link, to the outside world. His death was one of the many frustrations for this company at the time. Days later at My Lai 5, all hell broke loose. As the years have passed, Bill’s sister Elizabeth Weber has been writing a series of very personal poems not necessarily reconstructing, but recollecting Bill’s life and memory. She writes:

*“I am a girl who stands among sheets  
drying one by one in Kansas daylight.  
They starch to a white beyond the simple roll  
of these hills to dazzle my eyes.  
In sheets like these they wrapped my brother  
who yielded his body in a killing  
called war, as if that made it more right....*

*My father says hell glories on this earth.  
Nothing more. Salvation is what big men talk about  
when they want something, like a church  
or my brother.”<sup>3</sup>*

As one reads these lines, one cannot help but also think of those great Thomas Hart Benton paintings of the “Social History of Indiana” or of John Stuart Curry’s “Baptism in Kansas.” So much of our country is contained here in an ongoing search for an American voice. These are the great iconic images of a local Baptist Church, a rail road yard and depot, clothes drying on the line, rows of corn and plowed fields and rows of soldiers going off to or coming home from war! These do indeed tell the American story.



> Reverence (1999)  
Washington D.C.

The telling of war stories however, is not a recent development, but goes back to ancient times. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* for example, as well as the great sculptures of “Herakles the Archer” and the “Fallen Warrior” from the Temple at Aegina are some of the earliest examples. Continuing into the Renaissance we have Ucello’s “Battle of San Romano” and “The Surrender at Breda” by Velazquez as literally setting the stage for many paintings to come. There is a certain thread, both visual and historical, that links past examples to the present. Jacques Callot’s series of etchings “The Miseries and Misfortunes of War” from 1633 in reaction to the Thirty Years War was one of the major influences on Goya’s series “The Disasters of War” of 1805. Additionally, Goya’s painting “The 3rd of May” set the scene for both “The Execution of Maximillian” by Manet as well as Picasso’s “Massacre in Korea.” Most recently, even the very abstract painting of “Solomon’s Justice” by David Reed stretches and emphasizes opposing sides of a painting (a war) held in check by a slash directly across the center of the canvas.

Today, artists such as Arturo Alonzo Sandoval of Lexington, Kentucky, Michael Aschenbrenner<sup>4</sup> of San Diego, California, and Michael Helbing<sup>5</sup> of Chicago, Illinois have been consistently drawing upon their experiences in Viet Nam in order to tell a story. Parallel to this, writers such as W. D. Earhardt, Yosef Komunyakaa, Elizabeth Weber and Tim O’Brien have also taken up this subject. All of these artists and writers have struggled to incorporate popular imagery, musical rhythms and personal narratives in a variety of ways, into a larger defining statement. After all, finding the American ‘voice’ continues to be one of the most important elements in our national aesthetic.

The question then becomes one of transforming the private and personal into a more public and universal language. In the hands of one artist, Tom Hubbard, a private history has been uncovered and a personal art has been created. In his search to rediscover his father a new road has been taken. Using old photographs and maps, a stack of orders, discharge papers, letters to and from the front, re-discovered in old file folders and shoeboxes he has created a collage of memories.

Hubbard’s series *Semper Fidelis: How I Met My Father* draws upon a variety of sources, encompassing a multitude of media. He has employed the surrealist collage technique of portmanteau, a juxtaposing of ideas and images, side by side, in order to create provocative and compelling images. Youthful and adult portrait photographs, images of both Arlington National Cemetery and remote Vietnamese Cemeteries for example, are incorporated in both drawn and photographic collages as well as onto very minimal ceramic cylinders. What better media than collage and clay? Both tactile. One essentially graphic, the other essentially plastic.

They are fused into a solid form and a very effective statement. While contrasting imagery, memories and feelings, these pieces are also synthesizing the past and present. They form a series of private and personal responses to very public and historical events. Their attention to detail rivets our sense of time and place. These images and memories ring true even across many years and from half way around the world.

Generation after generation, war continues to have an effect and continues to take its toll. Most recently the collections at the Center for Military History in Washington, D.C., the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago, the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia and the Musée de la Guerre in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, have expanded and heightened their efforts and collections. It has taken so many people so many years now to understand and to be able to speak about the Viet Nam War. The families and children of Viet Nam veterans, Elizabeth Weber and Tom Hubbard among them and an entire new generation of artists<sup>6</sup> responding to Iraq and Afghanistan have continued to look at war and to tell their stories. How many wars are going on right now in the world? How many years after these are done will it take in order to complete these stories? In the end, it comes down to this: that if future artists and writers are in search of a subject matter and they should choose war as their story they will unfortunately never be without a source of inspiration.

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1 Ehrhart D.; *Carrying the Darkness: The Poetry of the Vietnam War*; Texas Tech University Press; Lubbock, Texas; 1989; p. 98.

2 Mills, Nick; *Combat Photographer*; Time-Life Inc.; Richmond, Virginia; 1983 & 1999.

3 Weber, Elizabeth; “Kansas, 1920;” *The Burning House*; Charlotte, North Carolina: Main Street Rag; 2005; p. 9.

4 Moore, Julia Muney; *The Art of Combat: Artists and the Vietnam War, Then and Now*; Indianapolis Art Center; Indianapolis, Indiana; 2000.

5 Sinaiko, Eve and Anthony Janson; *Vietnam: Reflexes and Reflections*; The National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum; Chicago, Illinois; 1998.

6 Di Thommaso, Francis; *Testimony to War: Art from the Battlegrounds of Iraq*; Museum at the School of Visual Arts; New York, New York; 2008. Features the work of: Peter Buotte, Aaron Hughes, Steve Mumford, Lucien Read and Ryan Roa.

C. David Thomas

U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers,  
Vietnam, 1969-1970

Professor of Art, Emmanuel College

Director, Indochina Arts Partnership

Fulbright Scholar

Since the American war in Vietnam ended on April 30, 1975, we have studied it from what seems like every possible perspective. Recently one critically important voice has been added, that of the children who lost a parent in that now distant war. Tom Hubbard's personal yet universal search for what was taken away from him on September 21, 1966, at the age of two, when his father was killed in Kim Lien Village, Republic of Vietnam, adds an important voice that has long been absent. We can only imagine how many other sons and daughters of those who died on both sides in Vietnam and all other wars have taken similar journeys. Because of this, the importance of Tom's record of his quest cannot be overstated. Through his considerable skill as an artist he can give voice for those who have been unable to do so until now.

How lucky we are that Marine Sergeant Thomas Patrick Kindt's son, Tom, became an artist. When Tom first asked me to write a short essay for his catalogue I somewhat reluctantly agreed. As a visual artist myself, I often find it impossible to describe my own work, let alone the work of an artist as important and ground breaking as Tom Hubbard.

Like so many children of his generation, Tom buried his feelings about the loss of his father in Vietnam. It was simply too painful to even think about until fifteen years ago. It was not until his father's body was disinterred in Indianapolis and moved to Arlington National Cemetery in October of 1996, that Tom realized that he had to "begin the quest to come to know my father." This is a journey that has taken him around the World to Vietnam and will likely last the rest of his life. His record of this journey is simply put one of the most moving, powerful and important exhibitions I have ever experienced.

Somewhat like Tom's knowledge of his father primarily through photographs and stories, my knowledge of *Semper Fidelis: How I Met My Father* is also only through photographs and other peoples writings. The powerful images which make-up this installation go far beyond Tom's search for his father and touch a much more universal chord. Like Picasso's famous painting of the Spanish Civil War Guernica and Francisco Goya's powerful etchings The Disasters of War depicting the Spanish struggle against Napoleon's troops, we need not know the subject of their works to feel the pain and suffering depicted. The same can be said of Tom's quest.

Rather than give you a long critical analysis of Tom's installation I will let the work largely and much more articulately speak for itself. I will simply say that his combination of words and collage images, photographs on paper and ceramic and an altarpiece which make-up this installation are a masterful accomplishment, one which is unique to Tom's own history as a designer, his talent and vision which I believe will endure the tests of time. His perfect marriage of text and image, paper and clay, and story

and emotions transforms our ability to deny the obvious and forces us to feel his loss and pain. That is why this work will speak to generations not yet born. I especially found his altarpiece a very powerful statement. In nearly every home one enters in Vietnam one is greeted by the family altar honoring those ancestors who have gone on ahead of us. Tom has incorporated this idea by carefully and lovingly placing pictures of his father, flowers, and joss sticks.

This exhibition is even more important today as we struggle to find new ways to fight the war on terrorism and religious extremism. More than ever we need to be reminded over and over that we have to find a better way than war to resolve these conflicts. How easy it seems to be for those in power to send nameless and faceless victims off to die on the battle-fields of Vietnam or Afghanistan. Tom eloquently reminds us that these are real people and places a human face and story on at least one white stone at the Arlington National Cemetery.

It matters not whether you are a conservative or liberal, capitalist or communist, young or old, military or civilian, Muslim or Jew, American or Vietnamese, man or woman, this exhibition has something to offer to you. Through his carefully selected images and words of his father, his son, and himself Tom has created a time and place for all to visit and reflect on the true meaning of war. From the pictures of his father as a Marine Corporal to the juxtaposition of images of cemeteries in Vietnam and Arlington, Tom has forced us to face the reality of war.

Once the guns have been silenced, the battles have ended and the politicians have signed peace treaties the pain and suffering does not end. What remains are the fading photographs and memories of those loved ones who have been forever taken away. It has taken him thirty years, thousands of miles, and many painful experiences but Tom can take great pride and pleasure in knowing that he has made such a powerful tribute to his father's memory and the memories of all who have suffered the loss of a loved one in war. We can only hope that Tom's work may one day be seen by people who have the power to wage war and give them reason to pause.

> *Overleaf: Family Reunion (2000)*  
*Kim Lien, Vietnam*

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*It is only out of my enormous respect and admiration for Tom and the importance of his work that I attempt this essay. Of course we all bring our own personal backgrounds with us to his exhibition. I served for one year (1969-70) in the Army Corps of Engineers in Pleiku, Republic of South Vietnam, and have made over fifty trips back to Vietnam to coordinate educational and cultural exchange programs since 1986. Most of my own artwork is informed by these experiences.*







< *Semper Fidelis, Detail* (2003)

also at long last I am finally eligible for  
Sgt. You have to have at least 19 months  
grade as Cpl. before they consider you an  
now I have an even 20. Time sure has gone  
fast, it seems like only yesterday that I  
joined the Corp. I'm wearing  
a hash mark. I'm a great 4 y  
I'm looking for more to the rest  
There something about it all that really  
makes you tick inside, I think you know what  
I mean. I really feel I at long last have  
found what I have been looking for, not many  
people can see or understand the pride that  
comes with it, but I have always felt you  
have above all.



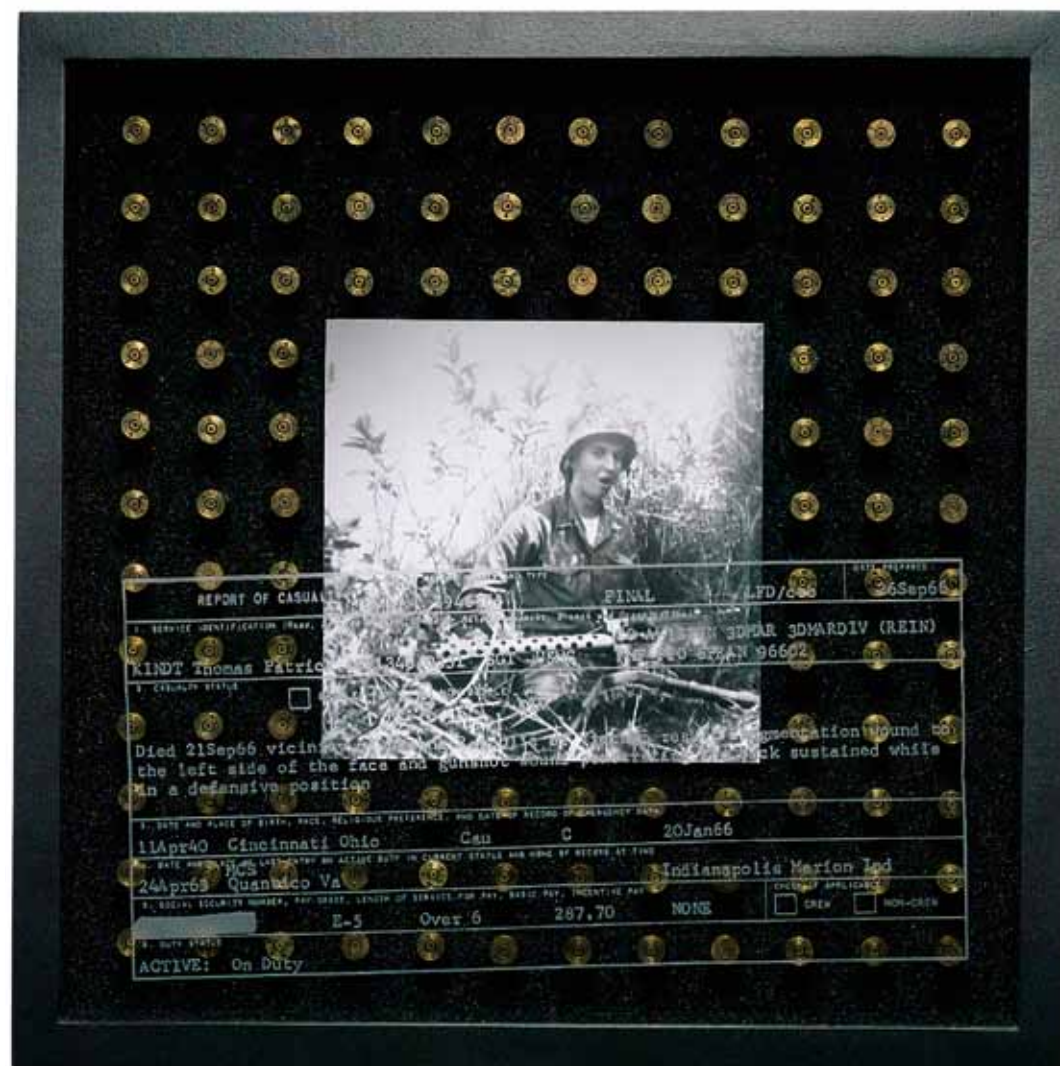
3 APRIL 66



I have a rifle squad here, we spend most  
of our time on patrols and setting up ambushes.  
The weather is hot to say the least and as  
usual it will get worse before it gets any  
better. But each day brings me one closer  
to home and all the reasons all of us are  
here.



< *Lotus, Cam Binh, Vietnam (2000)*



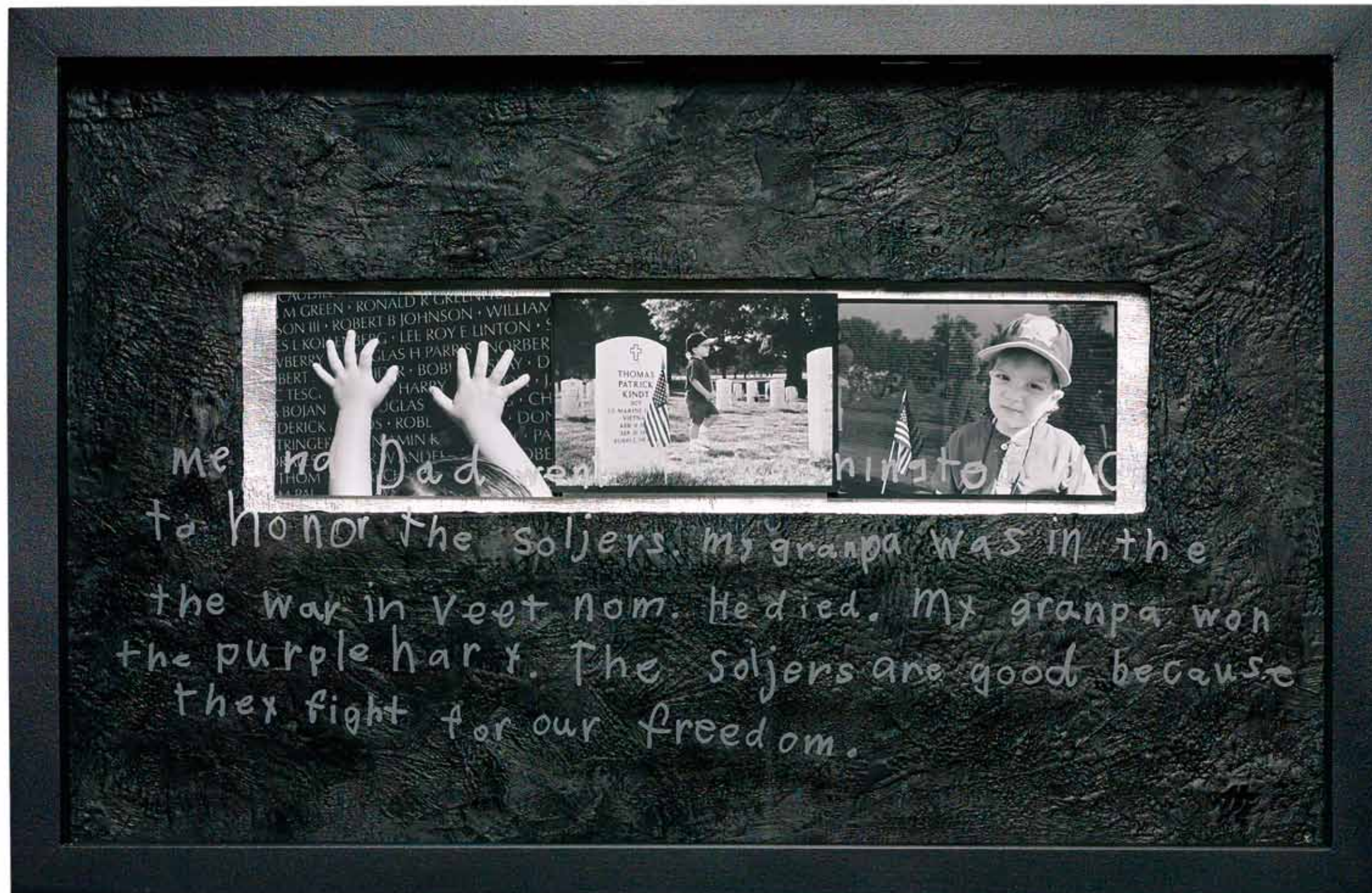


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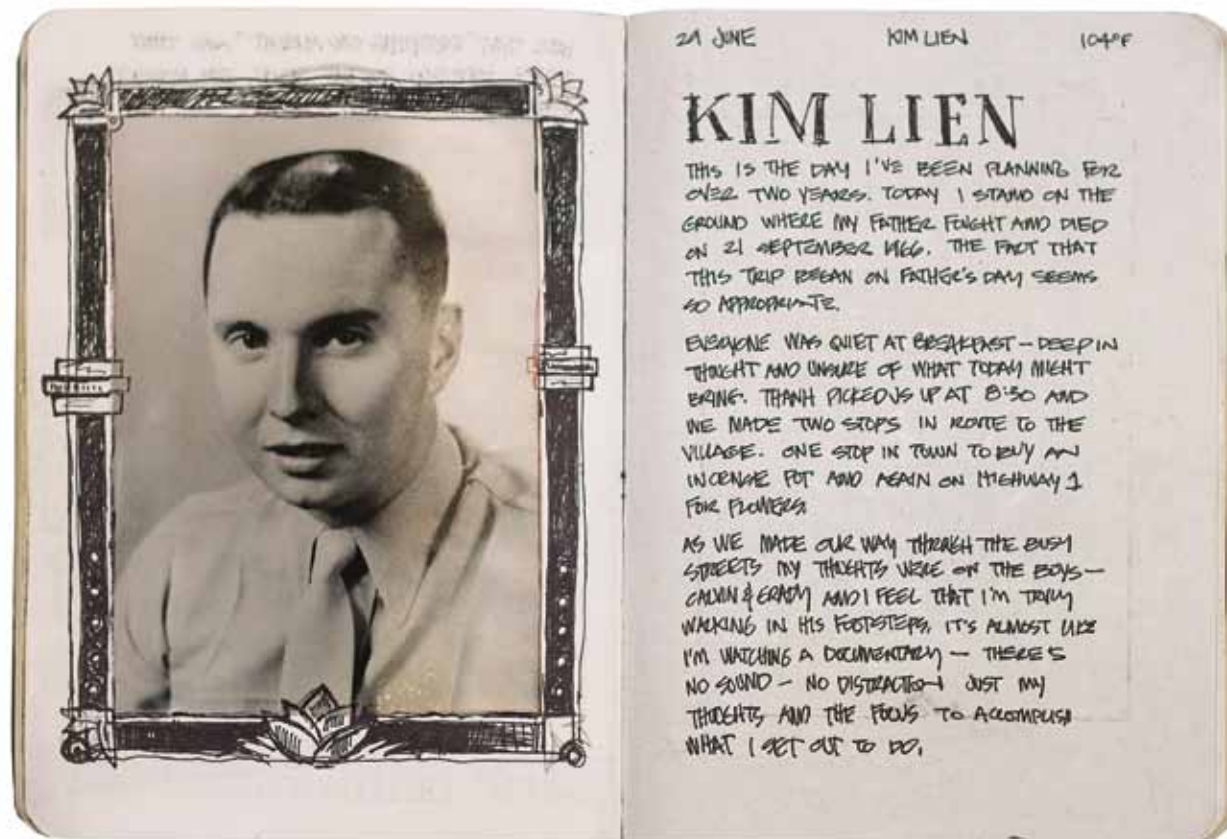




> *Bunkers, Hai Van Pass, Vietnam (2000)*  
*Overleaf: Family Altar (2003)*







**Ruth Crnkovich**

Independent Curator

Former Director, National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum

Tom Hubbard's exhibition, *Semper Fidelis: How I Met My Father*, allows the viewer the opportunity to experience the artist's personal journey to get to know the father he did not remember. Like many children of war who lose a parent, Tom grew up knowing his father only through photos, family member memories, and small mementos. The *Semper Fi* exhibit represents not only one man's personal exploration of loss and love, but touches the hearts of anyone who has experienced either.

Tom said he had time to distance himself from the work and spoke quite candidly with me about the exhibit. He said time had allowed him to be more reflective about his art. Outside of the interview process, we talked about how important his sketch books were to the art making process. He mentioned reading "Art and Fear" by David Bayles and Ted Orland, how he was struck by their observation about how important process is to the artist but not the audience. Tom used the sketchbooks to journal his experiences, collect facts and imagery, sketch ideas and develop concepts. He has since begun including some of the sketchbooks in the exhibit. Tom explained that he visited those sketchbooks in preparation for the interview.

**RC:** Tom, I would like to know more about the development of the *Semper Fi* exhibit from inception to fruition. When you began working on this, was it your intention that it would culminate into an installation exhibition? If no, please describe how it began and evolved.

**TH:** Growing up, I never wanted to know about my father or what happened in Vietnam, it was just too painful. That all changed when I became a father. One night, I was reading my oldest son, Calvin, a bedtime story when I realized that he was the same age I had been when my father was killed. I couldn't tell him about his grandfather, because I didn't know him myself.

Soon after, I started coming across documentaries, news articles and radio programs about the war in Vietnam and I became more curious. A friend of mine told me that "when you're meant to do something, it just keeps hitting you in the head until you get it". I decided not to fight it and just go where it was taking me, my journey had begun. I spent about 18 months researching the war, the country and learning everything I could about my father. By chance, I met Ed Henry, a Vietnam veteran, on the mall in Washington DC who led tours to Vietnam. He and group of Marines accepted me as one of their own simply because my father was a Marine. I still didn't know where all this was going but I knew that to understand things, I had to go to Vietnam. With Ed's help, I was able to make the trip to Vietnam and understand the circumstances and events that led to my father's death.

From the beginning, I was only certain of two things. If I was to understand this, I knew that I had to go to Vietnam and that I would work with it visually. I wasn't sure what it would become... a book, an exhibition or something else. I think we all learn in different ways and I knew that if

I could create something about this experience I could better understand it. I also decided to leave the work unresolved for as long as possible, simply to gather and record. I wanted the work to evolve naturally from the process and not to force any preconceived idea or form on the work.

In the summer of 2000, I spent 5 weeks in Vietnam and with the help of Ed and other veterans, I was able to retrace my fathers tour of duty, visiting the places he fought in DMZ, Danang and the village of Kim Lien where he and three other Marines were killed. I had been worried about finding the exact location of my fathers death. His commanding officer told me that it would all make sense when I got there, and it did. I stood on the beach where my father died and all the information I had from veterans and USMC documents just dove-tailed together. I realized the exact location wasn't that important. What mattered was that I was there allowing myself to feel that pain and loss for the first time.

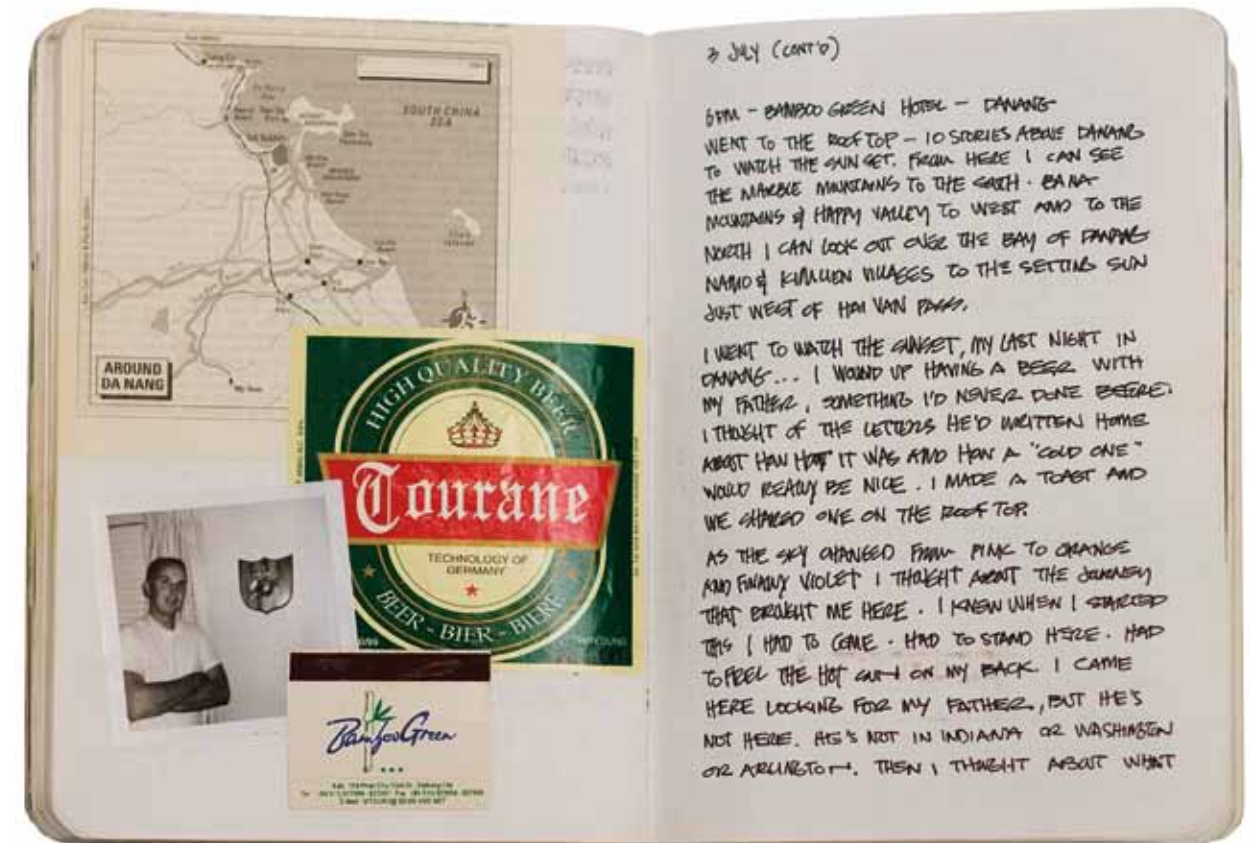
Along the way, I documented my journey in a series of sketchbooks. Recording facts, contacts, images, sketches and most importantly, my emotions. I decided from the outset to record my raw feelings without editing the content or grammar, just to "let it rip". These books became touch-stones and were instrumental in this body of work as they allowed me to revisit specific dates and times and tap into those raw emotions.

After returning from Vietnam, it took some time for everything I had seen, felt and experienced to sink in. Eventually I began to work with it and found that the honesty of my sketchbooks provided not just the content and emotion of the story but the visual vocabulary as well. The colors, textures, imagery and roughly layered compositions all came from the subject. The solution grew from the problem.

**RC: Can you tell us what the public reaction to the work has been? I know that with Bettye Saar's MTI installation piece, the public response was such that the exhibit became a community participatory event where in several viewers felt compelled to leave offerings. Of course the Vietnam Wall in DC also has had a similar impact on the public where individuals leave offerings at the site of the art installation. Have you found that people are reacting in a similar manner with your work? Have you found any offering made at your altar? Please describe the feedback from your public.**

**TH:** The public response to this body of work has been incredible and honestly, a bit unexpected. In the studio, I was so focused on the story, the imagery and the emotions, I never really considered what the viewers response might be. I concentrated on making the work as personal and honest as I could. It's such a personal story and so focused on my family, my father and the war in Vietnam that I was initially worried if there would be much interest beyond my family and the veteran community.

I always learn something new when my work is shown and I'm interested in how people interpret the work. I learned that while this work is specific to my family and the war in Vietnam, the message of loss is universal and something that everyone can relate to. I haven't had any offerings left at the altar but there have been some powerful comments left in the gallery books. One viewer wrote: "I just lost my father, not in the war but, pain is pain and loss is loss." It blew me away. I was also told by a veteran in the gallery that I had not just honored my father, but that I had honored them all. I have been touched by the public's response to this work.



**RC:** *Speaking of your public, who is your intended audience being that the work is so specific to the US Marines and Vietnam? Why? What has surprised you most about the public response to your work? Do you find it difficult to engage the public in stories of war and Vietnam?*

**TH:** I made this work for myself and my family, I didn't really have a specific audience in mind. I knew there would be some interest from the veteran community based on the amount of help and support I received but I didn't really think much beyond that.

The word "Vietnam" elicits such a strong response. Simply telling someone that I was working on a project concerning Vietnam and planned to travel there was an interesting experience. Nearly everyone has some connection to the war be it as a protester, veteran or relative of someone who served. The war is what people think of first when they hear the word. Once you get past that initial reaction, I do think people are interested and curious. I've been fortunate enough to speak on the topic at gallery talks, universities, public schools and national art conferences. I think that because, my approach to the subject is personal and makes no political statement or judgement on the war makes it easier to engage others in a discussion.

**RC:** *The exhibit tells a story in a visual narrative that follows your journey from a grave-site in Indiana to Arlington National Cemetery all the way to Vietnam. Do you think pieces shown separate from one another would communicate each component of your journey as effectively if shown individually? Or do you feel the exhibit should be seen as a whole installation to be fully experienced?*

**TH:** The exhibition was conceived as an installation with the 2D and 3D elements complementing one another and telling the complete narrative. I really thought of the installation as a book. Not just communicating the narrative aspect but also providing a sense of rhythm or cadence to the story, climax and areas of rest for the viewer.

The exhibition is somewhat modular and can be broken up in specific areas but its most powerful in its entirety. Most recently an edited version of the exhibition was displayed at the National Museum of the Marine Corps (2D works without ceramics or altar). I think the show was successful and it very well was received, but it didn't have the same power. My sketch books and preliminary drawings were also included to provide additional content and background information. It was conceived as one piece and works best that way.

**RC:** *Tell us more about the ceramic vessels. How did that idea come to you? How did you decide to do multiple pieces as an installation as opposed to one or two? What do they mean?*

**TH:** I work in a variety of mediums and in the years leading up to this body of work I had done a few series of ceramic vessels incorporating typographic and photographic elements. Influences from my design background I guess. *Semper Fidelis* was a natural evolution in the process but much more ambitious than anything I'd done previously. It is also the first exhibition where I allowed my backgrounds in design, ceramics and photography to come together.

When I was in Vietnam, I was very interested in the funeral spires I saw in the military cemeteries and the Vietnamese traditions/customs of honoring their departed relatives and honoring those lost in the war. Initially the ceramic vessels in the show were inspired by these funerary monuments and were much more architectural and ornate. After making 6 or 8 vessels in this manner I abandoned the idea as they were too fussy, decorative and interfered with the narrative. I began simplifying the forms into something much more pure. I needed a form that could carry the message without interference. It wasn't intentional but they really became abstracted artillery shell casings and another metaphor of the war. Some of the vessels are raku and pit fired which leaves them smoked, crackled and charred as feeling as if they've just been unearthed from the battlefield.

As far as multiple pieces go, I typically work in a series format. It's comfortable and allows me to fully explore an idea and consider it from different points of view. This series of 17 ceramic vessels visually chronicles my journey from Indiana to Arlington to Vietnam. They are the centerpiece of the installation and introduce the three voices used to tell story, that of the US military, my father and myself.

**RC:** *I know the exhibition has been shown at several venues in the Midwest, do you still see the exhibit traveling or will you put it in a permanent location?*

**TH:** I'm very pleased with all the exhibition has accomplished, It's done much more than I imagined. I believe it still has the potential to travel especially given the current events in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Semper Fidelis* looks back at a war that occurred over 30 years ago and its effect on one family but it continues to resonate today. The effects of war are lasting and effect not just those involved but the generations that follow. We need to learn from our past and understand that 30 years from now there will be another generation of children on similar quests to learn about mothers and fathers lost in war.

**RC:** *Looking forward, where do you see your work going as a result of this exhibit and its impact on the art and veteran community? Will you continue in this vein of work or have you moved on?*

**TH:** I learned a lot from this exhibition and I think it continues to influence my work today. I learned to make the work that is important to me and to make it personal. I'm still connected to the veterans that helped me with this work and still keenly interested in Vietnam and the war. I have pursued other subjects since *Semper Fidelis*, but feel I still have some work to do on the subject. In a way it's become a muse. Through my journey I came in contact with other artists who lost fathers in the war and deal with the subject in their work. We exhibited together at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago a few years ago. I always thought it would be interesting to find a group of Vietnamese artists doing similar work and to look at our shared experiences.



1. **Semper Fidelis** (2003)  
Seventeen handbuilt raku and electric fired ceramic vessels. Stamped text and graphics, resist type and photo emulsion transfers. Each vessel approximately 26-28 x 7.5" dia.
2. **Year of the Dragon** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Cotton, thread and gelatin silver prints stitched to hand embroidered quilt. Etched glass in shadowbox. 34.5 x 46.5 x 3.5"  
Artist portrait and sewing: Lisa M. Hubbard  
Embroidery: Dorothy J. Pieper
3. **29 February 1964** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Mineral paper with ink, charcoal, graphite and encaustic on panel. Gelatin silver prints, smaltz and etched glass in shadowbox. 22.5 x 22.5 x 3.5"
4. **3 April 1966** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Mineral paper with ink, graphite, sand and encaustic on panel. Gelatin silver print and etched glass in shadowbox. 22.5 x 22.5 x 3.5"
5. **3 October 1996** (1996)  
Gelatin silver print. 28.5 x 35.5"
6. **KIA** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Gelatin silver print, smaltz, 50 caliber machine gun shells on panel. Etched glass in shadowbox. 28.5 x 28.5 x 3.5"
7. **Posthumous Honors** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Gelatin silver print, mineral paper, charcoal, crayon, silver leaf and relief print on panel. Etched glass in shadowbox. 28.5 x 28.5 x 3.5"
8. **Gifts** (2001)  
Gelatin silver print. 28.5 x 35.5"
9. **Veterans Day** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Encaustic, gelatin silver prints and silver leaf on panel. Etched glass in shadowbox. 22.5 x 34.5 x 3.5"
10. **Nam-O Bridge to Hai Van Pass, Vietnam** (2000)  
Gelatin silver prints. 33 x 64.5"
11. **10E 129 / AT 925855** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Encaustic, gelatin silver prints, mineral paper, graphite, silver leaf and tin on panel. 33 x 45.5"
12. **Guardian Angel** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Encaustic, gelatin silver prints, mineral paper, graphite, silver leaf and tin on panel. 33 x 45.5"
13. **Alpha and Omega** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Encaustic, gelatin silver prints, mineral paper, graphite and tin on panel. 33 x 45.5"
14. **Hallowed Ground** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Encaustic, gelatin silver prints, mineral paper, graphite, silver leaf and tin on panel. 33 x 45.5"
15. **Bunkers, Hai Van Pass, Vietnam** (2000)  
Gelatin silver print. 28.5 x 28.5"
16. **Lotus, Cam Binh, Vietnam** (2000)  
Gelatin silver print. 28.5 x 28.5"
17. **Family Reunion** (2000)  
Gelatin silver print. 28.5 x 35.5"  
Photo credit: Lisa M. Hubbard
18. **29 June 2000** (2003)  
Mixed Media – Mineral paper with ink, graphite, sand and encaustic on panel. Gelatin silver print and etched glass in shadowbox. 22.5 x 22.5 x 3.5"  
Photo credit: Lisa M. Hubbard
19. **Sgt. Thomas P. Kindt, Kim Lien, Vietnam 1966**  
Gelatin silver print. 28 x 22"
20. **Family Altar** (2003)  
Salvaged wood, tin, encaustic, smaltz and silver leaf. Gelatin silver prints with raku fired ceramic vessels. Personal artifacts, lotus flowers and incense. 27.5 x 56 x 22 "

NZIE GLOVER Jr · WARREN L GOULD · GOLLE LEO GRANT · JOHN M HARRINGTON · JAV  
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ONARD F LANE · JOSE MARTINEZ-SOTO · GARY L MILLER · GEORGE W MILLER · JEROME D  
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ARRY LEE LAKEY · FRANCISCO HERNANDEZ · BILLY B KING · NORMAN J NAPIERAT

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> ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



At times, this project directed me as much as I directed it and would not have been possible without the support of so many people. From family and friends to veterans and the energy of countless others. While I cannot possibly thank everyone involved, I am grateful to everyone who had a hand in this work.

To Lisa, my “voice of reason”, for your love, support and the gift of time to pursue this project. I could not have made this journey or this body of work without you.

To Calvin & Grady for teaching me the importance of being a father.

To my mother, Margie, for passing the torch with my father’s burial at Arlington and for making the trip to Vietnam with me. I’m glad we can finally talk about my father.

To my dad, Richard, for understanding my need to make this quest.

To my grandmother, “Granny”, for your support and willingness to learn, embroidering the *Year of the Dragon* blanket and fine art packing.

To Ed Henry, for your guidance, translating military field reports and seeing that I made it to Kim Lien. Semper Fi.

To C. David Thomas and Richard Emery Nickolson for their support and beautifully written essays.

To Charles Shepard III and Sachi Yanari-Rizzo at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art for taking a chance.

**CREDITS:**

*Tod Martens: Installation and copy photography*

*Tonee Harbert: Film processing, contact sheets and work prints*

*Peter Macomber: Polaroid® prints*

*Joe Muir: Gelatin silver prints*

*Lisa M. Hubbard: Family Reunion and 29 June 2000 photographs, artist portrait and sewing of Year of the Dragon*

*Dorothy J. Pieper: Embroidery of Year of the Dragon*

*Calvin K. Hubbard: Photograph of the artist raku firing*

*Tom Hubbard: Design*

*U.S. Army: Vietnam Map 1966, Sheet: 6641 III, Series: L7014*

*J.S. McCarthy Printers: Printing and binding*

< *Overleaf:*  
*3 October 1996 (1996)*