

SPORTS

Longtime Woodhaven volleyball Coach Bruce Burke says farewell.

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LIFE & LEISURE

This Southgate couple weds at Walt Disney World and holds reception at 'Mickey D's.'

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Southgate, Michigan 48195

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Veterans Day, 2007

ENDURING MEMORIES

Vietnam vet returns to country to lend aid, ease soul

BY FRANCESCA
CHILARGI

THE NEWS-HERALD

TRENTON — His blue eyes tell of the sorrow John Craven has carried for decades.

Almost 40 years later, the 61-year-old can vividly recall when his tour with the Army 70th Combat Engineer Battalion's mission in Vietnam ended Nov. 29, 1969.

The mission began in 1965.

"I was one of those soldiers who reacted with every ounce of energy I had as the wheels of our C141 Hercules aircraft left contact with the runway at Cam Ranh Bay," he wrote in a memoir.



Photo courtesy of John Craven

Holding a memorial plaque are John Craven, 61, and his wife, Gail, 60, both of Trenton. They traveled in March to the Reil-Davis campsite, just outside the village of Khanh Duong, Vietnam, to place the plaque where he served during the Vietnam War and where three friends died in 1969.

"We were delighted that our tour was over and that we were going back to 'The World.' That is how we referred to the USA versus the godforsaken place we were leaving behind." Through a childhood friend, Monroe County res-

ident Tom Treece, Craven has been able to weather the memories by aiding the Vietnamese through the Development of Vietnam Endeavors, or DOVE Fund.

Treece, also a Vietnam veteran, made his return trip to the country in 2001 and wrote a book recounting the journey. Craven read his friend's book and concluded that the reunion with Treece was more than coincidence.

The veteran, compelled to aid humanity and right a perceived wrong, joined the non-profit organization in 2006 and sits on the board of trustees.

The organization was founded in 2000 and includes Vietnam veterans, Rotarians and others who raise money to build schools, medical facilities and water-treatment systems in Vietnam.

A majority of the country lives in poverty. The

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