



## THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL FOUNDATION



*Their forefathers fought at  
Bunker's Hill, Gettysburg, Belleau  
Wood, Normandy, Okinawa and Inchon.*

*They were Americans meeting their  
country's call to arms.*

*Some were volunteers. Some were  
draftees. Most had other lives to  
lead.*

*But when duty called, they served.*

Dear Member:

In this, the tenth anniversary year of the last American combat patrol in Vietnam, your Foundation is proud to bring you the opportunity to participate in an epic project in the field of 20th century military history.

We feel privileged to pay tribute to the Americans who served our country in the struggle for the preservation of freedom in Southeast Asia.

Many hundreds of hours - by Vietnam veterans, combat artists, skilled knifemakers, diemakers, military historians, Foundation members and Foundation staff - have gone into this.

As further indication of the importance of this project, we have even received the participation of General William Westmoreland himself, the Commander of all military forces in Vietnam (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam 1964-1968).

It is the first and most important work of this type ever created to pay tribute to those Americans who served and fought in the Vietnam War.

Let me tell you what this project is . . . and what it is not.

It is not a sugarcoated book of poetry or a sociological commentary on our

(over, please. . .)

society of the 1960's. Nor is it a report on political events leading up to our involvement in Southeast Asia.

What this is is a series of lasting, tangible symbols of bravery, courage, and self-sacrifice. Symbols that will live on so future generations will see and know more about our times - and the most important jungle warfare in U.S. military history since our troops re-took Okinawa and the Philippines in 1945.

The military knife has long been a symbol of close combat fighting. As an appropriate counterpart to the ceremonial swords awarded to American military heroes of the 18th and 19th centuries, a presentation military knife was selected for this 20th century tribute.

But this is not just an ordinary military knife. It is the most famous knife of the Vietnam War - especially created for jungle fighting there. It is the Gerber Mark II Combat Knife.

This is the first time that the original makers of this famous knife have ever agreed to issue a limited edition commemorative combat knife. (This is an important point in itself; collectors often find in future years that the "first" usually becomes more valuable.)

Men who know and respect knives - and whose lives depended on them - selected and carried the Gerber Mark II in Vietnam. Men like the Green Berets of the Special Forces. Many men of the U.S. Navy's elite SEAL and UDT units. Many of the tough Marine Long-Range Recon team officers and troops. Even the hand-picked men of the secret "Phoenix" Project (including one of our Foundation members who recently reported to us in no uncertain terms exactly how effective his Mark II was).

Nor is this just one knife. One wouldn't be enough. After all, this was our country's longest war and one that saw two and one half million Americans serve.

No, "The Vietnam Tribute Collection" is a series of four, solid mahogany encased, presentation-grade Gerber Mark II Combat Knives. Each is specially designed to honor the U.S. Army, the U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force.

You may reserve the complete series or select only the knives you want. If you wish the complete matched set - and you would be wise to consider this - you may determine the interval at which you would like to receive each knife in the weeks or months ahead.

\* \* \* \* \*

To make this collection of lasting symbols of valor truly complete and to add special meaning to this project for present and future generations, Foundation Member General William Westmoreland (U.S.A. - Ret.) has written "Vietnam Tribute," now being published by our Foundation, as an important fact of this project.

(continued . . .)

In a recent conversation with the General, I was impressed with the admiration he expressed for the men who served in Vietnam. These feelings and his valuable overviews - unique to him as commander of all military forces in Vietnam - are recorded for posterity in this booklet. It will give you a new sense of appreciation of our accomplishments there. General Westmoreland is a great American, and we are particularly pleased to be able to bring his written observations to you.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now the largely unsung men and women who served - and, in a sense, the noble motivations and the American spirit that caused us to enter the conflict - are being honored through the issuance of this lasting, tangible tribute. In particular, it is a remembrance of the men who didn't come back.

In a very real sense, this project is also a salute to those who served in the military in support roles back home in the States, the Guard and Reserve personnel who stood ready to fight if activated and the Americans of the "Silent Majority." All who supported the cause can take pride in this project and what it stands for.

But one of the most important positive aspects of this project is that it is an international group of patriotic Americans and citizens who live in 27 other countries worldwide - members of our Foundation - stepping forward through this program and saying, as President Reagan has said, "Ours was, in truth, a noble cause."

History - and time - will judge the Americans who served in Southeast Asia to be the heroes of that decade.

They came from all corners of the nation - from our largest cities and our smallest towns. Daily they performed or witnessed acts of heroism, valor and self-sacrifice, enduring untold hardships. They can take pride in their many accomplishments. They did what the leadership of our nation asked them to do, and they did it well.

It was a commendable crusade by a powerful nation to help a small, aspiring country win and hold a free and dignified way of life.

But it was a long war - the longest in our history. And as time wore on, political support lessened for it. It was a war we could have won militarily - but one politicians would choose to withdraw from rather than to win.

\* \* \* \* \*

The knives now available to you are not reproductions or simply stylized display pieces. They are genuine Gerber Mark II Combat Knives, authentic to Vietnam and every bit as battleworthy as the forebears that made them famous.

The Gerber Mark II Combat Knife represents the current state of the art in military-style fighting knives. One of our members in England, Gordon Hughes,

(over, please . . .)

states in his most recent book (Primer of Military Knives - Part Two), "In my opinion it represents the ultimate development of the 'F-S' type knife." I agree.

The original design was based directly on the Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife. In fact, the 1966 proposed design called for a three-piece hilt virtually identical to the F-S. But when the knife was put into production in late 1966, the original design was changed, so the relationship to the F-S became slightly less apparent. I have written, at the recent request of editors of antique arms and military magazines, several extensive articles about the history of the Mark II. These articles will appear in the months ahead.

But unlike any knives made prior to this, this limited edition has been given distinctive embellishments designed with the assistance of American combat veterans of each military service branch who served in Vietnam.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first knife in this series pays tribute to the U.S. Army in Vietnam. The "Armorhide" hilt is painstakingly produced in the four colors of the Vietnam-era, woodland leaf-pattern camouflage developed by the U.S. Army for jungle fighting. This is a "first" in the field of knife collecting.

A gold-plated, fired enamel cloisonne medallion of the U.S. Army insignia forms the focal point of the grip. Here again, this is another first.

The combat scene etched on the mirror-polished steel blade permanently records American troops making an airmobile assault on the enemy - a tactical innovation developed in Vietnam.

Riflemen with their M-16s jump from Huey "Slicks" (so called because initially they had no armament), while in the foreground M-60 machine gunners, riflemen and a radioman move out to secure the hot LZ (landing zone under enemy fire). You can almost hear the "whump-whump-whump" of the choppers' blades overhead, the cracking of M-16 fire, the staccato of the M-60s and, in the background, the thud of mortar fire and the enemy's Russian-made AK-47s.

On the blade shoulder is etched the insignia of the U.S. Army - Vietnam, representative of all Army units that served in Southeast Asia. Or, if you prefer, the unit insignia of your choice can be etched in this position.

As a further distinction, the original Vietnam-era "wasp body" blade shape - no longer produced - will be reintroduced especially for this series. The blade is hardened, tempered, sharpened and honed by hand to a razor's edge; it is so sharp you can actually shave with it.

\* \* \* \* \*

You can also now register, without obligation, to reserve subsequent knives in this series with the same serial number - so you can systematically acquire a complete matched set. These tributes - one to the U.S. Marine Corps, one to the

(continued . . .)



U.S. Navy, and one to the U.S. Air Force - can be shipped to you one at a time in the weeks or months ahead - with no deposit or payment at this time.

Camouflage became the symbol of jungle fighting in Vietnam. So, it is only appropriate that each of your knives will have a different camouflage pattern hilt and gold-plated fired enamel cloisonne medallion, bearing the insignia of the particular service branch honored. And the combat scene deeply etched on the blade - designed with the technical advice of veterans who fought there - will reflect the heroic contributions of each military branch.

To display and preserve each Vietnam Tribute Combat Knife, you will receive a specially designed, furniture-finished solid mahogany case of distinctive military design, with olive drab Certificate of Authenticity recessed and fitted into the inner lid.

But only 2,500 of each knife will be made - one to represent each one thousand Americans of the 2,500,000 who served. The limited edition serial number will be engraved on the reverse of each blade, inscribed on the Certificate of Authenticity, and registered in your name with The American Historical Foundation as further assurance of this strict edition limit.

After the knives are spoken for, the only way to acquire one will be to find an owner who is willing to sell one. It will be difficult to find such an individual - and there is no telling what price you would be forced to pay. So, if you are ever going to acquire one or more knives in this series, now is the time to act.

One knife of each will be presented by the Foundation to the appropriate military museums for each service branch, to remind present and future generations of the sacrifices made by Americans during the 1960s and the early 1970s.

Contributions will also be made by the Foundation to Vietnam veterans associations, to help them to continue to perpetuate the memory of the Americans honored by this Tribute.

As a symbol of this war, each knife is a link in the unbroken chain between our generations of today and prior generations who fought for Old Glory on a home or distant battlefield.

If you or a member of your family served in Vietnam, if you supported the cause, or if you are a patriotic collector, this stirring "Vietnam Tribute Collection" will give you a renewed sense of pride in the Americans who answered the call to duty in the defense of freedom in Southeast Asia.

This project is being unveiled at a time when interest in the Vietnam War and in collecting Vietnam-era militaria has picked up substantially. As you

(over, please. . .)

look around, you can see this in books, movies, art exhibits, newspaper and magazine feature articles and television specials. So "The Vietnam Tribute Collection" will attract considerable attention to your collection, now - and even more so in future years as interest in Vietnam continues to grow.

And, as a person who enjoys collecting fine quality military knives, you will also recognize the historic importance of this issue. As the first commemorative Gerber combat knives ever issued, this series is destined to be highly sought after.

This is available exclusively through The American Historical Foundation, with Members receiving first preference. You may write, call, personally visit or use the reservation form enclosed. If you wish, the balance may be paid over a period of time. Your reservation is placed without risk; full 30 day refund privileges apply.

If you are interested in participating - and I personally hope and recommend that you do - I encourage you to act promptly, while the many special benefits for our Members - including the low original issue price of \$189 - are still available. I can assure you that you will be pleased.

We appreciate your interest, support and participation.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Buerlein  
President

RAB/jdw