2016 DECISIVE BATTLEFIELDS OF VIETNAM TOUR ITINERARY

As at 06 Jul 2015

THE DECISIVE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE VIETNAM WARS TOUR
13 DAYS/12 NIGHTS 23 AUG 2016
LED BY BATTLE of LONG TAN VETERAN
DAVE SABBEN MG

DAY 1
HO CHI MINH CITY (SAIGON) – DA NANG – HOI AN

TUE 23 AUG
EMC 0530; BFAST 0630; BUS 0730

The Decisive Battlefields Tour commences at Tan Son Nhat Airport (Saigon) where we check in at 0800 hrs. Depart from Ho Chi Minh City to Da Nang on Vietnam Airlines VN 112 departing from HCMC at 1000 and arriving Da Nang at 1115. We will be met on arrival and taken for a set menu lunch at Beluga.

After lunch we will take a 10 minute drive to Marble Mountain, where you may wish to do the 260 plus step climb to a cave where the VC had a secret hospital during the war unknown to the Allies. A lift could take you 2/3rds way up for a small fee should you not wish to do the climb. There are dozens of marble factories/shops at the base of Marble Mountain where you can organize to ship purchases home at reasonable prices.

We then visit the Silk Factory Thang Loi Fine Arts Manufacturing Company on the outskirts of Hoi An. Watch the silk worms at work, and perhaps purchase silk goods and artwork to take or send home. A short drive will take us to our hotel in the heart of the beautiful Heritage Listed town of Hoi An for the next two nights. Then free to explore the city before dinner or have a swim. Dinner tonight is a set menu Dinner at 1900 at Viet Town.

ACCOMMODATION: HOI AN HISTORIC HOTEL
10 Tran Hung Dao
Hoi An Town Quang Nam province Vietnam 10000
Phone (84-510) 3861 445
Fax (84-510) 3861 636
In 23 Aug out 25 Aug

Breakfast and set menu lunch and dinner included on 23rd.
DAY 2 HOI AN
WED 24 AUG EMC 0700; BFAST 0800; BUS 0900

Spend time today getting to know Hoi An - a World Heritage Listed town often called the "Living Museum of Vietnam". It is a mixture of Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese and French architecture.
We join a cyclo ride of the old town visiting an old merchant home, the Japanese Bridge, Hoi An market and a local Chinese Pagoda and Assembly Hall. The cyclos will leave us in the old town near Le Loi Street as the afternoon is at leisure. It is a short walk back to the hotel. Excellent shopping for family and friends.

Meet Dave at 1800 in a conference room (byo drinks) for a Powerpoint presentation on Operation Starlite followed by Q & A/discussion, then dinner own arrangements after 1900 hours. Shops close at 2030.

Breakfast included on 24th. Lunch and dinner own arrangements.

DAY 3 CHINA BEACH – RED BEACH II – HAI VAN PASS - HUE
THU 25 AUG EMC 0600; BFAST 0700; BUS 0800;

Please bring your luggage to the foyer. We depart Hoi An and travel to China Beach with its massive new resort developments, then to Red Beach II, where the Marines first landed in 1965.

Then across the spectacular Hai Van Pass (with French fortification ruins), Lang Co, and Phu Bai on Route 1 into Hue, the Imperial Capital of Vietnam, modelled on the Forbidden City in Beijing.

Set menu lunch in Hue at the Tropical Restaurant.

This afternoon we take a relaxing Dragon Boat cruise up the beautiful Perfume River to the Thien Mu Pagoda returning to Hue by coach.

Meet Dave at 1830 in the conference room (byo drinks) for a presentation on Tet 68 followed by a dinner in hotel garden at 1930. (buffet subject to hotel numbers otherwise set menu in garden weather permitting)

ACCOMMODATION:
THE HOTEL SAIGON MORIN
30 Le Loi Street, Hue City
Tel (84-54)3823526 - Fax (84 54)3825155
In 25 Aug out 27 Aug

Breakfast and set menu Lunch; Dinner in garden at 1930 at the hotel included on the 25th.
DAY 4  HUE CITY  
FRI 26 AUG  
EMC 0600; BFAST 0700; BUS 0800

This morning we tour the city south of the Perfume River – especially sites of fighting in the 1968 Tet Offensive, including the infamous Tran Cao Van street.

A short bus ride to the Unesco Listed Citadel, to explore scenes of the fighting North of the Perfume River followed by a set menu lunch at Les Jardins de la Carambole.

After lunch bus to the Forbidden City. You will be left here and the rest of the day is yours until 1830 for more sightseeing by foot or shopping. It’s a short walk across the bridge back to the hotel and the Le Loi Street shops.

Meet Dave in the conference room at 1830 (byo drinks) for a presentation on the DMZ followed by a dinner in the garden at the hotel at 1930.

Breakfast, set menu Lunch at Les Jardins in Hue Citadel & Dinner at 1930 in the hotel garden on the 26th included.

DAY 5  HUE - DMZ - VINH MOC TUNNELS – LAO BAO  
SAT 27 AUG  
EMC 0500; BFAST 0600; BUS 0700

The next two days are “off the beaten track.” Hotel and food are the best we can source. We will check out of the hotel this morning and have the option of leaving our main luggage in one room taking an overnight bag to the DMZ. We bus up Highway 1 to QUANG TRI, DONG HA & the DMZ. Sites to view: Long Hung church, Quang Tri citadel, Cua Viet and the Vinh Moc Tunnels. We’ll have a picnic lunch at the tunnels, then to Peace Bridge over Son Ben Hai (the actual DMZ demarcation line), Gio Linh, Con Thien (pictured) and Cam Lo Bridge.

We will then drive along Route 9 to Camp Carroll, have a photo stop at the RockPile, and drive through to Lao Bao town.

Check into our hotel in Lao Bao town for 1 night. Set menu Dinner at 1900.

Meet Dave in conference room at 2030 for a 1 hr briefing on Khe Sanh (68) & Hamburger Hill (69), followed by Q & A/discussion until 2130.

ACCOMMODATION: DAO HUNG HOTEL (Best available in the area)  
DC-So 10 Nguyen Hue TT. Lao Bao Quang Tri Province Vietnam  
Tel 0533 877 777 - - - Fax 0533 877 251  
in 27 Aug out 28 Aug

Breakfast, Picnic Lunch at Vinh Moc Tunnels & set menu Dinner included 27th.
DAY 6  \[\text{SUN 28 AUG}\]

**LAO BAO – LANGVAI – KHE SANH – A SHAU VALLEY**

( HAMBURGER HILL) – HUE

**EMC 0600; BFAST 0700; BUS 0800**

We check out of hotel this morning bringing luggage with us and bus to the Khe Sanh Combat Base (pictured left) and Museum. We then cross the Da Krong Bridge (pictured below) & head South along the spectacular Da Krong and A Shau Valleys (Ho Chi Minh Trail) to A Luoi, with a photo-stop of “Hamburger Hill” from a distance, weather permitting.

Set Menu or Boxed Lunch en route with a bathroom stop in A Luoi town.

Afternoon: return to Hue on Route 49, built by US Engineers during the war.

Dinner at the hotel in the garden 1900

ACCOMMODATION

**THE HOTEL SAIGON MORIN**

30 Le Loi Street Hue City  Tel (84-54)3823526

In 28 Aug out 29 Aug

Breakfast, set menu or Box Lunch & Dinner at hotel included on 28\(^{th}\).

DAY 7  \[\text{MON 29 AUG}\]

**HUE - HANOI**

**EMC 0600; BFAST 0700; BUS 0800**

Today we check out of the hotel bringing luggage to the foyer and travel to Phu Bai Airport for our flight to Hanoi. VN 1540 departing Hue at 1045 and arriving into Hanoi at 1155am, Vietnam’s Capital, with shaded boulevards and public parks; the Paris of the Orient.

The drive from the airport to the hotel in Hanoi is about 50 minutes. In Hanoi we will be transferred to the Medallion Hotel for three nights.

Please join us for an afternoon walking tour of the Old Quarter of Hanoi.

Meet Dave in the conference room 1830 for a presentation on “Lam Son 11”, the disastrous last ARVN Offensive of the war! Q & A/discussion follows.

Lunch and Dinner today is your own arrangements in Hanoi. Feel like a hamburger and fries? We can help.

ACCOMMODATION: **MEDALLION HOTEL**

11 Ma May Street  Hoan Kiem District
Hanoi, Vietnam 10000  TEL (84-4) 3926 1302

In 29 Aug out 01 Sep  FAX(84-4) 3926 1306

Breakfast Included, Lunch & Dinner own arrangement on the 29\(^{th}\).
DAY 8  
TUE 30 AUG  

HA NOI CITY TOUR  
EMC 0600; BFAST 0700; BUS 0800

This morning we’ll visit the Hoa Lo Prison, (the “Hanoi Hilton” – models of inmates pictured here.) opens at 0800.

Then to the Army Museum which features the tank that breached the Palace gates in Saigon in 1975.

Here, we’ll sit in on a narrated documentary on the Battle of Dien Bien Phu prior to our visit there tomorrow.

The display shows video footage and uses animated light displays on a diorama to show the forces’ positions.

Set Menu Lunch today at Mam restaurant in the old town.

After lunch an optional walk past the Communist Party Headquarters, and view the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum.

A visit to the Water Puppets is optional, or you may like to shop and explore the Old Quarter and its markets.

Meet Dave at 1800 in the conference room (byo drinks) for a discussion on Dien Bien Phu followed by a set menu dinner at Au Lac Restaurant.

Breakfast, set menu Lunch at Mam and set menu Dinner at Au Lac included on the 30th.

DAY 9  
WED 31 AUG  

HANOI FREE DAY  

Shop for home, rest, or try one of Hanoi’s marvellous restaurants. The day is yours.

Breakfast included on 31st Aug, Lunch and dinner own arrangements.
The visit to Dien Bien Phu is subject to local weather conditions and the flights operating. Again it is “off the beaten track,” and the hotel and meals are the best we can source. We have the option to leave our main luggage at the Hanoi hotel overnight of the 1st.

DAY 10
THU 01 SEP

HA NOI - DIEN BIEN PHU
EMC 0600; BFAST 0700; BUS 0800

We check out of the hotel this morning bringing an overnight bag & will be transferred to Hanoi Airport to depart on Vietnam Airlines VN 1702 at 1050 arriving Dien Bien Phu at 1155.

Please note the aircraft is an ATR 72 turbo prop which carries 68 passengers and may code-share with Cambodian/Angkor Wat Airlines. Limited hand luggage in the cabin.

ACCOMMODATION:
MUONG THANH HOTEL
DIEN BIEN PHU
No 514 7/5 Str, Him Lam Ward,
Dien Bien Phu City
Dien Bien Phu Province
Tel 84-2303810043 Fax 84 2303810713
In 01 Sep out 02 Sep

From the airport we will travel 20 klms approx into the mountainous hinterland to visit General Vo Giap’s Bunker from which he ran the battle for Dien Bien Phu in 1954, passing the monument (pictured) to all who contributed to the victory. Round trip is approx 3 hrs. We will have a boxed lunch at the Bunker area.

Meet Dave at 1800 in the conference room (byo drinks) for a discussion on Dich Van (the only battle in Viet Nam that the Allies lost!). Sure to be followed by some discussion.

Then a set menu dinner at the Muong Thanh Hotel.

Breakfast, boxed lunch and set menu Dinner included on the 1st.
DAY 11  
FRI 02 SEP  

DIEN BIEN PHU – HANOI - HA LONG BAY  
EMC 0600; BFAST 0700; BUS 0800  

We check out of the hotel this morning with our luggage and visit some sites which include Vietnam’s largest cast bronze statue celebrating the Viet Minh victory over the French, the Dien Bien Phu Museum and Diorama, the Viet Minh Cemetery, Hill A1 which saw the heaviest fighting, the French Memorial (pictured) and the French Commander Christian de Castres’ Bunker where the French surrendered.

We then transfer to the airport to depart Dien Bien Phu, passing an old Bailey Bridge from the 1950s - still in use (pictured on previous page).

We’re on Vietnam Airlines VN 1703 at 1225 to arrive HANOI at 1325.

We will be met at Hanoi airport by bus, which will have the luggage we left in Hanoi, and travel 3 hours to Ha Long Bay, the “Jewel in the Crown”.

Set menu Lunch at the Chan Thiem May en route but after 2pm. Suggest pack a banana or roll from breakfast.

Our hotel in Ha Long is the Novotel Ha Long Bay for a two night stay.

ACCOMMODATION:  

NOVOTEL HA LONG BAY  
Ha Long Road Bai Chay Ward Ha Long City  
Quang Ninh Province Vietnam - Tel (84-0)33 38 48 108  
In 02 Sep out 04 Sep  

Breakfast and set menu lunch is included on the 2nd.  
Tonight you might enjoy a Western style meal, own arrangements.  
The Novotel has a buffet and a la carte available.  
The battlefields part of the tour is over – time to relax - Evening free
DAY 12
SAT 03 SEP

HA LONG BAY FULL DAY
EMC 0645; BFAST 0745; BUS 0845

Declared a World Heritage Site twice, today we have an 8 hour tour cruising the beautiful islands of Ha Long Bay on a private junk.

We visit the Amazing Hang Sung Sot Cave then the spectacular Thien Cung Cave whilst cruising the emerald sea. Bring your lotions and hats today. Swimming subject to water conditions.

Lunch on board - set menu.

Dinner/Evening – A “Farewell Buffet Dinner” is included at the Novotel.

Breakfast, Set Menu Lunch and Farewell Buffet Dinner included on the 3rd.

DAY 13
SUN 04 SEP

HA LONG BAY - HANOI HOME
EMC 0500; BUS 0600;

Today we check out of the hotel with bags and depart Ha Long Bay at 0600 for Hanoi Airport by bus, to arrive at 1000 for our journey home or onward flights. We have a boxed breakfast in the bus. New speed restrictions means a longer travel time.

If you have done the full tour and/or we have arranged airfares for you then you will likely be on Singapore airlines SQ175 at 1240 hours to Singapore with connections thereafter, to arrive back in Australia on Monday 05 Sep.

Details of flights to all capital cities will be advised on booking.
Breakfast included on the 4th on the bus.

As the Vietnamese say - CAM ON (Thank You!)
2016 DECISIVE BATTLEFIELDS TOUR COST:

$3,198 AUD per person based on twin share accommodation. Prices based on 2015 rates by providers & rates of exchange on day of itinerary preparation & are subject to change and/or currency fluctuation for 2016.

Single supplement – $699 AUD

A deposit of $500 AUD per person (non-refundable) is required within seven days of booking confirmation. Balance (final payment) will be due on 17 May 2016.

TOUR INCLUSIONS:

1. Accommodation including current local taxes as specified in the itinerary, or similar: single, twin or double sharing.
   - Hoi An THE HOI AN HISTORIC HOTEL – 4 STAR HOTEL Deluxe Rooms
   - Hue city: SAIGON MORIN HOTEL – 4 STAR HOTEL. Colonial Deluxe Rooms (& 1 room o/n 27 Aug for luggage)
   - Lao Bao town: DAO HUNG HOTEL 3 STAR HOTEL – Superior/Deluxe Rooms
   - Hanoi: MEDALLION HOTEL – 4 STAR HOTEL. Deluxe rooms
   - Ha Long: NOVOTEL HOTEL – 4 STAR HOTEL. Superior Bay view rooms

2. Meals on tour:
   - Buffet Breakfast daily except Boxed Breakfast on day 13.
   - Set Menu lunch on days 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11
   - Picnic lunch at Vinh Moc tunnels on day 5
   - Boxed lunch on day 10 DBP at Giap’s Hut (plus perhaps day 6 HCM trail)
   - 1 set menu lunch on board on day 12
   - Set menu dinner on days 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10
   - 1 farewell buffet dinner on day 12 at the Novotel Hotel restaurant.
   - Please note meals in the DMZ area can be of lesser variety than elsewhere in Vietnam.

3. Transportation and transfers in exclusive air-conditioned vehicle/s as specified in itinerary with DVD or video machine and a microphone in each. Bus has port in screen to permit PC presentations.

4. Sightseeing tours and excursions as specified in itinerary

5. Entrance fees to sightseeing venues

6. Services of local English speaking guides

7. Prepaid group gratuities

8. Private Conference Room, plus screen and projector – day 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10


10. 3 bottles of mineral water and wipes per person per day on the bus.

11. Internal Vietnam Airlines airfares and taxes on flights below or similar in economy class.
   - SAIGON – DA NANG VN 112 at 1000/1115 on Tue 23 Aug 2016
   - HUE – HANOI: VN 1540 at 1045/1155 on Mon 29 Aug 2016
   - HANOI – DIEN BIEN PHU: VN 1702 at 1050/1155 on Thu 01 Sep 2016
   - DIEN BIEN PHU – HANOI: VN 1703 at 1225/1325 on Fri 02 Sep 2016

The internal Vietnam airfares and taxes included as above are subject to change on the day of ticketing, due to airfare increase and depending on the rate of exchange & any new taxes introduced.
The tour rates quoted are based on 2015 rates by providers and exchange rates as at the date of itinerary preparation.
National Network Travel reserves the right to amend the tour cost should there be a change by providers and/or a fluctuation in the currency for 2016.
The tour cost is subject to achieving 15 passengers. The cost may vary if numbers not achieved.
It is also subject to sufficient numbers for the South Tour to operate.
NOT INCLUDED:
If you are ONLY doing the Decisive Battlefields Tour of the North, International Airfares and taxes and fuel levies from Australia are not included. We do have a special group airfare for this – please contact us for details
* Personal expenses such as laundry, mini bar, telephone; meals (own arrangements).
* Travel Insurance which is mandatory. National Network will be happy to assist.
* Passport & Visa Fees. A Vietnam visa is required on Australian passports.
  National Network Travel can assist.
* Optional touring not listed in itinerary
* Excess baggage.
* Any services not specifically mentioned.

Some mild hardships exist, climbing in and out of boats, tunnels, caves, steps to caves, rough tracks, weather conditions. All achievable for a moderately fit person.

To enable your mobile phone, you may need to purchase a SIM card from a local service provider. Global Roaming can be very expensive. We can obtain local SIM cards in Vietnam, or talk with your service provider.

MEALS: All set menus will include at least 1 rice, 1 vegetable, 1 beef and 1 chicken dish plus other dishes which could include pork, duck or seafood. Each group/table of four will receive one of every dish. Drinks at meals will be your own expense, very affordable in Vietnam.

BOOKINGS: Please read the Tour Terms and Conditions and complete the booking form which can be found on the NNT website or can be sent to you on request, and return to Judi at National Network Travel with a non-refundable deposit. We do reserve the right to amend the itinerary and cost due to unforeseen circumstances and local conditions. Every effort will be made to operate the tour as shown.

Contact Judi at National Network Travel
to make a booking or for further details.

Telephone: (03) 9654 4000   Fax: (03) 9654 7333
Email: judi@nntravel.com.au
Website: http:www.nntravel.com.au

This Decisive Battlefield Tour North is one of outstanding scenery and contrast, with ancient cities (Hoi An, Hue and Hanoi), beautiful scenic drives (the Hai Van Pass and Ho Chi Minh Trail), lush crop filled fields, green, cool mountain regions (Dien Bien Phu), and the natural wonder of Ha Long Bay. The hotels are each thoughtfully chosen by us, and the food is excellent quality and plentiful in a wide selection of restaurants and venues. Everyone who has been on the tour is pleasantly surprised at the high standard of hotels and the quality, quantity and variety of the food. It is excellent value for money. Yes it is a battlefield tour, but it is done in comfort. You do need to be moderately fit to take full advantage of the itinerary. This tour may be taken on its own commencing HCMC 23 August 2016 or in Da Nang or Hoi An. It is subject to sufficient numbers for the South tour to operate.

All photos in these itineraries were taken by guests on our previous Tours.
If your copy is in B&W, you can download colour versions from the NNT or LONGTANTREK websites.
While on the web, check out the “Tour Reports” for our previous Tours – 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013:
Go to www.longtantrek.com and select one of the “REPORT” options.