

Letter from the Invalid Nguyen VB

In gratitude to Ms Quach Thu Thuy from Tinh Thuong Foundation

My name is Nguyen VB (nick name Hung), army number XX/YYYYY, level B2, Battalion BB, Syndicate SS, ABC Branch. I became injured on 21/6/1974 at Thach Han, Quang Tri province. The severity is 85% of the whole body, my legs were amputated up to the knees. Currently, I am renting a house at a suburb, in a city in Southern Viet Nam.

Previously, I received \$100 Australian in donation and I sent a letter to express my gratitude but it was returned because I used the wrong address. Now, I am writing this letter to thank all of you for helping us through our current demise. My wounds still hurt very badly and the doctors said that I still need to take medications for one more year to ease the pain.

During the past years, our family has had lots of hardship and miseries. We did not have a home, so we had to rely on each other for survival. My children did not have the opportunity to go to school. And when they apply for jobs at government departments, they were rejected because my father and I were ex soldiers with the South Vietnamese government. We are both invalids without legs.

In June 1974, I was admitted to the army hospital NTP in Hue after I became injured. In September 1974, I was transferred to the army hospital Phan Thanh Gian in Can Tho to continue my treatment until my case was examined by the medical board. This did not happen as the result of 30/4/1975 event. The new government did not allow me to stay in the hospital so I had to get my crutches and left the hospital with the unhealed wounds. I came to live with my father who is also an invalid ex soldier, his name is NVP. At the time my father was living in a commissioned house in the Invalid's village in Vinh Long set up by the South Vietnamese government. I stayed there for a short time until the new government evacuated all of the Invalids out off their homes. This was terrifying for us. Both of us fought for the freedom of our country. And now we did not have a house to live. We were kicked out into the streets and had nowhere to go. We then had to seek refuge at the mercy of our acquaintances, and moved from one place to another. We did not have stable dwellings so our wounds reoccur. My father was overcome by grief and became ill. He soon passed away. I went into a church and begged to have my father buried there. After the funeral, I had to leave him there with his grave untended, and with an aching heart, but I had no other choice.

Finally, our family had to return to my wife's village in a southern city, to find some where to stay. We could not stay there for long. Soon after my wife's grand-mother died, her aunts asked us to leave. They said: "Your husband is an ex soldier for the old government, go some where else to live, don't stay here". We then had to move again to a southern city and rent a house there. It is not easy for us when we don't have enough money to pay rent, the land lord always scorn and threaten to throw us out into the streets.

To the honourable Miss Thuy and many other Vietnamese Australians, during the last number of years, myself and other VNCH invalids have to struggle for survival with our

unhealed wounds without any assistance. We have to tend for ourselves in the most difficult situation. Now thanks to many benefactors and the golden hearts from the Tinh Thuong foundation we have some money to afford medication for easing the pain of our wounds. And this source of donation has also helped us to pay for our rent. There are no words that can describe our happiness and deep appreciation for the Vietnamese who live many thousand miles away but still think of the invalids back in our home land. All of you have given us much consolation, love and hope in life.

We sincerely wish the founder of Tinh Thuong Foundation and the fellow Vietnamese people in Australia lots of luck and happiness. We hope that our kind benefactors will still think of us, the invalids like me, in the many months to come.

NVB (aka Hung).

(Dear letter, please arrive quickly as we are anxiously awaiting for a reply)

(Translator: Cac Than)