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H98-1325. Fetters, Dave (1944- ). Papers, 1969-2016. 1.00 linear ft.

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**H98-1325.** Fetters, Dave (1944- ).  
Papers, 1969-2016. 1.00 linear ft.



### Abstract

Graduate of Holland High School and local Holland Vietnam Conflict veteran. Served with the U.S. Army Fifth Special Forces (Green Berets), Third Corps, as a 1st Lt., 1967-1969. Collection includes twenty-one hours of experiences and impressions of the conflict made over a five month period in 1969, while serving in Tay Ninh Province and at Bien Hoa Airbase (recorded on fifteen audio cassette tapes); transcript of a 1991 oral history interview with Fetters by Allyn Abel concerning experiences while serving near the Cambodian border, near Tay Ninh, and while at Bien Hoa Airbase; two reels of 8mm film footage (dubbed to two VHS cassettes 2/2000) also of his experiences; photocopied pages from the scrapbooks depicting his experiences; and the book *I Was a Soldier Once...: 1st Lt David Fetters, US Army Special Forces, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), A-323, Thien Ngon, Republic of South Vietnam, 1969*, 2016 (digital).

Accession No: H98-1325  
Provenance: Dave Fetters  
Donor: Dave Fetters  
Processed by: Allyson Boggess, December 1999

### Biography

A graduate of Holland High School and Holland, Michigan native, Dave Fetters excelled in basic training and advanced infantry training after being drafted in December, 1966, when he was 22 years of age. Fetters was given the opportunity to attend officers candidate school where the United States Fifth Special Forces (Green Berets), Third Corps, picked him for his hard work and high rank in his class. After the appropriate training, Fetters became a First Lieutenant and was sent to Vietnam and served there from 1967-1969.

### Scope and Content

A total of twenty-one hours of first-hand experiences, daily observations, frustrations, and emotions have been transcribed from fifteen audio cassette tapes that were recorded by Dave Fetters in Vietnam over a five month period in 1969. The audio cassette tapes consist of narration by Fetters of the day's events and his thoughts about those events and about the current state of the Vietnam War in general. At points during Fetters' narration, sounds specific to his experience during the Vietnam War like test gunfire (called a "mad minute" where all of the weapons in the camp are fired for a solid minute straight), a Vietnamese conversation between two of the cooks in camp, and snippets of Vietnamese music off of the radio are highlights to the tapes themselves, but due to their nature could not be transcribed adequately to fully portray the moment.

Local ties to Holland and Fetters' down-to-earth personality are what make the impression left by this collection so long-lasting. Moments of hope are marked by the relation of

a day's worth of work well done, of simple pleasures had with friends Wes and Ron in the service, and of an operation that went smoothly without conflict or casualty. In a more formal setting, a transcript of a 1991 oral history interview with Dave Fetters, conducted by Allyn Abel, concerning experiences while serving near the Cambodian border, near Tay Ninh, and while at Bien Hoa Airbase. This interview gives Fetters, at 46 years of age, a chance to look back and reflect on his life as a twenty-something living and serving during the Vietnam War. The collection also includes the book *I Was a Soldier Once...: 1st Lt David Fetters, US Army Special Forces, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), A-323, Thien Ngon, Republic of South Vietnam, 1969*, 2016 (digital).

Container List

Box 1

Audiotape transcriptions, 1969 (15 folders)

Box 2

Audiotapes, 1969 (22 hours) (15 items)

Book

*I Was a Soldier Once...: 1st Lt David Fetters, US Army Special Forces, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), A-323, Thien Ngon, Republic of South Vietnam, 1969*, 2016 (digital)

Compact Disc (CD) (2/2000 dubbed videotape cassettes)

Films (two reels of 8mm)

Scrapbook pages (photocopied pages from the original scrapbooks depicting his experiences)

Transcript of oral history interview by Allyn Abel, 1991 (original and corrected) (2 folders)

Video cassettes (2 dubbed from the 8mm films in 2/2000)