

## Famie travels to Vietnam on mission as part of film project

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Keith Famie's new documentary film, "Our Vietnam Generation," will feature the voices and images of Michigan's Vietnam veterans, and this week, Famie is traveling to Vietnam on a mission as part of the project.

Famie, of Novi, hopes the film will cause people to reflect on that war and give Vietnam veterans the appreciation for their service and respect that he believes they deserve. He also hopes that Vietnam veterans' response to the film will be to hold their heads higher than they have in the past. The film serves as a thank you and welcome home.

"It's time that our Vietnam veterans have an opportunity to feel proud for the service that they gave," Famie said. "Many of them ended up in a war by way of the draft, not by way of choice. They did the best that they could in unbelievable circumstances and performed amazing heroic acts together in a place that was not favored by a large sector of society, for obvious reasons. To this day, they still harbor ill feelings about that time in their lives."

In the film, Famie pays tribute to all veterans, including his big brother, Randy Famie, a resident of Waterford Township who served on the aircraft carrier USS Ranger from 1963-67.



Photo courtesy of Keith Famie and Visionist Entertainment Productions This is Marine Jennifer Spooner in Baghdad, June 2005. The Spooners will accompany Keith Famie on a trip to Vietnam Feb. 26 to revisit the Au Shau Valley for the documentary Our Vietnam Generation

This new documentary will include a 10-day trip — Friday through March 7 — to Hanoi, Vietnam. Famie will travel with former Marines Mark Spooner and his daughter, Jennifer Spooner. Mark, 62, of Harrison Township, served in Vietnam from 1967-68 and Jennifer served in Iraq in 2005.

Famie created a humanitarian mission for the trip, to deliver a book from children in Southeast Michigan to children in Hanoi.

Forty children who have Cancer at Children's Hospital of Detroit will contribute pictures, stories and letters to the book to be given to the children at Van Canh Friendship Village in Hanoi. Famie said the children in Hanoi are still affected by the lingering effects of Agent Orange, a defoliant used by U.S. forces four decades ago.

Vietnam veterans will help assemble the book at Children's Hospital of Detroit on Wednesday morning.

Operation Exchange of Hearts will be a kids-to-kids exchange of messages from the children at Detroit's hospital to the children in Hanoi.

"It's bridging the two societies culturally through kids," Famie said.

The Spooners will act as ambassadors, taking the book to Hanoi and returning with a book from the children in Hanoi for the children in Detroit.

The trip will allow them to explore the length and breadth of Vietnam, from Hanoi to Hue (pronounced "way"), and visit most of the key sites of Spooner's tour of duty.

"It will be interesting, but I'll be going in areas where I lost friends, so I'll probably feel bad," Mark Spooner said. "On the other hand, it will be kind of nice to see what has happened after we left."

Jennifer Spooner said she feels "honored to be part of this living history."

"I think it's going to be fascinating actually walking through that history with my father — things that we only learned in textbooks and saw pictures of," she said. "It will be a great opportunity for my dad to say 'This is actually what happened.'"

Famie will appear on a live radio show at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 3 on WJR-AM (760) with Paul W. Smith from Hue, which was a significant battle zone during the Vietnam war.

"When I filmed 'Detroit: Our Greatest Generation,' every time I turned a corner, there was a Vietnam vet," Famie said. "They served as caregivers for the World War II generation and guardians for the current military as they come home."

Famie is interviewing Vietnam veterans around the state to share their stories in the film. Included in the film will be a two-day Huey helicopter event along the Detroit River

featuring a veteran photo shoot on Belle Isle, a motorcycle rally to Lansing and one to Washington, D.C., with Rolling Thunder on Memorial Day weekend as veterans converge on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, and a visit to The Moving Wall in Benton Harbor.

There will be a special media celebration premiere for the Vietnam veterans in December, followed by the television premiere on WDIV-Channel 4 on Christmas Day.

Famie said he wanted to thank Bob Gillette and Terry Desmond, whose support made it possible to get the film started. Famie hopes to find many sponsors to help bring the film to completion.

## **FYI**

For more information on being a part of "Our Vietnam Generation," as a sponsor or to share your story, contact Keith Famie at (248) 869-0096 or e-mail [famie@famie.com](mailto:famie@famie.com) and visit [www.ourvietnamgeneration.com](http://www.ourvietnamgeneration.com).