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NEW BOOK OPENS AN UNPRECEDENTED WINDOW ON THE VIETNAM WAR

Wilmington, Del., Sept. 16, 2008 – When American troops in Vietnam answered the call to correspond with a young reporter four decades ago, they could not have envisioned the enduring relevancy of their war letters or the legacy their words, photographs and memorabilia would leave to succeeding generations.

A new book, *Vietnam Mailbag, Voices From the War: 1968-1972* captures their hopes, fears, joy and tears through the nearly 900 letters Delaware servicemen and women wrote to Nancy E. Lynch for Nancy's Vietnam Mailbag column published for five years by *The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal*. Most of their letters or excerpts are reproduced in this full-color, 460-page book to be released November 2008 on Veterans Day.

The book is a social history of the long war fought 40 years ago, 12,000 miles away from U.S. shores – still relevant and controversial today. It is based on the largest

body of primary source material known to exist in this era and dedicated to the hundreds of thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who made tremendous sacrifices to serve. Of more than 500,000 U.S. troops engaged, 58,193 lost their lives.

“Though their letters were directed to Delaware, we soon realized their words clearly resonated far beyond the boundaries of this small state,” Lynch, the author, says. “Delawareans indeed spoke for all Americans through their letters and gave those of us at home an unprecedented window on the war.”

The first column appeared in May 1968. As letters started to pour in, Nancy’s Vietnam Mailbag grew in popularity. Servicemen exchanged ideas and gripes, vented frustrations, while some related rewarding experiences working with Vietnamese children and communities in off hours. “Whatever they wished to correspond, I encouraged them ‘to tell it like it is,’ ” says Lynch. The column grew from one to three times a week, and their letters are a dominant element of the book.

The second part of the book is a series of contemporary interviews with veterans about their experiences and perspectives, how the war shaped their lives and what they are doing today.

After working for *The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal* for nearly 10 years, Lynch, a University of Delaware graduate, launched a freelance writing career. She contributed numerous articles to regional publications and, working with photographer Kevin Fleming, produced six books on contemporary Delaware. With the publication of *Vietnam Mailbag, Voices From the War: 1968-1972*, Lynch, who lives in historic Bethel, Delaware, fulfills a decades-long desire to “properly salute my guys.”

The book's foreword is written by Delaware's U.S. Sen. Thomas R. Carper, a Navy flight officer who served five years in Southeast Asia. Endorsements include those from Andrew Carroll, editor of *The New York Times* bestsellers *War Letters* and *Behind the Lines* and founder of the Legacy Project; retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas G. McInerney, who served four tours in Vietnam, and is currently a Fox News senior military analyst, and Tom Daws, president of Delaware's Chapter 83, Vietnam Veterans of America, who served with the Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1968-1970.

The book will be released on Veterans Day, November 11, 2008, and may be pre-ordered at www.VietnamMailbag.com. After publication, the book will be available in bookstores, as well as the book's Web Site.

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(NOTE TO EDITOR: For more information, go to www.VietnamMailbag.com. To download images from the book, go to www.VietnamMailbag.com/media.)

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