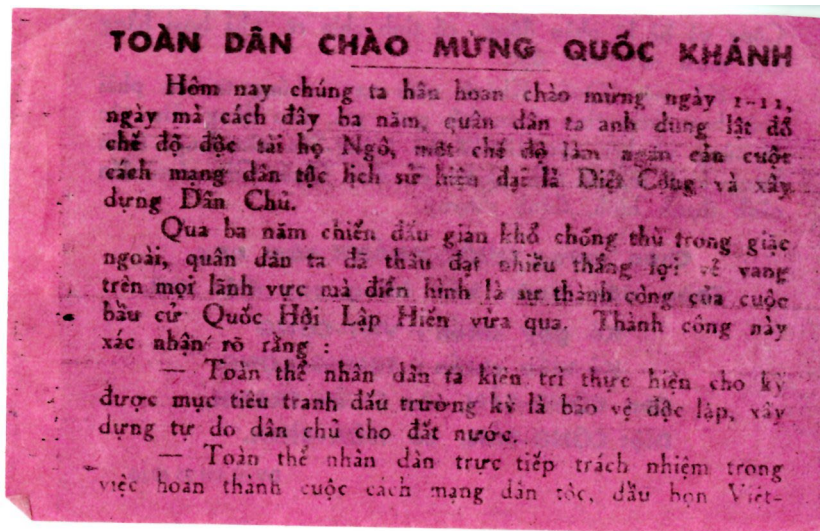


Guide to MS-302:

Benjamin Cooper Fairchild: Chaplain in Vietnam



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library  
Special Collections and College Archives

Hillary Le, Class of 2026, Robert '44 and Esther Kenyon Fortenbaugh '46 Interns

Spring 2023

## MS-302: Fairchild, Benjamin Cooper: Chaplain in Vietnam

Processed by Hillary Le, Class of 2016, Fortenbaugh Intern  
Spring 2023

### Size

1 box, .33 cubic feet

### Dates

Inclusive: 1966-1970

Bulk: 1966-1967

### Provenance

Purchase

### Biographical Note

Benjamin Cooper Fairchild (June 21, 1926 - October 19, 2010) was an Assistant Command Chaplain in the Navy active towards the end of World War II and during the Vietnam War. In 1966 and 1967, he came to Vietnam as a Presbyterian minister. His main duty was to host and guide important figures from the Navy when they came to visit Saigon. He was responsible for introducing them to Vietnamese culture and lifestyles, as well as military activities happening in Vietnam in 1966-67. To him, Vietnam is one of the episodes of his life that he wanted to forget the most. Despite having been through World War II, where he had served in the South Pacific and the Far East, Fairchild claimed that the Vietnam War was different from any pattern he had observed in the past, it created a sense of discomfort and unfamiliarity. Chaplain Fairchild believed that he and others were sent to Vietnam to help his the Vietnamese to gentrify their nation, bringing Vietnam to prosperity.

## Scope and Content Note

This collection contains Benjamin C. Fairchild's personal possessions, including letters, maps, work-related manuscripts, images, cut-out newspaper articles, drafts of *Farewell Vietnam*, and a copy of the book he wrote over the course of time he spent in Vietnam. All of these documents speak for the Chaplain's experience in Vietnam, of the life he had, of the relationships around him, and his character. While in Vietnam, he had been sending copies of all his correspondents back to his wife in the U.S. He thought they might be fascinating, as he described it to be "sort of touch and go." The letters reflect the best of his life during the years he served in Vietnam. There were thank you notes sent back and forth from the "distinguished guests" to chaplain Fairchild for his host during their Vietnam visit in 1966 and 1967. He often interacted with different positions in the Navy during his service time in Vietnam.

One letter was from Fairchild to his wife, dated several weeks after his arrival in Vietnam. In this letter, he wrote about what events happened prior to his assignment at the office, who was involved, and how he felt about it. Though the situation was not in his expectation, he did not feel irritated. If any, he thought the whole story worthy of discussion, which he did with his wife via letters.

All the handwritten and typed drafts for *Farewell Vietnam* and post-war lectures, which were based on his past notes during his service, contained not only Fairchild's experience and lessons about Vietnam's cultures, lifestyles, and religions but also his advice for those coming to Vietnam. These are highly valuable sources to further understand Fairchild's thinking and his stories of wartime. However, he seemed to have experienced cognitive dissonance in his viewpoints on the Vietnam War, and passed on these thoughts to whoever would read his book. The newspaper articles, coming from English publishers, were extracted and collected with intention. There are also two maps of Vietnam, and four pictures, two of which were probably taken in Vietnam. In addition, the collection also had addendums, reports, and documents of his chaplaincy work, which further unveiled his work life during his service time in the Vietnam War.

## Series Description

This collection has six series, arranged chronologically by subject.

### Box List

#### Box 1

##### Series 1: Correspondent

###### 1-1 1966 letters

- 14 September 1966, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to his wife Jaye Fairchild
- 11 August 1966, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Chief of Naval Personnel James W. Kelly
- 23 August 1966, Chief of Chaplain Robert M. Schwyhart to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from Washington D.C
- 29 August 1966, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Chief of Chaplain Robert M. Schwyhart
- 29 August 1966, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Captain Joseph J. Tubbs
- 2 September 1966, Captain Joseph J. Tubbs to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild

- 8 September 1966, Captain Joseph J. Tubbs to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild
- 12 September 1966, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Captain Joseph J. Tubbs
- 14 September 1966, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to his wife Jaye Fairchild
- 14 December 1966, "Mrs. Don Pratt" to Jaye Fairchild

1-2 1967 letters

- 13 February 1967, Dr. Reuben K. Youngdahl to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 3 March 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Dr. Reuben K. Youngdahl
- 23 March 1967, Mrs. William H. Clark to Mrs. Benjamin Fairchild, from Oceanside, California
- 3 April 1967, Dr. George Coulter to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from Kansas City, Missouri
- 7 April 1967, Dr. Edwin H. Tuller to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from Valley Forge, Pennsylvania
- 14 April 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Dr. Edwin H. Tuller
- 15 April 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Dr. George Coulter
- 4 May 1967, Dr. J. Oscar Lee to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from New York, New York
- 10 May 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Dr. J. Oscar Lee
- 10 May 1967, Raymond C. Hohenstein to Chaplain Harold O. Prudell, from Washington D.C
- 13 May 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to the Commanding Officer A. W. Ayers
- 15 May 1967, Raymond C. Hohenstein to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from Washington D.C
- 17 May 1967, Commanding Officer A. W. Ayers to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from Imperial Beach, California
- 5 June 1967, Chief of Naval Personnel James W. Kelly to Commander, U.S. MACV, from Washington D.C
- 6 June 1967, President Robert G. Rayburn to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from St. Louis, Missouri
- 19 June 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Commanding Officer A. W. Ayers
- 14 July 1967, E. Vaughan Lyons to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild
- 14 July 1967, Dr. Calvin Thielman to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from Montreat, North Carolina
- 18 July 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Dr. Calvin Thielman
- 24 July 1967, Secretary Howard Watson to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild, from Spokane, Washington
- 29 July 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Secretary Howard Watson
- 8 August 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Chaplain Robert Heath
- 15 October 1967, Benjamin Cooper Fairchild to Chief of Naval Personnel James W. Kelly, via Imperial Beach, California
- [undated], "Father" to his "child"

## Series 2: Maps

### 2-1 Maps

- *Vietnam Conflict Map*, including the Economic Map of Southeast Asia, the Vietnam Map and The Neighboring Countries
- *The San Diego Union's Map of Southern Vietnam*

## Series 3: News Clipping

### 3-1 1966 and 1970 News Clippings

- [unknown date], [unknown publisher], "Viet 'Armchair Experts' Rapped" (2 copies)
- [unknown date], [unknown publisher], "Viet Evolution Seen as Need"
- 1 September 1966, *The Saigon Post*, entire page 3&4
- [unknown date], [unknown publisher], "N. Viet 'Shadow General' Back in Hideout"
- [unknown date], [unknown publisher], "69 civilians killed by VC"
- [unknown date], *The Saigon Post*, "Application Of Terror By Viet Cong Exposed"
- 18 October 1970, *Evening Report – Current News*

### 3-2 1967 News Clippings

- 27 March 1967, *Los Angeles Times*, "Brooke's Stand on War Wins Johnson Praise"
- 11 May 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "Now We Really Know --- III" by Joseph Alsop
- 11 May 1967, *The Saigon Post*, "Application Of Terror By Viet Cong Exposed"
- 24 May 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "87% voters cast ballots in IV corps"
- 25 May 1967, *S&S Vietnam Bureau*, "40 Limited Wars Styed Limited" by Bruce Bissat
- 30 May 1967, *S&S Vietnam Bureau*, "N. Viets Lost Sanctuary – Gen. Walt"
- 30 May 1967, *S&S Vietnam Bureau*, "Tape Is Giveaway Of Hanoi Treachery"
- 30 May 1967, *S&S Vietnam Bureau*, "VC, 14, Is Guide To Booby Traps"
- 14 June 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "US officer shot dead in Cholon"
- 14 June 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "475 VC cadres rally in week"
- 15 June 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "400 houses for resettlement center"
- 15 June 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "US officer's killers nabbed"
- 15 June 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "77% of voters cast ballots in hamlet election"
- 16 June 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "4,476 hamlets hold elections during 1<sup>st</sup> phase"
- 16 June 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "City Electric power to be doubled"
- 28 June 1967, *MACV Observer*, "Chief Malaria Combatant Had Big Job in Vietnam"
- July 1967, *Mail Call/ Viet Nam Newsletter*
- (probably) July 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "More Troops For Vietnam" by Joseph Alsop
- 8 July 1967, *The Saigon Post*, "Why Are We Fighting In South Viet Nam?"
- 8 July 1967, *The Saigon Post*, "Thai Police Force To Be Increased"
- 17 July 1967, *Saigon Daily News*, "Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker's speech"
- 25 November 1967, *Commanders Digest*, "Gen. Westmoreland Gives Vietnam Progress Report"

## Series 4

### 4-1 Black and white pictures

- A picture of Fairchild with people at a Chaplain Camp in Vietnam
- 21 September 1966, a picture of Radm. Richardson with Bishop Kennedy
- A picture of two warships on the sea
- A picture of a warship on the sea

## Series 5: Work Duties

### 5-1 Chaplaincy Work

- 20 June – 2 July 1966 schedule for the visit of the Reverend Calvin Thielman
- 14 September 1966, 19-25 September 1966 schedule for the visit of Bishop Harry S. Kennedy
- 18 September 1966, Announcement to all active duty chaplains from Harry C. Wood
- 24-25 December 1966 schedule for the visit of Dr. Billy Graham and Farty (2 copies)
- 1966-1967 List of distinguished visitors – MACV
- 1967 Presbyterian Confessions
- 27 April 1967, Bupers Order from B. J. Semmes, JR. to Benjamin Cooper Fairchild
- 26 September 1970, 28-29 September 1970 Presidential Visit's Executive Memorandum and schedule details
- 29 September 1970 Presidential visit schedule
- [unidentified] Notes (probably) from Benjamin Cooper Fairchild
- Observations of USAID from one of the senior staff members
- U.S Navy Responsibilities

## Series 6:

### 6-1 Drafts to *Farewell Saigon*

- The final, bounded draft of *Farewell Saigon*
- Previous drafts of the book, including chapters which were not included in the final draft

### 6-2 Other writings

- Either Fairchild's own writing or his collections of other writers
- 21 June – 3 July 1967, The Visit Of The Rev. Calvin Thielman
- Between The Bookends: A Continental Golden Jet And A Pink Braniff (3 copies)
- Notes From Retrospect
- Illustrations
- Vietnam-3
- Viet Nam – A Government Of The People
- Viet Nam - 1966/1967

- Excerpts From Letters For Back Cover

### 6-3 Addendum

- Distinguished Visitors – MACV, August 1966 to August 1967 (3 copies)
- (more detailed) Distinguished Visitors – MACV, August 1966 to August 1967 (3 copies)

### Series 7: Propaganda Leaflet

- Toàn Dân Chào Mừng Quốc Khánh (Nation-wide celebration of the Independence Day), See English Translation below.

### Sources

Social Security Administration; Washington D.C., USA; *Social Security Death Index, Master File*

Navy Department Library - Naval History and Heritage Command; Washington, DC; *Navy Register: Officers of the U.S. Naval Reserve; Year: 1963 (v.1)*

National Archives at St. Louis; St. Louis, Missouri; *WWII Draft Registration Cards for California, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947*; Record Group: *Records of the Selective Service System, 147*; Box: 546

Navy Department Library - Naval History and Heritage Command; Washington, DC; *Navy Register: Officers of the U.S. Navy and Marine; Year: 1962 (v.1)*

FAIRCHILD, Benjamin Cooper. *[Archive]: Chaplain in Vietnam*; Between the Covers Rare Books, Inc.

### Related Collections

MS-044: Stephen H. Warner Southeast Asia Photograph Collection

MS-051: The Letters of Richard A. Moore to his Wife During the Vietnam War

MS-221: Cpt. Robert L. Morris '66 Papers

MS-222: Lt. John M. Colestock '65 Papers

MS-234: Richard Buchter '54 Papers

MS-235: LTC Richard F. Pendleton '63 Papers

### Contact Information

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## **Toàn Dân Chào Mừng Quốc Khánh Translation**

### **Nation-wide celebration of the Independence Day**

Today we jubilantly celebrate November 1st, the day that three years ago, our army and people have bravely overthrown the dictated system of the Ngo, who has stopped a modern historical national revolutionary of Vanquishing the Viet Cong and building Socialism.

After three years of arduous fighting against inside enemies and outside invaders (thù trong giặc ngoài), our army and people has claimed many glorious victories on all fields, in particular is the success of the past election of the Conventional Congress (Quốc Hội Lập Hiến). This success has further confirmed that:

- All of our people had persistently worked towards the ultimate goal of protecting our independence, build socialist freedom for the nation.
- All of our people were directly responsible for completing a cultural revolution, even when the Viet Cong and the reactionary intended to split us up, ruined us with all kinds of toxic strategies.

On this Independence Day anniversary for this year, we need to further develop our national unity and harmony to put more effort into vanquishing the Viet Cong enemies' invasion, boost/flourish our economics, upgrade our society to swiftly bring the Nation to peace and prosperity.

**To celebrate this year National Day,  
All people unite to vanquish the enemies,  
The warmonger: Việt-Cộng  
The belligerent: Trung-Cộng (Chinese-Communist)  
Communism exists, War exists  
Demolish Communism, win Peace**