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For Immediate Release

Museum Acquires Mysterious Painting

It can be described as eerie, haunting, or surreal, but however one interprets it, the painting donated to The National Vietnam War Museum last month certainly qualifies as mysterious. The painting was donated by Mac Shafer, of Shafer Oil and Gas Properties in Mineral Wells, in remembrance of his parents Marilyn and Arthur Jack Shafer. His parents both worked for Southern Airways, the civilian contractor that trained helicopter pilots at Fort Wolters during the Vietnam era. Shafer said, "I did it in honor of my parents and for the men and women who served our country during that time."

Shafer acquired the painting, "The Night Has Eyes," in an art swap with Ace Cook who had purchased it at an estate sale more than twelve years ago. The seller told Cook that the painting came from a relative of the artist, who is known only as R. W. from the initials scribed on the bottom right corner of the artwork.

Rumors surrounding the work suggest that the artist was a veteran confined in a mental institution who transferred his recurring nightmares to canvas. The painting is also alleged to have hung in the hospital where the unknown R.W. was a patient.

The 45 by 70 inch oil is executed primarily in red and black and framed in black providing an overall tone of darkness. The soldiers pictured are obviously North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, and easily recognizable as such to any who served in Vietnam. The eyes bring to mind to all Vietnam veterans the feeling that the enemy was constantly watching them during the long dark nights.

Jim Messinger, museum treasurer, accepted the painting on behalf of the museum and agreed with Shafer that the painting was surreal and surrounded by mystery. "I found it overpowering when I first saw it," said Messinger. "It's a rather fantastic piece of artwork and it will be an asset to the museum."

If anyone has information as to the identity of the artist we encourage them to contact The National Vietnam War Museum at P. O. Box 146, Mineral Wells, TX 76068, or on line at www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org.



Figure 1 - The Night Has Eyes - Artist Unknown