

Vietnam vet who found Cu Chi tunnels dies

by UPI

ALEXANDRIA, Va. -- The U.S. Army officer whose battalion discovered the infamous Cu Chi tunnels during the Vietnam War has died at his home in Virginia at the age of 83. U.S. Army Col. Robert Haldane was in charge of a joint U.S.-Australian operation in January 1966 when they discovered a camouflaged tunnel entrance near a rubber plantation 25 miles northwest of Saigon, The Washington Post reported Monday. Haldane and his 8,000-man force had come under fire as soon as they landed in the area but said they were mystified when the enemy soldiers seemed to vanish into thin air, the Post report said. After searching for three days they found evidence that the area was holding a regiment-sized force but saw only a few Viet Cong, the Post said. It wasn't until one of his men sat on a nail, that they discovered a trap door that led to a tunnel where 30 Viet Cong were hiding. In all, there were 125 miles of tunnels that today are a major tourist attraction. Haldane retired from the Army in 1982 after serving in a number of posts including chief of staff for the European Command.

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