The Case of Peter Dewey: A Revisit
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Life and Death
(1916-1945)

Son of Charles S. Dewey, U.S. Representative from Illinois (1941-1945)

Educated in Switzerland, Yale, and University of Virginia

Was a journalist for Chicago Daily News in Paris before enlisting in 1940

Exceptional military career:
  + Polish Military Ambulance Corps
  + Liaison officer between Free French and Latin America
    + 42-43: 8 intelligence missions after joining U.S. Army
_ Joined OSS in 1943: Mission Etoile, Southern France 1944: valuable intelligence and helped to capture 400 Nazis, destroyed 3 tanks
)_ Decorations: various incl Croix de Guerre and Legion of Merit.
_July 1945: appointed leader of Operation EMBANKMENT to Saigon.
_Arrived at Saigon on September 4, killed 22 days later on September 26
Peter Dewey in Saigon

Mission: “investigation of war crimes, prisoners of war, and the condition of (U.S.) properties...the collection of such documents and published materials...”:
not a full disclosure of the team real aims.

Had close interaction with the Vietnamese, including Viet Minh leaders in South Vietnam: Trần Văn Giàu, and Phạm Ngọc Thạch

Planned for Thạch (Foreign Minister) to go to the U.S. appealing directly to President Truman
- Moved the OSS HQ from the center of Saigon to the outskirt: better observation of Vietnamese political “atmosphere”
- Clashed with the British and French: tension grew high esp after September 23
- Ordered to leave Saigon on September 26 1945
- Killed when passed a roadblock 500 yards away from OSS HQ, close to the Airport
The “myth” surrounding the death of Peter Dewey

- The body has never been recovered despite much effort
- Who killed?: top Viet Minh leaders denied involvement, even blame the French, sent out letters of apology, and called for investigation
- At the height of the Vietnam War: Peter Dewey turned into an “American advisor” and his death became a “victory”
Peter Dewey and the understandings of the Vietnam Wars

_“Cochinchina is burning, the French and British are finished here, and we ought to clear out of Southeast Asia”: seen as an unheard warning to U.S. involvement in Vietnam_

_Access to his dispatches would provide greater knowledge on his ideas regarding the future role of the U.S. in Viet Nam: another possible answer to the question Why Vietnam? Why did a French sympathizer switch to anti-French and pro-Viet Minh?_

_The 1st and 2nd Vietnam Wars: failure due to misunderstanding? May help to prevent further cases?

_What was the real mission of Dewey’s team?_
Urgent need for writing a history of Peter Dewey’s team in Saigon; Vietnamese version and effort to “clear” his name in Viet Nam historiography

History from below and micro history?

+ Voice of the unheard: postwar-early Cold War transitional generation: OSS men and women

+ American ideologies as reflected in Pete Dewey

+ Multi voices from U.S. military
SKETCH MAP showing position and routes leading to position where Lt. Col. OBRIEN, USA, met his death.