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% Associated Press  
Rue Pasteur 158 d/3  
Saigon, Viet Nam

SAIGON--Maj. Anne M. Doering has returned to her homeland of Viet Nam after a 38-year furlough.

Arriving on March 30, the 54-year-old major is the only WACA to be stationed in Viet Nam along with 5,000 ~~servicemen~~ U. S. servicemen.

"I was almost a present to the command on April Fool's Day," she laughed. She works in the Intelligence Division.

She and two U. S. Army nurses are the only American military females in this small country of conflict.

<sup>MAJ.</sup> Major Doering, who has "been close" to many other South Pacific battlefields, was born in Haiphong, an important seaport now in the Communist-controlled half of Viet Nam.

"I've come home," Major Doering explained. "I'll be here for 15 months-- I hope. I don't want to go back before that. For me, it's a great honor and opportunity to be here."

Her French father died when she was young. He is buried in Hanoi, the capital of North Viet Nam. Her German-born mother married in Saigon an American accountant for an oil company.

A 15-year-old teenager, she left Saigon in 1924 for Europe and Texas, where she completed high school and graduated from college. Her Stateside home is Georgetown, Tex., a small town of 5,000 only 26 miles north of Austin.

"I had a hard time at first in the States," she explained. "I was trying to learn English." Today, she is studying Vietnamese, her native language, ~~for~~ three nights a week, "but I'm not doing at all well."

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She said U. S. servicemen ask her how she learned to speak French so well. "I just tell them we have good French-speaking schools in Texas. It gets too involved to tell them where I was born.

"When I came <sup>E</sup>back to Saigon, the whole place made me homesick," she said.

She looked in the shops along Tu-Do Street, where American servicemen sit along the bars and sidewalk cafes or do the twist to booming bands. It was called Rue Catinat 38 years ago.

"I went to the old French church near the Presidential Palace that I used to attend," she said. "Now it's Episcopalian."

She went to the Circle Sportif, where she used to play ~~tennis~~ tennis with her ~~other~~ teen-age companions. Today it is the most elite of Saigon's vanishing social clubs where bikini-clad maidens parade around the swimming ~~pool~~ pool that has been added in the past 38 years.

She visited one of the two houses her family used to live in. "There's a high fence around one of them now and I couldn't see much looking through the gate," she said. She's waiting to get access to a jeep to find the second house.

She noticed that the large central market had more people now "and they've ~~stuck~~ stuck skyscrapers up all around.

"We lived as part of the colony then," she explained. "We had a pleasant and lazy life with all kinds of servants. We used to take the launch up the river into the interior. Now it's very serious here. I haven't been out of the city yet."

Saigon is a "very quiet, peaceful place" compared to her other 15 years of military service, which were as hectic as those of any soldier.

She joined the WAC in March, 1943, only 10 months after the Corps was founded. The following year she was among 600 of the first WAC's to land in Australia. New Guinea, Leyete and Manila were next on her itinerary. She was one of the first group of WAC's to enter Tokyo ~~xxx~~ only a few months after the Japanese surrendered.

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"I wasn't in any fighting," she said, "but I was awfully close to it. When we moved into Manila, they were still <sup>shooting</sup> fighting ten miles out of the city."

After the war, she tasted civilian life, working for four years as a secretary and studying for her Master's degree.

In 1950, she again put on her lime-green seer-sucker uniform to activate the WAC detachment at Ft. Hood, Tex. A tour of France and an assignment at the WAC training center, Ft. McClellan, Ala., was followed by a five-year term with the U. S. Army Strategic Intelligence School in Washington, D. C.

"I don't know why I was selected to come here," she said. "I've tried to find out myself."

How does it feel to be one WAC among 5,000 servicemen?

"I've always been a woman among many men," she said. "I don't consider myself an oddity here, but I guess I am."

Why did she join the WAC's in the first place, she was asked.

"Well, don't put this down," she laughed. "I did it out of gratitude for my country. It showed me people with imagination, joie de vivre (joy of life), and and an interest in their fellow man. That's my impression of America."

She said she was interested in the reactions of other Americans to Saigon.

"They expect it to be like the United States, and there's no other country in the world like it," she said. "That's its charm."

"I'm more like the people here," she explained. "Wait and it will come to you. I've taken up their ways."

But then she should have. She was born here.