
Old Saigon Hand: Edward Lansdale

United States Air Force officer, 1947-63; political adviser, South Vietnam, 1954-56; special assistant to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, 1965-68. Born Detroit, Feb. 6, 1908 . . . studied at University of California, Los Angeles . . . in late nineteen-forties, was adviser to President Ramon Magsaysay of Philippines . . . helped put down Communist-led Huk-balahap rebellion there . . . developed basic concept that Communist revolution best opposed by democratic revolution . . . went to South Vietnam, as Central Intelligence Agency operative, 1954 . . . helped establish Ngo Dinh Diem regime . . . believed to be model for "Colonel Hillandale" in the novel "The Ugly American" and for "Pyle" in "The Quiet American" . . . urged creation of Vietnam counterinsurgency force instead of conventional army . . . reassigned to Pentagon, 1956 . . . reportedly helped develop Special Forces . . . retired 1963 with rank of major general . . . returned Saigon, 1965, as special assistant for pacification under Mr. Lodge . . . his known activities included supervising "rural reconstruction" . . . serving as liaison between embassy and Vietnamese . . . well known but mysterious . . . described as irreplaceable . . . reticent about his own role . . . returned United States 1968 . . . in private life, still does magazine writing on Vietnam and counterinsurgency . . . lives in Alexandria, Va.