



Impact Statement

Kiley Hagagi, Grade 9

Lt. Col. Tran Ngoc Hue, 2026

Acrylic on canvas board, 18 x 14 inches

Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts, Buffalo, NY

Unsung Hero: Lt. Col. Tran Ngoc Hue

This is Lt. Col. Tran Ngoc Hue, also known as Harry Hue. Harry experienced a tough life. One of the many things that left deep scars on him mentally was the fact he was born during the Second World War. He was born on January 4th, 1942. This later possibly was one of the many reasons that he was influenced to become the soldier he is known as today.

The day he became a hero. It was January 31st, 1968 and Hue had been woken up to the sounds of loud explosions. Just then, he rushed his family (his wife, parents, and daughter) to shelter. He knew what he had to do, fight for not just his home, but his family. He became an officer in the army unit "Black Panther" during the Tet Offensive. He saved many lives with his bravery. I find his courage and selflessness truly inspirational.

Tran Ngoc Hue contributed such a positive impact on the lives of others through attempting to save the lives of his home including his family and strangers. He gave many people another chance at life. Starting this painting, I had the image of Tran Ngoc Hue in my head standing strong (to symbolize his strength and leadership) with the Vietnam flag flowing behind him (representing his home and his motivation). My next few steps were sketching the idea and laying down the basic shapes and colors of the background and foreground.

For my art piece, I chose to use paint because paint throughout history has been utilized to tell stories that words simply could not illustrate. Painting has a raw and timeless power to it that I believe should be cherished. From the cave paintings that depicted early civilizations' struggles, to the impressive works of the medieval and Renaissance artists who raised their brushes like flags as a way to express their heroism, suffering and faith; to nowadays where paint is a way anyone could express themselves, but what stays consistent throughout the centuries is storytelling.

Tran Ngoc Hue's story will influence me to act in the moment with bravery. When people see my artwork, I want them to be able to feel the emotion through the piece and be able to visualize what was happening during this period. For most of us, his name might mean nothing, but for a handful of brave souls, hearing it is a symbol of hope. Like a call to salvation. It echoed through the corridors of war and rekindled the flame of hope in the most courageous and desperate. Tran Ngoc Hue is a selfless Vietnamese soldier who dedicated his life to protect his country. Despite his commendable values, Mr. Tran, also known as Harry, experienced a tough life where he had to fight many battles and overcome challenges over the course of his life.