**Vocabulary Assignment**

**“Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong”**

**Directions:** Each of the passages below come from pp. 85-90 of *The Things They Carried*. Each passage contains one or more words in **bold** print, with three synonyms or definitions coming after it in parentheses. For each bolded word, choose the BEST definition for the *way the word is used there*, and CIRCLE it. This assignment will be part of the notes you may use during tests and quizzes.

Ex. It wasn’t a question of **deceit** *(dishonesty / strength / disloyalty).*

1. Vietnam was full of strange stories, some improbable, some well beyond that, but the stories that will last forever are those that swirl back and forth across the border between trivia and **bedlam** *(dreams /chaos/ solid)*, the mad and the **mundane** *(real / ordinary / solid).*

2. Among the men in Alpha Company, Rat had a reputation for **exaggeration** *(overstatement/ bragging / imagination)* and overstatement, a **compulsion** *(self-imposed duty / forgetfulness / prejudice against)* to **rev up** (exaggerate / speed up / underplay) the facts, and for most of us it was normal procedure to **discount** *(lower the price of / ignore / figure out)* sixty or seventy percent of anything he had to say.

3. For Rat Kiley, I think, facts were formed by **sensation** *(excitement / feeling / payment)*, not the other way around, and when you listened to one of his stories, you’d find yourself performing rapid calculations in your head, subtracting **superlative**s *(insult / exaggeration / highest praise)* , figuring the square root of an absolute and then multiplying by maybe.

7. “It can’t happen,” Sanders said. “Nobody ships his honey over to Nam.

It don’t ring true. I mean, you just can’t import your own personal **poontang** *(type of boat / woman for sex / exotic dancer).”*

**continued on reverse…**

8. The highest ranking NCO was an E-6 named Eddie Diamond, whose pleasures ran from **dope** *(fashionable, faddish / heroin / marijuana)* to **Darvon** *(strong tranquilizer / exclusive private school / special bomb squad)*, and except for a rare field inspection there was no such thing as military discipline.

9. At one end was a small dirt **helipad** *(a really cool hootch / permanent place for a helicopter to land / VC hiding place for explosives);* at the other end, in a rough semicircle, the mess hall and medical hootches overlooked a river called the Song Tra Bong.

10. They had their own hootch at the edge of the **perimeter** *(longstanding rule / border between counties /outskirts),* fortified with sandbags and a metal fence, and except for the bare essentials they avoided contact with the medical **detachment** *(objectivity / lack of interest / group).*

11. It was during one of those late nights that Eddie Diamond first brought up the **tantalizing** *(powerful / tempting / impossibly difficult*) possibility. It was an offhand comment. A joke, really. What they should do, Eddie said, was pool some bucks and bring in a few **mama-sans** *(old women / prostitutes / large chairs)*from Saigon, spice things up.

12. At evening **chow** *(food, meal / small talk / medical inspection),* Mark Fossie explained how he’d set it up.

13. “A **cinch** *(tricky thing to accomplish / trap / easy thing to do),”* Fossie said, and gazed down at his pretty girlfriend. “Thing is, you just got to *want* it enough.”