

August/September
2006



A Memorial to the American Experience
In Vietnam

REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



***In Memory of Lives Lost
September 11, 2001***

~ 2,986 ~

The Law Beyond The Uniform

The law beyond the uniform,
"No Soldier left behind."
 Might not be the one we know,
 But it won't be hard to find.
 There's not one Soldier missing,
 From God's Honor Roll.
 Their names are written down by him,
 He don't forget a soul.
 You won't be needing uniforms,
 Because you'll be retired.
 The angels won't be giving shots,
 No clinics are required.
 God hears every Soldier's prayer,
 No matter what the rank.
 He hears you if your on a boat,
 Or if you're in a tank.
 If you're hurting in a bed,
 We pray our love you'll find.
 God's law was written down with love,
"No Soldier left behind"

By TSNA Member, Irving Rice



Strength In Numbers



Airborne
 Life Member, Dale Baker
 T-39 Crew Chief (Scatback)
 TSN 1968—1969

Think You've Heard It All?

Some guy bought a new fridge for his house. To get rid of his old fridge, he put it in his front yard and hung a sign on it saying: "Free to good home. You want it, you take it".

For three days the fridge sat there without even one person looking twice at it.

He eventually decided that people were too untrusting of this deal.

It looked to good to be true, so he changed the sign to read: "Fridge for sale \$50".

The next day someone stole it.

Compliments of Life Member, Larry Kiepke

Founded 1995

By

President Emeritus Don Parker
 and
 President Emeritus John Peele

Revetments is an official publication of
 the Tan Son Nhut Association, Inc.
 2413 Brambleton Avenue, Roanoke,
 Virginia 24015. The Association is a
 non-profit fraternal organization
 chartered under the appropriate statutes and law.

President, Wayne Salisbury

Vice President, Larry Fry

Secretary Pro Tem, Jerry Norville

Treasurer Pro Tem, Tobey Salisbury

Director of Communications, Charles Penley

Johnnie Jernigan, Director-At-Large

Dale Bryan, Director-At-Large

TSNA Chaplain

Rev. Dr. James M. Warrington

Rev. Dr. Billy T. Lowe

Revetments is published bimonthly at the Office
 of Public Affairs, 2413 Brambleton Avenue,
 Roanoke, VA 24015. Telephone: (540) 772-1025
 Email: TanSonNhut@aol.com.

Revetments Publisher and Editor: Wayne Salisbury

Associate Editor: Vacant

Contributing Editor: Jim Dugan

Contributing Editor: Vacant

Web site: www.tsna.org

Webmaster: Charles Penley

Membership Information

Annual Membership: \$20.00

Five Year Membership: \$80.00

Life Membership: \$180.00

Contact the Public Affairs Office

THE PROJECT IS COMPLETE!

The Tan Son Nhut Association CD's are a must have collector's item.

An Awesome Project By Charles Penley

CD #1 contains over one thousand photographs submitted by TSNA Members. (Tan Son Nhut and Saigon.)

Documents once classified **SECRET** are now declassified, and are of historical significance. In addition, many buildings are identified, cartoons page, memorial page, newspaper pages, story pages, a partial map of TSN and much more.



CD #1

\$19.95



CD #2

\$19.95

CD #2 contains all of the TSNA newsletters (*Revetments*) dating back to July 1996.

Order yours now. The cost includes shipping and handling. The CD will be shipped within 72 hours.

Send check or money order to:

Tan Son Nhut Association
Attn: Johnnie Jernigan
956 Donham Drive
Beavercreek, OH 45434

SAVE \$5.00

Get both the TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION 2006 CD and the REVETMENTS CD for a total of \$ 34.90

~Remember ~

The Handling and Postage is FREE!



Letter From A Mom By Janice Jones TSNA Member

Welcome Home to All of Our Men and Women.

It was the tough and hard day for me. We took you to the airport to see you off. You had volunteered for the military way of life and now look at you. There you stood in your brand new uniform with all of the spit and polish that goes with it. You were so tall and I couldn't help but stand a little taller and look up at you with a heart full of love and pride.

We hugged you and kissed you and with smiles on our faces, we watched you walk away. You didn't see the tears.

Letters came and were sent back to you. There were boxes sent to you and your buddies that were filled with different surprises and homemade goodies.

You never told us just how bad it was over there. You never would. We saw it all before us on national television. You had it bad - very bad at times. You stood your post and did the job expected of you, only you gave more and then some more. Time passed.

Great news! The letter said that you are coming home and there was the date that we could go pick you up. Joy of joys! You had come through the fire and were on your way home.

We quickly cleaned the house spit and polish. Goodies were made. Your favorite meal was planned and just waiting for you to get home.

Then, the best day of my life came. The rest of the world just went on in the normal regular way. Not my world! My world was coming home.

Your family and I dressed in our best and piled in the car. Nerves were tingling and anticipation was the name of this game. We parked and walked inside and stood there waiting. Just waiting. Then!

Then! There you were. You walked toward us with your head down in a tired and worn manner. You looked so good to us. Your bag was on your shoulder. You raised your head and there was the smile on your face that we had missed so much. Your head went up and you began walking tall again.

My soldier stopped in front of me and put his bag on the ground. He bent over to hug me and it was all that I could do to speak. "Welcome home, my soldier. Welcome home, my son. You did good!"

Welcome home all of you - sons and daughters. Y'all did good!

Jan Jones
Sister, cousin, niece, and Mom

Note to Revetments Editor, from Jan: As you know, my brother Charlie Penley was there, two first cousins and three uncles who were brothers. I also had a fiancé and several friends. We are well acquainted with homecomings of various kinds.



The Age of flight ushered in an era of brave individuals, who flew before it was safe to fly, and who blazed a trail in the sky so that others might follow. The legacy of courage and valor of these early heroic airmen has remained the bedrock of the culture of the Air Force and its predecessor organizations, ever since Wilbur Wright flew the first military aircraft for the first time in 1907.

The personal qualities that describe an Air Force hero today are no different than those qualities that epitomized the well-known flyers in conflicts over the past century. There are roughly 595,000

Americans currently serving in the United States Air Force who personify ingenuity, innovation, courage and sacrifice in the work they do to maintain the proud heritage of the Air Force.

Through their deeds, in combat as well as everyday life, the heroes of yesterday and today shape our finest aspirations. Young men and women serve throughout the Air Force on the ground and in the air, on the runways and in the control towers, in the hangers and the hospitals, in the command posts and in the commissaries, at home and abroad, in humanitarian airlifts and combat missions, in safety and in danger. In their service to their country, today's airmen can look to the courage and sacrifice of Air Force heroes, and strive to uphold those same values for the airmen of tomorrow.

Air Force heroes are also found in the homes of Air Force families. They are the sons and daughters, husbands and wives, and mothers and fathers who support and make possible the service of their family members. This is never so true as when airmen are called upon to go in harm's way for the greater cause of defending freedom. These individuals represent the very best of America and its values.

More than 54,000 American airmen have been killed in combat. They are among our finest Air Force Heroes, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their sacrifices and for safeguarding American freedom.

Courtesy of the Air Force Memorial Foundation

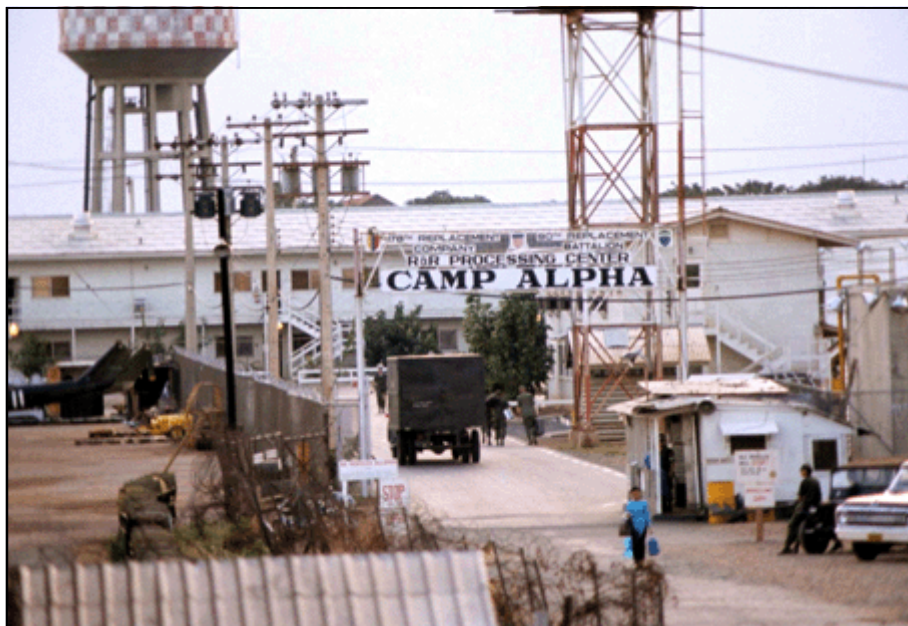


Proposed Air Force Memorial

**Camp Alpha
US Army
178th Replacement Co.
Tan Son Nhut Air Base**

**By Jim Dugan
Contributing Editor**

One of the often overlooked operations of the Vietnam War, is that which took place at Camp Alpha on Tan Son Nhut. Camp Alpha was the home of the 178th Replacement Company, a company of the U.S. Army's 90th Replacement Battalion headquartered in Long Binh. The primary mission at Camp Alpha was R&R processing. When an out of country R&R program was approved by MACV, it was decided that Tan Son Nhut airport best fitted the needs of the program because of the accessibility of commercial airlines, mainly Pan American and World Airways.



Here is a picture of the entrance as it looked in 1971. They were sent to me by TSNA member Rich Carvell. As you can probably guess, the small shack on the right, by the jeep and pickup truck, was the guard shack. That was where TSNA member, Aaron Underdahl worked. It was manned 24/7, 365 days a year for control of transients, and Vietnamese civilians. (J.D.)

On any given day, there could be six or seven outgoing, and a like number incoming flights for which Camp Alpha was responsible. With a company strength of about sixty, the 178th received personnel, provided billeting, meals, prepared flight manifests, provided money conversions and, with assistance from the 377th SPS (USAF) and the 18th MP Brigade (U.S. Army), provided the required customs inspections.

In 1969, the overall appearance and conveniences of Camp Alpha took a turn for the better. A major reconstruction of the compound began in the late Summer of that year. In what seemed like only a matter of months, American civilian engineers, and an army of Vietnamese construction workers took an average military sandbagged compound, and turned it into, what can only be described by Vietnam standards, a resort compound with hot showers, running water, and flushing toilets.

Personnel reporting for R&R processing in the late Fall of 1969, were impressed. Many who were reporting for a second R&R or seven day leave wanted to stay

at Camp Alpha, and take their time off cruising the Saigon bars. That was forbidden by MACV. U.S. military personnel not assigned to units in the Capitol Zone, or on official military business there, were forbidden to go into the city because of the fear it would result in disturbances between the citizens of Saigon and U.S. personnel. One of the duties of Camp Alpha's security platoon was to make sure transient personnel stayed put until they made their flights.

In 2001, I was interviewed by Dr. Eric B. Villard, a historian with the U.S. Army Center of Military History who was doing a paper on the R&R program as it pertained to the Vietnam War, and the 90th Replacement's part in it. He provided me with a thirty-five page copy of the finished paper, and says in his cover letter that the history of the R&R program from Tan Son Nhut is one that deserves more attention and should be expanded upon, possibly in a book.



**Tan Son Nhut Association
2007 Reunion
3- 6 May
Dayton, Ohio**

My Vietnam Tour

By Joe Montag

Life Member

I joined the United States Air Force on September 26, 1966 after being classified 1-A when I was unacceptable to the USAF ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corp) program at North Texas State University (now University of North Texas). Although I was not acceptable to the ROTC program, I entered the Air Force as an Airman 3rd Class. I left for basic training in September 26, 1966 at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas. I was assigned to Training Squadron 2132, Flight 3711. The training NCO was Staff Sergeant Harvelson.

Since I had the ROTC training I was offered a chance to bypass Basic Training, which I declined. Basic training was a snap and after training we were all assigned to our Air Force Career Specialty and new duty stations. However, I was the only one assigned as an Air Freight Specialist and went OJT (On the Job Training) for this field and to all places, a SAC (Strategic Air Command) Base in California, Castle Air Base.

As time passed, I received a top secret clearance, promoted to Airman 2nd Class and received orders for Vietnam. I left for Texas on leave before going to Vietnam. Before I left Castle I begin the vaccinations I needed for Vietnam but had to go to Lackland AFB in San Antonio to finish the eight shots I needed before attending a three day combat course at Hamilton AFB in California.

The Combat Course was very short; learning how to protect ourselves in a combat zone. Although we finally were able to fire M-16's, M-50's, M-60's and how to throw grenades, I met several other Airmen going to Vietnam and found I was the envy of the group because my orders were to Vun Tang, Vietnam. This place was the in country R & R center for our troops, but reportedly also the Viet Cong. We were bused to Travis and flew by commercial airline (TWA) to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Sai-

gon.

After checking in with the 8th Aerial Port Squadron, the Squadron NCO did not like the fact that I and Dennis Landers (another Airman from Castle) were going to Vun Tang for our first duty station, so we was reassigned to Tan Son Nhut, Detachment 1, 8th Aerial Port Squadron, 834th Air Division, 7th Air Force. After a few days of indoctrination, getting clothing, etc., I was soon working 12 hour day shifts.

About a month after arriving, the Squadron asked for volunteers for an Air Freight Mobility Team to Loc Ninh. I volunteered and we left early the next morning aboard a C-123 after being issued an M-16, 4 clips of ammo, a 38 revolver with six rounds, and a yellow Hyster 10K forklift. We unloaded C-7A Caribou's, C-123 Provider's and several C-130 Hercules. We spent one night sharing guard duty and again loading and unloading planes and left for Tan Son Nhut in the afternoon. No action to speak of. I was hooked. I liked working on the Air Freight Team and volunteered to go when ever needed in country. I spent Christmas at Bu Dop on a Mobility Operation.



On January 02, 1968 a group of 10 Airmen left for Song Be for an operation unknown at the time. As a side note, I just heard from three of them, Mike Brumfield, Ed Dodge and John McLaughlin in the past few months. We were told to set up to begin receiving aircraft of personnel and mobile equipment with an unknown date. We loaded our equipment of 10K forklifts and a couple 25K K-loaders carrying our personal items as well as M-16's, 38 revolvers

and lots more ammo, plus C-rations for three weeks.

When we arrived at Song Be, there was the 3,200 foot runway, ramp for approximately four or five aircraft, and a partially dug bunker, a partially sandbag shack, and lots of red dirt. On one end of the field was an Army Artillery compound and the other an Army fuel bladder area. A road to Song Be on one side and a mountain on the other side of the ramp area. We tried to stay at the MACV compound at Song Be but they said no as did the Army Artillery Compound. So we set out to rebuild our living quarters and strengthen the bunker by digging a deeper bunker and loading hundreds of sandbags which continued the whole time we were there. We set up a tent and shower which was cold most of the time. If we took showers at all, we would take them after the temperature would rise. During the day it would reach 100+ degrees and at night dropping into the forties. We setup a wire perimeter and claymores to protect us.

We were soon told that we would receive the Army's 101st from Hue, and the aircraft began landing. In the heat of the day we were unloading planes every five to eleven minutes with the C-130's shutting down only two engines. The plane would be barely unloaded and aircraft engines would start and taxi for takeoff back to Hue for another load.

We all took turns unloading or loading the aircraft as they arrived on the ramp. Aircraft landing at night was too dangerous, but several times these planes would land and take off as darkness began; the pilots thanking God they could leave the area. We had C-7A's, C-123's, C-130's and a couple of experiments of landing C-124's into the field. Most of the C-7A's pilots were great, but crazy. A C-130 would be on approach and the C-7A would cross their path near the end of the runway, land and taxi onto the ramp before the C-130 landed.

The C-124 experiments were exciting because they happened in two days and one lifetime. The C-124's were bringing

in heavy equipment for the 168th Engineers. They had landed several times with no problems of landing, unloading or takeoff. However, the second C-124 the next day proved a little frightening. As we were unloading a D-7 Caterpillar bulldozer, one of the winch lines broke and the D-7 shifted and broke through one of the aircraft's ramp toes. The D-7 hung in the air on one side and held by the other ramp toe and the aircraft's remaining winch.



It was getting late in the day and we knew we were in for another mortar and rocket barrage. The Army's 101st General even came to the field because this big silver aircraft could be seen for approximately six miles. He said every NVA and Viet Cong was zeroing in on that aircraft. He wanted it gone. So the 168th Engineers braced the D-7 with heavy lumber and then cut the remaining ramp toes from the aircraft. The C-124 took off at 1800 hours and at 1830 hours we were hit with the first round of mortars and rockets. The first rocket destroyed the D-7 and the lumber bracing. We never saw another C-124 or a silver aircraft at Song Be.

Even though the Army was on one side of We were bringing in a late aircraft, C-130, to unload. The aircraft landed with lights and then followed us on the ramp with no lights. I was directing the aircraft to the unloading spot with two yellow wands. The only lights were the yellow wands above my helmeted head. Snipers were more prevalent at night. All the sudden there were more lights than need be - the photographer had turned on his lights to film the arrival.

The next thing we were receiving heavy sniper fire. The photographer camera fell to the ground and I was knocking the

photographer to the ground. The aircraft commander didn't wait any longer; he had the loadmaster pull the blocks on the pallets and did a speed offload. In minutes he was at full taxi speed and in the air. The next day the Air Force Services team left on the first aircraft out.

Life was never boring; we had our conflicts with the Army, conflicts among ourselves, and the normal Air Force command conflicts. We were eating c-rations while the 168th Engineers and 101st were eating hot meals. We finally told them if we were going to unload their food supplies then we wanted to eat with them. Believe it or not we ate with them, and several times they delivered the hot food to us.

The metal pallets, used as a platform for the cargo, were being taken by the Army after we unloaded the aircraft. They used the pallets for their

bunker structures. We finally convinced the Army to return them, but they returned more than they took from us. It took every aircraft coming in to get the pallets back to Cam Ran Bay and Tan Son Nhut.

The day I returned and debarked from the plane, I was told to report to the 8th Aerial Port Commander. I had not had a decent shower in weeks but the Sergeant said to report now. I reported to the Commander and learned that I was being presented the USAF Airman's Medal for service during Hurricane Beulah that hit Texas before I left for Vietnam.

The Commander apologized that I was not getting a formal presentation. It was years later when I realized what the decoration was in the USAF criteria. Later I received the USAF Commendation Medal for my actions at Song Be.

On January 31, 1968, the Tet Offensive became the news of the day with the NVA and VC attacking Tan Son Nhut. Those first days are a blur now. We had no weapons because they were locked in Conex containers in our billet area (800 area), at the end of the taxi/ ramp area for C-123s. Hunker down was all we could do. I have some photos of the

aerial action, but not many others.

After Tet, we went on more Mobility Team missions. We had open orders issued in four month periods. With these orders we could anywhere in Vietnam at any time. I still have copies of those orders. I went on missions to Bunard, Swan Loc, Loc Ninh, Song Be, Bu Dop and many others I cannot remember the names. The ending period of my tour I worked ALCE and the ramp in coordinating loading and unloading operations and occasionally a MOB mission.

My brother had joined the Army earlier in the year and now was coming to Vietnam. I offered to extend for another year so he would not have to serve in Vietnam. He declined. In September, 1967, he arrived in Vietnam. I received a letter from him when he was at Long Binh and then another, but not telling me where he was stationed in Vietnam.

Using his APO address I soon located his unit. I called his unit from Tan Son Nhut and spoke with his Company Commander. He said to come on up to the Big Red One at Zion. So using those open end orders, I attached myself to a MOB mission, flew up to Zion and found his Company.

He could not believe I had flown up to see him. His buddies were giving me a hard time because of the M-16, pistol and combat gear I was carrying, all required to be on a MOB mission. They stopped the heckling when he told them that I had less than three weeks left in country.

After sitting down and talking for five hours, I needed to catch my flight back. Guess what, I missed the flight. There was some Hueys leaving for different areas. I caught a ride on one going to Long Binh and Tan Son Nhut. We were about to leave when I got bumped by two Army Captains. The pilots, who I had been talking with, asked if I could fire a M-60. When I told them I could, I became the door gunner for the trip.

Of all events I went through in the past eleven months, I think that flight was the most scariest.

VIETNAM IN PERSPECTIVE

by George "Sonny" Hoffman

Intelligent, rational human beings have difficulty accepting the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. I had trouble. Aside from the involvement issue, our conduct of the war seemed even more indefensible. No-fire zones, free-fire zones, bombing restrictions, and the ubiquitous rules of engagement defied reason. To look at the Vietnam War in isolation also defies reason.

The war was never fought to win. That is an absurdity to most people, veterans especially. The strategy was to contain the spread of global communism. This may seem laughable in light of the fall of communism, but no one was laughing in the fifties and sixties as country after country fell behind the iron and bamboo curtains. Communism was perceived as a serious threat to our national security. The threat of a global nuclear war loomed on the horizon, and we had come damned close several times before the first troops landed in Vietnam. The demise of humanity, indeed, all life on Earth, teetered on the brink of annihilation. Statesmen on both sides had this reality to deal with.

It was in this atmosphere of fear and insecurity that our leaders decided to draw a line in the jungle. Clearly, a line needed to be drawn somewhere. Once that line was drawn, it needed to be defended. The world watched to check our resolve. We held that line for 10,000 days. As a delaying action, it was quite successful. By tying the communists down in Southeast Asia, we bought valuable time. Other countries successfully resisted insurgency movements as the weakness inherent in the rigid socialist systems began to show. When we no longer needed to defend the line in the jungle, we pulled out. By then, communism was no longer on the march. If anything, it was on the defensive.

As to our irrational and irresponsible conduct of the war, I submit that is was neither. Counter-insurgency warfare is a tricky business. It is more political than military. In the post Napoleonic era, the-

ory returned to war as a rational, limited instrument of national diplomacy. This approach was best articulated by the Prussian military theorist, Carl von Clausewitz. He set the tone of modern armed conflict in his 1837 book, *On War*. It was he who stated, "War is the natural extension of diplomacy," and that "War, followed to its natural conclusion, is total."

In the aftermath of two global wars and the advent of nuclear weapons, his words took on greater significance. Military planners and statesmen on both sides read the book and bought into the philosophy. The cold war was fought using his book as a guide. The Vietnam rules of engagement were a direct result of this philosophy. Who can say whether he was right or wrong. The fact remains that we did not annihilate mankind in a nuclear holocaust, and China did not invade as they did in Korea. Our strategists had to carefully maneuver the tactics to straddle these two main concerns.

To be viewed correctly, Vietnam must be seen in the context of a much bigger war--the Cold War. Vietnam was one battle in a very long war. Even if you accept the popular notion that the U.S. lost that battle--which I do not--we, never-the-less, won the war. The Union soldiers that fought at Fredericksburg during our Civil War undeniably lost that battle. Some of those men were in the parade down Pennsylvania Avenue at the war's end. They had the satisfaction of knowing that their comrades did not die in vain. They were winners, not losers, even if Fredericksburg was the only battle they fought.

Vietnam, as big as it seemed to those of us involved in the fighting, was a minor skirmish. The losses were insignificant to what was at stake. Fifty-eight thousand placed on one scale against five billion on the other, makes it insignificant. I cringe at the notion that those lives were wasted, sacrificed in vain. If anything, no warrior ever gave a life for so noble a cause or sacrificed it for so many. Indeed, Churchill's words about the RAF ring true for the veterans of Vietnam: "Never have so many owed so much to so few."

I have no doubt that when the world looks back on the twentieth century with crystal vision, Vietnam will be seen for what it was: the turning point of the greatest threat humanity ever faced--communism. If you had a part in the Vietnam War, take pride, hold your head high. When you visit The Wall, revere those names etched thereon. If you can not see their glory, your great grandchildren will.

The TSNA Office Roanoke, Virginia

Many of you have not seen pictures of the TSNA Office. The office was moved to Roanoke Virginia in June 2004 following the death of then-Vice President, Robert Need.

The office is located in my residence in Roanoke. Here are pictures that will give you an idea of what it looks like.



A Few Words From Your President

You may have noticed in the Masthead on page 2 that there has been a change in Officer positions. Due to health concerns Jerry Norville resigned as TSNA Treasurer. He will remain as Secretary Pro Tem.

My wife, Tobey Salisbury, was appointed Treasurer Pro Tem by the Board Members.

An editorial staff for the publication of *Revetments* is being selected. There will be an Associate Editor and two Contributing Editors. These are not Board Member positions.

I have appointed Life Member, Jim Dugan as the first of the Contributing Editors. I will be contacting members seeking to fill the remaining positions.

Due to my own health issues I will not run for President following my present term which ends September 2007. A new President will be elected at the Dayton, Ohio Reunion business meeting in May 2007, and will be President Elect until the end of my term.

The publication of *Revetments* requires a lot of time. The assistance of an Associate Editor will help immensely to achieve my goal of having a highly rated, respectable bimonthly publication. The candidate for this position must have extensive computer experience and should have a high-resolution scanner.

Ideally this individual will have broadband Internet connection. He or she must have Microsoft Word experience. Experience in formatting a newsletter will be helpful, but not essential.

The idea is to have members involved in the publication of *Revetments* so that in the event I must step back from my duties someone can step in and continue the publication.

Besides loyalty to the TSNA, there are three prime reasons the majority of our

members renew their membership in our organization year after year: our Web site, *Revetments* and reunions. It is vital that I do everything possible to make sure *Revetments* continues after I can no longer accept the challenge.

Finally, I salute each and every one of you. I've made numerous friends among the membership over the course of the last 3 years; friends that will last a lifetime. I am grateful for each of you.

God bless you.

Your friend,

Wayne Salisbury

Tet 1968 By William Stribling Razorback Gunner

120th Assault Helicopter Co. Tan Son Nhut Air Base

For several days prior to Tet, we had heard that something big was going to happen. The morning of January 31, 1968, our Starcom 24 hour alert fire team was called out, and when they flew down the western perimeter we made contact with the first VC/NVA battalion as they crossed the road attempting to breach the wire.

From that moment on, it was nonstop combat for 13 days. By noon the first day, eight of our ships had substantial battle damage, and several of them had to be replaced. I recall that there were so many requests for gunship support, that there were ground units that had to wait until we could get to them. One of the saddest things I remember hearing on our net was a young cavalry trooper in an armored personnel carrier engaged with the VC at the Phu Tho Race-track begging for gunship support just before they were about to be overrun. We just couldn't be everywhere at once. By the second morning we had shot over two thousand rockets, and were in need of resupply from Long Binh.

Our Air Force friends flying the "Pedro"

chopper flew up to Long Binh and brought us all they could carry on board. They had a little "Willie Peter" mixed in with the HE (high explosive) rounds, but that was okay. We mixed the WP in with the HE and the NVA didn't like that much. It would get them up and running on a few occasions.

We slept in the gunships on the floor when we could get a few minutes, and it was like that for 13 days. I figured one time if we just averaged six missions a day during that period, we shot 372 rockets and fired 60,000 rounds of machine gun ammo. That was just one fire team. There were two other fire teams that stayed pretty busy also. All I remember drinking was water, and eating "C" rations. There were several enlisted crew chief/gunners seriously wounded and most of us had wounds of a less serious nature. I remember when there was a lull, and we could get a little sleep. I found an old cot in the LSI hanger and went to sleep but was soon shaken awake by a freelance writer wanting an interview. I was most uncooperative.

It seemed like Tet would never end, but with the Air Force and Army working together, we achieved a great victory. All of us that took part were changed forever, and for many of us, it was the defining moment of our lives.

I realize now that I should have kept a journal of everything that happened each day. I have pretty good recall, but my old memory is not what it once was.



SP4 Bill Stribling ~ 1968 ~

**Tan Son Nhut Association
Public Affairs Office
2413 Brambleton Ave.
Roanoke, VA 24015**