

JULY 2008



A Memorial to the American Experience
In Vietnam

“All included, none excluded”

REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

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You would think I'd become familiar with B-52 aircraft during the course of my Air force service, but when you ride a desk and a computer, well, B-52's are not what you get to intimately know. However, I did get to feel some of the devastating power B-52's can unleash. Working in TACC, I could look at the large Plexiglas and see where combat was taking place. There was a B-52 bomb drop about 15 miles away and when I stepped outside, I could feel the vibration and wind concussion as it beat against my legs. I've never forgotten that awesome power.

I was on the roof of a five story building one evening in Saigon with some buddies from work. We were celebrating either an arrival, departure, or promotion, when another part of the war was unveiled. We could see a Gooney Bird, the incredible AC-47 with Gatling guns, strafing the countryside to the south of Saigon. The enormous firepower could easily churn up every square foot of turf on a football field. I watched as it poured out it's lethal rain. It looked like a red ribbon was trailing from the aircraft due to the phosphorous verifying where the ammo hit. Suddenly, the party atmosphere dimmed and our eyes were wide and respectful. No wonder the gunships were called "Puff the Magic Dragon."

Before I left South Vietnam for my next assignment, as the only officer in my unit, I signed a month's supply of blank in-country combat reporting forms in advance, since my replacement had not yet arrived. For some reason, the forms required an officer's signature. A week later, I arrived at the Pentagon (as punishment, I imagine), assigned to the very desk where the signed-in-advance reporting forms arrived. I had to explain, repeatedly, why my name appeared in

the Approved box and the Received box. Some Generals didn't take kindly to this break in protocol. I came to understand that such concerns were important to paper pushers in the Pentagon. After three weeks the ass chewing eased as my replacements signature began showing up.

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More on the 90th Replacement Battalion

By Jim Dugan
90th Replacement Battalion
TSN 69 - 70

As far as I can recall, everyone going on R&R processed through Camp Alpha regardless of branch of service.

The airmen assigned to Tan Son Nhut may have stayed with their unit until the departure, but since the 178th Replacement Co. provided the flight manifest to Pan Am or World Airways, they had to check in with us. Camp Alpha acted like a Bed & Breakfast. Guys who were scheduled for R&R would come in from wherever, give us their orders, and the flight manifest was made up. Sometimes they would stay at Camp Alpha for two days before their flight schedule. We had all the services staying with us. It was quite an operation. I loved it. You got to meet all types of people. Civilian government employees also processed through us. Women, both civilian and military of all ranks, full colonels and above, and male civilians were taken to the flight line by special van. They didn't ride the buses provided for regular servicemen. The whole operation worked like a charm.

The 90th Replacement and its various companies at Long Binh were responsible to USARV for receiving just Army replacements

and holding them until they were assigned to further units. Likewise, when they were scheduled for DEROS, their units assigned them back to the 90th to be processed out.

In late 1972, the entire 90th Replacement Bn. moved back to Tan Son Nhut and rejoined the 178th to process the Army troops out. By that time there were no more incoming troops. The Air Force and Navy also worked along side the 178th Replacement Co. to process their personnel out.

We, at Camp Alpha, were one of its companies of the 90th, the 178th Replacement Company. We were honored to call Tan Son Nhut our home. The 90th Replacement Battalion headquarters was at Long Binh.

Officially, the 90th was the last Army support unit to leave Vietnam on March 29, 1973.

The 90th Replacement Battalion served under the command of the U.S. Army Vietnam (USARV). We served in all 17 campaigns of the Vietnam War.

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NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

From June, 2008 new member **Evander D. Schley, 330th Transportation Co, US Army:** "We were attached to Headquarters Co. Our unit supplied aircraft for Vietnam MAAG, Cambodia, Thailand, etc. Interested in prostate cancer among those on base, and any others in 330th."

From May, 2007 new member **Charles Gray, 377th SPS:** "First in country at Phu Cat, 37 SPS. Transferred to 377th SPS 7-67. Was in a Tango watchtower west perimeter during TET. Lived in the old French barracks SP area until moved to the 1300 SP area."

Tan Son Nhut Association
P.O. Box 236
Penryn, PA 17564

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YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE!!

This issue of Revetments is only 6 pages long. There are two main reasons for that. #1, I need to get this thing done in time for the July 4 emphasis of Chaplain Lowe's article; and #2, I am running out of articles to put into these newsletters.

As you may or may not know, things like this newsletter and your local newspaper, use what is called, "column inches" to measure how much space needs to be filled.

A 6 page newsletter uses about 144 column inches. As of when I am typing this, I have articles from 11 authors totaling around 284 column inches remaining to be used. You do the math, AND then, sit down, type up something, hand write something, but get me some more articles about your TSN experiences, or about anything for that matter! I am particularly interested in getting some stories from folks who are basically doing the same thing today that they were doing at TSN. I don't care how long or how short, or how many pictures you can include, JUST DO IT!!

Thanks.

Larry Fry

