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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Rev. Dr. Billy T. Lowe Pastor, First Presbyterian Church Cherryville, NC 28021

Chaplain, TSNA

As we approach another Fourth of July, I have pondered, "What is it that inspires and enables ordinary citizens to rise to the challenge of battle, to be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in service to country? What is it that motivates them to respond and continue wherever and whenever called upon to do so? The answer is, of course, values.

The proud legacy of our military, and our country, is grounded in these core values: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

Lovalty means to bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, your unit and other airmen, sailors, soldiers and marines. Duty means to fulfill your obligations. Respect means to treat people, as you would wish to be treated. Selfless-service means to put the welfare of the nation before your own. Honor means to live up to the values of your military branch. Integrity means to do what's right, legally and morally. Courage means to face fear, danger, and also adversity. These values have made our military strong.

We, in this country, owe a great debt of gratitude to those who sacrificed their lives so that we can live free. We can begin to repay that debt by not forgetting, by remembering that for which they sacrificed and fought and died.

Charles M. Province states it so well: "It is the soldier, not the reporter, who gives us freedom of press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has

given us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to fair trial; and it is the soldier, who salutes the flag, who serves the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag."

Samuel Francis Smith wrote it in 1831 but the words are just as profound for 2008: "My country 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing; Land where my father's died, Land of the pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, Let freedom ring."

Our nation celebrates another birthday, the Fourth of July. What a wonderful time to reflect how our nation's armed forces have blessed us. God bless them as we remember all who have served, are serving, and yes, will serve in the years to come.

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WHEN I WENT . . .

By Ray McKee 12th RTS

When I went into the Air Force they made me a cook. I was at Phu Cat Vietnam, and started cross training.

As my education was in Commercial Photography, I picked any of the areas that needed any kind of photographer. The Darkroom specialist 22354 AFAC came up. 3 weeks later, I was shipping out to Tan Son Nhut to do Darkroom recon photos.

I was located in Barracks right next to the Army Tan Son Nhut Barracks.

At the 12 RITS there were night crews and day crews. I was on the day crew. I do not remember many of the names of the fellows I worked with but they thought that a cook was not go-

ing to do well. I ended up taking photos of various events.

I photographed a BBQ cook out in a new Ramada next to the 18 wheeler freezers where our darkroom film and paper was stored.

We had this cook out. There was a fellow cooking BBQ chicken. We drank Australia Beer from Melbourne called Victoria Bitters. Master Sergeant Penley Petterson kept us in line and trying to push us, but over all was very nice. We worked 12 hours 7 days a week and on Christmas and Thanksgiving we were able to take a 2 hour lunch.

On Tan Son Nhut the Helicopters flew 24/7 and many times flying every 15 to 20 minutes right over our barracks. We did learn to sleep through the constant fly-overs. We did have it pretty swell over there. We all paid 20 bucks to one mammasan and she did our laundry, polished our shoes, made our bed, dusted, ironed, swept, and kept the barracks in proper order. All for 20 bucks a month.

William Sparks was a member of the Tan Son Nhut Association, and was in the 12th RITS when I was there.

There was a fellow who at the end of our tour there got into some bad Heroin I think and went catatonic. The guy was a smart gentleman. Many of the guys played cards and drank a case of beer often.

They were chasing with beer shots of Seagram 7. All that was very cheap over there. Two cases of beer and a bottle of 7 could be bought for less than 5 bucks. That could pose problems. We were never like the Army or Marines who were out in the bush fighting the VC.

As with any job we had to per- marijuana. Ruby Red, looked like Ramada thing. The names on the if any of us were angels there. military work dress are not distinguishable. There was a stocky Most of the guys did not want to Dec 68 to July 70 other places.

rean Lt. for a few weeks close to clothes for 35 to 45 dollars. We name was David Martin and the the Anniversary of the TET offen- were waited on hand and foot, town was Churubusco. Wood Stock and On a Clear Day ditioned darkroom, fed 3 squares light town. David used to say he Your Could See Forever played and complained that it was not was from Ft. Wayne. But for on the movies there.

the BBQ Pit, a Mexican restau- USA. Paul may have worked on rant, place called the Playboy the Robertson Copy camera, Our birds were sent TDY to two club (No association to the real where we could produce a 16X20 bases up in the Northeast states one) and an Airman and Ser- or 30X40 negative. There were while our runway was being regeant clubs. Plus a Hoagie house these big Arc lights, when they built and since it was our duty to behind the Barracks where you came on they were blinding stay with our planes David & I were either a number 10 GI or bright. Mark 5 contact printers, flew out with them. I had told you Number ONE. One good 10 Omega D5 enlargers, Huge con- David that I could not do more Bad. Then if you did something tact printers. There was this Ital- time in SAC and that I had volunthey did not like they would say ian Camera which could blow teered for duty in Vietnam, Thaiyou Buko Number 10 Bad up negatives to 640 times magni- land, canine school and Air Force GI. That was very bad. 3 swim- fications. That camera cost 1.2 Special Forces. He too, I found ming pools, 2 movie houses, 1 million bucks. Large dryers. We out, had submitted his paperwork basketball court, and 2 tennis worked with fiber, but also resin for Vietnam. While we were up courts around Tan Son Nhut coated papers, which were clas- North our reassignment orders AFB.

gon. There were bars with music photo paper. It was Kodak RC or and girls. There was a massage resin coated papers. parlor called the Magic Fingers Massage. That is all I will de- I said "oh this is not new but I will scribe of that. There were these work with it". I do not think he leave at home and then leaving motor cycles with a chair built on understood. the front or back that we could jump on and pay the cabbies to take us any where in Saigon. Curfew was at 10 PM to 6 AM. There were these cigarette stands that did not sell cigarettes. It was rolled packaged

form and do our Job. I do have a Lucky Strikes. This cost 50 cents few photos that I have from the PMC or Vietnam Dong. Very few

fellow, blonde, a tall skinny fellow be any part of this and missed who gave Penley a hard time and the World. Wanted to go back to About August of 1968 I was stahe would complain about much civilization. We were all young tioned at Warner Robins AFB in of the time. Other than that we kids who did not know what this Warner Robins, Georgia, a SAC did not associate. I heard from thing was all about. We knew we base. I had been there for about Sparks and Penley kept up on were risking our lives and were 10 months after completing basic what I was doing. We lost touch compensated 75 dollars a month training at Amarillo, TX. with everyone. We went to differ- to do so. Plus a month wages for thought of "walking around bombent bases some to OFFUTT AFB me was 432 dollars. A large PX ers" for 4 years made me gag. I in Bellevue Nebraska, and some we could buy booze, cigarettes, was adventurous and a bit cocky jewelry, cameras, anything for a at 19 years of age. Stationed song and a dance what it cost with me was a young fellow from We took Karate from a little Ko- today. We could order tailored a small farm town in Indiana. His The movie Mash, and worked long hours, in an air con- Churubusco was just a one stop good enough. equipment to work on, and made "Churubusco" stuck with me for There was a Steak house called some good support photos for the years to come. sified at the time. In 1974, my came thru: Tan Son Nhut AB, photo professor in college asked RVN, 377th SPS. We could go off base to Sai- if I wanted to work on this new





YOU CAN RUN, BUT YOU **CAN'T HIDE**

Thomas Bell 377th SPS Tan Son Nhut, AB

We had the top some reason just the name

We left Maine, headed back to Georgia to grab our gear and head for Lackland AFB in Texas for combat school. Seven days Travis AFB in California for a warm tropical place in December 1968. David was assigned to Echo Sector at the 051 Gate and I started out in Charlie Sector "quarding more planes"! An opportunity came up for someone who could type and I volunteered

for duty at CSC Charlie Flight old buddies from Tan Son Nhut where I would be for quite some and the help of Charles Penley time.

David and I rotated back to the 411 and obtained a phone num- Grp. states in 1970 and lost track of ber for Bob Martin in Churueach other; but I never forgot the busco, IN and left a voice mes- Since I was a support troop, the town of Churubusco, IN.

I am an over-the-road truck driver next I called the police depart- lice and their wonderful guard coming down Rt. 33 heading for ment in Benton, Kentucky. Ex- dogs foiled it, and I remember Ft. Wayne, IN and suddenly I am plaining the situation to the disin "downtown" Churubusco. So I patcher, along with the last heroes. thought I would try to look up known address I had for David David. The first place I went was and David's SSN which I had I worked in the Tactical Air Conthe post office where an old timer from a Sgt's promotion list I had told me that he remembered the kept. The dispatcher researched Martin family had a son named vehicle registration records and David who went to Vietnam. His had found that David had moved TACC was constructed out of mom was said to work at the to Shepherdsville, Kentucky up reinforced concrete and was wintown newspaper across the street near Louisville. The dispatcher dowless. I was concentrating on but it was closed that day. The had also provided me with hardware storekeeper next door David's birth date which could said that I should try the police also come in handy. I then called department up the block.

by a town person that a fellow The call was placed yesterday, was asking about the Martins and April 22, 2008 and David Martin was waiting for me when I arrived and I have been reunited once at his office. He said that the again. Martins did have a son who went Bob Martin call me at the pay found and they are: phone across the street. I spoke to Bob Martin for a short time ex- Forest Carter of Hamburg, Arkanme a contact phone number for vada. David. Turned out David was now living near Benton, Kentucky close to Kentucky Lake. I called him and made arrangements to connect with him the next time I was down that way. A couple of To obtain maximum attention, it's months later we had a nice visit hard to beat a good, big mistake. and caught up the time. Leaving, I had an address and a contact The average time between throwphone number. I tried a couple of ing something out and needing it times thereafter to call David but again is two weeks. found his phone number had been disconnected.

Now it is April 2008 and with my renewed contacts with several

and the 377th SPS web site, I am inspired to try to locate David By Morton M. Rumberg After our overseas adventure, Martin again. I placed a call to Hq. 7th AF, 377th Combat Supp. 411 for Shepherdsville and found that David and his wife were the The police chief had been called only Martins listed in that town!

to Vietnam but he had moved Through the contact with David away. The police chief said he Martin a couple of other former The light spilling from the open would call the Martins and have 377th SPS cops have also been door behind me told them I was

plaining my dilemma and he gave sas, and Leonard Gleason of Ne-

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THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Nothing changes the color of paint like putting it on the wall.

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ON THE GROUND AT TAN SON NHUT

sage but got no response. I fig- closest I got to battle was in Deured that his dad had probably cember 1966, when TSN came Springing ahead 35 years, 2005, passed away by this time. So under attack by VC. The Air Poone dog and his handler were

> trol Center (TACC) and had been working a very long shift when the base came under attack. The setting up databases and reporting procedures and didn't realize we were under attack. Taking a much needed break, I pushed open the rear door and stepped outside for a breath of fresh air. Two Air Policemen were behind sandbags, their weapons loaded and ready, not a particularly unusual sight, but I was taken up short being so close to them.

> there. Soon as they saw me I was ordered back inside. I could see them shaking their heads at the idiot Lieutenant wandering around, not knowing what the hell was going on. Under those conditions I felt they did a good job of apprising me of the situation in no uncertain terms.

> The next morning, the body bags of the VC attackers were lined up prior to being taken away. Later that day, I went to the officers barbershop for a haircut, only to find it closed. Strange, until I found out why: Several of the barbers had been in on the attack and were now in body bags. I sure was proud of base security and their dogs.

iar with B-52 aircraft during the ceived box. could look at the large Plexiglas up. 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 I've never forgotten that By Jim Dugan awesome power.

I was on the roof of a five story building one evening in Saigon As far as I can recall, everyone arrival, departure, or promotion, of service. 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 Sai-The enormous firepower could easily churn up every 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 month's supply of blank incountry combat reporting forms in 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 signedin-advance reporting forms ar- various companies at Long Binh perimeter during TET. Lived in rived. I had to explain, repeat- were responsible to USARV for the old French barracks SP area edly, why my name appeared in

course of my Air force service, didn't take kindly to this break in wise, when they were scheduled but when you ride a desk and a protocol. I came to understand for DEROS, their units assigned computer, well, B-52's are not that such concerns were import hem back to the 90th to be procwhat you get to intimately know. tant to paper pushers in the Pen- essed out. However, I did get to feel some of tagon. After three weeks the ass the devastating power B-52's can chewing eased as my replace- In late 1972, the entire 90th Re-

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More on the 90th Replacement Battalion

90th Replacement Battalion TSN 69 - 70

with some buddies from work. going on R&R processed through We were celebrating either an Camp Alpha regardless of branch

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 square foot of turf on a football had to check in with us. Camp field. I watched as it poured out Alpha acted like a Bed & Breakfast. Guys who were scheduled for R&R would come in from the Vietnam War. 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 From June, 2008 new member was quite an operation. I loved it. Evander D. Schley, 330th You got to meet all types of peo- Transportation Co, US Army: ple. Civilian government employ- "We were attached to Headquarmy next assignment, as the only ees also processed through us. ters Co. Our unit supplied airofficer in my unit, I signed a Women, both civilian and military craft for Vietnam MAAG, Camboof all ranks, full colonels and dia, Thailand, etc. Interested in above, and male civilians were prostate cancer among those on advance, since my replacement taken to the flight line by special base, and any others in 330th." van. They didn't ride the buses provided for regular servicemen. From May, 2007 new member The whole operation worked like Charles Gray, 377th SPS: "First a charm.

> The 90th Replacement and its Was in a Tango watchtower west receiving just Army replacements until moved to the 1300 SP area."

You would think I'd become famil- the Approved box and the Re- and holding them until they were Some Generals assigned to further units. Like-

Working in TACC, I ments signature began showing placement 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

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NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

in country at Phu Cat, 37 SPS. Transferred to 377th SPS 7-67.

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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





