



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

2010 TSNA REUNION SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS OCTOBER 7—10

More details are becoming available for this year’s reunion.

You will find on another page in this issue the 2010 Registration Form you can use.

A fun and activity filled schedule awaits your arrival in San Antonio.

Activities begin at 1 PM on Thursday October 7, when the TSNA Reunion Registration Desk opens, as well as the Hospitality Suite on the 3rd floor of our HQ in the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk Hotel.

Check - in time at the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk Hotel begins at 3 PM, at the front desk, 1st floor lobby.

Thursday at 5:30 PM, the TSNA will gather at the Crowne Plaza’s Riverwalk terrace to prepare for a 6:30 PM boarding of *Rio San Antonio Cruise* barges for a one-hour guided tour of the SAT Riverwalk and downtown San Antonio.



Crowne Plaza Riverwalk terrace



San Antonio Riverwalk

Following the tour you can enjoy a great meal at one of the many fine restaurants in the Riverwalk restaurant district before boarding *Rio on Demand* barges for the return trip starting at 8:45. Or if you prefer, take a leisurely post-dinner stroll back to our hotel, five blocks north along the historic and well lit Riverwalk.

After that great reunion group activity, the TSNA Hospitality Suite will open at 9 PM for an evening of greeting old friends and making new ones!

On Friday, October 8, two activities start the day at about the same time.

An optional spouses shopping tour of San Antonio will be guided by one of our local SAT TSNA wives, as well as bus transportation to Lackland AFB for the activities there.



Lackland AFB BMT Graduation

At Lackland, we will be attending the BMT graduation ceremony and parade, as guests of the 37th Training Wing Commander; touring the aircraft static displays for photos; board our busses for a guided “windshield tour” of Lackland main base and the Medina Annex, followed by a stop-over at the Lackland Security Forces Museum.

All of that will be followed by a buffet luncheon at the Lackland Gateway Club. After lunch, one bus will be returning early to the hotel and the Hospitality Suite will open.

Our TSNA Lackland tour group will then be attending a historic BAT 21 Panel Session at the Lackland Base Theater. In this session, led by Col. Darrel D. Whitcomb, USAFR (Ret.), Medal of Honor recipient LT Tom Norris, and US Navy Cross recipient PO2 Nguyễn Van Kiệt will be reunited with many of the BAT-21 Search and Rescue participants who flew the A-1 Skyraider, O-2 Skymaster, OV-10 Bronco, HC-130P King SAR bird and HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant under the command & control by MACV and HQ 7th Air Force at Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN.

After the panel discussion, we are invited to attend the Wing Commander’s stand-up reception for BAT 21 Panel participants and our TSNA (cash bar).

At the conclusion of this wonderful full day at Lackland, it will be time to return to the Crowne Plaza for more

Tan Son Nhut Association 2010 Reunion Registration

OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF TAN SON NHUT AND THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

YES, SIGN ME UP FOR THE REUNION!

NAME _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

NAME OF YOUR GUEST(S): _____

PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY: _____

REGISTRATION FEES

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING _____ X \$135. = _____

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (NO EXTRA COST)

- Access to the TSNA Hospitality suite, 3rd floor - Crowne Plaza Riverwalk Hotel (drinks, snacks, war stories!)
- One hour TSNA guided tour of the San Antonio River, aboard 36 passenger tour barges
- Leased buses, for the round-trip to Lackland AFB for the BMT graduation parade, guided windshield-tour of Lackland & Medina complexes, and the afternoon Bat 21 Panel Session.
- TSNA Saturday Banquet buffet dinner
- TSNA Sunday Continental breakfast

The price for {optional} weekend guided tours of San Antonio landmarks and spouse shopping trips will be listed at a later date.

Go to the TSNA Reunion web page <http://www.tsna.org/reunion/index.html> and follow the URL link https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_gi_new&groupID=2575021 to make your hotel reservations with the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk-San Antonio. Your room rate has been group-discounted to \$119.00 per night. Those without Internet access can call the Crowne Plaza: 1-888-623-2800. Hotel reservations must be made no later than **September 7, 2010 to receive this special rate.**

TSNA REGISTRATION MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 7, 2010.

PLEASE MAKE PAYMENTS PAYABLE TO THE "TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION" AND MAIL PAYMENTS TO:

TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION
C/O GEORGE PLUNKETT
587 WILLIAMS CIRCLE
WEST COLUMBIA, SC 29172

Form 22710

ROCKET IMPACT CRATER

Dave Dowdell
377th SPS (67 - 68)

Charles:

The first photo I viewed from the URL you sent out brought back some memories. I was assigned to the north revetments on February 18, 1968 and my M-16 bunker position was adjacent to this RB-57.



I was closer to the RB-57 than my bunker when the 122mm rockets began to impact on the flight line. I dropped to the paved surface in front of the nose of the RB-57 when the first rounds impacted in the RF-4C area directly across the high speed taxiway from the north revetments.

I tried to low crawl to my bunker between the multiple impacts, but the next volley walked across the north revetments. The 122mm rocket that impacted out in front of me and the RB-57 lifted me up off the ground and I hit the ground right next to the revetment wall.

Charles Akins was posted on the north revetments just west of my post and when we got together in the late 1990's he told me that when he saw me get wounded he crawled to my position and grabbed me by the harness and dragged me into the crater depicted in this photo.

I received minor shrapnel wounds from the rocket's impact. When I got to the Third Field Hospital I told the medical staff that I had pain in my right lower back (near my kidney).

They cut off my cammie shirt and found a softball-sized bruise they surmised I received when I landed against the revetment wall.

TSGT Art Garcia had taken possession of my web belt/harness before they loaded me in the ambulance and he returned it to me after I got back from the Third Field Hospital.

The first time I put my web belt/harness on I had a routine of checking my M-16 magazine pouch snaps so I wouldn't drop any loaded magazines.

I reached back to the right side to check my snaps and lacerated my forearm on a sharp protuberance on my web belt. When I removed my web belt/harness I found a nickel-sized chunk of the 122mm warhead embedded in an M-16 magazine.

The shrapnel ran along the side of the magazine before it penetrated, but the chunk of shrapnel had been stopped by the magazine's .223 rounds. That magazine was where I suffered the softball-sized bruise to my right back area.

I got authorization to keep the damaged M-16 magazine - with the piece of shrapnel still embedded - and now have it mounted in a shadow box along with the Saint Christopher's medal my Dad gave me before I left for Viet Nam.



That's the first time I had the opportunity to see a photo of the impact crater. It had been refilled and patched when I returned for duty.

Thanks...

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER MARCH 2010

By: Bob Chaffee
TSNA Chaplain

There are a lot of news stories about THE CENSUS. Some favorable, some negative about the costs, the people asking the questions, the resulting legislations, so many things to think about over the ten year span of a nations people.

The question "who are you?" prompts us to ask "who am I?" Easy to answer—a vet of Viet Nam, a person some 35 years after the experience that resulted in today's TSNA and maybe who I am. But give this a thought as well: some 2000 years ago there was another census taking place in Palestine and a man named Joseph and a woman named Mary were travelling to their ancestral town of Bethlehem to register in the census. Can you imagine what would happen in the USA if we had to go to our ancestral town to register, even if we knew where or which one it was? Chaos!

Well, that Bethlehem census created a lot of chaos. (Read about that in the Bible: about Herod and the three Kings).

So now by census we are forced to remember who we are, what happened during the past years and prompts us to peek at the future. The census is not just a counting of people, it is a definition of who we are and it should bring us to ask our Maker to guide us in His way for our nation, our families and ourselves. One writer said "There is good reason why people are leery about being recorded in a census". We should agree to that thought to some extent because it requires us to accept the past and calls for us to pray for our futures.

We, you and I, are only one on the census roll, but we are much more in our Maker's sight!



REMEMBERING TSN

By: George Wurtzinger
Jan 67-Jan68

I want to thank you for your efforts in assembling and maintaining this website.

I was stationed with the 509th RRCUV at Davis Station. Unfortunately, I don't recall the sector but I believe it was Foxtrot because the ARVN Airborne school was across the road from our compound.

The Tet Offensive occurred during my first CQ (Charge of Quarters – I don't know how much jargon translates from Army to Air Force).

Our 1st Sgt was a short-timer. He kept coming to the Orderly Room to tell me we were going to be hit. The first time, I took him seriously. But, he returned a number of times to change the time of the attack, based on intelligence reports. After a while, I concluded he was tense because he was anxious to get back to the world.

Intelligence changed the time for the attack one time too many and the offensive began at the prior time reported. All hell seemed to break loose. I stepped outside the Orderly Room to see what was happening and as I looked toward the flight line area, I saw a civilian charter taking off. Tracers followed the tail of the plane. I suspect I wasn't the only one praying for its safety.

That experience has left a permanent mark in my memories. We believed that short-timers paid their dues and were entitled to safe passage when their tour ended. Of course, we knew some didn't make it out of country safely. But, this was an experience we personally observed.

When the light of the tracers finally ended, we knew God must have copiloted that plane from Harm's way. At first we applauded. Then, the reality of the moment hit and we realized we were under attack.

Since we were Army Security Agency, we weren't expected to have infantry assignments. We were issued M-14's and no ammunition for them. The arms sergeant had been drinking and wasn't able to find the key for the ammo shed. He thought he would just shoot the lock off – before being subdued by others.

Someone gained access and for the first time, ammo was distributed to us.

Nevertheless, it was the start of reality for many of us. I had only been in-country for 3 months, 3 months of enemy inactivity.

Before you beat up on me and the Army too badly, let me say I had the good fortune to be assigned to duty at Clark and Tan Son Nhut Air Bases for over 2 years of my service. The Air Force treated us really well!

At Clark, our commanding officer felt we, as tenants, should stand alerts when the Air Force did. Apparently, he didn't realize the alerts were for

flight line personnel. As we skir-mished around the antenna fields with our weapons, Air Force personnel were "required" to laugh at the soldiers.

Tan Son Nhut didn't give us much access to anyone outside of our unit.

You may be interested to know that there is a Davis Station (home of the 509th RRCUV) on Youtube. It was made available to Vietnamese officials after the U.S. left. They felt it wasn't up to their standards. That didn't set well with me.

Even though Davis Station lacked a lot of amenities, it was "home" for us. And, I think most of us are defensive of our homes whether or not they are the biggest or the best. Every time I walked through our compound, I realized how fortunate we were to have roofs over our heads. And, the rest of my company finally realized that too during mortar and rocket attacks when we had TDY in the bunks.

I ramble on sometimes so if you are still reading, thank you also for that courtesy.

SPEAKING OF REUNIONS!

377 Security Police Squadron (Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN) Reunion
April 28 – May 1, **2011** Branson, MO
Contact: James Stewart, O.D.
jestewart@centurytel.net
810-639-5755

PROOF OF SERVICE IN VIETNAM

Hello All,

After more than 3 years of research and aggravation we have received a letter from the Air Force stating the following:

"After a thorough review of your official military record and provided documentation, we were able to verify your entitlement to the AFOUA and the Vietnam Service Medal...**while as-**

signed to the 552nd Electronics Maintenance Squadron, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam, from May 1966 to September 1966."

All those who have given moral support and direction - thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We were able to contact the Ops Officer of Big Eye Task Force and after several communications he recognized Allan from an old picture and wrote a statement regarding Allan's service at TSN, Vietnam.

We've learned a lot, mostly about the camaraderie of all those who served in a military service and their (your) willingness to share information, give directions and addresses, suggestions, organizations to go to....the list is endless. Hopefully you all know how much it is appreciated. As for what we have learned, we will share it with anyone who needs or wants the information - and I have already.

Thank you again - surely the VA will recognize the Air Force decision but at least Allan has his status of Vietnam veteran established.

Allan and Sue Kofoid
552nd Elect. Maint. Sq.
Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam
April 1966 / July 1966
(Verified and substantiated by the Air Force!!!!)

Editor's Note: The above is in response to an email awhile back from Sue and Allan which many of us responded to with suggestions and good wishes. It was REALLY good to get this email from them.

{OK—you're now two thirds of the way through this issue. Time for you to take a break, go back to page 3, print out the Registration form, fill it out and send it in.}

And now it's time for me to realize that I managed to fill in this final small space for this issue. ☺

AUGIE AND ME

By: Michael J. Spylios
377th SPS
Jun 71-Jun 72

I haven't spoken of this in years but, I would like to share with you the details of the stray pup I found. It had just been born and abandoned. The pup still had film covering it's eyes. I had mama-san nurse it to health. I named him Augie, a shepherd mix. He was my companion for about eight months. He lived in the barracks with me. He was the unofficial barracks mascot. Augie went on mobile patrols with some of the guys while I was stationed at one of the gates. He would go with anyone with a standard issue Base Police helmet liner.

They would pull up to the barracks, honk the horn and Augie would jump in the back seat of the jeep and patrol with the guys. I would meet up with him at the armory after my shift.

Augie was a constant companion that got me through some tough times. I was planning to bring him home and was in the process of getting the necessary paperwork.

One day while at work. A group of NCO's tasked with getting rid of stray dogs (there were numerous strays on TSN at the time-many diseased). Augie wasn't one of them. I bathed and pampered him regularly.

This didn't mean anything to this band of brave noncoms. I was informed by my peers that while I was at work 4 of these brave souls called Augie. He went with them in their Jeep and never returned. It's assumed they took him to the perimeter of the base and disposed of him like they did the diseased dogs. I went looking for him but to no avail. I never saw him again.

That day the four brave souls (who I have never seen before) arrived at my barracks. They came right into my cubicle without addressing themselves or stating a reason why they were

there. I can only assume that they came to gloat or to test my reaction. I was too grief stricken to care and did not give them the satisfaction. They left as quickly as they came in and to this day I don't know who they were or their names.

I was a double digit midget at the time. I knew that I needed to keep my composure if I wanted to get back to the world to my family and fiancé on time.

I swallowed my pride and my grief and let them gloat. They just stood there smiling.

This is the primary reason I never considered making the Air Force a career. I did my 4 years of active duty, 2 years inactive and never looked back.

Don't misunderstand me, I am proud to have served and to be an Air Force veteran. However, that experience alone left me with no desire to pursue a career.

I find peace knowing that the 4 brave souls will have to answer to a higher source for this act when their time comes.

I think of Augie almost daily and I still miss my little buddy.

Thanks for hearing me out.



A GOOD SCATBACK STORY

Larry,

Jim Reed here, SCATBACK, Tan Son Nhut, June '69 to June '70.

I have recently published a book titled: "Turning Final, a Pilot's Autobiography." Each Chapter comprises an as-

signment within the Air Force or in Civilian Life.

There is one chapter dedicated to the year I spent in SCATBACK and has several stories that you are welcome to use in the short stories portion of Revetments if you think they are appropriate. And, if you don't think they are appropriate for Revetments, that would be understandable. Here is an example:

Excerpt for "Turning Final:"

On one of our weekly T-39 trips to Clark Air Base in the Philippines, we had a secretary from the Embassy on board. In the climb out from Saigon, I decided to play a little trick on the Cager (FAA Controller) that was working Saigon Center. He was a good friend, a black fellow that stood well over six feet tall and had a voice like Paul Robeson, the singer that sang 'Ol Man River', in the 1936 version of the movie 'Showboat'.

In those days, in the war zone, there were scant few females and you never heard a female voice on the radio. I decided that when we reached our assigned altitude - which required a mandatory call to departure - that we would have the secretary make the call and see how he reacted. I asked her and she agreed.

During the climb we had her practice on interphone with the headset. "Saigon Center, this is Scatback Hotel, level at Flight Level 290." She practiced until she had it down perfect. When we arrived at the assigned altitude we gave her the headset and she made the call "Saigon Center, this is Scatback Hotel, level at Flight Level 290."

Without hesitation my friend came back with "Uhh! Scatback Hotel - I think your Copilot's got his seat belt a little too tight!"

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

Revetments is an official publication of the Tan Son Nhut Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564-0236
The Association is a non-profit fraternal organization chartered under the appropriate statutes and law.

President: Robert Robinson Gales
Vice President/Revetments Editor: Larry E. Fry
Treasurer: Carol Bessette
Secretary: Dale Bryan
Dir. of Communications/Webmaster: Charles Penley
Director of Marketing: Johnnie Jernigan
Dir. of Membership Development: George Plunkett
Director of Public Relations: Richard Carvell
Director of History: Bob Laymon
Chaplains: Rev. Dr. James M. Warrington,
Rev. Dr. Billy T. Lowe; and Rev. Bob A. Chaffee
Co-Founders/Presidents Emeriti: Don Parker and John Peele
President Emeritus: Wayne Salisbury

Web Site: www.tsna.org

Annual Membership: \$20.00
Five Year Membership: \$80.00
Life Membership: \$180.00



Michael J. Spylios	NH	Jun 71 - Jun 72	377th SPS	mspylios@yahoo.com
Andy Vaquera	TX	Jan 66 - Nov 66	8th Aerial Port Squadron	andyvaquera@sbcglobal.net
Doug Seward	FL	Jul 70 - Jul 71	12th RITS	dougsewardb52@msn.com
Richard E. Ottensman	OH	Nov 66 - Nov 67	377th SPS "C" Flight Echo Sector	rottenman@aol.com

TSNA and its officers, directors, employees and agents do not make any guarantees of any kind about the content, accuracy, or timeliness of information in the TSNA newsletter, *Revetments*. The use of information from this newsletter is strictly voluntary and at the user's sole risk. TSNA shall not be liable for any damages of any kind related to the information in this newsletter. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and do not constitute the opinion or policy of TSNA.