



# REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

APRIL 2012



## A Preview of the National Museum of the Air Force

By: Carol Bessette  
TSNA Treasurer

Those members who are debating whether to attend the next TSNA reunion in Dayton may well have their minds made up after roaming around this Virtual Tour of the Museum—it now includes the Southeast Asia War Gallery: [www.nmusafvirtualtour.com](http://www.nmusafvirtualtour.com)

If you click on this, don't expect to accomplish much in the next few hours; it can be addictive.

And come to Dayton to see the real thing. The Museum (specifically the SEA Gallery) is fully embedded with audio and video hotspots, and touch-screen devices have been located throughout the area. The reunion planners are arranging time to visit the Museum, plus our banquet will be in the Museum, beneath the wings of its aircraft displays.

## A DAY AT TSN

Two members of TSNA (Russ Jansky, and Walter Duke) have written to me with the following link to a video on Youtube about a "Day At Tan Son Nhut".

If you have not seen this travelling around the internet, here is a link to it:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=103kHGjdy9w>

Enjoy—it is interesting.

Larry Fry  
Editor, Revetments



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

It would seem that April of this year is defined with the scriptural admonition "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is of God". The glorious month of April holds Palm Sunday and Easter and the day of Caesar known as April 15, income tax day.

For most of us, these days affect our very being! For edification, all three event days fall on a Sunday in April 2012 (only mathematics can figure out how often this happens). Were this Chaplain standing in a pulpit he would give this advice. For the Sunday April 15, prepare days and weeks in advance to fulfill your "Caesar" commitment. As for the other two special Sundays, let us prepare for them with a lifetime of awareness of their significance and importance.

We dare not fail to render to Caesar but what happens if we neglect the meaning of the palms and the surprise that greeted a woman named Mary on a Sunday morning centuries ago?

In reality we sweat over the "15th" but we really are able to gratefully celebrate those two earlier Sundays of this month of April 2012.

End of Sermon  
Chaplain Bob

## FALLEN TROOPS TO BE HONORED

As part of "The Education Center at The Wall", there will be a section to honor veterans who were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Education Center is due to break ground in 2014.

A video showing photos, names, and details of fallen soldiers on each par-

ticular day will now include info on those fallen in these recent conflicts.

There are many sites on the internet talking about The Education Center. I suggest you do a search and learn more about it.

Larry E. Fry  
Editor, Revetments

## HISTORY BOOKS

Fellow Members:

Rob Wilkins of the Weider History Group recently contacted me and offered to sell various military magazines at a discount to our members. Weider publishes 11 different magazines. His contact info follows:

Weider History Group  
MSgt (USAF, Ret.) Rob Wilkins  
Director of Audience Development  
19300 Promenade Dr.  
Leesburg, VA 20176  
Office – (703) 779-8322  
Website – [www.historynet.com](http://www.historynet.com)

This is not an endorsement of his offer and no financial compensation has been received by me.

Thanks,

George

## HISTORY CALENDAR

April 4, 1949: NATO founded.

April 12, 1981: First U. S. space shuttle launched.

April 25, 1898: Spanish-American War begins.

April 30, 1975 Vietnam War ends.





## NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

I arrived at TSN on 12-21-68 after serving at RAF Wethersfield, England. I was assigned to the 1876 Comm. Sq. as a teletype operator. My assignment was for 12 months. However, there was an AF regulation in place that stated "No more than 36 consecutive months overseas unless war has been declared." After questioning my chain of command and receiving no help, I wrote Congressman Bob Casey who started a Congressional Investigation. The outcome provided me with 2 options: (1) Return to the U. S. immediately for reassignment. (2) Volunteer to serve in Vietnam until July 10, 1969 and return to the U. S. for an early Honorable Discharge to return to school. After signing the Volunteer statement, I gave the Commander the names of 3 friends (Don Ackersn, Aaron Harvey, John Hagan) who were also eligible to

return on 7-10-69. I returned home to complete my education (BS; Med; PhD) and recently retired from Teacher Retirement Systems in Texas with 42 years credit. 5 years elementary teacher; 3 years High School Assistant Principal; 30 Years Elementary Principal; 4 years military credit. My 38 years were with Deer Park Independent School District. I look forward to connecting with others who served at TSN.

Dr. Robert (Bobby) Garcia  
1876 Communications Squadron  
Dec 68—Jul 69

Mid 1969, we were flying our 14 day shuttles out of Cam Rahn Bay. Some genius at 315th Air Division directed the swapping of the "A" and "B" model C-130's. We moved to

TSN and the aircrews were billeted in a hotel in Saigon. The C-130A models operated out of TSN for a few months and then the aircraft were swapped back as they were.

John Henry Moore  
21st Tactical Airlift Squadron (Naha AB, Okinawa)  
Dec 68—Apr 71

The V. C. hit the base the day before I got there. Nothing happened until I left there in about two weeks. The V.C. did a job on it. Glad I was not there.

Carl J. Ransom  
OL1508,USAF Pacific Postal Courier Region  
Dec 66—Dec 67

### A PREFACE TO THE NEXT PAGE (From an email to the Editor, from Peter Beyette)

Good Afternoon Larry,

I have attached a song that I wrote many years ago, 1978.

I served with Detachment 5, 6922nd Security Wing from 1966 through 1968. (For those who may not know, Air Force Security Service was a separate wing like SAC, TAC etc with headquarters at Kelly "on the hill," AFB San Antonio, under the National Security Agency. I believe that it is now Electronic Security Service. When I was discharged I signed papers saying I would not discuss our mission which I have saved with other memorabilia).

In 1978 I was on a business trip to Erie, PA not far from my home near Buffalo, New York. Having no plans for the evening, I decided to see a movie. I chose "The New Centurions" starring Burt Lancaster as I recall. I did not know prior to viewing the movie that it was about the early days of US involvement in Viet Nam. Following the movie I returned to my motel room and went to bed. Some where around 3:30 in the morning I woke up went to the desk in the room and wrote the song which I titled "Ten Years After." I did not think about it, I just wrote it in about an hour at which time I went to sleep. It seems significant that, as I recall, years later, in the early eighties there were reports of Viet Nam Vets having problems which were referred to as "ten years after syndrome." I don't know whether anyone else recalls that. I don't think that I made it up. We all have a story, this is mine. Not one day passes that I do not think about the experience and all of those who were lost. This is dedicated to all who served.

Be well!



Best regards,

Peter F. Beyette, CME

**TEN YEARS AFTER**  
**By: Peter F. Beyette**  
**1978, Erie, PA**

Ten years have gone by.  
It seems like forever.  
Was it yesterday, now  
tomorrow or never?

Was I over there?  
Can that really be?  
Too many were lost,  
not only me.

Talk to your comrades,  
they say they've forgotten  
Can't really forget,  
the thing was too rotten

Don't know how it ended.  
Don't know if it has.  
How many must die,  
The future and past?

The wounds are now healed,  
diplomatic relations,  
But scars never go  
the men's or the nation's

How can it be past?  
Let it never be future.  
Let us learn from mistakes.  
Save tomorrow from torture.

If you didn't live it  
you'll not understand,  
a far away people  
an unknown land.

I want to go back  
to see if it's real.  
I can hardly remember  
but dreams are with zeal.

She's blonde and green eyed  
her number just three,  
I can't ever tell her;  
I must make her see.

The people you knew  
you really couldn't love.  
The ones that were killed  
you surely didn't loath.

I thought it was duty!  
Wanted to be right.  
Was young and so eager.  
Did I want to fight?

Go tell the nation  
let's do it no more!  
Don't send my son there,  
Let us learn from before

I can't discuss it.  
I don't understand.  
I want to return  
to that faraway land

People please listen!  
It never will end!  
For those who have been there  
The wounds never mend.

There may be some hope  
to make it worthwhile  
if we just don't repeat  
what lives in that file.

Of peace we may talk.  
These years we abhor.  
Please never repeat  
that God awful war.

What can you expect?  
Two years of my life.  
It must stay inside.  
I can't tell my wife.

A void of two years  
of passion and truth.  
It's full of so much,  
makes a man from a youth

My Daddy was sick  
and never got well.  
We were both on our way  
of learning to tell.

He wanted to tell me.  
I didn't understand.  
Lost our last conversation,  
returned to that land

You have taken so much  
that can't be returned.  
The future will tell us  
war must be spurned.

And finally God,  
please grant me this.  
It's ten years gone by,  
please let me have peace.

Editor's note: After preparing what you just read, I wrote Peter and asked him what song might be part of this. Here is his response, which I thought everyone should also read.

Larry,

I had no tune in mind. I just thought of it as a song. I had always thought of finding an artist who had the capability and interest in writing the tune and recording it. I may be on the way to that.

Last Veterans' Day, 2011, I went to the local Made In America Store which is near my home, but I never had taken the opportunity to visit. While there, I met the owner who in turn introduced me to Ricky Lee. Ricky is a young country western singer from PA, who was entertaining at the store. He and the store owner work together. That is another whole story.

Coincidentally, the owner told me that, "Ricky wrote a song about Viet Nam yesterday." He asked me whether I would like to hear it. Of course I said yes. He then introduced me to Ricky who had to read his own song because he had not yet memorized it. Ricky and I discussed the possibility of working together on my song.

I believe Ricky has five cds at this point. When I saw him the week before Christmas entertaining at the store again, he had driven directly from Walter Reed Hospital where he went, on his own, to entertain the troops. The saga continues.

By the way, I am a member of the committee that plans the annual Memorial Day ceremony at a local Viet Nam Veterans' Memorial in a local county park. I also MC the program. Last year at 7:00 a. m. on Memorial Day I wrote another poem which was stimulated by an associate that said I should talk about "real heroes." I read that at our ceremony at 11:00 a.m. It is now hand written, almost a year later. I will one day key it in and send you a copy.

Best regards,

Peter

### THE CALL IS GOING OUT!

Do you hear it? Do you feel it? There is a call going out from Australia to Hawaii, from Alaska to Newfoundland and to all the lower forty-eight states. The Tan Son Nhut Association is having their annual family reunion in Dayton, Ohio from October 11-14, 2012.

This is no ordinary reunion. The TSNA has commissioned a Memorial Bench to be dedicated to All Vietnam Veterans of the male and female persuasion. Yes, each and every one of you Nam vets is to be Honored and appreciated for everything that you have done for us and for our Beloved America. Welcome Home! Thank You! You did good!

There will also be an opportunity for all Nam vets and guests to attend the American Veterans Travelling Tribute on Saturday, October 13. This moving wall will be your chance to recognize and Honor the USA's fallen

Brothers and sisters. It is unforgettable!

You will experience laughter, tears, fatigue (from staying up too late and getting up too early), exchange of information (past and present), midget bullying (that will be Janice Jones—she loves y'all as other Brothers and Sisters), fun and laughter. Did I already mention that the Banquet might well present awards and more recognitions, fantastic speaker, Col. Charles DeBellevue and others and lots of fun and photograph time. It all boils down to the greatest family of all and she is named the Tan Son Nhut Association. Listen to the call. Feel it in your blood and in your heart. Please come if you can and bring a Loved One to share all of this experience with you. You are the most important one attending. You are the Tan Son Nhut Association Vietnam Veteran.

We are losing our Brothers and Sisters, so, come when you can! This could be your last family reunion. It may be your first family reunion. Everyone that I have spoken to has told me it was fantastic! You will have an experience. You will make my own experience a better one just because you will be there.

See you October 11-14, 2012 in Dayton, Ohio.

Hugs and Kisses,

Janice Jones  
TSNA kid sister and Cheerleader



## 2012 TSNA REUNION

The 2012 TSNA Reunion will begin on Thursday, 10-11 and end on Sunday, 10-14.

We have contracted with the Holiday Inn in Fairborn, OH for our 2012 reunion.

Contact info for the Holiday Inn is [www.holidayinn.com/fairbornoh](http://www.holidayinn.com/fairbornoh). Their phone number is 1-(937) 426-7800.

The room rate is \$110. per night. That includes all fees and taxes.

FREE parking.

FREE WiFi throughout the hotel.

FREE Hospitality Suite.

FREE Meeting Room.

FREE Meeting Room with auditorium style seating for guest speakers.

FREE shuttle to and from the airport. It is the responsibility of the GUEST to notify the hotel at least 72 hours prior to arrival.

FREE transportation to and from the NMUSAF and the traveling Vietnam wall.

FREE breakfast daily in the hotel restaurant.

Room reservations will be honored at the guaranteed rate for up to 3 days prior to and after the reunion.

For reservations guaranteed by credit card, the credit card will not be charged until the day of arrival.



You don't want to miss this reunion!

Make your reservations NOW!!

See you in October

## REUNION SPEAKER

On Friday evening, October 12, our banquet speaker will be Colonel Chuck DeBellevue.

1970s-1980s -- Chuck DeBellevue was the first U.S. Air Force weapons systems officer to become an ace during the Vietnam War in 1972. DeBellevue became America's top "MiG Killer" when he and his pilot, Capt. John Madden, downed two MiGs, giving him six in total, the most earned during the Vietnam War.

In October 1971, he was sent to the 555th TFS at Udorn Royal Thai Air Base. As a WSO with the "Triple Nickel," DeBellevue scored his first four aerial victories while crewed with Capt. Steve Ritchie, who became the first USAF Vietnam War ace. DeBellevue became the second when he downed two MiGs on Sept. 9, 1972 while flying with Madden on a four-ship combat air patrol.

During his combat tour, DeBellevue logged 550 combat hours while flying 220 combat missions. His skill as a WSO was recognized when he and the other two U.S. Air Force aces, Ritchie and Capt. Jeff Feinstein, received the 1972 Mackay Trophy, the Veterans of Foreign Wars' Armed Forces Award and the Eugene M. Zuckert Achievement Award.

DeBellevue retired from active duty as commander of the Air Force ROTC Detachment 440, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia Mo., in January 1998, after 30 years of military service.

He retired with numerous awards, including the Air Force Cross, the Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters, the Legion of Merit and the Distinguished Flying Cross with five oak leaf clusters, among others.



## 2012 TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION REUNION SCHEDULE

Thursday	9 AM	Registration Desk Opens and Hospitality Suite Opens
Thursday	????	Hospitality Suite Closes
Friday	10 AM (Buses leave at 9:40 AM, return at 12:15 PM)	TSNA Memorial Bench Dedication
Friday	12 PM-4:30 PM	Hospitality Suite is Open
Friday	2 PM (Buses leave at 1:40 PM, return at 4:15 PM)	NMUSAF Self Guided Tour
Friday	5 PM (Buses return to the hotel at 5:45 PM for those who stayed at the Museum)	NMUSAF Museum Shop opens exclusively for us
Friday	6 PM	Cash Bar Opens in Banquet Area/Aircraft viewing (The C-123, RF-101 and F-4 will have special access just for us)
Friday	7 PM (Buses leave the hotel at 6:30 PM, return after the banquet)	Banquet Seating
	Introduction of Guests	President George Plunkett
	Presentation of Colors	WPAFB Color Guard
	National Anthem	WPAFB Band of Flight Soloist
	Welcome	President George Plunkett
	Missing Man Table Ceremony	
	Invocation & Necrology	
	Dinner	
	Musical Presentation	WPAFB Band of Flight
	Introduction of Guest Speaker	President George Plunkett
	Guest Speaker	Colonel Chuck DeBellevue
	Awards/Coin Presentation	President George Plunkett
	Retirement of Colors	WPAFB Color Guard
Friday	10 PM—?????	Hospitality Suite is Open
Saturday	9 AM—?????	Hospitality Suite is Open
	2 PM (Buses leave at 1:30 PM, return at 3 PM)	The American Veterans Traveling Tribute
Sunday	8 AM-10 AM	Farewell Breakfast

Form 32912

# Tan Son Nhut Association 2012 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 \$125. = \_\_\_\_\_

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (NO EXTRA COST)

- Access to the TSNA Hospitality suite in the Challenger Discovery Room, (drinks, snacks, and war stories!) - \$20. daily if purchased separately.
- Leased bus round-trip to the NMUSAF for the TSNA Memorial Bench Dedication and Banquet.
- Leased bus round-trip to the Americans Veterans Traveling Tribute.
- TSNA Friday Banquet buffet dinner. \$65. if purchased separately.
- FREE breakfast every morning.
- Please circle which activities that you are paying for separately.

Your room rate has been group-discounted to \$110.00 per night. Those without Internet access can call the Holiday Inn, Fairborn (1-937-426-7800). Hotel reservations must be made no later than **September 20, 2012 to receive this special rate.**

**PAYMENT MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 30, 2012.**

**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

4/2012



## Tan Son Nhut Memorial Project Update

We are pleased to announce Johnnie Jernigan has signed a contract with Dodd Monuments beginning the process of casting the two bronze plaques for inclusion within the Tan Son Nhut Memorial. This is a major step forward as we now have all the memorial project's construction components under contract. As the construction phase moves forward, the Memorial Committee will continue to post pictures and related articles in Revetments.

Included in this project update are some photos giving visual looks at the progress being made. The large base of the bench has been finished and it already looks impressive even without the seat slab. Please note the circular hole in the center of the base. In the August 2011 special edition of Revetments, the Memorial Committee said provisions would be made to embed a small amount of soil from Tan Son Nhut as a special tribute binding the air base itself and the black bench together. The soil will be inserted into the hole seen at the top center of the base. In the August 2011 special edition of Revetments, the Memorial Committee said provisions would be made to embed a small amount of soil from Tan Son Nhut as a special tribute binding the air base itself and the black bench together. The soil will be inserted into the hole seen at the top center of the base. The Memorial Committee already has a small amount of soil and if you would like to contribute any Tan Son Nhut soil you may have, please do so by sending it to Johnnie Jernigan. His address is 956 Donham Drive, Beavercreek, OH 45434. Should the association's members contribute more soil than the bench's capacity, the soil received will be blended together before filling the hole. Any soil not inserted into the bench will be spread over ground just before the concrete slab base is poured.

The Memorial Committee is now beginning to plan for the dedication ceremony itself. We have not gotten very far into the planning process but we do know there are museum guidelines to be followed since the memorial is located on an Air Force Base. The dedication ceremony will be as meaningful and memorable as the committee can make it.

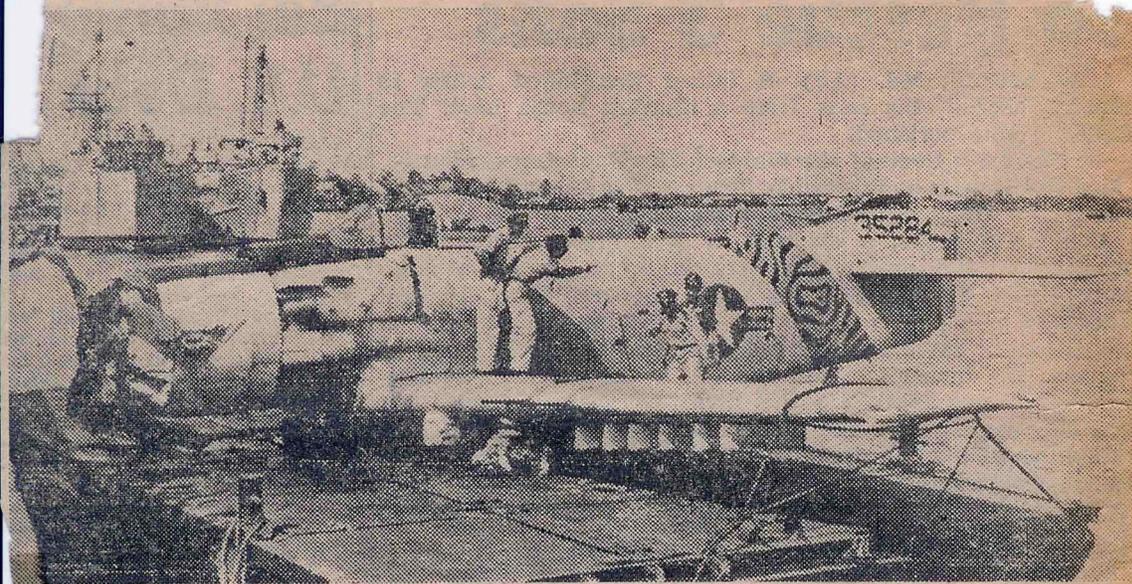
Start your planning for the 2012 Dayton Reunion. The dedication on Friday morning and dinner following later that night inside the museum will make for an event not to be missed. Forty to fifty years ago we were at Tan Son Nhut and without any doubts, none of us had any thoughts of someday reading words such as "black granite bench", "bronze plaques", "dedication ceremony", "banquet inside the Air Force Museum". We get to walk down some paths only once in our lifetime. This upcoming reunion and the dedication ceremony is one of those paths. Reach out to one another and begin making your personal plans to attend. Special times were had while we were together "in country" and this gathering in Dayton in October promises to be just as special.

Thank you for your continued support of the Tan Son Nhut Association and especially the Memorial Project.

The Memorial Committee



# Aftermath of Palace Bombing



**OUT FROM RIVER**—The wreck of one of two AD-6 fighter-bombers which attacked the presidential palace in Saigon Feb. 27 is taken to the Saigon Naval Base by barge after being recovered

from the Khanh Hoi River. It will be examined by authorities. Naval antiaircraft fire brought the plane down 5 miles from the Vietnam capitol. (AP Radiophoto)

(From the Det. 8, 2nd ADVON Chaplain Section Log, typed on a manual typewriter long before spell check and auto correct:)

XXXX

27 February 1962. Chaplain Kilpatrick at Nha Trang. Airmen Fry on guard detail all day due to bombing of President's Palace. Chaplain Kilpatrick returned from Nha Trang at 1500 hours.



TSNA Member Steve Jenkins working on plane which crashed into the Khanh Hoi River after bombing the Presidential Palace, February 27, 1962.

Photo and old newspaper article courtesy of Steve Jenkins. The Revetments Editor has similar pictures taken after we found the plane on TSN.

Note the shape of the propeller from nose diving into the river

**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 501(c)(19) tax exempt veterans' Organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

President: George Plunkett  
Vice President:  
Secretary: Dale Bryan  
Treasurer: Carol Bessette  
Director of Communications/Webmaster: Charles Penley  
Director of Marketing: Johnnie Jernigan  
Director of Public Relations: Richard Carvell  
Director of Veteran and Member Services: Hector Leyva  
Director of Membership: Larry E. Fry  
Co-Director of Membership Development: Bill Coup  
Co-Director of Membership Development: Kerry Nivens  
Revetments Editor: Larry E. Fry  
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 Emeriti: Wayne Salisbury  
President Emeritus: Robert Robinson Gales  
**Web Site: [www.tsna.org](http://www.tsna.org)**

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



**Come on down, or up, or over, or in to—**

**BUT COME!!**

Fellow Members,

I sincerely apologize for not contributing a CQ column last month, but I had a severe case of sinusitis and spent the better part of two weeks in bed.

Our guest speaker scheduled for Saturday morning of the Reunion, Taryn Davis, had to cancel her visit with us due to a scheduling conflict that she did not realize until recently. Taryn is the proud military widow of Michael Davis, and is the founder of the American Widow Project and one of CNN's 2011 top ten heroes of the year. Her organization has more than 1000 members and any contributions to her organization would be greatly appreciated. She promised to visit with us at a future reunion.

The Memorial Bench Committee has done a fantastic job of designing our bench. The dedication ceremony will be one of the highlights of this year's reunion.

Please do not hesitate to send in your reunion registration and payment. We need to get a firm grip on projected attendance for planning purposes.

See you in Dayton !!!

George Plunkett  
President, TSNA



Alvin T. Pontarelli, from Rhode Island. Jun 67-Jun 68. 377th CES. Email: [pont6@verizon.net](mailto:pont6@verizon.net).  
James B. McCarthy, from Florida. Oct 72-Dec 72; Apr 73-May 73. 8th Aerial Port Squadron. Email: [rjs10@aol.com](mailto:rjs10@aol.com).  
Barry R. Hewelt, from Michigan. Oct 67-Oct 68; 12th RITS. Email: [barryhewelt@aol.com](mailto:barryhewelt@aol.com).  
William A. Frazier, from Colorado. Dec 69-Jan 71; 377th CES. Email: [cmsgt89@msn.com](mailto:cmsgt89@msn.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.