

REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

DECEMBER 2013

By: Bernard Bucholz 1876th Communications Squadron

I spent Christmas 1967 at work in the 7th Air Force Command Post Comm. Center. Christmas greetings were going back and forth between the comm. centers on all the teletype circuits in addition to the normal traffic. Many people brought cookies, candy, and other edibles received from home to share. We also had received from the Red Cross or USO a couple of large mail bags full of Christmas cards from citizens from all over the USA and we enjoyed looking through them.

Recollections Christmas 1969

By Don (Big Al) Segraves 377th SPS

I was an A1C, assigned to Bravo Sector, 3/69-3/70. A lot of us in Bravo Sector made bets with other sectors to "pop" our pop flares at midnight on Christmas, Dec 69. I was assigned to Tango 16 that night and the observation tower was right next to the Shell tank farm, also across the road from Bravo Bunker 7.

Well there were prevailing winds which almost prevented me from doing so, but I took the top cap off a couple of flares and put the cap underneath and slapped the cap with my hand, sending the flare skywards. I saw all kinds of flares going up. Not only our sector but outside the fence line with all kinds of colors of tracer rounds going up in the air.

When we got off work in the morning, lots of the guys had gotten "care" packages from home and we drank beer, Barbequed, and shared what we received from home.

One airman, nicknamed "tank", honest

to God, received a case of Coors beer from his family. In those years you could only get Coors west of the Mississippi, and in country you had to drink what the Class VI store had.

Also the two large white radar domes had Christmas lights decorated all over it. We thought what a great target to aim at (for the VC). Sure enough, Dec 19 there was a rocket attack and a couple of the 122mm. rockets landed near the domes.

Coming in from downtown Saigon, you could see the lights miles away.

Anyway those were some of my recollections from Christmas December 1969.

Don (Big Al) Segraves E-6,retired after 25 yrs with the 55th Aerial Port Sq. (USAFR) at Travis AFB, CA.

My Christmas Story

By Fred Stein 460th TRW

I have been a member of TSNA for ten years or so; and my family and I attended the Reunion near Chanute AFB, Illinois in 2004. Here is my Christmas memory at TSN:

I arrived at TSN AFB in November 1968. My AFSC was 402X0, an aerial photo systems repair technician. I worked on the RF-4C's in the 12th and 16th TRS. To continue on with my Christmas story, I was sent TDY, mid Dec, to Phu Cat AFB, near Qui Nhon, north of Cam Ranh Bay, up the coast. I was at Phu Cat for over two months. My job there was to turn around RF-4C's that had flown a sortie from TSN, and were flying another sortie before returning to TSN. The story on the flight line, a day or two before Christmas Day, was that Bob

Hope and his entourage was coming to the base. Earlier, a C-7 Caribou landed with its nose decorated in red. and a Santa Clause painted on the fuselage. Yep, Mr. Chuckles himself had landed, and there would be entertainment soon. I was on duty on the flight line on Christmas Day. There were only one or two birds expected in, to be turned around, but it was my turn to stay on duty as backup / on call. My NCOIC, a young Staff Sqt, told me to "disappear", as he would handle any work that came up. Bless his heart, I thanked him several times, and I was gone.

By the time I arrived at the site of the Bob Hope Show, there were thousands of troops already waiting. People were sitting everywhere, and anywhere, in an attempt to be part of this historic event. There were awesome sound systems set up, so that everyone could hear the show.. From my vantage point, everyone on stage appeared to be two inches tall, as I was far to the rear of the audience. It was a wonderful show full of comedy and entertainment, with Rosie Grier, Ann Margaret, the Gold Diggers, Les Brown Orchestra, and many others who I do not recall. Bob was his usual charming, humorous self. Everyone loved him and his cast of entertain-I was sent back to TSN in Feb. 69 and I remained there until I shipped "world" back to the in Nov 69. I stopped enroute at Anderson AFB Guam to visit my twin brother. who was stationed there for 18 months, as a top- secret crypto decoder/encoder. He and I had an early holiday celebration visit for two days. And after my 30 day leave, I was assigned to Beale AFB CA. until I was discharged Dec 70, along with my twin bro, who was stationed at Vandenberg AFB CA later in 70. We drove home together back to the Midwest on Dec 9, 1970.

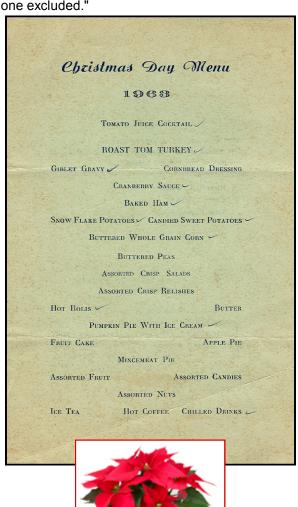


CHRISTMAS 1963

TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE

By: Bob Jarboe TSN '63-'64. 377th USAF Dispensary

It was a time as we all know when we were all so far from home and our leaders would always do their best to make us feel at home as we enjoyed one of our most valued traditions. You will note that I checked off those items which I had planned to partake. It is 45 years later, but, I still recall some of my fondest military memories during my assignment at Tan Son Nhut. Like as written: "All included, none excluded."



TSN CHRISTMAS 67

By Jim Stewart 377th SPS Sept 67 – Sept 68

I was stationed at Tan Son Nhut from Sept. 67 through Sept. 68 in the 377th Security Police Sentry Dog Section as a dog handler. I have attached a photo of my dog Dobe 7X49 and me from December 1967 probably taken by Bob Need's photography unit.

Here's my tale:

On Christmas eve 1967 I was posted with my sentry dog Dobe on post kilo 13 north of the runway. Most K9 posts had a small sand bag bunker on them. Dobe and I were taking a break at the bunker. I was listening to the Armed Forces radio broadcast of the John Doremus show on my "unauthorized" radio. Bing Crosby was singing White Christmas. I sat there with tears in my eyes feeling very home sick and sorry for myself. Bing Crosby's version of White Christmas is still my favorite Christmas song. Every time I hear it I think of my time at Tan Son Nhut.

A Christmas Prayer (Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850-1894)

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus,
That we may share in the song of the Angels,
The gladness of the shepherds and the wisdom of
The wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of Love All over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children, and the Christmas evening bring Us to our beds with grateful thoughts, Forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

Amen

(Sent in by Janice Jones, TSNA Cheerleader)



From Tan Son Nhut to Port au Prince A lesson well learned, and passed on by

Joseph E. Thompson Jr. MAJ, CA, USAR

In October of 1971, I PCSed from Beale AFB in California to Tan Son Nhut Air Base in the Republic of Viet Nam. I was essentially a brand spanking new Air Force E4, and also a "newbie" to TSN. I was so new that I was still wearing the standard green stateside fatigues with the Blue and White name tapes. One day that October, after all the in processing was over and I was finally working on the flight line, my Shop Chief sent me up to the main part of the base in the shop's blue pickup truck. I do not really recall what I was sent for, but I can remember the events of the return trip very clearly.

When I reentered the flight line from the area near the Aerospace Ground Equipment (the light carts and generators we used to maintain and service the aircraft), I became disoriented, not really sure where I was or how to return to the Fuel System Repair Area located at the end of the flight line. All I knew was that I had to get over to where the "gooney birds" revetments were and make a left. I also knew how late I was and what would have been done to me at Beale for such an offense. Unbeknownst to me as I sweated inside the hot pickup, I was also being followed by the Law Enforcement SPs in their 1/4 ton truck. When I reentered the flight line they had the pleasure of seeing me drive a little too fast, in addition to not executing the proper passing procedures in the vicinity of a C-47 getting ready to "pull chocks." The SP's judiciously pulled me over and asked me for my Military drivers license, specifically the one with "Viet Nam" stamped on it. As my luck of the day would have it, this particular license was in my locker in the barracks. What else could go wrong?

I quickly envisioned myself now having a "chat" with the squadron commander, CPT Matthews, regarding my unique driving skills and lack of flight line safety knowledge. I pleaded with the SPs that I needed to get back to my shop to return the truck. They agreed, and as soon as we pulled into my work area my shop chief, Technical Sergeant "Shorty" Yarbrough, appeared from the "office," nothing more than a plywood and tin-roofed affair. One of the SPs immediately gave him a full briefing on my inefficiencies as a driver. Shorty listened to the tale and then said to the SP, "This man just got here, and he will get into a lot of trouble. Please let me handle this."

The SPs reluctantly agreed to let TSGT Yarbrough handle my punishment, and released me to his custody. As they left he looked at me and said in his most stern voice, "Number One, what were you doing speeding on the flight line?!? What were you doing passing an aircraft?!?" When I could offer no immediate explanation, he proceeded to

properly chew my butt. The experience was sufficiently unpleasant that I found myself considering that it would have been better had the SPs taken me away. Finally, Shorty looked at me and said, "You know what, Sergeant Thompson? Your new name is 'Hot Rod!' Come on, Hot Rod, let's get a cup of coffee." For the remainder of my tour in Viet Nam, everyone in the Fuel Shop knew me by that name. I never forgot the incident, or Shorty sticking up for me, and I also didn't do any more speeding on the flight line. I knew that if the same thing had happened at Beale, my shop chief would have probably fed me to the nearest lions, even if that meant a long drive to the closest zoo.

Many years later, I am still in the military, having made the move to the Army, earned a commission, and eventually found myself in the Reserves. To my surprise and great pleasure I had the unique ability to pass on the wisdom taught me that hot morning in 1971, this time in another hot climate. In September of 1994 I was attached to the Civil Military section of the 10th Mountain Division during OPER-ATION UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. One day I received a call at the Civil Military Operations Center from a very irate MP who was working the entry point to our compound. "Major Thompson! We just had one of your sergeants leave out of here speeding, and carrying Haitian nationals in the back of the HMMWV!" I asked him to let me handle it. When the offending staff sergeant returned from Port au Prince I properly chewed his butt in a fashion that I hoped would have made Shorty proud, and then christened him with my nickname of 23 years earlier: "Hot Rod." I experienced déjà vu that evening as his buddies picked up the new moniker, but the label had the desired effect: his driving became more responsible and there were no more complaints from the MPs.

Thanks, Shorty, for bailing me out: I never forgot it!



Joe Thompson (at the Dedication of the Tan Son Nhut Association Memorial at the NMUSAF, October 2012)

To those who wore our nations uniform and left families at home and went overseas to fight or protect... to those who gave up Christmas and other holidays and served at sea, on aircraft parking ramps, in dust bowls or jungles, in arctic weather or rice paddies picking leeches off your bodies... to those who meant what they said when they promised "so help them God".... Thank you for being the honorable men and women that you were and are. Because of your sacrifice and the sacrifice of those who have passed into the next life, we have enjoyed the most freedom, security and prosperity then any other people in the world. Even though our country is slowly turning against those ideals that we joined to protect, we stepped up, the true one percenters and did our duty.

Happy Veterans Day

EDWARD J DeMORE, MSgt, USAF (Ret)

Hi, Larry!

Thought you'd like to have this picture of Don from the Veterans Day ceremony held on the courthouse grounds in Princeton, IN.

Don, Capt. Tim Bottoms and Sheriff George Ballard salute during the playing of Taps at the end of the program. The three men were part of the Gibson County Sheriff's Office Color Guard that participated with color guards from two American Legion posts and members of the former Princeton post 1147 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Don had been commander of VFW1147 four times.

Feel free to use any or all of this in the Revetments.

Thank you!

Sue



A Team Effort

The idea for placing a wreath at the TSNA memorial started when we were talking at the Board Meeting during the Chattanooga Reunion about placing a wreath at the Memorial for Veteran's Day. It began to take shape as we got closer and closer to Veteran's Day. A notice was placed in Revetments looking for help. Jimmy Smith, Charles Templeton, and Joe Kricho (who had to later withdraw) volunteered to help. MS Jane Leach at NMUSAF was contacted for permission. She indicated she had informed the appropriate Museum personnel and we were "Good to Go".

I had the honor to lead a team of TSNA members in placing wreaths at the TSNA Memorial on Veteran's Day November 11, 2013 at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. Our plan was to meet at the Memorial between 0845 and 0900 hrs on 11 Nov. It was cloudy, windy, and cool as you can see by the pictures. We placed the flags and rendered a salute to them. We stepped back to the sidewalk and each had the opportunity to speak about what Veteran Day means to them. I talked about my patriotic family (my Dad, 7 uncles, my brother and I, and three first cousins) all served in WWII or Vietnam War. I explained that I was named after the two uncles that didn't make it home from France in WWII. Charles talked about the sacrifices the veterans make. He indicated that the saying, "All gave some, some gave all", was very true, but we must remember and thank the families of the veterans for the support and sacrifice that they provide for "their" veterans. Patriotism does not just apply to the active ser-George Plunkett, TSNA's president, had vice member. sent these words to be read.

Fellow Americans,

Once again it is time to pay homage to those who have worn the military uniforms of the United States of America.

To the members of America's greatest generation, thank you for your defense of freedom and the heavy burden that you paid.

To the veterans who have succeeded us and volunteered to put themselves in harm's way, your service will never be forgotten.

To my fellow Vietnam Veterans, most of whom are retired or are nearing retirement, I say to you, we are now America's greatest generation. It is time for us to pick up the gavel of leadership and do what we do best - lead from the front.

Take the lead in helping our fellow veterans, their families and military widows.

Take the lead in helping the poor, the homeless, the sick, the less fortunate, and the oppressed.

Look in the mirror - are you at peace with yourself? If not, remember, it is never too late to change and become the

person that you always wanted to be.

In this beautiful setting, surrounded by monuments to the Doolittle Raiders, the Tuskegee Airmen, the Mighty 8th and other icons of military aviation, we now have the opportunity to spread our wings and show our fellow Americans that we are equal to the task.

Our great nation needs us again, lead from the front. God Bless America,

George

Jimmy read George's comments above and continued with his feelings followed by a prayer. It went like this:

One year ago, at this very spot; these three memorials were dedicated that we might remember all who served at or transited Tan Son Nhut Air Base during the Vietnam War. Many heroic men and women paid the ultimate price defending the Airbase, and their fellow comrades, from vicious enemy forces in Vietnam. We must always remember their dedication to duty and selfless sacrifice. We must never forget the families of those we honor with these memorials who lost their loved ones. Other brave men and women survived the war but have wounds of grief and memories that haunt their lives even yet today. This Veteran's Day we remember with pride the service of all Veterans; the military currently serving this country all-over the world, all living Veterans, those who have gone on before us, and those who were the casualties of war giving the ultimate sacrifice.

Let us never forget that Freedom is Not Free,

Join me in a moment of silence as we remember our fallen heroes.

Now please pray with me.



The TSNA Memorial at the NMUSAF, November 11, 2013

(Charles Templeton, Johnnie Jernigan, Jimmy Smith)



Heavenly Father we give thanks to you for the love that you have for us and we pray that you will strengthen our love for you. As we remember our departed comrades and their families we pray for comfort and understanding. Be with all who struggle with the memories of war that they may find comfort and peace from their struggles. We pray for your continued blessing on us as a nation. We ask that you would strengthen our faith and help us to understand-that all good and perfect gifts come from you.

Through Your Son we pray -- AMEN

Sharon Jernigan hand made the wreaths and took the pictures. Charles's wife Barb, Charles' brother Bruce and his friend Edith Coulthard also attended and were very complimentary of the ceremony.

Thanks to the Team! It was an honor serving with you on this occasion.

Johnnie Jernigan

MORE 2014 REUNION NEWS COMING SOON!



STAY TUNED!!

ANOTHER ATTRACTION IN EVANSVILLE JUNE 12-15, 2014

The USS LST 325

What is an LST? LST stands for Landing Ship, Tank. These ships were designed in 1942 to land battle ready tanks, vehicles, soldiers, and supplies directly onto enemy beaches. Over 1,000 of these ships were built for World War II. Many more were built for the Korean and Vietnam Wars for their ability to navigate inland waterways.

USS LST 325 participated in several operations, most notable was D-Day at Omaha Beach, Normandy. She was there for Operation HUSKY, the invasion of Sicily in 1943. She sailed as support for the invasion of Salerno, Italy later that year. This ship has seen 70 years of history and survived as the last fully-operational WWII LST.

Come walk these decks and feel the connection to our shared past.





Chaplain's Corner

Just thinking about the "Holiday Season" can be a self-evaluation. It started at our house on a day in late October and grew more and more each day. The recording started with the sound of the mail box closing and now continues uncharted! I thought of making a TSNA contest over the experiment but abandoned the idea after seeing the problems: Judges, communication and time. You see it's over catalogs. No family can match mine for receipt of Holiday Seasonal catalogs!

As of three days before Thanksgiving Day "the box" has held 89 catalogs!!!

Now the self evaluation! What is the purpose or meaning of the Holiday Season? For me it's kicked off with November 20th birthday, then Hanukkah, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Kwanza and climaxed with New Years.

But back to the catalogs: They cover a broad range but with only one theme: buy, spend and ??? Here is the sermon: Each "Holiday Season" event has personal reason, each event has purpose and draws on emotion, memories and commitment. These days of the "season" were designed for a commitment of praise, memory, sharing and love. Each is more than a holiday, it is not just a day to "spend" but is set aside to accept a broader understanding of self, faith and where our world really begins.

Chaplain's suggestion: Let every one of the "Holiday Season" days events begin with a moment to thank God for the day and what it can mean to each of us!

End of Sermon Chaplain Bob Chaffee



Why I Wear this Black Cap

Why do I wear this black cap? Good question, it isn't pretty, its all black, except for the colorful front. The front shows efforts of many wars fought by our sons, dads, and brothers. The black cap I wear is to respect the 58,000 that died in my war. Yes I speak of Vietnam, this was not our proudest period as a nation.

Many of my military brothers returned to our country, not as heroes but much much less. Let me go back to the first black caps I have seen, the second world war.

These gentleman and ladies returned to their homeland as absolute heroes.

Anything less would have been a mistake, they defeated our enemies on two fronts.

On occasion I run into one of these people, perhaps waiting for a wife to shop at a local Wal-Mart. It is easy to shake the hand of this gentleman, I hope you do. Then to another fellow it might have the ribbons that represent our presence in Korea. These are the forgotten heroes, I guess we all thought of the second world war, with it's decided victory, and gave our appreciation to them.

The efforts in Korea are no less than were exercised in that terrible world war.

Somehow we just were tired of war I guess, so the recognition wasn't there.

Now to the war I was involved in, Vietnam. It lasted far too long, to not have a more acceptable conclusion. Many of my brothers returned to the CONUS and were considered to be far less than heroes. Honestly, I took it all as duty and came home in 1973, and continued my life with my wife and two lovely little girls. After many years and time to think I arrived at the obvious fact that my war was the most unliked war ever. So what has happened over the years, many groups have come together and supported our unfavorable war.

I have now decided the least I can do is wear my black cap, somewhat like the song by Johnny Cash "Man in Black". It's a small deed that I do, but surprisingly my countrymen, reach out and shake my hand. This reminds me that we of that war are now recognized as patriots. The larger issue is that now our sons and daughters come home from Iraq and Afghanistan as heroes and are given the welcome they well deserve. That means everything.

This is just my thoughts, and I know I have left out some conflicts that deserve equally as much recognition. A last point, over 1,100,000 troops have died for our great country since the Revolution in 1776.

You decide if its worth it. I think it is.

T J Lawson USAF/Retired 377 CAMS - 377 ABWG Sep 72 - Feb 73

Editor's Note: After receiving this from Thom, I wrote and asked him if it could be used in Revetments.

His answer was: "I would be honored if you use it. Just thoughts I had after looking at a 5 year old holding a folded flag at Arlington. I cried."

Thanks Thom!



(The Three Servicemen Statue, November 11, 2013) (Photo by: Carol Bessette, TSNA Treasurer)

TSNA AWARDS

FROM HARLAN HATFIELD RE: VETERANS DAY

All:

It's time to begin our awards process.

Awards tab.

criteria to me at viet62@aol.com or Rich ers and Sisters. Carvell, our VP, at:

rcarvell@suddenlink.net.

The deadline to receive nominations is Dec 31, 2013.

Thanks.

George

SUPREME MILITARY ORDER OF THE DRAGON

Requirements for this award are that the person be a previous Dragon Award recipient and who has, by his or her efforts, contributed significantly to the operation of the Association for a sustained period of time.

MILITARY ORDER OF THE DRAGON.

A member who performs activities which advance the stated purposes of the Association.

ANCHOR AWARD.

most of our reunions, regardless of the acles in the healing of injuries. cost, location or time of year; or a member who can be called upon to help as Trinie Reiter needed, a "Go To person."

GOLDEN KNIGHT AWARD.

longed record of helping the poor, the we were young. homeless, the underprivileged or who assists veterans of any era and their fami- George B. Starks, 377th CSG, May 70-May 71 lies.

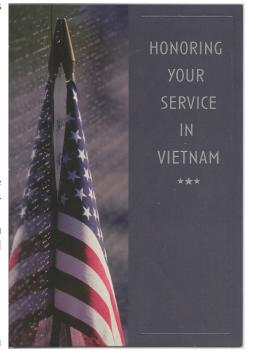
For Veterans Day I received a very special card from my Daughters family. I had never seen or heard of such a card so it was a surprise, as good as Christmas. It's available at Hallmark cards.

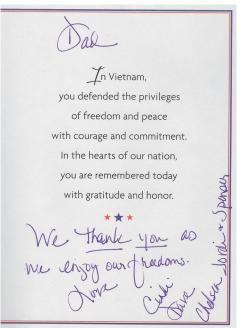
Specific awards and their descriptions can The names on it are Cidni Oseto our daughter, Dave Oseto her husband, Grand be found on our web site under the Daughters Chelsea Oseto (the special ed teacher), Jordi Oseto (studying to be a nurse) and Grand Son Spenser (studying for Criminal Justice).

Please send nominations and justifying As a dear friend said this is not just for Veterans Day but Everyday for our Broth-

WELCOME HOME.

Harlan N. Hatfield TSN Class of 1967 460th AEMS PMEL





NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

n 1966, while visiting her uncle dying of cancer at Brooke Army Medical Center, she became attached to many of the wounded soldiers. She spent most A member who is steadfast in allegiance of her spare time attending to and visiting the patients. In this way she was exto the association. One who has attended posed to much of the tragedy of the war. She feels that she witnessed many mir-

(Written by Donald Reiter, her husband)

Torked CBPO. Airman Assignments. Lived 700 area. Saigon weekend nights. Classes College Park, Maryland—R & R Hawaii. First son A member or non-member who has a pro- George, born while I was in Vietnam. A different time—a different place. When

Just In Case I Die

Mom, Dad, Brother, Sister and Sister-in-law,

This letter is being written to you just in case I don't come home as I had wanted. It will be sent with my other belongings. That is the reason I have not put a date on this letter.

By this, I mean that if the worst happens to me, then know that I love each and everyone with my very being, heart and soul. That God is with me and that, "his will be done."

The thoughts I want to convey in this last letter are hard to accomplish. My mind is racing with so many thoughts that I don't think it is possible to place them all on paper.

The manner in which you raised me to become a young man, no parent could have accomplished more. There were always the hugs and kisses from each of you. There was never a hesitation for any of us to speak these three words to one another, "I Love You."

I think of my mother. My mother who would put her arms around me and tell me that things will be alright. She taught me to sing what I wanted to say to her, because I stuttered so badly. My mother, who will be dear and close to my heart. Always!

I think of my father whom I have greatest love and respect for. Who showed me all things in life and the meaning of life. Even though you and I are separated by thousands of miles, that you are with me always.

I think of my brother, Jerry and his wife Carrie. Jerry was always looking after me and taught me many things about becoming a man. Hunting and fishing with him was the best of times. To explore the forest and lakes, just to see what was there. Carrie's beauty and laughter. Always!

I think of my sister, Clara Imogene. I wanted to let you know that when I dream of you, that you are not the baby infant who died at thirty days old, of double pneumonia. You come to me as an angel of approximately twenty years of age. Your attire is a beautiful white robe. Your beautiful mannerism and peace emanates from you, to me. Always!

I think of my sister Janice. One year, one month, one week and one day older than me. Who was taller than me when I was thirteen and she fourteen? Now I am fifteen inches taller than her, she loves to tell everyone that I am her little brother. Always!

Being at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam is totally different from anything that I have ever experienced. There will probably come a time when I must do my duty to my fellow man.

It will be very possible that a life must be taken, to save another man's life. All life is very precious. Always!

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen !!!

Your son and brother,

Charles Eugene Penley



Graphic by Charles Penley, TSNA Webmaster

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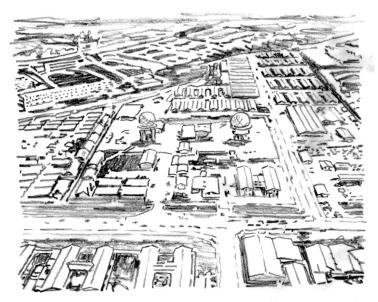
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And our thanks to TSNA Member John Bowen, for his illustration.



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