



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

Lived in 1200 area near 8th Aero Port Building, then 1300 area near Chow Hall, right behind the 2 Radar Domes (white).

Benny was a member of the TSNA. Benny and I worked together a lot here in Westfield. He and I belonged to the VFW Post 1847, and the Vietnam Veterans Chapter 219. We both worked with our North and South Middle Schools each year with Essays for Memorial Day. Also, we both were on our Veterans Council. He is surely missed.

I got to Vietnam 1970. Landed at Bien Hoa first. After a couple weeks I went up to Det. 2, TSN. Worked on a lot of big jobs there. I stayed there most of the year.

Then in August the sappers blew up the Ammo Dump at Cam Ranh Bay. A lot of us went there to clean up the place. What a mess. Then we came HOME.

Would like to become a Life Member in Memory of Benny Goodman. I should have joined years ago!

Frederick R. Benda, Jr.
Sep 70 - Sep 71.
823rd & 544th Red Horse Combat Engineers, in charge of Mason crew.



Lived in barracks 886, the first floor, and worked at PAFCO Relay, near "MARS".

Yes, I was there for "TET". We wound up working nights (16 hrs) on with (8 hrs) off to get sleep, eat, and clean up. We worked seven (7) days a week. I can't be sure but it was for either 3 or 4 weeks straight without stop.

One night a 122 MM rocket hit outside of the Relay and Airman Dave Pettit went down with no signs of injuries. The shift supervisor, a MSgt, had him removed to a storage room where he awaited the medics. No signs of life. The next I heard about him was that he was alive and had woken up in the Morgue. He had hyper-ventilated.

We had an Airmen 1st class Dennis Koneig in our barracks. He was an air traffic controller. I can't be sure but an individual with the same name was a writer for the "MASH" TV Show and a similar incident happened on it, and "Father Mulcahy" was giving him "The Last Rights" and found him breathing.

I often think about "Dave" and wonder how he is doing. Dennis, I tried to get in touch with to see if "Dave" was the story line on that show.

Vietnam - TET and all the experiences I wouldn't have missed for anything.

Think I'm nuts?

Leslie J. Duty III, SSGT USAF
1964 Comm Grp 1876 Comm Sq (PAFCO)
Sep 67 - Sep 68

Lived in Barracks, maintained all aircraft and choppers on base. No Tet. Used to get ground fire once in a while from perimeter, then call in gun ships to clear the enemy out, then napalm. Worked on the 123's with Agent Orange aboard. Guarded by 25th Army Division.

My Diabetes is now with insulin, pills, numbness in feet, joint aches, eye surgery.

Gary H. Bachelor
Jan 69 - Jan 70
436 MAC
Aircraft Electrician E-4

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

It's a New Year! With this announcement with a shout JOY out of my "throve of quotes" I discovered that joy is fit into every religious group, every emotional experience and almost all psychological evaluations. Joy is a part of every century of expression. When we study Buddha we find "we are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves" and the Old Testament in the Psalms we find "Restore unto men the joy of salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit" (51:10). Many women wrote of the spirit of joy such as Mother Teresa "Joy is prayer, Joy is strength, Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls".

For those of us who served in Nam there were moments of question and at special time's moments of great joy. What about this? The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding.

In this year of 2016 the TSNA will again gather together for its annual assembly. He was a poet but also saw our future as a final quote has Charles Dickens words "The pain of parting is nothing to the joy of meeting again"!

As Chaplain I support an important joy: read Luke 2:9-11.

End of sermon,

Chaplain Bob Chaffee



MILITARY NOSTALGIA

Military nostalgia...about those that served. This article sums it up quite well.

Occasionally, I venture back to NAS, Meridian, where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back and says, "Have a good day, Sr. Chief".

Every time I go back to any Navy Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, many years ago.

The military is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced - a place where everybody is busy, but not too busy to take care of business.

Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read somebody's uniform from 20 feet away and know the score.

Service personnel wear their careers on their sleeves, so to speak.

When you approach each other, you can read their name tag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line military formation that looks like a mir-

ror as it stretches to the endless horizon.

I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the tarmac, the bark of drill instructors and the sing-song answers from the squads as they pass by in review.

To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business-especially in times of war.

But I miss the salutes I'd throw at officers and the crisp returns as we criss-crossed with a "by your leave sir".

I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds.

The same while on carrier duty. I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit.

I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender.

Mostly, I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea.

Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it, and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind with their youth. I wish I could express my thoughts as well about something I loved -- and hated sometimes.

Face it guys - Whether you had one tour or a career, it shaped your life.

"A veteran is someone who, at one

point in his or her life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America', with no restrictions."

Author unknown.

Submitted by TSNA member David J. Butler, 232nd Signal Company, USA, Mar 62 – Mar 63.



WHEN I HELD A MAN IN MY ARMS

By: Dan McKegney
1876 Communications Squadron
Aug 67 - Aug 68
copyright 2015

Place: Tan Son Nhut Airbase, South Vietnam.

Time: January 1968

The South Vietnamese TET Offensive started promptly at 0300 hours on 30 January 1968.

The offensive started at Da Nang Airbase and headed south till it reached Tan Son Nhut!

I was an Air Force radio Operator there and on duty at the time. see link: <http://www.vspa.com/tsn-o51-bunker-tet-mckegney-1968.htm>.

Suddenly bullets and 122mm rockets were raining down near the location of our radio shack, which was next to the base ammo dump.

We four radio operators left our radios, grabbed M-16 rifles and proceeded to take a defensive position behind a nearby sandbagged fortification! With rifles on full-auto, we waited, and WAITED more. A group of very nervous 20 year olds we were!! With rifles at the ready and pointed in the direction we believed the enemy would attack, we stood there side-by-side.

Next to me was John, a quiet and unassuming kid, just like me. Suddenly John fell to the ground and, while clutching his rifle, he quivered and shook like a leaf. In a sometimes mumbling and shaky voice, he repeated several times "we are all going to DIE." I laid on the ground next to him. I put my arms around John, and calmly reassured him that we would NOT DIE.

After repeating that several times,, His trembling soon abated and we resumed our posts behind that sandbagged fortification.

After TET concluded, I never again went to downtown Saigon. Before TET, I frequented Saigon.

See link:

http://0036306.netsolhost.com/vietnam_carnival.htm.



(Dan McKegney today)

TET '68

By: Bill Stribling
120th Assault Razorbacks Gunships
Nov 67 - June 68

I served as a door gunner in the 120AHC gunship platoon Razorbacks. I will never forget the morning of Jan. 31st when the TET Offensive started.

REVETMENTS

When the mortars started coming in and the 51 Bunker came under fire, our five minute standby fire team of two gunships stationed between the active and taxiway runways got airborne, and flew to the west end of the runway. The light from aerial flares revealed hordes of VC/NVA attempting to penetrate the wire, as well as masses of them in the dry rice paddies beyond.

There were numerous .51 cal. Machine-guns dug in that immediately took our ships under fire along with all of the AK47's and RPD machine-guns. One of our pilots remarked that there were more green tracers coming up than we could send red tracers down.

By eight o'clock the first morning, we had one crew chief hit badly enough that he went to 3rd. field hospital and eventually to Japan. Several others had minor wounds, and kept flying. At that time, all of our helicopters were shot up so badly, they were unsafe to fly and were grounded. Luckily for us, there were nine Hueys that were being assembled by the civilian contractors at Hotel Three for the US Navy, and they put the armament systems on these, and let us have them. I guess since Tan Son Nhut was in danger of being overrun, and they were on it too, military protocol could be ignored.

When we got flying again, we shot up all of our rockets and machinegun ammo, in fact were out of HE rockets and were using Willie Peter on enemy positions. Imagine that in today's politically correct world.

Our parent company was in Long Binh near the ammo dump, but since there was so much AAA fire they decided they couldn't bring us an ammo resupply. Lucky for us, the Air Force para rescue unit "Pedro" volunteered to fly to Long Binh and bring us all they could. This lasted until a brave Chinook pilot sling loaded us a huge resupply of Rockets and machinegun ammo.

We flew for three straight days non-stop, night and day. Eventually after the base perimeter was secure, the missions shifted to the Phu To Race-track, Cholon area for it seemed like a week. We had no KIA's in all of this, and in looking back on it, God was with us in my opinion. My helicopter was shot down in a big fight on Feb. 8th west of the runway about 10 miles, but that is another story.

The May offensive was in some ways worse on us in that the VC/NVA had learned how to lead helicopters, but that's another story too.

We won a great victory in the battle for Saigon, all of us involved, Air Force as well as Army. The American press told a different story, a story not grounded in truth, but that's the way it was.

I am an old man now, but it all seems like yesterday. Us old "Pigs" meet every year, and reminisce about when we were something we will never be



again.
(Bill Vi-



Stribling in etnam)

MAMASANS

Well, boys, where would we have been without our Mamasan! They are truly the unsung heroines of the Vietnam War!

I tell you, mine was great. she washed clothes, made my bed, shined my shoes and provided a lovely and gracious smile.

Attached is a pic of my mamasan and her young daughter, as well as the Christmas card she gave me in 1967. Where is she now, I wonder. Is she the one cutting my hair at the local styling salon, or does she now clip toenails and fingernails? god only knows

Let's hear a big cheer out there for our mamasan, boys!!!!

Dan Mckegney
Tan Son Nhut AB
1876th Communications Squadron (8/67-8/68)



EDITOR'S NOTE: My apologies to Dan McKegney—this should have been in the December issue, but I goofed.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well we are heading into a new year and towards our 2016 Reunion. Our boots on the ground Kerry Nivens has been a busy man lining up some great tours and has got us a great speaker.

Got an email from Kerry and things are coming together. Hoping everyone is making plans for Huntsville? This is a great area with lot's to do. Our hotel is a really nice place (thanks George).

I know we are getting a lot of renewals of members, but have you signed up a new one yet? I know you all can do that.

Let's all talk with a member who has not attended a reunion and try to get them to come. We get them there we will get them back.

Hoping all have a great New Year and a Healthy one also.

Randall W Brown
President TSNA



2016 TSNA Reunion
Huntsville, AL

September 22-25

PLAN TO BE THERE!!

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

While at TSN, I resided in the 619th TCS/505 TC Gp Compound Barracks in the “700 Area” Barracks Area. I was either at TSN or elsewhere in-country during Tet and/or other battles/engagements.

(Editor's Note: Russ got around Vietnam, that's for sure. Here is his list of places stationed:)

4 Jan 68—18 Jan 68: 619th Tactical Control Squadron, Tan Son Nhut.

18 Jan 68—5 Jan 69: Detachment 1, 619th TCS, Duong Dong Airport, Phu Quoc Island, RVN.

5 Jan 69—Mar 71—619th TCS, Tan Son Nhut.

27 Nov 69—26 Dec 69: Detachment 3, 620 TCS, Quang Tri, RVN.

Mar 71—Jan 72: Detachment 4, Air Force Advisory Team 4, Soc Trang AB, RVN.

Jan 72—Apr 72: Air Force Advisory Team 4, Binh Thuy AB, RVN.

(Russ has also participated in two recent TSNA presentations at The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall)

AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE MEMORIAL

A tranquil new monument near the Capitol in Washington, D. C., is the first-ever public tribute to the more than 4 million disabled veterans in America. The memorial (avdlm.org), features a reflecting pool and a ceremonial flame.



TSNA Member Carol Bessette sent me this info; and Member Gary Redlinski has also been there.

Check out the AVDLM website for more information.



Commando Vault

By: Garry Arndt
4th SOS (AC-47 Gunship)
Aug 69—Aug 70

"Commando Vault" was the project name given to the ten and fifteen thousand pound bomb program. The program started out at Da Nang and was transferred to Cam Ranh Bay due to Port facilities and larger bomb dump area. I was assigned to the 14th Aerial Port Squadron in January 1970 after the AC-47 Spooky Gunships were phased out.

The bombs would be offloaded from the ship to 12 foot platforms that we had built specially for the bomb drops. The platforms came crated and un-assembled. Our section within the 14th APS consisted of Loadmasters and Air Freight Specialists. We would then rig the bombs with all the straps and tie-down devices. When a mission was scheduled, Munitions personnel would deliver the bombs to the Flight line on rollerized trailers. The bombs would be transferred to the K-Loaders and loaded onto the aircraft. The 463rd Airlift Wing, using C-130B model aircraft, was assigned the "Airdrop" role. The 463rd was stationed at Clark AFB in the Philippines and rotated aircraft and crews to Cam Ranh Bay for this purpose. Once loaded aboard the C-130, we would tighten all the tie-downs and rig the extraction parachute. Munitions personnel would then 'Fuse' the bomb with the four foot nose-probe fuse and a back-up fuse in the back end. During the drop mission, extra loadmasters were needed. We at the 14th APS filled these slots on the crew. I personally flew on two of the drops. Bomb drops were normally made at seven or eight thousand feet.

We, in the 14th, kept the six pound nose cones that Munitions removed when fusing. These we had chromed in Saigon and each member was presented one when we rotated back to the states.

Different websites contain more information.



MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM

Editor's Note: The following is the text from an email to TSNA President Emeritus George Plunkett. It is from William Barlow, Donor Relations Officer, Medal of Honor Museum Foundation

I enjoyed our conversation and appreciate you making time to meet with me for lunch. We appreciate your support of the Medal of Honor Museum and I hope we can count on your continued support in whatever way you feel is appropriate. I am enclosing a link to our website and hope you will go to it for a full update and review of our progress. There is a section on the bottom right of this site for you to register and stay up to date on the latest news about this worthwhile project. I hope you will share the website and my contact information with others you feel might have an interest in learning about and supporting the Medal of Honor Museum.

<http://www.mohmuseum.org/>

<http://www.mohmuseum.org/museum#site>



THE SOURCE OF TSNA

The 360th TEWS and the 460th TRW are the two groups that evolved into the Tan Son Nhut Association.



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Graphic courtesy of: Scott Jones, Life Member, Kingsport, TN

From the creative minds of Don Parker and John Peele, the Tan Son Nhut Association grew from a seedling into what it is today.

The beginning was July 1996, and the Tan Son Nhut Association has grown each and every year.

Share your story and your photographs.

- 1. Parker, Don E., 360th Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (October 1967 - October 1968)**
- 2. Peele, John , 460th Field Maintenance Sq. (November 1969 - November 1970)**

IN MEMORIAM

Mr. Terry K. Bootle	Cinnaminson	NJ	Oct 65 - Oct 66	377th SPS
Mr. J. Les Love	Hartford City	IN	Oct 67 - Oct 68	25th Infantry

NEW MEMBERS



Leslie J. Duty III	Randallstown	MD	grampyj@verizon.net	Sep 67 - Sep 68	1964 Comm Grp 1876 Comm Sq (PAFCO)
Michael G. Richardson	Hartford City	IN	mike@printersexpress.com	72-73	U. S. Navy Saigon Harbor
Frederick R. Benda, Jr.	Westfield	MA	bfrederick45@comcast.net	Sep 70 - Sep 71	823rd&544th Red Horse Combat Engineers
Gary H. Bachelor	Hollister	FL	gbach1949@gmail.com	Jan 69 - Jan 70	436 MAC Aircraft Electrician E-4
James H. Turner	Ocklawaha	FL	booger2011@gmail.com	Aug 70 - Aug 71	69th Signal Bn.
Philip W. McFalls	Southern Pines	NC	pmcfalls@earthlink.net	Jun 63 - May 64	1964 Comm. Grp
Russell Clark, Jr	Fort Washington	MD	russ.clark10@gmail.com	Jan 68 - Apr 72	619th Tactical Control Squadron
Charles R. Dampman, Jr.	East Greenville	PA	charlesr@crdampman.com	Apr 71 - Aug 71	834th Air Detachment Division

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