



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



NOVEMBER 2018

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By: Jimmy Smith
TSNA Chaplain

Greetings fellow TSNA Members: As your newly elected Chaplain it is my privilege to serve you in this capacity and my goal is to provide you with words of encouragement and support in future issues of this publication. As an introduction, I have been a member of the TSNA for over five years; I have served Veterans for over 11 years as Chaplain for the VFW Post level, VFW 3rd District level, Chaplain for the Dayton National Cemetery and Chaplain Services volunteer at the Dayton VA Hospital. I have experienced open arms of fellowship and have been welcomed at each and every TSNA Reunion I have been able to attend. The bond of fellowship and love Vietnam Veterans have for each other in this organization and their families is totally remarkable. This organization is true to their words of "all included, none excluded". Words sometimes escape me on how to express these feelings adequately. If you missed the reunion in Dayton in September, you missed a great time of fellowship with your family.

I ask each of you, "what service have you performed or activity have you been involved with this past year to help a fellow veterans and support your TSNA organization? I challenge each of you to take action and get further involved in supporting TSNA and other veterans locally.

The Bible clearly teaches us the principles of loving God and loving people which includes loving our neighbors, our TSNA family and fellow veterans. Merely helping them not expecting anything in return, it is a true Blessing. Think about what you can do to help a TSNA family member or fellow veteran in your service to the organization, keeping in mind that what you do for others is showing your love for them. Think new members!

Until next month, this is your Chaplain signing off. Have a blessed month and God's speed.

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

Visited TSN often (Average about once a month). TDY at TSN 15 January - 2 February 69, training newly-arrived AC-119 "Shadow" Gunship crews on Gunship operation and tactics in III Corps of South Viet Nam.

John F. Bessette
3rd Special Ops. Sqdn. Detachment, Bien Hoa AB
May 68 - Aug 69
(Husband of the late Carol Bessette, Treasurer of TSNA)

TSN. I was a child. 1968 Tet was awful. I was evacuated out of the base during the Tet Offensive.

Nancy Kieu Nga Avila
San Jose, CA

Arrived at TSN June 70 at 20 years old. Found several buddies from Electronics School, Ft. Monmouth, NJ., already there. I worked at site Octopus Tropo during my entire tour. We kept the 29 foot dish antenna's and radio communications up and running.

I was part of the 1st Signal Brigade, 362 Signal Bttn.

After college, retired after 40 years working for U. S. Dept Health & Human Services.

Eugene V. Schulte
Jul 70 - Jun 71
Radio Cable Co. Signal Support Agency, Saigon

During Tet, I was with Augie on KILO 27 Post near the old 055 gate, where 2,500 North Vietnamese were to attack. Fortunately, they got lost in the jungle.

Joseph L. Richardson
377th Security Police K-9
Sep 67 - Sep 68

FAVORITE SAYINGS



Your manuscript is both good and original, but the part that is good is not original and the part that is original is not good.

~Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)~

Snacktrek, n.:

The peculiar habit, when searching for a snack, of constantly returning to the refrigerator in hopes that something new will have materialized.

-- Rich Hall, "Sniglets"

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

-From the Internet
Submitted by Herr Kemper

“Veterans Day 2018 – 100 Years Later”
Tan Son Nhut Association “Revetments” Newsletter, November 2018
By Ira Cooperman

This month’s observance of “Veterans Day” has a significance beyond the usual. It is the 100th anniversary of this special day, a time when hope existed for the end to all wars.

Originally called “Armistice Day,” it was created in commemoration of the end of World War I on November 11th, 1918, and in honor of those who fought in “The Great War.”

In 1954, the year after the cessation of Korean War hostilities, the name was changed by the Congress to honor *all veterans* of America’s armed forces, past and present.

Over 70 million people were involved in World War I. It is estimated that 10 million soldiers were killed as well as eight million civilians.

While “The War to End All Wars” did not accomplish its stated purpose, it did change the nature of warfare. New 20th century technology -- with the introduction of military weapons such as tanks, machine guns, armored cars, poison gas, and using aircraft for bombing -- clashed with 19th century warfare tactics.

And as you and I have come to learn from history, instead of ending war, World War I began the deadliest century in the history of warfare. But what of the veterans of those wars -- people like us?

Every Veterans Day, my thoughts turn to my fellow vets and their experiences, the men and women ordered to fight our wars -- the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who were left with the unintended consequences of war.

If these Americans were lucky enough to survive World War I or II, or Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan or Iraq, they became our forgotten warriors.

While this is not a day to review our political feelings regarding America’s wars and those who ordered us to fight them, it is a time to ask questions of our history, of the way all veterans have been treated, of our responsibilities toward them.

Throughout our nation’s history, one of its most constant supporters has been its veterans -- people like us. And today, once again American women and men are serving their country far from home.

For veterans like TSNA members, who have served overseas in at least one of America’s conflicts, the current crises in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine and North Korea evoke memories of the past.

Six decades ago, as a young Air Force officer, I received orders to go to Vietnam. Unlike 58,000 other vets, I was one of the lucky ones who returned home. But I will never forget the veterans of my generation, or the heroes, like Senators John McCain and John Kerry, who have spoken out in support of veterans.

Make no mistake about it: Veterans have served honorably, “From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli,” from Flanders fields to Pacific islands, from frozen Korean foxholes to the quagmire of Vietnam, from the hills of Afghanistan to unwelcome Iraq villages.

Veterans have supported with spirit America’s sense of mission and have kept faith with presidential and national security commitments -- all in the name of protecting American “interests.”

Veterans are the citizens who put themselves in harm’s way so that others may remain free. Yet, since the founding of our Republic, veterans have had to fight for their rightful benefits, with the success of receiving those benefits dependent less on the country’s conscience than on expediency and political circumstances.

What have we learned from the sacrifices of our fellow veterans who have died as a result of our nation’s wars?

The lives of all those veterans who have served our nation challenge us, not only to remember them, but to give *meaning*

to their lives. For as Archibald MacLeish has suggested in his poem, "*The Young Dead Soldiers*," their lives will mean what we make of them."

On a day when some vets feel particularly haunted by the past, a day when my memory takes me back to Tan Son Nhut and the countries of Southeast Asia, I salute every veteran, as well as those who have experienced the loss of a loved one in military service.

I believe it is the duty of all Americans on November 11th -- and every day -- to remember and appreciate our nation's veterans, past and present, who provide us with the peace and freedom we seek.

Remembering veterans is another way to live with honor and act with dignity. For me, it is the only way to live.

[Ira Cooperman is a veteran of the wars in Southeast Asia, having served as an Air Force intelligence officer with HQ 7AF at Tan Son Nhut AB, Udorn RTAB in Thailand, and in Laos during 1965-66. His e-mail address is: iracooperman@gmail.com.]

FROM THE PREZ #1
Subject: 377 SPS

Mr. Brown,

I am currently stationed at Kirtland AFB in the 377th Security Forces Squadron. We are about to conduct a squadron revitalization project and are looking for a few items. We are doing a big building renovation project, and wanted to include some old flight names and logos along with the squadron emblem. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

SETH C. STOCKWELL, MSgt, USAF
Supply & Logistics, NCOIC
377th Security Forces Squadron
Kirtland AFB, NM
Seth.stockwell@us.af.mil

FROM THE PREZ #2
An Appeal

In this note, I want to start by explaining how your Association and its programs are funded. No worthy pursuit in this life is free.

Dues is an obvious source of revenue to cover costs of managing an organization like ours. That income is placed in the General Fund and covers the more routine expenses like materials for publishing Revetments, keeping current the computers and software for publishing Revetments and maintaining our website, covering initial expenses for reunion planning, having an attorney on retainer, paying annual government filing fees, and other functions. The recent copywriting of our name and logo required paying fees to file with the U.S. Government.

Other activities, particularly the scholarships and our placing memorials, are mostly funded by donations. The fact we are a tax exempt organization under IRS Code 501(c)(19) allows you to deduct any contributions you may give to those activities or the General Fund.

Our Director of Membership sends each member a statement when dues are upcoming. If he does not receive payment in about 90 days, he will ask that I contact you or assign a member of the Board of Directors to remind you of the outstanding invoice. The last action we want to make is dropping a member from our rolls. If this paragraph might apply to you, please remit your payment as soon as possible.

We would like a high balance in the Scholarship Fund to allow the awarding of the maximum number of scholarships each year. Anything that you feel you might give is most appreciated. This philosophy also applies to the Memorial Fund.

Thank you for taking time to consider my appeal. Any payments or donations are very much appreciated.

May our Association continue to remain solvent.

Randall Brown
President, TSNA

Golden Knight Awards

By: Dale Bryan
TSNA Secretary

Three of the Golden Knight Awards that were bestowed on September 21 at our banquet were not presented to the recipients since they were not present. On October 5, I was able to present two of the awards. I attended the monthly dinner of an organizations called Heroes Night Out to present them to Wes and Judy Pierce and to J.D. Steward. Below are the citations for each that were read at the reunion banquet and at the Heroes Night Out dinner.

Heroes Night Out Citation:

This Golden Knight is to the founders of a veteran's outreach organization in Cedar Park, TX, a north suburb of Austin. This one is a gem among many in the USA and is called Heroes Night Out.

Heroes Night Out started over 10 years ago when Wes and Judy Pierce recalled how their sons encountered obstacles during their return to civilian life after serving in the military. Their first act was providing a gift card to a veteran in need. The organization has grown with leaps and bounds since then.

Heroes Night Out is a place where a veteran can, among other things, meet with VA representatives, the county veteran's outreach representative, representatives of State of Texas employment agency, counselors for various needs, and many other facets.

On the first Friday of each month, a dinner for veterans and their families is sponsored at no cost with the best entertainment in the Austin area that is oriented toward families. Generally, it is a magic show where some of the best magicians in the USA who draw great crowds in places like Las Vegas, Branson, and other venues donate their time. The children love it. A highlight each year is a BBQ that draws near 3,000 people with great events for the children that are akin to a mini county fair. Again, all for free.

J.D. Steward Citation:

It was mentioned that there is a magic show at each dinner of Heroes Night Out. Well the person that schedules acts for those shows does much more than that for family members of veterans.

J. D. Steward MD (MD means magic dude) schedules the talent, but he also conducts a magic camp every summer at the Heroes Night Out facility. J D normally charges \$150.00 for a camp session that lasts for a week with four hours per day. J. D. charges each family member of a veteran \$25.00 for the same camp. That fee covers only materials. All time by J. D. is gratis for the benefit of the children.

I can attest to the quality of his camps since my grandchildren have attended.

It was great to spring a surprise of these awards at the dinner.

The recipients were so grateful.

Left to right: Wes Pierce; JD Steward, Magic Dude; TSNA Secretary Dale Bryan; Judy Pierce



2018 TSNA Golden Knight Award

The Golden Knight Award honors individuals or organizations who have a prolonged record of helping the poor, the homeless, the underprivileged or assists veterans of any era.

In the case of Truman's Bar and Grill, Columbia Mo, they host a monthly Military Morning breakfast March through November for any Veteran and guest-no ID required. They feature a full buffet breakfast with a short program featuring speakers from local Veterans/ community organizations.

Gary Fields, TSNA Director of Communications, presents the 2018 TSNA Golden Knight Award to an employee of Truman's.



FROM THE PREZ #3

Larry,

Capt. Guy Gruters called me today and thanked me for letting him become a member of TSNA. He said he loved our group and was treated with so much kindness.

He wanted to send me some dues, but I told him he is a member already.

I asked him if he would wear his pin and tell everyone about our group TSNA.

He was just getting back from a month long of talks and being on the road.

Guy sends his thanks to TSNA and said God Bless to each of us.

Randall
10/15/2018

REGARDING THE PACKAGES FOR THE TROOPS

10/4/2018

I sent out 4 boxes today - 1 to a soldier in Iraq, 1 to an airman in Korea, 1 to a sailor in Bahrain and the last one to a marine in Afghanistan.

Anysoldier.com only permits you to download one address per day.

If you all want to help, download an address for a female of any branch each day and send me the info after you download it.

At this rate, on my own, it will take another 8 days to download addresses and mail the packages.

Will send an article and pics for Revetments when I finish.

George

MORE ON PAGE 6

Fellow TSNA Members:

The message on our TSNA website banner page says it all “To assist military personnel of all eras and their families whenever and wherever possible”. And that is what we accomplished with the mailing of eleven packages to the troops. The final packages for the troops were mailed today. One was sent to a Sailor, 3 to Airmen, 5 to Soldiers, 3 to Marines and one to a Coast Guardsman; 10 recipients were male and 3 were female; one each were in Iraq, Kuwait, UAE, Pakistan, Korea, UAE, aboard ship, 3 in a classified location and 3 were in Afghanistan.

The 13 packages had a gross weight total of about 455 pounds. All contained a letter of greetings from TSNA and business cards from Randall and me with our contact information.

Each package had a mixture of paperback novels, toiletries (mostly shampoo, soap, skin creams, hair conditioner) with some also containing ball point pens, pads, markers, disposable razors. Most also received a 16GB flash drive I put together that had 2900+ songs, mainly from the fifties and sixties. Music that you could play for your Mother or Daughter and not be embarrassed by its content.

Kudos to everyone who participated in this most worthy venture. Never again will one generation of troops fail to support succeeding generations.

Today's troops are all volunteers and they deserve our unqualified support. Supporting the troops (and their families) is an honor and a privilege.

Once the packages are delivered, I feel confident that we will receive numerous thanks from the troops. We will publish them in a future issue of Revetments.

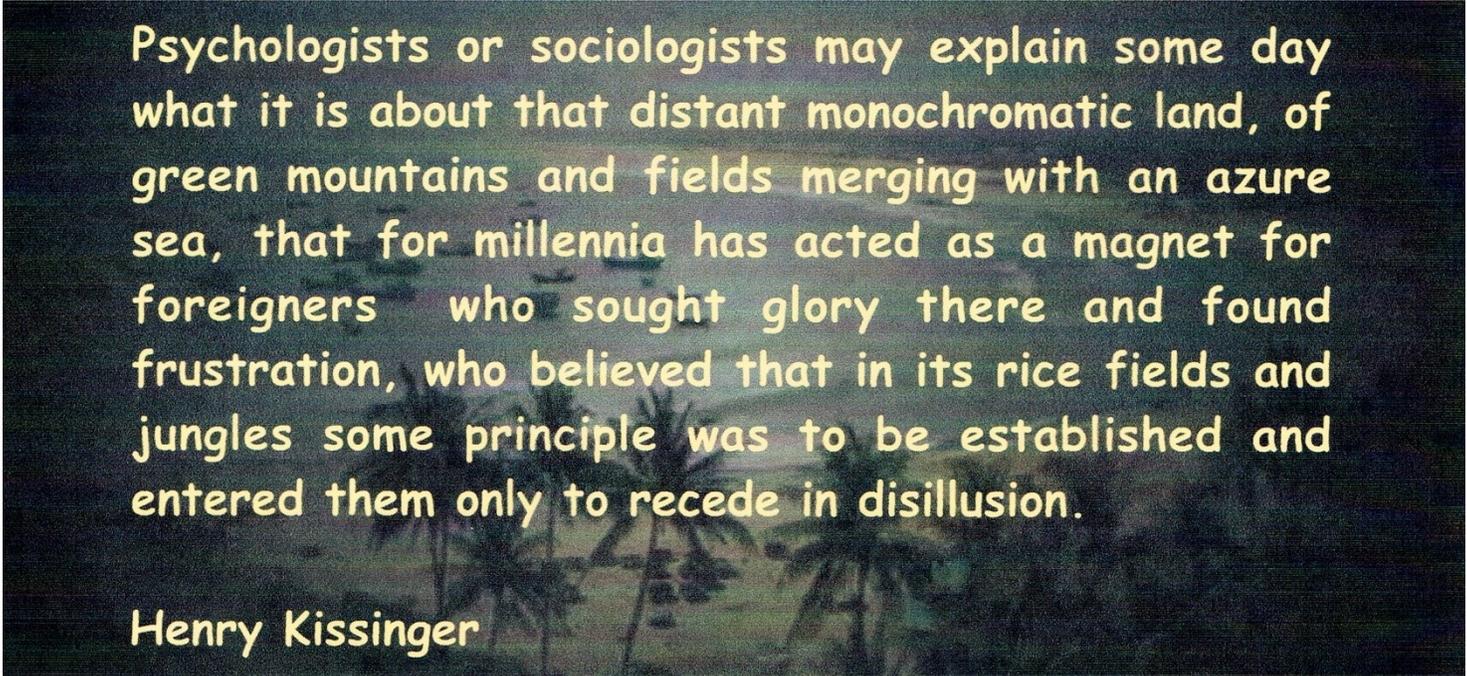
George R Plunkett, President Emeritus, Tan Son Nhut Association



Larry,

Since my service in Vietnam at Tan Son Nhut Air base and the surrounding area, my involvement in the TET Offensive with Task Force 35, and my return home to the world, I have thought much about that war and our subsequent withdrawal from it. I have read many books on the war and developed close ties with other Vietnam Veterans and listened and learned from their personal stories. I am attaching a couple of quotes that, during all of the time that has passed since my service there, have stood out in my mind and have caused me to ponder on them more so than others. It is my thought that they may be of some value to other Vietnam Veterans and that you might want to include them in our Revetments publications...or not. In any event, I wanted to send them to you for your consideration and as always "Welcome Home".

With Kindest Regards
Gary F. Monahan, TSNA Member.



Psychologists or sociologists may explain some day what it is about that distant monochromatic land, of green mountains and fields merging with an azure sea, that for millennia has acted as a magnet for foreigners who sought glory there and found frustration, who believed that in its rice fields and jungles some principle was to be established and entered them only to recede in disillusion.

Henry Kissinger

All the wrong people remember Vietnam.

I think all the people who remember it should forget it,
and all the people who forgot it should remember it.

Michael Herr, 1989

A VERY DESERVING VETERAN

The Consensus was unanimous. Hartford City resident Randall Brown could not be a more deserving veteran to be honored with a Quilt of Valor.

Brown, who was accompanied by his wife Rita, was presented with the annual honor by members of the Blackford County Sew Happy 4-H Home Demonstration Club last week.

The group honors a deserving veteran each year with a handmade Quilt of Valor. Those who worked to create the quilt presented to Brown included Darleen Chick, Chris Coons, Mary Crawford, Beverly Furnish, Suetta Miller, Donna Peyerk, Janet Plumner, Sharon Rich, Leslie Robb, Cindy Stinson, Mary Ford and Harleen VanNess.

Over the last 52 years, when he first enlisted in the US Air Force in 1966, Brown has accumulated a long list of accomplishments. After graduating from basic training in San Antonio, Texas, he was assigned to Postal & Courier training at Ft Harrison in Indianapolis. Brown was stationed in Little Rock AFB, Ar till his oldest daughter was born then was assigned to Tan Son Nhut Air base near Saigon, Vietnam. He was stationed there for 13 months, during which time he flew through Agent Orange areas.

After his return to the states, Brown was assigned to Grand Forks AFB in North Dakota. After being discharged from the military, he attended IU-PU Ft Wayne where he earned a degree in business law.

It was after college he began to feel the effects of his exposure to Agent Orange while in Vietnam. The veteran had already been diagnosed with diabetes. More serious medical issues began to show up. Cancers, loss of stomach, joint replacements, eye surgeries, Thyroid, Prostate cancers, tumors, much more. Today he takes 74 pills a day to stay alive, runs Glucagon in his pump, because his Pancreas does not work properly.

He continues to be active with Vietnam Veterans With Diabetes and a website and Facebook page he started in 2007. He travels extensively to speak before Veterans groups about diabetes and health issues.

He started the first Vietnam Veterans of America in Indiana and it was one of the first 13 chapters nationwide. He was elected President of TSNA (Tan San Nhut Association) for a 4 year term. He started the VFW in Blackford County and served twice as President.

During his talks, Brown says he sees good in serving in the military. He says the military taught him discipline and structure in his life. And his friendships he made while in the military have lasted throughout his life.



The American Widow Project

On Veteran's Day, we remember and honor our veterans, but how often do we think of their families? In particular, how often do we think about the families of those service members who made the ultimate sacrifice?

Last year, my husband and I heard the founder of the American Widow Project speak at the TSNA reunion in Colorado Springs. Taryn Davis lost her husband on May 21, 2007 and knows firsthand the experience of two military men or women in uniform knocking on your door to notify you of your spouse's death. Her husband had been killed only an hour and a half after they'd last spoken on the phone.

As she sought to deal with her tragedy, she began to realize that there was little organized support for family members of the fallen, much less for the military widows. She told the touching story of googling "widow" only to see the question "did you mean *window*?" pop up. As a young military widow, she felt particularly alone. In the blink of an eye, she had gone from focusing on graduating from college to trying to cope with her husband's death.

She discovered that we as a country are quick to acknowledge and memorialize the military members who have given their lives but seem to overlook their spouses. After traveling the country to meet and hear from other military widows, she realized that widows needed not only compassion and acknowledgment but also tools to help rebuild their lives.

When you consider these statistics from the American Widow Project website, the need is apparent:

"Since 2001, over 6,800 U.S. service members have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. This number does not include the thousands more who have lost their lives due to sudden illness, accident, homicide or those that have taken their own lives due to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. At the same time, more than 3,600 young widows ... [have been left behind.]"

Taryn saw a need and founded the American Widow Project to address it. The mission is stated as:

"Providing vital support to military widows with programs that
Unify * Educate * Empower and assist in rebuilding their lives in the face of tragedy."

The organization accomplishes this mission in several ways:

- A website that houses tools and support
- Homecomings or "retreats" where widows come together to reflect, share and renew
- A documentary that details the stories of six military widows
- A newsletter to update widows on resources and stories
- WidowU—courses and resources

If like me, you had never heard of this organization nor considered the military widows around us, you may be wondering what you can do to help. The simplest way is to visit the website <http://americanwidowproject.org/meet-us/mission/> and make a donation, but you'll find other suggestions on the site on how to support this organization in its mission.

For example, the website has fundraising suggestions. I can see a fundraiser as a great service project for middle or high-schoolers. TSNA members, George and Trish Plunkett, have provided their Pigeon Forge cabin as a "Homecoming" location, for the past nine years. Contact the group, and they will work with you on ways to offer your support.

While we seem unable to put an end to wars that create more military widows, surely we can do something to increase the awareness of the existence and tragedy of these young women, and in some cases, men. Hats off to Taryn Davis for building an organization to do just that.

Kathy Manos Penn is married to TSNA member Hugh Penn. A version of this column will appear in her local paper, the Dunwoody "Crier," where she hopes it will garner support for the American Widow Project. Find Kathy's books "The Ink Penn: Celebrating the Magic in the Everyday" and "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch" on [Amazon](#).

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Web Site: www.tsna.org
Annual Membership: \$20.00
Five Year Membership: \$80.00
Life Membership: \$180.00



Thanks to Tim Lee for this bunker photo.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. John Bessette Springfield VA jcbessette@aol.com May 68 - Aug 69 3rd Spec.Ops. Sq.Det 6, Bien Hoa AC-47 "Spooky" Gunship Navigator

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