

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

**MAY 2022** 



By: Jerry Jenkins 1st Civil Engineering Group (Red Horse) June 68 – June 69



I have a rather long discussion regarding VA surgery and the potential for adverse outcome. It is a problem that I believe impacts many vets and is offered for future Revetment.

Can VA surgery result in an adverse result that is a career ending injury? Surgery outcomes can allow return to functional status, or in some cases result in chronic debilitating pain and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (FTS). Post herniorrhaphy pain syndrome, or inguinodynia is a condition caused during the surgical procedure that can be life changing for the patient.

However, it appears to be an acceptable post-surgery outcome for veterans at San Francisco VA Medical Center, and the VA in general. My 1151, and subsequent claims/appeals to VBA, to receive compensation for an adverse outcome due to surgery or treatment from VA was denied. The surgeon overseeing my 4/20/2011 procedure made the following comments in the C & P Examination regarding the veracity of my claim, and apparently it was denied based on the doctor's comments below:

"My opinion on this 1151 case is that Veteran's claimed disability of "Nerve damage right groin -1151" as a post operative was caused by or became worse as a result of the VA treatment (Surgery as above on 4/20/2011) at issue.

However, the additional disability DID NOT result from carelessness, negligence, lack of skill, or similar incident of fault on the part of the attending VA personnel.

The additional disability DID NOT result from an event that could not have reasonably been foreseen by a reasonable healthcare provider, and or failure on the part of VA to timely diagnose and/or properly treat the claimed disease or disability allowed the disease or disability to progress.

This surgery was performed by a staff surgeon from the VA who knew this complication (See clinical note dated Apr 20, 2011). Post operative pain from inguinal hernia surgeries are well established complications. As devastating as it was especially for this patient, this post operative pain is a known complication for hernia repair of the groin. Operative findings initially did not indicate any complications of surgery."

Veterans needing hernia repair should be mindful of this complication. Ask the surgeon how many operations they have done. Going forward I'll ask for the Doctor, rather than intern or resident in training, to perform the actual procedure. The condition is serious and results in chronic pain, making one fatigued chronically in addition to unrelenting groin and sciatic pain 5 to 9 level daily.

My April 2011 double hernia repair at San Francisco VAMC resulted in debilitating chronic groin/sciatic pain. However, my condition was treated as "general...pain" rather than a serious condition needing specialized treatment post-surgery. And in February 2022 the surgeon, who oversaw the resident performing the 2011 operation, referred me back to the Pain Management Team February 2022, as was done in 2011. Now scheduled for a video call with UCSF pain management team in March 2022.

I began having mind numbing pain and restless sleep immediately after surgery. Consequently, I submitted an 1151 Claim, and later VBA claims indicating that the post-surgery pain had caused service-connected conditions (50%) to be fully debilitating. My 1151 claim was denied because the hernias had been "resolved", and SFVAMC would not assist in showing the nexus for service connection to the outcome. None the less, in 2014

VBA awarded 20% for "postoperative ventral hernia with weakening of abdominal wall and resulting bilateral inguinal hernias (**resolved**)" 20% effective date 06/26/2014.

I was awarded 100% Aug 2016 due to worsening of other service-connected conditions, but lost compensation from 2011 to 2016 at 100% rating due to SFVAMC failure to assist (VCAA of 2000) with a proper diagnosis caused by VA surgery resulting in inguinodynia. Moreover, they have not recognized the condition's debilitating impact in 2022. The bottom line is that veterans needing hernia repair should be mindful of this complication. Moreover, ask the resident/intern surgeon how many operations they have done; and, if not satisfied with the response, ask for the "doctor" overseeing the procedure to perform it. Veterans have rights.

### I have an excerpt from an article I found on the web. PLEASE CONTACT ME AT:

J1 jenkins@comcast.net., if you are interested. (That's an underline between "J1" and "jenkins").

### **AGENT ORANGE UPDATE**

We've all heard of agent orange. But did you know that from 1961 to 1971 that the U.S. conducted Operation Ranch Hand in South Vietnam and sprayed an est. 20 - million gallons of "Rainbow Chemicals" on somewhere between 3.6 to 4.5 million acres of roads, rivers, canals, rice paddies and farmland to destroy the forest cover and food crops used by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong? When I say "Rainbow chemicals, I mean that agent orange was not the only herbicide/defoliant used. The "Rainbow" included Agents Green, Pink, Purple, Blue, White, Orange, Orange II, Orange III, and Super Orange. It is estimated that 65% of the Rainbow Chemicals sprayed contained Dioxin, which has been exposed as a known carcinogen. At the time, American soldiers who were involved in spraying the chemicals, or who were directly or indirectly exposed were told the chemicals were safe. Wherever the Rainbow Chemicals were sprayed the jungle died, the farmlands died, the soil and water was polluted. The Vietnamese government has estimated that 4-million Vietnamese were exposed to these chemicals. They estimate that 3-million continue to suffer from the lasting health consequences of exposure. I don't know how many U.S. veterans were exposed, but the Agent Orange Act of 1991 accepts that any veteran who served in Vietnam 1962-1975 was probably (presumptively) exposed. Presumed exposure is not limited to Vietnam. Presumed exposure includes C-123 aircraft ground maintenance and aircrews before and after the Vietnam War, and those who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone or Thailand military bases, and herbicide test and storage areas at military installations in other countries.

The question now is, is this something you need to be thinking about 50 years later? The answer is absolutely yes. It was a lot of years after Vietnam before the government acknowledged (at all) the harmful effects of "Agent Orange" on U. S. Veterans. The range of illnesses in Vietnam veterans the government has been willing to concede are related to Agent Orange and other Rainbow chemicals has steadily grown. It's possible that you have never been evaluated for potential disabilities associated with Agent Orange, or if you were, you may have been evaluated early on before so many more illnesses were recognized. Today the Veterans Administration recognizes a long list of Agent Orange related illnesses including Chronic B-cell Carcinoma, Hodgkin's Disease, Multiple Myeloma, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Prostate Cancer, Respiratory Cancers, Soft Tissue Carcinomas, AL Amyloidosis, Chloracne, Diabetes Mellitus Type 2, Ischemic Heart Disease, Parkinson's Disease, Peripheral Neuropathy, and Porphyria Cutanea Tarde. In addition the U.S. Congress is trying to pass legislation that recognizes bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and other illnesses as being caused by presumptive exposure. If you have any of these conditions and you have never been evaluated by the VA, you need to contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator and request an Agent Orange Registry Health Exam. If you were previously evaluated by the VA, and denied disability for any illness listed above because they were not yet recognized as Agent Orange related, you need to contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator and request an Agent Orange Registry Re-Evaluation Health Exam. If you have any illness that you attribute to exposure to these Rainbow chemicals, whether recognized or not, you need to contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator and request an Agent Orange Registry Health Exam. For more information call the VA Agent Orange Help Line at 800-749-8387.

K.H. Elliott, CICV II/OC 1971 Oct 70 - Sep 71 525th MI Grp

### Memorial Day, May 28, 2012 Preface

Mark O'Connell (Mark O'), Army Viet Nam veteran, Captain of the AMVETS Post 219 Honor Guard, member of the Post Board of Directors and very active AMVETS member had encouraged me to make sure that I included some words related to "Our Real Heroes" at the Memorial Day Ceremony at The Viet Nam Veterans Memorial at Sprague Brook Park. As the master of ceremony my function was to lead the ceremony, primarily introducing participants and recognizing contributors.

While reviewing the agenda over coffee on Memorial Day, Mark O's entreaty was on my mind as I tried to think of what to say. At around 7:00 a. m. I wrote the following.

### The Lesson: For Mark O'

By Peter F. Beyette
Det 5 6922 Security Wing, Tan Son Nhut June '66 – June '68

The young boy was excited as he bounded up the walk; His dad had just arrived from work, now they would sit and talk.

It was the father's favorite time as they settled in the kitchen; The boy would tell dad what he learned, his dad would sit and listen.

Tell me son what did you learn, please tell me of your day; And dad would eagerly await, this was just their way.

Today we learned of heroes dad and just what made them great; We learned about Olympians, and sluggers at the plate.

And when the boy had finished, his dad looked into space; The boy just watched his father, the strange look upon his face.

His dad just left the table without a single word; Then in his hand a little box, to the table he returned.

You never met your grandpa, he left us years ago; And now you talk of heroes, it's time that you should know.

He never wore this medal, though he earned it that's for sure; Your Grandpa was a hero, we lost him in the war.

Several years later we lost Marco following his valiant fight with cancer resulting from Agent Orange exposure.

### **FROM IRA**

In the March/April issue of *The VVA Veteran* (the magazine of the Vietnam Veterans of America), a letter to the editor I wrote was published.

Entitled "A True Mensch," it was in memory to my friend Bernie Edelman, and in tribute to his son, Aidan.

Altho' only Aidan and some Vietnam vets and a few Chautauquans who were in the Special Studies class that week may be interested, here is my letter to the editor:

REVETMENTS 3 MAY 2022

"Thank you for publishing the remembrance of former VVA staffer Bernie Edelman by his son, Aidan. His words beautifully describe his dad who truly 'dedicated his life to the well-being of all men and women who served.'

"Bernie was a special guy, so knowledgeable about veterans' issues that several years ago I invited him to teach a week-long class with me at the **Chautauqua Institution** in Upstate New York. The topic: The Vietnam War and Its Impact on Its Veterans.

"The students in the class appreciated Bernie's wisdom gained from his experience working with vets for more than 20 years. They learned a great deal about the challenges we all face.

"I will never forget the times Bernie and I worked together on VVA issues. In fact, those of us who were his friends became better men and women for knowing him. Bernie was a true mensch, a person with integrity and honor."

Ira Cooperman, 7th AF Intel, 65 - 66

### **BACK TO THE USA**

By: SSgt Jim Marshall 377 ABW, Hq Sq, Data Automation Feb 1970 – Mar 1972

At times I think back to my leaving Viet Nam for good and "Operation Golden Flow". It turned out it was my ticket to get out of Vietnam early after 2+ years. The Defense Department initiated "Operation Golden Flow" in September 1971 in Viet Nam to test all returning Gl's for Drug Use. The US Government had finally admitted there was a drug problem in Viet Nam. One thing about the military is once it admits to a problem, there has to be an immediate solution. It can never say there is a problem and has "NO CLUE" and "NO PLAN" how to solve it. I believe this is why the military denied the existence of drug problems for so long.

The US Air Force implemented "**Operation Golden Flow**" from the beginning as random drug testing for all Airmen in Viet Nam. The program continues today (not called the Politically Incorrect name of Golden Flow) but simply Random Drug Testing.

In January 1972, the 377<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Group became the 377<sup>th</sup> Air Base Wing gaining a number of combat units, specifically the 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadrons and the 310<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron. In early March 1972, I knew I was finally leaving Viet Nam for good with my DEROS date of April 7<sup>th</sup>. Somehow, I was booked April 14<sup>th</sup>!!!!!!! I appealed and was told **NO WAY, NO HOW** although I might be able to leave early "**if**" a person volunteers to be a Security Guard on a Drug Flight to the US; **SIGN ME UP**! On March 24<sup>th</sup> at 1100, a Thursday, I got a call at work to report to the Aerial Port Squadron in 3 hours to catch a plane as a Security Guard for a drug flight home to the real world.

I was already mostly packed, said goodbye to all at work, rushed back to the Hooch, gifted my maid my fan along with any remaining Vietnamese currency along with other items. She had taken care of me for over 2 years, ensured I got all my laundry, made the bed, shined my boots and nagged the heck out of me if I left my locker unlocked. With no fanfare, it was down to the Aerial Port Squadron to meet an Air Force C-9 Nightingale ambulance plane.

The C-9 landed picking up we three guards along with a few drug patients, flew north to Da Nang AB,



to pick up more drug patients now totaling 21 and flew to Clark AFB in the Philippines to stay overnight. The plane was met by Security Police taking the drug patients to some secure facility in the hospital and the three of us checked into the BEQ overnight.

The next day, Friday, we picked up the 21 Drug Patients from the hospital and out to a large C-141 cargo plane with our "patients" and the three of us guards. In the very front of the cargo bay was a pallet, rolled into the plane called a "Comfort Station" (aka two portable Outhouses) and a pallet with airline style seats. These were not the comfortable kind one finds on airliners. Over the back 2/3 of the plane were wounded soldiers in litters stacked 3 & 4 high along with all the Flight Nurses,

Doctors, medics, etc.

Our job would be to monitor drug patients using the bathrooms, the door had to remain ajar by inserting our boot in the doorway. Every 30-45 seconds the patient was required to speak to us ensuring he was still alive and maybe not trying to hang himself. Some staff officer in the Pentagon claimed a person could not kill himself in less than 45 seconds.

The plane was loaded and it took off around 1100 traveling east over the Pacific headed to our next stop, Hawaii, to refuel with the final destination Travis AFB, San Francisco in the US of A. About 75 minutes into the flight I felt the plane go into a slow bank to the right as if we were turning around. I found the Flight Engineer and asked what was happening. He explained they had lost a radio (broke) but it was not important since there are many radios. Then, the Autopilot was lost and there were a couple of those operating still. Then, all the autopilots were lost and, no sweat, for onboard were three pilots to fly the plane manually.



Then another compass did not work and again, no problem for there were a bunch of them. Then the Inertial Navigation System (INS) malfunctioned and I made the mistake of asking why it was needed. The explanation said the INS kept track of where the plane is by knowing where the plane was NOT; OOOO-K? The crowning moment came when the plane was down to only one radio and one compass working. It was time to return to Clark AFB.

When we landed the malfunctions were to be corrected and if necessary, backup air crews were standing by in case it took too long on the ground. The plane landed and immediately surrounded by portable power units, A/C units to keep everyone cool and other ground support equipment. Outside the plane it looked like mass panic.

In the front of the plane behind the cockpit was this network of metal frames containing black boxes with all the electronics. These were stacked 3-4 high and looked like 5-6 across. I watched as a couple of airmen feverously pull out **ALL** the boxes and inserted replacements. I asked the Flight Engineer if anyone knew exactly which box(es) failed or if indeed they were the cause. He said they were not sure so they were replacing ALL in mass. I immediately wondered if indeed the problems were someplace else in the aircraft.

I was a Computer Operator in Vietnam working first as a maintenance type on the flight line right after joining the Air Force. So I asked one airman why all the rush. He quietly explained the panic and almost mass hysteria. Clark AFB was having a huge beach party, around 45 minutes away, on this Friday afternoon and the backup crews had been prematurely released 15 minutes early just before the flight declared all the problems. Right after they left, the C-141 declared an emergency, returning for repairs. The maintenance people had less than 2 hours to get the C-141 back in the air before the mission was required to be aborted.

Aborting the mission would have disastrous consequences for the Base and Wing Commanders. All the litter cases would have to be offloaded, taken back to the hospital not to mention our druggies. Then, the inbound flights of patients out of Vietnam would have to be delayed. But the worst thing was reporting the fact the backup crews were erroneously released early to AF Pacific Headquarters in Hawaii who would report it to Headquarters USAF in the Pentagon. The careers of the Base Commander and Wing Commander would be TOAST. In less than 60 minutes, the fixes (we hoped) were swapped, ground support equipment disconnected, doors slammed shut and rolling down the runway.

For the next 17 hours, I could not sleep or relax in my seat thinking about all those black boxes. The Pacific is a gigantic body of water and if the plane were to crash, what are the chances it would be near some island. Even if there was a successful ditching this huge plane and got out, floating in the huge expanse of water might be for days to weeks to months not to mention the fate of all those litters in the back. Then it occurred to me the chances of surviving ditching were slim to **NONE**. I would have survived 25+ months in Vietnam only to be fed to the fishes in the depths of the Pacific. After this experience and for years to come, flying was never an enjoyable event.

We stopped off in Hawaii to refuel, now back in the US of A and would be continuing to San Francisco. Those who remember leaving Viet Nam will always remember their last ride in the "Freedom Bird" taking you back to the "Real World" called America. There is nothing like it. As we were leaving Hawaii for Travis AFB, I did not realize my final adventure to get home was just starting. The story will continue in a coming Revetments.

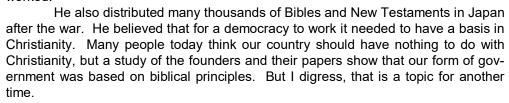
### **Chaplain's Corner-Spiritual Reawakening**

By Andy Csordas, Associate Chaplain

We have heard many things about Douglas MacArthur, one of the few five star generals in the history of America. He was loved and hated, but that is the mark of a leader, they do not try to please everyone all the time. Perhaps his most famous quote was "I shall return" when our troops were driven from the Philippines by the Japanese early in WWII. He did return.

He was a complex person and leader. To some he was a vain egotistical person, to most he was an incredible leader and military strategist. He was the one who insisted that we would not punish Japan with extreme punitive

measures after the war. Japan turned out pretty well so part of his vision obviously worked.



He said: "Believe me, sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed." It is not what we think of when we think of MacArthur. We think of the rough tough general. Do we, you and me, consult the

word of God daily, or at least regularly?

I am always amazed when I read a verse that I have read countless times before and a new insight jumps out of the verse to me. But for that to happen we need to study the Word, not just casually take a look periodically. Reading your Bible can be an adventure of "hide and seek", where Jesus is saying, "Come find me!"

John 1:1 tells us "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". The Bible is the inspired word of God.

One more quote by MacArthur; "In this day of gathering storms, as moral deterioration of political power spreads its growing infection, it is essential that every spiritual force be mobilized to defend and preserve the religious base upon which this nation was founded; for it has been that base which has been the motivating impulse to our moral and national growth. History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either **spiritual reawakening** to overcome the moral lapse or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster."

That is a sobering thought for America and is even truer today than when he said it over 50 years ago. Are we, you and me, part of that great reawakening? We must return to our roots and be part of the group that respects our founder's great vision, a country formed like no other one in history. God has truly blessed this nation over time. We need to seek Him to make sure he continues to bless us.

### **NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS**

When I first got to TSN, women officers were housed in "VIP" trailers that had been relocated from somewhere in theater. Two women per - a bedroom at either end and a shared bath in the middle. Air conditioned. Around Christmas the trailers were relocated somewhere else and we moved into an air conditioned concrete block building. Private bedrooms, but one "gang" bathroom. I think the A/C was a source of envy for the male junior officers - they lived in "fresh air" hootches. There was one nighttime attack while I was there, but nothing harmful came anywhere near the women's quarters. As the conflict "ended" in February, 1973, the whole squadron was transferred to Udorn RTAFB Thailand with a new designation. The 12th RITS was dissolved with a solemn ceremony.

1st Lt. Margaret Hammond Anno 12th RITS Executive Support Officer November 1972 to February, 1973



(At 12th RITS Award Ceremony)

# Join us for the 2022 Tan Son Nhut Reunion **Dayton OH** September 22-25



Come as strangers, leave as friends! Bring your cameras and capture some valuable memories!



## We would like to shake your hand and share a cup of coffee over some small talk!



None of us are getting any younger. Come this year we have a hall!

There are no strangers in TSNA - only new friends waiting to be discovered!



If you've never been to one before, come and



### **Hotel Information**

Hope Hotel and Richard Holbrooke Conference Center

10823 Chidlaw Rd (Outside Gate 12A) Wright Patterson AFB 45433

937-879-2696

Registration must be made by telephone. Mention Tan Son Nhut Association, Do not say TSNA

> Rm Rate \$109.00 plus taxes Breakfast Coupons will be provided at check-in

## Schedule of Events (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED)

Tan Son Nhut Association Wright Patterson AFB OH September 22-25, 2022

Date and Time		Event	Room	
Thursday September 22		Oat was and Danietzetien	O - h /Dh h	
1000	2000	Set-up and Registration	Sabre/Phantom	
1000	2000	Hospitality/Social		
Friday September 23, 20	)22			
0900	2100	Registration	Sabre/Phantom	
0900	2100	Hospitality/Social	Sabre/Phantom	
1000	1800	NMUSAF Visit	NMUSAF	
1000	1800	Cars leave/Return at convenience	Lobby	
1100	1300	Tours	NMUSAF	
1300	1400	Memorial Rededication Ceremony	NMUSAF	
1800	2100	Dinner/socializing on your own	Hope Hotel	
1900	1930	Silent Auction ends	Sabre/Phantom	
1900	1930	Door Prizes	Sabre/Phantom	
Saturday September 24	2022			
0900	1600	Registration	Sabre/Phantom	
0900	1600	Hospitality/Social/Hospitality closes		
1200	1400	Board Meeting		
1400	1600	General Meeting	Sabre/Phantom	
1415	1445	Officers and Directors Report	Sabre/Phantom	
1445	1500	New officers/Swearing In	Sabre/Phantom	
1500	1530	Officers and Directors Q and A	Sabre/Phantom	
1700	1800	Welcome Reception	Sabre/Phantom	
1800	2200	Banquet	B29 Super Fortress	
1800	1815	Welcome Remarks Randall or designee		
1815	1830	Presentation of Colors/Pledge	WPAFB Honor Guard	
1830	1945	Dinner	B29 Super Fortress	
1945	2015	Guest Speaker	B29 Super Fortress	
2015	2100	Awards	B29 Super Fortress	
Sunday September 25, 2022				
0900	1100	Breakfast/on your own	Restaurant	
0300	1100	Reunion Ends	Nostaurant	
		Neurillott Litus		

### TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION 2022 REUNION REGISTRATION

Dayton, OH Sep 22 - 25, 2022

NAME	GUEST NAME
STREET ADDRESS _	
CITY	STATE ZIP
TEL ( )	EMAIL
SPECIAL NEEDS (if a	pplicable)
	Choose one of the following:
	1: FULL Reunion Registration
	Number attending x <b>\$85.00</b> = \$
	Full Reunion Total Remittance: \$
	2: PARTIAL Reunion Registration
•	Access to Hospitality Room (includes snacks & beverages):
Number	of days: x <b>\$12.50</b> = \$ x No. of people: =
	Partial Reunion Total Remittance \$
	3. Banquet Only Saturday, September 24, 2022
	Number attending x <b>\$44.50</b> = \$
	Banquet Only Total Remittance: \$
	Mail this form with payment (check only) to:
	TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION

TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION P.O. BOX 236 PENRYN, PA 17564-0236

# REGISTRATION FORM WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED

NLT September 1, 2022

Questions regarding Registration should be directed to:
Paul Mortensen
Director of Reunion Planning
TSNAreunions@gmail.com

### **Hotel Information**

### **Hope Hotel and Richard Holbrooke Conference Center**

10823 Chidlaw Rd (Outside Gate 12A) Wright Patterson AFB 45433 937-879-2696

Registration must be made by telephone. Mention **Tan Son Nhut Association**, Do not say TSNA Rm Rate \$109.00 plus taxes

Breakfast Coupons will be provided at check-in

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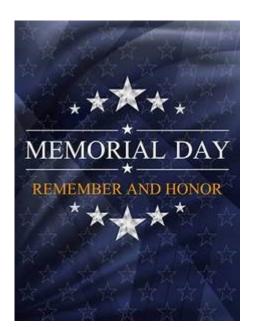
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Web Site: www.tsna.org Annual Membership: \$20.00 Five Year Membership: \$80.00 Life Membership: \$180.00 MEMORIAL DAY MAY 30, 2022 LET US NOT FORGET





Mr. Stanley D. Davis Eleanor, WV Jul 67 - Jul 68 1876th Communications Squadron Comm. Center Specialist

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