



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association
A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



NOVEMBER 2024

To: Members of the Tan Son Nhut Association

October 28, 2024

From: TSNA Board of Directors

Dear Members, we hope this letter finds you in good health.

First, we want to thank you for your membership and support of the association. Your support is very important to us.

For many years the association has had annual reunions, except for a few years or when we could not meet because of COVID.

Since COVID, the hospitality industry has changed extensively. Anyone who has traveled recently knows that housekeeping and room quality has deteriorated. While room rates have increased. We also have seen rate increases for reunion services; the hospitality room and banquet room rental, the meal costs have also increased while the meal selection has decreased. In addition, travel expenses for our members have increased and that creates a burden on some members to attend reunions.

We are all getting older, and it is difficult for us to travel and even if a reunion is close to our home base, travel is difficult due to health and financial reasons.

When the Board met in September, one item on the agenda was how can we be mindful of our members' needs and desires, and yet still be able to hold annual reunions. After much discussion and thought, the painful decision was made NOT to hold an annual three or four-day reunion in 2025, but to look at other options to see what could be an alternative that would be a benefit to our members and yet keep the expenses to members and the association down.

Several options were discussed including smaller regional reunions close to membership population centers, but all members would be invited. Partnering with another Vietnam Veterans group and piggy backing on their reunion is another possibility. Virtual reunions were also discussed as well as smaller one day reunions.

If you have ideas, or suggestions to help the Board meet their desire to serve you, please send those comments and ideas to: TSNAreunions@gmail.com.

Thank you and we look forward to our members' continued support.

TSNA Officers and Directors

PS: One thing we can do for anyone wanting to set up a "mini" reunion:

You tell Larry Fry (larlo4044@gmail.com) what states you would like member information, and it will be sent to you. I will send you an email with your requested info as an Excel attachment. You can enlarge the columns to get all the data you would need.



Chaplain's Corner-Thanksgiving Provisions

By Andy Csordas, Associate Chaplain

A Wampanoag Patuxent Indian boy could not have imagined how events in his life would impact history. As events unfolded he would be responsible for saving the lives of our early forefathers in the New England area of the new world. His travels included Spain, England and back to the new world. When white sailors came ashore this boy named Tisquantum welcomed them to the new world. You will likely recognize the name the English gave him, Squanto.

We probably remember him as the Native American who spoke English and helped save settlers in New England, but there is much more to the story. When he welcomed the first group of white men they returned the favor by kidnapping him and taking him back to England where he was displayed much like part of a circus freak show. He learned to speak English during this time which would serve him and many others well in the future. For years his captors used him as a scout and interpreter as they explored the rugged coastline of the new world.

After he was freed and returned to his tribe, he and his friends welcomed another English ship. They were rewarded by being kidnapped, again, and taken to Spain where they were sold as slaves. He was very ill when a Monk purchased him. He was nursed back to health at the monastery, where he discovered the love of Jesus who the Monks worshipped.

He was freed and was able to get passage to England and then back home to the new world. Arriving at home he discovered his village had been decimated by smallpox, homecoming was not as he had imagined. It was a lonely and despairing time for him. Then he saw another ship bringing settlers.

This time he hid and watched as the new settlers built shelters. The harsh winter took its toll on the settlers, about half died of starvation and disease. He then approached the settlement. The settlers were afraid; some were ready to shoot him but were amazed when he spoke to them in English. If you have ever traveled to a new country where no one spoke English and you did not understand their language you are able to relate to this setting.



This only survivor of a now dead tribe was to be God's answer to the prayers of the Plymouth Colony. He showed them where to find fish, taught them to grow corn, how to hunt and of course introduced them to friendly tribes. With Squanto's help the Plymouth Colony survived, they likely would not have survived without his help. God put him in the right place at the right time. Of course we have all heard about the Thanksgiving feast with the settlers and the natives that took place later, made possible because of God's provision resulting from the travails of Squanto's life.

I know in my life God has answered my prayers and provided for my family and me. Sometimes we tell God how to solve the problems, but we do need to wait on Him for the answers in His time. **Psalm 27:14** says, **"Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart and wait on the Lord."** Sometimes waiting on the Lord does take a lot of strength to be patient while you wait.

When Squanto died, as Governor William Bradford knelt at his deathbed Squanto gasped, "Pray that I might go to the Englishman's God in heaven". Bradford remarked later, "Surely he now rests in heaven."

What about you, will you meet his God in heaven? That is the most amazing provision he has ever provided for us, have a personal relationship with God. Take advantage of that provision and thank God for it.

*Many thanks to Robert Peterson's **Book of Amazing Stories**

**Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Tan Son Nhut Association



Episode – 6.5 – Vietnam - Thank You President Richard Nixon

By: Sgt Jim Marshall - TSNA
377 CSG, Hq Sq, Data Automation
Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN
Feb 1970 – Mar 1972

Despite all attempts to get out of going to Vietnam, even getting special permission to cross-train out of a Southeast Asia critical career field, Aerospace Ground Equipment Repairman into Computer Operations, I never believed, in the jungles of Vietnam, such a clean, A/C, no humidity computer room would exist. To my surprise, 7-months later, February 1970, I was catching the “Big Bird” to the Far East. In my case it was Flying Tiger Airlines on my way to Tuy Hoa, AB



I landed at Cam Ranh Bay, stayed overnight and caught a hop up to Tuy Hoa. Turned out my tour there lasted for 1-hour when I was handed orders for Tan Son Nhut AB. On that day I was the most despised person on the entire base. Seems in November 1969, two computer operators were grabbed out of Tan Son Nhut for two future choices arriving in February; myself and a Sgt Palmer hailing out of Utah.

Coming into Tan Son Nhut, I learned the base was on lock down due to Viet Cong activity in Saigon. A wise Army 2-Star General overseeing 70K+ support troops working and billeted in Saigon made the entire city “Off Limits” now going on 3 weeks. The effect was devastating to the economy; local restaurants, bars, markets, etc. Since all of Saigon paid taxes to the city, civilian and military police, not to mention the Viet Cong, there was little money for each tax collector. An unofficial peace treaty was brokered within Saigon itself and things returned to normal unleashing 70K+ GI's on the local economy.

When I arrived I learned about MPC (Military Payment Certificate). I had to exchange my Green Back dollars for MPC funny money. Then I learned the Vietnamese currency the Piastre (p) which exchanged \$1MPC = 100p. Although the Black-Market rate was \$1MPC = 200p. Now if someone smuggles in \$1 “Green Back Dollar” it was worth \$2MPC or 400p. It all seemed like play money. Later I learned almost everyone exchanged their money on the Black Market.



When I got settled into Headquarters Squadron I learned everyone was volunteered to be a Security Police Augmentee. But then for some reason the Orderly Room asked if I wanted to volunteer to be part of the local NBC (Nuclear, Biological, Chemical) Response Team. I was almost certain the Viet Cong had no “Nucs”, maybe chemical weapons although I never heard any reports of their use. Looking around Tan Son Nhut and Vietnam itself, this whole country was a biological weapon with parts seeming like a cesspool. Heck, why not get some training and besides it maybe keeps me out of the trenches in an attack. So there were three of us and as it is in the Air Force, there was training. On the left is our graduating class and I am on the left or maybe in the middle. I figured if called out in the heat, I'd last 10-12 minutes.



Saigon had settled down in early 1968 when the Tet New Year's offensive saw extensive combat all over Vietnam including Saigon. Things all over the southern part of Vietnam had calmed down but it did not mean there was not trouble brewing. When Tet was over, supplies for the next big offensive began flowing down the Ho Chi Minh trail destined for Cambodia and an area about 50-55 miles due west of Saigon. Yes, Cambodia was that close and officially US troops could not cross the border to pursue the Viet Cong who would raise hell in the Tay Ninh, Cu Chi and down in the Mekong Delta escaping back into their sanctuary when things got too hot.

What was later learned was a plan to stockpile war material just over the border in Cambodia and then in early 1970, along with my arrival, 60K+ North Vietnamese Army (NVA) seasoned combat troops would start walking down the Ho Chi Minh trail arriving in late Spring opposite Saigon in the Cambodia sanctuary. The plan was to rest up a bit, pick up all the stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, food, etc and come across to take Saigon. So imagine 60K+ combat trained NVA soldiers versus 70K+ US support troops with very little training except to maybe fire the M-16 in Basic Training.

Politically, Cambodia was officially off limits for US troops to invade although Special Forces troops were known to go into the area for "sneak and peek" operations. I will dare say most all of us on Tan Son Nhut were none the wiser of the danger coming in the summer. Then on April 28, 1970 President Nixon signed an order authorizing what was known as the "**Cambodian Incursion**" for 2-weeks. The objective was to go into the supply staging areas and steal what had been brought down disrupting the coming attack. When I first heard of it, I recall seeing all kinds of helicopter activity in the skies of Tan Son Nhut.

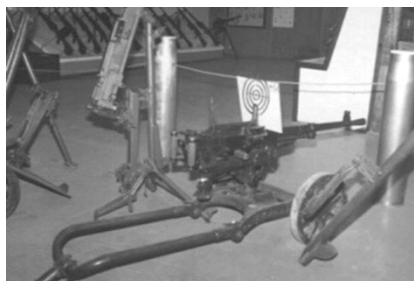
It appeared all kinds of NVA military supplies was being airlifted out of Cambodia and staged at Tan Son Nhut. It was amazing the activity. At the same time, you may recall the protests in the US and the big one at Kent State. The Antiwar protesters were incensed President Nixon has permitted the invasion of a seemingly "**so-called**" neutral sovereign country such as Cambodia. But President Nixon stood firm and even extended it to 3-weeks. I understand Kent State was an unfortunate incident. The amount of material was more than imagined. In the final week, the depots were just being burned and/or blown up.



Once the incursion was over there were few supplies left for those 60K+ NVA troops coming South. I understand they stopped North of the border and then made life miserable around the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone). As far as my time from the summer of 1970 to leaving in March 1972, it was peaceful. Well, it was mostly peaceful until Christmas and an effort to cheer up the troops, a new Base Commander decided to decorate the Radar Domes with Christmas lights. On Christmas Eve some surely drunk VC about 20 miles out decided to send three extended range 122mm rockets our way; one hit short, one went wide west and one hit Saigon. The Base Commander was on a plane to Hawaii the next day.

Eventually someone came up with a great idea, create a museum with examples of what was taken out of Cambodia for all to see.

Going inside there were displays and also actual weapons taken from Cambodia. The variety was astounding and all meant to be used to overrun Saigon taking Tan Son Nhut. Here is a taste of what was taken out.



I can't imagine how the crates below could have been carried down 1000 miles of mountain roads and eventually on bicycles.



These are considered Crew Served weapons equivalent to our 50 calibers.

Of all the displays I saw this one below was the most disheartening. Just like any Army, the NVA needed typewriters; yes typewriters. There is a Scuba tank along with medical supplies for their Medics. The shocking part was seeing labels on the medical supplies saying they were donated by American Antiwar groups. Besides the medical supplies, there were bicycle tires and bicycle tubes all donated from America along with so many other items.



Later when President Nixon resigned because of Watergate many condemned him. Being in Saigon during that time I will forever thank President Nixon for his courage and tactics to go into Cambodia to steal, blowup and burn all those thousands and thousands of tons of **“military death”** having my name written all over it. This was one time when President Nixon’s nickname of **“Tricky Dick”** was well earned.

NOVEMBER 11th

By: Johnnie Jernigan
TSNA Director of Merchandising

We have received permission for the Tan Son Nhut Association to place a wreath at our Memorial at the NMUSAF for Veteran's Day Nov. 11th. We will meet at the Memorial at 9AM and perform a simple ceremony to honor all Veterans. It will especially target those who were stationed at or passed through TSN. Help is needed to place the wreath and flags at the Bench and Plaques. Please let me know by e-mail if you are willing to help. My e-mail is jernigan1@ameritech.net.

This effort brings up the question: What is the difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day?

Many people confuse Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Memorial Day is a day for remembering and honoring military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle.

While those who died are also remembered, Veterans Day is the day set aside to thank and honor ALL those who served honorably in the military – in wartime or peacetime. In fact, Veterans Day is largely intended to thank LIVING veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served – not only those who died – have sacrificed and done their duty. The above is a quote from a Washington Post article -(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/05/26/why-memorial-day-is-confused-with-veterans-day/>)

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2013 REVETMENTS

The Silent Ranks

I wear no uniforms, no blues or army greens.
But I am in the military in the ranks rarely seen.
I have no rank upon my shoulders. Salutes I do not give.
But the military world is the place where I live.

I'm not in the chain of command, orders I do not get.
But my husband is the one who does, this I can not forget.
I'm not the one who fires the weapon, who puts my life on the line.
But my job is just as tough. I'm the one that's left behind.

My husband is a patriot, a brave and prideful man, and the call to serve his country not all can understand.
Behind the lines I see the things needed to keep this country free.
My husband makes the sacrifice, but so do our kids and me.

I love the man I married. Soldiering is his life.
But I stand among the silent ranks known as the Military Wife.

--Author Unknown

Submitted by Harlan Hatfield

FROM NOVEMBER 2014 REVETMENTS



1966
 THANKSGIVING DAY MENU
 TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE

COURTESY OF
 BOB KAHLMORGAN
 TSN MAIL ROOM
 AUG 66-JUN 67



THANKSGIVING MESSAGE

FAR FROM THE THANKSGIVING OF CHILDHOOD, WE FIND OURSELVES THIS DAY NOT AT THE FAMILY TABLE ENJOYING THE TURKEY, COMPANIONSHIP, AND THOUGHTS OF YESTERYEAR; BUT AT A NEW TABLE, WITH OTHER FRIENDS AND DIFFERENT THOUGHTS. THE MORE MATURE THANKSGIVING THAT THIS YEAR HAS BROUGHT US HAS FOUND US IN A PLACE WE HAD NOT EXPECTED, FACING AN EXACTING CHALLENGE ... WE HAVE FOUND OURSELVES IN A WORLD THAT DOES NOT MEASURE UP TO OUR CHILDHOOD STANDARDS ... A WORLD IN WHICH A BASIC IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT REQUIRES OF US MANY SACRIFICES AND STRENUOUS ENDEAVORS. CAN WE NOT FIND, HOWEVER, IN THIS SITUATION THE REAL MEANING OF THANKSGIVING? THE REALITY OF A HARD WON AND HARD KEPT PEACE FOR OURSELVES, OUR FAMILIES, AND OUR NATION. CAN WE NOT THANK GOD THIS DAY WITH A TRUE REALIZATION OF THE VALUE OF OUR SEVERAL BLESSINGS? HAVE WE NOT LEARNED TO BE TRULY THANKFUL?

Commander

THANKSGIVING DAY MENU

- Shrimp Cocktail Crackers
- Roast Turkey with Giblet Gravy
- Baked Ham
- Bread Dressing Cranberry Sauce
- Mashed Potatoes Candied Sweet Potatoes
- Buttered Vegetable
- Assorted Relish Tray
- Hot Parker House Rolls Butter
- Fruit Cake
- Mincemeat Pie or Pumpkin Pie with Whipped Cream
- Assorted Fresh Fruit
- Assorted Nuts Assorted Candy
- Tea Coffee Milk

Tan Son Nhut Association
P. O. Box 236
Penryn PA 17564

Revetments is an official publication of the Tan Son Nhut Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564-0236
The Association is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt Veterans' Organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

President: Rick Cooley
Vice President: Richard Carvell
Secretary/Treasurer: Andy Csordas
Director of Communications: Gary Fields
Director of Marketing: Andy Csordas
Director of Reunion Planning: Paul Mortensen
Director of Membership and Revetments Editor: Larry E. Fry
Director of Membership Development: Rick Cooley
Director at Large: Bruce E. Wimmer
Web Master: Kerry Nivens/Chad Towry
Chaplain: Jimmy Smith
Associate Chaplain: Andy Csordas
Chaplains Emeriti:
Rev. Bob Alan Chaffee (1929-2017), Chaplain: 2009 - 2017
Rev. Dr. James M. Warrington (1926 - 2022), Chaplain: 1997-2018
Presidents Emeriti:
Don Parker, (1947-2014), Co-Founder and President 1996-2002
John Peele, Co-Founder and President 2002-2004
Wayne Salisbury, (1940-2014), President 2004-2007
Robert Robinson Gales, President 2007-2011
George Plunkett, President 2011-2015
Randall W. Brown, President, 2015-2023

Web Site: www.tsna.org
Annual Membership: \$20.00
Three Year Membership: \$50.00



TSNA and its officers, directors, employees and agents do not make any guarantees of any kind about the content, accuracy, or timeliness of information in the TSNA newsletter, *Revetments*. The use of information from this newsletter is strictly voluntary and at the user's sole risk. TSNA shall not be liable for any damages of any kind related to the information in this newsletter. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and do not constitute the opinion or policy of TSNA.