



REVETMENTS

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



OCTOBER 2024

Chaplain's Corner-Forgiveness

By Andy Csordas, Associate Chaplain

Forgiveness can be a very difficult thing for many. How does forgiveness work vs. retribution? Our sin nature always tends to go to retribution for little things and big things. What do you do when someone cuts you off or does other stupid things in traffic that directly affects you? Do you just let them go or do you work to make their passage down the road a little more difficult. Their offense is really a small thing in the scope of life but there have been numerous occasions where it led to a very big thing, even the death of someone after a road rage incident.



Consider some things that have started out big. In 1994 the best part of one million people were killed, mostly by their friends and neighbors by machetes. This happened in just 100 days in Rwanda. This was the infamous Rwanda Genocide. If you read the details of this you just cannot wrap your head around the entire thing. The backdrop that resulted in this Genocide started out many years before with the identifying of separate tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis. The Hutus tried to extinguish the Tutsis and anyone who defended them. The picture at left is from one of the rooms in the Genocide Museum. In this article I will not share some of the more graphic pictures of rooms in the museum. Presently almost half of the Rwanda population is below the age of 18 as a result of the Genocide.

I have been to Rwanda twice on mission trips, one as recently as June, and the Genocide museum in Kigali is a very sobering place. It has the bodies of 250,000 victims, who are just from the capital area, buried there. Bodies are still being found in the countryside almost 30 years later. On my most recent visit I was at the site of a new school being built by Cindi's Hope near a Reconciliation Village. As the footers were dug some clothing was recovered that has damage that looked like it could have come from a weapon. Was it a victim's clothing, we don't know, but it is very sobering to process.

Back to forgiveness, the victims of the Genocide prevailed over the perpetrators. What is the normal human response? We tend to go to revenge or retribution quite quickly. Instead the new government chose a different path. The low level perpetrators had to answer for their crimes, but they also had their punishment limited if they would ask forgiveness of the remaining family members of their victims. Remember most were killed by close neighbors, not people they did not know.



Some of the rural families of the victims and the families of the perpetrators live together in what is called Reconciliation Villages. As an aside note, Cindi's Hope builds their schools near Reconciliation Villages. The picture at left shows the roofs of a Reconciliation Village from one of the school sites. The picture to the right shows what the houses actually look like. I am praying with one of the men who lives in that village. Was he part of a victim's family or a perpetrator? It does not matter; God loves him just as God loves all of us. Has reconciliation been hard, absolutely! What are the alternatives, to go on and continue the hate, as some have done, or try to go on with your life?



Think about who suffers more in something that has affected you, the person who was wronged and refuses to forgive. Or the person who wronged another and does not care, or perhaps is not even aware of the hurt he or she has caused. Forgiveness is a funny thing, it can bring peace or if not done can eat at your very soul for a very long time. By the way, forgiveness does not mean forgetting, it means you are at peace with the past and you chose to go on with your life.

Do we want people to forgive us for our wrongs, or what God calls sin? Of course we do. Will God forgive us for our wrongs? Yes he will. But you need to ask for that forgiveness, just as we need to ask people we have wronged for their forgiveness.

John 3:16 tells us **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."** That is forgiveness, it can make our opportunities to forgive people seem small indeed. Trust God for your own sake.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This issue of Revetments is mostly about the TSNA Reunion recently held in Huntsville, AL.

So you will be seeing quite a few pictures, and descriptions, thanks to Paul Mortensen.

In addition, on Page 10, unfortunately, you will see quite a list of members who are longer with us.

The size of the list is mainly because of some "searching" having been done with members whose email is no longer working, or dues situations being checked into.

TSNA Board Appointments 2024

The Board added two new Board Members at the recent Board Meeting held during the Huntsville Reunion.

Paul Mortensen

Rejoining the board is Paul Mortensen. Paul was part of the 9th Air Postal Squadron on Tan Son Nhut from March 1967 to Feb 1968. Paul has been instrumental in reunion planning for the last several years. He has put in many hours doing RFPs, refining requirements for both TSNA and the venue, negotiating prices and options and all of the other details needed for us to have a successful reunion. It truly is a lot of work. We thank him for all of his efforts. Paul and his wife Amy reside in Payson AZ.

Welcome back Paul.

Bruce Wimmer

We welcome Bruce Wimmer as a new board member. Bruce was an intelligence officer and was part of the 12th RITS during his stay at Tan Son Nhut from September 1972 to February 1973. In addition to his 22 years in the Air Force Bruce has worked domestically and around the world as a security consultant for a number of governments and organizations. He specialized in counterespionage and developed a comprehensive counterespionage education and awareness program for the entire Air Force. That was also used with other organizations to help them protect critical business and government assets. He was also cited for having the largest actual espionage investigations caseload in the US Air Force and was responsible for the neutralization of multiple internal and external spies. He worked with the Pinkerton Asia group after retiring from the Air Force. Bruce and his wife Teresa reside in Spring Hill, FL.

Welcome Bruce.

Submitted by Andy Csordas, TSNA Secretary/Treasurer, TSNA Director of Merchandising



**Left to Right:
Erica Bradford, Huntsville Convention & Visitors Bureau, Paul Mortensen, Amy Mortensen**

2024 TSNA Awards-By Andy Csordas

Paul Mortensen-Supreme Order of the Dragon

Paul, with Amy's help, has been a very significant part of the reunion process for a number of years. There is so much more to putting a reunion together than most people realize. It requires endless phone calls to hotels, local tourism boards, transportation for events, group tickets for events or venues, etc.

Trying to get people to return calls will sometimes drive you insane. He has been instrumental in making the reunions possible. It takes so much time effort and expense, but Paul just makes sure it gets done so we can all have a great reunion.

Kerry Nivens-Supreme Order of the Dragon

Kerry, with Margaret's help, has done so much for the Association over the years, virtually all of it unseen by the general membership. Kerry has chased down all of the Memorial items we have done over recent years.

That too takes tons of phone calls, asking permission to do an award, where to put it, what the award will look like, etc.

Kerry has also worked very hard over the years trying to set up transportation when needed. You may recall the great trip we had inside Redstone Arsenal the last time we were here in Huntsville, all of that was a result of Kerry's work. All of this while dealing with health issues as well.

Richard Cooley-Military Order of the Dragon

Most of you know our ranks are thinning significantly. Last year Richard selflessly agreed to become President. It is appreciated by the rest of the board, and the organization. This position also has many unseen duties that are required. As our ranks thin we need to have people like Richard who will fill in where needed. Richard has done that along with Brenda. They, like others in this group, selflessly helped with the reunion last year and this year.

Thomas Earnest-Military Order of the Dragon

Tom, and Joyce, have been to all the reunions we can remember. Tom has always volunteered to help in any way he could. Last year Tom and his family were life savers for Rena and Andy as they took over the BX in addition to running the hospitality room and performing other duties. to ensure the reunion ran smoothly.

Tom recently suffered a stroke and could not be at the reunion in Huntsville. He and his family were truly missed. His award was forwarded after the reunion.

Joyce Earnest-Anchor Award

We just talked about Tom above, now we can talk about his bride Joyce. Joyce, just like Tom, helps in any way she can. Rena so appreciated her and her family last year as they helped with the Hospitality Room and the BX. She helped everyone keep our sanity. Joyce has also attended all the reunions that we can remember. She is surely an "Anchor" for the Tan Son Nhut Association. Her award was forwarded after the Reunion along with Toms.

Bobby White-Anchor Award

Bobby, and Jane, have been regular attendees at our TSNA reunions, and they too are always willing to help wherever they can. I believe Bobby has been at all of the reunions we can remember and they attended wherever they have been located. He has supported our organization steadfastly over the years. You can find him with Gary at the Registration table. We so appreciate his help.

I would like to add that others, not just the people receiving awards this year, have been so very helpful over the years. This is so much more important as our group ages and thins.



2024 REUNION HUNTSVILLE, AL



First Tan Son
Nhut Reunion



2024 Reunion Group

The Board of Directors wish to thank all who were able to attend for the wonderful company, stories, and support of the Association.

**THANK YOU ALL
FOR ATTENDING**



Our speaker receiving a thank you from Andy for a wonderful presentation.



The line of people wishing to thank our speaker and receive an autographed book.



Andy presenting an award to Rick Driesbach



Kerry Nivens and family after receiving his award.



Our speaker at the banquet was Thanh Dong Boyer who spoke about her escape from Vietnam and her love for America and the Vietnam Veterans.

She had many heart warming stories about her experiences.

The MIA/POW table presentation was performed by the Cooley and Redlinski families and as always, was a very touching and emotional part of the evening.



Bobby and Jane White were honored for their service to the reunions. They have helped with registration and 50/50 drawings for many years and their assistance does not go unnoticed.

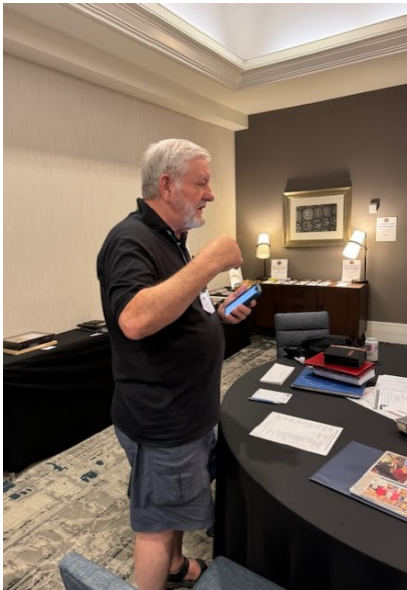


The highlight of Friday evening was the Banquet, with our guest speaker, and awards presented.

Thank you all for attending



Lots of activities going on in the hospitality suite



Jesus and Yolanda Herrera attending their first TSNA Reunion





Tan Son Nhut Association's Board of Director meeting, led by our President, Richard Cooley.



We welcome our newest Board Member, Bruce Wimmer who served in Vietnam with the 12th RITS in 1972-1973.

Other Board Members are Gary Fields, Kerry Nivens, (also an award winner this year), Rich Carvell, Andy Csordas, Paul Mortensen, and Larry Fry.



Rick Driesbach (driving the van) arranged for a trip to the US Space and Rocket Center. Here are some of the folks who were able to attend, We thank Rick for the tremendous amount of time and effort he put into making this event happen.

Thank You Rick

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Secretary/Treasurer: Andy Csordas
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Web Master: Chad Towry/Kerry Nivens
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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

NEW MEMBER

Mr. Chad Towry catowry@gmail.com Life Member TSNA Webmaster (Kerry Nivens Son-in-Law)

IN MEMORIAM

Dale F. Bryan
Morris Cutler
William O. Doolittle
Charles W. Gray
Keith W. Krier
Johnny A. Martin
Carl H. Mckenzie

Stan Morris
Michael R. Pelto
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