



REVETMENTS

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



JANUARY 2025

NEW MEMBER

I lived in the group of barracks across the road from the Rebel Row, near the C-130 Terminal. I worked unloading-loading all kinds of cargo aircraft and commercial contract aircraft.

The men assigned to the 8th Aerial Port were an outstanding group to work with! The times allowed to load and unload aircraft were short, and had to be accomplished swiftly.

Victor Eugene Ringsby
8th Aerial Port Squadron.

February 1969 - February 1970

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Chaplain's Corner-New Year, New Life Andy Csordas-Associate Chaplain

Well here we are at another new year. Do you find that time seems to pass incredibly fast as we get older? I suspect you have seen the meme that talks about how we feel like we are much younger but our body does not feel that young anymore. Or you meet an older person and realize you went to school with them. Many times, we cannot relate to how old we are, unless it is the aches and pains we feel. We do understand that we cannot do the things we used to do and for me that can be annoying.

We watch our children grow and ask ourselves, how can our kids be in their 50s? Of course, we do love seeing them grow and we especially love to see our grandchildren grow up. It is amazing how patient we have become with our grandchildren vs our kids when they were the same age. How about seeing that 55 Chevy you used to drive and realizing it is almost 70 years old, wow how did that happen?

How do we get a new life in the New Year? What does God say about that in his word? John 3:3 tells us that Jesus said to Nicodemus "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." Of course, Nicodemus asked how that was possible. Jesus continues in verse 5; "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit."

Scripture is clear we can have that new life through a gift that God gives us through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. We just celebrated His birth, but His death and resurrection three days later is so much more important. Giving your life to Christ by asking for forgiveness of your sins and asking Him to come into your heart is all it takes. It is a free gift. Very few things are truly free, but God has given us this gift.

It gives us hope and peace, I know it has in my life, it also gives us purpose. God will not allow sin to enter heaven; we need to ask forgiveness of our sins. Have you sinned? I certainly have, but God will forgive those sins. But we must accept the gift of forgiveness by accepting Jesus Christ as our savior and asking God to forgive our sins.

John 3:16-18 says, "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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

So, start the year off right with a new life, invite Jesus into your life today and feel the peace that comes with that new relationship.

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

FROM THE JANUARY, 2009 REVETMENTS (NEXT 2 ARTICLES)

January 31, 1968

On my bicycle

By Lt. Col. Jack Wimer
7th Air Force Scatback

(From an email to Bob Laymon, TSNA member)

My nephew, LTCmdr. Brian Wilson, forwarded to me your E-mail regarding 31 July, 2008, reunion in St. Louis. I am very happy to have your address and the opportunity to possibly meet some old friends. Also, the TSN Assoc. is interesting as I served in 7th AF in Blue Chip from Oct. 1967 until Oct. 1968 (did not fly that year). On the morning of Jan. 31st., 1968, I rode my bicycle from my room in an alley off VoTan Street to the main gate at Tan Son Nhut. It was still dark and the gate was blacked out and barricaded. An Air Policeman shouted from behind the concrete to turn off the headlight on my bike and to pedal fast through the gate. I pedaled fast and headed for the O'Club as I normally did for breakfast and after passing the gymnasium, I ditched the bike and dove into a sandbagged bunker and waited out the firefight on the flight line, then proceeded to Blue Chip where we continued to launch missions for the next 7 days without coming out of the command center. We had no advance notice of the Tet Offensive. From Vietnam, I was assigned to Bergstrom AFB, TX, to fly retired President LBJ in T-39 #62-4478, now on display at the National Museum of the Air Force. When LBJ died in 1973, I went back to SEA as Ops. Officer of Scatback at NKP. Scatback had recently moved from TSN to NKP. I had many interesting experiences there, including flying back into TSN while the peace talks were taking place and see North Vietnamese officers at base ops. Also, I believe I flew the only T-39 to get shot up (happened at Phenom Phen, Cambodia...had left engine shot out with 30cal. and numerous holes in fuselage). In short, it would be great to reunite with some old friends.

Jerry Sommerfeldt
And TET '68

By Charles Penley
TSNA Webmaster

During the TET Offensive, Jan 31, 1968, a 377th Security Policeman, Jerry Sommerfeldt was performing his duties as part of the Quick Reaction Team (QRT), enroute to the 0-51 Gate to help defend the gate and the installation when Jerry was badly wounded.

Eventually Maj. Carl Bender picked Jerry up from the battlefield and placed him on a security police jeep, driven by 1Lt Melvin Grover and it was Grover who drove Sommerfeldt to the 377th USAF Dispensary to receive immediate treatment.

Once the ambulances, which were under guard from the 377th Security Police Squadron, started making runs to 3rd Field Hospital about 1/2 mile straight out the Tan Son Nhut Main Gate, Sommerfeldt was transferred there.

Sommerfeldt spent approximately two weeks at 3rd Field Hospital and then transferred to Tachikawa, Japan.

From Tachikawa, Japan, Sommerfeldt was then transferred to Chanute AFB, IL.

Sommerfeldt's condition kept getting worse due to an infection.

They transferred him to Lackland AFB, TX hospital. Once he was there, they told him that he would be in the hospital for approximately two years. They had to operate and replace his hip and placed Jerry in a full body cast.

The doctors were very accurate in the length of time in the hospital. Altogether, Jerry spent almost three years total in the various hospitals.

Jerry then received a 100% Medical Discharge. Upon discovering the Tan Son Nhut Association, Jerry became a member.

TET '68

Bernard Bucholz
1876 Comm Sq.
67- 68

I was asleep in barracks 886 when TET began. A rocket landed by the left rear corner of the barracks. The concussion lifted me from my bunk and I landed on the floor.

Fortunately, I was in the bottom bunk. Everyone inside quickly ran out and sheltered in a nearby bunker.

Barracks 886 and 887 were damaged. Fortunately, there was no fire. I later heard there was a card game going on in 887 and some of the participants were wounded. One injured Airman was brought into the bunker with us and was treated by a medic.

The tail fin of the rocket was sticking out of the ground. It eventually disappeared, probably grabbed as a souvenir.

No one was quite sure what to do. I eventually reported to work at the 7th AF HQ Comm. Center.

The 7th AF HQ building was probably the safest place to be. It was solid concrete with no windows.

Here are some photos of the damaged barracks. I am standing by the rear door in December 67.



FROM THE JANUARY, 2011 REVETMENTS

Remembering TET '68

By: Michael Mitchell

12th. RITS

Apr. '67 - Nov. '68

I have to start out by saying that I have just observed another Memorial Day, #63, in my life and it reminded me of what is really important. I am here today because of the many sacrifices made by men I never knew, men who were young men so many years ago in a place that is listed in "history" today, Vietnam. To be exact, Tan Son Nhut AB, Republic of Vietnam during a time that when I look back seems like yesterday but many years ago per my calendar.

The more I read the stories in "Revetments", the more I realize how little I knew about what was going on around me in those days, what was being done by men who deserve the life long respect of men like me but yet may never know that we existed because there were so many of us stationed at that airbase, each doing his job and doing it well without regards to what it might mean to someone else. I believe that's what is learned by one who serves in the military, you do your job and go about your business without realizing how important that job might be. How many lives have I saved or how many will be saved in the future by what I'm doing right now. We tend to not think in the present, it's our job and we do it, one more day in-country and one day closer to going home.

But later, in the future, we sit and look back, we learn that what we did at the time meant so much in the overall scheme of history.

I remember Tet '68, the night suddenly lit up with tracers, the sound of explosions around the base and the 122mm rockets that for weeks would hit the base. I remember also being scared because I didn't know what was going on, everything was suddenly different from my normal routine. I had been on the base for 8 months and the war was on the "perimeter" of the base, or downtown, or in the "boonies". But this night, the war was real, it was close, and I could feel it closing in on me. I was in the Air Force and was unarmed but then why would I need to be armed, the war was somewhere "off in the distance" and anyway, I worked in a very safe building with others like me who did classified photographic work, why did we need firearms? We had a base that was secure and protected by the Air Police and anyway, the VC would never attempt to attack this great base, it would be useless and a suicide mission with no possible chance of succeeding. But this night, Tet '68, this 20 year old airman was starting to realize that something was wrong, something didn't fit and for the next several months my life changed in so many ways.

I grew up, proud to admit it, during the next few months. I was given a chance to leave Tan Son Nhut in April '68 but felt that my "job" in Vietnam was not completed so I extended my tour for another 6 months. That's right, I extended my tour because I had a job to do that was not finished, I knew my job in my field and could do it better than anyone else at the time and had lived through the many rocket attacks, the probes of the base, and even survived being pinned down by a sniper that had gotten into one of the radar towers.

But my story is just one of the many that could be told, nothing special, nothing heroic, just a guy doing his job. I don't even have a wound to show my children, at least not on the outside.

I hear the rumblings, "Let's get to the point" and the point of my story about TSN is the guys that I never knew did so much to protect me. The guys that faced the enemy that I never faced, the guys that did their jobs in a very professional manner. The ones who, in a lot of cases, made the ultimate sacrifice to carry out their assigned duty without regards to who they were protecting. I have only become aware of some of these things while reading "Revetments" and felt that I had to say something to the many who, like me at the time, were just doing their jobs. I feel that I owe a debt to so many and now all I can say is "Thank You".

I know that when I returned home I was treated differently by a lot of my friends and those people that I would meet. Once they found out that I was in the military and had served in Vietnam, well, let's just say that even in August it could get a bit chilly.

We, the returning Vietnam vet, endured some things that we didn't deserve but I'm sure that most of us took it in a military manner because we knew what we had done for our country and do to this day.

IN MEMORIAM



Ricci Pineau, 76, of Crestview, FL, passed away on February 27, 2024, after a recent illness. She was born on May 28, 1947, in Acushnet, MA, to parents Leo J. Pineau and Marie E. (Bellfleur) Pineau. Ricci was a student of New Bedford Vocational High School and Bristol Agricultural School. After attending the "Aggie," she enlisted in the U.S.A.F. during the Vietnam War, serving as a jet aircraft mechanic. She was bestowed with the Purple Heart and then completed her tour with an honorable discharge. After patriotically serving her country, she went on to work at Elco Dress Company, in shipping and receiving, and then at the New Bedford School Department, in maintenance. She later moved to California, where she was employed by the Santa Cruz Public Works Department in several roles, including supervisor, until her retirement. After the loss of her spouse Carol, she relocated to Arizona. Her last place of residence was in Crestview,

FL. Passionate about many subjects, Ricci was never at a loss for words. She was witty, creative, and thoughtful. In her gratitude and recognition of how fortunate she was on this earth, she continually showed great generosity and acts of kindness toward family, friends, and strangers alike. Ricci is predeceased by her father, Leo J. Pineau and Marie E. Pineau, her wife Carol Morris Nissen, and her sister Rosalie (Pineau) Tarini. Ricci is survived by her son, Michael Pineau of Rehoboth, MA; daughter, Susan Colón of Lithia, FL; granddaughter, Madeline Colón of Tampa, FL; sister Muriel Morris of Fairhaven, MA; nephew James Morris and his wife, Alice Morris, of Fairhaven, MA; nephew Carlo Tarini and his wife, Diane DiNardo, of Beverly, MA.; numerous cousins; and several beloved friends from coast to coast.



Photos here and Page 6 by Kevin Shwiner, Jul 71-Jul 72

315th CAMS - 310th TALS - 21st TASS

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