
Tan Son Nhut Association



4th Edition T.S.N.A

September 7, 1997

Attention Last Call...Attention Last Call...Attention Last Call...

To all Tan Son Nhut Air Base Veterans.

Well there is only one way to say this, YOU MUST COME TO THIS RE-UNION. The guest, and speaker line up for the reunion in Hampton, VA is a must see and hear, you will be glad you came. Reservations need to be made by October 1st. The committee has worked very hard to make sure everyone has a good time in Hampton, Please don't disappoint them or yourselves by missing this event.

Guests include Lt. Gen. Gordon Graham U.S.A.F. (Ret). Most of us just get to read about men like Gen. Graham. To list the lifetime accomplishments of Lt. Gen. Graham would take 20 pages of this newsletter, but I would like to list a few of his accomplishments: In the 7th A.F. Vietnam and Southeast Asia one year as Vice Commander of the 7th Air Force, where he flew 146 combat missions in F-4 and RF-4 aircraft. For his service in the Republic of Vietnam, Gen. Graham was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. He also earned the Silver Star, Legion of Merit; Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster; Air Medal with 27 leaf clusters; Joint Service Commendation Medal; Air Force National Order of Vietnam, 5th class; Vietnamese Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, 1st Class; Vietnamese Air Force Pilot Wings; Republic of Korea Air Force Pilot Wings; and Chinese Air Force Pilot Wings. These are but a few of the many distinguished awards for Gen. Graham, he is also the author of the book "Down for Double", please come and hear him speak you won't regret it!

Currently we are still expecting Col. Tex Peebles, Base commander TET 68'. Col. Peebles is in a serious battle with cancer right now so we cannot guarantee he will still be able to make it. Please come and support Col. Peebles with your presence, whether or not he is able to attend.

The voice of Armed Forces Radio, "Good Morning Vietnam!", Adrian Cronauer is also expected to speak at this reunion. Adrian is a great voice of Vets and Vets needs. Don't miss what he has to say to all of our members.

Maj. August Schell and his collection of over 5,000 patches and uniforms will be there for all to enjoy. This is a most impressive display! Bring your family and children this is something no one should miss!

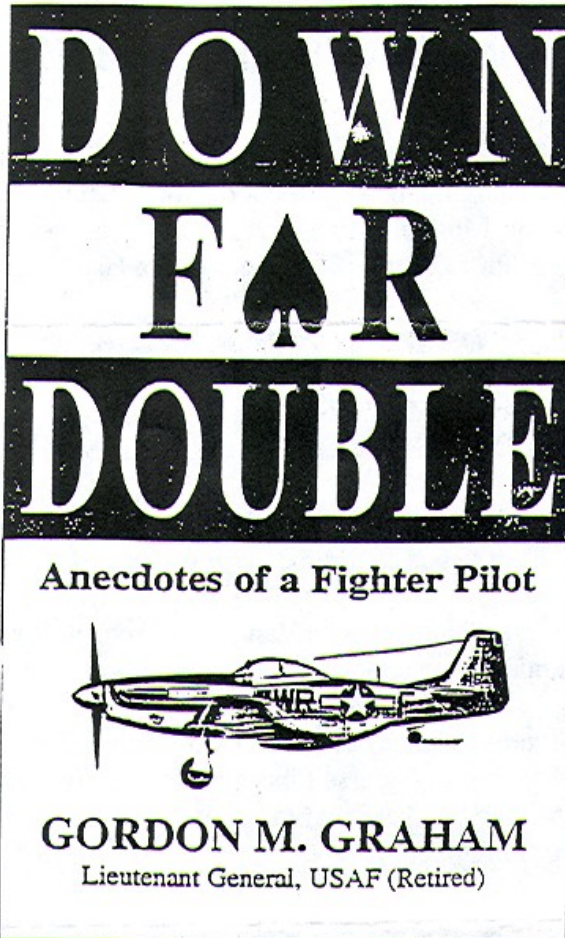
Don't forget to send in your reservation for Hampton by October 1, 1997.....

Reunion Itinerary
(All tours optional)

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| Day 1 | Early Arrivals (optional)
Day free for tours on your own and fellowship
Welcome reception
Hospitality room open |
| Day 2 | Main arrival day
Tour to Colonial Williamsburg and Yorktown
Hospitality room open |
| Day 3 | Langley tour
Lunch at Officers Club with Base Commander
Arrive back at hotel
Hospitality room open
Briefing on U.S.A.F. now vs. Tan Son Nhut days |
| Day 4 | Business meeting
Day free for tours on your own or fellowship in
Hospitality room
Depart for Miss Hampton II boat tour
Banquet |
| Day 5 | 0800-1000 Farewell breakfast Holiday Inn Travoli Garden restaurant
Depart |

As always we will be having our 50/50 drawings, door prizes, and more surprise gifts to win. Some of you may recognize a few of the gifts this year from days long ago in a place far away.

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Down for Double traces Lieutenant General Gordon Graham's career as petroleum engineer, U.S. Air Force gunnery and pilot instructor, tactical operations commander, heavily decorated combat triple ace fighter pilot, and corporate executive, whose worldwide military career spanned thirty-three years, three wars, and numerous military conflicts. He amassed over 9,000 pilot hours in seventy-eight aircraft types, which included seventy-three combat missions in Europe and 146 combat missions in Southeast Asia.

This is the story of a man whose life and career took him into many battles in the air and challenges in the civilian business. This is also the story of the courage and devotion that is still the power of our Air Force.

Gordy is a real fighter pilot who tells it like it was. It will bring back memories. -Chuck Yeager

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More info on tours and activities in Hampton...

Tour Colonial Williamsburg and the Yorktown Battlefield, this is a 7 hour tour for \$29.00 per person. If you would like to venture out on your own you may want to choose the Jamestown settlement, Fort Monroe which started out as a British fort in 1609, Little England Chapel, St. John's Church on the Bay (this is where Blackbeard the pirates head was posted on a pole for all to see).

For those that enjoy touring museums there are plenty to choose from here are just a few: The Virginia Air and Space museum, The Casement museum (once home to Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis), The Virginia Living museum, & The Mariners museum.

If you play golf, and I know some of you do, there are no less than 3 golf courses for your enjoyment. There is also a tennis center for those who enjoy the game.

For additional family entertainment, The Hampton Carousel, Busch Gardens Amusement Park, and Virginia Beach are all only minutes away.

With all of these activities plus the reunion activities scheduled you should have no problem keeping the whole family and yourself busy not to mention the tons of shopping in the area. **Don't forget to make your reservation or call the Tan Son Nhut Association at 301-277-~~8484~~ time is running out!**

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Air War: Vietnam by Frank Harvey continued...

The newcomer to Tan Son Nhut is soon struck by the type of Americans who inhabit the place. A hot shooting war seems to float the take-charge types to the surface. There are few flabby nearsighted officers or petty by the book noncoms. In fact, you might think you had somehow stumbled into the Green Bay Packers preseason training camp. Everywhere you look there are big guys with clipped heads and deep tans. They wear dark jungle fatigues with huge pockets in the baggy pants, Special Forces canvas boots with deep mud cleats and either turned up Aussie jungle hats or dark loose-crowned baseball caps.

The officers club bar at the base is jammed, starting at 10 in the morning. The noise level is only slightly less than the chipping bay of a steel mill. At times, in order to hear what your companion is saying, you have to put your ear a few inches from his mouth. He then shouts. The barroom conversation is not wholly dedicated to women, stateside ball scores and how many days, hours and minutes until a hitch is up. The also talk shop. Fighter-bomber pilots argue the merits of low-level lay-down versus high-angle dive bombing. The Air Commando guys (they fly the paradrop and short-field supply runs) discuss such matters as going to full power with water augmentation if you get in a bind coming up a canyon and have to pole-vault over the ridge, or how to bounce yourself 30 feet at the last moment, to clear the trees, by dumping full flaps on the C-123.

The Air force's twin engine C-123 Providers, some modified by adding GE jets and tail-breaking chutes, are designed to be STOL (short takeoff and landing). You could get an argument on it. Some say, ungently, that the only way to get a grossed-out C-123 in the air on a hot day is with a hydraulic jack.

Nonetheless, the C-123 is the best we've got for small field supply runs. Just about every C-123 ever built is here. Our jocks have shoehorned them out of plenty of back country jungle strips. Some air commandos say they've gotten them in and out of 1,200 feet, which is taking your life in our hands. Now, in the middle of 1967, the air Force is also using Caribous. The payload is only half as big, but the Caribou is more STOL, and a lot thriftier on the old adrenaline supply.

One of the paces the Information Office will not encourage you to visit is the mortuary at Tan Son Nhut, where all American dead are prepared for shipment to the States. Such visits are verboten. Nobody is supposed to really get killed in this war, and if they do, let's whisk them out the side door quickly and be about other business. But I had smelled the C-123 death ships on the line at Tan Son Nhut, and I had seen men quicken their pace during the hot Saigon day as they walked by the big mysterious building where the American dead are processed.

With the help of an independent-minded noncom, I was able to get inside the warehouse-like building. I saw the man-sized aluminum containers stacked high against the wall. I saw the ambulances back up tight to the door and unload the bodies of American soldiers. I saw the white-tiled floors, the tilting tables, the grim but necessary tools. I spent an hour there. The dreadful task was being handled as well as is humanly possible.

To be continued...