

# Revetments

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



"All Included - Non Excluded"

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February, 1999

## Sentimental Journey

By Anne Keegan  
Chicago Tribune Writer

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We were given this article about Tan Son Nhut Association member, David Chung, and feel that it ought to be passed on to our membership and the readers of *Revetments*. It was originally published in the *Chicago Tribune* on September 17, 1993. But we think there's agreement that it is a story worth re-telling.)

David Chung says he didn't really feel like stopping for an hour. His eyes were tired from driving and he was two hours behind schedule. Probably nobody in that small town up ahead would still be there waiting at this late hour, so why not keep on moving?

But Chung, of Schereville, Ind., swung the big truck off the road when he got to the exit and, along with the rest of the small convoy, rumbled into Junction City, Kan., down its empty streets and into a dark and rain-swept park. As he rounded the turn, his headlights fell upon the figures of hundreds of people -- a hushed crowd peering out from under their umbrellas, their eyes glued to his truck, waiting.

He stopped the truck, locked the brakes and got out. There was a rapt silence. A couple of crew members with his convoy helped him, and in the dark they slid open the back door of the truck and pulled back the curtained sides, revealing the cargo within. Silhouetted in the gray of the storm, standing 7 feet high, was the statue of three female combat nurses -- one tenderly cradling a wounded and blinded GI, one



Tribune Photo by Nancy Stone

Federal Express driver, David Chung of Schereville with the Vietnam Women's Memorial he's transporting from Santa Fe to Washington

looking up, waiting anxiously for a helicopter to drop down out of the sky, the third with her head bowed in perpetual grief for all of the fallen men.

At the same moment, two state trooper cars, which had escorted the convoy into town, flicked on their headlights simultaneously. The back of Chung's truck and the statue inside lit up like a stage coming to life. The bronze on the figures glistened and slowly; as the powerful image sank in, applause began to ripple slowly through the crowd. Then, beginning from a murmur, cheers erupted. The throng moved in closer to look and touch the image, and then the tears began. Standing in the rain in this small town outside of Ft. Riley, the townspeople and the military families had come to pay tribute to the women who served in the Vietnam War, and they had waited for hours to do it.

"About time," said a male voice, rising

over the crowd. "About time we say thanks to the ladies."

Chung smiled. He was glad they stopped after all, even if they were late and it was raining buckets and they'd be staying for only one hour. Because this is what this whistle-stop tour across Middle America was all about. To let people get a firsthand look at this precedent-setting memorial and say thanks to the 11,000 female nurses who cared for the American soldiers who fought and died in Vietnam.

On November 11, Veterans Day, this statue that Chung is hauling from the sculptor's studio in Santa Fe to Washington in the back of this big truck will be formally unveiled at its permanent site next to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It will be the first memorial to military women in the nation's capital.

And Chung, a Chicago native and  
(Please See MEMORIAL, Page 3)

# Tales of Olde Tan Son Nhut

## Reminiscence From The Early Days

by

Bill Coup

Boca Raton, Florida

In November 1965 I was sent to Tan Son Nhut as part of McNamara's 100,000 man buildup.

I found that they didn't know I was coming and they didn't quite know what to do with me.

Here I was a draftsman and there was no drafting equipment to be found. All I had was a pen set and two warped eighteen inch rulers to work with. I found a lettering set in a paint shop that I could borrow when he didn't need it. This was a learning time for me, I found out just how much I could get along without.

It was a very interesting situation. A chief I had known at Lockbourne saw me and passed the word that I was there. Soon there was enough work to last me for the foreseeable future. You can't run a war without charts!

This was also a confusing period for my family. I kept changing my address! Why? Because things were changing so fast that the base's organization had to be constantly revised to accommodate the additional personnel. I was first assigned to the 6250th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. The squadron got too big so they split it up into three separate squadrons.

Those, like me, who didn't fit into either of those squadrons were assigned to the 6250th Support Squadron. The support squadron was later deactivated and changed to the Headquarters Squadron, 6250th Combat Support Group. Three squadrons in three months!

During all this time I did the same job with the same people. I also got to see the 1965 Bob Hope Christmas Show at the base.

The final change occurred in March 1966. A new wing was formed. I was transferred to the Headquarters Squadron, 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing. I continued doing the same job, just in a different place. I heard later that I was the subject of an argument between my old boss and my new one. The old one wanted to keep me, but the new one said, "I've got

him and I'm keeping him!" I got a kick out of that.

For about a month I worked in the same place until they made space for me in the new unit.

During that time the base came under a mortar attack. I found myself running in my underwear and shower shoes to find a shelter. I finally found one with a group of other frightened men. A few airplanes and buildings were hit on the Air Force side.

On the other side of the base some Army men were killed when a mortar hit their tent.

The next day the whole base was building bomb shelters. The base commander never thought the base would be attacked so he had many old shelters torn down to "beautify" the base.

A few weeks later a dignitary arrived at the base and the Vietnamese government proceeded to fire a twenty-one gun salute for him. Unfortunately, they neglected to tell the Americans about their plans. The guns sounded just like mortars again and many men were heading for shelters. I just hid under my desk.

I learned what reconnaissance really is. The image was of airplanes taking pictures --- how dangerous could that be?

Very! The reconnaissance aircraft fly in alone at a specific altitude on a specific course to photograph targets right after our fighters and bombers have hit the target.

The enemy is in a pretty bad mood after an attack and they take it out on that lonely, single airplane. We saw twenty-five year old men age ten years in one year of flying those missions, if they survived. Many of them didn't.

For their efforts, the 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing was awarded the Air Force Presidential Unit Citation for the period I was there.

## Musings Of A Self-Styled REMF

by

Jeff Shideler

Shreveport, Louisiana

Many airmen lived downtown while I was stationed at Tan Son Nhut.

And being eighteen years old, and not very wise, I decided, with three other E-2s, to find a villa downtown and create a party house.

We all worked over at the 377th USAF Dispensary, and had decided that if we pooled

our resources we could live like kings on the local economy.

We found a nice four bedroom place at 262 Cach Manh and commenced to make it livable. A friend of mine bought a small refrigerator at the base exchange next door to the dispensary. We decided to load it in the cracker box ambulance and take it out to the apartment while on a routine run to the 3rd Field Army Hospital which was located just off the base, conveniently on Cach Manh.

We worked 12 hour shifts, so the guys on nights took it down on their evening run around 1900 hrs. (7 p.m.). We met them at the villa, having ridden in a cyclo and beating them home easily due to the mass of motorcycles and "white mice" (native police) that clogged the streets. We proceeded to unload the merchandise.

After they left, we dressed up in our 1505s and headed down to Tu Do Street for an evening of libation.

Much to our surprise, around 2100 hrs. (9 p.m.) we spotted the cracker box sitting on the side of the road and noticed my two roommates were sitting inside. We stopped to inquire and they told us the ambulance had broken down and they were waiting on a wrecker from the motor pool. We quickly continued on our way and thought nothing more about it.

The next morning when I walked into the back door of the dispensary, the First Sergeant was standing in the hallway, steam coming out of his ears, waiting to discuss the commander's policies regarding contraband transportation in government vehicles.

Apparently, if it's after dark in Saigon, the base commander has to be notified before any recovery vehicles can be sent downtown -- and our little sojourn was exposed at that point.

Needless to say, I and my three friends were required to take a golden flow (urine test), and all given written reprimands, not the last in my career by the way, and ordered to move back on the base (which you were not allowed to live away from anyway).

The best part of the story is that when I was processing out a year later, we were in the middle of the "truce" and all personnel were given their records in a sealed envelope to hand carry to their next assignment.

Can you guess the rest?

My next First Sergeant found a pristine young airman with a clean file, and everyone learned their lesson, especially myself.

The year was 1972.

(Editor's Note: And *Revetments* adds that Shideler must have remained the pristine young airman that this epiphany engendered, but the Tan Son Nhut Association's records reveal that he is a retired Captain. Then again, Shideler could have been carrying his records again in separation.)

A  
ADDINGTON, FRANKLIN  
ALEN, JACK  
AMATO, PAUL  
ANDERSON, DOUGLAS  
ANDERSON, EARL  
ANUNDSON, ARLIE  
ARINT, WILLIAM  
ARNOLD, DONALD  
ATKINSON, TOM  
AYOTTE, RAYMOND  
B  
BAILEY, CHARLES  
BAILEY, JACK  
BAINTER, JACK  
BALLENTINE, BOB  
BALLET, AL  
BANICKI, GREG  
BARBERY, WILLIAM  
BARNETTE, LEWIS  
BARTHLOMEW,  
CHARLES  
BATLER, NOEL  
BAUER, JAMES  
BELL, GRIFFEN  
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BEST, RUSSELL  
BISHOP, HARRY  
BLANK, THOMAS  
BLOCK, EMIL  
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BRAMBHAM, STEVE  
BRANSON, JIM  
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BRONZ, THOMAS  
BROWN, BILL  
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BURGAR, DAVID  
BURGESS, ROBERT  
BURNS, DENNIS  
BUTLER, JAMES  
BUTZ, TIMOTHY  
BYERS, DENNIE  
C  
CADENA, RICHARD  
CARPENTER, ADELBERT  
CARR, TERRY  
CARRUTHERS, JAMES  
CASTNER, AL  
CERYANTS, JAMES  
CHACON, JOSEPH  
CHAPPELL, ALL  
CHAREST, ROSAIRE  
CHESNER, TONY  
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CISCON, ALLEN  
CLARK, EDWARD

COLE, DICK  
COMBS, RONALD  
COMBS, EDWARD  
COMPTON, THOMAS  
CONNER, RICHARD  
COOK, DENIS  
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COPELAND, ORVIN  
CORBIN, BILL  
COSGROVE, T.J.  
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GRAIG, CLIFFORD  
CRAMER, ALLAN  
CRAN, STEPHEN  
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CROFT, GEORGE  
CROFT, GILBER  
CRONAUER, ADRIAN  
D  
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DAISLEY, RUSSELL  
DALESANDRIS, RON  
DAMERON, NOAL  
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DAY, DAVE  
DECKER, HARRY  
DENISIO, CARL  
DEER, DONALD  
DETRANI, GUY  
DETUCCIO, MIKE  
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DORRER, WALTER  
DROST, CARL  
DUNCAN, TED  
DUTKO, FRANK  
E  
ECKLEY, WILLIAM  
EGGERS, THOMAS  
ELKINS, DAVID  
F  
FAHR, JIM  
FAIRCLOTH, JIM  
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FATHING, DON  
FENN, DAN  
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FINKEL, GARY  
FLUMMER, JOHN  
FORCETTE, JOHN  
FOSTER, DAN  
FOSTER, JOSEPH  
FRITCHER, BOB  
FULLER, TOBIN  
G  
GALBACH, CHARLES  
GANGOLF, BERT  
GIBBS, CURTIS  
GIBSON, BILL  
GIBSON, WILSON  
GLENDEIN, JIM  
GLENN, CAREN  
GRAHAM, GORDON  
GRAHAM, ROBERT

GREEN, PETE  
GRIER, GILBERT  
GRIFFIN, RICHARD  
GRIMMAUD, LORELL  
GRINDSTAFF, ERNIE  
GRITTS, LEVI  
GUILD, GEROGE  
H  
HAGAN, BON  
HALL, RONALD  
HARBERT, JAMES  
HARLEY, JAMES  
HARRIS, IRVIN  
HARRIS, JOE  
HASSMEN, JAMES  
HEADRICK, RICHARD  
HEINKE, JOHN  
HELMIS, JOE  
HENRY, EDWARD  
HESS, GARY  
HICKMAN, GEOFFREY  
HICKOK, PAUL  
HIGGINS, NORMAN  
HILLARD, RON  
HUNTON, CRAIG  
HOITELA, CARL  
HOLBURY, ROBERT  
HOLEN, RICK  
HOLLAR, KENNETH  
HOLLY, CAROLL  
HOLLINGSWORTH,  
GEORGE  
HOOD, CHARLES  
HOOVER, LEONARD  
HORNE, BILL  
HORVATH, RAY  
HOVEL, STEVE  
HUBBAED, RICHARD  
HULL, LEROSS  
HUMPHREY, NEAL  
J  
JANIAX, THADEUS  
JANKONSKI, DAVID  
JARRELL, PAUL  
JELLISON, JAMES  
JENKINS, MIKE  
JOHNSON, ED  
JOYCE, THOMAS  
K  
KELLY, JOHN  
KELLY, KEITH  
KENNEDY, PAUL  
KESSLER, AL  
KESSLER, PETER  
KESTERSON, JIM  
KIENLY, GERALDINE  
KIMBELL, LESTER  
KINGSLEY, GORDON  
KINNAIRD, GEORGE  
KIRBY, WAYNE  
KOLLOK, JOE  
KOTKE, LARRY  
KUNG, RICHARD  
KUNZ, RICHARD

KURAS, ALEXANDER  
L  
LADISLAW, BOB  
LANDER, DENNIS  
LANGLEY, JOHN  
LANGMEAD, THOMAS  
LANGONE, GREGORY  
LASETER, WILLIAM  
LEE, JACK  
LEGAT, JOHN  
LEMASTER, DAVID  
LINEBERRY, ROLAND  
LLOYD, DAVID  
LOCKWOOD, JAMES  
LONGAN, JIM  
LOPEZ, JORGE  
LOTT, JOHN  
LOVELADY, RICHARD  
LUCAS, FRED  
LUKEMAN, JAMES  
LUNDEY, JIM  
LUNN, ROY  
LUTZ, GEORGE  
LYNCH, JIM  
LYONS, LAWRENCE  
M  
MACHOS, GEORGE  
MACSEOD, DONALD  
MADISON, JAMES  
MALONEY, EDWARD  
MARANVILLE, JIM  
MARCELAIN, MICHAEL  
MARION, ARNOLD  
MARTIN, FREDERICK  
MARTIN, JAMES  
MARTIN, JOE  
MARTIN, SAM  
MATECZUM, ALFRED  
MATHIS, LARRY  
MATTEL, AL  
MCARTOR, TRUSTEN  
MCCAFFREY, BILL  
MCCARTHY, ROBEERT  
MCCLELLAM, THOMAS  
MCDUGALL, DON  
MCDOWELL, JERRY  
MCGOVERN, JOHN  
MCGOWAN, EDWARD  
MCKAKIN, GROVEN  
MCKINNON, TAYLOR  
MCCLAUGHEIS, RON  
MCMULLEN, GLENN  
MCMULLEN, PAUL  
MEAGLEY, DEAN  
MEIER, FREDERICK  
MESSER, LOWELL  
MICKLE, WILLIAM  
MIERAU, ROBERT  
MILLS, VERNON  
MINENICK, JAMES  
MITCHELL, JOHN  
MOIT, LONNIE  
MONTAG, JOSEPH

MORGAN, DONALD  
MORRISON, HAROLD  
MUNOZ, EMIL  
MURRAY, BILL  
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NASE, IRWIN  
NASH, RANDY  
NEEDIAM, ROBERT  
NELLMORE, KEN  
NELMS, DRURY  
NELSON, RICH  
NERI, DON  
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NEUNDORF, CHARLES  
NEWTON, STEPHEN  
NICHOLS, F. A.  
NIGHTENGALL, ROBERT  
NILES, DONALD  
NISWENDER, JAMES  
NOBLE, HARRY  
NOE, RICHARD  
NORIEGA, ED  
NORMAN, WINFRED  
NORMAND, GUY  
NOVITSKY, RONALD  
NUNN, LESS  
NUTTER, RAYMOND  
O  
O'BRIEN, MICHAEL  
O'HAYES, ROGERS  
OPERMAN, LOWELL  
ORZEN, MORT  
P  
PAGET, JAMES  
PARMENTIER, JAMES  
PARSON, GARY  
PATCH, EARNEST  
PATTERSON, HARRY  
PEACOCK, L. A.  
PEJJOE, JOHN  
PEEBLES, TEX  
PENDERGRASS, DARYL  
PENLEY, CHARLES  
PERKO, PAUL  
PERICENI, LOU  
PETERS, ROY  
PETERSON, DOUGH  
PERTSON, PHILLIP  
PETRIE, BILL  
PHAM, GUANG  
PHILLIPS, WAYNE  
PIERSON, WILLIAM  
PINEAU, RICHARD  
PODWARSKI, WALTER  
POE, BRYCE  
POORE, CHUCK  
PWELL, LOW  
PRICHETT, LOW  
PRODAN, JOHN  
R  
RAMOR, EUGE  
RAMBEAU, RICHARD  
REDCLAY, LYNN

REIMARD, BOB  
REYNOLDS, DICK  
ROARK, BOB  
ROBBINS, JAMES  
RODRIQUEZ, DAVID  
ROSE, JOHN  
ROTHER, BOB  
ROUTHIER, RAY  
ROWLEY, DAVID  
RUEBEL, RAY  
RUSHING, KEN  
RYALL, ZACK  
S  
SAGAN, DAN  
SALISBURY, WAYNEE  
SANDERS, FRED  
SANDONAL, JOEL  
SARAFINE, RALPH  
SAWYER, THOMAS  
SCHAEFER, WIL  
SCHALLER, RICHARD  
SCHELL, WILLIAM  
SCHEUREN, HOWARD  
SCHNEIDER, BYRON  
SCHRODER, KEN  
SCHWEHR, DON  
SCOTT, CARLTON  
SCOTT, ROBERT  
SEIDEL, WILLIAM  
SEIDL, DAVE  
SEIFFERT, ARNOLD  
SHANTZ, KEN  
SHASTANY, BOB  
SHEA, WILLIAM  
SHELBY, MYKE  
SHELDON, DOUG  
SHERR, BRYANT  
SHOLEFF, CHUCK  
SHOPE, DON  
SILVIA, JOHN  
SILVY, EDWARD  
SIMPSON, GILBERT  
SMITH, JAMES  
SMITH, JOHN  
SNIDER, MICHAEL  
SNODGRASS, JOE  
SOHN, STEVE  
SOKOL, GEORGE  
SPAIN, LLOYD  
SPENCE, LUCIS  
SPIDLE, BILL  
SPURLOCK, IRVIN  
STABER, JAMES  
STAHL, BILLY  
STAMPER, JIM  
STARITA, RICHARD  
STARKE, RICHARD  
STATES, STANLEY  
STEGORA, DUANNE  
STEIN, ALLEN  
STEWART, REGGIE  
STIDNICK, WESLEY  
STILL, ED  
STINE, RAY

STOCKREISER, EMIL  
STORTS, BOBBY  
STRICKLIN, MICHAEL  
STRIBELL, PAUL  
SUTTON, CHUCK  
SWAGGER, CHARLES  
SWINNEY, MERRITT  
T  
TAYLOR, NORMAN  
TAYLOR, STEVE  
THOMAS, ALAN  
THOMAS, THEODORE  
TOONEY, THOMAS  
TOOP, ROBERT  
TRAPINI, VICTOR  
TRINGALL, CHARLES  
TRINGALL, DANIEL  
TULLY, GEORGE  
U  
UAZO, CHARLES  
URSCH, GLEN  
V  
VAN PELT, WILLIAM  
VANDERKARR, DOND  
VANEK, AL  
VAUGHT, WILMA  
VOELCKER, FRED  
WALKER, WAYNE  
WALTER, JOE  
WALTON, STU  
WALTZ, DONALD  
WAMBACH, VINCE  
WAXMAN, BOB  
WAYSON, JAMES  
WILLIAMS, JIM  
WILLIS, HARRY  
WILSON, RON  
WINSTON, JOHN  
WISE, JOE  
WOFFORD, KENNETH  
WOODY, JOHN  
WYATT, WILLIAM  
Y  
YINGLING, BRUCE  
Z  
ZENKO, MIKE

Please review this list carefully. We know that there are many mistakes in the spelling of many of these names. This is one of the reasons we have been asking for the return of the form, in order to correct considerable prior misinformation in the files. If you are continuing as a member, which we hope will be the case, please carefully prepare the form when you return it.

## Lifeboat Instructions

For the past four months, The Tan Son Nhut Association has been attempting to reconstruct the membership files of the Association. We have been very pleased with the response to date. However, as you will see by our *Passenger List* there are still a number of *Revetments* readers who have not yet returned our information form.

We do not want to lose these people, they are our old friends and comrades who lived in, worked at, passed through or were associated with one of the greatest air bases in history - Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon.

But, unfortunately we cannot continue to assume the costs of printing and mailing this many copies of *Revetments* to non-members. Therefore, it has become necessary for us to remove all non-members from our current mailing list.

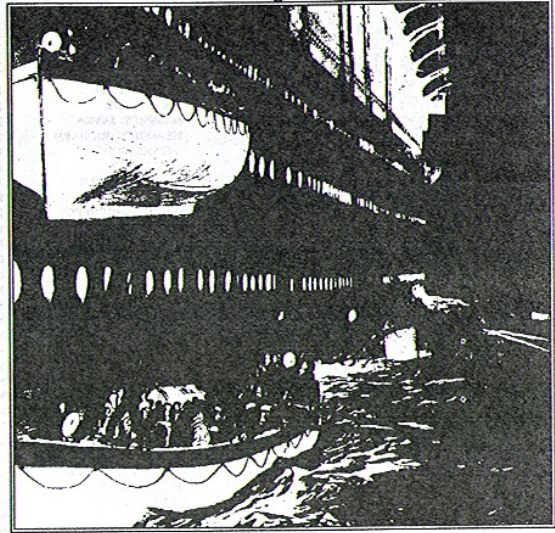
But, if your name is on the *Passenger List*, please seriously consider staying with us. Soon, the paid-up membership will provide the Association with expanding the value of *Revetments*, allowing us to look forward to a Tan Son Nhut Memorial, central Association offices in Washington, bigger and better reunions; and support of our growing regional chapter program, to mention only a few of the exciting programs being developed.

So friends, go to the back page of this month's issue, fill it out, write a check or money order payable to the Tan Son Nhut Association, and mail it to the address shown, not later than February 15th. Annual membership is \$20, and a new and lower rate of \$180 has been set for Life Membership.

**SO GET IN THE LIFEBOAT  
NOW.....!**



## Passenger List



The White Star Line  
R.M.S  
**Titanic**

See Back Page for Lifeboat Instructions

**MEMORIAL from Page 1**

wounded Vietnam Veteran, is the man delivering the precious cargo, stopping along the way so people in big cities and little towns can see it, people who might never make it to Washington.

"It's the way it should be," says Diane Carlson Evans, the Army Nurse who founded the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project, which commissioned the work. "That a Vietnam veteran like David would be driving this wonderful memorial for us to its resting place. In Vietnam we took care of the men; now the men are taking care of us."

It was Evans' crusade that made the project possible, but as much as the female veterans of the Vietnam War supported it, "the men veterans were our biggest cheerleaders," she says. "They sent in their money, their poetry and their songs they'd written about the women who nursed them."

Speaking at a Vietnam Veterans of America conference in Washington a year ago (1992), Evans, of Northfield, Minn., mentioned that when the statue was done, she envisioned its being taken to Washington by truck, stopping as it went so people could see it. "It was grass-roots America that made this happen. Why not let the heartland see it first?" she said.

Chung was in the audience. He went up to her afterward and suggest that because he was a truck driver for Federal Express, a company started by Vietnam veteran Fred Smith, perhaps he could get his employer to provide the truck to make her idea possible. After Evans drew up a proposal, Federal Express not only provided a truck but had one especially equipped for the project with curtained sides that open to reveal the 7-foot-high, 5-foot-wide, 2,500-pound statue.

The 23-day trip across America -- with 22 stops, including Tulsa; Bloomington, Minn.; Lincolnwood; Ft. Wayne, Ind.; Toledo -- has become, Evans says, "almost a spiritual event. You know, when I first saw this memorial out in New Mexico, I turned to the artist, Glenna Goodacre, and said: 'It is almost as if you took warm clay and poured it over real people. I feel if I touch these figures, their skin would be warm.'"

"David Chung gave up his vacation time to do this. He wasn't even going to let us pay his motel bills. He wanted the privilege of delivering this monument to Washington. He is doing it out of love and heart."

"These nurses took care of everybody," says Chung, who is married to a nurse who served in Vietnam. "I worked (medical administration) over there, and we were bringing in to those nurses Vietnamese villagers, (North Vietnamese Army) prisoners, American wounded, Thai wounded, Australian wounded, Korean wounded. They were undermanned, understaffed, overrun and

outnumbered during the entire war. I'm doing this for all the nurses. They deserve it."

As he travels from town to town, where crowds are waiting in malls and parks for him to pull up and slide those curtains back, and still standing there when he pulls out, "I see faces filled with awe, I see tears, many tears," Chung says. "I see people fainting and hugging each other. I see a lot of women nurses filled with pride. And I see men veterans looking around for a nurse to say 'thank you' to."

Two days before Chung left on his trip, he got a long-distance call from a veteran named Bill. He says he didn't know Bill. Never met him. Bill had been in Vietnam in 1968 and lost his legs. He wanted to know if he could join the truck convoy when it hit Tulsa and stay with it the rest of the trip. Maybe that way, he told Chung, he could peruse the crowds at each stop and somewhere, standing there, would be the woman he has been looking for the last 25 years -- the Army nurse who had saved his life. He wanted to tell her thanks.

"Bill never showed up in Tulsa, although I was waiting for him," Chung says. "Perhaps it was too hard for him. Perhaps he was too nervous. But I've seen a hundred other Bills, all looking for their nurses. Guys who lost their arms, their legs, their eyes, their insides. Guys wounded physically or emotionally and wanting to find the nurses who took care of them."

In Ft. Worth, Chung says, he watched an entire high school band get tears in their eyes when an Army nurse got up before the statue and described what it was like during the 1968 Tet Offensive when the Viet Cong were shooting the wounded in their hospital beds.

When Chung pulled the truck into the Chicago area last week for the 12-hour stay, there were speeches, a band, and a crowd that spilled out over the barricades in the Lincolnwood Town Center shopping mall.

"One of those gals held my hand when I got wounded," said a middle-age veteran in a camouflage jacket at the mall. "Just before they put me under, she told me I was going to be all right. I can still see her face."

The faces are all older now, these faces of the nurses and the men who fought the war who gather in each town to look at this memorial. In Lincolnwood, a small child looked up into one of those faces and said, "Why are all these people crying, Gramma?" and Gramma responded, "Because we remember."

"This trip is a whole lot of people remembering," Chung says. Up on the truck stage, nestled next to the statue was a wreath from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment with a banner through it that read, "Thanks Ladies."

This week is the last leg of Chung's journey. He will have hit Pittsburgh, Jersey City (which is his Friday stop) and Baltimore before he pulls into Washington Sunday. And everywhere, crowds have been waiting for him.

They have watched as he pulled back the

curtains, and they stood back to look, then come closer to touch, and sometimes they have reached into their pockets for a pen and signed a plastic banner that adorns the back of the truck.

"Thank you for bringing my husband home," wrote Cookie Rogers in Ft. Worth.

"You may have just saved my life," wrote a Vietnam veteran named Chris Buchanan.

But one short written statement perhaps explains best what this new monument means -- to Chung and all the people, young and old, along the way who came to see it.

It is signed by a couple named "Tom and Sherry." No date. No town mentioned. It says simply: "This is us."

(Editor's Note: We extend our deep gratitude to Ms. Sandy Spikes of the *Chicago Tribune* for her gracious authorization for permission to use this splendid article. And to David Chung. *Revetments* extends the most sincere respect of the membership, and a heartfelt grateful salute.)

## Coggins Silver Star Ceremony Set For February 12

Major Thomas Joyce, Randolph AFB, has announced that the ceremony honoring AIC Alonzo J. Coggins for valor and gallantry with the Silver Star will be during the morning of February 12, at Lackland Air Force Base.

The ceremony will be held during a Basic Military Training Squadron Graduation. In the afternoon, the Lackland Television Production Studio will conduct video historical interviews with Mr. Coggins and other of the Tet Offensive era.

Coggins is the sole survivor of Tan Son Nhut Gate Bunker 51, attacked and overrun by the enemy in the early morning hours of January 31, 1968, during the opening battles of the Tet Offensive. His heroic story was outlined in last month's issue of *Revetments*. Reprints may be obtained by writing the Editorial Offices.

All individuals interested in attending these events can receive further information by contacting Major Thomas Joyce via E-mail:

[Thomas.Joyce@RANDOLPH.AF.MIL](mailto:Thomas.Joyce@RANDOLPH.AF.MIL)

### Patchworks!

Yes, friends, comrades & buddies, the TSN Asse. Patches have been ordered, but John Peele says the factory "lost" our order, so hang in there for about five to six weeks for delivery. In the beloved words of the military, "Sorry, 'bout dat."



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Don Parker, President  
and The Board of Directors

**Executive Editor**

John Peele, Vice President

**Editor**

Robert Need, Director of Public Affairs



**Base Beautification:** "When you boys are finished, I want the building painted pink."

**EDITORIAL:**

## A Gathering of Eagles

by

Robert Stanley Need, Editor

The Tan Son Nhut Association is a little over five years old and has proudly attracted the attention of over six hundred individuals. With this fifth issue of *Revetments* we have been happy to see over two hundred new and renewed memberships. The opening of each membership renewal envelope give us a moment of extreme pride. Our old friends, buddies, people we worked with, or never knew, but should have, are coming back and doing more than just saying "hello."

They are rolling up their sleeves and returning to assist in building a great community of eagles. Just like we built, sustained and protected Tan Son Nhut and all the other installations in Vietnam, we are picking up the tools to build an enduring institution that can give posterity an opportunity to learn the lessons of what real duty, real honor, and a real dedication to the country can really be.

Platitudes and empty rhetoric are one thing, and often over-used and hypocritically stressed, especially when referring to "our veterans" and "our fallen heroes."

The Tan Son Nhut Association is attempting to avoid these semantic pungit pits, and rather than coming forth with an "agenda" we are seeking to establish tangible goals. Agendas have a way, these days, of being a dogma or a methodology that a small group has chiseled in stone and seeks to impose forcibly on everybody else.

Goals are entirely different. They usually evolve from the hopes, the dreams, and often the needs of human beings. Goals are not imposed on anybody, they are only achieved after careful planning, and hard work over a long period of time. Goals arise at completion as monuments to compromise, change, unity of effort and a harmonious appreciation of accomplishment.

The regional/local Tan Son Nhut Chapter program has begun. A number of individuals have taken on the responsibility of

forming these chapters in various regions of our country. They have certainly achieved no goals yet, but they will. They will put a human face and a human voice into the Tan Son Nhut Association. There will be a place not far away where periodically a growing number of members can meet and plan goals within their own region. They can form speakers' bureaus to make useful presentations in local schools and for local civic groups.

As they become stronger financially, not just through membership fees, but through obtainable grants and endowments, they can expand into displays suitable for all levels of educational institutions and libraries.

Down the same financial avenues they can establish goals for assisting present retired and senior veterans and their families in medical programs, eventually establishing Association clinics and regional hospitals.

Of course, as the chapters grow, they will have their recreational programs, parties, barbecues and patriotic celebrations. While at the same time, they can be endowing scholarships and awarding rewards and citations for valor, courageous actions, meritorious achievement and contribution to the community.

By February 15th we want to hear from the four hundred we have not heard from yet. If we don't necessity dictates that we must discontinue mailing *Revetments* to you, and reduce our membership roster to those new and renewed members we now have.

For the past five months, *Revetments* has been the first humble, but deliberate steps towards a goal. We want you all to know all about each other. These eight little pages with their crummy photography do not constitute what *Revetments* is going to remain, it's just a start. We see *Revetments* becoming an influential publication distributed to thousands of people and hundreds of interested organizations and institution. It will have both narrative and pictorial history sections that will at last display the industry, dedication, and high morale of the millions of men and women who passed into and through Tan Son Nhut to successfully and victoriously pursue the conduct of war across Vietnam for ten years.

Please let us hear from all of you!

# The Communications Center

Send us your letters, comments, suggestions, and stories by mail, fax or e-mail

**Photo of Bunker 051**

I received your name from Major Thomas Joyce, of Randolph AFB. He said you had information concerning a Tan Son Nhut Association. I was at Tan Son Nhut from December 27, 1967 through December 23, 1968. I was a security policeman assigned to the Delta Sector (Flight Line). Can you provide me with information concerning your association. I am also a VSPA member. I just returned from a trip to Saigon. Got some photos of the 051 bunker which is still standing. Can you believe it?

**Frank Ybarbo  
Mesquite, Texas**

**We were there too!**

I like the *Revetments* newsletter, but I have only one complaint. Not everyone who was there was a security policeman, and not everyone there was in country in 1968.

Besides that, it is a great newsletter. I have many humorous stories, and few exciting combat oriented ones that I could relate to the reading public. If you need any, let me know.

**Jeff Shideler  
Sheveport, Louisiana**

**Revetments Reply to Shideler**

We're aware that we are getting a little too SP-ish and 68-able, but we are just starting and using what we have at hand. But as more and more respond, the wider angle we'll have. That's why we're happy to hear about your stories, so SEND THEM!

The Editor  
P.S. He did, and you can enjoy one of his sagas on Page 2 of this issue.

**FIRST TSN LIFE MEMBER!**

With great pride, the Tan Son Nhut Association recognizes **Richard B. Hartley of Toledo, Ohio** as the Associations' first paid Life Member.

Hartley served one of his Vietnam tours as an OV-10 pilot. He also worked in MACSOG at USAF TOC.

**Silent Tennessee**

Hope the membership dues drive is successful. Prior to the holidays I wrote to the fourteen Tennessee members to see how much interest there was in forming a state chapter. So far, I've had one letter returned for moved, - no forwarding address, two phone calls from members

in the area who expressed only luke-warm interest and have yet to hear from the other eleven. I'll let you know later if things change here.

Good luck,

**Steve Carter  
Regional Dir., Tennessee  
Collierville, Tennessee**  
(Editor's Note: Come on, people, Steve doesn't bite. Call him at (901) 853-6177.

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**HELP US GROW,  
AND  
GROW WITH US!**

# The Members' Bulletin Board

Mail, Call and E-Mail in your "wanteds, for sales, looking for, announcements, etc."

## TSN VET. QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide your answers on a separate sheet(s) of paper and mail to: Major Thom Joyce, 11726 Jarvis Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78253. My goal is to publish your information in a reference document for future researchers. Thank you for serving your country, welcome home, and I'm proud of you for answering the call.

1. Name.
2. Vietnam dates of service.
3. Rank (at the time).
4. Town & State where enlisted.
5. Why did you join military?
6. What service were you in?
7. Age when arrived in country?
8. Did father serve in WWII/Korea?
9. Other relatives in previous wars?
10. What organization did you serve in?
11. Who was your supervisor and C.O.?
12. Occupation in USAF?
13. Were you wounded in action?
14. Medals or commendation received.
15. Did you participate in Tet?
16. What was your role?
17. Were you involved in any other battles, sapper attacks, or rocket attacks?
18. Explain experiences in detail (use additional sheets if necessary).
19. Did you lose comrades in Vietnam?
20. Please state their name(s).
21. Is there anyone you believe should have received a medal, but didn't?
22. Please state their names.
23. Is there anyone who you would like to locate but haven't heard from since you left Vietnam?
24. Please state their name(s).
25. Do you have any pictures, videos, maps or rosters, etc. from Tan Son Nhut?
26. Would you be willing to donate your artifacts to a TSN museum?
27. Would you be willing to loan them?
28. Date discharged or retired?
29. What did you do after you left the military?
30. What lessons can we learn today from your experiences?
31. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you!

Pass your copy  
of *Revetments*  
around  
to friends!

## Pix, Stories Wanted!

*Revetments* needs your pictures and stories. You all did interesting, serious, sometimes dangerous jobs. And, you often had hilarious situations. At lot of you are still working and participating in interesting endeavors. Tell us about what the Tan Son Nhut, Vietnam veteran was

doing then, and what he or she is doing now. And send us pictures (copies only, preferably black and white). *Revetments* is not a lecture platform for the national leadership, it is a place for you to speak and tell about your life. We are already hearing from people all over the country who have been pleasantly surprised to see an old friend suddenly surface in the pages of *Revetments*. The editorial staff doesn't want to sit here and rehash its memoirs, it wants to give the Association a bigger and broader scope coverage with each new monthly issue. Send to: Tan Son Nhut Association, Editorial Offices, Suite 709, 330 W. Brambleton, Norfolk, VA 23510.

## TET '68

### 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

## VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION

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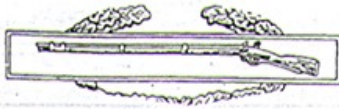
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# WAR!



## (STORIES!)

Now that I have your attention,  
I'm getting ready to publish my book called "Happy Hour Stories  
(and other lies)." And I want to publish your story.



## I WANT YOU

Every warrior who has ever served our country has at least a couple of dozen interesting or funny stories they like to tell. **DUST OFF THOSE MEMORIES!**

- ◆ I REMEMBER THE TIME I WAS SERVING WITH.....
- ◆ THIS SERGEANT OF MINE WAS.....
- ◆ WE WERE TAKING HEAVY FIRE.....
- ◆ DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME.....

Get the idea?

No one has ever written down these stories. They should be preserved. Don't worry about punctuation or grammar. I even have a way to give you credit for your story, and to protect the innocent (and guilty).

**PRESERVE THESE STORIES FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN!**

Just call me with your stories at (407) 862-4953 or write me:

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Stories from all Services, MOS's, ranks, duty stations, and liberty ports are welcome.  
(Remember the pearl of the Orient—Olongapo).

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