

Revetments

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



"All Included - Non Excluded"

Volume 2, Number 1

The Tan Son Nhut Association, Washington, D.C.

October, 1999

TSN Association Members Key POW-MIA Tributes



TSN Association Members Frank Ybarbo and Norman Whitlow

The Eyes of Texas Are Upon Us

Lancaster, Texas - When Tan Son Nhut Association member, and Texas Regional Director, Norman Whitlow woke on Saturday, September 11th, he was a proud man. This day was the fulfillment of his own personal longtime, careful planning for the ceremonies that would be held several times that day and in the evening at the Vietnam War Memorial in the Lancaster Heritage Park.

This was the city's Second Annual POW-MIA Observant Week, the 11th was Recognition Day. Whitlow made sure that the major sponsorship would be held by the Tan Son Nhut Association.

Coming up from Mesquite, Texas, to assist him was another TSNA member, Frank Ybarbo.

At the programs at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. it would be Whitlow who opened the ceremonies, and the Raising of the Colors was attributed to the Tan Son Nhut Association. His color guard was Whitlow



Proudly our TSN Association Members salute at the Raising of the Colors



and Ybarbo and others.

In the evening at 7, at the Twilight Candlelight Visual Ceremonies, it would be Whitlow who closed the program.

The back cover of the program bore the History of The Tan Son Nhut Association.

The Dallas Morning News, covering the events reported, "The Lancaster event also included a health fair for veterans and an evening candlelight vigil and prayer service, organized by the regional Tan Son Nhut Association and several city organizations and businesses."

The House of Representatives of the State of Texas even passed a Resolution calling it a "significant occasion (and) is truly worthy of special praise ..."

There are several mentions of the Tan Son Nhut Association, the last reading:

"RESOLVED, That the Lancaster 2nd Annual P.O.W./M.I.A. Recognition Day be commemorated and that the Tan Son Nhut Association, the City of Lancaster Human Relations Commission, and all those associated with this important event be commended for their Noteworthy efforts."

After Whitlow opened the ceremonies, the Confederate Air Force performed a Missing Man Formation Fly Over, followed by an invocation, the Raising of the Colors, the National Anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Reading of a Proclamation by Lancaster Mayor Marsha Wallace, a Table of Remembrance, the Wreath Ceremony, Taps, and the Benediction.

The Dallas Morning News interviewed

Frank Ybarbo, quoting him as having "said he believes Americans are more patriotic now than they were 10 years ago. He's glad to see wider acceptance and appreciation of Vietnam veterans.

"I think attitudes have changed with the transition of the country," he said. "You hear churches recognize Vietnam vets now and politicians say they served. People now are not ashamed to say, 'I served in Vietnam.' Personally, I've always been proud of being a vet."

Saturday was the first time Whitlow and Ybarbo had ever met and could share memories of the beginning of the Tet Offensive and the attack on Tan Son Nhut. Ybarbo told The Dallas Morning News that they had met because he had read an article about Whitlow in the association's news letter.



TSNA Regional Dir. Whitlow accepts the wreath from Lancaster Mayor and City Council Members

Texans Unite!

There are 30 of you reading this article according to the membership records of the TSNA.

Responding to comments from Ybarbo and Whitlow, the Public Affairs Office asked Ybarbo to "come on get those Texans into a TSNA Chapter." The immediate reply was, "Don't worry about it, we're well on our way."

So, come on partners, hitch up and mosey on up to Lancaster and see Norm. Or at least give him a call at (972) 227-8075.

Frederick Hart, *The 4th Soldier*

*A few words in commentary
by Robert Stanley Need*

The powerfully geniused sculptor, Frederick Hart, passed away on August 13. A memorial service was held in Saint Matthew's Cathedral in northwest Washington the following Wednesday.

He was eulogized for his monumental works, including the "Ex Nihilo," the center tympanum of the Washington National Cathedral. Nude figures swirling in raging waves struggling to rise from nothingness into vibrant being.

The *Washington Times*, in a fine column by Patrick Butters, describes brilliantly the tumultuous life of this gifted American. Butters tell us of Hart's court room conflicts and his battle against a massive stroke that left his left side and hand paralyzed, that did little to diminish his workshop hours, which Butters says were "still alive with activity."

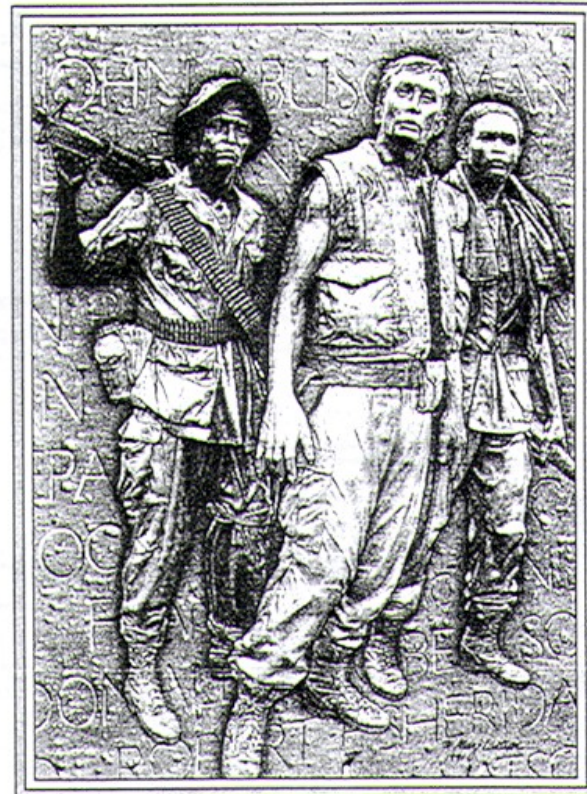
His fame rests on an endless list of magnificent works including statues of remarkable strength and compassion of an eclectic array of subjects such as the late Senator Richard Russell, Senator Strom Thurmond, and President Carter and V.P. Quayle.

It is said that his greatest inspirations were found in his work on the National Cathedral.

This all may be so, and he is to be remembered by all with overwhelming respect and pride. Ironically, he was also a target of wide controversy, and this is where we come in.



The Soldiers in winter



The Three Soldiers

interposed against the Vietnam Memorial, Washington, D.C.

After the completion of the Vietnam Memorial, "The Wall," there was a feeling that something a little more personal was needed to compliment the awe-inspiring power of the massive, silent, reflecting wall.

Frederick Hart provided the incomparable answer with his poignant *The Three Soldiers*.

The piece generated ridicule and derision from the so-called *avant guard* and the *moderniste* that this was just a sop to conventional military portrayal and an insulting distraction from the powerful wall.

In Butters' article he says, "Perhaps. Yet talk to Vietnam vets who silently observed the 'Three Soldiers' on Memorial Day. They would testify to the sense of loss in the heroes' eyes."

The critics weren't there, we were, and we know that Frederick Hart, if not really one of us, yet had the genius and compassion to know who we are and where we went.

(Editor's Note: Vice President Peele, and others of the TSNA, met Frederick Hart last May at the Memorial Day Ceremonies at "The Wall.")



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*Thoughts of
 Our Sky Pilot*

by
 Chaplain James M. Warrington

Patience expresses confidence

An American tourist was strolling through one of the colleges at Oxford University in England. He said to the gardener, "How do you get your grass lawns to look like this?"

The old gardener looked at him and said, "Well, sir, you see we just water them and mow them and roll them, and water them and mow them, and water them and mow them and roll them -- and when we have done that for over 800 years they look like this." The American tourist then replied, "Well, I guess I had better get back to the States and begin."

There are some things that cannot happen in a hurry. Elm trees do not grow into their majestic size and beauty overnight. Farmers know that fields and gardens require their allotted time to produce -- and they cannot be hastened.

There are many human relations that also require patience. How necessary is patience for parents with growing children, for teachers, as they guide their pupils, for officers encouraging members of their volunteer associations, for clergy as they try to bring a congregation into a truly worshiping family. And how we sometimes struggle to become patient with ourselves.

It is a great mistake to think of patience as a passive acceptance of a bad



The Revetments at Tan Son Nhut
 from the Collection of Member Lance Coar

situation. Patience is an energy of the soul, a capacity for endurance based on confidence in God. It is the faithful readiness to be about the Lord's work, without seeing any immediate visible results.

The father of the preacher John Wesley once said to Mrs. Wesley, "How do you have the patience to tell that boy the same thing 20 times over?"

"If I had told him only 19 times I would have lost all my labor," was the quiet reply. Had John Wesley been left only under the guidance of his impatient father, we might never have had this powerful ambassador for the Kingdom of the Lord!

Chaplain Warrington is available for pastoral services desired. Contact the Public Affairs Office for additional information and to make requests.

**Please Return
 Constitutional Ballots**

Exciting things are beginning to happen in the Tan Son Nhut Association. A major Chapter is about to open in Texas and there are noises from other locales.

But we still don't have a quorum vote on the proposed Constitution. Those who have not returned their vote, please dig through the closet and send it in!

*From the
 desk of the
 Vice Pres.
 John Peele*

* * *



This is to announce to all members that Master Sergeant Robert S. Need, USAF (Retired), has almost single-handedly put this news letter out for over one year.

His cheerful good nature is something all should be blessed with. I know all of you look forward to this news letter every month.

We're working on a reunion in Texas, San Antonio, hopefully in the third week of June, 2000. We've appointed Member Norman Whitlow, in Lancaster, Texas, as the Executive Coordinator. We are looking for a group of sponsors to work with Norman. Volunteers may call either Norman at (972) 227-8075, or Public Affairs at (757) 627-7746.

I am hoping to see all of you and Bob there.

Be a TSNA Recruiter!



The Communications Center

Send us your letters, faxes, stories and e-mail, we want to hear from you!

Member blows his horn

... While you all are checking out the want ads in your local papers would you keep an eye out for a Double French Horn. New or used.

We are looking for one for Shane. This is the instrument he plays in the high school band, and they have a shortage of them. So, we thought we would like to get him his own.

They are around \$3,700 new and about \$1,100 used. So if you see one, let me know. We also checked out a couple of pawn shops and they had one but just sold it. Wouldn't you know. So if you're inclined to frequent pawn shops, check them out too.

Thanks for you help, love ya!
Alan (Chainsaw) Strauss
 Azle, Texas

Poignant Memories ...

Thanks for the back issues of *Revetments*. It brings back a lot of memories, good and bad.

I don't know if you remember or not where the MP (military police) camp was, just outside of the main gate. That's where I was for a while and then I went down the country and rode boats up and down the river and into the Delta. But the main camp was there at Tan Son Nhut.

I got out in November 1967 just before Tet (68) started. I, as others did, had a lot of friends killed during that time.

If you remember the dead end alley just outside the gate there, I heard that 17 from our company got caught in there and didn't make it out.

Well, thanks again, and take care. Jesus saves.

The Reverend Ed Lester
 Pickens, South Carolina

Dialogue on the new ONElist system...

(See the article on Page 7. The following interchange occurred with Major Joe Thompson who was the first to join.)

From the P.A. to Joe - You are

the greatest! I sent out dozens of invitations to the Tan Son Nhut Association membership on this damn thing. We can take votes, polls, surveys, exchange ideas, wrangle over reunion locations and we can get goodies for *Revetments*.

They all act like they're still on active duty and are afraid to "volunteer."

You're the only one I have to watch though, with your wild-eyed attempts to politicize our beloved *Revetments*. (Reference to an article Joe sent about the North Vietnamese flag flying on the Ford plant.)

If you keep that up, you'll have us identified as a Hate Group. Thanks, major.

Old Sarge (Bob)
 Public Affairs Office
 Tan Son Nhut Association
 Thanks for the good words,

sarge.

If you think I am a radical now with the Ford plant idea, you should have seen me at Tan Son Nhut in '71-'72 at the 33 stands after a bout with a 6-pack of that "blessed panther piss" or on Kadena AFB, Okinawa, with the SR-711 SQD when the First Sergeant caught a bunch of us singing "Born Free" while we were buck naked bathing in the dependents' swimming pool at about 2400 hrs. Now that is when I was really radical! By the way, our First Sergeant was not impressed.

I am in agreement with you that the E-mail is a positive and powerful tool for our organization considering the geographical separation of each of us. It is also a very high speed way of communicating, however I know I am preaching to the choir.

The internet can also be used to visually introduce a potential reunion site to the body of the membership. Stay loose, keep your head down, and I hope all is well.

In our next communication we have to swap stories about the VNAF Officers Club and the

"Saigon Teas!" All the best!

Joe Thompson
 King of Prussia, Pa.

What is it about Ba-Moui-Ba (33)...?

I served with 7th Air Force Intelligence, '67-'68. I was at Tan Son Nhut for Tet '68, manning a bunker, along with others, when Charlie came over the wire. Interesting times, what?

While many memories are being placed on the back burner through choice, there are others that I recall that make me seriously doubt the intelligence of Mrs. Garner's little boy, Paul. Ah, hell, I survived and returned. Guess that is what counts.

For your information, 33 Beer (or Ba-Moui-Ba) is now imported into the United States by Ba-M'Ba Imports of Westport, Connecticut. Doesn't seem to taste the same, but then I even would drink Crown Beer from Korea.

The memory of THAT drunk is one that should be on the back burner.

Paul Garner
 Waco, Texas

(Editor's Note: Member Garner is our first to arrive via ONElist (See Article Page 7).)

Another Texan Arrives

... I had heard about the Tan Son Nhut Association on the Internet. It has taken me a year or so to find it. For years I've looked in the American Legion Magazine for some on Tan Son Nhut Air Base. I was looking through the June issue and finally found it.

I would like to be a part of the association. I was at Tan Son Nhut from Thanksgiving Day 1967 to May or June 1968. I'll have to look at my papers later for the exact date. I was shot on May 5th during the May Offensive. I went to the infirmary and then to the 3rd Field Hospital. I was there for three or four weeks before going to Japan and then to the States. In Japan the doctor asked me in

which direction I wanted to go. At that time I was still hurting. I told the doctor that I feel like I am running out on the guys, but I am in too much pain to go back. All these years I've still wished that I had gone back.

I was in the 460th Field Maintenance Squadron, in the jet engine shop. I worked on T39s, C123Ks, and an RF4, just once. I went to school on the F4, but worked on it only once, which was all right by me.

I've also been trying to find William Gilchrist who was one of my supervisors, and anyone else who was in the FMS. I did find Dan Allen whose bunk I got.

I am interest in information on the reunion and on the other members of the association.

Jerald (Jerry) E. Fish
 El Paso, Texas

Heard on the answering machine ...

One morning last month, on opening the Public Affairs Office, TSNA, we found a curious message on the answering machine from **Member James R. Padgett, McConnells, South Carolina**. He said some nice things about us, but then he lamented "that *Revetments* seems to be cool towards C-130 people."

This shocked us to our toenails. We love C-130s! We dream about C-130s! The rug in the office is a pattern of C-130s on a field of C-123Ks!

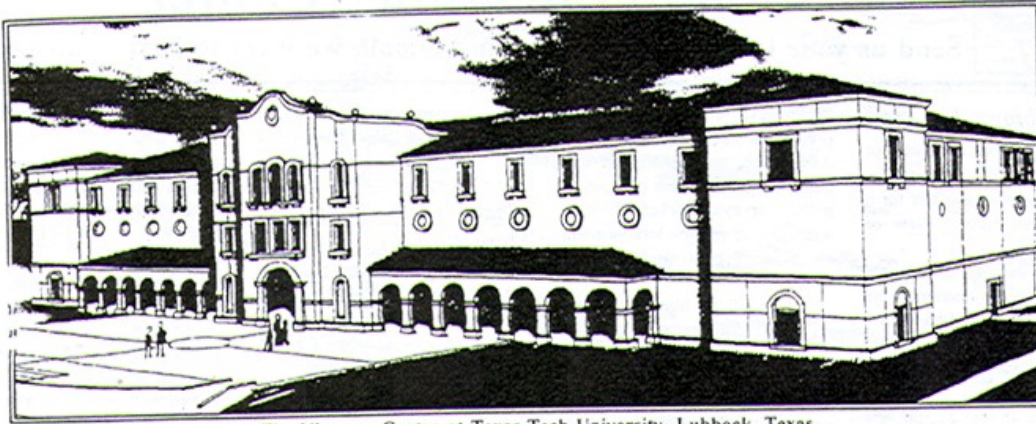
Please, dear gentle C-130 readers, forgive *Revetments* for the appearance of impropriety. But, we'll say this in our defense, if you guys, C-130 types, will send us pix and stories, we'll do a whole damn issue of C-130s!

For heaven's sake, just look at the *Revetments* masthead (on Page 4), our e-mail signature is **hercules29**.

And in Closing ...

Member Peter F. Beyette, Springville, New York, suggests that the association come out with Tan Son Nhut Association lapel pins. What do you think?

The Tan Son Nhut Collection



The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

During the month of September, the Public Affairs Office, TSN Association, became very concerned about what is now becoming a frequent occurrence. Many of the fine members of the Association have begun sending their priceless photos and other memorabilia to us.

On this page we show you but a few of the many photos Member Mark Reveaux has sent us. He included chapel programs, poignant Christmas letters sent to the "soldiers" on Tan Son Nhut by young Vietnamese students, and many more items that are totally irreplaceable. Mark, like others, is contributing these items to what he thinks will become the Tan Son Nhut Archives.

We find this trust in us extremely moving and we have found that we have incurred awesome and solemn responsibilities. At present, the Association is incapable financially of establishing a permanent TSNA Center at



Mark Reveaux - TSN 1967

any location.

Then we remembered the article we ran in the July 1999 issue of *Revetments*, "Your Closet is Important ... To These People," about the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

On Wednesday, September 22nd, Dr. (Lt. Commander, USN (Ret.) James Rechner, the Center's Director, was contacted.

We explained the situation and asked if he had space available to house a Tan



Area where some VC were buried near the TSN perimeter. Sign notes circumstances. From the Reveaux Collection

Son Nhut collection. He was most cordial and immediately agreed to the establishment of a Tan Son Nhut Collection, with, if members desire, subsections bearing their names, i.e., The Mark Reveaux, etc. Collections.

The Center has the very latest scientific archival facilities. Collections will be appropriately arranged by highly skilled professional archivists.

Materials will be treated for prevention of decay and will be protected from fire,

flood and theft.

The Public Affairs Office is awaiting further documentation that will provide instructions on the use of, the return of material, and other user information.

The Center publishes its catalogue of holdings periodically, which is distributed widely both nationally and internationally.

We are extremely grateful to Dr. Rechner for helping us establish The Tan Son Nhut Collection.

We urge members to write the Center to be placed on their mailing list. Write: The Vietnam Center, Box 41045, Lubbock, Texas 79409.

The Public Affairs Office feels a lot better about accepting precious items now.



The littlest airman on Tan Son Nhut From the Reveaux Collection - 1968

Christmas in October



*Send your friends a Y2K Gift Membership now,
and they'll start receiving Revetments now!*

RECIPIENT'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

DONOR (Please Print Name) _____

DATE _____ / / \$20 Enclosed. Check or Money Order Only to TSN Assc.

COMMENTS: _____

 / \$5.00 also enclosed for a colorful Tan San Nhut Association Patch.
Please clip and send to: Public Affairs Office, TSN Assc., Suite 709, 330 W. Brambleton Ave., Norfolk, VA 23510

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