

February 2006



A Memorial to the American Experience
In
Vietnam
"All Included-None Excluded"

Revetments

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



**TSN Flight Line
16th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron
Taken by member Captain Pete Doe
RF-4C Maintenance Officer (Picture is labeled "My Home")**

Tan Son Nhut Association at “The Wall” by Dale Bryan, Director-At-Large

November 11 was Veterans’ Day, and John Peele, TSNA President Emeritus, TSNA member Bill Grayson, and I were at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to lay the Tan Son Nhut Association wreath before the reflecting, black, granite panels that are often referred to as “The Wall”. It was a most moving and emotional experience. To us, the names carved into stone are not just words: They are part of our true being and identity as Vietnam veterans.



I delivered the TSNA wreath to the memorial's information kiosk for staging during the morning hours. At the allotted time, representatives of all participating organizations carried their wreaths in procession to “The Wall” to have them in place for the formal laying ceremonies. I placed our wreath before Panel 38W, and that certainly jerked upon my heart strings because one of my college roommates has his name etched into that panel. Then it was time for the formal ceremonies.

They began with survivors of the Ia Drang Campaign of 1965 marching before the west wall to the memorial apex where the east and west walls meet. They were an impressive and inspiring group with Lieutenant General Harold Moore leading his troops again. Will this be the last time? Before the ceremony, I overheard some campaign survivors in conversation saying this may be his last reunion. I hope that is not true. Hearing those conversations brought a lump into my throat. Is another great, old soldier fading away? When General Moore fades away, America will have lost a great, underappreciated icon.

There were numerous speakers, but the highlight was the keynote address by General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Pace is the first Marine to fill that position, and the Marine veterans in the crowd were ecstatic.

His speech was definitely not the usual dry address typical of ceremonies of this type. I’ll attempt to highlight and paraphrase his remarks: General Pace began with a salute to specific Marines, by rank and name, who are listed on “The Wall”. The emotion in his voice was obvious, and he hesitated. Then he stated those men are honored because they obeyed the orders of their lieutenant. He was the lieutenant. The crowd was hushed and all of us could feel his passion.

He then stated that America is fighting a real enemy, and they have stated their agenda (in writing) to eliminate us just as Hitler stated his aims long ago in *Mein Kampf*. There is no difference. He wrapped up by telling everyone that should the enemy, due to unusual circumstances, get past the active military and directly attack America, there are millions of veterans who would “strap it on again” to defend our great nation. The crowd cheered. One can definitely conclude that General Pace is a great soldier, leader, and humanitarian by listening to his speech. Later, he proved this by his action.

Within ten feet of where the Tan Son Nhut Association wreath was placed before “The Wall”, there was a young Marine in a wheel chair. I’m certain that he recently returned from Iraq. General Pace came and spoke to him but did not loom over him. He knelt down and placed at least one knee upon the ground to be at eye level with the young man. He was willing to soil the trousers of his dress uniform, because being eye-to-eye with one who had given nearly all was important. I witnessed humility, not symbolism.

I felt most honored to represent the association at the wreath laying. I especially felt great pride to hear the announcer say, “And now approaching is the very colorful wreath of the Tan Son Nhut Association.”

Thank you, all members, for allowing me to represent our great organization.

Our special thanks to Bill Grayson for making all the arrangements with the National Park Service, and taking the picture of the Tan Son Nhut Association wreath. Thanks also to Dale Bryan for selecting and purchasing the wreath.

(Editor Note: I apologize that I did not publish the wreath laying event in the November/December issue.)

A Bit of History



John Levitow

America lost a hero November 8, 2000, when Air Force Medal of Honor holder John L. Levitow died at age 55 at his home in Connecticut after a lengthy battle with cancer.

The Vietnam-era Air Force sergeant was buried with military honors November 17 at Arlington National Cemetery. President Richard M. Nixon presented the Medal of Honor to Levitow on Armed Forces Day, May 14, 1970, for gallantry in combat 15 months earlier.

"This was a sad day for our Air Force," said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Jim Finch. "John Levitow for years has been woven into the fabric of enlisted heritage. Through his heroic efforts, he was the embodiment of our core value 'service before self.' His name has become synonymous with excellence, and his legacy will continue to live in the hearts and minds of all Air Force members today and well into the future."

Levitow was cited for valor as an AC-47 gunship loadmaster during a mission on February 24, 1969. Flak had severely damaged his aircraft and peppered him with more than 40 shrapnel wounds in his back and legs. Seeing a smoking magnesium flare amid a jumble of spilled ammunition in the cargo bay. Levitow threw himself on the flare and hugged it close as he dragged himself to an open door despite loss of blood and partial loss of feeling in his right leg. As he hurled the flare through the door, it ignited white-hot, but harmlessly outside the aircraft.



The AC-47 with shrapnel holes





General Peter Pace

Joint Chief of Staff

General Peter Pace was sworn in as sixteenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Sep. 30,2005. In this capacity, he serves as the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council. Prior to becoming Chairman, he served as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from October 1,2001 to August 12,2005. General Pace is the first Marine to serve as Chairman. He also holds the distinction of being the first Marine to have served as the Vice Chairman.

General Pace was born in Brooklyn, NY and grew up in Teaneck, NJ. A 1967 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, he holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from George Washington University and attended Harvard University for the Senior Executives in National and International Security program. The General is also a graduate of the Infantry Officers' Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Ga.; the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, in Quantico, VA; and the National War College, at Ft. McNair, Washington, DC.

In 1968, upon completion of The Basic School, Quantico, Va., General Pace was assigned to the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam, serving first as a Rifle Platoon Leader and subsequently as Assistant operations Officer. He was later assigned to Marine Barracks, Washington, DC, where he served in a number of billets, to include Security Detachment Commander, Camp David; White House Social Aide; and Platoon Leader, Special Ceremonial Platoon.

General Pace has held command at virtually every level, and served in overseas billets in Nam Phong, Thailand; Seoul, Korea; and Yokota, Japan. While serving as President, Marine Corps University, then Brigadier General Pace also served as Deputy Commander, Marine Forces, Somalia, from December 1992 - February 1993, and as the Deputy Commander, Joint Task Force - Somalia from October 1993 - March 1994.

After an assignment as the Director for Operations (J-3), Joint Staff, Washington DC, then Lieutenant General Pace served as the Commander, U. S. Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic/Europe/South. He was promoted to General and assumed duties as the Commander in Chief, United States Southern Command in September 2000.

As the Vice Chairman from October 2001 to August 2005, General Pace served as the Chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, Vice Chairman of the Defense Acquisition Board, and as a member of the National Security Council Deputies Committee and the Nuclear Weapons Council. In addition, he acted for the Chairman in all aspects of the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System including participation in the Defense Resources Board.

General Pace's personal decorations include: Defense Distinguished Service Medal, with two oak leaf clusters; Defense Superior Service Medal; the Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medal with Combat V; the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal with gold star; Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V"; Navy Achievement Medal with gold star; and the Combat Action Ribbon.

General Pace and his wife, Lynne, have two children, Peter and Tiffany Marie.

Been There—Done That
By John Mayfield
New Member

I served at Tan Son Nhut from July 1965 - July 1966. Not one day goes by after 40 years that I do not think about my days there.

I was assigned to the 13th Recon Tactical Squadron. Our squadron took pictures all over North and South Vietnam. After they were looked at they were sent out to the different bases and ships for the daily bombing runs.

To this day I am thankful for every day. I was at the terminal having a drink with Fernando Pola who was departing back to Puerto Rico after his one year tour. That's the day Charlie decided to blow it up. I



remember after the first blast everything was blown all over. We were on the second floor. I decided to get up and run out when a Marine grab my leg and pulled me back to the floor. Five seconds later there was a second explosion placed under the steps leading down stairs. Had he not grabbed me I would not be typing this. Every time I think of this I wish I could meet him now.

We all lived in tents the first six months, then moved into open bays. The guy who slept next to me who took Fernando Pola's place was killed when they blew up the My Canh Floating restaurant. (Editor Note: The explosion occurred on June 25, 1965)

When I returned to the states to my wife I was kind of unfit to live with for awhile. I drank a lot. I stayed out of service for ten years then went back and retired in 1976 as a First Shirt at the 440th Airlift Squadron in Milwaukee Wisconsin.

I only finished the first few letters on the

website, but I am going to read every one of them over the next few days. Would like to hear from all 13 RTS people 1965-66. I will continue to monitor the web site as I just lucked on to it.

Here is a silent prayer to all of you and my brothers who never came back.

Traveling With The Carlson's
By Bill and Mary Ann Carlson

During our many driving trips across the United States to visit my family in South Carolina, Bill and I have had the opportunity to visit some of the Vietnam Veteran Memorials that have sprung up across the county. Some of the them we came upon by accident; others we discovered listed on maps we picked up along the way. Each time we come across one, we stop to pay our respects to those who have given their utmost for this great country of ours.

Some of the memorials are elaborate and placed in beautiful settings; others are as simple as a small plaque placed in a public park or on a courthouse lawn. The one closest to my heart is the one recently dedicated in my hometown of Conway, SC. Located on a corner of the courthouse lawn, the second name on it is that of my high school classmate, Johnny Paul Sawyer. Johnny was a really nice, fun-loving guy, who couldn't wait to join the service. I didn't learn of his death in Vietnam until many years later while attending my first high school class reunion.

One of the more elaborate memorials we found by accident in Savannah, Georgia. We stumbled across it while taking a walk in one of the many beautiful parks found in Savannah. It is a large memorial, surrounded by a wrought iron fence, and in its center is a raised map of Vietnam.

We found the memorial in Idaho listed on a map and near the area we were traveling, so took a side trip to see it. It was difficult to find at the time, as the road to it was being repaired and the signs were removed, but was worth the effort. It is a tall, upright monument, with an angle jutting out from one side containing the names of veterans from that state. A large map of Vietnam is contained in the upright portion of the

monument. The monument itself is surrounded by beautiful flowers.

We were doing family research at the courthouse in Pottawatomie, Kansas, where we found a very simple, but moving, memorial on the courthouse lawn. It was nestled in among a group of monuments which honored veterans of other wars.

A very different type of memorial can be found in the Donald A. Davis Park on the Oregon Coast. Called a Commemorative Walk, it is a walkway to the beach, with benches placed in strategic places along the way where you can rest and contemplate. A large stone within the walk contains the names of Oregon Vietnam veterans.

These are only a few of the memorials we have found. There are many more that we have not yet had an opportunity to visit, but we will continue to look for them. No matter how elaborate or how small, visiting these memorials can tug at your heart, and make you mourn again the great loss of the many young men and women who did not make it home.



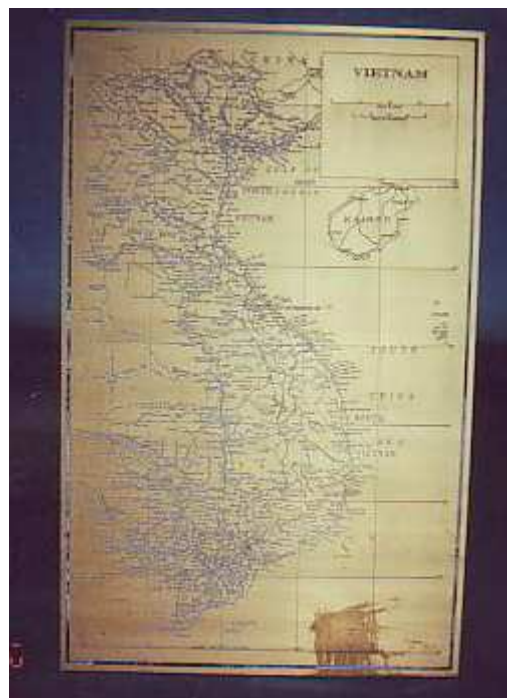
Bill Carlson at the Vietnam Memorial Horry County Courthouse, Conway, SC



Close up of above memorial



Freeman Park, Idaho Falls, Idaho



Close up of Vietnam map that is on the angled part of the above monument

Military Breakfast of Champions (SOS)

**Complements of member
John Price**

INGREDIENTS:

5 ounces ground beef

1 tablespoon and 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour (NOT self-rising flour)

1/3 cube beef bouillon

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/3 pinch ground black pepper (a bit more is better)

3/4 cup milk

1/8 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce (a little less is better)

DIRECTIONS:

Brown beef in a large skillet over medium high heat. Stir in flour, bouillon, salt and pepper. Sauté all together for about 5 minutes or until flour is absorbed. Gradually stir in milk and Worcestershire sauce. Bring all to a simmer, stirring constantly. Cook until thickened, about 5 to 10 minutes. Serve hot!

BX Items By Jim Butler

I am a relatively new member. One of my collections, is Military Lapel Pins and Unit Crests. I have about 300 and it continues to grow.

Shortly after receiving my new member package, I ordered the TSN Lapel pin and Challenge Coin. Just received them the other day and all I can say is "Wow --- they are terrific." Whoever designed them did a great job. Haven't put them in my collection yet as I have been carrying them around showing them to everyone.

(Editor Note: Thank you, Jim, for joining our great organization, and many thanks for purchasing the coin and lapel pin. By making the purchase you not only added two wonderful items to your collection, but you've helped support the Tan Son Nhut Association.)





United States Air Force Mission Statement

To the Airmen of the United States Air Force

December 7, 2005

Almost 60 years ago the President and Congress created our Air Force. The world we live in today has changed dramatically over those six decades. Today, our world is fast paced, constantly shifting, and filled with a wide range of challenges. Our mission is our guiding compass, and now more than ever we need it to be clear and precise. Therefore, we have rewritten the Air Force's mission statement to define where and what we do...

*The mission of the United States Air Force is to deliver sovereign options
for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests
- to fly and fight in Air, Space, and Cyberspace.*

Our task is to provide the National Command Authority, the Combatant Commanders, and our Nation with an array of options ... options that are not limited by the tyranny of distance, the urgency of time, or the strength of our enemy's defenses. With one hand the Air Force can deliver humanitarian assistance to the farthest reaches of the globe, while with the other hand we can destroy a target anywhere in the world. This is the meaning of sovereign options and the essence of being a superpower. We will be the best at what we do, and we will accomplish our mission as part of a joint, coalition team.

Our adversaries will contest us across all of the domains: Land, Sea, Air, Space, and Cyberspace. As Airmen, it is our calling to dominate Air, Space, and Cyberspace. If we can decisively and consistently control these commons, then we will deter countless conflicts. If our enemies underestimate our resolve; then we will fly, fight, and destroy them.

The pioneers of airpower—Billy Mitchell, Hap Arnold, Curtis LeMay, Bemie Schriever—knew what their mission was: to fly and fight wherever our Nation calls. The Air Force's mission statement has evolved over time, but it does not change the nature of who we are or what we do. Our heritage has given us a limitless horizon. Just as our predecessors did in the past, we will continue to fly, to fight, and to win wherever we are called. We are the greatest Air Force in the world, because of you ... because of your sacrifice, dedication, and skill. Keep up the great work!

Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of The Air Force

T. Michael Moseley
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

(Editor Note: Thank you, [Johnnie Jernigan](#), for forwarding this to the office. The Mission Statement of the other services will be featured in future issues of Revetments)

**If you have not renewed your membership,
please do so today**

We don't want to lose you!



Tan Son Nhut Association
A Memorial To The American Experience In Vietnam

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