



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

JANUARY 2012



Happy New Year's Day to all !!! 2012 brings us all sort of reunion news.

Colonel Chuck DeBellevue, AF Cross recipient and Fighter Ace, will join us in Dayton. He is the fourth consecutive warrior to be our honored guest speaker. His complete biography is printed elsewhere in this edition of Revetments.

Hotel arrangements have been finalized and complete details are also printed elsewhere in this edition. One of the factors that led to our receiving such a great deal from the Holiday Inn in Fairborn is that the Dayton area is a tier three metropolitan area. Generally speaking, the smaller the city the cheaper the hotel prices. Great hotel room deals can be had in larger cities, but parking and transportation to and from the nearest airport frequently negate the low room prices.

With the wind down of most U.S. military activities in Iraq, large numbers of troops are returning to the land of the big PX.

When possible, take some time to greet them and offer a "job well done". Give them the greeting that you never received.

A complete reunion schedule will follow in the next Revetments and on the web site.

The 2012 annual reunion just might be our best ever...

George Plunkett
TSNA President



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

2012 REUNION HOTEL INFO!

Fellow Members:

The 2012 TSNA Reunion will begin on Thursday, 10-11 and end on Sunday, 10-14.

We have contracted with the Holiday Inn in Fairborn, OH for our 2012 reunion.

Contact info for the Holiday Inn is www.holidayinn.com/fairbornoh. Their phone number is 1-877-834-3613.

The room rate is \$110. per night. That includes all fees and taxes.

FREE parking.

FREE WiFi throughout the hotel.

FREE Hospitality Suite.

FREE Meeting Room.

FREE Meeting Room with auditorium style seating for guest speakers.

FREE shuttle to and from the airport. It is the responsibility of the GUEST to notify the hotel at least 72 hours prior to arrival.

FREE transportation to and from the NMUSAF and the traveling Vietnam wall.

FREE breakfast daily in the hotel restaurant.

Room reservations will be honored at the guaranteed rate for up to 3 days prior to and after the reunion.

For reservations guaranteed by credit card, the credit card will not be charged until the day of arrival.

George Plunkett
TSNA President



HOLIDAY INN FAIRBORN

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

A New Year Dawns

Let it be known: This Chaplain was raised in Kansas and is a subscriber of the periodical "Progressive Farmer". (Well, in the 1920's my grandfather sold "grain binders and windmills"). One of the beauties of the farm magazine is that editor George H. includes each month a study of great quotes. This month he outdid himself and this Chaplain is going to borrow some of those famous people's comments to support "A New Day Dawns".

We find ourselves in the northern hemisphere so William Blake said "In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy".

This is a new year dawning: (Time for a little humor) "The worst gift at this holiday is a fruitcake. There is only one fruitcake in the entire world and people keep sending it to each other!" Quote Johnny Carson (bless his memory)

There are so many philosophers who spoke up on "A New Year Dawns". How about the brain Bertrand Russell: "If I were a medical man, I would prescribe a holiday to any patient who considers his work important."

There are deep thinkers, there are short phrases. Philip Adams is quoted of saying "To many people holidays are not voyages of discovery, but rituals of reassurance". The Chaplain has to study that one to figure it out.

So many great brains have tried to philosophize about Christmas and "The New Year Dawns" but one great thinker has an answer: Phyllis Diller is quoted "Christmas is a time when everyone wants his past forgotten and his present remembered".

Thus "A New Year Dawns" must close; everyone has a seasonal comment about Christmas and New Years. How I wish the words of Hamilton Wright Mabie maybe could be

true "Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love".

Yes, we wish this could be true! All we can ask is that you would think and offer prayers as "A New Year Dawns"!

End of Sermon
Chaplain Bob Chaffee
TSNA Chaplain



**AMERICAN VETERANS
TRAVELING TRIBUTE**

This organization will be having their traveling display located in Greene County, Ohio, during the time TSNA will be having our reunion.

We plan on visiting this exhibit on Saturday, October 13.

"American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) travels the USA with the Cost of Freedom Tribute to provide a forum for the members of the community to come together to Honor-Respect-Remember all those whom we have asked to stand in harm's way to protect and defend our great country and freedom as our way of life. They are the true American Heroes and we have an obligation to pay tribute to them by celebrating the freedoms they fought for and stand to insure."



The above used with permission from the AVTT website: <http://www.avtt.org>.



AMERICAN WIDOW PROJECT
www.americanwidowproject.org.

Taryn Davis, Founder and Executive Director of American Widow Project will be speaking to us during our 2012 Reunion in Dayton. Below is some information about the project.

Who We Are Our Mission

Since 2001, over 6,200 U.S. service members have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Around half of these service members were married, leaving an estimated 3,000 military widows across our country. While the service member's sacrifice is acknowledged, many simply forget or fail to recognize the sacrifice of the spouse who is now left a widow of war. Oftentimes the invisible wounds of military widows are disregarded due to age or a simple lack of knowledge and understanding.

The American Widow Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to the new generation of those who have lost the heroes of yesterday, today and tomorrow, with an emphasis on healing through sharing stories, tears and laughter. Military Widow to Military Widow.

50th "ANNIVERSARY"

As anniversary's go, December 29th, is an interesting one for me. On December 29th, 1961, I arrived at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Since no one knew we were coming, we stayed at the Continental Palace for 19 days, while our tent floors were built.

Larry E. Fry
Editor, Revetments

Col. Charles DeBellevue

1970s-1980s -- Chuck DeBellevue was the first U.S. Air Force weapons systems officer to become an ace during the Vietnam War in 1972. DeBellevue became America's top "MiG Killer" when he and his pilot, Capt. John Madden, downed two MiGs, giving him six in total, the most earned during the Vietnam War.

DeBellevue was born in New Orleans and grew up in Louisiana. Commissioned through ROTC in 1968, he completed undergraduate navigator training at Mather Air Force Base, Calif., in July 1969. He began F-4 combat crew training at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., en route to an assignment with the 335th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.

In October 1971, he was sent to the 555th TFS at Udorn Royal Thai Air Base. As a WSO with the "Triple Nickel," DeBellevue scored his first four aerial victories while crewed with Capt. Steve Ritchie, who became the first USAF Vietnam War ace. DeBellevue became the second when he downed two MiGs on Sept. 9, 1972 while flying with Madden on a four-ship combat air patrol.

During his combat tour, DeBellevue logged 550 combat hours while flying 220 combat missions. His skill as a WSO was recognized when he and the other two U.S. Air Force aces, Ritchie and Capt. Jeff Feinstein, received the 1972 Mackay Trophy, the Veterans of Foreign Wars' Armed Forces Award and the Eugene M. Zuckert Achievement Award.

DeBellevue entered pilot training at Williams AFB, Ariz., in November 1972. After pinning on his new wings, he returned to the F-4 Phantom II as a pilot assigned to the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing at Holloman AFB, N.M. In 1975, he moved to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, where he served as an assistant operations officer in the 43th TFS. He was the 5th Air Force deputy chief of staff, at Yokota AB, Japan, then was assigned as commander of the 95th Air Base Wing, Edwards AFB, Calif., until 1995.

DeBellevue retired from active duty as commander of the Air Force ROTC Detachment 440, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia Mo., in January 1998, after 30 years of military service.

He retired with numerous awards, including the Air Force Cross, the Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters, the Legion of Merit and the Distinguished Flying Cross with five oak leaf clusters, among others

The above furnished courtesy of: <http://www.af.mil>.

Sources compiled from Air Force Flight Test Center History Office, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.



NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS



Billed on base not far from Main Gate. Had Security Police Armory next door and an Army Signal Battalion across the main street. We ate most of our meals at their chow hall—closer and they had ice cream most nights (AF chow hall only once per week!). We had two launches of C-123K's (123B's gone within first two months) each morning. Got our "Frag Orders" (thin strips of Mil Teletype—pasted together) at the morning Ops. Briefing. These always started with a time hack. Two to three (usually 4 sometimes) days of duty with one day off. Always a shock when you were scheduled for a day off and checking the posted "new schedule" on the Quarter's Bulletin board and now you're on for the first launch in the morning.

James W. Schultz, Jr.
19th special Operations Squadron
Oct 68—Oct 69

I lived at the end of "Charlie Row" behind the base morgue. I was there during 3 Tet's and remember crawling between two mattresses I had under my bunk when the rockets would fly! Also did a tour with the 8th AP at Bien Hoa AB as a buck sergeant in 1968.

Jerry Brown
8th Aerial Port Squadron
Mar 66—Mar 67, and 68 also

Joseph R. Galvan was my brother. He was there in the 377th CES. I'm still trying to find out more on my brother's service at Tan Son Nhut. My brother was an electrician, he passed away 4/8/10. I Googled his name and

TSNA came up with him visiting your site (in 2000),

Therese Galvan, In Memory of:
Sgt. Joseph Galvan
377th CES
69-73

Lived in airmen's barracks near C-130 parking. I can recall two times there was an attempt to infiltrate the base, unsuccessfully. My main duty was a daily visit to the hospital to exchange mpc's for U. S. money for the wounded. During this time, several finance guys were caught selling U. S. currency on the black market. The system was tightened up after that.

Donald L. Reiter
Air Force Finance
Jun 66—Jun 67

I lived I think in the 1300 area. Arrived with assignment to Bien Hoa. CBPO TSN told me that assignment had been closed for three months. Made me wonder why I went to work at AFCRL Hanscom Field on a Monday and found out about assignment and had cleared and left the base on the following Friday allowing 23 days leave. Oh well, the military of times past. Retired August 1977.

Thomas J. Lawson
Airborne Radio Shift Supervisor
Sept 72—Feb 73

I was a Tower Controller at Tan Son Nhut. Lived in tent section on base. Was on duty during 2 attacks on TSN. The VC used the tower rotating beacon as reference point for mortars. 2nd attack hit fuel tanks next to the tower.

Steve Whitmore
1876th Communications Squadron
May 65—May 66

Lived in the barracks complex near the flight line and not far from the French cemetery. My barracks consisted of communication specialists and air traffic controllers. I was there during the Tet offensive. The barracks behind me took a direct hit, killing one airman. One rocket buried itself below a sidewalk behind the barracks. No explosion! The next three days were dicey. Thanks to the 377th and Army troops getting the enemy routed and off the base. The "C" rations during this time were not so delectable! A lot of memories for the year I was at Tan Son Nhut. Memories stay a lifetime.

Bob Treiber
1876th Communications Squadron
Oct 67—Oct 68

I got to Tan Son Nhut on 1/2/67, 5 days later I experienced my first rocket attack. I think 3 of our F-4's took direct hits. I fought on the south east perimeter by the old French grave yard, from sunup until about 5 pm. The 82nd AB and the Korean Marines finally closed the outer perimeter. Tet 68-69 was a nonevent for me after Tet 68. Left 6/9/1969.

Robert Pompeo, Jr.
460th Field Maintenance Sq.
Nov 67—Jun 69

Willard Compound flight engineer on VC118. I was Crew Chief of 7th Air force flight Crew. Our flight people supported Ambassador Bunker, General Clay, and General Abrams. Did courier work throughout Vietnam.

Bobby McCasland
7th Air Force
Jul 70—Jun 71





TSNA Member Gary Redlinski “outrigging” in Hawaii

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

National Veterans Golden Age Games

Athletes at the Arch! Registration is now open for the 26th National Veterans Golden Age Games. This premier sports event for Veterans age 55 and older who receive care at the VA will be held in St. Louis, Missouri May 31 – June 5, 2012. To register go to <http://www.va.gov/opa/speceven/gag/index.asp>.

Tan Son Nhut AFB, April 13, 1966.

By: Steve Whitmore
1876th Communications Squadron
May 65-May 66

Tuesday, April 12, 1966 I was one of three controllers on duty in the airport control tower. Sometime around 2100 I saw several trip flares floating down a few clicks to the west. As we watched the flares a smattering of muzzle flashes erupted. We didn't think much of it at the time. Flares and small arms fire was somewhat routine but usually in the north, not the west. We generally knew when and where heavy firing was scheduled so we could advise departing aircraft. When the fire zone was close the Navy jets would light their after burner and be vertical before the end of the runway. What a sight! But this night we had no firing advisories. We were all quite jittery. The VC had recently hit Bien Hoa AFB and had attacked a village nearby us a few days before. The intel was we were next and it would be a big one. Just to help the VC along, we had a rotating beacon over our heads. That made a perfect reference point for rockets and mortars trying to find the VNAF fuel tanks about 75 meters behind the tower.

Shortly past midnight we saw more

activity to the south west. Then all h@#* broke loose. The entire north-north west quadrant came alive with muzzle flashes. The control tower is all glass-like-stuff but pretty well insulated against sound so we didn't hear much more than soft popping and booms. Curiously, we had no SOPs in the tower for being under attack. I told the E-3 to get out and run. When he opened the hatch leading to the stair on the outside of the rear of the tower – facing the fuel tanks – we heard loud and clear what was going on. Without saying a word to each other we grabbed mikes, teletypes, and phones to tell the world that TSN was under heavy attack, to clear the air-space, use Bien Hoa as an alternate, and to keep frequencies clear for emergency transmissions. Just then we felt the concussion of one of the fuel tanks exploding. I grabbed the mike and broadcast on all channels that we were leaving the tower. We grabbed some classified stuff (at the time it seemed important!) and made “didi mao” to the hatch.

The stair down to the ground was a rickety thing. For some insane reason I was mad because it was wooden and could burn. By this time the flames were starting to shoot up. I was sure another tank would go and we were about to get drenched with flam-

ing fuel oil or blasted into pieces. In the crazy way time slows down, I remember deciding being blown to bits was the better choice!

When we hit the ground we ran through the base ops office and out onto the flight line. It was chaos. Some aircraft at the west end were on fire. The VNAF and Air America aircraft parking area to our left was taking hits so we turned right and ran into dozens of whatever had wheels and red lights rushing all over the place. I never heard whether any of them crashed into each other. We heard small arms fire under the roar of everything else but figured, heck it must be ours. The other choice was to hit the deck and risk getting run over by an APC or fire truck.

I guess it was about this time that all my adrenalin cooked off. I have absolutely no memory of the rest of the night.

The official numbers: 9 KIA's, 184 WIA's, 4 aircraft destroyed, 61 heavily damaged, 34 vehicles damaged or destroyed. One ESSO fuel storage tank destroyed. The tower, with its rotating beacon – not a scratch!

Thursday was business as usual in the tower.

By: Larry E. Fry
 Det. 8, 2nd ADVON
 Dec 61-Mar 62

The text below is from the "Daily Activities Log Detachment 8 Chaplain Section", 29 December 1961 until 7 March 1962.

This January portion covers the trip that I made with Chaplain Kilpatrick to Nha Trang and Duc My, to set up a schedule of Chaplain visits to these locations.

Fast forward to September 2011! The TSNA webmaster, Charles Penley, has put the new "Photos of the Month" into the website, and I was reviewing them.

Imagine my surprise when I noted the number of the C-123 that was damaged on April 13, 1966. It was the same plane we flew on from Tan Son Nhut to Nha Trang, via Dalat, where the picture was taken.

The following pictures tell the rest of the story.

22 January 1962. Chaplain Kilpatrick and Airman Fry departed Tan Son Nhut at 0900 hours, enroute to Nha Trang via Dalat. Arrived Nha Trang 1100 hours. Met Lt. Col Cook, MAAG Senior Advisor, and Lt. Pepe, 1st Mob Site Commander. Went with him and Col Cook to our quarters and got our rooms. We then went to lunch at MAAG Co-Op Mess. After dinner we received a tour of Nha Trang, courtesy of Col Cook, and then Airman Fry and Chaplain Kilpatrick visited the Mob Site. Airman Fry then typed a schedule of services to be held at Nha Trang. In the evening after Supper Chaplain Kilpatrick attended a Bible Study with other Protestant Missionaries in the area, including Rev. Houck.

23 January 1962. After breakfast, Chaplain Kilpatrick and Airman Fry went with Maj Daily, MSC Advisor of MAAG, to Duc My, MAAG "outpost" 50 kilometers from Nha Trang. There met with the Sr. Advisor, Major Keyes, and Exec Officer Maj Silvester and some other key men. Set up a schedule for a service for them each Monday. Arrived back at Nha Trang at 1100 hours. Packed, ate lunch after seeing Maj Mercier and getting manifested on a flight, and then boarded plane. Departed Nha Trang at 1330 hours and flew to Pleiku (didn't stop), and came on to Saigon, arriving here at 1600 hours.



Larry Fry—At Dalat Air Base, enroute to Nha Trang and Duc My, January 22, 1962



Photo courtesy of: Augustine R. Letto, Base Operations, January 1966—December 1966

C-123, tail number 56-4382, written off as a total loss after the attack of 13 April 1966.

There were 246 rockets and mortars that hit Tan Son Nhut within a 13 minute time frame.

BOOK REVIEWS



Vietnam veterans who have problems explaining our war to their grandchildren (or even adult children) might be interested in a book recommended by a friend who is an expert in Children's Literature. I read it and yes, it is a "kid's book," but it is very powerful--and I think it will ring a chord with many of us.

The book is All the Broken Pieces by Ann E. Burg. It is a "novel in verse," which I thought would be off-putting; it wasn't. It is the story of a young Vietnamese boy who is adopted by American parents--a very loving family. But his past is still with him--his Vietnamese mother who sent him away to save him, and his younger brother, who was horribly injured in the war. (No child should have to carry the amount of guilt that he does.) But several things help this boy--baseball and music, plus his loving parents and a local Vietnam vet.

My friend recommends this for middle school grades, but older children (and adults) will learn from it.

Carol Bessette



Seawolf 28 by Al Billings, first published in 2004 by BookSurge, LLC.

Seawolf 28 chronicles the naval career of Al Billings, a former enlisted man, who retired as a Commander after a 22 year career in naval aviation. He flew more than 600 missions during his four tours in Vietnam, ending with a mission sweeping mines from the port of Haiphong. His awards include the Silver Star and Distin-

guished Flying Cross.

His skills as a helicopter pilot are unbelievable, always beating the air into total submission. Al's skills as a warrior were overshadowed by his concern for his men. He was a fantastic organizer, planner and supervisor.

Unfortunately, his "people skills" did not translate into good relations with his supervisors. His constant cage rattling and total dedication to making the mission safe and successful were not seen as favorable character traits by many. He was an early version of Spike Lee, always trying to do the right thing and letting the chips fall where they may.

If you enjoy reading about a real warrior who spells it all out - warts and all - this is the book for you. It is not recommended for adolescents.

Al was a real warrior. It would have been an honor to have served under his command.

Al Billings has his own web site, www.combatsar.com. Autographed copies of his book may be ordered there.

George Plunkett



**FROM TSNA MEMBER
HARLAN HATFIELD**

I would like to tell you about a donation program that helps sick and disabled American veterans. Our company builds reverse osmosis water filters which protect users from toxic and radioactive pollutants in drinking water. This is a product that would greatly benefit many veterans with health problems and through our charity program; we are looking to donate free systems to them.

It is a known fact that many veterans have been exposed to chemicals and pollutants during their service and some have serious lifelong health concerns. Many are on medication and

have compromised immune systems, making it hard for them to tolerate even the small amounts of chemicals and toxins found in tap water. Some cannot afford a water filtration system. These are the people we want to reach, and we need your help.

If you could help us spread the word about this program, we would greatly appreciate it. Please consider mentioning or linking to our program page at <http://www.freedrinkingwater.com/charity/charity-veterans.htm>. Your readers can learn more about the program and apply for a free system from this page.

As an American company that builds our systems here in the USA, we are grateful and indebted to our veterans. If you have any questions about our program or our products please feel free to contact me. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ed Shih
APEC Water Systems
ed@freedrinkingwater.com
1-800-880-4808 ext.117

**THIS SPACE
RESERVED
FOR
YOUR STORY**

**(Please send to:
lfry2@dejazzd.com)**



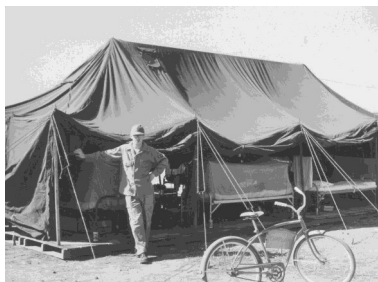
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Annual Membership: \$20.00
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Life Membership: \$180.00



The picture that didn't fit onto Page 2.
Larry Fry in Tent City, January, 1962



CHRISTMAS 2011 "AT THE WALL"
Photos by Carol Bessette, TSNA Treasurer

NEW MEMBERS 

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Colonel Jim C. Harding, USAF (Ret) | jimhobo1@aol.com | 65, 67, 71, 72 | SE ASIA |
| Mr. James R. Ricks | carman7117@nc.rr.com | Jun 67 - Jul 68 | 460th AEMS |
| Mr. Timothy A. Lee | lee424@hotmail.com | Apr 69 - Apr 70 | Hq. 7th AF |
| Mr. Mark H. Bastian | mhbastian@msn.com | Apr 70 - Jan 71 | 12th RITS |
| Mr. Emmett C. Harkins, Jr. | c_harkins@bellsouth.net | Apr 70 - Apr 71 | 1876th Communications Squadron |

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