



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

OCTOBER 2012



MEMORIAL DEDICATION

We would like to see as many members and guests as possible at the TSN Memorial Dedication, and other activities also.

If by chance you can only come for the Dedication, please let me know **NOW** so I can make up a Dedication name badge for you.

We want to have you there, and we sure want to know who you are!

Contact me by October 8, and I can make badges for you.

Email: lfr2@dejazzd.com.

MY VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

By: Arnold Lilly
377th SPS
Mar 72 - Mar 73

My orders to Vietnam sent me to DaNang AB and upon arrival I was redirected to Tan Son Nhut AB. My duty tour was 5 March 1972 - 29 March 1973. I was assigned to the 377th Security Police Squadron, as Flight Commander of "Charlie Flight" Law Enforcement. Charlie Flight worked 9PM to 6AM. I lived in barracks 1308 until near the end of my tour and moved to the 1200 area when the 1300 area was given to troops from Australia and Indonesia. The First Sergeant's office and the orderly room was in the upper floor and the bottom floor was living quarters for several NCO's. During the day time I worked at the base theater for the MWR office. We showed the movie three times during the day time. I followed that pattern my entire tour until the theater closed in March 1973. Things were uneventful except the times "victor charlie" found some ordnance to lob our

way. What we encountered was hardly worth mentioning compared to what our predecessors had to deal with. I was impressed with the professional way our military did their duty. Many people spent their off duty hours in a party mode but duty was a different matter. In my view everyone did what they were sent there to do. The base community as a whole respected the effort and performance of my unit. There was a different level of respect for Security Police than any of my other assignments. I attribute this to the valorous performance of those brave warriors who performed professionally before I got there. I was just the next guy. I know that many members of TSNA connect without participation just as I did. They should be informed that my unit respected their unit mutually and we are grateful. Our job was easy and uneventful because of the mutual respect.

I departed on the next to last plane. The last plane carried the command element minutes later. We were not well received in San Francisco. History did not treat us well either. The warriors of the current generation have received proper respect. I hope our political structure avoids a repeat of anything that resembles the Vietnam War.

SUSIE AHRENS' ARTICLE

By: Mark Reveaux
377th Supply Squadron
May 67 - May 68

That was an interesting article by Susie Ahrens. I used to go to the library quite often and listen to tapes. Some were donations from American Airlines, being classical. That was in 1967 through 1968. It wouldn't surprise me if Susie was one of the employees there who handed out the

tapes. A number of personnel were recording their own tapes from the library. Some were buying tape recorders from the BX. They were full sized machines. I recall seeing brands such as AKAI and AIWA. No one seemed concerned about how they were going to get them home. They were big and heavy, being about 16" wide, 10" deep and 18" high. I guess in those days, we didn't think a lot about what was going to happen eleven months later, but whether we'd live long enough to see the end of the current month. They were even buying ceramic elephants from Thailand as part of a fund raiser for an orphanage. When I think back about how big those machines were, I look at my iPod that's smaller than the Zippo lighter I had in Vietnam, and it stores more songs than a whole set of tapes would have recorded during the year I was at TSN. In any case, thank you, Susie, for your courteous help with those tapes. I recently downloaded some of those classicals to my iPod.

Here is approximately what Mark's unit looked like:



REUNION PANORAMIC PHOTO

Be sure to stick around after the great Memorial Dedication Program to participate in the TSNA 2012 Reunion Panoramic Photo to be taken at the Memorial site. It will be available to view and order on Saturday morning in the Hospitality Suite.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

In a few days about 150 of us will gather together in Dayton, Ohio in the shadow of the inspiring Air Force Museum. A time of fellowship and memories. For those who could not for many reasons attend this gathering we reach out to all who served with us at TSNA (Chaplain's thought: read 3 John 1:2) Remember our motto: All Included, None excluded!

We might just add the words of Mother Teresa "It is a gift of God to us to be able to share our love with others."

October is said to be the beginning of the fall and winter. Bears hibernate in winter but we are not bears, not allowed to hide out for these months ahead. Dr N.V. Peale gives us an October thought "The realities of faith, hope and love can make every day an exciting adventure".

End of Sermon,
Chaplain Bob Chaffee



REUNION SCHEDULE ADDITION

We have added two items to the schedule.

First, we will have a Board of Director's meeting at 5 PM on Saturday, October 13.

And at 8 PM on Saturday evening, October 13, we will have our General Business Meeting. This is a change from the past when we held the meeting on Sunday morning—with a very small attendance. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

REUNION ATTENDANCE

As I write this paragraph on September 25, we now have over 160 folks scheduled for the dinner.

Dayton, here we come!!



NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

I was assigned to the Radio & Cable Company (U. S. Army). My duties included trouble shooting communications (Landline, Microwave and Tropo Scatter), between my station (Site Octopus) and other critical sites throughout our A. O. Toward the end of my tour of duty I was assigned as night-trick chief (NCOIC) until a replacement of suitable rank was found. (I was Spec. 4).

Richard A. Hall
1st Sig. Bgd., 69th Sig. Bn., US Army
Nov 70-Nov 71

REVETMENTS

Lived in 1300 area. Was on west end of base during Tet 68 (Echo Sector) driving Security Alert Team #1 Call sign Golf 1. Responded to Foxtrot Sector during May 68 attack.

Frank J. Bracken, Jr.
377th SPS
Sep 67 - Sep 68



THANK YOU ANGELA

By: Dale Bryan, TSNA Secretary & Carol Bessette, TSNA Treasurer.

On Wednesday September 26th, TSNA Secretary, Dale Bryan and TSNA Treasurer, Carol Bessette met with photographer Angela Pan to thank her for the wonderful donation of her sunrise photo at "The Wall", a framed print of which she has donated to be the door prize at the 2012 Tan Son Nhut Association reunion.

In addition to thanking her for the donation to TSNA, we wanted to extend the best wishes of TSNA to her for her upcoming marriage in late October.

Angela is holding a pecan bowl made specifically for her by wood-turning craftsman and TSNA President, George Plunkett.

We met Angela for lunch at the Founding Farmers Restaurant in Washington, DC.

Carol found a list of restaurants in the area of DC close to the White House and asked for Dale's opinion. He'd heard of this one because of the interest that Judy and he have in farming in ND. ND agriculture was involved in the founding of a similar restaurant in Georgetown. As it turns out, Angela had been to Founding Farmers before with her fiancée and loved it. Pure chance for such a great choice.

AWP GUESTS AT DAYTON

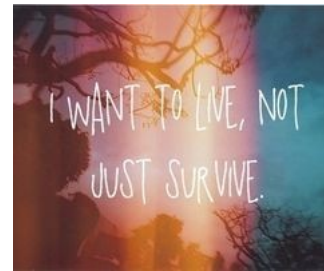
By: George Plunkett
TSNA President

We have received word that an AWP member (**American Widow Project**) will be attending some part of our 2012 TSNA Reunion in Dayton.

Their mission statement is:

Since 2001, over 6,500 U.S. service members have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Around half of these service members were married, leaving an estimated 3,200 military widows across our country, from the wars alone. These numbers do not include our heroes who lost their lives in non-combat ways leaving countless more military widows. 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 military widow. 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.



For Social Security recipients:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pressoffice/pr/coss-online-statement-pr.html>

Press Release

Statement of Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, on the Initial Success of the New Online Social Security Statement

I am pleased with the public's initial response to our new online Social Security Statement. Since our May 1 launch, more than 130,000 people have successfully created an online account to access their Statement information, with the first 100,000 coming online in less than three days.

Our new online Statement is simple and easy-to-use, and the initial satisfaction scores from users prove it. According to the American Customer Satisfaction Index, users are giving the online Statement a score of 89, making it competitive with our other top-rated, best-in-government online services.

The online Statement is a very useful financial planning tool. It provides estimates for retirement, disability and survivors benefits. It also provides workers a convenient way to determine whether their earnings are accurately posted to their Social Security records. This feature is important because Social Security benefits are based on average earnings over a person's lifetime. Now people as young as 18 can access their Statement for the first time, as well as find links to important information and online services.

People should get in the habit of checking their online *Statement* each year -- around their birthday, for example. To learn more about it, or to try it yourself, please go to www.socialsecurity.gov/mystatement.

###

SSA Press Office 440 Altmeyer Building 6401 Security Blvd. Baltimore, MD 21235
410-965-8904 FAX 410-966-9973

Thanks for the Memories

Part 2

I left off on part one, getting my orders to report to Tan Son Nhut AFB, Saigon, in October, 1970. I arrived at the 377th CES Sign Shop for my assignment. The Staff Sergeant in charge welcomed me and made sure I was set up in my hooch and introduced me around the squadron shops. We became good friends and hung out after hours at the Ba Moi Bah stands drinking 33 beer and eating burgers, a great combo! It was here that I met an officer and found out we had a lot in common, we were from the same state, New Jersey, and lived only a few minutes from each other. I ended up moving into his apartment off base where we had a blast. So I had a place off base and a bed in my hooch to split my time. This went on for only a few months until one day, we saw that our apartment building was getting raided for drugs. We decided it was time to move out and back to the base!

I remember the cyclo races to the local bars in Saigon, especially the Peace Bar. We must have been crazy back then to sit in a basket in front of a motorcycle racing through traffic! Life was good, to me Saigon was like living in NYC, fast paced and very crowded. I recall there was a Mexican restaurant on base that served the best enchiladas around. Do you remember this place? Funny thing, I recall seeing a Vietnamese cooking there! Today, the smell and taste of Mexican food brings back those memories. I always wondered what had become of the locals that worked in my shop. I still have some gifts they made for me, sitting on a shelf where I can see them every day. They are a reminder of those friendships that remains in my heart to this day.

I went on R&R to Sydney on Christmas Day, 1970. I was fortunate to have a relative living in Sydney who had me stay with him so I ended up with a personal guide. I had to rent a

tux to see Neil Sedaka at the Playboy Club! I even drove his VW in Sydney...on the left side. It's a wonder we didn't get into an accident! I came back to TSN on News Years Day. Sure hated to leave beautiful Australia and return to the hot and dusty confines of Vietnam. I was a "Short Timer" with only 2 months left before I rotated back to the States. Soon, my orders would come and I went right back to where this all started... McGuire AFB, New Jersey, where my military career ended.

I don't have very many photos of TSN nor can I recall the names of those I met there. This part of my Vietnam experience has become much clouded. The six months I spent in TSN were quiet. There were no base attacks like we had at Tuy Hoa and I am grateful for that. As the years went by, Tan Son Nhut had become a void that I was trying to fill until I met Wayne Salisbury on the internet and he said I should come to a reunion. My first one was Gettysburg. My wife and I didn't know anybody from TSN...I was hoping to run into somebody I knew, somebody to help fill in those gaps, but that never happened. We did meet new friends, Harold & Brenda Boone, Charles Penley and his sister Janice and Bob Laymon at our first reunion and we were off and running. Thanks to Charles and all his info on the base, I was able to find my shop, my barracks and some good markers to help bring back the past.

It's been a few years since Gettysburg and we returned to Charlotte last year and we had a great time and met a lot of new friends. I still haven't run into anybody from my past at TSN but maybe someday I'll hear: "Hey Kahuna, how the hell are you, it's been a very long time."

I just want to thank everybody for the friendships we have made and for sharing your thoughts and feelings about a time that was lost to me but not forgotten. Yes, "Memories, pressed between the pages of my mind, Memories, sweetened thru the

ages just like wine." May we never forget!

God Bless America
George A. Bontya
TSN, 1970 -1971



George Bontya - last day at TSN

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

October 7, 2001: Operation Enduring Freedom begins in Afghanistan.

October 12, 2012 Dedication of the Tan Son Nhut Air Base Memorial at the National Museum of the U. S. Air Force

October 13, 1775: U. S. Navy established.

October 24: United Nations Day.

FLYING TO DAYTON?

If you are arriving at Dayton via air, and want transportation from the airport to the hotel, you MUST notify the hotel ahead of time with all your details.

The front desk number is: (937)426-7800.

See you soon!!

GEN. W. W. MOMYER

Word has been received of the passing of 95 year old General Momyer. From July 1966 to August 1968 he was Deputy Commander for air operations, MACV, and Commander, 7th Air Force.

Our Time Has Come

Ten O'clock Friday morning, October 12, 2012 will be our day, our time, our moment. Long in the thoughts of so many and well over two years in the planning process, the memorial to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam will be dedicated at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

The day of dedication will be one of dignity and honors, of flags and speeches, of quiet thoughts and personal reflections, of prayers for the living and prayers for the souls of those having seen the end of all wars. Those gathered at the dedication site will see friends whose faces have been weathered by the passing of time. The passing time can never diminish the spirit of those who served at Tan Son Nhut, nor what they stood for, nor what they did. Nothing can take that away, not even the passing of time.

There are probably many different reasons why putting a memorial to an Air Base half way around the world some fifty or so years ago matters. It matters because those serving at Tan Son Nhut heard a call and responded without hesitation. It matters because they were asked to sacrifice and did so without reservation. It matters because those who served do not want the world to ever forget the sacrifices of so many. It matters because those who served there were ostracized by society for being a Vietnam Veteran. It matters because they continued to move forward with heads held high knowing they did the right thing. Yes, this memorial matters.

This memorial is not being dedicated as a way of patting ourselves on the back. Rather, it is being dedicated to say we cared enough to remember, we cared enough to honor, and we cared enough to tell everybody of a time and place where men and women accomplished all that was asked of them and more. Yes, we cared enough.

There are moments in life where time seemingly stands still and does not move. A memorial dedication is one of those moments. As we stand before the memorial we will be in the present, but yet our thoughts will carry us back to a place and time long ago and again we see ourselves in the past. The sweetness of that moment is what makes a dedication so personal and so meaningful.

There are over one hundred and forty persons already committed to attending the dedication ceremony. A common greeting for Vietnam Veterans is to say "Welcome Home Brother". Can there be a better place to say that to a friend than while standing before the Tan Son Nhut Air Base Memorial? Such an opportunity lies before us. Our time has come.

The Memorial Committee



CLASS 62H

BY: Larry E. Fry
Revetments Editor

A group of men who graduated from U. S. Air Force Pilot Training Class 62H in June, 1962 have never had a reunion.

When working on possibly having a 50th Anniversary Reunion, work began on how and where to do it.

Joe Vaillancourt, their Reunion Coordinator, contacted the National Museum of the U. S. Air Force and was put in touch with Jane Leach, (who has been instrumental in helping Johnnie Jernigan and George Plunkett during the planning for the TSNA Reunion).

Jane suggested that because of their small number (there were 28 in their class), they might want to think about joining up with another group.

And as you can see where this is going, she suggested the Tan Son Nhut Association.

The TSNA Board welcomed the opportunity to share with these folks for many reasons, certainly including the fact that some of them wound up at Tan Son Nhut and other SEA bases at some point during their USAF career,

At present there are 9 members of this class registered to attend the TSNA 2012 Reunion. Please welcome them.

FAVORITE SAYINGS



I would like to be allowed to admire a man's opinion as I would his dog - without being expected to take it home with me.
-Frank A. Clark

(A good thought this election year?!)

LAST MAN STANDING BOB LAYMON'S THOUGHTS

By: Bob Laymon
Sep 71 - Sep 72
Scatback

The last time we reunited in Dayton, OH [2007] I drove around to find a liquor store to resupply our TSNA Hospital-ity Room.

Lord behold, up on the top shelf of this old/decrepit liquor store were half-a-dozen dusty Seagram's V.O. Canadian Whiskey bottles, ...w/ the Vietnam Short Timer ribbon attached. I bought all the bottles, giving them all away to friends, including Sir Charles Penley for our TSNA archive and as our TSNA *Tontine Tradition (last man standing).

It is suggested that the final TSNA Association reunion be scheduled as soon as it can be reasonably concluded that the remaining survivors of the TSNA have been reduced to just two living members. At this final reunion, the two survivors shall proceed to a suitable setting where, with appropriate ceremony, and in the presence of families, friends and representatives of the United States Air Force, they will open the bottle of VO and drink a toast to the departed members of Tan Son Nhut Air Base; a toast to their wives and family; and then each shall drink a toast to the other.

The Tontine will then be entrusted temporarily to the younger of the survivors. It will be claimed permanently by the sole survivor when that time comes. As property of the sole survivor, The Tontine will become a part of his estate for disposal as he chooses.

It is suggested that the final reunion be held at an Air Force installation most convenient to the two survivors or, if feasible, at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Wright - Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio.



LOOKING AHEAD

ATTENTION - ATTENTION

Ladies and Gentlemen known as Vietnam Veterans. My name is **Revetments** and I have been wondering, "Where are you and when are you coming back?" Have you forgotten all about me? You never send me any letters or anything else. You kept me fat and now, I am gnawing on a meatless bone. As my friend Audrey (star of the movie "Little Shop of Horrors" was known to say, "Feed Me!!!"

In the past you fed me pictures, stories, cartoons, jokes, poetry, and they made me laugh, cry, and stand taller and prouder. Now I am eating any crumbs and the last bone. "Feed Me!!!"

I am only as good as you make me. I am the mirror of your thoughts and memories of the time you served in Vietnam. Give them to me and I will pass them on to all the Brothers & Sisters of the Tan Son Nhut Association. You have to "Feed Me!!!" I must live on and the only way I can do that is with your help. You have been so good to me.

If you have stories, poetry, cartoons, or just some fill-ins, send them to me. I will return them to you every month in your paper called the "Revetments." My, doesn't that sound just so good?

Meanwhile, Welcome Home! Thank You! You did good!

Love y'all

Revetments

PS: Did I forget to say, "Feed Me!!!"

(The above submitted by our TSNA Cheerleader, Janice Jones, after a conversation with your Editor regarding the lack of stories. Thanks Janny!!)

Janice submitted the above in April, and now I REALLY feel the need to publish it. The November issue will be all about the 2012 TSNA Reunion. After that it's gonna be small Revetments and scrambling time unless I get some more items to use. Thanks. Your Editor

The Military Spouse

The good Lord was creating a model for military wives and was into his sixth day of overtime when an angel appeared. She said, "Lord, you seem to be having a lot of trouble with this one. What's wrong with the standard model?"

The Lord replied, "Have you seen the specs on this order? She has to be completely independent, possess the qualities of both mother and father, be a perfect hostess for four to 40 with an hour notice, run on black coffee, handle every emergency imaginable without a manual, be able to carry on cheerfully, even if she is pregnant and has the flu, and she must have six pair of hands."

The angel shook her head. "Six pair of hands? No way!"

The Lord continued. "Don't worry, we will make other military wives to help her. And we will give her an unusually strong heart so it can swell with pride in her husband's achievements, sustain the pain of separation, beat soundly when it is overworked and tired, and be large enough to say, 'I understand' when she doesn't and 'I love you' regardless."

"Lord," said the angel, touching his arm gently, "Go to bed and get some rest. You can finish this tomorrow."

"I can't stop now," said the Lord. "I am so close to creating something unique. Already this model heals herself when she

is sick, can put up six unexpected guests for the weekend, wave good-bye to her husband from a pier, a runway or a depot, and understand why it's important that he leave."

The angel circled the model of the military wife, looked at it closely and sighed. "It looks fine, but it's too soft."

"She may look soft," replied the Lord, "but she has the strength of a lion. You wouldn't believe what she can endure."

Finally, the angel bent over and ran her finger across the cheek of the Lord's creation. "There's a leak," she announced. "Something is wrong with the construction. I'm not surprised that it has cracked. You are trying to put too much into this model."

The Lord appeared offended at the angel's lack of confidence. "What you see is not a leak," he said. "It's a tear."

"A tear? What is it there for?" asked the angel.

The Lord replied, "It's for joy, sadness, pain, disappointment, loneliness, pride and dedication to all the values that she and her husband hold dear."

"You are a genius!" exclaimed the angel.

The Lord looked puzzled and replied, "I didn't put it there."

Author Unknown

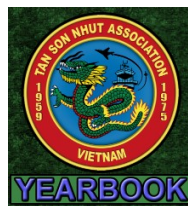
Thanks to TSNA Member Janice Jones for sending this in for publication.

Tan Son Nhut Association
P. O. Box 236
Penryn PA 17564

Revetments is an official publication of the Tan Son Nhut Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564-0236
The Association is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt veterans' Organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

President: George Plunkett
Vice President:
Secretary: Dale Bryan
Treasurer: Carol Bessette
Director of Communications/Webmaster: Charles Penley
Director of Marketing: Johnnie Jernigan
Director of Public Relations: Richard Carvell
Director of Veteran and Member Services: Hector Leyva
Director of Membership: Larry E. Fry
Co-Director of Membership Development: Bill Coup
Co-Director of Membership Development: Kerry Nivens
Revetments Editor: Larry E. Fry
Chaplains: Rev. Dr. James M. Warrington,
Rev. Dr. Billy T. Lowe; and Rev. Bob A. Chaffee
Co-Founders/Presidents Emeriti: Don Parker and John Peele
President Emeriti: Wayne Salisbury
President Emeritus: Robert Robinson Gales
Web Site: www.tsna.org

Annual Membership: \$20.00
Five Year Membership: \$80.00
Life Membership: \$180.00



**ON
THE
TSNA
WEBSITE**

By: Charles Penley
TSNA Webmaster



On the main page of the TSNA website are two new "buttons".

One button is labeled "Yearbook." You can click on it and go to it and see numerous photographs of Tan Son Nhut Association Members. Many of the photographs were taken when we were in Vietnam. We were young women and men.

If you have not submitted your Vietnam photograph to be displayed on this web page, then please do so soon. You do not need to be in uniform, civilian clothing would be just fine.

The second green button is labeled "Buildings." Click on that one and you can see all the buildings that TSNA has been able to identify by building numbers. If the building number has a blue color, click on the blue to see that building.

If you have a photograph of a building and it is not shown, then email Charles Penley the photograph and we will post it quickly.

NEW MEMBERS 

Mr. Dennis L. Westafer	OH	dwestafer@att.net.	Oct 67 - Oct 68	141 Signal Battalion
Mr. Leo J. Mutti	CA	leo_mutti@yahoo.com	Mar 66 - Mar 67	377th/6250th CES
Mr. Michael L. Green	MT	mike-lung@bresnan.net.	Feb 66-Jan 67;Jun 71-Mar 73	377th USAF Hospital

TSNA and its officers, directors, employees and agents do not make any guarantees of any kind about the content, accuracy, or timeliness of information in the TSNA newsletter, *Revetments*. The use of information from this newsletter is strictly voluntary and at the user's sole risk. TSNA shall not be liable for any damages of any kind related to the information in this newsletter. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and do not constitute the opinion or policy of TSNA.