



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

APRIL 2013



From our Saturday morning Special Guest:

I have revised the logo of the "Welcome Home/A Monument of Honor" project and book. Please see the attached logo.

Thank you,

Ross

WELCOME HOME



A Monument of Honor

A Tribute to the Veterans who served in Viet Nam

Please plan to attend this session at 9 AM on Saturday, June 15, 2013

See Pages 2 and 3 for more on the 2013 TSNA Reunion. Please register soon.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ARTICLES!

In the past 5 plus years, I have received many articles, and also have received many suggestions for articles to be written—BY YOU!

Here is a starter list for you!!

Where were you before and after TSN?

Do you still live in your hometown or area, and/or why do you live where you do?

Same career after the military—because of the military?

Most embarrassing moment?

Most unforgettable person?

Does anyone remember this place or event (send a description or photo)?

Saigon—off duty (keep it clean!).

Book review.

Movie review.

Places to visit.

Please think about these things and send me your response to any and all of them. Just sit down and type out an email to: lfr2@dejazzd.com.

You - and those who read Revetments, will be glad you contributed.

Larry Fry
Editor, Revetments



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Again I go to a volume that is a gift from Christmas. I quoted from it in the March "Revetments". The author is with God, his name is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Hitler had him put to death on April 9, 1945 only a short time before the fall of the Nazis.

One of his short writings he titled "Discipline of the Tongue" and took his thought from the New Testament book of Ephesians 4:29. It reads: "Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what we say will do good to those who hear you."

He pleads that we "Discipline our tongues so that we are able to stop incessantly observing others, judging them, condemning them their particular controlled portions, and their doing violence to others". Interpreting this is to say our vision widens and we are better able to see the world of God with a new free light.

If we have trouble understanding this I suggest one reads the rest of that 4th chapter of Ephesians, verses 30 thru 32. These words set up real life as stated "Be kind and tender hearted to one another and forgive one another as we are forgiven".

As I read his writings and feel his thoughts I wonder what more he could have taught us had Hitler let him live.

End of Sermon
Chaplain Bob





2013 REUNION BANQUET SPEAKER

Major General Lester D. Eisner is the Deputy Adjutant General, South Carolina National Guard, and also serves as the Assistant Adjutant General - Army, Joint Force Headquarters, South Carolina Army National Guard.



Tan Son Nhut Association Reunion in Chattanooga, TN June 13 – 16, 2013

Chattanooga Choo Choo

Schedule of Events

Wednesday	Noon	Hospitality suite and registration opens
Wednesday	?????	Hospitality suite closes
Thursday	9AM	Hospitality suite and registration opens
Thursday	?????	Hospitality suite closes
Friday	9AM	Hospitality suite and registration opens
Friday	?????	Hospitality suite closes
Friday	6PM	Banquet cash bar opens
Friday	7PM	Banquet Seating
(A SEPARATE SCHEDULE FOR THIS EVENT WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE BANQUET)		
Saturday	9AM	Ross Lewis, guest speaker "Monument of Honor"
Saturday	10:45AM	Vans begin loading for Tennessee River Boat Cruise
Saturday	1:30PM	Hospitality suite opens
Saturday	1:30PM	Vans return to the hotel
Saturday	5PM	Board Meeting
Saturday	8PM	General Business Meeting
Saturday	?????	Hospitality suite closes
Sunday	7:30AM-9AM	Farewell Breakfast Buffet

Tan Son Nhut Association 2013 Reunion Registration

OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF TAN SON NHUT AND THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

YES, SIGN ME UP FOR THE REUNION!

NAME _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME & PHONE NUMBER _____

NAME OF YOUR GUEST(S): _____

PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

CELL PHONE (WHILE AT REUNION) _____

REGISTRATION FEES

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING _____ X \$125. = _____

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Access to the TSNA Hospitality suite in Penn Station, (drinks, snacks, and war stories!) - \$20. *daily if purchased separately.*
- TSNA Friday Banquet buffet dinner. \$65 *if purchased separately.*
- Please circle which activities you are paying for *separately.*
- FREE Saturday 1 ½ hour Tennessee River Cruise with deluxe buffet lunch. Please cross out this activity if you do not plan to take the cruise because TSNA must pay in advance for all participants.
- Upon request to the Choo Choo, airport transportation via the Choo Choo shuttle will be provided at a cost of \$10.00 per room each way.
- Free parking.
- Honored guest speaker to be announced at a later date.

Your room rate has been group discounted to \$120.00 per night. This rate will be honored up to three days prior to and two days following the reunion. The reservations phone number at the Chattanooga Choo Choo is 1-800-872-2529. Hotel reservations must be made no later than **May 22, 2013 to receive this special rate.**

PAYMENT MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN MAY 30, 2013.

PLEASE MAKE PAYMENTS PAYABLE TO THE "TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION" AND MAIL PAYMENTS TO:

TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION
C/O GEORGE PLUNKETT
587 WILLIAMS CIRCLE
WEST COLUMBIA, SC 29172



Oh Really Pvt. Monahan

By: Gary Monahan
58th/110th Transportation Company
Jul 67—Jul 68



WORDS FROM WURSTER

After arriving in Vietnam in November of 1967, I was assigned to live at the St. George Hotel in Cholon. New barracks were being built on Tan Son Nhut and after about two months we moved on base. I was assigned to the US Army Mortuary Saigon as an Identification Specialist. Having some funeral home experience (raised next door to a funeral home), this assignment was relatively safe but mentally very challenging.

After a couple of months we were moved into the new housing on TSN. As you all know, saluting was really not expected much while on base, but I remember one day a group of us were walking down a street on TSN and a large staff car was headed our way. I guess we did not notice the flags on the car and after it passed, we heard tires screech and a bird colonel jumped out and loudly let us know that General Westmorland was in the car and that we should have saluted. By then we were all saluting quite vigorously.

Another incident happened during the TET offensive in February. When the rockets started coming into TSN, many of us working at the mortuary and other places on base had never been issued a weapon. So in the confusion, someone opened a weapons cache, and several hundred weapons were tossed out to those waiting. After the dust settled, I heard that only a small portion of those weapons were ever returned. Not exactly sure what happened to the person who was distributing the weapons, or how he ended up!

I'm actually leaving in March for a trip back to Saigon (HCMC) for a bucket list trip after 45 years. Will take some pictures and try to write something up for a future article.

Steve Wurster
US Army Mortuary Saigon
1967-68
(That's me on the left in the picture)

I enlisted into the Army on February 9th, 1966 and was promptly sent to Fort Hood, Texas to complete Basic Training. After successful completion I was assigned to the 1st Armored Division, "C" Company of the 16th Engineer Battalion also at Fort Hood where I worked in the supply room.

In early July of 1966 I was informed by my Platoon Leader that I had come down on levy for Vietnam and that I would be shipping out soon. Later that day I called my Mom to let her know what had happened. She immediately told me that I couldn't go to Vietnam because I was only 17 years old and for me, in her words, to "Go tell my Sergeant or whoever that I couldn't go".

The next day after formation I spoke with my Platoon Leader and he told me that I would have to speak with the First Sergeant. I was in the Supply Room when I received word that I was to report to the Sergeant Major's office. Our Sergeant Major was a large African American named Sergeant Major Otis. He was a Veteran of World War II, and Korea and a very scary looking guy especially to a 17 year old kid. Anyway, I went into his office and reported as is customary. The Sergeant Major looked at me and said, "What's this I hear about you can't go to Vietnam". To say the least I was extremely intimidated by his tone and his stature and the only thing that I was able to blurt out was, "Well Sir, my Mom said I can't". He sat back in his big chair and interlaced his fingers and looked at me making eye contact and said, "OH REALLY Private Monahan and just why would that be?" Realizing how stupid I just sounded I recovered by telling him that I was still 17 years old. A smile came across his face and he said "Well Private, your Mom is right".

One year and a day later I again came back down on levy and became part of the "Class of 67-68" to serve his Country in Southeast Asia.



ABOUT A FEBRUARY ARTICLE:

Hi Larry,

I was reading the memories of the "great ICE Capades" where the guys got the idea of getting ice from the dining hall so they could chill down soft drinks and/or beer.

This brought to mind the infamous, or maybe not, soft drink machine caper put on by the "Blue Eagle" Squadron (Airborne AFRTS) of the Navy, who had hooch's located next to the Air Police hooch's; when we were initially housed right near the front gate of TSN. Vietnamese women working in the hooch areas, would also sell Coca Cola from wooden cases in the area; however you could not get chilled or cold ones, because of no ice availability.

One of the Navy Chiefs asked about that and we explained it to him. He said the Navy will find a way.

About 2-3 weeks later, he came by our hooch and said "come on, we now have a soda machine installed. As we were using Military Payment Certificates commonly known as Scrip as MPC does not have metal coins, all monetary items from 5 cents up are paper. We wondered how the machine would operate because of that, and several guys thought maybe they would use "slugs" or something similar.

When we got to their, (the Navy Chiefs), hooch there stood a brand new stateside Coca Cola machine in all its shining beauty. Taped to the front of the machine was a cardboard box. We were told as no coins were available, we were to place 15 cents (MPC) in the box. Then we were to push the button on the front for what soda desired. When that was done, a Chief standing next to the machine opened the front door of it, reached in, and took out the item desired. STILL warm! (They couldn't get the machine to chill down, because the door was constantly being opened.) They told

us they had tried for almost three weeks to figure out a method, came up empty, and then the Chief standing by the machine stated, "Oh well, its the thought that counts, isn't it"?

Always great to have two Service Branches working together in friendship.

Skip Miller TSN "Class of 4-1-66 to 4-1-67."

EXPLORE ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY FROM HOME

On October 22, 2012 Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) announced the release of a new application for smart phones and your personal computer that will bring ANC to you, wherever you may be. This app permits the user to locate grave sites and niches for cremated remains, as well as points of interest throughout the cemetery; you can access photos of the front and back of the headstone or memorial, as well as receive directions to the location.

The app is free; you can access it on the cemetery website www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/ancexplorer or via iTunes or Google Play.

Future modifications are planned to make the app very useful for the cemetery visitor; it will include emergency and event notifications (especially useful during unusual weather conditions like hurricanes or blizzards), the location of restrooms and water fountains, info on shuttle bus service within the cemetery, and info for self-guided tours of the cemetery.

This app is the result of the Army's efforts to review its 150 years of records and to correlate and coordinate them via modern technology. I have written previously of the Army's efforts last summer to photograph each of the almost 300,000 headstones, both front and back, and niche covers, and of how impressed I was with the Army

staff working on this project.

I cannot access this on my phone; I have too early a model. But, I did access it via computer--and it was pretty emotional to see the headstones for two of my friends. I had attended their funerals at ANC, but that was very different from sitting at home and looking at them--it was quite emotional. I hope our TSNA members will find this useful.

Carol Bessette
TSNA Treasurer



NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

I lived across street from 8th Aerial Port. We provided arrival, approach, departure controls. also GCA Final Approach control. We had very high traffic count during this time as an international airport also. All types of military aircraft quite often coming in as emergency.

Emmett C. Harkins, Jr.
1876 Communications Squadron
Apr 70—Apr 71

I was assigned to HQ 7AF Requirements Div. Directorate of Operations. We staffed combat required operational capabilities for the Air Force. I lived in Willard compound. I have often wondered what happened to Willard. Sending some pictures for association's use. I have a "Radio Lone Star" tape which just repeats info during an attack in 1972.

James H. Dawe
HQ 7th Air Force
Jan 72—Nov 72

U. S. AIR FORCE

By: Nicholas F. Tkachuk

Nov 62-Dec 62

Det. 1 5th Communications Squadron

I graduated from Chesterton High School in Chesterton, Indiana, June, 1961. I ranked 55 out of our class of 155. A fellow classmate, Wilson Fitzgerald Halley, ranked 1st in the Class, and was our Valedictorian.

I joined the U. S. Air Force that June, and Wilson was accepted into Harvard University.

In 1965 I met Wilson for the first time since high school at the Bank in Porter, Indiana. We talked. He had just Graduated from Harvard. I just finished Active Duty with the U. S. Air Force. He told me that he was going to Vietnam as an Army Officer. I told him that I was an A/2C with the Air Force and that I served in Vietnam in 1962 with Det. 1, 5th Communications Squadron, 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo). We discussed Vietnam. We each expressed our concern. I wished him well, and as friends we said goodbye to each other.

In June 2005, a classmate from CHS, Marea (Cox) O'Neil, wrote of "A Note from The Virtual Wall."

"Tay Ninh Province lay on the northern side of the 'Parrot's Beak' area of Cambodia which protruded into South Vietnam, forming an unmolested sanctuary for VC and NVA troops and supply areas. The area around the provincial capital, Tay Ninh City, was disputed ground throughout the war and became even more so as the infiltration of North Vietnamese Army units increased during 1968.

On 27 November 1968 the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, was engaged in a bitter fight about 3 kilometers south-east of Tay Ninh City. At day's end, 26 Americans were dead - six from a supporting helicopter unit, two from a 22nd Infantry unit, and 18 from the 4/9 Infantry:

D Co 4th Bn, 9th Infantry, Lt. Wilson F. Halley, Chesterton, Indiana died that day from Hostile fire.

1LT Wilson Fitzgerald Halley

US Army

Died: November 27, 1968

South Vietnam

Cause of death: Hostile fire

God Bless America, Our Soldiers, and my friend and classmate, Wilson Halley, who gave his life to protect our freedom.

I remember it was mid November 1962 when Det. 1, 5th Comm Sq. Div. PACAF received orders to deploy to Vietnam. Our C-130 Hercules 315th Air Division aircraft departed from Naha, Okinawa. It was packed with all our necessary supplies and equipment. We arrived at Clark AB in the Philippines. One team set up operations in the Philippines. Team #5, our team, then proceeded on to Saigon, South Vietnam. When we arrived in Vietnam we unloaded our aircraft. We set up our communications center in a building next to the flight line at Tan Son Nhut Air Field. Our tent encampment was (tent city). In Vietnam our work was 24/7. Our mission was to provide communications support for all 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo) aircraft operating in South Vietnam.

One night I awoke from my bunk and heard gunfire. U. S. Military helicopters were taking fuel to various outposts in Vietnam. They had taken the fuel drums and dangled them by rope from the helicopters. The shooting was the Viet-Cong trying to down our aircraft and explode the drums. They missed!

One day at our tent a Vietnamese lady came in to gather our laundry. She talked with me and told me her husband had been killed by the Viet-Cong. She said she is always scared. I felt sorry for her. When she returned with the clean laundry, I learned my first Vietnamese words: "Numi Lum Dum". That meant 55 cents, that is what I owed her for doing my laundry.

I remember eating at the chow hall one day. You could hear incoming fire from the far end of the base. The Vietnamese girls who were working in the chow hall hid under the table. They were scared. We sat there and continued to eat. We were military, young and unafraid.

On one occasion we were allowed to go to downtown Saigon. The bus that took us there had wire mesh on all the windows. That was to keep the Viet-Cong hand grenades from entering the bus if we were attacked. I really didn't see how that would help. Downtown Saigon was strange. On each corner of the street they had Vietnam soldiers standing on guard, rifle in hand. That was to protect the people from the Viet-Cong. South Vietnam Prime Minister, Ngo Diem, was a strict leader, he knew the danger and did well to protect the people as well as himself. I can't remember when it happened (*Editor—it happened Feb. 27, 1962.*) but I do know an insurgent aircraft bombed his palace. He survived! You had to be wary of the Viet-Cong, in the jungle, in the bush, or in and around the city.

I remember A/2C Ray Sarinana and I were downtown in Saigon. We ate at an Italian restaurant called the "Chez Rene." I was surprised to find Italian food in Vietnam. We ate outside. Cainti bottles were displayed on the surrounding wall. I am sure glad the Viet-Cong did not decide to take target practice on the bottles. Ray and I proceeded to eat and drink. When we were done we split up. I wanted to drink some more and Ray had other plans. We planned to meet later for the bus trip back to Tan Son Nhut. It seemed like a good idea at the time. Unfortunately I got drunk and missed the bus back to base. I had no choice, I had to walk back. I remembered a landmark, a church. I saw it as we entered Saigon. If I could find it, that would help me find my way back.

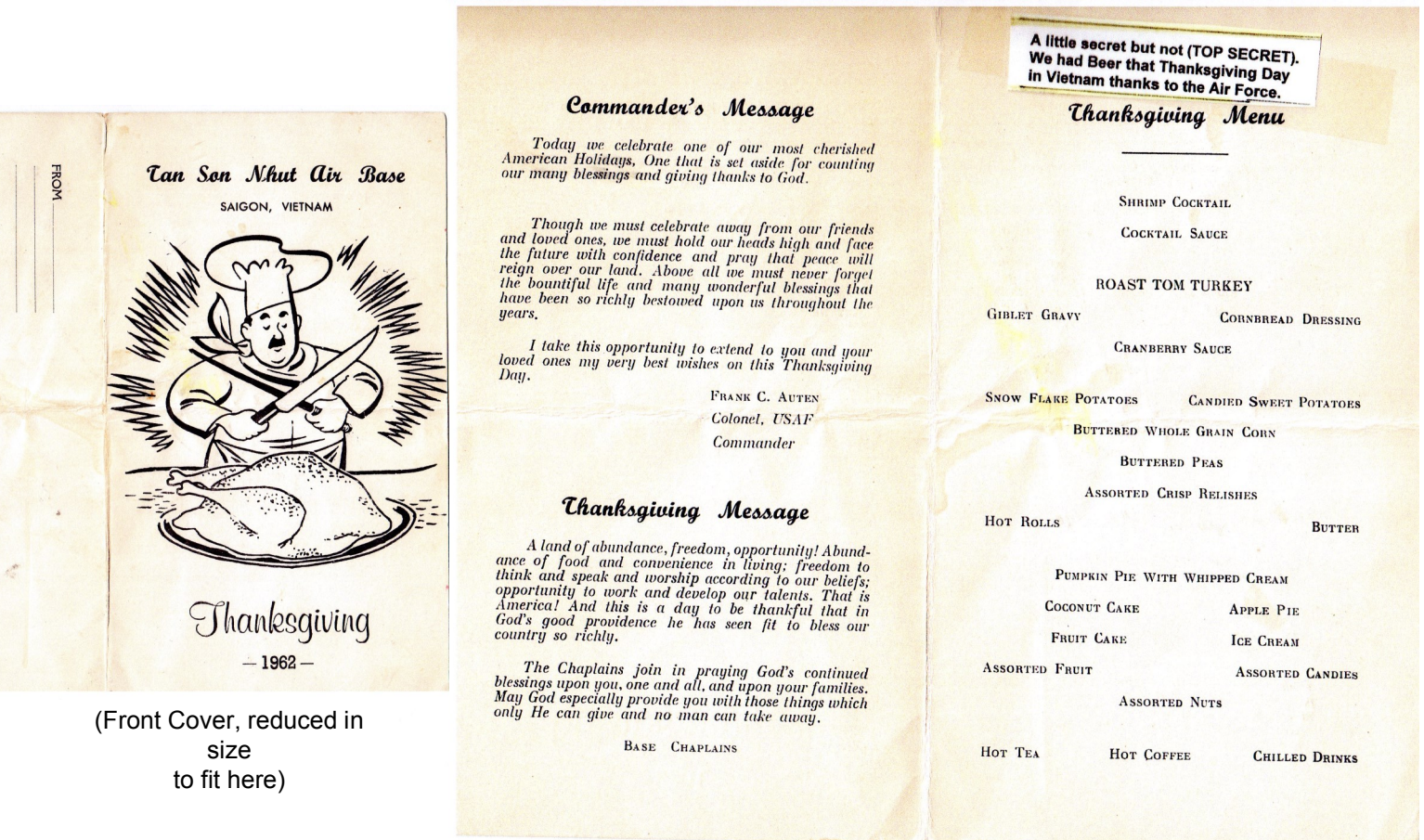
—————→
MORE!

I saw a Vietnam soldier on the corner. Me, being forever the jokester, and being drunk, I snuck up behind him, and said: "stick-em up!". He turned and looked at me and said: "You are lucky I did not shot you!!" He could see that I was an American military man, that I was a good guy, and that I was really drunk. I told him my problem. I missed the bus, etc. He gave me directions to the church and also directions to Tan Son Nhut Air Base. I then began my walk.

Once I passed the church the countryside started looking remote. I was on a dirt road. There were trees, fields, and jungle. The moon was full offering me light to see. But with the darkness and light it made shadows all around. I remember hearing a sound coming from behind me. It was some guy dressed in dark clothes. He went speeding by me on a motor bike. Just like he didn't even see me. He could have stopped and given me a ride. I am sure glad he was not Viet-Cong. I admit that as I walked through the night I was a little concerned about who I could meet. But I was drunk and tired and needed all the help I could get. It took me all night to walk to the outskirts of Tan Son Nhut. Finally the sun was coming up. It was morning and there was military road traffic. I hitched a ride and arrived at Det. 1 5th Comm. Squadron. The first person I saw was A/2C Raymond Sarinana, our radio operator. We talked briefly. I sacked out on the bunk in my crypto work area. I slept soundly for many hours. When I woke up Ray told me that our CO from Tachikawa was in to conduct an inspection that day. He said he told the Commander that the crypto guy sleeping in the bunk had worked a 24 hour shift. I don't know if there really was an inspection. Ray often played tricks on Nick-san. But if we really did have an inspection, Ray saved me from having a major consequence.

I remember that Ray and I were on duty one day and we were listening to the radio. They were talking about the Cuban Missile Crisis. I told Ray that we were lucky to be serving in Vietnam and not some hot spot like Cuba. Ray did not say a word, he just looked at me!

Many things happened in Vietnam. 49 years have passed since my Vietnam experience. I do know that while we were there we did work hard and long hours. We did what was necessary to provide ground-to-air communications for the aircraft of the 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo) during their mission in Vietnam. 1962 - it was the early years of the Vietnam Conflict.



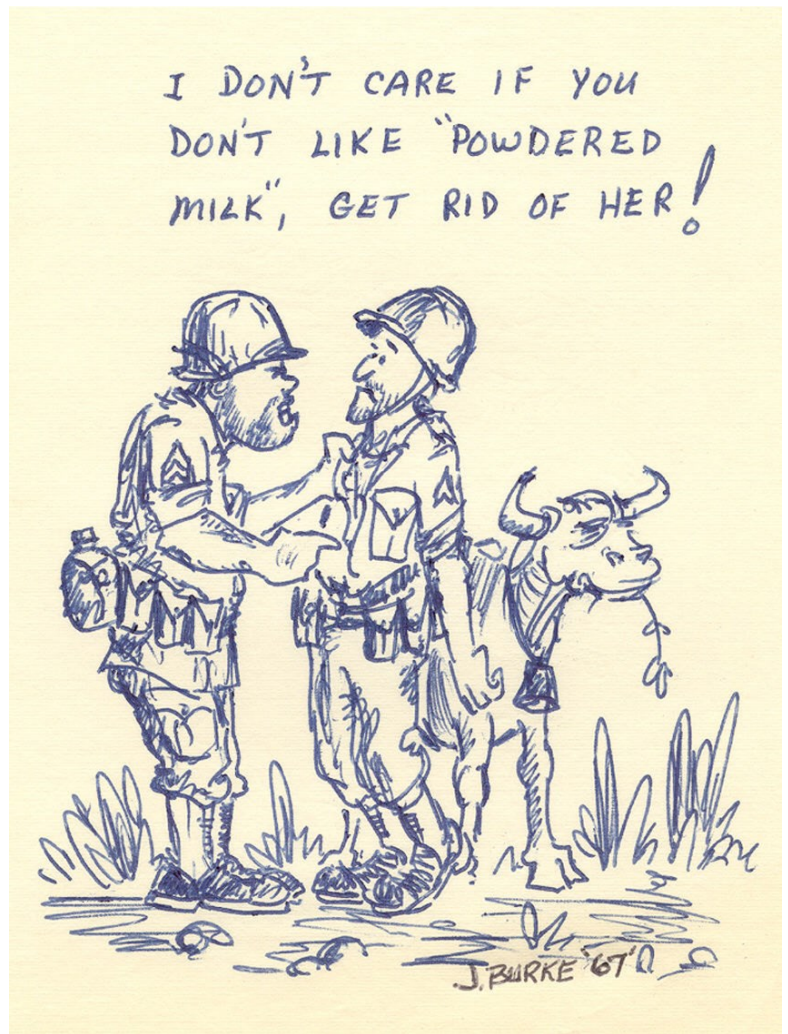
(Front Cover, reduced in size to fit here)

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: Richard Carvell
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 Services: Joe Kricho
Director of Membership: Larry E. Fry
Director at Large: Hector Leyva
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



And our thanks again to John Burke, TSNA Life Member, for another great cartoon.

(I remember eating powdered mashed potatoes, made with powdered milk, and of course, powdered gravy made with powdered milk. Given their limited resources in early 1962, our cooks did a good job. The Editor)

NEW MEMBERS



Joseph Ferrindino NY jferrindino@rochester.rr.com Jul 66-Nov 66(Big Eye); Mar 67-Feb 68 460th TRW Material Control

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.