



# REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



JULY 2013

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

July: The Month of Nation. What does one say but that God has given us so much. We repay by putting "In God We Trust" on our coins and say "under God" in our National Pledge. We honor our service and our dead with our prayer that calls to God.

This short "Corner" is just a reminder of where we stand, what we have been given under the Stars and Stripes flag, it is truly a gift of God.

End of Sermon  
Chaplain Bob

a PS to June Chaplain's Corner

The June "Corner" theme was "TSNA: We are family". A reminder of what this means was brought to light at the Chattanooga assembly. Long time member Dean Gard attended again after the amputation of another finger (joining earlier removal of fingers and a leg). When he and Debbie arrived he was quiet and subdued. Then Debbie, as did others, observed his brightening up, his comments about feeling recovering and his joy of being with us (family) when he needed the boost. Dean and Debbie say (through the Chaplain) "Thank You, TSNA."

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

All,

There is a problem with the binding of some of the books that Ross Lewis sold to us at the 2013 Reunion.

Please check your books.

If your books have problems with the binding, please send me your name, address and the number of books that have problems.

I will compile a list for Ross and he will send you replacement books provided by the printer.

Thanks,

George Plunkett  
President  
TSNA

## A NEW BOOK RECOMMENDATION

BY: Bob Flanagan  
3rd RRU/Air Section/224th Aviation Bn  
Mar 64—Mar 65

A new book has just been published in which much of the action and events take place on TSN. The book is *Unlikely Warriors: The Army Security Agency's Secret War in Vietnam 1961-1973*, by Lonnie M. Long and Gary B. Blackburn, available on Amazon.com and others. The publisher is "iUniverse" of Bloomington, IN, 2013. I believe the Tan Son Nhut Association will want to know about this.

ISBNs are as follow: 978-1-4759-9057-7 for softcover; 978-1-4759-9058-4 for hardcover; and 978-1-4759-9059-1 for e-books

You may or may not know that ASA was the first "unit" into Vietnam in 1961; there were obviously Spec. Forces, advisors and pilots in various support roles and a few logisticians ... but ASA was the first unit, located at Davis Station on TSN, under the cover of 3rd Radio Research Unit. It later grew into the 509th RR Group in 1966-67, spread all over country.

This is a comprehensive work (non-fiction) of the beginning-to-end tale of ASA's involvement in Vietnam, essentially ending in 1973 when American forces were withdrawn. Good read, too.

I just returned from the annual reunion of the Southeast Asia Army Security Agency Veterans Assn. (OSS: Old Spooks and Spies) in Colorado Springs. Lonnie and Gary were selling books like hotcakes.

Worthy of mention in "Revetments" and in any other public announcement to get the word out. Query me for any further (known) information.

Thanks,

Bob Flanagan

## 50/50 DRAWING

Once again the Tan Son Nhut Association 2013 Reunion was a complete success.

The 50/50 Split was also a success. We raised a total of \$870.00

A person who did not purchase any tickets, drew the winning ticket.

The winner of the 50/50 split was TSNA Life Member, Angela Duncan. She will receive \$435.00 for her winning ticket.

Thank you to everyone who participated.

Charles Penley



Charles Penley with the 50/50 Jar.

## FROM ROSS LEWIS

I thank you all for creating a spectacular weekend during the Tan Son Nhut Convention in Chattanooga. I am very grateful to all of you.

Attached are the transcripts from veterans and their wives. The "Welcome Home/A Monument of Honor" project will make a significant national impact. I need your help for this to grow. Please imagine thousands of veterans and families experiencing the same new views and good feelings which you did. This is very possible. To do this, I need your help with strong endorsements and personal introductions to the "movers and shakers" out there who will adopt this same presentation and commemorative books as powerful gifts to their conventions, groups and veterans. With time, this will create a positive, healing, national and lasting experience.

I deeply appreciate your most generous support of these efforts.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,  
Ross

## "Welcome Home/A Monument of Honor"

### **A National Book Project To Honor the Humanity and Dignity of Vietnam Veterans**

#### **Transcripts of Testimonies following "Welcome Home/A Monument of Honor" Speaking Event and Commemorative Book to the Tan Son Nhut Association Convention, Chattanooga, Tennessee, June 15, 2013.**

#### **John Bayley. Communications Officer aboard the USS Maddox, Gulf of Tonkin (1964):**

*"Left me with a great feeling as to the role of Vietnam veterans outside of the Navy. Their compassion for the people of Vietnam was heart-warming and took me beyond the war stories. Your introduction was excellent! This program will change the way people see Vietnam veterans!"*

#### **Bill Fraker ( U.S. Army Colonel, Ret.- Gunship Helicopter Pilot/Company Commander. 197<sup>th</sup>, 334<sup>th</sup> and 189<sup>th</sup> Aviation Companies (1965/66 and 1968)**

*"Soul-Searching!"*

*"Cleansing!"*

*"Funny!"*

*"Emotional!"*

#### **Randy Smith (United States Marine Corps-U.S. Embassy in Saigon during the April, 1975 evacuation) :**

*"It put a face on Vietnam veterans that breaks the 'unfair and wrong' stereo type. The possibility of healing is of utmost importance."*

#### **Jan Faulkner (Air Force wife):**

*"I want to thank you for what you are doing. These folks need this."*

*I worked 'Operation Baby Lift' at the end in the Philippines, 1975. Being a wife of a husband in Vietnam, it does my heart good to see this side. Bless You!"*

#### **Jerry Childers (U.S. Army Colonel, Ret.-Gunship Helicopter Pilot/3 Tours RVN/197<sup>th</sup> Aviation Co. ('64/'65), AH-1G Intro team ('67/'68), 18<sup>th</sup> Avn. Co.('72/'73):**

*"Brought back memories of the human side of my Vietnam service."*

*"Gave reason to take another look at my Vietnam photos of people and places vs. combat activities."*

*"Generated desire to recommend this effort to other veteran organizations to which I belong."*

#### **Cary King (U.S. Army Infantry S-2 and Artillery Battery Commander, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bde., 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division and "C" Battery 1<sup>st</sup> Bn., 7<sup>th</sup> Artillery):**

*"It put the book in the proper perspective. That is, rather than about the tragedy. This book is about the humanity and the heart of the American fighting man. The spirit and the honor with which we all served is the untold story. This book tells it!"*

#### **George A. Bontya (USAF, 31<sup>st</sup> CES & 377<sup>th</sup> CES, Republic of Vietnam, Feb. 1970-Feb. 1971):**

*"After seeing your photos presented today, I get it!" Through the camera lens you captured the 'soul' of the person or group of people that were photographed. During my tour I was drawn to take photos of the local people and places, to capture the beauty of the country that a war just happened to break out. So now when I go home, and look at my photos, I'll see the "Soul" of the photos I've taken."*

*"I believe in your project 100%. This is what the country needs to know about."*

#### **James Faulkner (Captain, USAF, Graves registration duty, Nov. 1967-Nov., 1968)**

*"Love, softness, beauty of Republic of Vietnam I never experienced."*

*"Seeing the Republic of Vietnam through different eyes perspective."*

*"Well Done! Good Therapy!"*

#### **Jim Wade (Director of the Medal of Honor Museum and U.S. Army RVN-1964-1966 (3<sup>rd</sup> Missile Bn./65<sup>th</sup> Artillery & 90<sup>th</sup> Army Group-Air Defense).**

*"A new view of Vietnam. More about the people and being human beings."*

*"The importance of remembering we are all God's children."*

**Bernard Bucholz (USAF-1876 Communications Squadron-Feb., 1967/Feb., 1968):**

*"Even in bad times and in bad conditions people always seem to be able to sometimes tune out the worst and look at what is good and beautiful around them. They can find a release and relax and cope. There is a human desire to help others."*

**Joe Thompson (USAF, 377 CAMS-Fuel Shop, 1971/1972):**

*"The Vietnamese people made an impact on all of us. Their resilience and ingenuity to adapt and overcome the horrible situations while keeping family integrity. Your photos and the "Standup Talk" all confirmed this factor."*

*"Your talk also honored my service in Vietnam."*

**Sandy Bayley, wife of Navy Communications Officer John Bayley, aboard the USS Maddox, Gulf of Tonkin (1964):**

*"Thank you, Ross for an excellent presentation. It is a pleasure to experience the goodness and humanity of our Vietnam veterans. All Americas should be proud of the wonderful men and women who served. They exemplify the best of all of us."*

**2013 REUNION WE WERE ON LOCAL CBS TV!**



**ANOTHER TSNA MEMBERS' BOOK NOW AVAILABLE**

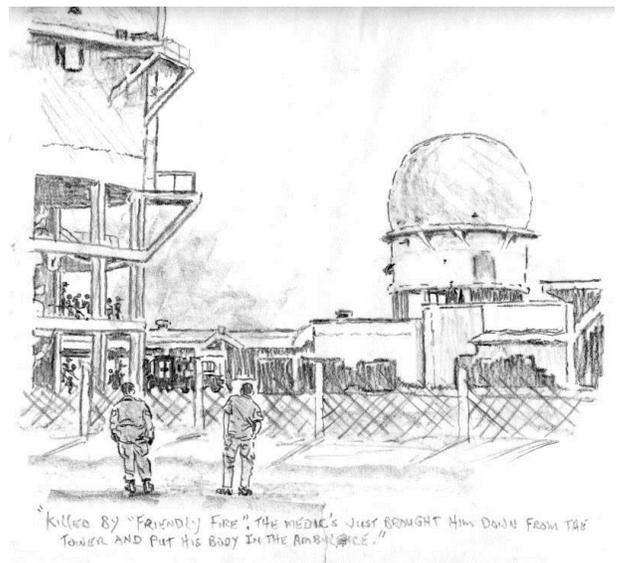


**Eleven Months and Nineteen Days**

The new book by TSNA member John Bowen will be available in July for \$24.95, plus \$3. shipping. You can order now and save \$5.

The book is about John's experiences as an Air Force illustrator serving with the 834th, in South Vietnam, in 1968. The book contains 43 black and white drawings, plus a color rendering for the front and back covers.

Please email John at: [jbowenartist@aol.com](mailto:jbowenartist@aol.com), if interested in obtaining a copy.



## MORE THANK YOU'S

In addition to all that were posted in the Special Reunion Revetments, we all need to give thanks to the folks who had a part in:

**T**he 50/50 Contest: Thanks to Charles Penley, and Harlan Hatfield, and any others who helped out in selling tickets.

**D**oor Prizes: There were a bunch of them this year, and a big thank you to all who donated items for this cause.

**S**ilent Auction: Thanks to Janice Jones, and any and all who helped her with this great fun time and great bidding on some wonderful items.

### AND!!

[Within an hour or so after writing the above, I received an email from our cheerleader, Janice Jones, which says things even better!](#)

There are lots of thank you's to go around. Thank you so much to each and every Brother and Sister who came to our Chattanooga reunion. It is always a guaranteed success when the family shows up.

Thank you to the Front Liners who manned their posts at the registration table and distributed the gifts and info to the attendees. Charles, Harlan, Kerry, Bob and Larry - great job.

Thank you to Rena, Sharon and Trish who "drove the chow and beverage wagon". Thank you for all the home-made goodies that were offered. Great cookies, brownies and cake. Yum! Great job.

Thank you to the Dollies who maintained the awesome auction table. Bobbi (Mom), Carolyn, Janice (No. 2), Georgette, Rena, Trish and Sharon are our Dollies. Thank you to everyone who donated money to our bank via the purchase of all of the donated items

brought by so many. Thank you Gary and George and everyone else. Johnnie and Charles were our great auctioneers - as usual.

Thank you, Johnnie, for your successful BX. Every year you bring and set up and supply us with many wonderful items to purchase. Great job!

Thank you, Ezra Wilson, for your magnificent handcrafted woodwork that you gave to our BX and auction table. They are always cherished!

Thank you, Gary Redlinski, for your flag holders and Vietnam bracelets among many gifts you make and give to us.

Thank you to two of our resident Angels who every year volunteer quietly to do all things possible to make sure y'all have a great reunion. They, like all of the hospitality room workers, show up and do the work. TSNA Wings go to Jimmy Smith and Andy Csordas. The TSNA hospitality room crew has earned their Wings every year. Great job!

Thanks to our Officers, Directors, Appointees and you the Brothers and Sisters. Your TSNA is a thriving, healthy and growing Association. We are stronger and larger every year because of you. Great work!

Thanks to you, the TSNA shall continue to live on! You are the TSNA and you Rock!

Love,  
Janice Jones

P.S. Sharon & Sue will be taking their act on the road soon. Fantastic, Ladies!

P.P.S. Welcome Back! Thank You!! You did Good!!!

Also, did you know we had a First this year? At the Chattanooga reunion, we had a grandfather, son and grandson to attend. Colonel Ken Winchester, Neil Winchester and Colin Winchester set this precedent. Hooray!

## Job Change

By Jimmy Avera  
1876 Communications Squadron  
Jun 71-Jan 72

I was assigned to the 1876th Communications Squadron. A couple of months after landing at Tan Son Nhut, our telephone office function was scheduled for a takeover by the Federal Electric Corporation, civilian contractors.

We kept a couple of people in the base telephone exchange for Vietnamization training and the rest of us were dispersed in different directions. They first intended for me to pitch mail at the local APO, but I wouldn't have anything to do with that, not while my cousin was in country on his second tour, US Army, and there were countless thousands also out in the jungle.

I ditty- bopped down to the Security Police station and volunteered as an augmentee. I would fly with the medics out into local villages and help them prep for vaccinations, first aid or any way I could. I also was well armed and as I had fired expert several times over, I was sometimes used as a perimeter lookout while the medics did their jobs. I felt more fulfilled doing this rather than working in a mailroom as, after all, we were at war.

PS, We are having a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Parade in Pigeon Forge on the 16th of April. I have about 15 local Vietnam Veterans who will be riding their motorcycles with pride!!!

## TSNA BY-LAWS

A Committee of TSNA members has gone through and updated our By-Laws. You can check them out at the Tan Son Nhut website.

Our Thanks to Dale Bryan and the By-Law Committee members for a job well done!

## FROM GARY FIELDS:

After Basic Training July/August 1966, I was sent to Refrigeration Specialist Tech School at Sheppard AFB, TX for 18 weeks.

After graduation I was assigned to Carswell AFB (Ft Worth) TX until Feb 1969. I then served at Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN February 1969 to February 1970. Received Discharge at Travis AFB on return from RVN as Sgt (E-4).

Used my GI Bill to receive an Associate Degree in Refrigeration/Air Conditioning Technology from Ranken Technical Institute in St Louis in 1972. Remained in Refrigeration industry until 2009, when I retired from Missouri University as a Chilled Water Technician.

In the meantime, I used the remainder of my GI Bill for a Bachelor's Degree (Business Administration) from the Inaugural Extended Studies program at Columbia College (Now Worldwide Campus).

From 1981 until 2006 I served in the AF Reserve at Richards-Gebaur and Whiteman AFB in positions of Air Cargo Specialist, Training Manager, First Sergeant, Mechanical Superintendent, Civil Engineer Manager/Chief of Operations, retiring as CMSgt.

Deployments included Osan AB, Korea, Clark AB Philippines, Aviano AB Italy, Mildenhall AB, England, Rhine Mein AB Germany (2), Soto Cano AB, Honduras, and San Salvador, El Salvador.

I attended First Sergeant Academy at Keesler AFB (Distinguished Graduate), and AF Instructor School at Keesler.

Married Sandy from next door in 1971, she passed in 2000; two great sons, both Eagle Scouts, and two equally fantastic Grandchildren.

Gary



## Hello Mom...Over

By: George Bontya  
Tuy Hoa 1970

This is the opening that I heard on almost every call I put through from the Tuy Hoa MARS station to the many GI families & friends back in the States in 1970.

First of all, what is MARS? It is The Military Affiliate Radio System. That said, MARS provided a patch system that goes from one point to another point via telephone from an overseas MARS station to the U.S.

I usually worked the night shift with one or two other guys and we would listen for signals to come up from the States that we could patch in. I would use our station call sign: AI8AH or Alpha, India, 8, Alpha, Hotel, patch in a stateside station, hopefully Barry Goldwater, who paid for any calls that went through his Ham radio station in Arizona. The guys would be lined up waiting to place their calls back home. There were those rules though, no military information, especially where your unit was located, no casualty information, no political discussions, no profanity. Then there was that one little problem...saying over when you were finished your sentence. That was the signal for us in "Nam" and the operator in the States to flip our switch so you could answer. I wish I had a nickel for every time I had to tell someone to say "Over". You usually had 3-4 minutes on each call, 5 if the waiting lines were short. Were you one of those guys that would yell your message because your loved one was 10,000 miles away?

I would like to say that this experience was one of my best memories during my tour at Tuy Hoa. Just to hear some of your calls about a baby being born, some holiday gatherings and yes sometimes tragic news are forever in my thoughts. If you were one of the guys that I talked to on my shift, I thank you for the memories.

This is AI8AH signing off.



## LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

By Fred Stein  
460th TRW/12th TRS  
Nov 68-Nov 69

(From Emails to Larry Fry)

March 27, 2012

A brief update; my wife and I will be grandparents for the 2nd time in a few weeks. Both of our sons are law enforcement officers; the oldest son is in Grand Forks, North Dakota; the younger son is near us in "Spam Town" / Austin MN, home of the Hormel Co. Son Andrew was a Security Policeman in the USAF for six years, as a K9 handler. He has a working dog also, with the GF PD, a Belgian Malinois named RENO. My second son, Kristoffer, followed his older bro's footsteps; and became a cop also. Wayne Salisbury and Johnny Jernigan, and perhaps others, would remember Kris from the 2004 TSNA Reunion in Bourbonnais Illinois. (Reno was born in Germany, and was purchased by the city of Winnipeg Canada Police Service. Andrew and Reno trained for four months with the Canadian K9 Unit. Reno is trained to locate drugs, is a tracker, and he is trained in apprehension / "bite-dog".) I have done ride-a long's with both sons several times; quite a "hoot" to observe them deal with the "bad guy's" and with the general public.

Marietta works part time with home health and hospice programs for Mayo; I am retired, so I volunteer for the hospice programs and for various veterans' programs. We are caregivers for my wife's parents, who are 88 and 93 years old. It is a huge challenge for us to do any traveling. We wish you the best of success with your next TSNA reunion in Ohio in the fall. I think about everyone often; and I love reading the newsletter each month; Take Care, Fred Stein

April 10, 2012

Hi ya Larry, you are so very wel-

come; I am pleased that my thoughts triggered such a positive outcome potential.

A few quick remarks re: my dog handler son. As a USAF Security Policeman, he also had a Belgian Malinois; a female named Fendy; she was trained to apprehend and to search for explosives. SSgt Andrew Stein participated in two dozen missions with the Secret Service to protect the Presidential Candidates during the 2004 Election Campaign. This MWD, (Military Working Dog), and Andrew were with Senator John Kerry and his entourage for a full week touring the Midwest.; he also protected President Bush and VP Chaney, and their wives.

Great memories for him. I had lunch with my other cop son and his wife today. He was exposed to a "bad guy" who is HIV + a few nights ago, while on duty; he and other officers had to use their Tasers to subdue him; they had to have blood tests and wash their uniforms when they were finished with their ordeal. I hope the general public appreciates what all of our public service personnel do, to protect and serve them!! I can guarantee you that my wife and I do; we are very proud of our sons. (Now I will step down from my soap box)

(PS: Fendy was reassigned to other handlers when Andrew was discharged in '05. She pulled three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, barely surviving the 2nd tour due to health problems and the stress. Last I heard she was reassigned to a base in the state of Washington. She would be over nine years old; probably close to retirement)

### FIRST U.S. AIR FORCE AIRMAN WOUNDED BY ENEMY FIRE

Saigon, Vietnam

July 11, 1962 - An American, A1C  
Howard W. Wright, assigned to

Headquarters 2ND ADVON Tactical Transport Squadron, last night became the first U.S. Air Force Airman, wounded by enemy fire in South Vietnam.

A1C Wright, was not seriously wounded and is expected to be returned to full duty within a week.

The wounded airman was part of a U.S. Air Force C-123 aircrew engaged in giving night time flying training to South Vietnam Air Force personnel.

The aircraft was fired upon by Viet Cong ground troops and a bullet entered the fleshy part of the right leg, making only a slight penetration.

U.S. Air Force medical officers said the wound, will not have any lasting effect on the airman.

Airman Wright, normally stationed at Pope Air Force Base, S.C. is a crew member of the C-123 aircraft.

It is one of many aircraft, which the USAF uses, to furnish airlift support and advisory assistance to the Vietnamese Air Force.

Submitted by Charles Penley, TSNA  
Webmaster.

### ANOTHER NOTE ABOUT THE REUNION

I had the honor of attending the TSNA reunion banquet dinner with my Uncle & Aunt, Lynn & Linda Patton. Everything was great! To attend and see the camaraderie between all of those who served in Vietnam was really cool.

Seeing the awards handed out was neat! I am so glad that you all continue to reunite and spend time together! From the moment that I entered with My Aunt & Uncle until the moment I left I felt welcomed and it was great to be a part of!!

Thank you!

Lindsey Tharp



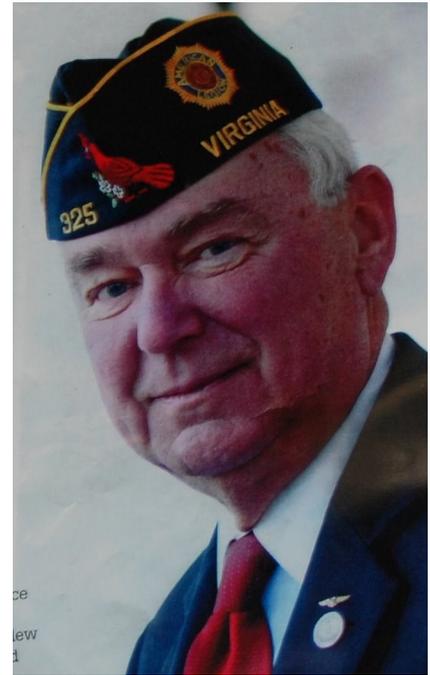


**TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION  
2014 REUNION  
JUNE 12-15**

**HOLIDAY INN EVANSVILLE AIRPORT  
7101 HIGHWAY 41 NORTH  
EVANSVILLE, IN 47725**

**GUEST SPEAKER:**

***Paul E. Galanti, Commander, U. S. Navy  
(Retired)***



Commander Galanti was raised in an Army family in many states, Japan, France, Germany and Turkey. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1962 and entered Navy Jet Flight Training. He departed for Vietnam with Light Jet Attack Squadron 216 aboard the U.S.S. Hancock in November 1965. Shot down and captured while flying his 97th combat mission in June 1966, he remained a prisoner of war in North Vietnam's infamous Hanoi Hilton for nearly seven years.

Released from Hanoi in February 1973, he served in Navy recruiting in Richmond, Virginia, earned the Master of Commerce degree from the University of Richmond in the evening program and served in the office of the Commandant as a Battalion Officer at the United States Naval Academy.

His personal military decorations include the Silver Star, two Legions of Merit with Combat "V", the Bronze Star with Combat "V", 9 Air Medals and 2 Purple Hearts.

After retiring from the Navy, he was the CEO of the Virginia Pharmaceutical Association, the Medical Society of Virginia and the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation.

He's a member of twelve veterans' organizations. The Virginia War Memorial Foundation named its new \$8 million education center after him and his wife. In 2010, Governor Bob McDonnell appointed him Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, the agency that provides services to Virginia's 830,000 veterans and to the Board of Visitors of the Virginia Military Institute.

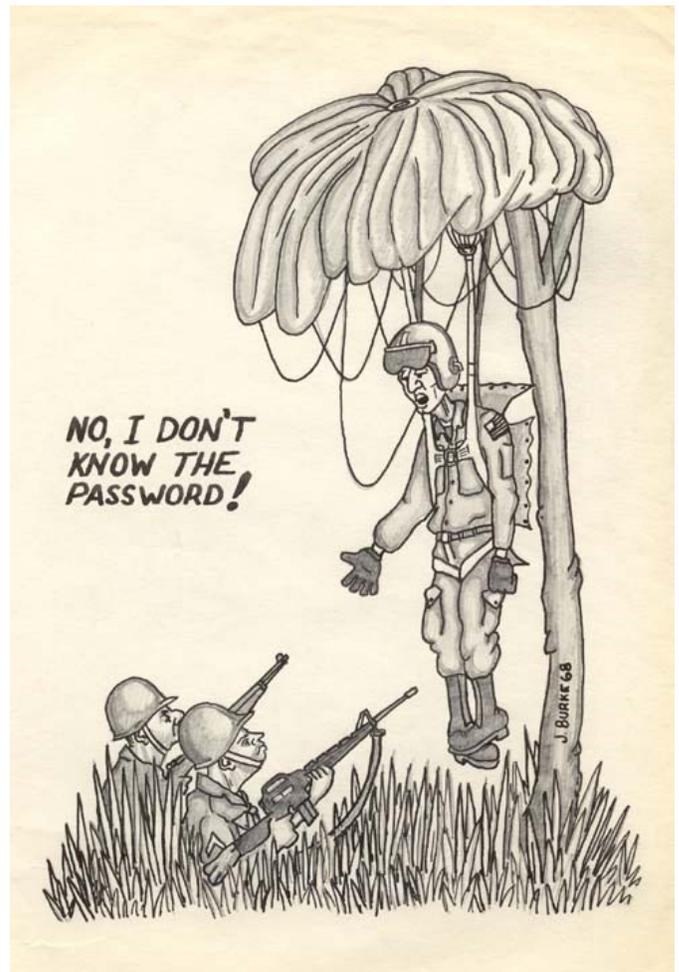
He and his wife have two grown sons and live in Richmond.

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**Penryn PA 17564**

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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.

**M**y first 5 weeks in Vietnam I was stationed at Bien Hoa. Transferred to TSN late November, 1970 assigned to 12th RITS. I am a survivor of the CBC Bar Bombing on April 8, 1971—2 killed; over 20 wounded. Derosed Vietnam October 18, 1971, assigned to the Base Fire Department at George AFB, Victorville, CA; Honorably discharged September 18, 1972.

Scott Roberts  
12th RITS  
Oct 70 - Oct 71



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