

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

MARCH 2013

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/American Heroes".

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.

Above is the Schedule Next Page is the Registration Page Three is the speaker's Bio Info

SIGN UP NOW!! WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU.

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	DELAN THE SECOND
	HUT Aso
PHONE	EMAIL_
EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME & PHONE NUMBE	iR L
NAME OF YOUR GUEST(S):	
PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS:	
CELL PHONE (WHILE AT REUNION)	5
REGISTRATION FEES	
NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDINGX \$	125. =

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Access to the TSNA Hospitality suite in Penn Station, (drinks, snacks, and war stories!) \$20. daily if pur chased 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



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.

Eisner was commissioned in 1976 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Mercer University

EDUCATION:

- •1976 Mercer University, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, Macon, Georgia
- 2000 United States Army War College, Masters Degree, Strategic Studies, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

AWARDS AND MEDALS:

- Legion of Merit (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster)
- Meritorious Service Medal (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster)
- Army Commendation Medal (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster)
- Army Achievement Medal
- •Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster)
- National Defense Service Medal
- Humanitarian Service Medal
- Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with 1 Silver Hourglass Device)
- Army Service Ribbon
- Master Army Aviator Badge
- Parachutist Badge
- Air Assault Badge
- South Carolina Recruiting and Retention Achievement Medal
- South Carolina Active State Service Medal
- South Carolina Governor's Unit Citation

ASSIGNMENTS SINCE 1999

Sept. 1999 - Feb. 2004, Commander, 51st Aviation Group, Eastover, South Carolina

March 2004 – Nov. 2004, Director, Aviation and Safety, Headquarters (-Detachment 1) State Area Command, Columbia, South Carolina.

Nov. 2004 – Feb. 2006, Deputy Chief of Staff Aviation, South Carolina Army National Guard Element Joint Force Headquarters (-Detachment 1), Columbia, South Carolina

Feb. 2006 – Present, Assistant Adjutant General, South Carolina Army National Guard Element Joint Force Headquarters (-Detachment 1), Columbia, South Carolina



From Emails to Stories:

Email #1

Bill

Charles P. gave me your email address. I am researching the 120th AVN CO. for an article..... and have read (on line) of their section of the TSN air field as HOTEL-3.....

Was it just a large helipad....and were they given or allotted that space in 1964-1965 and 1966?

Any assistance would be of tremendous help Thanking you in advance

Don Kochi

Email #2

Don, I am sure that the 120th was located at HOTEL-3 in 1964. I saw the aerial photo that Charles Penley sent you, and if you will notice the main gate, and the road leading from it goes straight to the heliport. HOTEL-3 was essentially a paved square, across the road from the new BX. There were metal revetments for each helicopter to be parked when not on a mission. The whole company, slicks and gunships included, were physically at HOTEL-3 until late 1967, when all of the slick platoons, Snoopys, Packrats, etc. were moved to Long Binh, a few miles north of Saigon. The Razorbacks stayed at Tan Son Nhut at HO-TEL-3, for they were the air support for the whole of Capitol Military District. I remember the heliport itself being several acres in size. There was a rocket and small arms storage bunker on the west side, dug into the side of a high dirt berm, and consisting of metal conex containers. If my memory serves me well, we could store about a thousand rockets, along with maybe 100,000 rounds of 7.62 machinegun ammo, and 5.56 M-16 ammo in this bunker. There was an armorers "shack" for maintenence on rocket systems, and machineguns. There was also a radio "shack" to receive assigned missions from Capitol Military District, or "CMD". Just to the north maybe 75 yards was a huge building housing the civilian "LSI" maintenence company. I understood that they assembled Huey helicopters coming in from the United States. When I was assigned to the Razorbacks in Nov. 1967, there were six gunships, or three light fire teams parked at HOTEL-3. One was the standby, or second team, the other, the third team. The first team was on 24 hour alert status, parked between the active, and taxiway runways on the main flightline, about a mile slightly NE from HOTEL-3. There was a wood frame building in which were bunks, and a lounge area for the flight crews, since they were there for 24 hours. This crew was called the "STARCOM" unit, and for any ground unit that needed air support in the CMD area, we were it. The unit in trouble called CMD, requested gunship support, CMD radioed the STARCOM team, gave ground coordinates, and we were usually there within 10 minutes. Once the STARCOM team went off duty, the second team became the STARCOM team. During the TET Offensive, for at least two weeks, all three teams flew constantly 24 hours a day, one mission right after the other. I remember we slept on the floor of the helicopters and got short catnaps between missions. By noon of the first day of TET, all eight gunships were shot up too badly to fly. The US Navy had eight helicopters that LSI were assembling for them, but were diverted to us. LSI installed our rocket systems on these ships so we could continue to provide air support for Saigon. In May of 1968, the NVA came back in what we called MINI-TET. In many ways it was as bad as the first one.

I don't really know what all you need, but I will be glad to try and answer any questions that you have. I also have a lot of pictures of ships, crews, etc. I will help in any way I can. I served with a lot of brave men that all have a unique story to tell. There has been an hour long documentary on us called "The shadows of men" . You can see the trailer and some of our photos, I think on Yahoo.

Bill Stribling



(EDITORS NOTE: Thanks Bill and Don for permission to use these emails as a story. And thanks to Webmaster Charles Penley for sending them on to me for publication.

And as one famous broadcaster used to say—"and now you know the rest of the story".

As a TDY Chaplain's Assistant At TSN in early 1962 it's hard for me to fathom all the different jobs and situations that eventually occurred on TSN)

2013 REUNION AUCTION TABLE

If you are planning to attend the next TSNA family reunion in Chattanooga, we could use a little help. We have our annual auction table and we sell a large variety of items. We have sold items from a 4 dozen bag of cookies (thanks, Rena) to a hand crafted gorgeous Star quilt (thanks, Janeth). Over the years we have been successful in selling hundreds of items and our bank account was grateful. The money is used for a variety of plans that benefits all of us. If you would like to donate an item, please do. Hand crafts and all donations are welcomed. We have sold hand signed books and last year in Dayton there was a genuine 60's mood ring that is now being worn by a Peace Brother. So, come to the next TSNA family reunion to see what treasure you may purchase. I, myself, bought a hand crafted knitted hand bag made by Sharon Jernigan (thanks Sharon.) If you paint, sew, work in wood, beads or leather or any other venue, please feel free to contribute to the Auction table. It is always a hoot.

Love,

Janice.



Janice at the 2012 Silent Auction Table.

COINS ON HEADSTONES

Submitted by: Harlan Hatfield 460th AEMS (PMEL) Jan 67 - Jan 68

While visiting some cemeteries you may notice that headstones marking

certain graves have coins on them, left by previous visitors to the grave. These coins have distinct meanings when left on the headstones of those who gave their life while serving in America's military, and these meanings vary depending on the denomination of coin.

A coin left on a headstone or at the grave site is meant as a message to the deceased soldier's family that someone else has visited the grave to pay respect.

Leaving a penny at the grave means simply that you visited. A nickel indicates that you and the deceased trained at boot camp together ... A dime indicates you served with him in some capacity. By leaving a quarter indicates you are telling the family that you were with the solider when he was killed.

According to tradition, the money left at graves in national cemeteries and state veterans cemeteries is eventually collected, and the funds are put toward maintaining the cemetery or paying burial costs for indigent veterans.

In the U.S., this practice became common during the Vietnam war, due to the political divide in the country over the war.

Leaving a coin was seen as a more practical way to communicate that you had visited the grave than contacting the soldier's family, which could devolve into an uncomfortable argument over politics relating to the war.

Some Vietnam veterans would leave coins as a "down payment" to buy their fallen comrades a beer or play a hand of cards when they would finally be reunited.

The tradition of leaving coins on the headstones of military men and women can be traced to as far back as the Roman Empire.

Chaplain's Corner March 2013

As we go into the spiritual month of March we see the dignity of our very lives. Yet we all have the cold chills that come with life in today's world. As the months go by we all feel a desire, a need for peace. A great prophet, one put to death near the end of WWII said: "With elementary power, the call breaks through again and again in mankind". He goes on to say "now again in recent times it is every where in great longing for world peace".

This season of spiritual thought includes the sought for sense and desire for world peace. It would seem that those who have known the horrors of loss of peace (war) are the ones who speak out in desperation for World Peace. That same prophet spokesman put in the words of scripture and then interprets for us: may God control our passion. May he discipline our thoughts and our wills and lead us to peace. The peace of today's world is held off by desire for power, pride, arrogance and fear, quarreling over living space and bread.

You wonder how we can achieve peace in our world at this time. An answer, well not from today's individual, but we can ask God to help us find PEACE.

End of Sermon Chaplain Bob Chaffee

FAVORITE SAYINGS



You've reached middle age when the girl you smile at thinks you are one of her fathers friends.

Blessed are they who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused.

~Anonymous~

YOUR HELP WANTED By Tan Son Nhut Association

Your TSNA is in search of:

Short Stories about serious or funny incidents in and around Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

PHOTOS: Color, Black & White

MAPS: Any size

UNIT PATCHES: Scanned, or a photo

STARS & STRIPES: Any year MACV PAPER: Any Year 7th AF News: Any Year MPC: Any Year

DATE: January 14, 2013



Inquiring minds want to know!

The Revetments Editor and the Web Master need your assistance. We need your input and photographs to place in Revetments and on the Photograph of the Month web page. All photographs remain your copyright.

Email Larry Fry at lfry2@dejazzd.com or Charles Penley at cepenley@chartertn.net

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Thanks to our Web Master Charles Penley for the above graphic, made to "Graphically" illustrate the need we have to get "original" notes, anecdotes, stories, photos, comments from YOU (not the internet, or magazines). Thanks.

VIETNAMESE PMEL

This is about my attending the PMEL (Precision Measuring Equipment Laboratory) Tech School at Lowry AFB, Denver Colorado in 1966.

My class had four Vietnamese Air Force members in it. As near as I can remember the leader was MSgt BA, another was a Sgt. Wah (probably misspelled), the other two I have totally forgotten their names. At the time I had no idea that I would later run into them again. All I knew was that the PMEL Tech School as many others Tech Schools such as Photo, had foreign students attending them. I also remember when I was in the Fire Control School in 1960 the base had a large number of Foreign students, many from Iran and Saudi Arabia as I remember.

Anyway back to the story, I graduated and returned to Minot AFB ND, and within six months had an assignment to Tan Son Nhut AB RVN, PMEL. After my arrival there and settling into the routine for a couple of months, one day, who would come into the Lab but MSgt. BA and Sgt. Wah. It was to my surprise that MSgt. BA was the Vietnamese Equivalent to the Director of the United States Bureau of Standards (NBS), for the country of South Vietnam. He was also the Manager of the PMEL at Bien Hoa.

Later in the year the PMEL at Bien Hoa took a direct hit with a 122mm rocket and sort of put them out of commission. As a result of that loss, their Vietnamese technicians who were living in the Saigon area were assigned to us at TSN, while the ones living in the Bien Hoa area were to continue working at that base.

Again it shows what a small world it is sometimes.

I have always wondered what happened to our Vietnamese PMEL technicians after we left.

Welcome Home, Harlan N. Hatfield 460th AEMS (PMEL) Jan 67—Jan 68

ALL ABOARD!!

Our next TSNA family reunion is being held in Chattanooga, TN from June 13 -16, 2013. Why should you attend? For those Brothers and Sisters who have met with each other at various cities since 1993 in Evansville, IN, no reason is needed. They already know and have experienced the gathering. For those who have never graced us with your presence, here is the layout of our reunions.

After leaving your hotel room, you come to the hospitality room. At the door is a registration table manned by Brothers and sometimes a Sister who will sign you in, give you the wearable ID and other gifts. You will be hugged, shake hands and greeted royally. Next, you go into the hospitality room where you will find tables ready for you to sit down and enjoy yourself. There is food and more food treats. You will be blessed with Rena's homemade treats. They and she are divine! There are beverages to suit your tastes. Around the walls are tables laden with exhibits such as photo albums, books, maps and other things. Members bring their exhibits.

We have a BX/PX where you will be able to purchase many items to wear, look at, place in your home, put on your cars or trucks, and to give as gifts. Thank you, Walt, for my beautiful TSNA bracelet that you bought and gave to me last year. I wear it always! Gary Redlinski, a Brother, creates these bracelets. Purchase one or more and proudly wear them. Johnnie and Sharon Jernigan are the store-keepers and have always done a great job. All monies go to the support of the TSNA.

You will also see the annual auction table which is covered by lots of member donated articles to be bought by silent auction. Thank you, Bobbi, for setting up this table and contributing items. All monies from this auction goes to the TSNA fund for upkeep and support. You pay for and receive your items on Saturday night. Please have

money ready to pay Sharon.

There is a door prize or prizes to be given away. You will be given a free ticket for this at the registration table. Also, we have a 50/50 game where Charles Penley, Harlan Hatfield and Kerry Nivens will sell you a ticket or tickets that cost \$1.00 each. You may buy as many as you wish. Then, on Saturday night, a ticket will be drawn and the 50/50 winner will then be awarded their 50% of the pot and the other 50% is donated to the TSNA. If the total is \$500.00, you will receive \$250.00 and the TSNA gets the rest. Last year, thanks to the generosity of all you members, we had around \$700.00 and the winner. Harlan, donated a big chunk of his part back to the TSNA. It is your money to do with as you please. You have to be present at the time of the drawing. Thank you to each member who bought tickets.

If you have a talent - guitar playing, banjo picking, magic acts (hey, Andy, give a short show, please), singing, or another talent that you wish to share, contact George Plunkett - our President - and let him know. You could become a TSNA star. Maybe card tricks or belly dancing - eh, Debbie? You are the Best, Madame, and thank you for last year. Everyone loved you.

But, here is the last and best of all things coming your way. The members!!! Always the Brothers and Sisters are the Best! We hug, kiss, shake hands, talk, tell jokes, take thousands of photographs, remember the past and play catch up on our memories, make new memories, cry because of certain memories, discover that we have lost some of our family since the last reunion, and most of all share our most valuable time and make bonds that will not ever be broken. Ever!

There is a banquet at which we have delicious food and each other's company to share. There is some music, speeches (well, doesn't everyone give those), and various recognitions and awards are given out. Chaplain

Chaffee prays and gives out an oral list of the Brothers and Sisters who have passed on since our last reunion. We do love and miss y'all very much!

The hospitality room is open every day. The family gathers there every day. It is staffed by wonderful volunteers and thank you Rena, Lois, Debbie, Sharon, Bobbi, Trish and all others who give of their time in this endeavor every year.

Here it is! This TSNA family reunion is held every year in a different city for you, by you and because of you! You make the TSNA stronger and better by your attendance and your support of her every day of every year. We are only as strong as our weakest link. Our TSNA is a thriving, growing association thanks to every member from Adams to Zohn. If you can possibly attend at all, come. We are not getting any younger and all of our aches and pains are letting us realize every day that the option of doing anything later or next year is growing smaller and smaller. Even though we get new members every year, we also lose some. Come and share a few days of fun, camaraderie, love, and friendship. Fill up and recharge your personal battery to keep you operating until our TSNA family reunion next year. Bring a Loved One or more with you. Chattanooga offers a variety of excursions and tourist delights for you. Hey, the Chattanooga Choo Choo and their famous Moon Pies come to mind.

Bring yourself, your Loved Ones, your cameras and your hearts to our TSNA family reunions. No one has ever told me that they ever regretted attending.

So, if the Good Lord's willing and the creek don't rise, I will meet you there. There are hugs for everyone. There are laughs, tears, and so much Love for everyone. There is our TSNA family for everyone. You are the TSNA! This is what we do.

Love, Janice



belonged to the 552nd Trans. Co. (car) Troop Command, assigned as a driver for the G1 level at USARV Hqs. I also drove visiting VIP's. I was also the alternate driver for Gen. Bruce Palmer. I drove Gen. Jeanne Holm, then Col, of the Women's Air Force for a day, when she visited USARV Hqs. I took her and my LTC Shirley Heinz to breakfast at the USO, then escorted them the rest of the day.

I remember an attack on the air base, and I saw some of the bodies of the VC. You guys did a great job defending the air base that night.

In July of 67 we moved to Long Binh, where I continued to drive VIP's and different Generals. I left from Long Binh in Dec. of 1967.

Robert Anselmo SFC US Army Ret. 552nd Tran Co. (car) Troop Command Oct 67—Dec 67

Pilleted in the 1200 area, bldg. 1238 lower level. Worked EC-47N, C-123K, C-54, C-118, U3B and the "White Whale". Two things I will never forget: Sitting on the flight deck of the C-54 the night a F-105 side swiped a C-123 on 25L. I remember the FOD walk afterwards and all the debris. Secondly, the recovery of a downed C-123 in a rice paddy near Rach Gia in the Kien Giang Province. The recovery was mostly for the remains of the crew. It was such a beautiful place for such an ugly sight.

Guy J. Balistreri 460th Field Maintenance Squadron Oct 67—Dec 69

I enlisted in 1967 and discharged in 1971. I was in the USAF Reserve until 1973 when I enlisted in the OHARNG as a full time technician until I retired in 2007 as an E-9 CSM. Giving me 40 years of service.

Served in Kosovo 2004-2005 as a Task Force CSM. When at TSN I lost my best friend, A1C Johnson on a C-123 crash 10 Oct 69. He will never be forgotten.

Kenneth W. Fanty 19th Special Ops Sq. Dec 68—Dec 69

Was in the Army and worked at Tan Son Nhut AFB Our compound was a 15-20 minute jeep ride from TSN and consisted of 5 buildings and was 1 block long. Each of the 5 buildings was named after a WWII Pacific battle, i.e., Iwo Jima, Midway, etc. During the day the locals could travel through the compound, at night it was locked down.

James C. McBride
USA STRATCOM Regional Communications Group (U. S. Army)

rrived in-country in October '72 and spent about a week in TSN prior to PCS at DaNang. From DaNang went PCS to NKP RTAFB. Came back to TSN in TDY status for approximately 6 weeks, mostly going up-country for recovery missions (Bien Hoa, Tuy Hoa, Ninh Hoa, Kontum). Usually went in 2-4 man teams in either C-130 or UH-1 out of Camp Alpha.

James B. McCarthy 8th Aerial Port Squadron Oct 72-Dec 72 Apr 73-May 73

aunched 55-4264 (an RB-57E) on the early morning of 25 October 1968 on its last flight. It went down due to enemy fire, both pilots ejected and returned safely.

Richard A. Cooley Det. 1 460th TRW Jan 68—Jan 69

I arrived at Tan Sn Nhut after a 19 hour flight and spent the next 12 months in the 1876th Comm. Sq. Our

"accommodations" were close to Charlie Row. I fixed and maintained teletype machines and filled many sandbags. Outside of a booby trapped "C" ration explosion on the flight line, it was a peaceful tour, for me

Murray I. Goldberg 1876th Comm. Sq. Nov 68 - Nov 69

was at Tahkli, Thailand for my SEA time. During Tet we also were infested with the VC. I remember one night at the test cell, we heard noise in the bush. We fired up the J-75 engine on the test stand. After we attained 100% operating temperature we released the pins slowing the engine to swivel, hit afterburner and fried everything and body for 350 feet behind the engine flame. What a flame thrower.

Richard A. Matkevich 55th Fighter Maintenance Squadron Apr 68 - May 69

I will always remember stepping off the plane on arrival, the heat out on the tarmac just sort of slapped you in the face. We (E4 and below) lived on base in screened in wooden barracks with fans. It was great for sleeping after a midnight shift in an air conditioned radar van. You lay there in a heat stupor, sweating all the morning. There were other great memories I can contribute at a later date.

Norman R. Pelkey 1876th Communications Squadron Nov 66 - Nov 67

(I was a) 19 year old turned 20 in country - worked Security on ramp and perimeter. Received two Bronze Stars and Presidential Unit Citation for Tet and mini-Tet May/June.

Fred T. Jernigan 377th Security Sq. Nov 67 - Nov 68



Thanks to Gus Letto, Jan 66-Dec 66 377th Combat Supp. Grp.



Tan Son Nhut west ramp, west of Base Operations. Among the aircraft in this view, there is a P-2V, a U-3B, a C-118, several C-121s and a C-47. The revetments didn't help the RF-101s and RF-4s much. During the rocket and mortar attack on the base, Charlie had the range and was dropping rounds right into the revetments.



There were very few on-base billets for Air Force personnel in 1966, so most of us lived in apartments or villas in Saigon. The Navy ran the bus system between various town locations and the base. This is the stop on Hai Ba Trung Street, with the Army's Brink BOQ in the background. Note the heavy screens positioned to prevent grenades from being thrown through the open windows on the bus.



It was a long walk from the TSN main gate to base operations where I worked. A few P to the Lambretta taxi driver bought a crowded but interesting ride.

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

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The Association is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt Veterans' Organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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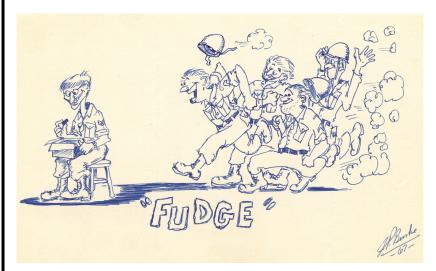
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Web Site: www.tsna.org

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



Thanks as usual to TSNA Member and TSN Artist John Burke for this cartoon.



Mr. John F. Langley FL dogman1968@aol.com Mar 67 - Mar 68 377th Security Police K9



Mr. Emory L. Baston GA Sept 68 - Sept 69 1876 Comm Sqdn

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