



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



NOVEMBER 11th

NOVEMBER 2013

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By: Johnnie Jernigan
TSNA Director of Merchandising

We have received permission for the Tan Son Nhut Association to place a wreath at our Memorial at the NMU-SAF for Veteran's Day Nov. 11th. We will meet at the Memorial at 9AM and perform a simple ceremony to honor all Veterans. It will especially target those who were stationed at or passed through TSN. Help is needed to place the wreath and flags at the Bench and Plaques. Please let me know by e-mail if you are willing to help. My e-mail is jernigan1@ameritech.net.

This effort brings up the question: What is the difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day?

Many people confuse Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Memorial Day is a day for remembering and honoring military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle.

While those who died are also remembered, Veterans Day is the day set aside to thank and honor ALL those who served honorably in the military – in wartime or peacetime. In fact, Veterans Day is largely intended to thank LIVING veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served – not only those who died – have sacrificed and done their duty. The above is a quote from a Washington Post article - (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/05/26/why-memorial-day-is-confused-with-veterans-day/>)

When the leaves begin to change color and then fall, our minds also change to the preparation for the holiday seasons and the coming New Year. Our postal service carrier is loaded down with new calendars and annual greetings.

One of the major church denominations has just published a new hymn and song book.

One of the hymns fits our TSNA fellowship and I pass on one of its verses under the title "We Build a House" and subtitle "All Are Welcome".

It's phrased "Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the word they have known. The chorus picks up the theme again, "All are welcome, all are welcome in this place". Sound familiar?

Another new hymn printed these words or meaning in our November Veterans Day and Thanksgiving moments! Its subtitles are "Bring Peace to Earth Again". The editorial that accompanies the musical work states that the song is to respond to the many world problematic events. (The page could never be big enough to hold the history of the past decades.)

The op page holds poetic words to God "Hear our cry and heal our nation till our nation honors you".

For this season of Thanksgiving we have the opportunity to speak to our Creator as we become mindful of the broad range of human needs in today's world.

Hearing all this we should really add a solemn moment of pause on Veterans

Day for our own special Thanksgiving and commitment.

End of Sermon
Chaplain Bob Chaffee

REVETMENTS



OK, so the TSNA newsletter is named after these "things" found at various bases throughout Viet Nam, and I suppose elsewhere.

So I thought it's about time to show our "namesake".

And now I want some discussion on them.

And I have some questions:

As if Vietnam wasn't hot enough, how much hotter was it to work in these things?

In addition, how did you manage to see what you were doing?

What other questions should be asked (or answered)?

Please send your thoughts to me at: lfry2@dejazzd.com.

Go Figure

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"We are living in a world today where lemonade is made from artificial flavors, and furniture polish is made from real lemons."

~Alfred E. Neuman (Mad Magazine)~

**FROM
TSNA MEMBER**

DAN McKegney

1876 Comm. Squadron
Aug 67 - Aug 68

While serving as a radio operator with the U.S. Air Force at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, RVN, (1967-1968), I had occasion to visit the city of Saigon fairly frequently. Saigon was always an interesting place to me and where the U.S. Embassy was located, but still culturally light-years away from my home in California, which was where I had spent my first twenty years. Saigon had a kind of magical, carnival-like quality to it. Above all, I remember the hustle and bustle of vehicles and people on Saigon's main commercial street which was called Tudo.

On Tudo (Freedom) Street, cars, trucks, military vehicles, scooters, pedicabs (motorized and not), and bicycles all seemed to converge in some incoherent mess which, miraculously, seemed to nearly always right itself. That conglomeration of vehicles, and somehow in its collective wisdom, slowed and swerved in a zig-zaggy fashion in order to just narrowly miss one another, and just at the right moment. Sometimes they did not miss each other, since Tudo street always seemed to be just a great jumbled and clogged mess of individual machines whose operators did not always judge distance accurately, or who just managed to misjudge the actions of other machine operators at the most inappropriate time. Crash, slam, crunch!... as vehicles would sometimes collide. Such a collision created in its wake the sound of honk, honks...beep, beeps! Or... was it the other way around?

Just as Tudo Street, the roadway, was clogged with vehicles plus the occasional brave soul who dared cross the street, the Tudo Street sidewalks were likewise clogged with people. Most of the people were closely moving, but slowly in one direction or another

along the sidewalks, and in almost a heel-to-toe and nose-to-neck manner. Other people, the Vietnamese vendors, whose sidewalk storefronts sold all sorts of black market American goods, presented obstacles to the free flow of pedestrian traffic on the sidewalks. So, sometimes in order to continue in the normal American GI gait of moving on along straightway, one had to step off the sidewalk and onto the street momentarily so as to avoid a slow moving clog of pedestrians just ahead.

One afternoon on a sunny day in Saigon in 1967, my buddy and I were doing the town. Just walkin' around, mind you. He and I were doing nothing special. We were gawkers and just plain observers of the sights, sounds, and smells surrounding us on Tudo Street while we walked along one of its sidewalks. As the traffic light turned green (yes, mom, Saigon had traffic lights), my bud and I cautiously crossed the street to the next block on Tudo Street, with him walking in front of me a few paces. I noticed that he had stepped onto the sidewalk but after having taken a few steps had taken an abnormally wide semicircular path onto the street itself. I figured he was avoiding another pedestrian clog on the Tudo Street sidewalk, but I thought he was nuts to get so close in the path of traffic, given those crazy vehicle drivers on Tudo Street. It was shortly after my "so-astute" observation of my buddy's behavior that I met the Tudo Street Whizzer.

As I was a few paces behind my bud, I also swerved in my travel from the sidewalk and onto the street, as indeed I did see a blockade of pedestrians on the sidewalk. Normal, right? Although, I did not take the greater semicircular swath onto the street that he did. While I confidently moved beyond that clump of pedestrians on the sidewalk, I simultaneously saw and felt the Whizzer's presence. Glancing off the bottom of my right cuff leg, but squarely hitting my moving left thigh there was the unmistakable vision of fluid and the feeling of wetness. Yes, I

had been whizzed on, peed onto, urinated upon by the Tudo Street Whizzer.

The worst was that now I had to change clothing, and that would be a hassle as it meant going back to the base. Just after I noticed that I was whizzed upon, I slowed, stopped and turned, but saw that the Whizzer was a young boy, probably around 7-9 years of age, and in a school uniform. We looked at each other, and he giggled along with his other young schoolmates. I just walked on and beyond the laughter and giggles of those young kids. GI Number One I guess, and for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was getting accidentally whizzed upon, and owing to GI stupidity and especially because of the culture differences.

Then as now, and in California, I don't think that public urination was or is permitted. And, if caught, you could be hauled off to the brig, or hoosgal, or by any other word simply the slammer. But, in Saigon and by contrast, male citizens especially there and then whizzed when necessary and wherever. Now, just tell me, who's culture is better, boys? Think about beer, and lots of it. And yet, if you happen to get the opportunity, and by some time travel kind of device, to go to Saigon in 1967, just be a little more skeptical about those smells in the streets of Saigon. I think that they are a stewy mixture of things I had never before considered. But, the culture of Vietnam, especially as it then-concerned the matter of public relief is quite a draw for me. I think that there is something there, fellas. Now, in 1998, the culture of Vietnam is a draw for me for entirely different reasons.

Lisa's email to me came as a bolt out of the blue after she read my story at war-stories about the Tudo Street Whizzer. I've pasted her and my emails, with a slight editing by me to take out website references I made, and the result is what appears below. Otherwise, the email exchange which appears below is how it happened. I

have no idea where Lisa lives.

Of particular interest to me was Lisa's, a high school senior, reply to me. The more time that passes, the more I feel compelled to pass along things I've learned, or think that I know. The best part is that perhaps my recollections/opinions will motivate kids to think.

Best regards, Dan McKegney

Lisa's Question

Hi - my name is Lisa, and I'm a senior in high school. We're reading "The Things They Carried" in my English class, and as a supplement to that, we were assigned to read some stories from war-stories.com. When we were given the assignment, I have to admit I was a bit skeptical. I have the utmost respect for anyone who has ever served in the military, war or peace time, as well as the civilians involved in conflicts. That's actually where my skepticism stemmed from-by having these experiences pounded into our heads over and over again, we as students become desensitized to them. No longer able to appreciate the full implications of what happened - death tolls become just numbers and everyone misses the big picture. I think this is a horrible thing to have happened. I think it's extremely important that kids understand exactly what war means and does, so I wasn't looking forward to this assignment. But then I read your story "Saigon - The Tudu Street Whizzer" and was very pleasantly surprised. I love the fact that your story incorporates some of the good you experienced over there. I really love it whenever I see any representation of history where the people who are needlessly vilanized aren't for a change, and that's the impression I got from your story. I think it's great that you wrote it (I think it's well written too by the way) and I thank you on behalf of the rest of my classmates. If you've got time to respond, I'd really like if you could answer a question I have. Knowing what you know now, after being in the war, if given the chance to decide back

then, would you have gone? I can see reasons for both yes and no, but never having experienced anything like it, I could never know.

Thank You!

Lisa

My Response to Lisa' Question

Dear Lisa,

What a delightful surprise it was to receive an email from you concerning my little story about the "Whizzer". I have three lovely nieces, ages 24, 21, and 15. When each of them became old enough to understand, I would talk with each about the importance of developing an understanding of war...if that is possible for anyone to do. My discussion with them always focused on the profound responsibility each will have as they grow into adulthood. That responsibility includes keeping well informed about events outside their own zip code, learning about the historical context of wars, and exercising their right to vote when given the opportunity.

I referred to those responsibilities as profound because they can deal with life and death matters, especially when it comes to war. In fact, I recently sent my youngest niece an email in which I talked about war and the necessity for developing an understanding of history. I mentioned to her that in order to make well-informed decisions, she had to acquaint herself with issues of war and peace. I told her that it could be possible in the future that she would have to send her son or daughter off to war, just like my mother had to do in 1967 when I was 20 years old. Given the recent tragic events in America and the Middle East and the uncertainties surrounding war, that possibility is real, though far off for her at 15 years of age. And yet, I want to instill in her the habit of thinking outside the immediacy of her own experience; I know that is a tough

thing to do for a teenager...I was a teenager once and I remember. Well, Lisa, enough of my pontificating and now to answer your question.

Your question was: in consideration of what I know now, and had I been offered the choice to go or not, would I have gone to Vietnam? The short answer to your question is no I would not have gone. The short reason is because North Vietnam and the VC were fighting a civil war to unify their country, much like we did during the American Civil War, 1861-1865. By contrast, America fought the Vietnam War to stop the spread of communism, an ideology that was seen as threatening to the American way of life during most of the last half of the twentieth century. Our "enemy" were fighting for their country against foreign invaders (Americans); I can understand that, just like we are currently fighting those who would seek to directly destroy America. We were fighting in Vietnam to support a political theory. There is no question that when one fights for his homeland, he does so with great perseverance and resolve. When one fights solely for a theory, he does so with much less conviction. We must pick our fights very carefully, and that lesson was surely learned by America during the Vietnam War. The lesson was dearly paid for by the 58,193 names that are listed on "The Wall" in Washington, D.C., as well as by the families of those who are listed. That lesson continues to exact a cost, a price, and in particular for me.

I am now 54 years old. About two years ago I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, a disease that the Department of Veterans Affairs considers to be "service-connected" because of the Agent Orange that was sprayed in Vietnam during the war. Agent Orange was a herbicide used to defoliate vegetation in order to deny the enemy cover; its active ingredient was Dioxin, a highly toxic chemical. I am being treated for my cancer by the Veteran's health system. So, there is a cost to be borne by those involved long after the guns of war have ceased to

sound. There is also a very real cost to American taxpayers, again, long after a war has ended. Because the personal and societal consequences of war can last 50, 60 years or longer, it is imperative that you and those of your generation become well informed so that you can make sound judgments about your future and the future of this country.

I am glad that you enjoyed my "Whizzer" story. I intended it as a light-hearted look at a moment for me in an otherwise dismal period of time. However, there were other, darker moments as well.

By the way, I intend to forward this email to my youngest niece. She is a freshman in high school, and perhaps she can learn something by reading my response to you. Lastly, I understand that the repeated recitation of facts about death tolls, places, dates, and the like can lead to a desensitized view of war by students who must sit quietly and listen to the same old stuff. In that regard, I appreciate the opportunity you have provided me to put my personal spin on things, to put some living flesh and bone to history, and to encourage you to seek understanding of the world around you.

Sincerely yours...Dan McKegney

Lisa's Reply to Me

Thank you very much. I completely understand your reasoning. The United States' policy regarding communism and the fear of the 'domino effect' really struck a sour note when I ran across it in past reading, so I see exactly where you're coming from.

I shared your response with my English teacher, and she read it aloud today during class. Being as close to the end of the year as it is, and considering that my class is comprised entirely of seniors, we're a typically (and increasingly) rowdy bunch. But while she read what you wrote, they were silent, and actually listened. I was shocked, and almost proud. Not

only were they listening, but they even remained quiet when she was finished. This is a massive achievement, hard to relate in an email, but I thought you might like to know.

I'm sorry to hear about the cancer. But if it's any consolation at all, I think that may have had the most impact on my classmates and myself. It's a very real thing that most never connect with Vietnam. I'm fairly familiar with similar complications experienced by Gulf War vets, and I'd like to believe that at least a few of my classmates are as well. Your representation of Agent Orange as an extraneous danger to both sides really established a connection between things like the Gulf War, and to the chemical weapons used in World War I. I know that there were some in the class that hadn't made that connection that did today, myself included. Being so removed from the era, and given such limited information as we are (in the school's defense, it is hard to cram the entire history of the United States into one year) things like this really make an impression, and have very honestly made me think a lot about it over the last few days. Such to the point where I'm planning to go find a good book about Vietnam tomorrow. I know for certain that a few of my classmates, who feel education in general anathema to them, have a new interest in it as well. You elicited an actual "wow" from some of the most apathetic teenagers I've ever met :o)

A millions thanks for your time,

Lisa



Dan McKegney

**NOV 11, 2013
AT THE WALL**



(Photo courtesy of
Angela Pan Photography)

All:

Scheduling difficulties and travel plans have caused TSNA to not be part of the ceremonies commemorating Veterans Day this year. If you would want to participate in future Veterans Day ceremonies, please email me at viet62@aol.com and I will add your name to the roster of volunteers.

Thanks,

George

TSNA AWARDS

All:

It's time to begin our awards process.

Specific awards and their descriptions can be found on our web site under the awards tab.

Please send nominations and justifying criteria to me at viet62@aol.com or Rich Carvell, our VP, at rcarvell@suddenlink.net.

The deadline to receive nominations is Dec 31, 2013.

Thanks,

George

SUPREME MILITARY ORDER OF THE DRAGON

Requirements for this award are that the person be a previous Dragon Award recipient and who has, by his or her efforts, contributed significantly to the operation of the Association for a sustained period of time.

MILITARY ORDER OF THE DRAGON.

A member who performs activities which advance the stated purposes of the Association.

ANCHOR AWARD.

A member who is steadfast in allegiance to the association. One who has attended most of our reunions, regardless of the cost, location or time of year; or a member who can be called upon to help as needed, a "Go To person."

GOLDEN KNIGHT AWARD.

A member or non-member who has a prolonged record of helping the poor, the homeless, the underprivileged or who assists veterans of any era and their families.

Re: November 11th From Our Cheerleader

I wish that there were enough words to describe how I feel about y'all. A few are love, honor, friendship, caring, kinship, precious (y'all are), important (y'all are), and my Heroes (y'all are). Celebrate and remember on Veteran's Day November 11 and for a few minutes, close your eyes and in your mind and heart, visit The Wall in Washington, DC.

Thank you for your service, sacrifice and your work on behalf of the TSNA and our Beloved America. Welcome Home! Thank You!! You did Good!!!

Salute,
Janice Jones



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)**



NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

While TDY to 39th ARRS, 2 combat saves (crew of RF-100 shot down northwest of DaNang AB)

David R. Stringer
31st ARRS/39th ARRS
20th MAS/776TAS
Jul 68-Apr 75

Lived in tents across from Base Ops. Most of the Battery's duty was low and high search by our radars. You could see our radars and missile launchers from Base Ops. I was Launcher Crew Chief but spent most of my time running bucket loader loading gravel down by the hospital.

I was there the day when Charlie tried to hit the hospital. Charlie on one side of gravel, me on the other side. Never went there again without my bullet launcher even if the Lieutenant said I was non-combatant, Charlie would not shoot me (HAHA). Anyone remember that?

Then they moved out to Hoc Mon, next to "Charlie's" supply and training area. Who thought that move up? Read the Battle for Hoc Mon. I was the one who was going to charge the VC sapper squad with my bucket loader at the Hospital until I thought about that.

James S. Gropper
A Btry 6th Bn 56 Art Nov 65—Nov 66

When I arrived in November '65 the squadron grew from around 300-400 to over 1,000. When you went on post you never knew if you would get relieved when your night was done or not. In February '66 when they went to the Sector concept, things improved 1000%. Most of my time I spent on 051 gate or the water tower with an occasional SAT team. I had a great sector leader, Waltyer Jennings that made the job a lot better.

Earnest Jack Wymer (Zeke)
377th SPS, Nov 65—Nov 66

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

FUDGE!



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

NEW MEMBERS



Mr. Jules J. Maderos NY jmaderos@gmail.com Jan 64 - Nov 65
Mr. Matthew Maderos MA mmaderos@bu.edu Son of Jules Maderos

US Navy VP-42 Air Crew Officer

IN MEMORIAM

CMSgt. Edward J. Creamer FL 377th CES May 67-May 68

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