



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



FEBRUARY 2014

Editor's Note:

Janice Jones sent me a copy of the handout from Dean Gard's Funeral.

There was the following poem written on the inside. I have never seen it before, but I plan to remember it, especially since it describes Dean so well.

A Beautiful Life

"A beautiful life
that came to an end,
he died as he lived,
everyone's friend,
In our hearts a memory
will always be kept,
of one we loved,
and will never forget."

Call for Candidates

Your Association continues as an active and financially sound organization to serve its members. Again, we are looking forward to an eventful reunion in June at the birthplace of Tan Son Nhut Association – Evansville, Indiana. For such reunions and other events to occur, people have to manage your Association as officers and board members. It is they who keep us alive and viable.

The terms of two of your board members end this year. The positions are Director of Membership and a Director at Large. The incumbents are eligible to run for reelection. That being stated, we need active volunteers to stand for election to those two important positions. I emphasize the word active, because serving as an officer or board member of TSNA is not just adding a title to your name on the Association roster. Work and dedication are involved.

The duties of Director of Membership are to maintain the Association Roster and to remind members who are not

life members that their tenure of membership is expiring. This director collects all dues payments and issues all membership cards. A Director at Large performs necessary duties as assigned by the President and/or the Board of Directors.

A person may nominate themselves, or any member may nominate another. If you nominate another, be certain that that person is willing to run and serve.

Please send all nominations by name and position to me via email at dale_f_bryan@yahoo.com. Note that there is an underscore (_), not a dot or space on both sides of the f in my name. If you are sending the nomination by surface mail, send it to Tan Son Nhut Association at P. O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564 - 0236.

Deadline for nominations is March 31, 2014. A self nominee or one accepting a nomination by another member must submit a statement of approximately three to five paragraphs to the TSNA Secretary of their vision for the future of TSNA and how they would help achieve that vision. If the nominee is running for reelection, a summary of their achievements during their term of office is also requested. The announcement of the election and a listing of all nominees will appear in the May 2014 issue of Revetments.

Thank you,

Dale F. Bryan
Secretary, TSNA



Reunion 2014 Registration Form-Pg. 6

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

While in Maintenance Squadron lived in barracks 1244.

6 months spent in Maintenance and 6 months in HQ AFAT. My VNAF boss was WO Heip. USAF Boss was SMSgt. Epps, Branch Chief.

My first wedding anniversary 16 January 1971 was spent in Rec. Center and I went swimming on Christmas 1970.

TET 1971 the base took 3 rockets. One exploded between runways and one was laying under a C-119 and another was lodged in a revetment between aircraft. It took 8 hours to find the un-exploded ordnances.

I took a short and re-enlisted as an E-4 and collected a bonus while at TSN. Now the VA is trying to say I was not in Vietnam so they don't have to pay me more for my state of mind or injuries.

I went on to serve 20 years, 10 months and retired as an E-6. Corrosion Control Specialist/Supervisor my whole tour in USAF.

Thomas B. Marmon, Sr.
377th Field Maintenance Squadron
Nov 70—Nov 71

Was at TSN during Tet and 6 May attack. Lived in 1300 area.

Renato P. Della Porta
Sept 67 - Sep 68

I was on duty on the night of 6 April, 1966, during the sapper/mortar attack.

Terry K. Bootle
377th Security Police Squadron
Oct 65 - Oct 66

The Vietnamese Civilian Side of Tet!

By: Susie Ahrens
TSNA Member
Civilian worker at TSN

There are a lot of TSNA members (unfortunately) who were in VN during the 1968 Tet offensive and posted about their experience during that time at TSN. I was there during the Tet offensive too, but not on the base because of the Tet Holidays and the Vietnamese workers got 3 days off to celebrate the New Year.

The first day of Tet, we went about doing our traditional celebrations, got dressed up, went to churches, temples, got together for big dinners, played games, exchanged gifts etc., Sound of firecrackers, loud music everywhere, everyone enjoyed the atmosphere of Tet. It was (still is) the most sacred, fun and cherished holiday of Vietnam.

The next morning, we woke up and were surprised by a strange voice on the radio, no music. The stern voice announced that the city of Saigon and numerous others were taken by the North Vietnamese Liberation Front. A little later, the whole neighborhood gathered to listen to the news in horror. We also then realized the sound which we thought were firecrackers were really gunfights very nearby. We normally heard shelling and cannons from a distance. We turned white with fear and panic, everyone looked at each other and asked the same question "what do we do, where do we go now?"

My mother and I ran in the house, put some clothing in a bag, and headed out. We weren't sure where we would go, but followed the crowd, hoping that someone would lead us to a shelter. As we were out of the neighborhood to the main roads, at the intersection, we saw people from all directions, coming toward us, some of them wounded, and they were asking each other what they should do; people shouting, praying, children crying - it was chaotic. They all came from other parts of town, and were totally confused. I noticed there were no policemen or soldiers at all, the streets were still covered with red paper remnants of firecrackers, and the burnt smell of gun powder and firecrackers. At that point, we realized that the only safe place was probably our home, so we went home and stayed put. My mother, who was a Northern Vietnamese, who had fled from North VN in 1954 to get away from the Communist, froze in fear. She kept saying "we are dead, we are dead". I thought about me working for the US government and shared the same fear.

The next days were the same, news of towns in South Vietnam under the Communist control. The first thing they did in the city was taking over the main radio station (we didn't have television at the time), and broadcasted propaganda and news of South Vietnam surrendering.

I don't remember exactly how many days before the South Vietnamese government took over the radio station and announced that the NVA were defeated. People were relieved, life was supposed to come back to normal. Nobody had a phone at the time so we were totally out of touch with the base, with our relatives and friends and had no idea what was going on at other areas of Saigon. As a child, I was told many stories about how brutal the Viet Cong could be and how they treated the enemies. I shuddered to think of South Vietnam being taken over by them and the consequences if they were in power.

I ventured out to the TSN main gate and used their phone to call the office. The chief clerk told me all the men in the unit were OK and the base was safe to come to work. On the way to the office, I was horrified to see the ruins of many buildings and structures. By then, most everything was cleaned up, so I had no idea there were several battles at different parts of the base. Everything was also classified so I did not know how many Americans or Vietnamese soldiers had lost their lives in those battles. And of course, nobody wanted to talk about it. I didn't even know about the Vietnamese Base Commander, Col Luu Kim Cuong, being killed in the battle while defending the base.

TSN has a lot of restricted areas to us, so I didn't see three fourths of the base and didn't know what was going on in most areas. Most of the structures were repaired quickly by the American GIs. I guess the authorities wanted life to come back to normalcy as quick as possible.

Even though the NVA took over Saigon for only a very short time, I gradually learned about the damages they did and especially the massacre in Hue and other towns in Central Vietnam. I knew this wound would not be healed, it's a black mark in history and in every South Vietnamese and American soldier who was in VN at the time. And I knew that the South Vietnamese would never forget nor accept the communist government and we proved it to them by the mass exodus to escape VN in April 1975, knowing the risk was life and death. This is the first time I have talked about this story. I don't know why, I guess it was just a part of life in VN, and all of us were familiar with poverty, death, fear, loss and all sort of human situations. Life is different now and I am grateful that everything I went through is just a memory. However, I can't help but still feel the anguish and resentment to the regime that caused all of it, and the sympathy for people who are left behind and still continue to suffer.

Susie—"Then
And
Now"



Hotel California ... **Tan Son Nhut - 1968**

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Memories of Hotel California - Old French Fort, Vietnam

I was in a strange place, far from home. The Tet offensive brought me to the face of death. After two months in country I was tired. As I arrived at the fort I thought I heard them say: Welcome to the Hotel California. *What a lovely place.*

I was permanently assigned to an RVNA Company on the northern most tip of Tan Son Nhut Air Base. The company was situated in an Old French Fort. The fort was right out of a French Foreign legion movie. The walls were 20 feet high; three feet thick white washed concrete and formed the perfect rectangular defensive position. The Solid Iron gates secured this impenetrable fortress. A courtyard surrounded by tiny cubicles, arched doorways, a well-fortified RVNA Company compound. At times I expected to see French Legionaries march through the gate. Just across the fence line was a small hamlet, a civilian mortuary and a cemetery with thousands of white head stones. Our mission was to detect and prevent an enemy assault in a very vulnerable area, the 055 gate. *What a lovely place.*

We were deployed at dusk and headed back to base at dawn. What I thought would be long lonely boring nights turned into bonding friendships with Officers, soldiers, children, and families. I was readily welcomed into a world I was not prepared for. Military courtesies were not used and I soon found myself part of a family. The RVNA troops were gracious hosts. They always stopped and talked, always smiling, always asking if there was anything they could do for me. Little did I know how close we would grow in the next eight months. Many relationships grew inside and outside

the high whitewashed walls. Such a lovely place, plenty of room at the Hotel California, anytime of year, you can find us here.

Our first few weeks were challenging. The rat population, and their huge size, were beyond description. I wrote to my Dad asking for the biggest rat-traps he could find. And big they were. He went straight to the Victor Animal Trap Company and sent me the biggest and the best. They were more like bear traps. We set the traps baited with c-rats, and thirty seconds later all six traps popped. Great, we got so good we didn't even use bait. Down the wall, set the traps, up the wall and wait for the traps to spring on an unsuspecting rat. One hour each night of killing rats seemed to bring the rats under control. Then the rice bug (cockroach) population exploded. They were everywhere: In our food, in the sandbags, everywhere we walked and sat. We started stomping cockroaches every night. This began getting out of hand, and I felt more like an exterminator. Then Lt. Tiep stopped by one night to meet us. He wanted to make us feel at home. He also wanted to help with our pest problem. His advice, "Leave everything alone. The rats will eat the rice bugs and will leave us alone. The rats will keep the rice bug population under control." Put another way; Don't kick a sleeping dog, or fool with Mother Nature. You know he was right. Everything fell in place and the rats and the rice bugs did not bother us again. It was a lesson I've applied to my life ever since.

During the first month at the fort the commander of the RVNA Company would call me to his office late at night. The office was sparse, a table and several chairs centered in the white washed walls. A single light bulb hanging in the middle of the room. He was gracious and polite, offering me a cigarette or a coke. Then he would open a copy of the Wall Street Journal and start reading in English. I was to listen, help with words he didn't recognize, and explain the meaning of what he was not sure of. I would often drift into a daydream, watching the geckos clinging to the

white walls, waiting for the occasional insect for supper. Our relationship was more a friendship. I helped him with his English and he found anything I needed, like rounds for our recoilless rifle. The commander was one of my first and best friends in Vietnam. He was a Captain. But for some reason I cannot remember his name. *They're living it up at the Hotel California.*

Lt. Be was a slight man. A very quiet squeaky voice would call my name, "Sergeant Cook, how you today?" He would shake my hand. Be was always polite but I often had a sense that he could not be trusted. My mistrust turned to pity. Our storage area at the fort was broken into and C-rats were missing. Be was the thief. His punishment was three days in the brig. The brig consisted of four pieces of portable runway strips held upright to form a cage. There was enough room to sit. He stayed in that cage for three days, and not allowed out for anything. I saw him every night and gave him food and cigarettes. He gave me a note asking me to talk to his commander the Captain. I spoke with my friend the commander but backed off realizing I was interfering with his authority. I kept that note in my wallet for 20 years. I'm not sure why, but I finally let go on my visit to The Wall, and left his note there. When the three days passed, I never saw Be again. Tiep told me Be was assigned somewhere in Saigon, but he did not know where.

Baldy: A private, no a lower grade, lower than the lowest grade. A simple man. Not a hair on his head. Not even eyelashes on his pockmarked face. Baldy's smile beamed between jug-ears that could double as beer mug handles. He was proud to be a friend of an American. He had a rare talent, eating coke bottles. I was astonished the first time he bit the end of a coke bottle, chewed and crunched it, and swallowed the mouth full of glass. I invited friends to come out and see the glass eating man, Baldy. Such a small insignificant man. His voice was down the corridor and I thought I heard him say, *Welcome to the Hotel California.*

The May Offensive was a tense time at the fort. The RVNA's and the 377th SPS made many preparations. The entire fort was equipped with claymore mines. Old sandbags were replaced with 55-gallon drums filled with sand. Extra troops were posted at night. A Rapid Response Team for the CONUS was sent to TSN. My bunker went from a three-man position to a 21-man unit. The new troops were like every new troop, scared. Intelligence reported that TSN would be hit tonight, and the likely point of attack was my 055 gate. The commander made his rounds every hour. Tiep was stationed nearby. All my friends were on post that night, and we were prepared for a fight. We were in this together.

Some time around 0200 hours Tango 10 called Central Security Control, "CSC this is Tango 10, we're picking up rocket flashes off to the north." Just as I heard Tom's transmission I heard the strangest whooshing sounds in the night sky. KABOOM, KABOOM, KABOOM. Rockets were hitting 200 meters behind my position, and close to Tom's Tango 10. I knew that a ground attack would come in directly under the rockets. I was on the highest point on the fort, looking through binoculars for the ground assault. The white headstones played tricks on my eyes, but I was looking hard for any sign of movement. When I was satisfied nothing was out there, I let my vigil down. I looked around and saw the eighteen new troops curled into balls behind 55 gallon drums. I laughed for a minute, then paused to think about how disassociated with death I had become. They were right to take cover, but more importantly, we needed to be aware of what might happen.

The new troops were pulled the next day. But I spent the next week on post. No problem, my friends took care of me. We didn't want for anything, not even beer. So I called up the Captain, "Please bring me my wine." The days following the May Offensive brought a new realm into my New World. A small pub was just outside the Fort's white walls. The

days were too hot to sleep and I would spend my time at the pub, shooting pool, talking with my Vietnamese friends, and drinking warm Tiger beer. A care package from home arrived, and had five boxes of beef jerky. Ah, beef jerky and warm Tiger Beer; things just don't get any better than that. Our conversations rarely talked about the war itself. Mostly politics, and occasionally, how Nixon would win the war.

The children played in and around the pub. They were so small and slight. With coal black hair, and deep black eyes. It was unusual for me, barely more than a kid myself, to notice the children. But they were so precious, so shy, so ... happy. They had nothing and they were happy. I wrote home asking for all the small toys they could send. BINGO! Christmas in July. The toys included small dolls, balls of all colors and sizes, toy cars and trucks, the list went on and on. I sat by the community well, surrounded in a sea of kids. They screamed and hollered anxious for that special toy that would be theirs. I sat and laughed as I was swamped in a sea of kids. There was no doubt how little they had as they raced away with their own special treasure. All the adults came out to watch. They were happy to see their children happy, just like any parent would on Christmas Day. What a lovely place. A smile on every face. I miss their smiles, and I miss them.

Mirrors on the ceiling and pink champagne on ice. As time went on, I became more involved in the daily life and routines at the fort. At night a domino game was always cracking on a table. I could hear the bricks slap the table like the crack of an M-16. This was a serious game and I watched for many nights before I was invited to sit in. I always refused opting to watch the charisma of the players making outstanding plays. There was pride in their skills, and their open display of ability allowed them to show the American just how good they were.

With their steely knives. The fort was becoming my world. I was no longer in-country. I was with family

and friends. I was allowed to blend in whenever and wherever I wanted. At the time, everything seemed so natural. But as I reflect on my experience at the fort I think of what a privilege I had to live, work, and grow close to a beautiful gentle people. People who reached out with their kindness and understanding to a stranger far from home. I now find it difficult to leave that beautiful place, a place that became my home. We haven't had that spirit here since 1968. How can I tell you what it is that won't let me leave the Hotel California?

Lt. Ngngen Tat Tiep. He was as tall as I, a full face, a soft gentle manner and voice with a French accent covered the fact that he was Vietnamese, a North Vietnamese. Tiep was born in Hanoi. When the Communist came to power many educated people died. Tiep's father was a doctor. One day the Communist came to his house and took his father away. He was never seen again. Tiep's Mother fled to Saigon with the rest of his family. We spent many days together, talking about the war, his family, my family, Vietnam and the U.S.. Our talks would often take place at the pub.

I remember one day we had a bit too much Tiger Beer which was usually served on ice. I avoided all local water and generally drank my beer warm. It went straight to my head. I took Tiep's Honda for a ride on the perimeter road, a combination dirt and gravel back road. The alcohol glazed my judgment and good sense, and I crashed the Honda. Tiep's first reaction was anger. I had just wrecked his prized possession. Then he saw the blood running down my leg and his mood changed to compassion. The injury was mostly superficial but it hurt like hell. Tiep cleaned me up, bandaged my knee, and made sure I was OK. He never said another word about the wrecked Honda.

Tiep taught me Vietnamese and I helped him with his English, and again, the family back home came through for us, sending a supply of phonics books. Later that year, Tiep got married and of course I was at the wedding. After Tiep and his wife set-

bled in I was often invited to their house for skinny-chicken meal. What an honor, Tiep was my best friend. I believed in the war because of Tiep's experience. We were fighting Communism. I didn't see our efforts as barbaric. War was war, and not meant to be pretty. To this day I believe our first intentions were in the right place. If only the rules would have been in our favor?

Like most Vets, I regret that I didn't maintain contact with friends, with Tiep. When Saigon fell to the North, I could only wonder what happened to him. Did he die in a battle? What would have happened to him at the hands of the North? Did he escape and find refugee in the states? I often relate to Dith Pron in the *Killing Fields*. I hope that some day we'll be reunited and my worst fears put to rest.

Now, I start my search for Tiep. Any and all suggestions will be greatly appreciated. I need to do this for Tiep; I need to do this for me. I need my own version of closure.

I've wondered why things happened the way they did, and it's sometimes difficult to understand the way things are now. There were so many losses, but at the same time, there were many wonderful things to remember. God put me in these things, although I don't pretend to understand His infinite wisdom, and I place myself in His hands. We search for the truth; we search for the meaning and the reasons of our-war, then and now. But God knows the truth. He loves us all. He is with us now as he was without us then. He is our peace.

Welcome to the Hotel California, you can check out any time, but you can never leave.

I would like to dedicate the story of Hotel California to the Vietnamese people, a beautiful people, Vietnamese Veterans, and of course to Tiep.

Den



REVETMENTS

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Sometimes as the day ends, as the sun goes down so does our smiling spirits and it might cause us to suffer emotional collapse. We have watched a couple of "News" programs (news?) and stopped the busyness of a day with now time to meditate on this day, time and events, those things happening in the world outside of our life but affect us regardless of where and who we are.

The short month of February, the month of "Brotherly Love" and the National Presidents birthdays, the love comes from Valentine's Day and the other because of two great presidents' birthdays in the month. I don't need to tell you this entire lesson, you are all aware of the events but the beginning of these thoughts brings a separation of the Days of Love and National Pride somehow is divided from the depressions of the day's histories.

It is very important and necessary to have a resource to ease the one we call "a low feeling" and also celebrate the spirit of love.

I am going to divulge a much hidden secret, one some have rarely realized. It is called the Scriptures, The old and New Testaments and also the spiritual wirings of the centuries. A year or so ago TSNA's "Little Sister" Janice gave the Chaplain a Bible in the wording of the King James Version in the "Old English Language". It rests beside my Greek N.T. and Hebrew O.T. All these contain the reminder that daily love and comfort comes in a long and world-wide openness to find the true meaning of comfort in each day's problems, sorrows and personal needs. Here now we have the resource, the honesty for the month of Love. It is possible to find that needed comfort at the end of each day, the love of God and the fellowship of those near us.

Announcement: I'm not going to write down for you the true message of these pages; I'll let you all read them

for yourselves! This text for February is part of that very long 119 Psalm, verses. 129 thru 144. You will find the good light of the day and be blessed.

End of Sermon

Chaplain Bob Chaffee

A GOOD QUOTATION

(The following reminds me of all TSNA Members and those who served in ALL Armed Forces of the USA)-Editor

From Ira Cooperman
7th AF Intel
65-66

A person acknowledged for his scientific brilliance once said the following:

"Strange is our situation here upon Earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that we are here for the sake of each other, above all, for those whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls to whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy.

"Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of others, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received and am still receiving."

-- Albert Einstein

Many thanks for all you have given and continue to give to me and so many others. May you continue to enjoy friendship and good health in the years ahead. Happy New Year!



I went outside to find a friend
But could not find one there;
I went outside to be a friend,
And friends were everywhere!
Payne

Tan Son Nhut Association 2014 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 _____

NAME OF YOUR GUEST(S): _____

PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

REGISTRATION FEES

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING _____ X \$75. = _____

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (NO EXTRA COST)

- Access to the TSNA Hospitality suite in Royale FGHIJ, (drinks, snacks, and war stories!) - \$15. daily if purchased separately.
- TSNA Friday Banquet buffet dinner. \$30 if purchased separately.
- Saturday morning plaque dedication ceremony. Details to follow later.
- Please circle which activities that you are paying for separately.
- Free airport shuttle service.
- Free parking.
- Free WIFI.
- Free hot breakfast buffet.
- Honored guest speaker is Navy CMDR Paul Galanti, a POW in N Vietnam for nearly 7 years.

Your room rate has been group discounted to \$92.00 per night, plus tax. This rate will be honored up to three days prior to and two days following the reunion. The reservations phone number at the Holiday Inn Evansville Airport is 1-888-465-4329. **Hotel reservations must be made no later than May 27, 2014 to receive this special rate.**

PAYMENT MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN MAY 30, 2014

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

Reunion begins Thursday, 6-12-2014
Reunion ends Sunday, 6-15-2014



REMEMBERING DEAN

By: Susie Ahrens
377th Services Squadron

When I saw the posting of Dean's passing on the TSNA website, my heart sank and I was saddened, especially to see the unit where he served in Vietnam – 377th Services Squadron. This was the unit I also served at TSN from 1969-1973, and had so many memories that I will cherish till the day I die.

Dean was there in 1969 when Lt Col Robert Pianowski was the Commander of the Squadron, and TSgt Bradshaw was the First Sergeant, I learned later on that TSgt Bradshaw was like a father to all the young men in the unit. He took care of them in many ways. I was Col Pianowski's secretary, and we were all in a small building located behind the base theater, and surrounded by the Airmen's club, NCO's club, Officers' Club and the Cafeteria.

I remember vividly how I got the job with the 377th Services Squadron which turned out to be the best job of my working life. After a couple of years at the Tape Center, I got restless and wanted to move further, so I went to the Personnel Office and took a test for a higher position. I passed the test so Personnel placed me in one of their divisions and my new job was to recruit hutch maids for the entire base. The job was not what I expected because of a Vietnamese supervisor whom I reported to and all the political crap going on daily so I was again, looking around for other opportunities.

One day, that opportunity walked thru the door and it was Lt Col Pianowski, who came in to look for a couple of hutch maids, as he was over the Base Housing. We got to talk and work together and when he learned that I was looking for another job, he created that job for me, and I gladly became his secretary.

Col Pianowski was the best boss in the world and I was treated like a favorite daughter. There was him, the First Sergeant, a Chief clerk and me working in the Orderly Room. Col Pianowski was the Commander over all dining facilities (we had 4 at the time), the base Housing (barracks) and the Clothing Sale store. Dining Hall #1 (later on became #4) was the biggest in SE Asia, open 24 hours and fed about 10000 men a day. What I liked the best about the job was to accompany Col Pianowski every where he went and met almost every man in the unit. I don't doubt that I met Dean at least once, only we did not know each other, as all the men in the unit had to come in the Orderly Room for some business during their tour of duty as we handled their personal files and other admin functions.

Our office moved to the 1200 area later on to an annex building of Dining Hall #1. I got to know and was befriended by the men working in the mess hall, and all the Vietnamese workers as well. Mr Minh was a Manager, and the secretary, Phuong, who became one of my closest friends.

Every day I would take a Lambretta from the main gate to work for what was equivalent to a dime. Sometimes I would walk and enjoyed the morning breeze, got my daily exercise, and waved to the guards at the two Radar Towers. At lunch time, I would meet friends at the swimming pool by the Service Club in the 1200 area, we would eat lunch, or swim and be silly. Those were fun days, and not a care in the world.

I went on working for the 377th Services Squadron until 1973 when all US armed forces pulled out of VN. I worked with Lt Col Baker, Lt Col Hotard, Major Choate, and lastly Major Shappell. During the last month, I typed up hundreds of Commendations for the men, saying goodbye to them one by one, and it was very sad for me to lose my job and all my friends.

During the 40 years here in the US, I only saw 3 men from 377 Services Sq. The first one was TSgt Reed, who lived in Virginia in 1975. He was the Chief clerk in the Orderly Room. I called him collect when I was in the refugee camp in Indiantown Gap, so Sgt Reed and his family (wife and 2 daughters) traveled to the camp and visited a couple of days. The second person was SSgt Leslie, whom I contacted when I lived with my sponsor in Boulder City, Nevada as I kept in touch and knew where he was. SSgt Leslie was working as a chef in Las Vegas. He came to Salt Lake to visit once then we eventually lost touch. And my boss, Major Shappell, as he passed thru Salt Lake one time, we had dinner together. He later retired from the service and moved to Seattle, WA.



More 

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

Dean was the only TSNA member who was in the 377th Services Squadron, I didn't know him well, but was so glad to meet him and his devoted wife Debbie at the 2012 Dayton reunion, where he presented me with a Service Award, and an Air Force rug for a souvenir. It was fun reminiscing about the people we knew. I felt a special bonding with him and it seems like a big loss for the TSNA family now that he's gone. I want to thank him for his service in VN, I wish we gotten to know each other when he was at Tan Son Nhut, but I guess it did not matter, we met finally and shared a common bond and interest. I will miss seeing him at the TSN reunion, and upon the news of his passing, as a Buddhist, my prayer for him would be " May your spirit soar to an eternal bliss " and as a member of the TSNA, I'd say "Rest in Peace, brother".

1st year with 834th. I lived in Bldg. 864. Worked only on C-130's.

2nd year personnel of 834th merged with those of the 460th TRW and we became the 377th CAMS. Worked C-7's, C-54's, C-118's, C-123's, C-140's, T-39's, Cessna 0-2's, OV-10's, HH-43's and transient aircraft.

Robert G. Warren
834th AD Det. 1, then 377th CAMS
Sep 70-Jun 72

I was online and saw your newsletter. Then I saw that Jim Stewart received an award for helping out the poor and helpless. So I asked Jim to loan me \$180. for Life Membership. He said here's \$80. for five years you !

I arrived in Vietnam, drank lots of warm beer, went to Bangkok 3 times, and then went home 3/29/68.

Thanks.

John F. Langley
377th SPS
Mar 67-Mar 68



TSNA 2014 BUDGET

	2013 BUDGET	2013 TO DATE	2014 BUDGET
CASH INFLOW			
BX Income	2,000	3,378	2,500
Donations			
General Fund	600	1022	700
Memorial/Legacy	200	603	400
Membership Dues	4,000	3,788	3,500
Dues—Into Reserve	2,500	2,992	2,500
Reunion Income	8,000	16,383	8,000
TOTAL INFLOW	17,300	28,166	17,600
CASH OUTFLOW			
Administrative Expenses	1,500	788	900
BX Expenses	1,300	2,117	1,500
Membership Admin. & Retention	1,300	632	1,100
Legal	1,600	1,525	1,600
Memorial	300	0	0
Outreach	----	500	600
Reunion Expenses	15,000	15,634	18,000
Revetments	1,000	812	1,000
TOTAL OUTFLOW	22,000	22,008	24,700

NOTE: 2013 data as of December 28, 2013

TET '68 MY STORY

By William Brewer
616 Military Support Squadron (MAC)
1967-68

So there I was lying in my bunk after having a good run at acey-ducey. My helmet was stuffed with military script and I had just slipped off to sleep. KA-BAM!!! Well Hell, that got my attention; I'd heard that sound before.

"INCOMING!" Someone yelled. I thought: "well no kidding Sherlock"- time to leave this fire trap of a hooch. Grabbed my fatigues, threw the script out of my helmet into my locker, snatched my boots and beat feet to the bunker. Just as I entered the dogleg of the bunker more 122mm rockets landed across the road; that motivated me to more rapidly ingress the bunker, except there was some idiot blocking my chosen path; he got tossed inside by the expedient of wrapping my arms around his scrawny body and flinging him forward.



Hooch after a 122mm rocket hit.

(Photo by Jim Benjamin via The Tan Son Nhut Association)

Having (finally) arrived in our beloved bunker, the rats who usually occupied the bunker vacated the premises. You could see them scurrying out the door even as more troops piled in. Guess they were more worried about us than being blown up by a random explosion.

I bummed a Camel from a fellow denizen of the bunker and we entertained thoughts about how long this would last. The consensus was probably about a 1/2 hour. I had just returned from a 179 day TDY in Bien Hoa where these mortar or rocket attacks happened with boring frequency, mostly lasting long enough to get everybody up and armed. The VC would usually leave the area before the Quick Reaction Force could get to them. Little did we know that this rodeo would last several days.

Though I hadn't experienced any attacks in Saigon, here I wasn't armed. I felt nek-kid.

A little later we started hearing small arms fire, that distinctive sound of an AK-47, some answering fire from an M-16. Huh! About that time an E-6 stuck his head in the bunker and asked for volunteers to augment the 377th Air Police Squadron to help defend against the VC who had penetrated the fence. "Hey Sarge, will we be issued weapons?" "You bet!" He sold me, I stood and followed him out the door with about 5 other troops. I wasn't staying there in a bunker unarmed; my Momma didn't raise any idiot children. [To any friends who might see this post and want to refute that statement. Remember I moderate the comments and I don't have to allow you any rebuttal ;-)] (Ed. From his blog) We wound our way to the HQ of the Air cops and joined another 40 or so troops waiting to get our weapons issue, vests, and ammo, lots of ammo. Well, I remember getting 4 mags full. Hey, way better than I had earlier.

An old tough looking E-7 gave us our safety briefing. Number one on his list: DO NOT CHARGE YOUR WEAPON WHILE IN THIS FORMATION! So this "Delta Sigma" next to me says "oops" real quietly. I glance over at the dummy and he's trying to figure out how to "un-charge" his weapon, with his finger on the trigger! Before I can react other than lean away (luckily the muzzle is pointed towards the clouds) the weapon discharges. BANG!! That got everybody's attention. When the Ol' Sarge got in that poor fool's face, I was concerned I would get splattered with whatever was left of the boy. That boy got to meet new and interesting people, he also was un-volunteered. I did see him later, filling sand bags, so he did contribute to the effort.

To be continued (maybe; the story gets harder to tell the more I write. We'll see)

WHICH WARS WERE WE WORKING??

Our TSNA Cheerleader, Janice Jones, recently made an excellent suggestion.

The suggestion came about because she recently received an obituary of one of our members; and in that obit, there was mention that he had served in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam.

So NOW—HOW MANY OF YOU DID THE SAME?

And, HOW MANY OF YOU SERVED IN KOREA AND VIETNAM?

Please write to me at: lfrv2@dejazzd.com, so we can all read your stories of your career.

Thanks.

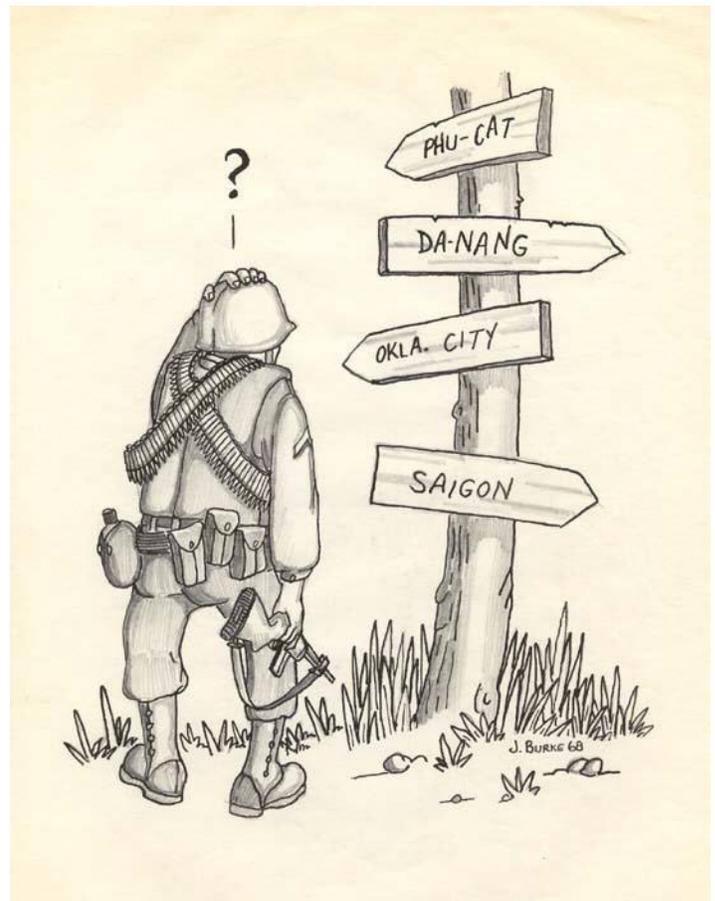
Larry

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

NEW MEMBERS



Mr. Garry L. Arndt	OH	garryarndt@roadrunner.com	Aug 69 - Aug 70	4th SOS (AC-47 Gunship) DaNang
Mr. Gerald E. Johnson	IA		Aug 71 - Aug 72	377th CAM Transportation Maint.
Mr. William R. Meigs	GA	wrmeigs@att.net	May 66 - May 67	6250 CSG

IN MEMORIAM

Mr. Peter D. Umbras NY Life Member Jun 68 - Mar 70 377th Combat Support Group-CBPO

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