



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

MARCH 2014



Our webmaster, Charles Penley has created another great graphic for the Tan Son Nhut Association.

Thank you, Charles, for all your work on these type of things and also for your continuing work on the Tan Son Nhut Association website.

We all appreciate it!



This graphic really shows the fact that our organization is:

ALL INCLUDED

NONE EXCLUDED

HOW MANY CONFLICTS??

(In answer to the article in the Feb. issue)

I served in Korea 2/14/1951 to 2/20/1952; Vietnam 6/1965—6/1966.

Have an article I will send at a later date.

Walter Duke

HI LARRY,CAN'T CLAIM 3 WARS ,BUT SAW DUTY IN VIET NAM AND DESERT STORM AND I ASSURE YOU,THAT WAS ENOUGH.

HOPE ALL IS WELL.

WELCOME HOME

LANCE COAR

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

The late Nelson Mandela in one of his most meaningful moments of speech said "We should use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right" and William Penn's earlier words ring a clear note "Time is what we want most but what we use worst". In this "time" when many of us are spending time studying the tax forms these words seem to have meaning.

There is a multitude of sayings about time and the way we use it but the guiding theme is summarized best by good old Ben Franklin "Lost time is never found again".

A lot of religious thought on "time" is found in the Old Tes-

tament book of Ecclesiastes chapters 8 and 9. The words define what and who we really are. As we age we realize that past events were "time" and today is also important TIME. As our fellowship in our Association has brought us together in time it also calls on us to share ourselves and our time with each other in its most meaningfulness. We gather together and as we face each other for just a moment time stops and memories hold us.

Interestingly I write this "Corner" on Presidents Day and find it fitting to close it out with words of a great one, Abraham Lincoln, "The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time".

End of Sermon
Chaplain Bob Chaffee

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

Assigned to a two story open bay barracks at MACV Hq. Compound, TSN. Taught at a VNAF language school bordering Saigon Golf Course. Army, Navy, and Air Force each had branch-specific English schools in the Saigon-Cholon area. Language training was part of the Vietnamization program. Vietnamese military personnel, upon graduation, were sent to various tech schools in the US to train for specific duties and then returned to SVN to replace Americans who were performing those jobs.

Ed Stutz
Det. 11, 1131st Special Activities Sq
Advisory Team 62 (AFLS) Hq. MACV
Sep 69-Sep 70.

I lived in the 1200 area.

THE CONNECTION

By: Susie Ahrens
TSN - 1967 - 1973

I've been in the US for 38 years, and have always been homesick for Tan Son Nhut AB and everything/everybody related to it as I spent my most impressionable years on the base. It is where I started all my training for the English language, for different skills, where I started adulthood, started making friends, some for fun, some for life, and to understand a little bit about the importance of human relations.

Despite the war, life seemed normal enough. I have always been a "people" person so I made lot of friends along the way. It was easy on the base, as people ran into each other almost everywhere and all the time. I made hundreds of GIs friends. They came and went, and some left real footprints and fond memories in my heart. I made lot of Vietnamese civilian friends who worked at different parts of the base as well. When the GI's left in 1973, we bonded together, looking for jobs with the ICCS so we still could work together. Tan Son Nhut was the place where I grew up, and the playground where I and all my friends lived, worked, played and created so many memories.

Being away from TSN has been as hard as being uprooted from my home in VN. I often think about the "good old days" at TSN and all the people I associated with, wondering where and how they are. I spent a lot of time trying to remember each person, each event. The old age sets in and it's sad but inevitable that some of them begin to fade and get fuzzy.

Being a member of the TSNA, a lot of memories have been brought back. Here we have a group of a few hundred people, scattered all over the country, living different lives, trying to put the memories together like a puzzle and it's always a joy when someone brought up something or some-

place, and everyone else chipped in to make the story complete, or more interesting. The members post stories, pictures, questions etc. Curiously enough, there were still a lot of unanswered questions and misconceptions about various subjects, places, and people. There is still so many heavy hearts and "wondering" out there.

When I attended the TSNA reunion in Dayton, Ohio, I was very touched to hear many members talking and asking about their Vietnamese friends, co-workers, and acquaintances. They were genuinely concerned about the safety and well-being, and feeling guilty of leaving those people behind. Some of these feelings have been haunting those members all these years. I wish I knew all their friends, and I wish I had good answers for them. I wish everyone could be reunited.

Then a small miracle happened, just this month. I had the pleasure of connecting a couple of people with their old friends from the TSN days. A member of the TSN forum (Bob P) randomly asked me if I knew a Nancy Thanh who worked at the R & R office on the base, and another member (Bob W) saw photographs of the girl working at the base library and remembered her by name (Do Thi Minh). Both members befriended with the girls while serving at TSN, and both have expressed to me how they wondered and were concerned about them since the end of the war.

It turned out both of these girls are my very dear friends and we are still keeping in touch. Minh still lives in VN and Nancy in Houston, I called Nancy and she is very delighted to hear about her "long lost friend". Bob P sent me pictures of Nancy taken in 1971 and so I made some prints and sent them to her, Nancy recognized Bob right away and we spent an hour on the phone talking about the old friends from TSN. I also contacted Minh via email to tell her about Bob W and of course, she remembers him vividly as his friendship at the time

made quite an impact on her. The two are now corresponding by emails and they are both very glad to have found each other. I also got to meet another member, George, who lives in the same city with me and it was a nice "reunion" even though we'd never known each other before. It felt like seeing an old friend again and now I can understand why the TSNA board refers to all members as Brothers and Sisters. George also worked at the CBPO at TSN in 1971 with another Vietnamese friend of mine (Jackie Phuong), and when I told her about George, she seems to remember him vaguely.

It is totally amazing to me how the world is so big, but yet seems so small, and when people connect, there is no time and space, just human feelings and lasting friendship in the hearts. I hope I can do more to bring people together, even for a moment on Facebook or email. It's a greatest feeling to be the "bridge" and bring some consolation and a little joy in people when they know their friends are still all right somewhere. And on the same token, the Vietnamese friends feel the same way about their GI friends from TSN days and have been missing and wondering about their old friends whom they've kept as fond memories in their minds and hearts.



Bob P and Nancy Than—"back then"



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.

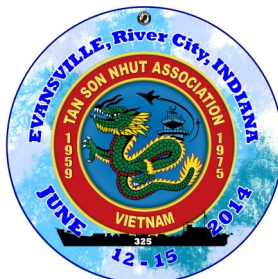
Your room rate has been group discounted to \$92.00 per night, plus tax. This rate will be honored up to three days prior to and two days following the reunion. The reservations phone number at the Holiday Inn Evansville Airport is 1-888-465-4329. **Hotel reservations must be made no later than May 27,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



By: MSgt. Arnold Lilly
377th SPS
Mar 72 – Mar 73

My orders to Vietnam sent me to DaNang AB but upon arrival there I was re-directed to Tan Son Nhut AB. I was assigned to the 377th Security Police Squadron with duty as Flight Commander of "Charlie" Flight Law Enforcement. "Charlie" Flight worked night time duty from 10 PM to 6 AM. My duty was very routine compared to that of my predecessors. We were responsible for the safety and security of everything in the cantonment area. The threat of war existed but our daily intelligence briefing was the stimulus to not take things lightly. Every night the flares were dropped by the aviators that reassured us that others were vigilant also. The major combat units were withdrawing from their out-post assignments. Most of them traveled through TSN and in many cases acted a little rowdy before they boarded their freedom bird. We were aided by the curfew that made those that had been to the city of Saigon return early in the night. In addition the Vietnam bars on base were off limits to US troops and our focus generally was in the barracks areas where people gathered.

Upon my assignment to duty I was replacing a man on "Charlie" Flight who was the manager of the Theater 1 and he hooked me up with duty there as well. We showed the movie three times during the day time under the control of the Morale, Welfare, Recreation Officer. Another group showed the evening schedule of the same movie. The movies were picked up from and returned to the MACV Compound about once a week.

When I was assigned to Vietnam I did not know what to expect. I was sent to Lackland AFB, Texas for Combat Preparedness Training where I was exposed to information about events and doctrine by veterans of the conflict. The training motivated me to per-

form my duty and uphold the traditions my predecessors had established. I was aware that their actions had provided my generation with equipment and support. They had paid the price of being without resources and support for all those of my time. My job was to follow tradition so they could see that their efforts were not in vain.

We experienced four stand-off attacks during my tour. The first was April 14th where two rockets landed behind the Base Exchange which was adjacent to the Security Police Barracks. One exploded harmlessly and the other was a dud properly cared for by Explosives Ordnance Disposal personnel. The other attacks were in September on my wedding anniversary, December 6th and January 28th to celebrate the "cease fire" agreement being signed in Paris.

The conclusion of the war was hastened by the escalation of the air war against enemy troop positions in South Vietnam and North Vietnamese cities and infrastructure. This air war was largely staged by bombers based outside of Vietnam. The 7th Air Force Command Post was aware of the planned air strikes and informed us when strikes were planned in our general area. I became aware of one planned strike's time and location that was to occur while I was on duty. Prior to the strike I joined the sentries on top of the Tango 1 and watched as the operation unfolded. It was a sight to behold, and an experience I'll never forget.

Another unforgettable experience took place in the summer that involved me alone. A break-in occurred at the main BX and because of the curfew restrictions we had to go to Saigon and pick up the BX Manager to check the inside of the BX. Afterward I transported him back to his quarters in Saigon. During my return to Tan Son Nhut I encountered sniper fire that passed through my jeep. It was so close I felt the heat of the bullet on my chin. The sniper probably slept through a phase of his classroom

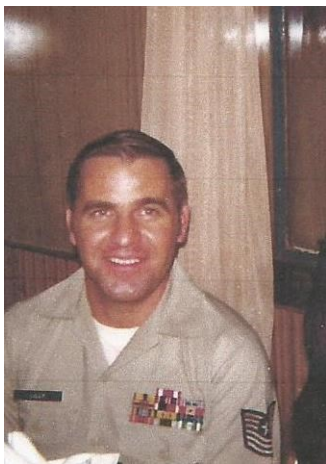
training and I survived that ordeal. The eggs at San Francisco were somewhat easy by comparison.

I departed Vietnam on the next to last plane March 29, 1973 after some ceremonial farewells by the Vietnamese Base Commander and Colonel Odell, Base Commander. The last plane carried the command element. As we prepared to board our plane for our departure we encountered a delegation led by North Vietnamese Lt. Col. Bui Tin. Apparently the Treaty Agreement sanctioned their actions and permitted them to stand at the boarding ramp. They faced off with each US military member and made a note on their clipboard. I was glad they allowed me to pass without consequences because I was eager to go.

We landed in San Francisco and were met by the anti-war crowd. They had been informed that we were the last warriors from Vietnam and were pumped up to spill their venom. TV news people put microphones in our face and asked "What's it like to be a baby killer?" The crowd spat on us, called us profane names and chanted "baby killers." There was very little visible crowd control. There were a couple dozen troops who worked with me during my last shift in Vietnam among the passengers. We wanted to rearrange their body parts but military discipline prevailed. I passed through Chicago and Cincinnati on my way home and the public citizens there were no different but they were not as organized as those in California and fewer in number. Needless to say that experience caused some post war sentiment and I personally carried it with me for a long time. I retired from the Air Force five years later with the events of the conflict in Vietnam and thereafter still fresh in my mind. I did not discuss my experiences for approximately 39 years after I left Vietnam. My family greeted me properly, but I cut off everyone else in the conversation. I proudly did my duty tour. Those who disapproved of the war and my participation have not succeeded if they intended to instill

insanity or feelings of guilt. I did not start the war but I helped end it and did my utmost to protect and supervise those in my charge as I was tasked to do. I own my actions and have no regrets.

I tell everyone I was the guy who turned out the lights. My flight worked the last Law Enforcement duty shift in Vietnam. We did not have a relief so we turned in our equipment and went to the Air Terminal to board our departure flight. I stopped at the Chapel and viewed the plaque honoring those killed in the December, 1966 attack on Tan Son Nhut. I had served with A2C John Cole guarding a missile site in Kansas and was very close to him. I paid my respects to him and those who perished during that attack. I experienced mixed feelings. I had several Vietnamese friends developed by working close with them in the daily duty tasks over the previous 13 months. They expressed their appreciation in numerous ways. On two occasions VNAF Commander General Tran Van Minh ("Big Minh") shook my hand, saluted me, and thanked me for my service to his country. He later became the President. I was completing my duty tour in one piece and all the troops assigned to my charge had completed their tour in one piece. I had entertained the base population in the day time and supervised their protection at night. Pride and joy prevailed.



TET AT TSN

By: Terry Love
1966 - 1968
1st Signal Brigade, U. S. Army

Larry-

Terry Love here. I was stationed at Tan Son Nhut from June 1966 until February of 1968. During that time, I lived in Camp Gaylor, just inside the main gate on the left hand side. I was with HHC, 1st Signal Brigade, Aviation Section. We had quite a few Bell UH-1s at the heliport, right next to the 120th Aviation Company - The Deans, and the Razorback platoon.

I was there during the Tet Offensive. I have NEVER seen so much fireworks in all of my life - the sky was full of red and green tracers !! Camp Gaylor was right on the concertina wire fence and road around the airfield - right on the edge, so we were very alert. Anyway, just north of Camp Gaylor, there were two radar towers covered in canvas. During Tet, some people got into the towers and were shooting down into Camp Gaylor at us. We returned fire, and shot the hell out of the towers. I would assume that they were very valuable radars under the canvas.

I never found out who or how many "people" there were in the towers. Does anyone know? I have heard stories of great variances - from one guy to a dozen to a mad Airman. I also assume that the towers were repaired and became functional again.

Cheers,

Terry Love

Larry-

Thanks for your email about my request of the radar towers. By the way, quite a few years ago, I submitted to the 1st Signal Brigade's website some photos of Camp Gaylor, just inside of the main gate on the west side of the street. It is where the 69th

Signal Battalion was located. The 1st Signal Brigade people posted my photos on their website. In the past, you had to be a member and sign into the website to view them. They have changed their policy, apparently, because now the photos can be seen without signing in. There are only 36 photos but they are all of Camp Gaylor. One of the photos in that bunch is a photo during the Tet Offensive showing the radar towers being shot at.



A Reminder

As announced in February Revetments, there is an election this year to select two members to serve on the TSNA Board of Directors. The positions are Director of Membership and Director at Large. The list of candidates and instructions for voting will be announced in the May issue.

You may declare your own candidacy to run, or you may nominate another member. Deadline for either activity is last day of this month – March 31. See last month's issue for details about running or nominating.

Dale Bryan, TSNA Secretary.

FAVORITE SAYINGS



Everyone has a photographic memory.

Some, like me, just don't have any film



NMUSAF—OTHER MEMORIALS

By: Garry Arndt, Retired Loadmaster (USAF)

I retired from The USAF after twenty years and stayed in Ohio near Wright-Patterson AFB, which has the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

Still being fascinated by aircraft and Military History, I visit the Museum at least once a month. I still find the old stories incredible, but find new ones all the time.

The Memorials really intrigue me because I wonder what the members of those organizations and groups went through during training and actual operations.

In 2012, I got in touch with some guys that called themselves the "SPOOKY Brotherhood". I was a loadmaster on the Spooky's at Da Nang, Aug-Dec 1969.

The chairman of the informal group was Junior Skinner. We started the process to place a Memorial Bench at the Museum.

The Museum does not have an AC-47D Spooky Gunship on display and very little information regarding the Gunship. The process to get the design approved, find a proper contractor and get the Bench placed took just over a year.



During this process, I found out about the Dedication Ceremony for the Loadmaster Monument being placed by the Professional Loadmaster Association. I joined that Association and attended the Dedication in 2012.



Also during this one year process, I walked throughout The Memorial Park at the Museum. I was notified that the 463rd Airlifters Association was placing a Memorial Bench in the Park.



(More on next page)

I was assigned to the 14th Aerial Port Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay in 1970 and rigged the ten and fifteen thousand pound bombs, Daisy Cutters. The 463rd Airlift Wing from Clark AB, the Philippines dropped the bombs. I flew two of the drops, but do not know any of the crewmembers.

Therefore, I joined the 463rd Airlifters Association. In the same section of the Memorial Park, I found the Tan Son Nhut Association Memorial. Being a loadmaster on C-130As from Okinawa, 1967-1968, I flew in and out of Tan Son Nhut many times.

Later, during May and June of 1970, I was sent to Tan Son Nhut to augment the 8th Aerial Port Squadron's "Mobility" Section, called the 'Flying Forklifts'.

Five-man teams, with a 10K Adverse Terrain (AT) Forklift were delivered by C-130 Aircraft to isolated airstrips along the Cambodian Border to support the Cambodian Invasion.

That was another connection that I had with Tan Son Nhut AB in Vietnam. Therefore, I joined The TSN Association.



Another loadmaster that I met at McChord AFB, WA., Lawrence Dobrenz was later assigned to the 8th Aerial Port Squadron at Tan Son Nhut. He died of a heart attack at Tan Son Nhut on 24 October 1966. His story is chronicled in the "Memorial Wall" section of the 8th Aerial Port Sq. website. Chris Hartley has been deeply involved with me and Lawrence's sister, Barbara, in telling his story.

Therefore, I am honored to be connected to four of the latest Memorials placed at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

REVETMENTS

Some of my memories and impressions of Vietnam 1967!

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

After leaving Minot AFB ND in December and making a stop at Fairfield AFB CA, where we had to qualify with the M-16 and M-60 in such things as combat fire and night fire. Also we covered booby traps, and grenades in how to use them even rifle grenades. Only later to find we were not allowed near a weapon, good military thinking. Then a bus trip to Travis AFB for our flight.

It was a long flight in a World Air 707 with three refueling/maintenance stops finally arriving at Tan Son Nhut about noon.

The following are some of my impressions:

- 1: Needless to say it was HOT and HUMID and smelled BAD, that was my first impression off the plane.
- 2: At in-processing I kept hearing thunder but no clouds, then realizing that was heavy artillery, second impression we are in a WAR zone.

Interesting things which occurred:

- 1: Day off runs to the Victory Restaurant, and a 33 or two.
- 2: Rode the Round Robin C-47 equipment run once and I thought we were going to crash on landing at Can Tho, as we did a struggling go around. It seems we had taken some ground fire. Ummm
- 3: From Can Tho to Bien Hoa the Vietnamese families we were transporting there all got air sick - did that gooney bird stink!
- 4: Our day out with Sgt Wah, to a Vietnamese restaurant and later the Saigon zoo and museum.
- 5: The day the bulldozer backed into our PMEL building next to where I was working and I thought we had been mortared.

Another impression: It rains at 4 PM every day in the summer, and monsoons will make you all wet!

Upon leaving my last impression was, glad I'm leaving and it is still HOT and HUMID and smells BAD.

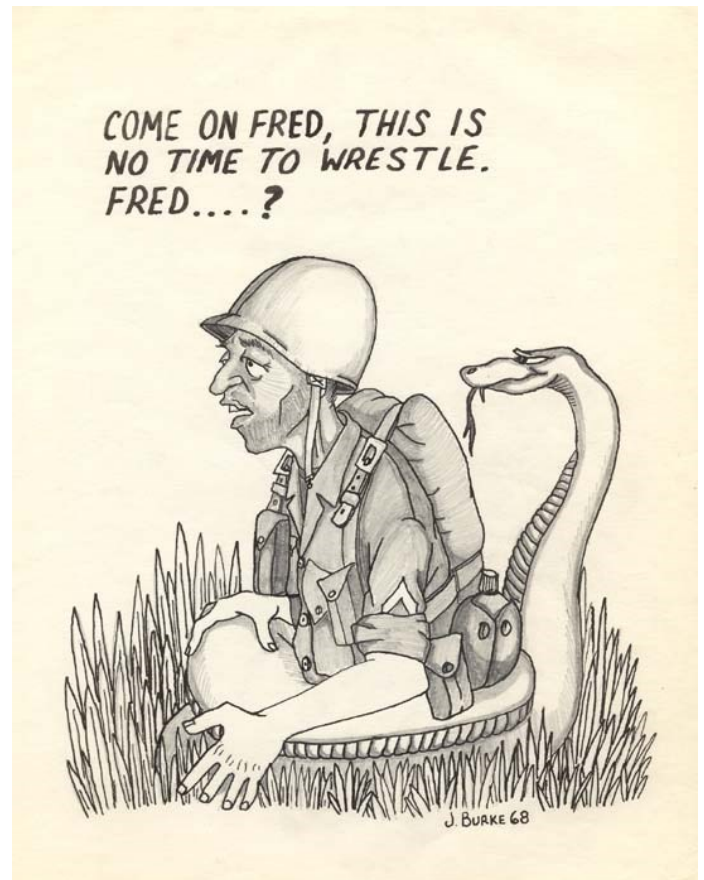
Oh yes a few minutes before loading time I finally got my weapon, a K-38 and 5 rounds but told not to load it. Amazing now they now trust me to be the armed guard on a classified shipment. Ummm

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Revetments is an official publication of the Tan Son Nhut Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564-0236
The Association is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt Veterans' Organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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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.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Heyward W. Hill SC bhpirateover40@aol.com July 70 - July 71 8th Aerial Port Squadron Line Loading
(Former member, "Renewed" to Life Member)

IN MEMORIAM

Mr. John C. Griffin WA Nov 70 - Aug 71 460th TRW, 12 TRS RF-4C Weapon System Operator (WSO)

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