



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

November comes and is an "Oh My???" emotional month. Just look at the historical days for 2014. Its starts out with the end day of Daylight Saving Time and All Saints Day followed by All Souls Day and then Election Day looms. There is another date to list: this Chaplain will list a year older by the calendar. Oh and don't forget November 11, Veterans Day!

Like most of the people of our land will be glad to see a few of the days of November pass. They think like the words of Harold Lowman: "Politicians say they are beefing up our economy. Most don't know beef from pork." Well said Hal!

So we come to the end of the month, Thanksgiving Day, the day of prayer and a time of family. Again I found a great quote for this day. It contradicts so much of the troubles of the earlier month. Pope Pius XI puts it right to the point "The family is more sacred than the state!"

The most important day for us as family is that of Thanksgiving! O Henry put it this way "There is one day that is ours. Thanksgiving Day is the one day that is purely American".

And so we end a much cluttered month and ends so worthwhile, Thanksgiving. It is a day of family, feasting, fasting and prayers.

Let's close with the words of the philosopher Kierkegaard: "Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays".

End of Sermon
Chaplain Bob Chaffee



MORE ON THE C-119 STORIES

I enjoyed your revetments immensely as I always do. I have to add to the C-119 story. I was surprised that they mentioned Columbus, Indiana since that is where I was born and raised and when I was a small kid they used to fly C-119's above the city all the time out by the airport.

Then the memory I have of the airport Bakalar Air Base was in July 1966 when I rode in a C-54 from our 12th Air Force HQ unit that flew in to do an IG inspection of the airbase. I got to go up front in the C-54 and lookout and it was a sight to behold for a low life SSgt of the Air Force. I worked with the pilot personally, Captain Richards.

When we landed however, the brakes went out completely and the only way to get the plane to quit moving without brakes was to keep making large circles in the grass area and around the flightline till we came to a complete stop.

My mom and dad and 2 younger sisters were there to pick me up at Bakalar Air Base. They must have thought that was how a plane normally landed since they didn't ask any questions.

Oh the memories of my Air Force career. I left for my first tour in Vietnam after that flight home in September 1966. I am glad all the aircraft I rode in thereafter did not have any brake problems.

Sincerely,

William R. Moffitt, Ph.D.
TSN Det. 1 834th Air Division
03 Feb 68 to 03 Aug 69
(C-130 aircraft)

VETERAN'S DAY CONCERT FOR VALOR

For perhaps the very first time, there will be a special concert on the National Mall on the evening of November 11. It is free and open to the public; large crowds are anticipated. (I have seen estimates ranging from 250,000 to 800,000.)

And it is big name talent. Performers scheduled as of late October include: Bruce Springsteen, Metallica, Eminem, Rihanna, Dave Grohl, Carrie Underwood, and the Zac Brown Band. There will also be appearances by Jamie Foxx, John Oliver, Meryl Streep, Steven Spielberg, and Tom Hanks.

If anyone not from the DC area is interested in attending, I will be happy to pass along the latest information on transportation changes (Metro, etc.) for the evening. Contact me at jcbesette@aol.com or 703-303-6723. (Do not even consider trying to drive and park; it won't be possible.)

This will be an event comparable in size to a Presidential Inaugural, and the planners are approaching it that way.

If you want to sit home and watch, the latest information says it will be televised live, starting at 7 pm, via HBO.

Carol Bessette



The Star Spangled Banner

In 1814, Francis Scott Key wrote the poem, Defense of Fort McHenry. The poem was later put to the tune of (John Stafford Smith's song) The Anacreontic Song, modified somewhat, and retitled The Star Spangled Banner. Congress proclaimed The Star Spangled Banner the U.S. National Anthem in 1931.

Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen thro' the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner: O, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O, thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
Between their lov'd homes and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!



ANOTHER BOOK RECOMMENDED

Suggested by Garry Arndt:

I thought you might like to know about a book I found out about and got a copy" *Warriors Remembered* "

Albert Nahas put together this book of over 100 Vietnam Veterans Memorials across the US.

From an introductory writing by the author "The single purpose of *Warriors Remembered* is to publicize Vietnam veterans memorials in all 50 states and to honor all those who spent many years creating them."

The book is arranged in nine regions to encourage you to visit memorials in your area.

In addition to encouraging folks to buy, read, and use this book, the author also suggests that we also: "continue to show respect and gratitude to our current generation of warriors returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Greet them with a thank you for their service and welcome them to the veteran's brotherhood."

He also wants to encourage participation in Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies in your community. And also particularly to join in on any occasion that honors Gold Star Families.

And finally he mentions, "Honor our past and current warriors to help ensure we can maintain the strong heritage of service that Americans have always valued."

It is a 240 page hardbound book. Check locally for it—and it is available from Amazon as well.

THE CARNIVAL OF VIETNAM, A REMF VIEW

(Copyright 2002 by Dan McKegney) danmckegney@comcast.net

I was an Air Force radio operator, a REMF (Rear Echelon Manpower Fellow) at Tan Son Nhut, 8/67-8/68, in the RVN (Republic of Vietnam). Tan Son Nhut Air Base was just outside of Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam and both of which are now in the dustbin of history. Things were fun and adventurous in Saigon in 1967.

There was booze, drugs, rock 'n roll, and all on the cheap. For a 20-year-old kid, Saigon appeared to be like heaven. I was out of sight and sound of my overly religious mother and 12,000 miles away from my home in California. My father was somewhere, but I didn't know exactly where or what he was up to. Well, by golly, I was gonna have some fun. After all, I didn't choose to go into the military or choose to go to Vietnam. So, I decided to satisfy my constant curiosity and have some fun in the process. I was in the rear area of the war, a safe place to be. It was a great scene, and war was nothing more than a carnival to me.

However, my perception of war changed at 0300 on 31 Jan '68, the start of the TET Offensive. It was then that the rear and the front dissolved into one chaotic mess of bullets, rockets, mortars, RPGs, parachute flares, gunships named Huey and Puff, Army howitzer shells whooshing above in the dark night, and the rattling of tanks and machine guns. I remember the look and the smell of death. I recall the somber faces of the survivors, the living, those of the 377th Security Police Squadron on Tan Son Nhut. It was the faces of the living whose soul had seemed to have departed that I recall most vividly.

After 34+ years, I'm soon to receive my VA disability for "service-connected" prostate cancer because of Agent Orange. Such a connection reminds me, once again, that the war continues its insidious ways and that REMF's paid then (I knew guys, yes, REMFs, who died there in '68). We REMFs are still paying, alongside our combat unit brothers.

Now, with some very serious diseases, I guess it's payback time for the carnival they made me attend when I was a kid.

You may find other of Dan's writings at the following URLs

<http://www.war-stories.com/aspprotect/sgn-mckegney-tudo-street-whizzer-1967-2.asp>

<http://www.vspa.com/tsn-o51-bunker-tet-mckegney-1968.htm>

THE PEA PATCH

By: David Butler
232nd Signal Company
Mar 62 - Mar 63

I was with the advance party of the 232nd Signal Company, 39th Signal Battalion which arrived in South Vietnam in March of 1962. We were among the first ground forces into the country. We didn't have a good feel as to what was happening, but we knew it wasn't particularly good.

We arrived well ahead of some of our equipment.

We had been there several weeks when about 6 o'clock in the evening a sergeant approached me stating "You are scheduled for Guard Duty tomorrow, but something has come up. Get your rifle and report to the Orderly Room right away. It will only be tonight, but you will receive credit for a full 24 hour tour of Guard." Hey, I thought. I can handle this. Pull guard for 12 hours max and I have a full day off. Wow, good deal!

Got my rifle and as I approached the Orderly Room tent, I could see another Private already there. A Warrant Officer came out as I approached and explained we were supposed to guard some trucks that had just arrived. He put us in a jeep and drove us out to a field which later became known as the "Pea Patch"

The Pea Patch seemed to be in the middle of nowhere. A chest high barbed wire fence enclosed a field of grass containing about 15 deuce and half's, lined up side by side. It was surrounded by tall grass. One side which I will call the "Top" was near a SVN Airborne barracks. To the right was about 100 yards of tall grass bordering a road that led to the Air Base at TSN. The bottom seemed to be just an endless sea of grass. The other side, was grass leading to a runway. It goes without saying, there were no lights and no communication with anybody once you were in the enclosure.

The Warrant Officer then proceeded to give us instructions before he left. His final words were "Now, I want you to walk this guard in a special way-----one man on each side of the trucks walking in the same direction at the same time. As you pass each truck ...look over and make sure your buddy is still there."

Uh Oh! Maybe this isn't going to be as good as I first thought!

The first tour of two hours wasn't bad as it was still daylight. A Vietnamese soldier caught a rat, skinned it and was going to make a meal for himself. He offered to share it, but I indicated that it was all his to enjoy.

The next tour was from about midnight to two in the morning. The Airborne barracks were empty. Apparently they were out on a night mission. The other guard and I were totally alone, in the middle of heaven knows where without any light or worse----communication.

Initially, it was uneventful. Then as we were walking our post, a sound came from somewhere among the trucks. A sound that we were told in Basic Training that "When heard in the darkness will make your blood run cold", -----the sound of the opening and closing of the bolt on a rifle. Immediately, my partner shouted "Halt". I slid between the trucks to cover him. It seemed an eternity. Nothing moved---no response to the challenge. I carefully moved out to him. While we kept our eyes on the trucks we held a brief conversation. He agreed as to what the sound was. I said "We're going to have to check each of those trucks." He whispered, "Yeah. Go ahead. I'll cover you." I silently slipped over to the line of vehicles, looked under each, looked in the back, moved to the front and opened the door of each cab. Each time I knew I was going to confront a Viet Cong armed with a machine gun. Didn't find a thing. We went back to walking our post.

15 minutes later we heard the same sound. Again, the other guard cried out "Halt". I slipped between the trucks to cover him. Again.....Nothing. Another conversation. Again it was agreed the trucks had to be checked. Again, I was elected to do the checking. (I don't know why.....I certainly had no intention of volunteering.) Back among the trucks I was now certain I would find the Viet Cong with the machine gun that I hadn't located the first time. Again.....found nothing. Went back to walking our post.

Shortly thereafter, a dog started barking out in the field towards the road. Couldn't see him, but the grass was so deep that you couldn't see anything that might be crawling through it. What is upsetting that dog?

Soon after that there was an explosion in the distance and a red glow in the sky. We could see the headlights of all sorts of vehicles racing up and down the road. We tried to figure out what was happening, but naturally could not. We went back to walking our post.

I walked up to the fence facing the Airborne Barracks. Nothing, no one, not a sound. Turned and started back the other way. Got about 15 yards and a voice speaking Vietnamese came from the field to my left and behind me. As I turned, in the moonlight, I saw a face with a helmet and a figure dressed in full combat gear. Instinct kicked in, the rifle came off my shoulder, safety clicked off, I backed up and dropped into a shallow hole, crouching with the rifle trained on him, shouted the appropriate challenge. Why I didn't pull the trigger I don't know. Good thing, as it turned out to be a Vietnamese guard asking what time it was.

The explosion turned out to be a generator that blew up on the airbase.

Never did see the dog or determine what he was barking at.

Neither did we figure out what the sound from inside the line of trucks was that had us rattled.

I do know that even though we performed our duty-----I was scared silly.

I wonder if that Vietnamese guard ever knew how close he came to being shot?



NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

Initially, upon arrived in '64, I was an E-5, SP5, Army Security Agency manual Morse intercept operator, and under the cover of Radio Research, was assigned as Assistant Trick Chief at White Birch collection site, located on the Vietnamese CGS compound, next door to TSN, out gate 2. In Aug 64, I was promoted to E-6, SSG as NCOIC of the Airborne Radio direction finding ARDF unit, 3rd RRU (Radio Research Unit). I served in that role through the remainder of my first tour, until Mar 65. I lived in an NCO hooch on Davis Station, in the far back corner of the airfield by a corrugated metal fence and a benjo ditch. Directed tasking of ARDF intelligence-gathering operations for both US forces and VNAF complementary units. We flew, at that time, Army U-6(Beaver) and U-8 (Iroquois) unarmed aircraft. I also took my turn on manifest rotation and flew combat intelligence-gathering missions. We lived in the tall chicken coops on Davis Station, with louvered/screen walls, but had a solid-walled club.

Upon assignment to Viet Nam for my second tour in early Sep 68, I was by then a Chief Warrant Officer-2, coming from an assignment on the East German border. I was assigned to the 224th Aviation Battalion (the outsized unit which had been 3RRU Air Section) to the S-3 (Plans & Operations) as the intelligence side of a two-man "standardization team" for the whole of 224. The 224th comprised five companies, up and down the full length of Viet Nam. They were 138th Avn Co (RR) at Da Nang, with one platoon at Phu Bai, In I Corps; the 144th Avn Co (RR) at Nha Trang in I Corps; the 146th Avn Co (RR) at Tan Son

Nhut, co-located with 224 Hqs in III Corps; and the 156th Avn Co (RR) at Can Tho in IV Corps. A fifth company, the 1st Radio Research Co. (Aviation) at Cam Ranh Bay, I Corps, was also a part of 224, but whereas the other four companies performed ARDF functions, 1RRC was a voice/Morse collection platform. But because of flying conditions differing over the IV Corps areas, and the target inventory was so varied, there was no standard of operations or flight throughout the battalion. I, and one other Warrant Officer Instructor Pilot were formed into a team to travel about the country, fly missions with all four ARDF companies, and from both operations and flight perspectives, try to develop some standardization that was practical. Naturally, it never could be, but a great deal was learned that was folded back into operational dictates. During my time in this role, I lived in the 509th Transient Officers billet in Cholon, and rode a bus to TSN every day for duty. After a couple of months, I moved to the Newport Army BOQ located adjacent to 3rd Field Hospital, just outside Gate 2 at TSN. I continued flying standardization and combat intelligence missions until 1 Jan 69 when I was transferred up-country to be the lead controller on the 1st RRC (Avn) missions (CRAZY CAT), until Aug 69. In both tours in flying duties, I was never targeted specifically in attacks, though in my first tour we were often in defensive positions about Davis Station because of incursions, by either VC or water buffalo. The ground fire we took was minimal, despite our low fly altitudes. The battalion did lose a number of planes over the periods I was there, but fortunately for me, not one of mine. Though there are a couple of stories

Now that's more than you ever wanted to know. Pick what you can use.

Robert J. Flanagan
3rd RRU/Air Section, Mar 64-Mar 65
224th Aviation Bn, Sep 68-Dec 68

During my tour at TSN, I primarily took raw film footage from Com. Doc. And edited it, added dialog and music, and produced the Identity 7th Commander Call Films. I also helped with 7th Air Force News newspaper and contributed articles to Stars & Stripes. I was in Quang Tri and Dong Ha for the Laos incursion in Feb 1971 (Lam Song 719) where we escorted civilian journalists and put dispatcher on aircraft. This activity was reported throughout the year for different operations.

Thomas A. Beardslee
HQ 7th Air Force
Nov 70—Dec 71



DANANG AIR BASE 2014

By: Jack Wimer
Hq. 7th Air Force Comm. Center
Oct 67 - Oct 68

Larry, spent a couple of days in DaNang and Hoi An. An interesting place is the old DaNang Air Base. All along China Beach are new Resort and Condo developments, mostly Russian and Chinese investors. The real estate along there is of prime value.

However, the air base, located in this same area, is vacant and deserted. almost as if the land is spoiled, or perhaps, contaminated by the presence of Americans at one time. The older generation, our age, are very bitter about the "American Bombs". They refer to the war as the "American War". They will not call the beach "China Beach", as that is an American name...Their children and grandchildren are like ours, mostly not interested, or not informed, about history. These pics I took from the highway along the air base. Note the apparent abandonment, the remains of the control tower, revetments still standing as if just recently vacated. Our radar bubbles on top of Marble Mountain, however, are still in use for air and sea traffic control. Next episode, Saigon. Jack.



The Silent Ranks

I wear no uniforms, no blues or army greens.
But I am in the military in the ranks rarely seen.
I have no rank upon my shoulders. Salutes I do not give.
But the military world is the place where I live.

I'm not in the chain of command, orders I do not get.
But my husband is the one who does, this I can not forget.
I'm not the one who fires the weapon, who puts my life on the line.
But my job is just as tough. I'm the one that's left behind.

My husband is a patriot, a brave and prideful man, and the call to serve
his country not all can understand.

Behind the lines I see the things needed to keep this country free.
My husband makes the sacrifice, but so do our kids and me.

I love the man I married. Soldiering is his life.
But I stand among the silent ranks known as the Military Wife.

--Author Unknown
Submitted by Harlan Hatfield



2015 REUNION

Fellow Members,

Your Board of Directors is working hard to make next year's reunion a success.

Once again we will be staying at the Mainstay Suites at 410 Pine Mountain Road. It is located a few blocks from the Parkway (the main road in Pigeon Forge) and is on the shuttle bus route. Their toll free phone # is 1-888-428-8350. Special room rates are \$88.68 during the week and \$105.52 on the weekends. These rates include tax.

Please mention our organization when you book your room. We are contractually obligated to rent a minimum number of room nights. If you do not mention our group or book at another rate, your room nights will not be counted for this purpose. This would trigger fees for using the hospitality suite and banquet room, which are now being provided at no cost.

The reunion officially begins on Wednesday, 5-27 and ends on Sunday, 5-31. Some of us will be there as early as Tuesday and will be leaving on Monday.

A 3 hour sight seeing tour of the Pigeon Forge-Gatlinburg area will leave the hotel at 10AM on Friday.

A memorial bench/plaque dedication ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, 10AM, on the river.

Saturday afternoon will feature a book signing by Joseph Galloway, author of "We Were Soldiers Once and Young".

An honored guest speaker has been contacted, but he has not confirmed yet.

And several honored guests have also been invited, with no confirmations yet.

We are also attempting to secure lower fares to and from the airport.

Please visit www.mypigeonforge.com for information on the Pigeon Forge area.

Thanks,

George



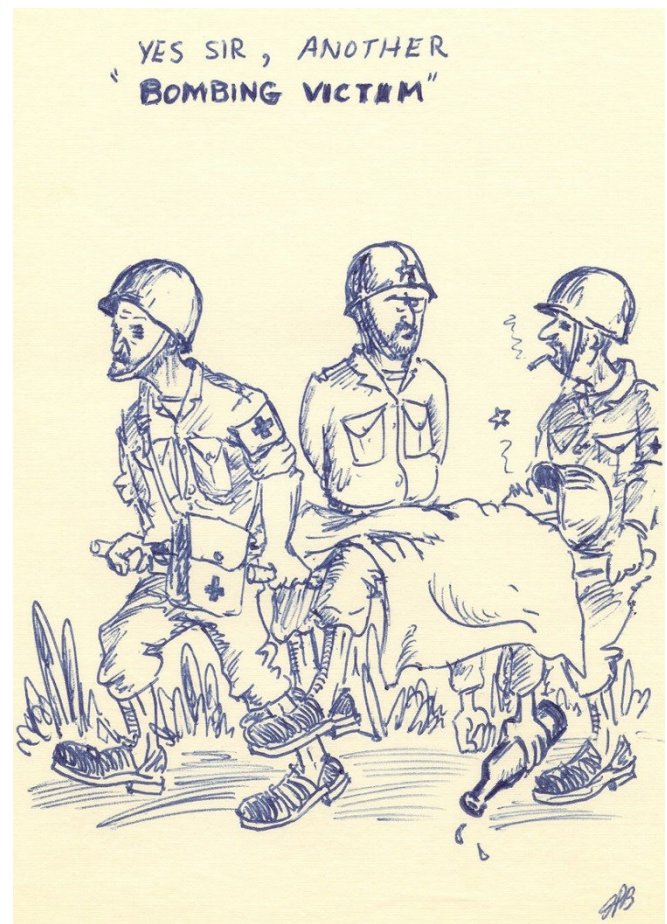
Tan Son Nhut Association
P. O. Box 236
Penryn PA 17564

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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Web Site: www.tsna.org

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.

NOVEMBER 11, 2014 AT THE WALL

This year our Treasurer, Carol Bessette, and TSNA Board Member and Director of Veterans Services, Joe Kricho will be marching in the presentation formation and accompanying our special wreath in the Annual Veterans Day Observance at The Wall.

This event is sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, and will be held at 1 PM at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.

We thank Carol and Joe for representing TSNA in this way. And we also thank Carol's husband, John, for his usual job of official TSNA photographer for the event.

If you are interested in participating in this event in the future, please notify our Secretary, Dale Bryan at: dale.bryan@gmail.com.

NEW MEMBERS



Mr. George G. Miller Wheaton IL geo8000@aol.com Oct 68 - Sep 69 377th Sup. Grp Finance
Mrs. Laurina Csordas Rome GA ascordas@att.net Wife of new Life Member Andy Csordas

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DON E. PARKER



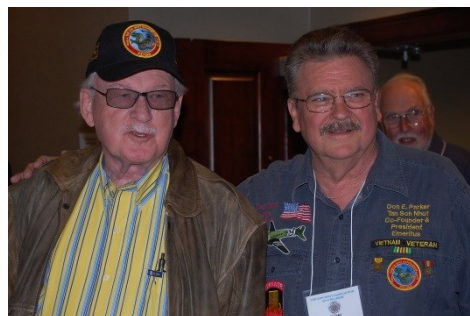
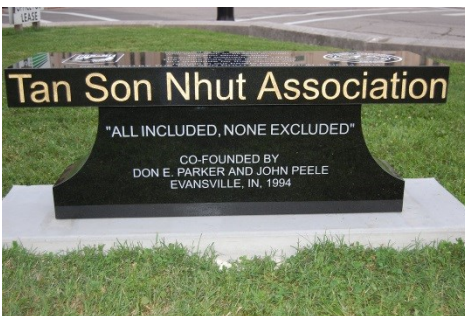
One of our valiant brothers, a co-founder of our Association, passed away suddenly on October 31, 2014. He will be sorely missed by all of us. May he Rest in Peace as he passes to his just reward.

Our 2014 reunion was held in his home territory of Evansville, IN. So wonderful that he was present for this homecoming. Evansville is where our Association was founded and the site of the first reunion.

There will be a missing man from the "formation" at our 2015 reunion, but his spirit will be in the hospitality suite, at the banquet, at the dedication of our bench at Pigeon Forge, and forever in our hearts.

From TSNA Chaplain Bob Chaffee:

Father, Thank You for each and every day You have blessed us here on earth. Thank You for Your tender mercies. Thank You for giving us friends and family to share joys and sorrows with. I ask you to bless my friends, relatives, brothers and sisters and those I care deeply for, who are reading this right now Where there is joy give them continued joy. Where there is pain or sorrow, give them your peace and mercy. Where there is self-doubt, release a renewed confidence. Where there is need, fulfill their needs. Bless their homes, families, finances, their goings and their comings. Amen





NOVEMBER 11th



At the National Museum of the U. S. Air Force



As they did last year, Johnnie Jernigan, Director of Marketing for TSNA, and others, will be placing a wreath at the Tan Son Nhut Association Memorial Bench and Plaques at the Museum's Memorial grounds, the morning of the 11th.



If anyone wants to help or just attend, please send him an email, and he will let you know the time. His email address is: jernigan1@ameritech.net.

