



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



DECEMBER 2017

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Brothers and Sisters, rejoice, for this is truly the most joyous time of the year, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

I was reflecting this morning on just how wondrous this event in human history has been, and what a profound effect His birth has had on the world.

During the fury of battle during World War II, between the German and American armies, at Christmas, even the horrors of battle ceased in order to celebrate His birth. There are many stories of soldiers from both sides who stopped fighting, and even got together around a fir tree to share bread and wine, our Savior's body and blood.

So as you gather to enjoy your Christmas dinner with family and friends, recall just how blessed we all are for the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and that God, our Heavenly Father cared enough to send His only Son to save each and every one of us.

May God bless, and keep all of you safe this Holiday Season, wherever you may travel.

May you have a blessed Christmas with loved ones.

By His Grace,

Associate Chaplain Paul A. Subbie

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

I was ground crew on C-123 for the 19th SOS from Nov. 66 to Feb. 69. I was on flightline for the first night and day of Tet.

I spent two months with the Ranch Hands.

In 1970 I was with the 17th SOS as a crew member on AC-119(Shadow) Gunship.

On Apr 28, 1970 I was med-evaced, after we crashed on takeoff of Shadow 78.

Allen Chandler
19th SOS 1966-1968; 17th SOS 1970
Deerfield, IL



Christmas 67

By: Bernard Bucholz
1876th Communications Squadron

I spent Christmas 1967 at work in the 7th Air Force Command Post Comm. Center. Christmas greetings were going back and forth between the comm. centers on all the teletype circuits in addition to the normal traffic. Many people brought cookies, candy, and other edibles received from home to share. We also had received from the Red Cross or USO a couple of large mail bags full of Christmas cards from citizens from all over the USA and we enjoyed looking through them.

To Whom it May Concern:

Enclosed please find a patch recently created to honor the service of Air force personnel assigned to the 377th USAF Dispensary's 21st Casualty Staging Flight. A number of varying AFSC's combined to provide incredible daily care for our wounded—and witnessed first-hand the horrible cost of war.

Most airmen will recall the daily trips made each morning with multiple ambulances to off-load our wounded into C-141s for aeromedical evacuation and continued care at military medical facilities in the Philippines, Japan, and the United States.

The remainder of the day was spent at numerous C-7A, C-123, C-130 ramps, helipads, 3rd Field Army Hospital, etc., receiving our patients from various medical evac facilities. This included on-going medical care and patient prep for the next day's flight.

The words "Medic Charlie" refer to the designated call sign for the cracker-box field ambulance that accompanied our ambulances to the flight line.

Respectfully,

Bob Craig
July '68 - July '69





DECEMBER 4, 1966



Defenders of Tan Son Nhut, the men of the 377th Air Police Squadron

By Gary Jones and Charles Penley, 377th Security Police Squadron.

In the early morning hours of 4 Dec 1966, at approximately 0110 hrs., George Bevich and his sentry dog REX 674F were manning one of the distant perimeter K-9 posts when two Viet Cong sapper units penetrated the perimeter of the base undetected.

It is quiet as usual and then a sentry dog alerts to some movement in a very large and deep ditch, known as "Utah Ditch." It is surrounded by tree's, bushes, weed's and filled with black water, located on the north-west side of the installation.

The handler calls in the situation report, of a large group of men, moving inside his defensive position, where this ditch is located, to Central Security Control. Almost simultaneously, other sentry dog handler's saw the same movement. Radio traffic begins to pick up.

Immediately the enemy forces opens up with automatic weapons fire and mortars. The Air Base was hit by stand-off weapons of approximately 33 of these mortar rounds.

The size of the Viet Cong infiltration force was estimated to have been over 75 sappers and commandos.

For the first time a ground assault on Tan Son Nhut Air Base begins.

Bevich raised the alarm and engaged the enemy. The 22 year old was killed almost immediately, his K-9 wounded. In providing the early warning alarm on that tragic morning along with his fellow dog handlers, George's brave actions saved lives and aircraft.

His name is inscribed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Wash, DC, Panel 13E, Line 9. Indeed, we lost a friend and a brother on that terrifying December morning at Tan Son Nhut. We believe that it is incumbent upon all of us not to let George's memory die.

Previously, on April 13, 1966 Tan Son Nhut had been attacked with 246 Rockets and Mortars within thirteen minutes but no ground attack. Once inside the perimeter, the enemy had divided into smaller groups to attack their various targets. The targets were the bomb dump, flight line and targets of opportunity.

This first report from the sentry dog handler enabled the air policemen of the 377th Air Police Squadron time to engage the enemy. A blocking force had been established and the fighting was fierce.

A2C Robert A. Throneburg and NEMO A534, a sentry dog, were posted for the night on the north-west portion of base.

Just before total darkness on December 4th, 1966 after being posted, Nemo alerted and was released to attack the VC who had evaded earlier detection. NEMO and his handler were both wounded, but not before killing two VC. Nemo's injuries included the loss of one eye and a gunshot wound that ripped into his nose.

A sweep of the area by the Quick Response Team (QRT) met with negative results. Using additional sentry dog teams, the security forces located and killed four more VC.

A second sweep with the dog teams resulted in the discovery of four additional VC who were hiding underground. The remaining enemy forces were soon killed by other security police.

Before help could arrive, Nemo, an 85 pound German shepherd, although severely wounded, protected his handler by crawling across his body, and guarding him against anyone who dared to come near.

When help arrived, they were able to convince Nemo to leave his handler, who was then given first aid. Nemo, suffering from a gunshot wound to his face, and the lost of his right eye, was relieved of sentry dog duties.

It was A2C Alvin W. Curie, who handled the M-60 machine gun and A2C Robert B. Kane, assistant machine gunner, who defended their assigned bunker in Delta Sector, Delta Bunker-11, on the single runway, positioned on the inner defense perimeter, all through the attack.

When daylight came and the action died down a little, it was discovered there were thirteen dead enemy bodies less than 100 feet from their bunker.

Thanks to the quick actions of the air policemen, damage to aircraft and facilities was minimal.

The 377th Security Police Squadron lost three men and three sentry dogs, Dec 4-5, 1966. Really, it was just a moment ago for those who were there.

Major Roger P. Fox, Executive Officer, received the nation's third highest medal, the Silver Star, for his actions taken on Dec 4-5, 1966. Maj. Fox passed from this life on Dec 14, 2000

A2C George M. Bevich, sentry dog handler was the first U.S. Air Force dog handler to be killed in Vietnam. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart medals.

A2C Alvin W. Curie, received the nation's third highest medal, the Silver Star, for his actions taken on Dec 4-5, 1966. A2C Curie passed from this life on Dec 7, 1983.

A2C Tommy C. Poole, sentry dog handler, received the nation's third highest medal, the Silver Star and the Purple Heart medal for his actions taken on Dec 4-5, 1966.

A2C Robert A. Throneburg, sentry dog handler, received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart medals for his actions taken on Dec 4-5, 1966

The 377th SPS was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor for its "combined actions," against the Viet Cong infiltration force.



VETERANS DAY NOVEMBER 11, 2017

The Ceremony at The Wall on Veterans Day in Washington DC, was very well attended by many, many veterans this year. This was the 35th Anniversary of the wall.

I let Carol Bessette know I would be attending and help present the TSNA wreath. As usual, *'when we are making plans, Life has a way of changing things at the last minute'*. Carol and John had been able to contact me that they would not be able to present the wreath due to some unforeseen circumstances. I'm not sure if Carol passed the baton to me, (or I had been in the right place to catch it before it hit the ground) to carry on the mission. I arrived at the appointed place and was able to finalize the wreath plans and get the needed instructions. It was a beautiful sunny and balmy morning around 38 degrees. (BRRRR)

After the ceremonies of the Posting of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance, the Keynote speaker, Former Secretary of Defense, The Honorable Chuck Hagel, talked about his time in Vietnam.

Maya Lin, whose concept was used to build the monument, was there and spoke about her involvement and what she had envisioned for the monument.

When it was time to place the wreaths, a lone bagpiper began playing. Two of my brother Vietnam veterans, Ray Arieno and Dick Palmetier (both from my area in NYS) helped me present the wreath, with great honor.

On Friday, the 10th we visited the Washington Cathedral and had a tour. I didn't know there is a Veterans Chapel to the side of the main altar. Veterans can have their funeral services there. The first official reading of the 58 thousand + names placed on the wall, took place in that chapel. I lit a candle for the POWs and MIAs in the name of the TSNA.

Here is a link to the Ceremony from C-Span:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?436708-1/veterans-day-ceremony-Vietnam-veterans-memorial>.

To all of you Brothers and Sister of TSNA, I want you to know it was a great honor to represent our organization this year.

Happy belated Veterans Day to everyone.

Gary Redlinski
1968 -1970
US Army Tan Son Nhut Mortuary



Gary, Ray and Dick



The Veterans Chapel at Washington Cathedral

Looking Back to the Year 1968

Three simple words defined the Vietnam War in 1968: The Tet Offensive. The troop buildup for the war hit its peak at 536,100. The number of deaths in 1968 totaled 16,866 (the number may go higher as MIA's are identified). The deadliest week of the war was February 11-17, 1968 when the U.S. suffered 543 killed and 2,547 wounded. Again, these numbers may rise due to MIA's being identified.

President Johnson announced he would not seek another term as President. In the November election, Nixon defeated Humphrey to become President. Two well-known men were assassinated. Dr. Martin Luther King and Senator Robert Kennedy died that year.

The nuclear submarine, USS Scorpion, sank near the Azores with 99 men on board. North Korea captured the USS Pueblo and held it for almost one year. Apollo 8 became the first to orbit the moon.

New things on the market include waterbeds, Jacuzzi's, and for the fashion conscience guys, the Nehru Jacket. And for the patrons of fine dining, McDonald's introduced its now famous "Big Mac" nationwide. On a personal note, I was a lucky man as I met Brenda, the love of my life, whom I would marry two years later.

Oil was discovered on Alaska's north shore. In money matters, a postage stamp jumped to 6 cents while milk was around \$1.07. The minimum wage was \$1.60.

That year produced some very good music for us. Here are Billboard's top songs for 1968.

Hey Jude by the Beatles
Love is Blue by Paul Mauriat
Honey by Bobby Goldsboro
(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay by Otis Redding
People Got to be Free by Rascals
Sunshine of Your Love by Cream
This Guy's In Love With You by Herb Albert
The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly by Hugo Montenegro
Mrs. Robinson by Simon and Garfunkel
Tighten Up by Archie Bell & Drells



The first movie ratings system was started in 1968. Initially the rating were G, M, R, and X. Do you remember going to the Tan Son Nhut theater for a movie? Here are some of the movies from 49 years ago. Funny Girl, The Lion in Winter, Oliver!, Rachel, Romeo and Juliet, The Heart is a Lonely Hunter.

The newsmagazine, 60 Minutes, began its long run on TV. Other shows on TV in 1968 include Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In, Gomer Pyle, Bonanza, Family Affair, Julia, and Dean Martin Show.

In sports, the Detroit Tigers defeated the Saint Louis Cardinals in the World Series. Of note is Detroit's pitcher, Denny McLain, who won 31 games during the regular season. Ohio State was named College Football Champions. UCLA won the NCAA Basketball Championship. In the Super Bowl the New York Jets defeated the Baltimore Colts and that surprised a lot of fans.

By: Harold Boone
460th TRW HQ Section
Sept 67 - Aug 68



EDITOR'S NOTE: A number of items in this issue are from various earlier issues of Revetments, since I became Editor in 2007

Due to a lack of new items for Revetments, I am having to go back and bring back some of the "oldies."

The articles are as good now as they were then.



A Different Christmas Poem

Author Unknown (Submitted By Charles Penley)

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.
Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.
The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, Then the
Sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.
Standing out in the cold and the dark of night,
A long figure stood, his face weary and tight

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled there in the cold.
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.
"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts..
To the window that danced with a warm fire's light
Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."

"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,
'That separates you from the darkest of times.
No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.
My Gramps died at Pearl on a day in December."
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas Gram always remem-
bers."
My dad stood watch in the jungles of 'Nam',
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.
I've not seen my own son in more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile."

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,
The red, white, and blue . . . an American flag.
I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.
I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing another,
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother . .
Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
Give you money," I asked" or prepare you a feast?
It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."
Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret.

"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.
To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.
For when we come home, either standing or dead,
To know you remember we fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

TSNA 2018 REUNION

**Hope Hotel & Conference Center
Gate 12A, Wright - Patterson AFB**

SEPTEMBER 20-23, 2018



'TWAS THE NIGHT

"Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,
in a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.
I had come down the chimney with presents to give,
and to see just who in this home did live.
I looked all about, a strange sight I did see,
no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree,
No stocking by mantle, just boots filled with sand,
on the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.
With medals and badges, awards of all kinds,
a sober thought came through my mind.
For this house was different, it was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a soldier, once I could see clearly.
The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone,
curled up on the floor in this one bedroom home.
The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder,
not how I pictured a United States soldier.
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?
realized the families that I saw this night,
owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight.
Soon round the world, the children would play,
and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas day.
They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,
because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.
I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.
The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
dropped to my knees and started to cry.
The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice,
"Santa don't cry, this life is my choice;
fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,
my life is my God, my Country, my Corps."
The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still
and we both shivered from the cold night's chill.
I didn't want to leave on that cold, dark, night,
this guardian of honor so willing to fight.
Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure,
whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas day, all is secure."
One look at my watch, and I knew he was right.
"Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night."
Anonymous



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FAVORITE SAYINGS



Someday is not a day of the week!

The shortest distance between two points is under construction.

-- Noelle Alito

We have only two things to worry about:
That things will never get back to normal,
and that they already have.

- * Bennett's Laws of Horticulture:
(1) Houses are for people to live in.
(2) Gardens are for plants to live in.
(3) There is no such thing as a houseplant.

Whether you think that you can or
that you can't, you are usually right.
(Henry Ford)



NEW MEMBERS

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Frederick C. Soth, III | Orland Park | IL | soth12118@comcast.net | Sep 67 - Mar 69 | 377th Supply Munitions Maintenance |
| Allen | Chandler | Deerfield | IL | allen.chandler@gmail.com | Nov66-Feb68 19th SOS Maintenance - Air Crew |
| | | | | Jan 70-Apr 70 | 17th SOS |

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