



# REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



JULY 2017

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Who we are: What we are: What is the future; more important what is the past!

The history of 2017 is what happens IF: can we teach for tomorrow not by retool that puts together the plane, not the AM bus that carried the sick or wounded, yet none of these. What we need is what did we learn and what will be the drawing of the history, the feelings and the proud commitment of a gathering of "souls" (men and women) who served a nation called to defend, care for, our band known as the United States of America!

And about who we were TSN and what those minutes, hours and days said to us, but even more to who and what we were (and still are) in a world and a nation that stands for concerns for people who speak languages different than our druid and English but bleed as we do, cries as we feel like doing and want to serve our beloved nation!!

We gather together, share our stories and above all, our histories but are still full of untold history and heartfelt love.

End of sermon  
Chaplain Bob Chaffee

### Looking Back to the Year 1963

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

Seemingly everyone remembers where they were on November 22, 1963 when the news was heard. President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated in Dallas. Shortly thereafter Lyndon Johnson became President aboard Air Force One. As one would expect, the assassination of Kennedy profoundly altered the course of history.

The "hotline" between Washington and Moscow was installed.

The United Postal Service introduced the "Zoning Improvement Plan". It is better known as "ZIP Code" for mail distribution. My zip code at Tan Son Nhut was 96307.

The prison named Alcatraz, also known as "the rock", closed.

The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King delivered his now

famous "I Have A Dream" speech in Washington.

Weight Watchers International was incorporated. In a related story, Tab Cola was introduced. Touch-Tone phones were introduced. Cassette tape recorders are marketed. A measles vaccine is being readied for use, even though it was too late for some of us.

One hundred and twenty-two died in Vietnam in 1963. Troop strength was 16,300. Things were not very stable in Vietnam. South Vietnamese Premier Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother, Nhu were assassinated by military officers.

On the lighter side of life, we enjoyed some of the better music and movies of our time.

At the movies in 1963 some of the more noted ones including America, America, Cleopatra, How the West Was Won, Lilies of the Field, Tom Jones, and Hud.

"Louie, Louie", one of the more controversial songs of the 1960's, is recorded by The Kingsmen. Here are the top 10 songs of 1963 as listed by Billboard. Does anyone remember holding that special hand while hearing these songs? Sugar Shack by Jimmy Gilmer and the Fireballs; Surfin' U.S.A. by the Beach Boys; The End Of The World by Skeeter Davis; Rhythm Of The Rain by the Cascades; He's So Fine by the Chiffons; Blue Velvet by Bobby Vinton; Hey Paula by Paul and Paula; Finger Tips II by Stevie Wonder; Washington Square by the Village Stompers; It's Alright by the Impressions.

In sports the Los Angeles Dodgers with Sandy Koufax pitching defeated the New York Yankees in the World Series. The University of Texas was college football champions. Loyola University was college basketball champions. In professional golf, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, and Gary Player, were setting the stage for the future of professional golf. Fifty years later they would be referred to by some as the "Mount Rushmore of Golf



## A SIMPLE HANDSHAKE

By: Dave Butler  
US Army 232nd Signal Company  
Mar 62—Mar 63

I don't wear my "Vietnam" ball cap except on Patriotic and Military holidays. However, I do wear my TSNA "Warrior Bracelet" often. I wore both over this past week-end.

It seems that more veterans wear a hat identifying their service on Memorial Day than any other holiday.

My wife knows that I'm proud of my service and encourages me in my habit of speaking to fellow Vietnam Veterans. These conversations can be very short such as "Welcome Home!, Where were you stationed?, When?, What unit were you with?", to very lengthy where we exchange stories, some humorous and others more somber.

This weekend, we visited cemeteries, attended a local Patriotic/Remembrance event and went to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. During this time, an incident brought back a memory of something that occurred as a result of, but, after I returned from my tour in Vietnam.

Captain Petty was the officer in charge of our group when we were sent to Vietnam. He commanded the respect of everyone, not only because of his rank, but also due to the type of individual he was. He was a natural leader and conveyed a sense of trust and competence simply by his personality. He was in command of our company for several months while at Tan Son Nhut and then was assigned elsewhere.

Upon returning to the States, I was assigned to the 54th Signal Battalion, III Corps, Fort Hood, Texas. As we supplied communications for both the First and Second Armored Divisions we spent a lot of time in the field. Whenever either went out on a training exercise, we went too.

Sometime in early 1964, our unit participated in a practice alert. In such instances, we would pack all our equipment and prepare to go overseas. At times, we did not always know if it was real or just an exercise.

Well, one night, around midnight, it was decided that all the enlisted men needed to have their immunization shots brought up to date. We were herded into a building and in single file wound our way through a number of stations where a very efficient medic would grab your arm and stick you with a needle.

As this was going on, the Battalion officers came in, along with an Inspecting Officer, who just happened to be Captain Petty (who had been promoted to Colonel). We saw each other and without hesitation, he pushed his way through two or three lines of men. He grabbed my hand and exclaimed "Butler! How have ya been?" There was a brief conversation before he returned to his duties. The Battalion officers who witnessed this scene were confused and didn't know what was going on or what to do. I may have contributed to this, as being a lowly SP/4, I still referred to him as "Captain" and he didn't correct me.

I treasure this handshake. Not because of his rank, but it was one man's respect for the other. It was the first time I experienced the true comradeship of all Vietnam Veterans.

While at the zoo, a veteran was seated on a bench, alone, off by himself. I walked over, noticed his hat read "Desert Storm". I extended my hand and said "Welcome Home".

A short time later, I encountered a Vietnam Veteran who held out his hand along with a hearty "Welcome Home".

In both cases the handshake was firm and sincere. Recognition and respect between veterans.

A simple handshake, what a wonderful way to end the Memorial Day weekend.

## MORE ON THE SOTHWEST FLORIDA VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL

By: Richard Roberts  
377th Security Police  
Jul 66 - Jul 67

Larry,

We spoke about my having 12" bricks put in at the wall in Punta Gorda when you were here and I told you that I would let you know when it happened. They were put in this week. My contribution to the TSN.

See you in September.



## HEROES AMONG US

By Kathy Manos Penn

I've had the honor of meeting quite a few veterans around Dunwoody. My husband and I bump into them at Memorial and Veterans Day celebrations, the July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade, the poppy giveaways at the grocery, and just out and about.

Perhaps because my Greek grandfather immigrated to the US and then fought for us in WWI, I was intrigued when I heard that [veteran Dominic Giovinazzo had immigrated to the US as a child and then returned to Europe to fight in WWII](#). With my curiosity aroused, I sat down with Dominic to get “the rest of the story,” and what a story it is.

Dominic's father came to America ahead of his wife and children, and Dominic was seven when the rest of the family left Portigliola, Italy to join his father in Ohio. There he started first grade without knowing a word of English. Skip ahead to his being drafted into the Army shortly after graduating high school, shipping off to England in 1944, and several months after D-Day, landing at Omaha Beach.

As he recounted his WWII experience, I asked, “What's your most vivid memory?” His response? “How lucky I am.” Every one of his stories includes an example of that luck.

He sees the Battle of Moncourt Woods as the first instance of his good fortune. He can still see the bullets flying into the saplings around him as he dug a foxhole with a partner and dove in. His partner landed on top of him and was hit with shrapnel, but Dominic emerged unscathed.

Soon after, he fought in the Lorraine Campaign. Again, as he advanced through an open field against German tanks, shells fell behind and in front of him, but not *on* him. And then came the Battle of the Bulge. The last major German offensive of WWII, it was one that caught the Allied forces off guard and the one in which our American troops suffered their highest casualties of any operation in the war.

Picture Dominic on Christmas Eve, newly assigned to be a bazooka man, out in the open on a snow covered hill firing at enemy tanks—again escaping unmarked. Early Christmas morning, caught behind enemy lines, he was leading his men up another snow covered hill when a group of Germans started down the same hill. As yet more proof of his good luck, he describes hitting the ground with his men and surviving the close encounter unnoticed.

His final stroke of luck, he says, came during his days as a POW after capture in Saarlautren. Over 68 days, the POWS marched close to 600 miles. Though he lost twenty pounds and was constantly cold, hungry, and in need of a shower, Dominic feels lucky that he was neither tortured nor harshly treated. On day 68, the POWS awoke to find all but one of their guards gone and the 13th Armored Division, known as the Black Cats, there to liberate them.

Back in the states, Dominic went to Kent State and Ohio State on the GI Bill and earned a degree in Industrial Engineering. He married Ellie, the petite Greek girl he met on a blind date, and went on to raise two daughters and have a successful career with GE. After his 1982 retirement, he and Ellie moved to Dunwoody to be near their daughter Cindy.

They've been married 61 years, and I couldn't stop smiling when Ellie said her sweet husband always brings her flowers or takes her to dinner on December 10<sup>th</sup>, the day of their blind date. I'd say they're both lucky in love.

Dominic's story seems a fitting reminder as we look forward to celebrating July 4—a reminder that the Greatest Generation and so many others cherish(ed) our American way of life. Many made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve it. Many continue to defend it.

How does this 95-year-old father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and patriot wrap up his tale of service to his country and a life well lived? “I give my blessings every day that my father came to America.” May his heartfelt words inspire us all to reflect on how fortunate we are to live in this great country.

*Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident now happily retired from a corporate career in communications. Find similar patriotic columns in her book, “The Ink Penn: Celebrating the Magic in the Everyday,” available on her website [www.theinkpenn.com](http://www.theinkpenn.com) and [Amazon](#). Her book will also be available at our September reunion. Look for “Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch,” her next book due out in September. Contact Kathy at [inkpenn119@gmail.com](mailto:inkpenn119@gmail.com).*

# Tan Son Nhut Association 2017 Reunion Registration

**September 14 – 17, 2017**

OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF TAN SON NHUT AND THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ BRANCH OF SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF YOUR GUEST(S): \_\_\_\_\_

IS THERE ANYONE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS? **YES/NO** (Please circle one.)

## **REGISTRATION FEES**

Number of Persons Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$75.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-order Video of 2017 Reunion QTY: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT to TSNA MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN Aug 31, 2017.**

**PLEASE MAKE PAYMENTS PAYABLE TO THE “TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION” AND MAIL TO:**

**TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION**

**P. O. Box 236**

**Penryn, PA 17564-0236**

## **ACTIVITIES (No Extra Cost) WITH FULL REGISTRATION FEE**

(Please circle which activities that you are paying for separately, if you are not paying the full fee.)

**Access to the TSNA Hospitality Suite (drinks, snacks, and war stories!) (\$10.00 daily if purchased separately.)**

**TSNA Friday Banquet Buffet Dinner. (\$35.00 if purchased separately.)**

**Friday morning tour of the Air Force Academy (no extra charge)**

(Please indicate how many people will be taking this tour) = \_\_\_\_\_.

**Saturday morning tour of Peterson AFB (no extra charge)**

(Please indicate how many people will be taking this tour) = \_\_\_\_\_.



## **HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION**

Marriott Colorado Springs, 5580 Tech Center Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80919

(719) 260-1800    www.marriott.com

**Room with breakfast buffet for two: \$114.00**

**Room without breakfast: \$104.00**

Rate does not include tax, which currently is 9.63%. The special room rate is available three days prior and three days post the reunion. Included are free in-room Wi-Fi and free parking.

**Please hold “Ctrl”, and click on the following link to make your hotel reservation:**

**[Book your group rate for Tan Son Nhut Association Military Reunion](#)**

**Rev 4/7/17**



## DIRECTIONS TO MARRIOTT COLORADO SPRINGS

Even though they have the same exit number, Exit 148 Southbound and Exit 148 Northbound are nearly a mile apart.

When traveling South from Denver, upon exiting I-25 (red arrows), you will come to a traffic light at Corporate Dr. Continue on thru this intersection until you reach the next traffic light, which will be Rockrimmon Blvd. Turn right (West) to the hotel. When exiting from the South (green arrows), your first intersection will be Rockrimmon Blvd. Turn Left (West) to the hotel. Follow Rockrimmon until you see the Shell gas station on your right. Just past it, turn left onto Tech Center Dr. Almost immediately, turn right again into the hotel parking lot.



## MEMORIAL DAY 2017 NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE U. S. AIR FORCE



Johnnie Jernigan, Robin Griffith, Jimmy Smith, James Groves in uniform after doing six services representing Beaver Creek, Ohio VFW Post.

## "A Return To The End"

By: Joe Kricho  
Director of Reunion Planning

It has been confirmed that the Producer/Director of the video *A Return To The End*, Pat Clark, will be joining us on **Saturday afternoon** to provide a screening of that video.

From 1330-1500 (approximately) we will have that screening. There will be a short intro, followed by the video (54 minutes) and will wrap up with a 15 minute Q&A.

The video tells the story of a group of Marines who returned to Vietnam in 2015, the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of American involvement in the Vietnam war, to commemorate what is truly one of the more poignant stories of that conflict. The Marines in this video were there on that day in 1975. The video tells the story of the last two combat casualties of the Vietnam war at Tan Son Nhut Airbase. Two Marines, Cpl Charles McMahon and LCpl Darwin Judge, were detached from their post at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, and sent to Tan Son Nhut, to assist in the evacuation of both US personnel, and Vietnamese nationals. I would highly recommend that you visit the website at: <http://www.areturtotheend.com/>



I met Pat in Denver when I was there in 2015 arranging this reunion. Very interesting story. I'm sure that y'all will enjoy it.

I certainly hope that you will join us on Saturday for this truly memorable account of the last days of that war.

### BANQUET HONOR GUARD

Joe Kricho, Director of Reunion Planning, is pleased to announce that our Honor Guard for our Reunion Banquet in Colorado Springs will be courtesy of the U. S. Army's 4th Infantry Division, Ft. Carson, CO.

Joe also mentioned: *"When speaking to SFC Lee at Ft. Carson, he emphasized that they were a "mounted" honor guard. (I could just envision those horses galloping through the lobby of the hotel!) But he quickly followed with the fact that they do "dismounted" duties as well. Whew!"*

We hope to have more about this organization for the August Revetments.

### HELP!

We are getting to the point in the reunion planning process where we have varying lists of potential/actual reunion attendees: 1.) I have received emails from individuals stating their INTENT to attend, but who have yet to register for the reunion. 2.) Then there are those who have actually REGISTERED for the reunion. 3.) And finally, we receive regular updates from the hotel of those who have BOOKED A ROOM for the reunion.

As a result, we need to compare these three lists to make sure that we have everyone covered and that no one "slips through a crack" so to speak.

It is important that individuals planning to attend, both register for the reunion, and, make hotel reservations (should they need them) as soon as possible.

**For those who have sent in their Reunion Registration Form, you should be receiving an email from me requesting that you provide your menu choice for our Plated Banquet Dinner.**

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Joe Kricho  
Director of Reunion Planning

### NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

I was injured in December 4, 1966. I found picture on your site of Purple Heart being presented.

I lost all memory of most of this period due to injury.

Would like to find more info. I could find info/pics of certain groups but not C flight security. Can you help.

Lyle K. Davis  
377th Air Police Squadron  
Mar 66—Dec 66





## 2017 Reunion Marriott, Colorado Springs, CO

### Thursday – September 14, 2017

0630-0900 Breakfast in hotel restaurant  
0900 Hospitality Suite opens for official reunion registration  
0900-1200 Plaque Dedication at 460<sup>th</sup> Space Wing, Buckley AFB, CO (Limited to 12 people\*)  
2200? Hospitality Suite closes

### Friday – September 15, 2017

0630-0900 Breakfast in hotel restaurant  
0900 Hospitality Suite opens  
0900 Buses depart hotel for USAF Academy tour & lunch  
1400 Buses return to hotel  
1700-1800 Cash Bar cocktail reception (Separate schedule of banquet events will be provided)  
1800-2200 Banquet  
2300? Hospitality Suite closes

### Saturday – September 16, 2017

0630-1159 Breakfast in hotel restaurant  
0900 Hospitality Suite opens  
0900 Buses depart for Peterson AFB tour  
1130-1200 Buses return to hotel  
1330-1500 Screening of the video “A Return to the End” with Producer Pat Clark  
1500-1600 Kathy Manos - Renowned Writer  
1600-1730 Board of Directors meeting  
1900-1930 Raffle & door prize drawing (Hospitality Suite)  
1930-2100 Silent auction (Hospitality Suite)  
2300? Hospitality Suite closes

### Sunday – September 17, 2017

0630-0900 Farewell breakfast in banquet room  
1000 Hospitality Suite closes

**\*Anyone interested in attending the dedication must contact Joe Kricho ASAP. Former 460<sup>th</sup> TRW members have priority. Reservations will be on a first come/first served basis.**

**(Updated 6/28/17. This is a tentative schedule and subject to change.)**

### NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

Arrived at Tan Son Nhut the first week of December, 1964.

Base was attacked Dec 4 & 5 by Viet Cong. We lost three men and a canine.

Can't remember much but do remember a good friend, John Walker, would like to get back in touch with him.

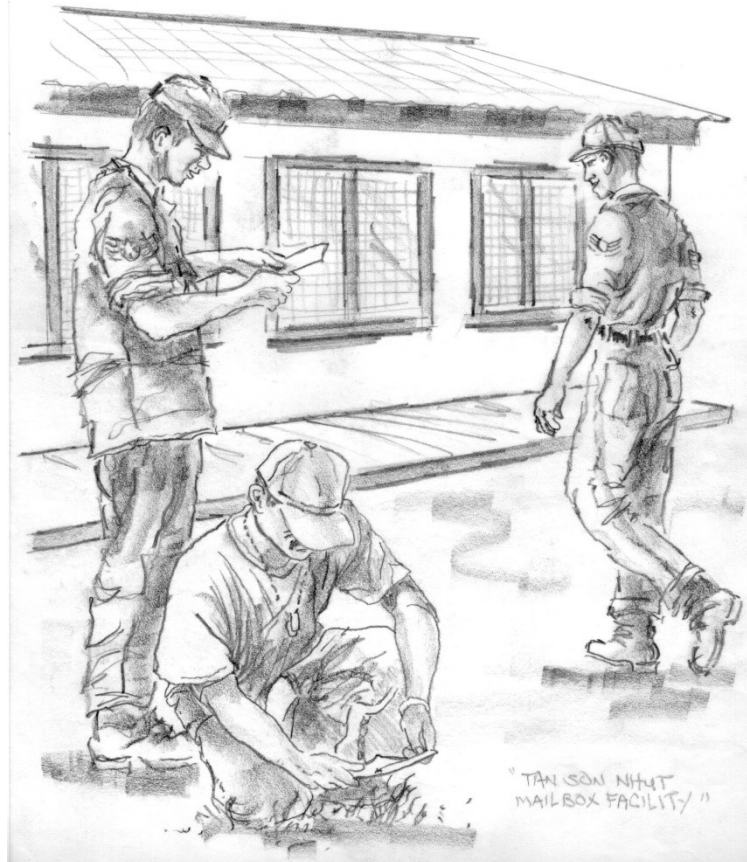
Donald R. Carper  
377th SPS  
Dec 64 - Aug 65



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

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



And our thanks again to John Bowen, TSNA Member  
for another great illustration  
**"TAN SON NHUT MAIL FACILITY"**



Mr. Thomas Rung Fenton MO tomwrung@gmail.com '71 377th Services

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