



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association
A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



FEBRUARY 2018

TET (Continued)

I didn't care much for barracks life, so when the opportunity arose to transfer to a BEQ off base I was first in line to volunteer. The name of the BEQ escapes me now, fifty years later, but it doesn't matter; I never actually set foot in the place. A few months earlier I met and became engaged to Đệp, a beautiful Vietnamese lady with whom I was destined to share thirty-six blissful years of marriage. On the night of January 30, 1968 Đệp and I were enjoying a Tet celebration with some friends in Saigon. We were awakened very early the next morning by what we first thought were firecrackers going off in the neighborhood. Later, rumors circulated that another coup was taking place and fighting had broken out between the rebels and loyal government forces. It wasn't long before the terrible truth emerged; the war had come to Saigon.

The sounds of shouting, rapid gunfire and explosions were coming from all directions, making it impossible to know who or what was in control of our neighborhood. Having never heard the sound of an AK47 before, and only firing a few rounds from an M16 on the practice range back in Lackland AFB just before shipping out to Vietnam, I was never sure who was doing all the shooting. To make matters worse, Airmen like myself were not issued weapons at that time, so the only thing I could find for defense was a large, but dull, kitchen knife. The fighting continued sporadically for the next two days. On the third day things quieted down and one of my civilian friends offered to take me to Tan Son Nhut on his motorbike. We came across an MP jeep on the way and they escorted me back to the base. When I reported in the CO gave me the butt chewing of my young life. He had contacted the BEQ where I was supposed to be quartered and was told that I had never checked in. So, I was listed as missing. Luckily--- or perhaps the CO was relieved not having to write a letter to my folks-- -I was only restricted to base for a month and not given the Article 15 that I so richly deserved. I did receive some punishment though; problems from sleeping in a barracks bunk reserved for transients.

When I was finally allowed off base again I was authorized to carry an M16 and required to load a full clip before going out the gate. After explaining my relationship with Đệp, and after the CO and the chaplain could not deter me, I was allowed (or at least not disallowed) to live in private civilian housing for the rest of my tour in Tan Son Nhut.

Hope you have a Happy New Year,

Paul Allard
460th Avionics Maint SQ
Oct 1967 - May 1969

TSNA 2018 REUNION, DAYTON OHIO

SEPTEMBER 20-23, 2018

On page 2 of this issue is the registration form for the 2018 TSNA Reunion to be held September 20 – 23 in Dayton, Ohio.

We are still working on the full schedule of activities, and a Guest Speaker.

We will continue to update you via the TSNA website regarding any and all changes and updates of the reunion.

But, you know the quality of previous TSNA Reunions; you KNOW it's going to be a great one!

We have been having requests for the Registration Form, so here it is!

See 'ya in September.

Joe Kricho
Director of Reunion Planning

TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION REUNION REGISTRATION

- ☐ USA
- ☐ USAF
- ☐ USCG
- ☐ USMC
- ☐ USN
- ☐ CIV

NAME: _____ GUEST NAME: _____
STREET ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
TEL: (____) _____ EMAIL: _____ @ _____
SPECIAL NEEDS? _____

REGISTRATION FEES

Number Attending: _____ x \$75.00 = \$ _____
Pre-Order Reunion Video: QTY: _____ x \$15.00 = \$ _____
Total Remittance: \$ _____

PAYMENT MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN: August 31, 2018

Mail check to: TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 236
PENRYN, PA 17564-0236

Note: If not paying the full registration (\$75.00) then the following fees apply:

Access to hospitality suite (includes snacks & beverages): \$12.50 daily
Friday Banquet Dinner: \$37.50/person (Cash Bar not included)
Additional charges (TBD) for tours; transportation; outside activities; etc.

HOTEL INFORMATION

HOPE HOTEL & RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE CONFERENCE CENTER
Bldg. 823, Area A, Gate 12A
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433-5000
(937) 879-2696

Reservations must be made by telephone. Mention "TSNA" when making reservation.
(Please note: Military ID not required to access the hotel)

Room Rate: \$109.00 + Tax (includes breakfast)
NOTE: This special room rate is available three days prior and three days after the reunion
ALL HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY: AUGUST 27, 2018!

All questions should be directed to:

Joe Kricho

Director of Reunion Planning

67vietvet68@gmail.com

Please put: "TSNA Reunion" in the Subject Line



On January 31, 1968, at approximately 0320 hours, the "Attack On Tan Son Nhut, Tet Offensive began."

Tet at Tan Son Nhut, was from Jan 31, 1968 – Feb 18, 1968. Rocket and mortars, landed on the base every day.

Ambulance Incident!

Sgt (unknown name), working bunker Charlie –5 and A2C Charles Penley, Charlie-5, which was a M-60 Machine Gun Bunker and M-16 rifle post.

Situation: An ambulance ran the Main Gate, Jan 31, 1968. It was reported from the 716th Military Police BN, Saigon, Vietnam, that several US Military vehicles had been stolen, in downtown Saigon.

To be on the lookout for ambulances, jeeps and duce and a half ton trucks.

At approximately 0430 – 0500 hours, the Tan Son Nhut Main Gate, over the Base Police radio frequency, radioed to Central Security Control, that an unauthorized ambulance had just run the main gate, coming onto the installation.

The ground "Attack On Tan Son Nhut," had began earlier and it was still going on.

Knowing about the stolen military vehicles that was reported earlier, the ambulance was of utmost concern, to the men of the 377th Security Police Squadron.

The ambulance drove west, from the main gate, on "Republic Avenue." Heading towards the Hotel-3 helicopter pad.

The main gate desperately needed any mobile unit, to intercept the unauthorized ambulance and determine who they were.

At this time no Base Police or Security Police vehicle, was close enough to intercept the unauthorized ambulance, that had forced it way onto Tan Son Nhut.

The unauthorized ambulance then turned right onto "Main Street," heading north, driving toward Central Security Control and Charlie-5 Bunker, which was located on "Avenue K" and near the Flight Line.

At the intersection of "Main Street and Avenue K," was a static Base Police Entry Control Point. It consisted of a wooden shack and his sand bag bunker. It was the last entry control point before the flight line.

At this same intersection was "Charlie-5 Bunker" which was a sand bag, M-60 Bunker. It was manned by Sgt (Unknown name) and A2C Charles Penley.

It was CSC that was controlling the 377th Security Policemen in the Defense of Tan Son Nhut.

It was the 377th Security Police Squadron, who were the boots on the ground, fighting both NVA and VC personnel.

Charlie-5 personnel had spoken briefly to the Base Policeman, at his entry control post, that if he could not stop the unauthorized ambulance, that he was to get inside his bunker and hit the ground, as fast as he could.

As Charlie-5 definitely was going to open fire, on the unauthorized ambulance and stop it with armed force.

About the same time, 1LT Melvin G. Grover was transporting wounded 377th Security Police Squadron personnel to the 377th Base Dispensary.

In addition to Grover being in the jeep, Sgt Gerald Summerfeldt, was seriously wounded and in the jeep also. They had come from Echo Sector, where the main fighting was taking place.

The unauthorized ambulance did not stop for the Base Police, Entry Control Point and it was the last point before entry onto the flight line area.

Sgt (unknown name) and A2C Penley fired three long bursts of fire from the M-60 machine gun, intentionally firing into the air above the ambulance and the ambulance stopped immediately.

After the proper challenges to the occupants of the ambulance were conducted, the passenger, was ordered at gun point, to get out of the ambulance and A2C Penley, put him in the prone position, face down.

Sgt (unknown name), kept the M-60 machine gun, aimed at the driver of the ambulance, who was still inside it.

At gun point, the driver of the ambulance, was ordered to get out of the ambulance, on the passenger side and placed in a prone position, face down.

Then A2C Penley, requested backup from the nearest mobile unit.

Then several Security Police vehicles arrived to ensure no one was in the rear of the ambulance.

The mobile units, then took control of the two men in the ambulance.

Approximately 1200 hours, Sgt (unknown name) and A2C Penley were taken to CSC to give written statements about the incident.

There had been some slack in the fighting at this time.

Sgt (unknown name) and A2C Penley returned to Charlie-5, which was their assigned M-60 machine gun post.

I do not have any information on the outcome of the two American men, who were in the ambulance.

Charlie Sector, received a lot of sniper fire, up and down the entire MLR (Main Line of Resistance.)

Several nearby buildings were hit and some burned to the ground.

During the TET Offensive, Jan 31, 1968, 157 NVA and VC were killed on Tan Son Nhut and approximately 800 NVA and VC were killed just off the west perimeter of the base.

Charles Penley
377th Security Police
Oct 67-Jul 69

THANK YOU CHARLES FOR YOUR EFFORTS AT TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE DURING TET.

AND, FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION, WE THANK YOU SO VERY, VERY MUCH FOR YOUR GREAT EFFORTS TO KEEP THE FACE AND WORDS OF TSNA ON THE WEB FOR ALL TO SEE.

To our Members - December 31, 2017 was the last day for Charles Penley being our official Webmaster. TSNA Director Kerry Nivens will be taking over that duty.

Hi Larry,

I hope this doesn't get too wordy, but I'll do my best to keep it coherent.

My name is SGT (E4) Lionel Jeffers (nickname: Jeff). My AFSC was 23250 Still Photographer, and had just finished up a 14 month tour of duty as a junior instructor in the Photo Tech School, at Lowry AFB in Denver.

When I arrived in country, on July 4th, I was originally assigned to the 6470th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron (RTS). It was a Photo Recon Squadron, and I was put in charge of the contact print section of the photo lab. On Sept. 1, 1967, a bunch of us got orders that we were relieved of duty from the 6470th, and reassigned to the new 460th RTS, which was not yet existent. So we remained in the same lab until the end of 1967. Of course, on October 19, 1967, I became the NCOIC of contact print, when the airman rank titles were changed, and the E4 grade was retitled Sergeant and we were now considered NCOs.

As I mentioned before, the 460th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron, or "Recky Tech" did not actually exist yet. Around the time of the Christian New Year, my supervisor, the newly promoted MSGT Sumner, told me to report to SSGT Deathridge, near the flight line across from the passenger terminal. I was to join a team of five other E4s and SSGT Deathridge, to begin construction of a mobile photo trailer complex. When I enlisted, I told anyone who would listen that I wanted to be a draftsman and work with the Corps of Engineers, and I guess that was why I was chosen for that detail.

I'm sorry to say that I don't remember the names of all of the guys in the crew, but two of the guys Don Zambizi from Framingham, MA and Danny White from Provo, UT were bunkmates directly across from my bunk. Sarge also bunked on our floor in our barracks and was truly one my heroes. The Air Force was the third branch with which he had served, and he even had a CIB as an infantry soldier in Korea. He also served in the Navy.

Anyway, we only worked during daylight hours which, I'm sure, saved our lives. As the Tet celebrations were going on, we kept hearing talk that there may be an attack by the enemy under the cover of the fireworks. Sometime around Christmas, I remember that a MSGT came into the lab, cleared my guys out, and had me print up a negative. When the image came up in the developer, there was a group of helicopters...and they weren't Hueys! I later heard on AFR radio that enemy helicopters were discovered in the DMZ! I believe they sent a sortie there to remedy that situation.

You may also remember that there were no sandbagged bunkers and the barracks were not sandbagged. I was told that because we hadn't been attacked recently, the bunkers had been taken down for "base beautification". Bob Hope and his USO show did not stop at Tan Son Nhut that year, and there was even talk about discontinuing our hazardous duty pay. Fortunately, the enemy gave us a bit of time to prepare, because they attacked I Corps & II Corps on January 30th. That night our 1st Sergeant called a squadron meeting outside our barracks and briefed us about an eminent attack. Since we now didn't have sandbag protection around the barracks, we were told to go down to the ground floor and pull a mattress over us for cover. We were not issued weapons, and told that they would not issue them to first term airmen. That statement was the scariest thing I heard while in Vietnam.

At about 0300 hrs, I was awakened by a lot of noise and a lot of airmen looking toward the flight line, which by the way, was clear on the other side of the base (we were in the 1200 billeting area, just south of the basketball court). Another fortunate thing was that the enemy had targeted their rockets at the flight line, far away from our barracks. However there were ground troops trying to attack near our barracks area. But the Army and Marine Corps stepped in and kicked some serious butt. It was also the first time I had seen the Cobra attack helicopters, and their tracers were eerily beautiful. Anyway, it was very painful to see some of our aircraft being hit and burning white hot smoke on the other side of the base.

By daybreak, things had finally quieted down...or though we thought. We were told that we were confined to barracks until further notice. Fortunately for me, I'm a light eater, however some airmen decided that it was safe enough to go to the chow hall. Well, it was not so safe. A sniper had infiltrated the area and started firing. "Zam" came over and woke me up and I thought he was kidding. Then the sniper opened up again and I hit the deck. I do remember seeing an airman laying on the ground next to a jeep and not moving. I don't know who he was, but I assume that he was KIA.

The next morning, I was ordered to meet Sarge at our photo trailer complex. By the way, one of the rockets hit the ground near our photo trailers and destroyed three of them. It also knocked out the generator for our refrigeration freezer, where we would store our film and print paper. And lastly, while SSGT Deathridge and I were cleaning up the wreckage, the enemy lobbed in a few more rockets. Fortunately, we were very close to another recky tech, and took cover in their bun-

ker. By my recollection, that was the last hostile action that I saw in relation to Tet.

Thanks for the opportunity to share my little piece of history with my fellow airmen. Let me know if you'll want a 50th anniversary essay on the May 6th "MiniTet". I was nearly killed during that attack.

SGT (E4) Lionel "Jeff" Jeffers
6470th & 460th RTS
Tan Son Nhut AB
July '67 to July '68



To: Larry Fry,
Greetings,
In Response,

TET 68 at TSN:

As I recall, seems to get harder as every year goes by, but I was with the 377th Transportation Squadron, 377th Combat Support Group. What I remember was a barrage of rocket fire coming from outside the wire and from somewhere in Saigon City. The VC rushed the perimeter in several places and caused casualties at the 0-51 bunker manned by AF Security Airman.

Several got through to the interior of the base, some came through by 1200 barracks area or close by. A couple got up in the radar domes and had to be shot down. The army came onto the base with heavy equipment to help clear the base of VC. We kept receiving small arms fire and rocket fire continuously throughout the day and night for quite a while. There were many fire fights going on in Saigon including the Embassy attack although I don't remember exactly when that was. We had several VC go through our compound yet kept going and didn't stop. I probably have some of this mixed up but it's been a long time ago. I remember the Base Chapel getting blown to smithereens, about the only things standing was nothing much, charred wood & ashes. I remember a rocket hitting the base AF Motor Pool Office--leveled it, right next to the Materials Handling Equip Repair Shop where I was working at the time. Saigon got hit pretty hard and was a constant fire fight going on there for quite some time. Don't remember what the VC body count was in the aftermath was but it was quite substantial..

Well that's all I have for a short summary so hope you can use it..

Probably have some things mixed up but it's been along time ago.

Regards,

Jim Thayer, SGT USAF, Vietnam 67-68, 377th Trans Sq



Larry, per your request:

Served in 7thAF Command Center "Blue Chip" 1967-1968. Lived in apartment in an alley near 3rd Army Field Hospital. Rode bicycle to work.

Morning of December 31st, 1968 travelled along street to TSN main gate. Had no warning of an attack. Morning was still dark (around 6:30AM).

Noticed no people out on street and VNAF A1 flying very low and slow with landing light shining along street. All sights and sounds very unusual.

Approached main gate and was shocked! Totally barricaded....voice shouted from barricade, quote "J....C.....! Don't you know we're under attack?"

I was easily spotted wearing my uniform and my brand new, shiny major's leaf on cap and headlight on bike. I was directed through barricade and onto base with not too polite commands. I proceeded past gym and toward Officer's Club.

Ducked into sandbagged bunker and the enormous firefight to the west began. Stayed in bunker until late morning when two security policemen escorted me to 7th AF Hqs.

Went to work immediately launching Rolling Thunder missions and stayed in Blue Chip next 7 days sleeping on tables and eating field rations.

We never missed launching all the mission packages up North.

Lt. Col. Jack Wimer, USAF (Ret.)
Oct 67-Oct 68
Hdqtrs. 7th AF, Comm. Ctr. (Blue Chip)



I served in the Razorbacks gunship platoon on Tan Son Nhut from Nov. 1967 till July 1968. About three o'clock in the morning Jan. 31st, those of us not on the 5 minute or 30 minute standby teams were in our barracks asleep. When the mortar rounds started impacting we quickly dressed and jumped in the 3/4 ton truck and headed for Hotel Three where the gunships were in revetments. From that moment on, it was mass confusion. The 5 minute team stationed between the active and taxiway runways was already up and working over the VC/NVA near the 51 bunker and Vintexco complex. They were taking plenty of hits from AK's and machine guns. As we made our way to Hotel Three, we were almost shot up by nervous ARVN checkpoints, but soon, all crews were at the ships and airborne. By this time, our radio operator was getting frantic calls from all over Saigon asking for air support. Cholon was a hotspot as well as the Phu To racetrack on Plantation Road. The French cemetery that was right next to the air base was one place where the VC/NVA tried to penetrate the perimeter. I remember that by that time it was about 12:00 and we had shot up all of our HE rockets, and had to use WILLIE PETER in the cemetery fight to stop the assault. About this time, a Chinook flew in from the ammo dump in Long Binh with a huge sling load of HE rockets, 7.62 ammo and C-rations. That was just in time, for the Phu To racetrack situation had gotten out of hand and we had to go. We had a serious problem by now of helicopters shot up so bad they were unsafe to fly. Luckily for us, right there on HOTEL THREE were nine brand new Cmodel Hueys belonging to the US Navy. Since things were so desperate at Tan Son Nhut, they changed out our weapons systems and let us have them. For about three days, the Razorbacks flew non-stop missions, in fact we slept on the floor of the helicopter when we could get 30 minutes sleep. After that, the VC/NVA started withdrawing from Saigon, and things were a lot more manageable. Through all of this we had no one killed, and only three wounded, an almost unbelievable run of luck. TET was a combined effort by the AIR FORCE and ARMY units to win a great victory over overwhelming odds.

Bill Stribling
Nov 67 - Jun 68
120th Assault Razorbacks Gunships

TET 1968

I was a young 21 year old C-123K Crew Chief with the 19th Air Commando Squadron (later renamed the 19th SOS) at Tan Son Nhut. The early morning hours of 31 Jan '68 will forever be seared in my mind. I was inside my aircraft on Charlie Row sitting in the cockpit doing my "pre-flight power-on" checks for the morning mission. As I recall I saw bright flashes of light out the right cockpit window down toward the active runway. I guess I watched for a few seconds before I realized we were under attack as the mortars / rockets exploded and got closer and closer as if they were marching right down our parking ramp. I remember running out the back of the aircraft as the cargo door and ramp were open and I immediately laid flat as I could behind the airplane. I remember thinking I needed to get as far away from my airplane as possible because it was already full of fuel as were the other planes parked on either side of mine.

We didn't have any sand bag bunkers on Charlie Row at that time except for the one at the end of Charlie Row where a 377th SP troop was stationed. I don't know how many mortars / rockets exploded on or near our flight line that first few minutes of the attack but it seems like it would never stop. I made my way to the round SP bunker which seems was only about 3 feet high and enough room for 3 or 4 guys at a time but I jumped in there with him. At least he had an M-16 and a radio which was somewhat comforting at the time. I remember his radio saying the enemy was breaching the perimeter and our troops were taking direct fire. At one point a Huey was directly overhead spewing fire and red tracers toward the active runway area.

I had a DEROS of 28 Feb and the attacks of that month run together in my mind as the years have passed. I don't know if it was that first night that I saw an F-4 take a direct hit near Base Ops or if it was at another time but I remember from my viewpoint it was like looking into a welders arc without a face shield.

As the old song by Hank Williams Jr says, "that's my story and I'm sticking to it" !!

Skip Tannery
Feb 67 - Feb 68



Larry - I was stationed at TSNAB Sep 67 -Sep 68. I was assigned to the 1876 Comm Sqdn 1964 Comm Grp PAFCO Relay 1100 Area. In the early hours of TET a 122mm Rocket supposedly hit our barracks in the rear 800 area. The barracks was hit with shrapnel. The first floor had sand bags piled approximately five feet to six feet. The second floor was not protected and took a lot of the hit. I was third man in on the first floor lower bunk. One piece of shrapnel hit my locker 5 feet from the floor. I never went up to see. The newly arrived Sgt who had the bunk above me got a little cut about the 1/8 of an inch. He acted like it was the end of the world. More on that later. I went out of the barracks and looked around when it got lighter, To my surprise I found what looked like a human finger, the skin had turned gray but who knows for sure. That morning I got up and went to work at PAFCO Relay. We started 16 hour night shifts for I think 18 days. It was rough having to get off when it was light out, get to the mess hall and eat. we ate "C" rations for the first two weeks. That was 1 "C" ration per day. They were left over from 1943. (My dad and I discussed them when I got back.). I performed Guard Duty at the relay on the only door watching the front door of the SVN Comm Center. The Shift leader a Master Sargent was worried about being attacked by the South Vietnamese. We found out latter that there two tunnels out behind our complex. By the way that Sgt was awarded a "Purple Heart" for his injury and 3 months later he was promoted to Staff Sergeant. Think about MASH TV show and when Frank Burns was awarded a "Purple Heart" for an egg shell in the eye. The M-16 I was Issued for guards duty had 1 - 20 round magazine and wasn't the best. I would have liked an M-1 Garand which I knew was more dependable. but the Vietnamese received those.

Leslie Duty
Sep 67 - Sep 68
1964 Comm Grp 1876 Comm Sq

There are other things but are not to be spoken of. Hope all this was helpful.

Larry - I'm looking for photos of the Laundry being done in the ditch area and dried on the lines and on the grass that had been sprayed with agent orange.

I was with the 834th Air Division, Headquarters Unit. Came in-country November 19th, 1967. My cousin Dean Havens was a radio operator, in a recon platoon, in the Delta, with the Ninth Infantry Division. He was wounded while on patrol, in early January. He was airlifted out to the 3rd Field Hospital, in Saigon. I started seeing him the next day and every day after that until he was discharged. He was released from the hospital and stayed in our barracks overnight. He planned on taking a chopper to his base camp the next morning. The Tet Offensive started at 3:00 am, waking us up with a bull horn. Telling us the base was under attack. My cousin had to stay with us for three days before being able to join his unit. Within that time we had lots of things going on around us. Without weapons and not knowing what was going on around us it was scary as hell. During that time we witnessed a "Friendly Fire" incident, in our area, among other things. This was my first experience with the real war, and we weren't issued weapons until after the Tet Offensive. 1968 proved to be full of exciting and deadly things. These experiences stayed with me long after I returned home.

John Bowen
Nov 67 - Nov 68
834th Air Division Hq. Unit



I was assigned to the 377 SPS Sentry Dog Section during Tet '68. When the base went on alert on January 30 our entire K9 section went to work at around 5 pm. The night was getting very long at about 3 am when the attack began. I was on post Kilo 15 which was near the base firing range. I believe Jim Marsfelder was on the post next to me. When we heard TSgt. Jim Bloom state on the Security Police radio network from CSC (Central Security Control) "Attention all personnel, we are under mortar attack, Take Cover, Take Cover". Jim and I ran up and jumped into the grenade pit with our dogs. We crawled up the side of the berm and looked toward the West end of the runway. Green tracer rounds were flying everywhere but very few red ones from our side yet. We knew it would be a long and dangerous night - which it was. Looking back 50 years I can remember how scared I was but we had to protect the base and the people and equipment on it and history has shown that our 377 Security Police Squadron did the job.

Jim Stewart 377 SPS K9 Dobe 7X49

One thing I thought of when I read some of the January Revetments submissions was that I was never so happy to see the sun come up as I was the morning of January 31, 1968



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Photo Courtesy of Tim Lee, Apr 69-Apr 70
Headquarters, 7th Air Force

IN MEMORIAM

Mr.	Dennis	Lander	Nov 67 - Nov 68	8th Aerial Port Squadron
Mr.	Anthony	Tidwell	Feb 71 - Feb 72	460th FMS
CMSgt	Robert	Nelson	64-65 & 72	
Mr.	Michael J.	Schneider	Aug 64 - Aug 65	8th Aerial Port Squadron

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