



# REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



APRIL 2019

## Chaplain's Corner

By Andy Csordas  
TSNA Associate Chaplain

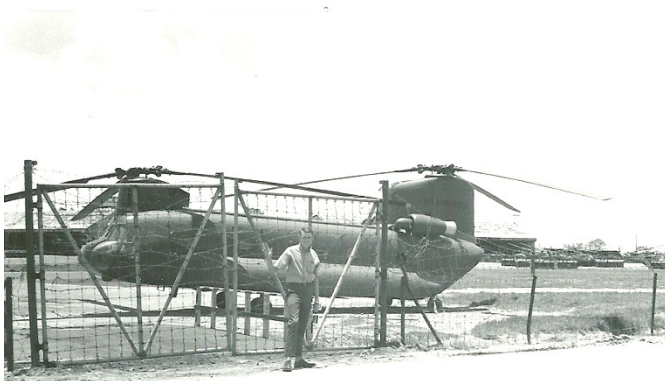
A few years back before I retired, while traveling, I was eating one evening in a buffet restaurant when a family of three came in after me - a Mom, Dad and a little boy. As they headed to the table with their food the little boy excitedly exclaimed "I want to sit next to Daddy". He said it repeatedly all the way from the food area to the table and loud enough for most of the people in that area of the restaurant to hear him. The Dad made sure he sat next to his son. It was really nice to see them having a "high level" discussion during the meal. Spending time with his Dad was a big deal to the boy and spending time with the boy was a big deal to the Dad.

It made me think back to my youth and my Dad. He passed away at the young age of 52. I thought of the times we did things together and the time he took to teach me things, and believe me sometimes it took a lot to teach me. I am sure all of you can relate to that statement. I remember sitting at the kitchen table one day and he taught me, at a fairly young age, how to read a micrometer. I asked Dad why he taught me that and he said it was because he thought I would like to know how to use a micrometer. I still have his set of micrometers.

That evening in the restaurant also made me think of God, our father. He, God, wants to spend time with us. So do we want to spend time with Him? How often do we listen for the still small voice of God in our busy lives? You cannot pick out His still small voice unless you are in a quiet place and you listen. Remember God does not want a list of our wants and needs, He wants to fellowship with us. That involves a two way conversation.

We have the privilege of being able to talk to Him, and He can talk to us, perhaps not an audible voice, but He will talk to you if you listen. .

Even the Byrds in their song, *Turn, Turn, Turn, To Everything There is a Season*: refers to Ecclesiastes 3:7b which says there is "a time to be silent and a time to speak". Spend time listening, He wants you to come to Him.



George Greenwood standing near a CH-47D Chinook on the left, and on the right some maintenance being done to a chopper. Note the mechanic up on the tail. (How does he get there, and stay there safely??) (Photos by George Greenwood, Sep 66 - Sep 67, 460th FMS Airframe Repairman.)

## FIRST NIGHT AT TAN SON NHUT

At the end of my first day at Tan Son Nhut, I went to the barracks room I had been assigned. It was Room 1, Barracks 379 in the cantonment known as "Dog Town." Each room was affectionately referred to as a "hooch" in the Vietnam War jargon.

When I got to my room, it was about 8 feet long and 8 feet wide. There was a closet at the far end. It had a little table and chair, but nothing else. The barracks building was made of wood, with the walls being only 2 x 4 boards on edge. There was one thin sheet of plywood nailed to the boards separating each of the barracks rooms. The front outside wall was made of simple 2 by 4s on edge with screen door wire nailed to the outside from floor to ceiling.

Over this screen wall were 1 by 6s installed at an angle with about 4 inches between them. I later learned this was done to deflect the monsoon rains away from coming inside my room. The weather the whole time I was there never got below 70 degrees. Usually it was in the 90's with a humidity at least in the high 80's. There seemed to be only two seasons – the monsoon rains or not monsoon rains. There was a little overhead fan, that did very little good.

That first night, I undressed, got out my flack vest, helmet, and .38 Smith and Wesson to be ready in the event of an attack. I prayed for protection of myself and my family. Then I lay down on my cot to sleep. Sleep did not come easily. It was very hot and humid. The fan did not help much. My hips, both of them, were extremely sore from the 10 cc's of gamma globulin shot in each hip that day to prevent me from getting hepatitis. And I was scared.

As I lay there, I could hear cannons firing in the distance at regular intervals. I later learned this was called "harassment fire" to keep the Viet Cong at bay. Every once in a while, I heard small arms fire coming from the direction of the main gate, only a couple of blocks away.

In the distance, I could also hear the rapid but muffled boom, boom, boom, boom of the high altitude B-52 bombers dropping their loads of bombs on enemy positions near our base. As time went along, the bombs would be so close our building would shake. From the air I later saw many series of trails of small lakes in a straight line where the B-52 bomb craters had filled with water from the monsoon rains.

I knew the war was right there, and I was in the middle of it.

Quiet muffled voices were the hardest to take. I could hear them easily at night, sometimes sounding like they were from right outside my room. A lot of the voices were speaking Vietnamese. Tan Son Nhut was a Vietnamese base and much of it consisted of Vietnamese housing, warehouses, and shops. It was a little city to itself where Dog Town was located. Right down the street was an old French fort that looked like it had been there for a hundred years.

Finally, I drifted off to sleep.

About 0200 hours, I was awakened to the blare of very loud air raid sirens and the loud boom-splaat of an enemy rocket hitting the base. I jumped up, donned my helmet, and, remembering my bed was made of heavy steel frame, I did like I was told and dived under the bed. The steel frame was designed to protect me by holding the building up in the event of being hit by a rocket and crashing down on my room.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, the "all clear" siren came and I could hear people in the barracks moving around. I was motivated to get under the bed, but I soon found out it was far easier getting under the bed than getting out from under it. The bed was quite heavy and I still had on my helmet and flack vest. Taking off my helmet was easier than lifting up the bed with my back to give me room to scoot out from under it. But I finally succeeded. I had held my fully loaded Smith and Wesson in my hand the whole time under the bed.

After a few moments, I could hear beds scooting on the floor of rooms above me, sounding like people were crawling under their beds again. I called out to find out why they were going under their beds again when the all clear siren sounded. "There is no 'all clear' siren," I was told. "There are more rockets coming in. Get under your bed" they yelled. I stayed under the bed for another half hour or so and then heard others apparently crawling out from under their beds. Getting out the second time was easier, and it got more easier each time after that as the year went along and we came under attacks.

The next morning, when I heard others moving around in the barracks, I took my towel, toothbrush and shaving gear to the latrine. I walked in to see the place rather full with men showering and shaving. Finding a small area where I could put my stuff, I started to undress for the shower. Then I stopped.....

I walked an elderly Vietnamese woman, wearing black pajama pants and a white blouse. I was not about to undress in front of a woman ! Looking around, I noticed that none of the other men paid her any attention. "What do you do about the women in here?" I asked the man next to me. "Nothing," he said. "Just ignore them. They ignore you, don't they? If you want to shower with no women in here," he continued, "you better get up early, because they start coming in here about 0700 hours."

"Why did they sound an all clear siren last night if there is no all clear siren?" I asked. "You don't get an all clear siren here," he answered. "You have to get a FM radio and listen to the instructions on the FM station." "But don't the Viet Cong have access to FM radios?" I wondered aloud.

"New here, aren't you?" he asked me. "Yes sir" I answered. "You'll get used to it after awhile. None of it makes sense here" he said. "Just do your job. Keep your head down. And go home in one piece." He smiled. I bought a FM radio at the BX later that day!

Of course, I could not just buy a radio. I had to have a Ration Card from my squadron commander. More paperwork. Then with the card in hand, I returned to the BX and bought the radio. That radio was to become one of my essential items of personal survival equipment in Vietnam. In fact, I still have it today, some 50 years later.

Getting back from the BX, I returned to my Base Legal Office. The office doors were closed, but a hand-written sign was stuck to the door just above the handle.

"CLOSED FOR LUNCH - OPEN AGAIN AT 1400 HOURS"

I turned the knob and walked in. The lobby area was empty. I found one of the JAGs in the hallway by the courtroom. Realizing I had not yet seen the courtroom, I started to open the door to it when someone called to me "Can't go in there yet. No JAGs allowed just now." It was one of the sergeants who had seen me.

Not pushing the issue, I backed away from the door and leaned against the wall talking with the other JAGs who had gathered in the hall. "Coming Through," a sergeant called as he hurried down the hall with a tinfoil covered heavy dish. The door opened just enough to let him in. Other sergeants came through with their covered dishes and eased into the courtroom.

Finally, the door opened and we were all invited in with the ringing of a dinner bell. Inside, the tables were put together and chairs arranged for us to sit down. Our new colonel came in with the two Vietnamese secretaries. Then the food was served. Real mashed potatoes, corn, beans, salad, rolls, dressing, and steaks – yes, steaks!

The NCOIC and I had been stationed together in California. As we ate the wonderful meal, I asked him where all the food came from? Immediately the room was hushed. All there looked at me in disbelief I had asked such a question. Jerry, the NCOIC, said "Quiet, Captain. Don't ask that. Just eat. I'll tell you later."

After the meal and we had returned to our cubicles, I was getting my new desk organized when Jerry came in with some paperwork. "Need you to sign this, Captain" he said. Knowing I do not sign anything I have not read, I asked what it was? "Just sign them. The Colonel has appointed you the new supply officer for the office and these are the requisition forms for what we need."

In looking at the forms, I was flabbergasted. "We don't even have a Xerox machine, so why are we ordering thousands of pages of copy paper? What will we do with 5,000 paper clips? A gross of ball point pens? What is going on here?" I asked.

"Did you like the steak?" he asked. "Yes, of course" I answered. "Then sign here," he pointed on the paper. "Well, you see Captain, this is what it takes for us to get what we need." He continued "The Air Force over here does not get very good meat, but we can get a lot of office supplies. So ..." he stopped to see if I was picking up on where he was going with this.

“So you trade office supplies for meat?” I asked. “Right. So just sign the forms,” he pleaded. Intrigued I wanted to know more. “How do you arrive at a value on these things? I mean what can you get for a box of paper clips?” I was getting interested in this barter system.

“That depends on what the Army guys need and how badly they need it. If they need something we have on hand, then the price is one thing. But if they need something we do not have, then I have to find someone who does have it and see what they need. Then the price depends on what I have to pay in supplies to get what they need. Do you see Captain? It varies from day to day.”

Jerry continued. “You are new here, but over here nobody gets what they want or what they order or what they need. The supply channels are all screwed up everywhere over here. Stuff is ordered from the States and is supposedly shipped to us, but it never arrives. It is not just the Air Force. The Army is the same way. The Navy is different because they bring everything with them on their ships that they need, but the Navy won't share with us. So, the Army and the Air Force have to take care of each other. It is called scrounging, and if you don't scrounge you don't get what you need.”

As I learned, each unit had its own scrounger. And a good scrounger could be very valuable to your unit. As an officer, I learned to never ask where something came from or what we had to give up to get it. Just be glad we had it and go on. I asked Jerry “Where do I sign?”

Les Nunn  
Aug 69 - Aug 70  
377th Combat Support Group, Combat JAG

### Call for Candidates

Your Association continues as an active and vibrant veteran organization that serves its membership.

Again, we are looking forward to an eventful reunion in September, 2019 in Little Rock, AR.

For reunions and other events to occur, TSNA needs qualified members to manage your Association as officers and board members. It is they who keep our association viable and in compliance with national, state, and local laws and regulations.

The terms of the incumbents of the following positions are expiring: President, Secretary, Director at Large, Webmaster and Director of Membership Development. The incumbents of these positions are running for reelection. There are no specific requirements to run for these positions other than being a paid-up member in good standing of the Association.

A person may nominate themselves for an office, or any member may nominate another. If you nominate another, be certain that person is willing to run and serve.

Please send all nominations by name and position to me, [Jim Faulkner, TSNA Chair Nominating Committee](#), at [jim1c21@aol.com](mailto:jim1c21@aol.com).

If you need to send your nomination by surface mail, send it to Tan Son Nhut Association at P. O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564-0236.

Deadline for all nominations is May 31, 2019. A self-nominee or one accepting a nomination by another member must submit a statement of approximately three to five paragraphs of their vision for the future of TSNA and how they would help achieve that vision by serving in any one of these positions. Nominees running for reelection must submit a summary of their achievements during their term of office.

The announcement of the upcoming election and a listing of all nominees, with their vision statement, will appear in the August 2019 issue of Revetments.



# **TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION 2019 REUNION REGISTRATION**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR  
Sep 12-15, 2019**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GUEST NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TEL ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL NEEDS (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Choose only the item(s) from the following that apply:

**Full Registration** (includes Banquet & daily access to Hospitality Suite, per person) .....\$75.00  
Number of people \_\_\_\_\_ x \$75.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Banquet Only** (per person) .....\$37.50  
Number of people \_\_\_\_\_ x \$37.50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Access to Hospitality suite** (per person, per day) .....\$17.50  
Number of people \_\_\_\_\_ x Number of days \_\_\_\_\_ x \$17.50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-Order Reunion DVD** (each) ..... \$15.00  
Number of copies ordered \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL REMITTANCE:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form with payment (check only) to:**

**TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 236  
PENRYN, PA 17564-0236**

**THIS REGISTRATION FORM WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED  
NLT AUGUST 30, 2019**

Questions regarding Reunion Registration should be directed to:

Larry Fry  
Director of Membership  
Email: [lfry2@dejazzd.com](mailto:lfry2@dejazzd.com)



**TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION 2019 HOTEL REGISTRATION**  
**FOUR POINTS SHERATON LITTLE ROCK MIDTOWN**

925 S. UNIVERSITY BLVD & INTERSTATE 630  
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72204  
(501) 664-5020

*NOTE: This hotel is now part of Marriott Hotels International*

**TSNA Room rate: \$96.00 + Tax (Currently: 15%)**

**Option 1:**

You may make your reservation by telephone. To do so, call the hotel directly at:  
**(501) 664-5020**

Mention TSNA or Tan Son Nhut Association

**Option 2:**

You may also make reservations through Marriott's nationwide Toll-Free Reservation Center at:  
**(800) 721-7033**

Mention this code: **TS-1089**

**Cutoff date for hotel reservations at our reduced rate is: August 10, 2019 at 5:00PM**

Any questions regarding hotel reservations should be addressed to:

**Joe Kricho**

Director of Reunion Planning

Email: [67vietvet68@gmail.com](mailto:67vietvet68@gmail.com)

(Please put "TSNA 2019 Reunion" in the subject line)



## MY TIME IN VIETNAM

I was a young Airman in 1967, 1968. I was there from January, 1967 till after TET in 1968. I left Feb. 8th, 1968.

I was assigned to OL 1508 Postal & Courier Sq. I was an armed Registered Mail Courier. I flew every other day all over Vietnam in a Caribou C-7A.

I delivered Registered Mail, Secret Orders, etc. I flew with the Aussies out of Tan San Nhut. We were everywhere delivering orders mainly for Army & Marines. Would ferry troops back for R&R, discharge, etc.

Pleiku. Nha Trang, Gia Nghia, Vung Tau, Da Nang, Cam Rahn Bay, Tuy Hoa, were some of places I visited.

The old sturdy C-7A was faithful. I spent a lot of time in the back of that bird.

We would land on convex airstrips in the middle of nowhere sometimes.

The experience will always be with me and the great crews I was associated with.

I had a bag handcuffed to my wrist and when we would land there would be someone meet me and they had a key as well as I did also. We would unlock and they would get their secret mail or orders and off we would go. On some stops we would pick up Vets heading back to TSN to rotate home.

On one stop we picked up some Vietnamese with their chickens and a cow. On take off a couple of them got sick and of course the crew chief had no sick bags, so what a mess. Crew Chief wanted to toss them and the chickens, cow out, but pilot said no to that.

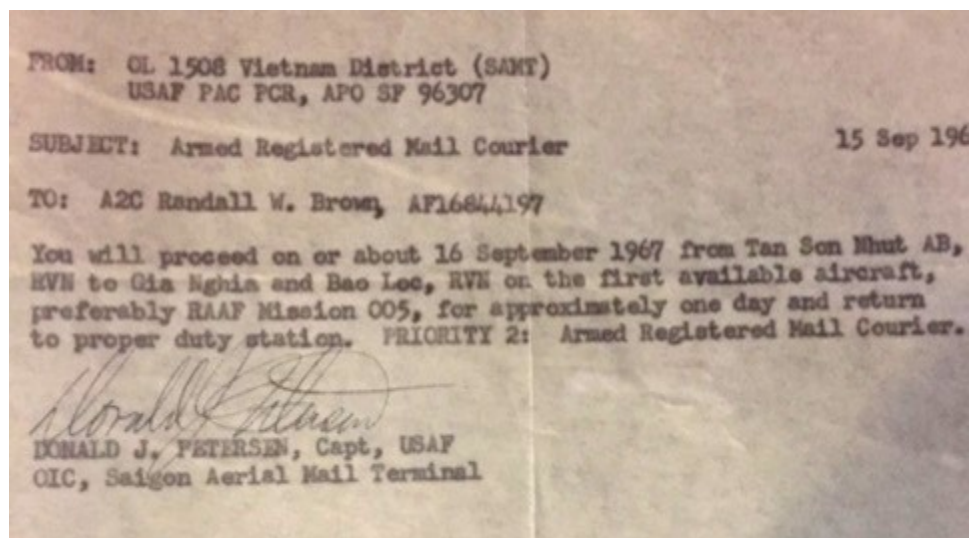
I was just a 2 striper at the time, so each flight was a real experience to say the least.



Landing at Pleiku under fire was a really scary flight. Maybe the worst. The rest were fun I would say now.

I have included a copy of one of my orders.

Randall W Brown  
President-TSNA



## MY QUILT OF VALOR STORY

By: Lynn Patton, Jan 71 - Jan 72, 377th Security Police

On Sunday, March 10, 2019, the Auxiliary Unit of Walker Harris VFW Post 8826 of Salisbury Pennsylvania honored 42 veterans with quilts from Quilts of Valor (QoV). I was one of those proud veterans. The range of service for this group was from World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As a side note, I originally decided not to go, after all I was not familiar with this organization. When I told my wife, a quilter who was very familiar with this organization, about this invitation she immediately informed me that I will be attending. I immediately called the lady from the Auxiliary Unit and informed her that my wife did tell me I was in error so now we will be attending. I am very glad I made the decision to attend.

For those not familiar with the QOV foundation, it was founded in 2003 by "Blue Star" mother, Catherine Roberts. Her son was deployed in Iraq. During that time she had a dream of comforting veterans with quilts. In that dream she saw a young man sitting on the side of his bed feeling under despair, with demons of war clustered around him dragging him down. Next she saw that same young man wrapped in a quilt. His demeanor changed from despair to hope and well-being. She saw that quilts made with love and respect and honor would equal healing. That is why each quilt presented to a veteran is wrapped around their shoulders and they are given a hug.

Catherine believes that the quilts are a way of saying "Thank you for your service, sacrifice, and valor in serving our country". These quilts are distributed in the field, at Veterans hospitals, within groups, organizations, churches and homes. We go where our veterans are. To date over 212,000 quilts have been awarded. It should also be noted that volunteers have spent thousands of hours and thousands of dollars to make these quilts over the years. More information can be found at [www.QOVF.Org](http://www.QOVF.Org).





## A MOMENT IN TIME

By: Edward Dietz  
460th FMS  
Dec 67 - Dec 68

I arrived in Vietnam Christmas night, December 25th, 1967. It was 94 degrees that night I recall. I lived in Barracks 1236 at the perimeter of the base bordering the famous cemetery where the VC hid the morning of the May offensive and I dined at Chow Hall #4, remembering the Mailroom was a long, long walk.

I was on taxi duty for maintenance shops the night of Tet and had been watching the fireworks at the flight line earlier in the evening when I received a call to pick up a Tech Sergeant from my shop and I was to take him to where the C-123/C-130's were parked near the airport tower.

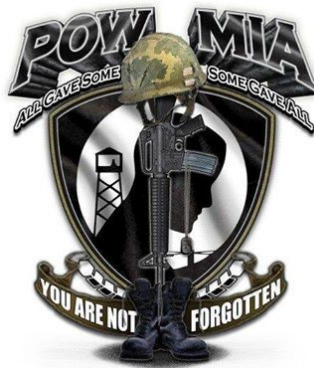
I saw several flashes of sparks in front of us. At that moment I thought we were seeing more fireworks till I saw a huge flash from a rocket hitting the base of the tower, a morning after picture of which is shown on the TSNA website.

I also noticed at the time a C-140 was trying to take off at the base of the runway with red tracers flying all around it while taking off down the runway. We jumped from the truck looking for cover. I have no idea where the Tech Sergeant went. After a few minutes of lying on the taxiway with rockets flying over my head, what seemed like forever, there was a slight lull, and with a complete base blackout, the only light was from those parachute flares.

I jumped up and located the AP bunker where I found some protection, lucky though that he had a radio and a weapon, as AF personnel were not allowed to have weapons in a war zone . . . . at least not till Tet was over and after multiple complaints. But that is a story for another time involving the May offensive.

It was a moment in time that I will remember for the rest of my life and as well as it was for all those who were there and served and were lucky enough to come home.

**Always! Always! We Remember . . . . .**



**EDITOR'S NOTE: Edward is a brand new member. When I contacted him about the above graphic, he sent me a jpg copy of it. If you are interested in having a copy, let me know.**

### FAVORITE THOUGHTS

*They begin the evening news with "Good Evening", then proceed to tell you why it isn't.*

*Buses stop in bus stations. Trains stop in train stations. On my desk is a work station.*

*I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not so sure.*

*To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.*

*Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.*

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

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Annual Membership: \$20.00  
Five Year Membership: \$80.00  
Life Membership: \$180.00



The South end of the Tan Son Nhut "original" runway - a 5200" runway. This type plane would sit there, full power and full brakes before taking off. Talk about LOUD!?? The tent is part of the original tent city - January 1962. Photo by Larry Fry

## **NEW MEMBERS**

Edward Dietz Blackwood NJ [Fishingjock@earthlink.net](mailto:Fishingjock@earthlink.net) Dec 67 - Dec 68 460th FMS Repair of aircraft electrical systems

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