



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



DECEMBER 2020

SPECIAL REVETMENTS ANNOUNCEMENT

I have cataract surgeries scheduled for January 19th and 26th, 2021.

In addition to that, my wife and I will be temporarily moving out of our apartment while the 10-year refurbishing takes place. That will take place starting on February 1st. And since new flooring everywhere is involved, that means we will be completely moving out!

The net result of all of this is that there will not be a February, 2021 issue of Revetments.

And, while I have your attention, please consider writing to me with your stories, thoughts, anecdotes, whatever – about your time at TSN. I don't have much in the pipeline right now, which is one of the reasons I am going back and picking up items from previous issues.

We all are, or should be, fairly home-bound right now. So, if you want to fill in some of that extra time, sit down and send me an email about TSN – PLEASE!!

Chaplain's Corner-Hiding

Recently I was sitting in an evening meeting at church that included a meal. There was one pesky fly that seemed to like my plate. I could not effectively swat it, but managed to annoy it enough to go bother someone at another table. This was around the time the second hurricane was bearing down on Lake Charles, LA.

Having had previous opportunities to work hurricanes including prep work, during the actual storm and restoration after the storm; it occurred to me you never see a fly or other insect during the storms. They do however come back in droves after the storm.

As I thought about where they could possibly hide in 120 mph winds I thought about how we try to hide from God. Then, of course, the thought process brought me to the realization that we cannot hide from God. We should all know that, but in fact we all tend to separate our spiritual life from our regular life.

Scripture is very direct when it says in Revelation 20:12b *"the book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their*

deeds." In other words our entire life will be revealed, we cannot hide from our actions in life, God knows about all of them, good and bad. That can be a pretty sobering thought since we are all imperfect and fall short of God's standard in so many ways.

But is there a positive reference related to hiding and God? Yes there is and it is opposite from hiding the things we do not want people to see. In Psalm 17:8 David wrote *"Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Your wings"*.

So while we are here on earth we can try to hide things from God and other people or we can be protected by God as we hide in the shadow of His wings. It is our choice.

TSNA Associate Chaplain-Andy Csordas

Notations from Applications

Started my tour in Vietnam, Special Agents (SA) of the USAF Office of Special Investigations (1005 Special Investigations Group, IG) conducted criminal investigations and counterintelligence activities, in addition to certain intelligence missions in regional nations. Like all SA's, those in RVN wore civilian clothes and drove civilian vehicles (standing out to enemy like a sore thumb!). I started my tour in Vietnam at Binh Thuy AB (Can Tho City) in IV Corps. As the only SA in the Delta, I was busy day and night. As conflicts in the Delta wore down and the footprint was reduced in 1971, I was transferred to TSN, where I served in a desk job in OSI DO 50 Hq most of the time. Our work was typical Hq ops staff activity with some interesting sidelights thrown in. We rotated as nightly duty officers, so did go out on runs even though usually at desk. TSN was a beehive of activity with the usual criminal activity, including that of allies having access to the base. (I recall an incident chasing down some U. S. military trucks being stolen by Koreans.) In Saigon, we also helped train the Palace Guard and other Vietnamese counterparts. We were given special Vietnamese Presidential Credentials that allowed us freedom from curfews and restrictions in Saigon. The credentials were in Vietnamese. I never saw a translation but knew that they seemed to strike a bit of fear in sentries. I have photos of my time there, but wish digital cameras existed then for us so that I could have taken many more.

Thomas L. Yager
USAF OSI Hq District 50
Mar 71 - Mar 72

December 1966

By: Paul Clark
377th SPS
TSN 1966-67

I am sitting in my office viewing for the umpteenth time a copy of the Air Force News, dated Dec 09, 1966. On the cover is a picture of two 377th Security Policemen, A2C Robert B. Kane, and AB Alvin W. Curie from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

I was from Ohio then, born and raised there, but now reside in southern Michigan.

I look at the picture of Curie and remember him so well even though he was in a different sector, "C Sector," I think. I was in a single man bunker that night just down from him and Kane. I was in "B Sector."

I will never forget that night and the explosions that seemed to go on forever and it was warm that night. I got the chills just waiting and watching the flight line and praying to see the daylight and for the planes to keep dropping flares. I could hear Curie's machine gun down the line, as they were firing on the VC that had broke through to the fighters.

Curie fired the M-60 that night and killed 13 VC. I remember watching him later as we gathered for guard-mount at the armory. He didn't really look like a hero but then what do heroes really look like.

Later, we stood in an official ceremony for the defense the 377th Security Police did during the attack. Curie was promoted to what rank I can't remember now and awarded medals for his heroism of stopping the enemy from doing immense damage to the aircraft and killing more of our troops.

It seems we stood for hours that day as speeches were made and medals were given out to the men who were on the main line of resistance, especially to the K-9 handler and to "Nemo the wonder dog," hero of the night.

But the toll of that night took its toll on Alvin and reminded me of the movie I saw of the Indian, Ira Hayes. That night wasn't anything like Iwo Jima but the toll of taking lives seemed to have an ill effect on Alvin and he began to drink more heavily. Within 6 months after the Dec 4, 1966 attack, they were putting Alvin on a plane, busted down again to no stripes and sent back to the states.

I often wondered what happened to him and tried this year to contact some of the Curies in Grand Rapids, MI., to find out where Alvin is buried, after reading on your site he had died.

I had no luck contacting anyone there but would like to take a drive there and just visit his grave to honor once again the young boy that I looked up to that night as a real hero and the only one I ever personally met and will never forget.

Not all the heroes died on the battlefield, some have to live with themselves and what happened in Vietnam, for years and some never get over it.

I honor AB Alvin W. Curie today and never let his heroism die as long as I am alive. I tell my four sons the story and my eleven grandchildren.

The congregation I now pastor, shares our story with tears, as I have now in my eyes, of the necessity of war at times and the horror of it also.

God bless our troops in harm's way today and God bless America.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above is from the December 2008 Revetments.



IMPORTANT DAYS THIS MONTH:

DECEMBER 7 PEARL HARBOR DAY
DECEMBER 10, 1898 TREATY OF PARIS SIGNED ENDING SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR
DECEMBER 11, 1941 HITLER AND MUSSOLINI DECLARE WAR ON US
DECEMBER 13, 2003 SADDAM HUSSEIN CAPTURED BY US ARMY TROOPS
DECEMBER 15 BILL OF RIGHTS DAY
DECEMBER 16 BATTLE OF THE BULGE
DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS DAY
DECEMBER 31 OFFICIAL END OF WWII

MEMBER INFORMATION

Dr. William S. Cottringer has renewed for 5 years.

Charles R. Dampman, Jr. has renewed for another year.

W. C. Henry has renewed for another year.

Duane E. Godden has renewed for another year.

Harold S. Hunt has renewed for another year.

John Kuhaupt has renewed for 5 years

Loren G. Peterson has renewed for a year, and made a Donation to the General Fund.

Mark Reveaux has renewed for another year.



(Graphic produced by Charles Penley)

A Different Christmas Poem

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."

(From the December, 2008 Revetments)

"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 remembers."
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."

Author Unknown (Submitted By Charles Penley)



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.

My Christmas Story

By: Fred Stein
460th TRW

I have been a member of TSNA for ten years or so; and my family and I attended the Reunion near Chanute AFB, Illinois in 2004. Here is my Christmas memory at TSN:

I arrived at TSN AFB in November 1968. My AFSC was 402X0, an aerial photo systems repair technician. I worked on the RF-4C's in the 12th and 16th TRS. To continue on with my Christmas story, I was sent TDY, mid Dec, to Phu Cat AFB, near Qui Nhon, north of Cam Ranh Bay, up the coast. I was at Phu Cat for over two months. My job there was to turn around RF-4C's that had flown a sortie from TSN, and were flying another sortie before returning to TSN. The story on the flight line, a day or two before Christmas Day, was that Bob Hope and his entourage was coming to the base. Earlier, a C-7 Caribou landed with its nose decorated in red, and a Santa Clause painted on the fuselage. Yep, Mr. Chuckles himself had landed, and there would be entertainment soon. I was on duty on the flight line on Christmas Day. There were only one or two birds expected in, to be turned around, but it was my turn to stay on duty as backup / on call. My NCOIC, a young Staff Sgt, told me to "disappear", as he would handle any work that came up. Bless his heart, I thanked him several times, and I was gone.

By the time I arrived at the site of the Bob Hope Show, there were thousands of troops already waiting. People were sitting everywhere, and anywhere, in an attempt to be part of this historic event. There were awesome sound systems set up, so that everyone could hear the show..

From my vantage point, everyone on stage appeared to be two inches tall, as I was far to the rear of the audience. It was a wonderful show full of comedy and entertainment, with Rosie Grier, Ann Margaret, the Gold Diggers, Les Brown Orchestra, and many others who I do not recall. Bob was his usual charming, humorous self. Everyone loved him and his cast of entertainers.

I was sent back to TSN in Feb 69 and I remained there until I shipped back to the "world" in Nov 69. I stopped enroute at Anderson AFB Guam to visit my twin brother, who was stationed there for 18 months, as a top- secret crypto decoder/encoder. He and I had an early holiday celebration visit for two days. And after my 30 day leave, I was assigned to Beale AFB CA. until I was discharged Dec 70, along with my twin bro, who was stationed at Vandenburg AFB Ca later in 70. We drove home together back to the Midwest on Dec 9, 1970.

TSN Christmas 67

By: Jim Stewart
377th SPS
Sept 67 – Sept 68

I was stationed at Tan Son Nhut from Sept. 67 through Sept. 68 in the 377th Security Police Sentry Dog Section as a dog handler. I have attached a photo of my dog Dobe 7X49 and me from December 1967 probably taken by Bob Need's photography unit.

Here's my tale:

On Christmas Eve 1967 I was posted with my sentry dog Dobe on post kilo 13 north of the runway. Most K9 posts had a small sand bag bunker on them. Dobe and I were taking a break at the bunker. I was listening to the Armed Forces radio broadcast of the John Doremus show on my "unauthorized" radio. Bing Crosby was singing White Christmas. I sat there with tears in my eyes feeling very home sick and sorry for myself. Bing Crosby's version of White Christmas is still my favorite Christmas song. Every time I hear it I think of my time at Tan Son Nhut.



(EDITOR'S NOTE: ALL THE ABOVE STORIES FROM THE DECEMBER, 2008 REVETMENTS)

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Penryn PA 17564

Revetments is an official publication of the
Tan Son Nhut Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564-0236
The Association is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt Veterans'
Organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND

HAPPY NEW YEAR

**FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION**

REUNION 2021

Paul Mortenson, who is our Co-Reunion Director and I will be meeting up at the Doubletree Hotel in Tucson, the site of our 2021 Reunion.

We will be going over details, looking at tours, etc.

Paul will be updating and talking to Joe Kricho on many things to make sure we have a great time while in Tucson.

We are making plans for a super Arizona Reunion.

Randall

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