



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



MAY 2020

Chaplain's Corner-Fear Not

So there are lots of things going on this year that are not "normal" as we likely define normal. There is fear about major health issues in our states, our country and around the world. Some of what we read and hear is indeed true and some is simply overblown hype designed to increase ratings or just to frighten us as individuals or as a people.

So how should we react to all of the things we see and hear? Sometimes it seems like a subliminal message that says, "We are all going to die!" So if we pragmatically think about that comment, it is true. We are going to die at some time.

Perhaps it will be caused by a disease related to Agent Orange, an automobile accident, industrial accident or a disease related to our age group called old age. Perhaps the process will be long and torturous or quickly such as a major heart attack.

We as humans tend to think of ourselves as indestructible, especially during our younger years. I think we also feel that way as we age, but it tends to be tempered with a more realistic view of life.

How should we think about our inevitable demise? Do we fear that day? Isaiah 41:10 says "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Psalm 34:4 says "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears."

What steps do we need to take to prepare for that day? God asks us to come to Him. Are you in despair? Don't stay silent. Cry out to God. He hears and waits to restore your hope. Though He doesn't always take us out of hard situations, He promises to be with us always.

TSNA Associate Chaplain-Andy Csordas



(Sorry, I lost track of who sent this nor where it is.)

IMPORTANT(?) DAYS THIS MONTH

- MAY 2 OSAMA BIN LADEN BROUGHT TO JUSTICE BY US NAVY SEALS
- MAY 4, 1942 BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA BEGINS
- MAY 6, 1941 BOB HOPE'S FIRST USO SHOW AT MARCH FIELD AIR BASE, CALIFORNIA
- MAY 8, 1945 VE DAY
- MAY XX MOTHERS DAY (SECOND SUNDAY IN MAY)
- MAY XX ARMED FORCES DAY (THIRD SATURDAY IN MAY)
- MAY 22 NATIONAL MARITIME DAY
- MAY 26 TOKYO BOMBED
- MAY XX MEMORIAL DAY (LAST MONDAY IN MAY)

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS (New Member as of 4/8/2020)

Volunteered as Comm. Center Spec, MOS 72B20. Assigned to Satellite Station, TSN. Duties: Code, Decode, Send & Receive messages between Command and Washington, D. C. Had an apartment in Saigon because there were no available facilities at TSN. Ate at Navy Mess in Saigon.

December 16, 1965, unit was transferred to Thailand.

TSN was the first unit to use Satellite Comm. in war zone by U. S. Army.

Robert W. Reed, Brownstown, MI
Aug 65 - Dec 65



TSN RECOLLECTIONS

By: SSgt Jim Marshall
377 CSG, Hq Sq, Data Automation
Feb 1970 – Mar 1972

I ended up in Vietnam by getting into Computer Operations in 1969 at MacDill AFB, FL to avoid a war zone and ended up at Tan Son Nhut AB by way of serving for 30 minutes in Tuy Hoa, AB in the middle of nowhere. The Vietnam War, as I was to learn, was an insane war. One saw it to be true if you were stationed in Saigon, a city of 3M+ people. When I arrived in February 1970 I was told the city was having all kinds of problems with the Viet Cong causing trouble. An Army 2-Star General put the entire city off-limits to about 70K+ hormone laden soldiers and airmen.

In Saigon, I was to learn the hotels, restaurants, Bars, "Places of Pleasures", etc, paid off to the Vietnamese Civilian Police (White Mice), the Vietnamese Military Police (QC) and to the Viet Cong in order to ensure their establishments had no trouble. Failure to pay meant a bar might be shot up or blown up sending the message to all that the owner was not ensuring your safety.

During the 3 weeks of Saigon Off limits, the merchants could not pay the bribes and revolted when pressed. Most all in Saigon must have read the VC the Riot Act and in Vietnam, money trumped politics. The city returned to normal with a de-facto truce. You do not mess with me and I will not mess with you. But when, for needed political purposes, a point needed to be made, word would go out on the Mama-san Intelligence network that after the 2200 curfew, something would be blown up usually with little damage. Then the VC could boast it could not be stopped and the point was made.

In my 700 Area hooch, I met my maid who would care for me for two years. I was told to pay her 300p in official exchange rate which was around \$3 although on the Black Market, \$1.50. This seemed quite low for working 0700-1700, Monday thru Saturday. Her name was something else so I just called her Zoom-Zoom. All 4'10" of her would zoom here and zoom there around the hooch area so many times it just became ZOOM. I turned out to be Zim.

I settled into working in the back of Finance area in the same building as the BX and was assigned to Mid-nights with Sgt Dennis St. Jean as my boss and trainer. Working in the wee hours of the morning and going to bed at 0745 was fine until around noon when it was 95 degrees plus. You'd awaken, sweat soaked, crawl out of bed staggering out into the dayroom and stick your head into the freezer and breath deeply.

When I got settled, an old hand would take the NEWBIES in tow and explain how to go down to Tudo Street, shop in the markets, etc. and not get taken; you hoped. You spread your money into all those little pockets in the jungle fatigues especially into the pockets inside of pockets. You took your wristwatch and turned the face under your wrist to keep the Cowboys on motorcycles from ripping it off.

My first real encounter with Zoom was when I got my fatigues soaked and caked with mud. Being trained by my mother I hung them up on a nail to dry. They hung there for 3 days. Surely she knew they were dirty and would do her job. By that time I understood the power she held. She controlled security in the hooch and who got what clothes. To me 300p was too little and I would pay her the equivalent of \$15 Black Market exchange rates.

After 3 days of seeing the dirty jungle fatigues, I called Zoom over and pointed to the hanging fatigues. She just stared at me. I pointed and said dirty. She said, "NO dirty". I grabbed the pants and pulled off the mud, pointed to the mud and said, "**DIRTY**". In her frustration she screamed "**NO DIRTY**", grabbed them from my hand, threw the clothes on the floor, pointed down and screamed, "**DIRTY**".

Ah-ha, this was definitely a clue as to how the Vietnamese viewed maid service. To keep things simple as to how to determine if you viewed something as needed to be laundered, you would just throw it on the floor in the corner. This was elegant, simple and there would be no misunderstanding. When I returned to the states, got my own apartment and started throwing my clothes into the corner, it finally occurred to me there was no Zoom.

Then, in the two-week celebration of the Vietnamese New Year, I would bring Zoom a bottle of Cognac and from then on, she was my guardian. She ensured my area was secure, locker was locked and I always got my clothes cleaned, shoes shined and all was swept.

We worked six days a week although depending on the flow of data into the Computer Room, some nights there was nothing to do. Other times of the week, it was very busy. The most critical time of the month was pay check time. Yes, if the troops are not paid, troops are very, very unhappy.

I believe the air bases in Vietnam were the prototype for payroll Direct Deposit. Each base had a real US Bank and ours was Bank of America (BOA). Near the end of the month, instead of printing me a green US Government check, all those on the base who had the checking account, had their names printed on a list with the total on the last page. The list was delivered to BOA on **ONE** large check. It would take a few years for it to come to the US

Since now Saigon was a relatively safe place to go, except for the thieves, shopping for the nude felt paintings, monkey pod wood carvings, etc, was great. The market area was awash with small business merchants who sold anything you could imagine. A lot of the goods were from the BX and probably stolen along the way.

I could spend a good Saturday afternoon looking for things to send home to my mother and sisters. Most GI's would show interest in something and pay the asking price; just like in America. But if one loved to **HAGGLE**, this was the place. I would spot something I might buy and show interest. Instantly the vendor would be quoting a price of \$20 in P. I'd respond back at \$0.50 and he would scream. He would point out all the value and I'd point out all the flaws and what a piece of trash it was. This was a heated exchange.

This dance would go for 5-6 minutes and I'd raise it to \$1. He would then tell me about all his family problems and I would tell him about my pregnant sister whose husband left her with 8 kids, mother who is near death, etc. So now he is down to \$10 and I am up to \$3. We are both near tears and feeling sorry for each other. You know when the deal is made when he starts wrapping up the item. When he hands it to you he says \$5.

At this point you turn quick and walk slowly away. After you he comes and drags you back by the arm cementing the deal at \$3. The money is paid and everyone is happy. A number of times I have heard the vendors who sell to GIs at the asking price, calling them dumb and stupid after they walked away. I learned early to try to understand the culture and when in Rome, do as the Romans do.

After sending a few items to my mother and sister in Jupiter, FL they got compliments and offers to buy the items for far more than I paid. There were so many offers my sister proposed to me going on buying sprees for certain kinds of items and sending them home to her. She would market them, and we would split the profits. To me this was more a chance to kill time and have some fun going downtown into the markets and perfecting my sob stories. It never got into the thousands of dollars but it was better than spending money and not showing anything for it.

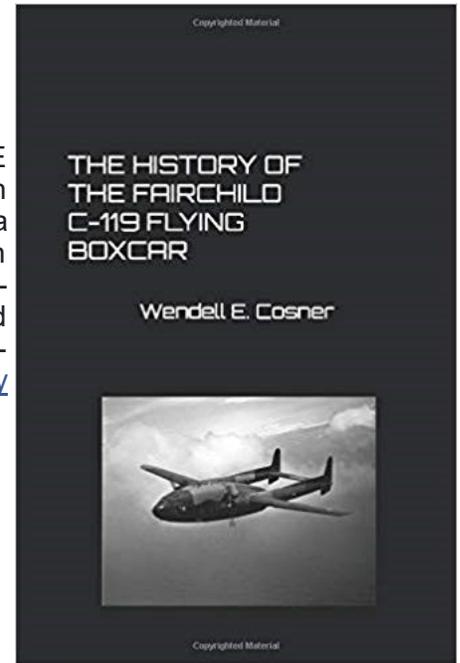
At the time there was little thought of how nice we in Saigon had it or what others were enduring out in the boonies. I recall across from the BX was a Depot Level helicopter repair facility. You would see smaller shot to shreds helicopters dangling from large ones being lowered into the facility. Today, I still see that picture in my mind. I think all of us have a bit of guilt knowing all those who were out at the remote bases or humping the boonies had it much worse than us. My level of guilt has been tempered in the last few years because of Agent Orange. Very, very few of the Vietnam Veterans I have met have escaped the ravages of Agent Orange including myself.

PLEASE SEND **YOUR** STORIES TO ME AT: lfry2@dejazzd.com.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AT THE AC 119 ASSOCIATION

Below is a link to a book that was just published. The book's title is THE HISTORY OF THE FAIRCHILD C-119 FLYING BOXCAR and was written by one of our Association members, Col Wendell Cosner. Wendell was a pilot in the G-model at Phan Rang from 1970 to 1971 and passed away in February 2017. It took him over 15 years to complete the history of the C-119—most likely the only one written on this subject. It is a great read and covers the life of the C-119 from day one through its conversion to a gunship. You can purchase this book on Amazon using the following link [Buy "THE HISTORY OF THE FAIRCHILD C-119 FLYING BOXCAR"](#).

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Call for Nominations

Our reunion for this year may have been cancelled because of the Coronavirus Pandemic, but your board of directors must continue to function to keep our association viable and plan for more great reunions in the future.

The term of Rich Carvell, TSNA Vice President ends this year. He is eligible to run for reelection, but we always seek qualified candidates to run for all officer and director positions in our association. There are no specific requirements to run for Vice President other than being a paid-up member in good standing. The duties of that position are spelled out in our bylaws.

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, Dale Bryan, TSNA Secretary, at dale.bryan@gmail.com. If you must 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, 2020. 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 the vice president position. A nominee 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 2020 issue of Revetments.

From a new TSNA Member: Interesting reading!!

1/31/2020

Hi Larry,

Thanks for sending the Revetments link. There's some good reading there.

I've attached copies of two cables that might be of interest to our members if they haven't seen them before.

Also I attached the text of four CINCPAC Communiques dated from 12 Jan 1945 - 15 Jan 1945 that mention

Thanh Son Nhut [sic] air base. One comment, it's a neat trick to destroy "eight of five Zero planes". 😊

Every year, as we approach January 31st, my "memory bank" starts opening up my recollections of the events of "Tet '68". It seems like it was just a few years ago. This year I'll try to document my experience as it related to Tan Son Nhut so you'll have the perspective of one of the civilians working at MACCORDS in the "Pentagon East".

Cheers,

Hal Hunt Oct 66 - Feb 74 Civilian Contractor

HS Hunt@email.com

CINCPAC COMMUNIQUÉ NO. 230, JANUARY 12, 1945

Carrier aircraft of the Pacific Fleet are now attacking the enemy off the coast of French Indo-China between Saigon and Camranh Bay.

CINCPAC COMMUNIQUÉ NO. 231, JANUARY 12, 1945

Additional reports from forces of the United States Pacific Fleet which struck at targets along the coast of French Indo-China on January 11 (West Longitude Date) show that our carrier aircraft attacked four convoys and other scattered units sinking a total of 25 ships including a *Katori* class light cruiser and several destroyers or destroyer escorts. Heavy damage was inflicted on 13 additional vessels.

Eighteen aircraft were observed airborne over Saigon of which our fighters shot down ten. A bomber off the Indo-China coast and eight of five Zero planes at the **Thanh Son Nhut** air base north of Saigon were destroyed. Twenty flying boats and seaplanes in Camranh, Cat Lai near Saigon and Quinhon Harbor about 250 miles northeast of Saigon were also destroyed. At last reports our surface forces had suffered no damage and were continuing their attacks.

CINCPAC COMMUNIQUÉ NO. 232, JANUARY 13, 1945

Following the first carrier attacks in the vicinity of Saigon on January 11 (West Longitude Date) numerous fires were observed on shore especially at the **Thanh Son Nhut** Air Base and at Port Nhabe. Six transports were included in the ships sunk at Saigon. At least six ships were sunk in the Harbor of Quinhon.

CINCPAC COMMUNIQUÉ NO. 234, JANUARY 15, 1945

Further reports from U. S. Pacific Fleet forces which struck at shipping and other targets along the coast of French Indo-China on January 11 (West Longitude Date) show that our carrier based aircraft inflicted the following damage on the enemy. (This report includes damage previously reported in communiqué No. 231)

Sunk:

41 ships totaling about 127,000 tons.

Damaged:

28 ships totaling about 70,000 tons.

Enemy plane damage:

15 aircraft shot down.

77 aircraft destroyed on the ground.

20 aircraft destroyed on the water.

About 50 aircraft damaged on the ground.

Ground installations:

A large dock at Camranh Bay demolished.

6 oil tanks at Saigon destroyed.

Oil storage facilities, warehouses and buildings on Saigon River de-destroyed.
 Seaplane hangar at Cat Lai destroyed.
 Two locomotives at Quang Ngai destroyed.
 Oil refineries in Saigon area damaged heavily and fires started in Saigon Navy Yard.
 Our forces suffered losses of 16 planes in combat.

While inflicting the damage listed above our aircraft sank a convoy of 1 oiler, 4 medium cargo ships, 2 destroyer escorts, and 4 coastal cargo ships in its entirety. A second convoy was all sunk or damaged and beached. It consisted of 1 light cruiser now believed to be *Kashii*, of the Katori class, 4 destroyer escorts, 4 oilers, 7 medium and 2 small cargo ships and 1 coastal ship. A third group of ships approaching Saigon from the south was attacked, an oiler sunk, and 1 large cargo ship, 1 medium cargo ship and 1 small coastal cargo ship damaged. At Camranh Bay a destroyer escort and a small cargo ship were sunk, and at Cape St. Jacques, 3 destroyer escorts, 1 oiler, 3 large cargo ships and a small cargo ship were sunk. Attacking the Saigon area heavily our planes sank a large oiler, a large troop transport, 2 medium cargo ships, a dismantled French light cruiser *Lamotte Picquet* and damaged a large cargo ship, 4 medium cargo ships and 2 coastal cargo ships. Along the coast our planes sank an additional medium cargo ship and damaged 5 small coastal cargo vessels.

14ND CINCPAC 2100-26 (4-67)
 THIS MESSAGE UNDER CINCPAC SSO CONTROL

26 APR 75 22 46

FLASH

UNCLAS EFTO

ZCZCHLA946
 ZZ YLHADR
 DE YHLAAH #0000
 ZNY MMNSH
 ZYH
 FM SSO SAIGON
 TO ASC HONOLULU
 INFO AFSSO NKP
 SSO PACOM
 ZEM
 UNCLAS E F T O

1. THIS STATION IS CLOSING NOW DUE TO EMERGENCY;
 2. ALTRQUTE ALL TRAFFIC TO SSO PACOM;
 3. YOU WILL BE INFORMED ASAP IF OPERATION IS RESUMED;
 IF NOT, THIS MESSAGE CONSTITUTES OUR LAST MAN
 QUOTE TURNING OUT THE LIGHTS UNQUOTE;
 #0000

CINC	EXEC	F/LT	C/S	DEP	INSP	PA	JT	PERS	INT	DPS	LOG	PLN	C&E	PAO	SEC	SSO	FHF	ARPA	IFAC		
100	1001	1002	101	102	GEN	PA	104	11	12	13	14	15	16	17A	18	DDO	19C	DPR	NOG	332	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	C

CINCPAC SSO COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY - INCOMING

DTG

14ND-P 2 1/1D (3-74)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Hal also sent me a copy of a Department of State Telegram dated August 24, 1963. It is on pink paper, and due to it's interesting original "TOP SECRET" labelling, I am not including it here. But if you want to receive it, please contact me at: lfry2@dejazzd.com.



ON TO TUCSON - IN 2021

The Board of Directors of the Tan Son Nhut Association have voted and approved a motion to “Keep **ON** with Tuc**SON**!!”

Obviously, it’s time to say, “Stay Tuned for Further Information.”

TSNA Scholarship

The deadline for applications for the TSNA Scholarship for the Fall 2020 college term has been extended until 1 July 2020.

“Closure of schools across the nation had an adverse effect on the number of applications the Association has received,” according to Richard Carvell, TSNA Scholarship Committee chair. “So, the Committee voted to extend the application deadline to 1 July 2020.” The original scholarship application deadline was 1 May.

Carvell urged all TSNA members to contact schools in their part of the country to let them know of the Scholarship and of the extended deadline to apply.

“Our only way of getting the word out about the Scholarship is with the help of our members,” Carvell said.

The \$5,000 scholarship is available to high school seniors who plan to pursue a college degree in the Fall. The applicant must be a direct descendant of one who served in Vietnam for any period from January 1, 1959, to April 30, 1975. Service may be either with the Armed Forces of the United States or the Republic of Vietnam or as a civilian at Tan Son Nhut Air Base either as an American or Vietnamese citizen.

The scholarship is awarded in equal amounts over four years, provided the student maintains a 3.00 grade point average at the end of each school term and completes a minimum of 30 semester hours each year.

Recipients must pursue a four-year degree as a resident student at an accredited United States accredited college or university that grants bachelor or higher degrees but may begin higher education studies at a two-year accredited institution and transfer to an accredited school to complete the final two years leading to a bachelor's degree.

If TSNA members wish to honor a person or make a donation in memory of someone, it is not too late. Please provide contact information so that we may properly advise the honoree or surviving family of your donation.

Send donations to "The Tan Son Nhut Association, PO Box 236, Penryn, PA"..



Tan Son Nhut Association
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Penryn PA 17564

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Web Site: www.tsna.org
Annual Membership: \$20.00
Five Year Membership: \$80.00
Life Membership: \$180.00



Doug Emch & Fred Benda & Crew working on PVC Matting and drainage for the 8th Airport taxi way.

**Photo from Fred Benda, Sep 70 - Sep 71
823rd & 544th Red Horse Combat Engineers
(Good friend of Benny Goodman)**

Larry:

If you want to let TSNA know about the following.

The Razor Backs were the Army's quick reaction gunships on TSN. The Documentary covers their history including TET of 68.

The documentary title is THE SHADOWS OF MEN. There were two trailers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7oCqkxYn2k>
and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fvr4pX1lkxo>

The documentary itself is available for free on Amazon Prime Video.

The home page is <http://www.theshadowsofmen.com/>

Ernie Pyle had a book titled BRAVE MEN, the title applies here.

Chuck Templeton
377 SPS 68-71

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