



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



AUGUST 2021

FROM THE PREZ!

FROM PAUL ALLARD

Reunion 2021-DAYTON

In meeting with the Board of Directors of TSNA and gathering all the info from the CDC, Dayton and the State of Ohio I have decided to **CANCEL** the 2021 Reunion.

A lot of factors played in this hard decision.

First and foremost is the health of our members, next, the costs incurred to our group.

The next was our survey which told us our members would not be coming for many reasons.

Also, the DELTA VARIANT and the low turnout and health risks.

Our Reunion planners will have more on next year's Reunion try in 2022!

Thank you all for your support of TSNA.

Randall W Brown
President-TSNA

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

Lived on Tan Son Nhut in a hooch near the outer perimeter. Managing SEADAB involved tracking all aircraft coming from Tonkin Gulf or NKP (Thailand), capturing payload, ordinance expended, target, flight duration, etc. SEADAB was used by the Command Post as the principal resource for directing all airstrikes (in-out country).

Chauncey D. Jackson, MSgt. USAF
7th Air Force (DOY)
Aug 71—Aug 72

Lived at Tan Son Nhut across from the Air Terminal. I worked with a great team of Combat Controllers. We were few but we took care of business. CCT is now named Special Operations, out of Hurlburt Field, FL.

James A. Scott
8th Aerial Port Squadron
July 70—Jun 71

Walking along the beach road in Nghi Son in Northern Vietnam on April 30th when this group hailed me and invited me to join their picnic. I thought it interesting that they would invite a foreigner, especially an American, to help them celebrate this day. I shared some cool Tiger beer and talked with them in my limited Vietnamese, all the while thinking that fifty years ago this same group of young men would have gladly shot me. War is not only hell, it's stupid; yesterday's enemies are today's friends.



George Plunkett Flag Presentation
By: Andy Csordas
TSNA Treasurer



Andy Csordas was honored to present George Plunkett, President Emeritus of the Tan Son Nhut Association, with a flag given to our organization by our first Scholarship recipient, Catherine Clark. During George's tenure as President of the TSNA, 2011-2015, George worked very hard to develop a program to provide scholarships to descendants of Vietnam Veterans, with an emphasis on those who served or passed through Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

The competition for the scholarships is very intense. As noted above, Catherine received the first TSNA Scholarship to attend Virginia Tech for her Bachelor's Degree in Biological Science. She graduated in 2020. She was gracious enough to send a thank you note to Rich Carvell, the Chairman of the Scholarship Committee. In addition to the thank you note, she also sent a flag flown over the USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19) which was captained by her father, Max Clark, for the specific purpose of presentation to the Tan Son Nhut Association.

It was an emotional presentation and was certainly well received by George and his wife Trish who in addition to George has provided the TSNA with so much support over the years. We are indeed blessed and honored to receive the flag and the board determined that the flag should go to George Plunkett. The plaque provided with the flag states:

**Presented to the Tan Son Nhut Association and George Plunkett,
Father of the TSNA Scholarship Program
By the Captain Max Clark Family and
Catherine Clark, the First Scholarship Recipient**

To date we have awarded, or are in the process of awarding, eleven \$5,000 scholarships with the funds dispersed at a rate of \$1,250 per year for four years for a total of \$55,000 thus far. The Colleges and Universities attended by these recipients include locations from coast to coast and from large universities to smaller colleges. The criterion to receive a scholarship is listed on our TSNA web site. The process is managed by Rich Carvell, the Chairman of the Scholarship Committee, and he along with the rest of the Scholarship Committee members review the applications to select the best recipient(s), which can be very difficult as there are many deserving applicants.

Some years we have awarded one Scholarship, other years two and this year we are awarding three because of generous donations. It all depends on the donations received for the Scholarship Program. Obviously, we cannot award these scholarships without donations specified for this purpose. Scholarships will provide a legacy for our organization way down the road. Please consider a donation so we can continue to provide help to worthy scholars who are descendants of people who served with us.

JIM AUGERI'S TRAVELOGUE - PART 3 (SPECIAL TO TSNA "REVETMENTS")

SAIGON AND THE MEKONG DELTA

Our last installment finished up with us leaving Siem Reap, Cambodia behind and bound for Ho Chi Minh City or, as we knew it, Saigon. It is still widely referred to as Saigon all throughout Vietnam.

That departure from Siem Reap, Cambodia was to be the one and only time we had any real issue with the wives' electric wheelchair. For whatever reason, Cambodia Air did not want the chair on their airplane under any circumstances. No doubt it had to do with the Lithium batteries, which everyone else was happy to let us remove and take aboard as part of our carry-on stuff, and then check the chair as an extra "bag". I surmise that this issue has to do with the potential for Lithium Ion batteries to short out and start a fire in checked baggage (due to being bumped around and what-not). At least as part of the carry-on stuff, they would be able to detect and deal with any such issue. In any case, it was NOT an issue at all, except HERE. Thankfully our guides always stayed with us until we were successfully checked in to the airlines, so he (Mr Sip, as I called him) was able to intervene on our behalf, even going so far as to try to argue our point for us thus bridging the considerable language barrier with the airport folks.

It was ultimately all for naught, however. And on a moment's notice we had to arrange to have the chair SHIPPED overnight to Saigon by motor coach. We were assured that the chair would be in Saigon the next day but that we needed to pay \$100 USD for this accommodation. He (Mr Sip) also let us know that there was the possibility that the chair might be "inspected" at the Cambodia/Vietnam border crossing as part of the "baggage" being carried by the motor coach (bus). He mentioned this so we would know to be extra diligent at inspecting the chair once we were reunited with it at the other end. He took care of everything for us, and he and the driver took our precious chair to an express shipping service to get it done. This was a bit nerve wracking given the cost of the particular article, which we feared we might never see again! It all worked out in the end, although it actually took an EXTRA DAY for the chair to arrive in Saigon/HCMC. Our next guide, who went by the name Eddie, had the travel company rustle us up a manual wheelchair to use for the first day visiting Saigon. As I said, it all worked out in the end, and the chair arrived safe and sound the next morning.

It had been 18,150 Days (100 days exactly shy of 50 years) since I had last set foot on Vietnamese soil. How much had changed in those intervening 50 years? Would the Viet's hate us (for "abandoning" them in their time of need)? What should I expect? Interesting the kind of thoughts that pass through your mind at the last minute.

Our hotel arrival in Saigon was a bit inauspicious at first, as this particular hotel had a steep set of stairs from the sidewalk up into the lobby entrance. (Those steep stairs, again!) No worries, as the hotel security guard (every hotel there has at least one), our guide, our driver and a handful of other anonymous "volunteers" came out of nowhere and literally carried my wife AND HER WHEELCHAIR up the steps and into the lobby! About 6 people in all managed this chore without batting an eyelash. Blew our minds. But it also kind of freaked out the wife as she was totally unprepared for all the attention and being carried that way. We made sure to thank all involved but took steps in the future to make sure that she was afoot before getting to that point. And from then forward, I just wheeled her chair to the top of the steps and carried it down to the sidewalk. It is worth noting that everywhere we went with this small foldable electric wheelchair, people were fascinated with it. It drew stares wherever we went, as I'm sure they had never seen anything like it before.



**The International Terminal at TSN Airport
as it appears today**



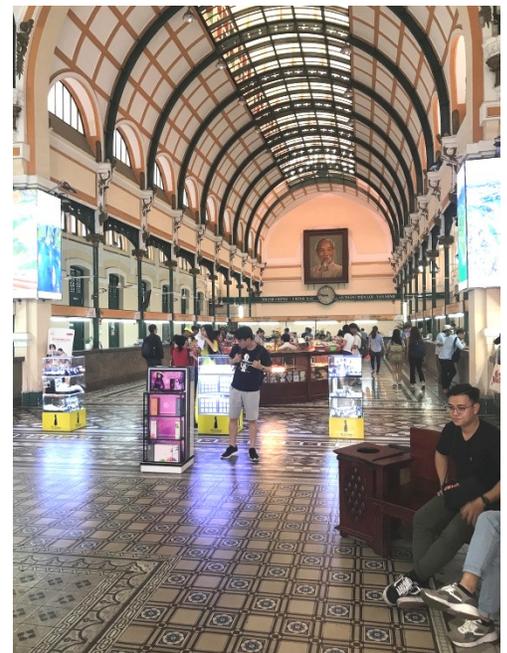
The beautiful grounds of the former Presidential Palace

On Monday, we visited many places in HCMC (Ho Chi Minh City)/Saigon. Most everything was in the immediate vicinity of “downtown” in the heart of Saigon’s District 1. It would be the first time to actually visit inside the old Presidential Palace, now called the Reunification Palace. (Our hotel here in Saigon was located just around the corner from the Reunification Palace, and about a half block away.) It is truly a beautiful building inside and out. We even got to visit the “secret” underground communications center and see the safe rooms located in the basement. In addition to the Reunification Palace, we visited the old Saigon Post office, the Saigon Opera House and the Notre Dame Cathedral, though we were not allowed inside due to some outside construction work and scaffolding blocking the main entrance. The Post Office is a fairly elaborate building which is still in operation as a P.O. to this day. It too is pretty beautiful on the inside and was a bustle of activity on a Monday morning. At the far end of the main lobby was a huge portrait of Uncle Ho. To be expected, I guess.



The War Remnants Museum reminds us that history is written by the victorious

The unsettling part for the wife came when we wandered into the “Agent Orange” wing of the museum. The picture displays of the dead, and of the deformed children born in the aftermath was enough to make her cry and ask to leave NOW! It was indeed a disturbing sight to behold but must also be viewed through the lens of the victorious Communist regime. This display in particular was 100% designed to tug at the viewers heart-strings and does exactly that. You could easily see that in the eyes of those present, and from the random comments you could hear while wandering past others present. Interestingly, there is LITTLE or NO MENTION of any of the effects felt by or being experienced today for those of us (myself included) who were also exposed to AO during the time. I guess that would not fit their narrative. Again; History is written by the Victor! No place was that more obvious than here at the War Remnants Museum. (Well, it was actually obvious in Hanoi as well!)



Lobby of the main Saigon Post Office in District 1

I mentioned previously that I had chosen the month of March for this trip to avoid as much foul weather as we possibly could. And I have to say that we were extremely fortunate on this trip with regard to the weather. Every day was as glorious as the next. Except for the one day of light rain once we made it farther north

With most of the local “downtown” attractions taken care of, we went to visit the Ben Thanh Market. Think of a huge open stall indoor mall (just not that fancy, and far more crowded) selling just about anything you could ever want, and even more stuff than you would ever need! Oh, and with very cramped and narrow walkways between everything. If you can think of something, it was probably for sale here somewhere. After the market we drove to Cho-Lon to visit “Chinatown” and the very impressive Thien Hau Temple there. Not at all like the very ornate Temples back in Bangkok, this one is clearly a very much working mans (and woman’s) religious spot; albeit one that just happens to be full of tourists as well as regular patrons. After visiting the Temple, we returned to our hotel to have a bit of time on our own to do whatever we wanted to do. Naturally, I found the local brewpub, called East-West Brewing Co. The local craft brews are what draw my interest, and this spot didn’t disappoint either. Decent food too, including American-style burgers. Vietnam still has the “33” beer that many of us likely remember! (Nope, I wasn’t feeling nostalgic for it either!) There is also a pretty decent Saigon Lager, and – of all things – Heineken is hugely popular there too. There is a large bottling plant for Heineken just outside of Hanoi.



Thien Hau Temple in Cho-Lon



Winnie in her chair at the Ben Duoc Tunnels of Cu Chi

On Tuesday, driver “Phat” took us all north to Cu Chi to pay a visit to the infamous Cu Chi Tunnels of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. I had previously requested that we go to the less-visited Ben Duoc tunnels just to help with the getting around issues for Winnie. Little did we know just how manageable her chair was even in the Vietnamese jungle. Only a couple times during the entire visit there did we have to help her over some obstruction or other (tree roots mostly) or help her cross some sandy stretch. Unfortunately, due to her issues getting around, she was not able to go down into the tunnels to see first-hand what it was like down there. I had never been to this area myself, and so it was quite an eye-opener as to just how elaborate these tunnel complexes were. And YES, I did go down into the tunnels myself. My 5ft – 7in and 185 Lb. frame was able to negotiate the often-cramped tunnels that passed between the much larger “rooms”. The rooms consisted of sleeping quarters, communications areas, medical treatment and even surgery areas, food preparation and eating, you name it! One particularly clever feature of the underground kitchen was that there was a separate small tunnel that took the smoke from the stoves and ovens a couple hundred feet away from the main tunnel complex so as to divert interest away from the areas where people were actually located. All this elaborate stuff was built on multiple levels – here there were actually three levels – that went as much as 30 or so feet underground. Visiting here gave me a whole new appreciation for what the “tunnel rats” did in exploring these places back in the day armed with nothing more than a sidearm (typically an M1911, 45ACP) and a flashlight! I can’t imagine what it would be like to discharge that 45 down in those cramped spaces! I worked with a fellow volunteer at the local VA Hospital who was a tunnel rat and had nothing but the utmost respect for him even before seeing this maze. He was about half my size, or so it seemed. In reality he was about 5ft - 2in and might have weighed 130-140 Lbs. soaking wet. Unfortunately, he has since passed, and I could not convey to him my thoughts of what it must have been like for him in those days.

The next day we jumped into the car with Eddie and “Phat” for a drive south to My Tho, Can Tho and the Mekong Delta region. I had never been able to venture to this area either back in 68 & 69! Not sure I would have wanted to back then anyway. But in March of 2019, it was a completely different place and experience. The Mekong Delta it turns out is quite a huge area as all the many tributaries of the Mekong all feed into the South

China Sea. The highlight of this leg of the trip involved a sampan ride up and down some of the canals, which was another eye-opener. It made it all very obvious as to just how dangerous it had to have been for the river boat guys cruising up and down these things. We also went out into one of the much bigger parts of the river and visited a rather large floating market. People came and went from different boats anchored there to pick mostly produce and assorted fruits for the day. There is a system in use there where each boat has a tall staff sticking up with whatever fruits and vegetables they are offering that day, so people can know which boat to visit to obtain whatever they are looking for at the moment. Pretty slick actually.



It was here along the shores of the great Mekong River that we had one of the most unusual lunches of the entire trip. A Mekong delicacy we were told. When the meal was brought to the table, we both thought – this is a DELICACY! It was a rather large fish called an Elephant Ear fish and appeared to be deep fried intact (head and tail all still present). It was brought to the table intact and looked like it had enormous scales on it. (Think of the bristles on a hedgehog!) The hostess told us what she was about to do and proceeded to peel and scrape the scales off the outside with food service gloved hands, and then peeled off the “meat”. This was wrapped in a rice wrap along with a bit of shredded vegetables and a few bean sprouts and served to us in handheld fashion. And dang if it wasn’t pretty good, too. Not sure I would classify it as a delicacy myself, but as the saying goes – When in Rome...! We did thoroughly enjoy this unusual meal along the banks of the Mekong River.

A Mekong River Delta delicacy: Elephant Ear Fish

I mentioned elsewhere that we were responsible for our main evening meal pretty much every day. While we were in Can Tho we had one of the major exceptions to that policy. Eddie, the guide, told us to meet him in the hotel lobby that evening for a “surprise”. We walked a short distance across the street and to very near the river’s edge to a small local restaurant where, Eddie told us, dinner was “on him”. While the food was just fine, it was the after dinner part that came as the surprise. Eddie politely told Winnie that he would take her out to the riverbank where she could watch the river traffic and people-watch. But, she would be on her own there, cause “us guys” were going to stay behind at the restaurant for a while longer, and that, respectfully, it was not a woman’s place. (It is worth nothing that at NO TIME while in Vietnam did we feel at risk from hooligan-ish activities. We felt very safe, even walking the streets at night.) Before escorting her across the street, however, he did concede to her to have one small glass of rice wine with the rest of us, in the interest of including her in this men’s tradition. Anyway, back to the “us guys” part. Eddie bought a couple bottles of rice wine and we got to it; knocking back small glasses of rice wine as one might do with shots of booze. (An appropriate analog, since their rice wine is quite strong!) Well, I’m here to tell you that these Viets can sure handle their rice wine, as all three of us (the driver came with us on this outing) did a pretty good job on those bottles. The amazing part was, even though I was not used to the rice wine (I have been known to tip a glass now and then), I had no headache or hangover the next morning. The real point here is not actually about the wine, however. The real story here is that we were just three guys – two Viet’s and one American – out for the evening sharing stories about our families, and about whatever else we wanted to share about our respective lives. THAT is what made this particular day stand out the most from all the others.

Other sights we visited while in the delta region included a small family owned factory – a large open-air shed actually – that made rice noodles; we got to watch and even take part in that process by rolling up the “sheet” of mostly cooked noodle (which had been rolled out on a hot griddle) and placing it on a drying rack before being sent over to the machine that cut the noodles from these roughly 30 inch diameter round sheets. Fascinating. We also visited a bee farm and sampled some local honey and honey-based products. I also got to handle the family’s 10-foot pet python, much to my wife’s dismay! After lunch we jumped back into the car for the drive back to Saigon and the flight to our next stop of the trip. We would be heading to the central part of Vietnam, up in the Da Nang area. See you all next time.

[Jim Augeri Albuquerque, New Mexico TSNA Life Member](#)

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By: Andy Csordas, Associate Chaplain

Rain Drops

Have you ever carefully watched rain drops cascading down your windshield? One day as I sat in the car in the rain I watched as gravity caused the weight of tiny droplets to start descending down the windshield as they overcame the friction caused by the surface of the windshield. As each small droplet touched another droplet they overcame their surface tension and became a bigger droplet and increased the speed of their descent. This continued over and over again and the droplets became large drops that quickly descended as their weight overcame the resistance much easier.

I reflected on this process and thought, sin can be just like that process. If we do a little wrong thing and don't think about it or make sure we never do it again it will become easier next time. We rationalize that it did not hurt anything or anyone so it is ok, or some such reason, even though we knew it was wrong. Then we can easily take our actions to the next level and it can turn into a process where we are doing things we would have never done in the past. Our improper actions can start a process not unlike the increasing speed and size of the rain droplets above.

The more we continue to do things in life the less we tend to think about them or perhaps even their consequences. Years ago I was working as an owner's rep on a construction site around people who cursed every few words. I realized I was doing the same, even though I did not want to curse. It took significant discipline on my part, and God's help, to stop doing that and it also took constant attention to what I was doing as the day progressed.

Hosea 13:2 talks about the priests who have turned from God: ***Now they sin more and more; they make idols for themselves.*** They continued to turn away from God and God punished them for their actions. They prayed to items they themselves had made as if it was a God. If the "god" was made from wood they worshipped part of the wood and cooked their food on the rest. **Isaiah 44:17** tells us, ***And the rest of it he makes into a god, his carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"***

So are we caught up in detrimental activities or routines that seem to snowball? It can happen very easily. What is the solution? John the Baptist says in **Matthew 3:2**, ***"Turn back to God!*** That is the one and only God, not one we make for ourselves. That can turn life that is a drama into a life of peace.



JOSEPH S. KRICHO

4/24/1947—7/23/2021

It was with great sadness that on Tuesday, July 27, The Board of Directors of TSNA were notified about the death of our friend and fellow Board Member, Joe Kricho.

Joe joined TSNA in December, 2007, and became our Director of Reunion Planning a few years later.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to Joe for his tenacious work ethic to make many reunions the great success that they were.

On the next page are pictures your Editor found in his files, showing Joe in different reunions and situations, all showing his continuous involvement in TSNA Reunion activities.

RIP my friend, we will miss you.

Here is his Obituary:

Joseph (Joe) Stephen Kricho, SMSgt. USAF Ret, age 74, of Saint Peters, Missouri passed away peacefully on Friday, July 23, 2021. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri on April 24, 1947 to Stephen and Marie Kricho (nee Vetz). Graduate of McBride High School. Served his Country in the USAF from 1966 to 1990. Joseph is survived by his sister, Virginia Harmann, brother, John Kricho (Pamela), sister, Dianne Lundak (Tony Johnson), sister-in-law, Jeanne Kricho and many additional loving family members. He was preceded in death by his parents Stephen and Marie A Kricho (nee Vetz); sister, Rosemarie Kricho, sister, Sylvia Bunk (Carroll), sister, Carol McEwan (Steven); brother, Donald Kricho; brother-in-law, Kenneth Harmann. A visitation will take place from 4:00 pm until 8:00 pm on August 4, 2021 at Newcomer Cremations, Funerals & Receptions, St. Peters Chapel, 837 Mid Rivers Mall Drive, St. Peters, Missouri 63376. Mass will take place at 10:30 am on August 5, 2021 at St Ferdinand Catholic Church, 1765 Charbonier Rd, Florissant, MO 63031. Interment will follow at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. Joe would have wished to make donations to any of the following in his honor. Vietnam Veterans of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America or the Wounded Warrior Project.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Sorry that the rest of this is blank. An 8 page Revetments was ready to go when we learned of Joe's death. So I added two pages to this Revetments, but don't have anything to fill in the rest of this page.

Pictures of Joe from TSNA activities are on the next page.



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George Plunkett, President 2011-2015
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Annual Membership: \$20.00
Five Year Membership: \$80.00
Life Membership: \$180.00

**I just cleared out
some space in the freezer
sounds much more productive
than I just polished off
another pint of ice cream.**

**If we're not meant
to have midnight
snacks, why is there
a light in the fridge?**

NEW MEMBERS

Chauncey Jackson, from San Antonio, TX.

**cjackson@uta.edu.
Aug 71 - Aug 72
7th Air Force (DOY)
Managed South East Asia Database**

James A. Scott, from Fort Washington, MD

**jimscott33rd@verizon.net.
Jul 70 - Jun 71
8th Aerial Port Sq. Combat Control
Air Traffic Control & Logistics**

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