



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



FEBRUARY 2021

FROM THE EDITOR:

I know I mentioned that there would not be a February issue.

But thanks to our Webmaster, Kerry Nivens, we have a story that I originally wasn't quite sure how to use, due to it's length.

Well, preparing it ahead of time (I am writing this on the 5th of December, 2020) seems to be the ideal way to get something out for February.

THE BATTLE OF BASTARD'S BRIDGE

(Submitted by Webmaster Kerry Nivens)

OK.. This is a LONG read & I realize most will have no interest in this - but it caught my attention - a very close high school friend of mine - as well as several FB friends will remember - DOYLE GAYLON KING - we graduated in 1965 - The following story is about The Battle of Bastards Bridge - a battle involving U S Marines in Vietnam in October 1967. I have read several accounts of this battle. Gaylon was a Navy Hospitalman attached to this Marine group - Gaylon died gallantly while giving medical aid to the injured Marines - Gaylon gave his ALL - I will forever remember him - Gaylon's name is listed near the end as a casualty - RIP MY FRIEND - I post this as a tribute to you, Gaylon!!! **Kerry**

"Let Us Never Forget"

Killed in Action, USNA 1959, Captain Jack Warren Phillips, USMC Four Silver Stars and the Medal of Honor were earned by Marines in the Battle of "Bastard's" Bridge in Vietnam. This is their story. In all, 21 Marines were killed in action. Captain Jack W. Phillips, Captain James W. McCarter Jr., and Lance Corporal Phillip S. France were posthumously presented the Silver Star and Sergeant Paul H. Foster was posthumously presented the Medal of Honor.

Jack Warren Phillips was born on January 25, 1935 in Kansas City, Missouri to Luther H. Phillips and Lois Elaine (Young) (Phillips) Brokowski. On January 17, 1953, he enlisted into the Marine Corps. Midshipman Phillips was a member of the 13th Company and Company Sub-Commander. Midshipman Phillips graduated 74 of 797 Midshipmen on June 3, 1959.

In the 1959 Lucky Bag, Midshipman Phillips' roommate wrote: Hailing from the tiny village of Mission, Jack came to the Naval Academy after a tour with the Marine Corps, firmly and rightly convinced that he had left the best branch of the service. Having established a new record for rack time early in Youngster year, he proceeded to rouse himself long enough to earn a set of stars. His winning manner with the Forth Class was surpassed only by his influence with the weaker sex. In spite of Jack's affinity for the pad, it seems inevitable that he will find enough time to become a first rate officer in the Marine Corps.

On December 21, 1961, 1st Lieutenant Phillips married Georgia A. McLaughlin in California. Together they had three sons, Jack Jr., Kevin M. and Rodney Phillips. From 1962 to 1964, 1st Lieutenant Phillips was assigned to 1st Force Recon Company, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

On September 25, 1967, Captain Phillips arrived in Vietnam and was assigned as Commanding Officer Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division.

In the second week of October 1967 the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, relieved BLT 2/3 as the defense force for the recently built bridge north of Strongpoint C-2. The construction of the bridge had permitted the reopening of the vital road to Con Thien washed out by the heavy September rains. The battalion defended the bridge because the 3rd Marine Division was concerned that if the enemy destroyed the bridge, they would cut the only supply line to Con Thien.

The defense of the bridge was no easy task for Lieutenant Colonel James W. Hammond Jr.'s battalion. Since its move north from Camp Evans on September 11, 1967, constant combat around Con Thien had worn

the battalion down from a "foxhole strength" of 952 to about 462. The 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines had great difficulty in manning all the defensive positions prepared by the departed full-strength BLT-2/3.

The defensive position around the bridge was divided into quadrants by virtue of the road, which ran roughly north and south, and the stream, which ran east and west. Golf Company had the northwest quadrant; Hotel Company was on the same side of the road but across the stream in the southwest quadrant. Fox Company was in the northeast; Echo Company in the southeast. The battalion command group set up beside the stream in Golf Company's area and near the center of the position.

At 0125 on October 14, 1967, 25 artillery rounds, rockets, and 135-150 mortar rounds hit Hotel Company. An ambush squad posted in front of the company reported an enemy force moving toward it, and immediately took the advancing enemy under fire. The Marine squad leader notified his company that he had three casualties and that the enemy seriously outnumbered his squad. The company commander, Captain Arthur P. Brill, Jr., ordered the squad to pull back and, at the same time, called for night defensive fires to block the avenues of approach to his position. The battalion requested flare ships to illuminate the area. Using starlight scopes, sniper teams watched the enemy as they massed only 50 meters in front of the company. The snipers and two tanks attached to the company opened fire, forcing the North Vietnamese to start their assault prematurely. The rest of the Hotel Company held fire until the NVA troops reached a clearing 20 meters from the wire. Of the entire attacking unit, only two NVA soldiers reached the wire and Marines killed both as they tried to breach that obstacle.

The enemy withdrew, leaving bodies behind, but they were far from finished. At 0230, enemy mortars shelled Golf Company. Lance Corporal Phillip S. France went to the aid of a wounded Marine. Suddenly grenades landed in their position and Lance Corporal France shielded his comrade with his body, sacrificing his life.

Silver Star:

Awarded for Actions during the Vietnam War The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to **Lance Corporal Phillip S. France** (MCSN: 2294742), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Squad Leader with Company G, Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, Third Marine Division (Rein.), FMF, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. In the early morning hours of 14 October 1967, a determined force of North Vietnamese Army Regulars, firing small-arms and automatic weapons and throwing hand grenades, penetrated a portion of the Company G defensive perimeter south of Con Thien. During the ensuing fire fight, the Marines sustained heavy casualties. Observing a wounded comrade lying in an area dangerously exposed to the enemy fire, Lance Corporal France fearlessly ran across the hazardous terrain to the side of the casualty and assisted him to the relative safety of a fighting hole. Suddenly, several enemy hand grenades landed in the position. With complete disregard for his own safety, Lance Corporal France unhesitatingly threw himself over his comrade to protect him from the exploding grenades, and was fatally wounded. His heroic actions and sincere concern for his fellow Marine in the face of grave personal danger were an inspiration to all who observed him. By his courage, bold initiative, and selfless devotion to duty in sacrificing his life in order to protect his comrade, Lance Corporal France upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Service: Marine Corps

Rank: Lance Corporal

Battalion: 2d Battalion

Division: 3d Marine Division (Rein.), FMF

As the attack continued, Private First-Class David A. Hamilton's machine gun inflicted heavy casualties on the North Vietnamese soldiers charging his position. Direct hits by RPGs destroyed his machine gun emplacement and several backup positions on the primary avenue of approach into G company's position.

Silver Star:

Awarded for Actions during the Vietnam War The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to **Private First Class David A. Hamilton** (MCSN: 2326751), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Machine Gunner with Company G, Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, Third Marine Division (Reinforced) in the Republic of Vietnam on 14 October 1967. The battalion to which Company G was attached was protecting a newly constructed bridge approximately 3000 meters south of Con Thien. In the early morning hours, the battalion came under a heavy rocket and mortar bombardment, followed by a human wave attack of North Vietnamese soldiers. The enemy penetrated Company G's forward position and was charging towards Private First Class Hamilton's machine gun. The enemy had his position pinpointed and rocket and automatic weapons fire erupted all around him. Firing at point blank range, he continually exposed himself to deliver a heavy and accurate rate of fire on

the enemy onslaught. His position received a direct hit from rockets and automatic weapons fire, wounding him and destroying his weapon. Although wounded, he remained determined to allow his fellow Marines further time to prepare for the follow up attack. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, he along with his squad leader and assistant machine gunner attacked the oncoming hordes of enemy soldiers in hand-to-hand combat, killing eight North Vietnamese soldiers, before he was mortally wounded by an enemy automatic weapon. By his bold initiative, intrepid fighting spirit and loyal devotion to the fulfillment of a vital task, Private First Class Hamilton reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and upheld the highest great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Service: Marine Corps

Rank: Private First Class

Battalion: 2d Battalion

Division: 3d Marine Division (Rein.), FMF

The NVA force attacked through this break, overran the company command post, and killed the company commander, Captain Phillips, and his forward observer. Three platoon leaders, two of whom had just arrived in Vietnam that morning, also died. Captain Phillips was killed in action as a result of gunshot wounds to the body from hostile small arms fire. Some reports from his Naval Academy Company mates indicated that Captain Phillips took a rocket propelled grenade to the chest.

Captain Phillips was commanding a company in combat the ultimate challenge for a Marine officer," said Robert McFarlane (USNA 1959). "He was fit, strong, knowledgeable, a paragon of what our institutions from the Academy to the United States Marine Corps are supposed to produce. Captain Phillips, took a rocket propelled grenade round in the chest and was destroyed.

Silver Star:

Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to **Captain Jack Warren Phillips** (MCSN: 0-77504), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as Commanding Officer, Company G, Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, Third Marine Division (Rein.), in the Republic of Vietnam on 14 October 1967. During Operation KINGFISHER, the battalion defensive position, of which Captain Phillips' company was a part, was subjected to a devastating enemy rocket barrage. Intermingled with the rocket fire, the enemy unleashed deadly volumes of accurate 60-millimeter and 82-millimeter mortar fire into the company's position. Then with very little pause between the heavy barrages, the company was attacked by a fanatical force of North Vietnamese Army soldiers surging over the defensive wires. Displaying exceptional skill and presence of mind, Captain Phillips directed his men to hold their fire to insure greater accuracy with each shot. He finally signaled his company to open fire, completely raking the enemy force and inflicting a large number of casualties with the initial burst of fire. During the ensuing fire fight, which lasted for more than three hours, the well-trained enemy troops ran rampant within the Marine positions, retaliating with grenades, satchel charges and intense small-arms fire in a frantic attempt to completely overrun the company. Remaining calm, Captain Phillips shouted words of encouragement to his men and repeatedly exposed himself to the hostile fire in order to direct his company's efforts. He continually crossed the hazardous company perimeter to assess the situation and issue necessary orders. Moving from position to position, Captain Phillips inspired his men with his forceful leadership and courageous fighting spirit until he fell, mortally wounded by enemy automatic weapons fire. His daring initiative and resolute determination undoubtedly prevented many of his men from being killed or wounded by the overwhelming enemy force. His exceptional valor and unfaltering dedication to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Action Date: October 14, 1967

Service: Marine Corps

Battalion: 2d Battalion

Division: 3d Marine Division (Rein.) FMF

The battalion sent its S-3A, Captain James W. McCarter, Jr. USMC, to replace Captain Phillips, upon arriving, he directed effective changes to unsuitable defensive positions within the company perimeter. He quickly reestablished efficient communications within the company and assumed command via radio. He then moved out of a bunker into the deadly fire to personally assess the situation. As he moved from position to position, inspiring his men, he accounted for the deaths of several enemy troops in his path. He was mortally wounded by an enemy grenade that exploded nearby.

Silver Star:

Awarded for Actions during Vietnam War

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to **Captain James William McCarter, Jr.** (MCSN: 0-85448), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as Assistant Battalion Operations Officer with the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, Third Marine Division (Rein.), FMF, in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on 14 October 1967. During Operation KINGFISHER, the Battalion's night defensive position was subjected to heavy volumes of rocket and mortar barrages which inflicted numerous casualties. The devastating bombardments were immediately followed by a charging North Vietnamese force, which succeeded in a deep probe of Company G's defensive position. Unconcerned with the countless losses inflicted on the North Vietnamese by the defending Marines, the frenzied enemy troops ran rampant within the company's position, hurling grenades and saturating the area with accurate bursts of deadly fire. Although fighting gallantly, the company paid heavily with the loss of many Marines, including the Company Commander. Captain McCarter, upon receiving orders to take over Company G, fearlessly and without escort, proceeded towards Company G over 50 meters of perilous, fire-swept enemy terrain. He directed effective changes to unsuitable defensive positions within the company perimeter. Displaying exceptional professional skill, he quickly reestablished efficient communications within the company and assumed command via radio. Without regard for his own safety, he then moved out of a bunker into the deadly fire to personally assess the situation. As he moved from position to position, inspiring his men, he accounted for the deaths of several enemy troops in his path. As a result of his fearless actions, he was mortally wounded by an enemy grenade that exploded nearby. Captain McCarter's exceptional professional skill, presence of mind in the face of extreme danger and unfaltering dedication to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Service: Marine Corps

Rank: Captain

Battalion: 2d Battalion

Division: 3d Marine Division (Rein.), FMF

During the confused, hand-to-hand combat some of the North Vietnamese fought their way within grenade range of the battalion command post in the center of the position. In the command post, although wounded by a grenade, Sergeant Paul H. Foster, a member of the fire support coordination center, continued to direct mortar and artillery fire upon the enemy. Another grenade landed among a group of six Marines. Sergeant Foster threw his flak jacket over the grenade and jumped on top of the jacket. The grenade blast mortally wounded him, but this action saved his fellow Marines. Before the melee ended, the North Vietnamese killed or wounded the entire forward air control team. The enemy also killed the battalion medical chief, and wounded the fire support coordinator, headquarters commandant, and battalion sergeant major.

Medal of Honor:

Awarded for actions during Vietnam War

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pride in presenting the Medal of Honor (Posthumously) to Sergeant **Paul Hellstrom Foster** (MCSN: 1903536), United States Marine Corps Reserve, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty on 14 October 1967, while serving as an artillery liaison operations chief with the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, Third Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in action near Con Thien, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam. In the early morning hours the Second Battalion was occupying a defensive position which protected a bridge on the road leading from Con Thien to Cam Lo. Suddenly, the Marines' position came under a heavy volume of mortar and artillery fire, followed by an aggressive enemy ground assault. In the ensuing engagement, the hostile force penetrated the perimeter and brought a heavy concentration of small arms, automatic weapons, and rocket fire to bear on the battalion command post. Although his position in the fire support coordination center was dangerously exposed to enemy fire and he was wounded when an enemy hand grenade exploded near his position, Sergeant Foster resolutely continued to direct accurate mortar and artillery fire on the advancing North Vietnamese troops. As the attack continued, a hand grenade landed in the midst of Sergeant Foster and his five companions. Realizing the danger, he shouted a warning, threw his armored vest over the grenade, and unhesitatingly placed his body over the armored vest. When the grenade exploded, Sergeant Foster absorbed the entire blast with his body and was mortally wounded. His heroic actions undoubtedly saved his comrades from further injury or possible death. Sergeant Foster's courage, extraordinary heroism, and unfaltering devotion to duty reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and upheld the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Action Date: October 14, 1967

Service: Marine Corps

Battalion: 2d Battalion

Division: 3d Marine Division (Rein.) FMF

Lieutenant Colonel Hammond moved what was left of his command group to a better location within Hotel Company's position. He ordered Fox Company to move to Golf Company's right flank and counterattack to push the NVA forces out of the perimeter. Illumination and automatic weapons fire from "Puff," the AC-47 requested at the beginning of the fight and which arrived about 0330, aided the counterattack. By 0430, the enemy began retreating out of the position, pursued by Echo Company.

The next morning the 2nd Battalion reconsolidated and evacuated casualties. There were twenty-one dead (18 from 2/4 Marines) and two dozen or more wounded. The NVA lost at least 24 killed. That afternoon, Lieutenant General Cushman and Major General Hochmuth visited the bridge site. They granted a request from Lieutenant Colonel Hammond that the new bridge be named "Bastard's Bridge" to honor the 18 Marines of the 2nd Battalion who gave their lives in its defense. At 1400, Hammond's battalion turned over the bridge to Lieutenant Colonel Needham's 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines and then moved to Dong Ha where it assumed the mission of regimental reserve after 42 days of close combat.

The men killed in action at Bastard's Bridge included:

From H Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines 1st Lt William F. Mullins, Short Hills, NJ Sgt Paul H. Foster, San Francisco, CA (Medal of Honor) Pfc Robert J. Araujo, New York, NY From G Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines Captain Jack W. Phillips, Mission, KS (Silver Star) 1st Lt Charles Yaghoobian, Pawtucket, RI 2nd Lt Eric C. Egge, Hopkins, MN LCpl John P. Avery, Elizabethton, TN LCpl Duane J. Foss, Hastings, MN LCpl Frank Foster, Meridian, MS LCpl Phillip S. France, Baltimore, MD (Silver Star) LCpl Donald A. Gehling, Grand Meadow, MN LCpl Morris J. Sensat, Egan, LA Pfc Robert D. Buchanan, Bristol, VA Pfc Gary C. Griswold, Bethel, CT Pfc David A. Hamilton, Springfield, OH (Silver Star) Pfc William I. White, North Vandergrift, PA Pfc Stephen R. Worley, West Monroe, LA From H&S Co, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines Captain James W. McCarter, New Orleans, LA (Silver Star) HM2 Robert E. Bardach, Arlington Heights, IL HN John I. Higgins, Chula Vista, CA HN Doyle G. King, Vinemont, AL (Bronze Star "V")

Captain Phillips was posthumously promoted to Major.

"Most of us from the 13th Company think you would have become the Commandant of the Marine Corps, you were that good. A friend to all, tough, strong, and a leader of men without peer. We miss you dearly. God bless and keep you!"

Major Phillips is buried in Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, Fort Leavenworth Kansas, section P, site 2258.

Major Phillips personal decorations included: Silver Star and Purple Heart Medals.

Major Phillips is remembered on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, panel 28E, line 3.

Major Phillips is remembered in Memorial Hall at the United States Naval Academy where his name is engraved under the "DONT GIVE UP THE SHIP" flag, honoring those alumni killed in action.

THIS MONTH OF TAN SON NHUT HISTORY

On February 2, 1962, a Ranch Hand crew became the first Air Force fatalities in Vietnam. Captain Fergus C. Groves II, Captain Robert D. Larson and Staff Sergeant Milo B. Coghill were killed while on a training mission. Although there was no evidence the aircraft was struck by ground fire, Air Commando T-28s were tasked to fly armed escort on future missions. Ranch Hand operations continued unabated throughout the rest of the year.

February 27, 1962 - The presidential palace in Saigon is bombed by two renegade South Vietnamese pilots flying American-made World War II era fighter planes. President Diem and his brother Nhu escape unharmed. Diem attributes his survival to "divine protection."

(Editors note: Some of us at TSN that day were on special alert guarding the main entrance road (no one knew what was going on), and some Army guys there with us shouted, "If we start shooting, duck—our guns are bigger than yours!")

(Results of landing nose down in the Saigon River after the February 27 incident. Note the propeller! Larry Fry photo)



The above from the February 2008 Revetments.



HARLAN HATFIELD

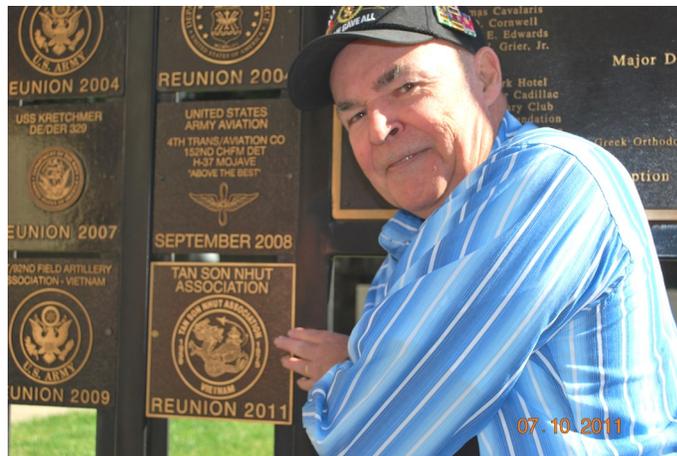
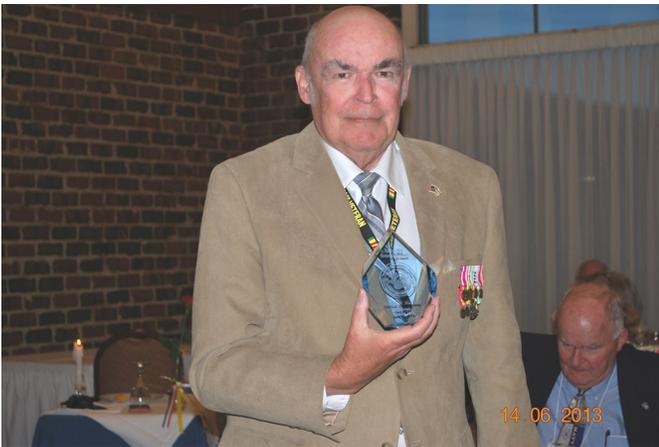
Our great TSNA friend, inveterate reunion attendee and photographer, passed away in California on January 3, 2021.

Since Harlan was always TAKING pictures, I thought I would have a hard time finding pictures of him. Those here are just some of what I found.

Harlan joined TSNA February 1, 2004, and was a Life Member.

He served at Tan Son Nhut from January, 1967 to January, 1968, and was part of the 460th AEMS (PMEL) organization.

RIP, our great friend!



2021 Reunion

Tucson Arizona



Doubletree Airport Hotel
Tucson AZ

Questionnaire

Unfortunately, the Covid Virus is still affecting us as we continue to plan our 2021 reunion. We desire the input from our members about the 2021 reunion

Arizona is in much better shape than some states, but there are still some restrictions that we will need to follow for the reunion. We are unsure of what local restrictions will be in place at the time of our reunion.

The health and safety of all our members and their guests is our number one concern, and we do not want to put anyone in danger during the reunion.

Your input is needed as soon as possible. You can text or email Paul Mortensen at:

602-821-1015 Text

paul@themortensens.com Email

1. Are you planning on attending the reunion in September 2021?
2. If attending, are you driving or flying?
3. How many days are you planning on staying?
4. Will you be visiting other attractions in the Tucson area on your own that the association will not be organizing?
5. Are you open to alternative reunion planning, such as regional reunions in 2021?
6. Are you open to alternative activities if a particular tour needs to be canceled?

Please answer these questions by Mid February 2021

Tan Son Nhut Association
P. O. Box 236
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.

President: Randall W. Brown
Vice President: Richard Carvell
Secretary: Dale Bryan
Treasurer: Andy Csordas
Director of Communications: Gary Fields
Director of Marketing: Johnnie Jernigan
Co-Director of Reunion Planning: Joe Kricho
Co-Director of Reunion Planning: Paul Mortensen
Director of Membership and Revetments Editor: Larry E. Fry
Membership Development: Rick Cooley
Director at Large: Jim Faulkner
Web Master: Kerry Nivens
Chaplain: Jimmy Smith
Associate Chaplain: Andy Csordas
Chaplains Emeriti:
Rev. Bob Alan Chaffee (1929-2017), TSNA Chaplain: 2009 - 2017
Rev. Dr. James M. Warrington, TSNA Chaplain: 1997-2018
Presidents Emeriti:
Don Parker, (1947-2014), Co-Founder and President 1996-2002
John Peele, Co-Founder and President 2002-2004
Wayne Salisbury, (1940-2014), President 2004-2007
Robert Robinson Gales, President 2007-2011
George Plunkett, President 2011-2015
Web Site: www.tsna.org
Annual Membership: \$20.00
Five Year Membership: \$80.00
Life Membership: \$180.00



RANCH HAND QUARTERS
TSN AIR BASE
1962

MEMBER INFORMATION

Tom A. Earnest has Donated to the Scholarship Fund.

The John W. Bremer Memorial Foundation via TSNA Members **Lynn & Linda Patton**, has Donated to the Scholarship Fund.

Paul Mortensen has Donated to the General Fund.

John Burns has renewed for another year and made a Donation to the Memorial Fund.

Alfred C. Crane, Jr. has renewed for another year, and JOHNNIE: He has ordered a #T9 CD-ROM Pictorial Remembrance. His address is: 104 Winder Road, Tabb, VA 23693-3222.

Joan I. Gray has renewed for another year and made a Donation to the General Fund.

Boyd N. Schluter, Jr. has renewed to Life Member.

Michael T. Swift has renewed for another year.

Thomas N. Tessier has Donated to all three Funds.

Margaret & Stephen Anno have Donated to the General Fund.

TSNA and its officers, directors, employees and agents do not make any guarantees of any kind about the content, accuracy, or timeliness of information in the TSNA newsletter, *Revetments*. The use of information from this newsletter is strictly voluntary and at the user's sole risk. TSNA shall not be liable for any damages of any kind related to the information in this newsletter. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and do not constitute the opinion or policy of TSNA.