



# REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



MARCH 2021

## A COMMENT ABOUT THE JANUARY EDITION:

## Chaplain's Corner-I Knew You

**From:** David <yokozuna@nwi.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 1, 2021 3:11 PM  
**To:** [fry2@dejazzed.com](mailto:fry2@dejazzed.com)  
**Subject:** Battle of Bastard's Bridge

Just a short note to say thanks for publishing the details of the subject battle in the February Revetments. Captain Jack Phillips was the XO at the Marine Corps Recruiting Station in Kansas City, MO when I was stationed there in the early 1960's. Although we were notified of his death in combat, I was not aware of the circumstances of how he was killed until now.

He was a fine Marine and was well liked by everyone at the station.

David F. Rose GySgt (Ret) USMC

### NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

I lived in Junior Officer Barracks near the TSN main gate. I was there during the renewed bombing of NVN. My DEROS was extended. I was responsible for Targeting Interdiction points on the HCM Trail in Laos.

Michael D. McAnelly, 1st Lt. USAF  
Sep 71- Oct 72  
Hq. 7th AF

### WHERE MIGHT IT BE?

I'm trying to locate the house we rented off base from around October thru December 1967. A Number of houses were being rented on that street at that time. It was French architecture and open space in the kitchen and a second floor. There was a Vietnamese fellow named Tarzan who hosted a party one day. Getting to the house from the base involved a cyclo which turned left onto Main road and about 15 or 20 minutes later dropping off and then I would walk on the street to the right and the house was about half-way down on the left. One late afternoon there was a fight between an American army person and a South Korean soldier. The American limped back to the house. Not far from that street there was an incident where the Dragon Lady while riding on the back of a Honda, tossed a grenade into a group of Americans waiting at the bus stop. If anyone remembers that street would you let me know the name?

Mark Reveaux Email: [mreveaux@comcast.net](mailto:mreveaux@comcast.net).  
May 67-May 68, 377th Supply Sq

I fell on the ice the other day and came down very hard on the left side of my chest. I knew it was a hard fall because the snow plow driver, who saw me fall, came over and said "you had a very hard fall", well duh, I kind of knew that at the moment. My cell phone was in my shirt pocket and I thought I broke the phone because that's where I hit the ground. Well apparently the phone was tougher than my chest.

I really thought I had, at the least, cracked a rib so I went to Urgent care for X-Rays. No cracked or broken ribs; but my chest is very, very sore and painful with every deep breath, reaching for things, turning the steering wheel, etc.

It is truly amazing how many other muscles and movements affect that particular area of your body, and don't even think about coughing. It brought to mind the passage in Jeremiah Chapter 1, verse 5 where God tells Jeremiah; ***"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I set you apart . . ."***

Our body is so interconnected, or formed, by God that all of our cells connect to all the others in some way. Even a cursory study of DNA makes you realize that all of the "code" needed to produce any particular cell is locked into each cell, but the basic building block knows what to make each cell to complete our body.

It is difficult to comprehend that God knew us before we were formed in the womb, but that is what scripture tells us. The complexity of DNA is also mind boggling, but God is the divine creator, and he knows what he designed and knows you personally.

Notice the scripture verse above also tells us that we, all of us, were set apart by God for a purpose here on earth. The next part of the scripture says Jeremiah was set apart to be a prophet to call Israel back to God.

We are not likely called to be a prophet by God, but he does have an assignment for each of us. Have you asked God what your mission on earth is supposed to be? If not perhaps you should, if you talk to God, and more importantly listen for his small still voice He will communicate with you.

Andy Csordas-Associate Chaplain



## **Special COMSEC Support Detachment-Tan Son Nhut by Andy Csordas, Spec 5**

I entered the Army after a deferred enlistment during the Tet offensive of 68. I had become 1A and knew it was just a matter of time until I was drafted, so I enlisted to pick an MOS. After many weeks of training I finished with an MOS of 31S30, Field General Crypto Repairman, depot level. I spent some time in Detroit and about a year in Cleveland before receiving orders for Vietnam. Through some unusual circumstances I was led to believe that I was going to Vietnam on a special assignment and fully expected to live in a hotel and wear civilian clothes. I will never forget the belly laugh by the E7 when I approached him after I arrived in country and asked about my "special assignment". Needless to say mine was no more special than anyone else's assignment.

I processed into my battalion level outfit at Long Bien June 1, 1970 with only nine months left on my enlistment and ended up at Tan Son Nhut where a friend from school had one month left in country. At the time we lived in the upstairs of a barracks at MACV Annex. The AFVN guys all lived downstairs. About a month later we moved into our repair compound in the H3 Heliport across from the Post Exchange. We repaired classified gear and our repair compound had to be manned 24/7. Our troop strength was steadily being reduced and we did not have enough manpower to man 24/7 unless we lived in the repair compound, which was one medium sized building, a bunker and two sand bagged conexas with a locked fence around the perimeter. We were surrounded by the heliport, a lot with helicopter part containers, Camp Alpha and the road to the H3 Terminal.

We mostly repaired Crypto gear for other countries troops including ARVN, Australia, and Korea, but by far the largest work load was from the ARVN's. Some equipment just showed up, we were not sure where it came from so it may have been from US outfits. Our battalion level unit was located in Long Bien and there were detachments like ours, Special Comsec Support Detachment, from the "Delta to the DMZ" as they used to say. Ours was one of the larger units with approximately 18 people assigned when I arrived in country which was reduced over time to approximately 9-10 when I came home at Christmas 1970. That included one guy who lived at the ARVN KL-7 operator training base at Vung Tau. He brought his tanned body, along with broken KL-7's, back to our compound once a month on pay day. Some of the other detachments were only one guy working in a trailer at a base camp.

Most of the gear we repaired was older equipment including more KL-7's than we ever wanted to repair from the ARVN's. The ARVN's were not given access to modern Crypto gear. We did work on newer equipment like KW-7's, KY-28's, KY-38's and older but still much newer than anything the ARVN's used the KY-8.

Jerry Proc has a good Crypto site at, <http://www.jproc.ca/crypto/menu.html>, which includes lots of great information and pictures of the gear we repaired and many other items and articles.

The KW-7's were used for teletype transmission, typed on a keyboard at the point of origin, which provided a paper print out and a punched paper tape at the receiving end. I am told the KW-7 was used for radio traffic as well in other situations but our application was strictly teletype through landlines. These units generally came from the Aussies and other allies.

The KY-8, KY-28 and KY-38 were all used to encipher radio traffic and were all compatible if set to the same settings. A KY-8 was transistor technology and quite large, approximately the size of a counter model microwave oven of today, and was typically Jeep or truck mounted.

The KY-28 was typically installed in a helicopter; you may have seen it as a grey box mounted under the pedals on the left seat of a Huey approximately 6" x 8" x 12". The KY-38 was carried on the back of the grunt radio man. The unit with the battery attached was approximately the size of three cartons of cigarettes.

All of these units used analog technology, whereas the KW-7 used digital technology. If listening on the same frequency being used with these units all you would hear is static and noise unless you were using a compatible unit with the same setup. These units were able to save lives on a daily basis by keeping our plans and movements out of the other side's hands.

The KY-28 and KY-38 had quite sophisticated technology for the time. They used six or eight layer circuit boards and IC chips which were not at all common at that period of time. The units had individual electronic components including transistors, capacitors, resistors, etc. But there were a number of chips that provided much of the enabling circuitry. These chips were very basic and quite large by today's standards, 8 or 12 legs, 3/8" square and perhaps 2" long, but were very sophisticated for the time. It took lots of deliberate care to properly solder a chip through all circuit board layers and not end up with a cold solder joint. After soldering a chip in place we would mix epoxy and attach the new chip to the circuit board to minimize movement, particularly on the KY-38 which received a lot of shock and movement on the back of the grunt in his normal course of the day.

The KL-7, used by the ARVN's, was technology left over from the Korean War and was introduced in

1953. It was a stand-alone portable unit enclosed in a fiber glass case. It printed an encrypted message on a paper tape in five letter groups. After every five letters the unit placed a space on the paper tape. Encryption was provided by a series of eight rotors that were set to a specific code by the operator. When the encrypted message was typed into the KL-7 with rotors set to the same code a clear message was printed. This unit also used four vacuum tubes, with two extra tubes plugged in the board for spares. As I said it was old technology and was quite similar to the enigma machines used by the Germans in WWII. There is a great book, A Man Called Intrepid, which includes WWII Crypto intrigue and information about the Enigma Machine by William Stevenson.

The KL-7 base board had a series of posts on the bottom side which had a wiring harness soldered to the posts, not printed circuits. These units were thrown in the back of trucks, dropped all the time and generally had a pretty rough life which resulted in damaged vacuum tubes and lots of cold solder joints on the main board. They also came into the shop covered in Agent Orange. Frequently we could not find a failed component so we just re-soldered all of the connections on the wiring harness posts which would fix the problem. The continuously rotating print wheel had critical timing which sometimes required a speed adjustment on the motor to print the correct letters.

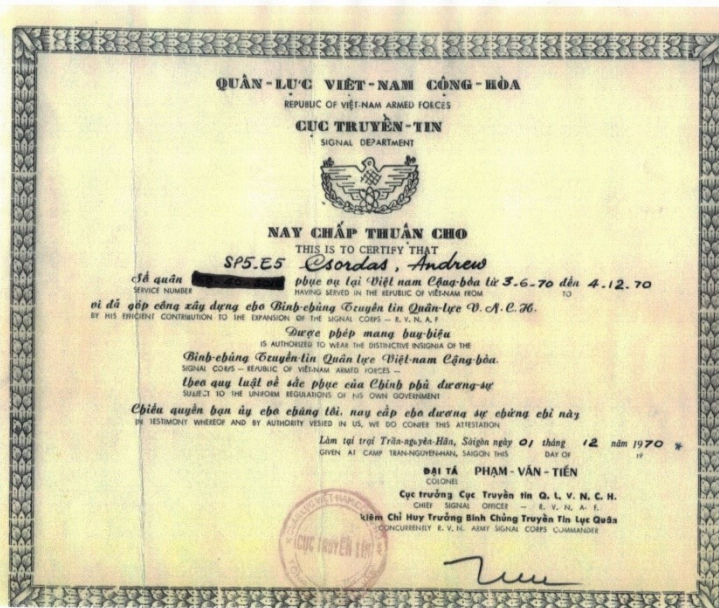
Another constant problem with the unit was corrosion on the rotor contacts. After every character was typed into the unit the rotors would step one notch. If there was corrosion, however minor, on the contacts which prevented a complete circuit through the rotors and unit the rotors would stop stepping. The normal operator kit included contact cleaners, can you say an eraser, for this problem. When the rotors stopped stepping on the units we were repairing in the shop we would sometimes strike the rotor basket with the handle of a large screwdriver and it would start working again. It had to be difficult for the operators working under duress.

The KL-7 had a bridge rectifier that used twelve diodes to convert AC power into DC power. Most bridge rectifiers use four diodes, but these older diodes required three on each leg and were notorious for their failure rate. At one time we had over 100 KL-7s's on the shelf waiting for diodes, the diodes were always on back order. One day we received all of the diodes we had on backorder and more. The newer diodes only required four for the entire bridge rectifier and were part of a retrofit any time we had a unit in the shop. Bad diodes or not, every unit got the new diodes from that time forward.

We then got to work some pretty long hours, 12-16 hour shifts seven days a week until the back log of repairs got back to almost nothing. We worked almost exclusively on the KL-7s during that time period and even got help from other techs who arrived from the other detachments to help.

I did receive the ARVN Signal Award (which we called the Electronic Chicken) for my work for them while at Tan Son Nhut, see pictures below.

I may add some other details in another post, but suffice to say I received an early out to come home and start school in January 1971. I was fortunate enough to be home to have Christmas with my bride of one year who still puts up with me!



**‘Very sacred time of the year’:  
Here’s how Utah’s Vietnamese community celebrates  
Lunar New Year  
(Submitted by TSNA Member Susie Ahrens)**

Friday is Lunar New Year, a significant holiday celebrated in many Asian countries with a focus on ushering in the new year with loved ones.

Utah’s Vietnamese community welcomed in 2021, the Year of the Ox with a celebration that, in the States, usually lasts three days.

Susie Ahrens, who celebrates Lunar New Year, says that it is a family-centered holiday comparable to Christmas.

“Everybody, all the kids that have moved out or gone somewhere, they all try to come home for New Year... during that time, we have a lot of food, a lot of games,” she says.

Ahrens tells ABC4 that in the old days in Vietnam, New Year was celebrated for a week or even a month, with people taking a whole month off just to celebrate. When the Vietnam War escalated, the holiday was shortened to three days, Ahrens says.

An important aspect of this sacred holiday is not only spending time with living family, but feeling close to deceased relatives, she explains.

“The family will guide the deceased members of the family, like ancestors, to come home to celebrate with them by making a lot of food and flowers and fruit. There are typical, traditional foods that we have only on New Year. They believe that the spirit of the ancestor will come home and celebrate with the whole family, and that’s why it’s important for everybody to come home and get together and have dinner and lunch and then they play games,” she says.

Ahrens provided the following photos

Ahrens says that ancestors are invited into the home to join the family in celebration and watch the family grow.

“There’s always more grandkids and great grandkids and so on, and also they bless us to keep us safe,” she says. “We always pray that they protect us and watch over us.”

During that time, Ahrens says, cleaning and hard work is put off due to the belief that hard work on the New Year will lead to a year of toil.

“They don’t even sweep the floor because we believe that we don’t want to sweep our money out the door,” she says.

“So basically, it’s just a time for celebration and a time for family to get together. The custom is that we all have a lot of food and we all have new clothes. Everybody always has new clothes, and they have to get their hair done and get manicures.”

The new clothes are a symbol of wealth and prosperity in the new year, she says. It’s very important to not only wish someone a happy new year, but a prosperous and healthy year.

When asked what she most enjoys about the New Year celebration, Ahrens explains the significance of the holiday.

“I would think that every Asian loves new year because it’s a time of celebration. It’s a time to reflect on the last year, and we welcome the new things. We want to have a happy year, and we want to forget all the sorrow and all the bad things that happened. We want to leave that behind and we want to start over,” she says. “It’s a time to renew friendship, a time to forgive, and it is a very sacred time of the year for us.”

She explains that people take part in a lion dance to bring good luck and firecrackers to chase away the ill spirits. Giving also plays a role in the holiday.

“Like Christmas here, everyone gives gifts, but on Lunar New Year, our tradition is to give money. And it’s not the amount that counts, it depends on the financial situation, and normally they give it in a red envelope,” Ahrens states.

She says that people often give money- “lucky money”- to the elderly and children. Another tradition is to make savory rice cakes as an offering to ancestors.

Leading up to the New Year, families will decorate their homes with pink and yellow flowers and might give it a fresh coat of paint. These colors are often seen at typical Vietnamese alters along with a food offering for ancestors.

Ahrens explains that New Year’s Eve is a particularly sacred time when families will pray and put out flowers and fruit, as well as visit churches and temples for a ceremony and prayer session.

“They pray to the higher being to bring peace to the earth and that no tragedies or anything bad can happen to mankind,” she says. “It’s important to do it right at midnight on New Year’s Eve.”

New Year’s Day is a big day, Ahrens says.

“In the morning we get up, clean up, and get dressed. Then normally children go wish to parents and grandparents, like a line at a wedding, they wish them health and happiness,” she states. “The parents or grandparents will give them the envelope- the lucky money.”

People will wear their new clothes and spend the day eating and playing games. Ahrens says New Year is a time of unity to put aside ill feelings and sadness and look forward to a better year. She says especially last year with COVID-19, she is happy that 2020 is over and excited for a better year.

“It’s a fun time of the year. It’s a sacred time of the year. It’s a time to get together... However a westerner feels about Christmas is how we feel about New Year,” she says. “It’s for all religions. It’s not just for one religion; it’s for everybody.”

For “The Rest of the Story”, please press CTRL, and click on the following link: <https://www.abc4.com/news/local-news/very-sacred-time-of-the-year-heres-how-utahs-vietnamese-community-celebrates-lunar-new-year/>

New Years Greeting!



Utah Cultural Celebration Center

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50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War  
 Commemorative March  
 November 11, 2025  
 Frederick R. Benda Jr.

March  
 Slow Air

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
 VIETNAM WAR  
 SERVICE \* VALOR \* SACRIFICE  
 50th  
 COMMEMORATIVE PARTNER

" Never Again Will One Generation Of Veteran's Abandon Another "

I wrote this bagpipe tune (ABOVE) for all my Sister, and Brother Vietnam Veteran's from the United States, South Korea, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and Thailand. It Commemorate's the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. I would like to thank members of a large Bagpipe Family out there that helped me correct a few mistakes in this tune from earlier posts. Also I would like to thank IsraelPiper (David N. Siegel) for helping me with this tune. Please enjoy, and share!!!

**Frederick R. Benda Jr.**  
**823rd, 554th Red Horse CES Vietnam 1970-71**



**NEW MEMBERS**

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