



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



DECEMBER 2022

NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

I worked in the AGE Shop (Yellow Units), repairing equipment.

Was mobile and repaired units on the flight line.

I was sent to work in a "Control" Building where I had a large lighted map of the Flight Line. I got a copy of the sorties for the day and I had to use my tug drivers to move AGE units to aircraft getting ready to fly. I lived in a two-story barracks with screen walls, across the fence from a Buddhist Cemetery.

I would not trade my time there—I am a VFW member.

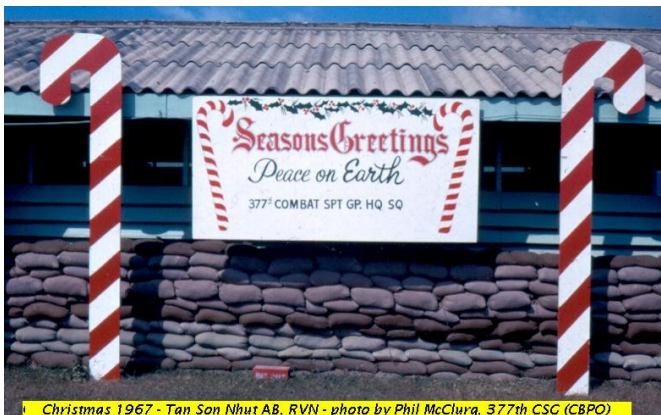
Gary L. Townsend
460 Field Maintenance Squadron
June '69 - May '70

GOOD INFO!!

Guys,
I ran across this website tonight. It has an unbelievable amount of information.

[Vietnam War Resources \(pilsch.com\)](http://Vietnam War Resources (pilsch.com))

Andy Csordas
Treasurer, TSNA



Christmas 1967 - Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN - photo by Phil McClurg, 377th CSC (CBPO)

From Phil McClurg



My neighbor made me this challenge coin holder with a TSNA decal on it. Starting put all my coins on it. Have my 2 TSNA Awards next to it. My brothers Flag who served 2 tours in Vietnam as a door gunner and was wounded twice.

Randall W Brown
President-TSNA

Hi Larry,

With regard to the September Revetments article about the sand bagging detail. I believe I was on the same detail as Paul Mortenson. I didn't recall the 0200 attack but do recall the attack at about 0530. Two rockets whizzed over our heads and impacted within a hundred yards on the other side of our detail. I heard that one of the rockets, either the 0200 or the 0530, hit the motor pool.

Mark Reveaux
May 67 - May 68
377th Supply Squadron

It Was All About Flowers

By: Harold Boone
Sept 67 - Aug 68
460th TRW HQ Section

A veteran is usually honored at death, most often by a flag-draped coffin in repose. The flag is ceremoniously folded and presented to a family member. Less often a bugler sounds Taps in the quietest of moments. On rare occasions, a Rifle Squad fires the traditional three volleys. Regardless of which honors are afforded a veteran, there is a singular thread running through and binding all three of them together: the veteran being honored was not able to participate while alive. The veteran was never able to see tears of gratitude shed, never to smell the sweet flowers of honor. Collectively, these honors serve as an unspoken eulogy telling everyone of a veteran's service.

In a small but significant way, an organization named Honor Flights Network is making concerted efforts to honor the veteran while alive. The organization's intent is to get veterans to Washington, D.C. to see in person the major war memorials. And the program is not just about transportation but includes honors to and from Washington.

These efforts began upon the completion of the World War II Memorial, which was long overdue. These WWII veterans were aging fast as some were well into their 80's. The idea was simple: get them to Washington to see their memorial as quickly as possible allowing them to receive accolades for their service. Thus began a nationwide network devoted to transporting veterans to Washington with honors. Since age and health was becoming a primary factor, a priority system was developed. World War II veterans and veterans with terminal illness are given priority. Then as space became available, Korean Veterans were given priority. Now the Vietnam Veteran is being included in these flights. All travel and food are provided at no cost to the veteran.

On Saturday, October 22, 2022 I had the privilege of being one of approximately 80 veterans on an Honors Flight Network chartered plane to Washington. So special were those five WWII veterans on board also. And it was not simply a plane ride. The airport in Charlotte was abuzz in welcoming all the veterans. The best parking was provided free of charge by the airport. The airline's management staff were there to welcome us aboard. The flight crew had decorated the plane with red, white, and blue ribbons. The American Flag was posted throughout. Flags were posted on the tarmac and our plane was given a water-cannon salute as we departed. Everyone went to great lengths to make us feel as honored guests. And they did.

In addition to the veterans on this trip were Honor Flight Network staff members, a doctor with multiple nurses and medical support staff. As one would expect, many veterans needed assistance to make the trip. Guardians were provided to ensure those with needs were given personal care and attention on a one-on-one basis. The old military adage of "don't leave anyone behind" was in full force. Provisions were made to accommodate every need of each veteran.

We were welcomed in Washington by another water-cannon salute. Buses transported us to Arlington National Cemetery, The Iwo Jima Memorial, The World War II Memorial, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and to the Korean War Memorial. The flight to Washington was filled with laughter, camaraderie as if we had known each other for years. Once on site of these majestic memorials, the laughter stopped. We all knew we were standing on hallowed grounds. The laughter and jovial moments had been reduced to quiet whispers of respect and reflection of times long past. My touching a friend's name was so special to me.

The accountant knows the dollar cost of a war memorial. The engineer knows the tons of steel and granite that make up what is seen by the eye. Only the war veteran knows the bloodshed and heartbreaks which gives such memorials their very souls. Those having never heard the guns of war can only experience a war memorial through sight of eyes. The war veteran also sees a memorial with sight of eyes, but experiences their memorials with emotions found only in the heart.

The acclaimed singer/songwriter, Tanya Tucker released a recording in 2019 entitled "Bring My Flowers Now". The song simply says if flowers are your way of expressing a love and respect, then give them to me now so I can enjoy them also. Read below the song's ending lyrics.

Bring my flowers now, while I'm livin'
I won't need your love when I'm gone
Don't spend time, tears, or money on my old breathless body
If your heart is in them flowers, bring 'em on
If your heart is in them flowers, bring 'em on
(lyrics by Brandi Carlile, Phillip Hanseroth, Tanya Tucker, Timothy Hanseroth)

So, on a beautiful October Saturday, the Queen City Honor Flight organization brought flowers of honor to fellow veterans and me. And those flowers of honor given to us had an aroma only old war-horse veterans could appreciate and understand. A day of continuous honors for some 80 veterans ended with tears of gratitude being shed. Amen.

JOE AND LEO

(Adapted from an article published by “Pets for Patriots)

(Published with permission of “Pets for Patriots”)

But first, a recent memo from “Joe” - Joe Lazaravich, Aug 69 - Aug 70; 377th USAF Dispensary

Recently some good fortune came my way that I'd like to share with the TSNA to hopefully help another veteran.

For a long time I've been considering adopting a dog but then thinking about all the expenses involved in being a responsible dog owner I decided it was best I didn't. I'd still visit my local Humane Society with a box of dog treats and do a walk-through tossing a treat or two at all the pups up for adoption.

On a visit to another shelter I learned of a group called Pets for Patriots. Their poster on the wall explained that their mission was to assist veterans who are looking to adopt an animal from a shelter and would like to help with the adoption fees. Yes Sir, I am all ears!

To make a long story short, they picked up the oral surgery, and, if that weren't enough, they sent me a gift card for PetSmart.

CAUTION : The agreements between Pets for Patriots vary from shelter to shelter so you might not get the same deal from another Pets for Patriots.

I kept in touch with Pets for Patriots telling them stories of me and my new buddy and sending a photo every now and then. They asked if I would sit for an interview and, of course, I said yes.



Serving veterans and saving pets since 2010

Our work uplifts the lives of military veterans and their families

while saving the most overlooked shelter dogs and cats.

SHELTER DOG INSPIRES VIETNAM VETERAN AND FORMER MEDIC TO LEAD A HEALTHIER LIFE August 15, 2022

Joe is a former medic who struggled with loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. A dog surrendered to his local shelter turned out to be just what the doctor ordered.



A GIFT FOR HEALING

Joe was 19 when he decided to enlist in the Air Force in 1967. He was found to have an aptitude for medicine and was dispatched to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware for medic training.

Two years later, Joe was deployed to Vietnam.

The young medic worked in Saigon – known as Ho Chi Minh City as well – in emergency rooms and on several Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) missions.

MEDCAP missions provided essential medical care to Vietnamese civilians in an attempt to win hearts and minds. They included setting up daily dispensaries in villages and orphanages, and picking up patients stranded in the battlefield known as “dust offs.”

“We pick them up and get them back to our facility, get them comfortable for transport to Hawaii or Japan,” Joe explains, “someplace with a better medical facility.”

The former medic describes his experience in Vietnam as “rather uneventful” until the spring of 1970. His unit received a call to assist a pregnant woman stranded in the streets of Saigon.

Joe and another sergeant were dispatched and delivered the baby safely. The dramatic event captured the attention of a local Air Force newspaper reporter, and Joe’s reunion with the mother and her child was featured in the local news.

“That was kind of a positive in a very negative situation,” he recalls. It was a bright spot in an otherwise very dark war, one that Joe remembers to this day.

“...MY LIFE’S WORK”

In August 1970 Joe separated from service after nearly four years of duty and began his transition to civilian life. Several months later he found a job as an emergency medical technician at a major university hospital. While there, he worked in both the emergency and respiratory therapy departments.

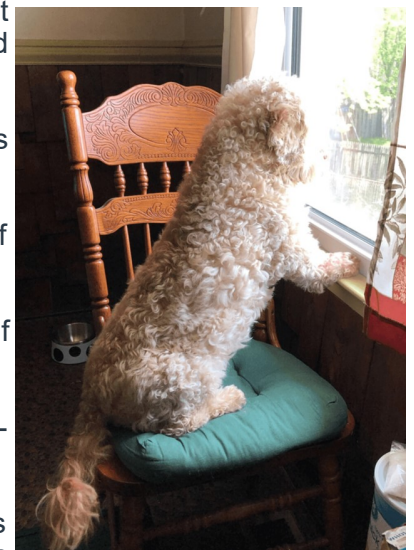
In time the former medic took classes at a local college, and held various jobs in consumer finance.

However, it was Joe’s healing gifts that would ultimately define the remainder of his working life.

In 1980 the Vietnam veteran was recruited by the United States Department of Health and Human Services for his medical expertise.

“I just like the work. Helping people, trying to make their lives better,” Joe explains.

“Other jobs after that were all related to the medical career field, which makes me think back to basic training and how [the] Air Force thought I might have an aptitude for the medical career field. And it turns out that it was – it was my life’s work.”



Much like the military, this new job sent the gifted medic where he was needed most.

Joe started working with Cuban refugees at a military base near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Soon after, he was sent to a Washington, DC area hospital. A colleague recommended him for that assignment because Joe had such a natural gift with patients.

ALONE AND LONELY

Twenty years after separating from the military Joe would be faced with another turning point in his life. The COVID-19 pandemic hit and brought a new challenge to the Air Force veteran: loneliness.

The virus posed a serious danger to Joe. Due to a kidney transplant he received in 2016 his immune system was fragile. Joe had long lived alone, but now the additional layer of isolation from society had him searching for a companion.

“Other than doctor’s appointments and a run to the grocery store, I just don’t mingle,” he says. “So, I’m thinking, I was remembering how great company dogs were all my life.”



The Air Force veteran was no stranger to dogs, having had mostly sporting breeds in his younger days.

However, the deaths of Joe’s last two Labrador Retrievers was emotionally difficult enough that for a long time he could not face the prospect of adopting another dog. But the unprecedented situation encouraged the Air Force veteran to take a chance.

Joe visited several animal shelters near him before finding a dog he wanted to meet at Prince George’s County Animal Services Division.

Since 2013, the municipal shelter has offered veterans in our program fee-waived adoptions when they rescue eligible dogs and cats. It is where Joe first learned about our companion pet adoption program for military veterans.

While at the shelter Joe met one dog who had an unknown medical condition. Despite his life’s work, the former medic was not prepared to care for a special needs pet with unknown prognosis and costs.

The search for a new pet friend would continue, but not for long.

COOL, CURLY-HAIRED CANINE

Joe continued down the row of kennels and saw Leo, a then six-year-old Cockapoo. The Air Force veteran took an immediate liking to him.

“I thought, ‘Well, that guy looks cool. He’s got all these curls and everything, and he has a waddle as he’s walking away, like he’s showing off what he’s got. He’s kind of cool,’” Joe says. “I like him.”

Leo had been surrendered due to aggression in his previous home. However, since their adoption Joe sees no trace of hostility in this dog who seems to love everyone he meets.

“I mean the guy, he greets everybody,” Joe says. “He is definitely not a watch dog.”

So just two days after being approved into our program the medic and the curly-haired mutt went home together.

A LITTLE HELP FROM FRIENDS

It is expensive to be a pet parent. In addition to initial costs that can run \$1,000 or more, there are annual costs for food, medical care, supplies, and pet care.

Pets for Patriots was founded with the goal of making lifetime pet guardianship more affordable for military veterans by providing direct and indirect financial support to lower pet costs.

Joe was pleasantly surprised to learn that there is a program like ours to make it easier and more affordable to adopt a pet. He thinks about Pets for Patriots as a genuine benefit that goes beyond merely saying, 'Thank you for your service.'

"That was kind of like a pleasant shock there," he says. "I'm thinking to myself, 'Ah, look at this. Here's an organization that actually is reaching out, saying, 'We can help you with that adoption.'"

One bit of assistance that the former medic did not expect was paying for Leo's dental surgery. Joe took him to a local animal hospital about a month after the adoption – and the curly-haired pup was diagnosed with grade three dental disease.

The costs of dental surgery were beyond Joe's means; the Vietnam veteran asked if Pets for Patriots could help.

Our hero fund for veterinary care helps defray or outright pay for essential, life extending, quality of life, and palliative care for pets adopted through our program. It is funded solely through the generosity of individuals who donate directly to this restricted fund.

Joe believes that everything that happened did so for a reason.

"If I didn't go to that particular shelter to see this particular dog, I would've not have found out about you guys," Joe says. "It was totally serendipitous that I happened to be there the right place at the right time."

In June 2022 Leo underwent dental surgery. Our hero fund paid the bill after negotiating a meaningful discount from the treating veterinarian.

HEALING AT BOTH ENDS OF THE LEASH

Starting a new friendship requires trust.

At first, Leo was unsure of his new surroundings. He would tread about carefully, observing everything in his path. Stairs seemed foreign to him. And his eyes had a fearful look when Joe reached out to pet him. It seemed as though the little dog was afraid that he was going to be hit.

"He had me wondering what life was like in his previous home because of some of the things he was doing," Joe shares.

To get Leo to open up to him and move, Joe had to lead. Whether it was milling around the house or going out for walks, Leo quickly followed.

In time the former medic realized that the regular exercise benefitted their growing friendship – and their physical and emotional health as well.

"If he were not here, the day could be spent sitting in a chair in front of a computer, or in front of a television," he says.

"He got me moving to make things better for me."

Joe credits his new charge for inspiring him to live a healthier life. It is not unlike what the Vietnam veteran did for so many of his patients over the years. Still, he marvels at how adopting a dog has changed his life for the better.



“Leo and I are getting to know each other and it appears he’s content with his rehoming,” he shares. “Personally, each day is brighter because of my new friend.”

“HE’S A FREAKIN’ JOY”

When the isolation of COVID-19 compounded Joe’s loneliness he took a life-affirming step to overcome it. In doing so he saved a homeless, adult dog from an uncertain fate and improved his own health as well.

During our routine post-adoption follow ups Joe continues to sing the praises of his newfound friend. “He is a freakin’ joy,” Joe says. “Did I happen to mention? He’s a freakin’ joy.”

Since adopting Leo, the former medic and Air Force veteran has been telling other people about our program. He plans to recommend Pets for Patriots to a family member and an old friend, as well, both of whom are veterans.

While the pandemic and its draconian restrictions have eased mostly, Joe is a transplant recipient and must still be cautious. But the now 75 year-old veteran has no complaints. To the contrary, he describes days that are filled with joy and laughter, all thanks to a little dog named Leo.

The Vietnam veteran continues to marvel at the series of coincidences that brought him to this moment in life. “And if I didn’t go to that particular shelter, county shelter, to see your poster on the wall, I never would’ve never known about Pets for Patriots. So glad I did find them,” he says. “You brought therapy into this old man’s life.”

Chaplain’s Corner-The Sacred Book By Andy Csordas, Associate Chaplain

This article is on the theme of other articles in Chaplain’s Corner in that we talk about the founding of our nation and some tidbits from the papers of our founding fathers. Make no mistake, no matter what some people say, the bulk of our founding fathers were Christians and called on God for guidance.

Not a founding father, but our twenty third President, Benjamin Harrison, was no exception to this guidance. He stated this about the bible. “If you take out of your statutes, your constitution, your family life all that was taken from the Sacred Book, what would there be left to bind society together?”

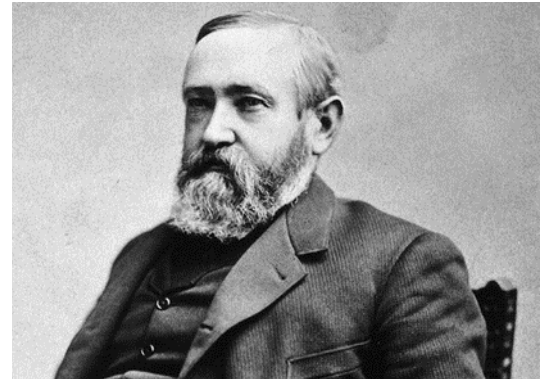
1 Timothy 4:4-5 tells us, ***“For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude: for it is sanctified by means of God and prayer.”*** Sanctified is defined as made Holy or consecrated. When God makes something Holy we are not to dismiss or ignore it but to pay attention.

Our founding fathers understood this as did statesmen after the founding fathers, including Benjamin Harrison. Harrison, in 1889, was the oldest president to be elected to the presidency until Ronald Reagan’s election. Prior to the presidency he was a Brigadier General for the union during the Civil War. He had incredible leadership qualities and integrity.

On many occasions he willingly sacrificed valuable political support rather than abandon his convictions. He also led on foreign policy matters which expanded the United States’ influence around the world. He credited God for the basis of his core principles and integrity.

So how does this relate to us? Do we realize and understand that all good things are created by God? To me that includes the never before heard of government system that was to be called the United States of America. Go back to 1 Timothy 4:5 are we praying for our country? It certainly needs our prayers. But don’t stop there; praise God for all he has created and what he has used to bless us.

We are truly blessed when compared to the rest of the world, but we need to make sure our younger generations understand that blessing and how well it has served us and the world for almost 250 years. Think about how you can impact younger generations and help them understand how the country was founded and how God has blessed us because of that process.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Graphic courtesy of Charles Penley

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AND
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