



# REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

JANUARY 2023



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** On this page, and other pages in this Edition of Revetments are notes from folks about January 31, 1968. Some of you have seen these before, since I am copying them from the January, 2008 Revetments.

Some are from folks who are not members of TSNA, but were gracious enough to write something back in 2008, when TSNA member Jim Stewart asked some of his fellow TSN TET Security Police vets to do so. I thank them again for their cooperation.

I arrived at TSN on Sept. 20 1967 and was assigned to 377 CES. During that time we were doing "base beautification" which meant taking down all the sandbag bunkers, planting palm trees, new sidewalks, painting and remodeling buildings. My first commander's call, can't remember his name, stood up and held a nickel plated pearl handled 45 over his head and said "Men we're never gonna need these here". I was good with that. Everything was going along really well and I never thought the war would come to us.

Since Tet is a holiday most of the civilians that worked for CE were home and I think I had the day off. That evening , I watched a movie out on a patio in our area, went to bed about midnight. I remember waking up to the sound of something different and then the same sound again and someone yelled "that's incoming". Okay this is exciting , something to write home about. The next two or three rounds came way closer and were way louder and I realized at that point my life is in danger. This goes on for some time, maybe 45 minutes or so. After that, I take a look around. I can see some fires burning and I can smell the explosives in the air. Lots of small arms fire, the gunships are going crazy and you could hear fighting going on all around you. By daybreak , most of the fighting died down and I thought, well that's it, but we know that was just the start.

The next day I was an augmentee 377 SPS and that was a very memorable time spent with them. I got to do a lot of things on and off base that was really an experience.

Mike Barty, 377th CES, Sept. 1967-Sept. 1968

Thanks Larry, I've not forgotten and in addition, I keep it marked on my computer pop up calendar as "Day of Remembrance, Tet Offensive-1968" in honor my fellow Security Policeman who gave all at the 051 Bunker so that I could return home, at least physically, in one piece. This coming December 31st I celebrate the 50th anniversary of my arrival in country via Cam Rahn Bay, the last day of 1967, and took a hop sitting between pallets on a loaded cargo C-130 to TSN the next morning, so I and had less than a month in country when we got to celebrate Tet. I have very few photos from that time, but as pictured below, I was able to attend the Memorial for them at the patched and reinforced 051 Bunker. I finally got to visit the Vietnam Memorial Wall in early July this year to pay my respects to my fallen brothers and sisters, shed a few tear and spoke a Prayer of thanks to the families of the fallen. Had the privilege of getting to meet Sen Bob Dole later that day when visiting the WWII Memorial. He was there with an Honor Flight with a group of Veterans from Kansas.

Stan Morris  
Dec 67 – Dec 68  
377<sup>th</sup> SPS



## Chaplain's Corner-Trust in the Lord

By Andy Csordas, Associate Chaplain

Mitchell Page grew up in the small town of Charleroi, Pennsylvania where he went to a small three room schoolhouse. In school they opened the day with a Bible verse and the Pledge of Allegiance, plus they memorized the great documents that established the bedrock of America. On September 1, 1936 eighteen year old Paige left home to walk to the nearest Marine Recruiting Station in Baltimore, Maryland, 200 miles away. His mother put a note in the lunch she packed for him that said ***"Trust in the Lord, son, and He will guide you always"***.

September 1, 1936 was also the day Hitler started what would become WWII. That was the day he attacked Poland using a false flag operation. Paige went on with his training and various assignments and exercises over the years until Pearl Harbor was attacked and the US formally entered the war against Japan and Germany in 1941.



On October 26, 1942 Paige found himself as the sole desperate survivor of his unit on Guadalcanal defending against a regiment of Japanese soldiers as they tried to break through the American lines and retake the airfield. As a Platoon Sergeant at that time, Paige fired his machine gun until it was destroyed, then moved from gun to gun (four machine guns total), keeping up a withering fire until he finally received reinforcements. He later led a bayonet charge that drove the Japanese back and prevented a breakthrough in our lines. Had the Japanese retaken the airfield it could have changed the course of

the war in the Pacific.

After the battle Paige said, "I will never forget sitting in a foxhole, bloody, burned and injured in the morning after our all-night, fierce, hand-to-hand battle against an overwhelming Japanese force on Guadalcanal. I was alone except for hundreds of dead bodies of the enemy surrounding me. I emptied my pack looking for something to stop the bleeding from a bayonet wound and out fell my small Bible. Picking it up in my dirty, bloody hands, I could scarcely believe it when it providentially opened to ***Proverbs 3***, and there were my mother's words, ***Proverbs 3:3***, ***"Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths."***

In the years to come people would ask why he would willingly put his life on the line for his country. He said the answers took him back to that three room schoolhouse where he learned about his country and why it was worth being part of that glorious heritage. Of course we understand that heritage too, as we made that same commitment to defend our country as well during our youth.

My question for you today is, do you trust in the Lord as ***Psalms 3:3*** says? Like me, I am sure you have days where that trust is higher than other days, but I strongly encourage you to reach out to the Lord and receive the peace that only He can give you, true peace in any circumstance.

As the hymn says:

*The Savior is waiting; let Him come into your heart,  
Time after time He has waited before,  
And now He is waiting again,  
To see if you're willing to open that door,  
Oh, how He wants to come in.*

Open that door to your heart.

{Includes excerpts from American Patriot's Bible, WWII Article, PP 1-37 to 1-39}

Larry-

Terry Love here. I was with HHC, 1st Signal Brigade - Aviation Section (largest brigade in the U S Army - 22,000 men) based at Tan Son Nhut. Our barracks were at Camp Gaylor which was just inside of the main gate on the left hand side. I was there during the Tet Offensive. Our Aviation Section had around a dozen Hueys at the Heliport and about a dozen fixed-wing aircraft next to the Air America ramp. I have never seen so much "fireworks" in all of my life. The sky was full of red and green tracers during the dark hours. A few of the items that I recall were armed Huey gunships flying very low and very fast over the main entry way of TSN towards the heliport. They were the Razorback Platoon of the 120th Aviation Company based at the heliport at TSN.

Another outstanding memory was the fellow that got up into the canvas-covered radar dome. He was shooting down into our compound at Camp Gaylor. In Camp Gaylor, we were all armed with small arms, but we also had M-60 machine guns that we took off of our Huey helicopters based at the Heliport. I believe that there was an article in the TSN newsletter a couple of years ago about that incident.

I also recall LOTS of infantry soldiers (I believe that they were ARVN) with an M-113 APC about sixth or eighth soldier walking towards the main gate. Lots of Air Force vehicles driving up and down the main road very fast - some with sirens blaring.

The mortar and/or artillery rounds hitting something somewhere was a concern to all of us Army personnel at Camp Gaylor. I also recall quite a bit of black smoke rising from the area around the flight lines. The 8th Aerial Port was holed with lots of damaged aircraft nearby.

A few days after the Tet Offensive, for some long ago forgotten reason, we had an armed convoy that went from TSN to Bien Hoa just north of the airport. The damage at Saigon and the area nearby was massive. Any civilian vehicles that I saw had massive number of holes in them and most were burned. Lots of buildings were nothing but rubble. There were lots of civilians around all of the area. That means that the VC were all gone by now.

Cheers,

Terry Love  
[luyplanes@aol.com](mailto:luyplanes@aol.com)  
1st Signal Brigade, (USA) , Aviation Section  
66-Mar 68

I was in the 377th Supply Squadron. My hooch was not far from the road that was across from the French cemetery. In the early morning it was quiet. Then we heard automatic weapons fire coming from the area of the cemetery. That was immediately followed by a series of whistle sounds, of the kind that a football coach would use. The weapons fire continued and then the base sirens sounded. Mortar rounds started coming in over the base.

Battle activity was coming in from all over the base with orange flashes. Occasionally a bullet would rip through our hooch and at about 0500 one hooch member said he had been hit in the ankle.

At about 0530 a Huey flew in low and fired rockets into a position near the cemetery.

Air Police in full battle dress ran through our area.

I don't recall everything that followed except my supply office was put under immediate battle command and our work schedule was 24/7. We sacked out wherever we could find a space on the floor or desk. It was risky taking breaks outside for a cigarette. The Air Police advised that the enemy was still on the grounds.

[Mark Reveaux, May 67-May 68, 377th Supply Squadron](#)

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Below starts some information on a book by one of our TSNA members, Ray Gauvin. I have published notes about other TSNA members who have written books, so here is Ray's information, and a chapter from his book.**

## Introduction

When I received my orders to go to Vietnam in 1967, at the tender age of 21, I had absolutely no idea that the rest of my life would be forever radically changed (and not for the better) by my experience over there.

That I would become part of a military unit, known as WDMET, hidden in a mortuary building on the outer perimeter of Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon. Its existence and mission of only 2 years (1967-1969) would remain completely unknown to the general public and to most of the military for nearly 50 years, yet it would end up performing the largest casualty research of any war in history.

That, due to the sensitive nature of the mission, I would not be allowed to live on the base and fraternize with other soldiers, but would be housed in a billet in downtown Saigon, exposed to the dangers of the Viet Cong and indiscriminate rockets landing all around the city.

And I had no idea that I would later on be faced with images that I would never be able to unsee and that would haunt me for more than two-thirds of my life.

Every soldier of a war has their own story to tell. This is only one. It is mine, and I'm glad to be able to share it with you in my book.

## **A Soldier's Heart: The Three Wars of Vietnam.**

### *Prologue*

In 1968, when I boarded an air-conditioned Boeing 707 headed for Vietnam, there were 536,100 American troops there ahead of me. Up until that time, the Pentagon and the American public had seen the war as winnable and soon to end. But the first Tet Offensive had riddled the country with fighting a few months earlier—it was a massive Viet Cong attack that broke the unspoken truce on the lunar new year holiday of Tet. And Tet II was already in progress. Tet changed the view of the war at home and news of the massive casualties brought the whole war into question. I knew I would be desperately needed and put to good use. I'd been trained at Fort Sam Houston as an X-ray technician and combat medic. And yet, the job description I'd been assigned only said WDMET. Other than those five letters of the alphabet, I had no other details.

The month of May in Vietnam means mostly hot weather. The rains start in June. For nearly two weeks in the sweltering heat, broken only by an occasional steamy rainfall in the afternoons, I cleaned latrines at Long Binh. It was a nasty job that smelled even worse than it looked. As I waited to be sent down to Saigon, we pulled steel drums up out of the ground beneath wooden toilets and set the waste on fire with diesel fuel.

Despite feeling heartbroken over losing my girlfriend, despite feeling lost in a foreign land, and despite the unrelenting heat and the smell of burning human waste, I couldn't help wondering, *What the hell is WDMET?*

On June 6th, I finally got my orders to report to Tan Son Nhut Air Base on the southeast outskirts of Saigon. We had just received word that Robert Kennedy had been shot while campaigning in Los Angeles and that he was still clinging to life. Knowing that our country was in such unrest back home was not good for morale. My plan was to concentrate on my job, do my part in helping my fellow soldiers, and then, in a year, I'd get the hell out of Vietnam, a country that didn't even want us there in the first place.

The next afternoon I was put aboard a helicopter and flown down to Tan Son Nhut, which took only a few minutes. It was a relief to leave the smelly latrines behind. A jeep was waiting for me at the helipad when I arrived, driven by the company clerk. I assumed he'd take me to headquarters where I would finally receive my job description.

"You Gauvin?" he garbled around a cigarette hanging precipitously from his mouth. I nodded.

"I'll drive you into Saigon," the clerk said. "To your billet."

"Saigon?" I asked. "Why not the barracks with the other guys?" At least I could check combat medic off my list of concerns. Combat medics weren't put in billets, but sent to where the fighting was.

The clerk hunched his shoulders.

"Tomorrow you'll meet Colonel Ostrom, our unit commander. He'll explain everything."

I started getting really paranoid. This wasn't typical of the military. If I were going to be assigned to a

medical unit, surely it was time to inform me.

"You'll be given your own jeep for transportation," the clerk said. "And an M-16, which you'll be allowed to keep at the billet. I'll pick you up in the morning at 0-800 hours."

My own jeep *and* an M-16? For goodness sake, I was an X-ray tech. After the first Tet Offensive, soldiers in Vietnam were allowed to carry M-16s. It was apparent to me by now that an M-16 wasn't a bad idea if I were going to live in Saigon. In addition to the Viet Cong sympathizers on every street corner, rockets were still exploding all over the city.

I assumed I'd be driven to headquarters the next morning and would receive my job description. But when the clerk picked me up, we drove to the perimeter of the base. There were three long trailers there, set up in a T-shape. They were old and a drab green color, the kind that are pulled behind Army trucks to carry freight.

"That's the mortuary," the clerk said. He pointed at a building next to one of the trailers. "There's another one at Da Nang, but much smaller. Da Nang takes care of the north. Down here at Tan Son Nhut, we get about seventy percent of the casualties."

*Mortuary?* We knew about the deaths, of course, but no one ever asked about how the bodies were taken care of in Vietnam. They just seemed to come home in the bellies of those big cargo planes. Not even the nightly newscasts or the protesters said the word *mortuary*.

"But I'm an X-ray tech," I said. "Why am I at the mortuary?" He tossed me a set of keys.

"That's your jeep parked over there." He pointed at a jeep sitting in front of the second trailer. Its license plate said WDMET. "Think you can handle the traffic in Saigon? Just go with the flow."

"Why am I at the mortuary?" I asked again.

"Wait here for Colonel Ostrom," was his answer.

I stood alone as the clerk drove off. The mortuary was far enough away from the base that it had its own generators, which were noisy as hell. Why I had been brought there to meet my commanding officer was anybody's guess. As I waited, a Huey helicopter arrived in a blast of dust rising up from the nearby helipad. Two soldiers crawled out and then grabbed the straps of a large green bag. They lifted it out and quickly carried it into the mortuary building. It was my first glimpse of an HRP, a human remains pouch, or body bag. They came back for a second bag, and a third, and a fourth. A few minutes later, they climbed back aboard, and the chopper rose in the dust and flew off.

*What the hell is going on?* I thought.

A jeep pulled up in front of the trailers and a colonel got out. It was my commanding officer, Colonel Thomas Ostrom. I saluted him.

"I bet you've got a lot of questions for me, don't you, soldier?" he asked

"Yes, sir."

"Follow me," the colonel said.

## SEE PAGE 8 FOR ORDER INFORMATION FOR RAY'S BOOK



I was a SSgt and night shift NCOIC, APO Breakdown, Saigon AMT, when TET hit around 2AM, January 30, 1968. We occupied a slatted building backing up to perimeter fence and French Cemetery-were VC had obviously hidden. Initially, I was a bit confused as splinters flew but after a few seconds I realized we were being shot at. The VC were firing on us as we sorted mail. Shortly afterwards grenades and 122 MM rockets were hitting our compound and outside my building. I shouted hit the floor and directed my troops to crawl across a gravel road separating our building from the command compound. Our Commander, Captain Morioka had opened a CONEX and was issuing M-16s with two clips each. Me and other QRT SP Augmentees were quickly assigned perimeter defense near our building. We were instructed to fire at any incoming fire until it ceased. As the night wore on our ammo was replenished. By afternoon A1E aircraft were dropping bombs just outside perimeter fence and tanks were strategically positioned along fence firing into residential community outside the base. Smoke was choking. Somehow in this melee and my adrenaline pumping a piece of shrapnel about the size of quarter had hit me and was stuck in the front upper left of my flak jacket. One of my guys noticed asking me if I knew. I dug the shrapnel out and brought it back home. Jan still has it to this day.

Jim Faulkner  
Mar 67-Mar 68



**George Greenwood TET pictures**

### **REGARDING THE VA PACT ACT**

If you recall I am the gent who sent you information about Prostate Cancer, testing, etc. Most all of you are Vietnam Vets.

The PACT Act was passed in August 2022 and now extends all of Agent Orange coverage to all of Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Guam and a few other places where it was stored for a time. See Attachment. As a note, it also includes Ft Dietrick, MD which did testing of Agent Orange.

Then the list of presumptive maladies has expanded.

AL Amyloidosis 2006

Chronic B-Cell Leukemias 2003

[Chloracne](#) 1991

[Diabetes Mellitus Type 2](#) 2001

Hodgkin's Disease 1994

[Ischemic Heart Disease](#) 2010

Multiple Myeloma 2016

Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma 1991

[Parkinson's Disease](#) 2010

[Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset](#) 2013

Porphyria Cutanea Tarda 1994

[Prostate Cancer](#) 2013

[Respiratory Cancers](#) 1994

Soft Tissue Sarcomas\* 1991

[Bladder Cancer](#) 2021

[Hypothyroidism](#) 2021

Parkinsonism 2021

Hypertension 2022

Monoclonal gammopathy 2022

If you know of anyone who was not included back when, they should definitely file. I understand the payment amount will be backdated to when the disease existed which could mean MANY thousands of dollars of tax free money to start.

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**SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE INFO**



# PACT ACT & VIETNAM, COLD WAR ERA VETERANS



The PACT Act, signed into law August 10, 2022, expands health care and benefits for Vietnam era Veterans.



## PACT Act Health Care Eligibility

Veterans who served in these countries during specific time periods are eligible to enroll in VA health care effective August 10, 2022.

### Republic of Vietnam

January 9, 1962 - May 7, 1975

### Thailand

Any U.S. or Royal Thai base  
January 9, 1962 - June 30, 1976

### Guam or American Samoa

(or in their territorial waters)  
January 9, 1962 - July 31, 1980

### Laos

December 1, 1965 -  
September 30, 1969

### Cambodia

at Mimot or Krek,  
Kampong Cham Province  
April 16, 1969 - April 30, 1969

### Johnston Atoll

(or on a ship that called there)  
January 1, 1972 - September 30, 1977



The law expands health care and benefits for Veterans who participated in certain nuclear response or cleanup activities:

### Enewetak Atoll

January 1, 1977 -  
December 31, 1980

### Palomares, Spain

January 17, 1966 -  
March 31, 1967

### Thule, Greenland

January 21, 1968 -  
September 25, 1968



## Toxic Exposure Screenings

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants
- Chemicals
- Radiation
- Warfare Agents
- Occupational Hazards

**ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022:** VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans who have not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



## PACT Act Benefits

The PACT Act adds two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
- High blood pressure (hypertension)

Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran may qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).

## 4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE



Apply online at [VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Call the toll-free hotline 877-222-8387 Mon - Fri, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET



Mail a completed, signed Application for Health Benefits [VA Form 10-10EZ](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Bring a completed, signed [VA Form 10-10EZ](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction) to the nearest VA Medical Center or clinic.

## 4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS



Learn more at [VA.gov/dtsability/how-to-file-claim/](https://www.va.gov/dtsability/how-to-file-claim/)



Visit a VBA Regional Office [VA.gov/benefits/offices.asp](https://www.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)



Call the Benefits hotline (for specific questions) at 1-800-827-1000



Work with an accredited VSO [VA.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp](https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT)  
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)  
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)  
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/)

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### **FROM PAGE 5:**

**People can obtain the book by clicking on the link below to  
my Web site.**

Ray Gauvin, Author  
*A Soldier's Heart, The Three Wars of Vietnam*  
[www.raygauvin.com](http://www.raygauvin.com)

### **IN MEMORIAM**

Mr. Augustine R. Letto Albuquerque NM Jan 66 - Dec 66 377th Combat Support Group  
Assistant Base Operations Officer

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