



# REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association  
A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



JULY 2024

## Chaplain's Corner-Darkness

By Andy Csordas, Associate Chaplain

As I lay in bed with my mind racing thinking about what needs to be done at work, I long for sleep, but it does not easily come to me. Many of our veteran friends will wake up abruptly with very frightening and not welcome memories. It can be a debilitating experience that comes back repeatedly no matter what you try to do to suppress those thoughts. Sometimes we just fear the night because we know what is coming.

So in our discussion today we will talk about the relationship between darkness and light. The scripture talks about both in many places. Let me be very clear, I am not equating any bad experiences that PTSD can bring back to us as being far from God, just that there seems to be some similarities observing bad experiences as a dark part of our existence. We know those experiences are not fun, to put it mildly.

The scriptures have many references to darkness and light. Of course many of the references have different contexts. While you are reading scriptures is very important to understand the context by looking at the verses before and after the passage in question.

We all feel better when outside on a bright sunny day and don't feel as cheerful on a dark damp day. King David is singing a song praising God's deliverance in **2 Samuel 22:29** and he says; **For You are my lamp O LORD; The LORD shall enlighten my darkness.** David is equating light as positive and darkness as negative. David is excited about the Lord helping the people defeat the enemy. When darkness or depression overcomes us, for whatever reason, there are ways to help.

A way not to help is to just wallow in the depressing thoughts. Many professionals have said you can help yourself by just focusing on helping others; as it gets your mind off your problems. Studies have also shown that eating right and exercise helps as well. Please understand that serious depression, or PTSD requires professional help, we are talking about sporadic bad days or nights in this case.

For me, when my mind is racing at night, I just give it to God and start to pray about the issue, or just pray for others that come to mind. More often than not I am then able to let it go and go back to sleep. In a sense the Lord enlightens my darkness as David said in 2 Samuel above. Plus think about the times you worried about things that turned out to be no big deal, all that anxiety for nothing.

So when your mind is racing, allow God to show you the light as it says in **1 Peter 2:9; But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.** Remember God knew you before you were born and he has a plan for your life, no matter how old or young you happen to be at the moment. Allow God to show you the peace he can give you in life, talk to Him. He longs to have a special relationship with you!

\*Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Tan Son Nhut Association

**EDITOR'S NOTE: There wasn't space on the next page for the Scholarship Fund Logo, so here it is, and to inform you of the great information concerning this year's Scholarship Recipients, that you will be reading next!**



**TSNA Scholarship News**  
By: Rich Carvell, Vice-President, TSNA  
Chair, TSNA Scholarship Committee

The TSNA Scholarship Committee has chosen nine recipients for the 2024 TSNA Scholarship. Recipients of the \$5,000 Scholarship, payable over four years, are Jordan Foster of Jonesboro, AR; Jacob Hermosillo of Hot Springs, AR; Audrey Jones of Cabot, AR; Sawyer Gribble of Versailles, KY; Elizabeth Burgess of Williford, AR; Reese Rankin of Fayetteville, AR; Elia Schafer of St. Johns, MI; Lucas Chance of Little Rock, AR; and Rhett Barker of Hot Springs, AR.

New this year is a \$1,000 scholarship awarded to students attending a two-year technical school. The Committee has chosen Spencer Allen of Prairie Grove, AR, for the \$1,000 scholarship (awarded in two \$500 payments, one each year).

**Rhett Barker** of Hot Springs, AR, plans to attend Lyon Collège in Batesville, Arkansas, and plans to play football at Lyon. At Lyon, he plans to major in education to become a teacher and coach. Barker says he has more commitment and a stronger work ethic than many his age.

**Elizabeth Burgess** of Williford, AR, will go to Ozarka College in Melbourne, Arkansas, for the first two years to earn an associate degree, then transfer to Arkansas Technical University in Russellville, Arkansas to finish work toward a bachelor degree in art. Burgess says she has dreamed of being a teacher all of her life. As a high school junior, she was a member of the Arkansas Teacher Residency Program.

**Lucas Chance** of Little Rock, AR, will attend the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and major in bio-medical engineering, followed by medical school. Chance wants to be a physician. Chance has been a leader in high school and wants to continue that role in college.

**Jordan Foster** of Jonesboro, AR, is planning to attend Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and major in biotechnology. Foster has been accepted as an Alice Carson Tisdale Honor Scholar and a Strada Scholar. Foster's future plans include obtaining a Master of Science degree in biotechnology and eventually attending medical school to specialize in oncology.

**Sawyer Gribble** of Versailles, KY, plans to attend Bellarmine University in Louisville, KY, and later will attend pharmacy school at the University of Kentucky to become a pharmacist. At Bellarmine, she will study chemistry while also playing collegiate soccer. Participation in collegiate athletics is in memory of her grandfather, a Vietnam Veteran.

**Jacob Hermosillo** of Hot Springs, AR, has plans to attend the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville to major in biology and pursue the pre-medical route to become an oncologist. Jacob says his academic pursuits are inspired by the impact cancer has had on his family. He will continue his organization's efforts to raise funds for cancer patients.

**Audrey Jones** of Cabot, AR, will attend the University of Central Arkansas in Conway to major in communication sciences and disorders and will continue her education toward a doctorate in occupational therapy. Her ambition is to have a positive influence in the lives of others and help others overcome challenges and improve their quality of life. Jones says she has a love of helping people.

**Reese Rankin** of Fayetteville, AR, plans to attend Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, to major in exercise science and eventually become a physician assistant. Rankin has been actively involved in school activities and last year went on a week-long mission trip to Nicaragua which had a great impact on him.

**Elia Schafer** of St. Johns, MI, plans to attend Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, MI, to major in biological sciences with the ultimate goal of becoming a physician. She sees college as a chance to expand her horizons. She has worked as a volunteer coach for several years, learning the power of mentorship and the significance of prioritizing the needs of others. She wants to lead by example, have an impact on others and to motivate others to reach their full potential.

**Spencer Allen** of Prairie Grove, AR, was chosen for the new two-year TSNA \$1,000 scholarship for technical school. Allen plans to attend Northwest Community College in Bentonville, Arkansas. There he will major in fire science to pursue his goal of becoming a firefighter. Allen believes his college work will set him apart from the competition and improve his chances of becoming a firefighter.

The Tan Son Nhut Association Scholarships are for descendants of those who served in Vietnam anytime between 1959 and 1975 either with the United States Armed Forces or the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam or as a civilian at Tan Son Nhut Air Base either as an American or Vietnamese citizen. The TSNA scholarship criteria and the application for the fall of 2025 will be on the TSNA.org website.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: I HOPE YOU LIKED THE BAGPIPE'S ARTICLE IN THE JUNE ISSUE,  
"AS PROMISED", PAGE 3 STARTS THE STORY OF "THE PIPER" BILL MILLIN.**

## Piper Bill Millin

Unit: Brigade HQ, 1st Special Service Brigade

Bill Millin was the Piper of the 1st Special Service Brigade, and was amongst the more noticeable men to land on the Normandy Beaches on the 6th June as he played the Brigade ashore with his bagpipes. The following is his personal account of D-Day.

"I went along to the Hamble River, aboard the landing craft with twenty-one others, and we went in the leading one and I had the Pipes in the box. I had been playing to the troops waiting to go aboard the craft and then I put them back in the box and Lord Lovat said "*you better get them out of the box again because once we set sail by nine thirty or nine o'clock, you can play us out of the Solent. We will be in line astern. You will be in the leading craft with me*", so that was the start of it then. He never mentioned what to do. He realized that I knew what to do. I had to pipe ashore in the water up onto the beach and then later he would tell me when to play.



Well, the music I played sailing up the Hamble River towards The Solent was The Road to the Isles. That was the main tune I played. I was standing in the bowsprit, as you would call it, and the music was on the loudhailer. Someone put it on a loudhailer and, of course, you could hear it over it, I could hear it even above the bagpipes. And in the Solent just off the Isle of Wight were thousands, thousands of transports. Large ones, small ones, and troops aboard and, of course, they heard the Pipes, and they were throwing their hats in the air and cheering. I could even hear the cheers above the sound of the Pipes. And then a destroyer came in close. It was a destroyer with a name like Montrose, and Lovat looked round and smiled and waved because his family was associated with the name Montrose, and they came in close and then swerved away again and we continued towards the Isle of Wight, and then the sea began to become choppy so I was beginning to lose my balance a bit. I didn't want to take a header into The Solent, so I stopped playing the Pipes and that was it. We were right into the Channel by this time.

After we had left The Solent and were out into sea - into The Channel, the hatches were put down and we were downstairs in a very cramped situation. There were some people playing cards, but most of the people were sick - some violently sick - including myself. Then I slept fitfully through the night. The next morning the noise of the engines - instead of the thump, regular thump, and it was calmer. So, I went along to the hatch and pushed it open and looked out at a grey dawn and the wind was blowing and freezing cold, so I shut it very quickly and got back down to where the heat was. Then after about another half an hour people started to get gear together, their rucksacks on, picking their rifles up and making towards the hatch, and then we all got up on deck. The rails were down ready for action. Instead of being in line astern the fleet were spread out and we could see in the mist the French shoreline. Bungalows along the seafront.

Everyone was behaving normally, I mean checking their kit, putting their kit on... I didn't think of being shot, how many Germans there, what was there, whether the smell of feeling of seasickness was still on me. We all got up on deck and we stood in the freezing wind watching the shoreline. Then the order came to get ashore, and I was very pleased to get ashore and no one was shouting that they were afraid or shouting that they were going to kill all these Germans. All people really wanted was to get off.

Lord Lovat was in the next ramp. There were two ramps at the front of the landing craft. I was up on one and he was up on this one. He jumped into the water. So, I waited till he got in, because he was over six feet tall, to see what depth it was, and someone came up on to his empty ramp. Well, he was immediately shot. A piece of shrapnel or a bullet was in the face, and he fell and sank. Well, I jumped in pretty smart then. My kilt floated to the surface and the shock of the freezing cold water knocked all feelings of sickness from me and I felt great. I was so relieved to get off that boat after all night being violently sick. I

struck up the Pipes and paddled through the surf playing "Hieland Laddie", and Lord Lovat turned round and looked at me and [gestured approvingly].

When I finished, Lovat asked for another tune. Well, when I looked round - the noise and people lying about shouting and the smoke, the crump of mortars, I said to myself "*Well, you must be joking surely.*" He said, "*What was that?*" and he said, "*Would you mind giving us a tune?*" "*Well, what tune would you like, Sir?*" "*How about The Road to the Isles?*" "*Now, would you want me to walk up and down, Sir?*" "*Yes. That would be nice. Yes, walk up and down.*"

Well, there was the water's edge. Just about a few feet up on the beach I walked along that part. I could see people lying face down in the water going back and forwards with the surf. Others to my left were trying to dig in just off the beach. A low wall, and they were trying to dig in there. It was very difficult for them trying to dig in the sand. Yet when they heard the Pipes, some of them stopped what they were doing and waved their arms, cheering. But one came along, he wasn't very pleased, and he called me "*The mad bastard*". Well, we usually referred to Lovat as a "mad bastard". This was the first time I had heard it referred to me.

Well, we moved off in two sections. One attacked the front from the seaside area of Ouistreham. The group I was with attacked the rear of Ouistreham. After the capture of Ouistreham one part of the Brigade went along the towpath of the canal. The part of the Brigade I was with - with Lovat - we went by road towards Bénouville.

We were walking in aircraft formation. That is single file on either side of the road, and I am Piping. After we left the Ouistreham area, I was Piping along the road, and it's a raised road with sloping away towards the canal to the left and then there is the high ground again on the other side of the canal, so we were very vulnerable on this road, but anyway I was Piping along the road. Then we were being attacked by snipers from the other side of the canal and from the cornfields on the right side of the road, and I am Piping along the road, and I could see this sniper about a hundred yards or so away ahead of me and I could see the flash when he fired. And I glanced round, stopped playing and they were all down on the road and their faces in the road. Even Lovat was on his knee - one knee. Then the next thing this man comes scrambling down the tree and Lovat and our group dashed forward. Of course, I dashed, I had stopped playing by this time, and dashed forward with them and the man's head bobbing about - the sniper's head bobbing about in the cornfield, and Lovat shot at him, and he fell down and sent two men into the cornfield to see what had happened, and they brought back the dead body.

Lovat had killed him. Then Lovat said to me, "*Right, Piper, start the Pipes again.*" Well, we got to Bénouville. I had to stop again because we were under fire there and we couldn't get down the main street. We were taking shelter behind the low wall to the right of the entrance to the village, and Colonel Mills-Roberts of 6 Commando - he was across the road looking round his side of the wall. So, then he came dashing across to me and said, "*Right, Piper, play us down the main street.*" So, he wanted me to run. I said, "*No, I won't be running. I will just play them as usual.*" So, I Piped them in, and they all followed behind me and through the village and then stopped.

I was Piping Blue Bonnets Over the Border at that time again. Then a shell hit the church on the left and we all stopped, and two Commandos ran into the church to see if it had hit the snipers there. Then I looked round and the Commandos and throwing hand grenades in through the windows of the houses.

Then I continued along the road and there was a lot of white dust with the noise and the explosions and everything. So, at the end of the village, I stopped there and then Lovat came up to me and he said, "*Well, we are almost at the bridges. About another half a mile. So, start your Pipes here and continue along this road and then swing round to your left. Then it's a straight road down to the bridges.*" Well, I started Piping, continued along the road, eyes looking this way, looking - no sign of snipers. I had begun to become conscious of snipers by this time. Then turned round left and there is a group of Commandos sitting on the rails outside the Mairieux, and I noticed they were the French Commandos, so I recognized their faces anyway. Turned round left and then I could see the bridges about 200 yards down the road and a pall of black smoke over the bridges and the sound of mortars bursting.

So, I kept Piping down the road. Lovat was behind me and when I came to the bridges, I stopped across the road from a café. A café on the right-hand side of the road at the bridge...

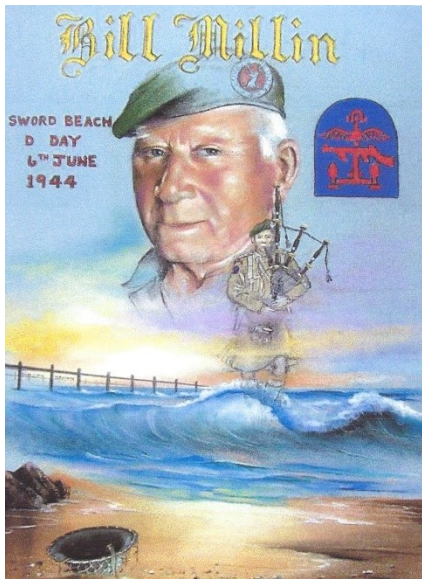
Lovat passed and he - this Airborne Officer - approached us and Lovat and the Officer shook hands and started to discuss the situation. Then Lovat came to me and said, *"Right, Piper, we are crossing over."* So, I start, walking, put the Pipes up. This time we are walking over. We can hear the shrapnel, whatever it was, hitting the sides - metal sides - of the bridge. Well, when we got almost to the other side, I started up the Pipes. Coming off the bridge, I stopped again because Lovat put his hand up, the indication was to stop. So, I stopped, swung the bagpipes on my shoulder and he said, *"Another 200 yards along this road, Piper, there is another bridge, but we won't have the protection that we have here because it's not a metal-sided bridge, it's railings"* as he called them, *"and when you get there, no matter what the situation, just continue over. Don't stop."* So, I struck up the Pipes and marched along, merrily along the road and he was walking behind me, and others strung out behind. I was still playing Blue Bonnets Over the Border, and we came to the bridge. I could see across the bridge, and there were two Airborne chaps dug in on the other side of the bridge and they were frantically indicating to me and pointing out to the sides of the river that it was under fire, sniper fire, and whatever. So, I then looked round at Lovat, and he indicated to me by his hand, carry on across. So, I kept Piping, but it was the longest bridge I ever Piped across, but I got safely over and shook hands with the two Airborne chaps in the slit trench. Then Lovat got across and then at this point an Airborne Officer - a tall Airborne Officer - approached us from across the road, held his hand out to Lovat and said, *"We are very pleased to see you, old boy."* And Lovat said, *"Aye, we are very pleased to see you, old boy,"* and looking at his watch, *"Sorry, we are two and a half minutes late."* We weren't two and a half minutes late. We were just over an hour late because we should have been there about twelve o'clock and it was now after one.

We set off again. We crossed the road in single file and then we turned down a narrow leafy lane, and walking along there then came to an opening and there were a cluster of French farm type houses with a gathering of French folks. They were poorly dressed French folks and I was walking along here and a little girl with red hair came out in bare feet. Very unkempt looking, and she kept shouting, *"Music, music, music"*. And I said, *"Well, she wants a tune."* So I turned to Lovat and I said, *"What do you think?"* he said, *"Okay then, give her a tune."* So, I started to play a tune called The Nut Brown Maiden. It's a famous Scottish tune and went for a few yards like that then I had to stop because the mortaring had started, and the French people scarpered. They all scarpered to every nook and the mortars began to blast. And we came up to this road and we passed, all the hedges were covered with this white dust. We got up the road and we passed on the right-hand side a quarry with lots of wounded lying there on stretchers and up to the crossroads and Lovat stood there directing the attack on the village straight ahead, and so I stayed with him a while. Then I went into the barn to see what was going on there, and that was full of wounded. I looked at Lovat, he just sat on the grass, and I thought *"By ginger, I wouldn't like his job."* And he was thirty-two years of age at that time - very responsible job. But anyway, we moved forward a bit along this hedgerow with the mortars bursting in the field alongside us and I could hear this, we all jumped into a ditch, and we could hear the shrapnel coming through the hedge, and this is the spot where the Pipes were injured. Not seriously, they could still be played.

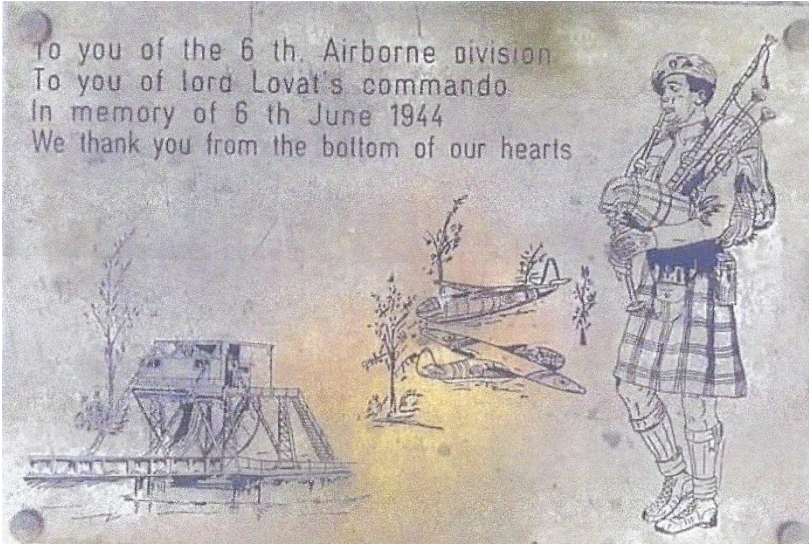
So, the next thing Lovat says, *"Right. We won't go into the village today. We will go up and occupy the farmhouses, the main road and the farmhouses on the edge of the road."* So, we stopped there and took over the farmhouse, then attacked the village in the morning. And that was us. Objective taken."

In 1962, the all-star film adaptation of Cornelius Ryan's book, *The Longest Day* was made. It is commonly believed that Bill Millin had a cameo role in the film, playing himself as the Piper who accompanied Lord Lovat's Commandos. This is untrue, however, as the man was in fact Pipe-Major Leslie de Laspee, official piper to the Queen Mother in 1961. Millin has denied ever being involved in the film, and when Lord Lovat was asked why Millin did not play the part, he said, *"My old piper works in a bar in Glasgow now, I believe, and is too fat to play the part."*

Bill Millin died on the 17th of August 2010.



**POSTER OF MILLIN, SWORDS BEACH JUNE 6TH**



**PLAQUE FOR LORD LOVAT'S COMMANDOES**



**BILL MILLEN PLAYING HIS PIPES AT A CEREMONY IN FRANCE**



**JUNE 6 D-DAY CEREMONY IN FRANCE SWORDS BEACH (BLOW-UP, SHOWING HOW LARGE THE STATUE ACTUALLY IS!)**



**PHOTO OF BILL MILLEN DURING WWII**

**JUNE 6 D-DAY CEREMONY IN FRANCE SWORDS BEACH**



# Tan Son Nhut Association is going to Have Fun in Huntsville

## We Hope to see you at the reunion



When I would go to the Navy Exchange in Cho Lon, I would always buy a pack of these blade. Well, anyone who has seen me lately know I don't use or need them. I recently found a bunch of blades and we will have them in Huntsville to give away to registered reunion attendees, probably as door prizes.

Can you believe these prices, and this is for five blades!

**Come and share some photo's**

**Enjoy the company of other Tan Son Nhut Veterans**

**Share some small talk**

**Sept 18-20, 2024**

**Huntsville AL**

**Come and bring your family with you!**

The origins of military challenge coins are unclear, but some say they date back to Roman times when soldiers were rewarded with coins for exceptional service. Others say the tradition began in World War I when a squadron leader gave bronze medallions to his fellow pilots, or during the Vietnam War when an Army bar required non-infantrymen to prove their combat service with a coin-sized item.



The modern tradition of challenge coins involves soldiers "challenging" each other to present their coins. If a soldier can't produce their coin, they may have to buy a drink or meal for the challenger. The tradition is now known as a coin check, or coin challenge

Come to Huntsville and while in the hospitality suite, **"CHALLENGE"** A Tan Son Nhut Board member, and if they do NOT have their coin, they will make sure you get a wine, beer, or soft drink for FREE. Then sit down with that member and swap some stories, remember some good times and maybe share some pictures.



# **TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION 2024** **REUNION REGISTRATION**

**Huntsville AL**  
**Sep 18-20, 2024**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GUEST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TEL ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL NEEDS or MEALS (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

**Choose one of the following:**

**1: FULL Reunion Registration including banquet**

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ X **\$95.00** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Banquet Only Friday, September 20, 2024**

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ X **\$65.50** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form with payment (check only) to:**

**TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION**  
**P.O. BOX 236**  
**PENRYN, PA 17564-0236**

**REGISTRATION FORM WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED**  
**NLT September 4, 2024 (No refunds after September 11, 2024)**

Questions regarding Registration should be directed to:

Paul Mortensen, Director of Reunion Planning

[TSNAreunions@gmail.com](mailto:TSNAreunions@gmail.com)

## **Hotel Information**

**Four Points by Sheraton (Huntsville Airport)**  
**1000 Glenn Hearn Blvd Huntsville AL 35824**

Rm Rate \$139.00 plus taxes standard King- -\$149 for a Double Queen

Meal selection will be made closer to the event

Additional events may be added later

Rm Rate \$139.00 plus taxes standard King- -\$149 for a Double Queen

Meal selection will be made closer to the event

Additional events may be added later



**Tentative Schedule of Events**  
**Tan Son Nhut Association**  
**Four Points by Sheraton at Huntsville Airport**  
**September 18-20, 2024**

Date and time	Event	Room
Wednesday, September 18		
1000      2000	Set-up and Registration	Hospitality Suite
1000      2000	Hospitality/Social	Hospitality Suite
Thursday, September 19		
0900      2100	Registration	Hospitality Suite
0900      2100	Hospitality/Social	Hospitality Suite
1000      1800	Tour Space and Rocket Center	Huntsville
1700      2100	Dinner/socializing on your own	
Friday, September 20		
0900      1600	Registration	Hospitality Suite
0900      1630	Hospitality/Social	Hospitality Suite
0900      1100	Board Meeting	Board Room
1100      1300	Free Time/Hospitality	Hospitality Suite
1300      1400	General Meeting	Hospitality Suite
1400      1445	Officers and Directors Report	Hospitality Suite
1445      1500	New officers/Swearing In	Hospitality Suite
1500      1530	Officers and Directors Q and A	Hospitality Suite
1530      1700	Free Time/Hospitality	
1600	Silent Auction ends	Hospitality Suite
1600      1630	Door Prizes	Hospitality Suite
1630	Hospitality Suite closes	Hospitality Suite
1730      1800	Group Photo	Foyer
1800      2200	Banquet	Banquet Room
1800      1815	Welcome Remarks	Banquet Room
1815      1830	Presentation of Colors/Pledge	Banquet Room
1830      1930	Dinner	Banquet Room
1930      2015	Speaker	Banquet Room
2015      2145	Awards	Banquet Room
Saturday, September 21		
0900      1100	Breakfast/on your own	Restaurant
1100	Reunion Ends	
1100      1600	Free Time, self guided tours of Huntsville You will need a military or VA ID to get on military facilities	

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Chaplains Emeriti:  
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Rev. Dr. James M. Warrington (1926 - 2022), Chaplain: 1997-2018  
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Wayne Salisbury, (1940-2014), President 2004-2007  
Robert Robinson Gales, President 2007-2011  
George Plunkett, President 2011-2015  
Randall W. Brown, President, 2015-2023

**Web Site: [www.tsna.org](http://www.tsna.org)**  
Annual Membership: \$20.00  
Five Year Membership: \$80.00  
Life Membership: \$180.00

**HAPPINESS FOR THE WIFE  
OF  
A VIETNAM SERVICEMAN**

Happiness is the first letter she receives from him.  
Happiness is every letter after the first.  
Happiness is the tapes he sends her.  
Happiness is the arguments they can't have via air mail.  
Happiness is not having to have dinner on the table at 4:30 sharp.  
Happiness is the letter she gets saying he's coming home.  
Happiness is meeting him at the airport.  
Happiness is the look on the kids faces when they see their daddy after a year.  
Happiness is the second honeymoon — just the two of them  
And happiness is letting him watch the kids for a day,  
So she can get her hair fixed and shop without the kids.  
Happiness is being a family again.



Tom Hildreth Photo

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