



REVETMENTS

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



MARCH 2024

THOUGHTS FROM A NEW MEDIC

By: Joe Lazarovich
Aug 69 - Aug 70
377th USAF Dispensary

There are a lot of scary things for a new medic in the military.

The process starts with eight to ten weeks of classroom learning then you're sent to your first permanent duty station (that term has always struck me as odd. If it's permanent, how can it also be the first?) where the training is called O.J.T. or On the Job Training where you are rotated through the different areas of the hospital to give some basics of how it works and where the new medic might show some aptitude or, just as importantly, a lack of aptitude. Suturing a wound is one of those things covered in O.J.T. I probably saw ten before I was told the next one that comes through the door is yours Laz-a-whatever. So here she comes, a six-year-old who stepped on a piece of glass. Nervous??? You bet. Just short of soiling myself. I won't go into details just suffice it to say it wasn't the best display of composure ever shown by Joseph John but I got through it and no one died.

As my time in the Emergency Room went on, I learned that it is not only feet that get lacerated, sometimes a person's scalp gets cut and what's the first thing we do class? Ya gotta shave that area before you reach for the needle and thread. The preferred Air Force tool at that time was a Weck straight razor with detachable safety guard.

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/113784138957>

Kinda nervous using this thing on a person's head for the first time so this young medic figured that if he wanted to become more proficient and comfortable using this thing why not have a volunteer to practice on. There weren't too many volunteers so by the process of elimination he became me. I took one back to the barracks with me and from that day on Sergeant Laz-a-whatsizname shaved his face with a Weck straight razor and it worked. After a few minor nicks it's surprising how nicely and confidently the Sergeant became shaving other people's hairy parts. After discharge I still shaved with a commercial straight razor and, of course, I had to have a strop to keep the thing sharp.

And now as I work on minimizing my possessions, I am getting rid of the razor and strop but I can't find the brush and mug to lather up.



HOPE to see you in HUNTSVILLE
September 18-20, 2024
Four Points by Sheraton
Huntsville, Airport

This is Paul Mortensen and he is holding a Tan Son Nhut Association Challenge Coin. He HOPES to see you in HUNTSVILLE, AL in September, and if he does see you and he does not have his challenge coin—HE WILL BUY YOU A DRINK.



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

Hotel Information

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

Here's your reservation link you can use to make reservations:

[Book your group rate for Tan Son Nhut Association](#)

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

INCOMING

By: Thomas N Tessier. SSGT Tan Son Nhut 377th SPS 9/67 thru 8/70
5 consecutive tours.

377th Security Police rocket spotter/target acquisition towers.

If you were stationed on Tan Son Nhut between 1968 and 1970, you probably wondered how the base warning sirens at night most often warned you of incoming rockets before the rockets hit.
We believed many lives were saved.

It was not the Army radar sites that warned the base. It was the Security Police assigned to the three main rocket spotting towers who visually sighted and plotted the many rocket launches aimed at TSN and other major US military installations including Cu Chi, Bien Hoa and Long Binh and the capital city of Saigon.

According to the daily diary I kept, Sunday February 18, 1968 was the first very large rocket attack against TSN during the infamous TET offensive. At 0100 approximately 80 to 100 tube fired Russian 122mm Katyusha rockets hit TSN. A few more hit at 1130 am and 1530 pm. (Note: this type of rocket is being used today by Hamas against Israel).

Note: The Daily diary entries I made during my three years on TSN accurately recorded the times, dates and approximate number of rounds fired against us.

On that early dark dry season morning of 2/18/68 I was posted on Tango (tower) #14 on the farthest and darkest northern corner of the base perimeter facing the old catholic church in the tiny village off the 056 gate perimeter.

I saw the bright long flashes from the 122 mm rocket motor propulsion fuel thinking they were large flares being fired off the base. I called them in to base security control as large flares. Then, when they hit the base I thought they were mortars. We learned when we came into base after dawn that they really were rockets. I called in a few more launches in the following weeks from Tower 14.

Because of my quick reaction call-ins from Tango 14, my night shift Alpha sector NCOIC Tech Sgt Mckissick and night shift OIC Lt Mel Grover transferred me to Tango (tower) #10, one of the three multi manned artillery spotting towers on TSN. I was sent to a 25th Infantry Army artillery unit at Cu Chi for training to learn taking accurate azimuth readings with BC artillery scopes by spotting preplanned controlled nighttime 105 howitzer air bursts 3 to 6 miles north of the TSN perimeter. We later referred to this area as rocket alley.

The three rocket towers on TSN were Tango #10, #1 and T-Alpha responsible for sighting, and calling in Incoming rockets to 377th SPS Security control and JDOC (joint defense operations control) where triangulation provided map coordinates for artillery counter fire. Almost Immediately the base warning sirens were initiated.

Our Tower orders read "your tower is the "single most" important security post on this installation...you must spot enemy rocket artillery fire launches and "instantaneously" report fire direction azimuth readings from your BC artillery scopes. Yes, there were a few false alarms when we called in distant launches which were headed to BienHoa, Cu Chi, Saigon and other locations. However if unsure, we were instructed to call in "possible incoming" which would also prompt sounding the base warning system.

I worked on the three towers, all on night shifts, for 2 years and 9 months.

I was promoted to SSGT in late 1969 and made NCOIC of the newly created Tango (Tower) sector. The three towers were previously supervised by three separate sector NCOIC's.

I was allowed 9 hand picked airmen.

Most of the trainees did not last more than a couple weeks. Either they could not stay awake or they could not handle the strain of the constant acute vigilance needed for night surveillance of the horizon during the long dark hours. I worked with only a few individuals who lasted 6 to 8 months. My trainer Sgt Dave Tolley, Sgt Mike Page and SSgt Jim Harbert.

Many tower trainees requested transfers off the towers within weeks and a few were relieved of duty due to stress or ina-

bility to stay vigilant for long 8 to 10 hour night duty.

Tango 10 (located in the TSN Bomb Dump) called in most of the attacks due to its location in a dark distant location near the NNW perimeter with very little light pollution.

We worried constantly that the bomb dump would blow up like the gigantic bomb dump explosion at the Long Binh munitions depot.

On a few occasions when rockets landed very near the towers we assumed we were being targeted. Our other fear was that the enemy may have tunneled near us, so we not only had to watch the horizon but we were paranoid enough to also constantly survey the ground around us with our first generation night vision starlight scopes.

Personally, I was never off the towers and off duty on base at night when rockets came in. I wonder now what everyone did while those loud rocket warning sirens blared base wide.

I would enjoy hearing those stories. And we all hoped everyone on base appreciated the early warnings.

Not one of us were ever officially recognized for our very stressful acute vigilance work.

Many have experienced PTSD diagnosed from the VA and described as acute vigilance syndrome. I know, years later I wrote PTSD letters for some fellow tower operators and I received three letters from my immediate superiors in 2009 corroborating my VA PTSD diagnosis.

War is hell.

That was our job.

If I close my eyes today and reflect back, I can replay all those super adrenaline rush episodes of spotting, calling in and plotting all those rocket attacks.

Perhaps we saved your life or prevented a serious injury.

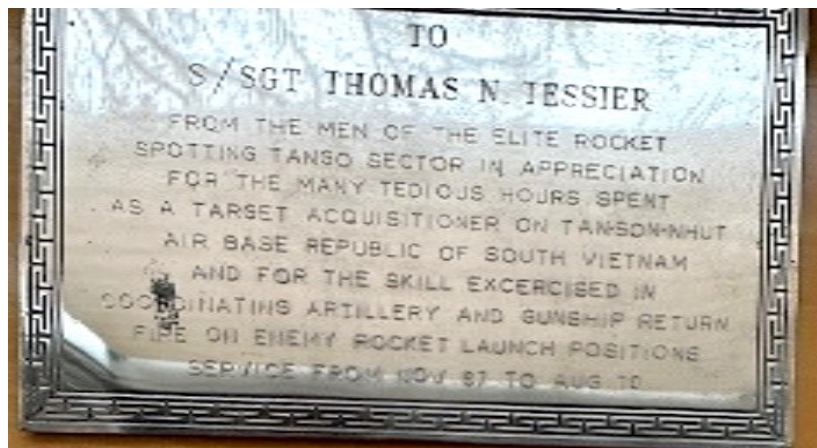
I was 19 when I arrived at TSN and felt like 40 when I was honorably discharged three years later.

Note:

Pictures of the rocket towers and their operators are available on the 377th SPS website labeled Tango Sector.

Tango 1 was the large 165 foot high red/orange and white checkered water tank located a few hundred yards north of the 1300 SPS barracks in the ARVN Ranger compound. Tango 1 was manned by Silver Star recipient SGT Steve Rivers during the TET battle 1/31/68.

Tango A was the water tank on base near CSC and Tango 10 was far out on the NNW corner of the Bomb dump near the northernmost 056 perimeter gate.



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
**THE AIR FORCE
COMMENDATION MEDAL**

TO

THOMAS N TESSIER

Sergeant Thomas N. Tessier distinguished himself by outstanding achievement as a Security Policeman 377th Security Police Squadron, TAN SON NHUT Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, from 31 January 1968 to 2 February 1968. On these dates, while exposed to B-40 Rockets and small arms attack he displayed courage and discipline, and fought bravely to help give the attacking hostile forces a devastating and bitter defeat. By his outstanding achievement Sergeant Tessier has reflected credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



I am the SSgt. NCOIC at center of group.



Tango (tower) sector guard mount circa 1970.

Chaplain's Corner-A Bigger Shovel

By Andy Csordas, Associate Chaplain

R. G. LeTourneau, 1888-1969, was an amazing inventor. He invented all kinds of earth moving equipment plus other items over his lifetime. We often think of Caterpillar equipment as leading the industry in equipment innovation, but they came to the forefront after LeTourneau. His story is an American success story. He was responsible for moving dirt in his first job in Stockton, CA and was frustrated because of the inefficiency of the process with the equipment available at that time. This drove him to invent new ways to move dirt, seemingly a simple thing but it was a really expensive process at the time.



He invented nearly 300 things for earth moving and other industries and is considered the father of modern earth moving equipment. He also invented the electric wheel, something that we use a lot these days, can you say Tesla.

During WWII he produced 70 percent of the Army's earth moving equipment. Much of the older equipment is still in use today after many years of use. Log stackers like the one in the picture on the right can be 70 years old and still be used every day.



He felt he was called to be a "Businessman for God". He referenced God as the Chairman of his Board. He also founded LeTourneau University in Longview, TX which produces first rate engineers and other occupations.

I personally know an Avionics Engineer from LeTourneau who worked at Piper, Cessna and Lear. When I visited the campus many years ago the dorms were Quonset Huts from WWII, but they have a very modern campus now.

LeTourneau said **"You will never know what you can accomplish until you say a great big yes to God."** That University has a spiritual legacy that has alumni faithfully serving as missionaries all around the world. The student I referenced above was a missionary in the Philippines after his graduation and prior to his career in the aircraft industry.



LeTourneau learned to trust God after he was in business for a while. He had read the scriptures that talked about tithing but did not think he had enough money to spare for God early on. I remember me having the exact same thoughts when I was younger. One day as he was struggling financially he realized he needed to give God His 10% tithe. It was a tough decision with more money going out than coming in, but he listened to God and God blessed his business. **Malachi 3:8** tells us, **"Will a mere mortal rob God?"**

Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings." Verse 10 says, "Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty. There is no other scripture that tells us to test God.

He later said. **"I shovel it out and God shovels it back, but God has a bigger shovel."** As he prospered he would tithe 90% and live on the remaining 10%. He credited his success to God. His life verse was **Matthew 5:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."**

2 Corinthians 9:6 tells us **"and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully."** That was certainly true in LeTourneau's life. Do we, you and me, sow bountifully into God's Kingdom and work, if not why not? It can be a big step of faith, but God rewards that step of faith.

God's blessing of LeTourneau also blessed us by helping us win WWII. One of the differences between the Allies and the Axis during WWII was mechanization. We were mechanized and the Germans, in spite of their advanced aircraft and tanks, still used horses to move artillery and other equipment. Letourneau's inventions are still providing a huge asset to our economy over the long term by reducing operating costs for businesses.

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

Dale Floyd Bryan, who was born in Santa Cruz, California on April 20, 1942 to Floyd and Betta (Ebert) Bryan, departed this life on February 6, 2024 in Leander, Texas. He was supported by his wife Judy and his son David in his final moments.

Dale graduated from San Jose State University in 1964 with a degree in Mathematics. While at San Jose, he was a member of the Air Force ROTC, and upon graduation entered the United States Air Force. He was then sent back to San Jose State University by the USAF to obtain his degree in Meteorology in 1965. He became a member of the American Meteorological Society in 1964 and was a lifelong member.

Dale was sent to Warren Air Force base in Cheyenne, Wyoming where he spent two years and met Judy Berger, his future wife. They were married on June 18, 1966 in Cheyenne. Dale was sent to Vietnam in May 1967 and served there for one year. From Vietnam he was assigned to the 54th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, based in Guam, as a Typhoon Chaser.

After leaving military service he began working for the National Weather Service/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Dale worked for NWS/NOAA in California and Maryland. In 1978 Dale began working as an on-camera meteorologist for A.M. Weather, an early morning show targeted to pilots and farmers, produced at the Public Broadcasting Station in Owings Mills, Maryland. He was one of the first on camera meteorologists at the Atlanta, Georgia based The Weather Channel when it debuted in 1982. He also worked at the Raytheon Corporation, and as a contractor with the Federal Aviation Administration (Veracity, SAIC, Conwall), where he worked to improve airport safety.

In retirement, he was active in several veterans' organizations, including the Military Order of the World Wars, The Tan Son Nhut Association, The VFW, and volunteering with the Veteran's Memorial Plaza (VMAG) at Sun City, in Georgetown, TX.

In addition to living in California, Wyoming, Virginia, Maryland, Georgia and Texas, Dale and his family enjoyed living in Colorado, Oklahoma, New Jersey and Minnesota. Dale and Judy retired to the Austin, Texas area in 2013. Besides Judy, he is survived by three children: Nancy (Terry) Stockner, David (Marcia) Bryan and Vicki Bryan, as well as his grandchildren, Daniel (Sarah) Daff, Joshua Daff, Joe (Kaitlin) Daff, Alex Bryan and Ellie Bryan. He was also great grandpa to Kaylen Daff, Kilian Daff and Ella Daff.





LEAVING TAN SON NHUT, MARCH, 1962

By: Larry Fry, TSNA Director of Membership, & Editor, Revetments

A permanent replacement had come in for me one afternoon, and I showed him around that evening and early the next morning. There wasn't much to show him at that time on TSN. At 8:30 AM I received permission to leave, hopped on the Chaplain bicycle, pedaled my tail off down the road to the operation's shack and got my name on the manifest for the next C-124 out of there. And thanks to the fact that we had most of our stuff right there in our tent, I was on a flight at 10:30 AM. Well, almost all of my stuff. I got to talking to the incoming Chaplain about my laundry. He offered to take care of picking up and mailing my laundry to me - and he did just that! I've never forgotten his thoughtfulness.

It was night when we got to Clark AFB, Philippines'.

Two unusual things happened as we were attempting to land, and I found out all the details from the Loadmaster, AFTER we finally landed.

On either the first or second attempt, we took off very high angled and fast. Turns out that was to get out of the way for jets taking off to check out an unscheduled and unidentified aircraft coming in near Clark.

Again, on either the first or second attempt, we took off without landing because we had overshot the runway.

On the third attempt we made it onto the ground, BUT there were red lights flashing all over the place as we went down the runway.

Turns out we were coming in on three engines, not 4. I have no idea when that happened on the flight, but we made it. We had a little debriefing at Clark, for maybe a day, and then we got scheduled on a C-124 headed for Japan. On board with us, and right in front of our faces, was a good-sized fuel tanker trailer, which thankfully was either new or cleaned out, or ???, because there were no fuel smells.

This was early March, and the humidity in the Philippines was horrible. It seemed to take forever for the plane to get enough airspeed to get climbing. I remember seeing an awful lot of buildings and treetops for quite a while until we started climbing.

Unfortunately, this flight was not headed for Tachikawa (Tokyo), but for Sapporo, in northern Japan.

We got to Sapporo, and were sitting having some food and drink, when all of a sudden there was a public address announcement for us to get the heck on the plane – pronto!

We now had an empty C-124 with a dozen or so passengers, headed for Tachikawa. Having had a few take-offs in C-124's' in the past 3 months, we realized that something unusual was going on because that aircraft took off at a speed and sharp up-angle that we had not been part of before.

We got to Tachikawa, and were moving fairly fast coming to the location where we had to stop. They hit the brakes so hard and fast that we could hear the tires squealing.

We had barely gotten unstrapped and gathering belongings, when coming down the ladder/stairway was one of the officer aircrew members, a 1st Lt. We found out a little later that he was in a hurry to get to a show – it was a Friday night. Someone informed us that we had cut something like 25 minutes off the “normal” flying time between Sapporo and Tachikawa.

So, after a little over two months TDY at TSN, I was back at Washington Heights Housing Annex in “downtown” Tokyo, with just 3 months left until my DEROS date.

Little did I know that that date would also be changing, thanks to my time at TSN.



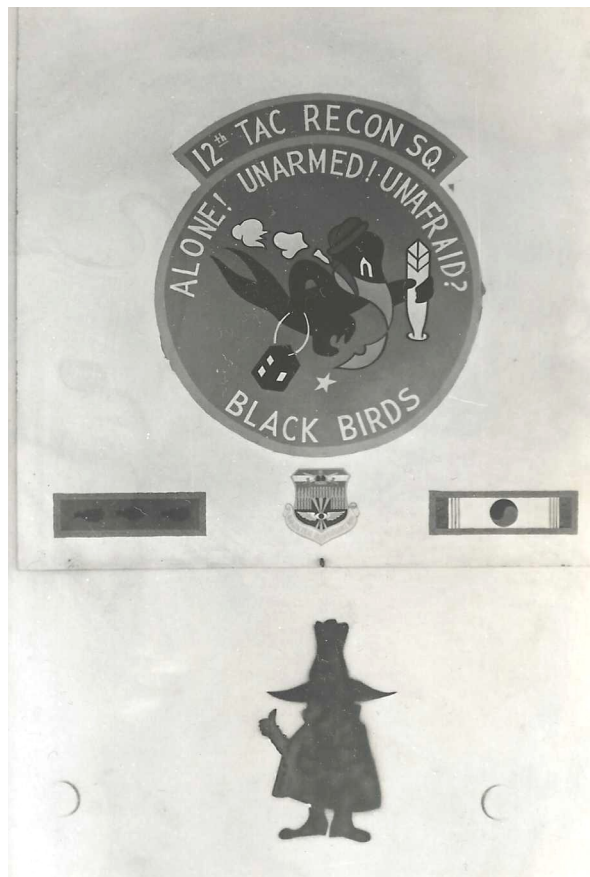
TENT CITY, FEBRUARY, 1962

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David Link Photo

NEW MEMBER

John Gallup La Jolla CA johngallup@fastmail.com Aug 72 - Feb 73 12th RITS

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