

Revetments

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



All Included - Non Excluded

Volume 1, Number 3

The Tan Son Nhut Association, Washington, D.C.

December, 1998

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Christmas Eve on Tan Son Nhut, 1967

(Members of the 377th Security Police Squadron are assembled for a 7th Air Force press release.)

Oh, Lord, Thou who hast brought us all back safely to our families and friends,
Thou who protects in Your bosom the souls of our fallen comrades,
Thou who hast made sacred the cherished memories of the past,
To Thee we ask Thy holy guidance and lead us into the new tasks, and new joys that lie ahead
in the coming year.

Don Parker, President

John Peele, Vice President

Chapter Officers Selected From Volunteers

On November 23rd, Tan Son Nhut Association President Don Parker and Vice President John Peele sent a letter to seventeen individuals who have indicated an interest in assisting in the formation of regional and local chapters of the Tan Son Nhut Association.

This letter appointed them as "Officers Pro Tem" with the authority to begin the formation of chapters.

Accompanying the letter was a copy of the yet unratified Constitution and a nationwide roster of currently recognized members.

They were asked to contact members in their areas and hold an initial conference in any manner possible, by correspondence, phone, or, if possible, an actual meeting.

From these "conferences" the Association would like to determine a number of possibilities agreeable to the members.

Initially, would members like to establish a regional chapter, or separate ones in the region's municipal districts?

When it came to what the chapter would be called, the letter stated, "We would like to get away from just cold names and have the Association chapters bearing meaningful ones. It could be plainly named for the state, or some aspect of the state like a mountain, or other physical phenomena; an event or persons drawn from military history, etc."

The temporary officers were asked to determine the frequency and location of future meetings, and the officers they want who will be acquired through elections.

One of the main things the letter stressed were chapter programs.

The officers were asked them to "discuss programs the members might want to support, such as regional speakers bureaus, benevolent programs assisting former military and/or civilians, etc."

Extremely important would be that the Association "would be very happy to have the groups make recommendation for additional programs that could be adopted throughout the Association."

In their closing remarks, Parker and Peele found themselves "deeply appreciative of your offers to assist in this program. We are getting a new and invigorated sense of purpose from the membership."

"The Tan Son Nhut Association is a proud, noble, and growing organization that

can soon be a nationwide forum memorializing the loyalty, courage and bravery of all these hundreds of thousands of men and women who worked at, worked with, and passed through Tan Son Nhut Air Base for the cause of freedom during a violent and devastating war."

Officers ProTem

Contact the one nearest you now!

Johnnie H. Beasley, Jr., Phone: (864) 271-8743, 357 Hillandale Road, Apt. 209, Greenville, South Carolina 29609-2317.

Howard S. Bialas, Phone: (205) 755-9787, E-mail: hbialas@aol.com 101 Round Forest Drive, Clanton, Alabama 35045.

Carter S. Randall, Phone: (901) 853-6177, 176 Bancroft Avenue, Collierville, Tennessee 38107-6177.

Alexander Chaisson, Phone: (540) 898-0239, 10305 Leavells Road, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22407.

Charles C. Damron, Phone: (606) 739-8304, E-mail: DAMRON235@ash.ukv.camp 9314 Alley Branch Street, Catlettsburg, Kentucky 41129.

Dean Gard, Phone: (815) 932-0238, 139 Meadows Roads S., Bourbonnais, Illinois 60914.

Dan Glowa, Phone: (850) 581-5097, E-mail: jamjammer@aol.com 2701 West Highway 98, Mary Esther, Florida 32569-2332.

Richard Godfrey, Phone: (941) 701-2372, 910 Hanover Way, Lakeland, Florida 33823.

Ronald W. Nadeau, Phone: (850) 243-1914, 434 Oakland Circle, Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548

James Pew, Phone: (307) 742-0656, E-Mail: jimpew@uwyo.edu 1601 Mill Street, Laramie, Wyoming 82072.

David W. Rich, Phone: (612) 755-7434, E-mail: david.richj@cwix.com 2332, 115th Avenue N.W., Coon Rapids, Minnesota 55433.

James A. Stewart, Phone: (810) 639-5755, E-mail: jstewart@centuryinter.net 311 North Saginaw Street, Post Office Box 67, Montrose, Michigan 48457-0067.

Fred Voelcker, Phone: (410) 667-3620, E-mail: fred1945@bellatlantic.net 4D DeepWater Court, Cockeysville, Maryland 21030-4712.

Don Walker, Phone: (520) 836-5484, 10199 Pinal Avenue, Casa Grande, Arizona 85222.

Kenneth Watson, Phone: (206) 763-6208, E-mail: FIFT5ALIVE@aol.com 3906 South 113th Street, Seattle, Washington 92168.

Paul A. Weidenbacher, Phone: (608) 748-4729, 964 Bluff Road, Hazel Green, Wisconsin 53811-9754.

Norman Whitlow, Phone: (972) 227-8015, 1451 Chapman Drive, Lancaster, Texas 75134.

More From Joyce

(Editor's Note: In last month's issue we ran an article by Major Thomas Joyce, stationed at Randolph, Page 3, entitled *Active Duty Major 'Vitality' Interested in the Battle for Tan Son Nhut*. This month, he has more to ask of us.)

Pictorial Material Needed

Major Thomas Joyce would like the Association to consider sponsoring military art work.

He says, "If you go to the Pentagon, Air War College, Air Command & Staff, SOS, and the Senior NCO Academy, you will never see anything on combat camera of the security police fighting at Tan Son Nhut."

"There are all kinds of Army, Aviation, Navy, Marine and even Coast Guard artwork donated by private individuals and institutions."

He asks us "to think about it, all the future general officers, Chairmen JCS, Chiefs of staff, and CMSgt of the Air Force pass through these institutions on the way to making critical decisions about the

(Continued, see ART, Page 5)

Proposed Objectives and Goals

This is the last month of 1998, and the Association, based on the recent increased membership interest is looking forward to a very progressive new year.

In view of this, *Revetments* has been asked to present proposed objectives and goals to the membership for their consideration and comments.

Clearly defined purpose

The membership of most good organizations want to feel that they belong and support an organization that has a clearly defined purpose. This is certainly true among most of the intelligent and courageous members of this Association.

Just putting a name on a membership list and mailing in dues, no matter how small or how large, and increasing the total organizational roster, is an empty, actually futile gesture, if there is no clear purpose for the existence of that organization.

Defining purpose

Defining the purpose of any organization lies primarily within the attitude and desires of the prospective individual member.

Those desiring to support, and often participate in sports, create sports clubs, little league associations, etc.

Political activists create political clubs and even political parties. There are garden clubs, bridge clubs, crafts, dancing, and for probably any subject you can name, somewhere there is a club supporting and promulgating interest in a particular subject.

Your recent responses

Since the 1997 Reunion in Hampton, Virginia, and accelerating during the past several months, the Association has received an outpouring of support, and a demonstrated desire for us to achieve more adhesiveness and increased interchange.

The applications returned, the phone calls, and the e-mails being received are at times humorous and sometimes extremely poignant. People want to know where other people are and what they are doing. Others want us to publish rosters of their particular units, and others want us to publish the complete member rolls.

Many have sent unsolicited substantial checks to "defray expenses" or "support the program."

It seems then that our premise that the defining of the program arises in the individual desires and attitudes is correct.

And certainly being demonstrated by the current membership of the Tan Son

Nhut Association. Yet, at this point, we are not being articulate enough to express just what our central purposes should be. Since we suggested that purpose arises from individual desire and attitude, let's take a look at who we are.

Who are we?

Although the membership rolls have only 600 or so individuals now, we are but a small portion of those thousands and thousands of military and civilian men and women, and not just Americans, who worked at, worked with, and passed through Tan Son Nhut Air Base, just outside of the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon ... during over a decade of bloody and violent war.

Some of us stayed a year, others had repeated tours, a high percentage being volunteers. We all arrived there determined to do as good a job as possible and knowing full well that there was the possibility that we might never leave.

And, some didn't.

Most of us don't look at ourselves as any kind of hero, but there are many among us who totally fulfill such distinction.

When we came home, many of us left the service and entered civilian pursuits. Others of us remained on until military retirement.

But Tan Son Nhut remained in our soul. Forgive us for that use of what some might feel is superlative.

Perhaps not all of us, but probably a great number of us, felt deep sadness and loss when Tan Son Nhut was finally abandoned to the enemy in April 1975, to an enemy who had never been able to take it or shatter the dedication and courage of its defenders.

Ah, there's the key to purpose.

We are still defenders of the noble cause we worked for so hard at that base. We know that for several decades now, cultural and political ramifications have obscured the demonstrated loyalty, courage and affection that the Vietnam Veteran, including we at Tan Son Nhut, had for our country and flag.

But as times change, attitudes change and it would appear that the climate is favorable for us to again contribute our experience, knowledge and dedication to the public's understanding of what really was accomplished in Vietnam.

So we would like to offer the membership some suggested purposes and

objectives. We are hoping that in the coming months members will respond to them with comment, criticism, and additional suggestions.

Proposed purposes and goals

What we do not propose is that this Association ever become politically oriented in any way.

Social: Call it what you may, the first purpose of the Association and its Chapters should be to provide a meeting place for us all to meet each other, again, and enjoy each others company.

The Establishment of a Tan Son Nhut Museum & Library: Many offers of photographs and other memorabilia have already been made. We should initiate planning that will allow us to establish a central museum and library.

Speakers Bureau: As the museum and library program grows, a speakers program, both national and local, should be established by members, and other knowledgeable individuals, that can be made available to schools, colleges, civic groups and business interests.

Awards & Endowment Programs: The membership could establish an awards program for meritorious and courageous contributions by citizens; scholarship programs could be established for future descendants achieving high and outstanding scholastic standards.

Medical Assistance & Care Programs: The membership could organize and found medical service centers and elderly care programs for veterans and their descendants.

The Future As A Goal

Of most importance to our Association should be our attitude and outlook. We should be an organization oriented to a proud and bright future for our descendants.

But unlike some, we should view the past with reverence, but use it as a lesson book for the future. There is no advantage in dwelling on the tragedies and losses, for they speak for themselves. The Tan Son Nhut association should come to be respected for its use of history in providing positive encouragement and direction for those who come after us.

Great and dynamic lessons were learned at Tan Son Nhut and throughout Vietnam. Historians may write what they may about diplomatic and political defeats.

As long as we were there, all of us knew only the satisfaction of victory.



"All Included - None Excluded"
 Revetments is an official publication of The Tan Son Nhut Association, 6203 57th Avenue, Riverdale, Maryland 20737. The Association is a non-profit fraternal organization chartered and registered under appropriate statute and law. Editorial offices are located at Suite 709, 330 West Brambleton Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23510. Telephone: (757) 627-7746. FAX: (757) 627-0878. E-Mail: hercules29@worldnet.att.net

Publisher

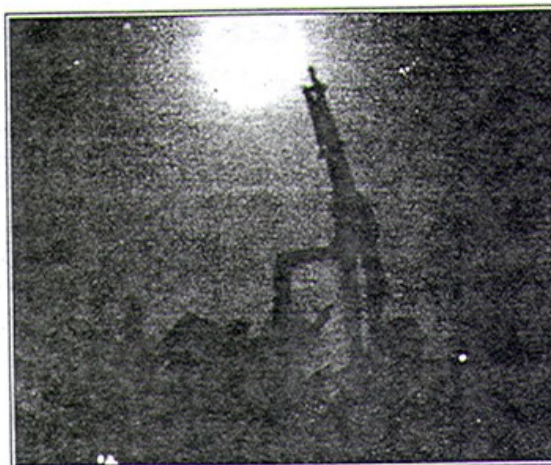
Don Parker, President
 and The Board of Directors

Executive Editor

John Peeke, Vice President

Editor

Robert Need, Director of Public Affairs



Just At Midnight

Somewhere on the perimeter of Tan Son Nhut, Christmas Eve 1967
 (From an anonymous unpublished novel)

* * *

It is just midnight, and a special beep comes from the comnet. Clark comes back to our jeep and swings himself in behind the wheel.

He reaches down and turns up the volume.

"Good evening, B Flight, this is Colonel Seviars," comes the finely modulated voice of the Air Security Commander. "I am at the base of tower 10, in A Sector. I'll be seeing all of you tonight.

"Major Brace is sitting here next to me. We both wanted to be the first to wish you the very best of Christmas, for, men, these are the first few moments of Christmas Day. There is always a lot of talk around Christmas about gift-giving. People say they have 'finished' buying their gifts, they talk about having 'finished' wrapping their gifts, and they report that they have 'finished' sending out all their gifts."

"A few moments ago, you finished giving Tan Son Nhut, and its thousands of people their gift, another year of peace and security. And now, men, you are starting to prepare that gift again for the coming year. Many of you will not be here next Christmas and will be at home with loved ones. But until the day you depart you will have added night after night, week after week, to the shield of protection that keeps your brothers safe and sound. Another man will pick up your task and, God willing, next year at this time the gift of peace will remain intact.

"Our greatest prayers this Christmas Morn should be that peace will quickly come, not just to Tan Son Nhut, but across all of Viet-Nam. But until that blessed moment, it is your courage, given freely and bravely, that keeps us safe. It is easy to clip barbed wire, it takes no effort to blow up mine fields, it is simple to poison our dogs and child's play to shoot out the floodlights. But it is very difficult, and you have proved, impossible, to break the strong band of resolution I find in each one of you as you stand guard in the thin line that stretches around the perimeter of this base.

"To each of you, I thank you for myself and on behalf of the thousands of men whose safety you hold in your hand and guard with your strength. I thank you for this precious, priceless gift. To all of you, my friends and brothers in arms, I wish you a Merry Christmas."

There is a click and in a moment Major Brace's warm voice is heard. "I cannot add to the sentiments expressed by Colonel Seviars, except to underscore them with my own personal gratitude. I know that all of us, when we were young boys back home, knew that Christmas was a time of magic. I used to find much of that magic in the wonderful music of Christmas, the carols with their joy, their warmth, their promise and, yes, their mystery.

"For just a second, men, let me recall for you the last stanza of God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

There is a second of silence and his voice continues ...

*"Now to the Lord sing praises,
 All you within this place,
 And with true love and brotherhood,
 Each other now embrace ..."*

The comnet falls silent. The words from the old carol still seem to hang in the dense night air of sleeping Asia. Somewhere in us a tiny hand has reached out and plucked a soft chord within.

The Communications Center

Send us your letters, comments and suggest, mail - fax- e-mail

Help Tamara Martin
(This message was passed to *Revetments*, by member **Dean Dearinger**)

OK you guys ... This isn't a chain letter, but a choice for all us to save a little girl that's dying of a serious and fatal form of cancer. Please send this to everyone you know ... or don't know at that.

This little girl has 6 months left to live, and as her dying wish, she wanted to send a chain letter telling every one to live their life to the fullest, since she never will. She'll never make it to prom, graduate from high school, or get married and have a family of her own.

But by you sending this to as many people as possible, you can give her and her family a little hope. Because, with every name that this is sent to, the American Cancer Society will donate 3 cents per name to her treatment and recovery plan.

One guy sent this to 500 people!

So, I know that we can send it to at least 5 or 6. Come on you guys ...

And if you're too damn selfish to wait 10-15 minutes scrolling this and forwarding it to EVERYONE, (more than

one person), you're one sick puppy. And too, just think, it could be you one day. And it's not ever your \$money\$, just your time.

I know that ya'll impress me!

Love

Greg Harduk

DHerri7140@aol.com

Tamara's Message:

Hello. My name is Tamara Martin and I have severe lung cancer due to second hand smoke. This chain was a final attempt to get me healthy again.

Every letter sent gets 6 cents. Please send this to 10 people. By the way, for those who take 2 minutes to send this, what comes around, goes around.

Please.

Constitution Suggestion
(After reviewing the proposed TSN Constitution, the following comment was contributed.)

Re: \$350 for Lifetime Membership. The majority of those eligible for TSN Membership are either in their late 40s or early 50s.

The Lifetime cost is pretty steep. Other organizations (VFW, for instance) want \$195. This area should be looked at

seriously.

John Sweetland
West Lanham Hills,
Maryland

Character Assassination

Only a confined egomaniac such as Robert Stanley Need would anoint himself as Director of Public Affairs of this (or any) organization.

Mark Fleisher
Horseheads, New York
(Editor's Note: As readers can see, I had to put up with more than the V.C. while at Tan Son Nhut.)

We May Make It Into Films Yet ...

I was housed with the 1st Weather Group at Tan Son Nhut, assigned to the Combined Intelligence Center (near 3rd Field Hospital). SSgt, USAF, Climatological Environmental Technician attached to Army 45th MI Company, 1970-1971.

Currently writer, folklorist, oral historian, working on novel and screenplay about Tet '68 at Tan Son Nhut.

Denis Boyer
Dodgeville, Wisconsin
(Boyer can be e-mailed: dennisb@midplains.net)

*If you haven't already done it,
please return application form
on Page 8*

Another Constitutional Comment

If and when associated members are accepted ... drop me!

Lowell Messer
Piedmont, Alabama

Pass Your Copy
of
Revetments
on to others!

Limited complimentary copies
available by calling Editorial Off.

Art, continued from Page 3.

defense of our beloved country.

Another market is the combat camera community.

Their story is an inspiration to them, the unsung heroes who expose themselves to fire, to get the story so we can learn something about the experience. Without people like them, we would be lost.

I have a copy of the correspondent's dispatch who covered my great-grandfather's battle in Mill Springs, Kentucky (19-20 January 1862).

Sometimes, historians like myself have only the clippings of newspaper to piece together the events and draw conclusions to important events.

I'm calling on your community and asking for your support.

I'm sure I'll get it.
(Major Joyce can be contacted at: 11726 Jarvis Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78253, Phone: (210) 673-9399, and e-mail: tj1172@aol.com)

The Members' Bulletin Board

Mail, Call and E-Mail in your "wanteds, for sales, looking for, announcements, etc."

SEARCH & RESCUE Help! TSN Assc. looking for lost members during records shake-up. Members knowing of previous members who have not been receiving *Revetments*, please have them contact Pub. Affairs. (757) 627-7746, E-mail: hercules29@worldnet.att.net

REUNION PLANNERS WANTED Members interested in planning for, arranging and conducting TSN Assc. Reunion activities, please call VP John Peele, (303) 277-7474, or write to: 6103 57th Avenue, Riverdale, MD 20737.

PICTURES AND STORIES WANTED BY REVETMENTS *Revetments* is getting bigger, and hopefully better. Staff is not too bright and is running out of material. Send COPIES ONLY to: TSN Assc., Editorial Offices, Suite 709, 330 W. Brambleton Ave., Norfolk, Virginia 23510, or FAX: (757) 627-0878, E-mail: hercules29@worldnet.att.net

360TH TEWS. FLIGHT LINE CREW CHIEF (1971) would like to find out how many fellow flight line buddies from 1970-1971 are in Assc. From 360th TEWS. Would like to know how many have attended past reunions. Contact: Gregory C. Smith, 1761 Drake Drive, Eagan, MN. 55122. Phone: (651) 452-1219.

PATCHES TO BE AVAILABLE IN JANUARY The attractive and colorful Tan Son Nhut Association patch will be available in January. They will cost \$5. In the January general membership billing statement, forward, there will be a block for ordering the number of patches desired. Payment may be included in the remittance returned for membership dues.

WIDE VARIETY OF TSN INFORMATION AND MATERIAL SOUGHT. Major Thomas Joyce, military historian and combat doctrine planner, previous security police unit commander wants information, pictures, and any and all other types of material for base battle defense programs. Write: 11726 Jarvis Drive, San Antonio, Tex. 78253; Phone: (210) 673-9399, E-mail: tj11726@aol.com

SPEAKERS BUREAU NEEDS PERSONNEL/LEADERSHIP American schools, colleges, civic groups, and business programs need accurate information regarding not just the past war, but the nature and character of Vietnam. Looking for individuals who would assist in forming The Tan Son Nhut Association National Speakers Bureau. This is a perfect opportunity for experienced military and civilian retirees to contribute valuable insight at places where it is needed. Write: TSN Assc. Public Affairs, Suite 709, 330 W. Brambleton Ave., Norfolk, Virginia 23510; call (757) 627-7746, FAX: (757) 627-0878, E-mail: hercules29@worldnet.att.net

BOOKS MAKE GREAT XMAS GIFTS Books are always welcome under the Christmas Tree. Here's a few we recommend for the Tan Son Nhut readers.

Down For Double, Anecdotes of a Fighter Pilot by Lt. Gen. Gordon Graham, Brandlyne Publishers, White Stone, VA.
After Tet: The Bloodiest Year in Vietnam by Ronald H. Spector, The Free Press, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

Battle for Saigon: Tet 1968, by Keith William Nolan, Pocket Books, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

TET '68

Richmond Remembers
P.O. Box 31885
Richmond, Virginia 23294

1999 SCHOLARSHIP RULES

In order to be considered for a \$1,000 scholarship, the applicant must be a high school senior whose parent or stepparent is a Vietnam veteran. Write a short essay on "What is Freedom", and submit this for judging by a panel selected by the TET '68 Board.

All entries must be received by March 31, 1999. Winning essay writers will be notified by phone by May 15, 1999 that they have won.

We will work with High Schools in an effort to award the scholarships at school ceremonies. Since we do not know at this time how much funding will be available from our 1999 reunion, we cannot say how many scholarships will be given. However, you can be assured that we will give as many as possible.

Each application submitted must include the following:

1. A copy of the parent's or stepparent's DD 214 showing Vietnam service with Campaign Ribbon Award.
2. Short essay on "What is Freedom" (500 word maximum). Essay must be typed and double spaced. It will be judged on originality and neatness. An original and three (3) copies, without the author's name on the copies (we will code id them), are to be submitted. TET '68 owns the essay and can republish it. Winners agree to furnish us a photo for our scrapbook.
3. Provide a cover sheet which includes the following information:
 1. Applicant's full name, address and phone number
 2. name, address, and phone number of contact person at High School presently attending
 3. name, address, phone number of contact person at school where application has been made or will be going for further training and education
 4. a statement signed by the applicant that he or she will graduate from High School in May/June of the year of their application

NOTE: To be eligible for judging, all of the above must be received no later than March 31, 1999. Please send only by first-class mail - no overnight, Federal express, Parcelpost, Certified or Registered packages, please! Any package received after our deadline or with postage due will be returned to sender, unopened.

TET '68 12TH ANNUAL

VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION

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SCHOLARSHIPS ARE NOW WORTH \$1,000!

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Tet '68 Inc. is a non-profit organization.

**This old gentleman keeps
lists of who's been
naughty and nice ...**



So do we ...

The Tan Son Nhut Association is filled with fine, brave and intelligent people, over six hundred to be exact. But some of them have been naughty this year. They know who they are because they still haven't sent in their information form. So, if these people want Santy to visit them this year, they'd better get the form on the back page filled out.

Postage
Here

**The Tan Son Nhut Association
Editorial Offices
Suite 709, 330 West Brambleton Avenue
Norfolk, Virginia 23510**

Phone: E-Mail:

Tan Son Nhut Affiliation?

I would like to attend a TSN reunion in 1999: Yes ()

(Signature)

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