

Revetments

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



"All Included - Non Excluded"

Volume 1, Number 2

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

November, 1998

Response to First *Revetments* is Great!

The response to the first issue of *Revetments* was great, although only about 100 applications were returned.

At present the records of the Association carry over 600 names. The Public Affairs Department is trying to bring the files as current and accurate as possible.

The department is especially anxious to complete this project for several reasons.

A number of the responses received indicated that members like the idea of forming either state regions and/or local chapters. The department wants to be in the position of being able to provide complete and accurate membership information to those participating in organizing regional and local units.

For all readers who have not yet sent in our brief application form, please fill and return the one provided in this issue. Or call in the information to (757) 627-7746 (Mon-Fri. 8-5).

For those using E-mail:
hercules29@worldnet.att.net

* * *

(R) Sentry dog handler and friend at TSN, 1968.



TSN Association Chapters To Be Formed

Due to considerable response by the membership to last month's issue of *Revetments*, the Board of Directors has decided to go forward on the establishment of Regions and/or Chapters of the Association, as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws.

A number of members notified the Public Affairs Department that they were interested in assisting in the formation of chapters.

Within the next thirty days, the Board of Directors will be sending these individuals letters authorizing them to begin organization activities that will include locale advertising, selection of meeting places, and general recruitment of new members.

Individuals receiving these letters will also be provided with a copy of the current membership directory of the Association to assist them in identifying current members residing in their region.

Also, next month's *Revetments* will provide the names and addresses of those receiving organizational letters so that readers can contact them.

It is felt by the Board of Directors that the regional/local chapter concept will greatly expand and revitalize the TSN Association programs.

It should provide for more frequent contact between members at either monthly or quarterly meetings. It also provides for a better forum for members to participate in policy and program guidance for the national program.

It also brings the Tan Son Nhut Association into higher profile at the state and local level, thus allowing it to present new programs with a quicker response from the public.

Board members see state-wide, regional organizations forming first.

For example, Texas, that has over sixty some members on the roles at the present time. The various cities, such as Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, etc., probably do not have quite enough to form local chapters at the present time.

Furthermore, meetings more frequent than quarterly, at a central location, would be impractical.

But, the formation of the state region would immediately bring the impetus to attract more members at the local level.

The best thing about this program is that the national office, and everybody else will begin hearing what the whole membership is doing, what it really wants, and a way to get it done.

This is a new program and big step for the Association. Vice President Peele and other members of the Board do not want any member thinking that the formation and operation of these regions and chapters are going to be dictated from Washington.

All readers are urged to make proposals and suggestions on this matter as soon as possible.

Write, call or send e-mails, we want your input now! Written comment should be sent to Suite 709, 330 West Brambleton Ave., Norfolk, Va. 23510. Call (757) 627-7746, e-mail: hercules29@worldnet.att.net

Reunion Plans Get Underway

Talk about stirring up a hornets nest, the first issue of *Revetments* sure did it!

Over ninety percent of those responding want a reunion, and soon!

And, we got a lot of surprises, some like Lackland and San Antonio, some like Lubbock, others like Hurlburt Field, and others want other locales. (See Communications Center on Page 5).

Reunions take time and careful planning to be anything like a success. The last Association reunion in Hampton, Virginia, in 1997 was a howling success ... but a lot of work too.

So, like you read in the article above, we need your input, and we need it now. We want as reasonable a consensus as we can get, and want all of you (or at least most of you) wildly happy with the final selection.

Write, call or e-mail where you'd like best and we'll put it to a vote soon in *Revetments*.



"All Included - Non Excluded"

Association Patch Offered Soon

John Peele, Association Vice President, has notified *Revetments* that he has ordered a new issue of the multi-colored TSN Assn. patch.

It will be available after January first and will cost \$5.

When the general membership billing is sent out, January 1, there will be a box provided for placing an order for the patch, and the \$5 can be included in the membership check.

Active Duty Major 'Vitaly' Interested in the Battle for Tan Son Nhut

Wants Your Input

San Antonio, Nov.12- Major Thomas F. Joyce, with offices at Randolph Air Force Base was the first officer assigned to the USAF Force Protection Battlelab at Lackland Air Force Base.

He is a man personally and professionally dedicated to the lessons he finds that were taught at Tan Son Nhut during Tet 1968, that he and others describe as the Battle for Tan Son Nhut.

As Division Chief, he built the modeling simulation from the ground up. His approach was to study every ground attack against air power, combine that with future projections, and model scenarios to generate doctrine that would create a pull on the technology base.

High Praise for 377th

He calls his "primary problem" the "almost impenetrable shadow of darkness covering all of the details regarding the Battle of Tan Son Nhut Air Base on 31 January 1968, when a reinforced NVA/VC regiment attacked the base and nearly succeeded in taking the nerve center of the entire war - MACV."

Major Joyce has nothing but the highest of respect and pride for those defending the base. "Had it not been," he says, "for the valiant efforts of the 377th Security Police Squadron and support for joint and combined force, Tan Son Nhut would indeed have fallen."

A former security police officer and commander himself, he goes on

to point at the influence this action had on his curriculum. "This battle had a major effect on the formulation of our base defense regulations, equipment, organization and training."

Better Knowledge and Training Vital

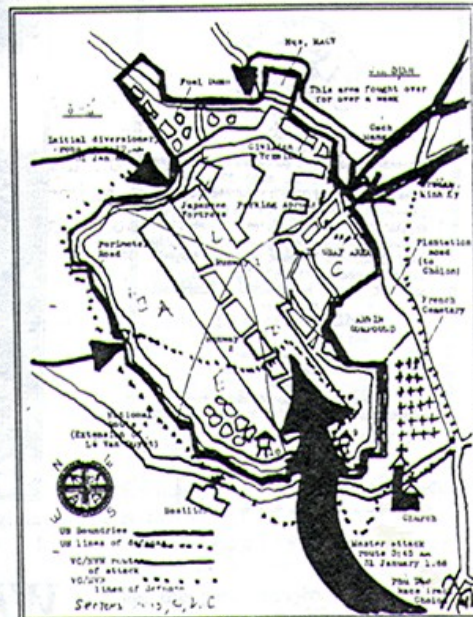
The once Aide-de-Camp to retired Chief-of-Staff, General Fogleman, calls for a wider view and broader training requirements for base defense personnel.

"In all my experiences," he says, "I've never been taught anything about the proud history of security forces in any of my career field courses or professional military education, including ACSC."

"As a result, I've contributed hundreds of hours researching base defense in Vietnam and especially the Battle of Tan Son Nhut. All told, there are at least 646 documented attacks against air power worldwide over the past 50 years or so."

"I've developed a high-speed multi-media presentation on the subject and briefed approximately 100 different groups."

And he closes his comments seriously, "Of the several thousand people I talked with, only one-two percent had ever heard of the battle. Against the backdrop of Kohbar Towers and continual attention focused on force protection, how can we afford to ignore the subject any longer."



From the notebook of a combat newsman, on patrol with the 377th SPS, January 1968

You Are Important To Him

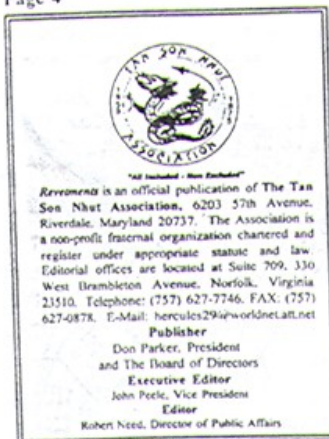
Major Joyce reads *Revetments* and wants to know anything and everything he can about Tan Son Nhut.

He has asked *Revetments* to publish his address, phone and e-mail address so that members can contact him.

MAJOR THOMAS JOYCE
11726 Jarvis Drive
San Antonio Texas 78253
Telephone: (210) 673-9399
E-Mail:
tj11726@aol.com



Contributed
by
Charles E. Penley
377th Security Police Squadron



Future Veterans - The afternoon of January 31, 1968 at Tan Son Nhut

~ Editorial ~

What is a Veteran?

by
Father Denis Edward O'Brien
United States Marine Corps

(Revetments is most grateful to TSN Association member, Dean Dearing of Silver Lake, Indiana, for sending us this on Veteran's Day 1998.)

Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in the eye.

Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg - or perhaps another sort of inner steel: the soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity.

Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem.

You can't tell a vet just by looking.

What is a vet?

He is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel.

He is the barroom loudmouth, dumber than five wooden planks, whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four-hours of exquisite bravery near the 338th Parallel in Korea.

She, or he, is the nurse who fought against futility and went to sleep sobbing every night in Da Nang.

He is the POW who went away one person and came back another - or didn't come back AT ALL.

He is the Quantico drill instructor who has never seen combat - but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-account rednecks and gang members into Marines, and teaching them to watch each other's backs.

He is the parade-riding Legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.

He is the career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by.

He is the three anonymous heroes in the Tomb of the Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless deep.

He is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket - palsied now and aggravatingly slow - who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come.

He is an ordinary and yet an extraordinary human being - a person who offered some of his life's most vital years in the service of his country, and who sacrificed his ambitions so other would not have to sacrifice theirs.

He is a soldier and a savior and sword against darkness, and he is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf

of the finest, greatest nation ever known.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say, Thank You. That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded.

Two little words that mean a lot, "THANK YOU."

Remember November 11th is Veterans Day.

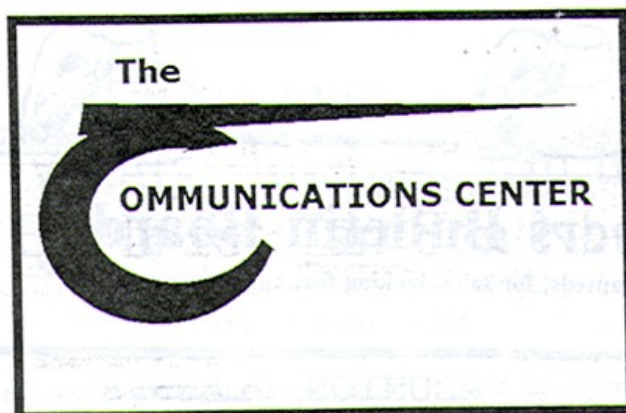
"It is the soldier, not the reporter,
Who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, not the poet,
Who has given us freedom of speech.
It is the soldier, not the campus organizer,

Who has given us the freedom to
demonstrate.

It is the soldier,
Who salutes the flag,
And whose coffin is draped by the flag,
Who allows the protestor to burn the flag.





Send us your
letters, comments
suggestions
by mail, fax or e-mail

Lubbock, Texas might be a good place for a meeting in the future? We will have the Number 1 archive for Vietnam documents/materials/etc., at Texas Tech in the near future, and are planning on building about a \$13 million dollar facility to house the collections and classrooms. More to follow.

Don McCullough
Lubbock, Texas

Was attached to the 460th Field Maintenance Squadron, in the Corrosion Control/ Paint Shop. Initially worked out of a Quonset hut off the Wash Rack, washing airplanes and wheels and caring for the general's "White Whale," a decorated C-123K Provider.

Oh, yeah, my tour was August 1969 to 1970. If you were there then maybe you heard about the paint crew that re-did the general's T-39. Looked good the night we went home, glossy and smooth. Don't know what happened overnight -- when we came back in the morning it was all "orange-peeled."

Must have been the "humidity" -- yeah, right! Well, the boss pulled our crew off of it and put in the second ranking crew on it to strip off the orange-peeled white cap, using a very volatile paint stripper. They managed to wreck every plexiglas window on the fuselage.

I don't remember if the cockpit windows were affected or not, but I know that at least 6 windows needed changing.

Hey, they could'a flown with orange-peeled paint ... but the general didn't like "frosted" windows.

Elmer Ingram
Glenolden, Pennsylvania

Thanks for your hard work in revitalizing the group. The Security Police

and others that served need this organization to carry out the tradition and history. Call on me if you need help.

George Austin
Poquoson, Virginia

I did get a good gift today. I received my copy of the TSNA newsletter, Revetments. I had to sit down and read it immediately. Even though it is the first issue, it was still a good issue.

I did see the web site for Den Cook there. I have known him for about a year now and visit his site often. However, I had not heard or located James Wheeler's page. I also thank you for having my site in the newsletter also. You can never imagine how much I appreciate small things in life.

I read the by-laws and think they are an excellent starting point. I can not imagine how anything in them could be changed much. I can tell that you all have been doing your jobs and doing things right.

If there is anything I can do for you then don't hesitate to speak to me.

Charles Penley
Kingsport, Tennessee

I received your publication today. It looks great and I think we are on our way to a good start! I like the idea of group insurance and medical benefits for our group of Viet Nets. We are sure to need it in the future.

One thought for the Association on a reunion is to hold it at Hurlbert Field, Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

The base has a large display or park area of all the Special Operations aircraft used by the USAF in Viet Nam. I had the pleasure of being there on TDY for the 50th Anniversary celebration of the USAF in September 1997.

Much to my surprise and great pleasure there are many memorials to our era of the USAF. Some of the aircraft on

display are O-2, OV-10, C-130, C-47, C-123, C-119 (gun ship and loudspeaker birds).

I would not be a bit surprised if many of these now static monuments saw some time at Tan Son Nhut.

There is also a very moving tribute to the USAF Medal of Honor winners. Visiting the park brought back a lot of memories of sweating in the revetments of Tan Son Nhut repairing the fuel systems on the aircraft. "Just food for thought."

I got a chuckle at your comment on Lackland AFB "the spa." The San Antonio area is much improved since I was there in 1969 for basic. The "river walk" area is superb for dining and entertainment for the entire family.

Incidentally, back then during the "Viet Nam days," I was with the 377th CAMS (1971-1972)(Fuel System Repair) as an E-4. I remember turning age 21 over there and celebrating this very old age by hitting all the "bon-bon" stands (33 Beer) with the guys from my shop. Oh what a headache that was in the 1200 barracks area the next day!

Next year marks my 30th year with the military, and I can say without hesitation how proudly I look back on my experiences at Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN.

Nice job on the newsletter and my compliments to you and the staff for keeping the comradeship up of the USAF Vet Vets.

WELL DONE, DRIVE ON !!!!!

Joe Thompson
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks for the opening comments of our people. And there's more to this last guy than meets the eye. Maj. Joe Thompson is now in the U.S. Army Reserve, and is currently on a short tour of duty

The Members Bulletin Board

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

SEARCH & RESCUE

Help! TSN Assc. looking for lost members during records shake-up. Any members knowing of previous members who have not received Revetments, please have them contact Pub. Affairs. (757) 627-7746 or 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, at (301) 277-7474 or write to 6203 57th Avenue, Riverdale, Maryland 20737.

READ A GOOD BOOK LATELY?

For only \$14.95 you can own a book that not only gives a sense of pride, but a great deal of great humor. Order Lieutenant General Graham's *Down for Double* from Brandyane Publishers, White Stone, VA 22578.

REALLY GREAT TSN WEB SITES

For hours of nostalgia, entertainment and pride go to these TSN Web Sites:

PENLEY PAGE:

<http://users.intermedia.net/cepenley/index/html>

COOK PAGE:

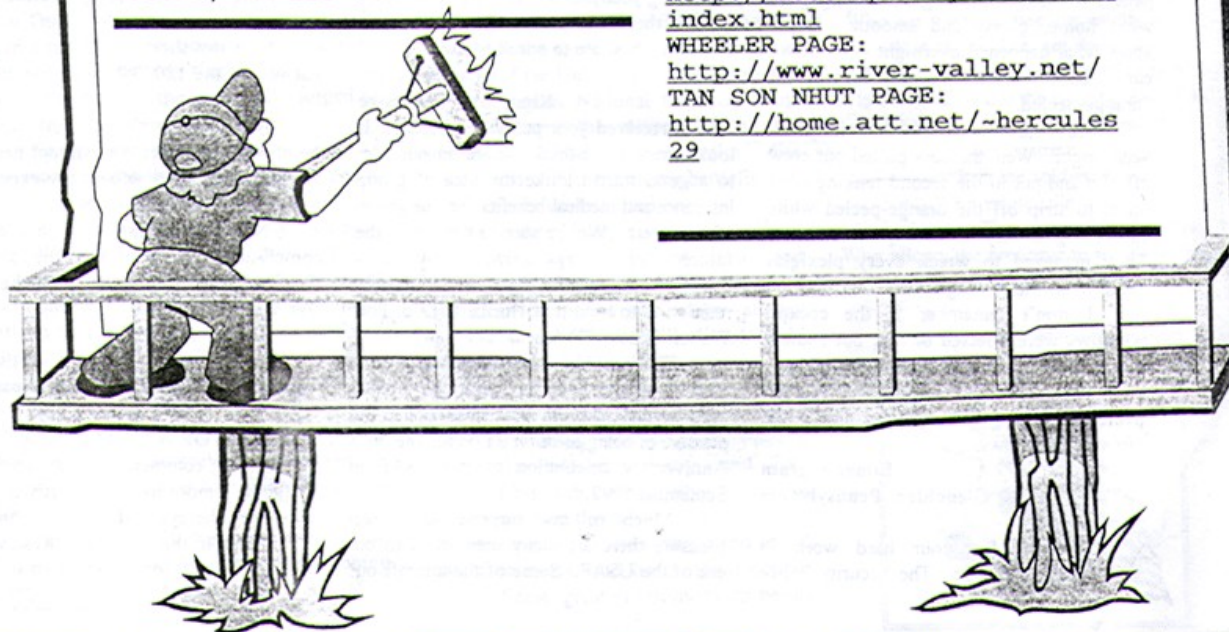
<http://host.fptoday.com/COOK/index.html>

WHEELER PAGE:

<http://www.river-valley.net/>

TAN SON NHUT PAGE:

<http://home.att.net/~hercules29>



All right, people, we're going to keep
doing this until we get
it right!



If you are reading this page and did not send in your form last month, please fill out the blocks on the next page, and then clip this page as our "finger" indicates, fold, staple or scotchtape, and mail. This applies to all - from lowly basics - to generals, SIR!

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & INFORMATION FORM

Clip and mail, or Call (757) 627-7746 or E-Mail: hercules29@worldnet.att.net

Name:

Address:

City:

State: Zip Code:

Phone: E-Mail:

Tan Son Nhut Affiliation?

I would like to renew my membership in January 1999:

I would enjoy assisting in forming a TSN Chapter:

I would like to attend a TSN reunion in 1999:

Yes ()

Yes ()

Yes ()

(Signature)

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