

Revetments

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



"All Included - Non Excluded"

Volume 3, Number 3

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

December, 2000

And There Shall Be Peace Unto You All



Christmas Mass 1967 at the Church of Bui Phat, a mile from the Main Gate of Tan Son Nhut

The Gift of Christmas is Love

(Editor's Note: This is the most poignant and beautiful letter Revelments has ever received. There is no more an important occasion as these coming holidays to share it with the membership.)

Dear Tan Son Nhut Association,

In June 1966, a young man graduated from high school and immediately enlisted in the Air Force. He came from a long line of Volunteers from Tennessee. Our family has proudly lived up to that name since the Revolutionary War. We have met the enemy in many forms - foreign and domestic.

As he came from a long line of family who were law and peacekeepers, he chose that field in the military. He trained and became a military police officer and ultimately, a dog man.

In 1967 he volunteered to serve in Vietnam. Being single, he said that it might keep a married man, possibly a father, from having to serve in Vietnam. He was stationed at Tan Son Nhut. He was there on the line at the front gate entrance when the 1968 Tet Offensive broke out. He and his fellow peacekeepers met the enemy and fought them valiantly. He lost some of his buddies. He lost his youth.

They kept their post.

He was a dog man and Rebel was his four-legged brother. They took care of each other and loved each other. Rebel was destined to be his partner - after all, he was from the South. They walked side by side until Rebel took the forward position and took a chunk of shrapnel that would have taken the young man's life. He paid the ultimate price. He was a valiant dog.

The young man had a leave of absence in November of 1968. He came home to be with his family for a leave between duty assignments. He had volunteered for a second tour of duty, and again asked for Vietnam. During his leave, his father passed away and he stood with the rest of his family as they laid his father to rest. After a while, he returned to Tan Son Nhut and continued to do his duty and to do his job well. He was a dog man. Doing your duty and your job well is what a dog man does.

When he came home, the only people to celebrate was his family and loved ones. The numbnuts of the world chose to use verbal and visual assaults and

insults to welcome him home. Well, you know, that is what numbnuts do. After all, they are self-made idiots who actively work at it all the time. It is surprising how some people don't mind showing their ignorance. It is a fact! They are proud of it. That's why they are numbnuts.

He served at home and in many foreign lands before he finished his last tour in Desert Storm. He always volunteered and always served well.

His health got the best of him. After all of his wounds, physically, spiritually and emotionally had taken their toll on him, he was Honorably Discharged and came home. He had grown up and matured in the military. He was a career man. He was also a changed man. Everyone! Everyone who has served in his shoes was changed!! There are many, many of you and you know who you are and how you have been changed.

I honor you and everything you represent.

This young man, now a mature and middle-aged man, began to work on his computer. He wanted to set events and information down so that he could share with others and they could do the same with him. He created a wonderful Website and became a proud member of the official Tan Son Nhut Association. He is a very proud man; proud of his country, his flag, his military family, and his military life.

I am deeply proud of him. He is my brother. He is also your communications man. He is Charles Penley and he is still living up to the honor and the U volunteer name that he and our family wear with pride. He carries his scars well. Sometimes, they weigh him down, but, he wears them well.

I honor him. I honor all of you who saw your duty and did your best. As my Momma used to tell us, "You did good."

Yours respectfully!

Janice Penley Jones

Kingsport, Tennessee

(Ed. In an accompanying note, she wrote: This letter is being written without the subject knowing of its existence. I just wanted you to become better acquainted with this gentleman. This short piece doesn't cover a whole life. It just skips like the stone over a stretch of water. In truth, I could write a book about this man.)

I just wanted you to know of a few details of one man's life.

You all keep up the good work and keep the good faith.

Walk tall and proud!

P.S. Have a good one!



Distant Voices

by
Ira Cooperman



Riding the Ghost of Vietnam:

An Open Letter to President Clinton

Dear President Clinton:

With all the important subjects to which you have to pay attention in the final weeks of your presidency, I would have thought traveling to Vietnam - reopening old wounds - would have seemed imprudent to you.

Was your Asian trip one of undaunted courage, or to settle a debt of honor? Was it a journey of the spirit, or did you actually accomplish something worthwhile for our nation?

It takes more than a shallow view of history to understand the alienation and frustration many Vietnam veterans feel even now, a quarter-century after the official end of the war. For the wound inflicted during the conflict - the longest and most divisive since the Civil War - still have not been completely healed.

I just hope, Mr. President, that in traveling to Vietnam, you considered the words of Albert Camus, who wrote fifty-five years ago that it is not the role of an individual "to transform either the world or man ... but it may be to serve those few values without which even a transformed world would not be worth living in ..."

For a politician heralded for your political ingenuity, there has been a lack of any constancy about your values, especially as they relate to veterans' policies, during the past eight years. Like most public officials, I believe you are a series of contradictions.

But until your term ends on January

20, you have the opportunity to demonstrate that you will not be victim to the indifference to the fate of others.

Mr. Clinton, you evaded our nation's call to military service during the Vietnam era. How credible now are your expressions of sorrow for the miasmic effects of American actions in Vietnam?

Instead of riding the ghost of Vietnam, live up to your moral obligations as president. In the weeks ahead, help bring us together by encouraging more adequate funding for veterans' health care, benefits and services.

Expedite movement toward Agent Orange and hazardous chemical research in Vietnam. Order the initiation of research projects in the United States on American veterans of Vietnam and their families, as required by the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

And everyday of your life, take a moment to reflect, remember and honor the 2.7 million Americans who served in Southeast Asia from 1959 - 1975, as well as the 58,195 veterans whose names are carved on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. -- men and women who served in your stead.

Only through actions like these can you keep faith with your often expressed wish to seek a national reconciliation.

After a most divisive presidential election, now is a time for healing -- for our nation and all its veterans.

* * *

(Ed. Ira Cooperman, a resident of Rochester, New York, served as an Air Force intelligence officer in Vietnam, Thailand and Laos in 1965-1966. His E-Mail address is: ibcooperman@aol.com. Mr. Cooperman's opinions and expressions, as with all columnists in *Revetments*, are solely his own and are not published as an endorsement from the Association.)



The Tan Son Nhut Association Wreath laid by members at Vietnam Memorial Veterans Day, November 11, 2000

Veterans Day Meet A Fine Event

Veterans Day, November 11, was an absolutely beautiful day to be in Washington. And fourteen, yes, count 'em, fourteen members of the Tan Son Nhut Association met for breakfast at the Four Seasons Restaurant in Alexandria and then went on to formally lay a wreath, in your name, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Attending were John and Michelle Peele, Jerry Wilcoxon, Ira Cooperman, Dean Guard (who flew in from Illinois), Erwin Nase, Jim Smith, Al Keeler and friend, Ken Moll, Dave Bolton, Bill Grayson and wife, and Bob Need.

During the informal get-together there was a discussion of forming a Capitol District Chapter. The enthusiastic group was heartened by this response and felt that even more would attend functions like this.

A Tan Son Nhut Memorial Day for April 30th is being looked at, and we really want to beat the bushes for Memorial Day 2001. The Four Seasons appears to be an ideal spot, located right off I-95, with no hassle. And getting into town? We all rode the Metro right smack into town to the Mall. Wish you were there, and expect to see you there soon!



"All Included - Non Excluded"

Revetments is an official publication of the Tan Son Nhut Association, Inc. 6203 57th Avenue, Riverdale, Maryland 20737. The Association is a non-profit fraternal organization charter under appropriate statute and law.

President, Don Parker

Vice President/Treasurer John Peele

Vice President/Secretary John Evans

Chaplain James M. Warrington

Public Affairs Robert Need

Communications Charles Penley

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Thoughts of Our Sky Pilot

by
Chaplain
James M. Warrington

Roads to God

* * *

When I come to a large modern city I have a debate with myself as to which road to take into the inner city area. There is always the temptation to use the expressway, but it means going at such speed and with such concentration that nothing can be seen along the way.

In our religious life it is equally true that there are many roads that lead to God - and no one of them is necessarily better than another. In fact, we do well to use each of them upon the appropriate occasion as there will be certain advantages. However, it is very important that we do not despise those who use a road other than the one of our choice at the time.

There is the intellectual road

This is the way that leads to the God of

Truth. It is followed by those who find in all the new discoveries of science the revelation of God at work, and by those whose intellect dominates their other faculties. It is an important road, and the experience of God's presence is narrowed and limited whenever this road is blocked.

The aesthetic road

... or the road that leads to the God of Beauty. There was a time in the history of human affairs when people or societies feared art and architecture, lest worshipers make the work of beauty an idol rather than a symbol. Happily this time has passed, and many places today the contribution of fine beauty, painting, stained glass, sculpture, music and architecture is recognized and welcome. There was a valid gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful

There is the emotional road

This leads to the Being of God. Man does not live by mind alone, or beauty alone. His affection hungers to be one with the presence of God, to feel the closeness and undergirding of God's divine Spirit. If the mind is meant to guide the course of man, its will and the emotions which provide the power.

There is the ethical road

... leading to the God of Righteousness

敬祝新年
Best Wishes for a
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
恭賀降生

Salutation from a handmade card left for us at the main gate 1967 by
Vietnamese civilians

(From the collection of member Mark Reveaux)



A Very Happy
New Year
to all of our
Great Members!

Let's hope we'll be seeing a lot more of each other in 2001. Let's keep the Association growing ... and let's not forget to keep in touch! To all, our best wishes -

Don Parker, President

John Peele, Executive Vice President

John Evans, Vice President/Secretary

James Warrington, National Chaplain

Charles Penley, Communications Officer

The Communications Center

Member finds "must read" book ...

I am glad to read that you will be upgrading your graphics. The photos have been terrible.

Other than that I wanted to pass on to the other members a small review of a book I just finished reading.

No doubt many of the members have probably read this a long time ago. If not, it is a must for any Vietnam Vet. The book is *The March of Folly - From Troy to Vietnam*, by Barbara W. Tuchman, 1984.

If you don't feel bad enough about the politics of war this will make you feel worse. And, maybe think about the vote.

Thanks, and continued success for the Association.

Robert Capener
Port Townsend, Washington

Seeking information ... I do not know if you can help me but I figured I would give it a shot.

My father-in-law served in Vietnam ('67-'68). He was at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. He told me a story about a pilot what was being honored at the base. My father-in-law was the one who met the pilot after he landed, put up the ladder and unstrapped him. He told me there was a lot of media coverage.

He watches the Discovery Channel whenever they do specials on Vietnam in hopes to see this footage.

I am trying to find it for him and hopefully surprise him for Christmas. I think this was one of the few good

things he came home with. I would really like for him to have a copy of the footage.

If there is any way you could help me, or maybe direct me somewhere to find such information, I would appreciate it.

His name is Richard G. Bartos. Thank you.

Tony Velotta
Avelot777@a.cs.com



Several Members send us a serious message ... Never Dial Area Code 809

Don't respond to Emails, phone calls, or web pages which tell you to call an "809" phone number. This is a very important issue of *Scam Buster* #21 because it alerts you to a scam that is spreading "extremely" quickly and can easily cost you \$24,100 or more, and is difficult to avoid unless you are aware of it. We'd like to thank Verizon for bringing this scam to our attention. This scam has also been identified by the National Fraud Information Center and is costing victims a lot of money.

There are lots of different permutations of this scam, but **Here's How It Works:** You will receive a message on your answering machine or your pager, which asks you to call a number beginning with Area Code 809.

The reason you're asked to call varies. It can be to receive information about a family member who has been ill, to tell you someone has been arrested, died, to let you know you have won a wonderful prize, etc. In each case, you are told to call the 809 number right away.

Since there are so many new area

codes these days, people unknowingly return these calls.

If you call from the United States you will apparently be charged \$2.425 per minute. Or, you'll get a long recorded message. The point is, they will try to keep you on the phone as long as possible to increase the charges. Unfortunately, when you get your phone bill, you'll often be charged more than \$24,100.

Why It Works

The 809 Area Code is located in the British Virgin Island (The Bahamas). The 809 Area Code can be used as a "pay-per-call" number, similar to 900 numbers in the United States. Since 809 is not in the U.S., it is not covered by U.S. regulations of 900 numbers which require that you be notified and warned of charges and rates involved when you call a "pay-per-call" number.

There is also no requirement that the company provide a time period during which you may terminate the call without being charged. Further, whereas many U.S. phones have 900 number blocking to avoid these kinds of charges, 900 number blocking will not prevent calls to the 809 Area Code.

We recommend that no matter how you get the message, if you are asked to call a number with an 809 Area Code that you don't recognize and/or investigate further, just disregard the message.

Be wary of Email or calls asking you to call an 809 Area Code number. It's important to prevent becoming a victim of this scam, since trying to fight the charges afterwards can become a real nightmare. That's because you actually did make the call. If you complain both your local phone company and your long distance carrier will not want to get involved and will most likely tell you that they are simply providing the billing for a foreign company. You'll end up dealing with a foreign company that argues they have done nothing wrong.

Please forward this entire message to your friends, family and colleagues to help them become aware of this scam.

Life behind Tan Son Nhut's

Revetments!

an essay by

Bob Need, Editor, *Revetments*

When John Peele and I were planning the initiation of this publication, we wanted a clearly distinctive and meaningful title for it. "Gateway," and similar names seemed okay, but not just right. Then we thought of the most distinctive feature of Tan Son Nhut. It was the first thing you saw when you landed, worked around them, and the last thing you saw when you flew out towards home ... the revetments.

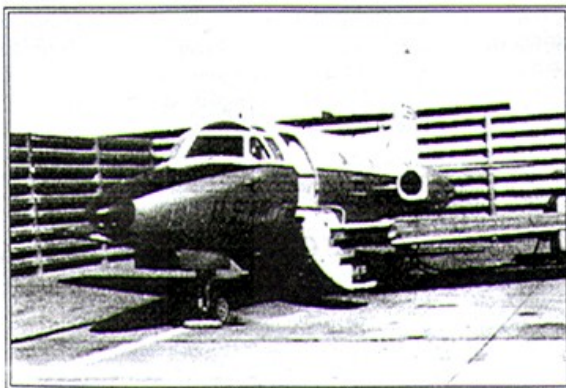
Member Dale M. Baker, Davenport, Iowa, and T-39 Section supervisor, 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, sent



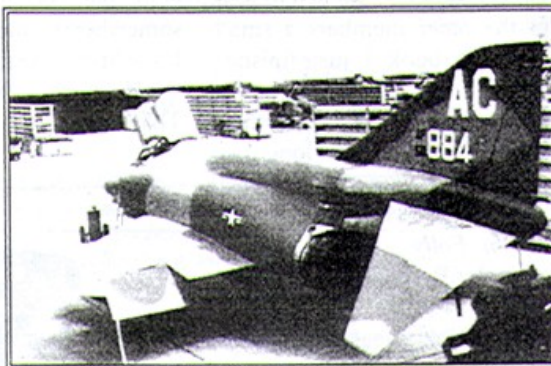
Welcome to Tan Son Nhut, Base Operations

us these pictures (and more). They were taken in late 1968.

When we saw them, we were very moved, and also very sad about our ability to reproduce them for publication in



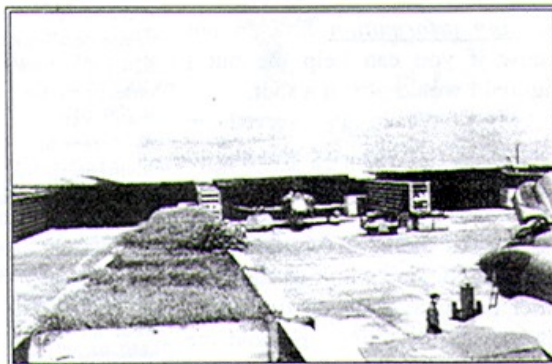
T-39 ... and revetments



RF-4 ... and revetments

Revetments.

Earlier this month we had an interesting and informative e-mail discussion with Lt.Col. Russell Mann, Lafayette, Louisiana, who gave us invaluable pointers for improving our graphics. He was Chief, Air Traffic Control at Tan Son Nhut from 1968-1969.



We have not yet been able to avail ourselves of his plans to have us gain assistance from the photo and publications people at nearby Langley Air Force Base, but we will soon.

But we tried mightily to experiment with our own contrasts and resolution, and we hope this page shows some improvement and allows us to share Dale Baker's now priceless pictures with you.

* * *



GIFTS & GOODIES



for the holidays and the new year

There has been a lot of discussion over the past years about having all sorts of momentos for the Tan Son Nhut Association. Well, this time we're going to get serious. Things you can get right away are ...



PATCHES ... Get the colorful TSNA Patch for only \$5, \$1 shipping and handling. Order from Public Affairs Office, Suite 709, 330 West Brambleton Avenue, Norfolk, Va. 23510, or call (757) 627-7746 or e-mail: hercules29@worldnet.att.net



Saigon Facilities Map: (1969), showing all the streets, BOQs, BEQs, USO, many other important buildings and locations that the U.S. Military leased from the South Vietnamese. Includes a large portion of the Tan Son Nhut and MACV Compound. Only \$18.95 (includes S/H. Send checks or money orders to: Charles E. Penley 708 Teasel Drive, A1-3, Kingsport, Tennessee 37660. E-mail: cepenley@chartertn.net



The Victors CD is a must item, poignant, humorous and a tribute not only to the brave members of the 377th Security Police Squadron, but to all the people of Tan Son Nhut and anybody serving in the 'Nam. Only \$19.95. Send checks or money orders to Taylor Mac Productions, P.O. Box 381, Patton, California 92369. Call: (909) 862-3666, or E-Mail: TaylorMac1@juno.com



NOW, ABOUT OTHER STUFF . . .

It appears members would like all sorts of things. But before we can make them available we have to know what kind of demand we are facing. So, to get the show on the road, please look over the following and let Public Affairs, (address above) know what and how many you'd be interested in, and if you would commit yourself to an order after we establish a fair price for these items.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TSNA Logo Coffee Cup # _____ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TSNA Tie Clasps # _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TSNA Lapel Pins # _____ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TSNA Belt Buckle # _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TSNA Flight Jacket # _____ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TSNA Commemorative Plate # _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TSNA Blazer # _____ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TSNA Golf Cap # _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I am also interested in purchasing: _____ | |

PROFITS FROM ALL ITEMS GO TO THE TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION

TSNA "Notes For New Year's"

Association Dues: As the Association has grown over the past two years, so has the incident of members forgetting to renew their annual membership. Please look at your membership card and check the Expiration Date. If you have misplaced or lost your card, please call or write the Public Affairs Office, Suite 709, 330 West Brambleton Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23510; Phone: (757) 627-7746; FAX: (757) 627-0878 or E-Mail: hercules29@worldnet.att.net and your expiration date will be furnished immediately. We will never be a "dunning" organization, but we do need funds to continue publication of *Revetments* and planning ahead for a Tan Son Nhut Memorial, and other worthwhile projects that we are anxious to initiate. Annual Dues are \$20; Five Year Membership is \$80, and Life Membership is \$180. If you make one of these membership a birthday or holiday gift for someone else, we send the recipient a colorful Tan Son Nhut Association card in your name.

Change of Addresses: Please, please, please, etc., when you move across the hall or across the nation, send us your changes of address. Every returned *Revetments* means a waste of money to the association, money we really can't afford to lose. And speaking of addresses, please let us know as soon as you can if you are changing or discontinuing your e-mail address. Either contact Public Affairs, addresses as shown above or the Tan Son Nhut Website, <http://www.tsna.org>

Patches: We have restocked the very attractive and impressive Tan Son Nhut Association Patches. They may be ordered by mail, phone, FAX, or e-mailed to the Public Affairs Office, addresses as shown above. They are \$5 a piece, and \$1 shipping and handling. They would make an ideal stocking stuffer for the holidays.

TSNA Chapters Let's make the Year 2001, the year of the establishment of more Tan Son Nhut Association Chapters. Motions are being made to establish a Capitol District Chapter in the Mid-Atlantic area, the Lone Star Chapter is in place in Texas, and there are people moving in the direction of establishing a Southern California Chapter. There is a large and growing population of TSNA members across western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Florida, and adjacent states, also continue to grow, and the area should seriously consider establishing a central chapter.



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