

# Revetments

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

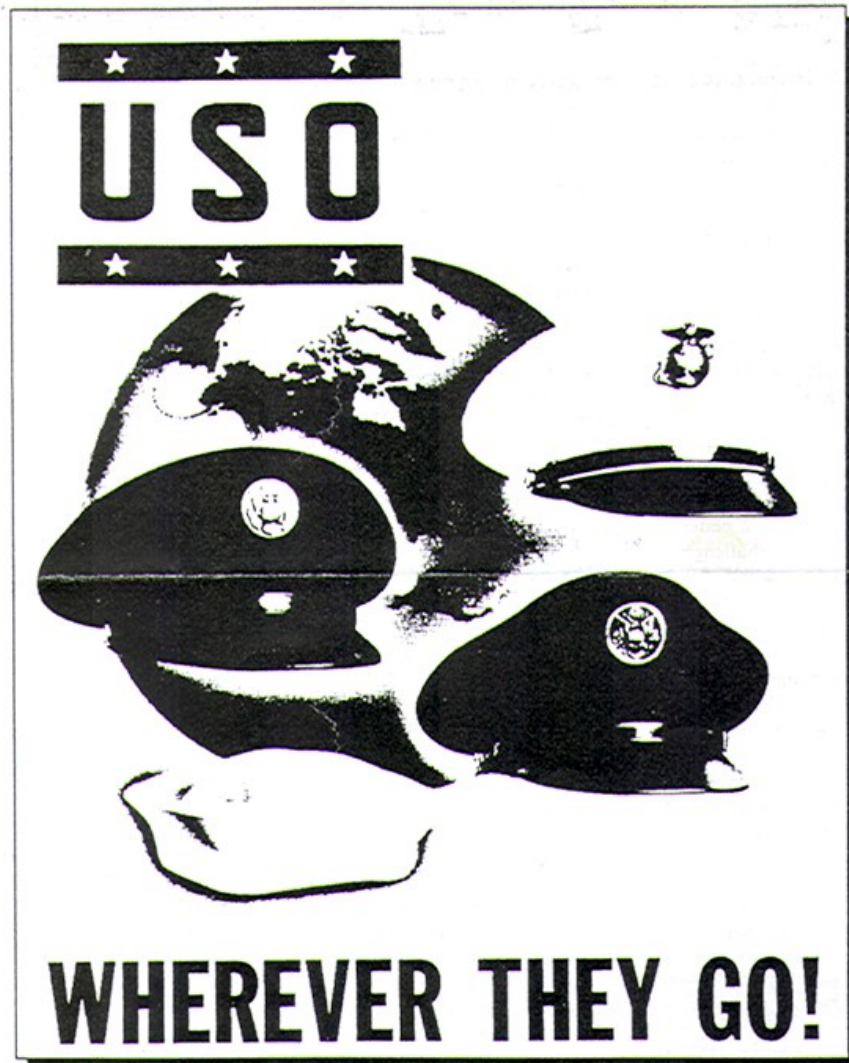


"All Included - Non Excluded"

Volume 2, Number 5

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

February, 2000



*... including Tan Son Nhut!*



# Those Other Tan Son Nhut-ers!

It all started when somebody told TSNA Vice President John Peele about Nancy Joyner. He called Public Affairs and asked that back issues of *Revetments* and membership information be sent to her, which was accomplished.

What makes Nancy Joyner so special?

Well, to begin with she was at Tan Son Nhut along with all of us. Her tour was 1970-1971. And, Nancy didn't go to Vietnam to fight anybody, she went there to make us happy.

Then Nancy Chutz, a young lady from New Orleans, was the Assistant Director, Program Director of the Tan Son Nhut United Service Organization (USO) Club.

And she did make us laugh, in fact she was still laughing, thirty years later, last week in a telephone interview. She says the most fun was watching us perform in the "pie eating contests."

As a representative of an organization that has been trying, and succeeding for over fifty years, to remind combat service personnel that there is always a better life away from the daily stress and challenges we had to face, Nancy is proud of her experiences.

Sure, we all remember the big shows and the galaxy of stars that would sweep in, performing on makeshift stages, often with the drama of cannon fire in the distance.

## USO, The Family Circle

But it is Nancy and her staff, and hundreds of other USO volunteers who made it all possible. And their work did not begin and end with the big wonderful shows, they were, like us "on duty" twenty-four hours a day.

"Just a huge family," is what Nancy thought of all of us at Tan Son Nhut. "We

loved the holidays," she says with a little poignancy in her voice. "We (the staff) would prepare huge turkeys with all the trimmings, have candles on the tables, and when we all sat down to eat, it was truly having the family in for the holidays."

## Fashion Au Courant de TSN

Nancy lived in the B.O.Q. next to the base hospital. She racked her mind on how to include all those patients in there. Finally, she had a flash of inspiration, a fashion show.

Are you kidding, a fashion show? No, she figured the guys should be kept informed of what the gals back 'Stateside were wearing. Being from New Orleans, she sent back for the latest fashions and lots of those Mardi gras beads that were so popular during that era.

When the garments arrived she dolled up the ladies she conscripted on the base and into the wards they went. As good as any full-blown production on stage, the "fashion show" was a howling success, as I think we can all imagine.

Now this where the beads come in. They weren't for the girls. The were handed out to the patients who were garbed in their own "gowns."

"And, yes, they were happy to wear them," she says, "after all it was a fad back home in those days."

Nancy Joyner and her husband live in Annandale, Virginia. She is the Dean of the Lutheran Semester College in Washington, D. C.

## ... and from Washington

*Revetments* also contacted the USO World Headquarters in Washington for some background information.

We had the distinct pleasure of talking to Annette Amerman, the Director of Corporate Communications. She was delighted to hear from us and especially to hear about Nancy.

We asked her if she had any pictures and background we could share. A day or so later we received a magnificent book, *50 Years of the USO: Always Home*, by the celebrated photographer, novelist, and screenwriter, Frank Coffey. Cramped with priceless pictures and often moving narrative, it tells a story of proud and heroic civilians who have stood next to us in every conflict since 1940, continuing on through today.

Ms. Amerman also faxed extensive additional narrative that we hope to be able



Classic Hope in Vietnam

to publish in a special edition at a later date.

And again, Tan Son Nhut and the rest of Vietnam saw a "first" in USO operations.

"The turbulent 60's were full of challenges for USO," quoting from the white paper *A Proud USO History*. "For the first time in its history, USO centers were located in combat zones. The first USO opened in Saigon in 1963. The 17 centers which were opened in Vietnam and six in Thailand served as many as a million "customers" a month. Bob Hope took his USO Christmas show to Vietnam for the first time in 1964; the shows continued into the next decade."

Accompanying all this fine material was a personal memo from Ms. Amerman. She says, "If anyone would happen to ask for more information about the USO, please feel free to have them write to me. I will be happy to send them something."

"I look forward to seeing (*Revetments*) when my subscription arrives. Thank you for your interest and support of the USO, and thank you to you and your members who have served our country so proudly!"

Ms. Amerman's address is: USO World Headquarters, Washington Navy Yard, 1008 Eberle Place, S.E., Suite 301, Washington, D.C. 20374-5096. (Pictorial, front page and this page, courtesy of Ms. Amerman and the USO)



Early visitors, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans in 1960.



## An Appeal To Congress

(Editor's Note: This was sent to us by member Colonel Harry Patterson, Shallote, North Carolina, who says, "This was forwarded to me at a time when our local newspaper was running letters to the editor about the plentiful life, good pay, good housing, and other benefits the military enjoys that the civilian population does not enjoy. Some of us still remember the great vacations in Germany, Italy, the Pacific back in the 40's. How can we ever forget those great outings in the surf, mountain climbing, and the lush jungle walks some had to take. At least one person in Congress acknowledges our military today needs help." We are grateful to Colonel Patterson for the following statement of Representative Helen Chenoweth to the House of Representatives on May 20th, 1999.)

Mr. Speaker, in today's military a young enlisted person serving out his or her first contract can expect to make one thousand, seventy-five dollars and eighty cents a month. Over a forty-hour workweek, this averages to six dollars and seventy cents an hour.

But most of our military personnel don't work forty-hour weeks. We all remember the famous Army slogan -- "We do more before 9:00 a.m. than most people do all day."

Mr. Speaker, it's true. These young enlisted personnel can expect to be at work before first light and not home again until long after dark. And, Mr. Speaker, we don't pay them overtime.

These young people train for weeks at a time away from home. They keep themselves in a state of top physical readiness. They live their personal lives according to the high standards of integrity and honor we mandate for them.

These young servicemen must uproot their families on a moment's notice, moving to a new duty station across the country, or across the globe. They do it all on six dollars and seventy cents an hour.

For members of the military with families, the situation is worse. Despite a modest living allowance, 12,000 families currently serving our Armed Services are dependent on food stamps. Food stamps. We have government employees living off of government subsidies.

Mr. Speaker, why don't we skip the intermediary step and just pay them properly the first time?

During the holidays at the Mountain

Home Air Force Base in Idaho, a network of military spouses work together to collect donations of money and toys for the enlisted families who cannot afford to give young ones Christmas or Thanksgiving. Last November and December, the Mountain Home Warm Heart organization, run by the spouses of servicemen, distributed over eighteen thousand dollars worth of food, toys and cash to the needy military families.

Where did this money come from, Mr. Speaker?

From the pockets of servicemen who already had very little to give. If this were not bad enough, many military families have more serious concerns than just Christmas and Thanksgiving. At the Mountain Home Air Force Base, 459 women and children are receiving regular food assistance, 107 of those are infants. The Mountain Home Air Force Aid Society made \$131,000 in emergency assistance loans to military families.

I am very concerned about what will happen to these families when the money runs out and they still have to make monthly payments on loans.

In the 18th Century, citizen soldiers won our independence and secured our liberties. We hailed them as heroes and revered the courage and commitment they demonstrated in defense of our nation.

Today, this nation is protected by citizen soldiers with the same integrity and sense of duty. Only in 20th Century America, we don't even pay them a living wage. We should be ashamed of ourselves.

From 1988 to today there have been thirty-two deployments of our military. In the previous sixty years there were only ten deployments. Put it another way, Mr. Speaker. Prior to this administration the military was deployed an average of once every six years. During the Clinton Administration the military has been deployed an average of four times every year.

Furthermore, since 1987, we have depleted our ranks by eight hundred thousand servicemen. In practical terms, that translates into more frequent deployments and dangerously long hours.

It is illegal in this country for truck drivers to be on the road longer than eight consecutive hours without rest. We have pilots patrolling the Mediterranean in

fourteen-hour shifts. In short, this Administration is expecting our servicemen to do one hundred times as much and place their lives at risk one hundred times as often with eight hundred thousand fewer people ... for as little as six dollars and seventy cents per hour.

Mr. Speaker, I recently paid a plumber \$90 an hour to unstop my garbage disposal. An auto mechanic can expect \$50 an hour. A teenager working as a bagger in a grocery store can earn up to \$12 an hour. None of these jobs require 24-hour dedication to duty and a constant threat to life.

Mr. Speaker, one young Marine I know of has taken a second job to supplement his income. Every night, this Lance Corporal goes home and trades his Marine uniform for a blue and red T-shirt and matching hat from Dominoes. This young Marine, hardworking father of two, delivers pizza because he is too proud to accept welfare. He is not alone in this endeavor. But it is nearly impossible to know how many young servicemen are in this position because most of them hide it from their commanders.

A young Lance Corporal serving in the Marine Corps today can anticipate being combat-deployed at least once in a four year enlistment. I wonder what this Lance Corporal's family will do when he is away and they have to make do without the supplemental income from Dominoes.

I am humbled by this young Marine, and the many others like him who work so hard to protect us. I am ashamed that we don't do right by them. I urge this body to seriously consider the ethics of our government's continued over extension of our military in light of our complete lack of gratitude for their service.


Mr. Speaker, I have a request to make of the members of this body.

Tonight, when you go home to your families, to the security and comfort of your homes; when you tuck your children into bed; say a prayer for the men and women of our armed forces. As you sleep, approximately one-hundred thousand of them stand watch, away from their own loved ones, ready to give their very lives to protect you.

For as little as six dollars and seventy cents an hour.

\* \* \*





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Being seen around town ... From the Mark Reveaux Collection



*Thoughts of  
Our Sky Pilot*  
by  
Chaplain James M.  
Warrington

### Venerable Landmarks

Washington, District of Columbia, has many venerable landmarks.

Some of them are buildings; the Washington Monument the Jefferson Rotunda, the Lincoln Memorial, built to provide guidance to the citizens of the nation.

Other buildings such as the Archives or the Library of Congress contain precious documents to remind us of our heritage, including important landmarks of times past.

Other landmarks such as walls, statues or tombs of George Washington and for the unknowns help us to focus on the lives of specific individuals. Individuals who faced a decisive moment or a turning point in their lives. Individuals who charged forward because they held fast to those things that are certain -- the simple landmarks revealed by almighty God.

I find help in the knowledge that for all of us there must be venerable landmarks, simple and basic realities to which we can cling in the midst of inner turmoil and confusion.

It seems to me that we need these landmarks today in our national life. We need to recall and learn anew the faith of our nation's founding fathers. We need to ponder the meaning of such words as

"freedom, republic, justice for all". This is what is meant when we are called to return to a sense of national purpose.

Even more do men and women need these venerable landmarks in their personal lives. Landmarks that are to be found in the great historic and Biblical assurances that bring peace and direction during even the darkest days.

Every person needs to make a personal list, and have ready in advance of life's crisis. Perhaps your landmarks might include, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

"Be still and know that I am God," or "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

...

### TSNA Constitution Being Rewritten

Every organization should have an effective written constitution. Over a year ago Public Affairs sent out the presently written proposed TSNA constitution to all of the current membership.

Some very constructive and sound changes were proposed, but the preliminary ratification was disappointing, hardly a third of the membership responding.

So the Board of Directors has directed Public Affairs to rewrite and simplify the proposed Constitution. When completed, it will be published in *Revetments*.

A return voting card, postage paid, will be included in that issue. If additional changes are desired by members they should be submitted separately in writing.

Please respond to this call for member support, this time around.

## Revetments and National Politics

by  
Robert Stanley Need, Editor

This is going to be one of the most dynamic, dramatic and vitally important national elections in the history of the United States. It is going to determine the course of American society as it enters a new century and a new millennium.

The direction of foreign affairs, the world economy, space and the internet, and even society's customs and mores are going to be affected this year, and in powerful and irrevocable ways.

Is *Revetments*, and by association, The Tan Son Nhut Association going to mutant into a militant pro-this and anti-that political hot bed? Definitely not!

So, *Revetments* is just going to ignore the whole thing, and it'll just go away.

Again, definitely not!

According to a healthy number of readers (TSNA members), *Revetments* is doing a fairly good job, with limited resources to be a serious publication that not only informs the membership, but provides a forum of exchange for the membership. And for the last seventeen issues it appears to have achieved a substantial degree of this responsibility.

But then, each of our members is an individual who has his or her political bent, and would not only like to express it, but in this Republic by right and responsibility should do it. So, we are prepared to initiate an **Election Forum 2000**, where any and all comments, written in good taste, will be published, standing alone and free from editorial comment on any occasion. Each comment should be brief and will not, at any time, be considered as endorsement by *Revetments* or the TSNA.



**The Communication Center** Send us your letters, stories, announcements, etc., we need them to keep *Revetments* interesting. Mail to: TSN Assoc., Public Affairs, Suite 709, 330 West Brambleton Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23510, or FAX to: (757) 627-0878.

This member shocked 7th AF ... I spent one tour at Tan Son Nhut, arriving in October 1968 to October 1969.

I was attached to the 377th Civil Engineering Squadron as a power production specialist, 543X0. I worked at the Lucky Dragon producing electricity for the 7th Air Force Headquarters and other on the compound.

We operated Mbteens, EMUs, Blue Canoes, no brakes and other generator units. Our section was a small group, usually three men working days and two at night. The main section covered the whole base and had more men but we worked separately.

I made Staff Sergeant in minimum time which gave me enough rank to work days. This didn't set well with some of the career airmen. I got out after one tour of duty. The Air Force wasn't too bad, sometimes I wish I'd made a career out of it to see how far I could have advanced. With a family, I didn't want another tour in Vietnam.

Robert Etherton  
Joplin, Missouri

**Member comments on *Days At Tan Son Nhut* Column ...** I enlisted in the infantry in World War II, went through Aviation Cadets and on to Korea and Viet Nam.

I find the article by Major McKinnon, no mater how true, disturbing as to:

His foul language in print.

His view of "academy grads in charge" ... get real, finger pointing does not lead to unity in this small organization.

Leland H. Williams  
New Carlisle, Ohio

### In Memoriam

We deeply regret to announce the passing, last month of **Life Member**

**Joseph R. English**  
of Grandbury, Texas.

Having served at Tan Son Nhut with the 460th Field Maintenance Sqdn, '67-'69.

Our deep condolences to his family and friends on behalf of all of the Association members.



This optimistic member says "Happy Millennium" (anybody can say Happy New Year) ... I really look forward to every *Revetments* letter and enjoy reading them. You know how some people look forward to their check every month, well that's how I feel about your newsletter.

We are planning to have our Second Reunion for the 1st Signal Brigade sometime in November 2000. We hope to at least double our turnout from 1995 which was 77 people from all over the country.

I am at work listening to my patriotic CD and guess what happens to be playing right now?

*Wild Blue Yonder*, naturally I think of you guys at Tan Son Nhut, the helicopters constantly flying over, and the times that I experienced at Tan Son Nhut. This feeling will never leave me.

I plan on go to "The Wall" every Memorial Day and Veterans Day as much as possible, so if you need me for anything don't hesitate to ask.

I finally got a friend of mine to go to "The Wall" with me this (last) Veterans Day. He has never been there and it took us 33 years to get him there. He served in the 4th Infantry Division.

After 31 years, I finally found the name of the vet who was killed in action January 31, 1968 (he was Sergeant of the Guard, Task Force 35, and I was Sergeant of the Guard February 1, 1968).

So you can see why this bothered me, not remembering his name for so long. I located his name at "The Wall," placed a wreath, said a prayer, and finally after the 31 years, told him I'm sorry.

I wish all of our Tan Son Nhut Association veterans all the very best for the New Year and the start of a new Millennium.

Take care, keep in touch and GOD bless you and all the work being done to keep the Tan Son Nhut Association active and thriving.

Dennis Byrnes  
Royersford, Pennsylvania

And from a membership renewal directed to "The Membership NCOIC" ... I look forward to reading *Revetments* each month.

George A. Gandelli  
Sharon, Connecticut

**Request to TSNA seeking information on missing father ...** I am the daughter of Chief Master Sergeant Thomas Moore, who was with the 6250th Civil Engineers, from April 1965 to October 1965 when during a one day R&R became an MIA (missing in action) and later confirmed as a POW (prisoner of war).

He was with Samuel Adams, Charles Dusing and Jasper Page. Page escaped after five days. The incident occurred on October 31, 1965.

I am seeking any one that may have known the three remaining men, dad, Sam and Charles, as I am in touch with their sons.

I am the person-next-of-kin and need to find out about the 6250th, the area, and if there is a patch, insignia or pin that I can get.

Please e-mail me at home:

[norad@bellsouth.net](mailto:norad@bellsouth.net)

and please visit my dad's memorial web site at:

<http://www.geocities.com/pentagon/barracks/3250>

Thank you.

Diane Moore  
Daughter of, CMSGT. Thomas Moore  
USAF-POW-MIA-LKA, 10/31/65



Chief Master Sergeant Thomas Moore  
Photo from Website shown above

**Let us know your June Reunion plans as soon as you can!**





There is no free lunch ...

## It's Membership Renewal Time!

**Past Due For January, 2000 ...**  
Current records indicate that the following members are due for membership renewal. Please try to remit \$20 by February 29. If you feel there is a mistake and have already renewed, please contact the Public Affairs Office.

Agnew, Lewis B.  
Anderson, William G.  
Andrews, Bruce L.  
Austin, Jr., George N.  
Barnette, L.  
Bessette, Carol S.  
Beyette, P.  
Blaha, M.  
Boddrini, Nik  
Bowles, C.  
Brown, Charles V.  
Burckhalter, William M.  
Chaisson, A.  
Chambers, Robert B.  
Cox, Jr., Robert B.  
Cummings, Jack C.  
Damron, Charles C.  
Davis, A.  
Dearing, D.  
Duval, Richard  
Eckhoff, Jim  
Emerson, Thomas F.  
Etherton, R.  
Evans, Jr.  
Fischer, Ralph E.  
Fitzpatrick, Thomas H.  
French, J.  
Fulton, R.  
Glass, T.A.  
Grayson, William C.  
Greenspan, Michael M.  
Greehead, Phillip E.  
Hagler, J.  
Hanson, W.  
Helms, F.  
Hileman, F.  
Houck, R.  
Howard, G.  
Ingoglia, R.  
Ingram, E.  
Johnston, S.  
Joyner, N.  
Kennedy, D.  
Kettenhoffen, D.  
Kiechlin, E.  
Kinnaird, G.  
Krebs, R.  
Lindbeck, R.  
Maranville, J.  
Marshall, H.  
McClellan, T.

McCullough, D.  
McDonald, R.  
McElwee, R.  
McKinney, P.  
Mickle, W.  
Moll, K.  
Montag, J.  
Norquist, E.  
Noriega, E.  
O'Krusky, P.  
Pachinger, C.  
Padgett, J.  
Penley, C.  
Pittman, W.  
Predergast, P.  
Randles, F.  
Saenz, H.  
Schirmer, G.  
Schoenhals, L.  
Scime, J.  
Sheldon, D.  
Sherrett, R.  
Sherrill, B.  
Shoemaker, M.  
Sidisin, R.  
Skea, R.  
Smith, G.C.  
Smith, J.A.  
Smith, P.M.  
Strauss, A.  
Sweetland, J.  
Taylor, W.  
Tennerman, H.  
Thompson, J.E.  
Walker, D.  
Welsh, P.  
Wilcoxon, J.  
Wilhem, R.  
Woods, R.  
Yardborough, R.

**Due for February 2000** Please remit \$20 for membership dues by February 29, 2000. If already paid please contact Public Affairs.  
Anisko, R.  
Anundson, A.  
Aufiero, R.  
Balleit, A.  
Bauer, J.  
Beckwith, G.  
Chung, D.  
Church, A.  
Coup, W.  
Donnelly, L.  
Elkins, D.  
Fender, R.  
Fleisher, M.  
Foster, L.  
Halbeisen, G.  
Harley, Jr.  
Hickman, G.  
Ingalsbe, G.



### New Member Wears the Medal of Honor

New member, CWO Michael J. Novosel, United States Army, from Enterprise, Alabama, joined us last month. His citation for the Medal of Honor signed by President Richard Nixon, says a lot about our new comrade.

"CWO Michael Novosel, 82nd Medical Detachment, 45th Medical Company, 68th Medical Group, distinguished himself on 2 October 1969 at Kien Tuong Province, Republic of Vietnam, while serving as commander of a medical evacuation helicopter.

"He unhesitatingly maneuvered his helicopter into a heavily fortified and defended enemy training area where a group of wounded Vietnamese soldiers were pinned down by a large enemy force.

Lerner, V.  
Line, D.  
Lyons, L.  
Martin, J.  
Masten, B.  
McAntor, A.  
McKinnon, T.  
Messer, L.  
Moore, K.  
Nellist, L.  
Neri, D.  
Ness, C.  
Orzen, M.  
Patterson, H.  
Peterson, L.  
Sartin, H.  
Seifert, A.  
Shotliff, C.  
Spinelli, M.  
Starke, R.  
Stevenson, D.  
Stine, R.  
Sutton, C.  
Waxman, R. Wells, R.  
Ybarbo, F.

"Flying without a gunship or other cover and exposed to intense machinegun fire, CWO Novosel was able to locate and rescue a wounded soldier. Since all communications with the beleaguered troops had been lost he repeatedly circled the battle area, flying at low level under continuous heavy fire, to attract the attention of the scattered friendly troops. This display of courage visibly raised their morale, as they recognized this as a signal to assemble for evacuation.

"On six occasions he and his crew were forced out of the battle area by the intense enemy fire, only to circle and return from another direction to land and extract additional troops.

"Near the end of the mission, a wounded soldier was spotted close to an enemy bunker. Fully realizing that he would attract a hail of enemy fire, CWO Novosel nevertheless attempted the extraction by hovering the helicopter backward. As the man was pulled on board, enemy automatic weapons opened fire at close range, damaged the aircraft and wounded CWO Novosel. He momentarily lost control of the aircraft, but quickly recovered and departed under withering enemy fire.

"In all, 15 extremely hazardous extractions were performed in order to remove wounded personnel. As a direct result of his selfless conduct the lives of 29 soldiers were saved.

"This extraordinary heroism displayed by CWO Novosel was an inspiration to his comrades in arms and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army."

The White House  
June 15, 1971

**Don't Forget to get  
a TSNA Patch!  
Just \$5.00**



# ... From Another Part of the Field



Hootches at Tan Son Nhut

(Editor's Note: There has been considerable interest shown in last month's story, *Thirty-Two Years Ago This Month When The Rumors Came True*. A major battle is a confusing swirl of events at best, and when it's over it is not at all unusual for many of the thousands of participants to have varying, and often even conflicting accounts of what they observed during action on different parts of the field. Mark Reveaux, whose photography we have been privileged to use before, and use here today, has been a fine contributive member of this Association. He sent us the following account right after he received *Revetments*. At first, he didn't want us to print it, but we finally talked him into it. His objections were that someone might take exception ... but he feels that his "recollections are pretty accurate. You don't forget that kind of a night or what happen during the following months." It is with pride, we bring his report to our readers.)

It was in early January (1968) that rumors started about several thousand VC taking up positions outside the perimeter (of Tan Son Nhut) and waiting for a major assault. We heard the 67th Mechanized was pulled out of Saigon at that time to move up north, so we had less armor in the area for protection, which is what the VC were waiting for.

## The night of January 30-31

I was there at the time. I was in our "hootch" or small single story louvered barracks (those little green buildings you remember), located not far from the road linking into the road leading to the main gate. I don't know the gate numbers there.

At about the time the attack began, we heard a police whistle sound from the gate area, followed by automatic weapons fire. One of our people caught a round that went through his ankle. A friend and I did some first aid work on him to stop the bleeding. Went right through his boot. We couldn't get him to the infirmary because it would have been like being a duck trying to walk through a skeet range. He said it felt like a bee sting.

Bullets were generally passing through our area at the time. About day break, it got worse in our area. One of the VC battalions was breaking through. That was when Security Police in full battle dress ran through and then a Huey appeared overhead, so low you could see the members' faces. They fired rockets into a position near the road (this is where that

French Cemetery was) and it was evident to all of us that the Huey was the main force that prevented the attack to progress into our area.

If they had gotten through, I probably would not be writing this, because the Command Post heard later that the VC battalion commanders had orders to take no prisoners -- they were to sweep through and kill as many as possible.

## Heard from the perimeter

On the other side of the base, we heard that an outpost on the perimeter had called in and said, "We can see some movement at the wire..." and then nothing. He was found with his own bayonet in him the next day.

Another man spent part of the night with bamboo slivers put in his fingers by VC who captured his bunker and had been ordered to spend a few hours until further orders - they needed something to entertain themselves with and he was it. I don't know if he survived. I think he did.

My sympathy and thanks go to all who didn't get through that night. It taught all of us who survived that nothing replaces the experience of being in a real attack, where it's no game. The people moving through that wire were well-organized and bent on taking you out.

## ... and then the rockets arrived

About the rocket attacks, I know you remember February. I believe it was during that month when someone got it from a 122 mm, that went through the hootch roof, through the bunk beds, mattresses and through the person underneath them. No sand bag bunkers at that time protected you against the 122 mm. Kalashnikovs.

They brought an exploded warhead to our supply depot at BEMO for display. Diamond quilted pattern, very mean, and no upward conical fan like the mortar. It blasted everything and everyone no matter how low they were.

Do you remember the slit trenches? They were the only sure way of protection against the 122s unless it was your luck to have one find you. Remember the ferris-wheel type ditch digger machine? The slits were only about 24" wide. More people, including myself, got injuries diving into those slit trenches than by the rockets themselves.

Flak jackets were around, but when instant mobility was needed, the jackets took second place. Not much help against a 122 mm, anyway.

Did you hear about the poor fellow who was waiting in line at the Tan Son Nhut Airport ready to board the plane for home when a 122 mm. crashed through the roof and killed him, along with wounding others standing by him?

Also about the poor fellow who walked into the prop. While I was there the story we heard was that it was a ground crew member who accidentally walked into a C-130 prop. Now I know the real story (*Revetments*, last issue, *Days At Tan Son Nhut*). I understand why



Tet damage at Tan Son Nhut

the man was sleepy. Lots of us were sleepy those days for one reason or another, especially during February and March when the VC used to launch rocket and mortar attacks in the early mornings.

The infirmary reported a lot of people being brought in who tripped over guy wires, fell into ditches and walked into objects because the rocket attacks were timed so that no one knew when the next attack was coming (except we knew the VC Liked early morning hours) and no one got any sleep. (Yes, I know, we wouldn't complain about that to any of the people who spent their days in the rice paddies, never knowing what was coming during any hour of the day.)

## ... from all over the field

That was the same year, I believe, when a ground crew member decided to try flying a C-130 out of Tan Son Nhut. Once airborne he figured he might as well go all the way and headed for the Philippines. He, nor the plane, was ever found.

While I'm on this "roll," did you hear the story about the Dragon Lady? She rode on the back of a Honda and tossed grenades into people waiting at bus stops. They were pretty sure it was she who tossed the grenade that killed the sergeant when he was waiting at the bus stop near where I had been renting a house.

She was also thought to be the sapper who left a satchel charge in the pannier of her bicycle that she propped up against the mooring piling that blasted the side of the My Canh Floating Restaurant killing dozens.

She was later killed at the Tan Son Nhut main gate when trying to toss a grenade at a group of officers, at which time the South Korean guards shot her and the Honda Driver.

Take care.

*Please send us any and all changes of addresses!*





We are still getting a fine response from the Association membership from the Reunion Poll. Nearly fifty members have said they were definitely planning to attend. That's a good start. But time has a way of running by rapidly, so let us know

soon if **YOU** are planning to attend. Please write the Public Affairs Office, Suite 709, 330 W. Brambleton Ave., Norfolk, VA 23510; or call (757) 627-7746, or FAX: (627-0878, or E-Mail: [hercules29@worldnet.att.net](mailto:hercules29@worldnet.att.net) as soon as you can. Or write the Executive Coordinator, Norman Whitlow, at 1451 Chapman Drive, Lancaster, Texas 75134; Phone: (972) 227-8075, FAX: (972) 218-9669. We're hoping to see most of you there during the 3rd week in June in San Antonio!

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