



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

MAY 2012



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

May is a month of history, both secular and religious.

It begins with a day that features military parades and floral commemorations and ends with Memorial Day with Armed Forces Day and VE day designated during the month. It prompted a search of the religious side of the month. For our nation we can go back to the last days of May 1660 where Mary Dyer, a Boston Quaker, was tried and then a day later executed for "heresy of preaching religious liberty and freedom of conscience". Some 25 years earlier Roger Williams was also forced to move to Rhode Island for the same reason.

All this said, it is to be remembered in May, with all those days of remembrance, that the American example of religious freedom has set an example of the ideal of religious freedom worldwide.

Historians say that in the early 1800's there came a "Great Awakening" to religion also prompting and heightening the democratic spirit of the nation.

It all boils down to this; the very history of our nation finds itself responding to our needs for a personal belief. A belief in Personal Value and a deep concern for "our fellow men"! It is out of response to religious faith that comes order, clean living, discipline, thrift, hard work and service. We should be proud of our history!

End of Sermon
Chaplain Bob Chaffee



THESE DAYS IN HISTORY

(From a USO calendar furnished by TSNA Cheerleader, Janice Jones).

May 2 Osama bin Laden brought to justice by US Navy Seals

May 4, 1942: Battle of the Coral Sea begins.

May 6, 1941: Bob Hope's first USO show held at March Field Air Base, CA.

May 8, 1945: V-E Day.

May 13: Mother's Day

May 19: Armed Forces Day

May 22: National Maritime Day

May 28, 2012: Memorial Day observed.



MEMORIAL DAY

Many of you were drafted and many of you volunteered. When the call to arms went out across the lands, you answered and into battle you did go. You did not know what your final destination would be. You walked into harm's way and you became Heroes! Many did not return. Some have yet to return. Wherever their final resting place is beneath some unknown ground, it is forever and beyond, hallowed. It is ground marked and only known by God - Our Father.

Thank you every day for the many blessings of freedom bought, paid for and secured by the many sacrifices of all heroic Military veterans. We remember your sacrifices! We honor your courage! We do not and will

never forget that it was you who paid the high price for all of our Freedoms!

Salute

Janice Jones

MY TIME AT TSN:

Mine is not simple. For years, I had submitted papers for a transfer from my training command in Pensacola, FL. My CO finally approached me one day and asked if I would go on a secret mission with him and a Navy-wide select 12 others. I volunteered and we met daily in the Admiral's quarters for 7 days. We were rushed through the passport process and given a one-way prepaid ticket to Vietnam. Our orders were handcuffed in a briefcase to a senior leader (just like in the movies). We flew in the Navy's Blue Angel's planes to San Francisco, Hawaii, Wake Island, Guam and finally landed at Tan Son Nhut Airport 3 days later. I thought I was in another world. We were given crash courses in Vietnamese language and divided up among the hotels surrounding the Legislative Building. I stayed at first in the Continental Palace, some in the Caravelle and the rest in the Majestic. We were bussed to the American Embassy and all the US Government's rented buildings near Cholon. After a few months, some of us were given weapons and put on a C-130 for Nha Trang where we were fortunate enough to have an egg or pancakes. I lost 54 pounds the first few months because I refused to eat the weeds gathered from the river and put in whole stewed fish. Just too much to tell. Locations: Saigon, Bien Hoa, Nha Trang and some stops at other Vietnamese bases.

Donald S. "Steve" Jenkins
U. S. Dept. of State & MAAG
Mar 61—Apr 62

The following submitted by TSNA Member Benny Goodman:

Hannah Giffune
Team 81
Hmrm 242

What Memorial Day Means to Me

People have given so many speeches about Memorial Day that by now, it may have lost its meaning. It's not about getting free candy that's thrown at you by a passing parade. It's not even about the games we play, or the songs we sing. It's for the people that the parade was marched for. It's for the people these games were played for, or these songs were sung for.

I'm not afraid of forgetting the meaning of Memorial Day. I have come to realize that people have forgotten the meaning because of the numbers. We hear of the deaths as in, "40 men died that day" or "Only 7 today, no bad losses". But have you ever heard someone say, "John Dear died today, leaving behind a wife and two sons" in the news report? I believe we can all say, no. We can hear the names of individuals in a report, or maybe in a speech, but those names are forgotten by the end of the day, just as are the families they left behind. Only once you come to understand the difference between numbers and people will you fully understand what Memorial Day means.

The feeling of a fist closing around my insides as name after name is called, that is what I feel when I hear of casualties. These men and women were just like me, so many years ago. A fourteen year old, attending school, no clear idea of what lay ahead in their future. They had hopes, dreams, and wishes too. The fist inside me opens when I read of stories of people who with their last breath saved a fallen comrade, or delivered a final blow that helped with the ongoing fight. These people shouldn't die in vain, so we must repay the service.

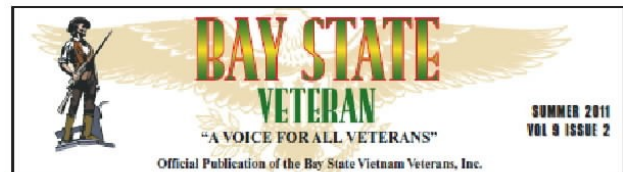
Memorial Day means repaying a service by doing a service. I repay the services of all the men and women who died by marching in the parade. I repay the service by playing the games and singing the songs. I repay the service by donating money and going to veterans' homes and listening to their stories. I've heard stories of pain and sorrow, but the visit always ends on a happy note. They survived and got to go home. Sometimes, however, going home also meant putting flowers on a friend's grave.

I'll never forget the meaning of Memorial Day. This is because I've forgotten the numbers and remembered the names. Not only the names, but also the people and memories that go with them. Someday, I hope everyone can be like this, remembering people and not numbers. 7 may not be a large number, but if you group 7 people together who are all 21 years old, that's 21 years of memories and love. Make sure it's not diminished by saying "only 7". Memorial Day should be about the people, not the numbers. This is what Memorial Day means to me.

Editors Note: Following is the email I received from Benny with the above.

Larry,

I've been sitting here reading past issues of Revetments (not too far past) when I suddenly realized that I have a story that you may of interest to you and might be useful in a future copy of revetments, especially around Memorial Day. Every year for the last twenty years or so our Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter has sponsored an essay contest in the two local Middle Schools as a part of the city wide activities associated with Memorial Day. The only restriction is that the subject of the essay must be appropriate to the true meaning of Memorial Day. One winner from each school, and each grade level (6th, 7th, 8th) is selected by a team of school staff members, and submitted to our Chapter for further recognition. All of the essays selected have been in the excellent category. However, without question, there are times that we receive one that is outstanding and memorable. The attached essay was written and submitted by Westfield North Middle School 8th grade student Hannah Giffune. I realize that this has absolutely no relationship to Vietnam or Tan Son Nhut. As a group of Vietnam veterans, we are extremely proud to be a part of helping keep alive the remembrances of all who have made the supreme sacrifice so that we can remain a free and proud nation and share the thoughts and beliefs of the future of our country.



VVA Chapter 219, Westfield, MA
North Middle Schools 8th grade winning essay
by Hannah Giffune



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More on page 16

"AFTER DAYTON"

There has been talk about the next Reunion; about where to have it; and about when to have it.

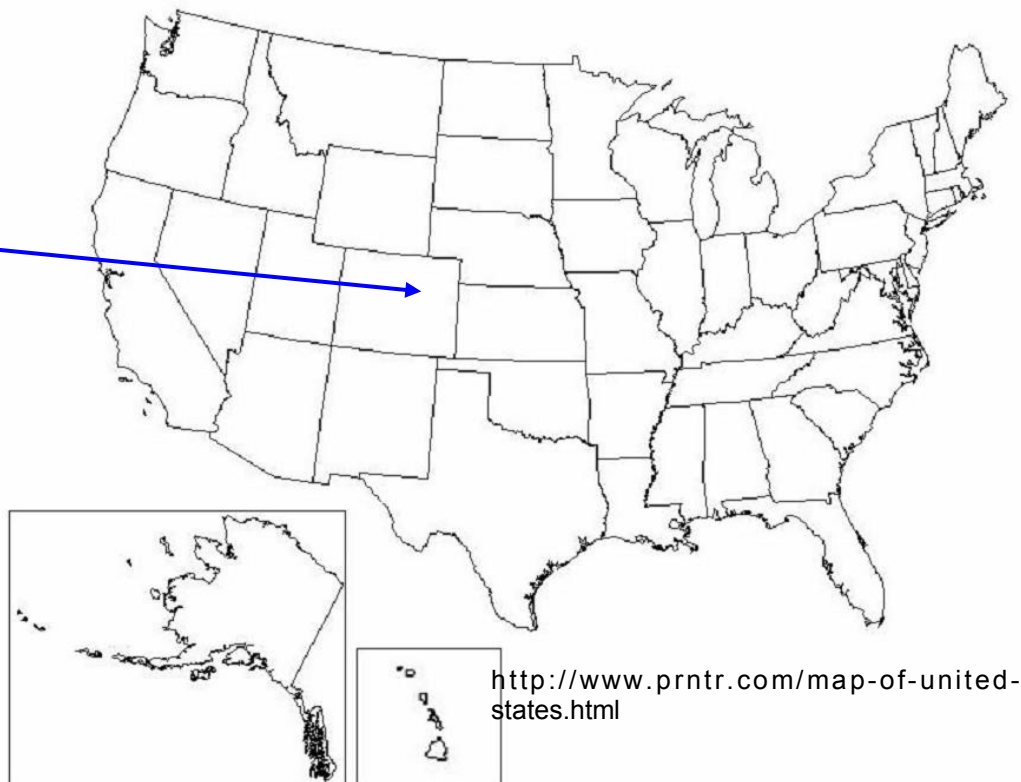
One suggestion has been made to have it in Denver, Colorado. And to get away from conflicts we are always having with other organizations having reunions at the same time, we are proposing to have it in the late spring of 2014.

The only way we can do this is if YOU plan to attend.

Please send an email to our President, George Plunkett, under the understanding that "all things being positive then as they are now, I will be there". His email address is: viet62@aol.com.

We look forward to hearing from you—soon!!

The Board of Directors of TSNA



THE KITCHEN TABLE GANG TRUST WEEKLY NEWSLETTER ~ 16 APRIL 2012
*for our Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines ~ Veterans & Hospitalized Veterans,
and those folks interested in helping these people who proudly serve our country!*
The Kitchen Table Gang Trust has been serving our veterans and military for over 32-years!

~ Semper Fidelis ~

Thanks to all of you who donated to our "WELCOME HOME" flag program . . .
We were able to purchase over 3,240 American flags -but we still need even more! So far this year we have given away an estimated 11,675 flags to families whose husband, dad, wife, daughter, son (and even neighbor) a flag so that they can wave it in a hearty greeting upon the soldiers, Airmen, Sailor and Marines arrival at larger airports in the United States.

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So who the heck are we? Well, PARADE MAGAZINE (the Sunday newspaper supplement gave us a blurb on this past Veterans Day. Check out "11 Ways to Help Veterans on 11-11-11" at <http://www.parade.com/news/veterans/articles/11-ways-to-help-veterans-on-11-11-11.html>. On item #9 "Post a care package." General Colin Powell even called me that Sunday morning and congratulated us on what we were doing to help our soldiers and Marines deployed overseas. Also, we got a blurb in the Los Angeles Times (see "This barn is red, white and viewed" at: <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/04/local/la-me-adv-flag-barn-20110704>. Even several national television news organizations gave us a small blurb on their respective evening news shows about our flag program. *The flags we pass out to the families are made entirely in the United States in Marion, Indiana by C.V.S. Flag Co. These flags cost us \$72 for a gross (144).*

To make a small donation to us, please use the PayPal icon on the front page of our website www.kitchentablegang.org, or send us a check to the Kitchen Table Gang Trust, 42922 Avenue 12, Madera, CA 93636-8866. The PayPal method of sending a donation to us is both fast and safe! Your donation doesn't have to be very big, and every little bit helps us continue this valuable program. *Please check us out and see if we are worthy! Thank you very much!*

MISS AMERICA 1972

It was May 1972. In less than a year the Seventh Air Force Vietnam would "pull out". Before the Seventh Air Force left, many of the service organizations would have left. The USO in Saigon as well as the many USO clubs around Vietnam are examples. Still, that did not deter the morale booster on-the-road shows that the USO sponsored for the troops still in Vietnam. In December 1972 Bob Hope would bring his "Christmas Show" to Tan Son Nhut. That show marked his last in Vietnam. What a morale booster he was. His legacy lives on today for many GI's in various wars and conflicts.

Other entertainers, sports figures and celebrities moved among the troops as well. Red Foxx and Martha Raye had shows at Tan Son Nhut in 1972. My favorite, though, was the Miss America USO Troupe. Laurel Lea Schaefer had won the title of Miss America 1972 and she came to Southeast Asia. She brought with her several young ladies representing their respective states, like Miss South Carolina 1971 and Miss Maryland. They came to the Tan Son Nhut base theater on a hot May evening to perform and entertain "the boys". And what a show it turned out to be, especially for me!

I was one of several young men picked from the audience to participate in a dance routine equipped with flat straw hats and skinny canes. Miss South Carolina 1971, Pamela Inabinet, has chosen me as her partner after one of my friends, John Tigert, had informed her that I was from South Carolina. She was a tap dancer. I was a bumbler, dancing like someone with two left feet. But she was gracious and we talked afterwards.

Following the dance number Laurel Lea Schaefer briefly interviewed each of us GI dance partners. I told her how I had watched the Miss America contest on AFVN-TV twelve times, and she won every time!! She asked me, "Many of you have moustaches, doesn't that tickle?" to which I responded "Would you like to find out?" This ended the interview with much laughter.

Now, forty years later, as I reflect back on that experience, I see that there was a lot more than the good entertainment those kind folks brought to us. There was also acceptance, grace, laughter and a little bit of feeling of home. I sure do appreciate it.

Sincerely,
Reverend Dr. Billy Lowe

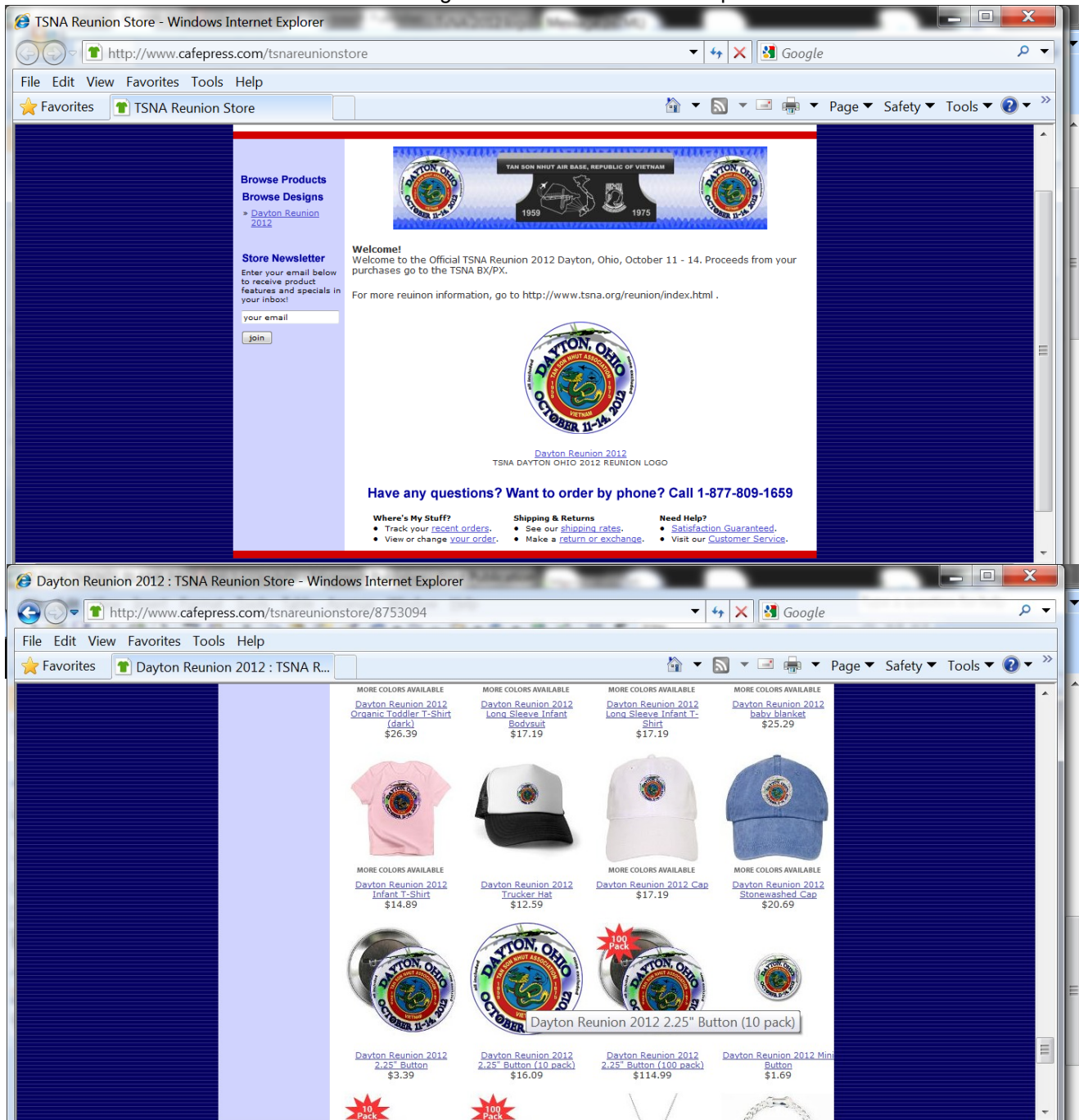


TSNA REUNION 2012 LOGO ITEMS FOR SALE

TSNA member Gary Redlinski now has items with the 2012 Reunion Logo available for sale. All proceeds benefit the Tan Son Nhut Association.

The link for the website is: <http://www.cafepress.com/tsnareunionstore>.

Here is what the Home Page looks like. And it shows a phone number also



A sample page of items

Another Reason for Coming to the Reunion

By: Dale Bryan, TSNA Secretary

My fellow members of TSNA: Many of us are looking forward to being in Dayton, OH in October to dedicate our beautiful and inspiring memorial bench at the National Museum of the USAF. We all know that the memorial is past due like the "Welcome Home" greetings that were too long in coming. Often, something delayed seems sweeter than an immediate gratification.

The inspiring memorial, the dedication ceremony, and the location are great draws unto themselves. Add to that the quality time we will spend with old and newly acquired friends. Is that enough? Is that all? No, there is more!

We are blessed to have an outstanding photographer and patriot of a younger generation present to our association a glorious, heart stopping, tear precipitating photo of The Vietnam Veterans Memorial (often called "The Wall") taken one day at sunrise. I've yet to observe the picture from a distance where it could be touched and have seen only a picture of the picture. See that below. The real article (already framed as part of the donation), will be on display at the reunion in the Hospitality Suite and really be a focal point of the reunion along with the dedication of our memorial.

I have the honor to write and inform you of this gracious gift, but we are indebted to TSNA Treasurer, Carol Bessette. She found the picture from a notification from Facebook, and had the original contact with Angela Pan, the young professional photographer and arranged the lunch meeting in March where Angela offered the picture to Carol and me as TSNA representatives.

If the dedication of our memorial is not enough to draw you to Dayton, perhaps coming to also see this icon may tip you in favor of attending the reunion.



VIETNAM MEMORIAL CLOUDY SUNRISE

Want to know more about Angela Pan and her work: Check out her website: <http://www.abpan.com>.

Tan Son Nhut Association 2012 Reunion Registration

OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF TAN SON NHUT AND THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

NAME _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

NAME OF YOUR GUEST(S): _____

PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY: _____



REGISTRATION FEES

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING _____ X \$125. = _____

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (NO EXTRA COST)

- Access to the TSNA Hospitality suite in the Challenger Discovery Room, (drinks, snacks, and war stories!) - *\$20. daily if purchased separately.*
- Leased bus round-trip to the NMUSAF for the TSNA Memorial Bench Dedication and Banquet.
- Leased bus round-trip to the Americans Veterans Traveling Tribute.
- TSNA Friday Banquet buffet dinner. *\$65. if purchased separately.*
- *FREE breakfast every morning.*
- Please circle which activities that you are paying for separately.

Your room rate has been group-discounted to \$110.00 per night. Those without Internet access can call the Holiday Inn, Fairborn (1-937-426-7800). Hotel reservations must be made no later than **September 20, 2012 to receive this special rate.**

PAYMENT MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 30, 2012.

PLEASE MAKE PAYMENTS PAYABLE TO THE "TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION" AND MAIL PAYMENTS TO:

TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION C/O GEORGE PLUNKETT, 587 WILLIAMS CIRCLE, WEST COLUMBIA, SC 29172



On Friday evening, October 12, our banquet speaker will be Colonel Chuck DeBellevue.

Chuck DeBellevue was the first U.S. Air Force weapons systems officer to become an ace during the Vietnam War in 1972. DeBellevue became America's top "MiG Killer" when he and his pilot, Capt. John Madden, downed two MiGs, giving him six in total, the most earned during the Vietnam War.

During his combat tour, DeBellevue logged 550 combat hours while flying 220 combat missions. His skill as a WSO was recognized when he and the other two U.S. Air Force aces, Capt. Steve Ritchie and Capt. Jeff Feinstein, received the 1972 Mackay Trophy, the Veterans of Foreign Wars' Armed Forces Award and the Eugene M. Zuckert Achievement Award.

He retired with numerous awards, including the Air Force Cross, the Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters, the Legion of Merit and the Distinguished Flying Cross with five oak leaf clusters, among others.

2012 TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION REUNION SCHEDULE

Thursday	9 AM	Registration Desk Opens and Hospitality Suite Opens
Thursday	????	Hospitality Suite Closes
Friday	10 AM (Buses leave the hotel at 9:40 AM, return at 12:15 PM)	TSNA Memorial Bench Dedication
Friday	12 PM-4:30 PM	Hospitality Suite is Open
Friday	2 PM (Buses leave the hotel at 1:40 PM, return at 4:15 PM)	NMUSAF Self Guided Tour
Friday	5 PM (Buses leave the hotel at 5 PM)	NMUSAF Museum Shop opens exclusively for us
Friday	5:45 PM	Panoramic picture of everyone taken at NMUSAF
Friday	6 PM	Cash Bar Opens in Banquet Area/Aircraft viewing (The C-123, RF-101 and F-4 will have special access just for us)
Friday	7 PM (Buses leave the hotel at 6:30 PM, return after the banquet)	Banquet Seating
	Introduction of Guests	President George Plunkett
	Presentation of Colors	WPAFB Color Guard
	National Anthem	WPAFB Band of Flight Soloist
	Welcome	President George Plunkett
	Missing Man Table Ceremony	
	Invocation & Necrology	
	Dinner	
	Musical Presentation	WPAFB Band of Flight
	Introduction of Guest Speaker	President George Plunkett
	Guest Speaker	Colonel Chuck DeBellevue
	Awards/Coin Presentation	President George Plunkett
	Retirement of Colors	WPAFB Color Guard
Friday	10 PM—?????	Hospitality Suite is Open
Saturday	9 AM—?????	Hospitality Suite is Open
	2 PM (Buses leave at 1:30 PM, return at 3 PM)	The American Veterans Traveling Tribute
Sunday	8 AM-10 AM	Farewell Breakfast

All:

We continue to seek speakers to address the group on Saturday morning, but nothing has been confirmed yet.

Please respond to the question posed elsewhere in this month's Revetments regarding the location and timing of our next reunion.

The Board of Directors works for YOU.

Thanks,

George

The Tan Son Nhut Air Base Memorial

Work continues on the Tan Son Nhut Air Base Memorial. The museum is working to expand the Memorial Park and our memorial will be located within the newly created area.

Our contractor, Dodd Monuments, is finishing the cutting of the stone and will lay the concrete slab bases just as soon as the museum finishes the new sidewalks in the expanded area.

It is the intent of the Memorial Committee to plan a dedication ceremony that is both moving and meaningful to the members. The committee wants to incorporate some history of Tan Son Nhut into the ceremony and also include some modern day aspects. Several members have already sent Tan Son Nhut soil to Johnnie Jernigan for insertion into the Memorial Bench. In addition to the soil, the committee will ask the museum staff to have the last American Flag to fly over Tan Son Nhut be present at the dedication site to lend a historical touch to the ceremony. This flag was presented to the museum in 2007 by the family of Colonel David Odell who lowered the flag on March 29, 1973 as he was leaving the air base. Since the flag has such a strong, historical background, the museum may not allow its removal from the climate controlled area. The Memorial Committee will nonetheless ask and make every effort to have the flag at the ceremony.

An American Flag will be flown over our Nation's Capital in honor of the Tan Son Nhut Association in recognition of the dedication of a memorial at the National Museum of the Air Force. Once this flag has been flown, it will then be taken to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. where it will be honored by a ceremonial walk and a series of salutes at "The Wall". In addition to honors at "The Wall", the flag will also be honored at The Three Servicemen Memorial and also at The Vietnam Women's Memorial. All three memorials are very closely situated and together comprise one of the most heavily visited sites in Washington.

Following the ceremonies in Washington, this American Flag will be carried to the National Museum of the U. S. Air Force by TSNA members where it will be made part of the dedication ceremony. Afterwards, this flag will remain the possession of the Tan Son Nhut Association and will be available for display at reunions.

Memorials made from granite will last a long time - - - longer than our natural lives.

Future generations coming after us will probably wonder who we were, what we did, and why it was important enough for us to dedicate such a memorial. We cannot answer those questions for them. We will leave that task to the historians. For those men and women having the op-

portunity of serving at Tan Son Nhut this dedication represents a special moment. While at the dedication ceremony, we won't have to ask why this monument is being dedicated or who it represents. We will simply look at the faces around us and know all we need to know about this monument. Our shared memories will be the soul of this memorial.

Plan now to attend and be a part of the dedication ceremony. Honor your fellow Tan Son Nhut veterans with your attendance. Modern day conveniences provide us with the ability to rewind and see it again. This dedication ceremony, however, is a once in a lifetime event. Along with your presence, remember someone with your memorial contribution to the Memorial Fund. All of us have memories of Vietnam Veterans in need of recognition.

A contribution to the Memorial Fund is an excellent way of remembering their service.

Thank you for your service and your continued support for the Tan Son Nhut Association.

The Memorial Committee



(Artistic concept of the Tan Son Nhut Air Base Memorial, by TSNA Member Gary Redlinski)

Tan Son Nhut Association
P. O. Box 236
Penryn PA 17564

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Annual Membership: \$20.00
Five Year Membership: \$80.00
Life Membership: \$180.00



IN MEMORY **MEMORIAL DAY, 2012**

IN MEMORIAM

Word has been received of the passing of TSNA member George D. Witmer, Carlisle, PA, on April 22. George was at TSN from May 65 to May 66, with the 6250th Transportation Squadron, 33rd TAC Group, where he was a Refueler Mechanic.

NEW MEMBERS



Mr. Guy J. Balistreri	WI	guyjbalistreri@gmail.com	Oct 67 - Dec 69	460th Field Maintenance Squadron
Mr. Duane Smith	NC	jumper20032@yahoo.com	Mar 67 - Mar 68	1876th Communications Squadron
Mr. Kenneth W. Fanty	OH	fantykh@live.com	Dec 68 - Dec 69	19th Spec. Ops. Squadron
Mr. James C. McBride	MO	amqizzical@yahoo.com	Nov 68 - Nov 69	USA STRATCOM Reg. Comm. Grp USArmy
SFC Robert Anselmo	IL	robert.anselmo@sbcglobal.net	Oct 66 - Dec 67	552nd TRANSCO (Car) Troop Command
Mr. Richard P. Busillo	PA	richardpbusillo@aol.com	Jun 67 - Jun 68	120th Assault Helicopter Company

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