



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

JANUARY 2018



From our TSNA Director of Reunion Planning,
Joe Kricho:

Our 2018 Reunion will be held at the Hope Hotel & Conference Center, located on Wright-Patterson AFB, OH.

The dates for the reunion are: Thursday – Sunday, Sep 20 -23, 2018.

I have created a new email address for the 2018 reunion. It is: tsna2018dayton@gmail.com.

To make hotel reservations for the 2018 Tan Son Nhut Association Reunion in Dayton, Ohio, September 20-23, here is what you MUST DO!

First of all, please note that you cannot get the discounted rate by doing your reservation on-line!

All reservations need to be made by telephone, to get the discounted rate! That number is: **937 879-2696. THIS IS NOT A TOLL-FREE NUMBER!!**

THERE IS NO DISCOUNT CODE FOR ON-LINE RESERVATIONS!

AND, when you start the reservation conversation with the hotel, please give the full name, "Tan Son Nhut Association", NOT "TSNA". That will help immensely for everything to get done correctly.

The Special Rate, is \$109.00 + tax. Be sure you are quoted that rate. That rate includes a full, hot, breakfast buffet.

Although physically located on the base, you do not have to go through a gate, or other USAF security measures to access the hotel.

It is located just off to the side, and just before, Gate 12A, which you can access from Highway 444 (Kaufmann Ave.)



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

TSNA 2018 REUNION

**Hope Hotel & Conference Center
Gate 12A, Wright - Patterson AFB**

SEPTEMBER 20-23, 2018

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

To all my Brothers, and Sisters, I wish you a very Happy New Year, and hope your Christmas was all you wanted it to be.

You know, I wear a cheap little silver ring that I picked up in my hospital gift shop, but it just fits my purpose. There are three words inscribed on it: faith, hope, and love. All are lower case, no capitals, but these words constantly remind me of the things I am to present to the people I minister to, and also are the three things that Jesus wants us to show to others.

Our faith is a strong feeling, deep inside, that motivates us to live as He wants us to, and believe in. To some, it is difficult to believe in something you cannot see, touch, smell, or taste, but He gives us many reasons to do so. Every day, and in many ways, we are shown that He exists, and places His hand in our lives..it only takes a little effort to see just when, and how this happens in your life, but if you open yourself to recognizing His presence, and what has been done, it really is easy to see. In my life, looking back over 70 years, it is much easier than when I was 20, or 30 years old..because there have been many more instances to recognize His hand in my life: like missing being involved in a mid-air collision because my plane miraculously did not start right away as usual, and that short time loss kept me from being at the spot of the collision. Both pilots made it to the ground, by the way, but their planes were totaled..a miracle in itself. Believe.

So, this new year, start taking a closer look into His hand in your lives, and I'll wager you will begin to see that your life is not without His help, guidance, and control over the occurrences of your own lives. He loves you all, and wants only the best for you. That is His will, and doing. He cares deeply for each and every one of you, enough to send His only Son here to redeem you. That is true love.

In this new year, I wish each and every one of you, faith renewed, hope for a bright future, and health, and love for you, and your loved ones. God bless you.

By His Grace,

Paul A. Subbie

Associate Chaplain
Tan Son Nhut Association



TET '68

MEMBER RESPONSES

In mid-December, 2017, I wrote to a group of TSNA members, who, according to the TSNA Master Records, were assigned to TSNAB on January 31, 1968.

Since it will be the 50th Anniversary of that date, I thought it would be good to get as many responses as I could.

Based on the TSNA records, Out of 503 members, there are 113 members who have Tet timing dates at TSN showing in their data.

I sent an email to all of them asking for stories about Tet '68.

There have been over 30 great responses so that not only is this issue full of them, but the February issue is also just about complete!

I hope you enjoy them as much as I have.

The responses I received follow!

Larry

I arrived at TSN on Sept. 20 1967 and was assigned to 377 CES. During that time we were doing "base beautification" which meant taking down all the sandbag bunkers, planting palm trees, new sidewalks, painting and remodeling buildings. My first commander's call, can't remember his name, stood up and held a nickel plated pearl handled 45 over his head and said "Men we're never gonna need these here". I was good with that. Everything was going along really well and I never thought the war would come to us.

Since Tet is a holiday most of the civilians that worked for CE were home and I think I had the day off. That evening , I watched a movie out on a patio in our area, went to bed about midnight. I remember waking up to the sound of something different and then the same sound again and someone yelled "that's incoming". Okay this is exciting , something to write home about. The next two or three rounds came way closer and were way louder and I realized at that point my life is in danger. This goes on for some time, maybe 45 minutes or so. After that, I take a look around. I can see some fires burning and I can smell the explosives in the air. Lots of small arms fire, the gunships are going crazy and you could hear fighting going on all around you. By daybreak , most of the fighting died down and I thought, well that's it, but we know that was just the start.

The next day I was an augmentee 377 SPS and that was a very memorable time spent with them. I got to do a lot of things on and off base that was really an experience.

Mike Barty, 377th CES, Sept. 1967-Sept. 1968

Thanks Larry, I've not forgotten and in addition, I keep it marked on my computer pop up calendar as "Day of Remembrance, Tet Offensive-1968" in honor my fellow Security Policeman who gave all at the 051 Bunker so that I could return home, at least physically, in one piece. This coming December 31st I celebrate the 50th anniversary of my arrival in country via Cam Rahn Bay, the last day of 1967, and took a hop sitting between pallets on a loaded cargo C-130 to TSN the next morning, so I had less than a month in country when we got to celebrate Tet. I have very few photos from that time, but as pictured below, I was able to attend the Memorial for them at the patched and reinforced 051 Bunker. I finally got to visit the Vietnam Memorial Wall in early July this year to pay my respects to my fallen brothers and sisters, shed a few tear and spoke a Prayer of thanks to the families of the fallen. Had the privilege of getting to meet Sen Bob Dole later that day when visiting the WWII Memorial. He was there with an Honor Flight with a group of Veterans from Kansas.

Stan Morris
Dec 67 – Dec 68
377th SPS



I was in the 377th Supply Squadron. My hooch was not far from the road that was across from the French cemetery. In the early morning it was quiet. Then we heard automatic weapons fire coming from the area of the cemetery. That was immediately followed by a series of whistle sounds, of the kind that a football coach would use. The weapons fire continued and then the base sirens sounded. Mortar rounds started coming in over the base.

Battle activity was coming in from all over the base with orange flashes. Occasionally a bullet would rip through our hooch and at about 0500 one hooch member said he had been hit in the ankle.

At about 0530 a Huey flew in low and fired rockets into a position near the cemetery.

Air Police in full battle dress ran through our area.

I don't recall everything that followed except my supply office was put under immediate battle command and our work schedule was 24/7. We sacked out wherever we could find a space on the floor or desk. It was risky taking breaks outside for a cigarette. The Air Police advised that the enemy was still on the grounds.

Mark Reveaux, May 67-May 68, 377th Supply Squadron

I was a SSgt and night shift NCOIC, APO Breakdown, Saigon AMT, when TET hit around 2AM, January 30, 1968. We occupied a slatted building backing up to perimeter fence and French Cemetery-were VC had obviously hidden. Initially, I was a bit confused as splinters flew but after a few seconds I realized we were being shot at. The VC were firing on us as we sorted mail. Shortly afterwards grenades and 122 MM rockets were hitting our compound and outside my building. I shouted hit the floor and directed my troops to crawl across a gravel road separating our building from the command compound. Our Commander, Captain Morioka had opened a CONEX and was issuing M-16s with two clips each. Me and other QRT SP Augmentees were quickly assigned perimeter defense near our building. We were instructed to fire at any incoming fire until it ceased. As the night wore on our ammo was replenished. By afternoon A1E aircraft were dropping bombs just outside perimeter fence and tanks were strategically positioned along fence firing into residential community outside the base. Smoke was choking. Somehow in this melee and my adrenaline pumping a piece of shrapnel about the size of quarter had hit me and was stuck in the front upper left of my flak jacket. One of my guys noticed asking me if I knew. I dug the shrapnel out and brought it back home. Jan still has it to this day.

Jim Faulkner
Mar 67-Mar 68
OL 1508 USAF Pac Postal Courier Service



Larry-

Terry Love here. I was with HHC, 1st Signal Brigade - Aviation Section (largest brigade in the U S Army - 22,000 men) based at Tan Son Nhut. Our barracks were at Camp Gaylor which was just inside of the main gate on the left hand side. I was there during the Tet Offensive. Our Aviation Section had around a dozen Hueys at the Heliport and about a dozen fixed-wing aircraft next to the Air America ramp. I have never seen so much "fireworks" in all of my life. The sky was full of red and green tracers during the dark hours. A few of the items that I recall were armed Huey gunships flying very low and very fast over the main entry way of TSN towards the heliport. They were the Razorback Platoon of the 120th Aviation Company based at the heliport at TSN.

Another outstanding memory was the fellow that got up into the canvas-covered radar dome. He was shooting down into our compound at Camp Gaylor. In Camp Gaylor, we were all armed with small arms, but we also had M-60 machine guns that we took off of our Huey helicopters based at the Heliport. I believe that there was an article in the TSN newsletter a couple of years ago about that incident.

I also recall LOTS of infantry soldiers (I believe that they were ARVN) with an M-113 APC about sixth or eighth soldier walking towards the main gate. Lots of Air Force vehicles driving up and down the main road very fast - some with sirens blaring.

The mortar and/or artillery rounds hitting something somewhere was a concern to all of us Army personnel at Camp Gaylor. I also recall quite a bit of black smoke rising from the area around the flight lines. The 8th Aerial Port was holed with lots of damaged aircraft nearby.

A few days after the Tet Offensive, for some long ago forgotten reason, we had an armed convoy that went from TSN to Bien Hoa just north of the airport. The damage at Saigon and the area nearby was massive. Any civilian vehicles that I saw had massive number of holes in them and most were burned. Lots of buildings were nothing but rubble. There were lots of civilians around all of the area. That means that the VC were all gone by now.

Cheers,

Terry Love
lluvplanes@aol.com
1st Signal Brigade, (USA) , Aviation Section
66-Mar 68



Hi Larry

I was still living out at the Ponderosa compound that the 16th TRS had as our EM Quarters!

Didn't start living on base until the beginning of Feb. 68.

My experience with the TET offensive was on Feb. 18, 68 when the base was hit with 118 rockets and mortars. Especially the one that hit the RF-4C I was standing in the Revetment with by a 122mm rocket with shrapnel hitting me. I was shell-shocked and got into the bunker at the end of the revetment!

Ricci Pineau

Dec 67-Dec 68

16th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron



I was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Mobile EOD Team at Tan Son Nhut unit and our office was in the 900 buildings across from the VNAF air park.

My AFSC was not that of an EOD type however I learned very fast how to work with the unit and do some of what they did (morgue duty), etc./ due to the work load, as my duties were not really needed.

I also assisted the AP's at the gate near our office/hutch/barrack's when needed and I had the time. During my tour at Tan Son Nhut I also flew with the Specter birds occasionally as an observer.

Terry Longpre

Jan 68-Jan 69

377th Supply Squadron



Larry,

I had just returned a week from R & R in Hawaii where I spent a wonderful time with my future wife. I lived in the 800 area, hutch 841 right down the street from the main gate. Kind of a scary night, no weapons, flak jackets or helmets due to stupid leadership.

Norbert A. Pirri SMSgt retired

377th Civil Engineer Squadron



I was on TANGO ONE, the guy with the Southern Accent on the audio tape of the attack. My memory of 50 years ago, started with a briefing by OSI (SA JOE WORLEY) to a group of us that "something" was up and to be extra alert on our towers for activity. It began with rocket and mortar attacks and confusion - should the QRTs roll or not roll. I was calling for gun ships on the west end as a lot of reports were coming in there and explosions. I remember how calm the voice was from the Controller in CSC, calm, cool and collected. Also, the calmness of Capt Carl Denisio in all of his transmissions. If either was in a panic, neither showed it. The recording tells the story of the 051 Bunker and the calls for help due to injuries. The west end was overrun but we stopped the advance at the MLR (Main Line of Resistance).

The Vietnamese Airborne area where my tower was, was abandoned. So I was basically over-run, maybe for two days. I had all the water I needed and 3 cases of C Rations, so I was set. Only worry was running out of battery power for my radios. I would take some fire, but based on my high position and angle nothing came close but could hear them hit the steel reinforced concrete tower on occasion. The access was double locked at two points, so didn't expect company and had a case of grenades if needed.

Throughout the day, I called in positions and movements and areas that I could see mortars/rockets being launched from. We finally pushed what was remaining off the west end where they were hit by F-4s and gun ships, an open killing field. When I was finally relieved I was surprised to realize I never fired a single round of ammunition.

I was later awarded the Vietnamese Honor Medal, 1st Class, by the Vietnamese Airborne Commander, as he noticed I was on my tower when they pulled out and still there when they returned. Actually 1st Class is an officer award, not enlisted but nobody wanted to correct him. Six months later, I entered OSI and completed a career of 26 Years. It all seems like a blur now!

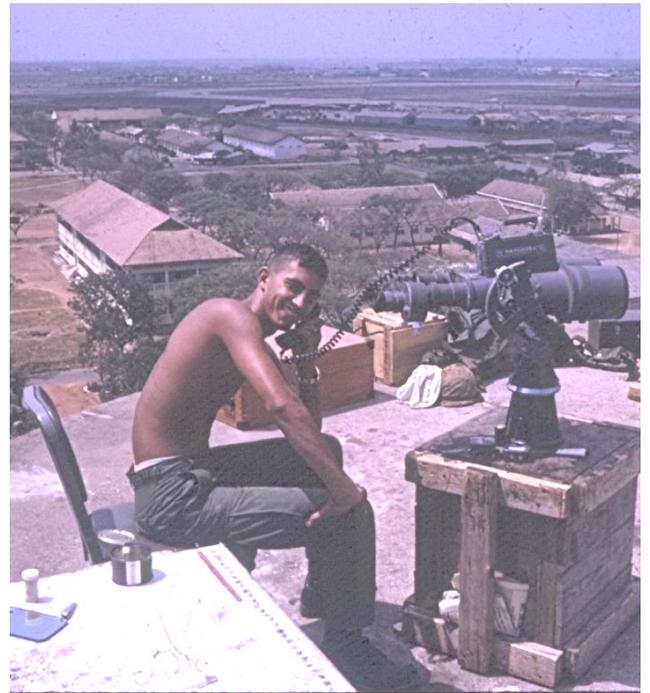
Sgt Steve Rivers 377 APS/SPS (Jul 67 - Jul 68), yes, the one mentioned in the book by Keith Nolen, "The Battle for Saigon" having a ring side seat for TET.

(See Rivers' Pictures on Next Page)

RIVERS' PHOTOS



Relieved (of duty)



Baking in the sun, why no skin cancer I will never know.



VC pulling back



Various radios used to communicate and alert base to mortar attack



Hi Larry,

Sure do remember; ingrained forever into memory. 22-Jun-1968 thru 29-Jun-1969.

Thanks for all you do.

Best regards,

Jim Augeri
68-69
Co. A, 69 Sign. Battalion

Hi Larry,

I was assigned to Alpha sector Charlie (night shift) flight of the 377th Security Police SQ in October 1967 after a few days at Bien Hoa when I was reassigned to TSN due to manpower shortages. I was an A2C but received my A1C orders (buck sergeant) that followed me two months late to Nam.

On the night of Jan 30 1968, I was assigned to Tango 14 from a bunker to assist Sgt Autry and we were issued an M60 with a few thousand rounds of ammo due to the alert status. Tango 14 was a 4x4 foot one man observation tower on the far North perimeter in the old Diesel dump facing the "Old North Church" and the small villa and rice paddies near the perimeter.

Hell broke loose around 330 AM when the base was hit hard at the West end and locations at the east north and north-west perimeters took incoming diversionary small arms and RPG fire.

We could hear all the confusing radio chatter going on all over the security net. We and some bunkers took fire from the North Church area and returned fire with the M60. On the second night of the attack we called in sporadic sniper fire and were surprised when the VNAF A1E Skyraiders strafed and Bombed the villa area beyond the perimeter.

Sgt Autry was reposted on a jeep patrol on the second day and I was finally relieved on the morning of Feb 3.

We heard about the major battle at the west end and the KIA and WIA from our fellow Security Forces. Also the many casualties that the 3/4 Cav of the 25th infantry Div who battled down from Cu Chi to save our butts and TSN and MACV!!!

Also cannot forget the ARVN Ranger battalion that was on standby and who were sent into the meat grinder on the west end and who fought bravely and experienced heavy casualties.

Although we were on red alert, none of us were really prepared for that battle. When Keith Nolan's book, "The Battle For Saigon" was published we learned just how massive that battle was and what could have happened if the 377th SPS had not held on and fought bravely until help arrived.

Then on the night of February 18 the first "major" rocket attack happened at about 0100 hours when approximately 80 or more Russian 122mm Katyusha tube fired rockets hit the base. We reported the launch from Tango 14 as large flares going up, but when they started hitting we realized what they were. Many more rocket attacks followed throughout 1968.

Because of my rocket spotting in Tango 14, I was moved to Tango 10 which was one of the three main BC Artillery scope manned towers. I remained in the rocket spotting towers throughout the remainder of my five tours at Tan Son Nhut. I served with many guys who rotated out of the towers because they could not tolerate the constant intense and extreme vigilance at night watching for enemy artillery. In late 1969 I was promoted to SSGT and made NCOIC of a new Tango Sector comprised of those three Rocket spotting towers T1, T10, and T Alpha.

I have arranged for a mini reunion of the tower guys that I have maintained contact with over the years and we will be at the USAF TET reunion for all USAF Security forces who fought during that period.

I should write a book about my five tours at TSN. I kept an accurate daily diary with names, times and dates of important actions that I have matched with official USAF reports since published and made public.

I realize that due to time and circumstance, I could have been assigned to Echo Bunker 1 at the 051 gate with my in country Massachusetts training buddy, William Cyr KIA 1/31/68. RIP young man, you will always be young!

To all my fellow TSN survivors of TET and post TET. When the base sirens were warning you to get to shelters quickly to avoid death or injury, please don't forget that a handful of Security Police who were trained to spot and plot enemy artillery incoming fire were out there day and particularly during long nights vigilantly watching the horizon for hour after boring tedious stressful hour to make certain the warnings were made early. I salute and commend all those men who worked the towers but were not properly commended for a tough job done very well.

Tom Tessier
Nov 67-Aug 70
377th Security Police

TET MORNING WAS A SURPRISE TO ALL OF US. We were due to go to the bomb dump but couldn't get there . No truck to pick us up. When Skip finally showed up early morning, 6 of us with only one M16 headed for the the dump. Our regular route was outside road in front of bunker 051. Instead we cut straight across the runway with firing all around us. When we got to the bomb dump we went to work distributing Ammo to who ever showed up. We distributed to all branches of the service. We even had a chopper show up. Mac and I had to make a Flare and rocket run to the flight line. We had to share the only 2 flack jackets we had. We had to pass under the church steeple on the north end of the base, that a sniper was using, the security guards were keeping him busy. Outside of our Alpha area we had very little idea what was going on. That night we spent the night on the top of the bunker on guard. To say we were ready would be a joke. It was a long and tense 2 days. Picture is the AMMO GANG ,me on the top right.

Frederick C. Soth, III
 Sep 67 - Mar 69
 3778th Supply



As a 20-year old E-3, I arrived at TSN in early January 1968. I was on orders to be assigned to the 377th Combat Support Group at TSN, very quickly I was transferred to the Field Maintenance unit and sent to the "tire shop". I spent less than a day there before once again being reassigned to Det. 1, 460th TRW, specifically, the RB-57E "Patricia Lynn" unit. The unit had four RB-57's, even though we never had more than three on base, as one was always back "in the states" being re-configured with the latest and greatest technology for reconnaissance. We worked two 12-hour shifts, and as the new guy I spent the early weeks on the Day Crew, where I met William "Bill" Cook.

The actual night of the first attack I was in my bunk in the 1200 Area trying to catch some "Z's". As the first rockets hit, it was very confusing and disorienting, trying to grab clothes, helmet, boots, and flak vest. I decided that if I was going to die, it would be with my boots on....so since they needed someone for night crew, I quickly volunteered. At least, I would be in a better position to run when trouble started. On night shift, I worked with Gary Devena, Lawrence Paul St. Julian, and Felix High. Together, we spent many nights "hunkered" down in bunkers, revetments, and at the height of fighting on base, in Base Ops armed with M-16's. Fortunately, none of our guys was injured nor were the RB's damaged. We continued to launch missions nightly amid all the "fireworks", always keenly aware of the rockets, mortars, and snipers.

My story is not as hostile and scary as some others, but I entered TSN, a very naïve, southern boy, but left wiser than my years. I have attempted on numerous occasions to contact many of my fellow crewmembers, but have not been very successful. Within the past year, Bill Cook and I have found each other and have shared emails and phone calls, we are both looking forward to the 2018 Reunion in Dayton, to see each other for the first time in fifty years!

I would be remiss, if I did not give a "shout out" to the 377th Security Police, and others who kept us flight line grease monkeys safe, so that we could perform our duties. Honor and remembrance to those who fell, and so thankful to have served with those that were able to return home safely.

May God Bless America and all of it Warriors...

Richard A. Cooley, S/Sgt 1966-1970. United States Air Force



How I Spent TET 1968

I was assigned to the 1876th Comm Sq where I worked the switchboard that served 7th Air Force HQ. We were located in a small building in the 7th AF HQ compound, about 100 feet from the main building. When Tet '68 started, I was working the night shift, from 1800 to 0600.

It was around midnight and time for my break. I stepped outside to smoke a cigarette. Even at midnight it was quite warm and humid. There were quite a few fireworks going off. This was not unusual as it was the most important holiday of the year for the Vietnamese people. Think of it as our New Year's and the 4th of July rolled into one.

After a while, I began to get the feeling that something wasn't right. And sure as hell, all hell broke loose. No longer was it just firecrackers, bottle rockets, and M80's. This was for real. Now it was small arms fire; automatic weapons fire; mortars; and rockets. People were trying to KILL each other.

I went back inside to the switchboard and it was lit up like a Christmas tree. (Sorry for using such a trite expression.) Over the course of several hours, calls were coming in from bases throughout Vietnam. We had a large map on the wall, and we could track the calls coming in from the North down to where we were located just outside of Saigon. Not all of the calls were coming from other Air Bases. Many were calls that had been patched in from Army units out in the field requesting air support. It was on the verge of chaos. In addition to serving 7th AF HQ, we also supported the Army's MACV HQ (Military Assistance Command Vietnam.)

I can't recall having another break from my duties at the switchboard in the next 12-18 hours. I do know that I was relieved of duty by the incoming shift sometime the next day. By that time, it was apparent that we (Tan Son Nhut AB) were under a full-on assault by 3 battalions (1200 – 3000 men) of both North Vietnamese, as well as Viet Cong forces.

Again, I don't know how I was able to return to my quarters, or, how I was able to get ready for my upcoming shift that evening. During the day, I witnessed both US Army attack helicopters engaging enemy forces along the base perimeter, as well as, Vietnamese AF attack aircraft doing the same.

Somehow, I managed to get some sleep, as well as to take a shower, change clothes, and get ready for another 12-hour shift on the switchboard.

Sounds like just another day between your house and the office. Right?

Trust me, nothing could be further from the truth. You try taking a shower, or shaving, in the midst of an attack on where you live. At least we had the luxury of having a latrine with a shower. Pity the poor souls in the field for days on end who had neither.

Yes. We had it better than those in the field. But, then again, we went through the same attacks. Rockets and mortars, as well as small arms and automatic weapons fire, don't discriminate between those in the field; or those who are in the so-called "rear echelon." In Vietnam, there was no rear echelon. We were all in it together.

SMSgt Joseph S. Kricho
Dec 67-Dec 68
1876 Communications Squadron



Have not talked much about those days but after fifty years I still have visions as if it were yesterday. I was the night security force commander and on 30 Jan it seemed like every base but ours was attacked. That next morning we were placed in our strongest alert posture. My shift went to work at 1800 with all 300 plus of us on duty. All was quiet until about 0300 when we had some firing on the East end and then the West end position (051 Bunker) called in and said they had a lot of movement in front of them. I responded to the call and ended up in a ditch in front of the 051 gate about 50 yards from the bunker. I saw the VC pull up in a cab and fire a rpg into the bunker. I fired at least 20 rounds into the cab but the rocket had hit home. The security policemen in the bunker who were not wounded or killed returned fire and continued to fight for at least twenty more minutes. Four brave men lost their lives in that bunker that night (Sgts Fischer, Cyr, Mills, and Hebron) but their heroics and perseverance allowed us to respond with reaction forces and defend the base. I am forever reminded of those four young men who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Mel Grover, 377 SPS Aug 67- Aug 68

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

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Base Chapel Sunday Service TSN AFB 1967

Photo from George Greenwood Collection

NEW MEMBERS

Barry T. Bergeron Madisonville LA btiger67@bellsouth.net Sep 69 - Sep 70 377th CSGroup High Priority Parts Delivery

IN MEMORIAM

Mr.	Dennis	Lander	Lakewood	CA	Nov 67 - Nov 68	8th Aerial Port Squadron
Mr.	Anthony	Tidwell	Litchfield	MN	Feb 71 - Feb 72	460th FMS
CMSgt	Robert	Nelson	Anchorage	AK	64-65 & 72	

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