

# Revetments

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



"All Included - None Excluded"

Volume 4, Number 8

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

May, 2002

The background of the cover is a dense collage of names, including: LEE HARVIN, STEVEN T, EY L HOLBROOK, DANIEL HOLCOMB, A, LLEY, DENNIS D KING, LAUNEY E KING, MARI, DONALD LOZANO, ALBERT MA, MOHA, GRINO, NEAS, N E O, B PAR, DAVID, A PC, HARRY E, ART, P THU, N VAL, WALTER, D VIC, DERSO, A BAL, AMES, EAKE, P FRAS, UDSC, T, THO, R, FR, ONLEY, INSON, PROSE, E SIMS, ON, S, E G BO, R BRETT, WARREN R BROWN, DAVID J CAVIS, EMENTS, CHARLES W CLINE, DAVID A CRAM, IRRE CONTRERAS, HOWARD M COX, LARRY, D DAVIS, ROBERT E DOOLEY, J, OXEY, T, FOSTER, ARTHUR D FREDERICK, W, GRAHAM, RANDALL A HENZE, L HILL, N, JON A JULIA, KENNETH V, JAMES A, RENCE, ROLAND P LEVESQUE, LIN, GEE, GREGORY MCINTYRE, JOE, VAK, LARRY D POWEL, S, GEORGE J SCH, SSLEY, TH, JERRY W, CHAN, IAN.

*"Pilgrimage of Honor ....*  
*... Reunion of Remembrance*

Tan Son Nhut Asse.  
Reunion 2002

**Mission Accomplished!**

# ★ Reunion 2002 Report ★

The Tan Son Nhut Association Reunion 2002 was, by all accounts, an unqualified success. Both President John Peele and the office of Public Affairs have been receiving constant feedback from the roughly sixty members who attended the reunion in Arlington and Washington, D.C.

## Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

A surprising number of members arrived on this rainy Thursday, some already checked in earlier into the National Airport Hilton. There were a few of the usual special rate problems that are encountered at any reunion and they were quickly taken care of. The accommodations were fair enough, the hotel staff was polite and helpful, and the food reasonably good. Ms. Kim Bayes of the Reunion Brat reunion planners conducted the registration through the afternoon and handed out the "kits" which contained among a number of things, an outstanding name badge that included your Tan Son Nhut unit and period you were there. There was quiet socializing in the pleasant Tan Son Nhut Hospitality Suite.

## Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup>

Friday dawned an absolutely beautiful warm spring day. The "pilgrimage of pride" started in earnest as we climbed into the bus and went north, crossing the always impressive Memorial Bridge, circling the ever-imposing magnificence of the Lincoln Memorial and parking on Constitution Avenue right at the entrance to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. At the invitation of Member Thomas Tessier (Nashua, New Hampshire), a close friend, Jan Scruggs the founder and President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation, met us and delivered an interesting talk on the background for the approval and building of this most moving of the city's monuments - the most visited in the capital. We laid a wreath and our chaplains, James Warrington (Falls Church, Virginia, and Billy Lowe (Cherryville, North Carolina) conducted a short blessing and benediction.

Then it was back to the Potomac River landing in Alexandria where we boarded the cruise vessel, *Nina's Dandy*, for a luncheon cruise up the river. The vessel passed Bolling Air Base and then we could view most of the important buildings and monuments of Washington. We turned and headed back at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This cruise was highly appreciated and many members would like to see it as a permanent fixture in any future meetings or reunions in Washington. It was both relaxing and an underscore to our theme of "pride."

Our final destination, at four-thirty, was the old chapel that serves Arlington National Cemetery at Fort Myer. Chaplains Warrington and Lowe met us on the steps of this beautiful, colonial-styled chapel with its tall handsome steeple. They conducted a most moving memorial service dedicated to all those we left behind at Tan Son Nhut and in Vietnam. There was no organist, but at the end of the service, Chaplain Warrington told us to pick up the hymnals and turn to Hymn 151. He and Chaplain Lowe started to sing and the chapel was filled with all of our voices, proudly, with much emotion, singing all four stanzas of *The Battle Hymn of The Republic*.

On the way back to the hotel, we were taken by the wing of the Pentagon that was hit on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Repairs are practically complete.

## Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>

At 8:30 a.m., the First Annual Meeting of the Association was convened by the Chairman Pro Tem, Bob Need. The TSNA Constitution was approved by a total vote (those present and those voting previously

by mail) of 98 Yea; and 1 Nay. It was immediately referred to a special committee and parliamentarian for review and revisions. John Peele was elected President, and several other officers were elected and will be reported later. Chaplain Lowe swore in the new president, Peele's hand placed on a catholic missal that had been in the Tan Son Nhut chapel and was inscribed in both English and Vietnamese. Discussion of the annual budget was deferred until a later date. New business included discussions regarding future reunions. The last item was a motion that Tan Son Nhut Association reunions always be in April. The motion carried by a majority vote.

The afternoon was spent in sight-seeing, shopping, and Wayne Salisbury (Roanoke, Virginia) had brought his computer and scanner and set up shop in the hospitality room to make copies of members photos for other members.

At six, the members attended the cocktail hour in the banquet ballroom. At seven, the honor guard posted the colors. Chaplain Warrington dedicated the missing persons table, and the members rose separately to introduce themselves and their guests.

After the dinner, Major General Edward F. Grillo, Jr., President of the Air Force Memorial Foundation gave an interesting talk on the progress being made on the Air Force Memorial which will now be placed on a embankment (the highest in Washington) near the Pentagon. General Grillo also read a moving message from member General John Shaud who was supposed to have been our other speaker, but was called away to San Antonio on business. He is the Executive Director of the Air Force Association.

## Sunday Morning, April 28<sup>th</sup>

This probably became the climax of our great reunion. Scheduled as a Memorial Breakfast, Chaplains Warrington and Lowe made it that - and much more. They provided an invocation and a brief homily. Then Chaplain Warrington proceeded to the lectern and announced that he had a list of those killed at Tan Son Nhut. Chaplain Warrington was very stern and serious as he looked around the large room. "When I read a name and unit I will pause, and if you knew the person, I want you to repeat, 'Died on the field of battle with honor.'" For the next twenty or so moments the room was tense and charged with emotion. So many were killed from the 377<sup>th</sup> Security Police Squadron - and there were many TSNA police members present. When finished, Chaplain Warrington closed his book and silently left the lectern. Not another word - no benediction - nothing but silence. It took the members a while to come back to reality. Quietly, an obviously shaken President John Peele bade the members goodbye. Reunion 2002 was over.

## Epilogue

The motto for this reunion was not empty words - our members found that they truly did arrive at their destination in a pilgrimage of pride. They commented about the diversity of the TSNA and how they just now were finding out that there so many other skills and duties than theirs on Tan Son Nhut, and found a new fascination in meeting and talking to each other about this diversity. And reunion of remembrance? Yes, for quite often laughter broke out loudly, while at the same time, tears were not too far from the eyes, as we remembered and recalled the good and the bad, the funny and the disgusting, the heroism and the tragedy. This Reunion 2002 set a pattern, a direction for future reunions that will be more than buddy-buddy get-togethers, that instead will be personal events of pride in and reflection of the service we each gave to our God, our family, our flag and country.



# Friday at The Wall

Friday, April 26, opened with an early morning trip to the wall. The Tan Son Nhut Association members were met there by the Founder, and President of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, Jan Scruggs who sincerely welcomed us, and gave us interesting comments on his background and his struggle to bring this great memorial into being. TSNA President, John Peele, and longtime member, James Smith, laid a wreath in the Association's name. Our two TSNA chaplains, The Reverends James Warrington (Virginia) and Billy Lowe (North Carolina) reminded us of the sacrifices of those whose names were before us, and blessed our humble offering at this holy wall.



Member John Smith (L) and President John Peele place the Association's wreath at "The Wall."



TSNA Member Jim Fahr and John Peele, both together in the 460<sup>th</sup> FMS share a bittersweet moment at "The Wall"



Jan Scruggs,  
Founder & President V V M



TSNA Chaplains Warrington and Lowe bless our wreath and offer a benediction.



Members Mark Fleisher (L) and Bob Need (R) worked together in the same division in Vietnam and remember the deaths of their buddies and coworkers, Richard Charles Ramsey (February 18, 1968), and John Jerome Kopfer (February 21, 1968). The 122mm. rocket that killed Ramsey fell in the office of the Combat News Division (DXI, Tan Son Nhut Air Base.



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**Vice President/Comptroller Ben White**  
**Vice President/Secretary John Evans**  
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#### Membership Information

Annual Membership \$20.00

Five Year Membership \$80.00

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Send to Public Affairs, address above.



### Thoughts of Our Sky Pilot

By  
Chaplain James Warrington

## Death is not final!

The "wall" located on the mall in Washington, D.C. lists the names of those men and women who died as a result of their military activities in Viet Nam. Was the death of each person so named the final act, is that all there is, nothing more? Consider the very existence of the wall itself and why it was built. Consider the great number of people who visit the wall each year. Death is not final.

There is constant human experience often in the form of intuition or premonition, to underline the truth that death is not final. An interesting example is Colonel David Marcus, the West Pointer, who helped to create the Army of Israel. Colonel Marcus was

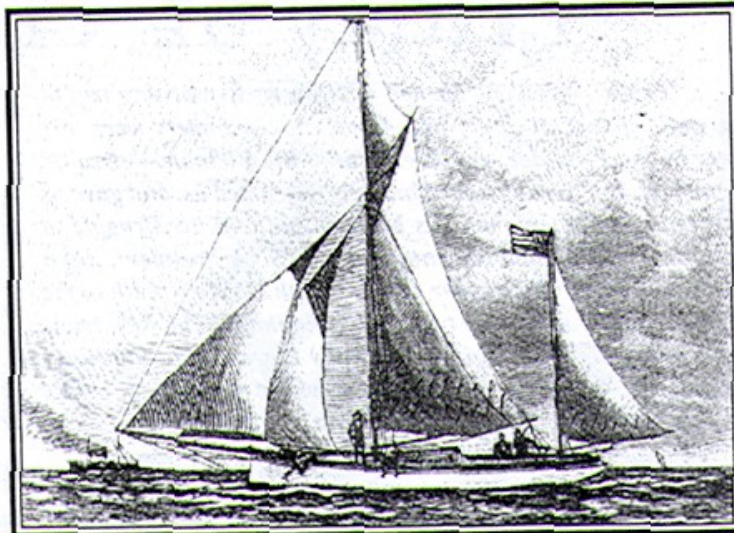
killed while leading Haganah forces in the Jerusalem Road battle on 11 June 1948. He seemed to have a forewarning of his death as indicated by this note found in his wallet and subsequently forwarded to his widow:

"I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and heads for the blue ocean. The ship is an object of beauty and strength, and I stand and watch her until at length she is only a ribbon of white cloud just where the sea and the sky come to mingle with each other. Then someone at my side says, 'There! She's gone!'"

"Gone where? Gone from my sight - that is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my presence, and just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of destination. Her diminished size is in me, not in her. Just as the moment when someone at my side says, 'There! She's gone!,' there are others ready to take up the glad shout, 'There! She comes!' And that is Dying."

\* \* \*

(Chaplain Warrington and Lowe are available for pastoral counseling and other functions. Call Public Affairs for appointments. (757) 627-7746)



"There! She comes!"

## TSNA Reunion Trivia

from the desk of President Peele

At the Tan Son Nhut Association Reunion 2002, twenty states were represented, Oregon and California being the farthest from Washington.

Sixteen different units were represented, the 460<sup>th</sup> Field Maintenance being the most represented.

The earliest Tan Son Nhuter was Robbie Robertson (Winchester, Va.) 1963-1964; the latest to serve was Erwin Nase (Hyattsville, Md.) 1973-1974.

Been to all 5 reunions: J. Peele (Riverdale, Md.), Dean Gard (Bourbonnais, Ill.), William Coup (Boca Raton, Fl.), and Jimmy Smith (Washington, D.C.).

There were nineteen "first timers" at this reunion.

### Special Thanks

goes to everybody who attended, and Carol Bessette (Springfield, Va.) gets a gold star for her professional tour comments during our tour of Washington. Wayne Salisbury (Roanoke, Va.) and Mark Fleisher (Horseheads, N.Y.) get special kudos for the all the great photography in this issue . . . which Revetments immediately does its best to screw up.

## Friday Afternoon & Evening, April 26



The TSNA Reunion group aboard the *Nina's Dandy* sailing up the Potomac River. The cruise included a delicious meal and was two and a half hours long. Beautiful warm spring weather, and just about everybody wants to do it again – soon!



At 7 p.m. Tom Tessier (Nashua, N.H.) who had seven tours of duty with the 377<sup>th</sup> Security Police Squadron gave a fascinating slide presentation of his duties in the large "A" towers that spotted rocket attacks against the base and provided immediate warnings and coordinates. The presentation lasted nearly two hours and generated a great deal of lively discussion. (The tower shown above is not one of Tessier's, it is a perimeter tower)



At 4:30 p.m. the TSNA Reunion group arrived at the beautiful Arlington Chapel on Fort Myer. Chaplain Warrington (with Chaplain Lowe, not shown) conducted a solemn yet uplifting memorial tribute to those who fell at Tan Son Nhut and in Vietnam.

## Morning & Afternoon, Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>



Chair Pro Tem Bob Need opens the First Annual Meeting of the TSNA at 8:30 in the morning. The Constitution was adopted and the election of 3 officers was held. John Peele was elected President; Ben White, Vice President/Comptroller; Bob Need, Vice President/Executive Director; and Jerry Norville as Parliamentarian and chairman of the constitution review board. Discussions were held on future planning for the Association.



Chaplain Billy Lowe (L) administers the oath of office to incoming President John Peele. The oath reads, "I, John Peele, do hereby swear and affirm that I will uphold the Constitution of the Tan Son Nhut Assoc. and will vigorously support all program properly adopted by the Board of Directors and the members of the Association. I will unstintingly support and lead programs that will continue the expansion of the membership. I shall serve with vigor, responsibility and pride, so help me God."



Many, like Al Keeler and his friends spent the afternoon in the TSNA Hospitality Suite exchanging stories and memories. Al's are great and range from B-17s in WWII to classical music and instruments.



Dr. Shay, (L) who worked in VNAF hospitals, seems to have the rapt attention of Bill Carlson, (Center Point, OR) (C) and Robbie Robertson (Winchester, VA).



Member Taylor McKinnon's CD *The Victors*, dedicated to the 377<sup>th</sup> Security Police Squadron, was one sale in the Hospitality Suite. Also, there was the Member Thomas Joyce 4CD set of *The Battle for Tan Son Nhut Air Base* on sale. They were \$19.95 (2 for \$30) and \$49.95 respectively. Do you have your copies of these fine presentations yet?

## The Banquet, Saturday Evening, April 27<sup>th</sup>



Wayne Salisbury and John Peele arrive at the Banquet Hall. Wayne may be the President of the Old Dominion TSNA Chapter being formed in Virginia.



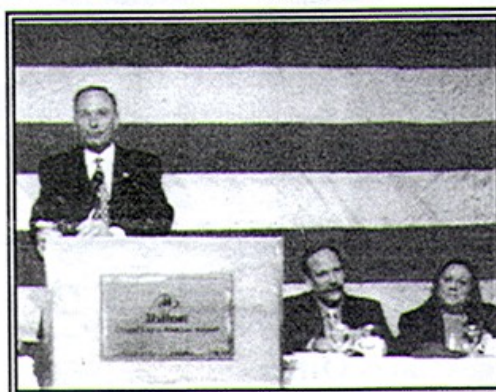
College Park, Maryland, Air Force ROTC cadets sharply post the national colors.



Chaplain Warrington gave a moving dedication to the Missing Persons table.



Salisbury took this picture and said it should be Peele saying, "All right, guys, sit the hell down and keep quiet." Such was not the case.



Major General Edward F. Grillo, Jr., President of the Air Force Memorial Foundation (L) gave the reunion an interesting and encouraging report on the imminent construction of the Air Force Memorial.



*Good bye until next year – we'll see you then!*

## New Printer Urgently Needed



The 2522 with ARDF, Sheet/Sure  
and 2500 Sheet D.C.

Nearly four years ago Public Affairs Officer, Bob Need, purchased a Monroe Copier/Printer. The printer was supposed to be relatively new and was said to have been only a floor model in the Richmond, Virginia Monroe office. Shortly after the purchase Monroe went out of business. For a short time maintenance was provided by Savin, and then the contract was passed on to McKendree Imaging Systems (Savin) in Norfolk. For three years they have provided excellent servicing, but the machine was much older that purported to be by Monroe. More and more it has become increasingly difficult to publish *Revetments*, and is becoming virtually impossible to use. Forty-three issues of *Revetments* have been published, and thousands of other Association publications, forms and documents. McKendree has offered to provide us with a ultra-modern new Savin 2522 (shown on the left) for only \$6,487.16, with a \$500 annual maintenance contract. One TSNA member has already made a pledge of \$1,000. Please help us upgrade our printing abilities so we can give you more professional publications. Do Not Send Money -- send pledges to Public Affairs Office, Tan Son Nhut Association, Suite 709, 330 West Brambleton Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23510 - or - FAX: (757) 627-0878 - or - E-Mail: [hercules29@worldnet.att.net](mailto:hercules29@worldnet.att.net)

For further information call Bob Need at (757) 627-7746  
Thank you, please help us as soon as you can.



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Renewal Date -



Reunion 2003!  
April  
Start making plans now!

37660+3289

