



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

THIS IS WHAT I REMEMBER

By Dave Koopman
460th FMS

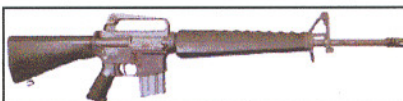
This is what I remember of May the 6th 1968, when a group of us from the 460th TRW - FMS helped stop the VC from over running Tan Son Nhut. This stand off attack remains among my strongest memories of Viet Nam. I don't remember ever feeling more alive, but at the same time feeling closer to death. This battle changed my perception of life and caused me to mature beyond my 21 years.

I had been working the night shift in the SOAP Lab, which was located inside the Engine Shop. SOAP was an acronym for Spectrometric Oil Analysis Program; engine oil was burned in the SOAP machine to create a spectrum of colors, which corresponded to different varieties and amounts of metal content. The purpose of this was to predict engine wear.

After my shift that morning; I rode my bicycle back to my hooch and arrived there shortly after dawn. I lived in hooch number 1245, which was located south west of the main gate in the 1200 area, next to the Tan

Son Nhut South perimeter fence, and across the old French cemetery from the road to Cholon.

I had just dropped into my bunk when I heard a couple of loud explosions; followed by the base attack siren going off. I grabbed my uniform, boots, helmet, and flack vest. Then I ran for the bunker outside, where I got dressed while I waited for the all clear. Obviously some thing was going on, because I could hear occasional small arms fire. When I stepped out of the bunker I noticed a group of Airmen were standing in front of the arms locker; placed between my hooch 1245 and 1244 next to it. They were arguing loudly with the Airman who had the key. They wanted him to pass out the M-16's, but he said he wouldn't release them with out a direct order from the base commander. Some one said to him, "We can worry about the base commander later; we're drawing fire, hand them out now before we all get killed, make it quick or we'll kick the crap out of you and take them". This statement facilitated the quick release of the weapons.



ADC PRIME BEEF

Edited and re-written by Larry Fry from information provided by SMSgt. Bruce Swafford.

Comments from an email to TSNA VP Larry E. Fry from Bruce Swafford regarding "Prime Beef": "My first deployment to TSN was Dec. 1961 to Feb. 1962. We were a small team of CE people, 5 civilians and 2 military. Some of us were from Hq. PACAF, Hawaii and others from 13th AF, Clark AB. We first lived and operated out of a warehouse on TSN, across from the Civilian Air Terminal, where we ate all our meals. Then in mid-January the Embassy relocated us to the Majestic Hotel down along the Saigon River. We were on a classified project and myself who was a TSGT at that time and an AIC from Clark had to wear civilian clothes. I remember an AF Doctor from Tachikawa was at TSN, all of us in our team had bad cases of diarrhea and the Doc gave us plenty of paregoric to tighten us up".

REDHORSE Association

Can Do - Will Do - Have Done



Prime BEEF
RED HORSE

ADC PRIME BEEF

(CONTINUED)

ADC "PRIME BEEF" DEPLOYMENT TO VIETNAM TO BUILD REVETMENTS:

To assist the Republic of Vietnam in their struggle with Communist Forces, large numbers of U.S. Air Force strike aircraft were deployed to Southeast Asia where pavement for aircraft parking was at a premium. Operational requirements made deployments necessary before an emergency construction program could provide enough new aircraft pavement. The resulting aircraft parking situation was of grave concern since aircraft were parked with compromises in safety and vulnerable to enemy attack. This condition generated an urgent need for the erection of protective aircraft revetments.

The urgency of an aircraft revetment program was unquestionable but existing construction agencies in Southeast Asia, already overtaxed, could not be used effectively. Hq PACAF requested the use of "PRIME BEEF" (Base Engineer Emergency Force) teams to erect revetments

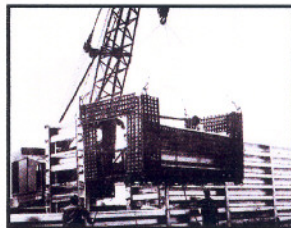
Major Air Commands were tapped by Hq USAF in July 1965 to provide "PRIME BEEF" Teams for deployment to Southeast Asia. ADC and ATC hand picked highly skilled personnel from several base civil engineering squadrons to form two 25 man "PRIME BEEF" construction teams. SAC provide a 3 man Advanced Survey Team from March AFB, California, and a 25 man "PRIME BEEF" construction team from Biggs AFB, Texas.

The deployment would give the

Air Force the chance to demonstrate a construction capability in a combat zone to satisfy an urgent operational requirement that could not be effectively met by other construction agencies. The "PRIME BEEF" accomplishments could lead to the justification for the development of large Air Force Civil Engineering construction units.

On 5 August 1965 MSGT Bruce F. Swafford, ADC Team; SSGT Stanley Holmes, ATC Team; and SSGT Ed Monroe, SAC Team, arrived Tan Son Nhut Air Base. SSGT Holmes then went to Bien Hoa Air Base and SSGT Monroe to DaNang Air Base. These three NCO's were responsible for setting up final arrangements for the teams prior to their arrival.

The three main "PRIME BEEF" construction teams of 25 men each less 1 each Advance NCO, airlifted from the United States, arrived at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam on 8 August 1965. Lt General Joseph H Moore, Commander of 2nd Air Division met the aircraft and welcomed all the "PRIME BEEF" personnel to Vietnam. The ADC team remained at Tan Son Nhut Air Base while the ATC team moved on to Bien Hoa Air Base and the SAC team was airlifted to DaNang Air Base. Each base had prepared a welcome for the arriving teams, including extensive press coverage. Final arrangements for the teams had been made previously by the Base Civil Engineers assisted by the Advance NCO's of each team. Impressed with the importance of the "PRIME BEEF" mission and the reception provided, the spirit and morale of the team members was reflected in the eagerness to start work.



(The special rig constructed by Prime Beef personnel to assist in construction)

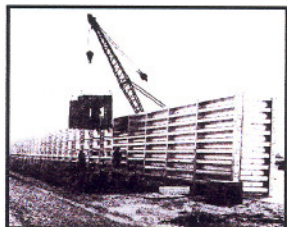
The "PRIME BEEF" Team from ADC deployed to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, was led by Lt Colonel Francis E. Torr, Base Civil Engineer, Hamilton AFB, California. Team NCOIC was MSGT Glenn H. Cooper, Kingsley Field, Oregon. Among other team members was MSGT Bruce F. Swafford, Hamilton AFB, CA (who provided the information for this article).

On 19 August 1965, Colonel Dolby, 2nd Air Division Director of Civil Engineering appointed Lt Colonel Francis E. Torr of the ADC Team, as the Officer-In-Charge of all "PRIME BEEF" Teams in Vietnam. The reorganization of the PRIME BEEF deployment was effected to insure the integrated effort in accomplishing the primary mission of aircraft revetment construction.

Reorganization allowed consolidation of teams, if necessary, and gave flexibility to assignment of resources (men and materials). The reorganization assigned Captain Bratton, Advance Survey Team Chief, as Administrative Officer responsible for progress reporting, coordinating, press and publicity coverage, and maintaining accurate historical records. MSGT Swafford, the senior site developer, was assigned additional duties at dock side of off loading of equipment and material and trans-shipping material to the bases concerned.

Each 25 man PRIME BEEF Construction Team was augmented by two "TOP DOG" mechanics for maintenance of PRIME BEEF equipment. These six mechanics, AFSC 471X0, arrived at Tan Son Nhut Airbase on 15 August 1965. Their assignment orders were not coded to indicate assignment to PRIME BEEF teams; therefore considerable effort was spent trying to locate the mechanics in Vietnam. Five of the six men were located on 25 August 1965 and assigned to the teams.

Interest in the PRIME BEEF effort was exemplified at Tan Son Nhut when TSGT Edward H. Kelly, a parachute fabrication technician, personally volunteered to help in the revetment construction while waiting for his organization to open a new base. TSGT Kelly remained with the ADC Team for the entire operation.



Ten to twenty five Vietnamese laborers were assigned to the teams at Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa. The Vietnamese laborers were unskilled and required constant supervision.

Each PRIME BEEF Team was provided equipment from Bomb Damage Repair Kits (BDR) which included 15 each 5-ton dump trucks, 2 each 2-1/2 yard pay loaders and 3 each compactors.

In addition to the equipment earmarked for PRIME BEEF use the teams were able to negotiate for and "borrow" additional

equipment, such as the following items which the Tan Son Nhut ADC Team possessed: a Grader, TD-20 dozer, 20-ton truck mounted crane, trailer mounted air compressor, 2 fork lifts, tractor trailer, arc welder, 3/4 ton six-pack, a jeep, and a sedan.

When the PRIME BEEF Teams arrived in Vietnam on 8 August 1965 only one revetment kit (240 linear feet) had arrived. The next shipment did not arrive until 20 August 1965.

PRIME BEEF Teams assisted the Base Commercial Transportation Officers with off loading of ships and used PRIME BEEF trucks to help haul the steel to job sites.

All three PRIME BEEF Teams, upon reaching the bases and finding no kits to erect, directed maximum effort toward stock piling fill material. Each revetment kit (240 linear feet) requires 600 cubic yards of fill, such as the Tan Son Nhut ADC Team hauled and stockpiled 12,500 cubic yards of sand for backfill. Haul was from the West Gate where the contractor had deposited the fill for the job site which is approximately 3 miles away.

Tan Son Nhut ADC Team had to provide parking area for F-100 aircraft that were parked on existing aprons where revetments



were scheduled to be erected. The team removed 130,000 sq yards of PSP matting in the soil cement revetment

area and installed 155,000 sq yards of M9M1, modified aluminum matting. Each revetment had two PSP blast deflectors installed also which amounted to 16,720 sq ft of PSP matting connected and welded. After this area was completed the team used the remaining PSP matting to fabricate and store additional blast deflectors on the apron. The team also stabilized and graded 1555 sq yards of apron shoulder.

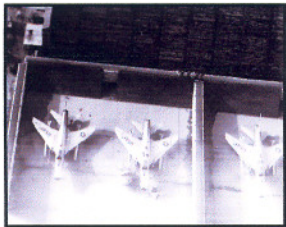


The Tan Son Nhut ADC Team erected 4700 linear feet of steel bin type revetments 5.5 feet wide and 12 feet high. These bins were filled with 11,800 cubic yards of sand. The Team also fabricated and installed 36,784 sq. ft. of PSP blast fence in 22 revetments. The total man hours to complete this job was 4,836 military and 3,624 indigenous, or a total of 8,460 man hours.



All steel bin revetment construction in Vietnam was completed 23 October 1965. All three teams made final preparations for deployment to Thailand bases 1 November 1965. MSGT Swafford was sent to Thailand to make all necessary arrangements for teams to go to Korat, Udorn and Ubon Airbases. Close coordination with commercial transportation

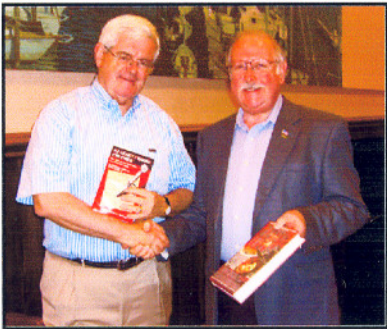
Lt Colonel Torr, MSGT Cooper and MSGT Swafford remained in Vietnam until 5 December 1965 to close out all reports and records of the 1st PRIME BEEF Teams operation in Vietnam. On 6 December 1965 the above personnel debriefed the Civil Engineer personnel at Hq PACAF in Hawaii on the complete PRIME BEEF OPERATIONS in Vietnam.



\$\$\$TSNA NEEDS YOU\$\$\$

<<<<<<<<TSNA>>>>>>>>

From the editor: Below is some information about our TSNA member, Bill Grayson, compiled from two emails sent in by Bill.



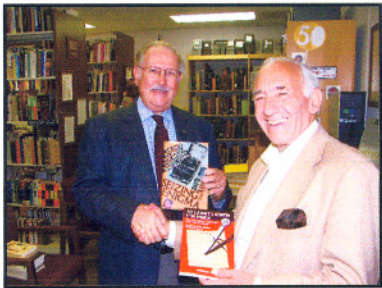
The proceeds of both books are also donated to the Freedom Alliance Scholarship Fund for children of troops killed or disabled in Iraq and Afghanistan.

From: Stein, Rene S.
<rstein@nsa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2008
8:05 AM
To: distribution

works on cryptography has given nearly 2000 books to the National Cryptologic Museum Library. This collection comprises Dr. Kahn's personal, professional library on SIGINT, codes and ciphers, secret writing, espionage, military communications, and related topics. A multi-linguist, Dr. Kahn collected books in many countries, written in numerous languages.

I would like to acknowledge Bill Grayson's work as a volunteer translator and thank him for his help in cataloging 225 foreign language books from the Kahn collection in German, French, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish.

Rene Stein,
National Cryptologic Museum
Librarian

[illegible]

By Harlan Hatfield
460th AEMS

It was a quiet and very dark summer night, the rays of setting sun had disappeared over the horizon hours ago. The sounds of silence were wafting across the open field to the East. As you sit all alone you can faintly hear the drone of engines on Spooky as she makes her nightly rounds. You're never

alone as long as the Dragon Lady is in the air, and that's a very comforting thought tonight.

As the flares fall slowly earthward, sending forth their million candlepower rays of light, causing shadows to dance and race from building to building as if they were children playing tag. If one tries hard enough it is possible to see all sorts of images in the dim shadows. Sudden movement in the field of the dead brings the pulse to a racing rate, all of a sudden you notice you're not breathing in effort to hear, so you force yourself to again inhale the aromatic summer air. Moments later you see it's only a couple of dogs on their nightly hunt, so you again turn inward to your own reverie.

You think back to the faces of the young men as they stepped off the bus this afternoon. You wonder what kind of world would cause a young lad of 18 or 19 to see things and do things that creates a face of a haggard old man on this young body. You look toward the heavens and ask the Great Spirit, why can man be so gentle to some things and yet so cruel and unkind to others. You question the Spirit as to the wisdom of such endeavors and why it is allowed. But your questions are not answered now!

The hour is the darkest and coldest, just before dawn when you finally begin to fathom an answer from the Great Spirit. It comes not as a voice or a sign but something felt deep within. The answer is this:

"Mourn not the dead for they are free! But instead mourn the survivor, for he shall forever carry the memories, the scars, and the memories, even though they may be repressed they

shall continue to creep into his conscious to haunt him!"

In hopes we NEVER forget, I dedicate this to the ones left behind, I will NOT FORGET YOU and ask the Great Spirit each day to allow you again to join your Country and your families.

Harlan N. Hatfield

Oh, Great spirit, Help me always to speak the truth quietly, to listen with an open mind when others speak, and to remember the peace that may be found in silence.

A Cherokee Prayer

The Thousand Yard Stare!

The Thousand Yard Stare
Yes I saw it over there,

I sat with a young lad
I old enough to be his dad,

We sipped our brews
And watched the crews,

Scurrying around the bird
I wanted not to disturb,
One with whose eyes shown
So Much pain, and hurt his own,

With him looking though me, I
felt so bare
Him with his Thousand Yard
Stare.

Harlan N. Hatfield

SIGNS AND "GRACE"

By Chaplain Billy Lowe

TSNA Chaplain

One of the squadron areas at Tan Son Nhut AB was that of

SNAPFACS. A pretty large sign stated their mission, "We will FAC anything, anywhere, at anytime". I'm sure they lived out their mission statement as recorded on that sign. My hat is off to those forward air controllers and the duty they accomplished while assigned to TSN and Southeast Asia. Their sign, though somewhat humorous by the way it stated their purpose, held a deep conviction to duty. A dangerous duty, at times, I must add.

It was always interesting to me to see a squadron patch or sign outside an area and how, in just a few words, a very important and serious mission could be stated. It was true in the military and it is true in civilian life as well. You can see and understand deep meaning in just a few words. I think we all know the depth of those two words, "Let's Roll".

In the Gospel According to Matthew you will find some words which make up a part of the Great Commission recorded as "and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you". There was much taught. Thankfully we can teach great depth and meaning in everyday instances with simply being who we are and born to be in this life. Let me tell you of such a moment in my life while living on Tan Son Nhut.

You might remember the little Bank of America building which sat down near the Base Exchange, Post Office and theatre area. It was one of those hot sweaty afternoons when I just wanted to deposit my check and get a little MPC anticipating an evening "off base" and there I stood in a line which seemed to be stalled at the lone teller's window. The sweat beads run-

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ning down my back, neck and head were moving faster than that line. In my frustration I blipped out a few cuss words and kicked the side of the building. The outside of the building was covered with paint peeling plywood. My foot got stuck right where I had hit the wall. It was, at that moment, I felt a hand firmly grip my right shoulder and a calm but even firmer voice say, "Now Sergeant, just settle down", I was about to tell the owner of the hand and the voice

what he could do when I noticed the eagles on his collar. Immediately, I settled down.

I don't know the Colonel's name. I can't even remember how he looked. However, as the years have gone by I have thought of him often. He had every right to ask for a "gig". I don't know what kind of trouble I almost got myself into by losing my temper like that. Instead, the gentleman offered me something else. He gave me

"grace". He was a Colonel in the United States Air Force and at that moment he became a life-teacher for me. Grace is one of those tremendous gifts the Master taught. The Colonel was passing it on. Thankfully, we all have folk who have taught us what is truly important in life. God bless you.

