

DECEMBER 2009



A Memorial to the American Experience  
In Vietnam

"All included, none excluded"



# REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association



'Twas the Night . . .

'Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,  
in a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.  
I had come down the chimney with presents to give,  
and to see just who in this home did live.  
I looked all about, a strange sight I did see,  
no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.  
No stocking by mantle, just boots filled with sand,  
on the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.  
With medals and badges, awards of all kinds,  
a sober thought came through my mind.  
For this house was different, it was dark and dreary,  
I found the home of a soldier, once I could see clearly.  
The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone,  
curled up on the floor in this one bedroom home.  
The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder,  
not how I pictured a United States soldier.  
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?  
Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?  
I realized the families that I saw this night,  
owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight.  
Soon the world the children would play,  
and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas day.  
They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,  
because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.  
I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,  
on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.  
The very thought brought a tear to my eye,  
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.  
The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice,  
"Santa don't cry, this life is my choice;  
I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,  
my life is my God, my Country, my Corps."  
The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep,  
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.  
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still  
and we both shivered from the cold night's chill.  
I didn't want to leave on that cold, dark, night,  
This guardian of honor so willing to fight.  
Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure,  
whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas day, all is secure."  
One look at my watch, and I knew he was right.  
"Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night.  
—Anonymous

## The Major Mom Story

By: Carol Bessette  
Hdqtrs, 7th AF 68-69

I am hoping that some of the former Security Police members can fill in the blanks on this story--or at least will remember what happened.

I lived in one of the two female BOQs that were behind the VNAF Chapel (which had the impressive hole in the roof from an earlier rocket attack). During the first half of my tour (April 1968--May 1969), there was a nurse who had started a tradition of standing on the second floor balcony of our building and waving at the SPs who passed, late in the afternoon, for a shift change.

Charles Penley, who is my guru on "all things TSN," has told me that the SPs could have been going to Bravo Sector, Charlie Sector, Delta Sector, or Base Police guard posts. (We were just told at the time that they were going "out to the perimeter.")

This grew to be quite a "tradition." Other women in the BOQ who were off-duty would join her, and the women would wave and shout and clap for the guys, and the guys would wave and holler back.

This nurse must have worked a shift where she'd be back in her quarters by 1600 or thereabouts. I only got to participate in this "tradition" once that I recall. I worked at 7AF Intelligence, and we worked until about 1800, so I was rarely there. (I worked in the secure area "behind the banana trees," which had an SP post to check us in and out.)

This went to the back of my mind until November 1992 and the tenth anniversary of The Wall. Living in northern Virginia, I went into DC with a relative and a friend, both Vietnam vets, on November 11th to walk in the 10th anniversary parade. It was also the dedication of the Vietnam Women's Memorial, so there were many

women there. The three of us were heading for the Virginia section of the parade when someone told me, "Quick, go up to the front of the parade. The women are walking there and you should be there." So I did, and there were probably about two dozen women in our contingent. As we walked and talked, this story suddenly came into my head and I mentioned it--and someone in the group said, "There she is, over there." And it was the same woman. With the crush of people and all that was happening, I never got to talk to her.

In retrospect, I lived in the same small building, but I had never talked with her. We never really socialized with anyone other than the people with whom we worked. (Talk about staying in a small circle!) If I had it to do over again, I would have expanded my circle--and talked to this woman (and the others).

Does anyone remember this? I have a vague memory of being told at the time that she had been invited over to the SPs' area and they thanked her and "made a fuss about her." I hope that happened!

Maybe this will ring a bell with someone--

***After the above was posted on the TSNA website, the following information was received:***

By: Don Segraves  
377th SPS Mar 68--Mar 70

Hi Carol:

To many of us on Charlie flight and to a few of us assigned to Bravo Sector, the driver operating the 2-1/2 ton "Deuce and a half" truck carrying us, would deviate our route and drive by female quarters.

We assumed all were nurses, however there were women who served in other fields of the military.

Anyway, there was a Major who was a

nurse and she would stand out by the balcony on the second floor and wave at us.

We affectionately gave her the name of Mom.

So every time we drove by, she would wave at us and we would yell back, saying "Hi mom".

Not all the time but often there were other females who would join her and do the same

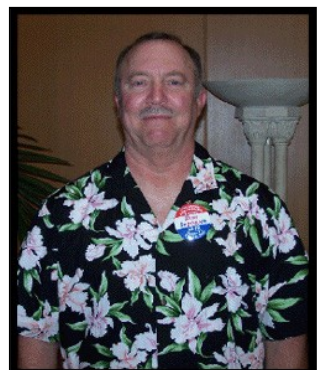
We just wanted to see some "round-eye" women and in those years the military was mainly comprised of men. Sometimes we would stop and for a minute or two make some small talk. I think once or twice we gave her some small gift, but I don't remember what it was.

I think it was during Christmas and then when we learned Mom was PCS'ing back to the states.

As I remember it now I can still see the figures and remember the corner of the building where they all stood for us, just helping making our nights a little more pleasurable.



Don Segraves, then and now



By: Jack Smith  
377th SPS Dec 68-Dec 69

Hi Carol:

I was at Tan Son Nhut December 1968 - December 1969. I remember well, going out on Quick Reaction Team and the Nurse's waving at our truck.

I do not remember her name but one of the Nurse's was a Major.

We would stop the truck and talk to them. That's all that happened was talk.

They were there every night waiting for the QRT for that shift to go by.

I remember about the girls waving is that most of them wore civvies or housecoats as they waved from the 2nd floor. The Major was most of the time in her uniform.



Jack "the Old Cowboy" Smith

By: Ray Rash  
377th SPS  
Oct 68—Oct 69

Hi Carol:

I remember very well ... the Heavy Weapons Section stopped and presented a plaque to the Major, who we called Mom.

I have or had some pictures of the presentation and will send them in to Charles Penley ... IF I can find them.



**From the Editor:** There is more to report on this. Check future Revetments for updates on this very interesting story!!

#### Christmas Letter 1967

By Chris Godfrey  
377th SPS

FROM: Comdr C Flt Scty  
29 December 1967

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

TO: Noncommissioned Officers and Airmen, C Flight Security, 377th SPS

1. Security Policemen normally work harder, longer, and are exposed to more personal danger than any other group on Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

During the past weeks you have toiled even longer hours. In addition to the duty of defending USAF lives and property you have participated in many ceremonies, honor guards, and special details. The manner in which you have performed these tasks is admirable. Do not think it has gone unnoticed. I assure you that your fellow airmen look upon you as defenders of their lives. There is absolutely no doubt the Viet Cong notice you (probably with more scrutiny than your compatriots) and consider you a major obstacle to their planned destruction of Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Visiting dignitaries see you in honor guards and ceremonies and carry away that distinct favorable impression of you and your base.

2. As a fellow citizen I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your effort. You are professionals in your work and patriots in your attitude. It has been difficult for me to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It was not a Merry Christmas as you are used to it; nor will it be a Happy New Year as you would normally expect it. More than anything, I wish for each of you the preservation of your life during this tour in Vietnam so that next holiday season and all that follow may be spent in peace with your loved ones. Thank you.

*Melvin G. Grover*  
MELVIN G. GROVER, 1st Lt, USAF  
Commander, C Flight Security

#### New Members

**Wurtzinger, George J., Illinois,**  
**509th RRCUV (Army Security**  
**Agency) Jan 67—Jan 68**

**Gottlieb, Milton H., New Jersey,**  
**377th Security Police Squadron**  
**Nov 66—Nov 67**







**DECEMBER 4, 1966**



## Defenders of Tan Son Nhut, the men of the 377th Air Police Squadron

By Gary Jones and Charles Penley, 377th Security Police Squadron.

In the early morning hours of 4 Dec 1966, at approximately 0110 hrs., George Bevich and his sentry dog REX 674F were manning one of the distant perimeter K-9 posts when two Viet Cong sapper units penetrated the perimeter of the base undetected.

It is quiet as usual and then a sentry dog alerts to some movement in a very large and deep ditch, known as "Utah Ditch." It is surrounded by tree's, bushes, weed's and filled with black water, located on the north-west side of the installation.

The handler calls in the situation report, of a large group of men, moving inside his defensive position, where this ditch is located, to Central Security Control. Almost simultaneously, other sentry dog handler's saw the same movement. Radio traffic begins to pick up.

Immediately the enemy forces opens up with automatic weapons fire and mortars. The Air Base was hit by stand-off weapons of approximately 33 of these mortar rounds.

The size of the Viet Cong infiltration force was estimated to have been over 75 sappers and commandos.

For the first time a ground assault on Tan Son Nhut Air Base begins.

Bevich raised the alarm and engaged the enemy. The 22 year old was killed almost immediately, his K-9 wounded. In providing the early warning alarm on that tragic morning along with his fellow dog handlers, George's brave actions saved lives and aircraft.

His name is inscribed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Wash, DC, Panel 13E, Line 9. Indeed, we lost a friend and a brother on that terrifying December morning at Tan Son Nhut. We believe that it is incumbent upon all of us not to let George's memory die.

Previously, on April 13, 1966 Tan Son Nhut had been attacked with 246 Rockets and Mortars within thirteen minutes but no ground attack. Once inside the perimeter, the enemy had divided into smaller groups to attack their various targets. The targets were the bomb dump, flight line and targets of opportunity.

This first report from the sentry dog handler enabled the air policemen of the 377th Air Police Squadron time to engage the enemy. A blocking force had been established and the fighting was fierce.

A2C Robert A. Throneburg and NEMO A534, a sentry dog, were posted for the night on the north-west portion of base.

Just before total darkness on December 4th, 1966 after being posted, Nemo alerted and was released to attack the VC who had evaded earlier detection. NEMO and his handler were both wounded, but not before killing two VC. Nemo's injuries included the loss of one eye and a gunshot wound that ripped into his nose.

A sweep of the area by the Quick Response Team (QRT) met with negative results. Using additional sentry dog teams, the security forces located and killed four more VC.

A second sweep with the dog teams resulted in the discovery of four additional VC who were hiding underground. The remaining enemy forces were soon killed by other security police.

Before help could arrive, Nemo, an 85 pound German shepherd, although severely wounded, protected his handler by crawling across his body, and guarding him against anyone who dared to come near.

When help arrived, they were able to convince Nemo to leave his handler, who was then given first aid. Nemo, suffering from a gunshot wound to his face, and the lost of his right eye, was relieved of sentry dog duties.

It was A2C Alvin W. Curie, who handled the M-60 machine gun and A2C Robert B. Kane, assistant machine gunner, who

defended their assigned bunker in Delta Sector, Delta Bunker-11, on the single runway, positioned on the inner defense perimeter, all through the attack.

When daylight came and the action died down a little, it was discovered there were thirteen dead enemy bodies less than 100 feet from their bunker.

Thanks to the quick actions of the air policemen, damage to aircraft and facilities was minimal.

The 377th Security Police Squadron lost three men and three sentry dogs, Dec 4-5, 1966. Really, it was just a moment ago for those who were there.

Major Roger P. Fox, Executive Officer, received the nation's third highest medal, the Silver Star, for his actions taken on Dec 4-5, 1966. Maj. Fox passed from this life on Dec 14, 2000

A2C George M. Bevich, sentry dog handler was the first U.S. Air Force dog handler to be killed in Vietnam. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart medals.

A2C Alvin W. Curie, received the nation's third highest medal, the Silver Star, for his actions taken on Dec 4-5, 1966. A2C Curie passed from this life on Dec 7, 1983.

A2C Tommy C. Poole, sentry dog handler, received the nation's third highest medal, the Silver Star and the Purple Heart medal for his actions taken on Dec 4-5, 1966.

A2C Robert A. Throneburg, sentry dog handler, received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart medals for his actions taken on Dec 4-5, 1966

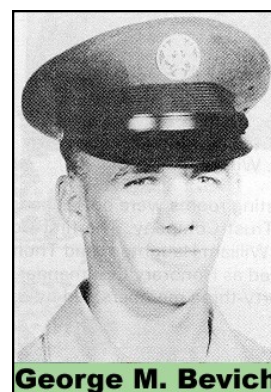
The 377th SPS was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor for its "combined actions," against the Viet Cong infiltration force.



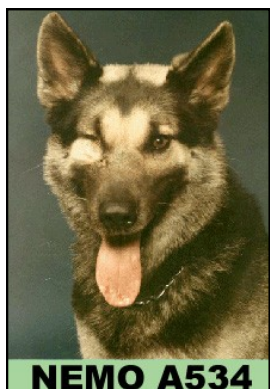
**Roger P. Fox**



**Alvin W. Curie**



**George M. Bevich**



**NEMO A534**



**Tommy C. Poole**



**Robert A. Throneburg**



**NEW  
BX  
ITEMS!!**

By: Johnnie Jernigan  
TSNA Dir. Of Marketing



**Item # T35 TSNA Laser-cut 3-D Logo Circle**

This laser-cut TSNA Logo is beautiful. It is a 12" diameter circle made of four layers of wood. The dragon is cut out of the top layer with the TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION and VIETNAM cut out of the second layer. The bottom two layers have scalloped edges and provide the blue background for the dragon and the black background for the words. This will look fantastic hanging on your wall!



**Item # T36 TSNA Laser-cut Picture Frame**

This picture frame has a wood insert that has the laser-cut TSNA Logo with a blue background and a place for a 5" by 7" photo. The frame is solid wood (either black or brown) with glass to protect the TSNA Logo and your photo. It will look great sitting on your desk or hanging on the wall. Mine has a photo of me taken in 1967, in front of one of the sandbag bunkers in the 1200 area at TSN.





## TSNA Donates to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

By: Carol Bessette  
TSNA Treasurer

In late October, the TSNA Board voted to donate \$1000 to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) in the name of all those who served at Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

In a recent press release, the VVMF announced work on needed repairs to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and solicited funds for these repairs. The VVMF and the National Park Service have a decades-long tradition of caring for the Memorial in a unique public-private partnership.

Work has begun to repair and preserve the patina—the metal finish—on the flagpole, the base of the flagpole, and five Directory stands around the Memorial site.

This is only the second time in the Memorial's history that preservation work has been done to the flagpole. Its base includes the insignia of the military service

branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

The 26-year-old directory stands are also in need of attention, and this is the first time that work will have been done on them. There are five directory stands on the Memorial site, each contains a Directory of the more than 58,000 names on The Wall, enabling visitors to find the location of specific names. The VVMF is also paying to have new directories laminated to withstand the elements.

The final phase of the project will be to repair damage to the patina on the Three Servicemen statue. This repair work is more difficult and costly to do, and estimates put the price tag at nearly \$100,000.

Since September, the VVMF has spent thousands of dollars to repair the sprinkler system that waters the lawn in front of and on top of The Wall; in addition, new sod was scheduled to be laid this fall.

The Board considered this a worthy project, deserving of the support of TSNA.

## TSN Memories

By: Bernard Bucholz  
1876th Comm Sq  
Feb 67-Feb68

Seeing President Obama saluting the dead at Dover AFB reminded me of honors given the dead at TSN. I lived in the 1876th barracks area, no. 886, which was across Ave. B from the entrance to a flight line of C123s. To go to work at 7th AF HQ I had to pass the morgue/dispensary area. Sometimes a flat bed semi would pull out of the morgue area with a load of flag draped coffins arranged in a single line on the trailer. It would go down to the flight line gate and turn in. Myself and many others walking down the road when the truck passed would halt, face the truck, come to attention and salute. No one told anyone to do this. It was just done. I also recall vehicles on the road stopping until the truck passed. Final salutes given to our fallen comrades.



Editor's Note: I found this recently while looking for some military clip art to use.

Judging from the helmet the soldier is wearing, it was made years ago, but I thought it still applicable as a way to remember those who are serving right now to keep us free.



The JFK article on Pg. 8 comes to us from Bob Jarboe, 377th Air Force Dispensary 63-64



## LBJ Assumes Presidency



PRESIDENT LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

## General Harkins Issues Condolences At JFK Death

General Paul D. Harkins, Commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Viet Nam, issued the following statement Saturday morning following the death of President Kennedy:

"News of the assassination of our President and Commander-in-Chief comes as a great shock to all of us stationed in the Republic of Viet Nam — as it does to all Americans throughout the world.

"The bold decision to come to the aid of the Republic of Viet Nam in its fight against the communist Viet Cong was one of the highlights of President Kennedy's tragically abbreviated but illustrious term as our Chief of State.

"In all his actions he strongly supported the forces of freedom in their struggle against the communists' goal of world domination.

"Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to Mrs. Kennedy and the other members of the President's family.

"As a memorial to him, let us strive even harder in all that we do supporting the fight against communism by the forces of the Republic of Viet Nam."

## Funeral Services Set For Monday

Boston (AP) — A Funeral Mass will be said Monday in the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington for President Kennedy by Richard Cardinal Cushing, it was announced Friday night.

A spokesman for the cardinal said the Mass will be at 2 a.m. Saigon time. There will be no eulogy.

There was no information on the possible place of burial of the President.

The cardinal, a longtime friend of the Kennedy family, gave the invocation at the President's inauguration, officiated at his marriage, baptized the two Kennedy children, and presided at the funeral mass for Patrick Bouvier Kennedy, the first family's son who died within 40 hours after birth last August.

## President Shot From Ambush; Texas Governor Is Wounded

### Compiled From Wire Services

President John F. Kennedy was shot from ambush and killed in Dallas at 2:30 a.m. Saturday, Saigon time.

The President was shot in the head. He fell face down in the back seat of his car. Blood was on his head. Mrs. Kennedy, who was with him, screamed and cried, "Oh, no!" and tried to hold up his head.

Gov. John B. Connally of Texas, who was wounded by the same burst of fire that killed the President, remained half seated, slumped to the left. There was

blood on his face and forehead.

The President and the governor were rushed to Parkland Hospital near the Dallas Trade Mart, where Kennedy was to have made a speech.

President Kennedy was given a blood transfusion at the hospital, but he died without regaining consciousness about 30 minutes after he was shot.

The two were shot by an assassin who had been hiding in a textbook storage warehouse along the President's motorcade route. The assassin used a high powered rifle, reported to be .30 caliber fitted with a telescopic sight.

Lyndon B. Johnson, Kennedy's Vice President, was sworn in as President at 4:30 a.m., Saigon time. "I will do my best," the new President said. "That is all I can do. I ask for your help, and God's."

Reporters on the scene of the assassination saw Kennedy lying on his face in his car. One reporter said a man and woman scrambled up the upper level of a walkway bordering the road and overlooking an underpass near which the President was shot.

Police who had been accompanying the motorcade charged up a bank and into a nearby park, chasing the suspects. Several suspects were picked up in the next few hours.

One of them, Lee H. Oswald, was chased into a theater near the scene and seized after he had shot and killed a police officer. Oswald, who wore a brown shirt, was captured by the slain policeman's partners after a struggle. He was quoted as saying: "It's all over now."

According to some reports, Oswald is a confessed Marxist who had lived for some time in Russia, and is married to a Russian born wife. He is a former marine, and at one time,

### TV & RADIO

New York (AP) — America's three major television and radio networks cancelled all advertising and entertainment programs out of respect for the death of President Kennedy.

during his stay in Russia he attempted to renounce his American citizenship. He is also a member of a pro-Castro sect called "Fair Play for Cuba."

It is was the first presidential assassination since a half insane gunman, Leon Czolgosz, shot William McKinley in Buffalo in 1900. Czolgosz was executed for the crime a month and 23 days later.

Kennedy was the first President to die in office since Franklin D. Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1945.

President Johnson automatically succeeded to the office after Kennedy's death, taking the oath of office an hour and a half after Kennedy died.

The new President took the oath of office aboard the presidential jet transport, Air Force One, from U.S. District Judge Sarah T. Hughes, who had been a Kennedy appointee.

Secret Service men also immediately threw a tight ring of security around House Speaker John W. McCormack, who now becomes next in line for the presidency.

### Presidential Biographical Sketch

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States, was born on May 29, 1917, in Brookline, Mass., the second eldest of nine children. He was married on Sept. 12, 1953, to Jacqueline Lee Bouvier. A daughter, Caroline, was born on Nov. 27, 1957. John F. Jr., was born Nov. 25, 1960, and Patrick, who died 39 hours after birth, Aug. 9, 1963.

The President was educated in the public schools of Brookline, Mass., the Choate School, and Harvard University from which he was graduated in 1940 with honors (B.A. degree). He attended the London School of Economics in 1935-1936 and pursued further graduate studies at Stanford University in 1940.

President Kennedy was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Navy in 1941. He served as a PT boat commander in the South Pacific during World War II. He was decorated twice by the Navy for "his courage, endurance and leadership."

Before and immediately following World War II, the President was a correspondent for the Chicago Herald American and the International News Service, covering the birth of the United Nations in San Francisco, the Potsdam Conference and the British election in 1945.

He won the Democratic Presidential nomination in Los Angeles on July 13, 1960. On November 8, 1960, he was elected President of the United States.

He was inaugurated on January 20, 1961.

## The Observer

The Observer, an authorized weekly publication, is published by the Information Office, MAAG Viet Nam, for U.S. Forces in Viet Nam and printed by DONG-NAM-A, Saigon.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense or of any of the Service departments. This paper uses the facilities of The Associated Press, Armed Forces Press Service and the news services of the Service departments to augment local news. Mailing Address: MAAG, c/o Information Officer, Command Group, APO 143, San Francisco, Calif. Telephone 60213.

COMMANDING GENERAL ..... Gen. Paul D. Harkins  
CHIEF MAAG ..... Maj. Gen. Charles J. Timmes  
INFORMATION OFFICER, MACV ..... Col. B.L. Baker  
INFORMATION OFFICER, MAAG ..... Maj. William V. Koch

### STAFF

OFFICER-IN-CHARGE ..... Capt. William G. Smith  
EDITOR ..... SFC Tony Bermudez  
ASSISTANT EDITOR ..... SSgt. Bob Reid  
PHOTOGRAPHER ..... Sp5 Dick Jones



## SEASONS GREETINGS

The Holiday Season traditionally is one of both rejoicing in the Celebration of the Birth of CHRIST and a period of reflection upon those principals which make us what we are. We, Members of the United States Air Force serving in Vietnam, realize that the cause which we serve is a direct expression of our beliefs and our convictions.

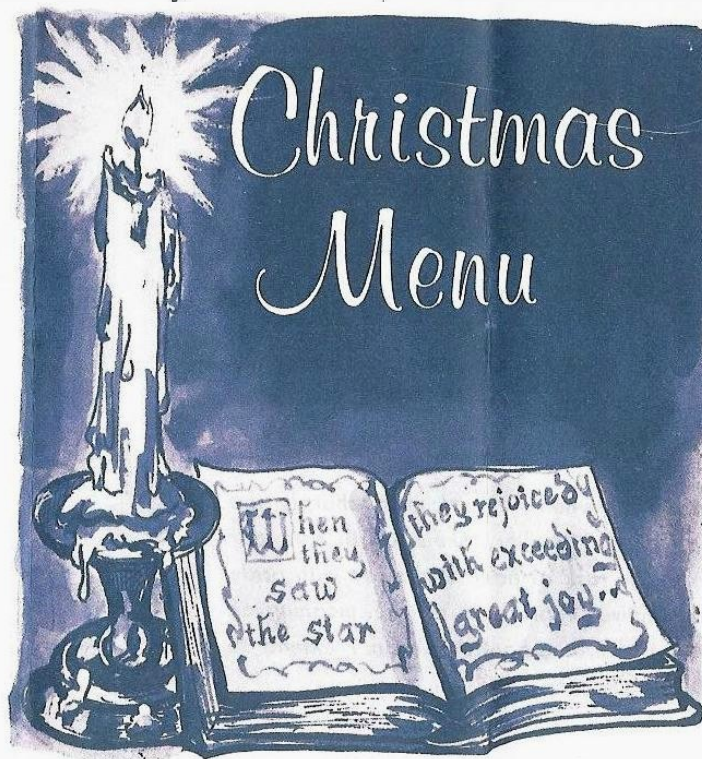
At this time, when we feel most sharply the need to be with our families, take strength from our dedication to the task at hand and serve with pride this sincere active expression of the meaning of CHRISTMAS, the Brotherhood of Man. I extend to you Holiday Greetings.

*George Budway*  
GEORGE BUDWAY, Colonel, USAF  
Commander

## CHRISTMAS DAY 1965

### Menu

ROAST TOM TURKEY      BAKED HAM  
GIBLET GRAVY  
CORN BREAD DRESSING  
CHILLED CRANBERRY SAUCE  
MASHED POTATOES      CANDIED YAMS  
BUTTERED CORN      BUTTERED PEAS  
ASSORTED SALADS  
ASSORTED CRISP RELISHES  
ASSORTED DRESSINGS  
CLOVERLEAF HOT ROLLS      BUTTER  
PUMPKIN PIE      MINCEMEAT PIE  
ASSORTED FRESH FRUIT  
ASSORTED NUTS      ASSORTED CANDY  
COFFEE AND TEA WITH CREAM  
ASSORTED COLD DRINKS



6250th Combat Support Group

Tan Son Nhut, Vietnam

By: Dale Bryan, TSNA Secretary

Dawn broke wet on November 11. The Sun was hiding and not radiating warmth, but it was time to trek to The Wall again. A cold rain could not distract us from our mission. How could one avoid or even complain of some minor discomfort when the mission was honoring our contemporaries who served or sacrificed to preserve our freedom?

For a fifth year in a row, you, members of the Tan Son Nhut Association, allowed me the honor of helping lay a wreath at the base of the reflective slabs that define The Vietnam Veterans Memorial. For four years, I'd experienced weather that had been near perfect – cool and calm with brilliant sunshine. This year it was very different. Later this winter, I will likely describe such a day as misty and mild. Perception of the weather is relative.

Note that I earlier used the term “we”. I was not alone. TSNA President Bob Gales and TSNA Treasurer Carol Bessette joined me to march our wreath to The Wall. TSNA Member Gary Redlinski came from New York to participate. Some of the excellent pictures of that day that have already appeared on the Association web site can be credited to him. Gary, thank you for your help on November 11; most of all, thank you for your service so many years ago. Finally, we can bask, even on an overcast day, in being appreciated. In the 60's and 70's we were not allowed the luxury of such indulgence. Gary's driving from New York to DC is, alone, an act of dedication. We also thank John Bessette for taking pictures.

As we gathered together to be staged for the march that started the ceremonies, I commented that I should remove the Air Weather Service pin from my hat. Considering the weather this day, it might not be a popular emblem. My forecast was right on. Wish I'd have “busted” this prognosis rather than the one long ago given to a numbered air force commander.

Finally we marched. A bunch of aging veterans with colorful wreaths and young members of the military honor guard all came in as one proud unit. No generation has a monopoly on willingness to serve. Then speeches and musical renditions paid homage to those whose names are carved on The Wall.

Finally it was time to formally place our wreath. I found it ironical (or is it actually destiny?) that our wreath was again very close to the slab that bears the name of one of my college roommates and fellow AFROTC cadet. That always makes it most personal. All of us were proud when the name Tan Son Nhut Association boomed through on the PA system as we set the wreath in place.

Next year, I want the Association to have a large foot print at The Wall. I implore you to come to DC on November 11, 2010. It's an experience you will never forget. Tears will come to your eyes as you recall some particular friends and events. A smile will come to your face or laughter into your heart as you remember the same people in different circumstances. All let their emotions flow freely here, and no one judges.

I will not post a forecast for next year, but past history and climatology say it's time for cool and sunny again. Join us. Reunions should not be the only time we of the Association are together.



TSNA Treasurer, Carol Bessette; TSNA President Bob Gales; TSNA Secretary Dale Bryan prepare to present our wreath.

John Bessette; TSNA Treasurer, Carol Bessette; TSNA President Bob Gales; and TSNA member Gary Redlinski present the wreath at The Wall.



Placing the wreath.

Presenting the wreath. TSNA is just to the right of the umbrella.





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

**Revetments** is an official publication of the Tan Son Nhut Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564-0236  
The Association is a non-profit fraternal organization chartered under the appropriate statutes and law.

President: Robert Robinson Gales  
Vice President/Revetments Editor: Larry E. Fry  
Treasurer: Carol Bessette  
Secretary: Dale Bryan  
Dir. of Communications/Webmaster: Charles Penley  
Director of Marketing: Johnnie Jernigan  
Dir. of Membership Development: George Plunkett  
Director of Public Relations: Richard Carvell  
Director of History: Bob Laymon  
Chaplains: Rev. Dr. James M. Warrington,  
Rev. Dr. Billy T. Lowe; and Rev. Bob A. Chaffee  
Co-Founders/Presidents Emeriti: Don Parker and John Peele  
President Emeritus: Wayne Salisbury

**Web Site: [www.tsna.org](http://www.tsna.org)**

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



### **Christmas TSNA, 2009**

**By: Chaplain Bob A. Chaffee**

As I sat down to prepare my first submission for the “Revetments” I heard the lid of the mail box bang. A new copy of “Good Old Days” was in the pile of new mail. (I dropped the subscription a long time ago but they still send me the magazine.) An ad caught my eye on page 25, a book named “I’ll be Home for Christmas”. The cover picture is of a GI surrounded by family. He could be dressed for WWII, Korea, and Vietnam or from a lot more of our experiences as part of our nation’s military service.

The picture prompted me to think of those years when we were not at “Home for Christmas”. As a Chaplain for all too many of those Christmas years I can respond to that feeling and the heartfelt pain.

Yet, as we went through our times without the “Home” we looked up into the night sky and saw a Star and thanked our God that He was giving His love for our families even though we could not share it with them in the moments of gathering about the “tree” or manger set.

At Tan Son Nhut on my 1968 Christmas Day I helped the MedEvac team load the C-141 at sunrise, but though my family was in California, the wounded and the GI men and women, our medics, were that day my family. Did they realize that the day was Christmas? I don’t know but I do know that my God and their God loved and cared for them and truly believe that He continues to care for all those who today serve so far away from family and home.

May God continue to love us all in this Christmas Season.

(Chaplain Bob A. Chaffee was assigned to the 377CSG from September 1968 to September 1969. He was detached for his tour with the 21st Casualty MedEvac Flight and the 57AES.)