

APRIL 2010



A Memorial to the American Experience
In Vietnam

"All included, none excluded"

REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

UPON LEARNING YOU HAVE DIABETES II

BY: Charles Penley
377th SPS

Every few visits to the Veterans Administration hospital they take a vial of blood to see how your health is.

My VA hospital was in the process of giving me an excellent medical exam.

April 16, 2009 – VA Dermatology *removed a skin tag from my nose.*

April 16, 2009 – VA gave me an MRI for my kidneys to see if anything was abnormal with them. (I had a little too much iron in my blood.) Everything was normal with my kidneys.

There are two types of MRI machines. Enclosed type and they put you in a round circle. And the Open type.

Now many of you have seen how large I am and you can guess which one they put me in. That's right the enclosed type. Afterwards I told them no more enclosed types for me.

April 21, 2009 – VA doctor checked my hemoglobin.

May 18, 2009 – VA gave me an electrocardiogram.

May 24, 2009 – My doctor is on a one week vacation and I saw another doctor and he told me that I have Diabetes II. He then scheduled me to at-

tend a diabetes class that will take eight hours to accomplish.

May 28, 2009 – I went to the VA Hospital and took the eight hour class for diabetes. I now have the basic knowledge of what diabetes is all about and how to treat it.

For the next ninety (90) days they want me to see if I can control my diabetes with me altering my diet.

I have learned to read labels on all the food items that I purchase at the grocery store. Carbohydrates are what you have to pay close attention to.

Also if you watch your carbohydrates then you will definitely lose weight.

At this point in time, I do have to take 2 pills per day for it and I do not have to take any insulin shots for it.

At the end of the eight hour class, I received a very nice Certificate of Completion and it was signed by the diabetic doctor and two nurses from the diabetic class.

Now having said all of the above, I would like for you to know that Diabetes II is one of the fifteen (15) symptoms of Agent Orange.

In III Corps, on Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon, Vietnam the official records shows the numbers of gallons used and various chemical agents used:

Orange – 6,320

White - 0

Blue – 1,595

Total: 7,915 Gallons used

The 377th Security Police Archives states: "We were unable to obtain chemical agents through normal procedures and had to revert to the bootleg method."

There is no known number of thousands of gallons used during the bootleg method.

The bootleg method was hand pumped from the back of a 2 ½ ton truck or a 5 ton truck. Therefore it was a more concentrated form of the chemical agents compared to the mist of chemical agents from the C-123.

The 377th SPS would pump the chemical agent on the overgrown vegetation during the day and the security policemen who worked nights, especially sentry dogs handlers would walk in the vegetation that was freshly sprayed earlier that day and eat their C-Ration while in this vegetation. No one wants Diabetes II but it certainly happens.

I will now make a claim with the VA Hospital as it pertains to Diabetes II and Agent Orange.

It is normal for them to give a 20% Compensation Rating with no questions asked.

20% compensation equates to veter-

ans who are single \$ 376.00. 100% compensation equates to veterans who are single \$ 2,673.00.

I am 100% disabled and by applying for Diabetes II will not increase the compensation but will definitely help other veterans who come behind me.

I write this story so that you also will be aware of Agent Orange used on Tan Son Nhut and it's consequences of having been around it. Please keep a check on your individual health.

Charles Penley

[From an email to Charles from Dave Dowdell on this subject:](#)

Charles:

After reading your e-mail I wanted to share with you that I'm an Agent Orange-related cancer survivor twice over. In 1998 I was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma and had a radical nephrectomy.

They start up at the heart and they remove the aortic connector to the renal artery from the side with the cancerous kidney, then go down and remove the kidney, the adrenal gland, the urethra and a portion of the bladder, then bypass blood from the testicle on the side with the surviving kidney so the other testicle can have a blood supply (since the renal artery was removed).

It was the roughest post-operative experience I ever went through even worse that my total knee replacement and now I'm a one kidney person. I tell people that I have to go around "half pissed" all the time now.

In 2006 I was diagnosed with squamous cell sarcoma twice and had both excised from my right arm.

Both Oncologist's pathological reports listed Agent Orange as the 'probable' cause of my cancers. The VA refused to approve both claims

submitted by my Urologist and Dermatologist.

I was TDY to Vung Tau Airbase (April thru July 68) with the RAAF number 9 Squadron and I've traveled to Australia twice in the past nine years to attend their RAAF Viet Nam Reunion.

I learned that many of the RAAF Aussies have Type II Diabetes from exposure to Agent Orange and their Veteran's Affairs Office has given them 100% disability.

We had transient C-123's from Operation Ranch hand, along with a US Navy Seawolves helicopter unit whose Huey's sprayed Agent Orange along the banks of the Mekong River.

We had perimeter bunkers adjacent to the AO stored barrels and recall watching the pressure bleed off valves expelling the mist while the C-123's were parked on the PSP surfaces along our MLR.

With the undocumented "bootleg AO" used at Tan Son Nhut and the constant exposure we unknowingly endured at Vung Tau - keep in mind Vung Tau was postage stamp sized compared to Tan Son Nhut - we must conclude that many of our 377th brothers have unknowingly succumbed to AO-related maladies.

The Aussie's are fortunate to have a government that takes care of their Viet Nam veterans.

Note: The Aussie Viet Nam Vets also have a lifetime free pass on any passenger rail service in any of their Territories, they have a 50% discount on all Qantas domestic flights, and they have RSL's, or Returning Servicemen's League facilities all over Australia.

I met with some of the RAAF vets at a Newcastle RSL and was amazed that this was a combination bar lounge, a restaurant and a casino operation all in one and these are located in all of their major cities all across Aus-

tralia. Go figure, huh!

Good luck in your management of your diabetes. Keep a positive attitude.

DAVID DOWDELL
377th SPS (67 - 68)

[From an email to Charles from Charles \(Chuck\) Gray on this subject:](#)

You all,

Not only did we contend with the use of pesticides, but I'm sure you all remember cleaning your M16s and M 60 in half barrels containing carbon tet.

Guess what carbon tet is made off? Yup. Some of the same ingredients that Agent Orange has.

Carbon tet has been banned for use as a cleaner for many decades now, but we sure used it by the barrel back then.

Does anyone have any info on that side of the story.

Charles Gray
RVN 67-68
37th SP Phu Cat and 377th SP TSN

[From an email to Charles from Bob Valentine on this subject:](#)

Charles,

Thanks for the e-mail on Diabetes Type II.

I've been diagnosed with this since June, 2002.

Like you, I started out controlling my Diabetes with diet alone. I went on the Adkins diet and dropped my A1C from 6.5 to 4.9. I also dropped my weight from 237 to 193.

Unfortunately, I stopped my diet but I have watched what I eat more carefully since being diagnosed. I weigh

about 215 now.

I was able to control my diabetes with diet alone for about a year or so but eventually had to go on medication. The meds do a number on your kidneys and liver so keep a close eye on those functions.

I was one of those people who actually started having first symptoms of neuropathy in my feet before being diagnosed with Diabetes. This neuropathy is something I wouldn't wish on anyone. I now have it up to my knees and also have it in both hands.

I have gotten to the point of needing insulin, fortunately only one shot a day.

They tell you that once you are on insulin that your VA benefit goes from 20% to 40%. Don't believe it! I've had to appeal the VA decision to keep me at 20% for Diabetes Militias TypeII for almost 2 years. Just two weeks ago I finally was notified that I've been upgraded to a 40% disability for Diabetes. Your claim must state the following: You are required to take insulin to control your blood sugar AND you are on a restricted diet AND you are restricted from doing heavy or strenuous work and exercise. If your physician does not state ALL THREE ITEMS succinctly and in no uncertain terms, you may not be granted an upgrade from 20% to 40%.

Currently I have 40% disability for Diabetes plus 20% disability for lower left side neuropathy plus 20% disability for lower right side neuropathy totaling 80% disability but only 60% disability pay. My claim for upper left and right side neuropathy (left and right hands) is under appeal. It has been for a little over two years at this time.

I also have an appeal for a claim of schema of the colon. I have no idea how long this will take. The one potentially bright spot in all this is that if I'm awarded 10% more disability for anything, I will have 70% pay and with that along with having 40% disability

for a single item, my diabetes, I can apply for permanently unable to work which will automatically move me to 100% pay and give me BX and Commissary privileges as well as allow me to put my wife on VA insurance which will save me another \$500.00 per month for her health insurance.

Still, I would gladly give all this up for a cure of my Diabetes and Peripheral Neuropathy in a heart-beat.

I hope this info might help someone who is going through the same thing.

Bob Valentine.
rwv@bright.net

P.S. High R.A.T.! It's been a long time, I doubt if you remember me. My nickname was "Joker" on the "B" band. Welcome Home Brother!



ONLY IN A WAR ZONE!

By: Jim Reed
Scatback

Early morning takeoffs at Tan Son Nhut always caused a jam up on the parallel taxiway. Even though by 1969 we did have two runways at TSN, trying to get the landing traffic down and the departures off proved challenging to the traffic controllers. To compound the difficulty every species of aircraft from Fighters, Cargo, Liaison and Airliners were mixed in together on the parallel taxiway, waiting their turn for takeoff. Sometimes the wait was interminable.

One tower chief used a procedure that I had not heard in a flying career that spanned 45 years. One morning when there must have been 25 or 30 airplanes on the parallel taxiway, waiting for takeoff, there was enough of a break in the landing traffic that would permit one runway to be dedicated to departures.

This is what came over the radio:

"OK!! All you people on the parallel taxiway listen up! Everyone on the parallel taxiway is cleared for takeoff, maintain your own separation!"

It was unorthodox. . . .but it worked. He got more airplanes off in the shortest time and everybody was happy.

Try doing that at Chicago O'Hare.

BOOK REVIEW

Vietnam veterans who have problems explaining our war to their grandchildren (or even adult children) might be interested in a book recommended by a friend who is an expert in Children's Literature. I read it and yes, it is a "kid's book," but it is very powerful--and I think it will ring a chord with many of us.

The book is All the Broken Pieces by Ann E. Burg. It is a "novel in verse," which I thought would be off-putting; it wasn't. It is the story of a young Vietnamese boy who is adopted by American parents--a very loving family. But his past is still with him--his Vietnamese mother who sent him away to save him, and his younger brother, who was horribly injured in the war. (No child should have to carry the amount of guilt that he does.) But several things help this boy--baseball and music, plus his loving parents and a local Vietnam vet.

My friend recommends this for middle school grades, but older children (and adults) will learn from it.

Carol Bessette
TSNA Treasurer



Commonwealth of Virginia

STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

This is to certify that the certificate of incorporation of

TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION

Brig. Gen. George B. Price, USA (Ret.) also will be a featured speaker at In Memory Day. He was among the earliest supporters of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. His distinguished military career spanned 27 years during which he was awarded the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, Commendation Medal and the Purple Heart. Today he serves as a special advisor to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) founder and president Jan Scruggs.

State Corporation Commission

Joel H. Beck
Clerk of the Commission

[illegible]

SECRETARY'S COLUMN

From CMSgt. Charles Palmer
Scatback
Dec 68-Dec 69

Tan Son Nhut Association became a Virginia Corporation on February 22, 2010. That date is kind of neat for a patriotic organization like ours. It is George Washington's birthday. Then consider that George Washington was a Virginian. Odd coincidences? Perhaps. A rendition of our incorporation certificate accompanies this column.

Now that we are a Virginia corporation, I have filed Articles of Dissolution, with the State of Wisconsin. With that behind me, I will be working to update our bylaws.

Carol Bessette, your Treasurer, continues to work with our attorney on the tasks to make us a tax exempt organization. That kind of effort takes time, but when tax exempt status is achieved you will be notified by her in the Treasurer's Column.

I look forward to seeing many of you in San Antonio in October.

REVETMENTS

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By: Bob Chaffee
TSNA Chaplain



For a Christian Chaplain this is the week and the days most important to our faith: Palm Sunday, the calendar of the week, Thursday, Friday and Easter Sunday. In 1969 it was a time of a "big" memory. A few days before Palm Sunday the Base Chaplain called me to say "we have a special request next week; set a day and "can you go"? 0-6 to 0-3? What a question! Scatback was alerted, Bob's field altar packed and ready and the plan set up. Someone (I never found out who they belonged to) had a Detachment at an island south and west of Viet Nam, named Phu-Quoc.

We flew there; my chapel helper and I cleared their picnic cum pub cum "hide out" of cans, etc. and set up our altar and organ. (Someday let me tell you about that "organ"). At 4 pm (1600) the troops arrived. I served a Lenten/Easter communion for 7 of the 12 assigned. Hugs and tears and praise to God at the end of a 20 minute Lenten/Easter communion service. Then Scatback and I went back to TSN. But, after 41 years I still remember those hugs, tears and God's love in Our Lord out there on an island that had a Saigon prison, a VC rest area and a US weather/comm. Det. God's love and gift is with us wherever we are!

(There is more to this historical event but we note now the spiritual feeling of the Holy Week for His people. May there be a special blessing for those "7".)

TSNA 2010 REUNION OCTOBER 7-10, 2010 CROWNE PLAZA RIVERWALK HOTEL SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

A fun and activity filled schedule awaits your arrival in San Antonio.

Activities begin at 1 PM on Thursday October 7, when the TSNA Reunion Registration Desk opens, as well as the Hospitality Suite on the 3rd floor of our HQ in the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk Hotel.

Check - in time at the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk Hotel begins at 3 PM, at the front desk, 1st floor lobby.

Thursday at 5:30 PM, the TSNA will gather at the Crowne Plaza's Riverwalk terrace to prepare for a 6:30 PM boarding of *Rio San Antonio Cruise* barges for a one-hour guided tour of the SAT Riverwalk and downtown San Antonio.

Following the tour you can enjoy a great meal at one of the many fine restaurants in the Riverwalk restaurant district before boarding *Rio on Demand* barges for the return trip starting at 8:45. Or if you prefer, take a leisurely post-dinner stroll back to our hotel, five blocks north along the historic and well lit Riverwalk.

After that great reunion group activity, the TSNA Hospitality Suite will open at 9 PM for an evening of greeting old friends and making new ones!

On Friday, October 8, two activities start the day at about the same time: An optional spouses shopping tour of San Antonio will be guided by one of our local SAT TSNA wives, as well as bus transportation to Lackland AFB for the activities there.

VIETNAM VETERANS WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION

(From TSNA Member Andy Csordas)

This long overdue celebration will be held on April 24, 2010 in Rock Hill, SC at District 3 Stadium located at 122 S Cherry Road. The celebration will reflect the community's sense of patriotism and gratitude to our Vietnam Veterans. In addition to a Welcome Home Ceremony, there will be a POW/MIA Ceremony, a Massing of the Colors as well as music, concessions and other activities. Gates open at 8:00am and ceremonies began at 9:30am. Admission is free. Vietnam Veterans of all branches of service are welcome and are requested, but not required, to pre-register. For more information, please contact the SCARNG 178th En Bn Family Readiness Group at 803-417-8600 or rhfrg@truvista.net.

A POEM ABOUT SPRING

First the howling blizzard woke
us
Then the rain came down to soak
us
And now before the eye can
focus
Crocus

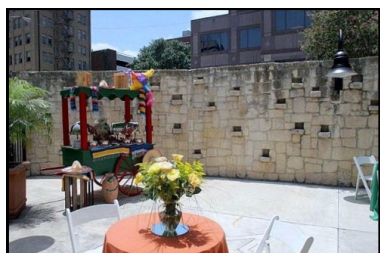
By Lilja Rogers

At Lackland, we will be attending the BMT graduation ceremony and parade, as guests of the 37th Training Wing Commander; followed by a 'windshield' bus tour of Lackland AFB and Medina Annex. We are then honored to be taking our noon meal in the basic military training squadrons, going through their chow-line with present-day Airman Basics and sitting down with them at their tables for lunch and to share experiences from now, and back in our day. At the end of the mid-day meal, the majority of TSNA reunion attendees will be returning on buses to the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk for afternoon free-time in the TSNA Hospitality Suite and leisure time along the beautiful San Antonio Riverwalk.

A smaller group of Bat 21 Search & Rescue participants, our Distinguished Visitors, and your Board of Directors will be traveling with the 37th Training Wing Commander over to Medina Annex in the afternoon. What used to be Officers Training School (OTS 90-day wonders) is now the home of the 37th Training Group. They provide Pararescue, Combat Control, Survival Evasion Resistance Escape Instructor, Tactical Air Control Party, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal recruitment, screening and training in support of USAF Special Tactics units. The 37th TRG also provides Advanced Security Forces Training focusing on Ground Combat Skills, Weapons Systems Security, Law Enforcement, and Combat Arms; along with marksmanship training to Basic Military Training recruits. Our DVs and Bat 21 SAR participants will be talking with these SF instructors and SF tech school students about their Special Forces experiences in Vietnam during the early '70s.

Saturday, October 9 begins with another opportunity for an optional guided tour of San Antonio; or you can go on your own for sightseeing along the newly opened two-mile extension of Riverwalk North, the Alamo, Hemisfair, or shopping in places like Rivercenter Mall and *El Mercado*, the Mexican marketplace. The TSNA Hospitality Suite will also be open beginning early in the morning.

Beginning in the early afternoon, we will be holding a series of "briefings" at the TSNA meeting room, on the 3rd floor of the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk. Your TSNA will be hosting a historic BAT 21 Panel Session in the Texas Ballroom of our Crowne Plaza Riverwalk hotel. In this session, led by Col. Darrel D. Whitcomb, USAFR (Ret.), Medal of Honor recipient LT Tom Norris, and US Navy Cross recipient PO2 Nguyễn Văn Kiệt will be reunited with many of the original BAT-21 Search and Rescue participants from April 1972 in Vietnam. Bat 21 SAR participants will be discussing their memories of this most famous rescue effort in the history of the United States Air Force. LT Norris and PO2 Kiệt will be commenting on the individual SAR participant discussions and adding their own perspectives from the ground in Military Region I, near the DMZ. **Of special note:** Norris and Kiệt have never met the majority of Bat 21 participants who are traveling to San Antonio for our TSNA Reunion, and only spoke with them on their emergency radios 243.0Mz UHF, over 38 years ago! Will Norris and Kiệt still recognize their voices and rescue call signs?



PICTURES FROM THE CROWNE PLAZA
"COME ON DOWN", AND TAKE YOUR OWN
PICTURES!



Tan Son Nhut Association 2010 Reunion Registration
OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF TAN SON NHUT
AND THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

YES, SIGN ME UP FOR THE REUNION!

NAME _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

NAME OF YOUR GUEST(S): _____

PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY: _____

REGISTRATION FEES

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING _____ X \$135. = _____

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (NO EXTRA COST)

- Access to the TSNA Hospitality suite, 3rd floor - Crowne Plaza Riverwalk Hotel (drinks, snacks, and war stories!) - *\$15. daily if purchased separately.*
- One hour TSNA guided tour of the San Antonio River, aboard 36 passenger tour barges - *\$10. if purchased separately.*
- Leased buses round-trip to Lackland AFB for BMT graduation parade, Lackland/Medina "windshield tour", and lunch with basic trainees. *\$10. if purchased separately.*
- TSNA Saturday Banquet buffet dinner. *\$46. if purchased separately.*
- TSNA Sunday Continental breakfast. *\$24. if purchased separately.*

(Please circle which activities that you are paying for, if purchasing separately.)

The price for {optional} weekend guided tours of San Antonio landmarks and spouse shopping trips will be listed at a later date.

Go to the TSNA Reunion web page <http://www.tsna.org/reunion/index.html> and follow the URL link https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_gi_new&groupID=2575021 to make your hotel reservations with the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk-San Antonio. Your room rate has been group-discounted to \$119.00 per night. Those without Internet access can call the Crowne Plaza: 1-888-623-2800. Hotel reservations must be made no later than **September 7, 2010 to receive this special rate.**

PAYMENT MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 7, 2010.

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

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

Form 33110

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



NEW MEMBERS



Mr. Robert A. Pearson	VA	pearsonr@embarqmail.com	Nov 70 - Nov 71	12th RITS
Mr. Scott M. Burkey	PA	celtic01@ptdprolog.net	Aug 72 - Feb 73	12th RITS
Mr. Peter D. Umbras	NY	umbras@mac.com	Jun 68 - Mar 70	377th Combat Support Group
Mr. Michael J. Schneider	MN	mike1532@charter.net	Aug 64 - Aug 65	8th Aerial Port Squadron
Mr. Barry Lee Cammack	MO	barry.cammack@sbcglobal.net	Oct 64 - Nov 65	6250th Air Police Squadron
CMSgt. Charles R. Palmer	MD	crpchp@aol.com	Dec 68 - Dec 69	6250th Combat Support Sq. (Scatback)

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