



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam

AUGUST 2011



FUEL TANK EXPLOSION

By: Gil Simpson
33rd CAMRON & AP Augmentee
Jul 64-Jul 66

The June 2011 photo of the burning fuel storage tank brought back memories. I could well have been up on the back of the pictured pumper truck at the time the photo was taken. At the time of the attack I was in the 377th Comm/Nav shop located in the vicinity of the fire station. As the shop was in what I think was called a Bailey Building (canvas covered Quonset hut) and provided zero protection from incoming we swiftly adjourned the pinochle game and took shelter across the street in an old brick and mortar structure. Recent base beautification program had eliminated most of the sand bagged bunkers in our area.

Shortly after it was evident that the incoming had ceased, a Senior NCO came into our refuge and more or less said "I need three volunteers, you, you and you". I don't remember who the other two were but we ended up on a pickup truck hauling a load of flame retardant foam to the site of the fire. I was sent up the ladder on the back of the pumper truck and spent the next few hours hauling up cans (I think 5 gallon) of the flame retardant and dumping the contents in the tank. After awhile we got some relief and then started running back and forth to the storage dump where the retardant was kept. I think we were relieved in the early afternoon but my recollection has faded a bit.

I had always been led to believe that the flame retardant used at the time contained horse blood. My fellow "volunteer firemen" and I were completely soaked in it as our procedure for getting it from the pickup to the pumper's tank entailed the guy at the bottom of the ladder puncturing the top of the can with an axe then passing it "bucket brigade" style, up the ladder. Needless to say the fellow at the base of the ladder got the worst of it as the vile smelling concoction would slop out as the cans were manhandled upwards. We all changed places occasionally so we could equally share in the drenching.

The fuel storage tank in the picture was located in the center of a ring of other fuel storage tanks. The fireman in charge of the operation impressed upon us the fact that if we could not contain the blaze to the burning tank the whole outer ring might go up and chances were pretty slim that none of us would survive the aftermath. That was incentive enough for us to give it our best. Apparently we did and we contained the blaze and made it out hot, smelly

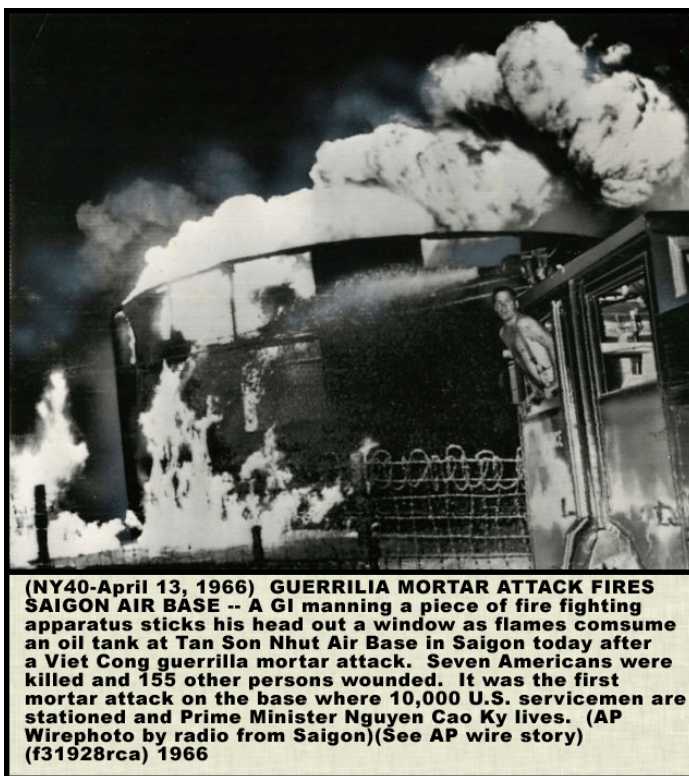
and tired but still alive.

I've always hoped to make contact with someone else involved in the episode but so far I have not. If anyone out there has any other take on the whole affair I would like to hear about it. I could embellish the story more but I think this is enough info.

As always Charles, don't forget I'm still living in Saigon and would like to help anyone from the TSNA who might be interested in visiting.

Next time you talk to Chuck Grey please give him my best regards. Feel free to use all or any part of my ramblings in the newsletter.

Your Friend.....Gil Simpson



NOTATIONS FROM APPLICATIONS

I was there during Tet. Lived in Saigon. Worked at the Mortuary as a technician on a top secret mission.

Raynold A. Gauvin
WDMET
Apr 68—May 69

Freedom Is Not Free



The 2011 Tan Son Nhut Association Reunion is fast approaching—almost as fast as a NASCAR vehicle you can see when you visit the NASCAR Museum while attending the Reunion!

Tan Son Nhut Association 2011 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 \$125. = _____

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (NO EXTRA COST)

Access to the TSNA Hospitality suite, (drinks, snacks, and war stories!) - \$15. *daily if purchased separately.*

TSNA Saturday Banquet buffet dinner. \$56. *if purchased separately.*

TSNA Sunday Continental breakfast. \$24. *if purchased separately.*

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

PAYMENT MUST BE MAILED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 25, 2011.

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

Reservation information for The Blake Hotel is on the next page

THE TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION

2011 REUNION

OCTOBER 6-9

THE BLAKE HOTEL

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

555 South McDowell Street, Charlotte, NC 28204 (704) 372-4100

The special TSNA room rate is \$109.00 per night (plus tax). This rate will be honored for up to three days pre and post event.

Check-in date: **10/06/11**
Check-in time is: 3:00 p.m., Thursday.
Check-out date: **10/09/11**
Check-out time is: NLT, 12:00p.m., Sunday.
Overnight parking is \$10.00 per night.

COLONEL JAMES C. HARDING, USAF Retired



Silver Star



Air Force Cross



TSNA 2011 REUNION GUEST SPEAKER

Freedom Is Not Free

Colonel James C. Harding entered the Air Force in 1956 as a distinguished graduate of the Penn State University Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program where he was also selected as the outstanding Air Force ROTC cadet. His military career covered a variety of flying assignments as well as command positions. He served as squadron commander for a 400 person unit at Lackland AFB and as an A-1 combat squadron commander in Southeast Asia.

He is a command pilot with nearly 5,000 hours of military single-engine flying time, and a master parachutist with 69 jumps. Colonel Harding was shot down by a SA-7 Surface-To-Air Missile (SAM) while directing a rescue mission in Vietnam in 1972. United States Army helicopters rescued him after he successfully evaded North Vietnamese troops. While on the ground, Colonel Harding used his survival radio to direct the rescue of his wingman, who had also been shot down on the same rescue mission.

Upon retiring from active duty on July 31, 1979, Colonel Harding entered general aviation at Nueces County Airport, Robstown, Texas. In 1980, he turned his focus to the Air Force Junior ROTC program where he was instrumental in organizing and implementing programs in the continental United States as well as at Department of Defense schools overseas. He had two short breaks from the Junior ROTC program from 1985 to 1987 and 1990 to 1992 when he worked as an advisor to the Royal Saudi Air Force and developed a professional education program for Saudi Air Force officers. Colonel Harding retired from the Air Force Junior ROTC program in 1998 to take up tree farming in Bayview, TX. He moved his tree farming operation to Huntingdon, TN in 2001 and continued teaching as a substitute in Carroll County. He retired from teaching in 2009 to devote full attention to his family tree farm. He is an accomplished public speaker and has extensive writing experience. **He is a lifetime member of 15 national service organizations.**

SHOW YOUR LOGO

Below is the link to TSNA Member Gary Redlinski's website where you can purchase T-shirts and other items with this years Reunion Logo showing prominently.

And this year there is a double sided logo—part showing on the front and part on the back.



Remember—all proceeds go to the benefit of TSNA.

http://www.printfection.com/veterandesigns/TSNA-REUNION-2011/s_427564 .

Thanks Gary!!

NGUYEN CAO KY FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF SOUTH VIETNAM

We have received word of the passing of former South Vietnam Prime Minister and former Chief of the South Vietnam Air Force, Nguyen Cao Ky.

He passed away on July 23. He was 80 years old.

Further information can be found by searching for his name on the internet.



YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

The 2011 Open House of the American Wartime Museum will be held near Manassas, Virginia, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on both August 20 and 21.

Last year around 5,000 guests enjoyed an amazing array of vintage armored vehicles; A flamethrower demonstration as part of a living history re-enactment; A Blackhawk helicopter that visitors could sit in and explore; Opportunities to drive or ride in an armored vehicle; A chance to fly in a commercial helicopter; Great food; Activities for kids; Information about the American Wartime Museum.

The event is free. Parking is free.

You need to register for this event, at their website:

<http://www.nmaw.org>.

TSNA has no affiliation with this organization. This has been posted for your information only.

Chaplain's Corner

Just think, it's August and if you were natives of Germany or France you would begin the month of vacations; shops closed and the leisure month is celebrated. Well, here in our country we celebrate the inventors; the people responsible for our air conditioners, ice machines, tanning cream, and all those things we feel we must have during the hottest month of the year!

As a clergy person I always dreaded August. We always had so few to sing the hymns on Sunday it almost didn't justify turning on the Chapel air conditioners.

Be honest, because we live in the northern hemisphere we get awfully warm in August, tempers become short. We even are glad the lawns are turning brown. Does anyone remember a joyous song about August?

But!!! There is little we can do about the fact it is August. Just think we accept the penalizing fact that calendar makers give us 31 days for August and only 28 in the fun month February.

With all this negative thought about August I went to the "too nice to throw out box" of old calendars and discovered that only one or two out of the dozens showed a single special event for August. Only the first "official day" of WWI, otherwise all the blocks was just to give the day numbered.

Now what does the Chaplain have to say that is good about August? Well, it's best to know his two children have birthdays in August. That's good. Some of the great leaders of our religious faith were born and taught during the month of August. Yes, and during the slowdown of life during August we have the opportunity to meditate, think and share time with others that might have been ignored in the faster more hectic days of other months of the year. Actually August is the time of harvest in our land. Our bountiful land! Absolutely:

Thank God for August; we need it to make us thankful to all we have been given.

End of Sermon

Chaplain Bob Chaffee



ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY Of The Tan Son Nhut Association

It's Time To Vote!

Just about all of the news about Tan Son Nhut Association has been about the upcoming reunion, but there is a piece of business that every member needs to attend to - voting to fill the offices of President and Secretary.

We are fortunate to have two highly qualified persons running to fill these positions. The candidates are George Plunkett for President and Dale Bryan for Secretary. Both have already given valuable service to our association. They are now falling in to volunteer to do more.

Accompanying this announcement are biographies of the candidates and a ballot. The time honored American tradition of the secret ballot will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Our bylaws as now written require that a ballot be signed and dated. That allows verifying returns against the membership list. In this modern day, we have to really allow voting by email. We also realize that all members do not have the ability to scan a signed ballot and return it as an email attachment. Therefore, an email message with a statement that you vote for a certain candidate will be considered a valid ballot; list your name as it appears on your membership card following the statement. Email, of course, is dated. Whether the returned ballot is via regular or email is the voter's choice.

If you complete and return by U.S. Mail, please send it to the following address:

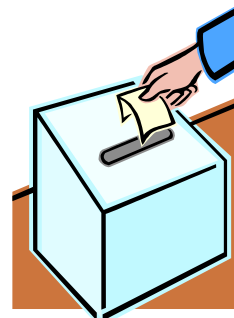
Benny Goodman
TSNA Nominating Committee
133 Sackett Road
Westfield, MA 01085-4043

If you complete and return via email, please send it to this address:

cwvet1@comcast.net

The bylaws require that there be 30 days between the date of this announcement and the deadline for voting, so please have your ballots mailed or emailed by September 15. Benny Goodman will take the ballots to the 2011 Reunion, where the Nominating Committee will count them and announce the winners.

The Biographies and Vision Statements from the two candidates begin on the next page. These are the nominations received by the Revetments publishing time. Any further data received will be communicated in the September issue of Revetments.

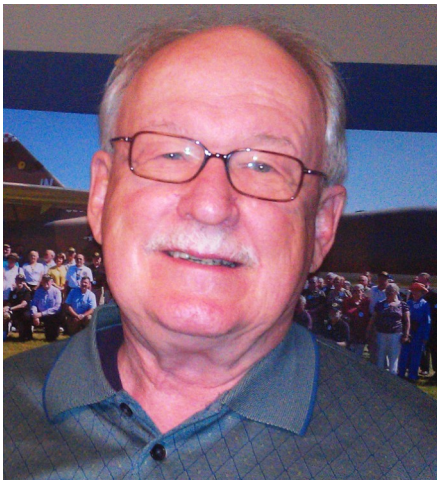


GEORGE PLUNKETT BIOGRAPHY

- November, 1941 - born in Newark, NJ. Oldest of 4 children.
- June, 1959 - graduated from Hillside High School, Hillside, NJ.
- 1959-1960 - worked in a wholesale steel distributor as a shipping clerk.
- January, 1961 – enlisted in the U.S. Air Force.
- June 1961 – completed Ground Radio Operators School at Keesler AFB. Graduated first in class.
- June 1961 – assigned to the 305th AREFS (SAC) at McGuire AFB, NJ.
- July 1962 – assigned to the 1st Mobile Communications Group (AFCS) at Clark AB, PI.
- July 1962 – TDY for 179 days to the 1964th Communications Group, Tan Son Nhut AB.
- February 1963 – TDY for 179 days to the 1964th Communications Group, Tan Son Nhut AB. Further deployed to Soc Trang and Ban Me Thuot for 2 weeks each to support U.S. Army operations. Further deployed to Pittsanaluk, Thailand for 2 weeks to support a SEATO military exercise.
- August 1963 – TDY to Don Muang Airport (Bangkok) for approximately 140 days to the 1964th Communications Group.
- December 1963 – TDY to Ubon, Thailand for approximately 90 days.
- June 1964 – TDY to Udorn, Thailand for approximately 150 days.
- November 1964 – Sept 1966 – PCS to 354th CSG, Myrtle Beach AFB, SC.
- October 1966 – March 1967 – PCS to 1964th Communications Group. Approximately half of the time was spent at Tan Son Nhut AB and the other half was spent at Cam Rahn Bay AB.
- April 1967 – July 1969 – PCS to the 702nd Radar Squadron, Hunter AAF, Savannah, GA.
- December 1967 – married Patricia (Trish) Munn.
- July 1969 – received a 90 day early discharge from the U.S. Air Force to attend the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC.
- May 1972 – graduated from the University of South Carolina with a BS degree in Business Administration, with a major in accounting. Attended college year round while working as a shipping clerk, 25 – 30 hours per week.
- May 1972 – present. Employed as a Controller for several leading firms based in South Carolina. Presently semi-retired and employed as the Controller for South Carolina Cars, Inc.
- May 2007 – present. TSNA VP Membership Development and Reunion Point of Contact for this year's reunion, and the last 3 reunions. Improved membership renewal rates from 73% in 2007 to 85% in 2008, 92% in 2009 and 90% in 2010.

VISION STATEMENT

If the Tan Son Nhut Association is to remain a viable and vibrant veterans organization, we must reach out to family members of Vietnam era veterans, interest them in our purpose and function, and encourage them to join the unit. We must also encourage veterans of all eras to join us, as well as anyone who has an interest in preserving the history and heritage of those who served at Tan Son Nhut AB.



TSNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AUGUST 2011

President: Robert Robinson Gales
Vice President: George Plunkett
Treasurer: Carol Bessette
Secretary: Dale Bryan
Director of Communications/Webmaster: Charles Penley
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Director of Public Relations: Richard Carvell
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Director of Veteran and Member Services: Hector Leyva
Membership Development: George Plunkett
Revetments Editor: Larry E. Fry

Candidate Biography

Dale Bryan, Candidate for Secretary (reelection)

Military Service:

USAF, 1964 to 1969. Entered active duty as 2LT from AFROTC program at San Jose State College, San Jose, CA as a Distinguished Military Graduate with degrees in Mathematics and Meteorology. Honorable Discharge from Regular Air Force as Captain.

Weather Officer, served at F.E. Warren AFB, WY supporting Minuteman Missile operations and at Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam.

Aerial Reconnaissance Weather Officer Instructor, Andersen AFB, Guam. Flew with Typhoon Chasers in WC-130E into 20 fully developed typhoons and numerous tropical storms. Awarded Air Medal. Also participated in cloud seeding in Philippines and flew tactical support missions supporting aerial refueling operations.

Tan Son Nhut Service:

May 1967 to May 1968 (Tet Offensive occurred during this period)

Weather Forecaster, Detachment 2, 30th Weather Squadron: Assigned to base weather supporting all units operating from TSN whose missions were weather sensitive. Approximately 90% of support was directly to 460th TRW working directly with flight crews and intelligence in mission planning. Cloud cover has impact upon taking pictures from the sky.

TSNA:

Presently Secretary and running for reelection. Previously a Board Member.

I will continue to maintain the association records and adjudicate actions of the TSNA Board of Directors. Will continue to represent the Association in the Nation's Capital. Past experience in television media is an asset when interacting with press.

Would continue to plan and participate in association's activities at The Wall on Veteran's Day.

Civilian Career:

Since 1992: Technical support contractor to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in runway incursion prevention, wind shear detection, and other weather programs. Have worked at FAA Technical Center in Atlantic City, NJ and FAA Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City, OK. Now working in Washington, DC where the mission is keeping aircraft from coming together at high speed at the same location on an airport. Career has been either weather or aviation related since 1964.

1984 to 1992: Worked with computer graphics systems used in weather analysis for television and industry. Development and operation of lightning detection systems used in aviation, electrical utilities industry, and broadcasting. Part time television meteorologist.

1982 to 1984: The Weather Channel, Atlanta, GA. One of the charter on air meteorologists. Supervised meteorological operations on the overnight shift.

1970 to 1982: Meteorologist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Fresno, CA; Washington, DC; and Owings Mills, MD. Weather Satellite operations.



PLEASE CAST

YOUR

BALLOT

SOON!

Thank You

BALLOT
ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY
TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION
AUGUST 2011

I VOTE TO ELECT THE FOLLOWING TO THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT OF THE TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION

☐

GEORGE PLUNKETT

☐

I VOTE TO ELECT THE FOLLOWING TO THE POSITION OF SECRETARY OF THE TAN SON NHUT ASSOCIATION

☐

DALE BRYAN

☐

NAME:

DATE:

If you complete and return by U.S. Mail, please send it to the following address:

Benny Goodman
TSNA Nominating Committee
133 Sackett Road
Westfield, MA 01085-4043

If you complete and return via email, please send it to this address:

cwvet1@comcast.net

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Thank you for taking the time to elect our future officers.

VIETNAM - AUSSIE STYLE

By: Phillip Greethead
Australian Army
1968

Good morning Larry,

I've had a look through some of my old photos and have collected some to send over. Unfortunately a lot of my old Vietnam photos are of poor quality and fairly uninteresting. A few were taken off some of my colour slides and these turned out reasonably good.

Pre Vietnam.

I joined the army in late 1965 when I turned 17. I had been working with relatives on farms learning the cattle industry but thought I'd have a break for awhile so I joined up. During my service I was taught a trade by the army for civilian life but never used it.

Vietnam Tour.

My memories from 43 years ago are probably distorted by now.

I was posted to Vietnam in 1968 as a reinforcement and landed in Tan Son Nhut, Saigon during the Tet offensive. The district of Cholon still had fighting going on there and I still remember parts of the areas on fire. We had a good view of it from the air when landing. We knew Tan Son Nhut had already been attacked and that the airbase was expecting more attacks. After that I first went to Vung Tau and then up to Nui Dat, which was in the then province of Phouc Tuy.

On one trip to Vung Tau the American airbase there was rocketed in the early hours of the morning causing some damage and some casualties. I have put in a photo of an Australian caribou transport plane badly damaged in the attack. In Nui Dat we were involved in building new troop lines as well as patrolling and escorts on convoys. Sometimes we were also sent as escort riflemen on the Chinook transport choppers that were taking supplies to fire support bases in the delta and the far north of the province. We also stopped off at Tan Son Nhut a number of times.

At times enemy fire was directed at our camp but it was obvious that the VC didn't really know the lay out or where anything was at Nui Dat. They even rocketed our garbage dump. I guess they had seen constant traffic coming and going to it and thought it was important. All it achieved was to put a smile on everyone's face.

The Americans had two units at Nui Dat that I know of. One was the mobile guns, I think they were 105's. The other unit was a signals detachment. There was always a large traffic of American gun ships in and out of the camp.

After Vietnam.

Left Vietnam in early 1969 and was posted to a unit in Western Australia for three years and met my future wife Catherine there.

On discharge from the regular army we moved back to the eastern states. Worked in the security industry for a while as well as serving in an infantry battalion in the reserve army.

We eventually decided to go farming again. My wife had grown up in the wheat belt of Western Australia so farming was fine with her. We bought a dairy farm in Queensland and raised our three children there. Finally got tired of milking cows so we sold the dairy and bought a beef cattle property, which we leased out.

We moved to Western Australia for a working holiday and stayed over 17 years working in Kalgoorlie, which is a small gold mining city in the desert. As our holidays were nearly 12 weeks a year, we did a lot of overseas travel. Even spent five months travelling around South America. Plus a few trips to the USA and a lot of trips to Asia. We went back to Vietnam with friends in 2004 and then took our grand daughters for a holiday there in 2005. We travelled from Hanoi to Saigon. I noted the bomb craters that were still evident at the Hanoi airport. The changes I saw were quite significant and Vietnam has grown in population and I believe 70% of peoples were born after the war. In the South the older men were often on for a yarn and I think they were ex ARVN.

Now at 63 I have a quiet job in the local hospital stores section just to keep active. I don't like the idea of retiring.

Best Regards

Phill Greethead



Me clearing banana trees near perimeter Nui Dat.

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

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The Association is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt veterans' Organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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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

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



OTHER THINGS TO DO IN CHARLOTTE



Billy Graham Library



Mecklenburg County
Vietnam Veterans
Memorial

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