



REVETMENTS

The Official Journal of The Tan Son Nhut Association

A Memorial to the American Experience in Vietnam



OCTOBER 2016

2016 REUNION VIDEO

There will be 2 DVDs in the package. DVD 1 will contain all activities from Friday, September 23. This includes some interviews, filming of the crowd in hospitality room as they mingle, all the awards given away as well as the speech from the Colonel.

DVD 2 will contain all activities from Saturday, September 24. It has some footage of the Rocket and Space Center, the Bench Dedication at the museum, footage from the memorial park in Huntsville, and much much more including Saturday night's auction, Plus many many photos that will be made into a montage of the weekend. It will be an awesome set of DVDs.

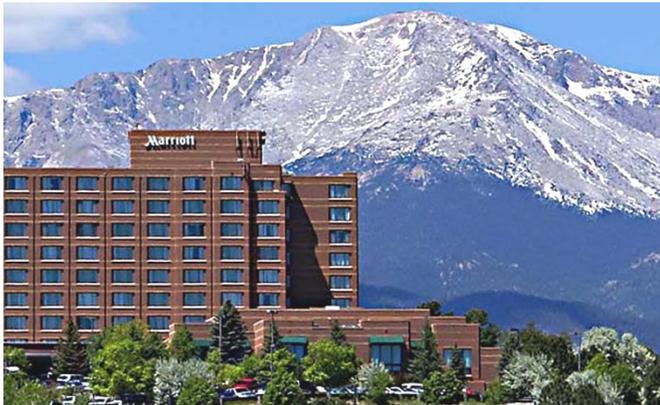
Dennis

EDITOR'S NOTE: I am preparing the mailing labels for Dennis to use to mail to those who have ordered DVD's of the Reunion. IF YOU WANT TO ORDER ONE (and have not done so - you can still do it! Send a check for \$15. to "TSNA", at the TSNA address of P. O. Box 236, Penryn, PA 17564-0236. AND, to hurry things along, please write to me and tell me you have mailed the check!! Email address is: lfry2@dejazzd.com.

2017 TSNA REUNION COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

By: Joe Kricho, TSNA Director

Our 2017 reunion will be in Colorado Springs, CO, Sep 14 – 17, 2017. Our hotel will be the Colorado Springs Marriott and our special room rate will be \$114.00 (+tax) per night, which includes breakfast for two. This special rate will be available three days prior and three days after our reunion. If you are a member of the *Marriott Rewards* program you will receive points for your stay. If you aren't a member, I encourage you to join (at no cost) as you can apply your points to an airline rewards program if you wish. *Starwood Preferred Guest* members will also receive points



as they have recently merged with Marriott hotels.

Monthly updates will be published both in *Revetments*, as well as on the TSNA website as our plans become firm. So please mark those dates on your calendar and join us in Colorado Springs.

WOW

WOW

WOW

Well another TSNA Reunion is in the books. It was a good time in Huntsville, Al. Nice turnout for the banquet and reunion. Thanks to all who attended.

We had a great tour of the Redstone Arsenal, Military Park downtown. The Bench Dedication at the Museum was another nice memorial for TSNA.

You will be able to check out all the pics in *Revetments* and on the website.

A big thank you to Kerry Nivens for all his leg work of getting this reunion put together. He was our boots on the ground in Huntsville.

Congrats to all the Award winners. Much deserved to each of you.

Our focus is now towards Colorado Springs. Joe, Gary, and I will be there in mid October to begin setting 2017 reunion up.

Our Hotel is top of the line. Marriott has just completely refurbished. We will be putting pics and info in *Revetments* soon.

Start making your plans as we set the date.

The sad part of reunions is the departing after some good times.

This year we again had some good speakers, who were very entertaining. I want to thank, Col. John Reitzell, Col. Mike Izzo, David Carney. Outstanding.

Our guest from the American Widows project Cayssia David and her son Blake. We were again honored to have you at our reunion.

I hate to mention a few and miss someone, but the best guests were all of you. Thanks to you all.

If you did not order your DVD of Reunion, they are still available. \$15.00 and there are 2 DVD's this year for price of one. We had so much to get in, he made two, one will be mostly Friday, one will be Saturday. You can still order, just send your money to Larry Fry. Hurry going fast. You will love hearing our speaker at the banquet.

This is down the road, but the TSNA Board voted to have our reunion in Dayton, Ohio in 2018.

Mark your calendars for Colorado Springs 2017, Dayton 2018.

Thank you all for a great reunion.

Randall Brown, TSNA President

TOURING THE REDSTONE ARSENAL

By: Carol and John Bessette

The group's first field trip was on Friday morning, when two motor coaches of members and guests headed to Redstone Arsenal. The arsenal is a very large and spread-out facility; people commented on the amount of green grass (and wondered how it was kept so neat, tidy, and "clipped.") The Arsenal is the center of testing, development, and doctrine for the Army's missile programs. After being greeted by the Garrison Commander, Colonel Tom Holliday, we toured several facilities, with emphasis on the essential role of technology in training today's forces. Several members experienced the 3-D "immersion" into a tactical fire fight (while sitting there in front of us, with heavy goggles "immersing" them in a 360 degree experience.)

One of the most interesting aspects was the briefing about America's Army, a war gaming program which is available to the public online (www.americasarmy.com). Popular with young people (not surprisingly), it is light years ahead of what some of us might think of a "computer war game." It is not just entertainment, however. There is a section where a young person could explore Army career fields via the "Army Career Navigator," which matches the individual's interests to particular Army jobs.

We also visited the Arsenal's Prototype Integration Facility (PIF), which responds when problems are found when another agency or contractor develops the prototype of a new piece of equipment. One example: problems were found in a new Air Force runway-clearing vehicle after the contractor had delivered the first prototype. The Air Force asked the PIF to develop solutions, and the vehicle is now becoming operational more quickly than otherwise.

We had a very full morning, and for many of us, the technology advancements were particularly impressive. It isn't the military we once knew!



Get 'em Bill!!

Sheila, if I was flying with Jim, I'd have that look also!!



**REUNION SPEAKER
JOHN REITZELL
COLONEL, U. S. ARMY (RET.)**

**By: Rich Carvell
VP, TSNA**

Leave 'em laughing.

Is that John Reitzell's motto?

It would surely seem like it ... given the string of one-liners that drew gales of laughter from an appreciative Tan Son Nhut Association banquet audience at the annual reunion in Huntsville, Alabama.

After a 28 year Army career, Colonel Reitzell retired to Huntsville and currently is employed by Dynetics Inc, a Soldier centric Company. During his military service, Reitzell was awarded three Legions of Merit, four Bronze Stars with "V" device for valor, the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge (with more than 500 jumps to his credit), the Ranger Tab, and numerous other decorations from multiple services and countries. Let's start with the funny stuff.

Reitzell said he was a rifle platoon leader at age 22 and questioned whether he was well respected. But, he said, he was such a "good" second lieutenant that they promoted him to first lieutenant!

The retired Army colonel confronted a Vietnam War protestor once when the protestor called him a baby killer. Reitzell's response? He said, "I don't remember killing any babies but I will kill you in a heartbeat." Apparently the protestor backed off.

Keeping his audience guessing, Reitzell moved back and forth from fun and games to really serious stuff.

He said the enemy Vietnam Veterans faced outside the wire were smart and highly-trained ... particularly the NVA. But the problem with a firefight then or now is that neither side knows who is winning.

The oath each new military person takes has a special meaning behind it. It is, he said, "uniquely American." It is a solemn promise to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

But in spite of the fact that the U.S., Reitzell said, is facing "one hell of a threat of great magnitude" in today's world, today's current Army soldiers are – as he put it – "no less committed than we were."

He outlined the history of warfare from ancient times to the modern era and seemed to blame Washington politicians for walking away from Vietnam and for quitting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He concluded his speech to this group of Vietnam Veterans by thanking the group for its service and dedication.

But he warned: "Only the dead have seen the end of war."

His rousing, colorful, but often deadly serious speech earned him a standing ovation from the Veterans and their guests.





2016 TSNA Awards Citations

Presented by Secretary Dale Bryan and VP Rich Carvell

Tonight, we are presenting four awards, each in a different category, to some most deserving members of our Association. None of them should be strangers to you.

The first we will bestow is the Golden Knight Award. It is given to someone who has a prolonged record of helping the poor, the homeless, or the underprivileged or who assists veterans of any era and their families. Our recipient has volunteered for many years assisting veterans and their families at hospitals and nursing homes. One example of many that we could list is transporting veterans to events where they are dined, entertained and honored. She did much of this volunteer work while at the same time nursing and caring for her own Vietnam veteran husband during his final battles with the devastating effects of Agent Orange. He was one of our own and an Order of the Dragon inductee. I'm deducing that most of you have already concluded that the recipient is Debbie Gard.

The next to be bestowed is the Anchor Award. Often, it is presented to a spouse, and that has usually meant wife. However, spouse is a gender neutral word, so it can also mean husband, and tonight, this situation is the case. This man is a Vietnam Veteran who mostly supports the TSNA by being the supportive spouse. He is an avid military his-

torian and has given seminars related to Vietnam War history at TSNA reunions. Members of the TSNA Board seek his advice as does our fine Treasurer to whom he is betrothed. John Bessette come forward to receive an honor that is long overdue.

Our Tan Son Nhut Military Order of the Dragon inductee is already a recipient of the Anchor Award as part of a dynamic husband-wife duo of our Association, and it would take the remainder of this evening to list every contribution that she has made to make reunions over the years successful and enjoyable. Like the snacks in the hospitality suite? She has often been the person responsible for their being there each day. She has always arrived well before the reunion to help with setup. Etc.! Etc.! Etc.! Another clue to her identity. A major reunion function she always helps set up and operate is the BX. Sharon Jernigan, please come forward to be inducted into the Tan Son Nhut Military Order of the Dragon.

There is one award category remaining, the Tan Son Nhut Supreme Military Order of the Dragon.

There are not many possibilities for induction, since there are not that many of us who are already a Dragon. Everyone in this room is well aware of the accomplishments of what is one of the better known husband-wife teams of our Association. In addition to all of the team accomplishments, he is also a member of the TSNA Board of Directors, and has served for many years as Director of Marketing. He was even Vice President Pro Temp 12 years ago. Johnnie Jernigan, please come forward to stand by your soul and team mate and be inducted into the Tan Son Nhut Supreme Military Order of the Dragon.

FROM TSNA DIRECTOR GARY FIELDS: Friday & Saturday evenings:

It was a great night of entertainment, fellowship and camaraderie at our banquet on Friday night.

It opened with entertainment by the Fahrenheit's, from the Huntsville Fire Department. We had great food by our friends from Four Points Hotel, and the opening flag ceremony by the Grissom High School JROTC.

Our guest speaker, Colonel John Reitzell, was outstanding, kept us either riveted to our seats or rolling in the aisles,

Saturday evening, the Silent Auction raised around \$1800, another \$900 raised for the scholarship fund. The 50/50 raffle was won by Ricci Pineau who promptly donated it back to TSNA-half to scholarship fund. Congrats to our award winners, Johnny and Sharon Jernigan, Debbie Gard and John Bessette.

Thanks to all who support our Organization and the Scholarship Fund.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Can the Chaplain's Corner view have four themes for a trio of months? Here we will try these three: they are HOLIDAYS, REMEMBRANCE and GRATITUDE. Oh! There was a fourth BUT the person who writes this series cannot get a computer to accept his thoughts of this year's POLITICS!

Just to fulfill the first three themes well, politics does not come to fit the other three. This is to be a quotation filled message but not another word of politics.

There are three months, October, November and December that echoes Terri Marshall's words "The HOLIDAY season is a perfect time to reflect on blessings and seek out ways to make life better for those around us". One realizes the many meaningful of these months by opening the new calendars that have filled our mail boxes. Last year I used this quote in the "Corner" but it says so strong and wishes it could be true "Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of Love!" Just to prove this point open a Bible to James 1:17.

And we come to GRATITUDE. One of the deep thinkers, I quote "Gratitude is the memory of the heart".

The scriptures remind "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in our Lord concerning you", Thessalonians 5:10.

Now we come to this for our months of holidays. "Remembrance: The French proverb reminds us "youth lives on hope, old age on remembrance".

The apostle Paul says in Philippians "I thank God upon every remembrance of you".

We see the holidays together, the three month season of HOLIDAYS using this "sermon" ends in calling you to read a short biblical text that fits all faiths. Please don't miss the text on this one, its long but speaks out of the thought of the next three months. Please read the Old Testament Nehemiah 8:9-12. Think of this "A HOLIDAY is those words tied to the texts just studied! Three months for this! HOLIDAY, a restoring thing that, which by a blast of magic turns up into our real selves.

End of Sermon

Chaplain Bob Chaffee



We Leave Another "Footprint"

By: Dale Bryan
TSNA Secretary

Again, we participated in what is now becoming a TSNA tradition. We dedicated a memorial bench in Huntsville, AL. This follows those at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH in 2012, Evansville, IN in 2014, and at Pigeon Forge, TN last year. This one became a reality due to the hard work and dedication of Memorial Committee Chairman Gary Fields and committee member Kerry Nivens who was the committee's "boots on the ground" in Huntsville.

The overall bench dedication was relatively short, but, importantly, it was reverent and patriotic to honor all who served at Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam.

TSNA President Randall Brown kicked off the ceremonies with a few words about the purpose for the dedication and some introductions. Followed was the invocation by Memorial Committee member Andy Csordas who was acting as chaplain during the ceremony. (Note: Andy was later appointed to position of TSNA Associate Chaplain by the Board of Directors.) Next was an address by Captain Mike Izzo of the Huntsville Police Department. He is also a Lieutenant Colonel of the Alabama National Guard. He thanked and honored veterans like those of TSNA in whose footsteps he said he is following. He also gave us that long delayed but always appreciated welcome home.

The concluding and main event was the unveiling of the bench by Memorial Committee Chairman Gary Fields and committee members Dale Bryan, Andy Csordas, and Kerry Nivens. The picture below captures the unveiling.

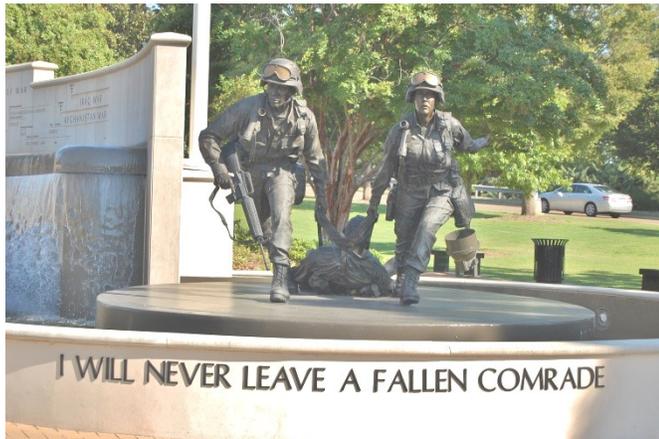


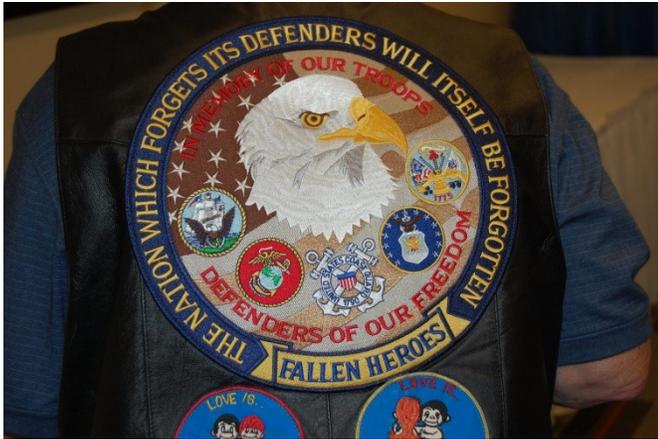
Andy Csordas gives the Invocation



Colonel Mike Izzo gives introductory and welcoming remarks







AND I TOLD HIM, "HOW CAN THE CAR BE ATTENDED WHILE I UNLOAD WHEN I AM BY MYSELF"??



THE GOLDEN KNIGHT AWARD

Larry,

I just received a Golden Knight Award in the mail from TSNA President Randall Brown.

Please express my thanks to all of the Brothers and Sisters in the TSNA Family.

This was not expected and I am humbled that I was nominated and received this award.

I will continue to work to help all veterans.

Hope to be able to attend the next TSNA Reunion in Colorado Springs, Co. in 2017 to see everyone again.

Take care.

Loyally,

Debbie Gard

BILL COUP'S FUNERAL

By: Carol Bessette
TSNA Treasurer

My husband, John, and I had the privilege of attending Bill Coup's funeral at Arlington National Cemetery on September 29th, and it was quite memorable.

We had been fearful about the weather. The weather mavens had been predicting terrible rain for September 29/30; there were predictions of "the greatest rainfall in five years," and another report said the worst since a hurricane in 1954. At least that did not happen on the morning of the 29th. It was raining very, very hard at 6 am, with intense lightning. However, it stopped a while later, and while it was wet and drizzly at Arlington, we never put umbrellas up during the service.

But we were so concerned that we left way, way early--got to the cemetery an hour early, but--better than the couple who came running up to the Administrative Building for a funeral that had left for the grave site at least 20 minutes earlier.

There were about a dozen people there. . .including Larry Coup and his wife (who had been at the Huntsville reunion), and a man who flew up from Texas. He and Bill had strong connections through genealogy research; both were involved with the same family organization. ("Vance," not "Coup"). I had not realized Bill's interest in genealogy; this man said, "Genealogy was his life."

And I learned we all had been pronouncing Bill's name incorrectly--it should rhyme with "cloud." (Whoever told me this said Bill had given up trying to change people's pronunciation.)

We had four vehicles following the hearse--the grave site (Section 55) is quite close to the Admin Building. (You can

go online www.arlingtoncemetery.mil for a map of the cemetery.) Wait about six weeks, and you can go online to the same site, for "Find a Grave," and by then they will have a photo of the headstone. It is a well-organized and useful site--I use it a lot.

Chaplain Warrington of TSNA led the entire prayer service except the "welcome" and "final words," which were provided by the Arlington Cemetery chaplain. The Air Force provided the rifle squad, the bugler, and the flag detail. All looked so very young, but they performed perfectly; the flag was folded with such precision and care.

The family arranged for a photographer to film the entire service; these photos will be available online at www.mattoxphotographyanc.com The password: coup. If the photos are not yet available, you leave your email address and they will notify you when they are posted.

So, what can I say except, "All went well." And Bill is among his comrades, as he wished.

EDITOR'S NOTE: TSNA Member Joe Ingram wrote to Nancy Avila, after meeting her at the Reunion in Huntsville, AL.

Welcome home. Nancy you were the star of our event. We all enjoyed your stories and, seriously, you should consider writing them. I'm sorry that I wasn't present to have heard all of them. Please consider joining us again next year. Again, Welcome Home. Joe Ingram

Here is her reply:

Good morning Mr. Ingram :)

What a kind message I received. Thank you so much. I was so thrilled and happy to be able to attend TSNA reunion event.

I had a ton of fun.

I want to let you and everyone know that how much each of you meant to me. I watched and observed each of you at the event. I felt each of your kindness, passion, and caring in your heart and bones. I also felt your passion, dedication for our country. You were proud to serve and protect the freedom for me and many others to enjoy.

I have been thinking on my flight back. How I can be of help for the 2017 reunion?

With TSNA Board of Directors approval, I will try to get donations for 2017 silent auctions. I will focus on getting donations from businesses that have nationwide locations.

Have a wonderful Monday :)

Regards,

Nancy

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



NEW MEMBERS



Mr. James M. Thayer	Trout Creek	MT	montanajim@ronan.net	Mar 67 - May 68	377th CSG/377th Trans. Sq.
Ms. Nancy Avila	San Jose	CA	nngavila@gmail.com	N/A	N/A
Mr. Lester L. Hanlon, Jr.	Kure Beach	NC	boazhanlons@yahoo.com.	Sep 66 - May 67	8th Aerial Port Squadron
Mr. Lewis B. Agnew	Huntsville	AL	Imagnews@mindspring.com	Jan 68 - Jan 69	USAF Pac Postal & Courier Region
Mr. William A. Cooper	Augusta	GA	william.cooper@dol.state.ga.us	Nov 65 - Nov 66	69th Signal Btn, 1st Sig. Brig. USA
Mr. Danny Gulledege	Huntsville	AL	dgulledg@gmail.com	Mar 68 - Jun 69	1/26th Inf, 1st Inf. Div.

IN MEMORIAM

Lt. Col. Sidney F. Johnston, Jr. Albuquerque NM Oct 66 - Oct 67 360th TEWS Antique Airlines Pilot/EC-47: #043

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