

MEKONG EXPRESS MAIL



The newsletter of the Thailand-Laos-Cambodia Brotherhood, Inc. Volume 23, issue 2

WWW.TLC-Brotherhood.com

My Life and Times at NKP, continued

by John Sweet

TLCB Assistance—How It All Began

Every once in a while, I would stumble across the old shoe box full of pictures while searching in the bedroom closet, and I would spend a few minutes pondering over the pictures of NKP, or Naked Fanny as we called it, and of the orphanage at Thare, pictures taken just a couple days before Christmas in 1969. The years would pass away as the flood of memories returned.

Another Buck Sergeant, named Ted, deserves the most credit for the following:

I had missed the bus to town, and as I was standing at the gate, Ted convinced me to accompany him to the orphanage at Thare, which was almost fifty miles away, near Sakon Nakhon. Ted was waiting for Father Khai, and to this day I have no idea how he first met Father Khai, or how he managed to pull off teaching English to the kids there during his R & R.

Father Khai returned us after dark that night, speeding in a cloud of dust over the twisting, rut-filled red dirt road through the jungle. We used to say, “If you don’t believe in God when you get in Father Khai’s car, you sure do by the time you get out.” My one-day visit to the orphanage was enough to convince me that Ted was right; the kids needed all the help they could get. So together, we started a campaign to raise money.

The project, “Operation Thare,” began in October and took off like wildfire. The men stationed at NKP gave generously and gathered assistance from everywhere. By the time a week before Christmas rolled around, there was \$5,000 in cash and

everything from baseball equipment to fingernail clippers. Somehow, don’t ask me how, there were over a dozen large containers, each four feet square, filled with personal items for the children—combs, shampoo, scissors, sewing kits, handkerchiefs,

soap, socks, and clothes. I was amazed because they were all brand new and individually packaged. It certainly was going to be a great Christmas for those kids!

The units were competing amongst themselves, in a friendly way, to outdo each other. The most astonishing gift was the first one delivered. A huge pile of snow from Colorado was hauled in a crate by Military Airlift Command (MAC) to NKP, brought to Thare by the 21 Special Operations Squadron (SOS), and dropped to the ground — smashing open on impact, followed by a Colorado Spruce, a Christmas tree thrown out of the helo into the pile of snow, sticking straight up on top! The kids went wild because they had never seen snow before! But I have to admit, when Santa dropped down from the Jolly, piloted by Captain Robert Arnau, they had certainly tied for first place!

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Editor's Notebook

The Great MEM Staff Meeting

Not too long ago, while they were traveling through New England, Thelma and Bill Tilton managed to visit our home on Green Hill Pond, just off the Atlantic, in Charlestown, Rhode Island. In effect, it was a staff meeting of *The Mekong Express Mail*. As I believe most of you remember, the TLCB was forced by the pandemic to cancel its 2020 Reunion in Newport, Rhode Island, not all that far from our home. We had hoped to host some of the members at our home, and subsequently extended an invitation to members travelling this way to visit us and enjoy the view. The Tiltons were the first to take us up on it.

The offer still stands for all of you.

John Harrington

MEM Editor

jharrington@nscopy.com

On Harringtons' deck overlooking Green Hill Pond, are from left to right, Bill Tilton, layout; Thelma Tilton, co-editor; John Harrington, Editor, and seated, Eileen Harrington. Not present was Membership Committee Chairman John Duffin, of Philadelphia, who assembles and mails each issue.



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TLC Brotherhood, Inc.

Tax ID #54-1932649

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2021-2022, showing year of term end

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The Mekong Express Mail

David MacDonald (1939-2019), Founding Editor

Editor: John Harrington (jharrington@nscopy.com)

Asst. Editor: Thelma Tilton (thelmatilton@gmail.com)

Distribution: John Duffin (jduffin29@gmail.com)

Composition: Bill Tilton (billtilton@gmail.com)

TLCB Facebook Page

Ray Boas, Monitor

(raymar711@gmail.com)

TLC Brotherhood Website

Jerry Karnes, Webmaster

(JKarnes@tlc-brotherhood.com)

Payments to the TLCB

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Reunion 2022: Springfield, Virginia

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Father Khai had not been idle either. The bishop had come up from Bangkok for the celebration, an eleven hour drive each way. Somehow Father Khai had “found” a case of cold American beer and provided a feast on the verandah for Ted, several of the officers, and me. The older girls performed Thai dancing as entertainment while the other 1200 or more orphans watched, lined up behind them, facing us.



Author John Sweet and Father Khai watching as orphanage kids put on a traditional Thai dancing show at the Thare Orphanage in 1969. Photos from the author.

Passing out those gifts to the children is the fondest memory of Christmas I have. As they passed down the row of boxes, holding out their newly acquired shopping bags with handles, I wondered who had connections with the bag manufacturer. The faces of the children portrayed the true meaning of Christmas in ways I am not capable of putting into words. I always remember that day filled with joy in celebration of love and peace. I always wondered each time I looked at the pictures, “Whatever happened to Father Khai and the orphanage at Thare?”

In 1997, I was headed to China by invitation of a Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party. A guide and translator, along with transportation was provided, with permission to travel anywhere in China. The offer had been made over dinner a year earlier as my wife, Nancy, and I had assisted a delegation that had come to America to finalize negotiations with my company. They would never have the opportunity to be in America again and were staying in a motel, alone on weekends, so we escorted them around Boston and southern New Hampshire.

I never thought they were serious when we were told, “You are welcome to come to China” — until I received a phone call from Wuhan, a month later, concerning the details.

So, I thought maybe we could go to Bangkok if we entered China from Hong Kong. I discovered that Thai Airways was flying up to NKP a couple of times a week. In late June, I left a posting about my pending return trip to Nakhon Phanom on the United States Air Force 50th Anniversary PACAF Website and another on the Vietnam Vets Message Board.

A week or so later I received an e-mail from Suttida and David Brown. Suttida is from NKP and now teaches Thai at Princeton University, and her sister is a school teacher in NKP. Suttida kindly offered to assist me in any way, and offered to have her sister meet us at the airport. I asked her if the orphanage at Thare was still there, and if they could locate Father Khai. I received a return e-mail saying that Suttida would ask her sister to try to locate him and that, “yes,” the orphanage was still there. That same night I dreamed of returning to NKP and finding Father Khai. I woke up when I thought, if I find him what would I say — “Remember when we helped you?”

The very next day I began raising money for the orphanage at Thare, which would be donated in memory of the men from NKP who never returned home. That same night I received an e-mail from Dick Anderson, a former member of the 23rd TASS at NKP, responding to my posting on the Vietnam Vets Message Board. Dick had located several other members of the 23rd TASS over the years, and held a reunion with them at the Vietnam Wall Memorial in Washington, DC. Dick said that it seemed like a good project for the 23rd TASS guys, and asked for my address as they were each sending a twenty-five-dollar donation.

Two weeks later I had raised a thousand dollars, half my own funds and most other through a fifty-fifty raffle through the 500 employees at work. Everything was fitting together. Suttida’s sister found that Father Khai was still right across the street from the orphanage, and she e-mailed his fax number to me. So, I faxed off my old pictures of him and me from 28 years ago, and received a very warm response which was signed, “Your Old Friend in Thailand, Lawrence Khai.” He had become the Roman Catholic

Sweet continues on page 4.



The KIDS! Children at the Thare Orphanage for the performances. Thanks to efforts by The TLC Brotherhood and very successful fund-raising campaigns conducted by the late Archbishop Lawrence Khai, Thare has become a fine facility and our Assistance Program has shifted its focus to locations of greater need.



At left, picking up stones on the parking ramp at Nakhon Phanom Airport in 1997. Tommy Thompson is seen standing, at right, and father Khai is kneeling just behind him. Soldiers and even the base commander helped. Later John brought back 6" squares of PSP (steel used for "instant runways" in World War II) and sold them in sets with some souvenir stones to raise funds for Thare Orphanage.

them pick up rocks so they could help the kids. Word is, he thought that they were nuts, but joined in picking up rocks. The rest of the soldiers figured if the commander was doing it, they had better help, and everyone got involved.

Well that went great and they had a big box of rocks in no time, and sat down in the commander's office for a cold drink. A few minutes later, in came the commander's grandsons with the box of rocks, which they had hosed down, washing them clean.

Tommy Thompson said, "Oh no, we need the ones covered in grime and red dirt." Now the commander was certain

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Archbishop of Thailand.

The orphanage at Thare stands across the street from the new school, and the old buildings I remembered in 1969 have been replaced. A brand-new church has also been built. One of the sisters who works at the orphanage was one of the children present when we brought Santa in 1969. Father Khai informed us that the former students still speak fondly, remembering the American GIs' visit to this day.

I told Father Khai that I'd try to find a way to help the kids more, and brought back five rocks from the PSP underlayment as souvenirs for the five guys who had sent donations. When I got home, the editor of the "Air Commando Newsletter" contacted me, asking me to write an article about our trip back to NKP to share with their 6,000 members. At that point, I thought that if I had more rocks, I could raise funds for the orphanage by asking for donations in exchange for them.

MacAlan Thompson put me in touch with Tommy Thompson at the Udorn VFW. Tommy drove to Thare, picked up Father Khai, and they convinced the Thai Base Commander to let

they were all crazy until Father Khai explained why the old GIs needed them that way. So, the Grandkids were sent forth to collect new "old" rocks.

While gathering the rocks was being planned, I'd been in process of contacting Canadian International Airlines, and sweet talked them into shipping the box of rocks back to my company in Gloucester Massachusetts, free of charge. Tommy got them down to Bangkok to Mac, but the Thai Customs held them there for a couple of weeks trying to figure out what the hell we were trying to smuggle. But eventually they were safely delivered right to my office.

I stayed in contact with the 23rd TASS guys, and our email chat group kept growing and growing until it finally reached the point where everything was bouncing everywhere due to all the changes in email addresses. Finally, I was able to locate a local provider who cut us a break and more or less donated an email server to us for costs because he liked what we were doing. It grew from there and we had a gathering at the Air Force Museum in Dayton in 1998, which became the foundation of what is today's TLC Brotherhood Inc.



Newest Members in the TLC Brotherhood

The five members listed below joined between the March, 2022 issue of the *MEM* and Memorial Day. You can find more information on our website database.

The *Mekong Express Mail* wishes you all a sincere "Welcome Home."

No.	Branch	Last Name	First Name	City	State
02003	USAF	Kuykendall	Linda	Tunnel Hill	IL
02004	USAF	Wallin	W.C.	Salisbury	NC
02005	USAF	Stretch	Wayne	Bristol	CT
02006	USAF	Pocchiari	Joseph	Nashua	NH
02007	USAF	Abel Jr	Ray	Indialantic	FL

Once Upon a Night in Phnom Penh

By Gary Larsen

There is a certain time of day one can visit Angkor Wat. For me it has always been early in the morning. The air is cool, the grounds largely deserted. The crumbling ruins, entwined in the verdant strands of persistent vegetation, and the bas reliefs of Hindu gods and dancing Apsaras, all slumber quietly under the watchful eyes of the Bayon. The stillness is broken only by the singing of birds and the squeaks and squeals of the macaques. The Khmer deserted Angkor centuries ago and it is now just a place of statues and spirits, so as one wanders about trying to imagine what it was like, there is no connection from that world to ours and little emotion for those who came before. They are no more real than the statuary.

But I was not in Angkor Wat. I was in Phnom Penh. It was April 1981. Phnom Penh too was a ghost town, quiet and crumbling. Vegetation grew wild and the skeletal remains of walls and columns lined the streets like tombstones over graves of bricks, and concrete from which protruded spidery fingers of steel. The roads were dirty, crumbling, and potholed. The sidewalks were cracked and cluttered. Outside gutted office buildings and apartment complexes, there were piles of appliances—air conditioners, refrigerators, TVs, fans—marking the maniacal rage of the Khmer Rouge against the modern era. Here and there a spirit house or small roadside Buddhist stupa had been smashed and the National Bank was a pile of rubble. But here there were people, sort of...

I was in Phnom Penh as a volunteer for a startup international relief organization, *Operation California*. Cambodia had been a late arrival to the wars in Indochina, but had suffered disproportionately. The eastern part of the country had been fought over by all participants and massively bombed by the US in secret. In the aftermath of the war the murderous Khmer Rouge (KR) had seized power. Three years later their “fraternal” communist neighbor, Vietnam, invaded and expelled the KR.

Cambodia now teetered upon extinction. Commerce had collapsed. The social fabric had been shredded. Rice production had collapsed and malnutrition, if not starvation, was widespread. One third of the population had perished. By 1981, the country had been liberated from the KR for some two years. Although the Vietnamese had easily occupied Phnom Penh and other major cities, the country itself was only partly secure. KR strongholds existed in the mountains. Along the border with Thailand, the KR had established safe havens from which they would launch attacks and then retreat to their sanctuaries. These attacks were sporadic but continuous. In addition, banditry, terrorism, and mines made travel outside the capital precarious. Finally given the support the KR was receiving from both Thailand and China, no one could discount a possible return to power in the future.

It was a situation in which caution perched on everyone’s shoulder, suspicion shadowed speech, and fear shrouded action. Confidence in the future was faint and flickering, like rays of



Angkor at Rest. Gary says: “I am walking alongside a temple. This is Angkor early in the morning after a rain. It is not 1981, for Angkor was still insecure at that time. Probably 87-88.” Photos furnished by the author, except ending image.

candlelight from beneath a closed door.

I had been in Phnom Penh in the time before the Khmer Rouge. From 1969 to 1973 I had been stationed in Vietnam and had made trips to Phnom Penh. Even though during that time, Cambodia was engulfed in the war, the city was still a relatively calm oasis of charm and beauty.

But this was not the Phnom Penh I remembered, and I found myself wholly unprepared. There was almost no commercial activity. A few fruit vendors trudged the streets with makeshift

Phnom Penh continues on page 6.



Hotel in Phnom Penh.

Phnom Penh *continued from page 5*



A city without people. Gary's comments: "Street scenes of a deserted Phnom Penh; streets overgrown, cracked etc, vehicles abandoned, destroyed." These photos were shot during the day



carts, and an occasional bicycle repair stop occupied a sidewalk corner, marked by a piece of plastic sheeting, pliers, some rubber patches, and an antiquated pump. The Central Market was still deserted, some said occupied now only by ghosts (khmaoch phsaar), although outside there were a few stalls selling, well, whatever. The currency of choice was a pack of cigarettes, with which one could barter for anything, anything that is which was available, which of course it was not. And that's my point, you see, there was nothing. I noted early one morning that someone had left an uneaten breakfast roll on a plate in the hotel lobby overnight—still intact. You see, there were not even any rats.

But it was the people who struck you most. Unlike Angkor, with its disembodied spirits, Phnom Penh was filled with dispirited bodies. They



walked about with expressions of—nothing. Just blank stares into a future which could not be any worse than the past—but who was to know? The morning salutations, hands to forehead and a greeting (suos saday, sok siibai) were mechanical, the smiles forced, unreal, and the eyes dull, insipid, un-awakened to a new day. Even now, more than two years after the

Phnom Penh *continues next page.*

expulsion of the KR, the streets were largely deserted. There were no children following the calling out of taunting phrases, or hawking chewing gum. In the evening, the streets were dark and most of the building remnants were empty. Here and there the ground floor of a shattered structure was occupied by three or four people, the vestiges of a scattered family moving slowly, their forms illuminated by the light of a single lantern or small fire. Those small groups were joined by shadows cast on the walls behind, but whether they were really shadows, or the phantasms of the uncounted dead, was anyone's guess.

My visit consisted of a review of ongoing programs, looking for new ways to help, and unraveling bureaucratic knots, "please resubmit your request in ten copies for final disapproval." On occasion we were taken to visit one or two "Potemkin" villages close by Phnom Penh. Here the authorities would gather the villagers, "thank you so much for your generosity and oh, look, here on the village dispensary shelf are some of your donated medicines." Some? It was discomfoting to know that a portion of your aid had been diverted. But it was not unexpected.

Most disturbing was the obligatory visit to Tuol Sleng, the notorious Khmer Rouge prison. It was here that political prisoners, merchants, teachers, musicians, spectacle wearers,



Gary's comment: "This is hard. The pile of bones is from an excavation site near the city"

and foreigners, including two luckless young Americans from my hometown of Long Beach who were sailing across the Gulf of Thailand, were taken for incarceration and torture. Their confessions were extracted by starvation and beating. "Admit you are an enemy of the revolution, a spy for the CIA,—a wearer of spectacles," and prior to execution—more beating. In the words of one, "The living came to envy the dead."

The entrance to the "exhibition" was a room highlighted by a map of Cambodia made from human heads. These were dug up from mass graves close by the city, which were marked by haphazard disinterment—mounds of dirt, piles of bones, and scattered skulls. "Welcome to Tuol Sleng. Please do not touch the exhibit. You may take photographs." What happens to one on a visit such as this? How does one feel? Despair, rage, sorrow, compassion.... nothing?

The end of the war in Indochina had been tragic. In the

Official Notice: Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the TLC Brotherhood, Inc., will be held on Saturday, October 15th at the Springfield, Virginia, Holiday Inn Express. The first order of business will be the election of directors whose terms expire in 2022. The following is the official slate as adopted by the board of directors. Active members may also write in the names of other members for these positions. Eligible members who are not attending the annual meeting may **vote OR assign their vote to a proxy**, using the enclosed ballot. Members attending the meeting will be furnished ballots for in-person voting.

For President: John Sweet (unapposed)

For Treasurer: Bill Tilton (unapposed)

For Board Member: (vote for two)

Ray Boas

Harry Bright

Roger Durant

years following, I had been involved with refugees in the US and in camps from Hong Kong to Thailand to Malaysia. I had heard stories from friends, relatives, and strangers of escapes, suffering, sorrow, and death. I had lived in refugee camps in Malaysia. I had visited the hospital ward at Khao I Dang refugee camp in Thailand, where the survivors of Cambodia's killing fields were learning to live without limbs, and I had comforted children who were orphaned when the ship in which they were fleeing broke up on the shores of Malaysia, one wave from sanctuary. They lost their parents, and tended to the bodies of two young women washed up on the shores of Thailand's sunny beaches, brutally mutilated and murdered by pirates in the South China Sea.

The story of Indochina was a story of despair, a face of tears, an unexpected death for every day of the last several decades. Was I responsible? Well, I was there. And now I was here. But how does one feel? How should one feel? It was not clear. I did not know, so I buried my feelings—radioactive sentiment for a later day. It turned out that our visit coincided with the Cambodian New Year, Chnam Thmai, which began on the 13th of April. By tradition it is an end-of-harvest holiday which lasts for three days. The Foreign Ministry had decided to host a party on the roof of the Ministry Building. This was to be the first time an event like this would take place, in which the Khmer Rouge and the few foreigners in Phnom Penh were invited as well.

The same day is celebrated in Thailand. I had been to New Year's celebrations there and the excitement and joy, not just on the day, but several days before were spontaneous, infectious. It was different in Phnom Penh. There were some scattered banners, flowers, and garlands hung on despoiled spirit houses, here and there a candle or stick of incense placed before a small stupa, but these were tentative offerings, tiny baby steps away from a known terror and into an unpredictable future. The night was beautiful. The air was clean. The sky was clear. A waning moon was late to the event, and with no ambient

Phnom Penh *continues on page 8.*

Phnom Penh *continued from page 7.*

Gravesite remains; the uses of the dead.

Gary Larsen commented: "The photos of stacked skulls is separation for 'artistic' merit, i.e. the ceation of exhibits which will demonstrate the brutality of the KR. Of course no effort is made to separate remains for possible future identification. The bones are to be destroyed, the skulls used. You see, even the dead have their uses. This is all done under the direction of the Vietnamese, who are at pains to show how evil the KR were in large part to justify their occupation/salvation of Cambodia. (Which of course was not their purpose in invading). Nevertheless, I had always thought the Vietnamese were very artistically creative. I now realized that was not necessarily a virtue."



light from a desiccated, depopulated city, the stars began their twinkling theft of the night sky. The heat of the day, which at that time of the year is harsh, had grudgingly surrendered a bit of its intensity to the cool of the evening, and the roof was tantalized by a gentle breeze which flickered candles and torches and wafted the scent of frangipani and jasmine over the rooftop. Flame and fragrance. The lights strung around the perimeter glowed dimly, erratically due to the unreliability of the city power source, but the tables were filled with food.

However, the scene was hardly boisterous. The people clustered in threes and fours, quietly speaking or gazing around, as if apprehensively awaiting the arrival of harsh reality, a sharp rap on the shoulder, which would awaken one from a pleasant dream to the terrors of life in an auto genocidal nightmare. This restrained mood in a magical setting was mirrored by the dress of the men, dark slacks and white shirts, proper if somber. It was the women, however, who hinted at a livelier spirit. For almost all had chosen to dig into long-hidden storage caches for traditional finery. And although they too stood quietly at first, the colors of yellow and green, burgundy and blue, bespoke of gaiety, youth, and hope. They were wearing the Khmer dress, the sampot. This consists of a silk bodice and skirt which clings with envious tightness to the waist and hips and then drops straight down, seemingly constricting movement, yet which in fact gives each and every gesture a single graceful swaying fluidity of style and beauty. Think animated friezes from an Angkor temple. Slowly the first few strands of music came



Cartography/map making? Gary's comment: "Skulls on the floor. They are making another map of Cambodia for exhibition."

from the band, then a song. Some of these were old Khmer favorites and some pop songs from the Phnom Penh of the late '60s and early '70s.

Gradually the evening bestowed its enchantment on those attending, and song, music, and laughter rose in volume and spread throughout. Toward the end of the evening, the band struck up the music for a traditional dance in which men and women move in a circle, making gestures with their hands which describe the falling of rain and the growing of rice. In Thai and Khmer, it is called the lam vong. The women, in their colorful and clinging attire undulating gently to the sounds of the music, arms moving sinuously from shoulder to wrist, with the fingers curling gracefully back to the forearm. The circle goes round and round with those dancing pulling in bystanders with gestures and smiles, "please,...join us." So we entered into the evening's last event.

Then the music stopped. Everyone smiling, some clapping, and I turned to the young girl behind me who had invited us to join in, "You look very beautiful tonight in your dress, like the Apsaras of legend." She smiled and as she did so, I saw that her dark eyes brimmed with water and her cheeks glistened, spillways for wayward and unwept tears. She reached out and took my hands tightly in hers, "I never thought I would wear this again. Thank you for coming back to save us." I stood there in vain, trying to imagine her life under the Khmer Rouge and said softly, "Suos sa day, Chhnam Thmei" (Happy New Year), and then the sentinels of my reserve fled their posts, and my eyes too filled with tears.

But of course, she was wrong. I had not come back to Cambodia to save her, or the Cambodians. What was it Orwell said, "Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent." Was it the same with humanitarians? I was here for myself, forgiveness, redemption. And at that moment, as she held my hands, smiled hopefully through her tears, I experienced a bit of solace that only hope can provide. It was not redemption, but it was something. And for tonight, in Phnom Penh under the moon bringing a new year, it was enough.



My Year Tour in Southeast Asia (SEA)

By Bob Vettel

I joined the Air Force on 13 July 1971 after I had just finished a 2-year technical school in North Dakota, earning an Associate Degree in Electrical Technology. My Draft number was 13, so with no more deferment, I decided to enlist in the Air Force. I went through basic at Lackland AFB then to Ground Radio Maintenance School at Keesler AFB, MS. Our instructors advised us that the best assignments were overseas, so on my dream sheet, I selected Germany and Thailand. I won and was selected for Thailand. Departed Travis AFB on 13 April 1972, refueled in Hawaii and Guam, then on to the Philippines for an overnight rest. I flew out on a C-141 to Korat, my first ride on a military aircraft.

The movie “The Godfather” was out and Neil Young’s “Heart of Gold” was popular on the radio.

I arrived as an airman first class for a year-long tour at Korat RTAFB, Thailand, April 1972, and was assigned to the 483rd Electronics Installation Squadron (EIS), informally called GEEIA (Ground Electronics Engineering Installation Agency), working in a ten-person ground radio installation work center. The 483 EIS had about 150 personnel assigned



A1C in front of unit barracks at Tan Son Nhut in 1972. Beret not necessarily authorized. Photos provided by the author.

to ground radio, navigational aids (NAVAIDs), teletype, crypto, inside plant (telephone systems), outside plant (buried cables), construction (antenna systems), vehicle maintenance, material control, job control, and orderly room work centers. We had three buildings in the compound, one air conditioned, and two large warehouses. The compound was close to the square concrete water tower. We also had a building for the motor pool. The unit had a small contingent of 12 folks in Tan Son Nhut (Saigon) RVN, and the squadron had about 10 M-151 Jeeps, 15 M-715 weapons carriers, six Dodge 6-pax, a couple of



A1C Vettel in front of M-715 weapons carrier.

power line trucks for setting poles, and different cable trenchers and cable trailers.

I lived in a twelve-person hooch, and every four hooches shared a central latrine and shower building. We had a water cooler and refrigerator at one end of the hooch, and we had two hooch maids who washed and pressed our uniforms, shined our boots, made our beds, and cleaned. I think it was Building #993, located close to the perimeter road. Down the street was the Ancillary NCO Club that had a pool, which we called the Nit Noi Club. My hooch was about a mile away from my workcenter, so I ended up buying a bicycle from a guy who was PCSing out. [Note: “PCSing” means “leaving” and “nit noi” is Thai for “little.”]

Roberta Flack’s “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face” was a #1 hit.



Hooch at Korat—building #993.

My first two-week TDY was in May 1972, at Ko Kha Air Station, near Lampang in Northern Thailand. This was during the time that Governor George Wallace was shot. We had to finish installing a 10-kilowatt High Frequency (2-30 mega hertz) transmitter. The team makeup was a tech sgt, two A1Cs, and I was low man on the totem pole because I was still a 3-level and in training. We stayed on the station in an air-conditioned room, which was super nice as it was the only barracks room I

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Vettel continued from page 9

At right, this was my Thai driver's license.



ever stayed in, while in Thailand, that had a/c.

To get to Ko Kha was quite an adventure. First, we departed Korat on the C-130 daily rotator, the Klong Bird, my first time on a C-130. The plane landed at Udorn, and



Above, one dollar Military Payment Certificate (MPC), also known as "funny money."

the next day we flew to Chang Mai on, I believe, a C-54. From Chang Mai we took a taxi to Ko Kha AS, and during the ride we saw some elephants pulling logs along the side of the road. After we finished the job, we returned to Chang Mai for flights out. We stayed in a downtown hotel because the next scheduled flight wasn't for three days, so with some free time on our hands, we visited all the local sights, including a temple with 300 steps to the top. We eventually got a flight out of Chang Mai on a C-47 to Don Muang Airport, which is north of Bangkok, and then took a taxi back to Korat right in time to go TDY to Kunsan Air Base in Korea.



Main gate sign at Ubon.

where we RON for the night. The next day we finally flew into Kunsan. At this time, Korean bases were using Military Payment Certificates (MPCs) instead of dollars, so we had to exchange all of the dollars we had brought in. MPCs were also used in Vietnam.

The first month at Kunsan we stayed in billeting; and it was crowded. I had a top bunk. The second month there we stayed in a small Korean hotel downtown. My room had a mat on the floor, a wardrobe, small table, and a window over the door that looked into the hallway. The hotel had a traditional Korean bath, like a small swimming pool. Everyone shared the same water. There were cubbies by the front door for your shoes. Korea was

Vettel continues next page

Below, a "loaded" A1E Skyraider on static display at NKP.





A1C Vettel installing UHF transmitters at Udorn.

In June 1972, a tsgt and I deployed to Kunsan for 60 days to learn/augment an E&I unit from Japan, and to install security systems in the bomb dump at Kunsan. The systems consisted of buried cable (maid-miles) outside the fence, mercury switches on the fence, and geo-phones to pick up vibrations on buildings and bunkers. All intrusion alarms were monitored by the security police. To get to Korea, we boarded a C-130 to Don Muang to remain overnight (RON) in Bangkok. The next day we flew a Flying Tiger 727 cargo/passenger milk run—Don Muang to Clark AB, Philippines; to Taiwan (Ching Chuan Kang AB (CCK); to Okinawa (Kadena AB); to Yokota AB Japan,



Nakhon Phanom RTAFB gate sign.

under martial law with a midnight curfew, so the hotel would close its gates at that time, and as you can imagine, there were a few nights that we got back from the bars past curfew and had to scramble over the gate to get back into the hotel.

Neil Diamond hit #1 with "Song Sung Blue."

When we finished the TDY, we flew back to Yokota AB, Japan, waiting for a flight, where we spent the three days with a team member who lived in base housing with his Japanese wife. They showed me all the local sites around Yokota, and we

had a great time and a great TDY. Then it was back on Flying Tiger 727 milk run back to Bangkok.

In July 1972, a buddy of mine, who was in aircraft radio maintenance, was TDY from Tyndall AFB, FL to Ubon. When I returned from Korea, I requested a 3-day pass and rode the train from Korat to Ubon to visit him. I got a top sleeping berth as the train departed at midnight from Korat. We had a good visit, but were unable to drink the Airmen's Club dry, although we did give it our best shot! When I left Ubon in the evening, I just had a regular seat on the train, and sat next to a Thai student who had gone to school at a university in Illinois. Needless to say, I had a very good translator for the return trip. The train stopped four or five times, people getting on/off, but I couldn't see any countryside since it was really dark out.

As luck would have it, my next TDY for 30 days was to Ubon in Eastern Thailand. I flew over on the C-130 Klong Bird. My team chief (tsgt) and team member (staff sgt) drove over in an M-715 weapons carrier. The job was to install a patch panel and three UHF (230-500 MHZ) transmitters and receivers. I think the radios were used for air traffic control. We stayed downtown at the Siam Hotel, and took taxis or the bus to and from the base. On the return trip to Korat, the team chief and I took turns driving. It can be a challenge to drive on the wrong side of the road, and to top that, one of the driving instructions I found funny said, "to look for airplanes to find Korat." We would stop in small towns to get cokes and would be instantly surrounded by kids; most had not seen foreigners before.

Gilbert O'Sullivan's "Alone Again (Naturally)" hit #1.



UHF transmitter/receiver installation at NKP.

In September 1972, after a week or so of sitting in Korat doing busy work at the squadron, I was sent on a 45-day TDY to Nakhon Phanom (NKP) in Northeast Thailand. To get there, half the team flew and three of us drove in a Dodge 6-pax. We were able to see a lot of the Thai countryside when we drove from Korat to Udorn and the next day to NKP. The job at NKP was to install five HF Transceivers, five UHF single-channel solid state transmitters, receivers, and two multichannel tube type UHF transmitter and receivers and patch panel. This was

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Temple in Bangkok, with Thai guide.

in a new building on the same road as the main gate, down past base supply. The radios were “remoted” into the command post. We stayed on base in a hooch near the BX, and for entertainment, we spent time at the communications squadron’s bar, the Dragon Inn, went to the movies at the open-air theater, and took some trips downtown on Sunday. We worked six days a week.

President Nixon and Henry Kissinger announced “Peace is at Hand” in Vietnam prior to the ‘72 elections.

On a sad note, one of our team members overdosed from heroin during this TDY; he lived, and was sent to the states for rehab. I ran into him a few years later when I was TDY to Keesler AFB. When I left NKP, I rode shotgun in a 5-ton M-series semi-truck pulling a 40-foot flatbed trailer. As all our vehicles had the steering wheel on the wrong side for the country we were in, I had to tell the driver when it was safe to pass. The passenger seat had no springs, just a canvas-covered bench. We drove from NKP and overnights at Udorn on the way back to Korat. After arriving, I took my end of course exam for my 5-level career development course and—I turned 21.

“Brandy (You’re a Fine Girl)” by Looking Glass and the Moody Blues “Nights in White Satin” hit #1.

In mid-November 1972, I went on a 60-day TDY to Tan Son Nhut AB RVN (Saigon). I caught the Klong C-130 to Don Maung AB and RON in Bangkok, and the next day caught a ride in a C-47 to Tan Son Nhut. I worked on a project called “Peace Grey,” which was a Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) system where the command post at Saigon could key a radio to control aircraft at other locations in South Vietnam. We also removed a PA system out of the 7th Air Force conference room and shipped it to NKP. There were three GIs from Korat and an Engineer from PACAF on this team, and we occupied the bottom floor of a hooch, sharing it with about 12 other guys TDY to our unit. At one end we had a small hooch bar, and a Vietnamese barmaid taught me how to play solitaire. We went downtown a few times and ate at a floating seafood restaurant on the Saigon River. Highlights of this TDY were the Bob Hope Show on Christmas Eve, Linebacker II was taking place up north, a rocket attack occurred at Tan Son Nhut, a bomb dump attack at Bien Hoa, and the Peace Accords were signed in Paris.

“You’re so Vain” by Carly Simon was #1 around this time.

We filed our travel vouchers when back in Korat. By this time, I was getting really good at filling these out. My team chief, Tom, and I requested a 5-day R&R to Bangkok where we saw lots of temples, the King’s Palace, Reclining Buddha, Emerald Buddha, and the zoo.

The day after our return, we were sent to NKP for five days to install that same PA system in a conference room in the Task

Christmas, 1972. The Bob Hope Show!



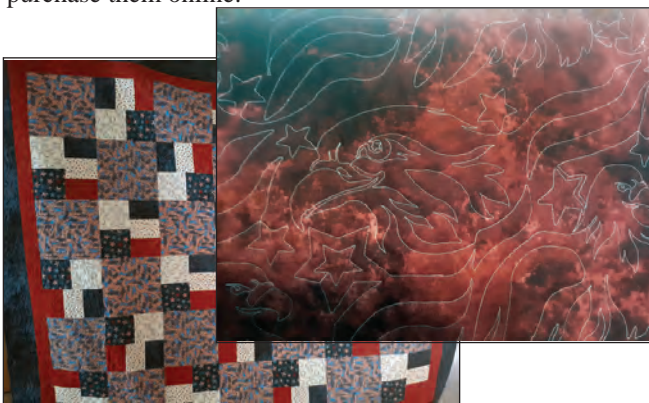
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The 2022 Rosie’s Memorial Quilt Raffle

Help raise funds to support TLCB Assistance

Here is a photo of this year’s beautiful “Rosie Wheatley Memorial Quilt,” which is donated by a TLCB member, Mark Schlieder, and his wife, Becky. This beautiful patriotic design is queen size and has an embroidered patch with an inscription honoring Rosie Wheatley and displaying the TLCB logo. The reverse side is unique, and shows white-stitched stars and eagles, a real innovation for our quilt.

Raffle tickets are included in this issue and will also be available at the reunion. Fill in the info, or just one ticket, and we will copy the info and print all the tickets you order. Send your check and the enclosed sheet for raffle tickets (\$2 per ticket, or \$20 per sheet) or go to WWW.TLC-Brotherhood.com and purchase them online.



Force Alpha (TFA) compound, and upon completion, we went back to Korat. Yay! I passed my EOC and was awarded my 5-skill level.

“Crocodile Rock” by Elton John was #1.

After just a week, I’m off on a 45-day TDY to Udorn RTAFB, located about 30 miles south of Vientiane, Laos. This was a former Japanese base during WWII. This was in Feb 1973, and while there, we stayed in a hotel, a rented bungalow, and billeted on base. We had a team of three to install four single channel UHF transmitters and receivers, two HF transceivers, and two multi-channel UHF systems. We installed the radios in the operations building for the search and height radars, two large radomes. This site was close to the USO, and we ate breakfast there sometimes because they had awesome



Main gate at Udorn.

blueberry pancakes. The highlight of this trip was the release of the POWs from Hanoi.

“Killing me Softly with His Song” by Roberta Flack hit #1.

I headed back to Korat for two weeks to out process and do busy work until I caught the Silver Samlor C-141 back to the Philippines, then on to a contract Braniff flight to Travis AFB via Guam and Hawaii.

The song that stuck in my head on the flight back to the states was, appropriately, “I’m Your Captain/Closer to Home” by Grand Funk Railroad.

My next assignment took me to Mt. Home AFB, Idaho. I stayed in the AF for a little over 23 years, and my assignments included Alaska, Oklahoma, Georgia, Germany (twice), and Greece. TDYs were to Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Panama. I retired in 1994 with the rank of senior master sergeant (E-8) from Robins AFB in Warner Robins, Georgia.

I met and married my wife, Ginny, while we were both stationed at a forward air control post in Germany, still operating today. We have two sons who live nearby, and my daughter lives in Boise, Idaho with her husband and my grandson. After retiring from the Air Force, I went back to school and received my certification in drafting and worked at Blue Bird Bus Company as an Electrical Designer/Draftsman, and from there, I went on to work Civil Service on Robins AFB, Warner Robins, GA, at the Avionics Repair Center in the Circuit Board Manufacturing Facility. We fully retired in 2016 and enjoy traveling, golfing, gardening, and hiking. My claim to fame is section hiking the entire 2190-mile Appalachian Trail between the years of 1997-2017.



Candidate Biographies for the TLCB Board of Directors

John Sweet, candidate for president

Strong supporter of all TLCB objectives and membership.

Born 1947 in Marblehead, MA (suburb of Boston), graduated from Salem High School in 1966, and joined the USAF.

Attended Technical Training School, Lowery AFB as a 23450 Precision Photographic Processing Specialist for Satellite Reconnaissance. Cross trained to 70250 and assigned to Headquarters Western Ground Engineering Electronics Installation Agency at McClellan AFB, CA.

Ordered to Vietnam at Bien Tuey and assigned to the 1987th Communications Squadron located with the 56th Special Operations Wing, TUOC Message Distribution Center, Nakhon Phanom August 1969—September 1970. While there, established Operation Thare to assist the children at St. Joseph’s School at Sakhon Nakhon, Thailand, under Father Lawrence Khai.

Assigned to 2014th Communications Squadron, Hanscom Field, Bedford, MA from September 1970 until July 1972. Assigned thereafter as Administrative NCOIC, Commander’s Staff of the 2069th Communications Squadron, Nellis AFB and detachment located at Indian Springs, NV until July 1973.

August 1997, arranged return visit to NKP and Thare Orphanage, St. Joseph’s School; met with Father Lawrence Khai, and began an assistance program.

If elected to the position of President, I will strive, with the

board of directors, to strongly advance all objectives of the TLC Brotherhood and concerns of the membership. I would appreciate your support to achieve these goals and carry out our mission.

TLC Brotherhood Treasurer 1998—2000, founded TLC Brotherhood Assistance Program 1998, Assistance Committee Chairman 1998—2005, TLCB Vice President 4 terms, 2000—2004 & 2009—2013, TLCB President 2 terms 2013—2016, and served two and a half terms as board member

Bill Tilton, candidate for Treasurer

My main qualification for this position is my experience with the TLCB, having previously served four two-year terms as treasurer, with a two-year break after the first three, and a two-year break since my last term. I was also the founding president of the Brotherhood and served the limit of three consecutive terms in that position. While I have never had an accounting course, I have adapted the Excel spreadsheet created by Dusty Henthorn when he was treasurer, so that it provides the management information needed by the board and adds computations for the annual tax return to the IRS. I also account for BX transactions as well as all financial transactions of the annual meeting and reunion. While Paul Lee was treasurer, and

Biographies continues on page 14

Biographies *continued from page 13*

while Thelma Tilton served one term, I continued to support them by maintaining this spreadsheet. [Disclosure: Thelma Tilton is my wife.]

I joined the Air Force in 1961 and served twice in Thailand, in 1966 as a FAC at Nakhon Phanom and one TDY to U'Tapao in 1972 as a KC-135 crew commander. I retired at the Pentagon as a manpower management officer in 1981. By the time of this election, I will be 84. I retired in 2018 and we live in my home area near Aspers, Pennsylvania. As treasurer, I will assist Thelma to maintain and operate the TLCB Exchange.

Ray Boas, candidate for board member.

I have been a supporter of the TLCB and its objectives, have been a member since May of 2003, and have attended all of the reunions except one. I planned and hosted the 2017 reunion in Dayton Ohio and assisted preparation for the 2018 NKP reunion in Dayton.

I was in the Air Force for 4 years, went to tech school at Amarillo AFB, studied to be an "inventory management specialist" (fancy name for supply), and then was off to NKP, in Thailand. I returned to Wright Patterson AFB where I finished my enlistment as an E-5. After my military service, I went back to work for Bridgestone/Firestone as a retail store manager, where I retired after 37 years. With my wife Marie still working, retirement was a little boring so I got a part-time job as a bank courier and worked another 11 years.

I feel very strongly about the assistance work that the TLCB is carrying out, and I support the objectives of the TLC Brotherhood 100%. If re-elected I will endeavor to represent all the members to the best of my ability.

Harry Bright, candidate for board member.

I have been a member of the Thailand Laos Cambodia Brotherhood since April 6, 2006, member number 1025, and served in the Air Force from 1965 to 1968. Hurlburt Field and Nakhon Phanom were my duty stations, and recip engine mechanic was my career field.

I strongly believe in the mission of our organization, the Brotherhood and the Sisterhood, and the Assistance Program, on which committee I am presently serving. For our members living in the area, I helped John Duffin organize and host several mini reunions at the Air Mobility Command Museum at Dover AFB, Delaware.

I am a life member of the DAV, Air Commando Association, Delaware City Fire Company, and the Townsend Fire Company, and have held elected positions of board of directors, treasurer, vice president, and president of both fire companies. I am starting my 59th year in the Volunteer Fire Service of the state of Delaware, and have been a docent with the Air Mobility Command Museum since 2010. Under the first director of the museum, I was appointed as operations assistant, running the museum on weekends.

My goals as a board member would be to encourage more members to attend our reunions, attract new members under our extended membership program, develop a format that would

allow the general membership to submit ideas for reunion locations, and fine tune our reunion dates so as not to compete with other veteran organizations to which our membership may belong.

I look forward to serving the membership of our great organization and continuing to meet and develop friendships with all of you.

Roger D Durant, candidate for board member.

I was in the United States Air Force from July '66 to March '70. I attended weapons school in Colorado and served at Loring AF Base, Maine. As to Southeast Asia, I served at NKP from '68 to '69, Da Nang in '70, and Phu Cat in '69 and '70.

As to my career, I was a computer operator for the American National Bank as a real estate loan officer. Schools I attended are Colorado Graduate School of Banking, National Compliance School, University of Nebraska Bank School, and the University of Oklahoma. One of my projects was to clean up problem banks. I purchased the Bank of Osborn, changed its name to Horizon State Bank, moved the main Branch to Cameron, Missouri, and ran the bank for over 20 years.

Some of the boards I have served on are the Missouri Bankers Association, Horizon State Bank, ATF Violent Crimes Task Force, Cameron Veterans Home Assistances League, and served as Chairman of the Graduate School of Banking at Colorado. I also served on the Methodist Church Board of Trustees in Cameron and on the Missouri State Police Advisory Board.

I have been a TLCB member since January 2000, and have made two trips to Thailand and one to Laos to see the kids and the help we have provided for them! The adults appreciate what we do for their children, and the kids are happy to see our members show up at their schools!

I would like to stay on the Board to continue to help raise money for them! We have a great group of members and going to the reunions is a great way to see old and new friends. The auction, a highlight of the reunion, is one of our best money makers, and as long as John Sweet and Les Thompson let me help with that fun project, I will! I would like to serve on the board again, so please give me your vote.

LIKE us on FACEBOOK

***The Official Thailand-Laos-Cambodia
Brotherhood page***

Changed your address? ...eMail?

If so, please let us know so that we can update the official database and ensure that *MEM* issues and official mail get addressed properly. You can send an email to:

BillTilton@gmail.com, or a note in the mail to:

TLC Brotherhood

PO Box 60

Aspers, PA 17304.

Memories of Pearl Harbor: A Final Farewell

By James M. Hoover

The United States of America recently memorialized the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The news was full of stories, and survivors converged upon Hawaii in wheel chairs and double canes. Those who participated in this war event are in their mid to late 90s and several are over 100 years of age.

I'm 75 and recall the story my father told me about his personal experience of the incident. Inscribing his words below is my great honor, not just to my father but for those who forfeited their lives and the four hard years of a nation sacrificing its entire existence toward the goal of survival against two enemies, that came from both directions, to rule over it.

My father, James Henry Hoover, a product of the depression, joined the United States Navy in 1939, and after boot camp, was assigned to Pearl Harbor. He was a quartermaster in the Navy, a ship's navigator, with particular responsibility for steering and signals. On smaller ships, he would assemble all the charts (maps of oceans); and to maintain radio silence, he would send messages with two signal flags, semaphore, using an alphabetic code. He would signal other ships with an Aldis lamp or a Morse lamp, which flashed a light using Morse Code;



Aerial view of the USS Arizona National Memorial, above. Above, right, wall memorializing the names of the sailors who are entombed in the sunken battleship that lies beneath the memorial.

both methods would not break radio silence.

My dad's ship, the USS Richmond, a light cruiser, left Pearl just before the bombing on a mission to Valparaiso, Chile. They were on a good-will tour with Chilean officers.

Dad related that he was at the helm room on the bridge with the ship's captain, examining the charts as the ship proceeded out in the Pacific Ocean about 5000 nautical miles from Hawaii. He was generally not allowed to address the captain unless questioned. The radioman, nicknamed "Sparks," rushed to the bridge and informed the captain that there was a FLASH message for him. FLASH is the second highest in order of precedence. The urgency factors of messages, starting from the lowest, were ROUTINE, PRIORITY, IMMEDIATE, FLASH, AND FLASH OVERRIDE; the latter was to go directly to



or from the President of the United States. Knowing of the importance of this telegram, but needing to keep his eyes focused on the task at hand of steering the ship, the captain ordered Sparks to read the telegram aloud to him. My father listened, as he had "ears to hear." Telegrams were expensive in those days, thus, very short like, "MOM STOP AM HOME SAFELY STOP LOVE DOROTHY STOP"

Not in this case, it was two pages long and detailed the bombing of the Navy Base at Pearl Harbor, Wheeler Army Air Field, and other facilities. When the telegram was read, they were all horrified. The ship was soon ordered to drop off the Chilean officers in Panama and return to Pearl Harbor.

As the Richmond entered Pearl Harbor and approached Ford Island, my father said that he was horror-struck by the devastation of the once so elegant and beautiful Island and the wreckage of ships inside the harbor as well. The damage "was like nothing he had ever seen," he later told me.

Dad rarely discussed or reminisced of this sighting until 2007.

In April 2007 my dad and I went to Hawaii on vacation, and while there, he insisted on visiting the USS Arizona National Memorial. (Virtual tour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUF-C14TD6o>) When the skiff landed at the onramp to the memorial, he limped to the back wall, and eventually found the name "Jenkins" listed on the wall that memorializes those sailors who remain inside the USS Arizona to this day. Dad took pictures of the name and stood in silence. Little did I realize that he was saying his final good bye to Jenkins. This man was Seaman Second Class (S2c) Robert Henry Dawson Jenkins, USN from Texas.

Later that day, Dad explained that this sailor had been his best friend on the USS Richmond, and that just prior to the Richmond's departure from Pearl, Jenkins had been promoted and transferred to the Arizona. He was the stenographer for the admiral. Jenkins is one of the 1177 sailors who perished on the Arizona that fateful day, 80 + years ago.

Soon after, Dad passed away in December 2007; his life was completed and his awaited closure met after 66 years.



U.S. Army Museum! The Wall! Washington!

Honoring Our Past—Revisiting Our Heritage

Finally, the TLC Brotherhood Annual Meeting and Reunion will return to the Washington area for a long-awaited visit to The Vietnam War Memorial (The Wall) and, at last, the Army's long-anticipated National Museum, at Fort Belvoir. Here are the details so far. Registration materials will be included in your mailing envelope.

Hotel Location: The **Springfield Holiday Inn Express**, 6401 Brandon Avenue, Springfield, Virginia, located just beyond the south side of the Washington, D.C Beltway, near highway and rail transportation hubs. The hotel is only a 10-minute drive to one of our featured visits, the new National Museum of the US Army

Hotel rates and details: The hotel offers a free breakfast, in addition to well-equipped rooms at a very reasonable price, compared with similar Washington-area hotels. Your room rate should be \$119.00 per night, plus 13% tax (\$134.47 per night). Shoulder dates at the reunion room rates may be available on a space available basis. Off-street guest parking is complimentary.

Hotel on-line registration instructions and hotel rates:

1. Open the hotel web page: <https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/springfield/wassf/hoteldetail>
2. Scroll down and enter your planned arrival and departure dates in the appropriate windows (13-15 October).
3. Enter your data in the fields for number of rooms and guests, then open the drop-down menu under Rate Preference, and select Group Rate. In the empty window below this selection type TLC.

Hotel reservations by phone:

The hotel prefers on-line registration, if possible, but you can also make reservations by phone at 1-877-666-3243. **Be sure to mention the TLC Brotherhood Group rate.**

Holiday Inn Express Washington DC SW-Springfield



Reunion Agenda

As usual, our Reunion plan includes visits to DC-area attractions, as well as our traditional official and social TLCB events. Here is our planned agenda, still subject to change.

Thursday, 13 October

3PM – Arrival, hotel check in, and reunion registration. Nipa Hut is open. Social time. Evening meals available at any of several excellent local restaurants.

Friday, 14 October

Morning: Chartered bus group visit to the Vietnam Wall in DC. Nearby attractions are Lincoln Memorial, WWII Memorial, Korean War Memorial, Smithsonian museums.

Afternoon: Sandwiches and drinks in Nipa Hut. Free time. Local shopping, sight-seeing. (Possible presentations in Nipa Hut). Optional visit to Army Museum.

Evening – Pizza party & social hour in Nipa Hut, followed by Assistance Fund Auction.

Saturday, 15 October

Morning: TLC Brotherhood, Inc., Annual Meeting

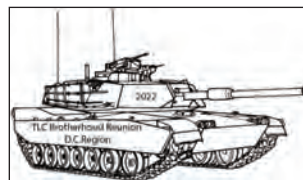
Noon: Travel by POV to new Army Museum for lunch (on own) and tour.

Evening: President's Banquet after social hour. Buffet style dinner, ceremony and special guest speaker.

Sunday, 16 October Hotel check-out & departures.

Reunion Banquet Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker this year will be USAF Colonel "Bud" Traynor (Ret). Col Traynor flew the C-7 Caribou light transport in South Vietnam during his tour of duty in Southeast Asia. Following his SEA assignment, he transitioned into the C-5 Galaxy airlifter. He and his C-5 were sent into Saigon in April, 1975 to assist with the evacuation of dependents and orphan children in an operation that came to be known as "Babylift." Shortly after takeoff from Saigon, with a full load of passengers bound for the Philippines, his aircraft experienced a total hydraulic failure, making the airplane totally unresponsive to the flight controls. This sort of failure was "not supposed to happen" in the C-5, so there were no procedures in existence, and no safe way to return to the ground. The crash landing of this heavily loaded C-5 resulted in a high loss of life, but



thanks to Col Traynor's quick thinking, roughly nearly half those on board survived. We look forward to hearing the full story of this incident from Col Traynor at the Reunion Banquet on Saturday, Oct 15.

How to pack: The mid-October temperature range at Reagan National Airport is 45 to 65 degrees. At right, official flag of Springfield, Virginia.

