



SAND BLAST



TUY HOA AIR BASE - VETERANS REUNION ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 - Number 1

Return With Honor

February 2015

REUNION 2015

The 2015 Tuy Hoa Air Base Reunion will be held September 10-13, 2015 in Rapid City, South Dakota.

This year's Reunion is an opportunity to see some of the history and beauty of the Old West. And as always, the event highlighted by the gathering of old and new friends. The Reunion Committee did some exploration of the Rapid City area in September 2014 and found numerous activities for our members and guests to experience in the "Geographic Center of the United States. Rapid City is truly a gorgeous example of this part of the United States with the beauty of State Parks, Monuments and Memorials.



Mt Rushmore near Rapid City, South Dakota



South Dakota AIR & SPACE Museum is located 7 miles East of Rapid City. They have over 30 Historical Aircraft on display and an Aviation Gift Shop. There is Free Admission to the Museum and also a Self-Guided Tour available. The Museum is located just outside of Ellsworth AFB and features a tour of a Minuteman Missile Silo. A Tour of Ellsworth Air Force Base is also available by bus for those that may want see the base and the B1-B bomber, the B-52 Stratofortress and a Minuteman Missile Silo are among the many sites on the tour. The tour will cost \$6.00 per person and everyone will need a valid drivers license or Pass Port to enter the base. Anyone that wants to go on this tour must sign a South Dakota Air and Space Museum Ellsworth Air Force Base Tour Log two months in advance. We can provide a PDF of that Tour Log upon request.

Dedication of the Tuy Hoa Air Base, Vietnam Memorial Plaque at the US Air Force Museum Memorial Park in Dayton, Ohio.

On September 6, 2013 at the United States Air Force Museum Memorial Park located at Wright - Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, the Tuy Hoa AB Reunion Association dedicated the Tuy Hoa AB Memorial Plaque. Tuy Hoa AB Memorial Plaque was dedicated "IN HONOR OF ALL WHO SERVED AND IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO GAVE ALL 16 DEC 1966 – 15 OCT 1970."



United States Air Force Museum Memorial Park located at Wright - Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio



The Wright-Patterson AFB Honor Guard performed the Posting of Colors and immediately following the National Anthem was played.



Dale Brown provided the Opening Remarks with Ray Ruff giving the Invocation. George Bontya presented the Memorial Plaque to, and was accepted by Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jack L. Hudson representing the Air Force Museum. Jack McCloskey and Mike Spencer presented the Memorial Wreath, and Ray Ruff provided the Benediction. Prior of the "Retiring of the Colors", by the Wright-Patterson AFB Honor Guard, the Wright-Patterson AFB Bugler played "Taps."



A large number of Reunion members, spouses, family members and friends attended the ceremony. It was a time of Pride and Joy for all those in attendance and an opportunity to be a part of this Historical occasion.



The Round 1966 Tuy Hoa Turnkey Project Brass Plate is featured on the Tuy Hoa, Vietnam Memorabilia Plaque



This is an enlarged photo of the small Round Brass Plate featured on the Tuy Hoa, Vietnam Memorabilia Plaque.

David Lee provided us with some information about the beautiful plaque which was made by Don Wozniak. The Plaque included a round brass plate celebrating the completion of the Tuy Hoa Turnkey project. The plaque was sold during the Auction at the Dayton, Ohio

The after Dinner Auction was a Huge Success in Dayton.

The Auction at the 2013 Reunion in Dayton Ohio was loaded with Vietnam memorabilia in addition to many other items donated by the members of our Tuy Hoa Reunion Association. We know that many of you spent many hours and money to gather items for our auction and we **Thank You**.

At Dayton, the Silent Auction raised \$883.61 and the regular Auction raised \$2,473.10. The Auction raised a total of \$3,356.71, which helped with the costs of our hospitality rooms, snacks, drinks and the many other costs associated with holding a reunion.

Remember to keep your eyes focused on finding items we can auctions off to help our organization.

To all that donated items and also those that bought auction items, we truly **Thank You**.



The Ladies of the 2013 Tuy Hoa Reunion Association take a moment from their busy schedule for a photo-op.

Finally, it was decided that a Plaque featuring a variety of Vietnam Memorabilia would be crafted. After it was completed the names of the Arizona group were etched on the plaque.



This Auction item, included the Plaque made by Don Wozniak, an 8" x 10" photo of the plaque and a letter explaining how the Turnkey project round brass plate was acquired.

Tan Son Nhut Golden Knight Award Presented to George Bontya



George Bontya, is the first recipient of the Tan Son Nhut (TSNA) Golden Knight Award. He is a life member of TSNA and attends the Reunions on a regular basis.

He is a supporter and promoter for many Veteran activities in his hometown and is a supporter of the Wounded Warrior program. At his previous residence, he was a member of the Vietnam Veterans United Honor Guard. You will find the American and the POW flags flying daily on the flagpole in front of his home in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina. Congratulations to George Bontya.

What was it Like to come to My First Tuy Hoa Reunion?

By J. Peter Jeterslle

Forty-four years had passed and it was like I just left a month ago. The guys I remembered, and that remembered me, just picked up where we left off. Unlike a high school reunion, where it seems to be a brag fest, we talked mostly about our time there.

Being a first timer, I asked several of the other first timers when they started looking into Tuy Hoa. Most said in the last 3 to 5 years. Just think, 40 years passed before we started looking into our past.

For me it was probably 3 years ago. I was bored and doing a Google search for Tuy Hoa and on the 15th page I found a www.rogerdimick.com. Could it be the same Rodger from FM Tuy Hoa? It was and we made contact. He told me about the upcoming reunion in 2011, but I had already made commitments for that weekend and couldn't come, but I made sure I was available this year. And I'm so glad I came. There were seven of us who had worked at FM Tuy Hoa there, including Rodger Dimick who I worked with when I was there.

I was worried about not knowing anyone else, but was real lucky to have 6 or 7 of us Comm/Nav guys there. And I met many new friends also.

Working on radios, several times a day I would write in the plane's log: "R & R Arc 34, 5821-505-0945. Ops checked good." I hadn't thought about that for 44 years and it all came back this weekend, with the help of talking to the others.

My wife was a little unsure about coming, but went to all the events with me including supper with Eric Huntley, who I had not had contact with for the 44 years since I left. I'm sure she was a little bored at times, but I'm also sure she could see how happy I was to be reliving the past and I hope that made up for the boring times she might have had. What a great experience, and I can't wait for the next one.

Softball Auction Breaks previous Record

This famous Softball has been sold, sold again, and sold again, and again.

It was first auctioned in Myrtle Beach, South

Carolina at the 2009 Tuy Hoa reunion, the winner with the highest bid, paid for the ball and threw the ball back to auctioneer Dennis Bechtel and asked that it be sold again. The ball was sold 8 times, rising \$138.00 before being put away for the next reunion.

At the 2013 Tuy Hoa reunion in Dayton, Ohio the ball was sold again 9 times and raised \$480.00. So far this famous ball has raised \$618.00 for our organization and will be up for auction at the 2015 Tuy Hoa Reunion in Rapid City, South Dakota.

We look forward to the 2015 auction to see this famous ball fly from owner to owner as we raise money to help pay for our hospitality rooms, snacks and other goodies.



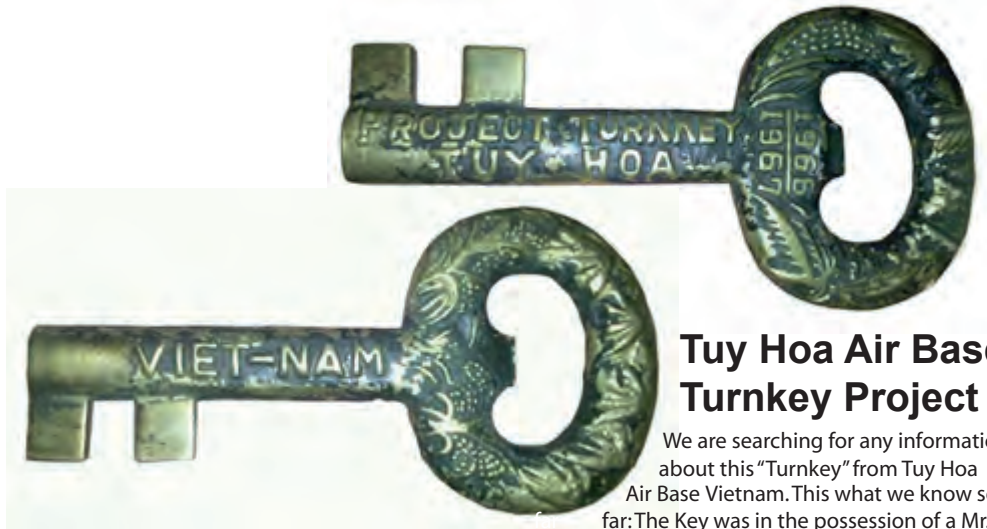
COLONEL JAMES C. HARDING

United States Air Force Retired



Colonel James C. Harding was our renowned Guest Speaker at the 2013 reunion in Dayton, Ohio. Colonel Harding entered the Air Force in 1956 as a distinguished graduate of the Penn State University Reserve Officer Training Corps. His military career covered a variety of flying assignments as well as command position.

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, which had also been shot down on the same rescue mission.



Tuy Hoa Air Base Turnkey Project

We are searching for any information about this "Turnkey" from Tuy Hoa Air Base Vietnam. This what we know so far: The Key was in the possession of a Mr.

Bristol Baker from North Carolina. Mr. Baker's Grandson found the key in a box in his Grandfather's storage unit. It was then sent to Dale Brown, Tuy Hoa Reunion Association President.

It is suspected that this key was handed over to the Base commander or other high-ranking officers in the 7th Air Force as a "commemorative" key from the civilian contractor who built the base.

This would have been done sometime in 1967 when they completed the initial phase of construction. We have not found anyone who was there in that time frame that remembers this ceremony.

We believe this key is the only one existing and are trying to find out who gave it to whom and how it came into the hands of Mr. Baker. We don't have any more information at this time. We hope someone reading the newsletter might fill in the blanks.

Colonel James C. Harding (Continued)

He flew 442 combat missions in the O-1 and U-10, 101 of which were over North Vietnam. Col James C. Harding, USAF is ranked 24th of the Most Highly Decorated U.S. Military Personnel in American History.

It was truly an honor for Colonel Harding to attend our reunion and deliver such an enlightening message to those in attendance. He stated that he, and his wife, would join us at the Rapid City, SD, for the 2015 reunion if at all possible.

178 Veterans and Spouses, Significant Others, family and friends gather together at Dayton, Ohio.

At the 2013 Reunion in Dayton, Ohio, we set a record for attendance of any of our reunions. We had 104 Veterans registrations prior to the event and an additional 7 Veterans registering upon arrival. We had 67 Spouses, Significant Others, friends and family in attendance. We had an unprecedented 51 First Time Attendees.



Tuy Hoa Reunion Association Veterans gather for a group picture at the 2013 Reunion held in Dayton, Ohio.

Life at Tuy Hoa

This Life at Tuy Hoa Section Is Dedicated to the Memories and Pictures of those that Served at Tuy Hoa AB RVN



Bruce Hanke

was with the 31st AMS (Avionics Maintenance Squadron) and was there for 18 months from May, 1968 through November 1969. There was a Hobby Shop that opened sometime in 1969.

"I was big into U-Control model flying all through high school, and of course I dropped it when I enlisted in the Air Force. When the Hobby Shop opened up, it was just a natural thing for me to gravitate to. I worked mid shift almost the whole 18 months, so I had days to goof off and most of my time was either on the beach or going into town (liberty was only 1300-1800 daily when not off limits altogether). The opportunity to build and fly model airplanes at Tuy Hoa was a big deal to me so I jumped on it.

I built a U-Control bi-plane myself (pictured), and unfortunately never got to fly it as I rotated out before having had the chance to put it in the air. I gave it to someone but I don't remember whom. So, if someone recognizes this red bi-plane and who had it after me, I would sure like to know!"



James A Millsap, Jr.

Served Aug 1966 to Aug 1967, in the 637 Combat Support Group, Tuy Hoa AB, RVN before the base was activated in October 1966. I was based in the tented area and was the 37th Airman to arrive. There were approximately 6 to 8 tents erected. I was off loaded on a nearby air field with a PSP runway, and was given instructions as to which direction to walk and carry what few articles I had and found myself at my new home away from home. I was instructed where to erect my tent and with some assistance, we erected that big rascal, was issued a face pan and a few other essentials, including my weapon as we arrived. There are lots of memories. I remember when the 31st TFW arrived with those beautiful jet aircraft, the loud jet engines, the air strikes on the nearby mountains, seeing the napalm fire-balls.

I was a Staff Sergeant with an Administrative AFSC, but it didn't matter what your skill was, we filled sand bags, erected tents and bunkers and anything else that was needed. We took out details of vehicles to pick up supplies, etc from Navy vessels that would arrive. In those days we caught a ride on a vehicle that would take us to eat with Army in their location. We ate and returned to do whatever we were assigned to do.



Tents and Sand Bags in the beging at Tuy Hoa

Couple Found Love During the Vietnam War



John and Kit Cotton began a lifetime of love, adventure and travel after meeting at Tuy Hoa, Vietnam

I was at Tuy Hoa as my first assignment in country from July - Nov 1969. It was a wonderful way to start my year, and seemed quite modern with air conditioning and the beach nearby. I must admit that it wasn't as exciting as other assignments, such as Camp Enari at Pleiku where we went out to fire bases.

But it was at Tuy Hoa where I met and took home my biggest souvenir—a young fighter pilot named John Cotton. After going through a mountain of red tape, we were married in Saigon in a Vietnamese ceremony when we had completed a year in country for each of us. Last July marked our 44th wedding anniversary. Now we are in the "grandparent mode" with nine grand children. Everyone was here at Christmas, and there was beaucoup yak-yak—although it was a Number One time that was had by all!

Kit Sparrow Cotton



John and Kit forty-four years later.

Jim Sachs

was with the 31st TFW when Tuy Hoa was first opened. One of his fondest memories was Christmas day of 1966. Hanoi Hanna was telling us we would never eat a meal in our new mess hall being built but we had our first meal in it on Christmas day and a C-47 gunship was flying around the base broadcasting Christmas Carols and pulling a banner that said Merry Christmas.

Uploading Bombs at Tuy Hoa Air Base, RVN



Another hot day on the Flight Line with Tuy Hoa's Ammo Load Crew 28

Crewmembers were: Frank Hayes (crew chief), Bill Gentry (#2 man), Charles Berry (#3 man) and Jerry Boling (#4 man, Jammer driver). Photo by John Hennigar

"Bubba" Charles Camino

I was deployed to Bien Hoa AB on 19 October 1966 as a Weapons Specialist, 462X0, and assigned to the 308th TFS. On 16 November 1966 I was deployed to Tuy Hoa along with the 308th TFS. We had launched all our birds from Bien Hoa on 15 November and the majority of support personnel were sent right after the F-100 departed Bien Hoa. My load crew was on the last C-130 out and when the Pilot could not make contact with the Tuy Hoa Tower we returned to Bien Hoa and left the next morning for Tuy Hoa. I remember being issued an M-16 with one magazine. Upon arrival at Tuy Hoa, as we were getting off the C-130 we were asked to turn in our weapons. We were then counted off and every eight people were directed to find a certain Slab Number, I believe my group had J-4. Upon finding a concrete slab numbered J-4 we were told to get our eight-man tent erected and to build sandbag bunkers on each side of the two entrances to the tent.

"Bubba" continued

We were able to get our tent up and some sandbags filled before dark. I remember a Korean Officer coming by and say that if the siren blew to move to the beach as quick as possible although there was some small arms fire on the perimeter the siren never went off. The next morning we started flying combat missions from Tuy Hoa. I do remember that, we had such a small ramp, that at first we had to push/tow the aircraft into empty spaces to park them. Pilots were not allowed to taxi in or out of the spaces for a few days until there was more space to maneuver.



Ask an Ammo guy what I.Y.A.A.Y.A.S. stands for.



Tuy Hoa Red Cross Donut Dollie

Laura McLaughlin

You know, after all these years (45 of them!), when I think about my time at Tuy Hoa I remember most the guys at FM Tuy Hoa. They were my closest friends and the biggest supporter of our Red Cross activities.



FM Good Guys Dave Scott and JR Starr with Laura

I specifically remember our putting on a "Field Day" which included outdoor physical activity in blazing heat, and which was probably a most inappropriate idea considering the temperature and humidity.

I do remember the egg toss that day where raw eggs were thrown back and forth—and that part was a big success! Our job as Donut Dollies was to provide a bit of diversion from the reality of the war, and that, if anything, we accomplished on that particular day.

The complex where we lived was the best ever. I had previously been assigned to an Army base in the Central Highlands where facilities were rudimentary, and when I arrived at Tuy Hoa I felt like I was almost stateside. We lived in air conditioned trailers, and only once do I remember the AC not working. There was beautiful concrete every where, and the Red Cross facility was superior.

I hope at some point to attend a reunion. So far it just hasn't worked out.

Editors note: Get your bags packed as our 2017 reunion will be in Florida.



Laura setting up the July Activities Schedule

*Checkout the Donut Dollies on facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/thedonutdollies>*

REUNION BOARD of DIRECTORS

The Tuy Hoa Air Base Reunion Board of Directors are listed in this issue. If you have any questions call or e-mail any of these members.

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Life
at Tuy Hoa

The Life at Tuy Hoa Section (page 4) is Dedicated to the Memories and Pictures of those that Served at Tuy Hoa AB, RVN. I will continue to add additional pages as I receive more information. It will be set up in a format so you can print them and build your own notebook full of memories.

For articles and photographs (jpg) please send all information to:

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Bus Tour: Crazy Horse Monument & Memorial, Mt Rushmore, Custer State Park, Buffalo, Elk, Deer, Prairie Dogs and More.

Pictured above are some of the many fantastic Historical Landmarks you will see when you join us on the Mt Rushmore Bus Tour on Friday September 11, 2015.

While visiting South Dakota you will have the opportunity to set back and relax and take a tour bus traveling through scenic tunnels and pigtail bridges on the National Scenic Byway. We will travel through Custer State Park where you should keep your cameras ready to photograph wildlife like buffalo, burrows, antelope, elk, and rocky mountain bighorn sheep. The driver will stop for you to take pictures when it's safe.

Our lunch stop is the presidential summer white house to former president Calvin Coolidge. We continue through Custer State Park up Needles Highway passing through scenic tunnels and by scenic overlooks.

Crazy Horse Mountain & Memorial is the largest mountain carving in the world. You can visit the memorial and the museums prior to returning to Mt Rushmore for dinner at the Carver's Cafe.

We will have the Lighting Ceremony and our Memorial Ceremony following dinner

This outing promises to be a tour you will never forget so be sure to sign-up on your registration form so you don't miss it.

After Dinner Conversations Among Our Veterans & Families.

With a full belly and many stories to tell all had a grand time after dinner. A fine example of one of our favorite pastimes, "Swatting Flies and Swapping Lies."



Old and New Friends enjoy some post-dinner conversations at the Dayton, Ohio 2013 Tuy Hoa Reunion.