

Torii Typhoon

Volume 14, Issue 1

March 2015

Official Newsletter of ASA Okinawa



2015 reunion in
Kissimmee, FL:
Sept 23-27



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When this issue hits the printers, Rusty and I will hopefully be with some friends south to Florida - Mississippi trying to find some warm weather and perhaps play a little golf - getting a jump on the season back in Iowa. When we left on 2/26 it had snowed 4-5" on Wed 25th and temps down to -12 and after we left it went down to -15. Hope we can get far enough South to get the warmth.

But we are hoping the worst will be over by the time we get home. Then we can start planning for

a great reunion time in Kissimmee this coming Sept. I am certain Brenda, Larry and the entire Premier Reunion Services group will be planning another awesome time for the entire group.

We will be having an election this year in Kissimmee for a new vice president when we install our friend Dave as the new president replacing me for the next two years. Be thinking of who you would like to nominate for the vice president job.

If anyone is interested in a cap, I do have both

the black w/ gold lettering and dk blue w/gold lettering still at the popular price of \$13 plus shipping (\$5-6) or place your order for delivery at the Kissimmee reunion and I will deliver them free - What a deal \$13 each at the reunion.

Hope to see you all there - Sandy, Lou, Rusty and I will certainly be looking forward to seeing all of our old friends and hope to meet many new attendees.

Thank you all and God Bless all of you - see you all in Kissimmee.

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VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this, temperatures have plummeted and there is a lot of snow and ice in much of the country. I hope that all of our members are well and safe. Here in Washington state we are setting records for high temperatures, three new records in the past week. I can't believe that some fruit trees and flowers are already blooming!

Only six months until our reunion in Kissimmee. I am looking forward to seeing everyone again and visiting Florida. I have been there several

times but not Kissimmee. We will have a great time being together as always.

Thanks to the members who elected me as their vice president. I hope to serve you as well as all of our present and past officers. I'll see you in Florida in September.

David Merritt,
Vice President

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Treasurer's Report ASA Okinawa Association February 28, 2015

Beginning Check Book Balance July 1, 2014--\$3697.07

Income

Income from Dues \$400.00
Income from Newsletter\$115.00
Income from Caps, History Book, etc.....\$64.00
Other Income\$70.64
Total Income\$649.64

Disbursements

March Issue of Torii Typhoon\$281.20
Other Disbursements\$6.00
Total Disbursements\$287.20

Ending Check Book Balance Feb 28, 2015.....\$4059.51

Total Membership is as follows:

- 10 Life Time Members
- 12 Life Time Deceased Members Wives
- 115 Paid members for 2015
- 52 for 2016
- 14 for 2017
- 5 for 2018

If anyone would like a detailed list of Incomes and Disbursements email me at sandysands66@msn.com and I will email it to you.

Duane R. Sands, Treasurer

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**"Our Reunions Work So
You Don't Have To"**

NCU 37 SOBE CAMP, OKINAWA, 1956

BY NEAL P. GILLEN

Continued from July 2014

YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW

The ride from Futenna to Sobe took us through Camp Sukiran down to the main highway that skirted the East China Sea. We drove past a number of Army installations and the vast Kadena Air Force base where huge B36

Bombers were staged at the end of the long runway, through the village of Kadena Circle, that we would come to know so well in the coming year, past Yomaton Village, where the nuclear bombs were stored, and on to our destination a mile down the road—Sobe Camp, the home of the Army Security Agency's (ASA) 8603rd Detached Unit,

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Ryukyu Command.

The ASA installation sloped down from a coral ridge below Yomaton Field, the old Japanese Air Base, where kamikaze pilots took off to reek havoc on the U.S. Fleet in April 1945. Four barracks buildings were built into the rocky coral hillside. The Administrative Building and the Armory were located at the bottom of the hill along with a row of Quonset huts. Stretched out for almost a mile behind these buildings was the world's largest field of rhombic antennas that ran down and inland from the coastline where the initial U.S. invasion force landed. Each of the four barracks was multifunctional. Housed in the barracks closest to the main gate at the top of the hill were the movie theater and a small infirmary, where APC's were dispensed as the universal remedy for all ailments. The barracks directly below contained the library, television lounge, pool and ping-pong room. The barracks across the road was home to Tsu Shin Tai, the Enlisted Men's Club and card room, and up the hill on the same side of the road was the Mess Hall. Above the Mess Hall was the Radio Shack, call sign "KR6QW," where Tom Donohue (current call sign "W1QU" - Ellsworth, Maine) spent frustrating hours on some pretty sorry gear mastering his very capable sending and receiving skills. The large, and mostly underground, Operations Building was about a quarter mile down the road inland from the Administration Building. The Operations compound was adjacent to a primary school for Okinawan girls, who attended school clad in short blue dresses modeled from navy jumpers. Inside the fenced off compound was a large incinerator for burn bags and a number of trailers containing computers and other intercept equipment.

The Army personnel welcomed us like conquering heroes. Never before have I been so readily accepted. That attitude would continue to prevail during my fourteen-month stay. It was almost a month

before I could pay for a drink at Tsu Shin Tai or in Kadena Circle. Every soldier went out of his way to make us feel welcome.

The ASA worked on the same watch system as the NSG. Their watch sections were known as "Tricks." Desmond, Marshall and I were assigned to Trick Three and we were billeted with the Army personnel in the barracks near the main gate across the road from the Mess Hall. Technical Sergeant Freyes, a great guy, was Trick Three's senior NCO. He issued us mosquito nets, M3 Carbines, steel helmets, and footlockers. The best thing Sergeant Freyes did for us was to assign "Higa" as our houseboy. For a miniscule amount of Military Payment Certificates (MPC) he kept the barracks clean, shined our shoes, made our beds, and did our laundry, which we dumped into a straw basket underneath our beds and within two days it was returned fully clean and nicely ironed. All of us sported the best spit-shines imaginable. We like Higa immensely and he enjoyed working for us. We always made it a point to show our appreciation by giving him extra money whenever we could.

We soon learned from our new Army buddies that the primary purpose of the steel helmets was to chill cans of beer purchased at Tsu Shin Tai with ice obtained from the machine outside the Mess Hall. At one point the Sobe Camp PX held a promotional sale on some very ordinary beer known as "Blatz," which was advertised as a refreshing Milwaukee Pilsner. It was awful stuff, but at a dollar a case, we bought all we could. We later learned that the beer contained a derivative of formaldehyde to preserve it. All I know is the stuff worked as many of us got good stiff. For some weeks the beer parties in the barracks went late into the night when the bar at Tsu Shin Tai closed at 23:30. This was especially true around May Day when we were restricted to base for well over a week when the Okinawa Communist Party held large demonstrations calling for an end to the U.S. rule of the island.

Tsu Shin Tai was a revelation for

an 18-year old who was not permitted in the Enlisted Men's Club on Guam after 1800, since the drinking age was 21. The Army didn't care how old you were. Canned and bottled beer was a dime and miniatures of gin, vodka, whiskey, and scotch were a quarter. Gambling was legal. It was the first time I saw a slot machine. They lined the walls of Tsu Shin Tai where an around-the-clock high-stakes poker game was in process 24/7 during the duration of my stay on Okinawa. The only restriction on the game, though not enforced, was playing within your pay grade.

Ninety percent of the ASA personnel were draftees and most were college graduates. Given their time spent in basic training and ASA schools at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, and Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, they arrived on Okinawa with a little more than a year to serve on their two-year service requirements. Suffice it to say that a short-timer's attitude prevailed. Most of the soldiers did not blouse their boots, wore their fatigue shirts outside their pants, and did not block their hats. It was a fairly laid back atmosphere. A considerable difference from the strict Navy discipline we experienced on Guam. It was not uncommon for soldiers to congregate in Tsu Shin Tai for a beer or two on the way to or from work. I'm convinced that this laid back atmosphere reduced productivity and was the likely reason why the NSG took over the ASA coverage.

Desmond, Marshall and I went to work on the Eve watch our first day at Sobe Camp. The radio receivers were dated World War II era RCA gear. The dials had no locking devices requiring continual dial adjustment to hold the signal you were copying. It would be some months before the latest Collins digital receivers were shipped in. During the first few weeks we worked in a section with ASA personnel who were copying Chinese Navy signals. There were also Air Force Personnel at some of the positions in our room and in the adjoining room. The antenna patch panel covered the width of the lower hallway and the signal strength from the Chinese transmitters was more than ade-

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quate given the highly effective antenna system.

The lack of ASA discipline was evident one night a few weeks after our arrival. A new type of multiple ply paper was introduced and within minutes we had a strike on our hands in protest to the change in procedure regarding the use of the new paper. Many of the ASA personnel pulled off their earphones and walked off the job. They milled about in the outside hallway for almost an hour until they were pacified. We couldn't believe it. Nothing was ever said and no disciplinary action was taken.

The positions we took over from the ASA were extremely busy during the Day and Eve watches. Lee Marshall's position proved to be the busiest. Its call signal was "JXF", it had a very loud signal, and a constant flow of shipping traffic, even on the Mid watch. Ritchie Drabek sat behind Marshall and always seemed to be running up to the front of the room to re-supply him with paper. Since Marshall's traffic was primarily numbers, at about 20 words per minute, any of us could easily slip in behind him, grab his earphones, and give him a spell for a smoke or some coffee without missing a number.

Next: THE MEN

THANK YOU

Thank you so much for the generous donation you made to the Le Bonheur Children's Hospital to the memory of my dear wife Linda.

Sincerely,
Dallas May

HISTORY BOOKS FOR SALE

Tom Sevits still has ASA History books for sale for \$15.00 each. Make checks payable to ASA Okinawa Association and mail to:

Tom Sevits
25703 McCutcheonville Rd
Perrysburg, OH 43551



WELCOME MAT

The following members have been located since the last newsletter. Welcome to the Association. We hope to see you at the next reunion and hear from you about your memories of your time spent in Okinawa.

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TAPS

The Typhoon learned of the following deaths since the last newsletter was published. The deaths are not necessarily recent, but we just learned of them. The entire membership extends our deepest sympathy to the widows, families and friends of the deceased.

James Oldach

Died September 20, 2013

Royal "Ted" Reineccius (1950-52)

Died December 1, 2014

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Torii Typhoon is the official publication of the Security Agency Association Okinawa. It is published tri-annually in March, July and November. The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. Contributions should be sent to the treasurer. All members are encouraged to support the voice of ASA Okinawa. A financial statement appears annually in the November issue.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another member will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations.

Premier Reunion Services is not responsible for the accuracy of articles submitted for publication. It would be a monumental task to check each story. Therefore, we rely on the submitter to research each article.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

NEWSLETTER EXPENDITURES

March 2015 \$170.10

This issue is mailed to only to those who sent in \$5.00 dues for the newsletter.

A NOTE FROM LARRY ECKARD

Hopefully you are looking forward to our reunion in Kissimmee, FL as much I am. This is always a highlight of the year. This will be one of the least expensive reunions in years, so you are not going to be able to use cost as an excuse not to attend. The complete agenda has not been created yet, but you can count on plenty time to socialize with old friends and make new ones. I know it sounds like an old cliché, but we really are a "family" of former Torii Station soldiers. We don't want to give away too many secrets, but you can expect to visit

the Kennedy Space Center one day, and probably the Medieval Times or Al Capone's Dinner show, Wild Florida, Gatorland and more. We really are hoping for the largest turnout in several years.

Anyone who plays around on the computer and is a member of Facebook, you will want to go to the Torii Station Facebook page. This page is dedicated to anyone, regardless of years served there, and a lot of good chatter passes back and forth. You are encouraged to join the group and share your experiences with some of the younger members and help en-

courage them to join the association and come to the reunions. We need to stress to them that they are the future of the organization – we all want our heritage to continue. As you know there have been several name changes, but we all did the same thing; there is no reason we shouldn't share our experiences and have a large and cohesive organization. Each of you can help by joining the Torii Station Facebook page and promoting the organization and our reunions.

Taken from LIFE ON OKINAWA Volume One Number 2 April 1961



THE WINNAHS!!! Victory smiles of the 3D ASA basketball team indicate their pleasure of winning the Army Battalion Level Basketball Championship (US Army Photo by Connor)

Can you identify any of these men? If so, let us know at karen@mlrsinc.com or our mailing address on page 2. Names will be published in the next issue. (They are not identified in the original publication.) If you are one of these men, let us know at the same address and you will be sent a gift from Premier Reunion Services.

GRAND OPENING

2 JULY 1960



PROGRAMME

COMMANDING OFFICER

LT. COL. QUENTIN L. ZELL

CLUB ADVISOR

MAJ. G. B. WITHINGTON

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

M/SGT LEROY E. JOHNSON	SFC GLENN G SLAGLE
M/SGT CLIFFORD L. DEWOODY	SB5 RICHARD G ABBOTT
M/SGT DEAN SHIDELER	SP5 CECIL D CARPENTER
SFC RAYMOND E. FENTERS (104th)	SP5 CHARLES KINGSTON JR
SFC JOSEPH J. HICKLER	

M/SGT ARNOLD KOHN CUSTODIAN

MANAGERS

BALL, JOHN E.
 CHABOT, LEO A.
 SERUM, MARTIN A.
 ROACH, JAMES
 BANNIGAN, WILLIAM J.
 CLARRE, WESLEY L.

A SPECIAL VOTE OF THANKS IS DUE TO MAJOR RICHARD L HAMEL WHO WAS THE TORII CLUB ADVISOR DURING THE PLANNING AND EARLY BUILDING STAGES UNFORTUNATELY, HE IS NOT WITH US TO SEE THE END RESULT OF THE NEVER ENDING LABORS OF THE MANY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THIS ENORMOUS PROJECT. WHO HAVE HELPED IN MANY WAYS

SP4 RANDAL A. WHITE & PFC GERALD BAILEY	ART WORK
PFC TERRANCE J. MONTHIE	ELECTRICAL WORK
SP4 FREDERICK G. TOMPKINS	MASTER OF CEREMONIES

A NOTE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

I wish to extend my congratulations to all concerned upon the opening of the new Torii Station NCO Open Mess. Of particular note are the persistent efforts of Board of Governors in surmounting the myriad of details involved from the inception of the project to this date of the opening. It has encompassed much time and thought on the part of many individuals. Special mention must be made of the secretary and his staff for completing the massive task of relocating to this new facility with the minimum interruption of service. The cooperation of the Comptroller and Engineer, Headquarters, US Army Ryukyu Island/IX Corps, was especially noteworthy. Thus through the efforts of many people, today terminates a phase in the history of the Torii Station NCO Open Mess.

Today is the opening of a new and beautiful building, constructed for the morale and welfare of the enlisted men of this command. I look upon the future of this club with much optimism. The success of the club rests upon all members of the command and it is incumbent upon each individual to support the club by all means available. It is a club designed for the rest and recreation of all enlisted men, their families, and guests. Members are encouraged to take part in club sponsored activities, and to enjoy the club as a recreational facility with their families.

I wish the club continued success in all its endeavors. I am sure it is the best "little" club on Okinawa and will continue as such.