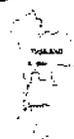




# Guardmount

Volume 2, Issue 1

July, 1996



## Call for Volunteers

FROM: Captain Verna

SUBJECT: EAGLE PLATOONS

TO: All Military Fighting Men of the 3rd Security Police Squadron

1. **PURPOSE:** To provide Bien Hoa Air Base a reaction force to be deployed behind the enemy for harassment and interdiction following a mortar attack.

2. **Concept of operation:** The 57th and 58th Regional Forces will share alert standby duty on a rotating basis with the 3rd Security Police Squadron. A flight of 45 men will be stationed at the 145th Aviation Battalion each night from 2200 hours until 0400 hours. In the event a mortar attack occurs and firing positions are identified, this force will be deployed to preselected landing zones behind the enemy position to engage or harass them during their retreat.

3. **Training:** The 173rd Airborne Brigade Jungle School will provide training on tactics and maneuvers. The start date is tentatively scheduled for 11

Sept 67. It will be conducted on your off duty time. It will take three to four hours a day for five days. Attachment 1 is the full training schedule for the jungle school. We will receive selected subjects for our "Eagle Platoons".

4. **Manpower Requirements and Selection:** To perform this duty and to minimize the commitment, I am requesting 45 men from "A" Flt and 45 men from "B" Flt to join this program. With two groups of 45, each group will stand alert one night out of every six nights.

a. Because of the training provided, personnel with retainability are desired. This should not prevent "Short Timers" from signing up. With the number of personnel required "Short Timers" will be required to get us over the large loss this squadron will sustain between 1 Oct and 31 Dec 67.

5. **Program Start Date:** We are hopeful that this program will be operational before 1 Oct 67. A great amount of training, procurement, coordination and planning is still ahead of us.

6. **Deadline:** All volunteers should have their names affixed to the roster NLT 1600 hours, 1 Sept 67.

7. **General:** I have been extremely proud and honored to be associated with this squadron to date. Your daily performance has been outstanding

*(Continued on page 4)*

IN MEMORY  
OF  
A FRIEND



President's  
Corner



Bad Moon Rising!

I was stationed with James F. Francis at Forbes AFB from May 1966 to September 1967. During that time I got to know Jim quite well. We both worked the Main Gate at Forbes many times. Jim was a fanatic St. Louis Cardinal Baseball fan. He would read the paper daily and keep stats on each and every game. When I really got to know him was when I and five other airmen drove to Lackland AFB for AZR Training in June 1967. When we arrived back at Forbes we received assignments and out of the five Jim was the only one going to Thailand. Needless to say we thought that he had the best assignment and probably the safest. We all shipped from Forbes in September 1967.

Everyday we would read Stars and Stripes and always read the Obituaries to see if anyone we might know was killed. On 11 March 1968 I read of one James E. Francis, USAF, killed on Udorn AB, Thailand. I assumed that this was the same James Francis I had known at Forbes. Later I wrote to a friend and found out that indeed it was Jim. He had been guarding a POI area and was killed in a mortar attack.

I later journeyed to Washington DC and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and found Jim's name, Panel 44E Line 014. It took a long time to leave that Wall but I told my mom only by the grace of God that my name was not on that Black Granite Wall.

Jim was a good friend, he always had a smile on his face and never spoke unkindly of anybody.

Last Name	Francis
Given Name	James E.
Rank	A1C
Branch of Service	Air Force
Causality Date	11 March 1968
Home Town of Record	St. Louis, Mo. <i>Daniel D. Lawler</i>

On March 22, 1996, Jerry Gryzmala gave his life for his country. Jerry succumbed to a long battle with cancer that was due to exposure to Agent Orange. Along with the bad news notifying me of Jerry's death came a note that said, "no wonder that he got cancer, the Agent Orange barrels were stored right next to the Security Police area at Bien Hoa." How many more will have to endure the effects of this exposure we will only know in the future. The only sure thing is that Jerry suffered a fatal wound in 1968 and never even knew it. Another sad note that I failed to mention is that Paul Brown, a member from Michigan, also passed away due to a massive heart attack while sleeping. I met Paul and his wife last September in Kokomo, Indiana while attending the Nam Vet reunion. We should all count our blessings that we have our health and our senses. It would be easy to dismiss these deaths as being, "part of nature," but myself, I say these deaths are a result of an, "act of war." May their souls rest in peace.

*John Langley*



**DISMOUNT**



A **DISMOUNT** was a formation held at the end of the normal tour of duty for some special reason. This **DISMOUNT** is to pay final respects to those who have gone to their final well deserved resting place.

Paul B. Brown                      January 1996

Jerry Gryzmala                      22 March 1996

*(If you know of anyone who we need to recognize in this space contact John Langley, Steve Ray, Terry Morris, or Dave Dobson so that they too may have their DISMOUNT.)*

## New Look

## New Editor



## What About The K-9s?

John has been asking if someone would help with the newsletter, in fact he has asked several times in the past. I finally decided that since he has done such a terrific job getting this organization off the ground I would do what I could by putting the *Guardmount* together. If you have any suggestions or material to be put in this publication send them to me at:

5315 Bevens Ave  
Spring Hill, Fl 34608

I am open for any ideas and material that you are able to provide. I know that there is a great deal of information out there that needs to be shared with others. It is hard to find out a lot about what happened there, most of the squadron histories and scrap books were lost after the war.

A little about my background. I was a SSgt in Nam and a career NCO. After Nam I went to Germany and that is where I spent 14 of the next 17 years. I was in Security Police for 18 of my 23 years, the last 5 was as a First Sergeant. I retired from the Air Force in 1988 and I currently live in Florida and work for the Florida Department of Corrections as a Psychological Specialist. I am a co-sponsor of a Veterans Incarcerated chapter of VVA.

I have more Bio's, letters and information that was sent to John that will appear in coming issues. There was too much for a single issue but please keep it coming so I can keep each issue full and interesting. If you want to submit one please send it to me directly.

Please help me make this the best possible information source for some of the greatest guys in Vietnam.

Dave Dobson, MSgt, (Ret) USAF



The sentry dogs were great, their presence in the areas around the base created a feeling of added security. As an area supervisor and SAT team leader I relied on the sentry dogs and getting to know them on the kind of alert they had, human or animal. I heard that no sentry dogs would be brought back to CONUS after the war, this upset me. I am a dog lover and hated to think that they would be put down simply because they had been sent to Nam to add to our security.

I was pleased to learn that at least 190 of these hard working sentry dogs were returned to CONUS after the war. They were a psychological deterrent for the enemy and a psychological boost for our people.

Probably the best known sentry dog was Nemo, who was wounded on December 4, 1966. He and two handlers were wounded, there were three other sentry dogs and one handler who were not so lucky, they lost their lives at Tan Son Nhut during a sapper attack. Nemo was returned to Lackland and used as a recruiter. He died on March 15, 1973.

*(Information like this is available in a very interesting book "Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam", written by Roger P. Fox - a retired SP officer and a Silver Star recipient in Vietnam. The book sells for \$6.50, checks made payable to the US Treasury from:*

Attn: Debbie Moss  
Air Force History Supply Office  
110 Luke Ave, Suite 405  
Bolling AFB, DC 20332-8075

*I will be using this as a material source in future issues.)*

## THE ABSURDITY CALLED WAR

Endless patrols that wandered aimlessly - crisscrossing ancient pathways that inevitably lead to the madness of death, we walked into the absurdity called war.

Given up to the senseless slaughter, we were sacrificed for an ideal that had no meaning for a country that had forgotten who we were and what we had become.

The fear of death strangled our memories and limited life's pleasures to a vaguely mystical dream of some forgotten bygone life that was now lost in the absurdity called war

Where reality was punctuated by unexpected terror and the constant companion called death. A reality where confusion was God and a youthful generation aged before they were twenty. Growing older and more callous with each passing ambush and every unavenged death.

Our dreams became blurred by the nightmare of disillusionment as innocent dreams and thoughts of heroic deeds gave way to the absurdity called war. What we had thought was forever lost in the rape of childhood innocence. Where jungle trails, became classrooms that exploded in deadly combat and left us with the anguished memories of a world gone mad and the silent unseen eyes of the dead.

Our sanity held together by a loyalty to our brothers and a desire to survive, we struggled forward. The sacred "Short Timers" calendar etched into our helmets and minds were grim reminders of what we had endured and how much longer we had to face the daily ritualistic dance of death as we bowed to the absurdity called war.

For now, the silence of death still ring in our ears and in our hearts. Forever lost in the drama of war, we are unable to break the chains that bind us to that time as we struggle to forget an absurdity called war.

*Michael J. Quinlivan - 17 Feb 1995*



and your support of squadron policy and mission has been the finest I have witnessed in my career. Your cooperation and backing are necessary to make this program an effective and practical weapon against the Viet Cong. It will require personal sacrifice from each man in the form of reduced free time and comfort and exposure to hostile environment. I am convinced, however, after three months in this squadron, you are prepared to make this sacrifice.

JOSEPH B. VERNA JR., Captain, USAF  
Security Operations Officer.

*Forty plus members of the squadron volunteered and were trained by the 173d Airborne. We made a helicopter assault right before dusk, spent the night in a perimeter defense and the next day spent 6 or 7 hours patrolling through the jungle back to the base where we were net by Red Cross Donut Dollies.*

*To my knowledge this was the only helicopter assault behind enemy lines by an A.P. unit.*

*Kent Miller*



## Awards and Decorations Upgrade

The 1996 Defense Authorization Act contained language that will allow a one year window for opportunity (Feb 9, 1997 is the cut-off date) for persons that received a medal for valor or heroism to submit data to have their award upgraded or to be considered for first award if they believe they were unfairly downgraded or not awarded at all. Further information may be obtained from:

Air Force Personnel Center

Attn: DPPP

550 C St. West

Suite 12

Randolph AFB, Texas 78150-4714



# MEMORIES OF 'NAM

633rd SPS. Pleiku. RVN - 3/67 - 3/68



I arrived in Nam through Da Nang AB on March 7, 1967 and was temporarily assigned to Phu Cat AB. Within the next two weeks I was transferred to Pleiku AB. Arriving at Pleiku I remember thinking how small the base was and how on earth could we defend it against the VC/NVA when you could almost throw a rock from one perimeter to the other. The base was the home of the A1E s (Sandy), rescue choppers and Puff the Magic Dragon, AC-47.

I was assigned to swing shifts which I hated. You could never get your night vision focused due to the amount of time spent in sunlight during the day. Just as you were adapting it was time to be relieved. The other reason that I did not like swing shift was that when Charlie hit I was normally sound asleep and had to react to the situation and had to react to the situation in a stupor. My buddy Dan Gittens and I were always the first in line for posting or assigned to the SRT. Neither one of us could stand not knowing what was going on at the perimeter. Also, the rounds usually fell on the flight line or within the compound. So it made sense to me to head for the perimeter. There were a couple attacks that my strategy did not work and I ended up in the middle of an attempted penetration of our defenses.

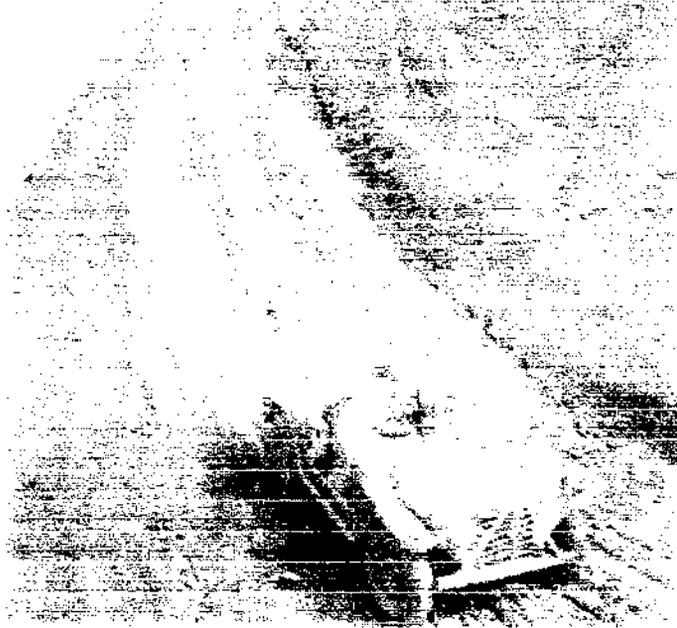
During the next few months up until March of 1968 the base received numerous rocket, mortar attacks, sniper incidents and two attempts at penetrating our perimeter. These incidents were minor compared to the tragedy which occurred one quiet day. I remember a large explosion rocked the base and nearly knocked me off my feet. I ran to the bunker where I was to respond when under attack and waited for more in-coming. To my amazement there was only one explosion. Over the radio CDC

informed everyone that SPS arms room had exploded. At first it was believed that a sapper attack caused the explosion, it was later proved that it was caused by careless handling of an ammo can (with grenades and hand flares) which caused the explosion. What a tragedy, we did it to ourselves. Carelessness caused death and injuries not the enemy. I always thought that I could accept it or at least understand loss of life caused by the enemy but not by stupidity. The base was left vulnerable due to the loss weapons. The only weapons we had were those left on post at the time of the explosion and those stored in the SRT lockers at the barracks. We recovered from the incident both strategically and mentally but it will always be in the back of my mind that it could have been me. It was nearly 14 years later while performing executive protection duty in Beirut and saw the Marine Barracks blown to rubble that I relived that day in Vietnam.

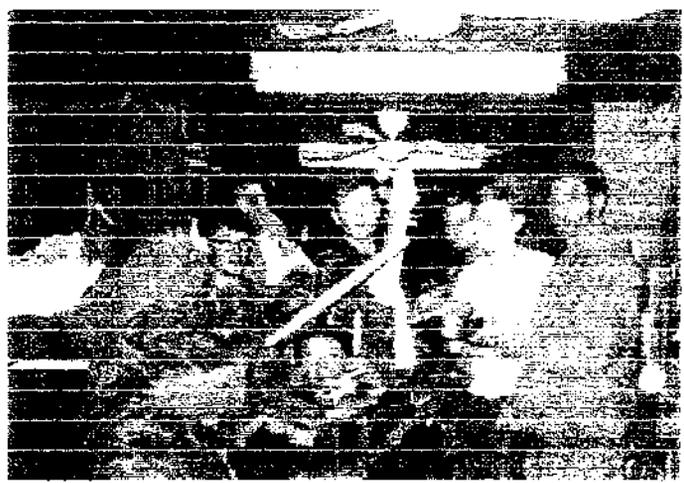
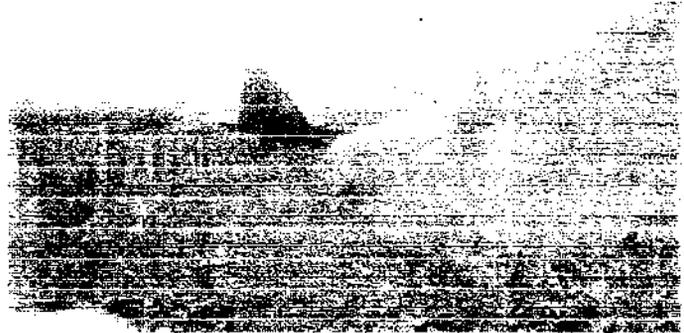
After leaving Vietnam, I was assigned to the 81st SPS, Bentwaters RAF and then separated from the AF in March of 1970. I married, earned my BS in Criminal Justice, worked in the pharmaceutical business and then re-enlisted in the Army in 1980 as a Military Policeman. As a military policeman I worked law enforcement, criminal investigations, executive protection and physical security. I am now a Supervising, Physical Security Specialist with the Department of Energy at the Savannah River Site (Defense Nuclear Weapons Site) in Aiken, South Carolina.

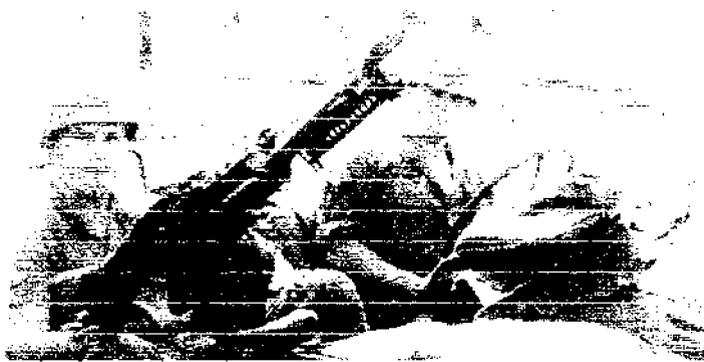
Steve Shelt, Sgt  
USAF 3/66-3/70





**633rd Security Police Squadron  
Pleiku AFB, RVN  
March 1967 - March 1968**





## Looking for Men From Pleiku



I would like to hear from any Security Policeman who was at Pleiku AB during the 1969 Tet Offensive with the 633rd Security Police Squadron.

I DEROSed from Pleiku 2 April 67. A couple of my senior Sergeants were extending at Pleiku and should have been there. In particular, I am looking for MSgt. Billy Welch who was the Flight Commander for the night operations. Billy had been an Airborne infantryman in the Korean War and taught all of us a lot.

I was a tall, skinny 1st Lt. who smoked a pipe (kind of hard to do at night under a poncho - I owe Billy 1000 cigarettes). I made Captain the day I left Pleiku. I spent many a long dark night in a jeep with Billy checking on sentries and responding to dog alerts and stopping the VC/NVA when they came to visit. I was a typical dumb shit Lieutenant and I was grateful to have a strong MSgt with combat experience.

The other NCO was TSgt Paul D. Salazar from California. He was NCOIC of Law Enforcement after TSgt Erskine Sexton left. I have pictures of both of them.

For years I have tried to find out what happened during Tet to the base and Security Police Squadron. I have a handful of rumors but none from a Security Policeman. In all the books on Tet including Brian Oberdorfer's legendary *Tet*, there is no reference to Pleiku.

And since I am just running off at the mouth now, for vets wanting to return to Vietnam I don't think you can get to Pleiku, etc. in that area without permission from the top of N. Vietnam. The new CD-ROM on Pleiku made by these photographers who say they were allowed to go anywhere has nothing on the central highlands.

A couple of years ago the Washington D.C. at IA Drang Valley Association reunion, we stopped by and I met SMSgt Basil Plummley, who was Colonel Hai Moore's SM. They had just come by from the Ia Drang where ABC made the 20/20 feature on Hai Moore's book, *We Were Soldiers Once and Young* about the 1965 Ia Drang battles. He said that at An Khe they wanted to go to where their base camp was but it was totally restricted. They were with a 3 star Viet General who said he had no idea what was there. MIA's??

At Pleiku, which when I was there probably had 5000 people at the most, there were 79,000 people. All of the Yards still alive were brought there and Vietnamized to destroy their culture. They stayed in a Japanese hotel until they flew them out of the Ia Drang where they spent 2 days and one long scary ass night.

He said there was no evidence the Americans had ever been at Pleiku or the Air Field. All the buildings were gone and they even dug up the runway and built an entire new runway. Base Ops used to be down next to the bomb dump and is now down on the opposite end where RMK - BRJ used to be.

Sorry to ramble - pass that on to whoever may be interested. I have a lot of pictures, mostly Black and White - plus what remains of a lot of super 8 film that just broke up it was so brittle when I had a video made.

Bob Edwards



**Membership Application (send Copy of DD 214 and \$10.00 fee)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unit in S.E.Asia \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates of S.E.Asia Duty \_\_\_\_\_  
 Description of Duty \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Looking For? \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to ~~Steve Ray~~. Send checks to 1300 Shadow Ridge Dr., Huntsville, AL. 35803*  
 VSPA 170 SHIH Dr. APT C-4 2



**ASSOCIATION MERCHANDISE  
 FOR SALE**



- |    |   |          |
|----|---|----------|
| 1  | Association Patch - made around a QC design                     | \$ 5 00  |
| 2  | Air Force Combat Veteran Patch                                  | \$ 4 00  |
| 3  | Security Police Badge Patch                                     | \$ 4 00  |
| 4  | QC lapel pin, Just arrived                                      | \$ 3 50  |
| 5  | QC patch, Actual size Quality Reproduction American Made        | \$ 5 00  |
| 6  | Air Force Security Police Coin - Pewter                         | \$ 6 00  |
| 7  | Black Baseball Style Cap with any of the above Patches on it    | \$10 00  |
| 8  | Air Force Flag 3' X 5', Nylon                                   | \$10 00  |
| 9  | Hanes Beefy T-shirt with QC patch silk-screen on it M,I,XI,XXI. | \$12 00  |
| 10 | Association Bumper Stickers                                     | \$ 1 00  |
| 11 | 7th Air Force - Patch   | \$ 4 00  |
| 12 | 7th Air Force - Pin   | \$ 3 00  |
| 13 | Mini-Security Police Badges, 1 3/4" high, Official Issue        | \$ 10 00 |

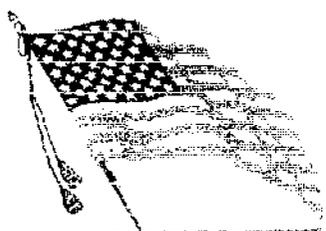
*Please add \$1.00 per item for shipping up to a maximum of \$3.00. Please make checks for merchandise payable to ~~Steve Ray~~. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Send checks to 1300 Shadow Ridge Dr., Huntsville, AL.*

35803 VSPA 170 SHIH Dr. APT C-4 2

Guardmount  
David Dobson  
5315 Bevens Ave  
Spring Hill, FL 34608

# Guardmount

First Class



**AMERICA IS #1**  
Thanks to our  
Veterans

## Reunion 96 - San Antonio FINAL NOTICE



We hope to give more details in the next issue if we are able to continue with our plans. Some of the tentative plans are very exciting.

It only takes \$5.00 to place your reservation. We hope to get more reservations in the near future.

### Reunion 96 Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending \_\_\_\_\_ Amount you are enclosing \_\_\_\_\_

Send to Steve Ray ~~1538 Shanks Ridge Dr. Huntsville, AL 35894~~ Please send funds in American Dollars, no MPC accepted by our bank.