



Guardmount

Volume 2, Issue 2

October, 1996



First Contact with Charlie

I was assigned to work the swing shift (1400 - 2200) base security. My assignment was on the south east area of the base adjacent to the river. There was a rice paddy in front of my tower with an eight (8) foot fence between the rice paddy and tower. My equipment included my M-16, starlight scope, M-60 and radio. During the hours of darkness there was a K-9 unit assigned to patrol in front of my post. Located behind my tower was a mortar pit again manned during the hours of darkness. Also assigned to the area was a three-man SAT team.

After arriving on my post and getting all my equipment up the tower I made the necessary contacts with flight control and surveyed the area. As was customary I mounted the starlight scope on my M-16. I would then adjust the "T" sight of the scope on the object. I figured that I would be close to whatever I shot at if the need arose.

Throughout the night I would make frequent checks with the starlight scope. I would check the rice paddy and the rivers edge for any activity. At times I would watch the K-9 unit make its rounds up and down the fence line. It was an uneventful night as usual. At about 2145

hrs I decided to take one last look through the starlight scope before taking it off my M-16 and putting it back in the case. As I started to sweep across the rice paddy, I saw three (3) shadowy figures floating across the rice paddy. It was an eerie feeling to see the three VC moving ever so slowly across the rice paddy. As I said, they appeared to be floating. All I could see of them was from about the waist up. I will never forget what I felt with my first contact with Charlie. Without taking the scope off the figures, I called on the radio that I had three unidentified subjects about 100 yards out in front of my post. Flight control acknowledged and sent the SAT team and reserve SAT team to my location.

After I made my first call, I could hear the radio in the mortar pit come alive and within a few minutes the night became day as the mortar pit started sending up flares. With flares in the air the VC disappeared. With the assistance of the flares I could see better than anyone responding. I started directing the SAT team to the location where I last saw the VC. Sometime during this exchange a Tech Sergeant climbed up my tower and started relaying my instructions to the SAT teams. While the TSgt gave the instructions, I kept my eye glued to the scope watching for any movement in the rice paddy.

During the SAT team search for the three VC a fire fight broke out. With the muzzle blast,

(Continued on page 4)

IN THE PROUD
SP
TRADITION

A Dark Night

I'm sure by now that we've all heard about it. Maybe from the newspapers, radio, or most likely from the television. It was in the early morning of Tuesday, June 25, 1996 in a small place called Dhahran, Saudi Arabia that nineteen Air Force personnel were confirmed killed and untold numbers hurt or still missing. Once again if it had not been for three Security Police, who were on duty that morning, the body count of Air Force personnel could have been higher.

Two of the Security Police were standing watch from the roof tops of two neighboring buildings. The third Security Policeman had a foot patrol along the inside of the fence line. As he was making his turn, he noticed the oil tanker parked outside of the fence. With the same feeling that we had felt in Vietnam and Thailand, he knew that something was just not right.

Just as he sounded the alarm the oil tanker exploded. The building began to collapse, glass and bricks flying in the air, flames were everywhere and so were the cries of pain. That night those three Security Police personnel did their jobs and laid their lives on the line as they were trained to do. If it had not been for the Security Police, just think how many more Air Force personnel could have been wounded or killed. I'm just as proud of those young Security Police as I was with the ones that I served with in Vietnam.

Johnnie H. Beasley, Jr.

71-72, 377th Combat Security Police Sq.

Tan Son Nhut AFB, Vietnam

72-73, 69th CMSG, MAVC, United States

Embassy Saigon, Vietnam



President's
Corner



On to San Antonio!

Plans are made and all systems are go for our reunion to be held November 8 to 11 in San Antonio, TX. Steve Ray has lots of activities planned including a visit to the Security Police Museum and also to Camp Bullis. If you have not done so, please send Steve the \$45.00 per person which pays for your dinner and breakfast. We will be having a business meeting on Sunday during which election of officers will be held. Hilliary and I are looking forward to it. On a more serious note we need to deal with some important issues dealing with where we are headed as a group. Our guest speaker at the dinner will be Medal of Honor recipient, Sgt Roy P. Benavidz. (see page 8)

As of this date we have 189 paid members. There are thousands of us former, "Ramp Rats" out there so lets start recruiting them. Larry Breazeale has been working hard on the west coast. We have the ability to track former SP's and AP's through their social security numbers, so if you have any old orders send them to Terry Morris for processing. The recruiter of the year will receive a gift from the association.

I finally have the software to print the certificates for our charter members. These will be awarded at the reunion. Those of you not attending will receive theirs via the mail.

In closing let me say that I have enjoyed my stay as your president and I hope to serve this organization in some capacity in the future.

John "Short Time" Langley

Some Memories of Nam

Reading Steve Ray's, "A Different Mission," brought back some nostalgia, and is actually the first thing I've read in the years that could tempt me to consider doing this.

I was in Cam Ranh for about seven weeks (4/1/71 - 5/18/71) and twice when on trips to an orphanage. I didn't go as a guard, but I did carry a .38, as was required at the time. In fact there were only about eight or nine people on each trip, and only three .38's for arms, but we transported food and clothes to the kids.

There were only three nuns at the orphanage, and two village women also helped out. Surprisingly, with all their suffering, the kids were in pretty good spirits and happy as hell to get a hot meal that was not lacking in quality or quantity. The only other memory of those trips was stopping on the way back to base to buy a burlap bag of charcoal (at least 60 lb.) for about 200 Dong. It's hard to believe that was twenty-five years ago.

Just prior to Cam Ranh I was in the 377th SPS at Tan Son Nhut (12/15/70 - 3/31/71). I was a QRT on the flight line (days), but we really didn't do much. After Cam Ranh I was sent to Nha Trang AB, which was VNAF controlled, and was with the 90th SOS. There were only 21 security police there to protect our operational area (4 C-130's and 6 C-123). Three men to secure the area, two on patrol, and one in dispatch/CSC. We had one V-100 and two M-151's. One of the jeeps was so bad off that the army (our support) finally refused to fix it any more because, "you can't weld rust."

Steve Novikoff, a fellow NCO and SP, and I use to go to the army side (helicopter training) of Nha Trang and get rides to different areas of II Corps, and usually had to hitch rides back to be on

(Continued on page 4)



Tools of our Trade

The M-16A1 rifle replaced the M-1/M-2 carbines as the basic security police weapon in 1965. It was a lighter and more durable weapon, its high performance and ease in marksmanship training made it right for defending the bases in Nam. Sentry dog handlers were having problems with this weapon as reported in the after action report from an attack on Tan Son Nhut. It was suggested that the strap be attached to the top to enable the handler to have better control of the weapon while handling the dog. It was also suggested the barrel be shortened to 11.5 inches, it be equipped with a stronger flash suppresser and a telescoping stock; thus the CAR-15 was born (later called the GAU-5A/A). The basic load for a security policeman to carry was 50 rounds.

Open-face construction with exposed working parts and lack of shock power made the .38 a poor choice of handguns for use by security police in Vietnam.

The first grenade launcher used in air base defense was a percussion-type, single-shot, shoulder weapon. It fired a 40-mm round up to 400 meters, this was the distance between a handgrenade and a short mortar round. They were able to fire three types of rounds - high-explosive, buckshot, and illumination and signal flares. They were secured from the Army in RVN.

To add firepower a grenade launcher was attached to the M-16, a M148 (M-203). This grenade launcher was not as effective as the M-79. In late 1969 a grenade launcher was developed which was fed by a 12 round magazine, it could be fired semiautomatic and automatic - the XM-174.

These weapons were considered best used on security alert teams and quick reaction teams but were very effectively used to fire H & I into free fire zones around the bases, such as Phu Cat and Tuy Hoa. This random firing kept the enemy near the base off balance.

*Information in this article was obtained from:
Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam
1961 - 1973*

Next issue more information on other weapons .

time for duty. One time I had no ride back from Cam Ranh and wound up crossing the large bridge and getting a ride back to Nha Trang with an ARVN convoy, I was dropped off by the Buddhist Statue and walked through the town and back to base, about 4 Km.

Another time Steve and I were stranded in Cam Ranh and started walking back to Nha Trang (48 Km) and had little luck. We were passed by so often that we finally rolled our sleeves up over our chevrons, and were quickly picked up by a special forces SFC who drive us all the way to 5th Field Force in Nha Trang. A little imagination goes a long way.

*John Fox
One of our members*

Editors Corner

I want to thank all of those who have written with comments and material for future issues. I hope to hear from more of you in the future, that is the way that I will be able to keep future issues full of interesting material. I have no doubt that we have enough material out there to fill issues well into the next century and then some considering all of the years that we were in Nam. Let me hear from you and have your contributions. They do not have to be perfect, as editor I reserve the right to edit and correct the grammar in your stories. I will also call you if I need any further information, that is one of the advantages of this job, I get to talk to a lot of you out there and share "war stories".

Hope to hear from you soon

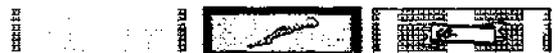
*Dave Dobson
Whiskey Delta
CRB "70-"71*

the tracer and flares the starlight scope intensified the brightness, At one point the mortar pit ran out of flares, Just as they fired off the last flare, the resupply truck arrived. I could hear the frantic effort by the troops breaking open the flare cases, As the last flare burned out and before the resupplied mortar pit could get another flare up there was about 30 seconds of darkness. That is when the VC started to move toward the river. I saw one VC at the rivers edge and reported this to the TSgt. who requested permission for me to fire from flight control. I was stunned when I heard the response from flight control, "*permission denied.*" What a way to fight a war.

After the flares again turned the night into day, the SAT team successfully captured one of the VC's. Sometime in the early morning hours I was relieved and the TSgt. took me to the operations office where I met Mr. VC. He was wearing only a pair of shorts and had covered his body with some type of dark oil. He was armed with an AK-47. It was later learned that the reason for the infiltration was to test our ability to observe and respond. The AK-47 was mounted and placed over the doorway of Operations.

It's strange how one is aware of what is happening around them in a stressful situation. At one point I heard the troops in the mortar pit request additional flares as their supply was running low. I remember the SAT leader yelling at the VC they captured later. I remember the TSgt's (not his name) voice that was a calming effect on me. I was no hero at the time, just a scared 19 year old.

*Bill Scholtz, a.k.a. "Feet"
37th SPS*



A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to War....



One night we had been in a yellow alert status since about 2200 hours and got the word about 0300 to pickup our augees. We went to the various posts and picked up the posted augees to transport them to the pickup point so they could be taken back to their respective squadron areas.

I picked up the last one at Oscar 3, on the South China Sea beach side of Cam Ranh Bay AB, and started toward the pick up point. We were hurrying along to get him dumped so they would get him and start relief at 0500. I was driving with the Tiger Eyes on, no headlights. Naturally I was driving a little faster than was safe under these conditions but I wanted to get off and go back to the Hooch.

Visibility was poor and I did not see the large stones until I hit them bouncing everyone around. The augee was sitting in the back seat with his helmet on his head, wearing his flak vest, carrying his weapon in one hand and a bag in the other hand. When I hit the bump and the jeep bounced up

he went flying up out of his seat when he came back down the jeep had moved forward and he landed in a sitting position with both legs straight out in front of him holding his weapon and bag, his helmet was at an angle and a bewildered look on his face. I realized he was gone when my grenadier, who was use to this type of occurrence and had held on, looked back and yelled at the poor augee, "Hey dude, you aren't supposed to get out here."

I stopped, backed up and jumped out to see if the man was all right. He was and we hurried to the pick up point. We all had a good laugh numerous times after that over the grenadiers quick thinking in telling the man he was not to get out there.

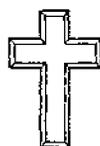
Dave Dobson

483rd SPS

Cam Ranh Bay

I am sure that everyone has had one or more things occur while he was in country that was humorous. Please send them to me and I will publish them in this column. I bet we have enough

REPRINT



Help Chaplain Needed



We are growing and are in need of an Association Chaplain. If anyone would like to volunteer or has a nomination for the position contact Steve Ray NLT November 1, 1996.

Steve has a new address: 170 Shih Dr. Apt C-4, Huntsville, AL 35802

Regional Get Together

Since this is such a large country Denis Cook is wanting to organize a get together in the northeast. Anyone who would also be interested in doing this please contact Denis at (717) 871-3260 or write him at:
34 Derby Lane
Lancaster, PA 17603

He's hoping to hear from you all up in the northeast, we should have more information as he gets it together.



Ed Roberts "Moon Lighting" as a laundry man. Fresh air drying in the sun just like mom did.

1966

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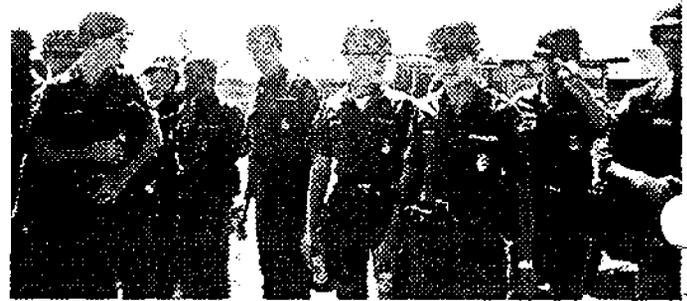


Baby San, overseeing to insure quality control, had to have clean uniforms for the troops.



Fall in for guard mount

B
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Y



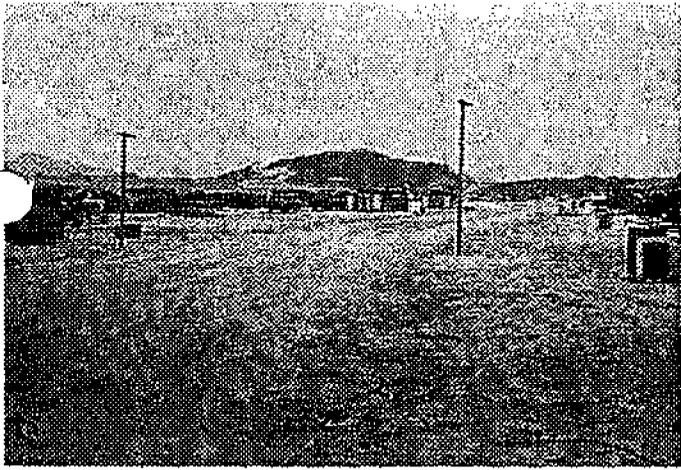
Tiger Flight falling in, maybe you see yourself or some one that you know.



Tiger Flight guard mount. T.Sgt.. Earl "Jolly Rodgers" Rogers NCOIC.



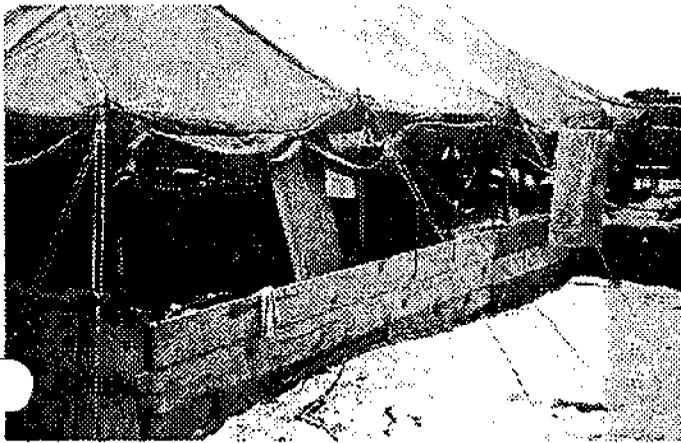
Action shot, the guy in the helicopter took one in the ass. It went through the bottom of the chopper, his seat and a flack jacket he was sitting on.



Main tent area looking toward OP-1, the K-9 kennels and a mortar battery were at the base of the hill



Mess Hall, old field kitchen and mess kit. Notice the latrine in the foreground, the ones that were cleaned by burning.



Luxurious, air-conditioned living quarters. Open to everyone and everything, including that fine sand.



Home sweet home complete with a mortar bunker in the front yard.



Ed in front of CSC with an M-16.



Central Security Control.

(Ed.note: These are a change from what I saw there in 1970, hopefully I can find some pictures to put in future issues)



Reunion Keynote Speaker



As an introduction to our Keynote Speaker I am going to reprint the citation that accompanied his Medal of Honor:

The President of the United States Of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded in the name of the Congress the Medal of Honor to *Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez, United States Army (Retired)* (Note: on January 3, 96) for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:

On 2 May 1968, Master Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Roy P. Benavidez, distinguished himself by a series of daring and extremely valorous actions while assigned to Detachment B-56, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Republic of Vietnam. On the morning of May 2, 1968, a 12 man Special Forces Reconnaissance Team was inserted by helicopter in a dense jungle area west of Loc Ninh, Vietnam, to gather intelligence information about confirmed large scale enemy activity. This area was controlled and routinely patrolled by the North Vietnamese Army. After a short period of time on the ground, the team met heavy enemy resistance, and requested emergency extraction. Three helicopters attempted extraction, but were unable to land due to intense enemy small arms and anti-aircraft fire. Sergeant Benavidez was at the Forward Operating Base in Loc Ninh monitoring the operation by radio when these helicopters returned to off-load wounded crew members and to assess aircraft damage. Sergeant Benavidez voluntarily boarded a returning aircraft to assist in another extraction attempt. Realizing that all the team members were either dead or wounded and unable to move to the pickup zone, he directed the aircraft to a nearby clearing where he jumped from the hovering helicopter, and ran approximately 75 meters under withering small arms fire to the crippled team. Prior to reaching the team's position, he was wounded in his right leg, face and head. Despite these painful injuries, he took charge, repositioned the team members and directed their fire to facilitate the landing of an extraction aircraft, and the loading of wounded and dead team members. He then threw smoke canisters to direct aircraft to the team's position. Despite

his severe wounds and under intense enemy fire, he carried and dragged half of the wounded team members to the waiting aircraft. He then provided protective fire by running alongside the aircraft as it moved to pick up classified documents on the dead team leader. When he reached the team leader's body, Sergeant Benavidez was severely wounded by small arms fire in the abdomen and grenade fragments in his back. At nearly the same moment, the aircraft pilot was mortally wounded, and his helicopter crashed. Although in extremely critical condition due to his wounds, Sergeant Benavidez secured the classified documents and made his way back to the wreckage, where he aided the wounded out of the overturned aircraft, and gathered the stunned survivors into a defensive perimeter. Under increasing automatic weapons and grenade fire, he moved around the perimeter distributing water and ammunition to his weary men, reinstilling in them a will to live and fight. Facing a build-up of enemy opposition with a beleaguered team, Sergeant Benavidez mustered his strength, began calling in tactical air strikes and directed the fire from supporting gunships to suppress the enemy's fire and so permit another extraction attempt. He was wounded again in his thigh by small arms fire while administering first aid to a wounded team member just before another extraction helicopter was able to land. His indomitable spirit kept him going as he began to ferry his comrades to the craft. On his second trip with the wounded, he was clubbed from behind by an enemy soldier. In the ensuing hand-to-hand combat, he sustained additional wounds to his head and arms before killing his adversary. He then continued under devastating fire to carry the wounded to the helicopter. Upon reaching the aircraft, he spotted and killed two enemy soldiers who were rushing the craft from an angle that prevented the aircraft door gunner from firing upon them. With little strength remaining, he made one last trip to the perimeter to ensure that all classified material had been collected or destroyed, and to bring in the remaining wounded. Only then, in extremely serious condition from numerous wounds and loss of blood did he allow himself to be pulled into the extraction aircraft. Sergeant Benavidez' gallant choice to join voluntarily his comrades who were in critical straights, to expose himself constantly to withering fire, and his refusal to be stopped despite numerous serious wounds, saved the lives of at least eight men. His fearless personal leadership, tenacious devotion to duty, and extremely valorous actions in the face of overwhelming odds were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect the utmost credit on him and the United States Army.

Mail Call

Ref. Article from Steve Shelt, (Pleiku) and
b Edwards:

I arrived on the hill (Pleiku) with the first group of Security Police, I believe our force was twenty-two strong, during the month of May 1965. There was evidence that a small runway had existed and a few buildings remained from the French Forces. We were thankful for a Special Forces camp a few miles from the hill and a few weather people

welcomed us aboard. Believe me this was a trip previously I served as a tail gunner, WW II, and during the Peace talks (Korea) as a security force member but Pleiku will always take top billing. Needless to say when we left, April 1966, the base was fully operational.

Now the hill has changed again, how long before a new force arrives?

*Walt Cobourn
MSgt, Retired*

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? _____



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,L,XL,XXL. | \$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 170 Shih Dr. Apt C-4, Huntsville, AL.

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Guardmount

First Class



AMERICA IS #1
Thanks to our
Veterans

Reunion 96 - San Antonio FINAL NOTICE

Keynote speaker, Roy Benavidez, Medal of Honor recipient; tours of Camp Bullis (remember the AZR war games to prepare us for Nam?), the Security Police Academy and Security Police Museum; dinner with the keynote speaker, business meeting/breakfast at the hotel and other activities.

Reservations may be made by calling the ho-

tel, *Holiday Inn*
Antonio (210) 377-
vations that you are with the *Vietnam Security*
Police Association.



Northwest in San
3900; tell reser-

The cost of the reunion is \$50.00 per at-
tendee (member/spouse/attendee)/

See Ya there!

Reunion 96 Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Number of people attending _____ Amount you are enclosing _____

Send to Steve Ray 170 Shih Dr. Apt C-4, Huntsville, AL 35802. Please send funds in American Dollars, no MPC accepted by our bank.