



Guardmount

Volume 2, Issue 4

April 1992



Memories of Bien Hoa Air Base, RVN

From July 68 to July 69, I was an A2C, assigned to the 3rd SPS Bien Hoa Air Base. Before I got there, I heard plenty of stories about the place. I knew it had frequent rocket and mortar attacks and because of that fact many referred Bien Hoa as 'Rocket Alley'. I also heard of the bravery displayed by many 3rd SPS 'Skycops' during the infamous '68 Tet offensive. News of the SP's defending the base, particularly at "Bunker Hill Ten," spread through the Air Force Security Police channels like a wildfire.

By the time my aircraft touched down on Bien Hoa runways, I knew of Bien Hoa's reputation. I had missed the '68 Tet offensive but, when the '69 Tet offensive (Feb. '69) arrived, the base under siege by VC and NVA proved to be challenge enough for all of us.

During my one year tour there, our base suffered 30 rocket attacks, several sapper penetrations, and fire fights along the perimeter, along with a ground attack during Tet. Concentration of the enemy was so strong in and around the base that our own F4C, jet fighter aircraft, dropped napalm right off of the fence line.

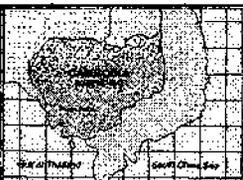
"Listening Post" (LP) was interesting duty, an "LP" tour of duty was usually for a couple of weeks to a month. Prior to performing this duty, troops needed

about a week to train with claymore mines (assembling and disassembling them blindfolded), "Totem-pole" familiarization and general stealth. "Totem-poles," were two empty oil drums cut in half and welded on top of each other. A "Spooky" flare canister was placed inside the concave portion of the stacked Totem-pole. The 'Poles' were placed 4 or 5 meters behind the 'LP'. If it was necessary to fall back, retrograde or retreat due to your post being overrun by the enemy, the fleeing SP's could activate the Totem Poles - creating a blinding flash, facing the oncoming enemy. This technique helped slow the enemy down, while Security Police could take to a safer position. According to the book, *Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam, 1961 - 1973*, the 3rd SPS was the first to develop and use the Totem-Pole concept.

Claymore mines would have to be checked often throughout the night by low crawling to the mine and making sure the 'Face' of the mine was pointed in the right direction, toward the enemy. Sometimes, if Charlie knew you were there, he would purposely turn it toward the LP.

Off of Bravo Area, across from Bunker Hill #17, there was a high hill top called "Buddha Hill" over looking the base. 'Rumors' said it was a VC Command Post but we could never prove it. During Tet we saw rounds coming from it, at us. Permission was finally granted from 'CSC' to hit it. Finally an air strike took it out. My first action was when 'Charlie' hit the VNAF ammo dump, two miles away, across the flight line, from our bunker, which was on top of a huge sand hill. Sand bag crews would back their trucks up to the base of the sand hill and fill sandbags during day time. The huge

(Continued on page 5)



Mayaguez Remembered

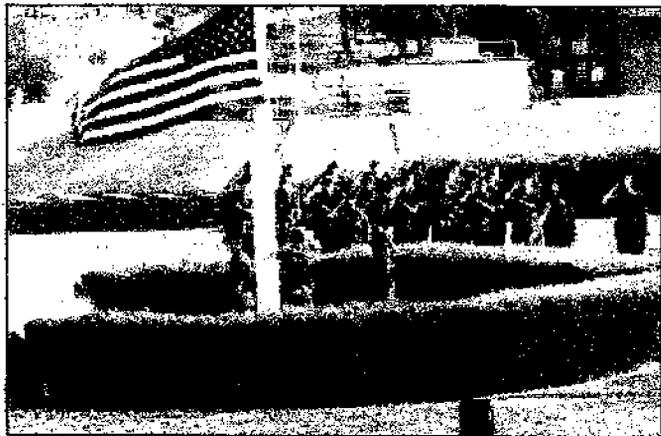


The Prez Sez



On May 12, 1975, just 12 days after US forces pulled out of Vietnam, the SS Mayaguez drifted into Cambodian waters in the Gulf of Thailand and was captured by Khmer Rouge communist and who forced it to sail to Kohtang Island with crew. When negotiations failed President Ford ordered a rescue mission to liberate the crew.

Helicopters with 125 Security Police from 56th Special Operations Wing stationed on Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base (NKP) undertook this objective on May 14, 1975. One of the choppers crashed 37 miles from NKP and 18 SP's lost their lives. The 56th is now stationed at Luke AFB and last year they observed the loss with a special Retreat Ceremony. This year there is planned a special Memorial Retreat on May 16, 1997 and a SP Combat Dining Out on May 17, 1997. At this time we have no further information, if you would like more information contact Charles Coles, CMSgt, USAF, 56th Security Police Squadron, 7333 N Bong Lane, Luke AFB, AZ 85309-1428.



Memorial Retreat, May 1996, A Flight under the command of Capt. Hedi Scheppers (Operations Officer) and Maj. Ed Addison.

Spring is almost upon us and we are getting ready for our informal get-together in Melbourne, Florida. Vietnam Veterans of Brevard are having their annual reunion on April 18, 19 and 20th. The location is Wickham park in Melbourne. There is camping available and a good time should be had by all. If you plan on attending please let me know so we can make some plans.

Mickey Reade has been busy planning our next reunion. Look for a flyer in the mail from Steve Ray. The dates are October 22, 23 and 25th in Pensacola, Florida. If you missed our last reunion don't miss this one.

I have a new T-shirt in the works so keep an eye out for that. I normally send out merchandise once a month so please keep that in mind when you order.

We still need you to contact your local newspapers to let them know about our group. If you need help on this give Steve Ray a call @ 205-722-4085. Steve will help you with a press release etc.

The Tan Son Nhut Association is planning a get-together in Virginia also in October. You former members of the 377th SPS might be interested. Jim Steward has the information on this. Give him a call @ 810-639-5755. Jim is very interested in talking to former members of the "fighting 377th."

Terry Morris is hard at work up in Wisconsin although his hat size has grown since the Packers won the Super Bowl. If you have any questions about our membership call Terry @ 608-429-9090.

If you have any general questions please feel free to contact me via e-mail @dogman1968 A aol.com or give me a call @ 941-497-0493

John Langley



Our Unhonored Heros

For Immediate Release

Marilyn Monroe has been honored with her own postage stamp. So have Elvis, Buddy Holly, and James Dean. There's even been a commemorative stamp for Bugs Bunny. Now the 500-member Vietnam Dog Handler Association is campaigning to have the Postal Service issue a commemorative stamp for the 50,000 canines that have served the U.S. Military from World War II to the present.

"Ours is the only major country that does not have a memorial or award for the military dogs," said author Michael Lemish, the official historian of the Vietnam Dog Handler Association. "Many of these dogs made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. In Vietnam they saved lives by alerting troops to ambushes, locating bobby traps, and searching for land mines.

Over 3,000 military dogs served in Vietnam as sentries, scouts, and trackers. During the course of the war, these dogs, mostly German shepherds and Labrador retrievers, were involved in over 64,000 missions. It has been estimated that dog teams helped to avert at least 10,000 casualties and were responsible for finding more than 2,000 Viet Cong bunkers and secret tunnels. The teams proved so effective that the Viet Cong began placing a bounty on the dogs and their handlers.

It is the hope that the issue of commemorative stamp will help ensure that the devoted dogs from Vietnam and other military conflicts receive the recognition they deserve. Lemish, author of *War Dogs - Canines in Combat*, says, "It's important that we show the U.S. Postal Service that there are a lot of people who want to do something to honor these military dogs. That is why the petition has been launched."

(Continued on page 5)

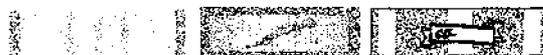
Battle for Saigon Tet 1968

Author Keith William Nolan has done something for the Security Police that served in Vietnam that should not have been bought even if we had hired the best Ad firm in the land. As all of you are aware, most people have no idea what we did in Vietnam, that has now been corrected. "*The Battle for Saigon Tet 1968*" was published in October 1996 by Pocket Books. The book details the courageous actions of the 3rd SPS at Bien Hoa and the 377th SPS at Tan Son Nhut while defending the Air Base during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Several members of the VSPA were participants in those battles and shared their stories with Mr. Nolan. The success of the book is due in part to his use of first hand accounts from our members. The book is a MUST read for any AP/SP that served in Nam. As you will see when you read the book, Mr. Nolan is not shy in pointing out weaknesses in human character and leadership and judging by that, the Security Police acquitted themselves quite well. The only snafu was the Air Force Security Police Association was listed in the sources section of contributors and the Vietnam Security Police Association should have been mentioned but was not. I will see what can be done on future printings. In any event, pick up a copy of the book, it's well written and does us proud.

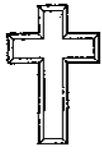
Steve Ray

(Note: I have moved, please send any future dues payments or correspondence to him at:)

1626 Chandler Rd.
Huntsville, Al 35801



We are honored to have the "Top Cop" of the Security Police as a member of our organization. B.Gen. Richard A. Coleman in now a member. It is good to know that the career field is in good hands.



Chaplain 's Corner



Some Wonder Why

No matter where or when you served in-country, if you went to Vietnam, you dealt with many dangers and discomforts. Because of that fact and range of your experience, you were a prime candidate for post traumatic stress disorder (P.T.S.D.). This affects many Vietnam veterans and their families, even twenty-five years later.

Some of us still wonder why? We question authority and find it hard to work for or with people. We want to be alone or find ourself alienated for others - even in a crowded house. Still others of us have problems with intimate relationships and keep an emotional distance from our wife or children, or we punish ourselves in other ways.

There are many symptoms of P.T.S.D. including depression, anger, sleep disorders, reacting under stress with survival tactics, survivors' guilt, hyper alertness, suicidal thoughts and/ or flashbacks (vivid recall of events or places in Vietnam or Thailand).

We have learned that there are certain triggers that cause these feelings. Triggers of smells, sounds, certain events, or times of the year, or sights around us bring certain feelings on. For example the smell of urine, gun powder, Asian food, fumes of diesel or jet fuel can send the mind to the past and perhaps to an unpleasant or traumatic experience. It could be the sound of a chopper, a truck a backfire from a car, corn popper, fireworks, or musical oldies. For me

rain or bright lights can bring it back.

Certain events, or dates make us act "strange." Things don't seem to come together. Everything is off the tract. It may be an argument with your wife or just unlocked doors at night, unexpected company dropping in, being criticized by someone or a family member's delay in carrying out an order. At these times we can't seem to handle the small things. PTSD has many sides and many faces. It is as varied as the experiences of the vet. The V.A. can help to identify it but I think misses the mark in overcoming it.

If you feel I have described you to a tee, then you probably have PTSD to some degree. It is a NORMAL reaction to a life threatening situations. Hey, the next time I go on a tour anywhere it will be to a place like Disneyland. There are many things practical in helping with the healing process. Romans 8:28 says, "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." All things are not good but all things can work together for good; yes, even Vietnam. If you need help in starting a PTSD claim drop me a line or call. We also offer helpful books and tapes.

Hey guys, "WELCOME HOME!"

*Steve Janke, VSPA Chaplain
483rd SPS, K9
Cam Ranh Bay 70 - 71*



"IT IS THE SOLDIER, NOT THE POET, WHO GIVES US FREEDOM OF SPEECH. IT IS THE SOLDIER, NOT THE REPORTER, WHO GIVES US FREEDOM OF PRESS. IT IS THE SOLDIER, NOT THE CAMPUS ORGANIZER, WHO GIVES US FREE-

DOM TO PROTEST. IT IS THE SOLDIER WHO SERVES BENEATH THE FLAG, WHO SALUTES THE FLAG, AND WHOSE COFFIN IS DRAPPED BY THE FLAG, WHO GIVES THE DEMONSTRATOR THE RIGHT TO BURN THE FLAG. FATHER D.E. O'BRIEN

sand hill made an excellent observation post, from this vantage point we could see nearly half of the base. When the ammo dump blew it looked like a huge fireball emerging from the ground and then a mushroom cloud. We could even see the 'ripple effect', of the shock wave, rolling over the ground and flight line, shaking everything in its path like a rag doll. We felt the wind blast from the explosion up against our bunker. A2C Jessie was working tower duty in the ammo dump at the time. I thought for sure he perished in the explosion, but minutes later I was relieved to hear his voice over the radio. He was alive but he suffered a busted ear drum and singed hair, eye brows and arms. During Tet '69 in front of Bunker Hill #17 VC sappers tried to penetrate our fence line. General Patton's son, then Lt. Col. George Patton III, commander of the U.S. Army's 11th Armored Cavalry (Black Horse), positioned his tanks in between our big bunker hills to give us more muscle for the punch. Each tank had one Security Police NCO inside with the tank crew, as a liaison for fields of fire etc.

Smaller bunkers were equipped with an outside tall chain link structure, covering the front portion of the bunker, facing the enemy, to keep an enemy B-40 rockets from directly hitting the bunker. We had four fence lines on the base perimeter. The base was ten miles in radius. The American fence line was the 'inside' fence, closest to us. The other fence lines were constructed, when the French and Japanese operated the base, years ago. In between these other fence lines were still active land mines. Trip flares were only installed on the American fence line. VC were not the only varmints attempting to crawl under or over the wire, we also had gorillas, black panthers, snakes and ocelots. When the varmints were 'in the wire', trip flares would be going off all the time. It always took a keen eye, of a Security Police troop, working tower duty, to distinguish the only varmints worth worrying about . . . "Victor Charlie."

We had a SAT (Security Alert Teams) which was our only really armed backup response. Anything more than that, for additional troop strength backups were usually several Air Force Augmentees, from various job skills, supervised by Security Police. Augmentees proved very useful because, at least they were trained with the basic M-16 rifle, and they could "point and shoot." SAT's drove the standard 4-wheel drive jeeps, with an M-60 machine gun resting over the top of

the hood. Also used, was what was known as the "Rubber Duck," (V-100) armored vehicle. This highly mobile vehicle had ports for rifles, mounted M-60's and the 90 Mil. Recoilless rifle (cannon). The 90 mil fired a "bee hive round," this was a round with thousands of little darts, like finishing nails. At one time, I think the idea of mounting a "mini-gun" on top was seriously considered.

During the '69 (Tet) Offensive, I carried a cassette tape recorder in my field pack. I placed my field pack on top of the bunker, next to our field radio. If anything happened worth recording, I would turn it on. I never told my bunker buddies because everyone would want to act like John Wayne. I taped the actual battle sounds and communications with CSC. Someone had a transistor radio tuned into 'Armed Forces Radio' who was reporting the battle. I recorded that too. I sent a copy to the SP, museum years ago. I still have the original. The only other fellow Nam Vet SP that I keep contact with, from 3rd SPS, at Bien Hoa, is SSgt. (Ret) Edward Crawford. He lives in Parrish, Florida and suffers the effect of 'Agent Orange.' Like me, Ed Crawford is a proud member of both "VSPA and AFSPA." We keep in touch often, either by phone or by letter. I drew two sketches of Bunker Hill #17. Ed has one framed and hinging in his house. The other one belongs to Bob Nelson, the New England rep for AFSPA. According to Bob, it's hanging over some bar, in a local tavern, in Mass. I figure there will always be a part of me, still there, somewhere on that abandoned American Air Force air field called 'Bien Hoa'.

Larry Breazeale
Bien Hoa 6/68-69



(Continued from page 3) Honor K-9

A petition form is available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Vietnam Dog Handler Association, c/o K-9 Stamp Drive, P.O. Box 1337, Westborough, MA 01581-6337.

For more information contact Mike Lemish, at (508) 366-0082

The Vietnam Security Police Association
Check out our new WEB Page, it's just starting so be patient and watch it develop.
<http://www/csmsys.com/vietvet/vspa/vspa.htm>

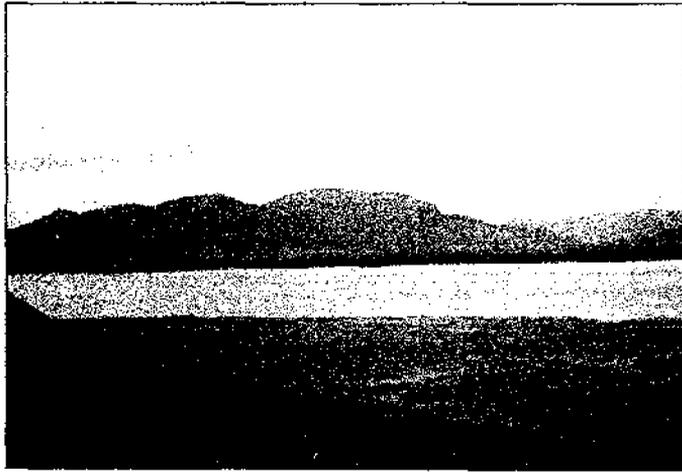


F-4 parking area, notice the gate shack.



SAT

Cam Ranh Bay 1966



View from OP-6 ROK Marine post



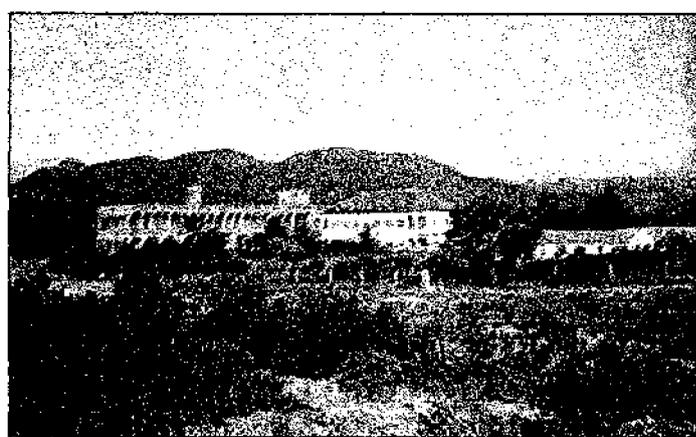
Looking west across the bay



Main runway under construction 1966



A2C Edward F. Roberts



Catholic Monistry at My Ca village.

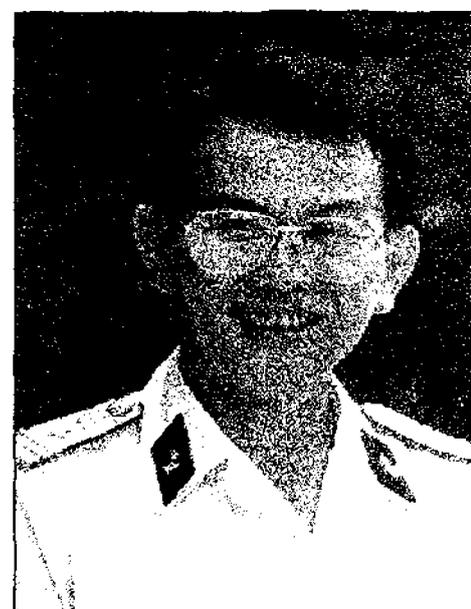


Entrance to My Ca village, note the Off Limits sign



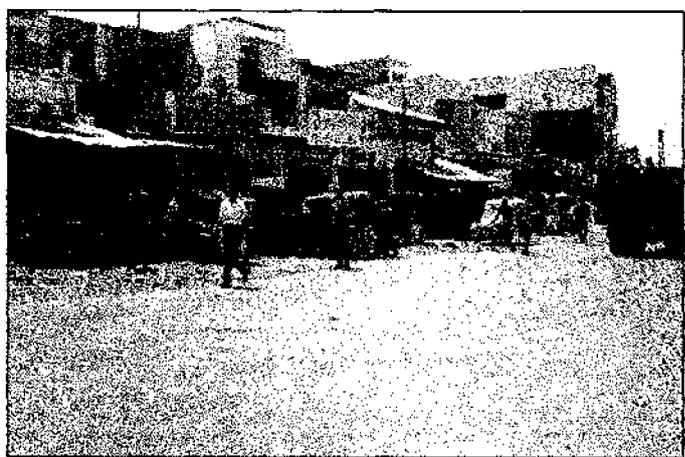
Road leading to posts formerly manned by ROK marines, north of My Ca and the village.

P
o
i
n
t
s



This is the NVA General who captured Cam Ranh Bay AB (Name not Known)

And other



100 P Alley in Saigon



John F. Kennedy street in Saigon, 1966



The Healing Wall

I WENT TO THE WALL FOR I HAD A FEELING,
THAT ONE OF MY BROTHERS WAS IN NEED
OF HEALING.

I APPROACHED A MAN OF INCREDIBLE SIZE,
AS HE TURNED TO ME, THERE WERE TEARS
IN HIS EYES.

HE COULD TELL BY MY LIMP, AND THE
SCARS THAT I BORE,
THAT I TOO WAS A VET FROM THE VIETNAM
WAR.

WE LOOKED AT THE NAMES ON THE BLACK
GRANITE WALL,
BROTHERS TO US, ONE AND ALL.
MEN WHO HAD FOUGHT, AND DIED BY OUR
SIDE, STAND BEFORE THEM IN REVERENT
PRIDE.

EACH POEM, EACH PATCH, EACH PICTURE
AS WELL,
TOLD THE WHOLE STORY OF THEIR PER-
SONAL HELL.

WE SAT ON THE GRASS FOR AN HOUR OR
MORE,
TALKING, RELIVING OUR PART OF THE WAR.

THE FEARS AND DESPAIR THAT FILL OUR

MIND,
THE MEMORIES OF FRIENDS WE'D LEFT BE-
HIND.

WE REFLECTED ON THE LIVES OF THE MEN
WHO WERE LOST,
WE QUESTIONED OUR MOTIVES, WE PON-
DERED THE COST.

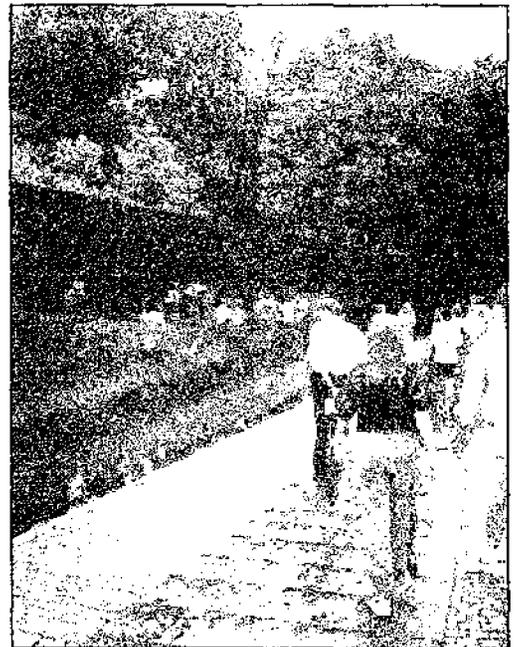
HE THANKED ME FOR COMING TO SHARE IN
HIS PAIN,
THEN BOWED HIS HEAD AND CRIED ONCE
AGAIN.

HE GAVE ME HIS NAME AND HIS NUMBER
TO CALL,
AND PROMISED TO SEE ME AGAIN AT THE
WALL.

WE ROSE TO LEAVE AS EVENING FELL.
I GAVE HIM A HUG, AND I COULD TELL.

THAT SOMEDAY IN THE FUTURE, HE'D
HAVE A FEELING,
THAT ONE OF OUR BROTHERS WAS IN NEED
OF HEALING.

© Richard L. Lemley, April 1986



Vietnam Security Police Association

Dear Fellow VSPA Members:

It's that time again. Time to renew your dues in the Association. Please take a moment to do so today. We appreciate your membership.

Benefits of membership include:

- Friendship and camaraderie, assistance in hooking up again with long-lost buddies, and a genuine sense of "belonging"
- Dues are \$10 a year which entitles you to: (dues may be paid for a maximum of two years in advance). (Supporting membership for your spouse is available for \$5 per year).
- Access to our national telephone directory and our list of hundreds of former SP's that served in Southeast Asia. (Available only to members).
- Subscription to your quarterly newsletter, "Guardmount" filled with news items, photos, tidbits and stories (which you are welcome to contribute to as a VSPA member) and other features with which you will be able to relate.
- Our own catalog of high-quality merchandise (no cheap Charlie stuff), including our Association Patch (QC), T-shirts, hats pins and others.
- As a member you are entitled to attend our annual reunion!!

DUES RENEWAL FORM

Please renew dues for (Name): _____

Enclosed is a check money order for \$10 _____ \$20 _____ Other \$ _____ for _____

years membership. Please list all address, telephone changes below:

Base of assignment: _____

Make checks payable to VSPA and mail to: Steve Ray 1626 Chandler Rd., Huntsville, AL 35801. If you have paid your dues please disregard this notice

WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN

NOTICE IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR DUES FOR 1997 THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE OF THE GUARDMOUNT PLEASE SEND YOUR DUES TO STEVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO PREVENT MISSING AN ISSUE. EDITOR

Guardmount
David Dobson
5315 Bevans Ave.
Spring Hill, Fl 34608

Guardmount

First Class



AMERICA IS #1
Thanks to our
Veterans



**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 35802