



Guardmount

Volume 2, Issue 3

January, 1997



Pleiku Tet 1968



I would like to give one eye witness account of an action that took place at Pleiku AB, Republic of South Vietnam during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Like Sgt. Steve Shelt, I served at Pleiku on the swing shift, "C" Flight, 633rd Security Police Squadron.

By 30 Jan 68, I had been in-country 6 1/2 months. Like Sgt. Shelt, I was transferred there from another location (Phan Rang, AB), after my first 3 1/2 months in Vietnam. Pleiku was short handed due to rotations and an unfortunate arms room accident. We arrived in the central highlands, 75 replacements, in early October at the tail end of the autumn monsoon season. After having spent time at Phan Rang, Pleiku appeared a wet, muddy and depressing mess. It was as if we had left the penthouse for the outhouse. Such a small area as the majority of it's perimeter covered, it seemed very likely that an assault from either north or south could cross the runway and aircraft parking areas before any sentry could sound an alarm, much less stop the sapper team(s). I can remember thinking, "You ain't never gone get out of this place alive." You could toss a rock from one perimeter to the other. Phan Rang had been new and huge, this supposed "New 'Leek" was postage stamp, and had once been over run, that is why it was called

new Pleiku. Hell, if that was new, I can imagine what "Old "Leek" must have been like.

The Tet Offensive kicked off, we were already in a state of high alert. We were in the two (2), flight configuration. Twelve hour on and twelve hours off. That was strange, we remained in the three (3) flight mode during *our Christmas and New Year cease fire* agreement, yet for their lunar new year, we were alert. We were even put on permanent posts. You had the same position night after night. I was posted near the GCA, (Ground Control Approach), shack in an old bunker on the south perimeter. There on the first night of the offensive, "Charlie" launched at least three to four salvos of 122 mm Katusha rockets on my position, I thought they were personally out to fulfill the prophecy I had conjured in my mind on arrival in the highlands. Each new salvo was a three rocket launch. Three nearly simultaneous explosions, then another, and another, and another. I was awash in fear, dirt, smoke and noise. All I could do was take it. I remember bobbing up and down trying to see if VC were attempting to slip through the wire. I knew there was an OP (Observation Post) 100 yards of to my right, but since the Vietnamese manned it, I didn't know if they were still there, most ARVIN had left for their holiday, no fire came from the OP, I held mine, I had no target(s). One of the rockets struck close enough to the fence line to set of the trip flares, I thought for sure "Charlie come", no target(s), nothing but dirt, smoke and

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The Prez Says



Annual Meeting SPVA

WOW! That's what I have to say about the San Antonio reunion. Steve Ray did a bang up job coordinating everything and everyone had a great time. I was especially impressed by the Security Police staff at Lackland and how they are professionals. I'm already saving my money for the 97 reunion in Pensacola, FL.

I am way behind in my work so I hope you all understand as there has been some sickness in my family.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy holiday and I hope you all have a great New Year.

We need to spend more time recruiting members and I hope to see our membership grow in 1997. If we all recruit just 1 new member we would be in great shape. Look through your old papers and see if you can come up with some old orders. They are worth their weight in Gold and Terry Morris really needs some more things to do.

There will be a Vietnam Vets Reunion in Melbourne, Florida in April. If any of you plan to attend let me know so we can get together.

John Langley

Mayaguez Memorial

There will be a Mayaguez Memorial ceremony to pay respects to those Security Police, from Naknon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, who lost their lives in the helicopter crash while attempting to free that ship. It will be conducted by members of the 56th SPS, Luke AFB, Arizona at that base. The only information that we have now is that the Mayaguez Memorial Retreat will be held on 16 May 1997 and a SP Combat Dining Out will be held on 17 May 1997. We hope to have more information on the activities and background in the next issue.

There are 349 names of former SP's on the list but not all have joined the Association.

Non-Profit Organization status - Steve is still looking into this. The assistance of a lawyer and payment of \$150.00 fee to IRS. This is still in the discussion stage. December 31 was set as the end of the Association's fiscal year.

Membership -

a. Life Membership will not be offered at this time.

b. Associate Membership: Criteria will be established by the Association officers and reported later in 1996.

c. Supporting Membership: A supporting Membership will be offered to the spouse or significant other of paid up members. Cost will be \$5.00 per year due when the member pays his annual dues.

d. Dues:

1. Will remain \$10.00 per year and will be due and payable on January 15 of each year.

2. A delinquent notice will be sent if not paid 30 days after due date. (Feb. 15)

3. Dues may be pre-paid for a period of two years.

4. Dues received after June 30 of each year will be \$10.00 plus \$1.00 a month for the remainder of the year which will serve to pay dues for the next calendar year. This applies to new members only. All renewals will pay the full amount for each year. Example: A new member joining in October 1997 will pay \$13.00 for 1997/98.

Future Reunion Site Selection -

October 23 - 26, 1997 - Pensacola

????? 1998 - Washington DC

????? 1999 - determined via a survey in the Guardmount in 1997

Association Officer Additions - The membership voted to add the positions of Association Chaplain and Historian.

Election - The membership voted to retain the current slate of officers for 1997.

President: John Langley

Vice-President: Mike Daoust

Secretary/Treasurer: Steve Ray

Membership: Terry Morris

Chaplain: Steve Janke

Historian: Vaughn Hull

In addition, the membership voted that the vice-president should assume the duties of President for the year following

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and the President would remain as Chairman of the Board for one additional year following his tenure as President.

Position Descriptions were given out and discussed. Member present voted to accept them as written.

John Lott proposed that the Association place plaques in the Security Police Academy (enlisted) and at the Air Force Academy (officer) for those SP's that score 100 percent in their different phases of training. John Lott and John Morris took action items to follow-up and report back to VSPA board. John thought naming the officer award the "Wright" award would be appropriate. It was pointed out that retired Col. Wright is not yet a member of VSPA. If he becomes a member then we may name the award in his honor.

Having VSPA members guest lecture at Camp Bullis was discussed.

John Lott has several prints he has done (themes are SP's). He will donate 50% to VSPA of all sales made through his merchandise orders.

At the dinner on Saturday the following awards were made:

Captain Mike Florio (who worked with me to arrange all the activities): received a plaque from the VSPA for rendering, "Outstanding Service to our Association."

Captain Ken Record (presently our only associate member) received the same plaque for his efforts in identifying our KIA's and those who have received valor medals.

John Langley (President VSPA) received a wall plaque engraved with the three men statue at the Vietnam Memorial for his efforts to establish and build the Association.

Terry Morris (Membership Chairman) received an unframed numbered print of the statue from the memorial for his recruiting efforts.

Steve Ray also received a copy of the same print for work done for the Association.

Steve Ray

Secretary/Treasurer VSPA

Added note: Many of those that attended the reunion wanted to know if they could send items for inclusion in the museum. The answer is yes, however, please advise all that wish to send items to do so through the SP training commander. All items should be submitted to:

Lt. Col. Michael Vendzules
Commander, 343rd Training Sq.
1350 Femoyer St.
Lackland AFB, TX 78126-5429

Also: On dues renewal. When you send your renewal please list the base, unit and years you were in Vietnam. This is currently missing in some cases on the rooster.



Tools of our Trade

The Stevens Pump (Savage), Model 77, 12-gauge shotgun was the least adequate weapon issued to Security Police in Vietnam. It was used by sentries assigned to the flight line or other high value resources. The weapon was designed for civilian use, not military, and jamming was a major problem. In the high humidity brass casing ammo corroded and paper ones swelled and rotted rapidly. Air Police were armed with Savages when VC assaulted the flight line at Tan Son Nhut in December 1966, three of the weapons jammed. The weapon was unreliable, awkward in loading and short ranged. They were replaced with the M-16A1.

Tet Offensive of 1968 made it apparent that the Security Police needed heavier weapons. Air base defense began to get the weapons needed to defend a base adequately. We got the M-67 90-mm recoilless rifle, M-29 81-mm mortar, M-72 66-mm light assault anti-tank weapon (LAAW) and the M-2 .50-caliber heavy-barrel machine-gun. The mortars were used primarily for illumination during rocket attacks to prevent penetration. The 50's were used for H & I fire. There is no record of the 90mm or M-72 being used after Tet 1968. (*Editor Note: I remember them being used in 1970 to discourage a Junk from coming too close to the beach at Cam Ranh Bay*)

These weapons gave Security Police the capability to defend against the VC or retake any position that had been over run. There was no major attack against an Air Base after the weapons came into the security inventory, this may be because we had the capability to protect ourselves and the VC knew it. I like to think that our good training and dedication had a lot to do with this.

The new weapons also meant other new vehicles and methods of air base defense. That is for the next issue.

Information in this article was obtained from:

*Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam
1961 - 1973*

Next issue more information on other weapons

Editors Corner

In an effort to improve our publication, and to keep the post office from complaining about our staple, we are trying a new format which I think is better and I hope that you like it.

I am still in need of material from you out there to keep this publication interesting and a part of each one of you. We have only heard from a few bases out there and I know others existed and there are stories from them, send them in.

Last month's pictures brought together two hootch mates. I received a letter from one of Ed Roberts' Hootch Mates who wanted to renew an old friendship. I forwarded the letter to Ed who was able to talk with him. I am still looking for more material and pictures of our times over there. If you have any pictures that you can loan me send them and I will return them after they have been scanned for use in a computer. If they do not want to send the pictures you can take them to a Kinko's or some place that will scan them on to a 3.5 HD disk and send me the disk. I prefer *.pcx format. Who knows, maybe some one will recognize you and want to re-establish contact.

Hope to be hearing from you soon.

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

Associate Membership

At the annual meeting in San Antonio it was voted by those in attendance to have the board decide the criteria for Associate Membership. In that vain, I recommend the following classes of people be eligible for Associate VSPA membership:

- A. Parents of Security Policemen KIA or those that died in RVN/Thailand from other caused.
- B. Spouses, children and grandchildren of SP's as described above.
- C. Persons who make a substantial service contribution for the betterment of the Association (as judged by the Board).

(Continued from page 1) Pleiku Tet 1968

the acrid smell of cordite. All though it seemed an eternity, it mercifully ended, I suppose the entire episode lasted 10 minutes, I was unhurt, I was scared, but I was still there!

Later that morning, although it was still during the hours of darkness, I heard the clanking sounds of tracked vehicles. This time I thought a ground assault was definitely coming. Even worse, it was coming from my right flank, my rear. Man, I could not believe it when I saw tanks passing behind me in single file. They were heading for the east end of the runway. I was greatly relieved that they were American, my M-16, M-60 and 40 mm grenades were no match for tanks. Those M-60 tanks on Pleiku represented the heavy fire power we were devoid of. They were indeed a comfort to me. By the time the sun arose, we were supported along the entire perimeter by augmentees from various squadrons of the 633rd Air Base Group, I don't know how well they could use them, but they were all armed with M-16 rifles, and the air base bristled with firepower.

That was Pleiku AB on the first morning of the 1968 Tet Offensive as I remember it almost 29 years ago. We did not suffer direct ground assault, we had no KIA's nor wounded as a result. We did not get the press, because things were really jumping in and around Siagon, Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut, Hue and up at Khe Sanh. If "Charlie" had real plans for us, he must've left them down town Pleiku, because when he attacked the city, he got his butt waxed. The armor and infantry broke his back in the "VILL"!

*Sherman H. Arnold, Jr.
Sergeant, 633rd SPS
Pleiku AB, '67 - '68*



The deed or service would be beyond the normal scope of someone providing assistance to the Association.

Please feel free to suggest others, when I receive your responses I will put them all together and send them out to be voted on.

*Steve Ray
Secretary/Treasurer*



Chaplain 's Corner



Firstly let me apologize for not being at the reunion in Texas through my thoughts were with all of you and thanks for the privilege of allowing me to be your Chaplain. I've enjoyed being Chaplain for the K-9 Association as well and look forward to serving you. I have to say that my first duty station was Vietnam and I admired all you guys as soon as I arrived and saw you working. I have always wanted to be able to express my feelings to you all, especially those of you that manned a tower or a bunker or a listening post. When Charlie tried to go around us if he could. I've always admired you guys and your doing your job kept us safe also. Thanks Guys.

I've learned to respect every veteran who went there or served off the coast, perhaps in a ship or those standing by in Thailand. Our war was different and of course brought different problems to deal with as you know. Let me say as your Chaplain that God Almighty saved us from that place for a reason and He wants to use that experience to make us better not bitter. He can use even bad things in our life for our good and His glory. I plan to write articles on PTSD and would also like to encourage you to write me for information to help your PTSD and also your prayer requests or just write

if you want or call.

Let me close my first article by quoting a Bible selection from 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 that I like to share at my church every chance I get or opportunity because it talks about us. "We brethren would not have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

This organization also gives us a chance to inform people around us of what it was like to be there and why it was so different. When we came home no one wanted to know and it was painful but now many want to know and there is a need to express it that helps us. May God and His richest Blessings be yours during the coming holiday season

Steve Janke
483rd SPS
Cam Ranh Bay, K-9, 70-71



Lots of ways to thank our vets

For many people, Veterans Day is kind of a "nothing" day. Not quite a holiday, because so many stores will be open in anticipation of the holiday shopping season. And not quite a "fun" day, since summer is faded memory and the chilly winds of autumn may keep many of us homebound, with "nothing to do."

Many will just dawdle over their morning coffee and try not to think about going back to work Tuesday.

But for those who would like to escape the doldrums that now seem to accompany the day intended to honor and recognize the sacrifices and contributions of American men and women who have worn our country's uniform, a few humble suggestions are offered.

We could reflect on the origins of Veterans Day, formerly known as "Armistice Day." It was on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918 when the fighting in World War I officially ended. It was called "The War to End All Wars." We could remind ourselves that we have to keep trying.

One way to remind ourselves of the need to end war, is to visit one of the Veterans Administration hospitals and other places to offer a kind word to one or more of the in-patient veterans, some of whom might otherwise spend a lonely day, bedridden or wheelchair bound.

Some are aged World War II or aging Korean War veterans. Others are Vietnam veterans who fought in a different kind of war where, according to "VFW" magazine, "Amputations or crippling wounds to lower extremities were 300 percent higher than in World War II and 70 percent higher than Korea."

Of course, visiting a VA hospital wouldn't be for everyone.

But a number of ceremonies and activities are planned for Veterans Day in which the whole family can take part and enjoy. (*List of ceremonies and parades in Boston Area*)

If you choose to brave the inevitable brisk November winds, you may be struck by the sight of many "new" Americans, hard-working immigrants who have come here to take jobs that nobody else seems to want, to stake their claim to the

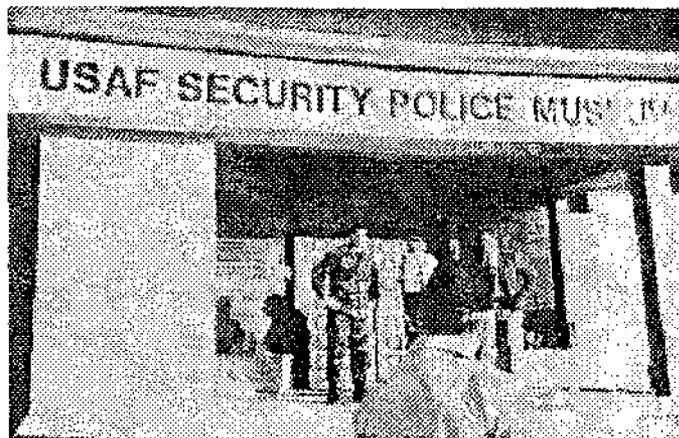
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AZR-Reunion 1996

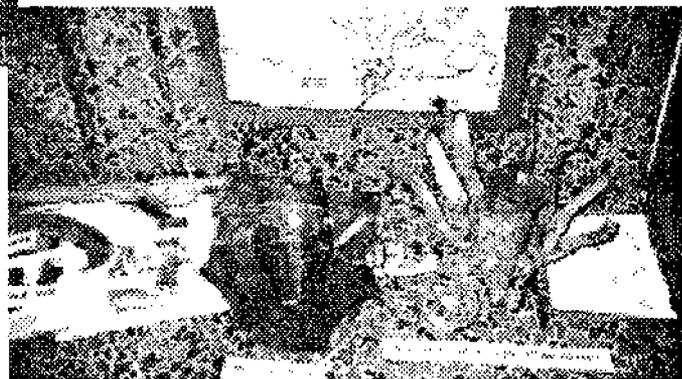
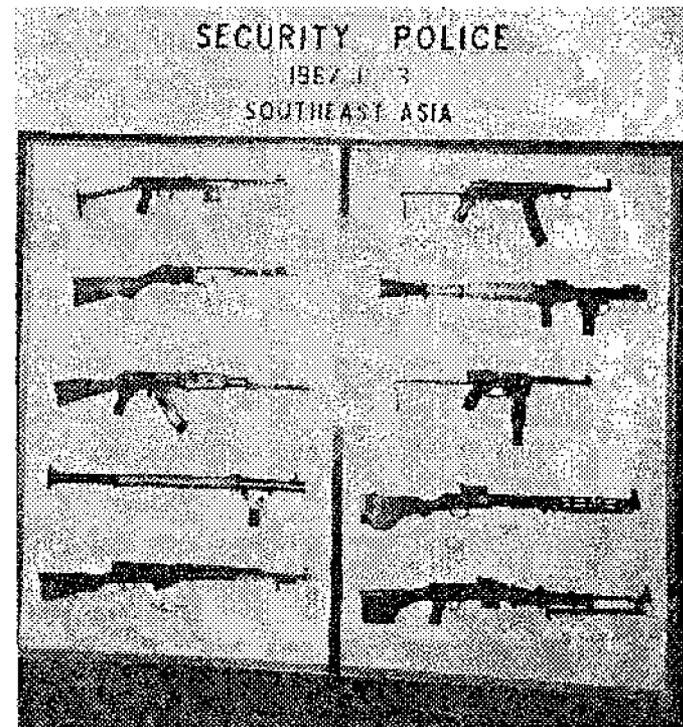
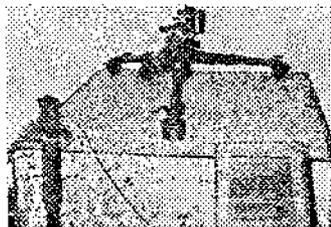
Lackland AFB/Camp Bullis

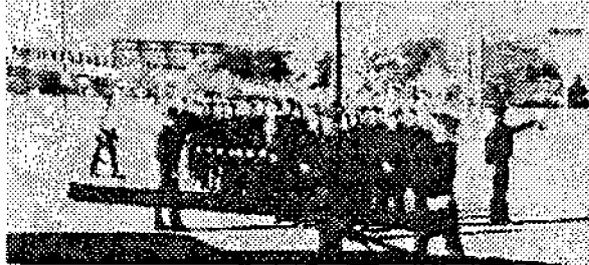


Opening formation



SP Museum





Brings back old memories



Camp Bullis



In our day.....

Been there, Done that

Reunion: After Action Report

When asked to say a few words about VSPA's 2nd Annual Reunion in San Antonio, I immediately wondered how many adjectives I could use to describe it. Fantastic, superb, exciting, eventful, and the list would be endless. The weather was great, sunny and warm everyday, but that was no match for the warmth of renewing old friendships and the making of new ones.

Before I even attempt to recall all the events of the reunion, there are two members that I think should be recognized and applauded until they can be better paid. First is our VSPA President, John "Sparky" Langley. If it weren't for John's continuous efforts, this association would not have existed and the recognition that the Security Police deserve for service in Southeast Asia would have never been realized. Secondly, thank you to Steve Ray for your tireless efforts in keeping book on our funds and for acting as liaison between the officers and NCO's at Lackland and the Holiday Inn staff to make our reunion one that will not be forgotten.

Friday morning on November 8th, the members and some of the wives car pooled to Lackland where we were greeted by the officers and NCO's of the Security Police Academy. They really went out of their ways to give us the VIP treatment, after a briefing by the squadron commander, we were sent off in groups for guided tours through the academy. Boy how the years have changed the training the SP's receive now. Even acting out domestic abuse cases to train the Sp's how to resolve such situations. Everything was state of the art. Night vision equipment, heat seeking scanners in the patrol vehicles and my personal favorite was the computerized bad guys on screen that we could shoot at with 9MM or M-16. And it didn't even cost a quarter.... After the academy tour it was outside for a heavy weapons and vehicle demos.

At noon, we were bused out to Camp Bullis with a stop at "Rudy's" Texas BBQ. The sign above the door said "Worst Bar-B-Q in Texas", but that was a lie, and we were starved by then. At Camp Bullis, we were again briefed and given demonstrations of the equipment and the combat field training received by the recruits. A far cry from the seven weeks of AP School that I graduated from. Friday evening it was back to the hospitality room for beverages, snacks and camaraderie.

Saturday morning, Sgt. John Brady, retired, opened the USAF Security Police Museum for our group. It was

full of pictures and archives and really laid out nicely. It was worth seeing and made the trip worthwhile in itself. It does however make you face reality with your age when you realize that you are part of a museum exhibit! After the museum visit we had free time to explore San Antonio or go back to hospitality room. At seven that night we got to shake hands and greet Sgt. Roy Benavidez, the last veteran to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. His speech was very patriotic, tearful and humorous and truly words to live by. His basic theme was that the Red, White and Blue colors of the United States flag were the only colors that mattered. A remarkable man and an inspiration to all. After the speech, there were photo op's and autograph book signings.

On Sunday we had a sit down breakfast and the business meeting. Many things were discussed but with many more association details left to resolve. We need everyone's input here. Let us know your feelings on the hows, wheres and whys of what you would like to see happen. It's your association. Sunday afternoon and evening it was San Antonio "look out". Thirty years ago the river was a thing to stay clear of. Now it's a place of beauty and entertainment. Hard Rock Cafe, Planet Hollywood, we had some fine cuisine at Dick's Last Resort, where the food was served in pails and the service was worse. Be sure and ask John "Sparky" Langley how he got his nickname when you see him!

On Veteran's Day, the remaining VSPA members and the Vietnam Dog Handler Association went to Ft Sam Houston for a wreath laying memorial. A very fitting tribute to our fallen veterans and a perfect conclusion to a perfect reunion. I've been to D.C., Atlanta, Kokomo, Indianapolis, New Glarus, WI, Milwaukee and now San Antonio for reunions and veterans gatherings and they just keep getting better and more enjoyable. Next stop for the VSPA is Pensacola, FL in October 97. Our brother, Mickey Reade is arranging a grand reunion with the highlight being a trip to "The Wall South". It promises to be a very relaxed time and quality time for the Sps and their families. My advice, start saving your change now and plan on joining your comrades. I've yet to hear a complaint but the laughter never stopped. I know I'll be going if all is well.

I'll leave you with the words of the SP Sgt at Lackland who said to me when I thanked him for his hospitality. He replied, "We take care of our own sir." We did thirty years ago and we do today. And then he rendered a sharp salute.

Terry Morris

Phan Rang 4/66-67

Mail Call

My name is Richard K. Stephens, I am a Police Officer with the Washington State University PD. We are located in Pullman, Washington, home of the WSU Cougars.

For the last 1 - 2 years I have been attempting to locate some of my old buddies I served with in Vietnam. I served with the 37th Security Police Squadron at Phu Cat AB, RVN. I was there from 3/67 to 3/68. I have my name and information on the Internet. I have been able to locate a few other Vets from the net, and have been put in touch with your association. I hope that I can contact my old buddies who may have also joined the association.

Richard K. Stephens
POB 33/515 E Street
Albion, Washington 99021-033
(509) 332-4322
E-Mail stepherk@wsu.edu

(Continued from page 5) Veterans Day

American dream for themselves and their children. They will be easy to spot because they will be waving their little American flags and cheering the loudest as the parade passes down the street. Just as we native-born Americans used to do in years past.

(Visit a homeless shelter.)

Come spend some time with 350 men and women veterans who live at the shelter - people who are asking only for a "hand up" and not a handout as they receive counseling, support services and job training to help themselves get back into society. On top of all that, a simple handshake could do much to help them on their way back from a hell that, thankfully, most of us will never know. A warm smile can do as much for them as a warm bed or a hot meal.

If none of these things fit into your schedule, you could simply call or call upon a veteran that you know, and say, "Thank you." You could say (like I've seen on some bumper stickers about Vietnam), "I wasn't there, but I care."

From "The Boston Herald, 11/11/96
by - Jim Murry, Cam Ranh Bay, 65/66

A member of our association who just returned from a trip to Vietnam, hope to hear more from him later.



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 VSPA

