



Guardmount

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October, 1999



Walking in the Sand

I have read many articles about Vietnam over the years. Some were written by fellow airmen just trying to tell their story and some were written by professional writers. I guess it must be my turn to write about my first time in Vietnam.

I was stationed at Sheppard AFB, TX (64-65) when TSGT. James Eason (Flight Chief) came into the LE Desk and told me I had PCS orders to Vietnam. I can not remember what I said, but would guess it was, "Where in Vietnam?" Needless to say I found out from personnel where it was, but not what I would be doing over there.

The funny thing about this assignment was in October 65 we had an IG inspection and the exercise they gave us was to send the squad with HQ element to Hamilton AFB for training. The one 2nd Lt., three SSGT. 's and 15 airmen were sent through the whole system to see if we could meet the requirements for this TDY. This included a medical checkup by a female doctor with gloves on both hands as she gave the order to bend over and smile (that is another story).

Now back to my first trip to Vietnam. After having a nice New Year's time in New York City with family and friends, I was off to Hamilton AFB, CA to spend two days learning about the M-

16 and some other things about Vietnam. It rained both days so our training was cut short in some areas. I then left Travis AFB, CA on 11 Jan 66 for Vietnam.

As we came in for landing at Tan Son Nhut AB, the sun was just rising. The pilot came over the speaker and told everyone that we would be making a drop and straight in approach to the base. He said, this was because the VC would shoot at the planes on a long approach. A few minutes later we dropped and landed without any bullet holes in the plane that we could see.

I was sent to billeting to get a bunk while they tried to think of where to send me because the 366th Air Police Sq. at Phan Rang, AB was not in existence yet. After a few days and nights at Tan Son Nhut, AB, I was sent to the 12th Air Police Sq., at Cam Ranh Bay AB, along with 56 other AP's. This was the start of our "Walk In The Sand" time.

I arrived at Cam Ranh Bay with the sun shining as bright as it could. It was hot and the wind was blowing the sand all over the place. I was taken to the squadron tent and along with two other AP's met Major Herron, the commander. He gave us the General Patton speech about what we were doing in Vietnam and what he expected of us. Then he sent us to a tent area at the far end so we could get moved into our new quarters. The other AP's and I had to work together to put the tent up and secure it

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One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex was staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The plaque was covered with names, and small American flags were mounted on either side of it.

The seven-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the boy, and said quietly, "Good Morning Alex"

"Good morning pastor," replied the young man, still focused on the plaque. "Pastor McGhee, what is this?" Alex asked.

"Well, son, it's a memorial to all young men and women who died in the service."

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Alex's voice was barely audible when he asked, "Which service, the 9:00 or 11:00?" (from *The Voice of Retired Enlisted association* - November 1999)

Business Meeting Minutes of 9 October 1999

President Kevin Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 0912 hours.

Don Poss gave the invocation.

Special Election: A special election for Vice-President was held due to the death of Ted Janiak (President). Kevin Fitzgerald (Vice-President) moved to the office of President to complete Ted's term of office. Mike Daoust (Past President and Trustee) presided over the election. There were two nominations offered: Larry Breazeale and Stephen Gattis. Mike Daoust made three calls for further nominations. There being none, Kevin Fitzgerald made a motion to close the nomination. Motion carried. Both candidates accepted the nomination. The nominee's retired from the room and the membership voted in the majority to elect Stephen Gattis to the office of Vice-President with his term to expire in October 2000.

The treasurer's report was given by Steve Ray, which covered the period 31 October 1998 to 31 September 1999. The balance was \$3205.97 for the period. A motion to accept the report was made by Terry Austin with a second from several members.

A motion to re-open the discussion on Life Memberships was made by Steve Gattis with a second by several. A discussion followed. An amended motion was made by Larry Breazeale to defer any discussion on Life Memberships until such time as the VSPA membership equals or exceeds 1000 members. Second by Tony Morris. Motion passed.

Jim Kelter requested a discussion on Association Dues - A motion was made by Joe Bouback to increase VSPA dues (beginning 1 January 2000) to \$15.00. Seconded by several members. Motion passed. Members were reminded that their family members are eligible for Associate Membership for \$5.00 per year.

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President's Corner



Well, our reunion of October 1999 is now history - but what great history To say the least. It was a wonderful experience to see so many familiar faces from past reunions - and so many new ones too. In my opinion, the entire event went smoothly thanks to the heroic efforts of Steve Gattis, our new Vice President. Steve handled everything with what appears to be real ease - even our transportation crisis at Nellis' front gate. For those who could not attend our bus company was a "No Show" and Steve got us rescued in good time. Thanks too, to the Security Forces at Nellis who gave us so many informational demonstrations, including the field exercise. Our appreciation goes to Col. Wheeler who saw that things went well for us - including the troops for the Honor Guard.

Now our attention goes to the next year, in San Antonio and Lackland AFB, and we hope a great turn out. We have raised our membership dues to \$15.00 and are committed to try and bring the membership up by members getting the word out.

Winter and the Holidays are upon us and I extend my own personal warmest wishes for a wonderful Holiday Season with the hope that Y2K will be good for each VSPA member and our Association in general.

Until next time.....

*Kevin Fitzgerald, President
Tan Son Nhut 66 - 67*

Agent Orange Claims

Federal District Court Rules Veterans Entitled to Retroactive Agent Orange Benefits

On February 11, 1999, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California in a class action order in the case of *Nehmer vs. U.S. Veterans Administration* invalidated the VA policy that denied retroactive Agent Orange benefits to those veterans and surviving family members of deceased veterans, who failed to state on their claim that their disabilities resulted from exposure to Agent Orange. This Court's order is extremely important to Vietnam veterans and their survivors. It is now likely that the VA will be required to pay many Vietnam veterans and surviving family members several years of retroactive VA compensation benefits or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

The VA again has been embarrassed by a federal court finding that it engaged in the unlawful rejection of valid claims of Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. The National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) requests that advocates make every effort to identify claimants potentially entitled to these retroactive benefits. It is suggested that the NVLSP be contacted when such a case is identified. The NVLSP Agent Orange Resource Center has a telephone hotline that advocates and claimants can call for advice about Agent Orange claims. That number is 202-797-8364. Advocates or claimants can e-mail the Agent Orange Resource Center at aorc@nvlsp.org.

Da Nang AP Honored

The 366th Security Forces Squadron dedicated the park next to their squadron headquarters Thursday, March 25th, to fallen Vietnam veteran, Airman 2nd Class Cary L. Fuller.

Fuller was an Air Police sentry dog handler with the 366th Wing at Da Nang Air Base, Vietnam, from December 31, 1966 to February 27, 1967. Fuller just completed a shift protecting the warriors and combat aircraft of the Wing when at

3:10 a.m., February 27, the base came under attack by Viet Cong forces. Fuller was killed when a rocket exploded right outside his hooch.

"We are proud to dedicate this park in the name of a Gunfighter and Air Policeman who paid the ultimate price for his beliefs, his comrades in arms and our great nation," said Maj. Mike Trapp, 366th Security Forces Squadron commander. (See picture on page 5.)

Taken from The Gunfighter, base paper for the 366th Wing, Mountain Home, Idaho. Issue dated March 19, 1999

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so the wind did not blow it over again. Needless to say the first day at Cam Ranh Bay AB was very different from anything we had ever done before, except maybe as a Boy Scout.

During the course of the next few days we learned to fire many different types of weapons at the beach. Also learned to work as a team when making sweeps of the sand dunes. Then we got the grand tour of Cam Ranh Bay area before we were sent to work on flights. I was assigned to the night flight and worked the flight line for sometime. During this we had to pull reserve SAT duties after getting off work. One Sunday morning, five other AP's and I went to the RSAT building (no more tents) and settled in for the 8 hour of standby duty. If you can remember the only time the chow hall had really good food was at the Sunday lunch meal. Well my team and I went to get the steaks that they were cooking this day. We had just got our meals and had taken one bite when, you guessed it, CSC called and wanted us to back up the PSAT on a papasan in a boat that was stealing wood for the trash dump area by the bay.

We responded and set up by a bunker with a .50 cal. overlooking the trash dump. The PSAT went to check the dump out, but the papasan had left already with the wood. At this time a voice came over the radio and told CSC to recall everyone to CSC for a deployment. My team and I looked at each other and knew we would not get to eat the steaks today. The rest of the squadron except those on post went over and surrounded a town and sweep through it for the missing wood that was taken, that also is another story.

We have all worked with the other branches of the armed forces but on one real nice sunny hot day the Navy played a game card that was not very funny. As best as I can remember it started with a fly over of Cam Ranh Bay AB. Only problem was the two F-4's came very low and did not tell anyone they were doing this. They were picked up on radar

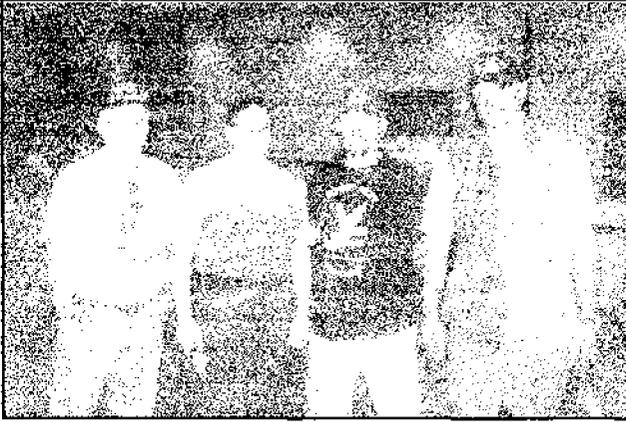
and something was mentioned about possible MIGs coming in. About that time they flew over us and as the base siren was sounding everyone was hitting the ground, sand or what ever. The Wing Commander dispatched the standby F-4's to give chase and they did almost the same thing to the flattop in the gulf after following the two Navy F-4's back to it. I think they called this incident "Pucker up or Games people will play."

Then one day we were told the ROK's, White Horse Division, were leaving and we would have to take over their positions on the bay side and north end of the peninsula. We were also going to have to cover these areas without any new AP's for a while. You remember this part, "Do more with less." Well we did it and after getting some scares from the local tiger that walked around we felt real good. Sometimes we would sit in our positions at night and watch a light or two being flashed in the mountains across the bay. Then we would see a light answer that light from the tower at the Catholic Monastery in My Ca village. This information was passed on to CSC so someone could check it out.

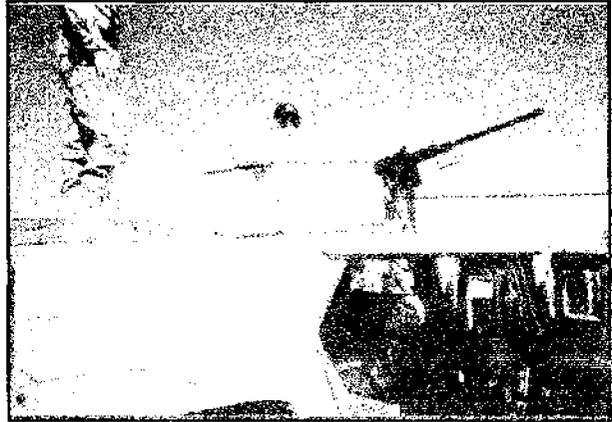
I can also remember the day that a funny incident happened, we were on a M-35, 2 1/2 ton, going to post when we stopped at one of the posts near My Ca village. While the guys were unloading all the ammo and equipment from the back of the truck something happened. To set this up right you must remember that we carried our grenades in empty sandbags to make it easier to carry. Well one of the guys was smoking and some ashes fell on the bag under him, someone else saw the smoke coming from the sandbags, but did not yell "smoke," but did yell "grenades." Needless to say everyone in the back of the truck hit the ground running. One of the guys even walked across the water on this incident to get away from the truck. Now this was funny, but the three guys in the cab of the truck did not hear any of this. The only thing they saw was everyone running away from the truck. The NCO driving the truck kept asking what was going on and finally someone thought about what had happened and went back and poured water on the

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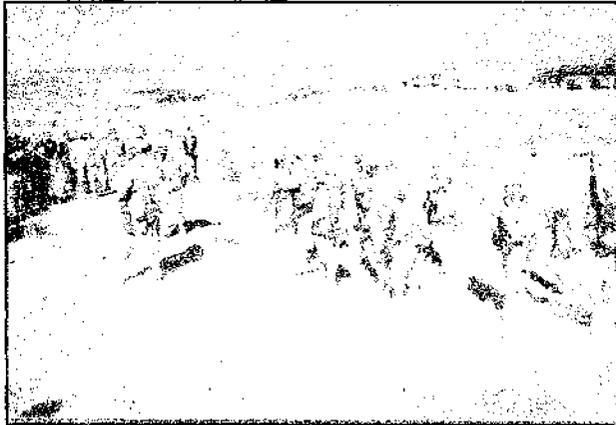
VSPA Reunion at Las Vegas



Terry Morris, Don Poss, Pat Dunne and Larry Breazeale at the reunion

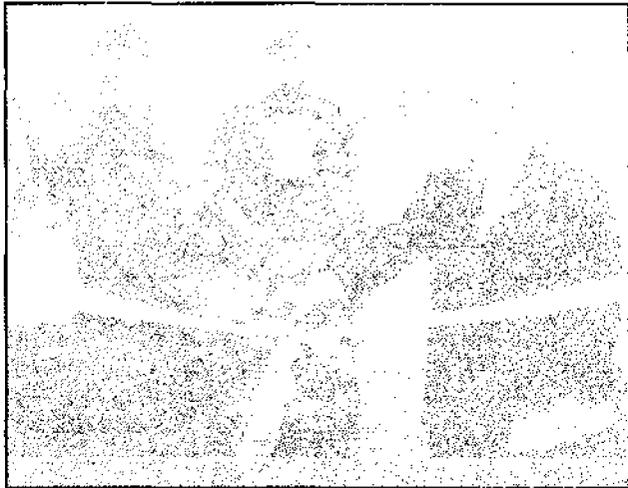


HO! HO! HO! John Wetzel checking out the 50



The old Security Police watch the new Security Forces demonstrate their tactics. Different colored camies!

Park Dedication

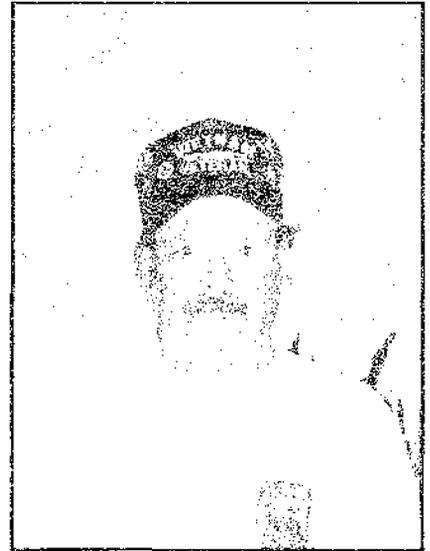


Dedication of the Gary L. Fuller Park - Lew Barnett of VSPA and representatives of the 366th SFS take part in the ceremony on March 25, 1999 at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

VSPA Members at the VVA Convention



On the right is John Petriello was an augmentee at Cam Ranh and rode with me on night, we meet up again 29 years later at the VVA convention in California. On the left is the editor.



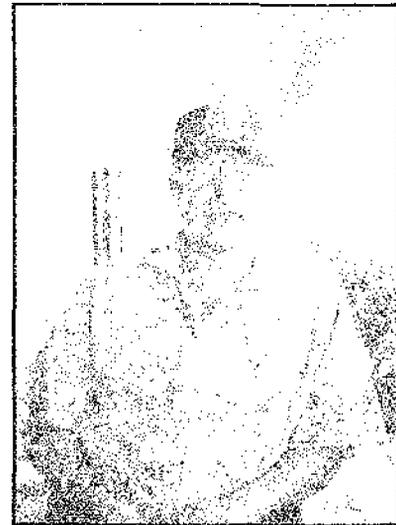
David Cauthron was a dog handler in Vietnam



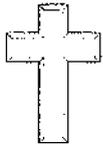
Mike Kennedy who wrote the piece on "Bien Hoa after Tet 1968" in last issue of Guardmount.



Steve Gattis, our new Vice Pres. Although not a delegate he lived in the area and visited.



Another of our members was in the hospitality room. food was good and I lost his name.



Chaplain 's Corner



Risk Being Free

To laugh is risk appearing the fool.
 To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
 To reach out to another is to risk involvement.
 To expose feeling is to risk exposing your true self.
 To place your ideas, your dreams before the crowd is to risk their loss.
 To love is to risk not being loved in return.
 To live is to risk dying.
 To hope is to risk despair.
 To try is to risk failure.
 But, the risk must be taken,
 Because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.
 The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, and is nothing.
 He may avoid feelings and sorrow, but he simply cannot learn, feel, change,
 grow, love, live.
 Chained by his certitudes, he is a slave, he has forfeited freedom.
ONLY A PERSON WHO RISKS --IS FREE.

By *Chaplain Steve*

(portions taken by Pointman Ministries by permission)

Dismount

It is always with heavy heart that we have a Dismount in *Guardmount* because it means that we have lost another brother at arms. Jose Sandoval passed on to his peace on February 27, 1999. Keep his family in your prayers.

His daughter is looking for an old friend of his, Robert DeCeaser, anyone who knows him please let us know.

smoke coming from the sandbag. We all had a good laugh before going on to post that day.

I can say that during that tour at Cam Ranh Bay AB, we were involved in many incidents. We pulled convoy duty to Nha Trang, assisted in the riot near South Beach, and checked out two unknown people that my rider and I spotted one evening by the supply area. Well we only saw their legs moving around by some crates, we were not sure what we had so we called it in and requested backup. We then deployed and came in from the sides because that gave us the most cover. Well you may have guessed it, we came upon a pilot and a female sitting in the sand with about six bottles of San Miguel beer, empty of course, in the sand. They both had a hard time telling us what they were doing in and around the supply area at that time of the evening. We did what we thought was the right thing and let them go with a warning, but we had a good laugh about it.

I completed my tour working in the armory and in December 1966 I departed Cam Ranh Bay AB. I would say this was my "Walk In The Sand." I can also say that I did not see nor hear a shot being fired at me. That is not to say that the VC did not have the chance to do it. Being a young airman I was not sure what I had accomplished, but I did feel that I had done the job I was sent to Vietnam to do to the best of my ability and now I was going home on the "Freedom Bird from Tan Son Nhut AB. Little did I know that I would be back in Vietnam in six months and involved in TET 68 offensive, but that is another story.

William (Pete) Piazza

12th APS, Cam Ranh Bay, 1966

3rd SPS, Bien Hoa, 7/67-7/68

12th SPS, Phu Cat, 6/70-6/71

(Editors Note: This is the first of three tours Pete served in Vietnam, accounts of the other two will appear in future issues of Guardmount.)

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Reunion 2000 will be held in San Antonio, Texas as voted on at the 1998 reunion. A motion was made (Owen Lamb) to set the dates of the 2000 reunion as follows: 5-8 October 2000. Frank Ybarbo seconded the motion. It was requested that the President appoint a committee to lead the effort to organize the 2000 reunion. Steve Ray, John Langley and Don Graham were appointed. Steve Gattis made a motion to use "The Reunion Brat" to assist the VSPA in organizing the 2000 and Carlson Wagonlit Travel (owned by a VSPA member) to be used for airfare/travel arrangements. The motion was seconded by several. Motion passed.

Historian Report - Steve Ray reported the following:

1. VSPA members conducted a JJ Chestnut memorial service in Arlington, VA.

2. VSPA sponsored a ceremony at Lackland AFB, TX in February 1999 to honor Alonzo J. Coggins, Sgt., USAF (Ret). Sgt. Coggins receive the Silver Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal during the ceremony.

3. Research historian, Ken Record, found the names of 77 Air Force personnel (25 AP/SP) that died in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. These names were never included on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC. A letter has been submitted to the Air Force. The Air Force has rejected the names for inclusion. Additional information will be submitted to the Air Force.

4. Ken Record identified one SP KIA, Horace Holbrook, that had received the Bronze Star Medal with "V" for days before he was a KIA. The only living next of kin had not been informed of this award. Ken Record and Steve Ray worked with Denton Lankford, Public Affairs 820th Security Police Group, Lackland AFB, Texas to obtain the awards. Denton Lankford obtained the Medals from the Air Force and organized a presentation at Maxwell AFB, Alabama with B. Gen. Richard Coleman. Due to health reasons of the next of kin, sister, the presentation could not be done. The Medals were mailed to Ken Record, who is to set up a local presentation ceremony in Jacksonville, Alabama.

5. On March 25, 1999, the 366th Security Forces Squadron, Mt. Home AFB, ID, dedicated the Gary L. Fuller Memorial Park. VSPA member Lewis Barnett attended the dedication as the official VSPA representative. Lew had to drive a long distance to attend and his efforts on behalf of the Association is appreciated.

6. The Association continues to sponsor the Sgt. Louis Fischer Award, the highest award given at the Security Forces Academy at Lackland AFB, TX.

7. The Association has raised over \$1500.00 for the Security Police Museum at Lackland AFB through the sale of tee shirts. The money will be presented in the near future.

8. A letter was written to the Air Force Office of History, Dr. Richard Hallion, requesting his office conduct further research into the attack on Air Bases in Vietnam and Thailand. The Association has identified eight such cases that do not appear in the *Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam Book*. (AUTHOR Roger P. Fox, who is a VSPA members).

A motion was made by Steve Ray and seconded by Larry Breazeale to have the VSPA Vice-President serve as the Public Relations Chairman of the Association. Motion passed.

Terry Morris, Membership Chairman, presented a report on membership.

John Langley wants to turn over the merchandise sales to the Association. This will be done when the Association has enough funds to purchase the stock of merchandise. Mike Daoust will lead the Association efforts.

Steve Ray reported that a \$250.00 donation was to be made to the guest speaker at 2000 hours on 10 October 1999. The speaker represented the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association and the money is to be used for their scholarship fund. Donation approved by the membership.

It was reported that if there are a minimum order of 20 rings with the QC logo could be made. A head count was taken with 13 members expressing an interest. Please notify Steve Gattis if you have an interest in purchasing the QC ring. The rings range in price from \$127.00 to \$400.00 depending on the material used.

A motion was made to adjourn. Motion Passed. President Kevin Fitzgerald adjourned the meeting.

Steven F. Ray
Secretary/Treasurer

Mail Call

Information contact Ron at 660-678-3501 or co-branam@aol.com

Cobra flight will have a reunion June 1 - 4, 2000 in Chilhowee, MO. This will include members of 37th SPS from 67 - 68 and they are inviting all SP/AP's and K-9 handlers from those years to join them. Plans include BBQ Hog Roast, canoe trip and a possible tour of the Security Forces at nearby Whiteman AFB (plans not final at present). Arrangements for those not wanting to camp on the farm is Days Inn in nearby Clinton, MO, reunion discount \$35.00 per night plus tax. For more infor-

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 | \$ 4.00 |
| 5. QC patch, Actual size. Quality Reproduction. American Made | \$ 5.00 |
| 6. 7th Air Force Coin | \$ 6.00 |
| 7. Black Baseball Style Cap with any of the above Patches on it | \$12.00 |
| 8. Air Force Flag 3' X 5', Nylon | \$15.00 |
| 9. Hanes Beefy T-shirt with QC patch silk-screen on it...M,L,XL,XXL. | \$14.00 |
| 10. Association Bumper Stickers | \$ 1.50 |
| 11. 7th Air Force - Patch | \$ 4.00 |
| 12. 7th Air Force - SP Lapel Pin - Pewter | \$ 6.00 |
| 13. Mini-Security Police Badges, 1 3/4" high, Official Issue | \$ 16.00 |
| 14. 7th Air Force (Hanes) T-shirt, Full color design L,XL,XXL | \$ 14.00 |

Please add 10% to your order for shipping and handling, minimum of \$3.00. Please make checks for merchandise payable to John Langley. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Send checks to John Lanbley, 150 Aurora Road, Venice, FL 34293

