

Guardmount

January 2000

Volume 5, Issue 3

A HARD DAYS NIGHT

This story starts in February 1967, when I was assigned to the 70th Combat Defense Squadron, Clinton-Sherman AFB, which was in the small town of Burns Flat, Oklahoma. I had left Vietnam in December 1966 and was assigned to Clinton-Sherman. It was alright, but I wanted Sheppard or some other base in Texas.

Well to say the least the Commander signed my request for PCS overseas (Vietnam), but I was told I would not be going anywhere for sometime by everyone. Well I received my TDY orders to the Air Police Combat Preparedness Course at Lackland AFB, TX in April 1967 for five days of AZR (Shackleford special) training.

In May 1967, I then departed Clinton-Sherman AFB, OK for the 3rd Security Police Squadron at Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam. When I arrived in Vietnam in July 1967 at Bien Hoa, AB the weather was very hot and the uniform I was wearing got very wet fast walking from the plane to the MAC Terminal. Then an NCO from the orderly room came over and picked me and several other SP's up and walked us to the squadron area on the east end of the MAC flight line area.

Short history about Bien Hoa AB, it was the busiest airport in the world during this time with all the flights coming and going. The base also had the 145th Aviation Battalion (choppers), 23rd VNAF Fighter Wing, Army Hawk site, Ranch Hand Wing, III Corps Operation Center, ARVN Ranger Battalion and just northeast of the base was the 101st Airborne base camp, just to name a few.

So in July 1967, I started my tour of duty at Bien Hoa, AB. I was assigned to "C" Flight Security (midnight shift)

and worked mainly SAT teams on the west and north sides of the base, patrolled the perimeter, bomb dump and MAC/Ranch Hand flight line areas of the base. Each SAT team had three SP's and a QC (Vietnamese interpreter) assigned to it.

Now the Commander, Lt. Col. Kent Miller, and OPS Officer, Capt. Maiscy, were working on making the 3rd SPS prepared for any type of attack against the base by VC/NVA forces. They had each shift conduct training on AST team deployments, QRF blocking forces, how to use clear and sweep methods for both on and off base areas, and how to go out into the field aboard choppers to check out the movements of the enemy before they attacked us just like the Army did only better.

Now the base had a firing range that was between the USAF bomb dump and the Army Hawk site, to protect Bien Hoa, AB from MIG attack. This range was mainly used to show us how to fire our weapons as a team almost every night. Everyone got their chance to fire and deploy as a team. Then one day I got picked to work with the field testing of an infrared radar system being tested for use on an M-151 jeep to spot people at night in hot rainy weather. Then one night Capt. Strones, Flight Commander for our flight asked me if I would like to run the flight resupply teams. I accepted the task and became an ammo, food and coffee runner.

Now being the NCOIC of the resupply teams was fun. That is if you liked working early and getting off late each day. We worked about 10 to 12 hours a day to get the vehicles and ammo ready for our flight coming on and getting off the next morning. In between we ran from one end of the base to the other and sometimes off the base too.

Now the 3rd SPS guys had worked very hard to defend the air base and the command level folks felt that we needed to relax and feel our oats. So on 25 Jan 1968, "C" Flight Security held a party at the club on base. We had a band from the Philippines and a red headed Italian-Australian female stripper

(Continued on page 4)

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Treasurer Nomination

Denis Cook will be nominated for the office of Secretary/Treasurer for the term 2000/2002. Denis has 28 years of banking experience and will serve VSPA well. Because of the long lead time in transferring bank accounts, files and assets I request you accept this as notice of nomination. However, should you wish to be considered for this position, please notify Steve Ray ASAP. Thank you.

Steve Ray
Sec/Tres



President's Corner



JANUARY 2000 - we made it. Well it's a beginning. If you are like me at all - you did some reflection over the past years that made history as we saw it. News Reporters, at least here in Music City, seemed to avoid Vietnam, except for a passing word - however; 15 years is a good percentage of time too *only get the briefest mention*. In my opinion it defined our generation as much as WW II and Korea defined time for others. My mind also drifted back to flight lines, B-52's, parties - leave, loves won and lost, Vietnam - home - and yes, living and adjusting to a post Vietnam experience. I guess I was reluctant to speak about being an Airman or being Air Force in a Combat Zone. I did not readily join any Vet organization. I'm not sure when it happened - but all that changed. By the time VSPA was born I was ready to join and be counted. Our contributions and efforts in Asia not only made USAF's total effort successful - but we collectively have helped shape the future of the Security System and Security Forces the Air Force has today. *We truly are the few and the proud - we won the Cold War - no base was put out of service because we did do our job!* I've never been a part of anything in my life that I am prouder of than VSPA!

Which reminds me to remind you and me to pay our \$15.00 dues this month! At the end of January VSPA will make a contribution to the Media Center at the Security Police Museum at Lackland.

In closing - it is a pleasure to know you my friends - you are the most committed people I know and showed your courage in the face of an enemy and it's an honor to be a part of VSPA - **you are the Best!** The best to you this New Year and Millennium.

Until the next time . . .
Kevin Fitzgerald, President
Tan Son Nhut 66 - 67



Chaplain 's Corner



PTSD and The Holidays

Christmas should be a time of celebration and forming good memories. To many it's a time of getting together with family, remembering past holidays, and acknowledging God's goodness to us. For some veterans the holidays may be a painful and difficult time. It may be hard for them to "act" like everyone else. Their family may want to think of new ways to celebrate or start new family traditions. Some vets won't participate in lighting up the tree or putting up the lights on the family house. They remember times that it was a threat to life to be caught out in the lights, out in the open. Since they feel a need to protect their family from danger, they just can't enjoy getting into this type of activity either knowingly or unknowingly. Forming new family traditions might be a good way to accomplish the same mission. Some suggestions are: visit a VA hospital together and give out homemade Christmas cards or candy, or visit a homeless shelter and help serve food. Some war vets do not feel comfortable in a crowd so why plan going out to a public activity if it brings discontentment and perhaps anger. Perhaps limiting visitors to the house, and instead have a small gathering is an alternative. Some vets do not enjoy having unexpected company drop in. You are limited in ideas only by your imagination. However you choose to observe the holidays, you are forming memories. May God be with all of you and your families at this special time and throughout the New Year. Proverbs 3:5,6. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowlege Him and He shall direct thy path.

*Sincerely Yours,
Steve Janke, Chaplain VSPA*



The Heavyweight Of Nam

I just finished reading the July Guardmount and really enjoyed the story by Mike Kennedy. Like most of us in Vietnam, we did not perform heroic actions during our tour of duty. We simply received our orders to go, put our families through hell, and went patriotically to fight the enemy. The following is a poem I wrote was for all the Mike Kennedys and myself.

The Heavyweight of Nam

We were once young and fit,
Eagerly paused in the ring of grit.
At the peak of our performance,
To battle our enemy's endurance.

During all our endless rounds of will,
Reason staggered confused on the hill.
Both hands and minds flaring raw,
We kept on justifying what we saw.

Trying to find a way out of this jungle;
Standing proud in our bloody struggle.
Until the day, our ref called it a draw,
We still felt like a heavyweight' all.

The fighter's prize was to be welcomed home,
But the jabbing caused us to constantly roam.
Gaining strength from our Vet brother's palm,
We now can lift this heavy weight of Nam.

*By Douglas Gorski
483rd Security Police Squadron
Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam 1969/70*

(Continued from page 1)

come up from Saigon for the musical and show for everyone to relax and have fun for all the hard work we had done. Again Capt. Strones volunteered me to watch over the female stripper to ensure no one got too close to her before, during and after her show, hard duty if you can get it. Needless to say it was one hell of a party and the 3rd SPS again showed that we were the best in Vietnam at anything we did. You could say this was the beginning of the "Hard Days Night" that was to come in a couple of days.

Sometime on the morning of 30 Jan 1968, we were called to CSC and were briefed about the VC/NVA rocket attacks going on in the northern part of Vietnam against USAF bases. I just mentioned that if they were getting hit tonight then tomorrow night will be our turn. Well that evening on or about 1500 hours my resupply team members and I reported for duty to start picking up vehicles from motor pool to use for posting and QRF teams that night. We did everything as if it was a normal night on duty except we were in Security Alert Condition Yellow because of TET New Year.

Then about midnight both resupply teams were called to CSC. Once there we were told to pick up some more vehicles and issue out more ammo to the teams coming on duty because 7th Air Force Headquarters had placed all USAF bases in Vietnam on Security Alert Condition Red, attack is imminent. My team members and I got the additional vehicles and ammo ready. After the vehicles and ammo were issued we then split up into four resupply teams, one for each area of the base.

The start of the "Hard Days Night" began at 0300 hours, 31 Jan 1968. I was driving on the road from the bomb dump toward the FDC (*Fire Direction Control*) for the Army Hawk site when the rockets, forty-five 122mm, were reported coming inbound. After the rocket attack, I checked with three augmentees I had and then started toward the main part of the base when I heard CSC calling Defense Six, eastside resupply team. They wanted them to go to Bunker Hill #10 on the eastside of the base for resupply, but Defense Six called back and said they were stopped at the 101st MP checkpoint by sniper fire from the east. Upon arrival I found Sgt. Lee, Defense 6 leader, and his team under cover. I then told AIC Simmons, Defense 6 SP rider, to take charge of his team and my augmentees.

I then took Sgt. Lee with me in my vehicle after we picked up some slap flares from his vehicle. We then drove back toward the bomb dump and then turned south about half way down the new runway. We then started back toward the east end and then turned south again toward the run-up area and then got back on the road to come up behind Bunker Hill #10. We were stopped by a K-9 unit who told us that Capt. Maisey did not want anymore vehicles out at Bunker Hill #10

at this time. Sgt. Lee and I took the box of flares and walked up to Bunker Hill #10. After giving Capt. Maisey the flares we went back and drove the vehicle up to Bunker Hill #10 for safety reasons.

At approximately 0330 hours, 31 Jan 1968, the VC/NVA hit Bunker Hill #10 with RPG's 2 and 7 rounds, plus small arms fire from the north, east and south sides of the bunker. That put them on base, north and east sides. Everyone hit the ground and setup to defend the bunker area. Their first round took out the M-16 on top of Bunker Hill #10. At the time we had one SAT team, one QRF team, one resupply team, one NCOIC of A Sector, Capt. Maisey and a Lt. From the 145th Aviation Battalion, who was to help us with chopper support from CSC, and one base fire department team with fire pumper truck. I would say about 40 or 50 people in all.

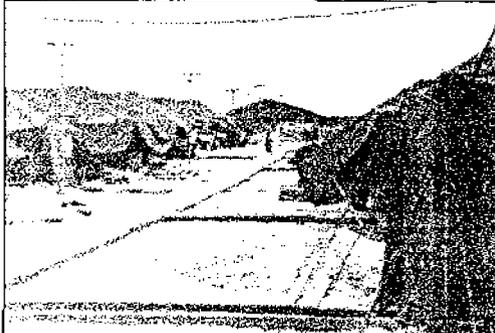
I took cover behind Bunker Hill #10 as the fire truck drove back toward the main base area after several RPG rounds missed it. During this time, I am not sure why I was counting the number of rounds being fired at us, but I did. At this time the Army Lt. had a M-16 with an M-148, 40 mm, and he did not know how to fire it. I then gave him my M-16 and took his. I then started firing at the VC/NVA troops that were firing at us from the QC position just east of Bunker Hill #10.

I can remember as a child playing war with other guys in my area, but now I was playing in the big game of life. As it turns out Charlie would fire one RPG round at us and I then would fire a 40-mm round at them. It was like a western movie where two guys used the building as cover and fired at each other. Well they fired their twelve rounds and I returned fire with my 13th round. Then we heard a big explosion and looked to see the QC position going up with at least three VC/NVA troops. My last round must have hit the ammo in that position and exploded. During all this firing I was yelling at Sgt. Neal Tuggle who was inside the old French bunker with other SP's and augmentees. He told me that they were alright, but that someone was dead, but they did not know who it was. It was found out to be Capt. Maisey who was in the back by one of the RPG rounds.

As I checked around the south side of the bunker, I saw a large number of NVA troops moving west toward the main flight line, F-100 parking ramp area. I called this information into CSC and a few minutes later Cobra and Huey gun ships arrived from the 145th AB and started to fire at them. As their firing came close to me, I jumped inside Bunker Hill #10 for cover. After a while we came out of the bunker because we could not see what was going on around us in the dark. Spooky, AC-47, was on the scene dropping flares and we put up slap flares sometimes too. Sgt. Tuggle and I got on top of the bunker and called CSC with information on any movement of VC/NVA we could see, and directed fire power around Bunker Hill #10.



One of the first things you see upon landing at Cam Ranh Bay AB in 1966



A look at tent city for the 12th Air Police Sq. in 1966



Outstanding living quarters in tent city at Cam Ranh Bay AB in 1966



Building a bunker next to our tent in case of a rocket attack in 1966

CAM RANH BAY 1966 FROM "WALK IN THE SAND"



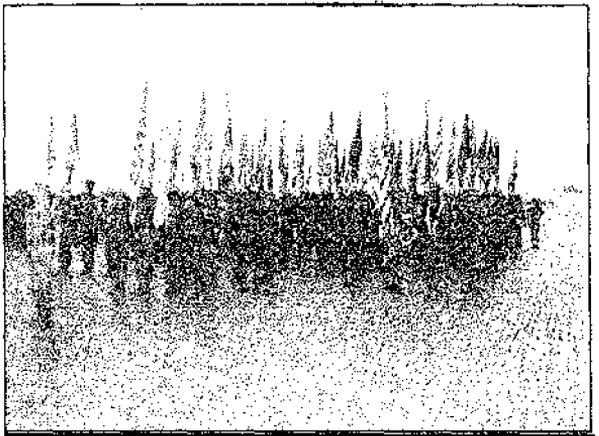
March 1966 weapons firing on the beach. Also notice the black beret I am wearing. We called ourselves, "The Black Berets of Cam Ranh Bay."



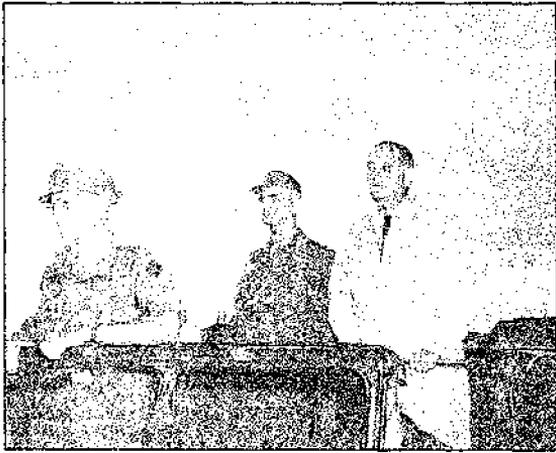
Cleaning equipment in our bunker on the bay side of Cam Ranh Bay AB in 1966. One of the old ROK positions that we took over or moved.



President Johnson and General Westmoreland arrive at Cam Ranh Bay.



Troops on parade for President Johnson and General Westmoreland



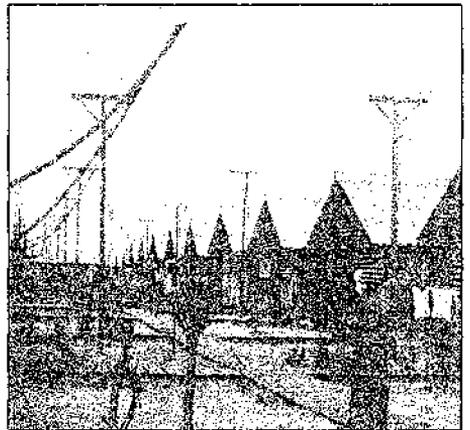
The President and General review the troops at Cam Ranh Bay.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S VISIT TO CAM RANH BAY AB

(Note: Check Mail Call for a story on the pictures on this page.)



Tom Risinger with ROK troops at Cam Ranh Bay in the sand.



The Tent city turned into Tin City with the new hootches.

After fighting most of the night daylight looked really good. As I looked over the battlefield, I could see a lot of dead VC/NVA bodies. For the rest of that day, 31 Jan 68, Capt. Strones kept me and four other SP's on the bunker to watch over the battle still going on outside the base as he lead several sweeps on base to clear out any VC/NVA troops that may be hiding in the elephant grass areas around the east end of the runways. About 1830 hours we were relieved from Bunker Hill #10 and taken back to the barracks area and spent the next 2 1/2 hours in a bunker just in case we got rocked again. At 2200 hours my resupply team members and I went back to work again doing our job covering the base and supporting the men of the 3rd SPS to help protect Bien Hoa AB. Thus ended my "Hard Days Night" for "TET 68". That night the men of the 3rd Security Police Squadron along with the augmentees stopped the VC/NVA troops cold in their tracks from doing a lot of damage to the aircraft and personnel living on the base. We had support from some units with their fire power and faith from other units that did not have any fire power except to pray. The training that we had gone through for months had proven to be our secret weapon, team work and communications. Medals were handed out to some of us and the 3rd SPS received an AFOUA citation for its action that night.

I completed my second tour in Vietnam and felt like I had done my job in an outstanding manner. Sometimes I look back and remember sitting on the perimeter watching silhouettes moving around off base, hit the deck when the rockets landed on base, or just sitting there waiting for all hell to break loose on a quiet night. During the TET 68 offensive all Security Policemen in Vietnam did an outstanding job. Some of them only received a "9" on their APR or a plaque from their flight or squadron for a "Job Well Done." Many of our AP/SP's were called upon to perform in, "uncommon valor above the call of duty to defend their base." I would like to remember those who served and fought, and those who died in Vietnam as part of the history of the Air Police/Security Police and not the Security Forces. We provided protection of the highest fashion with outstanding professionalism and dedication to duty.

I left Vietnam June 1968 for Dyess AFB, Texas. Little did I know I would return for a third tour in two years, which is another story. Like I said in the beginning I think I had a "Hard Days Night" on 31 Jan 68, but so did everyone else that night.

William (Pete) Piazza
12th APS, Cam Ranh Bay AB, 1966
3rd SPS, Bien Hoa AB, 7/67 - 68
12th SPS, Phu Cat AB, 6/70 - 71

In early 1944 I entered the military service, trained and flew as tail gunner over Europe near the end of WW II. We returned to the states in June 1945, assigned to Sioux Falls, S. D. for re-deployment to the Pacific. In July 1945 our commanding officer crashed into the side of the Empire State Building, within a month our Bomb Group was deactivated, at the turn of the year I landed or reported to the 979th MP Company, Wiesbaden, Germany. My training as a Military Policeman was "On the Job," remember at this time we were policing military and civilians. In November 1946 the Army and Air Force separated, I was given the option of either, I chose the Air Force and was assigned to Squadron E, Headquarters Command, Air Force Headquarters in Europe. Now I was an Air Policeman performing highway patrol between Frankfurt and Wiesbaden, still using Military Police Logo.

I returned to Europe again in the Berlin Airlift, a log of changes occurred during this period; Air Police definitely had their own logo, desegregation, lost Quartermaster functions (laundry and dry cleaning), uniform allowance, wearing civilian clothes off duty and of course with the uniform change came the new stripes. During the fifties I was fortunate to represent the Air Police as a liaison to the Chief of Police, Selma, Alabama and the 10th District Office of the OSI.

Then I received several months of field training, the purpose of this training revealed its ugly head in Korea disguised as base defense, my first experience with this type of police function, but phased in during this period.

Mid-fifties I had an interesting function as a Flight Air Policeman, flying with classified documents and equipment to its destination. I was given a plush 90-day TDY assignment as a rifle instructor at a Boy Scout Camp in Pennsylvania. Scouts trained with 22 caliber rifles. I then had a shot at a Nuclear Storage site in Maine, followed by the Security Service in Europe. Entering the Sixties I received a taste of Flightline Security and Presidential Security at Austin, Texas, also the name SP was becoming the thing.

I finally arrived at the moment that made me stop and think what is going on. In May 1965, 22 Air Police or Security Police, which included one Lieutenant, were left on a hill that had two French buildings, resemblance of an old dirt runway and occupied by two weather people and one fireman. This became Det. 1, 34th TAC Group. This small group secured, planned and provided the coordination for the forming of 6254th Combat Support Group, Pleiku Air Base. I left in April 1966 and spent my remaining years until retirement in June 1972 as First Sergeant in the Material Air Command (MAC)

Walt Cobourn
Pleiku Air Base 65 - 66

Poet's Corner

Welcome Home
by Frank Pilson

...years in the past
but still in the present
you were the best of time
you were the worst of times
and we left behind several
unintended gifts and bombs
you thought I re-examined my
need (uh desire) for one significant
other to share my life-space with.

You commanded in me an unwilling
re-evaluation of self, behavior patterns,
relationships and corresponding
change in my attitudes; i.e. growth.

I'm nicer to people...
...I'm more in touch with my feelings
the things and persons around me ...life.

We came back, we survived, we owe it,
to those 58,000 who died,
We must live our lives for them and us
I came home
which was purgatory
I lost
which was hell
and I survived
Heaven!

Welcome Home

Notice

Check the number beside your name.
If it is 99 your dues is due.
A 00 or 01 means you are paid up through
Those years.

2000 Dues is Due

Your dues notice is in this issue so please take a moment now to send in your payment, payable to VSPA. One year memberships are \$15.00 and you can pre-pay up to three years in advance. Don't forget your family members are eligible for Supporting (non-voting) memberships for \$5.00 each person per year. Please send all dues payments to me at the following address:

Steve Ray
2887 Hampton Cove Way
Hampton Cove, AL 35763

I will post the dues and notify the Membership Chairman and the Guardmount Editor of your renewal. Several members have already renewed. Your support is appreciated.

On 28 January 2000 the VSPA will host a dedication ceremony at the SP museum at Lackland AFB, Texas. Through the sale of the 051 Tee Shirts we raised over \$1500.00 for the project. The dedication will take place at the museum 1200-1300 hours with lunch provided by VSPA. Letters of invitation have been sent to our members in the San Antonio area and any members who want to attend just come on out. Thanks for your support of this worthy cause.

Work on the reunion has started. You will receive all reunion information by April 2000. I hope to see all of you there. The reunion committee will be meeting (by telephone) this month.

The Association account balance as of 31 December 1999 was: \$1134.89. Denis Cook, who will run for the office of Secretary/Treasurer at the October meeting, and replace me in that position, has completed his audit of the Association books. Denis informs me all is in order.

I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Steve Ray
Secretary/Treasurer

MAIL CALL

In case anyone is interested, I am including some copies of pictures at Cam Ranh Bay when President Johnson came over to visit. Boy, what a boon doggie! I was with Phantom Flight who was the first called out when the base found out he was coming. The politicians wanted 100 people from each branch of the service; Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force. They went so far as to pull Marines out of an on going fire-fight to come eat with the President. For some it was their first hot meal in months. They were hot, dirty, tired, hungry and aggravated. They were moved direct from combat to the chow hall in a matter of minutes. No time to rest or clean up, just to be there for the politicians to say they were.

I remember a secret service officer telling one Marine, "I'll take that rifle soldier." The Marine answered, "That's the only way you'll get it ass hole. Five minutes ago I was fighting for my life and now I'm here, this will be my first hot meal in months and if you don't get the f— out of my way I'll kill ya!" (Secret Service left)

Here are the pictures. (See page 5)

Tom Risinger
USAF Ret

Membership Application (send Copy of DD 214 and \$15.00 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 _____ \$ 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. VSPA T-shirt featuring QC patch ...M,L,XL,XXL. _____ \$14.00
10. Association Bumper Stickers _____ \$ 1.5 0
11. 7th Air Force - Patch _____ \$ 4.00
12. 7th Air Force - 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 Langley, 150 aurora Road, Venice, FL 34293

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AMERICA IS #1
Thanks to our
Veterans

First Class

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WE ALWAYS LOVED IT WHEN THE USO CAME AROUND TO ENTERTAIN, BUT ESPECIALLY AMN. JOHNSON, WHO NEVER MISSED AN OPPORTUNITY TO SING ALONG WITH A 'ROUND EYE' FROM HIS HOME STATE.



AIC SHORTIMER SHARES HIS CONCERNS OVER SQUADRON MANAGEMENT WITH LT SMITH DURING LIVE FIRE DEMONSTRATION.

