



Guardmount

Volume 6, Issue 3

January, 2001



Life At Nha Trang In '71

They asked us, "Who wants to go to Nha Trang?" There weren't that many takers, so the next day I said I would go. As it was, I had only been at Cam Rahn about a month (night shift) and was actually pretty bored. There had been some action, i.e., in April of 1971 the mortar team on the south bay had accidentally fired a round over the Korean compound across the bay. This led to the Koreans returning fire on the American positions along the bay with small arms fire. I was on the mobile team that night and it was sure interesting then. But overall, CRB was a big place (compared to what I was used to at Tuy Hoa), and I could use a change.

The fact was, I got to CRB on 4/1/71 because there had been a drug bust there, and I had been at Tan Son Nhut 3 ½ months when I was sent (with several others) to fill the gap. I spent about 5 ½ weeks at Cam Rahn, and then off to see the wonders of Nha Trang.

Six of us were sent, via 2 ½ ton truck, and it was quite a trip (around 48 K's if I recall correctly). I took a lot of photos along the way (some were of the transferees) Nha Trang is a low-land area with mountains 2 to 3 miles to the

west, and the South China sea to the east. Except for the base (including the Army helicopter school and the 105 Howitzer battery) the Nha Trang area is very green and lush. The beaches are some of the most beautiful I've ever seen, and the "nuoc Muom" is quite pungent.

When I arrived, in 5/71, there was just a detachment of security, about twenty-one, altogether. MSgt. Hiatt was the NCOIC, and we were attached to the 90th SOS (flying C-130's and C-123's, they flew over North Vietnam and inserted non-locals). I don't recall many names, but some that stand out are SSgt. John Derry, Sgt. Steve Novikoff and A1/C James Suelak. I should remember more but my memory is not what it once was.

It got hot at Nha Trang. It got hot everywhere, but at Nha Trang it seemed like off the beach there was just no breeze at all. Once, I had a terrific headache, caused by the heat. I stuck my head in a refrigerator freezer (a tight fit) for about 2 or 3 minutes; the headache went away. That was in August, just a couple of months before DEROS. When the monsoons came in, it was from the north, and you could see the leading edge advancing in the daytime. It was so solid looking—just like a moving wall of water. You also had that hot, dusty, wet smell that instinctively meant, "take cover."

The barracks were whatever we were allowed to construct for ourselves inside the two-story

(Continued on page 4)

VSPA Points of Contact

President: Kevin Fitzgerald
1219 2nd Ave. S
Nashville, TN 37210
(615) 835-0004

Vice Pres: Steve Gattis
616 W. Medallion Ct.
Ontario, CA 91762
gattis@gte.net

Treasurer: Denis Cook
7113 Nicole Place
Dallas, TX 75252

Membership: Terry Morris
W5148 E. Bush
Pardeeville, WI 53954
(608) 429-9090
incoming@jvlnet.com

Chaplain: Steve Janke
739 Hill Street
Carlstadt, NJ 07072
jank953208@aol.com

Guardmount: Dave Dobson
5315 Bevans Avenue
Spring Hill, FL 34608
(352) 683-2767
camranh@atlantic.net

Website *www.vspa.com*



President's Corner



Greetings from Chicago - The Windy City. I truly hope your holidays, all, were great. Seems hard to believe 2000 (Y2K) has come and gone - Lackland 2000 a memory - a wonderful one and life goes on! We have a president - although it was a civic lesson. I was disturbed to find out that our absentee votes in most states are not usually counted - because they counted in post election. In Tennessee they are due back - election day - well there are plenty of things to fix before 2004, and hopefully they will be fixed.

I've received many calls from our membership on VA related issues, I'm working on these matters - again a system that needs to be fixed and more responsive to the needs of all vets.

I've moved into a new job and have been on the go - later this summer - I'll be in Philadelphia for one month, home in Music City on weekends. I'm still doing after care groups at the VA.

Before I close, thank you all who attended our Lackland Reunion - and to all the members and officers who worked behind the scenes to make it so memorable. A special thanks to General Coleman for being there and speaking with us - and last but not least our fire team who beat the 820th in competition at the range - Great job. Thanks. And a special thanks to Col Hewitt, commander of the 820th Security Force Group for his comments and the patches he gave us.

Till next time . . . God Bless Everyone

Kevin J. Fitzgerald
President

P.S. Sorry no article last issue - time - where did it go?

2001 DUES IS DUE

**CHECK THE NUMBER ON THE LABEL AND IF IT IS
OO**

**THAT INDICATES YOUR ONLY PAID
THROUGH 2000 AND NEED TO
SEND IN YOUR DUES FOR 2001**

**THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE IF YOU
ARE NOT PAID UP!!**

VSPA WEB SITE BRINGS BACK MEMORIES

While reviewing the updated list of AP/SP casualties I came to the name of A2C James Jones who was killed in a rocket attack at Da Nang air base in January, 1966. I remember hearing about that tragic loss because Airman Jones was the first Air Policeman killed in the line of duty since I arrived in Vietnam and one of the very first AP's to die in the war. I feel a connection with Airman Jones because my original orders had been to Da Nang. But when I arrived at Tan Son Nhut on Veterans' Day, 1965, I found that I, as well as several other of my fellow AP's shipped over from SAC in Lincoln, Nebraska, had been "diverted" to a place none of us had ever heard of called Cam Ranh Bay. (The base was more a "camp" at the time. The 12th Tactical Wing of F4C's hadn't even arrived there. The runway our C-130 landed on was temporary PSP job that shifted with the weight of each landing aircraft. This was November 11, 1965. The 12th Air Police Squadron had only been activated three days before.) But many times I wonder if that would have been me killed in that rocket attack at Da Nang instead of James Jones if I had not been diverted to CRB. I'll never know, of course, not in this life, but I do wonder. And I was gratified to finally learn a little about him through the magic of the VSPA web site, to see his picture, find out where he was from and get to know him a little through the warm and loving thoughts of his Vietnam buddies, friends and family. I am sure I would have liked him and I hope and pray that if by some strange fluke of destiny he died in my place, that I have lived a life worthy of such sacrifice. Of course that is something that I will also not know in this life, but I hope I have made him proud. I hope I don't sound to pretentious, but this is how I honestly feel.

While still reviewing the casualty list and the descriptions of the manner in which our comrades lost their lives for that same month and year, I came across the names of A2C Robert Louis Fields and A1C Gary Paul Gay. I sat there at the computer, momentarily stunned. I remember the day they drowned as if it were yesterday (Just in from the states, they drowned while taking a swim in the treacherous South China Sea) I remember being totally bummed out but until now, 35 years after their deaths, I never knew that they had been fellow Air Policemen. As I mentioned, the base at the time was more a dusty collection of canvas tents with little organizations and communications. I do remember seeing both the two small Air Force helicopters circling the bay. We thought at first a Phantom had suffered damage or ran out of fuel and dunked into the water (It wouldn't be the first time as I recall, and it was a race between us and papa-san to see who would get the salvage rights.) But then someone said that two "new guys" had drowned while going for a dip at what became known as "Baker Beach". (I knew how dangerous it was and still I damned near drowned there myself some time later. The rip tide caught me off guard.) "They were dead before their first letters got home", I remember someone saying. Since they had been in-country but a few days, they never really got processed into the squadron or had time for us to get to know them is the reason why, I'm guessing, that I never knew they were SP's. I don't recall any written bulletin about this incident or memorial service or anything at all about these two brothers being mentioned at guardmount. Which isn't to say there wasn't any. I just don't recall it.) But if it weren't for VSPA, I would never have known these were our guys. Thank you brothers.

Jim Murray

(Continued from page 1)

buildings left over from the first American presence. But you didn't want to make it too nice or the Vietnamese would move you to a different barracks, and they would take yours for themselves. That actually did happen about two months after I arrived. We also had running water for two hours a day, so we kept two 55 gallon drums in the shower area for non-potable water. Don't even mention hot water—hard to come by.

A few of us, most notably Steve Novikoff and I, used to go over to the Army helicopter school and catch hops all over III and IV Corps, and then fly back that evening (we actually did work occasionally). Once in a while we might get stuck, but we always found a way back. We flew into Cam Rahn once and stayed the night. The next morning there were no flights going north so we went to the long bridge to catch a ride, but nothing was scheduled for Nha Trang, so we started walking. During the first mile or so we were passed by two army jeeps, so we rolled our sleeves over our chevrons and were quickly picked up by this Army SSgt. He drove about a mile down the road and turned right, off the road, through a screen of trees and on to a dirt path. A few hundred yards along some trees he turned left into a clearing where special forces were training Cambodian. After about 15 minutes we headed back to the road and on into Nha Trang to fifth field HQ. Steve and I thanked the guy and then took off to the air base, about 3 klicks away.

Another time, when I couldn't get a ride back (CRB, again) I caught a ride with a Vietnamese convoy that was going to Nha Trang. I know the MP at the bridge was sure that was the last of me, but the trip was without incident. They dropped me off as they turned left, up by the large Buddha statue, and I continued on through town and back to base, another 5 or 6 klicks.

They had a telephone hook-up at Nha Trang called Tandem Switch. From there, a cable was supposedly run across the ocean floor back to the states. I don't know that it did, and I never got a

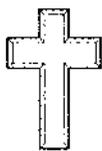
chance to use it. I made two MARS calls: one from Tuy Hoa and one from Tan Son Nhut. Other than that, it was strictly letters, cards, and packages. One of the packages, the last one, was an applesauce cake (I think), that followed me from Tan Son Nhut to Cam Rahn, and then to Nha Trang. By the time I got it, it had been run over and smashed enough I couldn't even get to it. It was still mostly in the coffee can, wrapped in brown paper, and tied with string, but the forces of man got around all of that.

There was a BX canteen where I usually had a plate of rice and chili on top, along with a large glass of apple juice. Actually, they didn't always have chili, or apple juice, but they (almost) always had rice. Since I worked graveyard shift, I sometimes stopped at the all ranks club for breakfast (steak and eggs) but they were often closed so we could take the ¾ ton Studebaker (weapons carrier) and drive to the artillery battery and eat all the eggs we wanted at their chow hall. I sure would like to have that truck today.

In early October I was visiting Cam Rahn Bay (they were our support base) and found out that I was getting a five day reprieve from my four year hitch. Originally I was due to expire on October 17, 1971, but this said I was to graduate on October 12, and who was I to argue. On the other hand, if I had not been down there (and this was the 6th), exactly how long would it have taken to reach me?

Okay, it all worked out fine, even if it was just a little rushed. No pre-departure medical / dental screening; no debriefing by the Ops Officer (we didn't have one). I packed up on October 10, said goodbye in 20 words or less, and caught a helicopter (of course) to Cam Rahn. I flew into McChord AFB on the October 11th, and processed out on the 12th. We were asked to re-enlist four or five times in the six hours it took to de-enlist us. Hah!!!

John Fox



Chaplain 's Corner



DID GOD GO AWOL IN VIETNAM?

Most Vietnam vets entered the war thinking God was on our side-confusing patriotism with God's favor. The anguish of battle revealed to the average teenager the awesome potential for evil on both sides of the conflict. Suddenly it didn't seem God was in control. With this superficial understanding of God, most American soldiers were unable to deal with what was happening around them.

How could we be made in God's image as the Bible said? Both friend and enemy had the potential to be dehumanized which could justify war. How can we understand God's place in this confusing situation? First, God is not to be blamed. To come to terms with God we must understand that God was not AWOL and was in control. He kept men and women alive and brought them home safely through for a purpose. The purpose is discovered when the veteran makes peace with God and through a personal relationship with Him comes to understand what really happened during the conflict.

*Happy New Year friends.
By Steve Janke/Chaplain*

*Reprinted with permission of Pointman Ministries
International*

Year 2000 Membership Audit (Of Sorts)

Gentlemen,

In the year 2000 we had 153 new members. There were 182 Members that did not renew and pay their dues for 2000. I mailed out 122 applications/brochures in 2000. Of those, 50 actually joined from those mailings. 103 new members just printed the applications from the Web Site. The volunteer recruiters (4) from the SA Reunion contacted 30 SP's that again expressed interest and were resent applications/brochures, 1 newbie from those.

I don't mean to be the Grim Reaper but the cost of printing and postage is growing. And the thinking that VSPA could reach and retain a 1000 paid memberships is dwindling. I'm way open to any ideas or suggestions. Don said the VSPA Web Site gets between 800 & 1000 hits a day! Let's do a little brainstorming here. The Members Only Bulletin Board will help I think but we will have to be very careful to send the names of each renewal as they come in to Don or it will create an email nightmare. "I paid my dues but can't get in"! sort of thing.

Terry Morris

A SOLDIERS PRAYER

For the men and women of the armed services

Oh Lord, on bended knees, I bow before thy awesome presence. Mayest I beg of thee to hear this plea from thy humble servant? I am a soldier, one who protects and defends my people, our land and our way of life. Although I may hold the sword and the shield, thou art my fortitude. I am man, I am woman. My skin is of many colors. My language is of many tongues. My culture is diverse, both old and new. As a soldier, I loath the thought of war. In my heart, I find it to be an abomination. I would gladly lay down my life for my brethren, but, alas, is not my enemy also a brother and one of your children? Take this cup of fear and confusion and replace it with courage from thy immaculate hand, for on the morrow, I may do battle. Should the terrible need arise and I must slay mine enemy or be slain by him, I ask for thy forgiveness and for thy absolution. Thou hast blessed mine heart with the knowledge, that even should I walk away from thee, thou shalt never abandon me.

If it be your will and I should fall in battle, then I beg of thee to let it be with dignity. Even with my last breath, I will praise thy name.

Lay this corruptible shell beneath the ground, hallowed by the bravery of other fallen comrades. May our souls rise again incorruptible and fly to thy sweet bosom to live again for time eternal. Is it not true, that when a flower dies and it's seeds are buried, from this, new life sprouts forth? I beg thee to give me the courage and the wisdom to enlighten me and to do my duty with honor. Guide me to make the right decisions and do the deeds that are expected of me. In thy holy name, I humbly ask. Amen.

Michael R. Farley

VA & DIABETES INFORMATION

Diabetes Mellitus (Type II) As A Presumptive Condition for In-Country Vietnam Veterans

Questions and Answers

1. *What veterans will be affected when this condition is added as a presumptive condition for those exposed to herbicides/dioxins?* Honorably discharged veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period January 9, 1962 through May 7, 1975 and have "adult onset diabetes mellitus." This does not include veteran's who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period February 28, 1961, to January 9, 1962.

2. *What does "presumptive condition" mean?* Normally, the claimant must show proof of relationship between service and the condition being claimed. Under presumption of service connection, VA presumes the service-connected relationship exists based on the other qualifying criteria, such as dates and location of service and that the condition being claimed, in this case, is associated with exposure to Agent Orange.

3. *Must I have served "in-country" Vietnam to be eligible?*

To have presumptive service connection granted for diabetes mellitus based on Vietnam service, the claimant must have served in-country.

4. *What does "in-country" mean? What if I served in support of operations in Vietnam, for example, on board a ship in the Gulf of Tonkin?* During the period 1/9/62 through 5/7/75, you must have physically served or visited in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), including service in the waters offshore if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in Vietnam. This means the ship must have come to

(Continued on page 8)

**THIS PAGE IS RESERVED FOR
THE ARTICLE YOU
WERE GOING TO SEND BUT HAVEN'T HAD TIME
TO WRITE
AFTER 5 YEARS AS EDITOR I AM RUNNING OUT
OF THINGS TO PUT IN THE
GUARDMOUNT.**

PLEASE HELP!!!

**ONLY REQUIREMENT IS THAT IT HAS TO PERTAIN TO OUR
TIME IN VIETNAM OR VIETNAM SERVICE.**

port in the RVN and you disembarked.

5. *Will private medical records be accepted as proof of my diabetes? Will I be required to undergo a VA examination? If private medical records are sufficient, VA can make a determination and grant based on those records. If not, a VA examination will be required. These records should :* Comment on the age of onset and the diagnostic test used to affirmatively diagnose this condition.

Comment on the treatment modalities (i.e. Insulin, diet, regulation of activities, etc.) Discuss, if applicable, the prior and current episodes of ketoacidosis or hypoglycemic reactions. Were hospitalizations required? What was the frequency of hospitalizations?

Fully describe any complications that stem from the veteran's diabetes mellitus; such as vision; cardiac; vascular; renal; neurologic (including both peripheral neuropathy and cerebral effects); amputations; and other associated complications.

6. *I applied for service-connection for my diabetes and was denied. The condition was however, rated as non-service connected. Will I need to reapply for service connection?* As soon as the governing regulations regarding this issue are published, if you had in-country Vietnam service and have diabetes, you will need to reapply. Any veteran in this situation should contact his or her local VA office at, 1-800-827-1000 or by e-mail through the VA web page. (www.va.gov).

7. *My husband died from diabetes and was an in-country Vietnam veteran. Do I now qualify for service connected death benefits (DIC)?* If you believe the cause of death was related to diabetes and the veteran had in-country service, you should contact the local VA office to determine your eligibility.

8. *When will my benefits begin if I am granted service connection for diabetes?* VA must publish regulations to implement this decision. Benefit payments cannot begin prior to the date VA publishes the final regulation concerning this issue. We expect the proc-

ess to be completed by late Spring 2001.

9. *Will I receive retroactive benefits based on a grant of service connection due to presumptive service in Vietnam?* Generally, no. The regulations will not have a provision for retroactive payment prior to the date the final regulation is published. We note, however, that there is pending litigation before a United States district court in the case of *Nehmer v. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, which, depending on the outcome of that case, could result in entitlement to retroactive benefits for certain individuals who have previously been denied service connection for their disability.

10. *If I am already service connected for diabetes, will I get an increase based on this change?* You will not receive any additional benefits as a result of this change. However, if your diabetic condition has increased in severity since you were last rated by VA, you should contact your local VA office. You can file a claim for a reevaluation and the local VA office can provide assistance with that claim.

11. *Will I be eligible for medical treatment?* Even if you decide not to file a claim based on exposure to herbicide, you can still get a free physical examination at the nearest VA Medical Center. You may also be entitled to free ongoing medical treatment at a VA medical facility. You should contact the nearest VA medical facility or you can obtain information and an application for health benefits at the Veterans Health Administration web site at www.va.gov/vbs/health/index.htm or by calling 1-877-222-8387.

12. *Where can I get a copy of the National Academy of Sciences Study on Herbicide/Dioxin Exposure and Type 2 Diabetes?*

You can download a copy of the study from the NAS web site at "<http://www.nap.edu/html/diabetes/>" "<http://www.nap.edu/html/diabetes/>" "<http://www.nap.edu/html/diabetes/>" Veterans and Agent Orange: Herbicide/Dioxin Exposure and Type 2 Diabetes



VSPA BX PRODUCT SALES



Patches:

- a. VSPA Patches _____ \$ 5.00
- b. QC Patches _____ \$ 5.00
- c. SP Badge Patch _____ \$ 4.00
- d. Air Force Vietnam Vet Patch _____ \$ 4.00
- e. Tet 68 Survivor Patch _____ \$ 4.00
- f. 7th Air Force Patch _____ \$ 4.00
- g. POW/MIA Patch _____ \$ 4.00
- h. QC Back Patch (9") _____ \$15.00
- i. U.S. Air Force Back Patch (10") _____ \$15.00

Pins:

- a. QC Pin _____ \$ 4.00
- b. 7th Air Force Pin _____ \$ 4.00
- c. Air Force Vietnam Vet Pin _____ \$ 4.00
- d. Tet 68 Survivor Pin _____ \$ 4.00
- e. POW/MIA Pin _____ \$ 4.00
- f. Vietnam Base Pins (Bien Hoa, Binh Thuy, Cam Ranh Bay, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Phan Rang, Pleiku, Phu Cat, Ton Son Nhut) _____ \$ 4.00
- g. U.S. Air Force (Geretic) _____ \$ 4.00
- h. Vietnam Service Ribbon Pin _____ \$ 4.00
- i. Vietnam Veteran With Ribbon Bar Pin _____ \$ 4.00
- j. New Air Force Security Forces Pin _____ \$ 4.00
- k. Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Pin _____ \$ 4.00

Stickers:

- a. VSPA Bumper Sticker _____ \$ 1.00
- b. 7th Air Force _____ \$ 3.00
- c. POW/MIA _____ \$ 1.00
- d. Vietnam Service Ribbon _____ \$ 3.00
- e. U.S. Air Force _____ \$ 3.00

Hats: (Baseball Style Black) \$12.00

- a. VSPA Association
- b. QC
- c. Security Police Shield
- d. U.S. Air Force Vietnam Veteran With Ribbon Bar

Miscellaneous:

- a. Security Police Mini Shields (Numbered) _ \$10.00
- b. Security Police Qualification Badges _____
(Lg \$4.00 - Sm \$2.00)
- c. 7th Air Force Coin _____ \$12.00
- d. Paper Weights
Marble with QC Patch and VSPA ___ \$ 15.00
Lucite With Security Police Shield ___ \$30.00
- e. VSPA Black Satin Jacket Embroidered ___ \$85.00
- f. USAF Black Laminated Wood Clock ___ \$45.00
- g. Vietnam Memorial Black Laminated Wood Clock
_____ \$45.00
- h. Belt Buckels (Vietnam Veteran with Service and Campaign Ribbons) _____ \$12.00
(U.S. Air Force Generic) _____ \$12.00

Please add \$3.00 shipping and handling for all orders under \$50.00, orders over that are only \$4.50 for Shipping and Handling. Please make checks for merchandise payable to Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA). Sorry no Credit Card Orders. Send checks and orders to Mike Daoust, 401 N. Kiesel St., Bay City, MI 48706

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? _____

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

Guardmount

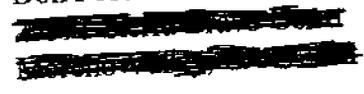


First Class



AMERICA IS #1
Thanks to our
Veterans

Don Poss 00

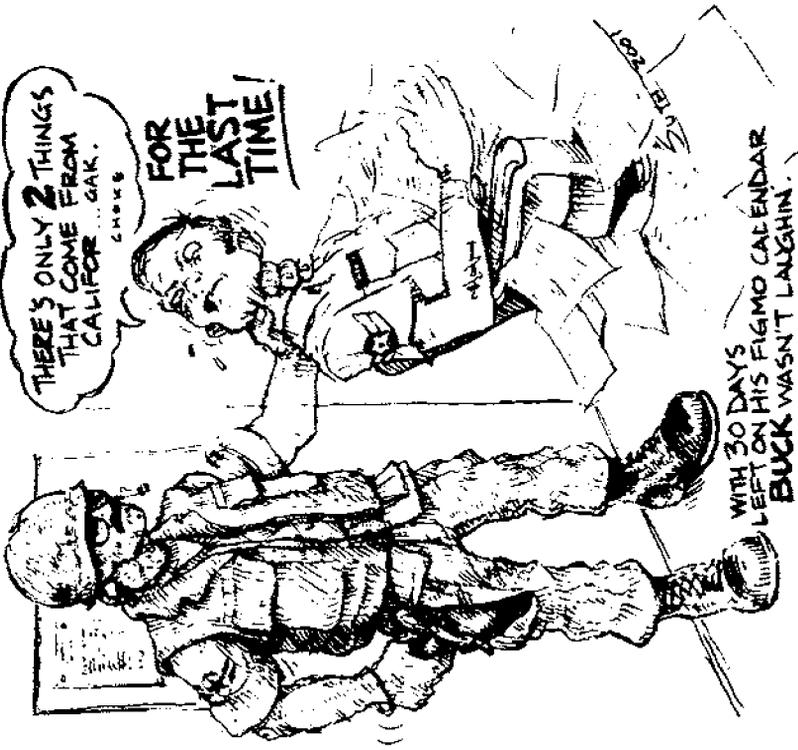


92531-2160 46



HAND TO HAND COMBAT IN THE
ORDERLY ROOM

AIC BUCK BAKERSFIELD OWENS HEARS...



THERE'S ONLY 2 THINGS
THAT COME FROM
CALIFOR... GAK.
CHUCK

FOR
THE
LAST
TIME!

WITH 30 DAYS
LEFT ON HIS FIGMO CALENDAR
BUCK WASN'T LAUGHIN'!