

Vietnam Security Police Association Guardmount

The following information is an update on some decisions that were made at the business meeting. The next issue of Guardmount will contain the detailed information.

REUNION INFORMATION:

2005 Valdosta Georgia, Moody AFB

2006 Las Vegas, Nellis AFB - October

2007 Washington DC 25th Anniversary of The Wall - We will be marching in the parade. This reunion will require a date change to correspond with the parade which will be in NOVEMBER.

ELECTIONS - TWO YEAR TERM:

President Steve Gattis - Cam Ranh Bay 68 - 69

Vice President Hector Ramos - Binh Thuy 69 - 70 Secretary Bruce Hadley - Bien Hoa 61 - 62

Treasurer Den Cook - Tan Son Nhut 67 - 68

Historian Don Graham - Tuy Hoa 68 - 69

APPOINTED POSITIONS:

BX Sales Van Digby - Phan Rang 67 - 68

Chaplain Steve Janke - Cam Ranh Bay 70 - 71

Guardmount Editor Den Cook - Tan Son Nhut 67 - 68

Membership Terry Morris - Phan Rang 66 - 67

Photographer Tony Morris - Cam Ranh Bay 69 - 70

Web Master Don Poss - Da Nang 65 - 66

NEW APPOINTED POSITION

VSPA Service Officer - A critically needed position to provide direction and assistance for members who need advice when dealing with the VA. This position will be held by Junious "Bud" Owens LM #56 (Binh Thuy 66 - 67) who is very active in the DAV and understands the claims process. Bud initiated the idea and made a presentation at the business meeting. He provided DAV pamphlets with vital information for our members.

Don Poss will update the VSPA web page to reflect all officers, appointed positions and the addition of the VSPA Service Officer, Bud Owens. Bud has agreed to receive referrals via email which will be available on the web page after the update.

My best to all of you.

Steve Gattis, President
Life Member #49

My Anniversary – Claude Hebert Life Member #34

It was the middle of June 1967 when I arrived at DaNang AB Vietnam for assignment with the 366th Security Police Squadron. Everything was going pretty well as I learned the ins and outs of the base and work schedule. I was assigned Cobra Flight and soon began the task required of all Security Policemen in Nam.

Then came July 15, 1967 and the real world of Nam opened up. This was my first rocket attack and it was a big one, better than 80 rockets his us during that attack. I was in my bunk asleep when the attack began and had to crawl on my stomach to get out the hut into a bunker. We had dust so thick in the bunker, because of a near strike, you could not see and had to feel your way out. After I made it to the bunker and was sitting waiting for this thing to end my thoughts went back to home.

While on leave prior to going to Nam I began dating a hometown girl. We dated the entire time I was home on leave and I even took her to her Senior Prom.

While sitting in the bunker and hearing the constant explosions taking place my mind kept telling me I would not make it back home. My thoughts were of the girl I left behind. My feeling for this girl was strong but I had not mentioned that to her. Well I made it through that incident fine, so the next day I wrote her a very detailed letter of my strong feelings for her and I asked her if she would marry me when I got home!!!!

This wonderful girl would write me a letter everyday so I had a pretty good idea of how long it would take for her to answer the “**important**” letter I sent her. Well the time passed and I received my long awaited. letter. When I opened it I was stunned and being young and not familiar with the romantic life style, I figured I had what everyone called a Dear John letter. What I found in the envelope was the letter I sent to her. She sent it back to me. Well I was really down and didn't know what to think.

The next day I received another letter from her and this time it was the real thing. She told me that when she received my letter she wrote me a long letter but was so excited that she put my letter in the envelope instead of the one she wrote.

To make a long story short we married eight months after my return from DaNang and have been married for 35 years as of February 8th 2004.

Editors Note: from all of us at the VSPA a happy belated anniversary wish for 35 more years.

Classified Add

"Dedicated AP/SP patch collector looking to buy Vietnam & Thailand patches. This would be for my own collection, not resale. Please contact me at tuyhoa68@att.net or 610-691-6960 with any questions. Thank you. Don Graham"

Death of a Friend and Brother - Rex Hare

Van Digby just called me to report that our dear friend and brother, Rex Hare, died this morning. (October 13, 2004)

As many of you know, Rex Hare had been fighting Agent Orange related cancer for many years. He was rated 100% by the VA for injuries he suffered during an attack in Vietnam and for the cancer. Yet, he remained very active in the VSPA and had helped Mike Daoust with the BX at many of our reunions. Rex had been in a hospice in Michigan and expressed the desire to make one last reunion so that he could be with his brother Security Policemen. He attended the reunion in Tucson with the assistance of Van and Joyce Digby.

Rex attended all of our functions in Tucson with the exception of the Sunday Memorial Service when his breathing got too difficult. Van and Joyce called a hospice nurse to the hotel who made sure that he was comfortable. Their combined care gave Rex the strength to make the flight home to Michigan on Monday so that he could be close to his daughters. Van and Joyce travelled with him and made arrangements for him to return to the hospice where Rex requested a NO CODE response if his condition deteriorated. Yesterday, Van and Joyce gave Rex a full size security police shield on behalf of his brothers in the VSPA. When they pinned the shield on his shirt, he said to thank everyone for their friendship and brotherhood.

As hard as it is for all of us to say goodbye to friends at the reunion, it was even more difficult to say goodbye to a friend who knew that Tucson would be his last reunion and that he was going home to die. Of course, he also knew in his heart that he would soon be attending Guardmount in Heaven with friends from long ago and that he would be posted to guard the gates of heaven with his lifelong friend Mike Daoust.

Last night, in painful anticipation of what we knew would happen, Kim Bayes sent me a beautiful poem and asked that I share it with Rex's family. Since we were all his brothers and extended family, I have enclosed the poem below. Van and Joyce have given it to Rex's daughters.

FINAL REUNION

It took every ounce of their strength to come,
Knowing this would be their last reunion.
As the flag passed, they stood with the others,
Despite the agony, they joined their brothers.

Broken bodies, racked with weariness and pain,
Carried only by the desire to see friends again.
The spring in their step and spark in their eyes,
Were moments of joy, before the final goodbyes.

"Our time is becoming more precious by the minute",
A soldier said, recognizing what is hard for all to
admit.

Our hearts are breaking, and we wish it wasn't so,
Because it is never easy, to let a good man go.

A band of angels will escort them to paradise,
To a reunion where there is no admission price,
As the price was paid on earth, in war and peace.
God awaits them, where all suffering is released.

Kimberly Sue Bayes 10/12/04

As you think about Rex, remember him as someone who cared very deeply for his friends, someone who served in combat and carried the wounds of his service without complaint, a man who continued to serve as a Federal Police Officer for the VA and as a member of the US Coast Guard who only recently received orders to attend training, which he faithfully attended.

Attending the reunion, seeing his brothers and wearing the security police shield again were his final wishes. So it is with deep respect and honor that I render a hand salute to my friend and brother,

Rex Hare.

Road Trip to Thailand – Jim Watson

It was January 1968, I had been working my dog Fritz X704 on post since September. I arrived at March AFB in July of 67 after completing Air Police Tech School and Sentry Dog School at Lackland AFB Texas.

Between July and September I worked some security and law enforcement. The 22nd Bomb wing was TDY to Guam for operation Arc Light. Most of us junior dog handlers were assigned to Security or law enforcement or wherever they needed us. Spent a lot of time in the base housing area walking the streets with just a night stick and flashlight. Saw a lot of hanky panky going on. I was not happy. All I wanted to do was be a sentry dog handler.

In September I finally got my chance. The wing returned from Guam and I was assigned to one of the three squads that worked out of the 22nd SPS K-9 Section. Each squad had seven dog handlers. We had five k-9 posts on base and two in the WSA. I was actually working with my dog and the hours were great. Three swing shifts a 24 hour break and then three midnight shifts and then three days off. It was a good life.

In the mean time friends of mine were getting orders for Vietnam. Doug Stream left for Bien Hoa in October. Jesus Parra got orders for Phan Rang. In January 1968 my girl friend decided to call it quits. She had found another. I was depressed and being the stupid young airman that I was I decided to volunteer for Southeast Asia.

Two weeks later give or take I had orders for Ubon RTAFB. Along with SGT Dobie Scarborough we would both be taking our dogs to Thailand to open up the first k-9 sections at Thai air bases.

On March 9 1968 after completing a thirty day leave I returned to the base to pick up my dog. We were scheduled to leave on a red eye flight out of LAX bound for San Antonio and Lackland AFB for week of AZR. We were the last class to go through one week of AZR. The next classes would be two week courses.

Arriving at Lackland that Sunday I ran into one of dog school classmates Jimmy Gifford. Jimmy was bound for Danang. It was great seeing him again and in 2000 we met again at the ceremony unveiling the War Dog Memorial at March Field.

The first bases to get dogs in Thailand were in NKP, Ubon and U-Tapao. Twenty dogs and men were assigned to NKP and Ubon and fifteen dogs and men were assigned to U-Tapao. After going through the AZR course all 55 of us went through a short three day combat preparedness for our dogs. It consisted mostly of weapons firing and loud explosions to get our dogs used to that noise.

On Thursday March 21st we packed up our in there transportation kennels and were driven the short distance to Kelly AFB where two C-141 starlifters were awaiting us. I do believe all the dogs were given some sort of sedative because they did not make any noise on the flight over. They slept most of the way as did all of us. On the first C-141 were the 20 handlers and dogs for NKP and ten for Ubon including the first NCOIC of the kennels TSGT James E Langlely.

I was on the second C-141 with the 10 other Ubon handlers and the 15 for U-Tapao. Three of the fifteen men Ron Lewis, Tom Stewart, and Carl Newcombe would be assigned to Kadena AB Okinawa along with me and 5 other handlers from Ubon after our tours were up in Thailand. I have since found Ron and Tom and we met the at last VDHA reunion in St. Louis.

By the time we took off it was 5:00 PM San Antonio time. Next stop Elmendorf AFB. We landed at Elmendorf around midnight Alaska time after refueling we took off for our next stop Yokota AB Japan. There was an unexpected delay at Yokota. The C-141 I was on had a hydraulic leak we were going to be there eight hours for repairs. Lucky for us they let us visit the airmen's club on base. By the time we were ready to leave most of us had had a few beers. Our next leg of the journey was an uneventful flight to U-Tapao. I think we all slept due to the alcohol in our bodies.

It was close to midnight March 23rd when we landed at U-Tapao. On hand to greet us were the base commander and numerous Thai dignitaries, plus some beautiful Thai women who were handing out leis to put around our necks. One hour later we were taking off for Ubon Royal Thai AFB home of the 8TH Tactical Fighter Wing also known As "The Wolfpack". How ironic German shepherds on there way to guard the Wolfpack. At 1:00 AM March 24th 1968 we finally arrived at our destination. It was 85 degrees and humid it was something we would all have to get used to. We were met by our NCOIC and transported to the temporary kennels located in the off base bomb dump. After getting a bite to eat at the chow hall we were taken to our home for the next 12 months Hootch 478.

To this day I don't think I have ever recovered from that Jet lag. I believe it took about 72 hours. That's it
Jim

We Meet Again – by Gary (Frenchy) LaTour

Charlie McCrady, Jerry Klueh, John (Dutch) Cassidy, and myself became best friends while serving in Danang in 1972. We all worked Tiger Ft. Security, although we worked different areas. After the Easter Offensive began, it became more hectic than ever at Danang. We had very little time off, and the attacks by NVA and VC rockets increased dramatically. To ease the tension a little, we'd get together for a couple of beers after work, or sneak off to Chain Beach for a while. As I think back, I sometimes wonder how we worked all those night shifts, with so little sleep during the day. We did though, and we forged friendships that would never end.

After getting out of the Air Force in late 1974, I thought about Charlie, Jerry, and Dutch on occasion. As the years went by (too fast), I wondered where my old friends ended up, and thought how great it would be to see them again.

My daughter was in her third year of college back in 1999, when she decided she needed a new computer. I agreed to buy her a new one, and she gave me her old one. Not being very computer literate, I was astonished as I surfed the 'world wide web'. I couldn't believe all the information that was at my fingertips. I found Bill Liddell's website (fellow VSPA member), and scanned him some old Danang pictures. He put them on his website, and I was thrilled. I also soon found the VSPA website, and joined immediately. I attended the reunion in Dayton, and had a fantastic time. When I got home though, I felt something missing. I soon realized that although I made many new friends at the VSPA reunion, I longed to contact my old buddies.

I soon started searching various sites on the web. I also downloaded Net Detective, and those resources helped a lot. What was a big break though, was when Keith Steward (fellow VSPA member), sent me a copy of some promotion orders. I won't bore you with all the details, but with Charlie's name and social security number I went back to work searching. I spent many hours hovering over the old computer, and finally came up with a promising lead. I went to the phone with three Charlie McCrady's in Lexington, Kentucky. As I dialed the first number, I wasn't too excited - that is, until I heard the voice at the other end say hello! I knew instantly that it was my old buddy, and as I asked him if he had ever been in Danang, he recognized my voice too!

Needless to say, that was one long, exciting, and emotional phone call. As luck would have it, Charlie knew Jerry's address in Indiana too! He gave it to me, along with his phone number, and I called Jerry next. Another great contact! Things were coming together. We kept in contact via e-mail and phone calls. Then, a couple of months later,

another good piece of luck happened. Dutch stumbled across my pictures on Bill Liddell's website, and e-mailed me. (Bill had put my e-mail address on the site too). I was thrilled again, to talk to Dutch. Imagine his surprise, when I told him I had located Charlie and Jerry. He didn't believe me at first - especially since he had heard a rumor that Charlie had passed away years ago! What a great feeling it was, to tell Dutch that Charlie was alive and well in Kentucky! I gave him Charlie's phone number and e-mail address - and the rest is history. We all soon decided it was time to get together again. We agreed on Washington, D.C. the last weekend of June.

I was sitting by the check-in counter at the J.W. Marriott when I saw Charlie enter. Did I recognize him after 32 years? Of course, since he's 6' 7" he's hard to miss! He also had his two Sons, and one of his Son's girlfriends trailing behind him, so that confirmed it for me. I let him get to the counter before I approached, then I went up to him and said, "don't I know you from some where"? What a great moment that was - and to make it even better, Dutch had been nearby. He said he heard my voice and came hustling over, so all three of us finally met again after 32 years! Jerry came in on a later flight, and met us at the Old Ebbets Grill that evening. It surely was a night to remember!

We had all brought old picture albums of the Danang days. We spent half of the next afternoon talking about the memories we had, and looking at each others albums. It's amazing how much we could recall, as a group.

We also visited all the war memorials (and shed some tears at the Wall). We also walked down to the Capitol. Typical Washington tourists. Saturday night's dinner outing was also outstanding. We ate at the Hotel Willard (I think). I'm not positive about the name, but I sure remember the bill...! We had a great time, for sure.

One more thing that made our weekend so special, was the other family members that were there. Charlie's Sons Josh and Jacob, and their friend Brianna. Dutch's wife Jane, and Jerry's friend Dianne. These are all wonderful people, and it was a joy to have them with us.

Sunday was a little somber, as we all had to say good-by and head home. However, we all know we're going to get together again, no doubt about that!

As I stated on the bulletin board of the VSPA website - for all of you brother S.P.'s still searching for old friends, don't give up. Words just can't describe the feeling you get, meeting old Vietnam friends again.

Editors Note: Like Charlie, Gary and Jerry, many of us have found old friends. Don't wait. Find your friends before it is too late. Words can not describe the feeling of old friends meeting again.

About Reunion Selection Sites – Steve Gattis

I thought it would be a good idea to give you an overview of our reunion locations and how we vote to select those locations. There are four guiding principles that we use to select the locations, then all who are present in the business meeting suggest locations. Of the nine or 10 locations suggested, we vote and eliminate all but the highest three. Then we vote again for the final location. Valdosta, Georgia (Moody AFB) was selected last year for 2005. This year, the response for Las Vegas (Nellis AFB) and Washington DC (Bolling AFB) was overwhelming.

1. The location must be affordable for the majority of our members. Therefore, Hickam AFB and Aviano AB have been ruled out several times.
2. There must be a local base so that we can link with the Security Forces Squadron and make contact with those who are carrying on our history. The SF Squadron provides honor guards and color guards for our banquet and memorial ceremonies. They also provide current Op Tempo and deployment information while demonstrating new weaponry, field tactics and K-9 operations.
3. We always attempt to select locations on a regional basis, moving across the country, so that our members from throughout the United States can potentially attend a reunion close to home.
4. We attempt to select a location where there is also something for our wives, friends and family who accompany us to the reunions and provide support throughout the year.

The following is a list of the locations we have held reunions:

- 1995 Atlanta, Georgia
- 1996 San Antonio, Texas
- 1997 Pensacola, Florida
- 1998 Washington D.C.
- 1999 Las Vegas, Nevada
- 2000 San Antonio, Texas
- 2001 Hamton Roads, Virginia
- 2002 Dayton, Ohio
- 2003 San Antonio, Texas
- 2004 Tucson, Arizona

FUTURE LOCATIONS:

- 2005 Valdosta, Georgia
- 2006 Las Vegas, Nevada
- 2007 Washington D.C. We will march in the parade to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of The Wall.

I hope this information helps you plan to attend a future reunion.

VSPA History Book Project

The **VSPA History Book Project** is alive and well. We have a deadline extension until November 30 so that we can receive orders and additional bios from our members. If you have questions or need a brochure to order the book, please contact VSPA President Steve Gattis at his email address SteveGattis-LM49@vspa.com or you can call him at home 254-898-2647.

VSPA History Report 2004 – Don Graham

- 1- Thanks to fellow member Bill Wagonlander we have more then tripled our historical data on Phu Cat AB. Bill provided the address for CMSgt John Forgette (Ret) the Phu Cat AB History Project coordinator. This information not only includes official Air Force documents but also personnel accounts and numerous photo's
- 2- Earlier in the year I was contact by Wallace Goudeau who had been trying to work with the producers of War Stories, on the Fox network, to have our story told. Wallace wasn't having much luck and asked me to give it a try.
We emailed War Stories and I had provided them with a number of incidents that I thought would be suitable for their show. This included Bunker 051 at Tan Son Nhut, Bunker Hill 10 at Bien Hoa and the story of Nemo, also from Tan Son Nhut. I also provided them with our web site address in hopes they would check it out. Unfortunately they never acknowledged my emails. Perhaps if they heard from a few of us it might get their attention. (warstories@foxnews.com)
- 3- A major project we had this year was undocumented base attacks. Steve Ray originally started this project. I'm sure many of you saw our request for information in Guardmount as I received quite a few responses. All the information we gathered was submitted on April 27th to the Air Force History Office. We are still awaiting a reply. I would like to thank everyone who participated.
- 4- We had also listed in Guardmount information to have our DD214's corrected to include the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross. Again many of you responded and sent in a request for the required forms. It looks like we're reading our Guardmount.
- 5- VSPA representatives Steve Ray and Ed Wilson attended a dedication of a miniature version of the "Defender" monument at Maxwell AFB, Gunter Annex, AL. The event was held on July 17, 2004. The Defender will reside at the Enlisted Heritage Hall.

Advertisement

WALK A DEADLY TRAIL

A novel by former Air Policeman Lawrence McNally USAF (Ret)

Vietnam POW endures the trails of capture in a jungle prison camp
as their loved one's believe they were killed in action

Available in paperback at your favorite bookstore, www.barnesandnoble.com, www.amazon.com,

ISBN 0-595-26282-1

VSPA Scholarship Fund - Jim (Buda) Lebowitz

At the VSPA Annual Business Meeting the scholarship fund was discussed. We have \$500.00 that can be awarded to members, spouses of members, children and grandchildren of members. All it takes is a 3.0 GPA and complete the appropriate paperwork. The scholarship award can be used for post secondary education, i.e., trade school or college.

I can send you the necessary paperwork via e-mail or snail mail. You can contact me as follows:

E-mail (work) James.Lebowitz@med.va.gov

E-mail (home) jelcatfish@aol.com

Home Phone 732-254-7912

Work Phone 908-647-0180, ext. 4354. You can contact me between 0700 and 1500 (that is 7:00 AM and 3:00 PM civilian time)

FAX 908-604-5343

Sincere Thanks - by Erlyce Pekas

Dear VSPA members and officers, staff, and volunteers. Just a note to express once again (in writing) how touched and moved Mrs. Lehman, Lynn and I were by your warm acceptance of our presence at your recent VSPA Reunion in Tucson, AZ. Allowing us to participate in all of your events, your presence at the ceremony at the cemetery, and your big smiles and enveloping hugs made us realize how very much you live your motto "we take care of our own". Mrs. Lehman was so impressed by you all....she couldn't stop talking about it! And with your permission, we are seriously considering attending other reunions in the future. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone. It is said that "friends are family that we choose for ourselves." You are now that kind of family to us.

Erlyce Pekas and Myron Pekas, Phoenix, AZ

Helen Lehman, Tucson, AZ

Lynn Valentine Helgeson, Bemidji, MN

A Mother's Love – Larry Fleming LM #131

Our plane lifted off the runway at Sea-Tac International Airport headed for Viet Nam. I was on an emotional roller coaster as I'm sure everyone else was. I was headed for a place I didn't know very much about. I knew I would be gone for at least a year. I knew the ongoing daily KIA. I knew it would be a long year.

I had just left my small hometown in West Texas and had a good visit with my family. It was late January 1968. We had just left Lackland from our Southeast Asia combat training and I had brought a couple of buddies with me for the couple of days before the long trip across the Pacific. It has been so long ago I only remember one name, Mike Daoust. He didn't think much of West Texas but he felt right at home with my folks. The day we left for Seattle we had to get up pretty early because it was about 90 miles to the Midland Airport. I remember it was a pretty somber ride, no one said much.

We arrived at the airport. Every one was pretty teary eyed. I could tell it was very hard on my mother, as she looked very tired and worn. She got me alone for a minute and gave me a letter and tearfully said open and read this letter when you are over the Pacific Ocean. I put the letter in my pocket and put on the bravest face I could. My dad held up my mother as we headed for the plane. I didn't look back.

We arrived in Seattle and began processing for debarkation. It was a long and tedious process but it kept our minds off what lay ahead. After a few hours we began to board our plane for the long flight over the Pacific. I kept thinking of home, my family, the little blonde cheerleader I had loved since junior high and hoped I would be reunited with a year from now.

I knew I was well over the Pacific when I pulled the letter from my pocket and began to read:

"My Darling Larry,

There are so many things I wanted to say to you while you were home, but I knew I could never get them said without breaking down and getting tearful, and it wouldn't come out the way I wanted it to. So I decided to write you a letter to read while you were flying over the Pacific.

Hon, the hardest thing I've done in my life is to see you leave us to go so far away, and with things uncertain as they are in the world.

I told you I wasn't going to worry about your being over there because it was in God's hands. I mean that. I have an assurance that you will be back because I have claimed one of God's promises that whatever we ask in his name, believing, it will be granted. I'll not tell you now what I asked of God, but I will tell you next year when you get home."

The letter goes on for a couple more pages. It took a while to read the entire letter because my eyes kept leaking and blurring my vision. I still have the letter and just copied the above word for word. The letter is dated Jan. 27 1968. I must have read the letter 10 times on the flight. I kept asking myself what she meant by not telling me what she had asked of God but would tell me in a year when I got home.

When we finally arrived in-country I had little time to think about the letter. I knew my mother loved me and that assurance would help me get through the year. I wrote several letters during my year. In addition to letters I sent a tape every once in a while. Letters and tapes were always weeks behind.

I started my short timers calendar and before I knew it, it was time for the return trip to the world. I began to think of home, my family and that little blonde cheerleader. After an exhausting few days of travel I had called my mom and dad and told them to meet me at the Midland airport at a designated time. I remember being the last one off the plane. That was back in the days of walking down the stairs to the ramp. As I started down the stairs my mom, dad, little brother and sister were running to meet me. What a beautiful site. We hugged, laughed, cried and talked all at the same time. This was indeed the best homecoming I had ever had.

I spent the next few days getting reacquainted with my family and visiting friends. My mother was as happy as I had ever seen her and we talked about everything we could think of. It wasn't long before the text of the letter came up and I finally asked mom what she had asked of God. She sat down and began to cry as she tried to speak. She began to explain the fear she had of never seeing me again when I got orders for Viet Nam. Her biggest fear was my being killed on foreign soil and she had to achieve a comfort level. She finally said that if it were my time, I would die before I left the United States. I began to try to sort out what my mother had just said. In her mind if I'm flying over the Pacific I was no longer in the United States therefore, I would return home in a year. Makes perfect sense to me.

At that time I couldn't see as clear as I do now. But now I have two daughters of my own and I can't possibly imagine the thought of losing one of them for any reason. I also believe God's grace is sufficient for us all and in every situation He will help us through. My Mom was able to find comfort and security for the harms way her son had been put in and she was able to cope for the longest year of her life. I lost my Mom to heart failure in 1990 but I will never lose her love.

And that little blonde cheerleader is now my wife, the mother of my two daughters and my soul mate since May 24, 1969.

Freedom — David Scott, U-Tapao

Freedom

U-Tapao, Thailand

635th Air Base Defense Squadron (SP)

Dragon Flight.

It was spring 1976 and I was working tower guard when I heard a call go over the radio. It was Sgt. Tony Lopez, the sector supervisor and it seemed like all hell was breaking loose.

Sgt Lopez was from San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was barrel chested and powerfully built. He was an old Asian hand who liked his beer and was married to a Thai. So what was the big deal?

The big deal was this "Hundreds of Vietnamese 'boat people' are swarming over the beach" he said. Sgt. Glenn the central security controller (CSC) ordered "*keep them on the beach. The Thais are not giving permission for them to enter their country.*"

"*You tell them,*" yelled Lopez over the radio "*their not listening to me. They are requesting asylum. They want to speak to the Supreme American Commander.*"

"*That's a negative; we do not have Thai permission.*" A few moments later Sgt Lopez called CSC, "*there's just too many refugees, old men, women, kids. I can't stop them. I gave them permission for asylum.*"

"*You did what!?*" screamed CSC.

"*I gave them permission.*" Replied Lopez.

For what seemed like a life time (moments had only passed) there was silence over the radio but you could hear the "lifers" at HQ having heart attacks over this.

Finally CSC said "*Sgt. Lopez, why did you give political asylum to these people (refugees)?*"

And Sgt. Lopez said this "*because they are looking for freedom. No senior American officially showed up. I'm an American, so I gave them Asylum.*"

Again there was silence from CSC, but you could hear other SP's chirping in over the radio with "awright!" and "yeah!" we were all proud of what Sgt. Lopez had done.

Sgt. Lopez was called into CSC and received a royal chewing for his action but he still kept his three stripes and was allowed to go to his base of choice in June, which was South Korea.

"Bravo" Sgt. Lopez, for a guy who looked like a cross between a bull and the devil, you sure saved a lot of lives that day.

Veteran Contact Numbers – by Don Graham

For info on home loans, disability, medical care and burial –

1-800-827-1000

Life Insurance –

1-800-669-8477

Education (G.I. Bill)-

1-888-442-4551

Health Care Benefits –

1-877-222-8387

Agent Orange –

1-800-749-8387

Headstones & Markers --

1-800-697-6947

web address

www.va.gov

Need help with the VA? Bill Wagonlander, VSPA member, has a web site that will help.

[Http://12.239.11.79/vetsvacorner/](http://12.239.11.79/vetsvacorner/)

Offices that can assist in searches for supporting documentation.

To obtain copies of your records go to-

www.archives.gov/rcsearch_room/vetrecs/index.html

National Records & Administration Center

Attn: NCP-MA

9700 Page Blvd

St. Louis, MO 63132-5200

Washington National Records Center

8601 Adelphi Road

Adelphi, MD. 20740-6001

National Archives & Records Administration

Library & Printed Archives Branch

Eight & Pennsylvania Aves. N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20408

Air Force Personnel Center

Attn: DPPPR

550 C Street West Suite 12

Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4714

Unit Histories, Lineage and Honors

Air Force History Support Officer – 202-404-2264

Dept. of the Air Force

HQ/AFHRA

600 Chennault Circle

Maxwell AFB, AL. 36112-6424

Correction of Military Records

Air Force Review Board

Office SAF/MIBR

550 C Street W. Suite 40

VSPA Flag – Don Graham

At the 2004 business meeting it was decided that we should have a flag to represent the VSPA. A committee was formed and will review designs submitted by the membership. The flag will be displayed at our reunions and used in any parades we may participate in. Please send any idea's for the design to Don Graham. We will also be creating Guide-on's for each squadron.

The committee consists of the following members.

Don Graham

John Langley

Ken Neal

Ed Way

Don Poss

Terry Morris

Earl Cary

Don can be reached at tuyhoa68@att.net or

Don Graham

2911 Westminster Road

Bethlehem, PA 18017

Also, Veterans Bonus

South Dakota has a Veterans bonus of up to \$500.

For info please contact-

SD Veterans Bonus

500 E Capital

Pierre, SD 57501

605-773-4656

Mass. also has a bonus of up to \$300. For info please contact-

Office of the Treasurer

One Ashburton Place 12th Floor

Boston, MA. 02108

617-367-3900 ext 208

Other states may also have a bonus. Please check with your local state representative.

New Members In Order Of Enlistment.

Jul-04

Frederick "Fritz" Heiss	Phu Cat 2/67-68	Ft. Meyers, FL
Billy Roberts	Takhli 2/68-69	Atwater, CA
Daniel Rooney	Binh Thuy 6/65-66	Rome, NY
Alan Pearch	Danang 8/67-68 Monkey Mountain	Chagrin Falls, OH
David Pierson	Binh Thuy 9/69-70 Phan Rang	Carson City, NV
William Hogan	Danang 8/64-65	Maryland Heights, MO
Roger Lansden	Danang 9/69-70	Portland, OR
Michael Woodards	Bien Hoa 4/69-70	Madison, WI
George Wrenn	Udon 11/73-74	Flat Rock, NC
Robert Moore	Nha Trang 2/65-66	Warr Acres, OK
Richard Hargrove	Phan Rang 4/68-69	Dexter, MO
Manuel Carlos	Udon 3/72-73	El Paso, TX
Horace Livingston	Tan Son Nhut 5/68-69	Rome, NY

Aug-04

Donald Sims	Tuy Hoa Ban My Thout Cam Ranh Bay 10/69-71	Bowling Green, KY
Russel Stabler	Ubon 11/72-73	Fargo, ND
James French	Tuy Hoa 11/68-69 Nakon Phanom 3/72-73	Darlington, SC
Reginald "Art" Vos	Danang 1/72-73	Peoria, AZ
James Hunter	Pleiku 4/69-70	Klamath Falls, OR
James Rasco	Danang 12/67-68	Oklahoma City, OK
John Delprete	Phan Rang Pleiku 70 Nakon Phanom 72	Warwick, RI

Sep-04

James Boyer	Tuy Hoa 6/68-69	Napa, CA
Leon Cooper	Nakon Phanom 10/74-75	The Woodlands, TX
James Ford	Binh Thuy 6/67-68	Knoxville, TN
Gary Walters	Phan Rang 3/68-69 Bien Hoa	Columbus, MS
Daniel Herring	Bien Hoa 12/70-71	Albany, NY
Arthur "Rick" Willis	Danang 3/69-70	Ellsworth, ME
Thomas Rogers	Ubon 7/72-73	Cordova, TN
William Gaughan	Bien Hoa 65 12/66-67	Las Vegas, NV
John Tudor	U-Tapao 7/68-69	Seven Valleys, PA
Harry Sheller Jr.	Cam Ranh Bay 2/69-70	Cornwall, PA
Charles Tomlinson	Binh Thuy 10/68-69	Shreveport, LA
Charles Synder	Ubon 6/69-70	Erin, NY
Robert Parise	Bien Hoa 9/65-66	St. Charles, IL
Newell Swartz	Phan Rang 12/65-66 Phu Cat 8/66-67	Phoenix, AZ
George Martin	Nha Trang 2/67-68	Atco, NJ
Kenneth Headrick	Phan Rang 12/66-67 Tuy Hoa	Sioux Falls, SD
Philip Savage	Phan Rang 2/66-67 Tuy Hoa K9	Athens, MI
Jerry Way	Bien Hoa 11/67-68 CRB Tan My 5/69-70	York, PA
	Danang	

Oct-04

Terry Hall	Nha Trang 6/67-69 Hon Tre	Woodstown, NJ
Edward Cottrell	Binh Thuy 11/65-66	McAllen, TX
Rodney DeMent	Binh Thuy 70	Belpre, OH
Teddy Wright	Tan Son Nhut 1/65-66 Phu Cat 67	Spokane, WA
James Cline	Phan Rang 6/67-68	Tucson, AZ
Russell Hinojosa	Cam Ranh Bay 10/66-67 LM 166	Tucson, AZ
Nelson Harrison	Cam Ranh Bay 11/66-67 LM 168	Tucson, AZ
Bennie Martin	Pleiku 5/66-67	Dallas, TX

Business Meeting Minutes – Steve Ray, Secretary

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION OCT 9, 2004 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES Tucson, AZ

1. Call to Order - Meeting called to order by Steve Gattis, President at 0915 hours.
2. Steve Gattis requested a moment of silence for those that did not return from Southeast Asia.
3. Invocation was given by Don Poss
4. Pledge of Allegiance – Steve Ray led the Association members in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.
5. Steve Gattis announced the VSPA Sisterhood was holding a meeting at 0900 and Frank Ybarbo and David Adams were making presentations to that group.
6. Officers of the Association were introduced.
7. Reading of the 2003 minutes – Steve Ray read the business meeting minutes of the 18 October 2003 business meeting. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as read. Motion passed.
8. Treasurer's Report – Steve Ray read the treasurer's report in Den Cook's absence. Ending balance as of September 30, 2004 was \$39,166.11. A motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report. Motion passed.
9. Membership Report – Terry Morris, Member Chairman, gave the membership report. There are 760 paid members for 2004. There was a net gain of 67. Motion was made and seconded to accept the Membership Report. Motion passed.
10. Historian Report – Don Graham presented the History Report. He reported receiving a large amount of historical data on Phu Cat from CMSgt (Ret) John Forgette. He expressed thanks to VSPA member Bill Wagonlander for his assistance in providing contact information for Chief Forgette. Don assisted member Wallace Goudeau by submitting information to Fox cable network (War Stories) about Air/Security Police history. Don advised he submitted information on undocumented Air Base attacks to the Air Force Office of History. This was done to document attacks that are not listed in the Airbase Defense in the Republic of Vietnam book. Don reported he had provided information in Guardmount about how to receive the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross. VSPA representatives, Steve Ray and Ed Wilson attended a dedication ceremony of the "Defender" statue held at Maxwell AFB (Gunter Annex), AL on July 17, 2004. The "Defender" resides at the entrance (guarding) all the other memorials, at the Enlisted Heritage Hall. Motion made and seconded to accept the Historian Report. Motion passed.
11. BX Sales Report – Van Digby gave a report on sales. The BX sales are now in the black. Van reported receiving assistance in shipping products to Tucson and after discussion a plaque was approved by the membership to be presented to the company who assisted. Van reported he would add youth sizes for product shirts, etc.
12. Web Site Report – Don Poss gave an update on the new web pages. The new web site has pull down menu's and members can make changes to their personal data, e.g. e-mail, address, etc. His bother, Larry Poss, continues to provide VSPA a free server. He reported BX sales would soon be added on the site. Don stated that Monty Moore was handling the K-9 pages and that archive pages are available on the site. Members needing assistance with the web site can contact Don and he will assist. *(Continued page 15)*

Business Meeting Minutes – Steve Ray, Secretary

13. New Life Members in attendance were presented their Life Member Pins.
14. Guardmount Report – Steve Gattis gave a report for Den Cook, editor, who could not attend. Past issues of Guardmount are on the web site under “Guardmount Reload”. Members are urged to submit their stories.
15. VSPA History Book – Steve Gattis reported the publisher has extended the deadline several times. VSPA needs 300 orders and only 80 orders have been placed. A handout was made available to all in attendance and all were urged to send in their biographical data. The deadline for submitting information and reserving a book is November 30, 2004.
16. VSPA Incorporation - Steve Gattis reported VSPA has not been incorporated as of this date. He had made contacts and progress is being made toward becoming a 501 (c) 19 organization. Draft By-laws and Constitution have been written. Information on incorporation will be published in Guardmount.
17. Scholarship Report – Steve Gattis gave an update. Brian Thorne, Vice-President and Scholarship Committee Chairman could not attend the reunion. Steve reported there were no applications received for the scholarship in 2003. A new committee Chairman was selected. Committee member Jim Lebowitz was selected as the new Chairman. The scholarship is for \$500.00. Members were urged to submit an application for the year 2005. Applications are available by contacting Jim Lebowitz. A call was made for volunteer's to replace committee member Steve Ray. Dave Adams and Bud Owens agreed to serve. Members of the scholarship committee are Jim Lebowitz (Chairman), Dave Adams, Bud Owens and Albert Habercorn. Motion made and seconded to accept the scholarship committee report. Motion passed.
18. Reunion Site Selection – VSPA members selected by vote the following future reunion sites. Valdosta, GA (Moody AFB).
Selection of the reunion site for 2006: Las Vegas, NV (Nellis AFB).
2007 Washington D.C. The 25th anniversary of the Vietnam Memorial.
The 25th anniversary of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC would be in 2007. He requested consideration for a reunion in November 2007 to be held in Washington DC and for the VSPA is to march as a unit in the 25th anniversary parade. Dates of reunion will have to be moved to November 2007. November 11 is on Sunday in 2007. Hotel contacts will need to be made ASAP.
19. Election: An election was conducted with the following results:
President: Steve Gattis
Vice-President: Hector Ramos
Secretary: Bruce Hadley
Treasurer: Den Cook
Historian: Don Graham

Appointed positions:

BX Sales: Van Digby

Chaplain: Steve Janke

Guardmount Editor: Den Cook

Membership: Terry Morris

Photographer: Tony Morris

Web Master: Don Poss

(Continued page 16)

Business Meeting Minutes – Steve Ray, Secretary

Service Officer (New Position): Junious "Bud" Owens

20. For the Good of the Order:

Many ideas/subjects discussed: Agent Orange exposure, membership types, uniform (updated membership brochure), DAV National Service Officer Program and request to have DAV NSO attend and provide briefing at next meeting, and the names of former Air/Security Police that belonged to the Air Force Security Police Association who had passed away in the last year were read.

In addition three motions were made:

1. Have a design committee come up with an Association Flag to be carried in the parade at the 2007 reunion. There was discussion. Don Graham will serve as Chairman. Members are John Langley, Ken Neal, Ed Way, Don Poss, Terry Morris, Earl Cary. Motion made and seconded. Motion passed.
2. Come up with a recruiter pin to give out to members who recruit new members. Motion made and seconded. Motion passed.
3. Make Kim Bayes an Associate Member of VSPA. Motion made and seconded. Motion passed.

21. Adjournment – Steve Gattis adjourned the meeting at 1250 hours after a motion was made and seconded. Motion passed.

Steven F. Ray
Secretary, Vietnam Security Police Association

Guardmount – Behind the scenes

I would just like to add a few words about the many people who help put guardmount together. .Special Thanks to Frank and Joan Pilson, and Chuck Clemens and his wife for their assistance assembling Guardmount.

Also, a special thanks to all who have contributed articles to the last three editions of Guardmount. Without your help we could have never done the job.

The most gratifying story was Howard Pugh's. Howard was always a strong supporter of the VSPA. Each year he would make a donation, over and above any dues, to the VSPA. It is with a sense of joy that his story was posted prior to his death for Howard and all to see.

We should all take note of Howard and start writing our memories before we are gone and our story is gone forever. I'll take any and all story's for publication in Guardmount.

A special thanks this month to the Digby's, Van, Kerri, and the lady that saved me many hours of work this month, Joyce Digby.

Den

Editors

Charles Myatt
 Dave Dobson
 Don Graham
 Don Poss
 J. Paul
 Jim Watson
 Kari Digby
 Larry McNally
 Sheila Cain
 Steve Janke
 Steve Gattis
 Steve Ray
 Terry Morris
 Tommy Williams
 Van Digby

Contributing Members

Jack Manzi
 Ray Conboy
 Frank Pilson
 Tommy Williams
 Tonny Gonzales
 Bob Combs
 Jim Randall
 Jack Kays
 Barry McLean
 Bob Mitchell
 Don Poss
 Andy
 Bill Marshall
 Jonathan Evans/Terry Strickland
 Wilfred R. Wright
 Richard Bennett
 Howard Pugh
 Paul Mashburn
 William Pete Piazza
 Don Marshall
 Stephen Pippenger
 Bill McKissic
 Ritchie and Dean Toth

BX

Patches:

VSPA Patch _____	\$5.00
QC Patch _____	\$5.00
SP Badge Patch _____	\$4.00
Air Force Vietnam Vet Patch _____	\$4.00
Tet 68 Survivor _____	\$4.00
7 th Air Force Patch _____	\$4.00
POW/MIA Patch _____	\$4.00
I Been There Vietnam Patch _____	\$4.00
Brothers Forever Patch _____	\$4.00
In Memory Patch _____	\$4.00
Vietnam Service Ribbon Patch _____	\$4.00
QC Back Patch (9") _____	\$15.00
U.S. Air Force Back Patch (10") _____	\$15.00
K-9 Patch _____	\$4.00
VSPA Logo Back Patch (8") _____	\$15.00
VSPA Logo Patch (3") _____	\$4.00

Pins:

QC Pin _____	\$4.00
7 th Air Force Pin _____	\$4.00
Air Force Vietnam Vet Pin _____	\$4.00
Tet 68 Survivor Pin _____	\$4.00
POW/MIA Pin _____	\$4.00
POW/MIA Pin w/Eagle _____	\$4.00
POW/MIA Cross w/Black Ribbon _____	\$4.00
In Memory Pin _____	\$4.00
Vietnam Tab Pin _____	\$4.00
Vietnam Base Pins (Bien Hoa, Binh Thuy, Can Ranh Bay, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Phan Rang, Pleiku, Ton Son Nhut) _____	\$4.00
U.S. Air Force (Generic) _____	\$4.00
Vietnam Service Ribbon Pin _____	\$4.00
Vietnam Veteran with Ribbon Bar Pin _____	\$4.00
New Air Force Security Forces Pin _____	\$4.00
Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Pin _____	\$4.00
Vietnam Cross w/Black Ribbon Pin _____	\$4.00
Vietnam Flag with Year Pin _____	\$4.00
VSPA Reunion Pin (Plain) _____	\$5.00
VSPA Reunion Pin (2002) _____	\$5.00
VSPA 10 th Anniversary Pin _____	\$5.00

Stickers:

VSPA Bumper Sticker _____	\$3.00
7 th Air Force, Proudly Serves sticker _____	\$3.00
Vietnam Service Ribbon sticker _____	\$3.00
U.S. Air Force _____	\$3.00
POW/MIA (Inside or Outside) _____	\$3.00
Security Police Shield sticker _____	\$3.00

Jackets and Shirts will be in the next issue of the Guardmount

Add Shipping:	Total Amount	Shipping
	\$0.00-\$25.00	\$3.00
	\$25.01-\$50.00	\$5.00
	\$50.01-\$75.00	\$7.00
	\$75.00 & Up	\$10.00

Hats: (Baseball Style Black)

VSPA Association _____	\$12.00
QC Plain _____	\$12.00
C w/Flight Tab above QC Ranger ,Tiger Phantom, Cobra ,Dragon) _____	\$12.00
Security Police Shield _____	\$12.00
U.S. Air Force Vietnam with Ribbon Bar _____	\$12.00
QC w/K9 Tab above QC, Dog Embroidered on side of hat. _____	\$14.00
Can add K-9 dogs name and/or number for additional charge of \$5.00	

Miscellaneous:

Security Police Qualification Badges		
	Large _____	\$4.00
	Small _____	\$2.00
Paper Weight VSPA Logo _____		\$10.00
Paper Weight Security Police Shield _____		\$10.00
VSPA Stoneware Coffee Mug-Black _____		\$12.00

Coins:

7 th Air Force coin _____	\$12.00
Challenge coin _____	\$12.00

Flags:

USAF (3'x5') _____	\$12.00
USAF and POW/MIA 2 flag set (4'x6") _____	\$4.00
POW/MIA (3'x5') _____	\$12.00

Mouse Pad:

VSPA Logo, Black with Silver Bkgrd _____	\$10.00
--	---------

Wall Print:

Larry Sutherland Wall Print _____	\$1.00
-----------------------------------	--------

License Plates:

SP Qualification front License Plate _____	\$8.00
VVA w/Helicopter front License Plate _____	\$8.00
Motorcycle License Plate Vietnam Vet _____	\$3.00
Motorcycle License Plate POW/MIA _____	\$3.00

New Items: Pewter Items

A.F. Security Police Shield Lapel Pin _____	\$5.00
A.F. Security Police Shield Zipper Pull _____	\$5.00
A.F. Security Police Shield Key Chains _____	\$7.00
A.F. Security Police Shield Christmas Orn. _____	\$12.00
A.F. Security Police Shield Window Display _____	\$12.00
A.F. Security Police Shield Insulated Glass _____	\$15.00
A.F. Security Police Shield Stainless Mug _____	\$15.00

Please Make Checks or Money Order Payable to:
 Vietnam Security Police Association or VSPA
 Send to:
 Van A. Digby
 403 N. Kiesel St.
 Bay City, MI 48706-4317

Awards - 10th Anniversary Reunion Banquet

The following people received awards during our 10th Anniversary Reunion Banquet:

2003 Awards: presented to people who could not attend the reunion last year:

John Langley for his service as the founding President of the VSPA.

Monty and Cathy Moore for their work to assist K-9 Handlers and for maintaining the K-9 Web Page for www.vspa.com.

Tom Bodden for his service as the Bulletin Board Flight Leader for our web page www.vspa.com. (Plaque to be mailed because Tom could not attend again this year).

2004 Awards:

Brian Thorne for his service as our Vice President (plaque to be mailed because Brian could not attend the reunion).

Den Cook for providing the leadership to rescue our quarterly newsletter *Guardmount* (plaque hand carried to Den by Frank and Joan Pilson because Den could not attend the reunion. Frank was introduced as your Chief Stamp Licker. We publicly thanked both **Frank and Joan** for the assistance they have given you).

Hector Ramos for his commitment to the memory of a fallen brother who was killed at Binh Thuy Air Base and for making sure that his family knew that he was one of our heroes.

Bob Mitchell for his dedication to his brother Security Policemen and for the donation of memorial badge/buttons that have been distributed at the reunion for the last three years.

Rob Ellman, Assistant Attorney General for the State of Arizona, for preserving our honor and valor in a treacherous case of stolen valor where a convicted murderer attempted to rewrite the history of air base ground defense operations at Phu Cat Air Base.

Kim Bayes for helping to form the VSPA Sisterhood, for her sensitive handling of PTSD issues and for writing the poetry that continues to heal the wounds that cannot be seen.

The men and women of the **355th Security Forces Squadron** for being the host squadron for our 10th Anniversary Reunion, and for continuing the outstanding tradition of honor and bravery established by the 355th Security Police Squadron at Takhli RTAFB, Thailand.

Steve Ray for his 10 years of service to his brothers in the VSPA. Steve became ill prior to dinner and had to leave the banquet before his awards could be presented. His plaque and a beautiful bust of a Security Policeman wearing a beret will be mailed to him as a gesture of thanks from his brothers in the VSPA.

Steve Gattis, President

REMEMBER THE DATES FOR OUR REUNIONS:

October 7 - 10, 2004 for the VSPA reunion in TUCSON, ARIZONA (Davis-Monthan AFB). Come and help us celebrate our 10th Anniversary!

October 6 - 9, 2005 for the VSPA Reunion in VALDOSTA, GEORGIA (Moody AFB).

Editors note: I did not rescue *Guardmount*, You did, the members of the VSPA brought this publication together, so write those stories and send them in.

**VIETNAM SECURITY
POLICE ASSOCIATION**

W5148 E. Bush
Pardeeville, WI 83954

Don Poss LM 37
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

LANCASTER PA 17603

NOV

CO4

We Take Care of Our Own

*We're on the web at
www.vspa.com*

Membership dues are payable in January 2005.

It is that time to renew your membership. Please check your name and address on the mailing label above. If 04 follows your name then your membership dues will come due the first of January

Please make checks for \$15.00 payable to the "VSPA" and mail to Denis Cook, 1632 Manor Blvd., Lancaster, PA 17603

This is also a good time to consider a Life Membership.

Undocumented Base Attacks:

The Association is looking to document all attacks on our bases in Thailand and Vietnam. Please provide any information you may have on currently undocumented attacks. Contact [REDACTED] if you are not sure if an attack is officially documented.

We will divide these attacks into two categories. One will be for those attacks that you have documentation for and the other will be for those attacks that you remember but have no documentation. We will collect this information, research it and provide the results to the Air Force History and Research Center at Maxwell AFB, AL. Please contact Don Graham at tuyhoa68@att.net or 610-691-6960