



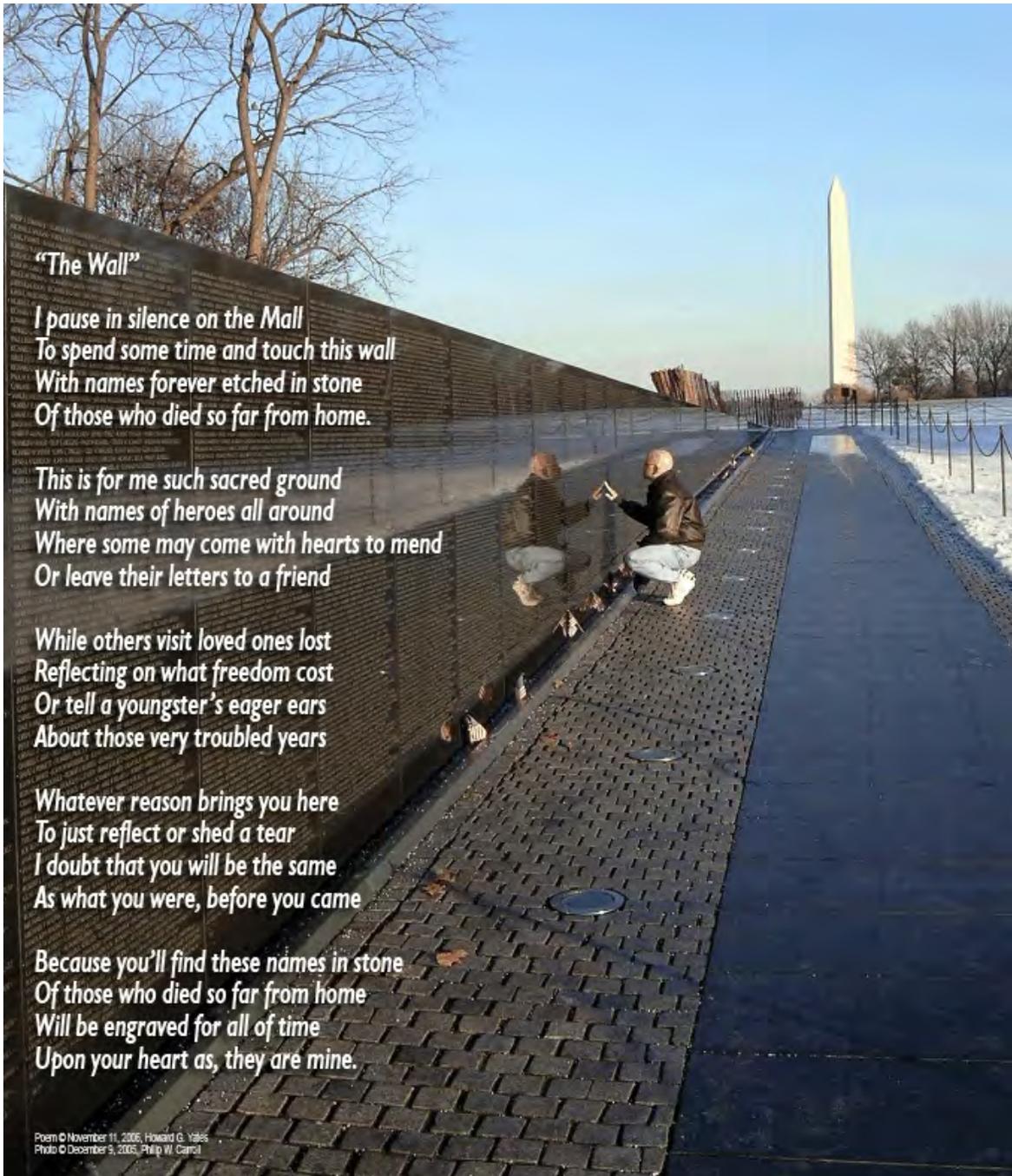
# GUARDMOUNT

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

*"We Take Care of Our Own"*



## 2007 REUNION - WASHINGTON, D.C. THE 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALL



**COVER PHOTO:** Chaplain Jim Stastny taking a rubbing at The Wall. Chaplain Jim takes care of all of us in his ministry as one of our Chaplains. The photo was taken by our Membership Chairman, Phil Carroll, who takes care of the entire association and all new members as he manages our Membership Program. The poem was written by our member, bagpiper, poet and retired career policeman, Howard Yates, who takes care of his own by writing poetry that heals wounds that cannot be seen and playing bagpipes during ceremonies for fallen officers. Howard's son, Kyle, is currently serving as a Security Forces 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. in Kuwait and Iraq.

## OFFICERS AND APPOINTED STAFF MEMBERS FOR 2007/2008

All officers and staff are unpaid members of the Vietnam Security Police Association who volunteered to serve their brothers in the association. Officers were elected in 2006 for a two-year term. Staff members were appointed to assist and advise the officers of the association. The next elections will be held in 2008.

President	Steve Gattis, Cam Ranh Bay 68 – 69, <a href="mailto:SGattis-LM49@vspa.com">SGattis-LM49@vspa.com</a> 254-898-2647
Vice President	Hector Ramos, Binh Thuy 69 – 70, <a href="mailto:hramos123@verszon.net">hramos123@verszon.net</a> 732-969-1577
Secretary	Bruce Hadley, Bien Hoa 61 - 62, <a href="mailto:brunole@juno.com">brunole@juno.com</a> 718-896-1954
Treasurer	Den Cook, Tan Son Nhut 67 - 68 <a href="mailto:vspa_treas@netzero.com">vspa_treas@netzero.com</a> 717-368-0124
Historian	Don Graham, Tuy Hoa 68 - 69 <a href="mailto:tuyhoa68@att.net">tuyhoa68@att.net</a> 717-368-0124

### APPOINTED STAFF MEMBERS

BX Sales Manager	Van Digby, Phan Rang 67 - 68 <a href="mailto:VAD403@sbcglobal.net">VAD403@sbcglobal.net</a> 989-686-3639 Van is assisted by his wife Joyce and their daughter Kari.
Chaplain	Steve Janke, Cam Ranh Bay K-9 69 -70, <a href="mailto:Jank953208@aol.com">Jank953208@aol.com</a> 201-507-9038
Chaplain	Jim Stastny, Korat K-9 70 – 71, <a href="mailto:jimstastny@verizon.net">jimstastny@verizon.net</a> 301-482-2659
Chaplain	Bill Cooley, Cam Ranh Bay K-9 71-72, <a href="mailto:BCAJ@gvtc.com">BCAJ@gvtc.com</a> 830-899-7542
Guardmount	Larry Ernsting, Phan Rang-Safeside, Pleiku, Tuy Hoa, 68 - 70, <a href="mailto:ss821cspa@netscape.net">ss821cspa@netscape.net</a> 785-632-5310
K-9 Kennel Master	Bill Cummings, U-Tapao, K-9 70 - 71, <a href="mailto:usafbrutus@comcast.net">usafbrutus@comcast.net</a> 240-925-1892
Membership	Phil Carroll, Takhli and NKP K-9 70 -71, <a href="mailto:K9nightfighter@msn.com">K9nightfighter@msn.com</a> 503-975-8608
Membership Asst.	Janet Wise Affiliate Member, daughter of Life Member Al Matthews <a href="mailto:Jwise11956@aol.com">Jwise11956@aol.com</a>
Photographer	Tony Morris, Cam Ranh Bay 69 - 70, <a href="mailto:htmorris@gmail.com">htmorris@gmail.com</a> 219-322-4418
Photographer	Steve Hall, Binh Thuy 68 - 69, <a href="mailto:hallstudio@worldnet.att.net">hallstudio@worldnet.att.net</a> 714-634-1132
Photographer	Ken Neal, Ubon 68 - 69, Udorn 74 - 75, <a href="mailto:MAXK000@aol.com">MAXK000@aol.com</a> 310-417-3820
Safeside Liaison	Pete Villarreal, Phan Rang, Bien Hoa-Safeside 68 - 69, NKP 73 -74 <a href="mailto:villa@santanet.org">villa@santanet.org</a> 907-388-6942 Vice President of the Safeside Association
Sergeant-at-Arms	Keith Young, Binh Thuy & Phu Cat 70 - 71, <a href="mailto:kcy9540@aol.com">kcy9540@aol.com</a> 716-549-0715
Service Officer	Bud Owens, Binh Thuy 66 - 67, <a href="mailto:betbudowe@comcast.net">betbudowe@comcast.net</a> 603-778-1990
<b>VSPA WEB SITE:</b>	
Web Master	Don Poss, Da Nang K-9 65 - 66, <a href="mailto:DonPoss-LM37@vspa.com">DonPoss-LM37@vspa.com</a>
K-9 Web Master	Monty Moore, Da Nang and Phu Cat 68 - 70 K-9, <a href="mailto:K-9@vspa.com">K-9@vspa.com</a>
Bulletin Board. Flight Chief	Bill Marshall, Phu Cat 68 - 69, <a href="mailto:bmarshall@mrioc.com">bmarshall@mrioc.com</a> 949-361-1770 Bill is also the President of the SAC Elite Guard Association
QRT Flight Chief	Gary Jones, Udorn 65-66, Phan Rang- Safeside 68-69, Tan Son Nhut 71-72, <a href="mailto:GaryandJJ@hotmail.com">GaryandJJ@hotmail.com</a> 843-851-7427

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

## GUARDMOUNT

This issue of Guardmount is our first on-line issue in color, although the web site does contain black and white scanned copies of all previous issues of Guardmount. The printed version of this issue will be in black and white due to the cost for color. Volume 12, Issue #1 is also our first published issue of Guardmount since February, 2006.

The delay in publishing Guardmount has been the result of many many factors. Our previous editor and publisher, Den Cook, who is also our Treasurer, could no longer do both jobs while still working in a high security printing job that mandated a large amount of overtime. Den's last issue was February, 2006. We looked for a replacement and found Life Member Larry Ernsting who agreed to become the new editor at our last reunion with the agreement that Den Cook would receive Guardmount ready for publishing, have it printed using our existing printer, then stamp and mail to current members using a team of friends. While it was a good plan, several of us (not Larry) had computer problems, old software issues and a learning curve for new software that created delays. When it appeared that we could go to press, Den Cook advised us that the printer we had been using was changing direction in their operation and would no longer be able to print Guardmount. Larry Ernsting, who works in printing management at Kansas State University, then volunteered to do the printing at the university, only to find out that a new law had been enacted in Kansas that prohibited printing for any entity other than a State office or for Kansas State University. The result was that a national bid process had to be conducted to find a printer that could give us a complete, turnkey process, including mailing with a permit.

Bids came in from all over the country for thousands for dollars per issue with the hope that we would contract with them to sell tribute advertising. Several different formats were reviewed, but nothing in the bids with advertising could justify a cost of \$8,000 to \$15,000 per issue. The cost of four issues would deplete our funds within the first year unless we drastically raised our dues. We were eventually able to work with Ag Printing in Kansas to obtain a great bid for the full process with a mailing permit. The best part of the process, besides having the lowest cost available, is that Larry Ernsting has a working relationship with Ag Printing and has used them for university printing with great results. This issue is the outcome of the entire process.

Guardmount is a combined effort among a lot of people, including our members who submit articles, photographs and stories for publication. We hope that you will enjoy this issue and many more to come, now that we are back on schedule to print four issues of Guardmount each year. As you read the rest of this issue, please send your prayers and good wishes to Den Cook and Larry Ernsting. They are both dealing with medical issues that will not allow them to attend the reunion in Washington, D.C. Larry has had knee replacement surgery and Den is scheduled for surgery on November 9 for recurring bladder problems. ~ Steve Gattis

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Steve Gattis

It is time for **REUNION 2007 in Washington D.C.!**

We have a great time at our reunions and they get better every year. They get larger every year, too, and this year will be no exception, especially as we return to The Wall to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the memorial to those who did not survive the war.

We lost 111 Air Policemen and Security Policemen who served with us in Vietnam and Thailand. We knew them as friends and brothers, hooch mates, the voice on the radio, members of our Security Alert Team, the

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!  
Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

QRT, the man on the adjacent post, the K-9 handler who stepped out of the darkness with a ferocious partner, the heavy weapons man, the guy who always talked about home and his favorite food, the son who will always be a hero, the friend who died in our arms, and the men who gave their tomorrows for us, for their families and for their country. As we preserve our history and the hard lessons learned in Vietnam and Thailand with specific words and phrases like TET, Bunker 051, the Mayaguez volunteers, Mike-Mike, H/E, Bunker 10, Safeside, XM148, OP, increments, C-4, claymore, THE FIFTY, Neptune, starlight, lightning battery, P-38, C-rats, B-1A, B-2 Units and even Tango-Papa, we continue to serve them and the sacrifices they made, knowing in our hearts that they would do the same for us.

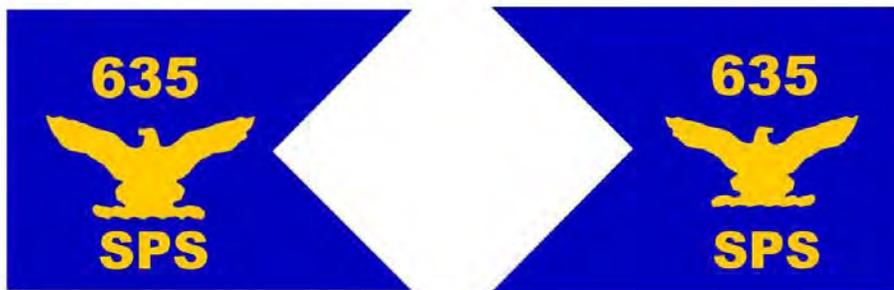
## REUNION INFORMATION

Members voted at the business meeting in 2005 to increase the reunion by one day so that we could have more time together while reducing the pace of the events. The decision was a resounding success at our 2006 reunion in Las Vegas and added flexibility. This year, our reunion will begin on Thursday, November 8 and end on Monday, November 12 after our traditional morning memorial service. For those who remain, there will be special, optional tours (to Gettysburg, the Spy Museum and Memorials in D.C. area) on Monday, November 12 after our memorial service.

Washington D.C. has proven to be an extraordinary challenge due to the multiple events being held over the Veteran’s Day week, starting on November 6. We have been in contact with the lead planners for the Vietnam Veterans of America, the host organization for the Veteran’s Day Parade that will attract thousands of Veterans and their families for the parade that will be held on Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Wall. We are also in contact with the Vietnam Memorial Foundation, the host agency for the memorial service and wreath laying ceremony that will be held at The Wall on Sunday, November 11. The host agencies must interface with 35 different approving agencies in Washington D.C. due to Homeland Security concerns. Our parade committee has done a great job and will continue up to the very last minute and the order to march is given. They have addressed hundreds of issues and have had to make numerous changes to the parade plans in order to address last minute changes mandated by the approving agencies or the host agencies, something that we cannot control but must be prepared to handle.

We owe a great tribute to all of the members of Parade Planning Committee under the leadership of our Vice president, Hector Ramos. They have worked for two years to make the parade a very special event. Sincere thanks are also due for Vicky and Kelly Bateman for 36 guidon flags that will be carried in the parade. The guidons include guidon and 35 of our the guidon and were Vicky! They example below.

one command that represent each squadrons. All of flags are two-sided hand made by look like the



## THE COST OF OUR REUNIONS

For those of you who are concerned about cost, the hotel has been under contract for over a year in order to obtain the lowest rates possible. Hotel rates are very high on weekdays and increased significantly to \$300 as we got closer to the anniversary of The Wall, with thousands expected to converge on Washington D.C. However, due to our early contract, we were able to secure a static rate of \$109 per night from Thursday through Sunday night. Some of you may be able to get a better rate on an individual basis, but we can't do that for 300 to 400 people in the same hotel with planned banquets and meetings. We have also attempted to control the registration fee even though the cost of fuel, meals and other related costs have increased with inflation. Base tours involve significant cost due to the charter buses, the meal on base and the security requirements that have been imposed upon all visitors since 9/11. Even though we plan to use the Metro extensively, our base tour and shuttles to the parade and events at The Wall require charter buses that must be under contract.

The optional special sign-up tours for Gettysburg and Washington D.C. on Monday, November 12, were individually priced and did not affect the basic registration fee of \$195 per person.

While cost is always a factor for our members and in all the planning that we do, remember that the registration fee covers the Hospitality Room, the room for our BX, the reception dinner on Thursday, the noon meal on Friday, the banquet on Saturday, the business meeting on Sunday and the memorial service on Monday, meeting rooms, with buses and all shuttles not associated with the tours on Monday.

## HOTEL INFORMATION

We sold out all of the rooms at the Sheraton hotel where we had 150 rooms under contract. We had an additional 100 rooms available in the Doubletree Hotel approximately one mile away, with shuttle buses running between the hotels at specific times each day. The Reunion Brat (our on-site coordinator) will have someone at each hotel. The overflow hotel is the Doubletree and is the same hotel we used in 1998. It is very nice. The room rate is the same at \$109 plus tax.

## REUNION 2008 - ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

The reunion will be held from October 15 to 18 with a significantly reduced registration fee due to the location. Albuquerque is not as expensive as Washington D.C. or Las Vegas. We will visit Kirtland Air Force Base, the home of the 377<sup>th</sup> - *Proven in Combat*. Start making your plans to attend now.



Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!

Our first on-line edition of *Guardmount* is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)

## MEMBERSHIP

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR HISTORY, WE HAVE OVER 1,100 MEMBERS WHO HAVE REMAINED CURRENT WITH THEIR DUES! THAT INCLUDES OVER 450 LIFE MEMBERS.

We are a very strong organization because of our brotherhood. The sense of brotherhood does not happen by chance. It is part of all of us, a factor based upon our shared experiences while wearing a very special shield and defending bases, aircraft and personnel in Vietnam and Thailand. We extend that brotherhood, by contacting friends, talking to them about the VSPA and inviting them to join the best possible Veteran's Association that has ever come along for Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who served with us in Vietnam and Thailand. We now have a silver Recruiter Pin for those who recruit a new member.

Have you received a postcard in the mail that looks like the card below? If you have, please pay your dues so that we can continue to keep the association strong.



### The Vietnam Security Police Association, Inc.

#### REMINDER TO MEMBERS!

VSPA membership must be renewed annually by paying \$15 dues. Another option is to become a Life Member, as 408 of your fellow members have already done. Our roster shows your dues as being expired (please pardon us if your check is in the mail). This will be a great year to renew; our annual reunion is going to be held in conjunction with the 25th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, D.C. Members of the VSPA will march as a unit in the parade. Even if you're not able to go, you'll want to read all about it in the Restricted Area afterwards.

Send your dues to: VSPA Treasurer      Or pay on-line at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)  
1632 Manor Blvd.  
Lancaster, PA 17603

Questions? Contact: Phil Carroll  
P.O. Box 8  
Gladstone, OR 97027  
([k9nightfighter@msn.com](mailto:k9nightfighter@msn.com))

*Welcome Home!*

Speaking of great things happening for our membership, look at the photograph below of our commemorative knife that the Leatherman Group laser etched for us. Our Membership Chairman, Phil Carroll, will have 50 of these knives at the reunion. The knives are \$50 each with all proceeds going to our Old Dawgs and Pups Program that supports our deployed Security Forces troops and their military working dogs in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Djibouti and Korea. To date, over \$12,000 in supplies has been donated to our troops through the Old Dawgs and Pups Program!



If you are not going to the reunion and would like to order a knife from Phil, please send him email or call him to make your order. The final cost will be \$50 plus a small amount for shipping. You can find all of Phil's contact information on Page 2 under Appointed Staff Members - Membership Chairman. And yes, he is proud to say that he stole the "Nightfighter" portion of his email address from the call-sign of the K-9 posts at Nakhon Phanom. Members are also welcome to mail a request for the knife to him at P.O. Box 8, Gladstone, OR 97027.

For those of you wondering how we were able to donate over \$12,000 in supplies to the troops, the Leatherman Tool Group donated over \$6,000 in value of the very special Surge Tool that is an incredible tool loved by our military working dog handlers in the field.

## **VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION ASSOCIATE (HONORARY) MEMBERSHIPS AWARDED FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE VSPA**

1. **Captain Ken Record, USAF Security Forces - For meritorious service through extensive research of Squadron Histories, Squadron Day Reports, base attacks, awards and decorations documentation, correction of errors in historical records, and assistance in the coordination of awards and decoration verifications.**
2. **Larry Poss, Web Server Owner and Host for the VSPA Website [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com) - For Meritorious Service and his generosity as a distinguished financial contributor who was responsible for saving the VSPA thousands of dollars per year. He donated server space on the World Wide Web, graphics design, site backup and web maintenance services. The value of his personal time, and business donation of server space exceeds \$5,000 per year since 1998, a direct savings of \$45,000 for the VSPA.**
3. **Phil Henry, Business Partner of Larry Poss - For Meritorious Service and his generosity as a distinguished financial contributor who was responsible for saving the VSPA thousands of dollars per year.**
4. **Tim Sypowicz, Business Partner of Larry Poss - For Meritorious Service and his generosity as a distinguished financial contributor who was responsible for saving the VSPA thousands of dollars per year.**
5. **MSgt. Jeff Petty, USAF Security Forces (retired) - For Meritorious Service as a Security Forces Investigator to locate former Air Policemen and Security Policemen through Air Force records, and his consistent effort to locate the burial locations throughout the United States of the 111 men who died while serving as Air Policemen and Security Policemen in Vietnam and Thailand.**
6. **Kimberly Bayes, Reunion Hostess for the Reunion BRAT, Daughter of a Retired U.S. Army Helicopter Pilot Veteran of Vietnam - For Meritorious Service as a friend to the members of the VSPA and their families throughout the year, from reunion to reunion, year after year since 1999. Kim suggested and personally coordinated the development of the VSPA Sisterhood so that the members of the group would have a support system among each other throughout the year as they worked to take care of those who take care of their own. As a Licensed Clinical Therapist with extensive experience working with Veterans and issues related to PTSD, Kim developed presentations on PTSD for the families of our members. The presentations were so well received by the families and members that she made herself available at no cost throughout the year to assist our members and their families. Kim has written poetry that has healed the unseen wounds of many of our members. She dedicated her poem "Quiet Warrior" to her friends in the Vietnam Security Police Association.**
7. **Helen Lehman, Mother of A/1C Millard W. Lehman, KIA Binh Thuy 8 July 1966 -Affectionately known as "Mom" to those who have met her at our reunions. For Meritorious Service as our Gold Star Mother. For assisting members of the VSPA and the VSPA Sisterhood who were**

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

experiencing grief, for sharing her resilient spirit with everyone she met at our reunions, for representing all of our Mothers with her hugs and smiles, and for being an essential part of our lives.

8. **Erlyce Pekas, Fiancee of A/1C Millard W. Lehman, KIA Binh Thuy 8 July 1966 - For Meritorious Service as a friend to the members of the VSPA and the VSPA Sisterhood. For sharing her wonderful sense of life with everyone she met at our reunions, for helping the Sisterhood cope with catastrophic loss, and for traveling throughout the country to assist our members whenever possible.**
9. **MSgt. Tim Waage, USAF Security Forces (retired) - For Meritorious Service, honor and integrity in his outstanding work to honor our service in Vietnam and Thailand. For designing and manufacturing a highly distinctive Commemorative Air Police / Security Police Shield with a QC crest at no cost to the VSPA, for managing the brilliant quality of each shield, and for making it possible for our members to have their name, squadron or base etched onto the shield. MSgt. Waage was extraordinarily generous by accepting all risk, personally funding the Commemorative Shields, and taking no profit from the sale of the shield so that he could make the shield available at the lowest cost possible for all VSPA members.**

## VSPA MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

The following information will be placed in a special location on our web site in the near future. The next issue of Guardmount will include those who receive awards at the 2007 reunion. We extend our sincere thanks for their volunteer service to the VSPA and for their commitment to our country. We now have a gold Meritorious Service pin for those who have received awards from the VSPA.

### 2006

Jackie Kays in recognition of his heroic actions on November 21, 1965 to rescue the crew of a C-123b that had crashed outside of the perimeter of Da Nang Air Base, South Vietnam.

Chaplain Steve Janke for his continuing service to our brotherhood by being one of the very few to make themselves available to their brothers in the VSPA 24-hours a day throughout the year.

Bill Marshall for his tireless work as our Bulletin Board Flight Leader to maintain our on-line bulletin boards.

Associate Member Tim Waage for donating 200 miniature VSPA commemorative badge lapel pins.

Robert Lark for donating a life membership to deployed SMSGT Ben Brown in recognition for his continuing service to our country from Vietnam to Iraq.

Richard Nucifora for his generous support of the VSPA and the production of T-shirts with the VSPA Flag.

Robert Perro for his preservation of our history through music and for his performance at our awards banquet.

Al Matthews for his generosity in the funding and facilitation of the Warriors Medal of Valor from the Native American Nations.

Pete Piazza for his effort to make presentations regarding the 1968 TET Offensive in support of our mission to preserve the history of our service in South Vietnam.

Phil Carroll for his work to modernize our Membership Program.

Associate Member Helen Lehman, our Gold Star Mother of Millard Lehman, for the love that she gives to each of us as she represents our Mothers.

Associate Member Erlyce Pekas, our Gold Star Sweetheart of Millard Lehman, for her generosity and the love that she shares with the VSPA.

Associate Member Kim Bayes for her continuing effort to preserve our history and honor our service through her published poetry that has healed wounds that could not be seen.

Ken Neal for his artistic support through the creation and donation of challenge coins, his generous financial support of the VSPA and the Nemo War Dogs Heroes Memorial, and for his financial support of our program for deployed troops -The Old Dawgs and Pups Program.

Monty Moore for his work as the VSPA K-9 Web Master and for coordinating the adoption of deployed Security Forces personnel throughout Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa.

Bill Cummings, Terry Strickland, Kelly Bateman and Ernest Childers for their preservation of security police history through the funding and establishment of the Nemo War Dogs Heroes Memorial at Lackland AFB.

Larry Poss (Associate Member) for personal programming of new and essential elements of the VSPA web site and for his generosity in providing the award winning VSPA website and server space at NO COST to the VSPA, a cost equaling \$50,000 over several years.

Kent Miller for his generosity in donating to the VSPA each year and for providing a Life Membership as an award for outstanding service which was given to Den Cook in 2005.

Vern Anderson and his wife, Sharon, for their work to coordinate the adoption of deployed security forces troops and their K-9 partners.

John Homa for assistance with the K-9 web pages, for recruiting 19 K-9 members into the VSPA, including four Life Members, for his assistance to David Adams and the Thailand Agent Orange Project, for his assistance in the development of the memorial at Gunter AFB, Alabama, for being the fund raising chairman for the National War Dog Memorial, and for his assistance to VSPA Kennel Master Bill Cummings.

Bill Wigginton for his dedication to preserving our history through the National War Dog Memorial and for his public information displays regarding air policemen and security policemen who had K9 partners in Vietnam and Thailand.

The Leatherman Tool Group for their donation of the "SURGE" Tool to the troops we support through our Old Dawgs and Pups Program, and for creating their locking blade tribute knife honoring our service in Vietnam and Thailand.

Van and Joyce Digby for their ongoing personal commitment to manage, update and expand the BX Operation from a few boxes to a full store that is shipped to and from the reunion on pallets.

Earl Cary for his financial generosity and support of the VSPA.

Claude Hebert for his financial generosity and support of the VSPA.

Steve Gattis for his continuing service as President of the VSPA.

## 2005

Kari Digby for her assistance in running the BX for several years while Van and Joyce Digby were on the road.

Frank and Joan Pilson for their consistent effort to help Den Cook with Guardmount.

Retired Security Forces Master Sgt. Tim Waage for the development of the Vietnam Commemorative Shield and for paying all of the up-front cost to do so. He was made an Associate Member by unanimous vote at the business meeting.

Brett Gober of Classic Rings, the manufacturer of the donated Security Police Rings that we have given away in our raffle every year since 1999. He donated TWO rings in 2005, 2006 and again in 2007.

David Adams for his work to have the use of Agent Orange in Thailand recognized by the Air Force and the VA.

Janet Wise for her dedication, financial generosity with membership, raffle donations and support of the VSPA.

Al Matthews for his dedication, financial generosity, raffle donations and support of the VSPA. He also provided several pounds of BBQ with sauce in 2004 and 2005 for the hospitality room.

Saginaw Knitting Mills for their support of the BX operation and development of high quality memorabilia for the VSPA.

Don Graham for his work to coordinate the committee on the VSPA Flag design.

Ken Neal for his work on the VSPA Flag design.

Jim Jerome for his design, funding and manufacturing of a VSPA limited edition belt buckle.

"Monk" Pope for his research, development and funding of a CD with music from the Vietnam Era.

Frank Ybarbo for his development and selfless presentation of information to the VSPA Sisterhood in order to promote understanding of issues related to PTSD.

Ron Wheelock for his dedication to our motto "We take care of our own" by providing memberships and a Life Membership in the VSPA.

Sheila Cain for her help to develop, form and maintain the VSPA Sisterhood.

Bob Mitchell for coordination of the very first on-line reunion for those who could not attend the reunions in person.

Bud Owens for his work and assistance to members as the VSPA Service Officer.

Don Poss for his continuing excellence and dedication as our web master.

Bill Cummings for his coordination of K-9 recruitment into the VSPA and coordination of the "Old Dawgs and Pup Adoption Program" to support our deployed security forces personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pete Villarreal for starting the hospitality room tradition of regional foods and for his essential coordination and recruitment within the Safeside Association.

J.B. McGuire for assisting with the hospitality room tradition of regional foods and for personally coordinating a program to support our deployed security forces personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Jackie Kays for his poetry and writing that has become a source of healing wounds that cannot be seen (for our members with PTSD).

Steve Gattis for leadership, commitment and dedication to the VSPA.

## 2004

Steve Ray for 10 years of leadership as a member of the board of directors.

Den Cook for his work as editor and publisher of Guardmount.

Hector Ramos for his commitment to keeping the memory of a fallen brother alive.

Brian Thorne for his service as Vice President of the VSPA.

Kim Bayes for her poetry, for working with our members throughout the year on issues of PTSD. Kim was also awarded an Associate Membership by unanimous vote at the business meeting.

Bob Mitchell for providing memorial buttons at no cost to the membership for three years.

## 2003

Van and Joyce Digby for taking over the BX after Past President Mike Daoust passed away unexpectedly shortly after the reunion in 2002.

Kim Bayes for her dedication and commitment to our motto "We take care of our own" and for her assistance in the formation of the VSPA Sisterhood.

Tom Bodden for his work to assist Don Poss as the Bulletin Board Flight Leader.

Monte and Cathy Moore for their work to assist Don Poss with the development and maintenance of the VSPA K-9 web site (presented in 2004 due to Monty's illness in 2003).

John Langley as our founding President.

Tony Morris for his work as our photographer and for continuous assistance with our raffle.

Johnny Zolondz for his assistance with our raffle and fund raising year after year.

Barry McLean for living our motto We Take Care of Our Own and starting the tradition of giving a life membership to a friend.

Steve Janke for his service as the VSPA Chaplain.

Linda Irvine owner of The Reunion Brat for five years of outstanding service to the VSPA.

Larry Breazeale for his development of a Security Police memorial combat wreath to commemorate the deaths of the 111 who did not survive the war in Vietnam and Thailand, and for numerous public presentations and recruitment displays on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day for several years.

Den Cook for his work as VSPA Treasurer for four years.

Don Graham for his service as VSPA Historian.

## 2002

Kevin Fitzgerald as our Past President and for providing leadership upon the death of VSPA President Ted Janiak.

Steve Gattis for leadership in the absence of President Kevin Fitzgerald who was drawn away from his VSPA duties in 2001 to provided significant assistance in the investigation of the 9/11 terrorists.

Dave Dobson for his years of work on Guardmount.

Don Poss for his work as web master of [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com).

Larry Poss (Don's brother) and his two partners were awarded Associate Memberships and given plaques to commemorate their generosity in providing free server space to host the VSPA web site.

## 2001

Terry Morris as a founding member of the VSPA and his work as the Membership Chairman since 1995.

## 2000

Steve Ray for his work to form the VSPA and his work as the Secretary and Treasurer of the Association since 1995.

## 1997

Don Poss for developing the VSPA Web site.

Mickey Reede for coordinating the reunion in Pensacola.

Dave Dobson for his work on Guardmount.

## 1996

Associate Member Captain Ken Record for his effort to identify our Air Policemen and Security Policemen who were Killed in action for his work to identify those who received medals for valor.

John Langley for his effort to establish and build the association.

Terry Morris for his recruiting efforts.

Steve Ray for his work on behalf of the association.

## 1995

Terry Morris and Steve Ray for outstanding service to our group.

The Warriors Medal of Valor  
from the  
Native American Nations of the United States

2005 - Alvin Matthews

2006 - Kent Miller, Jackie Kays, Don Poss and Steve Gattis

2007 - To be announced

This year at our reunion we will again honor some of our heroes and members with the Warriors Medal of Valor from the Native American Nations. For those members who are not familiar with the Warriors Medal, it was created and crafted by a Native American Chief who served in Vietnam. The medal may be awarded to any deserving Vietnam Veteran and is not limited to Native Americans. Our ability and opportunity to award the Medal has been approved by the local Tribal Council. Life Member Alvin Matthews is the Chairman of the VSPA Committee for the selection and presentation of the Warriors Medal of Valor. He was the first VSPA member to receive the Warriors Medal of Valor for his service in Vietnam. He received his medal from a local Chief while attending a Cherokee Pow Wow. Since



then, he has worked to make it possible for the VSPA to present the medal. Al made all of the arrangements to present the Warriors Medal of Valor in 2006 and 2007, and personally financed the awards for our members.

The presentation last year was a very moving experience and an honor for all recipients. Jackie Kays could not attend the reunion due to health reasons. His medal and certificate were presented to him by Life Member Lew Goldberg, who lives near Jackie. Jackie also received Life Membership #366 from Al as a tribute for his actions at Da Nang in 1995 to rescue the crew of a C-123b that had crashed outside of the perimeter of Da Nang.

## CHAPLAIN PROGRAM

We are incredibly fortunate to have three devoted men who served with us in Vietnam and now serve God as they take care of their own by serving us as our Chaplains. These very fine men are Chaplain Steve Janke, Chaplain Bill Cooley and Chaplain Jim Stastny. Each of them served as a K-9 handler and carries the memories of their K-9 partners deep within their hearts. Don't hesitate to contact one or all of them. Their contact information is on Page 2 - Appointed Staff - Chaplain.

The following is from Chaplain Steve:

### **A Christian.....**

Christians.....When I say, "I am a Christian" I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin'." I'm whispering, "I was lost, now I'm found and forgiven." When I say, "I am a Christian" I don't speak of this with pride. I'm confessing that I stumble and need Christ to be my guide. When I say, "I am a Christian" I'm not trying to be strong. I'm professing that I'm weak and need His strength to carry on. When I say, "I am a Christian" I'm not bragging of success. I'm admitting I have failed and need God to clean my mess. When I say, "I am a Christian" I'm not claiming to be perfect. My flaws are far too visible But, God believes I am worth it. When I say, "I am a Christian" I still feel the sting of pain. I have my share of heartaches, so I call upon His name. When I say, "I am a Christian" I'm not holier than thou, I'm just a simple sinner who received God's good grace, somehow! Author unknown, but it sure is how I feel. Thank God for His blessings. ~ Chaplain Steve

## OUR WAR STORIES

Editor's Note: If you think these stories are good, you should hear the war stories told in our Hospitality Room during our reunions!

### **Ubon Joy Ride – Mark Brooks - Ubon 72 - 73**

What is the OSI jeep doing in the Intel shop? Enter the door and feel the caress of the cool air. Some guy in civilian clothes talking to Ken. Ken says, "Hi Mark. This is Agent O' Mally (for you Cheech and Chong fans) of the OSI; he has something he wants to ask you about." I look at the agent and say OK. Here's the pitch, in the last three weeks they have received 14 reports of a group of 12 to 21 men with backpacks and armed with AK47's. They have been seen within 5 kilometers of the base along the main road from UBon to Laos. Would I make a sweep down that road tonight and see what might happen? My immediate reaction is to say "are you out of you ever lovin' mind? You know I work out there unarmed." But I hold my tongue. I tell the agent that it would depend on the Thai Police, and if they would be willing to make a sweep out that far. He would have to ask the driver if he would be willing to do it or not. I also tell him that I am going to arm myself. His only comment is that 'what he doesn't know won't hurt me'. Cool tacit approval for a fool's errand and a fool to go on it. One small problem.... The armorer won't let me have my M16; "Hey, you know the rules". (Status of Forces Agreement with Thailand said American military personnel would not be armed off the installation.) Damn! Ken got the M79 they "let" us take as well as the buckshot rounds bought on the black market hidden away by those before us (thanks guys). He also has the box of flares for the launcher. Now where to get a rifle? Ernie might give me his, he's got the Gofer patrol and won't need it. So I told what was fixing to go down, called in my friendship card and asked him to let me have his rifle. With barely a hesitation he said OK. He went and got his rifle and handed it over with out a comment. I also hit up a couple of K-9 troopers for some of their "extra" ammo. So away we went; Ken with the M79, the driver, three Thai cops, with worn out M2

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

carbines and me with an M16 and 120 rounds. Not exactly loaded for bear, but hopefully we would not see anyone. We knew that radio communications would be real tough because the Motorolas had a range of about 3-ft, as you well know. We knew we would likely be out of communication with CSC for most of the sweep. Washington, in the other patrol, would stay to the side of the base closest to us to hopefully relay messages if we screwed up and bumped into these guys or they bumped into us. By the time we crossed the river we were out of communication with CSC and we weren't even in the possible contact zone. Well, once we got out in the country and started the sweep, that driver floored the gas and we raced down the road. Dark –Rats, it was dark! Rotten night vision; what the heck are we going to do if they ambush us? We won't have any night vision, we won't be able to see them, and they will be able to see us....Why is this trip really getting down to being unnecessary? Well, what the heck; enjoy the ride 'cuz you won't get out of the jeep alive anyway if something happens. Then it hit me; the cold realization that the M16 in my lap will get a very good man in a heap of trouble should something happen to me. Oh man, what the heck did I do...The ride continues down the highway that seems to go forever. The driver was told to just take us out the 5 clicks and turn around, but we keep going. Finally, we get to a turn in the road where the direction is east; we are now out about 15 k which is about half way between UBon and Laos. The driver knows of a Thai policeman in the area and we wind up at his bungalow, and spend a few minutes in this very small village talking with the Thai cop the driver knew. The cop doesn't know anything; he hasn't had any reports. (Imagine?). We then head back to the base. Forty-five minutes later the sweep is history. We didn't see any thing (couldn't if we had wanted to), no contact with the bad guys (thank goodness); just 90 minutes of being very tense. We take Ken back to CSC to turn in the M79 and let him get back to the Intel shop. Now you would think that the OSI agent that thought it was so important for Ken and I and the Thai police to do something out of the ordinary would have been there to at least determine if there was anything useful to be learned. Guess what?...yep you got it. NO agent. Guess the joke or whatever was on us. So what is the point to this rambling story? Simply to recognize some stand up men: Ken Olson and Ernie Butts and Washington. Ken, because you went with me when you didn't have to. You could have stayed in the Intel Shop but chose to go on this run. Ernie, because you took a big chance for me. You risked getting into a bunch of trouble because of me, and I still owe you big time. To Washington, because you would have had to pick up the pieces. To the driver, Sgt. Sootah, because he agreed to take us. The next night a different driver refused to do it. To the three Thai cops that went with us, because a month after I came home they were killed in an ambush on the Laotian border that all but wiped out the Special Action Force for the province..

## From the Freezer to the Fire

By Larry Fleming, Life Member #131 - Nha Trang 68 - 69

We landed in Cam Ranh Bay at about 8 or 9 hundred hours. As I looked out the window of our big commercial airline everyone could see the tarmac was as busy as ants. The ground crew had the belly doors open before we came to a full stop. The Captain of the aircraft was on the intercom telling all of us new in-country passengers to deplane ASAP. Having not had any sleep in probably 30 hours none of us moved as fast as we should have. I think I was seated about the middle of the plane, so as we were taught in basic training it was heel and toe with no talking. The intercom was giving instructions as to where we were to report once we were on the flight line. As I neared the door I could smell the outside air and all the new stuff I had never smelled before.

There was no hydraulic canopied gate that rolled up to the door like at a real airport, but some kind of truck with stair steps and handrails. I cleared the door and noticed how bright and hot it was in this new temporary homeland of mine. I headed where I was supposed to go, I think. This airport was as busy as DFW the day before Thanksgiving, the difference was this was a military operation and they were trying to process hundreds of people to their in-country duty stations. Courtesy and our repeat business was not an inkling of their consideration.

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

Our present situation had been compounded 6 or 8 hours earlier by a series of events that I would become more and more familiar with for the next 12 months. As we began our descent into Cam Ranh Bay I could feel the big jet begin to nose up and bank to the left. It was not a normal turn as we all began to look out the windows into the blackness of the night, we asked and wondered what was going on. In less than a minute our questions were answered. The captain of our large air cruiser keyed the intercom mike and calmly informed us we could not land in Cam Ranh Bay at the present time because they were under rocket and mortar fire. You could have heard a pin drop at 30,000 feet. Not one of probably 200 people on that plane said a word. The captain told us we were headed for Guam to wait until daylight and then try again. My first thought was, let's just keep going east like to L A or San Diego and try again in a couple of years.

As we cruised toward Guam I was thinking about how I came to be in this situation. Oh yes I volunteered!! It seems as though about 6 months earlier I was sitting in Minot, North Dakota guarding these missiles from potential unfriendlies. Coming to the realization that I could not stand the cold weather, I told myself I need a transfer out of here. The first chance I had I found some desk clerk in personnel and told him I needed to be detached from Minot. Without looking up from what he was doing he simply said Southeast Asia. I knew where that was and I was not interested. I departed personnel. The next week a three-day polar freeze of about -30 F sent me back to personnel. I informed another clerk I was from West Texas and when I signed up my recruiter told me and my best friend that we could be air traffic controllers and be stationed in Arizona, New Mexico or Texas. My best friend got to drive a gas truck in POL and I became an Air Policeman. The clerk said Southeast Asia is the only place I could go to get out of Minot. I filled out the paperwork and in January of 1968 I got my request.

We landed in Guam and sat on the tarmac a few hours giving everybody too much time to think. This may have been a good thing because I came to the decision that this is what hand I had been dealt and I was going to have to make the best of it. At the first sign of light we took off to try Cam Ranh Bay again. This time we made it in without incident.

After a hurried processing I was informed where to go to get a ride to my duty station. I was going to spend my 12 months at a place called Nha Trang. I hooked up with a C 123 headed to Nha Trang and was on the ground in about 15 minutes. I found my way to AP headquarters and reported to the First Sergeant. I told him my story about not having any sleep for a long time and how I needed something to eat. With everything finally settling down I found a bunk and was told to report to CSC the next morning to get a duty assignment.

About 16 or 17 hundred hours that day I was able to get into a bunk. The next thing I remember was loud explosions, men running, someone yelling get to the bunkers and a new word I had never heard in this context but I immediately knew what it meant, "INCOMING". I made it to the latrine, which was heavily sandbagged and curled up in a fetal position in my underwear. Some big E-7 yelled at me to get my gear and get on post. I responded I had just arrived and was wearing all the gear I had. He welcomed me to Viet Nam and told me to stay where I was and keep my F\_\_\_ing head down.

I had just been baptized into TET 1968.

## Flies in Our Soup

by G. Ernest Govea - Bien Hoa 68 - 69

"Hey, Govea, get up man!" "C' mon, we're going to one of the bars." I looked up into the rough face of Richard Diaz from Inglewood, California. I was lying in my bunk face down, trying to get some sleep to little avail. I had been trying all day to get some sleep, but the constant roar of jet fighters going out to kill Charlie, the heat,

the humidity, the light, all conspired to keep me from sleeping. It was making me wonder if I was going to survive this year in Vietnam, a year I had just started. And now, Richard Diaz and two guys standing behind him were asking me to join them in going to a bar on the base.

I remembered what “Sarge” had told us about the bars. “Sarge” was a three-stripe buck sergeant who had responsibility for indoctrinating and training us newly arrived troops in Vietnam. He had just re-enlisted for another four years and was an old guy, about twenty-three. He had short-cropped blond hair and he knew everything there was to know about life, love and war. He supervised our weapons training and had taken us all around the base. He showed us Bunker Hill -10, where Captain Reginald Maisey and an “augee” had been killed repelling a major Viet Cong ground attack several months earlier. He showed us the bomb dump and told us about how an enemy rocket had blown it up with such an explosion that everyone thought all the Security Police in Abel area had been wiped out.

The next morning, when they came down to the squadron area, there was a lot of hand shaking and backslapping with comments like, “Man, we thought we’d lost you guys.” Sarge also told us to “Stay away from the bars.” “If you go to the bars, a girl is going to come over and sit on your lap and ask you to buy her a drink.” “It’s going to cost you five bucks and all it is, a glass of Coke with a drop of whiskey on top, so stay away from them!” There was no way I was going to one of those bars. Five bucks was real money. “Well,” I said to Diaz, “Sarge told us to stay away from those bars.” “Forget him!” Said Diaz. “C’mon, get up, let’s go!!” “Well, alright, “I said feeling my resolve dissipate. I got up and put on my fatigues and jungle boots and we went. I had seen the bars from outside. They were just shacks. As soon as we walked into the bar I felt uncomfortable. Having just turned nineteen and being newly arrived in Vietnam, I was really just a boy. I had never even dated, and seeing those girls with heavy makeup hanging onto GI’s made me feel like I was in foreign territory. All the GI’s looked like they were experienced and knew the score, but I felt out of place. Then I saw something I could not believe. It was “Sarge,” drunk as a skunk and sitting at a table with some girls. I quickly glanced away, not wanting to embarrass him or myself, but not before we made eye contact. I could feel his eyes burning into my back as we walked past him and sat at a table. Occasionally, I would glance over at him, and too often found him glaring at me. To Diaz and the other two guys, Sarge was just another troop and they paid him no mind. After a while, Sarge got up and staggered over to our table and sat next to me. In slurred but serious speech he said, “Govea, I thought I told you to stay away from these bars.” His intoxication made me bold enough to ask “Well..., what are you doing here Sarge?” “Darn it Govea!!” he shouted, “I’m checking up on you guys!”

I had known Richard Diaz casually at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. I worked Security and he worked Law Enforcement. One day, LE was short one man and asked for a volunteer. I raised my hand because the LE uniforms were so sharp. I too, wanted to wear the white hat, white gloves, white scarf and white bootlaces over the dark blue uniform, and thought I looked pretty spiffy when I did. What I didn’t know was that volunteering once meant that from there on out, when LE was short, I was assigned to help out no matter what. One day, I worked the main gate with Diaz. Later he would tell me, “Man, when you showed up at the main gate, you were so skinny I thought that if a strong breeze came along it would blow you away.” He left for Bien Hoa months before I did and when I ran into him one hot, clear day he blurted out, “What are you doing here?”

One afternoon, a couple of weeks after my first bar experience, he came over and said, “Let’s go over to the bar and get some soup.” I couldn’t believe my ears. Eat in that place, that dilapidated shack where you could see rats running around? I said, “You’ve got to be kidding, I wouldn’t eat there.” “I’ve eaten there before,” he said, “they’ve got steaks and everything, it’s better than chow hall food.” “C-rats are better than chow hall food” I said, “but at least it’s clean.” “That’s what you think” he said. Months later, when forty some SP’s took sick from eating in the chow hall, I would realize he was right, but for now I could not reconcile myself to eating in one of the bars. “I’ll go with you,” I said, “but I am not eating.” I was still going through the process of adjusting to Vietnam.

As part of that process which we all went through, I was very reluctantly surrendering my standards of hygiene. I was learning that I was going to have to dramatically lower my standards or go crazy. I was realizing too that if I didn't lower my standards, in the end I would have neither my standards nor my sanity, and it was better to keep at least one of the two. I was learning to shower in water that was "non-potable" and often smelled like it came from the toilets. Its yellow-brown color didn't give much comfort about what might be in it. I was already developing "jungle rot" in between my toes, armpits and other places, and would soon learn that the white powder in the little green can could control it but not eliminate it. When the water was shut off for a few hours each day, you had to use a toilet that had already been used by two or three other guys and had not been flushed. Eating without washing our hands became the norm, and soon we thought nothing of it. Mama-san brought back our washed fatigues often smelling worse than when she took them. We all smelled bad, but fortunately became accustomed to our stink so then it wasn't so bad. I found that I went for days without brushing my teeth, as I believed it was better than rinsing my mouth with the same water we showered in...when it was available.

We arrived at the bar and went into the restaurant, if one can call a rat-infested shack with tables and bench chairs that wouldn't be acceptable at a campground a restaurant. I don't know how, but Diaz got me to order some soup, although what I was going to do with it I had no idea anything but eat it. Soon, the waitress, a springy, young Vietnamese girl with no makeup came over with two large bowls of steaming soup and set them before us. Diaz began to gulp his down. I stared at mine, not knowing what to do with it. "Eat it," Diaz said. I stared at it and curled my upper lip in disdain. "I don't think I can eat this," I said. "What, you're going to let it go to waste!?" He asked incredulously. Just then, my good buddy Steve Bauer, and two other guys walked in. Steve was a blond surfer boy from Burbank, California and Diaz and I had all been stationed at Langley, AFB together. Pretty soon, I had four guys saying, "eat it, eat it." I stared at the bowl. Suddenly, Steve Bauer stuck his thumb and index finger into my soup and pulled out a small shrimp. "Look, shrimp," he said, and stuck it in his mouth. I looked at him for a moment, he was still alive. Then... I put my spoon into the bowl, filled it with broth and ate it. IT WAS GOOD!! Better than anything I had eaten at the chow hall and even better than C-rations. I began to eat. There was shrimp, beef, noodles and other stuff I could not identify but it was tasty. My Mom was a really good cook and I knew what good food tasted like.

After that, I would go to Diaz and say, "Let's go get some soup." By now I had adjusted. I was changing in other ways, although I didn't actually know it. I had jungle rot and lots of it. So what? The white powder in the little green can did a reasonable job of keeping it from spreading, as long as you didn't stop using it.

At night, while on duty out on the perimeter, I was bitten by chiggers. In the morning while in the chow hall having breakfast, I would roll up my sleeves and would see large, angry, raised, red patches of skin all over my arms. Using a toilet that had been used and not flushed was no big deal, but I did prefer digging a "cat hole" while out on the distant perimeter. Stinky water was welcome because it was there. My teeth were not brushed for days at a time, but so what, they were still in my head weren't they? I stunk so bad it was pointed out to me by a young lady while on R&R in Taiwan, but I didn't care, I couldn't smell anything. I had adjusted, I was becoming a Vietnam vet and I was proud of it, stink and all. My hygiene standards were lower than they had ever been in my life or ever would be again, but in exchange I was keeping my sanity. Anyway, what choice did I have?

One day, Diaz asked me if I wanted to go eat some Vietnamese soup. "Let's go!" I said eagerly. We went over to the shack and ordered our favorite. The shack didn't look like a shack anymore. It hadn't changed, but I had. I'd just gotten used to it. It was part of my environment and I felt comfortable in it. While waiting for our soup we engaged in mindless chatter. "You see that Spooky pouring fire down on Charlie off Bravo area last night?" "Yeah, Hueys too. "Charlie was in a world-a-hurt man, must have been pretty messy down there." "I imagine they were all ripped up." "Yeah, that Spooky kept dropping flares and tore that place up, and those Hueys were steering clear of Spooky's fire too." "Heck yeah, they didn't want to get wasted by Spooky." After a while, the

young girl brought us our soup and also a big smile. We were regular customers. I didn't really know her but I had come to like her. "Thank you so much," I said looking her in the eyes. She diverted her eyes shyly, and with a singsong voice said "You waacome!" Diaz and I dug in. After a few minutes Diaz stopped eating. "Look at this" he said. In his soup spoon was a large, fresh green fly. "Well throw it on the floor," I said, unimpressed, and continued eating. But for some odd reason, it had disgusted Diaz. I knew both of our bowls had come from the same pot, but I didn't care, I had adjusted. I had survived a few things by now and a big green fly in our soup was not worth a second thought. Who knows how many times there had been flies in our soup probably every time. A few times, I had looked into the tiny kitchen and I could see Papa-san in there stirring a big caldron with sweat from his forehead falling into the soup, but I didn't care, I had adjusted, I had changed. But now, Diaz was really turned off. "C' mon let's go" he said. "What, you're going to let it go to waste!?" I asked incredulously. "Just throw it on the floor, what's wrong with you?!" A dead fly on the floor would not have even been noticed in this place. But Diaz wouldn't listen to reason. "Let's go," he said, and got up. I had to decide whether to stay loyal to my friend or finish my delicious soup that had a fly in it. It was a tough decision. But I got up and followed Diaz to the door. When we got to the door, I looked back over my shoulder longingly at my soup. I wanted to go back and eat it. Diaz had left his soup spoon on the table with the fly in it.

As the months dragged on, I continued to change in other ways, although I would not know it until I had left Vietnam. Day after day I struggled to find sleep in the heat, humidity and noise. Night after night I struggled to stay awake, sometimes so consumed with exhaustion and fatigue that all I could think of was plunging into my bunk. At night I watched Spookies and Hueys pouring fire down from the sky, or I'd see a B-52 raid off in the distance. One night, there was one so close another SP called in and asked if we were under attack because the concussions were so great. "Be advised," replied Central Security Control, "that's a B-52 raid five clicks west of the base." Another night, when I was supposed to be off, rockets slammed into the base. I had been drinking heavily but reported for duty as required. I was soon recruited to help load ammo onto a flat bed truck that was taking it out to the perimeter. Perhaps because my judgment was off from my drinking, I lifted a 120 lb. box of —60 ammo the wrong way. A moment later I felt a burning sensation in my lower abdomen and I knew I had ripped a muscle and had a hernia. I spent three weeks in three hospitals and saw hundreds of young men with all kinds of ugly wounds. I learned there are countless ways to get burned in combat. And I saw one young man who shot himself in the foot to avoid going into the fight. At Vung Tau, where I had surgery, there were Vietnamese patients—men, women and children. Some had been wounded by friendly fire, others by unfriendly fire. Others had been injured in various ways. Many nights, I had watched Air Force bombs exploding and helicopters firing their weapons at targets on the ground. But like the pilots who dropped the ordinance, I had never seen the results of their work up close until now. Many, had been burned and had hideous wounds covering their limbs and torsos where napalm had burned ragged and craggy into their flesh. Where nipples and belly buttons had once been located no one could discern. Today, they have nasty scars. Others patients were amputees, and others had parts of their bodies blown away. Being surrounded by this multitude of wounded and injured, many of whom were immersed in their own personal pain and suffering, removed from my mind any lingering abstract notions about war and permanently bound my tongue against discussions of war with any sense of false bravado. I continued to change.

One night, during a rocket attack, I was running for a bunker as lethal rockets were exploding around me. I asked myself, "Am I going to make it?" I answered honestly, "I don't know." During Tet, I was on the east perimeter in the early morning with my good buddy John Fisher, from Uniontown, Pennsylvania. We were part of a defensive line of men waiting for the VC to launch a large ground assault against us. I wasn't really scared as we were checking our weapons and ammo, but I thought to myself, "I could be dead in the next few hours."

To maintain discipline, our own officers and NCO's were hard on us, and I saw troops sent to Long Binh Jail for several months duration simply because they succumbed to exhaustion and fatigue. Our squadron

commander told us that Security Police were not allowed to feel thirst, hunger, heat or fatigue. I came to believe that life was hard, mean and violent and that if I was going to survive it I was going to have to be hard, mean and violent; and so I was.

After completing my one-year tour, I went home on a thirty-day leave. One day, I went to a local junior college to see some old high school friends. Not a single one of them said anything complimentary, appreciative or kind about my service to our country in Vietnam. But then, no other Americans did either. That's just how America was. As I stood there with these college kids, I in my uniform, they in their cool college clothes, I watched them laughing and giggling over what I thought was complete nonsense. They struck me as childish and foolish, and I realized they were acting the same way they had acted in high school. I realized then that I was the one who had changed and that I could never be the same again. And I knew I was no longer a boy.

## Phu Cat Mortar Attack by Rollie G. Holt - Phu Cat 69 - 70

While surfing the web, I ran across your web site concerning Phu Cat. I served at Phu Cat with the 37th and 12th SP's from May '69 to May '70. On April 24, 1970, I received the Airman's Medal for the CSC Duress/Shoot Out. All total, there were three of us that received the Airman's Medal on that date. You know there are a lot of humorous things that occurred along with the more serious aspects of being at Phu Cat. As far as I know, the 37/12 has the distinction of being the only Security Police Squadron to ever shell their own base.

If I ever find my map I can tell you what mortar pit it was. Anyway, it was the pit located on the west side of the runway near the center and off on a hill. The mortar crew apparently had a dud, and as they moved the tube to slide the dud out, it fired. All the crew could see was that it splashed down near the revetment area. I think it was Captain Norton and my fire team that went looking for the impact point. It was about 150-200 yards to the right and about 75 yards short of an F-4 and maintenance crew. Now let me tell you, that was one relieved Mortar Crew when they were advised that no one got hurt. Anyway, there are a bunch of little interesting stories like the one I just told and somewhere out there are members of the Mortar Crew who can do the telling first hand and they need to write in and tell their story. Me, I was just a few years older than most of the men.

I was a 24 year old SSgt. with 5 years in service. I think I spent 6 to 9 months on Cobra Flight and then I went to Days. I was working days on April 24, 1970 when Alternate CSC announced we have a Duress at CSC, this is No Exercise. I spent 15 Years as an SP, took a commission, cross trained in the process, and retired a number of years ago.

**Please renew your membership. If you have moved, changed your telephone number or email address, please contact Phil Carroll.**

## Military Working Dog Records Now Available to VSPA Members

A Program to Support the Nemo's War Dog Heroes Memorial

Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas 501(c)(19) Tax Deductible Project

It is with great pleasure that Nemo's War Dog Heroes Memorial Committee would like to inform you that we are now in possession of over 30,000 Military Working Dog Records for all branches of our military, dating from 1956 to 1985.

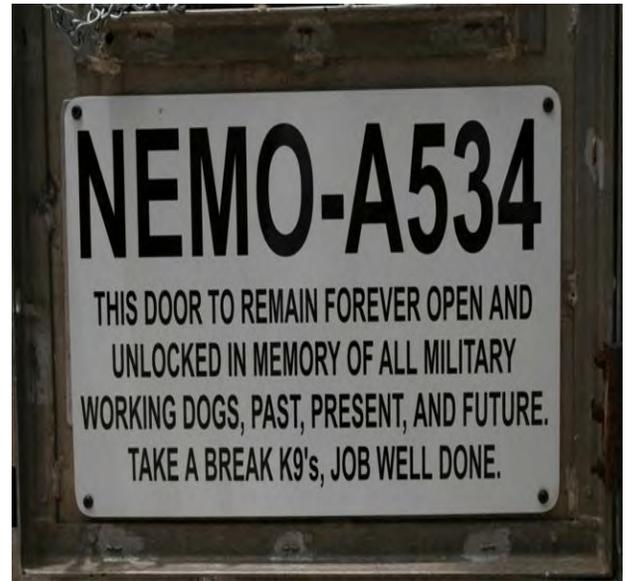
It has been a very long and costly process for us, but we are about to release this information to all of the handlers of the VSPA. We have established a process for our handlers to obtain the copies of their dogs' records. Funds raised for this project will be used to enhance the memorial site and hopefully an education center on the grounds at Lackland AFB, Texas.

One of our proudest accomplishments is to announce that after nearly 40 years, we are able to provide the tattoo number and records of Sentry Dog Rebel 519X. Rebel is one of the three dogs that were killed in action during the 1966 attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam. In addition, we also have approximately the same number of "Vet Cards" that indicate the Date of Birth, Date of Procurement, and Date of Death, and in most cases the cause of death of our Military Working Dogs.

As you might well imagine, we are very pleased with the efforts to obtain this information over the last three years. This project is intended to be an ongoing project to support the Memorial that is being built at Lackland to honor all Military Working Dogs past, present and future!

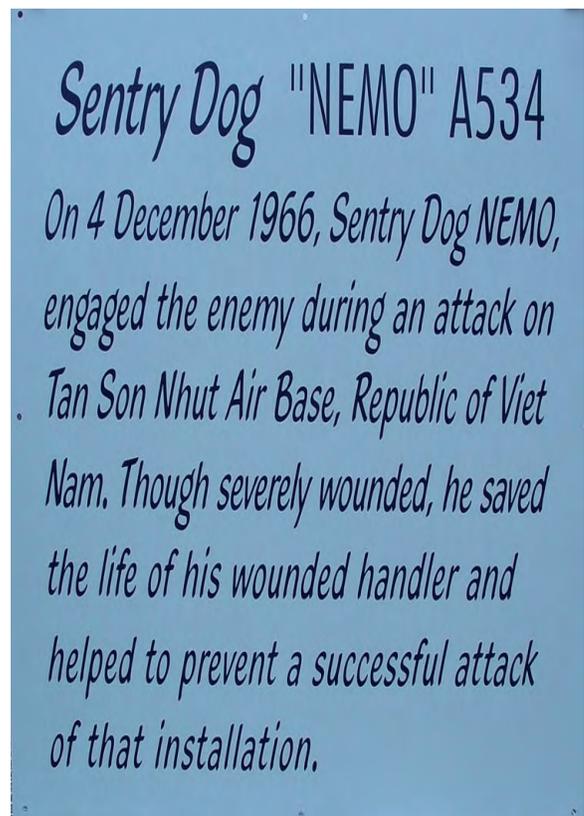
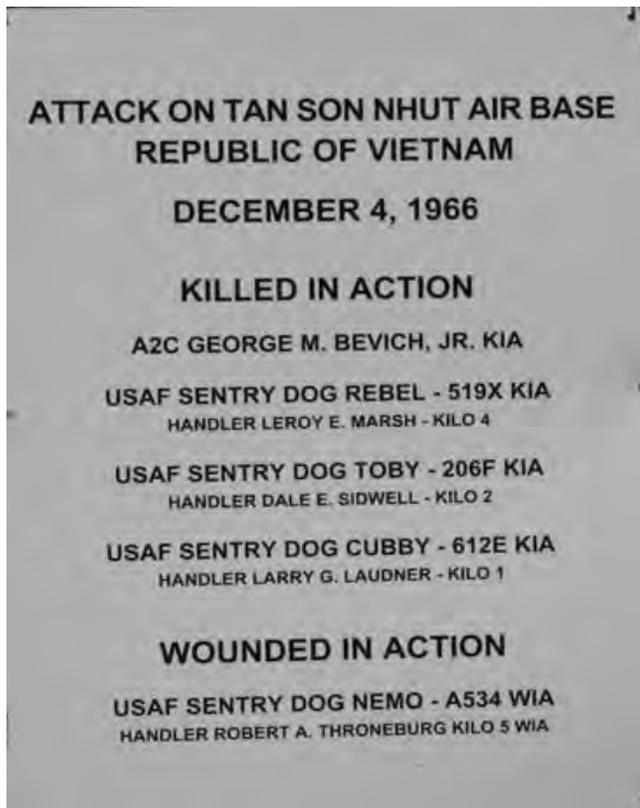
Hopefully, many of you are aware of the Memorial that we are building at Lackland, or as it commonly known, Nemo's War Dog Heroes Memorial project. We would like to announce that last Veteran's Day weekend the committee, with help from our members, friends, and many active duty MWD handlers attending classes at the DoD Dog Center at Lackland, came together to erect the latest editions to the memorial. There is still a large amount of work planned for the site. Our plans include the procurement of a life sized replica of Nemo (to represent all of our Military Work Dogs) and a roof to cover the entire "kennel area" that will be very similar to the roof that covered the kennel when Nemo resided at the center between 1967 and 1972.

The Committee has procured and reconditioned a shipping crate (circa 1965) and it has been decorated with the markings of Nemo's travel crate. First hand recollection and information has enabled us to recreate the markings. It has been placed within the confines of the kennel area at the 37<sup>th</sup> SFS at Lackland.



To further enhance the display, the following tribute signs have been placed at the memorial. The sign on the right is a replica of the sign that was placed on Nemo's kennel circa 1967. The "Danger Sentry Dog" sign, a replica of the sign that we all knew, is also a permanent part of the memorial display.

The "Attack on Tan Son Nhut" sign has been created to honor the memory of those who gave their lives or were wounded during the attack. Hopefully this will help tell the story of the attack and the events that took place at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam - December 4, 1966.



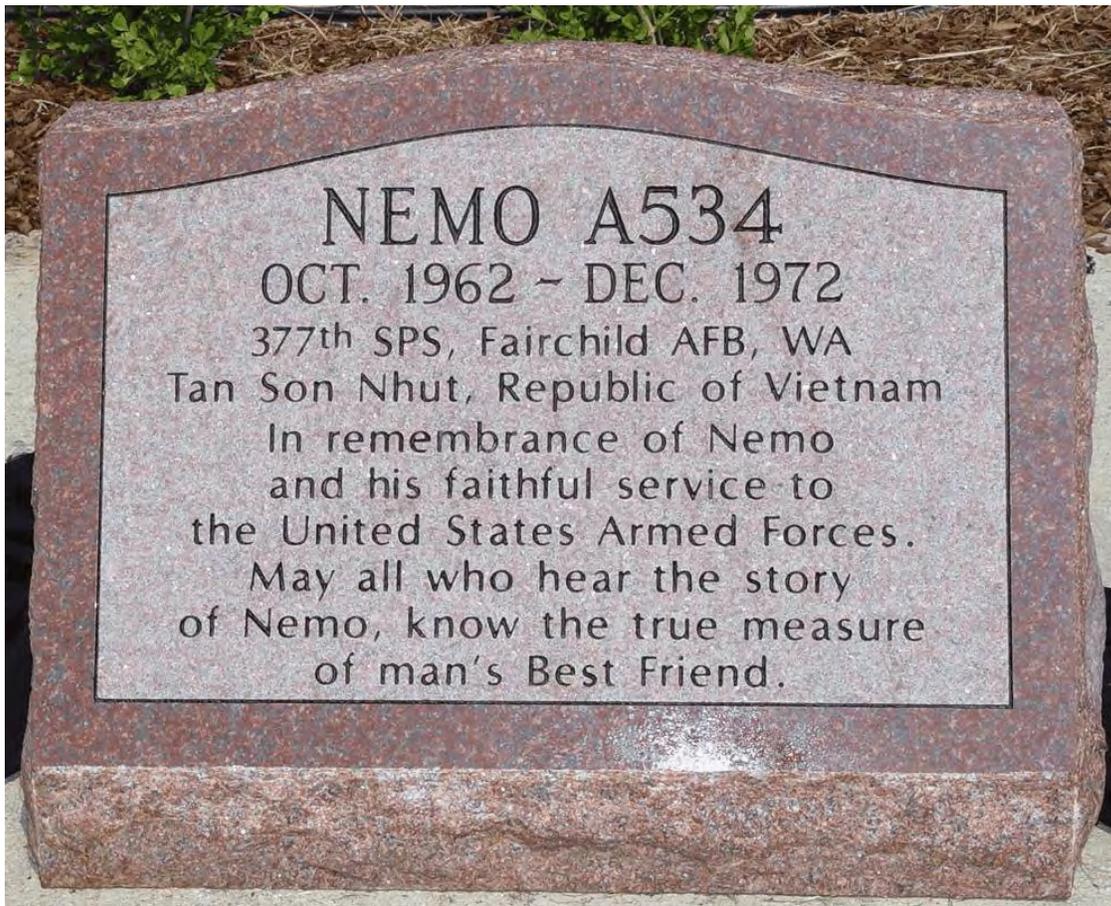
The recreated “Danger Sentry Dog” sign will soon be available for purchase to support the memorial. For additional information – send an email to [nemosheroes@yahoo.com](mailto:nemosheroes@yahoo.com) – Title Line: Request “Sign” information.



Below is the site as we found it at Lackland in October of 2003 during our tour of 37<sup>th</sup> SFS while attending the VSPA reunion in San Antonio, Texas.



Some three years later, we are proud to present Nemo’s War Dog Heroes Memorial as of November 11, 2006. Nemo’s kennel house has been reproduced to the specifications and size as close as possible to the original kennel house. A water bowl and feed pan (circa 1965) are also part of the display.



Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!  
Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)



The plaque inside the kennel area was donated by the Specialized Search Dog Class – Team II at Lackland during their graduation ceremony on September 23, 2005. The team was made up of MWD handlers from the U. S. Army, Marines, and Air Force Security Forces. This was a team effort uniting new and the old

We still have a long way to go to complete our plans for the site. The long range plans also include the procurement of a life size likeness of Nemo and a roof to cover the entire kennel area.

**View Website at: <http://635thk9.com/tdhnemo.htm>**

**E-Mail: [nemosheroes@yahoo.com](mailto:nemosheroes@yahoo.com)**

Donations may be sent to:

NWDHM

P. O. Box 1318

Manchaca, TX 78652

## A PROPOSAL FOR SECURITY POLICEMEN TO MAKE A RETURN TRIP TO VIETNAM

by Bob Anisko - Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut 62-63, Qui Nhon 64-65

Greetings VSPA members:

I am putting together a proposal for a return trip to Vietnam for Security Police members in March 2008 (exact dates to be determined). The trip will focus on visiting the former air bases in Vietnam. If you and/or your spouse or family members or friends are interested, please contact me as provided below.

Doug Reese of Vietnam Tourism is coordinating the trip. Doug handled a previous trip to Vietnam that I participated in with 30+ Marines and their family members in 2006. The trip was a rewarding experience. This would be my third trip back to Vietnam.

The trip will be limited to a maximum of 35-38 members. The limitation is due to the size of the bus that will be used for travel in the southern part of Vietnam.

The estimated total cost of the trip is \$2,647. This includes round trip airfare from the west coast and all air and land expenses in Vietnam. The exact departure airport is yet to be determined but it will probably be San Francisco. The estimated cost is based upon 20 persons so if the maximum number of persons increases, the price could come down somewhat.

Additional airfare from other parts of the USA to the West Coast could be approximately \$100-\$275 roundtrip, but will vary based upon the point of origin. The travel agency that we have arranging the international ticket to Vietnam can set you up with connecting flights to the west coast departure city. The use of the same travel agency is recommended because of the connections.

Note that any deviations (additions or deletions) from the itinerary will be considered prior to departure, but they may not be able to be included. Also, if any of the bases are still occupied by the Vietnamese military, we will not be able to enter them, e.g., Bien Hoa, although we will go by them.

If you are interested, please contact me as soon as possible and I will provide you with a copy of the itinerary and a map. If possible, I would like to have firm messages of interest/commitment by September 15, 2007. Further information will be provided as available.

I will be at the reunion to provide information to anyone who is interested. Please use my contact information below. I look forward to hearing from you.

Bob Anisko

E-mail: [bienhoa@adelphia.net](mailto:bienhoa@adelphia.net)

Home Telephone: (412) 833-4209

Work Telephone: (412) 820-2690, Ext. 214

A new Airmen’s Creed was published this year by the Air Force. The creed reflects our heritage of honor and valor while emphasizing the warrior ethos. Along with that creed came the new Airmen’s Combat Medal that will recognize those who have been in direct contact with the enemy.

### THE AIRMAN'S CREED

I am an American Airman.  
 I am a warrior.  
 I have answered my nation's call.  
 I am an American Airman.  
 My mission is to fly, fight, and win.  
 I am faithful to a proud heritage,  
 a tradition of honor,  
 and a legacy of valor.  
 I am an American Airman,  
 guardian of freedom and justice,  
 my nation's sword and shield,  
 its sentry and avenger.  
 I defend my country with my life.  
 I am an American Airman:  
 wingman, leader, warrior.  
 I will never leave an Airman behind,  
 I will never falter,  
 and I will not fail.



\*\*\*\*\*

### AGENT ORANGE AND PROSTATE CANCER

What are the odds that you could have prostate cancer? The odds are high because of our age and are even worse because of our exposure to Agent Orange. Last year during our business meeting, Vice President Hector Ramos and Secretary Bruce Hadley both revealed to our membership that they had been diagnosed with prostate cancer. They have successfully fought the disease and made a plea to our members to make an appointment for a physical exam for prostate cancer. They specifically advised our members to schedule a digital rectal exam of the prostate and a PSA Blood Test. **BOTH TESTS** are necessary in order to have the best possible chance of early diagnosis. A brief survey of those present revealed that several members had never been tested. Bruce and Hector gave a heartfelt explanation of symptoms, testing and diagnosis with strong encourage to everyone to make the appointment. Now what are the odds that one year later, another elected officer would be diagnosed with prostate cancer? Don Graham was recently diagnosed after a PSA test and will be unable to attend the reunion so that he can begin the fight.

**EACH INDIVIDUAL NUMBER REPRESENTS 50 GALLON BARRELS**  
**USAF Ranch Hand Herbicides from Aug 1965**

Grand Total: 8,165,491

3/8/98

I Corps: 2,355,322	Orange	White	Blue	Total	II Corps: 1,054,406	Orange	White	Blue	Total
A Shau	53,550	2,550	6,128	62,228	An Khe, Camp Radcliff	37,810	6,400	5,610	49,820
An Hoa	6,500	1,800	11,250	19,550	An Lao, LZ Laramie	68,970	,490	10,570	80,030
Binh Hoa	8,220		1,600	9,820	Ban Me Thuot	16,000	9,250		25,250
Cam Lo	80,375	8,660	12,785	101,820	Ben Het	80,495	7,230	3,000	90,725
Camp Carrol	78,200	5,400	5,050	88,650	Bon Song, LZ Two Bits	80,643	,630	6,000	87,273
Camp Eagle	14,250			14,250	Bre Nhi	6,600			6,600
Camp Esso	53,410	5,600	5,500	64,510	Cam Ranh Bay	21,227	1,373		22,600
Camp Evans	18,690		880	19,570	Camp Granite	59,310	2,075	5,390	66,775
Camp Henderson	68,155	7,040	4,800	79,995	Che Oreo		1,800		1,800
Chu Lai	12,170	4,150	1,598	17,918	Da Lat	575			575
Con Thien	84,700	12,460	10,925	108,085	Dak To	49,460	600	34,800	84,860
Da Nang, China Beach	13,800		2,000	15,800	Firebase Pony	43,490		3,800	47,290
Dong Ha	54,385	5,060	9,935	69,380	Kontum		415		415
Duc Pho, LZ Bronco	46,225	14,400	1,175	61,800	LZ Dog, LZ English	63,073	630	6,000	69,703
Firebase Jack	140,875	11,900	3,280	156,055	LZ Oasis				No Data
Firebase Rakkassan	150,145	23,900	2,510	176,555	LZ Putter, Firebase Bird	50,095		7,200	57,295
Firebase West	15,405	3,690	18,480	37,575	LZ Uplift	43,455	3,220	,275	46,950
Hill 63	20,500	3,200		23,700	Nha Trang	6,950	325		7,275
Hill 69	11,620	4,150	1,598	17,368	Pham Rang	,110	2,075		2,185
Hoi An	17,520	3,000	13,950	34,470	Phan Thiet	5,000	,330	,220	5,550
Hue	41,395		5,070	46,465	Plei Ho, SF Camp	15,300	1,260	,110	16,670
Khe Sanh, Firebase Smith	43,705	3,040	4,800	51,045	Plei Jerang	98,220	51,235	1,800	151,255
LangCo Bridge	50,610	5,600	3,500	59,710	Pleiku	1,210	11,640	1,950	14,800
LZ Baldy	15,430	3,000	13,950	32,380	Puh Cat, LZ Hammond	29,700	7,210		36,910
LZ Dogpatch, Hill 327	4,490		8,250	12,740	Qui Nhon	53,215	1,800	4,125	59,140
LZ Geronimo	22,535	14,000	468	37,003	Song Cau	5,650	55		5,705
LZ Jane, Firebase Barbara	91,150	6,750	3,700	101,600	Tuy An	13,215	3,740		16,955
LZ Langley, Firebase Shepard	72,105	7,040	4,800	83,945	Tuy Hoa	29,565	4,485		34,050
LZ Profess, Hill 55	39,300	13,000	17,209	69,509					
LZ Rockcrusher, Hill 85	47,800			47,800					
LZ Rockpile	110,050	15,440	7,650	133,140					
LZ Ross	15,405	6,720	18,508	40,633					
LZ Sandra	118,780	20,210	24,755	163,745					
LZ Snapper, Firebase Leather	11,350		3,000	14,350					
Marble, Hill 59	15,405	6,720	18,508	40,633					
Phu Bai	54,300	3,000	120	57,420					
Phu Loc, LZ Tommahawk	78,250	4,000		82,250					
Quang Nai	25,605		1,800	27,405					
Quang Tri, LZ Nancy	68,000	2,750	3,700	74,450					
<b>III Corps: 4,086,229</b>	<b>Orange</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Blue</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>IV Corps: 669,534</b>	<b>Orange</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Blue</b>	<b>Total</b>
An Loc	77,000	79,830		156,830	Ben Luc	45,900	14,838		60,738
Ben Cat	87,250	83,640	20,105	190,995	Ben Tre	24,800	24,750		49,550
Bien Hoa	35,045	124,525	3,950	163,520	Can Tho	15,160	13,915	11,685	40,760
Cholon	320			320	Cao Lanh	1,875	2,935	830	5,640
Cu Chi	59,150	67,540	14,105	140,795	Dong Tam	5,870	605	165	6,640
Dau Tieng (Michelin)	32,370	45,800	3,600	81,770	Firebase Grand Can(yon?)		1,540		1,540
Dien Duc, Firebase Elaine	66,850	25,500		92,350	Firebase Moore	9,820			9,820
Duc Hoa	750			750	Ham Long	3,275	1,620		4,895
Firebase Di An	6,000		1,595	7,595	Moc Hoa	12,400	6,590		18,990
Firebase Frenzel	13,445	57,560	,900	71,905	My Tho	13,320	7,316	965	21,601
Firebase Jewel, LZ Snuffy	219,550	146,010	7,300	372,860	Nam Can	150,345	64,295		214,640
Firebase Mace	34,280	23,350	,730	58,360	Phnom		184		184
Katum	299,420	239,395	20,000	558,815	Phu Quoc	19,000			19,000
Lai Khe	57,120	22,300	1,800	81,220	Rach Gia		2,155		2,155
Loc Ninh	46,660	103,710	1,800	152,170	Seafloat	4,700			4,700
Long Binh, Firebase Concord	13,445	57,560		71,005	Soc Trang	3,410	2,391	1,280	7,081
LZ Bearcat	17,840	75,470		93,310	Tan An	89,550	36,450		126,000
LZ Fish Nook	44,000	23,800		67,800	Tieu Con	8,700			8,700
LZ Schofield	38,640	17,210	7,800	63,650	Tra Vinh	9,885	8,000		17,885
Nha Be (Navy Base)	119,725	121,925	6,000	247,650	Vinh Loi	30,010			30,010
Nui Ba Den, Firebase Caroline	50,020	66,500	2,100	118,620	Vinh Long	8,360	9,755	890	19,005
Phouc Vinh	484,383	146,576	12,810	643,769					
Phu Cuong	39,845	62,230	12,055	114,130					
Phu Loi	79,000	83,430		162,430					
Qua Viet	50,610	5,600	3,500	59,710					
Quan Loi	44,190	34,300		78,490					
Saigon				No Data					
Song Be	1,900	9,220		11,120					
Tan Son Nhut	6,320		1,595	7,915					
Tay Ninh	720	3,225	600	4,545					
Trang Bang	32,365	39,560	6,000	77,925					
Vo Dat, Firebase Nancy	14,180	29,100		43,280					
Vung Tau	7,350			7,350					
Xuan Loc	23,865	58,750	660	83,275					

Note: This does NOT include the US Army helicopter or ground applications, or any form of the insecticide programs by GVN or the US military. The amount represents gallons within eight (8) kilometers of the area. Thus, each area is 9.6 miles in diameter.

Description:	TCDD (Dioxin) Amounts:
Agent Orange	1.77 to 40 ppm
Agent Blue (Purple)	32.8 to 45 ppm
Agent Red (Pink)	65.6 ppm
Agent White (Green)	65.6 ppm
Silvex	1 to 70 ppm
2,4,5-T (Current)	0.1 ppm or less

**EARLY DIAGNOSIS CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE. MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR AN EXAM!**

Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!

Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)



**APPOINTED POSITIONS - All positions appointed by the President with approval of the Board.**

- 7.7 Web Master(s) Don Poss, Life Member #37, Corona, California (Da Nang K-9 65 - 66) Don appoints the K-9 Web Master, Monty Moore, and the Bulletin Board Flight Leader, Bill Marshall, Life Member #85. Bill is unable to attend due to his wife's serious illness.
- 7.8 Membership Chairman Phil Carroll, Life Member #336. Gladstone, Oregon (Takhli and NKP K-9 70 - 71).
- 7.9 Guardmount Editor Larry Ernsting, Life Member #139, Clay Center, Kansas (Phan Rang-Safeside, Pleiku, Tuy Hoa, 68 - 70).
- 7.10 Chaplain Steve Janke, Carlstadt, New Jersey (Cam Ranh Bay K-9 69 - 70). Steve is unable to attend, he sends his prayers for a great reunion.
- 7.11 Chaplain Jim Stastny, Gaithersburg, Maryland (Korat K-9 70 - 71).
- 7.12 Chaplain Bill Cooley, Canyon Lake, Texas (Cam Ranh Bay K-9 71 - 72) Bill was unable to attend.
- 7.13 Photographer Tony Morris, Life Member #70, Shererville, Indiana (Cam Ranh Bay 69 - 70)
- 7.14 BX Sales Manager Van Digby, Life Member #59, Bay City Michigan (Phan Rang 67 - 68)
- 7.15 VSPA Service Officer Bud Owens, Life Member #56, North Hampton, New Hampshire (Binh Thuy 66 - 67)
- 7.16 K-9 Kennel Master Bill Cummings, Life Member #173, Hollywood, Maryland (U-Tapao K-9 70 - 71). Bill will be moving to Tucson, Arizona in January, 2007 after he retires.
- 7.17 Safeside Liaison Pete Villarreal, Life Member #14, North Pole, Alaska (six months) and Corpus Christi, Texas (six months) (Phan Rang and Bien Hoa - Safeside 68 - 69, and NKP 73 - 74)
8. **Approval of the 2005 Minutes** Prior to the approval of the minutes, President Steve Gattis asked if there was anyone on the room who was not a current member of the VSPA. Two people raised their hand. They were advised that they could observe the meeting and were told that they could not vote in any of the VSPA issues that came up for a vote, including reunion site selection and the election of officers. Secretary Bruce Hadley explained that the minutes of the 2005 Business Meeting were distributed ahead of time for reading and approval. The minutes were approved without change.
9. **REPORTS**
- 9.1 Treasurer's Report - Secretary Bruce Hadley for Treasurer Denis Cook who was unable to attend due to work commitments. To gain time in the meeting, the report was distributed ahead of time for reading and approval. There are no changes and the report was approved.
- 9.2 Historian's Report - VSPA Historian Don Graham. Copy of report distributed ahead of time and approved.

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

- 9.3 Web Site - VSPA.com - Web Master Don Poss gave an update on the web site and discussed planned upgrades with an easier set of menus.
- 9.4 Membership Report - Phil Carroll reported that there are 901 paid members for 2006 for a net gain of 97 members for the second year in a row. To date, there are 342 life members.
- 9.5 Guardmount Report - Our new Editor, Larry Ernsting, was introduced to our members by Steve Gattis. Den Cook will continue printing and mailing. We are seeking historical material and will be looking into a postage
- 9.6 Scholarship Committee - Committee Chairman Jim Lebowitz. Committee members are Vice President Hector Ramos, Albert Habercorn, Bud Owens and David Adams. Jim reported that two applications were received from students who were attending the University of Wisconsin. One is the child of a VSPA member, the other is the grandchild. A motion was made and seconded that we award a \$500 scholarship to each student as they were our first successful applicants.
- 9.7 BX Sales Report - BX Sales Manager Van Digby. To gain time in the meeting, the report was distributed ahead of time for reading and approval. There were no changes to the report and it was approved. Van reported that there were several new items in the BX and that he could order medals if a member made a specific request.
- 9.8 VSPA Service Officer - Bud Owens reported that veterans who served in Thailand and were exposed to Agent Orange should submit an application to the VA for disability due to recent legal decisions that indicate possible approval in the future. Bud also reported that PTSD requires evaluation and testing and is difficult to get compensation on the first try. He added that this should be pursued based on medical documentation. Locations where Agent Orange was used included areas in the United States, Korea and Europe, in addition to Vietnam and Thailand.

- 8.1 Member John Homa, on behalf of Thai vets, was recognized and reported that he was available to help with the claims process.

Bud continued his report with an overview of his activities to greet troops when they return to the United States after being deployed to Southwest Asia. A motion was made and seconded to cover the cost of a plaque that would be approximately \$150 to \$200 for a U.S. Air Force seal to be placed at Pease International Trade Airport, formerly Pease AFB, Portsmouth, New Hampshire to honor the troops returning from the Gulf Region. The motion was amended to make the plaque a VSPA plaque with our logo and the VSPA Security Police Shield. Motion passed. The President then reported that Ken Neal stepped up to the podium, presented \$200 in cash and said to him, "buy it!"

- 9.9 K-9 Report - Bill Cummings, Kennel Master, gave an update on the Nemo's War Dog Heroes Memorial at Lackland AFB, and the Old Dawgs and Pups Program. Phil Carroll reported the support of the Leatherman Company in donating several thousand dollars in equipment for K-9, and a wholesale price on the multipurpose tool that is being resold at retail to raise funds for the program. Phil also displayed the VSPA commemorative knife that was specially etched for us by

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

Leatherman and was available for \$50 at the reunion, with proceeds to the Old Dawgs and Pups Program.

- 9.10 Safeside Report - Pete Villarreal, Safeside Liaison, reported that a collection of several hundred pairs of tennis shoes were donated to children in Iraq through *Operation Shoe Drop*. Pete lives in North Pole, Alaska and reported that the "Letters from Santa" was available for Christmas.

## 10. OLD BUSINESS

- 10.1 VSPA Flag - Steve Gattis and Van Digby displayed the new VSPA flag. The flag is available in the BX in the following sizes: 3'x5' , 12" x 18" and 4" x 6".
- 10.2 VSPA History Book Update - Steve Gattis reported that Don Graham and some of his Veteran friends had gone to The Wall and obtained rubbings of the names of Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who had died in service to our country. Other graphics for patches and crests were also being worked on to obtain the best possible resolution for publishing. Some members had submitted photos and materials that had been poorly scanned, or were in very bad condition as photocopies and could not be used. The history of our bases was also being researched to go along with our squadron histories.
- 10.3 Pins - Steve Gattis reported that we now had a silver VSPA pin with a wreath around the QC crossed pistols logo and an inscription of our motto "We take care of our own" as a tribute to our members who recruit someone into the VSPA. If you were recruited by someone, buying a pin for them would be a perfect way to honor them and say thank you. The VSPA Sisterhood has a new pin with their motto, "Taking care of those who take care of their own". The pin is white rather than black and has a red rose over a black star in place of the crossed pistols in our QC logo. We now have a gold Meritorious Service Pin that has a wreath around our crossed pistol QC logo and a banner above the wreath that says, "Meritorious Service". The pins will be given to those who have received Meritorious Service Awards and be controlled by a roster of those who have received the awards.
- 10.4 Challenge Coins - Steve Gattis reported that we now had specific challenge coins to honor our troops for outstanding service as Defenders of the Force. The coins are silver with a gold wreath around a Security Police Shield and have 21 stars as a tribute to those we lost in Vietnam and Thailand. Prior to those coins being produced, Steve had sent Captain Christopher Johnson (our 2004 host at Davis-Monthan) 12 VSPA challenge coins for troops in his unit. The Defender Coin was designed as a separate VSPA coin that would reward outstanding service. Lastly, Steve reported that Life Member Ken Neal had donated the rights to his "Return to The Wall" challenge coin to the VSPA BX.
- 10.5 Commemorative Shield - Steve Gattis and Johnny Zolondz reported on the sale of the VSPA Commemorative Shield designed by Retired Security Forces Master Sergeant Tim Waage and his donation of 200 miniature commemorative shield lapel pins that would be available in the BX - one per member due to the limited quantity. Additional pins will be ordered.
- 10.6 Incorporation Update - Steve Gattis reported that we were incorporated as a 501(c)(19) Tax Exempt Veteran's Organization not required to pay Federal Taxes if we maintained our War Veteran membership level appropriately. Tax deductions by members are authorized providing

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

that the funds benefit our members and programs. Dues are not deductible unless they are a gift to the association to buy a membership for someone other than the donor.

- 10.7 Donations for the Bayes Children - Steve Gattis and Hector Ramos reported that VSPA members had donated \$2,500 for Lydia and Ellie Bayes, the children of Kim Bayes. Ten \$500 US Savings Bonds with a value of \$5,000 were purchased - with five bonds going to each child for college as a memorial to their father who passed away in 2005 just prior to the reunion.
- 11.9 Reunion Site Selection for 2007 - Steve Gattis reported that Washington D.C. had been selected at our 2004 Reunion Business Meeting due to the Veteran’s Day Parade and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Wall.
- 11.10 Selection of Reunion Site for 2008 - Steve Gattis reported that we have had reunions in the following cities and regions. Site selection must include an area where there is an active duty Air Force Base with a Security Forces squadron so that we can link with the troops.

**Reunion sites - Places we have been**

**REGION**

- |       |   |         |
|-------|---|---------|
| 10.1  | Atlanta, Georgia 1995                             | East    |
| 10.2  | San Antonio, Texas 1996                           | Central |
| 10.3  | Pensacola, Florida 1997                           | East    |
| 10.4  | Washington D.C. 1998                              | East    |
| 10.5  | Las Vegas, Nevada 1999                            | West    |
| 10.6  | San Antonio, Texas 2000                           | Central |
| 10.7  | Hampton, Virginia 2001                            | East    |
| 10.8  | Dayton, Ohio 2002                                 | Central |
| 10.9  | San Antonio, Texas 2003                           | Central |
| 10.10 | Tucson, Arizona 2004 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary | West    |
| 10.11 | Valdosta, Georgia 2005                            | East    |
| 10.12 | Las Vegas, Nevada 2006                            | West    |
| 10.13 | Washington DC 2007                                | East    |
- 13.1 Special Date Change to include November 11, Veteran’s Day, for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Wall and the Veteran’s Day Parade. The dates will be November 8 - 12.

- 10.14 Site to be selected for 2008 - Nominations/Suggestions/Presentations - Numerous sites were proposed and voted on until the top two choices were determined. The date will be October 15 - 18, 2008. The final two were

- 14.2 Kirtland AFB - Albuquerque, New Mexico - Home of the 377<sup>th</sup>
- 14.3 Barksdale AFB, Bossier City, Louisiana

**NEW BUSINESS**

10.8 Programs

- 8.1 Chaplain Program Expansion - Steve Gattis reported that due to the number of members in the association and the commitments of Chaplain Steve Janke in his home community that have precluded him from attending some of our reunions, that we would expand our Chaplain Program by adding two of our members who are ordained ministers. Jim

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!  
Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

Stastny and Bill Wheeler have agreed to extend their ministry to our members throughout the year. Chaplain Jim was present in the meeting.

- 8.2 Photographer Program Expansion - Steve Gattis reported that VSPA Photographer Tony Morris will be assisted by Steve Hall and Ken Neal who have agreed to use their extensive photographic skills to preserve the history of our reunions. Our reunions have become so large that it is impossible for one man to take enough photos to preserve our great memories. All are present at the reunion and have taken already taken several hundred photographs. Steve Hall is a professional photographer.
- 8.3 The Bulletin Boards and the Rules of Use - Steve Gattis and Don Poss explained that our use of the public bulletin board was controlled by VOY, the company that owns the bulletin board server. The bulletin board is a family rated public bulletin board and does not allow profanity or personal attacks. Users were reminded that the children and family members of our deceased often use the bulletin board to find someone who knew their father. The bulletin board is also there for former air policemen, security policemen and augmentees who have just learned about the VSPA and want to connect with friends or find a lost buddy. The rules of use are available online and must be followed. Violations of the rules will cause the violator to be blocked. This rule protects everyone, especially from the anti-war fanatics who still call us names and try to send hate mail or hack the bulletin board. The VOY owned VSPA Free Fire Zone is in the Restricted Area and protected by a password. The intent of the Free Fire Zone is to allow more personal discussion of a nature that should not be open to the public due to the graphic nature of our war experiences. The same rules apply regarding profanity and personal attacks. Violators will be blocked or have their messages removed from the bulletin board. There is also a VSPA Sisterhood bulletin board in the Restricted Area that is protected by password unique to the Sisterhood. Members will also find links to our Agent Orange Bulletin Board and the K-9 Bulletin Board on our web site.
- 10.9 Web Site Additions and Upgrades - Steve Gattis and Don Poss reported that there would be a Poet's Corner for members who have written poems that have healed wounds that cannot be seen. This will not be the same as the stories that have been posted on the web site. There will also be a Wall of Honor for members who have received awards for Meritorious Service to the VSPA. A specific page that will have a list by year and name, of VSPA members who have been honored for Meritorious Service to the association. The list will include a brief citation regarding the award. The list will also include the people that we have been honored with Associate Memberships over the years, including the citation for their Meritorious Service to the VSPA. There are currently nine Associate Members.
- 9.1 Links to Member Owned Services on the web page in the Restricted Area for Services or Items for Sale that the VSPA does not warrant, but provides links to as a service for our members. Policy change required with a vote due to our long-term mandate for non-commercial activity. A motion was made and seconded to move this item to a committee for further review due to the complexities and liabilities of managing the problems that the links would generate for our web master, Don Poss.
- 10.10 Membership
- 10.1 New Membership Cards - Phil Carroll presented information on the possibility of issuing new plastic membership cards. There was extended discussion regarding the cost or need

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

- for membership cards. A motion was made to eliminate membership cards and seconded. After some additional discussion, the motion was amended and approved to keep the newly designed cards currently being issued by Phil Carroll.
- 10.2 Member Updates on Web Site - Don Poss reported that the new web site and the online database would improve member ability to connect with each other and allow officers to have immediate updates regarding changes to address, telephone and emails for our members.
- 10.3 The Membership Application Process - Phil Carroll reported that we use a three-part membership process and that the new on-line database system planned by Don Poss would allow on-line tracking of the process that requires:
- 3.1 Application
  - 3.2 DD Form 214
  - 3.3 Payment of Dues
- 4.2 Payment of Dues will continue during the reunion registration process through the Reunion Brat. Dues can be paid online via PayPal. Dues reminders will also be sent to all members.
- 10.11 Plans for the 2007 Reunion were presented by Steve Gattis and Hector Ramos
- 11.1 Contract update - Steve Gattis reported that the contract with the Sheraton Hotel was in place.
  - 11.2 Operations Plan for the Parade - Steve Gattis had a copy of the plan distributed ahead of the meeting to allow familiarization. The plan is detailed and has several action items for our Parade Planning Committee chaired by Hector Ramos.
  - 11.3 The Status of Issues in Washington D.C was explained by Hector Ramos
  - 11.4 Color Guard Presentation - Frank Ybarbo presented the proposed color guard uniforms. The members approved the uniforms modeled by the committee members.
  - 11.5 Parade Formation - Tony Gonzales presented information on the proposed parade formation that consisted of the VSPA followed by Safeside with our perimeter protected by our K-9 Handlers. The members approved the formation, including the presence of wives or family members walking within the formation to support our members, especially those with medical or PTSD related issues.
  - 11.6 Parade Dress Tony Morris presented information regarding the proposed clothing to be worn by members participating in the parade. Several versions were modeled by members of the committee. Members selected black shoes that would be selected by the wearer to ensure comfort and proper fit, black pants, black baseball hat with pins, and a BDU woodland camouflage shirt with the SP badge on the left breast pocket, the VSPA logo patch on the right breast pocket, the QC patch on the left shoulder and the 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force patch on the right shoulder. Members who did not wear the QC patch because of their assignment may substitute a squadron patch. The uniform was recommended only and not mandatory. The patches will be available in the BX.

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!*

*Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*

- 12.4 Election of Officers - Two Year Term of Office - Conducted by Bud Owens due to Secretary Bruce Hadley running for office again. Nominations were opened for President. Hector Ramos declined to move up to Vice President due to his personal and professional commitments. There were no other candidates for the office of President. A motion was made and seconded to amend the bylaws of the association, one-time only, to allow Steve Gattis to continue in office for two more years beyond the two-term limit. The motion was made due to no candidates and to maintain continuity for the 2007 reunion and parade planning for 2007 Veterans Day and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wall, by allowing the current President, Steve Gattis, to run for another two year term as President, provided he will accept the nomination. Motion passed. Steve Gattis accepted the nomination. The following members were reelected to office for a two year term. The next elections will be held in Albuquerque in 2008.

President Steve Gattis  
Vice President Hector Ramos  
Secretary Bruce Hadley  
Treasurer Den Cook  
Historian Don Graham

- 12.5 Appointed Positions - The following positions are appointed by the President of the Association to assist the elected officers with the management of the various functions of the VSPA.
- 5.1 Web Master - Don Poss, assisted by the Assistant Web Master for K-9 (Monty Moore), the Bulletin Board Flight Leader (Bill Marshall), and the Quick Reaction Team (Gary Jones) to assist members with computer problems
  - 5.2 Membership Chairman - Phil Carroll, Assistant Janet Wise, Daughter of Life Member Al Matthews.
  - 5.3 BX Sales Manager – Van Digby, Assistants Joyce and Kari Digby
  - 5.4 Chaplains Steve Janke (New Jersey), Jim Stastny (Maryland), Bill Cooley (Texas)
  - 5.5 Photographer(s) – Tony Morris, Steve Hall and Ken Neal
  - 5.6 Guardmount Editor - Larry Ernsting
  - 5.7 VSPA Service Officer - Bud Owens
  - 5.8 VSPA Kennel Master - Bill Cummings
  - 5.9 Safeside Liaison - Pete Villarreal

**13. ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

- 13.1 SAFESIDE Meeting following the VSPA meeting.
14. A MOMENT OF SILENCE WAS OBSERVED FOR ALL THOSE WHO DID NOT COME HOME, AND FOR OUR DEPARTED VSPA COMRADES LISTED AT LIFE MEMBER#111. CLOSING PRAYER BY CHAPLAIN JIM STASTNY
15. Motion to adjourn, seconded and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 1315 hours by Steve Gattis.



Brassard available through our BX. Contact VAN Digby.



VSPA Service Officer Bud Owens with the VSPA plaque that was placed in the terminal of the old Pease Air Force Base in an area called “Heroes Walk.”

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!  
Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*



Membership Chairman Phil Carroll with Juli Warner of the Leatherman Tool Group. Phil presented Juli with an autographed T=Shirt from VSPA members who donated to the Old Dawgs and Pups Program. The shirt was also signed by Security Forces personnel who received equipment through the program. The plaque is now in the executive offices of the Leatherman Tool Group.

*Over 1,100 members! 450 Life Members!  
Our first on-line edition of Guardmount is available on our web site at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com)*



Vietnam Security Police Association  
P.O. Box 1889  
Glen Rose, Texas 76043

