

USS MAYAGUEZ RESCUE OPERATION (13-15 May 75)

While on a controlled tour with the Armed Forces Police Detachment, Washington D.C., I received notification of a PCS reassignment. I was being assigned to the 388th Security Police Squadron, Korat Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, reporting in January 1975. Knowing that the Vietnam War had just ended, I assumed this tour would be a piece of cake. We probably would be closing down bases in Thailand. This was my fourth PCS tour to PACAF, yet my first in SEA.

Upon arrival at Korat, I was assigned to a law enforcement flight, midnight shift, as the Flight Chief. I further was assigned as the LE Flight Chief for deployment purposes and kept a mobility bag packed at all times. I was only a TSgt but had a large flight of about 110 USAF men and women and about 200 Thai AF Guards. The flight was composed of LE security policemen and augmenters from other base units that were winding down, with primarily a resources protection mission. My new commander was Lt Col Frank Martin, later to be Brig Gen Martin, USAF Chief, Security Police.

As I recall, early in the morning of 13 May 1975, I was rudely awakened by a loud knock at my hooch door. I was instructed to immediately report to CSC with my mobility gear ready to deploy.

Having just ended a midnight shift and half asleep, I got dressed, grabbed my gear and headed for CSC. There I was told that a flight of 25 airmen was being deployed to Utapao RTAFB for staging and further deployment. Final destination—unknown! I was to be the Squad Leader and a Lieutenant would accompany us as the Officer in Charge.

I repeatedly counted personnel and equipment, making double sure, no make that triple sure that each person and their equipment were accounted for prior to boarding a C-130 for the short flight to Utapoa. We had 25 people and I had a correct list of names as we boarded the aircraft. All in order, so far.

Upon arriving at Utapoa, we were temporarily put up in the base gym. I was instructed to report to a General Officer for deployment orders and further instructions. I did so immediately. To my surprise I was informed that we were going to rescue, via a surprise assault, the USS Mayaguez, which had just been captured off the Cambodian coast by Khmer Rogue communist forces. It became apparent immediately to me that the wrong flight had been deployed from Korat. We were the LE flight, equipped with 38s, handcuffs, nightsticks, etc., ready for riot control. They should have deployed the Air Base Ground Defense Security flight. Also after recounting I discovered we only had 24 people that had deployed. No lieutenant. Needless to say I was on the phone back to

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Applications are now available. The criteria is:

- 1. A VSPA Member.
- 2. The spouse of a VSPA member.
- 3. The child of a VSPA member.
- 4. The grandchild of a VSPA member.

The member must be in good standing with VSPA. Applications can be gotten upon request by sending request to:

Mike Daoust
401 N. Kiesel St.
Bay City, MI 48706.
Or E-mail me at skycop68@aol.com.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Greetings, and I wonder how many of you al! are having this summer weather. Recently I paid my life membership dues....it surprised me at the age, I mean it seems like yesterday that I (we) were in Nan.....how could I be 59?? Which is what a younger troop at Ft. Campbell said to me less that a few weeks ago. You're the generation that we (younger) troops look to for encouragement. Actually that made me feel good. We are the generation that will need to lead the fight for Vets Rights both the older ones and those who are much younger and have no idea of the battles they will fight long after the Yellow Ribbons come down or the wave of patriotism cools even a little. Our day is now and we are the ones that will be looked at the most for leadership in the new war. We won the cold war and our battles in Vietnam, this is a new roll, no less important to our country or to each other

I sure look forward to seeing you all again in Dayton and hope that this is a great summer for all. Take care and till next time, GOD BLESS.

KEVIN J FITZGERALD, PRESIDENT kevinfitzgerald@hilton.com

Notice

If your are planning any VSPA activities in your area and would like them to be mentioned in *Guardmount* please send me the information with enough lead time to print it in an issue that will come out before the event. The above item arrived on 6 Feb for an April event.

Editor

Would the member who sent the tribute to Obert Hiett please send it again, it is lost in the maze of my computer.

WINNING THE CLAIMS GAME

You finally decided to file a VA claim for disability, so now what do you do? Maybe you already have started the paperwork yourself or have been helped by a veteran rep filling out the required VA Forms and are now one of many waiting to hear from the VA about your claims status. If you haven't figured it out by now, it's time to realize that you are involved in a giant paper shuffle and this <u>IS</u> NOT a spectator sport.

You must be actively involved with your claim. No one else has an interest in the outcome of your claim as much as you do. You are dealing with the Government, even though recent changes in law favoring the veteran have been enacted, it is still up to you to provide supportive evidence for your claim and become familiar with the rules and regulations the VA plays by.

- 1. Get competent representation, don't go it alone. Be picky, interview several reps until you locate one that you feel confident with.
- 2. Send the required SF-180 form to request <u>COM-PLETE</u> copies of military service files (including medical & personnel), a 2nd SF-180 form to request updating of Awards & Decorations, and a 3rd SF-180 form requesting a DD-214 if needed
- 3. Make a list and request copies of all Medical files from private physicians and hospitals (available to you under the Freedom of Information Act)
- 4. Request a copy of your Units History & lineage from the appropriate archive.
- 5. Keep a file of all correspondence with the VA; note received date in your logbook with a brief description.
- 6. Keep copies of everything you send to the VA, do not send originals unless required.
- 7. Never send documentation or requests directly to the VA. Always route through your rep as he/she should be keeping a log of information re-

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CHAPLAIN 'S CORNER



"Nevertheless afterward." Hebrews 12:11

There is a legend that tells of a German baron who. at his castle on the Rhine, stretched out wires from tower to tower, that the winds might convert them into an Aeolian harp. And soft breezes played about the castle, but no music was born. But one night there arose a great tempest, and hill and castle were smitten by the fury of the mighty winds. The baron went out to the threshold to look out upon the terror of the storm, and the Aeolian harp was filling the air with music even above the tempest. It needed the tempest to bring out the music.! Many a man's life has not given out entrancing music in the day of calm prosperity, but who when the tempest drove against them have astonished others by the power and strength of their music. You can always depend on god to make the "afterward" of difficulties, if rightly overcome, a thousand times richer and fairer than the forward. "No chastening seemeth joyous... nevertheless afterward..."

Chaplain Steve

Whether we like it or not the "Computer Age" is here and we are using it. Email is much easier and faster than the old snail mail system and information flows at lightening speed over the lines. VSPA utilizes this medium for exchange of information among the officers and members, Guardmount is totally dependent on the computer. Members who have computers with email capability receive notification of new items added to the VSPA web page, That is if Don has their email address. This is a service that members may enjoy or opt out of if they wish. If you have an email address and are not yet receiving these updates let Don know by logging on to our website at:: http://www.vspa.

Korat and Col Martin. I explained our situation, I understand he wasn't happy but said we were there and to make the most of it. I did.

I talked to the Utapao armory folks and eventually; they agreed to <u>lend</u> us proper weapons. Well, with the law enforcement troops I had, most had not been through ABGD training. Thanks goodness, all the NCOs had been through the training. We immediately initiated a hands-on training class with the borrowed weapons.

During this initial period, we were all briefed that a chopper from Nakhon Phanom RTAPB (NKP) with 25 souls on board had crashed, killing all on board. This devastating news rallied us even more throughout the coming hours. We were all very upset as it had not yet been determined if the cause of the crash was accidental, if it had been shot down or sabotaged. We all were determined to do our best on this mission, for the guys who had just died, so that their deaths would not be in vain.

We were preparing for an early morning takeoff via helicopters for an at sea assault on the Mayaguez. Each squad had been briefed and assigned to certain levels of the ship. We received our intelligence briefing and were given a couple of hours to get some shut-eye. Soon we were summoned and loaded up busses for the trip to the flight line to board the choppers. While on the flight line waiting to board the choppers, we received word that due to the earlier chopper crash, our mission was cancelled

Little did we know that a contingent of 175 Marines deployed from Okinawa, would complete the assault and rescue operation successfully the next day. The **impending assault** was reported in the *Bangkok Post, prior* to the event, alerting the communist forces. The Marines ran into an ambush from some 200 heavily armed Khmer Rouge, laying in wait for them. Although the Marines suffered 15 KIAs, 3 MIAs and 49 wounded, they persevered and rescued all 39 crewmembers of the

Mayaguez.

Although this eventually turned into a USMC operation, I am told it was the most highly decorated single mission in Air Force history, earning four AF Crosses, 22 Silver Stars and numerous Air Medals, Bronze Stars and Purple Hearts.

My personal salute goes to the US Marine Corps and to those men who gave their all. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

M. T. 'Ted Whitlock Jr. VSPA MEMBER

(Continued from page 3)

ceived and sent to VA dates. (this is a back up source when the VA says they lost or did not receive a document from you) Also, your rep should be going over everything you submit checking for, and eliminating, items that would be detrimental to your claim.

- 8. Use the sources of information and links from this website. There are webboards, references, access to the laws and rules governing VA Benefits, tips, suggestions, and aids in helping you become knowledgeable.
- 9. There are no stupid questions, check the FAQ's first, then ask for help.
- 10. Follow the guidelines laid out on the website and follow through with backup for everything.

Expect to continue learning as you go, education is ongoing, share with your brother veterans whenever possible, knowledge is power, we can learn from each others mistakes and avoid problems others have overcome. Welcome Home!!

http://12.239.11.79/VctsVACorner/

William Wagonlander 37th SPS K-9/Kaylo A280 Phu Cat 1-68 to 8-69

Note: We are fortunate to have someone who is willing to write on VA claims and how to file them. He will be contributing more in the future.

Vietnam Security Police Association Reunion! October 10 - 13, 2002 ~ Dayton, Ohio

To be held at the Marriott Hotel across from the Wright Brothers Museum in Carillon Park.

Hotel rates are \$85 per night, single or double occupancy, plus tax..

Registration is \$105 per person and will include the following:

- Welcoming Package with reunion identification and itinerary
 - List of attendees, & local information
- Hospitality Room stocked everyday with snacks & beverages
 - Welcoming Reception Dinner on Thursday, October 10.
- Tour of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Air Force Museum on Friday, October 11.
 - & Business Meeting with Refreshments on Saturday Morning, October 12.
 - Banquet Dinner on Saturday Evening with Guest Speaker and Raffle
 - * Memorial Service on Sunday Morning with Refreshments
 - * All associated taxes and gratuities

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There will also be a VSPA Hospitality Room for you to meet with friends, share photographs and tell the stories of when we were in Vietnam and Thailand.

Call the Marriott Hotel at 937-223-1000 no later than September 10th to make your hotel reservations. Make sure to tell them you are with the Vietnam Security Police Association Reunion to receive the group rate of \$85 per night. Group Airfare is available by calling Kennewick Travel at 1-800-323-8728. This is guaranteed to be the lowest available rate!

COME JOIN US AS WE SHARE MEMORIES AND FIND OLD FRIENDS!! "WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN."

For More Information Contact:

Steve Gattis (Cam Ranh Bay 68-69)

Phone: (909) 986-6991

Email: gattis@gte.net

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The Reunion BRAT Phone: 509-582-9304

Email: BratEmail@aol.com

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

"WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN!"

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM OCTOBER 10-13, 2002 DAYTON, OHIO

YES! SIGN ME UP FOR OUR REUNION!!!

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MEAL SELECTION: BEEF CHICKEN	VEGETARIAN_
PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS:	
REGISTRATION FEES:	
REGISTRATION # OF PERSONS x \$105	= \$
MEMBERSHIP DUES \$15 (if not already paid)	= \$
TOTAL COST	= \$

PAYMENT IS DUE NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1 0, 2 0 0 2

PLEASE SEND PAYMENTS TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS AND MADE PAYABLE TO:

THE REUNION **BRAT**4005 S. IONF
KENNEWICK, WA 99337
(509) 582-9304

Confirmation of Registration and Itinerary will be sent out by September 25, 2002. A \$20 per person cancellation fee will apply to all cancellations within 30 days of the reunion. Cancellations received within 10 days of the event will be non-refundable. Call The MARRIOTT Hotel at 937-223-1000 no later than September 10, 2002 to make your hotel reservations. Be sure to mention you are with Vietnam Security Police Association Reunion to receive your group rate of \$85 per night, plus tax. These prices are available 3 days prior to and after your event should you choose to extend your stay. Call 1-800-323-8728 for your Group Airfare, guaranteed to be the lowest available rate!! Well see you soon in beautiful Dayton, Ohio and the Air Force Museum!

A TRAGIC RESCUE AT CAM RANH BAY

One bright day at Cam Ranh Bay in 1970, I was at the 483rd Security Police Squadron Training Facility, where I was six days a week. There weren't any newly assigned trainees on this particular day, so we were cleaning and restocking for the next training session. We heard a muffled "whump" outside, nothing unusual as a distant bomb strike made the same sound. We went outside to see where the bomb strike was and noticed a column of black smoke rising at the end of the runway. Another SSgt, I believe SSgt La Joie, and myself jumped into the training section's M-151 jeep and headed for the site of the smoke. As we approached the end of the runway we saw a C-123 had nosed into the surf, broke in half and spun around so the open cargo bay was pointed toward the beach. The surf at that location was about 4 to 5 feet deep. A SAT had gotten there before us and had observed the aircraft load master standing in what was left of the cargo bay. As the SAT pulled up to the beach, the load master fell into the water. Two of the SAT members (I never got their names), unhesitatingly went into the water and pulled him onto the beach. He suffered a broken neck, but survived. Very soon, a lot of people were at the scene, including two Boston Whalers the squadron used for bay patrol. Sgt La Joie and I got into one of the boats and went to the fuselage. A couple of heavy wreckers arrived and we were attaching cables to the plane to pull it onto the beach. The flight deck was crushed and below water, but we were trying to get it high enough to extricate the crew, hoping against hope that they might have survived. There were now quite a few people around, both in the boats and in the water (including myself) when we got word from one of the Oscar (observation) Posts overlooking the sea that sharks were seen on their way to the sight. We hoped the SPs in the Oscar Post would open up on the sharks with the .50 cal stationed there, but the sharks never showed up. With all the

noise and cacophony going on, it was impossible to hear if they did.

The hulk of the 123 was finally hauled up high enough onto the beach that the fight deck (or what was left of it) could be accessed. The crew members were extricated, but unfortunately they didn't survive. Cam Ranh didn't have many aircraft accidents, in fact this was the only one during my tour of duty. Thanks to the unhesitating action of the SAT members, one name would not be added to "The Wall", that of the load master.

Clifford Wilson, TSgt (Ret) 12th/483rd SPS

LEWIS B. FISCHER AWARD

As you all know, the Vietnam Security Police Association sponsors the "Lewis B. Fischer Award". This award is give to an outstanding graduate of the Security Forces Academy at Lackland AFB. In a normal year this award is presented to 2 or 3 airman. However, due to the heighten security levels and the deployment of troops to an area at war, the Fischer Award has been presented 10 times this year. The winners of the award are as follows:

January	SSgt Edward Richer class 011019
April	SSgt Milton N. Ramirez class 020205
April	A1C Jason E. Russell class 020129
April	A1C Jeremy Mietzger class 020114
May	A1C Jesse J. Wheeler class 011019
May	SRA Neal M. Adams class 010327
May	A1D David B. Marshall class 020222
May	SSgt Mario J. Norrenmann class 020129
May	ET2 Chad D. Martin class 020240
May	SSgt Christoper B. Cekovsky class
-	020301

Please keep these Airman, all the Security Forces, and all the troops in your thoughts, prayers, and thanks.

Denis Cook



REGIONAL GET TOGETHER

Our first annual joint SP rendezvous was held 21-28 Apr 2002. The event was co-hosted by the Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA) and the Air Force Security Police Association (AFSPA), in conjunction with the Vietnam Veterans of Brevard 15th Annual Reunion and the Moving Wall, in Melbourne, Brevard County, Florida.

We SPs were encamped at the huge 400 acre Wickham Park, but it could just as easily have been the NCO Hootches at Korat RTAFB, the Parachute covered NCO lounge at Ben Hoa AB or any of a hundred locales in SEA where Security Police met to relax, have a beer or two and cook up some chow. It was warm and humid but there was enough of a sea breeze to stir and wave the thousands of flags proudly flying from staffs, poles, antennae and even skyhooks. Veterans from every war since and including WWII were here. They were from all branches of service, every conceivable unit and of all grades and ranks. Over a hundred thousand visitors during the weeklong event, but there is a difference now days. A big difference!! These were proud and smiling folks. They were obviously happy. The favorite greeting was "Welcome Home Brother" or "Sister" as the case may be.

Motor homes, fancy trailers and hundred thousand dollar custom coaches were snuggled right in with the tent campers and home built trailers. There were no distinctions here; all were brothers and sisters. Former helicopter pilots, K9 Handlers, River Rats who used to man the gunboats, Tacan boys who were operating in TLC (Thailand, Laos and Cambodia), all were here. 1st Cavalry, point men, grunts, demolition men, Special Forces, Rangers, Scals, every type and color of Beret. Veteran's wives, widows, Gold Star mothers, brothers, sisters and children, all so proud to be here. This was the biggest Veterans Event in the United States and it was the Vietnam Veterans who started it and now are the focal point. The Nam Vets did for themselves what no one else could do for them. They got their Pride back. They are no longer the "Walking Mentally Wounded" of that era.

The Wall is a draw of course, but the camaraderie is the other reason for the veterans coming to the reunion. These folks stand tall and show more good old fashion patriotism than any other group of people you will ever meet. Everyone was wearing "Colors"—old fatigues, some with just the tops

or maybe just a fatigue cap, a few boonic hats. All were loaded with unit patches, pins, medals and ribbons, etc. Remember the "Participant Southeast Asia War Games" patches?? They were all here. If you needed a cap special made? You could get it here. Lost an old patch and couldn't find another; you came to the right place! They could even make them "Special" for you on computer operated and controlled Toyota Sewing Machines. The operator scans your design or photo and the computer tells the sewing machine how to sew it and with what color thread! Must be a good business as those machines cost 14K. upwards of sans computer!

The Vietnam Security Police Association and the Air Force Security Police Association. Space Coast Chapter set up a joint CSC/CP with a couple of RVs, trailers, tents and their respective banners flying. In the center of the space flanked by the RVs, AFSPA set up a table with AFSPA Brochures, Applications, and AFSPA memorabilia for sale. VSPA and AFSPA members gave recruiting pitches whenever they came across a fellow AP-SP or others who were qualified for membership. Although only a relatively few former or present Security Police were in evidence, the members made every effort to recruit those that were not members and they were definitely in the minority! Almost all APS/SPs we encountered were already members. The few that were not seemed to want to think about it and they put us off with just taking the applications.

Still, we were there, we were highly visible and we represented the VSPA and AFSPA with good memorabilia displays, banners and flags. We have made a good initial start and we are hoping to find ways to improve our participation and recruiting at future annual reunions of the Vietnam Vets of Brevard County. For those who made it by the encampment we all truly shared the "Bond of the Blue Beret". We shared the brotherhood as we had all been there and done that!!! We look forward to a bigger and better SP rendezvous next year (May 2-3-4, 2003) and invite all current and past Air Police, Security Police, and Security Forces to join us. We can just about guarantee you a great time!!!!

M. T. 'Ted Whitlock Jr. VSPA MEMBER

FYI

There were 78 Charter Members of VSPA and of that 78, 52 continue to be members. Of the 52, 7 are Life Members.



VSPA **BX PRODUCT SALES**



Patches: VSPA Patches ______ \$ 5.00 QC Patches_____\$ 5.00 b. SP Badge Patch ______ \$ 4.00 C. Air Force Vietnam Vet Patch _____ \$ 4.00 d. Tet 68 Survivor Patch \$4.00 C. 7th Air Force Patch _____ \$ 4.00 ſ. g.

POW/MIA Patch \$4.00 I've Been There Victnam Patch _____ \$ 4.00 ħ. Brothers Forever Patch \$4.00 In Memory Patch \$4.00 Vietnam Service Ribbon Patch \$4.00

k. QC Back Patch (9") ______ \$15.00 i. U.S. Air Force Back Patch (10") \$15.00

Pins:

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a.	QC Pin	_ \$ 4.00
b.	7th Air Force Pin	_ \$ 4.00
C.	Air Force Vietnam Vet Pin	_ \$ 4.00
đ.	Tet 68 Survivor Pin	_ \$ 4.00
e.	POW/MIA Pin	_ \$ 4.00
ſ.	POW/MIA Pin w/Eagle	\$ 4.00
g.	POW/MIA Cross w/Black Ribbon Pin	\$ 4.00
ĥ.	In Memory Pin	\$ 4.00
i.	Vietnam Tab Pin	\$ 4.00
j.	Victnam Base Pins (Bien Hoa, Binh Thuy	, Cam Ranh
-	Bay, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Phan Rang, Pi	eiku, Phu Cat,
	Ton Son Nhut)	\$ 4.00
k.	U.S. Air Force (Geretic)	
ŧ.	Victnam Service Ribbon Pin	_ \$ 4.00
m,	Vietnam Veteran With Ribbon Bar Pin	\$ 4.00
n,	New Air Force Security Forces Pin	_ \$ 4.00

Please Add \$3.00 For Shipping and Handling for All Orders Under \$50.00 - Orders Over \$50.00 Please Add \$4.50 For Shipping and Handling.

Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Pin _____ \$ 4.00

Please Make Checks or Money Orders Payable to Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA)

Sorry No Credit Card Orders Yet.

Send to Mike Daoust 401 N. Kiesel St. Bay City, MI 48706

Stickers:

a.	VSPA Bumper Sticker	\$ 1.00
b.	7th Air Force	\$ 3.00
C.	Vietnam Service Ribbon	\$ 3.00
đ.	U.S. Air Force	\$ 3.00
e.	POW/MIA (Inside or Outside)	\$ 1.00

Hats: (Baseball Style Black) \$12.00

- VSPA Association
- OC Plain
- QC w/Flight Tab above QC (Ranger, Tiger, Phantom,
- d. Security Police Shield
- U.S. Air Force Vietnam Veteran With Ribbon Bar
- f QC w/K-9 Tab above QC and Dog Embroidered on side of the hat \$14.00

Miscellaneous:

a.	Security Police Mini Shields (Numbered) _ \$10.00
b.	Security Police Qualification Badges
	(Lg \$4.00 - Sm \$2.00)
C.	7th Air Force Coin \$12.00
đ.	Paper Weights Marble w/QC SP Shield or VSPA

\$15.00

VSPA Stoneware Coffee Mugs Coblt Blue W/Logos e.

ſ. VSPA 1 3/4 oz. Shot Glass w/Logos \$ 6.00

Stainless Steel USAF Travel Coffee Mug \$10.00 (U. S. Air Force Available Only)

U.S. Air Force Magnate (Size Approx. 3") - \$ 3.00 h.

Belt Buckels (Vietnam Veteran w/Ribbons) i. (U.S. Air Force Generic) \$12.00

Black Laminated Wood Clocks (U.S.A.F. or Victnam j. Memorial) \$45.00

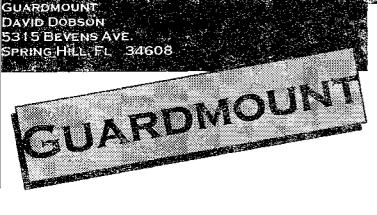
Full Size Vietnam Service Medal w/Ribbon Set k.

3x5 Flags (U.S.A.F. or POW/MIA) \$12.00 1.

Shirts:

- Deluxe Polo Style Shirt w/QC Emblem on the Front a. (Size S. M. L. XL - \$25.00 XXL - \$28.00)
- Cadet Sweatshirts w/OC Emblem on the Front b. (Size S, M, L, XL - \$35.00 XXL - \$38.00)

Coming Soon A New Style Jacket and T-shirt



First Class



CYBERSPACE

For those on internet here is a website that will let you locate names on the wall as well as other facts. You can even add information and pictures of people you know on the wall.

http://www.virtualwall.org/viewthewall.htm

If you have lost your DD Form 214 you can rebuild it using this website.

http://members.aol.com/forvets/dd214.htm

If you have any websites you feel other members would enjoy visiting or that may provide information please send them to me and I will be happy to post them. Of course the most important website for all of us is:

http://www.vspa.com/

For those of you who read the Navy version of the attack on NAF at Cam Ranh Bay AB in June 1970, check out the Security Police rebuttal in the current issue of *Vietnam*. It begins on page 8 and continues on page 48 along with the Naval Commander's defense. We were the silent shadows who protected the perimeters of the bases and were overlooked. We have to step up and be counted when necessary.

Dave Dobson, CRB 70 71