

VSPA



USAF

GUARDMOUNT

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

"We Take Care of Our Own"

2023 FALL EDITION



Welcome to Joint Base Charleston



Charleston, South Carolina



28th VSPA Reunion

Joint Base Charleston



Charleston, SC

October 4-8, 2023

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

JERRY NELSON, CMSGT (RETIRED)
 PRESIDENT, LIFE MEMBER #668
 PHAN RANG, PHU CAT, TUY HOA 69-70

My VSPA Brothers and Sisters,

I am truly excited about our upcoming reunion in Charleston, South Carolina. It is a great venue and there are lots of things to do. Downtown Charleston has a lot of great shops, museums, and wonderful restaurants with sensational food. There will be time to explore the area and enjoy its many opportunities.

This is also an election year, and you will notice the bios for those who are running for office. I would like to acknowledge their commitment to the Vietnam Security Police Association. There is no greater honor than holding an office in this organization. These individuals who are seeking office are certainly some of our best and I applaud them for serving.

I also hope we have many Heritage members attending this year. Our children and grandchildren are truly looking after us. We seem to pick up new members to this group every year. These young men and women, while not having served in Thailand or Vietnam, are our life's blood and will carry our Association into the future. I am very proud of them and their sincere desire to honor and preserve our legacy...to keep our history alive by helping the VSPA.

As I have mentioned previously, we will not be visiting Charleston AFB this year. We decided that due to mobility issues for many of our members and to save on costs for buses and lunch, that we will have the troops visit us at the hotel on Friday afternoon. They will provide briefings and demos at the hotel. It will be much more convenient and in a relaxed atmosphere with reduced walking. This is somewhat of an experiment for future reunions.

This will be my last official letter as the President of the VSPA. It has been an honor to help lead the VSPA and I want you to know how proud I am of our members. My Brothers and Sisters mean the world to Sherry and me. I certainly would like to thank each of you for your support over the last five years. Your support has certainly been instrumental in our efforts. To the Board of Directors, thank you for your dedicated efforts in supporting our vision. I hope to still be involved in helping move the Association forward and working with those leading us into the future.

Sherry and I look forward to seeing you in Charleston!

Jerry Nelson
 President

SEND IN YOUR REUNION REGISTRATIONS. DO IT NOW! SAVE \$25 BY MEETING THE EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION DEADLINE OF SEPTEMBER 5.



THE VSPA SISTERHOOD

Sheila Cain, Sisterhood President



Hello to my Dear Sisters and Brothers of the VSPA,

Well, it's already August so that means the Reunion is just around the corner. Hopefully you have your hotel reservations made, flights or travel arrangements planned, and the all important VSPA Reunion registration form sent into the REUNION BRAT.

As of this writing I believe it will be a very well attended event.

Some of our wonderful Sisters, who are also nurses, developed the VSPA Health Information Form. Please make sure you upload the form and bring a completed copy with you to the reunion. One completed form should be brought for each attendee. It's also a good idea to keep a completed copy with all your important papers at home and with your family.

The annual Sisterhood meeting will take place on Saturday morning starting with our traditional Mimosas.

The Memorial Services and business meeting will follow. A Sisterhood raffle with gifts for the ladies will also be held. Please bring a gift that you think one of your Sisters would like to win.

If anyone knows of a Sister or member who has passed away since our last reunion, PLEASE contact myself or Sisterhood Chaplain Roberta Smith with any information you may have available.

A quick reminder, if you know of any member who is sick or injured, please keep us informed. Cards, Good Wishes, and Prayers cannot be sent if we are "Not In The Loop".

I'm anxiously awaiting seeing you all in Charleston soon.

*Peace, Joy, and Love,
Sheila Gervase-Cain
Sisterhood President
716-480-9101*

*Wife of Greg Cain
Binh Thuy 67-68*

**Print and complete the VSPA Health Information Form.
Bring the completed form to the reunion!**



My concerns today are:

Name:		Last 4	Date of birth:		Date:
Veteran: Yes No		Agent Orange Exposure: Yes No		Advanced Directives: Yes No	
Healthcare Provider:				Provider Phone #:	
Insurance Company:			Ins #		Group#
Blood Type:		Medication Allergies:			

Emergency Contact Information

Name:		Relationship:	Phone:
Name:		Relationship:	Phone:

Medication(s)

Medication	Dose	Frequency	Medication	Dose	Frequency

Problem List/Medical Diagnosis

Diagnosis	Date	Diagnosis	Date

Surgeries

Surgery	Date	Surgery	Date

Other Information:

VSPA Word 11-9-22



RAFFLE  RAFFLE **Saturday Night Banquet Raffle** RAFFLE  RAFFLE

*The highlight of our great reunion is the **Saturday Evening Banquet and Awards dinner.***

The conclusion of the dinner is our raffles for items that have been generously donated.

*These fund's help to defray the cost of offering up a hospitality room that is well stocked with **"Adult"** and regular beverages and snacks while gathering with old and new friends.*

Please consider bringing something to add to the treasures. Perhaps maybe something unique from your hometown.

*There will also be the highly anticipated 50/50 raffle where you could be big winner of some **COLD HARD CASH!***

Thank you in advance for your generosity in both your donations and ticket purchases.

*Loyally,
Sheila Gervase-Cain
Hospitality and Raffles Chairman*

*Wife of Greg Cain
Binh Thuy 67-68*

DEFENDERS OF THE FORT

Sometimes in the late of night when I cannot sleep,
My thoughts go back in time to memories hidden deep.
There I dare survey the past, and what I might have lost,
Of things I might have gained, and what had been the cost?

There is a time in all our lives that we cannot forget.
More than just old memories are living with us yet.
Between the days of now and then, between conflict and calm,
That point of time in my life is always Vietnam.

Guarding, watching, vigilant ..., Air Police by trade,
Defend the fort was our creed, the promise that we made.
While others slept we stood our guard, and often paid the cost.
Never once while on our guard was an airbase ever lost.

There wasn't some great battle each time we went to post,
Many times the enemy was in our minds like ghosts.

But when the battles came, and the fires of hell rained down,
Like Brothers we fought side by side, and bravely stood our ground.

I wonder how many brave, young men might have died alone,
If the planes that we guarded would have never flown?
If the air support had never come to answer their dire call,
How many thousands more would be carved upon "The Wall"?

It gives me pride now to know we always did our best.
Our legacy was born in war, and we passed every test.
Second to none, heads held high, I survey now with pride,
And honor Brothers one and all, especially those who died.

Air Police, Security Police, K-9, and SafeSide,
Augmentees, Security Force, all can say with pride,
When our country called, we came, and proudly now report,
Your Air Force is secure, rest well ..., Defenders Of The Fort.

Written by: Randy "Ramps" Stutler, 23 February, 2009



Vietnam Security Police Association
28th Reunion
Charleston, South Carolina – October 4-8, 2023
Joint Base Charleston

The 2023 VSPA reunion will be held at the Crowne Plaza Charleston Hotel, 4831 Tanger Outlet Blvd. North Charleston, South Carolina 29418. The contract room rate is \$152 per night, plus tax. The room rate *includes a free breakfast*. The rooms include a refrigerator. The group room rate is available three days before and three days after the reunion based upon room availability. You must book early to ensure that rooms are available. DON'T WAIT! This hotel fills very quickly! **HOTEL SOLD OUT!**

HOTEL INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RESERVATIONS AT THE CROWNE PLAZA:
IF YOU HAVE TO CANCEL FOR ANY REASON, PLEASE CALL THE REUNION BRAT AT 1-360-663-2521 TO COORDINATE REASSIGNMENT OF YOUR ROOM RESERVATION. DO NOT CALL THE HOTEL! The Reunion BRAT has a list of VSPA members who are waiting for room at the Crowne Plaza.

ADDITIONAL HOTEL ROOMS: The Reunion BRAT has worked extensively to help us resolve room availability and has blocked additional rooms at two areas hotels at the same price of \$152 plus tax, including breakfast. A TOTAL OF 30 ADDITIONAL ROOMS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE HOTELS BELOW. Book at the Fairfield Inn first. They have ten rooms for us. It is right next door and uses the same parking lot as the Crowne Plaza. The next hotel is the Towne Place Suites. They have 20 rooms available for the VSPA and a shuttle that will transport you to the Crowne Plaza for our events. The Crowne Plaza will also shuttle you back to the Towne Place Suites.
 DON'T WAIT! MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!

Fairfield Inn

843-300-3100 to make their reservations.
 4841 Tanger Outlet Blvd. North Charleston, SC 29418, right next door to the Crowne Plaza.
 Kings and Queens \$152 + Tax Breakfast Included (Total of 10 Rooms)
 Rate available 3 days pre and post based on availability.
 Room Block is Vietnam Security Police
 Complimentary Parking
 Complimentary Airport Shuttle

TownePlace Suites Charleston Airport/Convention Center

Phone 843-990-7777
 5001 Fashion Avenue North Charleston, South Carolina 29418
 King Rooms Only \$152 + Tax Breakfast Included (Total of 20 Rooms)
 Rate available 3 days pre and post based on availability.
 Room Block is Vietnam Security Police
 Complimentary Parking
 Complimentary Airport Shuttle and Shuttle to Crowne Plaza

If you encounter any difficulty with hotel reservations, reserve the room, obtain the confirmation number, and contact the Reunion BRAT at 1-360-663-2521. Explain the problem and she will correct it for you.

AIRPORT INFORMATION:

Book your flight to “Charleston International Airport” (airport code: CHS), in North Charleston, South Carolina. **YOU MUST BE AWARE OF AIRLINE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS. BRING A MASK!** *The hotel does have an airport shuttle.*

REUNION REGISTRATION FEE: \$184 per person (early bird) plus an optional tour on Thursday.

AGENDA: The agenda is generally accurate, but is subject to change due to Joint Base Charleston operational requirements for the 628th SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON:

- Wednesday, October 4: On-site Registration and Reception Dinner at the hotel.
- Thursday, October 5: Optional Tour of the **Charleston Tea Garden, a Factory Tour and tram tour of the Tea Plantation, PLUS a visit to the Charleston Market Specialty Shops.** 50 people maximum. There will be time for lunch on your own at the Specialty Shops, but you should eat your buffet breakfast.
- Friday, October 6: Buffet breakfast. 1300 Presentation by the 628th Security Forces Squadron **at our hotel.** Dinner and evening are open for squadron and base dinners or gatherings.
- Saturday Morning, October 7: Breakfast buffet before the VSPA Business Meeting. Afternoon open.
- Saturday Morning, October 7: Breakfast buffet before the VSPA Sisterhood gathering of wives and companions. Afternoon open.
- Saturday Evening, October 7: Banquet dinner with awards and raffle.
- Sunday Morning, October 8: Breakfast buffet before the Memorial service and reading of the names. The reunion will end after the memorial service.
- The Hospitality Room will be stocked with FREE snacks & beverages and will be open as much as possible.
- **THE VSPA BX STORE WILL BE AT THE REUNION THIS YEAR.**

CRITICAL INFORMATION!!! PLEASE READ!!!

Our hotel has been inspected by our VSPA Life Member Gary Jones who has inspected our hotels in the past. He knows exactly what we need. His inspection was highly detailed, including contract space verifications. His report was **OUTSTANDING!**

We have spoken with many of our members regarding fatigue and the length of time for our tours. Members who attended previous reunions expressed concern regarding early start times, as well as fatigue and the extended days while on base. More and more of our members have difficulty walking; however, some walking may be required for the optional tours. Our planning for events will reduce walking time significantly. Our goal is to provide an opportunity for a reunion with less physical demands and more time to visit with each other in the Hospitality Room.

*The REGISTRATION FEE will be \$184 per person. Our economy has been very difficult for all of us. However, for comparison purposes, the registration fees for our last three reunions were: Washington, D.C. \$210; Colorado Springs \$190; Phoenix \$210. We always work hard to control cost and sincerely hope that the registration fee is not something that will impact your ability to attend our reunion. The registration fee includes an **EARLY BIRD CREDIT** of \$25 for those who have a registration postmarked by **September 5.***



THE FOLLOWING IS A CRITICAL CHANGE TO OUR REUNION REGISTRATION PROCESS. PLEASE READ!

The Reunion BRAT and your VSPA Board of Directors experienced severe impact on planning and preparation FOR THE 2019 REUNION due to **late and incomplete registrations** that were received long past the deadline.

The impact on the VSPA Board and Reunion Planning Committee consisted of delaying plans with the base, including the meal at the base, working with outside entities who had approval authority over our ability to visit the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, and multiple units at Joint Base Andrews. A variety of other problems occurred that we had to resolve on behalf of our members by contacting them for the Reunion BRAT. The same issues applied to Colorado Springs and Phoenix but were significantly reduced through the implementation of our EARLY BIRD FEE, which will also be applied this year as unanimously approved by our membership.

THEREFORE, THE \$25 EARLY BIRD CREDIT ON YOUR REGISTRATION WILL BE HONORED IF YOUR REGISTRATION IS POSTMARKED BY SEPTEMBER 5. FOR REGISTRATIONS POSTMARKED AFTER THAT DATE, THE REGISTRATION FEE WILL INCREASE BY \$25.

We have had a huge response to our warning that rooms would sell fast at our reunion host hotel, The Crowne Plaza Charleston. Many of you responded immediately. Some missed the opportunity and discovered that the hotel was sold out. Please take advantage of the 30 additional rooms at area hotels.

If you have a question or need additional information about this reunion, please contact VSPA President Jerry Nelson JRNEL1423@aol.com or call him on his cell phone at (210) 273-4777. We hope to see you in Charleston, South Carolina for our 28th VSPA Reunion! It will be great to see you.

THE REGISTRATION FORMS FOLLOW THIS PAGE.

“We Take Care of Our Own!”



VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION REUNION REGISTRATION FORM



28th Reunion
Charleston, South Carolina
October 4 - 8, 2023

NAME _____

RVN or Thai base _____ Squadron _____ Years 19 _____ to 19 _____
(Do not list bases outside of Vietnam or Thailand)

RVN or Thai base _____ Squadron _____ Years 19 _____ to 19 _____

Home Address _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Name(s) of your guests(s) _____

Banquet meal selection: BEEF _____ CHICKEN _____ VEGETARIAN _____

List any special needs: _____

In case of emergency, notify: _____

Is this your first VSPA Reunion? YES: _____ NO: _____

REGISTRATION FEES

Are your annual VSPA dues current? Dues Renewals Only \$15 = \$
(Not for new members - to join the VSPA, please see "VSPA Membership" on the instructions page).

Number of persons attending the Reunion including you # X \$184 = \$
(EARLY BIRD CREDIT OF \$25 INCLUDED if postmarked by September 5)

Number of persons attending the Reunion including you # X \$209 = \$
(LATE FEE OF \$25 INCLUDED if postmarked AFTER September 5)

OPTIONAL THURSDAY TOUR

Charleston Tea Garden, Plantation and Factory Tour, plus the Charleston Market Specialty Shops \$52 per person # _____ (Maximum of 50 People) X \$52 = \$
(First come, first served)

KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL T-SHIRT FUNDRAISER \$25 TO HELP BUILD TWO KNIFE-13 MEMORIALS. Please circle the shirt size and number of shirts:
SM _____ MED _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____ XXXL _____ TOTAL _____ X \$25 = \$

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED = \$ _____

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

THE REUNION BRAT
16817 Mountainside Drive East
Greenwater, WA 98022 (360) 663-2521
TheReunionBRAT@hotmail.com



PLEASE READ

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE REGISTRATION FORMS

1. The information that you provide on this form is critical for a successful reunion. All name and base information will be placed on your reunion identification badge. Guests will also receive reunion identification. The reunion ID will serve as your identification throughout the reunion.
2. PLEASE PRINT or type all information clearly. Do not use abbreviations on any portion of the registration form.
3. RVN OR THAI BASE INFORMATION: Please list only those bases where you served in Vietnam or Thailand. When listing bases, do not abbreviate. When listing squadrons, please indicate Air Police, Security Police, or specific detachments. The information will be used on your reunion ID.
4. HOME ADDRESS and MAILING ADDRESS: for your confirmation letter. THE CONFIRMATION LETTERS WILL BE MAILED BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2023.
5. TELEPHONE AND EMAIL ADDRESS: Your contact information is vital to a successful reunion. You will also receive a copy of the attendee roster upon arrival at the hotel.
6. NAMES OF YOUR GUESTS: Please provide the first name, middle initial and last name of your guest(s) on the Registration Form.
7. RENEWAL OF ANNUAL DUES: For existing VSPA members only - you can renew your dues at the time of registration if they are not current. VSPA membership must be current to attend the reunion or bring a guest. Life Members have paid their dues for life.
8. VSPA MEMBERSHIP: If you are not a member of the Vietnam Security Police Association, please do not send \$15 with this registration form. For information on how to become a member, contact Paul Shave at 505-831-9401 or email him: Paul_Shave@hotmail.com. You will have to submit a completed application form and a DD-214 showing service in the USAF as an Air Policeman, Security Policeman or an Augmentee in Vietnam or Thailand 1958 to 1976, and a discharge under honorable conditions.
9. REUNION COST: The registration fee is \$184 per person UNLESS YOU MISS THE EARLY BIRD DEADLINE WITH A POSTMARK OF SEPTEMBER 5. The registration fee will be \$209 per person for all registrations postmarked after September 5. THIS IS CRITICAL because of the work that must be completed by the Reunion BRAT and your Board of Directors. The following work must be completed by the Reunion BRAT after registrations are received: A full audit of all names, base names, squadrons, and fees paid. The audit of names must be correct in order to print reunion ID badges, pay advance fees to the hotel and bus transportation company based upon the number of people attending the reunion. Only then can the confirmation letters be mailed to our members. All of the registration and identification information must be assembled in Registration Welcome Packages that have to be mailed in bulk to the hotel with enough time for delivery no later than Tuesday, October 3, the day before registration opens at the hotel. Shipping and delivery are very difficult to guarantee with the current delays in mail systems and shipping. Once the packages arrive at the hotel, another audit must take place so that reunion specific items may be placed in each welcome package, including reunion pins, patches, meal tickets, bus tickets, raffle information and local restaurant information. PLEASE DON'T DELAY.
10. **KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL T-SHIRTS: We are raising funds to build two memorials for the 18 Security Policemen and five crew members who perished in the crash of their helicopter, KNIFE-13, on May 13, 1975, while enroute to the Mayaguez Rescue Staging Area. They were all assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand.**

2023 ELECTION OF VSPA OFFICERS

CALL FOR BIOS AND PHOTOS

The VSPA's By-Laws call for elections of officers every two years, with all current members being given an opportunity to vote. Current members may vote in person by attending the business meeting at the annual reunion, or by mailing in a written ballot, which will be printed in the next issue of Guardmount. Each member may submit only one ballot. There are six positions up for election: President, Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Historian. The other positions on our board of directors (President Emeritus, Past President and Communications Director) are permanent positions as recognized by our Constitution and By-Laws. All other positions in the VSPA are staff positions appointed by the president and board based upon expertise and willingness to serve the members of the VSPA. Elected officers will be confirmed and installed after the voting is completed at the reunion in October. The term of office of all positions is two years. The positions do not receive a salary and are entirely on a volunteer basis.

VSPA members have until **August 5, 2023**, to declare their intention to run for an elected VSPA position and must submit a bio and photo for publication in Guardmount. Each person who runs must have been a regular member or life member in good standing for at least two years prior to the election. Board members must have the ability to attend future business meetings that are held at our annual reunions. They must communicate via the Internet and by phone on a regular basis and must make the commitment to provide the time necessary to serve in the position - none of these are ceremonial positions.

If you want to run for an office on the VSPA Board of Directors, you'll need to submit a photo and one-page biography. Send your bio and photo to VSPA's Guardmount Editor, Mike Kennedy, electronically (mike3sps@verizon.net) or by surface mail (14766 Foxfield Lane, Fontana, CA 92336) soon enough so that he receives your information by **August 5, 2023**. The bios and the 2023 Election Ballot appear later in this issue of Guardmount.

The duties of the elected board positions below are from the VSPA By-Laws:

PRESIDENT - The duties of the President shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Act as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Directors.
- B. Cause to be called all regular and special meetings of the organization.
- C. Preside over all regular and special meetings of the organization.
- D. Enforce the Constitution and By-Laws.
- E. Direct and supervise the operation of the organization.
- F. Prepare and present the Board of Directors Annual Report at the annual business meeting.
- G. Coordinate the confirmation of all appointed staff members with the Board of Directors.
- H. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to his care and turn over the folder to his successor.
- I. Be an ex-officio member of all committees, except the "Nominations Committee."

VICE PRESIDENT and **SECOND VICE PRESIDENT** - The duties of the Vice President and the Second Vice President shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Assist the President in the discharge of his duties.
- B. Assume the duties of the President in the event of his absence, illness, or call to eternal Guardmount.
- C. Execute the powers and authority of the President, when required, in the absence of the President.
- D. Serve as elected members of the Board of Directors.
- E. Serve as Chairman and member of the Public Relations Committee if a committee is necessary.
- F. Serve as a member of the Scholarship Committee.
- G. Prepare and present annual reports relative to the operation of their respective office at the annual business meeting.
- H. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to their care and turn over the folder to his successor.
- I. The Second Vice President shall provide oversight for all record keeping activities and assist the President by maintaining hard copy records when necessary.

SECRETARY - The duties of the Secretary shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Officiate when required in the absence of the President and Vice President.
- B. Serve as an elected member of the Board of Directors.
- C. Serve as a member of the Membership Committee.
- D. Be the clerk of the organization.
- E. Be the custodian of all business-related non-financial records and materials, with the exception of: those records which are created and maintained by the VSPA Historian, the VSPA Membership Chairman, the VSPA Treasurer and VSPA Communications Director Don L. Poss; or those records which are required for performance of the duties of the registered agent and liaison with VSPA's tax accountant and tax attorney. All such records shall remain property of the organization.
- F. Take minutes and keep permanent records of the proceedings of all annual Business Meetings and meetings of the Board of Directors.
- G. Prepare and distribute election ballots, if necessary and as required.
- H. Ensure that only members in good standing vote on organizational business. The Secretary will be assisted by the Membership Chairman and the Sergeant-at-Arms.
- I. Serve as official organization correspondent.
- J. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to his care and turn over the folder to his successor.

TREASURER - The duties of the Treasurer shall include, but not be limited to:

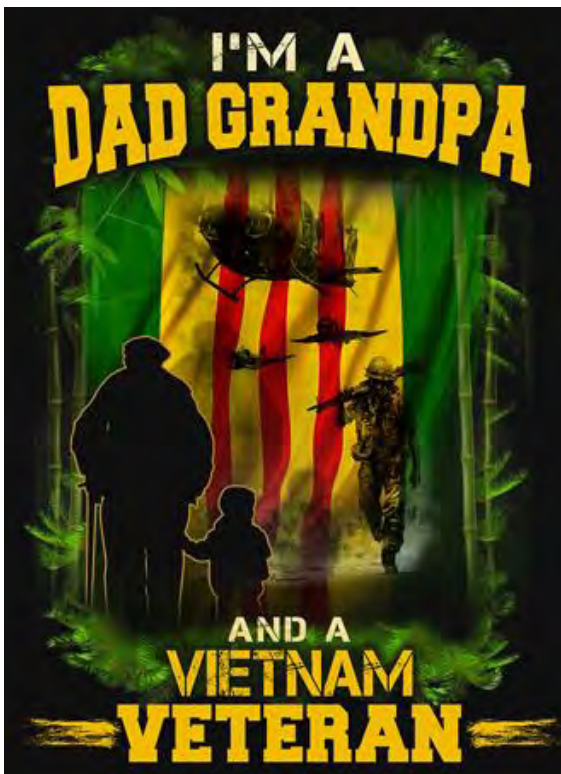
- A. Serve as an elected member of the Board of Directors.
- B. Act as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee if the committee is necessary.
- C. Be the Chief Financial Officer of the organization.
- D. Be the custodian of all financial records of the organization.
- E. Receive and be responsible for the collection of all monies due and payable to the organization.



- F. Have custody of all organization funds, and shall provide for the safekeeping, retention, disbursement, and investment in a manner acceptable to the Board of Directors.
- G. Receive donations on behalf of the organization.
- H. Issue letters in acknowledgement of all donations as required by tax codes.
- I. To work with the President to make such reports and returns as are required by Federal, State and local governments, the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution, and these By-Laws, including the disbursement of appropriate taxes and fees.
- J. Maintain accounts appropriate to the structure and activities of the organization and in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and principles.
- K. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to his care and turn over the folder to his successor.

HISTORIAN - The duties of the Historian shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Serve as an elected member of the Board of Directors.
- B. Serve as Chairman of the Historical Committee if a committee is necessary.
- C. Prepare and present a report at the annual business meeting regarding the history projects completed during the preceding year.
- D. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to his care and turn over the folder to his successor.





For President:

Larry Fleming

Life Member #131; Nha Trang 68-69



I am running for President of the VSPA. I have been a life member since 2004. I served in the USAF from 1966-1970. First serving at Minot AFB, North Dakota, volunteering for Southeast Asia and receiving orders for Nha Trang AB arriving on 31 January 1968. After Viet Nam I was sent to Hamilton AFB, California, where I was honorably discharged in 1970.

I have served as Vice President for 5 years including the Covid year when we canceled our reunion. Decisions were made by the Board of Directors to not meet because of health concerns of our aging membership. It was the right decision and it was a tough decision because we felt there would be some

members that would not be able to make the next reunion. Unfortunately, that was the case.

This leads to the consideration of future reunions and the health and mobility of our membership. In deciding to run for President my concern was, if I were to serve 2 terms, which would be expected, I will be 80 years old. That gentlemen, is reality for all of us. We are a terminal organization and soon we will be but a legacy. My desire is to leave great and everlasting memories of a brotherhood that is dear to my heart.

With that said, I feel there are changes that need to be made for the betterment of our organization, such as less travel on busses, more time for hospitality and just visiting with dear friends that we may not see next year. I also want us to spend time with the Sisterhood who has always had our backs. It seems to me the last couple of years there has been great joy in people just talking, telling tall tales, telling stories no one remembers and laughing until we are about ready to pass out.

These are some of my thoughts about our future. I know others may have a different view and that's ok. I will lead the direction the membership wants to go.

I want to acknowledge the great work Jerry Nelson has accomplished in his term as President and I will work closely with him as he becomes Past President and will seek his knowledge and input in the coming years. Feel free to contact me at information below if you have any questions.

I am asking for your vote for President in the upcoming election. Thank you and WELCOME HOME!

Larry Fleming Life Member #131

ldfleming569@gmail.com

254-396-4091

– – CANDIDATE BIOS CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE – –



For 1st Vice President:

Robert “Deke” DeCubellis, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)

Life Member #347; Bien Hoa 1970-71



Well it's amazing how fast these two years have passed since I first “sought” the 2nd VP position. During that time, it's been great working with our VSPA Board-- I think our team has done you proud! Since the COVID, we've had two great reunions and we're on to Charleston SC this fall!! I was looking forward to Ft Walton Beach and a trip to Froggies, but the Palmetto State will work out just fine. Y'all come now ya heah!!

During my tenure as 2nd VP, I've initiated a Member Health Survey, the results of which will appear in Guardmount and be available at the Reunion. There are some trends indicated which we need to address for the good of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood. My next move is to create the VSPA Centurion Club (for those of us who will be sitting around the Round Table at 100, sipping adult beverages (mixed with fibre additives) and telling treasured war stories.) But seriously, your leadership is focused on this subject even though we can't stop the sands of time from dropping through that hour-glass. We do seek to make our time in this stellar group one of good times! We seek to share

useful information to continue friendships, improve quality of life, and to insure that our legacy lives on as we fade toward that last Guardmount. We will continue to Take Care of Our Own! More on this at the Reunion.

I've been working with Don Poss to create a unique design for the Knife 13 Monument. In spite of computer crashes, the design is about ready for prime time viewing while concurrent negotiations are in process for materials and construction, transportation and site approvals at both Luke AFB and the SF Museum at Lackland. And we're moving along in the fund-raising department via donations for the Pieta Posters and the unique Knife 13 Medallions. I've been making Knife 13 Presentations on the left coast to raise awareness and funds. We had a tent up at the heavily attended March ARB Air Show in April. The word is getting out!

Did you know VSPA has “Kahlidge Professahs”? Mike Kennedy, Larry Breazeale and I did spring semester duty in Riverside CA at La Sierra University's History 430 class. It involved our direct interaction with students studying the Vietnam War. We and other vets shared our lives prior to, during the War, and upon returning to the “World”. It was a great experience for all of us. AND THIS JUST IN: the City of Murrieta has finally broken ground for our long-awaited Vietnam Monument our team of vets designed. It will be dedicated on Veterans Day Nov 11, 2023! (Follow the progress via my Facebook posts!)

If so honored to represent you for a 2nd hitch as a VSPA Vice President, I will press forward on the Knife 13 project so that we can see our fallen brothers honored in a long overdue and fitting manner. We'll continue work on sensible reunion concepts to meet our needs. Together with our Board, we must address smart and creative ways to keep our organization solvent, meaningful and rewarding for our Brothers and our Sisterhood as we move forward. I will continue to be available should any of you wish to call, text or call with a question, suggestion or a concern. Happy to be here and continuing to serve!

dehollylu1@gmail.com (Cell 951-212-2999)



For 2nd Vice President:

Charlie Blood

Life Member #372; K9 Udorn, Thailand 70-71



I am seeking the office of 2nd Vice President of the VSPA. I have been currently serving as our secretary.

I joined the Air Force in September 1967. My first duty station was Andrews Air Force Base in the 1001st Security Police Squadron. In August 1968 I volunteered for K9 duty. I was sent to Lackland Air Force Base for Sentry Dog School. I worked K9 at Andrews until August 1969 when I was again sent to Lackland for Patrol Dog School. I continued my service at Andrews until March 1970 at which time I was assigned to the 432nd SPS K9 section at Udorn, Thailand. I served there from April 1970 to April 1971. I was sent to Travis Air Force Base for Discharge.

After arriving home, I began working in the Oil and Gas industry in Louisiana, working both on land and offshore Gulf of Mexico for Baker Hughes. I retired from Baker Hughes in February 2015, as Gulf Coast Technical Manager of Fishing.

I would be honored to serve as your 2nd Vice President and continue working with the board to continue our mission, We take care of our own.

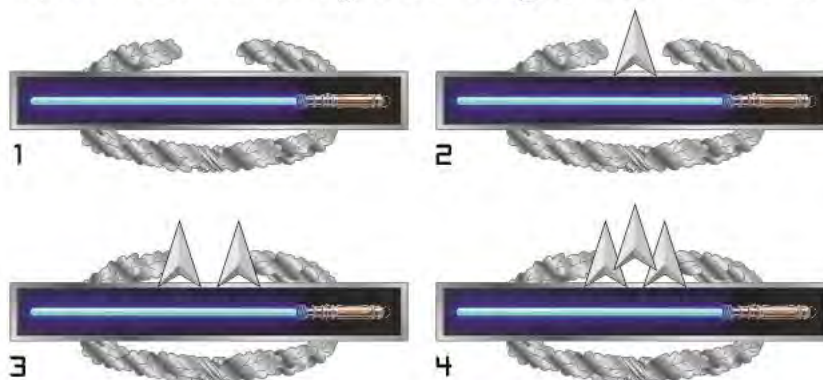
cblood@suddenlink.com.

– – CANDIDATE BIOS CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE – –

HUMOR

Space Force Combat Lightsaber Badges, Level 1-4 Awards

HUMOR





For Secretary:

Richard A. Gano, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
 Life Member #46; Bien Hoa 1966-67

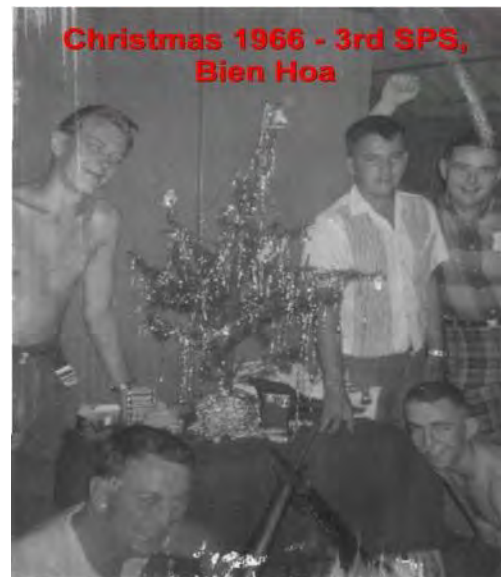


RICHARD A. GANO, Colonel (Ret) born Nov 30th, 1944 in Washington D.C. Enlisted in USAF in Jun 1963. Served on active duty nine years with air/security police units in Washington State, Labrador, California, and Vietnam. Commissioned in the air force reserve in 1978 and commanded units to include a mission support group.

His most memorable experiences were his year in Vietnam, being enlisted for 15 years, and commanding a security police unit for seven years. Last assignment was commander, 939th Mission Support Group, Portland IAP, OR. He retired in Nov 2004 completing a combination of active and reserve duty totaling over 41 years.

Awards include the Legion of Merit, MSM w/2 OLC, AFCEM w/3 OLC, AFAM. In Jul 1969, he married Ellen Levonne Mitts of Canby, OR. Col Gano has one son, Mark, who teaches high School math. Col Gano spent 25 years as a classroom teacher, coach, and high school counselor retiring in 2000.

Richard (Rick) Gano
 Email: rgano@canby.com and rickgano@gmail.com
 Phone: 503-651-2044





For Treasurer:

Richard Garcia

Life Member #82; Phan Rang 69-70



I have served as the Treasurer of the VSPA since 2009 (fourteen years).

I enlisted in the United States Air Force in April 1967. Basic Training, Security Police School, Combat Prep Course at Lackland AFB 04/67-07/67. After Lackland, I went to Francis E. Warren AFB, Cheyenne, WY 07/67-01/69, guarding Minuteman Missiles/Nuke Warheads.

I served at Phan Rang AB, RVN with the 35th Security Police Squadron in heavy weapons, Mortar Pit leader from Feb 1969 to Feb 1970. I completed my service commitment with the 370th SPS Bangor, Maine, and was honorably discharged in April 1971.

- I served the Episcopal Church as a Billing/Collections manager for fifteen years and retired in 2014.
- Received the “Vietnam Security Police Association Mike Daoust Award” in 2011.
- Received the “Vietnam Security Police Association Warriors Medal of Valor” in 2014.



Associations:

- Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA) Life Member #82
- VFW
- American Legion, Massapequa Post 1066
- DAV Life Member
- Vietnam Veterans of America Life Member

It would be an honor and a privilege to continue serving this great association of USAF Air/Security Police brothers.

Welcome Home!

Richard Garcia

cal400@optonline.net

– – CANDIDATE BIOS CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE – –



For Historian:

Steve T. Shelt

Life Member #157; Pleiku 67-68



Steve was born and raised in the mid-western city of Tiffin, Ohio. He currently resides in Evans, Georgia. He has had a very diverse career within federal services as well as private business and industry. Education: Bachelor of Science, Criminal Justice.

U.S. Air Force: 1966-1970, Air/Security Policeman/SGT. Assignments: Strategic Air Command, 410th Bombardment Wing, 410th Combat Defense Sqd, K.I. Sawyer AFB, Michigan; 7th Air Force, 633rd Combat Support Group, 633rd Security Police Sqd, Pleiku Air Base, Vietnam; AF Europe, 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, 81st Security Police Sqd, Bentwaters, RAF, England. **Decorations:** Air Force Commendation Medal; Air Force Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal; Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry; Vietnam Campaign Medal; Presidential Unit Citation; Air Force Outstanding Unit Citation/w V.

U.S. Army: 1980-1987, Military Policeman/SSG. Assignments: 18th Military Police Brigade, 385th Military Police Bn., 554th Military Police Co., Patch Barracks, Germany; Headquarters U.S. European Command, Protective Service Detachment, Germany; Forces Command, Law Enforcement Activities, Fort Sheridan, Illinois. **Decorations:** Meritorious Service Medal; Joint Services Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal w/ 2 OLC; Army Good Conduct Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Beirut, Lebanon); National Defense Service Medal; Army Service Ribbon; NCO Professional Ribbon w/ 2; **Foreign Awards:** The German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency; German Armed Forces Badge for Weapons Proficiency; **Recognition:** 1982 Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year for the Headquarters, Area Support Group, Stuttgart, Germany.

U.S. Department of Army and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE): 1987-2007 Supervising Physical Security Specialist; GS-12 to GS-14/15. Assignments: Physical Security and Crime Prevention Division, Office of the Provost Marshal, Ft Sheridan, IL; DOE Savannah River Operations Office, Safeguards and Security Division; DOE Headquarters, Washington DC; FBI's Southeastern Joint Terrorism Task Force. **Achievements:** *Commander's Award for Civilian Service, Achievement Medal for Civilian Service, 20 Achievement and recognition awards with DOE, Aviation Management Professional of the Year, GSA Aviation Program of the Year, DOE Aviation Program of the Year (4 years), Outstanding Community Service Award;* **Foreign Award:** *Russian MVD Internal Army and Police Excellence Service Medal.*

Consultant (self-employed): 2007-2012: consultant to both private industry and the federal government on nuclear and petroleum security, terrorism, emergency services, and aviation safety and management.

Highlights of his career: Vietnam War: defending Pleiku Air Base during attacks by enemy forces during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Cold War: leading executive protection missions in high-risk countries such as Beirut, Lebanon; DOE: leading transportation security missions of nuclear spent fuel from foreign countries to the U.S. as part of the nation's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. After 9/11: FBI's Southeastern Joint Terrorism Task Force working on teams consisting of, investigators, analysts, linguists, SWAT experts, and other specialists from of local, state and federal agencies.



Retirement: 2012-Present. Volunteered at Veterans Administration Medical Center, Augusta, GA; National Veterans History Project, and the Columbia County, GA, Emergency Management Agency. Member: Knights of Columbus, American Legion Post 192, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12190 (Junior Vice Commander), Military Police Regimental Association (Life Member), Vietnam Veterans of America (Life Member), Vietnam Security Police Association (Board of Directors/Historian/Life Member), and the Pleiku Air Base Vietnam Association (Vice President/Board of Directors). **Post Retirement Award:** *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Volunteer Service Awards; Warrior Medal of Valor from the First Nation People of the United States of America, Georgia Governor's Certificate of Honor.*

steve@visoweb.com

– – END OF CANDIDATE BIOS – BALLOT ON NEXT PAGE – –

SARGE'S CAFÉ, INC.



Hello all,

Sarge's back at work providing bottled water and after school snacks for Lincoln Academy and weekend food for Bryant School. We have come a long way since March of 2014! With your support, we can continue our mission. All donations are greatly appreciated and tax deductible. No amount is too small. It all matters. Thank you for helping us honor the memory of Alvin W. Matthews, M.Sgt. USAF retired. His generous heart has always been our inspiration.

Welcome Home!

HUGS!

Janet Matthews

Daughter of LM #127

“Sparkplug”

332 COUNTY ROAD 626

SECTION, AL 35771

205-602-8522

SARGESCAFE@GMAIL.COM

FB @SARGESCAFEINC



Vietnam Security Police Association

2023 BALLOT

PRINT AND MAIL TO:

MIKE KENNEDY
14766 Foxfield Lane
Fontana, CA 92336-1185



PRINT OR TYPE CAREFULLY
SO THAT WE CAN VERIFY YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND ADDRESS

NAME: Last First M.I. Nickname

STREET ADDRESS:

CITY and ZIP CODE:

PHONE NUMBER: EMAIL ADDRESS:

INSTRUCTIONS

If you are attending the reunion, you may mail your ballot, or you may wait to meet the candidates and submit your ballot at the reunion. You may only vote one time.

PRINT THIS PAGE

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BALLOT AND MAIL TO MIKE KENNEDY WITH A POSTMARK NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 27, 2023.

Completed ballots can also be emailed to Mike Kennedy at: mike3sps@verizon.net

Place a check [X] in the box next to the name of the Candidate(s) of your choice below.

FOR PRESIDENT

[] Larry Fleming

FOR VICE PRESIDENT

[] Robert "Deke" DeCubellis

FOR 2nd VICE PRESIDENT

[] Charlie Blood

FOR SECRETARY

[] Richard Gano

FOR TREASURER

[] Richard Garcia

FOR HISTORIAN

[] Steve Shelt



KNIFE 13 COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION



The medallions are being sold as a fund-raising effort to build two memorials to honor the 18 Security Policemen and five aircrew members who were assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing at Nakhon Phanom, RTAFB, Thailand. They perished in a CH53 Helicopter crash, call sign: KNIFE-13, that went down enroute



to the Mayaguez Rescue Staging Area on May 13, 1975. Their names are on the medallion. The memorials will be constructed at two locations and are pending final approval. All additional donations for the memorial will be accepted. The VSPA is a tax exempt 501(c)(19) Military Association.

Height: 4 inches Width 2.5 inches Thick: 5/32" Plating: Shiny Gold

Questions regarding the memorials may be directed to VSPA President Jerry Nelson: Cell: (210) 273-4777 Email: jrnell1423@aol.com

Sales POC: The Vietnam Security Police Association BX

Email address: vspastore@yahoo.com

Phone: (989) 686-3639 - Credit cards are accepted.

Checks payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association with a note for the KNIFE-13 Memorial may be mailed to:

VSPA BX c/o Van & Joyce Digby
3062 Lantern Court
Bay City, MI 48706

Online ordering and credit card processing is available in the VSPA BX located at VSPA.COM by clicking on STORE at the top of the page.

You may also go to <https://vspa.coffeecup.com/shop/> then click on PRODUCT CATEGORIES and select CHALLENGE COIN.

COST: \$ 25.00 in honor of the 25th Anniversary of Defensor Fortis, plus shipping & handling, which depends upon the weight and number of medallions purchased.



WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN





KNIFE 13 MEMORIAL FUND RAISER COMMEMORATIVE LITHOGRAPH



Height: 24 inches
Width 18 inches
Color: Sepia/bronze

THE PIETA – Honoring the Military Nurses of the Vietnam War by Delita Alvarez Piercy, approved and painted from the original Vietnam Women's Memorial Sculpture by Glenna Goodacre.

The lithograph depicts a military nurse holding a wounded soldier and is known as The Pieta. The beautiful lithograph was made available to the VSPA by the artist, Delita Piercy, to honor our members for their service and sacrifice. The Pieta lithographs are being sold as a fund-raising effort to build two memorials to honor the 18 Security Policemen and five aircrew members who were assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing at Nakhon Phanom, RTAFB, Thailand. They perished in a CH53 Helicopter crash, call sign: KNIFE-13, that went down enroute to the Mayaguez Rescue Staging Area on May 13, 1975. The memorials will be constructed at two locations and are pending final approval. **The frame is for display only. The Pieta is being sold unframed and would be a superb gift for Veterans and nurses.**

Questions regarding the lithograph may be directed to Robert DeCubellis, VSPA 2nd VP at 951 212-3999 or dehollylu@gmail.com

COST: \$ 25.00 in honor of the 25th Anniversary of Defensor Fortis, plus shipping and handling. The lithograph will be rolled and mailed in a tube

All additional donations for the memorial will also be accepted. The VSPA is a tax exempt 501(c)(19) Military Association.

Sales POC: The Vietnam Security Police Association BX

Email address: vspastore@yahoo.com

Phone: (989) 686-3639 - Credit cards are accepted.

CHECKS for purchase and/or donations payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association with a note for the KNIFE-13 Memorial may be mailed to:

VSPA BX c/o Van & Joyce Digby
3062 Lantern Court
Bay City, MI 48706

Online ordering and credit card processing is available in the VSPA BX located at **VSPA.COM** by clicking on **STORE** at the top of the page, then click on **PRODUCT CATEGORIES**, then click on **FUND RAISING FOR KNIFE-13 MONUMENTS**. You may also go to <https://vspa.coffeecup.com/shop/> then click on **PRODUCT CATEGORIES** and select **FUND RAISING FOR KNIFE-13 MONUMENTS**.

WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN





“We Take Care of Our Own”

Robert “Deke” DeCubellis, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
Life Member #347; Bien Hoa 1970-71



Those of you who attended the San Antonio Reunion and the DC Reunion where VSPA marched, may remember a Bien Hoa member Bruce Nelson. Those of you who attended our reunion in Phoenix last year might remember that he was not present as Bruce died from complications from pneumonia and Covid that week.

A few words about Bruce. He and I served at Hamilton AFB while the non-identical twins Sgts Steve Gattis and Larry Fleming were regaling us newly assigned airmen with their tales of life in the ‘Nam. Bruce and I made later the trip in 70-71 and returned to Hamilton after the twins had trashed the place. We finished our enlistments and Bruce went to Cal State San Luis Obispo, became an LA Unified School Teacher, married/amicably divorced, and later retired to Phoenix where his sole immediate living relative sister lived. His sister divorced, died of cancer, and Bruce fell on difficult times. Through our efforts we helped Bruce through the VA maze to get him 100% disabled (severe PTSD etc.) and helped him gain residency at the CA State Veterans Home in Napa CA where he spent his final years.



When he moved to Napa, he had to complete a Care Directive designating someone to act on his behalf should he be unable to do so. I got the nod along with his sister’s best friend Claudia in Phoenix. When he was hospitalized just before the reunion, the hospital called me and I was asked to call the shots if he couldn’t. The first night of the reunion, the ICU nurse called to tell me he agreed to go on a ventilator. I asked to speak with him and we talked a few minutes and said I’d catch him on the rebound, which he acknowledged with a whispered yes. I was later contacted to be advised the doctor believed the vent had done all it could do and recommended removal with palliative care to which I agreed knowing Bruce’s wishes. He peacefully passed away 5 hours later.

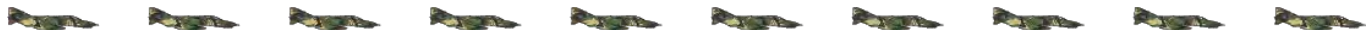




But like Paul Harvey said, here's the rest of the story. After he passed, I figured my duties as a Care Directive guy were over but yea verily, there was more. The final arrangements were deferred to me by the Vets Home and the funeral home director. He'd chosen cremation but was also an organ donor. I spent 4-5 hours on the phone with those folks to ensure that happened. Next was the issue of where his remains would go. Bruce had told me last August that he was getting tired of the State Home, so I figured he did not want to reside in their Columbarium. With some negotiating, I convinced the funeral director and Riverside National Cemetery to accept his remains. I thought since he lived in So Cal most of his life, that we had members living nearby, and that RNC was a top-notch operation, that this would work out.

The funeral director and I arranged his ceremony with full military honors attended by Lu and I, Don Poss, Mike Kennedy and several others plus the added benefit of a Missing Man Military Flyover by vintage aircraft that coincidentally were in the vicinity. A fitting send-off for our brother. Last of all I picked a phrase to appear on the name plate affixed to his place on the Columbarium wall.

Bruce and I were part of each other's lives for half a century. These things we do because we do take care of our own.





**ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
27th ANNUAL VSPA REUNION
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2022
PHOENIX, ARIZONA**



1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 1007 hours by President Jerry Nelson
2. **MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR DEPARTED BROTHERS INCLUDING:**
 - A. The 111 Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who did not survive the war in Vietnam and Thailand.
 - B. All VSPA members listed at Life Member #111 which was established as a tribute to those who did not survive the war and those members of the VSPA who died as members in good standing.
3. **INVOCATION** – Chaplain Jeff Kerkhoff
4. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – VSPA 2nd Vice President Robert DeCubellis
5. **INTRODUCTION OF ELECTED OFFICERS** by name, squadron and place of residence:
 - Jerry Nelson, President; LM #668; San Antonio, TX; Safeside Phu Cat 821CSPS, Phan Rang 821CSPS, Tuy Hoa 821CSPS, 69-70.
 - Larry Fleming, LM #131; Glen Rose, TX; Nha Trang 1968-69. (in hotel but sick).
 - Robert “Deke” DeCubellis; LM #347; Murrieta, CA; Bien Hoa 1970-71.
 - Charlie Blood, Secretary; LM #372; Pineville, LA; Udorn K9 1970-71. (Unable to attend).
 - Richard Garcia, Treasurer; LM #82; Massapequa, NY; Phan Rang, 1969-70. (Unable to attend).
 - Steve Shelt, Historian; LM #157; Evans, Georgia; Pleiku 67-68.
 - Don Poss, Communications Director; LM #37; Hemet, CA; Da Nang K-9 1965-66. (Unable to attend).
 - Greg Cain, Past President; LM #62; West Seneca, NY; Binh Thuy 1967-68.
 - Steve Gattis, President Emeritus; LM #49; Glen Rose, TX; Cam Ranh Bay, 1968-69.

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM BY PRESIDENT NELSON WITH FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD PRESENT IN THE ROOM AND ONE (FLEMING) IN HIS HOTEL ROOM IF HIS VOTE IS NECESSARY.

PROCEDURAL CHANGE: In accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order, all reports presented by appointed staff and members of the Board of Directors will be approved by voice rather than a motion and second, unless the item requires an action to be taken. This change was suggested by members in the interest of saving time due to motions and seconds that were routinely required in the past that added unnecessary time in an already lengthy meeting.

6. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** of the previous annual business meeting. Rather than taking the time to read them during this meeting, we published the minutes in Guardmount.
7. **OLD BUSINESS**

7.1 REUNION SITE SELECTION FOR 2024

a. AN AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS AND CONSTITUTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED LAST YEAR:

1. Pursuant to Article III, Section 2, Reunions, Paragraph B

“We offer strong support to all active duty and reserve members of the United States Air Force Security Forces. Therefore our reunions can be held near a United States Air Force base with an active duty Security Forces Squadron, or an independent destination chosen and voted on by the general membership at the annual business meeting.”

- b.** Reunion sites are selected two years in advance so that planning by the VSPA can begin early. We need to be able to adjust to events in the chosen area. If we are being hosted by a Security Forces Squadron, they can begin early and have the time necessary to adapt to active-duty operational requirements.
- c.** The reunion site for this reunion in Phoenix, Arizona was selected in 2019 and postponed to 2022 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020.
- d.** As in the past, the 2023 reunion will be held in October, the Wednesday through Sunday before the Columbus Day holiday (which is always the second Monday in October). **The dates are October 4 – 8, 2023.** The sites selected at our 2021 Reunion were:
- 1. Primary Site for 2023 is Eglin AFB, Destin, Florida.**
 - 2. Secondary Site for 2023 is Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.**
 - 3. Backup Site for 2023 is Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina.**
- e.** The site selection process for **2024** will be conducted by VSPA President Jerry Nelson, 2nd Vice President Deke DeCubellis, and assisting Board Members.
- f.** President Jerry Nelson explained past reunions and the bylaw requirement to choose by alternating regions in the CONUS: WEST, CENTRAL and EAST regions and **THAT WE MUST CHOOSE A LOCATION IN THE CENTRAL CONUS FOR 2024 because we are in the WEST REGION this year and will be in the EAST REGION next year.**
- g.** President Jerry Nelson explained the potential selection of sites in the CENTRAL REGION in accordance with the change in the BYLAWS. He also explained the modified base selection procedure where available bases were listed on a ballot that was placed in the Reunion Welcome Packets. The purpose of the ballot is to save time during the business meeting by allowing members in attendance to select their top three choices, then submit the ballot prior to the meeting so that the time devoted to site selection will be limited to the top three choices from the 15 bases and off-site city on the ballot.
- h.** To address the amendment to the BYLAWS and Constitution, your Board of Directors conducted research to identify locations within the CENTRAL REGION with hotels in the area that could accommodate VSPA requirements for a reunion site. The only available off-base site is New Orleans. Branson, Missouri did not meet those requirements.
- i.** The Base Selection Ballot is shown below:



**VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION REUNION
OCTOBER 5 - 9, 2022
2024 BASE SELECTION BALLOT**

Active Duty USAF/Joint Bases in the US Central Region

In an effort to expedite our Business Meeting this year, the executive board has decided to start the base selection early by providing you with an opportunity to vote for your top three (3) choices of where you would like us to hold our 29th reunion in 2024. PLEASE DO NOT CHECK MORE THAN THREE.

Base Selection Ballots will be collected in the HOSPITALITY ROOM and picked up ON FRIDAY AT 2100 HOURS. Once the ballots are collected, your Board of Directors will tally the votes and present the top three locations at the business meeting on Saturday. At that point, we will all vote again for a primary and secondary location.

Last year, we approved a Bylaw revision to allow for selection of a city that does not have an Air Force Base. We have evaluated available cities based upon weather conditions, cost, hotels, and the location of airports. After a review with the Reunion BRAT, we have determined that the only city available in the Central Region that can accommodate our group requirements is New Orleans, which is included below.

CENTRAL REGION LOCATIONS AVAILABLE - MILES AIRPORT TO BASE

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> USAF Academy (2021) | Colorado Springs 6 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peterson AFB, Colorado | Colorado Springs 6 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FE Warren AFB, Wyoming | Cheyenne 1 mile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kirtland AFB, New Mexico (2008) | Albuquerque 1 mile - Balloon Festival in October |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cannon AFB, New Mexico | Clovis 7 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offutt AFB, Nebraska | Omaha 8 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> McConnell AFB, Kansas | Wichita 6 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tinker AFB, Oklahoma | Oklahoma City 12 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Rock AFB, Arkansas | Little Rock 18 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barksdale AFB, Louisiana | (2014) Shreveport 5 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> JBSA San Antonio - Randolph, Texas | San Antonio 16 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> JBSA San Antonio - Lackland, Texas | (1996, 2000, 2003, 2010, 2017) San Antonio 15 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dyess AFB, Texas | Abilene 11 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sheppard AFB, Texas | Wichita Falls 5 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scott AFB, Illinois | St. Louis 25 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Orleans, Louisiana | NO AFB |

***NOTE: Bases not considered due to cost \$\$\$, distance and weather:
Altus AFB, Oklahoma***



Vance AFB, Oklahoma

Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota

Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota

Minot AFB, North Dakota

Holloman AFB, New Mexico

Whiteman AFB, Missouri

Branson, Missouri – Older hotels, local airport not available for major flights. Airport 45 miles

PAST REUNION SITE INFORMATION FOR REFERENCE ONLY:

- Atlanta, Georgia 1995 East
- San Antonio, Texas 1996 Central
- Pensacola, Florida 1997 East
- Washington D.C. 1998 East
- Las Vegas, Nevada 1999 West
- San Antonio, Texas 2000 Central
- Hampton, Virginia 2001 East
- Dayton, Ohio 2002 Central
- San Antonio, Texas 2003 Central
- Tucson, Arizona 2004 West
- Valdosta, Georgia 2005 East
- Las Vegas, Nevada 2006 West
- Washington D.C. 2007 East
- Albuquerque, NM 2008 West/Central
- Phoenix, Arizona 2009 West
- San Antonio, Texas 2010 Central
- Dayton, Ohio 2011 Central
- Destin, Florida 2012 East
- Charleston, SC 2013 East
- Shreveport, LA 2014 Central
- Las Vegas, NV 2015 West
- Tampa, Florida 2016 East
- San Antonio, Texas 2017 Central
- Tucson, Arizona 2018 West
- Washington, D.C. 2019 East
- Colorado Springs, CO 2020 Central (postponed due to COVID-19 Pandemic)
- Colorado Springs, CO 2021 Central
- Phoenix, Arizona 2022 West
- Destin, Florida 2023 East (changed to Charleston, South Carolina)

j. The Reunion Dates for 2024 are October 4 – 8. While the off-site city was included in the reunion site selection process, the following are the results of the selection:

- 1. Primary Site for 2024 is Lackland Air Force Base, Texas**
- 2. Secondary Site for 2024 is Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma**

8. REPORTS BY THE PRESIDENT, BOARD MEMBERS, APPOINTED STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

8.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT by President Jerry Nelson – Numerous conference calls were conducted by the Board of Directors throughout the last year to conduct business and prepare for this reunion. Those calls were highly successful in the reunion planning process. A Board of Directors meeting was held at 0800 hours this morning. We discussed items of concern to the Board and have included applicable items in the specific reports or under **NEW BUSINESS**.

8.2 KENNEL MASTER: Presented by Kennel Master Ken Smerecki. K9 handlers toured the kennels and met with the military working dog handlers who followed in their footsteps.

8.3 GUARDMOUNT REPORT by Steve Gattis on behalf of Mike Kennedy, Guardmount Editor and Publisher who was unable to attend. Erlyce Pekas and Steve Gattis will continue as Assistant Editors to Mike Kennedy. Mike submitted the following report:

Sadly, I was not able to attend this year's reunion due to some other commitments. I hope that everyone is having a great time.

As everyone should know by now, Guardmount is strictly an electronic publication now due to the ever-growing costs associated with a printed publication. We will continue to make Guardmount available in Adobe PDF format to our members through the VSPA website, Facebook and direct emails to all members who provide VSPA with their current email address.

Guardmount is a reflection of the history of VSPA and the experiences of our members during their service and what life has brought to each of us since coming home. At last year's reunion I suggested that I would like to increase the frequency of Guardmount publications. With that in mind, I asked that members help by contributing their own stories and several people said they were interested in helping. While I have received a few items, far more is needed to give us enough to fill future issues of Guardmount.

So, I will ask again that every VSPA and Sisterhood member search their memories for stories that would be of interest to the rest of us. You don't have to be a professional writer to submit something for publication. Just write your story or multiple stories and send them to me. With the help of my trusted assistants Erlyce Pekas and Steve Gattis, we will make sure that the grammar and spelling are correct and ready for publication. Photos associated with the stories are also welcome and I can even enhance the quality if a photo is not in the best of condition.

You can also submit interest photos not associated with a story, service-related cartoons (with credits), and poems, etc. We can all be part of the team. I look forward to your contributions.

Thanks! Enjoy the rest of the reunion and be safe as you travel home.

Mike Kennedy
Guardmount Editor

STEVE GATTIS clarified why we no longer print and mail copies of Guardmount to those who do not have a computer. The Board of Directors and members voted at our 2019 reunion to discontinue printing and mailing as the cost for printing was overwhelming at over \$5,000 per year for those who

did not have a computer, making it impossible to continue printing and mailing. Guardmount is presented in a PDF format through our VSPA web site. Don Poss sends mass email messages when Guardmount has been posted. If you have a computer, you can receive Guardmount online. Please give Paul Shave your updated email address for our database.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING CELL PHONES: If you have a cell phone but do not have a computer, you can still access Guardmount via cell phone. Additionally, for those of you who might not be familiar with PDF files and the Internet, if your children or grandkids have a cell phone, they can get Guardmount online for you. Steve then showed members a copy of Guardmount that he had download to his cell phone.

Steve requested that members continue sending stories, photos and articles for publication in Guardmount because it is their opportunity to preserve a piece of their history.

8.4 TREASURER’S REPORT by Jerry Nelson. Richard Garcia was unable to attend; however, he prepared the Year-to-Date report for 2022. The report is attached to the file copy of the minutes.

As of December 31, 2021:

The amount in the Checking Account was \$ 9,083.52

The amount in the Savings Account was \$ 25,606.22

TOTAL AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2021 \$ 34,689.74

As of September 30, 2022:

The amount in the Checking Account is \$ 2,606.88

The amount in the Savings Account is \$ 25,608.15

TOTAL AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2022 \$ 28,215.03

DONATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

8.4a As we have at the last three reunions, your Board of Directors unanimously decided to pass the hat at this business meeting rather than at the Awards Banquet. \$1227.00 was collected at this meeting and will be donated to the KNIFE-13 Memorials at Luke AFB and Lackland AFB.

Motion to approve by Richard Gano; 2nd by Jerry Gable. Approved.

8.4b THE SAM WILLIAMS ENDOWMENT TO ASSIST VSPA MEMBERS WHO CANNOT AFFORD TO ATTEND A REUNION: VSPA Life Member Sam Williams and his employer have each donated \$500 SEVEN years in a row. We now have over \$6,000 to hopefully assist a VSPA member in financial need so that they can attend a reunion. This year, we were able to identify FIVE people who needed assistance. After initially accepting the offer of assistance with registration fees, all declined due to family or medical concerns. We identified three additional people while at the reunion. After review of their individual circumstances, they were approved. We are thankful for all that Sam has done to take care of our own.

If you know of someone who might need assistance, please contact any member of the Board of Directors with information regarding the situation.

If any of you would like to contribute to the Sam Williams Endowment, please contact any member of the VSPA Board, send a check to the VSPA Treasurer, Richard Garcia made payable to the VSPA with a note to apply it to the Sam Williams Endowment. You may also donate through PAYPAL to our treasury.

- 8.5 MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN’S REPORT** by Paul Shave. Report attached to the file copy of the minutes.
- 8.6 BX SALES REPORT** by Steve Gattis. The Van and Joyce Digby were unable to attend the reunion this year. The BX is a self-sustaining operation that buys memorabilia and wholesale prices from various vendors so that they can provide a single point of sale at significant savings for our members. Last year they sold \$7,810 in merchandise with expenses of \$7367. They had \$15,086 on hand at the end of 2021. The Digby’s provide outstanding service to our members. After this reunion, they will also be handling the online sales of the Knife-13 Medallions and The Pieta to raise funds for the Knife-13 Memorial Project.
- 8.7 WEB SITE REPORT BY LARRY POSS, HOST OF OUR VSPA SERVERS.** He is providing the report for his brother, Don Poss our Director of Communications, who could not attend. Larry presented information on the need to update all base histories, squadron lineage, articles, stories, and poetry to downloadable PDF files to ease the process of research and the preservation of our history. Don’s most important project this year has been the creation of proposed designs for the KNIFE -13 Memorials at Luke Air Force Base and the Security Forces Museum at Lackland Air Force Base which you will hear more about shortly.

STEVE GATTIS – Presented information on recent updates and the conversion of the membership database to make it easily searchable for members who use our web site VSPA.COM. Steve reported that in January of this year, we received calls from a couple of members who checked their own names in the on-line VSPA membership database and discovered that they were dead. Don explained that there was an unintentional database scramble during the conversion due to a glitch in the new software. Don and Paul Shave have been working to correct the errors that occurred due to the scrambling of data. It should now be working correctly. However, if you need to report a change of address, change of phone number, or you have a problem with your information in our database... like being dead and would like to be listed among the living, please contact our Membership Chairman, Paul Shave so that he can update your record.

STEVE GATTIS added the following to the web site report, reminding all present that our status as a Tax Exempt Military Organization of War Veterans requires that we follow IRS Rules and Regulations regarding the prohibition of political activity in support of or against specific candidates for office. The VSPA does not pay income tax and all donations to the VSPA are tax exempt for donors. Our exempt status is the equivalent of the government and the public paying us to conduct our business on behalf of our membership. We cannot receive the benefit of tax exemption if we engage in political activity as an organization. Therefore, the VSPA and other organizations like the VVA cannot advocate for or against candidates for political office, especially during highly contested elections or the current volatile political climate. The VSPA must demonstrate compliance by removing political comments from our bulletin boards when members attempt to organize votes or begin speaking for or against candidates. Members are free to engage in whatever political activity they desire as long as it is not in

conjunction with the VSPA and our tax-exempt activities which include the web site, the bulletin boards and the VSPA private group on Facebook.

- 8.8 HISTORIAN’S REPORT:** Presented by Steve Shelt. Information and resources have been indexed to provide excellent research for filing claims with the VA. Please submit rosters, orders, and reports for our historical archives.
- 8.9 SECURITY FORCES MUSEUM UPDATE:** Presented by Jerry Nelson, member of the Board of Directors of the Security Forces Museum Foundation.
- 8.9a** Jerry presented information regarding the Museum Foundation’s efforts to upgrade displays in various area of the museum, including complete parachute rigging recently obtained from the Safeside squadrons at Moody Air Force Base.
- 8.9b** The museum has expended a great deal of money for new display cases. They are continuing to replace and remodel various portions of the Southeast Asia Section. The Safeside Section has been completed with original artifacts. Tim Waage has donated an Elite Guard Guidon to be placed in an updated Elite Guard Section in the museum. VSPA photos were donated for the 37th Cobra Flight at Phu Cat. Extensive historical information for the 56th Security Police Squadron while at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand was received from Mary Ann Heubusch, the wife of deceased Colonel Charles Heubusch, by Jerry Nelson with copies forwarded to the 56th Security Forces Squadron at Luke Air Force Base for their heritage room.
- 8.9c NAME CHANGE:** The name of the Security Forces Museum Annex will revert to the Security Forces Museum, deleting the term “Annex” from the title.
- 8.9d DEFENSOR FORTIS:** The original documents approving DEFENSOR FORTIS and the original patch authorization from the Institute of Heraldry for implementation Air Force-wide, including original signatures by the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ronald Fogelman, were presented to the Security Forces Museum.
- 8.9e KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL PROJECT**
- 1. LACKLAND AFB** – By Jerry Nelson. The memorial location adjacent to the Security Forces Museum has been approved. Preliminary designs are in process along with the development of a Talking Paper.
 - 2. LUKE AFB** – By Deke DeCubellis and Jerry Nelson – Members of the VSPA Board met with the 56th Mission Support Group and 56th Security Forces Squadron during this reunion to discuss the design concept and placement of the proposed Knife-13 Memorial. The design concept was approved. The acting commander of the Mission Support Group stated that the commanding general of the 56th Fighter Wing had approved the Knife-13 Memorial Project for Luke Air Force Base.
- 8.10 SAFESIDE LIAISON REPORT:** Presented by Jerry Nelson.

The Safeside Reunion at Moody AFB that had been scheduled for April 20 – 24, 2022 was rescheduled to September 12 – 16, 2022 due to COVID. That reunion was subsequently rescheduled again due to COVID in the Valdosta, Georgia area. The Reunion is now scheduled for APRIL 17 thru 20, 2023.



A SAFESIDE Memorial Bench will be dedicated at Moody AFB during the Safeside reunion. The bench is similar to our VSPA and SAFESIDE benches at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio. VSPA and SAFESIDE members in this room contributed to the new bench.

8.11 SERVICE OFFICER'S REPORT

8.11a JAIME LLERAS sent the following regarding the PACT ACT (although could not be here this year).

As part of the PACT ACT which the President signed in early August, there are two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions added to the list, which can affect you:

- ♣ High blood pressure (also called hypertension)
- ♣ Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)

MGUS usually causes no problems. But **sometimes it can progress to more-serious diseases, including some forms of blood cancer.** If you have high amounts of this protein in your blood, it's important to have regular checkups so that you can get earlier treatment if it does progress.

If you think you're eligible for VA health care and benefits, we encourage you to apply now.

There added FIVE NEW AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTIVE LOCATIONS under the PACT ACT.

- Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976
- Laos from December 1, 1965, through September 30, 1969
- Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969
- Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 30, 1980
- Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977

If you served on active duty in any of these locations, the VA will automatically assume (or "presume") that you had exposure to Agent Orange.

The Secretary of the VA said at the recent DAV National Convention in early August, that they are preparing for the thousands of claims submissions as a result of these new additions. The Secretary also said that they won't be ready to begin processing until January 2023, but that Veterans should start filing their claims now.

You should, at the very least, submit an Intent to File Form (VA Form 21-0966). This will tell the VA that you plan to submit a claim, but you don't know for what or when. When you submit the Intent to File form, the VA gives you 365 days to submit your claim along with the necessary evidence. If and when they approve, or award compensation for your claim, the pay will be backdated to the date on your Intent to File form.

Many of us have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, but have never been able to claim it as a disability - now we can and should! That concludes Jaime's report.

8.11b HEALTH SURVEY BY 2nd VICE PRESIDENT DEKE DECUBELLIS

An initial review of the anonymous data submitted by 19 members at this reunion indicates a trend where members have health issues that are presumptive, automatic approvals for Agent Orange related VA Disability Compensation based upon a medical diagnosis. However, they are not receiving VA Compensation. One of those conditions is hypothyroidism. Another is diabetes with neuropathy.

Some members reported Peripheral Neuropathy related to dioxin but not related to diabetes. Other conditions reported were PTSD and Sleep Apnea. A follow-up report will be provided at the next reunion after additional surveys are received and tabulated.

8.12 J.J. CHESTNUT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT Presented by Jim Lebowitz. Please encourage your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to apply. This year we received two applications that were reviewed by the Scholarship Committee. The applications were all outstanding, the best ever received by the committee and extremely difficult to rate. Therefore, the Scholarship Committee recommends that the J.J. Chestnut Memorial Scholarship of \$1,000 be awarded to both applicants due to their merit.

The recipients are: Madelynn Chi and Evan Elliott.

Chairman Lebowitz reported that committee member Rick Gano will become the chairman of the Scholarship Committee. Jim "Buddha" Lebowitz will remain on the committee. Vice President Larry Fleming will also serve on the committee.

8.13 REUNION REGISTRATIONS: by Jerry Nelson. In 2019, the Reunion BRAT and your VSPA Board of Directors, in accordance with a unanimous vote of the membership, developed an Early Bird discount if members submitted their registrations early, which would allow planning without the severe impact of late registrations. That program was highly successful in 2021 and again this year. We appreciate your effort to comply. We will make certain that the Early Bird Discount is available to members who submit early registrations for all future reunions.

9. NEW BUSINESS.

9.1 KNIFE-13 MEMORIALS were previously covered under the Security Forces Museum Update.

9.2 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS – NONE

10. AFFIRMATION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The following is a legal requirement as a Tax-Exempt entity and a major requirement for banking purposes with the authorization to sign checks for the

Association during the coming year. This information must be included in the minutes of the annual business meeting.

10.1 THE OFFICERS ARE:

- President Jerry Nelson (authorized to sign checks)
- Vice President Larry Fleming
- Second Vice President Robert DeCubellis
- Treasurer Richard Garcia (authorized to sign checks)
- Secretary Charlie Blood
- Historian Steve Shelt
- Past President Gregory J. Cain (authorized to sign checks)
- President Emeritus Steve Gattis
- Communications Director Don L. Poss
- BX Managers Van & Joyce Digby (authorized to sign checks related to BX operations).

10.2 AFFIRMATION OF APPOINTED POSITIONS – By VSPA President Jerry Nelson: The existing appointed positions are hereby re-appointed for the next year, subject to future changes per the Constitution & By-Laws.

11. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

11.1 LUNCH IS AVAILABLE IN THE LOBBY COFFEE SHOP NEXT TO THE REGISTRATION DESK. SANDWICHES WILL BE AVAILABLE WITH A SOFT DRINK FOR \$7.00.

11.2 JERRY NELSON reminded members to send Mike Kennedy photos from this reunion for possible publication in Guardmount.

11.3 JERRY NELSON REMINDED MEMBERS THAT STEVE GATTIS AND DEKE DeCUBELLIS WOULD BE AVAILABLE IN THE ROOM AFTER WE ADJOURN TO SELL KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL MEDALLIONS AND THE PIETA LITHOGRAPH.

11.4 MARTY STRONES provided information regarding a book by Bien Hoa Security Police Veteran Mike Mann titled “American Passage Class of 1968”.

12. EVENTS BEING HELD WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS:

12.1 The Safeside Reunion will be held at Moody AFB with the 820th Base Defense Group (now scheduled for April 17 to 20, 2023). The Safeside Memorial Bench will be dedicated, to include 820th Safeside Troops lost in combat during deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq. All members of the VSPA are invited to the dedication and reunion.

12.2 A reunion of Veterans assigned to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB will be held in Charleston, South Carolina April 12 - 16, 2023.

13. REMINDERS

13.1 JERRY NELSON - The Awards banquet this evening will begin with a no-host bar at 1700, posting of the colors at 1800 with the National Anthem, followed by dinner. After dinner, we will hear our



GUEST SPEAKER, the former Air Force Chief of Staff General Ronald Fogelman. Afterwards, we will present awards and conduct the raffles.

13.2 JERRY NELSON - ALL BANQUET SEATING COORDINATORS FOR THE VARIOUS BASES MUST MEET WITH ME AND THE REUNION BRAT AT 1600 FOR TABLE ORGANIZATION. WHEN THE TABLES ARE READY, THE DOORS WILL BE OPENED. PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE ROOM AND TAKE SEATS UNTIL THAT PROCESS HAS BEEN COMPLETED. DO NOT REMOVE OR REARRANGE RESERVED TABLE SIGNS.

13.3 Reminder that a Worship Service will be conducted at 0800 Sunday by Chaplain Jeff Kerkhoff.

13.4 Reminder that our annual Memorial for our 111 begins at 0900 Sunday. The names of all Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who did not survive the war in Vietnam and Thailand will be read at that time.

13.5 The wife of Tim Clifford, 377th SPS Tan Son Nhut, donated QC pins and Heart pins for members attending the business meeting.

14. CLOSING OF THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AT 1235 hours.

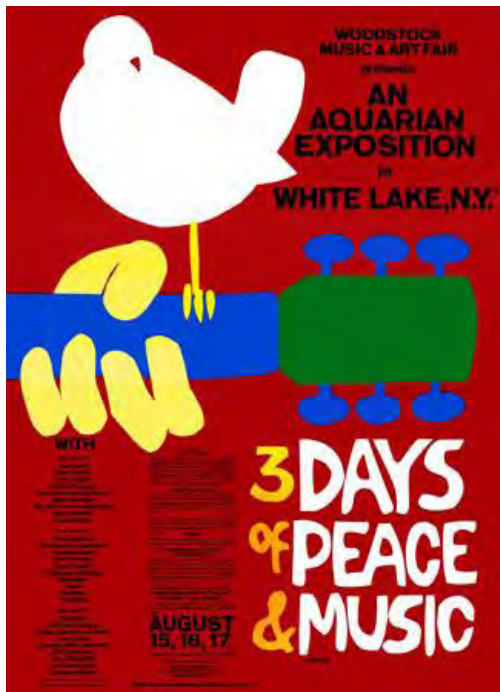
MINUTES BY:

APPROVED BY:

Steve Gattis, President Emeritus

Jerry Nelson, President

Woodstock Music & Art Festival
54th Anniversary – August 15-16-17, 1969
Where Were You?





“THE CHIEF IS *ALWAYS* RIGHT”

Robert “Deke” DeCubellis, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
Life Member #347; Bien Hoa 1970-71



Some of our fellow VSPA members served with me at Hamilton AFB in the last 60s and early 70s with some tours of SEA tucked in and around our time at the Garden Spot of the West. The base was situated on Hwy 101 north of San Francisco and south of the ever-popular Napa/Sonoma wine country. The Peace and Love--Drop-in/Drop Out--Flower Children of the Haight-Ashbury era were still roaming Baghdad by the Bay (SF) and Marin County in those days. You can still find these freeze-dried hippies populating the Mendicino area by the coast. In those days we stood out with our short haircuts, close trimmed mustaches and physical fitness versus those bell-bottomed colorfully clad souls.



The NCO corps of our Air Force had their hands full trying to lead, manage, mentor, and discipline our draft-era youth during that period. As a new troop assigned to Hamilton I quickly learned that the Chief is *always* right. I'll offer one of two true stories.

I had several interesting experiences during my three years of active duty at Hamilton with a year in Vietnam sandwiched in between. The fall of 1969 was one of significant anti-war demonstrations around the country and our airplane patch was a regular target. There was a decent approach to the base main gate off the frontage road which ran parallel to Highway 101. It had a traffic island that the demonstrators would set up on and make their anti-war pitch without interfering with the flow of traffic. Thus, Novato PD and the CHP, which had concurrent jurisdiction, would let them be. Base Security Police, on the other hand, had to be alert to possible infiltrators or other disruptions so we always had riot control training on our “days off”, and had an apprehension team on standby should we need to disperse any violators.

On Thanksgiving Night 1969, (all cop leaves were cancelled), I was on graveyard shift at the Main Gate with Sgt Butch Trachtenberg (Thailand vet). Traffic was down to a drizzle like the mist beginning to cover the area. We'd blacked out our interior gate shack lights so as to not be so easily observed by a group of demonstrators still maintaining their vigil out on the just off-base highway island. The center section of our Spanish style four-arch gate structure contained a space heater which was operating that chilly evening. No chairs were allowed in these shacks but a gun-metal grey steel table sat against the opposite wall. One could lean against it and stay warm while maintaining overwatch of the gate approaches. Normally that table contained only the Post Instructions binder, base maps, and other official stuff but tonight it held treasure! The mess hall had baked a bunch of delicious pumpkin pies for the “Holiday”, and one of the patrols had just brought us a warm full pie with whipped cream, plates and forks and fresh hot coffee! It now resided in the dark shadows on that table awaiting us to devour it.

We were about to get into this delight when we wisely detected our Squadron Superintendent's vehicle approaching as the LE patrol was departing. The Chief then pulled into the parking lot just inside the gate. Chief (at that time, the 5th ranking time-in-grade E-9 in the Air Force), was indeed a CHIEF in every way, and not an E-9 if you know what I mean. All six-plus feet of this athletic man exuded professionalism as extracted himself



from his 280Z and approached us. We promptly reported our posts and answered the usual obligatory questions. He then stood in the traffic lane eyeballing the hippies up on the main drag. He commented as long as they kept to themselves on this foggy and cool Marin County evening, things would be ok. Chief then entered the center gate house and approached that heater where he warmed his hands a bit as he kept his eyes on the hippies in the distance then without warning, he suddenly backed up onto the table without looking. Due to his height, his buttocks overlapped nearly half of the table, *and* a good piece of our still warm unauthorized pumpkin pie. Butch and I saw what was about to suddenly happen but could not utter a warning a timely warning in time so we remained speechless once it happened. We knew that life as we knew it, was about to end.

Chief maintained his position without flinching for some very, very long seconds and then majestically arose. He stood there for a few more seconds then moved confidently to the exit and turned to face us. I was expecting him to direct the Flight Chief to have us surrender our badges and weapons. We were both holding our breaths while standing at attention. Chief merely said, "Keep up the good work. Happy Thanksgiving. Carry on." He did an about-face and walked briskly back to his car with pieces of pumpkin pie residue clinging to his trousers and occasionally flaking off to the pavement. As he walked away, we turned to face the highway afraid to do anything else. A long minute later, we heard him drive away so we dared to look at each other then burst out into side-splitting laughter. We figured we'd survive this incident so we inspected the pie, decided the back half was still very edible, and consumed it.

The Saga of the Thanksgiving Pumpkin Pie obviously made its way surreptitiously around the squadron but to my knowledge, no one who valued his stripes and his life ever brought it up in the presence of Chief, who is always right, because he is the Chief.

Post-script: this Chief save my butt from the fury of a wanna be pilot butter-bar officer dumped into the SPs on my first duty day as a cop. Chief and I served together at Hamilton on two tours and stayed in touch throughout my rise from a one-striper during my 36-year career. I was honored that he attended my Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony in 2006. He still resides in Sacramento. And yes, I *finally* politely mentioned that Thanksgiving night where he took the time to do post-checks to watch out for his troops. We smiled at each other full well knowing what we both knew about that pie without specifically mentioning it, because even a retired Colonel knows full well that Chief is *ALWAYS* right.





NOTE: All Officers and Staff are unpaid VSPA members who volunteer to serve their brothers in the association. Officers were elected in 2021 for a two-year term. Staff members were appointed to assist and advise the officers of the association as needed.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President: Jerry Nelson; Safeside Phan Rang, Phu Cat, Tuy Hoa 69-70; jrnel1423@aol.com; 210-273-4777
Vice President: Larry Fleming; Nha Trang 68-69; Ldfleming569@gmail.com; 254-396-4091 Cell
2nd Vice President: Robert "Deke" DeCubellis; Bien Hoa 70-71; dehollylu@aol.com; 951-696-3916
Secretary: Charlie Blood; Udorn 70-71; Chris 77M3; cblood@suddenlink.net; 318-625-9106
Treasurer: Richard Garcia; Phan Rang 69-70; cal400@optonline.net; 516-799-9205
Historian: Steve Shelt; Phu Cat & Pleiku 67-68; sshelt1102@gmail.com; 706-231-5056
Communications Director: Don Poss; Da Nang 65-66; Blackie 129X; dp-LM37@vspa.com; 951-325-7244
Past President: Greg Cain; Binh Thuy 67-68; gicain@yahoo.com (new email address); 716-771-1157
President Emeritus: Steve Gattis; Cam Ranh Bay 68-69; SGattis-LM49@vspa.com; 254-898-2647

APPOINTED STAFF:

Membership Chairman: Paul Shave; Binh Thuy 68-69; Paul_Shave@hotmail.com; 505-831-9401
K-9 Kennel Master: Ken Smerecki, Pleiku and U-Tapao 68-69. K9 Bullet, K9 Duke and K9 Shannon; ksmereck@bellsouth.net; 615-456-4272
Sergeant-At-Arms: Keith Young; Binh Thuy, Phu Cat 70-71; kcy9540@aol.com; 716-549-0715
Service Officer: Jaime Lleras; Binh Thuy 1970; chieffal9@gmail.com; 301-848-3399
BX Store Managers: Van & Joyce Digby - MAIL ORDER available by email: jad403@att.net or vad403@att.net
Chaplain: Steve Janke; Cam Ranh Bay 69-70; Kobuc X448; Jank953208@aol.com; 201-507-9038
Chaplain: Jim Stastny; Korat 70-71; Boots 645M; K9stastny@gmail.com; 301-482-2659
Chaplain: Bill Cooley; Cam Ranh Bay 71-72; Mingo 30A0; BCAJ@gvtc.com; 830-899-7542
Chaplain: Jeff Kerkhoff; Tan Son Nhut 72-73; (no email); 626-338-6846
Guardmount Editor: Mike Kennedy; Bien Hoa 69-70; mike3sps@verizon.net; 909-641-1002
Guardmount Assistant Editor: Erlyce Pekas; erlyce@msn.com; 602-574-7089
Safeside Liaison: Jerry Nelson; Safeside Phan Rang, Phu Cat, Tuy Hoa 69-70; jrnel1423@aol.com; 210-273-4777
Web Administrator: Larry Poss; Associate Member; larry@larryposs.com; 702-501-7677
Web Master: Don Poss; Da Nang 65-66; Blackie 129X; dp-LM37@vspa.com; 951-325-7244
K-9 Web Master: Monty Moore; Da Nang, Phu Cat 68-70; Kobuc X448, Giant A905, Blackie 129X; vspa.k9@gmail.com; 512-639-0005
Web QRT Troubleshooter: Gary Jones; Udorn, Safeside Phan Rang, Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut; 1965; 68-69; 71-72; gjones003@sc.rr.com; 843-851-7427
Web Adobe PDF Tech: Greg Dunlap; Da Nang 68-69; Blackie 129X; blackey@sonic.net; 707-576-9683
BB Flight Leader: Bill Marshall; Phu Cat 68-69; billmarshallvspalm85@gmail.com; 949-388-5664
Photographer: Tony Morris; Cam Ranh Bay 69-70; htmorris@gmail.com; 219-322-4418
Photographer: Steve Hall; Binh Thuy 68-69; hallstudio@att.net; 714-634-1132
Photographer: Terry Hall; Nha Trang 67-68; TerryHallPhotography@Icloud.com; 856-981-5071
VSPA Scholarship: Richard "Rick" Gano; Bien Hoa 66-67; rgano@canby.com or rickgano@gmail.com; 503-651-2044
Reunion Hospitality: Sheila Gervase-Cain; Sisterhood President; smgervase@yahoo.com; 716-771-1157

BASE LIAISONS:

Binh Thuy Liaison: Jaime Lleras; Binh Thuy 1970; chieffal9@gmail.com; 301-848-3399
Cam Ranh Bay Liaison: Trent Nentrup; Cam Ranh Bay 68-69; trent.nentrup@gmail.com; 812-341-2235
Nha Trang Liaison: Larry Fleming; Nha Trang 68-69; Ldfleming569@gmail.com; 254-396-4091 Cell
NKP Liaison: George Conklin; NKP 70-71; K-9 Ango 0K31; nkpk970@gmail.com; 406-781-2269
Phu Cat Liaison: Ron Arthur; Phu Cat 67-68; cobranam68@aol.com; 660-678-3501
Pleiku Liaison: Pat Dunne (Hawk); Pleiku 1968; hawk51044@aol.com; 954-923-9001
Tan Son Nhut Liaison: Charles Penley; Tan Son Nhut 67-69; Rebel A531; cpenley@chartertn.net; 423-245-6863
Ubon Liaison: Jim Watson; Ubon 68-69; Fritz X704; jimwatk9@ca.rr.com; 626-806-8463

Wash "The Wall" In Washington D.C. Coordinator: Gary Jones (See WEB QRT Troubleshooter Above)



VSPA SISTERHOOD:

President: Sheila Gervase-Cain; smgervase@yahoo.com; 716-771-1157
Vice President: Janet Matthews; janetmm62@gmail.com; 205-602-8522
Secretary: Erlyce Pekas; erlyce@msn.com; 602-574-7089
Chaplain: Roberta Smith; rps.jackie@yahoo.com; 614-879-6835
Correspondence Secretary: Jean Logan; jeanwattlogan@aol.com; 530-790-7482

DONATIONS AND ESTATE PLANNING BEQUESTS TO THE VSPA

The VSPA is an IRS recognized 501(c)(19) military association whose membership is over 95% War Veteran. Therefore, all donations are tax deductible. Donations, Employer Matching Funds and Estate Planning are an essential part of our lives that provide for our families as well as the entities that have meaning in our lives. Donations and Employer Matching Funds provide resources to support our VSPA daily activities and annual operations. Planned giving in the form of a bequest to the VSPA in your will or trust ensures the future of our mission while also expressing your commitment to that mission and our brotherhood. Because the VSPA is a tax-exempt charitable association, your bequest may also reduce estate taxes. As an alternative, you may also make a gift that may avoid probate by naming the VSPA as a beneficiary on an IRA, insurance policy, other retirement plans or securities.

When making your donation or bequest, you may designate that the funds be used by our general fund in support of our mission, or you may specifically designate that the funds be used by one of our programs like the Jacob J. Chestnut Memorial Scholarship Fund to provide educational scholarships to our members and their descendants, or to assist a member in need. You and your employer can make the arrangements for your donation and their matching donation by sending your donations in a check made payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association.

Your attorney or financial planner can make the arrangements for your estate-planning bequest. Our Treasurer, Richard Garcia, will provide you, your employer, and/or your estate with a letter of acknowledgement for tax purposes.

IN-COUNTRY VET



WHERE WAS I DURING WOODSTOCK?...

IN-COUNTRY VET



YOU STILL CHECK THE PERIMETER AT NIGHT?

In-Country Cartoons are printed by permission of the creator Phil Fehrenbacher, Army Veteran in Vietnam, 68-69. His cartoons depict the experiences and memories of veterans who served in South Vietnam. While we may not have experienced all the situations depicted; we can all relate to the memories.



National POW/MIA Recognition Day

Though not here...



their sacrifice is not forgotten

September 15, 2023 | **#NotForgotten** | www.dpaa.mil |

