

VSPA



USAF



GUARDMOUNT

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

"We Take Care of Our Own"



2022 SPRING/SUMMER EDITION



Getting Ready for Phoenix, Arizona October 5-9, 2022



President	Pg 2
Sisterhood	Pg 3
2021 Reunion Remembered	Pg 5
2021 Vietnam Memorial Service.....	Pg 9
2022 Reunion Registration.....	Pg 16
Warriors Medal of Valor.....	Pg 22
Our Proud And Gallant Legacy.....	Pg 23
VSPA Health Survey 2022	Pg 25
Remember the Pied Piper Story?.....	Pg 26

27th

VSPA Reunion

From Your Service Officer	Pg 27
AN AMAZING HERO	Pg 29
Sarge's Cafe	Pg 31
I Never Thought I Would Outlive You	Pg 32
J.J. Chestnut Scholarship	Pg 34
Scholarship Application.....	Pg 35
2021 Reunion Minutes.....	Pg 36
Lost and Found (Comrade & Friend).....	Pg 45
VSPA Roster.....	Pg 48



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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

My VSPA Brothers and Sisters,

As you all know, we held an off-year election last year at our reunion in Colorado Springs, Colorado. We were unable to conduct our elections in 2020 because of our overwhelming concern for the health of our members due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the subsequent postponement of our 2020 reunion to 2021. I am particularly proud of our Board of Directors for serving an additional year and continuing to serve our Association during a tough period. I would like to say how honored I am to have been elected for a second term as your President. It is an honor to serve this Association and I will continue to work diligently to make it the best it can possibly be.

After missing the 2020 reunion, we held our 2020/2021 reunion as scheduled in Colorado Springs and were hosted by the 10th Security Force Squadron at the Air Force Academy. What a wonderful visit we enjoyed at the Air Force Academy! The members of the 10th SFS were incredible, and we created some great memories. In this edition of Guardmount, there will be pictures of that great event. Being able to visit with my Brothers and Sisters again was so very important and wonderful after the passing of 34 of our Brothers and Sisters between the reunions.

I am truly excited to start the planning for our 2022 VSPA Reunion that will be hosted by the 56th Security Forces Squadron at Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, AZ. As you are aware, the 56th SFS has a storied history at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand where they served valiantly during the war in Vietnam and Thailand. They are excited to host our visit and have eagerly engaged in planning for our reunion. They hosted our reunion in 2009 and were superb.

I personally scouted several hotels in Phoenix, AZ in January of this year. We have selected the Sheraton Crescent Hotel in Phoenix. It is a very nice hotel with plenty of room for us to socialize. Additional information on the hotel will be provided in the reunion Registration Forms that are included in this edition of Guardmount as well as in a mass email and in our VSPA private group on Facebook. I hope we can all make plans to attend and celebrate our Brotherhood and Sisterhood.

On a personal note, Sherry and I would like to thank all of you for the love and prayers during her two-year battle with lung cancer. She has completed surgery, chemo and radiation treatments and, thankfully, she is cancer free and doing extremely well. Your love and prayers helped her more than we can tell you. We will forever be in your debt and send our heartfelt thanks to all of you!

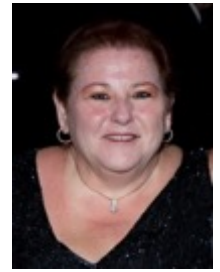
I am truly excited about the future of our Association and look forward to serving as your President for the next two years. I also want you to know that I am available to you via email at jrnel1423@aol.com and via cell phone at 210-273-4777. Sherry and I look forward to seeing you in Phoenix!

Jerry Nelson, President



THE VSPA SISTERHOOD

Sheila Cain, Sisterhood President



Dear Sisters and Brothers of the VSPA,

With the hot and humid days of summer running rampant, I am writing with the fond hope of seeing you in October. With this heat, it's almost as if Mother Nature has been preparing us for our reunion in Phoenix, Arizona, which will be warm, but not like this summer.

As many of you know, I had surgery again to repair my pelvis in an area that had not healed properly after the collision I was in. I am recovering at home now and trying to avoid rolling over Greg's feet as I cruise around our home in my wheelchair. Doctor's orders for the chair, Greg's orders to avoid his feet, which can be difficult since he takes care of me.

We had a wonderful reunion last year in Colorado Springs. The event was outstanding because we had some surviving spouses attend to honor the memory of their wonderful husbands. Some brought family members with them so that they, too, could enjoy the heart and soul of the Sisterhood as we all gathered to share our love and care for each other. The reunion was especially important because of the 2020 reunion being postponed due to COVID-19. Sadly, as age, life and Agent Orange control so much of our lives, it was also the last reunion for more of our beloved members. As we grieve for them, we know how very fortunate we were to see them and share their love and memories. I extend my sincere thanks to Sue Nelson for her assistance to some members of the Brotherhood who experienced minor medical problems.

This year, our reunion in Phoenix will be a time to reconnect and renew our friendships. We have been there before (in 2009) and the Defenders took very good care of us while we were with them at Luke AFB. I am hopeful that more surviving spouses attend and that we will form new friendships with those attending for the first time. We are a family of brothers and sisters who reach out to each other throughout the year because we take care of those who take care of their own. It is who we are as wives and family members. Many of us have done this since the war and we offer our experience to those who are new to their relationship with a Veteran of that war.

Brothers and Sisters, if you have had a loved one who has passed since the last reunion, please notify me with their name and the date they passed as we would like to remember them at the Memorial Service during the Sisterhood meeting. Please send the information to my email. smgervase@yahoo.com.

We have several events planned, including a special screening of the film, "I MARRIED THE WAR" which was made especially for wives of Vietnam Veterans. We also have an optional shopping trip planned to Old Towne Scottsdale in addition to our regular events. I encourage each of you to visit our Hospitality Room where Greg and I will once again hold court at the bar with your favorite beverages and snacks at NO CHARGE. War stories are also included at NO CHARGE but you might have to look at some photos and scrapbooks. Bring them with you if you have them. Meet new friends and learn how we support each other. I encourage you to bring something for our raffles as they not only support our Sisterhood but also the brotherhood that our husbands share.

As always, if any Sister or Brother needs to contact me, I am available by cell phone at 716-480-9101 or at the above email address.

God bless you all.



I send my loyalty and love from the heart. We don't pay dues because we already give from the heart, day after day, week after week, month after month and year after year. Thank you to all of you who sent cards and flowers as I recovered from my collision and all the related surgeries. You made a huge difference in my recovery. Every card touched my heart and the words brought tears of joy. I am so thankful to have you in my life.

*Loyalty,
Sheila Gervase-Cain
Sisterhood President*

*Wife of Greg Cain
Binh Thuy 67-68*



REMINDER: *We are again looking for items to be placed in our Saturday night raffle. The raffle helps fund the snacks and beverages in the Hospitality Room.*

SISTERS: *don't forget the raffle we have in our Sisterhood meeting. The items you bring fill our hearts with joy as we share our blessings with each other.*





2021 VSPA Reunion Remembering Colorado Springs





THE LONG BLUE LINE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY



ALMOST A THOUSAND AIR FORCE ACADEMY GRADUATES SERVED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT. THIRTY-THREE GRADUATES WERE POWS AND MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED FIFTY MEN MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE. MANY EARNED THIS NATION'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS.

THIS WALL PORTRAYS THE MANY AIRCRAFT THAT ACADEMY GRADUATES FLEW AND THE MISSIONS THEY ACCOMPLISHED. THEY EXHIBITED TREMENDOUS VALOR AND COURAGE WHILE FLYING SLOW-MOVING AIRCRAFT TO OUR FASTEST JETS. THEIR MISSIONS RANGED FROM DELIVERING SUPPLIES TO REMOTE OUTPOSTS TO BOMBING HANOI – THE MOST HEAVILY-DEFENDED CITY IN ANY WAR.

AS PRESIDENT REAGAN ASKED IN A SPEECH HONORING OUR RETURNING POWS, "WHERE DID WE FIND SUCH MEN? WE FOUND THEM WHERE WE'VE ALWAYS FOUND THEM. IN OUR VILLAGES AND TOWNS, ON OUR CITY STREETS, IN OUR SHOPS, AND ON OUR FARMS." AND THAT IS WHERE THE MEN WE HONOR HERE CAME FROM PRIOR TO ATTENDING THE AIR FORCE ACADEMY. THEIR ACADEMY EXPERIENCE MOLDED THEM INTO OFFICERS COMMITTED TO SERVING THEIR NATION AND PROTECTING ITS VALUES.

IT IS ONLY FITTING AND PROPER THAT WE SALUTE ALL GRADUATES WHO SERVED DURING THIS TUMULTUOUS TIME IN OUR COUNTRY'S HISTORY.



The Vietnam War
1965-1968






Operation Rolling Thunder was an intensive aerial bombardment of North Vietnam, the U.S. conducted gradually increasing air strikes, designed to cause North Vietnam to accept a ceasefire and withdraw its forces from supporting southern communists while retaining a semblance of independence, with the final intent of the President's Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, to force a withdrawal of the North Vietnamese from the country.

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**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
SOUTHEAST ASIA VIETNAM
PRISONERS OF WAR**

They endured seemingly endless months and years of brutal incarceration and inhumane treatment.

Their sacrifices and commitment to the ideals of the American fighting man never flagged. They held their heads high with pride as they served our Nation as Prisoners of War.

They accomplished their sworn goal.
They returned with honor.

Let this memorial forever stand as an example to future generations of the courage and character expected of US Air Force Academy graduates.

Thirty-Three Graduates of the United States Air Force Academy Served as Prisoners of War in Vietnam

NAME	CLASS	POW DOWM	RELEASED
Lockhart, Hayden J. Jr.	1961	03/02/1965	02/12/1973
Stapleton, Jerry A.	1962	11/08/1966	22/12/1973
Criswell, Jerry D.	1963	05/24/1966	22/12/1973
Bentley, John L.	1963	06/30/1966	02/12/1973
Stottling, Hugh	1964	07/08/1966	12/12/1973
Alvord, Martin J.	1964	08/12/1966	12/04/1973
De la, Ronald G.	1964	09/04/1966	03/04/1973
Winters, Thomas M.	1964	04/04/1966	03/04/1973
Glitz, Leroy W.	1964	12/02/1966	03/04/1973
Speck, Donald R.	1964	01/21/1967	03/04/1973
Fox, John	1962	02/04/1967	03/04/1973
Shirley, James R.	1964	05/05/1967	02/18/1973
McManus, Kevin R.	1964	06/14/1967	02/18/1973
Washburn, Edward J.	1964	06/10/1967	02/18/1973
Black, Joel D.	1969	10/27/1967	02/18/1973
Sijan, Lance P.	1965	11/20/1967	N/A
Hick, Ronald John	1965	10/18/1967	12/14/1972
Grulich, Greg D.	1964	10/20/1967	12/14/1972
Smith, Wayne Ogden	1968	07/18/1968	12/14/1972
Donahue, Myron L.	1965	02/23/1968	02/14/1973
Leonard, Edward, W. Jr.	1966	05/05/1968	12/28/1972
Johnson, Kenneth R.	1961	08/05/1965	02/14/1973
Evitt, Timothy R.	1968	05/05/1972	03/06/1973
Salch, William J.	1970	08/11/1972	03/06/1973
Beckman, William D.	1969	06/24/1972	03/06/1973
Jackson, Charles A.	1969	06/24/1972	03/06/1973
Cook, John A.	1967	06/22/1972	03/06/1973
Ridgeway, Paul K. Jr.	1962	07/28/1972	03/06/1973
Minshall, Marston A.	1968	07/05/1972	03/06/1973
Kyle, James D.	1968	07/23/1972	03/06/1973
Woods, William A.	1968	06/18/1972	03/27/1973
Bohannon, Michael J.	1967	10/27/1972	N/A
Trimble, Jack R.	1970	12/27/1972	12/28/1973



VIETNAM MEMORIAL SERVICE
OCTOBER 8, 2021
JERRY NELSON, CMSGT (RETIRED)
PRESIDENT, LIFE MEMBER #668
PHAN RANG, PHU CAT, TUY HOA 69-70



Good afternoon, it is an honor to welcome you to the Southeast Asia Pavilion on the Grounds of the United States Air Force Academy.

CHAPLAIN JIM STASTNY, please come forward for the invocation.

PRAYER

Thank you, Jim.

This wonderful venue was created as a tribute to the Air Force Academy graduates who served in the Vietnam War. The pavilion was spearheaded by the Class of 1970 as a permanent memorial to those men and women who served in Vietnam and Thailand. Other classes have joined in that endeavor to ensure that the facility is properly maintained. At the conclusion of our memorial service, I encourage everyone to walk through the pavilion to see the honored history of the graduates who are Vietnam Veterans and then feel the spectacular manner in which the facility tells that story.

The following words were written as a Tribute to the Vietnam Security Police Association on the occasion of our Reunion, October 12, 2002:

“Men who served together in good and bad times..., who gave themselves unselfishly to their country..., to their unit and to their mission...; men who stand in later years with hand over heart when the flag of America passes in review...; men whose affection for one another forged lasting bonds of respect and friendship...; these men are the core and heart of our country... They are AMERICA!

Be quietly proud of yourselves and of each other... Take warmth from the ties that bind each of you to the other.

I am humbly proud to have served with men like you.

Robin Olds, Brigadier General
 United States Air Force (Retired)
 Commander, 8th Tactical Fighter Wing

Brigadier General Olds was a giant of a man and one of the most recognized pilots in United States Air Force history. During his tenure, he was a three-time Ace in World War II, Korea and Vietnam where he shot down 17 enemy planes. He was one of our wing commanders at Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand where he pioneered the Wild Weasel Program. He was also the Commandant of Cadets at this Academy from 1967-1971. Earlier today, we were able to spend some time at a Bronze statue of General Olds that was just recently completed. His letter certainly sums up, in a few words, the bonds that hold our Brotherhood together. In the civilian sector, those feelings of love and pride do not exist in other relationships unless you are in law enforcement or the fire service. As you know, on Wednesday evening, we read the names of our 32 Brothers who stood their final Guardmount; and the 3 Sisters who passed since our last reunion. We will always honor and respect their lives and sacrifice...as we should... We all have benefitted from their friendship and sacrifice. Our



brothers are now remembered forever in our Life Member #111... and we will always remember them as well as the members of our Sisterhood.

Today, we also honor someone else entirely. This ceremony celebrates a group of Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who answered their nation's call, then served and fought at locations through Thailand and Vietnam. They served in Law Enforcement, Security, K-9 and/or Safeside. They performed magnificently and never allowed an Air Force base or any other location to be overrun or taken. That is our legacy, our proud history...the history of YOUR service and I am proud to call you Brothers. I am talking about **YOU!**

There were more than 2.7 million military personnel who served in South East Asia.

Of those, over 303,000 were wounded.

2,338 personnel were missing in action. 1900 are still unaccounted for.

We had over 20,000 Air Policemen and Security Policemen who served in Thailand and Vietnam, with approximately 500 wounded.

Our country suffered over 58,000 Deaths of US troops. And as you know, the Security Police career field suffered 111 deaths.

The Vietnam Conflict was the first war that was brought into the living rooms of America via television. I remember talking with my Mother, prior to her death and asked what it was like having a child in Vietnam... and what was she thinking.....She said it was horrible! She watched the national nightly newscast, hoping and praying that she would not see me on a stretcher being loaded onto a helicopter. I am certain that all of our parents had the same horrifying experience. This war divided America and resulted in an anti-military attitude among many of our citizens. We all remember what it was like when we returned to America... with people calling us baby killers, spitting on us and shouting horrible things about us. I remember returning to Elba, a small south Alabama community. Even my close, life-long friends were stand-offish and treated me differently. It took time for them to realize that I was the same guy they knew. Little did they realize; and I certainly could not explain...why that was not the truth!

As you all know, we left the shores of Vietnam to return to what we called The World...to reunite with our families and loved ones.....

However, Vietnam came home with us. The truth is we did not know how much Vietnam and Thailand would remain part of our lives. For many of us, our lives had changed forever. We were not the immature young men who had volunteered to serve our nation. We were forced to grow up in a hurry and do things unimaginable only months, and sometimes mere days before. Many of us did not carry visible physical wounds; but, we were suffering from PTSD and Agent Orange related illnesses. Most of us were too proud to admit that we were suffering from nightmares, from hypervigilance, from what some called battle fatigue or a form of mental illness. We refused treatment and suffered in silence, refusing to acknowledge the existence of Post Traumatic Stress for many years. That happened because there was a stigma attached to a Diagnosis of PTSD – the “D” very notably indicating word “DISORDER”. Thank goodness that has changed. Unfortunately, the result was strained relationships, divorces and very difficult lives led by many veterans. I am proud to say, that today, things are much different. Social awareness of Post Traumatic Stress, advanced treatment and Veteran's understanding of VA treatment availability has resulted in many, many more seeking treatment...and that includes suicide prevention. If anyone has not sought treatment, I urge you to pursue it. It will certainly change your life.



We also brought the war home in the form of Agent Orange. Far too many of us suffer from the effects of Agent Orange. Every year, the VSPA briefs on the various diseases that we have as a result of our exposure. Our own government would not admit that the diseases were caused by Agent Orange for many, many years. While that was a constant problem and often troubled our members, especially as it relates to proof of exposure, they fully realize and admit their responsibility now. If you are suffering, I encourage you to contact a Veteran's Service Officer, seek assistance and file a claim with the VA.

While we have all endured hardship and have experienced multiple issues related to our service in Vietnam and Thailand, I am so very proud of you and absolutely proud to call you my Brothers. We have all sacrificed in some way and answered our Nation's call. You were absolutely the best America had, then and now. I am so honored to be in this distinguished group. The letter by General Olds, which I read earlier, describes you perfectly!

There is another special group that I need to honor today. They are those who are committed to their motto: "Taking care of those who take care of their own."

They live that motto on a daily basis, 24 hours a day, day after day, year after year. They stood by us, raised our children, paid our bills and waited for us to come home. For those who found us later in life, sometimes broken and in need of healing, they loved us and have taken care of us as we take care of our own, as we sought treatment for Agent Orange related cancer, and Post Traumatic Stress.

Our Sisterhood is a wonderful group of wives and companions, who care for us, hold our hand in the night, listen to us cry out with nightmares, and help us function when it seems like we can't make it through the night, or the next day. They push us in wheelchairs and always stand by our side whenever things go sideways. When things go dark, they are there holding things together, helping us realize we are going to be okay. They are our biggest supporters and sometimes need to give us the guidance that saves us. I can readily admit that without my spouse's love and support, I would have suffered a far worse outcome in this life after the war. I know that I am not alone. The Sisterhood is our backbone. Thank God for their support. It is hard to imagine how many of us would have dealt with life without them. Thank all of you for your love and support. We could not have survived this road without you. You are an amazing group!

Our journey as Veterans of Vietnam and Thailand is not over. According to the latest statistics, we still have over 500,000 surviving Veterans who served in Vietnam and Thailand. In this group alone, we have well over thirteen hundred Veterans of that war. We have many who served multiple tours and some who served in both countries. We must continue to preserve our history, tell our story and serve our nation in any capacity possible. I am proud of my Vietnam service and I know all of my Brothers are as well. I am looking forward to many more reunions with the VSPA because this is certainly not our last rodeo.

In closing, I would like to read a poem written by one of our VSPA Brothers, Randy "RAMPS" Stutler who was unable to attend the reunion this year. He wrote these words on July 19, 2008. It is titled: "ONE MORE RIVER TO CROSS":

Echoes softly calling now, within my heart I hear loved ones who have passed away, and many friends so dear.

When we were young and fearless, we'd never count the cost.
Life's challenge was no great thing, just one more river to cross.

In Vietnam we stood our ground, young troopers side by side.
We bit our lips and hid our fears, and honored those who died.



Through all the years of pain and sorrow, time extracts it's cost, and mortals we are bound to pay, one more river to cross.

Oh, if I could just go back to the way we were back then, laughing, living, full of life, proud warriors and brave men.

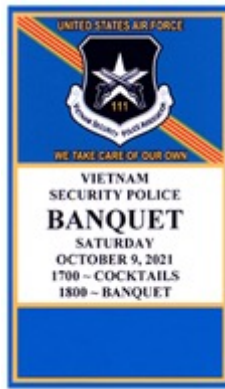
But I know deep within my soul, as I count the friends I've lost, there too lies ahead for me, one more river to cross.

HOWARD YATES – AMAZING GRACE

CHAPLAIN JEFF KERKHOFF - please come forward to provide our closing prayer.

This concludes our ceremony; please enjoy the Southeast Asia Pavilion. We will board buses again in approximately one hour.









**Vietnam Security Police Association
27th Reunion
Phoenix, Arizona – October 5-9, 2022
Luke Air Force Base, Home of the 56th SFS
Previously Assigned to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand**

The 2022 VSPA reunion will be held at the *SHERATON PHOENIX CRESCENT HOTEL*, located at 2620 W. Dunlap Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021. The contract room rate is \$149 per night, plus tax for up to four people in the same room. The room rate does not include a free breakfast; however, a private breakfast buffet is available for \$10 person. The rooms include a refrigerator. The room rate is locked-in for the three days before and three days after the reunion. The room rate is based upon room availability. You must book early to ensure that rooms are available. **DON'T WAIT!** The Sheraton is owned by Marriott.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

YOU MAY USE THE FOLLOWING LINK TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATION ONLINE:

[Book your group rate for Vietnam Security Police Association](#)

Or, call *toll-free* 1-800-325-3535 or 1-602-943-8200 by **MONDAY September 5, 2022**. You must identify yourself as a member of the **Vietnam Security Police Association**. All reservations must be guaranteed and accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card. **The deadline for reservations is September 5, 2022. After that date, rooms will be space available only and AT THE HOTEL'S PREVAILING RATE. Make your reservations early!** Check-in time is 3:00 PM; check-out time is 12:00 NOON. 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 PHOENIX SKY HARBOR AIRPORT (**AIRPORT CODE: PHX**). **YOU MUST BE AWARE OF AIRLINE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS. BRING A MASK!** *The hotel does not have an airport shuttle. Further information will be made available regarding transportation from the airport to the hotel.*

AGENDA: The agenda is generally accurate, but is subject to change due to Luke Air Force Base operational requirements for the 56th SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON:

- Wednesday, October 5: On-site Registration and Reception Dinner at the hotel.
- Thursday, October 6: Optional Tour for the Sisterhood with time for lunch. Spouses are welcome to attend. **EAT BEFORE YOU BOARD THE BUS.** There will be an afternoon film presentation at the hotel for all members. Dinner and evening are open for squadron and base dinners or gatherings.
- Friday, October 7: **EAT BEFORE YOU BOARD THE BUS** for a tour of Luke Air Force Base. Lunch will be with the 56th Security Forces Squadron Defenders. Dinner and evening are open for squadron and base dinners or gatherings.
- Saturday Morning, October 8: **EAT BEFORE** the 1000 hours VSPA Business Meeting. Afternoon open.

- Saturday Morning, October 8: EAT BEFORE the 1000 hours VSPA Sisterhood gathering of wives and companions. Afternoon open.
- Saturday Evening, October 8: Banquet dinner with guest speaker, awards and raffle.
- Sunday Morning, October 9: EAT BEFORE the 0900 hours 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 NOT BE AT THE REUNION THIS YEAR.** PLEASE CONTACT VAN OR JOYCE DIGBY FOR REUNION RELATED MEMORABILIA PRIOR TO THE REUNION. THE LAST DAY FOR AN ORDER WILL BE SEPTEMBER 17, 2022 SO THAT SHIPPING CAN BE COMPLETED AND YOU CAN RECEIVE YOUR MEMORABILIA PRIOR TO THE REUNION. USE THE FOLLOWING LINK TO VIEW THE BX AND MAKE AN ORDER: <https://vspa.coffeecup.com/shop/>

CRITICAL INFORMATION!!! PLEASE READ!!!

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY!!!

Our hotel has been inspected by our VSPA President, Jerry Nelson. The inspection was highly detailed, including contract space verifications and a stay in the hotel. His report was OUTSTANDING!

We conducted a survey of members who attended our last reunion in Colorado Springs. We have spoken with many of our members about 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 day while on base. More and more of our members have difficulty walking; however, some walking may be required on Friday at the base; however, our extensive planning for events will reduce walking time at the base. The optional tour on Thursday for the Sisterhood will necessarily include some walking. Our goal is to provide an opportunity for a reunion with less physical demands and more time to visit with each other.

The REGISTRATION FEE will be \$210 per person. Our economy has been very difficult for all of us. However, for comparison purposes, the registration fee for our 2019 reunion in Washington, D.C. was also \$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 6.

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 Reunion BRAT and the 2019 REUNION was founded on the long standing VSPA requirement that she prepare the Entry Authorization List (EAL) that we submit to the base.



Andrews AFB needed that list in 2019 so that they could check each name for valid entry. Luke AFB will also need an EAL due to their air assets and their combat readiness mission. The EAL database also affected the Reunion BRAT's ability to create name badges, work with the hotel on meal requirements, room availability, handle last minute additions, assist members with cancellations due to medical issues, and schedule buses on contract for various events based upon the number of participants that varied consistently up until the last few days. The incomplete registrations required the Reunion BRAT to track down members for additional information that was either omitted, or the entire Entry Authorization Data Entry Form was not sent to the Reunion BRAT. In many cases, Board members had to do the tracking and contacting of members.

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 like 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 APPLIES TO OUR VISIT AT LUKE AFB THIS YEAR.

WHEN THIS INFORMATION WAS PRESENTED TO THE MEMBERSHIP DURING THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, THEY UNANIMOUSLY AGREED THAT THIS PROBLEM MUST BE CORRECTED FOR ALL FUTURE REUNIONS DUE TO THE LAST MINUTE WORKLOAD FOR ALL INVOLVED WITH PLANNING AND COORDINATING A SUCCESSFUL REUNION. THEREFORE, WE ARE IMPLEMENTING AN EARLY BIRD CREDIT ON YOUR REGISTRATION OF \$25 IF YOUR REGISTRATION IS POSTMARKED BY SEPTEMBER 6. FOR REGISTRATIONS POSTMARKED AFTER THAT DATE, THE REGISTRATION FEE WILL INCREASE BY \$25. THE NEW REGISTRATION PROCESS WAS APPROVED BY ACCLIMATION OF ALL REUNION ATTENDEES IN 2019 AND AGAIN IN 2021.

The hotel will prepare a private buffet breakfast with advanced notice and payment through our registration process for our reunion beginning Thursday morning. The fee is \$10 daily per person (Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday ONLY).

Pay specific attention to the requirement for your identifying information on a separate form for the Entry Authorization List. You cannot enter the base without that information.

THE REGISTRATION FORMS FOLLOW THIS PAGE.

If you have a question or need some more 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 Phoenix, Arizona for our 27th VSPA Reunion! It will be so great to see you.

“We Take Care of Our Own!”



VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION REUNION REGISTRATION FORM



27th Reunion
Luke AFB, Phoenix, Arizona
October 5 - 9, 2022

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 \$210 = \$ _____
(EARLY BIRD CREDIT OF \$25 INCLUDED if postmarked by September 6)

Number of persons attending the Reunion including you # _____ X \$235 = \$ _____
(LATE FEE OF \$25 INCLUDED if postmarked AFTER September 6)

OPTIONAL THURSDAY TOUR

Scottsdale Old Towne \$33 per person # _____ X \$33 = \$ _____

BREAKFAST BUFFET (CIRCLE THE DAY(S)) - Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday ONLY

Number of people _____ X Number of Days _____ = Meals _____ X \$10 = \$ _____

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 COMPLETE THE FORM FOR THE ENTRY AUTHORIZATION LIST!

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 and must be worn, especially while we are in all military or government facilities.
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, 2022.**
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 in order 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 \$210 per person **UNLESS YOU MISS THE EARLY BIRD DEADLINE WITH A POSTMARK OF SEPTEMBER 6**. The registration fee will be \$235 per person for all registrations postmarked after September 6. **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, develop the Entry Authorization List for the Security Forces personnel at the Academy, and 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 4, the day before registration opens at the hotel. Shipping and delivery is 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. **PLEASE COMPLETE THE ENTRY AUTHORIZATION LIST FORM – NEXT PAGE!**



Entry Authorization List Procedures 56th Security Forces Squadron Luke Air Force Base, Phoenix, Arizona

SUBJECT: VISITOR ACCESS – ENTRY AUTHORIZATION LIST REQUIRED

THERE ARE SPECIFIC BASE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS!! The following comes directly from the 56th Security Forces Squadron of Luke AFB: Failure to provide the information will cause denial of entry.

THIS IS NOT A SCAM! IT IS A SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT OF LUKE AIR FORCE BASE DUE TO THEIR COMBAT READINESS MISSION!!!

“Guests must use their **LEGAL** information. Nicknames, missing information or incorrect information are not authorized. People will be removed from the list for failure to provide valid information for entry onto a military installation. List all personnel who require base access. Only use **LEGAL** personal information (i.e. Legal name, State and DL#, and DOB for individuals 18 years of age or older. Guests under the age of 18 only need to be listed by name and DOB.”

LUKE AFB must have your complete, full name as it appears on your state driver’s license; NO NICKNAMES OR MILITARY ID CARD NUMBERS. WE MUST PROVIDE THAT INFORMATION TO THE BASE SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON PASS & ID SECTION so that you can be allowed onto LUKE AFB with our VSPA Entry Authorization List (EAL).

PLEASE FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE BELOW.

Last Name, First Name	Telephone #	State/Driver License#	DOB mm/dd/yy
Doe, John D	(210) XXX-XXXX	TX./00000000	01/15/45
Last Name, First Name	Telephone #	State/Driver License#	DOB mm/dd/yy
Last Name, First Name	Telephone #	State/Driver License#	DOB mm/dd/yy
Last Name, First Name	Telephone #	State/Driver License#	DOB mm/dd/yy
Last Name, First Name	Telephone #	State/Driver License#	DOB mm/dd/yy

NO PRIVATE VEHICLES WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE BUS CONVOY! IF YOU ARE GOING TO ATTEND THE BASE TOUR, YOU MUST BE ON THE BUS BECAUSE WE WILL BE ENTERING A HANGAR IN A RESTRICTED AREA.

A MESSAGE FROM JANET MATTHEWS, CHAIR OF THE WARRIORS MEDAL OF VALOR COMMITTEE, TO THE 2021 RECIPIENTS OF THE WARRIORS MEDAL OF VALOR:

Congratulations to the 2021 recipients of the Warriors Medal of Valor. Sarge would be proud to have you included in this special group. For the new members of the VSPA, be assured that Sarge would seek you out just so he could say, "Welcome Home, Welcome to the VSPA." Not all of you had the chance to meet Sarge, though I hope you have heard about him. My father, Alvin W. Matthews, MSgt, USAF retired, served in the 483rd Security Police Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam from January 1971 to January 1972. He was an instructor at the Security Police Academy before he retired from the Air Force in 1980. He discovered the VSPA on the Internet and like many of you, he kind of watched from a distance before deciding to join or attend a reunion. It is an honor to say that he is Life Member #127. Sarge posted his last Guardmount on January 4, 2008, his 66th birthday. His resting place is plot number **111** at Cedar Hill Cemetery, Scottsboro, Alabama, a plot he specifically selected to honor his Brothers. We have some wonderful memories of our Sarge. I am so glad that he found the VSPA. He loved this association, he loved his Brothers, and I know he is proud of the continued commitment and growth. He would definitely tear up at the thought that you continue his dream of honoring his VSPA Brothers with this medal.

The Warriors Medal of Valor Request for Nominations

Sarge and the Nominations Committee established the following criteria for consideration: The nominee must be a member in good standing of the VSPA plus any one or combination of the following:

- a. Valor (recognized or unrecognized by the Air Force) for service as an Air Policeman, Security Policeman or Augmentee in Vietnam or Thailand.
- b. Outstanding service to the members of the Vietnam Security Police Association.
- c. Outstanding service to the military and/or Veterans.

You may submit the nomination by including his name and your justification for why this member deserves the medal. Please include as many **details** on his service as you can. Nominations must be submitted to me at the following email address: janetmm62@gmail.com no later than **August 12, 2022**. The Warriors Medal selection committee must have time to review the nominations, make the selections, and have the medals engraved. The medals will be presented at the VSPA Reunion Awards Banquet in October. Thank you for your service and **WELCOME HOME!**



Janet Matthews, Daughter of VSPA Life Member #127



OUR PROUD AND GALLANT LEGACY

JERRY NELSON, CMSGT (RETIRED)

PRESIDENT, LIFE MEMBER #668

PHAN RANG, PHU CAT, TUY HOA 69-70



The Vietnam Security Police Association has always been a Band of Brothers built on the brotherhood and history of our career field in a time of war. From the very beginning, we restricted membership to our brother Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who served in Vietnam or Thailand. The dates for inclusion have changed over time due to our understanding and research of our own history. Now, they extend from 1958 to 1976. The blessing of restricted membership is that we never have to explain what we did because we already know. We only ask where and when did you serve? However, the restrictions severely limit our group of potential members, and we are not getting any younger.

You, each of you, answered your nation's call, then served and fought at locations throughout Thailand and Vietnam. You performed magnificently and never allowed an air base or any other location that we protected to be overrun or taken. That is our legacy, our proud and honored history of service in a time of war. Your legacy provides the foundation for current Security Forces Training and includes all types of Air Police and Security Police duties including law enforcement, security, K-9, Safeside, customs, heavy weapons, combat arms training, investigations, and corrections. We are a proud organization, but we also recognize that we are, by choice, a terminal organization due to our membership restrictions that have been continuously reaffirmed by our members. As we age, many of us are fifty years beyond the time we served in Vietnam and Thailand, and so are our potential members. At some point, we will stand our final guardmount as we join our brothers who have gone before us, eventually leaving one of our brothers to have that long, lonely drink of Seagram's VO, earning the last short timer's ribbon. While being the last man standing is an honor that we often hear as, "It's gonna be me," it is not a pleasant thought to be alone without our Band of Brothers. Yet, it is reality. Thankfully, our Sisterhood of wives has stood by us throughout the years, and they have kindly offered to pour that last drink, maybe even helping one of us raise that last glass.

During our last reunion at the Air Force Academy, several of us had a discussion late one evening regarding our legacy: "Wouldn't it be nice to see that proud and gallant legacy continue?" It would be such a shame for the bond and love that has formed in the VSPA to be lost to time, to no longer exist in the hearts of our families. John and Laurie LaRock, the son-in-law and daughter of Jack and Roberta Smith, brought up the idea of having the legacy potentially live on through our kids and grandkids. Thankfully, our charter recognizes our family members as Affiliate Members. As I thought about it, we already have several children and grandchildren who are regular attendees at our reunions. Janet Matthews, the daughter of Al Mathews, the man we all knew as "SARGE;" Jeff Wedding, the son of Robert Wedding; Marissa Fleming, the daughter of Larry and Martha Fleming; and, Lew and Scotti Goldberg's Granddaughter, Shelby Stark, all attend our reunions regularly. Just as Janet, Jeff, Marissa, and Shelby have committed to attend our reunions, John and Laurie LaRock have also committed to become regular attendees. I approached my daughter, Sunday, who has attended prior reunions in Washington, D.C., and San Antonio. She also thought that preserving our legacy was a great idea and committed to attend our reunion this year in Phoenix, Arizona. I know there are others who would love to be part of carrying on our wonderful legacy to ensure that it becomes a lasting legacy. Our Bylaws already provide that when we have less than twenty-five of our war veteran regular members, our VSPA Affiliate Members consisting of our wives, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren can assist us by helping to manage the VSPA on our behalf.

Therefore, I am asking you to discuss our plan for the future with your descendants, to invite them to consider their potential inclusion. I hope that you will encourage them to attend and become part of our wonderful family



... our Brotherhood and Sisterhood. As we fade away, they can have a whole new group of family and friends to carry the stories and legacy into the future. Our legacy can live on through our families. Can they form the same kind of love and bond that we have had over all the years since we said goodbye in Vietnam and Thailand and found each other again through the VSPA? The answer, in my mind, is yes, a resounding YES. In fact, many of them have already told the stories of their fathers and grandfathers and have regaled us with laughter and tears in our hospitality room. If this idea works as we have hoped and as intended in our Bylaws, we could leave the VSPA in the hands of our children and remain a strong, loving association of brothers and sisters. Who knows what great things they might accomplish?

At this point, our legacy is strong. Continuing that legacy is our hope, my hope, the hope of your Board, and we propose that you encourage your children and grandchildren to become involved, to attend a reunion to feel the Brotherhood and Sisterhood that we share. It is an idea whose time has come. I know this can work; however, it is dependent upon each of us to get our families involved. Now, more than ever, we need to make the effort to ensure that our legacy is carried on. What better group of people to lead it forth than our wives, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. I am asking that you talk to them and invite them to Phoenix to start this process together. It is an important issue, and it is time to move it forward.

Jerry Nelson
President



Washington D.C., November 10, 2007



USPA HEALTH SURVEY 2022



This is a ***completely voluntary*** survey of our members. Not every ache or pain we suffer is just due to the aging process! Your VSPA Board wants to try to quantify the raw numbers and types of likely service-connected “ailments” we have had to endure over the years.

NO NAMES REQUIRED! We will share significant statistical results once they are tallied up.

If YOU, **the Vet** have, or if you are a **Sister** responding on behalf of a member who has, (or sadly *had*) any of the following **Please circle Y (yes) or N (no) as applicable.** **Vet deceased: Y**

PTSD: Y or N VA compensated: **Y or N** Belong(ed) to a VA Vets Group: **Y or N**

HEARING (huh?): **TINNITUS** (ringing in ears) **Y or N** VA Hearing Aids **Y or N**

HEARING LOSS **Y or N** VA compensated **Y or N** *For Tinnitus Hearing Both (circle)*

AGENT ORANGE (AO) ISSUES:

PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY **Y or N** (circle hands, arms, feet) VA compensated **Y or N**

Have you ever had any radiation therapy/s? **Y or N** If Yes, what kind? _____

HYPOTHYROIDISM*: **Y or N** VA compensated **Y or N** *(*New AO presumptive!)*

PARKINSON’S*: **Y or N** VA compensated **Y or N** **Bell’s Palsy: Y or N** VA Comp **Y or N**

DIABETES: Y or N If yes, what *Type* do you have? **Circle 1 or 2**

BIRTH DEFECTS (offspring) i.e.; Spina Bifida **Y or N** **Other AO issues: (please print)**

SLEEP APNEA **Y or N** VA compensated **Y or N** **CPAP: Y or N** From VA? **Y or N**

PROSTATE CANCER **Y or N** VA compensated **Y or N**

SKIN DISEASE/S: Y or N VA compensated **Y or N** (your option to provide what type/s diagnosed _____)

BACK, HIP, KNEES, CUFFS (skeletal issues) **Y or N** VA compensated **Y or N**

(i.e.; Spinal Stenosis, Sciatica, Arthritis etc. *(Trigger Finger maybe?)* Any OEM parts replaced??

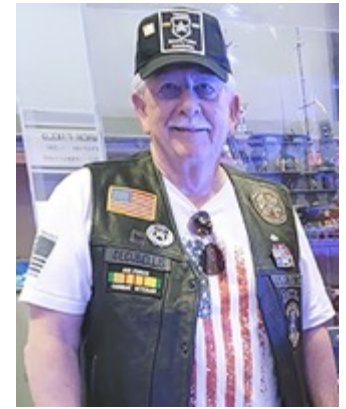
Vet Age ____ Live Alone **Y or N** Vet or **Sister** circle where served: **RVN Thailand BOTH**

USE REVERSE IF YOU WISH!! Mail form to VP Robert DeCubellis, 25121 Corte Ancha, Murrieta CA 92563 OR give to a Board Member at the Reunion in Oct!



Remember the Pied Piper Story?

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



Once upon a time, there was a guy who got a sweet gig leading rodents out of town during the great cataclysm known as the Plague. Well, those of us who served in Vietnam and likely Thailand too, had to deal with all manner of animal and insect life during our tours. The "Guvmint" had etymologists, Civil Engineers, and base supply, whose purpose in life was to keep us from getting inundated with disease-bearing critters and crawly flying things.

The Supply folks graced us with a variety of bug repellents in sprays and splash-ons in lovely fragrances. When mixed with salt-pill sweat from your pores prior to their clogging, the blend tended to make one kind of slimy and glossy. Some of those bugs might slide off, usually *after* taking their ounce of blood and or flesh.

In addition to mosquitos, one of my favorites was the rice bug. It had a hard exterior and was not a night sleeper. It was attracted to light. If you were riding in an open gun jeep Security Response Team, it could be dangerous. (Remember them Rommel Goggles which most hardly ever wore.?) I was a M-60 gunner on a jeep one night and luckily turned my head ever so slightly just prior to being whacked by a 14 pounder (okay it was several ounces) the diameter of a softball (well maybe a ping-pong ball.) Remember the math class problem: two trains heading at each other at 25 mph and 40 mph, when will they pass each other? Unfortunately, he/she/it was flying, and we were too. Its' hard shell nicked my cheek bone just below my right eye requiring 48 stitches and concussion protocols.... *well* maybe just some canteen water and a band-aid and no Purple Heart, but that spot will bleed a wad..... I put a tourniquet in place and commenced to stomp the rice out of the assailant which had landed on the floor of my jeep. You don't want to hear my boa constrictor story....

But let's close with the rodent tail, err I mean tale. From time to time, guys would check out a shotgun from the armory and go hunting for those rats which could often be the size of house cats (*well-fed* house cats). This was frowned upon because lighting them up with a round of double-ought buck in the bigger bunkers near the hooches where they hid, made for quite a mess. Guys liked killing them but hated the cleanup detail. Traps worked as long as the trap was anchored (some time you'd see one lugging one behind him). If it was big enough to kill the critter, then CE took 'em away!

Now to the more fun part of this saga. The scene: Bien Hoa AB, Spring 1971, a two-story hooch near the armory across from the SP motor pool and Guardmount area/ ball field. I worked nights and rarely slept in the hooch on a rare night off. One night I did have off, I awoke to a critter scooting along the cement wall of our gazebo hooch by my bunk and I went after him with my bayonet only to miss him. Several days later, I'm in my cube with the fan blasting that wonderful unairconditioned nuoc-mam flavored morning air, attempting to get some sleep after a long Charlie Flight shift. At the entry to the hooch is the cube of my good buddy Sgt Dwain "Woody" Haworth, a B Flight Security guy and Hamiltonian like me.

Suddenly I'm awakened by the sound of loud cussing, hooch-mates cheering, and what sounds like splintering wood and falling timbers. I arise, as did the others in the back of our ground floor abode, to see Dwain in his underwear, wielding the hooch fire axe into the plywood covered wall panel above where he slept. Note that this panel also housed the electrical circuitry for home away from home. We attempted to point this out to Dwain but he was a man with a mission.



Inside this wall was a nest of rats that had convinced themselves they could live nicely out of the rain and sun and feed on GI care packages and leftovers from the hut maid. Dwain said nay nay, and after having no luck with the CE trapping method, decided to take matters into his own hands with obvious success. He was about to put toe tags on the deceased occupants, when the panel shorted, the fans stopped moving and the SP 1st Sgt who was in the area, came to exam the cause of the commotion and carnage. Needless to say, he was less than pleased with having to call in an emergency work order. BUT it did solve the problem and luckily, the CE electricians who love a good story, came with some of their critter killer peeps and it all got cleaned up, the power got restored, nobody got written up, the axe was remounted to the wall, and I finally got some sleep.

So, while Dwain, (who plays the 12-string guitar but not the Lute,) elected NOT to try and lull these rodents out of our hooch with music, I am indebted to him for rendering them rats non-functioning. And it's a fun true (well almost all of it is true) story of the Vietnam veterans' appreciation for Mother Nature and ingenious methods for dealing with Her.



FROM YOUR SERVICE OFFICER

Jaime A. Lleras, Life Member #887, Binh Thuy AB – 1970



What Are the Aid and Attendance Requirements?

Veterans who need assistance with day-to-day living activities or are housebound may be eligible for the Aid and Attendance pension. You may be eligible for this benefit if you get a VA pension, and you meet at least one of these requirements.

At least one of these must be true:

- You need another person to help you perform daily activities, like bathing, feeding, and dressing, or
- You have to stay in bed—or spend a large portion of the day in bed—because of illness, or
- You are a patient in a nursing home due to the loss of mental or physical abilities related to a disability, or
- Your eyesight is limited (even with glasses or contact lenses, you have only 5/200 or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less)

The Aid and Attendance pension can help cover the cost of in-home care, assisted living, or nursing home care. The pension can help pay for home health aides or transportation to medical appointments for homebound veterans.

How Do I Apply for a VA Pension?

You may be eligible for the veterans pension program if you meet these eligibility requirements.

Both of these must be true:

- You didn't receive a discharge under dishonorable conditions, and
- Your yearly family income and net worth meet certain limits set by Congress. Your net worth includes all personal property you own (except your house, your car, and most home furnishings), minus any debt you owe. Your net worth includes the net worth of your spouse.

And at least one of these must be true about you:

- You started on active duty before September 8, 1980, and you served at least 90 days on active duty, with at least one day during wartime, or



- You started on active duty as an enlisted person after September 7, 1980, and served at least 24 months or the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions) with at least one day during wartime, or
- You were an officer and started on active duty after October 16, 1981, and you hadn't previously served on active duty for at least 24 months.

And at least one of these must be true:

- You're at least 65 years old, or
- You have a permanent and total disability, or
- You're a patient in a nursing home for long-term care because of a disability, or
- You're getting Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income.

If you think you might be eligible for a pension, the first step is to gather the necessary documentation. It includes your military discharge papers, marriage and divorce certificates, medical records, and birth certificates for any dependent children.

Once you have the required documentation, you can apply online or by mail. You will also need proof of your income and any assets you own. The application process can often take several months to complete, so getting started as soon as possible is important.

How to Determine Countable Income

The VA offers different benefits to veterans and their families. One of the most important is the veterans pension, which provides financial assistance to qualifying veterans. The VA looks at their countable income to determine whether a veteran is eligible for the pension. Countable income includes earned income, such as wages from employment, and unearned income, such as interest from investments. **Social Security benefits** are included in countable income.

The VA uses a complex formula to determine whether a veteran's countable income exceeds the maximum amount allowed for pension eligibility. Veterans should be familiar with the types of income that are counted and those that are excluded. By understanding how they assess their income, veterans can ensure they get all the benefits they are entitled to. We hope this guide has been helpful. Remember, if you have any questions, I encourage you to contact your local DAV Chapter Service Officer for support.



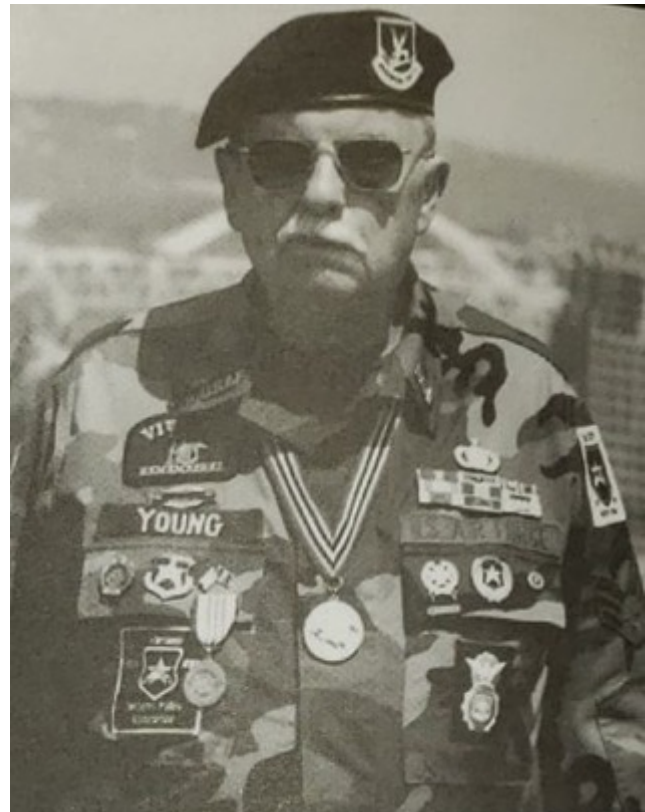


AN AMAZING HERO
BY MARTIN STRONES, COLONEL (RET.)
LIFE MEMBER #1011, BIEN HOA 1967-68



On 17 November 2021, we lost an amazing Security Policeman who was a hero in Vietnam. I was his Shift Commander, ‘C’ Flight, the night shift at Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam. The hero was Luther ‘Wade’ Young, but most people remember him as ‘Able 10’ his post at one of the several towers in the bomb dump. Able 10 was one of the northern towers near where napalm bombs and other munitions were stored. Bien Hoa was the largest base in the Vietnam war, large because over five hundred aircraft called the base home. For that reason, the base was subject to many rocket attacks by our enemy, mostly called 122s and mortar rounds. According to enemy reports, over 1,300 rockets alone hit the base. At the time there was no incoming alert mechanism or device to detect incoming rounds, so the thousands of members had to dive for cover to attempt to be safe. However, there was a person assigned to the base who had a very unusual special skill. His name was Luther Young.

Luther was the incoming rocket detector who during his tour accurately called in every incoming rocket attack. As his shift commander, I tried every way possible to determine how he was able to detect the incoming rockets, putting others along with Luther in his post, and other ideas, but nothing worked. We modified his post with compass rose markings so he could identify the specific direction of the launching position enabling US Army counterfire and USAF gunships to quickly attack the enemy. At times, Luther called in rocket attacks on nearby US Army bases again assisting US Army counterfire and gunships. His post order stated that because of the hazards of being posted in the ammunition storage area or bomb dump he was to abandon his tower and take cover in the bunker below when the base was under an attack. However, he never took cover, he always stayed in his tower to look for more rockets. We gained valuable seconds for those on the base to seek cover





by moving the base siren switch to Luther's post. By moving the switch, we felt under most conditions Luther gave members on base 40 seconds to be in the bunker and protected.

One night, Luther pressed the siren and 17 Ranch Hand pilots managed to exit their barracks in that 40 seconds and gain safety as immediately two 122s directly hit and destroyed their barracks and all their personal possessions. Lt. Colonel Kent Miller, Commander 3rd Security Police Squadron, received a letter from the Ranch Hand Commander, thanking Luther for his direct actions that saved each of his pilot's lives.

To demonstrate the impact of Luther's ability and reputation, the number one question I was asked when getting ready for my shift and guard mount by individuals while I walked to posting was: "Is Luther on post tonight?" I could continue with more details of how Luther's actions directly saved lives. There is more to the story. A quiet person, Luther never said much or asked for anything, or even acknowledged his skill. He signed up for a second tour and quietly returned home for 30 days. We all waited for him to return; however, at the time we did not know his brother, Lonnie Young a US Marine, was killed in Vietnam and Luther was given a reassignment in the USA. Luther never received any form of USAF recognition for his heroic actions.



For eight years I tried to locate Luther to determine why he never returned to Bien Hoa. Finally, with the help of many, I found him working in Kansas City. I called Luther, then flew to Kansas City and personally thanked him for what he did in Vietnam. Without his knowledge and with statements from VSPA Life Member Lt. Col. Miller, John Novak, and myself, plus other evidence of his heroic accomplishments, and special help from VSPA Affiliate Member Major General Mary Kay Hertog, 42 years after his discharge from the USAF Luther was awarded the Bronze Star with 'V' device for his actions. He was an amazing and heroic man who represented the USAF Security Police and Security Forces with great merit and valor. The Vietnam Security Police Association also recognized Luther with the Warriors Medal of Valor of the Native American Nations of the United States of America. I am proud to tell his story.



SARGE'S CAFÉ, INC.



Dear VSPA family,

Greetings from beautiful Northeast Alabama! Thank you so much for your support of Sarge's Café, a non-profit organization established in 2014 in memory of Alvin W. Matthews, (4-Jan-1942 to 4-Jan-2008). My Daddy was a retired USAF Master Sergeant who served in the 483rd Security Police Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, 1971-1972. Sarge was a Life Member of the Vietnam Security Police Association (LM #127). 2022 marks our eighth year of service providing for school children!

As you know, Sarge's Café has no paid employees. 100% of all donations go directly to providing for school children. The directors donate their time, vehicle and provide gas for picking up and delivering non-perishable foods and bottled water for school children battling food insecurity. No donation is too small. Everything helps provide for a student in need. You may contact me if you would like additional information or details.

We have committed to providing bottled water, after school snacks with bottled water and weekend food for the 2022-2023 school year beginning in early August. As I approached our contacts at Bryant Elementary and Lincoln Academy about continuing service, their response was a grateful, resounding YES!

This is our passion and we have made so many friends since starting the project. I am personally grateful for and humbled by the love and support Sarge's has received over the years. The plan is to continue as long as possible.

Thank you again for honoring Life Member #127 through Sarge's Café in our mission to defeat food insecurity one child at a time.

Welcome Home!

HUGS!

Janet Matthews

Daughter of LM #127

“Sparkplug”

332 COUNTY ROAD 626
SECTION, AL 35771
205-602-8522
[**SARGESCAFE@GMAIL.COM**](mailto:SARGESCAFE@GMAIL.COM)
FB @SARGESCAFEINC



I Never Thought I Would Outlive You

Another Melancholy Day

© 2021, Don Poss

Letter to my Brothers,

I never thought I would outlive any of you--it never crossed my mind. Not a day passes without one of you popping up in my daily thoughts. Vietnam. Da Nang. Dog handlers, mostly. And we still had fun and made fond memories—and memories not so fun.

Remember the night we got off duty, put our dogs away, and caught a ride to Tent City? The morning cool was nudging 90. After chow hall we were back to our tent—sun just rising a blazing orb that blistered the canvas tent's walls guaranteeing sleep was impossible; way too oppressive a baking heat to sleep. We went outside to our bunker and sat in the shade BS'ing, dozing, and crawling around the bunker following the shade—high noon robbed us of even that. Then sarge caught us out in the open and scooped us up to fortify and fill sandbags; somebodies got to do it and it's you's...or something like that. Funny thing, he drove us over to the kennels and said the President wanted us to participate in the new Vietnam Beautiful Program and plant flowers around the K9 office.

Bouncing in the back of the deuce-n'half, we were all royally...upset, exhausted, and poor-mouthing 'Why Us?' And then someone started giggling and it was contagious and hilarious because of all the above. The plotting began.

Sarge, presented us with about five bags of flower seeds, and told us to dig small holes all around the base of the office, put in a couple of seeds, cover it up leaving a water basin around each one. His mistake was telling his he had an errand to run and would be back in an hour or so and expected it to all be done.

It was. The plotting began.

We dug the little holes spaced about a foot and half apart, with water basins and then on the last hole, we dug one about two feet deep and dumped all the seeds in it. We filled all the basins with water and sacked out inside the office building. Sarge returned ready to break heads but was instead very pleased with our hard work and knew LTC Phillips would be too.

Instead of giving us a ride back to our tent, he told us we should all be bushy-tailed from our naps and to hump it back. We were in a great mood over our little green-thumb revenge.

Sometime later, sarge wondered aloud why no flowers ever grew at the kennels—we did such a great job and all. I told him I thought the reason was all that Vietnam crappy soil and the Vietnamese using it for toilets. He thought about it and said that sounded about right.

Many other fun things happened; and bad things, along the way. Sgt. Jensen was KIA in July, and in January, JB Jones was KIA. Woodward later and another guy. Maxie couldn't handle that JB was killed and was sent back home. He disappeared. Later, there were ten or so other deaths at Da Nang; a couple of new guys got sick and died within 1-5 days of arrival, dying on the hospital ships in the harbor—we never met them or even knew their names for years—and one or two drowned. I DEROS'd and gradually so did you all.



Three decades passed, and then you started dying. Phil Norwich passed away in 1997, heart attack and AO related. We didn't know that many of us were killed in Vietnam by Agent Orange that would follow us home to finish the job. Tom Baker, 2007; Gary Eberbach, 2017; Gary Knutson, 2020. And yes, there were others. And when I go for walks, I sometimes feel your shadows in memories, and smiling at some; tearing at others. I'm old, you know, and a great-grandpa now.

Brotherhood is not a club to veterans. I can still see your faces and hear some of your voices in my dreams. I've often wondered if our dogs went to heaven. If the lion will lay down with the sheep in peace, I think there may be a place for Blackie, Rex, Eric, Lucky, King, and all the others.

None of us left Vietnam as we had arrived. We were changed and Vietnam couldn't be undone. We remember you each day, each night, in our hearts, in our minds, in our souls. It will always be so this side of The Wall. Our Brotherhood will someday have crossed over to the other side, and once there, maybe we could plant some flowers.

Don Poss





Vietnam Security Police Association
J.J. CHESTNUT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

(<http://www.vspa.com/t-rip-chestnut-1998.htm>)

Jim Lebowitz, Life Member #241, Bien Hoa AB – 66-68

Deadline: October 1, 2022

The VSPA has established a scholarship in memory of J.J. Chestnut. J.J. was a career Security Policeman who served in Vietnam and after completion of his military career became a member of the U.S. Capital Police. In 1998 while on duty he was killed by a deranged individual who shot several others. He was brandishing a weapon and was attempting to gain access to sensitive areas at the capital building. J.J. is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

All VSPA members, spouses, children, grandchildren, step-children/step grandchildren, and great grandchildren are eligible to compete for this scholarship. Normally one \$1,000.00 award is given annually. The award will be granted to those seeking education beyond the high school level and may include trade schools, community colleges, junior colleges or four-year college or university.

The deadline for submission of scholarship applications the first day of October each year. The basis for the award will be Grade Point Average (GPA), recommendations and the applicant's response to one of the below listed topics.

VSPA members should request applications on behalf of applicants via the public bulletin board on the VSPA Web Site or by contacting Jim Lebowitz at 949-855-8901. Relatives of deceased members may also request applications.

Please complete the biographical data and recommendation. On a separate piece of paper, please respond to one of the following questions, in 500 words or less:

1. In what instances do you feel that the United States is justified in taking military action?

Or

2. May people feel that the military today is alienated from the general population? How can this alienation be eliminated or prevented?

Submit the completed application via e-mail to jimlebowitz@yahoo.com or regular mail to:

Jim Lebowitz
 2144 Ronda Granada
 Unit G
 Laguna Woods, CA 92637



**Vietnam Security Police Association
J.J. Chestnut Memorial Scholarship Application**

APPLICANT'S BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Name of VSPA member: _____

Relationship: _____

Name and address of school currently attending or last attended:

Current degree/education level: _____

Name and address of school currently or planning on attending:

Grade point average: _____

- Note:** 1. Please attach a copy of your most current transcripts.
 2. Recommendation of school official, principal, university administrator, department chair, or guidance counselor.

Name of applicant: _____

Comments concerning applicant's qualifications and potential:

 Signature/Title of person making recommendation

 Date



**ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
26th ANNUAL VSPA REUNION
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2021**



1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 1000 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 Vice President Larry Fleming

SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY CARMEN K. MCGINNIS, NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER AND COLORADO REGIONAL SERVICE SUPERVISOR FOR DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV).

Ms. McGinnis is retired from the United States Marine Corps and has several years of experience representing Veterans and facilitating claims (AT NO COST) that she has filed on their behalf with the Veterans Administration. She emphasized that certified Service Officers through the DAV, American Legion, and other organizations DO NOT CHARGE FOR ASSISTANCE. Veterans do not have to pay to file a claim with the VA and should not use the VA for assistance in filing their claim due to the adversarial nature of the claims process. She presented extensive information specifically tailored to Vietnam Veterans who have Agent Orange Related health issues and disabilities, as well as hearing impairment, hypertension and PTSD. At the conclusion of her presentation, she attended the meeting of the VSPA Sisterhood to present information tailored to wives of Vietnam Veterans and how they may assist in the claims process.

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, Vice President; LM #131; Glen Rose, TX; Nha Trang 1968-69.
 - Jaime Lleras, Second Vice President; LM#887; Surfside Beach, SC; Binh Thuy 1970 (unable to attend).
 - Charlie Blood, Secretary; LM #372; Pineville, LA; Udorn K9 1970-71.
 - Richard Garcia, Treasurer; LM #82; Massapequa, NY; Phan Rang, 1969-70. (Unable to attend).
 - Steve Shelt, Historian; LM #157; Evans, Georgia; Pleiku 67-68 (Unable to attend).
 - Don Poss, Communications Director; LM #37; Hemet, CA; Da Nang K-9 1965-66.
 - 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 SIX MEMBERS OF THE BOARD PRESENT.

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 **ELECTION OF OFFICERS** – The candidates for the VSPA Board of Directors all ran unopposed. There were no write-in candidates. The newly elected officers are:

Jerry Nelson for President

Larry Fleming for Vice President

Robert “Deke” DeCubellis for 2nd Vice President

Charlie Blood for Secretary

Richard Garcia for Treasurer

Steve Shelt for Historian

Greg Cain will continue in the position of Past President

Don Poss will continue in the position of Director of Communications

Steve Gattis will continue as President Emeritus

Motion to approve by Van Digby; 2nd by Jerry Gable.

Members approved unanimously by acclamation with a REVISED QUORUM OF SEVEN.

THE NEXT ELECTION WILL BE HELD AT THE 2023 REUNION.

7.1 REUNION SITE SELECTION FOR 2023:

a. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS AND CONSTITUTION** – Jerry Nelson presented the history of the proposal based upon discussions at the 2019 Reunion in Washington, D.C. The following was reviewed by the Board of Directors and is presented for your consideration:

1. Pursuant to Article III, Section 2, Reunions, Paragraph B – (the following is the current text within our BYLAWS and Constitution):

“We offer strong support to all active duty and reserve members of the United States Air Force Security Forces. Therefore, our reunions will always be held near a United States Air Force base with an active duty Security Forces squadron.”

Proposed Change to Paragraph B, if approved, will be effective for the reunion in 2023.

“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.”

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY A VOICE VOTE OF ACCLIMATION.

- 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 Colorado Springs, Colorado was selected in 2018 and postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- d. As in the past, the 2022 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 5 – 9, 2022.** The sites selected at our 2019 Reunion were:
 - 1. **Primary Site for 2022 is Luke AFB, Phoenix, Arizona.**
 - 2. **Secondary Site for 2022 is Hill AFB, Utah.**
 - 3. **Backup Site for 2022 is Nellis AFB, Nevada.**
- e. The site selection process for **2023** will be conducted by VSPA President Jerry Nelson, Vice President Larry Fleming, 2nd Vice President Deke DeCubellis, and Secretary Charlie Blood.
- 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 EAST CONUS FOR 2023 because we are in the CENTRAL REGION this year and will be in the WEST REGION next year.**
- g. President Jerry Nelson explained the potential selection of sites in the EAST 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 13 bases that were available on the ballot.
- h. To prepare for the potential amendment to the BYLAWS and Constitution, your Board of Directors conducted research to identify locations within the EAST REGION with hotels in the area that could accommodate VSPA requirements for a reunion site. The potential sites in alphabetical order are:
 - 1. **Jacksonville, Florida.**
 - 2. **Louisville, Kentucky.**
 - 3. **Savannah, Georgia.**
- i. The Base Selection Ballot is shown below:



**VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION REUNION
OCTOBER 6 - 10, 2021
2023 BASE SELECTION BALLOT**

Active Duty USAF/Joint Bases in the US Eastern 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 28th reunion in 2023.

Please write a #1 in front of your first choice; #2 on your second choice; and a #3 on your third choice.

Your ballot will be collected in the HOSPITALITY ROOM ON FRIDAY at 2100 hours. Once the ballots are collected, the executive board will tally the votes and present the top three bases chosen at the business meeting on Saturday. At that point, we will all vote for a primary base and a secondary base.

EASTERN BASES AVAILABLE - MILES FROM AIRPORT TO BASE

- Joint Base Andrews, MD / Washington, DC – Reagan National 10 Miles (Reunions in 2007 & 2019 with the highest reunion cost)
- Joint Base Charleston, SC Charleston - 10 miles (Reunion in 2013)
- Dover AFB, DE Dover - 5 miles
- Elgin/Hurlbert AFB, FL Ft Walton Beach - 7 miles (Reunion in 2012)
- Keesler AFB, MS Gulfport/Biloxi – 17 miles
- JB Langley-Eustis, VA Hampton - 1 mile (Reunion in 2001)
- MacDill AFB, FL Tampa - 5 miles (Reunion in 2016)
- Maxwell AFB, AL Montgomery - 2 miles
- Moody AFB, FL Valdosta - 10 miles (Reunion in 2005 – Home of Safeside Squadrons)
- Patrick AFB, FL Melbourne - 15 miles
- Robins AFB, GA Macon - 15 miles
- Shaw AFB, SC Columbia - 35 miles
- Wright Patterson AFB, OH Dayton - 10 miles (Reunions in 2002 & 2011)

FOR PURPOSES OF THE MINUTES, GREEN INDICATES THE TOP THREE BASES.

NOTE: Bases not considered due to cost \$\$\$, distance and weather:

- Arnold AFB, TN Testing and Research only, no operational runway
- Columbus AFB, MS Columbus - 10 MILES - Home of the 14th SFS (Nha Trang)
- Hanscom AFB, MA Weather and distance
- JB McGuire-Dix, NJ Philadelphia - 90 minutes – Too far
- Pope Field, NC Raleigh - 70 miles - Too far
- Seymour Johnson AFB, NC Raleigh - 50 miles
- Tyndall AFB, FL Panama City - 10 miles - (Hurricane Reconstruction)



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

j. **The Reunion Dates for 2023 are October 4 – 9. While the cities without bases were included in the reunion site selection, **NONE** of the cities without bases were selected.**

1. **Primary Site for 2023 is EGLIN AFB, FLORIDA**
2. **Secondary Site for 2023 is Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio**

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 0830 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 Jim Stastny: Jim thanked the Board of Directors for allowing him to serve as the Kennel Master for over ten years. He is retiring as Kennel Master and will be replaced by Ken Smerecki. Ken presented information on new K9 challenge coins for the handlers.

8.3 GUARDMOUNT REPORT by Mike Kennedy, Guardmount Editor and Publisher. Erlyce Pekas and Steve Gattis will continue as Assistant Editors to Mike Kennedy. 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.

Mike asked the members to 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 annual report for 2020 and the Year-to-Date report for 2021. Both reports are attached to the file copy of the minutes. As of December 31, 2020, the amount in the Checking Account was \$8,674.12. The amount in the Savings Account was \$35,602.88. TOTAL AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2020 = \$44,277.00. As of September 30, 2021, the amount in the Checking Account is \$5,841.39. The amount in the Savings Account is \$35,605.52. TOTAL AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2021 = \$41,446.91.

DONATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

8.4a As we have at the last two reunions, your Board of Directors unanimously decided to pass the hat at this business meeting rather than at the Awards Banquet. All money collected at this meeting will be donated to the J.J. Chestnut Scholarship Fund.

Motion to approve by Ken Smerecki; 2nd by Jerry Gable. Approved.

8.4b THE FUND TO ASSIST VSPA MEMBERS WHO CANNOT AFFORD TO ATTEND A REUNION HAS BEEN RENAMED TO **THE SAM WILLIAMS ENDOWMENT:** VSPA Life Member Sam Williams and his employer have each donated \$500 SIX 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 SIX people who needed assistance. After initially accepting the offer of assistance with registration fees, FOUR of them had to decline due to medical problems and concerns re COVID-19. The other two were able to attend this year. We also identified three additional people while at the reunion. After review of their individual circumstances, a total of five were approved. We are thankful for all that Sam has done to take care of our own.

Motion to approve by Bill Cummings; 2nd by Jim Stastny. Approved.

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

At the conclusion of this report, Craig Reeves stood and immediately pledged to donate \$500 to supplement the Sam Williams Endowment.

- 8.5 MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** by Paul Shave. Report attached to the file copy of the minutes.
- 8.6 BX SALES REPORT** by Van Digby. The BX has been highly successful at every reunion for several years. Van presented information on new items of memorabilia that are available in the BX. He also requested that the members approve payment for transportation of the BX to and from Colorado Springs. The membership unanimously approved his request.
- 8.7 WEB SITE REPORT** by Don Poss, Communications Director. Don presented information on recent updates and the conversion of the membership database to make it easily searchable for members. He also 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.

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:** Steve Shelt was unable to attend. His report is attached to the archive copy of the minutes.
- 8.9 SECURITY FORCES MUSEUM UPDATE:** Presented by Jerry Nelson, member of the Board of Directors of the Security Forces Museum Foundation.
 - 1. Jerry presented information regarding the Museum Foundation's efforts to upgrade displays in various area of the museum, including the Hall of Honor area.
 - 2. 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



Lt Col Charles Heubusch by Jerry Nelson with copies forwarded to the 56th Security Forces Squadron at Luke Air Force Base for their heritage room.

3. Two Vietnam Era Starlight scopes were donated to the museum by the 355th Security Forces Squadron of Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona.

- 8.10 SAFESIDE LIAISON REPORT:** Presented by Jerry Nelson on behalf of Safeside Liaison David Pierson who was unable to attend due to extensive back surgery.

The Safeside Reunion at Moody AFB April 20 – 24, 2022 has been rescheduled to September 12 – 16, 2022 due to COVID in the Valdosta, Georgia area. A second SAFESIDE Memorial Bench (similar to the bench dedicated at the Security Forces Memorial at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio) will be dedicated at Moody AFB during the Safeside Reunion. Several members of the VSPA donated to this second memorial bench.

- 8.11 SERVICE OFFICER'S REPORT** – Presented by Jerry Nelson on behalf of Jaime Lleras who was unable to attend. Jaime very kindly arranged for the presentation today by the Colorado Regional DAV Representative. He has provided extensive outreach to Patricia Throneburg in the aftermath of the death of Robert Throneburg. Jaime also assisted Dave and Kathy Pierson with his VA claim for extensive back surgery and rehabilitation that resulted in ALL cost being paid by the VA.

- 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 four applications that were reviewed by the Scholarship Committee. The applications were all outstanding, actually 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 all four applicants due to their merit.

Recipients are: Merideth Bowden, Alyssa Chi, Camden Faulkner and Kristen Shave.

Members present at the meeting donated a total of \$1,000 cash to the scholarship fund when the hat was passed among members earlier.

Motion to approve by Rich Gano; 2nd by Jim Stastny. Approved.

9. NEW BUSINESS.

- 9.1 REUNION REGISTRATIONS: by Jerry Nelson.** This year, 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. We appreciate your effort to comply. We will make certain that the Early Bird Discount is available to members who submit early registrations next year when we go to Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix.

- 9.2 INPUT REGARDING THIS REUNION:** Vice President Larry Fleming requested members of the Board report on comments that they have heard regarding the reunion.

1. All comments from VSPA members have been very positive.
2. Food in the hotel for non-reunion related meals have been very good and the staff very kind.

9.3 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS – By Jerry Nelson. Your Board of Directors has voted unanimously to award a non-voting honorary membership to our Point of Contact, MSGT NICK LEWIS for his never-ending energy and effort to assist the members of the VSPA at two different reunions: Lackland AFB and the USAF Academy.

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 Dr. Kim Bayes-Bautista presented information on Moral Injury, understanding the failures of leadership, social behavior, Acts of Omission where someone failed to do something, Acts of Commission where someone acted through training and decisions, and Acts of Transgression where someone violated the laws of war. Repair of moral injury can be achieved by working through effective leadership to promote appropriate social behavior, self-forgiveness, prayer and meditation, as well as counseling. If you have personal questions regarding moral injury, Kim is available to talk with you.

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

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 September 12 – 16, 2022). The Safeside Memorial Bench will be dedicated, to include 820th Safeside Troops lost in combat during deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq.

12.1 A reunion of the Vietnam Dog Handlers (VDHA) will be held in San Antonio, Texas April 18 - 20, 2022.

13. REMINDERS

13.1 The Awards banquet this evening will begin with a with a no-host bar at 1700, posting of the colors at 1800 with the National Anthem, followed by dinner, a special musical tribute to our members, awards and raffles. ALL BANQUET SEATING COORDINATORS FOR THE VARIOUS BASES MUST MEET WITH 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.**

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

13.3 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.

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

MINUTES BY:

APPROVED BY:

Charlie Blood, Secretary and
Steve Gattis, President Emeritus

Jerry Nelson, President



Lost and Found (Comrade and Friend)

Mike Kennedy, Life Member #35, Bien Hoa AB – 69-70



The story of a brotherhood and friendship made in Vietnam, but almost lost after coming home.

I arrived at Bien Hoa Air Base on 1 MAY 1969 to begin my tour of duty with the “Thundering Third” 3rd Security Police Squadron. Like the troops that stepped off the American Airlines flight into the heat and humidity, I’m sure I looked like a true “FNG” wondering where Charlie was at. The only person I knew when I arrived was my former assistant flight chief, SSgt Miller from George AFB in the high desert of Southern California. Interestingly, SSgt Miller was the person who broke the news to me that I had orders for Vietnam. He actually called my wife who had just come home after giving birth to our first daughter three days earlier at the George AFB Hospital while I was out running errands. When I came home, she met me at the door with our baby in her arms and tears in her eyes and said I needed to call SSgt Miller because I had orders. Unfortunately, I would never see SSgt Miller again because Bien Hoa was just a stopover for him as he boarded a flight to his next duty assignment at another base, so I effectively knew no one as I tried to settle in.

The first week of my orientation period, I bunked in the senior NCO hootch as arrangements were made for my permanent hootch assignment. I felt privileged having such great accommodations as a lowly E-4, but shortly after I moved to hootch #36, which I would call home for the next year. I ended up sharing a cubicle with Sgt Robert “Gary” Whisnant who had arrived about a month before I did. We were assigned to nights in Charlie Area (east perimeter). Like most other SPs, we started out working the bunkers, including the infamous Bunker Hill 10 (Tet ‘68).



We then started working other assignments like SAT and QRT but didn't always work together. After a couple months we settled into more permanent assignments. Gary went TDY to another base for Mortar School and returned to work Twinkle III, the Charlie Area Mortar Pit. At about the same time I trained to drive the original 3rd SPS M-113 Armored Personnel Carrier, affectionally known as "Fluffy." Fluffy, an older, gas-powered APC was later traded to an Army unit when the 3rd SPS received four new diesel-powered APCs in June 1969. I then started working fulltime as the driver/team leader for the Charlie Area QRT.

Although Gary and I seldom worked side by side for the rest of our tours, we spent most of our off-duty time (what there was of it) hanging out together. Many hours were spent listening to music on Gary's Teac or Akai reel-to-reel tape recorder, talking about life at home, semi-regular trips to the NCO club or enjoying the occasional flight parties/BBQs. These days I do veteran interviews at local high schools, and I often refer to that big tape deck as our version of an iPod when I am showing students my photo album.

Neither Gary nor I can definitively say what we were doing in this photo, our best guess today is that it had something to do with the Alabama Crimson Tide football program. Gary has been a lifelong diehard fan of Alabama even though he is from North Carolina. That now creates some interesting conversations since I favor the USC Trojans!



After completing our respective tours and we DEROS'd stateside, Gary and I lost contact with each other. I moved several times after I was discharged and during one of those moves, I lost any records I had with Gary's address. I tried several times over the years to locate Gary. In 1999/2000 I came up with about ten addresses across the country for people with the same name. I sent letters to each one, hoping that I would stumble onto my old friend. Sadly, I never received a reply to any of the letters. Today's advances in technology have made it easier these days to track someone down using the Internet, but it still wasn't that easy around the Y2K timeframe. Having failed to get a response to the letters and not finding any other leads, I pretty much gave up on my search and figured Gary and I would never reconnect with each other.

Fast forward to 2015/2016, I got up one morning and did my usual routine of feeding the dogs, turning on the local news to see what Earth shattering or mundane things had occurred since day before, and checking my email.

To my amazement as I was scanning the list of unopened messages, I was shocked to see a name that I thought of almost daily but had not read anywhere in many years. I sat there staring at my computer screen as I read the sender's name "Robert Whisnant." I could not believe what I was seeing and just stared at it for a minute. I had always remembered my friend as Gary, never actually using his first name, so I thought at first that it might just be a coincidence that someone had the same last name.

So, after a double take, I opened the email and as I read the email, I thought to myself that I had written it because Gary's message read almost exactly the same as the letters, I had mailed across the country 15 years earlier. Gary's email basically started off by saying "You may not remember me, but if you are who I think you are, we served together in Vietnam." I definitely knew who he was and had never forgotten him.

Gary's message continued by saying that he had actually found my name on the VSPA website while searching the Internet for me. He found my email address and took the chance that I was the right person. As I found out a couple years ago, there is a chance that he may have connected with another Mike Kennedy who also served in



the Air Force as a Security Policeman. Although not an active member this Mike Kennedy had contacted me to arrange to transfer his VVA membership to the Inland Empire chapter that I belong to.

Needless to say, that once Gary and I connected, we at first spent many days sending multiple emails back and forth every day, catching up on where our lives had taken us since the last time we spoke in March 1970.

I learned that Gary had never left his hometown in North Carolina, which I had totally forgotten over the years because none of the addresses I sent letters to were in North Carolina. In another funny coincidence I was talking to my wife Debbie as I was reading one of Gary’s first emails and she asked where he lived. I said he lives in Morganton, North Carolina. She told me I had to be kidding because her dad had been transferred to Morganton, NC for his job when she was a kid and they lived there for a year or so.

Once Gary and I reconnected we tried to plan a real reunion, but something would happen to prevent it. It was a long time coming (too long), but with COVID winding down and organizations rescheduling planned events like VSPA’s 2021 Colorado Springs Reunion, I decided time might be running out on opportunities for us to get together.

VVA scheduled its National Convention in Greensboro, NC just a month after the VSPA Reunion. I decided I had to make the trip to Greensboro. After making my reservations, I sent Gary a note and said I was heading his way and hoped we could find a way to get together. Gary said Greensboro is less than two hours from Morganton and he said he and his wife Linda would come to Greensboro for a couple days so we could see each other.



1970 Gary Whisnant & Mike Kennedy



2021 Mike Kennedy & Gary Whisnant

Finally, on 3 NOV 2021, almost 51 years after we last saw each other in Vietnam, Gary and I had a great reunion at the Sheraton Greensboro at Four Seasons hotel in Greensboro, NC. In between the VVA convention activities that I was committed to, my good friend and comrade Gary and I spent many hours over three days reminiscing about our shared adventures in Vietnam, retelling old war stories, and no doubt boring Linda at times even though she claimed she enjoyed it all.

I am hoping that my good friend Gary and I can get together again, I have no idea if we will ever have that opportunity again. In any case we continue to communicate regularly, and we have our great new reunion memories to go along with our Vietnam memories that will stay with us forever.

Thank You Gary for being a brother, friend, and a part of my family.



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.

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AIR FORCE



Vietnam Veteran

