

KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL



TSGT
JACKIE D.
GLENN
56TH SPS



SSGT
GERALD W.
COYLE
56TH SPS



SSGT
FALEAGAFULU
ILAOA
56TH SPS



SGT
JIMMY P.
BLACK
56TH SPS



SGT
BOBBY G.
COLLUMS
56TH SPS



SGT
THOMAS D.
DWYER
56TH SPS



SGT
BOB W.
FORD
56TH SPS



SGT
GERALD W.
FRITZ
56TH SPS



SGT
GREGORY L.
HANKAMER
56TH SPS



SGT
MICHAEL D.
LANE
56TH SPS



SGT
WILLIAM R.
MC KELVEY
56TH SPS



SGT
ROBERT W.
ROSS
56TH SPS



SGT
DARRELL L.
HAMLIN
56TH SPS



SGT
DAVID A.
HIGGS
56TH SPS



SGT
DENNIS W.
LONDON
56TH SPS



SGT
ROBERT P.
MATHIAS
56TH SPS



SGT
TOMMY R.
NEALIS
56TH SPS



AMN
EDGAR C.
MORAN II
56TH SPS



CAPT
JAMES G.
KAYS (AC)
21ST SOS



1LT
LAURENCE
FROEHLICH (CP)
21ST SOS



TSGT
MC MULLEN,
GEORGE, III (FE)
21ST SOS



SGT
ROBERT P.
WELDON (FE)
21ST SOS



SGT
PAUL J.
RABER (CC)
21ST SOS

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF OUR KNIFE-13 BROTHERS

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE EIGHTEEN SECURITY POLICEMEN FROM THE 56TH SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON AND FIVE AIRCREWMEN FROM THE 21ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON. THEY WERE ASSIGNED TO THE 56TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING AT NAKHON PHANOM ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE, THAILAND (NKP). OUR BROTHERS WERE VOLUNTEERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE VALIANT HOPE OF SAVING THE LIVES OF THE CAPTURED CREW OF THE SS MAYAGUEZ. ALL PERISHED ON MAY 13, 1975, IN THE CRASH OF THE CH-53C SEA STALLION HELICOPTER #68-10933, CALL SIGN KNIFE-13, WHILE EN ROUTE FROM NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB TO THE STAGING AREA FOR THE MAYAGUEZ RESCUE OPERATION AT U-TAPAO ROYAL THAI NAVY BASE.

WE SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER THEM!

THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT

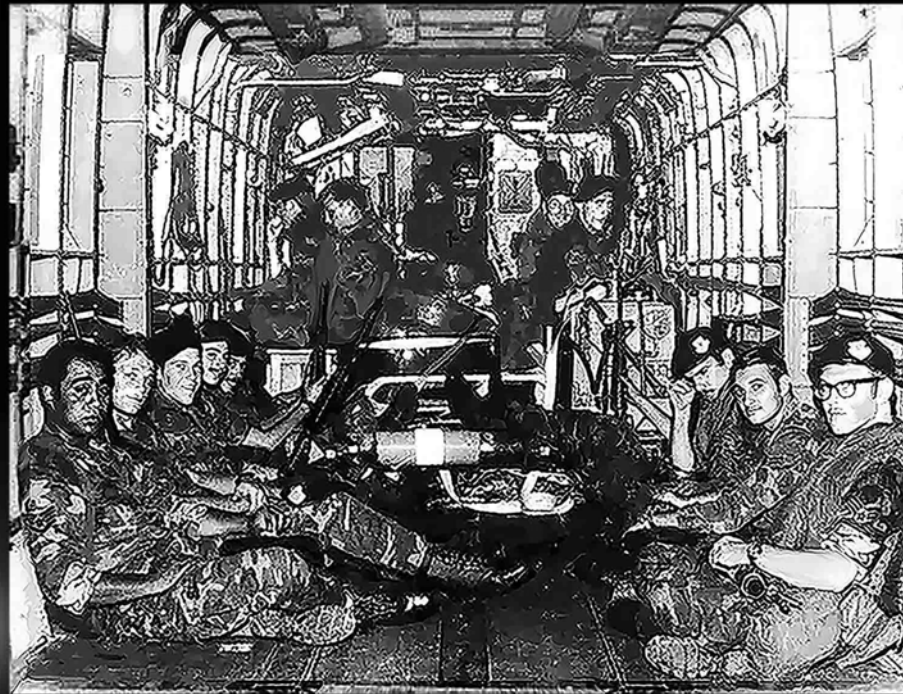
THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT SHIP SS MAYAGUEZ AND ITS CREW WERE CAPTURED ON MAY 12, 1975, BY KHMER ROUGE INSURGENTS IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS OFF OF THE COAST OF CAMBODIA. PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD ORDERED THE U.S. MILITARY TO RECOVER THE SHIP AND SAVE THE CREW. 75 SECURITY POLICEMEN FROM THE 56TH SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON AT NKP ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE, THAILAND VOLUNTEERED FOR THE MISSION ON MAY 13, 1975, BASED UPON THEIR PRIOR TRAINING FOR EMBASSY

EVACUATIONS DURING OPERATION EAGLE PULL. FOUR HELICOPTERS FROM THE 21ST SOS LIFTED OFF FROM NKP TO TRANSPORT THE SECURITY POLICEMEN TO THE STAGING AREA AT U-TAPAO. SHORTLY AFTER LIFT-OFF, KNIFE-13 FELL OUT OF THE FLYING FORMATION, CRASHING IN DENSE JUNGLE DUE TO CATASTROPHIC MECHANICAL FAILURE. ALL 23 AIRMEN ABOARD KNIFE-13 DIED DUE TO IMPACT AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE WITH EXPLODING AMMUNITION. THE SS MAYAGUEZ AND HER CREW WERE RESCUED ON MAY 15, 1975.



KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
56TH SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON, AND 21ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON, NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB, THAILAND



KNIFE-13 GOODBYES

STANDING ON THE METAL TARMAC AT U-TAPAO, PEERING AT STARS ON THAT WARM MAY NIGHT, THREE BLINKING LIGHTS APPEARED ON THE HORIZON ... HEARTBROKEN, THE FOURTH NOWHERE IN SIGHT.

LANDING IN BREATHLESS SLOW-MOTION, NOT KNOWING WHICH ONE WENT DOWN, WE WERE TOLD THAT OUR BROTHERS WERE LOST ... FOUR JOLLY GREENS, NOW ONLY THREE.

STANDING THERE, MY HEART SINKING WITH THE POUNDING ARRIVAL OF EACH WHIRRING ROTOR, READING THE NUMBERS ON THEIR SIDES AS THEY POWERED DOWN EACH PULSING JET MOTOR, I BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT MY DELTA SQUAD BROTHERS WOULD NOT DISEMBARK. MY BROTHERS NO LONGER THERE, I BEGAN A SOUL QUENCHING REALITY, A MISSING SPARK, MY YOUTHFUL SPIRIT QUICKLY LOST.

HEROES WHO VOLUNTEERED AND BROKE BREAD WITH ME, NOW THE GHOSTS OF KNIFE-13. THROUGH GOD'S INTERVENTION I HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM THEM JUST HOURS BEFORE, HANDSHAKING AND HUGGING GOODBYES, NOT REALIZING THERE WOULD NEVER BE MORE. I SHIFTED BETWEEN ANGER, DESPAIR, AND THE REALIZATION I WOULD NEVER AGAIN SEE MY BROTHERS ALIVE ... A TWENTY-YEAR OLD SERGEANT, INSTANTLY GROWING IN MATURITY TO A TEMPERED OLD THIRTY-FIVE.

THEY ARE ALWAYS IN MY THOUGHTS, NOW AND IN THE DECADES SINCE THAT WARM AND FATEFULLY CLEAR NIGHT, WHERE THREE BLINKING LIGHTS APPEARED ... HEARTBROKEN, THE FOURTH NOWHERE IN SIGHT.

SGT J.C. HAGLER, 56TH SPS, NKP 1974-1975, SOLE SURVIVOR OF DELTA SQUAD, KNIFE-13 MAY 13, 1975