

## TALKING PAPER

### KNIFE 13 MEMORIAL MONUMENTS

PREPARED BY THE VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION, INC.

- The Vietnam Security Police Association, Inc. (VSPA) has proposed to raise funds, design, and deliver long-overdue memorial monuments to honor the 18 Security Policemen and five aircrew members (all assigned to the 56<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand) who perished in the crash of United States Air Force Helicopter, Knife 13, on 13 May 1975 in Thailand. Monuments will be located at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona (home of the 56<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing and 56<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Squadron) and the Security Forces Museum at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.
- The VSPA is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt organization of military war veterans who served as United States Air Force Air Policemen, Security Policemen, and Augmentees in Vietnam and Thailand. All donations to the memorials will be tax deductible for donors.
- The VSPA will seek support from corporate America and other patriotic organizations. Fund-raising is already underway using VSPA's extensive network of retired and active-duty Security Forces Defenders, including K-9 and others, plus the Special Operations community.
- The VSPA will fund, design, contract, transport and deliver approved monuments to mutually agreed upon and prepared sites that we have already surveyed at both bases.
- The VSPA has several members with in-depth experience in successfully creating and delivering world-class, distinctive memorials honoring this Nation's Military Veterans.
  - Granite Memorial Benches at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio and Moody AFB, Georgia.
  - A series of photo-etched black granite Veteran's monuments created in the Town Square Park of Murrieta, California, in addition to a grey granite Fallen Warriors Monument, a POW/MIA Table, a 30-foot obelisk, and an Honor Garden where memorial bricks and tiles are available.
  - A Gold Star Honor Garden recently completed and dedicated September 22, 2022, in Hatboro, Pennsylvania.
- We anticipate raising the necessary funds to create the Knife-13 Monuments at Luke AFB, Arizona and Lackland AFB, Texas to recognize all who volunteered and perished when their helicopter, Knife-13, crashed while enroute to the staging area for the Mayaguez Rescue and Recovery Mission, also known as the Last Battle of the Vietnam War.
- The anticipated cost of both granite monuments has been estimated at \$100,000. The COVID pandemic, as well as labor and supply chain considerations prevent more accurate budget estimates. Once site and design concepts are agreed upon, and with approval from the Air Force Historical Research Agency, we will develop A&E renderings with more accurate cost.

Jerry R. Nelson, President  
Vietnam Security Police Association  
Personal Cell Phone: (210) 273-4777

# KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL



TSGT  
JACKIE D.  
GLENN  
56TH SPS



SSGT  
GERALD A.  
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*