

VSPA FUND RAISING FOR KNIFE-13: EIGHTEEN SECURITY POLICEMEN AND FIVE AIRCREWMEN (LOD), 13 MAY 1975 -- [Don Poss](#), Wed, May 17 2023, 16:50:49 PDT (NoHost/193.239.87.14)

The Vietnam Security Police Association, Inc. (USAF) has begun a fundraising project to fund the building of two Knife-13 Memorial Monuments. The Air Force wants both monuments to be placed at Luke AFB (home of the 56th SFS), and the SF Museum, Lackland JAFB, Texas. Land where the monuments will stand is in the review and approval stages.

Although thousands of dollars are already raised, we need your help. Viewers of VSPA's proposal for both sides of the monument are very impressed, some with tears in eyes. You may see the VSPA's Proposal designs from a link on our homepage: [VSPA.com](#). We hope you will support our fundraiser and click the "Donate" button and enter any amount.

You can help raise Memorial funds by printing the one-page whitepaper that describes VSPA's Memorial goals, designs, our experiences with previously created memorials, and estimated costs for the Knife-13's two memorials and sharing whitepaper and photo design pages with friends or veteran's groups you attend. Use the whitepaper as a Talking point, and the photos as what the proposal wants to accomplish.

Brief Background:

Purpose for a Knife-13 Memorial Monument is to remember and honor the valor and sacrifice eighteen Security Policemen of the 56th Security Police Squadron, NKP RTAFB, and five Aircrewmembers of the 21st Special Operations Squadron, who gave their lives on 13 May 1975– the greatest single loss of Security Police lives in Air Force history.

On 12 May 1975, insurgent Khmer Rouge soldiers from Cambodia, attacked and captured the SS Merchant freighter and crew (flying an American flag) in international waters. This came at the ending of the Vietnam War in which members of the 56th SPS had just participated in the Rescue Operations in Saigon. President Gerald Ford ordered US military to rescue and return to US control, the captured crew and ship. The attack became known as the Mayaguez Incident.

The Mayaguez Rescue Operation was a hastily formed joint services event, and at the time would form up at U-Tapao RNAFB. Seventy-five Security Police volunteered, and were flying in three CH-53C Sea Stallions, and one Command helicopter, from NKP to UT (An advanced SP helicopter proceeded them). En route, Knife-13 fell out of flying formation due to catastrophic mechanical rotor failure, exploding and burning in dense jungle. All 23 Airmen aboard Knife-13 perished.

Sgt. J.C. Hagler (56th SPS, NKP, 1974-1975 and sole survivor of Knife-13's Delta Squad, on 13 May 1975) was removed from helicopter Knife-13 to make room for additional ammo. Along with three other SPs making way for ammo, they flew together in an Advance SP helicopter to UT. Upon learning one of the SP helicopters crashed and all 23 aboard perished, the Advanced helicopter returned to NKP and awaited the arrival of the three SP helicopters.

Sgt. J.C. Hagler stood alone awaiting return of the three CH-53C Sea Stallion helicopters. Later, he wrote a stirring poem, KNIFE-13 Goodbyes, describing how it felt to learn all the men he served with in Knife-13 were the Airmen killed in line of duty in the crash. Sgt. J.C. Hagler's heartfelt poem, KNIFE-13 Goodbyes, is presented in full on the Memorial's side two. I encourage you to read the poem and consider VSPA's motto. Together, we can make the Knife-13 Memorial Monument happen, and literally share our motto carved in granite through the coming centuries: We Take Care of Our Own.

Don Poss