

Edwards AFB, CA

RIP

TSgt Robert B. Butler

by Garrett W. Chew
TSgt, 304th RQS/DOW
(2003)

[TSgt Butler: 95th SPS 10JAN98 Gunshot by Murder Suspect who later shot and killed himself]

95th Security Police Squadron, 10 Jan 1998 Bob Butler was my first patrol supervisor at Kadena AB in 1993. He was always straight forward and was considered to be a very serious person. This was because he had a very private family life and his on-duty conduct was always professional. He was a black belt in the martial arts and I can remember he was always the one you wanted backing you up during any situation. Many of the defense techniques I learned from him I used throughout my career. I once saw him take down 3 young scrapping Marines all by himself; it was a thing of beauty. He got me enrolled in college and even took a few classes with me to keep me going. On one of our many deployments to Korea for an exercise, he received a badly burned nose from a foxhole fire which someone threw in a used propane canister in. The flash and explosion was seen and heard clear across the base and for the remainder of the deployment he was known as Red-Nosed Bob. He kept a great sense of humor about it and I think I even saw him smile, although it may have just been a wince from the pain. On another deployment I can remember him coming to my muddy post while it was pouring rain and sleet outside and asking myself and everyone else on post to put some polish on our boots to make them black. Many people took offense to this but we later learned our jerk OIC told him to chew us a good one for not having a high shine on. Bob was simply protecting us like he always did. I remember the sadness I felt the day I heard what happened to him. It could have happened to the best of us. At the least, this should reinforce those basic rules of officer safety we learned at the academy. It is a shame it was Bob's last lesson for us.

Bob, you are missed. Your quiet strength and devotion to your country, your family, and your fellow airmen will never be forgotten.

Sleep well my friend,

GW Chew

Bolling cop honors fallen colleague with 'final ride'

When asked why he wanted to participate in the 18th annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Day Services held during Police Week, May 9 - 15, Tech. Sgt Daniel Melvin of Bolling's Security Forces, thinks it was just fate.

In April, Sgt Alex Wynnck, U.S. Park Police, had asked Melvin if he knew anyone who might want to participate in the services. At the time he asked, Wynnck did not know that Melvin had for months been searching for a way to honor a fallen comrade-in-arms with whom he had served at Kadena AB in Japan. Melvin decided he would perform the final ride for his close friend, Tech. Sgt Robert B. Butler.

Butler, a flight chief, was assigned to the 95th Security Forces Squadron at Edwards AFB, Calif., when he performed the ultimate sacrifice for his country when he was killed conducting a traffic-stop on Jan. 10, 1998. Just this year, Butler's name was added to the list of America's fallen police officers whose names are inscribed on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Wall. The memorial is located at Judiciary Square in Washington, D.C.

Melvin said the main purpose of his ride was to "... honor Butler by letting everyone know that military police officers ARE police officers. We put our lives on the line to serve and protect each duty day."

The sober procession through the streets of our nation's capital in honor of all fallen law enforcement officers took place May 15. In his Air Force SF uniform with riding boots and spurs, smartly seated on a white horse, Melvin, joined other mounted police officers and gave "final ride" honors to his fallen friend, Butler. Melvin's Police Week ride culminated with a visit to the memorial to see the inscription of his friend's name on the wall.

For this special occasion, Melvin had to learn an equally special way to ride horseback. Melvin said he received a lot of help, training and guidance from the U.S. Army Caisson Platoon, Third U.S. Infantry, nicknamed the "Old Guard" at Fort Myer, Va. The Caisson Platoon is the last official equine mounted ceremonial unit in the Department of Defense. For almost fifty years, the magnificent discipline of trained horse and rider has embodied the sacred duty of full honor funerals. Melvin cited platoon leader, Chief Warrant Officer Charles J. Sowles, Jr., in particular for his outstanding coordination efforts.

"Without hesitation," said Melvin, "Chief Sowles made the necessary arrangements to make it happen and provided me with individualized instruction on the proper way to seat a horse and to make sure I would be able to 'Ride with Pride' as they say over at the Old Guard."

Melvin related he learned a great deal in a very short period of time about the history and tradition of the Caisson Platoon and about the long hours (sometimes 16 hour days) the unit works to practice and perform funeral ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery. Melvin stated that he had come to the right place for help and will forever hold the soldiers and leaders of the 3d U.S. Infantry Caisson Platoon a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid.

(Courtesy of 11th Wing Public Affairs)

AFSFA Memorial Statue:

The Air/Security Police/Forces career field has evolved greatly since its birth with the formation of the Office of The Air Provost Marshal in 1942, Military Police assigned to Air Force units saw action in all major conflicts of World War II. Since the end of that conflict APS/SPS, and today's Security Forces have continued to be the guardians, defenders and law enforcement authority of the United States Air Force. The men and women serve in a variety of roles, as policemen, combat Air Base defenders, dog handlers, and combat arms technicians. They serve in the active force, reserves and air guard units wherever Air Force personnel and equipment are stationed or deployed.

The demands of these roles in peace and war have exacted a high price for the protection these men and women have provided. Air Force Security Forces face the same criminal elements that are common to our society, TSgt Robert Butler was shot in the face and killed during a traffic stop at Edwards Air Force Base in California--just another in a long line of security police who have given their lives in the line of duty. A retired security policeman, CMSgt Chesnut, gave his life when a madman shot his way into the U. S. Capitol in 1998.

We Take Care of Our Own