

[WELCOME HOME SGT BRUCE DALE JONES](#)

by, Don Poss, VSPA Communications Director/Webmaster



Framed Photo, signed by VSPA members, presented to James Windham

An Open Letter to Evergreen and Conecuh County Alabama:

Thank you Evergreen and Conecuh County for helping the Vietnam Security Police Association, Inc. (VSPA), *welcome home* our brother and your son, Sgt. Bruce Dale Jones. In the Vietnam War, men wounded or killed were often flown away leaving comrades with unanswered questions, and it is likely they might never learn if he had lived or died. Veterans ending enlistments returned home and tried hard to forget Vietnam, but many felt one last duty remained and planned their trip home to include the grave of their fallen friend, for last respects. In a way, that is what VSPA wanted to do for Sgt. Jones.



VSPA member Ed Daubert had asked about a *Sgt Jones*, but wasn't sure if his first name was "Bruce." Forty years had passed since Sgt Jones' death and Ed had mistaken a similar name on VSPA's casualty list as the casualty he knew of.

I began a web [search for Alabama's Sgt. Jones](#) and found a *Bruce Dale Jones* listed as buried near Evergreen, at Rabb Cemetery, which was in the middle of a forest and fronting on an unnamed dirt road (satellite photo, left). The search widened to include Alabama veterans' monuments.

A week earlier, a new veterans' monument was dedicated in Evergreen. That online

Dispatches from the LP-OP

Manning the BCR Listening Post-Observation Post since March 2010.

Thursday, May 31, 2012

New military monument includes list of county's war dead

Monday was Memorial Day, that is, the day that our country has set aside for citizens to pause and remember U.S. service members who died during military service.

All of us enjoy, and often take for granted, the freedoms that have been secured for us by members of the military, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalves to protect our way of life.



dedication story and photo had the name "*Sgt Bruce Dale Jones*" and his correct date of casualty—we had found *Sgt Bruce Dale Jones*!

I contacted James Windham whose help became instrumental in arranging a memorial visit to Sgt. Jones' grave. My brother Larry and I decided to drive the 109 miles from VSPA's reunion hotel in Florida, to Rabb Cemetery. VSPA's president suggested we email our members and see if any could attend the memorial with us as many were already signed up for other reunion events. A bus was quickly chartered for Sgt Jones' memorial.

On October 5, 2012, VSPA's convoy of a bus, three cars, and motorcycles approached the turn off to Rabb Cemetery. A sheriff's patrol car turned on its blue-lights and we followed his

escort lead slowly down a dirt road.



I could see people standing within a gauntlet of parked cars, pickup trucks and assorted vehicles along the narrow country road. VSPA climbed off the bus 57 strong, walked a hundred yards pass cars and a school bus toward the cemetery gate.

We all knew Sgt Jones' grave had waited four decades for us. Folks gathered inside the cemetery fence seemed focused on the gate funneling in new arrivals; not staring, but more like searching out friends they had only heard about -- Evergreen had turned out big for the memorial.

We all knew Sgt Jones' grave had waited four



JROTC stood at attention resplendent in colorful red uniforms and white "cowboy" hats



with turned up side rims and flags wafting lazily in a light breeze. The Patriot Guard formed a line of honor with unfurled flags flying and guiding us to where Sgt Jones lay at rest. I paused at the gate searching for his gravestone, at last--*there it was*. I entered the cemetery nodding to friendly faces. I knew I was standing on hallowed ground, bordered by a tall standing forest like vigilant sentinels that had

weathered many a storm since the early 1800's.



Silence awaited our gathering members. Something *special* was happening as all came together with a single purpose. Standing near the podium, I shook James Windham's hand for the first time and stole a glance at Sgt Jones' weathered gravestone which seemed to have held up well through the years.



After brief introductions we began. Newell Swartz, VSPA's past president, gave a heartfelt speech listing reasons veterans would travel across the nation to a small Alabama country cemetery to honor a young veteran who died four decades ago, and quoted: "*... for as long as a man is remembered, he is not truly gone.*"



Mayor Wolff read a fitting proclamation, as retired Navy Chief James Windham and Rev. Jackson look on, stating that October 5th will be Sgt Bruce Dale Jones day now and for perpetuity. School Principal Ms. Lyons then spoke of student Jones' long held desire to join the Air Force.



Sgt Jones' Aunt Angela McGee spoke of her remembrances and new joy that a memorial was being held for him. Then a tribute poem, [*And Now We Say Goodbye*](#), was read by Pete Piazza.



The moment came when thirteen SPs who served at Tan Son Nhut AB were called for the wreath laying ceremony, and followed those who served with Sgt. Jones. Jim Willis, Dir. Veteran's Affairs State of Oregon, carried the floral wreath for Ed Daubert. Ribbons were inscribed: "VSPA Remembers Sgt Bruce Dale Jones, Welcome Home." VSPA members, citizens, and

dignitaries followed the procession.



VSPA's wreath was placed by Ed Daubert, as each of us stood with private thoughts of lost friends and times past. Aunt Angela McGee stood near Ed as all quietly listened to the moment of requested silence and prayer.



Member Howard Yates in full Scottish military dress played *Amazing Grace* on the bagpipes, creating feelings that tugged every heart and set free glistening tears.

Yes, Sgt. Bruce Dale Jones, you are remembered by those whom you served with, and your fellow

countrymen; your soul commended to the Lord; and I tell you plainly and from the heart: Though 40 years have passed your sacrifice will always be remembered.



BRUCE DALE JONES

SGT - E4 - Air Force - Regular

Casualty was on Mar 9, 1972

In GIA DINH, SOUTH VIETNAM

TAN SON NHUT AIRBASE, 377th SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON

Non-Hostile, died of illness/injury,

GROUND CASUALTY

Accidental Self-Destruction

Body was recovered

Panel 02W - Line 114