



GUARDMOUNT

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

"We Take Care of Our Own"



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Vietnam memorial statue of 3 soldiers restored

BY BRETT ZONGKER, ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER
THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2010 AT 8:28 A.M

WASHINGTON — A statue of three soldiers installed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial after critics thought the V shaped memorial wall was too abstract has been restored to its original finish in a six-week project completed Thursday.

A private foundation that built the memorial raised about \$125,000 to restore the bronze "Three Servicemen" statue of three soldiers for the first time. After 25 years, weather and the hands of millions of visitors wore down the patina finish on the soldiers' faces, arms, hands and guns, turning those areas a greenish-blue color.



The Three Servicemen statue, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, which was unveiled after it underwent six weeks of restoration work, is seen, Thursday, July 8, 2010. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

Retired Marine Master Sgt. Fred Burns, a Vietnam veteran who lives in Laurel, Md., visited the sculpture Thursday as he does at least twice each year. It brings back memories, he said, recalling the towel draped around one soldier's neck to wipe away sweat. "This is more realistic" than the previous worn finish, said Burns, who works for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "We carried a little bit more gear than that, though - a lot more gear."

The statue was completed in 1984. It faces more than 58,000 names etched in the wall representing those who died. Retired Army Brig. Gen. George Price, who served in Korea and Vietnam, said the memorial keeps alive memories of one of the United States' greatest challenges. "We are a nation that loves heroes and hates wars," he said. "When you look at this monument ... recognize the era it represents and understand it could have gone either way."

Baltimore-based New Arts Foundry restored the statue with two artists who worked with the original sculptor, Frederick Hart. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is creating a maintenance program to preserve the statue's new finish, said Jan C. Scruggs, the foundation's founder and president. The project is part of an effort begun last year to help the National Park Service maintain the memorial grounds. Foundation officials said they were moved to act after reading an Associated Press investigative story on the lack of federal money for the National Mall, despite needed repairs. The park service contributed a \$25,000 grant for the statue's restoration. The foundation has raised more than \$230,000 to care for more than 13 acres of the mall, including landscaping and repairs to an irrigation system for the lawn.



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Vietnam Security Police Association
16th Anniversary Reunion
San Antonio, Texas – October 6-10, 2010
Lackland AFB and Camp Bullis

The reunion will be held at the **Holiday Inn Riverwalk**. Room Rates are \$125 a night, plus tax, and **include breakfast for two each morning**. The rate is good for three days before and three days after the reunion. Transportation from the airport is approximately \$25 in a Taxi. Parking at the hotel is reduced to \$8. When you check-in at the VSPA Registration Area in the hotel, you will receive a welcome package with reunion security identification, a commemorative reunion pin, a detailed itinerary, a list of attendees and local information. The following itinerary and meals have been arranged for you and are included with your basic registration fee of \$138:

- ~ *Reception dinner buffet with beer and wine, Wednesday Evening, October 6th*
- ~ *Optional Base Tour with lunch at the Gateway Club (see below for details,) Thursday, October 7th*
Or, *Optional City Tour and Mexican Marketplace Shopping (see below for details), Thursday, October 7th*
- ~ *Morning tour and lunch with SF troops at Lackland Air Force Base, Friday, October 8th*
 - ~ *Afternoon tour at Camp Bullis, Friday, October 8th*
 - ~ *VSPA Business Meeting, Saturday Morning, October 9th*
- ~ *VSPA Sisterhood Gathering of wives and companions Saturday Morning*
 - ~ *SAFESIDE Business Meeting Saturday Afternoon October 9th*
 - ~ *Banquet Dinner with Guest Speaker, Saturday Evening, October 9th*
 - ~ *Memorial Service, Sunday Morning, October 10th*
 - ~ *Commemorative 16th Anniversary Reunion QC Pin*
- ~ *Hospitality Room stocked with snacks & beverages ~ All associated taxes and gratuities*

HOTEL RESERVATIONS: Call the Holiday Inn Riverwalk at 210-224-2500 no later than **September 5** to make your hotel reservations.

OPTIONAL Tour of Lackland AFB with lunch at the Lackland Gateway Club on Thursday: The fee is \$39 in addition to your registration fee and includes bus transportation, the Security Police Museum, K-9 Demonstrations, Clothing Sales, the BX and lunch at the Lackland AFB Gateway Officer's Club. This tour has been arranged separately so that you can choose between the tours on Thursday. **0815 to 1530 hours.**

OPTIONAL City Tour and Shopping in the Mexican Marketplace on Thursday: The fee is \$22 and includes bus transportation. You will begin with a guided tour of the city of San Antonio where you will discover how the city captures the spirit of Texas. Now the eighth largest city in the United States, San Antonio has retained its sense of history and tradition, while carefully blending in cosmopolitan progress. Afterwards you will proceed to Market Square, which from early morning until late at night, is alive with activity. "El Mercado" has 32 shops and is patterned after an authentic Mexican market. There are an additional 80 specialty shops in Farmers Market Plaza! **0900 to 1500 hours.**

PLEASE USE THE REGISTRATION FORM TO REGISTER FOR OUR REUNION.

**If you have questions, please call VSPA Life Member Dennis Evans toll-free at
1-866-672-6533 or send Email to DennisEEvans@aol.com**

Contact: The Reunion Brat
Phone: (360) 663-2521
Email: Info@TheReunionBRAT.com



**VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION
REUNION REGISTRATION FORM
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
OCTOBER 6 – 10, 2010**



NAME _____

RVN or THAI BASE _____ SQUADRON _____ YEARS 19__ to 19__

(Do not list bases outside of Vietnam or Thailand)

RVN or THAI BASE _____ SQUADRON _____ YEARS 19__ to 19__

HOME ADDRESS _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

NAME(s) of YOUR GUEST(s) _____

BANQUET MEAL SELECTION: BEEF _____ CHICKEN _____ VEGETARIAN _____

PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS:

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY: _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST REUNION? YES: _____ NO: _____

REGISTRATION FEES

ARE YOUR ANNUAL DUES CURRENT? RENEWALS ONLY FOR \$ 15 = \$ _____

(Not for new members. To join the VSPA, please see the attached membership information).

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING REUNION # _____ x \$138 = \$ _____

OPTIONAL TOUR (Thurs): Lackland AFB with lunch # _____ x \$ 39 = \$ _____

OPTIONAL City Tour and Marketplace Shopping (Thurs) # _____ x \$ 22 = \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED = \$ _____

PAYMENT IS DUE NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 5, 2010

PLEASE SEND PAYMENTS TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS AND MADE PAYABLE TO:

THE REUNION *BRAT*

50721 State Hwy 410 E

Greenwater, WA 98022

(360) 663-2521

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED LACKLAND AFB SECURITY FORM

A Confirmation of Registration and an Itinerary will be mailed to you by September 15, 2010. A \$20 per person cancellation fee will apply to all cancellations received within 30 days of the event. Cancellations received within 10 days of the event will be non-refundable. Call the Holiday Inn Riverwalk at 210-224-2500 no later than September 5, 2010 to make your hotel reservations. Be sure to mention that you are with the Vietnam Security Police Association Reunion to receive your group rate of \$125 a night, plus tax which includes breakfast. These prices are available 3 days before and after the reunion should you choose to extend your stay. Parking is \$8.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE REGISTRATION FORM

1. The information that you provide on this form is critical for a successful reunion. All name and base information will be placed on your reunion identification badge. Guests will also receive reunion identification. The reunion ID will serve as your identification throughout the reunion and must be worn, especially while we are in all military or government facilities.

2. **PLEASE PRINT** or type all information **clearly**. Do not use abbreviations on any portion of the registration form. Your cooperation will make the processing of reunion identification badges and all security rosters a much more accurate process.

3. **RVN OR THAI BASE INFORMATION:** Please list only those bases where you served in Vietnam or Thailand. When listing bases, **do not abbreviate**. When listing squadrons, please indicate Air Police, Security Police, or specific detachments. The information will be used on your reunion ID.

4. **HOME ADDRESS and MAILING ADDRESS:** We will mail your reunion confirmation to the mailing address listed on this form.

5. **LACKLAND AFB SECURITY FORM:** Please complete the attached Lackland AFB Security Form. This information is essential for access to the air force base due to the enhanced security requirements. **YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED ON BASE IF YOU DO NOT COMPLETE THIS FORM.**

6. **TELEPHONE AND EMAIL ADDRESS:** Your contact information is vital to a successful reunion. The information will be part of our security roster that we must provide to the local Security Forces Squadron. You will also receive a copy of this roster upon arrival at the hotel.

7. **NAMES OF YOUR GUESTS:** Please provide the first name, middle initial and last name of your guest(s) on the Registration Form as well as the Lackland AFB Security Form.

8. **RENEWAL OF ANNUAL DUES:** This item is a reminder for VSPA members only so that they can renew their dues at the time of registration if they are not current. VSPA membership must be current in order to attend the reunion or bring a guest.

9. **VSPA MEMBERSHIP:** If you are not a member of the Vietnam Security Police Association, please do not send \$15 with this registration form. The VSPA uses a three-step membership application process for approving membership. To be eligible for membership, you must complete the following three steps: 1. Submit a completed application. 2. Document your service in the United States Air Force as an Air Policeman, Security Policeman or an Augmentee in Vietnam or Thailand during the years 1958 to 1975, and a discharge under honorable conditions. Your documentation of service must be a DD Form 214. Additional documents may in some cases be necessary. If you do not have a DD Form 214, you may submit alternate substantial proof of service for consideration until you are able to obtain your DD Form 214. Please remove your Social Security Form 214. The DD Form 214 is required for two reasons: 1. To prevent stolen valor. 2. Because we are a tax exempt, incorporated organization of war veterans as defined by the IRS in Section 501(c)(19).

10. **REUNION COST:** The basic registration fee of \$138 is the cost per person plus any tours. If you bring a guest, their registration fee is also \$138 and will cover transportation, several meals and our Hospitality Room.



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND

SUBJECT: Request for Visitor Access:

1. Request a Visitor Access Pass for the following individual(s) for entry to the installation: The Vietnam Security Police Association will be visiting Security Forces facilities and Military Working Dog (MWD) training areas from October 6 – 10, 2010.

Please follow the example below:

Last Name, First Name Telephone # State/Driver License# DOB mm/dd/yy

Doe, John D (210) XXX-XXXX TX./00000000 01/15/65

Last Name, First Name Telephone # State/Driver License# DOB mm/dd/yy

Last Name, First Name Telephone # State/Driver License# DOB mm/dd/yy

Last Name, First Name Telephone # State/Driver License# DOB mm/dd/yy

Last Name, First Name Telephone # State/Driver License# DOB mm/dd/yy

2. I will inform my visitors that they must have current proof of insurance, proof of registration and a current/valid driver's license. Additionally, they were briefed that while on this installation all personnel and the property under their control is subject to search.

3. I understand that failure to provide any of the information requested may result in denial of installation access pass. Disclosure of information is voluntary, however; this information is necessary for validation of identity and may result in a non-issuance determination by the issuing authority.

Poet's Corner

Featured poet:
Jack "the old cowboy" Smith



The FINAL TAPS

With pride our country was founded
But when the final Taps is sounded
And the last Vietnam Veteran is laid to rest
Our generation will have lost its best.

Vietnam Veterans are like no others
Not coming home to songs and banners
No one knowing just who we are
Trying to forget the war that was ours.

Still living those endless nights
Praying to survive 'til morning's light
The past we lived that is ever present
From our thoughts is never absent.

Though we are safe now many years home
It comes seeping into our minds when we are alone
Seeking to pull us back to times better left in the dark
Attacking, slicing, biting like some fearsome shark.

But when the final Taps is sounded
And that last Vietnam Veteran is counted
We can all join together in God's formation
All of us whole again, never to be broken.

Jack Smith, 377th SPS 68-69 LM 453

Edwin J. Smith
The old Cowboy Poet
June 9, 2010



Elections Message from Hector Ramos VP-VSPA



Dear brothers and friends of the VSPA,

As you know, this October will bring another opportunity for the election of officers. After long thought and consideration, I have decided to not seek a fourth term for the position of 1st Vice President of the VSPA. Going forward, I feel that I would not be able to fulfill that role and remain true to the responsibility of the position. As Vice President in my three terms amounting to six years, I have had the opportunity to serve and participate in the growth of what has become a unique & premier veterans organization that, through teamwork, has realized what few organizations are able to do with monthly meetings. With the VSPA web site & Bulletin Board serving as the glue that binds us, the four day reunions in different parts of the country coupled with the Security Forces we visit, the reconnection with hooch mates and the new friendships struck up at each venue, cements the affinity we all crave and want to preserve along with our legacy. So, it is with honor and pride that I step away and rejoin the members and associates in our continuing bond of friendship & brotherhood. I would like to thank all of you that have encouraged and supported me, contributed to committees, funds, membership, the web site, Newsletter, BX, Bulletin Board and, of course, your votes which allowed me to proudly serve the VSPA. Lastly, please accept my apology for such short notice. I hope to see you all again in San Antonio in October.



In brotherhood and friendship,

Hector Ramos

VP—Vietnam Security Police Association

2010 ELECTION OF VSPA OFFICERS



VSPA members who attended our 2007 reunion in Washington D.C. voted to modify our by-laws and the election process so that the election would no longer be conducted only at the reunion business meeting. A committee was appointed to determine whether electronic voting could take place via our web site and to develop a process. The committee included Don Poss, Newell Swartz, Sam Lewis and Don Hamilton.

Don Poss thoroughly investigated electronic voting via the Internet and found that it could not be done in an efficient, cost effective manner. He looked at the process as both our Web Master and as a VSPA member who fully supported the idea of voting on-line. Other organizations that had attempted the process had numerous problems that far exceeded our ability to resolve, including multiple votes from different computers and the inability to accurately identify voters who emailed ballots. We simply do not have the manpower to search our records to verify current membership based upon multiple email addresses (like pullmyfinger@email.com) that have changed without notice to the VSPA, which is something we experience on a daily basis. Multiple votes on-line are a reality, not because people are dishonest, but because computers can be very confusing for some people who might worry that their ballot has not been received and they send it again, or they send it from another computer which could make them appear to be a different person. The only other alternative is to have a mail-in ballot that you can print from our web site, or receive in the mail and return.

For those members who are reading this on-line, you must be a current member in order to vote and read the bios of those who have declared their intention to run for office. Therefore, the bios, photos and the ballot form have been posted in the Restricted Area of our web site. To vote, you must print the ballot and mail it to VSPA Past President Steve Gattis WITH A POSTMARK NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 20, 2010. He will verify your membership status and make certain that only one vote is submitted. All votes will be counted and verified by an election committee at the reunion.

There are SIX positions up for election this year: President, Vice President, 2ND Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Historian. All other positions in the VSPA are staff positions appointed by the president and board based upon their expertise and willingness to serve the members of the VSPA. Elected officers will be confirmed and installed at our reunion in San Antonio in October. The term of office is two years. The positions DO NOT receive a salary and work on a volunteer basis.

The following VSPA members have declared their intention to run for an elected VSPA position. Each person listed below has been a member in good standing for at least TWO YEARS. They are all Life Members. They have the ability to attend future business meetings that are held at our annual reunions. They communicate via the Internet on a regular basis and have made the commitment to provide the time necessary to serve in the respective positions that they seek.



PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR BIOS

**FOR PRESIDENT: Phil Carroll, Life Member #336,
Takhli K-9 and Nakhon Phanom K-9 70-71:**



Brothers of the VSPA,

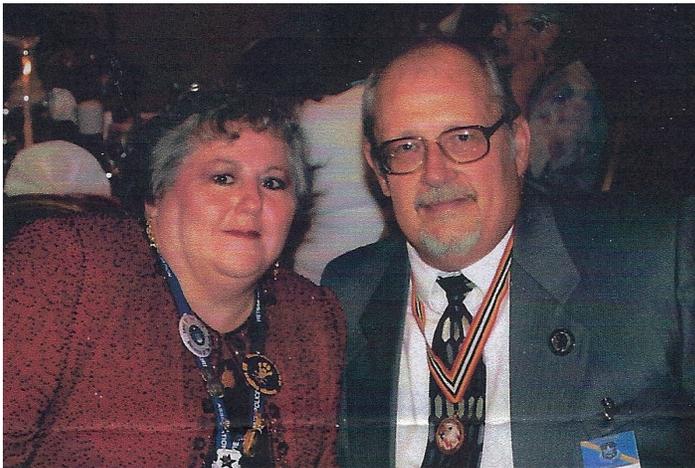
I'm very pleased to run for the office of President of the Vietnam Security Police Association. I joined VSPA in 2004, and have served as your membership chair since 2006. I've been blessed for almost four years to be able to communicate with every one of you who has joined, paid dues, become a Life Member, or just asked a question. It's been an amazingly rewarding time in my life because of you.

I believe that Newell and all the VSPA presidents and Board members before him have done an outstanding job of building a supportive, civil and nurturing environment for those of us who share the bond of having served as Air Police, Security Police and Augmentees in Vietnam and Thailand during the Vietnam War. I'm excited to have the opportunity to help VSPA continue along that same path.

I don't want to change VSPA; I want to keep growing it by making the same kinds of constant improvements others have made for the last 16 years. My highest priorities are to keep improving services to members, communicate more with the entire membership, encourage our members to get together whenever possible and add to our contacts with active-duty Security Forces troops. Nobody else in this world shares our pains and our pride, or our memories and our wounds like we do with each other. The greatest value of the VSPA is in bringing and keeping us together with each other and our heritage, and I want to nourish that.

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1948. We moved around the country wherever my Dad's job as an FBI agent sent us. I enlisted in the Air Force in 1968, trained at Lackland, and then served as a Sentry Dog Handler at Kincheloe AFB Michigan (SAC), and Takhli RTAFB and Nakhon Phanom RTAFB in Thailand. I cross-trained as a Still Photo Lab Specialist when I returned from overseas, and served out my last year at Bergstrom AFB, Texas, with a TAC recon wing. After discharge and a few years of wildly assorted jobs, my photography skills got me an entry-level position at a newspaper, and then a few years later the GI Bill helped me get a Bachelor of Science degree in Technical Journalism when I was 33. Since then I've worked 30 years for Uncle Sam as a civilian public affairs officer. I retired this past January 1, and am blessed to now have more time to devote to serving the Brotherhood of the VSPA. I'm also a member of Vietnam Veterans of America, the Air Force Sergeants Association, the American Legion and the Vietnam Dog Handlers Association. I volunteer for the Old Dawgs & Pups program with Bill Cummings, sending equipment, supplies, goodies and moral support to the active-duty K-9 handlers in today's war zones. I love to hunt and fish, and my wonderful wife Patti and I enjoy hiking, camping and nature photography in our spare time.

FOR VICE PRESIDENT: Greg Cain, Life Member #62, Binh Thuy 67-68:



I would be honored to be considered for the Vice President position in the forthcoming election at our reunion in San Antonio, Texas. I will support the new President and perform his duties when he is unable, taking leadership roles as required and continuing to grow our organization.

I have been involved in the VSPA since 2002 and have attended every reunion since then with my wife Sheila Gervase-Cain (President of the Sisterhood). I was awarded the Warriors Medal of Valor in 2007 and the Monk Pope Brotherhood Award in 2008.

I entered the Air Force in August 1965. My first duty station was Niagara Falls, New York and went TDY to Selfridge, Wurtsmith and Alpena (in Michigan) before being assigned to Binh Thuy RVN for the period of May 67 to May 68 (TET Offensive). I have been retired since 2005 and was awarded 100% disability service connected.

I became involved in veterans affairs in 1980 and am a charter member of VVA Chapter 77 (550 members, one of the five largest VVA chapters). I was their second President and have continued to serve in other offices and on the Board of Directors. I have also been a delegate to the VVA state council and national conventions for over 25 years. I have participated in and fought the system of the VA and watched it grow from shabby treatment of Vietnam Veterans in the 80's to the point now where we are highly respected and treated with dignity.

I have the dedication, knowledge and experience to serve you well.

Welcome Home! Greg Cain GJCain@roadrunner.com

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN

FOR VICE PRESIDENT: Howard Yates, Life Member #644, Bien Hoa 67-68:

Gentlemen,



I am announcing my candidacy for the office of Vice President with the Vietnam Security Police Association.

I became a member of the VSPA in October of 2006 and as of this year I am a Life Member.

I served one tour in Vietnam at Bien Hoa Air Base, from July 1967 to July 1968. I was an aircraft ground crew member and later a crew chief with the 12th Air Commando Squadron.

Shortly after my arrival, I volunteered to be an Augmentee with the 3rd Security Police Squadron and was on the perimeter with them during the 68 Tet Offensive. It was on January 31, 1968 that I had the honor of seeing first hand the kind of mettle our Air Force Security Police were made of. They were the most

selfless and courageous warriors that I have ever met. I was proud to be counted as a brother then, and I am equally honored to be counted as one now, through my membership with the VSPA.

My experience as an Augmentee with the 3rd Security Police Squadron, helped to affirm my desire to pursue a civilian law enforcement career, which I began shortly after my separation from the United States Air Force. I served with the Orlando Florida Police Department from 1971 to 2002.

During my tenure with the Orlando Police Department I helped to form and, eventually became president of, The Orlando Regional Police and Fire Pipes and Drums. A Bagpipe unit made up of mostly police officers and fire fighters. We performed in parades and played for other festivities. We also carried on the time honored tradition of piping for fallen officers and fire fighters. Although I am retired, I am still called upon to pipe for funerals and memorial services; some of which are for our fallen military heroes.

Along with playing the highland bagpipes, my other interests are: writing poetry with an emphasis on my Vietnam experience (for which I was recognized by the VSPA) and patriotism, assisting with our local Boy Scout Troop (where both of my sons obtained their Eagle rank), attending church, taking care of “Honey-dos” and keeping in touch with my sons.

My wife, Ellen and I raised two sons who are both serving in the military. Our oldest, Kyle, is in the Air Force Security Forces and our youngest, Ian will be graduating from the Army Military Police School in September.

My brothers, I am ready to lend what ever talents God has given me to serve this great and worthwhile brotherhood. I am ready to help preserve its legacy for the benefit of future generations, especially those who serve in the United States Air Force Security Forces.

Welcome Home

Howard G. Yates

howardgyates@gmail.com

FOR 2nd VICE PRESIDENT: Bill Marshall, Life Member #85, Phu Cat 68-69:



I was born and raised in rural Van Wert County, Ohio where I worked on the family farm. I attended Ft. Wayne International Business College for one year prior to entering the United States Air Force in 1965.

My assignments were primarily in SAC as an Air Policeman/Security Policeman with my first assignment at Grand Forks AFB. I was assigned to “missile facility top-side security.” I learned to endure harsh winters and hot summers. I lived inside a camper vehicle, eating T.V. dinners and providing security for Minuteman Missile silos near the farmlands of North Dakota. I was fortunate enough to be selected for a position with the SAC Elite Guard in 1967 to provide internal security for the headquarters

building at Offutt AFB, Nebraska. The assignment included a specially designed uniform with a blue beret. I worked at entry control points within a building with 23 assigned Generals plus one Admiral, thousands of Colonels, Lieutenants, Captains and Majors. Additional responsibilities included: honors and ceremonies, funeral details and standboards for visiting dignitaries. This assignment was the best duty I could ask for.

I would have liked to have remained in the SAC Elite Guard, but the Vietnam build-up in 1968 created a large demand for Security Policemen. I was assigned to Phu Cat Air Base and am very proud that I was able to serve my country. My greatest pleasure was serving with other airmen who, in the spirit of duty and brotherhood, protected their base as well as each other.

I was discharged in 1969. I worked for the Hanes Knitwear Corporation for 25 years; first as a sales representative, then as a sales manager where I was responsible for 25 sales representatives covering six western states. I took early retirement in 1966 and started my own executive recruitment company which I still run today. I am now easing into semi-retirement where I would like to give back to organizations like the VSPA which have been instrumental in bringing closure to my Vietnam experience while allowing me to initiate many new friendships throughout the USA. Because of this, I ask that I be considered for the position of **VSPA 2nd Vice President**.

I believe very strongly in the VSPA and its motto “**We Take Care of Our Own.**” I have been a member since 2001 and have repeatedly seen this expressed in acts and deeds for a fellow brother. While we are all different, we share a brotherhood that can only be understood by those who have stood in harms way and who have risked their lives to protect their base and brothers. This bond, forged by a war 40 years ago, cannot be broken and will continue to the last man standing.

During the past ten years I have chosen to become a life member of VSPA. For the past five years I volunteered to monitor the web site bulletin board and have attended as many of the reunions as circumstances permitted. One of the most special moments of my life was to march with 400 VSPA brothers at the 25th celebration of “The Wall” in Washington D.C., paying tribute to those who served and to those who paid the ultimate price.

Additionally, this past eight years, I created a web site that paid tribute to all the men who served on the SAC Elite Guard. From this initiative grew the SAC Elite Guard Association (SEGA) 501(c)(19), which now numbers over 700 former members and over 100 past members who have turned in their shield for the final time. I served as the first President of SEGA and presided over its incorporation during the first four years, acted as its webmaster the past two years and was re-elected in May as the current SEGA President. I believe the experiences I have gained with the SEGA organization would be beneficial in assisting the President and Vice President of the VSPA organization in the execution of their official duties.

It would be my honor to be selected as the 2nd Vice President of the VSPA.

Welcome home!

Bill Marshall

billmarshallsaceliteguard@gmail.com

FOR SECRETARY: Dennis Evans, Life Member #531, Binh Thuy:



I have been a member of the VSPA for 2 ½ years. I served at Binh Thuy AB, Vietnam in both Security and Law Enforcement; (although most who served in Law Enforcement at this little base, 1 mile long by 5 blocks wide) would say you served in Security the whole tour.

I served tours in the United States in ADC at Kingsley Field, Oregon and Siskiyou County Airport, Montague, California in Security. Upon my return from my tour in Vietnam, I was assigned to SAC at Beale Air Force Base in California, working in Security, Law Enforcement, Pass & ID and finally in Investigations where I became the NCOIC. At the end of my second enlistment, I chose to leave the Air Force, receiving my second Honorable Discharge and became a Deputy Sheriff for Sacramento County and retired on disability from that department. I then went into private business enterprises and am to a point of semi-retirement.

In my private life, I have served on prior Boards of Directors in the following position: 1 year as Secretary, 2 years as Treasurer; 4 years as Vice-President and 7 years as President

While performing all of the above, I found time to assist in the raising of my four children, three sons and one daughter, and as of this writing a proud grandfather of eight grandchildren.

I was unaware of this GREAT Association up until approximately 2-1/2 years ago, when I received an email from member Steve Hall who was also at Binh Thuy. Throughout my life, I had pretty much withheld the fact that I served in Vietnam. I had never received a Welcome Home, until I received mine from Steve. As I read his email and follow-up emails as well as viewing the VSPA site, I literally was overcome by chills, thinking there are others just like me and they have had the privilege of being together for some thirteen years, being brothers and understanding what we all went through. It was like a wake-up call and I took it and am proud to say within two days of the initial email, I became a member and then a lifetime member. I am so PROUD of this Association and the feeling of Brotherhood it provides. It is brothers looking out for brothers as well and their families. When a member is ill or falls upon on hard times, the membership is there for them 24/7. The motto of “We Take Care of Our Own”, is not just mere words. It is the STRENGTH of this great ground of men as well as those wonderful women of our Sisterhood.

I ask for your vote to serve as Secretary of this Association and assist in the continuing growth and strength of the Vietnam Security Police Association. It will be my honor to serve you.

FOR TREASURER: Richard Garcia, Life Member #82, Phan Rang 69-70:



I HAVE SERVED AS THE TREASURER OF THE VSPA FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS.

I was born in Puerto Rico and grew up in Brooklyn, New York. I enlisted in the United States Air Force in April 1967 and Attended Basic Training, Security Police School, Combat Preparation (AZR) Course at Lackland AFB, 04/67 - 07/67.

After Lackland, went to Francis E. Warren AFB, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 07/67-01/69 guarding Minuteman Missiles/Nuke Warheads.

I served at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, in the 35th Security Police 02/69 to 02/70, heavy weapons Tiger Flight mortar pit from sundown to

sunrise. I completed service commitment with the 370th Security Police Squadron, Bangor, Maine and was honorably discharged 04/71.

Currently, I am a Billing/Collections manager with the Episcopal Church, responsible for over 4,000 accounts payable and accounts receivable with an estimated monthly premium cash value of over \$20,000,000.00.

~Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA) Life Member #82, VFW

~American Legion, Massapequa Post 1066, DAV Life Member, Vietnam Veterans of America

Welcome Home!

Richard Garcia

cal400@optonline.net

FOR HISTORIAN: Kelly Bateman, Life Member #, Ubon K-9 70-71:

Born and raised in Garland, Texas near Dallas. Enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1968, basic training Amarillo AFB, Security Police Tech School, Lackland, 69/70 K-9 OJT handler, Incirlik AB, Turkey, Sentry Dog School Wiesbaden, Germany 3/69. Served at Ubon AB, Thailand 5/70-5/71. K-9 Training NCO 71/72, Dyess AFB, Abilene, Texas. Attended Patrol Dog School 1971 Lackland. Honorably discharged 5/72.



I am currently serving as VSPA Historian and am retired from ATT Customer Networks in Austin, Texas after 34 years in the Telecommunications Industry. Over the last 2 years I have catalogued and inventoried all the documents and information contained in our VSPA Archives and individual Base Archive Books. I am extremely proud to be a member of VSPA and to have served the members as Historian for the past 2 years. I would proudly serve again if elected.

I maintain consistent contact with the Security Forces Museum and Military Working Dog School at Lackland. In the photo on the left, I am presenting the "Top Dog" Award in the Texas Law Enforcement K-9 Trials at Lackland AFB, April 7, 2010.

~VSPA Life Member #116, VDHA Life Member #1066

~VFW Post 6441 Wimberley, Texas, Life Member, VVA Post 923 San

Marcos, Texas

~Founding Member "Nemo's War Dog Hero's Memorial Committee" Lackland AFB, Texas

~Member Civilian Emergency Response Team (DHS) Hays Co., Texas "SAR" Team.

Welcome Home!

Kelly Bateman

TexasK-9@swbell.net



VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

BALLOT

PRINT AND MAIL TO:
STEVE GATTIS
VSPA PAST PRESIDENT
P.O. BOX 1889
GLEN ROSE, TEXAS 76043



PRINT OR TYPE CAREFULLY
SO THAT WE CAN VERIFY YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND ADDRESS

NAME: _____
Last First M.I. Nickname

STREET ADDRESS _____

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INSTRUCTIONS

If you are attending the reunion, you may only vote one time. You may mail your ballot, or you may wait to meet the candidates and submit your ballot at the reunion.

PRINT THIS PAGE

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BALLOT AND MAIL TO STEVE GATTIS
WITH A **POSTMARK NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 20, 2010.**
CIRCLE THE NAME OF THE CANDIDATE BELOW

FOR PRESIDENT

Phil Carroll

FOR VICE PRESIDENT (Vote for one)

Greg Cain

Howard Yates

FOR 2nd VICE PRESIDENT

FOR SECRETARY

Bill Marshall

Dennis Evans

FOR TREASURER

FOR HISTORIAN

Richard Garcia

Kelly Bateman



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Newell Swartz, President VSPA

I am really looking forward to our upcoming reunion. As we get closer to our reunion date in October, members continue to suggest local areas of interest other members may want to visit such as a war memorial, the Alamo, a location celebrating October Fest and other ideas that may be entertaining to our members. These places are offered aside from the scheduled tours. Most are believed to be within walking distance from the hotel. As we develop the information, we will send it out. Steve Gattis is in contact with one of our members (JB Clark,

Da Nang and Takhli) who plays guitar and sings professionally. He has volunteered to visit our Hospitality Room on Thursday and Friday at 2000 hours to play some of the songs we remember from the Vietnam era. He is used to playing bars so conversation going on while he is playing does not affect him.

The BX continues to provide quality merchandise at affordable prices. A few members have contacted Larry Poss, our BX Manager, complaining about the high postage rates. Some things are just beyond our control. If you want merchandise delivered undamaged within a reasonable time frame, that is what Larry provides. The BX does not make money off postage as some members have suggested. Recently, the BX had to replace over \$600 in merchandise which members claimed to have not received. Larry now places a delivery confirmation on each box (which adds another 88 cents to the cost) and since then the problem appears to have been resolved. Larry has priced FedEx, UPS, and the US Postal service to get the best rates for shipping BX merchandise. Any reasonable suggestions for reducing mailing costs will be considered. Larry is a successful businessman in his own right and has donated thousands of dollars in merchandise and website services to the VSPA. He does apply professional business standards to the operation of the BX and supplies monthly financial reports to the treasurer and myself. Larry expects to continue to expand the types of high quality personalized merchandise offered to our members.

In the upcoming elections, as usual, we have limited choices due to the fact that members for one reason or another are unable or unwilling to contribute a significant amount of their personal time to run for office. I don't say this to criticize, it is just a statement of fact. I do appreciate the individuality of each member and enjoy the camaraderie each of you brings to our membership. The bright side to this crop of office seekers is they are all well qualified and have been actively involved in VSPA activities, mostly behind the scenes, but involved they are. The VSPA continues to thrive and grow in membership and I see only good things for our future.



.....continued on page 17.....

We will have two guest speakers this year. COL Steve Robinette will attend the Reception Dinner. He is the current commander of the Air Force Security Forces Center at Lackland and can give our members an update on the current status of our security forces now and what the future holds for them. LTC (Ret) Robert Sullivan will give a presentation at the Banquet. He will cover his experiences of being the first commander at Phu Cat, the arrival of Safeside and his involvement with K-9 which included a tour of the United States with Nemo and an assignment at the Pentagon overseeing the Military War Dog Program. We will also be honored to have one of the most respected men in the history of the AP/SP career field also in attendance, LTC (Ret) Kent Miller, Commander of the 3rd SP Sqdn at Bien Hoa during TET of 1968. BG Richard Coleman, one of two last boots on the ground in Saigon, was to have been our speaker at the Reception Dinner. However, he has to be at Moody early morning of October 7 for a meeting that concerns a concept he has championed for years that affects the USAF Security Forces. Hopefully he will be back in time to attend some of our social hours in the Hospitality Room or say a few words at the banquet before our guest speaker, LTC Sullivan. The men we choose for guest speakers are not chosen for rank; in fact next year I am going to recommend we find some hard charging First Sergeant or top recommended NCO to at least address the Reception Dinner and we have a few who were top NCOs, one being Randy Stutler. But what I want to say is the guest speakers are men who have either been security policemen or have shown extraordinary support for security policemen such as Mark Berent last year. Mark was a fighter pilot and a silver star recipient, but he respected our role in the Vietnam War. All of the above men mentioned who will be at the reunion this year are not mentioned by rank to impress anyone because we are no longer impressed by position. We respect the position but we really care about the men who hold those positions and what they have done for us in our careers to make us proud of our units and in some instances saved out lives. A long time ago we HAD to listen, now we WANT to listen to them.

In the two short years I have served as president of the VSPA, I can truly say, the VSPA membership is made up of some remarkable people. While there are a few people up front who do the heavy lifting, there are quite a few others who step forward and say "I'll handle that for you" and volunteer to take over some task. There are also others who just take time to do something for another member. Each act of giving of yourself builds the self-esteem of us all for being part of a group that really cares about each other and contributes to the camaraderie of the entire organization. And shame on me if I forget to mention the women who stand behind the VSPA, the Sisterhood, and our Associate members who have contributed significantly to our well being and success.

Respectfully,

Newell Swartz
President



Your Stories



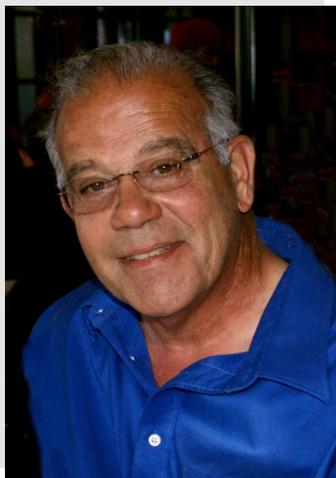
What the VSPA means to me.....by James P. Costello

Albuquerque was my first reunion after joining the VSPA earlier in 2008. Having corresponded with several members soon after joining, both by telephone and via email, left me with a gratifying feeling that I had made a wise decision in becoming one of VSPA's newer members. With that said, there were still mixed emotions about the upcoming reunion. Along with the excitement of just simply being among fellow Security Policemen again after so many years, were feelings and thoughts of long ago. My mind continually took me back to the first day I arrived at my base in exotic Southeast Asia. Knowing full well the reunion would be nothing like that day, the intrusive thoughts still remained.

Soon after arrival in Albuquerque, I quickly realized my search for all that I had left in Vietnam had come to an end. Most importantly was the camaraderie. Several members had welcomed me within the first hour, and friendships were beginning. All the while the memories continued. It was certainly an adjustment, and admittedly, at times, overwhelming. I hadn't been among a large number of Veterans since the Welcome Home parade in Chicago back in 1986. The VSPA reunions, (I've been to two,) have made a large impact in facing and dealing with past events and emotions. There is still work to be done, which I'm sure will continue until my last breath, but progress is being made thanks to all the members of the VSPA. I haven't met, or know all the members, but knowing they are there has made an impact. Throughout the reunion the motto of the VSPA, "We Take Care Of Our Own" was in full effect whether it was during planned activities, or relaxing time. A motto that is not only spoken, it is lived by its members, as well as spouses, and friends.

I had the opportunity to speak with a few members at length while in Albuquerque on many topics, including our tours in Vietnam, to a point. For the most part it's a subject I believe we all find easier to just leave at rest, or find it considerably easier to share experiences on paper. Not the case for all veterans I've met over the years, though. Some find it easier than others, and among Veterans it's not difficult to sense the subject needs to be changed. Long ago we had learned not to share our deepest thoughts or feelings, and it did make life easier at the time, and found it difficult to change that behavior upon returning home. I can only suspect that men have always done it this way throughout our wars, and sadly in today's world, the women serving as well. The difference was they came home together, while we returned home in the ones and the twos to a much different welcome.

The Security Policemen that I had served with shared many of the same events and experiences, throughout Southeast Asia, and they are the brave men of the VSPA. As I had shared with Phil upon renewing my dues after the first year to life membership, I left friends behind in Vietnam that I have never seen again. All of us left many. Bonds of friendship I had felt I would never feel again, until Albuquerque. I could not allow that to happen again. The void had been filled after many long years, and for that I will be eternally grateful.



The first reunion can be awkward (as it was for me, and I'm sure for most, if not all) yet so rewarding. For members who have tried only once, please try again. The second reunion is even better. We shared and sacrificed together in Brotherhood far from home, and all dreamed of being back in the "World". We're back now, and may I say it was an honor and a privilege serving with my fellow members of the VSPA.....
WELCOME HOME!!!!!!

In Brotherhood
Jim Costello LM#553
Nha Trang 69-70



Department of
Veterans Affairs

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

Fact Sheet

July 12, 2010

New Regulations on PTSD Claims

Quick Facts:

This new rule is for Veterans of any era.

The new rule will apply to claims:

- ◆ received by VA on or after July 13, 2010;
- ◆ received before July 13, 2010 but not yet decided by a VA regional office;
- ◆ appealed to the Board of Veterans' Appeals on or after July 13, 2010;
- ◆ appealed to the Board before July 13, 2010, but not yet decided by the Board; and
- ◆ pending before VA on or after July 13, 2010, because the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims vacated a Board decision and remanded for re-adjudication.

Please follow the link below for more information.

http://www.va.gov/PTSD_QA.pdf

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



Taking Care of Those Who Take Care of Their Own.....

(editor's note: This is the letter Janet Matthews-Wise sends out to new members of the VSPA, introducing them to the Sisterhood organization. Janet assists Phil Carroll, membership chairman, in this worthwhile endeavor)

Janet M. Wise
304 Wynlake Drive
Alabaster, Alabama 35007-7619
(205) 663-7662

As the assistant to the VSPA membership chairman and Vice President of the VSPA Sisterhood, I am proud to enclose your Viet Nam Security Police Association Life Member Pin, membership card, and a message from Phil Carroll, your membership chairman. Welcome to our family, thank you for your service to Our Country, and on behalf of the VSPA Sisterhood...WELCOME HOME!

I have no doubt that you will find in this Brotherhood something that will be very meaningful for you for years to come.

As the Association has grown and attendance at the Reunions increased, some of us who attend Reunions with VSPA members decided to organize ourselves to provide information and support for those who wished to participate. The Sisterhood was established officially in 2005. During the regular business meeting, the VSPA provided a meeting room and speaker or presentation for the guests of the VSPA members who attended reunions. We all thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship, but wanted to move forward in the spirit of our motto...Taking Care of Those Who Take Care of Their Own.

I would like to invite your spouse, children, family member, companion, etc. to join us. There are no dues. The only criterion is that they have their very own VSPA member. Please pass along my email address sparkplug_vspa@charter.net and that of the Sisterhood President, Sheila Cain at smgervase@yahoo.com. We will be happy to provide more information.

Welcome Home.

Sincerely,

Janet Matthews-Wise
a/k/a Sparkplug
VSPA Sisterhood VP
Daughter of VSPA LM # 127

"Taking care of those who take care of their own."



Editor's note: Many of you know Kim Bayes Bautista, aka "Queen Mother" and a great friend to the VSPA. In addition to assisting with our reunions for many years, Kim is a Licensed Clinical Social worker at Fort Hood, Texas. She has graciously agreed to write a repeating column for GUARDMOUNT and we gratefully present her first article below.



FROM THE FIELD

of behavioral health

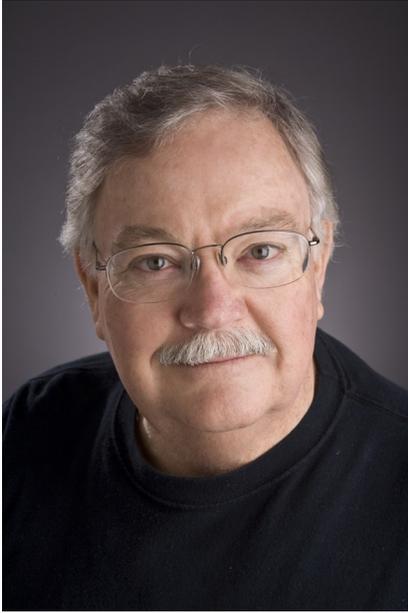
Kim Bayes-Bautista, MSSW, LCSW

Honorary Member



RESILIENCE is a strength-based perspective that is being embraced by behavioral health professionals. This is the belief that individuals have the ability to ‘bounce back’, move forward and grow from traumatic experiences. It is the philosophy that each person has within themselves what it takes to manage or even overcome their emotional pain. The majority of Vietnam veterans are the finest examples of resiliency. Granted, there are those who still struggle and suffer, however, with the philosophy of resilience, the notion is that there is always the capacity for healing. (Ask any first timer at a VSPA reunion!) Social supports are critical factors in resilience. We can “**talk it out, act it out, or have symptoms.**” **Acting out** might be drinking, drugging, verbal or physical aggression, or engaging in other self-defeating or reckless behaviors. **Symptoms** might include depression, anxiety, hypertension, stomach ulcers or other physical ailments. **Talking out** the pain is the first step in healing. Proper self-care (medical, psychological and spiritual) is also key. The young soldiers I work with are in awe of Vietnam veterans. They respect what Vietnam vets have been through and the difficulties they have overcome. They, too, are significantly impacted by their experiences. Vietnam veterans can help them strengthen their resiliency by reaching out a ‘psychological helping hand’, one that was seldom offered to the warriors of your generation. Helping others to heal can be healing to one’s self.

Kim Bayes-Bautista aka ‘Queen Mother’
Licensed Clinical Social Worker



360 Days and a Wake Up

By Steven Hall

At 05:30, August 22, 1968 I sat on the edge of the bunk with a copy of my orders and my ID card, more asleep than awake. The transit barracks at the In-Country Processing Center of Tan Son Nhut AB was a favorite place for AWOLs to catch a good night's sleep. The Security Police at Tan Son Nhut knew that, so they ran early morning sweeps to catch anyone who decided they didn't want to participate in the war any longer. The cops worked their way down the rows of bunks; expressionless, almost wordless, checking to make sure you belonged there. When the Security Policeman reached me, I handed him my orders and ID card. Looking at the orders, he said, "You're a cop, huh?" "Yeah," I replied. As he looked at my orders he asked, "Where's the 632nd Security Police Squadron at?" "Binh Thuy," I replied. He shoved my papers at me and said, "Well, *good luck*." It wasn't so much what he said, as the way he said it that snapped me awake instantly. Before he could take a step, I grabbed his arm and asked, "Whadda 'ya mean by *that*?" "Man," he said, "they got the crap kicked out of them last night." Then he kind of smiled and went on to the next bunk. It wouldn't be the last time I saw that smirky little grin that said, "Welcome to the Nam." I wasn't very sleepy after that.

Later that morning, after getting my paperwork in order and my butt punctured with a Gamma Globulin shot, I lugged my gear onto a C-130 that was flying south from Tan Son Nhut to Binh Thuy Air Base. Up to then, I'd flown only on commercial jets, so I was looking forward to a whole new flying experience. As it turned out, except for the incredible noise from the engines, the flight wasn't all that much to write home about. After about a thirty-minute flight, the C-130 banked sharply to the right and started a steep descent. I looked out the porthole shaped window and got my first glimpse of Binh Thuy. "Oh, my God," I thought, "*Is that it?* Please tell me that's not Binh Thuy." Compared to every base I'd ever been on or even heard of, this place was really small. If that wasn't bad enough, the lower we got, the worse things looked. "Oh man," I thought, "what have I gotten myself into?"

Once we landed, I found my way to what passed as a passenger terminal. The Airman at the counter let me use the phone to call the Security Police office. They told me to sit tight and they'd send someone over to pick me up. While I waited, I walked outside to look around. This was a very different place all right. Binh Thuy was a Vietnamese Air Force Base, so the Americans were "guest-tenants." The USAF aircraft on the base consisted of an HH-43 Air-Sea Rescue helicopter (call sign, Pedro), a C-47 PsyOps aircraft and two C-47 gunships that went by the name "Spooky". The runway was so short that there were no jet fighters stationed there. In fact, C-130 cargo aircraft had to use a jet-assisted take-off system known as JATO tubes to get airborne before they came to the end of the runway. The Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) had A1E Skyraiders. These were Korean War vintage prop aircraft. They also had a squadron of H-34 Sikorsky helicopters that were used to ferry the ground troops around.

When I arrived in August '68, the A1Es were the bad boys on the base. They were great for close-in ground support. They dropped iron bombs, carried rocket pods beneath their wings and sported 30-caliber machine guns. They were very effective at what they did; kill the enemy. The Viet Cong hated being on the receiving end of those aircraft and they did their best to destroy them. Binh Thuy really got blasted during the '68 Tet Offensive. Between February 1968 and December 1968, the VC attacked the base 36 times, firing 1,341 rounds of 82mm mortar or 75mm recoilless rifle rounds. Occasionally, the VC would hit the base twice in the same 24-hour period. The most rounds fired during a single attack was on March 5, 1968. On that date, the VC lobbed in 110 rounds in one long sustained attack. Ironically, during that attack no one was killed nor wounded and only two aircraft were damaged. There were several attempts during 1968 and 1969 by sappers to get through the perimeter fences, but the base's defenses were very strong and they succeeded only once. All the VC who got on the base that night were killed.

As I stood outside the terminal assessing my home for the next year, I'm not sure what I was expecting, but after seeing the huge Tan Son Nhut AB, whatever it was I expected this little bit of tropical paradise to be was definitely not it. The base's eastern perimeter was about 200 yards away, just across the runway. I could see the guard towers along the perimeter road as it ran a mile toward the north end of the base. I didn't realize it then, but I would be spending many long and tedious days in those towers. The ominous appearance of the towers, bunkers and protective revetments told me that this is where any fun and games stopped and life got very serious.

I was taking it all in when a jeep sporting an M-60 machine gun pulled up. I'd just come from a base where the SP's rode around in big, comfortable Dodge six-passenger trucks with doors, windows and roofs. This jeep had no roof and no windshield. It was completely open to the unrelenting tropical sun and the torrential rains of the monsoon season. The machine gun underscored the fact that my life was about to change dramatically. I threw my bags into the back seat and hopped in. I don't remember who the guys were that picked me up, but they seemed a lot more relaxed about being there than I was. While driving on the aircraft parking area, the driver stopped a couple of times to pick up several large, jagged metal fragments from the previous night's mortar attack. "Have a souvenir," he said, with an odd grin on his face. If my new souvenirs and their impact craters in the parking ramp weren't enough to illustrate the Viet Cong's handiwork, on the way to the SP office we passed a portable fuel tank that was charred and still smoldering, and aircraft maintenance buildings whose walls were peppered with hundreds of shrapnel holes. Things were not looking good...not good at all...and what was with that smile, anyway?

I signed into the Squadron and got directions to the barracks. After getting unpacked, things started to "normalize," or so I told myself. The barracks was located in the Red Horse area. (Initially, I was assigned to work with the night security flight, known as Devil Flight. After a couple of weeks, I was transferred onto "A" Flight-Security, worked Day and Swing shifts and moved to the barracks in another area). The 555th Civil Engineering Squadron built the barracks. Their logo was a Red Stallion rearing up on its hind legs. Thus the area was dubbed "the Red Horse area". The barracks had cement floors and were constructed mostly of 2x4's, 1x6's and a lot of wire screening. There were no glass windows, just screened-in window frames on the upper half of the wall. The thing that really caught my eye was the large gashes created by mortar shrapnel in the wall studs and ceiling beams. This definitely did not look like a happy place. At night, the barracks was all but deserted because almost everyone living there were on the night shift. I had to get my service records processed into the Personnel Office and get my jungle fatigues and combat gear, so I didn't get to work right away. That meant that I was awake while the SPs who worked the night shift were asleep. As a result, I didn't have an opportunity to talk with the other cops to learn about what I would be doing.

The barracks were only a couple of hundred yards from the perimeter's west side. I spent the first, near sleepless night jumping out of bed every time someone fired-off what I was to later learn was a slap flare. Every time I'd doze off, someone on the perimeter would fire off another slap flare. Being half asleep and totally ignorant of what made the sound, I'd leap out of bed and start for the bunker. Finally, an SP who had the night off informed me that I didn't really need to do all that jumping around because the sound I was hearing was made by a small, hand-fired flare that was used to illuminate the dark... Oddly enough, he had that same, "Welcome to the Nam smile" that I had seen a few times before. I was eager to get to work, but processing onto the base and into the squadron seemed to take forever. Everyone and everything seemed to move a whole lot slower on Binh Thuy. I guess they all figured they weren't going anywhere anyway, so what was the hurry? I soon realized however, that they were just saving up their energy for when it really counted. Now, I never thought of myself as a fast runner. As a matter of fact I never thought of myself as a runner of any kind, but the next night when the mortar rounds started to hit I was high-balling it out of the barracks across the open ground and into the bunker like an Olympic track star (this attack was on August 24, 1968 at 2339 hours. 12 rounds KIA: 0 WIA: 0). Standing there in the bunker with a couple of dozen other guys, my knees were knocking and I was gasping for air (man, I had to cut down on those Marlboros). Since we'd all been in bed, we were in our underwear. I'm obviously the new guy because I'm the only one in skivvies who's wearing a flak vest and helmet. Exactly when I had time to put them on I don't recall, but the other guys just kind of looked at me and gave me that special (and now) oh-so-familiar "Welcome to the Nam" smile.

So many things to learn... so much time to learn them. 360 days and a wake up.....

NOTE: All Officers and Staff are unpaid VSPA members who volunteer to serve their brothers in the association. Officers were elected in 2008 for a two-year term. Staff members were appointed to assist and advise the officers of the association as needed.

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cpenley@chartertn.net; 423-245-6863
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CHAPLAIN Roberta Smith; lizianthus1@yahoo.com; 614-879-6835
CORRESPONDENCE SEC. Pam Talbot; lilacroller1@comcast.net; 815-935-2139





“Coming Home”.....remembrances from five VSPA members

When I got back, my family didn't know I was coming. I knocked on the door, and my two young sisters and my mother just stood in the doorway, screaming at the top of their lungs. I finally had to ask them “Can I come in?” My Dad was out of town at the time, so the screaming scared all the neighbors. One even called the Sheriff! So I had the cops, the neighborhood, and everyone within screaming distance responding to the commotion. I just wanted to start tearing into my Pacex stuff....I had been up for a couple of days and I was freaking out with all the noise and commotion. I didn't even think about it then, but the Sheriff was the only one who shook my hand, patted me on the back and said “thanks” before he left.

Anyone else have any cool coming-home stories?

Author: Mike Thomas LM564

Hmmm... I landed back in Seattle, WA 29 March 1969, was walking through the airport and was approached by a war protestor who called me "baby killer" and I responded with profanity and told him to back away. He then spit on me and caused me to knock him on his rear! In the meantime 2 MP's saw this and came over and I thought I was going to jail. Instead, they picked him up and led him to the men's room where he and I went in alone. One MP told me "don't make too much noise" and both stood guard at the door so nobody else would walk in. You know, looking back on it now, I feel bad for that guy.... Because I had a year's worth of frustration and anger bottled up inside me and I took it all out on him! Man, it felt good!

I then caught my plane home to my family, where I was welcomed home with open arms! So, Mike and all my brothers.... welcome home!

Author: John Lochte LM#556

MIKE,

GOOD STORY. I KNOW HOW THE TEARS CAN FLOW.

MY RETURN TO THE WORLD IN NOV. 1966, IS STILL A VIVID MEMORY. AFTER ARRIVAL AT SAN FRANCISCO, I HAD A STRONG VERBAL CONFRONTATION WITH A GROUP OF HARE KRISHNAS, (BEING CALLED BABY KILLERS, ETC). I CHANGED INTO A SET OF CIVIES, FOR MY FLIGHT TO LOS ANGELES. AT L. A., I TOOK A CAB TO MY BROTHER'S HOUSE IN GARDENA. DURING THE DRIVE AND CONVERSATION, THE ELDERLY, BLACK DRIVER ASK IF I WAS RETURNING FROM VIETNAM. WHEN I SAID YES, HE TOLD ME THAT HE WAS A WWII VETERAN. UPON ARRIVAL AT MY BROTHER'S HOUSE, THE DRIVER WOULD NOT ACCEPT FARE, SAYING "THAT I HAD ALREADY PAID".

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Author: Ed Cottrell LM 222

Mike, I remember landing at McCord AFB for out-processing, then on to SEATAC for a plane to get home. I landed in San Francisco and then caught what was called a milk run plane. As another airman and I were trying to get tickets to get home, (he lived about 60 miles north of where I did) we were told the plane was full. Two little old ladies walked up and said, "They can have our seats.....send our boys home." We thanked the ladies and got on the plane. When I arrived at the small airport serving my town, I caught a cab to my church as I had arrived home on a Sunday night. I figured my parents were going to be at church and I was going to surprise them. The cabbie kept asking me if I had a ride as he did not want me to be left without a way home. He also would not take any money. It just so happened that when I entered the church, lots of people were happy to see me but my parents hadn't attended church that night. Someone called them and my Dad came and got me. It wasn't the "Grand Entrance" I had been planning, but I was glad to be home.

Author: Jim Burke LM466 Tan My

Mike, reading this reminds me of a poem I wrote some time ago.....

WELCOME HOME

Tell your soldier "Welcome Home", said the veteran to the soldier's Mom,
"Oh, he's been home a long time", she said, since he went off to Vietnam.

Like many soldiers who went off to war and returned to honor or to shame,
They've been home for many years, but they'll never be the same.

War demands an awful cost to all who will participate,
As portions of their souls are lost, while others celebrate.

The soldiers, the nurses, who gave so much, and never knew glory or fame,
They've been home for many years but will never be the same.

They're not crazy, these young patriots, who venture off to war,
They bring freedom to the oppressed. Who could ask for anything more?

They answered when their country called. The cost was high but they freely gave,
Their purchase was for freedom, the proud, the free, the brave.

Many sheltered will never know what they saw on that far-off shore,
And few will ever know the pain or the agony of war.

The wars and the soldiers are as different as the places from which they came,
Yes, they've been home for a long time, but they've never been the same.

To all those who gave so much, and through the years, endured alone,
Thank you for your service, and SOLDIER, "WELCOME HOME!"

Author Randy "Ramps" Stutler,

Editor's note: We plan to offer an article in each future newsletter that speaks to the process of grieving. Some of us are grieving now, or maybe still. All of us have or will grieve in our lifetimes. It's a fact of life. HOW we manage it is another story. In this issue, VSPA Sisterhood Vice President Janet Matthews Wise offers her insights and reflections after suffering the loss of her husband, father and grandmother in the space of one short year. We welcome other contributors as well.



Janet Matthews Wise

For those of you who may not know, I came to be a part of this wonderful Association with my Daddy, "Sarge" MSgt. Alvin W. Matthews, USAF Retired, LM #127, CRB, Tiger Flight, 1971 – 1972. I attended my first VSPA Reunion with him in San Antonio in 2003 and the rest is history. Never have I been more welcome or so embraced.

On January 4, 2008, Daddy posted his last guardmount. He had surgery on his neck that went well, but the morning after he had a massive heart attack. It was a complete shock to all of us.

Later, in March 2008, my husband, Mac, was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer. On May 29, 2008, Mama's mother, "Granny" gave in to congestive heart failure. And finally, on February 8, 2009, Mac could no longer fight the side effects of chemo.

That being said, as time passes and life goes on, it is my hope that as I go through my life, I can help to ease the pain of my grief and that of others who experience loss. At one time I would not believe that I would ever see the world through other than pained eyes and a shattered heart. I am better, stronger, and more determined than I could possibly have hoped. By Grace and Grace alone have I come so far. I hope you will indulge me for the next few *GuardMounts* to include you in this journey and maybe, just maybe give one of you some insight or hope from my experience.

Loss visits us in so many ways...the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, the loss of a home, the end of a relationship. All of these deal us emotional blows to sort through and address. I have been fortunate enough to have the support of this Association's members, my family, my friends, my church, and by no means the least of these, my Lord.

Earlier this year, I attended 13 weekly support sessions, GriefShare, through my church. About halfway through that experience, I was called to be a facilitator for another session beginning this Fall to help others take the vital steps in healing. Rule number one...you DO NOT HAVE TO DO IT ALONE. We, as a group, are so fortunate to have each other. How many of you would share a Brother's or Sister's burden if they reached out? My money is on 100%. That is, to the best of my understanding, why the VSPA exists, "We take care of our own" and "Taking care of those who take care of their own".

One of the suggestions in my Griefshare group is writing a grief letter to your family, friends, co-workers etc. This is a slightly altered version of my grief letter...

For those of you who don't know what to do or say about another's loss, sometimes you don't have to say anything...just extend your heart and your hand. A simple, meaningful "I'm sorry" is fine.

Grief is a monster. It is chaotic and messy. It is not gentle, discriminating, tactful, or fair. It ambushes the heart and the mind at the worst times. It kicks you when you're down. Grief can be its own entity. The word *hard* just doesn't cover it. It is, however, a necessary part of life. Most of all, grief is a side effect of love.

Grief is distracting, eliminates cognitive ability, makes you moody, sad, hurt, anxious, confused, scared, angry, and tired, and though you may feel like you are losing your mind, you are not crazy. The first, hardest part of this process is the unpredictability. The second hardest part is learning how to deal with it; not control it, just deal with it.

When the world stops, it is hard to see things go on around you when it should *all* have stopped, forever. The clichés that people say are hard to hear for the first few months and don't help. But, eventually, as the pain dulls, those clichés begin to make sense. They are each in a better place, life does go on, and this is a new normal.

It takes time to get through the journey of grief. I just wish I knew how much time. I wish there was a schedule and a map! But, it is what is and it would be a mistake to rush through it or cheat yourself. Do this over whatever period of time it takes.

Grief IS a side effect of love and if you miss the pain, you will have to miss the dance! (thanks Garth).

Please don't go through the steps of grief or loss alone. There are too many of us through this Association who will open our hearts or there is a church family who will lift you up or there is a support group who will share the load. Step out, reach out, and find the source that is best for you.

Sparkplug_vspa@charter.net

Janet Matthews-Wise
Daughter of LM # 127
Sisterhood VP
Membership Assistant
Friend of K9





Kennel Master: K-9 Report

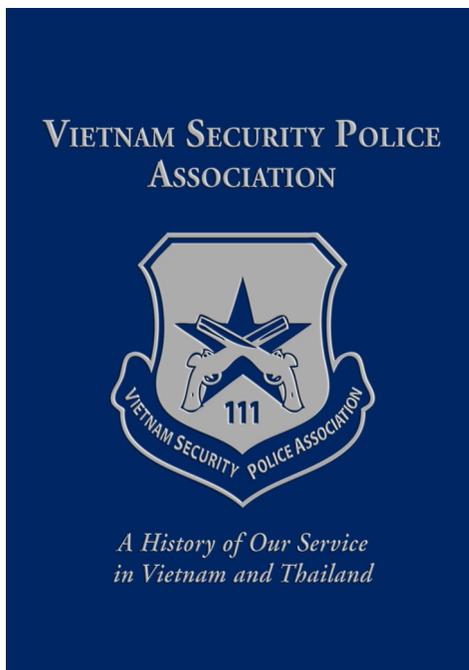
By Jim Stastny, Kennel Master

If the Board would have told me that this position required writing reports for Guardmount when they appointed me Kennel Master last October, well. . . Bill Cummings would still be the man. I hate writing reports, and my typing skills . . . well, let me put it this way. . . it's taken me five minutes to type these few words. But hey, I'm game. I'll plug along and perhaps finish this before the reunion.

I hope everybody is as excited about the reunion as I am. Going back to Lackland is like going back to the mother ship. Most all of us had our AP/SP training there. And with the exception of the OJT handlers and those trained in PACAF or Europe, all other handlers took our K9 training there. So, all you K9 men out there, are you ready to revisit "dog school"? We have a terrific K9 handler tour lined up for Thursday that is specific to K-9 Handlers because of our prior training. The tour is generally the responsibility of the Kennel Master, but since this is my first year, Bill Cummings took pity on me. Bill, with the excellent assistance of Ernie Childers and Kelly Bateman, made all the arrangements. With those three orchestrating things, you can be sure this will be one outstanding adventure. I had the responsibility of arranging for the bus and taking the reservations from K-9 Handlers.

I am pleased to announce that we currently have 203 K9 handlers in the VSPA. We gained 17 new handlers since the last reunion. I wish I could claim credit for their memberships; however, I must humbly admit they all came by way of our excellent web site. So thank you Webmaster Don Poss, and K9 Webmaster Monty Moore. You guys rock!!! I did get to write a personal welcome letter to each of the new K-9 members. And again, let me say to them: WELCOME HOME!!!!

One last thing, I communicate with all the handlers when something of K9 significance occurs. I do so by way of email and mass mailings, but for various reasons not all of the emails get through. Several consistently bounce back. Either the address is no longer valid or something else like a SPAM blocker prevents the recipient from receiving the message. So, if you are a handler and you have not heard from me this past year, please contact me and let's see if we can solve the issue.



HISTORY BOOK UPDATE

By Steve Gattis

Our history book is just about ready. The artwork for the cover is complete. It will be deeply embossed silver on blue. The book contains 180 pages of history, bios, photos and stories submitted by our members, plus an index.

The book should be shipping in about six to eight weeks. Copies will also be available in the BX at the same time as when the books are shipped to those who submitted bios and pre-ordered the books.

For those who ordered a book, please contact Phil Carroll IF (and only IF) you have moved and NOT notified the VSPA. We are updating addresses on the order list for Turner Publishing.



TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

By Steve Gattis, VSPA Past President

The VSPA is a tax exempt 501(c)(19) Organization of Military War Veterans. All donations to the VSPA are tax deductible. The IRS Letter of Determination is on file with the VSPA. We DO NOT send mail solicitations for donations and we do not contract with a commercial entity to call you and solicit funds over the telephone. The only request we will ever send in the mail is a dues notice from our Membership Chairman. If you want to give to the VSPA, that is a decision that you make on your own based upon your belief in our motto that *we take care of our own*. The VSPA will provide receipt letters for any and all donations.

Right about now, and several times throughout the year, your mailbox is probably overflowing with requests for donations from all types of organizations. Envelopes full of unsolicited mailing labels, calendars and greeting cards arrive at your homes on a regular basis to “remind” you to give. Then follow-up letters are sent “reminding” you to pay for the materials, merchandise and junk you did not request. Don’t feel guilty if you refuse delivery or don’t pay. Send it back or throw it away. If you reply, they will sell your name to other mailing lists.

Most of you probably receive phone calls and email requesting contributions. IGNORE THEM! Protect yourself and your family. Talk to your family members and tell them how to say NO.

Times are hard for everyone. Money is tight. Give to the charity, church or organization of your choice ONLY when you initiate the transaction. If you didn’t ask for something, don’t pay for it. Protect yourself by making an **absolutely solid decision** not to ever engage in anything financial over the telephone or the Internet unless you initiated the call or Internet purchase/donation and know who you are talking to. If you receive a phone call or an email requesting a donation or contribution, don’t answer the email and then block it with a anti-SPAM program. If it comes as a phone call, tell the caller that you do not do anything financial over the telephone under any circumstances. If your caller ID says “Unknown” or “Private Number” and they ask for money, ask yourself why they don’t allow their phone number to be shown on caller ID. Ask yourself if it’s possible that they could be sitting in a motel around the corner and claiming to be with a recognized charity. Ask yourself if it’s possible for them to hand you over to someone claiming to be a “supervisor” who is really a crook in the next motel room. Protect yourself. Don’t do anything financial over the phone or the Internet. And remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it is. You never ever get money from anyone by giving them earnest money to show that you are credit worthy. KEEP CROOKS OUT OF YOUR BANK ACCOUNT!!!

Erlyce Pekas, Editor
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USAF Security Police Vietnam Veterans - Welcome Home!

If you served in the USAF Air Police, Security Police, K-9, Safeside, or as a Security Police Augmentee in Vietnam or Thailand between 1958 and 1975, there's a great brotherhood looking for you. With more than 1,200 currently active members, the Vietnam Security Police Association is where you belong.

VSPA was formed for many reasons: to reunite friends, to preserve the memory of our fallen brothers and the history of our service in Vietnam and Thailand, and to ensure that the hard lessons learned in that war would not be forgotten. Lessons of life and death, forged in war, tempered in battle, that when remembered provide inspiration to Airmen who are yet to taste combat defending the fortress, and pride for those of us who have fought and bled together.

If you're qualified and interested in membership, read more about VSPA and how to join at our website: www.vspa.com. WELCOME HOME TO VSPA!!