

VSPA



USAF



# GUARDMOUNT

## VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

*"We Take Care of Our Own"*



### 2025 SPRING/SUMMER EDITION



## 30<sup>th</sup> VSPA Reunion



**Luke Air Force Base  
Phoenix, AZ**

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

**LARRY FLEMING**  
PRESIDENT, LIFE MEMBER #131  
Nha Trang 68-69



My VSPA Brothers and Sisters,

It's election year and I have submitted my Bio for a second term as President of VSPA. I never realized the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes. There have been conference calls, three-way calls, calls with the BX, calls with the Reunion Brat, individual calls with Board members and regular members that have questions about VSPA. It's not a 9 to 5 job but something most of the time. It's rewarding to see the progress that gets accomplished in planning our reunions.

The Knife-13 committee, headed by Jerry Nelson, is in constant progression. The memorial for Luke AFB has been ordered and should arrive in plenty of time to have it installed before our reunion. Jerry has led this committee with many hours over the course of two years with the two memorials that will finish in Phoenix this October.

Our next reunion will be in Nashville, and many are looking forward to this being our first there. Planning is starting and we hope to have things lined up before too long.

There are some transitions going on with the BOD, in a recent Conference call, it was voted on that there will be no reserved seating at the Banquet on Saturday night. Our hope is that you will have the opportunity to sit with someone you don't know and make new friends. We'll see how it works out. One of the considerations was there never has been a seating issue at the reception dinner on Wednesday night.

I hope to see everyone in Phoenix and are planning to have a great time visiting with family and friends. Wishing everyone health and happiness.

Onward!

Larry Fleming, President



## THE FREEDOM BIRD!



**VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION  
30th ANNIVERSARY REUNION  
Luke AFB, Phoenix, Arizona  
50th ANNIVERSARY OF KNIFE-13  
OCTOBER 8 – 12, 2025**

**REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND FORMS**

The 2025 VSPA Reunion will be held at the DOUBLETREE by Hilton, Phoenix North, **10220 North Metro Parkway East, Phoenix, Arizona 85051**. The contract room rate is **\$169 per night, plus tax**. Breakfast is included. All rooms are NON-SMOKING. The rooms include a refrigerator. The group room rate is available three days before and three days after the reunion based upon room availability. There is a \$50 Service Fee for pets. Certified Service Dogs that support Veterans are free. You must book early to ensure that rooms are available. **DON'T WAIT!** Free overnight Self-Parking is available. Valet Parking is NOT available. Motor Coach Parking is available WITHOUT hookups.

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS:** Call toll-free **1-800-222-8733** by **SUNDAY, September 7, 2025**. You must identify yourself as a member of the **Vietnam Security Police Association Group VSP**. All reservations must be guaranteed with a major credit card. **The deadline for reservations is September 7, 2025. After that date, rooms will be space available only and AT THE HOTEL'S PREVAILING RATE. Make your reservations early!** Check-in time is 4:00pm; check-out time is 11:00am. You may use the following link to make on-line reservations. You must use the entire link:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/deeplink/?ctyhocn=PHXNTDT&groupCode=CDTVSP&arrivaldate=2025-10-07&departuredate=2025-10-11&cid=OM,WW,HILTONLINK,EN,DirectLink&fromId=HILTONLINKDIRECT>

If you encounter any difficulty with hotel reservations, reserve the room, obtain the confirmation number, and contact the Reunion BRAT at 1-360-663-2521. Explain the problem and she will correct it for you.

**IF YOU HAVE TO CANCEL FOR ANY REASON, PLEASE CALL THE REUNION BRAT AT 1-360-663-2521 TO COORDINATE REASSIGNMENT OF YOUR ROOM RESERVATION. DO NOT CALL THE HOTEL!**

**AIRPORT INFORMATION:**

Book your flight to PHOENIX SKY HARBOR AIRPORT (**AIRPORT CODE: PHX**).

The hotel **DOES NOT HAVE** an airport shuttle.

**AGENDA:** The agenda is generally accurate, but is subject to change due to operational requirements at LUKE AFB for the 56th SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON:

- **Wednesday, October 8:** 1400 On-site Registration and Reception Dinner at the hotel.
- **Thursday, October 9:** 1000 Seminar in the Hospitality Room on Financial SCAMS and phishing that affects Veterans, Seniors, and VSPA Members. This seminar will be provided FREE by our Sisterhood and Legacy Member, Marissa McWaters, who is a Security Engineer Manager / Senior Technical Program Manager with several years of experience. Some of our members have been affected by financial fraud and SCAMS. The seminar will be worth your time.
- **Friday, October 10:** **KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL DEDICATION** at 1300. Buses will load at 1145 and depart at NOON. Tour of the Security Forces Complex immediately following the ceremony. Eat before you leave



the hotel. Buses will be back at the hotel NLT 1700. Dinner and evening are open for squadron and base dinners or gatherings.

- **Saturday Morning, October 11:** 1000 VSPA Business Meeting. Afternoon open.
- **Saturday Morning, October 11:** 1000 VSPA Sisterhood gathering of wives and companions. Afternoon open.
- **Saturday Evening, October 11:** 1700 Cocktails. 1800 Banquet dinner with awards and raffle.
- **Sunday Morning, October 12:** 0900 Memorial Service and reading of the 111 names. The reunion will end after the memorial service.

#### **HOSPITALITY ROOM AND BX:**

- The Hospitality Room will be stocked with FREE snacks & beverages and will be open as much as possible.
- THE VSPA BX STORE **WILL NOT** BE AT THE REUNION THIS YEAR. ORDER MEMORABILIA ON-LINE PRIOR TO THE REUNION USING THE FOLLOWING LINK TO VIEW THE BX AND MAKE AN ORDER NO LATER THAN **SEPTEMBER 20**

<https://vspa.coffeecup.com/shop/>

#### **CRITICAL INFORMATION!!! PLEASE READ!!!**

Our hotel has been inspected by our VSPA President Larry Fleming and President Emeritus Jerry Nelson, who have both inspected our hotels in the past. They know exactly what we need. Their inspection was highly detailed, including contract space verifications. Their report was OUTSTANDING!

We have spoken with many of our members regarding fatigue and the length of time for our tours. Members who attended previous reunions expressed concern regarding early start times, as well as fatigue and the extended days while on base. More of our members have difficulty walking; however, some walking will be required for the dedication of the KNIFE-13 Memorial. Our planning for events will reduce walking time significantly. Our goal is to provide an opportunity for a reunion with less physical demands and more time to visit with each other in the Hospitality Room. *Our economy has been very difficult for all of us. We are doing our best to control costs.*

***If you have a question or need additional information about this reunion, please contact VSPA President Larry Fleming [LDFleming569@gmail.com](mailto:LDFleming569@gmail.com) or call him on his cell phone at (254) 396-4091. We hope to see you in Phoenix, Arizona for our 30<sup>th</sup> Reunion and the dedication of the KNIFE-13 Memorial at Luke Air Force Base – the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the loss of KNIFE-13. It will be great to see you.***

**“We Take Care of Our Own!”**



# VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION REUNION REGISTRATION FORM



**30<sup>th</sup> Reunion**  
**Luke AFB, Phoenix, Arizona**  
**October 8 - 12, 2025**

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 guests(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Banquet meal selection: BEEF \_\_\_\_\_ CHICKEN \_\_\_\_\_ VEGETARIAN \_\_\_\_\_

List any special needs: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, notify: \_\_\_\_\_

*Is this your first VSPA Reunion? YES: \_\_\_\_\_ NO: \_\_\_\_\_*

## **REGISTRATION FEES**

Are your annual VSPA dues current? **Dues Renewals Only** ..... \$15 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Not for new members - to join the VSPA, please see "VSPA Membership" on the instructions page).

Number of persons attending the Reunion including you # \_\_\_\_\_ ..... X \$215 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**(EARLY BIRD CREDIT OF \$25 INCLUDED if postmarked BY AUGUST 25)**

Number of persons attending the Reunion including you # \_\_\_\_\_ ..... X \$240 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**(LATE FEE OF \$25 INCLUDED if postmarked AFTER AUGUST 25)**

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED = ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND PAYMENTS TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS, AND MADE PAYABLE TO:**

**THE REUNION BRAT**  
16817 Mountainside Drive East  
Greenwater, WA 98022 (360) 663-2521  
[TheReunionBRAT@hotmail.com](mailto:TheReunionBRAT@hotmail.com)

**THE \$25 EARLY BIRD CREDIT ON YOUR REGISTRATION WILL BE HONORED IF YOUR REGISTRATION IS POSTMARKED BY AUGUST 25. FOR REGISTRATIONS POSTMARKED AFTER THAT DATE, THE REGISTRATION FEE WILL INCREASE BY \$25 to \$240.**

## PLEASE READ

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE REGISTRATION FORMS

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.
2. PLEASE PRINT or type all information clearly. Do not use abbreviations on any portion of the registration form.
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: for your confirmation letter. THE CONFIRMATION LETTERS WILL BE MAILED BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2025.
5. TELEPHONE AND EMAIL ADDRESS: Your contact information is vital to a successful reunion. You will also receive a copy of the attendee roster upon arrival at the hotel.
6. NAMES OF YOUR GUESTS: Please provide the first name, middle initial and last name of your guest(s) on the Registration Form.
7. RENEWAL OF ANNUAL DUES: For existing VSPA members only - you can renew your dues at the time of registration if they are not current. VSPA membership must be current to attend the reunion or bring a guest. Life Members have paid their dues for life. The Sisterhood is FREE.
8. VSPA MEMBERSHIP: If you are NOT a member of the Vietnam Security Police Association, please DO NOT send \$15 with this registration form. For information on how to become a member, contact Shelby Starke at 608-416-3429 or email her: [Starke.Shelby@gmail.com](mailto:Starke.Shelby@gmail.com) You will have to submit a completed application form and a DD-214 showing service in the USAF as an Air Policeman, Security Policeman or an Augmentee in Vietnam or Thailand 1958 to 1976, and a discharge under honorable conditions.
9. REUNION COST: The registration fee is \$215 per person UNLESS YOU MISS THE EARLY BIRD DEADLINE WITH A POSTMARK OF AUGUST 25. The registration fee will be \$240 per person for all registrations postmarked after AUGUST 25. THIS IS CRITICAL because THE HOTEL WILL CHARGE ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR MEALS ON LATE REGISTRATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO SIGN-UP AT THE REUNION. Work must be completed by the Reunion BRAT and your Board of Directors after registrations are received: A full audit of all names, base names, squadrons, and fees paid. The audit of names must be correct in order to print reunion ID badges, pay advance fees to the hotel and bus transportation company based upon the number of people attending the reunion. Only then can the confirmation letters be mailed to our members. All of the registration and identification information must be assembled in Registration Welcome Packages that have to be mailed in bulk to the hotel with enough time for delivery no later than Tuesday, October 7, the day before registration opens at the hotel. Shipping and delivery are very difficult to guarantee with the current delays in mail systems and shipping. Once the packages arrive at the hotel, another audit must take place so that reunion specific items may be placed in each welcome package, including reunion pins, patches, meal tickets, bus tickets, raffle information and local restaurant information. PLEASE DON'T DELAY.
10. ENTRY AUTHORIZATION FORM: YOU MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR ENTRY INTO LUKE AFB AND THE KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY:

## LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

### MANDATORY INFORMATION FOR BASE ENTRY

IN ACCORDANCE WITH LUKE REGULATIONS, these are the guidelines for submitting guests for base access.

a. In order for guests to be granted base access, they must:

- (1) Be a citizen or be in possession of an Employment Authorization Card or Permanent Residence Card
- (2) Not convicted of any major crime (DUI's 2 or more) within the last 5 years,
- (3) Not convicted of any felonies with the last 10 years,
- (4) Not convicted of sexual assault, drug distribution, espionage/treason, or murder, and
- (5) Must possess a valid government form of identification (USA Passport/State Identification/State Driver's License).

b. Guests are only authorized to go directly to/from the location(s) listed on the guest list.

c. Vehicle operators must be in possession of a current driver's license, proof of insurance, and vehicle registration.

d. All guests must have picture identification unless 15 years of age or younger.

e. Guests 16 years of age and older need to be included on this form.

f. Vehicles are subject to search upon entering, exiting, or while on the installation.

g. Guests must comply with customs and courtesies. (for example: all vehicles must stop while the national anthem is playing over the base speaker system).

h. Cell phone use is not authorized while operating a motor vehicle except if utilizing hands free (Bluetooth device).

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	DATE OF BIRTH (mm/dd/yyyy)	US CITIZEN/ RESIDENT ALIEN (Yes/No)	LICENSE OR ID #	STATE OF ISSUE	LAST 4 SSN





# 2025 ELECTION OF VSPA OFFICERS

## CALL FOR BIOS AND PHOTOS

The VSPA's By-Laws call for elections of officers every two years, with all current members being given an opportunity to vote. Current members may vote in person by attending the business meeting at the annual reunion, or by mailing in a written ballot, which will be printed in the next issue of Guardmount. Each member may submit only one ballot. There are six positions up for election: President, Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Historian. The other positions on our board of directors (President Emeritus, Past President and Communications Director) are permanent positions as recognized by our Constitution and By-Laws. All other positions in the VSPA are staff positions appointed by the president and board based upon expertise and willingness to serve the members of the VSPA. Elected officers will be confirmed and installed after the voting is completed at the reunion in October. The term of office of all positions is two years. The positions do not receive a salary and are entirely on a volunteer basis.

VSPA members have until **August 5, 2025**, to declare their intention to run for an elected VSPA position and must submit a bio and photo for publication in Guardmount. Each person who runs must have been a regular member or life member in good standing for at least two years prior to the election. Board members must have the ability to attend future business meetings that are held at our annual reunions. They must communicate via the Internet and by phone on a regular basis and must make the commitment to provide the time necessary to serve in the position - none of these are ceremonial positions.

If you want to run for an office on the VSPA Board of Directors, you'll need to submit a photo and one-page biography. Send your bio and photo to VSPA's Guardmount Editor, Mike Kennedy, electronically ([mike3sps@verizon.net](mailto:mike3sps@verizon.net)) or by surface mail (14766 Foxfield Lane, Fontana, CA 92336) soon enough so that he receives your information by **August 5, 2025**. The bios and a ballot will be made available in the next issue of Guardmount.

The duties of the elected board positions below are from the VSPA By-Laws:

**PRESIDENT** - The duties of the President shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Act as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Directors.
- B. Cause to be called all regular and special meetings of the organization.
- C. Preside over all regular and special meetings of the organization.
- D. Enforce the Constitution and By-Laws.
- E. Direct and supervise the operation of the organization.
- F. Prepare and present the Board of Directors Annual Report at the annual business meeting.
- G. Coordinate the confirmation of all appointed staff members with the Board of Directors.
- H. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to his care and turn over the folder to his successor.
- I. Be an ex-officio member of all committees, except the "Nominations Committee."

**VICE PRESIDENT and SECOND VICE PRESIDENT** - The duties of the Vice President and the Second Vice President shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Assist the President in the discharge of his duties.





- B. Assume the duties of the President in the event of his absence, illness, or call to eternal Guardmount.
- C. Execute the powers and authority of the President, when required, in the absence of the President.
- D. Serve as elected members of the Board of Directors.
- E. Serve as Chairman and member of the Public Relations Committee if a committee is necessary.
- F. Serve as a member of the Scholarship Committee.
- G. Prepare and present annual reports relative to the operation of their respective office at the annual business meeting.
- H. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to their care and turn over the folder to his successor.
- I. The Second Vice President shall provide oversight for all record keeping activities and assist the President by maintaining hard copy records when necessary.

**SECRETARY** - The duties of the Secretary shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Officiate when required in the absence of the President and Vice President.
- B. Serve as an elected member of the Board of Directors.
- C. Serve as a member of the Membership Committee.
- D. Be the clerk of the organization.
- E. Be the custodian of all business-related non-financial records and materials, with the exception of: those records which are created and maintained by the VSPA Historian, the VSPA Membership Chairman, the VSPA Treasurer and VSPA Communications Director Don L. Poss; or those records which are required for performance of the duties of the registered agent and liaison with VSPA's tax accountant and tax attorney. All such records shall remain property of the organization.
- F. Take minutes and keep permanent records of the proceedings of all annual Business Meetings and meetings of the Board of Directors.
- G. Prepare and distribute election ballots, if necessary and as required.
- H. Ensure that only members in good standing vote on organizational business. The Secretary will be assisted by the Membership Chairman and the Sergeant-at-Arms.
- I. Serve as official organization correspondent.
- J. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to his care and turn over the folder to his successor.

**TREASURER** - The duties of the Treasurer shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Serve as an elected member of the Board of Directors.
- B. Act as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee if the committee is necessary.
- C. Be the Chief Financial Officer of the organization.
- D. Be the custodian of all financial records of the organization.
- E. Receive and be responsible for the collection of all monies due and payable to the organization.
- F. Have custody of all organization funds, and shall provide for the safekeeping, retention, disbursement, and investment in a manner acceptable to the Board of Directors.

- G. Receive donations on behalf of the organization.
- H. Issue letters in acknowledgement of all donations as required by tax codes.
- I. To work with the President to make such reports and returns as are required by Federal, State and local governments, the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution, and these By-Laws, including the disbursement of appropriate taxes and fees.
- J. Maintain accounts appropriate to the structure and activities of the organization and in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and principles.
- K. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to his care and turn over the folder to his successor.

**HISTORIAN** - The duties of the Historian shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Serve as an elected member of the Board of Directors.
- B. Serve as Chairman of the Historical Committee if a committee is necessary.
- C. Prepare and present a report at the annual business meeting regarding the history projects completed during the preceding year.
- D. Keep a current folder that includes all official correspondence, records, and official materials assigned to his care and turn over the folder to his successor.





## KNIFE 13 COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION



The medallions are being sold as a fund-raising effort to build two memorials to honor the 18 Security Policemen and five aircrew members who were assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing at Nakhon Phanom, RTAFB, Thailand. They perished in a CH53 Helicopter crash, call sign: KNIFE-13, that went down enroute



to the Mayaguez Rescue Staging Area on May 13, 1975. Their names are on the medallion. The memorials will be constructed at two locations and are pending final approval. All additional donations for the memorial will be accepted. The VSPA is a tax exempt 501(c)(19) Military Association.

**Height:** 4 inches    **Width** 2.5 inches    **Thick:** 5/32"    **Plating:** Shiny Gold

Questions regarding the memorials may be directed to VSPA President Jerry Nelson:    **Cell:** (210) 273-4777    **Email:** [jrnell1423@aol.com](mailto:jrnell1423@aol.com)

**Sales POC:** The Vietnam Security Police Association BX

Email address: [vspastore@yahoo.com](mailto:vspastore@yahoo.com)

Phone: (989) 686-3639 - Credit cards are accepted.

Checks payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association with a note for the KNIFE-13 Memorial may be mailed to:

VSPA BX c/o Van & Joyce Digby  
3062 Lantern Court  
Bay City, MI 48706

Online ordering and credit card processing is available in the VSPA BX located at [VSPA.COM](http://VSPA.COM) by clicking on STORE at the top of the page.

You may also go to <https://vspa.coffeecup.com/shop/> then click on PRODUCT CATEGORIES and select CHALLENGE COIN.

**COST:** \$ 25.00 in honor of the 25th Anniversary of Defensor Fortis, plus shipping & handling, which depends upon the weight and number of medallions purchased.



**WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN**







## KNIFE 13 MEMORIAL FUND RAISER COMMEMORATIVE LITHOGRAPH



**Height: 24 inches**  
**Width 18 inches**  
**Color: Sepia/bronze**

**THE PIETA** – Honoring the Military Nurses of the Vietnam War by Delita Alvarez Piercy, approved and painted from the original Vietnam Women's Memorial Sculpture by Glenna Goodacre.

The lithograph depicts a military nurse holding a wounded soldier and is known as The Pieta. The beautiful lithograph was made available to the VSPA by the artist, Delita Piercy, to honor our members for their service and sacrifice. The Pieta lithographs are being sold as a fund-raising effort to build two memorials to honor the 18 Security Policemen and five aircrew members who were assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing at Nakhon Phanom, RTAFB, Thailand. They perished in a CH53 Helicopter crash, call sign: KNIFE-13, that went down enroute to the Mayaguez Rescue Staging Area on May 13, 1975. The memorials will be constructed at two locations and are pending final approval. **The frame is for display only. The Pieta is being sold unframed and would be a superb gift for Veterans and nurses.**

Questions regarding the lithograph may be directed to Robert DeCubellis, VSPA 2<sup>nd</sup> VP at 951 212-3999 or [dehollylu@gmail.com](mailto:dehollylu@gmail.com)

**COST:** \$ 25.00 in honor of the 25th Anniversary of Defensor Fortis, plus shipping and handling. The lithograph will be rolled and mailed in a tube

All additional donations for the memorial will also be accepted. The VSPA is a tax exempt 501(c)(19) Military Association.

**Sales POC:** The Vietnam Security Police Association BX

Email address: [vspastore@yahoo.com](mailto:vspastore@yahoo.com)

Phone: (989) 686-3639 - Credit cards are accepted.

**CHECKS** for purchase and/or donations payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association with a note for the KNIFE-13 Memorial may be mailed to:

VSPA BX c/o Van & Joyce Digby  
3062 Lantern Court  
Bay City, MI 48706

Online ordering and credit card processing is available in the **VSPA BX** located at **VSPA.COM** by clicking on **STORE** at the top of the page, then click on **PRODUCT CATEGORIES**, then click on **FUND RAISING FOR KNIFE-13 MONUMENTS**. You may also go to <https://vspa.coffeecup.com/shop/> then click on **PRODUCT CATEGORIES** and select **FUND RAISING FOR KNIFE-13 MONUMENTS**.

**WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN**





## Vietnam Security Police Association J.J. CHESTNUT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

(<http://www.vspa.com/t-rip-chestnut-1998.htm>)

Richard A. Gano, Colonel, USAF (Ret.), Life Member #46; Bien Hoa 1966-67

**Deadline: September 1, 2025**

The VSPA (USAF) has established a scholarship fund in memory of J.J. "Jacob" Chestnut. J.J. was a career USAF Security Policeman and served two tours in the Republic of Vietnam, with the 12th Security Police Squadron and the 633d Security Police Squadron. After completion of his military career, J.J. Chestnut became a member of the U.S. Capital Police. In 1998, during an attack which shocked the nation, J.J. Chestnut was killed in the line of duty defending the U.S. Capital Building by a deranged individual attempting to gain access to sensitive areas. J.J. Chestnut is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

All VSPA members, spouses, children, grandchildren, stepchildren/step-grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are eligible to compete for this scholarship. Normally one \$1000.00 award is given annually. The award will be granted to those seeking education beyond the high school level and may include trade schools, community colleges, junior colleges or four-year college or university.

The deadline for submission of this scholarship application is the first day of September each year. The basis for the award will be recommendation(s), Grade Point Average (GPA) and the applicant's response to one of the below listed questions and recommendation.

VSPA members may request applications on behalf of applicants via the public bulletin board on the VSPA Web Site, email, or telephone. Applications may also be requested by survivors of a deceased VSPA Member.

Please complete the biographical data and recommendation. On a separate piece of paper please respond to one of the following questions, in 500 words or less:

1. In what instances, if any, do you feel that the United States is justified in taking military action?

*Or*

2. Many people feel the military today is alienated from the general population. How can this alienation be eliminated or prevented?

Submit the completed application **no later than September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year applying** via e-mail to: [rickgano@gmail.com](mailto:rickgano@gmail.com) or regular mail to:

Richard (Rick) Gano  
31025 S. Kaufman Road  
Canby, OR 97013  
(503) 577-2199



**Vietnam Security Police Association  
J.J. Chestnut Memorial Scholarship Application**

**APPLICANT'S BIOGRAPHICAL DATA**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF VSPA MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL CURRENTLY ATTENDING OR LAST ATTENDED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT DEGREE/EDUCATION LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL CURRENTLY OR PLANNING ON ATTENDING:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

GRADE POINT AVERAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

**RECOMMENDATION OF SCHOOL OFFICIAL, PRINCIPAL, UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATOR,  
DEPARTMENT CHAIR, OR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR**

NAME OF APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS CONCERNING APPLICANT'S QUALIFICATIONS AND POTENTIAL:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL MAKING RECOMMENDATION





## All That Glitters Is Not Gold....

By

Robert “Deke” DeCubellis, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)  
VSPA Life Member 347 & AFSFA Charter/Life Member  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Vietnam Security Police Association



It's Monday evening as I write this. It's Tuesday in Ho Chi Minh City, the 30th of April 2025. Fifty years ago today, communist troops paraded into Saigon as helicopters evacuated the US Ambassador and the remaining USMC and CIA operatives from the embassy compound. Yes, today is a Fiftieth Anniversary, a Golden Anniversary, but one that did not glitter for America, its military and the allies that served with us in the endeavor to keep Vietnam free from communism.

I distinctly remember the news that day. In my job as an air reserve technician at Western Air Force Reserve Region at Hamilton AFB in Marin County CA, I was privy to regular intel briefings. It didn't take a rocket scientist to foresee that an “April 30th” was only a matter of time. Vietnamization, the peace deal Kissinger negotiated, the demise of Richard Nixon and the “make things all nice again” efforts of Gerald Ford were only a part of it. Nevahmind the politics both in government and the military leadership of those days. It all contributed to the massive tarnish that was April 30th.

As I reflect on this anniversary, I think about my cousin Carmen, my high school buddies Joe, Russ, Dickie, and college buddy Richie. All are members of that brotherhood and sisterhood that are the more than 58,000 men and women that honorably served and were sacrificed in Southeast Asia in a war we were not allowed to win. Furthermore, I think about the men and women who got that treasured “Freedom Bird” ride home. Some returned physically shattered by the weapons of war to face years of therapy and rehab. What was later discovered was the psychological wounds that would become known as PTSD and the chemical wounds that would later be diagnosed as derived from Agent Orange exposure.

My buddy Army Nurse Charlotte succumbed to Multiple Sclerosis and many others have passed from diabetes, heart disease, cancers and the like. Our numbers dwindle as AO whittles away at us all. Since our return to the “World,” we veterans and our spouses have fought extended and often futile battles with the Veteran's Administration to receive the care promised as a condition of service and compensation for such service-connected disabilities. Those battles will continue.

But I'll end this with some good thoughts. I've been privileged to serve with some of the greatest people I could ever hope to meet. The mentoring of some have made me the man I am today. I still serve with many of them in our beloved VSPA and other veterans-oriented organizations. My brothers at the Vet Center also provide a big measure of comfort. And I'm certain that the battles we've fought since getting off those freedom birds have helped those who actively serve today. As I live and breathe, may they never suffer the indignities and ignorance that we have overcome. That battle will continue. Welcome Home my brothers and sisters.





## Remembering February 22, 1968, one night at Pleiku Air Base Vietnam

By

Steve Shelt

VSPA Life Member 157, Pleiku, 67-68



Before I begin my story on one night at Pleiku Air Base in Vietnam let me start at the beginning of my Air Force service. I joined in the Air Force in March 1966 and went through Basic training at Lackland AFB. After basic I received orders for K.I. Sawyer AFB with the 410th Bombardment Wing, 410th Combat Defense Squadron. There I OJT'd and worked the flight line. After one winter of freezing in below zero weather guarding B-52s and KC-135s, I volunteered for Vietnam and was sent to AZR training (Combat Preparedness Course) at Camp Bullis. Then I received my orders for the 35th Air Police Squadron, Phu Cat RVN. I arrived in Vietnam through Cam Ranh Bay and within a day transported to Phu Cat. Within a couple weeks I was transferred to Pleiku. So, there we are now stationed at Pleiku 633rd Combat Support Group, 633rd Air Police Squadron. In August, as I remember, I was redesignated a Security Policeman. Now let's get to the night of February 22, 1968.

On this night I arrived at Central Security Control (CSC) at approximately 2300 hrs. to draw equipment and waited for guardmount. Within a few minutes the Flight Chief came out of CSC and said fall in. First, he briefed on the daily intelligence report, post assignments, open ranks for inspection and then the command to post. All in line with a typical midnight shift. I then jumped in a jeep and was transported to the munition area and posted on Bravo 2 tower adjacent to the north perimeter. After climbing up into the tower, I checked my equipment and weapons so that I knew exactly where they were positioned. It was always a challenge reloading a belt in the M-60 in darkness if you did not preset the ammo belt before you really needed to in a stress situation. I then grabbed my radio and called control for a radio check "10-8/10-10." I began to scan the terrain with my Starlight Scope in order to become comfortable with my fields of fire. Now it is a long night staring and listening in the darkness.

Within a couple hours I could see tracers and flares in the distance. But it was not close. Before I knew it, I could hear an AC-47 running down the taxi way and taking off. My guess was to support where I saw the tracers and flares. It appeared to be a normal night but as I knew that can change in a second. Within about 15-20 minutes after the AC-47 took off, K-9 notified me that he had an alert just east of my position. I began to scan the area with my Starlight scope but could not see anything moving or unusual. I let K-9 know that I scanned the area but saw nothing unusual. In a few seconds I heard the sound of a mortar firing. I recognized that sound and knew it was incoming. The radio began to open up with different posts communicating "in coming." Damn, my heart started pumping. At that point the base siren began to blare, warning the base of an attack. The sound of explosions was deafening. One right after the other. It continued for about 15 minutes maybe. I counted about 18 rounds landing on base. There was a call to CSC from one of the posts on the flightline for assistance. He stated, "I'm Hit." CSC responded, "Stand by sending help." I grabbed the M-60 and was waiting for any penetration in the wire, but none came. Just as quick as it started, it stopped. The base siren sounded the all clear.

After a couple hours I figured it was quiet enough to eat my Cs. "Yummy, I got beans and franks." I always enjoyed beans and franks rather than Ham and Eggs or any of the other disgusting food that came in those boxes. Your best option was firing up a sterno can and heating them up. It melted the lard and anything else you could not identify. The rest of the night was quiet. Finally, as the sun was rising, I was relieved by day shift. I arrived back at CSC/Arms Room to clean and turn in equipment and walked back to the barracks. The flight chief informed us that the SP who was wounded on a flight line would recover. As it was normally after a midnight



shift, once back in the barracks we drank a few beers, sat around listening to music, and shot the bull prior to going to bed.

As I laid in my bunk I thought: “Just another wonderful night in Nam.” “I’m ready to leave for the world of round eyes.” “I’m a short timer with 13 days and a wake up.” I departed Pleiku Air Base and Vietnam on March 10th. After a 30 day leave at home in Ohio, I departed for reassignment to England and Bentwaters RAF, 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, 81st Security Police Squadron. On March 10, 1970, I separated from the Air Force.

This story although not one of importance in the larger scale of the war shows what it was like as a Security Policeman defending an Air Base in Vietnam. I’m sure there are many stories similar in nature and maybe more interesting, such as the TET Offensive attacks on air bases on January 1968, but I believe most SPs can relate to this one night.



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## **S.S. Mayaguez**

### **Remembering 50 years ago**

By

Gary L. Weeks (MSgt, Ret)

VSPA Life Member 1038, Nakhon Phanom, 75-76

This past month has been so damn hard for me, every time I let my mind drift, I’m back at NKP, my mind flashes images, even now as I sit here typing, I’m seeing images remembering words spoken and the damn box lunch that I ate after it sat on the front seat of the Deuce and a Half for over 8 hours. I’m the last person to be writing about what happened, my words can’t paint the pictures or express the feelings I had or am having at this moment, but I’ll do my best.

It’s been 50 years (I can hardly believe it’s been so long) and many nights as I’ve laid in my bed trying to fall asleep, I’ve rewound those days, hours and minutes over and over again. Many have asked me what I saw, heard, witnessed and it’s always been a struggle for me to recount my experience in words. I pray they’ll understand. I know it wasn’t enough. Over my 24-year career I’ve witnessed many tragedies but, those days in May 1975 are seared in my brain, it’s like a 24/7 movie playing in a loop, over and over again. I try to keep those memories buried behind a wall but, every year on the anniversary they come roaring back, and I relive those days over and over again. This is hard, but maybe it will drive some of the memories back behind the wall for a little while.

May 13, 1975, around 9-9:30 my next-door neighbor, Skip (a fellow SP Sgt) and I headed to the base for our regular shift. We walked the short distance to the bus station and got our normal Thai Iced Tea for our ride to base. When we arrived at the gate, we noticed the LE troops decked out with their flak vests, helmets and normal alert gear. They informed us we should hurry up to CSC because the squadron and base were on alert. We took a cab to the Cop Shop area and noticed a flight of guys, some standing and others sitting on the ground around their ditty bags with their weapons. At the time I didn’t know exactly how many there were, but I noticed some of the guys I knew, A1C Moran was one. He and I processed into the squadron together and had our orientation together. In 80/81, I would meet SSgt Ilaoa’s brother, Albert in the SP’s at Kunsan AB, Korea (another story). I tried to find out what was going on, but those of us coming in for shift change were told to hurry up and get our weapons so that shift change could occur. That night I was assigned to SAT-8, basically responsible for initial



posting of flightline posts, getting the box lunches for everyone, and carrying coffee & Kool-Aid drink throughout the night as well as relief breaks as needed. Guardmount was quick and short, flight chief (MSgt I don't remember his name but his nickname was Blinky, because of his uncontrollable blinking) and TSgt Blowser came out and gave us a short briefing about getting the guys off duty because of the deployment of our guys.

We had several classified tasking's throughout my time (Mar – Oct 75) at NKP. Almost all the SP's assigned to NKP were part of the 50-man task force that could be mobilized for several classified deployments. Our designation came from our AZR training we received at Camp Bullis before being assigned to bases in Southeast Asia.

Many of us that night (not tasked) thought it was another false deployment to evacuate the Laotian Embassy. So, I completed the flightline postings and went to the in-flight kitchen for box lunches, coffee and Kool-Aid. Once I had the drinks, I proceeded to the flightline to give the departing SP's something to drink. I'd have to go back for the lunches for the other posts. I wasn't fast enough to get there before the first three choppers took off, so I was only able to get drinks to the last chopper because it hadn't taken off yet due to delays.

For some reason I'm drawing a blank on where I was when I heard the radio transmission, but we heard a radio transmission that the pilot of one of the three helicopters had seen a flash of light, and they had lost contact with Knife 13. By the time they had banked back around Knife 13 was already on the ground and burning.

I think I was in CSC for something when I heard the transmissions. By then the last chopper had already taken off in route to U-Tapao, which was the jumping off point for the rescue mission. About an hour later the flight chief called me and Skip (he was SAT-9). He told us to take the best "Deuce and a Half's" to the motor pool and to work on them until we had the best 2 that could make the trip with the convoy to the crash-site in the morning. I was the one who ended up working on the trucks. Skip ended up taking care of lunches, drinks and relief breaks. Throughout the night I changed tires, topped off fluids, checked tire pressures and ended up with 2 Deuce and a Half's that I thought could make the trip. The flight chief asked us again whether we wanted to go or not, it was going to be gruesome (I pretty much figured that) and we were not going to be armed. The Thai Air Force provided 2 young troops with an M-16 and one 30 round clip each. Skip and I made sure we carried our K-bars. We would only have a box lunch for the duration of our convoy no matter how long it took. Skip and I would each have a radio for communications.

The convoy would assemble and depart from the Motor Pool yard. We were briefly introduced (I cannot remember a single word) but the Convoy Commander said something about trying to keep together because the deuce ½'s were pretty slow. They didn't like having to go slow. Anyway, once we got to the site, they told us all we had to wait. They had cut down a large section of saplings so we could get the trucks backed up to the crash-site). EOD told the Convoy Commander we needed to wait until they could determine that all the ammo cooked off. A group of Thai Marines had been tasked to secure the area during the night, and I remember they had taken one of the helmets from the crash and propped it up on a stick close to the crash.

When we were finally cleared to move the trucks in, they said the medics would be removing the bodies as we cleared the wreckage of the helicopter and placed the pieces on one of the duces. I remember they would bring the body bags out and lay them down. In the meantime, local Thai villagers had gathered and were observing the rescue, our Thai interpreter was interviewing many of the villagers from the surrounding area. I remember one old Thai hunter/fisherman who told the interpreter that he had heard 2 explosions, one in the area followed by a loud splash, and the second on the ground with a big fireball. The river was about 1.5 miles from the crash site, and the engine was ½ mile away, buried 6' deep into the ground, indicating it had fallen from a great height. The actual crash site was very small in comparison to the size of the helicopter. I remember one of the medics

explaining to the Commander that some of the bodies or body parts couldn't be found. One of the convoy team members said they had found one of the victims clinging to the back ramp of the chopper. I overheard a conversation between what I think was the Medic and the Convoy Commander, in which the medic said they had found bones and bodies they thought they could identify as 19 or 20 out of 23 known onboard the helicopter.

During the recovery of the bodies an old woman came to the interpreter and told him that she had smelled something really, really bad along the path as she was coming to the site. The Commander sent a couple of the officers off with her to try and find out what it was and if it possibly could be someone from the chopper. They came back a couple of hours later and reported to the On-Scene Commander that they hadn't found anything. The local Thais around the crash site were laughing it up until I told one of our Thai AF guys to tell them to stop it or leave. Anyway, after the Medics got done with the bodies, they had brought in another helicopter during the day with some extra helping hands and other supplies, etc. Once it was determined that there were no additional bodies or parts (bodies and fragments accounting for 19 or 20 out of the original 23) to be found they loaded the body bags and a couple guys from the site, and they flew back to NKP.

As I mentioned, each of us had a box lunch, but by the time we finally got around to eating it was around 2pm, about 16 hours after they had been prepared. I would've preferred a C ration versus the box lunch.

During the recovery of our people from the crash, they were also retrieving other parts of the helicopter that were not in the immediate vicinity. The rotor blades were approximately 1½ miles from the crash-site, these were lifted out by helicopter, along with the engine which was ½ a mile from the crash-site 6' in the ground and loaded on a flatbed truck that had been brought to the crash-site.

I heard from SP's who at the base and are now members of VSPA and the NKP Reunion Group that a small service was held back at the base for the bodies on the chopper when they were first returned.

The rest of us were left to load all the remaining pieces onto the back of my deuce. It took hours to load up and by the time we finished, our Thai security team of 2 had disappeared and we were left to our own defenses for the return trip. Having the heaviest load in my deuce, I obviously brought up the tail of the convoy. The heavy load put an extra strain on the deuce's, which weren't very fast, and made them even slower.

Apparently, the rest of the convoy thought it was secure enough and that we would remember the route back, so they simply beat feet back to base. I was soon the only truck in sight and unable to communicate because the radios were useless since the batteries had died hours earlier. So, it was a long and lonely drive back to base with a chopper that hours earlier had carried my fellow SPs and a couple of friends to their deaths and as far as I know there was nothing to explain the crash. I honestly believed the fisherman and his explanation of 2 explosions.

When I finally made it back to the base the rest of the vehicles had made it back about 40 minutes before me. I was instructed to park the truck inside a hanger and report to CSC. When I got there, I told the flight chief I wasn't feeling well, and he immediately started in with I told you what you would be doing and to expect the worst. I tried to tell him that it wasn't the gruesome scene of recovering our guys but, the fact that neither of us had had anything but a box lunch to eat in over 28 hours and very little water. He was a sh\*t bag, but our Assistant Flight Chief, TSgt Blowser understood.

I remember the first article that ran in the US Air Force times that read "23 Airmen Died during a Routine Training Mission," and this sent the cops into an uproar and almost caused a riot on base. Cops refused to take their post. What many people didn't and still don't understand is that our President is the reason our bases were forced to

close. He violated our Status of Forces Agreement with Thailand in which the USA would not stage or launch combat troops from within Thailand.

I'm sure I've left out a lot, but this is most of my memory of those days, but if you could hook up a projector to my mind, I'd show you everything in B/W with some sound. Like I said, I ran into SSgt Ilaoa's brother while stationed at Kunsan from 80-83, he was a 1st Lt. SP, and I believe he was TDY from Clark AFB, and he heard me talking one night to a friend in CSC (Central Security Control) and he told me his brother was on Knife 13. I told him everything I could remember because he had been trying for years to get the recognition for those on the chopper as being part of the last official combat mission of the Vietnam War. President Ford's initial orders for the rescue and General (what's his name) decision was to use Cops from Thailand to keep from violating the Status of Forces Agreement. Anyway, Lt. Ilaoa listened, but I don't know whether he believed me or not.

Anyway, that's pretty much it. A day or night doesn't go by that I don't remember those guys sitting in the parking lot of the Cop Shop at NKP waiting to leave, all joking and laughing like it was going to be an exciting adventure without a care in the world. God Bless you all.

I originally wrote this piece in response to a request from a Medic, Sgt William White who was also at the crash-site as the dental technician. There are a few things I'm not 100% sure about and I'm wondering if maybe it's my own mind that's not allowing me to remember what I witnessed for the sake of my own sanity or it's simply my inability to put into words what I was a part of. I can't describe the smells of that day. I only know that I've never smelled anything like it since and I've been to at least 6 crash-sites in my 24yr career.



"So you caught him puttin' bombs in an airplane. So what? He's a bomb loader and that's what he's supposed to do."





## FROM YOUR SERVICE OFFICER

Jaime A. Lleras, Life Member #887, Binh Thuy AB – 1970



### BENEFITS UPDATE

**HYPERTENSION** – It's my understanding that the VA continues to rate HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HBP) under the VA PACT ACT at 0% disability, but the presumptive is that it's service-connected (SC), which is most important. It's all about the numbers. The VA rates hypertension on a scale from 10% to 60% disability based on your Diastolic (bottom number) and your Systolic (top number). Here's the breakdown of ratings Diagnosis – Diastolic (bottom number) & Systolic (top number) are as follows:

RATING	Diagnosis – Diastolic (bottom number) & Systolic (top number)
0%	Just for presumptive service-connected.
10%	If your bottom number is 100 - 109 or your top number is 160-199.
20%	If your bottom number is 110 - 119 or your top number is 200 plus.
40%	If your bottom number is 120 - 129.
60%	If your bottom number is 130 or higher.

You'll receive a 0% just for presumptive service-connected (since you're taking meds for HBP, that might be the reason why your numbers are low).

If you filed a claim for HBP and received a 0% compensation rating, you can disagree with this rating by submitting a VA Form 20-0995 - Supplemental Claim, along with some additional/new evidence that's relevant to your case or identifying new evidence that your condition is worse than the 0% rating. If you are currently taking meds for HBP you should state that's the reason your numbers are below the VA rating scale is because of your meds. A supporting note from your doctor would help your case.

Here's why a 0% rating should be most important to you. If you are married, and unfortunately, die of a Service-Connected condition such as Hypertension (HBP), your spouse can put in for VA compensation for life. All she needs to do is submit a claim with the VA (with the assistance of a Claims Service Officer along with the following documents, which are:

1. A VA Form 21P-534EZ (Application for **DIC**, Survivors Pension and/or Accrued Benefits). Be aware that this form is also used for applying for a Survivors Pension, which is much different than a DIC. I will be discussing this at our reunion to our members and Sisterhood.
2. A copy of the death certificate with either the primary or secondary cause of death stating the condition which might fall under the Agent Orange medical conditions. So, if you die of complications of HBP, she would be covered.
3. A copy of your marriage license.

**BTW** – If you have been rated 100% T&P disabled by the VA for 10 or more years, it does not matter how you died. It does not have to be for a SC condition.

**TINNITUS** – There's been talk that Congress is considering Tinnitus not being related to service connection. If the law is changed, the VA will no longer accept Tinnitus as SC. Therefore, if you have Tinnitus (constant ringing in your ear(s), you should submit a claim asap.

**SLEEP APNEA** – Many veterans try to claim Sleep Apnea as SC but usually get denied even though the VA has diagnosed them with the condition and has provided them with the necessary equipment to help with the condition, it still needs to be provided. Usually, it's approved as a secondary to another primary medical or mental condition the veteran might have.

### HOW DOES VA DECIDE A RATING?

One of the major misconceptions is that combined simply means added together, which is not true as the VA uses what is known as a combined ratings table. This means that a person's efficiency is determined first by the most disabling—or highest individually rated condition, and then by less disabling conditions ranked in order of severity.

A veteran may receive a letter from VA notifying them that they have two service-connected disabilities, TBI and a back injury, rated at 50% each. Normally, 50% plus 50% would equal 100%, but this veteran's total disability rating is listed as 80%.

#### This is how the combined ratings table works:

In this case, the VA takes 100 (**representing a whole efficient person**) and subtracts the highest individually rated condition (TBI at 50%). This means the veteran is initially considered 50% disabled and 50% efficient.

**100% whole efficient person** – 50% = 50%

The veteran's back injury is also rated at 50%, but no longer at 50% of the **whole efficient person**. Instead, the back injury rating is subtracted from the **remaining efficient person**.

**50% remaining efficient person** – 50% = 25%

So only 25% (for the back injury) is added to the first 50% (for the TBI).

50% (TBI) + 25% (back injury) = 75% combined disability rating

VA rounds the combined disability rating up to the nearest 10, so 75% becomes **80% total disability**.

**VETERANS USING HOSPITAL ERs** – If you ever need to be taken to the ER in an emergency there is one additional step you should plan on. Once you are taken to the ER, have someone in your family contact the VA about Hospital Care. The number is 844-724-7842 and once they dial this number they should ask for a code number.

Jaime A. Lleras  
VSPA Claims Service Officer  
301-848-3399  
CHIEFJAL9@GMAIL.COM



## A MESSAGE FROM JANET MATTHEWS, CHAIR OF THE WARRIORS MEDAL OF VALOR COMMITTEE

Congratulations to the 2024 recipients of the Warriors Medal of Valor. Sarge would be proud to have you included in this special group. For the new members of the VSPA, be assured that Sarge would seek you out just so he could say, "Welcome Home, Welcome to the VSPA." Not all of you had the chance to meet Sarge, though I hope you have heard about him. Alvin W. Matthews, MSgt, USAF retired, served in the 483rd Security Police Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam from January 1971 to January 1972. He was an instructor at the Security Police Academy before he retired from the Air Force in 1980. He found the VSPA on the Internet and like many of you, he kind of watched from a distance before deciding to join or attend a reunion. It is an honor to say that he is Life Member #127. Sarge stood his final Guardmount on January 4, 2008, his 66th birthday. His resting place is plot number 111 at Cedar Hill Cemetery, Scottsboro, Alabama, a plot he specifically selected to honor his Brothers. We have some wonderful memories of our Sarge. I am so glad that he found the VSPA. He loved this association, he loved his Brothers, and I know he is proud of the continued commitment and growth. He would definitely tear-up at the thought that you continue his dream of honoring his VSPA Brothers with this medal.

### *The Warriors Medal of Valor Request for Nominations*

Sarge and the Nominations Committee established the following criteria for consideration: The nominee must be a member in good standing of the VSPA plus any one or combination of the following:

- a. Valor (recognized or unrecognized by the Air Force) for service as an Air Policeman, Security Policeman or Augmentee in Vietnam or Thailand.
- b. Outstanding service to the members of the Vietnam Security Police Association. The Nominations Committee may consider the nomination of a civilian or member of the military, who is not a member of the VSPA, if they have provided outstanding and extraordinary service to the VSPA.
- c. Outstanding service to the military and/or Veterans.



You may submit the nomination by including the name and your justification for why this member deserves the medal. Please include as many **details** on their service as you can. Nominations must be submitted to me at the following email address: [janetmm62@gmail.com](mailto:janetmm62@gmail.com) no later than **August 8, 2025**. The Warriors Medal selection committee must have time to review the nominations, make the selections, engrave the medals and prepare the certificates. The medals and certificates will be presented at the VPSA Reunion Banquet in October. Thank you for your service and **WELCOME HOME!**

Janet Matthews, Daughter of VSPA Life Member #127



## DONATIONS AND ESTATE PLANNING BEQUESTS TO THE VSPA

The VSPA is an IRS recognized 501(c)(19) military association whose membership is over 95% War Veteran. Therefore, all donations are tax deductible. Donations, Employer Matching Funds and Estate Planning are an essential part of our lives that provide for our families as well as the entities that have meaning in our lives. Donations and Employer Matching Funds provide resources to support our VSPA daily activities and annual operations. Planned giving in the form of a bequest to the VSPA in your will or trust ensures the future of our mission while also expressing your commitment to that mission and our brotherhood. Because the VSPA is a tax-exempt charitable association, your bequest may also reduce estate taxes. As an alternative, you may also make a gift that may avoid probate by naming the VSPA as a beneficiary on an IRA, insurance policy, other retirement plans or securities.

When making your donation or bequest, you may designate that the funds be used by our general fund in support of our mission, or you may specifically designate that the funds be used by one of our programs like the Jacob J. Chestnut Memorial Scholarship Fund to provide educational scholarships to our members and their descendants, or to assist a member in need. You and your employer can make the arrangements for your donation and their matching donation by sending your donations in a check made payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association.

Your attorney or financial planner can make the arrangements for your estate-planning bequest. Our Treasurer, Richard Garcia, will provide you, your employer, and/or your estate with a letter of acknowledgement for tax purposes.

### IN-COUNTRY



**THE (UNDESERVED) GUILT OF DOING YOUR JOB.**

### IN-COUNTRY



**ALL RIDING THE "FREEDOM BIRD" WERE WINNERS!**

**In-Country Cartoons** are printed by permission of the creator Phil Fehrenbacher, U.S. Army Veteran in Vietnam, 68-69. His cartoons depict the experiences and memories of veterans who served in South Vietnam. While we may not have experienced all the situations depicted; we can all relate to the memories.

