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GUARDMOUNT

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

"We Take Care of Our Own"



VSPA BENCH PROJECT

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION



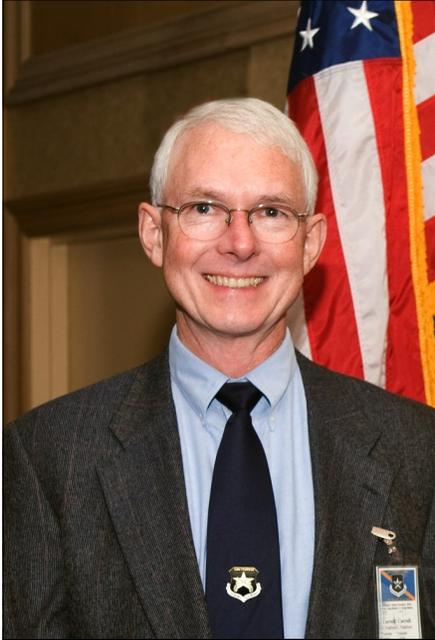
"WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN"

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

HONORING THE AIR POLICE AND SECURITY POLICE WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM AND THAILAND 1961-1975 ★ III DID NOT RETURN

7TH AIR FORCE HQ	CHU LAI	KO KHA	PHITSANULOK	TAN SON NHUT
BAN ME THECOT	DA LAT	KOBAT	PHU BAI	TUY HOA
BANGKOK	DA NANG	MONKEY MOUNTAIN	PHU CAT	VUNG TAU
BIEN HOA	DON MILANG	MIEUKHAN	PHU THI	UBON
BINH THUY	DONG HA	SAKHON PHANOM	QUI NHON	UDORN
CAM RANH BAY	HON TRE ISLAND	SHA TRANG	TARHEI	U-TAPAO
CAN THO	KHAC KHEO	PHAN RANG	TAN MY	UEI-DUBASSY-SARGON

Read Pages 1 and 2 for an update on the VSPA Bench project. Donations are still needed and gratefully accepted!



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Phil Carroll, President VSPA

Welcome Home, and please join me in saying a very enthusiastic *Welcome Back* to the incredible members-only Restricted Area of the award winning VSPA website! With a huge effort (more work than most of us can possibly understand, over a very long nine months) our Webmaster was able to whip a brand-new software supplier into shape and get their standard product extensively modified to work the way we need it to work, so we're finally back online. Thank you, Webmaster Don Poss! Quite honestly, our website is one of the central features that makes our Brotherhood function as well as it does. Without Don's tireless and artistic efforts, and his brother Larry's generosity in providing the infrastructure that makes it all run, I'm not sure we would have the association we enjoy today (and believe it or not, as I was writing this I got a phone call from

a prospective member who had just found our website and wanted to ask some questions about joining – and that happens all the time).

We are also a huge step closer to having our 2011 Reunion plans in place. We have approved the Reunion Brat to sign a contract with a hotel very close to Wright-Patterson AFB and the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. (Thanks to Jack Smith for giving us some "eyes on the ground.") We hope to release all the other details on the hotel and the reunion schedule sometime in April.

One detail of the reunion that I can announce now is that the Air Force has scheduled the dedication ceremony for our new black granite VSPA bench at the Defender's Memorial statue for Thursday, October 6. We've submitted our design (as approved by the VSPA Board), and all the text we want engraved (see page 3) on our bench, to the Air Force. The guy who will actually engrave the stone likes it, and the museum folks think it's great, but the formal Air Force approval process is still ongoing.

Our membership voted at the 2010 business meeting to fund the construction of this bench, with the hope of being able to recoup the money by asking for donations from members. The Board and the membership alike thought that although it's an outstanding permanent memorial to all of us who served as Air Police and Security Police in Vietnam and Thailand during the Vietnam War, including our 111 Brothers who did not make it home alive, it was simply too big a chunk of change for our bank account to absorb. So far we've received several very generous donations from members, but we still need a fair amount of additional money to finance the granite, the engraving, the placement and the long-term maintenance.

Please don't forget that these donations are tax-deductible - the IRS recognizes VSPA as a tax-exempt military association. If you can help with this very meaningful project, please make out your check to "Vietnam Security Police Association" and send it to VSPA Treasurer Richard Garcia.

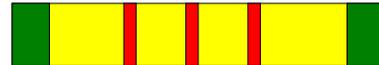


Please include a note specifying that it's a donation for the VSPA bench at the Defenders Memorial. Richard will send you a letter to document your donation, which you'll have for proof of the tax-deductible donation when you're filing next year's income taxes.

The Defender Memorial currently has two memorial benches, one at each side of the Defender Memorial. These were donated by and memorialize the SAC Elite Guard and the Air Force Security Police Association (now called the Air Force Security Forces Association).

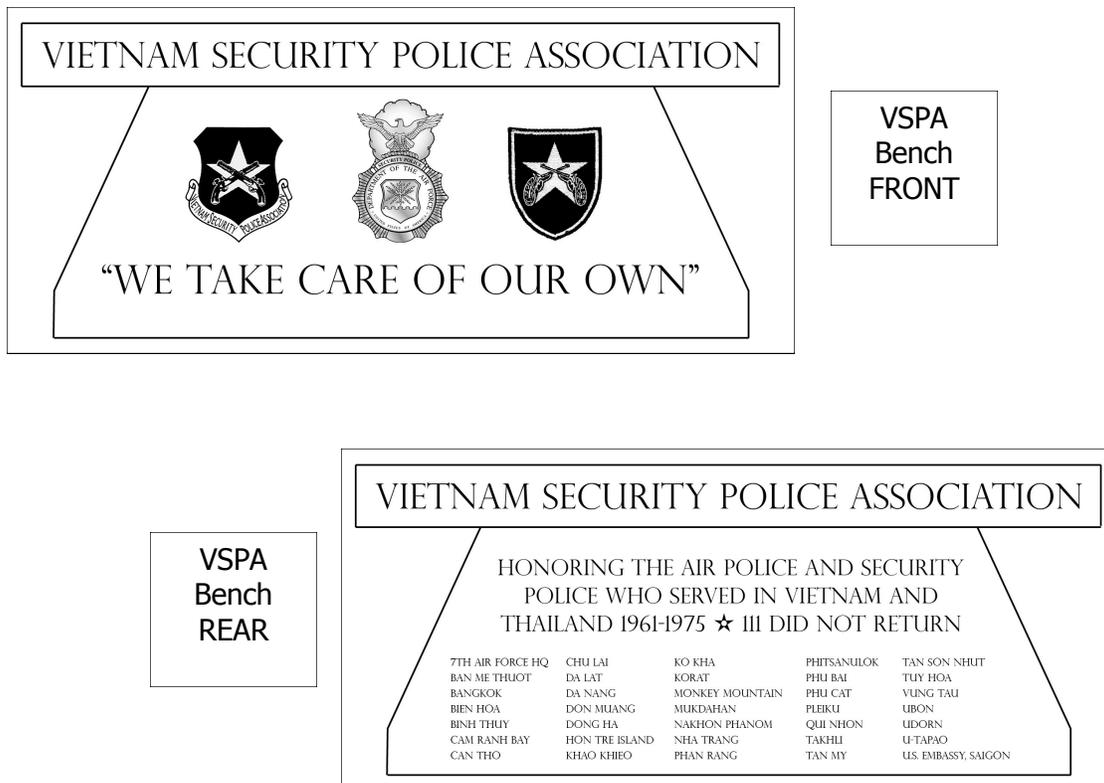
One last note: I just found and purchased an old book very similar to our VSPA History Book. This one is also published by Turner (like ours) and has a similar format (though ours obviously benefitted from a lot more layout effort and expertise). It's "The Men Behind the Guns: The History of Enlisted Aerial Gunnery 1917-1991." My father was a right gunner on a B-29 in the Pacific in WW II, and reading this book I can't help but think of what our sons and daughters and grandkids will have in their hands – with our History Book – after we're gone. It's quite a lasting legacy.

Welcome Home!



Phil Carroll—LM #336

Takhli, Nakhon Phanom 70-71; Tina X768, Charlie 2M45



My Experiences at the VSPA Reunion, San Antonio, Texas

By Zach Warr, grandson of Ed Warr, LM #287



I went back and forth between ideas quite a bit while trying to decide exactly what I should write this report on. At the beginning of the week I had absolutely no clue what a good subject would be. After my trip to Lackland Air Force Base with several Vietnam veterans, among other adventures, I knew exactly what I would write this paper on: The sense of camaraderie between the current members of the military and veterans alike. They understand each other very well and you can tell that there is a very strong sense of mutual respect between the two groups. I will touch on this and a few other subjects in this essay.

This is not the first Vietnam reunion I have been to with my grandparents. However, I believe this is the first reunion I have attended where I could understand and grasp what was occurring around me. Although I can never fully understand, as I am not a veteran or a member of the military, I can see and even feel the magnitude of what goes on at these events. Reunions often happen between people who have not seen each other in over forty years. Such an occurrence happened between my grandpa, Ed Warr, and Cornelius (Mike) O'Donahoe.

The two served together at the Ubon base in Thailand. They were in the exact same flight, lived in the same barracks together, and were friends during the war. This was Mike's first reunion. He told me that he has basically been hiding from anything associated with the war for the last 40 years. The experience was just too traumatic. He decided to give the VSPA reunion a shot after hearing about it from his friend. When my grandpa first saw Mike, he had no clue who he was talking to. After talking awhile, they realized the things I have stated above. Had Mike not come to this reunion, the two probably never would have remembered or thought about each other. Since he did, a friendship was reborn; a friendship that I am confident both will carry to the end.

Another thing that I noticed while on this trip was that there are a lot of similarities between the views of veterans, such as my grandpa, and those of current members of the military. Many Vietnam veterans are still bitter towards the people that served in Congress during that time. Congress cut off funding for the war and pulled the troops out of Vietnam and Thailand. Many have been quoted saying that if they would have had six more months, the enemy forces would have surrendered. However, since that did not happen, many people believe that the men of the armed forces lost the war. Troops were harassed verbally, physically, and even spit on when they came back from serving. This is appalling to me; these men were fighting to keep freedom alive and that's the kind of thanks they received...

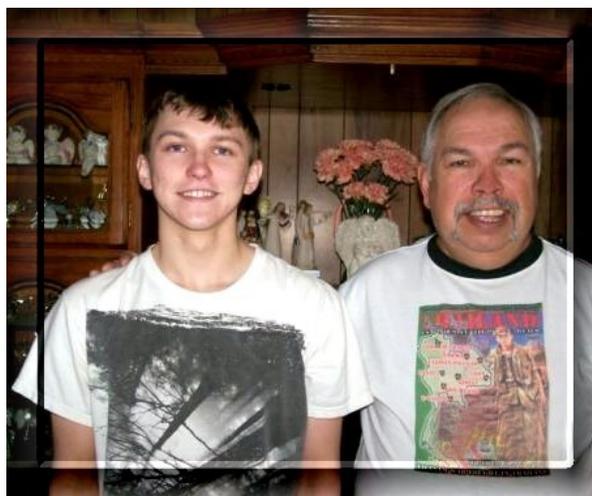
Many of today's troops have the same kinds of feelings about the war in Iraq. I spoke with one current soldier who has had three separate tours and is about to start his fourth. He told me that he strongly believes that if the armed forces were given another nine to twelve months in Iraq, that they would have been able to make it a self-sustaining, sufficient republic. Many of the current soldier's views are in line with his, and to be honest many are outraged with the decisions of politicians these days. They believe that politicians with no prior military experience have no place making decisions for the armed forces of the United States.

The purpose of this paper was not to pass judgment on any party or anyone's opinion. It was to report the things that I have learned during this trip. It was much more than a vacation for me; it was both a humbling and learning experience. I have always had respect for people who serve this country, but I now have a lot more. Some join because they have no other option, but most of the people in the military are very sincere and serious about fighting to keep this country free. For that reason, I take my hat off. They are very genuine, strong willed people.

Resources:

1. My grandpa, Ed Warr.
2. Other Vietnam veterans including but not limited to: Bill Cummings, Cornelius (Mike) O'Donahoe, Jim Stasney, and Phil Carroll.
3. The current dog handlers and military veterinarians/physicians at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

Editor's note: Zach is an Honorary member of the Thailand Dog Handlers and Old Dogs and Pups. He's a recent graduate from the ACC High School program, graduating 6 months early, and plans to attend college this fall. Zach is 18 years old.



Zach Warr with his grandfather,
VSPA LM #287, Ed Warr

Update on SSgt Brent Olson and Military Working Dog Blek

By Bill Cummings LM #173

Many of you will remember that at the VSPA reunion in San Antonio we raised some quick cash to help one of "our own". SSgt Brent Olsen and MWD Blek were severely injured in Afghanistan and had just returned stateside due to injuries sustained by a run in with five IEDs exploding on them during a "routine patrol". Due to the extreme generosity of our membership we were able to financially assist this young sergeant and his family during his recuperation at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC - SAMMC) at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.

SSgt Olson is still rehabilitating at Maxwell AFB, Alabama and has now returned to a light duty status at the 42nd Security Forces Squadron MWD section. Bill Cummings talks with him at least once a month to get updates and he is just in great spirits and is back doing some of the things he enjoys best about the Air Force – being a MWD handler!

So, here's an update that we just received from SSgt Olson:

"First things first, Blek is doing great. He comes to work with me everyday right now until his adoption is completed. He gained some weight after sitting with me for a while recovering. We're working the weight off together. His hearing is coming back. He still has trouble with it sometimes, but overall he's getting better. I now have returned to work on light duty at the kennels. I'm waiting to pick up another dog and start training to get back out there! I'm just helping out in the kennels trying to bring my experiences to the handlers here and all different types of scenarios that they could come across while down range.

Blek and I were a great team. We got finds, and went through some tough situations, but we came out on top. Like I said before, I can't wait to get back into the fight. I want to thank everyone that helped us out during our down time. And a personal thank you to Bill Cummings for checking up on me".

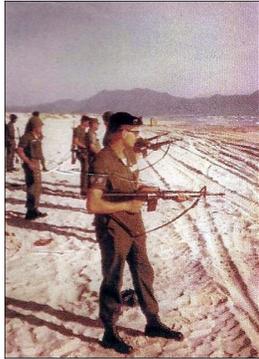
Blek now spends his time at "Fort Living Room" with some time at the 42nd SFS kennels. He still wants to do the job he was trained to do but he's also enjoying some of the perks that come with being a retired "veteran". SSgt Brent Olson continues to show the signs of the modern day warrior/Defender – he wants "back in the fight". I can't begin to tell you how many times he has told me that he needs to get back to the AOR – "There's a job there that I need to finish," as he puts it.



Blek and SSgt. Brent Olson

Coming Together To Remember The 43rd Anniversary Of The TET 1968 Offensive

by Pete Piazza LM #141



Pete Piazza, Cam Ranh Bay



L to R: Tom Vogt (Da Nang), James Crescentini (U-tapao), Pete Piazza (Bien Hoa), Robert Moore (Nha Trang), Pat Moore, and Barb Vogt

At 1600 hours, 30 Jan 2011, four Air Policemen/Security Policemen and two wives met at the Santa Fe Cattle Company restaurant in Midwest City, OK to commemorate the 43rd Anniversary of the 1968 TET Offensive. They were William (Pete) Piazza, James (Vito) Crescentini, Robert Moore and his wife Pat, and Tom Vogt and his wife, Barb.

As they do each year during this very special time, they get together to eat, drink and talk about their tour of duty in Vietnam or Thailand. These days, there are fewer folks showing up, because of sickness, passing away or the weather having to change their plans

This year everyone had gotten their copy of the VSPA History Book and it was the talk of the evening, along with many other things, like the weather, friends and comrades that have either passed away or moved on to other places.

Those who did not have their history book with them went through the one that Pete Piazza had brought for everyone to read and look at. Not surprisingly, there were some remarks about the pictures of those guys in the book and how different they looked now, compared to those many years ago.

As usual, everyone had good food, great drinks and, of course, outstanding company with our Brother Sky Cops and their wives. The sad part was that we are having fewer people show up each year. It may be that we will have to stop meeting since we cannot get very many participants, and that truly is the saddest part of all. If you read this and want to join us next year, please contact me through the VSPA website Bulletin Board!

Editor's note: Many of you know Kim Bayes Bautista, Associate Member, 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. She has graciously agreed to write a repeating column for GUARDMOUNT and we gratefully present her third article below.



FROM THE FIELD

of behavioral health

Kim Bayes-Bautista, MSSW, LCSW

Honorary Member VSPA



IMPACT OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) ON CHILDREN

PART 2 of 2

Research has shown that children respond in various ways to their parent's PTSD symptoms. The child may over identify with the parent and experience similar symptoms of the parent with PTSD. For example a child may begin to act fearful and anxious because these behaviors are being modeled by the parent. A child may take on parental duties (become parentified) as they may have to compensate for their parent's difficulties. An example would be a parent who is self-medicating by drinking heavily results in the child caring for siblings, cooking, cleaning and being protective of the parent. A child who has received little emotional support may exhibit problems at school, depression and anxiety, and have relational problems later in life.

Research revealed that children of veterans with PTSD are at higher risk for emotional, behavioral, academic, and interpersonal problems. An impaired parent and chaotic family experience can make it difficult to establish positive attachments to parents, which can make it difficult for children to create healthy relationships outside the family as well. The risk of violence in a family with a parent with PTSD is greater.

A fellow social worker, age 43, also a Navy brat and daughter of a Vietnam veteran, shared, "My dad's PTSD made my life a living hell. He would become angry at the drop of a hat, lock himself in his room for days at a time, and drink himself unconscious. He refuses to talk about Vietnam. I became anxious and withdrawn as a child for fear of provoking him. I am just now beginning to understand. I hope we get to talk about it someday."

A positive beginning step to help children cope with their parent's PTSD is to explain the reasons for the parent's difficulties. It is not necessary to burden them with graphic details. Tell them about the feelings. Children also need to know that they are not to blame and that the symptoms don't have anything to do with them. Older children may benefit from individual and/or family therapy or written materials that explain symptoms. Adult children may be angry with the parent which may abate after an honest, open discussion. Understanding leads to forgiveness.

Surviving Grief, part 3, by Janet Matthews Wise

The article below is the third in a series 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 5 short months.



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In the beginning of my grieving process, I lived from minute to minute. I could not fathom a tomorrow and a year later sounded like a foreign language. I wanted something to make the hurt stop. I felt like time stopped on January 4, 2008 and again on February 8, 2009.

For days I just muddled through out of sheer necessity. I had no plans and nothing to use to devise plans. It was a true spiritual wasteland. Finally, in November 2009, I realized that as much as it hurt, I was not getting anywhere. I was cheating myself of healing by refusing to grieve. I made an appointment with a grief counselor. Of course, I was concerned when his eyes kept widening as I told him all the things that transpired from January 4, 2008.

The best question he asked me was "what are you feeling?" Without hesitating, I answered fear. Fear because I know this is going to hurt even more when it really starts. When I finally address all the issues that come with grief, it is going to be unbearable. I made it to two sessions. By the end of the second session, I got my bearings and started truly working through the grief. It became a full time job. I was still muddling through the day to day but was active in feeling what I needed to feel.

Then the anniversaries, holidays and other milestones started. It was then that I discovered a new diversion. I wanted to run away. Truly leave everything. I used to fanaticize about getting all my money, my truck and my two cats and just driving away. From everything. On January 29, 2010, I hit rock bottom and almost did just that. I had one too many bad days at work with a difficult co-worker and left. I never intended to go back. Because of my pain, I was willing to sacrifice everything and walk away. I spent the next three full days wallowing. I am not good at wallowing. It made me feel weak and useless and out of control. February 2, 2010, 5:00 a.m. was a pivotal point...the clock alarmed and I had to decide what to do. I got up, went back to work, and got on with whatever was coming next. Sarge always said "you got to do what you got to do." I knew I had to stay and finish the grieving process.

The instinct to move on was stronger than the urge to run away. I knew deep inside that I could not run away from how I felt. A change of scenery is good for the soul. As long as the soul knows it is a reprieve not a solution, but a chance to rejuvenate and come back at life with some strength. By taking an opportunity to review circumstances from a different physical location, the work of grieving may not loom so darkly over your world.

After returning to my regular routine, I found Grace to be a great escape. I found that taking all the stuff and lying it at His feet was easier than carrying it from place to place. I found that saying "I can't do this today, it is not my grief today, but Yours" kept me from running away.

Now, a full year down the road, I am so glad I did not run. This outlet is proof that He had a different plan for me.

Peace and love be with you.

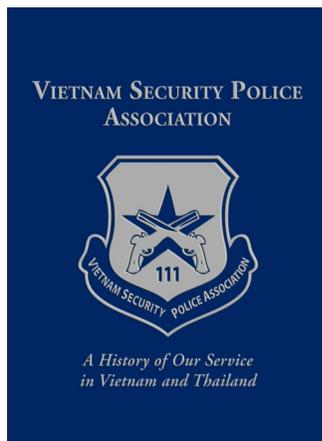
Janet



THE VSPA HISTORY BOOK UPDATE

By Steve Gattis

SGattis-LM49@vspa.com



The book is done and all pre-ordered books have been mailed by the publisher. I provided the publisher with 83 verified address changes that members reported to the VSPA. If you ordered and paid for a book and have not received it, please contact me immediately.

The VSPA purchased 100 additional copies of the book. They have been selling very fast. There are only 20 books left.

Something really incredible has happened with the extra books. Many of them have been purchased by our members as gifts. One member bought a book to donate to our raffle at the reunion. Others have purchased them for their local VA office, historical society and library. Other VSPA members have bought them to give to their brothers who cannot afford to buy a book. In fact, one member who had known hard times in his own life bought three books for members who had lost their jobs and could not buy a book without a long-term savings plan. The examples of personal giving have been amazing and will be a lasting testimonial to our motto: *We take care of our own.*

If you would like to purchase a book, please make a check payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association for \$54 per book, plus \$6.95 shipping. If you order more than one book, please include \$3 shipping for each additional book. This is the original book price and shipping rate charged by Turner Publishing.

Please mail the check (made payable to the VSPA) to the following address:

Steve Gattis
P.O. Box 1889
Glen Rose, Texas 76043

I hope to see you at the reunion in Dayton and at the Defender Memorial located at the Air Force Museum!

DON'T FORGET THE DATES OF OUR REUNION:

October 5 thru October 9, 2011

Meeting with Lt Gen Loren M. Reno

by Newell Swartz, LM# 262, Past President VSPA - PR, 35th SPS; PC, 37th SPS

In Feb 11, 2011 Jerry Haupt, our point man with the 56th SFS at Luke AFB, called me to invite VSPA members living in the Phoenix area to meet with Lt. Gen. Reno during his visit to Luke AFB with some of the 56th SFS troops on March 4th. Lt. Gen. Reno is responsible to the Chief of Staff for leadership, management and integration of Air Force logistics readiness, aircraft and missile maintenance, civil engineering and security forces. He also sets policy and prepares budget estimates that reflect enhancements to productivity, combat readiness and quality of life for Air Force people. As such he is the boss of the commanding general of the security forces. Plus, as a First Lieutenant, he flew four missions into Saigon, RVN in 1975.

Members attending were Don Hamilton, Bob Bohach, Dave Hechler, Bill Cummings, and Bob Curnick. We were supposed to meet with the general about noon and the 56th SFS bought lunch for us. The general was rescheduled in his visit with the 56th SFS so we toured the new K-9 kennel. Absolutely fantastic. Artificial turf with a shade screen overhead covering at least 50 yards by 50 yards. Newer types of obstacles for the dogs so they get the same training with less wear and tear on their bodies. Just seeing that much beautiful green grass, even if it is artificial, in the Arizona desert is like a small oasis

We finally met with the general at about 1700 hours. We presented him with a history book, a challenge coin and Bob Bohach gave him a packet containing several items of memorabilia unique to Bob. (For those of you who never met Bob, he has been there and done that. Served in Korea as a Marine, served in Vietnam in the Army and again in Vietnam as an Air Force Security Policeman, then spent 22 years with the Maricopa County AZ Sheriff's Office as a deputy).

Our get together with the General Reno was outside and sometimes things happen that no amount of planning could accomplish. As General Reno was talking with two members of the 56th SFS who had recently returned from Afghanistan, both of whom had been involved in fire fights, one lasting for three hours, Retreat sounded. There was silence among the ranks for several minutes, then the general finished his conversation with the two defenders and continued to speak individually with each of the rest of us. The general then gathered everyone up in a circle and said that speaking with the two defenders and discussing their battle experience and then having retreat sound at the same time was a profound moment that he will always remember. Lt. Gen. Loren M. Reno is a class act and the way things worked out for the 56th SFS, I think they scored a 10 with him that day. 10

Your Stories..... "Letter of Commendation" by

Ernest Govea, VSPA

3rd SPS, Bien Hoa 68-69



Ernest Govea, 1969



Ernest, age 18, 1968

About nine months into my tour of duty in Vietnam, several other guys and I were transferred from Security to Law Enforcement. I had mixed feelings about it, not that my feelings were relevant. Orders were orders. I was still only nineteen, but some nine months in an environment where violence was the norm had made me hard, tough and mean. As it turned out, these were traits I would need to survive in LE.



Ernest, 2010

There were some real positives to the transfer. I moved into a different hut much further away from the runway, which meant less noise to keep me awake during the day while trying to get badly needed sleep. I also got my own "room" that is, someone before me had put up some plywood around his bunk and hung a sheet of plastic in a crude doorway, so I actually had some privacy. In my hut on the Security side I had lived in an open bay, just rows of bunks. On the negative side, I left a lot of my old buds, guys with whom I had formed a bond of brotherhood, although I would still see them around.

My first night at guardmount, I showed up looking more like a Security troop than an LE troop. I had two bandoliers of M-16 ammo across my chest, normal for Security troops. Tech Sergeant Weeks, our flight commander told me to take them off. I soon learned that while Security troops had one enemy, the Viet Cong combined with the North Vietnamese Army; in Law Enforcement, we had two enemies, one was the VC/NVA and the other were those GIs who were drunk, whacked out, or just out of control from stress and other mentally debilitating inflictions.

A few nights after starting in LE, and while waiting for guardmount to start, I was made aware that the perils posed by enemy number two could be of consequence. I noticed what appeared to be a fresh bite mark on the wrist of another security policeman. I asked him if it was a bite mark and he replied that it was. "What happened?" I asked. "Oh," he said, "We went over to the Apollo Club to run some guys out of there." The Apollo Club was a building that passed for a bar and was off-limits to GIs, but a few would sneak over there once in a while. It was our job to run them off or apprehend them. "This guy latched onto my wrist," he said. "He just wouldn't let go even though we were beating him on his back with our clubs." "When did it happen?" I asked. "Oh, about five months ago" he said. I couldn't believe it. Five months later, this SP still had a bite mark on his wrist. And it looked like it had happened yesterday.

A month or two later, I was working the gate that lead from the air base to the small 5th Special Forces camp at the south east corner of the base. The perimeter road went by about one hundred feet away and another road peeled out from it to the gate I was working and into the Special Forces camp. This gate was favored by many GIs because once they got through they could get into the town of Bien Hoa and visit bars there. Doing so was strictly prohibited without a pass and getting a pass was just about impossible as the danger to GIs was considered to be too high. There was another gate on the south side of the Special Forces camp that was manned by Vietnamese and what I was told were Cambodian mercenaries. They were dark skinned like Cambodians, so I had no reason to disbelieve it, but these guys spoke little English and would let any Americans in or out at anytime, no questions asked and

no pass was required. Consequently, we were always being approached by GIs wanting to get through the gate and who were often quite creative in coming up with stories about why they needed to get through. We were supposed to apprehend anyone who tried to get through without a pass, so when we turned them away, we were doing them a favor.

Once, a couple of airmen approached me at that gate. One had a smile on his face and was obviously the guy with the story, but the other guy wore a deep frown. I smelled trouble, and unsnapped the strap on my .38 holster as they approached, and kept my hand on the pistol grip. Living in an environment where violence was a routine occurrence had also taught me to be cautious. As they approached, I kept my hand on the pistol grip ready to pull the weapon out.

When they got up to me, the guy with a frown said "You can take your hand off your gun; if we were going to jump you we'd have done it by now." "Oh yeah?" I said keeping my hand on the pistol grip, "Let's see." The other guy said something to make light of the first guy's comments and started giving me their preplanned story about how they had to get into the Special Forces camp to catch a helicopter. But the moment was ruined by our hostile exchange and I stopped him in mid sentence. I told him I didn't believe him, and they could either beat it or I could place them under apprehension. His smile disappeared and was replaced with a frown. They turned around and walked away muttering less than flattering comments about me.

On this particular day, at around midnight, I saw a couple of guys coming toward me. They were Army troops from the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion stationed at Bien Hoa Air Base. In addition to providing support to local Army troops, they also protected the base against ground attack and had been instrumental in fighting off large ground assaults against the base during Tet of '68 and February of '69. Watching their UH-1B Huey Gunships pouring fire from their miniguns down on VC positions around the air base was a common sight at night and they had fired many rockets and M-60 rounds at the VC/NVA over my head on the east perimeter in February.

These two guys both approached me with smiles. They were friendly and open and honest about where they wanted to go and what they wanted to do. I said "Yeah, but if you get picked up by the Army MPs, they're going to want to know how you got off base then its going to be my neck." "Nawww..." They said, "We're not going to get caught." I told them I didn't care to take that chance. I knew I could do a pretty good job of getting myself into trouble and didn't need any help from anyone else.

At one point, one of them pulled a pack of Kools out of his breast pocket and asked me if I had a light. At the time, I used to puff on Wild Wood cigars at night to help pass the time, so I took out my cigarette lighter and lit his cigarette. What if they went out somewhere else, could they come back in through this gate later, they asked. "No" I said, if they did that, I would have to apprehend them. About 70 feet away, half a dozen shirtless Green Beret officers were sitting around a picnic table drinking beer and shooting the breeze. One of the guys at my gate said, "He doesn't want to let us through because those officers are over there, if we come back later he'll let us through." They turned and started walking away and as they did, I said, "No, you're definitely not going out this gate and you're definitely not coming in this gate."

After a while I forgot about them. The officers who were drinking beer went to bed and bats that lived nearby came out and flew circles several feet over my head. Being a young, macho guy, I never registered any reaction, but inside they gave me the creeps. Even though my childhood seemed decades ago, it was not that far back, and the bats always reminded me of the bloodsucking vampire in the movie "Dracula." But there was something I dreaded more than the bats.

I wondered if the Vietnamese Army troops were going to come out and fire their artillery piece about 100 feet away. It was so black at night, you couldn't see them. Your only warnings were some dull clanging sounds that came from the weapon as they loaded it, then KABOOM!!

It would fire off. It was so loud, that no matter how well I braced myself for the next round, it always shook me physically. You could hear the round piercing through the air as it streaked over the air base toward its target but it went so far out you never heard it explode. After 5 or 6 rounds, they would retire and our nerves could settle down once again. There is no doubt the whole base was awakened by that monster.

From the town of Bien Hoa, right outside the base, I heard a burst of fire from an automatic weapon, and saw a stream of tracers streak across the sky. It was the Vietnamese "Popular Forces," teenagers with M-2 automatic carbines. They were kids even younger than us, but like us, they enjoyed cranking off rounds once in a while. They were also undisciplined and seeing their tracers in the night sky was not uncommon. Their job was to patrol the streets at night. In reality, they were no match for the VC. The night sky was packed with stars, and being on duty every night made shooting stars a common sight.

I wondered when an SP patrol would come around with some coffee. They were probably still busy rounding up unruly drunks and locking them in our cells. I thought about practicing my quick draw to pass the time, but the perimeter road was too close. No telling when TSgt. Weeks might come around. I, and a few other SPs who grew up on cowboy movies, used to practice quick drawing our revolvers. Some of us bored SPs with plenty of nothing-to-do time got to be pretty fast. Our skills remained secret however, as quick drawing loaded firearms was taboo. I didn't know that one day my secret skill would save my skin.

At about 1:30 AM, a three-quarter ton truck from the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion came pulling up to my post. "What on earth is he doing here?" I wondered. I could see the driver was an Army Security Forces troop. They had a small section of the perimeter where they manned a couple of bunkers at night to provide their own perimeter protection. We didn't have much contact with them and even though they sort of looked and acted like MPs with their SF armbands, they had no powers of arrest or even to detain. Now, this vehicle came pulling up to my post like it had business there. I walked over to the cab where the driver, a skinny young guy just looked at me. In the passenger seat was another troop, and even though he had his cap pulled down over his eyes pretending to be asleep, I could see he was one of the two guys who had been at my post earlier asking me to let them go through the gate.

I shined my flashlight in his face to be sure then said, "Alright, get your ID cards out." I was placing them under apprehension. The vehicle was for transporting small numbers of troops and had a canvas cover on the back. I went to the back and looked inside. There were four guys in there all pretending to be asleep. One of them was the other troop who had been at my gate earlier.

I banged my flashlight on the tailgate of the truck and said, "Alright, you guys get your ID cards out." I unstrapped the strap on my holster and went back to the cab. Reaching inside I turned the ignition switch off. The driver, who by now had put the vehicle in reverse, asked "What is this, a (expletive) restricted area?" He popped the clutch, causing the vehicle to lurch back, the large side view mirror nearly hitting my nose as it jerked past me. Suddenly, one of the guys in the back started climbing out. "HEY!!!" I shouted, "STAY IN THE TRUCK!!!" "I need some light to find my ID card." He said. "You've got light right here," I said, and shined my light on his wallet.

I walked to the back of the truck and held my flashlight on his wallet while he looked for his ID card. Suddenly, the guy who had been in the passenger seat in the cab came around the back corner of the vehicle. At the same time, the Security Forces troop got out of the cab and started walking toward me. The steady look in their eyes told me that at best, they meant to incapacitate me and make their escape. At worst...who knows?

I took a step or two back and whipped out my Smith & Wesson, Model 15, Combat Masterpiece, and cocked the hammer, all in less than a second. In an instant, the situation had changed and the Army troops froze in their tracks. For a moment I thought about shooting the guy from the passenger side in the face. I didn't think I would be faulted. The look of quiet

resignation in his eyes seemed to indicate he knew what I was thinking and he stood there looking at the bullets in the cylinder of my revolver, waiting for my decision and his fate. But too much time passed. It would be inappropriate to shoot him now. The Security Forces troop was watching all this from the side. From where he was standing, he could see the nasty looking firing pin sticking up from the hammer like a viper's fang. Not wanting him to feel left out I turned the weapon and aimed it at him. As I held it on him, I readjusted my hold on the grip, causing his lower jaw to slowly fall open and his eyes to open wider. It was now the other troop's turn to see the viper's fang sticking up. They both knew that with the hammer cocked the trigger was a "hair trigger" that is, very little pressure on the trigger would cause the weapon to fire sending a bullet into the young soldier's chest. They didn't move a muscle. I then turned the weapon back to the first troop and held it. He was the one I trusted least. The look in my eyes told them they were both facing death.

After a few moments, I walked over to the gate shack and called the Law Enforcement desk from my radio. "Be advised," I said, "I have six individuals under apprehension for trying to leave the base without passes." I then gently released the hammer into the down position and dropped the weapon into my holster.

To my amazement the troop I had nearly shot in the face took a cigarette out of his pack of Kools and asked me if I had a light. I wondered if he was foolish enough to think he could disarm me if he got close enough. "No," I said in an angry tone "I don't have a light." "Aw, man" he said, and put his cigarette back in his pack. The Security Forces troop had a Colt .45 Auto in a holster with the big flap over it hanging from his hip. I looked down at it then looked at him. I didn't want to disarm him in a war zone. Besides, he and I both knew there was no way he could get that clunky thing out of his holster quicker than I could whip my pistol out and have it pointed at his face, hammer cocked. He didn't care to risk that a second time, and there was no question in his mind as to what I might do.

A few minutes later, two jeeps with two SPs in each pulled up. Staff Sgt. Phillips got out and took charge. He collected all their ID cards and told the troop standing, to get in the back of the truck. He then told the Security Forces troop that he was to follow his jeep and that the other jeep would be following behind him. "Do you understand my instructions?" he asked. "Yes sir," the soldier said obediently. Pretty soon, the little convoy was on its way and I returned to trying to find ways to stay awake the rest of the night.

Later, Phillips told me the two guys who first approached me had been in trouble with their commander before, and were going to do hard time at Long Binh Jail. Jail time in Vietnam was "bad time" and would not count toward completing their tour. Whatever amount of time they had left to serve in Vietnam when they went to jail, they would have that same amount of time left to serve when they got out of jail and they would probably do six months in jail. I didn't give it much thought I didn't really care what happened to them.

I never told anyone I had drawn my weapon on a couple of American troops, nearly shooting one of them. It's not that I didn't want to tell anyone, I just never thought it worthy of mention. In war, things that might otherwise be remarkable are passed over with little notice, and in this place where men busied themselves with the daily task of killing, burning and maiming other men, my little incident was soon forgotten by all including me.

Consequently, I was surprised a few days later when I received a Letter of Commendation from the Base Commander. With it was a letter from Lt. Col. Bernard H. Fowle, Commander of the 3rd Combat Security Police Squadron. It, too, commended me on my apprehension of the six men. I don't remember how the letters were presented to me which implies it was without fanfare. They were probably just handed to me at guardmount.

Some twenty-five years later, I found the letters crumpled up in a battered suitcase, along with other things from my Air Force days. And after reading the letters I retrieved the incident from the deepest recesses of my memory, where many, many years before, I had carefully stored everything that was Vietnam and where it remained all these years. undisturbed.

Son of VSPA Member completes Officer Training School



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ Larry Blades ★
★ and his son, ★
★ 2nd Lt. ★
★ Zachary ★
★ Blades ★
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

2nd Lt. Zachary Blades, son of VSPA LM #648 Larry E. Blades, has completed Officer's Training School at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, AL, and graduated on February 18, 2011.

Larry's pride shines through as he writes about the exciting events of that special day.

"As for the events that day, all the parents and families were assembled in an auditorium where the Air Force presented awards to the new 2nd Lieutenants. Then they proceeded with the ceremony where Zachary's wife and birth mother pinned on his gold Bars. At this point I realized that I had just witnessed the second best thing in my entire life. #1) when he was born and they placed him in my arms, #2) when they pinned those bars on that man's shoulders.

From there, the event developed into a re-enlistment ceremony, where they re-enlisted for another six years. We proceeded to the parade grounds where they put on one hell of a show, capped off by the graduates throwing their hats into the air to signify that they had completed 3 months of rigorous mental as well as physical training.

My son is now stationed at Randolph AFB, Texas, where he has been assigned for training to fly the "Predator" drone aircraft. Zac has been in the military now almost 8 years this June. He was previously stationed at Malmstrom AFB in Great Falls, Montana and was a SSgt. prior to going into the OTS Program. He has gone through special forces training, Jump School, has his Jump Wings, and has now moved on to being an officer."



Zachary and his wife, Jenna



Zachary's wife & mother pin on his gold bars.



Hats to the wind!

Poet's Corner

Featuring Randy "Ramps" Stutler

LM #420

Every Now & Then

Every now and then something happens,
And it takes me back in time.
Something as simple as a sound or smell,
That activates my mind.
And it causes me to remember,
The way were back when,
Years ago in Vietnam,
Every now and then.

Sometimes I'll look into the dark,
And wonder if a foe waits there.
I'll seek to find the enemy,
Who hides beyond my steadfast stare.
It all seems so familiar,
As in my mind I see again.
The enemy is often in my mind,
Most every now and then.

Sometimes I can hear the sounds,
So real as if but yards away.
The chatter of machineguns,
The rocket's blast light night as day.
As I wait with steadfast gaze,
For the next volley to begin,
I taste the fear that I once knew,
Every now and then.

I oft' recall the friends I knew,
Back there in Vietnam.
We swore that we would never fail,
To keep each other from all harm.
And now as years swiftly pass,
And memories dull in time's vast din.
I shed a tear and remember friends,
Every now and then.



"Ramps"
Tan Son Nhut AB
1966



"Ramps"
San Antonio VSPA
Reunion 2010



Randy "Ramps" Stutler is a retired Air Force Sky Cop and Army Paratrooper who makes his home in Jane Lew, West Virginia. He has been interested in writing poetry for over 50 years and continues to entertain and enlighten us with his words. He also plays a mean guitar and sings!

Ramps is also a 2010 recipient of the Warrior's Medal of Valor and a lifetime VSPA member

What were your favorite Short Timer's sayings??

As posted on the VSPA Bulletin Board by member Steve Hall, LM# 639

I'm so short, I don't have time to say,
Good-----”

JP Coakley LM# 396
BH, 3rd APS; 6251st APS; Pk, 6254th
APS; 633rd SPS



“I'm so short that I can't get in any
long conversations!”

Bill Cummings, LM #173
UT, 635th SPS, K-9



“I don't know if it would qualify under this
category, but we used to tell the new guys
that we had more time in the latrine than they
had in-country. “



Bob Mitchell LM# 301
PR, 35th SPS; DN, 366th SPS; PHB

“I'm so short, I have to reach up to tie my boots.”

Howard Yates LM #644
BH, 3rd SPS, AUG



My favorite was... "I'm so short I have to
jump up to get down". I wore my CC
(short timers) ribbon for a full week without any
supervisors saying anything negative about it

Randy “Ramps” Stutler LM# 420
TSN, 6250th APS, 377th APS; SGN, 7th HQ AF



"I'm so short that if I sat on a thimble my feet
would not touch the ground"

Bill Marshall, LM#85
PC, 37th SPS



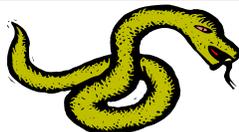
Not a saying, but I liked the eyes peering over a pair of
boots - Posted the same thing when I retired last year at
the Sheriff's office! Also "I have to climb up on a dime
to see over a nickel!"

Mike Tillman LM #677
PR, 6258 CSG/AP, 366th APS/SPS, 35th SPS



“I was so short I had to climb a step ladder
to kiss a snake on the butt.”

Jack Smith LM# 453
377th SPS 68-69



"I'm shorter than a pair of knee socks
on a
flat-footed pygmy."

Gary Jones, LM# 363
UD, 432nd APS; PR, 822 CSPS; 35th SPS; DN,



HELP!!

We need your recipes for the VSPA SISTERHOOD COOKBOOK

By Lise Gattis and Martha Fleming

Last year at the reunion, members of the VSPA Sisterhood decided to prepare a taste-tempting cookbook featuring the favorite recipes from members of the VSPA and the VSPA Sisterhood. So far, we have received about 40 recipes. We send our thanks to those who have sent the recipes. They are yummy! BUT, WE NEED AT LEAST 300 RECIPES TO FILL THE BOOK!

Send your recipes right away or we will not be able to have the book ready for this reunion. It's going to be your cookbook and it will be beautifully illustrated, specifically printed for the VSPA Sisterhood and placed in a special three-ring binder with our logo on the cover. The use of a three-ring binder will allow additional recipes to be added at subsequent reunions. The cookbook will also contain information about the VSPA and the Sisterhood along with some photos, and will be sold as a fundraiser for the VSPA.

Please follow the instructions below and submit your recipes via email or US Mail as soon as possible so that Lise and Martha can begin typing and formatting the recipes. The Sisterhood Cookbook Committee will then make the final decisions regarding the overall design of the cookbook and forward everything to the publisher.

- If sending via US Mail, **TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY IN INK, NOT PENCIL.** If more than one page is needed, use another sheet of the same size paper and staple together.
 - If sending via email, please send **ONE email for EACH recipe.**
 - List all ingredients in order of use in the ingredients list and directions. If you are sending something special from long ago, PLEASE update your mother's or grandmother's recipes using current brands available throughout the United States.
 - Include container sizes, e.g., 16-oz. pkg., 24-oz. can.
 - Keep directions in paragraph form, not in steps.
 - Use names of ingredients in the directions, e.g., "Combine flour and sugar." DO NOT use statements like, "Combine first three ingredients."
 - Include temperatures and cooking, chilling, baking, and/or freezing times.
 - Please use the abbreviations for measurements as they are described below.
 - Be consistent with the spelling of your name for each recipe you contribute.
- Your recipes should fit into the following categories and format:

CATEGORIES:

- Appetizers & Beverages
- Soups & Salads
- Vegetables & Side Dishes
- Main Dishes
- Breads & Rolls
- Desserts
- Cookies & Candy
- This & That

FORMAT:

- Recipe Title
- Category (from the list above)
- Submitted By (after you give your name, please include name of VSPA member and their base of assignment in Vietnam and/or Thailand and your relationship to them, i.e. Jane Doe (daughter of John Doe, Da Nang AB and Korat RTAFB).
- **DON'T FORGET TO PROVIDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER SO THAT WE CAN CONTACT YOU IF WE HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RECIPE(S).**
- List of ingredients using the following standardized abbreviations for measurements:
pt. qt. pkg. env. c. tsp. T. oz. lb. gal. doz. sm. med. lg.
- Directions for following and completing the recipe:

There is a category called This & That, so just about anything could go in there, including a funny recipe. And yes, we have received a funny one from Life Member John Homa that will have you drunk and rolling on the floor if you follow the directions. Remember, these books will be sold, so please give credit to someone if they have given you the recipe. We prefer to have your own recipes or your family favorites that you have modified or made your own. Please don't send a recipe from another cookbook unless it is your own recipe. If the recipe has been previously published, we need to have the information.

We know that many of our husbands like to cook and will be submitting recipes. In fact, we have already received our first recipe from Life Member Jimmy O'Connell, who heard about the cookbook while at our reunion in San Antonio.

Please send your recipes to Lise Gattis and Martha Fleming. We are neighbors and will be working together to prepare all of the recipes.

Contact information for Lise Gattis is lwgattis@windstream.net

Contact information for Martha Fleming is msfleming@valornet.com

If you are sending the recipes by US Mail, please mail to:

Lise Gattis
P.O. Box 1889
Glen Rose, Texas 76043



NOTE: All Officers and Staff are unpaid VSPA members who volunteer to serve their brothers in the association. Officers were elected in 2010 for a two-year term. Staff members were appointed to assist and advise the officers of the association as needed.

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Warning to Veterans

An organization called "Veterans Affairs Services" is providing benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans. This organization is not affiliated with the VA in any way.

WEBSITES with the name "vaservices" immediately after the "www" ARE NOT part of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the US Government agency. Do not go to them or if approached or called, do not offer them any information concerning yourself or data on other veterans. Keep in mind that the real VA websites ends in .Gov. Also, be aware that the Department of Veterans Affairs does not randomly call veterans, nor does it ask veterans for information which it does not already have - like Social Security numbers. In particular, if you have not dealt with the VA previously, and in person - and all of a sudden, you receive a call from someone saying they are with the VA or something similar sounding, hang up the phone. Also, do not respond to e-mails which suggest that they are from the VA. The VA never conducts official business nor asks for personal information by e-mail.

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. Our legal counsel has requested that we coordinate with the DOD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services.

In addition, GC requests that if you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38, United States Code, such as VAS employees assisting veterans in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits, please pass any additional information to Mr. Daugherty at the address below.

Michael G. Daugherty
Staff Attorney, Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Council (022G2)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington DC, 20420



Submitted by Bud Owens, VSPA Security Officer LM #56



Deke DeCubellis
2011

The Definitive History of Aircraft Hijacking in the USAF---sort of...

By Robert "Deke" DeCubellis, Col, USAF (Ret) LM #347, BH, 3rd SPS, 6251st SPS

To my knowledge, the United States Air Force has *NEVER* had one of its aircraft successfully hijacked. Think back to our fledgling Signal Corps or Army Air Forces. Those were in the days when a silk-scarfed debonair pilot just showed up at the hangar or base ops to strap on an airplane for a trip around the pattern or a cross country jaunt. Nobody else in his right mind would climb into some of those early "kites". But guess what? There has actually been a serious attempt to hijack one of the USAF's troop transports. And this, as Paul Harvey would have said, is the rest of the story.

In May of 1970, I was an A1C and newly assigned to 3rd SPS, Bien Hoa AB Republic of Vietnam. As a "newbie", I worked Charlie Flight Security, mostly in Baker Area and Able Area. I drew the usual assortment of listening and observation posts, 2-man M-60 bunkers, or the Entry Controller at the Bomb Dump or the Ranch Hand Compound. We also rotated on Security Alert Teams (SATs) duty as M-60 gunners or M-79 grenadiers. A "Numbah 1" good deal post was as a member of one of four Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs). Each 6 member crew was equipped with the tank-like M-113A1 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) we employed each night and during high threat periods.



US Army variant had a .50 cal plus twin M-60s with armor around them. Our tracks had .50 cal. turret but the M-60 was on a quick release mount. Sometimes we also had an XM-148 drum-fed grenade launcher.



Baker 5.0 on post. On the night this was taken in July, '70, I was the QRT's M-79 grenadier and green T-shirts were in short supply.

The "Five-Ohs" (APC radio call sign) were tasked to back up the sector SATs should any major enemy activity require the heavier fire power they carried. The top turret behind the driver's hatch and diesel "engine room" was home for the M-2 .50 cal machine gun. The rear hatch had mounts for an M-60 and/or an XM-148 drum-fed grenade launcher with a full array of WP and HE. A QRT was considered a "good post", particularly during the monsoon season. You could stay relatively dry even though the hatches usually leaked!

Another plus was the nightly "H & I" run. The word went out to all posts and patrols then we'd crank up the track and cruise the perimeter road as the grenadier launched harassment and interdiction (H&I) "40 mike mikes" into likely avenues of approach to our sector fence line as we "sped" along. In retrospect, anybody with half a brain could hear that monster track coming so I doubt we ever tagged any bad guys. But hey, it entertained the bored troops on the line and kept our 40 mikes from growing "stale" in the armory! The 12 round launcher was more fun to fire but a bigger pain to clean than the "blooper": there's a cost to everything in our business....

In early Aug 1970 on a *dark and stormy evening*, I "lucked" into M-60 gunner duty on "Baker-5-0". We drew weapons, ammo, starlight scopes, and an assortment of super-tasty C-Rations and humped them to the assembly area. From there it was up the APC ramp door to configure the "track" for business. Once that chore was done following Guardmount, it was mount up for the run out to our drive-in bunker. I think Bravo Five-Zero's was off the east end of the main runway near the "sand piles" within range of Buddha Hill.

Sgt Wolfe, our chauffer, skillfully joy-sticked the track which I believe was named Buffy, into the drive-in bunker and we set up for the long evening ahead. Nothing exceptional was going on as we eyeballed the perimeter with NVGs and binoculars, monitored radio traffic and did comm checks with Defense Control. We'd trade off topside watch in the drizzle—three up on watch, three down staying dry, catching a smoke or choking down a C-ration, while we waited for the sector supervisor to call for H&I time.

We'd been on post a few hours when about 2200, Sgt Wolfe got real animated as the radio started barking. Then he fired up the engine and signaled to us button up--stow and go time! We all took our positions as the ramp door was cranked up and locked, and then we backed out of the bunker. Wolfe jockeyed us onto the perimeter road and then quickly off-road toward the taxi-way and engine run-up pad at the east end of the runway. Wolfe's tanker helmet was tied in to the radio so we hoped he'd be able to hear what Defense Control was putting us into before we got there.

My M-60 was up in the open hatch with a 50 round belt of 7.62s in an assault pack hanging off so I pulled the naugahyde barrel cover off the piece and tossed it down below. My assistant gunner, the QRT rifleman, was ready with a spare ammo can. The .50 gunner, who I think was named Boyce, was up in the turret on his helmet headset as we clanked up on the apron and stopped at an idle. The noise of our V-6 Jimmy Diesel-powered APC was drowned out by what we faced about 100 feet off our "bow": a silver and white Lockheed C-141A Starlifter, engines running with its landing lights illuminating us up brighter than Time Square on New Year's Eve! The turret gunner, who normally stood on his adjustable seat, leaned into my open top hatch and yelled at me and the rifleman to exit the track with our machine gun and to deploy it in front of the APC. We both gave him the "like-what-have-YOU-been-smokin'look", but the ramp door was already being dropped by Wolfe from the driver's hatch.... and they both frantically signaled us to get it done.

I quickly humped the gun off the track and set it up on its bipod legs about ten feet in front of our APC. As I was doing so, we saw the area SAT, Baker 3, deployed to our left in a covering position. Their SAT leader ran over to me and knelt down next to my head. Over the roar of the aircraft's "whisperjets", the sergeant yelled that the Starlifter was being hijacked and our job was to stop it if they tried to take off. I looked up at him, the APC looming up behind us with its big .50 cal pointing out of the turret, and yelled: "Lemme guess! We're supposed to shoot out the tires, right?" He simply nodded "yes". Talk about an "Oh crap" feeling in your guts.....



C141B (stretched & refuelable version), McChord AFB Museum Photo



C141A, Circa '70 USAF Photo by Ken Hackman

So there we were: deployed on the damp pavement facing this massive fuel-filled C-141 with I don't-know-how-many-passengers, cargo, and crew. Our night vision and hearing was gone and we'd been ordered to shoot out the landing gear tires if the airplane attempted to move toward the active runway! Nuthin' to it, right? The Sixty was ready to go if I took it off safe. The QRT rifleman had popped open the spare ammo can and made sure the 2nd belt was ready to load if needed. Then he positioned himself to assist me while ready with his M-16. So now what?

My gun was ready so I decided my primary target was going to be the exposed nose gear wheels. The main gear was farther back and more concealed by the large gear doors amidships. They would be a more difficult and dangerous target if taking out the nose didn't work. If I had to fire, I hoped one or two well-placed short bursts would do the job! I yelled the plan to my A-gunner and then another comforting thought entered my mind and probably the minds of everyone nearby: if I cut loose with this gun, what about ricochets into "friendlies", flammables, and other priority resources beyond the aircraft? I just hoped my aim would be accurate as I lay ready to put the gun into action.

It was pretty tense for what seemed like hours but was maybe no more than 10 minutes. Without warning, there was brief but frantic activity on the aircraft flight deck followed by engine shutdown. Talk about relief!!! Now all we had was the "gentle" rumbling of our APC's 275 hp Detroit Diesel 5 feet behind us as we lay there still nearly blind from the aircraft's landing gear lights! Then the crew entry door dropped open just as a jeep with weapons-ready "Blue Bonnet" law enforcement troops and an ambulance rolled up.

The Baker 3 SAT NCO ran back up to us and we were then ordered to secure, so I carefully cleared the gun and put it back up on its mount in Buffy's rear hatch. We cross-checked for all our gear, raised the ramp door and then pivoted out of the spot. As we departed back out the way we'd come, there were swarms of cops, medics, fire department and ops types gathering by the now quiet Starlifter. We never did see the hijacker. Sgt Wolfe slipped us back into our bunker and we spent the rest of the night pondering various versions of "what if".



The "Hanoi Taxi" pictured above, was first aircraft into Hanoi to pickup our POWs. It retired to W-PAFB OH Museum from active service with 445 AW (Air Force Reserve) about 2004. This was the approximate view we faced that night, preparing to fire short bursts from a prone bipod-supported position to take out the nose gear or all the tires if the bird began to taxi. Fortunately, we never had to find out if it was a do-able shot without causing collateral damage to the aircraft, other resources, and NOT to mention the Quick Response Team I was a part of!

C141 Crew Cited for Foiling Hijack Try

S&S Vietnam Bureau

SAIGON — Five airmen who helped wrestle an M16 from the hands of a would-be hijacker at Bien Hoa Air Base received Airman's Medals Thursday. Another crew member remained in serious condition in a Long Binh hospital after he was wounded in the incident.

The fugitive GI, who tried for the second time in three weeks to hijack an airplane, was returned to Long Binh stockade pending legal action, officials said. He had escaped from the stockade Sunday.

A U.S. Air Force spokesman said Army Pvt. George M. Hardin climbed aboard a giant C141 Starlifter jet cargo plane to McChord Air Force Base in Washington via Japan about 10 p.m. Threatening the crew with an M16, he demanded that they take him to Da Nang, South Vietnam's second largest city.

Only six of the plane's eight crew members had boarded the plane, spokesmen said.

While the hijacker's attention was diverted, Maj. Jack H. Greer, 36, the plane's navigator, grabbed the rifle, pushing the barrel upward. The weapon fired an automatic burst into the ceiling of the cabin and wounded one crew member, the spokesman said.

The rest of the crew grabbed the hijacker and held him until security police could take him into custody.

Hardin attempted to hijack a civilian aircraft at Tan Son Nhut July 22, officials said. His attempt failed when the pilot convinced him that the plane could not fly as far as Hong Kong.

Spokesmen at XXIV Corps Headquarters in Da Nang said Hardin had been charged with kidnaping, aggravated assault and wrongful communication of a threat to kill in connection with the first attempted hijacking.

They said he had escaped during an Article 32 investigation (similar to a grand jury hearing) held to determine if there was enough evidence to support those charges.

Awards were presented to Greer, Maj. John H. Chilton, 1st Lt. Lowell Scott, T. Sgt. Lawrence M. Nelthropp, and S. Sgt. Billy E. Doolittle. **12 Aug 70**

Pacific Stars n Stripes reported the incident a few days later and I saved the clipping. It provided the following details which I've never seen chronicled any where else. The hijacker was a GI, who on 22 Jul 70, had unsuccessfully attempted to hijack a civilian aircraft from Saigon. That landed him in "LBJ", the Long Binh Jail, where he escaped from MP custody. He showed up on our doorstep that night looking to steal a ride to DaNang (not a bright move wanting to trade one "rocket city" for another in my view...) He selected our McChord AFB-bound C-141 and somehow took the crew hostage with an M-16, forcing them to taxi the aircraft. Their duress/hijack signal was picked up and our response teams entered the game. My guess is the sight of our QRT blocking his escape distracted him enough to give the aircrew the chance to wrestle the weapon away from him. Unfortunately, a burst was fired into the aircraft overhead, seriously wounding a crew member in the process. SPs got an honorable mention for taking the hijacker into custody.

In late Sept 70, I became a security controller in Defense Control. I don't remember ever discussing this incident or better ways to have dealt with hijackings. As I recall, civilian aircraft hijackings were infrequent (and usually headed to Cuba) and Sky Marshals were still in the future. Deflating a high pressure aircraft tire with a bayonet wasn't on the list and as good a driver as Wolfe was, doing a "Pitt Maneuver" on a C-141 with an M-113 wasn't in the play book. So shoot out the tires was the "field expedient" solution we were prepared to execute that night!

Hopefully, the wounded air crew member recovered. The aircrew was awarded the Airman's Medal and my guess is the "perp" is just now getting out of Leavenworth with a BCD. Local "wrench-benders" plugged the bullet holes in the roof and put the airplane back into service because it wasn't on our ramp the next night I came to work.

I did some Google-snooping and found a web site that claims the actual aircraft from this event was tail number 66-0192. The airplane, like most of the C-141 fleet, went through stretch, refueling and “glass cockpit” modifications. This one ended its career as a C-model with over 36,600 hours on the “odometer” before being retired to the “Boneyard” at Davis-Monthan AFB AZ. I logged numerous trips on C-141s during my 36 plus years of military service, but never tracked tail numbers. Gotta wonder if I ever actually flew on the bird I came so close to lighting up with my M-60 that night so long ago!

According to a 436 AMW unit history, two years later in December 1972 a Dover AFB aircrew deployed to Taiwan successfully thwarted a hijacking attempt of their giant C-5 Galaxy. Perhaps there have been other attempts at hijacking USAF cargo aircraft but I’m not aware of any. Since these events, our cops and aircrew have practiced and refined anti-hijacking prevention and response plans to counter all threats as they’ve evolved. I believe our Security Forces winning record still stands!

So there you have it: I’m staking claim to being an *original* player in *THE first* USAF aircraft hijacking attempt. Score: Good Guys 1, Bad Guy goes directly *back* to jail, does not pass go on his second time around! Would be interested to hear from anybody else who was there and/or whose knowledge of that night’s event is any better than mine!! Happy to have been there, proud to have served!

Robert “Deke” DeCubellis LM# 347
(Col, USAF retired) Murrieta CA

VSPA Handler finds Vet Tech’s first dog in Kansas Following VSPA October Reunion in San Antonio, TX

by JAY D. JONES LM# 526
Udorn, 432th SPS K-9

During the 2010 VSPA Reunion in October, K-9 members of the VSPA had a tour of the 802nd SFF kennels and the new Holland Military Working Dog Hospital at Lackland AFB. While on the tour, I met Kris Ritter who is a vet tech in behavioral medicine. Her job is in the breeding program at Lackland. Kris gave a presentation on the clinic and talked about her first dog in the program, Indy H103, saying the dog was at McConnell AFB in Wichita, Kansas. Well, I just happen to be from Wichita and knew a handler at McConnell who I supported in the Old Dawg and Pups program. After the reunion and returning home, I called SSgt. Will Booker at McConnell and set up a photo shoot with Indy.

Indy doesn’t have a handler at the moment, but SSgt. Booker was nice enough to get him out of his kennel so photos could be taken. Kris was sent six photos of Indy to display at the clinic and on her computer.

The Belgian Malinois is the new kid on the block and rising star as the canine of choice for military and law enforcement use.



IINDY, K-9
With SSgt. Will Booker



IINDY

WELCOME TO THE 10th ANNUAL AP/SP/SF RENDEZVOUS

WHERE: WICKHAM PARK (BETWEEN WICKHAM ROAD AND US #1) ENTRANCE OFF PARKWAY DRIVE),
2500 Parkway Drive, Melbourne, Florida (321-255-4307)

WHEN: 1-8 MAY 2011, 24 HOURS A DAY

WHY: The Space Coast Chapter of the Air Force Security Forces Association (AFSFA) would be honored if the men and women, current/former AP/SP/SF would visit us during the upcoming 10TH AP/SP/SF Rendezvous, 1-8 May 2011. It takes place in conjunction with the 24th Annual Vietnam and all-Veterans Reunion at beautiful Wickham Park (400 Acres) in Melbourne. This veteran's reunion is the largest of its kind in the nation and is for all veterans of all services. The Vietnam Memorial, the Moving Wall is escorted into the park on Sunday, 1 May and will then be erected. Opening ceremonies for the veteran's reunion will take place on Monday at 1900, 2 May, at The Wall. The Wall will remain available to the public 24/7 until closing ceremonies on Sunday at 1900, 8 May. Numerous and varied vendors and live entertainment will begin on Thursday 5 May and continue throughout the weekend. An enormous, impressive and moving Massing of the Colors will take place on Saturday, 7 May with veterans' units from throughout the state and US. Also an emotional reenactment of The Last Patrol w/K-9 from the Vietnam era takes place also on Saturday. The AP/SP/SF Rendezvous will start when we move our RVs, tents, campers into the Youth camping area of North Wickham Park on Monday, 2 May. We will be there 24/7 until Sunday afternoon, the 8th.

Ted Whitlock
1964

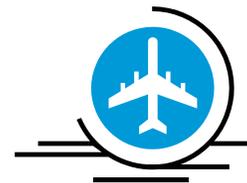


Ted Whitlock
2009



The AP/SP/SF Rendezvous is co-hosted by the Space Coast Chapter Air Force Security Forces Association (AFSFA) and the Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA) and the Space Cost War Dog Association. We will have plenty to eat, cool drinks, a lot of shade, a lot of camaraderie, a lot of history and a lot of "war stories". Just stop by or we will gladly make a place for you to camp out with us if you so desire. This is a family rendezvous, so please bring your loved ones as well. But most of all we would just sincerely be honored to meet and greet you and yours, because we are all from the same family under the Bond of the Blue Beret. Do not hesitate to email twhitlock@cfl.rr.com or call me at 321-243-8919 if you have questions.

Ted Whitlock
Chairman, AFSFA Space Coast Chapter
VSPA Life Member #98
KRT, 388th SPS
(22 year active duty AP/ SP, 18 year SP/SF civil servant)



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floridaveteransreunion.com

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Per Wickham Park: Golf Carts Permitted
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Abide By FL Highway Laws
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<http://travelingwall.us>

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VSPA Historian's Corner and USAF Security Forces Museum Update

by Kelly Bateman LM# 118, UB, 8th SPS, K-9

On Friday Jan. 7, 2011, I represented the VSPA at a meeting of the Exhibit Review Committee, USAF Security Forces Museum at Lackland AFB, Texas. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss updating and addition of exhibits to the Vietnam War portion of the museum. The new exhibits will include information on all USAF Vietnam and Thailand Squadrons and the roles and missions each played during the war. Also planned will be a new K9 exhibit including a standing MWD handler and his K9 partner, upgrading of the existing Security and Law Enforcement exhibits, adding several items of equipment perhaps a M79 and a .50 Cal. Guidons with battle streamers for each Squadron are also to be displayed. The existing weapons displays will be consolidated and placed into new display cases along a section of wall to save room. There are also more interactive displays being planned. During our meeting several Security Force classes toured the museum as part of their training program. Our museum is a valuable historical asset and teaching resource for today's soldiers attending Lackland training. For more information on the Security Forces Museum Foundation who are sponsoring the renovations or to contact the museum, go to..... www.securityforcesmuseum.org.

USAF Sentry Dog Handler 1968 - 1972

Erlyce Pekas, Editor
Associate Member
Vietnam Security Police Association
P.O. Box 22035
Phoenix, AZ 85028



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 1,300 currently active members, the Vietnam Security Police Association is where you belong.

VSPA was formed for many reasons; to reunite friends, to preserve the memories 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 the VSPA and how to join at our website: www.vspa.com. WELCOME HOME TO VSPA!

**GET READY FOR NEXT YEAR'S REUNION AT WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, DAYTON, OH!
October 5-9, 2011**