



A Publication of the Vietnam Security Police Association

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Winter 2012 Issue



GUARDMOUNT

VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION

"We Take Care of Our Own"



**The VSPA
Takes
Care Of
Their
Own.**

**Welcome
Home
Sgt Bruce
Dale Jones
by
Don Poss**

Read the rest of
this amazing story
on pages 18-21.





Photo of President Pete Piazza courtesy of Ken Neal, VSPA Photographer

President's Corner

By Pete Piazza, President VSPA

William (Pete) Piazza – LM #141
Cam Ranh Bay AB 1966
Bien Hoa AB 1967-68
Phu Cat AB 1970-71

To borrow a saying that our Past President, Phil Carroll used, “Greetings to all! Was it not a great time and place for our 18th Annual Reunion in Florida?” The visit with the men and women of the 96th Security Forces Squadron, 1st Special Operations Security Forces Squadron and 96th Ground Combat Training Squadron was outstanding.

Now we start a new era with a new President, and I hope to be able to carry on the great traditions that former VSPA Presidents have done over the years during their time in office. The rest of the current VSPA Officers have all signed on for another tour of duty, and that means they have stepped up to the plate to keep the VSPA Team in place and rolling towards making it the best association in the world.

I would also like to say a very special “Thank You” to the ladies of the VSPA and the Sisterhood. They show up and stand by with us each year, doing things like working the Hospitality Room, drawings and some other things too. They also sit around and can almost tell you word for word some of the war stories that our members tell!

As most of you are aware, we will soon start planning the 19th Annual VSPA Reunion in Charleston, SC and visiting the 628th SFS folks at Joint Base Charleston. We already have had several suggestions as to what hotels to look at, where to visit if time allows, and tours that our members may want to take. All of these suggestions will be discussed by the VSPA officers and The Reunion Brat so that we can come up with what we all feel is a good schedule for us to adhere to. As in the past, the visit to the 628th SFS is the primary tasking since we always want to spend time with today's Defenders of the Force.

On a personal note, I want to thank all of those members that sent me emails and phone calls expressing their congratulations as I accepted the position of VSPA President. I hope that with the help of the officers and membership we can accomplish many things; after all, this is a team effort as we all are brothers of the VSPA.

Welcome Home!

Pete





18th Annual VSPA Reunion ~ Eglin AFB, FL *A Time to Remember.....*



Photos by VSPA Photographer Tony Morris

18th Annual VSPA Reunion -



10/9/2012 - A Vietnam Security Police Association member, Victor Lebsack, shares stories with Staff Sgt. Allison Taulbee, of the 96th Security Forces Squadron, Oct. 4th, at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The veterans compared their generation's military police procedures to Air Force security forces' tactics, weaponry and transportation currently applied in missions stateside or abroad. The VSPA reunion was hosted by the 96th SFS and 96th Ground Combat Training Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo/Randy Gon)

- Eglin AFB, Oct. 3-7, 2012



Photo by LM #80 Ken Neal



10/9/2012 - Airman 1st Class Victor Villasante, of the 96th Security Forces Squadron, is shot by a Taser in a demonstration for the Vietnam Security Police Association, Oct. 4th, at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The veterans compared their generation's military police procedures to Air Force security forces' tactics, weaponry and transportation currently applied in missions stateside or abroad. The VSPA reunion was hosted by the 96th SFS and 96th Ground Combat Training Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo/Randy Gon)

“Come October”.....

by Edwin “Jack” Smith,

Tan Son Nhut, 377th SPS 1968-'69

“The Old Cowboy Poet”

VSPA LM #453

There is that one time each year
Of the twelve months it's October
When hundreds of brothers draw near
Many of us now much more grayer

Traveling great distances to relive our past
Joining once again on a long weekend
Some remembering the rockets' blast
While others are there to help make amends

It is for me a time to bond once again
Finding old brothers I have known
Meeting new brothers as long lost friends
Making sure none will ever feel alone

Yes, it is that time come October
When I forget about all the battles
That special time just before winter
When once again I soar with eagles.





Editor's note: Phil Carroll, outgoing VSPA President, spoke eloquently at the reunion banquet in Destin, FL. If you missed it, it was one great speech, and it is reprinted below. The speaker he next introduced, Major "Kit" Johnson, was equally stirring and memorable. Thank you from all of us for your service and dedication to this organization and to the troops, both young and old. See pages 10-11 for Major Johnson's moving speech.



“VSPA and The Troops” by Phil Carroll, Past President VSPA

Good evening!

I must have worn myself out being the “Guest Speaker” at last year’s reunion, because this year I’ve appointed myself to be just half of a two-man Guest Speaker Team for tonight. We won’t go on too long because we’ve still got a lot to do, but there’s something we really want to talk about.

Our topic is our troops. They are the third, the fourth and the fifth elements of the Vietnam Security Police Association’s Constitution:

Section 1. Statement of Purpose:

- To preserve the hard lessons learned in Vietnam and Thailand while conducting air base defense and counter-insurgency operations....
- To preserve our history through support of the active duty men and women of the United States Air Force Security Forces who have followed in our footsteps.
- To share our knowledge and provide assistance to USAF Security Forces personnel on active duty.

Would all active duty Military please stand up for a second, hooah? Thank you. OK, please get comfortable.

It’s absolutely amazing to me, and to most of us old goats, how far these folks have come, building on the capabilities we had back in the 50s, 60s and 70s when we served in the Vietnam War. Their training, techniques, equipment and spirit are nothing short of astonishing by our old standards. Most of us bailed out of the military as soon as our short-timer calendars said we could. I say most of us, because a very dedicated minority stayed in the Armed Services.

I applaud those of you who stayed in; would you all please raise a hand for a second? OK, thanks.

We all thank you, because by staying in you performed a huge service to America, and to the new troops who replaced those of us who went ‘four-and-out’ on to civilian life. You helped institutionalize some of the lessons learned in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia during the Vietnam War. But there’s always more to be done.

How many of you carry a Challenge Coin? Don’t worry; I’m not going to make anybody buy a round of drinks for the whole room if you don’t have one. Everybody know what those are? They’re big coins, usually metal, with some kind of a unit emblem or motto on them, and a coin owner is supposed to carry their one special coin all the time.

The “challenge” part of the tradition of these things is if you’re in a bar and somebody challenges you for your coin by tapping theirs on the bar top, you better have yours or you’re buying drinks. They came into use, according to legend, in World War I. They were important for personal identification and for unit morale and pride, and have become even more so today with the restrictions on the colorful patches we used to wear.

Challenge coins can be purchased or given as gifts. As a gift, they can mean an honor, welcome, thanks, friendship, or brotherhood of a depth that many people will never understand. **“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers....”** The challenge coin I carry is from the 101st Airborne - **Air Assault!** One of the young Air Force Security Forces troops I have been privileged to personally support during one of his tours down range gave me this coin. He served with the 101st at a Forward Operating Base, or FOB, in Iraq, called Warrior. The 101st Screaming Eagles gave him this coin for serving with them under enemy fire on some pretty hairy missions outside the wire. He gave it to me when he came home, touching me more deeply than I can possibly put into words. I’ll come back to the Screaming Eagles in a minute.



Do you remember how ugly some isolated incidents were in our war, toward the end? One of the worst kind might have been the fragging – a troop attempting to kill one of his fellow Airmen or Soldiers. They called it fragging because it sometimes was done with a “frag,” a hand grenade, thrown into somebody’s sleeping quarters. Some people today seem to believe that it was unique to the Vietnam War, with all the supposedly legendary issues of those times. But that’s wrong - it wasn’t just a horror of “our” war.

The first American deaths in the 101st Airborne Screaming Eagles in the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom came from a fragging incident, when a disaffected or insane American soldier threw grenades into tents and shot his officers. Two were killed.

That’s one ugly example that some of the worst things about our war haven’t gone away. But neither have some of the good things, or the day-to-day things, or the normal trials of life. Do you remember the friend in your Squadron who got the “Dear John” letter from home halfway through his tour and just about fell apart? Or maybe you or somebody you knew well was having some family or financial difficulties that seemed impossible to fix from

half way around the world. Maybe you or somebody you knew sewed on new rank and were busting with pride and excitement, or maybe consumed with worry about becoming a supervisor and taking responsibility for other men's lives. Maybe you experienced a horror that still haunts you.

All of these things, and more, happen to our troops today. All the struggles, tragedies, challenges and triumphs, joys and tears ... same as they happened to us. Well, I say that we, by having personal relationships with today's Airmen, can help them with the things we have to share: the stories we tell them about some of the ugly things, the good things and the every-day things that we endured; the memories and feelings about how we dealt with those things and then carried on to live successful lives; the understanding ear we can let them vent into when nobody else understands ... just like we do for one another.

I've been blessed with the opportunity to talk with, or email back and forth in some very personal private conversations with just a few of the troops I've supported, giving them a different and welcome perspective on some of the troubles and triumphs they face, and sometimes just listening to their concerns or feelings. Even the short contact we have with the active-duty Airmen at our annual reunions have led to friendships and support, war stories and reminiscing, passing on the camaraderie that may have been undiscovered by young Airmen all new on a job and in a strange place.

I know that some of you have children of your own who are in the military, even the Air Force Security Forces. I hope you have the kind of relationship with them that leads to you being able to communicate with them on this kind of level, but sometimes it can be harder with family, because with your own kids you're in their chain-of-command and that can keep things from being neutral. Maybe, sometimes, some things come easier with family; parents always hope so.

And yeah, I know, some things have changed; can you even imagine being able to email or Skype with your friends or family while you were sitting in a tent or hootch in Vietnam or Thailand ... or having somebody from a previous war stepping up to help you understand and deal with the stuff you were facing in 1960 or 1970? Wow.

I'm not alone in having had this privilege of a helping out a few troops. Many of you and many other people have taken advantage of programs like 'Old Dawgs and Pups' to strike up a friendship with a deployed Security Forces warrior: exchange emails, send care packages of equipment or unobtainable goodies, give counsel or just listen, help out in any way you could.

So I say, Thank you VSPA! Thank you Old Dawgs & Pups! Thank you - all of you, for keeping this Association alive with such a major part of its purpose being to give us the opportunity to share our lives and our history with those Airmen who are following in our footsteps in this changing world, hooah?

And with that, I'd like to introduce United States Air Force Security Forces Major Christopher "Kit" Johnson, a long-standing and treasured friend and Brother of the VSPA, who has agreed to talk a little about his perspective of our relationships with today's Airmen, from the other side.



Photos courtesy of VSPA Photographers
Tony Morris and Ken Neal

Remarks by Major Christopher “Kit” Johnson, USAF



Photo of Kit Johnson by Tony Morris

Thank you Phil, ladies and gentlemen, good evening, My fellow defenders - Hooah! What an honor it is for me to be here tonight to speak to some true American heroes and, I might add, some living legends... YOU, you Vietnam Veterans in the audience tonight, and let me add, your wives who stand by you today and back then. I'm humbled to be in your presence. Speaking of wives, (my beautiful wife of 10 years and mother of our three wonderful children,) Nicky is in the audience tonight. She has sent me off to war twice and now she is going to kill me for mentioning her, but the support of a military spouse can't be acknowledged enough, as you all know. As we were getting dressed tonight she asked me "what are you going to talk about?" and I said "then and now defenders" and she understood, and then I said I'd probably talk about Beirut also and she said, "what do you know about Beirut?"... to which I replied "Beirut" (Babe Ruth); he was best damn baseball player that ever lived!"

I am up here tonight to talk about troops today. Let me tell you this before I go off script; those defenders who take the time to know you, to hear your stories of war and dedication to a calling from a different era in an America with a different mindset toward war, those Airmen are better for it.

Better for your support, better for your guidance, just better for knowing you and your storied past in our great career field. And tonight I thank you.

I am probably the wrong guy to tell about today's Airman. (I include all active duty officers and enlisted as Airmen.) A small disclaimer here; at 46, I'm closer in age to you than I am to the 18 year-old slick sleeve of today. In the last couple of years I've heard something espoused from the President on down through my senior leadership, and in the last couple of days I've heard a few of you say what I'm about to say, and I've even said in the past to a few people. In reflecting on this speech, I think we may have been wrong, or at least a little over-zealous.

What I heard and even said over the last few years is how much smarter today's Airman is than any in the past. Some of you told me in the last two days, "These guys today are so much smarter than we were." Well folks, I hate to alienate my audience but you are wrong and I've been wrong to say that. So let me get off message a little bit, I promise I won't start talking to an empty chair.

I won't mention Clint Eastwood but I will mention John Wayne. As commander one time, I told a young troop after he had screwed up a training scenario; "you are no John Wayne." This Airman paused and looked at me like I had a cupcake on my head and in all seriousness said "Who is John Wayne, Sir?" The sad part folks, is that he was serious. That hurt my patriotism a bit.

In 2005 at pre-deployment training at Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, I was in charge of 64 Airmen preparing to deploy to Camp Bucca, Iraq, and we were doing convoy security training that day. I thought we were prepared. We had 8 Deuce and a halfs out there ready to roll. Seven of them were new state of the art machines; the eighth was a 1984 stick shift deuce that would be replaced soon. I had 46 trained drivers for the Deuce. I sent them all out to mount up and lock and load while I reviewed my map and actions on contact one last time with my Lieutenants. I went outside and no one was sitting in the '84. Come to find out, only one driver in the class was certified to operate a stick shift deuce with the manual air brakes. That driver was me! Needless to say, we conducted some just-in-time training that night. But that day, I directed actions on contact from the driver's seat of a deuce. So, smarter than you... really? Is there is an app for that? Another time as Commander I went to Guardmount to address my troops. I watched as an off-going Airman turned in his weapon and immediately turned on his cell and began to text. While looking down he walked right into a ceiling support brace, sending his phone to the floor in pieces. Smarter than you... really?

My point is this; I appreciate your self-deprecating demeanor and the accolades you shower on the active duty of today. But make no mistake about it; we have issues too. I've had to force Airmen to drink water that was warm and did not taste good just to keep them mission ready; some actually refused to drink the water until they got some more crystal light drink mix from the states... smarter

than you? Really?

Have we learned, though? Sometimes I wonder. In 1972, Combined Action Platoons operating in Vietnam were making a difference living out among the villages, but it was too little too late. The tide of change for the war was already in. In 2012 Foreign Internal Defense, FID teams operating in Afghanistan are making a difference, but again, at a decade-plus into the war, is it too little too late with the tide of this war coming in with the end of combat operations in 2014?

Counter insurgency operations is something else we have in common. Your generation was good...no, make that **great**, at it by 1972. 40 years later so are we, but in 2002 when it was time to employ those skills again, we had lost that corporate knowledge to 30 years of not knowing our history. "Counter Insurgency" was a term with a vague and distant definition. Shame on us for not coming to you quicker. Smarter than you... really?

Ladies and gentlemen, I leave you tonight with three things; a hope, an observation, and a wish, First, a hope that you know how great you were in the past to represent your country with pride and distinction in a deadly war against a dedicated foe, only to return home to a nation ungrateful at the time for your sacrifices. How great you are in the present for ensuring this generation doesn't endure the same injustices you did. And how great you'll be in the future when those you've supported and loved pay it forward to the next generation of Defenders. And maybe, just maybe, we will appreciate our history and heritage a little quicker without waiting for the tide to come in.

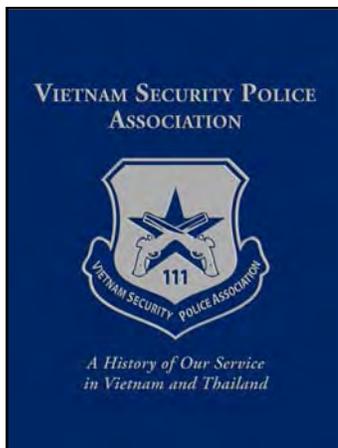
Second, an observation. Air Police, Security Police and Security Forces have another thing in common. Throughout the years we've been the Air Force's infantry as well as its police. Its grunts, if you will. And from the Vietnam War I offer you this definition of a grunt. It is a term of affection used to denote that filthy, sweaty, dirt encrusted, footsore, camouflage painted, ripped trousered, tired, sleepy, beautiful little son of a gun who has kept the wolf away from the door for over 200 years...

And finally a wish tonight for you; I wish you knew how much you mean to us, every defender out there, whether they are smart enough to know it or not, owes you a debt of gratitude. Tonight when I hit my knees I'm going to thank God we had guys like you guarding the door from that wolf during the Vietnam War. "*We few, we happy few, we band of brothers...*" Thanks for letting me be a small part of your organization; I love you guys - good night.

THE VSPA HISTORY BOOK

By Steve Gattis, VSPA President Emeritus

Cam Ranh Bay 68-69 SGattis-LM49@vspa.com



"THE BOOK" is back in print! This is a SECOND printing, not a Volume II. If you would like to purchase one of these great books, the cost will be the same as the original price of \$54 plus \$6.95 for shipping. Please send an email to me stating that you would like to reserve a book. Then, 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, the shipping cost for each additional book is reduced to \$3 rather than \$6.95. This is the original book price and shipping rate charged by Turner Publishing.

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

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

We represent living history for the men and women of the United States Air Force Security Forces who see us as the foundation of their survival and achievements. They wear their Security Police shield and blue beret with pride, knowing that others have bled and died to honor the duty and trust represented by the shield and the beret. You only have to see the look on their faces one time to know the respect and admiration they have for what we accomplished before so many of them were born. They honor us by listening and emulating our traditions, consistently thanking us for our service and sacrifice as a small group of dedicated old warriors who set the standard for today's Defenders of the United States Air Force. One of our VSPA History books was presented to each of our host squadrons during our 2012 reunion.

VSPA MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS - 2012



Special Award:

Bill Harris presented a VSPA flag that he had carried in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia to 96th SFS Commander Lt Col Jereme Barrett. Lt Col Kirk Hughes (1st SOSFS Commander) and Maj James Habeck (96th GCTS Commander) will each receive one after Bill's next tour of the countries, coordinated by Steve Gattis.

Meritorious Service Pins

(In some cases where awards were given in the past and the member continued or repeated the thing they were recognized for, these pins are similar to "Battle Stars" signifying repeat awards)

Bill Cummings - For your work as "Acting" VSPA Kennel Master for this year's reunion and Feed the Dawgs event, as well as for creating and running - for the seventh year - the Old Dawgs & Pups Program through which VSPA members have adopted and individually supported more than 339 MWD handlers and support staff down range, and through which you've sent more that \$74,000 worth of equipment and supplies.

Willie Squires, John Tudor, Gary Jones - For continuing to organize and personally wash The Wall, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that means so much to so many of us who aren't able to get to Washington D.C.

Keith Young - Keith's support for VSPA and its programs goes way beyond his serving as Sergeant at Arms for the Association. He has asked that his specific meritorious actions remain anonymous, but we could not resist pointing out to all that he has more than lived up to our motto; "We Take Care of Our Own."

Security Forces Defender Busts

Lt Col Jereme Barrett, Lt Col Kirk Hughes and Maj James Habeck - With sincere appreciation for their outstanding support for the 18th Annual VSPA Reunion. In a time of extraordinary demands on Squadron resources, their efforts for the Air Police and Security Police veterans who served in Vietnam and Thailand during the Vietnam War embody the VSPA motto: "*We Take Care of our own.*"

SSgt Jeremy Rice - For his extraordinary efforts in making arrangements for the first Feed-the-Dawgs event for Military Working Dog handlers ever held on the East Coast, which was held at Eglin AFB yesterday. His over-the-top ability and effective work to prepare for this event embodies our motto: "*We Take Care of Our Own.*"

SrA Jordan Hoover - With sincere appreciation for his outstanding commitment and extraordinary effort to coordinate the host activities of the 96th SFS, 96th Ground Combat Training Squadron, and 1st Special Operations SFS, during this 18th Annual VSPA reunion. His dedication is a living example of our motto, "*We Take Care of our own.*"

Bill Harris - For his extraordinary actions in carrying and flying the VSPA flag in many important historical locations throughout Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. "*We Take Care of Our Own.*"

Paul Shave - For his never ending unsolicited acts of generosity, kindness and support, most recently stepping up to help out our Gold Star Mother, Mom Lehman. "*We Take Care of Our Own.*"

Dave Pierson - For his great work coordinating charity events that raised thousands of dollars for Veterans in Nevada, and for his consistent great work as our VSPA liaison to the Safeside Association, an essential component of our pride and history as Air Police and Security Police. "*We Take Care of Our Own.*"

Jim Stewart - For his work with the 377th SPS Association, and his extensive efforts assisting many veterans in his local area. He exemplifies our motto: "*We Take Care of Our Own.*"

Mike Diaz - For his extensive work on the Air Police/Security Police/K-9 display at the March AFB Museum and K-9 Memorial. "*We Take Care of Our Own.*"

Mike Kennedy - For developing the very artistic and attractive masthead for our newsletter Guardmount, and for his painstaking work assisting Don Poss as our website Quality Control Flight Leader. He is truly living our motto: "*We Take Care of Our Own.*"

Rick Adams - For his constant presence and efforts on the VSPA public bulletin board, and elsewhere, helping members and others find old buddies. He exemplifies our motto: "*We Take Care of Our Own.*"

Meritorious Service Engraved Wood Plaque

The Warriors of the 96th SFS, 1st SOSFS and 96th GCTS - (Presented to the Squadron Commanders.) We present these plaques with our deepest appreciation for their efforts on our behalf as hosts of the 18th Annual VSPA Reunion; in acknowledgement of the outstanding leadership and training they provide today's Security Forces Warriors. We are in awe of the way they have built upon our legacy. Hooah!

Chaplain Jeff Kerkhoff - For his commitment to his Brothers in the VSPA, and his service to God and Country. He has had a positive impact on the lives of our members as one of our Chaplains. *"We take care of our own."*

Ed Daubert - With sincere appreciation for his commitment to a fallen Brother, Sgt Bruce Dale Jones, and for helping ensure that his family will always know that we remember him and honor his Service. *"We take care of our own."*

Bob and Debbie Citrano - With tremendous appreciation for their outstanding commitment to the preservation and honor of our Squadron histories. Their hard work to create the embroidered hats honoring each of our AP and SP Squadrons in Vietnam and Thailand gives us each a visible sign of our pride. They both live our motto: *"We take care of our own."*

Joe Spencer and John Westbrook - Individual plaques will be mailed with sincere appreciation for their effort to preserve The Wall, and thereby the memory of the 111 of our Brothers who did not survive the War in Vietnam and Thailand. *"We take care of our own."*

11th Security Forces Group, MWD Section - This plaque will be delivered in person by VSPA Chaplain and Kennel Master Jim Stastny: With sincere appreciation for their work to preserve The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, "The Wall," and thereby the memory of the 111 of our Air Police And Security Police Brothers who did not survive the war in Vietnam and Thailand. *"We take care of our own."*

Monk Pope Brotherhood Awards Presented by Phil Carroll, VSPA President

Ronald C. "Monk" Pope served at Tan Son Nhut Air Base RVN in 1967-68. He was VSPA Life Member #158, and he was one of the most jovial, friendly and full-of-Brotherhood members we've ever had in the VSPA. Monk Pope went on to his final Guardmount in 2007, and in remembering him the VSPA created the Monk Pope Brotherhood Award, to honor the one member each year who seems that year to have most closely followed Monk in embodying that "We Take Care of Our Own" Brotherhood ethic. We've only awarded this honor five times.

Don Poss - With sincere appreciation for his enduring commitment to our brotherhood; his generous, unwavering and tireless efforts to preserve the history and valor of our service in Vietnam and Thailand for us, and for the entire rest of the world through the Internet. He was more than enthusiastic and instrumental these past eight months in digging out the facts about the previously unknown one of our 111, Sgt Bruce Dale Jones, and making yesterday's important memorial ceremony happen. His actions and extraordinary ongoing effort enabled us to publicly and appropriately honor and remember one of our own, who had been previously forgotten. Monk always said that you were "Jam up and jelly tight."

We have always awarded only one Monk Pope Brotherhood Award. This year I'm going to have to bust that, and award two, because some things simply have to be done:

Steve Gattis - If ever there was a man who embodies the concept of tireless effort, it's Steve Gattis - not to say that the work he does doesn't ever tire him. He just won't admit it. In researching our outdated Constitution & By-Laws I discovered some details of how much more Steve has been doing for us than I even knew, and I've been working for and with him since 2006. No laundry list tonight, but just one example: as much as he already had on his plate, when Don Poss started the search for more information on Sgt Bruce Dale Jones, he called Steve ... who immediately became an important asset to the investigation that resulted in yesterday's ceremony. I cannot possibly tell you how much he's done for me over the last two years that I've been the VSPA president, I'll just say that without him I would not have achieved what I have. Honor is what you do when nobody is looking. Nobody is looking at what Steve does most of the time, but he's always "Taking Care of His Own." Monk always said that he was "Jam up and jelly tight."

Something New - The VSPA Sisterhood Award

The VSPA Sisterhood is made up of our VSPA moms, wives and daughters. Their motto: "Taking care of those who take care of their own." They do so much for each and every one of us, on an ongoing basis, day and night, year after year, no matter what troubles or issues we may face. Some of them rise even above that standard, and commit their time and energy to the whole of the VSPA and each other. Family members of VSPA members are automatically "Affiliate Members" of the VSPA, and as such will ultimately gain the responsibility to vote and hold office in the VSPA when there are 25 or fewer of us left. We've long acknowledged their love and support, but tonight we have something new and different.

Sheila Cain - Sheila is the wife of our VSPA Vice President, the very lucky Greg Cain, LM #62. She is also the very active and effective President of the VSPA Sisterhood, and the Sisterhood's official liaison to the VSPA. Every time I call her to ask about something I suddenly remember, in planning this reunion, she stops me and tells me she's got it handled. She is most visible to us at every reunion working 12 or 18-hour days stocking, organizing and running the hospitality room and usually some raffles to support it and other causes. Sheila is also a US Army Veteran and if you've ever talked to her you probably could guess that she was a SGT.

Kim Bayes-Bautista - Kim started with the VSPA in 1999 as the on-site coordinator working for the company that does the detailed work to make our reunions happen. She has earned the loving title "Queen Mother" for doing that so well for so many years. Though she's not qualified to be an Affiliate Member of the VSPA, we honored her with an Associate Membership in 2004, the highest honor we can bestow on someone not in the immediate family of an actual member. She's been through some terribly difficult times in her life, and some wonderful times with us, but now she is going to have to move on from coordinating our reunion so that she can keep raising her family, hang on to her day job as a behavioral health counselor at Fort Hood, and pursue a doctorate - all at the same time.

Janet Parker - Janet is the official VSPA Sparkplug. She's the daughter of one of our most fondly remembered Brothers, "Sarge" Al Matthews, VSPA LM #127. When I took on the membership chairman job in 2006, she jumped up to be my assistant and was invaluable as I tried to learn and keep up with that job. She and her daddy used to smoke I-don't-know-how-many tons of barbecue for our hospitality room every year. No family could give more love to the VSPA and the Sisterhood than they did. Janet has had a few very tough years since we've known her, but she's also had some great times with us and it's a thrill to see her back again this year.

For each of these three wonderful ladies, we have a new, small token of our love, esteem and appreciation. The all-new VSPA Sisterhood Award. The plaques read: For your deeply personal, heartfelt, ongoing and very loving support for those of us who Take Care of Our Own." From the Husbands, Sons and Brothers of the VSPA.

WARRIORS MEDAL OF VALOR

A Native American Vietnam Veteran from Oregon, Marshall Tall Eagle Serna, created this medal in 2002 to pay tribute to all military veterans regardless of cultural background. We obtain our medals directly from Tall Eagle, and award them with his personal blessing and a certificate signed by his hand. The Native American Nations of the United States of America recognized the medal. Our VSPA tradition of presenting the Warriors Medal of Valor was started by VSPA Life Member #127 MSgt Alvin W. Matthews. "Sarge" was awarded his Warriors Medal in 2004, and then established the process that we use today. He funded the purchase of the medals for us until his death in 2008, and many contributions were made in his honor to continue the tradition. Up to now, 24 Warriors Medals of Valor have been awarded to members by the VSPA for one or any of the following: Valor; for an action or actions in Vietnam or Thailand that were never recognized by the Air Force; for outstanding service to the VSPA, or for outstanding and consistent or ongoing service to or for deployed troops or veterans. A committee of five convenes to consider applications and select just a few deserving recipients for this award every year. This year the committee has selected five.

Master Chief James Windham

The Master Chief is a retired U.S. Navy Vietnam War Veteran who came to be a huge asset to the VSPA and the memory of one of our own these past eight months. For those of us who aren't familiar with Navy rank and protocol, a "Master Chief Petty Officer is the tip-top one percent of Navy enlisted personnel. In February of this year, VSPA member Ed Daubert discovered that fellow Tan Son Nhut Security Policeman Sgt Bruce Dale Jones, who died in the Line of Duty in Vietnam, was not listed among the 111 who lost their lives in Vietnam and he respectfully raised the question. VSPA's Don Poss and Steve Gattis investigated and were able to document that Sgt Jones had in fact served with the 377th SPS, and died while serving. Don Poss then discovered the location of Sgt Jones's gravesite. He was fortunate to also discover Master Chief Windham.

Master Chief Windham put in a non-stop effort to assist the VSPA. He contacted Sgt. Jones's family, explained the mission of the VSPA and that our members consider Sgt Jones a brother we lost during the Vietnam War, just as they had lost a son and brother. He obtained their approval for the memorial service and immediately began planning and coordinating all local assistance and recognition for Sgt Jones including local veterans, clergy and civic leaders, the local Junior ROTC, and local news media. Master Chief Windham also personally spruced-up the grave and cemetery, and enlisted the local Junior ROTC to continue to maintain Sgt Jones's grave as well as those of all Veterans in the cemetery.

Master Chief Windham's caring, vigorous and dedicated assistance is in keeping with the highest standards of our VSPA brotherhood and is a sterling example of our motto, "We Take Care of Our Own."

For these and many, many other significant and generous actions, and obvious strength of character, it is my honor and privilege on behalf of VSPA to award the Warriors Medal of Valor to Master Chief James Windham. (Don Poss presented the medal.)

Maj Christopher "Kit" Johnson, Chief of the Security Forces Division for Air Force Special Operations Command

Those of you who were with us on Wednesday evening at our reception dinner saw us award a very special "Associate Membership" in the Vietnam Security Police Association to Maj Johnson. There have only been ten of these awarded since the VSPA was founded in 1995, because it takes a sustained and extraordinary service to the VSPA and its members to be considered for this unique honor. You will remember hearing some of the following information about him on Wednesday.

The VSPA's first contact with then-Captain Johnson was in 2004, when he was our reunion's Security Forces POC at Davis-Monthan. He expanded his role to help plan and carry out our graveside memorial for A1C Millard "Lee" Lehman, KIA in July, 1966 at Binh Thuy. This memorial was extremely important for the members of the VSPA. At that event, Kit Johnson met VSPA's Gold Star Mom and Gold Star Sweetheart, and has stayed close to them ever since. His friendship with them, and his esteem for our history, moved him to initiate the Millard Lehman Chapter of the Air Force Security Forces Association. Later, as Commander of the 355th SFS, he started the difficult process of renaming and dedicating the 355th's Security Forces building complex as the "Lehman Security Forces Complex." It was a tough slog through local, Air Combat Command and Air Force approval, but he prevailed and the building was dedicated in 2011 in a very moving and significant ceremony. I cannot overstate the importance of this permanent recognition given to one of our own. Kit's involvement with the VSPA has included the wonderful stroke of genius in suggesting a special challenge coin for VSPA to use in honoring active-duty Defenders. It's what we give to the troops to this day.

Kit deployed to Iraq in 2005, and then again to Afghanistan in 2012 on a two-weeks-notice emergency deployment. He served there with the 820th Base Defense Group from Moody AFB, Georgia, and as a result of the relationships he forged with the troops there he is now a member of the Safeside Association - another close tie to VSPA.

I will add once again my personal observation that he's a caring, effective and highly respected leader who has done a tremendous job of building awareness among today's Defenders of the history and camaraderie of the VSPA and the Safeside Association. For these and many, many other reasons, it is my honor and privilege on behalf of VSPA to award the Warriors Medal of Valor to Maj Christopher "Kit" Johnson. (Mom Lehman and Bill Cummings presented the medal.) Kit was our guest speaker for the evening and also received a VSPA flag that had been carried and flown in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos by VSPA Life Member Bill Harris.

Edwin Jack Smith, VSPA LM #453

As an Airman First Class, Jack Smith served at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, RVN, in 1968 and 1969. An AF Form 909, "Airman Performance Report," submitted with the nomination for this award illustrates the kind of Security Policeman he was. It covers the six-month period of 2 Apr 69 - 1 Oct 69. His rating is the highest possible in every category of Personal Qualities, as well as the Overall Evaluation, and is endorsed by his Element Leader, Flight Chief, Master Sergeant and Squadron Operations Officer. It notes that his performance is directly responsible for a decline in the types of offenses he was responsible for detecting, investigating and apprehending. It notes his exemplary military decorum, military bearing and loyalty, and states that he "definitely possesses all the prerequisites of a leader." In addition to joining all the other endorsing officials in strongly recommending A1C Smith for promotion, Squadron Operations Officer Captain Howard King writes in an additional endorsement, "Airman Smith is one of the most outstanding and dedicated airmen I have ever known."

Those of us in the VSPA know Jack Smith as "The Old Cowboy" poet of considerable skill, giving remarkable life to some of the thoughts and memories that many of us struggle with. His words have helped many of us heal old wounds that cannot be seen. He is not only prolific in his writing for and about our members, but also generous with his time and support for those in need or for a good cause. He's put boundless energy into our reunion raffle for quite a few years, and the results were outstanding. On the basis of his highly rated Vietnam War service, and his continuing and ongoing service to VSPA members, other veterans and active duty troops, it is my honor and privilege on behalf of VSPA to award the Warriors Medal of Valor to Edwin Jack Smith. (Janet Parker presented the medal.)

Alexander Liverano, VSPA LM #521

Alexander Liverano served as a Security Policeman and Sentry/Patrol Dog Handler from 1968 to 1972, including a year at Takhli and Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. He was severely bitten while training another K-9 team, and hospitalized for days for his injuries. After recovering he requested to handle the dog that had torn him up; 105-pound Dante 632M. He successfully handled Dante for the rest of his tour. One night in December 1970 Sgt Liverano released Dante and successfully apprehended an intruder on his perimeter post. Squadron Commander Capt William Fadal wrote a letter commending his outstanding performance and aggressive action stating, "Your accomplishment has set a standard for your contemporaries to follow. It is a pleasure to have men of your caliber in the organization."

Sgt Liverano was honorably discharged as a Sergeant, served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and on the New York City Police Department. During his NYPD career he was awarded a Silver Medal of Valor for preventing the loss of a person's life with an act of valor that put himself at risk; a Law Enforcement Purple Heart, and a Silver Star for Bravery. He shared his black-belt-level skills in karate by teaching karate classes for children for more than four years.

A large picture of Sgt Liverano and Dante is on display at the 355th SFS, Davis-Monthan AFB. The Squadron Commander, Lt Col James Hodges, wrote to him about it: "All these ... factors make you an ... ideal subject for this photo, as they point to the kind of life that our Security Forces troops of today can admire and seek to emulate. My thanks are extended to you for allowing us to use your photo in this long-lasting tribute to the service you and others gave our country during the Vietnam War." On the basis of his Vietnam War service and lifetime of public service, it is my honor and privilege on behalf of VSPA to award the Warriors Medal of Valor to Sgt Alexander Liverano. (Phil Carroll presented the medal.)

Phil Carroll, VSPA President and Life Member # 336

Phil Carroll was unanimously selected for this award by the Awards Committee and was not aware that his name had been submitted for the award. Phil was a SSgt and served as a Security Policeman and K9 Handler from 1968 to 1972. As our president, Phil has maintained daily contact with members of the VSPA, Thailand Dog Handlers, the Old Dawgs and Pups Program, active duty Military Working Dog Handlers that he personally supports during their deployment, and numerous other active duty entities as he plans our reunions and fulfills his duties as President of the Vietnam Security Police Association.

Phil served as a dog handler at Nakhon Phanom and Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Bases. He has taken that experience and used it to provide guidance for current active duty handlers and to assist in the management of the Old Dawgs and Pups Program in which he manages the funds and mailing of

supplies to any deployed handler who participates in the program. He is personally responsible for enlisting the generous financial assistance of the Leatherman company that has donated tens of thousands of dollars in “Surge” multi-tools, “MUT” military utility tools, knives and flashlights for our deployed, active duty handlers. He designed a patch and challenge coin for the VSPA Thailand Dog Handlers that he mails free of charge to each handler in the program. He also designed a commemorative Leatherman knife for the VSPA that honors Air Police, Security Police and K-9 Veterans of Vietnam and Thailand.

Phil has been President of the VSPA since 2010. He was 2nd Vice President for one year prior to his election as president. He served as the VSPA Membership Chairman from 2006 until his election as president in 2010. He will end his first two-year term as president this year and has decided not to run for re-election due to medical issues that must be addressed. However, he will remain on the Board of Directors to fulfill the roll of “past president” to assist the incoming president and to help maintain continuity.

As Membership Chairman, Phil worked diligently with Don Poss, Steve Gattis and Gary Jones to build the national VSPA electronic membership database that we currently use to manage membership information via the Internet. His knowledge of computers and the essential elements of a database were and are a significant contribution to the improvement and success of our database. His flawless management of our membership program assisted in the increase in membership and the renewal/maintenance of current dues by our members. His efforts contributed to the effective doubling of our membership from 600 to 1200, including several hundred life members during his tenure as the membership chairman. On a very personal note in keeping with our motto of *We Take Care of Our Own*, Phil has provided personal guidance to our members who had difficulty proving their service in Vietnam and Thailand. He continues to share his knowledge, especially with augmentees who served with us.

As VSPA President, Phil has demonstrated consistent outstanding leadership within the VSPA and has recruited many new members. His character traits have continued to foster the sense of brotherhood that we share throughout the VSPA. He has been the VSPA representative and keynote speaker for Air Force building dedications and has planned two of our outstanding reunions: 2011 in Dayton, Ohio and 2012 in Destin, Florida. He designed the VSPA Memorial Bench that was installed at the Air Force Museum in 2011 and gave the keynote address for the dedication ceremony. One of the most significant contributions he has made to the VSPA has been his quiet work to build and maintain our sense of brotherhood within the various elements of the VSPA, including K-9, Safeside, the VSPA Sisterhood, our Affiliate (family) Members and our honored Associate Members.

Phil handled all of his duties as Membership Chairman and 2nd Vice President while he was employed full-time with the Federal Government. Phil made significant contributions of photographs and text for the VSPA History Book and assisted Steve Gattis with the final editing of the book. When he retired, he devoted his retired life to the management of the VSPA. He has received the Monk Pope Brotherhood Award in 2009 and the Mike Daoust Bayonet Award in 2007 for his commitment to the VSPA. (Janet Parker presented the medal.)

President’s Award

Phil Carroll also received the President’s Award for his dedicated service as President of the VSPA from 2010 to 2012. The award was presented at the conclusion of the change-of-command ceremony. The laser engraved plaque also honored his service in Thailand with his K9 partners Tina X768 and Charlie 2M45.



WELCOME HOME SGT BRUCE DALE JONES

by Don Poss, VSPA Communications Director/Webmaster, LM #37

(photo credits: Tony Morris, James Windham, Don Poss, and VSPA members)



An Open Letter to Evergreen and Conecuh County Alabama:

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



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

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

A week earlier, a new veterans' monument was dedicated in Evergreen. That online dedication story and photo had the name "Sgt Bruce Dale Jones" and his correct date of casualty- *we had found Sgt Bruce Dale Jones!*

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



On October 5, 2012, VSPA's convoy of a bus, three cars, and motorcycles approached the

turn off to Rabb Cemetery. A sheriff's patrol car turned on its blue-lights and we followed his escort lead slowly down a dirt road.

I could see people standing within a gauntlet of parked cars, pickup trucks and assorted vehicles along the narrow country road. VSPA climbed off the bus, 57 strong, and walked a hundred yards past cars and a school bus toward the cemetery gate. We all knew Sgt Jones' grave had waited four decades for us. Folks gathered inside the cemetery fence seemed focused on the gate funneling in new arrivals; not staring, but more like searching out friends they had only heard about -- Evergreen had turned out big for the memorial.



JROTC stood at attention resplendent in colorful red uniforms and white "cowboy" hats with turned up side rims and flags wafting lazily in a light breeze. The Patriot Guard formed a line of honor with unfurled flags flying and guiding us to where Sgt Jones lay at rest. I paused at the gate searching for his gravestone, at last--*there it was*. I entered the cemetery nodding to friendly faces. I knew I was standing on hallowed ground, bordered by a tall standing forest, like vigilant sentinels that had weathered many a storm since the early 1800's.



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



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



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



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





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



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

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

Yes, Sgt Bruce Dale Jones, you are remembered by those whom you served with, and your fellow countrymen; your soul commended to the Lord; and I

tell you plainly and from the heart: Though 40 years have passed your sacrifice will always be remembered.



BRUCE DALE JONES

SGT - E4 - Air Force - Regular
Casualty was on Mar 9, 1972
In GIA DINH, SOUTH VIETNAM

[TAN SON NHUT AIRBASE, 377th SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON](#)

Non-Hostile, died of illness/injury,
GROUND CASUALTY
Accidental Self-Destruction
Body was recovered
Panel 02W - Line 114



VSPA's Tribute to Sgt Bruce Dale Jones

by Newell M. Swartz, Past President ~ LM #262

Phan Rang, 35th SPS; Phu Cat, 37th SPS ~ 1966/'67

The Patriot Guard Riders honored Sgt Bruce Dale Jones by posting twenty of their members during the VSPA tribute to Sgt Jones. There were about 150-200 people present. The town of Evergreen sent their Mayor to proclaim October 5th as Sgt Bruce Dale Jones Day. Other dignitaries included the principal of the school that Bruce had attended as a young man, a county commissioner, city councilmen, Vietnam veteran Navy Chief Windham who did a lot of coordination for us, the Sheriff of Conecuh county whose deputies also provided traffic control and escorts, the pastor of the church which Bruce attended, and the local DAV rep along with the Junior ROTC who acted as the color guard. The JROTC also promised to maintain the graves of Bruce and all the other vets interned in the Rabb Cemetery. Members of the 377th laid a wreath at the headstone of Sgt Jones and our own Howard Yates played "Amazing Grace" on his bagpipes.

Our bus driver thanked us on behalf of his company and then attempted to thank us from his heart for the honor we had bestowed on a citizen of his State that day. However, he was so overcome with emotion his eyes filled with tears and he choked up and could not finish.

To Sam Lewis: this is the first time I have personally witnessed the Patriot Guard Riders in person. I hope I don't offend anyone by this example, but for anyone who has ever seen a herd of elk suddenly quietly appear out of a ponderosa pine forest in the mountains, create an impressive showing and then just as quickly fade away, that was these guys. All of a sudden they were there in a heart-stirring show of support and then they are furling their banners and colors and they are gone. I had to really hustle to get over to thank the Ride Captain Phil Brown from Satsuma, AL. Fourteen of the members had ridden over from Mobile, AL which was several hours away. They are a class act and each will receive a VSPA challenge coin. A letter thanking them for their service and support will be sent to the Ride Captain. Their motto is "Standing For Those Who Stood For Us".

I think the mutual feeling everyone came away with was like when you give someone a nice present. You truly enjoy the giving much more than the receiving.

Thinking back on Evergreen, the patriotism of the citizens, the Patriot Guard Riders, the willingness of the school children who are the JROTC, the VSPA members who attended, the restaurant where we ate, and the bus driver overcome with emotion leads me to the conclusion that Evergreen represents the heartbeat of America. It was a good day.



Photo of Patriot Guard Riders supporting VSPA at Rabb Cemetery by Associate Member Erlyce Pekas - 2012



A FITTING TRIBUTE by Bob Morrison, VSPA LM #88

U-Tapao, 635th APS, 635th SPS; Ubon 8th SPS

After attending my first VSPA Reunion in Florida, I spent another three weeks on the road, traveling the eastern seaboard, seeking out and visiting friends, family and familiar places. (I formerly lived in Massachusetts and New Hampshire)

While at the World Trade Center, I visited St Paul's Chapel where Police and Fire Departments have placed mementos. I thought my 18th VSPA annual reunion pin would be a fitting tribute to the fallen heroes. Opened in 1766, St. Paul's Chapel is Manhattan's oldest public building in continuous use – a place where George Washington worshiped



St. Paul's Chapel, NY

and 9/11 recovery workers received round-the-clock care. St. Paul's is a center for worship and the arts, a community of reconciliation, and a place of pilgrimage for all people.

On September 11, 2001, St. Paul's Chapel escaped destruction when the World Trade Center buildings collapsed across the street. Although the churchyard and church were filled with debris and dust, there was no physical damage to the building.



Bob Morrison places his VSPA pin as a tribute.

People from all over the world send or leave cards, letters, drawings, flags, and other memorials at St. Paul's.



Right: Ground Zero.....



Photo of Bob Morrison by Erlyce Pekas

VSPA SISTERHOOD COOKBOOK

By Lise Gattis and Martha Fleming, VSPA Sisterhood

The VSPA Sisterhood wants to raise funds for the VSPA by preparing a taste-tempting cookbook featuring the favorite recipes from members of the VSPA and the VSPA Sisterhood. So far, we have received about 150 great recipes. Several VSPA members and their wives brought recipes to the reunion, others have mailed them. We need a minimum of 300 recipes to complete the book. Please send more and make sure that your wives see this request

Lise Gattis is lwgattis@windstream.net 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



Honor your husband, wife, child, grandchild, mother or father with their favorite recipe. Your name and their name will be in the book with the recipe. Base and squadron assignments will be also be included.

DO IT NOW while you're thinking of your favorite *Bien Hoa Beans & Franks, Binh Thuy Burgers, Cam Ranh Casserole, U-Tapao Chicken with flaming peanut sauce*, or something that brings back memories of the meal you shared with your K-9 partner like pound cake with peaches. It can even be something hot and evil like **POP-FLARE CHILI** or **XM148 JALAPENOS** (with a guaranteed blast radius if 5 meters). **DO IT NOW, PLEASE!**

My Experience With The VPSA Brotherhood

by Alexander Liverano ~ Takhli, 355th SPS, K9; Nakhon Phanom , 56th SPS, K9 - 1970-'71



Phil Carroll and Alex Liverano "back in the day" in Thailand



Left to right: Michael O'Donohoe, Alex Liverano, Phil Carroll & Johnny Segovia in 2012 Photo by VSPA photographer Tony Morris



Alex and Pamela Liverano 2012
Photo by Steve Garris, LM #49

This was my first Reunion, and my wife and I enjoyed the experience very much, the Brotherhood and the Sisterhood. They provided not only a "bond," but Pamela found out from the Sisterhood, that she is not alone at all, dealing w/the good and not so good times in our lives, regarding Agent Orange, PTSD, and a host of other issues, that we have dealt with through 40 yrs. of marriage. She didn't have a clue of what some or most Vietnam Veterans feel, and think about. For example, after leaving Thailand and completing my tour, I was "heartbroken" about leaving my dog Dante 632M there. Still to this day I never had another dog (I was assigned one when I came back to the World) at Altus AFB OK. His name was Lazo. However, when I left the U.S. Air Force I somehow could never have a dog as a pet. Dante was a part of me, he saved my life numerous times, and for that I will be forever grateful. Sidebar.....In the 1980's, NYPD started their K-9 program. I was working "Street Crime" & I heard about this new program and applied. I figured I would be a "natural." In my application I found an old FM (Field Manual) on Sentry Dogs, copied it word for word, and submitted it to the New K-9 Commander of NYPD. About a month later he called me into his office and told me in some not-so-official terms that "the last thing the NYPD needed was an old ass sentry dog handler from SEA, patrolling the streets of NYC, with 10 million people in 26 sq. miles" so that was the end of that, and I stayed with Street Crime!

About Phil Carroll and me; Phil and I met in what's known in the USAF as AZR (Security Police Combat Preparedness Course). I think it was at Lackland AFB, TX. This was about the first week of May, 1970. This course was designed to familiarize us with the weapons and tactics we were taught while in the States; in essence, it was a refresher course. All Security Police at that time had to go through this, before being shipped out to SEA. Phil and I were riding in a deuce and a half, and he was in charge of the M-60 machine gun and I was his A gunner (The guy who carries the ammo and extra barrels for the machine gun, to change it out when it got too hot. They gave you an

asbestos glove to handle the hot barrel). Now as I struggle to remember what happened, (cut me some slack; this was 41 yrs. ago!) a truck full of us were in a convoy, and we were "ambushed." We dismounted from the deuce and a half, headed for cover and concealment, with the machine gun and ammo and assorted gear and took cover on the side of an embankment; we set up the machine gun and started to return fire as fast as we could; we did what we were trained to do. However, much to our dismay, in this exercise where we set up our defensive position on the embankment was a chigger nest; we were embedded in it, and at the time we had no idea. The exercise lasted for a few hours and after that we went on to complete that days training. This was one of the last training days for our class, and I shipped out directly to Thailand. When I got there I was itching and my body was completely covered with pustules; the heat and humidity didn't help my situation. When I saw Phil at Takhli, he was also covered with chigger bites, and we suffered together for a long time. We were assigned to the same hootch and were sent to NKP together, where we stayed in the same hootch. We took helicopters together, airplanes and it seemed like wherever they sent one of us, the other would get the same assignment. We went on R&R together. I think I came back to the World a week or two before Phil. I could be wrong, but sadly, we never knew where the other one was stationed in the States.

Over the years with the introduction of the internet, my C.O. in NYPD saw my name and unit and wanted it off the VSPA website, so I called the VSPA and advised them of my situation. To my surprise, I received a call from Phil. I was overjoyed, to say the least! We stayed in touch, and he also brought two other guys we had served with back in touch: Michael O'Donohoe and Johnny Segovia. What a great experience! At the reunion Johnny Segovia and Michael O'Donohoe presented Phil with a plaque thanking him for bringing us together again after 41 years.

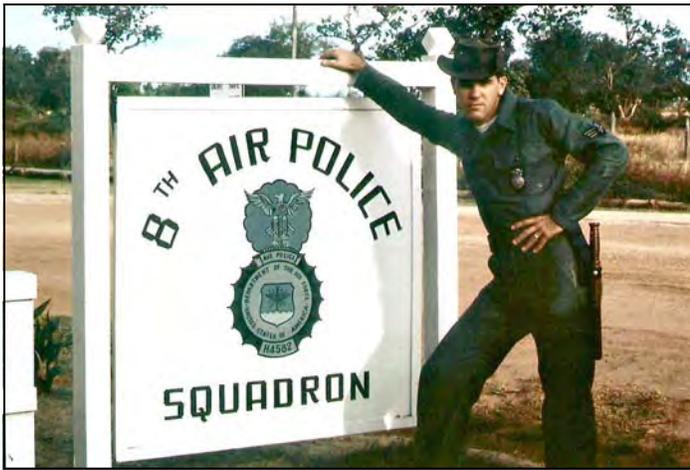
One more thing that I think that you should know; when I met Phil on Tuesday, 02 Oct. 2012, it seemed like the 41-year wall had come down, and it felt like we had only been together a week before. Of course, we had both aged and we shared our life experiences, but the personalities never wavered a bit. My wife, Pamela, finally saw in real life the man I had told her about all those years ago, and was extremely impressed with Phil and his attitude, as well as with Johnny and Michael. Thank you for letting me share my story with you.....it has been an amazing experience!

Alex and Dante
1970



Alex Liverano





MY FIRST REUNION

By Nick Guarino

VSPA member

Ubon, 8th SPS 1965-66

Experiencing my first Reunion as a member of the VSPA made me a little uneasy, not knowing what to expect and not knowing anyone. I had hopes of reuniting with others from my tour of duty in Ubon from July 1965—July 1966. That was not to be. However, I met with others who

did serve at Ubon, and I was astounded to learn of so many changes at the Base and things that had occurred. The tours of the men I met were, to say the least, different ordeals. I remembered guard post on the flight line, the bomb dump, also filling and building bunkers.

Attending this 18th reunion really enlightened my spirits and made me grateful to have served, and now, as a member of the VSPA. At the reunion, our visits to Eglin AFB, watching the demos with dogs and trainers, left me with a understanding of how far the Air Force has come since my day. (There were no dog units in '65-'66 at Ubon.) Also, seeing the troops of today and their attitude made me proud. My visit to the Air Force Museum was very impressive as I haven't seen anything like it in many years.

I'm so proud of the VSPA and am glad I'm a member! I'm now looking forward to the next reunion.....it's a great organization. All I can say is "Thank You" and "Welcome Home" to all my brothers.

More Florida Reunion Photos Below



“Reflections On My VSPA Reunion Experience”

by Danny Vinson II

Son of Dan R. Vinson, VSPA LM #66 ~ Ubon, 8th SPS 1968-'69

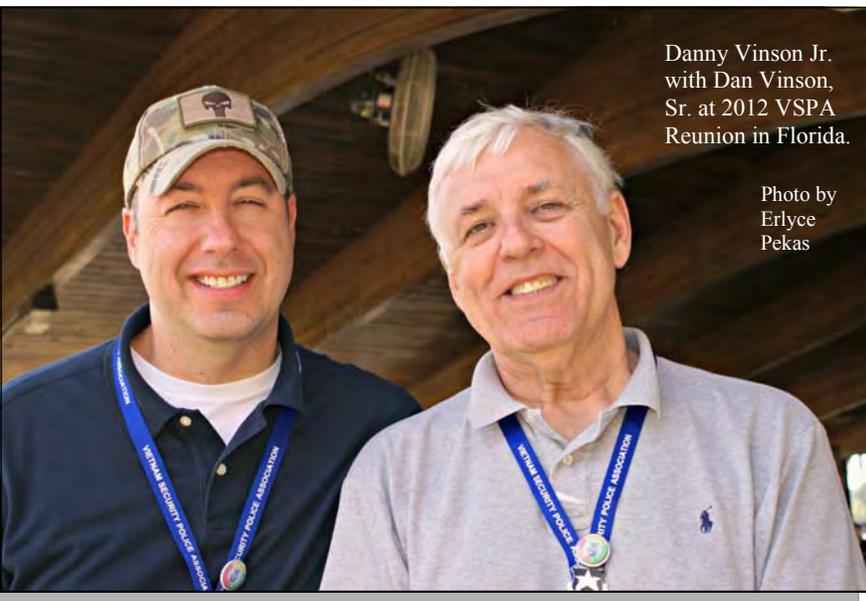


Dan Vinson Sr., - 1966



My father told me two years ago that the 2012 Vietnam Security Police Association reunion was going to be held at Eglin AFB, right near my home of Crestview, Florida. I couldn't wait to meet some of the people I had heard about since my early childhood. I was proud to accept this invitation and accompany my father, Dan Vinson, Ubon, Thailand, 1968-69 to this event.

The activity on our first day was a trip to Eglin AFB to observe a demonstration by the 96th Ground Combat Training Squadron, a specialized group that trains USAF Security Forces that are preparing for deployment all over the world. As I witnessed the interactions between the VSPA members and those currently serving, I saw how proud my father and the others were to share stories with the new generation of “Air Police”. The VSPA members had helped shape and contribute to what the USAF Security Forces has become today.



Danny Vinson Jr.
with Dan Vinson,
Sr. at 2012 VSPA
Reunion in Florida.

Photo by
Erlyce
Pekas

Back at the hotel, I immediately felt the warmth of this brotherhood as I was welcomed and treated like one of their own. I never personally served in the military, but I did spend some time as a civilian law enforcement officer and definitely felt a kinship with the VSPA members. As the son of a veteran, I enjoyed hearing tales from those my father knew, giving me a chance to learn more about him and the others who served our country

during that time. I had the privilege at this event to see the impact that Vietnam made on the lives of these individuals, as they came together and shared memories with each other, including their own families. I saw a grandson, a daughter, wives and others taking the time to remember and support those who served.

I can honestly say I had a great experience at this gathering with my father and will always treasure the time we spent remembering his service in Southeast Asia with the Air Force. The Vietnam Security Police Association provides a chance for this band of brothers and their extended families to commemorate the sacrifices made for this nation. I couldn't be more proud of my father, and feel honored to have been a part of this experience.

Keep an eye out for me at the next VSPA reunion!

My Promise to my Veteran Spouse by Carol Kelter

wife of VSPA LM#45 Jim Kelter, Tan Son Knut, 377th SPS , 1967-1968

Being Married to a Veteran

I know being married is not easy. It takes work and compromise from both. Being married to a veteran is a proud honor and adds a whole different dimension. We've been married 37 years and I'm still learning about the experience of being married to a veteran.

We've been through a lot of challenges due to my spouse having Post Traumatic Stress, PTS, (we drop the D) from his military service.

I'm very proud of my husband for continuing to challenge himself to handle the effects of PTS on his life. There are different programs out there to help a veteran to deal, handle and manage this stress.



Jim and Carol Kelter 2012

I'm fortunate to have a Peer Support For Veterans' Spouses Group in our area. This group has helped me to be more compassionate and understanding of my veteran spouse and PTS. I am not alone.

We have found how important it is that we both educate ourselves about PTS. We've grown closer and our relationship is stronger.

PTS does not go away, but a person can manage and maintain a decent life if they choose to accept they have PTS and do whatever it takes to deal with it.

The following Promise I have written is what I feel is important for me to let my Veteran spouse know.

My Promise To My Veteran Spouse

I promise to love you unconditionally.

I am proud you are a veteran.

I promise to respect you.

I promise to accept you for who you are.

I promise to not judge you for what you were conditioned to do in the military.

I promise to support you.

I promise to be patient with you.

I promise to really listen to you.

I promise to stand by you.

I promise to continue to seek education and advice to understand you, knowing I will never fully understand because you are a veteran.

I promise to always encourage you.

I promise to remind you that you are a very special person because you are a veteran.



by Carol Kelter

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 at Ft. Hood, TX. She has graciously agreed to write a repeating column for GUARDMOUNT and we gratefully present her tenth article below.



Photo of Kim Bayes-Bautista by VSPA photographer Steve Hall.

FROM THE FIELD

of behavioral health

*Kim Bayes-Bautista, MSSW, LCSW
Honorary Associate Member VSPA*



You CAN Teach An Old Dog New Tricks!

"I'm *too old* to change." "I'm set in *my ways*." "He'll *never* change." Consider this... Parents and caregivers of a blind woman with moderate mental retardation tried for 85 years to toilet train her, but to no avail. The woman became toilet trained at 87. This true story epitomizes the notion of change. One that reminds us that no matter how old, how impaired or how set in our ways we think we are, change can occur. Even the smallest change can make a difference.

In the late '70s and early 80's James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente at the University of Rhode Island developed the Stages of Change Model which was initially used for addiction, but is now used in many different contexts.

The Stages of Change are:

Precontemplation (When a person has not acknowledged that a problematic behavior exists.) In this stage people are not interested in changing their behavior and are not thinking seriously about changing.

Contemplation (The person acknowledges that there is problem but they are unwilling or not ready to change their behavior.) In this stage people begin to consider the consequences of their problem behavior but are still ambivalent about changing it.

Preparation/Determination (Getting ready to change.) In this stage the person has made the commitment to change. They begin gathering information about what they will need to change their behavior.

Action/Willpower (Changing the behavior.) In this stage people believe they can change and are actively involved in doing so. There is heavy reliance on willpower and taking steps to change.

Maintenance (Maintaining the behavior change.) In this stage people maintain the new status quo. They anticipate where the pitfalls may be so to avoid relapse, and they are motivated by their own efforts.

Relapse (Returning to old behaviors and abandoning the new changes.) This stage is when there is destabilization and old behaviors emerge. Relapse doesn't always mean complete and utter failure. It can be an important learning experience which makes the person stronger and able to restart the process again or return to the maintenance stage and get back on track.

It is important to recognize that the process of change is fluid and people can move through various stages at varying rates. All you have to do to change is change.

Kind regards, Kim Bayes-Bautista aka Queen Mother

FEED THE DAWGS EVENT, EGLIN AFB, FL



VSPA President Emeritus Steve Gattis presents a gift of gratitude to Jon Hemp, Co-founder of FEED THE DAWGS

Right: “First Steak” – Traditionally the first steak is served by the highest ranking to the least senior at the event – We made it happen. SSgt Roberto Matos is served by Major Kit Johnson (Hurlburt Field) and Lt. Colonel Jereme Barrett (Eglin AFB) serves SrA Corbin Carlson his steak.



Below: Nemo Committee representative Ernest Childers presents SSgt Jeremy Rice with his father’s MWD records – who then presented them to his father. Son, MWD Kanjer, and Father continue the K-9 tradition.



PHOTO CREDITS

VSPA PHOTOGRAPHER

KEN NEAL



VSPA members and military personnel along with three K-9 from Eglin AFB gather at a “FEED THE DAWGS” event at Eglin AFB on October 5, 2012. ³⁰

WASH THE WALL, from our hearts to those who gave all.....

Several times a year, some of our VSPA members join forces with others to *Wash the Wall* in Washington, D.C. It is a labor of love, performed by Veterans for their friends, buddies, family members or others they wish to honor by keeping the Vietnam Wall Memorial in tip-top shape. Recently, another wall-washing event took place. Below are photographs taken of the occasion, in the early pre-dawn hours of September 22, 2012.



Photo credits Lt Col E.C. Lee Chambers
President Eagle Chapter AFSFA

One Hundred Eleven

by Howard Yates LM #644

BIEN HOA, 3rd SPS, AUGMENTEE, 1967/'68

One hundred eleven names on the wall
One hundred eleven Sky Cops stood tall
One hundred eleven answered the call
One hundred eleven gave freedom their all

One hundred eleven, their deeds we recall
One hundred eleven, we honor them all
One hundred eleven now guard Heaven's halls
One hundred eleven names on the wall.

Ramblings of an Air Force Brat...

by Janet “Sparkplug” Parker

- *Editors note: Janet, Sisterhood Vice President and daughter of Sgt. Al Matthews, USAF and VSPA LM#127, (1942—2008) has been a contributing writer at GM for over two years. In this issue, Janet explores the unexpected topic of “Ambush Grief.”*



Ambush grief...

Ambush, now there's a word that you understand. It conjures up images of something sneaky, obscured, and not good. Something you can't anticipate.

In the grieving process, this is one of those undermining factors. Just when you think you are okay, when you least expect it, when you are not looking...Ba Bam! The grief comes on like a kick in the gut. It can throw you back to the very beginning of the process.

Ambush grief can be triggered by the familiar or the unfamiliar. Sometimes it is triggered by the things that brought you solace before.

With the upcoming holidays, ambush grief may well be lurking in the shadows. Remember, do what you can, when you can, and if you can't, don't. If it is difficult for you to have a large family get together, talk to those closest to you about an alternative. Maybe have a couple of smaller celebrations or pick different day. If it is difficult to be alone, then surround yourself. If you are alone, there are support groups and churches out there. Most support groups will have a session or information about coping with the holidays.

Of course, the holidays are not the only time you can be ambushed. It happens any time, anywhere. When it hits you, think about what you are doing, hearing, seeing, or saying that opens it up. Own it and be aware that it happens to all of us. I can't tell you how to stop it, I can only tell you to be aware of it as part of the process. Work through it and keep in mind that it does not have to nullify the good work you have done.

Once the initial shock of the ambush passes, I am helped most by having a good thought. I remember something about the person that made me happy or comfortable. Or, I think of something good that came from the situation that would not have other wise. Hind sight is very helpful. Call on what you did when you were ambushed by something else. If you can see that you made it through then, you are stronger now and have a tool to get through again. These tools may seem hidden, but every experience you cope with leaves its mark.

Life changes are tough. There is no check list or grading scale. Keep trying and working through. Plug in to a group or organization. Maybe find some way to volunteer and give back. You would be surprised how others can benefit from your experiences, even the not so good ones.

WE have this beautiful, wonderful group of Brothers and Sisters. Can one of you say that you don't have a place to go? I think we all know we can rely on each other for support, prayers, an ear, some advice or a shoulder.

I know this does not cover every possibility but I want you to know that you can get support and there are others of us who know what it is like and love you! So, when you are ambushed, remember who's got your back...Your friends, your family, and your Savior.

The Peace of the Lord be with you. Love 'ya, really, really.



Janet

YOUR VSPA HISTORY ~ by Kelly Bateman

VSPA HISTORIAN, Life Member #118, Ubon K-9 70-71:



I was not able to attend this years' reunion due to my wife injuring her shoulder and not being able to travel. She is doing much better now and will make a full, if not speedy recovery. She and I both hope everyone else had a great time and we both look forward to future reunions. In this issue of Guardmount are items from my personal Vietnam War Collection that I hope everyone will find interesting. It does not "directly" involve us as Security Police but I am sure there was eventually quite a bit of activity on the part of Da Nang Security Police personnel after the event.

8-Jan-1973 "JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT THE WAR WAS OVER "DA NANG RVN BOMBED BY USAF-NAVY-MARINES."

On January 8, 1973, Da Nang AB, RVN was mistakenly bombed by a flight of USAF F-4's during an all-weather bombing mission. The F-4's were led by a USAF "Pathfinder" Team, F-4's from the 8th TAC Fighter Wing from Ubon, AB, Thailand, 2 Navy F-4's, and 2 Marine F-4's from another Wing. The coordinates for the target and the rendezvous point were input into the navigation equipment in the reverse order causing the flight to rendezvous and proceed to the target 75 miles away at Da Nang.

Our aircraft dropped 32- 500lb. bombs through an overcast impacting in the Da Nang fuel farm destroying several large fuel storage tanks. Thankfully there were no casualties and initially, Da Nang, thought it was just another VC rocket attack. The patches were made to commemorate the event. These extraordinary patches and photo belonged to USAF Col. Hoover, last commander of the 6498th Air Base Wing at Da Nang AFB, RVN from 1971-1973. He flew 97 combat missions while in southeast Asia. His decorations and awards include the Air Force DSM, Legion of Merit W/ Oak Leaf Cluster, MSM, DFC W/ Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal W/6 Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award W/ V Device and 4 Oak Leaf Clusters and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross W/ Gold Star. The Colonel and his



personnel were able to make this event into an amusing story only because there were no casualties.

JAN 8 1973
 FUEL TANKS BURNING AFTER
 U.S. F-4'S MISTAKENLY BOMBED
 DANANG WITH 32 500 LB BOMBS
 DELIVERED FROM ABOVE AN
 OVERCAST - FORTUNATELY THERE
 WERE NO CASUALTIES. F4S WERE
 USAF NOT USMC FROM OTHER WINGS
 William W. Hoover
 COL USAF
 Wing Commander



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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Time to Renew those VSPA dues.....

It is time to renew your VSPA yearly dues....or, better yet, pay a one-time fee and become a life member! It's easy to pay dues or re-up an expired or expiring membership. If you've been putting it off trying to find time, take a few minutes now and make it happen :)

Just go to VSPA's Homepage (<http://www.vspa.com>) and on the top menu, click the menu "About/Join/Dues/Help", and select the appropriate link.



Business Meeting
18th Annual VSPA Reunion
Saturday, October 6, 2012

1. **0900: Attention please: “Observing and declaring that a quorum is present in accordance with our Constitution & By-Laws, I hereby Call to Order this annual business meeting of the Vietnam Security Police Association, Inc.”** - VSPA President Phil Carroll.
 - All non-members are requested to now leave, or to agree to not interrupt, ask questions, or attempt to vote.
 - This meeting will follow the agenda; any questions unrelated to an area of the agenda will be held until the end.

2. **Moment of Silence** for the 111 who did not make it home from the war, and departed VSPA Brothers listed at LM #111.

3. **Invocation** - President Phil Carroll

4. **Pledge of Allegiance** - VP Greg Cain

5. **Introduction of Officers** - Note that all officers serve as volunteers without any pay or compensation for their time and work:
 - Phil Carroll, President; LM #336; Gladstone, OR; Takhli and Nakhon Phanom K9, 1970-71.
 - Greg Cain, Vice President; LM #62; West Seneca, NY; Binh Thuy 1967-68.
 - Bill Marshall, Second Vice President; LM #85; Westerville, OH; Phu Cat, 1968-69.
 - Dennis Evans, Secretary; LM #531; Austin, TX; Binh Thuy, 1969-70; unable to attend.
 - Richard Garcia, Treasurer; LM #82; Massapequa, NY; Phan Rang, 1969-70.
 - Kelly Bateman, Historian; LM #118; Wimberly, TX; Ubon K-9, 1970-71; unable to attend.
 - Steve Gattis, President Emeritus; LM #49; Glen Rose, TX; Cam Ranh Bay, 1968-69.
 - Newell Swartz, Past President; LM #262; Phoenix, AZ; Phan Rang and Phu Cat, 1966-67.
 - Don Poss, Communications Director; LM #37; Hemet, CA; Da Nang K-9 1965-66.

6. (Out of sequence by necessity so that she can attend the VSPA Sisterhood meeting:)
Guardmount Editor’s Report - Erlyce Pekas
 - 6.1. Good morning. I have been your Guardmount Editor for two years. I want to thank those of you who have contributed stories and photos. I also want to encourage all of you to contribute your stories so that they can be preserved as part of our history. You make my job much easier when you send me those stories.
 - 6.2. We publish on a quarterly basis. The deadline for submissions is one month prior to publication. Please, do not submit more than two typewritten pages. We publish three to five stories in each issue of Guardmount, depending upon the number of pages submitted.
 - 6.3. If you write an article, I will mail a hardcopy of Guardmount to you as a thank you for your effort. Please make certain that the VSPA database has your current address. If you have moved, please let us know so that we have YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS AND EMAIL ADDRESS.
 - 6.4. We publish electronically on the VSPA web site. You will receive an email from Don Poss when Guardmount has been posted. The only other copies we publish are for those who do not have computers. This policy helps us control the cost of Guardmount. Again, if you have moved and don’t have a computer, please make sure that we have your current address.

- 6.5. I want to thank Phil Carroll and Steve Gattis for their guidance and for their work as editors to make certain that facts and terminology are correct.
- 6.6. Thank you. If you have any questions, please contact me here, send email or call me.
- 6.7. The Guardmount Report was approved by unanimous acclimation and applause.

7. Introduction of Staff in Appointed Positions - Note that all staffers are appointed by the President with approval of the Board, and serve without compensation or pay for their time and work.

- Communications Director Don Poss selects and supervises the following:
 - Web Server Administrator, Larry Poss; Associate Member; Las Vegas, NV.
 - K-9 Webmaster, Monty Moore; LM #500, Livingston, TX; Da Nang and Phu Cat K-9, 1968-70. Unable to attend.
 - BB Flight Chief, Bill Marshall; LM #85; Westerville, OH; Phu Cat, 1968-69.
 - QRT Flight Chief, Gary Jones; LM#363, Ladson, SC; Da Nang, Phan Rang, Tan Son Nhut, Udorn Safeside 1965, 1968-69 and 1971-72.
 - Tech Support, Greg Dunlap; LM #361; Santa Rosa, CA; Da Nang K-9 1968–69. Unable to attend.
 - Quality Control, Mike Kennedy; LM #35; Fontana, CA; Bien Hoa, 1969-70. Unable to attend.
- Membership Chairman, Bill Marshall; LM #85; Westerville, OH; Phu Cat, 1968-69.
- Chaplain, Jim Stastny; LM #442; Gaithersburg, MD; Korat K-9 1970-71. Unable to attend.
- Chaplain, Steve Janke; Carlstadt, NJ; Cam Ranh Bay K-9 1969-70. Unable to attend.
- Chaplain, Bill Cooley; LM #350, Canyon Lake, TX; Cam Ranh Bay K-9 1971-72. Unable to attend.
- Chaplain, Jeff Kerkhoff; West Covina, CA; Tan Son Nhut 1972-73.
- Guardmount Newsletter Editor, Erlyce Pekas; Associate Member; Phoenix, AZ.
- Photographer, Tony Morris; LM #70; Shererville, IN; Cam Ranh Bay 1969-70.
- Photographer, Lou Reda; Norwalk, OH; Phan Rang 1968-69. Unable to attend.
- Photographer, Steve Hall; Orange, CA; Binh Thuy 1968-69. Unable to attend. .
- Photographer, Terry Hall; LM #515; Woodstown, NJ; Nha Trang, 1967-68.
- BX Sales Managers, Van and Joyce Digby; LM #59; Bay City, MI; Phan Rang 1967-69; and Sisterhood Member.
- Service Officer, Bud Owens; LM #56; Stratham, NH; Binh Thuy, 1966-67.
- Scholarship Committee Chairman, Jim Lebowitz; LM #241; Laguna Woods, CA; Bien Hoa, 1966-68.
- K-9 Kennel Master, Jim Stastny; LM #442; Gaithersburg, MD; Korat K-9, 1970-71. Unable to attend.
- Sergeant-at-Arms, Keith Young; LM #175; Angola, NY; Binh Thuy and Phu Cat, 1970-71.
- Paralegal Services, Paul Sigler; LM #595; Bartlesville, OK; Cam Ranh Bay, 1965-66.
- Safeside Liaison, Dave Pierson; LM #299, Carson City, NV Binh Thuy, 1969-70.
- Binh Thuy Liaison, Lew Goldberg; LM #150; Battlefield, MO; Binh Thuy 1968-69.
- Cam Ranh Bay Liaison, Trent Nentrup; LM #662; Hope, IN; Cam Ranh Bay 1968-69.
- Phu Cat Liaison, Ron Arthur; LM #107; Chilhowee, MO; Phu Cat 1967-68. Unable to attend.
- Tan Son Nhut Liaison, Charles Penley; LM #606; Kingsport, TN; Tan Son Nhut K-9 1967-69. Unable to attend.
- Ubon Liaison, Jim Watson; LM # 520; Covina, CA; Ubon K-9, 1968-69. Unable to attend.
- Pleiku Liaison, Pat Dunne; LM #40; Hollywood, FL; Pleiku, 1968.

- Nakhon Phanom Liaison, George Conklin; Fort Benton, MT; Nakhon Phanom, 1970-71. Unable to attend.

8. **Approval of the 2010 Minutes**; Is there a motion to approve by acclamation and without reading the full text of the minutes based upon prior electronic distribution via the VSPA web site and the published minutes in the Guardmount newsletter. Motion by Van Digby. 2nd by Ted Whitlock; approved.

9. **Reports:**

9.1. **BX Report** - BX Manager Van Digby.

9.1.1. Good morning. The BX has been doing very well since our return as managers. We are now up and running on the VSPA web site thanks to the magic of Larry and Don Poss. You can see our entire inventory on the VSPA web site. You can order on line, send us an email or give us a call.

9.1.2. If there is something that you might like to have us carry in the BX, please let us know. We are always open to your suggestions. Thank you very much for your support.

9.1.3. Motion to accept the BX Report by Tony Morris. 2nd by Bill Paddock; approved.

9.2. **Historian's Report** - President Phil Carroll reported that Historian Kelly Bateman was unable to attend due to last minute medical problems his wife was having that prevented travel to the reunion. Kelly submitted the following report via email after the reunion:

9.2.1. As your VSPA Historian, I was honored to represent the VSPA as I attended weekly meetings at the Lackland AFB Security Forces Museum. I assisted the museum staff with the upgrade of the Vietnam Era Exhibit. The exhibit included the addition of a full size replica of an M-60 machine gun bunker, complete with sand bags and a full size weapon. Other additions included a new full size K9 handler complete with dog on leash, an upgraded Operation Safe Side exhibit completed by VSPA members Jerry Nelson and Pete Villarreal, new photos from each base in SEA, many full sized weapons on display that were used by AP's and SP's while serving in SEA, and several interactive computer touch screens with descriptions and history of many exhibits. VSPA member Col Mel Grover, the Air Force Security Forces Association and their board members were instrumental in getting this project accomplished on time for the ceremony to commemorate the 44th Anniversary of TET that was held at Lackland in conjunction with the SEA Exhibit Dedication. As VSPA members, we are blessed to have this museum that tells the story of our service as USAF Air Police, Security Police and Security Forces. Please visit "our" Museum at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas if you have the opportunity.

9.3. **VSPA Website Report** – Communications Director Don Poss

9.3.1. Good morning. The VSPA web site has averaged 5,739 daily unique visitors in the first five days of October for a total of 28,695 visitors between October 1st and 5th. As of today, VSPA.com has exceeded 1,003,085 hits since 2001. The stats prior to 2001 are not available. The site remains an outstanding source of historical information related to our service in Vietnam and Thailand.

9.3.2. We have two bulletin boards: The Free Fire Zone FFZ and the Public Bulletin Board. Our FFZ has had more than 186,150 hits since May, 6 2006. Our public bulletin board remains a source of communication and information for those who served with us, their families and for active duty members who want to know more about as they walk in our

footsteps. The commanders of the squadrons that visit during our reunion routinely look at our public bulletin board.

9.3.3. Steve Gattis reminded all present that our status as a Tax Exempt Military Organization of War Veterans requires that we follow IRS Rules and Regulations regarding the prohibition of political activity in support of or against specific candidates for office. The VSPA does not pay income tax and all donations to the VSPA are tax exempt for donors. Our exempt status is the equivalent of the government and the public paying us to conduct our business on behalf of our membership. We cannot receive the benefit of tax exemption if we engage in political activity as an organization. Therefore, the VSPA and other organizations like the VVA cannot advocate for or against candidates for political office, especially during this highly contested presidential election. The VSPA must demonstrate compliance by removing political comments from our bulletin boards when members attempt to organize votes or begin speaking for or against candidates. They are free to engage in whatever political activity they desire as long as it is not in conjunction with the VSPA and our tax exempt activities which include the web site and bulletin boards.

9.3.4. President Phil Carroll thanked members for their personal discipline that has maintained our brotherhood and reduced the number of bulletin board posts that had to be removed. He reminded members that the bulletin board is monitored by Don Poss and his appointed staff for inappropriate comments and violations of the bulletin board rules.

9.3.5. Motion to approve the Web Site Report by Jim Willis. 2nd by Bud Owens; approved.

9.4. Membership Report - Membership Chairman Bill Marshall

9.4.1. Good morning. We currently have 1,345 active members. Of those, 776 are Life Members. We have contact information for 2,880 former Air Policemen and Security Policemen who served in Vietnam and Thailand.

9.4.2. Since our annual meeting in October 2006, we have added 481 active members, 385 Life Members and 866 unique contacts in our database.

9.4.3. We currently have liaisons for various bases who maintain contact with members from their bases. The liaisons also provide a good source of contact and information for new members who would like to connect with members who served at their base(s). The liaisons know the bases and can effectively speak about the bases and squadrons. Please see the list of Base Liaisons at the beginning of the minutes. They provide a valuable service and we are looking for more members to get involved as representatives of their base and the VSPA.

9.4.4. Over 20,000 Air Policemen and Security Policemen served in Vietnam and Thailand. We need to provide outreach to those who served with us, especially those who are interested in the VSPA but have not joined. Liaisons and anyone interested in the program, please meet with me after we adjourn the business meeting.

9.4.5. I would like to remind all of you that the VSPA takes care of its own and that we will never turn away one of our brothers because he can't pay his dues. The VSPA will pay the dues for anyone who cannot afford to pay the \$15 annual dues.

9.4.6. The new Membership Database is on-line via the VSPA web site. It is a valuable tool for your Board and is also searchable by our members. Please thank Larry and Don Poss for the hard work to replace and upgrade the old software.

9.4.7. John Paul Coakley reminded members that when it comes to PTSD, healing takes place when we have one-on-one contact. He encouraged members to visit with each other during the reunion and to maintain contact with each other throughout the year.

9.4.8. Motion to approve the Membership Report by Ted Whitlock. 2nd by Nichols; approved.

9.5. Scholarship Committee Report - VP Greg Cain

9.5.1. There were 22 requests for scholarship forms since our last reunion. Only two were completed and submitted. Julie Summerfield, the granddaughter of deceased VSPA member David Summerfield, has been selected as the recipient of the \$1,000 JJ Chestnut Memorial Scholarship for this year.

9.5.2. The scholarship is supported by your donations and we just received an anonymous donation of \$1,000 from one of our members.

9.5.3. Motion to approve the Scholarship Report by Howard Yates. 2nd by Mike DeTuccio; approved.

9.6. Treasurer's Report – The report was received from Treasurer Richard Garcia.

9.6.1. Good morning. I would like to remind everyone that the VSPA is a terminal organization and that we are experiencing declining dues due to Life Memberships, deaths of members and those who do not renew their dues. As you know, we only have members who served in Vietnam and Thailand. Therefore, eventually we will no longer exist. Every year we have more brothers stand their final Guardmount. We are getting older and while our membership continues to grow as we find others who served with us, we have more and more Life Members who pay for their Life Membership status but no longer pay annual dues. When we discuss our assets, we must do it with the idea that with declining dues, we have limited sources of income beyond donations. We must maintain our assets in a manner that will allow us to continue to function as an organization. Total assets as of September 30, 2012 = \$97,790.

9.7. VSPA Service Officer's Report - Service Officer Bud Owens with additional comments by Life Member Jim Willis, Director of Veterans Affairs for the State of Oregon.

9.7.1. Good morning. I would like to remind all of you that when planning for the future, your wives do not automatically receive Dependents Indemnity Compensation after you die. They must apply for that benefit.

9.7.2. There is legislation pending in Congress regarding the mandatory deductions that are currently being applied to your compensation and again after you die.

9.7.3. The Aid and Assistance Benefit is one of the most often overlooked benefits for Veterans. It is rarely used by Veterans and should be applied for using a service officer.

9.7.4. Jim Willis reported that there is current legislation pending in both the Senate (SB3270) and the House of Representatives (HR6171) that prohibits "Pension Poachers" or those who would specifically target Veterans and charge fees to assist a Veteran with an application for Aid and Assistance Benefits. Typically, they charge between \$1,500 and \$3,000 to assist a Veteran after putting on a "FREE" bogus seminar that encourages Veterans to reduce their assets. If you go to an accredited National Service Officer through the DAV or American Legion, they will assist you with the application at NO CHARGE.

9.7.5. "Pension poaching" fraud is a serious problem for Veterans. I encourage each of you to be aware and to support this vital legislation. I will prepare appropriate language for the VSPA to consider as a resolution in support of this legislation.

9.7.6. Members present unanimously supported the development of a VSPA resolution in support of this legislation that outlaws the fraud known as "pension poaching".

9.7.7. Jim reminded everyone that he had distributed a list of the State Directors of Veterans Affairs for every state and that members should contact them regarding benefits provided by their respective state.

9.8. K-9 Report – By President Phil Carroll (for) K-9 Kennel Master Jim Stastny who was unable to attend.

9.8.1. I visited the kennels at Joint Base Andrews on a number of occasions; one of those visits was to commemorate a MWD who had been euthanized. I presented a VSPA certificate of appreciation to the handler of the fallen MWD. In March of 2012 Bob Curnick and I visited Wright-Patterson AFB to commemorate another MWD who had been euthanized. I presented two certificates of appreciation to the handler of the fallen MWD. An article about that visit is in the latest issue of Guardmount. I learned of a wounded K-9 handler at Walter Reed-Bethesda. SSgt Brian Williams stepped on a landmine, lost his left leg above the knee and suffered extensive damage to his left arm and face. His dog survived the explosion. I presented SSgt Williams a certificate of appreciation and presented him with a VSPA challenge coin. As far as I am able to ascertain we've added eight new K-9 members to VSPA membership this past year. I contacted each of them with a warm welcome into our great organization. In that welcome I encouraged them to attend the reunion.

9.8.2. The 11th Security Forces Squadron K9 Section at Andrews AFB recently joined Chaplain Stastny and other VSPA members at The Wall in Washington, D.C. to wash and preserve the wall. A plaque has been mailed to Chaplain Stastny that he will present to the members of the kennel at Andrews to commend them for their effort to preserve the memory of our service in Vietnam and Thailand and the 111 Air Policemen and Security Policemen who did not survive the war.

9.8.3. **“Nemo’s War Dog Heroes Memorial” Report** - Bill Cummings

9.8.3.1. I would like to thank Kelly Bateman for his research and assistance on historical projects. He continues to work with the Security Forces Museum at Lackland on their K9 displays and K9 history.

9.8.3.2. I also thank Ernie Childers for maintaining the records of several thousand dogs that served with us in Vietnam and Thailand. He maintains those records and provides them to handlers from our era and assists with historical projects for DOD bases.

9.8.3.3. We continue to work with production studios to provide factual information and photographs for media projects that include movies and articles for publication.

9.8.3.4. The 802nd Kennels at Lackland will be moving to the Medina Complex. The Air Force is working to declare the Nemo Memorial sacred ground as a historical landmark.

9.8.3.5. We continue to work with the Air Force to ensure that the history of our service remains within the training curriculum.

9.8.3.6. We are also working with the Air Force to create a roof for Nemo’s Memorial that is consistent with the type of roof used in 1967.

9.8.3.7. We would like to thank the VSPA and members of the 377th for their continuing support of our fund raising efforts.

9.8.4. **“Old Dawgs and Pups Program” Report** - Bill Cummings

9.8.4.1. We have been supporting deployed K9 troops for more than seven years. That includes 91 kennels staffed by 43 units in 11 countries located in Southwest Asia for a total of 338 handlers supported along with their military working dogs.

9.8.4.2. Our expenditures total \$74,118 funded entirely through donations. That includes \$20,791 in knives and flashlights manufactured and donated by the Leatherman Tool Company. In addition to the knives and flashlights, we have also

shipped a total of 1,624 pieces of equipment to kennels and handlers down range, including beds, food, water carriers, cooling vests and hoses.

9.8.4.3. Members of the VSPA have contributed over \$12,000 through personal donations and participation in our raffles.

9.8.4.4. As always, we thank those of you who have supported the handlers and their dogs on an individual basis. Your personal contact and shipment of care packages to the handlers totals thousands of dollars and enormous emotional support for these deployed Security Forces men and women.

9.8.4.5. Finally, I extend a sincere thanks to John Tudor who contributes all of his tips from the tours he conducts at the Gettysburg Battlefield; Keith Young for always being available to assist with whatever is needed; Phil Carroll who is the Right and Left Arm of the entire program; and Don and Larry Poss for creating and maintaining the Old Dawgs & Pups web site.

9.8.5. **“Feed the Dawgs” Report** – Ken Neal

9.8.5.1. We have conducted Feed the Dawgs events at 19 stateside kennels this year. We hosted the Iron Dog Competition at March AFB and conducted four memorial ceremonies for fallen handlers. We also conducted ceremonies for fallen war dogs. Next year, we will host an Iron Dog Competition in Texas in addition to several planned Feed the Dawgs events.

9.8.5.2. For those of you who are not aware, we go to the kennels to interact with the handlers, their families and their military working dogs. We barbeque steaks for the handlers and their families and receive tremendous support from the commanders of each base who serve steak to the newest handler assigned to the base.

9.8.5.3. Yesterday, we held our first East Coast event and served steak to 80 people at the Eglin AFB kennels, including handlers and their families from Hurlburt Field. We also purchased over \$800 in merchandise from the VSPA BX for the handlers.

9.8.5.4. As a special thank you for walking in our footsteps, Ernie Childers presented SSgt Jeremy Rice with the Military Working Dog records for the dogs handled by his father who was a Security Police K-9 Handler from our era. SSgt Rice also received a special award from the VSPA handlers for his work to coordinate the event and kennel tour.

9.8.5.5. VSPA member Jon Hemp was recognized by the VSPA for his work to organize and manage the Feed the Dawgs Program.

9.8.5.6. We are funded entirely through donations. You can donate to the program through the VSPA. Nothing is wasted. When we see a critical need, we handle it through donations. For example, we saw a need and funded \$1,700 in critically needed exercise equipment for the kennels at the 29 Palms Marine Base in California. Your support is always appreciated. Thank you.

9.8.5.7. Motion to approve all K9 Reports by Bill Trimble. 2nd by Randy Stutler; approved.

9.9. **Safeside Report** - by Dave Pierson

9.9.1. Safeside members held a reunion at Lackland AFB in April of this year. We toured the base, the training facilities, the Security Forces Museum and attended a graduation ceremony at the Security Forces Academy where Steve Gattis was the guest speaker.

9.9.2. We hosted a barbeque for the graduates, their families and the Academy instructors after the graduation ceremony.

9.9.3. The tour of the Security Forces Museum was outstanding and gave us the opportunity to see the newly remodeled Southeast Section that include Safeside displays that were created by Jerry Nelson and Pete Villarreal. We also visited the Vietnam Way memorial in San Antonio where we held a prayer service for our fallen brothers.

9.9.4. Jerry Nelson was re-elected to serve as our president. The Safeside Reunion for 2013 will be held in MAY at Moody AFB, which is located in Valdosta, Georgia. Moody AFB is the home base for the current Safeside squadrons.

9.9.5. Motion to approve the Safeside Report by Ray Rash. 2nd by Art Cook; approved.

10. Old Business

10.1. **Reunion Site Selection for 2014** - Sites are selected two years in advance so that VSPA and Security Forces Squadron planning can begin early and have time to adapt to active-duty operational necessity. Charleston AFB, South Carolina was selected in 2011 as the site for the **2013 reunion which will be held October 9 - 13**, and the backup site, in the event of operational changes at the primary site, will be Nellis AFB, Nevada.

10.2. As in the past, the 2014 reunion will be held in October, the Wednesday through Sunday before the Columbus Day holiday (which is always the second Monday in October). In **2014 our reunion will be October 8-12**.

10.3. Reunion Site Selection for 2013 - VSPA President Phil Carroll.

10.3.1. Past Reunion sites:

- | | | |
|----------------------|------|--------------|
| • Atlanta, Georgia | 1995 | East |
| • San Antonio, Texas | 1996 | Central |
| • Pensacola, Florida | 1997 | East |
| • Washington D.C. | 1998 | East |
| • Las Vegas, Nevada | 1999 | West |
| • San Antonio, Texas | 2000 | Central |
| • Hampton, Virginia | 2001 | East |
| • Dayton, Ohio | 2002 | Central |
| • San Antonio, Texas | 2003 | Central |
| • Tucson, Arizona | 2004 | West |
| • Valdosta, Georgia | 2005 | East |
| • Las Vegas, Nevada | 2006 | West |
| • Washington D.C. | 2007 | East |
| • Albuquerque, NM | 2008 | West/Central |
| • Phoenix, Arizona | 2009 | West |
| • San Antonio, Texas | 2010 | Central |
| • Dayton, Ohio | 2011 | Central |
| • Destin, Florida | 2012 | East |
| • Charleston, SC | 2013 | East |

10.3.2. Nominations, presentations and voting process - VSPA President Phil Carroll, VP Greg Cain.

10.3.2.1. Primary Site for 2014 is Barksdale AFB, Louisiana

10.3.2.2. Secondary Site for 2014 is Nellis AFB, Nevada

10.4. **Notice to members that the specific changes to the Constitution & Bylaws** voted for unanimously last year in concept, regarding the Board position of Communications Director, have been made and approved by the Board as meeting the intent of the Board and Membership votes.

11. New Business

11.1. **Affirmation of the newly elected officers of the Board of Directors** for banking purposes and the authorization to sign checks for the Association during the coming year.

Ballots were accepted by mail from members not intending to attend the reunion, and cast at the reunion by members present, prior to the business meeting. The selections were unanimous by all votes cast. The term of office is two years. Those newly elected will take office at a change-of-command ceremony during the annual awards banquet. The officers are:

11.2.

- President William “Pete” Piazza (authorized to sign checks)
- Vice President Gregory J. Cain (authorized to sign checks)
- Treasurer Richard Garcia (authorized to sign checks)
- Second Vice President Herbert W. “Bill” Marshall
- Secretary Dennis E. Evans
- Historian Kelly Bateman
- Past President Philip W. Carroll
- President Emeritus Stephen T. Gattis
- Communications Director Don L. Poss

11.3. Elections will take place again in 2014.

11.4. Affirmation of Appointed Positions - VSPA President Phil Carroll: The previously read existing appointed positions are hereby re-appointed for next year, subject to future changes per the Constitution & By-Laws. A change of command ceremony will be held at the end of the Awards Banquet this evening.

11.5. Discussion of a potential change in the purpose of one VSPA reunion, i.e. holding it in a location away from any active-duty SF Squadron (would require Board and Membership approval) – Lew Goldberg.

11.5.1. An idea was presented to the membership regarding the one-time possibility of changing our by-laws to allow for a reunion to be held in a city where there is no active duty Security Forces Squadron or Air Force base, i.e. San Diego, California. The possibility was raised in an effort to support wives and family who would like to do something other than visit an Air Force base during an annual reunion.

11.5.2. The basis for the idea is to create more involvement for the Sisterhood and to involve them in reunion planning.

11.5.3. Phil Carroll explained that according to our bylaws, our mission was to preserve our history and thereby, support active duty Security Forces personnel who followed in our footsteps by holding our reunions at an active duty Air Force base. He also explained that the Sisterhood officers have input into our planning process.

11.5.4. The idea was tabled until our 2013 reunion when site selection would take place for the 2015 reunion.

12. Announcements for the good of the order:

12.1. New Banners - Bill Cummings

12.1.1. Bill requested that the VSPA purchase new banners with the names and correct spelling of all bases where Air Policemen and Security Policemen served in Vietnam and Thailand.

12.1.2. A member immediately donated \$100 cash to assist with the purchase.

12.1.3. The VSPA has all information for 27 bases, stations and sites as it they were used for the VSPA memorial bench at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio.

12.2. Photos of Those We have Lost - Hector Ramos

12.2.1. Hector volunteered to chair a committee to gather photos of those we lost so that they can be posted at the reunions.

12.3. Report regarding the 111 names of Air Police and Security Police who gave their lives in Vietnam and Thailand during the Vietnam War – Steve Gattis

- 12.3.1. This year, we received information from VSPA Member Ed Daubert regarding Sgt. Bruce Dale Jones, a member of the 377th Security Police Squadron at Tan Son Nhut, who died there but was not listed among our 111 brothers who did not survive the war in Vietnam and Thailand. Don Poss and I conducted research that established the date of death and the assignment of Sgt Jones in the 377th. Don Poss continued that research and then planned the VSPA memorial service that was held at the grave of Sgt. Jones in Evergreen, Alabama yesterday. Sgt Jones has been added to our 111 Roster and his name will be read for the first time by Ed Daubert tomorrow morning at our Memorial Service.
- 12.3.2. We also received information from Rick Fulton regarding A1C John Kopfer who was listed on the VSPA web site KIA/LOD as a Security Police K9 handler at Da Nang which was not correct.
- 12.3.2.1. Fulton is a former Air Policeman who visits our web site regularly. He was a K9 handler (77150a) who served at Wheelus Air Base in Libya and at Blytheville AFB, Arkansas. He participated in a SAC program for reenlistment that offered cross-training upon reenlistment. He reenlisted and elected to cross-train to become an Information Specialist. He was promoted to SSGT in January 1968 while assigned to the 7th Air Force Directorate of Information, Combat News Branch, where he reported on the air war. He also provided information for the Stars and Stripes. He is retired from the Department of the Army.
- 12.3.2.2. Fulton is very familiar with the VSPA web site and has used it to gather information about his former career field and potentially locate old air police buddies. He is very proud of his time as an air policeman and appreciative of the way the VSPA honors airmen who were KIA or LOD while serving as air policemen, security policemen or augmentees. Fulton contacted the VSPA regarding A1C Kopfer and reported that Kopfer was neither a security policeman nor an augmentee, was not a K9 handler and was not assigned to Da Nang. Fulton means no disrespect to his friend A1C Kopfer but wanted us to know so that we could correct our list and the location of Kopfer's death.
- 12.3.2.3. Kopfer arrived at Tan Son Nhut on 22 January 1968 and was temporarily assigned to the 7th Air Force Directorate of Information, Combat News Branch, as an Information Specialist while he was processing through for an eventual assignment at Binh Thuy. Fulton was his supervisor at Tan Son Nhut and Kopfer was to remain TDY at Tan Son Nhut in the Combat News Branch until enemy activity had settled down.
- 12.3.2.4. A small information section had been formed in the 7th Air Force buildings near the hooches and heliport. When the attack occurred on 21 February 1968, a rocket came across the top of the 7th Air Force Headquarters, hit the roof of the old BX and the buildings housing the Combat News Branch. Richard Charles Ramsey was killed and several of the people working with him were wounded. After Ramsey was killed, the colonel in charge of the news center sent everyone back to their hooches.
- 12.3.2.5. Fulton stated specifically that, "John Kopfer and I had been working up the street in the Combat News Distribution Center when the rockets started coming in. One of them hit the roof of the Distribution Center and shrapnel blew out John's kidneys. He was transported to an Army field hospital ½ mile outside the main gate of Tan Son Nhut where he died three days later from his injuries. "
- 12.3.2.6. Fulton knew Kopfer for two weeks but has corresponded with the Kopfer family. Our web site erroneously lists Kopfer as K9 assigned to Da Nang - KIA on 21 Feb 1968. There is no other Kopfer listed on The Wall. Based upon the information obtained from Rick Fulton, and additional information obtained regarding personnel KIA in Vietnam that correctly reports John Kopfer being KIA at Tan Son Nhut while serving as an Information Specialist, his name will be removed from our list

of the 111 Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who did not survive the war in Vietnam and Thailand. We continue to honor him as someone who was KIA during an attack at Tan Son Nhut; however, his name will no longer be listed as part of our 111, or read as part of our memorial service that is specifically for the Air Policemen, Security Policeman and Augmentees that we lost during the war.

12.4. Agent Orange Information – Greg Cain.

12.4.1. Greg presented information regarding the Veteran’s Family Preservation Act and Agent Orange Related Illnesses. He explained that Agent Orange had generational impact and that it could affect not only our children and grandchildren but their children and grandchildren as well.

12.4.2. Greg distributed information to members in attendance regarding the illnesses that have been diagnosed in the descendants of Vietnam Veterans and encouraged all members to contact the Veterans Administration, get tested for Agent Orange and be listed in the Agent Orange Registry.

12.5. VSPA History Book – Steve Gattis

12.5.1. Books will be for sale after the business meeting.

12.6. Native American Veterans Memorial Initiative – Phil Carroll

12.6.1. Pat Dunne presented information to the Board for consideration and research regarding the Native American Veterans Memorial. We will conduct that research and report at a future date regarding a possible resolution in support of the memorial.

12.7. MOM’s Project – Paul Shave

12.7.1. Paul explained “Mom’s Project” that he developed to support our Gold Star Mom, Rachel Helen Lehman, whose son Millard was KIA at Binh Thuy in 1966. He requested donations for the project that will assist her by providing a computer and a large screen monitor so that she can communicate with us via email. He will install everything for her on her 91st birthday which is November 11.

12.8. Presentation – Art Rodgers

12.8.1. VSPA Life Member Art Rodgers addressed the membership so that he could make a special presentation to VSPA Life Member Ray Rash on behalf of the Governor of the State of Kentucky. Art presented a framed certificate to Ray signed by the Governor in which he honored Ray with the title of “Kentucky Colonel.” The certificate and title recognize Ray of his service in Vietnam and Thailand and for his contributions to the welfare of Veterans.

12.9. Stolen Valor Resolution - Paul Sigler

12.9.1. Paul reported that there was a new Congressional resolution being developed regarding the replacement of the Stolen Valor Act. He requested that all members support the new resolution by contacting their Congressional representatives.

12.10. Reminder that this evening’s festivities begin with no-host bar at 1700, posting of the colors at 1800, followed by dinner, speech, awards and raffles. Sara Windsor, the wife of Duke Windsor, is out of the hospital and will be at the banquet. Duke sent his thanks to everyone for the prayer service that was held for Sara after she was placed in intensive care for kidney failure.

12.11. Reminder that a Worship Service will be conducted by Chaplain Jeff Kerkhoff at 0800 Sunday, here in the main banquet room.

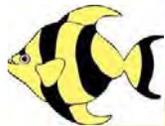
12.12. Reminder that our annual Memorial for our 111 begins at 0900 Sunday, here in the main banquet room.

13. Other questions from members? None.

14. Adjourned at 1228 hours.

Where Did You Go On R & R? Submitted by Don Poss

Da Nang K9 1965 - '66 ~ LM #37



Since I was married, I met my wife in Hawaii for R&R about 7-8 months into my Vietnam tour. I had to take a bus ride from Bien Hoa to Tan Son Nhut the night before my R&R flight. When I arrived at the TSN terminal, I was spotted (QC patch) by a TSN 377th Air Cop. He took me to their hooches and set me up with a bunk for the night and a wake up call so I did not miss my flight (We Do Take Care of Our Own).

My wife and I spent a couple days in Honolulu, then flew to Kauai (Paradise) for a couple days and back to Honolulu for the remainder of the time. We had a great time getting reacquainted and seeing the sites. I remember going to an afternoon movie matinee and laughing my butt off when they called for the Security Police in the movie. Yeah, that's right, we were watching "Planet of the Apes." On the down side, it was a drag having to return to Bien Hoa after spending a week in the "World" with my wife. Obviously, some of the better memories of my Vietnam tour.

**Mike Kennedy LM #35 ~
Bien Hoa, 3rd SPS 1969-70**



I went to Penang Malaysia It was cheap and had openings. I would like to go back; never heard of anybody else who went there.

**Robert Edwards LM #737 Cam
Ranh Bay 1967-'68**



I had extended in Vietnam and got two R&Rs. I went to Taipei both times and was so impressed I requested a consecutive overseas tour to Taiwan and was lucky enough to be assigned to Taipei for almost three years.

**Jim (Buddha) Lebowitz ~ Bien Hoa,
3rd SPS 1966-'68 LM #241**

For me, R/R was spent right inside the fence of Tan Son Nhut. I was married less than 30 days when I left for Vietnam. I sent every cent I made home. I only had MPC to pay for haircuts, clothes washing and a case of beer from the BX once a month. I was a poor boy while in Nam.

**Jack Smith ~ Tan Son Nhut 377th SPS 1968-'69
LM #453**



I met my wife in Taipei. Her dad was a Marine, stationed on Okinawa. We were married on Okinawa 3 months before I went to Vietnam... long story). We went to the National Zoo, the National Museum (really impressive) and Haggler's Alley (shopping). We met a great AF Staff Sergeant and his wife who took us to a roof-top Korean BBQ restaurant after dark. It was really great to see the city all lit up at night! We took a small commuter flight to the city of Hualein and a group bus tour to Toroko Gorge. After the bus tour we all had lunch in a covered patio and watched native Taiwan dancers perform. The other people on the tour were Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese. We were the only Americans. The tour guide was a professor at the University in Taipei. In addition to knowing the history of Taiwan, he spoke English, French, Japanese, and two dialects of Chinese. I was really impressed! Taiwan was really beautiful, plus there weren't any mortars. 'Nuff said.

**Steven Hall ~ Binh Thuy, 632nd SPS,
A Flight 1968-'69 ~ LM #639**



I did not take an R&R in country or out of country. I saved my money and sent it home as I knew I wanted a car when I got home so I bought a 1967 leftover Mustang as I got home in '68.

It was worth the wait instead of spending it on trinkets, etc.

**Ed Narwid ~ Phan Rang, 35th
SPS; Pleiku, 633rd SPS
1967-'68**

Went to Bangkok, Thailand the first tour, and Manilla the second tour. **Phil Block ~ Bien Hoa, 3rd SPS;
Tan Son Nhut, 377th SPS 1965-'68 ~ LM #203**



Erlyce Pekas, Editor
Associate Member
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P.O. Box 22035
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USAF Security Police Vietnam Veterans—Welcome Home!

If you served in the USAF Air Police, Security Police, K-9, Safeside, or as a Security Police Augmentee in Vietnam or Thailand between 1958 and 1975, there's a great brotherhood looking for you. With more than 1,300 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!

REUNION REMINDER—Charleston AFB, South Carolina, October 9-13, 2013