From: Don Poss
To: Don L. Poss
Subject: NKP casualties
Date: Sunday, December 28, 2014 12:28:31 PM

I have a plaque I'm going to present to you in a few minutes but first I want to read you the names of some of those men who were not able to return to their country and their families and their fellow Airmen because their lives ended while they were at NKP, serving their country in wartime, in a foreign land.

A3C Roosevelt Harden Jr.

Sgt Charles R. Morgan

Sgt Robert M. Robertson

Sgt Robert A. Palmer

A1C Clarence McKnight

CMSgt John B. Davis

Sgt Melvin J. Blakeney

On 29 and 30 April, Operation Frequent Wind, the final evacuation of Saigon by Americans was successfully carried out. It was supposed to be the end of the Vietnam War – but not quite two weeks after that, a Cambodian gunship seized the American cargo vessel Mayaguez on the high seas, and the 56th Security Police Squadron was the closest combat-ready unit that an angry and impatient President Ford could call on – in part because of their specialized training.

Security Police troops at NKP were asked to volunteer for an urgent rescue mission, and although it was beyond what even they were trained for, 75 were chosen from among the many who stepped forward. Weapons were issued, including some the men weren't trained on. Aircrews loaded the troops aboard the Special-Ops helos. Some current members of the Vietnam Security Police Association were among those not chosen to go, and they watched their friends load up. A few are here today.

About 2115 the night of 13 May, 1975, the helos took off from NKP and headed toward U-Tapao in southern Thailand, the closest U.S. air base to where the Mayaguez and its kidnapped crew were being held. All 18 Security Police volunteer rescuers and five aircrew aboard perished when the CH-53 helo "Knife 13" crashed in the dark jungle 36 miles from NKP.

These brave men were our brothers ... and yours. They were:

Sgt Jimmy P. Black

SSgt Bobby G. Collums

Sgt Gerald A. Coyle

Sgt Thomas D. Dwyer

Sgt Bob W. Ford

Sgt Gerald W. Fritz – K9

TSgt Jackie D. Glenn

Sgt Darrell L. Hamlin

Sgt Gregory L. Hankamer

Sgt David A. Higgs

SSgt Faleagafulu Ilaoa – K9

Sgt Michael D. Lane

Sgt Dennis W. London – K9

A1C Robert P. Mathias

Sgt William R. McKelvey

Amn Edgar C. Moran II

A1C Tommy R. Nealis

Sgt Robert W. Ross

Don Poss
Sent from my iPad