

Melbourn 1997 VSPA Recruiting Drive!

We Take Care of Our Own

Melbourn 1997, Florida

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Melbourn 1997 Membership Recruiting Drive: Any of you who have attended one of the membership recruitment drives around the country will know how great the *fellowship* can be. Whether at Melbourn, Florida (October), or at Kokomo, Indiana (September), there is a feeling that you will never experience any where. Here are where total strangers, bound by a common experience, come together and are instantly bonded. Each year that I have attended the reunion at Melbourne, Florida, the better they get. I look forward to renewing old friendships with people that I have not seen since the last recruitment drive. **[Photo: Kokomo, Indiana (September)]**



How will you ever find anyone in a massive place like that? When I arrived in town the first place I went was to Wickem Park and the first person I ran into was our president, John Langley, and while we were talking who should walk up about our V.P., Mike Daoust. It seems that SP's seem to attract each other without trying. **[Photo Left: Mike Daoust, John Langley, Dave Dobson]**

The next morning I returned to attend the opening ceremony and met up with several other SP's who I had known from years past and some that I had never met, all were interested in VSPA. As we stood listening to Sammy Davis, Congressional Medal of Honor Receptient, and to observing the opening, I felt a certain pride in what had been accomplished by all of those who were there. It felt real good when a WWII, D-Day Vet, came up and shook my hand. When someone asked for help with crowd control to make room for the color guard it was a Security Policeman that jumped up to volunteer help.

There were a lot of old songs and music that brought back some old memories and most of them were pleasant memories. When Chris Noel got up on the stage and sang, **You are My Hero** for all the vets it even brought a tear to most of the eyes around me. She had changed since I saw her pictures plastered all over Phù Cát, but then again so had we. Someone said, "We all have gotten older, haven't we?" I remembered that she traveled around Nam and entertained live as well as her radio show, *A Date with Chris*, and all the time there was a \$10,000 bounty on her head. We were not the only ones with a bounty payable to anyone who killed them.

It seemed that every where I went that day I would meet another SP. By the time I met up with Mike Daoust that second day, I had given out most of the VSPA cards that I had with me. Mike had handed out a large number of the reunion posters he had with him. In one of the areas I met a former dog man that I had worked with *over there*. I left that day with a warm happy feeling.

As I arrived the next morning for John Steer's church service, the first person that I met when I got out of my car was someone with a VSPA patch on his cammies, Pat Dunn. As Chris walked by I pointed her out to Pat and being a good SP he called her over. He has proof that he talked with Chris Noel, and so does everyone else.

As we sat there waiting for the services to begin, I looked around and there were twelve SP's in the area where we were sitting. When I first attended a reunion at Melbourne, I had only met one other SP, John Langley, and a few Air Force people. This year I met up with at least twenty SP's and more Air Force people than I can remember. It seems to grow more every year and we are beginning to let our identity be known. We even had an SP in the march that started for Wasington D.C. that day.

When my wife and I started for home, she asked me if I was glad that I came? I had almost backed out at the last minute because my bowling team needed me, at least I thought they did. The fact was that I needed that reunion more than I needed to bowl. For those of you who have not yet been to a reunion, make every effort to get to one.

Welcome Home Brothers!

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