

VSPA



USAF



*"We Take Care of Our Own"*

## 2024 SUMMER EDITION



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



### Joint Base San Antonio

### Lackland AFB, TX

### October 9-13, 2024

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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



My VSPA Brothers and Sisters,

As I begin to serve my first year as President of the VSPA I want to share with you my goals and outlook for the future of our organization. In looking at 2024 and 2025 we are working to complete the two Knife-13 Monuments at Lackland and Luke. Jerry Nelson and his Knife-13 committee have a daunting task before them. The logistics of these Monuments is a complex and ongoing challenge, from acquiring the locations to design and confirmation of the information and names of those that were lost in the crash. We are still seeking donations to cover the costs of the two beautiful monuments.

Our reunion in San Antonio is on track and the registration forms have been published and ready to be sent in. We will have a full week with the dedication of Knife-13 Memorial to be done on Thursday. I hope everyone will be up to the task.

The 2025 reunion will be back in Phoenix for the Knife-13 Memorial dedication at Luke AFB. We are close to having the hotel selected in Phoenix.

Several years ago, I sent in a request to the National Personnel Records Center to get a copy of my military records. It took a while but finally received them. What I was most interested in was my Performance Reports (AF form 77a). I had never seen these evaluations before, after reading these reports I became aware that had I stayed in until retirement I could have retired as a General. I didn't realize what an outstanding airman I was. Reading those reports made my chest swell.

October is just a couple months away and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone. Hope ya'll have a great Summer. Stay healthy and safe.

Larry Fleming  
President





## **THE VSPA SISTERHOOD**

Sheila Cain, Sisterhood President



*Greetings Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

*I sit here wondering where the time has gone since our last Reunion. It's July already and the next Reunion will be here before you know it.*

*The Holiday Inn Riverwalk in San Antonio is eagerly getting ready to welcome us back again. We had a Reunion there several years ago and it was a marvelous experience.*

*San Antonio is an exciting and fabulous city with many places to explore from The Alamo to the Riverwalk.*

*The REUNION BRAT is again coordinating the registration. Please get your paperwork in early to help assist her in getting the application for admission onto the base. You will also save yourself some money with a timely response.*

*One of the highlights of the Reunion this year will be the dedication of the KNIFE-13 Monument at the Security Forces Museum. This was made possible by the hard work of MANY VSPA members and all the Brothers and Sisters working together to honor our own.*

*The Sisterhood meeting will take place on Saturday morning while our Brothers hold their annual meeting.*

*We will open our gathering with our traditional Mimosas!!!*

*This year we will again have our Memorial Service during our meeting. Unfortunately, at this writing, we will have to honor two beloved Sisters who will no longer be with us.*

*Every two years the Sisterhood holds their election of officers to represent the organization. The offices are: President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Membership Roster Chairman, and Chaplain. Please consider holding office in this wonderful organization. At present, there will be at least one office that will be vacant.*

*At the conclusion of the Sisterhood meeting, we will conduct our annual raffle. Please think about bringing a gift or two that you feel your other Sisters would enjoy. Maybe something from your hometown.*

*I anticipate a well-attended fun filled time spent together again.*

*As always, I am proud to represent you all and I am at your service at any time. Please feel free to reach out to me with your questions and concerns.*

**716-480-9101**

*Peace, Love, and Happiness*

*Sheila Gervase-Cain*

*Sisterhood President*

*Wife of*

*Gregory Cain*

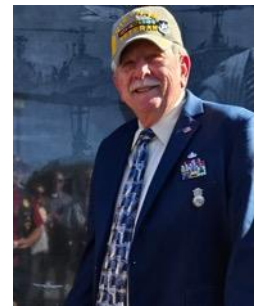
*Binh Thuy 67-68*



National Police Week Closing Ceremony
412 SFS, EDWARDS AFB, CA
FRIDAY MAY 17TH 2024

By

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

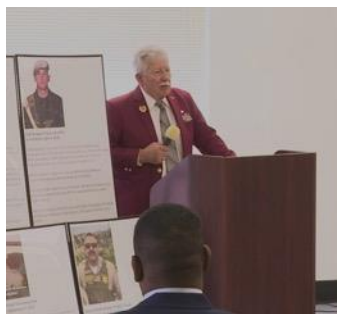


As nearly all of us who have ever worn the Security Forces Shield know, since 1962, May 15th has been designated as Peace Officers Memorial Day. The day is set aside to honor Federal, State, and Municipal officers who have been killed or injured in the line of duty. The week in which that day falls is designated National Police Week. Our present-day Air Force Defenders, like their civilian counterparts, take this week to recognize and honor our own fallen heroes. Edwards AFB's 412th SFS was right in step for the occasion.

Lt Col Patrick Gordon, the unit commander and his cops crafted a very fitting closing ceremony on Friday, May 17th, 2024, which was supported by wing leadership, squadron members and family, and local enforcement representatives. The base Chapel Annex was filled to capacity to include honored guests from the Jones Family, whose son sadly passed away in May 2020, in a swimming accident while assigned to their squadron.



You may ask: why is DeCubellis involved in this event? Seems eloquent guest speakers were in short supply throughout the Southland, so Lt Col Gordon reached out to AFSFA's president John Probst, who in turn contacted me. With a little arm-twisting, they convinced me to drive 3 hours to make the presentation at the Edwards event. Then I talked Mike Kennedy into joining me! If you'll continue reading, you'll see my reason went beyond having company and a navigator!



Photos and biographies of the fallen were displayed at the head of the room and, as each name was solemnly read, the assembled men and women rendered one pushup in their honor. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's bagpiper's music was a somber and touching contribution to the solemnity of this day of remembrance.





I discovered as I did homework to craft some meaningful comments, that VSPA brother Mike Kennedy had some linkage to the area and what we were commemorating. Prior to his Bien Hoa tour, he'd been assigned to nearby George AFB. While Mike was in transit in 1969, his flight chief and mentor was gunned down in a domestic dispute.

Mike later found out that TSgt Isiah Roberts' name was not included on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington DC, and so he took up the cause. After nearly two years of research and diligent negotiations with various officials, Kennedy accomplished his mission. TSgt Roberts, the 95th SFS's TSgt Butler (murdered in a traffic stop), and VSPA's Capitol Police Officer JJ Chestnut (lost on Jul 28, 1998 in a shooting on post in the US Capital Building) were all honored in May 1999. Mike attended the "Candlelight Vigil" where each name was read, in Washington DC with TSgt Roberts' widow and her children. Like VSPA's Motto: ***"We Take Care of Our Own."***

Touching on other matters of our career field's history and heritage, I told the participants how proud we are of today's Defenders, noting they will face many challenges--- some constants and many new ones. In some ways, the "attitudes" foisted upon today's Defenders and their fellow LEOs are not a lot different from what we Vietnam veterans dealt with upon returning home from an unpopular war. Our on-going initiative to memorialize "Knife-13" was touched upon. The first of two monuments going up at the Security Forces Museum on JB Lackland will honor those 18 cops and 5 aircrew lost while supporting the recovery of the SS Mayaguez off the coast of Cambodia in 1975.

I encouraged them to be supportive of each other, to be professional at all times, and to realize that most of the public they serve appreciate and value their service and sacrifices. Mike Kennedy and I thanked them for the opportunity to join them in their closing ceremony.

In closing I left them with: "memorials are built, names are read, and words are spoken for one reason: to honor the fallen and what they stood for. It's been said that as long as the names of our fallen are spoken, they will not be forgotten."

Following the end of the ceremony, Lt Col Gordon gave us a tour of his squadron and we watched a Guardmount and had some interesting discussions and swapped coins. It was well worth the trip!



**National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial**



**Vietnam Security Police Association  
29th Reunion  
Joint Base San Antonio – Lackland AFB  
October 9 – 13, 2024  
UPDATED WITH NEW INFORMATION  
AND REGISTRATION FORMS**

The 2024 VSPA reunion will be held at the Holiday Inn - San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel, 217 North Saint Mary's Street, San Antonio, Texas 78205. The contract room rate is **\$169 per night, plus tax**. The room rate includes a free breakfast in the Hospitality Room. The rooms include a refrigerator. The group room rate is available three days before and three days after the reunion based upon room availability. **CERTIFIED SERVICE DOGS ARE ALLOWED IN THE HOTEL, BUT YOU MUST BRING YOUR PAPERWORK! PETS ARE NOT ALLOWED!** You must book early to ensure that rooms are available. **DON'T WAIT!** Overnight Self-Parking is available for \$20 per day. Valet Parking is available for \$39 per day. Motor Coach parking is space-available for \$65 per day.

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS:** Call Phone 1-210-224-2500 (Select Option #2) by **TUESDAY, September 8, 2024**. You may also use the toll-free phone 1-888-465-4329. You must identify yourself as a member of the Vietnam Security Police Association Group Block Code P24. All reservations must be guaranteed and accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card. **The deadline for reservations is September 8, 2024. After that date, rooms will be space available only and AT THE HOTEL'S PREVAILING RATE. Make your reservations early!** Check-in time is 4:00 PM; check-out time is 12:00 Noon.

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

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

**AIRPORT INFORMATION:**

Book your flight to "San Antonio International Airport" (airport code: SAT), in San Antonio, Texas.

*The hotel DOES NOT HAVE an airport shuttle.*

**REUNION REGISTRATION FEE:** \$225 per person (early bird) if postmarked by **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9!** After September 9, please add \$25 for a total of \$250. Our economy has driven prices up and made it difficult for planning that requires money to be paid in advance to our hotel and vendors. All food and beverage prices are up, and the buses have increased in price due to fuel. *Our economy has been difficult for all of us. We are doing our best to control costs. Please take advantage of the Early Bird registration fee.*



**AGENDA:** The agenda is generally accurate, but is subject to change due to operational requirements at Lackland AFB for the 802nd Security Forces Squadron:

- **Wednesday, October 9:**
  - 1400 On-site Registration and Reception.
  - 1700 Cocktails.
  - 1800 Buffet dinner at the hotel.
- **Thursday, October 10:** Buffet breakfast. KNIFE\_13 MEMORIAL Dedication at the Security Forces Museum, Lackland AFB.
- **ENTRY AUTHORIZATION LIST REQUIRED TO ENTER LACKLAND AFB! YOU MUST COMPLETE THE ATTACHED MANDATORY INFORMATION FORM!**
  - 1200 Buses will load.
  - 1215 Buses will depart the hotel and proceed to Lackland.
  - 1300 Knife-13 Memorial Dedication. All VSPA members in place prior to 1300.
  - AFTER THE DEDICATION, tour of the Security Forces Museum.
  - 1600 Buses will load.
  - 1615 Buses will depart Lackland and return to the hotel by 1700.
  - Be sure to eat an early lunch. Evening open.
- **Friday, October 11:** Buffet breakfast. Presentation by the 802<sup>nd</sup> Security Forces Squadron at our hotel. Dinner and evening are open for squadron and base dinners or gatherings.
- **Saturday Morning, October 12:** Breakfast buffet before the VSPA Business Meeting at 1000. Afternoon open.
- **Saturday Morning, October 12:** Breakfast buffet before the VSPA Sisterhood gathering of wives and companions at 1000. Afternoon open.
- **Saturday Evening, October 12:**
  - 1700 Cocktails.
  - 1800 Banquet dinner with awards and raffle.
- **Sunday Morning, October 13:**
  - Breakfast buffet before the Memorial Service and reading of the names at 1000.
  - The reunion will end after the memorial service.
- The Hospitality Room will be stocked with FREE snacks & beverages and will be open as much as possible.
- **THE VSPA BX STORE WILL NOT BE AT THE REUNION THIS YEAR DUE TO TRANSPORTATION COST. HOWEVER, YOU MAY PURCHASE MEMORABILIA, HATS, SHIRTS AND CHALLENGE COINS VIA THE ONLINE BX STORE AT THE FOLLOWING LINK. ORDER BY SEPTEMBER 15.**

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

#### ABOUT THE EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT:

The Reunion BRAT and your VSPA Board of Directors experienced severe impact on planning and preparation for prior reunions due to **late and incomplete registrations** that were received long past the deadline. The impact on the VSPA Board and Reunion Planning Committee consisted of delaying plans with the bases, obtaining authorization for base entry, and coordinating with multiple units at the bases. A variety of other problems have occurred that we had to resolve on behalf of our members by contacting them for the Reunion BRAT. We have reduced those problems significantly through the implementation of our EARLY BIRD FEE, which has been unanimously approved by our membership.

**THEREFORE, THE \$25 EARLY BIRD CREDIT ON YOUR REGISTRATION WILL BE HONORED IF YOUR REGISTRATION IS POSTMARKED BY SEPTEMBER 9. FOR REGISTRATIONS POSTMARKED AFTER THAT DATE, THE REGISTRATION FEE WILL INCREASE BY \$25.**

*If you have a question or need additional information about this reunion, please contact VSPA President Larry Fleming [LDFleming569@gmail.com](mailto:LDFleming569@gmail.com) or call him on his cell phone at (254) 396-4091. We hope to see you in San Antonio, Texas for our 29<sup>th</sup> Reunion and the dedication of the KNIFE-13 Memorial at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. It will be great to see you.*

**“We Take Care of Our Own!”**





VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION REUNION REGISTRATION FORM



Joint Base San Antonio Lackland AFB - October 9-13, 2024

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

RVN or Thai base \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Years 19\_\_ to 19\_\_ (Do not list bases outside of Vietnam or Thailand)

RVN or Thai base \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Years 19\_\_ to 19\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of your guests(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

REGISTRATION FEES

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

Number of persons attending the Reunion including you # \_\_\_\_\_ X \$225 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (EARLY BIRD CREDIT OF \$25 INCLUDED if postmarked by September 9)

Number of persons attending the Reunion including you # \_\_\_\_\_ X \$250 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (LATE FEE OF \$25 INCLUDED if postmarked AFTER September 9)

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

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

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

BE SURE TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORM WITH THE INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE LACKLAND AFB ENTRY AUTHORIZATION LIST.



# Entry Authorization List Procedures

## 802<sup>ND</sup> Security Forces Squadron

### JBS SAN ANTONIO - LACKLAND

**SUBJECT: VISITOR ACCESS – ENTRY AUTHORIZATION LIST**

**THE FOLLOWING BASE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ORDER TO ATTEND THE KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL DEDICATION AT THE SECURITY FORCES MUSEUM ON LACKLAND AFB!!** The following comes directly from the 802<sup>ND</sup> Security Forces Squadron Pass & ID Section of Lackland AFB: Failure to provide the information will cause denial of entry. **THIS IS NOT A SCAM! IT IS A SPECIFIC AIR FORCE REQUIREMENT!!!** “Guests must use their LEGAL information. Nicknames, missing information, or incorrect information are not authorized. People will be removed from the list due to not providing valid information for entry onto a federal installation. List all personnel who require base access. Only use LEGAL personal information (i.e., Legal name, DOB, and DL# or passport, for individuals 18 years of age or older. Guests under the age of 18 only need to be listed by name and DOB.” **LACKLAND AFB must have your complete, full name as it appears on your state driver’s license or other acceptable ID; NO NICKNAMES. THIS IS NOT NEW. WE HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE. WE MUST PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION TO THE BASE SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON PASS & ID SECTION so that you will be allowed to enter Lackland AFB with the VSPA Entry Authorization List (EAL) that we must provide. Please use the following numbers when you specify ID TYPE below:**

- 1 = Driver’s License
- 2 = State Identification Card
- 3 = Veteran’s Identification Card
- 4 = Passport/Visa
- 5 = Permanent Residence Card
- 6 = US Citizenship & Immigration Services
- 7 = Foreign Visitor

<u>Last Name, First Name, MI</u>	<u>DOB (DD/MMM/YY)</u>	<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>ID Type</u>	<u>ID Number</u>	<u>Country of Issue</u>	<u>State of Issue</u>
Doe, John Q.	12/25/45	USA	1	12345678	USA	TEXAS
<u>Last Name, First Name, MI</u>	<u>DOB (DD/MMM/YY)</u>	<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>ID Type</u>	<u>ID Number</u>	<u>Country of Issue</u>	<u>State of Issue</u>
Doe, Jane (NMI)	01/01/48	USA	4	987654	USA	
<u>Last Name, First Name, MI</u>	<u>DOB (DD/MMM/YY)</u>	<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>ID Type</u>	<u>ID Number</u>	<u>Country of Issue</u>	<u>State of Issue</u>
<u>Last Name, First Name, MI</u>	<u>DOB (DD/MMM/YY)</u>	<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>ID Type</u>	<u>ID Number</u>	<u>Country of Issue</u>	<u>State of Issue</u>
<u>Last Name, First Name, MI</u>	<u>DOB (DD/MMM/YY)</u>	<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>ID Type</u>	<u>ID Number</u>	<u>Country of Issue</u>	<u>State of Issue</u>



## PLEASE READ

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE REGISTRATION FORMS

1. The information that you provide on this form is critical for a successful reunion. All name and base information will be placed on your reunion identification badge. Guests will also receive reunion identification. The reunion ID will serve as your identification throughout the reunion and when you attend the Knife-13 Memorial Dedication at Lackland AFB.
2. PLEASE PRINT or type all information clearly. Do not use abbreviations on any portion of the registration form.
3. RVN OR THAI BASE INFORMATION: Please list only those bases where you served in Vietnam or Thailand. When listing bases, do not abbreviate. When listing squadrons, please indicate Air Police, Security Police, or specific detachments. The information will be used on your reunion ID.
4. HOME ADDRESS and MAILING ADDRESS: for your confirmation letter. THE CONFIRMATION LETTERS WILL BE MAILED BY SEPTEMBER 20, 2024.
5. TELEPHONE AND EMAIL ADDRESS: Your contact information is vital to a successful reunion. You will also receive a copy of the attendee roster upon arrival at the hotel.
6. NAMES OF YOUR GUESTS: Please provide the first name, middle initial and last name of your guest(s) on the Registration Form. YOU MUST ALSO COMPLETE THE BASE ENTRY SECURITY FORM.
7. RENEWAL OF ANNUAL DUES: For existing VSPA members only - you can renew your dues at the time of registration if they are not current. VSPA membership must be current to attend the reunion or bring a guest. Life Members have paid their dues for life.
8. VSPA MEMBERSHIP: If you are not a member of the Vietnam Security Police Association, please do not send \$15 with this registration form. You may join at the reunion by completing an application and providing your DD Form 214 showing service in Vietnam or Thailand as a USAF Air Policeman, Security Policeman or Augmentee. For further information on how to become a member, contact **Larry Fleming (254) 396-4091**.
9. REUNION COST: The registration fee is \$225 per person UNLESS YOU MISS THE EARLY BIRD DEADLINE WITH A POSTMARK OF SEPTEMBER 9. The registration fee will be \$250 per person for all registrations postmarked after September 9. THIS IS CRITICAL because of the work that must be completed by the Reunion BRAT and your Board of Directors. The following work must be completed by the Reunion BRAT after registrations are received: ENTRY AUTHORIZATION LIST OF ATTENDEES MUST BE RECEIVED BY LACKLAND BY OCTOBER 1. A full audit of all names, base names, squadrons, and fees paid. The audit of names must be correct for the EAL, to print reunion ID badges, pay advance fees to the hotel and bus transportation company based upon the number of people attending the reunion. Only then can the confirmation letters be mailed to our members. All of the registration and identification information must be assembled in Registration Welcome Packages that have to be mailed in bulk to the hotel with enough time for delivery no later than Tuesday, October 8, the day before registration opens at the hotel. Shipping and delivery are very difficult to guarantee with the current delays in mail systems and shipping. Once the packages arrive at the hotel, another audit must take place so that reunion specific items may be placed in each welcome package, including reunion pins, patches, meal tickets, bus tickets, raffle information and local restaurant information. PLEASE DON'T DELAY.



# KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL MONUMENTS



## STATUS REPORT

The Vietnam Security Police Association is raising funds to deliver two long-overdue memorial monuments to recognize and honor the 18 Security Policemen and five aircrew members who were all assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. They perished in the crash of United States Air Force Helicopter, Knife-13, on 13 May 1975 in Thailand. The monuments will be located at the Security Forces Museum at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, the current home of the 56th Fighter Wing and the 56th Security Forces Squadron. The memorial that will be located at the Security Forces Museum will be dedicated in October, during the coming VSPA Reunion. The memorial at Luke Air Force Base will be dedicated in October of 2025 during the 30<sup>th</sup> VSPA Reunion, which will also be the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the crash of Knife-13.

A great deal of planning and fundraising has been done by the VSPA's Knife-13 Memorial Planning Committee. 12,000 pounds of black granite has been ordered for the memorial at Lackland. The foundation for the memorial is in place. The graphic design has been researched and refined to depict the faces, names and ranks of each one of our heroes who volunteered for the mission to rescue the crew of the Mayaguez. The Air Force Historical Research Agency has approved the design.

Just as the aircrew and our eighteen brother Security Policemen volunteered to rescue the captured crew of the Mayaguez, we have volunteered to care for them, to raise funds and build two memorials to preserve the honor and history of their sacrifice. The men on board Knife-13 perished in their effort to take care of their own. We need to honor and take care of our own.

The VSPA is a 501(c)(19) tax exempt organization of military war veterans who served as United States Air Force Air Policemen, Security Policemen, and Augmentees in Vietnam and Thailand. All donations to the memorials will be tax deductible for donors and **WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH FUNDRAISING.** The anticipated cost of both granite monuments has been estimated at \$100,000. Fundraising is already underway using VSPA's extensive network of Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees, retired and active-duty Security Forces Defenders, including K-9 and others, plus the Special Operations community.

### YOU MAY DONATE FOUR DIFFERENT WAYS:

1. By direct check to the VSPA. If donating by check, please make the check payable to the Vietnam Security Police Association, and mail to Jerry Nelson, 12923 Gypsophila, San Antonio, TX 78253. Please write Knife-13 in the memo section of the check.
2. The links on our website at [www.vspa.com](http://www.vspa.com) provide a very convenient way to donate via PayPal.
3. For those of you who may have received stock as an employee benefit, you may donate appreciated stock through a special account established for the VSPA. A donor received stock as a salary enhancement. The stock has increased/appreciated in value over the years. The donor will receive the full appreciated value of the stock as a tax-exempt donation to the VSPA.
4. You may also purchase a Memorial Medallion or The Pieta lithograph using the information on the following flyers. All proceeds will go to the Knife-13 Memorials.

**DONATIONS! DONATIONS! DONATIONS!**

**PLEASE DONATE!**





KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL, PROPOSED DESIGN SIDE-1

### KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL

 TS/SGT JACKIE D. GLENN 56TH SPS	 SSGT GERALD A. COYLE 56TH SPS	 SSGT FAHECARULLU ILAOA, K9 56TH SPS	 SGT JIMMY P. BLACK 56TH SPS	 SGT BOBBY G. COLLINS 56TH SPS	 SGT THOMAS D. DWYER 56TH SPS
 SGT BOB W. FORD 56TH SPS	 SGT GERALD W. FRITZ, K9 56TH SPS	 SGT GREGORY L. HANKAMER 56TH SPS	 SGT MICHAEL D. LANE 56TH SPS	 SGT WILLIAM R. MCKELVEY 56TH SPS	 SGT ROBERT W. ROSS 56TH SPS
 SGT DARRELL L. HAMLIN 56TH SPS	 SGT DAVID A. HIGGS 56TH SPS	 SGT DENNIS W. LONDON, K9 56TH SPS	 SGT ROBERT P. MATHIAS 56TH SPS	 SGT TOMMY R. NEALIS 56TH SPS	 ANN EDGAR C. MORAN II 56TH SPS
 CAPT JAMES G. KATS (AC) 21ST SOS	 1LT LAURENCE FROEHLICH (CP) 21ST SOS	 TS/SGT MC MULLEN, GEORGE, III (FE) 21ST SOS	 SGT ROBERT P. WELDON (FE) 21ST SOS	 SGT PAUL J. RABER (CC) 21ST SOS	

**DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF OUR KNIFE-13 BROTHERS**  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE EIGHTEEN SECURITY POLICEMEN FROM THE 56TH SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON AND FIVE AIRCREWMEN FROM THE 21ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON. THEY WERE ASSIGNED TO THE 56TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING AT NAKHON PHANOM ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE, THAILAND (NKP). OUR BROTHERS WERE VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDING THREE K9 HANDLERS WITHOUT DOGS, WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE VALIANT HOPE OF SAVING THE LIVES OF THE CAPTURED CREW OF THE SS MAYAGUEZ. ALL PERISHED ON MAY 13, 1975, IN THE CRASH OF THE CH-53C SEA STALLION HELICOPTER #68-10933, CALL SIGN KNIFE-13, WHILE EN ROUTE FROM NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB TO THE STAGING AREA FOR THE MAYAGUEZ RESCUE OPERATION AT U-TAPAO ROYAL THAI NAVY BASE.

WE SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER THEM!

#### THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT

THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT SHIP SS MAYAGUEZ AND ITS CREW WERE CAPTURED ON MAY 12, 1975, BY KHMER ROUGE INSURGENTS IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS OFF OF THE COAST OF CAMBODIA. PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD ORDERED THE U.S. MILITARY TO RECOVER THE SHIP AND SAVE THE CREW. 75 SECURITY POLICEMEN FROM THE 56TH SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON AT NKP ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE, THAILAND VOLUNTEERED FOR THE MISSION ON MAY 13, 1975, BASED UPON THEIR PRIOR TRAINING FOR EMBASSY

EVACUATIONS DURING OPERATION EAGLE PULL. FOUR HELICOPTERS FROM THE 21ST SOS LIFTED OFF FROM NKP TO TRANSPORT THE SECURITY POLICEMEN TO THE STAGING AREA AT U-TAPAO. SHORTLY AFTER LIFT-OFF, KNIFE-13 FELL OUT OF THE FLYING FORMATION, CRASHING IN DENSE JUNGLE DUE TO CATASTROPHIC MECHANICAL FAILURE. ALL 23 AIRMEN ABOARD KNIFE-13 DIED DUE TO IMPACT AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE WITH EXPLODING AMMUNITION. THE SS MAYAGUEZ AND HER CREW WERE RESCUED ON MAY 15, 1975.

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### KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
56TH SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON, AND 21ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON, NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB, THAILAND

#### KNIFE-13 GOODBYES

STANDING ON THE METAL TARMAC AT U-TAPAO, PEERING AT STARS ON THAT WARM MAY NIGHT, THREE BLINKING LIGHTS APPEARED ON THE HORIZON ... HEARTBROKEN, THE FOURTH NOWHERE IN SIGHT.

LANDING IN BREATHLESS SLOW-MOTION, NOT KNOWING WHICH ONE WENT DOWN, WE WERE TOLD THAT OUR BROTHERS WERE LOST ... FOUR JOPLY GREENS, NOW ONLY THREE.

STANDING THERE, MY HEART SINKING WITH THE POUNDING ARRIVAL OF EACH WHIRRING ROTOR, READING THE NUMBERS ON THEIR SIDES AS THEY POWERED DOWN EACH PULSING JET MOTOR, I BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT MY DELTA SQUAD BROTHERS WOULD NOT DISEMBARK. MY BROTHERS NO LONGER THERE, I BEGAN A SOUL QUENCHING REALITY, A MISSING SPARK, MY YOUTHFUL SPIRIT QUICKLY LOST.

HEROES WHO VOLUNTEERED AND BROKE BREAD WITH ME, NOW THE GHOSTS OF KNIFE-13. THROUGH GOD'S INTERVENTION I HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM THEM JUST HOURS BEFORE, HANDSHAKING AND HUGGING GOODBYES, NOT REALIZING THERE WOULD NEVER BE MORE. I SHIFTED BETWEEN ANGER, DESPAIR, AND THE REALIZATION I WOULD NEVER AGAIN SEE MY BROTHERS ALIVE ... A TWENTY-YEAR OLD SERGEANT, INSTANTLY GROWING IN MATURITY TO A TEMPERED OLD THIRTY-FIVE.

THEY ARE ALWAYS IN MY THOUGHTS, NOW AND IN THE DECADES SINCE THAT WARM AND FATEFULLY CLEAR NIGHT, WHERE THREE BLINKING LIGHTS APPEARED ... HEARTBROKEN, THE FOURTH NOWHERE IN SIGHT.

SGT J.C. HAGLER, 56TH SPS, NKP 1974-1975, SOLE SURVIVOR OF DELTA SQUAD, KNIFE-13 MAY 13, 1975





## KNIFE 13 COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN**



**DONATIONS! DONATIONS! DONATIONS!**

**PLEASE DONATE!**





## KNIFE 13 MEMORIAL FUND RAISER COMMEMORATIVE LITHOGRAPH



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

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

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

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

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

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

**Sales POC:** The Vietnam Security Police Association BX  
Email address: [vspastore@yahoo.com](mailto:vspastore@yahoo.com)  
Phone: (989) 686-3639 - Credit cards are accepted.

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

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

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

**WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN**

**DONATIONS! DONATIONS! DONATIONS!**

**PLEASE DONATE!**



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

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

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

**Deadline: September 1, 2024**

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Or*

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

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

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





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

**APPLICANT'S BIOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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

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

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

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

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL CURRENTLY ATTENDING OR LAST ATTENDED:

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

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

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL CURRENTLY OR PLANNING ON ATTENDING:

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

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

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

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

COMMENTS CONCERNING APPLICANT'S QUALIFICATIONS AND POTENTIAL:

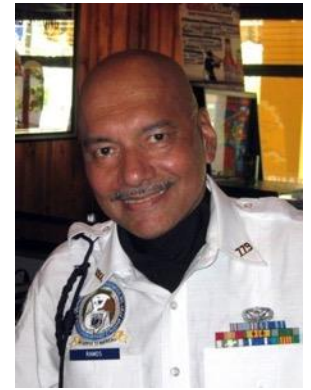
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SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL MAKING RECOMMENDATION



## Moonstruck in Vietnam: July 20, 1969

Hector Ramos, Life Member #165, Binh Thuy 69-70



The year 1969 for me was a time of growth, wonderment, hope, and fear. On July 20 Apollo 11 landed on the moon and a man stepped on another planetary body for the first time. Fifty years ago, I was twenty-one and in the third year of my USAF enlistment. Stationed at a small airbase, Binh Thuy, I had grown to adulthood through my travels and experiences in the military. After my baptism under fire and a steady diet of mortar attacks by an unseen enemy, I hoped and prayed that if I survived, I would pursue a degree in engineering.

Vietnam was never declared a war, but don't tell that to any Nam vet or the families of the 58,000-plus KIAs and the countless others wounded. The Age of Aquarius had become a distant song. The reality of war, social unrest, protest, political conniving, and government incompetence embedded itself in our hearts and minds. But this is not about that; I am merely painting the view we had from the Mekong Delta while trying to live up to the ideals of military service and fighting for a democracy. Humankind was about to realize President Kennedy's vision: *"This nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth."*



At times I feared I would fly out of there not in a Freedom Bird, but in a flag-draped coffin. I dealt with this morbid possibility of my demise with an equal sense of survival and humor. I embraced a countdown of the days left in country on my short-timer's calendar.

On July 20, 1969, when I was six months into my tour with six to go—not officially a short timer yet, but not a cherry either—Apollo 11's three crewmembers were preparing to land on the moon. The snippets of reports on Armed Forces Radio and Stars and Stripes were all we had, since TVs were rare, and we slept during the day when most programming was available. For me and my fellow Security Policemen, it would be a typical day of sleeping

from 8 a.m. until maybe 3 p.m. after another long night providing security for the base perimeter, then getting up and repeating the nightly Devil Flight routine all over again.

My assignment was 15 Alpha, a 25-foot steel tower on the far end of the base runway. As I climbed up, then went in and turned to face the tiny village and the Bassac River beyond the perimeter, before me was a bright, almost-full moon in all its glory. I sat down and immediately knew that this night would be different from any other.

Apart from the fact that history was unfolding, it could have been just another night of vigilance and fear, another nocturnal passage in this exotic, beautiful, but war-torn country. While most Americans were tuned to their TVs, I settled into my post, checked and arranged my equipment, then dug into my gear for my transistor radio. I inserted the earpiece and tuned into Armed Forces Radio for the live broadcast of the lunar mission.

Although it would be hours before the descent to Tranquility Base, I was transfixed by the moon before me and probably put myself and fellow airmen at risk. As the lunar lander emerged from that last orbit around the dark





side of the moon and resumed communications, the excitement, fear of failure, and hope of success practically had me riding with them as my imagination soared.

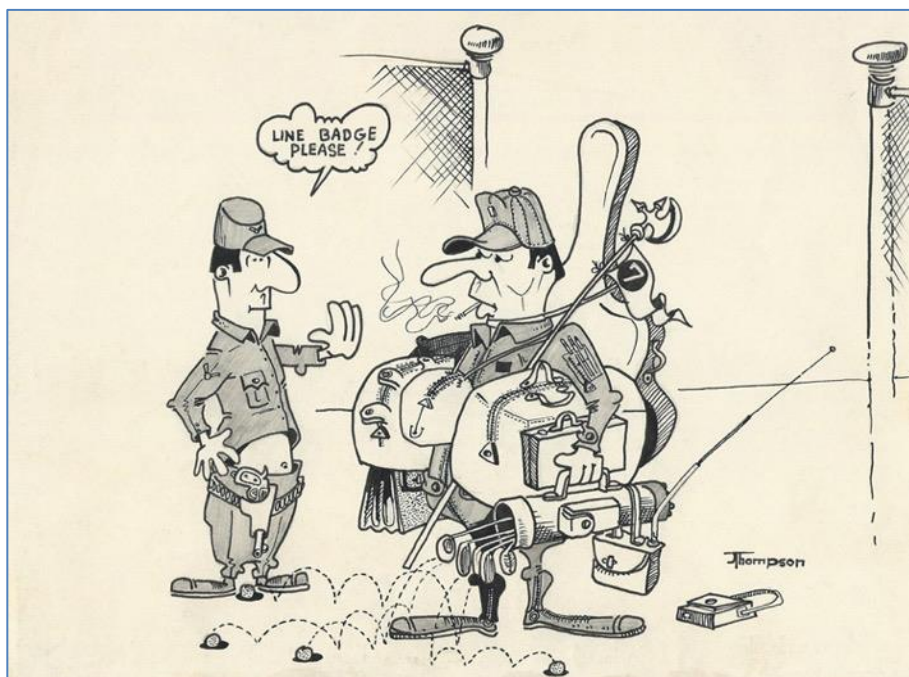
Then, as the descent began, I vividly remember intense color as the retro rockets slowed the descent and they radioed back that they saw moon dust stirring up just before the crew counted down the last few feet to touchdown and engine shutoff. The words, *“Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed,”* came through the earpiece. I let out a loud *“Whoowwie!”* America was first on the moon, and I watched—yes, watched—from halfway around the world, and there was glory, victory, and renewed hope for the genius and resourcefulness of humanity.

Just then someone called out. It was my sector K9 team. He had heard my whooping. I recounted all that had just happened and the dog handler, too, was thrilled. But I was living it and soon was right back on the moon. Luckily, Victor Charlie did not spoil this night.

At about 3 a.m. July 21 on my side of the world (3 p.m. the day before on the East Coast), the decision was made to open the hatch and climb down from the lander, which would take about six hours. I would be off duty in three and the radio battery was about dead, so the first words by Neil Armstrong after stepping off the ladder were heard by a group of us in our hooch: *“That’s one small step for a man; one giant leap for mankind.”*

We were all in awe but tired and needed to rest. After that, we slept and maybe dreamt of home, family, girlfriends, and the possibilities of the future—a future that 58,281 would never realize. So yes, I remember the triumph of July 20, 1969, and for me it’s inexorably linked with the tragedy of the Vietnam War.

Years later I saw the video of Apollo 11 sitting on the moon and the astronauts’ walk. But the video couldn’t compare to what I, while sitting in that tower with the moon aglow in a clear black sky, saw in my mind with such clarity and wonderment. As I have relived it over and over through five decades, I wouldn’t trade it, not for anything.





**AN UPDATE by Janet Matthews**

Sarge’s completed our mission for the 2023-2024 school year. At the end of each school year, we confirm with our contacts for Lincoln Academy and Bryant Elementary that the schools will want us to continue providing for the students. We have recommitted to both schools to continue providing for the students. We will know in a few weeks what each school’s enrollment will be and start planning for the 2024-2025 school year.

It is hard to believe that Team Sarge’s (aka Mama and me) have been doing this work for over 10 years. We appreciate all your support whether it is through monetary donations, encouragement, or prayers.

As you know, Sarge’s exists to honor the memory of Alvin W. Matthews, MSgt. USAF, retired. I think Sarge would approve of what we do.

Thank you all so much. *Welcome Home!*

Janet Matthews,  
Director



**RAFFLE**  **RAFFLE** ***Saturday Night Banquet Raffle***  **RAFFLE**  **RAFFLE**

*The highlight of our great reunion is the **Saturday Evening Banquet and Awards dinner.***

*The conclusion of the dinner is our raffles for items that have been generously donated.*

*These funds help to defray the cost of offering up a hospitality room that is well stocked with **“Adult”** and regular beverages and snacks while gathering with old and new friends.*

*Please consider bringing something to add to the treasures, like something unique from your hometown.*

*Plus, the highly anticipated 50/50 raffle where you could be big winner of some **COLD HARD CASH!***

*Thank you in advance for your generosity in both your donations and ticket purchases.*

*Loyally,  
Sheila Gervase-Cain  
Hospitality and Raffles Chairman*

*Wife of Greg Cain, Binh Thuy 67-68*





## Operation Cold Tar

Carl Essig, Life Member #978, Cam Ranh Bay 68-69

I was stationed at McGuire AFB, New Jersey from 1966 to Feb 1968. In Dec 67 we had a pretty good snowstorm and at the same time for some reason they started posting guards on some C-141's parked on the flight line, which was not normal, and no one could figure out why.

On 28 December 1967 I was given Flight Orders for a special airlift mission. I don't remember how I was given the assignment, but I didn't have time to let my new bride know that I would not be home on my three-day break. A Staff Sergeant and I were given flight orders as crew members and ordered to proceed "as directed" on a C-141 to perform an airlift mission with a scheduled return to McGuire on or about 28 January 1968.

We departed McGuire on our assigned C-141 and only flew a short distance and landed at a Naval Air Station near New York City. After landing we were met by Brinks Armored trucks! They proceeded to load pallets of Gold Bullion onto the aircraft, from one end to the other. According to the loadmaster, it was 36 million dollars! Once the plane was loaded, the aircraft took off and flew up over Greenland, Norway, and Sweden, then down to Mildenhall AFB in England.

I asked why we didn't fly straight across the Atlantic from New York to England. The pilot said that if the aircraft encountered a problem, it would be easier to recover the gold. They wouldn't have to fish the gold out of the ocean.

The flight crew treated both of us Security Policemen great. They invited both of us up to the cockpit, one at a time and let us sit and ask questions. I also got to see the Northern Lights from the cockpit.

50000 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON (MAC)  
480TH MILITARY AIRLIFT WING (MAC)  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
McGUIRE AIR FORCE BASE, NEW JERSEY

FLIGHT ORDER NUMBER 312

The following named crew members will proceed on or about 28 Dec 67 in C-141 aircraft, from McGuire AFB, NJ, to As Directed COLD TAR, to perform an airlift mission and upon completion will return to proper station on or about 28 Jan 68. Variations in itinerary authorized.

Crew Name	AFSC	Pos	Crew Pos	Crew Qual	Flying Time Rating	Security Clearance
A1C ESSIG, CARL F., AF197			GUARD (ACM)			Secret
SSGT HALE, CHARLES, AF521			GUARD (ACM)			SECRET

FOR THE COMMANDER  
LAWRENCE E. HILSHAN, 1A Col, USAF  
Operations Officer

DISTRIBUTION  
- 1 Individual  
7 - Control each Organization Listed  
1 - Comptroller  
1 - File



I can't find any information about this operation, its name was "Operation Cold Tar" and there were many more flights with the same cargo. England's pound was in trouble, so the USA loaned the Gold to England, then it was returned later probably the same operation in reverse. Although I can't find any detailed information on this operation, the C141HEAVEN website blog contains a reference under its Tall Tales tab by a C-141 aircrew member who makes reference to flying similar missions around the time I was assigned to the mission. The blog also talks about the security being armed with Thompson's, but we were carrying our standard M-16 rifles.

Three months later I was on my way to Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam April 68-69.

C141HEAVEN (<https://c141heaven.info/dotcom/index.php>)

Unique Cargo ([https://c141heaven.info/dotcom/tall\\_tales/unique\\_cargo.php](https://c141heaven.info/dotcom/tall_tales/unique_cargo.php))



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

Congratulations to the 2023 recipients of the Warriors Medal of Valor. Sarge would be proud to have you included in this special group. For the new members of the VSPA, be assured that Sarge would seek you out just so he could say, "Welcome Home, Welcome to the VSPA." Not all of you had the chance to meet Sarge, though I hope you have heard about him. Alvin W. Matthews, MSgt, USAF retired, served in the 483rd Security Police Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam from January 1971 to January 1972. He was an instructor at the Security Police Academy before he retired from the Air Force in 1980. He found the VSPA on the Internet and like many of you, he kind of watched from a distance before deciding to join or attend a reunion. It is an honor to say that he is Life Member #127. Sarge stood his final Guardmount on January 4, 2008, his 66th birthday. His resting place is plot number **111** at Cedar Hill Cemetery, Scottsboro, Alabama, a plot he specifically selected to honor his Brothers. We have some wonderful memories of our Sarge. I am so glad that he found the VSPA. He loved this association, he loved his Brothers, and I know he is proud of the continued commitment and growth. He would definitely tear-up at the thought that you continue his dream of honoring his VSPA Brothers with this medal.

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

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

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



You may submit the nomination by including the name and your justification for why this member deserves the medal. Please include as many **details** on their service as you can. Nominations must be submitted to me at the following email address: [janetmm62@gmail.com](mailto:janetmm62@gmail.com) no later than **August 5, 2024**. The Warriors Medal selection committee must have time to review the nominations, make the selections, engrave the medals and prepare the certificates. The medals and certificates will be presented at the VPSA Reunion Banquet in October. Thank you for your service and **WELCOME HOME!**

Janet Matthews, Daughter of VSPA Life Member #127





**FROM YOUR SERVICE OFFICER**

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



**HYPERTENSION (HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE)  
UNDER THE VA PACT Act**

If you submitted a claim for Hypertension and receives a 0% rating, remember that the most important part is that you are Service-Connected (SC) for this condition, which eventually, might be much more important than receiving compensation. It's all about the numbers.

**VA RATING FOR HYPERTENSION (HBP) - JANUARY 2023**

The VA rates hypertension on a scale from 10% to 60% based on your **Diastolic** (bottom number) and your **Systolic** (top number). Here's the breakdown of ratings:

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

If you filed a claim for HBP and received a service-connection for it, but only with a 0% compensation rating and you disagree with this rating, you should follow up with a disagreement, by submitting a VA Form 20-0995-Supplemental Claim, along with some additional/new evidence that's relevant to your case or identifying new evidence for review. If you are currently taking meds for HBP you should state that's the reason your numbers are below the VA rating scale.

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

1. A copy of the death certificate with either the primary or secondary cause of death stating the condition which might fall under the Agent Orange medical conditions. So, if you die of complications of HBP, she would be covered.
2. A copy of your marriage license and
3. A completed VA Form 21P-534EZ (Application for DIC, Survivors Pension and/or Accrued Benefits).

VA Form 21P-534EZ is also used for applying for a Survivors Pension, which is much different than a DIC.

I will be discussing this at our reunion to our members and the Sisterhood.

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

Jaime A. Lleras  
VSPA Claims Service Officer  
CHIEFJAL9@GMAIL.COM

**VSPA****USAF**

**VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING  
28th REUNION  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2023  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**



1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 1004 hours by President Jerry Nelson
2. **MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR DEPARTED BROTHERS INCLUDING:**
  - A. The 111 Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who did not survive the war in Vietnam and Thailand.
  - B. All VSPA members listed at Life Member #111 which was established as a tribute to those who did not survive the war and those members of the VSPA who died as members in good standing.
3. **INVOCATION** - Chaplain Jeff Kerkhoff
4. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - VSPA 2nd Vice President Robert DeCubellis
5. **INTRODUCTION OF ELECTED OFFICERS** by name, squadron and place of residence:
  - Jerry Nelson, President; LM #668; San Antonio, TX; Safeside Phu Cat 821CSPS, Phan Rang 821CSPS, Tuy Hoa 821CSPS, 69-70.
  - Larry Fleming; LM #131; Glen Rose, TX; Nha Trang, 1968-69.
  - Robert "Deke" DeCubellis; LM #347; Murrieta, CA; Bien Hoa, 1970-71.
  - Charlie Blood, Secretary; LM #372; Pineville, LA; Udorn K9, 1970-71.
  - Richard Garcia, Treasurer; LM #82; Massapequa, NY; Phan Rang, 1969-70. (Unable to attend but will arrive later in the day to handle expenses).
  - Steve Shelt, Historian; LM #157; Evans, Georgia; Pleiku, 67-68.
  - Don Poss, Communications Director; LM #37; Hemet, CA; Da Nang K-9, 1965-66.
  - Greg Cain, Past President; LM #62; West Seneca, NY; Binh Thuy, 1967-68.
  - Steve Gattis, President Emeritus; LM #49; Glen Rose, TX; Cam Ranh Bay, 1968-69.

**SPECIAL GUESTS:**

- **Lt Col (Ret) Lee Chambers**, Chairman of Eagle Chapter of the Air Force Security Forces Association. He is responsible for Virginia, Maryland and Delaware and holds Chapter meetings at Langley and Dover. Virginia and Maryland meetings are in Washington D.C. He is the go-to guy for the Association in the Washington D.C. area, attending Vietnam Wall Washing events and all other Security Forces events. He does an excellent job of keeping Security Forces always present and consistently visits our wounded Defenders at Walter Reed Military Hospital.
- **Chief Master Sergeant (Ret) Frank Crowder** from San Antonio, Texas. Frank is the very generous first sponsor in the history of the Vietnam Security Police Association. He is a retired Security Policeman and is the founder and President of Defense Consulting Services, headquartered in San



Antonio, TX. His company handles all the firearm certifications for retired Security Forces and Military Police under the Law Enforcement Officer's Safety Act (LEOSA).

### SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:

- **David Bennett, DAV National Service Officer**, from Columbia South Carolina. He will be providing a presentation on developing and filing claims with the VA.
- **Angela Costello, VSPA Sisterhood**, wife of deceased Life Member Jim Costello, Nha Trang. Angela is an attorney with years of experience in Estate Planning. She will be providing information on estate planning.

**DECLARATION OF A QUORUM BY PRESIDENT NELSON WITH SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE BOARD PRESENT IN THE ROOM AND ONE (POSS) AVAILABLE VIA TELEPHONE IF HIS VOTE IS NECESSARY.**

**PROCEDURAL CHANGE:** In accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, all reports presented by appointed staff and members of the Board of Directors will be approved by voice rather than a motion and second, unless the item requires an action to be taken. This change was suggested by members in the interest of saving time due to motions and seconds that were routinely required in the past that added unnecessary time in an already lengthy meeting.

6. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** of the previous annual business meeting. Rather than taking the time to read them during this meeting, we published the minutes in Guardmount.
7. **OLD BUSINESS**

#### 7.1 REUNION SITE SELECTION FOR 2025

- a. **AN AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS AND CONSTITUTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY PREVIOUSLY APPROVED:**

1. Pursuant to Article III, Section 2, Reunions, Paragraph B

“We offer strong support to all active duty and reserve members of the United States Air Force Security Forces. Therefore, our reunions can be held near a United States Air Force base with an active-duty Security Forces Squadron, or an independent destination chosen and voted on by the general membership at the annual business meeting.”

- b. Reunion sites are selected two years in advance so that planning by the VSPA can begin early. We need to be able to adjust to events in the chosen area. If we are being hosted by a Security Forces Squadron, they can begin early and have the time necessary to adapt to active-duty operational requirements.
- c. The reunion site for this reunion in Charleston, South Carolina was selected in 2021. As in the past, the 2023 reunion will be held in October, the Wednesday through Sunday before the Columbus Day holiday (which is always the second Monday in October). **The dates are October 4 – 8, 2023.** The sites selected at our 2021 Reunion were:

1. Primary Site for 2023 is Eglin AFB, Destin, Florida.
  2. Secondary Site for 2023 is Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio.
  3. **Backup Site for 2023 is Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina. Final selection due to local cost concerns for Destin and Dayton associated with the economy.**
- d. The site selection process for **2024 was conducted in 2022. The Reunion Dates for 2024 are October 9 – 13, 2024. While the off-site city was included in the reunion site selection process, the following are the results of the selection:**
1. **Primary Site for 2024 is Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and the planned dedication of the Knife-13 Memorial.**
  2. **Secondary Site for 2024 is Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma.**
- e. President Jerry Nelson explained past reunions and the bylaw requirement to choose by alternating regions in the CONUS: WEST, CENTRAL and EAST regions and **THAT WE MUST CHOOSE A LOCATION IN THE WEST CONUS FOR 2025 because we are in the EAST REGION this year and will be in the CENTRAL REGION next year.**
- f. President Jerry Nelson explained the potential selection of sites in the WEST REGION in accordance with the change in the BYLAWS. He also explained the modified base selection procedure where available bases were listed on a ballot that was placed in the Reunion Welcome Packets. The purpose of the ballot is to save time during the business meeting by allowing members in attendance to select their top three choices, then submit the ballot prior to the meeting so that the time devoted to site selection will be limited to the top three choices from bases and off-site city on the ballot.
- g. To address the amendment to the BYLAWS and Constitution, your Board of Directors conducted research to identify locations within the WEST REGION with hotels in the area that could accommodate VSPA requirements for a reunion site. The only available cost effective off-base site is SAN DIEGO.
- h. The Base Selection Ballot is shown **ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE:**





**VIETNAM SECURITY POLICE ASSOCIATION REUNION  
OCTOBER 4 - 8, 2023  
2025 BASE SELECTION BALLOT**

**Active Duty USAF/Joint Bases in the US Western Region**

To expedite our Business Meeting this year, the executive board has decided to start the base selection early by providing you with an opportunity to vote for your top choice of where you would like us to hold our 30<sup>th</sup> reunion in 2025.

Your ballot will be collected in the HOSPITALITY ROOM AND ARE DUE NO LATER THAN FRIDAY AT 2100 HOURS. Once the ballots are collected, the Board of Directors will tally the votes and present the top three bases chosen at the business meeting on Saturday. At that point, we will all vote for a primary location/base and a secondary location/base.

**WESTERN BASES AVAILABLE - MILES FROM AIRPORT TO BASE**

- Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA      **Seattle-Tacoma 37 miles (Small SF Sq. - Army kennels)**
- Fairchild AFB, WA      Spokane 6 miles
- Hill AFB, UT      Ogden 16 miles / Salt Lake 31 miles
- Nellis AFB, NV      Las Vegas 16 miles (second highest reunion cost)
- Luke AFB, AZ      Phoenix 27 miles **(2025 Knife-13 Dedication Site for 56<sup>th</sup> SFS)**
- Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ      Tucson 8 miles
- OFF SITE NON-MILITARY LOCATION - San Diego

**NOTE: Bases not considered due to cost \$\$\$, distance and weather:**

- Beale AFB, CA      (Too far: Sacramento Airport 44 miles / San Francisco 141 miles)**
- Edwards AFB, CA      (Too far: Los Angeles Airport 96 miles)**
- Los Angeles AFB, CA      (Systems only, no air assets, minor SF presence)**
- Travis AFB, CA      (Too far: San Francisco Airport 61 miles / Sacramento 43 miles)**
- Vandenberg AFB, CA      (Too far: Santa Barbara Airport 55 miles / Los Angeles 160 miles)**
- Creech AFB, NV      (Too far: Las Vegas Airport 54 miles - No longer regional Trng Ctr.)**
- Malmstrom AFB, MT      (Weather)**
- Mountain Home AFB, ID      (Weather)**
- Eielson AFB, AK      (Distance and Weather)**
- Clear AFS, AK      (Distance and Weather)**
- JB Elmendorf-Richardson, AK      (Distance and Weather)**
- JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI      (\$\$\$, Distance and Weather)**

**PAST REUNION SITE INFORMATION FOR REFERENCE ONLY:**

- 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
- Shreveport, LA 2014 Central
- Las Vegas, NV 2015 West
- Tampa, Florida 2016 East
- San Antonio, Texas 2017 Central
- Tucson, Arizona 2018 West
- Washington, D.C. 2019 East
- Colorado Springs, CO 2020 Central (postponed due to COVID-19 Pandemic)
- Colorado Springs, CO 2021 Central
- Phoenix, Arizona 2022 West
- Destin, Florida 2023 East (changed to Charleston, South Carolina)
- San Antonio, Texas 2024 Joint Base San Antonio - Lackland AFB

**j. The Reunion Dates for 2025 are October 8 - 12. While the off-site city was included in the reunion site selection process, the following are the results of the selection:**

- 1. Primary Site for 2025 is Luke AFB, Phoenix, Arizona**
- 2. Secondary Site for 2025 is Hill AFB, Utah**
- 3. Backup Location: Nellis AFB, Las Vegas, Nevada**

**8. REPORTS BY THE PRESIDENT, BOARD MEMBERS, APPOINTED STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS.**

**8.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT** by President Jerry Nelson – Numerous conference calls were conducted by the Board of Directors throughout the last year to conduct business and prepare for this reunion. Those calls were highly successful in the reunion planning process. A Board of Directors meeting was held at 0800 hours this morning. We discussed items of concern to the Board and have included applicable items in the specific reports or under **NEW BUSINESS**.

**8.2 KENNEL MASTER:** Presented by Kennel Master Ken Smerecki. K9 handlers toured the JB Charleston Kennels and met with the military working dog handlers who followed in their footsteps.



**8.3 GUARDMOUNT REPORT** by Steve Gattis on behalf of Mike Kennedy, Guardmount Editor and Publisher who was unable to attend. Erlyce Pekas and Steve Gattis will continue as Assistant Editors to Mike Kennedy. Mike submitted the following report:

Mike asks that every VSPA and Sisterhood member search their memories for stories that would be of interest to the rest of us. You don't have to be a professional writer to submit something for publication. Just write your story or multiple stories and send them to me. With the help of my trusted assistants Erlyce Pekas and Steve Gattis, we will make sure that the grammar and spelling are correct and ready for publication. Photos associated with the stories are also welcome and I can even enhance the quality if a photo is not in the best of condition. You can also submit interesting photos not associated with a story, service-related cartoons (with credits), and poems, etc. We can all be part of the team. I look forward to your contributions. Thanks! Enjoy the rest of the reunion and be safe as you travel home.

Mike Kennedy  
Guardmount Editor

**STEVE GATTIS** clarified why we no longer print and mail copies of Guardmount to those who do not have a computer. The Board of Directors and members voted at our 2019 reunion to discontinue printing and mailing as the cost for printing was overwhelming at over \$5,000 per year for those who did not have a computer, making it impossible to continue printing and mailing. Guardmount is presented in a PDF format through our VSPA web site. Don Poss sends mass email messages when Guardmount has been posted. If you have a computer, you can receive Guardmount online.

**SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING CELL PHONES:** If you have a cell phone but do not have a computer, you can still access Guardmount via cell phone. Additionally, for those of you who might not be familiar with PDF files and the Internet, if your children or grandkids have a cell phone, they can get Guardmount online for you. Steve then showed members a copy of Guardmount that he had downloaded to his cell phone. Steve requested that members continue sending stories, photos, and articles for publication in Guardmount because it is their opportunity to preserve a piece of their history.

**8.4 TREASURER'S REPORT** by Steve Gattis. Richard Garcia was unable to attend; however, he be here for the banquet this evening. He prepared the following prepared the Year-to-Date report for 2023. The report is attached to the file copy of the minutes.

**As of September 30, 2023:**

The amount in the Saving Account is                   **\$ 15,609.71**

The amount in the Checking Account is                   **\$ 32,621.84**

**TOTAL AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2023                   \$ 48,231.55**

**The following funds are accounted for within the total assets and not available for Operational Expenses:**

**Sam Williams Endowment Fund                   \$ 8,775.00**

**Knife-13 Memorial Funds                   \$ 28,898.19**

**TOTAL OPERATIONAL FUNDS                   \$ 10,558.36**

**FUNDRAISING DISCUSSION:** Your Board of Directors has discussed numerous ideas, including grant applications and potential donations. We are pursuing those fundraising avenues, especially for the Knife-13 Memorials. We extend our sincere appreciation to Retired Chief Frank Crowder of DCS Consulting, who donated directly to the operational cost of this reunion. There are signs at this reunion that identify DCS Consulting as our Reunion Sponsor.

### **VSPA AND YOUR ESTATE PLANNING**

The vast majority of those who will read this are senior citizens, with some more senior than others! In the 25 plus years VSPA has been here, a good number of us have already stood our final Guardmount. As we all know, eventually we all will join them.

You've likely been bombarded by estate planning info from various sources. This is not a plea to buy a timeshare or deed one to us, to buy insurance, or get a warranty plan for your new battery-mobile or golf cart.

What we are pitching is a plea that you take care of your loved ones by planning for that day, so they aren't sitting there going, "Now what?" Like the Cable Guy sez: Gitterdone! Plan for the future.

And while you're at it, if you think you'll have a few spare bucks in that estate, earmark some of it for a final VSPA donation. Our general fund and scholarship fund can use the boost to help us keep your VSPA solvent and serving as we continue to "Take Care of Our Own."

Check with your financial advisor, attorney or one of your Board of Directors on how to work it! Those of us who remain after you're gone will speak highly of your generosity! And, as long as your name is spoken, you will not be forgotten!

### **DONATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

**8.4a** As we have at the last four reunions, your Board of Directors unanimously decided to pass-the-hat at this business meeting rather than at the Awards Banquet. \$1,833.00 was collected at this meeting that was donated to the KNIFE-13 Memorials at Luke AFB and Lackland AFB.

**8.4b THE SAM WILLIAMS ENDOWMENT TO ASSIST VSPA MEMBERS WHO CANNOT AFFORD TO ATTEND A REUNION:** Steve Gattis reported that VSPA Life Member Sam Williams and his employer have donated \$500 each for the last EIGHT years in a row. Donations from other VSPA members have supplemented the fund. We now have over \$8,775 to hopefully assist VSPA members in financial need so that they can attend a reunion. Your Board of directors approved assistance for three members.

An announcement was made for members to please contact any member of the Board to provide information on a member in need for our 2024 reunion. The information will remain confidential.

The Board will continue to act as the committee with newly elected President Fleming as the Chair. Richard Garcia will handle the bookkeeping as Treasurer. The Board will handle all recommendations through conference calls.

We are thankful for all that Sam has done to take care of our own. If any of you would like to contribute to the Sam Williams Endowment, please contact any member of the VSPA Board, send a check to the VSPA Treasurer, Richard Garcia made payable to the VSPA with a note to

apply it to the Sam Williams Endowment. You may also donate through PAYPAL to our treasury.

- 8.5 MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** by Paul Shave presented by Steve Gattis on behalf of Paul who could not attend. Paul had registered to attend the reunion but was diagnosed with a difficult and persistent kidney infection. He has served our Association as Membership Chairman for many years and has done a wonderful job. He has asked to step down in the future. We are actively looking for someone who would be interested in serving in this position. If you are interested, please contact one of our Board of Directors. Additional membership information is covered in the Web Site Report.
- 8.6 BX SALES REPORT** by Steve Gattis. The BX Managers, Van and Joyce Digby, were unable to attend the reunion due to COVID. The BX is a self-sustaining operation that buys memorabilia and wholesale prices from various vendors so that they can provide a single point of sale at significant savings for our members. Last year they sold \$7,729 in merchandise with expenses of \$5,515. They had \$17,595 on hand at the end of 2022. The Digby's provide outstanding service to our members. After the last reunion, they handled the online sales of the Knife-13 Medallions and The Pieta to raise funds for the Knife-13 Memorial Project. This year, they shipped challenge coins, Knife-13 Medallions, and the VSPA Flag with campaign streamers to us at the hotel.
- 8.7 WEB SITE REPORT** Presented by Steve Gattis on behalf of Don Poss, our Director of Communications, who could not attend. Don has had three major projects among many many others that keep him busy on a daily basis when not dealing with web site maintenance, catheters, and bladder cancer. There is a consistent need to update all base histories, squadron lineage, articles, stories, and poetry to downloadable PDF files to ease the process of research and the preservation of our history. Don has developed an outstanding search engine to conduct research on the web site. The tool is available on the VSPA Home Page. Enter a subject and the engine will search all of the VSPA Web Site files. Don's most important project during the last two years has been the creation of proposed designs for the KNIFE-13 Memorials at Luke Air Force Base and the Security Forces Museum at Lackland Air Force Base which you can see in the posters on the table. His other major project has been the complete revision of the membership database so that it could be posted as a PDF file on the web site. He sent the links to all members via the email addresses that we have in our database. He specifically requested members to contact him if they found errors in the master roster or base rosters.

If you have moved, changed your email address, phone number or mailing address, please notify Don Poss of the update so that you can receive future updates and emails regarding reunions, VSPA news regarding Guardmount being posted, and other events.

The recent updates and the conversion of the membership database were completed to make it easily searchable for members who use our web site VSPA.COM. As reported last year, we received calls from a couple of members who checked their own names in the on-line VSPA membership database and discovered that they were dead. Don explained that there was an unintentional database scramble during the conversion due to a glitch in the new software. That software has been upgraded and many of the errors have been corrected. However, new errors have been discovered by members who checked their information for the first time after the data scramble. Some of the errors were the erroneous listing of career Security Policemen as Augmentees. Don and Paul Shave have been working to correct the errors but that involved over 3,000 membership records with multiple data elements within each record. The end result was the request for members to verify their data then notify Don Poss if an error had occurred...like being listed as an augmentee, or RIP – DEAD, you need to contact Don Poss so that he



can interview you over the phone to verify all of your personal information. He's more than happy to talk to you, especially the dead guys who have been resurrected.

**STEVE GATTIS** added the following to the web site report, reminding 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 highly contested elections or the current volatile political climate. 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. Members 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, the bulletin boards and the VSPA private group on Facebook.

**8.8 HISTORIAN'S REPORT:** Presented by Steve Shelt. Steve provided information on the VSPA historical archives and requested that members send copies of orders for awards & decorations, especially those with multiple names. Similarly, orders for transfer often contain names and historical address information that will help identify potential members and help locate buddies. Records of both minor and major attacks are particularly helpful since many of those records are not always available. A minor attack like harassment fire is sometimes omitted from reports to higher headquarters.

**8.9 SECURITY FORCES MUSEUM UPDATE:** Presented by Jerry Nelson, member of the Board of Directors of the Security Forces Museum Foundation.

**8.9.1** Shadow boxes have been completed for many displays. Weapons displays have been upgraded. Digital photos and film have been placed on a loop for continuous display. There is a new bronze dedication plaque for the museum; the old plaque will be framed for display.

**8.9.2** The 820th Base Defense Group at Moody AAFB donated an airborne display.

**8.9.3** There is a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Display of the original Defensor Fortis title, logo, and organizational authorization, signed by Air Force Chief of Staff, General Fogelman.

## **8.10 KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL.**

**8.10.1 LACKLAND AFB** - By Jerry Nelson. The Enlisted Heritage Hall will pay for electrical lighting and the concrete pad for multiple memorials (three to include Knife-13) adjacent to the Security Forces Museum (opposite from the Nemo Memorial). The Security Forces Museum Foundation has pledged \$10,000 to assist with the purchase of the Knife-13 Memorial that will be located adjacent to the Security Forces Museum. Other pledges have also been made. (Final authorization has been approved by the base).

**8.10.2 LUKE AFB** - By Deke DeCubellis and Jerry Nelson – Planned future meetings with the Mission Support Group and 56<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Squadron due to personnel changes at Luke AFB. We have total support from the 56<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Commanding General.

### 8.10.3 FUNDRAISING FOR THE KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL.

**KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL MEDALLION** - Steve Gattis reported the first 300 Memorial Medallions have all been sold. We ordered an additional 500 medallions that have been selling well. Medallions and The Pieta are being sold through the BX online store. Advertising throughout the Defender Nation has started with our flyer being published (at no charge) by the Air Force Security Forces Association in their DEFENDER NEWS publication every other month. The medallions and The Pieta are also being advertised on Facebook and in Guardmount.

Steve Gattis traveled to the NKP Reunion in Charleston, South Carolina in April of this year. He made a presentation to all reunion attendees and sold approximately \$2,000 in medallions. He received additional cash donations. He donated his airfare, car rental and hotel expenses. Steve Gattis, Jerry Nelson, and Bill Cummings traveled to Moody AFB, Valdosta, Georgia to attend the Safeside Reunion. Steve Gattis made a presentation to the 820th Base Defense Group and they sold medallions, raising another \$2500. They donated their airfare, car rental and hotel expenses.

Jerry Nelson has planned several fundraising contacts and potential public appearances to raise awareness of Knife-13 and planned memorials.

**THE PIETA LITHOGRAPH:** Deke DeCubellis reported that the lithograph of The Pieta was being sold for \$25 through the BX. Several of the lithographs are here at this reunion and available for sale.

**DISCUSSION:** Announcement of the Knife-13 Memorials and sales of the medallion and Pieta in other organizations is continuing. We have flyers and the VSPA Talking Paper available to our members to go to the Veterans organizations in their communities. Advertising will continue throughout the Defender Nation through the Air Force Security Forces Association magazine and the Internet.

**8.11 SAFESIDE LIAISON REPORT:** Presented by Dave Pierson. The Safeside Reunion at Moody AFB was held APRIL 17 thru 20, 2023. A SAFESIDE Memorial Bench was dedicated at Moody AFB during the Safeside reunion. The bench is similar to our VSPA and SAFESIDE benches at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio. VSPA and SAFESIDE members in this room contributed to the new bench and attended the dedication ceremony.

### 8.12 SERVICE OFFICER'S REPORT

**JAIME LLERAS** was unable to attend due to his wife's diagnosis with cancer and the urgent need to start chemo last Monday. He sent the following information in addition to arranging for the DAV guest speaker for this meeting.

As part of the PACT ACT which the President signed in early August of 2022, there are two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions added to the list, which can affect you:

- ♣ High blood pressure (also called hypertension)
- ♣ Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)



MGUS usually causes no problems. But **sometimes it can progress to more serious diseases, including some forms of blood cancer.** If you have high amounts of this protein in your blood, it's important to have regular checkups so that you can get earlier treatment if it does progress.

If you think you're eligible for VA health care and benefits, we encourage you to apply now.

There added FIVE NEW AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTIVE LOCATIONS under the PACT ACT

- Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976
- Laos from December 1, 1965, through September 30, 1969
- Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969
- Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 30, 1980
- Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977

If you served on active duty in any of these locations, the VA will automatically assume (or "presume") that you had exposure to Agent Orange.

You should, at the very least, submit an Intent to File Form (VA Form 21-0966). This will tell the VA that you plan to submit a claim, but you don't know for what or when. When you submit the Intent to File form, the VA gives you 365 days to submit your claim along with the necessary evidence. If and when they approve, or award compensation for your claim, the pay will be backdated to the date on your Intent to File form.

Many of us have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, but have never been able to claim it as a disability - now we can and should due to the Pact Act!

### 8.13 HEALTH SURVEY BY 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT DEKE DECUBELLIS

An initial review of the anonymous data submitted by 65 members via mail and at the last reunion indicates a trend where members have health issues that are presumptive, automatic approvals for Agent Orange related VA Disability Compensation based upon a medical diagnosis. However, they are not receiving VA Compensation. One of those conditions is hypothyroidism. Another is diabetes with neuropathy.

Some members reported Peripheral Neuropathy related to dioxin but not related to diabetes. Other conditions reported were PTSD and Sleep Apnea. The bottom line is that conditions change and more of those conditions are being approved by the VA due to the PACT Act. File your claim to establish your date for compensation. Even if they reject you, they may authorize your claim in the future. That specifically happened with bladder cancer which is now an approved Agent Orange related Cancer. They will pay retroactively back to the date of your initial filing. A copy of the report is attached to the file.



**8.14 VSPA JJ CHESTNUT \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP** - Presented by Chairman Richard Gano. Please encourage your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to apply. The \$1,000 Annual J.J. Chestnut Memorial Scholarship Program awarded TWO scholarships in 2022. This year we received two applications that were reviewed by the Scholarship Committee. The recipients are:

Autumn Avalon and Davin Faulkner.

Charlie Blood, who will be the new 2nd Vice President, will serve as a member of the committee to replace Vice President Larry Fleming who be the new VSPA President. Richard Gano, our incoming Secretary, will continue to serve as Chair of the Scholarship Committee. Jim Lebowitz will remain on the committee.

**8.15 REUNION REGISTRATIONS:** by Jerry Nelson. As you all know, the Reunion BRAT representative who was assigned to this reunion was diagnosed with COVID. We sincerely thank all of you for your cooperation while members of your Board and the Sisterhood filled the multiple roles of on-site coordinator for this reunion.

In 2019, the Reunion BRAT and your VSPA Board of Directors, in accordance with a unanimous vote of the membership, developed an Early Bird discount if members submitted their registrations early, which would allow planning without the severe impact of late registrations. That program was highly successful in 2021, 2022, and again this year. We appreciate your effort to comply. We will make certain that the Early Bird Discount is available to members who submit early registrations for all future reunions.

We have received many positive comments regarding our effort to reduce fatigue as well as the cost saving decision to bring the Security Forces Squadron to us rather than paying for buses and increasing the registration fee. Can I see a show of hands regarding your positive approval of the presentations by the 628th Security Forces Squadron when they came here to the hotel.

## 9. NEW BUSINESS.

**9.1 KNIFE-13 MEMORIALS** were previously covered under the Security Forces Museum Update.

**9.2 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS** - We have had 16 honorary memberships since the VSPA was founded in 1995. The Associate Membership is a non-voting honorary membership to recognize significant service to the VSPA. We have two that your Board of Directors has unanimously approved. They are with us today and we would like you to welcome them home to the VSPA.

- a. **ELIA “LEE” CHAMBERS**, the president of the AFSFA Eagle Chapter for his 20 years of service to Defenders, coordination of dates for our efforts to wash The Wall, and consistently visiting every wounded Defender who has ever been at Walter Reed Medical Center.
- b. **FRANK CROWDER JR.**, the CEO of Defense Consulting Services (DCS), has coordinated the firearms certifications for thousands of retired Security Policemen and all military police personnel. He is also the very first sponsor of the VSPA.

**10. AFFIRMATION OF THE NEWLY ELECTED BOARD OF DIRECTORS WHO RAN UNOPPOSED IN THIS ELECTION:**

- Larry Fleming, President**
- Robert “Deke” DeCubellis, 1st Vice President**
- Charlie Blood, 2nd Vice President**
- Richard Gano, Secretary**
- Richard Garcia, Treasurer**
- Steve Shelt, Historian**

**President Jerry Nelson** will become Immediate Past President and remain on the Board for continuity until a new president is elected in two or four years. The BOD honored him by designating him as President Emeritus, a title he may use as he continues to manage all fundraising activities for the Knife-13 Memorial Project. He will remain on the Board as President Emeritus when he is eventually replaced as the Immediate Past President.

**Immediate Past President Greg Cain** will end his time on the Board. We extend our sincere thanks for his NINE years of service on our Board of Directors - four as President and five as Immediate Past President.

**Don Poss** will remain as the Director of Communications.  
**Steve Gattis** will remain as President Emeritus.

A Change of Command ceremony will be held during our Awards Banquet on Saturday Evening. Until then, all Board members will continue in their current positions.

**11. The following is a legal requirement as a Tax-Exempt entity and a major requirement for banking purposes with the authorization to sign checks for the Association during the coming year. This information must be included in the minutes of the annual business meeting.**

**THE OFFICERS ARE:**

- Larry Fleming, President**
- Robert “Deke” DeCubellis, 1st Vice President**
- Charlie Blood, 2nd Vice President**
- Richard Gano, Secretary (authorized to sign checks)**
- Richard Garcia, Treasurer (authorized to sign checks)**
- Steve Shelt, Historian**
- Jerry Nelson, Immediate Past President / President Emeritus (authorized to sign checks)**
- Don Poss, Director of Communications**
- Steve Gattis, President Emeritus**

BX Managers Van & Joyce Digby (authorized to sign checks related to BX operations).

**11.1 AFFIRMATION OF APPOINTED POSITIONS** - By Newly Elected VSPA President Larry Fleming: The existing appointed positions are hereby re-appointed for the next year, subject to future changes per the Constitution & By-Laws.

**12. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

**12.1 JERRY NELSON** reminded members to send Mike Kennedy photos from this reunion for possible publication in Guardmount.

12.2 **JERRY NELSON** REMINDED MEMBERS THAT STEVE GATTIS AND DEKE DeCUBELLIS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE ROOM AFTER WE ADJOURN TO SELL KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL MEDALLIONS, THE PIETA LITHOGRAPH AND KNIFE-13 SHIRTS.

### 13. REMINDERS

13.1 **JERRY NELSON** - The Awards banquet this evening will begin with a no-host bar at 1700, posting of the colors at 1800 with the National Anthem, followed by dinner. Afterwards, we will present awards and conduct the raffles. There will be no guest speaker due to the change of command ceremony.

13.2 **JERRY NELSON** - ALL BANQUET SEATING COORDINATORS FOR THE VARIOUS BASES MUST MEET WITH ME AT 1600 FOR TABLE ORGANIZATION. WHEN THE TABLES ARE READY, THE DOORS WILL BE OPENED. PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE ROOM AND TAKE SEATS UNTIL THAT PROCESS HAS BEEN COMPLETED. **DO NOT REMOVE OR REARRANGE RESERVED TABLE SIGNS.**

**PLEASE BRING RAFFLE ITEMS TO THE BANQUET ROOM AFTER 1630 HOURS.**

13.3 Reminder that a Worship Service will be conducted at 0800 Sunday by Chaplain Jim Stastny.

13.4 Reminder that our annual Memorial for our 111 begins at 0900 Sunday. The names of all Air Policemen, Security Policemen and Augmentees who did not survive the war in Vietnam and Thailand will be read at that time.

### 14. CLOSING OF THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AT 1230 hours.

MINUTES BY:

APPROVED BY:

Steve Gattis, President Emeritus

Jerry Nelson, President







## IS IT A CRIME OR A SPOOF? NOT A GOOF, SHOW ME PROOF!

Robert "Deke" DeCubellis, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)  
Life Member #347; Bien Hoa 1970-71



I just watched a documentary about a 2015 kidnapping case in Vallejo, California. In summation, the victim and his girlfriend were home at o-dark-thirty when he was hog-tied and she was allegedly snatched. The story he gave responding Vallejo PD would have been hard to swallow in the most gullible of enforcement agencies and the case got nicknamed Gone Girl.

Yet the end result was their story was true! Vallejo PD and the FBI, fueled by the Bay Area media and politics, caused this couple a ton of grief until another Alameda County agency investigating similar assaults and attempted kidnappings found the missing link that cleared them both! That female officer was responsible for putting the prison suit on a former Marine who was also a disbarred attorney. The guy got 40 years of bubba time and the Vallejo PD (City of Vallejo) had to pony up \$2.5M in damages to these verified victims (this is the same City that declared bankruptcy in 2009 but that's another story).

What came up in this documentary was a comment by someone in the law enforcement community that implies there are women out there (and rarely even men), that seek the attention of law enforcement by staging such events to garner attention for various psychological gratification. Perhaps this mindset is what tainted the Vallejo detective and his department AND the FBI agent that administered a polygraph on the male victim (and was tainted because he'd dated a woman involved in that case!). A link is provided at the end of this piece should you be more curious about the details of that case.

But on to my own personal vignette. In my early USAF career (1969-73) I served in Vietnam plus two tours in law enforcement on Hamilton AFB, Novato California. The event took place in late summer '71 in the Wherry Housing area near the North Gate and Commissary for those who remember this Garden Spot of the West. It was comprised of WW II-era substandard housing units that were home to many married airmen who could afford nothing better and earned the quaint and most appropriate nickname of Splinter City.

I was dispatched on an unspecified call for service at about 1145, arriving at the quarters to find a frenzied A1C at the door of his humble two-story abode. As he ushered me inside demanding I come upstairs with him, I noted nothing unusual about the entryway, the living room and adjacent kitchen. I kept asking him why he called and what was his issue as we mounted the stairs. Well, the answer became very apparent once we entered the second-floor bedroom.

His young wife, sans all clothing, was spread-eagled on the bed with both feet and one wrist tied to the bedposts and it appeared her other wrist was secured by a clock radio power chord. I, of course, immediately asked if she was hurt or needed medical attention. Except for the fastenings, she appeared uninjured and the room showed no sign of a struggle. She said she was unharmed but began to tell me someone had broken in and attempted to assault her. The unidentified "perp" quickly departed when he heard her husband entering the quarters for lunch. She wasn't at all upset by the commotion this event was causing for her husband and me. I asked her husband to fetch a clean sheet or big towel to cover his wife but to not to touch anything to preserve potential evidence. I used his house phone to call the desk sergeant and have our SP Investigator with the alert photographer and the OSI summoned ASAP.

After the airman's wife was covered by him, I continued to look about the room and my attention was drawn back to that clock radio fastening her wrist. The chord was twirled around it, unlike the other three appendages. I

could envision the lady tying her feet and one wrist then, swinging the chord on her remaining wrist to give the appearance that someone else did it.

I began to suspect this being the Noon(er) Hour, she had possibly staged this scenery for the benefit of her husband, but he freaked when he saw what I saw, and called the cops. As I asked more questions like having her describe the bad guy so we could begin a search, she became evasive. Then the OSI arrived with two of their finest and I took the airman downstairs for minute as they took over. I asked the airman about his typical lunch time activities, surmising they might involve more than a chicken salad sandwich and a Coke from time to time. He flushed, stuttered, and then clammed up. I had him sit in his living room and filled in an OSI guy about my suspicions. He agreed but had the alert photographer take detailed but respectful photos before detaching the lady from her bindings. She was then transported by ambulance to the USAF Hospital for a check-up.

Subsequent investigation by the OSI with some interviews and a few tips from this airman’s neighbors, confirmed our suspicions. This couple was a froggy recently-wedded pair. They were known to periodically “entertain” their neighbors with sound effects of their affection for each other through the thin Splinter City apartment walls and summer “air conditioning” from open windows. The wife eventually confessed to OSI she had dreamed up this scenario to spice up her airman’s noon time lunchbreak. The incident resulted in their being ordered to live off base.

As for me, it was just another normal day on patrol plus another missed lunch while doing the Incident/Complaint Report. My guess is it was the same for the OSI, the alert photographer, the incident airman’s First Sergeant, and probably the medics at the hospital. Bottom line is things are not always what they seem! Like Sgt Friday usta say: “Just the facts, M’am, just the facts!” One must not jump to conclusions in this line of work. Check out the link article or watch it on Netflix. Happy to be here, still proud to serve.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/matthew-muller-denise-huskins-kidnapper-american-nightmare-netflix-gone-girl-2024-1>



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**IN-COUNTRY**



**TYPICAL SAIGON MORNING COMMUTE.**

**IN-COUNTRY**



**RULES FOR DRIVING IN SAIGON?... WE DON'T NEED NO STINKIN' RULES!**

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