



# KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL



TSGT  
JACKIE D.  
GLENN  
56th SPS



SSGT  
GERALD A.  
COYLE  
56th SPS



SSGT  
FALEAGAFULU  
ILAOA  
56th SPS, K-9



SGT  
JIMMY P.  
BLACK  
56th SPS



SGT  
BOBBY G.  
COLLUMS  
56th SPS



SGT  
THOMAS D.  
DWYER  
56th SPS



SGT  
BOB W.  
FORD  
56th SPS



SGT  
GERALD W.  
FRITZ  
56th SPS, K-9



SGT  
DARRELL L.  
HAMLIN  
56th SPS



SGT  
GREGORY L.  
HANKAMER  
56th SPS



SGT  
DAVID A.  
HIGGS  
56th SPS



SGT  
MICHAEL D.  
LANE  
56th SPS



SGT  
DENNIS W.  
LONDON  
56th SPS, K-9



SGT  
ROBERT P.  
MATHIAS  
56th SPS



SGT  
WILLIAM P.  
MC KELVEY  
56th SPS



SGT  
TOMMY R.  
NEALIS  
56th SPS



SGT  
ROBERT W.  
ROSS  
56th SPS



AMN  
EDGAR C.  
MORAN II  
56th SPS



CAPT (P)  
JAMES G.  
KAYS  
21st SPC OPS SQ



1LT (CP)  
LAURENCE E.  
FROEHLICH  
21st SPC OPS SQ



TSGT (FE)  
GEORGE E.  
MC MULLEN III  
21st SPC OPS SQ



SGT (FE)  
ROBERT P.  
WELDON  
21st SPC OPS SQ



SGT (CC)  
PAUL J.  
RABER  
21st SPC OPS SQ



## 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 K-9 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. ALL WERE POSTHUMOUSLY AWARDED THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE.

WE SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR KNIFE-13 BROTHERS!

## 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 FIRES WITH EXPLODING ORDNANCE. ~ THE SS MAYAGUEZ AND HER CREW WERE RESCUED ON MAY 15, 1975.



# KNIFE-13 MEMORIAL UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



SCAN



KNIFE-13



## 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 JOLLY 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, DISPAIR, 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, THAILAND, 1974-1975, SOLE SURVIVOR OF DELTA SQUAD, KNIFE-13, MAY 13, 1975.