



# SAFESIDE- Mini Edition



Spring 2016

## SAFESIDE Updates

Recently, Vice President Pete Villarreal (Left) and President Jerry Nelson (Right) present the Legacy Award to Bobby LeFever. Mr. Bobby Lafever for many, many years was the 820th Deputy Commander and personally coordinated Safeside reunion events at Moody AFB.

Previously in the 2013 Safeside Reunion he was surprised when he was awarded the Sgt Major Bob Frink Award for all of his efforts. Some of his efforts included creating the Safeside Heritage/ Museum at the 820th Headquarters and serving as the Safeside Board Member representing the 820th BDG.

His list of accomplishments is a very long one, but suffice to say that the Association could not let this talent get away.



Not too long afterwards President Nelson appointed Bobby as the 2nd Vice -President.

Bobby was also presented with a Safeside Association coin box.

**Thank you Bobby, for all the many years of devoted efforts to the Safeside Association.**

## Note from the Editor

Safeside has been in the 820th Base Defense Group since 1997. Many have profited from this organization and will continue to. Please contact the association for more information. Or visit our new and improved website featuring PAYPAL! All members are welcome to share within this newsletter. Please share past, present and future stories!



## A Final Note from the BDG Commander: Col. Ross

### SAFESIDE!



What a ride this has been! As I look back at my time with you all, I can easily say I am privileged to have had the opportunity to be surrounded by the Air Force's finest warriors. It is now time for me to pass on the torch, and for the legacy of the 820th Base Defense Group (BDG) to continue on. The mission never ceases however, and there is much to be said about the outstanding men and women of the BDG. As I write this letter, the 822d Base Defense Squadron (BDS) is on its way back to the area of responsibility to relieve the 824th Base Defense Squadron. Our Tactical Security Element (TSE) teams have also recently replaced each other in Afghanistan, and continue to play a vital role in the partnership with our Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) brothers and sisters. As you know, we lost two NCOs from the 105th Base Defense Squadron and four AFOSI agents in the attack on 21 Dec near Bagram, and had several other injuries. The TSE mission is as dangerous as evil can be...and SafeSide Airmen are as deep in the fight as ever.

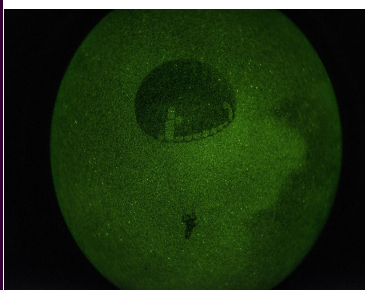


A huge part of preparing to carry out the mission are the MRXs and partner exercises we conduct throughout the year. SPARTAN WARRIOR and GREEN FLAG are two of the more recent ones we have participated in, which include air power and ground forces combining to take on the enemy threat. SPARTAN WARRIOR is our wing's annual exercise where we compete and validate skills with members from the Air Support Operation Groups. GREEN FLAG gets us back in the door with the Contingency Response Group and the 82nd Airborne for a first-in mission. Good times. In addition to exercises such as these, we also rely on our coalition partnerships to sharpen our skills. GLOBAL EAGLE has been a long standing relationship with our British allies, and we have recently expanded this to our French counterparts. GLOBAL EAGLE '16 will be held in the UK, with hopes of GLOBAL EAGLE '17 being hosted in France. Traditionally, we have only participated with the Royal Air Force Regiment at the Flight level and traded tactics, techniques, and procedures on how to kick in doors and conduct Flight level operations. This summer we will be taking a larger team and will work on coordinating command and control operations. This is perfect to help smooth over the language barriers. We've needed this for a long time...even before the French got involved!



Several other big events this summer may interest SafeSide members, and of course the invite goes out to you all. Though too late now, we just renamed one of our Drop Zones (DZ) to the "Lee D. Fulp DZ." We jumped 32 Airborne Airmen into the DZ on 21 April and laid a plaque on the point of impact. TSgt Lee Fulp's family was there, with about 100 close friends...it was a good day.

Changes of Command...the 824 BDS will have an Assumption of Command 25 May with Maj Michael Warren taking the reins and getting that unit ready for the On Call Global Response Force mission. The 822 BDS will have a Change of Command on 29 Jun, where Maj Jake Foley will pass the flag to Lt Col Julia Jefferson. Jake is going off to do some book learning in DC. Julia is coming in from command at Randolph. She has a great track record and plenty of time leading troops. I look forward to all of the successes from the 822 BDS with her at the helm. Definitely join us if you have the time and inclination!



At some point, we will have a ceremony this summer to inaugurate a memorial wall near our Headquarters building for our Airmen fallen in combat (Time and Date to be determined). This will include Chavis, Lobraico, Bonacasa, and Lemm. I wish I could say this will be the last of the names we add to our memorials, but unfortunately we answer the Air Force's call to go in harm's way and give the ultimate sacrifice.

As for me, I hand this group off, kicking and screaming, to Col Kevin Walker on 7 Jul at 0820. I highly encourage getting out here for that...not for me, but to welcome him to the best damn job in the Air Force.

I will be watching the 820 BDG and SAFESIDE from Seoul, South Korea, where Mandy and I are headed next. I am going to the J34 (USFK Force Protection). Mandy is addicted to travel, so she is looking forward to it. Lots to see over there. I am just glad to have a job involved in a fight... All of my SAFESIDE brothers and sisters, I say "see ya!" And by that, I mean "I hope to see ya at the 20th Anniversary next year here in March." HUAH!

JOINED TO FIGHT—Col Mike Ross



**Colonel Paul Kasuda retired 1 April and several Safesiders were in attendance at the formal ceremony such as President Jerry Nelson and Colonel (Ret) Randy Richert. Richert resides in Illinois, and rode his pedal bike 1600 miles to the function. He will also be at the Change of Command Ceremony in July.**

**Good luck Col K. as you embark in your new adventures!**



### Story from the past.

#### FOND MEMORIES OF A 1041ST SPS (T) SAFESIDER, RANGER 2!

I was transferred to Eglin AFB, Florida. I arrived there in January 1966. My duties as an Air Policeman were mainly base patrol. At the time, I was angry and disillusioned due to the lack of promotions in the Air Police Field, so I decided to volunteer for Viet Nam. Who would care what I did? Then I received the notice of being recalled as a Basic Military Instructor in Amarillo, Texas. There was an outbreak of illnesses at Lackland and the base was closed for training. I was off again to be a bad man. After being there for three months, I was released and returned to Florida. Upon arrival, my 1st sgt. informed me about being called by a Chief Master Sgt in the Pentagon, and I was to call him ASAP. I was asked what I had done or who I had pissed off to be called by a CMSgt in the AF Air Police Office. I had called, and spoke with CMSgt Tannerhill. He said that my request for Viet Nam had been forwarded to his office. The AF was starting a test program and needed people for it, and wanted to know if I was interested. I told him that I had nothing better to do. I was told that the training would be difficult and that the duty could get rough in Viet Nam. Then I was off and running again, along with another AP volunteer from my AP squadron. (I began to think that I had a birth defect. Any time a call for volunteers went out, my right arm went up.) I arrived at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, in August 1966, along with 200 others, to begin training. We would be trained by graduates of the U.S Army Ranger School and receive the same training as the Army Rangers. "Holy Cow, Bat man. What have I done?" It started the next morning at 5:00 a.m. with a two-mile run, most of us puking most of the way. If you did not complete it, you had to repeat the run at 10:00 a.m. Some of us had to do just that. There was also 30 to 45 minutes of P.T. It was hard for me, as I was totally out of shape. Also, we NCO's were quite older than the others. (After two weeks, I felt I was dead- and they had forgotten to bury me.) Our barracks was a slight distance from the main base. We were told that when horses and mules were used by the Army cavalry, people started to smell like animals, so they were separated from the main section of the post.

We had classes that taught ways to fight with weapons and out hands. Many classes were conducted in the Kahuka Mountains where we would stay for a week at a time. We climbed mountains down through ravines, learning how to go with very little sleep. The rain was heavy in the mountains, but it didnt stop us. The training was very hard, and I had trouble keeping up. But I stayed with it, and one day I finally realized that although I was last to fininsh anything, I was still there. My physical condition had improved. Every place we went was at a double time. There was no walking. We were being formed into a real fighting force.

Schofield Barracks had been hit very hard by Japanese planes, at the same time Pearl Harbor was hit. Bullet holes could still be seen in many buildings. We graduated in December 1966 and gathered in a theater where we received our Blue Berets-and honor filled with pride. I had obtained confidence in myself that I never thought I would have.

On Christmas Eve, 1966 we had a party outside of Schofield Barracks in a place called Kemoo Farms. We were all there, including our CO, Colonel Wise. A fight broke out on the patio, and I was standing in the doorwat watching the action outside. Someone poked his head out the door, and I smacked him on his head and said that it didnt concern him. When the door fully opened, I almost fainted. The head belonged to someone who must have weighed 500 pounds and looked like a sumo wrestler. He turned me very which way but loose. (I knew that I would go to Heaven, because he beat the Hell our of me.) There was a wrought iron fence. I was helped to climb and the pushed over the top of the fence. I hit the ground hard and was bruised for days. We still refer to this incident as the Battle of Kemoo Farms.

### Operation Safeside

This operation was created by Lt. Colonel William H. Wise, who was an outstanding person. He was a leader and truly a great friend. We all loved him, and many of us attened his funeral in Pensacola, Florida. It was an AF test program to determine if properly trained personnel could secure an outer perimeter of an air base and relieve the Army of it. The 1041 SPS was self maintained with Police, Weapons people, Cooks, Vehicle Maintenance, and Intelligence. In early January 1967 we boarded three C-124's at Hickam AFB, Hawaii and departed for Viet nam. It was a quiet time, as we knew that we were going to a war zone, and it was possible that some, if not all, of us might not return. We flew to wake for overnight, then to Guam for overnight, then to the Phillipine Islands for overnight. The next stop would be Qui Nhon, Viet Nam. As we flew over the South China Sea, the pilot announced that we were entering the combat zone of Viet Nam, "So loan and lock." We loaded and locked our M16's. When we landed and the doors opened, the heat and smell hit us. We were loaded onto open air trucks and noticed that we were being counted by a Vietnamese man. While wondering why, we were driven though the city and onto Highway 1 enroute to the Central Highlands to be located in the Phu Cat of Binh Dinh proveidence. The Phu Cat AFB was being built for fighter planes. The road was full of pot holes and we could see areas of rice paddies, buildings, shell holes, and people walking or riding bikes. Our area was five miles away from the main base, and we had to start security of our area. Tents had been set up, and we moved in. I was the senior Staff Sergeant with four fire teams assigned to me, on eof which was the snipers, A fire team consisted of a team leader, assistant leader, point man, radio man, 30-caliber machine gunner, and two rifle men. We started to build four towers around our spot that would be used for surveillance, as we were surrounded by wide open areas. We would have walking patrols, motor vehicle patrol, surveillance, and ambushes that covered a large area with a river. One area consisted of mountains that were covered by the Korean Army. Another area consisted of trees and upper growth. Another area was covered by rice paddies. We had no lights, shower or kitchen when we arrived. These had to be installed. Meals consisted of eating cans of C-rations, with no way to heat them. A kitchen was built right away. Bathing consisted of wiping-off until we could get a shower built. Our first patrol of the area was scary, as it was our first time to be part of a war. The first and last nights in Viet Nam were the worst. First, you did not know what to expect. Last, you wanted to stay alive and go home. Some of us returned to Qui Nhon, as the ship with our equipment had arrived. It carried trucks, Jeeps, weapons, armored personnel carriers, and supplies that we needed. Our work had just begun. We posted men in position for surveillance of outlying areas. Some areas were covered by jeeps, some by walking patrols. In wooded areas you had to be watchful for holes in the ground as well as snakes. There was a breed of snakes that lived in the trees. They were known to drop onto things passing underneath, and they were poisonous. So we had to keep one eye looking up and the other looking down.

Continued on page 7

**VP Pete's Column — by Pete Villarreal**

VP (TSgt) Pete Villarreal

**NOTE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT!**

Safesiders:

President Nelson sends his regards. He and his wife Sherrie have been busy selling their old house and moving into their new hacienda. He is extremely happy with their new mansion; I've seen the photos of his outside kitchen and am anxious to visit and enjoy his culinary skills.

The 824th has finally made it home, and I'm happy to say that we adopted 22 of these outstanding men and women. My adoptee and we enjoyed tons of emails and Facebook posts. We enjoyed baking and shipping her brownies. Keep the 822nd Scorpions in your prayers as they take over the role of the 824th Ghostwalkers. We'll let the 822 get settled before we start our Adoption Program again.

Great news from the 820th BDG. A Safeside Chapter is in the works which will involve reps from each squadron and an executive committee. Good stuff. The Safeside Association will have a Board Meeting around July time frame at Moody, and all will meet to discuss the issues.

Many of you have yet to renew your annual membership, which are due on Jan 1 of each year. We have made it so easy and painful, merely visit [safesideassociation.org](http://safesideassociation.org) and follow the links to JOIN, and use Pay Pal to accomplish your task.

Thanks to our Facebook administrators that have made it possible to have an active Facebook Page. Dan Goodell has contributed an article regarding the subject matter. Please take the time to visit our Safeside Heritage Facebook Page and feel free to post videos, photos and articles of interest.

Again we have lost many Safesiders the last two years. Our prayers go out to their families.

Warmest regards!

Joined to Fight! SAFESIDE!!!  
Pete Villarreal, V/P

## “Story from the past” (Continued from pg. 4)

### Ambushes

This was a major part of being on patrol, and was conducted mainly during darkness. Night time was so dark at times that you could hardly see the end of your arm until your night vision kicked in. It was necessary to seek out an area where you could set up an ambush site for the night in order to obtain your coordinates in case you came under fire. APC's with backup would know where you were. As you were doing this, there were Vietnamese working in most areas, so you never knew who was watching you.

As night started we would be dropped off at a certain point, then continue on foot into our spot, under the cover of darkness—doing so while wondering if we were walking into an ambush on the other side. During this time, it was hard to stay awake. My method was a string tied to both arms of my team members. It would be pulled at times to make sure each of us was awake. Our instructions were that if someone passed in front of us, we should allow that person (usually a point man) to pass. If a file of persons started through it could be a main force. I would be the first to fire, and then the others could open fire. It is an awesome feeling to know that you may be killed or that you may kill someone else. But you did what you had to do. Each member carried bandoliers of ammo for the 30-caliber machine gun, so we were always loaded down. The only sounds were from frogs and crickets in the rice paddies and tree lines. Sitting there, a person could be thinking of long forgotten memories. As for myself I often thought, "What in the hell is my Mama's baby doing in a place like this?"

I sat on one ambush in a cemetery, leaning against a tombstone. We stayed in position until 5:00 a.m., then started out to be picked up. That was another worry—what the enemy could be waiting for us. Back in camp, I had to give a report to Intelligence. I might have something to eat, most likely a cold can of ham hocks and lima beans. It was wonderful when our kitchen was finally in place. Our food people were dearly loved by all.

One issue that no one in Viet Nam really understood was the "No Fire Zones." There were areas where the enemy could shoot at us, but we were not allowed to fire back. On a Sunday afternoon, my team was on standby for backup to teams in the field. A team came under fire at the river, and off we went. As we arrived, the rear door of the armored carrier opened, and my team went out. I went out through the top, to see where my team had deployed. The moment I jumped off, a bullet whizzed by my left ear. There was a VC sniper across the river. If I had not moved at that exact second, the bullet would have gone between my eyes. We were pinned down from a "No Fire Zone." The sniper was inside a burned out hut. My point man asked if he could fire a grenade in to the hut, as no one was firing at it. I said "OK. If we get caught we can all go to jail together." He fired the grenade and it went into the sky in an arch. I said, "What are you aiming at? The sniper is right in front of us." He said, "I am so damn nervous, I did not aim straight." We watched the grenade start to fall, then smiled as we knew that someone would be under it when it came down. Then we heard the explosion. We finally removed ourselves, as the sniper stopped firing. War is hell. One of our snipers killed a man passing through our area. He was a courier, with papers for the VC leader located in the Phu Cat area to notify him of highly trained security force that had moved into the area—which was us. If any one of us was killed, the VC would receive money. If a VC could return with a blue beret, he would receive \$100 and a hundred pounds of rice. (How nice it was to be wanted.)

From my R & R, I went to Taipei where I met some old friends. We had a good time but received some sad news. One of my Armed Services Police partners, 1st Quartermaster Wilber Cosson, U.S Navy, had been killed in Viet Nam. He was a member of a Swift Patrol Boat on the Mekong River. They were ambushed, and all members were killed. Willie and I had been close friends, and his death hit me very hard. At a later time, I visited his parents in Defuniak Springs, Florida.

Much like military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, we had the problem of not knowing who the enemy was. The North Vietnamese wore uniforms, and the VC wore black pajamas with rubber sandals. Many of them worked daily in our camps. The following are some examples.

It was discovered that a female worker in our kitchen was married to an officer in the North Vietnamese Army. She was a spy. A worker who cleaned our tent, with whom I had exchanged words, turned out to be a VC. One afternoon, while lying on my cot, my assistant Fire Team Leader eased over and told me to look closely at the mortar pit. I observed a worker walking through the pit and stopping to look around. I ran to the intelligence tent and told them that the worker was measuring the pit. He was promptly turned over to the Police for questioning, where he was found to be a VC. He was taking measurements for sapper teams to blow us away.

That pit of four was 75 feet away from my tent. We got so accustomed to seeing them in our camp that they were ignored. One morning as my team was walking out for patrol, my point man (who was 15 to 20 feet in front of me) stopped and signaled for us to "freeze" and pointed downward. His leg was against a wire across the path. The wire was attached to a grenade on both sides of the path. Luckily, we were able to remove it safely. If he had moved, all of us would have been hit. He was a food man who had remembered all of his training.

One night we had a display of what was called "Puff Magic Dragon." It was a C-47 plane with gattling guns. It could lay down a line of fire power that was a sight to behold. Some days, we watched B-52's fly overhead to their bombing sites. Shortly after we arrived, and night patrols were in place, a call came in that said, "i need help. A big snake is lying beside me. Each time I move, the snake moves." His name was Donnie. He was asked "How big is the snake?" He said that the snake was so big that he couldn't see its head. A backup patrol was sent to assist. They found Donnie lying next to a big tree limb. As he moved, the limb moved. Our Chief Master Sgt. threatened to kill him. We never let Donnie forget it.

One night, while in an ambush position, I was deep into my thoughts. Doing my best to stay awake, I heard a loud sound coming from another person. I crawled over to him, saying that the noise could be heard all the way to Hanoi. He replied, "Ham hocks and lima beans go in, and they must come out/"

One morning as we walked out of a site, I slid off the trail and fell into a rice paddy. I was covered with that was used in paddies. Back in the camp, I was getting ready to be debriefed when my team said, "No. You are going to shower first." I was escorted by five M16's and a 30-caliber machine gun. I showered, then washed my clothes and boots, so I would be allowed back in our tent.

There were two seasons in Viet Nam. Dry season would turn the ground into powder which filled clothes, weapons and bodies with white powder. In monsoon season it rained day and night. The ground turned to mud. Clothes never dried and would be covered with mildew.

It became time to leave Viet nam, and it was a happy time. I was leaving with the advanced party due to what I had to face once I was back in the USA. My team left an ambush site at 5:00 a.m., showered, put on our cleanest uniforms, gathered our gear, and flew into Cam Rahn Bay without sleep. After any night in an ambush site it takes time for the body's adrenaline to go down, so sleep came later.

We boarded a C-141 for the flight to Fairchild AFB in Spokane, Washington. After we cleared Customs, we went on leave, and I went to Seattle/Tacoma airport. All west coast airports were filled with hippie protestors to greet returning military from Viet Nam. As I went to the boarding area, a hippie spat at my shoes screaming "How many babies have you killed?" A he raised his head, he made contact with my fist which broke his nose. I was pounding him as a policeman arrived. He pulled my off and asked where I was going, and I told him that I was on standby for a seat to San Francisco. he asked the people around me if they had seen anything. Someone told him the Hippie had fallen and that I was helping him up. The gate attendant said that there was one seat available in First Class, and it was given to me. The policeman escorted me to the seat and told the stewardess to give me a drink. He shook my hand and said, "Welcome Home." I was thankful that he didn't arrest me.

After a 30-day leave, we remained at Fairchild AFB. Some of us went to Eglin, Florida for a short, temporary duty. Then we returned to Schofield Barracks to train a unit for Viet Nam. We lived in quads ( as shown in the movie "From Here to Eternity"). As the training completed, our unit moved to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to train another unit. We were scheduled to go through AirBourne School at Fort Benning, Georgia.

The Air Force and Army had a disagreement, as the Army said we were taking their positions for security purposes. And so our 1041st SPS was deactivated and came to an end, and each of us went in different directions.

We members of Operation Safeside became a "band of brothers." We trained together, fought together, and could have died together. Most of us are still attached, and we have a reunion every year. Some have passed on, and the rest of us will follow to rejoin a wonderful group of "brothers."

I was assigned to Luke AFB in Glendale, Arizona where I discovered that we members of Safeside were known as "Super Cops" by other members of the Air Force Police, and we were not liked by everyone. Some said we proved nothing; others said we proved an objective for the Air Force. I had been promoted and begun duty as a Flight Supervisor for Law Enforcement and Security of the base. In any unit, there were those known as the Fair Haired Boys who could do no wrong, and got the "crea" jobs, while the rest obtained what was left. My supervisor made it very clear i was "not" a Fair Haired Boy. The military was almost begging troops to do their jobs, get hair cuts, and shine their shoes. ( It was the hippie generation.)

After 18 months, I was notified that I would be returning to Taiwan and perhaps Viet Nam. It was time for a decision. I chose to retire, and did so. I'd had enough of the Air Force, and it was time to leave.

My 20 years were up May 15,1971. I had to remain for another two weeks, as retirement is ont he first of each month. On June 1, 1971 I had completed my career in the Air Force. I was five days short of being 38 years old. I had joined at 17, and then retired when I was 37. I had been many places of the world., met many people, had some good times, and had some bad times, and gained experience that only the military could provide.

## *The Mission*

Our mission is to promote camaraderie between Air Force units of the Vietnam and Iraq/Afghanistan wars: to promote and preserve the legacy of the Air Force's only self-sustaining ground combat units.

Our Association brings current and former members of Operation Safeside, Operation Desert Safeside and other Safeside units together, with our common bond.

Join our Association today. To become a member, go to [www.safesideassociation.org/members](http://www.safesideassociation.org/members) or contact



CMSgt (R) Lyle Brakob, 823rd CSP

## RECENT FALLEN SAFESIDERS

Bill Revell---1041st Security Police (T)

Larry Rupp---822nd Combat Security Police Sqdn

James B. Sly---821st Combat Security Police Sqdn

Joseph G. Lemm---105th Base Defense Sqdn (ANG)

Louis M. Bonacasa---105th Base Defense Sqdn (ANG)

Chester J. McBride---822nd/824th Base Defense Sqdn

Arthur J. Anderer---1041st Security Policed (T)

Robert J. Roswell---821st Combat Security Police Sqdn

Jim "Hawkeye" Chance---822nd Combat Security Police Sqdn







**Let's hear it for Safeside Heritage! .. our new Facebook page:**

Your Safeside Facebook administrators have put in a lot of hard work to gather hundreds of pictures that previously were scattered around the internet, and assembled them in one place for all of us to enjoy. Don't get confused by the "Heritage" designation, our site is especially geared for active duty troops. Every Safeside squadron is represented going back to our founders (1041st Security Police Squadron (Test) thru today's warriors. It is a Closed Group exclusively for all Safesiders and their immediate family members. The site will now allow us to freely share photos/videos and exchange dialogue. Let's be absolutely sure we follow the rules that are clearly posted in the description. Any questions or concerns should be directed to one of your administrators via a Facebook message. So, help us meet our goal of 500 members.

**Don't wait any longer, join SAFESIDE HERITAGE now !!!**



**Joined To Fight Your Safeside administrators:**

**Joe Crotty, 820th BDGp**

**John Griffith, 1041st SPS (Test)**

**Bryan Anderson, 822nd CSPA**

**Dan Goodell, 821st CSPA**