



## United States Air Force Academy Class of 1965

### *50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Class Gift Project*

#### **Class of 1965 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Gift**

After much thought about an appropriate 50<sup>th</sup> reunion gift to the USAFA from the Class of 1965, our class officers approved joining with the Class of 1970 in adding a Plaza of Heroes to the existing Southeast Asia Memorial Pavilion on the Heritage Trail adjacent to Doolittle Hall. As many of you know the Heritage Trail, dedicated by the Class of 1960, is preserved for solemn memorials, erected over time, in honor of those USAFA graduates who participated in major conflicts.

The soon to be built Plaza of Heroes is a memorial to USAFA graduates who were awarded the Medal of Honor (MoH), AF Cross and Silver Star in SEA. It is intended to complement the existing SEA Memorial Pavilion and will serve as an outdoor space for small, solemn events (pin-ons, retirements, and possibly academic classes) which will serve as a draw for people (including the public) to view the accomplishment of AFA grads in the SEA conflict. The Class of 1970 is building the Plaza of Heroes. The Class of 1965 will build the north wall of the plaza to be dedicated at our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion which will be held in conjunction with the Class of 1970's 45<sup>th</sup> reunion.

- The cornerstone of our gift will be the North Wall of the Plaza of Heroes which honors the only AFA grad to be awarded the MoH as a result of combat in SEA, our classmate Capt Lance P. Sijan. The three vertical sections of the wall described below will be clear, three inch laminated glass and are shown in the attached rendering as blue in color only so the depictions can be seen. The wall has the following major elements:
  - Left side: The six articles of the Code of Conduct.
  - Center: A depiction of the downing of an F-4, a deployed parachute over the karst terrain in NVN and a rescue helicopter (Jolly Green) all relevant to Lance's story. At the base of the depiction just described is a bronze sculpture of Lance in the condition he was in after bailing out of his disabled F-4C, landing in heavy foliage, dragging himself over 3 miles over a 45 day period before he was captured and became a POW. His left leg was shattered, his right hand crushed and he had numerous lacerations and a concussion. He was severely tortured as a POW before he died in captivity. We plan to have the bronze sculpture realistically, but respectfully, depict Lance's condition.
  - Right side: Lance's official MoH citation.
- The second part of our gift is a \$150,000 contribution to add to the \$150,000 the class of '70 has already given the AOG for maintenance of the Heritage Trail including the current SEA Pavilion and the new Plaza of Heroes.
- The third part of the gift is to place an appropriately sized wide-screen monitor on the east wall inside the SEA Pavilion where we will have continuous showings of our 25<sup>th</sup> reunion class gift – "Return with Honor"
- Lastly any monies left over from our fund raising effort after the bills are paid will be donated to the USAFA Endowment on behalf of our class.

NOTE: If you haven't seen the existing SEA Memorial Pavilion you can view it at [www.usafa.org/Heritage/South\\_East\\_Asia\\_Pavilion](http://www.usafa.org/Heritage/South_East_Asia_Pavilion). Click on "watch video."