

Introducing the NDQSA Memorial Trust

This story was originally published in the January 2025 NDQSA Newsletter and has been reproduced for the Our History section.

The National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association is unique among veteran organizations. You represent the most highly decorated army artillery outfits in Vietnam. Your lineage includes the only ADA unit with a Medal of Honor recipient, Sergeant Mitchell Stout, C/1/44th Dusters as well as a Distinguished Service Cross recipient, Staff Sergeant Jeffery Jarman, Quad-50 Squad Leader, Delta 71st ADA. You were awarded presidential and meritorious Unit citations, Silver

Stars, Bronze Stars for Valor, and over 1,000 Purple Hearts. Tragically, 212 ADA warriors lost their lives during the Vietnam War. Your combat skills were in demand, firing over four million 40 MM rounds, ten million .50 cal. rounds, and a million miles of illumination from the DMZ to the Delta. NDQSA was founded in 1981 by John Huelsenbeck and others. It grew to a strength of over 4,350 members because you found each other and banded together. You knew that what you had together was stronger and better than being alone. In those early days, you assured each other that what you did in Vietnam meant something - "together we are somebody"- and that the ultimate sacrifice of your fellow soldiers was not in vain. That special brothers-in-arms relationship was so



valuable that you established your official motto as "Together Then – Together Again."

Year after year you reached out to each other, met at reunions, participated in ceremonies honoring the fallen and fellow veterans, and lived your lives making things better for those you loved. Many of you have been haunted by the war, endured lasting pain from war wounds, and suffered from the ravages of the effects of Agent Orange. Overcoming adversity is a hallmark of the NDQSA membership. On August 9, 2013, you completed a massive undertaking at Fort Sill, Oklahoma to build a memorial to the ADA soldiers in Vietnam and to honor the fallen. The marble eagle was purchased in Vietnam and donated by Luke Clark, but everything else was paid through donations or selling the bricks that surround the monument. The memorial also includes the granite panel engraved with the names of the fallen, and the contemplation benches facing it. Vince Tedesco cleared the regulatory hurdles because nothing can be built on a military base without lots of paperwork that includes giving it to the Army. Full disclosure – the government takes possession but assumes no responsibility for care or maintenance. Almost from the beginning Vinny began to warn us about the weather hazards of



Oklahoma with dire and graphic descriptions of tornados and flying eagles which was concerning. A crack in the eagle's pedestal reminded us that the Army was not going to pay for repair of "our" memorial.



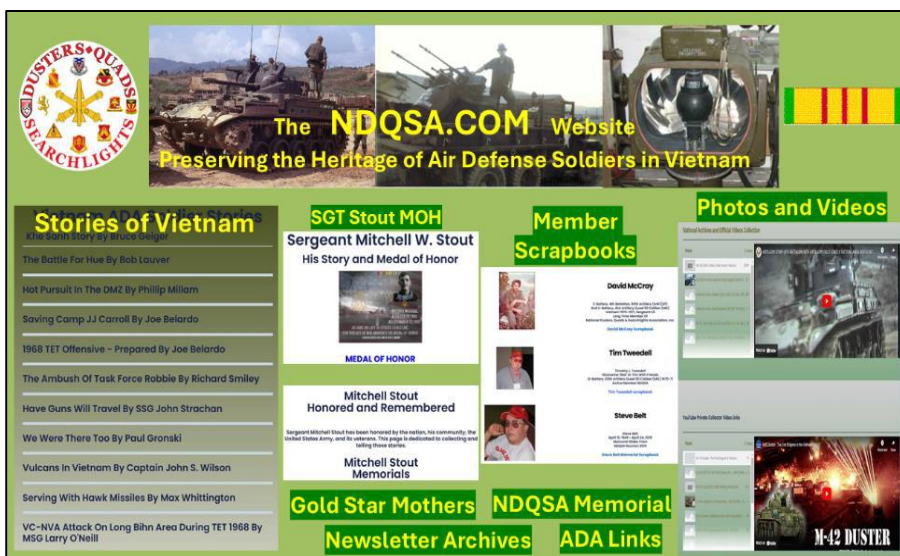
Fast forward to the NDQSA annual business meeting on November 13, 2021. It was there that Dave McCray presented information about the Air Defense Artillery Association's (ADAA) memorial brick program to raise funds in support of the newly constructed ADA Learning Center. He proposed that we, as an organization, somehow take on the heritage preservation project of obtaining a brick for each of the 212 men who lost their lives while assigned or attached to our ADA units in Vietnam. There was no debate about whether this should be done, only about how to raise the money. In March 2024 this project was completed through donations and installation help from the ADAA with labor. These memorial bricks

are a fitting tribute and in a great location, right outside the ADA Learning Center. Young soldiers and visitors will pass by every day and reflect on the sacrifice of these Vietnam heroes. During this same time, we began to talk about how to honor Mitchell Stout. NDQSA had installed a stone marker and planted a tree where he is buried in the Virtue Cemetery at Farragut, Tennessee. It seemed appropriate to do something at Fort Sill, especially if it could be somewhere where ADA soldiers could feel the impact of their heritage. Inquiry led to invitation and a marble bench dedicated to him and his sacrifice was installed on June 11, 2024, right outside the entry doors to the ADA Learning Center and Museum.



So back to Vinny and funnel clouds and our memorials. The Air Defense Artillery Association maintains financial trust as a funding mechanism for their scholarship program. Vinny is on the ADAA board of directors. Long story short – he and Dave McCray put together the concept and legal structure that

resulted in the NDQSA Memorial Trust. It will provide perpetual care, which includes maintenance, upkeep, and other such reasonable care, of all our physical memorial structures and fixtures at Fort Sill whose care is currently being provided by the NDQSA. When we are gone, the Trustee becomes the Air Defense Artillery Association. Because our heritage is also being preserved through stories and pictures on the NDQSA website, the Trustee is also responsible for maintaining the NDQSA official



website (<https://ndqsa.com>) and will continue to house it on the ADAA server for an indefinite period. Heritage is also about tradition, so the Trust ensures that a commemorative wreath is laid at the memorial every Veterans Day.

The money in the Trust is held in a Charles Schwab account managed by The Trustmont Advisory Group in Greensburg, Pennsylvania so that it continues to grow until needed.



There is a lot of legal content in the Trust, but bottom line NDQSA has established a mechanism that will preserve in perpetuity our heritage of being Air Defense Artillery men in Vietnam. Our families, historians, and future visitors can continue to visit our website to read our stories and see how we honored those who we served with in Vietnam. Young soldiers can see and understand their ADA lineage in the memorials at Fort Sill. We may pass away, but our tradition of laying a wreath on

Veterans Day does not die with us. This Trust provides the physical and financial method of preserving our heritage and respecting our fallen in perpetuity. The Air Defense Artillery Association understands their responsibilities and readily accepts this obligation.
