

**From:** [EJ 12TFW](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 23, 2014 2:24 PM

**Subject:** 12th Memorial Dedication 2014

**TO: Members and Friends of the 12th TFW**

**Subject: The 12 TFW Memorial Dedication 19 September 2014**

**Recognition:** The point-man for this year's event was Sherif Lepi of Albuquerque, NM who coordinated the setup for the event. Our Treasurer Bill Cathey worked closely with the Fremont County Commissioner and contractor on the wall restoration/correction effort.



**Photo by Charlotte Burrous:** Current 12th Tactical Fighter Wing Association president Skip Blanchard plays "Taps" at the end of the ceremony at the Col. Leo Sidney Boston War Memorial Park at the Fremont County Airport.

**Fremont County, CO --** As the flag whipped in the wind, cars raced by on the highway while several voices read names from the wall. "John DeBock....William Fuller....Thomas Kilcullen.... Ron Packard."

Current 12th Tactical Fighter Wing Association president Skip Blanchard led an informal ceremony Sept. 12, 2014, at the Col. Leo Sidney Boston War Memorial Park at the Fremont County Airport.

"We're here to honor those who gave their lives while serving with the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing," he said to the members, their families and several guests in commemoration of the 13th anniversary of the re-dedication of the memorial wing at the airport. Although none of the members were stationed together, each of them have common memories of their service in Vietnam.

This year, the group was especially pleased to commemorate panel K (formerly known as panel J), which had been in question for a short time when Fremont County added 81 names to Panel J. When the 12th TFW veterans questioned it in September, the county claimed it had consulted with a "sergeant with the 12th TFW" regarding the issue. Since then, the county set aside Panel J, the section nearest to the F-4C, strictly for inscription of the names of all known 12th casualties on the memorial wall. (see photos below)

"I really appreciate Fremont County's cooperation and outgoing support for our unit, the 12th Tact Fighter Wing," Blanchard said after the ceremony. "We thank (the community) for all the activities in the area." Fremont County Commissioner Ed Norden said he was glad they could get the bricks straightened up in time for their ceremony. "Mike Madone, of Mountain Masonry, paid attention to detail to make sure we got it right this time." he said. Norden also encouraged families, who had names inscribed on Panel J, to come out to look for their loved ones' names, which have been moved to other panels at the war memorial. "Some of the local bricks have been reorganized other than the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing section," Norden said.

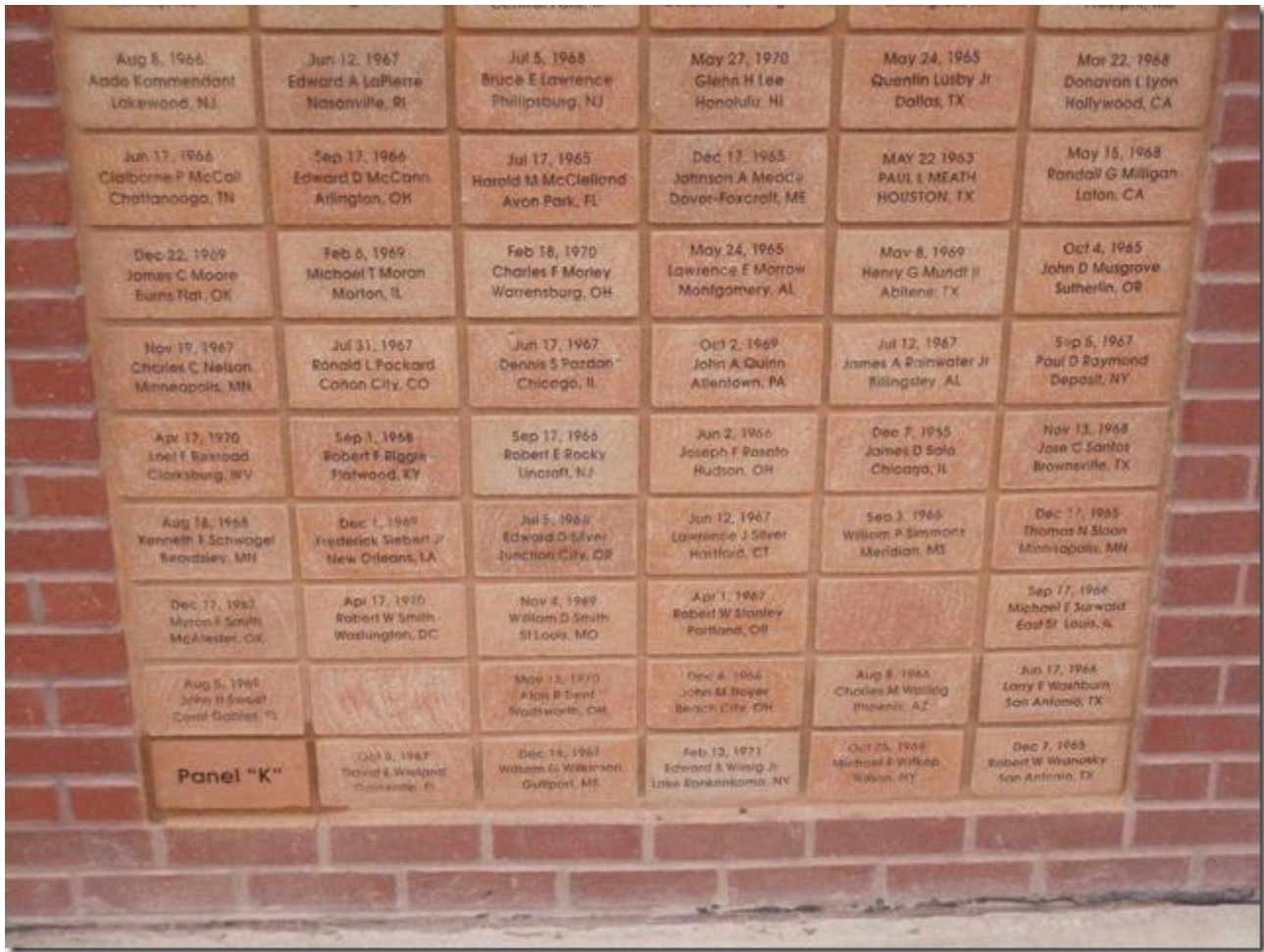
According to the website, the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing was activated in April 1962. The squadron deployed to Cam Ranh Bay in November 1965, where it gave close air support and helped with combat air patrol activities over Vietnam and Laos. During the capture of the USS Pueblo, it also augmented U.S. forces in Korea, as well as stood alert during the Cuban missile crisis. In March 1970, the 12th was dispersed and the operations over Cam Ranh Bay Air Force Base were halted. At this point, the 37th TFW at Phu Cat Air Base was designated the 12th TFW, which continued combat operations until the 12th was inactivated in November 1971. "During those years from 1962 to 1971, thousands of airmen served," Blanchard said. "More than 100 war personnel from the 12th were killed." Bringing the names to Fremont County began when Aurora resident Gene Rust noticed an F-4 aircraft while driving by the Col. Leo S. Boston Memorial Park. At the same time, it was coincidental that Ron Packard, a native of Cañon City, was a member of the 559th when he was lost in North Vietnam, the website said. In conjunction, Col. Leo Boston also was missing in action for many years until his remains were found and interred on the campus of the Air Force Academy.

After discovering the F-4, Rust contacted the late H. Ray Jones, a member of the Cañon City War Memorial Park Commission, as well as Fremont County Veterans Service Officer Bill Lande. After striking a deal, the 12th veterans raised the funds to inscribe the names on the wall. In September, the veterans arranged its first dedication of the wall. However, the events of 9/11 led the group to change its plans somewhat, such as cancelling a fly over of the Colorado Air National Guard F-16s and Gen. Sutton's appearance. Instead, the Air Force Band of The Rockies, the Air Force High Frontier Honor Guard / Color Guard and Major Steve Sheik, Chaplain of the Air Force Falcons, attended, making the first dedication a success. Since then, members of the 12th TFW have spent several days together with the highlight being its 13th annual dedication ceremony of the memorial.

*Story written by Charlotte Burrous, Florence, CO*



**Photo by Sherif Lepi - 12 TFW wall panel with new and added plaque. (view is upper section of the panel)**



*Photo by Sherif Lepi - View is lower portion of panel K*

**Note:** There will be no empty brick spaces, about a half dozen are yet to be engraved.