

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

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In this issue

**Sgt. Saves C-123 During attack**

**Officials at the Base Post Office have announced the following mailing periods**

**35TH T.F.W. Tops 75,000 Sorties**

**Col. Williams To Spain Wing; Col. Gailer To Take Over**

**315th S.O.Wg Sets New Tonnage Record**

**Know Your Commander**

**RAAF Receives Award for World War II Service**

**What’s It Like Being Off Duty At Phan Rang?**

**Bobcats Hit Hard**

**Shadow’s Miniguns Break Attacks**

**Phan Rang Names New Dining Facility After Fallen Airmen**

**Doctors, Dentists Conduct Sick call For Villagers Near Phan Rang AB**

**Shadow Aids Village; Kills Six Communists**

**SP Training Is Big Job**

**Pilot Bailout, Rescue Goes Quickly, Smoothly**

**Phan Rang Farms Open**

**Plaques Honor PRAB Fallen**

**Fire power Shadow's Strong Point**

**They Do More Than Talk about the Weather**

**Fast Getaway for Super Sabres**

**Camberra at War**

### **SGT. SAVES C-123 DURING ATTACK**

*(Phan Fare, 19 September 1968)*

“I guess you don’t think of personnel safety until it’s all over.” Those were the words of TSgt. James W. Jeffress as he spoke of the recent mortar attack on Phan Rang where he was credited with saving a C-123 “Provider” aircraft.

The recent mortar attack on Phan Rang by a hostile force will be a night remembered by Sergeant Jeffrees, a security police flight leader with the 35th SPS. for a long time.

Around midnight...mortar rounds in the immediate area of Sergeant Jeffress and peppered a C-123 aircraft with approximately 2,000 small shrapnel holes.

“The only reason I headed for the aircraft was because I heard a moan and thought someone might be injured inside.” The moaning Sergeant Jeffress heard was later found to be a severed hydraulic line. Reaching the aircraft Sergeant Jeffress entered and discovered smoldering wires and insulations. Disregarding his own safety, he tore out the smoldering item that were threatening to burst into flames. Sergeant Jeffress also discovered one engine had sustained a fuel leak.

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

**Officials at the Base Post Office have announced the following mailing periods.** (Phan Fare, 19 Sep. 1968)

FROM CONUS TO OVERSEAS:

Surface mails; 14 Oct. to Nov. 9

SAM; 21 Oct. to 23 Nov.

PAL; 28 Oct. to 30 Nov.

Airmail; 1 Dec. to 11 Dec.

FROM PACOM AREA (Surface)

from Vietnam to CONUS, Hawaii 1 Nov.

All mailing periods have been coordinated with CINCUSAR PAC (GPAG-AP). Mailing periods from the standpoint of Hawaii will be the same as those published in the Honolulu Post Office.

## **35TH T.F.W. TOPS 75,000 SORTIES**

*(Phan Fare, October 10, 1968)*

The 35th Tactical Fighter Wing recently completed its 75,000th combat sortie since it began operations at Phan Rang Air Base in October 1966.

The record-breaking flight was made Monday afternoon by an F-100 Supersabre piloted by Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., 35th TFW Commander. Speaking to Phan Rang personnel who were on hand to witness the completion of the 75,000 sorties, Colonel Gailer praised the “courage and aggressiveness” of the men who have flown with the 35th.

He thanked “everyone associated with the wing, both aircrews and support personnel” for their “outstanding contributions which made the 75,000 sorties possible.

During the two years that the 35th has operated at Phan Rang, the unit has supported almost every major ground and air operation conducted in Vietnam.

The 35th TFW consists of tactical units which provide a unique and versatile combination that is unlike any other Air Force unit in Vietnam. Four of the units, the 120th, 352nd, 614th and 615th Tactical Fighter Squadrons, are equipped with F-100 Supersabres, the venerable “workhorse” of air support in South Vietnam.

The 120th TFS is the newest addition to the 35th TFW, coming to Vietnam from Colorado in May of this year as the first Air National Guard unit deployed to a war zone as a unit since World War II.

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

Another integral part of the Wing is the 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron, now in its 51st year and fourth war, flying the B-57 Canberra bomber, this unit has a primary mission of interdicting enemy supply routes.

Since coming to Phan Rang one year ago, the 8th has destroyed more than 3,000 enemy trucks carrying supplies into South Vietnam.

The Royal Australian Air Force Number 2 Squadron also made an important contribution towards the 75,000 total and to the effectiveness of the 35th TFW. The 2 Squadron flies the Australian Canberra, an aircraft similar to the B-57s of the 8th TBS.

During the past two years and 75,000 sorties, the 35th TFW has accounted for about 6,400 enemy soldiers killed by air (by body count). The 35th has also destroyed or damaged 42,253 fortifications, 3,087 sampans, 25,085 bunkers and accounted for 29, 749 secondary explosions and fires.

### **Col. Williams To Spain Wing; Col. Gailer To Take Over**

*(Phan Fare, September 19, 1968)*

Col. Herdon F. William, Commander, 35th TFW completed his tour of duty in Vietnam Monday. He is credited with completing 200 combat missions in the F-100 Supersabre in support of Free World forces fighting here.

During his tenure as wing commander, Phan Rang has become the showplace of the Seventh Air Force bases. The 35th TFW has received awards that rank it as the best of the F-100 wings in Southeast Asia.

The Air Force Outstanding unit Award was presented to the 35th TFW during Colonel Williams' tenure as commander. The wing also won the Colombian Flying Safety Trophy for not having a single major aircraft accident during 1967.

The PACAF Maintenance Trophy, indicated the best maintenance facility in PACAF., was won by the wing as a stepping stone to the Daedalian Trophy for Maintenance, indicating the best maintenance complex in the Air Force.

Phan Rang has been selected on numerous occasions as the Best Base in Seventh Air Force and has been commented for its recreational facilities.

## “Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

The wing commander flew most of his combat missions with the 614th TFS, one of four Supersabre squadrons in the 35th TFW. He also flew a night road interdiction mission over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam.

This mission, flown with the 8th TBS B-57 Canberras, qualified him for the famous “Doom Pussy” patch. This is awarded only to those men who have flown night Canberra missions over North Vietnam.

Colonel Williams’ next assignment will be in the wing commander of the 401st TFW (USAFE), Torrejon AB, Spain.



Back from Phu Cat AB, Vietnam, where his unit has been for 10 months, Lt. Col **Warren E. Rice**, Commander of the 612th Tactical Fighter Sq., sips a soft drink and gets a welcome from Col. **Frank L. Gailer Jr.**, commander of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. The F-100 squadron is again part of the 35th TFW. (*Air Force Times*, May 28, 1969)

## 315th S.O.Wg Sets New Tonnage Record

C-123 Provider crews of the 315th SOWG recently established a new one-day airlift tonnage record for C-123 wings.

Flying 35 lines or missions in one day, the crews averaged 32.2 tons per line for a total of 1,129 tons hauled on a total of 328 sorties.

“A typical C-123 mission has from eight to ten sorties, as directed by the Airlift Control Center (ALCE) of 834th Air Division.” According to Col. Arthur M. James, assistant Deputy Commander

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

for Operations, 315th SOWG. “It may start from Phan Rang with a load of ice and supplies for Bao Loc, pallets or ammunition from Bao Loc to Dalat, a load of vegetables into Cam Ranh Bay from Dalat followed by a load of U.S. Troops to Nha Trang.

“You now require some fuel so that you can use your two J-85 jet engines to rush a load of ARVN troops to Ban Don and pick up some passengers to go back to Nha Trang. Arriving back at Nha Trang you find a load of rice waiting for you to take to Ban Me Thuot.

“Ban Me Thuot has more passengers and empty fuel bladders to go to Cam Ranh Bay. Before arriving at Cam Ranh Bay you check in by radio with the 834th ALCE at Tan Son Nhut and they advise you that a Combat Essential load of fuel is waiting for you at Cam Rahn Bay to be delivered to Gia Nghia.”

“Again you need fuel in order to make this last effort. Arriving at Gia Nghia which is often referred to as the aircraft carrier of Vietnam, you land, offload your fuel on the two thousand foot hilltop landing strip, taxi out and head for Phan Rang (Happy Valley) having flown ten sorties and over seven hours, you are using your jet engines again in order to get home before your 12-hour crew duty day is over.”

The old tonnage record stood at 31.4 average tons per line for a total of 1,068 tons.

Co. John Pauly commander, 315th SOWG stated that the record was an outstanding achievement particularly since it was set while flying fewer hours.

“The full cooperation of the various aerial port personnel and the air crews was required to get this record. This exemplified the teamwork that has made the Vietnam airlift the most successful airlift ever achieved! Colonel Pauly added.

### **35 TFW Gets Praise From Army Troops**

*(The Happy Valley Weekly, 19 October 1968)*

F-100 Supersabre pilots from the 35th TFW received high praise recently from the 2nd Brigade, 9th United States Infantry Division for outstanding air support.

In a letter to the 35th TFW Commander, the 2nd Bde, 9th Inf. Div. Air Liaison Officer (ALO) praised the Phan Rang based pilots for their support during an operation some 10 miles north of Vinh Long.

The ALO indicated that one of the Division’s battalions had been airlifted into an open rice paddy. Their mission was to assault, overrun and destroy a large bunker complex.

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

“The friendly forces,” the letter indicated, “were immediately pinned down by intense automatic weapons fire from a dug in Viet Cong force. The enemy was too well fortified for the use of helicopter gunships and artillery was not available, so the Air Force was called on to eliminate the opposition.

“Five air strikes from the 35th TFW were used in support of our people,” the letter continued.

“Realizing the urgency of the situation and totally disregarding heavy ground fire, each pilot precisely placed his ordnance on the Viet Cong positions. Each strike, in turn, was placed within 200 meters of friendly positions. Finally the enemy positions were totally silenced.

“There is no doubt,” the ALO wrote the 35th Commander, “That the contributions of your pilots saved countless U.S. casualties.”

### **KNOW YOUR COMMANDER**

*(Phan Fare 26 September 1968)*

**Colonel Frank L. Gailer Jr.** is the commander of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. He assumed command on Sept. 23 from Col. Herndon F. Williams, who has been reassigned to the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing, Torrejon AB, Spain.

Colonel Gailer comes to Phan Rang from the faculty of the National War College in Washington, D.C. Prior to that assignment he served as the commander of the 3630th Flying Training Wing, Sheppard AFB, Texas.

A member of the American Fighter Aces Association he is credited with destroying 6 ½ German aircraft during World War II before being shot down and captured. He destroyed 3 ½ FW 190s and 3 ME 109s while compiling 45 combat missions. He was held as a POW for five months and liberated by the Russian forces.

His major assignments have included Jet Fighter Advisor to the Uruguayan Air Force and Special Assistant to the Chief of Mission, Montevideo, Uruguay. When he returned to the United States he was assigned to Headquarters USAF, DCS/Operations as the Chief of the Missions Section and later served as the Chief of the Latin American Missions Branch. He then became the Action Officer, Western Hemisphere Branch in the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Colonel Gailer’s decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 9 oak leaf clusters, the Joint Services Commendations Medal, the Air Force

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

Commendation Medal and the Purple Heart. He also has been awarded the Joint Chiefs of Staff Identifications Badge.

### **“Luke” Record Stays Unbroken**

*(Phan Fare, 1968 November 28)*

Talk of **“Cool Hand Luke”** and attempts on his 50-egg record in one hour by U. S. Army and Marine personnel led to an Air Force Egg-eating assault by A1C **Kirk W. Minert**.

A member of the engine conditioning branch, 35th FMS, Airman Minert recalls that the idea got started while his team was taking a break after completing an F-100 jet engine overhaul.

“I have something of a reputation as a chow hound,” Minert said,; and as we talked of the “Luke” movie and the recent attempts by other service branches to match it, one said “How many eggs can you eat Kirk’.”

“I said I couldn’t eat 50 but could beat the Army record.”

On the day of the contest against time, Airman Minert did without his usual breakfast, lunch and supper. By 7:50 p.m., he felt hungry enough to begin. More than 100 squadron associates were there to witness the event.

“I had two peelers and two coaches and a heck of a lot of eggs. My goal was one egg per minute which lasted for about 22 minutes. It took the remainder of the hour to get the next dozen down,” he said. Coaching Airman Minert during his marathon were SSgt Wilburn E. Willis and Sgt Harold Henderson while SSgt Craig Johnson served as official egg counter. Bret R. Stagg was official judge and time keeper and Sgt Bernard D. Shively was “load team” and advisor, all of the 35th FMS.

Eggs were provided through the courtesy of SSgt Edward P. Dray and his brother, PFC Patrick J. Dray who is with the 21st S&S.



## "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN.

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 "Stories worth telling"

---



As a flare lights up the perimeter of Phan Rang AB, security policemen of the 35th Security Police Squadron fire their M-60 machine guns in suspected enemy positions. Air Force security policemen throughout the Republic of Vietnam are kept busy nightly manning positions on their base perimeters guarding against possible enemy infiltration.

*(Source: Air Force News, July 30, 1969)*

## RAAF Unit Receives Award For World War II Service

*(Seventh Air Force News, July 30, 1969)*



**General Brown and Commander Whitehead**  
Inspecting the Honor Guard. *USAF photo by Sgt.*  
*William F. Diebold*

By TSgt. John Mahony

**PHAN RANG** - The U.S. Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation was presented recently to the Royal Australian Air Force Number 2 Squadron here.

The citation was awarded to Australia's Number 2 Squadron for its many successful attacks against Japanese forces in the South-west Pacific at the outbreak of World War II.

At a flightline ceremony at Phan Rang Gen. George S. Brown, U.S. Seventh Air Force commander made the presentation.



## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

R. L. Harry, Australian Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam; Maj. Gen. R. A. Hay, commander, Australian Forces, Vietnam; and Air Commodore F. S. Robey, Royal Australian Air Force commander, Vietnam; made up the official Australian delegation at the ceremony.

The 27-year delay in the presentation was due to several factors such as the disbanding of the squadron after World War II and the Australian requirement that a unit be in continuous existence for 25 years before it can get its own standard or banner, an RAAF spokesman explained.

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, who was then Supreme Commander of all Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific area, recommended the Number 2 Squadron for the award for the period April 18, 1942, to August 25, 1942.

On January 4, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved a U.S. War Department order making the award official. King George VI approved acceptance of the citation April 20, 1943.

In April 1947 the squadron arrived for duty at Phan Rang AB. Since then the 300-man unit has flown more than 8,000 combat sorties against enemy forces. Wing Commander John A. Whitehead, Canberra, Australia Capital Territory, is the current squadron commander.

Two members of the RAAF were in Number 2 Squadron during the citation period are still serving with the RAAF in Australia.

The men, Warrant Officers E. J. Lee, and C. P. Bolger, were flown to Phan Rang to take part in the ceremony. General Brown presented the individual citation ribbon to them.

## **What It’s Like Being Off Duty At Phan Rang**

*(Air Force Times, June 16, 1971)*

**By SSgt. Ken Garrett**

PHAN RANG AB - Many activities and services await off-duty airman at Phan Rang. For personal advancement, the base provides a fine extension of the University of Maryland and an air-conditioned, 18,000-volume library. For spiritual advancement, the base chapel offers a program for everyone.

The extensive sports program here offers football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, tennis, a quarter-mile jogging track, an indoor handball court, a weight room and a skeet range.

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

For swimmers, there is an on-base swimming pool and an off-base beach nine miles from the base on the South China Sea which is used by the base scuba club. And for the less energetic, a miniature gold course is open to challenge them.

For entertainment, the base provides a 400-seat, indoor, air-conditioned movie theater and a 4500-seat, free outdoor theater which also hosts frequent live USO shows. The American Red Cross Du Drop Inn is open to all and is staffed with American Donut Dollies. Separate clubs are offered for officers and NCOs, and there is also an All-Stripes Club.



**USO Entertainers  
Draw Crowd to  
Happy Valley Theater**

For unit activates and large get-togethers, the White Rock Picnic Area offers picnic tables and a large barbecue pit.

Phan Rang also boasts an extensive hobby center. There is a large tape center housing 14,000 albums, a slot-car track, a photo hobby shop, an electronic shop, a lapidary shop and a hobby sales store. For the model airplane enthusiast, there is a radio-controlled model airplane club with builds and flies exact replicas of historic aircraft along with some exotic home-made jobs.

Keeping busy is a sure way to make a Vietnam tour go faster and Phan Rang has enough activities going to satisfy almost any interest.



**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

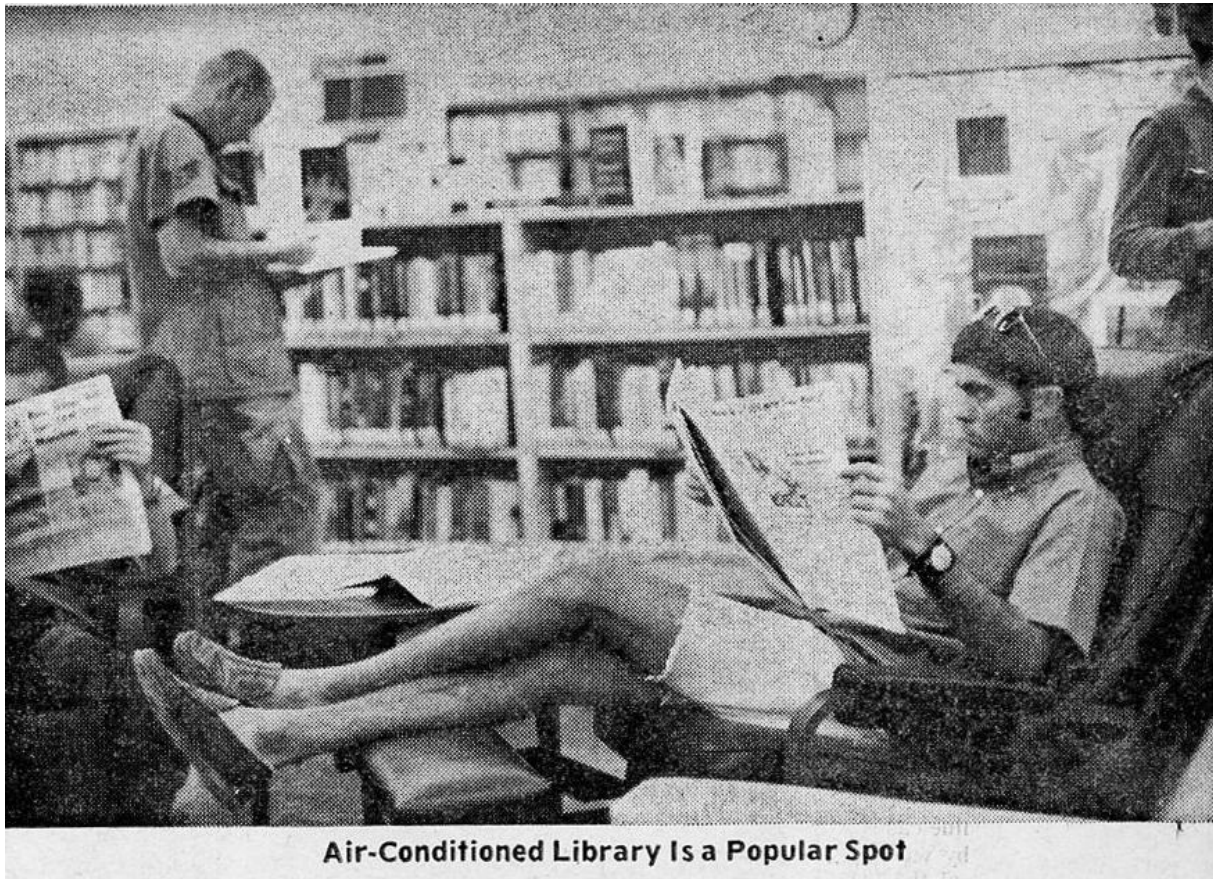
..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---



**Tape Center Contains 14,000 Albums**



**Air-Conditioned Library Is a Popular Spot**



**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

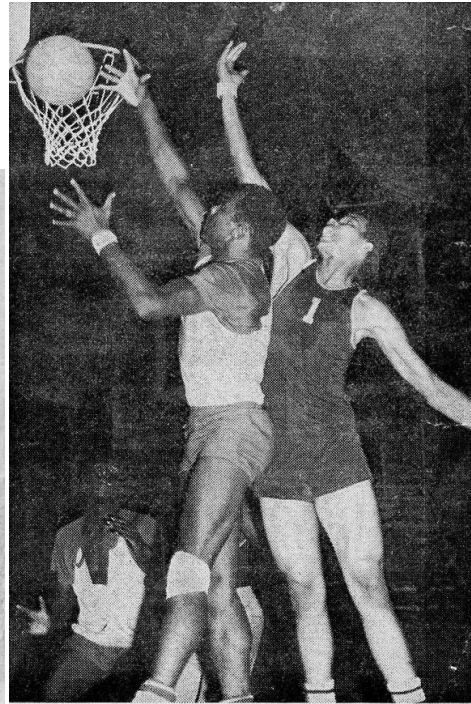
..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---



**MARS Connects Airmen With Loved Ones Back Home**



**Basketball Is Played Day and Night**



**Beating the Heat in the Base Pool**



## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

### **Bobcats Hit Hard**

*(Seventh Air Force News, July 30 1969)*

**PHAN RANG** - “We were taking enemy ground fire on every pass,” stated F-100 Supersabre pilot, Capt. Thomas H. Selecman Jr., Fort Monroe, Va. In the cockpit of the second F-100 was Capt. Francis C. Gideon Jr., Clark AB, Philippines. Both pilots are members of the 615<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron “Bobcats.”

“The target was an active Viet Cong location,” Captain Selecman said. “It was in among a group of trees on a flat plain and was quite difficult to see. An Army helicopter crew informed us there were two enemy twin-fifty (four .50 caliber machine) guns in the area.

“After our last pass, we were informed that we destroyed two fighting positions, and damaged one other, uncovered 150 meters of trench, touched off one sustained fire, one large secondary explosion and killed two enemy soldiers.”

### Supporting Ground Units

#### **Shadow’s Miniguns Break Attacks**

*(Seventh Air Force news, July 30, 1969, Page 17)*

**PHAN RANG** - An AC-119 Shadow gunship crew of B Flight, 17<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron here recently assisted in breaking of two enemy attacks on friendly ground positions.

The aircraft commander, Lt. Col. William E. Long, Rochester, N.Y., recalled the mission. “We were working in an area of heavy enemy movement when a friendly unit called for assistance in repelling a small arms and mortar attack on its position.

Shortly after the Shadow crew fired their miniguns on the enemy, the attack was broken off.

“Later, we were again called to help another unit under intense automatic weapons fire.” Colonel Long continued. “We turned on our spotlight to draw enemy fire so he (the enemy) would reveal his positions. It worked, and ‘Charlie’ open up on us with automatic weapons fire.”

The crew shot back, destroying three weapon positions and causing four secondary explosions.

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

“That was the heaviest automatic weapons fire we have encountered in several weeks,” the colonel said. “We sometimes found ourselves in a crossfire from several positions, but our guns caused all the damage - to them.”

Both ground units reported the Shadow got excellent results with its miniguns.

### **Phan Rang Names New Dining Facility After Fallen Airmen**

*(Seventh Air Force News, June 11, 1969)*

The new dining facility in the fire station of the Phan Rang AB flight line was recently dedicated to the memory of two firefighters who gave their lives in the line of duty last year.

Staff Sergeant **Milard L. E. Bledsoe**, Oneonta, Ala., and Emmett S. Orr, Rodgersville, Mo., died in the crash of a Rescue Squadron’s HH-43E Huskie rescue helicopter on Oct. 10, 1968.

In opening the Bledsoe-Orr Dining Hall, Col. Robert G. Goold, Provo, Utah, base commander, said the men died “While performing airborne rescue firefighting duty.” He continued. “May their sacrifice and dedication to duty and country serve as an inspiration to all.”

Lt. Col. James B. Roberts, Pleasureville, Ky., base Civil Engineer, said “We feel proud that we can honor such men by dedicating this facility to them. Such dedication is one of the highest forms of tribute.

The dining facility will serve the firefighters, rescue squadron and the barrier maintenance section of the 35th Civil Engineering Squadron.

### **Doctors, Dentists Conduct Sickcall For Villagers Near Phan Rang AB**

*(Seventh Air Force News, June 11, 1969)*

Saturday is “sick call” day for villagers of An Xuan near Phan Rang AB.

That is the day that physicians, dentists and their assistants from the 35th Dispensary at Phan Rang visit the village to treat some of the 1,800 people in the area.



## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

“We’ve been making these weekly trips to An Xuan, as well as other villages near the base, for more than a year,” commented Capt. Gerald G. Koehn, West Bend, Wis., general medical officer, “At An Xuan we examine about 30 dental and 40 medical patients each visit,” he said.

The general health of the village has improved greatly since the program started. “Now most of the patients have learned to come here while the illness is in the early stages,” Captain Koehn explained, “and we have been able to help keep them in good condition.”

However, the dentist find that by the time their patients come to be examined, the hurting tooth cannot be saved.

“We are teaching them proper dental hygiene,” remarked Capt. Michael C. Getz, Hamilton, Ohio, dentist, “but they still don’t realize that the teeth should be treated before becoming painful. By the time they come to us, the tooth is abscessed or broken down and has to be extracted.”

The communications problem with the patients is solved with the assistance of Mrs. Hoi Nguyen Thi, a dispensary secretary who acts as interpreter. “She does an excellent job in explaining to us what ails the patient.” Captain Koehn said, “and in telling the patients how to use the medicine we prescribe.”

With their modern-day medicine, the doctors and dentists are becoming quite popular with local villagers, “But it wasn’t always this way,” explained Capt. Charles Q. Harrold, North Platte, Neb., dentist.

“When our doctors and dentists first started these visits to the local villages.” Captain Harrold continued, “The Vietnamese were wary of our modern techniques and equipment. But now we can hardly handle the number of patients who whom to see us on our visits.”

## **Shadow Aids Village; Kills Six Communists**

*(Seventh Air Force News, June 11, 1960)*

Phan Rang-Scrambled off the runway here to aid friendly troops under enemy attract, an AC-119 Shadow gunship crew was credited by forward air controllers with killing six enemy soldiers.

## **"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 "Stories worth telling"

---

An Army artillery spotter informed the Shadow crew that an outpost on the southwest side of Phan Ly Cham Village, 35 miles southwest of Phan Rang, was receiving mortar fire and that the enemy was moving toward the town.

Capt. Frank E. Kiobucar, Indianapolis, directed the pilot, Maj. Robert J. Allen, Scranton, Pa., into the firing circle around the target.

Sixteen minutes after leaving the alert pad, the first of shadow's minigun rounds hit the target.

The spotter aircraft pilot reported both he and the Shadow had been receiving intense and accurate groundfire when the AC-119 first arrived. However, once Shadow's four miniguns opened up, the ground fire subsided appreciably and the attackers retreated to the security of an adjoining village.

Timely delivery of ordnance on target was handled by Sergeants Roger D. Stephens, Hickory, N.C., and Jerold E. Thomas, Live Oak, Fla. Flight Engineer was MSgt Owen D. Stickles, Edinburg, Ind., and the aircraft commander was Lt. Col. Earl W. Scott, Greenfield, Ind.

## **SP Training Is Big Job**

*(Phan Fare, 1968 December 5)*

"Our pupils couldn't outshoot Matt Dillon, but they have out-shot Charlie every time," says Sgt. Thomas J. Metzen. Sergeant Metzen, NCO in charge of the 35th Security Police Sq. firing range, is charged with making certain that the sentries know the weapon they are handling like the back of their hand.

"When we get new men in the squadron," he continued, they go through classroom and range familiarization. They may have handled the same weapons for two or three years---but not in a combat situation. That can make quite a difference."

After the initial familiarization with multitude of weapons, the policemen are called back on a bi-monthly basis for re-fire. "Though these people carry the weapons daily, they may not fire them once between training sessions," commented Sgt. Roger T. Williams. Aside from the familiar M-16 rifle, the course also includes firing the M-148 and M-79 grenade launchers, the M-12 riot gun and the M-60 and .50 caliber machine guns, plus basic instruction on hand grenades and flares. "Part of our initial training consists of instructions on how to spot explosive devises or "booby traps," said Sgt. Larry D. Paul.

## "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN.

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 "Stories worth telling"

---

"There is no way," concluded Sergeant Williams, "to tell how much the people gain from our instruction, or how many lives it has saved, but we are confident that our work has paid big dividends."

### **Pilot Bailout, Rescue Goes Quickly, Smoothly**

*(Phan Fare December 12, 1968)*

Recently, two F-100 Supersabres of the 352nd TFS (Jackets) scrambled off the alert pad at Phan Rang AB, routine, uneventful mission and headed back home.

There the routine stopped. As he prepared to go into his final descent to Phan Rang, 1st Lt. **Wendell L. Cook** noticed that something was wrong with his bird. Recounting the event, Lieutenant Cook said, "I moved the throttle up so I could close in a little on my lead pilot (Capt. Sloan L. B. Brooks) and got no response from my control whatsoever." The pilot 'immediately went to his emergency procedures, trying his emergency fuel supply, but nothing happened.

He was now 25 miles from Phan Rang, over mountainous territory, and he knew he could not make it home.

"My engine started 'unwinding'," he continued, and I knew I had a flameout. I couldn't get an "airstart" and just then all the warning lights in the cockpit lit up like a pinball machine. I knew I was going to have to leave the aircraft."

With his lead pilot screaming at him to get out, Lieutenant Cook checked all his survival gear and ejected. The downed pilot called his lead and told him to radio for a rescue chopper. While waiting for the rescue chopper other planes had arrived and were circling the area. Captain Brooks buzzed up the valley at a low altitude to show the other pilots Cook's position on the ground.

Maj. John C. Acton Jr., commander, Det. #1, 38th ARRS "Pedro," at Phan Rang, was in the air on a routine training and orientation mission at the time of the ejection. After analyzing the situation, his position, amount of fuel, and what he had on board the aircraft, he headed for the downed pilot's position to attempt a pick-up.

Major Acton called the tower at Phan Rang and alerted the Pedro standby crew,' which was airborne in less than ten minutes, on their way to help if help was needed.

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

Major Action, arrived at the scene and described what happened like this, "Proceeding around the mountain, I spotted the Lieutenants chute, resting on a very steep incline. As soon as he saw us, Cook set off a smoke bomb and I spotted him, sitting on about the only level place sticking out of the side of the mountain.

The major maneuvered his HH-43 over the downed pilot, his rotors clearing the mountain's side by a scant few feet. The rescue penetrator was lowered; the downed F-100 pilot climbed on and in a few seconds was aboard the chopper, safe and happy.

The chopper had left Phan Rang at 10:25 am; by 10:43 Cook was aboard headed for Phan Rang, by 11:05 arrived at the base, "everyone is feeling fine and happy to see Lieutenant Cook back in good shape." said Major Acton.

"That's one of the great rewards of the business," added the whirlybird pilot, "when you can return a downed man in good shape, laughing as Lieutenant Cook was."

" I'll tell you One thing," added the rescued Supersabre jockey, "that chopper is one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen, anywhere."

## **Phan Rang Farms Open**

*(Phan Fare 1969 January 16)*

Enthusiasts--your chance to try the fruitful soil of Vietnam has come! Sixty 20-by-20-foot farm plots have been plowed at Phan Rang Air Base. Irrigation water has been brought in, seeds accumulated, fertilizer acquired, and tools are being gathered.

These mini-farms are a recreational project initiated by Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., commander, 35th TFW, to serve a variety of purposes.

In addition to the pure recreational aspect of the farm, they are expected to provide a large volume of fresh vegetables.

SMSgt Richard E. Hawkins, NCOIC Personnel Services, currently heads the program.

"We now have seeds for two types of watermelons and onions, seeds for tomatoes, red hot peppers, mustard, lettuce, cucumbers and pumpkins and are open to recommendations from our new farmers.

## **"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 "Stories worth telling"

---

"With the 12-month growing season we have in Vietnam, plus a continuing supply of water and fertilizer, the men will have a year round production capability.

'The plots are being given out on a first-come, first come, first-serve basis," he added, "but if farmers fails to keep up the plot, it will be turned over to someone who will care for it."

## **Plaques Honor PRAB Fallen**

*(Phan Fare, 1969 February 6)*

Two plaques, dedicated to the men of Phan Rang Air Base who have given their lives in the battle against communism in Vietnam, were unveiled recently in base chapel services.

They were purchase" with funds contributed by members of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, 315th Special Operations Wing and B. flight, 3rd SOSq.

One plaque, a large Philippine mahogany carving, now stands in the base chapel and is, in the words of Col, Frank L. Gailer Jr., commander, 35th TFW, "a permanent memorial to those of our wing who have paid that last full measure of devotion...giving their lives in the service of their country."

"(These men) have brought honor not only to themselves and their country but have also won the confidence, respect and admiration of freedom-loving people everywhere," he said.

Affixed to the plaques are miniature emblems of participating units.

The second plaque, presented to the men of Det. 1, 38th ARRS, shows a miniature helicopter atop a pyramidal base.

Engraved on the base are the names of the five men who lost their lives when their HH-43 "Pedro" crashed on Oct. 1, 1968. **Maj, John C. Action Jr.**, detachment commander, said that the plaque will be displayed in a prominent location in their unit operations.

Saluting the crew, Colonel Gailer told the assembled rescuemen, "(They) severed their country faithfully and courageously."

## **Fire power Shadow's Strong Point**

*(Seventh Air Force News June 11, 1969)*

**By Capt. William R. Casey**

(Editor's Note: This is second in a series of four articles)

**PHAN RANG** — According to the National Rifle Association, the average rifle owner will, in hunting and in target practice, shoot about 16,000 rounds of ammunition in a lifetime.

The Shadow shoots more. Shadow, in this instance, refers to B Flight of the 71st Special Operations Squadron (SOS), headquartered here. The 71st SOS is the proprietor of the AC-119s employing minigun firepower in support of Allied forces in the Republic of Vietnam.

The miniguns fire the new 62mm NATO cartridge which is comparable to the Winchester .308. The 7.62 bullet travels from the barrel at nearly 2,760 feet per-second muzzle velocity and strikes its target with almost 1,-000 foot-pounds of energy.

For a non-technical comparison, that would be like getting hit with a .38 caliber round from a distance of 12 feet.

The AC-119's four miniguns can fire 400 rounds a second. Each gun is capable of 6,000 rounds per minute and they may be fired singly or in combination to achieve a maximum rate of fire of 24,000 rounds per minute! The gunship orbits over the target. This maneuver provides a continuous and accurate delivery of ordnance from all points completely surrounding the enemy position.

This form of attack allows little recovery time for enemy ground troops and results in flank and rear exposure of a force.

## **They Do More Than Talk about the Weather**

*(Seventh Air Force News June 11, 1969)*

**By TSgt. John B. Mahony**

**PHAN RANG** — "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it," people have said.

Not true!" says Maj. Fred T. Miyashiro, commander of Detachment 22, 30th Weather Squadron, here. "We forecast! The 38-year-old meteorologist from Kahului, Hawaii, and his 17-man detachment operate a typical 24-hour weather fore-casting and observing station in Vietnam. The detachment's primary mission is to give accurate and timely weather reports to the aircrews of the two wings at Phan Rang.



## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

The base is home for twin-engined C-123 Provider transports of the 315th Special Operations Wing and F-100 Supersabres of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing.

"Our biggest challenge is to predict weather where our transports are going, where the fighters will strike, and, of course, the weather conditions enroute," Major Miyashiro explained.

"Ceilings and visibilities have to be such to permit planes to land elsewhere or hit targets. Local weather is no problem to forecast, although it is unique for Vietnam."

Unique indeed. Visitors to the base are surprised to find cactus, Spanish Bayonet and other desert plants that one could find in the Southwest United States. Five thousand foot mountains, which border the air base on three sides, keep Phan Rang's average annual rainfall down to 31 inches. This is light compared with Saigon's 77 inches and Da Nang's 84 inches annually.

The climate on this base is amazing for Southeast Asia," Major Miyashiro said, "but it is understandable. Most of the coastal stations get less rain than the Highlands. Nha Trang, for example, which is 50 miles north of here, gets 55 inches a year.

"Primarily, what happens is this: from about May through October, Vietnam experiences what is called the southwest monsoon season. This is when all the tropical storms and moisture-filled winds move in from the South China Sea.

"As these currents rise in order to overcome the mountains in their path," Major Miyashiro continued, "they cool and precipitate their moisture slopes. By the time these winds get to us on the eastern side, they are pretty well dried out. "Sea-level pressure, temperature, dew point, wind direction and speed, altimeter setting, visibility, ceiling, sky condition, and humidity are just part of the data we gather and disseminate hourly," he pointed out.

"We use several devices such as this weather radar to assist us. With radar we can see buildups as they occur in the area. We brief pilots as to the location and what these buildups are in their path," Major Miyashiro continued, "they cool and precipitate their moisture slopes. By the time these winds get to us on the eastern side, they are pretty well dried out.

"Sea-level pressure, temperature, dew point, wind direction and speed, altimeter setting, visibility, ceiling, sky condition, and humidity are just part of the data we gather and disseminate hourly," he pointed out.

"We use several devices such as this weather radar to assist us. With radar we can see buildups as they occur in the area. We brief pilots as to the location and what these buildups are doing, the direction they are moving, and how high.

## **"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 "Stories worth telling"

---

A row of teletype machines constantly trade weather information with other stations and Asian Weather Central at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon. Next to the teletypes is a facsimile transmitter-receiver which speeds weather maps throughout Vietnam.

In addition, the detachment gets a broad, general weather picture of Asia from Fuchu Weather Central in Japan. The central stations have weather satellites and electronic computers assisting them.

A teleantograph machine, which permits electrical transmission of hand written data, is installed at each wing command post. and base tower. The teleautograph provides the weatherman with the capability of keeping the wings posted with up-to-the-minute changes. Weather is considered as war's most basic consideration. Weather played big roles in the Berlin Airlift, the successful evacuation at Dunkirk, the D-Day invasion of Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, and Napoleon's and Hitler's defeats in Russia, to mention but a few.

In Vietnam, weather is a vital factor in war. The weathermen of Phan Rang Air Base are determined to make Old Man Weather work for the U. S. Air Force.

## **Fast Getaway for Super Sabres**

*(Pacific Stars and Stripes, Thursday, June 19, 1969)*

**PHAN RANG AB**, Vietnam (Special)—"Scramble Switchblade 20." the voice says over the phone, and within minutes a pair of F-100 Super Sabres are roaring down the Phan Rang runway.

This is a scramble-an answer to a call for close air support. Each week one of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing's four F-100 squadrons makes scrambling its primary mission.

While on alert, pilots and crew chiefs spend a 12-hour shift in a small trailer complex near their aircraft. One such pilot is 1st Lt. Ronald W. Rubin, 24, of Nanuet, N.Y., and the 612th Tactical Fighter Sq.

"Pilots and their crew chiefs are teamed and coded for each shift," Rubin explained. "When our code is called, we are off and running towards a fully loaded aircraft. We must be on the way to the target within minutes.

"After the engine is started," Rubin said, "we receive the mission briefing from the wing command post over the radio." The pilot then taxies out of the revetment to the runway and off on another mission.

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

Rubin's crew chief, Sgt. Jesus R. Padilla, 23, of Queens, N.Y., is responsible for the aircraft's readiness. "Between missions I check over the jet and make a minor repairs," he said. "When a scramble is called, the aircraft must be ready to go.

"After the systems are checked and the ordnance loaded," Padilla continued, "the pilot switches the systems on so all he needs to do is fire up the engine to take off."

## **Canberra at War**

### **With No. 2 Squadron, R.A.A.F.**

by J. W. BENNETT

Two days before Christmas 1966 the Australian government announced the deployment of a Canberra bomber squadron to South Vietnam to add to the already large military commitment to the Republic. The squadron involved was No. 2 Bomber Squadron, then based at Butterworth, northern Malaysia, operating the Australian Canberra B.20. These aircraft are basically the R.A.A.F. version of the R.A.F. 's Canberra B.2, although, being equipped with Avon 109. engines and integral fuel tanks, they are similar to the later B.6. Before departing for the war zone, No. 2 Squadron's Canberras were fitted with TACAN oral UHF to become compatible with other tactical aircraft in Vietnam, and with wingtip bomb carriers to increase the aircraft's weapons load.

Arriving at Phan Rang, a U.S.A.F., air base 150 miles northeast of Saigon. In April 1967, No 2 Squadron become part of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing under the direct control of the U.S. 7th Air Force. Phan Rang was chosen as the Canberras' base because it was the home of the U.S.A.F. squadrons of B-57s, serving beside several squadrons of F-100s forming the 35th TFW. These squadrons of B-57s were later withdrawn and replaced by further F-100s, leaving the Canberras as the sole bombers in an otherwise wholly fighter wing.

### **Operations**

Combat flying began for No. 2 Squadron on 23rd April 1967. and for the first four months all missions were Combat Sky Spots (CSS). This involved high level bomb release as directed by a ground radar site. Bombing sorties were conducted throughout South Vietnam under the guidance of U.S.A.F. and Marine radar controllers. During this phase of operations the weapons loads included either 1,000 -lb bombs or ten 500 lb bombs.

In September 1967 the squadron began its first visual bombing missions. Here the Canberra excelled, displaying outstanding accuracy from medium and low levels, although it was not until August 1968 that the 7th Air Force decided to use the Canberra in a mainly visual role, still retaining some CSS operations. At that stage the squadron also standardized on the 750-lb bomb, each aircraft carrying six of these weapons.

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

Most of the Canberras’ targets are in the Mekong Delta area of South Vietnam known as the Fourth Military Region (4MR). The Canberra, by nature of its level bombing technique (which, incidentally, is the only such visual system used in the Republic), is suited to dropping sticks of bombs-any combination of six bombs at any selected stick length. This has proved ideal working against the long straight canals in 4MR, which harbor Viet Cong troops. Due to the “Vietnamisation” of the war, which is especially evident in this region, the Canberras have been working solely with V.N.A.F. Forward Air Controllers (FACs) since early 1970. The FACs, who fly O-1 Bird Dogs, mark the required target by smoke rockets. Daily the R.A.A.F. and V.N.A.F. cooperate in this way to destroy, very effectively, the Viet Cong (VC) base camps and supply caches.

Elsewhere in South Vietnam the Canberras work with U.S.A.F. and Australian FACs flying F-2 and OV-10 aircraft. In the more northern regions bombing against VC bunker complexes, supporting troops in contact or by making landing-zone (LZ) preparations for helicopters, the Canberra has demonstrated remarkable accuracy and with its relatively long endurance (compared with that of all other tactical aircraft in the Republic) can loiter in the target area for hours and then deliver its deadly load over six single attacks.

In April 1970 No. 2 Squadron moved into a new field of operations by interdicting roads in the northernmost region of South Vietnam, the First Military Region (1MR), immediately south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The main area of operation during this phase was bombing the road winding through the A Shau Valley, the principal supply route from the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex in Laso to VC base camps in northern 1MR, the area surrounding the huge U.S. base at Da Nang. This interdiction proved highly successful, and the speed with which the VC tried to repair road damage showed that the Canberras’ bombing was seriously denying the enemy his supplies.

### **Bombing system**

Contrary to the theory of dive-bombing being more accurate than level delivery, the Canberras have achieved a reputation of unsurpassed accuracy. All attacks are photographed by a vertically mounted camera enabling these passes to be assessed precisely. This is unique in South Vietnam and hence no statistical comparison can be given with other squadrons. An average 50 per cent Circular Error for No. 2 Squadron per month is 38 metres; sometimes crews achieve monthly results of 50 per cent bombs within 10 metres line and 20 metres of range. What makes these surprising figures seem even more incredible is the bombing fitted in the aircraft. To Marconi’s astonishment, the R.A.A.F. Canberras are still equipped with Green Satin Doppler, the drift and groundspeed readouts being manually fed by the navigator into the T4 Bombsight of 1950 vintage.

Along with the remarkable accuracy, No 2 Squadron also achieves an enviable Bomb Damage Assessment (DBA) from the FACs. The monthly BDA is always high and makes this unit one of

## "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN.

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 "Stories worth telling"

---

the best scorers in Vietnam. In October 1970 the squadron reached its 10,000th combat mission in South Vietnam, during this period dropping 65,000 bombs.

Although the Canberra is now twenty-two years old, this aircraft is still providing the 7th Air Force with an extremely accurate and devastating weapons system, supplying invaluable close air support and interdiction to the Allied war effort.

### Why Veterans Unite

From a post by Lonnie Flowers "I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men Who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades... Such good men."



**Famous Actor** - (*Seventh Air Force News*, March 12, 1969)

**At Phan Rang AB, actor Pat O'Brien, famous for his portrayal of football's immortal Knute Rockne, shakes hands with Sgt. Lawrence T. Phillips as he leaves an armored Security Police Vehicle. (Photo by A1C Donald B. Dirksing)**

## **Base Defense Center Monitors Free Forces**

*(Seventh Air Force News, March 12, 1969)*

**PHAN RANG** — "It's a big job with tremendous responsibility," said TSgt. Joseph E. Moore, Tampa, Fla., as he explained the purpose of Phan Rang AB's Installation Coordinating Center (ICC).

"The ICC," he continued, "is responsible for coordinating the activities of local area Free World forces. These include Vietnam's ARVN and Popular Forces units, elements of the Republic of Korea's White Horse Division, Royal Australian Air Force elements, and the U.S. Army and Air Force units in this vicinity.

"In the recent attack on Phan Rang by enemy forces," Sergeant Moore added, "one of the prime tasks of the ICC was locating where incoming mortar rounds were being launched from and calling in artillery mortar and air strikes against enemy positions. At the same time, we had to assure that no friendly forces were near these targets. "Later, when the attack was over, I accompanied Korean soldiers on a sweep outside the base perimeter defenses. We had to eliminate the possibility that the enemy might launch a second attack. By taking an active part in the base defense, we became more familiar with our allies' method of operation."

In the opinion of many base officials, the ICC was one of the key agencies in the successful repulse of the enemy attack and in holding base damage to a minimum.

This was not the first that ICC's operation has been termed "indispensable." "In our routine day-to-day work," said 2nd Lt. Albert C. Rock, Long Meadow, Mass., officer-in-charge of the ICC, "we keep an around-the-clock tab on the status of all Free World forces in the area.

"We must know and keep the other services informed on locations, time schedules, movements, all activities of patrols, planned ambushes, day and night. We keep in touch with everything within a 30-kilometer radius of Phan Rang AB.

"We are also responsible for gathering and analyzing intelligence data from these same units," he continued. "This information is collated and made available to our commanders here and at Headquarters, Seventh Air Force as well."

Other members of this section include Staff Sergeants Douglas A. Gray, San Antonio, and David G. Buch, Denver and Sgt. Frank W. Christenson, Decatur, Ga.



## **Phan Rang’s Officers’ Mess Receives Professional Touch**

*(Seventh Air Force News, March 13, 1969)*

**PHAN RANG** — there is no AFSC in the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing's manning document for an interior decorator, but the new Phan Rang Officers Open Mess will definitely bear the traces of a professional's touch, thanks to A1C Hunter Stone of the 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

Airman Stone, a personal equipment specialist, was owner of his own interior decorating firm in Denver before being called to active duty with the Air National Guard unit during the Pueblo crisis of early 1968.

Tipped by SSgt. Paul Coffee, a fellow former Air Guardsman now working at the present "O" Club the club's board of governors approached Airman Stone, who readily accepted the task, even though "it means burning the midnight oil for quite a few nights."

"When I started out, I wanted to design the interior of the new club to not only be durable, but to be one of the better looking clubs in the Air Force, particularly in the Far East," he said.

To meet these self-imposed goals, the guardsman has chosen an Edwardian era motif. "I was seeking a masculine effect," he said.

He will rely heavily on mahogany paneling, black naugahyde, a burgundy coloring for the runs, and false beams for the ceiling.

The VIP room will be highlighted by a large burgundy loop rug with the 35th TFW's emblem weaved into the center. This room will also have a black naugahyde wainscoating, black leatherette chairs and indirect lighting.

The bar will include three smoked glass mirrors, separated by moss rock dividers, and illuminated by hand-hammered carriage lamps, the same type lamps that will line the hallway leading from the double entrance front door to the bar. The bar itself will have a padded black naugahyde front, with brass foot-rail.

Present plans call for the bar wing to be open in two months; the dining wing in six months. The interior decorating job is the second bit of "moonlighting" for Airman. Stone. Since his arrival in country with the former Colorado ANG unit last May, the tall, trim airman has been averaging about \$200 a month as a volunteer barber.

His present customers read like a "Who's Who" at Phan Rang AB. He is looking forward to that

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

day in May when he can re-enter the decorating field in Denver, selling his ideas to hotels, motels and apartment buildings. He looks forward to relaxing in someone else's barber chair, getting a razor cut and having some cute chick giving him a manicure.

He plans to give up barbering the minute he reverts back to ANG status. "If I ever see another head of hair, I'm going to go crazy," he yelled.

Meanwhile, he's thankful for the chance to decorate the Phan Rang "O" Club. It's sort of a transition back to his former occupation after nearly a year of fitting parachutes and checking out survival gear.

## **F-100 Pilot Survives Bailout, Goes Fishing in China Sea**

*(Seventh Air Force News March 12, 1969)*

**PHAN RANG** — One of the most adventurous rescues in the history of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, here, occurred recently when Capt. Fred E. Davis, Makanda, Ill., ejected from his F-100 Supersabre over the South China Sea. Captain Davis, for whom this was the second bailout from a battle-damaged aircraft in recent weeks, ejected a few miles from Phan Thiet City and splashed down near a small fleet of Vietnamese fishing boats.

"We knew," he later commented, "that there were quite a few Viet Cong sampans in the area. I floated there for a minute, and then one of the boats pulled alongside me and motioned for me to come aboard.

"I was scared, but there were so many other boats around that I didn't figure that I had anything to lose. Once aboard, I tried to tell them that I wanted to go to a nearby destroyer, the USS Robert K. Huntington. I couldn't make them understand, and from the way they were looking at me, I wasn't sure that they wanted to understand.

"I took out a smoke flare and lit it, hoping to get the attention of one of the search planes. Finally, one of the forward air controllers saw me.

"My problems still weren't over. By this time, a number of other boats were beginning to close in on us, and I had a good idea why! About the time I had finished all the prayers I knew, an Army Huey Cobra came over and let loose with a burst of .50 caliber machine-gun fire between us and the other boats.

"Before we could weigh anchor and head for the destroyer, I had to help them pull in their

## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN.**

..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 “Stories worth telling”

---

fishing nets. After about 20 minutes of some pretty strenuous work, we got underway to the Huntington.

"A lifeboat met us at the ship, and took me aboard. On the Huntington, I was outfitted in a Navy uniform. The men of the ship were very helpful in getting me back to base.

"First I was taken by Navy chopper to Phan Thiet, and then an O-2 Bird Dog aircraft brought me back to Phan. Rang.

"Now " concluded Captain Davis, "I'll have something to tell any grandchildren about.!"

## **Phan Rang AB Final Days**

*by Joseph Luther*

As the war in South Vietnam entered its conclusion, the SVNAF pilots at Phan Rang flew sortie after sortie, supporting the retreating South Vietnamese Army after it abandoned Cam Rang Bay on April 14. For two days after the ARVN left the area, the Wing Commander at Phan Rang fought on with the forces under his command.

The last of the SVNAF 2d Air Division abandoned the airfield with the remaining flyable airplanes, leaving four A C-119s which had flown in from Da Nang and two A-37s. The SVNAF had several squadrons of students from Phan Rang flying A-37s at England AFB, Louisiana. Approximately 187 A-37Bs were assigned to Phan Rang AB when the North Vietnamese invasion took place. Many A-37s managed to fly south and later managed to fly to the USAF-controlled U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield, Thailand, where Ninety-two were recovered.

ARVN Airborne troops were sent in for one last attempt to hold the airfield, but the defenders were finally overrun on April 16 and Phan Rang Air Base was lost to the North Vietnamese Army.

## **Sabre Pilots Destroy Enemy Bunkers, Truck**

*(Seventh Air Force News, January 15, 1969)*

**PHAN RANG**—F-100 Supersabre pilots of the 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron here recently flew three separate missions on the same day in support of Allied Forces conducting the TOAN THANG OFFEN-

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..keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 1 "Stories worth telling"

---

SIVE in the III Corps tactical zone.

Of his mission, one of the former Colorado Air National Guard pilots, said, "After a week of hardly any bomb damage assessment (BDA) it felt pretty good to have bit something. All in all it was a pretty good mission."

The final BDA for the strike was eight bunkers destroyed and six damaged, ten fighting positions destroyed with another 15 uncovered, 40 meters of trench destroyed and a 2 ½ ton truck destroyed.

On a second mission, the forward air controller (FAC) reported that the pilots killed one enemy soldier and destroyed a sampan.

One of the pilots was Capt. **James K. Fletcher**, Denver, Colo.

The pilots on the third mission were Maj. **John L. France**, Aurora, Colo., and Capt. **William J. Wilson**, Wray, Colo. Their target was a known enemy location about 25 miles west of Saigon.

"The enemy had practically built a town in there," commented Major France, "and we hit it good. The wind wasn't bad so we had no trouble putting our bombs right on target."

The final BDA for the mission was 14 enemy bunkers destroyed and 6 uncovered, 15 meters of trench destroyed and another 200 meters uncovered.