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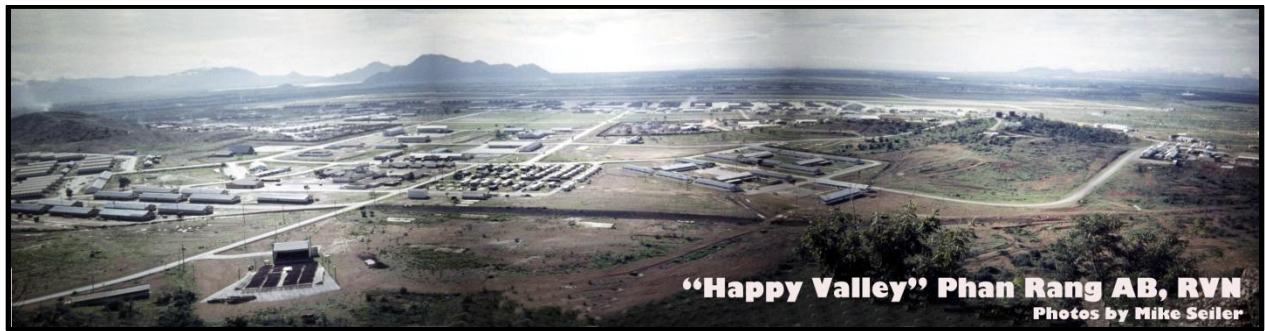
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Doug's Note



The 2014 "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB Reunion

Where: DoubleTree by Hilton, Reid Park, 445 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson AZ

When: October 9-11

Single/Double rate \$99

Banquet 11 October in the Bonsai Room



You may now make your hotel reservations for the reunion. Click on the Double Tree logo above and it will take you to the Phan Rang AB Reunion Web Site. Please make your reservations early which will help us greatly in the planning process and also to insure that everyone that wants to attend gets the reunion rate. This is a smaller hotel than the previous year, so we have to watch it very carefully. Remember if circumstances prevent you from attending you can always cancel within 24 hours of your check-in date. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact [me](#).

Psychologist Uses Mini-Gun To Convince VC He's Wrong *(Seventh Air Force News, Dec. 4, 1968)*

DANANG — It has often been said that psychology can lead a man to the mending of his ways, but a young psychologist with the AC-17 "Spooky" Flight at Da Nang uses a hail of 7.62mm mini-gun fire to convince the enemy that he is on the wrong trail.

Whether or not the LeMoyne College graduate, 1st Lt. Kenneth J. Snyder, Syracuse, N.Y. has practiced any real psychology is not known but he's spent over 1,150 hours flying 285 combat missions with the 4th Special Operations Squadron.

Lieutenant Snyder is an AC-47 navigator, a title which doesn't begin to cover the duties involved. "My first job is to get the aircraft to our target. Once we have the target in sight, I coordinate with the ground force, determine where the friendlies' lines are and where the enemy positions are," he said. "I then convert this information into aerial terms so the pilot knows the exact location. "Then I become a forward air navigator, directing the pilot's aim of fire so we stay on the precise target."

At times navigators aboard AC-47s are also called on to direct friendly artillery fire onto enemy positions.

"Sometime ago, I was on a mission near Hoi An, south of Da Nang where Viet Cong troops were trying to take the city," he started. "It was a major assault during the Tet Offensive and there were at least two companies trying to penetrate the city. Our AC-47 was the only air support aircraft available since other enemy actions were going on during that period.

"We arrived over the target and began dropping flares and firing at the advancing enemy. After we stemmed their advances, we dropped flares over the city itself to help the friendlies fighting off snipers and infiltrators," he added.

When the enemy found his path to the city protected by the slow flying but fast firing Spooky, he launched a large scale rocket attack to cover his retreat.

"We found his launching pads and immediately started firing on these," said Lieutenant Snyder. "Once we had silenced the rocket positions, we dropped flares and flushed the enemy companies out into an open rice paddy where ground forces combined with Spooky's deadly fire were credited with over 200 enemy troops killed.

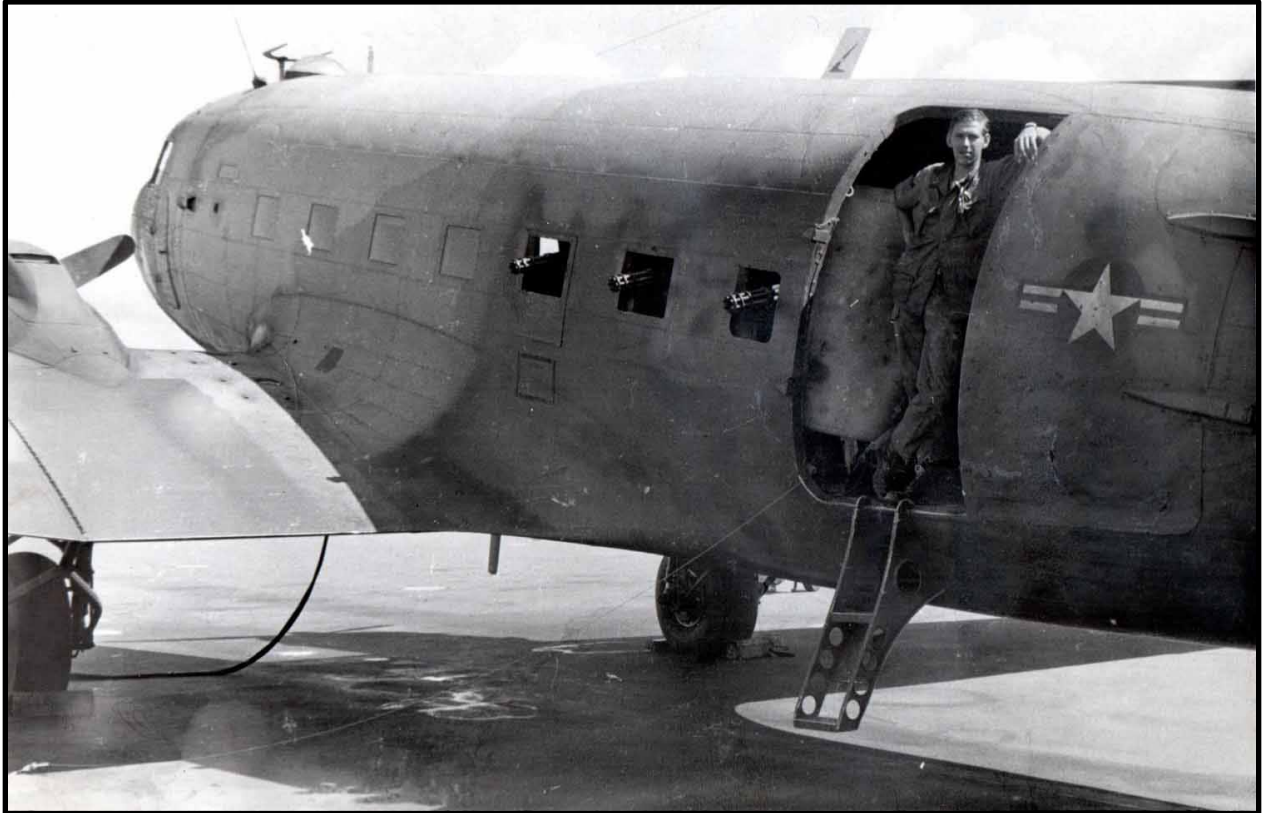
"We took some ground fire that night, but only one round hit us. It came up into the cockpit, bounced around and fell spent on the floor," he continued.

The mission terminated with over five hours of defensive air support for the city.

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"It was after day break before we could leave the area, knowing that it was secure," he noted. "And it was one of the only times I know that Spooky was airborne during daylight hours."

Undoubtedly he'll use some of the 'case studies' made during his hours flying Spooky missions, while assigned to 'A' Flight of the 4th SOS at Da Nang, when he begins his new duties as a navigator instructor for AC-47s at England AFB, La.



Spooky - Photo by Carl Cromwell

Airlift Crews Maintain Supply Lifeline *(Seventh Air Force News Dec. 4, 1968)*

CAM RANH BAY — "They say you can't fight a war without supplies," said Maj. John F. Hilgenberg, Kaukauna, Wis., and airlift crews are the men who get the supplies to every base in Vietnam."

Major Hilgenberg is an aircraft commander of a C-130 Hercules assigned to the 21st Tactical Airlift Squadron, Naha AB, Okinawa. He is temporarily assigned to the 834th Air Division, flying airlift missions from Cam Ranh Bay AB.

A recent C-130 mission from Cam Ranh Bay describes many of the problems and contains much of the satisfaction that face the airlift crews.

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The cargo-loaded Hercules departs from Cam Ranh Bay during all hours of the day and night. On one recent mission 32,000 pounds of concertina wire, steel revetment materials and C-rations were airlifted to Ban Me Thuot East, a Civilian Irregular Defense Group Camp deep in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

At Ban Me Thuot East, the pilot, Capt. James B. Kozlowski, Chicago, kept one of the four engines running while Aerial Port personnel unloaded the cargo. The aircraft loadmaster, Sgt. Bennie A. Brown, Odessa, Tex., then began installing seats for the passengers waiting to go to Nha Trang AB.

While the passengers off load at Nha Trang the interior must again be set up for cargo. The flight engineer, SSgt. Pete Staffan, Mackinaw City, Mich., and the navigator, Capt. Michael T. McKeon, Peru, N.Y., assist the load-master. Seats are put away and the aircraft is prepared to receive four huge pallets of automotive fuel in 55 gallon drums.

The crew takes a quick break to eat lunch and then back for the leg to Nhon Co, an Army Special Forces camp only 25 miles from the Cambodian border. No one answers the radio request for landing instructions so the crew must make a low level pass down the runway to indicate that the C-130 wants to land.

The 62 drums of gasoline are speed off-loaded, a method where the pallets are pushed off the rear ramp of the aircraft while the plane is taxied forward. From Nanh Co, the navigator heads the Hercules back to Cam Ranh Bay for refueling and another load.

Ammunition for 105mm howitzers is picked up at Cam Ranh and the landing at Phan Thiet is made over rice paddies and fields of scrub growth pockmarked with bomb craters reminiscent of the recent fighting there.

The mission ends with a stop at Nha Trang again to pick up mail to be speeded to the United States from Cam Ranh Bay, the final stop of the day's mission. The Hercules touches down twelve hours after the crew began its day.

"It makes for a long day, split between flying, loading and refueling." Major Hilgenberg conceded, "but it does get the supplies through. It's worth it when you know that the men in the field are getting the mail, fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as the materials to fight the war with." The crew works well together and usually flies as an integral group.

"We have to be able to work together and we really must know our airplane." Captain McKeon said. "If we land at one of these small fields out in the bush and something goes wrong with the airplane someone on board must know how to fix it."

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The flight engineer agreed with the navigator. "My job is to know every system on the airplane as well as I can," Sergeant Staffan said. If something breaks down I have to fix it one way or another so we can get back to our base."

The loadmaster is also a vital cog in the structure of the crew. "My job," Sergeant Brown explained, "is to supervise the loading of the airplane, compute the weight and balance, and assist any passengers we carry."



Archie T. Pinkley: Det. 8, 14th Aerial Port personnel unloading a 101st Jeep on a C-130.....1967

The fifth crewmember is the co-pilot.

"When I'm not flying the airplane," Captain Kozlowski explained, "I have to take care of the radio communication and back up the pilot in all phases of the flight."

The airlift people feel that they have an important job.

"This is some of the most diversified flying we have ever done," Major Hilgenberg said. "You face something new and different every day and there is seldom a dull moment."

Got Photos or Stories that you would like to share with Phan Rangers and other interested Vietnam veterans? If you do, send those treasured pictures and stories to me and I'll include in this newsletter, that reaches out to over 200, or post on Facebook where we have over 550 former Phan Rangers, their families and friends. You can contact [me](#) and I will provide further instructions. Share the Phan Rang story and keep the memories alive.

Spooky Rides Skies at Night; Builds Viet Homes in Day (*Seventh Air Force News, Dec. 4, 1968*)

DA NANG — Maj. Rueben E. Williams, Clara City, Minn., is one "Spooky" who prowls the skies at night and spends the daylight hours helping the Vietnamese people whose homes have been destroyed by Viet Cong actions.

"I'd say it all started about two years ago when I was on a Civil Air Patrol assignment," began Major-Williams. "I had orders to report to England AFB, La., for air commando training in the C-123 Provider. But before I got there, I heard about the Spooky program and that pilots with experience in C-47s were needed, so I volunteered for the AC-47 school. After I finished the gunnery school I came to Vietnam."

Major Williams was assigned to Pleiku AB for three months before moving to Da Nang where he is assigned to the 4th Special Operations Squadron. "I think Spooky is one of the most rewarding flying jobs in Southeast Asia," he noted. "On most missions you provide air support to ground troops who are having a tough time with enemy attacks, and when you hose down the area with mini-gun fire, the enemy pulls back or breaks his attack in a hurry. And anytime you can lend a helping hand to the ground troops, you get a good feeling."

Spooky aircraft fly during darkness hours, prowling the skies, ready for call for help which sends the slow flying converted transport in a circling orbit, dropping flares and pouring rounds of 7.62 ammunition into enemy troops. Most missions are in support of ground forces threatened by enemy troops or mortar-rocket attacks. However, some missions are in support of med-evac operations which require extra fire power to keep the enemy's ground fire suppressed until the helicopter can get out with the wounded.

"Since we fly only at night, I had a lot of spare time during the days, so I got involved in civic action," continued Major Williams. "Some of the projects I've been working on include the construction of a new addition to the Vietnamese Air Force school here at Da Nang, a party for

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800 children from Co Man Hamlet, and gathering lumber and equipment to rebuild homes destroyed by the Viet Cong during Tet in Lo Giang.

"Right now the entire squadron is participating in a drive to raise money for scholarships for deserving Vietnamese Air Force dependents. This drive has just begun and my replacement will take over where I left off," he concluded.

To show their appreciation for his civic action, the Vietnamese Air Force awarded Major Williams the Vietnamese Medal of Honor First Class in a recent ceremony at the Headquarters of the 41st Wing at Da Nang AB.

A Stewardess' Record of Soviet MiGs Snaring a U. S. Transport
(Life Magazine July 17, 1968)
*(Note: U. S. Urges Quick Release Of Off-Course Transport appeared in **Phan Rang News 12.**)*

When the Seaboard World Airlines plane, with 214 American servicemen bound for Vietnam, was forced down by Soviet MiG fighters over the Kurile islands in the Pacific, stewardess Nancy Jacquier of Placerville, Calif. recorded the incident with her



Stewardess Nancy Jacquier with camera and souvenir Russian cigarettes.

\$12 camera. Here is her picture-and-word account.

Out of Seattle, with our destination of Yokota Airbase near Tokyo less than eight hours away, we served the men a lunch of fried chicken. Our maiden flight in this huge Seaboard DC-8 was normal, except that nothing seemed to function properly in the galley. The ovens didn't heat quickly enough, our coffeemaker was on the blink and I had to make too many trips the length of the 165-foot cabin to get hot coffee to the 214 passengers aboard.

Just an hour and a half from our destination, I plopped down into a rear jump seat to take off

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my shoes and eat a leftover chicken dinner. We were flying at 35,000 feet, in clear blue skies high above a floor of clouds, when I heard somebody's alarmed shout: "Look out the window." Through the high porthole in the service door next to me I saw the plane, silver with big red stars on its tail and wings. It looked small and toy like, but it was only a few feet away and I was afraid our wings were going to collide. I had no idea what the plane was until somebody yelled it was a Soviet MiG fighter. I crossed to the opposite window and saw another MiG with the pilot looking directly at us. I snatched my camera, a \$12 Instamatic which my brother had given me for Christmas, and started taking pictures. The MiG pilot was gesturing, and for a moment I thought he was waving and being friendly. Actually, he was signaling our pilots to bank to the right and descend.

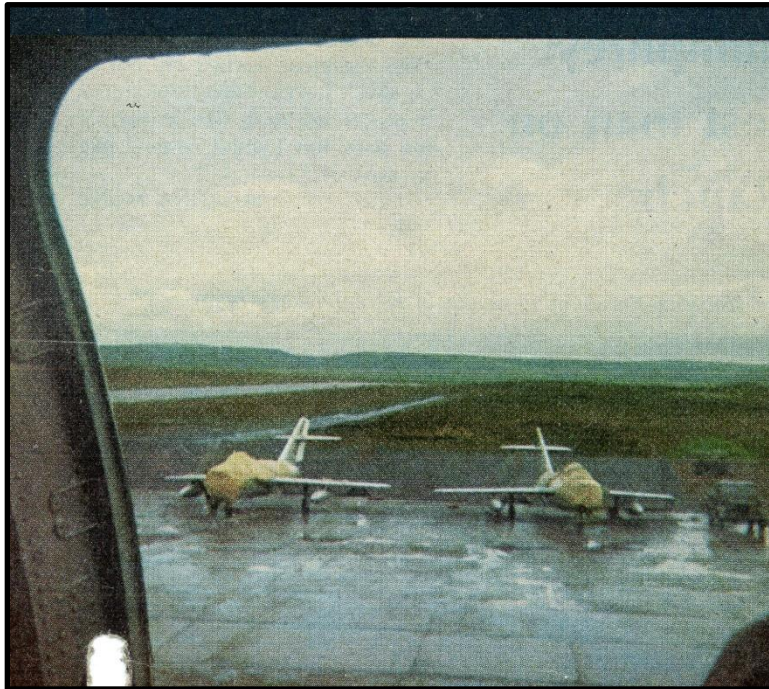


Views of the MiG fighter as it closed in.

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The other MiG, now flying ahead of us, was firing a burst of machine-gun fire by way of emphasizing the point. We went into a frighteningly steep descent and made a quick landing. Through the windows I saw a crowd of people, including maybe 50 children, gathered beside the plane. When the door was opened, a group of unarmed Russian officers came aboard. I remember one of them in particular because he was so good-looking, tall and slender with dark hair. But he wouldn't smile at me. The only one who smiled was a husky woman wearing a thick sweater. She acted as interpreter.

Immediately, our flight crew was escorted off. In crude English, the interpreter assured the rest of us we would be on our way soon. We were told to lower the shades, and the good-looking officer collected passports and identification cards.



The MiGs that forced the airliner down.

Food was put on board for supper. There were 30 loaves of warm, dark bread that smelled of vinegar, tins of white cheddar-tasting cheese and a mountainous chunk of butter, as big as a 50-pound cake of ice. To conserve battery power, we had no lights, no galley heat, no lavatory facilities. By midnight most everyone aboard was asleep, but the huge chunk of butter was in my seat, so I sat on the floor and talked to a sergeant from Washington.

In the morning, to ease our anxiety, card games were launched, a guitar was pulled out and we sang. That afternoon we received our first information, bellowed into the cabin by the interpreter through a megaphone: we were waiting, she said, for an official and an interpreter to come from Moscow.

About 10 p.m. I went to the cockpit to sleep. I curled up in the captain's seat, next to the navigator, Larry Guernon, who was in a fit of depression, blaming himself for the incident. A little later, Pilot Joe Tosolini came in from his long interrogation. As he collapsed into a seat he said, "You know, Nancy, we'll be lucky if we get out of here in a month."

We were awakened again at 2:30 a.m. by the Russians, who took all nine stewardesses by truck to an unheated log building filled with rows of sewing tables. Thin mats and sheets had been

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arranged on the table tops for beds. There the interpreter from Moscow, just arrived, courteously apologized for the accommodations. From sheer exhaustion, I suppose, I lay on my sewing table and cried. We hadn't been there more than a couple of hours when the interpreter reappeared, wearing a big smile. He spoke just one word: "Tokyo." Instantly awake, we leaped up and embraced each other.

It took two hours for a single Soviet truck to fuel the plane for our departure; meanwhile the Russians made a complete search of the cabin. Luckily they missed the oxygen mask where my camera was hidden. After they left, the doors were secured, the "No Smoking" flashed on and Joe's voice sounded through the cabin: "Everybody get into your seats as fast as you can because we're getting out of here." As the plane lifted off, almost vertically it seemed, the cheers were so deafening it sounded like New Year's Eve.



A GI looking out at a Russian soldier in a guard (lower center).

(Note: I would really be interested in knowing if any of the passengers aboard this aircraft were to be assigned at Phan Rang AB. If anyone knows, please let me know.)

Canberra Truck Killers Form Centurion Club - Eligibility Requirement: Destroy 100 Vehicles

By CAPT. PETER J. ANDERSON

PHAN RANG—The Centurion Club, one of the most exclusive clubs in the Air Force, has been formed here.

To qualify for membership an individual must destroy 100 enemy trucks as confirmed by a forward air controller.

"One of the men who originated the idea," said Col. Elbert M. Stringer, Moberly, Mo., 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron commander, "was Maj. Philip H. Lacy, (San Antonio). He felt that since the mission of the squadron was to destroy trucks there should be some recognition for those who did the job well."

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Truck hunters of the 8th TBS fly the B-57 Canberra in support of their interdiction mission. The primary infiltration routes into South Vietnam are the targets for the night flying air crews.

Colonel Stringer, who also flew night missions with the 8th TBS during the Korean War, credits the Forward Air Controllers (FAC) with the high success rate for the B-57s.



Lt. Col. John T. Schiffer, (left) a B-57 Canberra navigator, is one of the leaders in the Centurion Club. He has destroyed 125 trucks. Col Elbert M. Stringer, (right) is commander of the famed 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron and is a member with 109 trucks destroyed.

"The FACs are really good," he said. "They start the mission off by finding the trucks on the roads or in truck parks. If the trucks are using lights they can be spotted by the naked eye.

A Starlight scope must be used when the trucks are running without lights though.

"The FAC will dart in there," the colonel continued, "mark the target and instruct the crew on where he wants the bombs placed."

Maj. Frank A. Hughes, Edenton, N.C., a pilot with

the 8th TBS, had high praise for the navigator-bombardier, the second man in the B-57.

"He does a very necessary job," the Centurion Club member said. "The pilot can fly completely by instruments and not worry about the orientation of the airplane with the target."

"The navigator is another set of eyeballs," said Maj. David M. Hammett, San Diego, a B-57 navigator-bombardier.

Major Lacy, the man who originated the idea for the club, was the first to achieve membership. The truck count was begun in 1968 when the 8th TBS switched from a day dive bombing mission to night interdiction flights. The crew members feel that the B-57 has proved itself again in combat.

"The Air Force has been planning to phase the B-57 out for 10 years," Colonel Stringer said. "But every time we get ready to do it, the airplane proves itself by doing an outstanding job."

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Every member of the club is awarded a certificate which records the number of trucks destroyed. A plaque is also available and this contains the club emblem, a flying helmet with the Roman Centurion's red brush decoration.

At last count there were 10 pilots and six navigators in the Centurion Club. They, and the number of trucks they have destroyed, are: Major Lacy, 119; Capt. George C. Clark, Corpus Christi, Tex., 104; Maj. David M. Hammett, San Diego, 107; Capt. Brendan A. Hanniffy, Union City, N.J., 125; Maj. Frank A. Hughes, Edenton, N.C., 106.

Also Lt. Col. William B. Maxson, Akron, Ohio, 101; Lt. Col. John T. Schiffer, Caseyville, Ill., 125; Colonel Stringer, 109; Col. Bennie L. Davis, McAlester, Okla, 106; Capt. Robert O. Heavner, Akron, Ohio, 108; Lt. Col. Donald D. Klein, Shreveport, La., 105.

Capt. George G. Mitchell, Fayetteville, Ark., 101; Maj. Richard A. Zock, Colorado Springs, Colo., 111; Maj. George R. Davidson, Princeton, N.J., 111; Lt. Col. James D. Henderson, Flagstaff, Ariz., 136; and 1st Lt. James C. Wagner, Clark AB, Philippines.

Doug's note: I know not all of these stores have a dateline of Phan Rang, but we have a lot of members and readers that have an interest in stores dealing with the B-57, F-100, C-119, C-47 and C-123 aircrafts. Some may have friends or may have even been stationed at one time at these other bases.

Also if you are new to the Phan Ranger mailing list and you would like copies of previous issues of the Phan Rang News, just send [me](#) a note and I'll will send one your way. If you know of a Phan Rangers that would be interested in receiving news about Phan Rang AB, please let [me](#) know and I will add them to the mailing list.