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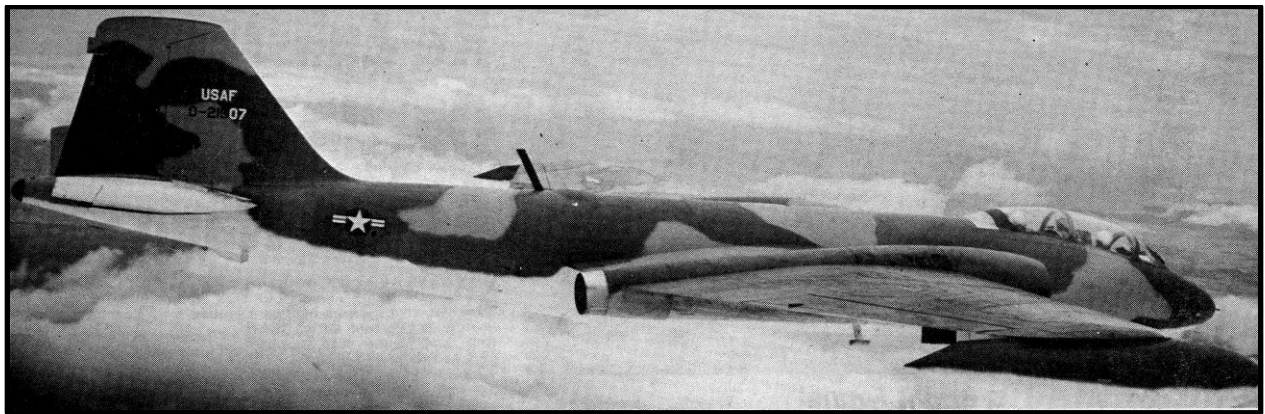
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Capable of flying at speeds up to 600 miles per hour and carrying a 8,000 pound bomb load, the B-57 Canberra performs a primary mission of interdicting enemy supply routes.

**Famous 8<sup>th</sup> TBS in Forth War** (*Seventh Air Force News, Nov 20, 1968*)

PHAN RANG — In its fourth war and 51st year, the 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron here is continuing its tradition of being one of the foremost units in military aviation.

The oldest flying squadron in the Air Force, the 8th TBS has made important contributions to allied efforts in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and now in Vietnam.

Flying the versatile B-57 Canberra bomber, members of the historic "Liberty Squadron" are now performing the vital mission of interdicting enemy supply routes in Vietnam.

The effectiveness of the "Canberra Night Fighters" in this role is reflected by the results of the nightly raids — more than 3,000 enemy trucks destroyed since the Squadron began operations at Phan Rang AB one year ago.

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Pilots and navigators assigned to the 8th TBS are lavish with their praise for the B-57, an aircraft that has been in the Air Force inventory since 1953. "There's no finer aircraft for this type of mission," claimed one veteran of more than 200 missions. A dual-engine jet aircraft, the Canberra is capable of carrying 8,000 pounds of ordnance in addition to its four 20mm cannons or eight .50 caliber machine guns. With a large fuel capacity, the Canberra has a longer range than almost any other jet aircraft in Vietnam, giving it the capability to linger over targets for extended periods of time.

The 8th TBS traces its origin to May 30, 1917 when it was organized at Kelly Field, Tex. The unit saw action in World War I where it earned five battle streamers in France.

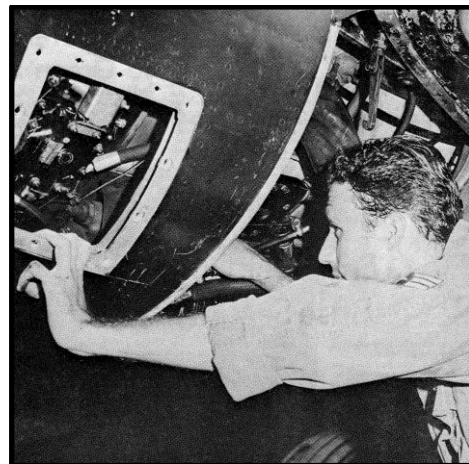
Three months after American entered World War II, the 8th was on its way to Australia where it began a tour of overseas duty that is unbroken. The 8th fought its way from Australia to Okinawa, earning 14 battle streamers in the process.

On June 26, 1950, the 8th TBS flew the first combat mission, of the Korean War. Between that date and June 27, 1953 when the squadron flew the last mission of the war, 15 more battle streamers were earned. The B-57s became the first jet aircraft to fly a combat mission in Vietnam when a flight of two Canberras destroyed an enemy command post on February 19, 1965. In July 1965, the 8th and its sister squadron, the "Devil's Own Grim Reapers" of the 13th TBS, began operations from Da Nang AB against targets which were then in North Vietnam.

In October 1966, the 8th and 13th moved to Phan Rang. The 13th TBS was deactivated in January 1968 and the 8th was permanently assigned to the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, ending a rotational tour from Clark AB, P.I.



Life Support. TSgt Robert T. Miskell, Lawrence, Mass., 8th TBS Life Support section, aids Lt. Col Donald D. Klein, Enon, Ohio, a B-57 pilot, with part of the nearly 100 pounds of survival equipment Canberra crew members must carry.



Canberra Maintenance. Sgt. Edward J. Marchetti, Yonkers, N. Y., performs part of a phase inspection on a B-57 Canberra. The 35th Field Maintenance Squadron and the 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron maintenance section are tasked keeping them in top shape.

# Caption This



Steve Russ: Don't ask, don't tell.

George Carrie: Isn't that a VC with Ho Chi Minh sandals on? Sneaking into the Terminal where Doug and Archie worked!

James F. Wachowski: A sittin' here la la, waitin' for my ya ya, ah-um, ah-um. It may sound funny but I don 't believe she's comin', ah-um, ah-um. Baby hurry, don't make me worry ah-um, ah-um.

David Gile: Some of the guys used to stash their little baggies of (you know what) between the sandbags. He was most likely receiving a small stipend for his duties.

Archie T. Pinkley: AAAAH  
HAAA he's guarding  
George Carries in  
between Meal snacks  
!!!!

Donald Poirier: His best friend is using the shower and is very shy. Therefore, on-guard to make sure no one else enters the shower while buddy is getting clean.

George Carrie: I guarded my stash with this guy! "Happy Kim" we called him ... ! HA

Lou Ruggiero the owner of this photograph has declined to comment.

George Carrie: I thought they were supposed to be standing on guard duty?

## **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](#).**

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### **John Postgate Pilot and a Distinguished Veteran**

Major John Postgate volunteered for Vietnam as a pilot in the North American F-100D Super Sabre. He flew the 10,000 F-100 sortie in Vietnam. In June, 1967, he was assigned to the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang Air Base, where he flew 303 combat missions.

John enlisted in the United States Air Force in September, 1954, and went through Aviation Cadet Pilot Training from March, 1955 to June, 1956. After completion of F-89 school, John was assigned to Air Defense Command at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. A year later, the Northrop F-89 Scorpions were phased out and he went to Greenville Air Force Base, Mississippi, as a T-33 instructor pilot. In 1960, he was re-assigned to Williams Air Force Base, Arizona, flying T-33, T-37, and T-38s as a Stand Eval and Instructor pilot. In 1965, he volunteered for Vietnam as a Forward Air Controller, Assistant ALO, and Forward Air Control Safety/Instructor at Bien Hoa. After training, he was assigned to the 19th TASS and flew out of Duc Hoa under the 99th advisory team. During this tour, John, whose call sign was 'Cobra 2', flew over 1,200 combat hours and 475 missions in the O-1.



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After a short break at Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa, he again volunteered for Vietnam and was assigned to the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang Air Base. His next assignment was back to Air Defense Command in July, 1968, as an F-106 pilot at McCord Air Force Base, Washington. He returned to Kadena AFB, Okinawa, in 1971 as the 313th Air Division Assistant Operations Officer, Okinawa Reversion Officer, and Instructor pilot. He finished his 23-year career in the Air Force as a Fighter Duty Officer and T-33 Instructor Pilot at Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas. He flew the F-89, T-29, O-1, T-33, T-37, T-38, F-100, F-102, and F-106. His decorations include five Distinguished Flying Crosses, 33 Air medals, the Bronze Star with Valor, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation, and the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with palm, two with bronze star, and two with gold star.

### Capture the Flag

“In February, 1966, during one of the Tet offensives, I was flying the O-1 on a Forward Air Control mission near a village called ‘Cu Chi’. I enjoyed flying the O-1. We were near a free fire zone, so if we saw anything, we could shoot at it. I carried a 38 side arm and an M-15 rifle, and I usually would empty a couple of clips on each mission. A bamboo forest shielded the small village of Cu Chi, and over the path that led into the village was a 15-foot high bamboo arch adorned with a VC flag. They kept putting those darn flags up all over the place. I decided I would fly low and try to snag the flag, as it seemed like the thing to do, besides, the sew girls would make imitation flags and sell them to the Green Berets and Army Rangers, who would in turn sell them to the grunts.



Cambodian Border

I wanted the real thing. Flying low was one way to catch the VC without being seen or heard. We did some low level flying in the F-100, in fact, one time I remember flying so low on a strafing run, I made a rooster tail in a rice paddy. In order to snag the flag off the pole, I dove the O-1 down low, right over the grass, and I snagged the flag on the left strut of the O-1. I flew down the valley and landed in a short field, where I took the flag off the strut and placed it in the plane. I made a quick u-turn and took back off. I was concerned about the VC in the vicinity shooting at me and also losing the flag. I kept the flag and no one knew I had it except for the French photojournalist who took a photo of me with the flag.”

“The O-1 had two rocket launching pads on each wing, with white phosphorus target marker rockets, and occasionally nine pound high explosives on 2.75 FFARS. We would climb the plane at a 30-degree angle, fire the rockets, and basically lob them over the Cambodian border. We did it just to harass the VC that occupied the Cambodian side. I had to fly up to Tiezan City as a Liaison Officer to meet with other FAC officers. On the return flight, I went west around a large thunderstorm. I was near ‘Parrots Beak’, when I noticed a lot of people working in the rice paddies. I went down to investigate and flew my O-1 right down the middle of the rice paddy at low level. The people on both sides pulled out their guns and started shooting at me. I kept it on

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the deck and went as fast as I could go. I sure could of used an afterburner that time! I thought I was in a free fire zone in Vietnam, when in actuality, I was in Cambodia, where I wasn't supposed to be."

### **Friendly Fire**

"I remember one time when I almost got shot down by a Navy F-4 Phantom. I was calling in an air strike near the Vico-oriental River. The Navy F-4s came in and dropped its ordinance near the target. My O-1 shook a little, but I thought nothing of it. I flew back to base with no problems and landed. After getting out of my plane, my crew chief told me to come and look at the horizontal stabilizer. Shrapnel from the exploding bombs dropped by the Navy F-4 had hit the stabilizer and ripped it open like a can opener! I don't know what it was about the Navy, they dropped more duds than you can count. I had a flight of A-1Hs come over, drop about 18 bombs, and only two exploded."

### **Purple Heart**

"On one mission, I took an Army Ranger up in the O-1 to look for gun replacements around Cu Chi. During the flight the engine quit, so I reached over and switched the fuel tanks. The engine finally caught and restarted. That 'tough' Army Ranger was scared to death. On another mission, I took Dave Pensky, who later became the wing commander of the SR-71s and U-2s at Beale Air Force Base, up in the O-1 to show him how to find VC. The VC started shooting at us. When the VC were firing their guns at the O-1, especially when flying with the window open, you could hear the popping sound. It sounded like popcorn popping. Shrapnel hit the left wing and some of it went into the left side of my face. The Army doctors treated me and said, 'You're going to get the Purple Heart the best way, most guys get it posthumously.'"

### **Bronze Star**

One evening, the VC launched a mortar attack against our base at Duc Hoa, including two rounds that hit the runway. It turns out the attack on our base was a diversion, as 1,000 VC were attacking another base in our vicinity. We had 300 people in that camp, and they had an escape route out of the camp. When our base was attacked, I got up, dressed quickly, and ran to my O-1. I was somehow able to get the plane airborne, and flew three missions, each lasting approximately 2.5 hours. I flew all night and into the early morning. A C-123 dropped flares over the camp, which revealed the VC had captured some of the Army's large weapons, such as 50 caliber heavy guns, and were firing them at us from the center of the camp. I called in air strikes to help protect the 300 people who were fleeing the base. Finally, A-1s came in and clobbered the camp and the escaping VC before daylight that morning. Initially, I was told I was going to receive the Silver Star medal, but later was told they were handing out too many Silver Star medals. I received the Bronze Star with Valor, one that I am very proud of."

*(Note: John W. Postgate was also mentioned in Phan Rang News 7 "614<sup>th</sup> Completes 10,000 Sortie")*

### **Claudio's Missions - Captain Bill Claudio, U. S. Air Force 1969**

Nothing was more horrifying to Viet Cong guerillas than the site of a U.S. Air Force jet streaking low again the contours of the land, about to deliver a funeral pyre of napalm.

Captain Bill Claudio was the fighter pilot they feared, because his dead aim resulted in countless enemy losses.

Bill Claudio received an ROTC commission as a regular Air Force Officer when he graduated from Parks College of Aeronautical Technology in St. Louis. He had already served a four-year Air Force hitch before that.

Capt. Claudio flew 216 combat missions from Phan Rang AB in Vietnam, with the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing of the 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force. He was assigned to the 614<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron. He streaked in over the tree tops at 600 knots to drop the napalm fireball or low drag bombs in close ground support. His airplane was the venerable F-100 Super Saber.

Bill Claudio was one of the hottest pilots of his day. He was a senior F-100 pilot, a qualified

test pilot and a check pilot for senior officers.



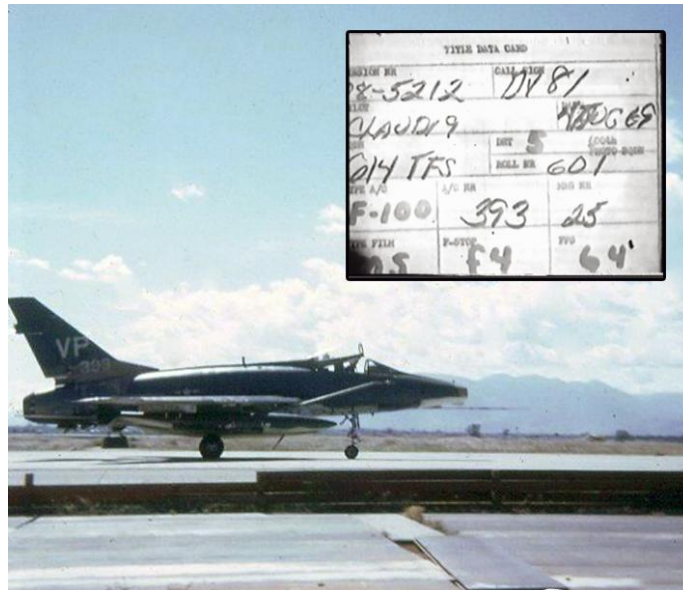
**Captain Bill Claudio, 614th TFS, Phan Rang AB, Vietnam.**

Among his four rows of awards and decorations are two distinguished flying crosses, the Air Medal with 20 devices, the Vietnam Combat Service Medal, and the Good Conduct medal for his enlisted service.

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Click the picture above to see the video.



F-100 "393" the same aircraft flown by Capt. Claudio, waiting to take off from Phan Rang AB. Photo by Jim Cummings.

Aircraft flown: 393 - 072- 883-381

**Canberra Men Net Viet Kudos** (*7<sup>th</sup> Air Force News, 9 December 1968*)

PHAN RANG — Eight B-57 Canberra aircrew members of the 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron, Phan Rang AB were recently awarded the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star.

They include Lt. Col. William R. Abercrombie Jr., Jackson, Miss., B-57 pilot, and Maj. William J. Richardson, Ottawa, Kan., navigator-bombardier.

The others, already departed from Phan Rang, are Majors Ernest G. Schultz and Wilson E. Eldridge; Captains Arthur W. Gillson and James I. Merrill; and First Lieutenants Donald Graham and Roger A. Beck.



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They were cited for being "outstanding air crew members with high serving spirit" and conducting close ground support strikes against enemy positions, effectively supporting friendly ground units."

### **Sgt. George Carrie - Award Winner Gets to Soar With the Eagles**



Phan Rang AB - April 1970 - Sgt. George Carrie nominated for Crew Chief of the Month, Maintenance Man of the Month and Maintenance Man of the Wing is offered a ride on a F-100 Super Saber by the 615<sup>th</sup> TFS during a 90 minute training mission for two new pilots. These are the pictures and comments from that event.

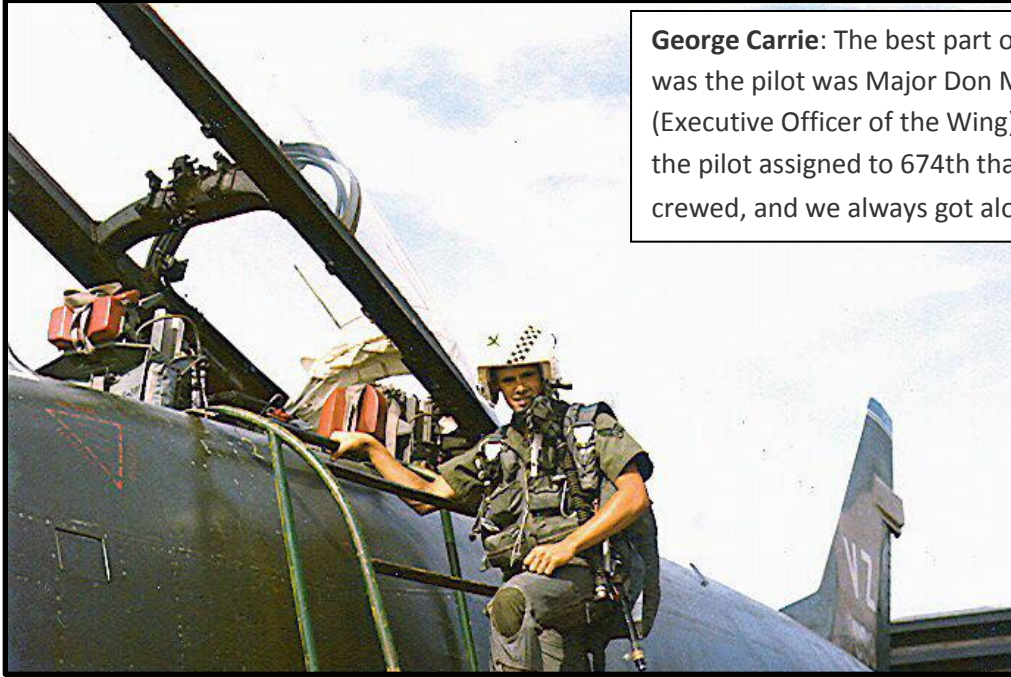


**George Carrie:** My first complaint! The first 10 minutes it was noisy as hell but I figured it out. Nobody informed me of the 2 rubber bands at both side of the helmet that needed to be released to allow the helmet head set to close over the ears.

News From many sources from "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, Vietnam  
...keeping the memories alive

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**George Carrie:** The best part of the ride was the pilot was Major Don May (Executive Officer of the Wing) who was the pilot assigned to 674th that I crewed, and we always got along great.





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**George Carrie:**  
Major May knew I had a private pilot's license so he took off and landed, but the rest of the time he said "just follow them." He let me do aileron rolls and a barrel roll but I lost it upside down in a loop but he corrected that error right away.



**George Carrie:** At times I felt like I was a member of The Thunderbirds!

**George Carrie:** ...precious memories for a 22 year old.



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.

**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, they are all available [here](#) for downloading. If you have any difficulties, 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.