

**"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive**

Phan Rang AB News No. 101

"Stories worth telling"

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SEVENTH AIR FORCE



Principal Organizations



3rd Tactical Fighter Wing



35th Tactical Fighter Wing



8th Tactical Fighter Wing



37th Tactical Fighter Wing



12th Tactical Fighter Wing



56th Special Operations Wing



14th Special Operations Wing



355th Tactical Fighter Wing



31st Tactical Fighter Wing



366th Tactical Fighter Wing

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388th Tactical Fighter Wing



432nd Tactical Recon Wing



460th Tactical Recon Wing



553rd Reconnaissance Wing



633rd Special Operations Wing



377 Combat Support Group



632nd Combat Support Group



834th Air Division



315th Special Operations Wing



483rd Tactical Airlift Wing

2nd Aerial Port Group

Other Units

1st Civil Engineering Group

3rd Air Rescue and Recovery Group

1st Weather Group

505th Tactical Control Group

1964th Communications Group

Seventh Air Force

"Just One Island After Another"

The history of Seventh Air Force, Pacific Air Forces' present field operations command in Southeast Asia, began in 1916, when an air office was established as a special staff section of the Hawaiian Department Headquarters in Hawaii.

It had the distinction of being the first American air force organized outside the continental limits of the United States. Entry of the United States into World the most minute targets with the fewest airplanes, and until the advent of the B-29s, it flew the longest missions in the world.

During and after the initial attack on Hawaii's military and naval installations in December 1941, aircraft took to the skies in search of the origin of the attacking aircraft, patrolled the perimeters of the Islands and engaged the enemy in combat.

Seventh Air Force began the U. S. aerial war against Japan in the Battle of Midway. Its B-17s joined with Navy forces in June 1942 to smash a huge enemy invasion fleet off Midway.

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Seventh Air Force conducted strikes against enemy positions in the Gilbert Islands at Nauru and Tarawa, Eniwetok, Guam and Saipan.

By the close of war in mid-August, FEAF pilots, including those of Seventh Air Force, had flown nearly half a million combat sorties against the Japanese. They defeated the Japanese air forces in the Pacific, spearheaded the way for General MacArthur's island-hopping campaign and supported the massive amphibious assaults which leap-frogged to Japan.

Seventh Air Force crews flew nearly 28,000 sorties, dropped more than 30,000 tons of bombs and destroyed at least 458 enemy aircraft.

After the heat had subsided, the Seventh Air Force's mission was generally defensive in nature. Daily submarine patrols, with sightings, bombings and claims of submarines sunk, became routine.

Seventh Air Force returned to Hawaii January 1, 1946, and was redesignated the Pacific Air Command (PACAIRCOM) on December 15, 1947. It was deactivated May 26, 1949 and its role was assumed by the Pacific Division, Military Air Transport Service.

Seventh Air Force was reactivated and assigned to the PACAF command on January 5, 1955. Its mission was to discharge Air Force responsibilities in the Pacific east of 140° longitude to include service support to other military and U. S. Government agencies.

Concurrent with the assignment of Seventh Air Force to PACAF, Detachment 1, Seventh Air Force, was organized at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. On April 1, 1955, the 6486th Air Base Wing, with headquarters at Hickam Air Force Base and with jurisdiction over all bases in the Hawaiian area, was transferred to Seventh Air Force.

Then on July 1, 1957, Seventh Air Force was concurrently deactivated.

In November 1961, PACAF's 2d Advanced Echelon (ADVON) was organized in Vietnam. The original units consisting of several hundred officers and men were located at Tan Son Nhut, Da Nang and Nha Trang air bases. Most of the personnel were on temporary duty from other PACAF units or the Tactical Air Command (TAC). On October 8, 1962, 2d ADVON was inactivated and 2d Air Division was organized under the operational control of Thirteenth Air Force.

United States airpower in Southeast Asia grew steadily during the ensuing years, as the Vietnam War grew in magnitude.

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Following North Vietnamese attacks against U. S. vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin, squadrons of tactical fighters, bomber and reconnaissance aircraft were deployed to Southeast Asia in August 1964.

Heavy ground fighting in early 1965 increased 2d Air Division's commitment for air support. United States Air Force strike aircraft flew their first mission over North Vietnam in support of Vietnamese A-1H Skyraiders on February 1, 1965. Later that month, USAF F-100 Supersabres and B-57 Canberras hit Viet Cong positions in South Vietnam, the first use of jet strike aircraft within the borders of the republic. Except for planned pauses and periods of restricted bombing, these missions have not stopped.

Seventh Air Force was reactivated April 1, 1966, to replace 2d Air Division.

On June 29, 1966, for the first time, pilots struck against strategic petroleum, oil and lubricant (POL) depots in and around Hanoi and Haiphong.

The air war reached a new intensity in 1966, as critically important targets such as the Thai Nguyen industrial complex, thermal power plants and the Kep and Phuc Yen airfields were hit.

For the first time, an occupied North Vietnamese airfield was struck when Air Force fighter-bombers, striking from bases in Thailand, bombed Hoa Loc airfield April 24, 1967.

May 1967 was the biggest "MIG-kill" month of the war —20 MIGs were downed. Six of the 20 MIGs were downed May 20, the second time in four months that six or more MIGs were destroyed in a single day.

Air Force fighter-bombers hit the Hanoi (Paul Doumer) highway and railroad bridge August 11, 1967. Two days later, F-105 Thunderchiefs hit the Lang Son Railroad yards, less than 10 miles from Red China's border.

One of the biggest tactical airlift operations of the Vietnam war began January 21, 1968, when Khe Sanh, a U. S. Marine stronghold, came under heavy enemy attack. U. S.

Air Force, Army and Marine strike aircraft flew around-the-clock in support of the embattled installation. During a four-day period, U. S. aircraft flew 1,615 tactical air strikes against enemy positions around Khe Sanh.

Following the 1968 Tet and June offensives, through the balance of the year, and then beyond the 1969 post-Tet increased enemy activity, Seventh Air Force men and aircraft have continued carrying the war to the enemy where it hurts him hardest.

SEVENTH AIR FORCE'S MISSION

The mission of the Seventh Air Force is to fly and fight. In more specific terms, it is to conduct, control and coordinate offensive and defensive air operations in accordance with tasks assigned; to maintain assigned forces at a level of readiness to insure successful completion of directed military operations; and to advance the national policies and interests of the United States.

All Air Force personnel and aircraft in Southeast Asia are under the operational control of the Commander, 7th Air Force, who reports directly to the Commander, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) and to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Air Force.

In performing its task of conducting and controlling Air Force operations in Southeast Asia, Seventh Air Force has maintained air supremacy while providing close air support and tactical airlift for ground forces in South Vietnam and tactical air interdiction, and, before the November 1968, bombing halt, and destruction of military targets in Communist North Vietnam.

In the south, tactical fighters have kept the insurgents on the move by being able to locate his hiding places and destroying them. Air Force aircraft have also been able to suppress any offensive attempted by the enemy. The in-theater airlift aircraft move almost all of the troops and material from point to point in Vietnam.

In the North, before the bombing halt, Air Force jets impeded the flow of infiltrators and supplies into the South, striking enemy transportation networks, hitting airfields, petroleum storage areas and other targets which contributed to his war-making potential.

Seventh Air Force also advises and assists the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) in achieving a state of combat readiness through applications of proven techniques for logistics, engineering, maintenance, communications, planning operations, tactics, training and personnel functions.



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35th TFW Record Breakers



Members of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing pose for a picture commemorating their achieving a high jet engine spares repair record. **Tomas Parsons** was a member of this group, but was on R&R when this picture was taken.

Those identified are George **Bailey** (Glasses middle row right side) and **Davidson**, bottom left kneeling.

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A Trip To Thap Cham To Remember By Theodore Youwer *(Originally appeared in Phan Rang News 83)*

(Note: I’m repeating the original story by Theodore Youwer with comments by Donald Chatterton because since that time I’ve received a letter of appreciation (recreated at the end of this story) that sheds more light on the situation.)

Sometime in 1967, last half of the year I believe, two of my buddies and I (SSgt. Bob Miles and SSgt. 'Andy' Andreola) left the base to visit a friend stationed at the MACV compound.

None of us checked out weapons (too much trouble, I guess).

We hitched a ride into Thap Cham and walked the rest of the way. As I remember while we were walking out of a road surrounded by thick growth into a clearing; a village (huts as I recall) on the left side and on the right is the MACV compound.

It seems that as soon as we entered the clearing the whole world lit up and suddenly the village on the left was engulfed in flames. Villagers were running everywhere, many on fire. One young boy ran onto the road and collapsed right in front of us.

Bob or Andy, both trained medics (all of us were assigned to the TAC Dispensary) tried to help, but the kid was beyond help. For me everything was moving in slow motion. I remember all the MACV troops rescuing villagers, loading them into trucks, and driving off. I don't know if I ever moved; seems like I was paralyzed.

At any rate, the three of us eventually found ourselves standing alone in the road. A gathering of angry villagers started to throw stones at us, probably blamed us for whatever had happened. At that point, some Korean Marines ran out of the compound, set up a machine gun in the road and motioned us into the compound.

The last things I remember is the sound of helicopters, plumes of smoke, and a having a brief conversation with the compound commander. I can't recall how we got back to base. I don't remember ever leaving the base again!

Note: Both Donald Chatterton and Theodore Youwer believe the locals were collecting JP4 from a leak in the pipe line that ran from the beach to the base and supplied JP4 to the base. Speculation was that an incendiary device was thrown in the middle of them. It was right across from Civil Action Group. Normally you could throw a match in JP4 and it would not ignite, however a lot of people used it as lighter fluid for their lighters. If anyone has more facts,

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please let me know and I will share. Also, Ted will be attending the Charleston Reunion so we can discuss it there.

Donald E. Chatterton on Facebook wrote: I came on the same scene and I helped load burn victims on a flat bed truck that went to the local hospital, did what we could do there, then flew on the helicopter taking some patients to Cam Rahn Bay. I have never before or since seen such bad burns. Out of 40 only 2 survived. I recently found a letter of commendation for my actions that day. I still have nightmares over this but now I have a dog that wakes me up.

SG

22 June 1967

Letter of Appreciation

1. On the morning of 21 May 1967, approximately 40 Vietnamese civilians, mostly women and children, were severely burned by JP-4 in an accident occurring near the town of Phan Rang, RVN. The Injured were taken to the Province Hospital where immediate first aid was rendered by the MILPHAF team assigned to the hospital.
2. Supplementing an assistance team of medical personnel summoned from Phan Rang Air Base was A1C Chatterton, Donald E. AF17708401. He had heard of the disaster while swimming at the recreational site at the beach. His assistance in caring for the burned and injured as well as helping in the air-evacuation of casualties to Nha Trang and Cam Ranh Bay undoubtedly played a role in reducing the morbidity and mortality of patients treated.
3. This letter of appreciation is written in recognition of the unselfish aid rendered by A1C Chatterton.

William L. Lee Jr., Lt Col, USAF
Commander

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LBJ Says A Prayer For Pat *(Story provided by Tom Parsons, source and date unknown.*

Previous articles about Pat Nugent in the Phan Rang News are in issue 15, 75 and 99.)

AUSTIN, Tex. (AP) — Former President Lyndon Johnson prayed in a Catholic student center Sunday for his son-in-law, Pat Nugent, whose base (Phan Rang) in Vietnam was hit Saturday night.

"We heard Pat's base got hit pretty hard last night," Johnson told a bystander. "Don't think he's hurt. We thought we'd come over here and do a little praying."

Mrs. Johnson and their daughter, Luci Nugent, accompanied Johnson to the Catholic Student Center at the University of Texas.

Guitarists played folk music at the mass. Johnson and Lady Bird shook dozens of hands after the service.

Also accompanying the Johnsons were Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Nugent II, Pat's brother and sister-in-law. Jerry handed his infant son, Jerry Nugent III, to Johnson outside the center, and Johnson posed for pictures.

The former chief executive was friendly toward newsmen after first trying to avoid them. He slipped out of his television station in an aide's station wagon to go to the center.

The Johnsons drove to the Lyndon B. Johnson Library, now under construction at the university, after leaving the student center. Johnson has promised to teach at the library, on occasion, after it opens next year.

When a photographer tried to get his picture at the library, Johnson said: "Didn't you get enough pictures at the church?" Then he changed his mind: Oh, come on over here and take the picture and then you can leave us alone, can't you?"

Airman Meets His Recruiter - 8,000 Miles from Home *(Seventh Air Force News, February 18, 1970)*

By TSgt. John B. Mahony

PHAN RANG — "Boy, I'd sure like to have a talk with my old recruiting sergeant." More than one young airman has had this thought after entering the Air Force and arriving at his first permanent assignment. Amn. Dennis L. Wimmer of Ogden, Utah, was one such airman.

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"You bet I wanted to see him," said the determined airman, describing his arrival at Phan Rang AB. "But this is a big Air Force, and I was a long way from the recruiting station in Ogden."

After signing in at the orderly room of the Field Maintenance Squadron of the 14th Special Operations Wing here Airman Wimmer walked over to the flight line. There, in a large prefabricated maintenance shop for aircraft, Airman Wimmer would serve for the next 12 months as a welder.

"When I opened the door to the maintenance office, the first person I saw was — Sergeant Carpenter! I hadn't seen him in a year. I quickly reached out...

"I thought he was going to grab me," interjected a smiling TSgt. Robert L. Carpenter, also of Ogden. "I couldn't place him immediately. After all, I must have enlisted something like 250 young men during my two years in recruiting duty at Ogden."

"I just wanted to shake his hand," Airman Wimmer said with a grin.

"One of my duties in the maintenance office is to process in new arrivals," Sergeant Carpenter explained. "As I showed Dennis around the various shops, he brought me up to date on where he had been since enlisting."

Airman Wimmer's thoughts went back to Jan. 24, 1969. "That had to be the greatest day of my life," the airman recalled. "I took my sweetheart to the Mormon Temple where we were married. And I had only one more course to complete at Brigham Young University before I would get my degree in industrial arts education.

"The next day a friend of mine, who was home on leave from the Air Force, stopped in and suggested I look into what the Air Force had to offer. That's when Sergeant Carpenter and I got acquainted.

"I enlisted under the college delayed enlistment program, which gave me enough time to complete college and a preference for a career field," Airman

Wimmer said.

"I'm going back into recruiting when I leave the Republic of Vietnam in September," Sergeant Carpenter said. "I found one of the great rewards of recruiting duty is seeing young men like Dennis Wimmer come into the Air Force and contribute not only to the future of their country, but their families and careers.

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"My family and I would love to get back to Ogden or Salt Lake," the veteran of 18 years service continued. "I met my wife in Ogden while I was stationed at Hill AFB for four years." At Hill, Sergeant Carpenter was a flight mechanic on C-124 Globemaster transports from 1954 to 1957.

Both men are elders in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Airman Wimmer was president of the Mormon seminary at Ben Lomond High School, Ogden, in 1961 and 1962. Upon graduation he served as a missionary from October 1962 through October 1964 in New York under the Eastern States Mission.

TEAMWORK - Phan Rang's Byword
(Seventh Air Force News, February 18, 1970)

By Sgt. Ralph H. Saenz



C-123 Provider, F-100 Supersabre
315th TAW Transport and 35th TFW Jet Fighter Line Up for Takeoff

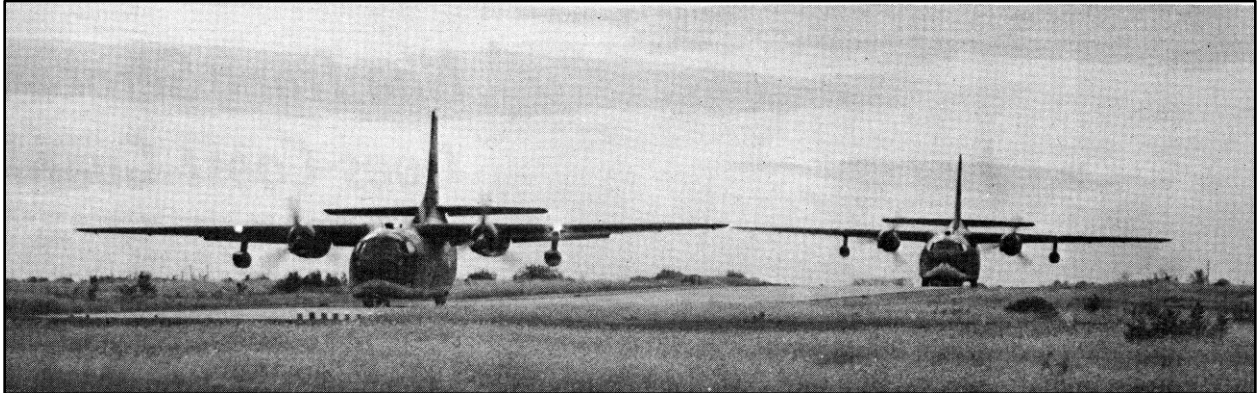
PHAN RANG — The skies over this base are constantly filled with aircraft. Day and night jet fighters and bombers, transports and gunships land and take off.

The reason for this continuous activity is Phan Rang has not one, but three missions. Sharing the runway and other facilities are the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, the 14th Special Operations Wing and the 315th Tactical Airlift Wing.

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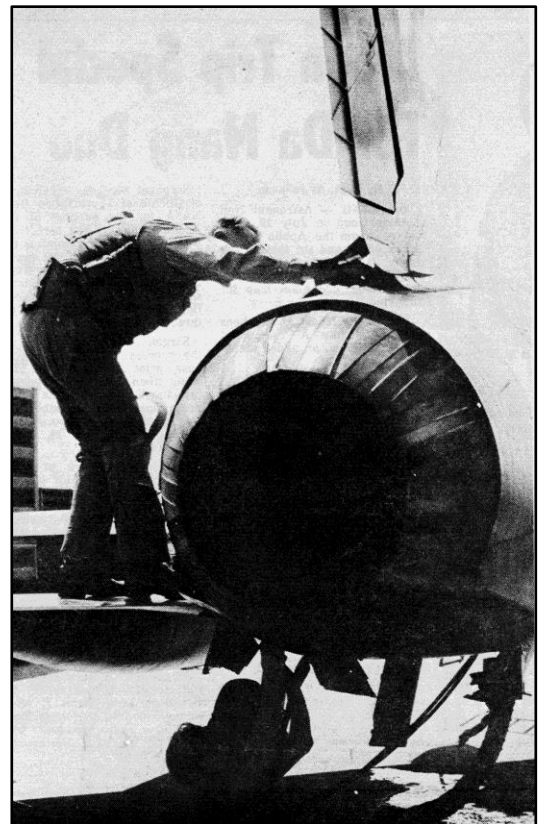
"Stories worth telling"



**315th TAW C-123 Providers
Home at the end of a long day**

Parent wing is the 35th TFW commanded by Col. Walter T. Galligan. "Our mission," the colonel said, "is to support the air and ground wars. Under my command are four F-100 Supersabre squadrons and a squadron of Royal Australian Air Force Canberra bombers to do the job. We tell the Tactical Air Control Center at Tan Son Nhut AB what assistance we can provide, and they let us know what their needs are."

"Our mission is gunship and psychological operations," commented Col. Clyde S. Cherry, 14th SOW commander. Now a tenant unit, the 14th recently moved from Nha Trang AB where it was the parent wing. There are five squadrons in the wing and they operate from eight locations in the Republic of Vietnam.



**Aircraft Check
Pilot, above and Crew Chief Inspect F-
100 before Bombing Run**

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**A1C Vernon L. Angerman
Munitions man load Supersabre Cannons**

"Two of the squadrons are here," continued Colonel Cherry. "We fly AC-119 Shadow and Stinger gunships. For psychological operations, the C-47 Skytrain is used to drop 20 kinds of leaflets and the O-2 Super Skymaster is used for broadcasting.

"We talk directly to the ground forces," Colonel Cherry explained. "It's a more personal contact than having a forward air controller as an intermediary. Doing something for the ground forces is really a good feeling."

Flying C-123 Providers, the 315th TAW has received five Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards and two United States Presidential Unit Citations. One could say the 315th is really a "hauling" outfit. "Our job is to resupply Civilian irregular Defense Group camps and Allied forces," remarked Col. Leslie J. Campbell Jr., 315th TAW commander.



**Move 'Em Out
F-100 Crew Chief Signals for Pilot To Taxi to Runway**

Operating from four locations the 315th

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flies more than 300 sorties a day. Supporting all Allied Forces in the Republic of Vietnam, the wing hauls more than 500 tons of cargo daily and carries more than a million passengers each year.

"We have very few problems," Colonel Campbell added. "We have to work too much. Twelve-hour work days do not leave room for problems.

"You name it and we carry it," observed the colonel, "— anything necessary for the war effort. We are also capable of air-dropping cargo and people. The most difficult part of the mission is landing and taking off. Most of the camps we operate in and out of are not much more than strips. They allow for no margin of error. The landings have to be right the first time, every time."

There is another mission here at Phan Rang, one that isn't written down in any manual or history, but one that is just as important as the war effort. "It is my duty to keep every man safe and sound while he is here at Phan Rang," said Colonel Galligan, "and send him home a better man for having served in the Republic of Vietnam."



C-119 Shadow Gunship
14th SOW Aircraft Fly Fire Support and Physiological Operations Missions

(Note, this article was a center two-page spread in the Seventh Air Force News)

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366th Units In Viet Nam Shift *(Alamogordo (N.M.) Daily News, Friday, October 21, 1966)*

HOLLOMAN — Movement of F-4C Phantom and B-57 Canberra units and the opening a 10,000-foot concrete runway at the Phan Rang air base were announced last week by the Air Force in Viet Nam.

Units shifted were Phantom- equipped 389th Tactical Fighter Squadron, formerly of Holloman, from Phan Rang to the Da Nang air base. The Canberra units transferred from Nang to Phan Rang.

Concurrent with the transfer, the parent wing designations along with their attached squadrons at the two bases were switched. The 35th Tactical Fighter Wing is now at Rang and the 366th Fighter Wing is at Da Nang.

Only the Phantom and Canberra aircrews and support men were physically transferred.

The movement and unit re-designations were part of the Air Force's “bed down” program for its organizations in Viet Nam. The transfer joined the 389th with two sister Phantom squadrons—the 390th and 480th at Da Nang, the Air Force's most northern major air base in Vietnam.

The newly completed runway at Phan Rang is capable of handling the largest transports and faster jet fighter operating in this combat zone.

Col. George S. Weart, 46, of Chicago, the 35th commander, was first to fly a Phantom off the Phan Rang runway to signal its opening and end seven months of operation from aluminum matting strip.

Phan Rang has been used by the Air Force since March when Phantom crews of the 389th arrived from Holloman.

Milnark Family Contributes to Vietnamese Orphans

Several kids in Phan Rang, South Vietnam will be wearing new and mostly new clothes in about one and a half months.

That's when a package mailed this week by Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Milnark, 7552 Pinehurst Dr., Mentor-on-the-Lake, will arrive at their son's base.

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Airman 2nd Henry D. Milnark wrote to his kid-sister Robin, 11, in May and suggested she and her school buddies make up a package for the poorly dressed kids outside his air base.

Robin took the letter to school. The illness of her sixth grade teacher prevented much progress on the project, but the kids did scrape up 87 cents and several clothing items.

The Milnarks took over from there and a bulky package was made up. Because of its weight, the package will be sent by regular mail. Delivery time to South Viet Nam is 30 to 40 days via regular mail.

"I turned the clothing, soap, etc., over to the chaplain and he was real happy to receive the items and he told me to thank you all back home." The airman writes home.

Young Henry is scheduled to get out of the Air Force next January. He's been in South Viet Nam since Jan. 10.



Henry D. Milnark

Answering to the rank of Airman First Class is Henry D. Milnark, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Milnark, 7552 Pinhurst Drive, Mentor-on-the-Lake.

The promotion was earned in Vietnam, where the serviceman has been since January of this year.

Entering service August 1, 1963, the 1963 graduate of Mentor High School took his basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

He attended a technical school in Amarillo, Tex. Studying inventory management before going overseas where is stationed in Phan Rang.

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Free World Forces flags are lowered at a Phan Rang Air Base retreat ceremony.

(Picture source is “Mission Vietnam” a 7th Air Force Booklet provided by Thomas Parsons.)



So far we've had 34 people make reservations for the 2016 reunion. There have been a lot of new people join our group and they were saying that they plan on making the reunion, which is great, but they need to make reservation at the hotel if they plan on staying there. The reason for that is to make sure that we have sufficient number of rooms in our block so that everyone gets the reunion rate. **Just remember if for some reason life prevents you from**

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attending the reunion, you can always cancel the reservation without any penalty.

Here’s some basic information about our reunion for those that haven’t had the pleasure of attending one before: The dates for the 2016 reunion are **6 through 9 October**. Most people arrive on Thursday afternoon 6 Oct. Over the years we’ve seen more and more people arriving earlier and we usually have get-togethers with each other and I know that many are already planning on an early arrival. On Friday, 7 Oct. we traditionally have a group tour and this year we are planning on going to Tinker AFB, but that planning process hasn’t started yet. Also we may plan another activity in conjunction with the tour. On Saturday, 8 Oct. usually is a free day where you can explore the local area and in the evening we have our gala banquet. The hospitality suite is open all of the time, except during the tour and banquet. Most people check out Sunday morning, 9 October.

Expenses that you might expect for your stay would be the hotel, banquet, transportation, and a small reunion fee. I hope this brief overview will give you some idea as to what to expect.

Here’s more information about the Sheraton Oklahoma Downtown Hotel

- **Guestroom rates do not include the current city/state occupancy tax**
- **Room rates are \$129 single and double, triple rate \$159 and quad rate \$189**
- **Included are two full breakfast buffets, a \$32 value**
- **Check in time: 3:00 pm; Checkout time: 12:00 pm**
- **Individual cancellations without liability: 5 days prior to arrival**
- **24-hour Sheraton Fitness by Core Performance (NBA certified)**
- **Free WiFi in all guest rooms and lobby**

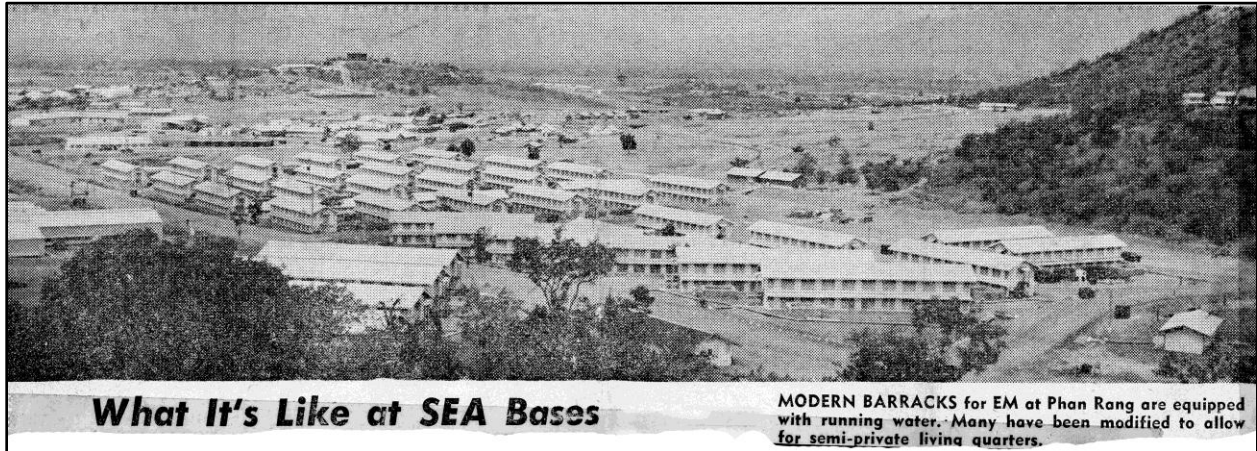
[Click here to make your hotel reservation.](#)

Please make your hotel reservations now!

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From Air Force Times, September 11, 1968

PHAN RANG STAFF MEMBERS

[Joseph Burkhart](#): Master of Ceremonies

[Robert Kellington](#): Tour Coordinator

[Jack Anderson](#): Treasure

[Lou Ruggerio](#): Site coordinator/Contract negotiator

[Douglas Severt](#): Reunion Coordinator

[Ed Downey/Barbara Brandt](#): Ceremonies

[Christopher Boles](#): Photographer

[Kirk Minert](#): Aircraft Historian

[Bob Tucker](#): Keeper of the Rolls

[Mike Maleski](#): Chaplain

[Jim Erixson](#): Associate Chaplain

[Bob Howe](#): Australian Ambassador

FACEBOOK GROUP ADMINISTRATORS

Douglas Severt, Joseph Burkhart, David McGaughey, Vincent Joseph Miller (Susan Anderson-Miller) and Kirk Minert

...and the 812 members (and counting) of the "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB Facebook group.

This newsletter was compiled and published by [Douglas Severt](#).