

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 103

“Stories worth telling”

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WHY DO WE USE ‘FUNNY MONEY’ HERE

(Copied from 7th AF News May 7, 1969, Pg 6)

(Previously copied from The MACV News)

Ever wonder just why we have to use Military Payment Certificates (MPC) in Vietnam? MPC can sometimes be a nuisance, especially if your wallet is filled with the equivalent of five dollars in small ‘change’ and a few hundred piasters. Between two forms of currency, it seems most people are never really sure exactly how much money they have in their possession-until a few days before payday, of course. But there are good reasons for the practice of using script.



The former policy of allowing Vietnam servicemen to use “greenbacks” was harming our own war effort and the Vietnamese economy. Since the U.S. dollar is one of three international currencies and therefore can be used to buy goods in any market, worldwide, many nations are anxious to get those dollars by legal or illegal means.

MPC is for use only in U.S. facilities such as exchanges, clubs and messes. Only authorized patrons of these facilities are allowed to possess MPC. This means according to the MACV Directive 37-6, that all in-country business transactions between U.S. authorized personnel

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must be accomplished in piasters. It is further worth nothing that the possession of MPC by Vietnamese Nationals is forbidden by Vietnamese law.

It is possible that black market dollars can be used to buy communist supplies and weapons. The process isn't very complicated and as the end results, the dollars you place into the black market pool in Vietnam could pay for the weapon and bullets that might kills you! Whether you put greenbacks or MPC into illegal hands, the effect is the same.

Just what are the consequences of an illegal money deal? Under Uniform Code of Military Justice, conducting a black market or other illegal transaction is considered a criminal act. In other words, since violation of the pertinent MACV directive constitutes a violation of a lawful order, an illegal money deal becomes a court-martial offense, with penalties including imprisonment and dismissal from the service.

If it becomes necessary for you to deal on the local economy, first convert your MPC to piasters at any authorized U.S. Conversion point. It'll save you from many future regrets.

“We kept the lobby bar open past closing as we talked, laughed and simply enjoyed each other.” ...Jack Anderson



**Spooky Crew Aids Friendlies
at Phan Thiet** (*The Phan Rang
Weekly, March 27, 1968*)

An AC-47 'Spooky' Dragonship piloted by Capt. Michael I. Pickett, assigned to flight B of the 14th Air Commando Sq. struck four enemy targets on a recent night mission to aid friendly forces at Phan Thiet, 80-miles south of the base.

Pickett said the Dragonship was scrambled from Phan Rang when 300 Viet Cong troops began moving toward South Vietnamese forces' outposts and villages near Phan Thiet. When the Dragonship reached the scene, the enemy had already blown up a bridge and had divided into three units.

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A Forward Air Controller, FAC, at the scene was receiving heavy fire from the Viet Cont. They were on one side of the wrecked bridge, and the friendly forces were on the other.

The Dragonship crew struck the enemy forces with mini-gun fire, and Pickett and he could see enemy ground fire. Then the AC-47 was directed to enemy 40mm rocket positions on the east bank of the river which were being used in an attack on nearby friendly outposts.

The crew illuminated the rocket positions with flares, and then subjected them to what Pickett described as a “hosing down” with its miniguns.

The FAC, exposing enemy positions by flying low over the area to draw fire, then directed the AC-49 crew to a third target further on down the river. The enemy troops were advancing on a friendly village, and they fired at the Dragonship from positions beneath a bridge as it opened fire with its mini-guns.

The final target of the night consisted of six enemy gun positions in an area of military fortifications.

Enemy fire from these positions ceased after they were hit by the Dragonship and the FAC reported to the crew, “Real Good” and “You got them!”

The dragonship stayed blacked out all night to minimize the chances of being hit by enemy fire.

The following comments are from the ‘Spooky’ AC-47 Gunship site:

<p>Larry Caudill: ‘Blacked out’ means that there were no exterior lights and interiors were kept to a minimum.</p>	<p>Billy Clark: I believe it (the rotating beacon) was turned on if there was another aircraft in the area. I know we would flash a landing light to signal other aircraft at times.</p>
<p>Donald Wilson: Sometimes, we would fly 2 Gooney Birds.....one C-47 from the 5th SOS which was psy-op (or bull shit bombers), and one AC-47 from the 3rd SOS. The C-47 would be in the lead with all navigation lights ON. The AC-47 would trail behind with all navigation lights OFF. When flares were deployed and you looked up, you could occasionally see the lights on the lead decoy aircraft.....drawing fire. When that happened, Spooky would rock their world!</p>	<p>Harvey Wasserman: They could also put the props out of synchronization so the sound of the engines could not be traced. (My theory on how and why that would work is that the engines sounds were still audible on the ground, but it was difficult to determine the actual location because the sound was being deflected.)</p>

“Very few miss the next one after their first (reunion). We are a Band of Brothers.” ...Jack Anderson

The channels that brought music to the troops: live musicians, tape decks and radio stations, official and underground



(by Doug Bradley and Craig Werner)

"The feel of Vietnam, the vibe, was like nothing I'd ever experienced," says Doug Bradley, co-author with Craig Werner of We Gotta Get Out of This Place: The Soundtrack of the Vietnam War. "It seemed as if our music—the rock 'n' roll sounds that we brought with us on our records and albums and cassettes, in our fingers, on our lips and in our heads—was colliding with the brutality of war and ricocheting off the Vietnamese landscape."

Nowhere was that more apparent than at Long Binh Post, the largest Army encampment in the world at that time. Army veteran Frank Gutierrez, who spent most of four years in South Vietnam between 1967 and 1970, traced his memories of the song "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" to the replacement station at Long Binh. "There's 300 or 400 or 500 guys in one place," he said, all brand new, and we don't know what our destiny is and we're listening to this music, and the song fits. We've got to get out of this place, if it's the last thing we ever do."

In this excerpt from We Gotta Get Out of This Place, Bradley and Werner show the importance of music to U.S. troops. It was a way to connect with each other and the world back home. Music also helped them cope with the complexities of the war they had been sent to fight.

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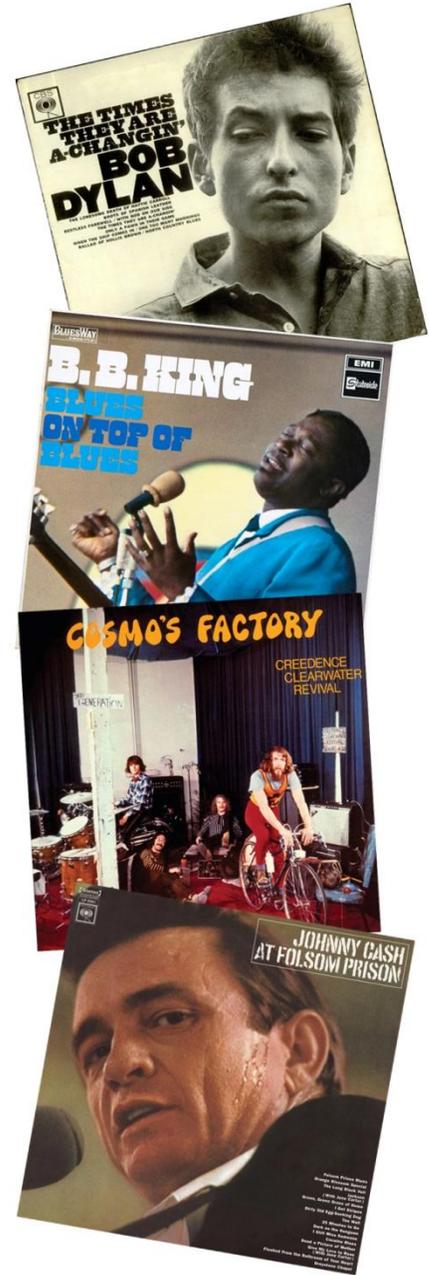
The sounds of popular American music reached almost every corner of Vietnam through radio waves that carried both sanctioned and underground stations; cassettes, eight tracks and reel-to-reel tape decks in hooches; bands, many of them Filipino or Korean, strumming out Creedence Clearwater Revival and Wilson Pickett covers in the enlisted men's clubs; and stages where USO shows and a few big-name stars entertained war-weary troops. But while many veterans say there was music everywhere in Vietnam, they don't always bother to state the obvious exception. For combat soldiers in the field, the soundtrack consisted mostly of silence.

Tom Helgeson, who spent much of his 1967-68 tour doing night patrols with the 23rd Infantry Division (Americal) in and around the notorious Pinkville, where the My Lai and My Khe massacres took place, observed: "When you went out on patrol, you really relied on your hearing. Most of what you heard was bad news, a twig snapping at night meant there was someone around. Even during the day, when you heard an explosion, you knew it meant someone had stepped on a mine."

Steve Piotrowski, a radio-telephone operator with the 173rd Airborne Infantry Brigade in 1969-70 who spent most of his tour in the field, concurred: "Funny, music is a big part of the experience, but most of the time there was no music."

We just did not let people operate radios while we were in the bush, at least not in any place that was at all dangerous. You might hear some music on a resupply day if someone on the helicopter crew had a radio or a tape, but mostly it had to wait till you got back to the rear."

Almost everyone listened to the officially sanctioned Armed Forces Vietnam Network radio, though opinions differed on the quality of it. Many GIs remember AFVN primarily as a purveyor of musical pabulum. By the later stages of the war, however, as "hip militarism" gained force, AFVN was playing at least some of the rebellious rock and soul songs that had begun to dominate the soundtrack back home. "Late night on AFVN was reserved for progressive rock played by stoned-sounding DJs, just like FM stations back in the world," said George Gersaba



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Jr., of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). "Those low-voiced disc jockeys played everything from Roger Daltry to Procol Harum."

Like all military communications networks, AFVN's primary mission was to build morale and cheer on the war effort. "Music, especially familiar stateside songs, was a good way to do that," said Les Howard Jacoby, a DJ from January to December 1970. At times Vietnam DJs found themselves at the center of a battle between a command determined to maintain traditional military decorum and a growing number of GIs who identified with the rebellious and often explicitly antiwar music.

The connection between music and morale was particularly clear to the young women who signed up for the American Red Cross' Supplemental Recreation Activities Overseas program, better known as the Donut Dollies, who often served as DJs. "Our job was to lift the guys' spirits," said Jeanne Christie, who was stationed with the Army at Nha Trang, the Marines at Da Nang and the Air Force at **Phan Rang** during her tour from January 1967 to February 1968. Christie enjoyed using the "huge tape center" in Da Nang, which gave her access to an unusually wide range of music. "I would spend hours and hours and hours at night copying music. I copied jazz and classical. The music that really got me was the 'Going Home' segment from Antonin Dvorales Symphony No. 9 'From the New World.' Whenever we put that on in the center, all the noise would stop. It was just this very powerful moment of reality."



A not so typical tape recording studio in a barracks at Phan Rang AB.

During the four months beginning in July 1969 that Donut Dollie Nancy Warner contributed to the programming at KLIK, an AFVN station at Lai Khe, she avoided songs or dedications that might put the DJs and their shows at risk. "Once a week at KLIK, they had the Red Cross girls come in and do a live dedication show," said Warner, who later worked at the AFVN station in Da Nang. "So all week long when we were out at firebases, we would collect dedications from guys in the field. A lot of them were songs to their girlfriends back home. They knew what time the show was on and they'd tape it and send it home."

Warner, who later worked at the AFVN station in Da Nang, remembered, "We couldn't play two Beatles songs, specifically, 'Happiness Is a Warm Gun' and 'Why Don't We Do It in the Road?'"

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But even when radio guidelines forbade playing songs like "War" and "Ruby Don't Take Your Love to Town," the troops still heard them through the ubiquity of tapes, records and live bands.

As the war crept on, enterprising GIs would rig tape recorders, microphones and even record players to their field radio systems and conduct unauthorized broadcasts on so-called alternative stations. One of the minor mysteries of the pirate radio scene was how the counterfeit DJs got almost immediate access to new sounds from stateside.

Roger Steffens shed light on the practice. Steffens, who trained at the Army's radio and television school before being sent to Vietnam, was assigned to the military's psychological operations, or PsyOps, which distributed American propaganda to enemy troops. Because his assignment gave him a high-level security clearance, Steffens was in a position to receive what amounted to contraband musical deliveries from the West Coast. "My friend Jerry Burns in San Francisco would tape from 8 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon and send me these tapes from KSAN, which was the first free-form FM station. He'd stick the tapes in the overnight and within 36 hours we'd have them in Saigon...interviews with the Grateful Dead, new music. I was making cassettes for guys to take out to the field. I must have made 1,000 cassettes those 26 months I was in yard."

Most of the makeshift networks were ephemeral, some jury-rigged for a single night. Sometimes, late at night, there'd be radio frequencies no one was using," said Piotrowski, the 173rd Airborne radio operator. "Some guy would get bored and send out some music, someone else would pick it up and relay it, and so on." One evening Piotrowski was participating in a radio relay when someone cut in angrily. "He said, 'This is a military station, I can have you busted.' He was really pissed off After a minute, a voice comes over the airwaves, 'Where am I, Major?' And right away, other guys in the relay join in, 'Where am I, Major?' Where am I? Come and get me: There was absolutely no way he knew where anyone was."

Among the innovators and pirates, none stood out more than "Dave Rabbit," the radio name of C. David DeLay Jr., the guiding spirit of the notorious Radio First Termer broadcasts, which aired for a mere three weeks in January 1971. Rabbit and his sidekicks, Peter Sadler and a female announcer who used the name "Nguyen," streamed drug-related songs to hooches, bunkers, compounds, hospitals, offices and tents across South Vietnam. "It was spooky," recalled George Moriarty, an information specialist at Army headquarters in Long Binh from November 1970 to November 1971. "Dave Rabbit would always be playing 'The Pusher' by Steppenwolf and warning us about bad drugs and nefarious drug peddlers. We all listened—because this guy was telling it like it was, playing our music, probably getting stoned himself—and infuriating the brass."

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For more than 40 years Dave Rabbit remained a cipher, his true identity unknown. Finally, in 2006, DeLay went public and gave his version of the story. He had been assigned to **Phan Rang Air Base** during his second tour, and one day his roommate told him the base was going to start a radio show that would override Saigon's AFVN for three hours a day. The roommate asked DeLay to be his studio engineer.

They decided on the name Radio First Termer. "It was a crazy setup," DeLay recalled. "We had a couple of TEAC reel-to-reel decks, an amplifier, a monitor speaker, a portable cassette player, a turntable, a telephone and a few cords and wires that hooked everything together. However, the neatest thing was this little switch. When 8 p.m. rolled around we flipped the switch, which put our signal out over the radio relay station that overlooked **Phan Rang**."

Radio First Termer, broadcasting from a brothel where Sadler knew the madam, hit the Saigon airwaves on Jan. 1, 1971, beginning with an announcement patched into AFVN's frequency: "Vietnam, in just 30 seconds your radio experience will change forever. Turn your radios to 69 megahertz on your FM dial. If you don't, we are going to re-up you for another tour of Vietnam." After the announcement, "AFVN returned to their regular crap, and at 8 p.m., 2000 hours, Radio First Termer was born," DeLay said.

As the threat of being discovered increased, 21 days and 63 programming hours later Radio First Termer was laid to rest. Taking one of the famous radio lines spoken by Edward R. Murrow and changing it just a bit, Rabbit's last words were, "Good night, Vietnam, and good luck"



Hanoi Hannah

The same message, issued in a very different tone, echoed in the broadcasts of Hanoi Hannah, who could be heard on Radio Hanoi in most areas of South Vietnam, especially at night. Several vets said they listened to Hannah for laughs, late at night over a few beers. But they also were puzzled about how she knew what she knew, often broad-casting Viet Cong offensives and announcing the names and hometowns of dead American soldiers.

Hanoi Hannah was the only source of music for prisoners of war in North Vietnamese camps, and they expressed a deep ambivalence toward her. "North Vietnamese propaganda radio played some memorable songs from the '60s," said Phil Butler, a pilot who was imprisoned at the infamous Hanoi Hilton. He listened to Buffy Sainte-Marie's "Universal Soldier," Bob Dylan's "With God on Our Side," Country Joe's

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"I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag" and Frank Sinatra's "The House That I Live In." Butler noted that "the purpose was to lower our morale and make us homesick"

Another former POW, Ray Voden, shot down over Hanoi in April 1965, observed that the North Vietnamese strategy often backfired. "One time they played 'Downtown' by Petah Clark," he said, "and everyone started dancing and yelling for an hour—just went wild. Another one that gave us a hoot was 'Don't Fence Me In' by Ella Fitzgerald."

Hanoi Hannah frequently aimed her words specifically at African-American GIs and the racism they faced. "It was as if she were talking directly to you," said Yusef Komunyakaa, a black soldier from Bogalusa, Louisiana, whose book of poems *Dien Cai Dau* is one of the unquestioned masterpieces of Vietnam literature. "She'd say things like 'Soul Brothers, what you dying for?' It was like a knife in the gut. And she also had some idea of the popular culture of black Americans. Just the mention of a singer like Ray Charles or B.B. King sort of legitimized her voice. You felt a momentary hesitation. It stopped you in your tracks."

While radio was an omnipresent part of the Vietnam experience for American troops, it was often the live music played by their comrades that tugged hardest at their hearts or tickled their funny bones. "Sometimes Special Services had auditions where soldiers could show what they can do, and they can put you on temporary duty, going around and playing," said Kimo Williams, who had established himself as a guitarist and singer in Hawaii before enlisting in the Army. "We auditioned, and in October and in November we had 30 days of temp duty. We called ourselves the 'Soul Coordinators.' We played officers' clubs, hospitals, firebases. We'd get in helicopters and play firebases in Da Nang. One gig was in the middle of a courtyard in the hospital in Saigon, just blasted, they were in their beds listening to us play—that was pretty special." (See "Kimo Williams: Are You Experienced," by Rick Fredericksen, Vietnam, April 2014.)

A handful of well-known American musical acts performed in Vietnam, including "Rebel Rouser" Duane Eddy; the Surfari, who reported that they were asked to play their hit "Wipe Out" a half-dozen times or more at each show; Motown artist Edwin Starr, best known for his antiwar anthem "War" ("What is it good for? Absolutely nothing!"); James Brown; Nancy Sinatra; and Johnny Cash.

Cash, who spent several weeks singing for troops in 1968, was ambivalent about the politics surrounding the war but not about the need to support the men fighting it. The following year Cash released "Singing in Vietnam Talkin' Blues" and "Man in Black," which included the lines, "I wear the black in mourning for the lives that could have been / Each week we lose a hundred fine young men." Cash admitted in his autobiography, *Ring of Fire*: "My thoughts about Vietnam really had to do with our boys over there. I knew they didn't want to be there, which is

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why I went over myself. Pretty soon June, Carl Perkins and I were doing seven and eight shows a day, sometimes for only 10 people in a hospital ward."



The Pretty Kittens

Some American musicians saw Vietnam as an opportunity to cash in on the large captive audience. The Pretty Kittens, a four-girl group assembled by a stateside manager to capitalize on the combination of rock 'n' roll and sex appeal, wore "miniskirts and white boots to entertain the half-million GIs that were in Vietnam," said their singer-guitarist, Bobbi Jo Petit.

The Pretty Kittens arrived in Vietnam in September 1967 with a grueling schedule. "We didn't get paid," lamented Petit. "We'd fly up in C-130s to Da Nang, do a show and then chopper down to Marble Mountain or someplace like that for an afternoon show,

and then back to Da Nang for the night. We'd set up on the back of flatbeds, I mean wherever. We were in the middle of nowhere, choppers flying through. After I got over the scariness of it, you know, the weight of what was really going on, it got to be where life was at for me."

The understandable reluctance of touring musical acts to perform in or near combat zones opened opportunities for in-country GI-musicians to do the entertaining. Priscilla Mosby was working as a stenographer in Long Binh when she heard about tryouts for a show that would "go out and entertain the troops and build the morale."

After signing a disclaimer "because I was a female and I wasn't supposed to be out of Long Binh," Mosby spent eight months in late 1971 and early 1972 in the band Phase 3 playing firebases from the Mekong Delta to the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Vietnam.

The story of Phase 3 came to a tragic conclusion at Bien Thuy in the Mekong Delta. Mosby had gone into the nearby town of Bien Sam Son to do "some shopping" and "heard that we were getting hit," she said. "I took refuge in a restaurant and stayed there until my instincts told me to move. When I came out, I saw a couple of guys that I knew who were Navy SEALs, and I went with them. So, I got back to the base, and someone tells me that the bunker has been hit. My guys—the barracks they were in—were totally demolished. My entire band had been killed."

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Like countless others in the war, Mosby expressed her grief through gallows humor: "I remembered something that one of the guys told me, and we laughed about it. He said, 'If I ever croak, make sure they don't cremate me because I don't want to burn twice because I know I'm going to hell' I thought about it and started laughing. Someone said to me, It's not a laughing matter. But that's the only way that I knew how to handle it."

Laughter, while an antidote to the grim reality of the Vietnam War experienced by people like Mosby, would become a rare commodity back home in America. There wasn't anything funny about the treatment encountered by many returning Vietnam veterans. More than ever, they would hold on to music in their struggle to survive.

Doug Bradley, a Vietnam veteran, teaches a course on the war with Craig Werner, professor of Afro-American studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and author of *Higher Ground: Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield, and the Rise and Fall of American Soul*.

Backstory: Get Out of This Place

More than any other song, "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" was the glue that held the improvised communities of troops together in Vietnam—and it's still bringing veterans together. "'We Gotta Get Out of This Place' was our 'We Shall Overcome,'" observed Bobbie Keith, an Armed Forces Radio DJ in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969 and famous for being the "Weathergirl." "We listened and danced to the tune in a state of heightened awareness that many of us might not make it back out."



In some ways, "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" was an unlikely anthem. The song was written for the blue-eyed soul duo the Righteous Brothers, recalled Cynthia Weil, who wrote the lyrics for Barry Mann's music. "Although they were white, they sounded so black that we thought of it as a ghetto anthem," she said. "I was in a sociological, change-the-world-with-songs period in my young life, so the lyric came from that sensibility."



The songwriting duo cut a demo with Mann singing both the lead and background parts. They gave copies to the Redbird record label's manager, Alan Klein, and its owner, George Goldner,

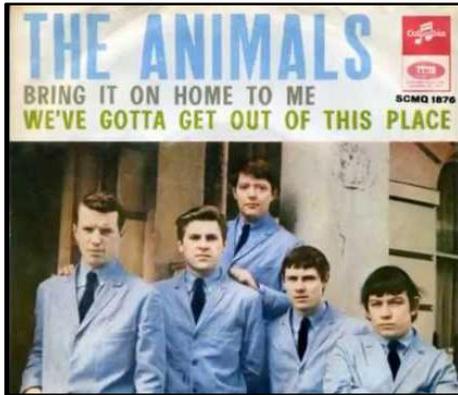
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who was so enthusiastic about the song that he persuaded Mann to release it under his own name rather than send it to the Righteous Brothers.

Later Well received a call from Klein congratulating her and Mann on having a big hit in England and she didn't know what he was talking about. It turned out that Klein had passed the demo on to the Animals' producer, Mickie Most, and the group cut the record without informing the writers. "When we heard the record, I was really upset," Weil admitted. "They'd made it their own stylistically, which was fine, but they changed or left out sections of the lyric. It killed Barry's record release."



Eric Burdon, the lead singer and guiding spirit of the Animals, remembered encountering the song in a stack of demos submitted to his agent. "Most of them were just 'Oh be my baby,' " he said. But when we heard 'We Gotta Get Out of This Place,' we really identified with it. It fit with our working-class ethic. For us, it was a symbol of wanting to get out of Newcastle."

When the Animals made their first visit to America in 1965, Burdon said, "The Beatles warned us what our management would tell us: Don't mention the war.' So we had a stock answer. We told reporters we were against war, period."

It wasn't until an encounter in bookstore near Fort Benning, Georgia, that Burdon became aware of Vietnam veterans' feelings about the song. "These three Green Berets came up to me," the then long-haired singer recalled. "I'm saying, Uh-oh, these guys are going to rip my head off. But they told me how the war was all a lost cause. They were actually thanking me for what I was saying."

The veterans' responses became a central part of Burdon's sense of the song. These amazing stories just keep coming," he said. "There have been hundreds of people who have come up to me and said something like, 'Your song saved my life.' "

Like Burdon, Well receives tons of letters every year from grateful veterans. "I can't express how much this kind of feedback means to us," she said. "To know that you have strengthened and comforted others through your work is the most satisfying feeling in the world."

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**WE GOTTA GET OUT
OF THIS PLACE**

Midnight finds me cryin'
Day time finds me cryin' too
I've got to get out of town
This whole city just brings me down, yeah

Gotta get away
Gotta get away
Gotta get away

I made a promise to you such a long time ago
Now baby, now baby, now baby, now baby
It's time to make it come true yeah, come through yeah
Come true yeah, come through yeah, come true yeah

In this dirty old part of the city
Where the sun refuse to shine
People tell me there ain't no use in me trying, no
Little girl you're so young and you're so pretty
And one thing I know is true
Your going to be dead before your time is due

See my daddy in bed dying
Watched his hair been turning gray
I know he's been working and slaving
Working and slaving, slaving and working
Working, yeah
Work, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

We gotta get out of this place
If it's the last thing we ever do
We gotta get out of this place, there's a better life
Don't you know, don't you know
Man, don't you know, don't you know, don't you know

Well, well, well
Time brings about a change
Time on the clock, on the wall
Brings about a change, yeah
All of his life he's been slaving

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All of the life he's been working

For what? For what?

For what? For what?

Give it up, give it up

Give it up, give it up, yeah

See my daddy in bed dying

Watched his hair been turning gray

I know he's been working and slaving

And slaving and working, and working and slaving

Working, yeah

Work, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

We gotta get out of this place

If it's the last thing we ever do

We gotta get out of this place

There's a better life

Don't you know, don't you know, don't you know

Take me, take me, take me



Michael Reed

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Remembering Col. Donald Paxton and Maj. Charles Macko of the 8th Tactical Bomb Squadron

Jack Anderson Wrote on Facebook: On February 22, 1969, a date I and many of us will never forget, the 8th Tactical Bomb Squadron lost a B-57 and her crew. The pilot was **Col. Donald Paxton** and the navigator **Maj. Charles Macko**. The Crew Chief was Mike Granese a member of this group who has attended all four previous reunions. There was a strong bond between the flight line personnel and flight crews. We felt very protective of them as they took our planes on dangerous missions. When they failed to return, it was a terrible blow to us and our morale. I have a chapter in my book (**Vietnam Remembrances**) called "A Sad Day in February" that gives more detail of this tragedy. Both are buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Rest In Peace our brothers.

<p style="text-align: center;">Donald Elmer Paxton Colonel 8TH BOMB SQDN, 35TH TAC FTR WING, 7TH AF United States Air Force Cedar Rapids, Iowa October 03, 1928 to February 22, 1969 (Incident Date February 22, 1969) DONALD E PAXTON is on the Wall at Panel W32, Line 82</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Charles Macko Colonel 8TH BOMB SQDN, 35TH TAC FTR WING, 7TH AF United States Air Force Endicott, NY January 15, 1931 to February 22, 1969 (Incident Date February 22, 1969) CHARLES MACKO is on the Wall at Panel 32W, Line 80</p>	

The Start of a Flightline Tradition

Jack Anderson wrote on Facebook: A Flight Line tradition happened on this day (5 March) in 1969. Maj. Beard flew his last flight. The tradition is that he gets champagne and hosed down

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after the flight. I was honored that he flew my plane (248) and I was to recover him that night. Maj. Beard had other ideas though Instead of bringing my plane back to Dog Row, he took a left turn off the taxiway and parked at Base Ops! There he jumped out of the plane and ran into the Operations Building before anyone could react. Undaunted, Lt. Leone had the fire truck go to the back door and drug the fire hose into the building and hosed him down in the dressing room! **We had fun in Vietnam too!**



Make your reservations at the hotel now. Just remember if for some reason life prevents you from 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 tours (See the **Tours** section). 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.

Tours: Friday 7 October is tour day. Right now we are planning on two tours. The first one is to **Tinker AFB**. We are still negotiating with them but right now the plan is to visit a Boeing E-6 Mercury aircraft flown by the United States Navy and they promise much more. The Mercury is

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an airborne command post and communications relay based on the Boeing 707-320 aircraft with a mission to communicate between the National Command Authority (NCA) and U.S. strategic and non-strategic forces. Two squadrons, the "Ironmen" of VQ-3 and the "Shadows" of VQ-4 deploy more than 20 aircrews from Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma to meet these requirements. This tour is subject to expansion and specific times for the tour have not been set. **There are a limited number of seats for this tour so a lottery type selection will be made from the list of reunion registrants that have made their hotel reservations by the end of March. Specific rules for this selection will be forthcoming.** There is also the possibility that if we have enough interest, we could also have a Tinker tour on Thursday 6 October.

The second tour is to the **Oklahoma State Capital** and the **National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum**. This tour will have to start early in the morning with an arrival at the capital by 9:00 am. No worry though as it is only a couple of miles from our hotel. Upon arrival at the capital we are expected to be greeted by Mary Fallin, our Governor. Governor Fallin is very pro military, but because we are planning this months in advance anything could happen that might prevent her from showing up. The state capital features Greco-Roman architecture. The structure is composed of 650 rooms and 11 acres of floor space with murals, restored stained glass, tribal flag plaza and changing art exhibits. For the most part this will be a docent guided tour with additional time to explore on your own as the legislature will not be in sessions, so there will be less restrictions as to where you can go. Believe me, this is a beautiful building! We are planning on departing at 11:00 am for our second stop at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum with lunch at the museum and then tour the museum. The National Cowboy Western & Heritage Museum is America’s premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the museum in Oklahoma City collects preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of our American West. More than 10 million visitors from around the world have sought out this unique museum to gain better understanding of the West: a region and a history that permeates our national culture.

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum features a superb collection of classic and contemporary Western art, including works by Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell, as well as sculptor James Earle Fraser’s magnificent work, The End of the Trail. The exhibition wing houses a turn-of-the-century town and interactive history galleries that focus on the American cowboy, rodeos, Native American culture, Victorian firearms, frontier military and Western performers. Outside, beautifully landscaped gardens flank the Children’s Cowboy Corral, and interactive children’s space.

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From fine art, pop culture and firearms to Native American objects, historical cowboy gear, shopping and dining, the Museum tells America’s story as it unfolds across the West. Like the National Museum of the Air Force you could probably spend a few days to view and appreciate all of the exhibits.

There will be reduced admissions (\$8.00) to the museum between 6 and 10 October by any of our reunion attendees that presents their name tag at the admissions counter. The normal admission rate is \$12.50 for adult and \$9.75 for seniors which most of us would qualify for. The group rate admission rate is \$5.50.

Another tour that we will be planning is a visit to Commodore Aerospace Corp and a real live working copy of the Skymaster. More on that later.

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

Please make your hotel reservations now!



Phan Rang AB Challenge Coins

Order your challenge coin now. Price includes postage.

MAIL ORDER PRICE* LIST		Total Amount to remit
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2	\$7.00	\$14.00
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4	\$7.44	\$29.76
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7 or more call for cost.		

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Send Check or money order for the exact amount to **Jack Anderson, 826 72nd St. SE, Auburn, WA 98092**. Please make check payable to **Happy Valley Reunion**. Because of the high cost of manufacturing these coins we are going to need your money up front and will have to amass sufficient funds to have coins made. Your understanding is appreciated and we will do everything to insure prompt delivery after the coins are manufactured.

** Price includes a \$.50 profit for the Phan Rang AB Reunion fund.*

Buy 10 or more coins for only \$4.44 Ea.

Coins must be paid for now with pickup at the Phan Rang AB Reunion in Oklahoma City in October.

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