

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 107

**“Stories worth telling”**

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**Enemy Steps Up Mortar Attacks...63 Allied Sites Hit** *(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Saturday, June 21, 1969)*

S8.S Vietnam Bureau

SAIGON—A heavy barrage of Communist rockets and mortar shells ripped into 63 Allied bases and towns Wednesday night and early Thursday.

Military spokesmen said the number of attacks almost doubled the previous night's and were the most since the same number was reported for the night of June 6-7.

Spokesmen said 27 of the latest shellings caused enough damage and casualties to be called "significant."

Hardest hit was the Vietnamese Due Truong district headquarters base, also occupied by U.S. Army support troops, 135 miles northeast of Saigon near Da Lat. Forty 82mm mortar rounds caused light American and ARVN casualties there.

The nearby Cam Ly airfield took 25 more of the same shells, and about 10 more hit the **Phan Rang air base**, along the coast 100 miles northeast of Saigon. Casualties and material damages were light.

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Other targets included the 9<sup>th</sup> Inf Div. headquarters post at Dong Tarn, 40 miles southwest of Saigon, and the 101st Airborne Div.'s 3rd Brigade headquarters base 65 miles northwest of Da Nang.

Artillery, mortar and recoilless rifle shells continued to pound American and Vietnamese troops at a Ben Het fire support base, 100 miles southwest of Da Nang.

The joint U.S. Army artillery and Vietnamese civilian irregular defense group outpost has been the site of constant shelling harassment for more than a week.

Meanwhile, U.S. Marines, backed by air strikes and artillery fire, killed at least 35 North Vietnamese soldiers Wednesday in an eight-hour battle about 100 miles northwest of Da Nang just below Khe Sanh.

Fighting broke out when fortified NVA troops opened up with automatic weapons on Leathernecks of the 3rd Div.'s 9th Regt. Other Marines moved in to help out as the clash continued.

U.S. losses were nine killed and 14 wounded.

**“That’s one of the great rewards of the business,” added the whirlybird pilot,  
“When you can return a downed man in great shape” said Maj. John Action Jr.,  
commander, Det. #1, 38<sup>th</sup> ARRS “Pedro”.**

**B52s Blast Enemy Troop Pockets...After Calm, a Storm of Bombs** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Monday, September 15, 1969*)

By SPEC. 4 JIM CLARE S&S Staff Correspondent

SAIGON — Five B52 strikes tore-up Communist troop concentrations, fighting positions and storage areas in South Vietnam Friday night and early Saturday as the giant Stratofortresses resumed bombing runs.

The Strategic Air Command bombers had suspended their missions for 36 hours Thursday ordered by President Nixon.

The B52s' latest targets were in Phu Yen, Phuoc Long, Long Khanh, and Binh Dinh provinces. The closest mission to Saigon was in Long Khanh province, 28 miles northeast of the capital.

In other air action Friday, Air Force F-100 Super Sabre pilots from the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang air base killed five Communists and razed 12 fortifications when they bombed a Viet Cong base camp in the Mekong Delta's Ba Xuyen province.



## **Airmen Team Up To Save Fuel Truck**

**Aerial Porters to the rescue  
of a potential diaster**



**(The R5 refueler, an ever-present piece of equipment on the flightline, was a GMC, V6 engine, cab over design with a production run from 1966 to 1968.)**

**Airmen Team Up To Save Fuel Truck** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Wednesday, December 8, 1967)

**PHAN RANG, Vietnam** (01) — "The guys didn't take time to think what could happen, they just did it," said Air Force S.Sgt. Donald C. Breire, a freight specialist with Det. 8, 14th Aerial Port Sq., at Phan Rang AB.

He was talking about four airmen who extinguished a blaze on a 5,000-gallon fuel truck, saving the truck and lives of men nearby.

Briere, S. Sgt. Joseph C. Mallette, and Airmen 1.C. Terry Streater, and Ronald R. Schenck, were, returning to work after lunch.

"We were following the fuel truck," said Mallette, "and could see the sparks coming from the universal on the truck. When it started burning, we pulled our truck around it and told the driver it was on fire."

Airman 1.C. Dennis R. Flippo, the truck driver, said, "The truck was full. I was on my way to fuel two F4s when my truck caught fire. You can bet I pulled off the road as fast as I could."

Schenck, driving the aerial port vehicle, pulled it across the road to block traffic and told a security policeman who arrived at the scene to notify.

While Schenck and Briere remained with their truck, Streater and Mallette ran to the burning truck to aid the driver. Flippo went to work with his fire extinguisher. Then Mallette took the nozzle and crawled under the truck.

"The flames had covered the universal," Mallette said. "I sprayed the whole bottle on it, and when Streater got another one, I emptied that one on it too. The fire was out before I emptied the second bottle, but wanted to cool the metal down."

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"The fire was so hot it burned all the paint off the universal," said Streater.

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**3 Squadrons Moved** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 1967)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (7AF) —The 315th Air Commando Wing has moved three of its airlift squadrons, its chief of maintenance section, and its headquarters to Phan Rang AB. Commanded by Col. Bill M. Richardson, the C-123 Provider transport unit airlifts cargo, personnel, and animals to installations throughout South Vietnam.

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

**The Night Belongs to Gunships** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Tuesday, November 3, 1970)

**PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special)**—As dusk stretches its fingers over this central coast air base and weary Air Force men kick off their boots and marvel at how they ever finished with their hard day's work, the AC-119 Shadow and Stinger gunship crews are just waking up.

Armed with 7.62mm miniguns capable of spewing 6,000 rounds per minute and containing illumination and surveillance devices, these prowlers of the sky deny the night's dark Blanket to the enemy.

Organized "into" the 17th and 18th Special Operations Sqs., both part of the 14th Special Operations Wing here, the Shadow and Stinger gunships provide nightly close air support, battlefield



**An AC-119 Shadow gunship on the ramp at Phan Rang AB.  
Photo by Christopher Boles**



## “Stories worth telling”

The big bombers have flown more than 500 strikes against the supply route since the campaign began Oct. 10.

### **GIs Smash 3 Attacks on Saigon Buffer Forces** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Wednesday, January 29, 1969)

**SAIGON** —Communist gunners and ground troops lashed out three times Sunday and early Monday at U.S. forces between Saigon and the Cambodian Border.

Ten 107mm rockets slammed into a night defensive position of 25th Inf. Div. troopers at 2 a.m. Sunday; marking the start of a three-hour battle 35 miles northwest of Saigon.

Fifteen minutes later the soldiers were hit with RPG, recoilless rifle and automatic weapons fire.

Backed by artillery and helicopter gunships, the Americans repelled the attack without taking any casualties. A sweep of the battlefield turned up 15 Communist dead.

Near the Cambodian border, 70 miles northwest of Saigon, 1<sup>st</sup> Air Cav, Div. troops spotted movement near their base camp and fired grenades at the suspected enemy around 1 a.m. the same day. Six hours later the 2d Bn., 8<sup>th</sup> Cav. outpost was hit with five rounds of 107mm rocket fire.

At daylight Gts moved out to hunt down the Communists and found seven satchel charges, 13 crew-served weapons, 21 rocket-grenades and 500 feet of communications wire — all within 250 feet of the camp perimeter.

Nearby, "Skytroopers" of the 2d Bn., 12th Cav. peppered suspected Red movement around their position with small arms fire shortly before dawn. A first-light search revealed the bodies of, four North Vietnamese soldiers.

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At 1 a.m. Monday, about 30 mortar and rocket shells ripped into a 28<sup>th</sup> Inf. Div. base camp at Dau Tieng, 40 miles northwest of the capital city. The attack caused light U.S. casualties and materiel damage, Artillery fire was aimed **at** the enemy positions with unknown results.

***Elsewhere, Communists used B40 rockets and small arms fire to assault the Phan Rang city police station, 162 miles northeast of Saigon, at 9:45 Sunday night.***

***The lawmen drove off the attackers and then policed up a B40 launcher, one rocket round and two AK50 submachine, guns around the station. One policeman was wounded.***

***The attack followed by about 18 hours a probe against the Phan Rang air base in which 12 U.S. soldiers were wounded.***

One militiaman was killed and an unreported number of others wounded when a B40 rocket hit a civil defense office six miles southwest of Saigon at 1 a.m. Monday.

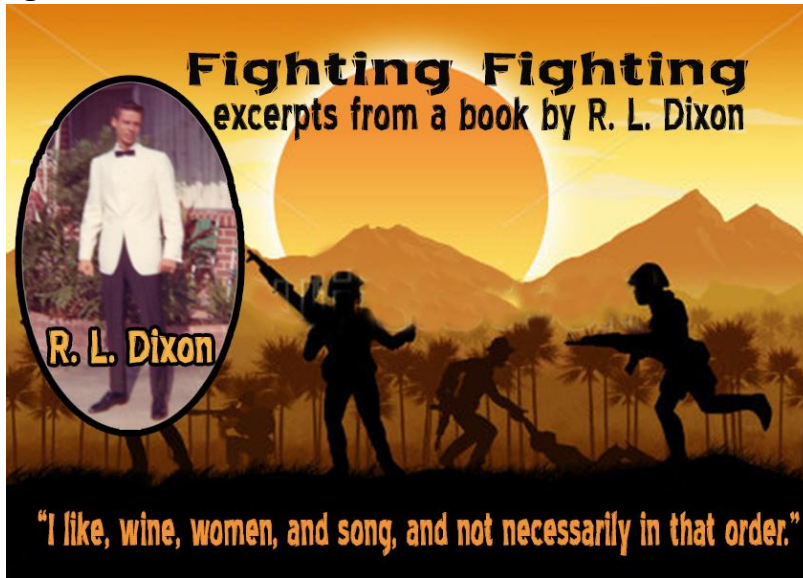
Near Da Nang, a Quang Nam Province hamlet unprotected by government troops took three enemy 82mm mortar shells an hour later. The barrage killed one civilian and wounded five.

Meanwhile gunships of the 101st Airborne Div, used machine-gun and rocket fire to destroy a 37mm antiaircraft gun around noon Sunday after they discovered Reds setting it up near Route 547-A, 14 miles southwest of Hue. The bodies of two enemy soldiers were later sighted in the area.

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



**Fighting Fighting** - excerpts from a book by R. L. Dixon (Part 1 of 3)



**Fighting Fighting  
Chapter 5  
(This is the first of three installments of Chapter five)  
Vietnam 1966**

I got about a week of bar time before being sent on my first temporary duty assignment. My first TDY was a modification team to Vietnam in June of 1966. It was to be a lengthy TDY, as we had to modify every piece of First Mob Crypto gear at every base above Saigon.

I was to go with Technical Sgt. Bertle, a small, quiet man old enough to be my father. He was stooped over, with gray hair, and he drove a Ford Falcon.

He was a family man who married late in life. His wife and young children stayed stateside, "rather than uproot them." That was how he put it.

He never went off-base. No one had seen him with a whore. Everyone I asked said, "He's too religious."

Two teams were to tackle every piece of Crypto gear deployed by the First Mob in Vietnam. Another team went south of Saigon.

Bertle and I were ordered to start at Saigon and go north. Bertle wanted us to pack all our clothes in his one big suitcase trunk. He thought it would be easier to carry. I didn't protest too much. He outranked me by three stripes.



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We packed everything into this one big, blue trunk with a red stripe on top and took off to Saigon in a C-130 cargo plane. Bertle was issued a thirty-eight caliber pistol and four boxes of .38 rounds. I got an M-16 with 200 rounds of M-16 ammo in a metal can. We had our hand tools, including soldering guns, solder, and diodes for the modifications. All in the trunk. All our clothes were in the trunk, too. It was so damn heavy I thought my arm would fall out of its socket.

I was skinny, but Bertle was smaller, shorter and skinnier. His facial contortions gave away his weakness. The trunk was a strain on him, but he never complained.

When I get to know people, I can always find some good in them, and Bertle had lots of good traits. Soft-spoken, he never got angry at anyone. He was religious and not afraid to show it. (On our descent into Saigon I saw Bertle close his eyes and pray. I smiled. I was beginning to like Bertle.)

\*\*\*

We went straight to the temporary barracks area. We were told technical sergeants and above sleep in a different barracks than airmen like me. Since we had packed everything in one trunk, Bertle came to the lower rank transient barracks with me.

Just after dark, as we were getting ready to shower, the whistle of three mortar rounds could be heard as they flew through the air and exploded upon impact on a couple of barracks. The tinny sirens wailed, troops ran, Jeeps revved their engines, and ambulances rushed up and down the streets while all the men ran towards the nearest sand bag bunker. We followed suit.

We heard it was a direct hit on the higher rank barracks. It was the barracks Bertle would have been in, if it weren't for our shared trunk.

In the dimly lit bunker I could see Bertle's face bathed in a sliver of light as he looked out a little slit of a window to see the chaos. The light on his face highlighted the crow's feet around his eyes. All his wrinkles looked deeper. He looked terrified and older than before.

I silently vowed to get him back to his wife and children. I was going to be his protector. I was younger, stronger, and probably a better shot.

The sirens stopped. Bertle and I went back to our temporary barracks and I slowly drifted off to sleep amid jet engine sounds. The jet sounds reminded me of Clark AFB, and I dreamed of the girls in the bar of which I owned one-tenth.

In the morning light I saw the splintered barracks and felt anxiety for the first time in a long time. Concern for my own safety was first and foremost in my mind.

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We didn't know where to get breakfast and when we asked, we were told breakfast was not served after 0800. We found this out at 0803. But we were told we might still be able to get something at the snack bar across the street, near the morgue.

The snack bar served fried bologna sandwiches on stale, thin white bread, with either beer or Coke to drink. We each ordered a sandwich. The snack bar was nearly full with early-morning beer drinkers. But there was an empty table next to the window.

Bertle and I were into our second bite of sandwich when our eyes focused through the Plexiglas window looked outside at several slabs of concrete. Bodies were being washed down with garden hoses. A trough under the slabs caught the body fluids and channeled them down to a larger trough, then to God knows where. I looked around to see if we were the brunt of some cruel joke. We were not. This was apparently a common occurrence.

Now I knew why no one had taken the window seat.

"I'd almost rather be over there being washed than eat this fried bologna sandwich," I told Bertle.

Let's adhere to the chow hall, from now on. How about it?" Bertle said.

My fighting ardor was beginning to wane. Saigon had too many different factions of our military, too many different uniforms, different friendly forces uniforms, and some of the enemy didn't wear uniforms. Almost chaos.

I didn't like anything about Saigon. Not even the "steam and cream" massage parlors.

\*\*\*

We did modifications in Phan Rang next. A new base, a primitive place with only tents to live in. Tents dotted the mountain side. No foliage. It looked like a black and white photograph of a Civil War encampment. I asked the C-130 pilot why it looked so desolate.

"They spray defoliant from the C-123's every week or so," he said. "So the VC can't hide behind the bushes. Won't nothing ever grow here. It's saturated. They call it Agent Orange."

Every place we visited, we were greeted by people we either knew or had seen in the Philippines. Phan Rang was no different. All these sites were First Mobile Communications sites.

The First Mob Air Force troops had esprit de corps. We wore black baseball caps with the words "First Mob" emblazoned on the front and our last name embroidered on the back. We sort of

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stole the Marine slogan of "First in, Last Out." The elite of the Air Force Communications.

The hat was a small effort at building camaraderie, and it worked.

A whore house city had been erected just outside the base gate. It was made of flat sheets of metal from different brands of beer cans. Schlitz and Budweiser logos printed all over it. Looked like my kind of place.

Bertle opted to stay in our tent and rest after he washed our dirty clothes at the laundry tent.

"Boy, I'm glad I put your clothes in this trunk with mine," Bertle said. "If I didn't wash your dirty underwear, you'd have to remember to put yellow to the front and brown to the rear every time you put on another dirty pair."

"Now Sarge, don't get in a tizzy," I said. "You know, I would just throw 'em away and buy 'em new when the stains got too big. And you never give me a chance to wash. Only one at a time can get in that trunk. All I ever see is your butt sticking in the air with your face and hands stuck in the trunk, rearranging not only your side, but mine as well. I put my stuff in a certain place, so when it's dark, I can reach and grab it. But no, you got to be moving it all the time. So go ahead and rearrange it one more time, so I won't know where nothin' is!"

I tried smiling, but Bertle's smile, in return, was short. He just showed his teeth while barely moving any facial muscle. "You go ahead into sin city with those other First Mob guys," he said. "I'll stay here and straighten out this trunk."

Four of us from First Mob bounced down off the side of that mountain in a cloud of red dust, heading for town, feeling free and secure with our M-16's and ammo boxes at our sides.

Being enlisted and on temporary duty to Vietnam from the Philippines, we didn't have the feeling of being stuck in any one place, like most drafted Army boys. We knew the Army was the reason for the bars in sin city, but we didn't have a feel for which bar catered to which echelon of the troops. Would some clean Air Force boys be welcome? We had our doubts. In the Army tent area, one side of the dirt road had a sign that read, "We Aim To Kill!" The rock lined walkways were unpainted.

On the other side of the road, a different company had another sign. It said, "We have killed!" They had painted rocks. I took that to mean, they were the more deadly of the two 101st, Screaming Eagle Companies, and were treated better.

Air Force boys naturally went into the best looking of the bars to find the best looking whores. We found it. We took the four stools at the small bar. No sooner had we sat down when seven of the baddest "we have killed" boys walked in. We had heard of suicide squads—the men who

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had large numbers of Vietcong ears strung on rawhide, hanging off their uniforms. These troopers fit the bill. They smelled worse than my dirty underwear.

One of them came up behind me as I sat at the bar. His shadow loomed large over me. He elbowed in between me and another cologne smelling, freshly washed and shaven Air Force First Mob enlistee. His hairy, huge, black, sweaty arm pushed mine along the bar. He coughed, grunted, and farted, and turned to within one inch of my ear and muttered, "That's the stool I always use in my bar."

I had already spotted another place to sit. I stood up.

"That is a nice barstool," I said. "But I need a chair to sit in, anyway, since I hurt my back in karate practice. I think I'll sit at the table over there. You guys like to join me?"

I was proud of myself for taking the route of least resistance, without losing face.

I got my first good look at the smelly man. He wore a size XXX large, semi-sweet dark chocolate color, with a gold tooth and an earring and Afro, and two bandoleers across his massive chest. His string of ears was the longest of the seven.

The other six suicide Army bad-asses spread out instinctively and waited for Mr. Gold Tooth to make the first move. The Air Force four had just seated themselves at the table when I heard Mr. Gold Tooth tell Mama San to give our table a round of drinks on him. I looked to see him smile and salute with his index finger off his right eyebrow. It was our signal to relax. We were accepted.

I saw Mr. Gold Tooth tell a pretty young prostitute something as he pointed at our table. She came straight to me and said, "You number one, G.I. You like go with me?"

I smiled at Mr. Gold Tooth as I followed her to one of the back room hooches. She parted the curtains and turned on her 12-inch oscillating fan. Then she oscillated my nine. No rubber. I figured I'd just pour some whiskey on it afterwards.

**Richards Vietnam adventures will be continued in the next two issue of the Phan Rang Newsletter. Please visit his [web site](#) for more information and how to order his book.**

**"Stories worth telling"**  
**Vietnam Security Police Patch**



The Republic of Vietnam Security Police Patch was given to all Air Force Security Policemen upon entering the country. This patch in a pocket hanger was also used by U.S. Advisors to the South Vietnamese Police Forces.

**PHAN RANG STAFF MEMBERS**

**Joseph Burkhart:** Master of Ceremonies

**Robert Kellington:** Tour Coordinator

**Jack Anderson:** Treasurer

**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 & Badge Board

**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**

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**6-9 October 2016**

**If for some reason life prevents you from attending the reunion, you can always cancel the reservation without any penalty.**

**TOURS**

<b>Tour</b>	<b>Info</b>	<b>Cost Per Person</b>
<b>Tinker AFB</b>	Visit Tinker AFB, view static aircraft displays and much more. There will be lunch on this trip, but it will be on a pay as you go basis. <b>Tinker AFB is limiting this tour to 40 people so the first 40 people to send remittance to Jack Anderson will get on the bus. Please note that this tour runs concurrently with the Capital/Cowboy tour.</b>	\$23*
<b>Capital/Cowboy</b>	Visit Oklahoma State Capital with greetings from governor and lunch and tour at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. <b>Please note that this tour runs concurrently with the Tinker AFB tour.</b>	\$32**
<b>Wiley Post Airport</b>	Visit Commodore Aerospace Corp. hanger at Wiley Post Airport. See O-2A aircraft, parts, Vietnam War display and take rides in O-2A aircraft. Lunch at the Runway Cafe and visit the Aviation Museum at Wiley Post Airport.	\$14*

\*Includes cost of transportation only.

\*\*Price includes \$5.50 admission cost to the museum, \$12 for lunch and \$14 for transportation. If you wish to go on this tour you cannot go on the Tinker AFB tour as they run on the same day and time.

**FOR ALL OPTIONS, PLEASE ADD THE REUNION FEE OF \$15. THE FEE IS APPLICABLE FOR A COUPLE OR FAMILY GROUP.**

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Please send remittance to:

**Jack Anderson**

**826 72<sup>nd</sup> St. SE**

**Auburn, WA. 98092**

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

**Please make your hotel reservations now!**

**Phan Rang AB Challenge Coins**



**The guys are just raving about these coins! There still are a few coins available. Order yours now before they become collector’s items and the cost quadruples.**

MAIL ORDER PRICE* LIST		Total Amount to remit
Each	Price	
1	\$6.56	<b>\$6.56</b>
2	\$7.00	<b>\$14.00</b>
3	\$7.22	<b>\$21.66</b>
4	\$7.44	<b>\$29.76</b>
5	\$7.66	<b>\$38.30</b>
6	\$7.88	<b>\$47.28</b>
7 or more call for cost.		



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Send Check or money order for the exact amount to **Jack Anderson, 826 72<sup>nd</sup> St. SE,  
Auburn, WA 98092.** Please make check payable to **Happy Valley Reunion.**

*\* 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.

I hope that you enjoyed this issue of the Phan Rang Newsletter. This newsletter was  
compiled and published by [Douglas Severt](#). All previous issues of the Phan Rang Newsletter  
are available [here](#).