

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 112

“Stories worth telling”

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Airmen, Villagers Team Up - Repair Bad Road *(Seventh Air Force News)*

PHAN RANG - An almost impassable road between Ninh Quy Hamlet and Thap Cham Village was recently repaired, thanks to a joint effort by off duty airmen and Vietnamese villagers.

Earth moving equipment from the 35th Civil Engineering Squadron here and 30 ox carts teamed up to spread about 100 tons of gravel over the three-quarter mile-long road.

"The provincial government, through the base civic action office, asked us to help repair the road," explained MSgt. James R. Barnett, pavements superintendent for the 35th CES.

"The road is the only means of getting to the little hamlet," he added. "During the rainy season, a woman in childbirth was being taken to the hospital over the road. The vehicle got stuck and the woman died. The government wants to make sure this does not happen again."

The Army provided the gravel from its rock crushing plant at Phan Rang AB. They also hauled the material to Thap Cham, where it was stockpiled.

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"One Sunday we went out with the equipment and started loading the gravel into the carts, some of which were rather small," Sergeant Barnett commented. "We were assisted by a front-end loader operated by one of the Army's civilian contractors. After the Vietnamese dumped the gravel, we used a road grader to level it off."

Sergeant Barnett said he and his men were gratified at the willing attitude of the Vietnamese people. "They turned out in full force to help us, not only by hauling the rock but also by using shovels, rakes and hoes to help spread it," he stated. "Our work was helpful to the Vietnamese, and having been used to loading heavy mechanized equipment, loading ox carts was certainly an interesting novelty."

Viet Boy's TB Cured in Florida - Air Men Make It Possible (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Monday, May 29, 1967*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (OI) - Little Huynh Tai was a pitiful sight, that day more than a year ago when his father, Huynh Tho, carried him into the Phan Rang province hospital after walking more than three days to make the 50-mile journey through Viet Cong-controlled territory.

Barely 8 years old, tiny Huynh was ravaged by a silent killer — tuberculosis. Already paralyzed, his life expectancy could be counted in days. This hospital in Phan Rang city was his last hope.

While donating his spare time and medical knowledge to help the understaffed Vietnamese doctors at the hospital, Air Force Capt. (Dr.) Harry Tucker of Winter Park, Fla., a physician at the Phan Rang air hospital, examined the new patient.

He found pulmonary and probable abdominal tuberculosis. The disease had attacked the spinal column, destroying several vertebrae which collapsed the spine into a bentover position.

Too weak to survive a necessary operation to relieve the paralyzing pressure, Huynh was given anti-tuberculosis treatment. Strength gradually returned to his disease wracked body.

Within two weeks Huynh was airlifted to the modern medical facilities at Cam Ranh Bay. A three-man team, including Tucker, performed an operation to drain an abscess and relieve the paralyzing pressure.

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Encased in a cast from hips to chin, Huynh was returned to the province hospital in Phan Rang.

Two months later and continuing to gain strength, Huynh hesitantly placed one foot in front of the other to take his first trembling step since the disease began its attack.

Vietnamese doctors, nurses, ward attendants and other patients watched those first steps.

It seemed the Air Force doctor had done enough. But Tucker turned his efforts to a permanent cure for Huynh — an operation to fuse his spinal column.

The complex operation demanded a modern, well-equipped hospital and a specialist in this field. Tucker contacted Dr. Royston Miller, chief of orthopedics at Orange County Memorial hospital in Florida.

Miller volunteered to operate. Nearly everyone in the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing — pilots, aircraft mechanics and support personnel — donated more than \$1,900 to allow the son and his father to be together in the U.S.

Nearly seven months after Huynh's condition became known to Tucker, the Vietnamese boy and his father boarded a jet-transport aircraft that; took them to the United States.

After the operation to fuse his spine, the heavy body cast was replaced with a lighter and more comfortable brace. Months of recuperative care and additional medical treatment brought a stocky Huynh back to Vietnam recently.

(Note: This same story, from a different source, appeared in **Phan Rang New 104** along with the obituary of Dr. Tucker. Dr. Tom Peterson who was acquainted with Dr. Tucker and has promised to share some of his pictures with us in the near future. He has also hinted that he would like to attend our 2016 Reunion but might have a conflicting event happening at the same time or near the time of the reunion.)

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100,000th Sortie (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Tuesday, August 5, 1969*)

Phan Rang AB, Vietnam (Special) - After approximately three years of operations at Phan Rang Air Base, the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing flew its 100,000th combat sortie recently.

Mercy Fund Drive Loses Flood in Viet...Airman collects \$37,000 (*Press-Telegram, Long Beach, CA. Fri. April 7, 1971.*)

SAIGON — A Turlock, Calif., Air Force sergeant who saw a picture in newspaper has collected more than \$37,000 for two young Texans suffering from a rare kidney disease.

Sgt. Robert L. Jones, 22, looked on with disbelief today as the money continued to pour in from contributors — Americans, Australians and Vietnamese — at Phan Rang Air Base on the central coast.

"The response was unbelievable. I didn't know we had this many people in the area and they all just seem to come arunning," said Jones.

He had organized the drive after seeing a photo in Stars & Stripes of pretty, 17-year-old Paula Holt of Austin, Tex., sitting atop boxes of the drugs that she and her brother Gary need to fend off a type of nephritis that, has taken the lives of three of their 10 brothers and sisters.

The photo caption said the Holt family needed \$20,000 to pay the drug company.

Jones, a security policeman in the U.S. 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, started his campaign as a marathon appeal and within 25 hours had collected \$37,200 with more pledged.

He hopes to have \$50,000 in contributions when he leaves South Vietnam Sunday on a special flight to the United States. He plans to fly to Austin to present the money to the Holt family.

Air Force officials also were astonished by the response to Jones. "This is fantastic," said one. "We won't know where all this dough came from."

But they said most of it apparently resulted from competition between various units, barracks, clubs at Phan Rang, each trying to donate more than the others.

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One airman wrote a check for \$1,267, which an Air Force spokesman said represented a "healthy portion" of his recent reenlistment bonus. Another airman canceled an order for a new car in the United States and gave \$450 to the drive.

Mechanics "sold" aircraft to pilots. Enlisted men challenged officers to top their contributions. Some men shaved their heads, or their chests, in challenging others for donations.

"It spread like wildfire." said Jones, "and it wasn't just limited to the Americans."

Members of an Australian air force squadron based at Phan Rang joined in as did U.S. Army personnel, Vietnamese civilian workers, U.S. civilian contractors and technical personnel.

Jones said he didn't try to get other bases into the act because "this isn't really a contest, it's too serious for that because the lives of two kids are at stake." But he added. "If other bases want to help the Holts, go to it."

(There are several other articles about the efforts to aid Paula Holt (Phan Rang News 49) from different sources. I think that the response to this appeal was astonishing and says a lot about the servicemen of the day.)

NCO 1 Of Top 12 In AF *(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Saturday, July 24, 1971)*

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special)—A versatile noncommissioned officer assigned to the 1882nd Comm. Sq. here is one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen for 1971.

M. Sgt. Arthur G. Miles Jr., the Air Force Communications Service nominee, will be an honored guest at the Air Force Association convention in Washington Sept. 20-22.

Noncommissioned officer-in-charge (NCOIC) of the squadron's communications-electronics (C-E) program, Miles is also a boxing, track and field champion, and a leader of black activities.

While assigned to the 95th Strategic Wing at Goose AB, Labrador, in 1967, Miles was recognized for his job knowledge and leadership and selected for retraining into the C-E programs management career field. In addition, he was named "PRIDE" Man of the Quarter

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for exemplary performance as the wing NCOIC of C-E plans and programs, cited for compiling the highest "error-free" Communications - Electronics Support Program rate over a 10-month period within the 16 8th Air Force bases.

Following these achievements, Miles attended the SAC NCO Academy and the C-E programs Management supervisor courses, graduating in the top 15 per cent of his class.

At Phan Rang the sergeant was assigned the additional duties of unit manpower representative, resources adviser and resources conservation' (RE-CON) administrator. In the latter capacity, he submitted the first RECON savings item within AFCS to be validated for more than \$1 million.

The San Francisco area Golden Gloves champion and Pacific AAU Junior boxing champion in 1952, Miles continued his interest in sports, while in the Air Force, competing in 1956 in the Air Force World-Wide Boxing Tournament and later turning his talents to track and field.

In 1960, working with the Turkish Olympic Track and Field Team, he became the first American airman ever invited to compete in the Turkish National Track and Field Championships.



Phan Rang an Aussie Perspective *(from the guys ‘Down Under’ sent from Barry Krosch, Kingaroy, Queensland, Australia.)*



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Barry wrote that “he served with 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force at Phan Rang during 1969 and 1970. It was one of the most memorable times of my life, and I met some great and friendly ‘Yanks’ at our Mess and your PX.”

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(I've missed Larry's Smiling face and fabulous stories so here is another of the Very Best Memories by Larry Theurer)

I HAD A REAL BLAST

I'm on the old linked steel ramp on the East side of the runway, revetment side not built yet. In Vietnam only a month, very nervous.

After the revetments were built on the West side of the runway, arming before takeoff and de-arming after landing was then done safely at the ends of the runway. But on the early old ramp it was done in a area at the edge of the parking ramp off the middle of the runway. It's daytime, I'm in that area doing de-arming, lugging a 7 foot aluminum ladder to climb up on the B-57 wings.

The small area was extremely crowded with maybe eight F-100s and five B-57s in a traffic jam all trying to get through both ways at once, lots of pissed off pilots. It was pandemonium. I had completed my task on one B-57 and climbed down removing my ladder from the front wing edge by the fuselage. I walked out about 40 feet to the right front of the aircraft's nose. I'm trying to get to my next B-57 waiting to be de-armed but there are so many aircraft in such a small place I'm like the frog in the “Frogger” arcade game. I'm trying desperately to stay out of the way of all the moving machines, jet engine intakes and jet exhaust.

“He just held the brake on the left wheel and revved up the right engine to spin in a circle.”

Suddenly the plane I had just left, instead of moving left, right or forward, where I could have countered his move, decides to do a 180 degree turn in place. He just held the brake on the left

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wheel and revved up the right engine to spin in a circle. And I mean really revved it up, like take off speed.

My problem was that the tail end of the revved up right engine is now pivoting toward me and my little ladder. Where I was in front of the plane, I will now be at the rear. No problem if the B-57 is idling. **Big problem if the engine is revved up and your ass is only 40 feet behind it.**

Here it comes, roaring, swinging right toward me. I frantically look left, right and back. I could find nowhere to move to without getting sucked in an F-100 intake, hit by somebody else’s jet blast or get run over.

I turn my back to the oncoming blast, hang on to my ladder, lowered my head and tried to bury my face in my chest thinking “Oh well, how bad can jet blast be? It’s just a wind.” Yeah. Right. I found out.

I felt in one more second it was going to burn the shirt right off my back, and/or I’d suffocate inside the jet fumes. Fortunately he completed his pivot turn and cut the engine back to idle leaving me standing there with steam rising off me, gasping for air and shaking like a leaf and glad to be still alive.

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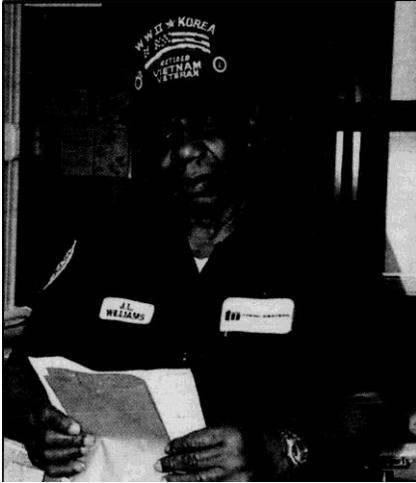
Base supply clerk recalls military service in three wars (*The Sheppard Senator, Friday, Aug. 25, 2000*)

For Junius Williams, 82nd Logistics Group Trend Western supply contractor employee, Normandy Beach, the Pusan Perimeter, and **Phan Rang Air Base** are not just places on a History Channel documentary. He served at all three locations.

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Junius Williams, a supply receiving clerk in Sheppard's Logistics Complex, verifies documentation concerning incoming aircraft parts.

the first time.

When the North Korean forces suddenly invaded South Korea 50 years ago, Cpl. Williams was assigned to an anti-aircraft battalion aboard an Army transport ship bound for Japan. At first he thought the invasion would not affect the seafaring soldiers, but as the situation in Korea worsened - that would soon change. Cpl. Williams was no stranger to facing an uncertain future aboard a ship bound for a war zone. Six years earlier, in January 1944, he was aboard the famous ocean line “Queen Mary.” Not converted to a troopship, the Queen was on one of its many trans-Atlantic voyages ferrying thousands of troops to the World War II European theater of operations. Cpl. Williams, a native of Gonzales, Texas, who had never seen a body of water wider than a river, experienced the open ocean and sea sickness for

As a truck driver in a segregated quartermaster trucking company, Cpl. Williams spend several months in England until May 1944m when his unit boarded a ship in the English Channel. They waited there without a hint as to what was about to take place. On June 9, three days after the massive D-day invasion, Cpl. Williams and the others of his company retrieved their trucks on a war-torn Utah Beach in Normandy, France. From there, they were to haul supplies to the combat units who were fighting their way across France. During this time, Cpl. Williams’ company was assigned to the “Red Ball Express,” hauling as to the thirst tanks of Army Gen. George Patton’s Third Army. Red Ball was a loop system of one-way highway routes over which the supply trucks ran 24 hours-a-day. Cpl. Williams was later involved in the relief of encircled American troops at Bastogne, Belgium, during the surprise German offensive in the winter of 1944, After Germany surrendered, he helped transport many German prisoners of war to their homes and then waited for redeployment to the Pacific that never came. After Japan surrendered, Cpl. Williams returned to the United States and was discharged from the Army in October 1945.

After working and attending college, Williams decided to join the Army Reserves in 1948 and later reenlisted in the regular Army. Then he got orders to Japan and after that, the North Koreans attacked.

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Cpl. Williams and his anti-aircraft battalion were quickly sent to Pusan Air Base, South Korea, in September 1950. By that time, the North Koreans had already pushed United Nations forces into an area at the tip of the Korean peninsula known as the Pusan Perimeter.

Sgt. Williams, as a member of an anti-aircraft unit, not helped provide base defense against enemy aircraft using 35 and 40mm cannons, a M-16, and a system of four 50-caliber machine guns mounted on a half-track vehicle. His unit was later assigned to Tague Air Base. After the Army and Marines landed at Inchon on September 15, they were sent north to Kimpo Air Base near the South Korean capital City.

Although enemy aircraft never attacked the air bases where he was stationed, Williams was forced to quickly evacuate Kimpo after Chinese Communist forces launched a massive surprise offensive in November. With orders to leave behind any vehicle that broke down, they returned to Tague and were later dispersed to Kunsan Air Base.

Sgt. Williams returned from Koorea in September 1951, and was a gunnery instructor for a year before being discharged for a second time. After working in various supply jobs in civil service at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, and attending college, Williams joined the Air Force Reserve in 1968. When his airlift wing was activated during the Vietnamese Tet offensive, he found himself in another war zone. This time it was at Phan Rang Air Base, South Vietnam where he experienced enemy rocket attacks.

After returning from Vietnam in 1969, he re-enlisted in the active duty Air Force. Williams served in various supply and U. S. Air Force Postal Courier Service duties at several continental United States and overseas locations as a technical sergeant. He was finally assigned to the supply squadron at Sheppard AFB in 1979, where he retired as a master sergeant on Feb. 1, 1985.

Since his retirement, 77-year-old Williams has been employed by the supply contractors servicing Sheppard. To sum up his career, Williams says, “I can put it this way. I got drafted the first time and the second two hitches I volunteered. I couldn’t stay away.”

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Nickel and Dime AF Units Making Big Change in Vietnam (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*,
Monday, May 23, 1966)

SAIGON (7th AF) — "Triple Nickel," and "Penny Short", squadrons are making lots of change.

When each squadron started out, neither had anything but tons of sand and clay. Today they have many acres of improved real estate, buildings and equipment. The cost was and still is — long hard working hours for the airmen and buckets of sweat.

Each squadron is unique in Air Force history. Both were the first ever created for exclusive Air Force construction work.

Officially called 554th and 555th Civil Engineering Sq. (Heavy Repair) both were assigned in Vietnam under the code name “Red Horse”. Because of the numerical designations, airmen began calling themselves "Triple Nickel: and “Penny Short.”

Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Rang ABs are being built by the Red Horse squadron airmen. Elements of the units began arriving in January and are now in full strength.

The units are self sustaining. Each can remain and work in respective areas indefinitely. Both are equipped with heavy machinery such as bulldozers giant earth moving equipment, doctors, medical technicians, cooks, etc.

At Cam Ranh Bays, the Triple Nickel airmen are building a port facility and air base to handle war supplies that will later arrive by ship and aircraft. Cam Ranh, according to engineering officials, is one of the most beautiful and ideal natural harbors in the World.

The two-fold mission of project Red Horse includes repairing airfields damaged by enemy forces or natural causes. From time to time segments of the unit s are deployed to make such emergency repairs In addition the squadron’s highly skilled airmen drill deep wells to supplement the water supply at various bases.

One of the first projects outside the Cam Ranh and Phan Rang areas was the deployment of a deep well drilling team. This team and drilling equipment went to the Da Nang the second largest air base in Vietnam, to drill for additional water supply, American and other Free World

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Forces Stationed there.

When the Red Horse team and equipment arrived at Cam Ranh Bay, they found a beautiful sandy beach washed by the gentle South China Sea. The sand however, almost became a more hostile enemy than the Viet Cong, who were in the area.

When the big ships came along side the long jetty that extended to the deep water of the sea. Air Force men began unloading the cargo of road scrapers, bull dozers, jeeps, flat-bed trailers and trucks.

As the trucks and flat-beds were unloaded, they were filled with smaller items necessary for the construction of an air base. Trucks laden with goods bogged axle deep in the shifting soft sand and the ‘dozers’ first job was to tow them to harder and higher ground.

The first job of the Triple Nickel Red Horses were to build themselves a place to live, and sanitation areas. Almost overnight, a tent city was created that housed all the squadron.

A "great debate" started among the airmen as to which is worse to work in — sand, clay and or mud. The debate is being argued. According to SSgt. Thomas D. White of Albany, Ga., a carpenter with Triple Nickel, no one wants to win that argument.

A fight between man and nature Triple Nickel and Penny Short airmen run into natural hazards such as rain and mud at Phan Rang and wind that blows sand at Cam Ranh.

Air Force Lt. Col. Albert L. Morgan Jr., of Lompoc, Cal., is chief of resource planning for Red Horse. Morgan said when Triple Nickel crews first went into Cam Ranh Bay, the place was absolutely bare except for a few scrub bushes.

According to White, more than a million yards of sand and clay has been moved. More than 20 tons of cement has been poured, more than 250,000 feet of lumber has been nailed up with 3,000 pounds of nails and 12 miles of roads have been built at Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Rang.

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Capt. Douglass Of Ore City Is In Vietnam. Captain **Joseph W Douglass**, son of Mr. and Mrs, Joseph S. Douglass. Ore City, is on duty at Phan Rang AB Vietnam. Captain Douglass, a base civil engineer, is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he was assigned at Aaipei Air Station, Taiwan. The captain, a 1956 graduate of Gilmer High School, received his B S. degree in 1961 from the University of Texas and his M.E. degree in 1966 from Texas A&M University. He was commissioned upon completion of Officer Training School at Lackland AFB. Tex. His wife, Barbara, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel L. Roberts of Dayton. (The Gilmer Mirror, Gilmer, Texas, August 8, 1968)

Lieutenant Colonel **Gay E. Jones**, son of Mr. and Mrs, G. A. Jones of 507 E. Ridgewood, Shawnee, has been decorated with the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Col. Jones received the medal for meritorious service as an aerospace research flight test officer while assigned at Edwards AFB, Calif. He was cited for his outstanding professional skill and knowledge. The colonel is now at Phan Rang with the Pacific Air Forces. A graduate of Shawnee High School, he received a B.S. degree from the Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Col. Jones was commissioned in 1950 through the aviation cadet program. His wife, Joan, is the daughter of Mrs. M. F. Birdsong of 503 Lake Murray Drive, Ardmore. (*The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, Sunday, October 13, 1968*)

EVANSVILLE AIRMAN AT PHAN RANG VIETNAM WITH U.S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam — A1C **Kenneth L. Ostrander**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Ostrander, Rt. 2, Evansville, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Ostrander, a finance specialist, is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he was assigned to Minot AFB, N.D. The airman is a graduate of Evansville High School. (Janesville Daily Gazette, Wednesday, December 13, 1967)

“Share the Memories” at the 2016 Phan Rang AB Reunion, Oklahoma City

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

Please make your hotel reservations now!

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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

Joe Kaupa: In Memoriam

Bruce Mueller: Badge Board (new)

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**

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