

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 118

“Stories worth telling”

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One Vietnamese Quest to find Her Husband’s American Family

by Doug Severt

(Phuong (Kristina) Ho joined our Facebook group about four years ago with her stated purpose of finding her husband’s American father. Her husband is Preston Vo (Son Hoang Vo). As usual for Phan Rangers and Americans in general, we welcomed her with open arms. Preston’s mother gave him a picture of his dad when he was only eight years old. That picture is very similar to the one on the right, but only with a different pose. He treasured that picture and carried it with him wherever he went to the point that portions of the picture, including the head are completely worn away.

As a young Amerasian he had to constantly avoid contact



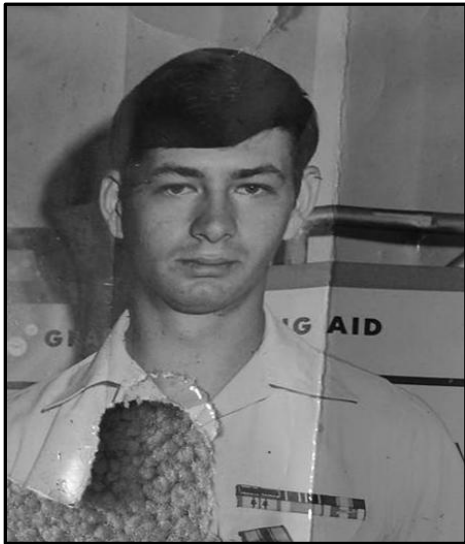
Donald Robert Reed

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with the Viet Cong and his life was very difficult. Throughout his young life and into his teenage years in Vietnam he held many different jobs working selling ice cream on the streets, picking up plastic and other recyclables, working at a coffee plantation and even making bricks for houses. As a teenager he worked with a group of men that went into the forest for months at a time finding and harvesting trees that made incense. In 1982, the U.S. passed the Amerasian Immigration Act (War Babies Act) giving preferential immigration status to Amerasian children born during the Vietnam Conflict. He started his journey to America in the 90's because being Amerasian and the War Baby Act all Amerasian were allowed to leave Vietnam. He first went to the Philippines and then on to the states. He had a 6-month course to learn basic English and American culture. Phuong didn't really know much about her husband's father except for his name and a few details of what he did at Phan Rang AB. Phuong has represented her husband through this long, arduous and emotional search. Some time ago she posted on Facebook that she did find her husband's father, but he was dead and it didn't seem like he had any family members around.



A crop from a picture posted by Phuong Ho of Donald Robert Reed, the father of her husband.

Phuong's story is very different. She is of Vietnamese and French heritage and grew up in Da Nang. She said her father was in the Vietnamese Air Force and in 1962 he was sent to Lackland AFB for training for four years. She is a 'boat person' having escaped Vietnam in a rickety boat with many others who made it to safety to Hong Kong. The following is what she posted. One other note for those that may have followed and remembered her posts on Facebook, for whatever reason she made it sound like she was searching for her father, rather than her husband's father. Whether the reason was either intentional or just

a result of culture or language interpretation it doesn't make much difference because I believe our group would have supported her no matter what. Doug)

I joined this Facebook group and I have been a member for almost four years. I was hoping you guys would help me find the missing pieces about my father in law and maybe someone on here might have known him. Last year I posted that I had found him but he passed away in 1987. He committed suicide in the backyard of his house. It was devastating to my family. Also, none of his immediate family is alive, they passed away very young. I was patiently

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waiting to contact his widow for more than a year. She finally agreed to send me his military information. Recently I received a package that contained documents from his military time and a few pictures from the base, his merit badge, diploma etc...and his kindergarten fingerprint. It's very touching! Oh, and one picture with him standing in front of a collapsed building. It also contained that same picture that my husband kept and treasured for years.

He is finally home to me! I will post some pictures now and later I will post more. I want to say thank you to all you guys for being there to support for me and not giving up hope. Through you I have learned a lot about military life and made many friends, yet lost a few good men since my searches. Thank you. Oops, I forget to tell you his name is **Donald Robert Reed**.

The amazing thing is that I have that same picture that his widow sent to me. I had been using that picture to search for him. My picture is very old. I want to tell you a little about him. His name is Donald Robert Reed born in 1950 from Warren, Ohio. He graduated from Warren G. Harding High School in Warren, Ohio in 1968 and attended Youngstown State University for a few months before enlisting in the Air force in May 1970.

Donald Reed was in the 315th Security Police Squadron, Phan Rang Air Base. There are stories from his commendations draft that I have shortened. The text from the commendations are from his military records and I don't know who wrote it and is little hard to read so if I miss some words I apologies. Upon arriving in Vietnam, A1C Reed was assigned to A Flight Security Police as a tower sentry from 29 May 1971 to July 71. While on duty at tower D-9, A1C Reed observed an unidentified individual crawl through the fence line. Without hesitation, A1C Reed notified CSC and patrols were dispatched. From the vantage point of tower D-9, A1C Reed directed the patrols to the scene of the penetration and directed the firepower to the affected area plus kept in communication with CSC, reporting all events, and his quick thinking allowing CSC to maintaining complete control of the situation.

July 4 1971, while on patrol in the bomb dump, A1C Reed was a radio man because of his knowledge of existing radio procedure and the lay of the land was pasted as a radioman on an XM-709 (V-100). On this particular night, all three other personnel assigned to the patrol had only been en-country a short time and were unfamiliar with the terrain. A1C Reed was commended by the Sector Supervisor fight Chief and the commander of Security for the job well done.

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On 22 July 71, A1C Reed was reassigned to the Law Enforcement Section where he performed duties as the Main Gate Guard Base Patrolman. He was quick to grasp the fundamental of Law enforcement. He volunteered to assist the oncoming flight when manning was critical. This meant remaining overtime when he should have normally been off. In August he was selected over his peers for the position of Desk Sergeant, a job which requires a thorough working knowledge of all Security Police Law Enforcement posts and patrols, and an excellent knowledge of radio and administrative procedures.

On numerous occasions A1C Reed was commended by the NCOIC and OIC of Law Enforcement for the outstanding manner in which his reports were completed. His reports were so completed as these were no question in the minds of the receiving authorities.

On (date unknown) A1C Reed was on duty as a Desk Sergeant when the base underwent a practice mass causality exercise. A1C Reed maintained complete control over the situation which directly affected the overall rating for the squadron.

On 12 Dec 71, A1C Reed was selected over a larger number of qualified personnel to the assigned to the Pass and Registration Section. The pass and Registration section is responsible for maintaining approximately 3000 exchange passes and related correspondence on all Vietnamese Nationals employed on base. In a very short time he had mastered the fundamentals of the issuance of identification media. This in itself was considered remarkable for an airman with such a short time in service.

Shortly after being assigned to Pass and Registration Section and upon the direction of the commander of security police and the base Commander, a new pass system was introduced for the Vietnamese Nationals. This entailed re-issuing approximately 6000 passes. The normal duty hours for A1C Reed was 0700-1800 hours. During the re-issuance it was not uncommon for A1C Reed to remain until 2100 hrs. He did this overtime without complaint and usually upon his request so that re-issuance would be completed in the minimum amount of time. It was truly a remarkable accomplishment. The distinction accomplishment of Airman Reed reflects credit upon himself and the USAF. THAT IS HIS DRAFT NOTE THAT I RECEIVED FROM HIS PACKAGE ALONG WITH MANY DOCUMENTS REGARDING COMMENDATIONS.

Donald Robert Reed is the youngest of three sons of the late James and Josephine Molcan Reed. His sister Emily and brother Thomas Reed have also passed. All three graduated from

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Marion Harding High School, Marion, Ohio. I have two first cousins from each, Cindy Droba and Jennifer J. Reed. I have talked to Cindy for a few minutes and that is how I found out my father committing suicide. We did exchange a little about our self. I guess she didn't know much about her uncle. Donald's family was never in touch with other family members. When I asked about a phone number to continue to be in touch she said no. I never called her again. As for Jennifer she never responded to my calls.

Donald's widow Linda Reed does not reject my husband as his son, but she does not want to speak to him because she does not want to answer question about the last few years of his life. She believes that it is important that I have some things from his military time. I understand and respect her because her time with my father before he committed suicide was very traumatic and her memories are very painful.

Preston's Vietnamese mother worked at the Phan Rang base in 1967. She worked at the NCO Club serving food and beer in the afternoon and also worked at housekeeping part time. She met Donald Reed in 1971. He keep chasing after her for months. One event that they never forget is he invited her to see the Philippine USO show around June or July '71. The topless Filipino show and dance was on base. That same night he keeps her at his place. She said he had a small room for himself. They got caught staying together that night. The Security Police came and took her work pass away. Donald took her out in his jeep. Since she lost her work pass, she couldn't come on base, but she still came to visit him at the main gate where he worked.

“As for now I'm being rejected and don't want to search any more.”



Preston Vo

When she was three months pregnant she confronted him. She remembered that he gave her a hundred dollars and told her to come back again. She came to visit him but this time the base was under attack and he told her to wait outside the base so she went home. Later she came back but didn't see him but the military police said he was no longer here. She had no other option because she could not longer get on base and couldn't find work

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locally she went to Nha Trang to work on the military base for a few months, but eventually returned to Phan Rang where Son Hoang Vo (Preston) was born. Contact was then lost for 40 plus years. He still has a half sister but I don't think his widow wants to see us. Hopefully one day she might decide to connect with us. As for now I'm being rejected and don't want to search any more.

“...hopefully one day his family will feel more comfortable in welcoming Preston and Kristina into their family.”

Although Preston and Kristina's quest might seem to some that they have reached their goal, but the search continues as it's only natural to feel that tracking down the people who put you into the world will help to restore order in your world. The search for personal contacts will continue as they still would like to find anyone that might have worked or known A1C Donald Robert Reed at Phan Rang AB and hopefully one day his family will feel more comfortable in welcoming Preston and Kristina into their family.

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F-100 Pilot's 200th Mission Rips Viet Cong Gathering Place *(Phan Fare Weekly, April 17, 1968)*

On his 200th combat mission, Capt. Christian A. Crooker, of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, took part in an air strike 30-miles south of Saigon which destroyed eight Viet Cong military fortifications and damaged eight others at a suspected enemy gathering area.

"The forward air controller (FAC) at the scene thought it did much to hamper enemy movement in the area," Crocker commented. A duty controller in the wing command post, he flies with the 615th TFS.

Bombing and strafing passes were employed against the enemy fortifications. Crooker said the FAC's first two smoke rockets sank into swampy terrain, as he attempted to mark the target. The third rocket, noted, went off successfully, providing clear indication the exact target

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location.

Croaker won the Distinguished Flying Cross for an F-100 mission which killed 18 enemy troops 400-yards from the lines of friendly ground forces were able to move forward.

Croaker's closest call came south of Pleiku, when enemy ground fire struck his aircraft, and he was forced to make an emergency landing at Pleiku Air Base. The enemy shells struck his fuel tank, and by the time he landed his forward fuel tank was empty.

As duty controller in the wing command post, he coordinates with command center officials at Saigon on the scheduling of combat missions, and relays their requests to officials and agencies of the wing.

He keeps in radio contact with wing combat pilots starting and ending their missions, and alerts maintenance agencies when returning pilots report malfunctions or battle damage.

The job has given him a broad picture of the air war, Croaker noted. His 200 combat missions, he observed, "have all been quite interesting."

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“Approach Plate” for Phan Rang

PHAN RANG, VIETM BN772862 11°37'50"N 108°57'30"E

**AF (RAAF) 102 L6 (1), 8 (2), 9 (3) H100 (CON) 150 04L-22R (S-100, T-220, TT-318) (VVPA)
100(AM-2) 102 04R-22L**

JASU - (MA-21 4(MO-3A) 7(MD-3M) 4(C-26)

FUEL - A+, J4, 0-123, 0-128, 0-148, LOX

A-GEAR -

RWY 04L BAK-12(B) _____ BAK-12 (B) RWY 22R

AERODROME REMARKS - CAUTION: Reduced rwy separation standards are in effect.

CAUTION: No ovrns Rwy 04R-22L. Barrier housing Rwy 04L-22R lctd 950' fr thld, 200' fr cen of rwy, 10' above sfc. Extv lt acft tng within 30 NM radius 2200-1300Z dly.

U. S. controllers on duty 24 hrs dly. Ltd tran prkg oval. 4 engine oat will taxi with outboard engines shut down. Tfc ptn alt 1100' convl and turbo-prop (except OV-10), 800' lt convl (including OV-101, 1600' jet. Turboprop and lt acft rgt to Rwy 04, left to

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Rwy 22. Helis proh from overflying bldgs, reveted areas and will ctc Twr or Gnd Con for Idg instructions. Acft requiring customs svcs will confirm block time with PTD at least 15 min prior to Idg. PSP and AM-2 twys extremely ruf. Buu-Son twy clsd to military acft, prior approval rqrd. Twr obst lgts out. Obst lgts out on 600' hill 1 mi NW of fld. Hospital Helipad lctd Y2 mi NW of the con twr, rstd to Med Evac use only. Helipad SE of fld clsd SS-SR. Extremely ltd hell refueling oval on SW ramp 0 Rwy 04L-22R. 0 Rwy 04L. ® Rwy 04L-22R only, opr SR-SS. 0/R after SS. CAUTION: Unusable beyond 5 NM due to neg terrain clnc.

COMMUNICATIONS (PTD 372.2)

®CAM RANH BAY APP CON - 241.2)35.9

TOWER - 265.6 124.7 (E) GND CON - 229.3 131.0

®CAM RANH BAY DEP CON - 273.3 119.0

ALCE - 281.8 140.4 8133 USB 4677 USB PFSV: METRO -

RADIO AIDS TO NAVIGATION

TACANO PRG Chart 75 At Field MP 2300-2400Z Sat and Sun

RBNo(H) (AO/A2) AV 202 11°37'N 108°57'6 At Field

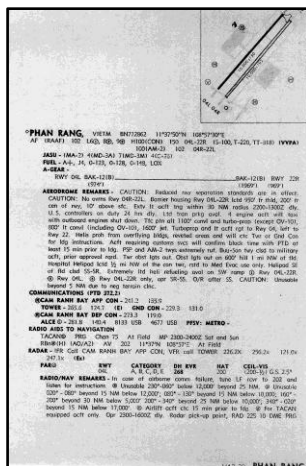
RADAR - 1FR Call CAM RANH BAY APP CON, VFR call TOWER 226.2X 256.2x 121.0x 247.1x (Ex)

PAR (d) RWY CATEGORY DH RVR HAT CEIL-VIS

04L A, B, C, D, E 268 200 (200-1/2) G.S. 2.5°

RADIO/NAV REMARKS - In case of airborne comm failure, tune LF rcvr to 202 and listen for instructions. .0 Unusable 230°-060° below 12,000' beyond 25 NM. 8 Unusable 020° - 080° beyond 15 NM below 12,000'; 080° - 130° beyond 15 NM below 10,000; 160° - 200° beyond 30 NM below 5,000' 200° - 340° beyond 25 NM below 10,000'; 340° - 020° beyond 15 NM below 17,000'. © Airlift acft ctc 15 min prior to Idg. lift For TACAN equipped acft only. Opr 2300-1600Z dly. Radar pick-up point, RAD 225 10 DME PRG

VA2-28 PHAN RANG



This is a copy of the actual ‘Approach Plate’ for Phan Rang AB as provided by Myron Janzen. There are so many abbreviations that it would take a real expert to interpret.

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3 Units Tagged Outstanding (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, April 21, 1967*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (7th AF)—The Air Force Outstanding Unit Award has been awarded to three Phan Rang air base squadrons for their exceptional performance in support of the base's mission.

The squadrons are the 35th Air Police, 35th Supply and 554th Civil Engineering Squadrons.

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Unit Has A Band Of Angels (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Saturday, June 4, 1966*)

(*Note: This same story was in Phan Rang News 96, titled 366th Loves Angels” from The Alamogordo (N.M.) Daily News, Sunday, June 12, 1966*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (OI)— Air Force men of the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing at the Phan Rang Air Base in Vietnam are in love with a special band of Angels.

Living up to promises to provide the 'necessities' of a combat tour such as fruit cake and home-baked cookies, the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps Angel Flight at New Mexico State University sent a seven foot box of home-baked cookies. The men are eating it up.

The cookies, in all sizes, shapes and flavors, made the long journey intact from campus ovens in Las Cruces, N.M. to the sun-baked tents at Phan Rang. In less than an hour after the cookies arrived, Col. George S. Weart, wing vice-commander, distributed them on the flight line to pilots, maintenance men and support personnel.

The promise, which the Angels made as their primary service project for 1966, began with formal adoption of the 366th Wing at Holloman AFB N.M. before it was deployed to Vietnam.

While at Holloman, Jennie Sturtz Angel Flight commander, proclaimed that since the Angels at N.M.S.U, "feel a particular closeness to the fighting men of the 366th TFW and to create a special place in our hearts and minds for these defenders of our opportunity to receive an education in the State of New Mexico.

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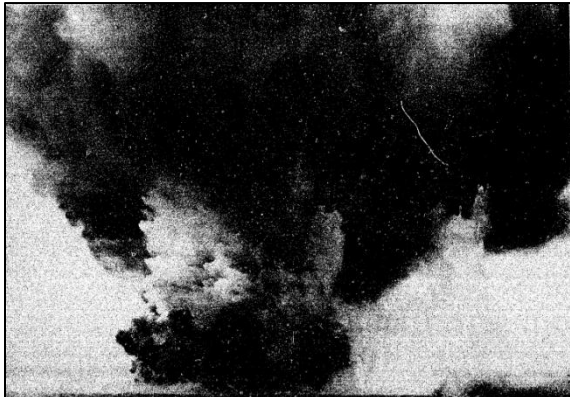
Big Air Force Blast A Happy Event for Villagers

USAF- Photos By Sgt. Edward T. Rollins

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special)— An Air Force explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team from the 435th Munitions Maintenance Sq. here re-blasted a route through a coral reef leading to the South China Sea recently.

The coral-blasting was a military civic action program to assist Vietnamese fishermen of the My Tan hamlet in Ninh Thuan Province, who rely on the reef channel to check their nets since there is no other way around the reef for their boats.

The route was previously opened by a team of engineers from the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam in late May 1970. It had become nearly impassable when the water currents deposited sand and rocks in the passageway.



The blast goes off, clearing a passageway to the sea for the My Tan hamlet fishermen.

The military civic action project was begun when My Tan hamlet officials contacted local province officials. With the needed coordination completed and paperwork approved, Capt. Michael J. Selby, Phan Rang AB military civic action officer was contacted.

After receiving the request, the Air Force's contribution to the project was set up. First Selby contacted the 435th MMS for the explosives and a team to set the charges. Once the explosives

and team were ready, the only problem delaying the project was the sea itself. Before the EOD team could set the dynamite, the tide had to be out and the sea very calm.

After a few days delay, the necessary conditions prevailed and the team went to work. The three-man team, including MSgt. Richard W. Johnson and S.Sgt's. Orion L. Vick and James J. Cloonan, was flown in by a MACV helicopter and worked for four hours together with 1st Lt. Glenn Roushenburg MACV team engineer.

The military civic action project temporarily cleared the passageway, but another blast is scheduled to make an even larger channel for, the My Tan fishermen's route to the sea.

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2 AF Units Shifted In Viet (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, October 14, 1968*)

SAIGON (S&S)—The movement of two Air Force units and the opening of a new 10,000-ft runway at Phan Bang AB, about 200 miles northwest of Saigon, was announced Wednesday by military officials here.

Units involved were, the Phantom-equipped 389th Tactical Fighter Sq. from Phan Rang to Da Nang and a B-57 Canberra unit from Da Nang to Phan Rang.

The newly completed concrete runway at Phan Rang is capable of handling the largest transports and faster jet fighters now operating in Vietnam.

Reunion Pictures by Tom Clark



2nd Lieutenant Tom Clark

Tom Clark, pictured to the left, oh you say you don't recognize him, well when last seen at the reunion he had gray hair. Tom has a fantastic collection of reunion pictures for your viewing and downloading pleasure. Click [here](#) and you will see a picture of Mary Benson and Jim Lehse having a ball. Click on that photo to see the entire album.

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35th K-9 Update andMore

Hi Phan Rang K9 and Family Members,

We had a great reunion in Branson, MO. thanks to the Vietnam Dog Handler Association (VDHA). The location was great, except for traffic, the hotel had great service, and the area had plenty of things to do, which we broke off and took advantage of besides the VDHA events. The entertainment and banquet provided by the VDHA was excellent.

Here are the details for the 35th K9 for 2017 and 2018:

OCT 2017: We have been invited to Seattle by the "Happy Valley" Phan Rang group on Facebook that includes all of Phan Rang members (some K9 attended this year in Oklahoma City (and enjoyed it). The majority of Phan Rang K9 at the VDHA reunion decided to attend the Seattle Event in 2017. Details will come later.

OCT 2018: The VDHA Reunion will be held in San Diego, CA. more information will come in early 2018.

Please note that "Happy Valley" and VDHA are not affiliated and are separate groups.

Best wishes,

Craig Lord

35th SPS K9 68-69

Winston, A170

Letters

Doug,

Just read the newsletter with all the pictures and comments about the reunion being so much fun. I had a conflict this year but will make a good effort next year to attend in Seattle. Boy, you and all the folks that organized the reunion deserve a tremendous "thank you" for the hundreds of hours you devoted to the effort. Many thanks even though I wasn't there. Continue to enjoy the newsletter too. Cheers,
Gary Gilchrist, Palm Harbor, FL PRAB '71 - '72

A Poem by
Sgt. Gary M. Erickson,
1969-1970.

“THE MEN OF VIET-NAM”

**Lost in the middle of nowhere,
Viet-Nam is the Spot.
We are damned to serve our time,
In the Land that God forget.**

**Down in the land of sagebrush,
Where a man gets mighty blue.
Out in the middle of nowhere,
A million miles from you.**

**We sweat and freeze and shiver,
It's more than a man can stand.
We're not a bunch of convicts,
But defenders of our land.**

**Living here in memories,
Waiting to see our gals.
Hoping that while we are away,
They haven't married one of our pals.**

**We are men of the Air Force,
Earning our months pay.
Guarding people worth millions,
For two and a quarter a day.**

**Few people know we are living,
Few people could give a damn.
Although we seem forgotten,
We all belong to Uncle Sam.**

**But when we get to Heaven,
Saint Peter will surely yell...
You've served your time in HELL.**

Last Minute Notes

- ✓ As many of you know the banquet meal feel a little short of expectations because by the time the last tables were served they were out of certain menu items. The hotel tried to rectify it, but it was too little too late. Because of this Bob Kellington, my wife Joyce and I visited with the banquet manager to see about renegotiating the cost of the banquet and

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between Joyce and Bob, they knocked \$800 off the cost of the banquet. Now, we can't monetarily compensate those that didn't get what was advertised, but the money will go towards funding the banquet next year to help bring down the cost.

- ✓ Bob Hoffman just announced the **Phan Rang Salmon Fishing Trip** for 2017. This will be the second fishing trip the group has made and the first one was very successful so if you are nearby or in any way can attend this event it will be well worth your while. The date is Tuesday, July 11 at 5 A.M PDT in Westport, Washington. There will be more information as we get closer to the event. Since the reunion is going to be in Seattle only three months after this fishing trip, maybe they can catch enough so that we could have Salmon on the banquet menu. If you are not on Facebook and wish to contact Bob Hoffman about the trip, click [here](#) to send him a message.

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.