

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 120

“Stories worth telling”

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PARTLY CLOUDY
WARM

The Corpus Christi Times

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15 MPs Wounded By Grenades at Party

SAIGON (AP) — Unknown persons presumed to be American airmen threw three grenades into a barbecue dinner for MPs yesterday, wounding 15 American airmen.

Three of the wounded were in serious condition, Air Force officials said. Two M26 fragmentation grenades and a smoke grenade exploded during the party at the Phan Rang Air Base's air police club, on the coast 160 miles northeast of Saigon. Most of those in the club were believed to be air policemen.

Informants at Phan Rang said four persons were seen running from the scene after the explosions. The informants said there was no indication that the attack was racially motivated.

It was the second serious "fragging" at a U.S. air base this year.

Twenty-nine soldiers were injured in a similar grenade attack Jan. 9 at Tuy Hoa, 100 miles north of Phan Rang.

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Fragging gets its name from fragmentation grenades. Soldiers throw them at their superiors against whom they bear a grudge.

Note: The Press-Telegram Independent, Long Beach, California, Thursday, June 24, 1971 carried exactly the same article. The following is from **The Daily Review**, Hayward, California, Sunday, June 27, 1971.

The Daily Review

Serving Southern Alameda County

Sunday, June 27, 1971

15 Airmen Injured By Grenade

SAIGON (UPI)-Two fragmentation hand grenades tossed into a party of U.S. Air Force military policemen at Phan Rang base in the central highlands injured 15 airmen, spokesmen said today.

Air Force spokesmen said three of the air policemen were seriously wounded in the Wednesday night incident at the air base 165 miles east northeast of Saigon.

Spokesmen said it was not known who threw the grenades.

The Air Force statement said "fifteen U.S. Air Force personnel were injured the evening of June 23 when unknown assailants threw two M28 fragmentation grenades and one yellow smoke grenade into a party of airmen at the air police patio at Phan Rang."

These two articles are the only two that I could find on the ‘fragging’ event that occurred in June of 1971. With the passing of 45 years, the memory of those that experienced or heard about the event at the time may have been clouded. Even the veteran that tried to get PTSD compensation (see VA Deposition) for claiming to witness the event had the date wrong. George Lepre, author of *Fragging: Why U.S. soldiers assaulted their officers in Vietnam*, said that 42 soldiers and 15 Marines were killed in such incidents. Racial tensions have always been suspect as the cause for the Phan Rang incident, but no official or more credible report has ever been discovered. The following conversations are from those that shared

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their memories on Facebook.

George Varney started the conversation and here is what he wrote “Phan Rang had an incident where some blacks fragged a squadron party across the street from 612th TFS barracks in early 1971. They used hand grenades and hurt a number of people, the worst was an airman that was hit in the neck with shrapnel and was flown to Cam Rhan Bay by helo. I never found out if he made it. The guys that threw the grenades thought they were smoke grenades, so they said.”

Floyd Brown: Do we have in our group someone that was there to give us a firsthand account of what really happened and the extent of injuries.

Floyd Brown: You would have had to have been there to know what really happened... The military is just a little bit closed minded to reporting such happenings in a war zone.

Dean Ford: Did the brass ever find out why they did it?

David Knighton: There was a lot of Black on White racism going on from mid 1970 thru 1971. It was happening over in Germany as well. At least at the base I was at (Spangdahlm) TDY to support the Reforger War games. One of our guys got jumped by a group of Blacks and beat up. From then on we did not go places alone. Pretty sad situation because they didn't care if you were a racist or not. Just another white guy to beat up on.

C Dan Brownell: It was going on at Osan AB, Korea in 66. Some at PRAB 68-69.

Joe Scott: I was there when that happened. Heard the explosions and dove under my bunk. Went out later and saw the smoke.

Floyd Brown: Can you fill in some of the blanks about this event? I and others would love to know.

George Varney: All I know (it) was (alleged to be) disgruntled black airmen. Without sounding racist.

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Ray Ingersoll: I was there from Aug 70 to July 71 and remember it but never heard how the guy that got hurt made out.

George Varney: I did the same as Scott, I grabbed my pot and flak jacket and (hid) under the bed, thought it was incoming, went to the door and the Security Police had blocked everything off. My barracks was right across the street. They were on a little higher ground than us.

Joe Scott: I thought it happened a month before I left in July 71. I was ready to leave for sure after that incident.

George Varney: We had so much going on before we closed down the F100s and split up going everywhere.

George Varney: Mike Crowder and Larry McCabe was there at the time of the frag, but in the other barracks, I was right across the street from it.

Tom Jakubek: I do remember an incident sometime in '71 that prompted a Commanders Call at the Viking. The Base Commander said there was recently a skirmish at night in the wire. Trip flares were set off and K-9 was on the scene. They observed a person in the wire. Security followed all procedures yelling “halt, dung lai “ several times. Eventually clearance was given to engage the invader and K-9 eliminated the threat. Pink Eye lit up the perp until morning.

At day break, security approached the body and it was found to be a black soldier. The scuttlebutt on the base was some angry black G.I.'s were going to get the K-9 personnel involved. The Base Commander said that if any harm came to the Security people involved, nobody was leaving Phan Rang until the issue was resolved. He said I don't care if you are scheduled to leave for home tomorrow, it ain't going to happen.

Rodney Eagan: I had to go outside the perimeter the next morning and take photos of this whole incident. Apparently he was an Army guy trying to smuggle dope back onto the base. He was wearing the same black pjs that the VC did and the way Tom described it is correct.

Tom Jakubek: Thanks!

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Rodney Eagan: I was there and it was at the SPS Orderly Room and Patio I think, not sure of how many injuries but it was bad.

Albert Wilson: A while back I tried researching this and did not find much. If I remember correctly there were 17 injured. I had heard it was over base security being combined between Army & USAF and the Army guys were mad because they were to be quartered on the USAF side of the base. Then again that was 45 years ago and my memory may be off.

[Albert Wilson](http://www.va.gov/vetapp08/files4/0830520.txt) Interesting read here. <http://www.va.gov/vetapp08/files4/0830520.txt>

Citation Nr: 0830520

Decision Date: 09/09/08 Archive Date: 09/16/08

DOCKET NO. 03-03 747) DATE

On appeal from the

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office (RO) in
Togus, Maine

THE ISSUE

Entitlement to service connection for post-traumatic stress
disorder (PTSD).

REPRESENTATION

Appellant represented by: Francis M. Jackson, Attorney

WITNESS AT HEARING ON APPEAL

The appellant

ATTORNEY FOR THE BOARD

Robert E. O'Brien, Counsel

INTRODUCTION

The appellant is a veteran who had active service from June 1969 to October 1971. He served in Vietnam from July 1970 to July 1971.

This matter was originally before the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) on appeal from a May 2001 rating decision by a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office (RO).

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In July 2003, a videoconference hearing was held before the undersigned acting Veterans Law Judge. A transcript of this hearing is of record. Service connection for PTSD was denied by the Board in July 2006. The Board determined that the veteran's alleged stressors had not been corroborated by the evidence of record. The veteran and his representative appealed the determination to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court). In an April 2008 Order, the Court ordered that the case be remanded to the Board for compliance with instructions set forth in a Joint Motion for Remand dated in April 2008.

The appeal is REMANDED by way of the Appeals Management Center (AMC), in Washington, D. C. VA will notify the veteran should further action on his part be required.
REMAND

The veteran's service personnel records do not suggest participation in combat. According to the veteran's official personnel file (OPF), he served at Phan Rang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, from July 27, 1970 to July 25, 1971. His OPF and service medical records document his assignment to the 17th Special Operations Squadron, Pacific Air Forces, Phan Rang Air Base. His OPF reflects that his Military Operational Specialty Code in Vietnam was 4313A, apprentice aircraft maintenance specialist.

The veteran claims that he witnessed the aftermath of a "fragging" incident of certain military police in Vietnam and that this incident was a stressor of his current PTSD. Specifically, the veteran stated that he and K.G. heard an explosion as they were leaving the veteran's hooch and saw two individuals running either away from or into the hooch close to the veteran's hooch. The veteran stated that the individuals had just "fragged" the military police personnel who were in the barbecue area close to the hooch. He claimed to have seen the smoke and mist of blood in the air and "guys all messed up." The veteran stated, by way of correspondence dated in April 2001, that he hadn't spoken to K.G. in over 31 years, that he did not know the unit the military police were in. At the July 2003 personal hearing with the undersigned, the veteran's accredited representative stated that the veteran believed the alleged fragging incident had been investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). He also indicated that the fragging incident occurred most likely between July 27, 1970, and October 6, 1970. He stated "that's the best we can do time wise. . . ." (Transcript,

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page 13).

Of record is a report from the U.S. Joint Services Records Research Center (JSRRC) (formerly known as the U.S. Armed Services Center for Research of Unit Records (CRUR)) dated in December 2005. At that time it was indicated that there was no documentation regarding the alleged fragging incident involving security policeman at the barracks at Phan Rang Air Base in Vietnam. The RO also contacted the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) to inquire as to any records regarding the fragging incident. In March 2006, the AFOSI contacted the RO and stated that it could not document the alleged fragging incident as it occurred over 25 years ago and their records are routinely destroyed after 25 years.

In the Joint Motion endorsed by the Court's April 2008 Order, it was agreed that VA did not do all it could to comply with the mandates of the Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000 to assist the veteran in the development of his claim. It was indicated that VA did not discuss whether it made, or was required to make, any attempts to obtain records from the FBI which might have been pertinent to the veteran's claim as required by 38 U.S.C.A. § 5103A and 38 C.F.R. § 3.159(c).

In view of the foregoing, the Board believes that another attempt for development is indicated and the case is REMANDED for the following actions:

1. The FBI should be contacted and asked to answer the following questions:
 - a. Did the FBI ever conduct investigations of "fragging" incidents in Vietnam during the Vietnam War?
 - b. If so, the FBI should be asked to provide any information it might have as to an investigation that might have been conducted in connection with the reported "fragging" incident involving the Air Force Police at Phan Rang Air Base between July 27, 1970, and October 6, 1970. If no such information is available, a statement to this effect is requested from the FBI.
2. Thereafter, the RO should ensure that the development sought above is completed (and arrange for any further development that might be suggested by the results of that ordered above). See *Stegall v. West*, 11 Vet. App. 268 (1998).

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3. When the RO is satisfied that the record is complete and all requested actions have been accomplished, the claim of service connection for PTSD should be readjudicated on the basis of all relevant evidence of record. If the determination remains adverse to the veteran, he and his representative should be furnished an appropriate supplemental statement of the case. The records should then be returned to the Board for further appellate consideration, if otherwise in order.

The purpose of this REMAND is to ensure a complete record for appellate review and to assist the veteran with development of evidence in connection with his claim. The Board intimates no opinion, either legal or factual, as to any final outcome warranted. The veteran is advised that any failure without good cause to report for such an examination or to provide more detailed information could result in a denial of the claim. 38 C.F.R. § 3.655 (2007). The veteran is also advised that where evidence requested in connection with an original claim is not furnished within one year after the date of the request, the claim will be considered abandoned. 38 C.F.R. § 3.158(a) (2007).

The appellant has the right to submit additional evidence and argument on the matter that the Board has remanded. See *Kutscherousky v. West*, 12 Vet. App. 369 (1999).

This claim must be afforded expeditious treatment. The law requires that all claims that are remanded by the Board or by the Court for additional development or other appropriate action must be handled in an expeditious manner. See The Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, Pub. L. No. 108-183, § 707(a), (b), 117 Stat. 2651 (2003) (to be codified at 38 U.S.C. §§ 5109B, 7112).

K. R. FLETCHER

Acting Veterans Law Judge, Board of Veterans' Appeals

Under 38 U.S.C.A. § 7252 (West 2002), only a decision of the Board of Veterans' Appeals is appealable to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. This remand is in the nature of a preliminary order and does not constitute a decision of the Board on the merits of your appeal.

38 C.F.R. § 20.1100(b) (2007).

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George Varney: They assumed the wrong date, (Oct 70) more like May or June 71.

Charles W. Johnston: According to the web site link Albert Eilson posted above the AF nor VA recognizes the incident. *(Maybe if they were given the correct date they might have found something. Doug)*

Albert Wilson: That's why I posted it. We know it did happen.

Charles W. Johnston: Not trying to doubt you, just making a statement.

Bobby Flack: I was there all of 1971 and don't remember this. But there WAS a lots of drugs (heroin containers everywhere you stepped near barracks -knew a couple of guys that were really hooked) and racial tension was high. Had a guy in the 1882nd beaten by a gang of blacks as he walked from Comm Center to the barracks.

Donald Poirier: My roommate, Jim Gagnon and I were in the patio area behind the Security Police (SP) building. I told him I was going back to the barracks to sleep and he came there too. Approximately 20 minutes later we heard two very loud explosions and hit the deck. Someone came running into the barracks and said two grenades were thrown into the patio behind the SP building. We ran out and assisted the best we could because it was hard to see, possibly from smoke grenades. We removed the injured and secured the area. The next day, Jim and I went back behind the building and saw that the frag grenades had landed right on and beside the table we were sitting at only 15 to 20 minutes earlier. God was with us.

Richard Hargrove: Amen yes he was.

Donald Poirier: I remember well, one of the injured was a really great guy, he was a black airman, who was a clerk in the SP building. Wish I could remember his name. Good Morning Vietnam sidekick to Robin Williams was like him.

Dean Ford: Are there any black vets among the Phan Rang Facebook members?

Doug Severt: I found several articles in state-side papers about this fragging event.that occurred on 23 June 1971. Fifteen Security Policemen were injured and it was at what was

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called the Phan Rang Air Base Air Police Club.

Donald Poirier: Right across the road from the SP barracks. I was there.

Doug Severt: While researching this I discovered that just during the month of June, 1971 when this occurred, there were several riots/racial incidents at several stateside bases including Sheppard AFB. Of those injured at Phan Rang, I think three of them were seriously injured.

Rodney Eagan: Had to take a lot of pictures of this incident also.

Doug Severt: Were you a base photographer at the time?

Rodney Eagan: Yes.

Doug Severt: I just ran into another Phan Ranger who was there at the time and he thought the target was the First Sgt.

Gary Chandler: This is what I posted on the Yahoo group site about 11 years ago: I do remember an event like that in late 71 or early 72. The guy that got shot was a black male and the SP was a white male. With the racial tensions at the time the blacks decided that the individual was shot because he was black or that he wouldn't have been shot if he had been a white. They decided to protest until the base commander put a stop to it. I don't remember anything about the Army wanting to protest. There were a lot of troops there, from what I heard, both blacks and whites. I guess they called out the fire suppression team and they sprayed the area. I guess they fired 2000 rounds that night. But the SP on post was white and he called it in so that started the tension. Hope that helps.

Gene Pellon: I was at Phan Rang when the fragging happened. It was my first week there. We were in the medical hooch. I was out using the urinal when they went off. I came back in and everyone was lying on the floor. Not being used to the incoming or outgoing, I asked what was going on. It was said that some black fragged a party on the S.P. patio. Of course we had to go to work. The second incident mentioned was at a later time. The shooting at the wire it was said that the person involved was given a court martial, found innocent, given a carton of cigarettes and transferred. Col. Blood was the base commander.

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Anonymous: This is hearsay and I have no details of facts to back it up. This just lends itself to the ‘black and white’ divide within the Air Police unit on Phan Rang. I was at Phan Rang July 68–July 69. Late in my tour I met an airman working in our Orderly Room (35th Combat Support) who had been a security AP K-9. I don’t remember his name. His story was that at the end of his day off. After drinking quite a bit, he was called to duty because of an attack on the base and was posted, with his dog. The next morning, when the alert was cleared those posted were released and were told, by radio, to go to the road for pickup. Because K-9s were picked up separately, the truck did not arrive for him till much later. He said he was sober by this time but extremely tired, having been up for a day and a half. He fell asleep in the ditch waiting for pickup. When the truck arrived he had to be awakened and when the driver returned, the driver reported him for sleeping on post (technically correct, since he wasn’t off duty until his dog was kenneled). The airman was court-martialed, stripped of his rank and spent six months in LBJ. Jail time does not count against your enlistment or in-country assignment time, so he was finishing out his tour in Republic of Vietnam at our squadron.

The point of this story (and according to him) is that during this same period a black E4, who supposedly had spent the day, instead of sleeping, off base partying and was then caught sleeping on post in his assigned tower the next night. The strike-team leader was not challenged when they approached the tower. Fearing something had happened to the posted troop, the team leader climbed into the tower. There he found the E4, who didn’t stir, asleep and snoring. The team leader then took the E4’s M16 and the M60; drove back to Security headquarters; and returned with a Lieutenant. They climbed into the tower, where they woke the E4 up and took him back to headquarters. The E4 did not get any bad time ... was not reduced in rank ... was merely fined $\frac{3}{4}$ his base pay for six months. My acquaintance told me this story saying the inequity of the punishments were based on USAF concerns about appearance of discrimination; and the Black Power movement stirring amongst the black airman in the unit. For what its worth and again, third hand and from someone rationalizing and justifying his own predicament.

Robert Remel: I was the assistant fire chief on duty during that incident! Cops had been blasted all over the place. We helped the Medics...get them taken off. Never forget one SP with his lower jaw blown off!

Bill Tetreault: I was on the Delta fence line patrolling with my dog when all the radio chatter

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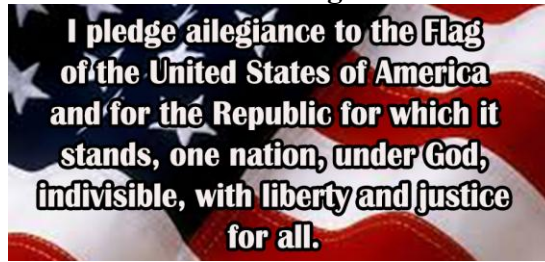
started. A tower guard on the Bravo fence line spotted what he thought was a sapper in the middle of the concertina wire crawling toward the base. A "Panther Flight" jeep patrol was the first on the scene I believe. Long story short, the person in the fence line was not identified until day break. He was given every opportunity to stop and give himself up, but chose to keep moving forward. Remember he was thought to be a sapper. When he would not stop his forward motion or respond verbally, the order to fire on him was given. They kept him lit up all night because "Charlie" was known for trying to retrieve their dead.

Bill Tetreault: It was only that next morning when they found out it was a black Army grunt who had been off base and was trying to get back so as not to be charged with being AWOL. It was also reported that he was bringing in some "smack" (heroin) as well (explains why he was trying to avoid coming back via the main gate) and that he was a "Short Timer". When the "Brothers found out about it, it was turned into a racial incident...which it was not. The tower guard and at least one of the SP's on the jeep that opened fire were quickly reassigned to a different base as I remember it. Note: Not all the blacks were up in arms about it, but there was a significant enough number that I remember it being a bit uncomfortable with several of the brothers. The night of the fragging I was actually off duty. I was laying on my bunk listening to some Emerson, Lake & Palmer. When there was a sudden explosion. I do not remember there being multiple explosions, just the one. It was close enough that I thought it could be an incoming rocket. My barracks was on the backside of the Security Police Squardons (SPS) Orderly Room which is where the fragging took place. It was not in the airmen's or the NCO club as has been reported. There were some staff members from the SPS Admin who were having a BBQ. The grenade was thrown over the fence into the small picnic like area and yes they actually seriously wounded several (not sure of the number) but at least one was a really solid young blackman. nice guy...wish I could remember his name. Rumor had it that they were actually able to identify the guy who tossed the grenade through finger prints found on the spoon from the grenade itself. However, nothing was done for fear it would create another incident of racial unrest. Not sure about that, but it was story being floated around, supposedly by one of the Sgt's assigned to the OSI. That's how I remember it, 45 years later.

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AF Couple Read to Go To Vietnam (*Portsmouth Herald (N.H.), Friday, Jan 8, 1971*)

DANVERS, Mass. (AP) - Admitting to being out of step with many others in the military forces, two Air Force people here, want to go to Vietnam.

That is provided that they are assigned to the same base.

Sgt. Laurence Brown, 23, is under orders to report to McChord Air Force Base in Washington Jan. 17 for transportation to Vietnam for assignment to an air base at Phan Rang.

Lt. Mary Brown, 23, an Air Force nurse, is under orders to report to Travis Air Force Base in California Jan. 14 for transportation to Vietnam.

The sergeant and the lieutenant are husband and wife, and they served the air force together at various bases in the last two years.

Sgt. Brown has a year and a half remaining of his enlistment.

Lt. Brown completed her two year duty, then signed for another, after she said she was assured she could be assigned to the same base with her husband in Vietnam.

Instead, she said her husband is being sent to a base at Phan Rang, and she is assigned to one at Tan Son Nhut—some 160 miles away.

"I want to be where he is," Lt. Brown said in recounting her story. "We'd both be very happy to go to Vietnam—if we could be together."

Appeals to Sen. Edward W. Brooke, D-Mass., and to Rep. Michael J. Harrington, R-Mass., in

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whose district they live, so far have gotten them only a 10 day delay in their orders.

But, said Lt. Brown, "we're hoping."

Experts Question Effectiveness Of U.S. Bombing Across Vietnam

Today when it is so hard to tell the boys from the girls, the best way to tell is to wait until they get married and see which one has the baby!

THE ADA EVENING NEWS

65TH YEAR NO. 199

ADA, OKLAHOMA, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1968

12 PAGES

10 CENTS WEEKDAY, 15 CENTS SUNDAY

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States spent about half a million tons of bombs, nearly \$2 billion worth of planes and hundreds of pilots were killed. But it failed in the main objective of its air war against North Vietnam.

That objective was to cut the level of infiltration of men and arms from the North into South Vietnam.

The flow of North Vietnamese soldiers doubled and redoubled during the more than 3 ½ years of the bombing campaign—even before President Johnson spared most of North Vietnam from U.S. air attack starting last March 31.

And, despite the interdiction campaign, the Viet Cong were re-equipped with new and increasingly sophisticated Red Chinese and Soviet-supplies weapons, many of them heavy rockets and artillery-type weapons.

Senior military officers believe that the air assault could have been successful; that it might have shortened the entire Vietnam war, including the ground fighting in the South.

But, they claim, former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, backed 'by Johnson, prevented the military from striking North Vietnam as heavily and rapidly as possible.

They contended that the closely controlled, gradually increased buildup of bombing pressure did little more than give the other side time to adjust.

The U.S. generals and admirals found their views echoed by a powerful Senate committee

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which declared "we shackled the true potential of air power."

Civilian leaders reply that the course of action favored by the military chiefs involved grave risks of bringing a clash with the Soviet Union and Red China, particularly if the military had been permitted to close the port of Haiphong.

The tight restrictions on targets, the firm ban against bombing populated areas—these, say the civilian leaders, were necessary to keep the war limited.

But even this limited bombing campaign which began on Feb. 7, 1965 has cost the United States 911 airplanes.

Most of the 469 Air Force men listed as killed in aircraft incidents died over the North. The same is true of most of 139 Navy men and some of the 102 Marine pilots and air crewmen killed-aloft.

The Air Force lists 519 men missing and most of these are either dead or captives in the North. This goes also for the bulk of 115 Navy men and some of the 88 Marines carried in the missing roster.

The bulk of 139 Air Force and 130 Navy men listed as captured also are believed to be in the North.

American warplanes have flown roughly 100,000 missions over the North since the campaign began.

The Pentagon says that a total of more than 2.8 million tons of bombs has been dropped on targets in both North and South Vietnam.

Claiming security reasons, it refuses to breakdown the totals between North and South.

But testimony before Congress by Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown suggests that the tonnage dumped on North Vietnam accounted for roughly one-fifth of the over-all weight of bombs used in the Southeast Asia war. Thus, the bomb tonnage over North Vietnam is roughly comparable to the 502,781 tons thrown against the Japanese in the Pacific in World War II and

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somewhat less than the 635,000 tons dropped by American bombers in the Korean war.

Over the years of the air war, McNamara and Johnson have sometimes shifted the objectives in order of importance, but for the most part the chief goal has been described as aiming to reduce the infiltration flow.

The- first U.S. bombing of North Vietnam was in August 1964 in retaliation for PT boat attacks on American destroyers patrolling the Tonkin Gulf. After this brief incident, there were no more raids until the sustained air war against the North opened the following February.

When the attacks were ordered on Feb. 7, 1965, they were described by both the White House and McNamara as retaliatory, a strike-back at North Vietnam for Viet Cong border attacks on U.S. bases, in South Vietnam.

U.S. officials have steadfastly insisted over the years that they never intended the- bombing would totally halt the aggression and its supporting infiltration from the North.

When McNamara was asked on Feb. 7 about future plans, he underscored a White House statement which said, in part: "The key to the situation remains the cessation of infiltration from the North into the South."

In April, McNamara called attention to the introduction for the first time of regular combat units of the North Vietnamese army, and he said:

"The carefully controlled air strikes will continue as necessary to impede the infiltration and to persuade the North Vietnamese leadership that their aggression against the South must stop."

Johnson has placed his main stress on protecting U.S. fighting men and allied troops from suffering heavier casualties because of arms and ammunition brought down the infiltration trails from North Vietnam.

On Christmas eve in 1965 Johnson ordered the bombing of North Vietnam halted, but 37 days, later, lacking any response from Hanoi, he ordered it resumed, saying that "if continued immunity is given to all that support North Vietnamese aggression, the cost in lives will only be greatly increased."

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Last February, about two months before limiting U.S. bombing to the southern panhandle of North Vietnam, Johnson declared that "we shall continue to give our men the protection it (the bombing) afford until the United States receives a sign from Hanoi that North Vietnam would not step up its terrorism and aggression if the bombing were halted.

Otherwise, he said, "the enemy force in the South would be larger and better equipped. The war would be harder, and longer. It would claim more American lives."

And on Sept. 10, about a month before the new U.S. peace initiative surfaced, Johnson told the American Legion national convention in New Orleans that he insisted the bombing would not stop until the United States is confident this would not lead to higher casualties.

Johnson, and senior U.S. military officers, are anxious that the demilitarized zone be truly neutralized and that North Vietnam agree not to shell U.S. and South Vietnamese positions from north of the DMZ.

In the absence of such an agreement, military men believe it is imperative to bring U.S. air power to bear in the panhandle against North Vietnamese artillery positions, troop concentrations, supply points and possible invasion springboards.

McNamara, who designed the blueprint of the U.S. air war against the North, has appeared over the years to shuffle objectives in their order of importance.

On Feb. 24, 1967, McNamara said that the first U.S. objective in opening the air war in North Vietnam was to raise the morale of the South Vietnamese who, at that time, were facing military defeat in the ground war.

He then listed as a second objective to either reduce the level of infiltration of men and equipment from North to South or to increase the cost of that infiltration."

Several months later, on Aug. 25, 1967, McNamara promoted the reduction of Infiltration to the status of "our primary objective," and there it remained.

The morale-boosting objective was dropped to second place, and a third major goal consistently has-sought to make clear to Hanoi that it would have to pay a price in the North for

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continued aggression against the South.

Infiltration figures show clearly that the primary objective has not been reached—not by a long shot.

In all of 1964, the year before the bombing campaign began, there were 12,404 infiltrators from the North.

In 1965 this more than doubled to 26,000, then to 57,700 in 1966 and 53,300 in 1967.

Gen. William C. Westmoreland, former U.S. commander in Vietnam, has said that an “invasion from the North” began in November and December 1967, as the enemy prepared for the Tet offensive.

The infiltration rose to flood tide early this year, even before Johnson ordered the bombing area restricted in a move to encourage North Vietnam to open negotiations looking toward peace. Currently, experts estimate that some 200,000 North Vietnamese have infiltrated into South Vietnam during 1968 and forecast the total will reach more than 262,000 for the entire year.

Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford contended that the reduced bombing area permitted under Johnson’s March 31 order did not constitute a drawback because American aircraft could, and did, intensify their attacks in the more limited area through which the infiltration routes had to pass.

Air Force and civilian officials say that the sortie rate is roughly the same this year as last year. A sortie is one flight by one plane.

There are no clear analyses of the effect of the interdiction since March 31, but Air Force sources said there was a clue in the estimate that between 3,000 and 4,000 North Vietnamese trucks were knocked out during August and September out of an estimated 12,000 along the infiltration routes. This works out to a destruction rate of between 25 and 33 per cent, although some other estimates range as low as 15 per cent.

Success or failure in attaining the second main objective - raising the South Vietnamese morale - is even harder to measure.

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Reactions of the South Vietnamese government suggest that Saigon and its people still value the U. S. air war against their enemies in the North.

The .S. bomb stikes, even though carefully limited in scope and targeting, unquestionably exacted a toll on the North Vietnamese for sustaining the war in the South.

In speaking about the cost to Hanoi, Johnson and McNamara frequently alluded to anywhere from 300,000 to 500,000 civilians who allegedly had to be diverted from the economy to repair bomb damage to keep the lines of communication open.

But since the March 31 limitation, at least half have returned to their previous occupations, according to intelligence estimates.

Much of the physical havoc has been repaired.

Both rail lines running north-east and northwest of Hanoi to China have been repaired and revamped with a new third rail which permits freight cars of different gauge to move smoothly from Chinese railroads to those in North Vietnam, without any trans-shipment of cargo.

New bridges have been built, many of concrete, to replace those shattered in the years of bombing. Alternate routes, using natural cover, have been built. Main roads have been hard-topped and waterways have been dredged.

Some factories have gone underground between Hanoi and Haiphong, presumably as a precaution against possible resumption of bombing. These are mostly munitions and vehicle assembly plants.

Priority cargoes arriving aboard Soviet ships in Haiphong reportedly include road-building equipment and cement, indicating an even wider development of transportation routes in North Vietnam in the months ahead.

The Thai Nguyen steel plant north of Hanoi, repeatedly blast- by American bombers, is reported operating at up to 60 per cent of normal capacity.

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Barge repair yards hit in the latter stages of the air offensive late last year are said to be back in operation and many “mini-ports” have been built along North Vietnam’s rivers to accommodate shipping.

Six North Vietnamese airfields capable of handling jets are now useable once more. They too were major targets at the height of the bombing offensive.

The North Vietnamese have been slow to bring their MiG fighters down from safe havens in Red China, even though most of North Vietnam has been free of bombing for months.

There are now about 50 MIGS on North Vietnamese bases and another 100 in China.

The MIGS never did constitute more than a nuisance to U.S. air invaders, and the Soviet-built surface-to-air missiles weren’t effective, either.

According to the latest reports, a total of more than 5,500 SAMS have been fired at American planes since mid-1965. They downed 117 planes, or a kill score of about 2 per cent.

The bombing limitation invoked March 31 permitted the North Vietnamese to rearrange their formidable anti-aircraft batteries which have accounted for most of the U.S. air losses.

There are some 6,500 of these anti-aircraft guns of varying calibers.

One of the main gripes of the U.S. military leadership was that the ‘gradualism’ and step-by-step escalation-rather than all-out blows at the start - permitted the North Vietnamese to refine and deploy their anti-aircraft defenses with maximum effect.

One important result of the partial bombing halt was to allow the North Vietnamese to run railroads right down to the 19th parallel, the upper limit of U.S. bombing after March 31.

Thus the North Vietnamese have established stockpiles and supply depots at Thanh Hoa and the prospect now is that they will be able to move those supply points to the DMZ.

U.S. military authorities never were happy about any of the nine short-term suspensions of bombing over North Vietnam during Christmas, New Year’s, Tet and other periods.

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Area reconnaissance showed all too often that the North Vietnamese used those pauses to military advantage in rushing supplies and men southward.

The American military chiefs fear that may happen again now, on a grander scale.

(The Ada Evening News, November 1, 1968)

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Shadow Strike Kills Six In Stemming VC Attack

(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, May 29, 1969)

Scrambled off the runway at Phan Rang Air Base to aid friendly troops under enemy attack, an AC-119 “Shadow” gunship killed six of the enemy force, confirmed by body count, and was credited with an additional nine estimated killed.

Arriving on scene, a U.S. Army artillery spotter informed the Shadow crew that an outpost on the southwest side of Phan Ly Chom Village, 35 miles southwest of Phan Rang, was receiving mortar fire and that an enemy probe was being made towards the town.

Capt. Frank E. Klobucar, directed the pilot, Maj. Robert J. Allen into the firing circle around the target.

Sixteen minutes after being airborne, the first of Shadow’s 7.62mm rounds hit the target.

The spotter aircraft pilot reported that both he and the Shadow gunship had been receiving intense and accurate ground fire when the AC-119 first arrived. However, once Shadow’s four mini-guns opened up, the ground fire subsided appreciably and the attackers retreated to the security of an adjoining village.

Next day, U.S. advisors to the Vietnamese Army defenders reported seeing numerous battle casualties in the area worked over by Shadow.

Timely delivery of ordnance on target was handled by gunners Sergeants Roger D. Stephens and Jerold E. Thomas. Flight Engineer was MSgt. Owen D. Stickles, and the aircraft commander was Lt. Col. Earl W. Scott.

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Phan Rang Challenge Coin Sale

Phan Rang AB Challenge Coins



**We are going to resume coin sales for a limited time. Order yours now before
March 31, 2017 before they become collector's items.**

MAIL ORDER PRICE* LIST		Total Amount
Each	Price	to remit
1	\$5.00	\$7.12
2	\$10.00	\$12.56
3	\$15.00	\$17.78
4	\$20.00	\$23.00
5	\$25.00	\$28.22
6	\$30.00	\$33.44
*Note: The cost includes the mailer and postage.		

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.**

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I hope that you enjoyed this issue of the Phan Rang Newsletter. This newsletter was compiled and published by [Douglas Severt](#). Although I don't date the Phan Rang Newsletter because the date really is irrelevant because most of what's included in the letter is of a historical nature and is not in any date order, but this issue is being sent out during Christmas time of 2016, and I just wanted to reflect a little on the past and what the future holds for us. Our family of Phan Rangers on Facebook continues to grow to over 1,000 members and this newsletter is sent out to nearly 600 proud American and Aussie Vietnam veterans. As we continue to expand, old relationships have been rekindled, participation in our annual reunion has dramatically increased and we designed and sold a challenge coin that reflects our pride in Phan Rang and our service to our great country. My reunion with my old friend Jim Erixson was a particularly memorable event for me in 2016 and I've also witnessed the joy that so many others have experienced in reuniting with war buddies throughout the years. In 2017 we have started to plan and are looking forward to our next reunion in Seattle. I hope that you are able to enjoy the beauty of this holiday with your loved ones. While many of us are truly blessed to be home with family, let us also remember our brothers and sisters who are far away fighting to protect our freedom and liberties, just as we once did. Also, those that have health problems are also in my thoughts and prayers. May God bless our country... home and family... during this Christmas season... and throughout the New Year. Let's make a promise this holiday season...let's make it a promise to try every day to touch someone's life in our own special way. Let's keep candles burning and proud flags unfurled, let's pray for our nation and let's pray for our world. **Merry Christmas.**

Previous issues of the Phan Rang Newsletter are available [here](#) for download.

