

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 124

“Stories worth telling”

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315th Air Commando Wing Plays Major role In Supporting Troops at Khe Sanh

(Phan Fare, The Phan Rang AB Weekly, April 17, 1968)

On January 21, 1968, the lights came on; the drama began. The stage was set in an area of rugged terrain in the northern corner of I Corps. The name of the theater, Khe Sanh, and the players, 5,000 Marines, 1,000 Army Republic of Vietnam Rangers and the 315th Air Commando Wing, flyers of the C-123’s.

The other players, a North Viet Cong Regular Army force estimated between, 20,000 and 40,000. More than 80-days passed. It appears that the Khe Sanh drama is over; on one is certain.

The Khe Sanh stronghold sets in an area of lovely mountains, beautiful waterfalls, and lush vegetation. On the east end of the base the terrain falls sharply to a river below. Mountains rise to the north and continue around to the southwest and slops gradually to the south. The approach to the runway is lined on both sides by high ridges. Few had the opportunity to admire the scenery.

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In the late afternoon on January 21st, an urgent call went out to the 311th ACS's detachment at Da Nang AB. Khe Sanh was under heavy attack.

The ammunition dump was destroyed. The Marines were nearly out of ammo. Six aircraft that had flown all day were immediately diverted to Khe Sanh. Some of these crews made five trips, carrying ammo late into the night. Two-thousand feet of the runway had been rendered unusable, and the rest was potholed and littered with debris. The cloud cover was low, and the runway was not lighted. As the aircraft started in on final approach, intense 30 cal. And 50 cal. Ground fire was encountered from the high ridges. Mortar rounds followed the aircraft down the runway. The crews were highly motivated, and it was not necessary to tell them to step on it. Offloading was rapid, and on-loading of wounded and refugees was the same.

C-123 and C-130 aircraft encountered heavy mortar, artillery and rocket fire on every landing. Ground fire was intense; aircraft received harassment on most every trip to the besieged base.



On February 24th the base received damage to the extent that on the very next day all C-130 aircraft were given orders not to attempt landings at the base. Airdrops were their mission. The old Provider, C-123's continued taking in Marines and cargo that could not be airdropped and brought out the wounded and other personnel.

The crew lounge in the 311th Operations building where the crews awaited the loading of their aircraft, turned into a grim room. Every man knew that it was only a matter of time before it was his time to fly. The C-123 was a way in and out for the Marines. They supplied them with vitally needed supplies. They call the C-123s their mother-in-law; happy to see her come, but didn't want her to stay too long. The Marines nicknamed the Providers the “Mortar Magnet; for when one landed, Charlie always stepped up the activity.

On March 7, the 315th Commander turned what had been a squadron detachment into a wing effort.

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Now that the siege is about over, 5,000 Marines and 1,000 ARVN troops can say they are very grateful for the support given to them by the men of the 315th ACW.



President Thanks SEA Troops

(Phan Fare, The Phan Rang AB Weekly, April 17, 1968)

This is a message from the President of the United States to United States Armed Forces in Southeast Asia.

“The relief of the forces which have held the base at Khe Sanh is an occasion for me to express the pride and confidence I feel in those who are carrying forward the Nations’ struggle against aggression in Southeast Asia.

“Side by side with your South Vietnamese comrades - and our fighting allies - you have taken the full initial weight of the enemy’s winter-spring offensive; and you have now seized the initiative.

“The enemy intended to destroy the constitutional government of South Vietnam and it’s armed forces. In this he failed. The enemy intended to overrun the base at Khe Sanh. For this purpose he emplaced around the base at least two divisions of North Vietnamese regulars. Less than 6,000 U.S. Marines and South Vietnamese Rangers - backed by our tremendous air capacity - pinned them down, kept them away from the populated areas at the peak of the winter-spring offensive; and imposed heavy casualties. Now the siege of Khe Sanh is lifted.

“But clearly the fighting in South Vietnam is not yet at an end. The enemy may throw new forces into the battle. You, I know, intended to continue to move forward. But by your gallant and skillful support for the brave people and armed forces of South Vietnam, you have brought nearer the time of peace in that suffering land and in all of Southeast Asia.

“As we seek now to find through negotiations and honorable peace in Vietnam, I wish you to know that we are grateful for what you have already accomplished and will be counting on your for more than ever, until the blessed day when the guns fall silent.”

Lyndon B. Johnson

President of the United States of America

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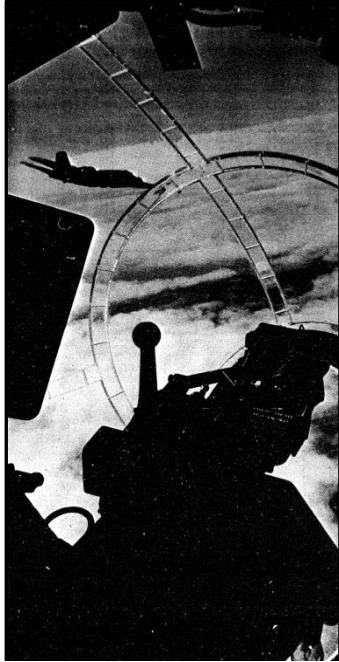
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Aussie Jets Earn High Praise

By Sgt. Donald B. Dirksing



An Australian Canberra bomber, seen from another flashes in toward a communist target.

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — "Their airplanes have had the least battle damage, they have flown without a combat loss, they have not had a crewmember wounded or lost, and their battle damage assessment (BDA) is the best of any operational unit in Southeast Asia."

These words of praise were spoken by U.S. Air Force Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., 45, Great Neck, N.Y., commander, 35th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), Phan Rang AB. They were spoken of the No. 2 Sq., Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), a unit under operational control of the 35th TFW.

The RAAF unit, flying Canberra medium jet bombers, has built an impressive record since it began flying with the "Yanks" in April 1967.

The British-designed, aircraft which entered RAAF service in 1954, is similar to the American B-57 flown by the 35th TFW's 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron "Yellowbirds."

However, while the B-57s use dive-bombing tactics, the Australians find their nose-mounted bomb sights more suited to medium and low-altitude level bombing runs.

In its more than two years at Phan Rang, No. 2 Sq. has struck more than 8,000 enemy targets, dropping more than 40,000 bombs.

Since its arrival, the squadron has been credited with killing 370 enemy soldiers, destroying or damaging more than 8,300 bunkers, 7,600 fortifications, 990 sampans and 70 weapons

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positions, and touching off more than 300 secondary explosions and igniting 60 secondary fires.



RAAF Air Defence Guards (ADGs) at Phan Rang

(An excerpt from Highest Traditions: The History of No 2 Squadron, RAAF by John Bennett, page 318)

On the night of 11 February 1970, Corporal Eddie Power, an airfield defence guard (ADG) assigned to No 2 Squadron’s Airfield Defence Flight, led his eight-man clearing patrol outside



the perimeter of the (Phan Rang) base to a pre-planned ambush position. In the early hours of the morning, an enemy reconnaissance squad of about six troops attempted to infiltrate the perimeter wire. Two Viet Cong were killed, and others were seen retreating between the Americans, inside the base, and the Australian ADGs, outside the wire. With American fire shooting past the enemy’s position, and over the heads of the RAAF squad, Corporal Power moved his section to avoid the friendly fire and cut off any possible route of escape. Moving his men about a kilometre through

the darkness, Power set up an ambush beside two bridges which crossed the perimeter canal. Power recalled:

We were in the ambush position for about a minute or so, when the M60 gunner sighted enemy movement on the other side of the canal. I obtained authorization to fire from the US Air Police control centre on the base. We then opened fire on the enemy, and saw at least two in the waist-high grass, who threw a couple of grenades in our direction. After a three-minute fight, we waited for twenty minutes and then completed a sweep of the area. Nothing was found, so we went back to our position near the

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bridge. At first light, we withdrew to the confines of the base. Later that morning, a clearing patrol went out on another sweep, and picked up an NVA major who had been wounded. He was handed over to US Intelligence for interrogation. Also, maps, a medical kit, an AK-47, a pistol and a cache of crudely-made grenades were found. From the Intelligence interrogation, the prisoner was the only NVA regular and he was being escorted by local VC for reconnaissance, possibly with the view for a Tet offensive, which then never eventuated.

This enemy patrol was probably reconnoitering entry and escape routes for an attack on the aircraft lines. From their entry on the south-west side of the base, any attacking force would have only had a kilometre to cross to the closest aircraft on the lines – 2 Squadron’s Canberras. For the success of thwarting this enemy mission, Power was awarded the Military Medal, the first to go to a member of the RAAF since World War II.

*Note: Australia ... re Military Medal.... And the RAAF also served in the Korean War alongside US allies. Also there is a chronology of VC/NVA attacks on Phan Rang AB, 1961-1973 in [Phan Rang News 43](#). Story provided by **Bob Howe**, Australian Ambassador.*

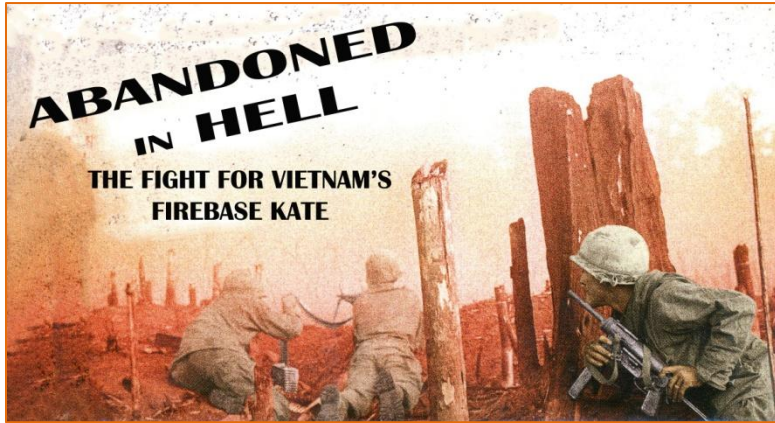


0-2 Skymaster Forward Air Controller

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*(Excerpts from the book “**Abandoned in Hell: The Fight for Vietnam’s Firebase Kate**”, used with permission of the author.)*

FOREWORD

By Joseph L. Galloway

In war, each day brings thousands of decisions—some good, some bad, some deadly for those who must carry out the orders that flow from such decisions. This book is about a deadly decision taken in the fall of 1969 to create a small artillery firebase in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam and dangle that post as bait for thousands of North Vietnamese Army regulars just two miles away behind the Cambodian border.

At this point in the Vietnam War, President Richard Nixon desperately wanted a big battle that would force the South Vietnamese Army to prove that it could fight and that it would fight. He wanted a success to show that his strategy of handing over the war to the South Vietnamese—Vietnamization—was working. Nixon's intent trickled down to the Pentagon, and from there to the US headquarters in Saigon, and thence to subordinate headquarters.

Thus was born Firebase Kate, one of three such bases created around Bu Prang Special Forces Camp deep in the Central Highlands. No part of this grand strategy was communicated to the handful of Americans and a larger handful of Montagnard tribal mercenaries who would occupy a makeshift hilltop fortress urgently constructed with shovels and sweat and sandbags out of the hard red clay of a grassy knob overlooked by higher surrounding mountains. Not for nothing did the arriving Americans immediately think of Dien Bien Phu and a similar French mistake in 1954. Nor did anyone bother to tell these men or their commander, Special Forces Captain Bill

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Albracht, that the dense triple-canopy jungle that ran back into nearby Cambodia was absolutely crawling with thousands of enemy troops who would soon be coming for them.

Huge US helicopters lifted in two 155 mm artillery pieces and one 105 mm howitzer, along with 27 American artillerymen to serve the big guns. Other helicopters lifted in 156 Montagnard soldiers of the so-called Civilian Irregular Defense Group—a collection of lightly armed tribal militias—to provide security for Firebase Kate. The closest road was five miles away. All their supplies, including drinking water, would have to be delivered by helicopter.

Among the North Vietnamese troops sheltering across the Cambodian border, waiting for the signal to attack, was the 66th NVA Regiment, well-known as the outfit that started the American war by attacking the 1st Cavalry Division battalions in the Ia Drang Valley in November 1965. Bled white with hundreds dead and wounded there, it came back to lead the Battle of Hill 875/Dak To against American airborne troops in 1967. The 66th fought again in the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968. Now, in the fall of 1969, it had been reinforced and refitted, and was ready to get back in action killing Americans.

That Firebase Kate survived an all-out North Vietnamese attack for five days and nights is little short of a miracle, given that the enemy opened up with heavy artillery from its Cambodian sanctuary and brought in 37 mm anti-aircraft weapons and plenty of .51-caliber heavy machine guns to make helicopter support a true nightmare. Mortars and B-40 rockets rained fire on the base. One by one, the firebase's own artillery pieces were knocked out.

Between the endless artillery and mortar barrages came human waves with hundreds of attackers. The Montagnard troops, reinforced here and there by a handful of the bravest artillerymen, fired off tens of thousands of rifle and machine-gun rounds every single day.

What kept the troops at Kate alive were brave helicopter crews bringing in ammo and water, Air Force fast movers delivering napalm and bombs from F-4 Phantoms and F-100 Super Sabres during daylight hours, and Air Force C-47 Spooky gunships that came out after dark to pour 6,000 rounds of minigun fire a minute onto the surrounding hills and the swarms of attacking enemy troops.

Ground attacks were almost continuous during daylight, while mortars and rockets landed around the clock. No one on Kate slept more than one hour in twenty-four. No one had time to

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eat beyond snatching a mouthful of C rations during the fighting. Water was in short supply until it was gone entirely. Leaving a foxhole to relieve yourself invited death or dismemberment.

In the midst of this hellish battle for survival, Captain Albracht would be stunned when his urgent radio request for a huge ammunition resupply to beat off the unceasing attacks was arbitrarily cut in half by a rear-echelon weenie whose reaction was: *There's no way those guys need this much ammo.*

Near the end of the fight, with 15 of the 27 artillery troops wounded and one dead, and a third of the 156 Montagnard defenders dead or wounded, Albracht was hoping and praying for a relief force to rescue Kate. He didn't care if that force was American or South Vietnamese: the American 4th Division or the ARVN 23rd Division. Senior US commanders were hoping that the ARVN would move, but all they heard were reasons why it would not. It was only a few Americans and a company of Montagnards, who were hated by the Vietnamese anyway. The Americans weren't coming either, hoping to avoid another pointless battle with heavy American casualties in a war that the leadership back home wanted to end soon.

That left only US Special Forces, Albracht's last best hope, and they ordered two companies of Mike Force Nung troops under an Australian commander to air-assault into the area and attempt to break through the North Vietnamese cordon around the firebase. The Mike Force troops ran into a buzz saw and were forced to pull back and hunker down. If the men on Firebase Kate were going to survive, they would have to save themselves by escaping under the noses of the enemy encircling them and then finding and linking up with the Mike Force troops several miles away.

The survivors, including the wounded, destroyed the already disabled big guns and the radios and generators and weapons and escaped under cover of darkness. The column of exhausted, shell-shocked men stumbled through dense jungle and bomb craters and broken trees on a long night's march until they found the Mike Force troops who would lead them to safety.

On his way back to headquarters, Captain Albracht looked up the officer who had cut the shipment of ammunition in half, then chased him around his office with violence on his mind until he was restrained by two sergeants while the offending officer ran out the door and down the street.

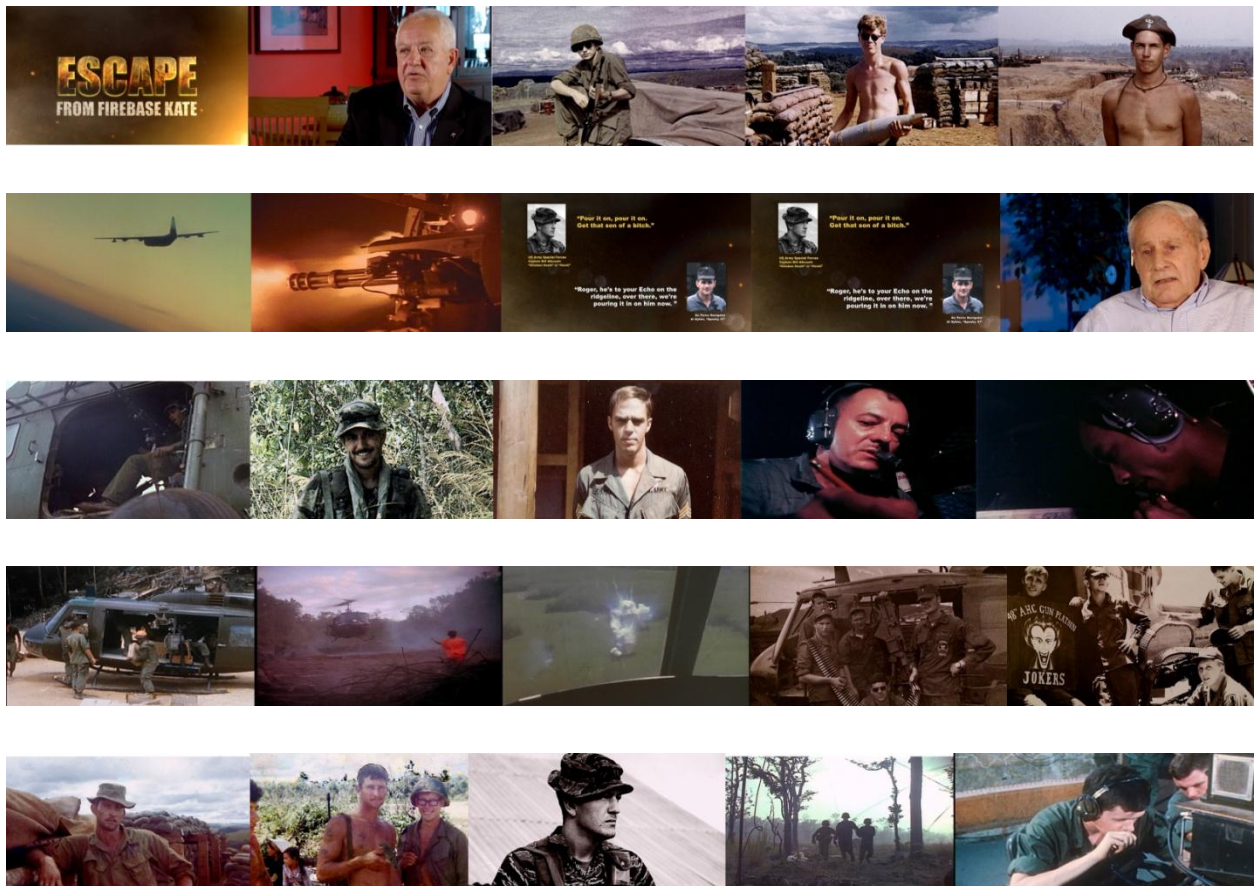
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Albracht and his coauthor, former Army captain Marvin Wolf, have told the story of Firebase Kate splendidly and in great detail. They found and interviewed half the surviving Americans and have woven their individual stories into the larger tapestry. There are tales here that will chill the blood, accounts of incredible sacrifice and bravery in a battle that more closely resembles those in Europe in World War II, or those during the first months after the Chinese intervened in the Korean unpleasantness, than those in Vietnam.

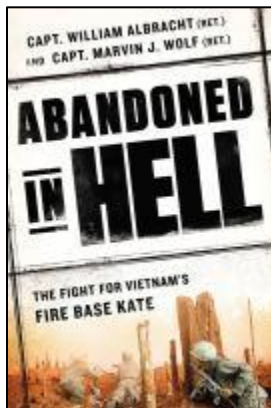
Screen Shots from the video “Escape From Firebase Kate”



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By William Albracht and Marvin Wolf

An astonishing memoir of military courage at a remote outpost during the Vietnam War—includes a foreword by Joseph L. Galloway, *New York Times* bestselling coauthor of *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young*.

In October 1969, William Albracht, the youngest Green Beret captain in Vietnam, took command of a remote hilltop outpost called Firebase Kate held by only 27 American soldiers and 156 Montagnard militiamen. At dawn the next morning, three North Vietnamese Army regiments—some six thousand men—crossed the Cambodian border and attacked.



10,000-Foot Runway Opens at Phan Rang

(Albuquerque Journal, October 13, 1966)

SAIGON (AP) The U S. Air Force announced the opening of a 10,000-foot concrete runway at Phan Rang on the South China Sea 170 miles northeast of Saigon.

The new runway is capable of handling the fastest jet fighters in the combat zone and the largest transports.

The Air Force also announced the transfer to Phan Rang of a B57 Canberra Bomber Squadron

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from Da Nang. Simultaneously, a squadron of F4c Phantom Jet tactical fighters was transferred to Da Nang from Phan Rang.



U.S. - Trained Teams Work on Mutineers

(Indiana Evening Gazette, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Tuesday, November 23, 1954)

By JOHN RODERICK

SAIGON, Indochina (JP)— Acting Chief of Staff Gen. Nguyen Van Vy ordered American - trained psychological warfare teams into action today in an attempt to persuade Vietnamese army mutineers to return to their battalion.

The general, who replaced Gen. Nguyen Van Hinh as chief of staff, returned this afternoon from Phan Rang, 140 miles northeast of Saigon, where 300 men and 12 officers of a National Army battalion took leave Sunday as a demonstration of their faith in Premier Ngo Dinh Diem.

Gen. Hinh is in France for talks with Bao Dai, the Viet Nam chief of state. Hinh heads an army faction which has accused Premier Diem of slowness in drawing up anti-Communist defenses in the South. Diem's followers say that, unless the army is obedient, the government will not be able to carry out reforms needed to gain support of the Vietnamese people.

There are 900 men and 30 officers the unidentified battalion involved.

The rebellious troops moved out of their units on the outskirts of Phan Rang and into the nearby mountains, once a hideout of the Communist-led Vietninh.

They have since defied government orders to come back.

The army said there had been no casualties in the group's withdrawal. It added that the men were confused by the political quarrel between Diem and Hinh and that their action followed a heated discussion of the issues. Gen. Vy, who has kept aloof from the fight and is expected to obey the orders of Diem, was accompanied by Deputy Defense Minister Ho Thong Minn in his hurried trip to the scene.

They said on their return here they expected the dissident soldiers to see their mistake soon.

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Psychological warfare sound trucks are patrolling the region announcing the government's order and explaining the political situation. Some solution to the dispute between Diem and Hinh is expected to result from the latter's consultations in Paris with Bao Dai.

An army spokesman said he did not believe the Phan Rang defections showed any widespread unrest in the army.

In pulling back into the mountains, the rebels blew up two bridges along their route. They are commanded by an officer identified only as Maj. Hoang.

The army said Hoang led his troops out of Phan Rang, a city of about 15,000, after warning the handful of Frenchmen there to barricade themselves inside their homes.

The bridges blown up were a highway and a railway span, one which has been repaired.



Vietnam Chams--a Vanishing Race

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Chams are Vietnam's disinherited ones, a vanishing race, Chams who once ruled the land, believe that God is a woman, and now live virtually unaware of the war around them. When Susan Bauernfeind, of Menasha, Wis., served with the American Red Cross at Phan Rang, she paid a visit to a nearby village and wrote this report.*

Bv SUSAN BAUERNFEIND PHAN RANG, Vietnam (AP) — Nearly 2.000 years ago, this land was ruled by a handsome and tough people- the Tchampa (Chams) . A mixture of Indian and Khmer (Cambodian) indigenous tribes, they settled uninhabited lands between Saigon and Canton, China

The Chinese called the Chams "Liny-y," forest savages, because they almost always chose land that was bordered on one side by impenetrable forest.

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These people were farmers essentially, and their lives were dominated by religion.

In the year 353 they started series of invasions that lasted 16 centuries. In 1822 the Chams were once and for all considered conquered. They became the disinherited ones of Vietnam.

One of the last Cham strong-holds was in Phan Rang, 165 mile east northeast of Saigon, where many Chams still live, separate from their Vietnamese countrymen.

A 1,200-year-old three-tower temple, built in homage to the godking of irrigation, overlooks their villages and vast green valleys.

Chat Thuong, 8 miles southwest of Phan Rang, is a typical Cham village. The road leading to this community of 400 people winds through rich rice fields set against jagged mountains.

Inside the village gate is the home of a hamlet elder. 64-year-old Quang Dai Mini), a former national assemblyman representing the Cham people. He wears the long skirt and turban traditional for Cham men, and as is the custom, wisps of hair hang down his neck.

GIRLS PURPOSE

He said he was born not far away but moved to his wife's village when they married. Still practiced, he said, is the custom of a girl choosing a husband and sending her parents with two kinds of cake as a proposal of marriage.

If a young man eats the cakes he returns to the girl village with her parents and they are married.

After that, the husband is head of the household.

Elder Quang Dai Minh wore two gold rings with a black stone in each for protection from evil spirits after he dies. His granddaughter-in-law wore four rings, but only for decoration. Perhaps,' she said, "I will believe in the evil spirits when I am Old."

He believes the first Cham queen came from heaven in 758 and stayed on earth for 200 years. Then she gave over her reign to a king and rose again to heaven. This same queen created the

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entire world, he said.

He thought the Chams had originated in China, and did not know they had ever ruled Vietnam, as once they did.

Their religion is based on respect for the queen that came from the sky, their ancestors who have the power to protect and their kings.

Four times yearly, the Brahmin Chams must visit their temples, once in celebration of the new year, once to pray to ancestors, once to pray for crops and once to pray for peace.

On any day, however Cham women religious dancers may be called to a home to appease an offended ancestor or to ask for a special favor.

Chat Thuong village was neat and well designed. Each home of wood and mud or cement had a courtyard and fence with a gate.

All streets were hedged with interwoven branches. Children skipped along, look happy and healthy.

Old and new are intermingled in the village. An old woman preparing a chew of red betel nut stands in front of a modern small meal factory: a 20th century doctor visits once a week to treat Chams who wear link necklaces to ward off disease.

So it is in one village of the vanishing Chams - a people whose temples once awed Marco Polo, who have no written history of their own, but who teach their children Sanskrit, the ancient language of scholars.

The Chams have a saying that “love has no limit,” but they do not intermarry. Their numbers dwindle and the land once theirs is torn end to end with a war they hardly know exists.



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315th Donates Sewing Materials

(The Phan Fare, The Phan Rang AB Weekly Newsletter, March 21, 1971)

Some 600 children of a nearby Montagnard hamlet will be “kept in stitches” for some time to come thanks to airmen of the 315th Tactical Airlift Wing here.

The airmen, let by Major William S. Pantle, 315th community relations officer from Fairborn, Ohio, and Capt. Michael J. Selby, base civic action officer from Burbank, California, recently donated an assortment of sewing, knitting and embroidery supplies and materials to a church and school in Ba Rau Hamlet in Ninh Thuan Province.

The materials were accepted by a French priest, Father Beliard, and two Vietnamese nuns who will use the items to set up a sewing center and conduct classes for the older girls and a few of their mothers in the foothill hamlet.

The assorted sewing supplies included 120 sets of needles, 100 thimbles, 100 tape measures, 100 pairs of scissors, 4 boxes of buttons, 16 boxes of thread, 24 sets of knitting needles, 25 boxes of straight pins, 4 large boxes of assorted size safety pins and 5 boxes of marking chalk. Also, they donated 96 skeins of wool yarn, 70 embroidery hoops, 2 large boxes of embroidery thread and 5 packages of embroidery needles.

“The people were really thrilled,” Major Pantele said. “They were very impressed with the materials, especially the yarn. It is very expensive and hard to get on the Vietnamese market.”

Other 315th airmen along during the visit were Capt. Douglas W. Potts, Corinth, Miss., flight scheduling officer for the 315th; First Lt. John S. Printz, Middletown, Ohio, 311th Tactical Airlift Squadron (TAS) civic action officer, and SSgts. Paul A. Lloyd, Glenoma, Wash., Standardization Evaluation Branch; Ronald G. McWilliams, Fiarfield, Calif., Life Support Section; and John L. Pratt, Paris, Tex., Loadmaster with the 311th TAS.

“The men got a feeling they were doing some good for the people, and supplies filled a definite need for the villagers,” the Major said. “They really enjoyed the visit and are anxious to return to see how the project is coming along.”

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(The Phan Fare is an unofficial bulletin published weekly on Sunday by the Office of Information, 35th TFW, and is designed to keep Phan Rang Air Base personnel informed of current events. Col. Gregg P. Nolen Jr., Commander, 35th TFW; Maj. Robert C. Thatcher, Information Officer; MSgt. George D. Martin, NCOIC; Sgt. Michael M. Hampton, Editor; SSgt. Ken L. Garrett, Sgt. Dale E. Lybarger and A1C Randy W. Day.)



Did the Aussies use our bombs and were they transported to the flightline by 435th MMS?

Doug Severt: I was wondering if the Aussies used our bombs? Also did the 435th MMS also deliver them?
--

Ken Miller: Trying to remember. I was Line Delivery. I believe I took some to the Aussies .
--

Michael Mulcahey: They may have used some, I do seem to remember that they did have their own area for assembly and such, but they may have been "Made In America"

Ken Daggett: I was assistant OIC of the bomb dump for several months in 68-69. The Aussies had their own revetments, but I can't remember where they got their bombs. Sure don't recall any Aussie deliveries. I suspect they "bought" through AFK. They did their own line delivery I believe.
--

John M. DeCillo: When they first came in the had some left over WWII Ordnance. After they ran out of that the U.S. supplied them.
--

Joe Taylor: As I recall they must have used our munitions. I must have verified most of the convoys from Cam Ranh Bay and verified the manifests and coordinated the shipments with the vessels that were offloaded and sent to us. I wasn't the only one in AFK that took inventory of those convoys but I sure did beucoup counting of bombs during all of '67. We had the Aussies with us in the Quonset hut but I think they only kept track of their frags, not the receiving or inventory. But that was nearly 50 years ago-I plead ageism for any inaccuracy.

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Howard Moffatt: Hi Doug , apparently when we first got there, we did indeed use WWII ord. as John M. DeCillo said.. . It was old but still good approx 27 thousand were used.. After that we used standard USAF ..Although mods had to be made to the aircraft to facilitate the longer bombs...Standard configuration was then (when I was there) 4x750lbs in the guts and 1x750lb on each wing tip...Personally I don't recall 435th delivering any to us , pretty sure we did all the deliveries ourselves ...but could be wrong.

Michael Mulcahey: We used a few WWII bombs still during 69/70

Jim Kucipeck: In '67 - '68, 435th MMS, as I remember, the Aussie's did their own build up with their own bombs. I agree with Howard Moffatt that they did their own delivery. After June of '68 I have no idea of what ordinance they used.

Michael Reed: In 1970 the Aussies delivered their own bombs. We delivered with 5 ton M52 trucks with 25 or 40 foot trailers The Aussies mostly pulled small trailers with a small tug. (not a



great photo)

Albert Wilson: Most of the munitions used during Vietnam came from the Ravenna Arsenal in NE Ohio. On an interesting note in the late 60's the largest \$ train heist occurred in Leavittsburg, Oh. when a whole boxcar load of C4 plastic explosive disappeared as the train yard after leaving the arsenal. The C4 and the boxcar were never found.

David Knighton: June '69 to June '70 worked night shift at Red 9 Line Delivery and later working Red 2 (Crane crew) I don't ever remember delivering any munitions to the Aussie's. We didn't get to wear shorts either!!!

Michael Mulcahey: If I recall correctly, the munitions crew only was in the bomb dump only half days, I have no idea how many planes they had.

Jim Kucipeck: Here is a photo that might answer the question about Aussie's using AF bombs and the 435th MMS Line D delivering them. This picture was taken in 1967. Howard Moffatt might enjoy this picture of his mates at work. Check out the fins certainly not AF supplied.

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

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Steve Russ: Like Dave, I don't ever recall transporting any munitions to the Aussie side. I DO, however, remember transporting several pints of their beer back to our side, so to speak.

Jim Kucipeck: Steve Russ I am sure you did "transport" several pints of their beer (and then some) and I am equally sure that you represented AMMO and the 435th well. LOL

Steve Russ: Did my best, Jim, for sure.

Steve Russ: We had standards to maintain, right? That's what the 2nd 'M' stood for in 'MMS' after all.

Jim Kucipeck: Steve Russ Absolutely brother, nothing but the highest standards!



Phan Rang Fallen Heroes



**Phan Rang
Fallen Heroes**

Max B. Smith died early Christmas morning. He is survived by me, his wife Janis, his two sons, Colt and Matthew, and three grandchildren, Morgan, Izabel, and Jordan Smith and daughter-in-law Danielle Nicole Smith. If anyone of his friends want to get in touch with me my email is jbsmithnc@gmail.com. I (Janis) was blessed to have been with Max for 45 years 44 of them in marriage. He was the sweetest man. He always had my back no matter how much I messed up. We love him and miss him so much.

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(Note: According to the Phan Rang AB Roll Call, Max was an A2C. in the 35th Field Maintenance Squadron, Sheet Metal Shop, from August 1966 to July 1967.)

PHAN RANG STAFF MEMBERS

Robert Kellington & Joseph Burkhart: Master of Ceremonies

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

Jim Erixson & Mike Maleski: Chaplain

Bob Howe: Australian Ambassador

Skip Ruedeman: Place Reunion info in VFW Mag.

Lou Ruggerio: Place reunion info in AFA Mag. & VVofA Newspaper

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2017 Phan Rang AB Reunion

Dates: 12 - 15 October 2017

Location: DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Seattle Airport-Southcenter, Tukwila, WA.

Tour: Boeing Museum of Flight, 12 Oct.

Banquet: 15 Oct. (Sunday evening)

Click [HERE](#) to book your room. If you are not comfortable with on-line call: 1-855-271-3617. Hotel: Double Tree Suits Seattle Airport South Center Rate: **\$108.00** per night. **SPECIFY: PHAN RANG HAPPY VALLEY** to get the rate. More information will come out soon, but don't wait! We only have a block of 80 rooms and they are going fast.

Challenge Coin Sale to resume now through March 18, 2017

New Rates:

- 1 coin \$8.67
- 2 coin \$14.17
- 3 coin \$19.67
- 4 coin \$25.08
- 5 coin \$31.03
- 6 coin \$36.71

Send your remittance to **Jack Anderson, 826 72nd St. SE, Auburn, WA 98092**. Make check payable to **Phan Rang AB Reunion**

I hope that you enjoyed this issue of the Phan Rang Newsletter. I never would have thought that when I started this little endeavor that I would have been able to put out 124 issues of Phan Rang news, which equates to approximately 2,108 pages. Naturally not every page was devoted to history because the original intent of the newsletter was to promote the annual “Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB reunion so there are a lot of pages either promoting or reporting on reunion activities. One reason that I would have thought it wouldn’t be possible to continue this long is the lack of news about Phan Rang, but boy was I wrong. There seems to be a never ending supply of stories about the base, the mission and the heroes that were stationed there. This newsletter was compiled and published by [Douglas Severt](#). Previous issues of the Phan Rang Newsletter are available [here](#) for download.