

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 128

**“Stories worth telling”**

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**2017 Phan Rang AB Reunion Info**

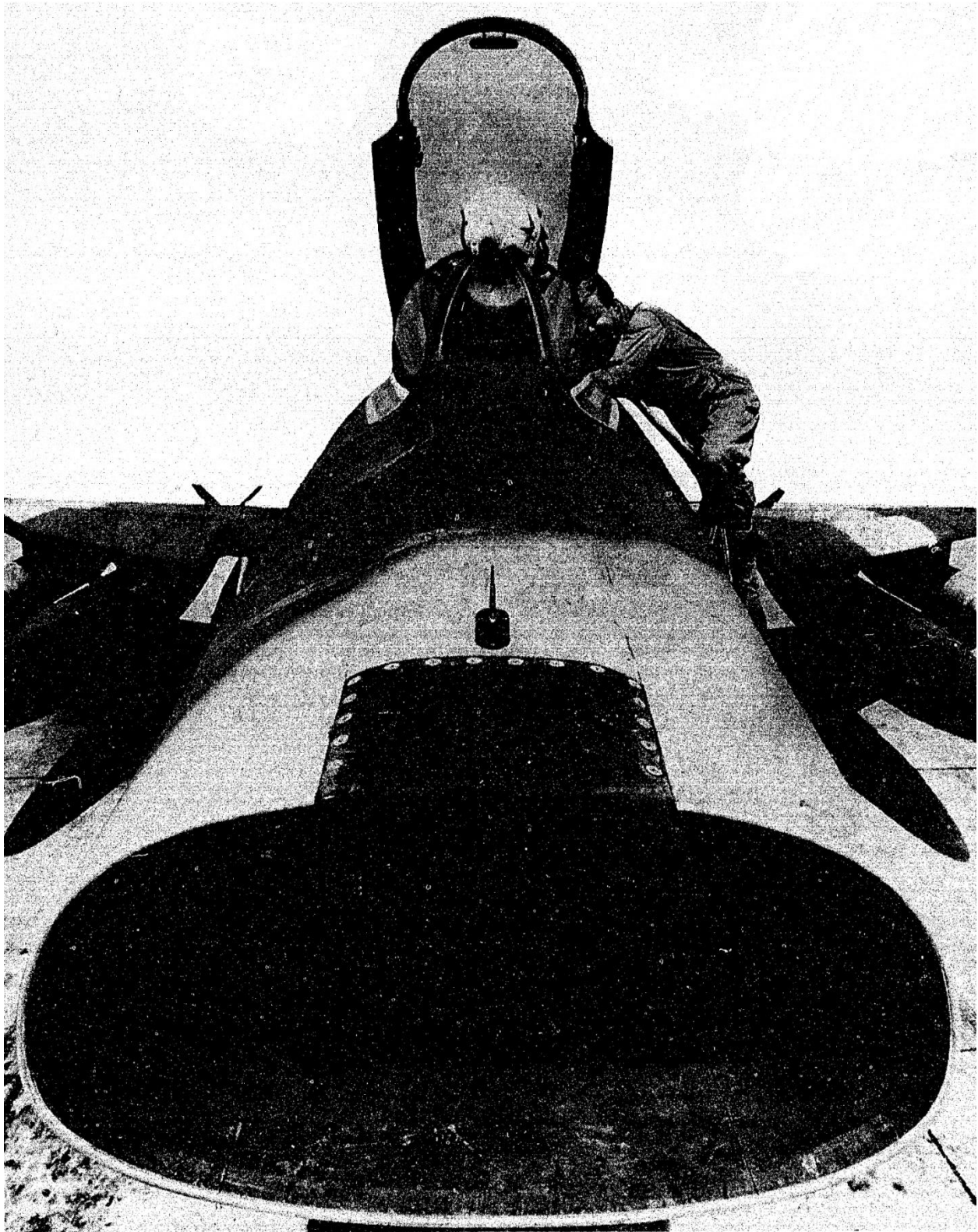
# THE HIGH-FLYING GUNSLINGERS

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**“Those guys are real pros!”**

It was spoken in admiration and often astonishment. Within days and hours after they arrived, the pilots of four Air National Guard tactical fighter squadrons were flying hot missions and screaming over the tree lines and jungle that hid crouching enemy.

The Regular Air Force men, to whom flying and fighting was a profession, watched the Guardsmen who fought and the ones who waited — the ground crews that pumped fuel, the mechanics who pulled maintenance, the armorers who fed the guns of javelin-like jets that flew 12,000 miles to join the war.

They got approving nods — the kind one professional gives another. Called from the field, the plow, the classroom and the office, the Weekend Warriors had come through again — as they did World War II, Korea and the Berlin Airlift.

They turned to as if they had been doing it for years. Many of them had, the old pro Regulars, many of them frankly skeptical, were agreeably surprised.

"I frankly didn't know what to expect from a bunch of guys recalled from civilian life," said Lt. Col. Tom Knoles, who commands the 6t4th Tactical Fighter Sq. at Phan Rang.

That was before the 120th Tactical Fighter Sq. deployed from Buckley Field, Denver, Colo., flying 22 hours, mostly over water, being nourished en route by 11 to 13 air-to-air refuelings. They landed at Phan Rang, were given a tough course in survival, and rushed into action almost as quickly as infantry replacements.

It was the same story for the 174th TFS, flying from Sioux City, Iowa, to Phu Cat, The 188th TFS left Albuquerque, N.M., and the 136th TFS departed from Niagara Falls — both of these outfits landing at Tuy-Hoa.

With overnight stops at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, and Andersen AFB, Guam, each unit left with 20 F-100C Supersabres and landed them as perfectly tuned fighting instruments, without an accident or incident.

But what really pleased the regulars was the discovery that they could glean years of golden

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experience from the newcomers. Some were fighting their third war and a few their fourth — those who had served four to six years in Regular Air Force and Navy and already knew the livid green-dull brown tapestry of Vietnam from the air. They volunteered to stay with the outfit they had come to know only on weekends but had become part of their lives.

The Guardsmen belong to the working Air Force. On its 44th day in Vietnam, 120th completed its 1,000 mission. Maj. John France, a 35-year-old Denver attorney, flew the landmark mission and shrugged it off as "routine."

"We were turned over to forward air controllers on a mission to the South where enemy troops were engaging the Army," he related. "The enemy was retreating into a tree line along a canal. We made three bomb passes and destroyed several bunkers and some military structures. We strafed some sampans, sinking some but I don't know how many. We got some small arms fire but weren't hit."

Just another mission — the way any pilot, wartime retread or lifetime regular, might describe it.

The flying gunslingers from Sioux City flew four more days than the 120th before they hit the millenium mark. Because Phu Cat is the most isolated of the three bases manned by Guardsmen, and the closest to the Ho Chi Minn Trail and the DM2, the 174th had hard work cut out for it.

*The "Regulars" didn't know what to expect when they heard they were getting a bunch of guys recalled from civilian life, but the Air National Guardsmen proved they were real pros.*

They work for the 37<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing. Col. LeRoy J. Manor, the commander, hands out "top gun" awards each day to the pilot who flies the best mission. Guardsmen won it seven out of the last nine days of June.

The 188<sup>th</sup> and 136<sup>th</sup> were behind only because they arrived last, at Tuy Iloa, which can be a launching point for missions from the DMZ and south to Saigon, besides Pleiku and Hue. Anywhere they park or fly is a long way from Albuquerque or Niagara Falls. However, said one Regular Air Force sergeant: "They proved right off they were real pros. In one sense, they were unhappy to be torn away from their families and civilian jobs, but they didn't gripe — they just



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said, 'We're here, let's get to work!' "

Citizen soldiers, all. Ninety per cent of the Guardsmen in the 188<sup>th</sup> finished their military obligation years ago. Lt. Col, Fred Fink, squadron commander, relates that 350 out of 750 men were selected for the move to Vietnam — and were pointedly asked if they wanted to stay behind.

"Not one man said he wanted to stay home," Fink says proudly.

The outfit from Niagara Falls includes four World War II pilots who fought over this area. One is a grandfather. Lt. Col. La Verne Donner, commander of the 136<sup>th</sup>, learned he had become a father for the seventh time, the day he landed at Tuy Hoa.

1st Lt. Garth Blakely, a former airline pilot in the New Mexico squadron, was far from his home base when the 188<sup>th</sup> was mobilized. His job had taken him to Saigon.

Mobilized, called up, dislocated from home and family, the Guardsmen accept it with the same game, heads-up spirit as the Regulars. M.Sgt. Thomas Mock, 32-year-old first sergeant with the 174<sup>th</sup>, puts it this way:

**"It's the first time I've been away from my family, but my wife and children are damned proud I'm here and able to serve my country."**

*(Special to the Pacific Stars and Stripes, Sunday, January 5, 1969)*



**12<sup>th</sup> SOS Combats Malaria**  
**C-123 Crews Spray Base Areas**

*By 2d Lt. Bob Sallee*

**PHAN RANG**-Two aircraft of the 12th Special Operations Squadron, a unit of the 315<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing here, carry out one of the most specialized and humanitarian missions

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performed in the Republic of Vietnam.

The "Bug-Birds," C-123 Providers of the 12<sup>th</sup> SOS, are outfitted with equipment to spray mosquitoes and control the malaria-ridden insect.

Capt. James G. Murphy, a C-123 pilot, explained, "The 'bug-birds' fly daily and spray malathion over air bases and villages throughout Vietnam. It is necessary to spray regularly since the local heat and humidity provide ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes."

Because mosquitoes hide to avoid the sun's heat, spraying takes place in the early morning, between sunrise and 8 a.m.

Since this time restriction does not allow a crew to depart from Bien Hoa AB, home of the 12<sup>th</sup> SOS, and still reach all their targets during these critical hours, bug crews frequently spend a week at a time away from home base, operating from an air base in the vicinity of their targets. Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang Air Bases serve as temporary operating locations for crews away from Bien Hoa.

The Provider departs daily at sunrise, carrying a crew of four which includes pilot and copilot, a navigator, and a flight engineer. The navigator is responsible for directing the aircraft on its 10 to 15 passes over the target to insure complete coverage with a minimum of overlap and aircraft maneuvering.

The spray pattern used may vary considerably, depending on terrain, the shape of the base or village, the weather and local air traffic. The flight engineer must control the rate of the spray's discharge, and turn the spray on and off for each pass. Exact timing is required, as only a few minutes of spray can be carried on the aircraft for each mission.

During the spraying, the pilot and copilot maneuver the aircraft at a low altitude, watching for obstacles and local air traffic.

*(Source: Seventh Air Force News, December 3, 1969)*



## **Stereotype of Fighter Pilot Incorrect, AF Officers Say**

*(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, May 15, 1970)*

*“...pilots as young, handsome, dashing, bachelors who are irresistible to the ladies.”*

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — “The American public tends to stereotype Air Force fighter pilots as young, handsome, dashing, bachelors who are irresistible to the ladies,” explained Col. Walter T. Galligan, commander of the F100 Super Sabre 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, when asked if he thought fighter pilots were different than the public's image.

*“...above all else, they are fighter pilots.”*

That is exactly what it is, a stereotyped image and nothing more,” he said. Fighter pilots come in all ages, sizes and shapes — and many, indeed, are married. The thing that sets them apart from other pilots is a knowledge that, above all else, they are fighter pilots.”

“When you ask me what makes a fighter pilot different, I believe it is because when we are up there, we are entirely on our own. I'm not discounting the vital role of our ground crews — God knows we couldn't fly without them. But what I'm talking about is after we're airborne,” said Maj. Don F. Brackett, one of the 35<sup>th</sup> TFW's married pilots.

The 35<sup>th</sup> TFW is indeed a fighter pilots' organization. In addition to being one of the few remaining Air Force wings which flies the F100, its pilots are also among the remaining few who fly alone, without copilot or navigator.

The fact that the single-seater fighter pilot must depend on his own skill has a lot to do with his feeling as a separate breed of man. How else could he develop the self-sufficiency and self-confidence to perform the difficult and lonely job demanded of him?

*“We're different, but we don't have a monopoly on it..”*

“We're all different, not because we are better or worse than anyone else, but because it takes a particular kind of individual to love to fly, and flying by yourself has an extra special thrill — at least for me. “We're different, but we don't have a monopoly on it — all aviators are,” he said

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**Facility Named For Hero, Widow Given His Medals**

*(Big Spring Texas Herald, Sunday, April 12, 1970)*



**Capt. George R. Andrews**

The Distinguished Flying Cross. Air Medal. Purple Heart and Air Force Commendation Medal, posthumously awarded to Capt. George R. Andrews, were presented to his widow, Mrs. Dorothy H. Andrews, during a ceremony held at Webb AFB recently.

The awards were presented to Mrs. Andrews by Col. Anderson W. Atkinson. Webb wing commander.

The alert facility at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, was recently dedicated in memory of Capt. Andrews, a Phan Rang-based pilot at the time of his death. Making the

dedication address was Walter T Galligan, 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing commander.

Capt. Andrews, then a member of the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron, scrambled from the alert facility for a mission while on night alert duty in Vietnam Oct. 15, 1969. During the mission, his wing men reported the captain's F-100 Super Sabre appeared to pull up from a pass over the target and then rolled into the ground. The flight was called to provide assistance for a river boat patrol experiencing small arms fire from the shoreline area.

The mission was being supported by a forward air control aircraft and a search light operation. After a dry run at the target, the aircraft made a pass, and the search light operation reported that the number two aircraft, piloted by Capt. Andrews had apparently crashed.

Capt. Andrews graduated from the University of Maryland in 1966 with a degree in electrical engineering. He entered the Air Force in July 1966 and received his pilots wings at Webb AFB a year later.



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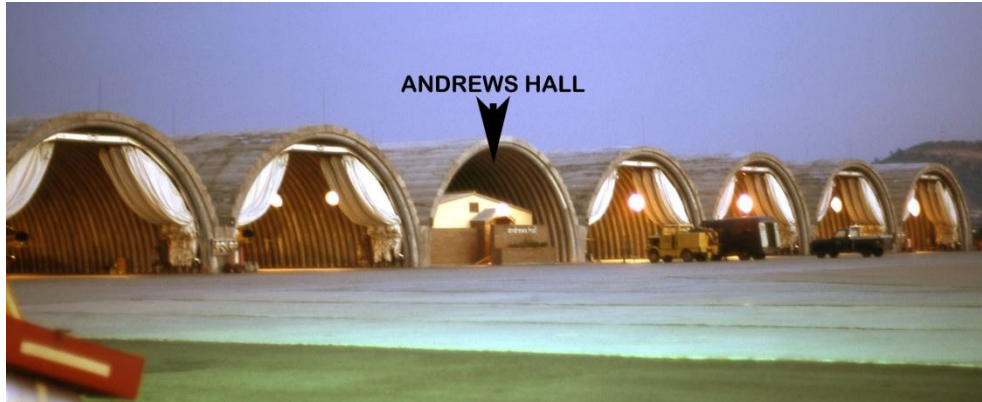
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Immediately after graduation he was sent to Vietnam for a year. He spent a short time at Luke AFB, Phoenix, Ariz. before being sent back to Vietnam in August 1969.

Capt Andrews is survived by his wife and two children, Lori Sue 3, and George Robert Andrews, Jr. 3, Big Spring and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Don D. Andrews, Washington D. C.



(Note: an article dealing with this same story is in Phan Rang News 4, “Phan Rang Dedicates Facility in Honor of Pilot” along with pictures of the dedication event.)

**From the Wall (17W, 80)**

- **Posted by Vic Craft to Capt Andrew’s Daughter:** I remember going to work the morning after we lost Captain Andrews. It was a night mission as I recall and I remember seeing the Crew Chief for his aircraft saying to me the last words Captain Andrews said as he got into the cockpit of the aircraft were "Not again". We thought it was cruel that on his second tour he would be killed after making it back from his first time in the Nam. His Crew Chief was in shock for a couple of days after.

Life is dealing with loss. We have all had our share and wish things could have been different. I know of the hole you have in your heart. Those of us who have survived carry a burden thinking of the lives that could have been experienced had they not been take away from us. But we go on as the world continues to turn not knowing or caring for our loss. It's a shame we can't acquire a similar separation from our emotions. Unfortunately we are human and must bear these things. I can only offer you my condolences after all these years. I hope you can put some of your hurt away. Your dad was a good guy. He is missed by all who knew him. I still drink a toast to all of my comrades from those days at this time of year. Hang in there, it does get better.

**Vic Craft, Crew Chief F-100D 56-3181, 615 TFS, Phan Rang AB '69/'70**

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- **To Dad:** I still think of you so often. I was four years old when you were killed on your second tour of duty in Vietnam. I am now 49, and still a part of me is that little girl wondering why you left us. What is there in a hero that allows a man to walk away from a wife and two children, after he has already served his country honorably. I know I may never fully understand your reasons, or your sense of honor. You were only 25 when you were killed. I now have two daughters older than you lived to be. Throughout my life, especially the big moments like getting married, or the birth of my two daughters, I have wished over and over that you could have been there. I can only say that you have left a hole in my heart that can never be filled. And no matter how old I get to be, there will always be a part of me that is that little girl waiting for her daddy to come home. You have my utmost respect and pride that only a child of a hero can have. I love you always, and know in my heart that one day it will be you who will be there waiting for me to come home. Until we meet again.



**A Welcome ‘Birthday Present’**

*(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Saturday, April 3, 1971)*

By SPEC. 5 STEPHEN KROFT  
S&S Staff Correspondent

**PHAN RANG**, Vietnam — The men of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) here celebrated their 50th anniversary -with a colorful parade Wednesday, on the heels of an announcement by the Australian Prime Minister that they are to be withdrawn from Vietnam.

Sleek Canberra bombers streaked overhead as the No. 2 Sq. paraded before Air Commodore C. H. Spurgeon, commander of the RAAF, Vietnam, and other high-ranking Australian and American commanders.

Standing amidst a static display of vintage Australian aircraft, Spurgeon told the squadron, "I'm not going to stand here under the bright sun and tell you about going home, because I don't know, It's not going to happen tomorrow," he said, "but I would be guessing in about three

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months."

Australian Prime Minister William McMahon announced Tuesday in Sydney that the No. 2 Sq. of the RAAF, based here, and elements of the No. 35 Sq. would be part of the second Australian Vietnam cutback, Australian forces, including Army, Air Force and Navy, will be trimmed by 1,000 men by September, McMahon said.

Although most of the squadron will be returning to Australia, Spurgeon warned the troops not to get their families all excited about homecomings. "There is a possibility that some of you will be staying in Vietnam," he said, "and be reassigned with other Australian units,"

In light of the withdrawal announcement, Spurgeon asked his men to maintain the high standards of the past 50 years. "There is still a war going on and we have our part to play," he said.

(Also see Phan Rang News 105 **“Aussie Flyer’s Reaction to Pullout is Mixed”**.)



**Wreath Laying, ANZAC Day, Phan Rang AB, 25 April 1970**

The ode is then read -

***“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them”.***

The Last Post is then played and a minute’s silence is observed.

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(See Phan Rang News 106 “ANZAC Day at Phan Rang - 25 April 1970” for a more complete story about the meaning of ANZAC Day.)

**RAAF Air Defence Group (ADG)  
“Out Beyond the Wire”**



An Air Defence Group day patrol takes a picture break. Photo by Bob Cornwell.

Note: Articles detailing the Air Fence Group activities are in Phan Rang News 124 “RAAF Air Defence Guards (ADGs) at Phan Rang” and Phan Rang News 4 “Joint Effort Foils Sapper Attack”.

**Phan Rang Pilots Hit Delta Targets**  
*(Seventh Air Force News, February 1969)*

**PHAN RANG** - Pilots of the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron recently struck targets in the Mekong Delta region of South Vietnam in two mission flown from Phan Rang AB.



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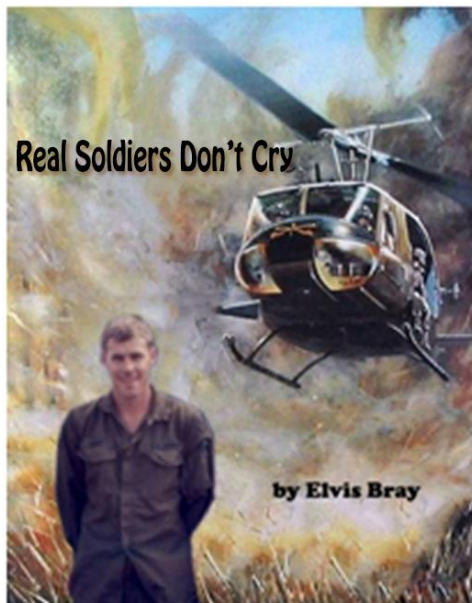
In one strike, Lt. Col. Samuel T. Dickens, Washington, D.C., and 1st Lt. James D. Thames, Decatur, Ga., flew their F-100 Supersabres to a target 243 miles south of Phan Rang.

Colonel Dickens, said, "The forward air controller (FAC) had been busy picking our target before we arrived and he put us right to work, rolling in first with bombs, then working over the target with strafing passes.

When the FAC assessed the damage, he credited us with five structures destroyed, five damaged, three bunkers destroyed, one secondary explosion, and with killing five enemy soldiers.

On another strike Super Sabre pilots struck an enemy base camp northwest of Saigon. The mission netted 27 enemy fighting positions, two bunkers and 20 meters of trench destroyed.

One of the pilots was Maj. James E. Williamson, Grapevine, Tex., who commented, "We couldn't see the target too well because of our altitude, but from the damage reported, it appears the FAC could see it fine. Every time the FAC laid down his smoke, we came in and hit smack in the middle of it. When we hit those fighting position, the FAC said he had only one problem - he didn't know whether he could count that high or not!"



**Real Soldiers Don't Cry**

**By Elvis Bray**

*(copied with permission of the author)*

*“A wounded American soldier was down there  
someplace and it was our job to go get him out.”*

The jungles below looked inviting from a thousand feet in the air, but that was an illusion. Tigers, cobras, bamboo vipers and the Viet Cong made them a dangerous place to venture. We were somewhere between Saigon and Cam Ranh Bay in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam during the Tet Offensive of 1969. A wounded American soldier was down there



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someplace and it was our job to go get him out.

*“...I could barely keep my eyes open. I wondered how the pilots were able to keep flying.”*

So much blood covered the floor of our UH-1H Dustoff Helicopter that my boots were sticking to it. I'd lost count of how many extractions we'd made that day. Hopefully this would be our last. We hadn't shut the engine down in the last sixteen hours and I could barely keep my eyes open. I wondered how the pilots were able to keep flying.

The river below ran westward in a deep valley. It was the only river I had ever seen in Vietnam with clear water. All the rest were a brown muddy color and smelled like sewage.

Short on light, we wanted to make the evacuation quickly before it was too dark to see. The sun had already set in the western sky. We spotted smoke on the south bank of the river and the pilot confirmed the smoke thrown was yellow. The jungle was so thick we couldn't see the ground. The only place to put the helicopter down was in the river. The water was swift and we couldn't tell how deep it was. Soldiers lay in the prone position pointing their rifles toward the opposite bank in case we started taking fire.

The pilot put the skids in the water with the nose pointed upstream. He maneuvered the helicopter as close to the bank as possible without hitting the overhanging trees with the rotor blades. Several men carried a stretcher out to the water's edge. Other troops locked arms, forming a human chain and started wading out into the swift water. It took about a dozen men to reach the helicopter. The first guy to reach us wrapped his arm around the skid to keep from being washed away. The pilot struggled to keep the helicopter steady in the current as the belly of the chopper slowly filled with water.

Four men lifted the stretcher onto their shoulders and waded into the swift current. The only thing keeping them from being washed downstream was the human chain of men already in the cold water. They had to be careful to keep from slipping on the rocks and dumping the patient into the river. Harvey and I grabbed the stretcher as soon as we could reach it. If we lifted it too high, the wounded soldier would slide off the back. The pilot lowered the helicopter deeper into the river and we pulled him safely inside.

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As soon as we had our patient secured, another soldier was brought to the helicopter. Two soldiers held him by his arms and walked him into the water. I couldn't see any wounds or blood on him but he looked like he could hardly stand up. When he got to the helicopter, they helped him inside and he sat in the jump seat on the side of the chopper. This is where we put patients with minor injuries so they wouldn't be in our way while we're treating the seriously wounded.

When the second soldier was secure, I shut the door and we lifted out of the water. The pilot hovered for a few moments letting the water drain out of the bottom of the helicopter. It was almost completely dark by the time we were airborne.

As we rose into the night sky, I felt sorry for the soldiers we left behind, knowing they had a very cold night ahead of them. As soon as we gained altitude, the medic turned on the overhead red light so he could treat our patients.

One look and we both knew the one at our feet was already dead. He had a small hole in the center of his forehead and there was brain matter on the litter behind him. Harvey spoke into the intercom. “This guy's dead and has been for a long time.”

The pilot glanced back at us. “Why in the hell would they have us risk our lives for a dead guy?”

“Hell if I know, Sir. He's shot right between the eyes and died instantly,” Harvey said.

The pilot shook his head and turned back towards the front of the cockpit.

“See what's wrong with the other guy,” Harvey said.

I went to the side compartment to check on him. He was staring straight out into the darkness. “Are you all right?” I yelled.

He didn't answer me. I yelled a little louder, “Hey buddy, are you okay?” He still didn't answer me. I moved closer and reached out and touched his arm. He jerked his head around and stared straight through me. It was the strangest look I had ever seen in anyone's eyes. Dark, blank, cold and empty. He just stared at me as if he were looking right into my soul. We stared at each other for a few moments. I asked again, “Are you wounded?” He held the stare for a few more

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moments and then slowly shook his head no. He never blinked.

Turning his head, he stared into the darkness. I moved back into the center area of the helicopter. “He’s not wounded.”

*“We risk our ass for a dead man and some jerk that’s not even wounded.”*

Harvey scooted over to the center of the helicopter and looked back at the guy and then at me. “What the hell’s going on here? We risk our ass for a dead man and some jerk that’s not even wounded.”

Harvey was right. It didn’t make sense. We would never risk four men and helicopter to evacuate a dead man. We would normally wait until we had a secured landing zone. The pilot and co-pilot were glancing back at us. Everyone was pissed.

I studied the face of the dead soldier for a long time. He looked to be about nineteen years old and in good shape. He could easily have been one of my football teammates. The small round hole in his forehead and the scrambled eggs on the litter next to him was the only sign of injury. It looked as if he were sleeping peacefully. Keeling down, I closed his eyes.

*“I felt sorry for them whoever they were.”*

His family was going about their daily business unaware that their son or brother or husband had been killed. I wondered how long it would take before someone showed up on their front porch with the bad news. I felt sorry for them whoever they were. A recurring thought crept into my mind. I had thought of it many times during the year and a half I’d spent in Vietnam. Once again blood stained these eyes of war. I was tired and saddened.

The guy sitting in the jump seat hadn’t moved. He just sat there staring out into the darkness. He was also about my age and he could have been one of my football teammates as well. I couldn’t help wondering what the hell he was doing in my helicopter. Anger swelled up inside me. For a moment, I thought about going back there and throwing his ass out. The more I thought about him the madder I got. I couldn’t believe we had risked our helicopter and our lives for that piece of shit. I was too tired to think about him any longer. I laid back and closed my eyes.

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We landed at the field hospital at Camp Betty on the outskirts of Phan Theit. Doctors and nurses rushed out to unload the patients. We slid the litter towards them. They grabbed it and carried the dead man away first. The black guy in the jump seat just sat there. A nurse offered him her hand but he didn't act as if he even saw her. I started moving to the back to throw him out. By the time I got there, a doctor had grabbed his arm and was helping him down. The last I saw of him, he was being guided into the hospital. I spat on the ground and closed the door.

After fueling the helicopter, we flew to our landing pad and the pilot shut it down. As soon as I had the blades tied, I went to my bunk. The rest of the crew was already asleep. We were too tired to eat.

It was mid morning before I woke. I sat up and noticed blood on my clothes and boots. Thankful we hadn't been called out again last night I stood up. I'd never been so tired in my life. I went to the mess hall, grabbed some breakfast and drank a gallon of coffee.

Sufficiently caffeinated, I went to the helicopter where Harvey was pouring bottles of hydrogen peroxide on the floor. Six inches of pink foam leaked out of the chopper. “Can you believe this shit, Bray?”

I shook my head. “We've never had that much blood before. I'm going to have to pull the panels and clean them.”

“No shit.”

I retrieved several buckets of water and flushed the foam out of the helicopter. A pink river ran off the landing pad onto the dirt and down the flight line. Harvey went to the hospital to get more medical supplies.

I checked the helicopter and found a small hole in the tail-boom and another one in a rotor blade. I hadn't even known we had been hit.

When Harvey returned, I told him about the bullet holes. He didn't act surprised or concerned. “Did you ever find out what was wrong with that black guy we brought in last night? I asked. “Hell no. Probably had jungle rot or something. I didn't see anything wrong with the bastard.”

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I was still pissed from the night before. “They already knew the other guy was dead before they called us in.”

“Yeah, that was bullshit.”

“I’m going to the hospital and find out why we risked our ass for that prick.”

“I’ll go with you and kick his ass.”

“He better have a good reason for being here or we might just do that.”

We were both, hot, tired and hell-bent looking for answers. We checked the hospital and couldn’t find the guy. We went into the infirmary. The doctor who had helped the guy off the chopper was just finishing wrapping up some guy’s foot.

“Hey Doc. What was the deal with that asshole we brought in last night?” I asked.

“Which guy are you talking about?”

“That black guy who came in with the dead guy on our last load.” “The guy without any injuries,” Harvey said.

I could tell by the expression on the Doc’s face, he didn’t appreciate our comments. He poured himself a cup of coffee. “He was wounded alright. You just couldn’t see the wounds.”

“What are talking about, Doc? He didn’t have a scratch on him,” Harvey said.

Doc rubbed his chin and took a drink. “Those men had been out in the field for three weeks. They camped by the river last night so no one could sneak up behind them. They’d dug their foxholes and were trying to get a bite to eat when they started taking sniper fire. They both ran to their foxhole and jumped in. When they landed, the black guy’s M-16 discharged hitting the other guy in the forehead. They were only a foot apart at the time.”

**“... he was in shock”**

The doctor took a deep breath. “The two guys you brought in last night were best friends from high school. They played football together. When the white guy got his draft notice, his friend



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joined up with him on the buddy plan so they could look after one another.”

It took a few moments for the information to sink in. “So, he was in shock,” said Harvey. Shaking his head, he walked away without saying another word.

“Where is he, Doc?” I asked.

“We shipped him out this morning. He’s on suicide watch.”

I now knew why they had called us in. It wasn’t for the dead guy but for his best friend. We just couldn’t see the injuries to his soul. I felt terrible for misjudging the man and the situation.

“Once again blood stained these eyes of war.”

“What?” The Doctor asked.

“Oh, nothing, Doc.” I walked away forcing back the tears. **Real soldiers don’t cry.**

**(Thank you Elvis Bray for your heroism and sharing your stories with us. I guess I’m not a real soldier, because I had a hard time holding back the tears after reading this story. Other non-fiction writings by Elvis Bray are in Phan Rang News 125 “So Others May Live “and Phan Rang News 127 “Answered Prayer”.)**

**Phan Rang AB Roll Call**



Add your name to the Phan Rang AB Roll Call, a list of people assigned to Phan Rang AB, RVN. Send your info to [Bob Tucker](#).

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**Here are the costs for the Seattle Reunion 2017:**

**Reunion Fee: \$10.00/person**

**Plate Banquet Dinner: \$50.00/person**

**Beef Banquet Dinner: \$55.00/person**

**Trip to Museum of Flight: \$50.00/person**

We'll have a plate dinner instead of a buffet. The reason: It's cheaper! The \$50 plate dinner will be your choice of Salmon, Chicken, or Vegetarian. Try letting me know your choice when you send me your check. If you want beef, it will be an extra \$5. The Museum of Flight charge will include: Transportation to and from the event and hotel Doubletree, Admission into the Museum, and a buffet lunch.

You can send your checks at any time from now until September 20th. Send them and make them payable to:

**Happy Valley Reunion  
826 72nd St SE  
Auburn, Wa 98092**

**See you in Seattle! October 11<sup>th</sup> thru the 15<sup>th</sup>**

Make your reservation now at the Doubletree Inn Seattle:

<http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/S/SEASPDPT-PHA-20171010/index.jhtml>



I hope that you enjoyed this issue of the Phan Rang Newsletter. In this issue Elvis Bray permitted me to print one of his short stories, which is the third one that I've printed. We still have Phan Rang AB patches for sale like the one on the left and soon will have stickers of the same patch. This newsletter was compiled and published by [Douglas Severt](#). Previous issues of the Phan Rang Newsletter are available [here](#) for download.