

"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 140

"Stories worth telling"

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Know your Airman

Sgt. C. Dan Brownell, USAF

Clifford Daniel Brownell (AKA--Dan, Brownie, Shorty) born June 1, 1946, Thermopolis, WY, graduated from High School at Glendo, Wyoming in 1964.

Worked on CB&Q (Chicago, Burlington and Quincy) Railroad extra gangs doing ditch

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construction and worked in sales in retail before joining the Air Force on April 12, 1965. Took basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas and technical school at Amarillo AFB, Tx.

First regular duty assignment was Osan AB, South Korea (Oct 1965-Nov 1966) 6314th Transportation Sq, then assigned permanent party at Lowry AFB, CO (Nov 1966-June 1968) 3428th Student Training Squadron; volunteered for duty in South Vietnam and was assigned to Phan Rang AB, South Vietnam (July 1968-April 1969) 352nd TFS (Ops).

Brought back early for my regular release from active duty. In the USAF Reserves 1969-1971. Returned to the state of Wyoming and worked for a land survey company and then road construction before going to college for one year at Eastern Wyoming College in Torrington, WY. Helped run and manage a gas station and selling insurance before getting married to Melissa Alice Kenyon of Shoshoni, Wyoming on Oct 31, 1970 and we had 2 children; One daughter Darlene Michelle and one son Daniel Joseph.

Clifford worked at an underground uranium mine, road construction, C&NW (Chicago and North Western) Rail Road, Avis Rent-A-Car and sold insurance again before going to work for the Wyoming State Parks & Historic Sites in October 1973 at Glendo State Park. He was promoted to Park Superintendant at Keyhole State Park and Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site 1975-1980. He then he was transferred to Seminole State Park/Fort Fred Steele State Park and stayed there until he retired after 31 years in October 2004. Clifford then drove a School Bus for eight years in Rawlins, Wyoming before retiring in 2014.

He and his wife are the grandparents of eight wonderful grandchildren, three boys and five girls. At this time (Oct 2017) we are selling our home in Rawlins, WY and moving to Cheyenne, WY to be closer to family and VA facilities. Clifford uses his free time taking advantage of his life time Wyoming fishing & small game hunting license and his free Wyoming State Parks Day Use & Camping Permit so he hopes to start being able to use them more from now on.

Vincent Joseph Miller

SSgt. Vincent J. Miller, aka Vince, was assigned to Phan Rang AB, RVN 10/1968 to 10/1969 with duty with the 35th Combat Service Group, Special Services working in the administration

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sections, Rest and Relaxation program where he managed the beach, clubs, sporting activities, hobby shops, library, etc.

Retired as a USAF CMSgt. with 30 years service.

Vincent resided in Prescott, Az., and Sydney, Australia.

Miscellaneous: Enlisted November 1960. Duty at Lackland AFB, Keesler AFB, Goodfellow AFB, Bremerhaven AB, Ramstein AB, Davis-Monthan AFB, Phan Rang AB, Bitburg AB, Langley AFB, Wiesbaden AB, Sembach AB, Bonn Germany, Bolling AFB and the Pentagon. Retired December 1990 and worked for five years as Director of Military Affairs for NCOA. Retired to Australia in 1994.

(Note: Vincent Joseph Miller started the Phan Rang AB "Happy Valley" Facebook page and was active in that until his passing in January 2013)

Joseph Schwarzer

I was educated for my first 8 years by Nuns at St. Joseph elementary school and was educated by the Christian Brothers at Calvert Hall High School in Towson, Md. The next 4 years. I worked at the Bendix Corp. until I got my draft notice and then decided to enlist in the Air Force.

Joe Schwarzer enlisted in the Air Force November 1966. His first assignment was Clark AB, Philippines and then at Phan Rang AB, South Vietnam for the period 1967/68. Joe was a jet aircraft mechanic (Crew Chief) with the 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron both at Phan Rang AB and Clark AB. During his assignment at Phan Rang AB he was promoted to the rank of Sgt. (E-4).

After his assignment at Phan Rang AB he was transferred to Andrews AFB, Md., and was with the 1002 CMS working on T-33's. This completed his four year service and was discharged in 1970 with the rank of Staff Sergeant.

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I went back to work at Bendix after my 4 years in the AF where they were supposed to train me on computers but they ended up laying me off. I held jobs as a driving instructor and running a printing press before I started my postal career. I was a letter carrier for the US Postal Service starting in 1973 and is now enjoying his retired life fishing and hunting in Timonium, Md. I was married twice and divorced twice with no children. I was really happy that I found the Phan Rang Facebook page where I have made many new friends.

John E. Reeves Jr.

Arrived at Phan Rang AB RVN 5 July 1969 initially assigned to the 35th CSG/ BITS (Base Information Transfer System) ie, Base Distribution. Delivered official correspondence throughout the base to all and I mean all units and organizations, twice a day updates After completion of my Security Clearance I was assigned to the document security section and I controlled all in and outgoing Top Secret documents. Performed this duty for 10 of my 12 months assigned to Phan Rang. Arrived as an A2C and left with a line number for SSgt.

John completed his BS degree in 1983 through Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.

It was totally out of character for me, but I ended up re-enlisting and would eventually have a very enjoyable Air Force career. I served at: Webb AFB, TX. 66-68; Phan Rang AB RVN 68-69; Mather AFB CA 69-70; Fresno ATM CA 70-71; McClellan AFB CA 2 weeks. 71-71; Ent AFB, CO 71-72; OJCS the Pentagon Washington DC 72-74; Camp HM Smith, HI 74-75; CINCPAC ABNCP, Hickman AFB HI 75-78; Castle AFB CA 78-81; Kirtland AFB NM 82-87; Ramstein AB Germany 88-88; Kapaun AS Germany 88-91; Kirtland AFB NM 91-92: Norton AFB, CA 92 and Kirtland AFB NM 92-96.

After retiring in 1996 as a CMSgt. I went to work for the US Post Office working as a Mail handler for 15 years.

After my wife passed away in 2012 I retired from the Post Office and relocated from Albuquerque NM to Clovis CA. I am currently retired and trying to stay healthy.

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James M. Erixson

Born: March 10, 1948 Des Moines, Iowa and raised in Altoona, Iowa. Went to school at Altoona Elementary/Junior High 1954 - 1963, Southeast Polk High School 1963 - 1966, University of Maryland 1976 – 1986 and San Francisco Theological Seminary 1993 – 1996.

Joined the United States Air Force June 1966, went to Amarillo AFB, Texas for four weeks of Basic Training. I was assigned to the 1589th Air Base Group at Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque, N.M. from July 1966 thru September 1967 for OJT in Air Transportation. I was promoted to A1C while at Kirtland.

I was reassigned to Detachment 8, 14th Aerial Port Sq. at Phan Rang AB, RVN in October 1967 thru May 1969. I worked as a cargo line loader, as Ramp Tramp, Cargo Traffic Control and a Load Planner. I was promoted to Sgt (E-4) while at Kirtland.

I was reassigned to 62nd Aerial Port Sq. at McChord AFB, Tacoma, Washington in May 1969 thru January 1970. I worked as a Load Planner and Contract Coordinator. I was reassigned to OLAG, 14th Aerial Port Sq. at Ban Me Thout Municipal Airport, RVN in January 1970 thru January 1971. I worked as a Load Planner and Office Clerk. I was promoted to SSgt (E-5) while at Ban Me Thout, RVN.

I was reassigned to 5th Mobile Aerial Port Sq. at RAF Mildenhall, England in February 1971 thru May 1977. I worked as a Air Cargo Specialist and Sq. Training NCO. I was promoted to TSgt (E-6) while at RAF Mildenhall.

I was reassigned to 1881 Mobile Communication Sq. at Lindsey Air Station, Wiesbaden, Germany in May 1977 thru May 1980. I worked as a Air Cargo/Passenger Specialist. I was in charge of Mobile Air packages for rapid Mobilization for the Squadron. I was promoted to MSgt (E-7) while at Lindsey AS.

I was reassigned to 35th Component Repair Sq. at George AFB, California in May 1980 thru May 1983. I worked as the NCOIC for the F-4G Flight Simulator, and supervised 25 Simulator Technicians.

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I was reassigned to 48th Component Repair Sq. at RAF Lakenheath, England in May 1983 to May 1985. I worked as a Shift Supervisor on the F-111 Flight Simulator. I was promoted to SMSgt (E-8) while at RAF Lakenheath.

My last assignment was to 317th Avionics Maintenance Sq. at Pope AFB, North Carolina in May 1985 and retired on January 1, 1988. I worked as the NCOIC for the C-130 Simulator.

After my Air Force Career I worked with Singer Link Simulation as a Maintenance Officer for the C-130 Simulator. We were contractors for the Air Force Training. After 2 years I was sent back to George AFB, California as a Site Manager for the F4E and F-4G Simulators. The contract changed companies to Simuflite Simulation. George AFB closed in 1990. In 1990 I was sent to Hill AFB as Site Manager for the F-16 Simulators. After two years I changed companies and moved to Long Beach, California where I was a Operations Manager for the MD11 and MD80 Simulators.

In 1993 I went back to school and entered into the Ministry. I graduated from Seminary in 1996 and became a Staff Chaplain at St. Judes Hospital in Fullerton California. In 2001 I was called to First Presbyterian church in Yakima, Washington as an associate Pastor. While there I volunteered with the Yakima Fire Department as their Chaplain. I retired from the ministry in May 2013.

Currently I am Co-Chair for the Community Military Appreciation Committee (CMAC) in Vancouver, Wa. CMAC is a non-profit Patriot community organization, who is partnered with 49 business organization within Clark County, Washington. We coordinate events like Memorial Day, Patriot'S Day, Veteran's Day and "Our Community Salutes" events. We also work with other Veteran organization to help Veterans who do not have the resources to care for their families.

I'm also involved with the National POW/MIA efforts, providing scholarships for families of those who are POW/MIA of WWII, Korean War and the Vietnam War. This year we raised \$27,000 dollars for this cause. I am also active in the Phan Rang AB Veterans group serving as chaplain and will serve as master of ceremonies for the 2017 Seattle reunion of that group.

I am married to Betsy Ross and we now live in Vancouver, Washington. I have two boys from a

previous marriage.

Joe Kaupa

Joe Kaupa was born in Springfield, Mn., April 23, 1945 and graduated from Plainview High School May 26, 1963.

He Joined the U.S. Air Force on June 10, 1963. After basic training he was assigned to 92nd Combat Defense Squadron (Air Police Squadron). He was then promoted to E-3, and worked one year on the flight line guarding B-52 Alert Bombers and KC-135. After a year he was assigned to Base Police (law Enforcement).

In 1965 was reassigned to Bossier Base, in Shreveport, La. at a Defense Atomic Energy Base (Nuclear Storage Site). Did patrol and worked Com-plotter desk promoted to E-4.

He is married to the former Nancy Passe. They had two children Scott and Debra. The day I left for Vietnam Scott turned 2 years old and Debra was 6 months old. On May 26, 1968, Joe arrived at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam and was assigned to 35th Security Police Squadron Panther flight. Panther Flight worked straight nights 1800-0800 hrs. While en route to Vietnam he was promoted to E-5, SSgt but could not sew on his stripes until July 1, 1968.

May 68 to July 1 1968 Joe worked towers on the perimeter and road SAT Team. July 1, 1968 after sewing on SSgt stripe he was a SAT Team leader and worked the perimeter responding to K-9 and tower alerts etc. Kaupa also was assigned on two occasions off base at the water point which consisted of three of security policemen. He worked about 6-7 months on the perimeter and then was reassigned to CSC (Central Security Control) as a Com-plotter. This was the entire nerve center for all base security and all calls came into me and my job was to dispatch SAT teams, Heavy Weapons, etc to any hot spot on the wire or the base.

Joe was awarded the AFCM for my actions on the night of Jan 26, 1969 regarding Sapper and Mortar and Rocket attack. SSgt Kaupa left Phan Rang on May 26, 1969 and was reassigned to Whiteman AFB, Mo. where he worked missile sites as a security Supervisor. Their third child Amy was born in May 1971. Joe, got out of the Air Force on June 10, 1971 after 8 years and

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returned to his home town of Plainview, Mn., where he had my application in to be a Deputy Sheriff for Wabasha Co.

They had no openings so he worked at a food packing plant putting in about 100 hours a week to make ends meet until he got hired at the Sheriff's Department in October 1971. He worked as a Deputy Sheriff for 3 years and was then promoted to Chief Investigator and then Chief Deputy Sheriff.

In 1976 Joe was hired as Chief of Police for the City of Plainview and remained in that position until retirement in May 1999. Our 4th child Katie was born in 1980. (I should note that Amy and Katie have medical issues which I am convinced has to do with AO even through the VA will not accept it. Amy is on total disability as she is in pain all the time and has many issues.) During that time he was named Officer of the year for Wabasha Co. Joe also was on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Assn.

After retirement he worked part time for the Mayo Clinic Medical Center for 10 years and then retired permanently. Both Joe and Nancy are philanthropist to the people of the island nation of the Dominican Republic. Every year they collect articles of clothing that they carry down to them. Joe is an artist creating dioramas of the north woods from objects that he's carved and painted from wood. Joe is also active in the Phan Rang AB group. He maintains the "In Memoriam" boards which are a listing of all that have passed that were at one time stationed at Phan Rang AB, RVN. To that effort he also donates a lot of his handicraft work to be used as fund raising for the group. Nancy and Joe have been married for 52 years and have 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild.

Howard Taylor

I was born and raised in the cotton fields of North Alabama. I graduated from high school in 1965 and joined the Air Force in January 1966.

Spent Four years in the Air Force and my first duty assignment was Clark AB, Philippines. I went TDY to Phan Rang in October for 179 days with the 8th and 13th Tactical Bombardment Squadrons. Back to Clark for 10 days then back to Phan Rang for 120 days, again back to Clark

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for about 60 days then back to Phan Rang for 30 days and to Clark to clear and go back State side.

Stateside I was stationed at Clinton-Sherman AFB, Ok with B-52. Three months there and off TDY to Okinawa for six months then back to Clinton-Sherman. Feb of 1969 was PCS back to Phan Rang with the 8th TBS until the returned the B-57's back to the States in October. I was discharged from Air Force 43 days early.

Entered civilian life trying to go to college and work full time and also got married. It seemed that the jobs were not very good and it was very hard to go to school full time and my marriage was not working out. So December 1974 I quit my job and joined the Marines as marriage was in shambles and school had been dropped when my beautiful daughter was born. I finally was divorced but gave the Marines four years had a good career going when I met my present wife. My wife and I ended up being a care taker for her parents so I got out and landed a good job.

In 1985 I joined the Alabama Army National Guard and stayed in the Guard until my 60th Birthday in 2006. I was activated in 2004 and sent to Iraq at the ripe old age of 57. During my military career I earned one Air Force Commendation, two Army Commendation, one Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Action Badge and all the other medals and ribbons that goes with Vietnam and Iraq. With all this time in the military I made it to Sgt1st Class (E-7).

I am one of the original founders of the B-57 Bummers Association BLMF and was the 1st President of our Association.

I live in Decatur, Alabama, happily married with two boys and eight grandchildren. Recently I went to Washington D.C. on an Honor Flight. I would recommend it to anyone that gets an invitation. It was a fantastic and honorable day that I will always remember.

Lawrence Martino, Sr.

It all started when I was born, on November 3, 1948. I was a preemie who weighed 3 lbs, 15 ounces. I had to stay in an incubator for one month before I was allowed to go home. Quite a start!! I was born in Providence, R.I. I had a great childhood, and had a lot of fun. I went to Marieville Elementary School in North Providence, R.I. Then I went to North Providence High

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school in North Providence, RI. Graduated there in 1966, went to Rhode Island Junior College, but I didn't finish, and went into the United States Air Force, and I'm so glad I made that choice.

For just one 4 year tour, I went to many places, and loved every minute of it! I went to basic training in Amarillo AFB, in Texas. From there I went to Lowry AFB, Co., for Inventory Management Training. My AFSC was 64550. When I was done with school, I received my orders to go to Lajes Field, Azores, Portugal. This was an 18 month tour on a very small Island called Terceira. Fantastic tour, semi-tropical, beautiful, and the locals were great people. I was in the 1605 Supply Squadron and worked in the Technical data section. I made some great friends there.

After my tour was done I was sent to Grissom AFB, Indiana a SAC base. I worked in the Research section of the 305th Bomb Squadron for about 8 months and was sent to Phan Rang AB, Vietnam in 1969. I worked in the 35th Supply Squadron as NCOIC of the Technical Data Section.

One very interesting thing was that my OIC in the Azores, Lt. Raymond Munn. Well, while he was on leave before Phan Rang, he received a letter from a Captain Munn, yes the same man. He informed me that he would be under him at Phan Rang. He is a truly great man and he and I are still in contact with each other. We became friends, and although he lives far away from me, we are in contact every week. I left Vietnam in April, 1971.

When Lawrence got out of the service, he had a very hard time finding a job. He worked as a gas attendant at Sears in Providence RI., and got very bored doing that. There just were not many good jobs available. Lawrence then married his beautiful wife, Louise in 1971. I had to find a good job. I called an Air Force recruiter, but he said I would have to wait for at least a year to enlist. A friend of mine advised me to go into another branch. I decided that was what I would do, so I enlisted in the US Army. This was in 1976. The Army in its infinite wisdom, put me in FDC (Fire Direction Control, Artillery, MOS 13E10., even though I was deaf in one ear! I went to basic at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., finished that and went to Ft Sill, Ok. for artillery school. Got through that ok, and was stationed at Ft Hood, Texas, First Cav. Division, B Btry., 1st Bn., and 77th Field Artillery. Louise and I lived off post, but I was gone from 5 a.m. until 6 p.m., unless we were going to the field, which was quite often. My job was to calculate wind speed, etc and tell which guns (artillery) where to fire, then adjust fire, etc. Well, this took a toll on my

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good ear, and was put on restriction. I couldn't fire my M-16 anymore and couldn't be around the big artillery pieces any more. The Doctors, mine was a Colonel, were very strict about their orders, so I had to stay in the orderly room until they found something for me to do. In 1977, they asked if I would like to get out or try another MOS. Louise and I had about had it, and we opted for a discharge. I then went back to college at University of Texas, Tyler, and graduated Magna Cum laude in Technology, OSHA.

Long story short, we really liked Texas, so I found a job in Waco, TX and stayed there for 10 years. We brought up our three children, Kerry, Tara, and Larry Jr. When the kids got older they wanted to move to Austin, TX., so we followed them there. I worked for the State of Texas as a OSHA Consultant for 10 years, as my heart attacks, and 2 mini-strokes made the State very worried about my liabilities. I was force to retire in 2004.

That brings us to the present. I have been married for 46 years, my children are all grown and have their own kids (6 Grandchildren), and we all live here in Austin. We've been in Texas for 30 years. We love it here, and are both retired now. It's been a crazy ride, but it all was good!

Donald Gray

Donald Gray was born in Long Beach California in 1949. He graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Elizabeth New Jersey in 1967 and after graduation entered the Air Force in May 1968. Donald was sent to weapons training in Denver at Lowrey AFB Co. After technical school he was sent to Luke AFB, Az., then was assigned to Phan Rang AB, RVN with the 18th SOS. At Phan Rang I did gun repair on the C-119's, the mini gun and the 20mm Vulcan canon.

Airmen Donald Gray then went to Udorn Thailand with the 40th AARS Jolly Green Giants and was discharged in December of 71 at the rank of E-4.

After Donald got out of the Air Force I worked for 31 years at General Motors on the assembly line. I was married twice the first time divorced with a daughter the second lasting 31 years. I lost her to cancer in March of 2013. I have six children, eleven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. I lived most of my life in north Jersey and moved to Nazareth Pennsylvania in 2010 after fully retiring. I'm happy to be a part of Happy Valley a little sad that I can't find any of

the men that I served with over there.

Ernest A. Peters

Ernest A. Peters, born December 12th, 1947 in Ashland Oregon. Ernest graduated from Ashland High School June, 1966 and Worked for the Oregon Department of Forestry as a Crew Member during the summers of 1966 and 1967 fighting forest fires.

Ernest joined the U.S. Air Force September 6th, 1967 and took his basic training at Lackland AFB, Sept - October 1967 with a follow on assignment to Kessler AFB, Ms. For technical training school Nov 1967 - June 1968 for Aircraft Radio Repairman 30130. Other training included: OJT Training: Myrtle Beach AFB July to Dec 1968 30150 Airman 2nd Class and Crypto Radio Repair at Lackland AFB Jan 1969 to get a Secret clearance.

Assignment: Phan Rang AB Feb to Oct 1969. Airman 1st/Sgt 35th AMS Comm Shop.

Assignment: Columbus AFB, Columbus MS., Nov 1969 to Sept 1971. SSgt Jan 1, 1971

Discharged: Sept 3rd, 1971

Work History:

Oct 1971 - Apr 1978 Columbus Communications, Columbus Ms., Two-way Radio Tech

Aug 1978 - Dec 2005 Josephine County Communications, Grants Pass, Oregon.

Electronic Tech. Promoted to Communications Program Manager. Was in charge of repairing County and City and 911 Agency two-way radios. Installed, maintained, and repaired county telephone system. Installed, configured, and maintained County computer network.

Retired: Jan 1, 2006

Marital Status: Married to Carolyn Nov 20, 1971 - present.

Children: Son, David, TSgt. Air Force Reserves. C-17 Crew Chief, McCord AFB, Wa.

Grandchildren: Natasha age 20 and Madison age 14.

Douglas I. Severt

Douglas was born in Athens, Wisconsin, December 8, 1943. In 1945 his father who worked for the Soo Line Railroad Company was transferred to Fifiel, Wisconsin. Douglas attended the Fifiel School and for three summers during his high school years worked the entire summer as a chore boy at Al's Place Resort on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. He graduated in 1962 and attended the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point for one year.

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Douglas Severt enlisted in November 1963, and after basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas, and went to technical school training at Sheppard AFB, Texas in Air Freight Specialty. His first assignment was to Clark AB, Philippines (1964-1966) in late 1964 to the 1506th Support Squadron (MATS), for an 18 month tour of duty. Primarily duty assignments were in the Freight Terminal and as a Ramp Controller coordinating the activities of the aircraft load crews on the ramp. A1C Severt's next assignment was to Travis AFB, California, 60th Aerial Port Squadron from 1966 to 1968. March 1968 to November 1969 found Sgt Severt in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) at Phan Rang AB, Det 8, 14th Aerial Port Squadron and was assigned as the NCOIC of the Traffic Control Section.

Sergeant Severt's initial duties at Phan Rang were as a Load Planning Specialist, preparing and maintaining air freight records and reports, preparing aircraft manifest and air bills along with accomplishing inventories and record backlog of freight and mail on hand. After promotion to SSgt., duties were NCOIC Traffic Control Section, insuring that loads are properly pulled, manifested and that all traffic records and reports were properly maintained. Additionally required to coordinate with all Aerial Port users for the prompt movement of cargo, passengers and mail. Additional duty included Career Information and Counseling NCO.

Douglas extended his tour of duty in Vietnam for 6 months and took his R&R to Singapore. After RVN he was assigned to McChord AFB, Washington, 62nd Aerial Port Squadron from 1969 to December 1972, where he worked almost exclusively in Load Planning. During his stay at McChord he received orders to go back to Vietnam (Qui Nhon), but while he was home taking his leave prior to departure, those orders were cancelled. At McChord Douglas met the girl of his dreams, the former Joyce Sims and they got married at McChord AFB in April 1972 and they started their lifelong love affair.

In January 1973 Douglas Severt reported to Rhein-Main AB, Germany, to the 630th Military Airlift Squadron and then the 435th Aerial Port Squadron where he remained until April 1976. While there he worked in various functional areas, including the Passenger Terminal.

Our son was born in June 1973 at the hospital in Wiesbaden. After four years in Germany, he returned to the states for an assignment to Lackland AFB, Texas, in May 1976 to September 1977 to the 3700 Resource Management Group. From Lackland AFB he had a sub-assignment

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to the San Antonio Civilian Airport as the Base Air Passenger Supervisor and I was in charge of what was called "Airport Reception". We were responsible for receiving all the recruits that came in everyday and putting them on busses to Lackland AFB, as well as taking care of charter flights that took trainees to various technical schools in other locations. After a quick year I was assigned to the Goose Bay Airport, Labrador, Canada, Det. 1, 438th Military Airlift Wing from September 1977 to August 1978. I was a Technical Officer of the Contracting Officer (TRCO) and was responsible for the transportation function that was performed by a contractor. There were only 10 Air Force members assigned and it was a very pleasant remote assignment because everyone had their own two bedroom apartments and even though it was still considered an unaccompanied tour of duty, his wife and son joined him from March 1977 until the time he deployed back to the States in August 1978. After Goose Bay he was assigned to Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, in August 1978. That turned out to be a 7 year assignment and besides performing in many functional areas he also was instrumental in the transformation of the LOGAIR Station into a major Aerial Port of Embarkation (APOE) and the only one in the Air Force Logistics Command. He wrote a training course and taught a week long class, for approximately 4 months, that was for every transporter and port managers in the command. The course of instruction was to bring AFLC in line with Military Airlift Command transportation practices. For three consecutive years as a result of his efforts in that endeavor, he was selected Air Force Logistics Transportation NCO of the year.

For about a year he performed as the 1st Sergeant for the 2854th Air Base Group. MSgt Severt retired from the Air Force as the Air Terminal Superintendent in December 1985 after 22 years. In August 1986 he was hired as a civilian at Tinker AFB and his first assignment was a GS-9 supervisor in Load Planning. After a short time he was promoted to Air Freight Section Chief, a Wage Supervisor WS-11 position responsible for all cargo processing and ramp services with a combined workforce of about 150 civilian and military employees. Not too long after that he was promoted to a GS-12 position as the Assistant Air Terminal Manager. He held that position throughout the Desert Shield/Storm era, second in command at the only inland APOE, supervising in excess of 300 military and civilian employees. In the mid-1990's, Air Force Logistic Command discontinued funding for LOGAIR and when that ceased, so did the need for an Aerial Port.

His next assignment was with Procurement Transportation as the Transportation Officer for the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center. Douglas retired again in April 2008 as a DoD civilian after 22

years of service under the National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

As a retiree he enjoys working with the Phan Rang AB group researching stories and putting together newsletters pertaining to the bases activities and helps arrange annual reunions for the group. He is also a part of his high school alumni group that plans their annual all-class reunions and is responsible for promoting that activity.

I reside in Midwest City, Oklahoma where his son and his family also live. He has lived here since arrival in August 1978. Douglas has three grandchildren.

Jim Kucipeck

DOB 7/20/46 in Tupper Lake, NY 12986

Early education Tupper Lake Central School District

Enlistment date 11/25/65, AFSC 46150 Munitions Specialist

1st Assignment Kunsan AB, Kunsan, Korea, May '66 – June '67

2nd Assignment Phan Rang AB, Phan Rang, RVN, June '67 – June '68

TDY Phu Cat AB, Phu Cat, RVN, Mar. '68 – Apr. '68

3rd and last assignment Hill AFB, Clearfield, UT, July '68 – Feb. '69

Highest rank achieved E4

While in Korea and Phan Rang and Kunsan I was assigned to the bomb dump performing munitions buildup, basically just “humped” bombs.

While at Hill I was assigned to the Minuteman Missile X-ray facility.

Married for 47 yrs. to Betsy, with three daughters and 7 grandchildren.

Attended North Country Community College, '69 – '71, Associate Degree in Bus. Admin

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Attended State University of NY at Albany, '71 – '73, Bachelor of Science Degree in Education.
Attended State University of NY at Albany, '73 – '75 (part time), Master of Science Degree in Education.

Taught Business Education courses for the Tupper Lake Central School District.

Retired in June, 2004.

Ray Benson

- USAF 1964 to 1985
- Wife: Mary, 3 sons, 1 girl, married 50 years.
- Phan Rang AB 1968-1969 assigned to 35th Transportation Squadron, worked at service station at night, ran the wrecker and also fixed vehicles.
- Took R&R to Hawaii where I was joined by my wife.
- 1969-1974 Torrejon AB, Spain
- 1974-1977 Warner-Robins AFB, Ga.
- 1977-1985 Grand Forks AFB, ND.
- Worked on People Elevators for 20 years.
- I now reside in Grand Fork, North Dakota.

Scott Hamilton

- USAF 1967-1970
- Paine Field, Evert, Wa. with the 57th Fighter Group
- Transient Alert
- Crew Chief U-3-A Cessna 110
- McClellan AFB, Ca., EC-121's
- Hurlburt Field, Fl., training on C-123-K's
- Phan Rang AB, RVN, 315th CAMS
Aero Repair, tire shop and paint shop
Phase Docks, Security Police Augmentee
March 3 1969 to March 3 1970
- Fairchild AFB, Spokane, Wa., Cross trained
Jet 8, 2E4 Engine, Aircrew Chief KC-135, B-52G models
AFSC: 4315A and 4371C

Orus Coffield

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I graduated from University of North Carolina in June of '68, and found myself at Lackland AFB for basic training and then in Vietnam in January of '69. Numbers of times on base I had guys ask me what the hell I had done to get busted since I was so old (23)! I worked at the Base Personnel Office in the area relating to assignments on base and in country. I was one of those guys who wanted a copy of your orders when you processed in at the CBPO and also probably assigned you to the wrong squadron.

After Phan Rang I was sent to Laredo and six months later ended up in Wiesbaden AB Germany for the rest of my time in the AF. It was an interesting and amazing experience. I met some of the finest people in the world and a couple that weren't! All in all I'm glad I served. I made some great friends, had some fantastic experiences, and I'm proud to be an Air Force and Vietnam veteran.

Edward L. Downey

Born November 13, 1949 in Alton, Il., 62052. Hometown of Jerseyville, Il., and graduated from Jersey Community High School 1967.

Attended Southern Illinois University VTI, Carbondale, Ill., and has a 2-year Associate Degree in Automotive Technology.

Entered the Air Force 9 September 1969 and was put in Aircraft Electronic Navigation Equipment Repairman career field. Was on duty at Phan Rang AB, RVN 14 September 1970 to September 1971 and assigned to the 35th AMS Nav. Shop. Serviced and maintained F-100D & F model Super Sabres.

Released from active duty with honorable discharge 7 September 1973.

Having been raised on a grain and hog farm northwest of Jerseyville, I was astonished to learn that my pre entry evaluation test indicated I was best suited for electronics. Arriving at Phan Rang AB I was fresh out of tech. school, and I had to do my OJT and study for my 5 level testing while in country. I learned flight line maintenance for all NAV. Systems on the F-100 and I specialized in ship at the Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) mock up to repair the black boxes.

For the month of April 1971, I was awarded the certificate of Maintenance Achievement. I was also a candidate for Airman of the Quarter in July 1971. I was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious service during the period of 14 September 1970 to 31 July 1971.

During my year at Phan Rang, rocket attacks were common on a Sunday morning, but I never heard on go off.

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I was very proud and honored to be selected by the NAV Shop to be part of the AMS launch crew for Red Ball maintenance when the F-100's departed Phan Rang at the end of July 1971.

Leaving Phan Rang was an emotional experience because even then, I felt the importance of my work would never be equaled.

The final two years of my service commitment were spend at Little Rock AFB, Ar., in the Radar shop maintaining C-130 "Hercules" aircraft.

Hank Milnark

Married April 12, 1969 Cleveland Ohio. 4 children and 12 grand children. Born in 1945 and raised in Cleveland Ohio. Attended Mentor Public Schools. (I wanted to quit in my senior year but my brother talked me into finishing).

Enlisted in the USAF July 29th 1963. After Boot Camp Hank transferred immediately to Amarillo AFB, Amarillo, TXx. Graduated in late November 1963 from Tech School.

Assigned to 507th Supply Squadron at Kincheloe AFB (Closed Air Force Base, in the Upper Penninsula of Michigan 20 miles southwest of Sault Ste. Marie.) Milnark worked as an inventory clerk in the Data Section.

Kept putting in for anyplace in Europe, I wanted to go to Italy or Germany. November 1965 I received orders for SEA and didn't even know where SEA was, but found out it wasn't in Europe.

Arrived at Phan Rang in January 1966 after spending several days at Travis Air Force Base, Ca. to learn how to fire an AR-15 rifle.

I worked in Base Equipment Management Office (BEMO) as an inventory control of all major electronic equipment on all aircraft once they started to arrive in the spring of 1966. Prior to that I was on a crew that installed the water pipeline to the base. Went TDY for 60 days to Saigon to issue field gear and weapons to troops going up to Phan Rang AB.

Headed home on New Year's Eve and discharged at Travis AFB January 5 1967.

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Worked at Eaton Corporation Cleveland Ohio from Feb 1967 to June 1974 attending night school and received my Associate Degree in Computer Systems. Promoted Srs. Programmer/Analyst to Marshall, Michigan with Eaton and stayed two years and then promoted Data Processing Manager and was transferred to Eaton in Roxboro, NC.

Left Eaton in 1979, joined Allen Bradley Company in Cleveland, Ohio. Several years later I joined Evenflo Products company as Division Manager of Information Systems. I went to night college and received my Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1987.

In 1987 I returned to Eaton as Group Manager of Information Systems. My last Corporate Job was Director of Corporate Systems for Fresh Mark Foods in Canton Ohio. In 1995 I started my own consulting business and just recently retired. I own an Apron business named No-Tie Solutions with some partners and now considering selling the business. We own a patent on a No-Tie Apron.

Bob Tucker

I was born 19 Sep 47 in Hutchinson, Kansas. At 6 weeks old, we moved to the country where I was raised.

I went to the same grade school and high school my entire educational time. After graduation, I went to Hutchinson Community College majoring in Electrical Technology. I started working in the afternoon at Underground Vaults and Storage in the Carey Salt mine.

After one year of college, I decided to join the Air Force. So I went to the recruiter and took the placement test where I scored 95 percentile in Electrical and Mechanical and 90 percentile in Admin, and 80 in General. I told the recruiter I wanted Mechanical because I was tired of Electronics. He had been a crew chief and talked me into Electrical. He said when it is cold or hot outside, the crew chiefs stay outside with the aircraft and electrical/electronic guys come out, do their thing, and return to a heated/cooled shop. I enlisted in the deferred program in September 1966, arriving at Lackland the night before Thanksgiving, November 23, 1966. The day we were choosing our career field, I was so tired I fell asleep during the explanation of each so when it came time to choose, I chose Communications.

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After basic I went to Keesler where I was put in 301x0 which was Aircraft Radio Repair. I was put in the accelerated program so I was only there 7 months.

After graduation, I was assigned to the 4677th Defense Systems Evaluation Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah. The 4677th flew B-57 B,C,D and E models. The unit was unique in that everyone involved was in the same squadron. The B-57's were equipped with loads of ECM gear and we flew missions against the Air Defense Command F-102's and F-106's mainly. It was here that I met "Nails" "Bear" Nelson. He was a really cool guy and very nice. We went TDY a lot to stage closer to our missions. I went to McClellan, Kinchloe, and 6 months to Lockbourne where we had 2-3 D models rotating in/out weekly. I flew there in the back seat of a D model.

I made Buck Sgt while in the 4677th. We had a CMSgt. that I didn't get along with very well so I decided to volunteer for RVN. About two weeks later, the CMSgt got orders for RVN but fortunately, not Phan Rang. It was at Phan Rang that I made SSgt but it was through my old unit. I don't think I could have gotten a better assignment than at Phan Rang in the 35th AMS. I got out 2+ months early on my return to the state due to not having enough time for reassignment.

When I got out, I didn't want to have anything to do with the military. I raced motocross and a friend and I moved to Orlando Florida to work in a motorcycle shop. After a few months of making very little money, he and I decided one of us needed to get a real job. Since I had more marketable skills than he did (Army Helicopter Crew Chief), we decided it would be me. I got a job at a burglar alarm whose main business was protecting weapons vaults for Army Reserve Centers in Florida, Georgia, East Tennessee, and North Carolina. I traveled the state monthly testing them. Several of them tried to recruit me but I wasn't interested.

After a while I quit that job and worked on a freight dock with my buddy. Then I worked for a hearing aid manufacturer for a year. Pay wasn't great so I decided to find a new job. I was in Florida for 4.5 years. No luck in Florida so I called the owner of the alarm company and he hired me to move to Knoxville Tennessee for a 25% raise in pay. I spent 5 years there and my dad wanted me to move back to Kansas to work with him in his electronic repair shop. So I did.

While in Tennessee, one of the full timers at a Reserve Center talked me into joining his unit which was the commo section of a Heavy Engineering Battalion. I spent 18 years in the Army

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Reserve finishing my career as the Operations Sgt for a school. I retired in 1996 as an E-8 Master Sergeant (MSG) when they reorganized and closed the school.

After a couple of years of starving to death working with my dad, I got a job at Beech Aircraft repairing testing equipment for the structural test department. The boss had been doing it but it took too much of his time and he had a bunch backed up. It took me 2-3 weeks to repair all of it. He was surprised that I got it done that quickly. It was then that I learned how to do the actual testing aircraft frames. I worked there 21 years when one day the VP Engineering called all 21 of us to his conference where he informed us that we were going to be given to Wichita State University's National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR). We were all apprehensive but in the end it was a great move for us. We stayed in the same hanger for 4-5 years when we made a deal to move into the old Kansas Coliseum north of Wichita. It was nice for me because it was only 3 miles away. I worked there until 2015 which was 11 years and I retired. In 1990.

I was single and took square dance lessons. A year later I started calling and retired from that in 2012 due to sinus problems. That is how I met Marcia, my wife. I was practicing and Marcia was one that was helping me by be in a square to call too. I asked for her number but never called her. Eight years later we went to a dance together and that started our romance.

I married Marcia in 2000. We built a house in 2000 and lived in Park City until our retirements in 2015. Marcia is from a farm family being raised south of Kingsdown, Ks. We would come out here to visit and I always liked the peacefulness of the area. We bought a small house so we didn't have to bother friends every time we came out. After a while, we decided it was not feasible to have two houses so we decided to move to Bucklin, Ks which is SE of Dodge City about 28 miles. We have lived here since we retired and are more socially active here than we were in Park City.

I started doing some websites a few years ago. It was from one of them that Lee Moore contacted me and told me about the Happy Valley site. I joined it and it is one the most enjoyable things I have done. Prior to it, my contact with other veterans was only in the reserves. Now I have veterans who, even though I didn't know any of them, I can relate too. It is a great thing that has happened.

Thanks to all my brothers here who have made my life more purposeful than before.

Bob Tucker

Dennis Collins

I was born in Bakersfield, California in 1946. My family moved to Long Beach, California in 1955 where I lived and graduated from Long Beach Poly High School in 1964. After a great summer, I enlisted in the Air Force in December of 1964.

My Air Force experience included firefighter (crash rescue) training at Chanute AFB, Rantoul, IL. After tech school I was stationed at Portland Air Base in Portland, Or. Due to a base closure I was transferred to Suffolk County Air Force Base near Westhampton Beach, Long Island, New York.

Upon receiving orders for Vietnam in 1967, I made a short stop in Wichita Falls, Tx to attend the airborne firefighting school. I then proceeded to Phan Rang Air Base where I spent the majority of my time at the structural fire station across the street from the Airman's Club.

April of 1968 I returned to the states staying just a short time at Perrin AFB, Sherman Tx. I was discharged a few months early which allowed me to enroll at Oklahoma State University in September 1968.

I graduated from Oklahoma State in 1974 with a degree in Fire Protection and Safety Engineering Technology. While attending OSU I received my EMT Ambulance certification. I worked part time for the City of Stillwater as an EMT.

In 1970 I did take a year off from college to work on Johnston Island (Atoll) as a firefighter. It was one of the original sites used to conduct atomic bomb atmospheric testing.

At graduation I accepted a position with Battelle NW Laboratories at the historical Hanford Engineering Works in Richland, Washington. After 5 years with Battelle I left to attend Central Missouri State University where I received my MS in Industrial Safety.

My professional career as a Fire Protection and Safety professional lasted some 40 years. The

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majority of my career was spent in the semiconductor manufacturing industry. I retired from Intel Corporation in 2002. I took three years off work, filling my time with golf and working in the yard. In support of this activity I became a Master Gardener through the Oregon State University Extension service in 2004. I worked from 2005 to 2012 as a safety consultant. In 2016-2017 I was contracted to conduct research facility hazard evaluations for NASA in Greenbelt, MD at the Goddard Space and Flight Center. Doing this work allowed me the opportunity to see the new James Webb Space telescope up close.

We retired to the beautiful Oregon coast in Florence. Gayle and I celebrated our 40th anniversary in 2016. We have five grandchildren with our first great grandchild expected in the spring. Our daughter is a Civil Engineer in Seattle and our son manages auto body shops in California. We enjoy kayaking, playing golf, watching sports, and traveling in the US attending sporting events, seeing friends and family, and sightseeing.

Bruce Muller

I was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, March 4, 1948. Entered the Air Force July 1967 in Milwaukee, Wi. Currently reside in Athlestone, Wi.

In February of 1969, I received a phone call from my hunting partner, who just happened to work in Personnel, saying he had orders for me to leave Peterson Field, Colorado (ADC). He said I had orders to go overseas to southeast Asia for 1 year and it required me to go to school for further training. Here were my options, 1 year in Thailand or 1 year in Vietnam. I know I was lucky to be able to choose where I was going, most people don't. I was married at the time and was not making much money as a two striper E-3, so I picked Vietnam.

One year is one year no matter which way you look at it away from your family. My orders came down saying Vietnam, with schooling at Clinton County AFB, Ohio. Where the hell is that I thought. Come to find out it was out in some farm field with an air strip manned with Air Force regulars from an Indiana Air Guard base (Bakalar AFB) that had been activated because they flew C 119s.

The saddest part of the story was an airman at Peterson Field had volunteered to go to Vietnam numerous times and never got orders. When the new people in other units at Peterson Field

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started to get orders for Nam, he wrote a letter to his Senator asking why he was not getting orders when he volunteered and the new jeeps were. Come to find out, through the grapevine, there were 7 Airmen who got lost on the transfer list. I could possibly have spent my whole four years working at Peterson Field. That would have been hard to take. Damn!

In late March, seven airmen, all two strippers from Peterson Field, got our TDY orders to report to school. We left Colorado Springs, CO. on our Admin, East flight on a C-131 which I crewed and landed at Wright -Patterson AFB in the early afternoon. We were loaded on a school bus with about 10 other Airman and taken to Clinton County AFB. We were going to be the first regular Air force personnel to be trained to work on the new, but old, AC-119G which had flown many missions as a cargo and parachute plane in Korea and around the world. (I still can't figure out why anyone would want to jump out of a perfectly good airplane.)

My memory is a little foggy on the length of the school, I think three weeks. They tried to teach us as much as possible about an old broken down cargo plane that the Air Force had retrofitted to a gunship. It didn't work. We played "Hearts", drank beer in the barracks until all hours of the night, got reprimanded by the Old Man, and we still had time to go to the local establishment to fraternize with the local ladies. (No wonder we ALL did so well on the Final Exam.) About 1/2 hour after the Final Exam, the officer in charge came into the room to tell us what our scores were. He had a stern look on his face as he said, "Well gentlemen, I'm going to tell you a short story. In all my years teaching, I have never had a complete class FAIL; you are the first. But, that doesn't mean you are NOT going to Vietnam. Have a great year." And he walked out.

We loaded up our duffle bags and headed back to Wright- Patterson. It was early in the afternoon when we arrived and we had a couple of hours to kill, so we went to the USAF Museum. They had just received the XB-70, and the intakes were huge. It was a great afternoon.

It was getting time to check in for our flight back to Peterson Field. The dispatcher said there was no room on the Admin. West flight for us. I showed him our TDY orders for our return trip. He said he had other people ahead of us on stand-by and they were going 1st. That didn't sit very well with me or the other six Airmen trying to get home before we were AWOL. So I asked to use the phone and I called dispatch at Peterson and talked to SSgt. ? His name slips my mind

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at this moment. I dealt with him whenever my aircraft was gone for an ETA on arrival back to Peterson. It was our job to meet it no matter when it came home. He called and talked to the dispatcher at Wright Pat to no avail. He called me back and said that Lt Col Was the pilot and as soon as he parked the aircraft on the ramp I should go talk to him. That was easy for me because he was one of our squadron air crews. I met him at the bottom of the stairs as he got off the aircraft and explain what was going on. He walked into dispatch and told the dispatcher that his seven airmen were going home ahead of all of his stand-by passengers. He (the dispatcher) was pretty mousey after that. We grabbed our duffle bags and found a seat. There were still two personnel left standing when the plane was full. He said to the Captain, "You can sit in the jump seat in the cockpit and lieutenant if you want a ride and don't mind sitting in the restroom, I will take everyone." Needless to say, we were full, but it was great to be home and back in the routine at Peterson. I said a special thanks to the Colonel as he left the plane.

In early April I loaded my furniture and family up for our trip back to Wisconsin. The last time I was home was December of 1967. My thirty days flew by and it was time to say good bye to family and friends; I had made a commitment to my country.

I left Green Bay WI. on May 6, 1969, headed to Sea-Tac for my flight to Vietnam. I checked in and showed them my orders. I was told to go to the barracks for the night and my flight would leave in the morning. We loaded the aircraft and the main door closed-there was no turning back now.

My emotions were mixed— sad that I was leaving family and friends, but there was excitement about the new adventure before me. I also wanted to avenge the death of my best friend that I grew up with from the age of three. He had left from Peterson Field when the 5th Infantry Div. was activated in July 1968. Our base was a deployment center, there were C-141's on every possible piece of concrete. I walked into my hanger for our assignment for the day and was walking through a wall of soldiers to get outside and I walked right into my friend, Gary Waldorf.

We made some small talk and said Goodbye and I told him to keep his head down. That was the last time I saw him alive, he died September 11, 1968. RIP Brother. The trip was long and tedious landing in Alaska, Japan, and finally Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, on May 7, 1969 at 1100 hours. It was hot to say the least. We unloaded, took our duffle bags and were told the C-130

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would be landing soon to take us to Nha Trang.

What a reality check, from relative comfort to shake rattle and roll and unbearable heat and humidity. My Khakis were well drench with sweat. We landed at Nha Trang and I tried to get us a ride to where we had to check in. That was a total lost cause. We carried all our possessions to the main gate. It felt like a mile, but what wasn't sweat soaked before, was now! As we approached the gate the bus finally came. Welcome to hurry up and wait. After finally getting through incoming processing, we were taken to our transit barracks for the night and they finally fed us. The next morning someone came and got us and took us to the 17th SOS Head Quarters for orientation and assignment. The only things I remember from the orientation was that we needed to get our International Driver's license and not to stand in a group of four or more while in downtown Nha Trang.

When we got on the flight line and the Special Forces soldiers that we had supported in the jungle wanted to see the planes in the daylight that they never saw in the darkness of night. But they saw the devastation and fear that the planes put in the VC's eyes.

While I was at Nha Trang I found out I had made E-4. That was a big deal it meant more money. Initially I worked in Depot, but not real hard because I had TDY orders for Phan Rang AB. I went to town a number of times to check out the local scene. We also got invited to the Special Forces Camp which was behind the air base to party with them. It was a real eye opener for me. Six weeks crawling around in the jungle with no shelter and people trying to kill you. I was sure happy that I had chosen the Air Force over the Army. When they said, "it was party time," everyone got real drunk and it didn't matter to them what they did, because hell was always waiting for them on the next patrol. Most of them couldn't thank us enough for the close air support we provided them when the chips were down.

Finally the day came when we were told to clean out our barracks, grab our duffle bags and report to the flight line for our first flight on a AC-119G to Phan Rang AB. We loaded up the aircraft and the ground crew signaled the pilot to start the engine. The engine started in a great grey cloud of smoke and the vibration started. I thought to myself the vibration would go away when both engines were on line, WRONG, it got worse. We taxied out for take-off and lined up on the runway. The throttles went forward and the noise and vibration got deafening. My mind raced and I thought, "I am too young to die on my first flight in an AC-119". The flight

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was short and smooth if you consider your legs were numb from the vibration and noise. We landed at Phan Rang and taxied to the revetments. I saw such a bunch of happy faces, I thought, "what the hell are they so happy about"?

After we unload and were on the ramp, we all figured it out. We didn't realize that we were their replacements and they were all going home on a freedom bird. We were taken to the barracks and assigned a room in the Quonset hut across from the motor pool. This would be our new home for the next year. The next morning at 0700 hours, we were picked up in an old Metro van and taken to the flight line for the typical orientation. All the NFG (new f-cking guys) were assigned a mentor to help with our new aircraft. Some of us (4) were told we would be working days 0700 to 1900 hours and the rest would be working the opposite shift until more new people arrived.

The next two weeks were a sharp learning curve. As time went on the ANG (Air National Guard) wanted to do less and less (must have been their short-time attitude). On the 28th of May they all deserted us, for a "FREEDOM Bird" back to the good old USA.

After the barracks cleared out a bit, we could choose a new room and switch roommates. My old roomy was working nights and I was working days so our sleep patterns were not very compatible so we decided to choose new roommates. E-3 Wayne Rodgers became my roommate because we both worked days. There were only 4 crew chiefs to crew 6 airplanes. The other two were E-3 Willie Bryd & E-5 Mac (can't remember his first or last name) but I think McCann. Our Maintenance Chief was E-6 Lorenzo "Liz" Lorentz, who was on his second tour in 3 years and not happy.

We were each assigned an aircraft. My first was 52- 5907 and was a great plane to crew. It never came back from a mission falling apart. In October of 69 it went to Depot at Nha Trang and it was sent to Tan Son Nhut AB. On October 11, 1969 it crashed on take-off from engine failure, killing 6 of my brother airman all from the 17th SOS.

The news was hard for me to swallow, not the loss of the aircraft, but my brothers even if I didn't know them well.

Our normal day was up at 0600 hrs., shit, shower and maybe shave, dress and wait outside in

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front of our barracks for the night shift to pick us up. Depending on how busy we had been during the night, we either had a split crew change or a full crew change. There were many mornings when we got to the flight line that our "61" mission bird was just coming home for a second time. After their first 6-hour mission they would return home or someplace else and then would go on alert until day break. The night crew would park, debrief the crew and usually do all the fueling before day shift took over. It was our job to go through the flight records and get the proper repair people to fix the write ups from the previous flight.

Munitions had been ordered usually by night shift. We would start our preflight with the visual inspection of the underside of the aircraft, head inside do a quick visual of the cargo compartment, and up to the HELL HOLE. Every plane has a hell hole where they stick some main component that needs to be checked daily. In this case, a 12' x 8' x 2' area that housed all the radio equipment and the hydraulic accumulator. It was all under a black coat of paint and a thin sheet of aluminum exposed to 100 degree sun by 0900 hours. (We were not allowed up in this area alone.) I'm sure you believe that, don't you? One morning I was up in the hell hole and I heard someone come up in the plane. All of a sudden, I heard a voice: "Muller where the hell are you." Oh shit! Its Maintenance Officer 1Lt. (nick name) "Flashlight Bob." My mind raced, I was caught with my pants down and no place hide. I said, "I'm up here". "You know better than be up there without a spotter". I was caught, so I said. "I do have a spotter and it is you sir, I saw you coming up the ladder in the back so I thought I'd take a quick peek." (This was all a big lie) He said, "I best not ever catch you again". "Yes Sir!" Usually when I open my mouth I get in big trouble, it kind of comes naturally. He also knew that we had big maintenance problems that day, plus a propeller leaking like Niagara Falls which could mean a prop change and it was on our first aircraft to fly that evening.

Now up to the cockpit, do a quick visual, climb up on the throttle and radio console, and up through the navigator's sexton bubble and up on the top of the aircraft near the front. Walk both wings, check both engine oil tanks, walk out on the tail booms, cross over the horizontal stabilizer (which is where we find most of our ground fire hits) and back down the opposite boom to the wing. You would be surprised how fast you can run across the boom and into the gopher hole, through the airplane and outside, when you hear the first mortar or 122mm rocket goes off.

After the visual, it is time to get with another crew chief so he can stand fire watch for engine

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checks. Don a head set, call the tower for clearance for engine start, performance, Mag check and shut down. "Preflight complete." Time to see who had started a preflight on our 'Stand By' plane and then the 'Just In Case' plane. We had great chew chiefs at Phan Rang. Never afraid to help one another whatever the task at hand. If there was an engine or prop change we always could count on the specialist at 14th FMS. (Field Maintenance Sq.)

I was beginning to be known by our squadron maintenance as the "Scrounge" or Mister Illuminator. One reason was because when we were told it couldn't be had, it somehow showed up and no one said anything. Like when we were going to have a party out back in the hooch and a case of steaks just showed up unannounced. "I know nothing."

We had an electrician from 14th FMS, Sgt. Albert Capuzan. He had a bulb change on our illuminator. We were required to take all the shielding off and remove the mirrors to get to the bulb. The bulb is made of quartz crystal and ethylene glycol cooled. If the bulb broke for any reason, the crystal could not be detected by X ray in a human body, so we were required to wear heavy leather jackets and gloves. Just what you wanted to wear in 100 degree heat and 98% humidity! The first couple bulb changes were always the worst, but by the time we were doing number 4 or 5 we had gained a high level of trust. I won't tell any secrets here, but the heavy coat and glove were pretty much a thing of the past between us. We could sweat enough between us just trying to do the task. The safety equipment was always right there in case LT. (Flashlight) Bob showed up.

Sometime in late January, we had an AC-119G shot up very bad over a target. According to the aircrew, it was an overcast night and the ground forces launched a flare above the aircraft that silhouetted them against the cloud cover and all hell broke loose. When it left the target, one engine was on fire and the fuselage was riddled with holes from ground fire. The ground forces called that it was going to crash. The fire must have looked horrendous from the ground. The aircrew managed to feather the engine and get the fire under control. Declaring an inflight emergency as the gunners and illuminator operator were throwing everything out the door to lighten up the aircraft.

They landed at Tan Son Nhut AB with fire trucks chasing it down the runway. When we got to work the next morning, we heard that we had a badly damage aircraft on the ground at Tan Son Nhut, and the crew was ok. After initial assessment by our sister squadron at Ton Son Nhut it

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was determined to be repairable and parts were ordered. I was notified to pack a bag for about a week, stay at Tan Son Nhut to help repair it and bring it home. I remember working in the hot sun 16 hours a day. We had to remove and replace one engine and prop, remove and replace the nacelle covers and gear doors, plus all the wiring and hydraulic lines that were burned. We finally got it done and flew home to Phan Rang AB with Maj. Bob Allen. He was a great guy. I flew many times with him on check rides on engine changes or bore sighting our guns. On some bore sighting missions, we would load all the spent gun barrels after they were cut up and put them in ammo boxes. Then we would fly out over the China Sea and accidentally bomb sampans to dispose of the barrels from the miniguns. (Who said that?)

Sometime during my year at Phan Rang, I was asked to go on a junket to Hong Kong on a C-47. Some officers and enlisted men made a 72-hour trip. All I remember was that I spent \$400.00 and picked up somethings we needed for the squadron. Oh, I forgot I bought two suit coats and pants for \$30.00. I will leave your imagination figure out where the rest went and you are probably right. I sure didn't want to fly back to Phan Rang after partying for a few days. It was a very long trip back when I felt like shit.

There were a few other occasions worth writing about in my year at Phan Rang. We had an engine change for a runaway prop and we were just finishing up. I called Aerial Port service for the oil truck. I was told the truck was broken down. They thought it would be operational in an hour or so. They always told us all the best equipment was in Vietnam. Our oil truck was a 1957 model. It looked like an old army truck with its rag top missing and a tank on it. I called back in an hour and a half later and was told they weren't sure when it would be done and offered to bring out 50 gallons of oil, 10 gallons in ½ gallon cans and the rest in quarts and a funnel.

Seeing as this was our 61 mission that left at 1845 hrs., we needed to do something- right or wrong. We unloaded the cases in the rear door and carried them up to the cockpit, then out through the skylight, one can at a time. We'd get 5 gallons on the wing and start pouring them into the tank. It was 1130 hours when we first called for the truck and 1300 hours before we got our delivery, so the temperature was at least 100 degrees outside, and on the wing at least 125 degrees. We sat on the empty collapsed oil boxes so we didn't burn our hands or our asses on the hot black metal on the wing above the oil tank. One can at a time and it wasn't beer either. At about 1530 Hours, I heard this terrible noise coming, horn blowing, and someone

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screaming. I looked up and there was my oil truck buddy with my oil. I proceeded in throwing one of the last two quarts of oil in his direction, saying @\$\$\$#&*^%&! The tank was full and the mission got off on time and everyone was happy.

In December of 1969, the 14th SOW moved to Phan Rang AB. All that meant was more bullshit and brass. My line chief came up to me and said, "You are going to be the crew chief on the Squadron Commanders aircraft." Our new commander was Lt. Col. Richard Knie, he replaced Lt. Col. William Long. I crewed 53-7848 until I rotated on 5/7/70, 366 days to the hour, from Cam Rahn Bay AB.

My last day at Phan Rang we had a rocket attack at 1630 hours. I ran to the bunker and tripped as I entered the door. The bunker was full. It was the first time any of us had used it. We all had a good laugh about that, because eighty percent of the unit rotated home by the 15th of May 1970.

I rotated home and spent my last 11 months at K.I. Sawyer AFB in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It was my first choice of places to go upon returning to the world. I went from working on 1952 and 1953 era AC-119 Gunships to brand new B-52H.

I spent my 1st 4 months on the flight line keeping them flying. My daughter got sick while I was there and I asked my supervisor, Chief Mc Bride if I could get off early to go to the hospital. The answer was NO. I went from his best crew chief to his worst overnight. I told him 1st chance I have to go to Bomber Alert Pad I was gone.

I finished my tour there in July 6, 1971.

I returned to Green Bay and tried to go to college, but my mind was too messed up to concentrate after a divorce. I bummed among jobs for a year and a half. I met my wife of 43 years "Mary" who gave me 3 wonderful daughters and 8 grandchildren. In March of 1973, I was hired by the City of Green Bay to work in the Traffic Control Dept. I was there for 31 years and retired as Supervisor in 2004. We moved from Green Bay to northern Wisconsin where we built a house together, 10 months later we moved in. Retirement was great in 2006 we spent two years working a week each year helping rebuild on the Gulf Coast after Katrina. We are getting ready to sell our property up north and move back to Green Bay to be closer to Family.

In 2016 I met another great family, My Phan Rang Brothers.

Crew Chief, Sgt. Bruce Muller, 17th SOS, B. Flt. PRAB. 5-69/70.

David Jaynes

My name is David Jaynes I am 68 years of age. I am from extreme eastern Kentucky. A small community called Van Lear which is where Loretta Lynn the country music legend is from.

I have been married to my wife Darcia for 35 yrs. We have a son David Lee two daughters from a previous marriage Paula and Jennifer. I entered the USAF in November 1968 and went to Lackland AFB, Tx. for basic training. I was in the 3723rd training Squadron flight 1666 my Training Instructor (TI) was SSgt. Patty.

I left Lackland in late December 1968 as a 1 striper airman. Headed for the frozen north of Illinois. To be precise it was Chanute Air Force Base. I was assigned to the 3355th student Squadron. I was a 432X0 jet engine mechanic. In April 1969 I was assigned to Cannon AFB, Clovis New Mexico assigned to the 27th FMS jet engine shop working buildup on T-33 engines.

In late November I went to put in voluntary papers for Vietnam. I returned to my duty station and already had orders for Vietnam THAT QUICK.

I was assigned to Phan Rang AB and arrived December 1969. My unit of assignment was the 35th FMS jet engine buildup. Working mainly on J-57 engines for the F-100 Aircraft. I received orders in October 1970 when they were doing a drawdown of aircraft. I was sent to England AFB, Alexandria, Louisiana. I was there for about a year then did a short reenlistment.

Then on to my last assignment to Langley AFB, Hampton, Virginia working flightline on the C-130 Hercules T-56 engines. I did that for three years and then was discharged in July 1974.

I dedicate this bio to my great friend and brother veteran **Roger Burchett** who sadly lost his

battle to cancer. RIP MY BROTHER. Sgt. David Jaynes.

John DeCillo

I was born at a very young age and forced to live with my parents in Chicago. Life was hard for me then. I was very small, and not able to reach a lot of things.

As I grew, my ability to get into the cupboards blossomed.

My Father would often frown, and comment on how much he disliked the fact that I would make 16 layer Dagwood sandwiches which would sometimes contain Bosco Chocolate syrup.

I believe that was one of the reasons that he put me into a Catholic school run by SS nuns.

I was force fed asparagus for my transgressions.

Did I mention that I was also sentenced to play the Accordion for many years?

Life wasn't all that bad though. We got to eat spaghetti twice a week. We even went down to White Castle for Sliders on occasion.

By the time I was ready to graduate grade school, I thought it would be a really great thing to become a priest.

At the latest possible date, I decided that this was not the path I should follow and teenage girls were looking better and better to me all the time.

Once again, my father took charge of the situation and enrolled me in a Catholic High school, run by SS Christian brothers. The Brothers informed me that I should forget everything taught me by the SS nuns and that they would rule my miserable life for the next 4 years.

My teen years were filled with big hair, leather jackets, and pointy shoes. Chasing girls, not paying much attention in school, and being in a band (accordion?) pretty well set the pace for my future.

I enlisted in the United States Air Force at age 19. They picked out a career choice for me. They said that I was qualified to be an aircraft mechanic and several other worthy occupations.

The recruiter casually asked if I had any fear of guns or loud noises. When I replied no, I was informed that although I was qualified in several fields, The Air Force really needed weapons technicians.

Six months later I was in Vietnam.

Needless to say, they didn't need anyone to load bombs on the wings of 707's upon my return to "The States".

As usual, dad bailed me out again. He got me hired on at the railroad.

I was older but not really any more mature when I returned.

My time in the service is one of the things in my life that I can truly say I am proud of.

I suspect though, that the time spent away from the normal maturing process was a contributing factor in some of the turns that my life took in its mid years.

I am very grateful for the understanding, love and forgiveness of all the people who have shared their lives with me.

I have three beautiful daughters, whose mothers have borne most of the responsibility of raising them. They have done a terrific job of it.

These days, I am older, a bit wiser and a lot wider.

I retired in 2007.

I plan to spend more time with my family and getting in a lot more days fishing!

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(Note to the gentle reader. *SS Nun is described as follows: “Strict, menacing quick with a ruler on the hands. Black habits (uniforms) like SS storm troopers.”***)**

Sam Lewis

I joined the USAF after spending the summer after High School in September 1964 .I was assigned to the Air Defense Command On small radar sites in Nevada and North Carolina until being sent to larger bases TDY to help fill the gap from Air Police being sent to Nam until I got my orders to go to Phan Rang in March 1967. I spent the entire year at Happy Valley on “B” Flight Security with 35th SPS manning towers, bunkers, and SAT Teams. I left Phan Rang at the end of March 1968 and after a short stint at Fairchild AFB, Wa., I was separated from the USAF on 5 July 1968.

Richard Oelkers

I served at Phan Rang Air Base from late April 1968 to early May 1969. I was part of the Colorado ANG (120th TFS, F-100s) deployment. I joined the COANG’s 140th Tac Fighter Wing on 10 Sep 1965, and was immediately put on active duty prior to USAF basic training. As background, in 1965, the 140th was one of several ANG fighter units authorized by the National Guard Bureau and USAF to exceed 100% manning. This resulted in a quick buildup of over 100 additional personnel in the 140th. The program was code named “Beef Broth”, which was stamped in bold letters on our personnel folders. Our pre-active duty consisted of half days of classroom instruction and drills, and half days working in our assigned AFSCs under the supervision of skilled NCOs. My AFSC was 647X0, Material Facilities Specialist.

The 140th buildup came at just the right time for me and many other guys who were facing the draft, and who did not want to go into the Army. I had taken my draft physical in June 1965. I passed the physical exam and written test, and was classified “1A”, meaning I was immediately eligible for the draft. This brought my personal situation into sharp focus. I began to explore my options to avoid the draft. I looked at the active Army, USAF, and the Naval Air Reserve. Eventually, I had decided to join the Naval Air Reserve in Olathe, KS, but had not yet taken the oath. Then, just at that time, I received a postcard in the mail from the Colorado Air National Guard. They were looking for people—which I later learned was due to Beef Broth. Apparently,

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they had obtained a list of potential draftees from my local draft board (Local Board #13, Englewood, CO). I didn't even know what the Air National Guard was. I asked my Dad about it; he was an Army Air Forces veteran of WW II, and an Air Force civilian employee at Lowry AFB. He informed me that the Colo ANG was an Air Force reserve type of organization out at Buckley Field, which was located seven miles east of Lowry AFB. I decided to go talk to them. They obtained my physical and ASVAB test scores from the Denver MEPS. They told me that based on my test scores, I qualified for any position in the COANG, however, most of their openings had been already been filled. I was offered Cook, Baker, Air Police, or Supply Material Facilities Specialist. I picked Supply.

Come November 1965 it was time for me to leave Denver, and travel to San Antonio, TX for basic training. This was to be my first ride in an aircraft, but unlike other guys who traveled by commercial air, I and one other guy were transported to our destination in a C-47. And, shockingly, as we boarded the aircraft, they issued us parachutes! Thinking back on this, I suspect the crew was just having some fun at our expense.

We landed at Kelly AFB, where the TIs (Training Instructors) were waiting for us. I was assigned to the 3710 BMTS, which was an all-ANG basic training squadron. Early in our training, our right guide screwed up, and I was picked to replace him, possibly because I had already learned how to march while back at Buckley ANGB. This was a stressful assignment, but I did my best, and held the position for the rest of our time there. My most memorable experience from basic training was three days of KP at Willford Hall Hospital! We must have been a very bad flight. We spent just four weeks at Lackland and were transferred to our tech school locations early due to a meningitis outbreak (or possibly fear of one?). We completed the final two weeks of Basic at our tech school locations. Even though we didn't actually complete basic at Lackland, the TIs allowed us the traditional day of liberty in San Antonio, which I as I recall included plenty of alcohol. I also remember the night before we left as an all-nighter of poker games. A busload of us traveled from Lackland to Amarillo AFB. It was an all-day road trip. This was in December and as we approached the base, the surrounding terrain appeared very flat, bleak, and windblown, with no trees—apparently the perfect place for an Air Force base! We actually experienced a few “mud storms” while there, where a light rain was mixed with flying dust!

Tech school was something of a shock, as I figured we had been through the strict discipline phase at Lackland and they would treat us as adult students while in tech school. But, no, not

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so. To me, it seemed more like Stalag 17, locked up in the barracks when not marching to and from classes. We did however have weekends free, unless we had dorm guard duty. I remember the Airman’s Club served Coors beer! I tried my best in the Material Facilities Course, received my 3-level, and was the honor graduate. This came as a surprise to me, as several of the other ANG students were college graduates, and I had only completed high school.

In February 1966 I returned to Buckley ANGB as a drill status guardsman and to my civilian job working in a supermarket. In May 1966, I was offered a full-time position in the ANG as an Air Technician employee. I was assigned to the Base Equipment Management Office (BEMO) and worked in Tool Issue and Individual Equipment. I did a lot of work with IBM cards, which were used to compile the various tool lists for each AFSC. I achieved my 5-level as soon as I could and was promoted to A2C, and A1C in minimum time. During my time as an AIC (3 stripes), the title of the rank was changed to “Sgt”, and we were supposedly given NCO status, however, we were not allowed to use the NCO clubs.

On 26 Jan 1968 something big happened. The 140th TFW and several other ANG units throughout the nation were recalled to active duty. Ostensibly, this was in response to the North Korean capture of the USS Pueblo just three days prior. However, many of those recalled ANG units were subsequently deployed to South Vietnam. My unit was one of those. We deployed in early May 1968 to Phan Rang AB. In fact, the 120th Tactical Fighter Sq. was the first ANG fighter unit deployed to a war zone since WW II. I and nine others were on the advance detachment and arrived a few days earlier, in late April. As I recall, my primary duty after the arrival of the main contingent was to go all around the base collecting the weapons that had been issued to the cargo couriers.

Upon arrival at Phan Rang, I and most of the other Supply personnel were assigned to the 35th Supply Sq. After a short time working in the main Supply warehouse and the open storage area, I was reassigned to the Automotive Supply Point, located adjacent to the Vehicle Maintenance Shop. Vehicle Maintenance was in a sad state of affairs. They appeared to be short-handed, with a huge backlog of vehicles that were out of commission for either parts or maintenance. Automotive Supply was a storage and issue point, but we didn’t have a computer terminal, so most of our parts were issued “Post-Post”, meaning those transactions had to be physically transported once a day to Base Supply to be entered into the system after the fact.

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We also didn't have any research capability—that was done back at the main Base Supply location. Looking back on this now, I can see the flaws in the system, which certainly must have contributed to the poor support that Vehicle Maintenance received.

As my time at Phan Rang, was nearing an end, I, like everyone else, was keeping a short-timer calendar. A commercial jet had been ordered for our trip home to Buckley ANGB, and I was looking forward to a ride home on that big bird equipped with stewardesses! Unfortunately though, I was one of a few who had been selected to be cargo couriers. My freedom bird was a C-141 which left a day after the Saturn World Airways DC-8. My seating position on the C-141 was near the front of the cargo bay. There was a LOX cart positioned directly in front of me which took up most of my foot space. It was a very uncomfortable umpteen hours flying home across the Pacific. We landed in several spots to refuel and change crews. The last en-route stop was Eielson AFB, near Fairbanks, AK. I'll never forget how cold it was there. It was overcast and everything was coated in frost and ice.

We next landed at Buckley ANGB, near Denver, CO. I recall how good it felt to be on the ground, and taxiing to the ramp. When we stepped out of the C-141, we were met by a greeting party of Colonels and Generals! There were TV cameras and news reporters. I had a microphone stuck in my face. Yikes, I was not expecting anything like this! Eventually, we were herded into the hangar where our families were waiting. Someone handed me a can of Coors beer. It felt good to be home, but it would take a while to relax. I took six weeks off before returning to my full-time job with the COANG.

As a result of our recall to active duty and deployment to a war zone, by law, our military obligations were eliminated. I never again saw most of my fellow COANG members who had served with me at Phan Rang. They processed out and returned to their civilian lives. I, too, seriously considered leaving the military, but after exploring the possibilities, decided to remain with the COANG. I was back to working in Tool Issue and Individual Equipment. Later in 1969 I was promoted to SSgt. Then, in 1970, at age 25, I was promoted to TSgt. At this point I was interested in trying other jobs in Base Supply, so, in 1971 I transferred into Receiving, then a year later went to Stock Control, where I mostly managed the munitions account. Then, after a year or so there, I went back to BEMO where I worked in Equipment Management, interfacing with equipment custodians in various shops around the base. Early in 1972 I was encouraged by one of my former supervisors to apply to the ANG NCO academy. I attended that school,

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located in Knoxville, TN, in the fall of 1972. Again, I surprised myself as I was one of the distinguished graduates of the course. It was at this point in my career that I decided I wanted to become a commissioned officer. In September 1973, at age 28, I enrolled at Community College of Denver, and started working toward an associate’s degree, which I received in 1977. Later, I eventually received a Bachelor of Science degree from Regis College in Denver.

In the summer of 1975, I was given the opportunity to apply for a commissioned offer position in Base Supply. I took the AFOQT and achieved a good score. I was selected for the position and attended the ANG Academy of Military Science—Officer, which was the ANG equivalent of USAF OTS. I was a distinguished graduate of this course and commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant—this per ANG rules (at the time) which allowed candidates with certain age and experience levels in the career fields to which they were being commissioned, to be commissioned at higher grades.

My first officer position was as a Supply Officer in the Mobility Support flight. After a year or so there, I was transferred back to the (renamed) Equipment Management Office. As the EMO Officer, I was now in the somewhat awkward position of supervising the guy who, up until recently, had been my NCOIC! But, that’s not too unusual in the ANG. In early 1978, my position at EMO was eliminated and I was offered another position back at Base Supply. Also in 1978, I was promoted to Captain, and later selected for the Budget Officer position at Buckley. This put me in a new career field, and I next attended the USAF Budget Officer course at Sheppard AFB, TX. I was the honor graduate of this course.

My responsibilities as the Budget Officer were to prepare annual budgets, submit them to higher headquarters, and to monitor the execution (spending) of those programs. This entailed coordination with cost center managers, and commanders across the base (and the entire COANG), as well as tenant units. In 1982 I was promoted to Major and later, that same year, after the Base Comptroller vacated his position, I was promoted into it. As Comptroller I was responsible for all financial activities of the COANG. This included Budget, Accounting & Finance, Military Pay, Civilian Pay, and Data Automation.

In late 1984 I noticed a job opening in the Oregon ANG. The ANG and USAF had decided to establish an Air Defense Fighter (ADF) training unit using the F-4 aircraft. They selected Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls for the new mission—due mainly to the excellent and expansive military training air space the base controlled. The job I applied for was Chief of Supply. I was selected

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for the position and transferred to Klamath Falls with my family in early 1985. My wife and I were eager to leave the congested Denver area for a small city environment to raise our family. My new unit was the 114th Tactical Fighter Training Sq. There was as yet other no wing or group organization established; that would come later. This was a challenging and rewarding assignment. As I later learned, the ANG had not established a new Base Supply organization since 1956. We were starting from scratch with no one still around who had done it before. We had a lot of people to hire and train. It was steep hill to climb, but we managed to get the new Supply account up and running.

In the summer of 1986 I was selected as the first Deputy Commander for Resources at Kingsley Field, ORANG. In my new position, I managed Supply, Comptroller, Transportation, and Logistics Plans activities. And, here again, we had to stand up a new Base Accounting and Finance operation—something which (again) had not been done in the ANG since 1956. My previous Comptroller experience helped with this tasking. I was promoted to Lt. Col. in 1988, and I served as the DCR until 1993, when, as the result of a revised Base organizational structure in the ANG, the DCR position was eliminated. The new organizational structure provided for a Base Executive Officer, which became my new job. Here, I worked directly for the Commander as his executive assistant. In early 1995 a new commander was appointed, and he wanted to move some people around. I went to the Comptroller position for two years.

Then in late 1996, the ANG finally decided to make Kingsley Field look just like all other ANG flying units. We were given group status designation, becoming the 173rd Fighter Group, with the 114th Fighter Sq, and all the various support organizations attached. Shortly thereafter, all ANG flying groups were upgraded to Wing status, and we became the 173rd Fighter Wing. The Support Group Commander position opened up and I was selected to fill it. I spent the final four years of my career as the 173rd Support Group Commander. Here, I was responsible for Civil Engineering, Security Forces, Communications, Personnel, Services, and Environmental Management activities. Our final achievement was getting a fully operational Military Personnel Flight (Consolidated Base Personnel Office) established. I was promoted to the grade of Colonel in June of 1998. I retired in December 2000.

Late in the summer of 2000, shortly before I retired, I had the pride and pleasure of administering the oath of enlistment to my daughter, Kristen. She had decided to join the Oregon ANG. Later, she became an AFROTC cadet at Oregon State. Today, she is a Major in the

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Air Force and flies the B-1B bomber. We are a three-generation Air Force family!

I was very fortunate to have a 35 year military career, mostly in the ANG. My Vietnam service taught me that I could make myself do something even if I didn't like it and didn't want to do it. My NCO academy experience really changed my attitude and put me on a path to achieve higher goals. I thank all my supervisors and commanders, who encouraged me and put their faith in me. I also thank all those great people who worked with me and for me to achieve shared goals. Finally, and most importantly, I thank my wife, Pat, and our entire family who supported me throughout my career. I could not have done it without all of them!

Richard G. Oelkers, Colonel, USAF/ANG (Ret)

Steve Curry

I joined the Air Force September 1968 after what seemed like the longest bus ride in the world. I arrived at Lackland and the fun started.

After Lackland I went to Sheppard for the first Tech school, Medical Fundamentals then to Brooks for 907X0 Preventive Medicine school I arrived at my first base Perrin AFB Tx., May of 1969 and six months later I received 37 days notice to report to Phan Rang. I arrived in country December 1969. I was assigned to the USAF Dispensary Aerospace Medicine Military Public Health Section. Responsible for testing drinking water, swimming pools and beaches, conduction the communicable disease program including the VD program. I also collected insects of medical importance. Managed the industrial hygiene occupational health program and conducted occupational physicals on all local nationals that worked on base. This is where I met my wife of 47 years.

From there I went to McClellan AFB Ca., reporting in January 1971 but by February 1971 I had orders to return to Vietnam and arrived in Tan Son Nhut June 1971. After Saigon I went to Charleston AFB, S.C., Kadena AFB, Okinawa, Eglin AFB, Fla., Howard AFB, Canal Zone and back to Eglin AFB, Fla.

I retired at Eglin in 1989 and went to work for the O&M range contractor as the Radiation Safety Officer. In 2000 I was offered a civil service position in the same office I retired from and spent

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the last 15 years as the Installation Radiation Safety Officer at Eglin AFB. I retired again in 2015 and now spend my time in my wood shop and fishing when I'm not playing with grand kids.

Ronald Dreher

Biography of Ronald Dreher, SSGT. 35th TAC Supply Squadron, NORS at Phan Rang AB April, 1968-April, 1969

Born April 29, 1941 in Denver, Colorado. Grew up in east Denver. I Went to St. James Elementary School then onto Regis High School graduating June, 1959.

College years were two short periods at different small colleges then starting at University of Denver, September 1961. I finished course work there in December, 1964. Earlier in the Fall I was notified by the draft board. After considering available options I joined the Colorado Air National Guard prior to finishing the University of Denver.

I went to Lakeland AFB for Basic Training in mid-April, 1965. Then onto Amarillo AFB, Tx., for Tech School in basics of Supply. Training was completed August, 1965.

Came back to Denver and gained employment with Denver's Public Television Station and the Denver Public Schools that same month. Also became a part of the Colorado Air National Guard 140th TAC and locally the 120th TFS at Buckley Air National Guard Base in Aurora, CO.

I eventually met my first wife and got married in April of 1967. I was still employed with KRMA-TV and the Denver Public Schools. In January of 1968, exact date can't recall, I was at work when my mother called about 1:30 PM saying that I had been activated and to report to Buckley by 4:30 PM. I was surprised by that but told my boss that I had to go reporting to Buckley. We were now on active duty and we never were told what was going on but just getting ready. In the evenings I would go home, eat a supper and go down to the TV station to work until they closed about 11 PM.

About 72 hours before we were actually deployed we were told who was going to Vietnam. I told them my wife, Judy, was expecting and the child was to be born in early June, 1968. They

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told me that all rules have been waved and I was going to be deployed. So on April 30th I went out to Buckley with my wife at 7:30 AM. We said our goodbyes and left for Hickam AFB at 10:30 AM. We hop scotched across the Pacific with a squadron of F-100s and 4 C-141 Star Lifters.

Next stop then was Guam with an overnight at the Naval Air Station leaving early in the morning. We followed the B-52s as they headed west. We landed about mid-afternoon at Phan Rang AB and went to the RMK chow hall to be fitted up with jungle fatigues, boots, assignment, stripes and name to be stitched on our fatigues. Next evening I was to report to Base Supply NORS.

The year goes by, and in January I get promoted to Staff Sergeant. That was a surprise out of the blue. That same month there was a trip to Hawaii for R&R which was delayed due to a typhoon so we were diverted to Japan. Landed, snowing in mid-January, it was dark and all we were wearing were our 1505s. They then had to find a crew for the Pan Am flight and finally got one by 8:30 pm local. I get on board and the pilot says we'll get us to Honolulu as fast as he can, going up to the jet stream. The plane gets airborne and the pilot takes it vertical straight up. We arrive in Honolulu at 5:30 am for our short week, but at least got there. I also found out one of my longest best friends was on a United flight from LA. that crashed and blew up somewhere out west. That really put a bumner on things.

April of 1969 we go home taking a hop skipping across the Pacific from Phan Rang to Clark to Anderson to Wake Is. to Honolulu to Travis and then finally to Buckley. That was longest flight I ever was on. Went back to work at the PBS station. This begins a period of job changes from the TV station to a commercial art studio to a manufacturing firm to a sporting goods chain in Denver. I eventually became the advertising manager of that chain.

August of 1988 the chain merges with another, and we now work for the competitor. The former owner of the chain I originally worked for said are you still thinking of doing that teacher thing? I said considering the way things are here I just might. He said go for it.

I did and become certified to teach art K-12. That all leads me to my last career, art teacher in Littleton Public Schools in the alternative high school. Well not just art teaching but math, social studies. I also did the yearbook, took kids with a fellow teacher on field trips to learn Colorado and their local cities' history so they could take 4th graders on their own field trips and also gold panning in the river. Yes, there still is gold in Colorado's mountains and streams, actually a lot

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still there.

I retired from teaching in 2005, because I kept getting pneumonia, and I paint, draw, do printmaking and all in my own studio I built in our backyard. Now into making our own Christmas cards. Will find out how many when the Mrs. Tells me. I hate to ask, she'll say 150. I am doing multiple blocks and colors which I think come to 6 or 7. That is a lot. Each color is a run through the press after hand inking each. It lots of work.

Lou Ruggiero

Lou was born and raised in Bronx New York. He attended a St Anthony School, a Catholic Grammar School where the sisters taught him right from wrong. He then attended Evander Childs High School also in the Bronx. Upon graduation in May 1966 he enlisted in the US Air Force.

He received Basic training was at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio Texas. Upon graduating he was assigned to the 2852 Air Base Group, McClellan AFB, Sacramento, California. Lou worked in Base Supply until May 1968 and then received orders for Vietnam.

He arrived at Phan Rang RVN in June 1968 and was assigned to the 35Th Supply Sq. Working at Base supply on the night shift until May 1969 when he received word that his father was ill and he needed to return home.

Since his tour was almost over he wasn't required to return to Phan Rang. He reported to Stewart AFB , Newburg NY., where he was assigned to the 4603rd Air Base Group until December 1969 when he received an early out discharge as the base was closing and he did not have enough time left to be re-assigned.

After the Air Force Lou worked for General Electric until 1972 when he started his career at Consolidated Edison in NY.

Starting as a B Mechanic Lou steadily rose from Mechanic A, Supervisor, Field Engineering Rep. and finally a Project Manager.

Lou married his wife Annette in June 1973. They have two children Lori and TJ.

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On 9/11, Lou was in the Emergency Control Center when the Twin towers were hit. Manpower was needed and he volunteered for work at Ground Zero, where he spent 3 weeks working 16 hours per day, 7 days per week. He said it was an experience he would never forget but it was very rewarding helping people get their lives back together after such a horrific event.

Lou Retired in 2005 at the age of 57 after 33 years. He loved the work however he felt it was time to go as his Dad passed away at that age and never had the chance to enjoy his life. Lou now splits his time between his home in Mahopac, NY and a second home at the Jersey Shore.

Kirk Minert

I was born in Iowa and grew up in Ohio where I graduated in 1966. I had these patriotic ideas and urges that had been passed down from previous generations.

I enlisted in the Air Force, 22 November 1966 and I took my basic training at Lackland AFB, Tx. This was followed by jet engine technical school which was held at Amarillo AFB, Tx., May 1967.

My first duty station was Norton AFB, Ca in November 67 to work on the new C-141A Starlifter. April 1968 was very interesting because there were TDY orders for Luke AFB, AZ for F-100 FTD.

On 22 May 1968, Phan Rang AB, I was at the 35th FMS engine shop and field repair team supporting the B-57 and F-100 aircraft. During my stay in "Happy Valley" I was chosen to become a Security Police augmentee and experience the finer joys of 35th Transportation heavy maintenance section.

Paul Minert is my identical twin brother who came to Phan Rang AB a little bit later than I did. He worked in automotive supply and I extended two months so we could PCS together. Unfortunately he was thrown from a truck during a motor attack and he was medevaced out. Consequently I was stuck with the extension.

On 15 June 1969 I was on the Freedom Bird and headed for Jolly old England. My assignment was with the 513th CAMS at RAF Mildenhall. RAF "Moldehole" (base nick name) had an interesting mission because we had the Queen Bee engine for the C-130 aircraft that were in

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Europe. We also supported The EC-135H (SILK PURSE) USAFE flying command post during the Cold War. After spending so much time away from my country it was time to come home.

My next stop was to the return to Norton AFB, Ca. on 3 October 1975 back to the land of the C-141 & T-39 with the 63rd FMS.

Nellis AFB, Nv. was my last and most interesting assignment. On 29 May 1979 I was assigned to the 57th AGS which consisted of several aircraft maintenance units (AMU), I supported the A-10 aircraft. The hi-light was 18 April 1989 when I was selected as the NCOIC of Red Flag Maintenance Branch for the 4440th TFTG. It was our organization that trained the Air Forces on combined strike tactics for the Gulf War. I retired 17 Apr 90.

Dana Anthony

Dana has been building custom, speculative and multifamily homes, as well as commercial projects in the Lake Wylie / York County, SC and Charlotte, NC metro area since 1978.

After a tour of duty in Vietnam and Honorable discharge from the United States Air Force he lived in Orlando, Florida where he attended and graduated from the University of Central Florida with a BSBA in Marketing.

Dana and his family made a corporate move to the Charlotte area in 1976. In mid 1977, with interest rates exceeding twenty percent. he left the security of a Fortune 500 company to follow a dream and become a home builder. Following a degree in real estate at Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, North Carolina and completing the required courses for the Graduate Builders Institute designation at NC State University helped give Dana a strong foundation of knowledge to properly manage and oversee the intricacies of a home building company.

An active member in the building industry and his local community, Dana is a past President of the Home Builders Association of York County, SC, past District Vice President of the Home Builders Association of South Carolina, past President of the Lake Wylie, SC Chamber of Commerce, past Commodore of the River Hills Yacht Club, as well as serving three years as an EMT on a local rescue squad. As a licensed real estate broker in both North and South Carolina,

Dana also operated Dana Anthony Realty in Lake Wylie until selling the business to another firm.

Lanny Atherton

I attended Murray State University, Ky., on a Track Scholarship. December 1968 I joined the Air Force and took basic training at Lackland AFB, Tx., and went to Technical school at Shepherd AFB, Tx.

After technical school I was assigned to Shaw AFB, S.C. working on C-47s.

Arrived at Phan Rang AB in December 1970 and was there for a year, leaving in 1971. I crewed a KC-123K nicknamed "Patches" for several months plus C-123 aircraft number 624 a Bookie Bird. My year at Phan Rang was mainly night shift maintenance. I was run up and taxi qualified for technical observance.

I was promoted to SSGT before rotation back home to Keesler AFB, Ms., for separation in 1972.

Doug's Comments

All of these submissions exhibit a different style and didn't follow any rule book, but they all tell the story of a Vietnam veteran. I would like to have another issue soon devoted entirely to their stories. We have well over a thousand members just on Facebook and this newsletter reaches another 600 veterans and I'm sure a lot of them were reluctant to tell their stories, but maybe once they see that others have opened up they might be willing to tell theirs. Also welcomed would be those that have previously submitted a profile to expand on their original submission.

Recently I received a letter from a sibling of a Vietnam veteran that said "As we approach the holiday season, I find myself thinking of my late father, Col. William W. Gray. On a whim I Googled his name and low and behold your (Phan Rang Newsletter 81) showed up." The article was from the 7th AF News titled "PACAF Win Daedalian Award...General Nazarro Lauds 7AF." Lt. Col. William W. Gray had just recently taken the safety post in Seventh Air Force and he said that the people who maintain and fly the aircraft and do the 'nuts and bolts' work in the

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field are the ones who earned the award. She continued to write: “It brought a smile to see a part of my father I never knew. I was born in 1970 and he retired after his 30 years in 1977. I often would hear from people about his time in the Air Force truly shaped him into the man he was. Seeing his comments about the safety of flights, missions, etc. honestly makes me think of him teaching me how to drive. He used the same principles! It made me smile of the memories (fights between a know-it-all teenager and the colonel at the time) that were really so many life lessons. I don’t know when you originally posted this, but I just wanted to say thank you! He lived to be 91 and while I miss him terribly I do take comfort in knowing he did make a positive impact in our world.”

I am very pleased to report that our stories will live on. They are building a new veterans history building at the University of South Florida in Tampa and my newsletters and research will be archived there. More on that later.