

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 141

“Stories worth telling”

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Stereotype of Fighter Pilot Incorrect, AF Officers Say

(Source: Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, May 13, 1970)

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — “The American public tends to stereotype Air Force fighter pilots as young, handsome, dashing, bachelors who are irresistible to the ladies,” explained Col. Walter T. Galligan, commander of the F-100 Super Sabre 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, when asked if he thought fighter pilots were different than the public’s image.

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

from other pilots is a knowledge that, above all else, they are fighter pilots."

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

The 35th TFW is indeed a fighter pilots' organization. In addition to being one of the few remaining Air Force wings which flies the F-100, its pilots are also among the remaining few who fly alone, without copilot or navigator.

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

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

I was in Arlington Cemetery on Memorial Day morning. I was thanked by at least 10 people for what we "tried to do for their country". John Ryan on Facebook.

New, Larger Dental Clinic Opens with Increased Staff

(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, July 3, 1969)

Brief ceremonies were held recently at Phan Rang AB to mark the opening of the new dental clinic facility.

The base dental clinic was moved from temporary quarters in the 35th USAF Dispensary to an adjacent, newly constructed building. This larger structure will enable the dental staff to more efficiently meet the increasing dental needs of Phan Rang Personnel.

Co. Frank L. Gailer Jr., 35th TFW commander, cut the ribbon at the grand opening ceremony and

was also the first official patient at the new facility.

Under construction since the middle of March, the clinic has eight dental treatment rooms, a laboratory, administrative offices, waiting room and conference room.

Also moving in the building were the Military Public Health and Medical Materiel offices. The military Public Health office monitors working areas for health hazards and checks Vietnamese employees to make sure they comply with physical examination requirements and have current health cards.

The Medical Materiel office stores and distributes all medical supplies for the dispensary and other organizations on base.

"The clinic will provide complete dental services," stated Lt. Col. James D. Browning, dental officer in charge of the clinic. "Our present staff of four dental officers and fourteen technicians will be increased to keep up with our enlarged dental operation."

"Not only will the dental clinic serve the personnel of Phan Rang Air Base," added the doctor. "But dental treatment will also be made available to the MAC-V (Military Assistance Command-Vietnam) team in Phan Rang City and Army personnel who are stationed at camps as far away as Phan Thiet."

Dental treatment is not limited to the military. About three days a week, the clinic conducts DENCAP (Dental Civic Actions Program) in the local Phan Rang area. On a rotating basis, a team of one dental officer and at least two technicians visit the communities of Thap Cham, Long Tre Province and Phan Rang City to give free dental aid.

"Had a first today. I was checking out at Hobby Lobby and a nice looking young man asked me if I had served in Vietnam (I was wearing a 'Nam hat and stuff). I said yes and he shook my hand vigorously. He went on to explain he and his family was from Saigon. They very much thanked us for our service." Doyce Bailey on Facebook

Munitions Men Put Sting in Wing

(Fan Fare, The Phan Rang Weekly (Later known as the Happy Valley Weekly), August 2, 1967)

Millions of pounds of bomb, rockets and cannon shells are expended by the tactical fighters and bombers of this base each week, and the 435th Munitions Maintenance Squadron handles every single pound of them.

"Committed to meet the daily frags," said CMSgt. Paul N. Thiebaud, 43, from Pittsburgh, Pa., the squadron's maintenance superintendent. "That's our daily existence and they haven't missed one yet."

He was referring to the planned mission (frags) of the F-100 Super Sabres and B-57 bombers which are the business end of the 35th TFW.

Each aircraft is assigned a specific configuration of bombs, rockets, and shells for every combat missions, and the munitions men supply the specific ordinance required for each mission many hours before the aircraft are scheduled to take off.

Commanded by Lt. Col Martinjak, 50, the squadron has close to 200 enlisted men, and a handful of officers, and more than 70 Vietnamese workers.

They assemble bombs and rockets, store vast amounts of munitions in the squadron bomb storage area, and deliver all ordnance to the flightline.

"You don't see any fat ones (Munitions specialist)," Sergeant Thiebaud commented. "They really get in shape here...They stay in shape too."

"The munitions maintenance and storage area is in the hands of the hardest workers I've seen in a long, long while," said their boss CMSgt. John F. Patterson, 46, from Philadelphia, Pa.

Eleven crews of enlisted men work in the area, and each crew is determined to outdo all the other crews in the speed and efficiency with which it builds up and handles the ordnance.

Recently the crew of A1C Earl Bootier, a former squadron airman of the month, was selected as

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the 435th MMS Munitions Maintenance Crew of the Month. This crew includes A1C Steven V. Micheleon (Spelling may be incorrect as the copy was very hard to read), A2C John Asher, A2C George R. Howell, A2C Steven J. Stubita, A2C Robert G. Wells, A2C Walter Wisner, and A3C Richard A. Conner.

Safety briefings and inspections are held daily, said Sergeant Thiebaud.

"I took my dog to be groomed wearing my Air Force parka. A man asked me if I served in Vietnam. I responded that I did. He paid for my dog grooming with a hand shake and a welcome home." Thom Myers on Facebook.

Top E.M. Tours Base

(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, November 7, 1968)

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Paul W. Airey visited Phan Rang Sunday as a member of the official staff of General John P. McConnell, Air Force Chief of Staff.

Arriving by helicopter, he was greeted by base senior NCOs and toured the 315th SOWg operations, maintenance and barracks areas.

Speaking to assembled enlisted men of all ranks in the NCO Open Mess, Sergeant Airey said that this year had been the best for enlisted promotions since the Korean War. While promotions in the coming year, 1969, will not be quite as numerous, he said, it will still be a good year and a tremendous improvement over the lean years of the mid-fifties through the early sixties.

He also discussed "base of choice" rotation to the U.S., saying that the majority of the returnees ask for California, Texas, and Florida - - which means that quite a number of men are disappointed when they receive their notification of assignment.

Phan Rang NCOs escorting Sergeant Airey were CMSgt. John P. Revell, Jr., CMSgt. Robert L. Zimmerman, SMSgt. Harold M. Sterling, and MSgt. Lucius L. Lewis.

"I was in the Airman's Club one night (the one night I was off each week) talking with an Army guy who was stationed at a small outpost that got shelled a lot. Naturally we started getting hit. Even inside the club I could tell it was incoming just from the direction of the explosions. I told him we were getting hit and we should sit on the floor. The siren started going off and I told him I had to go get my weapon and gear because I was an Augmentee. Before I left he said; "they told me this was a safe area!". I said; "Yeah, it used to be at one time", and took off. Didn't get a chance to go back and see how he took it." David Knighton on Facebook

A. F. Chief Decorates Six

(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, November 7, 1968)

Air Force Chief of Staff General John P. McConnell decorated six Phan Rang Air Base aircrewmembers in flightline ceremonies during his recent visit here.

Maj. **Elmer L. Slavey**, an F-100 Supersabre pilot with the 352nd TFS was presented the Silver Star for his actions as an F-100 forward air controller over North Vietnam on March 20, 1968.

The citation accompanying the award read "Major Slavey located and directed the destruction of a well camouflaged surface-to-air missile in a heavily defended area. (and then)...directed a devastating attack on a large truck convoy that destroyed or immobilized the entire fleet."

Maj. **Robert E. Lawton**, a B-57 Canberra navigator-bombardier with the 8th TBS, received the Silver Star for flying a "successful night armed reconnaissance mission against heavily defended truck traffic transporting supplies and ammunition..."

The citation accompanying his award read "Despite intense, accurate ground fire directed at his aircraft, Major Lawton directed his pilot on repeated passes against the hostile trucks until he had cut a vital supply route in two places, destroyed eight trucks, caused eight secondary explosions and ignited five secondary fires..."

Maj. **Robert A. Carlone**, a C-123 Provider pilot with the 315th SOWg, received the Silver Star for an airlift resupply mission during the siege of Khe Sanh.

The citation accompanying his award read, referring to a mission on Feb. 23, 1968, "His aircraft encountered intensive ground fire and mortar shelling. During these attacks, he voluntarily assisted in the off-loading of the ammunition. Although wounded during takeoff by mortar shrapnel, Major Carlone continued to perform his duties and assisted in successfully flying the crippled aircraft back safely."

Capt. **Winslow E. Reither**, an F-100 pilot with the 615th TFS, received the Distinguished Flying Cross for an extremely accurate air strike against enemy forces in close contact with elements of the Fourth Infantry Division.

Strafing within 50 meters of the friendly force and bombing only 200 meters of the friendlies, he accounted for 49 confirmed enemy dead.

TSgt. **Patrick J. Beatty Jr.** a flight engineer with the 309th SOSq, was presented the Distinguished Flying Cross for taking part in two emergency resupply missions to Ban Me Thuot City on 31 January 1968 despite bad weather and intense hostile ground fire.

SSgt. **Carleton K. Norton**, a C-123 flight engineer with the 310th SOSq, received the second Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross for taking part in an emergency resupply mission to Vinh Long on Feb. 4, 1968.

The landing was accomplished and cargo off-loaded in the face of constant ground and mortar fire.

"I remember getting off the aircraft at Cam Ranh Bay and checking in to take my C-123 ride to Phan Rang. "He Ain't Heavy" was playing on the juke box. I checked in to catch my hop to Happy Valley and I was told there would be a delay due to Phan Rang was under attack. Two hours later we took off and a short flight later landed at Phan Rang. I checked in and took a bus to the BAQ to check-in to base ops the next morning. It was already 6 p.m." Thom Myers on Facebook

McConnell visits PRAB

(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly November 7, 1968)

General John P. McConnell, Air Force Chief of Staff, visited Phan Rang AB Sunday as part of his tour of USAF installations in Southeast Asia.

Accompanying the Air Force's top officer were Maj. Gen. Royal N. Baker, vice commander, Seventh Air Force and Maj. Gen. William C. Garland, director of information, USAF.

The general and his staff were escorted on a base tour and briefing by Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., commander, 35th TFW, and Col. John W. Pauly, commander, 315th SOWg.

Their itinerary included the flightline facilities of both wings, a view of "Happy Valley" from the top of Nui Dat, and a visit with the aircrews of the 352nd FTS.

Before his departure, General McConnell was presented a Montagnard cross-bow and a captured Viet Cong flag by Col. Yoon, Jung Wha, commander Republic of Korea White Horse Division.

The general was also introduced to the 554th CES (RED HORSE) mascot, the Vietnamese pony.

Before departing, the Air Force Chief of Staff presented Silver Stars and Distinguished Flying Crosses to aircrew members in flightline ceremonies.

In his final comments, the general complimented the men of Phan Rang for their outstanding contributions to the war efforts in Vietnam.

"Went through there August 31, 1968 going home. Tech Sgt behind the counter said our Freedom Bird was delayed until 10AM the next morning. Running roughly 24 hrs late. Told us to get out of the terminal and find something to do for the next 24 hrs. We were to be back at 8am next morning. We bummed around but there was no where to find a bunk. Saw a freedom bird take off around 10pm. Went back to the terminal around 2 am to sack out on the benches. Promptly got our butts chewed because we missed our Freedom Bird.

The one we saw taking off was ours. there was 6 of us and I thought they were going to climb the counter and kill the Tech. He scrambled and found a Freedom bird with a transfer pump problem that was landing at CRB. He got us out on that one. Who misses their ride home from Viet Nam? Jim Hewitt on Facebook

Bladen Airman Helps Un-Bog Mired Aircraft

(The Robesonian, Tuesday, October 29, 1968)

WITH U. S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam—Mud, bursting air bags and enemy fire merged to badger Staff Sergeant Eugene Smith Jr., son of Mrs. Gathering L. Smith of Justin, Tex. But when he finished his job, a valuable transport was airborne over Katum, Vietnam.

The sergeant is a 1957 graduate of Bladenboro N. C. High School. His wife, Ella, is the daughter of Mrs. Gladys Edwards of Rt. 2. Bladenboro.

Sergeant Smith was a member of a 12-man U. S. Air Force maintenance team that recently recovered a C-123 Provider in an operation that was first thought to be impossible.

The Provider lay mired in mud with all three landing wheels off the runway at Katum. One propeller was bent; the left jet engine was an inch off the ground; the right wing extended 30 feet across the 60-foot-wide runway. The airstrip was blocked to other fixed-wing resupply aircraft and the Provider had to be quickly recovered or destroyed.

Sergeant Smith began the assignment that was plagued with difficulty but conquered by persistence when he boarded a helicopter at Phan Rang Air Base for the trip to the special forces encampment, northeast of Saigon near the Cambodian border.

He and his crew were initiated to the trials of the job when incoming mortar rounds forced their helicopter to take off from Katum before their equipment was completely unloaded. Using inflatable air bags, the team began the arduous task of lifting the transport during a lull in the attack but mortar fire took them off the job periodically and then three lifting bags ruptured from pressure.

The men took shelter as they awaited replacements from Phan Rang and then, even as enemy

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fire continued to pound the area, resumed work. They were again delayed, this time by darkness.

Sergeant Smith and the crew tackled the job, in the early daylight that also brought increased enemy activity. On their third attempt to get the transport on the runway, the Provider yielded.

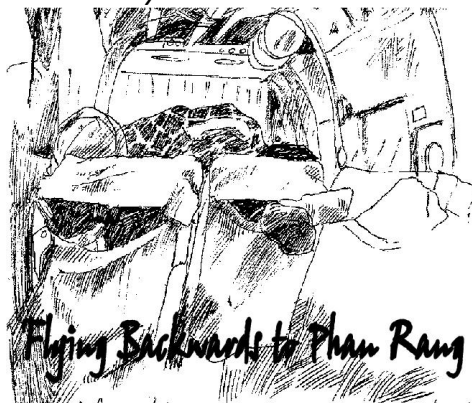
Supporting tactical fighter pilots blasted the surrounding area with bombs and, strafed as he maintenance men replaced the damaged propeller, started the engines and checked over the aircraft. A flight crew arrived and soon, the once-doomed Provider took off for Phan Rang.

(The story of the stranded Provider at Katum is also in these issues: Phan Rang Newsletter 3 "Recovery Team Frees Mired Plane While Facing Enemy Mortar Attack and Phan Rang" and Newsletter 80: "C-123 Provider Crew Rescue Stranded Ship")



Flying Backwards to Phan Rang

By Ronald Dreher



Flying backwards to Phan Rang, that is how I flew to Phan Rang from Buckley ANG Base in Aurora, CO leaving April 30, 1968 taking off around 10:30 am.

Buckley is the only flying Air Base close to the Denver area. Lowry was a training base then. Lowry doesn't exist now. Peterson AFB in Colorado Springs wasn't up and running yet.

We then Flew nonstop to Hickam landing late afternoon. Got chow, put up in a building at end of runway at Honolulu International. Saw my old boss who lived in Pearl City. He came over and we visited for a while. He worked at the TV station at the University of Hawaii. My wife and I visited with he and his wife when I was on R&R. He had worked in Denver's PBS station where I was working when got called up.

Then after breakfast we got back on board, flying facing toward that yellow webbing that held all our duffle bags in place. There were actually four C-141 Starlifters flying along with 25 F-100c to Hickam then 20 F-100cs from then on out.

We landed at Anderson on Guam just about 5:30 pm, was getting dark then, you remember 12 hours day, 12 hours night closer to the Equator. Put us up at the Naval Air Station at the north part of Guam. Had chow then to the barracks. Next morning we got up about 4:30, ate, bused us to Anderson. There we witnessed those B-52s taking off into the west breezes and heading on west to you know where. It wasn't even sunrise yet. Left massive black trail behind them and clipping the tree tops as they headed up. Boarded those C-141s again and headed off to Phan Rang.

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Arrived at Phan Rang AB at about 2:30 pm. My paperwork says we arrived at 13:30. Went to the RMK chow hall, I found out later. There they gave us our jungle fatigues and then we went over to another building for our boots. That night we sewed on our name and stripes, I being an E-4 at the time.

Let us say those two small windows one on each side was all the light there was. I made a

drawing (above) of the inside of the C-141 on the way over. **Three boring long days in the air.**



Our group boarding the World Airways "Freedom Bird" at Phan Rang AB.

...and then the return flight to the world. Well on the way home on the

stretch DC-8 with 210 passengers and we were headed for Buckley in Aurora, Colorado. The 120th was going home from Phan Rang. Because the plane was loaded with the tool kits of the 120th mechanics the cargo was so heavy they had to do small fuel loads so it was a literal hop scotch across the Pacific. So

we left about 4 p.m. from Phan Rang, on World Airways DC-8, and as the sun

was setting landed at Clark. Then fueled up or topped off, headed for Anderson AFB in Guam. Got there about 11:30 pm. Then from Anderson we flew into Wake Island just before sunrise. Wake sure is small that little triangular island. Plane was so heavy pilot was reversing thrust out over the Pacific to touch down at the first part of runway, at the waters edge. We came in from the south end. He hit the brakes then and we barely stopped at the north end edge of the runway. Water is on the other side of that edge. Got back to the cinder block building, concrete roof with a coke machine on it. We walked out east to the water's edge and beach and watched the sun rise in the middle of the Pacific. Won't forget it. Next stop Honolulu International about 1:30 p.m. Now we could get something to eat. No food on the flight other than what I and two other guys got a hold of at the RMK chow hall. We called over and asked them to fry up some chicken pieces. We brought on the plane 4 double or triple bagged grocery bags that fed the

plane. We knew the orders which read no food provided. Coming home they spent \$47.00 per person on getting us home. Then onto Travis AFB, Ca., about midnight for customs. Had to unload our duffle's for inspection, repack and board. Got into Buckley ANG Base at 4:30 a.m. Now that is a long travel experience. Haven't matched that ever since. **Going to Europe is nothing compared to that.**

"I was there when the Phan Rang Base Theater (Viking) first opened (summer 1969). It was too small for the amount of troops stationed there. You would spend half an hour in line - waiting for them to start selling tickets - it would take another 15 minutes to work up to the front of the line with about three guys in front of you. Someone would come out of the theater and say: "we're full". " Johnny Ray Caton on Facebook

Chance Encounter

By Thom Myers

This is just a neat personal story about a chance encounter at Phan Rang.

My brother and I were stationed in Vietnam at the same time. He was Army in a nasty unit on the Cambodian border in a base called Cu Chi.

I of course was stationed in Happy Valley and I had 6 months left of my tour but was ready to go back to the world and get discharged from the service. He extended for the early out and it was approved.

... my brother was standing there.

I was at the Viking movie theater and my named was called to please come to the lobby. When I got there my brother was standing there.

He had grabbed an Army chopper to the Army side of the base. Some Army guys drove him to our barracks and he was told we were at the theater. The Army guys brought him there. He stayed with me for three days at Phan Rang and then left to Cam Rahn Bay to get on a freedom bird home. **What a surprise!**

Rejoicing

By Gary D. Neitzke



Left to right are "me", then Keith Legerett from the 600th Photo, then the lost member, Bill Boyd and Ray Strutton.

Rejoicing after several years of searching, I finally found the lost member of our three-some comrades at Phan Rang. We worked out of the Info office as combat news journalists for the 35th TFW and then the 315th TAW.

About mid-tour I was assigned as the Wing Historian. With the exception of Keith, we chummed together throughout the whole tour. Sure made life more enjoyable. We're gonna have a conference call pretty soon and hopefully a reunion, possibly in Colorado. Incidentally, FYI, each of us has conditions medically diagnosed, related to Agent Orange.

Pat Nugent Flying Missions

(Lowell, Sunday, September 29, 1968)

By Barry Kramer

SAIGON (AP) - President Johnson's son-in-law, Airman 1.C. Patrick J. Nugent, has finished training to be a loadmaster aboard the Air Force's C-123 cargo-passenger planes and is now part of a crew flying missions throughout South Vietnam.

Nugent completed his three month training period Sept. 20 and is flying with the 309th Special Operations Squadron out of Phan Rang air base on Vietnam's central coast, 175 miles northeast of Saigon.

Nugent, 24-year-old husband of President Johnson's daughter Luci, is almost at the halfway point in his one-year tour of duty in Vietnam, and is due for a week's rest and recreation in mid-October. He may choose to meet Luci while on R&R.

At his request, newsmen are not allowed to talk with him, and his exact activities are classified. The Air Force will only say that Nugent is now regularly assigned to the four-man crews that fly the twin-propeller C-123s to any of dozens of air fields and landing strips in Vietnam.

The C-123s are often in thick of the fighting, bringing men and supplies to embattled Special Forces outposts.

During the North Vietnamese siege of the Marine outpost at Khe Sanh, for example, C-123s and other planes kept up a steady shuttle of supplies and maintained a flow of men into and out of the base despite murderous enemy artillery barrages.

As a loadmaster, Nugent is responsible for properly loading and unloading the C-123s with passengers, food, ammunition and other supplies.

Nugent arrived in Vietnam April 13 after his reserve unit, the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing, was called to active duty during the Pueblo crisis. He served briefly as a bomb loader at Cam Ranh air base but transferred in June to Phan Rang for loadmaster training.

President Johnson's other son-in-law, Marine Capt. Charles S. Robb, served for nearly six

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months as commander of a line company with the 1st Marine Division south of Da Nang and is now working at Division headquarters. Robb, husband of Lynda, is nearing the end of his 13-month tour in South Vietnam.

(For other stories related to Patrick Nugent see Phan Rang Newsletter 15 "Pat Nugent Training", Phan Rang Newsletter 75 "Patrick Nugent Receives the Distinguished Flying Cross" and Phan Rang Newsletter 99 "3-Month Course Completed By Pat Nugent".)

Obituary for Rev. Dr. Michael Matthew Maleski, Lt. Col. USAF, Ret.

Rev. Dr. Michael M. Maleski, of Tucson, AZ died Sunday, November 19, 2017 surrounded by the love of his family.



"Chaplain Mike"

Michael is survived by his devoted wife, Peggy, son Jason and wife Rachel, daughter Janelle Voss and husband Corey, son Michael, grandchildren Dylan, Zachary, Audrina, Brynn, and Samantha, siblings Sandra Plecko, Timothy Maleski, and Julie Maleski, and 14 nieces, nephews, and great nieces and nephews, amongst many other beloved family members.

Michael was born in 1949 in Collinsburg, PA. to Stanley and Mary Maleski. After high school, Michael enlisted in the Air

Force and served a tour of duty in Phan Rang AB, Vietnam.

Upon returning home, he enrolled in college, earning his

Bachelor's Degree in Theology from Washington Bible College. He subsequently earned a Master's Degree from Eastern Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry from Atlantic Coast Theological Seminary. Michael served the Lord as a Pastor ministering in Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Arizona. Michael served in the Air National Guard for decades, and after 9/11 was called into Active Duty as a Chaplain. Michael retired from the Air Force in 2009 as a Lieutenant Colonel, but immediately returned to work continuing his Chaplaincy work at Ft. Huachuca before retiring in 2015.

In addition to his service to God and his country, Michael was a devoted family man, historian and Civil War aficionado, football official for the Arizona Interscholastic Association, and an avid fan of Pittsburgh sports teams. You would often hear him chanting, "Hail Pitt!", "Here we go!",

and "Let's go Pens!" Above all, Michael will be remembered for his devotion to God and the humanitarian work he did throughout his life.

(Chaplain Mike and his wife Peggy attended the Phan Rang AB reunion in Tucson, Az. in 2014 and Mike wanted very much to attend the Charleston reunion in 2015, but health prevented that, so he and I arranged for him to give the invocation prayer via the telephone and it worked out very well. I'm not even sure what organization that he was assigned to when stationed at Phan Rang AB, and all that his wife Peggy can remember is that he did a lot of administrative work like typing orders, so it was likely he was assigned to the CBPO. He also was a chaplain's assistant while at Phan Rang. Mike loved the Lord!)

Jim Kucipeck wrote on Facebook: I know, it's that time of year again and we are all wishing each other a Merry Christmas but hear me out. I too want to wish each and every one of you and your families a Merry Christmas. Please remember this quote that I cite here and I really don't know where I read it, but it is worth thinking about.

"We left Vietnam but Vietnam never left us!"

With that in mind please take some time, a moment or two, to remember those who never came home to celebrate Christmas with their loved ones like you and I. We left brothers in Phan Rang, Pleiku, Khe Sanh, the A Shau Valley, the Mekong Delta, Hue, Bien Hoa, Danang, Dong Ha, Laos, Cambodia and nameless hills all over Vietnam and places over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They made the ultimate sacrifice and it is our obligation to take some time to think about them and offer up a little prayer.

Thomas G. Gates Inducted into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Today, Governor Rick Scott and First Lady Ann Scott joined the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs to honor 20 inductees to the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame recognizes and honors military veterans who have made a significant contribution to the State of Florida through civic, business or public service.

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Governor Scott said, “As a Navy Veteran myself, I’m proud to honor these brave veterans for their courageous service to our great nation. These inductees worked to better their communities after their military service. Ann and I join all Floridians as we thank these veterans for their service to our state and country.”

Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs Executive Director Glenn Sutphin said, “This year’s inductees join a distinguished heritage of patriotic Floridians whose work values and ethics have made a positive impact on the lives of others. Their names will be proudly added to the Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame Wall in the Florida Capitol.”

Thomas G. Gates

Thomas G. Gates is an aviator who served two combat tours with the Air Force during the Vietnam War. An Eagle Scout and graduate of the University of South Florida, he spent a distinguished career in the FBI following his active duty service. Returning to his USF roots, he campaigned for institutional and community support for veterans programs at the university, which led to *Military Times* ranking USF as top in the nation in supporting student veterans.



The 20 inductees to the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame, wearing medals. Thomas Gates is in the back row fourth from the left and Florida Governor Scott and his wife are in the center, back row.

Phan Rang Staff Members

PHAN RANG STAFF MEMBERS

Doug Severt: President
Lou Ruggerio: Vice-President
James Kucipeck: Secretary
Jack Anderson: Treasure
Ed Downey/Barbara Brandt: Drill & Ceremonies
Christopher Boles: Photographer
Kirk Minert: Aircraft Historian
Bob Tucker: Keeper of the Rolls
Joe Kaupa: In Memoriam
Bruce Muller: Badge Board
Jim Erixson & Charles Simmons: Chaplains
Bob Howe: Australian Ambassador
Skip Ruedeman: Place Reunion info in VFW Mag.
Lou Ruggerio: Place reunion info in AFA Mag. & VVofA Newspaper

Doug's Comments

The advance party to Nashville to work out the details and check the facilities of our 2018 reunion was a huge success. Jim Kucipeck, Lou Ruggerio and Doug Severt along with our wife's spent three days exploring the city and experiencing the wonderful hospitality of the Radisson Hotel staff. We spent some time exploring the honky-tonks on Broadway and we especially liked Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, a Nashville country music institution and world-famous honky-tonk, that has operated across the alley from the Ryman almost continuously since 1960. We all enjoyed beverages and the electric atmosphere of the place where good ole country music is played continuously throughout the day. No visit to Nashville is complete without a stop at the Ryman where if you listen carefully you can still hear Hank Williams sing "Your Cheatin' Heart,". The Grand Ole Opry Hotel was another place we visited and enjoyed a nice meal at Jack Daniels. What a place, it's so huge we spent a whole day there just ambling through the tropical forest and running into some of the most interesting and friendly people.

The reunion hotel has set up a web site to make reservations. Click [here](#) to make yours today.

"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 141

"Stories worth telling"

The cost of the room is \$163 plus tax, which includes a buffet breakfast, free internet and parking. There are also some parking spaces for RV's that are just that...parking spaces with no utilities.

We also arranged for a block of 100 tickets to the Grand Ole Opry and that number can and will be increased if we see a demand for more, so the sooner the members send in their money, the sooner we can make that assessment.

Total costs for the reunion, excluding your hotel room.

\$50 Banquet

\$49 Grand Ole Opry Ticket

\$15 Transportation

\$20 Reunion fee

The total cost then for the reunion is \$134 per person if you choose to go to the Opry and \$70 per person without the Opry.

Send check to: Jack Anderson, 826 72nd St. SE, Auburn, Wa., 98092, Make check payable to Phan Rang Reunion

The "Brothers Keepers" program is doing very well. If you haven't already volunteered to be one, please let me know and I will add you to the list and get you set up.

If you haven't already written and sent in your biography, please consider doing one. You do not have to follow any specific format, but please expand on your Phan Rang experiences. I know most of us worked 12 hour shifts, 7 days a week, and you think you don't have anything to say, but experience tells us that you probably have a lot of interesting stories in you just waiting to be released. Phan Rang Newsletter 150 will contain only those stories of the members.

This newsletter was compiled and published by [Douglas Severt](#). All of the grammatical and spelling errors are mostly mine. Previous issues of the Phan Rang Newsletter are available [here](#) for download.