

"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 145

"Stories worth telling"

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Sad Day for the 8th **by Jack Anderson**

Jack Anderson wrote on Facebook: January 13th, 1969 was another sad day for the 8th Tactical Bomb Sq. and for me. We lost a crew to enemy fire somewhere over Laos. Col. Norm Eaton was the pilot and Capt. Paul Getchell was the navigator. Those two had flown my plane more than any other crew and I came to know them quite well. They would both show up early for their flights just so they could talk to the ground crew members. Always quick to compliment us on our work, they would talk to us and question us about a variety of topics. On this night, my plane had already taken off on its' mission and I was looking for someone to help. I spotted these two arriving in an adjacent revetment, so immediately headed over there. We greeted each other warmly with handshakes and well wishes. I told the crew chief I'd help him out. (My diary failed to mention his name, but it did say it was tail number 561).

The mission didn't start well as a fire warning came on for the #2 engine and Col. Eaton immediately shut it down. We couldn't find any fire, so came back in front of the B-57 and went thru the start-up procedure again. This time everything was normal and they taxied away from the flight line.

He taxied out to the end of the runway and pulled in to Last Chance. There he was met by a crew chief (We took turns performing this duty) and an armaments crew who charged the guns making them operable.

There the fire warning light came back on. It was determined that a wire was shorting out and everything was ok. Let me be clear on this. After this length of time, Col. Eaton could have aborted the mission and returned to the flight line. He didn't however. They took off and flew into eternity.

Such good men. Lost forever, but never forgotten.

Gary Marshall: Since I was there at that time and an armament tech there is a fair chance I either loaded the payload or armed the guns for this mission. Rest In Peace Men!

H Lee Dixon: The DOOM Pussy kept her back to the bar that night. Believe the call sign was Yellowbird 52, but memory starts to fade.

Jack Anderson: You're right. It was Yellowbird 52. I'm adding a couple of chapters to my book. Its' title is Yellowbird Five-Two.

H Lee Dixon: If you do some research I was told we lost more than one YB with number 52. I kind of recall one later at Da Nang where they lost an engine and as they tried to divert there they attempted a missed approach and on the go around they rolled inverted and were unable to recover. So many brave men...brings tears to my eyes.

Jack Anderson: H Lee Dixon I believe all the numeric numbers were two digits. Since we flew 17 missions each night with 17 planes we would go thru the available numbers in about a week. I would assume there was a Yellowbird 52 each week.

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Jack Anderson: H. Lee Dixon I believe all the numeric numbers were two digits. Since we flew 17 missions each night with 17 planes we would go thru the available numbers in about a week. I would assume there was a Yellowbird 52 each week.

H. Lee Dixon: Yes. But what I am saying it seemed to be a little unlucky. It's hard to prove because most of the information about accidents or losses use the tail number rather than the call sign.

Jack Anderson: My intent in making this post was not to draw attention to myself, but these fine hero's who gave their lives to our country. RIP Col. Eaton and Capt. Getchell.

Jack Anderson: Well, there are 49 some stories in my book. I'll be doing another memorial for another crew next month.

David Wisser: Thanks Jack for the very heartfelt tribute for 2 of the very brave & courageous airmen who flew these very dangerous missions! Sadly we lost way too many of the country's best in that long ago war!

Cindy S. Weber: Never thought for a moment this was for self attention. I'm very thankful that you have a place to speak about your experience. The family of these fine lost men also have a place to see about their loved one. Thank you for being sooo courageous!

Jerry White: Nice story, Jack. Paul had a follow on assignment to the faculty at the Air Force Academy. I didn't know Col Eaton, but his remains were found several years ago. His son retired as an Army general officer. Not sure if Paul's remains were ever located.

Paul Koenig: I think it is very important for everyone to keep these memories alive

Brice Harris: Dad flew with Getchell three nights earlier. Earlier that day of their fateful mission, Dad said he saw Getchell and Eaton in passing at either breakfast or lunch. A year later we were living in Waterville, Maine, the home state of Getchell. Matt Getchell, (brother of Paul) I'm thinking of you this evening, buddy.

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H. Lee Dixon: This is an exceptional (but heartbreaking) thread. Thank you so much. Over the years I've gotten very emotional about just about anything but these memories really hit home.

Dennis W. Craig: I was there at that time, knew Paul

Charles Lee Simmons: It is a great story Jack and these kinds of true accounts are emotional for me. I never thought nor did I say or imply that you did it to bring attention to yourself. I have read your book, "Tales from the Flight line" and I have previously posted that we learn what other people were doing by their sharing on FB. I was NCOIC of 35TFW Maintenance Supply Liaison. Chasing aircraft parts and keeping 23 other guys working pretty well took up my time. It's through these stories that I learn how the other brothers lived.

Charles Lee Simmons: One of the things I like about Jack Anderson's story is the personal touch. Jack knew the crew and was friends with them. I attended 4 or 5 Memorial Services at the chapel for crews that didn't make it back, but I didn't know any of them. On the other hand, I knew Walter Dart who was killed 6/7/1969 and was a close friend to Michel Gunnels who was killed 9/26/1969. Although I was saddened by Walter's death, he was a nice guy; It hurt a lot more when Mike was killed. We were in the same prayer group at night and I knew a good deal about Mike's life based on what he shared with us. I was emotionally attached to this loss as Jack was to the aircraft crew. It is the personal touch that changes a story.

Daniel Acosta: I was stationed there at the time and didn't know about the loss. My condolences and thank you for the memory.

Did You Know?



Robert Chappelear wrote on Facebook:

"**Bookie**" was the call sign assigned to the cargo carrying C-123s in Vietnam. On missions we would be "Bookie 510" Bookie 511, So on. It didn't take too long before we became known as "**Bookie Birds**".



Rick Wiest Phan Rang AB memories

It was 1968 at the Airman's club. I was at the bar drinking a beer and noticed a table full of Marines. With a few beers under my belt, I went over and started talking with them. I said I felt guilty being on a base with clubs, movie theater (Happy Valley Drive In) and the other perks we had like dry beds and hot meals while they were out trudging through the rice patties and jungle. One of them asked me what my job was. I told him I worked on the F100's. He looked at me straight in eye and said "just stay where you are and don't feel guilty. When we want air support we need you guys to keep 'em flying". I guess that put everything in perspective. I have never had a snub from any branch. (Son, Marine ,first gulf war, Father in law, 30 yrs CID, Uncle, 3rd Infantry Division at Anzio)

Ian Wheat commented: Great History. I arrived in country 18 or 19th November, straight to RAAF 2squadron PRAB. I think it was about 3 or 4 days later, I'm sure it was a Sunday and I was still in bed and whoomp, 4 rockets were fired at the base. I think they were trying for the fuel farm. When investigate we heard they were Russian rockets but they didn't have the rocket firing gear and they just used forked branches and pointed them in the general direction.

...another Rick Wiest memory

I'll give you another one along the same lines. Same year, same Airman's club, same bar. Sitting next to me was a short little redhead Army troop, covered in red clay and he stunk. He said he was out in the boonies on some kind of recon with his Sergeant. I asked him if he wanted to go up to my barracks take a shower and have one of the hootch maids wash his clothes. He lit up like a little kid on Christmas! I took him to the chow hall he certainly got his fill. For the next two days while he on base, I never bought a beer. I know you are thinking I spent my whole year in the Airman's club. Not really, just when I wasn't on the flight line or perimeter, or the "strip"

Donald Nixon commented: One day about 3:15 pm I was walking towards the mailroom, and I stopped by the new brick security police barracks to say hi to Forte Berry, a buddy of mine who

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was writing a letter to his wife! He was outside the barracks because it was so hot inside! I walked away, on my way to check mail, and a rocket landed in the middle of the road I had just crossed! I looked at Berry, he was on the ground, with a monster hole in his back! Still affects me today, because I couldn't help him!

...another Rick Wiest memory

I do have another I can share. Me and my buddy were coming out of the Avionics shop on the road right by the flight line at about 0600. We had just finished a sixteen hour shift and we were going to go to the chow hall. As we were walking towards the bus stop, the VC started walking mortars down the road towards us. There was not a bunker close to us so I jumped in a culvert and my buddy headed for a ditch. As we were both going for cover, a mortar landed close to us and he stopped to look. Unfortunately he was in front of me, I knocked him down and ran right up his back. When the attack was over, and I found him, I had pushed him down in crushed rock, he had scrapes and scratches from that. He then turned around and he had my footprints on his back. I told him never, never, never stop in front of me when I'm running for cover. And by the way, I think that was the only attack I remember being during the day.

Remembering January 26, 1969

January 1969



Joe Kaupa commented: My Phan Rang Brothers. Forth nine years ago Today January 26, 1969, Phan Rang AB experienced the largest Ground, Rocket and Mortar attack in I believe its history. It is without a doubt that for you men that were there, that you will never forget it. I know it is well etched in my mind to this day. The main ground attack began in the Juliett area. What I

think I remember there was ground fire coming from all around the entire perimeter but it was not penetrated. It was obvious the NVA & VC were trying to get to the flightline. Many Kudo's to my security police brothers, augmentee's and all of you for doing a great job no matter what your job was or where you were at defeating the enemy. May God Bless you all. *By Joe Kaupa on Facebook.*

James Sullivan commented: It was some night no matter where you were. Thanks to all my brother SP's & those that volunteered to back us up, the Aussie's & ROK's.

Richard Hargrove commented: Amen brother the older I get, the more I think God was protecting us.

(To see a more in depth review of the events on 26 January see **Phan Rang News 99**, article **"Remembering 26 January 1969"**.)

Silver Star Present to 35th SP Maj.

(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, August 22, 1969)



Gallantry while directing security forces during a ground attack against Phan Rang Air Base has earned the Silver Star medal for a 35th Security Police Squadron Officer.

Major William H. Powell, squadron operations officer, was presented the award by Maj. Gen. James F. Kirkendall, Seventh Air Force deputy chief of staff for Operations, at brief ceremonies recently held at Phan Rang.

The 41-year-old native of San Rafael, Calif., was cited for heroism during the early morning hours of January 26, 1969. At that time a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) sapper unit penetrated the base perimeter in the largest ground attack of the war against the base.

According to the citation accompanying the award, Maj. Powell left a "position of relative safety and moved to the immediate area to evaluate the situation first hand and join in close combat in order to lead and direct his men.

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"The outstanding calm, professional and aggressive leadership of Maj. Powell is a key reason why a bitter and devastating defeat was inflicted upon the opposing force and the base was thereby saved from destruction," the citation continued.

During the attack the enemy fired numerous rockets and mortars into the base.

In recalling the attack, Maj. Powell said, "The area was receiving fire as I arrived. A sentry dog handler had spotted several NVA at the fence, so we poured firepower into their position.

"I led one of two elements of security policemen around the NVA, and we defeated the enemy about 25 years from the fence." He continued. "After moving back to the perimeter, several other NVA had penetrated the fence and were firing on our positions, knocking out of commission some of our armored personnel carriers."

"We continued fighting them until daybreak, when we made a sweep of the area and found 14 enemy killed and one wounded. We also found numerous indications of more enemy soldiers killed and wounded," the major concluded.

Thom Myers wrote on Facebook: My brother was in Vietnam at the same time as I. He was Army in a nasty base at Cu Chi. He was able to grab a helo ride into Phan Rang for his last days in country. I still had at least 6 months. His eyes were popping at the AB facilities especially the putt-putt course.



(Seventh Air Force News, October 7, 1970)

Traveling time from Travis to Travis is little more than 31 ½ million seconds, each one carefully measured to international standards.

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In Vietnam, time is the great equalizer. Every airman who walks down the boarding ramp at Tan So Nhut, Cam Ranh or Bien Hoa begins his own personal 12-month, 365-day race to DEROS. Amid all the unknowns and variables, there is one constant: with a little bit of luck, he will be getting back on the plane this time next year.

A 12-month tour is one of the truly unique aspects of the Vietnam conflict. Ernie Pyle's dogface of World War II plodded on through nameless towns in Italy; France and Germany not knowing where he would be in a month, a week or even the next day. All he knew was that he would be going home when the war was over. Whenever he talked about the future, he was almost sure to add the disclaimer, "If I make it through this all right."

The airman in Vietnam isn't as fatalistic. This is not to say he isn't just as scared. Everyone knows he is. He simply has too much to live for to admit there is a possibility he might not make that rendezvous with the freedom bird. He can still remember what a hot show feels like, and he has the months marked off on his camouflage cover to remind him that his discomforts are only temporary. Whenever he talks about the future, he says, "When I get home."

The present holds little promise for the airman. After a few weeks in-country, most men began living either in the past or in the future. Of course, there are those times of notable exception, during a firefight or a mortar attack, as Hemingway said, he will be living in the "very second of the present, with no before and no after." Those will be the longest seconds, but then, time is relative. It is meaningless without experience. How can you compare an hour filling sandbags with one spent on stand down?

Few people begin counting off the days at 365. There is no sense in it. Most prefer to avoid looking at calendars for the first few months. Occasionally, a casual glance to mark notable milestones (the first 90 days, one month to R&R, etc.) is in order. But there is really little difference between having 245 days to go and 238.

Getting short is like growing old. It's best to do it gracefully. It can't be rushed or forced, so why try. Time fades fatigues in much the same way it grays temples.

Take the case of one airman, Harvey. Harvey was a short-timer from the Midwest. Though

young, like all short-timers he looked older. The 24-year old turtles (those replacements who took so long in arriving: afforded him the respect of an elder statesman.

On a second's notice, Harvey could conjure up the spirits of those gone before but not forgotten. He relishes and enjoys reflecting on the good old days- way back in January.

In his final days Harvey would sit on an ammo box in front of the splashwall and talk to the turtles. He would patiently answer their questions one by one. He could rap about the pending monsoon as if it were some phenomenon of nature that occurred but once in a million years. Harvey, you see, had been through one.

As a single-digit midget (fewer than 10 days to go) Harvey could be counted on to do a few small tasks, but nothing that took very much time or required concentration. He walked around with a freakish grin on his face.

He was still smiling when he slid into the jeep for the ride to the 8th Aerial Port, where he would embark on his triumphant return to Saigon International Airport.

DEROSing, in many respects, is like getting married. You can watch it happen to your friends, ask questions about it but in the end you will have to experience it yourself before your mind can truly comprehend.

But just hold on. Just do your job, no matter how onerous it may seem now, and your day will come to hear the flight captain say: "Gentlemen we are approaching the California coastline which you can see in the distance with sun rising over the Rocky Mountains in the far distance."

*(Thanks to **Lupe Saenz** for saving this article for 48 years.)*

Did You Know

Robert Chappelle wrote: *Just as a matter of interest there were other FACs flying jets. There were small groups of A-37s called Typhoon FACs. We referred to ourselves as "half-fast FACs" (say that quickly and you will get the humor!)*

City Air Force Colonel, Soldier Son Serving at Same Station in Vietnam

(Source: Albuquerque Journal, September 8, 1967)

An Albuquerque family's big Interest in the Vietnam war is the flightline at Phan Rang Air Base.

The reason: Lt. Col. Horace W. Lehman, 45, serves on the Air Force side and his son, Spec. 4 Hal W. Lehman, 21, is across the way in the Army area.

Daily news reports and letters are, of course, of top concern for Mrs. Charlene Lehman, 3716 Gen. Stilwell NE wife and mother of the fighting men.

When Hal, a former student at Sandia High School, arrived in Vietnam, Col, Lehman was at the Long Binh processing center to greet him.

Col. Lehman, a 25-year veteran of the Air Force, is chief of the technical unit operation center for the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. Young Lehman is chief armorer of the supply section for the 48th Aviation Assault Co.

After Hal arrived in Vietnam, father and son toured Saigon and then flew to Phan Rang where the colonel escorted his son to his new unit.

Col. Lehman was assigned to Vietnam last November after three years of duty at the Special Weapons Center at Kirtland AF Base.

Young Lehman arrived in Vietnam last March for his first tour of overseas duty.

Hal volunteered for the Army," said Mrs. Lehman. "So did my other son who is now in Germany. I guess they thought they'd like the Army better than the Air Force."

Hal not only volunteered to enlist, he volunteered for Vietnam. He took basic training at Ft. Bliss, Tex., and had some training in Georgia and "then it was Vietnam."

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Hal's stay in Vietnam may be for some time, but Col. Lehman is due to return to the United States and has been assigned to the Strategic Air Command.

The colonel, who flew 25 missions over Germany in World War, II, has added more than 111 missions in the B-57 Canberra fighter-bomber in Vietnam to his combat record.

"We don't know where we'll be sent when the colonel returns," Mrs. Lehman said. "We hate to leave Albuquerque, we plan to retire here."

While part of Mrs. Lehman's attentions are centered on Vietnam, she keeps up with the Army career of her other soldier son, Spec. 4 Charles Lehman, 23, in Germany. Charles is now serving his second hitch in the Army.

Keeping up the home front with Mrs. Lehman is a third son, Jon, 18, a Sandia High School graduate who will, attend the University of Albuquerque, and 4-year-old Dana.

Did You Know

The 309th Tactical Airlift Squadron, which flies C-123 cargo planes out of Phan Rang Air Base on the coast, was deactivated as part of the fourth phase of President Nixon's reduction of American troop strength in Vietnam. (*Ogden Standard-Examiner, Tuesday, July 14, 1970*)

An Early Perspective of Phan Rang AB

(The Republican -Courier, Findlay, Ohio, Friday, September 30, 1966)

PHAN RANG, Viet Nam (AP) - At the foot of an ancient crumbling temple on the central Vietnamese coast six giant airstrips stretch into one of the most powerful jet fighter bomber bases of the U.S. Air Force in Southeast Asia.

It is operated solely by the United States and is strictly for fighting. No supply missions are flown from Phan Rang.

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More than 6,000 combat sorties have been launched from Phan Rang since March. The number of bombs dropped on the enemy is classified - but fuel consumption averages 300,000 gallons a day.

The six landing strips are 200 feet wide and 10,000 feet long. They are cut into reddish rocks and sand 10 miles inland from the South Sea. The base is 160 miles northeast of Saigon in the almost exact center of the South Vietnamese coastline.

About 100 U.S. Air Force jets — a squadron of F4C phantoms and four squadrons of F100 supersabres — are stationed here. They strike anywhere in Viet Nam.

THE AIR FORCE calls it a "bare base." There are no permanent buildings, no warehouses and no harbor. Tanks receive fuel pipelines from tankers in the South China Sea. Bombs are delivered by landing craft, truck convoys and cargo planes.

Security is provided by about 1,000 soldiers of the Korean Tiger Division and a battalion of Vietnamese Army troops. They are supported by the largest team of scout dogs in Viet Nam — 100 dogs with American handlers.

The headquarters of the 1st Brigade. 101st Airborne Division is only one mile away. But the paratroopers cannot do much for the air force. Except for a small base guard they have been away on operations most of the time since they arrived.

Viet Cong activity was virtually nonexistent in the Phan Rang area until the Americans Arrived In early 1965 and started building air strips. It has steadily increased since then recently the guerrillas attacked the fuel pipeline several times. In the worst attack 10,000 gallons were destroyed.

The predominate natives in the immediate vicinity are peaceful. They are the Chams, a steadily diminishing people that 2,000 years ago ruled Viet Nam. The Chams' reddish temple stands above the airstrips on a rocky hillside where it was built 1,200 years ago.

Most of the Viet Cong operate from a coastal salt flat some five miles south of the U.S.

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base. U.S. officers also say the VC maintain a training camp for about 500 guerrillas in the Je Mountains 12 miles to the northwest. The bombers of Phan Rang Base have not struck these nearby targets since the province chief has not asked for bombings. He is the only authority that can approve them in Ninh Thuan Province.

Phan Rang is a link in a complex of U. S. bases along the coast. Thirty miles is the vast logistic center at Cam Ranh Bay. This supply harbor and depot is also under sole control of the U.S. Armed Forces. Cam Ranh still serves partly as a fighter air base but Phan Rang is expected to take over all this activity soon.

Thirty miles farther north is Nha Trang, headquarters, of , the U.S. 2nd Field Force, which is similar to an army command.

National Highway 1 and a railway connect Phan Rang, Cam Ranh and Nha Trang. The road is traveled by well protected American convoys. The train does not carry U.S. military supplies because there are still too many Viet Cong incidents — but it is hoped that the track can soon be secured. Armored boxcars roll front, and U.S. Air Force spotter planes fly overhead when the daily train trundles up past the six big airstrips, stops at the giant harbor supply base and rolls into Nha Trang in the late afternoon.

Dear Abby - “Practically Untouched in Tulsa”

(The Daily Herald, Trone, Pa., Thursday, January 11, 1990 and Atchison Globe, Tuesday, February 1, 1972)



DEAR ABBY: Why do you perpetuate the idea that frequent sex is "normal"? You seem to believe that any other arrangement is so bizarre that people ought to see doctors or lawyers for a cure or a divorce.

Millions of couples have infrequent sex — or none at all — and they are happy. For you to suggest that sex should be at the top of the list with air and water is a peculiar blind spot of

yours.

A streetwise punk uses this "sex-is-normal" argument to convince his virginal girlfriend to give in by implying that she is weird if she doesn't.

Let people off the hook, Abby. Tell them that sexual frequency is a private arrangement that each couple must decide for themselves. Who cares if it's once a decade, or never again, if they're content with their lives?

Wiser people stay married — sex or no sex. Apparently that's news to you, as you advised "Practically Untouched in Tulsa" that if her husband didn't see a doctor, she should see a lawyer.

JAN IN BOULDER, COLO.

DEAR JAN: Sex is a normal part of marriage, and it's true that some people require more sex than others. But "Practically Untouched" complained that her husband of two years had made love to her five times in the last six months. (She had gift wrapped herself in Saran Wrap and greeted him at the door with a martini, and he had said, "Hi. What's for supper?"

This couple obviously is not operating on the same frequency, hence my suggestion that if they couldn't "fix" this marriage by seeing a doctor, they should see a lawyer.

DEAR ABBY: This is for the husband of "PRACTICALLY UNTOUCHED IN TULSA" : We don't believe that if he doesn't see a doctor, his wife should see a lawyer. He should see his nearest recruiting officer and spend a year in Viet Nam. Then he would appreciate one of the finer things in life—having his wife with him. [signed)

FIVE GI'S AT PHAN RANG

CAPT. ROBERT D. JACOBS

T. SGT. JOSEPH H. JOHNSON

S. SGT. JAMES G. GORDON

SGT. CARTER S. RICHARDSON JR.

S. SGT. JAMES L. BARKER

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RETURNEE

KINCHELOE AFB, Mich - Sgt. **Franie Williford** of Wilson, N C. has recently returned from a tour of duty at Phan Rang AFB, Vietnam. After leave, he returned to Kincheloe AFB, Mich. The sergeant attended Fike High School and joined the Air Force in 1961. (*The Wilson Daily Times, Friday, June 13, 1969*)

Fred Howell III Gets AF Honor. Airman First Class **Fred N. Howell III**, USAF, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred N. Howell Jr., 1820 N. Beal St., Belton recently was presented with the Air Force Commendation and Oak Leaf for outstanding service at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam, between the time of Sept. 24, 1968 and Sept. 24, 1969. The medal was pinned on him by his commander in ceremonies at Ulm, Germany, where he is presently assigned to Detachment 22, 601st Tac. Con. Sqdn. (*The Belton Journal, December 18, 1969*)

With The Armed Forces U. S. Air Force Sgt. **Richard H. Dixon**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar M. Dixon, 9 Brown Street, Sykesville, is on duty at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam. Sgt. Dixon is an aircraft pneudraulic repairman with the 315th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. He previously served at Pope AF Base, N. N. He attended Sykesville High School. His wife, Patricia, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bowie 60 Carroll Highlands, Sykesville. (*The Evening Sun, Saturday, October 26, 1969*)

WITH U.S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam — U.S. Air Force Airman First Class **Paul E. Currier**, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Currier of 632 Oak avenue, Davis, Calif., is on duty at Phan Rang AB. Vietnam. Airman Currier, a security policeman in a unit of the Pacific Air Forces, previously served at Malnstrom AFB. Mont. The airman is a 1968 graduate of Davis senior high school. (*The Daily Democrat, Monday, September 15, 1969*)

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County Serviceman Arrives in Vietnam PHAN RANG, Vietnam — Army Pfc **George M. Duke**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Duke, Coalport, Pa., arrived in Phan Rang, Vietnam, last month with his unit, the 529th Transportation Company. The company, previously located at Ft. Euslis, Va., will provide Transportation for Headquarters, Phan Rang Sub Area Command. Pfc. Duke, a truck driver in the company, entered the Army in November 1965 and completed basic training at Ft. Jackson, S. C. (*The Progress, Clearfield, Curwensville, Philipsburg, Moshannon Valley, Pa, Saturday, February 11, 1967*)

Trains Gun Crews U.S. Air Force Major **Donald D. Fraker**, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. G. Fraker of Rt. 3, Greeley, is helping train Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) AC-119 gunship crews at Phan Rang Air Base.

Major - Fraker, an instructor pilot in the 17th Special operations Squadron, trains his VNAF counterparts under a program scheduled for completion in August. The Vietnamese gunship crews — composed of pilots, co-pilots, navigators, flight engineers and illumination system operators — are scheduled for assignment to a unit expected- to be flying combat missions this year.

When activated, the unit will be the first VNAF organization to fly the AC-119 gunship. It will join other VNAF units now operating the older AC-47 gunship in combat. The AC-119 features added firepower having four 7.62 millimeter miniguns.

"The crews I have worked with have done exceptionally well. The language barrier has caused some minor problems as terms defy translation into Vietnamese," commented Major Fraker. "A great deal of emphasis is placed on having the crews use English as much as possible."

Before beginning his assignment at Phan Rang, Major Fraker served at Clark AB, Philippines. A 1950 graduate of Pawnee High School, Grover, the major received a B.A. degree in 1954 from the University of Northern Colorado and was commissioned there through the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps program. He holds the aeronautical rating of command pilot.

His wife, Patricia, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Richards of Grover. (*The Greeley Tribune, Thursday June 3, 1971*)

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At Vietnam: HOMER - Airman 2.C. **Robert C. Eckard**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roland J. Eckard, 4 Nixon Ave., has arrived at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam, with the 35th air police squadron, attached to the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing and the 101st Airborne Division. Eckard is a 1964 graduate of Homer Central High School. He enlisted in the Air Force in January, 1966. (*The Post-Standard, Ithaca-Cortland, April 29, 1967*)

Air Force Lt. Col. **Stacy B. Warden**, whose wife, Margaret, is the daughter of Mrs. Jack Pickle, of Osprey, has received three awards of the Air Medal at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, for air action in Southeast Asia. Col. Warden was decorated for outstanding airmanship and courage on missions from Phan Rang AB, S. Vietnam. He now holds nine Air Medals. (*The Herald-Tribune date unknown*)

RECEIVES MEDAL - Sgt. **Thomas L. Myers**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer E. Myers, 1456 S. Clinton, is congratulated by Brigadier General Walter T. Galligan after receiving the U.S. Air Force commendation medal for meritorious achievement. Currently assigned to the 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Phan Rang, South Vietnam, Myers is expected home this month. (*Defiance Crescent-News, Tuesday, June 9, 1970*)

EDWARDS, Calif. - Sgt. **Franklin L. Suffecool**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter D. Suffecool of New Paris, has received the Air Force Commendation Medal at Edwards AFB, Calif. Sgt. Suffecool, a construction equipment repairman was decorated for meritorious service at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. He was cited for his professional skill, knowledge and in initiative. He is now at Edwards in a unit of the Air Force Systems Command. The sergeant is a graduate of Mesa High School. His wife, Mary, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. O. S. Humble of Tucson Ariz. (*The Altoona Mirror, Altoona, Pa, Tuesday, October 8, 1968*)

VIETNAM — Air Force Airman 1. C. **Richard J. Vassas**, son of Mrs. Marie A. Vassas of 314 Craig St., Gallitzin, has arrived in Vietnam for duty and will be stationed at Phan Rang Air Base. Airman Vassas is a member of the 821st Combat Security Police Squadron, an elite unit that has-been specially trained to repel enemy aggression and provide air base security. The Phan Rang unit will be held in constant readiness to supplement the defense forces of any U.S. air base in the combat zone which might come under an enemy attack. The airman is a graduate of Greater Gallitzin Joint High School. (*The Altoona Mirror, Altoona, Pa, Tuesday, October 8,*

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MASURY - Airman Third Class **William E. Betts**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Verne A. Betts of R.D. 1, Masury, Ohio, is serving on temporary duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. The airman, an aircraft mechanic, was permanently assigned at Clark AB, Philippines, before arriving in Vietnam. He is a member of the Pacific Air Forces America's overseas air arm in Southeast Asia, the Pacific and the Far East. A 1964 graduate of Joseph Badger High School, Kinsman, Ohio. He attended Youngtown University and Kent State University. His wife, Ann, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Riley Mallett of R. D. 1, Fowler, Ohio. (*News Reporter, Wednesday, July 19, 1967*)

Sgt **Edwin Dickinson**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin W. Dickinson. Madison St.. a member of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. Phan Rang Vietnam, which has received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. Sgt. Dickinson is a command post specialist. (*Oak Leaves-Forest Leaves, June 16, 1971*)

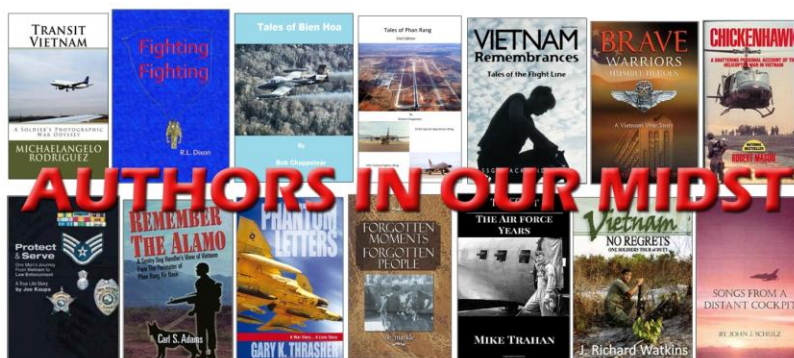
LAKENHEATH, E n g l a n d (Special) — Col. **Jerome F. Naleid** has assumed the post of 48th Tactical Fighter Wing deputy commander for operations. He succeeds Col. **Amin George Jr.**, who has departed for a tour of duty with the 35th TFW, Phan Rang AB Vietnam.

Gary D. Eutis, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Eutis Rte. 2, Marseilles, recently was promoted to Army Specialist Five at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam. His wife, Sue, lives at 119 N. Cash. St., Seneca. (*The Morris (Ill) Daily Herald, Tuesday, October 5, 1971*)



Beautiful artwork on wood and silk purchased by James Alvis from Thap Cham.

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Margorie Hanson: [Brave Warriors, Humble Heroes: A Vietnam War Story](#)

Vic Markle: [Forgotten Moments Forgotten People](#)

Mike Trahan: [The Gift: The Air Force Years](#); [The Gift Part Two - The Air Force Years](#); and [Home Again: Short Story](#)

Rob Morris: [Untold Valor](#); [Marinell](#); [The Wild Blue Yonder and Beyond: The 95th Bomb Group in War and Peace](#); [Prisoner of the Swiss](#); [I'll Be Seeing You](#) and [Combat Bombardier: Memoirs of Two Combat Tour in the Skies Over Europe in World War Two](#)

Carl Adams: [Remember the Alamo: A Sentry Dog Handler's View of Vietnam from the Perimeter of Phan Rang Air Base](#)

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Elvis Bray: [The Presence of Justice](#)

Michelangelo Rodriguez: [Transit Vietnam](#), [The Story of Coqui Claus](#) and [Waiting for the Garden of Eden](#)

J. Richard Watkins: Vietnam: [No Regrets](#)

John J. Schultz: [Songs From a Distant Cockpit](#)

Doug's Comments

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.