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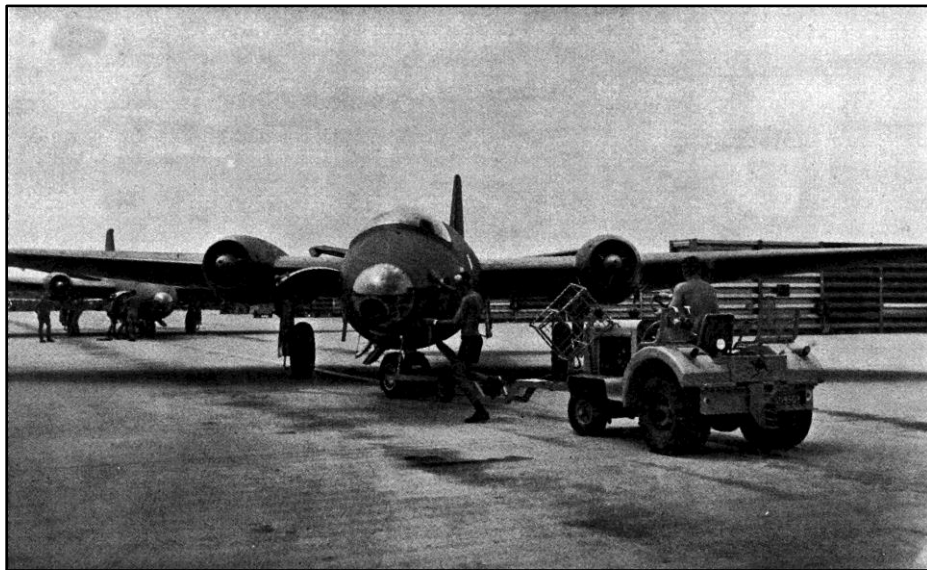
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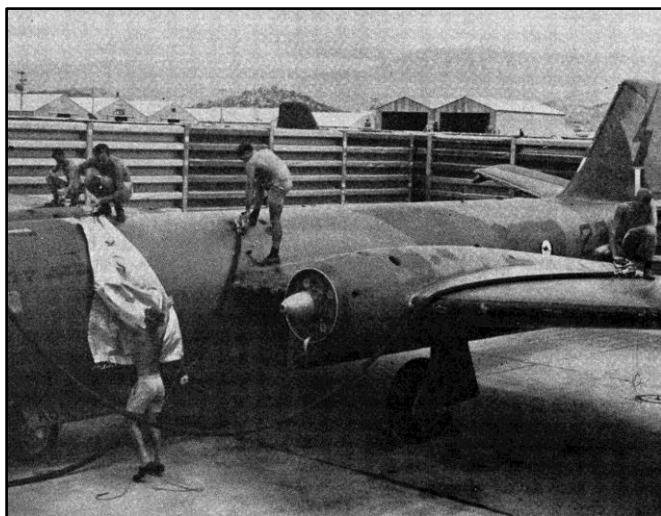
Maintenance

(Source: No. 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam 1968 Pamphlet)

Possession of the highest serviceability rate in the RAAF tells the story of the successful battle by, the squadron's Maintenance Flight to overcome problems quite different from those normally encountered by Canberra squadrons in Australia. The 97 percent serviceability rate, which has been maintained over the last 12 months, exceeds that of any other squadron

operating in Vietnam.

The significance of such a near perfect score is heightened by the fact that the squadron missions are normally flown between 0200 and 1200 hours, with five or six aircraft airborne in the early daylight hours. This results in aircraft returning for maintenance or turnaround just before the RAAF and USAF serviceability "check time" of 0930. (Under the present system the serviceability of every RAAF and USAF squadron is judged by the number of aircraft fully serviceable at 0930 each day).



No. 2 Squadron's operational requirements demand that its Canberras fly eight missions daily, seven days a week. However, not all eight aircraft are flown each day, some being turned around to satisfy the servicing stagger. In addition, the need for 'D' and 'E' servicing — the latter at No. 3 Aircraft Depot, RAAF Amberley — often reduces strength at Phan Rang to seven for periods of a few days.

To achieve their near perfect serviceability rate on the 15-year-old Canberras under these conditions the Maintenance Flight functions 24 hours a day on a two-shift basis. The day shift starts at 0700 and remains on duty until all aircraft are serviceable. Frequently, due to changes in target or weather holds, aircraft land at other bases for fuel, not returning to Phan Rang until the late afternoon, with unserviceabilities still to be rectified for the next morning's flight. The day shift also carries out A, C, afterflight and pre-flight servicing on all aircraft. The night shift, working between 2130 and 0730, does a second pre-flight immediately prior to take off, mainly to ensure that no damage has been done to the aircraft and to rectify minor unserviceabilities.

Much of the credit for a high serviceability rate must also be given to the small maintenance control section which collates all data necessary to plan, control and co-ordinate the technical maintenance facilities of the squadron. This section maintains histories of all the aircraft, installed equipment and associated ground support equipment.



No. 2 Squadron maintenance staff outside their hanger, circa 1968. Photo courtesy of Kevin “Rock” Neilsen who is in the first row on the left.

Operational requirements in Vietnam have led to the installation of many modifications in the squadron's Canberras; from protective armour plating to darker camouflage. Many RAAF agencies and Government departments were involved in the design of these. However, the electronics section has been responsible for designing, building and installing several of the modifications which directly help the aircrew achieve better bombing results. These include a TACAN azimuth repeater for the navigator; remote "Green Satin" ground speed and drift indicators installed in the nose; a flexible lead light to facilitate the checking of instruments and trim indicators, necessitated by the requirement for extremely accurate instrument flying; and fitment of E2B stand-by compass in place of the E2A.

In common with all other sections of the squadron, the electronics section has had the dual task of not only doing the work for which its men were trained but also of improving the working conditions — the major job being to line the rooms of the section to provide a dust free, temperature-controlled bench area. Fortunately, most of the latter work is now completed and

all sections have satisfactory working areas.

Another section which has been called upon to effect modifications to improve operational efficiency of the aircrew is the safety equipment section. Many alterations to the survival packs were required to suit Vietnam conditions, and in some instances equipment was incompatible with that of the USAF. After several trials, Tree Scapes (a device which allows an ejected aircrew member to lower himself through a jungle canopy) have been fitted to the survival packs. In addition an American RT-10 radio beacon, the very life-line of downed aircrew, has replaced the RAAF SARBE beacon, and trials are taking place to fit a second in the seat pack. All packs are now fitted with a homing beacon which is automatically activated on deployment of the parachute. Our gratitude must be extended to the excellent co-operation received from the USAF life support sections of the base regarding these items.

The mission always came first, but there was time for relaxation.



The No. 2 Squadron personnel enjoying their time away from the flightline. It's been said that "the Aussies worked hard and partied harder". Photo courtesy of Kevin "Rock" Neilsen who is in the first row on the right.



The “Bummers” Saga



The “Bummers” Sage Continues...

“Yes Bombs Do Bounce On Concrete”

By Chris Walling

We received word that a bird was coming in with a potential hung bomb in the bay. The pilot reported only seeing three explosions. Did not know if four bombs had left the bay and one failed to detonate or if one of them was still in the bay. The real question was, “had the fuse armed”?

After landing, the plane was placed as far away as possible and after much discussion it was decided to slowly rotate the bay using the manual pump while a jammer inched its loading arm into the bay to help secure the bomb. That seemed like a good plan. The door was slowly rotated and when enough of an opening appeared it was determined that a bomb was indeed still in the bay. Terrific!

“Yes, so help me it bounced!”

As the door continued to rotate open there came that magic point when the weight of the bomb overcame what little hydraulic pressure there was in the lines and the hand pump just wasn’t cutting it. Oops, inertia took over and the door quickly began rotating open. As it did the bomb began rolling down the door breaking off whatever was in its path and pieces were flying everywhere. Things seemed to go in slow motion at this point. The jammer was unable to do its planned job because of the quickly rotating door so gravity was in control and we were just along for the ride. I watched as that 750 lb bomb fell to the ramp and bounced. Yes, so help me it bounced! I don’t know about the others but I was just standing there watching it all happen but couldn’t move. After a moment I became aware that my feet were pointing away as if to run but my head was turned back; I just had to see what was going to happen!

(**Note:** Jammer: MJ-1 Bomb Lift Truck would be the official Air Force name, nicknamed jammer, for jamming the bomb into the pylon.)

“The Arkansas Coon Hunt”

By Howard L. Taylor

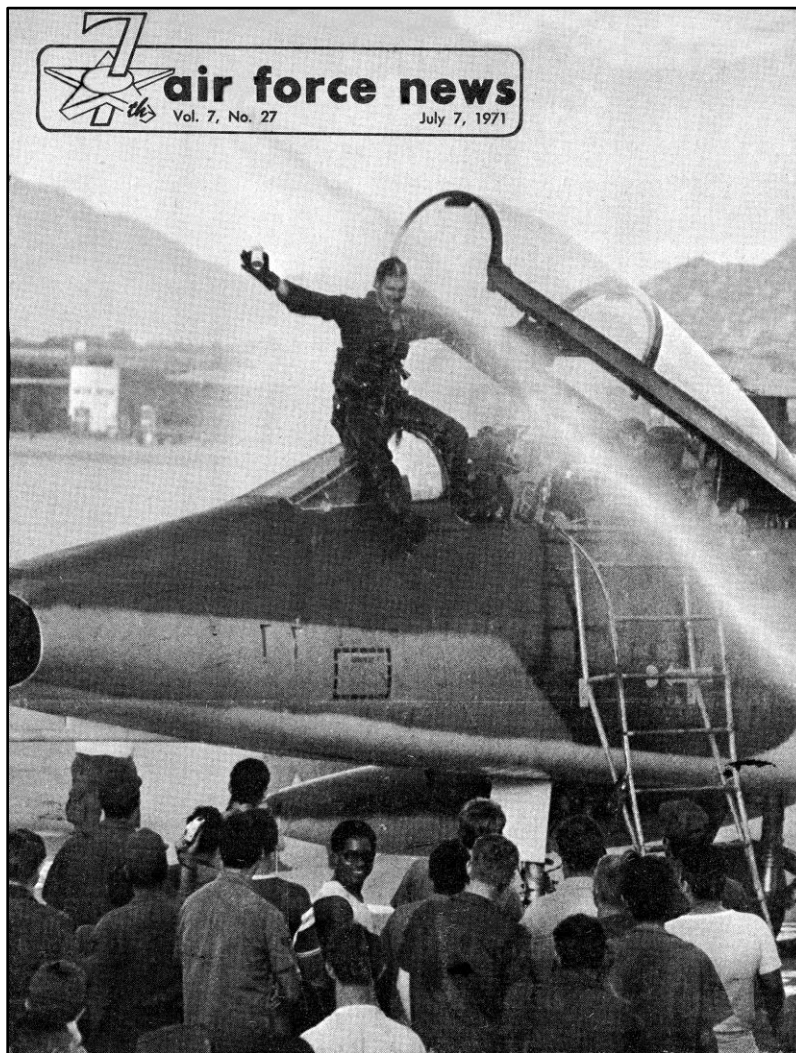
It was the middle of the summer of 67 and it was hot! Trying to sleep during the day was rough. As our crew reported to work that evening Tommy and I drew arm end of the runway for duty that night. Our crew was John (Red) Foster as load crew chief, Mike Chaney, Thomas (Rebel) Williams and myself, Howard Taylor. We were looking forward to a slow easy night. Before being dropped off at the end of the runway by the line tuck we made sure we had all the things we would need for the night. Our planes at night flew in pairs departing in two hour intervals. With about two hours in between takeoffs, you had plenty of talk time or you could read a paperback novel if you could scrounge enough flashlight batteries. This night had started out like most night of late, kind of quiet, after some heavy bombing of the North we seemed to be in a lull. It had been pretty quiet since the last takeoff and we had spent the last couple of hours making small talk.

“He jumps up off the ground and hits me over the head...”

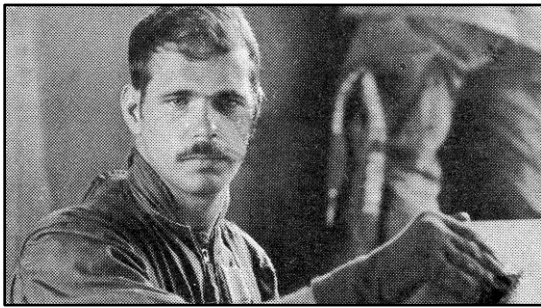
We heard the two next B-57’s cranking up back in the revetments and Tommy grabbed his ear muffs and the yellow wands and headed out to where we signaled the pilots to stop so we could arm the bombs and guns before takeoff. The planes had not left the area yet so I was talking my time putting on my ear muffs and Tommy was thirty or so feet in front of me and he was shining and pointing the lights over his head. Looking back over his shoulder he says to me “This is the way we hunt coons back in Arkansas.” All of a sudden, I see sparks jumping off the concrete ramp and a few seconds I hear the sound of gun shots. I call out to him to get the light off and get back to the bunker. He didn’t hear me and I can see more sparks so I take off running as hard as I can and tackle him knocking him to the ground. In doing that I knocked one light out of his hand and knocked his ear muffs off. He jumps up off the ground and hits me over the head with the other light before he realizes what is happening. Luck was with us as we scrambled back to safety in the bunker. We heard the planes shut down as that mission was

put on hold as security took care of the V.C. that was attempting to breach the perimeter. We were there for nearly an hour before someone came to check on us. I told Tommy that if that was the way he hunted coons in Arkansas I never wanted to go coon hunting with him again.

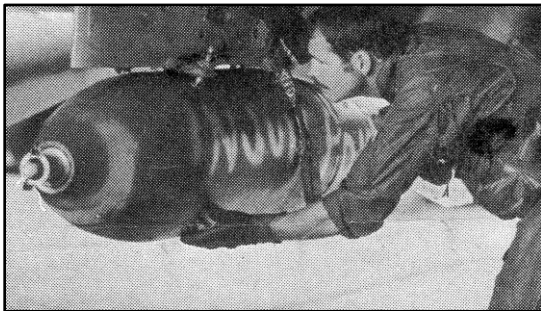
F-100 ‘FINI’ FLIGHT *(Seventh Air Force News, July 7, 1971)*



Capt. William “Chip” Taylor, who flew the last F-100 combat mission in Southeast Asia, receives they traditional welcoming home ceremony on the ramp at Phan Rang AB.



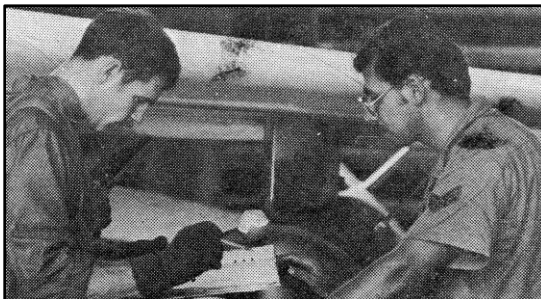
Capt. William “Chip” Taylor flew the last F-100 combat mission in Southeast Asia. Here he...



Checks out the last bomb...



And, contemplates his last combat mission in the Super Sabre.

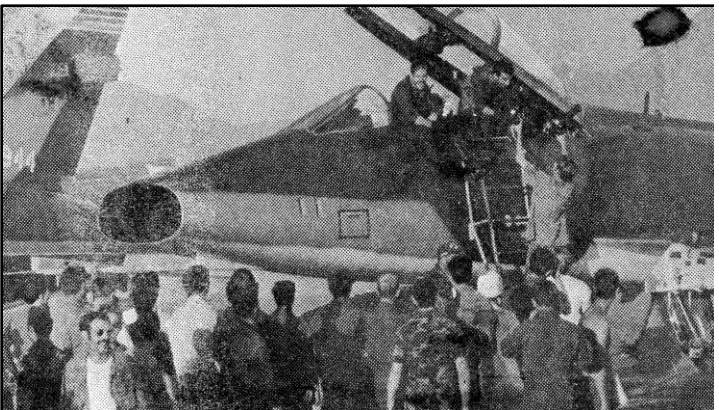


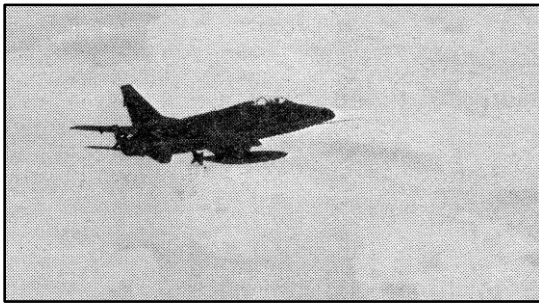
Preflights with his crew...

Champagne flowed and cameras clicked.



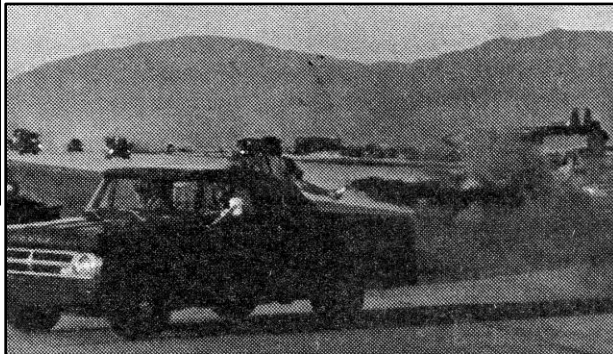
Briefs his passenger, an Air Force combat photographer...



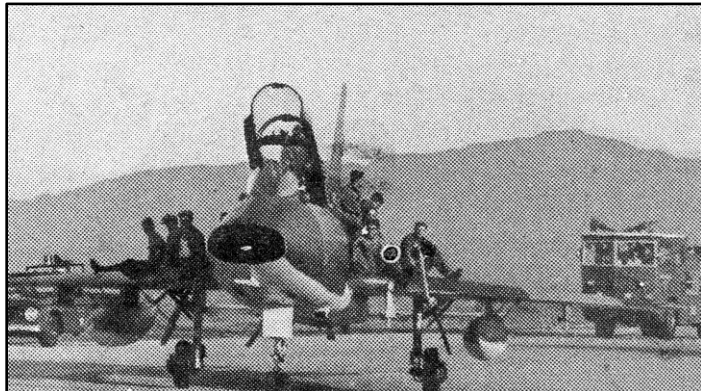


Makes a low pass over the Phan Rang runway...

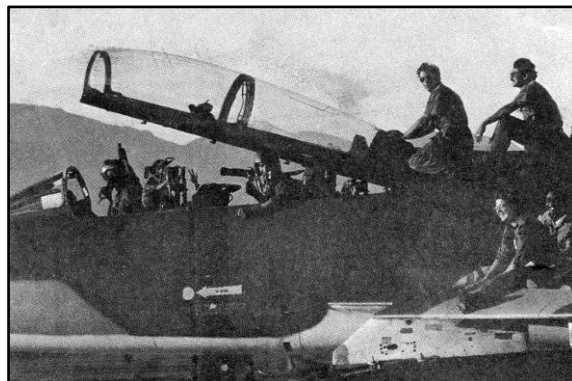
Flares and smoke bombs led the way



Number 874 takes off on the last F-100 combat mission in Southeast Asia



Enlisted men joined the parade



Number 874, last Super Sabre in combat

(Special thanks to Tom Barden for saving this historical article for 47 years and sharing with the Phan Rang community.)

School Marks First Year

(Seventh Air Force News, March 26, 1969)

PHAN RANG-February marked the end of the 504th Theater Indoctrination School's first year of operation here.

The school's "professors" provide standardization training in forward air controller (FAC) tactics and techniques. All FACs operating in Southeast Asia must complete the course of instruction at Phan Rang before proceeding to their permanent duty station.

In addition, the instructors provide upgrading courses for all FAC instructor pilots in SEA.

Since arriving here last year, the school has "graduated" more than 1,000 FACs. While the majority of these were qualified in the O-1 Bird Dog or O-2 Super Skymaster, the school was expanded last October to include the OV-10 Bronco, the Air Force's newest FAC aircraft.

Enemy Bunkers Hit

(Seventh Air Force News, March 26, 1969)

PHAN RANG-F-100 Supersabre pilots of the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron "Bobcats," here recently blasted an enemy bunker complex in the Mekong Delta region of South Vietnam.

One of the pilots on the strike was Maj. James E. Williamson, Grapevine, Tex.

"The Viet Cong positions were along a river," commented Major Williamson.

"The clouds were pretty low, but they were broken enough so that we could weave in among them. The big factor was a strong wind blowing across the area which made accuracy difficult but not impossible.

"There was a Vietnamese Air Force strike going on nearby too," he concluded, "so we had to turn right off our bomb runs to stay out of their way."

The FAC credited the pilots with destroying six enemy fortifications and damaging three, destroying two bunkers and one sampan and causing one secondary explosion.

ALCE Transports Move Everything

By Capt. David T. Seay

PLEIKU — The people most responsible for getting people and cargo to their destinations in the Republic of Vietnam are the small groups of Air Force personnel who operate the airlift control elements (ALCE).

The mission of any 834th Air Division ALCE is to insure the smooth flow and maximum efficiency of all the aircraft assigned for airlift mission.

Daily, more than 40 missions are flown in and out of here, supplying Civilian Irregular Defense Group camps, carrying passengers and cargo throughout Vietnam, performing air evacuations and a myriad of additional missions.

Primary aircraft for the missions include the C-7 Caribou, C-123 Provider and C-130 Hercules. A C-118 Liftmaster is used daily for air evacuation.

"Our highest priority is medical evacuation," noted Maj. James H. Brown Jr. "Headquarters at Tan Son Nhut AB will divert any aircraft in the area to respond to this emergency so the injured or sick individual can receive the quickest and best medical care."

Priorities are determined by the user and may run from a tactical emergency or emergency resupply requiring a response by ALCE in two hours or a routine priority two requiring delivery in six days.

The C-7's primary mission is resupply of the CIDG camps located in the II Corps Tactical Zone. An average of 19 sorties are flown daily, each aircraft carrying 4,600 pounds of cargo.

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 163 **“Stories worth telling”**

Again, the cargo is as varied as ALCE's mission. Montagnard soldiers and their families, pigs, chickens, ducks, cattle, fresh vegetables, petroleum, supplies, ammunition, lumber and pierced steel planking is only a small sample of what may be found sitting on the Pleiku cargo ramp ready for delivery.

The C-123s and C-130s primarily are used to haul cargo and passengers to the larger bases in country. In addition to 13 daily scheduled passenger flights, the Pleiku ALCE makes sure hold baggage, general cargo, aircraft and automobile parts, office supplies and anything else it takes to keep U.S. forces supplied are moved with speed and efficiency.

(Note: The 834th Airlift Division was responsible for managing and controlling all airlift in South Vietnam and the aerial ports and the various detachments were responsible for the actual movement of passengers and cargo. The aerial ports operated cargo and passenger terminals of varying sizes throughout South Vietnam and the aerial port was responsible for processing passengers and cargo, loading and off loading aircraft, maintaining inventory and coordinating with the Airlift Control Element (ALCE) for the timely movement of cargo and passengers.)

2019 REUNION INFO

Hotel: Embassy Suites by Hilton Savannah Airport

145 Mulberry Blvd., Savannah, Georgia, 31407

1-(912) 330-8222

Click [here](#) to make your reservations or if you prefer to call, please use the number listed above and mention **“Phan Rang AB Reunion”** to get the discounted reunion rates.

Please note: If an individual needs to cancel their own personal reservation they need to cancel **48 hours** prior to arrival to avoid a cancellation or NO Show charge. Check-in time after 4:00 PM. Anyone arriving prior to 4:00 p.m. will be accommodated as soon as possible, but should be advised that there may be a wait. Check-out time is 12 noon.

Rates: 8-10 October \$154, 11-12 October \$159 and 13 October \$139

Accommodations: All rooms are two-room suites with the option of one king bed or two-queen beds. Each suite includes a sofa bed, microwave, coffee maker, mini-refrigerator, hair dryer, iron and ironing board. All the suites have two 32” flat screen televisions, kitchen area with wet bar and oversized work desk with ergonomic chair.

Amenities & Services: Complimentary USA Today, Cooked-to Order Breakfast with an

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 163 “Stories worth telling”

Omelet bar to create your own omelets, complimentary beer/wine & Hor’s Oeuvres nightly at the manager’s reception from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM Monday-Sunday nights. Mulberry Restaurant & Lounge with American cuisine.

Restaurant & Lounge Hours:

Complimentary Breakfast: Monday — Friday 6:00am-10:00am

Complimentary Breakfast: Saturday & Sunday 7:00am-10:30am

145 Mulberry Restaurant & Lounge Hours: 5:00pm-10:00pm

145 Mulberry Restaurant (Room Service): 5:00pm-10:00pm

Comfort and convenience an indoor heated pool, whirlpool, and fitness center featuring leading edge cardio and resistance training equipment from Precor. The fastest high speed Internet available throughout the hotel. 24/7 Embassy Suites BusinessLink Business Center featuring high-speed Internet access, complimentary printing and copying service and audio/visual equipment rental.

- Complimentary parking
- Complimentary Shuttle to and hours: 5:00am-11:00pm.

Speakers: Nancy Kaupa has committed to be a key-note speaker at the banquet. She is going to give us the wives perspective of a Vietnam deployment and Maggie Johnson is trying to round up some speakers that would have interest to all veterans. It’s still early and any suggestions are always welcomed.

Additional Comments: The hotel is the only arrangement that we have currently made. The banquet will be on Saturday night, 12 October, per tradition. Times for hospitality suite operation will be forthcoming as well as an announcement for a group activity. We were thinking about a scuba diving trip or for those that like to stay closer to the surface, maybe just snorkeling. Jim Kucipeck, Lou Ruggiero and myself along with our wives will be visiting the hotel in January to meet the hotel staff and make other arrangements. It certainly isn’t too early to be thinking about a logo/t-shirt design. The incredibly talented Steve Russ did the design for last year and maybe he might be interested in doing it again. As I said before, any suggestions are always welcomed.

I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter and if you have any comments, please let me know. *I put that comment about scuba diving and snorkeling in just to see if anyone reads the newsletter.* This newsletter was composed by Douglas Severt. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, reply to <mailto:dougsevert@cox.net> and put ‘unsubscribe’ in subject line.