

In this issue:

Support - No. 2 Squadron

352nd ‘No. 1’ Unit at Phan Rang AB

The Bummers Sage Continues

- 8th and 13th Da Nang and Phan Rang Air Bases, Vietnam by John DeCillo

Two In New Duties

Serving Our Country

2019 Reunion Graphics

Australian-American Reunion List Updated

Letters

Support - No. 2 Squadron



No. 2 Squadron Headquarters Building

Despite the small number of Australian personnel on a USAF base of over 7,000, the squadron has achieved some renown because of its self-sufficiency. This is due largely to the fact that No. Squadron, unlike other squadrons on the base, has its own administrative and equipment support. Being part of an operational squadron, the administrative aspects have proved varied, interesting and in many ways quite different from similar sections at any normal RAAF base.

Due to the lack of banking facilities, the pay and accounting section handles all monies for the

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Phan Rang AB News No. 166 **“Stories worth telling”**

three messes as well as members' pay. Five currencies are presently being used; US Military Payment Certificates on the base, Australian, US Green and Malaysian by members on leave, and Vietnamese piastres for civil aid projects and for payment of civilian employees.

As well as providing and maintaining a signals network and HF radio link between Vung Tau, Phan Rang and centres out of country, the communications section is responsible for the defence warning public address system operative during "phase red alerts". The latter has proved its reliability on several occasions during the year.

On such occasions all 'Members of administrative flight share the additional responsibility of acting as augmentee guards while the base is under mortar or ground attack. Fortunately they have not been called upon to shoot yet, a situation which, it is hoped, will not alter.

Also part of administrative flight, but operating from the domestic area away from the headquarters building, the civilian labour office, under the defence officer, supervises the employment of 75 Vietnamese nationals. Thoroughly screened at the American Labour Office in Phan Rang, these people serve in the dining rooms, living quarters or work as gardeners, painters or general labourers.

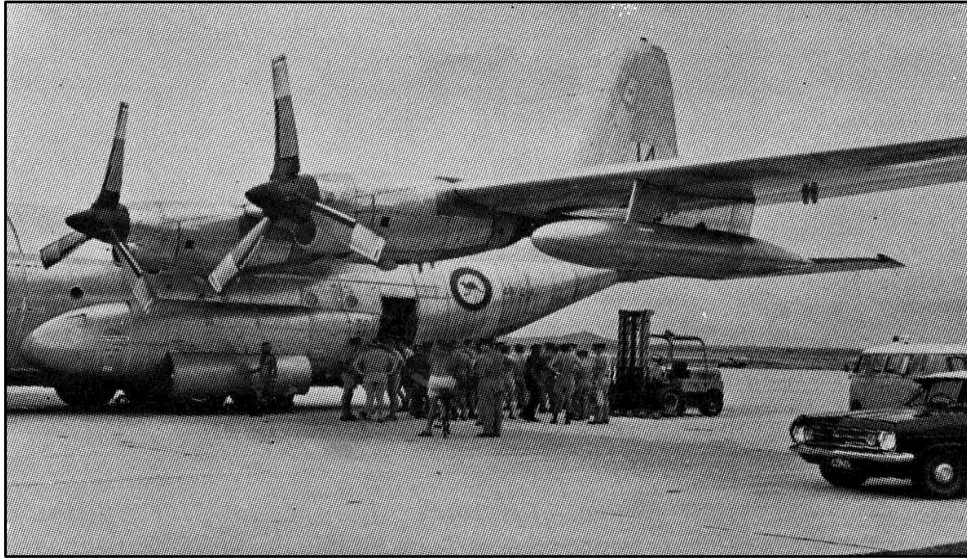
The linguist and his assistant, a Vietnamese girl who is also a skilled interpreter, help in a wide variety of situations, including 'Medcap' missions with the doctor, on civil aid projects accompanying the chaplain and on visits to the local hamlets with visiting officials.

Transport is another section which is called upon to provide many services not normally associated with similar sections in Australia. As No. 2 Squadron is almost completely independent in transportation needs we find the section undertaking duties such as carriage of bombs, refueling of aircraft, providing a unit bus run and taxi service, garbage collection, and carriage of Vietnamese workers to and from Phan Rang city each day. In addition, the section is responsible for maintenance of a large amount of aircraft ground handling equipment, forklifts, cranes etc, and the squadrons' 74 domestic refrigerators and air conditioners.

The credit for most of the photos appearing here goes to the photographic section which undertakes the squadron's numerous routine and public relations photographic requirements. However, the primary task of the small staff is to prepare and process the aerial photographs

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used to assess bombing results from daylight missions. The section uses the facilities of the USAF 600th Photographic Squadron's laboratory.

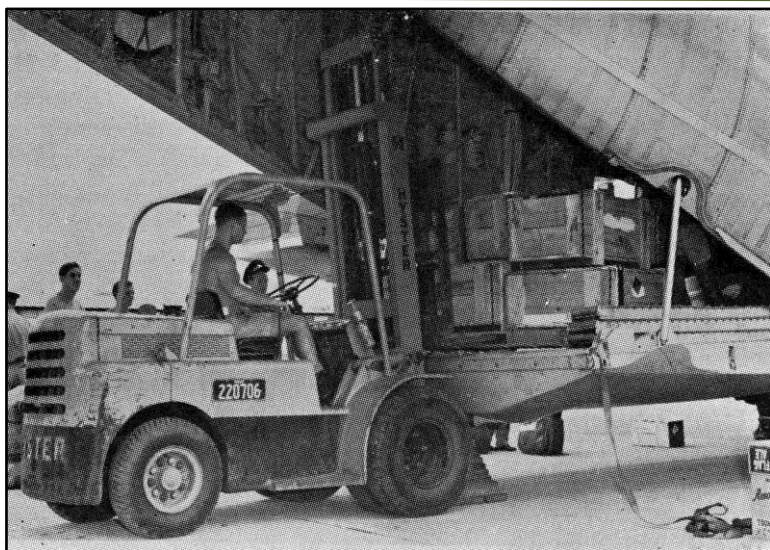


**Passengers
departing on
five days leave.**

**Officers enjoying an
afternoon snack amidst
pleasant surroundings.**



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Phan Rang AB News No. 166 **“Stories worth telling”**



**Unloading RAAF
Hercules.**

To provide effective logistics support for No. 2 Squadron in its present operational role, a considerable amount of equipment and supplies required are obtained locally from the USAF 35th Supply Squadron, under a USA-Aust financial agreement. The majority of aircraft maintenance spares, however, are obtained through RAAF sources, while shipments of bombs from overseas sources are initially delivered to Cam Ranh Bay then transhipped to Phan Rang as required and stored in the large local storage facility operated by the USAF.

RAAF Hercules and Caribou aircraft on regular courier service to Phan Rang provide a constant flow of spares, vehicles, mail and passengers. In the first 18 months of operations the air movements section has helped these aircraft maintain their schedule by rapidly handling over 1000 tons of palletized cargo and 3560 passengers.

Under the joint military agreement, buildings occupied by the squadron remain the property of the US Government and all maintenance work should be affected by US personnel. However, due to heavy construction/maintenance commitments placed on the US authorities, most maintenance and improvement tasks are carried out by RAAF personnel assisted by the Vietnamese workers, and under the guidance of the barracks section.

The catering section, staff of 25, comprising cooks, assistants and stewards work under the caterer preparing meals at all hours in a pre-fabricated kitchen consisting of three transportable, air conditioned trailers incorporating electric cooking facilities. Food supplies are received from the US Army 1st Logistics Support Group at Phan Rang, issues being based on the

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Phan Rang AB News No. 166 **“Stories worth telling”**

US forces 28 day cyclic menu. The standard of meal served is considerably improved by purchases such as frozen steaks from the commissary and fresh vegetables and bread brought in by RAAF Hercules. These extra rations enable the section to cater for occasional barbeques or buffet dinners, and to prepare suppers for VIP visitors or concert parties. However, the greatest factor is the ingenuity of the staff with their varying methods of presentation of what really is quite plain food.

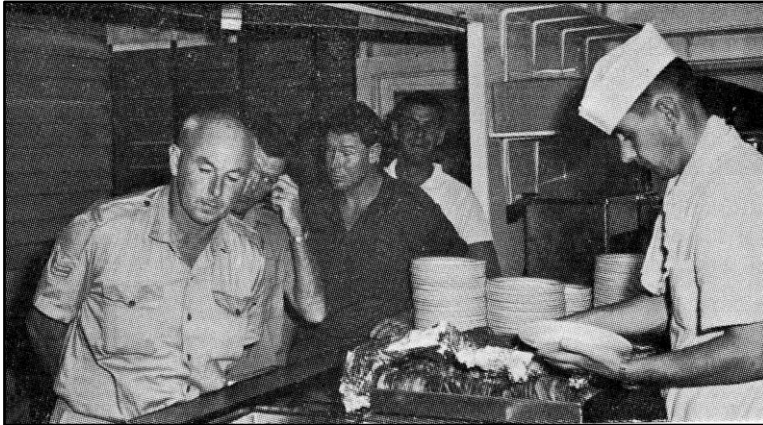


**Cook preparing
luncheon
sweets.**

**The squadron
bus, shown
outside the
Airmen’s living
quarters provides
regular transport
around the large
base.**



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Phan Rang AB News No. 166 **“Stories worth telling”**



All three messes are served from the adjoining kitchen.

**“We few. We happy few.
We band of brothers, for he today
That sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother.”**

— William Shakespeare, Henry V

352nd ‘No. 1’ Unit At Phan Rang AB

(Source: Seventh Air Force News, May 8, 1969)

PHAN RANG - The 352nd Tactical Fighter Squadron led its three sister squadrons of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, Phan Rang AB, in destroying the Viet Cong war potential during April.



Flying F-100s, pilots of the 352nd accounted for nearly half of the enemy soldiers killed by the wing's Supersabres, racking up 80 confirmed and 39 probable of the wing's total of 176 and 190 respectively.

In addition, the Yellowjackets, commanded by Lt. Col. Len C. Russell, Macks Creek, Mo., destroyed or damaged 1,152 bunkers. The wing total in this category was 3,078.

Capt. **Francis P. "Gus" Gauthier**, Marksville, La., led the squadron with 480 enemy bunkers damaged or destroyed. His display of bombing accuracy earned him the title of 352nd

"Top Gun" for the month.

1st Lt. **David T. Wolcott**, Arlington, Va., was a close second with 479 bunkers to his credit. The 352nd fighter pilots also destroyed or damaged 284 fortifications out of the 978 wing total and 1,400 meters of the 3,070 meters of trench line credited to the wing.

"We had some lucrative targets and delivered our ordnance with pinpoint accuracy," said Colonel Russell in summing up his squadron's performance.

(Other stories about the 352nd: Phan Rang News 70: *Wing Honors Won By Men From 352nd*; Phan Rang News 137: *352 Pilots Have Beautiful Mission and 352nd Marks 15,000 Sortie.*)

AS SEEN TAPED ON A DOOR AT PHAN RANG



...AND ANOTHER



The "Bummers" Saga Continues



The "Bummers" Saga



8th and 13th Da Nang and Phan Rang Air Bases, Vietnam

By John DeCillo

I was a member of ground weapons crews during the Vietnam War. My first encounter with the Canberra was at Clark Field in the Philippines during August 1966. I was excited to finally be getting assigned to a particular type of aircraft even though I had never seen or heard of it in Weapons Tech School or otherwise. At Clark, weapons troops loaded live ammo and blue practice bombs for pilot training missions. We all had a general knowledge of weapon arming, loading and systems check from technical school and we just needed to learn how they applied to the Canberra.

As far as my thought on the particular aircraft it was just "Holy Shit" - a real live bomber. It was much later after we learned of its strengths and weaknesses before we even though to compare it to other aircraft in the theatre. The rollover bomb bay door was the most unique thing to me. It could be configured for a vast variety of munitions. We would soon learn how many and how fact that could be accomplished. Here at least, I thought OK, I'm not in Vietnam. Soon after our familiarization with the aircraft we were assigned as load teams. Usually, the team consisted of a three-striper 'Old Head' and three FNGs-New Guys. Once trained and formed, we were issued TDY orders for Vietnam and re-assigned to the 8th or 13th TBS. By the time I reached Vietnam, both squadrons had been in place since 1965 and had already amassed a somewhat mottled reputation.

My first assignment was at Da Nang Air Base, Vietnam. I was assigned to the 8th TFS but the 13th was in-country at the time so we just did the same job with them as we would with the 8th.

A shortage of weapons crews ensured that when the aircrews and pilots rotated back to Clark every sixty days, there would still be enough weapons troops' in-country to handle the

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Phan Rang AB News No. 166 **“Stories worth telling”**

missions. We would get to the end of a sixty-five day TFY stretch and then get handed an extension for another sixty-five. If we were lucky, we would get back to the Philippines for a couple of weeks and then right back on the line we'd go.

The aircraft had its quirks. If you did not adhere to protocol for loading, you could end up with a bomber sitting on its tail with its nose wheels off the ground. I especially didn't like the wing-mounted speed break “fingers” that stuck out above and below the wing structure. I wasn't the only one to have his hair parted by one of those things. I also managed to get the pointed end of one of the wheel fenders jabbed into my back, not pleasant at all. In the heat of a fast turnaround you might even get some hot engine oil down your back while loading the mission's ordinance using the MJ-1 Bomb Loading machine (Jammer). Being the third man on the crew, driving the ‘Jammer’ was my main job along with all of the other aspects of loading and system maintenance.

One particular incident occurred on the flight line at Da Nang in September '66'. Our crew chief Adam Kubiak, briefed our crew on our first load of the day. We proceeded out to the aircraft and started in with our work. The line chief came up and said to drop what we were doing and go meet the NCO in Charge (NCOIC) at the end of the runway.

A Canberra was coming in with four hung M-35 750lb napalm tanks on the wing pylons. My first thought was, “I'm going to die today.” On his approach the pilot set the aircraft down like a butterfly and we all breathed again in unison. After the roll-out, the NCOIC called for me to bring the MJ-1 forward with an aluminum cradle on the loading table and place it under the first bomb. With someone to stead the weapon on each end, he shook it from side to side. The bomb plopped into the cradle and I backed out and set it on the waiting trailer. This process was carried out three more times in the exact same sequence. You have to know your way around a wing pylon to know what is involved in properly and safely loading munitions for combat delivery. The pylon had a center-mounted bomb rack that locks into the mounting lugs installed directly in the munitions. Once loaded and locked there are two sets of ‘chocks’ that need to be tightened on each end of the weapon to assure that it maintains the correct flight attitude and so it doesn't wobble from side to side. Well, with the aluminum skin of the napalm canisters, it took some time, the chocks could be tightened too much or cross-chocked. I believed that's what happened in this instance. We just went back about our work, but I'm sure that someone got their asses ripped for putting that aircrew and everyone else on the

recovery in harm’s way.

Here’s a perspective from No. 2 Squadron (RAAF) who’s duties parallel that of the USAF “Bummers” and the writer is also commenting on the munitions used by the RAAF as explained in Phan Rang Newsletter 164.

Dalton Neville wrote: I was a "Gunnie" with 2 Squadron (RAAF) in '70-71 and we used up the last of the older British Mk-10 1000 pounders during the early part of that time. They were fitted with 100-series bomb tails that had spring-loaded fin extensions that were operated by a lanyard release unit that pulled a safety pin after the bomb had left the bomb-bay. Bloody dangerous because the extensions whacked into place with a helluva smack when released and could chop a leg off if one ever went wrong!

After we changed over to all US 750's, bombing-up a Canberra became an easier task and I do believe the team that I was on, led by Sgt Tom Walsh and Cpl John Campbell broke the old speed record by quite a bit and we could do a complete bomb-up in about six minutes - four in the bomb bay and one on each wingtip. Mind you, we did have the Jammer to help with the wingtip stations, but still had to use a 1000 lb manual hydraulic jack to fit the four in the bomb bay. (And that's where/how [I believe] I managed to cause damage to my spinal L4/L5 vertebrae.)

Then, when all was done to proper settings we'd have to wait for the Nav/bomb Aimers to do their preflight checks where they'd jiggle the hung bombs and often want the feet re-tensioned . . . we'd undo the locking nuts on the tension-legs a turn or two and immediately re-tighten them . . . and they'd always pass a second inspection!! I can't remember any hangups due to failed releases in the year I was there, despite certain Nav's predilections for fiddling.

RAAF No 2 Sqn held a fantastic Bomb Damaged Assessment (BDA) across its history in Vietnam as statistics show.

We did trial a number of High-draggers but I can't remember the result details.

(The Bummers Saga began with **“Birth of the Bummers”** by Howard Taylor in Phan Rang News

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Phan Rang AB News No. 166 “Stories worth telling”

162 and continued with “**Yes Bombs Do Bounce On Concrete**” by Chris Walling and “**The Arkansas Coon Hunt**” by Howard Taylor in Phan Rang News 163. In Phan Rang News 164 “**Unpleasant Memories**” by Robert Zelski and “**My Most Disturbing Memory**” by Larry Theuer and in Phan Rang News 165 “**Beach Trip**” by Ron Bodine and “**Brown’s Story**” by Earl Brown.)

TWO IN NEW DUTIES

(Source: Seventh Air Force News, May 8, 1969)

PHAN RANG - Col. **Tony M. Greget**, Clovis, N.M., recently assumed duties as vice commander, 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang AB.

He arrived at Phan Rang in October of last year and was deputy commander for operations before being named wing deputy commander.

Lt. Col. **Paul A. Kaultu.**, of Annapolis, Md., former Thunderbird Aerial Demonstration Team commander and 35th TFW assistant deputy commander for operations, now fills the position vacated by Colonel Greget.



Serving our Country

Staff Sergeant **Halbert J. Tusinger**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tusinger of 510 S. College St., Siloam Springs, received the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal at Travis AFB, Calif.

Sgt. Tusinger was decorated for meritorious service as a jet engine mechanic at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. He was cited for his outstanding professional skill and initiative. The sergeant is a graduate of Siloam Springs High School. (Herald and Democrat, Siloam Springs, 1967)

Five decades ago, returning Vietnam War veterans didn't get the welcome they deserved.

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...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 166 "Stories worth telling"

In fact, they didn't get a welcome at all. "The American public didn't care for the war a whole lot by then," said Roger Pollard of Gilbert, who served in Vietnam in 1971. "There weren't a lot of people who were coming over and shaking their hands and saying, 'You did a good job' or 'You are a patriotic guy.' I never had anybody come over and shake my hand and say, 'Welcome home.'" **Skip Erickson** of Gilbert served from April 1968 to April 1969 at **Phan Rang** Air Base as a mechanic in the U.S. Air Force. "In those days, we seemed to blame the soldier for the war, not the government," Erickson said. One of the lucky ones, he was met by his family upon his return. (East Valley Tribune, The, Mesa-Scottsdale-Tempe, AZ, 2017)

Northwestern State University honored MSG(R) **John Dykes** prior to Saturday's home football game, continuing the university's tradition of honoring veterans and servicemen at athletic events. Dykes served in the U.S. Air Force from 1967-1991. A combat veteran, Dykes served two years with the 35th combat support wing at **Phan Rang** Airbase in Vietnam. (US Fed News. September 19, 2017)

When **Franklin "Frank" Longfellow** returned from Vietnam, his entire welcoming party was two students from Centennial, his daughters holding a banner. Longfellow was in the Army National Guard, Navy and Air Force, and served during Korean and Vietnam War eras, in a career that lasted more than 22 years. Longfellow grew up in Dearborn, Mich., and had a first job delivering newspapers from shortly after World War II to the dawn of the Korea War. The newspaper he was selling then was the sports-oriented Detroit Free Press. Newsboys were supposed to shout the main headline. "I dropped the sports headline and called out about the U.S. intervening in Korea," he recalled. "I sold more papers than anybody that day." Longfellow was looking at his career options. "Back in 1951, I was still in high school, and my buddies decided to join the Michigan National Guard," he said. Besides, there was a military tradition in the Longfellow family. "My dad was in World War I, my brother was in World War II and my sister served in Korea in the WACs," the Women's Army Corps, Longfellow said. One of the Guard's tasks in the paranoid Cold War era was to defend against air attacks on Detroit's car factories, he said. Then "I got wanderlust," he said. "I enlisted in the Navy in February 1953, and spent five years in the Navy," he said. He studied aircraft electronics and took a break to marry his wife Charlotte back in Dearborn. Then he was ordered to board the aircraft carrier USS Hancock, built during World War II and decommissioned shortly after the end of the war, then modernized and recommissioned in the early 1950s as an attack carrier with a different catapult system that Longfellow worked on. He spent two-and-a-half years on the carrier,

"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN

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Phan Rang AB News No. 166 "Stories worth telling"

deployed to the Far East. Then he got another assignment: another carrier. That was too much water for Longfellow. By extending his enlistment, he was able to get his choice of bases, and ended up in helicopter training in Pensacola, Fla. Out of the Navy, he returned to a Dearborn that was in a recession. He was able to get his old job back via veterans preference. Then he met with an Air Force recruiter. Longfellow was able to maintain an equivalent rank to what he had in the Navy, and was stationed in Michigan. He later worked on F-102 fighters. But the Air Force needed instructors, so he made his first trip to Chanute Air Force Base, now closed, near Rantoul and bought a home in Champaign to get better schools for his children. "Don't shoot 'em, Chanute 'em" was a phrase about being sent to what was not considered a top assignment, he said. That became irrelevant. He didn't get to stick around, sent to North Dakota and then to Okinawa for more than two years, and then back to Chanute — only to find he was headed to Vietnam in 1971. Most of his time was in **Phan Rang**, an air base used by the South Vietnamese Air Force and the U.S. Air Force. He worked in aircraft maintenance and largely was restricted to base. The base was wedged between jungle and the South China Sea. The war was winding down, and he was tasked to turn over equipment to the South Vietnamese. Still, Phan Rang was harassed by enemy rockets. "They weren't sophisticated rockets," Longfellow said. "They might land on an airstrip, or every once in a while a barracks, and we had to go into a bunker." (News-Gazette, The Champaign-Urbana, IL, September 11, 2017)

CMSgt. **William Levenson**, USAF (Ret.) September 12, 1929 - September 7, 2017 Warner Robins, GA- CMSgt. William Levenson, USAF (Ret.). He was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts on September 12, 1929 to the late David and Helen Levenson. Mr. Levenson enlisted in the Air Force and proudly served his country for 26 years. During those years he performed many jobs including; aircraft mechanic for B-29, B-52, KC-97 and KC- 135. The many locations he temporarily served include: Goose Bay, Labrador; Fairbanks, Alaska; Westover, Massachusetts; Guam; French Morocco, Africa; Brize Norton England; Fairford, England; and Sculthorpe, England. Permanent locations include: Tuscan, Arizona; Plattsburg, New York; Homestead, Florida; Goose Bay, Labrador; Minot, North Dakota; Warner Robins, Georgia; Tahkli, Thailand; and **Phan Rang**, South Vietnam. Mr. Levenson was also the Special Advisor to the South Vietnamese Air Force. He loved his job in the Air Force and felt that "everyday was fun." Mr. Levenson retired as a Chief Master Sergeant; and would have preferred to stay in the Air Force until they "threw him out!" (Macon Telegraph, The, September 9, 2017)

"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 166 **"Stories worth telling"**

Sgt. **Arnold A. "Clint" Houk**, who served his country as a member of the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. Arnold A. Houk was born Sept. 1, 1946, in Port Angeles, Wash. He graduated from the Port Angeles High School in 1964 and worked at the Crown Zellerbach Paper Mill in Port Angeles until he left for basic training Sept. 14, 1964 at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. Houk received his training in jet engine mechanics and then was stationed at the former Duluth Air Base, becoming a member of the 148th Fighter Unit. He met Mary Thompson of Superior in 1965. Houk was deployed to **Phan Rang** Air Force Base, Vietnam, in August of 1966, returning home September 1967. (Superior Telgram (WI), August 29, 2017).

Master Sgt. **Robert Bernero**, was living in Memphis, Tennessee, when he enlisted in the Air Force at age 17 for a 21-year career. By the time he got to the Vietnam War in the mid-1960s, the young soldiers who were ages 17 or 18, were calling him a "lifer," meaning not only that he was in the military for what looked like the long way home, but he was by then 22 ... and old. Although he was taught by the Air Force to make electricity with generators where there were no power lines, he also was issued a rifle — there were no front lines in Vietnam.

"My first assignment was in **Phan Rang**. I brought in some of the control tower. We were trying to build a base, and were trying to get a base suitable for F-4s." (Lubbock Avalanche-Journal (TX), July 23, 2017)

Col. **Denning Miles 'Jack' Perdew**. Born December 13, 1921 at San Antonio Community Hospital in Upland, CA., the second of five children of Earnest Edwin Perdew and Clara Dora Von Sien, Jack was a graduate of Chaffey High School in Ontario, CA. (class of 1939). He attended courses through the University of Maryland in Fontainebleau, France and earned a Bachelor's Degree in General Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1964 as well as a Master's Degree in International Affairs from George Washington University, Washington D.C. in 1966. On May 7, 1946, he married the love of his life, Ruth C. 'Dude' Lewis. They were married for sixty-five happy years and were just as much in love when she passed away in 2012 as the day they met. Jack and Dude were long-time residents for 50 years atop a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Cardiff by the Sea, CA. In January of 1942, Jack enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a pilot. As a Captain in the 11th Bomb Squadron of the 14th Air Force with headquarters in China, during the war, he flew 54 missions in his 11 months overseas. For meritorious combat services, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal. His thirty year career included a tour of duty in Okinawa (1949-1952); two assignments at the

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 166 “Stories worth telling”

Pentagon (1952-1955 as Staff Officer, Office of the Assistant for Atomic Energy to the Deputy Chief of Staff and 1968-1971 as an action officer in the Plans and Policy Division of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Staff Officer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Headquarters Allied Air Forces Central Europe at Fontainebleau, France 1959-1960); Staff Officer with the Office of SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander in Europe)’s Representative to the Joint Strategic Planning Staff at Offutt AFB, Nebraska (1960-1965), was Tactical Airlift Squadron Commander at Mactan Air Base in the Philippines (1967-1968), and volunteered twice for Vietnam. From 1972-1973, he served as Vice-Commander of the 14th Special Operations Wing at **Phan Rang** Air Base. After retiring from the Air Force at the age of 52, it became apparent that he wasn’t going to be content spending the rest of his life playing golf, so he leased a Cessna 150 aircraft and flew as a spotter for a sword fish boat. His job was to find fish and direct the boat to where they could be spotted and harpooned. The new venture was not successful; starting on the day he leased the aircraft, there wasn't another swordfish landed on the Pacific Coast for that season. He reluctantly returned the aircraft to its owner and bought a diesel boat, spending the next twenty years working as a commercial fisherman in San Diego. (July 20, 2017 San Gabriel Valley Tribune, West Covina, CA)

Robert F. MacAvoy, of Clark, N.J. was born in Rahway, N.J., to Frank and Ann (Glagola) MacAvoy. He proudly served his country as a sergeant in the Air Force at **Phan Rang** Air Base in Vietnam. Mr. MacAvoy was the recipient of the Vietnam Service Medal with four Bronze service stars. He was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor and one Oak Leaf Cluster. (June 20, 2017 | Star-Ledger, The (Newark, NJ)

Don Stokes, born in Tennessee, enlisted in the U.S. Air Force For basic training he went to Lackland AFB, then to technician school in Illinois to become an aircraft mechanic. In October 1964 Stokes was assigned to the 70th Bomb Wing at Clinton Sherman AFB. In March 1966, he received orders for Vietnam, first stopping in Saigon, then later to **Phan Rang**. He arrived as a mechanic, but was first put to work doing construction because there were no planes yet at the base. He was also chief of a quick reactionary team that provided security as needed. Stokes said there were a few enemy breaches, but did not go into detail other than to say it got pretty hairy at times. Months later he began working on F-100s, known as "lead sleds." The work mostly involved engines, hydraulics and fuel matters. In December 1966, he went to Ton Son Nhut Air Base, then headed home in March 1967. He was then assigned to Dover AFB – Delaware, where he worked on C-124, C-133, C-141 and other aircraft and did TDYs to Guam,

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 166 **“Stories worth telling”**

England and Spain to repair planes. He was discharged in April 1968 and returned to Hot Springs. (June 6, 2017 | Hot Springs Village Voice (AR))

Robert Galen Stack, of Fairfax, VA born March 23, 1941 in Packs Branch, WV he was the son of the late John William Stack, Sr. and the late Nellie Roberta Vance Stack. After graduation from High School in Mount Hope, Mr. Stack served honorable in the United States Air Force from September 1959 thru April 1981, achieving the rank of Master Sergeant. He served his country faithfully in the Republic of Korea; Langley Air Force Base, VA; Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany; Reese Air Force Base, TX; **Phan Rang** Air Base and Tan San Nhut Air Base, Viet Nam; and other locations across the United States. Following his military career, he continued to serve as a Department of Defense Civil Servant in the Washington D.C. area until his retirement. (June 2, 2017 | Fayette Tribune (Oak Hill, WV))

Holtz, LeRoy E. Of Villa Park, CA. in Garden Grove, CA. LeRoy was born on Aug. 7, 1925 in Omaha. He joined the Marines in 1942 and during the War was stationed at El Toro and Guam. After the War, he attended the University of Omaha where he played college baseball. After graduation and a brief stint in financing, he joined the Air Force and became an OSI agent. He worked as an agent in Alexandra, LA; Anchorage, AK; Del Rio, TX; and Clark Air Base, Philippines, before returning to Omaha to teach ROTC at his Alma Mater. He then spent a year in **Phan Rang**, Vietnam, in charge of base security. He was awarded a bronze star for his service during the Tet offensive. He was then stationed for two years at the Air Force Headquarters in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Robert Testa was born Dec. 26, 1947, in Norwalk, to Joseph and Sylvia Testa. Shortly after graduating from J.M. Wright Technical High School in Stamford, he joined the Air Force and was stationed at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, and **Phan Rang** Air Base in Vietnam. (April 28, 2017 Hour, The (Norwalk, CT) Jim Shay)

Dale L. Fischer, Army, Dates of service: June 28, 1968 to March 29, 1971. "I was sent to Vietnam on Jan. 7, 1969, to the 1st Infantry Division. I was a crew chief on a Huey helicopter that flew resupply and troop deployment. After two months, I was assigned to fly with the commanding general of the 1st Infantry Div. Through this experience, I was able to meet President Nixon and many other dignitaries. On my second tour, I was a crew chief on a medivac helicopter - The Dust Off - for the 247th Medical Detachment at **Phan Rang**. We would

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 166 “Stories worth telling”

pick up the wounded out in the field and transfer them to the hospital. Two dates I will never forget: March 10 and June 3, 1970, when I was shot down. (April 24, 2017 | Grand Island Independent, The (NE))

Clarence McCray arrived in Vietnam in 1969, serving with the U.S. Army's 238th Aerial Weapons Unit as an armament specialist. "The day started off, [it] was a beautiful day," McCray said with a laugh. "I know it was a Sunday because we took the big malaria pills on Sunday; we were supposed to go on the mission and get off and have the rest of the day off." They took off from the base near Cam Ranh Bay, on a mission to insert troops near **Phan Rang** Air Force Base. During a second run, McCray said a loud boom reverberated in the chopper. "So we started looking to see where we [were] hit," McCray said. "[We] never did actually find it because we crashed and left the helicopter in the jungle that day." The official report said small-arms fire brought the chopper down, and it never was recovered. The helicopter team was about five miles from base when it began to yaw and pitch, forcing them to begin looking for a place to land in the mountainous and tree covered terrain. "... We cut the top off some trees and the pilot ... we called him Gator, was flying the thing, he said 'we got to land,'" McCray said. "I was thinking, 'Land? There ain't nothing but trees here ...'" McCray remembers the tail of the helicopter hitting the trees and beginning to spin. "We all got knocked out, all four people, on the trees," McCray said. "The ship got knocked out, thank God for that; I believe that saved us." When he regained consciousness, McCray said the helicopter lay on its left side — his side — and a sapling lay across his helmet. The gunner, who was on the right side of the helicopter when it crashed, landed on McCray when he took off his seatbelt. The impact knocked McCray's shoulder out of place. "That was it; we all survived the crash," he said. It took about 45 minutes from the time the chopper crashed until the four soldiers were rescued from the jungle by a small helicopter nicknamed **Pedro**. "We had to recover the radios and the guns," he said, adding his job was to care for his gunner, pilot and co-pilot. "... I was just doing my job; that's what you're trained to do and that's what you do." He remembers after the crash, their unit attempted a rescue but didn't have the equipment to penetrate the thick jungle. "We formed a back-to-back perimeter, four men," McCray said with a laugh. "What good that would have done, I don't know, but we went through the ritual of doing it anyway."

When the helicopter Pedro arrived, he said the crew chief of that chopper pulled him out first, despite McCray's protests. "I told him no, I'm not supposed to be pulled first because it was my helicopter, I'm supposed to be the last man up," he said. The Pedro's crew chief told McCray he

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang AB News No. 166 “Stories worth telling”

looked like he could fire a machine gun and although they weren't under fire at the time, he was instructed to go to the back of the helicopter and provide cover while the other soldiers were extracted. McCray spent three days recovering before the flight surgeon put him back on duty. After leaving Vietnam, McCray spent some time in Fort Hood, Texas, and he believes it played a role in his recovery to stay with fellow soldiers and talk about their experiences.

Source: November 11, 2016 News & Advance, The (Lynchburg, VA)

Bill Gause of Georgetown looked at life a lot from behind a mule. “I decided there had to be a better way to make a living than looking at a mule’s backside,” he said. After graduating from Conway High, Gause served 20 years in the Air Force. As a mechanic for Titan 11 missiles, he was stationed in California, but checked and worked on missiles in silos in several states. “They didn’t have Titan 11 missiles in Vietnam, but they wanted warm bodies and I was a warm body,” said Gause, who was sent to Vietnam where he supervised a crane used to remove crashed planes from the runway at **Phan Rang**. (The Sun News (Myrtle Beach, SC, September 14, 1016)

Larry Preston White, born on Sept. 23, 1944 to Clyde and Effie Cox White in Warren, MS. Larry began his U.S. Air Force career as a Judge Advocate Court stenographer and later became part of the 2nd and 7th Air Force Command's Aircraft Accident Investigation Team that took him throughout the Pacific theater. Larry's professional career took him across the globe with multiple tours of duty at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines Islands, Vietnam, Korea, Okinawa, Spain and Hawaii, and numerous temporary duty assignments around the world. Larry was a Vietnam veteran and served in Vietnam at **Phan Rang** AB in 1967 and 1968 in support of the Tactical Fighter and Bomber Wing Commands and opted to return to Clark AFB at the end of his tour. (Paris Express (AR), August 12, 2016)

Frankie Gene Fields of Nacogdoches, Tx., was born in Pine Valley, Oklahoma, on February 24, 1929. His family moved to Wickes, Arkansas, where he graduated from Wickes High School in 1948, and enlisted in the United States Air Force. During the Korean War, Frankie was stationed at RAF Waddington Air Base in England. Frankie was stationed at several bases in the United States and at Bentwaters Air Base in England. In 1969-70, he served his country in the Viet Nam War at **Phan Rang** Air Base, Viet Nam, where he received the bronze star. (The Galveston County Daily News (TX), June 11, 2016)

"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN

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William Massey, Jr. enlisted a few months after he graduated from high school. The Air Force welcomed him in January 1965 with six weeks of basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas followed by eight more months of school at Amarillo Air Force Base, Texas and a duty station at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. As a member of the 4756 Armament and Electronics Squadron, he became a specialist in autopilot systems on fighter aircraft. That skill bought him six more weeks of technical training and a ticket to **Phan Rang** Air Base, Vietnam. Phan Rang was an airfield used by the Japanese in World War II, then by the French in the 1950s and later, the South Vietnamese Air Force and the United States Air Force. Located on the eastern coastal side, in the south of the nation, it was relatively removed from imminent danger. Or at least, Massey and his fellow troops thought so until Jan. 10, 1969. That was the day he remembers as the first time he realized his own mortality. "I was on the wing of an aircraft at two in the morning getting it ready for a morning flight when the first rocket to hit the base blew up an aircraft three rows down from where I was working," he recalled. "You can't imagine. I thought I could fly, I guess, because I came down off that airplane without a ladder. We went into the bunker at 2 a.m. and didn't come out until 6 a.m." (The Brunswick News (GA), May 30, 2016)

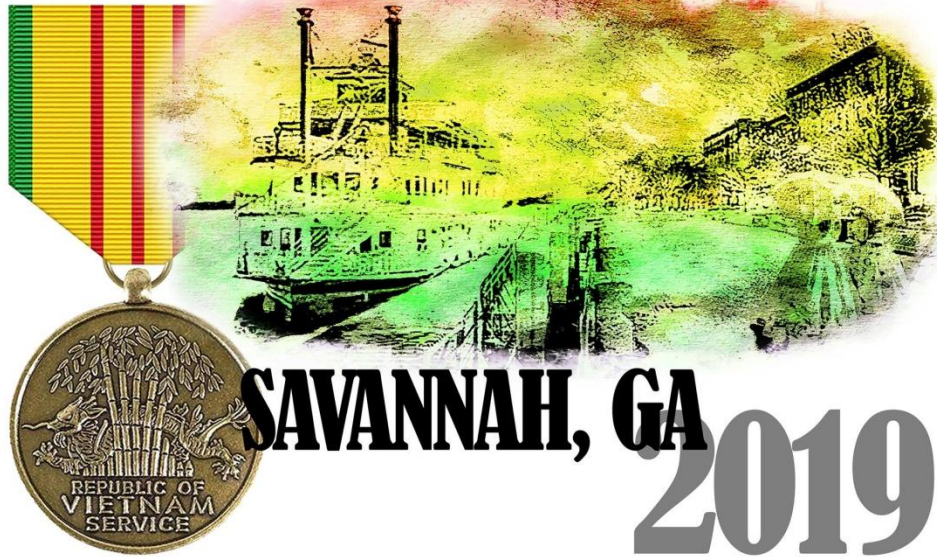
Patrick Paul Pavlica was born May 23, 1948, in Durand, to Thomas and Marjorie (Benjamin) Pavlica of Morrice. He graduated from Morrice High School with the class of 1966. Patrick enlisted in the U.S. Air Force Jan. 3, 1968. He served in the Vietnam War as a K-9 dog handler with his dog King in the 35th SPS (**Phan Rang**) Unit. He was honorably discharged as a sergeant Dec. 14, 1971. He was an active member of the Vietnam Dog Handler Association. Patrick was very proud of his service to his country. (The Argus-Press (Owosso, MI) May 24, 2016)

Former Yrekan Receives Medal

Redding - U.S. Air Force S/Sgt **Kenneth S. Swickard**, Redding, has been decorated with the Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious service while engaged in military operations against the Viet Cong forces. Sgt Swickard, son of Mr. and Mrs. William J. Swickard, Redding was cited for his performance as a medical technician at **Phan Rang** Air Base, Vietnam, and for displaying exemplary leadership, personal endeavor and devotion to duty. He was graduated from Yreka High School and attended Shasta College. He is now serving at Hamilton Air Force Base. (Siskiyou Daily News, Yreka, CA, March 1969)

2019 Reunion Graphics

PHAN RANG AB REUNION



Graphics designed by Steve Russ

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Letters



Ed Downey wrote: Having read Phan Rang News 165, I found Herbert’s testimony to be confusing and unclear. What I gleaned from his statements was that he resented that we had a domestic existence while he toiled in the jungled mountains. The Air Force sent us where we were needed to be and we did the work that needed to be done. We at Phan Rang Couldn’t have done our jobs in the jungle.

I too, have had memorable encounters with veterans over the years. As a member of the Illinois Patriot Guard, we were asked to escort the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall from a rendezvous point to Freeburg, Ill. After arriving in Freeburg and helping to set up the panels of the Wall, several of us went to the local diner for coffee. The table we sat at was next to a group of men who appeared to be of the WWII or Korea era. One of the men asked me if we were all Vietnam Vets and I replied some of us were. His next statement is what startled me. He said “That Vietnam wasn’t much of a war, was it?” And I surprised myself when I replied “It was to the men who had to fight in it!”

Another encounter involved the commander at our local American Legion Post. He was an Army Infantry Vietnam Veteran, awarded the Combat Infantry Badge and the Purple Heart. I was on the Honor Guard at the time and our primary mission was to perform military rites at veteran’s funerals. One day after a funeral, we were having a complimentary drink, the commander stated for all present to hear., that he didn’t think the Air Force should be categorized as a part of the military. I attributed this statement to resentment for the Rear Echelon M_F_ers.

However, I did have, on two separate occasions, an encounter with a soldier and a Marine, both Purple Heart recipients. In my discussions with them about their experiences, I thanked them for their service and sacrifice to. I told them I was at Phan Rang AB performing maintenance on F-100 aircraft and that I didn’t sacrifice anything compared to what they did. Both of those Purple Heart recipients came back with the same response, “If it weren’t for your airplanes, I would have been killed!” So, we were needed and we were appreciated!

(Note: Ed along with Barbara Brandt and John Ploof perform drill and ceremonies for our annual reunion.)

David Knighton comments on the Safeside story in *Phan Rang News 165*. In late '69 or early '70 there was a small group of augmentee's (me being one of them), who were given a mini version of the Safeside training. We were trained on M-60 machine gun, M79 grenade launcher and some infantry tactics (mainly advancing on an enemy unit by leapfrogging advance). There was talk that we were going to put on a demonstration for some "big wigs" and then be deployed along the perimeter for ambushes or as a rapid response unit during attacks. We went through all the training but never put on a demonstration or got deployed. Some of us were picked though to go down to the AF beach after the sapper attack in April '70. All in all it was good training and an interesting experience. A lot of scuffed up knees and elbows during the training.

Australian-American Reunion List Updated

On 13 January 2019 a revised list of potential attendees was sent out to everyone that we know of that has expressed an interest in the 2020 ANZAC Day reunion. If you did not receive an email and you would like to possibly make the trip please notify [me](#) so I can add you to the list and that includes our Australian friends. We do not have any pertinent information to pass along at this time. The list was just sent out to make sure we had the most accurate information for when we do start the planning process.

I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter and if you have any comments, please let me know. 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.