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News in a Nutshell

Shadow Foils Enemy

(Seventh Air Force News, January 14, 1970)

TUY HOA-An AC-119 Shadow gunship crew of the 14th Special Operations Wing here recently provided fire support and flare illumination helping the Bu Prang Civilian Irregular Defense Group Camp in Quang Due Province break an enemy attack.

Arriving over the area earlier, the gunship crew found poor weather conditions and Maj. William R. Casey, aircraft commander, decided to return to base.

The gunship had just left the area when an urgent call for aid came from camp. Turning around immediately, the AC-119 crew returned to the area. At Bu Prang the weather seemed to clear just when visibility was needed most.

Major Casey and his copilot, Capt. Harman E. Fawcett. Could see heavy firing on both sides. The gunship crew then began firing at the muzzle flashes of the enemy weapons.

Firing its miniguns and dropping flares, the Shadow crew helped the CIDG forces break the enemy attack.

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Other members of the Shadow crew were: Captains Paul J. Cherenzia, navigator instructor, and Thomas W. Wood, navigator; MSgt. John P.W. Schwartz and Sgt. John Temoney Jr., both aerial gunners.



Phan Rang Stinger Destroys 5 Bunkers

(Seventh Air Force News, January 14, 1970)

PHAN RANG - Recently introduced into the air war over the Republic of Vietnam, an AC-119 Stinger gunship crew of the 14th Special Operations Wing here destroyed five enemy bunkers in an area 13 miles north of Phuoc Le in Phuoc Tuy Province.

Maj. **William R. Burres**, aircraft commander, and his crew, of the 18th Special Operations Squadron, flew to the target area which was under the jurisdiction of Royal Australian Army ground forces.

"I had to be especially careful about any differences in terminology which could have caused confusion if we had misunderstood each other," said the plane's navigator, Maj. **James A. Shoemaker**, as he contacted the ground controller.

The Australian controller assigned the gunship three enemy targets in the general area. As the gunship fired into the target areas, the aircraft received a moderate amount of enemy ground fire.

The Stinger crew, however, continued to fire into the targets until the ground fire was suppressed, and the bunkers destroyed.

The Dubois County
DAILY HERALD

Tuesday, January 2, 1968

U.S. Servicemen Love Their Pets

By Bob Hope

CAM RANH BAY, Vietnam—Our last show in Vietnam is scheduled out here in sand dune country, our billion dollar cat box. This is a secure area—the only place in Viet-land that LBJ was allowed to visit. It's been cleared of Cong and Republicans.

In a moment we'll be rolling our show for 22,000 men of General Scott's First Logistic Command. As I peek out from the wings I see a kid in the front row with a monkey on his back. No—not the Sunset Strip kind—a real monkey.

It's a funny thing about the American G. I. He can survive without women, or a place to live, or a bath, but somehow, somehow he always manages to find a pet or a mascot. Maybe it provides the love he misses. The sergeants can't do it all.

I talked to Pfc. Bill Justis of Sacramento, Calif., about his monkey. She is three months old and eats anything, candy, oranges, nuts and bolts, whatever Bill is eating if he isn't very fast. The monkey isn't housebroken yet but Bill has high hopes and expects to take his pet home with him. I asked him what his folks thought about his bringing home his pet. He replied, they went ape.

I asked Sgt. Red Daniels of Sutliffe, S. C. why the guys went to such lengths to keep pets in the service. He had a small puppy on a big rope. He scratched her ears and said: the terrible treatment they give animals over here. They eat cats and dogs. A friend of mine had a puppy just like Alfie here. The natives wanted to buy his dog for dinner. He wouldn't sell it. A dog is company. It gives us something to pass the time away. But I guess the big thing is that we feel sorry for the animals.

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Col. **Turkey Wilson** commander of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang is gruff, tough, 130 mission fighter pilot who has a cat named Spike for a pet. Spike, because of the close contact with the boss, quickly became the pet of the base and was regarded as one of the boys. At least until she curled up in bed with the colonel one night and gave birth to four kittens.

However, the celebrity mascot at Phan Rang is a mongrel dog named Butch. He's more than just a mascot to the men of the 309th Air Commandos — he's a fellow airman. He has 2,900 hours of flying time, and a Purple Heart. He was wounded in combat and promptly sewed back up by a qualified flight surgeon. Butch will only ride on an aircraft of the 309th. His current master is Staff Sgt. Gordon McCullough of Sicklerville, N.J. He says : "I didn't pick Butch, he picked me. He's my senior officer. When I leave or get transferred. Butch will find him a new orderly."

At Korat, one of the favorite mascots. Snoopy, broke up the show by an impromptu appearance on our stage. He's a pretty good ad libber, too. He had the place in an uproar for 15 minutes. Of course. Snoopy is considered a civilian.

Roscoe is the real military dog at Korat. He's not a graduate of the Air Academy. He was promoted in the field—between trees. Roscoe never misses a pilot briefing. And during the briefing all eyes are on Roscoe. If he sleeps the strike will be scratched and the pilots relax. If Roscoe stays awake then the pilots pay strict attention—they know in a few minutes they'll headed out over downtown Hanoi.

It may seem ridiculous but pilots swear it is true. Roscoe has a better batting average than all the Air Force's ultra sophisticated electronic weather equipment. I have no reason to doubt Roscoe's sagacity. During our visit he tried to bury Raquel Welch three times.

For those who have fought for it, freedom has a flavour the protected will never know.

Battalion of Guard in Vietnam

(Beatrice Daily Sun, Beatrice, Nebraska, Sunday, September 15, 1968)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (AP) — The 116th Combat Engineer Battalion—the first battalion- size National Guard outfit to reach Vietnam —was welcomed today and told “ You are needed

here”.



The U.S. Military Command in Saigon announced the arrival of the Idaho Falls, Idaho unit simultaneously with a parade ground welcome formation held at the Phan Rang Air Base.

Most of the battalion had arrived by plane Friday, preceded by their heavy equipment which came by sea. The last planeload of engineers missed the ceremony, however. Their plane was diverted at the last minute to Cam Ranh Bay.

On hand to greet the engineers were Lt. Gen. William Peers, commander of the 1st Field Force command under which they will work, and Gen. David S. Parker, commander of all engineer troops in Vietnam, The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Donald Ghornley, a veteran of World War II and Korea, responded: “We have a job to do and we’ll do it well.”

The battalion of some 750 men has seen active service in every conflict involving the United States since the Spanish-American war. It was recalled to active duty April 14, 1968.

50 Years Later

“There were 700 of us from the (Snake River Valley) who went to Vietnam and most of us came back,” Idaho Falls native Jake Cordova tells of his war experience.

“It was not a good experience, but we made it and there was a bunch of us. I think that’s a helluva deal.”

“I’m proud as hell of what we accomplished over there,” Ron Skinner, who served with Cordova, said in response.

Cordova, like many other Vietnam veterans, recalls his war experiences with a sense of jovial concealment. Laughter, it seems, is his way of covering up the gruesomeness of what happened. Locations and climate conditions are recalled with skilled acuity but details of combat are vague.

It’s clear there is more to the story than what Cordova shared.

Cordova and Skinner were just two of the men from eastern Idaho who were part of the 116th Combat Engineer Battalion, the largest National Guard unit sent to Vietnam.

They were given active duty status in May of 1968 during the height of U.S. involvement in the war.

There were five companies for the battalion, including 200 men in Headquarters company from Idaho Falls, 150 men in ‘A’ company from Rigby, 150 men in ‘B’ company from Rexburg, 150 men in ‘C’ company from St. Anthony, and another 150 men in ‘D’ company from the Grangeville/Orofino area.

The Cedar Rapids Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1967

Restrictions Relaxed on U.S. Pilots

New York Times Service

WASHINGTON - The White House has relaxed restrictions on American pilots, permitting them to fly through the buffer strip along the Chinese border and a 20-mile circle around Hanoi.

Well-placed sources reported the relaxation was part of moves permitting sharp escalation of bombing of North Vietnam.

There has been a significant change in the strategy behind the attack in the North Vietnam heartland, aimed directly at breaking the will of the North Vietnamese to continue the war.

New raids are directed at rail lines from Red China and transportation links, such as bridges, near Hanoi.

The new objective was listed as gradually cutting the flow of imported food, petroleum and manufactured goods to North Vietnam.

White House permission still is required before an attack on the 25-mile strip just south of the Chinese border and in the circle from 10 to 30 miles outside Hanoi.

Pilots still are forbidden to bomb the Haiphong docks, the main port, for fear of hitting Soviet or Chinese ships.

The change indicates President Johnson has accepted the advice of the joint chiefs of staff and rejected that of Robert McNamara, outgoing secretary of defense.



The Chams are moving into modern world

By NANCY W. PUTZEL

(Greeley (Colo.) Daily Tribune, Wednesday August 22, 1973)

PHAN RANG Vietnam (AP) — The Chams of Vietnam's central coast are moving into the modern world.

For centuries, this ethnic minority — remnant of a once powerful Hindu kingdom — has either been persecuted, ignored or exploited by the predominant Vietnamese.

For the Chams, the problem is to fit themselves into the economic and political life of Vietnam while maintaining their ethnic identity.

Unlike the Vietnamese, the Chams are one of the Indianized peoples of Indochina. The turbaned men and saronged women still speak their own language and worship their own gods.

The Chams once ruled a vast area from above Hue to near Saigon. Mariners and pirates, they controlled the sea lanes off the coast. Their kingdom, weakened by wars with the Cambodians to the west, shrunk before southward advancing Vietnamese and was finally overrun in the 15th century.

Of the 70,000 Chams in Vietnam today, 25,000 live around the port city of Phan Rang, capital of

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Ninh Thuan Province, 170 miles northeast of Saigon.

Many Vietnamese regard the Chams as inferior and backward. The two groups don't always see eye to eye on social or official levels. Sources on both sides, however, assert that the situation is improving.

In Ninh Thuan, Vietnamese hold the top two positions in the province's government, but other positions are filled by Chams.

The local hospital is 50 per cent Cham staffed. In their own villages, these personnel use up-to-date medical techniques. Previously, water buffalo and goats were sacrificed to fight disease.

A downtown bank lends money to Cham farmers at low interests. Until this year, Vietnamese and Chinese moneylenders were the only sources of cash.

Although most parents are illiterate, children attend at least a few years of school. About 20 have gone on to college and two have left the country for graduate study.

After years of poverty and illiteracy, most Chams know little of their tradition.

"Many know there were once kings in this area, but they do not realize the rest of their history," says Gerard Moussay, a French priest who runs the Cham Cultural Center in Phan Rang.

The center's staff of 11 researches old family documents and teaches Cham language and folk arts. Additionally, 300 students from surrounding villages board at the center while attending Phan Rang schools.

In the village of My Nghiep, south of Phan Rang, cement houses are slowly replacing mud and thatch huts. Building may take years, with families buying a few bricks one year and roofing the next.

The men of My Nghiep are rice farmers. Some of the older women weave. A family of eight or

10 live on \$500 a year according to one Cham source.

The women weave tablecloths, and napkins with threads purchased from Saigon to sell to tourists.



Two Graduates Complete Tours In Vietnam

(Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph, Monday, August 21, 1967)

Two Air Force Academy graduates have completed 300 combat missions in Vietnam.

Capt. **Richard A. Mason**, class of 1959, flew 300 missions and has completed his tour of duty in the Southeast Asia (SEA) theater.

The captain, an F-100 Super Sabre pilot at **Phan Rang AB**, Vietnam, is scheduled for reassignment to Fort Bragg, N.C.

He holds the Distinguished Flying Cross. 12 Air Medals and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

The second graduate (Class of 1964, 1st Lt James R. Wallace, recently became the first man in his fighter unit at Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam, to complete more than 300 combat missions in SEA.

Lt. Wallace is an F-100 Super Sabre pilot with the 416th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Bien Hoa. He claims the distinction of completing his tour without receiving a single hit from enemy ground fire. The average Super Sabre pilot takes between 10 to 15 hits during a normal tour of duty in Vietnam.

His record-breaking mission is also a memorable one. Going to the aid of a special forces camp

under mortar attack by the Viet Cong, Lt. Wallace's flight roared in low over the target on their first run, firing 2.75 inch rockets, followed by anti-personnel - ordinance and strafing runs with 20 millimeter cannon fire.

The Communist troops were so close to the Special Forces outpost that the F-100 ordinance exploded within a little more than 100 yards of the friendly forces.

With the aid of U.S. Army helicopters, the Super Sabre flight succeeded in routing the enemy and breaking up their attack.

The lieutenant, who holds the Distinguished Flying Cross and 14 awards of the Air Medal, has been reassigned to Cannon AFB, N. M., where he will become an instructor pilot.



AF Crewman Assists In Viet Mercy Mission

(The Tribune, Sunday, November 22, 1970)

U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant **John E. Schmidt**, son of Paul I. Schmidt, 14639 Grant street, Dolton, Is one of five C-123 Provider crew men who are credited with saving the life of an 18-month-old Vietnamese baby girl.

Sergeant Schmidt, a C-123 Provider flight engineer, and fellow crew members recently airlifted the critically ill baby to Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. She was examined, given emergency medical treatment and then flown to a USAF specialist at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base.

The baby's father, a Vietnamese Popular Forces noncommissioned officer at Nhon Co Popular Forces camp requested Air Force assistance when she became lethargic and unresponsive to antibiotics following a two-day respiratory illness.

The five-man Provider crew had completed their last cargo delivery of the day and were returning to Phan Rang when they received the emergency call, relayed by a U.S. Army Special Forces adviser at Nhon Co. He informed them of the child's condition, explaining that the camp doctor wasn't equipped to handle the case and requested her immediate air evacuation.

The Provider was diverted to the camp where the crew took the child and her parents aboard.

Within 25 minutes after the initial radio contact, they landed at Phan Rang and the child was sped by ambulance to the dispensary. Examinations revealed that draining fluids caused by the respiratory infection had perforated the bone under her nose in the oral cavity. The abscess was in an area that bordered on the brain. Unsuccessful spinal taps were attempted since the child also had symptoms typical of meningitis.

The Phan Rang medical staff located a USAF doctor at Cam Ranh Bay who had considerable background in pediatric s and the child again was air evacuated, this time a distance of 30 miles by helicopter. Medical personnel agreed that she would have died in another day unless the abscess had been drained and special care provided.

Sergeant Schmidt regularly flies aerial resupply missions in support of allied ground forces in Vietnam. He is assigned at Phan Rang to a tactical air support unit of the Pacific Air Forces, head quarters for air operations in Southeast Asia, the Far East and the Pacific area.

His wife, Betty, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Givens of Sheridan, Ark.

The “Bummers” Saga Continues



The “Bummers” Saga



ARM/DE-ARM ADVENTURES

By Chris Walling

Very late one night MacDougall (A.K.A. Doc) and I were pulling arm/de-arm. The two of us were sitting on the ground just talking and it was dark as it could be. All of a sudden there was a quick bright flash. I happened to be looking toward Charley Mountain when it went off. For an instant the mountain was visible as it were in the middle of the day. At first we sat there stunned, not saying anything. I’m sure we both thought the same thing; did I really see what I just saw?

Suddenly, it happened again. This time we talked about it! Knowing what I know now I’m

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pretty sure they were from photo flashes dropped from either U2s or SR-71s doing photo recon runs. I think of these two aircraft only because we heard nothing at the time. On another occasion of nighttie arm/de-arm, the following happened: I and MacDougall were up on the wings de-arming the guns. I was on the left wing and Doc was on the right. As were standard, the plane was facing away from the flight line and with the gun hatches open our backs would be turned to the flight line.

To complete the picture, the jet engines are running and we have our “Mickey Mouse” ears on. Suddenly I got a feeling that something was not right. Looking back over my shoulder I watched mortars and rockets impacting. The mortars were walking up the taxi way and seemed to be heading our way. I ran over to the other side and got Doc’s attention, pointing to the impacting rounds. The next thing I remember is lying on the ramp in front of the plane. All I was thinking about was if the pilot tired to roll out he would run over me!

How I got on the ramp I just don’t remember. And why was I lying on the ground in front of the main gear? After a short time I believe the all clear sounded. After that the B57 headed in to park and the safety of the revetments.

And after a short time we decided to head back to the shop in the jeep. I was in the passenger seat. Not far from arm/de-arm we saw an aircraft land. Without its running lights we weren’t sure what it was, but thought it was another B57, so we turned around to head back to the arm/de-arm. Suddenly more rockets hit with one impacting about where we would have been if we had not turned around. That is my recollection.

The Snake Brotherhood

By Alan Reames

The “Snake Brotherhood” came out of a conversation I was involved in with Phil Gainey (Phil was in the 435th MMS with me). He was feeling exceptionally fearful and wanted to know how I could keep such a positive attitude toward all of the BS flying around. I told him if I wasn’t laughing I’d be huddled in a corner sacred shitless myself. As we talked, I told him that the thing to do would be to take on the attitudes of a snake because you cannot get any closer to the ground than a snake’s belly. I told him



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that he should think like an Anaconda...big and powerful hiding at the water's edge for prey. Nobody will mess with the Anaconda.

The peace sign with hooked fingers (fangs of the snake) became the greeting and it went viral (before viral was even invented). It was a little fun way to help a brother cope with the fear of being shot at with no way to shoot back...he called me later, after Vietnam and told me that the Snake Brotherhood saved his life...at least it gave him the power to get through each day and not jump out of his skin every time Charlie threw a few mortars in to us.

I also had to chuckle one time when my NCOIC was driving around with me in the truck on the flight line and all the 8th buys were “flashing” the Snake Brotherhood greeting when they saw me. He got frustrated and wanted to know what was going on! “Everywhere I go with you there are guys flashing that peace sign...What's with that?” he said. I told him it wasn't the peace sign, but that it was the sign of the Snake Brotherhood and he freaked out. I never thought I'd ever see a seasoned NCO lose his ability to respond.



Serving Our Country

WITH U.S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam—Sergeant **Franklin D. Wingo**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph M. Wingo, 2208 13th Ave N, Texas City, is on duty at Phan Rang AB Vietnam. Sergeant Wingo, an air operations supervisor, is assigned to a unit of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he served at Kingsley Field, Oregon. The sergeant, a 1956 graduate of Texas City High School, attended Lee Junior College Baytown. His wife is the former Nancy G. Flint. (The La Marque Times, Thursday, March 27, 1969)



**A1C William F.
Benson Jr.**

WITH U.S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam - Airman 1C **William F. Benson Jr.**, son of Mrs. Mauny S. Benson of 2510 Greenway Dr. Brownwood is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Benson a weapons mechanic is a member of the Pacific Air Force. Before his arrival in Vietnam he was assigned to Homestead AFB, Fla. The Airman, a graduate of Brownwood High School, attended Howard Payne College and Tarleton State College,

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Stephenville. His wife is the former Linda J. Ivie. (Brownwood Bulletin, Sunday, July 21, 1968)

Monroe Man Gets Air Medal - WITH U.S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam - U.S. Air Force Major



RECEIVES MEDAL - U. S. Air Force Major David S. Litten (right), receives the Air Medal at Phan Rang Air Base from Col. Leslie J. Campbell Jr., commander of the 315th Special Operations Wing.

David S. Litten, son of Mrs. Martha V. Litten, Clarington, Ohio, has received the Air Medal at Phan Rang ABm Vietnam. Major Litten, a troop carrier pilot, distinguished himself by meritorious service, displaying outstanding professional skill and devotion to duty which contributed materially to the success of the Air Force mission in Southeast Asia. The Major hold the aeronautical ration of command pilot, is assigned at Phan Rang with the 310th Special Operations Squadron, a unit of the

Pacific Air Force. A 1947 graduate of Clarington High School, he received his B.S. degree in physics from Ohio University and was commissioned there in 1952 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Major Litten's wife, Anita, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Yacobozzi, 2810 Sherwood

Drive, Lorain, Ohio. (The Daily Jeffersonian, Cambridge, Ohio Tuesday, October 7, 1969)

Bockelmann in Viet - Airman Second Class **Bruce W. Bockelmann** son of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Bockelmann of 39 E. Road, High Falls, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Bockelmann a weapons mechanic, is a member of the Pacific Air Forces which provides air power to maintain the U. S. defense posture in the Pacific and conducts air operations in Southeast Asia. The airman is a 1963 graduate of Kingston High School. (The Kingston Daily Freeman, Kingston, N.Y., Thursday Evening July 27, 1967.)

"The Nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools."

--*Thucydides, Greek historian*
The Reunion at the Oasis on Lake Travis



On 11 March 2019, Elizandro (‘D’) and Lillie De Los Santos along with Douglas and Joyce Severt Joined Brok Neilsen, the son of Kevin ‘Rock’ and Kay Neilsen from No. 2 Squadron RAAF at the beautiful Oasis on Lake Travis in Austin, Texas. Brok from Kingscliff, Australia was in Austin attending the annual SXSW (South by Southwest) Music Festival.



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“Doing it with Together” - Check out our [YouTube](#) Channel.



	The Phan Rang Challenge coins are expected to be received as early as the first week in April or at least by the second week. If you’ve ordered some, they will be mailed to you as soon as they are received and we thank you for fronting your money and your patients.
	Many people have questions about casualties at Phan Rang. Phan Rang Newsletter 155 is devoted entirely to the casualties that occurred in Ninh Thuan Province so check it out if you haven’t already seen it. I’m constantly updating it.
	Are you looking for someone that served with you at Phan Rang? A good place to start would be the Phan Rang Roll-Call maintained by Bob Tucker and also the “Serving Our Country” section in most of the Phan Rang Newsletters. If you are not on Facebook and would like a copy of the Roll-Call contact Bob Tucker or myself and we will send you one. All of the Phan Rang Newsletters are available here .

I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter and if you have any comments or have stories that you want to see included, 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:<mailto:dougsevert@cox.net> and put ‘**unsubscribe**’ in subject line.