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PLAYGROUND DAILY NEWS

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Red Horsemen Honored by Vietnamese, US, Koreans In SEA

PHAN RANG — In two recent ceremonies, the departing commander, Colonel William T. Meredith and men of the RED HORSE 554th Civil Engineering Squadron (Heavy Repair), were feted by both local Vietnamese American military and civilian dignitaries. The Ninh Thuan Provinces Chief Colonel Ngo Han Dong was accompanied by the US Senior Advisor Paul J. Haie, representing MACV, plus district, village chiefs and elders.

Colonel Dong paid tribute to Colonel Meredith while praising the outstanding Civil Action contributions made by RED HORSE during the past year. Citing examples of assistance,

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he mentioned emergency bridge repairs in the early stages of TET offensive Viet Cong action which extended far into the foothills of the mountains construction assistance to the Phan Rang City Hospital, and the joint construction of a new church in Thamp Cham plus the site preparation of a large area for a new ARVN camp in the local area. He then presented Colonel Meredith with a plaque in recognition of outstanding support of MACV Advisory Team 45.

The second event was hosted by the new RED HORSE Commander Lt Colonel Niels H. Lund and attended by the entire squadron, the last time they would all be together as one unit In addressing the group. Col Lund commented on the fact that Colonel Meredith was the originator of the PRIME BEEF (AF Civil Engineering rapid strike teams) developed back in 1964. The success of those teams responding to emergency conditions during the 1965-1966 buildup in Southeast Asia led to his being the prime mover in the formation of the RED HORSE Heavy Repair Squadrons and for that achievement he will always be familiarly known by the honorary title of **FIRST RIDER**.



“First Rider” Plaque - Col. William T. Meredith is presented a farewell plaque from the officers and men by Senior Master Sergeant Jess B. Haines, First Sergeant of the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron, Phan Rang Air Base, Viet Nam.

This ceremony was marked by both serious and humorous comments on the events of the past year. Men from every technical trade carried placards identifying their specialty had brief comments to make through a spokesman.

Meredith reiterated his feeling that no one man in the outfit was more important than the other in overall mission accomplishment", but the section representatives took the opportunity to comment with obvious pride on their own contributions to the mission.

Sergeant Albeit A. Claik. 28, Fairfield, Calif. a heavy equipment operator summed up the general feeling when he stated “They always said it takes faith to move mountains' but here at Phan Rang Colonel Meredith had it done by the Air fields Flight (This was pointed out as a no longer existent mountain which had been blasted and run through the rock crushers for building material) No one will ever forget his demanding phrase Keep that equipment moving”

First Sergeant Senior Master Sergeant **Jesse B. Haines**, 37 Staten Island NYC, emceed the program after making the initial plaque presentation, occasionally using the commanders pet phrase, ' You haven't seen anything yet', often heard during the past year when the troops were facing another impossible job.

Meredith then reviewed the engineering, construction and combat accomplishments of his men during the past year.

"CAN DO - WILL DO - 'WE DID IT' "

He noted that they had embarked on a new concept of self sufficient heavy horizontal operation in which they went into major blasting and rock quarry operations including heavy crushing activities to support the asphalt and concrete paving trains for roads, aircraft aprons, taxiways and the like, to a finished product.

Concrete production was increased from a monthly total of 1,098 cubic yards in January 1968 to a staggering monthly total of 6,768 cubic yards by May 1968. He then recalled an aircraft parking apron project of some 60,000 yards of concrete that really "kept the equipment moving" - for 64 days. It entailed thousands of cubic yards of earth removal, fill being hauled in, compacted and then covered with 12 inches of concrete. Connecting taxiways and asphalt apron additions with terminal facilities resulted in a prime aerial port for Vietnam.

Rock crushing production was increased by 800 tons per days until it reached a capability of 2,100 tons per day.

Another record was set when a new asphalt aircraft apron of some 25,000 yards was built in 30 days. In this project 13,000 cubic yards of earth were removed and 4,743 tons of asphalt placed.

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RED HORSEMEN opened the convoy route to Tuy Hoa in January 1968 and have maintained it ever since, even during the height of the TET offensive in February, to prevent a work stoppage from lack of equipment and materials.

The experience gained in laying 16,000 feet of 12 inch asbestos cement water main and 12,000 feet of sewer line was used to good advantage in assisting other RED HORSE units in Vietnam on similar projects. Men of the 554th have carried projects from Binh Thuy in the far south delta region to Da Nang in the mountains of the north, and at Nha Trang in between in spite of insurmountable odds.

The citation on the presented horse-bearing shield read, "To the FIRST RIDER, Colonel William T. Meredith from the officers and airmen of the 554th CES HR, Phan Rang. RVN 1967-68. "CAN DO - WILL DO - 'WE DID IT' ".

The shield will soon hang in the Pentagon where Col. Meredith will be the next Chief of Operations Division, Directorate of Civil Engineering. He has been the commander of the 554th since Oct. 30. 1967. A native of Halifax, Virginia, he entered the Army as a private in 1941. During service in the China, Burma, India theater 1942-1944 he received a battlefield commission as a U.S. Army second lieutenant.

Before coming to Phan Rang, he was the commander of the 560 CES (RR), "The Home of RED HORSE", Eglin Field 2, after initially establishing and directing the "Civil Engineering Construction Operations Group", Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

In that capacity he was directly responsible for the establishment, equipping, manning, training and subsequent deployment of the Air Force's first six RED HORSE Squadrons to Southeast Asia.

(Playground Daily News, Friday, November 15, 1968)



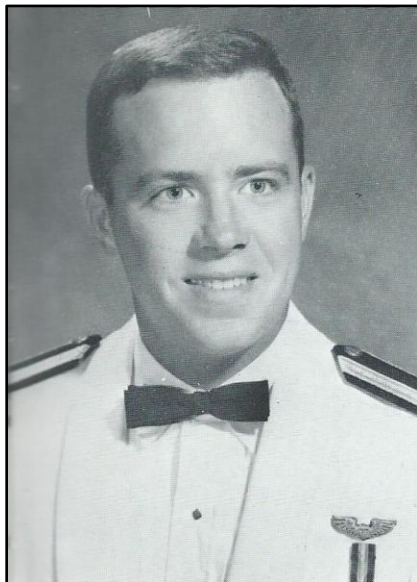


1st Lt. Charles Edward McLeish, Monona, Killed in Viet War

(Wisconsin State Journal, Wednesday, August 26, 1970)

First Lt. **Charles Edward McLeish**, 25, Monona, was reported killed in action in South Vietnam Aug. 21, 1970.

He was an F-100 fighter plane pilot stationed at Phan Rang. He was killed while on special assignment to Pleiku.



Charles Edward McLeish

McLeish, Portage.

He was a graduate of Monona Grove High School and received a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Wisconsin in 1967. He formerly was employed in the Oscar Mayer and Co. engineering department.

Ho entered the Air Force July 1967 and graduated with honors from the Lackland Air Officer Training Force School.

He was a member of Lake Edge United Church of Christ.

Surviving are his wife, the former Norma Sayno; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald McLeish, 1109 Nishishin Trail; a brother, Sp. 4 Douglas, with the Army in Germany; a sister, Patricia, Iowa City, Iowa; and his paternal grandmother, Mrs. Grace

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Funeral arrangements are pending at the Gunderson Funeral Home. 5203 Monona Dr.

(I discovered the death of Charles McLeish quite by accident while searching for another person. All the casualties from personnel assigned to Phan Rang AB and all the casualties that occurred in Ninh Thuan province are listed in Phan Rang Newsletter 155, including 1st Lt. McLeish and online files are updated to reflect the latest changes. If you know any casualties other than those listed in newsletter 155 please let me know so that I can update it.)

Bob and Lynda Smith of Sparta, Wisconsin describes their experience in discovering Charles McLeish’s name on the moving wall when Bob found the name of his childhood friend Charles (Chuck) McLeish.

Bob Smith described McLeish as a young man who graduated number-one in his high school class in Monona and became an Air Force captain. He died at age 25 in 1970 while flying a combat mission.

“He was a really nice guy,” Bob Smith said. “He had kind of a baby face, but as he got older, he looked like Rock Hudson,” Bob Smith said.

He said McLeish married a woman who had been crowned Miss Philippines.

“I didn’t meet her until the funeral,” he said.

“Time will not dim the glory of their deeds.”

General of the Armies John J. Pershing



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Men of 389th Operate From ‘Bare’ Viet Camp (Alamogordo (N.M.) Daily News, Sunday, June 19, 1968)

PHAN RANG, Viet Nam — Operating from a “bare” base, Air Force F-4C Phantom crews flew strikes from the Phan Rang air base against Viet Cong targets only two days after completion of a new, aluminum runway here.

The base which consists of new runway, an older runway nearby and temporary buildings for living and office space located about 65 miles northeast of Saigon. Although permanent buildings are being built, most men at the base still live, sleep and work in tents or hastily-constructed wood buildings.

Since arriving here May 14 crews from the 389th Tactical Fighter Squadron—a 366th Tactical Fighter Wing unit—have flown more than 1,000 close air support and other combat sorties against the Viet Cong.

Phantom crews from Phan Rang have been credited with destroying or damaging more than 1,200 buildings, possibly killing more than 115 VC and destroying or damaging about 50 fortifications.



Thieu Home Area Knows Peace - And Terror (Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, Sept. 25, 1970)

By PETER A. JAY

The Washington Post

PHAN RANG. Vietnam — Ninh Thuan Province, a quiet agricultural area on the South China Sea about 150 miles northeast of Saigon, should be a model of the American pacification effort.

It is the home of President Nguyen Van Thieu, who grew up in the pretty fishing hamlet of Tri Thuy, and who returns from time to time to visit.

For a variety of geographical and ethnic reasons, Ninh Thuan has never been especially fertile

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ground for homegrown communism, like Binh Dinh Province up the coast. The so-called big war to the north, with its massive troop movements and complete disruption of civilian life, has not reached here.

Both the Vietnamese colonel, who serves as province chief, and the American Foreign Service officer, who heads the pacification effort, have excellent reputations in Saigon, at regional pacification headquarters in Nha Trang, and locally.

But despite these significant advantages, and despite demonstrable gains in security over the last two years, there are some officials who believe that pacification here has reached sort of plateau, and that while the situation is still far from satisfactory, further improvement may be long in coming.

"It's like taking strokes off your golf score," said Richard Owen, who as province senior adviser directs eight civilians and 60 military personnel assigned to pacification — the restoration of local security. "The first ones are easy, but then it gets harder."

Owen's estimate is that there are about 1,100 Communist guerrillas, perhaps two-thirds of them are North Vietnamese, scattered through the brushy hills and low wooded mountains that surround the provincial capital of Phan Rang and the populous coastal plain.

"Incidents" are frequent — a bridge blown up, a bus stopped and the occupants dunned for "taxes," a hamlet entered at night by guerrillas looking for food, from time to time a local official assassinated.

Of the province's 190,000 residents, about 12,000 are under arms as members of the Regional and Popular Forces (known as RF and PF, or collectively as "ruff-puffs"), or of the hamlet level People's Self-Defense Force (PSDF). There are no regular South Vietnamese units or American combat troops in the province.

"They used to say a 10-to-1 ratio was enough to defeat guerrillas." one American officer in the advisory effort here said. "I think we're making progress, but it sure is slow."

By the standards of two years ago, however, Ninh Thuan has come far.

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Security has improved to the point where Americans drive alone, at least by day, to all parts of the province — an impossibility in two of the four adjacent jurisdictions. This year's rice harvest is excellent, prices for farm products are good, Hondas are everywhere, and the elected chiefs of most of the province's several hundred hamlets are not afraid to sleep at home.

"It could be a good life here if Charley (the Viet Cong) would only leave people alone," said an American civilian. "But it's sort of a stalemate. He can't win, and we can't wipe him out."

The province chief of Ninh Thuan, appointed by Thieu, is Col. Tran Van Tu. Tu, a French born career army officer, whose father was a prominent Vietnamese Trotskyite assassinated by the Communists, travels constantly throughout the province.

"The Communists should try and talk to us," he told an audience of hamlet elders in a Buddhist temple recently. "They shouldn't try to convince us with an AK47 (rifle) or a grenade." Some of his listeners nodded seriously; others looked backed impassively.

Both Americans and Vietnamese here say that Tu is personally popular, but that the central government is held in low esteem, even though it is headed by a native son. In the recent senatorial elections, a Buddhist antiwar ticket piled up a two-to-one majority over the second place slate.

"We were very disappointed," said an American military man involved with pacification. "It didn't show much support for the government."

It is difficult to determine what the situation in Ninh Thuan means for pacification generally, if indeed it means anything. Over the years, officials here have become chary of generalizations, for too many have exploded in their faces.

"It could go on like this for years throughout the country," one pacification official said. "Basically quiet, but with scattered terrorism. The Vietnamese can handle it, if they want to. And of course a lot depends on the Communists — what they decide to do."

Owen, the senior American adviser for the province, believes Ninh Thuan is ready for a

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reduction in the number of American military men working in pacification. Military men here, perhaps not surprisingly, tend to disagree.

In this area of Vietnam, however, the American desire for pacification at any price has cooled.

"They used to give us a million piasters (about \$9,000) each month and urge us to spend it on, local development projects and ask for more," an American source in Phan Rang said.

"Now they give us one-fourth as much and tell us to be thrifty."

He chuckled, "Perhaps they've heard about the Dean Rusk market place,"

The marketplace, a modest concrete structure in Phuoc Dong hamlet near here, was built upon the personal suggestion of the former secretary of State, after he visited the hamlet on a 1964 tour and was told by hamlet residents it was needed. It has yet to be used.



Air Police Help Build Infant Home

(The Abilene Reporter-News, Abilene, Texas, Thursday Evening, June 15, 1967)

PHAN RANG, S. Vietnam — Courtesy of Air Force Technical Sergeant **Robert V. Tomaselli** 37, of North Adams, Mass., and his unit, the, 35th Air Police Squadron, 20 infants at the Tan Tai Orphanage in Phan Rang city have recently been moved out of their cramped quarters and into more modern and spacious facilities.

The children were sleeping two and sometimes three to a crib in a 12 foot by 12 foot room. There were no facilities for isolating the infants who became sick with a communicable disease.

With the completion of the new building, sick children are placed in an eight-crib ward. Two of the orphanage's Catholic nuns have sleeping quarters within the building with one awake at all times to care for the infants.

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The project began in January when one of the Air Force doctors assigned to Phan Rang Air Base visited the orphanage. He suggested that the air policemen build the structure for isolation purposes. Shortly before this, the 35th AP Sq. had “adopted” the orphanage, assuming the responsibility for continuing aid to the small children.

Reacting to the doctor’s suggestion, squadron personnel, led by Sergeant Tomaselli, quickly erected the basic frame work while coordinating closely with the nun’s needs and the doctors recommendations.

After the basic 16 foot by 32 foot structure containing the children's ward, isolation ward and formula room were completed, the sleeping quarters for the two nuns and a treatment room was built in an L shaped addition. All-rooms have shutters fluorescent lights and tile floors. New cribs were purchased in Saigon to replace the wooden cribs, which contained only a wood panel for a mattress. From a post above each crib dangles a toy donated by relatives of squadron personnel.

“I’ve”never worked with kids before, except my own,” Sergeant Tomaselli says, “ But I’ve found that it's been one of the most satisfying things I’ve ever done in my life.”



TAKE A BREAK - The Air Force T.Sgt Robert V. Tomaselli, 37, of North Adams, Mass., pauses during his work day at the Tan Tai Orphanage in nearby Phan Rang City to hold one of the Vietnamese infants. Sergeant Tomaselli recently headed a project of the 35th Air Police Squadron to build new quarters and an isolation ward for the infants. (Air Force Photo)

Our Gal in Vietnam Returns...with Memories

By Joan Smith

(Madison Wisconsin State Journal, Madison, Wisconsin, March 31, 1968)



Jeanne Bokina is a pretty blonde blue-eyed 23-year-old who has just spent a year “being America” to our men in Vietnam.

Jeanne, or “Sam” as the GIs called her, still suntanned from the hot Eastern sun, spoke quietly, sometimes with emotion, in the living room of her parents home at 5010 Coney Weston Place, about her Vietnamese experiences as a Red Cross Clubmobile girl.

“I remember the time we went to Hill 55, a Marine hill outside of Da Nang,” she said. “We were the first two girls to go out to that unit. They’d stop and stare and say, ‘My God, it’s an American girl!’ I’ll never forget that.

“Or the kid in the hospital in Da Nang. He was all bandaged up. All you could see were bandages. He was in real bad shape Right before we left they took the bandages off and I could see why they had them on.

“His whole head was taped up, he had stitches all over, schrapnel all over, and tubes coming out of his nose and what was left of his mouth. But he could see a little out of his right eye.

“I looked at him square in the face and teased him about his peep hole. He responded so

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beautifully that I wanted to hug him. He was so glad just to see out and to talk to an American girl. It was very touching. I even got him to laugh, but you could tell that when he did, it kind of hurt.”

Jeanne was one of approximately 100 young women who are currently stationed at various U. S. military bases throughout South Vietnam to help bolster the morale of our fighting men.

“Just seeing an American girl over there helps remind the men that they do have somebody at home,” Jeanne explained. “It’s a simple thing, but we are America to them.”

Working in small groups, from three to 11 girls, the Clubmobile girls operate the Red Cross Recreation Centers in various base camps where off-duty servicemen gather to read, listen to music, play cards, pool, or ping-pong, or simply enjoy a chat with a girl from home. Over 1,000 men a day visit the large centers; the smaller ones accommodate 400 to 600 men per day.

She’d Like to Return

“I’d go back and do it all over again,” said Jeanne, who cannot, under Red Cross regulations, return to Vietnam for at least six months or a year. “The people were so tremendous, so natural, so truthful. I’d turn right around and go right back if I could. They were the most wonderful people I ever met.

“You see fellows with their arms and legs blown off; their heads smashed in and pieced together, eyes lost, and hearts completely broken. But they’re happy just to be alive. You hold their glass so they can take a drink, or light their cigarettes.”

To be eligible to become a Clubmobile girl, a young woman has to be over 21 years old, single, and a college graduate. Jeanne, who graduated in art education from the University of Wisconsin in January of 1967, sent a letter to the Red Cross Inquiring about jobs in Vietnam. In the meantime, she had decided to accept a teaching position in Kalamazoo, Mich. When the Red Cross called her one afternoon and asked her if she still wanted the job, she said she did.

She was flown to Washington, D.C. for a two week orientation program, then to Travis Air Force Base in California. She left from there for Viet Nam with nine other girls and about 200

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servicemen. Many of the men were younger than she was.

“We were all darn frightened, not knowing a thing about what it would really be like, or who would make it back. When we came in Bein Hoa it was dark out and there were blackout flight conditions—no light on the runway or in the plane either. We were just terrified. The men were scared too. It takes a heck of a lot of courage to step off that plane. More than most people are willing to admit.”

Sound Always There

Jeanne was stationed in three places in South Vietnam: Nha Trang, Da Nang, and **Phan Rang**. The girls live in quarters provided by the military and move at least three times in a year.

“You hear guns going off all the time,” she said. “We saw the flares at night and heard the planes. It’s funny how, if you don’t hear them, you realize you don’t, and you become very concerned about it. You always hear this constant sound.”

“Some days were long and hard and dusty,” Jeanne said. “But you really gained a sense of accomplishment when you got a big response from the men. We forgot the heat and dirt and the insects.

“Funny things happened, too.

“Perfume was so cheap over there that we’d all really splash it on. Especially before we went out into the field. Guys would say, ‘why. she even smells like a girl!’

“One day we went to a special forces camp. When we landed the villagers stood perfectly still. They just stood and stared with dazed eyes. The older people were actually immobile—they had never seen a blonde girl before!

“Another time we drove into a remote village. They were having some kind of a ceremony. When they were all done, the chief came over and we drank rice wine with him. We were with five or six American boys. He called one of the boys over and told him he’d like to trade two buffaloes and a jar of rice wine for me. It was the blonde hair that impressed him.

“Incidentally, that was a very good price!”

Recommends the Life

Jeanne said that she would recommend overseas Red Cross work “for any girl who has the time and the desire to do something for others.” “Even though it’s in a war situation,” she said, “if they have the courage to go, they should sign up. It’s something that can’t be taken away from you once you’ve been there.

“And I’d do it over again. Over and over again. So many things happen each day.

“One time we had a Christmas party for some Vietnamese orphans. We had this fellow in the kitchen. He was crying his eyes out in the kitchen. What do you do? A big man crying? We found out that he had been an orphan when he was a little boy. He was so touched by the concern of the others.

“Another time when I was leaving two fellows gave me a box of candy. It was a box of those chocolate turtles. Where they ever got them I’ll never know!

“The whole year is like that.

“I remember one night we were all down at the club and the band started to play ‘*God Bless America.*’ Everyone stood up and sang that song with all the sincerity and heart it deserves. **At that moment I realized what America was to me and what it meant to the fighting men in Vietnam.**”

Prized Mementos

Jeanne, who plans on returning to the University this fall for her master’s degree, has brought back letters from boys she has met. One read: “It was great talking to you, when I talk to you, you made time go by fast. For me, I just want to thank you for talking to me, if sometime I can do something for you just let me no.”

Another says: “I’m really going to miss you! Honest! Your smiling face is a real morale booster

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to me and all the Marines in this hospital.”

This one was left on a table for her to find.

“Jeanne, my name is Fred and I love you very much. I would like to know if we could have a nice talk when you are here again.”

But her most treasured possession is an 8-by-10 framed, handwritten certificate which was presented to her by the servicemen of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. She proudly explains that only three other certificates of this kind were ever presented by these men. It reads:

“Your Personality, Charm , and Enthusiasm have made ‘Happy Valley’ a much happier place for all of us. The officers and men of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing will miss you. Best of Luck always, Sam .”



Jeanne and another Red Cross recreation worker play a game called "Blockhead" with a group of American servicemen in the Red Cross Recreation Center at Phan Rang Air Base. Hundreds of men each day visit the centers to play pool and other table games, darts, horseshoes, or just talk. Jeanne said she could write a book on "1,001 ways to play Cards."



Miss Bokina is shown enroute to serve cold soft drinks to maintenance crews at the Phan Rang Air Base. The drinks were served off the tailgates of pickup trucks. Each canister held 10 gallons. With her is Winnie-the-Pooh, a stray dog that 'joined' the Red Cross girls three years ago. The dog lives with the girls, goes to work with them and is taken care of

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Cover photo: Jeanne Bokina, back home in Wisconsin, showing elation over seeing snow for the first time in a year.

"by everybody."

Note: The term “Clubmobile” originated during World War II when the American Red Cross created the service of young women to reach out to servicemen in airfields, camps and other theaters of war. Women who volunteered for the Clubmobiles were popularly referred to as “donut dollies” since one of their biggest tasks was making doughnuts for the servicemen, however in Vietnam they did not make doughnuts.



Squadron No. 2 Is No. 1



Aussie Unit Boost Allied Air Might

(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Monday, July 10, 1967)

By JOE McDANIEL

S&S Staff Correspondent

PHAN RANG, Vietnam—“We are real proud of being the only Allied force flying with the Vietnamese and Americans on combat missions in Vietnam,” said Squadron Leader **John Chesterfield** of the Royal Australian Air Force's No. 2 Sq.

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Since their arrival at Phan Rang AB just two months ago, the Australian airmen have taken their place in bringing the war to the Viet Cong.

Flying in support of the Australian Army's Task Force based in Phuoc Tuy Province, the Aussie Canberras have hit over 750 targets during the last two months.

One of the RAAF's most famous squadrons, No. 2, commanded by Wing Cmdr. **Rolf Aronsen**, has a proud history dating back more than 50 years. It joins No. 35 (Caribou) Sq., and No. 9 (Iroquois) Sq., as the only active duty Australian squadrons in Vietnam.

This is the third time the No. 2 Sq. has seen combat action. It has served in both world wars and now in Vietnam. Its history includes many notable firsts.

It was the first Australian squadron to fight in France in World War I, the first to receive a Presidential Unit Citation in World War- II and the first to be equipped with jet bombers.

The squadron has also played a major role in peace-keeping in Asia since 1958 and was deployed to Phan Rang AB from Butterworth, Malaysia.

The air weapon of the squadron is the Canberra bomber. It was first assigned to the RAAF in 1951. In 1953 they received their first Australian-built Canberra. This twin-jet plane carries a crew of two and has a maximum speed of 500 miles per hour.

United States and Vietnamese Air Forces operating against the enemy have already made successful use of their version of the Canberra, the Martin B57.

Though targets are usually the same, operation of the aircraft is different. The Australian Canberra is a medium-level jet bomber and flies straight bomb missions from high altitude. The Martin B57 is a fighter-bomber aircraft and flies bombing and strafing missions from a low altitude.

The move to Phan Rang has renewed a link between the RAAF and the USAF's 35th Tactical

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Fighter Wing, parent unit here. Men of the 35th flew with the RAAF from bases in Australia during WW II, helping to halt the Japanese advance to Papua, and also took part in the Allied offensive which recovered the rest of New Guinea.

Today, airmen from the two countries are combining to hit targets over all of South Vietnam. No. 2 Sq. was presented the "Queens Battle Colors" last year and has twice received the Duke of Gloucester Cup, presented annually to the most efficient flying squadron in the RAAF.

And efficient they are.

They have racked up 322 combat missions since becoming the first Australian aircraft to drop bombs in the Vietnam war. Their initial missions were eight combat strikes in April against Viet Cong supply dumps and base camps.

Pilot of the Canberra making the first strike was Wing Cmdr. **Vin Hill** of Brisbane, an experienced combat pilot who flew 150 missions in Meteor fighter-bombers with the RAAF's No. 77 Sq. during the Korean War. The first strike was in the Mekong Delta country, 27 miles west of Can Tho. Another squadron member mentioned in photo a caption is Flying Officer **Brian Gribble** who was pictured with Australian Wing Commander Rolf Aronsen and Brian who was his navigator going over navigation charts while plotting a combat mission.

The Australian crews fly preplanned night missions using radar bombing tactics and are under the operational control of 7th Air Force and the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. Under the conditions they fly, it is very difficult to get bomb damage assessment on targets.

Equipped with 500, 750 or 1,000-pound bombs furnished by their own government, the Canberras average eight missions each night. They can work with forward air controllers (FACs) and are equipped to fly in any type weather.

The squadron is considered an oversized one because of its unique position on the base. A normal RAAF fighter squadron such as No. 2 would have approximately 100 to 150 personnel assigned. No. 2 currently has about 260 men.

The Australian squadron furnishes almost all its own support, equipment and supplies. The

men even dismantled and brought along their own maintenance hanger from Australia.

With three RAAF squadrons in action in Vietnam, the RAAF now has more squadrons and men directly engaged in air operations than at any other time since World War II.

K-9 Handlers Heading to the Kennels



K-9 Handles loading up at the Armory, heading to the Kennels. Approximate date is June 1968. Those that are identified are Tony Lison with his arms extended, Jesus Pardo and John Meehan are sitting on the truck bed with their backs to the camera, Bob Yee holding the soda can and others that are identified but exact position are unknown; Woody Withrow, Mays, Parra and Meehan. Photo by Ken Swickard.



SVEN GUSTAFSON DRAWS DUTY AT PHAN RANG BASE Airman First Class **Sven T. Gustavson**, son of Mr. and Mrs. O. L. Gustavson of 4378 Avenida Prado, Thousand Oaks, is on duty at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam. Airman Gustavson, an administrative specialist, is assigned to a unit of

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the Pacific Air Forces, headquarters for air operations in Southeast Asia, the Far East and Pacific area. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he served at K. I. Sawyer Air Force Base, Mich. A 1968 graduate of Thousand Oaks High School, the airman attended Moorpark College. (Van Nuys Valley News and Green Sheet, Friday, July 9, 1971)

John M. Wellman Gels Assignment U.S. Air Force Sgt. **John M. Wellman**, son of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Wellman of 22200 Victory Blvd., Woodland Hills, has arrived for duty at McClellan Air Force Base, Cal. Sgt. Wellman, an aircraft engine mechanic, is assigned to a unit of the Aerospace Defense Command which protects the U.S. against hostile aircraft and missiles. He previously served at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. (Van Nuys Valley News and Green Sheet, Friday, July 9, 1971)

RETURNS Army S-4C **Richard D. Dutton**, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charley D. Dutton, Rt. 1, Celina, recently returned to his base camp in Phan Rang with his unit, the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, after more than a year of combat in the jungles of Vietnam. Dutton, a military policeman in the brigade's 101st Military Police Co., and the other members of the unit traveled by land, sea and air in the longest convoy thus far in the war. The journey began Jan. 21 and lasted five days. (The Lima News, Lima, Ohio, Sunday, February 12, 1967)

WITH U. S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam— saving lives and U.S. Taxpayer dollars in the Combat Zone is the task of Staff Sergeant **J.C. Gamble** of Hobbs, N .M, who performs an unusual job at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam and one which generally goes unheralded. Sergeant Gamble, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Gamble, 810 I Roxana St., Hobbs, is a member of a 11-man team that has been selected for an “Outstanding Arresting Barrier Crew of the Year” Award in the U S. Seventh Air Force In Vietnam. Resolving numerous air emergencies encountered in a he and his teammates maintain the flightline system used in Stopping crippled aircraft that might otherwise overshoot the runway, with possible loss of crew or plane. The system consists of a steel cable supported by spaced rubber “donuts” and connected to nylon tapes wound on storage reels located on each side of the runway. During emergency landings Involving radio, control or braking problems, the pilot with precision timing and airmanship drops his aircraft drag chute and releases a device attached beneath the rear section of his plane which, in turn, hooks onto the arresting cable and stops the aircraft within some 850 to 970 feet. Mission accomplished, the ground crew rapidly disconnects the cable, rewinds the tapes on the reels and the system is ready for use again within minutes. Working around-the-

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clock shifts, Sergeant Gamble and crew members periodically inspect the equipment and perform trail runs on their exacting Job that leaves no margin for error. The sergeant came to Phan Rang after completing duty at St. Albans Air Force Station, Vt., In August 1970. He is a 1957 graduate of Hobbs High School. (Daily Leader, Lovington N.M., 10 March 30, 1971)

AT PHAN RANG AB - Air Force T. Sgt. **William M. Demers**, son of Leo R, Demers, 59 Riverside Drive, Saranac Lake, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. His wife, Beverly, is the daughter of Mrs. Florence K. Soper, 60 Flower Ave., Saranac Lake. (The Post-Standard, October 26, 1970)

SSgt. **Larry G. Naylor**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hackerolt, Natoma, whose wife, Sharon, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Herzog Hays, has received the Air Force Commendation medal for meritorious service as an administrative specialist with the 35th Civil Engineering squadron at Phan Rang, Vietnam. (Salina Journal, Wednesday January 6, 1971)

Sgt. **Billy G. Sellers**, son of Mrs. Mack Sellers of Conway is a member of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam that has been honored by the Vietnamese Armed Forces. (Florence Morning News, Monday, June 7, 1971)

Sgt. **Carland Allen**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Odell Allen of, Loris is a member of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam that has been honored by the Vietnam Armed Forces. (Florence Morning News, Monday, June 7, 1971)

Airman 1.C **John J. Kovach**, Son of Helen Kovach Of 315 Inwood Blvd. Avon Lake, is a member of the 14th Special Operations Wing in Southeast Asia that has earned the Presidential Unit Citation. Airman Kovach, assigned at Phan Rang AB. Vietnam, is an aircraft maintenance snp- an aircraft maintenance specialist with the wing which has received the highest U.S. organizational award for its performance as the only USAF unit of Its kind in the Combat theater. The 14th is headquartered at Phan Rang and operated from nine major locations in Southeast Asia Airman Kovach will wear a Distinctive Service ribbon to mark his affiliation with the wing. He attended Avon Lake High School. (Chronicle-Telegram, Elyria, Ohio, Monday, June 7, 1971)

Sgt **Clifton E. Oskins**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Marsh of 222 Denison Ave., is a member of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam that has been honored by the Vietnamese

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Armed Forces. The 35th has received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for its contribution to the military forces and local citizenry of the country. Sgt Oskins, a jet engine mechanic, will wear a Distinctive Service ribbon to mark his affiliation with the unit.

The sergeant is a 1968 graduate of Elyria High School. (Chronicle-Telegram, Elyria, Ohio, Monday, June 7, 1971)

Currently stationed in Phan Rang, Viet Nam, is Army Pfc. **James F. Zyonse**, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Zyonse of Mount Pleasant, Mich, and husband of the former Suzanne Morel of Crete, now residing on Cornwall drive. ZYONSE entered the Army in June, took basic training at Fort Knox and completed field communication crewman course at Fort Benning, Ga. Earlier he had attended both Chicago Technical college and the University of Illinois (Chicago extension) while working at Blommer Chocolate company, Chicago. As a member of the 62nd Engineering battalion in Phan Rang, Zyonse repairs communications equipment and handles radio messages. Phan Rang is the location of a newly completed 10,000-foot-long expeditionary airfield, one of the Corps of Engineers' first major projects in Viet Nam. Pfc. Zyonse is slated to return to the United States December 5 to complete the remaining six months of his enlistment. (The Star 'Park Forest', Thursday, April 28, 1966)

Oceana Man Gets Air Medal - Air Force Maj. **Charles B. Haskins**, son of Mrs. Louise Smith, Oceana, has received the Air Medal at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Maj. Haskins, an F-100 Super Sabre pilot, was cited for his outstanding airmanship and courage on successful and important missions under hazardous conditions. He is assigned at Phan Rang in a unit of the Pacific Air Forces. The major, a 1954 graduate of Oceana High School, received his commission in 1957 through the aviation cadet program. His wife Eleanor, is the daughter of Earl Cook of Oceana. (Post-Herald and Register, Beckley W. Va., Sunday Morning, August 3, 1969)

POLICEMAN - VIETNAM — Airman 1C **Walter D. Parks**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Parks of Pembroke. Va., is on duty at Phan Rang AB. Vietnam. Airman Parks, a security policeman is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam he was assigned to Malmstrom AFB. Mont. The airman is a graduate of Giles High School Pearisburg, Va. (Bluefield Daily Telegraph, Bluefield, West Virginia, May 18, 1969)

BRONZE STAR - PHAN RANG, VIETNAM Army Sp. 4 **Gerald L. Honaker**, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lacy L. Honaker, Montcalm, received the Bronze Star Medal near Phan Rang, Vietnam. Spec.

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Honaker was presented the award for meritorious service in grounds operations against hostile forces in Vietnam. At the time of the presentation he was a rifleman with Company D. 1st Battalion. 327th Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division's (Airmobile) 1st Brigade. His wife, Shirley, lives in Matoaka. (Bluefield Daily Telegraph, Bluefield, West Virginia, May 18, 1969)

Airman First Class **Richard E. Golden**, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Golden of Blytheville, is now on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. (Blytheville Courier News, Blytheville, Arkansas, February 14, 1968)

Airman First Class **Richard E. Giddings**, whose wife, Julie is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pat Rameriez of Luxora, is now on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. (Blytheville Courier News, Blytheville, Arkansas, February 14, 1968)

Sgt. **McKinley Johnson**, whose wife, Brenda, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. Hancock of Blytheville, is now on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. (Blytheville Courier News, Blytheville, Arkansas, February 14, 1968)

A2C **LONNIE C. CARTER**, son of Mrs. Irene I. Carter of 1313 Iceland Drive, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Carter, an air policeman, 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. Before his arrival in Southeast Asia, he was assigned to the 436th Security Police Squadron at Dover AFB, Del. The airman is a 1957 graduate of Dobyns-Bennett High School. (Kingsport Times, Tuesday 18, 1967)

Maj. **Richard L. Stoner**, graduate of the Air Force Institute of Technology, has been assigned as a navigator at Phan Rang AFB, Vietnam. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Russell M. Stoner of 118 Broadway; his wife, Linda, is the daughter of Mrs. Edgar Zepp of 606 Oak Hill Ave. (Hagerstown Daily Mail, Hagerstown, Maryland, July 23, 1969)

Sgt. **William L. Cover**, an automotive repairman, has been assigned to Phan Rang AFB, Vietnam. His wife, Sharon, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Gilbert of Greencastle, Pa. (Hagerstown Daily Mail, Hagerstown, Maryland, July 23, 1969)

A1C **David M. Higgins**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Higgins Sr. of Williamsport, has been

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assigned as a supply inventory specialist at Phan Rang AFB, Vietnam. (Hagerstown Daily Mail, Hagerstown, Maryland, July 23, 1969)

Activities of a Kern County men on duty with the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam were reported by the Air Force Home Town News Center at Tinker AFB, Okla. Ten minutes after Staff Sgt. **Vincent L. Davis** of Bakersfield, took off in the midst of enemy-held territory, his critically wounded Vietnamese patient arrived at Phan Rang City Hospital for treatment. Davis, son of Mrs. May K. Davis of 2606 San Emidio Street, was an aeromedical technician on an H-43 Huskie helicopter crew that recently rescued a Vietnamese soldier who had been shot in the back twice by the Viet Cong 10 miles south of Phan Rang. When his helicopter was unable to land in the immediate area because of the terrain, the sergeant volunteered to climb down a cable to reach the injured man. Then, with assistance of Vietnamese troops, Davis carried the victim to a clearing where the chopper had landed. Davis is assigned at Phan Rang as a member of the highly-specialized and global Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service that has logged more than 1,000 combat “saves” in Vietnam since December 1964. The sergeant, a 1951 graduate of Bakersfield High School, has 15 years Air Force service. (Bakersfield Californian, Bakersfield, California, October 31, 1967)

Captain **Michael D. Peyton**, right, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tony L. Peyton of Lewisville, has received the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Captain Peyton distinguished himself by meritorious service as the assistant staff judge advocate at Lowry AFB, Colo. He is now at Phan Rang as assistant staff judge advocate with the 35th Combat Support Group, a part of the Pacific Air Forces. His wife, Nancy, is the daughter of Mrs. Lous I. McNew of Knightstown. (Rushville Evening Daily Republican, Rushville, Indiana, February 6, 1971)

A2C **Lonnie C. Carter**, son of Mrs. Irene I. Carter of 1313 Leeland Drive, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Carter, an air policeman, 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. Before his arrival in Southeast Asia, he was assigned to the 436th Security Police Squadron at Dover AFB, Del. The airman is a 1957 graduate of Dobyns-Bennett High School. (Kingsport Times, Kingsport, Tennessee, July 18, 1967)

REUNION INFORMATION

Dates:	11-13 Oct 2019	
Location:	Homewood Suites, 149 West Mulberry Blvd, Savannah, Georgia 31407	
Homewood Suites	(800-2255-4663). You need to mention the three letter group code: PHA to get the group rate.	
Embassy Suites	There are still some rooms left. Click here to book.	
Reunion Fee:	\$20	
Banquet (12 Oct):	\$55.41	
City- Tour-Dinner Cruise (11 Oct): (See schedule below)	\$77**	
HERE ARE THE TOTALS		
	Single	Double
Reunion fee, Banquet and Tour	\$152.41	\$304.82
Reunion fee and Banquet only	\$75.41	\$150.82

PLEASE SEND CHECK TO:

Jack Anderson
826 72nd St. S.E.
Auburn, WA 98092

Many have asked about a schedule for the reunion but right now one does not exist, however a more detailed schedule will be published and available for all reunion goers at a later date. For those who haven't attended a reunion before we always have the hospitality suite open all the time that other activities are **not** taking place, like the tour, banquet and preparations for the banquet. On Friday, 11 October we have the city tour and dinner cruise, so only the morning will be free to visit the hospitality suite or do anything else. The hospitality suite will probably be open all day on Thursday 10 October. Here is the schedule for the old Savannah Tour-Dinner Cruise:

OLD SAVANNAH TOUR-DINNER CRUISE SCHEDULE

3:00 pm-Arrive at Embassy Suites and begin boarding guests

3:30 pm-Depart for the River Street bus stop under the Hyatt

4:00 pm-Arrive on River Street Hyatt bus stop and unload passengers

Discover old Savannah and be ready to board the riverboat by 6:00 PM

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9:15 pm-Riverboard arrives back at the River Street under Hyatt and begin
boarding guests and depart back to the Embassy Suites
10:00 pm-Arrive back at the Embassy Suites and unload guests

River Queen Buffet: Beef Carving Station Fresh Catch of the Day Savannah Style Shrimp & Grits Baked Chicken with Artichoke Cream Sauce Fresh Seasonal Fruit Display Garden Salad with Dressings and Toppings Roasted Fingerling Potatoes Fresh Seasonal Vegetables Squash Casserole Iced Tea, Lemonade, Soft Drinks and Coffee. Additional information: The USAF Flag will be flown on the Riverboat and a missing man table will be set in the dining room.

Then on Saturday 12 October activities pick up with a general meeting and group pictures followed by a cocktail reception and the banquet. Specific times for those events will be announced later, but don't make any other plans for that afternoon or evening.

Many asked about nametags. Yes, we always have nametags, which besides your name includes your hometown and the organization you were assigned to at Phan Rang Air Base if you are on the Roll-Call.

Remember the funds are refundable up to a certain point. If you don't remember if you paid, look in your checkbook because the only way to pay is by check. Proof of payment by check sometimes could come in handy at registration if there are ever any questions because people sometimes make mistakes.

Doug's Comments: I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter and if you have any comments or would like to submit a story, just send it to me. This newsletter was composed and all graphics by **Douglas Severt**, so all of the mistakes are attributed to me. 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. I would like to remind everyone that we have services available to all Phan Rang AB veterans like the **Roll-Call** that [Bob Tucker](#) maintains. The 'Roll-Call' is a list of everyone that we've known to have been stationed at Phan Rang AB, including their grade, organization, time served and other information that may be helpful in searching for a buddy. If you are not on Facebook and

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would like a copy of it, contact Bob Tucker and he would be glad to send you a digital copy of it, but please remember that this is a work in progress and only contains the names that the members have captured through the years and it is not a complete list of everyone to have been stationed at the base. Another list that we maintain is the **‘Remembrance Board’**, which is a list of all Phan Rang Veterans that have passed. [Joe Kaupa](#) maintains that list and it contains the veterans name, unit/organization and year of death and that list is also available upon request.

Phan Rang AB Challenge coins are still available for eight dollars each. If you would like to purchase one, send a check to Jack Anderson to the address listed in the reunion section. Please make your check out to **‘Phan Rang Reunion’**. The 2019 Reunion shirts are on sale [here](#) along with hats and many other Phan Rang related products.