

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.

Phan Rang AB News No. 178 “...keeping the memories alive”

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San Antonio Express

101st Year, No. 165

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, *The HemisFair City*, MONDAY, MAY 8, 1967

GIs Helping Vietnamese Start Market

(San Antonio Express, San Antonio, Texas, May 8, 1967)

SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS

PHAN HANG, Republic of Vietnam — U.S. soldiers in this corner of the world are not just interested in bringing a democratic form of government to the people here by fighting a bloody war.

They are interested in helping the people in almost any way possible.

One of the ways is helping them establish a market for fresh fruits and vegetables — significant items to the U.S. men here as well as for the Vietnamese people.

A San Antonio Army colonel is among a handful of Americans working with the Vietnamese

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farmers showing them how to become part of the produce industry.

He is Col. **Julian A. Turner**, a special assistant for procurement to the 1st logistical Command commanding general. His wife, Marie, resides at 243 Antrim Dr., San Antonio and his mother, Mrs. Louise Grimes in Louisville, Ky.

Presented Check

Just recently, Col. Turner presented a check of 2,404,554 piaster (approximately \$30,056) to Nguyen Ngoc Think as a payment to the Buu Son District Farmers Association. The association is a non-profit organization for supplying fresh fruit and vegetables to 18 military messes in the Phan Rang area for a 30-day period.

This money will be divided among some 2,164 farmers in the Buu Son District who are members of the association supplying produce to Free World Forces. It is an excellent example of Vietnamese self-help with the assistance of Col. Turner and agricultural advisors with the Office of Civil Operations - a unified effort of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Mission in Vietnam. With the help of the American soldiers, the farmers, through sheer grit and toil, did the rest. The check turned over to the association is a proof of their labor.

From a meager beginning in August 1966. the Buu Son Farmers Association is now a full-scale produce supplier. This check is a giant step on the road to being self-sufficient.

Money Is Step

'With this money our farmers will be able to buy seeds to grow more produce, make payments on loans, and buy necessary equipment,' commented Mr. Think, manager of the Buu Son Farmers Association. This money also means a step toward the improvement in the standard of living for these farmers, their families and the economy as a whole, and as the land becomes more productive through the Individual effort of the farmer, his will to protect it will undoubtedly grow stronger.

How do you get a going concern like this going?

"Organization," says Col. Turner, an industrious businesslike soldier who has a keen eye for

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improvement.

"Eighty per cent of the Vietnamese rely on farming as a means of living. Because of wartime conditions, the Vietnamese had no real organization and their market for selling their produce was limited.

Created Demand

"We created and organized a demand for their fresh fruit and vegetables," continued Col. Turner, who works closely with the U.S. Army Procurement Agency. Vietnam. "With close to one-half million troops to feed in Vietnam, as well as the real need for improvement and diversification of the diet of the Vietnamese people there is a tremendous untapped market for fresh produce.

"Once the Vietnamese farmers were organized and began setting up their farmers associations, the U.S. Army started buying their produce. Our arrangement is simple. We pay the farmers a fair price for a quality product. We instill in the farmer the fact there is a continuing need for fresh produce.

"We educated the farmers to the point where they knew we would pay the prevailing price for their produce. The prevailing price is that price at which a certain item is being sold in the area in which it is grown. For instance, if lettuce sells for 140 piasters in Saigon and for 45 piasters in Dalai, we pay, after figuring in a fair margin of profit to the farmer.

Worked Well

This arrangement has worked well. The Vietnamese farmer profits and the U.S. Army is buying quality produce at less than it would cost to ship it from the U.S. or procure it elsewhere in the Pacific.

"In purchasing from the Vietnamese we make it clear that the Army will only buy produce that is in excess of the Vietnamese needs. We do not want to damage their economy and take food from the Vietnamese with U.S. money. Also, and more important to the farmer, we do not want the Vietnamese to become solely dependent on the U.S. as an outlet for their produce. If we did this, the day when we move all the troops out of Vietnam would leave the farmer with virtually no market, and he would be right back where he started.

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"Our aim is, to give the farmer a market for his produce, prevent inflation by buying only at the prevailing price, and to have him remain self-sufficient in the years to come."

Farmers Encouraged

While Phan Rang is the onion and garlic capital of Vietnam, farmers were encouraged to grow a variety of produce for sale to the Army. Once the farmer was made aware of this market, the program of selling surplus produce to the Army gathered momentum.

An example of how Col. Turner organized and created a market is at the mountain city of Dalat, some 225 kilometers northeast of Saigon.

Since Dalat is the vegetable center of Vietnam it was only natural that someone would explore the possibility of buying fresh produce for Free World Forces in Vietnam. Col. Turner did just that.

First Shipment

The first shipment out of Dalat was in August 1966. At that time the Dalat field office of the Procurement Agency was the only in-country procurement point, and was shipping 26 tons of produce every three days. They were supplying fresh vegetables and fruit, in a limited amount, to all U.S. Forces in Vietnam.

Today, that same operation ships between 40 and 45 tons of produce every day. It goes by rail and Air Force Planes to eight locations in Vietnam to supply a relatively large amount of the produce for the I and II Corps sectors of operation.

With the expanding demands for fresh produce, the Procurement Agency now has field offices at Phan Rang, the Saigon-Delta area, and in the near future there will be one opening in Pleiku.

Numerous Items

Included in the numerous items being purchased and shipped from these procurement areas are tomatoes, bananas, cabbage, cucumbers, peppers, watermelons, leeks and lettuce.

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The Dalat field office started by doing business with three vendors. Now there are 33 vendors and two farmers cooperatives selling their produce through the 1st Logistical Command.

Not only has the Vietnamese farmer been given a steady market for his produce, but he's been taught some of the finer points of business, how to pack and crate his produce for rail and air shipment, and most of all he has learned how to meet the demand created by a large influx of troops who need fresh vegetables.

First Payment

Thus, the presentation of the more than two million piasters at Buu Son was the first payment for the farmers organization and hard work. On hand to witness the presentation were:

Nguyen Luu Lof, supervisor from the directorate of the Farmers Association (FA) in Saigon; Le Trung Tai, Buu Son supervisor of FA; Knei Chang Wu a member of the Chinese Agricultural Technology Mission (CATM); Wan Tan Vieu, also of CATM; Col. Joseph L. Juskowiak, commanding officer of the Log's Phan Rang Sub-Area Command; Major Horace S. Henline, Sub-Area Command executive officer; and Allen C. Hankins and LeRoy Jensen, advisors from the Office of Civil Operations.

This, then, is part of the monetary beginning of one farmers association. There is virtually no limit to these associations. There is, however, one problem.

"In a country where unemployment is at a high level." slated Hankins, "There is an acute shortage of farm labor. But this is something that in time we will overcome as the Vietnamese realize that farming is not just a means of growing food for themselves but a very profitable business."

Huge Cargo Planes Brings Supplies To Air Guard for New F-100 Jets

(The Tribune, Terre Haute, Ind., Wednesday, August 11, 1971)

Five happy Air Guardsmen and 80,000 pounds of ground support equipment and supplies were airlifted into Terre Haute yesterday by two huge C141 cargo airplanes.

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The men and equipment arrived direct from Phan Rang, Vietnam, and were processed through customs upon arrival at Hulman Field.

The 181st Tactical Fighter Group, Indiana Air National Guard, based at Terre Haute’s Hulman Field, will utilize the equipment and supplies to maintain the unit’s newly acquired F-100 Super Sabre fighter bombers.

Both the new airplanes and the equipment received yesterday are from the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang. The regular Air Force recently deactivated the wing.

The five local Guardsmen who arrived home yesterday were part of a seven-man 181st TFG team that has been in Vietnam the past month preparing the equipment for the flight to Terre Haute.

The five who returned were: Capt. **James Bowman**, Dugger; CMSgt **Emory Morgan**, Brazil; TSgt **Donald Amerman**, Clay City; TSgt. **Henry Mauldin**, Clinton, and SSgt **Steve Keller**, Worthington. Upon arrival, the men were greeted by their families.

The huge Lockheed C 141 is cargo and troop carrier type aircraft and is one of the largest aircraft to land at Hulman Field. Each of the planes was loaded with 20 tons of equipment. After leaving Phan Rang, the planes flew to Yokota, Japan, then on to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska, and then directly to Hulman Field.

About 450 members of the 181st currently are undergoing their only 15 days of active duty at Hulman Field. Due to the conversion to the F-100s the annual training is being accomplished at the home base.

Aircraft and engine mechanics are undergoing specialized training to become qualified in the maintenance of the new fighters. The training, conducted by regular Air Force instructors, is being given at the local base for the entire Indiana Air National Guard, which includes personnel from the 122nd Tactical Fighter Group at Baer Field, Fort Wayne.

Pilots have been enrolled in special training for the F-100 Tucson, Ariz., plus additional training is being received by assigned pilots during the current field training period.

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LOCAL GUARD GETS EQUIPMENT—The 181st Tactical Fighter Group, Indiana Air National Guard, Tuesday received about 40 tons of equipment and supplies from South Vietnam for use in maintaining the unit’s newly acquired F-100 Super Sabres. Two C-141 cargo planes delivered the material.



BACK FROM VIETNAM—These area members of the 181st Tactical Fighter Group, Indiana Air National Guard, returned from Vietnam Tuesday after spending a month there preparing equipment to be brought to Terre Haute. Shown are, from left, S./Sgt. Steve Keller, T./Sgt. Henry Maudlin, Capt. James Bowman and T./Sgt. Donald Amerman. The equipment from Vietnam will be used to maintain the units recently acquired, F-100 fighter aircraft.

Carpenter Presented Silver Star RECOMMENDED FOR MEDAL OF HONOR

DAK TO, South Viet Nam

(AP) - The grizzled, 55-yearold topkick of Capt. **William C. Carpenter's** paratroop company said Sunday that Carpenter's heroic action in calling for an air strike on top of the company's position when it was overrun by Communists was "the only thing that saved us."

Carpenter, West Point's "lonesome end" on the football field six years ago, was presented a Silver Star for his gallantry and is being recommended for the Medal of Honor, the nation's

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highest combat award.



An infantry patrol moves up to assault the last Viet Cong position at Dak To.

His unit was one of two companies of paratroopers who battled North Vietnamese regulars for two days and two nights through a drizzling rain and then under a burning sun on a bloody mountainside 30 miles north of Kontum in the central highlands.

The battle on the steep, brush-covered mountain ended Saturday at noon when helicopters

lifted out the American dead and badly wounded while the other exhausted survivors beat their way back to the battalion perimeter.

Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the top U.S. commander in South Viet Nam visited units, part of the 1st Brigade of the 101st (Screaming Eagles) Airborne Division and hailed their "stamina, courage and just plain old guts."

He pinned an interim Silver Star on Carpenter for his actions in the battle on the unnamed mountain.

The first sergeant of Carpenter's company, **Walter J. Sabalauski** of Palm Bay, Fla., was among the walking wounded. His right hand had been burned by the napalm dropped from U.S. planes when Carpenter called for the air strike on his company's position.

"We had been ordered into position on the hill when all hell broke loose," Sabalauski said. The air strike right on top of us was the only thing that saved us.

Sabalauski, a veteran of World War II and the Korean War "I couldn't ask for any better men in combat, some were hit and they still crawled around helping each other. All medics were wounded but kept working."

Asked why, at his age, he was in the thick of the fighting with young soldiers, Sabalauski replied, "With these troopers, I'd be up there any time — a lot of good men."

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The battle opened at 2 p.m. Thursday when one company of the 101st paratroopers, struggling through tangled brush, came under concentrated fire from the front and both flanks.

They fought for their lives and nine hours later a second company led by Capt. Ron Brown of Chattanooga, Tenn., battled its way into the bloody angle.

The battle clung in balance and, when it was feared the two U.S. companies would be overrun, a makeshift company of 86 cooks, bakers, clerks and volunteers was formed to help relieve the two besieged companies Friday.

Among these 86 were 27 paratroopers who returned hurriedly from **Phan Rang** where they were awaiting flights home after completing their one-year tours in Viet Nam.

One of the men from Phan Rang was Sgt. Q.C. **Albert T. Ledford**, 32, of Hopkinsville, Ky. "I was on my way back to Kentucky when the battalion got hit and we got the word they needed us," he said. "We all volunteered. By this time I should have been back in the States."

The put-together company was equipped with whatever weapons were available and went to battle. Seven were wounded.

The wounded paratroopers, lifted out on a shuttle by two U.S. Marine helicopters to a tiny, chopped-out landing zone, were taken to the brigade aid station near Dak To. Here, bloody and dirty, their hair matted with dried mud, they told of the horror and heroism of the past two days.

There was Spec. 4 **Greg Ricketson**, 20, of Clewiston, Fla., with a bullet wound in his left hip.

"We thought it was a simple mission, then a whole bunch of Charlies — Viet Cong — packed a field of fire right on top of us. "I got hit and the medic who was working on me was hit in the face with grenade fragments. He kept working on me and then must have saved a dozen other guys."

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(Florence Morning News, Florence, South Carolina, June 13, 1966)

Information from Wikipedia:

Bill Carpenter married Toni M. Vigliotti in 1961 and had three children: William S. Carpenter III (1962), Kenneth Carpenter (1964), and Stephen Carpenter (1965).

In 1966, then Captain Carpenter's C Company, 2/502nd Parachute Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division took part in Operation Hawthorne, fighting North Vietnamese forces near Dak To on the Kontum plateau in the Central Highlands. As it maneuvered in an attempt to relieve Major David Hackworth's engaged 1/327th Infantry, C Company became isolated and in danger of being overrun. As the situation grew desperate, Carpenter radioed the battalion air traffic controller for a napalm airstrike on his own position: "We're overrun; they're right in among us. I need an air strike on my position." Captain Bill Carpenter radioed the orbiting forward air controller "Lay it right on top of us...they are overrunning us, we might as well take some of them too." The two orbiting F-4Cs dropped napalm which hit inside and outside the Company perimeter breaking up the PAVN attack. Further airstrikes were then called in outside the Company perimeter. Several of his soldiers were wounded by the close air support, but it blunted the enemy attack and prevented the envelopment of his company. C Company was then able to consolidate and eventually break out. For his actions, he was again awarded the Silver Star, which was later upgraded to the U.S. Army's second highest wartime medal, the Distinguished Service Cross. Carpenter committed another act of heroism on February 1, 1967 at Tan Son Nhat airbase in Saigon when he carried an injured man to safety after a plane crashlanding. After a C-123 Provider military transport aircraft made a belly landing on the runway, Captain Carpenter "hoisted the injured man onto his shoulders and scampered from the gasoline-soaked plane."

In 1984, Carpenter went on to take command of the newly activated 10th Mountain Division and, finally, the Combined Field Army in Korea. He eventually retired as a lieutenant general and settled in Montana.

Capt. Carpenter’s Tearful Wife Is ‘Proud of Him’

(Florence Morning News, Florence, South Carolina, June 13, 1966)

CENTRAL VALLEY, N.Y. (AP) — With tears in her eyes and her children in her arms, the wife of Viet Nam hero Capt. William C. Carpenter said Sunday, "I'm so proud of him, so proud to be a

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part of his life."

That life hasn't been an easy one for attractive, 27-year-old brunette Toni Carpenter. She is living through her husband's second tour of combat duty in Viet Nam — duty that nearly came to a tragic end last Thursday.

Carpenter and his paratroop company were pinned down by a North Vietnamese regular force that outnumbered the Americans 3 to 1 and, seeing little chance for escape, Carpenter called for a napalm drop on top of his company's position.

He escaped unhurt, and for his action, Carpenter, 28, is being recommended for the nation's highest combat award, the Medal of Honor.

When she first heard of her husband's call for the bombing, Mrs. Carpenter remembers, "I was sure he had been killed. I really had my doubts — about his safety — for awhile."

But despair gave way to relief and then to pride.

"I've always been tremendously proud of Bill," Mrs. Carpenter said in an interview at her parents' home here. "My first concern was for his safety, but then, when I heard he was okay - all I can say is that am just so proud to be a part of his life."

The Carpenters met when he was a cadet at West Point, earning fame as the football team's "lonesome end," from 1958 to 1960.

They were married in January, 1961, and have three sons, William III, almost 4; Kenneth, 2, and Steven, 1.

They were given an Associated Press Radiophoto of Carpenter receiving the Silver Star from Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Viet Nam.

Billy immediately spotted his father and commented proudly, "I'm going to give this picture to Daddy when he comes home."

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Just when that will be is uncertain.

Because of his recommendation for the Medal of Honor, Carpenter could be relieved of his combat duty and returned to the United States.

But his wife says she doesn't think he would want to come home now.

"My husband would never accept that," she said. "He volunteered to go back to Viet Nam, and I'm sure he will want to stay to serve out his tour."

Tough Old Soldier Returns To Florida, And Cries At Surprise Reunion

(Sarasota Herald Tribune, Sarasota, Florida, October 8, 1967)

PALM BAY, Fla. (AP) - A tough old soldier came home from his last war Saturday and found an adopted hometown, his wife, and former service buddies waiting to welcome him.

Army Sgt. Maj. **Walter J. Sabalauski** grinned and said thanks.

Then, facing a surprise reunion with the man his wife said was his favorite company commander, the bald 57-year-old ex-boxer cried.

During his 18 months in Vietnam. Sabalauski was awarded the distinguish service cross for valor when his unit was fire-bombed by American forces called in to kill Viet Cong by Capt. Bill Carpenter.

Carpenter, the football “lonely end” from West Point who won the Medal of Honor for calling the napalm attack down on his own position, was to speak by a telephone-public address hookup to a banquet for Sabalauski Saturday night.

Thomas J. Murphy of St. Petersburg, was to present the sergeant with a plaque from Gov. Claude Kirk during the banquet. Murphy's son, Pfc. Michael Murphy, 19, was machine-gunned during the same assault as he aided a wounded buddy and received the Bronze Star posthumously.

Sabalauski, a native Lithuanian who joined the Army in Chicago in 1939, arrived at the Cape

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Kennedy airport from Vietnam an hour before the reception committee Saturday.

But his wife, Bernice, was there to meet him, and the couple talked for an hour before the speeches.

Mayors of several cities, county officials and Army officers from nearby Patrick Air Force Base were on the platform.

Col. **William R. Parr**, Chief of Army Field Offices at Patrick, introduced Sabalauski as “a guy who has brought honor to the armed forces, to his country and to himself.”

Robert Barfield, a mail carrier from Orlando, Fla., recalled that he was a first sergeant in Sabalauski's outfit at Mainz, Germany, in 1962 Barfield said “there was a chip on my shoulder and we had it out.” Both men are former boxers but the older Sabalauski won.

“He’s one of the best soldiers I’ve ever known,” Barfield said.

At his new home Sabalauski watched a car arrive and Army Maj. Wayne R. Smith, stationed at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, stepped out.

“The Cocoa newspaper. “Today,” had asked Mrs. Sabalauski who her husband would most like to see at the reunion and she named his former company commander from Mainz. The newspaper flew Smith to Florida from Kansas as a surprise for the sergeant.

When Sabalauski saw Smith he snapped off a sharp salute, then said, “Damn, it’s good to see you, sir.”

Both men cried.

“This man has O. D. (Olive Drab) paint for blood,” Smith said. “He’s a man who has always been like a father to me.”

Through orders reportedly arranged by the headquarters of Gen. William Westmoreland in Saigon, Sabalauski — who served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam — will report after his

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leave to the U. S. Military Academy at West Point where he’ll serve the final two years in uniform as he has “ always dreamed,” teaching combat tactics to student officers.

MORGANTOWN Dominion-POST

Sunday Edition of The Dominion-News and The Morgantown Post

The New York Times News Service
United Press International

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INCLUDING 4 PAGES
TV TABLOID EDITION

Heroes by the Dozen in 40-Hour Battle

COURAGE IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS

TAU MORONG, South Viet Nam (UPI) — There were heroes by the dozen in the two spearhead companies of American paratroopers who held their ground for more than 40 hours against overwhelming odds here.

Take Johnny Cruz of Guam, for instance. Cruz walked out of the jungle Saturday with a hole in the front of his helmet.

“There was a machinegun right in front of us,” he explained. “Right after the napalm fell, I saw this man move behind a tree and I got him. I got him, there was stuff flying all the time before the napalm. I don’t think it was the guy I got that tired to get me. I think it was the machinegun.”

The slug that tore through Cruz’ helmet didn’t hurt him, but a piece of shrapnel did, slightly. He wanted to go back into the area with another company defending the perimeter while the helicopters took out the wounded. Battalion commander Lt. Col. Henry Emerson of Milford, Pa., had to personally order him to stay where he was.

There was 1st Sgt. Walter J. Sabalauski of Palm Bay, Fla., being recommended for a Distinguished Service Cross by Emerson, who shucked comments about his own action by saying “Hell, no one man is that important—everybody worked as a team.”

One of the men who lauded Sabalauski was Lt. Bryam Robbins of Columbia, Miss., executive officer of Charlie Company.

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“When those mortars were coming in, the old top (Sabalauski) was standing straight up, getting the men moved into position, Robbins said. “I think everybody thought at one time or another that we might not make it. But everybody fought like men—real men.”

First Lt. William C. Hookham of Pomona, Calif., a platoon leader, said: “The longer we stayed the worse it looked. They had the high ground, the low ground and the fields of fire. They had everything.”

Hookham credited the artillery observer with Able Company with saving many lives.

“He put up a wall of steel between us and the enemy,” Hookham said. The man he referred to was 2nd Lt. Harvey G. Snowden of Cincinnati, O. who was working with Able Company but once was attached to Charlie Company.

“I called in artillery within 50 meters (about 55 yards) all around our perimeter,” Snowden said. “It was continuous all night, all day and all night. I stayed behind to call in defensive fire to cover our withdrawal. This morning we killed 10 men, about a squad, within 30 meters of our perimeter with artillery. You know, we were pretty lucky.”

Pvt. Ronald Garnau, 19, of Lowell, Mass., a rifleman, said “They told us Charles was all around. He was. He fired on us from all sides. I thought we might not make it.”

Spec. 5 Donald Moss, a medic from Springfield, O. sat on his bloody medical kit and said: “I guess I treated 35 wounded. Many of the wounds were serious. Two men died before the companies could start walking out. But the air was what saved us. We called it in, and did the same thing later with our artillery. Called it right on top of us. Shrapnel was hitting our perimeter and going over us.”

He Is Tired

Sgt. Jerry Hanus of Houston, Tex., a squad leader, was dripping with sweat. All he had to say was: “I’m tired.”

“The main thing back there was the machineguns,” Robbins said. “We couldn’t move. We; just lay there and hugged old mother earth and kissed it and prayed.”

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Brown expressed the respect of one professional soldier to another as he spoke about the North Vietnamese troops.

“These are A-No. 1 professional soldiers,” he said. “They are well armed well trained and they’s just as soon kick the hell out of you as you would out of them.

“All the time before this we had a hard time finding the Viet Cong. This time we didn't have a bit of trouble. They were wherever we turned. We found too many of them at once. And they all seemed to have automatic weapons. But we took most of our casualties with grenades. They had regular grenade squads, like the one guy we killed who had 16 grenades on him.”

As all soldiers who have been through a tough fight, the survivors had recommendations on the way to run, and win, the war.















One of them was PFC. Richard Lowell of Newark, N J. “I’ve got a message for Gen. Westmoreland,” he said. “Tell him to take us out of here and drop one bomb.

THE TERRIBLE TOLL OF ‘OPERATION HAWTHORNE’				
NAME	AGE	GRD	ORG.	
James Howard Baker, Jr.	22	1 st Lt	C-Co.	
Allan Eugene Combs	22	SP4	C-Co	
Lawrence James Deisher	18	PFC	A-Co	
Will Page Barton II	19	PFC	B-Co	
John T. Dixon	35	SFC	C-Co	
Joseph Raymond Ellman	20	PFC		

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James E. Farrar	19	PFC		
Edward Thomas Frodsham	19	PFC		
Charles William Rooth	29	SSG	C-Co.	
Edward Garcia	23	PFC		
Peter Daniel Geoghegan	23	PFC		
Earl Wayne Goodall	20	PFC		No Picture
Glen Dorse Lofton	35	SSGT		
William James Caldwell	28	SSGT		
Robert Hanna	38	SFC		
Michael Thomas Murphy	19	PFC		
Robert James Phillips	36	PFC		
James Earnest Shuyler	20	PFC		
Derwood Steigleman Jr.	23	SGT		
Charles Van Turley	19	PFC		
Max V. Vasquez III	21	PFC		
Walter Williams Jr.	25	SP4		
<p>Above are listed just 21 of the 48 U.S. losses and 239 wounded, ARVN losses were 10 killed and 29 wounded, US/ARVN claiming PAVN losses were 479 killed (body count), 209 killed by aircraft of which 52 were counted, plus an estimated further 506 killed, 21 PAVN/VC were captured.</p>				

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You can't see nothing. You rely on your ears and they sure can play tricks. What was that noise, was that a lizard, snake, my imagination or was it Charlie? I remember those sounds and still wonder what it was. Those thoughts haunt me everyday.

Rich Luchhaupt, 35th Security Police Squadron

MEDALS HE HAS, BUT THOSE CHILDREN ARE PRIZED MORE

By MAUDE M. JEFFERS

Major **Charles R. Archie**, 69th Bomb Squadron, won two distinguished Flying Crosses, Clusters. One through Six on The Air Medal, and the First Cluster to the Commendation Medal while stationed at Phan Rang AB, Republic of South Vietnam. But he cherishes more the memories he has of working with Vietnamese children.

As civic actions coordinator for the 17th Special Operations Squadron, Major Archie of 1003 N. York St., Gastonia, worked with South Vietnamese children at the Phan Rang semi-public high school and Noch Ninh Buddhist orphanage.

He helped establish a scholarship fund for 35 needy children to attend Phan Rang who exhibited outstanding scholastic ability and whose families may be victims of the conflict. "We would visit the school often and monitor their program to provide food, lumber, and building materials to a Buddhist orphanage at Noah Ninh, whose children are without parents," he said.

"Working with the children provided me with a lot of self-satisfaction during my tour in Vietnam," he stated. "Because of the appreciation the kids showed for the smallest deed done for them, it meant even more to me."

Major Archie earned his first and second Distinguished Flying Crosses for support of operations in delivering the AC-119 Shadow gunship's ordinance and providing illumination and cover for air drop of supplies. The two outposts supported were Dae Pek, which was under siege and Ap Long Hoa hamlet, which was manned by South Vietnamese and Americans. He received the first through sixth clusters to the Air Medal for his achievements while navigating on the AC-119 shadow in 121 Missions over South Vietnam and Cambodia.

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As a final thought, Major Archie added, "I still cherish the letters of appreciation that I received from the high school principal and from some of the students, the letters being written in broken English and Vietnamese."

Since December, Major Archie has been stationed at Limestone AFB in Maine.

He is married to the former Gladys Anderson of Newport News, Va. The couple have two children, Karen and David.

Major Archie and his wife met while students at A and I State University of Nashville, Tenn. He is the son of Mrs. Mabel Archie and the late George Archie, of 1003 N. York St. (Gastonia Gazette, Gastonia, North Carolina, May 16, 1971)

The Daily Gleaner

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KINGSTON, JAMAICA, SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1978

How a family of 51 braved death to flee Vietnam

(Kingston Gleaner, Kingston, Jamaica, April 29, 1978)

MOMBASA, Kenya, (Reuter-CANA) After two years of carefully laid escape plans 51 members of a Vietnamese family faced death as water slowly filled their open fishing boat halfway across the South China Sea between their homeland and the Philippines.

Their motor had stopped and with their food and drinking water gone they estimated they had four hours left before going under. Then out of the darkness the 4,500 ton Greek freighter Lydia loomed to answer their SOS message- flashed by torch.

Three weeks later, under graceful palm trees on Kenya's Indian Ocean coast. 35-year-old Le Tien Cang spoke of why he decided that the risk of drowning and the slim hope of a new life abroad was preferable to remaining at his sugar factory in central Vietnam under the Communist Government.

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Cang, as head of the family which fled to Saigon from their home in Nha Trang as the North Vietnamese army drove South to final victory three years ago, decided he had been politically astute enough in dealing with the local Communists in his factory and sugar plantations. He overruled his young brother, Le Tien Lang, and Air Force Captain who had a plane, passports and money to fly out as Saigon fell.

The family stayed and Captain Lang reported, as ordered, to a high school in Saigon.

The North Vietnamese said at first his "Re-education" would last 10 days, then longer, then a year. Soon he had been there three years and had been allowed only brief visits from his family twice a year, Lang said.

“Nobody calls them reeducation centre” said 30-year-old Lang. “We all call it jail. There are armed guards, meager rations, no rights - that's jail.”

Back in Nha Trang, 200 miles Northeast of Saigon, the older brother Cang reopened his sugar mill under the watchful eye of a North Vietnamese political cadre.

Privilege

He could not make any decisions about his factory and he was not allowed to buy rice at the official price —the main privilege of the privileged.

"For three years I could not buy one Kilo of rice at the official price. Like 99 per cent of the people I was obliged to break the law and buy rice on the black market - at 10 or 20 times the official price - every day" he said.

Throughout the compulsory three hours propaganda sessions which followed every working day and the eight hours or so of radio broadcasts from loud speakers lining every street he could see no future for himself, Cang said.

Two years ago, after one year of the new regime, Cang travelled North on the crowded train - where there was so many people it is easy to evade official controllers - and bought a 17-metre

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boat. He got a fisherman to take it down to Phan Rang Bay on the coast south of Nha Trang and fish in it until the day he would arrive unannounced and ask for it.

Rare gasoline and rice supplies were hoarded and taken down to the fisherman's hut in Phan Rang. The children were told nothing because questions were often asked at school, Cang said.

Nothing was ever stored in the house because there were always unexpected visits from officials who looked around the house for packages or any other signs of preparations for flight, he said.

Risks

Cang knew the risks he was bent on running. Nha Trang is a port and almost daily, he saw people being arrested whose boats or rafts had drifted back to the Vietnamese coast after escape attempts.

"Even if they thought you looked as though you were thinking of trying to escape that was enough. They took people away without seeking evidence against them. It was highly dangerous."

All that remained was to free Lang from the re-education camp — moved away from the Cambodian border because of the border fighting to Trang Bom North of Saigon - where he had been put to work repairing vehicles and being lectured, Cang said.

Lang joined a grass-cutting party outside the camp perimeter on a pre-arranged day and leapt aboard his brother's motorcycle which was driven into the jungle.

Disguised

Within hours of their arrival at a hut outside Nha Trang the family, including a cousin who had also served in the South Vietnamese Air Force, began heading in ones and twos and disguised as barefoot peasants towards Phan Rang and the boat.

On March 23 the family group of 51 gathered at the fisherman's hut on the beach and pushed

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out through the breakers hoping to reach the Philippines seven days later. Another brother, a former Navy Lieutenant, was navigator.

Ten days later some 280 miles from the Vietnamese coast, with the engine dead and the water rising high up the bodies of the children, they were rescued by the Greek freighter.

The captain radioed messages to the British, Singaporean and other governments and to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

After refusals and rebuffs the Kenyan Government agreed to allow them ashore for three months while they found a home.

Greece guaranteed to take those who had, not found a new home after this period.

The ‘Bummers’ Saga continues...



The “Bummers” Saga



UNPLEASANT MEMORIES

(Note: The Pleasant Memories that Airman Zelski had are described in Phan Rang News 175)

By A1C Robert P. Zelski

The following are my unpleasant Vietnam memories:

- Mandatory shots before entering the Republic of South Vietnam. I'll never forget when our four man crew chief, Cecil Mathews said, “you'll love this last shot”! Talk about a true kick in the ass! The pain lasted a good 15 minutes and sore the next day.
- The head and humidity when the C-130 Hercules cargo door opened, welcoming you to Da Nang Air Base Vietnam!
- Adjusting to your living quarters in a 12 man military tent for the next 90 plus day. With the

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heat and humidity, it became necessary to have a small fan at the head of the bed especially if you slept days. Sometimes that didn't even help!

- Issuing an M-1 rifle (without shells) on my first TDY to Da Nang and then having to lock it to your bed springs for safe keeping!
- The heat and humidity in Vietnam was beyond my expectations. I remember hearing someone comparing it to Florida's heat and humidity, times two! Having to tell mom when you send my 'care package', please buy items such as potato chips, peanuts, etc., in cans and not bags because of the humid conditions.
- The dust storms that kicked out of nowhere! Better cover your open beer and C-Rations. Enduring the mosquito's, thank God for the mosquito netting or you would have a case of malaria!
- The seemingly unending wet and cold monsoon season.
- The smell of thousands of dead rice bugs crushed on the B-47 flight line by MJ's and other vehicles after a night rain, that were attracted from the maintenance and landing lights.
- This is the worst of the worst...on the night of January 12, 1966, from the arm/de-arm hut at Da Nang, I witnessed B-57, tail number 0-33876 takeoff, then crash at the end of the runway. Moments later when Major G. Tollett, Jr. and Capt Leno B. Smith II exited the cockpit and were standing nearby, a 500lb bomb aboard the aircraft exploded, instantly killing both pilots. Nearly every soldier goes home with some nightmare of war. That was mine! I will never forget that night of feeling so helpless. I will take those nightmares to my grave!
- Powdered eggs and milk at Da Nang's mess hall. Without saying, I never ever ate eggs or drank milk in Vietnam!
- Twelve hour work shifts and one day off per week! Discovering at 0600, after finishing a 12 hour shift that all of the steaks and lobster tails are completely consumed from the previous night's party. Only chicken was left for an early morning breakfast but it tasted damn good!

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- Working a 12 hour shift and then, discovering there was no hot water for a shower.
- After having finished a bomb-bay door reconfigure and bomb load, getting back to the work order dispatch hanger and being told that aircraft’s mission changed as well as the reconfigure and armament. Thanks, Sergeant Laramine, who became one of my best friend while over there!
- The sound of VC mortar rounds heading into the base, some aimed towards the fuel bladders that were adjacent to our living quarters. Our flares would light up the night sky!
- Watching Filipino’s eat a ‘Balut’, which is a developing duck embryo that has been boiled and aged.
- Tripping on a tarp and smashing my middle finger between a 50 caliber machine gun and a gun cleaning rack, requiring about night stitches with a loss of a lot of blood and much pain! Thanks to Reggie Fix for driving me and my blood soaked hand to the infirmary.
- Hitting the top of my head on a wing flap while fusing bombs. About six more stitches and again a lot of pain.
- Having the C-123’s (Operation Ranch Hand) that sprayed Agent Orange defoliant, parked right next to our work area and then 48 years later I had aggressive prostrate cancer because of it.
- Watching body bags and the wounded soldiers brought in by ambulances to the tarmac. Then were loaded into cargo aircraft to be sent home or to the hospitals in the Pacific. From my barracks seeing a flat bed of stacket silver transport cases being transported to the Clark Air Base Morturay.
- Having our whole squadron having to relocate from Da Nang to Phan Rang Air Base in October of 1966. It took some time to adjust to the new living conditions, i.e. back to living in tents and other sub-standard facilities.
- With my overseas tour coming to an end, having to say goodbye to the friends I made while

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at Clark, Da Nang and Phan Rang Air Bases, just knowing that most of them I'll never see again!



Pfc. **Theodore F. Altman**, son of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Altman of Idaville, is serving in Viet Nam. His address is Pfc. Theodore F. Altman, US558822166. Co. B 96th Qm. Bn. (D.S.), Phan Rang Sub Area Command, APO 96321, San Francisco, Calif. (Logansport Pharos Tribune, Logansport, Indiana, July 12, 1966)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam — Pfc **George M. Duke**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Duke of Coalport, arrived here last month with his unit, the 529th Transportation Company. The company, previously located at Ft. Eustis, Va., will provide transportation for Headquarters, Phan Rang Sub Area Command Pvt. Duke, a truck driver in the company, entered the Army in November 1965 and completed basic training at Ft. Jackson. S. C. (Altoona Mirror, Altoona, Pennsylvania, February 10, 1967)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam — Sp4/c **Gary L. Rockey** son of Mrs. Emma Rockey, Winburne, arrived here last month with his unit, the 529th Transportation Company. The company previously located at Ft. Eustis, Va., will provide transportation for Headquarters, Phan Rang Sub Area Command, Spec. Rockey, a truck driver in the company, entered the Army in November 1965 and completed basic training at Ft. Jackson S.C. (Altoona Mirror, Altoona, Pennsylvania, February 10, 1967)

Master Sergeant **Gerald A. Karr**, son of Mrs. Ramsey R. Karr of Rt. I, Keavy, is on duty in Phan Rang AB Vietnam. Sergeant Karr, a helicopter flight engineer, is assigned to unit of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service. Before his arrival in Southeast Asia, he served at Sheppard AFB, Tex. A graduate of Lily High School, the sergeant attended Black Hills College in Rapid City, S. D. His wife, Barbara, is the daughter of Edna M. Pearce of 105 Yeager Court, San Antonio. (Corbin Daily Tribune, Corbin, Kentucky, April 18, 1969)

U. S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel **Samuel T. Dickens**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred W Dickens, 2122

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California St., NW, Washington, D. C., recently completed his 200th combat mission in Southeast Asia. Colonel Dickens, an F-100 Super Sabre aircraft command, flies with the 615th Tactical fighter Squadron at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. The colonel is a veteran of the Korean War and has more than 23 years service. A graduate of American High School, Buenos Aires, Argentina, he received his B. S. degree and was commissioned in 1951 at the U. S. Military Academy. His wife, Marcella, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Willard H. Smith, 311 Van Dom St., Corbin. (Corbin Daily Tribune, Corbin, Kentucky, April 18, 1969)



Woodman

A1C **David Woodman**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence B. Woodman, Rt. 2, is serving with the 315th Combat Support Group at Phan Rang AFB, Vietnam. Woodman left from McChord AFB, Wash., Nov. 21, and stopped at Anchorage, Alaska; Tokyo, Japan; and Cam Ranh Bay, scheduled to go to Phu Cat AB Arriving at Cam Ranh Bay, he learned that Phu Cat AFB had been turned over to the South Vietnamese Forces, so his orders were changed to Phan Rang. Woodman, who served at K I. Sawyer AFB, Mich., the past year, was graduated from AF Technical School, Chanute AFB, Ill., in September,

1970. A Craig High School graduate in 1968, he attended Platteville State University before entering the Air Force. His address is: 394563960, Box 5828, 315th CSGP (PACAF), APO San Francisco, Calif. 96321, Pas: PRRHYK Phan Rang AFB, Vietnam. (The Jamesville Gazette, Janesville, Wisconsin, December 15, 1971)

“ONE FLAG, ONE LAND, ONE HEART, ONE HAND, ONE NATION EVERMORE!”

Oliver Wendell Holmes

PHAN RANG. Vietnam - Army First Lieutenant **Terry L. Beck**, 24, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Eckhoff, Mason Road, Berlin Heights, recently received the Bronze Star Medal near Phan Rang, Vietnam. He was presented the Bronze Star Medal for distinguishing himself through meritorious service in connection with military operations against hostile forces in Vietnam. The medal, adopted in 1944, recognizes outstanding achievement. Lt. Beck received the award while assigned as adjutant of the 6th Battalion, 32nd Artillery near Phan Rang. The lieutenant entered the army in March 1969 and was stationed at Ft. Benning, Ga., before arriving

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overseas. He also holds the Army Commendation Medal. The lieutenant is a 1964 graduate of Berlin High School. He received his B. S. degree in 1968 from Ohio State University. His wife, Sarah, lives on Berlin Road in Huron. (Norwalk Reflector, Norwalk, Ohio, March 15, 1971)

PHAN RANG, VIETNAM - "Sure, the Viet Cong snipe at us," said a driver in the 62nd Engineer Battalion's Company A, "but these rigs are pretty big. We had a driver run over a V. C. land mine the other day and he thought he had a blowout!" PFC **John M. Craft**, son of John E. Croft, RD 1. Baltic. 0. is a crane shovel operator in the company's equipment section. His section has been busy the past six months. In addition to supplies and equipment transported by the section's 2 1/2 ton trucks and tractor trailers to such places as Cam Ranh Bay and Nha Trang, the dump trucks roll night and day. More than 140,000 cubic yards of earth have been moved in the past six months by soldiers who drive the 5-ton dump trucks. Croft's battalion has been heavily involved in the vast airfield construction project at Phan Rang. Included will be a 10,000-foot-long aluminum-mat runway; underground electrical and communications cables; and a pipeline to bring aviation fuel from tankers anchored ten miles away in Phan Rang Bay. Although trucks of other sections in the company work hard, the equipment section has the highest performance record, and its members are proud of their maintenance. The 21-year-old soldier, son of Mrs. Amanda E. Croft. RD 1, Sugarcreek, entered the army in June 1965 and completed basic training at Fort Knox, Ky. He was graduated from Caraway high school in 1962 and was employed by the Widder Shell Service, Sugarcreek, before entering the Army. (New Philadelphia Daily Times, New Philadelphia, Ohio, April 6, 1966)

NEWS OF a promotion in Viet Nam for **David R. Finnestad** has been received. Sp/5 Finnestad, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald R. Finnestad of 79 Cherry, received his present rank while serving with the 13th Army Artillery. Specialist five is an enlisted rank equivalent to that of sergeant. Specialist Finnestad is a personnel clerk in the service battery of the 13th Artillery's Second howitzer battalion. He entered the Army in April 1964 and was formerly assigned Fort Sill, Okla., after completing basic training at Fort Knox, Ky. A graduate of Rich high school in 1960, he also attended Southern Illinois University.

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 Crete, now residing on Cornwall drive. ZYONSE entered the Army June, took basic training at Fort Knox and completed field communication crewman course at Fort Benning, Ga. Earlier he had attended

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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. (Park Forest Star, Park Forest, Illinois, April 28, 1966)

U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant **Joe H. Park**, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Park of 312 Shell St., Healdton, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sgt. Park is a stenographic specialist with a unit of the Pacific Air Forces, headquarters for air operations in Southeast Asia, the Far East and Pacific area. He previously served at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Ind. The sergeant a 1962 graduate of Nashville (Ill.) High School, attended Lockyear's Business College, Evansville, Ind, and Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts, Chickasha. His wife, Mary, is the daughter of Mrs. Tom Romo of 716 N. 12th, Chickasha. (The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Okla., Sunday, May 30, 1971)

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

VIETNAM — Air Force Airman 1 C. **Richard J. Vassas**, son Mrs. Marie A. Vassas of 314 Craig St., Gallitzin, has arrived in Vietnam for duty and will be stationed at Phan Rang Air Base. Airman Vassas is a member of the 821st Combat Security Police Squadron, an elite unit that has been specially trained to repel enemy aggression and provide air base security. The Phan Rang unit will be held in constant readiness to supplement the defense forces of any U.S. air base in the combat zone which might come under an enemy attack. The airman is a graduate of Greater Gallitzin Joint High School. (Altoona Mirror, Altoona, Pennsylvania, October 8, 1968)

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Doug’s Comments: With this newsletter I’ve changed the header to reflect “**The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those that served there**”, which I think, pretty accurately reflects the purpose of this newsletter. I hope that you enjoyed reading and found something interesting or a memory jogger and if you have any comments or would like to submit a story, please send it to me. This newsletter was composed and all graphics 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.

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 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.