

## **“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. 183    **“...keeping the memories alive”**

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**Serving our Country**

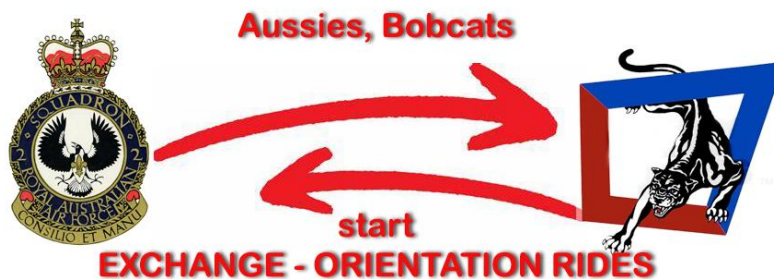
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### Aussies, Bobcats Start Exchange Orientation Rides

*(Phan Fare The Happy Valley Weekly, March 13, 1969)*

Two Royal Australian Air Force pilots recently flew combat sorties in the F-100 Supersabre with pilots of the 615<sup>th</sup> TFS "Bobcats".

The Aussies, Flight Lieutenant **Mervyn J. Lewis** and Pilot Officer **Shane S. Welsh** are both members of the RAAF No. 2 Squadron flying Canberras at Phan Rang.

The Bobcat flights were the beginning of a joint familiarization program that will have 615<sup>th</sup> pilots scheduled for flights in the RAAF Canberra while additional Australian pilots fly in the back seat of the F-100F.

A 615<sup>th</sup> spokesman added, "There is a very close relationship between the purpose of the fighter and the bomber squadrons in Vietnam and a very close friendship between their crews.

"The No. 2 Squadron has certainly maintained a standard of professionalism with excellent results. That assists in keeping the competition between squadrons keen and morale high at Phan Rang."

### Canberra Jets on the Attack

*(Sydney Morning Herald, 1967)*

RAAF Canberra jets made their first bomb strikes of the Vietnam War by bombing the Vietcong concentrations south-west of Phan Rang. The jets, which arrived from Butterworth base in Malaysia only a week earlier, pounded the Vietcong with 16.5-tonne bombs.

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### **Nothing was going to stop Anthony “Ned” Kelly**

*(Fraser Coast Chronicle, 09/26/2018)*

THE scene is Phan Rang Vietnam circa 1970 in the heat of the Vietnam war and nothing was going to stop Anthony “Ned” Kelly playing his round of cricket.

Not even three missiles heading for the RAAF base he was stationed at.

His mates recalled Ned’s antics at his wake after the veteran passed away last week aged 74.

“We thought it sounded like jets, but when they got closer we knew it wasn’t bloody jets,” laughed a fellow Vietnam veteran from Hervey Bay, life-long friend John Rutland.

“We got into trouble because everyone else ran to the bomb bunkers and we continued to play cricket.”

The story, like the many others passed around at the Boat Club yesterday, sang true to the “larrikin’s” wit, sense of humour and outgoing personality.

The Hervey Bay retiree was born in 1944 and grew up in Sydney.

Ned, affectionately nicknamed after his surname’s namesake the infamous bushranger Ned Kelly, had a claim to fame of his own.

“He was the only footballer to have punched Dud Beattie and gotten away with it,” Mr Rutland added.

“He almost died when we told him who he had actually hit at half time.”

Dud Beattie was the Australian team’s prop at the time.

During his 20 years in the Royal Australian Air Force, Ned was renown for his sporting prowess.

Ned played in the RAAF A Grade as a second rower alongside the likes of Australian wing three-quarter back, Les Hanigan, in Wagga Wagga.

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In 1970–71, Ned was sent to Vietnam as part of a squad of Canberra Bombers.

“Ned was a mad cricket fan obviously,” another mate said.

“He would get leave and be on the way home to visit his mum when he dropped in to the Gabba watching a test match.

“After five days had passed watching the cricket he realized his leave was over and he had to head back to work.

“I don’t think his mother saw him once for three years and it took him three months before she found out he was in Vietnam.”

While Ned was serving in Malaysia he discovered a genius way of breaking the rules and sending his motorbike with him.

“He took it apart and then posted it to himself in little pieces under ‘personal affects’,” Mr Rutland said.

It was only after Ned was in an accident and the registration on the bike had to be checked, it came to light where the bike had come from.

“God thing he played golf with the chief of police.”

Returning to Australia, Ned continued to serve on the HMAS Neptune stationed in Townsville doing maritime recognizance.

After some time spent sailing the east coast of Queensland, Ned landed in Mackay and met the love of his life.

Suzie Corby said she fell in love with Ned’s humour and personality when they met in Walkerston seven years ago.

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“It was everything about him, his wit, intelligence and his ability to tell stories.

“He had these gorgeous blue eyes.”

Suzie explained Ned’s reputation as a larrikin preceded him.

“Sometimes people wouldn’t believe him when he was telling the truth because they were so gullible when he was joking,” she said.

“Like when he was little he believed his name was Jesus.

“His mother would always say ‘Jesus Christ get in here’ or ‘Jesus Christ don’t do that’.

“True story.

“They had a really good relationship those two.”

Ned’s RAAF buddies consider him family and after serving together over seas and in Townsville, they kept touch through the years.

“He gave me a call and a list of four houses, he told my wife to pick one,” Mr Rutland said.

“So she did and he moved up to Hervey Bay without even seeing the house.”

And so the couple moved to Hervey Bay.

“Even when he was sick with emphysema, he had a couple of times when he couldn’t breath, and they brought him a panic button,” Mr Rutland explained.

“They asked him to test it out in case of an emergency.

“So at 74 years old he fell on the floor wheezing and coughing.

“They told him ‘not that you idiot, test the button’.”

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### **Airmen Build Home for Orphaned Kids**

*(Seventh Air Force News, October 29, 1969)*

**PHAN RANG** - When the 315th Special Operations Wing here recently abandoned a building no longer needed, the structure was threatened with an empty future.

Capt. **Edward M. Lederer** found the building a new "home" when he contacted the base civic action officer 1st Lt. **James V Cooley Jr.**

"We have many places the structure could be used." The lieutenant stated, "but at the Ngoc Ninh Orphanage in Phan Rang City, the need is the greatest. Forty new refugee children just arrived, and the orphanage is severely overcrowded."

Captain Lederer was quick to respond. The following day he appeared on the scene with 15 volunteers and work began. The building was torn down, trucked to the orphanage and reassembled in a single day.

Sgt. James C. Baranowski, a volunteer, said, "Although the day was extremely hot, it felt good to see those kids have a decent shelter over their heads."

Because of the crowded conditions, several children had been sleeping in hammocks rigged between poles. The one existing structure was sectioned into a porch, sleeping room, school room and an area for the Buddhist nuns operating the orphanage. The new building nearly doubled the living space.

AIC Rickey L. Patterson commented on the thoughtfulness of the school's nuns. "Since they were unable to help with the heavy work, they provided sugar cane and coconut milk for snacks and started conversations with the men during breaks from the work."

Sgt. **Douglas R. Cadieux** said one nun "adopted" Airman Patterson. "She asked him if he had a sister at home. When he said he didn't, she told him 'Then I will be your sister!'"

Maj. **Willard R. Mumford** summarized the feelings everyone had after the job was completed. "All of these kids have lost their parents and helping them is one of the most gratifying things I

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have ever done."

Now the life of the reassembled building has been fulfilled, and Captain Lederer and his group are helping to build a school in another village. "Once you've realized the satisfaction of helping others," Captain Lederer explained, "it is impossible to ignore the needs of your fellow men."



**Phan Rangers waiting for the opening of the Viking Theatre, Phan Rang's new 401-seat indoor theatre opens 17 March 1969.**

### **New Theater Ready Monday**

*(Phan Fare The Happy Valley Weekly, March 13, 1969)*

Red Horse construction workers were breathing hard at press time as they galloped towards a construction deadline. At the finish line is Phan Rang's new 401-seat indoor theatre.

The theatre, centrally located on base between the snack bar and 35<sup>th</sup> Wing Headquarters, will be fully air-conditioned with two 17 ½ ton capacity units. Opening night is scheduled for Monday (17 March 1969).

The paid-admission type theatre will show 35mm features supplied by Army-Air Force Motion Picture Service, Pacific.

Designed and built by Lt. Col. (soon to be full colonel) **Neils H. Lund's** 554<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer and Heavy Repair Squadron (RED HORSE), the theatre will have feature six performances daily:

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11:30m 13:30m 16:30, 19:30 21:30, and 0030 hours beginning March 18.

Opening night’s gala premiere showing is scheduled for 8:45 P.M. Monday.

**(Does anyone know what was the first movie shown and why was the name ‘Viking’ chosen for the theatre?)**



### **Gen. Gideon Visits Here; Decorates Son**

*(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, March 6, 1969)*

Lt. Gen. Francis C. Gideon, commander, 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force, with headquarters at Clark AB, Philippines, visited Phan Rang AB recently.

He was met by his son 1<sup>st</sup>. Lt. **Francis C. Gideon Jr.**, an F-100 Supersabre pilot with the 615<sup>th</sup> TFS, and Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., commander, 35<sup>th</sup> TFW.

After touring the base, General Gideon made several medal presentations including that of the Air Medal to his son.

Following the awards ceremony and an informal visit with members of the 615<sup>th</sup> TFS and other squadron commanders, General Gideon prepared for his major event of the day -- a mission in the F-100F with his son as the pilot.

Commenting on the mission, the General said, “The mission went normally and was very well executed. The weather over the target was hazy and the target itself was fairly indistinct, although we could make it out well enough from the altitude from which we were operating.

“The forward air controller put his smoke in on what he considered the most lucrative target and we put the ordinance right on the smoke.

“I was co-pilot today. After all these years, I finally graduated to be my son’s co-pilot. I was looking forward to it and I enjoyed it. Although he has flown with me on occasion, this was my first change to fly with him as the pilot.”



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### ‘Ranch Hands’ Visiting While Home base ‘Hot’

*(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, March 13, 1969)*

Landing on the runway at Phan Rang, a glance towards East ramp would give the appearance of being at the C-123 factory, for the base was being overrun by the “Provider” herd from Bien Hoa.



The 12<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, the “Ranch Hands,” commanded by Lt. Col. **Rex Stoner**, has been remotely operating out of here after temporary relocations from their home base during the current high threat period.

Mounting their saddles in the sky out of Phan Rang the “cowboys” have experienced only minor operational problems, none of which have impaired successful mission accomplishment.

Stopping briefly at Bien Hoa after each mission, they re-fill their 1000 gallon herbicide tanks with a new load and return to Phan Rang ready to mount for their next mission.

The 12<sup>th</sup>'s mosquito bird “Patches” has also been seen roosting here. Although this airplane is generally on the road, it always returns for periodic and other minor specialized maintenance and bed-down for the crew.

Close coordination with base officials has provided the purple scarfed airmen, with the necessary quarters and messing facilities, making their unscheduled visit to Phan Rang, most pleasant.

Once the rancher home base is secure, they will return to their own corral and the purple stampede seen at the local military clubs will become a thing of the past.

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### THE STORY OF 883



It began as a routine mission; but before the night was over, people would learn of the incredible flight, the flight that became . . .

#### THE STORY OF 883

There was no doubt that the 18<sup>th</sup> SOS men of 883 were an experienced crew. If they hadn't been, there's no telling what might have happened when their . . . but before getting to that part of the story, we should tell it from the beginning.



**KEPT HIS COOL -**  
Capt. Alan D.  
Milacek piloted the  
crippled plane.

It is May 8, 1970. An AC-119K, an Air Force gunship, tail number 883, sits outside waiting for its crew, waiting for tonight's mission — an armed reconnaissance mission over one of the most heavily defended road sections in Southeast Asia (Laos). In one of the briefing rooms, a group of men are gathering around in that special closeness that only an air-combat crew knows so well.

Captains **Alan D. Milacek**, pilot; **Brent C. O'Brien**, copilot; **Roger E. Clancy**, navigator; **James A. Russell** and **Ronald C. Jones**, sensor operators; flight engineer TSgt **Albert A. Nash**; illuminator operator SSgt **Adolfo Lopez, Jr.**; aerial gunner A1C **Donnell H. Cofer**, and crewmembers SSgt **Ronald R. Wilson** and Sgt **Kenneth E. Firestone**.

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*"...they were about to fly, their 100th together, was going to be just a little bit different from the rest."*

The crewmen didn't know that the mission they were about to fly, their 100th together, was going to be just a little bit different from the rest.

Weather, targets, coordinates, rescue procedures. A normal briefing. Soon, the engines are warming up, taxi is underway, and 883 and crew are airborne.

For awhile all is "routine." The crew has already discovered and destroyed two trucks when Sensor Operators Russell and Jones spot three more trucks on the road below.

Pilot Milacek begins maneuvering the aircraft, placing it in a firing orbit. The crew is alert, each man at his post. Ready for action. Suddenly, everything changes, the equilibrium of the night, such as it is, is gone. All at once the odds have turned against the crew of 883.

Bursts of antiaircraft fire begin cracking, and 883 is now engaged in the classic air battle.

Co-pilot O'Brien clears two F-4 escorts in on the six-gun positions and they respond immediately.

Again and again the F-4s are called in as 883 maneuvers through the deadly circle of fire.

Seconds and minutes. They remain on target. After 17 minutes of the deadly duel, guns firing away at the trucks below, 37 mm rounds whizzing by 883 from the positions below, the crew feels that a "tenuous balance" might best describe the situation.

One more truck has been hit and the fire from it lights the area. Suddenly, at exactly 1 a.m., everything changes and makes the previous few minutes seem as though they had been spent in Disneyland. "The whole cargo compartment lit up and I felt the aircraft go into a right bank dive," recalls Airman Cofer, aerial gunner. No one knew exactly where they had been hit, the gunners didn't answer right away. All they knew is that the nice steady left bank that 883 had been flying had been violently wrenched into a violent right-bank dive.

Milacek called out, "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, we're going in." He gave instructions for

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jettisoning the flare launcher to the Illumination Operator, Sergeant Lopez, and told the crew to prepare for an immediate bailout. If they were going to go in, they had picked a mighty bad spot to do it.

Things became a bit more complicated for the pilot. The plane was coming down fast, having already lost about 1,000 feet in altitude, while the crew struggled with the worsening problem. Milacek and O'Brien put in everything they had to try to pull out of that dive. Finally, with full left rudder and full left aileron, along with maximum power on the two right engines, they regained "stabilized flight." They pulled out of the dive.

It wasn't the easiest thing in the world to do. Navigator Clancy said later, "When you go on these missions, you brief for rescue procedures, where to head for and so forth. But this plane was going where it wanted to!"

On top of that there was an additional problem. With the right engines at full power, they began to glow, providing an easier target for gunners below. That wasn't all the crew had to worry about. After a quick evaluation, they discovered that they were headed away from their home base. Even worse, there was a range of mountains between them and home base, and they were too low to go over in their present condition.

But let's take one problem at a time.

There wasn't much they could do about their existence as a bright target in the sky, of course. They had to remain in a stable flying attitude. But Milacek, with guidance from the navigator, Clancy, edged 883 around to the correct heading.

Slowly, slowly, like a trickle of sand in an hour glass, 883 strained around until she was pointed in the right direction. Now there were the mountains to overfly. The entire crew began throwing out everything they could to lighten the load.

Adrenalin working at full bore, like the engines on the right wing, Sergeants Wilson and Firestone found that they could rather easily throw out the cans of ammunition with only one hand. It was working. The aircraft began a slow climb to get over the mountains. Once over the peaks, Milacek began a slow descent.

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Sergeant Nash recomputed the expected dry-tank time and discovered that the fuel consumption had been reduced considerably. For the first time since they had been hit, the crew could think realistically of landing the stricken bird instead of bailing out. It looked like the emergency might be ending.

Approaching the landing area (Tan Son Nhut AB), Milacek carefully performed a controllability check on 883. He found, after some experimentation that, at reduced speeds and with gear extended, control could be maintained with almost full left rudder and aileron. Since flap damage couldn't be assessed, he decided to do a no-flap approach at 150 knots, somewhat faster than the usual landing technique.

Down they came, each crewmember wondering what the dark night held for them as they came closer to touchdown. Finally, the first bump, then wheel roll, then finally, taxi up. They had made it. They were down, after their 80-minute ordeal. It was over, and no one was hurt.

Perhaps, though, no one was more relieved than Milacek, who was heard clearly over the intercom, saying as they went onto the taxiway at the end of the runway: "Thank you, Lord, thank you."

**May 9, 1970, Vietnam** - Fourteen feet of the wing and one aileron on Stinger 883 was shot off. The plane should not have stayed airborne.

It wasn't until the crew got out of the aircraft that they saw for themselves, for the first time, just what damage had been done. One-third of the right wing had been shot away and one aileron along with it.

Technically, the aircraft was almost unflyable.

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**GUNSHIPS CAN TAKE IT, TOO** - A 7<sup>th</sup> AF Air Force AC119 gunship sits at Tan son Nhut AB after returning from a mission over Laos where heavy ground fire tore off a large portion of the right wing.



Washington D.C - Captain Alan Milacek, to the right of the trophy, and his crew pose proudly with the Mackay Trophy. A year later, the crew of 883 was together again, this time to receive the coveted Mackay Trophy for the most Meritorious Flight of the Year. The citation reads, in part: Working as a team and displaying the highest degree of airmanship and courage in the face of extreme danger, they managed to successfully return to their home base, thereby saving a valuable aircraft. The exceptional distinctive accomplishments of Captain Milacek and his crew reflect great credit upon themselves and the United States Air Force.

### Half a Wing and a Prayer Gets Air Crew Top Award

*(Greeley Daily Tribune, Greeley, Colorado, July 31, 1971)*

**SAIGON (AP)** — As the AC119 gunship with half a wing sheared off turned onto the taxiway



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near the-end of the runway, the tower operators heard a crewman's voice come over the radio:  
**"Thank you, Lord."**

Next Thursday, the U.S. Air Force will thank the 10-man gunship crew for bringing the battle-damaged craft back to base from a night combat mission over North Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh trail supply network in Laos.

Gen. John D. Ryan, Air Force chief of staff, will present the Mackay Trophy to the pilot, Capt. Alan D. Milacek, and his nine-man crew in ceremonies at the Pentagon. The annual award is presented for the most meritorious flight of the year.

The mission took place on May 8, 1970, and all of the men have left Indochina.

Milacek is now at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma. The copilot, Capt. Brent C. O'Brien, has left the Air Force and lives in Galveston, Tex.

Other crewmen and their current bases are:

Capt. James A. Russell, sensor operator, Yokota Air Force, Japan; Capt. Ronald C. Jones, sensor operator, Kincheloe Air Force Base, Mich.; Capt. Roger Clancy, navigator, Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio; Sgt. Donnell H. Cofer, aerial gunner, Lowry Air Force Base, Colo.; SSgt. Adolfo Lopez Jr., illuminator operator, Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio; TSgt. Albert Nash, flight engineer, McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.; SSgt. Ronald R. Wilson, aerial gunner, McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas; and SSgt. Kenneth E. Firestone, aerial gunner, Dover Air Force Base, Del.

## **USAF Crew Came Back On One-and-a-Half Wings**

*(European Stars and Stripes, Darmstadt, Hesse, July 31, 1971)*

**WASHINGTON** (Special) — The crew of an AC119K attack aircraft has been named winner of the 1970 Mackay Trophy for the "most meritorious flight of the year," Air Force officials announced here.

Led by Capt. Alan D. Milacek, now assigned to the 443<sup>rd</sup> Military Airlift Wing, Altus AFB, Okla.,

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the crew was returning to its home base in Southeast Asia after an armed reconnaissance-strike mission when half of the plane's right wing was shot away by antiaircraft fire.

After regaining partial control of the craft, Milacek ordered the crew to jettison ammunition and other equipment to lighten the aircraft. It was then discovered that the fuel tanks would be empty approximately 30 miles short of the base.

"I pulled off power which put the aircraft in a slow descent," Milacek said. "This increased the air speed getting us home more rapidly. The reduced power also meant that less fuel would be consumed.

"The landing was routine," he continued, "but looking over the right wing, we discovered 14 feet of its leading edge and nearly 17 feet of the trailing shot away."

While the "most meritorious flight of the year" remains the criterion for awarding the trophy, careful attention is given to personal gallantry and unusual presence of mind under combat or noncombat conditions.

Previous winners of the trophy, awarded annually since 1912, include Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, Eddie Rickenbacker and Jimmy Doolittle.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John D. Ryan will present the award to the crew in ceremonies here Aug. 5.



## **PEDESTRIANS CAUTIONED**

In the Last 90 days four pedestrians have been struck by vehicles on Phan Rang. One has been fatally injured.

AFM 127-101 states, "When sidewalks are provided, pedestrians will use them, rather than the roadway. Only when there are no sidewalks will the pedestrians be permitted to walk on the edge of the road, and then they will be required to walk on the far left side, facing traffic."

Signs are being made up and posted as reminders, but only you have the key to safety! (Source:



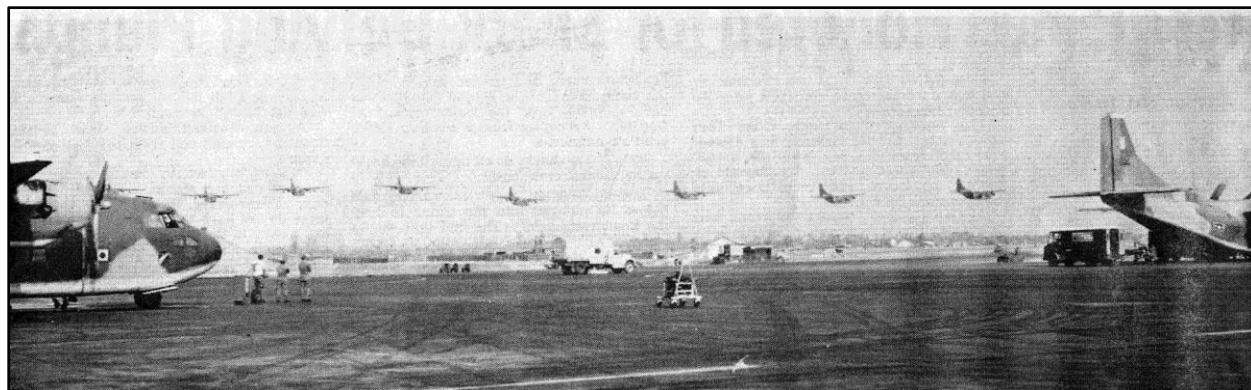
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*Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, November 7, 1968)*



### **BACK TO THE CORRAL**

*(Seventh Air Force News, May 14, 1969)*

**UC-123 Provider defoliation aircraft of the 12<sup>th</sup> Special Operations squadron fly low over Bien Hoa AB as they return from daily missions in the Republic of Vietnam. The UC-123 crews, using a commercial herbicide solution used by millions of Americans, temporarily defoliate thick jungle areas which provide cover for the enemy. The aerial spray used has a lasting effect from two to three weeks and has been successful in uncovering and exposing enemy concentration areas, storage area, base camps and resupply trails. (Photo by A1C Johnnie Gurley)**

### **Phan Rang Selects NCO**

*(Seventh Air Force News, October 29, 1969)*

**PHAN RANG** - SSgt. **Cyril E. Hill**, a member of the 1882d Communications Squadron here, was recently selected as the squadron's noncommissioned officer of the quarter.

A communications center specialist, Sergeant Hill was selected by his supervisor to represent his section in the squadron-level competition.

Competition is based on the individual's overall knowledge of his job, squadron policy, the chain of command and current events.

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# DOOM PUSSY



## the definitive definition

### THE DOOM PUSSY

#### A Unique Emblem for a Unique Mission

A unique emblem for a unique mission. The Doom Pussy had its beginning with the early missions of the Yellowbirds in 1965. Operating out of Bien Hoa, the 8<sup>th</sup> Tactical Bombardment Squadron would land at Da Nang to refuel and was engaged in pioneering night missions over North Vietnam. Captain Art Jepson (killed at Bien Hoa) was one of these pioneers, and it is generally conceded that he was the one to pick up a stuffed black cat and place it in the Officers' Club at Da Nang, and called it the “Doom Pussy” after the Da Nang Officers' Open Mess.

As the legend grew, it soon gained and retained its grim connotation as “Doom—the cat of death.” As in the movie “12 O’Clock High”, the cat was turned to face the wall every time our airplanes were on a night mission. Soon, these missions became known as, and remain ...Doom Pussy Missions. Since then equal value has been given to truck hunting missions over Steel Tiger, Tiger Hound, and Barrel Roll. As might be expected, imaginations went wild and soon the legend grew that a big black cat, with a mean green eye and a black eye patch, was seen in the Northern skies. He would suddenly appear in front of the canopy and try to claw his way in. When an aircraft was lost it was not to flak, missiles, or mountains, but simply “The Doom Pussy Got Him.”

Lt Bob Galdbreath drew the original patch and had it made up in Saigon. The words on the border are Laotian for “I have flown into the jaws of the cat of death.” The authoress Elaine

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Shepard spent some time with the squadron and wrote a book by the same title. The squadron doesn't claim it is exactly our story although the characters, if not their exploits, are real enough.

The stuffed cat still faces the wall in our own little club and the other is reportedly still visible on some dark night.”

Copied from the original description given to me at Phan Rang in 1969. I was honored to have served with the squadron as the intelligence officer Nov 1968-October 1969.

**Gerald L. White**, Colonel, USAF (ret)

**Note:** Some of Elaine Shepards stories titled The Doom Pussy are **“Harry's Hog Haulers”** and **“Cocktails at Green Apple”** which can be found in Phan Rang Newsletters 115. The article **“Doom Pussy Facts, Legend & Myths”** can be found in Phan Rang Newsletter 135.

*Whatever  
became of...?*

**Donald F. Brackett**

### **Former Sheppard airman earns eagles**

By TSgt. JACK SEYLER

Col. **Donald F. Brackett**, who attended an aircraft maintenance course at Sheppard in 1953, was promoted May 1, and is chief of the 3760th Technical Training Group which conducts the training.

He was named chief of the Department of Aircraft Maintenance Training of the School of Applied Aerospace Sciences (SAAS) last August. The department became the 3760th Technical Training Group under the recent reorganization of the school A native of Quincy, Mass., Colonel

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Brackett entered the Air Force in March 1953 and took basic military training at Sampson AFB, N Y. He then came to Sheppard for training on reciprocating engines.

He applied and was accepted for the Aviation Cadet Training Program at Lackland AFB. Tex. From there, he went to Ellington AFB. Tex., for navigator training. He was commissioned a second lieutenant upon completion of the course in March 1955.

He then served as navigator On Douglas C-124 Globemasters with the 1607th Air Transport Wing, Dover AFB. Del. He next attended pilot training at Bainbridge AB, Ga., and Laredo AFB, Tex., where he remained as an instructor pilot in the Lockheed T-38 T-Bird.

From October 1961 until May 1964, Colonel Brackett was a Cessna T-37 instructor pilot and academic instructor with the 3645th Pilot Training Wing at Laughlin AFB. Tex. From there he served with the Air Training Command Standardization and Evaluation Team at Randolph AFB. Tex.

The colonel entered the Air Force Institute of Technology Program and earned a bachelor of mechanical engineering degree in aeronautical sciences from Oklahoma State University. Stillwater. Okla., in 1968.

He then served in various staff positions until July 1969, when he became a North American F-00 Scorpion pilot with the 314<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron and wing operations officer with the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, **Phan Rang, AB**. Vietnam. He flew 245 combat missions.

From July 1970 until May 1974, Colonel Brackett served as chief of the Current Operations Branch at Headquarters, Fifth Air Force, Fuchu AS, Japan.

He came to Sheppard from Japan and assumed duties as deputy commander, Division B, 3750th Student Group. SAAS.

The colonel is a graduate of Squadron Officers School in residence and the Air Command and Staff College and the Industrial College of the armed forces by correspondence, and earned a master of science degree in systems management from the University of Southern California's off-duty education program.

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He holds the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, and both the Army and Air Force Commendation Medal.

*(Source: Wichita Falls Sheppard Senator, Wichita Falls, Texas, May 5, 1976)*

**William G. Norman Jr.**

### **Col. Norman Takes over ‘50<sup>th</sup> TTG**

Arrives from Panama duty - Col. **William G. Norman Jr.** assumed command of the 3750th Technical Training Group June 7, replacing Col. Michael J. Trodden.

Colonel Trodden, commander of the group since July 1986, is being reassigned to Maxwell AFB, Ala., as director of curriculum and vice commandant of Squadron Officers School.

Colonel Norman arrived at Sheppard from United States Southern Command Headquarters in Panama, where he served as chief of the Intelligence Programs Division.

Born in Chicago on Sept. 26, 1944, Colonel Norman graduated from West Virginia University in June 1966 with a bachelors degree in human resources and education. His initial military duty was Undergraduate Pilot Training at Randolph AFB, Texas, after which he was assigned to fly C-123K aircraft with the 311th Special Operations Squadron at **Phan Rang AB**, Vietnam.

No stranger to Air Training Command, the colonel has served as a UPT instructor pilot at Vance AFB, Okla., and as a Pilot Instructor Training instructor pilot at Randolph AFB. He has also served on the faculty of the ATC Instructor Training School.

Colonel Norman also has flown the F-111E while assigned as a flight commander at RAF Upper Heyford, England, and as a parachute qualified O-2A fighter air liaison officer to the commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Following another United Kingdom assignment as an A-10 fighter pilot at RAF Bentwaters, Colonel Norman was selected to be U.S. Air Attache to the Republic of El Salvador in August 1984, serving in that position until his transfer to Panama.

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Colonel Norman is married to the former Jo Anne Germona of Sacramento, Calif. They have one daughter, Kelly Rae Spalding.

*(Source: Wichita Falls Sheppard Senator, Wichita Falls, Texas, June 14, 1990)*

**Robert D. Beckel**

### **NCAA honors AF general**

Washington (AFNS) — Maj. Gen. **Robert D. Beckel** has become the first Air Force member to be honored with the coveted National Collegiate Athletic Association Silver Anniversary Award.

General Beckel was presented the award Jan. 9 at the NCAA convention in Dallas.

Each year, the NCAA presents the award to five former student athletes who have led distinguished lives after outstanding athletic careers in college 25 years before.

The 47-year-old general is currently director of operations at U.S. Air Force headquarters in the Pentagon. A native of Walla Walla, Wash., he is a 1959 graduate of the Air Force Academy.

The general set an Academy basketball scoring record in 1957 which still stands. He had a single-season high of 26.4 points per game and a career average of 22.8 points per game. He served as the Academy's basketball team captain for three years and baseball team captain for two years.

After graduating in the Academy's first graduating class, General Beckel went to Vance AFB, Okla., where he earned his pilot's wings in June 1960 as an outstanding graduate.

During his career, the general flew F-100 Super Sabres and F-105 Thunder-chiefs with the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem AB, West Germany; flew as a member of the Air Force Thunderbirds flight demonstration team, and flew 313 combat flying missions while assigned to **Phan Rang AB**, Republic of Vietnam.

He was also assigned with the Secretary of the Air Force's Office of Legislative Liaison in Washington, D C , where he worked daily with the House of Representatives.

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The general later returned to the Air Force Academy as the first Academy graduate to serve as Commandant of Cadets.

*(Source: Wichita Falls Sheppard Senator, Wichita Falls, Texas, February 2, 1984)*

### **Rupert Burris Speaker’s Circuit**

Gen. **Rupert Burris** will be the guest speaker when the Civilian Club meets at noon on Thursday at Immanuel Baptist Church Family Life Center.

Burris' career has encompassed a wide variety of notable roles including aerial combat over Nazi Germany and communications support in the field in Vietnam. He also commanded the Air Force Communications Service.

He spent his early years as the son of a sharecropper in Arkansas. He grew up in Mount Holly and now resides in El Dorado.

He entered the Air Corps at age 18 in 1943 and was an enlisted gunner aboard B-17 bombers during World War II.

After the war, and a brief stint as an administrative clerk, he completed Officer Candidate School in 1948, and received his commission as a second lieutenant.

During his tour in South Vietnam, he survived two attacks on Tan Son Nhut AB, fixed the Air Traffic Control radar at **Phan Rang AB** and was picked up at Bien Hoa AB by his son, John, who flew Army helicopters.

Shortly before his retirement in 1977, he was selected as the third speaker for the newly established Air Force Academy Commandant's Leadership Series. The next year, he received the prestigious Order of the Sword from AFCS NCOs in recognition of his contributions to the enlisted corps.

He was recently named to the U.S. Air Force Communications and Information Hall of Fame.



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His military decorations and awards include the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Vietnamese Honor Medal-First Class, Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm and the Republic of China Meritorious Service Medal, Class A, Second Degree.

*(Source: El Dorado News-Tribune, September 4, 2006)*

### **Robert J. Boyer**

#### **City Recognizes Veteran**

RAPID CITY - **Robert J. Boyer**, a licensed contractor and owner of E Z Home Repair, was recently recognized as May's veteran of the month by Mayor Jim Shaw in partnership with the Veterans Coordination Commission.

Boyer grew up in Oil City, Pa., and joined the Air Force after high school. He did basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, armament specialist training at Lowry AFB, Colo., and spent 18 months at Cannon AFB, N.M., before being sent to Vietnam.

While stationed at Phan Rang Air Base, Boyer remembers taking direct enemy fire at least 35 times while loading weapons onto the aircraft. For his efforts, Boyer was awarded the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation, the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm.

After his tour in Vietnam, Boyer was stationed at McConnell AFB, Kansas, assigned to the F-105 Aircraft Gun Shop. After re-enlisting, Boyer was again sent to Cannon AFB before going to Misawa Air Base, Japan. While there, he worked to close the war reserve materials division and relocate it to Yokota Air Base.

It was at Yokota AB that Boyer met his future wife, Carol, on a blind date. They were married three months later and have been married for more than 31 years and have two sons. The couple spent a couple of more years in Japan, he at Yokota and she at Takakawa Air Base. Their first assignment together was to Kadena AB, Okinawa, where Boyer loaded weapons onto the F-4 Phantom aircraft. In March 1976, the Boyers moved to Ellsworth AFB, where Bob was



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assigned to the B-52 Stratofortress.

In March 1979 Boyer was sent to Osan AB, Korea for the next year before returning to Ellsworth AFB for the last 12 years of his military career, in which he served in many roles, the most memorable being the resource advisor for the B-52-to-B-1 transition.

Boyer retired as a master sergeant in 1992 and the Boyers made Rapid City their permanent home. Boyer is a lifetime member of the VFW, a member of the American Legion and the Elks BPOE, as well as the Handy Man Club of America and the Bassmaster Fishing Club.

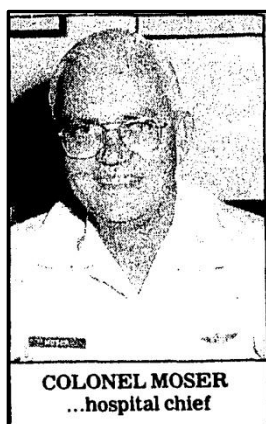
For more than 20 years, Boyer has devoted countless hours to the Boy Scouts of America and most recently served as Scoutmaster of Troop 1187. He was recently recognized for his service by receiving the National Presidential Scoutmaster Award of Merit and the Penjahame District Award of Merit. (The Rapid City Journal, May 24, 2004.)

**Col. (Dr.) Royce Moser Jr.**

### **Moser Hospital Commander**

Col. (Dr.) **Royce Moser Jr.**, is the new commander at the USAF Hospital at Tyndall AFB, located near Panama City, Fla. He replaces Col. (Dr.) Earle Heine who has retired.

The new commander comes to this assignment from the School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks AFB, Tex., where he served as chief, Aerospace Medicine Branch, Education Division, since July 1971.



From July 1970-71, the doctor served at the 35th USAF Dispensary, Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, as commander. He also served as chief, Aerospace Medicine Office of the Command Surgeon, Headquarters, Aerospace Defense Command, from October 1967 to July 1970.

A 1957 Harvard College graduate with a degree in biology, Doctor Moser continued his education at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Mass., from 1957 to 1961. He interned at the New England Center Hospital in Boston from July 1961 until July 1962. He entered the Air Force with a direct

commission in 1962.

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From 1964 until 1967, Doctor Moser spent two years of his residency at the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks AFB, and one year at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Doctor Moser is board certified in two specialties. He is certified by the American Board of Preventive Medicine in aerospace medicine and by the American Board of Family Practice in family practice.

A senior flight surgeon, the doctor has logged more than 1,600 flying hours.

Doctor Moser cited the hospital for its outstanding staff and reputation. He said he hoped to continue to maintain the same high quality of patient care. "I hope to be involved with some direct patient care in primary care and in aerospace medicine in addition to my duties as commander," he said.

The Versailles, Mo., native is married to the former Lois Hunter from Cranston, R. I. The couple have two children: Beth, age 14; and Donald, age 12. "I look forward to the numerous water activities in the area," stated the doctor. "My son and I like all types of fishing and my daughter and my wife enjoy seashore activities. I am very much looking forward to my assignment at Tyndall."

*(Panama City News Herald, Panama City, Florida, August 28, 1977)*

### **ATTENTION TOP KICKS!**

The Air Force is quite liberal regarding the length of haircuts and mustaches. Unfortunately, a few guys always try to push a good thing too far. The word is: get those mustaches and sideburns trimmed to Air Force standards. AFB 35-10 spells out the details: be “neat and presentable.”

*(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, November 15, 1969)*

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### OBITUARIES



**Thomas Neyman Tom** 65, of San Bernardino, CA, died December 29th, 2013 at home with his wife of 40 years Dona by his side. Surviving Tom are his daughter Laura, grandson Christopher, granddaughter Carly, great grandson Caden and sister Annette of San Jose, CA. Tom was a proudly served our country in the United States Air Force from 1967 to 1980. Tom was a USAF Loadmaster on C-141s, C-123's and stationed at several bases including, 8th MAS-McChord AFB, Washington, 310 TAS-Phan Rang AB, RVN, and 15 MAS-445th Airlift Wing (Associate) at Norton AFB, CA. He was an original member of the Golden West Chapter of the Professional Loadmaster Association. After leaving the USAF Tom and Dona started a pet grooming business, Blues House of Grooming. (*The Sun, San Bernardino, Ca., January 11, 2014*)

**George D. Hails**, 74, (Jan. 2, 1936 - Jan. 33, 2010) of Albany died Jan. 22 at Samaritan Albany General Hospital. George was born in Bonne Terre, Mo., to Amos and Rose (Vance) Hails. The oldest child of three, he attended Richmond Union High School in California, graduating in 1954. He greatly enjoyed sports while attending that school, which carried over into his later life. He participated in, coached and umpired fast-pitch softball, slow-pitch softball and Little League baseball. He was an avid fan of the St. Louis Cardinals (MLB), Oakland Raiders (NFL) and Jeff Gordon (NASCAR). After graduating from high school he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where he spent 20 years. During this time he was stationed in many locations, some of which were Thule AB, Greenland; Phan Rang AB, Vietnam; Adair AFS, Oregon; Pt. Arena AFS, California; Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona; and finally George AFB, California, where he retired as a master sergeant in 1974. After he retired he moved back to Albany, where he spent the remainder of his life. George married Marjorie Andrus in 1960 in Albany; they later divorced. (*Albany Democrat-Herald, January 28, 2010*)

**Herbert H. Holmes**, Col USAF Ret, slipped the surly bonds of earth and put out his hands and touched the face of God on March 5, 2006. He was born in Presque Isle, Maine, 8 November 1928, the son of Eva Warman and Rodney Arthur Holmes. On 11 Feb 1951 he married the

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former Marguerite Short in Milford, Ct. He is survived by her and their three children, Peter F. Holmes, MD and wife Susan; Cindy L. Holmes and Diane M. Holmes, and grandchildren Pamela Holmes, Amanda Rose Holmes-Davidian and Daniel Holmes. After graduation from the University of Connecticut in 1949, Herb signed up with the Connecticut National Guard, went to Officers Candidate School at Lackland AFB, Photo Radar Interpreter School at Lowry AFB, and the 72nd Strat Recon Tech Wing at Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico. He then went to Pilot training at Stallings AB in Kinston, NC; then to the 3545 Pilot Tng Wing at Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo, TX. He was awarded his wings 29 Aug 1956, and then to further training at Randolph AFB, TX and West Palm Beach where he piloted the KC-97. He was transferred to Westover AFB, Ma, and to Plattsburgh AFB, NY where he flew missions in the "cold war" in KC-97's and was upgraded to KC 135 Tankers at Castle AFB. From there he served at Bergstrom AFB, TX where in addition to refueling B52 bombers, he refueled Navy planes on their way to SE Asia. From Bergstrom he was assigned to Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, V A. During the Viet Nam War he flew B-57 bombers, while stationed at Clark AFB where he was a member of the 405th Fighter Wing, flying missions as a member of the 8th and 13th Bomb Squadrons out of Phan Rang, Viet Nam. His missions were mainly low altitude night bombing missions. While there he earned the Silver Star for gallantry in action, the Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the AF Commendation Medal and the Air Medal, 1st through 18th oak leaf clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal. He earned the National Service Medal, the Viet Nam Service Medal, Republic of Viet Nam Gallantry Cross, the AF Outstanding Unit Award and Armed Services Reserve Medal. His war days over, he was Director of Operations Services at Randolph AFB, then to Mather AFB where he was Director of Operations for the 454 and 455 Flying Training Squadrons, and to Chanute AFB, Illinois where he served as the Inspector General, and Deputy Base Commander. He finished his career at the Headquarters Training Center as Commander of the 3290 Technical Training Group, the "Red Hats". He was retired from active duty at Lackland AFB on 29 October 1982 at which time he received the Legion of Merit. After retirement, Herb enjoyed many years living in his "fish camp" on the Guadalupe River in Comfort. His favorite pastimes were fishing and hunting with his friends and family, family gatherings, and music and noshing with his Comfort friends. In his high school yearbook the comment by his picture was "The air doth laugh with our merry wit". Up until his last days, he was known by friends and family for his jokes and sense of humor. He was a member of, the Dedalians, and a life-long member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was cremated in his flight suit as was his wish. (San Antonio Express-News, March 19, 2006)

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**Airman Burch's Funeral Rites Set Wednesday** Funeral services will be conducted for Airman 1st Class **David Felix Burch** who died in Vietnam June 3<sup>rd</sup> when he fell from a truck while stringing constantina wire on the perimeter road when the vehicle he was riding in hit a bump and he fell from the truck, at 2 p.m., from the Wrenn-Yeatts Chapel. Interment will follow in Highland Burial Park.



**David Felix  
Burch**

Mr. Burch was a native of Reidsville, N.C. born February 24, 1949. He was a son of Joseph Earl Burch and Doris Burch Whitlow. Most of his life was spent in Danville where he attended the Danville public schools. He formerly was employed by Dan River Mills before entering service October 17, 1967. He had been in Vietnam for two months. On March 1967 he married the former

Sandra Frances Taylor. He is survived by his mother and step-father, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Whitlow of Danville; his father of Greensboro, N.C. He is also survived by one brother, Joseph Earl Burch, Jr., of Greensboro, N.C. (*Danville Register, Danville, Virginia, June 10, 1969*)

**Decorated airman was a natural leader - Lynton Winn 1941-2012** went to Vietnam with the Royal Australian Air Force in the most difficult phase of the war, in September 1970, well after the Tet Offensive, when the US forces were striving to win the war from the air.

His unit, the No.2 Squadron RAAF, was assigned to the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing of the United States Air Force (USAF) and operated from Phan Rang airbase, 250 kilometres north-east of Saigon.

The squadron's Canberra bomber aircraft were very effective in low-level precision bombing but they were also vulnerable to gunfire from the ground. One aircraft was shot down; another one was unaccountably lost.

Winn, a graduate of the RAAF's Point Cook academy in Victoria, served with distinction in Vietnam. He was mentioned in dispatches "for the conscientious and selfless efforts he made as officer-in-charge of the administrative flights, to ensure that No.2 Squadron always received the best possible assistance from its supporting elements". He went on to serve in Australia and overseas and became the youngest peacetime group captain in the RAAF.

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Lynton Thomas Winn was born in Edgware, London, on September 25, 1941, the son of a World War I aircraft mechanic, Thomas Winn, and Elizabeth (nee Childs). The family migrated to Australia in 1948 and settled in the Wyong-Toukley area on the central coast of NSW, where he completed school.

He enrolled at the RAAF academy in 1959 and was commissioned in 1962. His first posting was to Townsville, Queensland where he flew Neptune maritime aircraft. In 1963, Winn met a secretary, Beverley Eddy, while swimming at Terrigal beach, and he married her in 1966. In 1967, he was sent to Canada as an exchange air force officer. Their first son, Jeremy, was born there in 1968.

In July 1970, Winn was posted to Vietnam. His service lasted until July 1971 when the squadron completed its deployment, having lost two aircraft and five men. He was posted to Edinburgh RAAF Base in Elizabeth, South Australia, where his younger son, Michael, was born in 1972.

While posted to the United States for 16 months, he did a thesis for a Master of Science in logistic management. Co-written by a USAF officer, it was titled "Foreign military sales legislation: impact on the achievement of United States foreign policy objectives and implication for the Department of Defence."

In July 1977, Winn received the National Medal for 15 years' diligent service in the Defence Force. In October that year, now a wing commander, he became commanding officer of No.11 Squadron, Maritime Surveillance, based in Elizabeth, a position he held for three years. In June, 1981 Winn was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) "for service to the RAAF, particularly as commanding officer of number 11 squadron". In July 1981, at the age of 39, he became a group captain.

Winn retired from the RAAF in January 1982 and became director of studies at the Australian Administrative Staff College (later known as the Graduate School of Management) in Mt Eliza, Victoria, where he worked for seven years.

He then joined Lincolne Scott, the international consulting engineers, to which he brought new ideas and ideals.

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"He was often my sounding board through what was a very difficult time in the company," a former colleague said. In 1998, Winn bought Window Warehouse, a seller of windows, doors and security screens, at Mt Gravatt in Brisbane, and put in new systems and adopted a new approach. The business flourished.

He and his wife then took to travelling, touring Europe in a campervan for two years.

At home, he raced in sailing regattas with his son Michael, and competed in national sailing championships. Winn was planning a two-year campervan tour of the US when he was diagnosed with a brain tumour. He died in Brisbane on February 17 from complications arising from surgery.

His funeral was held in Brisbane on February 24, with a strong RAAF presence. Lynton Winn is survived by his widow, his two sons and four grandchildren. (*The Sydney Morning Herald, March 27, 2012*)



**Tom Wiemer**, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Wiemer, 201 S. Starr St., is awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for meritorious service in Vietnam. He was a munitions specialist at Phan Rang, Vietnam from June 1967 to May 1968. He has since been promoted to sergeant and serves at an air force base in Missouri. (*The Hawk Eye (Burlington, IA., 23 October 1968)*)

Staff Sgt. **David J. Munska**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Munska of 46 Woodbine Ave., Northampton has received the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal at L.G. Hanscom Field. Sgt. Munska was cited for his outstanding performance of duty as a crew chief with the 311th Tactical Airlift Squadron at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. (*Daily Hampshire Gazette (Northampton, MA., April 15, 1997)*)



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Lt.-Col. **Paul A. Kauttu**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel C. Kauttu of Seaside, [and a graduate of Ilwaco High School] has become assistant deputy commander for operations for the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang AB, Viet Nam. Col. Kautta served at Cam Rahn Bay AB, Viet Nam, as commander of the 559th Tactical Fighter Squadron prior to his appointment at Phan Rang. (*January 24, 1969, Chinook Observer (Long Beach, WA.)*)

**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**. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, reply to mailto:[dougsevert@cox.net](mailto:dougsevert@cox.net) and put ‘unsubscribe’ in subject line.



The banner that will be displayed as we march in the ANZAC Day parade in Brisbane, April 2020.

**ANZAC DAY 2020 Reunion** is progressing very nicely with information coming out almost daily. If you are just learning of this a group of Phan Rangers (currently about 40 people) who are going to Brisbane, Australia to march with No. 2 Squadron in the ANZAC Day parade. The trip also includes tours, including visiting the cities of Canberra and Sydney and going to New Zealand for an extended trip. There are various options available, so if you might be interested in joining us or want more specific information, please let [me](#) know as soon as possible so that I can add you to the visitors list so that you can join us for the trip of a lifetime...not counting your trip to the Republic of South Vietnam.