

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
“Keeping the memories alive” Newsletter 192

Canberras Over Vietnam

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Canberras Over Vietnam

A REUNION is normally a gala occasion; time to greet old friends and reminisce. But in Vietnam the war prevents such festive occasions. So when No. 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, linked up with the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing and the 8th and 13th Tactical Bomber Squadrons at Phan Rang Air Base, the reunion was warm but subdued.

These units fought together during World War II. The 35th was then a fighter group. No. 2 Squadron and the bomber units flew twin-engine Hudson bombers. From bases in Australia they helped to halt the Japanese advance in Papua and took part in the Allied offensive which recovered the rest of New Guinea.

The American bomber squadrons and the Australian unit have almost identical histories. All three are the oldest flying units of their countries. They have been on continuous active duty since 1919. All earned unit citations for operations in Papua. During World War II, the three squadrons even flew the same type aircraft, as they also do today. Only now it's the twin-jet Canberra bomber.

Most of the Australian and American Canberra pilots in Vietnam are too young to have taken part in the Pacific campaign. Yet there was no doubt that the esprit de corps of the old days was still present. The handshakes were vigorous as Wing Commander Rolf Aaronsen introduced his aircrews to visiting Gen. William W. Momyer, Seventh Air Force commander, and Col. James A. Wilson, 35th Tactical Fighter Wing commander. And at a brief, informal reception there was no doubt that the pilots of both countries were on the same team as they joked and exchanged information about their aircraft.

One thing the Aussies from down under made clear was that their Canberras are not B-57s. The Australians do not give their aircraft numerical designations. Moreover, there are differences between their Canberras and ours. Theirs are powered by Rolls Royce jet engines, ours by Wright J65s. The B-57 has greater speed. The Australian Canberra carries no guns or rockets, and the bomb bay has a different configuration. The Aussies also take pride in the fact that their aircraft were manufactured at Fishermen's Bend near Melbourne.

Actually, the friendly union between the Aussies and Americans at Phan Rang began long before No. 2 Squadron arrived at the base. A detachment from No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron arrived in Vietnam earlier to build technical and domestic facilities. They built a maintenance hangar, living quarters, messing facilities and a sewage system. As the construction progressed, aircraft maintenance personnel and equipment arrived. Despite this self-sufficiency, there is a spirit of cooperation and comradeship between the Aussies and Americans.

Said Wing Commander Vincent Hill, No. 2 Squadron operations officer, "Colonel Wilson and his staff give us their personal attention. They are generous in providing equipment and solving problems we might have."

The colonel says with pride, "No. 2 Squadron is an integral part of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing." One of the first things he did soon after the Australian airmen arrived was to see that they became familiar with the wing's F-100 Super Sabres. The Aussie pilots flew back seat during F-100 operational missions over enemy targets.

The Australians are kept abreast of day-to-day activities of the wing. Support problems are few, and solutions come quickly. Wing Commanders Aaronsen and Hill attend daily war briefings along with other members of Colonel Wilson's staff. Men like Flying Officer Malcolm I. Johnson and Capt. Carlos E. Fletcher often go over frag orders and discuss operational missions.

No. 2 Squadron earned a US Presidential Unit Citation for its action in Papua. The 35th, 8th, and 13th earned Distinguished Unit Citations for taking part in the offensive. These units were auded for "repeated attacks on enemy shipping, airdromes, troops, and installations . . . inflicting heavy damage to enemy material and causing numerous casualties."

Those citations are appropriate today. For, in almost identical climatic conditions, the 35th, 8th,

13th and No. 2 Squadrons are "inflicting heavy damage to enemy material and causing numerous casualties" in the jungles of South Vietnam.

Daily, around the clock, a Canberra leaves the Phan Rang runway destined for a target somewhere in South Vietnam. That target may be a supply route, enemy bunkers, or a base camp. Sometimes the mission is in support of friendly ground forces. Regardless of the objective, the enemy is sure to receive a pounding.

We call them B-57s. The Australians call them Canberras. But to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese these birds are lethal—no matter who's flying them.

Story by MSgt Irvin H. Lee, Airman magazine, April 1968



Men of 389th Operate From 'Bare' Viet Camp



BARE NECESSITIES — Using outdoor facilities at the Phan Rang air base, Air Force Maj. James R. Kirkpatrick (left) of San Antonio, Tex., and Lt. Col. Wilbur C. Pensinger of Fairborn, Ohio, prepare for the day's activities. Until permanent buildings are constructed at the base about 65 miles northeast of Saigon, Air Force men live, eat, sleep and work in tents or hastily-constructed wood buildings. (Air Force Photo)

PHAN RANG, Viet Nam - Operating from a "bare" base, Air Force F-4C Phantom crews flew strikes from the Phan Rang air base against Viet

Cong targets only two days after completion of a new, aluminum runway here.

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

constructed wood buildings.

Since arriving here May 14, F-4C crews from the 389th Tactical Fighter Squadron—a 366th Tactical Fighter Wing unit— have flown more than 1,000 close air support and other combat sorties against the Viet Cong.

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

(Alamogordo Daily News, Alamogordo, New Mexico, June 19, 1966)

AUSTRALIAN TRAVEL BROCHURE



DEFENCE TRAVEL PRESENTS:



WELCOME TO THE SUNNY TROPICS OF SOUTH VIETNAM

Air Displays



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Open Air Dining



Fireworks Displays



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Recreation and Convalescence Kilometres of Hiking Trails



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ALL COURTESY OF THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Confirmed Rabies Case Spurs Action by Base Medics, Security Police

(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, May 9, 1971)

An outbreak of rabies has recently occurred here, resulting in 23 Phan Rang AB airmen now undergoing the painful treatment and 21 dogs under strict quarantine.

The outbreak is due to a large number of unvaccinated stray or unattached dogs roaming free

on base. To counter the health threat, Phan Rang Base Regulation 161-3, Zoonosis Control, is being strictly enforced and all the stray dogs are being disposed of on sight.

“Previous controls of the disease through vaccination of animals has proved unsuccessful due to a lack of cooperation from their owners,” Dr. (Capt.) Victor E. Anspaugh, base veterinarian explained. “Since a confirmed case of rabies is already present on Phan Rang AB, the elimination of all unvaccinated animals must be accomplished to stop the spread of the deadly disease. Before a more serious outbreak begins, all animals should be vaccinated to prevent the spreading of the disease to other animals.

“Once an individual is exposed to rabies, he must be treated immediately,” Dr. Anspaugh said, “Introduced into the victim via the saliva of an infected animal through an open wound, it attacks the nervous system and causes a very painful death. Depending on what part of the body the rabies virus is introduced the number of days varies before the symptoms become prevalent.

“Immediate and thorough local treatment of all bite wounds and scratches is probably the most effective method of preventing rabies. When bitten or scratched, the victim should immediately flush the wound with water, soap and water or detergent and water.”

“The problem of whether or not to immunize those bitten or scratched by animals suspected of being rabid is decided by a board of physicians and the veterinarian here at Phan Rang,” according to Dr. (Lt. Col.) Royce Moser Jr., base director of medical services. “Every exposure to possible rabies infection must be individually evaluated, due to the number of factors deciding the treatment. Some of these factors include the extent and location of the wound, vaccination status of the biting animal, and the presence of rabies in the region,” he said. “A dog that bites a person should be captured if possible, confined, and observed by a veterinarian for at least seven to ten days.

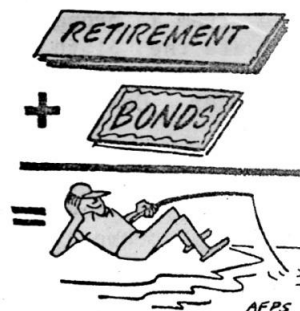
“The treatment for rabies is very painful. It consists of at least 14 daily injections given in the muscle of the abdomen, lower back or thighs. In the case of a severe exposure to the disease, 21 doses may be necessary. In addition, two booster shots are required, one 10 days and the other 20 days after completion of the initial series of injections.

“The only way to eliminate rabies is by strict control of all animals on Phan Rang AB.”

“There are two methods now used to eliminate the stray dog problem,” stated Capt. Richard V. Hague of the 35th Security Police Squadron. “The first is to capture the dog, which we try to do in all cases, and take the animal to the veterinarian for observation. At the same time we check to see if the dog has been registered with the pass and identification section of our squadron.

“The second choice, and only used if a dog cannot be captured, is to dispose of it. So far we’ve been able to capture half the dogs without injury to them. We have a third choice coming and that’s a tranquilizer dart gun. The gun, on order since January, shoots darts that contain a mild sedative which will disable but not harm the animal.”

“The problem of rabies can be solved, but the understanding of our problem plus the cooperation of all base airmen is necessary. Units that keep animals as pets are asked to have them vaccinated and registered.” He said. “Also if a person sees an animal acting in a strange manner, he should call the security police desk sergeant at Ext. 2000. A team will be dispatched to take it into custody.”



“Don’t be a victim of this deadly disease,” Dr. Moser emphasizes. “A little common sense can save your life.”



‘Yellow Water Still Drinkable’ Says Engineer

(Phan Fare, The Happy Valley Weekly, May 9, 1971)

Happy Valley residents may have noticed that the base water supply has been a bit yellowish lately, but base officials are quick to state that the colored liquid is perfectly safe for internal consumption.

Capt. **Donald R. Barrett**, deputy base civil engineer, stated that the colored condition of the water is a seasonal occurrence caused when local farmers flood their rice paddies and the muddied water drains back into the nearby canal which serves as one of the major sources of the base’s water supply.

The muddy water is harder to process through the base filtration plant and it takes longer to get it up to acceptable drinking standards. For this reason water pressure will be lower than normal during high use periods, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and as always excessive use is discouraged. It is not known how long the yellow appearance will persist, but Captain Barrett stressed that the tinted tap water is safe for consumption.



Yanks Outshoot Aussies in Sidearm Match

Aircrews Victorious In Return Bout

By SSgt. George Wilson

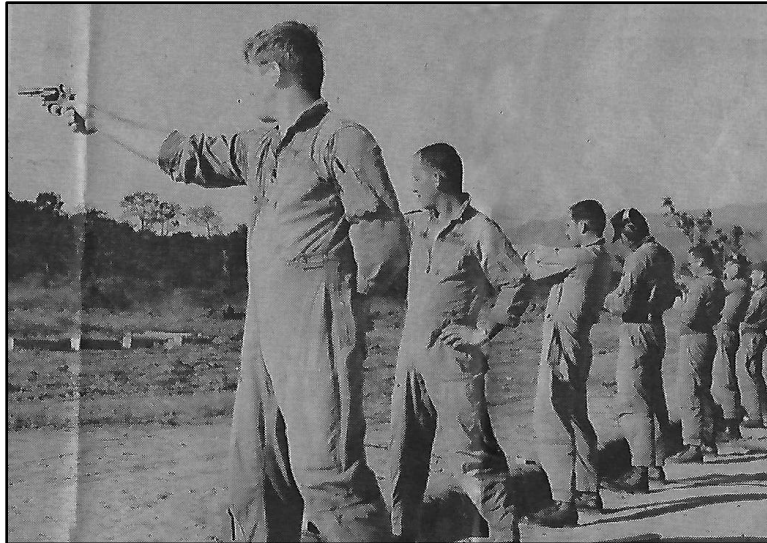
PHAN RANG - Not again!

The Royal Australian air Force Number 2 Squadron recently met its "Match" again at the hands of the U.S. Air Force 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang AB.

Station at 100 yards, standing position at 50 yards and shooting from the hip at 15 yards.

A total of 180 rounds were fired. With a point for each round hitting the silhouette target, the final score was: 35nd TFS, 157, 120th TFS, 150; 8th TBS 132; 614th TFS, 128; 615th TFS, 122, and in last place, the challengers with 98 points.

Rumors are already circulating around Phan Rang AB, that the Aussies are ready to issue another challenge in a game more to their liking. Anyone for Cricket?



Ready, Aim, Fire!

This was the general scene at Phan Rang AB/s firing range when air crew members of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing and the Royal Australian Air Force Number 2 Squadron competed in a pistol "shootout." After the smoke had cleared, all five of the 35th's tactical squadrons had shot the Aussies to "pieces."

(Source: Seventh Air Force News, January date and year unknown)



The official logo of the 2020 Phan Rang Reunion

2020 PHAN RANG AB REUNION

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
OCTOBER 15-17 OCTOBER 2020

As in the past we have tried to have something special for the group that we’ve dubbed “**The Big Event**”. In Nashville we went to the Grand Ole Opry, in Savannah we had a dinner cruise on the river and this year “**The Big Event**” is going on a train ride to Santa Fe on Friday because you can’t come to New Mexico and not visit Santa Fe. The excursion includes a bus ride to and from the rail station, the train trip, which from Albuquerque to Santa Fe on the Rio Metro Rail Runner Express takes approximately 1.5 hours to travel. The total distance between the two cities is just under 65 miles, and the train travels at about 80 miles per hour. After we arrive in Santa Fe, we have time to explore and then have lunch at the Cowgirls restaurant. Santa Fe at that time of year can be chilly so we suggest that you wear warm clothing.

THE COSTS			
Cost for Everything		Cost for Just the Reunion	
Banquet including gratuity and taxes	\$56	Banquet including gratuity and taxes	\$56
Friday ‘Big Event’ including gratuity, tax, bus transportation and lunch.	\$45	Reunion Fee	\$20
Reunion Fee	\$20		
Total	\$121*	Total	\$76*

**Note: All totals are for individuals only.*

Please send check to:

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

Please make check payable to “**Phan Rang Reunion**”. Please name all attendees to aid in the creation of name tags. Prompt payment is appreciated. Thanks.

IF YOU HAVEN’T ALREADY MADE YOUR RESERVATIONS AT THE HOTEL FOR THE

REUNION NOW IS THE TIME TO DO THAT. CLICK [HERE](#) TO LINK TO THEIR WEBSITE. IF YOU PREVIOUSLY MADE RESERVATIONS FOR THE CORE DATES OF 15-17 OCTOBER AND WANT TO ARRIVE EARLIER OR STAY LATER, PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE REUNION RATE IS EFFECTIVE THREE DAYS BEFORE THE CORE EVENT AND THREE DAYS AFTER. IF YOU WANT TO ADD DAYS IT PROBABLY WOULD BE BEST TO CALL THE HOTEL AT 1-505-821-3333 TO MAKE THOSE CHANGES AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU MENTION "PHAN RANG REUNION".

Doug's Comments: This newsletter was composed and all graphics by Douglas Severt unless otherwise stated. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, mailto:<mailto:dougsevert@cox.net> and put 'unsubscribe' in subject line.