

# Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.  
“Keeping the memories alive” Newsletter 213

## In this issue:

Australia Commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the loss of Magpie 91

One Day In Vietnam

Buddy Search

Fold3/Ancestry Information

Juan Bustamante Obituary

Plenty of sunshine followed by monsoons and rockets - PRAB meteorologist

Phan Rang 2021 Veterans Reunion Announced

Doug's Comments



Tuesday 3rd November marked the 50th Anniversary of the loss of Magpie 91. Group Captain Carl Schiller, OAM, CSM (Ret'd), National President of the Air Force Association shares the story of the eventual repatriation of Flying Officer **Michael Herbert** and Pilot Officer **Robert Carver** of No 2 Squadron.

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

---

Every conflict has its tragic stories. However, I am sure among the worst are those where there has been no confirmed death or whereabouts of a missing veteran who are recorded as Missing in Action (MIA). And, so it was for Flying Officer Michael Herbert and Pilot Officer Robert Carver of No 2 Squadron whose Canberra aircraft A84-231 (call-sign **Magpie 91**) was lost in South Vietnam on the evening of November 3, 1970.

The airmen, both 24 years, departed Phan Rang Air Base on a routine bombing sortie near the Laotian/South Vietnam border. They were never heard from again.

A subsequent Court of Inquiry into the disappearance found no obvious reason for the loss. There were no enemy aircraft counter measures employed in the region and the weather was fine. The aircrew were competent aviators. Michael had flown 198 combat missions and was an experienced Canberra pilot. He was looking forward to his return home in several weeks. Robert was a recent arrival at the Squadron but had already impressed his superiors for his airmanship qualities.

The stress on their families, friends and fellow members of No 2 Squadron must have been tremendous. As a No 2 Squadron Vietnam veteran, I had returned to Australia a year before and was deeply shocked by the loss. Young people tend to think they are ‘bullet proof’ and we thought the Canberra was an unlikely candidate for a combat loss. The inevitable thought of whether the lads had been held as prisoners of war (POW), like so many US forces aviators, would have tormented family and friends over the years that followed. Michael’s mother corresponded with political leaders in Vietnam and Australia urging them in vain for information on her son’s disappearance. Robert’s father had his son’s name engraved on a Toowoomba War Memorial.

Nearly 39 years later, the jungle gave up its secret. Major John Thurgar (former SAS Trooper during the Vietnam War), from the Australian Army’s History Unit, and Squadron Leader John Cotterell uncovered the wreckage of Magpie 91. It appears the crash site had been sighted sometime in 1982 by several hunters from the Katu people who reside in eastern Laos and central Vietnam. However, for a range of reasons, not the least being the sheer impregnability of the terrain and the dense jungle near the crash area, the discovery was not investigated.

The formal discovery of Magpie 91 can be attributed to the gallant efforts of Dr LTCOL (Retd)

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

---

James ‘Jim’ Bourke, AM, MG, PhD of Operation Aussies Home (OAH). A two-tour Vietnam Veteran, Jim committed himself to investigating and accounting for ‘The Forgotten Six’ Australian servicemen listed as MIA during the Vietnam War. Jim led a privately funded team to locate and retrieve the remains of six missing Australians—among them Michael Herbert and Robert Carver.

Jim spent many thousands of hours researching the details of their sortie and battle reports, and lobbying politicians and bureaucrats for support. When his pleas fell on deaf ears, he went ahead with his plans and together with a small team, he set off to Vietnam to find the missing airmen who never made it home. Sadly, Jim Bourke passed away on September 25, 2015 aged 72 years.

On August 31, 2009, the caskets with the remains of Michael Herbert and Robert Carver arrived on board an RAAF C130 that had brought them from Hanoi to RAAF Base Richmond. It is an emotional moment in No 2 Squadron’s history and especially for those airmen who served in the Squadron during the Vietnam War.



## “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. 213 “...keeping the memories alive”

---

# E-7A WEDGETAIL FLYPAST TO COMMEMORATE LOST AIRMEN



In honour of Australian Defence Force members who fought in the Vietnam War, a Royal Australian Air Force E-7A Wedgetail aircraft performed a flypast over the Australian War Memorial in the early evening of Monday, 2 November. This flypast commemorates the 50th anniversary of two airmen who lost their lives during the Vietnam conflict.

The E-7A Wedgetail from No. 2 Squadron, based at RAAF Base Williamtown, tracked from Parliament House to the Australian War Memorial at a speed of 450 kilometers per hour and a height of no lower than 150 metres.

It traveled along **Anzac Parade** from the south-west to the north-east, arriving overhead the Australian War Memorial at approximately 5:25pm.

As part of the ceremonial events, current serving No. 2 Squadron personnel held a commemorative service at the Australian War Memorial prior to the flypast, acknowledging the service and sacrifice of the lost airmen.

Commanding Officer No. 2 Squadron, Wing Commander Jason Brown said the aircraft participating in the flypast held great historical significance and was adorned with commemorative nose-art completed by personnel deployed on Operation Okra in 2020.

“The nose-art combines the No. 2 Squadron lightning bolt emblem with the Unit’s World War II and Vietnam War decorations,” Wing Commander Brown said.

“This includes a United States Presidential Unit Citation, a Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, and a United States Air Force Outstanding Unit Commendation.

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

---

“As No. 2 Squadron has recently returned from operations in the Middle East, we remember those who have come before us and we honour their memory through our service contributions.”

On 3 November 1970, No. 2 Squadron Canberra Bomber, tail number A84-231, call sign ‘**Magpie 91**’, went down near the Laotian-Vietnamese border after completing a successful bombing mission in support of United States ground forces. The cause of the crash remains unknown.

The aircrew were Flying Officer Michael Herbert (Pilot) and Pilot Officer Robert Carver (Navigator). The last known radio transmission to the crew were from US ground controllers who praised their efforts by reporting, “That was an excellent run, Sirs.”

Following the incident, No. 2 Squadron and the United States Air Force searched for the pair for three days, eventually declaring Flying Officer Herbert and Pilot Officer Carver as missing in action. Their remains were eventually found and repatriated by a Defence Historical Unit on 31 August 2009.

No. 2 Squadron returned to Australia from Vietnam on 4 June 1971 after four years and two months of operations. The Squadron flew over 11,900 combat missions during the conflict.

**The Commanding Officer of current No. 2 Squadron flew down to Canberra from RAAF Base Williamtown in a Wedgetail aircraft. The aircraft flew down Anzac Parade from over Parliament House and then right over the Australian War Memorial. The pageantry of the Colour Parade, associated activities and speakers were all so well executed, making for a very memorable event. Tom Grieves, SGNLDR (Ret’d) layed a wreath with the assistance of FLGOFF Collishaw on behalf of the former 2 SQN and 2 SQN association personnel.**

**(Editors Note:** For more information about the loss and hunt for Magpie 91, see Phan Rang Newsletter 147 and 155. If any reader knows of a similar honor bestowed on the anniversary of a U.S. Air Force Vietnam veteran, please let me know.)



## “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. 213 “...keeping the memories alive”

---



**Wreaths laid by Tom Grieves SQNLDR (Ret'd) and others in remembrance of Michael Herbert and Robert Carver.** *(Photo by Bob Howe)*



**Active duty members of the current No. 2 Squadron stand at parade-rest at the Australian War Memorial.** *(Photo by Bob Howe)*

Below is a photo of a historical event with a Wedgetail aircraft along with two historical aircraft, the Canberra and the Hudson. Arthur Rennick, Secretary 2 Squadron Association Inc., wrote that “*the Canberra was dressed up nicely and looked the part center stage.*” The Hudson was restored to military configuration and belongs to the Temora Aviation Museum and is the only flying Hudson in the world.



**A RAAF E7-A Wedgetail aircraft sits on the ramp next to a restored Canberra and a Hudson aircraft.** *(Photo by FLGOFF James Bailey)*

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

---

### **Wedgetail Nose Art**

The nose art pictured on page 4 was designed by two RAAF aircraft maintenance technicians in the Middle East who have found a creative way to commemorate the 50th anniversary of RAAF No. 2 Squadron Canberra bomber A84-231 “Magpie 91” that crashed in jungle near the Laotian-Vietnamese border during the Vietnam War.

Sergeant Nathan Bradford and Leading Aircraftsman Sam Chan designed nose art for a No. 2 Squadron E-7A Wedgetail that recently returned from Operation Okra in the Middle East.

The pair said the artwork honoured the two “Magpie 91” aircrew killed in the November 3, 1970, crash after their successful bombing mission in support of US ground forces.

“The Canberra bomber aircrew were Flying Officer Michael Herbert and Pilot Officer Robert Carver,” Sergeant Bradford said.

The nose art combines the No. 2 Squadron lightning bolt emblem with the unit’s World War II and Vietnam War decorations that include a US Presidential Unit Citation, a Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm and a US Air Force Outstanding Unit Commendation.



**Sergeant Nathan Bradford and Leading Aircraftsman Sam Chan proudly pose with their nose art design on the Wedgetail behind them.**

## “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. 213 “...keeping the memories alive”

---

# We are all connected



The military community can be compared to one large closely knit family. We all had similar experiences, experiences that sometimes are only understood by someone else in the military. During the course of our lives and careers, we are joined by many along the way, sometimes only briefly, but they all have an impact. For Bob Howe, one such person was Michael Herbert, who was one of his cadets when he was Flight Commander at RAAF Academy, Point Cook, Victoria. Mike served as a guard of honour for Bob’s wedding to his beloved wife, Diana on 11 December 1965 in Melbourne.



---

**Bride and Groom are saluted by the Guard of Honour as they leave the chapel. Michael Herbert, in his cadet uniform, is holding his sword up as the couple pass.** *(Photo courtesy of*

*Bob Howe)*

---

On 30 Apr 1969, Bob was a bombing instructor with Number 1 (Bomber) Operational Conversion Unit (OCU), based at Amberley, Queensland, and flew with Flying Officer Mike Herbert in Canberra A84-226, conducting a practice bombing run at Evans Head bombing range on the east coast of Australia. Mike (or Herby as he was also known) was then learning to fly the Canberra and their flight lasted 2 hrs 30 minutes. Almost a year later, on 23 March 1970, Bob met up again with Mike and flew an operational bombing mission with him in Canberra A84-238 flying out of Phan Rang air force



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

---

base to drop 6 x 750lb M-117 bombs on a VC base camp in IV Corps - the Mekong Delta. Mike would have been flying one of his first missions since arriving in Vietnam. Bob was his bomb aimer and on his 220th mission in Vietnam. The flight lasted 2 hrs 5 minutes.

### **WHAT IS THE ANZAC PARADE?**

(As mentioned in the previous article)

**Anzac Parade** is the iconic red gravel parade leading up to the Australian War Memorial. Along both sides of the parade is a walkway to visit the 11 Memorials of wars that Australia and New Zealand have participated in, side by side. It is flat level, 2.5km self guided walk up one side of the parade and back down the other that is sure to move you.



**Looking up Anzac Parade to the Australian War Memorial. The red gravel is made from crushed red bricks from Canberra homes and meant to replicate the crunch of military boots in a parade. The planter boxes are full of New Zealand Hebe shrubs.**

At one end of the parade is Lake Burley Griffin and the other end is the Australian War Memorial, which can be seen in the background of the picture above.

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

---

# **ONE DAY IN VIETNAM**



**A Canberra bomber releases its load of six 750-pound bombs onto a target in the Mekong Delta. (Image courtesy Australian War Memorial)**

**In 1968, Max McGregor was posted to 2 SQN in Vietnam where he flew 217 operational missions before returning home in 1969. He shares one of his experiences here.**

September 15, 1968 dawned fine and clear in Phan Rang. I know this as I saw the sun rise that morning. At this time, 2 SQN was running one aircraft on an “alert” basis, meaning that the aircraft and crew were all prepared to launch as soon as the word was given.

So, it was an early start as the aircraft and crew had to be available from 0600. On this day, my usual navigator was unavailable and I was crewed with FLTLT Ray Drury for this duty. The bomb load was 6 x 750 pound bombs, with 4 in the bomb bay and 2 on the wing tip carriers.

During the morning there was the normal Squadron activity. It was accepted that these alert missions could involve a significant waiting period until a target of opportunity presented itself. Most of the senior members of the Squadron, having done one alert, found that they were too busy to do any more, so the alert missions fell mainly to the boggies who could not come up with a work excuse. Some things never change!

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

---

By lunch time we had attended all the briefings and debriefs of the crews so we had a really good idea of what was happening throughout South Vietnam - and things were fairly quiet so we were starting to feel that it could be a long day. The afternoon was spent sticking by the phone and catching up on anything that could be done - the Flying Order Book and Unit routine orders were read and signed, logbooks updated - but there was still no indication that we would be tasked in the near future.

As the afternoon dragged on, no magazine was left unread. The only people left in the Operations room were Ray and me plus the duty ‘Intello’ and he had to be there until we returned.

A beautiful sunset precipitated another call to the Command Post along the lines of “if you don’t have a target for us then stand us down as we are thirsty for something apart from coffee!”.

“Patience Magpie, we will call you when we have something” was the reply.

As darkness prevailed, we were sure that this frustrating day would end with nothing to show, except a lot of signed routine orders and logbooks. The ringing telephone stirred us from our slumber and the Intello said “GO”.

We covered the short distance from the Operations Office to the flight line quickly and boarded. I connected my helmet into the aircraft communications, started the engines, the chocks were removed, and we commenced to taxi, strapping into the ejection seats as we went.

The tower controller told us to call the Command Post for target details as we left the Squadron flight line and we were just given a heading to fly after take-off and an altitude of around 25,000 feet. The heading given was around 340 degrees so that shed little light on where we were going.

Even after take-off no further information was forthcoming from the Command Post. This was most unusual.

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

---

However, it was clear that we would be bombing using the Combat Skyspot radar, which was very accurate using a transponder in the aircraft rather than a “skin paint” for guidance.

---

**“The cockpit lighting was not all that clear, so most pilots used a small penlight torch jammed under their right leg to highlight the heading...”**

---

While the Canberra had good performance for its age, the ergonomics of the crew positions left a lot to be desired. During the cruise it was important to have the aircraft maintain a constant, accurate heading when the wings were level. The radar controller would guide us to the target with heading corrections, frequently down to one degree heading changes, but the cockpit lighting - particularly for the compass - was not all that clear, so most pilots used a small penlight torch jammed under their right leg to highlight the heading! Once the aircraft was trimmed so that it was flying perfectly straight, we were all set to go.

Coming up towards Pleiku, we were handed off to the Combat Skyspot controller based at Pleiku. Minor corrections were made as he lined us up for the first pass, and three bombs were dropped. The Canberra was rolled into a 30 degree turn to the right for a predetermined period of time before rolling into a 60 degree turn to the left, so that we could both look for the sight of the explosions.

We both saw the three bombs explode. But then there was the largest secondary explosion that either of us had ever seen, much bigger than the three bombs combined. Somewhat excitedly, for I thought it was significant, I reported to this to the radar controller. No return excitement from the controller who just gave us a heading to position us for the next run, which we carried out and the last three bombs dropped, we estimated only a couple of hundred metres from the first target. Again, we saw the last three Bombs explode, followed by a very large secondary explosion, which I reported with more excitement.

---

**But then there was the largest secondary explosion that either of us had ever seen...”**

---

Thanks Magpie, you’re clear to RTB channel 75.” drawled the Controller, meaning return to base (channel 75 being the Tacan navigation installation for Phan Rang).



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

---

On the uneventful trip back to Phan Rang, we chatted about the unusual secondary explosions and the lack of reaction from the Skyspot Controller. Just another mystery of the Vietnam conflict!

After landing we headed back to the operations area to debrief this strange day and night, including reporting the two unusually large secondary explosions. Base command post could (or would) only tell us was that it was a high intelligence target.

By now it was quite late and the Mess was closed, so it was necessary to access the emergency reserve of beer stored in the air conditioning unit cooling outlet in our rooms. They did go down a treat after a very long day and night!

Over the next month, details slowly emerged that our target was a suspected VC/NVA base camp that had been allocated to the B-52's based in Guam, but for some reason these aircraft were unable to depart Guam. Furthermore, a Forward Air Controller overflew the target area the next day and reported 40 casualties still visible among the destruction of the two bombed areas. When ground troops eventually reached the location, they confirmed it had been a large base camp and there were numerous blood trails indicating that many wounded had been evacuated.

**All in all, not a bad day's work.**

*In memory of Magpie 91.*



**Max McGregor celebrates his final mission with 2 Sqn, Vietnam  
1969**

## “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. 213 “...keeping the memories alive”



**Buddy Search** is a device that lists names of searchers and who they are searching for. It is hoped that the information contained herein will eventually be captured by an Internet search engine and the two parties may eventually be reunited.

Searching For	Org.	Years	Who's Searching
Anyone	35 <sup>th</sup> FMS Egress Shop	69-70	<a href="#">Rick Learst</a>
Backman, Raymond MSgt	35 <sup>th</sup> CSG		<a href="#">Johnny Ray Caton</a>
Ballanger, Steve Capt.	C-123 Pilot	70-71	<a href="#">Gary Miller</a>
Baum, Robert	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	67-68	<a href="#">Jim Kucipeck</a>
Bowers, Frank	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS	68-69	<a href="#">Joe Kaupa</a>
Bowers, Jim	315th CES		<a href="#">Charlie Randall</a>
Boyd, William D.	35 <sup>th</sup> TFW/315 <sup>th</sup>		<a href="#">Gary D. Neitzke</a>
Brewster, James A2C		67-68	<a href="#">Van Digby</a>
Byrd, William (Willie) A1C	C/C AC119G	69-70	<a href="#">Bruce Muller</a>
Byrd, Willie	17 <sup>th</sup> SOS	69/70	<a href="#">Bruce Muller</a>
Calhoun, Maj.	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS	70	<a href="#">Ian Wheat</a>
Chaffin, James	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	67-68	<a href="#">Michael Mulcahey</a>
Chaplin Kenny	Chapel Services	69-70	<a href="#">Rick Learst</a>
Cherry, Elijah	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	67-68	<a href="#">Jim Kucipeck</a>
Cole, Gary Sgt	1882 <sup>nd</sup> Comm. Sq.	71	<a href="#">Bobby Flack</a>
Coulette, Jon	35 <sup>th</sup> AMS	69-70	<a href="#">Bob Tucker</a>
Crosby, Mert	315 <sup>th</sup> Com Shop		<a href="#">Frederick J. Ciesla</a>
Dlugolz, John	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	69-70	<a href="#">Michael Mulcahey</a>
Duden, John F.	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	69	<a href="#">Dean Ford</a>
East, Bill	315 <sup>th</sup> SPS		<a href="#">Dennis W. Stricklin</a>
Egbert, Robert	8 <sup>th</sup> TBS	68/69	<a href="#">Jim Hemphill</a>
Fisher, Eddie	315th CES		<a href="#">Charlie Randall</a>
Fisher, Joseph P.	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS	60-70	<a href="#">Margie McNeely</a>

**“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. 213 “...keeping the memories alive”

Foust, Robert S.	Det. 8, 14 <sup>th</sup> APS	68-69	<a href="#">Jim Erixson</a>
Frechette, Michael	35th SPS Law Enforcement	70-71	<a href="#">Robert Lanier</a>
Glenn, Randall C. Sgt	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS K9		<a href="#">Bill Lyle</a>
Gray, Paul	8 <sup>th</sup> TBS	67-68	<a href="#">John Dean</a>
Haart, Gaylord	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS		<a href="#">Lolan Goss</a>
Hawley, David	1882 <sup>nd</sup> Comm Sq	68/69	<a href="#">Nick Bositjevac</a>
Hettinger, Buzz	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	67-68	<a href="#">Donald Brodersen</a>
Hilton, James	35 <sup>th</sup> TFW MSL	1969	<a href="#">Charles Lee Simmons</a>
Householder, SSgt	35th SPS Law Enforcement	70-71	<a href="#">Robert Lanier</a>
Hunter, Ron A1C	35 <sup>th</sup> Engine Fitter	68-69	<a href="#">Kevin Neilsen</a>
Hustas III, Charles SSgt	14 <sup>th</sup> FMS	70-71	<a href="#">Bill Higgins</a>
Hutner, Ron A1C	35 <sup>th</sup> Engine Fitter	68-69	<a href="#">Kevin Neilsen</a>
Jenks, Albert	315 <sup>th</sup> Metal		<a href="#">Ken Creasy</a>
Johnson, Gary J.	35 <sup>th</sup> FMS	69/70	<a href="#">Dave Hooton</a>
Johnson, Harold Sgt	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	68-69	<a href="#">Ronald S. Zulkiewski</a>
Kahler, Bill	35th SPS Law Enforcement	70-71	<a href="#">Robert Lanier</a>
Kelly, Captain	Walt FACS		<a href="#">Randy Haun</a>
Keyes, David R.	Det. 8, 14 <sup>th</sup> APS	68	<a href="#">Douglas Severt</a>
Kolowski, Frank	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS	1970	<a href="#">Toni Taragowski</a>
Lanovaro, Vincenzo SMSgt	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	67-68	<a href="#">Jim Kucipeck</a>
Loveland, David C. Sgt	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	68/69	<a href="#">Ronald S. Zulkiewski</a>
Mancer, Scott	554 <sup>th</sup> Red Horse	68069	<a href="#">Dave Miller</a>
Marcus, Mitch	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS	68-69	<a href="#">Craig Lord</a>
Massey, John	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS Heavy Weapons		<a href="#">Darrel Mansholt</a>
McAvoy, Donnie	35 <sup>th</sup> AMS	69-70	<a href="#">Bob Tucker</a>
Miller, Rodney	35th SPS Law Enforcement	70-71	<a href="#">Robert Lanier</a>
Minor, Ron	315th CES		<a href="#">Charlie Randall</a>
Morrison, Charles W. A1C	C/C AC119G	70-71	<a href="#">Bruce Muller</a>
Norman, Russell	35 <sup>th</sup> FMS	69/70	<a href="#">Dave Hooton</a>
Nunnley, Butch	352 <sup>nd</sup> TFS	68-69	<a href="#">C. Dan Brownell</a>
Olivarez, Robert G.	315 <sup>th</sup> Sheet Metal		<a href="#">Ken Creasy</a>
Parker, TSgt	615 <sup>th</sup> TFS	67-68	<a href="#">Leo Remillard</a>

## “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. 213 “...keeping the memories alive”

Perry, Charlie, Amn	35 <sup>th</sup> USAF Disp.	67-68	<a href="#">D. John Vallee</a>
Pitman, Morris	35 <sup>th</sup> FMS	68/69	<a href="#">Dennis Beechey</a>
Pointon, Ken	35 <sup>th</sup> AMS	69-70	<a href="#">Bob Tucker</a>
Postigo, Tito	35 <sup>th</sup> CSGP	69-70	<a href="#">Walter Herron</a>
Rau, Jack	35 <sup>th</sup> FMS Engine Shop		<a href="#">Vernon Stephens</a>
Rodriguez, Jesse	1882 Comm. Sq.	68-69	<a href="#">Ted Trojanowski</a>
Sanders, David	435 <sup>th</sup> MMS	67	<a href="#">Joe Taylor</a>
Savaga, Al	35 <sup>th</sup> AMS	69-70	<a href="#">Bob Tucker</a>
Seaver, Dave Sgt	35 <sup>th</sup> Supply Sq.	1971	<a href="#">Jim Presson</a>
Snyder, Larry	35 <sup>th</sup> FMS	69/70	<a href="#">Dave Hooton</a>
Tanner, Charley	1969 SPS		<a href="#">Jim Mattison</a>
Taramino, Mario	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS Heavy Weapons	69	<a href="#">John Gorto</a>
Taylor, Tony	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS		<a href="#">Lolan Goss</a>
Thompson, Williams (Willie)	8 <sup>th</sup> TBS	67-68	<a href="#">Joe Schwarzer</a>
Usner, Vernon	Det. 8, 14 <sup>th</sup> APS	68-69	<a href="#">Douglas Severt</a>
Vendefelli, Joseph (Vendy)	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS	70-71	<a href="#">Donald Poirier</a>
Vilanti, Charles	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS Law Enforcement	70-71	<a href="#">Robert Lanier</a>
Vincent, James (Vince)	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS		<a href="#">Ron Hawley</a>
Warthen, Obediah SSgt	35 <sup>th</sup> CSG		<a href="#">Johnny Ray Caton</a>
White, Lt	35 <sup>th</sup> SPS	58-69	<a href="#">Joe Kaupa</a>
Williams, Billy A2C	35 <sup>th</sup> Supply	1966	<a href="#">Hank Milnark</a>
Williams, Billy R.	366 <sup>th</sup> /35 <sup>th</sup> Supply	66	<a href="#">Hank Milnark</a>
Williams, Larry SSgt	315 <sup>th</sup> CAMS Soap Lab	70-71	<a href="#">Gary Miller</a>
Zeigler, Lloyd E. (Gene)	Med. Train. Spec.	69-70	<a href="#">John Quasney</a>



Phan Rang Newsletters, photos and other information is now available at **Fold3** a part of **Ancestry**. Fold3 provides convenient access to military records, including the stories, photos, and personal documents of the men and women who served. The records at Fold3 help you discover and share stories about these everyday heroes, forgotten soldiers, and the families that supported them. On Fold3, you can combine records



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

---

found on the site with what you have in your own albums and shoeboxes to create an online memorial for someone who served.

Our group has shared all of the **“Phan Fares”**, the weekly publication of the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing (not yet posted at Fold3), all the **“Phan Rang Newsletters”**, the **“Roll-Call”** (Not yet posted at Fold3), thousands of photos from the group as well as collections of photos from veterans grouped together by their name and the **“Australian Vietnam Remembrance”** a log of all 2 SQN veterans that have passed and as far as I can determine this is the first collection of Australian names for the Vietnam War.

[Check it out at Fold3](#)



### **Juan Bustamante**

**1942-2020**



On Thursday, November 5th, 2020, Juan Bustamante peacefully passed from this life in Anson, TX at the age of 77. Juan was born on December 19th, 1942 in Pecos, TX. He spent his childhood in and around the El Paso area. He graduated from Ysleta High School in El Paso, TX.

In February 1960, Juan enlisted in the Air Force. His service brought him to Dyess Air Force Base where he met the love of his life, Elisa Vasquez. They were married on July 25th, 1964. To this union three children were born. The only time they spent apart was while he served a tour in Phan Rang AB, Vietnam and one on Wake Island. His military career took the family to Nevada,

California, the Philippine Islands and Washington state.

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

---

Upon his retirement in 1981, he attended gunsmithing school at Trinidad State Junior College in Trinidad, CO.

In May 1983, Juan moved his family to Stamford, TX. He began serving his community by working for the City of Stamford Public Works Department. He then moved to the Texas Department of Human Services in Anson, TX for 13 years, as well as becoming an adult education instructor assisting those in need in obtaining their GED.

Juan also served his church community as a Deacon beginning in 1996 until his retirement in 2015. Juan was also a lifetime member of the Knights of Columbus at the St. Ann's Catholic Church.

Juan's never-ending devotion to his family was evident to anyone who knew him. His smile would light up a room. His jokes were always the best, especially when they were the worst.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ernesto and Josephine Bustamante, his brother, Ernesto Bustamante, Jr., and sister Eufemia Peña.

He will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 56 years, Elisa; his children, Annette and Steven Stanford of Stamford, TX, Juanita and Eugene Cedillo of Sweetwater, TX, Carlos and Shelley Bustamante of Arlington, TX; his grandchildren Adam Bustamante, Jonathan O'Donnell, Cidney Jordan, Jacinda Cedillo and Charlie Bustamante; his great grandchildren, Donovan O'Donnell, Ethan O'Donnell, Jazlynn O'Donnell, Jace Willis and Journey Jordan; his sisters, Jessie Diaz and Martin of Stamford, TX, and Angie Smith and Rick of New Bern, NC.



Juan became a lifelong friend of Elizandro De Los Santos after they were bunk mates in Phan Rang. Juan worked at the LOX plant 1966-67. Pictured on the left is Elizandro and Juan, with electrifying smile, together at the Phan Rang Reunion, San Antonio, Tx. 2013.

## “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. 213 “...keeping the memories alive”

---

### Plenty of sunshine followed by monsoons and rockets

Phan Rang AB Meteorologist



**Frank Latona, PRAB Meteorologist, 1970.** (Photo by John Anthony Ward)

**Dave Myers** commented: I served with Frank at Phan Rang...he was from the Cleveland area...I was from Canton Ohio. Wow first time I have seen a post of a person I served with. I was a weather observer and processed the data for him to do his forecasts.

**John Anthony Ward** commented: Dave Myers. Frank was our hooch mate in '70-'71. He was able to take a few observation flights with us during our cargo missions.

**John Karr** commented: And the forecast heat plenty of sunshine followed by monsoons and rockets in happy valley on Sundays.

**Buddy Cox** commented: I was in line to the movie theater in 1970. Two meteorologists were inline ahead of me having a conversation that I eve dropped on. They didn't believe they needed to be in Vietnam because just reporting the weather from the day before would meet the accuracy standards.

## “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. 213 “...keeping the memories alive”

---

# Phan Rang Vietnam Veterans 2021 Reunion Announced



## 14-17 Oct. 2021



**LODGE OF THE OZARKS**  
Branson, Missouri

**ROOM RATES**

**\$99.95 DOUBLE QUEEN**

**\$104.95 KING**

**Call 417-335-2555, Monday - Friday 8am to 5pm**

**“Ask for Renee”**

The 2021 Phan Rang Veterans Reunion is planned for the beautiful [Lodge of the Ozarks](#), 3431 W76, Country Blvd., Branson, Missouri. Please make your reservations early as space is limited and as always if circumstances change you may always cancel your reservation.

All other reunion information will be forthcoming as soon as it's known.

**Doug's Comments:** Some may wonder why a stories title is repeated in the newsletter. The only time they are repeated is when the title is embedded in a jpg because that title is not searchable, but the clear text is, so I hope that makes sense. A future issue of the Phan Rang Newsletter is planned to contain biographies/autobiographies so if you have a story to tell, please write it down and send to me. 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:<mailto:dougsevert@cox.net> and put 'unsubscribe' in subject line.