

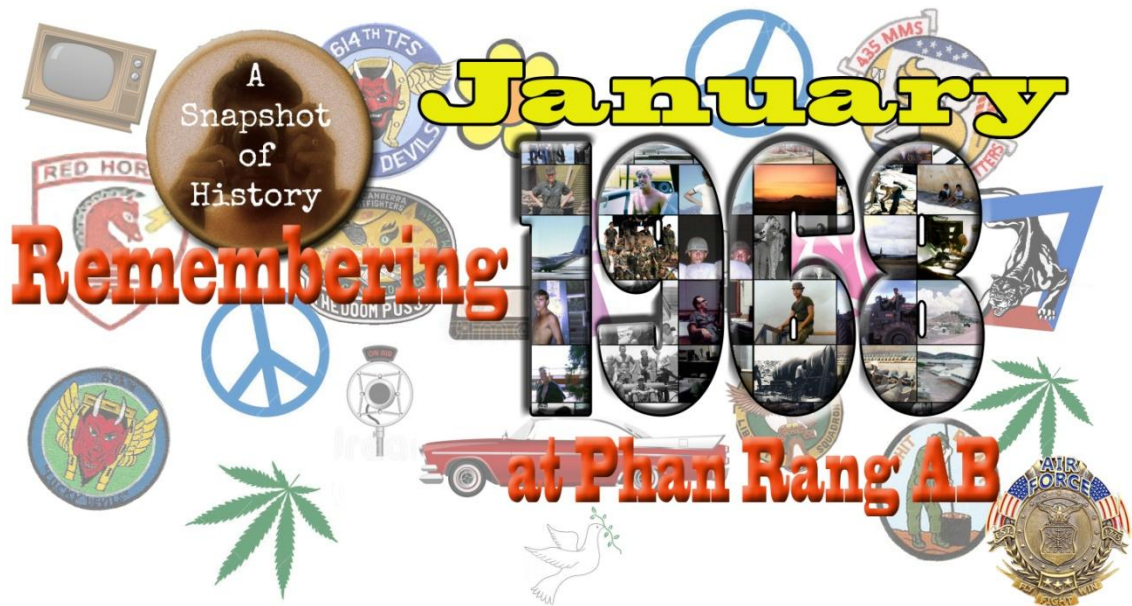
# Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan

Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.

“Keeping the memories alive” Newsletter 224

**Back In The Day**



## A SNAPSHOT IN TIME - JANUARY 1968

10 Jan - COL. CURTON BECOMES NEW VICE WING COMMANDER

10 Jan - 311<sup>TH</sup> MARKS 6<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

10 Jan - LIFE SAVING MISSIONS OUTSTANDING TO 311<sup>TH</sup> PILOT

10 Jan - COMMANDOS WILL PICK SWEETHEART

10 Jan - PHOTOG SNAPS VILLAGE EVAC

10 Jan - CBPO HAS BUSY MONTH

10 Jan - CAGE LOOP BEGINS PLAY

10 Jan - CHAPLAIN VISITS SECURITY POSTS

10 Jan - BULLETPROOF SORTIES

10 Jan - THE NON-SECRET WEAPON

10 Jan - FMS VERY BIG IN CIVIC ACTION

25 Jan - PHAN RANG SHARES TITLE 'BEST BASE'

25 Jan - 'SPOOKY' ACTIVE IN FIRST WEEK

25 Jan - 614<sup>th</sup> CHANGES COMMAND

25 Jan - AIR COMMANDOS AIRDROP 1000 ARVN PARATROOPERS

25 Jan - PILOTS RESPOND TO ENEMY CEASE FIRE BREAK

25 Jan - BLACK PANTHERS SET RECORD

25 Jan - TURTLES AHOY!

25 Jan - FRIENDS ASSIST PILOTS

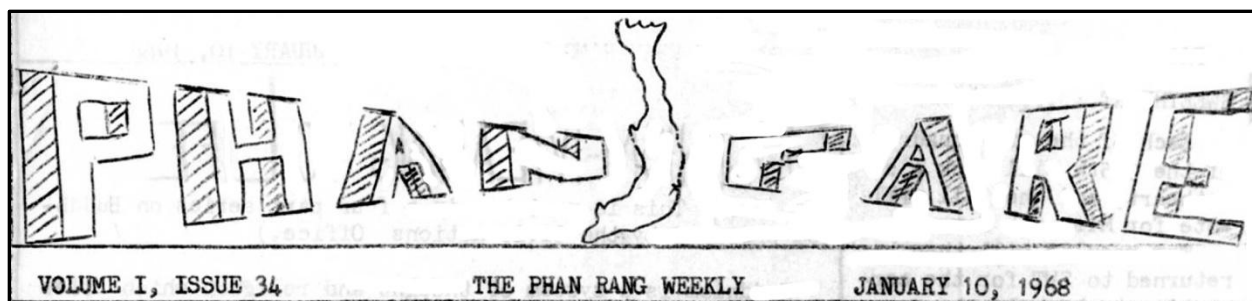
## **“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN**

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 224 “...keeping the memories alive”

---

### **25 Jan - “GCA” PILOT’S FRIEND**



### **10 Jan - COL. CURTON BECOMES NEW VICE WING COMMANDER**

Colonel **Warren D. Curton** has been named Vice Commander of the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing.

Colonel Curton is a 24-year veteran who served in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He also served during the Korean War.

He arrived here last spring to assume duties as Deputy Commander of Operations.

“This is the most professional group of pilots and flying supervisors that I have ever worked with in my career, he commented, “We fly our aircraft here about twice as much as we fly in the States, and in my opinion maintain the aircraft better than any place I’ve ever been stationed.”

He paid tribute to the teamwork of the ground crews and maintenance personnel: “They’re all putting out 100 per cent and coming out with a tremendous effort.”

Holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with five Oak Leaf Cluster, the Colonel described his assignment in Vietnam as “one of the most interesting I’ve had in the Air Force.”

Colonel Curton is a native of Chattanooga, Tenn., and is married and has three teen-age sons and one daughter.

He received his Bachelor’s degree from the University of Maryland and hold a Master’s Degree

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

---

from George Washington University.

### **10 Jan - 311TH MARKS 6TH YEAR**

The 311<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadron marks its sixth year of duty in South Vietnam this month.

Since 1962, when the unit became the first transport squadron to be permanently assigned to Vietnam, its mission has been enlarged to cover virtually the entire country.

Originally stationed at Da Nang AB, the northernmost U.S. airfield in Vietnam, the squadron concentrated its airlift mission to supporting Marine, Army, Vietnamese and other allied units for more than five years.

For providing outstanding service during adverse weather conditions and over treacherous terrain, the commandos were awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Citation while at Da Nang.

In July 1967, the 311<sup>th</sup> and two other squadrons were relocated at Phan Rang along with the parent organization, the 315<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Wing.

The move was accomplished without sacrificing a single daily mission, a feat that earned praise from the Wing and the 834<sup>th</sup> Air Division, the airlift arm of 7<sup>th</sup> AF.

Since making the move, the 311<sup>th</sup> has maintained an operating location at Da Nang, utilizing 50 per cent of the squadron's flying and maintenance crews and aircraft.

With the varied and growing commitments of the 311<sup>th</sup>, the commandos are continually working to uphold the squadron's motto - **“First In Southeast Asia”**.

### **10 Jan - LIFE SAVING MISSIONS OUTSTANDING TO 311TH PILOT**

“When you're there, and you've seen the happiness on faces, and you realize you actually have saved a human life, it's a real deep glow...a very rewarding feeling.”

That's how 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. **Michael A. Garoutte**, 24, from South Pasadena, Calif., a C-123 transport pilot in the 311<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadron, summed up a series of life-saving missions amongst the

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

---

850 combat sorties he has carried out in South Vietnam.

He noted that the C-123 Providers deliver troops, mail, supplies, ammunition, and food to front-line bases and outposts, and occasionally the air crews are called on to immediately evacuate battle casualties to field hospitals.

The first such mission in which he took part occurred following a battle on Hill 861. A Marine squad was trapped on the hill, and casualties were flown to a field hospital at Phu Bai. Lieutenant Garoutte said that hospital authorities commented that if it hadn't been for the fast C-123 flight the lives of some of the casualties would have been forfeited.

On another occasion, following a rocket attack on friendly forces positions at Dong Ha near the Demilitarized Zone, the lieutenant's C-123 landed at the air base there and picked up a wounded soldier. “He was hurt pretty badly,” Lieutenant Garoutte recalled. “They were keeping him alive by blood transfusions.” Just before the blood supply aboard the aircraft ran out, the aircraft reached Phu Bai and the soldier was safely delivered to the hospital. Lieutenant Garoutte chalked up another “save” for the C-123.

When five men were injured in a mine field at Duc Pho, his C-123 flew them to a hospital at Qui Ngon, and once again lives were saved by an emergency flight.

Lieutenant Garoutte noted that the 311<sup>th</sup> ACS was the first transport squadron to be permanently assigned to Vietnam, back in 1962. The mission of the Air Commando unit, he stated, is to fly food and supplies via tactical airlift “to where the war is being fought.”

### **10 Jan - COMMANDOS WILL PICK SWEETHEART**

Nearly every GI longs for a sweetheart. To some it is a wife or girlfriend many miles away. To the men of the 315<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Wing, a special sweetheart is being sought. She will be Miss Air Commando who will be picked from 30 nominees at Southwest Texas State College, San Marcos, Texas.

The plan came from 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. **William Moorman**, a C-123 Provider co-pilot, who is a 1966 graduate of the school.

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

---

Working in conjunction with the school’s paper ‘The College Star’, Lieutenant Moorman has been able to get the contest off to a rolling start with each girl sending a letter describing her hobbies and interests and a photograph or snap-shot to the campus paper, then they in return are to send a formal photos and letter to the 315<sup>th</sup>.

Each of the six squadrons of the 315<sup>th</sup> will pick a sweetheart, and then all will vote for Miss Air Comando.

The results will then be returned to SWT for the coronation to be held there.

Phan Fare will keep its readers informed as this contest progresses.

### **10 Jan - PHOTOG SNAPS VILLAGE EVAC**

An Air Force photographer was at the scene recently when the U.S. Army moved into a village of known Viet Cong sympathizers 40 miles from the base and evacuated all of the inhabitants.

“It was said that the Viet Cong was awful heavy in that area,” said Sergeant **Edward M. Wright**, 22, from Tulsa, Okla., assigned to Detachment 5 of the 600<sup>th</sup> Photo Squadron “and I was, of course, worrying if they’d hit us or not.”

He reported that the villagers “were already packed up and ready to leave when we got there.” A convoy of 20 trucks of the 1<sup>st</sup> Logistics Command carried out the mass evacuation, as Sergeant Wright snapped pictures.

The inhabitants included youngsters ranging from infants up to the age of 13, and older people. He was informed that inhabitants from 14 to 24 had joined the Viet Cong, and that the remaining villagers were supporting Viet Cong activities in the area.

Pigs, water buffalo and chickens in bamboo baskets were part of the evacuation. The villagers carried their belongings in boxes and “great big jugs”, the photographer observed. The children were dirty and very poorly dressed.

The Army troops who evacuated the villagers just treated them as other people....there wasn’t any harsh treatment.

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

---

### **“HAVE YOU SEEN THE MAGIC TREE?”**

#### **10 Jan - CBPO HAS BUSY MONTH**

They call it the Consolidated Base Personnel Office, but during the month of December it seemed more like Grand Central Station, as a total of 1,196 incoming and outgoing personnel were processed there.

According to **Captain Lou Butaud Jr.**, 29, from Rayne, La., chief of the data control section, the turnover of personnel in December represented an increase of 33 per cent for outgoing personnel processing through CBPO, and an increase of 100 per cent for incoming personnel, as compared to the figures for the preceding month.

“The normal monthly turnover is about 600 personnel. The brunt of the increased workload fell on the in-and-out processing section,” he observed.

He said it took an average group of 25 personnel two hours to process into the base, and it took only 15 minutes for each man to get processed through the military and travel pay section.

The captain said that the latter section was able to process outgoing personnel in only four minutes, provided they had properly completed the necessary processing and paperwork prior to reaching the pay section.

Among the 1196 personnel who came through the doors of the CBPO in December were 130 inbound and 96 outbound personnel of the 554<sup>th</sup> ‘RED HORSE Civil Engineering Squadron, currently undergoing a complete change of personnel in three monthly contingents.

The NCOIC of the in-and-out processing section is TSgt. **Joseph F. Metzger**. Heading the in-processing section is SSgt. **Jerry Pellowski**, and he is assisted by A1C **Gerald Sanchez**. The pay section is headed by SSgt. **Mike Hall**, and assisting him in this busy place are: Sgt. **Ken Van Wilgen**, A1C **Willie Branson** and A1C **Dale Fry**.

#### **10 Jan - CAGE LOOP BEGINS PLAY**

Basketball season opened at Phan Rang Monday night with fourteen teams entered in two

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

---

leagues.

Two teams from each league will play nightly, except Sundays, with games beginning at 6 and 7:30 p.m.

American League teams and coaches are: 35<sup>th</sup> Supply, Sgt. **Martin Renteria**; 554<sup>th</sup> CES, A1C **Eugene Bell**; 1882<sup>nd</sup> Comm. Squadron, SSgt. **William Harvey**; 35<sup>th</sup> Headquarters, Capt. **Robert Guin**; 35<sup>th</sup> CES, Sgt. **Russell Pollino**; 35<sup>th</sup> Services Squadron, Sgt. **James Westcott**; 35<sup>th</sup> SPS, Sgt. Cooper.

Team coaches in the National League are: 815<sup>th</sup> TFS, Capt. **James L. Martin**; 311<sup>th</sup> ACS, Lt. **August Jannarone**; 435<sup>th</sup> MMS, Sgt. **Robert Bennett**; 35<sup>th</sup> AEMS, TSgt. **George J. Davidson**; 309<sup>th</sup> ACS, SSgt. **John Mapes**; 310 ACS, Capt. **N.C. Barfoot**; 315<sup>th</sup> Headquarters Squadron, Sgt. **Herman Pettis**.

### **10 Jan - CHAPLAIN VISITS SECURITY POSTS**

“A friendly smile and a warm handshake can go a long ways out on the perimeter,” said Chaplain (Captain) **Charles R. Hutsler**, 33, from Gravois Mills, Mo., who recently spent the better part of two nights visiting security policemen on the lonely perimeter of the base.

“You immediately detect that the men appreciate your coming,: stated the Methodist chaplain, a former enlisted man in the Marines. He met with a total of approximately 70 guards and sentry-dog handlers of the 35<sup>th</sup> Security Police Squadron.

Chaplain Hutsler revealed that all of the chaplains are determined to go out to the farthest corners of the base in order to visit personnel wherever they work. “It’s one of our highest privileges to go out to the outposts where our men are located along the many miles of our perimeter,” he explained.

He stressed the surprise registered by the security policemen when he came out to see them. “Many of the men could not believe that we were out there,” he recalled, noting that one man said the only people he ever saw while working on the perimeter were his supervisors.

“Our main purpose in going out there,” he stated, “is to get to know them (the security

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

---

policemen)...to know something about their work, their involvement, and how important their job is.”

“Generally speaking, these men were very much enthused about the importance of their mission...They recognize that we must accomplish this task in order to provide maximum security for our men who sleep at night.”

Looking back on the perimeter trips, the chaplain said “We found that visiting these men was a tremendous inspiration to us personally.” He made the trips in the midst of his regular day-time duties, and admitted that by 3 a.m.” we were just worn out”.

### **10 Jan - BULLETPROOF SORTIES**

Sgt. **Frank J. Jacks** has flown 1,045 sorties in C-123 Providers in Vietnam, and has yet to have the planes he flies in to be hit by ground fire.

A flight engineer with the 311<sup>th</sup> ACS, Jacks has been in Vietnam for more than 10 months.

He has managed to miss the flights that draw ground fire. “One day I was taken off a mission that I had been scheduled for. The guy that took my place got his first hit that day. Only one other flight engineer who has been here as long as I have, has gone without a hit.”

Nearly all of Jacks’ sorties have been flown in I Corps. “I’m just hoping that I can go to the end of my tour without taking a hit,” Sgt. Jacks said.

### **10 Jan - THE NON-SECRET WEAPON**

Just over the threshold of another year, the American serviceman in the Republic of Vietnam holds the upper hand in the war. His success and high spirit is partly because of a traditional non-secret weapon that has been part of the American fighting man’s battle gear since the Revolutionary War.

The weapon has never killed an enemy or defoliated a jungle; it will not hold the dust down during the dry season or solidify the mud during the monsoon; yet servicemen never leave it behind and it seldom fails to work.



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

---

It helps men take “just one more step” on a seemingly endless march, eases the tension during the stay in a bomb shelter, and it helps release the pressure during a turbulent operation at sea or in the air.

This item in the military arsenal gives hooches and tents; planes and guns; ships and bunkers a personal touch...it has made “Snoopy: the top pin-up of the Vietnam War.

It not only strengthens men in the war zone, but also fortifies families and friends...in cartoons from service newspapers, wry remarks on tapes and anecdotes related in letters.

Best of all, no matter how far or how long you carry it, it never gets too heavy. It can be lost, however, and that spells trouble.

It comes in a great variety: a word, a drawing, a gesture, a carving....

It comes in different dialects, songs and slogans. It is international, but the American in the mud, on the waterways or aloft seems to have made it his personal trademark during the time of war.

**It’s their non-secret weapon....a sense of humor!**

**(Doug’s note:** The same can be said for our Australian counterparts. Just substitute “Australian” for “American” and that description also fits them to a T.)

### **10 Jan - FMS VERY BIG IN CIVIC ACTION**

Last Sunday, January 7, four men of the 35<sup>th</sup> Field Maintenance Squadron made it evident that the FMS Civic Action Committee is effective. MSgt. **Joseph E. Squires**, the squadron’s First Sergeant, along with TSgt. **Edwin J. Gehl**, SSgt. **Kenneth Nelson** and Sgt. **Glen E. Dinkheller**, all from the AGE section, paid a visit to Phan Rang City.

Their first stop was made at Tan Tai Orphanage. Here the men distributed various articles including soap, towels, clothing and toys. The FMS does not stop with donations.

FMS personnel are currently constructing a complete playground at the orphanage. “We’re

## “Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

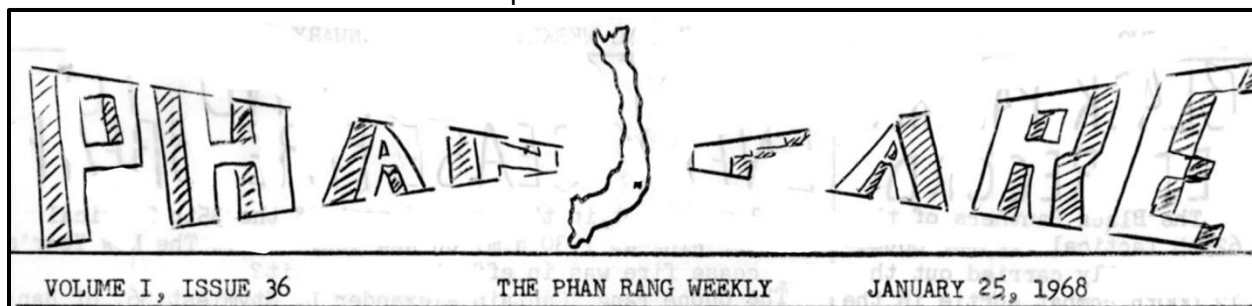
The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.

Phan Rang AB News No. 224 “...keeping the memories alive”

---

working on the swing sets now,” Sgt. Gehl said. “We should have them completed in about two weeks.”

The FMS men are also putting the finishing touches on some additions made to Truong Vinh Ky High School. “It’s quite a project getting those ceilings painted,” Sgt. Gehl stated. “We should have more Vietnamese students to help next week.”



### 25 Jan - PHAN RANG SHARES TITLE 'BEST BASE'

General **William W. Momyer**, commander of 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force, has notified officials here that the installation was selected as co-winner of the 1967 'best base' completion throughout his command. The other winner was Tuy Hoa AB.

In a letter addressed to the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, the general noted that Phan Rang was also selected as having the best recreational facilities in 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force during 1967.

“These selections are based on the results of evaluation visits by a group of senior officers from this headquarters wrote the general. “I wish to take this opportunity to comment all members of the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing and tenant Air Force units stationed on your base for their exemplary performance and support of the Base Improvement Program while working under adverse conditions and performing tactical missions in the Republic of Vietnam.”

The letter concluded: “Your continued support of this program will result in better living and working conditions for all personnel.”

Wing Commander, Col. **James A. Wilson**, said, “I think all organizations at Phan Rang have done an outstanding job. He praised base personnel for having “overcome many obstacles inherent in the combat environment.”

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

---

Colonel Wilson said the awards reflected the performance of base personnel in carrying out “our operational mission” and at the same time developing an operational base.”

Colonel **John M. Crowley**, base commander, commented that the awards were a tribute to the “spectacular job” done by personnel stationed here now and by their predecessors.

Phan Rang “is and has been the best base in the country.” said Col. Crowley, summing up the work of base personnel as “a concerted blue suit effort.” He paid special tribute to the role of the 554<sup>th</sup> ‘RED HORSE’ Civil Engineering Squadron, the 35<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron, the office of director of personnel, and the personnel services office in the operations which resulted in the ‘best base’ and ‘best recreational facilities’ awards.

### **25 Jan - ‘SPOOKY’ ACTIVE IN FIRST WEEK**

Three days after ‘Spooky’ AC-47 Gunship crew was credited with killing six Viet Cong troops at an isolated hamlet 10 miles south of the base.

“We were rolling down the runway when we received the coordinates,” said Capt. **Thomas J. Margle**, 31, from New Philadelphia, PA., navigator of the gunship.

A forward air controller had spotted 13 enemy troops, and they had retreated to a (con’t on two) **Note:** This story was page one and was not continued on page two or any other page in the issue, but I kept what was there because it does credit Capt. Margle. This was not the only article that didn’t have a continuation as promised. ‘*Air Commandos Airdrop 1,000 ARVN Paratroopers*’, was supposed to be continued on page four, but it wasn’t. That article appears below and is pretty complete except for mentioning and congratulating those that made the mission possible.)

### **25 Jan - 614th CHANGES COMMAND**

Lieutenant Colonel **Thomas M. Knoles**, from Flagstaff, Ariz. who has spent six of the last seven years in the Pacific theater, was installed as the new commander of the ‘Lucky Devils’ of the 614<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron recently in formal flightline ceremonies attended by approximately 120 member of the squadron.

A veteran of 80 combat missions in Vietnam, Col. Knoles accepted the squadron colors from the

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

---

former commander, Lt. Col. **Kenneth P. Miles**, from San Antonio, as officers and enlisted men stood on parade. The American flag and the flag of the 35<sup>th</sup> TFW were carried throughout the ceremonies by a squadron color guard.

The new ‘Lucky Devil’ commander described the 614<sup>th</sup> TFS as the **“Finest fighting outfit in the world”**. A veteran of 22 years’ military service, Col. Knoles came to Phan Rang close to five month ago and has served on the wing commanders staff.

Colonel Wilson attended the change of command ceremonies and presented a Distinguished Flying Cross to a member of the squadron, Maj. **Mathew B. Wallace**, from Pittsburg, Pa. He also presented a series of Air Medals to other pilots in the unit and several of other officers that have blown combat missions with the ‘Lucky Devils’.

Colonel Knoles’ past assignments include one as a planner on the staff of the commander-in-chief of U.S. Forces in the Pacific, in Hawaii. He also carried out a tour on the staff of the 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force Headquarters at Clark AB., and sandwiched F-100 training missions in between his staff duties.

Colonel Miles, who commanded the ‘Lucky Devils’ for nine months, during which the unit suffered neither accidents nor combat losses, has won the Silver Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross in Vietnam in the course of carrying out 307 combat missions in the F-100.

The former 614<sup>th</sup> TFS commander described his assignment with the unit as the best of his 18-year military career.

One day before the change of command ceremonies, pilots from the squadron presented Col. Knoles with a pair of size 14 combat boots as a token of esteem for their former commander. The outsized boots symbolized their feeling that Col. Miles’ shoes will be hard to fill.

### **25 Jan - AIR COMMANDOS AIRDROP 1000 ARVN PARATROOPERS**

Crews of the 315<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Wing dropped 1,000 Army of Vietnam paratroopers in two hours to kick off the ARVN Operation ‘Van Keip 168’, 10 miles north of Vung Tau.

“With the time phasing that we had to plan and execute the mission, I can find nothing wrong

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

---

with the jobs any of you did,” Colonel **Robert D. Brown**, of Spokane, Wing commander and mission commander, told the commandos when they returned to Phan Rang at the completion of the mission.

The planning of the mission began four days before the scheduled drop. This included readying C-123 Provider aircraft, flight and maintenance crews.

The base camp for the drop was at Vung Tau, where the commandos ferried maintenance crews the night before the drop. There were 25 maintenance personnel at Vung Tau consisting of ground crew chiefs, and flightline maintenance people from each of the three flying squadrons at Phan Rang, the 309<sup>th</sup>, 310<sup>th</sup> and 311<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadrons. The 315<sup>th</sup> Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron provided the maintenance specialists.

“With our own people there, we were virtually independent of the base there,” said Lt. Col. **Martin L. Stutts**, of Bellvue, Neb., wing chief of maintenance. “Just about the only thing that they provided was fuel.”

### **25 Jan - PILOTS RESPOND TO ENEMY CEASE FIRE BREAK**

All was quiet in the command post of the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing at 1:30 a.m. on New Year’s Day. The New Year’s Day cease fire as in effect...or was it?

The phone rang, Captain **Alexander L. Stymiest**, 36, of Bangor, Maine, a duty controller, answered it. On the line was the Tactical Air Control Center at Tan Son Nhut AB. The cease fire had been violated said the voice on the telephone, a 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division unit 175 miles west of Phan Rang was under heavy attack.

The alert Super Sabres rose to the attack throughout the night, and were joined by combat aircraft of other units. “The Tactical Air Control Center called back the next day,” Capt. Stymiest said, “to report a total count of 350 enemy soldiers killed in the action. I know that the 35<sup>th</sup> TFW played an important role in the defense of the base.”

The first two pilots off of the ground at Phan Rang were Captain **Lester G. Frazier**, 31, from Walla Walla, Wash., and Captain **Charles A. Shaheen Jr.**, 27, from Orange Grove, Calif. Both are assigned to the ‘Lucky Devils’ of the 614<sup>th</sup> TFS, the two fliers notched the first air strikes to be

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

---

carried out by the 35<sup>th</sup> TFW in 1968. Shortly after they returned to the base, they took off again to carry out two more air strikes in support of the Special Forces camp.

Two pilots who took part in the wing F-100 strikes were Lt. Col. **Kenneth P. Miles**, from Largo, Fla., former commander of the 624<sup>th</sup> and his longtime friend Lt. Col. **Julian D. Sawyer**, 38, of Happy, Tex., of the 625<sup>th</sup> TFS: Captain **John L. Martin**, 28, from Cincinnati, of the 352<sup>nd</sup> TFS; Major **Edward A. Lloyd**, 33, Charles Town, W. Va., and Captain **Vincent J. Kelly**, 29, Buffalo N.Y., of the 614<sup>th</sup> TFS.

(**Note:** Additional information on Lester Frazier can be found in Phan Rang Newsletter 188 and 206; Vincent Kelly 202 and 213; John Martin 212 and Lester Miles 7, 28, 139 and 223.)

### **25 Jan - BLACK PANTHERS SET RECORD**

The Black Panthers of the 615<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron recently carried out their 12,000<sup>th</sup> combat sortie in the F-100 Super Sabre jet fighter, and they believe it's the highest number flown by any fighter unit in Vietnam over the last 18 months.

At the controls of the Super Sabre was Captain **Edward R. Maney**, 28, from Douglas Ariz., a veteran of 208 combat sorties in Vietnam.

The mission consisted of preparing a landing zone for troops of the 25<sup>th</sup> Division of the Army north of Tay Ninh Mountain, in Operation Yellowstone.

The combat veteran said that the troops were approximately 200 meters from the target, a wooded area, preparing to sweep through it following the air strikes.

The forward air controller at the scene said that the pilots did a “fine job”, according to Captain Maney.

The target was approximately 34 miles west of Saigon.

### **25 Jan - TURTLES AHOY!**

An 80-pound sea turtle which wandered out of the South China Sea onto the beach facility eight miles from here has found a new home in a shower-room, but its fate hangs in the balance.

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

---

Air Force security guard and lifeguard Airman First Class **Gregg Trachsel**, 20, of Long Beach, N.Y., said that lifeguards at the beach are torn between making a pet out of the reptile or letting it loose to return again to the sea.

He reported that another lifeguard, A1C **Jim Considine** heard the mascot dogs barking about 11 p.m. and went to the scene of the disturbance and found the huge turtle about 20 yards up on the beach digging a hole, apparently to lay eggs in. At first he thought the turtle was a sand bag.

### **25 Jan - FRIENDS ASSIST PILOTS**

Professionalism and a touch of comedy characterized a recent in-flight emergency in which a pair of F-100 Super Sabre pilots were guided safely back to earth after they lost their air speed indicators and one of them also lost his radio.

The troubles of Capt. **Charles A. Shaheen Jr.**, 27, from Orange Grove, Calif., assigned to the 614<sup>th</sup> TFS ‘Lucky Devils’, and Capt. **Buren G. Galbraith**, 32, from Chillicothe, Ill., flying safety officer for the 35<sup>th</sup> TFW, began as they were completing their third air strike of the day.

Captain Shaheen lost the use of his radio, and shortly afterward realized that his air-speed indicator was also out. As darkness fell, he used hand signals and a flashlight to maintain contact with Capt. Galbraith, and assumed that the latter would guide him in for a safe landing.

As the pair approached the base, Capt. Galbraith confirmed a suspicion he had been harboring all the way back from the target. His own air-speed indicator wasn’t working either. What ensued next was like the theme of an old comedy routine, as Capt. Shaheen waited patiently for Capt. Galbraith to take him in, and Capt. Galbraith tried to indicated that he couldn’t do it.

At this point Capt. Gailbraith contacted the command post and a distress call went out to a pair of 615<sup>th</sup> TFS pilots, Capt. **Joseph F. Cassidy**, 27, from Medway, Mass., and Capt. **John J. Closner**, 27, from Douglaston, N.Y., who were 50 miles south of the base.

“We turned around immediately,” said Capt. Closner.

As Capt. Shaheen was orbiting over the base he developed a suspicion that Capt. Galbraith’s air-

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

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speed indicator was not working either.

Capt. Closner, who by this time had caught up with the two orbiting pilots, approached Capt. Shaheen’s aircraft, and directed Capt. Cassidy to go to the assistance of Capt. Galbraith.

“It was a little difficult to get Capt. Shaheen’s attention,” Capt. Cassidy recalled.

The trick was turned by flashing his refueling light as he pulled alongside and in front of Capt. Shaheen, who in turn flashed a flashlight when he ‘read’ what Capt. Cassidy intended to do.

After much maneuvering in the darkness, the 615thg pilots were able to lead the two stranded aircraft to a safe landing.

Maj. **Amos O. Fox**, director of safety for the 35<sup>th</sup> wing, complemented the professionalism of the pilots and also the quick thinking of the command post personnel for calling the other aircraft for assistance.

**“This is noteworthy of 35<sup>th</sup> TFW personnel.”** he commented.

### **25 Jan - “GCA” PILOT’S FRIEND**

When bad weather or instrument failure prevents pilots from carrying out visually-controlled landings here, they put their lives and their aircraft in the capable hands of GCA (ground-controlled approach) operators of the 1882<sup>nd</sup> Communications Squadron, AFCS.

These operators are currently directing approximately 1,500 GCA landings here per month, according to an air traffic controller who doubles as a shift supervisor, technical Sergeant **David W. Floyd**, 28, from Mount Pleasant, Tenn.

“It’s real gratifying to help a man,” said the air traffic controller, “and when he gets on the ground, and says, ‘Thanks, I couldn’t have made it without you,’ it really makes you feel wonderful.”

The prime tool of GCA is radar, which is being used to handle the landings of the many type aircraft that this base has stationed here and various other type transient aircraft.



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Sergeant Floyd specializes in ‘radar pattern control’; a system of making contact with an aircraft when it gets within 25 miles of the base and follows it until it gets within 10 miles of the flightline. At that point, the final controller takes over, utilizing precision radar to control the pilot’s course line and glide path.

The pilot “may not see the runway until he’s ready to touch it,” said Sergeant Floyd, pointing out that the GCA controllers employ a radar scope which has two electronic lines on it, and they “keep targets centered on these two line” to guide the pilot down to the ground.

Phan Rang, for the last three or four month, has been handling one of the highest volumes of GCA landings, he explained consists of the ‘echo’ pattern of radar signals sent out by transmitters on the ground and bounced back by the aircraft in flight.



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**Doug’s Comments:** The Phan Fare’s featured in this newsletter along with many others are now available on Fold3.com so check them out when you have time. If you don’t have an account for Fold3 or Ancestry you can use your Facebook login information to gain access. 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: [dougsevert@cox.net](mailto:dougsevert@cox.net) and put ‘unsubscribe’ in subject

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