

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
"Keeping the memories alive" Newsletter 225

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We Need to Remember Every One of Them

by Ron Deyhle

As Richard Sellers, a famous jazz songwriter, wrote, "Time moves like molasses when you are children, but it rages like a river when you're grown." As I sit here, a little rusty with the spring in my step now an effort, I see "the great divide: coming. I worry about who will remember those of us who served in Nam.

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

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

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It’s been 50 years and our ranks are now thinned (and that continues with a gathering pace). Another of my singer-songwriter heroes died this year, Johnny Prine. The last song he wrote and sang was “I remember everything.” We need to heed this advice...and remember our wartime comrades and brothers lost.

For instance, who remembers Captain **William “Bill” Carl Buerk**? Born 2/15/40 in Los Angeles, California, he was a SAC KC-135 pilot, married, no children, and was a Regular Air Force Officer. He volunteered for a tour in Vietnam, partly because he needed a combat tour on his record for that career boost. Bill was assigned to fly F-100s making it into the next to the last class for upgrade training at Luke AFB. He arrived at Phan Rang Air Base on 12/15/70, and was assigned to the 614th TFS Lucky Devils. He soon rose to Flight Lead status, and one day in April, 1971, he was “Blade 1” on the alert pad. He and Blade 2 were scrambled, and Blade 1 didn’t come home. Now, as we remember Bill, all that’s left are the meaningless lines in Chris Hobson’s *Vietnam Air Losses* (published in 2001).

History and More

It is said, if you don’t pay attention to history, you are doomed to repeat it’s mistakes. We often don’t remember that.

Here’s some history to consider: In the early 1950s, the French placed a series of fortified positions along the Vietnam-China border. The idea was to contain the Viet Minh and stop infiltration from China. The weather was bad, terrain atrocious, with poor roads and triple canopy jungle. Supply of those fortifications was difficult. Rescue during attacks was non-existent. The Viet Minh picked off and overran these forts one by one. The final battle for the French was Dien Bien Phu.

Along came the Americans, in force, from 1964-1973. We built fire bases (FBs) along the Vietnam and Laos/Cambodia border in the central highlands. They were on high ground in triple canopy jungle, no roads and bad weather, but we had air power and supply. No seat, right? Nope! What that did was to draw the People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) out to open battle. Many fire bases were attacked and some were overrun.

Fire Base 6 (FB6) was in Kontum Province near Dak To. It was built in 1967 along a mountain

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top called “rocket Ridge”. There was a massive battle there in 1969. The FB was turned over to the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) 42nd Regiment in 1970. They resupplied the mountaintop and in March 1971, it had 300 Montagnard and ARVN troops and a handful of American Army advisors manning the outpost.

The PAVN attacked with 5,000 troops on 31 March 1971. A ferocious battle lasted 13 days. Heavy air power support included B-52s, fixed wing fighters and helicopters. The weather was terrible, with low ceilings. The attackers had flamethrowers, mortars and a superior number of battle-hardened troops.

Early on, **Scott Madsen** and I were scrambled off the alert pad at Phan Rang to help. The weather was a huge problem. I was familiar with the valleys and passes. We flew an instrument approach at Pleiku to get below the cloud deck.

I then pulled out my trusty Buck Rogers compass (that took five box-tops of Ovaltine to obtain), and we worked our way up the valleys to FB6. We made multiple passes with the PAVNs right on FB6's anti-personnel wires. On one pass, I felt a big thump. Scott said he saw no battle damage and the flight control check was normal. We had blunted the attack, at least “temporarily.”

Later, Blade 1 and 2 were scrambled, carrying napalm and 500-pound high drags. Captain **Bill Buerk**, AC F-100D 56-2937, was Flight Lead. His first and only pass (with napalm) was reported as having a normal roll in and attack angle of 15 degrees. The FAC and Bill's wingman watched Bill's pass unfold. No ordnance was released, and he impacted in the target area. The aircraft bounced, the right wing separated and the aircraft fuselage catapulted into the triple canopy 800 meters away (report from the Library of Congress). No ejection, no beeper, and no chance of survival. He was likely killed or incapacitated by enemy fire into the cockpit on final. Ground fire that day was so heavy that there was no attempt to recover the body. It was a rough time!!

(We lost another F-100 from the 352nd TFS to small arms fire, but the pilot ejected near Dak To, and an Army unit recovered him. Al together, we lost five F-100s and three pilots in April, 1971.)

FB6 was overrun, and all 300 defenders were captured, killed, airlifted out or retreated into the

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jungle. Some troops resurfaced over the next few days, and the FB was recaptured by ARVN troops eight days later. In 1972, as the war was winding down, FB6 was abandoned, never again to be manned.

The great American blues and gospel singer-songwriter and musician, known as “Blind Lemon Jefferson,” was one of the most popular blues singers of the 1920s. One of his classic songs was the haunting, *See that My Grave Is Kept Clean*. That is, “Please Remember Me!” But who remembers Captain Bill Buerk? He was a very quiet guy. He sat in the background and didn’t participate in the crazy fighter pilot parties. Our XO, Major Banks, asked me to send his personal effects home.

“It was haunting to read about his life and dreams.”

Going through his papers, I found out that he was in the process of a divorce, but had a new girlfriend. It was haunting to read about his life and dreams.

Bill is still listed as “Active Pursuit, Body Not Recovered.” He has a memorial marker at Arlington Cemetery, so someone cared about him and arranged a service and memorial marker. On April 20, 1971, he was posthumously promoted to Major. But no medals.

A medal of Honor was given to Lt. **Brian Thacker** (without a doubt he deserved the award), one of the handful of Army Advisors mentioned in the total manning of FB6. He directed the defense of FB6 and was the last soldier to escape the base. He evaded capture for eight days and resurfaced after the FB6 was retaken.

A Medal Conversation

When Scott and I landed, we found that the thump I felt was an enemy hit that removed the top third of my vertical stabilizer. (Great battle damage check, Scott!). The Wing’s Awards and Decoration shop wanted to put us in for a medal. But, I didn’t feel good about any of it, so we demurred; we were alive, we did what we were sent to do, and we only temporarily stopped the attack. Bill was killed and 300 defenders were overrun. Not too much success!

Medals: Bill got one but it was only the Purple Heart. He gave the ultimate sacrifice, and I

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believe should have received more recognition.

As for me: In my opinion, a medal is not a “me” it’s an “us,” and excessive award levels diminish the luster of the truly earned awards. But when I was stateside, six months later, “my” unwanted, high level award arrived. As usual in the Air Force, it’s hard to stop a rolling stone. Go Figure!!

In his autobiography, General Chuck Yeager wrote a bit about medals: “...we became kind of cynical about medal awards ceremonies in Vietnam. Christ, that country was about to sink under the weight of bronze and brass....Lots and lots of people got many, many medals for accomplishing less, if you care to take a look at the end results. As Andy Anderson put it. “Vietnam was a place to get a medal or a Court Martial quicker than anyplace else.”

Paternal Advice

When I went to Vietnam, my grandfather (I could barely understand a word he ever said) offered this advice, “Now you keep the rough side off the pavement and let the smooth side slide.” After pondering, I decide this meant, “Don’t sweat the small stuff.” When I told him I’d be shooting guns and dropping bombs, he said, “Shut your mouth.” This is southern for, “You gotta be kidding me.” Then he proffered more good advice. He told me to take out life insurance.

But my problem was that I had no beneficiary back then. Now, today, I have beneficiaries, but I’m fearful that at my sunder service, when I cross the great divide, only my wife will be there (is she doesn’t have Pilates that day), maybe one of my kids (if they will ever answer their phone)...but my dog WILL be there. He always comes when I need him, and he will remember me.

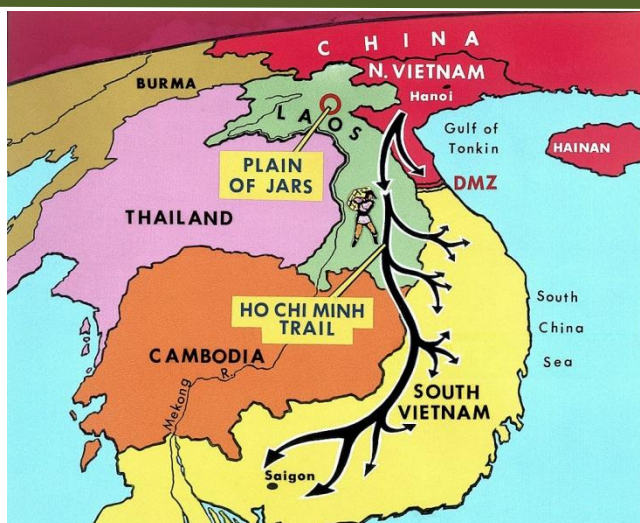


“The characters depicted in this story as well as those of the author have truly demonstrated behaviors and decisions that are worthy of the title ‘HERO’. Every sortie they flew they put their life on the line. These were highly skilled and motivated airman that deserves an elevated place in our history and in our minds.” Doug Severt

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FLYING OVER THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL

*“Come along, boys, and I’ll tell you a tale,
Of the pilots who fly on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.”*

BY Toby Hughes

Flying over the Ho Chi Minh Trail

When I was young my father, knowing of my interest in music and war, gave me a book entitled “Singing the Vietnam Blues: *Songs of the Air Force in Southeast Asia.*” Actually, he had it hidden so well he lost it and gave it to me years after he intended. I ended up losing it again while in college before reading it, a missed opportunity I’ve always regretted.

Later on in life, I discovered a folk song through a project at Buffalo State University called Vietnam Veterans Oral History and Folklore Project. I found the song instantly haunting. Recalling my father’s gift, I have always yearned to share it with my father to get his opinion. Unfortunately he died before I could. The song is titled “Ho Chi Minh Trail,” although the tune is identical to the old country song “Billy the Kid” (this adds extra layers of meaning if you know the lyrics). The song describes the point of view of an American pilot trying to stop North Vietnamese trucks on the trail while facing anti-aircraft defenses and his own fears.

While participating in the National Humanities Institute on Contested Territory: America’s Role in Southeast Asia, I have gained an appreciation for the layers within the song and parallels to Vietnamese culture. Obviously the Trail was a “contested territory,” with the North Vietnamese on the ground and Americans in the air above. This difference of space itself is a reflection of the technological and cultural divide between the two sides. The author describes a pilot struggling in the dark while fighting to stay in the air. This recalls to me American administrations creating policy, struggling with their ignorance of Southeast Asia, while fighting to keep South Vietnam afloat. This song also represents a contested cultural territory in

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America. Folk songs were typically used by American protesters in the 1950s and 60s, but here the form is used to describe a military experience. The last verse of the song, about an overconfident youth, seems a fitting metaphor for America as a whole in the mid-20th Century. Finally, this song brings to mind the Vietnamese Ca Dao poetry, or folk poetry used by the Vietnamese peasants to describe and give meaning to their lives. This song is an American equivalent of Ca Dao; it would have been sung by and to other American pilots before they met their destiny in the contested space above the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The song makes me think of lost opportunities for communication between people divided by space, technology, politics, and culture, just as my opportunity to play this song for my father was lost by his death. Listening to this song, I am haunted by that realization of loss. As we hurt each other, we all lose opportunities to understand. We lose our youth, we lose our fathers, and we lose ourselves.

“Ho Chi Minh Trail” by Toby Hughes

**Come along, boys, and I'll tell you a tale,
Of the pilots who fly on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
Of Covey and Moonbeam and Nimrod you've heard,
Of Hobo and Spad and of old Yellow Bird.**

**The trucks load in Hanoi and Haiphong by day,
In singles and convoys they start on their way.
South by southwest in an unending stream,
Reaching the border at day's fading gleam.**

**They stop at Mu Gia or at Ban Karai.
And wait for the last of the daylight to die.
Under cover of night through the pass they set sail,
Out on the roads of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.**

**As they roll on through darkness, not stopping to rest,
Miles away are the pilots whose skills they will test.
Who'll soon face the darkness, the karst, and the guns,**

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In the grim cat and mouse game that no one's yet won.

When you fly on the Trail through the dark and the haze

It's a thing you'll remember the rest of your days.

A nightmare of vertigo, mountains, and flak,

And the cold wind of Death breathing soft at your back.

But the trucks must be stopped, and it's all up to you,

So you fly here each night to this grim rendezvous.

Where your whole world's confined to the light of the flare,

And you fight for your life just to stay in the air.

For there's many a man who there met his fate,

On the dark roads of Hell, where the grim reaper waits.

Where a man must learn quickly the tricks of his trade,

Or die in the dark for mistakes that he's made.

And there's many a lad in the flush of his youth,

Who's still yet to meet with his moment of truth.

With wings on his chest and the world by the tail,

He'll grow up fast on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Click [here](#) to listen to “Ho Chi Minh Trail” cut from the album ‘INCOUNTRY - FOLK SONGS OF AMERICANS IN THE VIETNAM WAR’.

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THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

By Jean Ridl

My parents, Marlin “Jo” and Sandi Jordet, married in 1975, 4 years after my dad returned from Vietnam. Dad served with the 435th Munitions Maintenance squadron at Phan Rang, 1970-'71, and was responsible for maintaining the ordinance on Phan Rang AB and loading ordnance for all F-100 Super Sabre Jet Fighter aircraft stationed at the base.

I was born in 1978 and my sister came along just one year later in 1979.

“We just thought that's how things were supposed to be.”

As little girls we were taught that if daddy was sleeping, we should not go into the room or touch him to wake him up, we should just call for him from the door. We just thought that's how things were supposed to be. As we got older we learned that it was because of his startle reflex after the war. We heard stories of dad almost clocking mom once when she tried to wake him up from a nightmare, and also getting her to the ground to protect her in the middle of the night when someone blew up the dog catcher's truck. Dad didn't talk about the war that much, except to tell us stories of his escapades.

Dad liked to have a beer or two every night, but he was never drunk, as far as I remember.

We had a good childhood with him, although he did work a lot. Like most teens, I had some

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issues with him. I knew he loved me, and I was definitely Daddy's little girl, but I always felt some distance from him, although I now realize a lot of it came from my own battles with depression. It was in my teens that he started to open up more about the war after joining a Vietnam Vet group in our community. As I've gotten older and learned more about the war and my dad's experiences, I've really come to appreciate the childhood that I did have with my dad and understand some of my perceived distance from him.

“He always said he wanted us to be able to take care of ourselves...”

He instilled a lot of great values in us, and taught innumerable things, including the value of hard work and being willing to get our hands dirty by helping with remodeling projects, landscaping, building a house, and vehicle maintenance. He always said he wanted us to be able to take care of ourselves without depending on a man. I wonder if part of that stemmed from thinking about the widows of some of his brother's in arms. He also showed us the importance of having a man who loved and supported his family, not only financially, but also emotionally. When mom decided to go back to school, he fully supported her and did whatever he could to make it possible. He also supported our educational and extra-curricular endeavors. Although it took me a couple of years to get started, my sister and I both became teachers, like our mom. My sister has her Master's degree, and I have an Educational Specialist degree (just shy of a doctorate). We have both been fortunate enough to find husbands who love and support us in our endeavors as well as helping us to raise our sons.

In meeting my husband, I learned just how fortunate I was in my childhood with my dad and the issues he dealt with after the war. My father-in-law is also a Vietnam Vet. All I know about his time in 'Nam is that he was in the Army, and his primary duty was guarding Agent Orange. He doesn't really talk about this period of his life at all. We have come to realize in the last few years that he suffered from severe PTSD and that he self-medicated with alcohol. My husband and his mom are adamant that he was never a fall down drunk, but do acknowledge that he was definitely an alcoholic.

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Marlin “Jo” and Sandi Jordet, with daughter Jean Ridl with arms around her dad and standing next to her is her sister Jessica Noffsinger and her husband Luke on the occasion of their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

My husband also felt an emotional distance from his dad while growing up that he didn't fully understand. About 8 years ago, he stopped drinking after shoulder surgery that resulted from falling down while roller-skating with my boys. His PTSD symptoms intensified, and he finally started talking about his experiences through a group at the VA. This did seem to help him, although we are unsure how much now that he is suffering from Alzheimer's, that doctors now believe stemmed from his alcoholism.

“Military has always been important to our family.”

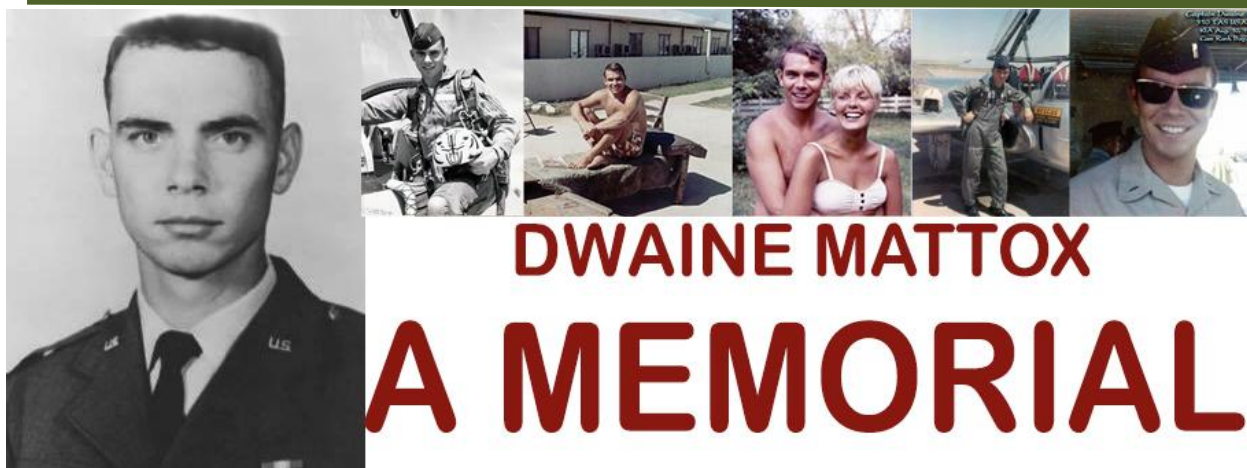
Despite all this, my husband did have a good childhood as well. We both count ourselves fortunate to have been able to grow and learn from our dads, especially when many in our generation were not. Military has always been important to our family. In addition to our dads, I have many family members who have served in all branches of the military. My husband is an Army veteran himself. Our oldest is unable to serve due to health issues, but our youngest, Zachary, is thinking about joining the Air Force when he graduates in three short years. Yikes!

We are proud Americans and know that we would not have the lives that we have today without the sacrifices of the men and women of our Armed Forces, and are eternally grateful to you all for your service!

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By John Anthony Ward

We both arrived at Phan Rang Air Base in the month of June, 1970. We both had at least a year's prior experience piloting Air Force aircraft stateside. Now it was our turn to serve a 12 month tour of duty in Vietnam, the war zone. Air Force policy at that time was that most newly minted pilots out of pilot training would be sent to Vietnam whenever their number came up.

Since we had prior flight experience, we were both designated to be in the Aircraft Commander upgrade program soon after our arrival. That meant we would be given training to fly the left seat as commanders of our C-123K Provider cargo aircraft, the equivalent of a Captain on an airliner.

That program involved both of us flying alternating legs in the left seat with an instructor pilot in the right seat. We would fly between 8 - 10 flight segments a day, hauling personnel and or supplies into remote airstrips all around South Vietnam. It was quite challenging, what with monsoon weather and metal matting or hard clay runways as short as 3,000 ft long in the midst of the jungle. This dual training went on for a week, after which we were split up. He was to continue his training with the instructor for another week to be checked out as A/C (aircraft commander) Then it would be my turn the following week to do the same. The first day they flew together, I was scheduled to fly as copilot with a regular A/C.

Upon returning from our mission that day, I learned that the squadron had lost an aircraft that day. While on final approach to Cam Ranh Bay, a C-123 had experienced a broken flap hinge and crashed into the bay. The only survivor was the loadmaster. Both pilots perished in the crash. They were the A/C trainee, Lt. Dwaine Mattox, and the instructor pilot, Maj. Grant L.

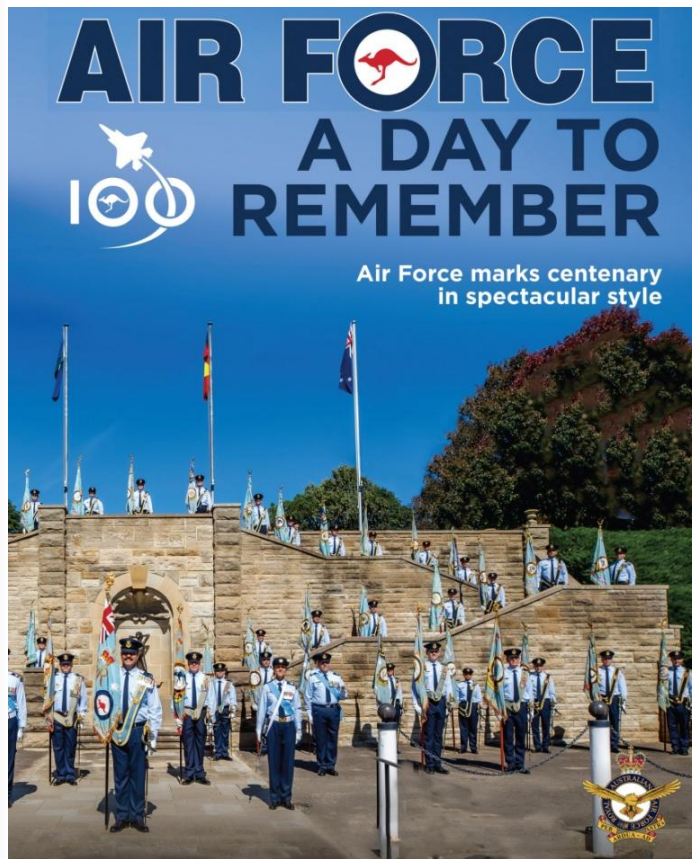
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Waugh. I have carried this memory all these years, and now feel it right to memorialize their sacrifice.

(Note: To read more about **Dwaine Elbyrne Mattox** see Phan Rang Newsletters, 143, 153, 155, 196, 197 and 207. To read more about **Grant Reed Waugh** see Phan Rang Newsletters 143, 53, 155 and 197.)



The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), formed in March 1921, is the aerial warfare branch of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). It operates the majority of the ADF's fixed wing aircraft, although both the Australian Army and Royal Australian Navy also operate aircraft in various roles. It directly continues the traditions of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC), formed on 22 October 1912. The RAAF provides support across a spectrum of operations such as air superiority, precision strikes, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, air mobility, space surveillance, and humanitarian support.

The RAAF took part in many of the 20th century's major conflicts. During the early years of the

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Second World War a number of RAAF bomber, fighter, reconnaissance and other squadrons served in Britain, and with the Desert Air Force located in North Africa and the Mediterranean. From 1942, many RAAF units were formed in Australia, and fought in South West Pacific Area. Thousands of Australians also served with other Commonwealth air forces in Europe, including during the bomber offensive against Germany. By the time the war ended, a total of 216,900 men and women served in the RAAF, of whom 10,562 were killed in action.

Later the RAAF served in the Berlin Airlift, Korean War, Malayan Emergency, Indonesia–Malaysia Confrontation and **Vietnam War**. More recently, the RAAF has participated in operations in East Timor, the Iraq War, the War in Afghanistan, and the military intervention against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The RAAF has 259 aircraft, of which 110 are combat aircraft.



Comments and photo by Dean Delongchamp

Never to pass up a good opportunity, members of the 310th Tactical Airlift Squadron put on their best attire and proceed to party. First row with the beret and sunglasses was our flight surgeon (name not remembered) and to the far right is **Bill Tafs** (pilot); second row with the beret is **Buddy Cox** (pilot) and 5th from left in the WWI flight helmet and goggles is **Dean**

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Delongchamp (Nav.) and next to Dean in the Green Bay tussle cap is **Pat Stajdel** (pilot) and all the way on the right in the jungle hat is **Bill Campbell** (Pilot). Unfortunately time has robbed me of who everyone else is.

What the picture depicts that in our very little bit of down time, we let our hair down. This was an impromptu party during Christmas season of 1969. The flying schedule was quite rigorous and when we got a chance to relax we took it by the horns. The party started when one guy came into the gathering room in our hootch with some funny things on. Slowly more and more guys came out until we had enough for a group picture. Most of the guys are in the 310th TAS and were flying C-123's. The rest of the guys were spread throughout the wing in medical, intel, supply, etc.. **We had great camaraderie and all got along very well for having been thrown together into a dormitory in the middle of a war.**

ANZAC DAY 2021 - WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



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AUSTRALIA’S ANZAC TRADITION LIVES ON

On one day every year, Australia celebrates the nation’s coming of age when, together with New Zealand, troops were sent to Gallipoli in World War 1. Known as the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps, abbreviated to ANZAC, they fought with such distinction that a public holiday is observed annually across the nation on 25 April. On this day, known as “ANZAC Day”, military veterans assemble, together with serving personnel who are available, in every country town and city to parade and march in commemoration of all those who have served in Australia’s armed forces. Indeed, a dawn service is usually conducted as well.

In the national capitol, Canberra, the ANZAC Day parade occurs at the Australian War Memorial and Number 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), which served with distinction during the Vietnam War at Phan Rang as part of the USAF’s 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, again participated in this year’s ceremony. In fact, the squadron’s banner was brought to Canberra by current No. 2 Squadron airmen serving at the RAAF Base Williamtown, near Newcastle, where they fly Boeing 737 “Wedgetail” airborne early warning and control aircraft. The attached photo shows these airmen accompanied by *Bob Howe*, who was the only Vietnam veteran to march with them in Canberra this year. Bob flew from Phan Rang in the RAAF’s Canberra jet bomber, named after Australia’s capitol city where he was born and where he lives.

No. 2 Squadron, which used the radio callsign “Magpie” in Vietnam, in honour of the bird that exists in the squadron’s badge, had its origins even before World War 1, when it was one of four units comprising the Australian Flying Corps (AFC), made up of Aussies who moved over to England and the Middle East to support the British and the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Not only did the ANZAC tradition prevail this ANZAC Day, so did that of No. 2 Squadron in the 100th year of the RAAF.

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ANZAC DAY 2021 WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



Bryan Francis Fitzpatrick

Robert Melville O'Hanlon

Robert Charles Carver

Ivan Alfred Wooley

Michael Patrick Herbert

Trevor Graham Petith

Ronald David Hewitt

CAPT. WARD AND THE CLAYMORE MINE

“...probably one of the more memorable incidents during my tour at Phan Rang.”



Capt. John Anthony Ward before having to explain to his commander why there was a Claymore mine on his aircraft.

Sometime during 1971, while flying a routine cargo sortie with the 310th Tactical Airlift Squadron, my loadmaster, a sergeant whose name I can't recall, came up to the cockpit in flight and he said, “Hey Capt. Ward, look what I found!” He was holding in his hand a Claymore Mine! I looked at him with alarm, and said, “Where the f**k did you get that, and get it off my airplane!”

He laughed, and took the cover off of it, showing that the explosive charge had been removed. Well, I noted that the blasting cap was still there and intact, so I told him to get rid of it at our next stop. He said he would. Done deal.

That evening, while at my hooch at about 10:00 p.m., I received word that the squadron commander wished to see me pronto. So, I was driven to the other side of the base to squadron headquarters, where Col. Wilson (?), and my loadmaster were in his office, waiting on my arrival. It seems that after we had

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returned from our mission that evening, a Claymore Mine had been found on the aircraft during the post-flight inspection. Upon hearing this, my loadmaster chimed in, saying, “Capt. Ward, it’s my entire fault, I forgot to take it off the aircraft!”

It seemed that as a result of that find, the whole air base had been put on Amber Alert! I told my part of the story, which seemed to satisfy the Col., and thankfully I didn’t have to fill out any paperwork as a result. That was probably one of the more memorable incidents during my tour at Phan Rang. (1970-1971).



Doug’s Comments: Sharing and preserving the memories of those who have served in Vietnam and Phan Rang AB in particular has always been a driving force for me. In my opinion the risks to the aircrew members on every flight, no matter how mundane, was huge and I’m certainly not an aviation expert, but I believe that chapter of the ‘annals of combat warfare’ book was closed after the Vietnam War because in no other conflict since then have the aircrews ever been subjected to such risks. Flying the Super Sabre was the most dangerous because of the bombing methods and most of our losses resulted in enemy action rather than other accidents that would have been mechanical or pilot error. The venerable provider had an excellent survival rate and most, if not all had received ground fire at one time or another, but most managed to return safely. Most of the accidents attributed to the Provider were not combat related, but caused by pilot error or mechanical issues, but with that said it doesn’t diminish the significant dangers that each mission and sortie presented and the fact that more aircraft were not lost to combat situations can only be attributed to the skills of the airman flying those aircraft.

All professions performed admirably contributing to the success of the air base which is recorded in the newsletters. With wokeness running rampant in society today the contribution of these heroes probably will be challenged at some point, but for the most part they were patriots who looked upon the draft dodgers and protesters with disdain. They believed they were defending American principles that they grew up in and wanted to preserve that for future generations. They believed in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and would never kneel for the National Anthem, because doing so would dishonor all that have fought and many died to defend that flag. Many of those that made the ultimate sacrifice were family members and even comrades. Let them challenge our accomplishments, but the truth lies in the pages of this newsletter.

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 and put ‘unsubscribe’ in subject line.