

"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. 228 "...keeping the memories alive"

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3 OCT - 7AF VICE COMMANDER PRAISES PHAN RANG CREWS

Maj. Gen. **Royal N. Baker**, Seventh Air Force vice commander, had high praise for Phan Rang-based aircrews during a recent visit.

Complimenting all of the 35th TFW air crews the general had special praise for the B-57 Canberra crews of the 8th TBS.

"That is some of the best bombing I've seen," he told Col. **Herndon F. Williams**, wing commander, and Col. **Elbert M. Stringer**, 8th TBS commander.

Visiting the 315th SOWG, General Baker had high praise for the role of airlift in the war in

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Vietnam.

“Your contribution is a small part in the overall United States effort in Vietnam,” he told assembled C-123 Provider aircrews. “You have made the Army’s job much easier with your dependable airlift.

“Your heroism,” he concluded, “is known by Gen. **(George S.) Brown** and the entire Seventh Air Force staff.”

While with the 315th SOWG, General Baker presented five decorations to men of the wing.

Distinguished Flying Crosses were presented to Maj. **Louis E. Seminare Jr.**, (First Oak Leaf Cluster), SMSgt. **Ted H. Rhyne**, 41, SSgt **Simon W. Bryant**, and SSgt. **Carleton K. Norton**, (First Oak Leaf Cluster), Major Seminare, Sergeant Rhyne and Sergeant Norton won their DFCs on emergency provider missions during the enemy’s TET Aggression. Bryant won his DFC during a mission in support of the U.S. Marine Corps forces at Khe Sanh.

The Airman’s Medal was presented to TSgt. **Rudolf Berger**. The C-123 Flight Engineer was honored for saving the life of a Marine Corps pilot who was trapped inside the cockpit of a burning aircraft.

During his visit to Phan Rang the General was hosted by Colonel Williams, and Colonel **John W. Pauly**, commander, 315th SOWG.

3 OCT - CLOUD COVER AIDS STRIKE

A low cloud cover is usually the last thing that an Air Force fighter pilot wants to see when he is tasked with pinpointing his ordnance on an enemy base camp.

The low clouds make it difficult for the forward air controller (FAC) to spot enemy activity, and the enemy often takes advantage of this situation by increasing his activity.

That is how the situation appeared to Maj. **Jack E. Wilhite**, and Capt. **Galen J. Smith**, both member of the Phan Rang-based 120th Tactical Fighter squadron, when they flew their F-100 Supersabres against an enemy base camp nine miles southwest of Vinh Long City.

“The weather was so bad that I didn’t see how we could get in there,” commented Major Wilhite, recalling his first look at the target.

A well-versed FAC and a few strategically located openings in the clouds made a difference though. “The FAC did a helluva good job and found some holes through the clouds in the right places,” he said. “He spotted some enemy troops in the open and apparently they weren’t aware of any aircraft in the area because of the low cloud cover.”

The FAC put in his smoke marker and Captain Smith was able to hit the target within five seconds after the marker went in,” reported Wilhite. “He came through an opening in the clouds and got them completely by surprise.

“The element of surprise enabled us to cause a considerable amount of damage,” Major Wilhite said. “We ended up killing eight enemy soldiers and destroyed eight fortifications, five sampans, six large bunkers and damaged five more fortifications.”

3 OCT - 315th WORKS ON SERVICE

A maximum effort to improve service and comfort for the 90,000-plus passengers carried each month has been undertaken by the 315th SOWG.

Col. **John W. Pauly**, commander, designed Maj. **Robert A. Carlone**, to head up project “**PASSREP.**,” short for Passenger Service Revitalization Program.

As a result of several meetings with squadron commanders and maintenance chiefs a number of possible improvements were suggested and a program of planned actions were drawn up by Major Carlone.

Initially all passenger-carrying pilots were briefed on crew “team spirit”, improved passenger comfort and adherence to scheduled take off times.

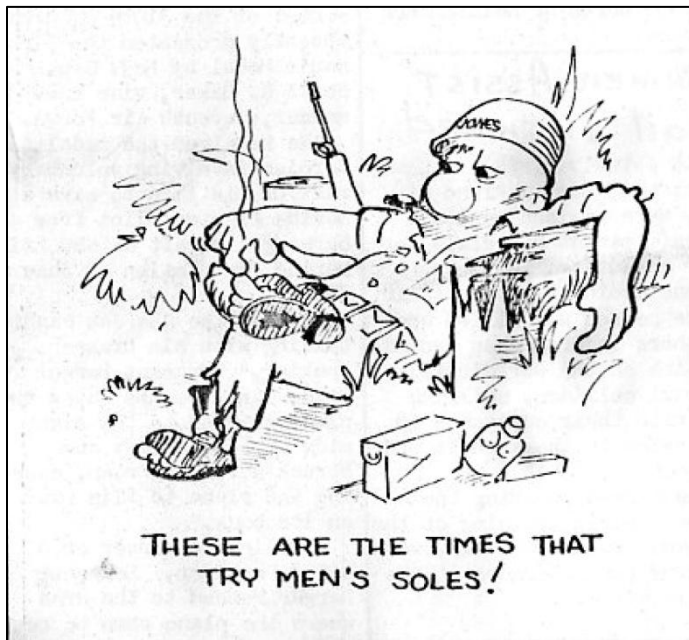
The second stage of PASSREP included outfitting the C-123 Providers with passenger information boards listing the crew names, new rubber floor matting, a plentiful supply of

ashtrays, ear plugs and jugs of ice water.

PASSREP also provides for a standardized all-inclusive briefing for the passengers covering all aspects of emergency procedures.

Critique forms will be handed out to all on board and the comments of the passengers noted.

“With flight attendants not authorized we may never be as popular as the commercial ‘Freedom Birds’ said Major Carlone”, “but our passengers will know that we are giving the best in-country service possible.”



3 OCT - DEAR BALDY

Dear Baldy,

With all those Christmas mailing notices you've been running in the Phan Fare, I've suddenly started worrying. Each Christmas eve for 18 years, I've been hanging my stocking up at the fireplace so when Santa Claus visited, he could leave his goodies. Our barracks has no fireplace. I've searched the base and can't find one anywhere. Where can I hang my stocking? Does Santa come to Vietnam? I've asked my section supervisor and first sergeant these

questions and they sort of snickered.

Anxious

Dear Anxious,

I hate to douse your dreams, but Santa may not even make it to Happy Valley this year. Last year he was almost shot out of the sky when the SPS Special Weapons team mistook him for a "MIG". When the barrel of the .50 caliber melted down and jammed, a faint cry of, "On Donner, on Blitzen, L.A. is better than this!" was heard.

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Dear Baldy,

I've been told that the excavation behind the base library is a new Security Pokice two-man bunker. It seems too small for that! Could it be a one-man bunker?

Defense-less

Dear Less,

Believe it or not, that is the new base swimming pool. From look at it, I see that it is too small for even a one-man bunker!!

3 OCT - TWO 352D PILOTS SCORE HITS DESPITE BAD WEATHER, DARK

Approaching night and a 1,500-foot ceiling caused by thunderstorms overhead made visibility, extremely poor. The target was only 100 yards from friendly forces.

Despite these hazardous conditions, two 35th TFW F-100 Supersabres scrambled recently to destroy the enemy's heavily entrenched positions and deliver their ordnance with "pinpoint accuracy".

The mission, flown by pilots of the 352nd TFS, including Lt. Col. **Robert D. Hook**, won a letter of "Outstanding Aerial Achievement" from U.S. Army Lt. Col. **Walter E. Price**, commanding officer, 3d Battalion 506th Infantry.

In his letter, Colonel Price said, "Both pilots displayed an exceptionally outstanding response to the critical needs of the ground forces. As the infantry unit commander made adjustments of these strikes, the tremendous flexibility and rapid response of the pilots was indicative of the outstanding coordination and appreciation of the ground situation which they displayed throughout their mission."

"The devastation and havoc wreaked upon the enemy was an awe-inspiring sight."

"The pinpoint accuracy in the delivery of their ordnance was greatly appreciated by the men on the ground. With complete confidence in the pilots above them, the paratroopers of this unit succeeded in moving directly into the target areas and routing the enemy."

"With pilots of this caliber, the United States Air Force will long be held in the highest esteem

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by the paratroopers of the 3rd Battalion, 506th Airborne Infantry.”

The 352nd pilots were credited with destroying three bunkers, two military structures, starting a secondary fire and killing 13 enemy soldiers by air during this strike.

3 OCT - TELEPHONE SECTION KEEPS BASE TALKING

The telephone on your desk is seldom noticed until you need it and it doesn't work. That's when Telephone Maintenance Section men of the 1882nd Comm. Sq. become very important people.

Under the leadership of Capt. **Charles R. Riggs**, and MSgt. **Raymond Cauthier**, the 14 men of the Telephone Maintenance Section are responsible for the installation and maintenance of the more than 5,000 telephones located on base.

One section, the 'Outside Plant' is responsible for removing, relocating, installing and repairing all telephone instruments and key systems on the base.

In addition, the men in the 'Outside Plant' are also responsible for maintenance and repair of approximately 25,000 cable pair miles of telephone cable.

The 'Inside Plant' section is under the supervision of SSgt. **Charles N. Rose** and makes up the other half of the Telephone Maintenance Section.

The four men who work the 'Inside Plant' are responsible for more than 1,500 pieces of telephone switching equipment making up the Dial Control Office. In addition, these men are also responsible for maintaining approximately \$500,000 worth of maintenance switches.

3 OCT - CAN TARGETS CLEAN BASE

Along the three-mile perimeter road connecting the 315th SOWG area with the main base, the 315th CAMS men erected “can targets.”

These are 55-gallon drums with large funnel-shaped mouths attached to make target-hitting more attractive. These are then mounted at a 30-degree angle along roadsides to temp

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vehicular by-passers.

The 315th CAMS technicians constructing and placing the can catchers were Sgt. **Herbert Mercado-Garcia**, and Airmen First Class **Harold E. Bowditch**, **Edward J. Calianese**, and **Donald M. Crawford**.

3 OCT - TWO 120TH PILOTS PRAISED FOR STRIKE

Two pilots from the 120th TFS were recently praised for their outstanding airmanship.

Capt. **Elbert W. Gardner**, and Capt. **William J. Wilson**, were praised in a letter to the 35th TFW commander from the Air Liaison Officer assigned to the U.S. Army’s 25th Infantry division.

The pilots were scrambled from the alert pad to assist a friendly unit in danger of being overrun.

“Our friendly forces,” the letter related, “were under heavy mortar, recoilless rifle and a ground attack by an enemy force of unknown size.”

When the pilots arrived in the area it was 3:30 in the morning and darkness complicated the mission.

The letter praised Captains Gardner and Wilson for quickly grasping the situation on the ground and then expending their ordnance.

“Throughout the strike,” the ALO said, “the pilots were cool and calm although they were receiving heavy anti-aircraft fire.”

Since there were other flights scheduled into the target the 120th pilots could not be briefed on their Bomb Damage Assessment. An Army relief force that later passed through the area found 25 enemy bodies and felt that another 30 were possible.

3 OCT - DOWNEY WINS BRONZE STAR FOR SERVICE

Lt. Col. **John A. Downey**, a member of the 352d TFS, was recently presented the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service.

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He received the award for distinguished service as operations officer and commander of the 523rd TFS, Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines from Nov. 20, 1965 to Dec. 1, 1967.

The citation accompanying the award stated, “Colonel Downey was able to sustain simultaneous active commitments throughout the entire spectrum of fighter aviation despite severe shortages of personnel and materiel during which time he repeatedly led his squadron to excellence in multiple missions throughout Southeast Asia.”

A veteran of 16 years in the Air Force, Colonel Downey graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1952 and received his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Program.

3 OCT - BERGER EARNS AIRMAN’S MEDAL

TSgt. **Rudolf Berger**, a member of the 310th SOSq was recently presented the Airman’s Medal by Maj. Gen. **Royal N. Baker**, vice commander, Seventh Air Force.

He received the medal for heroism involving voluntary risk of his life to save a marine fighter pilot from a burning aircraft at Chu Lai Marine Air Station on June 6, 1968.

“I saw the A3A Jet Fighter taxiing with his brakes smoking,” Sergeant Berger said, “and moments later the plane skidded to the right side of the taxiway and struck a loading ramp, causing the plane to flip over on its back.”

A flight engineer on a C-123 Provider, Sergeant Berger rushed to the area where the plane came to rest on its back to try and free the Marine pilot trapped inside. Despite the hazard of exploding fuel and possible fire, he smashed the remaining part of the cockpit canopy with his feet in order to free the pilot.

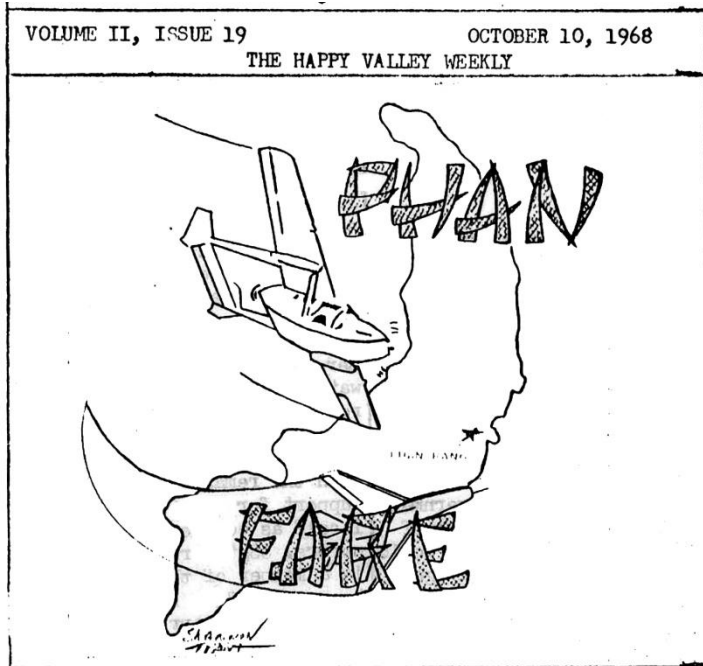
With the jet engine still running and fuel spilling from the overturned aircraft, he managed to free the upper part of the pilots body and called for assistance from bystanders to raise part of the aircraft nose section in order to free the pilot’s feet which were still pinned in the cockpit.

Disregarding his own injuries received during the incident, Sergeant Berger persevered in his humanitarian efforts until he succeeded in removing the Marine pilot to a place of safety.

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10 OCT - 35th T.F.W. TOPS 75,000 SORTIES

The 35th Tactical Fighter Wing recently completed its 75,000th combat sortie since it began operations at Phan Rang Air Base in October 1966.

The record-breaking flight was made Monday afternoon by an F-100 Supersabre piloted by Col. **Frank L. Gailer Jr.**, 35th TFW commander. Speaking to Phan Rang personnel who were on hand to witness the completion of the 75,000th sorties,

Colonel Gailer praised the “courage and aggressiveness” of the men who have flown with the 35th.

He thanked “everyone associated with the Wing, both aircrews and support personnel” for their “outstanding contributions which made the 75,000 sorties possible.”

During the two years that the 35th has operated at Phan Rang, the unit has supported almost every major ground and air operation conducted in Vietnam.

The 35th TFW consists of tactical units which provide a unique and versatile combination that is unlike any other Air Force unit in Vietnam. Four of the units, the 120th, 352nd, 614th and 615th Tactical Fighter Squadrons, are equipped with F-100 Supersabres, the venerable “work-horse” of air support in South Vietnam.

The 120th TFS is the newest addition to the 35th TFW, coming to Vietnam from Colorado in May of this year as the first Air National Guard unit deployed to a war zone as a unit since World War II.

Another integral part of the Wing is the 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron, now in its 51st

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year and fourth war. Flying the B-57 Canberra bomber, this unit has a primary mission of interdicting enemy supply routes.

Since coming to Phan Rang one year ago, the 8th has destroyed more than 3,000 enemy trucks carrying supplies into South Vietnam.

The Royal Australian Air Force Number 2 Squadron also made an important contribution towards the 75,000 total and to the effectiveness of the 35th TFW. The 2 Squadron flies the Australian Canberra, an aircraft similar to the B-57s of the 8th TBS.

During the past two years and 75,000 sorties, the 35th TFW has accounted for about 6,400 enemy soldiers killed by air (by body count). The 35th has also destroyed or damaged 42,253 fortifications, 4,087 sampans, 25,085 bunkers and accounted for 29,749 secondary explosions and fires.

10 OCT - TRUCK KILLERS FORM CLUB

The Centurion Club, one of the most exclusive clubs in the Air Force, has been formed at Phan Rang. To qualify for membership an individual must destroy 100 enemy trucks as confirmed by a Forward Air Controller.

“One of the men who originated the idea,” said Col. **Elbert M. Stringer**, 8th TBS commander, “was Maj. **Philip H. Lacy**. He felt that since the mission of the squadron was to destroy trucks there should be some recognition for those who did the job well.”

The truck hunters of the 8th TBS fly the B-57 Canberra in support of their interdiction mission. The primary infiltration routes into South Vietnam are the targets for the night-flying air crews.

Colonel Stringer, who also flew night missions with the 8th TBS during the Korean War, credits the Forward Air Controllers (FAC) with the high success rate for the B-57s.

“The FACs are really good,” he said. “They start the mission off by finding the trucks on the road or in truck parks. If the trucks are using lights they can be spotted by the naked eye. A Starlight scope must be used when the trucks are running without light though.”

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“The FAC will dart in there, the colonel continued, “Mark the target and instruct the crew on where he wants the bombs placed.”

The B-57s have created an impressive record with their dive bombing. During some months they have flown only 17 percent of the missions but been credited with more than half of the Bomb Damage Assessment.

Maj. **Frank A. Hughes**, a pilot with the 8th TBS had high praise for the navigator-bombardier, the second man in the B-57.

“He does a very necessary job,” the Centurion Club member said. “The pilot can fly completely by instruments and not worry about the orientation of the airplane with the target.”

10 OCT - MAINTENANCE MEN SAVE C-123 UNDER FIRE

A C-123 Provider, off the runway at Katum, lay mired in the mud with one wing blocking use of the strip to other fixed-wing resupply aircraft. The plane must be recovered or destroyed - - quickly.

The Special Forces men at Katum said it couldn’t be done but Maj. **Richard J. Mustico** and his 12-man maintenance recovery team from the 315th SOWG thought otherwise.

Arriving at Katum with repair kits the day after the aircraft incident, the team received a hot welcome. Incoming mortar rounds drove off their helicopter before they could complete offloading their supplies.

When a lull in the attack gave them the chance to assemble their equipment, Major Mustico’s crew surveyed the mired aircraft and found their work cut out for them.

The Provider was deeply mired with all three landing gear off the runway. One propeller was bent and the left jet engine was scant inch off the ground. The right wing extended 30 feet across the 60-foot-wide runway.

Using inflatable air bags, the recovery crew went to work raising the aircraft. Their efforts were hampered by sporadic mortar fire and the fact that one after another, the three lifting bags

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burst under pressure.

A call was put in to the home base for replacements. While awaiting delivery, the ortar fire intensified and the crew had to seek shelter in nearby bunkers.

Within a short time, the additional air bags arrived and the team set right to work, getting as much done as possible before nightfall.

All this time, enemy mortar rounds were landing in the area surrounding the aircraft.

Then darkness set in, the crew slept for the night on the floor of the only quarters available, and as soon as day light came, work on the aircraft began once again and after two attempts, the provider was finally raised out of the mud and onto the runway. Harassing mortar fire increased and the Special Forces commander called in fighter assistance.

While suspected enemy positions were bombed and strafed, the repair crew was able to continue its work and the damaged propeller was replaced. The engines were started and everything checked out.

A flight crew arrived from Tan Son Nhut Air Base and in the early evening, the C-123 that some said could not be recovered took off for Phan Rang AB.

Mission complete, Major Mustico said, “I’m happy to say that we cheated Charlie out of the airplane. The performance of the men was magnificent. As my commander says, ‘The ultimate American secret weapon is the wonderful ability of the American boys to get things done under fire.’ All I can say is I don’t know what they were thinking of but every time we said ‘let;s go; twelve faces got out of the mud and started working on that airplane again.”

10 OCT - WEATHER DET. GETS WTR-IE RADAR

Predicting what the weather is going to do is vital to the operation of any Air Force installation..

Det. 22, 30th Weather Sq., responsibility for weather observations in the Phan Rang area, now has a new device to help keep track of thunderstorms and rainy area - - a WRT-1E Weather Radar system, capable of spotting rain-filled clouds at distances up to 150 miles.

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“The radar sends out a signal and it is reflected off the water in the cloud,” explained Capt. **Charles L. Richardson**, a Phan Rang weather forecaster. “The signal is then reflected back, picked up and displayed on the radar screen.”

Before the far-reaching radar system was installed at Phan Rang, the detachment had to rely on visual observations to plot storm areas. “Observations are sometimes restricted by low-level clouds,” Captain Richardson said.

“The observer can only see the low clouds and will often miss thunderstorms building in the distance. The new radar system can penetrate those low-level clouds and locate thunderstorms and rainclouds that can’t be seen by an observer.”

The radar system is also used for tracking weather paths. “After the radar spots a cloud we can keep track of its movement and get a good idea of where it is going and what effect it will have on Phan Rang flying activities,” Captain Richardson said.

Det. 22 serves approximately 12 aircraft-equipped units at Phan Rang.

10 OCT - DEAR BALDY

Dear Baldy,

I have heard quite a bit of patrons comment at the NCO Club during the past few days about a “75,000 something” that was to take place this week. I don’t know what it is all about but hope to heck that it is a replacement for local beverage “33”, and information on this subject Baldy?

Thirsty

Dear Thirsty,

This time at least, the makers of “33” are safe. 75,000 is the number of sorties the 35th TFW has flown from their happy home of Happy Valley.

Baldy

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I THINK ITS A MESSAGE FROM
THE WEATHER BUREAU.

Dear Baldy,

In my frequent trips to the 315th Special Operations Wing area, I have noticed a flag with “100%”. No one seems to understand what it means or what message it conveys. Could you, dear Baldy, shed some light on this matter and relieve my troubled mind?

Troubled Mind

Dear Troubled Mine,

You aren't the only one with a troubled mind over the famous '100%' flag. It is rumored that the 310th SOSQ Operations Officer is also troubled over the obvious reminder - - but his problem is keeping it flying. The flag signifies that the squadron has had 100 per cent of that day's launches successful.

Baldy

Dear Baldy,

A fellow from the 309th SOS maintenance section claims that some of his friends have set a new record for “Happy Valley”, something about can stacking. Do you have the statistics available or can you verify that the event did take place? Secondly, has anyone taken up the challenge to set a new record if indeed a record does exist?

Wondering

Dear Wonder,

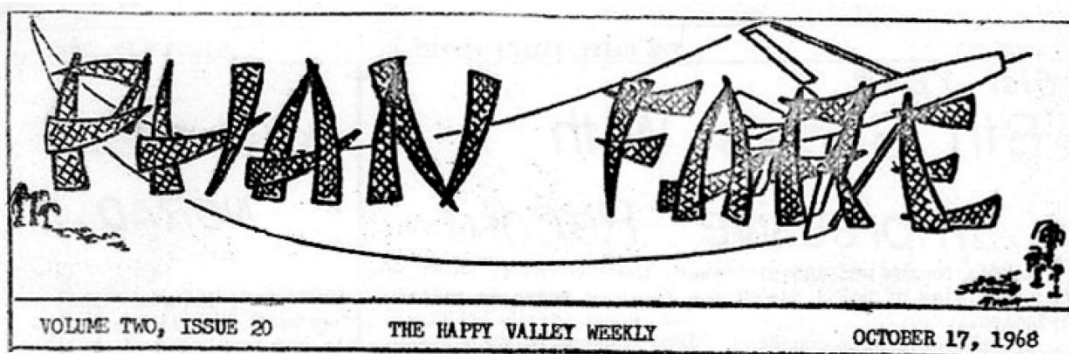
Indeed the record does exist as witnessed by me in one of my “above and beyond the call” of duties. The record set by A1C **Mills** and A1C **Hine**, stands at 32 feet of cans stacked no more than three cans deep! Please, no more attempts, (You should have seen that thing fall!!!)

Baldy

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17 OCT - MARS INVADES HIEP KIET!!

It was an invasion from MARS! Yet, the U.S. soldiers in the small compound at Hiep Kiet Village near Phan Rang AB couldn't have been happier.

These “Martians” were members of the 1882nd Communications Sq. Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS). The occasion was a test conducted by a MARS team headed by Capt. **Robert C. Sparks**.

“This visit,” explained Captain Sparks, “was a test of our capability to place telephone calls directly from the soldiers in the field to their wives and mothers back home.

“During the final weeks before Christmas, we plan to visit all U.S. Army field units in the Phan Rang area, giving them an opportunity to call their families - - our Christmas gift from the Air Force MARS to the U.S. Army.

“We believe this is a ‘first’ for Vietnam,” Captain Sparks said, “the first time an Air Force MARS unit has moved into the field to bring together by voice the men and their families on opposite sides of the earth.”

For the initial try out at Hiep Kiet, Captain Sparks and a team of three MARS NCOs carried less than 50 pounds of gear including transmitters, receivers, cable and a portable antenna.

Air transport to and from the Army outpost was by U.S. Army Huey helicopter. The MARS team patched in eight calls home during the brief test.

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“I feel we can say the experiment was a complete success,” said SSgt. **Patrick Gallagher**, MARS operator.

“All we need to cross 15,000 miles of water are four radios, five telephones and two people in love.”

Other MARS team members taking part in the field test were Sgt. **Theodore F. Trojaowski** and Sgt. **Marsden Cleckley**, volunteer MARS operator.

At the base MARS station supporting the field unit were operators Sgt. **Gordon E. Harter** and Sgt. **Jesus R. Rodriguez**. The phone calls were placed through a Stateside contact with a MARS affiliate station at Travis AFB, Calif.

17 OCT - BLADE 01 & 07 LAUDED BY FAC

“At approximately 11:30 p.m. on Aug. 26 Blade 01 and Blade 07 were directed to hit an intelligence target southwest of Saigon. Blade 01 and 07 hit right on target, but were given negative bomb damage assessment, due to darkness.”

These were the words of Capt. **Lowell R. Conder**, a forward air controller (FAC) attached to the 199th Infantry Brigade, in a letter of appreciation to the commander 35th Tactical Fighter Wing.

The letter also stated that a captured VC said it was his battalion that had been bombed. After the air attack nearly every member of the battalion was either dead or wounded. They had buried more than 50 dead.

The pilots flying the missions were Captain **Thomas R. Emmett Jr.** and **Robert G. Beabout**, both of the 120th TFS, and Capt. **Clyde E. O’Baker Jr.** and Maj. **Michael F. Connolly**, 615th TFS.

“For the professionalism and accuracy displayed by these pilots and their contribution to the air support of the 199th, please extend my appreciation as well as that of the Brigade Staff,” Captain Conder concluded.

17 OCT - 8TH SCORES WITH IMPRESSIVE RECORD - 51ST YEAR

In its fourth war and 51st year, the 8th TBS is continuing its tradition of being onew of the

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foremost units in military aviation.

The oldest flying squadron in the Air Force, the 8th has made important contributions to allied efforts in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and not in Vietnam.

Flying the versatile B-57 Canberra bomber, members of the historic “Liberty Squadron” are now performing the vital mission of interdicting enemy supply routes in Vietnam.

The effectiveness of the “Canberra Night Fighters” in this role is reflected by the results of the nightly raids - - over 3,000 enemy trucks destroyed since the 8th began operations at Phan Rang one year ago.

Three former member of the 8th from the days when the “*Liberty Squadron*” was in Japan and Korea are now stationed at Phan Rang. Col. **Elbert M. Stringer**, an operations officer with the 8th in its pre-jet days, now commands the unit here. Col. **John W. Pauly**, now commander of the 315th SOWg at Phan Rang, was the 8th's operations officer in Korea, and Col. **Patrick H. Kenny Jr.**, now assistant deputy commander for operations, 35th TFW, commanded the 8th in Japan.

Pilots and navigators assigned to the 8th are lavish with their praise for the B-57, and aircraft that has been in the Air Force inventory since 1954. “There’s no finer aircraft for this type of mission,” claimed on veteran of over 200 missions.

A dual-engine jet aircraft, the Canberra is capable of carrying 8,000 pounds of ordnance in addition to its four 20mm cannons or eight .50 caliber machine guns. With a large fuel capacity, the Canberra has a longer range than almost any other jet aircraft in Vietnam, giving it the capability to linger over targets for extended periods of time. Because of this asset, the B-57s have also proven to be very effective in close air support role.

The 8th TBS traces its origin to May 30, 1917 when it was organized at Kelly Field, Tex. The unit saw action in World War I where it earned five battle streamers in France.

Three months after America entered World War II, the 8th was on its way to Australia where it began a tour of overseas duty that is unbroken. The 8th fought its way from Australia to

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Okinawa, earning 14 battle streamers in the process.

On June 26, 1950, the 8th TBS flew the first combat mission of the Korean War. Between that date and June 27, 1953 when the squadron flew the last mission of the war, 15 more battle streamers were earned.

The B-57s became the first jet aircraft to fly a combat mission in Vietnam when a flight of two Canberras destroyed an enemy command post on February 19, 1965. In July 1965, the 8th and its sister squadron, the “*Devil’s Own Grim Reapers*” of the 13th TBS, began operations from Da Nang AB against targets in North Vietnam.

On October 1966, the 8th and 13th moved to Phan Rang. The 13th was deactivated in January 1968 and the 8th was permanently assigned to the 35th TFW, ending a rotational tour from Clark AB, P.I.

17 OCT - 315th SOWG WINS AFOUA (5TH TIME)

Maintaining full combat airlift capability while making a unit move from Tan Son Nhut AB to Phan Rang AB under the handicap of severe manning shortages earned the 315th Special Operations Wing its latest Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

This is the fifth time the 315th has earned this award.

Maj. Gen. **Burl W. McLaughlin**, commander, 834th Air Division, Tan Son Nhut, presented the award recently in flightline ceremonies attaching the OUA streamer to the wing’s guidon.

The citation accompanying the award read: “The 315th Air Commando Wing (recently redesignated Special Operations Wing) distinguished itself by outstanding achievement while engaged in tactical airlift operations in the Republic of Vietnam from 10 June 1967 to 31 December 1967.

“During this period, officers and men of the 315th consistently displayed outstanding perseverance and dedication in overcoming the seemingly insurmountable obstacles associated with a major unit move and severe manning shortages.

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“The superlative efforts of those officers and men were directly responsible for the Wing’s record-breaking accomplishments in tactical airlift with a degree of reliability previously unattained in the Republic of Vietnam.”

In his remarks to the assembled members of the 315th, General McLaughlin said, “The history of the 315th reads like one long, long-citation for heroism - for the gallantry - and for exceptional professionalism in the conduct of tactical airlift operations in Vietnam.”

In addition to the wing award, General McLaughlin presented the Legion of Merit and four Distinguished Flying Crosses to 315th members.

Col. **John W. Pauly**, commander, 315th SOWG, received the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service to the United States as Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and subsequently Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (for the 315th Air Division, Tachikawa Air Base, Japan) from 12 August 1966 to 8 June 1968.

Col. **William M. Bailey**, commander, 311th SOSQ, was presented the first Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross for distinguishing himself “by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as a C-123 pilot at Khe Sanh on 21 Jan 1968. On that date Colonel Bailey was instrumental in the delivery of vitally needed ammunition, and the evacuation of wounded Marines and Montagnard refugees.” from the camp.

“During this time Khe Sanh Air Base was under nearly constant attack by hostile forces,” the citation continued.

Maj. **Arnold L. Richardson**, a C-123 Provided pilot assigned to the 309th SOSQ also received the Distinguished Flying Cross General McLaughlin.

The citation accompanying his award read “...(he) distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as a C-123 pilot near Ban Ho Thuct City airfield on 31 January 1968. On that day, Major Richardson’s aircraft was on a tactical emergency resupply mission and despite heavy continuous and hostile ground fire against the airfield, Major Richardson and his crew successfully delivered essential combat materials to friendly ground forces.”

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SSgt. **Frank t. Pitts**, a C-123 flight engineer with the 310th SOSQ, earned the DFC for “heroism while participating in aerial flight as a C-123 flight engineer at Kontum City on 2 February 1968.

The DFC was presented Sgt. **Bernard V. Ryan**, 309th SOSQ, for participating “in a night airdrop mission of emergency supplies to the besieged defenders of Kontum.”

17 OCT - 20 TO DON LT. COL. RANK

Twenty Majors have been recently selected for promotion of Lieutenant Colonel this cycle.

They are Majors **Ron A. Bigoness** 352nd TFS, **Joe E. Bodkin** 8th TBS, **William H. Davidson** 615th TFS, **James P. MaCarthy**, 35th TFW, **William J. Richardson**, 8th TBS, **Len C. Russell**, 614th TFS, **Royce P. Tate**, 8th TBS, **Carl A. Carlson**, 3rd SOS, and **Boyd D. Williamson**, 3rd SOS.

315th SOSG officers selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel are **Robert A. Carlone**, **Robert A. Harrington**, **Carl E. Hilland**, **James E. Herrey**, **Emmett A. Hiblack Jr.**, **Ray D. Shelton**, **Allen Smith**, **Francis T. Tierman**, **John E. Voss** and **Garrett F. Rauney**.

17 OCT - REMARKABLE MEN FLY ‘SPOOK’

The AC-47 “Spooky” Dragonship is truly a remarkable aircraft, but more remarkable still are the men who fly it. One such man is Lt. Col. **Andrew Dudley**.

Dudley, who will soon take command of B Flight, 3rd SOSQ, has over 12,500 flying hours, many of them in the venerable C-47.

“Spooky” is the Air Force weapon charged with night support of friendly troops in contact with the enemy. It is armed with three 7.62mm guns and carries flares for night illumination.

In 1944 Colonel Dudley “checked out” in the C-47. “It seems strange to be flying the same type plane after so many years, he said, “but it is still very useful in this Guerilla type warfare.”

Since “Spook” is primarily a night fighter, making assessments of battle damage almost impossible, but in other ways, the pilot usually knows what he has hit. “The friendly ground

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forces are always happy to see us coming in,” Colonel Dudley further stated, “because they realize the effect our firepower has on the enemy.”

“As long as this type of combat goes on, there will always be a mission for Spooky,” he concluded.

17 OCT - C-123 RESCUES VIET VESSEL

At least one C-123 Provider aircraft that makes passenger shuttle runs out of Phan Rang is considered an “angel of mercy” for stranded ships at sea.

Capt. **George J. Vogel** ably filled such a role recently while piloting a shuttle flight from Tuy Hoa AB to Cam Ranh Bay AB.

“We were about 12 miles southeast of Nha Trang just about dark,” he said in an interview after the flight. “I happened to glance out the side --and spotted a distress signal from a 125-foot coastal trawler.”

“I banked around and saw a crew member on the ship signaling an ‘SOS’ with a lantern or flashlight. I radioed the Nha Tran Air Base tower and continued to orbit the ship until a U.S. Army U-8 helicopter from Nha Trang came out to help.”

“As we mad our final bank to continue the flight to Cam Ranh, I saw the lights of a military vessel coming up to take the disabled Vietnamese ship under tow,” he said.

Captain Vogel added that he saw the ship safely in port at Nha Trang the following day. “That made us feel that our time and effort on the rescue were well spend,” he said.

Other members of Captain Vogel’s crew on the flight were 1st Lt. **James M. Nehrer**, Sgt. **Michael L. Blake** and **SSgt. Richard White Jr.**

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24 OCT - GUARD CHIEF VISITS 120TH T.F.S.

Maj. Gen. **Winston P. Wilson** Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C., and Maj. Gen. **James F. Cantwell**, Adjutant General for the state of New Jersey and President of the National Guard Association visited here recently.

"Our visit here," said General Wilson, "is one of many we are making to Army and Air Guard units mobilized in January 1968 and subsequently assigned to Southeast Asia."

At Phan Rang, General Wilson joined Major General **Joe C. Moffitt**, Adjutant General of Colorado who arrived earlier for a four-day visit with the 120th TFS and other Colorado Guardsmen stationed here.

General Wilson praised the efforts of the 120th TFS and other Guard units serving in Vietnam. "National Guardsmen have shown once again their ability to react quickly in a crisis," he said. "The men of the 120th came to Phan Rang to do a job and by all reports they have shown that they are professionals doing a professional job."

General Wilson also mentioned the article on National Guard units which recently appeared in the Seventh Air Force News. "Omission of the 120th TFS from this story was unfortunate," he said, referring to the front page article in the October 16 issue which told of Air National Guard demobilization. "Not only will the Colorado Guardsmen be demobilized along with the other Guard units called to active duty in January, but since they were the first to arrive in SEA they will also be the first to return to the U.S."

The 120th has been at Phan Rang since May of 1968.

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24 OCT - PEDRO SAVES WET ROKS

Aerospace rescue and recovery, is usually orientated toward the safety of fighter, bomber and transport crew members flying in the vicinity of this base. Circumstances, however, brought them into a unique rescue role.

Heavy tropical storms pelting this central South Vietnam coastal area had brought floods. Among the victims were two platoons of the Republic of Korea White Horse Division, conducting a sweep of suspected VC area south of Phan Rang.

Rapidly rising waters left them stranded on a small piece of high ground. That is when an HH-43 helicopter from Detachment t 1, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here came to their aid.

Three flight by the HH-43 “Pedro” crew plus an assist from a U.S. Army Ch-47 helicopter from Cam Ranh Bay Air Base were needed to effect the rescue.

Pedro crew members participating in the rescue were: Capt. **Glen P. Walther**, pilot; Capt. **Gaylon R. Overton**, Co-pilot; SSgt. **Donald B. Lucia**, flight engineer; and Sgt. **James W. Bailey**, helicopter mechanic.

“When we came in,” commented Captain Walther, “you should have heard the cheers.”

24 OCT - FAC HELPS; 352 PILOTS HIT IT BIG

“The forward air controller (FAC) was going out of his skull down there!” These were the words of Air Force First Lieutenant **Rowland D. Stanley**, 25, La Mesa, California, when he described a recent mission over South Vietnam.

The F-100 Supersabre pilot from the 352 TFS was the wing man in a flight of two F-100s. “The FAC would say ‘you destroyed three bunkers down there, but you uncovered about ten more’”, he continued, “and it seemed to go on like that for just about every bomb we had.”

On one of his passes, Stanley saw a secondary explosion caused by his lead pilot. “I was right over the target when it happened,” said Stanley, “and there was no question in my mind that it

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two miles from the flight line, the ordnance is held awaiting use. In this reveted area, the cargo is safe from attack and far enough from vital areas to create no hazard.

When the ammo is need for the daily missions of 35th TFW aircraft, the trucks move to the flight line. There the final step of unloading takes place. The bombs, 250 to 750 pounds in weight, are picked off the truck bed by heavy cranes and placed on wooden platforms, awaiting up-loading by the fighter squadron load crews.

The 20mm, .50 caliber and 7.62mm cannon shells are taken from their crates and all cardboard required for safety in shipping is pulled out, then the huge belts or “chains” of ammo are linked and fed into magazines.

24 OCT - FAC LAUDS 352ND PILOTS

Two F-100 Supersabre pilots of the 352nd TFS were recently commended for the part they played in halting a night ground attack against the U.S. Army’s 1st Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division.

The pilots, Capt. **Colin A. Clarke** and Capt. **Sloan L.B. Brooks** were alerted and arrived at the scene of the battle to find the friendly forces under heavy attack.

Weather over the target area was extremely bad and visibility was limited. Because of these conditions, Captain Clarke had to go through the target on his first pass without dropping his bombs, but he was able to see enough of the target to direct Brooks, who put his bombs on the forward air controller’s marker.

Receiving constant and accurate ground fire throughout their attack, the Supersabre pilots directed their 20mm cannons on the source of the fire after dropping their bombs. After several passes, the gun positions were silenced and the ground attack had ceased.

The next morning, an Army unit made a sweep of the area and an air liaison officer assigned to the unit stated in a letter that “there were 47 Viet Cong killed in action and possibly as many as 72. Twenty more VC were killed as a direct result of the air strikes.” The letter also stated that

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“heroism was displayed by the pilots’ consistent accuracy despite the heavy enemy ground fire directed at them.”

24 OCT - JONES FLIES 302ND

Capt. **James R. Jones**, a navigator-bombardier with the 8th TFS, recently completed his 302nd combat sortie in a B-57 Canberra bomber.

Missions flown by Captain Jones included night interdiction raids against enemy truck convoys and close air support of friendly ground forces in the Republic of Vietnam.

During his tour, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross as a result of a mission in support of a U.S. Army unit under heavy enemy attack. Captain Jones dropped his bombs on the enemy position and then his Canberra returned to strafe the area. Later, Army ground forces made a sweep of the area and discovered 45 enemy soldiers killed by the air strike.

He was also awarded the Air Medal with 14 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Captain Jones is scheduled for reassignment to the 3535th Navigational Training Wing, Mather AFB, Cal. where he will serve as a navigator-bombardier instructor.

24 OCT - 614th PILOT WINS 3 DECORATIONS

Capt. **Charles A. Shaheen Jr.**, 614th was recently presented three decorations earned as an F-100 Supersabre pilot in Vietnam.

Captain Shaheen was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal and the Purple Heart.

The Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded after he flew two alert close air support missions to aid a friendly fire support base which came under attack during the Lunar New Year truce in January 1968. He was cited for his ‘repeated accurate low level deliveries in spite of extremely poor visibility, intense ground fire and lack of flare light.’ Captain Shaheen’s air support caused enemy forces to abandon their attack.

The sustained Air Medal came as a result of 260 combat missions.

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Captain Shaheen flew 61 of these over North Vietnam, serving as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) in an F-100.

On his next-to-last mission over North Vietnam, his aircraft was hit by enemy ground fire, forcing him to bail out. He was recovered minutes after ejecting, and was awarded the Purple Heart for being wounded on this mission.



24 OCT - FORMER FAC FLIES 323RD

Maj. **A.D. Sexton**, recently completed his 323rd combat mission in Vietnam.

He flew his first 168 missions as a forward air controller (FAC) with the U.S. Army 1st Brigade, 101st Abn. Div. Flying an unarmed light observation aircraft, Major Sexton's job as a FAC consisted of locating and marking targets and then directing air strikes against them. His

unit operated out of Phan Rang, Chu Lai, Phan Thiet, Bao Box, Song Be, Hue and Phu Bai.

In March 1968, he was assigned to the 615th TFS. He flew 155 combat missions in the F-100, providing air support for allied ground forces in South Vietnam.

While with the 615th, Major Sexton served as a flight leader and squadron maintenance officer.

He is being reassigned as an instructor in the Air Ground Operations School, Ramstein AB, Germany.

24 OCT - Dear Baldy

Dear Baldy,

Has Red Horse lost its collective mind?? Monday I was casually driving along the flight line when out ran a small red pony, followed by TWO jeeps and FOUR men. I tried to tell myself that they were only practicing the new exercise “jogging”, but the horse too?!?! Please clear my mind of all the suspicions this incident has aroused in me.

“WHAT THE HECK”

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Dear Heck,

Well, first of all, neither you nor 554th are losing your minds. It seems that the mischievous little rascal (the horse) got out of its pen and had everyone’s hair on end for a while, including Rocky and Stony, the FOD men. They had never seen such a large FOD in their lives, much less one on the hoof! (This one made “My Friend Flicka” look sick)

Baldy

Dear Baldy,

In light of the water shortage, I have one question to ask: How are we supposed to live???

Signed: Smelly Situation

Dear Smelly,

Like Grunts!!

Baldy

24 OCT - 35 T.F.W. PILOTS GIVE ENEMY ‘SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT’

Recently three pilots from the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang Air Base “probably gave the enemy something to think about” according to Capt. **Ronald G. Swanson**, 352d TFS. One of the other pilots was Maj. **Jack E. Wilhite**, 120TH TFS.

The F-100 Supersabres were scrambled off the alert pad at Phan Rang at 9:30 a.m. and their target was a (VC) concentration. The FAC also described the target as a suspected supply location.

The pilots made their passes from all directions to evade heavy ground fire. On his second run, Captain Swanson landed his bombs on an ammunition dump causing “the largest secondary explosion the FAC had ever seen in Vietnam. It had a 300-foot high fireball.”

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Doug’s Comments: Many of these stories may have been carried in previous issues of the newsletter, however, combining them and reading them in some historical order adds context to them and enhances the readers understanding of the time period.

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