

“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. 234 “...keeping the memories alive”

20 SEP - SNACK BAR OPENS

20 SEP - AUSSIES LOAD CANBERRA IN RECORD TIME

20 SEP - ‘EOD’ MEN SAVE TRUCK

20 SEP - ONCE CUED JFK - FORMER TV DIRECTOR NOW ‘DIRECTS’ F-100

20 SEP - PARACHUTE PACKERS ARE BUSY MEN

20 SEP - 614th TFS CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY HERE

20 SEP - “BLACK PANTHER’ IN SWITCH

20 SEP - ASK AUNT PHANNY

20 SEP - FLIGHTLINE DOUBLES

20 SEP - PHAN FARE SALUTES

27 SEP - C-123 SQ COMMANDER HAS COLORFUL BACKGROUND

27 SEP - AIR FORCE MEDIC SAVES LIFE OF VIETNAMESE SOLDIER

27 SEP - TOP CREW CHIEF NAMED FOR AUG.

27 SEP - NAVIGATOR PREFERS A NIGHT FLIGHT

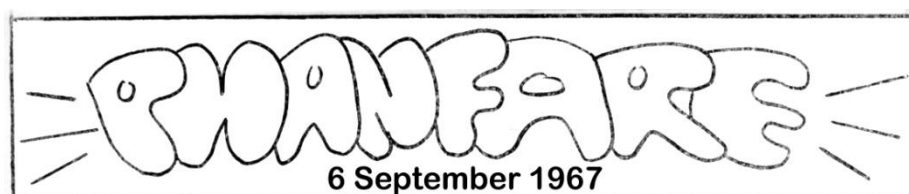
27 SEP - F-100 CLEAR WAY FOR ARMY ASSAULT

27 SEP - SNAKE HOUSE NOW GOING CONCERN

27 SEP - ASK AUNT PHANNY

27 SEP - THEY CALL HIM “BUTCH” - DOG LIVES THE GOOD LIFE

27 SEP - AUSSIES WIN P.R. DAVIS CUP



6 SEP - COOKS SETTLE ENGINEERS’ HASH

The 35th Services Squadron captured the base softball championship last Thursday in a hotly-contested game played against the 554th (‘Red Horse’) Civil Engineering Sq.

In the final game of a double elimination tourney pitting the top eight teams of the base against one another, the cooks and bakers burned up the Engineers, 3-1.

Each team went into the play-offs with a 3-1 record.

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Neither team scored during the first three innings, but in the top of the 4th, the 554th loaded the bases and then pushed over their one run.

There were numerous infield hits throughout the first three innings, but hapless runners were either picked off first base or left stranded.

The pitching was sensational, and it was good toe-to-toe softball all the way. At last, in the final (7th) inning, the men in white really stirred things up. TSgt. **Rice** got to first base on a line drive, then Sergeant **McClasky** hit another liner, and Sergeant Rice raced to third base, scoring a run shortly afterward on a stinging drive to the outfield by airman **Barton**.

A smooth bunt by A1C **Tossone** followed, and he moved to 2nd Base on a Red Horse error. Then A1C **Tipro** belted the ball and drove in the third run for the victors.

The base commander handed out trophies and congratulated both teams and the winning coach, **Jimmy D. Stanford**, for their fine playing.

In the 35th CES lineup were: TSgt. **Rice**, 1st Base; A1C **Trott**, 2nd Base; A1C **Jones**, SS; A1C **Burton**, 3rd base; A1C **Tossone**, LF; A1C **Tipro**, CF; and TSgt. **McClasky**, RF.

The Red Horse line-up: Sergeants **Stanford** and **Vining**, coaches: A1C **Scott**, 1B; SSgt. **Graham**, 2B; A2C **Shaul**, outfield; SSgt. **Bohara**, SSgt. **Barnett**, and A1C **Laudor**, outfield; and A1C **Nicoletti**, 2B.

The winning pitcher was A1C **Jim Wescott**. Story by **Joe Bond**.

6 SEP - TV CAMERAS FILM KARATE ACTION

Australian television cameramen caught the action Sunday evening when a Tai Kan Do Class including 12 Phan Rang airmen went through its paces near the Aussie enlisted men's dining hall.

Taught by an Australian enlisted man of the No. 2 Sq. (Royal Australian Air Force: this class

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meets six nights a week to develop experts in a Korean form of Karate called Tai Can Do. “It’s a step above Karate...It’s the killing part of karate...You learn mental discipline to the point where pain is nothing,” explained one of the students, A3C **Timothy Ramsey**, 19, munitions handler in the 435th Munitions Maintenance Sq.

Tactics include defense steps, striking steps, and kicking, and students are encouraged to bang their fists into the concrete, metal, and a rope-covered board up to 2,000 times a day in order to develop calluses on their knuckles, the tops and sides of their hands, and their elbows.

Within a month, Airman Ramsey expects to be able to slice through three bricks with a single blow from the heel of his hand. “We’re out to help the weak,” the airman commented.

6 SEP - CONSTRUCTION GOES ON...AND ON

Phan Rang AB, now approximately 18 months old is rapidly taking shape. A large portion of the base is now built and being used daily by the officers and airmen who live here.

However to many of the new people arriving at the present time, a tendency to take what we have for granted exists and gripes can be heard daily about the, “one Projector open air theatre” and the incomplete sewage system. To this situation there is but one answer: Time will correct all of these situations along with the help of the Civil Engineering Squadrons on the base.

For the information of those who think things could be better, we offer the following tidbits of information about the future: The base sewage system will soon be completely operational: The new snack bar, which is being constructed by the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron will be operational sometime in October.

Sometime in the distant future, Phan Rang will have a new motion picture theatre and bowling alley.

6 SEP - FANCY MEETING YOU

“Jim, what are you doing here?” asked A2C **Joseph Bouback**, 20, a security guard in the 35th Security Police Sq., when he was approached one night at the airmen’s open mess by A3C **Jim**

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Carey, a munitions handler in the 35th Munitions Maintenance Sq.

The two airmen hadn't seen each other for six years. Joe is from Belvedere, ILL. and Jim is from nearby Freeport, Ill., and they attended the same school for three years.

“We ran around together all the time in the States,” said Joe, who has been in Vietnam for seven months. Jim arrived two month ago.

6 SEP - SCHOOLMATES TEAM UP

Technical Sergeant **Jackie L. Winship**, 29, of Fort Scott, Kansas and his old school mate, Captain **Raymond L. Streeter**, 26, also of Fort Scott are working as a team again.

Thirteen years and 12,000 miles later, they now fly and crew the same F-100 fighter plane at Phan Rang Air Base. Sergeant Winship is the Crew Chief and Captain Streeter the Pilot.

The only thing they do not share is the date of rotation back to the United States, but according to Capt. Streeter, “My time will come.”

Both men are members of the 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron, which is located at Phan Rang Air Base.

6 SEP - AIRMAN VISITS SPECIAL FORCES

“You saved our lives, and I want to thank you,” exclaimed the commander of the Tong Le Chanh Special Forces Camp, deep in the jungles of South Vietnam near the Cambodian border, as he greeted a delegation of F-100 Super Sabre pilots of the 614th, 615th, and 352nd Tactical Fighter Squadrons of Phan Rang AB.

At the scene was A2C **Terry V. Brodt**, 21, from Los Angeles, Calif., operations clerk for the 614th TFS ‘Lucky Devils’. He joined in the trip, a gesture of gratitude by the Army for the F-100s’ role in saving the camp from being overrun by the Viet Cong, at the invitation of the 614th TFS commander, Lt. Col. **Kenneth Miles**.

The airman returned to the base with some vivid impressions of the camp. He noted that the

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Army men lived under primitive conditions, in bunkers, and that their only luxury was a TV set.

“It was fantastic!” he said. “I feel that I have gained quite a lot of experience of how the war is being fought in Vietnam.”

Airman Brodt hopes to pass on what he has learned to fellow airmen at Phan Rang. He recently completed his first year in Vietnam and has extended for seven months.

Fifteen officers and enlisted men of the base made the trip to Chon Le Chanh in a C-47 transport. Airman Brodt said signs of the recent Viet Cong on the barren camp were everywhere evident. A series of low-level F-100 strikes repelled an estimated 2,000 VC.

6 SEP - LIEUTENANT AWARDED MEDAL FOR BRAVERY

First Lieutenant **David W. Barksdale**, 24, of Denton, Texas, a member of the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Phan Rang recently was awarded the “Air Medal” for heroism and gallantry under fire.

Lieutenant Barksdale, was flying co-pilot on a HH-43B helicopter, when an emergency rescue call was received from a South Vietnamese Army unit which was pinned down under enemy fire, with two severely wounded soldiers who would die if they did not receive immediate medical attention.

The lieutenant and his fellow crewmen immediately went to the rescue of their fallen comrades.

Approaching the battle zone, they found the unit under sporadic small arms fire, with numerous brush and grass fires in the region also limiting visibility in the area. If this was not enough of an impasse, the area was very unsuitable for landing due to large boulders which could damage the rotor blades.

Following a short search period, the lieutenant spotted a landing zone close to the area where a landing would be possible.

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Lieutenant Barksdale laid down a covering fire with his M-16 rifle so that the helicopter could make a safe landing.

During the ten minutes that the rescue chopper was on the ground, the officer kept shooting at snipers as the medic hauled the two wounded soldiers aboard.

The chopper landed at Phan Rang AB just 20 minutes later, and the wounded soldiers were treated at the base hospital.

Following treatment and medication, the soldiers were flown to another hospital in South Vietnam for further treatment.

6 SEP - C-123K TRAINING LAUNCHED

Mr. **Jean S. MacCracken**, of Peabody Mass., a field jet engine technician for the General Electric Corporation is instructing maintenance and flight crews at Phan Rang in the operation and maintenance of the newly installed jet engines of C-123 aircraft which have recently underwent modification.

The venerable C-123 aircraft have been used in South Vietnam to ferry passengers and cargo from on base to another.

However, due to the heavy cargos being lifted these days, the Air Force decided to improve the power to load safety factor.

One way of doing this was to install a total of two small jet engines, which combined give a maximum of 5,400 pounds of thrust and raise the airspeed from 130 to 200 miles per hour.

The J-85 engines run on “Hi-Test” aviation fuel and can also be used if a prop as to be feathered on one of the standard engines.

Mr. MacCracken has been in Vietnam since March and said “the Air Force personnel I have met are nothing short of wonderful and are doing a great job for the nation.”

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6 SEP - FLYING GRANDPA TEARS ‘EM UP

Phan Rang’s ‘flying grandfather’ has hit it big. The 13th TBS ops, officer grandfather of a five-month-old infant, hit the 7th AF News like this:

A B-57 Canberra crew also set a new high total in a late report of an Aug. 17 night strike.

More than 75 secondary explosions and 100 fires were left in the area after the Canberra crewman, Lt. Col. **Dougal M. Davis**, Capt. **Richard S. Heaton** hit a group of small boats near the mouth of the Rao Nay River near Dong Hoi.

6 SEP - FANCY MEETING YOU

“Jim, what are you doing here?” asked A2C **Joseph Bouback**, 20, a security guard in the 35th Security Police Sq., when he was approached one night at the airmen’s open mess by A3C **Jim Carey**, a munitions handler in the 35th Munitions Maintenance Sq.

The two airmen hadn’t seen each other for six years. Joe is from Belvedere, Ill. and Jim is from nearby Freeport, Ill., and they attended the same school for three years.

“We ran around together all the time in the States,” said Joe, who has been in Vietnam for seven months. Jim arrived two months ago.

6 SEP - DEAR AUNT PHANNY:

Dear Aunt Phanny: I have financial problem which defies solution: I am broke!

Several of my close friends invited me to join them in a game of chance and now I do not have a shirt to wear. The thing that makes me mad is the fact that I had a pair of deuces and I still lost.

A1C Money Penny

Dear Diamond Jim: Your misfortune is matched only by your lack of knowledge of the pasteboards. I would recommend, that you take up something that requires less in the intelligence department (Example: Throwing darts and find new friends who sing in the church choir. **Phanny**

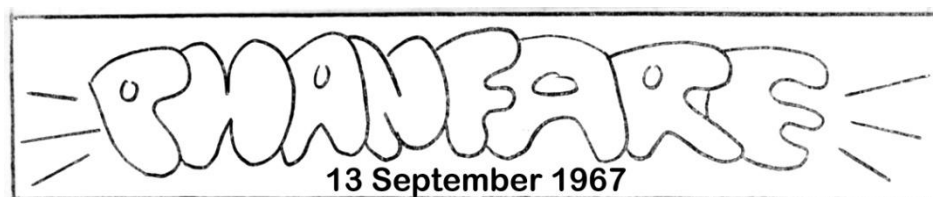
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Dear Aunt Phanny: My wife sent me a package of Black Orchid seeds and some plant food. I load bombs at night, and sleep days. How can I fight a war and grow black orchids at the same time. **Sgt. Fetters**

Dear Sgt. Fetters: Carry the Orchid seeds to the bomb dump and feed them to the Mynah bird, he might appreciate them more and look at all the water you will save. **Phanny**



13 SEP - GENERAL WESTMORELAND TOURS BASE, PRAISES AIR FORCE ROLE

"Never in all history has the United States Army received better air support than it is receiving at the hands of the 7th Air Force here in Vietnam," said General **William C. Westmoreland**, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam during a recent inspection tour of Army and Air Force units at Phan Rang Air Base.

"The air units stationed here at Phan Rang are an important part of this great team," the four-star general added. "The close support that is provided by the F-100's based here at Phan Rang has been of the highest order...I talked to many of the pilots today...I was given a comprehensive briefing and I consider the efficiency very high."

During a three hour visit, the general made contact with officials of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, elements of the 101st Airborne Division of the Army, a unit of the famous White Horse Division, Republic of Korea Army, and the Number 2 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force.

"It is a very exciting experience to see how these nationalities are working together," said the famous Army general, taking note of the fact that a Republic of Vietnam battalion as well as regional and popular forces are part of the Allied team in the area of Phan Rang Air Base.

"The coordination, I would consider, (is) almost perfect," he continued. "Everybody's high in morale...everybody is very proud of their relationships with other services and other nationalities, and it's one big team, held together by our common desire to defeat the Communists, who are attempting to dominate this country under the leadership of Hanoi.

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In the conference room of the headquarters building of the 35th TFW, the general attended a briefing at which the wing commander, the wings’ deputy commander for operations, and the commanders of the Wing’s F-100 jet fighter and B-57 jet bomber squadrons were present.

The fighting element of the wing includes: the 352nd Tactical Fighter Squadron, known as the Yellow Jackets; the 614th TFS, known as the Lucky Devils; and 615th TFS known as the Black Panthers; and the 13th Tactical Bombardment Sq., known as the Devil’s Own Grim Reapers.

The first three of these units employ F-100 Super Sabres. The 13th TBS uses B-57’s and alternates in rotational combat tours at Phan Rang with its sister unit, the 8th TBS. Both bomber units have their home base at Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

The F-100’s and B-57’s have flown many thousands of air strikes in close support of Army operations in Vietnam, and have been credited with the destruction of many enemy trucks, personnel, weapons positions, base camps, military structures and sampans.

General Westmoreland, visited the operations building of the F-100 squadrons, and flew by helicopter to the site of an element of the Korean White Horse Division.

He also inspected the operations area of the Number 2 squadron of the RAAF.

During a flightline interview just before boarding an army aircraft that would take him back to his headquarters in Saigon, the white haired general commented that the Australian unit which has Canberra bombers, “impressed me very much.”

He also praised the “superb discipline and very high esprit de corps” of the Number Two Squadron.

Commenting on the ROK (Republic of Korea) unit which “provided general security to the area, “General Westmoreland stated: They are a highly disciplined organization, and are doing a tremendous job-...Their professionalism is as good as any I have seen among Army units of any nationality here in Vietnam.

Colonel **James A. Wilson**, 48, from Glendale, California, commander of the 35th TFW greeted General Westmoreland upon his arrival at the Air Base.

Before departing the base, the general shook hands with Col. Wilson and the Base Commander, **Co. Lewis R. Riley**.

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13 SEP - REPORTER FLIES ALONG ON COLORFUL C-123 MISSION

By: *SSgt. Joe L. Bond*

"I can feel that this is going to be a hot one," said the small thin Captain upon entering the 310th Air Commando Squadron operations office. This comment was made at 6:15 A.M. He continued "Lieutenant **Rasmusson**, (the Co-Pilot) where are we going today? ---Sir we are scheduled into Nha Trang, Pleiku, and a Special Forces camp on the Cambodian border.

Staff Sergeant **B. W. Campbell**, the loadmaster who was standing near the water cooler, greeted both officers and said "three more trips and I go home"

The small sleepy eyed captain, told the sergeant not to worry as most of the trip over Vietnam's Central Highlands would be at sufficient altitude to avoid ground fire. Sergeant Campbell smiled and patted "Campbells Kingdom" (a large foam rubber pillow) which has been with the sergeant on every mission he has flown over South Vietnam.

The pillow is appropriately inscribed with all missions and dates flown. The sergeant considers the pillow a good luck piece.

Following a short, but comprehensive briefing on the area, the crew was going into, the men boarded trucks, and rode to aircraft number 291.

After checking the aircraft over, A1C **Curtis A. Isham**, the flight engineer on the C-123 told Capt. **Jack. N. Dole**, pre-flight checks were complete and the engines could be started.

The huge engines turned over and started to catch hold, smoke and unburned gas rushed to the rear of the airplane in the wake of the turning props.

As a matter of routine the engines were run up and functional checks were completed before the start of the days mission. The Captain tried to feather both props (streamlining the prop blades to reduce drag in the event of an engine failure), the left engine would not feather and the aircraft commander, Capt. Dole, decided to shut down the engines and have the prop repaired.

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An Air Force repair crew showed up shortly and 45 minutes later we were airborne. Loaded with six huge crates, the powerful C-123 steadily gained altitude and leveled out at 3,500 feet.

On arrival at Nha Trang Air Base, the huge cargo doors opened and three yellow fork lift trucks lined up and unloaded the cargo. Following the unloading, aircraft 291 taxied to the Special Forces Loading area.

An Army sergeant came rushing up and handed the loadmaster a six page cargo manifest. On the manifest, was the darndest variety of commodities any one could imagine: four crates of pumpkins; four live cows; three pallets of unhappy chickens; seven cases of rations, and one pallet of tomatoes.

Airman Isham, the flight engineer was out inspecting the engines and decided that we had a propeller oil leak on the right engine. According to Capt. Dole, the seal around the propeller governor was leaking and it would be an hour or two before mission number 29 could be resumed.

Capt. Dole decided lunch was in order, and all crew members boarded a flight line vehicle and headed for the officer’s club and the mess hall.

Returning to the aircraft was accomplished on foot and everything from women to the most current news from the states was discussed. Morale in a C-123 crew is extremely high, considering the fact that there is little or no glory involved in hauling cows, chickens and other semi-war type cargo.

The aircraft maintenance people were just finishing up, when the crew returned: The ever present paper work was signed off and the mechanic who was soaked from head to toe and covered with grease smiled and departed.

The Special Forces cargo was loaded, all but one (Vietnamese Cow) who had decided she did not need any flight time. She broke loose from two Vietnamese handlers, knocked them down and headed for the churning propellers of a C-47A aircraft which was starting to taxi. The cow stopped short of the propellers and a Texas round-up Vietnamese style, started.

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Bertha was we will call her ran into a storage yard; two Americans tried to stop her, but decided better, when she pointed both long sharp horns at them and charged.

At this time, the Special Forces people sounded retreat and the cow charged onto the flight line.

Fifteen minutes later, Bertha was listed as AWOL, and written down as missing a movement. The C-123B took off minus one cow and headed for Pleiku, which was approximately 50 minutes flying time away. The chickens cackled, the lone rooster crowed, and the cows mooed all the way to Pleiku.

Upon landing at Pleiku, the crew took in a long breath of fresh air and dropped off a box or two. Upon leaving Pleiku, we headed for Plei Djereng, and the Special Forces camp, where the cows and chickens would become the property of the Montagnard people who work with the Special Forces people.

The heavily loaded C-123 landed at the forward operating base and came to a stop. After taxiing into the unloading area, the cargo door was opened by SSgt. Campbell and 30 Montagnard soldiers rushed on board to claim the cows, chickens and food.

Having unloaded the livestock, the C-123 took off to practice an airdrop. This is done quite frequently to keep the C-123 Provider crews proficient, as they are required to airdrop ammunition into the same camps when they are under enemy fire.

Upon returning to the strip, one three quarter ton truck was loaded for the return trip to Nha Trang, where it would be repaired and returned to Special Forces Camp at a later date.

Following a short stop at Nha Trang, the empty C-123 flew back to Phan Rang and made a very, very good landing. Campbell's Kingdom was appropriately marked and mission number 29 went into the history books.

Crew weapons and flak vest were turned in and everybody headed for Snoopy's, the 310th's

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small but comfortable snack bar.

Sergeant Campbell now was down to two missions (he has flown 766 similar sorties) in the past year.

(**Note:** Capt. Jack Dole was the aircraft commander of a C-123 that was on the runway at Tan Son Nhut when an F-105 landing sideswiped his aircraft. The article is ‘*Hell on Runway 25L*’ in Phan Rang Newsletter 189 and another story about Campbell’s Kingdom can be found in Phan Rang Newsletter 171 in article titled “*Cambell’s Kingdom Flies 932 Sorties.*”)

13 SEP- OH BOTHER!

The Jaronik brothers from South Bend, Ind. are very much concerned with the security of this base.

One of the brothers, A1C **David J. Jaronik**, is assigned to the 35th Security Police Squadron. He is 21 years old.

The other one, a member of the 101st Airborne Division, does security work in E Company of the First Brigade. He’s PFC **Fred Jaronik**, 19.

The airman arrived on base March 1, and his brother reported in the next day. The Jaroniks go out to the beach together and have visited local towns together.

A final tie...they both like to lift weights.

13 SEP- SQUADRON COMMANDERS SHARE MEDALS, FRIENDSHIP

The recent awarding of Distinguished Flying Cross medals to the commanders of two F-100 Super Sabre Squadrons climaxed an 18-year friendship between the two combat veterans.

Lt. Col. **Kenneth P. Miles**, commander of the ‘Lucky Devils’ of the 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron, and Lt. Col **Julian D. Sawyer**, commander of the ‘Black Panthers’ of the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron, began their long friendship as aviation cadets.

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They won their wings together in 1949. After that Colonel Miles observed, “We instructed together and flew together for about three year...we’ve always kept our friendship alive by wirting each other and visiting each other...I consider Colonel Sawyer my best friend in the Air Force.”

In February, the two officers ferried F-100’s into Phan Rang Air Base from the U.S. and have been flying missions from here since that time. Colonel Sawyer readily admitted that rivalry exist between the Black Panthers and the Lucky Devils, and said of his long time buddy: “He’s a tough one to compete with.”

The two squadron commanders received Distinguished Flying Crosses in joint ceremonies at the headquarters building. Lieutenant General James V. Edmondson, Vice Commander of PACAF, made the presentations.

Colonel Miles received his for leading a flight of F-100’s in a series of air strikes which prevented enemy forces from overrunning an Army unit of the Republic of Vietnam and destroyed 35 per cent of the target area in the process.

Colonel Sawyer received his medal for leading three F-1200’s on a series of air strikes which killed 35 Viet Cong soldiers at their base camp and resulted in the capture of enemy rifles and automatic weapons.

“This was on activity,” Colonel Sawyer commented, “in which air power and Air Force aircraft alone were the reason for the destruction of enemy forces.”

Recently the two officers participated in a briefing on base attended by General William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam. Afterward General Westmoreland said: “The close support (of Army ground operations) that is provided by the F-100’s based here at Phan Rang has been of the highest order.”

General Westmoreland simply reflected again the close relationship between the Air Force and the Army, “ Colonel Sawyer declared, “We’re here to support eh Army exclusively...that’s the name of the game.”

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13 SEP - ASK AUNT PHANNY

Dear Aunt Phanny: I was taking a shower the other night and had just finished soaping down, when the water was turned off and I had to finish the shower in beer. My question is how do I get the yeast smell off. **Airman Smirnoff**

Dear Airman Smirnoff: Some people work for years and spend a fortune to smell like a brewery and here you are trying to ruin such a condition. (Try Water) when it is on. **Aunt Phanny**

Dear Aunt Phanny: I am a night worker, and have to sleep days. The other morning, I was shook from my bed by what sounded like a Mortar attack. My bed jumped up and down; I jumped under the bed. How can I tell when the base is being attacked? **Sgt York**

Dear Sgt. York: If your bed jumps 3 times or less don't worry, but if the roof of your barracks starts falling and you smell smoke, hear a siren; it is a reasonable assumption that an attack is in progress. **Good Luck Phanny**

13 SEP - SERGEANT'S FRIEND WON MEDAL OF HONOR

“I found out he was a fighter jockey, and I about dropped dead!”

That's how MSgt. **Richard H. Rice**, from Chandler, Ariz., the Base Civic Action NCO, described his acquaintance with Maj. **Bernard F. Fisher**, the only Air Force winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor in the Vietnamese conflict.

The sergeant has a magazine photo of the gallant major, and there are still vivid memories in his mind of the friendship that developed between the two men four years ago at Homestead AFB, Fla.

Sergeant Rice was president of the 'Gators', a skin diving club at the Florida base, when Major Fisher was stationed there as a captain. The future war hero joined the club, and Sergeant Rice taught his two eldest sons how to skin-dive.

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When the sergeant first met the Air Force flier, he recalled, the officer gave no indication of being a flier. As a matter of fact, Sergeant Rice thought he might be a personnel officer. He described the major as “read modest guy...very friendly...a very pleasing personality...He’d give you the shirt off his back if you needed it.”

Noting that the Air Force hero “always volunteered his services,” Sergeant Rice observed that Major Fisher would take member of the club skin-diving in his own boat.

Earlier this year, the major received the Medal of Honor from President **Lyndon B. Johnson** for flying his Skyraider “into the valley of death” to rescue a fellow pilot.

Sergeant Rice noticed his picture on the cover of the “Airman Magazine” not long afterward, and stared at the name beneath it.

Sure enough, it was the “real modest guy” from Homestead AFB.

(**Note:** More information on Major Fisher along with photos in Phan Rang Newsletter 36.)

13 SEP - THE STRAIGHT SCOOP ON TAE KWON DO

By: SSgt **Jerry Hirsch**

Fifteen airmen at this fighter and bomber base are being taught Tae Kwon Do, a Korean form of Karate, by a member of the Number 2 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Leading AirCraftsman **John Jarrett**, 23, of Stanthorpe, Queensland, in Australia holds a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, which he described as the art of smashing with the hand or foot. He added that it was a combination of Japanese footwork and karate handwork.

Self-discipline, exercise, good coordination, and the ability to “concentrate on four or five things at once without being distracted” were among the goals of the students, when they entered the class several weeks ago, LAC Jarrett reported.

One airman said “Since I’ve taken it (Tae Kwon Do), I’ve slept better and I’ve eaten better.....It conditions your body so that you don’t lay around and feel tired and dragged out all the time.

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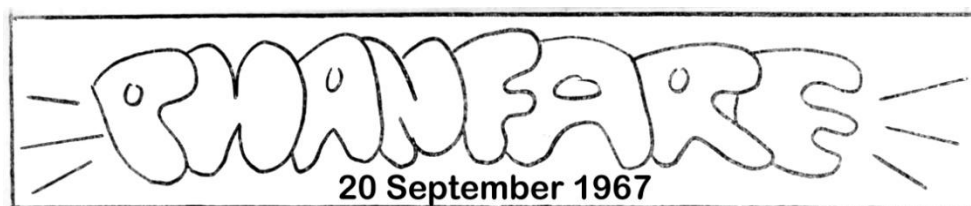
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Another student said, “It gives you a lot to do...The exercise is great.”

A third airman said, “I feel more agile in my daily life,” and a fourth commented “It keeps you in good shape.”

Students go through rigorous training sessions for two hours at a stretch, six times a week, and within two month, they will be taking their test for the first of 18 belts signifying progress in the rugged sport. Breaking bricks and boards with hand and foot is a very important part of the sport, according to the instructor, because it gives the student confidence and also makes him concentrate.

Korean Commands are used to put the students thru their paces, which include the movement of body arms, and feet in prescribed combinations ending in kicks and punches.



20 SEP - SNACK BAR OPENS

Phan Rang Air Base now has the newest most modern snack bar in South Vietnam. The new facility which was opened recently serves everything from hamburgers to fried chicken with French fries.

Staff Sergeant **Donald Hasty**, 37, from Sanford, Florida and SP-5 **Terrance Lynch**, 25, from Lemmon, South Dakota, both members of the United States Army, who work for the Base Exchange Food Service Division recently transferred to Phan Rang to operate the new facility.

The new snack bar is open 24 hours a day and from all reports, the food is excellent and leaves very little to be desired.

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According to SP-5 Lynch, “the 15 Vietnamese employees who work at the new snack bar are doing a fine job and his business is booming.

In the past air crew members who returned from night missions had no place to eat before going to bed, but the new facility which is located near the flightline will solve that problem.

20 SEP - AUSSIES LOAD CANBERRA IN RECORD TIME

A doubting U.S. Air Force officer was overheard by an Australian Warrant officer making a statement that the Australian knew was not correct.

The American officer said “It was impossible to load six 1,000 lb bombs on a Canberra jet bomber in less than eight minutes.

Following a brief, but tactful conversation, a loading contest was set up and Warrant Officer **Ray Spurr**, a member of the Number Two Squadron at Phan Rang had six 1,000 pound bombs waiting by a Canberra bomber the next afternoon.

At precisely 2:00 PM, an Australian loading crew came up to the bomber and met the doubting Air Force officer, who was still confident that he was right.

On a signal from Sgt. **Ken Guthrie**, the Australian Line Chief, the loading crew went to work.

Three minutes and 52 seconds later, all six 1,000 lb. bombs were safely hanging in their bomb cradles and the doubting U.S. Air Force officer was shaking his head in disbelief.

The five Australians who had loaded the bombs: Cpl. **Ken Craven**, Cpl. **Lyn Gentle**, LAC. **Bob Couper**, and LAC. **Bob Wilson** came out from the underside of the Canberra with a big smile on their face.

20 SEP - ‘EOD’ MEN SAVE TRUCK

The Phan Rang Explosive Ordnance Disposal office telephone recently rang at 12:45 PM, one of the EOD men answered the call and ten minutes later, SSgt. **James L. Callaway**, 30, of Oakland, Calif., and TSgt. **James D. Sloan**, 33 of Charleston, S.C. and their equipment were on their way

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to join the 101st Air Borne Division in what turned out to be a very interesting trip for the EOD men.

Upon reaching the 101st area, they joined up with an Army convoy and headed for Ca Na, a small village which is located 25 miles from Phan Rang Air Base.

Earlier this same day an Army vehicle was ambushed and two soldiers riding in the vehicle were injured.

Both soldiers were brought to Phan Rang for treatment.

Upon arriving at the scene of the ambush, Sergeant Sloan and Callaway put their mine detector to work and checked the area for booby traps, which the Viet Cong frequently place in similar situations.

No un-friendly ordnance was found and the truck was towed up on the road.

Once on the road the damaged truck was searched for hidden devices and the convoy started back to Phan Rang.

About half way back, the lead vehicle of the convoy was hit by small arms fire. The convoy stopped and everybody took cover until the soldiers cleared the ambush and the convoy started again.

20 SEP - ONCE CUED JFK - FORMER TV DIRECTOR NOW ‘DIRECTS’ F-100

Flying combat missions in Vietnam is quite a change from the job held by 1st Lt. **George A. Rabey Jr.**, 27, from Mt. Rainer, Md., back in the summer of 1962.

Now an F-100 pilot in the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Phan Rang Air Base, he spent that summer as an assistant director and floor manager for a television station in Washington D.C., and one phase of his job, consisted of being floor manager for some of the late President John F. Kennedy’s T.V. press conferences.

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Lieutenant Rabey admitted that it was a nerve-racking assignment: “I didn’t want to make any mistakes with the President of the United States up there.”

A radio and television production major at the University of Maryland, he has flown 190 combat missions with the ‘Black Panthers’ of the 615th TFS in support of friendly ground forces in Vietnam, and he feels this role is even more nerve racking than the press conference work:

“When I was working with the President and his press conferences, nobody was shooting at me.”

The fighter pilot described JFK as “an extremely relaxed, but yet vivacious young man.....He was always jovial, always joking with us, and always just seemed to be going out of his way to do what he could to please the radio and television industry.

Looking back over his many combat missions in Vietnam, Lt. Rabey singled out two of them as the high points in his combat career. One was a night scramble in which he was called on to assist friendly forces “in extreme heavy contact” with enemy troops in mountainous terrain west of Pleiku, South Vietnam “I wasn’t too experienced at the time, “he recalled: and it scared the hell out of me.”

The second mission etched in his memory occurred on June 20th of this year when his F-100 Super Sabre came to the assistance of Army troops engaged in a fierce battle with enemy forces. Lieutenant Rabey roared in to deliver his bombs right on the target despite extremely bad weather and high winds. The bombs fell just 75 meters from the Army troops.

In a letter written about this engagement, “the Army commander thanked us and said we were extremely valuable in helping to turn the tide for the Army troops.”

The former television director believes that his contact with President Kennedy has served to inspire him as a fighter pilot.

20 SEP - PARACHUTE PACKERS ARE BUSY MEN

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Every time an F-100 Super Sabre aircraft takes off from Phan Rang Air Base, it carries a large nylon drag chute. The drag chute is used to accomplish a large percentage of the aircrafts breaking during high speed landings.

Were it not for the large yellow chutes which are stowed in the belly of these supersonic fighters, break failures would be frequent and extremely costly.

Staff Sergeant **Melvin K. Riddle**, 29, of New Castel, Ind., a member of the 35th Field Maintenance Squadron manages the operation. His shop is open seven days a week.

His shop also repairs another 140 damaged chutes a week which are also repacked and used until they can no longer be repaired.

Sergeant Riddle, said “This is a team operation and I have seven of the best packers in the Air Force.”

According to Sergeant Riddle, “the devotion his men show towards their work is really outstanding and this is the smoothest and most efficient operation he has ever been engaged in.”

20 SEP - 614th TFS CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY HERE

Members of the “Lucky Devils” also known as the 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron recently celebrated their first anniversary of combat operations in South Vietnam.

When the squadron deployed from England AFB, LA., it was commanded by Lt. Col. **Lewis R. Blakeney** and in April of 1967, the present commander, Lt. Col **Kenneth P. Miles**, from San Antonio assumed the command.

All of the original pilots have now departed from the F-100 Super Sabre squadron, but there are still a few enlisted personnel who have extended their tours.

On of them, Airman Second Class **Terry Brodt**, from Los Angeles, is an operations clerk. According to Airman Brodt, “It has been a most interesting and fruitful year. I have learned

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quite a bit about Air Force Operations in SEA. The men coming to Phan Rang now cannot appreciate how good it is. We lived in tents, walked in mud ankle deep, or choked on dust. There were no paved roads, like now. It was an adventure that all who were deployed with the squadron will never forget.”

The “Lucky Devils: have expended thousands of tons of bombs against enemy positions and have used in excess of two million rounds of 20mm ammunition in the past 12 months.

The squadron was originally a bomber squadron in World War II, averaged 1,000 hours of fighter time each month for the past year. They have flown almost 8,000 sorties for the year.

This past year has seen the squadron fighting the Vietnam War in the other way, that of Civic Action.

The men of the 614th have donated over \$1,700 to the past year to schools in Phan Rang and Thap Cham for scholarships and improvements. Presently they are giving special support to one school, an Phoue High School located in the village of Thap Cham. The men not only give money, but such items as beds, mattresses, blankets, lumber and school supplies. In addition to supporting the education of Vietnamese students, the men have volunteered their time in promoting better relations with the Vietnamese people.

In the words of Colonel Miles, “WE are going to win this war not only by bombs alone, but by winning the hearts of the Vietnamese people. We are accomplishing this task daily through our many civic action programs.”

20 SEP - “BLACK PANTHER’ IN SWITCH

“I have to do everything for myself now,” said 1st Lt. **Christian A. Crooker**, 25, from Flourtown, Pa., as he described the switch he made from C-141 Starlifter Co-pilot to F-100 Super Sabre pilot.

A veteran of 43 combat missions with the F-100’s of the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the young officer recalled that as a co-pilot in C-141’s, the largest jet transports in the Air Force, he was part of a crew, which included pilot, navigator, engineer and loadmaster.

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He flew ten airlift missions to Vietnam from the United States in the gigantic four-engine transports to deliver vital cargo to Allied forces, before embarking on his new career as a fighter pilot.

The first step of that career consisted of four months of F-100 training in the United States. He came to Phan Rang two month ago.

“I was quite happy to get the chance to fly an F-100 Super Sabre in Vietnam,” the lieutenant commented.

“I think it’s any fighter pilot’s desire to be able to support our own troops in the field.”

The ex-transport pilot is now his own navigator, flight engineer, and bombardier as he flies his F-100 through the skies of South Vietnam to bomb and strafe enemy targets.

20 SEP - ASK AUNT PHANNY

Dear Aunt Phanny: My wife sent me a chocolate cake last week. However when the cake arrived (by boat-mail) it was in a million pieces and full of chocolate covered ants. The ants had a case of indigestion. What should I do with the Cake? **Sgt. Kindheart**

Dear Sgt. Kindheart: Break up some aspirin tablets and sprinkle the crumbs into the cake, the ants will appreciate any kindness you are willing to show them and offer the cake to some of your friends; I hear that chocolate covered ants are a delicacy and think of the praise you will receive. **Phanny**

Dear Aunt Phanny: My feelings are hurt, my supervisor told me to slow down and stop working so hard, he said “I was doing more than any three men in the ship, and causing the other men to have to work more. What should I do? **Sgt. Hard Toiler**

Dear Sgt. Hard Toiler: It is obvious that your good efforts are not appreciated, and it is always easier to drive with the traffic, than to try and pass it. Stop to fix a flat once in a while and your fellow loafers will love you. **Aunt Phanny**

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20 SEP - FLIGHTLINE DOUBLES

Flightline personnel of the 352nd Tactical Fighter Sq. are doing a lot of double-takes since the arrival of the Wikle twins.

A2C **Thomas M. Wikle** and his brother A2C **Charles E. Wikle** are now weapons mechanics who recently arrived here from Cannon AFB, N.M.

The 21-year-old identical twins are from Chillicothe, Ohio.

Other than causing a bit of confusion to their NCOIC and fellow crew members, they have never experienced any real trouble (being twins) since they have been in the Air Force.

While they were at tech school in Lowery AFB, Colo., they were with a flight that had three sets of twins in the same barracks at the same time.

“They never tried to distinguish one from the other. All they said when they wanted one of us was, ‘Hey, Wikle twin, come here.’” stated Tom Wikle.

Charles commented that as a twin you learn early that if you are mistaken for your brother, you just answer and go right along. It saves confusion.

The two have never been separated before in their 21 years, but upon returning from Vietnam they will try and go separate ways. Charles is going to try and return to Ohio.

20 SEP - PHAN FARE SALUTES

A1C **David L. Johnson**, an administrative specialist with the personnel services division, who recently worked a 24 hour day to insure that Phan Rang based personnel would be able to use the 90 Hawaii R&R allocations which were given to the base on short notice.

Keep up the good work, you can rest assured that it will be appreciated.

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27 SEP - C-123 SQ COMMANDER HAS COLORFUL BACKGROUND

Lieutenant Colonel **Conrad Kreps**, 51, of Akron Ohio, the commander of the 309th Air Commando Squadron at Phan Rang has one of the most colorful backgrounds anyone could ever run into.

Colonel Kreps, was the Assistant Air Force Attaché to Austria, from 1962 thru 1966 and enjoyed the job so much, that he still corresponds with some of the friends he made in that European nation.

However the Colonel had been in Europe prior to 1962, when he was a B-26 bomber pilot during World War II and was shot down by the Germans during 1943. At that time, the Italians were on the German side, and the young Army Air Force 2nd Lt. was placed in a Italian prisoner of war camp. He stayed in that camp until the Italians surrendered and the American and British POW's were loaded onto a German train, which was to take them to German prisoner of war camps deep inside German.

According to the Colonel, the treatment he had received from the Italians was reasonably good, but when he boarded the German train, it was apparent that things were going to take a turn for the worse, and he immediately started trying to find a way to escape.

With every click of the wheels, the colonel knew he was getting further away from the invading allied forces and freedom, and that he might not live out the war in a German prison camp.

The colonel and another man found a loose air grill on the box car and pried it out. They crawled out the small hole and managed to position their bodies on the rods which run underneath the European type box cars.

When the train slowed down, they jumped for high grass and hid until the train pulled out again.

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When the Germans checked the cars, they found the grill missing and launched a search for the two men, but were unsuccessful.

Shortly after the train departed, the two hungry men started an almost impossible trip over 120 miles of mountains to Naples, Italy, which was in allied hands.

Colonel Krebs said “we would never have made it, had it not been for the Italian people we met on the 36 day journey.

One hundred and twenty miles goes not seem like much on level ground, but try it in five or six thousand foot mountains.”

The colonel’s second trip to Europe as attaché was much different and instead of hiding from the people, he was now able to make lasting friends and do a job he enjoyed.

As an advisor, to the Austrian Air Force, he helped solve many operational problems and aided them in improving their small Air Force which was equipped with Saab (Swedish) jet fighters and other types of American aircraft.

Colonel Krebs, also said “he is enjoying his tour of duty in Vietnam and things he has the finest group of pilots and airmen in Vietnam.”

27 SEP - AIR FORCE MEDIC SAVES LIFE OF VIETNAMESE SOLDIER

Staff Sergeant **Vincent L. Davis**, an aeromedical technician assigned to the 35th Tactical Dispensary, recently saved the life of a badly wounded South Vietnamese soldier.

Sergeant Davis is presently performing his medical duties with the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron’s Detachment 1, which is based here at Phan Rang.

The sergeant was flying in an HH-34B helicopter when the pilot received a call for help from a South Vietnamese Army force which was operating in a Viet Cong controlled area approximately 10 miles south of the base.

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One of the soldiers assigned to the unit had been shot in the back twice and was in critical condition.

Upon reaching the area, the pilot, 1st Lt. **Gery L. Gross**, decided that the terrain was unsuitable for landing, so Sgt. Davis volunteered to descend by cable while the ‘chopper’ hovered. He then gave the wounded man what medical first aid he could, and with the help of other ARVN troops loaded the patient on the helicopter which found suitable landing area during this time. Ten minutes later the patient was being treated at Phan Rang City hospital.

27 SEP - TOP CREW CHIEF NAMED FOR AUG.

Airman Second Class **George M. Williams**, 352nd Tactical Fighter Squadron has been named as the Outstanding Crew Chief for the month of August for the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing.

He was also named Squadron Crew Chief of the month and awarded a \$25 Savings Bond.

27 SEP - NAVIGATOR PREFERS A NIGHT FLIGHT

Night mission are “a little more risky” than day light strikes, according to B-57 navigator Captain **William W. Fink Jr.**, 33 of Houston, Texas, but “personally, I enjoy the night missions more because it is a more demanding mission.”

About half of our missions are flown at night,” said the veteran of nine years Air Force service. “The night missions provide much more lucrative targets and are much more demanding in terms of mission preparation.”

Daylight assaults by the B-57 jet bombers in support of Allied Forces in South Vietnam, have been directed at enemy base camps, sampans, fortified positions, and troop concentrations.

Fink has been flying combat missions in Vietnam for more than five months. “I feel like my entire experience in the Air Force prior to coming to Vietnam was in preparation for the missions I’m flying here,” he said.

Captain Fink, recently flew his 100th combat mission as a member of the 13th Tactical

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Bombardment Squadron, which is based at Clark Air Base in the Philippines, but flies rotational combat tours in two month stretches at Phan Rang Air Base.

Looking back over his first 100 combat missions, Find singled out a strike 20 miles north of Phan Rang as his most memorable combat experience. He recalled that it was flown in close support of an Allied force in the midst of very adverse weather. Despite “extremely low ceilings,” the B-57 delivered its ordnance on target to assist Korean troops.

27 SEP - F-100 CLEAR WAY FOR ARMY ASSAULT

A flight of F-100 Super Sabres of the 615th TFS took off at dawn recently to clear the way for a helicopter landing of Army troops 45 miles northwest of Bien Hoa.

One of the pilots, First Lieutenant **Christian A. Crooker** said that the super-sonic fighters bombed and strafed a heavily wooded area surrounding a field in order to prevent any Viet Cong activity which might endanger the ensuing helicopter landings.

A forward air controller was at the scene to direct the landing zone preparatory operations of the Phan Rang F-100s. Lt. Crooker has been in Vietnam for two months and has flown many combat missions with the “Black Panthers” of the 615th.

27 SEP - SNAKE HOUSE NOW GOING CONCERN

“Things have turned out a lot better than we anticipated,” said Airman First Class Bill Gaither, 25, from Ludlow, Kentucky as he talked about this base’s unique new snake house.

Featuring 45 live snakes and a dozen live lizards, the base serpentarium opened a month ago. It drew an opening-day crowd of close to 300 personnel, and they took approximately 1,000 photographs of the cobras, pythons, poisonous crates, pit vipers, and other reptiles on the premises, Airman Gaiter reported.

“We have many people bringing us snakes now,” the young snake house proprietor said.

During duty hours, A1C Gaither works as a Motorola systems monitor in the 1882nd Communications Squadron, however most of his off duty time is spent building and running the

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attractive facility.

“We get many telephone calls each week from people who locate snakes in the area, “said the Kentuckian, adding that these snakes have been placed in holding cages and are earmarked for future display.

A multi-talented individual, Bill is also in charge of the administration of non-tactical radio systems for his squadron, but has also found time to learn to speak the Vietnamese language fluently, spearheading a squadron Civic Action program for local youngsters, and creating hilarious cartoons for base publications.

Airman Gaithers’ artistic talents were employed in creating attractive display cases for the snakes and lizards.

Phan Rang has the only snake house in existence among all Air Force installations in South Vietnam. The facility was originally built to familiarize base personnel with the variety of poisonous and non-poisonous reptiles in the area of the base. In this way, Bill explained, anybody who gets bitten by a poisonous snake will be able to identify it and thus assist base medical personnel in giving the proper antidote.

A minor crisis developed when the time came to install lights in the python pit. The electrician, seeing the 11-foot-long pythons, heisted to enter the area; Bill assured him that the pythons were docile, but when one of the long snakes began hissing and striking, the electrician bolted out of the pit, and “didn’t stop till he reached his vehicle.” The issue was resolved only when Amn. Gaither agreed to stand between the electrician and the snake for the duration of the lighting installation.

One of the most facinating inhabitants of the snake house is a “Phony” black cobra once owned by a Penang snake charmer. It’s fangs were pulled by the snake charmer. It spreads it’s hood and hisses and strikes at everyone as if it were the meanest creature in the world.

27 SEP - ASK AUNT PHANNY

Dear Aunt Phanny: There is an irate Colonel on base who told me that if he caught me drinking

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#33 during working hours just one more time, he'd slap my knuckles with a ruler. Don't you think this is a cruel, unjust and archaic punishment not to mention inhuman and bestial.

Amn. Goldfinger

Dear Airman Goldfinger, Yes I agree with you. Such punishment belongs to the dark ages. I've talked to the irate Colonel and he told me that this practice would be discontinued. I am not sure what replaces this type of punishment, but the Col. said something about a man with a hooded face, carrying a large axe. **Aunt Phanny**

27 SEP - THEY CALL HIM “BUTCH” - DOG LIVES THE GOOD LIFE

Butch, a 60 pound brown and black dog who is also a combat veteran with 1,500 missions to his credit believes in taking his own rest and recuperation trips to Saigon.

Butch is a member of the 309th Air Commando Squadron, which is based at Phan Rang Air Bae. He recently qualified for the “Purple Heart”, but was given a rare steak instead.

Butch was hit in the stomach by a piece of shrapnel from a 50 caliber bullet, which pierced the underside of a C-123 Provider during a recent re-supply mission over South Vietnam.

His condition was critical for a while, but after intensive care by a local veterinarian and his staff, he walked out of the hospital with only a three inch scar to remind him of his brush with death.

Following his return from the hospital, Butch limited his flying for a period of time, but his love for flying soon caught hold again.

According to A1C **Lee E. Nelson**, of Salt Lake, City, Butch's un-official guardian and protector, “Whenever Butch's plane lands in Saigon, he is likely to get off and not show up again for three days, as he likes to take leave at Tan Son Nhut.

When he wants to come back to Phan Rang, he visits until a C-123 with a “red nose” lands and gets on.

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All of the 309th's aircraft are well marked and the air crews all know Butch.

When he gets back to Phan Rang, he is so pooped, that he does nothing but sleep and rest for two or three days.

(**Note:** Previous stories about 'Butch' can be found in Phan Rang Newsletter 201 "*Sergeant Butch Logs 5,000 hours*" and Phan Rang Newsletter 219 "*Dog Gone Good Hitchhiker*".)

27 SEP - AUSSIES WIN P.R. DAVIS CUP

The Aussies have walked off with Phan Rang's version of the 'Davis Cup'.

No. 2 Sq. from down under, led by **Rex Bean**, won 6 of the 9 matches played.

The 'Davis Cup' was donated by Lt. Col. '**Duke** Davis, operations officer of the 13th TBS. It was intended to promote tennis competition between units on the base.

The cup was presented to the Aussies team by Lt. Col. **George Cap**, Commander of the 13th. It will remain in the possession of No. 2 Sq. until some unit is able to beat them in some future challenge match.



Doug's Comments:

I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter. If you have a story to tell, please write it down and send to me so that your unique experiences can be saved for posterity. This newsletter was composed by Douglas Severt and all photographs by Bob Howe and all graphics by Douglas Severt. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, mailto:mailto:dougsevert@cox.net and put 'unsubscribe' in subject line.