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F100 Pilot Cited As Able Aeronaut (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, June 1, 1971*)

Phan Rang AB, Vietnam (Special) - A U. S. Air Force F1-- Super Sabre pilot, credited with saving a 650,000 combat aircraft here, has earned the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Order of the Able Aeronaut Award for his feat.

Maj. Richard J. Ebel, presently a senior duty controller with 7th Ar Force's Tactical Air Control Center at Tan Son Nhut AB, was presented the award for bringing his disabled F100 fighter in for a wheels up landing at this coastal South Vietnam air base. The critical inflight emergency occurred Dec. 19, 1970, as he was returning to base after leading a combat stride of two 35th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) F100s against an enemy complex.

As Ebel prepared for landing at Phan Rang AB, the right main landing gear would not come down. He radioed his problem to his wingman, 1st Lt. William W. Taylor Jr., and the duty officer in the runway supervisory unit and then broke out of the traffic pattern. He attempted to recycle the gear with negative results. All other emergency procedures failed to dislodge the jammed wheel. Taylor stuck with him, confirming that the gear door recycled normally, but the gear remained in the wheel well. Then it was decided to make a main gear up-nose wheel-down landing, attempting to engage one of the two aircraft arresting barriers on the approach end of the 10,000 foot runway.

After the runway had been foamed by the Phan Rang AB Crash-Rescue unit, the 41-year-old combat veteran lined his crippled fighter up for a precise landing, and brought the Super Sabre in for touch-down just short of the first barrier. Making a perfect gear up landing into the foam, his tail hook engaged the barrier cable, bringing the 26,000 pound plane to a safe stop. Ebel scrambled out uninjured and the F100 sustained less than \$350 damage.

"Major Ebel's professional response and superior flying undoubtedly prevented major damage, saving a valuable tactical combat aircraft," the citation to the Order of the Able Aeronaut read.

Gens. Joseph J. Nazzaro, PACAF commander in chief, and Lucius D. Clay, 7th Air Force commander, both relayed their congratulations for the "...superior airmanship displayed after experiencing a serious inflight emergency."



Do-It-Yourself Air Base Grows -Self-Help Projects Become Accepted Part of Daily Life (7th Air Force News, October 21, 1966)

By SSgt. Bill Patrick

PHAN RANG -The general public has that idea that Air Force fighter wings and their support personnel fly to combat are as in sleek jet fighters and majestic transports - step off on to a shiny new air base facility complete with modern conveniences paralleling the sophistication of their equipment and begin operations.

The public is usually dumbfounded to learn the opposite is the case. Fighter squadrons drop in on "bare bases"

hardly more than a cleared space with a 10,000 foot aluminum matting runway and not much else - and from then on must live and fight under sometimes primitive conditions. They do, and successfully, as the results in both combat effectiveness and burgeoning base efficiency proves.

The overall pattern of the numerous new air bases in the Republic of Vietnam is similar to that at Phan Rang. A bustling dust bowl halfway up the coast on the South China Sea, this new base is emerging as a major factor in today's air war against the Communist insurgents.

Few Conveniences

Aircraft of the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing have flown more than 5,000 sorties against enemy

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targets since the wing began combat operations in March. And this is done with a minimum of operational and maintenance facilities and personal conveniences.

Col. Ben Matlick, first Air Force man on the scene (now base commander at Phu Cat) said When the initial group arrived here in November 1965, we lived with the Army's 62nd Engineer Battalion until we could put up tents in an AF cantonment area. From that day on, "self-help" became the motto of AF personnel at Phan Rang. If we'd waited for construction crews and adequate supplies and hadn't "selfhelped" ourselves, we'd still be in tents, dirty and thirsty." Self-help went further than just doing things themselves. It meant locating the supplies and equipment to do the job. This required quite a bit of ingenuity and, in some cases, horse-trading with other units in the area.

Hammers for All

Air Force men who had never wielded a hammer or saw soon found themselves building latrines, showers, tents and huts. The present clothing sales store was the first tent to be framed in. It served as the dining hall and social gathering spot for the small band of AF personnel then at Phan Rang.

One of the major structures built was a 1,000-man dining hall. SSgt. David J. Batson, a roads and grounds specialist with the 366th Civil Engineer Squadron, supervised its construction. While work was in progress, the frame of the building was blown down by high winds, but Sergeant Batson and his crew continued undaunted. On Feb. 26 the dining facility was dedicated "Batson Hall " during the first and only open house celebration at an American base in the Republic of Vietnam.

Of prime necessity was the matter of a place to sleep and a place to work. Using the Tactical Air Command mobility concept designed to move men and equipment on short notice to any part of the world and commence combat operations, a 1,100-man mobility kit, dubbed "Grey Eagle" is used as the basis for any new air base. This kit contains just the bare necessities, maintenance and administrative supplies, needed to establish a forward operating base.

Advance Party

In early February an advance party of the 366th TFW consisting of 25 officers and enlisted personnel arrived at Phan Rang from Holloman AFB, N. M. Their job was to construct shops, offices, and living quarters for the rest of the wing which was scheduled to arrive in March.

Heading the advance party was Col. Donald E. Hunt, then wing deputy commander for materiel and now wing vice commander. "When we arrived," said Colonel Hunt, "the flight line was non-existent except for four quonset huts. We landed our C-47 on the Buu Son (Vietnamese civilian) airfield. It was nothing more than a short s trip of perforated steel planking used by small planes belonging to Air Vietnam."

Colonel Hunt immediately named CMSgt. Buddy L. Bowler as supervisor of the work party. According to Sergeant Bowler, "I divided the men into crews, each one responsible for a certain

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task. We erected tents and huts and installed light fixtures. Our biggest problem was getting supplies. We ran frequent armed convoys to Cam Ranh Bay to get what we needed."

Sergeant Bowler continued, We hauled our water from about five miles away in 250-gallon trailers. This was both our drinking water and water for the showers. To provide security, we hauled sand from the beach 12 miles from the base, filled thousands of bags, and built bunkers near each tent."

"Every fighter squadron has gone through the same experience. Land from a long flight overseas and immediately begin work building places to live and facilities to fly from against the enemy ."

Rough Conditions

Conditions on the flight line are a test of men's stamina, with 100 degree heat shimmering off the aluminum matting runway that had been rushed to completion by the Army's 62nd Engineer Battalion. Dust blows constantly on men and equipment. With the arrival of the wing's 389th Tactical Fighter Sq., combat strikes began and maintenance under extremely difficult conditions was performed.

In spite of the heat, dust, and primitive tent shops, the wing flew 146 out of 147 scheduled sorties against enemy targets. This was accomplished by replacing aircraft parts with spares brought over from the United States in mobility kits and taking parts to Cam Ranh Bay for actual repair by wing maintenance personnel. Shop conditions did not permit the installation and use of sophisticated equipment but this did not deter maintenance personnel from keeping the Phantoms flying.

Pilots Paint Too

Recently flight line personnel embarked on another self-help project to replace tents and huts with steel quonset buildings. In addition to maintenance shops, fighter operations moved into new quarters but not until most of the pilots had a turn with a hammer or paint brush. The insides of several steel Butler buildings have been finished by maintenance personnel.

One of the biggest self-help projects and certainly one of the most important, is the base water system. Water comes from an irrigation ditch, pumped to a purifying plant, and distributed by means of above ground pipes throughout the base. Installing the system required a great deal of imagination and self-help. Pipe, valves, fittings, and most important, a pump, had to be 'found' before work could be started.

The men of Phan Rang met the challenge. Water now flows from faucets and showers in the cantonment area. The overland system brings cold water for shaving in the morning and hot water for drinking during the day. But the men don't mind it's better than hauling water from miles away. And it's said that the cold showers are good for vigorous health.

Lack of furniture brought about another self-help project.

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Needing a place to relax in their rare off-duty time, base personnel, both officer and enlisted, built their own clubs.

RVN's Only Drive-In

The only entertainment facility on the base is also self-help project. When arrangement were made to receive five 16mm movies a week, the "Phan Rang Drive-In" was built. Consisting of a projection booth and plywood screen, the drive-in is really a walk-in where everyone must bring his own chair, box or can to sit on. Nonetheless, the theater under the stars is packed every show night. Where else can a guy get a rain shower while he watches a movie?

Phan Rang, for all its 80 aircraft, four fighter squadrons and more than 4,000 men, is still in the bare-base self-help stage. Experienced now in roughin' it in the Vietnamese frontier style, personnel are quick to point out that their record of outstanding combat efficiency by pilots and support personnel at Phan Rang prove what Air Force men can accomplish when there's a job to be done.

Spraying Fountain Near Phan Rang Can Mean Jet Fuel Pouring Away (*Sun News, Las Cruces N.M., Wednesday July 9, 1969*)

PHAN RANG, Republic of Vietnam - Member of the pipeline repair team of the 21st Supply and Service Company hang on hard as the big 2 ½-ton truck winds around a bend in the road and jolts to a stop.

Six men armed with M-16 rifles jump from the truck and splitting into pairs, venture off the road, carefully looking through the multi-shades of green that can so easily hide a camouflaged man.

When they're satisfied the area is clear, they regroup around an eight-inch pipe spraying like a water fountain in a public square.

But it isn't water that's soaking into the ground. It's high-octane jet fuel that's being pumped through the pipe at a rate of over 1,200 barrels an hour. At 42 gallons a barrel that's a lot of fuel.

Even the small leaks are approached with care. The ground under a leak is always gently probed with a knife. Should a metal like sound be heard the area is immediately sealed off and an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team called in.

Sgt. Jeffery B. Touzet heads the pipeline repair crew from the 21st Supply and Service Company. Touzet has been in Vietnam for a year and a half and knows his job well.

"Our mission here," says Sergeant Touzet, "is to see that fuel gets from the beach to the Phan Rang Air Base, about 12 miles inland. When a fuel tanker moors in the harbor, the fuel is sent through underwater pipes up to the beach where the pumps take over.

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"The high-octane fuel used in turbine jets is forced through the eight-inch line. However a lot of time is spent keeping the 26 miles of pipes in operable condition, he explains.

When a leak is found the specially trained fire department crew from Phan Rang is called. Fire Chief James E. Stovall of Las Cruces rushes out with a 1,000-gallon tanker truck filled with a special foam to be used in case of fire. Stovall is in charge of the 31-member Vietnamese fire department at Phan Rang.

With the fire crew standing by, dirt from under the pipe is carefully cleared away and the pipe separated at the joint. Then the old rubber gasket is removed, the pipe well greased, a new gasket fitted and the pipeline rejoined.

The pipeline crew works fast, sometimes repairing as many as four leaks in under an hour. The fire crew stands by and covers the area with foam after each leak is fixed. The foam, consisting of animal plasma, air and water, leaves a protective covering to reduce the possibility of fire.

There is always an element of danger to the job - the next leak could be bobby trapped or turn into a fire hazard. However, the men consider it routine and part of their job while in Vietnam, doing their best to keep the fuel flowing.

Col. Gailer in Charge (*Pacific Star & Stripes, November 29, 1968*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (Special) - Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., 44, Arlington, Va., has assumed command of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing here. He succeeded Col. Hernden F. Williams, 46, Florence, S.C.

Galligan Takes Over (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, September 17, 1969*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (Special) - Air Force Col Walter T. Galligan has assumed command of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing here from the former commander of the F100 Supersabre unit, Col Frank L. Gailer Jr.

Phan Rang Sporting New Control Tower (*7th Air Force News, October 21, 1966*)

PHAN RANG - A new aircraft control tower was recently put into operation here by the 1882nd Communications Squadron. The tower replaces a mobile van, designed for a bare-base facility.

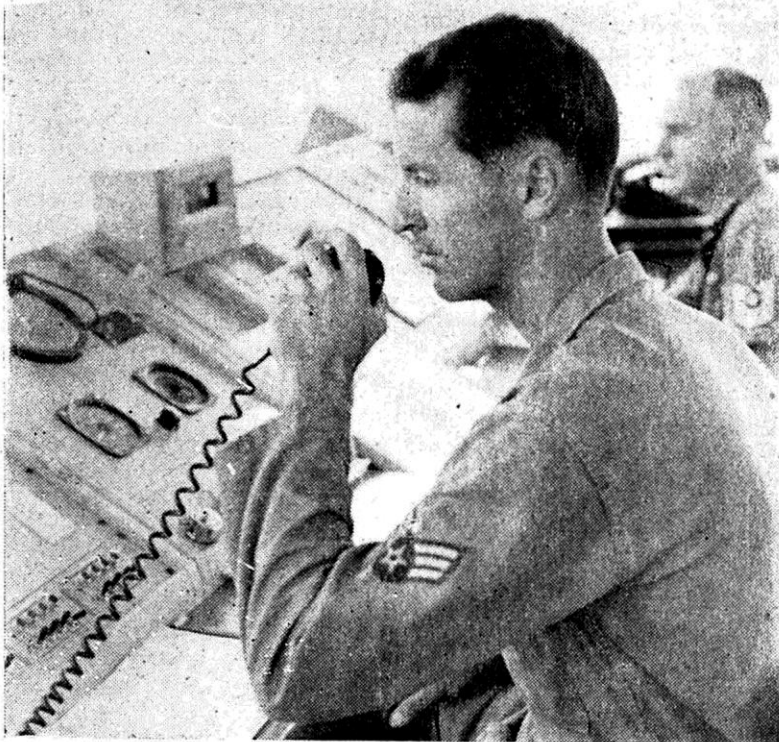
Maj. Charles W. Arnett, Mesa, Ariz., 1882nd CS commander, says "This is the first completely packaged unit consisting of the Federal Aviation Agency designed tower and electronic equipment completed in Southeast Asia."

The mobile van is designed to move into a new base and provide aircraft control facilities for approximately 60 to 90 days until a tower can be built. The van has been in operation here since January.

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MSgt. Maurice E. Patterson of North Highlands, Calif., noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the tower, said. "Traffic here has built up steadily since January so we now control approximately 14,500 aircraft a month. We had reached our saturation point in the van."

Capt. William E. Dusschleger, Houston, Tex., flight facilities officer said, "The van had only two operating frequencies or channels for communications with the pilots. With the increased aircraft traffic, the communications channels were getting pretty congested."



LANDING INSTRUCTIONS — Sitting in front of the modern Federal Aviation Agency designed electronic aircraft control equipment recently put into operation here by the Air Force's 1882nd Communications Squadron, AIC Arthur L. Fogleman of Lemoyne, La., gives landing instructions to a pilot while MSgt. Maurice E. Patterson of North Highlands, Calif., watches the sky for aircraft. Housing the electronics equipment is a 60-foot high tower which replaces the 10-foot high mobile van used here since January. The van is designed to move into a new base and provide aircraft control facilities for approximately 60 to 90 days until a new tower can be built. Sergeant Patterson says, "Aircraft traffic here has built up steadily since January so we control approximately 14,500 aircraft a month. We had definitely reached our saturation point in the van." (U.S. Air Force Photo)

In the new modern structure, controllers have eight channels for ground to air communications. In addition they can listen on all channels at once. The vans' communications system allowed the controllers to listen on only one channel at a time.

Major Arnett describes an aircraft controller as, "similar to a traffic policeman; his job is to see that there is a smooth flow of traffic both in the air and on the taxiways to prevent accidents."

Visibility was limited to the van since viewing facilities consisted of a small bubble in the roof only 10-foot-high. Cramped facilities allowed only one controller to work at a time.

Standing 60-foot-high, the new tower provides a clear, unobstructed view

of the Phan Rang runway, taxiways and surrounding skies and enough room for two controllers to work comfortably.

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Patterson says, "We will continue to provide the same type service, but we can not provide more effective aircraft control with less chance of error."

Aussie Jets Earn High Praise

USAF Photos
By Sgt. Donald B. Dirksing

PHANG RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — "Their airplanes have had the least battle damage, they have flown without a combat loss, they have not had a crewmember wounded or lost, and their battle damage assessment (BDA) is the best of any operational unit in Southeast Asia."

These words of praise were spoken by U.S. Air Force Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., 45, Great Neck, N.Y., commander, 35th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), Phan Rang AB. They were spoken of the No. 2 Sq., Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), a unit under operational control of the 35th TFW.

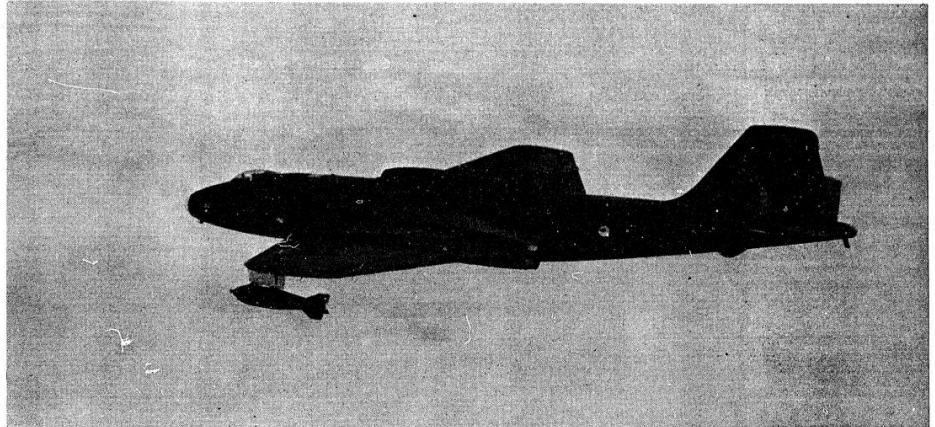
The RAAF unit, flying Canberra medium jet bombers, has built an impressive record since it began flying with the "Yanks" in April 1967.

The British-designed aircraft which entered RAAF service in 1954, is similar to the American B-57 flown by the 35th TFW's 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron "Yellowbirds."

However, while the B-57s use dive-bombing tactics, the Australians find their nose-mounted bomb sights more suited to medium and low-altitude level bombing runs.

In its more than two years at Phan Rang, No. 2 Sq. has struck more than 8,000 enemy targets, dropping more than 40,000 bombs.

Since its arrival, the squadron has been credited with killing 370 enemy soldiers, destroying or damaging more than 8,300 bunkers, 7,600 fortifications, 990 sampans and 70 weapons positions, and touching off more than 300 secondary explosions and igniting 60 secondary fires.



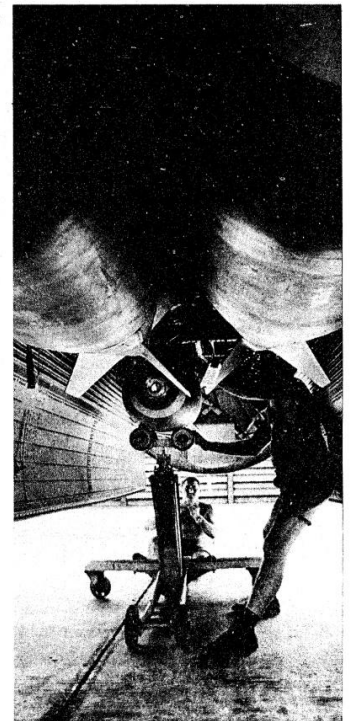
A CANBERRA FLIES HIGH ABOVE THE CLOUDS AS IT HEADS FOR A TARGET IN THE MEKONG DELTA, SOUTH OF SAIGON.



ANOTHER MISSION OVER, A CANBERRA IS GUIDED TOWARD ITS REVETMENT AT PHAN RANG AB.



Flying Officer John A. Bushell keeps an eye on his navigation instruments during a strike.



Australian crewmen ready bombs as they prepare their plane for a flight.

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Viet Temple Stands Over 6 Airstrips - Jet Base Boasts More Than 6,000 Combat Sorties *(source unknown, but it must have been written early '66 timeframe.)*

PHAN RANG, South Vietnam (At the foot of an ancient crumbling temple on the central Vietnamese coast six giant airstrips stretch into one of the most powerful jet fighter bomber bases of the U.S. Air Force in Southeast Asia.

It is operated solely by the United States and is strictly for fighting. No supply missions are flown from Phan Rang. More than 6,000 combat sorties have been launched from Phan Rang since March. The number of bombs dropped on the enemy is classified—but fuel consumption averages 300,000 gallons a day.

The six landing strips are 200 feet wide and 10,000 feet long. They are cut into reddish rocks and sand 10 miles inland from the South China Sea. The base is 160 miles northeast of Saigon almost in the exact center of the South Vietnamese coastline.

Base for 100 Jets

About 100 Air Force jets - a squadron of F-4C Phantoms and four squadrons of F-100 Supersabres - are stationed here. They strike anywhere in Vietnam.

The Air Force calls it a "bare base." There are no permanent buildings, no warehouses and no harbor.

Tanks receive fuel pipelines from tankers in the South China Sea. Bombs are delivered by landing craft, truck convoys and cargo planes.

Security is provided by about 1,000 soldiers of the Korean Tiger Division and a battalion of Vietnamese army troops. They are supported by the largest team of scout dogs in Vietnam — 100 dogs with American handlers.

Paratroop Base

The headquarters of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, is only a mile away. But the paratroopers cannot do much for the Air Force. Except for a small base guard they have been away on operations most of the time since they arrived.

Viet Cong activity was virtually nonexistent in the Phan Rang area until the Americans arrived in early 1963 and started building airstrips. It has steadily increased since then. Recently the guerrillas attacked the fuel pipeline several times. In the worst attack 10,000 gallons were destroyed.

The predominant natives in the immediate vicinity are peaceful. They are the Chams, a steadily

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diminishing people that 2,000 years ago ruled Vietnam. The Chams' reddish temple stands above the airstrips on a rocky hillside where it was built 1,200 years ago.

Red Training Camp

Most of the Viet Cong operate from a coastal salt flat some five miles south of the U.S. base. U.S. officers also say the Viet Cong maintain a training camp for about 500 guerrillas in the Je Mountains 12 miles to the northwest. The bombers of Phan Rang base have not struck these nearby targets since the province chief has not asked for bombings. He is the only authority that can approve them in Ninh Thuan Province.

Phan Rang is a link in a complex of U.S. bases along the coast. Thirty miles north is the vast logistic center at Cam Ranh Bay. This supply harbor and depot is also under sole control of the U.S. armed forces. Cam Ranh still serves partly as a fighter air base but Phan Rang is expected to take over all this activity soon.

Thirty miles farther north is Nha Trang, headquarters of the U.S. 2nd Field Force, which is similar to an army command.

National Highway 1 and a railway connect Phan Rang, Cam Ranh and Nha Trang. The road is traveled by well-protected American convoys.

Bob Pahl F-100 Photographer



Getting re-current in AAR prior to deployment back to the states in July 1971. Bob Pahl the photographer is flying alongside.

The 2014 "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB Reunion

The 2014 "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB Reunion

Where: DoubleTree by Hilton, Reid Park, 445 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson AZ

When: October 9-11

Single/Double rate \$99

Banquet 11 October in the Bonsai Room



You may now make your hotel reservations for the reunion. Click on the Double Tree logo above and it will take you to the Phan Rang AB Reunion Web Site. Please make your reservations early which will help us greatly in the planning process and also to insure that everyone that wants to attend gets the reunion rate. This is a smaller hotel than the previous year, so we have to watch it very carefully. Remember if circumstances prevent you from attending you can always cancel within 24 hours of your check-in date. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact [me](#).



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This postcard along with the next one of Superstition Mountain is a little teaser of what we will be seeing in October. **John Goss** our man on the ground in Tucson along with **Felipe Ludin** are working out the detail of our visit to [AMARC](#), the Air Force bone yard.

Ken Miller another of our guys on the ground at Tucson writes this:

Old Tucson is about 1/2 hour drive from downtown and is also a fun place. It was where many old movies were shot. It burned down (the main area) some years back but was rebuilt and is a decent visit.

Pima Air Museum and the Bone Yard are the best. Nothing compares. (Note: We will go as a group...Doug)

Sabino Canyon is a very nice hike and a tram can take you to the top, and back. Lots of side trails.

The Biosphere is the largest "greenhouse" ever built and it was the place that scientists stayed in using only the food grown and air breathed, cycling water and wastes. It is a great tour. About 45 minutes from down town. It was the basis for the Pauly Shor film "Biodome".

Many other sites. Best Mexican food around you ever had.



Got Photos or Stories that you would like to share with Phan Rangers and other interested Vietnam veterans? If you do, send those treasured pictures and stories to me and I'll include in this newsletter, that reaches out to over 200, or post on Facebook where we have over 550 former Phan Rangers, their families and friends. You can contact [me](#) and I will provide further instructions. Share the Phan Rang story and keep the memories alive.

Doug's note: I know not all of these stores have a dateline of Phan Rang, but we have a lot of members and readers that have an interest in stores dealing with the B-57, F-100, C-119, C-47 and C-123 aircrafts. Some may have friends or may have even been stationed at one time at these other bases.

Also if you are new to the Phan Ranger mailing list and you would like copies of previous issues of the Phan Rang News, they are all available [here](#) for downloading. If you have any difficulties, just send [me](#) a note and I'll will send one your way. If you know of a Phan Rangers that would be interested in receiving news about Phan Rang AB, please let [me](#) know and I will add them to the mailing list.

