

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
"Keeping the memories alive" Newsletter 250

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Touch the Moustache - Photo by Christopher Boles

Serving Our Country



Holloman Jets Land in Viet Nam

(El Paso Herald Post, March 14, 1966, El Paso, Texas)

PHAN RANG, South Viet Nam, March 14. — Seventeen U.S. Air Force F4C Phantom jets landed today at the new air strip at Phan Rang, 6 miles northeast of Saigon, after an 18-hour flight from the United States.

The jets, from the 300th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the 300th Tactical Fighter Wing, refueled

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eight times during the flight from Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico.

Lt Gen. **Joseph H. Moore**, Commander of the 2nd Air Division was at Phan Rang to greet the pilots. Airman from the squadron’s support group unrolled a red carpet under the first jet to land and Moore waited at the end of the carpet to welcome the arrivals.

COL. **Carlos M. Talbott**, 47, Charleston, Ill., commander of the 300th Wing was the first pilot to land. “It was a good trip all the way over,” he told Moore.

Two Vietnamese girls, dressed in colorful native dresses, placed leis around Talbott’s neck in the traditional welcome to Viet Nam.

The squadron is commanded by Maj. **F. Fowler**, 41, of Cleveland, Ohio.

Fowler said he expected his squadron to begin strike missions within three days.

Dolonite to the Rescue

(Dolton Pointer, November 26, 1970, Dolton, Illinois)

WITH U. S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam--U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant **John E. Schmidt**, son of Paul L. Schmidt, 14639 Grant St., Dolton, is one of five C-123 Provider crew men who are credited with saving the life of an 18-month-old Vietnamese baby girl.

Sergeant Schmidt, a C-123 Provider flight engineer, and fellow crew members recently airlifted the critically ill baby to Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. She was examined, given emergency medical treatment and then flown to a USAF specialist at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base.

The baby’s father, a Vietnamese Popular Forces noncommissioned officer at Nhon Co Popular Forces camp requested Air Force assistance when she became lethargic and unresponsive to antibiotics following a two-day respiratory illness.

The five-man Provider crew had completed their last cargo delivery of the day and were returning to Phan Rang when they received the emergency call, relayed by a U. S. Army

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Special Forces adviser at Nhon Co. He informed them of the child’s condition, explaining that the camp doctor wasn’t equipped to handle the case and requested her immediate air evacuation.

The Provider was diverted to the camp where the crew took the child and her parents aboard. Within 25 minutes after the initial radio contact, they landed at Phan Rang and the child was sped by ambulance to the dispensary. Examinations revealed that draining fluids caused by the respiratory infection had perforated the bone under her nose in the oral cavity.

Sergeant Schmidt regularly flies aerial resupply missions in support of allied ground forces in Vietnam. He is assigned at Phan Rang to a tactical air support unit of the Pacific Air Forces, head quarters for air operations in Southeast Asia, the Far East and the Pacific area.



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE (USAF) FORWARD AIR CONTROL (FAC) AIRCRAFT CRASH – 19 JUNE 1969

The loss of Cessna O-2 USAF Serial Number 68-6869 on 19 June 1969 and the recovery of the crew.

Article By: Roger Lambert – Platoon Commander, 9 Platoon, C Company, 5 RAR, 1969/70.

Preface

At the time, as is the nature of combat, I had not given thought about the deceased crew of the Forward Air Control (FAC) Cessna O-2 or their Next of Kin (NOK). They were simply two more casualties of the Vietnam War. However, as the years passed and the war faded into the pages of history, I began to think more and more about these men and their sacrifice.

Some 49 years after the event, besides being somewhat satisfied that we were at least able to recover their remains for repatriation to the United States, I decided that I would make it my personal quest to identify them.

Background

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Operation Esso 1, 2 and 3 was conducted in the period June to July 1969. For members of the Battalion, particularly C Company, Operation Esso is indelibly etched in the minds because of the enemy's use of mines throughout the Area of Operations (AO).

The Viet Cong used M16 anti-personnel mines taken from the barrier mine field laid between the Horseshoe Hill and Lang Phouc Hai on the coast. These mines were implanted on tracks, potential allied ambush positions and tactical harbour positions as well as around villages in the area. That is, they were placed anywhere our troops were likely to operate in the AO. An example of the enemy's tactical use of the mines is found in 7 Platoon's catastrophic mine incident on 4 July 1969. Unbeknown to the Platoon Commander, David Mead, he selected an ambush site that had been previously used by members of A Company, the site having been observed by the Viet Cong. 7 Platoon was virtually decimated in the resultant mine detonations.

The CO had ensured that special training was undertaken in conjunction with the Engineers prior to the Rifle Companies deployments into the AO. Flak jackets and helmets were issued and were to be worn whenever possible and practical. Notwithstanding these precautions, by the end of Operation Esso, 7 soldiers were killed and 43 were wounded by mines.

To support the land clearing, patrolling and ambushing activities, Fire Support Base “Thrust” was established some six hundred yards south of Hoi My. Under operational control of 5 RAR during this operation was a Troop of Engineers and elements of the Plant Troop of 1 Field Squadron. Two infantry Rifle Companies were involved throughout the operation protecting this Land Clearing Team.

Operation Esso is also well remembered by members of 9 Platoon, Charlie Company, 5 RAR having been given the task of recovering the bodies of two United States servicemen killed when their Cessna O-2 FAC aircraft crashed in the Long Phouc Hai mountains on 19 June 1969.

To relate the story of the recovery, the timelines and activities are taken directly from the 5 RAR Operations Log radio transmissions. These have been supplemented by the personal recollections of 9 Platoon and C Company soldiers who were directly or indirectly involved.

Time: 1044 hours

“TO CALLSIGN (C/S) 0A FROM C/S 3 - AN AC HAS BEEN HIT AND HAS CRASHED – WELFARE OF PILOT UNKNOWN AT THIS STAGE”

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This is Major Ducker advising the Battalion Command Post that an aircraft had crashed. 9 Platoon, C Company (C/S 33) were undertaking protection duties of the Engineer Land Clearing Team and their bulldozers in reasonably open ground at the base of the Long Hais. A lone aircraft had been seen undertaking observer activities for what we had been advised was naval gunfire into the hills.

The aircraft, later identified as a Cessna O-2, was carrying out observation duties for a Charles F. Adams Class United States Navy destroyer which was firing into the hills.



Charles F. Adams Class Destroyer

Private Colin Summerfield had noted the aircraft “buzzing around”. While most were watching the shells exploding in the hills, Colin noted a change in pitch in the engine sound of the aircraft and recalled, “Looking up, I saw a burst of flame and a few seconds later I heard the ‘boom’. A large piece fell to the left and a smaller section fell to the right.”

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Long Hai mountains; note the explosion on top of the mountain

“I watched the bigger piece hit the ground in the hills. Using a knoll on the ridge line of the hills, I measured three fingers to the right to get a fix on the big bit.”

As the Platoon Commander, I was immediately summoned and, besides, PTE Summerfield, I asked my troops whether anyone else had seen what happened. PTE Terry “Giuseppe” Fitzgerald stated that he had seen a parachute, a fact at the time Colin didn’t dispute. Using the knoll Colin had used as a reference point, I took a bearing on the crash site and reported my finding to the Company Commander, Major Claude Ducker, MC.

Time: 1047 hours

“TO C/S 3 FROM C/S 9 – GET TA MOV TO LOC OF CRASHED AC NOW”

This was the Commanding Officer (C/S 9), Lieutenant Colonel Colin Khan, directing Major Ducker to get the Centurion tanks and M113 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) in support to move to the crash site as soon as possible.

Time: 1048 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S POSS – IN AREA NOW AND WILL ORGANISE DUSTOFF AND RESCUE OPS – INCIDENT IN GEN AREA 455540”

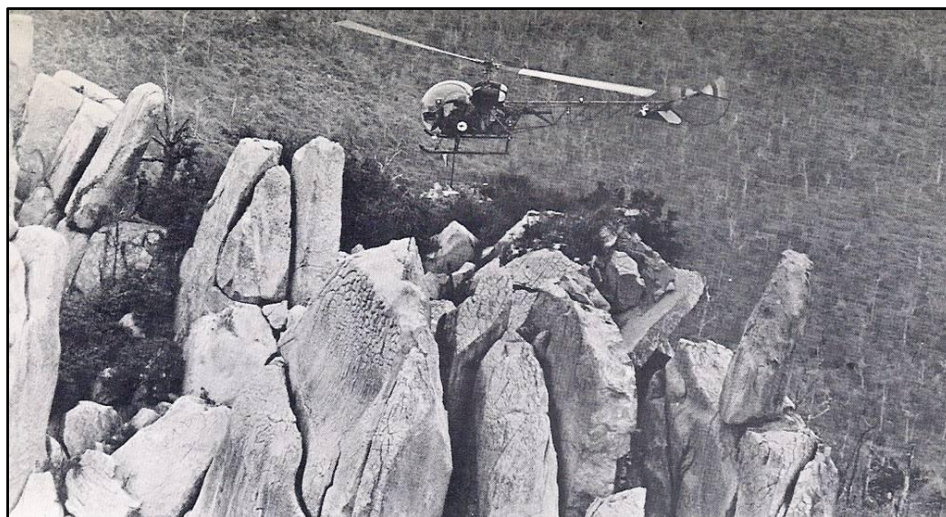
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This was the pilot of a 161 Reconnaissance Flight Bell 47 helicopter, known as Possum, reporting to the Battalion Headquarters Command Post advising that he would arrange a Dustoff helicopter as well as coordinate the rescue operation as it was at that time. The grid reference was the pilot’s original estimation of where the wreckage lay in the hills.

Time: 1100 hours



Bell 47G Sioux (Call Sign ‘Possum’), 161 Recce Flt over the Long Hais (Image via David Wilkins)

Possum advises that he is returning to FSB “Thrust”, presumably to provide a briefing on his aerial reconnaissance. He also advised a revised grid reference for the wreckage.

“TO C/S OA from C/S POSS – RETURNING TO THRUST – NOW GRID OF WRECKAGE 459544’

Time: 1102 hours

“TO C/S POSS FROM C/S 9 – I WILL BE OUT TO CON THIS OP SOON”

Lieutenant Colonel Khan has taken the decision to take charge of the operation himself and advises the Possum pilot accordingly.

Time: 1104 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S 68 – IT’S BEEN CFM THAT THERE WERE 2 PERS IN THE AC – IT SEEMS ONLY 1 BAILED & BLACK PARACHUTE WAS SIGHTED BY US (AC WAS A L19)

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This is the second reference to a black parachute being sighted. Regrettably, we were to find out later that neither the pilot nor his observer had parachutes. What had been mistaken for a parachute was in fact one of the tail fins of the aircraft, a Cessna O-2, wafting to earth after the aircraft had been hit.

Note also the reference to the aircraft being an L19. The L19 was the former designation of the O-1 Bird Dog, the very aircraft that the O-2 replaced in the FAC role. Whereas the O-1 was a single engine light observation aircraft, the O-2 was a twin-engine aircraft with the engines arranged in a push/pull configuration fore and aft. The only things in common between the two aircraft were that were both built by Cessna and both were used in the FAC role.



Cessna O-2 foreground and Cessna O-1 (L19 background)

Time: 1115 hours

“TO C/S 3 FROM C/S 9 – ONE BODY HAS BEEN FOUND IN THE WRECKAGE”

Lieutenant Colonel Khan advises Major Ducker that one body has been found. Presumably, this is an aerial observation by Possum as no ground party has yet been dispatched into the Long Hais to the crash site. Concurrent preparations for that activity had been initiated earlier and 9 Platoon, with other elements of C Company, was on stand-by to move into the Long Hais supported by a Centurion tanks and M113 APCs.

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At this stage it was assumed that the rescue operation had now become a recovery operation.

Time: 1155 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S T21 – NO OF AIRCRAFT 86869 USAF”

Tango 21 is the callsign of a Centurion Main Battle Tank. The downed O-2 is positively identified by the ‘buzz’ number stencilled on the separated tail fin located on the way to the crash site.

Time: 1200 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S T21 – NO CFM ON AC”

The Centurion tank commander advises Battalion Headquarters that there is not yet any confirmation on the remainder of the aircraft.

Time: 1216 hours

“TO C/S 9 FROM C/S T21 – ONE OF THE TANGO ELM CAUGHT IN ROCKS – SUSPECTING BROKEN GEARBOX – BLUE BELL OPS TO BE SUPPLIED”

This transmission advised the Commanding Officer that a Centurion tank had sustained a suspected broken gearbox and that Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME) would be required to effect repairs. “Blue Bell” was the radio codeword for RAEME.

During the Vietnam conflict, the Long Hais were a Viet Cong (VC) base area, known as Minh Dam secret zone. The VC D445 Battalion and VC C25 Company used the hills as a supply and staging area. The land clearing operations were designed to deny the VC covered routes into and from the Long Hais.

The hills, one of the few remaining Viet Cong strongholds in Phuoc Tuy Province, were subjected to constant bombardment by American B-52 bombers, strike aircraft, including our own 2 Squadron Canberra bombers, and naval gunfire from United States warships. Between the Nui Dat base and the mountains 12 miles to the south were the heavy populated villages of Baria, Long Dien and Dat Do as well as several small hamlets. The terrain between Nui Dat and the Long Hais was flat and one of the richest rice bowls in Vietnam.

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Typical Long Hai terrain

The Long Hais were considered ‘tiger’ country by our troops. The terrain was rugged in the extreme. Besides a thick jungle canopy, the hills were a labyrinth of limestone caves and VC base camps and hospital facilities. As previous battalions had experienced, the hills were littered with mines and booby traps, and the terrain lent itself to ideal sniper positions, all of which combined led to a high incidence of friendly casualties for Australian soldiers venturing into the hills.

Time: 1305 hours

TO C/S OA FROM C/S POSS 27 – 1 ATF REQUIRE PIECES OF CRASHED AC”

Possum relays a message from 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) that they require pieces of the crashed O-2. That may sound simple on paper but given the nature of the terrain of the Long Hais and the fact that the crash site could only be, as may be seen, reached on foot by Infantry, recovery of any aircraft parts would prove near impossible. Other than the port fin and portion of the horizontal stabilizer, tail boom and starboard fin which had fallen in reasonably open ground, activities at the main crash site would focus on the recovery of the bodies.

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Port tail fin and rudder, portion of the port tail boom, and portion of the horizontal stabilizer



Starboard tail fin and rudder

Time: 1307 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S T21 – HAVE GONE ABOUT AS FAR AS WE CAN GO – TERRAIN IMPASSABLE”

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This brief radio transmission eloquently described the harsh terrain presented to armoured fighting vehicles such as the Centurion tank or Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) attempting to access the foothills. The thick jungle interspersed with huge clumps of bamboo and jagged rocks proved to be a formidable barrier to tanks and APCs. From here on in, the recovery operation would come down to the Infantry.

Time: 1310

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S T21 – SECURING POSITION NOW HAVE SENT FWD CAMERAMAN AND IF HE IS FIRED ON HE IS TO WITHDRAW SO THAT MY C/S CAN FIRE – WE ARE ABOUT 100 METRES SHORT”

The tank troop commander advises Battalion Headquarters that he is short of his objective. It is at this stage that we had dismounted from the APCs in order to ascend the mountain on foot to the crash site.

Time: 1321

“TO C/S TF FROM C/S 5RAR – REQ SECOND POSSUM (APPROVED)”

With the tank unable to proceed, HQ 1 ATF is requested to allocate a second Possum to assist with reconnaissance work.

Time: 1330 hours

The Battalion Adjutant, Captain David Wilkins, flew as an observer in the Bell 47G Sioux helicopter. He was able to assist the C Company recovery party by guiding us to the crash site. The following is an extract from David’s diary of 19 June 1969:

“A “Jade” (FAC) aircraft was shot down by ground fire today and I was involved in the recovery operation, being the observer in “Possum”. This became a most nerve-wracking experience as we whirled in tight circles at treetop level at the foot of the Long Hai Mountains, above the plane wreckage, guiding the ground troops and reporting any enemy movement.

The pilot detected two enemy camp areas very near to the downed aircraft and we engaged one of these with a light fire team (Bushranger 70) firing rockets. We had one good hit but the rest were inaccurate. In addition to the possibility of coming under enemy fire as we hovered and reconnoitred, sometimes only 15-20 feet (4.6m-6m) from the ground, I was unnerved somewhat by the driving rain through the open side door, and the turbulence which tossed us about like a cork in

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the ocean. Updrafts would suddenly lift us from 20 feet (6m) to 200 feet (61m) above the ground. Thank heaven the down drafts weren't as violent!! After 2. hours I was thankful that “Possum” was due to refuel, as by now I was quite soaked through from the rain, cold from the wind and giddy from the tight circling of the chopper.

The downed aircraft was completely burnt out and the two unfortunate crew reduced to charcoal. The ground troops, C Coy, had the unpleasant task of recovering their remains, which they wrapped in ponchos, and carted to a helipad for evacuation.

The local VC who occupy camps in the areas of the Long Hai Mountains and the “Long Green” are having definite difficulties in obtaining rice and conducting their normal activities in Dat Do and surrounding villages. Documents captured from the VC in contacts in Dat Do and in the Long Green talk about the Australian operation here as “the siege of the Long Hai”. Their rice supplies have run very low and they have been forced to take risks by entering Dat Do by night and therefore exposing themselves to the Australian ambushes.

One document described how, on the night of 15 June, they unfortunately lost six of their VC hardcore members who, despite efforts to warn them, entered Dat Do and ran into a fatal Australian ambush. Two VC members inside Dat Do at the time were mentioned in the letter, as having failed to warn the six, and I would hazard a guess that they will be reprimanded accordingly, whatever their methods are.

The Australians have proved to be a definite thorn in the VC's side and retaliation is now planned (according to the documents) with the aim of attacking Dat Do and killing at least 30 Australians. Let them try.”

**“TO 62 FROM C/S 5RAR – YOUR RV WITH FOXHOUND ELMS IS AT 477548 OUR INTERNAL
FREQ 77E – YOUR EXTRA ELMS ARE APPRECIATED”**

Callsign 62 was that of the Battalion's Assault Pioneer Platoon.

Time: 1335 hours

**“TO C/S OA FROM C/S 3 – HAVE REACHED AC FOUND TWO VERY CHARRED BODIES AND 2
WPNS – BODIES ARE TO BE RECOVERED IF POSS – RADIOS AND OTHER EQUIP TO BE
DESTROYED”**

The Officer Commanding C Company advises Battalion Headquarters that 9 Platoon and the other C Company elements have reached the crash site of the O-2 and that the pilot and his observer were both deceased. On instructions from Major Ducker, I deployed my platoon in a

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defensive cordon around the crash site in anticipation of any enemy activity and to aid the recovery of the bodies.

I have never forgotten that scene of the two American servicemen still in their seats, very badly burned and with their arms up in front of their faces as if trying to protect themselves from the impending crash. With the tail blown off the aircraft, they stood little or no chance of survival as the O-2 would have been uncontrollable.

In conversation with our Company medic, Corporal Kevin “Doc” Mulligan, years after the event, he was able to confirm that both men had died instantly. Their spines had been driven up into their skulls by the impact. If it is any consolation to their next-of-kin, “Doc” advised that they were dead before the ensuing fuel fire took hold.

Time: 1344 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S 3 – ATTEMPT IS BEING MADE TO REMOVE BODIES FROM AC WRECKAGE – REQ LT FIRE TEAM – THERE ARE SIGNS OF EN IN GEN AREA”

At this stage, “Doc” and my platoon medic, the late Lance Corporal Stone began the unenviable task of extracting the bodies from the wreckage. Water bottles were passed to the two medics in order to cool the bodies for extraction from the tangled wreckage that once was an O-2 Cessna.

Concurrently, because of obvious enemy activity around us, the Officer Commanding asked Battalion Headquarters for a Light Fire Team (rocket and mini-gun armed Bell UH-1D Iroquois “Bushranger” helicopter) in case of any impending fire-fight.

Time: 1400 hours

“TO C/S 9 FROM C/S 3 – REPORT BY T21 HEARD 1 SHOT IN AREA OF WRECKAGE AND WANTS 33A TO WITHDRAW IN ORDER TO SECURE AREA”

Whether this shot was a signal shot by the enemy to warn their comrades of our presence in the area or something else will probably never be known. C/S 33A was a detachment of C/S 33 (9 Platoon).

At this stage, the recovery group began to make preparations for their way down from the crash site to marry up with the MBT and APCs.

Time: 1405 hours

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“TO C/S 3 FROM C/S OA – ETA 1430 OF TA FROM NUI DAT. TWO TRACKS ARRIVING 5-10 MIN”

This message from Battalion Headquarters advised the Officer Commanding C Company that two APCs from Nui Dat were arriving in the area of the foothills.

Time: 1431 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S 3 – TA22 APPROACHING 3 LOC NOW

Time: 1603 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S 3 – TA IS BOGGED ALSO RECOVERY VEH. IN GREEN NOW ALL EXCEPT C/S T21, 32, 33A”

Time: 1712 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S 3 – CHECKING WRECKAGE NOW. EN SIGNS IN AREA”

In conversation with Warrant Officer Class 2 Jack Lake, the Company Sergeant Major of C Company, in 2011, he advised that he believed that it was Corporal Bill Ross from the Intelligence Section, Battalion Headquarters, who told him some time after the incident that there were a group of enemy in a squad sized camp cooking rice when the aircraft plunged from the sky near them. Apparently, from captured documents and intelligence reports, the enemy rapidly decamped as they knew that there would be some sort of follow-up by ground forces as a result of the crash.

Time: 1735 hours

“TO C/S OA FROM C/S 3 – REQ LFT WITH DUSTOFF: GRANTED”

At this stage, it was intended that the bodies were to be extracted by air using a Dustoff helicopter. The request for a Light Fire Team was based on the tangible signs of enemy activity in the area.

Time: 1745 hours

“CANCEL DUSTOFF. THERE ARE BOOBY TRAPS IN AREA. BODIES WILL BE TAKEN OUT BY FOOT. LFT STANDBY”

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With bodies extracted, they were wrapped in a Tent’s Half Shelter and secured with toggle ropes. With the enemy activity in the area, the decision was taken to extract the bodies on foot rather than risk a Dustoff helicopter coming under enemy fire.

Private Summerfield recalled *“We got the remains out (of the wreckage). A length of sapling some 15 to 18 feet (4.5m to 5.5m) long and some 3 to 4 inches (7.6cm to 10.2cm) at the base was cut down. The bodies were wrapped in a tents half shelter and slung under the pole”.*

The bodies were then carried down the mountain by two platoon members. While this method may seem somewhat irreverent, due to the rugged terrain, it was the only practical way of getting the bodies off the mountain.

Time: 1908 hours

“HAVE BODIES – NEARING OLD LOC NOW. SEND DUSTOFF//DUSTOFF HEAR (sic) IN MORNING”

The Company Headquarters and 9 Platoon elements married up with the tanks and APCs at the foot of the mountains. With bodies placed on the lowered wading board of one of the APCs, the group returned to the Fire Support Base. In all, the recovery operation had taken some 9 hours but at least we had the satisfaction of knowing that these two United States servicemen would be repatriated to their homeland.

Time: 1945 hours

“LOCSTATS FINAL C/S 3, 33, E7, TA23 TFNBYZEC (477548), C/S 31 PWBZLFIA (461543) C/S 32, T21,T20B UXBLNGYLT (462545)

These were the final night time positions of C Company Headquarters group, 9 Platoon, the APCs, 7 Platoon, 8 Platoon and the Centurion tanks.

Who Were These United States Servicemen?

I wrote to the then Secretary of the FAC Association, Rick Aitcheson, in the United States seeking his assistance in identifying the pilot of the O-2 and his observer. I provided the ‘buzz’ number of the Cessna O-2, ‘86869’ (the full Serial Number (S/N) was 68-6869, the 68 designating the year of manufacture of the aircraft) together with the date of the crash as well as my reason for my enquiry.

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Rick's response included an extract from the FAC Association website as follows:

James Dean Hoag

Killed In Action 19 June 1969

Captain James Dean Hoag was from East Point, Georgia and born on 18 October 1941. He was 27 and married when he died. Captain Hoag was a Kenny Forward Air Controller assigned to the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron at Bien Hoa. He and First Lieutenant George Richard Dover, a Marine Observer, were flying O-2A S/N 68-6869 on a mission to destroy Viet Cong rocket and mortar firing positions near Lang Phouc Hai 15 miles (24km) north of Vung Tau in Choung Thien Province, South Vietnam. They were using air strikes and Naval gunfire when their aircraft was hit by ground fire, which blew off the tail of the aircraft. Both crewmen died in the crash and their bodies were recovered. Captain Hoag had four years of service and had served 67 days in combat. His name is located at 22W 089 on the Vietnam Memorial."

Some 49 and a half years after we recovered them from the Long Hai Mountains, I had finally identified the crew of the ill-fated Cessna O-2. But was it possible to put faces to the pilot and his observer? The following are extracts from the United States Vietnam Memorial Virtual Wall:

James Dean Hoag

ON THE WALL: Panel W22 Line 89

PERSONAL DATA

Home of Record: East Point, Ga.

Date of Birth: 10/18/1941

MILITARY DATA

Service: United States Air Force

Grade at Loss: O3

Rank/Rate: Captain

MOS/Rating: 1115 Pilot, Tactical Aircraft

Unit: 19th TAC Air Spt Sqdn, 504th TAC Air Spt Grp, 7th AF

CASUALTY DATA

Start Tour: 04/14/1969

Casualty Date: 06/19/1969

Age at Loss: 27

Location: Chuong Thien Province, South Vietnam

Remains: Body recovered

Casualty Type: Hostile, died while missing



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George Richard Dover **ON THE WALL: Panel W22 Line 88**



PERSONAL DATA

Home of Record: Indianapolis, IN

Date of Birth: 02/08/1933

MILITARY DATA

Service: United States Marine Corps

Grade at loss: O2

Rank/Rate: First Lieutenant

MOS/Rating: 0840: Naval Surface Fire Support
Planner

Length Service: 18

Unit: SUBUNIT 1, 1ST ANGLICO, FMFPAC

CASUALTY DATA

Start Tour: 10/26/1968

Casualty Date: 06/19/1969

Age at Loss: 36

Rest in peace Captain Hoag and First Lieutenant Dover, your sacrifice is not forgotten.

End Piece

The official reports state that the Cessna O-2 was brought down by ground fire. The VC did not possess ground to air missiles but rather utilised RPG 2 and RPG 7 anti-tank weapons, neither of which would be capable of bringing down a moving target such as the FAC aircraft; it would be a million-to-one shot if this were the case. In my opinion, the FAC was brought down by friendly fire from the Charles F. Adams Class destroyer. This would account for the violent impact that torn off the aircraft's empennage.

Acronyms:

1 ATF = 1st Australian Task Force

AC = aircraft

BHQ = Battalion Headquarters

CAPT = Captain

C/S = radio callsign

C/S OA = Battalion Headquarters command post

C/S 3 = C (Charlie) Company

C/S 33 = 9 Platoon, C Company

C/S 33A = detachment of 9 Platoon

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C/S 62 = Assault Pioneer Platoon
C/S 9 = 5RAR Commanding Officer (Lieutenant Colonel C.N. Khan)
C/S T21 = Centurion Main Battle Tank
CFM = confirmation
CPL = Corporal
CSM = Company Sergeant Major
Dustoff = Bell UH-1D Iroquois aeromedical evacuation helicopter
En = enemy
EQUIP = equipment
FAC = Forward Air Controller
Foxhound = Infantry
FWD = forward
GP = Group
HQ = headquarters
LFT = light fire team (armed UH-1D of the RAAF named “Bushranger”)
LOC = location
LTCOL = Lieutenant Colonel
MAJ = Major
NoK = Next of Kin
OC = Officer Commanding
Possum = Cessna 180 or Bell 47 helicopter of 161 Reconnaissance Flight
PTE = Private
RAAF = Royal Australian Air Force
RV = rendezvous point
SQN = Squadron
TA (Tango Alpha) = prefix for radio callsign of M113 Armoured Personnel Carrier
TAC AIR SPT = Tactical Air Support
TF = Task Force
T (Tango) = prefix for radio callsign of Centurion Main Battle Tank
VEH = vehicle

Acknowledgments:

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- The Virtual Wall, Vietnam Veterans Memorial (US); www.VIRTUALWALL.org
- Major Claude Ducker, Military Cross, Officer Commanding C Company, 5 RAR, 1969/70
- Captain David Wilkins, Adjutant, 5 RAR, 1969/70
- Warrant Officer Class 2 Jack Lake, Company Sergeant Major, C Company, 5 RAR, 1969-70
- Corporal Kevin ‘Doc’ Mulligan, Company Medical Orderly, C Company, 5 RAR, 1969/70
- Corporal Bill Ross, Intelligence Section, Battalion Headquarters, 5 RAR, 1969/70

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- Lance Corporal Dave “Stoney” Stone, Platoon Medical Orderly, 9 Platoon, C Company, 5 RAR, 1969/70
- Private Colin Summerfield, Rifleman, 9 Platoon, C Company, 5 RAR, 1969/70
- Private Terry Fitzgerald, Rifleman, 9 Platoon, C Company, 5 RAR, 1969/70
- Private Dennis ‘Digger’ Nivens, Machine Gunner, Tracker Platoon, 5 RAR, 1969/70

The Cessna O-2



Cessna O-2, Luscombe Field, Nui Dat (AWM Image)

The Cessna O-2 (also known as the "Oscar Deuce") was a military version of the Cessna 337 Super Skymaster and was utilized as an observation and Forward Air Control (FAC) aircraft. The United States Air Force commissioned Cessna to build a military variant to replace the O-1 Bird Dog in 1966.

The first O-2 flew in January 1967 and the plane went into production shortly thereafter, with the USAF taking delivery in March 1967. A total of 532 O-2s were built in two variants for the USAF by 1970. The O-2A served as a FAC aircraft while the O-2B was equipped with loudspeakers and a leaflet dispenser for use in the Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) role. Several USAF O-2 aircraft were later transferred to and operated by the former VNAF (South Vietnamese Air Force).

General Characteristics:

- **Crew:** two (2) - pilot and observer
- **Length:** 29.75 ft (9.07 m)

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- **Wingspan:** 38.17 ft (11.63 m)
- **Height:** 9.17 ft (2.79 m)
- **Wing area:** 202.5 ft² (18.8 m²)
- **Empty Weight:** 2,848 lb (1,292 kg)
- **Loaded weight:** 5,400 lb (2,448 kg)
- **Powerplant s:** two (2) × Continental IO-360C six-cylinder flat engines, 210 hp (157 kW) each

Performance:

- **Maximum Speed:** 200 mph (322 km/h)
- **Range:** 1,325 mi (2,132 km) combat
- **Service Ceiling:** 18,000 ft (5,490 m)
- **Rate of Climb:** 1,180 ft/min (6 m/s)

Armament:

- **Hardpoints:** Four MAU-3A bomb racks
- **Rockets:** LAU-59A Rocket Launcher, MA-2A Rocker launcher



World War II stock used by FAC Pilots

(Canberra Times, September 12, 1968, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory)

From JOHN MANCY at Phan Rang Air Base, South Vietnam

THE Australian Canberra jet bomber circles some 24,000 feet above the network of river canals and rice paddy of South Vietnam's Mekong Delta and calls for the FAC (forward air control) pilot who will mark out the bombing target.

"Magpie 61 here. We have two 5001b bombs and four 1,0001b bombs for you",
the bomber pilot radios. The FAC pilot answers:

"Great, Magpie 61. I think we can put them to good use. You see where the river breaks out to the east of that township. Your target is on the south bank of the first canal after the turn-off. I'll drop some smoke for you".

The FAC's light aircraft sweeps down and marks the target area — a complex of surface military

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structures — with a smoke bomb. Meanwhile the Canberra has come down to bombing level of 3,000 feet.

"Well, there's someone down there for sure", the AC pilot calls.

"I saw a fair bit of tracer whizzing past then, but it shouldn't bother you too much at your altitude. You see my smoke? The target's just 30 metres to the right from where you are now.

"I'd like you to drop your 500 pounds first. Do you want to do a trial run?"

The RAAF pilot answers that he does and the navigator wriggles up to the nose-cone of the jet and peers down through his bombing sights.

They finish the trial run and the FAC swoops down to place another marker.

The navigator directs the pilot in over the target. "Right. Little more right. Right. Steady, Steady, Steady-steady. Steady steady. Bombs away".

The Canberra returns to Phan Rang where the 260 men of No 2 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force are based on the coastline some 170 miles north east of Saigon.

There are eight of the more than 14-year-old Canberras at Phan Rang Base, which the Australians share with four squadrons of F-100 Supersabre fighter-bombers and one squadron of B-57 bombers of the US Air Force 35th Tactical Fighter Wing.

Stockpile

The 500 and 1,000lb bombs are from Australia's World War II stock pile. They have the only 1,000lb bombs in Vietnam, but the supply is almost exhausted and they will soon switch to the American's 750lb bombs.

Despite the age of the aircraft and bombs, the Australian squadron's performances compare more than favourably with the American squadrons.

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According to US figures, the 16 months that the Australian have been at Phan Rang, No. 2 Squadron has carried out eight per cent of the total sorties and scored 15 per cent of the bomb damage assessment.

The Australians, have dropped 25,000 bombs, all World War II stock, hitting some five-and-a-half thousand targets.

Targets range from enemy base camps, rest areas, supply and munition dumps, road, bridges and bunker complexes and military, structures.

A 'military structure' can be anything from a two storey French villa to a bark lean-to.

When the squadron arrived it carried out only night radar-controlled, Skyspot', bombing sorties. Now it flies six FAC directed day missions and two night sorties every day.

The squadron is an independent unit providing own food and accommodation facilities, but comes under the operational control of the US 35th TFW. It is the only RAAF bomber squadron operating in South Vietnam.

He Calls The Shots

A RAAF pilot has made more than 200 combat missions as the eyes of the daily airstrikes against the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.



He is Wing Commander **Vance Drummond**, AFC, of Hackett, Canberra, who is on attachment to the United States Air Force in Vietnam, flying his tiny Cessna “Bird Dog” aircraft named “Snoopy” in search of targets for the USAF fighter-bombers to blast.

Right: Wing Commander Vance Drummond checking his ArmaLite automatic rifle before another “Bird Dog” mission.

“Bird Dog” is the code-name for the forward Air Controllers (FAC)

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who range over the Vietnamese jungles, sometimes only at tree-top height, looking for the tell-tale signs that the Viet Cong are there.

Not only do the FACs ensure that the Viet Cong are there, but make doubly sure that no friendly troops or civilians are likely to be hit by the airstrikes with result.

Target Area

No target is attacked until the FAC has verified it as legitimate. He must check the target against maps and information supplied from the ground controllers, pass the information back to base, and then wait and guide the fighters into the target area which he has described on his radio, or perhaps marked with smoke bombs.

When the attack is over, he must then observe the results and report on the success of the operation.

Wing Commander Drummond was sent to Vietnam to study tactical air control techniques. His first few weeks were spent as the tAC centre at Saigon Airport, but now, at his own instigation, he regularly flies with the “Bird Dog” controllers in a more practical field of study.

The FAC spends a lot of time in the air. One hundred hours a month is the time officially allowed, and most of the pilots reach this limit without fail. An average flight lasts about three hours usually up to the limit of the fuel of the “Bird Dog”.

For most of this time the FAC is ranging the countryside checking on what is going on in his area of responsibility. The Viet Cong know by now that the small silver “Bird Dog” aircraft are out looking for them, and they usually try to keep low. Others naturally resent the watching aircraft and do their best to destroy it with ground fire.

Wing Commander Drummond only sees members of the RAAF when he lands at Vung Tau about once a month to pick up his pay and mail. He has a rare job among the Australians, and regards it as an honour and an opportunity to show that the RAAF aircrews are equal to the exacting task of calling the shots.

Wing Commander Drummond, who has a wide background of operational flying, is one of the

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RAAF’s most experienced fighter pilots. He served in Korea with No. 77 Squadron, and was taken prisoner-of war by the North Koreans. (*RAAF News, October 1966*)

MORE ABOUT WING COMMANDER DRUMMOND

In November 1965 Wing Commander Drummond was attached to the United States Air Force in Vietnam for tactical air control duties. During the period November 1965 until July 1966 he served on the headquarters staff where he displayed an excellent knowledge of the tactical air control system and weapons.

Vance Drummond’s vast experience in tactical air support was put to practical use when Wing Commander Drummond was posted to the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron, for forward air controller (FAC) duties on 8th July 1966. He flew more than 500 hours with this Squadron until the completion of his tour in November 1966 and in this capacity he displayed an uncanny ability for locating Viet Cong forces and installations. He took part in many hazardous operational missions and he proved himself to be a highly successful FAC.



"At 19:30 hours on 24th July 1966 he flew as the FAC on an urgent operational mission. He and

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his pilot were scrambled in an aircraft to cover an army company that was surrounded by Viet Cong and in danger of being annihilated. On arrival in this area encountered intense automatic weapons fire, with complete disregard to their own safety, they provided a vital life-line to the ground troops; Wing Commander Drummond played an indispensable role in directing flare ships and lighter aircraft into the area to support the besieged troops. Remaining in the area until dangerously low in fuel, they then made an emergency landing at Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

After a quick refuel they returned to the besieged company at 00:30 hours and remained in area directing support aircraft until 03:00 hours - during this period they continued to encounter light automatic fire and the weather conditions approached marginal conditions Wing Commander Drummond and his pilot again returned to the area at 06:00 hours and remained in contact with the troops until helicopter borne troops relieved the besieged company just after first light.

During the hours of darkness from the night of the 24th July 1966 until the morning of the 25th July 1966, the pilot of the O-1 aircraft and Wing Commander Drummond, as PAC, showed outstanding courage and unselfish devotion to duty in directing operations that were instrumental in saving the lives of many members of the besieged company. This incident typifies the outstanding qualities displayed by this officer throughout his operational tour with the USAF, and he reflected great credit upon himself and the Royal Australian Air Force".



6

Wing Commander Vance Drummond
AFC. DFC. AUS/33624 RAAF
Born Tuesday 22nd February 1927
Hamilton, New Zealand. Killed
Wednesday 17th May 1967 South
Pacific Ocean

Son of Leonard Henry Vance Drummond, office manager, and his wife Dorothy Josephine May (née McKnight) both New Zealand born, one of children.

Joined the RNZAF in May 1944 and trained as a

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navigator in October 1945 he left the service.

In March 1946 he joined the New Zealand Army and was sent to Japan working as an interpreter - returned to New Zealand in 1948 he left the army and applied to joined the RNZAF in the hope to be trained as a fighter pilot (his older brother, Fred served as a fighter pilot during WW2. Killed flying a Spitfire on a training exercise whilst with 111 Squadron in Scotland) He was rejected as being too old. He moved to Australia and was accepted by the RAAF on the 29th August 1949.

Graduated as a pilot coming top of his course in February 1951. Posted in August 1951 to serve in Korea with 77 Squadron. Flying the Meteor jet against communist forces flying the MiG-15's - recommended for the American Air Medal and commissioned on the 30th November 1951.

On the 1 December 1951 he was shot down but ejected safely only to be captured by North Koreans - in 1952 he, together with four others escaped from Pinchon-ni prisoner-of-war camp, but all were recaptured and punished. Drummond was repatriated in September 1953.

Completed various courses and became the initial member of the RAAF Sabre trials flight, on the 09th September 1955 he married Margaret Hope Buckham.

Promoted to Squadron Leader in January 1962 and took charge of 75 Squadron 'Black Diamonds' aerobatic team, the official RAAF squad.

Returning home, on 20 February 1967 from Vietnam, Drummond assumed command of No.3 Squadron at Williamtown. On 17 May that year he and three other pilots were engaged in training exercises off the New South Wales coast. At 4.20 p.m., about 50 miles (80 km) north-east of Newcastle, his Mirage went into a dive and plummeted into the sea. Neither his body nor the aircraft was recovered. Margaret took their only child, 9-year-old David, to Government House, Canberra, to receive Vance's DFC on the 5 April 1968.

Note: Additional FAC stories can be found in Phan Rang Newsletters 3, 21, 22, 45, 79, 126, 129, 130, 143, 174, 200, 205 and 228.

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GIs ‘Don’t Forget’ Local Red Cross

(Cumberland Evening Times, February 6, 1970, Cumberland, Maryland)

Clubs, church groups, auxiliaries, individuals and Allegany County Chapter, American Red Cross, have received many letters of appreciation for Christmas ditty bags mailed to service people in Vietnam.

The chapter also received a citation making it an "honorary Shadow" for outstanding service to the 17th Special Operations Squadron at Phan Rang Air Base. The unit, called "The Shadows", flew nightly combat missions in Vietnam.

The local chapter, with the assistance of many groups and individuals and its Service to Military Families volunteers, sewed and shipped 791 of the colorful ditty bags containing personal and recreational items to Vietnam.

Letters were received from group commanders, officers and GIs. They all expressed essentially the same thought, "we are not forgotten" One soldier wrote that the bag he received was his only Christmas present.

Others gave their names and addresses and requested letters.

Several of the men indicated that they would soon be rotated home but asked the chapter and the Red Cross to keep up the good work and to continue the program for those who would be in Vietnam next Christmas. Jean H. Faup, field director for the Red Cross, wrote that the local chapter's shipment was directed to his office which serves the Phan Rang Air Base and Phan Thiet, which serves elements of Task Force Southern Army Command. He noted that the Christmas ditty bags had to travel by land, sea and air to reach servicemen who in some instances serve in very isolated areas.

Mrs. Ellen McKenzie has been chairman of the Christmas project during the four years it has been in operation. The chapter each year has exceeded its assigned quota for shipment.

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That the program is a worthwhile one and is appreciated by the servicemen in Vietnam is indicated in different words by all of the writers, that someone unknown to them though and remembered them on Christmas.

L. B. ‘Blonde Amazon’ Won Troops' Hearts

(Independent, July 18, 1969, Long Beach, California)

By MARY NEISWENDER Staff Writer

They call her "The Blonde Amazon," but GIs from Can Tho to Dong Ha — from the Delta to the DMZ — think she's the "greatest."

And Judy Lee, Long Beach singer-musician, feels the same way about them.

The 24-year-old entertainer returned home recently after her second tour of Vietnam. She has performed before khaki-clad crowds of from six to 1,800, from atop bunkers, in rain and broiling sun, on stage and off.

BUT TO The 5-foot, 8-inch mother of two it was well worth it.

"There's something about wearing that little hat that says 'USO' and that red, white and blue that gets to you," she says.

What also apparently gets to her are the songs the American fighting men request:

"They ask for the sad songs, like 'The Green, Green Grass of Home' and 'Detroit City' —but they don't ask for it by that name, but by the name 'I Wanna-Go Home'. "All day long they're expected to act like tough men. They are expected to be almost super-human. A big treat to them is a hot shower — but they don't gripe.

"But when they are allowed to relax for a few minutes, you can see they're just tired of being tough guys. They want to sit down and cry a little bit — to get it out of their systems."

There are calls for jazz and folk and soul music, she says, but the most requested music is

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country-western.

"I guess it's typically American — no hidden meanings, sentimental, sad. It's what they liked and it's what we gave them."

A graduate of Wilmington's Banning High School, she became a part of show-biz while still a student. She was part of her mother's all-girl band -- "Dotty Lynn's Original Gold Diggers" — performing at the Navy base on Terminal Island. After three-and-a-half years she became experienced enough to perform "more than-adequately" on six instruments — piano, organ, accordion, vibraphone, bass and drums. She broke her home ties and struck out on her own, performing in every major city in the West.

When she accepted an invitation to join the USO's RFD — Hollywood' show, he agreed to perform for a month in Japan, Korea and Okinawa. Instead, she ended up in Vietnam.

"It was a 15-day whirlwind tour — but it was fun. They gave us the best. If everyone else slept on the floor, they'd give us an Army cot."

So she returned.

"THE FIRST-three shows we did were in Pleiku and Kontum. We sat up on top of some bunkers in Kontum because it was the best place available — but my drums kept tipping over. Round sandbags don't make a good base," she laughs.

All the shows, however, contrary to show biz tradition, were performed during the daylight hours.

"It doesn't take long to discover in Vietnam that no matter what you have during the day — at night it belongs to Charlie."

She was in Saigon during the last Tet offensive, and it was the "hardest part of the tour."

"For five days we were cooped up in the hotel — five women with nothing to do but argue. It

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was awful.”

The sporadic bombings, gunfire and fighting didn't bother her too much — “I was just scared to death.”

Heaviest fire she underwent, she recalls — now with a laugh — was in **Phan Rang**.

“It's an Air Force base, and we did five shows in the two days we were there. The first night Phan Rang took 52 rockets inside their perimeter. There weren't even any bunkers to help. We just sat there.

Of the Vietnamese countryside she says: “It's the most beautiful I've ever seen — white sandy beaches, blue water, tropical weather.”

Of the Vietnamese themselves she has little good to say: “The only religion I ever saw being practiced regularly — with devotion — was getting money off the GIs.”

Although she saw thousands of “America's finest” in her travels, she returned home to marry Stanton Hannaman of Culver City police officer, and longtime friend.

And she now plans to stay home at 2702 E. 218th St., to care for her new husband and two daughters, Doris, 3, and Laura, 2.

And write a book about her experiences.

Pat Nugent sure bet to be where action is

(Oneonta Star, August 13, 1969, Oneonta, New York)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (AP) Airman 1C, **Patrick J. Nugent**, President Johnson's son-in-law, is in training for a new job that should let him see a good deal of South Vietnam, including where the action is.

Nugent, who arrived in Vietnam April 13 for a one-year tour, is stationed at the U.S. Air Force

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Base at Phan Rang, on the central coast, 173 miles northeast of Saigon.

"He's a member of the 309th Special Operations Squadron, in training to be a loadmaster on the Air Force's C-123, a twin-engine prop plane that carries cargo and men to all parts of the country.

The second phase of his training, called on-job training or OJT by the military began in the middle of July. Nugent is flying as an apprentice loadmaster on C-123s making hops all over Vietnam, and possibly Thailand and Laos.

A fully qualified loadmaster accompanies him on each of the trips until mid-September, when Nugent will be fully qualified.

Information about Nugent's exact whereabouts on the base, and about his flights, is classified. At his request, the Air Force has kept newsmen away. This is Nugent's second job in Vietnam. His reserve unit, the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing, was called to active duty last February during the crisis over North Korea's seizure of the USS Pueblo. Nugent applied for duty in Vietnam, where the President's other son-in-law, Marine Capt. Charles Robb, also is serving.

His first assignment was as a Loadmaster at Cam Ranh Bay air base. But Nugent asked a transfer to the potentially more dangerous assignment as a C-123 loadmaster.

After he is qualified, Nugent could be transferred to any four other airbases where C-123s are stationed. He could remain with one of the two C-123 squadrons at Phan Rang, or he could be sent to Da Nang, near where Capt. Robb is stationed, or Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport, or Phu Cat air base, 300 miles up the coast from Saigon, or Bien Hoa air base, 20 miles northeast of Saigon.

The C-123s flying out of Bien Hoa are used in the military's defoliation program.

As a loadmaster, Nugent will average one and a half days on the job and one and a half days off. When he's not flying, Nugent will pull all the duties any enlisted man, including overnight charge of quarters, collecting-money for meals at the mess hall, and cleaning the barracks.

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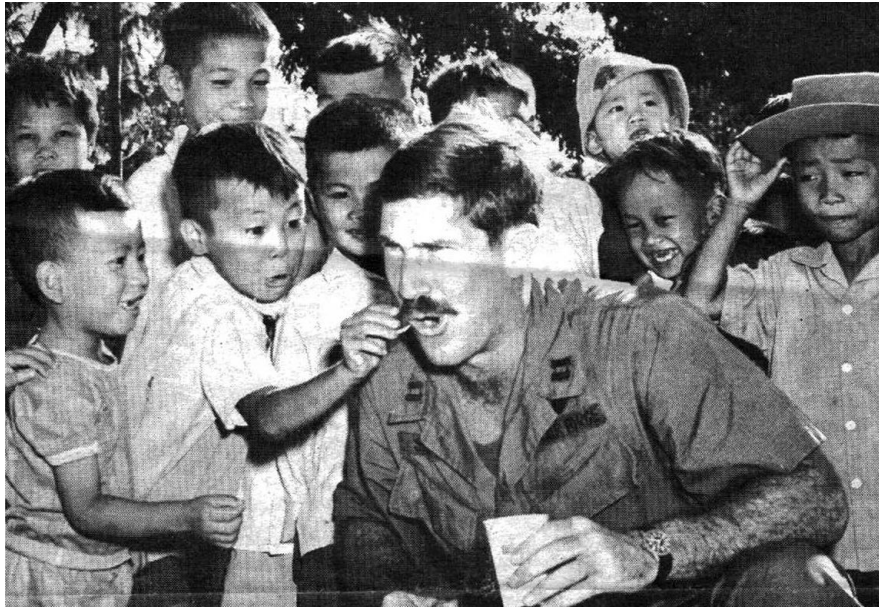
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As a loadmaster, Nugent will earn his \$343.60 monthly salary. The C-123s do everything from carrying Montagnard tribesmen, allied troops and other passengers from one airstrip to another, to ferrying loads of vegetables from Dalat, in the central highlands, to U.S. bases.

Nugent will be due for one week's R&R (rest and recuperation) in mid-October, and can go to one of six Asian countries or Honolulu, possibly for a reunion with wife Luci and their year old son, Lynn.

“Touch the Moustache”

“... My 2nd most famous photograph that I took while I was in Vietnam”



USAF Photo by Airman 1. C. Christopher Boles

Capt. Rowland D. Stanley’s playful grimace adds a challenge to a “touch the moustache” game at Phan Rang and his fellow pilots of the 352nd Tactical Fighter Sq. at Phan Rang AB were in the city to help on some construction projects in the units’ civic action program.”

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We had gone into town that day to do some civic action with the squadron. My job was to get some press release photos and captions would be added later. Capt. Stanley was in a classroom, and out in the area around the school. (not sure of all the details this late in the game). The kids were huddling around him while he played the guitar. I was just snapping pictures of the kids as they were so cute and looked like great photo material. I had used up all my film and was down to the last roll. I looked at my camera to see there was only one frame left before I was done for the day. The kids were starting to reach out and touch his moustache. I asked him to let the kids to that just one more time if he would be so kind to do so. He agreed and the kids reached in and pulled his moustache just as I squeezed off the shot.

The expressions and grimace were perfect! I just prayed that the film was going to come out on this one without any mistakes in processing. TSgt. Mahoney came down from the press office and wanted 25 prints as soon as possible in 5x7 to get his press release out on this. He knew it was a great shot. The printing in the newspapers just backed up what I knew when I saw the shot it, was going to have all the elements of a great picture.

As a footnote to this story...I had come back to the states before Christmas but I had to report in to Vandenberg as part of my 30 day leave. I reported in and got my room assignment. Later I went to the BX to shop for some personal items. As I was standing in line there was a rack of the AF Times. I looked over and I couldn't believe my eyes...there was the photo of the Capt's MoustOuch on the front cover! What are the chances of getting a front page? Another time I was reading the Ventura Star Free Press and turned the page where they had a half page spread on civic action programs in Vietnam. There was my photo as part of that story.



HUDSON - Air Force M.Sgt. **James M. Martin**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Martin, 217 River St., has been decorated with the Meritorious Service Medal at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sgt. Martin distinguished himself as a crew chief while assigned at Beale AFB, Calif. He is now at Phan Rang

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with a unit of the Pacific Air Forces. He is a 1954 graduate of Glenwood City High School. His wife, Lois, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Benoy, Hudson. (*Eau Claire Leader Telegram, August 25, 1971, Eau Claire, Wisconsin*)

Eau Claire - Sgt. **Robert M. Everson**, son of Mrs. Beatrice M. Everson, 3016 Douglas Lane, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sgt. Everson, an aircraft mechanic, is assigned to a unit of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he was assigned at Offutt AFB, Neb. He is a 1967 graduate of Eau Claire North High School and attended Wisconsin State University and District One Technical Institute. (*Eau Claire Leader Telegram, August 25, 1971, Eau Claire, Wisconsin*)

POLICEMAN VIETNAM — Airman 1-C **Walter D. Parks**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Parks of Pembroke, Va., is on duty at Phan Rang AB Vietnam. Airman Parks, a security policeman is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam he was assigned to Malmstrom AFB, Mont. The airman is a graduate of Giles High School, Pearisburg, Va. (*Bluefield Daily Telegraph, May 18, 1969, Bluefield, West Virginia*)

BRONZE STAR - PHAN RANG, VIETNAM - Army Sp. 4 **Gerald L. Honaker**, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lacy L. Honaker, Montcalm, received the Bronze Star Medal near Phan Rang, Vietnam. Spec. Honaker was presented the award for meritorious service in grounds operations against hostile forces in Vietnam. At the time of the presentation he was a rifleman with Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division's (Airmobile) 1st Brigade. His wife, Shirley, lives in Matoaka. (*Bluefield Daily Telegraph, May 18, 1969, Bluefield, West Virginia*)

County Serviceman Arrives in Vietnam PHAN RANG, Vietnam — Army Pfc **George M. Duke**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Duke, Coalport, Pa., arrived in Phan Rang, Vietnam, last month with his unit, the 529th Transportation Company. The company, previously located at Ft. Eustis, Va., will provide Transportation for Headquarters, Phan Rang Sub Area Command. Pfc. Duke, a truck driver in the company, entered the Army in November 1965 and completed basic training at Ft. Jackson, S. C. (*Clearfield Progress, February 11, 1967, Clearfield, Pennsylvania*)

Winburne Serviceman Arrives in Vietnam - PHAN RANG, Vietnam - Army Spec. 4. C. **Gary L. Rockey**, son of Mrs. Emma Rockey, Winburne, Pa., arrived in Phan Rang, Vietnam, last month

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with his unit, the 529th Transportation Company. The company, previously located at Ft. Eustis, Va., will provide Transportation for Headquarters, Phan Rang Sub Area Command. Spec Rockey, a truck driver in the company entered the Army in November 1965 and completed basic training at Ft. Jackson S. C. The 20-year old soldier was graduated from West Branch Area High School, Allport, in 1964. (*Clearfield Progress, February 11, 1967, Clearfield, Pennsylvania*)

SGT. **VIRGIL E. ADKINS**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond S. Adkins of 116 Arborland Acres, St. Albans, has received the Air Force Commendation Medal at Perrin AFB, Tex. Sgt. Adkins was decorated for meritorious service as a weapons mechanic at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. He was cited for his professional skill, initiative and dedication to duty in loading munitions on the F-4C Phantom II aircraft under extremely hazardous conditions. He is now at Perrin as a member of the Aerospace Defense Command. (*Charleston Gazette, April 13, 1968, Charleston, West Virginia*)

AIRMAN 1. C. **STEVE E. HARRISON**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Coy D. Harrison of 1833 Lotus Dr., is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. His wife, Glenda is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Les Hall of Rt. 3, Hurricane. (*Charleston Gazette, April 13, 1968, Charleston, West Virginia*)

AIRMAN **ALFRED G. BEANE**, son of Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Beane Jr. of 207 First St. St. Albans, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Beane, an aircraft mechanic is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. (*Charleston Gazette, April 13, 1968, Charleston, West Virginia*)



Monroe Man Gets Air Medal - WITH U.S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam — U. S. Air Force Major **David S. Litten** son of Mrs. Martha V. Litten, Clarington, Ohio, has received the Air Medal at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Major Litten, a troop carrier pilot, distinguished himself by meritorious service, displaying outstanding professional skills and devotion to duty which contributed materially to the success of the Air Force mission in Southeast Asia.

Photo top left: RECEIVES MEDAL - Major David S. Litten (right), son of Mrs. Martha V. Litten, Clarington, receives the Air Medal at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam, from Col. Leslie J. Campbell Jr., commander of the 315th Special Operations Wing.

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The major, who holds the aeronautical rating of command pilot, is assigned at Phan Rang with the 310th Special Operations Squadron, a unit of the Pacific Air Forces. A graduate of Clarington High School, he received his B.S. degree in physics from Ohio University and was commissioned there in 1962 through the Reserve Officers Training Corps program. Major Litton's wife, Anita, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Yacobozzi, 2810 Sherwood Drive, Loraine, Ohio.
(Cambridge Daily Jeffersonian, October 7, 1969, Cambridge, Ohio)

Sergeant **Ronald J. Overly** son of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac J. Overly of Donegal, is a member: of a unit that has earned the U. S. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with "V" device for Valor in Southeast Asia. Sergeant Overly, a carpenter in the 554th Civil Engineering at Cam Ranh Bay AB, Vietnam. He will wear a distinctive service ribbon to mark his affiliation with the unit. The squadron, which moved to Cam Ranh Bay in January, earned the award while stationed at Phan Rang Air Base. It was the third such award for the construction unit, but the first with the “V” device. The sergeant's squadron was cited for exceptionally meritorious service while participating in airfield and facilities construction and in the perimeter defense of Phan Rang from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 1969. He is a 1957 graduate of Mount Pleasant High School. His wife, Magdalena is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Pungenstein of 3112 S. Main, Minot ND.
(Connellsville Daily Courier, November 6, 1970, Connellsville, Pennsylvania)

U S Air Force Staff Sergeant **Gary I. Gemas**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas M. Gemas of 512 Race St. Connellsville, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sergeant Gemas is a weapons technician in a unit of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Southeast Asia, he served at Eglin AFB. Fla. The sergeant is a 1966 graduate of Connellsville Joint Senior High School. *(Connellsville Daily Courier, November 6, 1970, Connellsville, Pennsylvania)*

POLICEMAN VIETNAM — Airman 1-C **Walter D. Parks**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Parks of Pembroke, Va., is on duty at Phan Rang AB. Vietnam. Airman Parks, a security policeman, is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he was assigned to Malmstrom AFB Mont. The airman a graduate of Giles High School, Pearisburg, Va. *(Bluefield Daily Telegraph, May 18, 1969, Bluefield, West Virginia)*

BRONZE STAR PHAN RANG. VIETNAM - Army Sp. 4 **Gerald L. Honaker**, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lacy L. Honaker, Montcalm, received the Bronze Star Medal near Phan Rang, Vietnam. Spec.

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Honaker was presented the award for meritorious service in grounds operations against hostile forces in Vietnam. At the time of the presentation he was a rifleman with Company D. 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division’s Airmobile 1st Brigade. His wife, Shirley, lives in Matoaka. (*Bluefield Daily Telegraph, May 18, 1969, Bluefield, West Virginia*)

U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant **William L. Adams**, son of Mrs. Vivian Hargrove, 1311 Presstman St., Baltimore, has been decorated with the Air Medal at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sergeant Adams, an aircraft loadmaster, received the medal for his outstanding airmanship and courage on successful and important missions completed under hazardous conditions. He is assigned to a unit of the Pacific Air Forces at Phan Rang. The sergeant, a 1954 graduate of Douglas High School, served during the Cuban crisis. His wife, Ruth, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Salis Garrett, 2214 Bassett Ave., El Paso, Tex. (*Baltimore Afro American, July 1, 1969, Baltimore, Maryland*)

U.S. Air Force Sergeant **Eddie J. Holloway III**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eddie J. Holloway Jr., 2711 Delk Court, Baltimore. Md., is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sergeant Holloway, a security policeman, is in a unit of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Southeast Asia, he was assigned to the 1002nd Security Police Squadron at Andrews AFB Md. He has previously completed a tour of duty in Vietnam. A graduate of Patapsco Senior High School, the sergeant attended Morgan State College. (*Baltimore Afro American, July 1, 1969, Baltimore, Maryland*)

Doug’s Comments:



I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter. It’s amazing that with the 250th issue of the newsletter that equates to more than 7,000 pages of stories and pictures of the Phan Rang experience. This newsletter was composed by Douglas Severt and all graphics by Douglas Severt unless otherwise noted. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, dougsevert@cox.net and put ‘unsubscribe’ in subject

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