

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
"Keeping the memories alive" Newsletter 267

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Saluting 2ndLt. Dũng Nguyen

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My Visit to the Vietnam Memorial Wall



I (Douglas Severt) went there with a list of just five names that I wanted to look up. They were:

Jack Elroy Gardner, PFC

11/10/1944

05/20/1966

Died of gunshot wounds in hostile
fire.

I really didn't know Jack well, actually only met him once, but I worked with his mother at the Travis AFB Air Freight Terminal. Larry Stephen and I were the only two airmen working in the office and we were both the same age as her son Jack, working with all older civilian ladies and one of them was Christine, Jack's mother. Christine was the kindest lady, who not only had a family of her own, but they always had several foster children and her husband worked as a guard at the Vacaville Prison. On May 5, 1966 the lives of all of us working in the office changed, when Jack was killed after being in country for only three

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weeks, we experienced firsthand the grief of a mother and our first encounter with the Vietnam War. One of the worst things was the lack of information about his death and she tried so hard to get firsthand accounts from those serving with him, but I don't think she ever succeeded in getting anything that satisfied her. The office was a constant reminder of the horrors of the war because our office was on the second floor overlooking the ramp where night after night transfer cases of the fallen were offloaded.

Dwaine Mattox, Capt.

06/01/1940

08/10/1970



Dwaine died during a practice assault landing at Cam Ranh Bay a Provider crashed on the approach when a flap hinge broke causing the aircraft to roll uncontrollably. The aircraft fell into the sea just short of Cam Ranh Bay's runway and only the loadmaster (Agrifoglio) survived the accident. I never knew Dwaine, but I have communicated with Keith his younger brother many times, but his name for me is always associated with Maj. **Grand Reed Waugh** and TSgt **Bernard Morrill** who perished in the accident. Sgt. Robert Agrifoglio the lone survivor of that horrible crash passed away November 22, 2017 and attended one Phan Rang Reunion with his wife Marie, who has sense moved to the UK a few years after his death. Bob suffered from “*Survivors Guilt*”. I know that Bob's name isn't on the wall, but I wish that it could be along with his other crew members. Below is my first rubbing and I didn't do a very good job because emotions overcame me. I also left a Phan Rang AB Challenge coin for Dwaine with a note. Dwaine and his girl friend are pictured below.

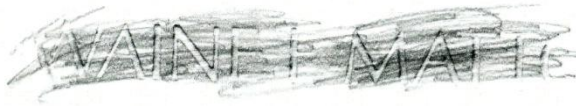
Here's some previous unpublished story from John Ward and his connection to Dwaine. He tells the following: Dwaine and I were paired up with an instructor pilot, Reed Waugh, for a

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week. We were being trained for upgrade to Aircraft Commander on the C-123 after we arrived at Phan Rang, since we both had prior flight experience from our previous assignments. What that training entailed was to have each of us to fly the left seat with an instructor in the right seat acting as co-pilot. During a regular cargo mission of as many as 8 to 10 flights a day, we would swap seats giving each of us left seat experience. We trained that way for a week. The following week, we were split up, with one continuing with the instructor to complete training, and the other was assigned to fly with a line Aircraft Commander for that week. I was selected for the latter, and the first day of that arrangement is when the mishap occurred.



**Curtis Edward Stieferman,
SSgt**

03/07/1939

11/04/1967



The story “Hell on Runway 25 Left” in Phan Rang Newsletter 189 has always haunted me ever since hearing about it and especially hearing first hand reports from Capt. Dole the AC. Curtis was in the back of the aircraft as the loadmaster, and the only casualty. He probably didn’t even know what hit him when that F-105 hit his C-123 aircraft because it almost immediately was engulfed in fire. The Provider was about to take off for its return flight to Phan Rang when the pilot saw a huge thunderstorm directly in its path and decided to abort the flight. He was observed to taxi along the runway to return to the parking area and had covered about 2,000 feet

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when the tower warned him to clear the runway immediately. However, before the Provider could turn off the runway, it was hit by the Thunderchief as it landed in poor visibility. The F-105's starboard wing sliced through the left side of the C-123's fuselage, the jet's fuselage tearing off both the Provider's engines from its port wing. The Thunderchief pilot, MAJ Aquilla F. Britt, was unable to eject and died in the crash as his F-105 cart-wheeled 5000-feet down the runway. MAJ Britt, who had just completed his 100th mission, was 5 days from returning to the U.S. The C-123 crew survived the collision, but one crewmember died a few days later. Loadmaster SSGT Curtis E. Stieferman exited the Provider which was engulfed in flames; however, he reportedly returned to the blazing wreck to save a crewmember and inhaled flames and was extensively burned. He died November 4, 1967. The rubbing was accomplished by my son, Ryan. A Phan Rang AB Challenge coin was also left for him along with a note. Jack Dole the pilot of this ill fated aircraft is in his early eighties, healthy and doing very well after an Air Force career and then later an airline career.



CURTIS E. STIEFERMAN



George Robert Andrews,
Capt.

11/04/1943
10/15/1969

Captain Andrews was flying F-100D tail number 56-3069 from Phan Rang Air Base on a close air support mission near Thuy Dong, about 30 miles west of Saigon. His aircraft was hit by ground fire as he was making a weapons run against an enemy sampan. Captain Andrews did not eject before the aircraft impacted in an un-survivable crash. I always felt an attachment to George

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because our birthdays are only a few days apart. A rubbing was accomplished with the help of my son Ryan and a Phan Rang AB Challenge Coin was left with a note.



GEORGE R ANDREWS



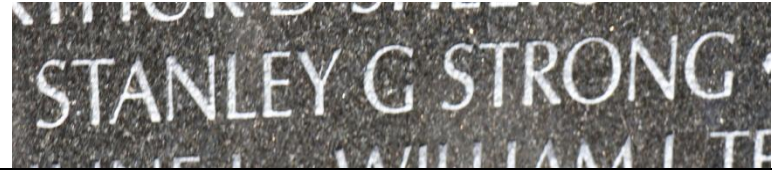
Stanley Grant Strong, Cpl.

10/26/1946

03/06/1968



I’ve always had an affinity for those innocent souls that were lost when a C-123 crashed with the loss of 52 souls, mainly because causality totals for passengers are just listed as totals but each one had a name and they have to be remembered as well. Stanley was one of 43 marines that perished after the aircraft tried to make another approach at Khe Sanh. I didn’t make a rubbing of Stanley’s name, however I did leave a Phan Rang AB Challenge Coin even though he was not assigned to the base, but just a passenger on a base assigned aircraft.



More detailed information about these hero’s can be found in Phan Rang Newsletter 155 and many other issues.

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Approaching the Wall it looked so unassuming and relatively small, but as you got closer you realize that it is larger than it looked from a distance. As you start finding names it seemed like I was amongst them...all those hero's were right here, I could see them and I became so emotional that I was afraid I was going to embarrass myself so I had to walk away to regain my composure and then just viewed it from a distance.

Statistics Concerning the Vietnam Memorial Wall

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010.

The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized. It is hard to believe it is 36 years since the last casualties.

The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of North Weymouth, Mass. Listed by the U.S. Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.

- There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.
- 39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger.
- 8,283 were just 19 years old.
- The largest age group, 33,103 were 18 years old.
- 12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old.
- 5 soldiers on the Wall were 16 years old.
- One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.
- 997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam.
- 1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam.

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- 31 sets of brothers are on the Wall.
- Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons.
- 54 soldiers attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia.
- 8 Women are on the Wall. Nursing the wounded.
- 244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall.
- Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons.
- West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 711 West Virginians on the Wall.
- The Marines of Morenci - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.
- The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam. In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.
- The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968 ~ 245 deaths.
- The most casualty deaths for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred.

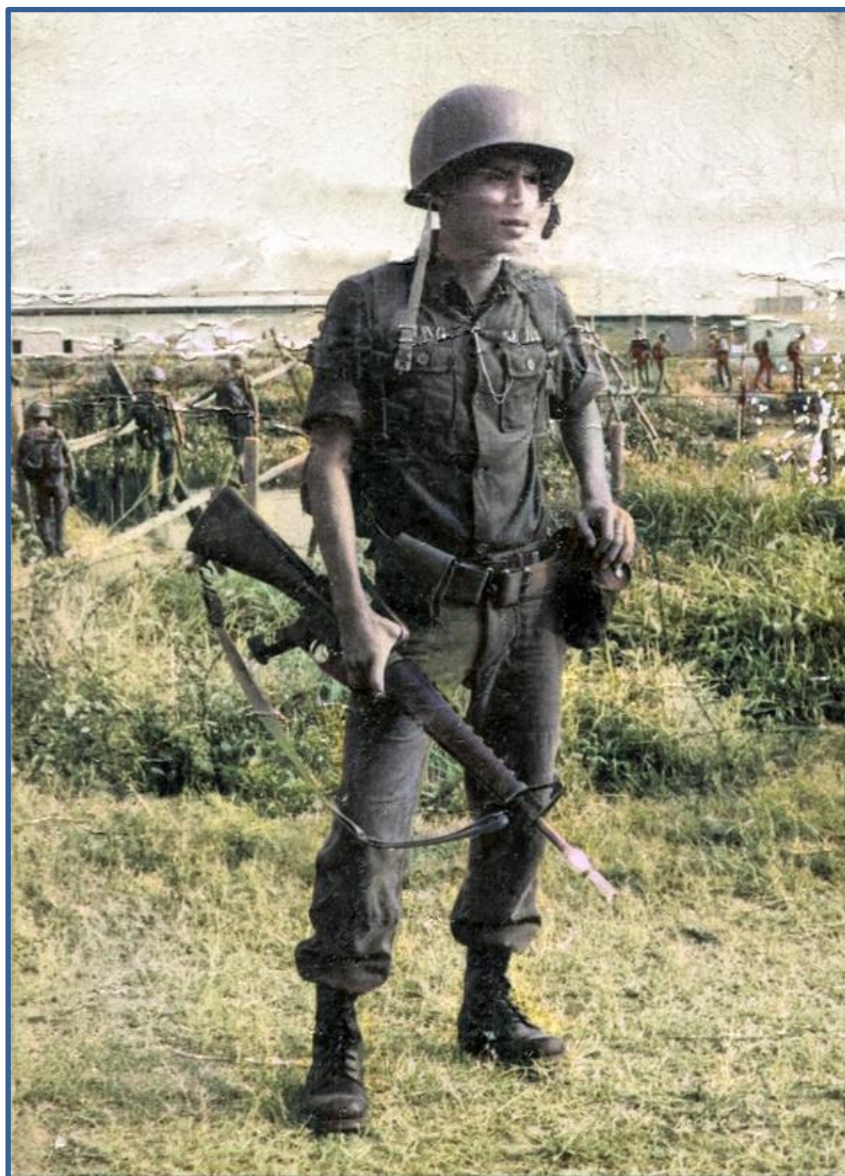
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We remember some of the faces...they all looked so young, but we never knew their names.

They fought so valiantly, but in the end the odds were too great against them. After being released from the commie prison, my big brother (a Second lieutenant, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)) left the country on a boat. The boats went missing, along with Lt. Dũng Nguyen and other Vietnamese refugees in 1980 and were never see again. Lt. Dũng is the brother of Nga Nguyen.



After the fall of Saigon to North Vietnam's People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN), the ARVN was dissolved and thousands of former ARVN officers were sent to reeducation camps by the communist government of the unified Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Lt. Dũng was one of those prisoners, but he was eventually released and boarded a refugee boat seeking freedom away from Vietnam.



Lt. Dũng Nguyen, at Phan Rang, the older brother of Nga Nguyen.

**kẻ chúng ta quên
(Lest We Forget)**

Chronology of 554th CES Red Horse Significant Events Jan-Mar 1969

FOREWORD



The purpose of this report is to document the accomplishments and activities of the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron (HR), cite lessons learned, and identify areas upon which future studies may be applied. The period covered by this quarterly report is from 1 January 1969 through 31 March 1969. Special recognition must be given to the officers and airmen of this Squadron for their contributions to this report. All sections were permitted to present a complete objective analysis of projects and activities in which they were engaged during this period.

Date	Significant Event
January 9	Construct TACAN was completed and turned over to 35 th TFWg. Project consisted of construction of 2-15' x 43' concrete pads 6" thick and one 12' wide, 900 foot long asphaltic concrete access road.
January 15	Road Access was completed. Project provided two 12' wide asphaltic concrete access roads, two concrete pads 6" thick, 30' wide by 38' long and two concrete pads 6" thick 18' wide by 65' length.
January 21	Construct Open Storage Base was completed and base assumed beneficial occupancy. A 49,000 SY of 2" asphaltic concrete open storage area was constructed.
January 21	The largest of four RED HORSE convoys during this period from Phan Rang AB arrived at Ban Me Thuot, 232 miles through VC country transporting a concrete mixer, conveyor belt, front end loader, cement, plastic, plumbing and electrical supplies, and 20 truss columns. Although the convoy was subjected to an ene attack of automatic and small arms fire, no casualties or injuries resulted and no vehicles or supplies were damaged.
January 22	The 554 th CES (HR) Brick Plant broke the production record. One

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	thousand bricks were produced on this day compared to previous high of 550. Subsequently to this date, production was further increased until an average of 1,500 bricks per day has been achieved.
January 25	The Pre-assemble and Erection Team had reduced the total time required for preassemble and erecting a Marwais Shelter from 308 to 608 man hours.
January 26	Phan Rang AB was hit with 86 rounds of 82mm mortar fire and four rockets. Infantry and sapper attacks occurred for seven hours. Twelve mortars and four rockets hit RED HORSE compound. RED HORSE COMBAT DEFENSE TEAMS spent hours on base perimeter defense.
February 1	RED HORSE COMBAT DEFENSE TEAMS were deployed for three hours on base defense. Phan Rang AB received twenty plus 82mm mortars. No damage to RED HORSE facilities.
February 2	RED HORSE COMBAT DEFENSE TEAMS responded in less than 15 minutes to base alert. Defense teams were in defense positions for two hours. Phan Rang AB received 35+ mortars and nine rockets. No damage to RED HORSE facilities.
February 11	Phan Rang AB received sapper attack along with 25 plus mortars and eight rockets. RED HORSE COMBAT DEFENSE TEAMS were deployed for 2 1/2 hours on base defense.
February 14	At 0700 hours, a four RED HORSE tractor trailer convoy was sent to Cam Ranh Bay to bring a "Young" shelter to Phan Rang. The convoy returned by 1600 hours, the shelter unloaded, and the "TEST" of Marwais versus Young Aircraft Shelters began.
February 15	Construct Sanitary Sewer Main, was completed. Project included paving of 2,700 SF of asphaltic concrete road, install water and sewer lines to 34 trailers.
February 15	Construct Airmen's Dorm, was completed and turned over to 35th TFWg for beneficial occupancy. Project provided a 54 man airman's dorm, 4,416 SF wood frame structure on a 4" concrete slab. Airman dorm was built in record 45 days.
February 15	Repair Revetments, was completed. Project provided protective

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	revetments for fighter pilots of the 35 th TFWg consisting of 5,750 LF of 10" thick by 4' high concrete revetment wall.
February 17	Concrete cover using two buckets-two crane operation began on first erected Marwais Aircraft Protective Shelter.
February 22	Phan Rang AB was hit with 86 82mm mortars. No damage resulted to RH compound, projects or dispersed equipment RED HORSE Combat Defense Teams were on the perimeter defense line for two hours.
February 24	Phan Rang AB received ten mortars. No damage to RH facilities, projects under construction, or dispersed equipment. RED HORSE Defense Teams in defense position for three hours and 45 minutes.
February 26	The first “Young” shelter was erected in Vietnam. Eight-hundred and eight total man hours including drilling of base plates, setting of base plates, pre-assembly, erecting equipment time, supervision, and cleanup were required for the erection of the first Young Shelter.
March 1	The 554th CES Concrete Batch Plant produced more concrete than ever produced by RED HORSE at this base. Old record of 6,824 cubic yards for June 1968 was alleviated by the 8,310 cubic yards made in the month of March. The large concrete dispersal hardstands and concrete cover of aircraft protective shelters were the primary projects where this concrete was placed.
March 6	Lt. General Glen W. Martin, DCS/Plans and Operations, Hq USAF, visited the major 554 th CES construction project sites.
March 6	Squeeze-crete machine arrived on 27 February 1969, was repaired, and placed in operation.
March 15	Construct Theater, was completed and first movie was shown on 17 March 1969, Saint Patricks Day. This 400 seat Base Theater, named the "VIKING", was constructed in 65 days. The facility was designed and built by 554 th CES (HR). Although the theater possesses architectural beauty, it was built using a pre-engineered warehouse building and ordinary building materials.
March 15	Phan Rang AB received two separate rockets attacks. First one commencing at 0130 hours and second at 0550 hours. The RED

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	HORSE DEFENSE TEAMS responded during both attacks and were in defense positions for approximately four hours. Two rockets landed in the RED HORSE compound. No significant damage resulted.
March 16	Phan Rang AB, received 34 82mm mortars and seven rockets from 1930 to 2145 hours. The RED HORSE teams were deployed and were in their defense positions for one hour and 15 minutes. No significant damage to RED HORSE compound, projects under construction, or equipment.
March 19	Starting at 0245 hours, Phan Rang AB received 23 mortars and four rockets. RED HORSE Defense Combat Teams were on perimeter defense for five hours. No damage to RED HORSE facilities or equipment.
March 20	The 554th CES (HR) Asphalt Plant produced 980 tons of asphaltic concrete, establishing a new 554th CES (RR) record. Old record established in 1968 was 885 tons.
March 21	Phan Rang AB, received 25 mortars and two rockets commencing at 2255 hours. RED HORSE Alert continued until 0110 hours. RED HORSE COMBAT DEFENSE TEAMS swiftly moved into defense position and remained throughout the alert.
March 23	Commencing at 0155 hours, Phan Rang AB received 32 mortars and a sapper attack (1 ½ hours). RED HORSE Combat Defense Teams were deployed and remained in a defense blocking position for three hours.
March 24	Forty-one mortars and six rockets hit Phan Rang AB commencing at 2400 hours. RED Alert lasted until 0600 hours and RED HORSE COMBAT DEFENSE TEAMS remained in combat readiness.
March 28	The final test report for “Young” versus “Marwais” Aircraft Shelters was submitted to higher headquarters. The findings were that the “Young” shelter simply in design is equal to the “Marwais” in time requirement for assembly and erection. However, it was recommended that future specifications issued for invitation for bids require closer tolerance in alignment of holes, that the marking of different panels be similar to that employed by Marwais, and that

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	more stringent requirements in packaging be specified.
March 31	Sixteen shelters have been erected on the aircraft apron, nine shelters erected on the dispersal hardstand, totaling 25 aircraft shelters erected. An equivalent of 6.4 aircraft shelters had been covered with concrete, which included complete cover of two shelters-one the "Young" Test Shelter. Three shelters are above the 24 foot mark. Majority of other shelter are at or above the 12 foot mark.

Timmons Seriously Wounded by 82mm Mortar



Information from John P. Davis, 35th SPS K9

A1C Robert E. Timmons was seriously wounded by 82mm mortar fragments during an attack against the base at 2359 hours, 18 June 1969. He was air-evacuated to Cam Ranh Bay AB. Timmons was a member of the 35th SPS unit at Phan Rang AB and was wounded by a mortar round while on duty at the gate leading to Cam Ranh Bay. John Davis says he last spoke to Robert in the hospital. Timmons received a Purple Heart.

The following is a portion of his obituary. **Robert Eugene Timmons 69**, of Saint Petersburg transitioned March 14, 2018. Mr. Timmons was a lifetime member of DAV and retired Staff Sergeant, U.S. Air Force. Cherished memories he leaves to his loving and devoted wife, Judy A. Timmons; daughters, Amanda E. Timmons and Nicole M. Timmons; son, Lorenzo Turner, Sisters, Rosara Timmons, Harriett Powell, brot her, Anthony Timmons.

May and June of 1969 was a very tragic day for Phan Rang AB and the 35th Security Police Squadron. On 28 May, A1C **Lawrence H. Grillo**, B Flight Security was killed when lightning struck his tower at Juliett-10 and on 7 June, A1C **Joel C. Loftis**, Sentry Dog Handler, was killed at 1620 hours during a daylight attack in which a Chicom 107 mm rocket impacted in the K-9 barracks area.

Members of the 35th Security Police Squadron that were wounded during that time period were

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A1C **Johnson L Alexander** who received leg wound during a 6 June attack. Sgt **Chancellor Johnson** who was seriously wounded during the 7 June attack. He was air-evacuated to Cam Ranh Bay AB and Sgt **Harold Harris** received minor wounds during that 7 June attack.

The Making of 435th MMS Sign

by Ray Jensen



Sam's Profile - The story of Sam Lewis

This is a story of my time in the USAF



I joined the Air Force in September 1964. I came out of a three week second phase of Basic training and I went to Tonopah Air Force Station, NV., as an OJT Air Policeman for a 15 month Semi isolated tour. Tonopah Air Station was a part of the Aerospace Defense Command (ADC).

I was PCS'd to another Air Force Station, a dream assignment at Winston Salem, NC., in March of 1966. At that time the USAF was building up forces in Vietnam so many of us Air Policemen were pulled off the Air Force Stations and sent TDY to help fill that void.

After one month at Winston Salem, I was sent TDY to Charleston AFB. I got lucky that time and only spent 30 days there. After three months I was once again sent TDY to Wurtsmith AFB in Michigan.

At Wurtsmith I got my first taste of SAC where I spent four months, and then I got orders while

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there to PCS to Phan Rang AB Republic of Vietnam. I came back to WSAFB in November of 66 cleared out for Nam in late February 67 and was sent to Norton AFB for one week, training with the M-16 which was new to me at that time. I also received training on the M-60 Machine gun and the M79 Grenade Launcher. We were also taught a little about Air Base and Self Defense and introduced to VC Tactics but what can one learn in one week?

From there I was sent on the Phan Rang for my year in that Oriental Paradise called Happy Valley. When I got there I spent a couple of days in orientation and then spent another 2 days in training in VC Jungle Tactics and once again qualifying with the same weapons I had qualified with at Norton a week earlier where I earned my first Expert Marksmanship medal.

My first duty was at a perimeter tower with another air policeman. I had my M-16 an M-60 and a Motorola 2-way radio for communicating with Combat Security Control, which I had to sign out of the Armory and lug all of that into a 12 ft tower. After two hours with him he said *“good luck, I’m out of here and its all yours”*.

I sat there overlooking a field of rice paddies watching peasant Farmers go about their business of farming and wondering what If any of them were VC? About Noon a SAT team came around with me filling up my canteen with cold water and they had in a big round stainless steel cooler on back of their jeep. I was then introduced to C-Rations which became my main meal on post for the next year.

I stayed in the tower bunkers and flight line entry points for the next few months and was assigned posting and relieving troops and working SAT teams. Around July of 1967 USAF decided the Air Police Name wasn’t sufficient and I became a Security Policeman.

Around the end of January 68 the entire county was surprised by what was named the 1968 TET Offensive. We had what was called and Emergency Strike Team with half the Squadron rotating on a list daily to be deployed and any minute to other bases in Vietnam that needed assistance. When TET hit I happened to be off the list that day and I stayed back helping guard the base leading a SAT team with two augmentees that filled in for the deployed SPs.

Phan Rang was fairly mild compared to some of the other bases during TET. After 10 days of

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TET '68 it ended and our deployed SPs came back with all kinds of wild stories.

I left Phan Rang in Late March 68 and after a thirty day leave I was sent PCS to another SAC Base Fairchild AFB, Washington once again Humping B-52s and KCs. I was sick of SAC after ADC and a year in Vietnam when I learned of a program in which I could get an early out if the USAF for up to 90 days by joining a Police Force. I applied for and was hired by my local North Carolina Police Force. I was then separated from the USAF on 5 July 1968. I didn't really want to be a policeman, I just wanted out of SAC and I sure didn't want to go back to Vietnam which would have been a choice between that and staying in SAC. I was an ADC troop for over two years loved it and sure didn't want either of the other choices. There was a saying back then once in SAC always in SAC.

Doug's Notes: Despite suffering from COPD and chronic bronchitis, he doesn't let any of that get him down. Sam and his wife Ruth (AKA “Edith”) are two of the original attendees at the first Phan Rang Reunion in Dayton, Ohio and are now family members of everyone in the Phan Rang AB community that ever had the pleasure of meeting them. In fact Sam was also one of the first members of the Phan Rang AB “Happy Valley” Facebook group and even helped plan and contributed to the first reunion by being the Transportation Coordinator and also bus driver and he still makes almost a daily appearance in “Happy Valley”. His voice of reason is always welcome and sometimes needed to lend sanity and common sense when things get out of hand. Sam has always been and continues to be an active veteran's supporter. For years he was a “Freedom Rider” attending and lending support to many military functions in his area. He probably hasn't missed any of the annual Vietnam-Thailand Sky Cops reunions since its formation and the same can be said for the Phan Rang Vietnam Veterans reunions.

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THIS AND THAT



Left to right: Bob LaCount, Sherman Twisselman, Ted Merrick. All 435 MMS 70-71.

This photo appeared in a previous issue of the Phan Rang Newsletter, and I wrote that it spoke of the GIs ingenuity by taking advantage of a rain shower. I just uncovered (politely saying I missed it.) from two years ago from Bob LaCount. He said it was his photo and *“it was taken during the monsoon. I got some soap and decided to take a shower, my buds joined in. Nice tan lines don’t you think?”* A guy came up to me later and gave me a 2nd place ribbon that he got in high school swim meet and said *I deserved it more than he. I still have the ribbon.”*

Bob wrote back to correct his mistake. He said, *“Just found the ribbon and my mistake it was 1st place. It said El Dorado Hills Swim Club, and the guy who gave it to me his name on the back for the Breast Stroke, 50 yards, 7/21//1968 and the name is **D Chase.**”*

Memories, be well crazy times, Bob

I’m Glad we got that cleared up!

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Need help in Identifying Individuals



Photo taken during Tet 1967 at the My Duc Agricultural Research Station, a few kilometers east of Thap Cham, south side of the highway to Dalat. On the left are the late Robert C. Hargreaves, Bakersfield (later a veterinarian and an expert in chicken engineering); he was called Ong Bob, meaning Mr. Bob, by his Vietnamese farmer friends with whom he worked. He is on the far left. Chuck Cable, in a jacket with his International Voluntary Services pin on the lapel. Bob and chuck were housemates in Phan Rang and volunteers with International Voluntary Services. Bob was an agricultural advisor with IVS.

The two airmen, on the right, are not identified and it is hoped that someone might recognize them. One may be Jack Lathrop of the Eugene, Oregon area. Jack was a good friend of my roommate, Beryl Darrah, a VN veteran who came back to Viet Nam and taught in the Duy Tan High School in Phan Rang from 1965 to 1967. (Beryl was previously stationed at TSN Airport when in the U.S. Army.)

Bob (Robert) Hargreaves passed away on January 6, 2015 in Bakersfield. Beryl is a retired teacher in Kansas. And, I'm retired from health care management. It would be great to identify the airmen and get copies of the photo sent to them or their families.

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If anyone can identify, contact information is: **Chuck Cable, 156 Armstrong Drive, Claremont, CA 91711-1701. Phones: 909-625-2277 home or 909-261-6450 cell** or information may be passed through to the Phan Rang News.

Letters

Ken Swickard wrote: Memories of Nam, 1968.

It has been 44 years since I talked about a lot of this stuff. I never felt at ease talking about Vietnam with those that had not been there. Probably because I thought that they would think that I was psycho, making up stories, or just plain bonkers. But I have found that talking with those that have been there and have experienced the same environment as myself, it was easier to bring these stories out. Exchanging memories, of the same area, at the same time, on the Internet, with fellow veterans, has allowed many to see and understand the same situation in another light or from another angle.

1. The 2nd Casualty Staging Flight was located at Travis AFB, California. Travis is located just slightly north of the halfway point between the Mexican border and the Oregon border. It was also equal distance between the liberals and hippies of San Francisco and the conservatives and politicians of Sacramento. The Staging Flight was made up of about 30 enlisted folks and 20 nurses and was located in three buildings just slightly down the hill from the Old David Grant Medical Center. Most of the nurses were 2nd or 1st Lieutenants and they were all in my age bracket of 22 to 25 years old. We worked very closely together and after work some of us would go down to the local Pizza Place, just outside of the main gate, and have beer and, duh, pizza. We all enjoyed the warm dry evenings that blessed Travis AFB as it shared the hot dry air of the Central Valley and the cool moist air of the Bay Area. As the summer moved into autumn, I started seeing one or two of the lovely ladies on a more personal relationship. Barbara T. was a fine woman with light brown hair and deep blue eyes with lips as soft as raw cotton. Even with her full shape and firm body, she still walked and presented herself as a true professional and officer in the Air Force. Even though she was only a 2nd Lieutenant, I felt proud to have her give me my oath during my reenlistment in early August of 1967. Command Nurse, Colonel Jones, the commanding officer of the staging flight did not like me having beer and pizza, let alone a relationship, with any of "her girls". She was even more upset that I had a 2nd Lieutenant and not her, a full bird Colonel, give me my re-enlistment oath. She called me into her office shortly after my re-enlistment and lectured me on the duties and responsibilities of

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the enlisted ranks and the officer ranks. She assured me that this “partying” would quit and there would be no more fraternization with the officer ranks. Well, boys will be boys, and girls will be girls, and it was not long before we were all back having beer and pizza off-base.

Understanding the importance of maintaining the officer/enlisted separation while on duty and not wanting to see how well the military court system worked, I did drop the personal relationships. I thought that the old Colonel would be happier than a cooked goose at an Irish wake. Which goose got cooked would be determined.

Colonel Jones called me into her office on a nice Wednesday morning in mid November. All 6 foot of her sat behind her desk with her broad shoulders and short hair making the cold black eyes that were piercing through me feel more like an arctic blast. She asked me if I was still fraternizing with "her girls". I told her that I had no longer been seeing any of her girls on a personal level. She was not impressed one damn iota with that reply, as we both knew what she was talking about. Beer and Pizza. I had just gotten my line number for Staff Sgt., the week before, and knew that I may be in a bit of a bind. She informed me that as my Commanding Officer she was giving me one of two choices. Number one: Go down to CBPO (Consolidated Base Personal Office) immediately and volunteer for Vietnam. Number two: Go immediately to jail. ! ! ! Hummmmmmm.

She gave me a little time to think about it and after about six microseconds I told her that I would be back in a jiffy with a copy of my volunteer statement. I had been seriously thinking about volunteering anyhow, as I felt that my knowledge as an Independent Duty Medical Technician was not being used to its fullest potential here at the staging area and would better be utilized in Nam. I also knew that it took three to four months to process a volunteer statement through the system before you are reassigned to combat duty. I figured that I could party for that time. I made a quick trip to CBPO, completed the necessary paperwork and brought back my copy of the statement to Colonel Jones. She smiled and said “Thank You, Sgt. Swickard”. She sure seemed overly happy, and that made me wonder what she was up to. That night after work, we had beer and pizza as usual at the off-base site. I relayed my conversation of the morning with the officer ladies and they too thought that it was not normal for Col. Jones to say "Thank You" to anyone. The very next morning the Colonel called me into her office just before noon. I made myself as comfortable as one can be when one is called into the

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Commanders Office, knowing that I was probable going to jail at the least. I greeted her in the standard military protocol afforded a commanding officer and then she handed me a stack of papers and said "Goodbye Sgt. Swickard, you can leave now". She had handed me a set of orders to Phan Rang, RVN. How!, What!, No way can this be so quick. I was later informed that her brother (also a full Colonel) was the commander of the assignments section at Randolph AFB. She called him the day before, gave him my volunteer statement number and he cut orders instantly for her. It goes to show that it only helps if you know someone in high places. I was given my choice of flying out in two weeks after M-16 training, or taking 30 days enroute. I did the latter and spent my time traveling to Texas and Colorado visiting friends and having fun before flying over to that “All Expenses Paid” trip to exotic Southeast Asia.

Ah, them C-rations. I really did like the meatballs and beans. We would leave them on the exhaust manifold, of the M151 (military jeep), for about an hour before opening them (If you forgot about them, they had a habit of exploding all over the engine. What a smell, especially with the ham and lima beans). Some had canned fruit and all had crackers or pound cake. We would trade and barter over the different selections. Once opened, they were mighty hot and tasted really good compared to most of the daytime meals at the chow hall. Lucky for us night owls, the night cooks at the flight-line chow hall would make a little better stuff for the security folks (who I worked with) and the standby crews of Spooky and air rescue. (When the Colorado National Guard showed up in April with their F-100's they brought a whole contingent of cooks with them. Among them was SSgt Coffee who was owner and chief chef at his coffeehouse in Denver. He was always making a special item for us night guys.) (Incidentally, while stationed at a semi-remote site in Italy, in the early 1970's, the supply officer ordered 500 individual C-Ration meals for on-site emergencies and he received 500 cases of C-Rations. We all had plenty of C-rats to take off site and share with our lovely wives and family.) Umm, umm, I do miss those things. I never have tried the MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat).

Lee Moore wrote: I was in the auto-pilot shop, 35th AMS, 3 June '69-'70. The first time I saw the building our shop was in, about 10-15 feet of wall was damaged. Direct hit, my first night on base. Hippely took one of those bit heavy coat hangers across the top of his head--he rotated out about a week later, had shaved bald spot & stitches. I remember waking up to the sirens and not knowing what they were all about, until the guy in the bunk below me (instrument troop-Shay, I think was his name) told me to hit the deck.

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Our barracks were up above the chow hall with the MARS station just over the hill. I think the Supply troops barracks were just below us. I was the unofficial "squadron carpenter" that was detailed to build new plywood partitions throughout our barracks. Also built a roof over our patio/bar area, with a pile of scrap sheet metal roofing.

There was a squadron dog "Snoopy" that would go down to the chow hall, get on the bus by himself & get off at the stop at the avionics shop. I think he was hit & killed by a truck. Our dispatch metro step-van call handle was "X-Ray 1."

Monsoon season, it rained so much the water treatment plant was flood, so we had no water--- how ironic. We took showers under the eaves of the roofs. Even when water treatment plant was up & running, the water would be turned off at night, I guess to fill the storage tanks. I got caught once, all soaped up with no water to rinse off when it was turned off.

Anyway, enough rambling on for now. Perhaps this brought back a few memories.

Doug's Comments:



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