

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
"Keeping the memories alive" Newsletter 271

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Jim Lombard and the North Miami H.S. Remember A Fallen Classmate

Kids-In All Their Finery

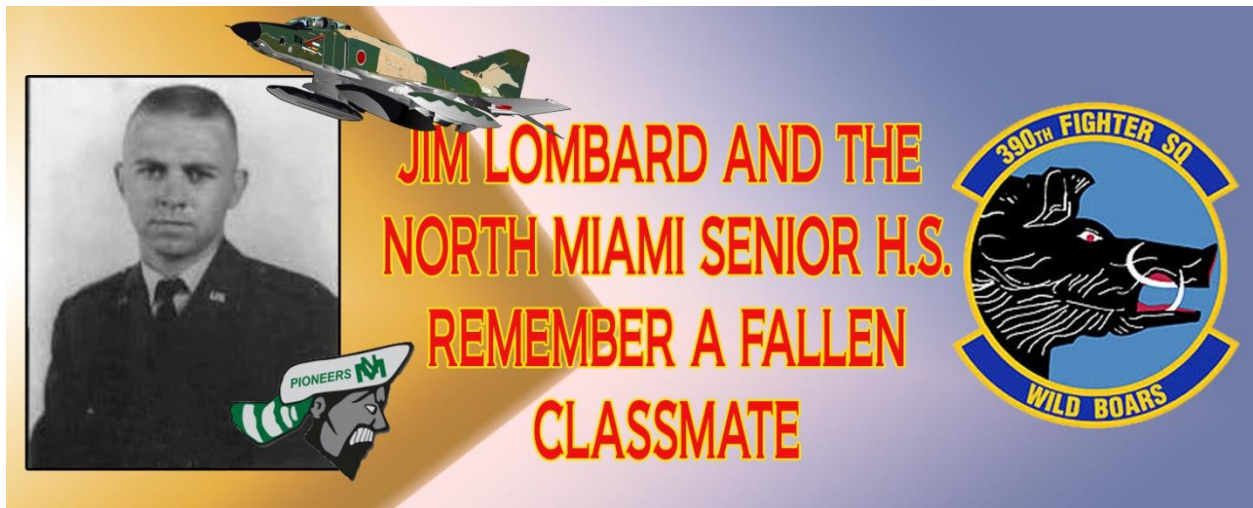
Korean Karate Demonstration - Photo collage by Christopher Boles

Scrambled F-100s Kill 32 Enemy

What a surprise to find this on the Joint Base Charleston Website

Letters

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TOKYO (AP)-An air unit of the Communist Chinese navy shot down a U.S. Air Force F4C plane Monday when it "intruded" over Hainan Island "on war provocations," the official New China News Agency said Tuesday.

ESCANABA DAILY PRESS

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ESCANABA, MICHIGAN - Zip Code 49829 TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 1967

Fliers Rescued the Phantom downed by the Chinese MIG17's over Hainan was en route to Da Nang after an overhaul in the Philippines and got off course due to a failure of navigational equipment, the Air Force said.

The MIGs jumped the Phantom at 30,000 feet, far above the clouds. The Air Force said the plane carried no bombs or ammunition and the fliers radioed a distress signal as they fled

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south ward before parachuting from their crippled plane.

The fliers were Maj. J.C. Blandford of Sherman, Tex., and Lt. Jeremy M. Jarvis of Warren, Mich., both stationed at Da Nang. Rescue helicopters from U. S. 7th Fleet units operating against North Vietnam picked them up about 50 miles south of Hainan an hour after they ejected.

BECKLEY POST-HERALD

Beckley, W. Va., Tuesday Morning, June 27, 1967

Chinese Planes Down

Straying U. S. Craft

WASHINGTON (AP)—A U.S. Air Force fighter plane strayed over Red China air space early Monday and apparently was shot down by Communist aircraft, the Pentagon reported. The incident, it was indicated, was caused by bad weather that created navigational problems. The F4C crashed into the South China Sea about 30 miles south of Red China's Hainan Island.

Two pilots aboard the plane, en route from Clark Field in the Philippines to Da Nang, Vietnam, were picked up unharmed by a Navy helicopter. They were taken first to a Navy aircraft carrier and later onto Da Nang.

The Pentagon said the copilot of the plane was Lt. Jeremy M. Jarvis of Warren, Mich. The name of the aircraft commander was not disclosed. The airplane strayed more than 100 miles north of its scheduled destination, the Pentagon said.

Chinese planes of an undisclosed type apparently shot the Air Force plane down although the Pentagon did not describe what took place in the attack.

ALL OF THIS AND ONLY 48 DAYS IN COUNTRY!

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28 July 1967

Two U.S. planes were reported downed over the north. The two crewmen of an Air Force F4C Phantom and the pilot of a Navy Skyhawk are missing in action.



**Maj. Herbert Lundsford,
Aircraft Commander**

Only a month after the MIG shoot down of Jerry's F4C and eventual rescue we know that Jerry (Jeremy Michael) Jarvis (Class of 60) was killed when the F4C on which he was a crew member (Weapons System Officer - WSO) was believed shot down over North Vietnam and crashed into the South China Sea July 25, 1967. The pilot of this aircraft was Maj. Herbert Lamar Lunsford.

During a night armed reconnaissance mission off the coast of North Vietnam a Phantom crew spotted a light on the beach about 10 miles south of Dong Hoi. The aircraft apparently rolled in to investigate or attack the light but the Phantom crashed near the target either as a result of being shot down or flying into the ground due to a misjudgment of altitude. No radio transmission or SAR beepers were heard and it was assumed that the crew perished in the crash.



Jerry was a 1st Lieutenant when he was declared MIA and the Air Force continued to promote him over the next 11 years until his status was changed to KIA in 1978, at that time he had reached the rank of Major. Jerry is memorialized on “The Vietnam Memorial Wall” at Panel 23E, Line 119. Additionally, he is listed on the “Courts of the Missing” memorial dedicated to those lost located in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (commonly known is “Punchbowl” Memorial Cemetery) in Honolulu Hawaii. Our class has recognized Jerry's loss at

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each of our reunions.

Here’s the tribute one of his old classmates wrote: Jerry was in our Class of 1960 at North Miami High School. He was handsome, bright and well-liked by all who knew him.

Jerry was such a positive guy! I remember him so well when we played baseball a number of summers together at North Miami in pony, colt and American Legion ball. After graduation from the Univ. of Miami, I accepted a Commission in the Air Force and attended flight school, receiving my wings in April 1966. At that time, with Vietnam on the front burner, I was given an assignment to B-57's. This was a two seat aircraft used in providing close air support in the region. I arrived at Da Nang in June 1966 flying in the back seat as a Navigator. While I can't remember the exact dates, I do remember in June or July, during a return from a night mission over North Vietnam, being called by either Blind Bat or Cricket control asking if I had ammo and fuel to cover for an F-4C Phantom that had been shot down. These were airborne C-130's that controlled the targets over the north and provided flares for night visibility. We covered for a short while and were short on fuel so we departed for Da Nang. During our debriefing I learned the names of the downed aircrews. When they said Jerry Jarvis, I asked where he was from and was told Miami Florida. Not knowing Jerry was even in the Air Force, I learned we were living across the street from each other at Da Nang where Jerry was a member of the 480th Blue Boars. A week rarely goes by that I don't think of Jerry and his "Skunk haircut" roaming around the middle infield for Coach Clark, with his constant smile. I truly appreciate your remembering him in this special way. Having made the ultimate sacrifice, he has always been in my heart. A nicer person than Jerry couldn't be found. He was one of a kind and I am happy to have been his friend.

Mario D'Angelo LTC. USAF Retired

The above has been repeated in various forms over the years. While doing some research on Jerry's death I ran across another event in Jerry's life which many may be unaware of. Jerry's Vietnam tour can at best be described as unlucky. He arrived in Vietnam on May 8, 1967 and was killed a little over two months later. Jerry was also involved in a singularly bizarre incident almost a month to the day before he was killed.

This is the story reported on in the beginning of this article, but presented here with more

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detail. On June 26, 1967, Jerry and a pilot from his squadron (Major J.C. Blandford) picked up an F4C which had been repaired at Clark AB in the Philippines. They left Clark on what should have been an easy and quick flight back to their home base of Da Nang Vietnam. Since the aircraft was being ferried over international waters, there was no necessity for it to be armed. They were flying under the call sign “Gunfighter 69” and at some point something went terribly wrong and they wound up well north of their intended route and being confronted by at least one People’s Republic of China Mig-17 when they flew too close to Hainan Island, and were shot down. Both Jerry, and his pilot, Major J.C. Blandford, successfully ejected and were rescued.

Hainan Island is nowhere near their intended route of flight and there is a lot of conjecture as to how they came to be in that area. The most logical theory is that the Chinese “lured” them into the area with a false signal. It was learned after the incident that the Chinese had been practicing similar tactics in the same area prior to Jerry’s flight. Although “Gunfighter” was a standard radio voice call sign for the Tactical Fighter Wing to which Jerry belonged, it may have been misinterpreted by the Chinese making them believe Jerry’s aircraft was an armed intruder. No one knows. From an interview with Maj Blandford following the incident they were unaware anything was wrong until they started taking cannon fire and their aircraft began to disintegrate around them. It is a horrible event for someone so young to have gone through. Following ejection there was a race over the South China Sea between U.S. forces and the People’s Republic of China Sea forces to see who could reach them first. Luckily, our forces won and Jerry and his pilot were rescued by a Navy helicopter and flown to an aircraft carrier which was in the area.

I don’t know what the odds are of being shot down twice in 30 days, but it would have to be astronomical against. Unfortunately Jerry was not as lucky the second time as the entry made in the Fighter Wing’s log the morning Jerry was shot down states “Maverick lead down, no chutes, no beepers”. Jerry’s aircraft was flying under a radio call sign of “Maverick 1”. No trace of the crew or aircraft were ever located, nor was either body recovered. Jerry, and his pilot Maj. Herbert Lunsford were either shot down or crashed into the ocean about 10 miles off the coast of North Vietnam.

The official Joint Task Force-Full Accounting Site Report (JTF-FA) as of 11 June 1992 describes

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the event as follows: *On 25 July 1967, 1LT Jeremy M. Jarvis, Pilot, and the aircraft commander, were onboard the lead F4C (#63-7488) in a flight of two aircraft on a night armed reconnaissance mission over NVN. While enroute along the coast on a heading of 340 degrees, the aircraft commander reported a light on the beach and that he would make a rocket pass on the light. Number two was opposite the target and observed the lead aircraft fire a pod of rockets at the target. Three seconds later, a fireball was observed in the water about one half mile off the coast in line with the target.*

No parachutes were seen and no radio transmissions or beeper signals were heard immediately prior to or after the crash. The wingman orbited the area until relieved by SAR aircraft. An oil slick was discovered 100 yards off coast where the fireball was observed. Objects were reported in the water that could have been a partially submerged life raft and a parachute; however, this was not confirmed.

There are many inconsistencies concerning these two events, most likely because the information is posted in so many places, both in published articles and on the Internet, but it doesn't have any effect on the story. Probably the most egregious error is the date of death of Jeremy Jarvis on his headstone at Arlington National Cemetery and Jim Lombard has already taken steps to see if that can be corrected. He made contact with the “Headstone” section of Arlington Memorial Cemetery and much to his surprise was able to connect to a real person within minutes of starting his call. Of course this is only step one of what may become a lengthy process, but according to the individual he spoke with who was able to verify the error in the date listed, they will pass the information on concerning the incorrect date of death (DoD) on Jerry's headstone to the “proper” people and they should be back in contact with him very quickly to advise when they will correct his DoD on the headstone.

What's important now is preserving the memories, lest we forget!

1LT. JEREMY MICHAEL JARVIS AND MAJ. HERBERT LAMAR LUNSFORD



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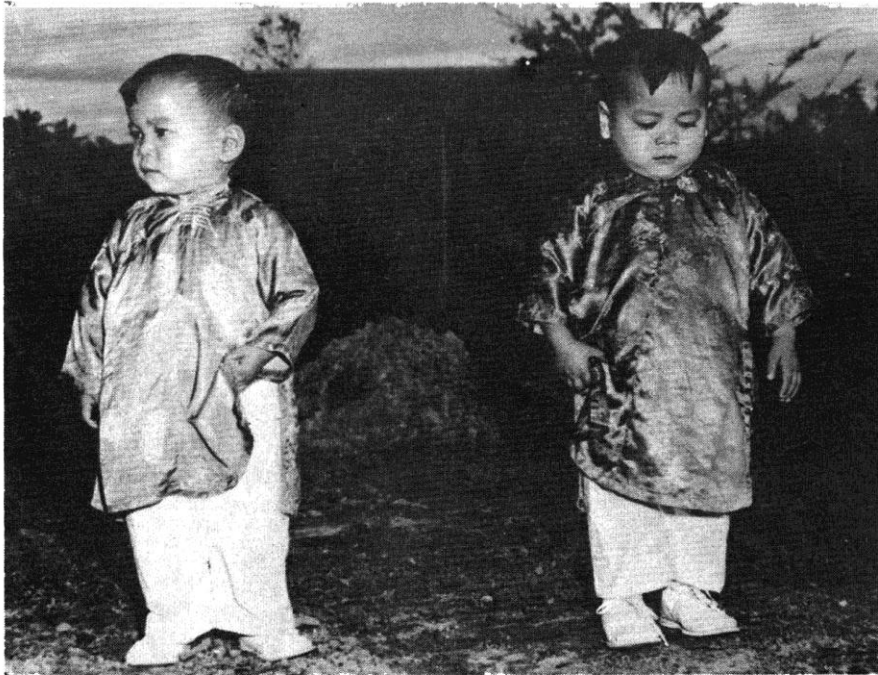
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(**Note:** Jim Lombard and Doug Severt worked in close collaboration on this story. Jim Lombard has been a technical adviser for almost every story involving aircraft operations for the Phan Rang Newsletters. Having been an aircraft controller himself he is very familiar with that subject and his ‘back stories’ sometimes are better than the story itself. I’m grateful to have had his support for so many years.)

Kids-In All Their Finery

(7th Air Force News, 4 February 1970)



Kids-In All Their Finery

Dressed in their native finery, these two Vietnamese children seem to be taking everything seriously. They were part of the large contingent of Vietnamese and Americans who witnessed the groundbreaking ceremony for new buildings at the Ngoc Ninh Buddhist Orphanage, Phan Rang City. Personnel from the 35th Tactical Fighter and the 315th Tactical-Airlift Wings support the orphanage as part of a civic action project.

(U.S. Air Force Photo by A1C Christopher Boles)

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KOREAN KARATE DEMONSTRATION



Photos by Christopher Boles

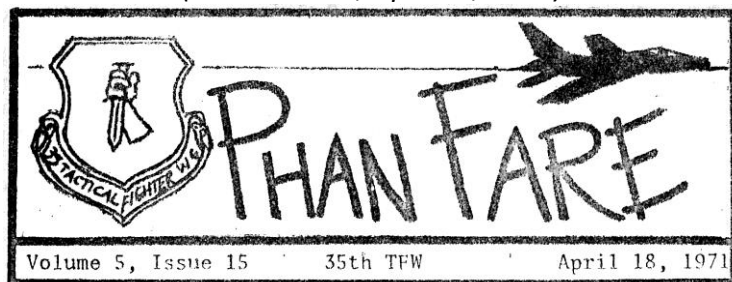
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Scrambled F-100s Kill 32 Enemy

(The Fan Fare, April 18, 1971)



Several 35th Tactical Fighter Wing F-100 Super Sabres were scrambled off the Phan Rang AB alert pad recently to support the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) Firebase 6, six miles southeast of Dak To in Kontum Province. The fighter strikes killed 32 enemy soldiers and destroyed two mortar sites.

Capt. **Gary H. Silence** was one of the two pilots on the first strike to support the firebase and they were followed by Capt. **Larry D. Bruce** and 1st Lt. **Robert F. Jones**.

Captain Silence stated, “The ARVN firebase was located on top of a peak on a ridgeline. The area was heavily jungled and the enemy was about a mile away on the side of the ridgeline.

“We couldn’t see through the thick trees so the forward air controller (FAC) put in a smoke rocket to mark the enemy troops and we bombed on his smoke. We made four bomb runs and one strafing pass each. The FAC and ARVN ground forces counted 25 enemy bodies and the two destroyed mortar sites.

Captain Bruce’s flight was called in about an hour and a half later. He said, “WE were at the alert facility when we received a tactical emergency report from the firebase. The ARVNs were pinned down, so we immediately scrambled off the pad and got to the base as fast as we could.

“It was overcast and getting dark and there were many fires in the area from the previous strikes. The enemy was about 200 yards from the firebase at this time and we were able to make four bomb runs and three strafing runs with our 20mm cannons before heading home to Phan Rang. The FAC said we put all our ordinance within 10 yards of his marks and he could see seven dead enemy soldiers. **Note:** Additional stories/articles about Gary Silence can be found

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in Phan Rang AB Newsletters 152, 235 and 236. Additional stories/articles about Larry Bruce can be found in Phan Rang AB Newsletters 30 and 240.)

What a surprise to find this on the Joint Base Charleston Website

<https://www.jbcharleston.jb.mil/News/Photos/igphoto/2001300830/>



JOINT BASE CHARLESTON



(From left to right) During a Vietnam War veterans base tour, Larry Martino, Joe Burkhardt and Doug Severt stand together on a C-17 Globemaster III at Joint Base Charleston – Air Base, S.C., on Oct. 10, 2015. Before retirement Martino was a Sgt. from supply, Burkhardt was a Sgt. who worked on aircraft navigations systems avionics and Severt was a MSgt. from aerial port. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Thomas T. Charlton)

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Senior Airman Joshua Sanders, 628th Civil Engineering Squadron explosive ordnance disposal apprentice, explains EOD equipment to Joe Burkhart, Vietnam War veteran, in a hangar at Joint Base Charleston – Air Base, S.C., on Oct. 10, 2015. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Thomas T. Charlton)



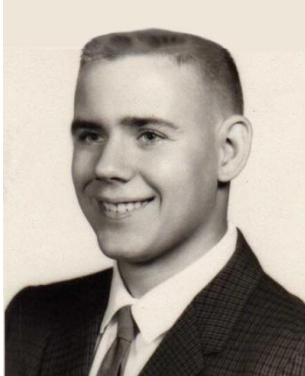
Vietnam War veterans stand together on a C-17 Globemaster III in a hangar at Joint Base Charleston – Air Base, S.C., on Oct. 10, 2015. The veterans traveled to Joint Base Charleston for a Vietnam veteran base tour. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Thomas T. Charlton)

Note: These are only three of the five photos of our group that are posted, so check it out to see the others. Also, there are other sites that sell high-res. copies of these photos. Who would have ever thought that?

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Dennis Wells wrote: I was stationed at Phan Rang AB about the middle of the month of November '66, about midway through '77, they decided they wanted the Motion Picture lab moved to Da Nang. I had two choices go to Da Nang for Thailand. I went to Da Nang stayed there extended to end of June 1968. I don't remember names anymore except for a few from the time I was at Phan Rang. I think a couple of us besides me what to Da Nang. Anybody left that might remember guys that were in the 600 photo squadron. You can always

contact me from this page. Thank you sir, you are you doing an outstanding job?

Doug's Comments: I hope that you enjoyed this newsletter and I'm happy to let you know that there are several exciting issues that are coming up. I received a wealth of information from Ken Garrett and I can't wait to share it with you. For those of you that want to be published, please send me your stories and or bios and I will make sure they get in an issue of the Phan Rang AB News. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, dougsevert@cox.net and put



'unsubscribe' in subject line.