

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
“Keeping the memories alive” Newsletter 276

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NAVY, AIR FORCE PILOTS SWAP SEATS

...A STORY BY KEN GARRETT, OFFICE OF INFORMATION, 35TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING,
ORIGINALLY TITLED “PILOT EXCHANGE PROGRAM BETWEEN AIR FORCE, NAVY” SUBMITTED BY
PRESS RELEASE # PR 1-71-24 AND WHICH APPEARED IN THE PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES,
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1971

(**Note:** The story that follows is a mix between the text in the press release and the edited version that appeared in the Pacific Stars and Stripes. Only one of the pictures submitted was

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Thursday, Feb. 18, 1971

Navy, Air Force Pilots Swap Seats

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam — The U.S. Navy established a beachhead at Phan Rang AB recently but that's all right because Air Force pilots of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing invaded the U.S.S. Hancock, a Navy aircraft carrier on station in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Both "assaults" were peaceful however. They were part of a pilot exchange between the Air Force and the Navy. The operation began when Maj. Frederick R. Nordin, 35th TFW flight scheduling officer, received a call from the Navy inviting the 35th TFW to participate in the pilot swap program.

There were to be two exchanges of three pilots from each service on each exchange. A total of six Air Force pilots were to go to the Hancock and a like number of Navy aviators were to come to this coastal air base for a few days.

The first exchange occurred on January 2. Since the 35th Wing's aircrafts would have a difficult time landing on the short aircraft carrier deck, the Navy flew a C-1A trainer here for the swap.

The first exchange saw Air Force Capt. Dennis C. Hermerding of the wing's 8th Special Operations Sq. at Bien Hoa AB switch, with Navy Lt. Cmdr. Boyd F. Repsher of the Hancock; 1st Lt. Frederick L. Tomlins of the 614th Tactical Fighter Sq. swapped with Navy Lt. Charles W. Singler¹; and 1st Lt. James F. Kilpatrick with the 615th TFS traded with Lt. (j.g.) Gerald, D. Tucker, also from the U.S.S. Hancock.

¹ In the original press release, Navy Lt. Charles W. Singler's name was spelled with an 'r' and in the Stars and Stripes article it was spelled with a 't'. I would suspect the press release to be the correct spelling.

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Air Force First Lt. Charles R. Harr (left) of Electra, Tex., a pilot with the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing here, shows Navy Lt. Jeff R. Woodfield of San Diego, Calif., now the triple ejector rack (TER) system works under the wings of an F-100 Super Sabre. The rack provides a versatile method for carrying and releasing a large bomb load on the Air Force fighter. The Navy aviator, from the USS Hancock, was here on a temporary Navy-Air Force pilot exchange program, and was able to fly on several combat missions with the wing's 612th Tactical Fighter Squadron. (U.S. Air. Force Photo by Sgt. Pete Pittas)

The Navy men were shown around the base, lived with their host squadron, and were able to fly on a number of actual combat missions in the rear seat of the wing's F-100 Super Sabres.

The Air Force fighter, pilots were flown aboard the Hancock, an experience in itself, and quickly fit into the swing (roll and pitch) of carrier life. The carrier is located off the DaNang coast in the South China Sea commonly called Yankee Station. There are no two-seat fighter aircraft aboard the U.S.S. Hancock so the Air Force men were not able to fly on an actual mission, but they were 'given a grand tour of the ship and saw how, the air war is run, “Navystyle.”

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U. S. Navy Lt. (j.g.) Gerald D. Tucker of Imperial Beach, Calif., checks out the rear seat of a U.S. Air Force F-100 Super Sabre before going on a combat air strike with the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing here. The Navy pilot, assigned on the aircraft carrier USS Hancock in the South China Sea was participating in an Air Force-Navy fighter pilot exchange program. Lieutenant Tucker was flown on several combat missions by Air Force pilots in the Super Sabres during his three-day stay here. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Sgt Pete Pittas)



Capt. Robert S. Pahl a member of the second group.

Air Force Lieutenant Tomlins stated, “We made what appeared to be a kamikaze run on the carrier when we landed. We can in about 15 feet off the deck, the landing officer told us to kill the engines, and we just tell the rest of the way.” The Lieutenant was also impressed by the Navy’s careful timing and precise coordination needed when moving a number of aircraft on such a small deck.

After- the initial groups returned to their own squadron the second group traded places for another three-day swap. The second phase traded Capt. Robert S. Pahl, 352nd TFS, with Lt. (j.g.) D. A. Foye: 1st Lt. Larry D.

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Bruce, 612th TFS, with Lt Jeff, R. Woodfield and First Lt. Sanders L. Avery, 615th TFS with Lt. J. R. Carlson.



EXCHANGING VIEWS - - U.S. Navy and Air Force pilots compare experiences encountered during a three-day pilot exchange program where the Phan Rang AB F-100 Super Sabre pilots went to the aircraft carrier USS Hancock while the Navy aviators came to Phan Rang to fly with the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. The Navy C-1A Trader aircraft in the background had just returned the Air Force pilots to Phan Rang and was preparing to fly the Navy aviators back to the carrier in the South China Sea off DaNang. The men are, from left, Navy Lieutenant (j.g.) Gerald D. Tucker, Imperial Beach, Calif.,; Air Force First Lts. James F. Kilpatrick of Hendersonville, N.C. ; and Frederick L. Tomlins of Cupertino, Calif., and Navy Lt. Charles W. Singler, Nokomis, Ill. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Sgt. Pete Pittas)

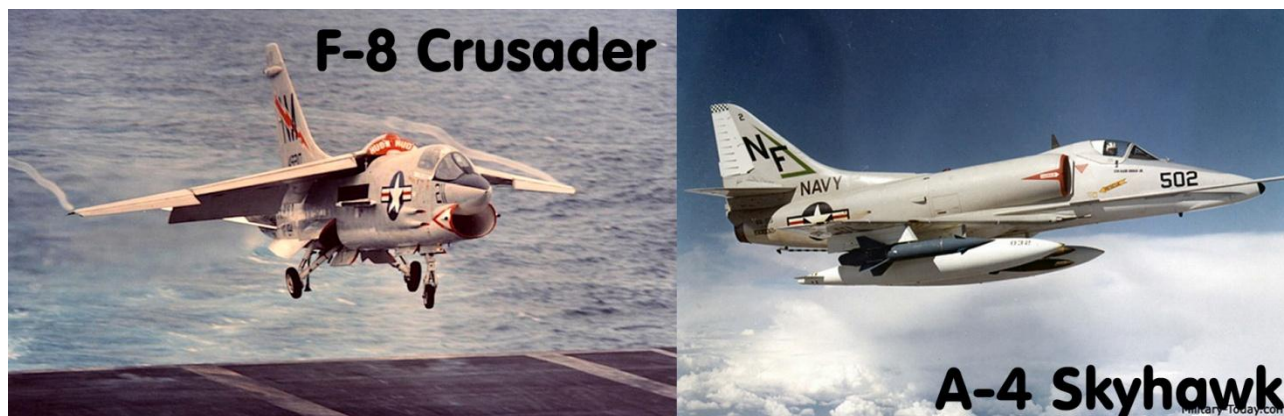
Navy Lieutenant Woodfield described what it is like aboard an aircraft carrier. He stated, “Our

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carrier has on air wing on it. In that wing are two fighter squadrons and three attack squadrons flying F-8 Crusader and A-4 Skyhawk aircraft. We have an eight-month tour to Southeast Asia, rotating three weeks on-station and about a week off in port. A pilot usually can count on two tours in a four year hitch.



“Our officers’ quarters are a bit smaller than the ones here at Phan Rang but our total living conditions are about equal. There aren’t too many recreational facilities available on ship and we have an inhibited night life compared to here because alcoholic beverages are not allowed on board. The fighter pilots practically live in the squadron ready-room, they even show movies there, and the average enlisted man works 12 to 14 hours a day.

“The enlisted men live in 70-to-80 man open compartments. There are no wall lockers for them, only a small box under their bunk.”

The lieutenant said it was quite a privilege to get to come to Phan Rang to see how the Air Force operates. He enjoyed our facilities here, the overall operations, and was impressed with the F-100 Super Sabre combat mission flights.

The purpose of the exchange program was to strengthen inter-service understanding and to give the pilots a look at how “the other fighter flyers” fulfill their combat mission. From all indications the program was a complete success and Air Force and Navy officials hope to continue in the months to come.

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COME BACK ANYTIME - - U.S. Air Force Maj. James M. Rhodes Jr. (left), San Diego Calif., and A-37 Dragonfly pilot with the 8th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) at Bien Hoa AB, leans against his aircraft while discussing the Air Force way of doing things with U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Boyd F. Repsher, also of San Diego, an F-8 Crusader aviator from the aircraft carriers USS Hancock. Commander Repsher was participating in the Navy-Air Force exchange program and had spent three days at Bien Hoa flying in the A-37 with the 8th SOS. Major Rhodes flew the Navy aviator to Phan Rang AB last week to meet a Navy C-1A to return him to his ship in the South China Sea. (Press Release by Sgt. Ken Garrett and U.S. Air Force Photo by Sgt Pete Pittas)

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Navy C-1A Trader



...AND IT COMES OUT HERE-- Air Force First Lt. Charles R. Harr (left) of Electra, Tex., describes the operation of the afterburner eye lids on an F-100 Super Sabre to Lieutenant Jeff R. Woodfield from San Diego, Calif., a Navy fighter pilot from the aircraft carrier USS Hancock. Lieutenant Woodfield was participating in a three-day Navy-Air Force pilot exchange program between the USS Hancock and the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing here. (Press release # PR 1-71-24 (C) by Sgt. Ken Garrett and U.S. Air Force Photo by Sgt. Pete Pittas.)

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Medic Saves The Day

HOI AN, Vietnam (Special) — Hospitalman 2-C, Phipp Edwards, a member of Combined Action Platoon 2-3C, had one of “those days” recently when he thought that he was through with his daily chores.

“I was down and we were just entering the village, coming in from our night ambush site,” said Edwards. “A Vietnamese boy came running up to me speaking rapidly. I can understand Vietnamese a little, but he was talking so fast that I couldn’t catch anything he was saying.”

Edwards knelt down and slowly and calmly began speaking to the youngster. The child’s face began to relax and his voice returned to normal.

It was now the corporal’s turn to become excited, for the news that the youngster brought was that his older sister was very ill and that she was in extreme pain.

The corporal started down the road hurriedly with the boy leading the way. As they reached a small hatched house, the corporal found himself looking down at the young Vietnamese woman, Tan Chin.

“I was a girl speaking to the woman as he quickly began examining her.”

“Her legs were drawn up almost touching her chin, and she was crying out in pain,” said Edwards. “She had acute abdominal pain, and I knew that I had to get her to a hospital right away.”

A Marine and the corporal turned her out into the morning light and moved slowly to the main road where the helicopter would be able to land.

“Everything was going alright until the ‘copter showed up,” said Edwards. “When we tried to make radio contact with the ‘copter, we found that we couldn’t get any response. After about ten minutes with the helicopter circling around us, we finally popped a yellow flare hoping that they would understand.”

The helicopter began a slow descent, Edwards left the side of the woman to direct the helicopter’s landing. As the wheels touched the ground he and the marine were already on their way to the helicopter with the litter.

“As the helicopter took off carrying the woman and her father to a Vietnamese hospital, a new day’s routine had already begun for the weary corporal.”

A small Vietnamese child showed Edwards a cut finger and asked for a band aid.

Defense Coordinator

Base Mayor Is ‘King of the Hill’

By SGT. JOHN MUELLER
FIRE SUPPORT BASE ALPHA FOUR, Vietnam—As a “mayor” of a town with many of the same problems the head of an small American town would have—except his “town” is a mile and a half from the demilitarized zone and the northeastern American base in Vietnam, Come is base defense coordinator and is known as the “mayor” here because of his responsibility for the base’s defense as well as the mess hall, roads and cleanliness of the area. He likes the name because “it’s a good respectable title. Some people even call me king of the hill,” he said with a smile.

The base is built on the site of the Vietnamese town of Con Thien and covers about one square mile. “City hall” is the tactical operations center bunker built into the side

of one of the base’s three small hills. It has also been Come’s home since November.

“The biggest problem here is keeping people from getting too lax and keeping people from falling asleep on the bunker line,” he said. He walks the bunker line at least twice a night to make sure everyone is awake. “More alert than awake,” he said.

He said he hasn’t come across anyone smoking pot on the bunker line. “But if I caught somebody I’d definitely press charges,” he said.

Come has other problems. Like keeping the base clean. Before the operation in western Quang Tri Province started, he said, at least two generals a month visited the base.

Tracked vehicles have turned up most of the roads on the base, he said. Ruts in some places appear to be three to four

feet deep. “All my culverts are out,” he lamented. “I’ve gotten as far as getting culvert material on here. Now we’re waiting on the engineers.”

Come says he is sometimes bored with the routine of being mayor. “It’s not bad on here when something happens,” he said. Early Sunday morning the North Vietnamese sent him a message, he said, by lobbing three rockets into the base.

One of his duties as mayor is to make sure boys show up for KP duty at “Howard Johnson’s.”

Before the mess hall opened three weeks ago to serve two hot meals a day, he said, only one hot meal a day was brought up by truck from a nearby fire base.

“We’ve been contemplating writing Howard Johnson and asking them for a sign on our mess hall,” he said.

Navy, Air Force Pilots Swap Seats

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — The U.S. Navy and Air Force recently swapped seats at the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing located at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Navy aircraft carrier on station in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Both “exchanges” were peaceful however. They were part of a pilot exchange between the Air Force and the Navy. The exchange began when Maj. Fredrick R. Nordin, 35th TFW flight scheduling officer, received a call from the Navy requesting 35th TFW to participate in the pilot swap program.

There were two swaps of three pilots from each service on each exchange. A total of six Air Force pilots were to go to the Hancock and a like number of Navy aviators were to come to this coastal air base for a few days.

The first exchange saw Air Force Capt. Dennis C. Horned, 35th TFW flight scheduling officer, swap with Navy Lt. Charles W. Singler, and 1st Lt. James F. Kilpatrick with the 35th TFW. The second exchange saw Air Force Capt. Dennis C. Horned, 35th TFW flight scheduling officer, swap with Navy Lt. Charles W. Singler, and 1st Lt. James F. Kilpatrick with the 35th TFW.

The Navy men were shown around the base, lived with their host squadrons, and were able to fly on a number of actual combat missions in the rear seat of the wing’s F105 Super Sabres.

The Air Force fighter pilots were flown aboard the Hancock and experienced in flight and quickly fitted into the swing carrier operations in an area off the Republic of Vietnam coast in the South China Sea, commonly called Tonkin Station. There are no two-seat fighter aircraft based at Phan Rang AB, Hancock as the Air Force men were not able to fly on an actual mission, but they were given a great tour of the wing and saw



Air Force 1st Lt. Charles R. Harr (left), a pilot with the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang AB, shows the workings of a bomb rack under the wing of an F105 to Navy Lt. Jeff R. Woodfield, during a pilot exchange program.

how the air war is run, Navy-style.

Tomlin said, “We made what appeared to be a kamikazi run on the carrier when we landed. We came in about 20 feet off the deck. The landing officer told us to all the engines, and we just fell the rest of the way.” The lieutenant was also impressed by the Navy’s careful timing and precise coordination when moving a number of aircraft such as a small deck.

“After the initial swap returned to their own squadrons, the second group traded places for another three-day swap. The second phase traded Capt. Robert S. Pahl, 35th TFW, with Lt. (j.g.) D. A. Foye, 1st Lt. Larry D. Bruce, 35th TFW, with Lt. Jeff R. Woodfield, and 1st Lt.

Sanders L. Avery, 35th TFW, with Lt. J. R. Carlson.

Woodfield described what it is like aboard an aircraft carrier. “The carrier has one flight deck on it. In that wing are two fighter squadrons and three attack squadrons flying F4 Corsair and A4 Skyhawk aircraft. We have an eight-month tour to Southeast Asia, rotating three weeks on station and about a month in port. A pilot usually can count on two tours in a four-year hitch.

“Our officers’ quarters are a bit smaller than the ones here at Phan Rang AB but our total living conditions are about equal. There aren’t too many recreational facilities available on ship and we have an inhibited night life compared to here at Phan

The clip on the left is page 7 from the Pacific Stars & Stripes, Thursday, February 18, 1971.

Phan Rang Newsletters 188, 207-240 has more information on Fred Nordin; James Kilpatrick, 167-249; Gerald Tucker, 30-240; Boyd Repsher, 240; Charles Harr, 30-158-235-274; Jeff Woodfield, 30-240-274; Robert Pahl, 24-26-30-98-105-165-208-240; D.A. Foye, 240; Larry Bruce and J.R. Carlson 30-240; Sanders Avery, 30-235-240; and Fred Tomlin, 30-194-197-214-221-225-240.

New Roads Aid Goal of Mission Couple

By SPC-4 LARRY BYLES
DA NANG, Vietnam — An American missionary couple has been saying the goal of helping the people here has been made easier by U.S. and Vietnamese roadbuilding projects.

The Rev. and Mrs. Gordon D. Smith came to Vietnam 15 years ago and recall when some of the alleys were used to go outside

only be reached by horseback, and if you went there the cars were likely to eat your horses,” Smith said.

American and South Vietnamese road improvements have made travel easier and safer, he said. The Smiths have raised some of the burden of their

Despite the physical challenges, the Smiths have been responsible for building the first leprosanatorium in Vietnam, establishing 20 churches and several orphanages.

The first leprosanatorium, built near Da Nang, had 100 beds more than 2,000 lepers. Several others have also sprung up with the couple’s help.

The Smiths have mastered Vietnamese and several tribal dialects, one of which Smith transferred into a written form, since they first reached Indochina in 1927.

The Smiths have also dedicated most of their time to orphan care. They care for more than 80 orphans at two orphanages near Da Nang and have opened similar homes at four other locations.

We plan to spend the rest of our lives here, Vietnam is our life,” Mrs. Smith said.

Bunker Back of Post
 SAIGON (AP)—U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker returned here Monday night from consultations with administration officials in Washington, an embassy official announced.

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834th Wins 2nd PUC

(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday October 1, 1971)

TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam (Special)—The 834th Air Div. responsible for all U.S. Air Force cargo and troop transport in the Republic of Vietnam, has received its second U.S. Presidential Unit Citation.

The division, headquartered at Tan Son Nhut AB, was cited for its outstanding airlift support for the Free World Forces in the Republic for the period April 1 to June 30, 1970. The earlier award covered the period Jan. 21 to May 12, 1968.

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Under the division are Detachments 1 and 2 at Tan Son Nhut and (Cam Ranh Bay AB, respectively, both flying C130 Hercules aircraft; the 315th Tactical Airlift Wing at Phan Rang AB, flying C123 Providers; the 483d Tactical Airlift Wing at Cam Ranh Bay, the only C7 Caribou wing in the U.S. Air Force; and the 2nd Aerial Port Group, headquartered at Tan Son Nhut.

In its five years in Vietnam, the 834th has been responsible for carrying out the largest sustained airlift in history, dwarfing the combined totals of the Berlin Airlift of 1949, the "Hump" airlift over the Himalayas during World War II and the tactical airlift of the Korean War.

More than two billion tons of cargo and 3.5 million passengers were carried aboard the unit's aircraft in the last year alone.

FAC With a Sting Directs Base Camp 'Kill'

(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Wednesday, August 5, 1970)

BIEN HOA AB, Vietnam (Special) — For more than five hours, the U.S. Air Force OV10 Bronco swooped and circled overhead. Below, the jungle heaved and shook with explosions as repeated Allied air strikes shattered the enemy base camp hidden beneath the dense jungle foliage.

At the end of five hours only gutted cache sites and bombblackened bunkers remained of what was once a enemy camp of 50 to 60 fortifications and bunkers.

Piloting the OV10 was 1st Lt. James L. Woods, 25, a forward air controller (FAC) with the 19th Tactical Air Support Sq. here. The day would see him direct air strikes for aircraft from two Air Force bases, two U.S. fighting services and two Allied countries. It would be a long, tiring day but a very worthwhile one.

Upon reaching his sector, Woods made contact with an Army hunter-killer helicopter team, consisting of a light observation helicopter (LOH) and a UH1 Huey Cobra helicopter gunship. The team had seen considerable enemy activity in an area some 30 miles northwest of Xuan Loc city in Long Khanh Province. The LOH pilot said the target was most likely an enemy cache site and base camp. The mission, however started with problems.

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"Just as I arrived on target," said Woods, "the hunter-killer team had to return to base to refuel. In the meantime, my strike had been canceled due to weather, so I requested a new strike."

This strike consisted of two A37 Dragonflies from the 90th Attack Squadron. They were scrambled from Bien Hoa AB to support the request. The A37s were piloted by First Lieutenants Quentin J. McGregor, 23, and John P. Cerak, 25.

"As the A37 flight was about to arrive, the LOH reported that he was ready to return to the target area, but that his high ship and cover, the Cobra, had not refueled yet," the lieutenant continued. "However, I told the LOH that I would have my A37 flight act as cover for him. He returned on station and immediately drew heavy small arms fire from the target area. I marked this target and put the A37s to work on it.

"Meanwhile, the LOH landed at an old fire support base to have a good look at himself. He had taken a lot of rounds, but fortunately wasn't hit. He then returned to the base camp area along with the Cobra gunship.

"The A37s pounded the area from which the ground fire had come. During their strike they a good secondary explosion confirming the possibility they were striking a cache site. The flight was initially credited with eight fortifications destroyed. Further searching by the LOH showed that the strike had destroyed an additional six fortifications and six bunkers.

"About this time, a Canberra, from the Royal Australian Air Force's Number 2 Squadron at Phan Rang AB, checked in with me," Woods went on. "I marked the new target for them. It was just a little to the right of the A37 target. The Canberra dropped three bombs on each pass and hit right on the target. They were really good hits, and that ended the ground fire from that area.

"I had the fighters set their first bomb fuses for instantaneous detonation to blow away the trees and then the next bombs with delayed fusing to get the exposed bunkers." continued Woods. "The enemy had built some fairly large hootches in the area, and under each he had built a good-sized bunker. There also were some pallets spotted in the area like those

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found at some of the cache sites in Cambodia.

"The LOH went in to get a reading on the battle damage caused by the Canberra. He stated that there was absolutely nothing left of the hootches or bunkers where the A37s and Canberra had hit. Pieces of them were blown all over the jungle, and where they originally were, there were only craters," added the lieutenant.

As soon as Woods had finished with the Canberra, two USAF F100 Super Sabres from Phan Rang AB arrived. They were replacements for the mission which the lieutenant had lost earlier in the day. Their mission was a landing zone preparation near the current target.

"When the F100s arrived, I put them in on the landing zone 'prep' which was near the target that I had been working on. After they expended all their bombs on the landing zone, I brought them to the original Canberra target. I had them strafe the area thoroughly with their 20mm cannons. They did a real job. The LOH again went in to have a look, and he reported that the Super Sabres had accounted for two more fortifications and another bunker.

"As the LOH flew at treetop level over the target, he saw that hootches blown away by previous bomb blasts revealed more bunkers underneath.

"The base camp and storage sites were much larger than we originally realized," Woods explained. "As we got into it and blew away some of the jungle, we kept uncovering more and more of the camp. As the new targets appeared, I kept calling for more and more tactical air. "I was able to stay on target for so long because I had a centerline extra fuel tank, on my OV10. Of course, that didn't do much to help the many parts of my body that were beginning to go to sleep or ache," the lieutenant continued with a grin.

"I was told there was a set of free air (a flight unable to expend its ordnance on its original target and available for a target of opportunity) available from Bien Hoa AB. I asked for this flight and soon had them on station," the lieutenant continued.

The flight consisted of two A37s from the 90th AS here. They were piloted by Lt. Col. Thomas J. Magner and Capt. Howard K. Carroll.

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Woods marked the new bunkers which the LOH had found. He then directed the A37s to start their bomb runs.

"On our first three passes Woods directed us to drop our bombs directly on his smoke," Carroll recalled. "Then he had us climb while the LOH went in to look at the target. The LOH pilot said all the bunkers in this area had been destroyed. The LOH pilot then told the FAC about another bunker complex about 400 yards from the first one we had hit. The FAC marked this new target, and we dropped our remaining bombs on it. Again we held high and dry while the LOH went into have a look. He said this target was also completely destroyed."

Another LOH now working in the area discovered a supply cache of 55-gallon drums. The A37 flight was next directed against this new site. Using their miniguns, the 90th pilots destroyed all the drums. All totaled, this A37 flight was credited with destroying, 17 bunkers and six fortifications, plus the drum cache.

It had now been more than five hours since Woods had first arrived on target in his OV10. He was out of ammunition, out of smoke rockets, almost out of fuel and finally out of targets. Warily he turned his Bronco back toward Bien Hoa AB.

It had been a "long kind of day." It had also been the kind of day that saw the death of an enemy base camp.

THEN & NOW

Robbie Peavy
Phan Rang - Tucson, AZ
1968 2023



Larry Jones
Phan Rang - Warner Robins, GA
1968 2023



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Joe’s children, Scott, Debra, Amy and Katie built a beautiful tribute to their father which graces the front of the Plainview, Minnesota Town Hall.



The concrete statue of Joe Kaupa. The plaque was enlarged to show details.

Herbert “Joe” Joseph Kaupa Jr., 76, of Plainview, MN passed away peacefully on March 9, 2022 at home with his family by his side after a hard fought courageous battle against cancer.



Joe Kaupa stands guard in front of the Plainview City Hall.

Both photos by Dean Harrison.

Joe was born in Springfield, MN on April 23, 1945 to Herbert Joseph Kaupa Sr. and Opal (Bisher) Kaupa. He met his best friend and love of his life Nancy (Passe) Kaupa when they were freshmen in high school while at the Wabasha Beach. After graduating from Plainview High School in 1963 he enlisted in the US Air Force. Joe and Nancy were married July 10, 1965 at St. Felix Catholic Church, in Wabasha. They spent the first few years of their marriage living on

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several Air Force bases and after having their first two children, they had to spend a year apart while Joe was deployed to Vietnam, and Nancy and the kids lived with her mother in Wabasha. In 1971 after Joe was honorably discharged from the Air Force, they settled in Plainview where they raised their four children.

In April of 1999, Joe retired from the Plainview Police Department, after 23 years as Plainview’s Chief of Police, and 36 years of public service. In addition to being a loving husband and father, Joe was a foster parent to several youth.

Joe attended several Vietnam Veteran Reunions and had an unbreakable bond with his “brothers” in service; they were family to him.

Joe is survived by his four children: Scott (Vicki) Kaupa, Debra (Wes) Bruemmer, Amy (Tom) Petersen, Katie (Nate) Nolting, eight grandchildren: Joshua Kaupa, Tyler Kaupa (Aleisha Leonhardt), Brady Kaupa, Nicole (Eric) Viegut, Daniel Bruemmer (Gabby Rigden), John Petersen, Miles Nolting, and Kira Nolting, and four great granddaughters. He is survived by one brother, David Kaupa.

He was preceded in death by his wife Nancy Kaupa,



Doug’s Comments: What an adventure it has been meeting and communicating with all the Phan Rang heroes, both American and Australian and helping to preserve their legacy and the memory of those that didn’t make the “Freedom Bird” home. I say that because I just returned home from my wife’s family reunion in Alabama and I experienced some of the same emotions as experienced at our annual Phan Rang Reunion. I hope that you have enjoyed this newsletter. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, dougsevert@gmail.com and put ‘unsubscribe’ in subject line.