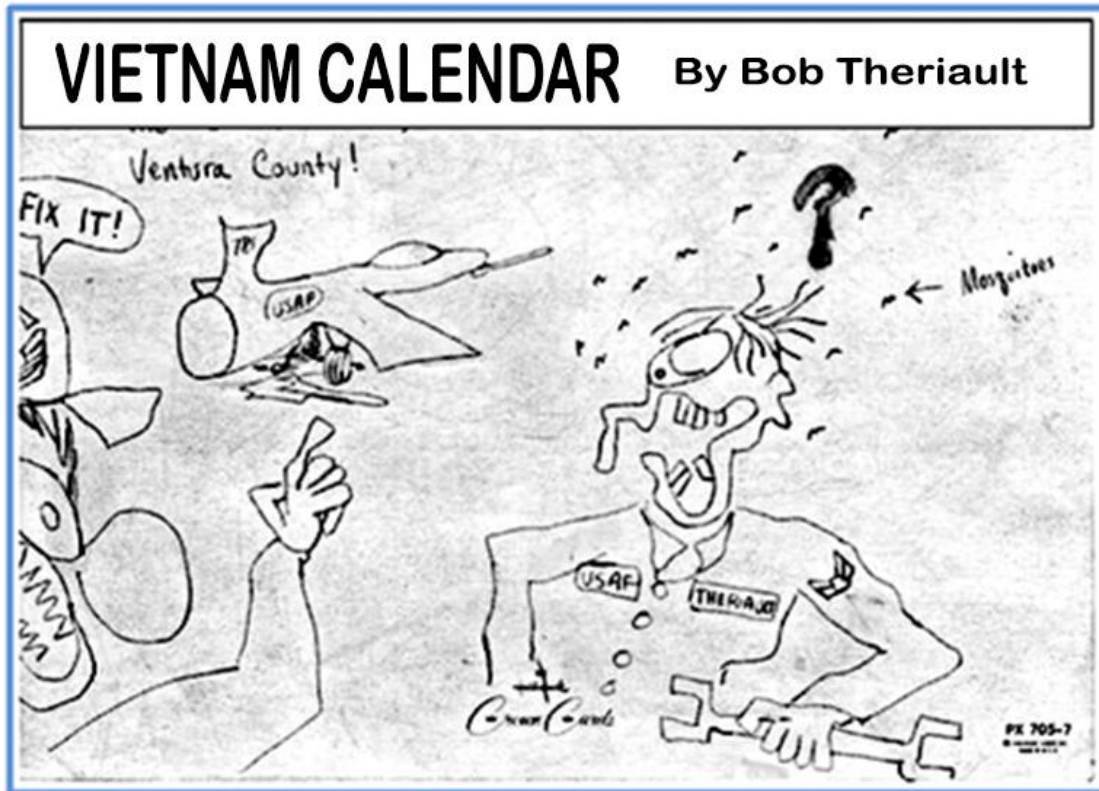


Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
"Keeping the memories alive" Newsletter 297

In this Issue:

Vietnam Calendar by Bob Thériault - Part 1



Twelve Months on an Air Base in Vietnam



INTRODUCTION

During the Vietnam War, I was assigned to the 35th Combat Support Group at Phan Rang Air Base in South Vietnam. The name says it all – I wasn’t fighting anybody, just supporting those that did. This was in 1969-1970, and I was an Avionics Instrument Technician working on the F-100D Super Sabre fighter bombers of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing.

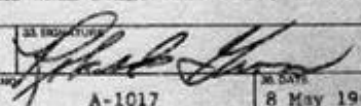



An F-100 from Phan Rang dropping a napalm canister near Bien Hoa. USAF Photo

I have put together this scrap book as a way for me to reminisce about that year in my life, and to have a record of it for my family. Yes, war is man’s folly, but I remember my year in Vietnam.

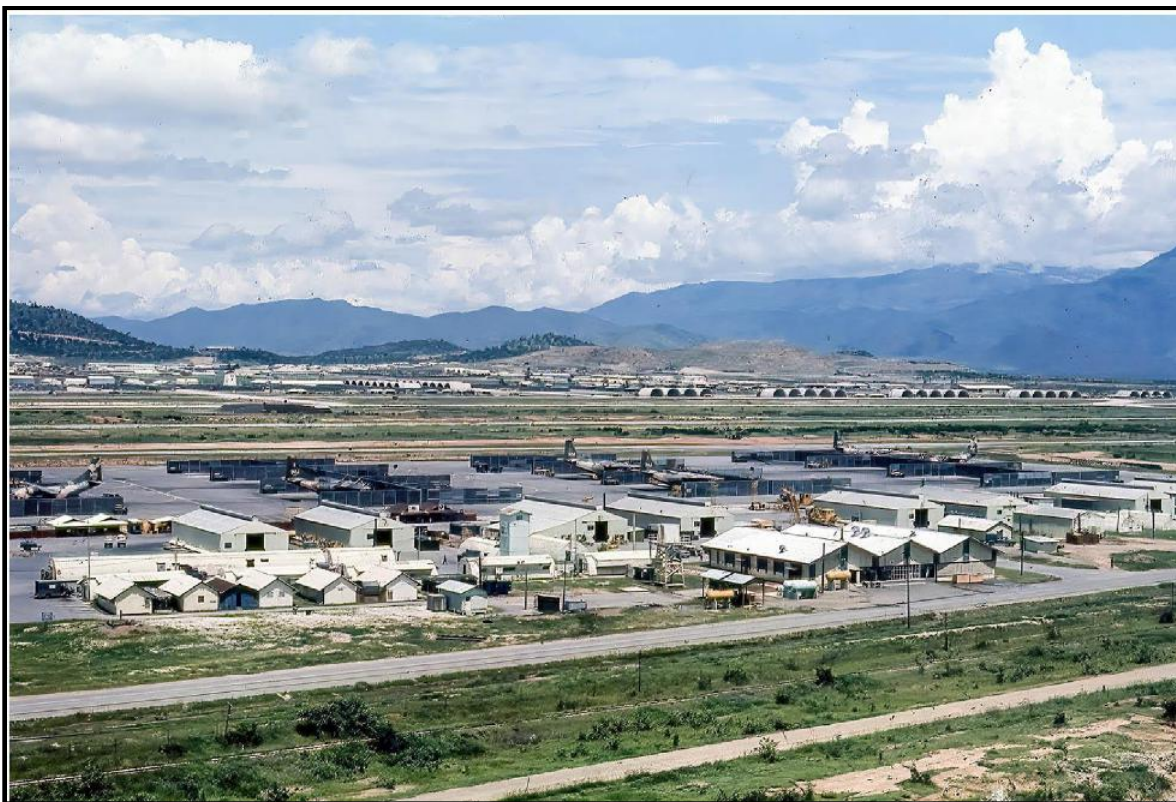
Bob Thériault / September 2024

Orders to Vietnam

REQUEST AND AUTHORIZATION FOR PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION -- MILITARY (If more space is required, continue on reverse)			
The following individual will proceed on Permanent Change of Station:			
1. GRADE, LAST NAME, FIRST, MIDDLE INITIAL, APO/AFSBAN A1C THERIAULT, ROBERT, AFI8866219		2. SHIPPING ADDRESS 42230	3. OVER 4 YRS. SERVICE (If over)
4. PURPOSE OF TOV Attend Cms 44ASF 42270-S, PDS Code HB5.		5. TOV ENROUTE ADDRESS 4410 Sturon, Eglin AFB, FL 32542	
6. NO. OF DAYS 11	7. TOV REPORTING DATE 6 JUL 69	8. SECURITY CLEARANCE Secret	
9. UNIT, MAJOR COMMAND, AND ADDRESS OF UNIT TO WHICH ASSIGNED 35 CSOp, PACAF APO San Francisco 96321 (PAS PRRNYK)		10. UNIT, MAJOR COMMAND, AND ADDRESS OF UNIT FROM WHICH RELEASED 93 FMSq, SAC Castle AFB, CA 95342 (PAS CHSDLR)	
11. TOV 15 Jul 69 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PCS WITH PCA (EDCSA) <input type="checkbox"/> PCS WITHOUT PCA			
12. REPORT TO COMOR, NEW ASSIGNMENT NLT		13. DUTY Yes	14. LEAVE ADDRESS Rto 2 Box 218 Thermal CA 92274
15. INDIVIDUAL ELECTED TO SERVE <input type="checkbox"/> ACCOMPANIED <input type="checkbox"/> UNACCOMPANIED TOUR <input type="checkbox"/> DEPENDENTS PROHIBITED WITHIN OVERSEA AREA		16. TRAVEL OF DEPENDENTS IS AUTHORIZED: <input type="checkbox"/> CONCURRENT <input type="checkbox"/> TO A DESIGNATED POINT WITHIN CONUS	
17. MODES OF TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZED FOR OVERSEA TRAVEL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MIL ACFT <input type="checkbox"/> MIL VESSEL <input type="checkbox"/> COMIL ACFT OR VESSEL		18. REPORT TO MAC PASSENGER'S SERVICE COUNTER AT McChord AFB, WA	
19. AIR MOVEMENT DESIGNATION		20. FLIGHT NO. OR NAME OF VESSEL	21. EXCESS BAGGAGE AUTHORIZED 3 1/2 POUNDS 3 PIECES
22. DISLOCATION ALLOWANCE CATEGORY			
23. DEPENDENTS (List names of dependent and DOB of child)			
SIGNED Robert M. Theriault General, USAF			
24. PCS EXPENSE CHARGEABLE TO 5793500 329 P577.92 410 411 440 8503725/ 5703500 320 P577.02 410 411 440 8503725			
25. TOV EXPENSE CHARGEABLE TO 5703400 300 044804 408 409 46310 8525002			
26. CSC 4 5 948 5779 503725/ 4 5 048 5776 503725		27. AUTHORITY AND PCS CODE J, AFM 39-11/USAF Line No 07N35219	
28. REMARKS Items 20, 21, and 22 will be indorsed at a later date. Stu will sign in at Bldg 9012, Base Hqs, by 1200 Hrs one day prior to start date. Stu will be Admin Asgnd to 4410 Sturon for duration of TDY, and will Rpt to Bldg 4410 Sturon one day prior to class start date. Govt Qtrs, mess and Trans will be used if Avail. However, Stu should be financially prepared to reside off base. For Tng Rpt to 3278 FTD, Bldg 9070, at 0600 Hrs on class start date. Uniform will be fatigues. Practical Tng will be Resp of TAC Maint units at Eglin AFB, and will follow FTD Crcs. Class start 7 Jul, grad 16 Jul 69.			
29. DATE 7 May 69	30. TYPED NAME AND GRADE OF CBPO OFFICIAL ROBERT C GROSS, SSGT, USAF		31. SIGNATURE 
32. DESIGNATION AND LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE HQ 93 BOMB WG (SAC) CASTLE AFB CA 95342		33. SPECIAL ORDER NO. A-1017	34. DATE 8 May 1969
35. DISTRIBUTION 15-4410 Sturon, Eglin AFB, FL 32542 6-35 CSOp (CBPO) PACAF APO San Francisco 96321 "AB" T-6219		36. SIGNATURE ELEMENT OF ORDERS AUTHENTICATING OFFICIAL  ROGER L. BARDOEL, 1ST LT, USAF Asst Chief, Admin Services	

One day someone walked into the Castle Air Force Base Instrument Shop and handed me this piece of paper and said, "You're going to Vietnam, Bob". Box 9 is the address for Phan Rang, and notice how I signed my copy, elevating my rank just a touch!

PHAN RANG AIRBASE



C-123 cargo planes nearest camera, all other aircraft are beyond the two runways. (Photo by Christopher Boles)

The Japanese had an airfield here (in Ninh Thuan Province) during World War I, and the French Air Force used it until 1954. It was rebuilt for modern aircraft and opened by the US Air Force in 1966. Just a little over a year after it was left as part of the US withdrawal from the war, it was turned over to the South Vietnamese. The first F-100 Super Sabre squadrons arrived in 1966.

Locations of the ten USAF bases in Vietnam.



Ethnic Groups

AUSTROASIATIC

- Vietnamese
- Mon-Khmer (Cambodian)
- Mon-Khmer (tribal groups)

MALAYO-POLYNESIAN

- Cham
- Tribal groups

MIXED GROUPS

- Vietnamese and Mon-Khmer (Cambodian)
- Mon-Khmer (Cambodian and tribal groups)
- Vietnamese and Mon-Khmer (tribal groups)

HRE Tribal name

NOTE: Chinese and other foreigners are concentrated principally in larger cities

The map shows the following ethnic group distribution:

- Vietnamese (Orange):** Predominant in the coastal regions and the southern part of the country.
- Mon-Khmer (Cambodian) (Brown):** Found in the central and southern regions, often in mixed groups.
- Mon-Khmer (tribal groups) (Yellow):** Found in the central and southern regions, often in mixed groups.
- Cham (Green):** Found in the central and southern regions, often in mixed groups.
- Tribal groups (Light Green):** Found in the central and southern regions, often in mixed groups.

Tribal Names:

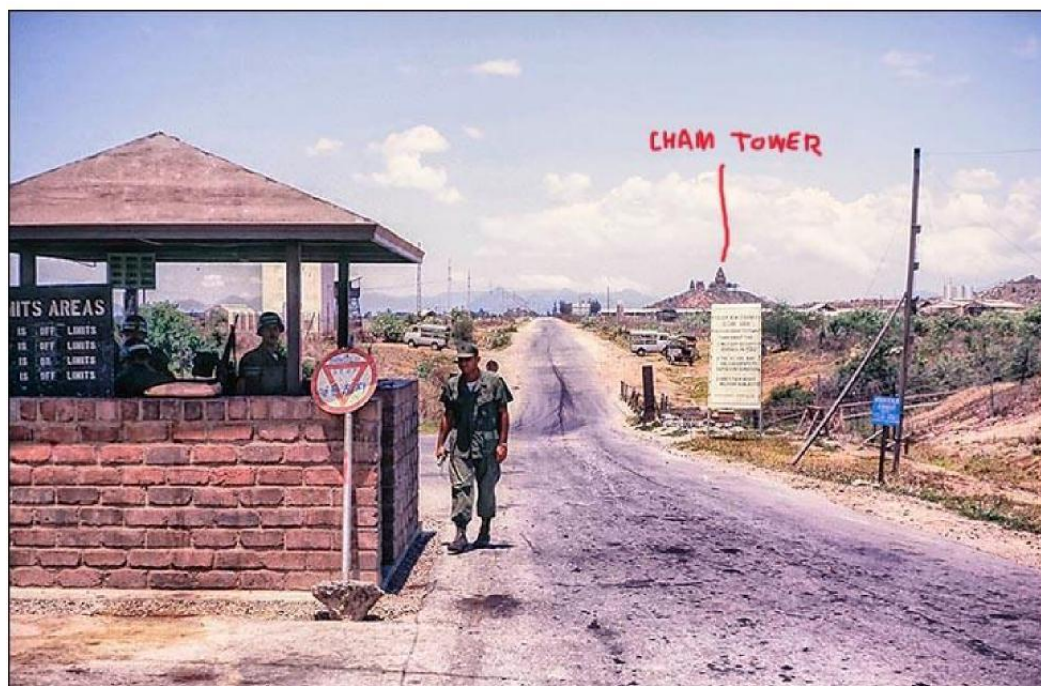
- KATU
- JEH
- SEDANG
- BAHAR
- JARAI
- RHADÉ
- M'NONG
- STIENG
- CHAU MA
- KOHO
- SRE CHURU
- RAGLA

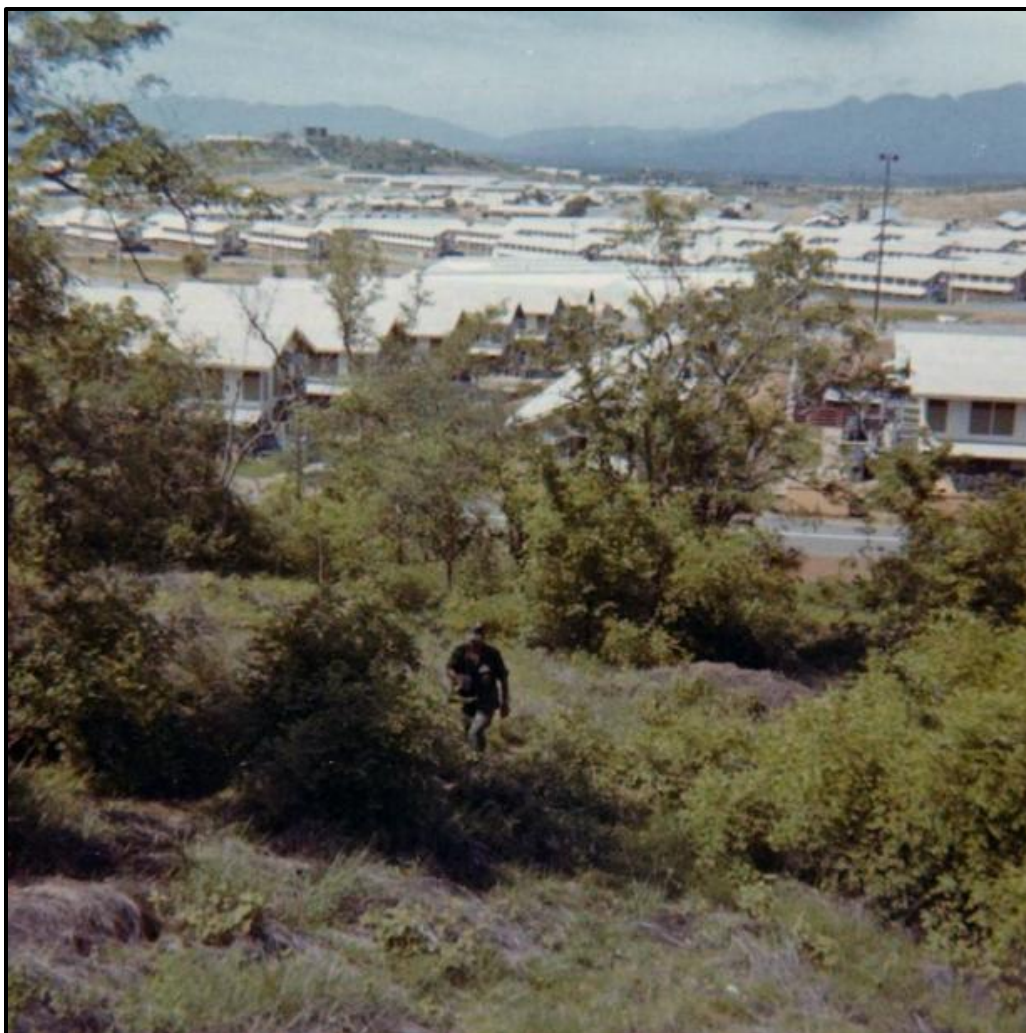
Other Labels:

- BRU
- Quang Tri
- Hue
- Da Nang
- Quang Ngai
- Kontum
- Pleiku
- Ban Me Thuot
- Nha Trang
- Cam Ranh
- Da Lat
- Phan Rang
- Phan Thiet
- Vung Tau
- Bien Hoa
- Gia Dinh
- Phu Cuong
- My Tho
- Sa Dec
- Vinh Long
- Can Tho
- Khánh Hưng
- Bac Lieu
- Quan Long
- Rach Gia
- Long Xuyen
- Dao Phu Quoc

rawn at Phan Bang shows one of the three remaining pockets of t

The Main Gate

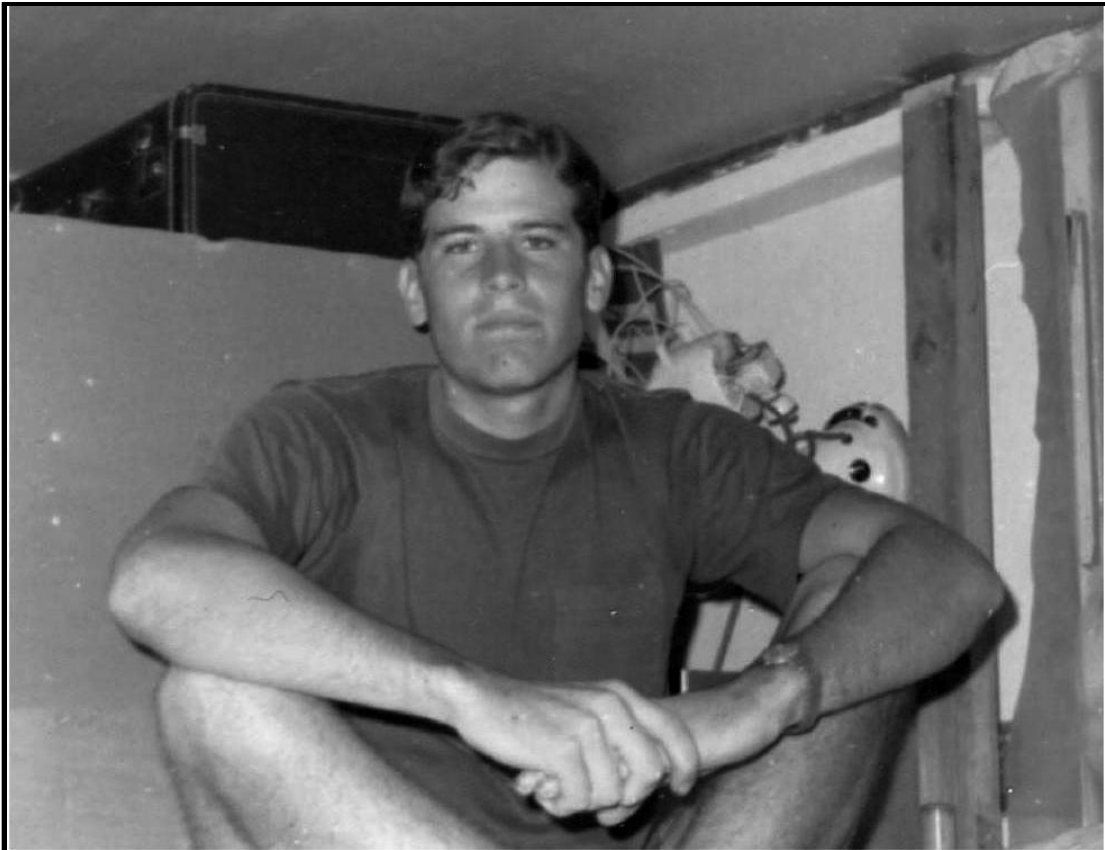




A sea of barracks. Photo by Bob Thériault

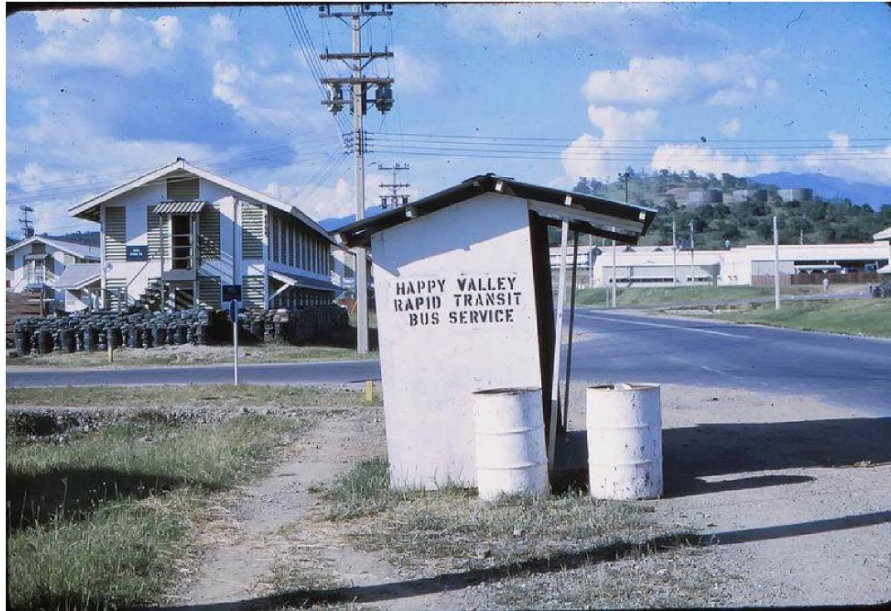
Phan Rang was like a large airport, but everybody who worked there lived there, so it was also like a town with many conveniences that would be found stateside, except no families. "Because there were no criteria for constructing airbases in a combat area, peacetime standards governed the design of Tuy Hoa, Cam Ranh Bay, Phan Rang, and Phu Cat. Perhaps from a location standpoint, Phan Rang was the most vulnerable because it received its water and aviation fuel from off-base sources through pipelines exposed to enemy interdiction... munitions were stored in the northwest and aviation fuel in the southeast corner both within easy small arms range from the base perimeter." It certainly was not uncommon for us on the flightline to see a plume of black smoke off base, and we'd say, "They blew up the JP-4 pipeline again!"

Considering that we were in a war zone, we Air Force guys had nice living conditions... always a bed to sleep on and a mess hall. One could play basketball or tennis. Go to the library or a hobby shop. Indeed, when the base was built, I don't think it was envisioned that the Viet Cong would come to strength locally, or that the North Vietnamese Army would push south into formerly secure areas.



I'm thinking it over on the top bunk. That's the neighbor's locker up against my back.

The barracks were hot (we had fans), and the sound of aircraft taking off and landing was fairly constant 24/7. Upon my arrival, I first slept in the squadron day room but before long settled into the barracks proper upstairs. It was an open bay affair with no walls – just 10 X 10-foot spaces delineated by lockers – fairly cramped conditions for two guys. At some point Lee Moore from Auto Pilot Shop installed plywood sheets between the bunks and lockers, as we as walked along the central walkway through the building, and that gave us some privacy **Way to go, Lee!**



Bus Stop. Photo by Lee Moore

The base was called "***Happy Valley***" and at the time I never asked why, I just figured it was an English translation of the local name for the area, but no! It was a name given by a base commander. There was indeed a bus service (my shop was about one mile from my barracks), but I usually commuted on my little Honda motorcycle.



Someone just threw me a baseball. There was some open space around my barracks.

So, all of us did our jobs on the flight line, in supply, administrative duties, etc., without worrying about a ground attack because the security forces were doing their job out on the perimeter. We could worry about incoming rockets and mortars if we wanted because it did happen.

AIR BASE TOTALS FOR 1969						
BASE	Attacks	Inbound Rounds	Aircraft		Personnel	
			Destroyed	Damaged	KIA	WIA
Phan Rang	34	525	2	38	2	52
Bien Hoa	21	228	3	15	2	20
Da Nang	16	119	2	19	8	57
Pleiku	12	35	0	5	0	11
Binh Thuy	7	152	0	0	3	9
Cam Ranh Bay	7	63	0	26	1	7
Nha Trang	5	34	0	4	0	3
Phu Cat	3	18	0	0	1	3
Tan Son Nhut	3	10	0	0	0	5

Totals for USAF Air Bases
1964-1973

Attacks - 475

Inbound Rounds - 6163

US Aircraft Destroyed - 75

US Aircraft Damaged - 898

US Personnel KIA - 155

US Personnel WIA - 1702

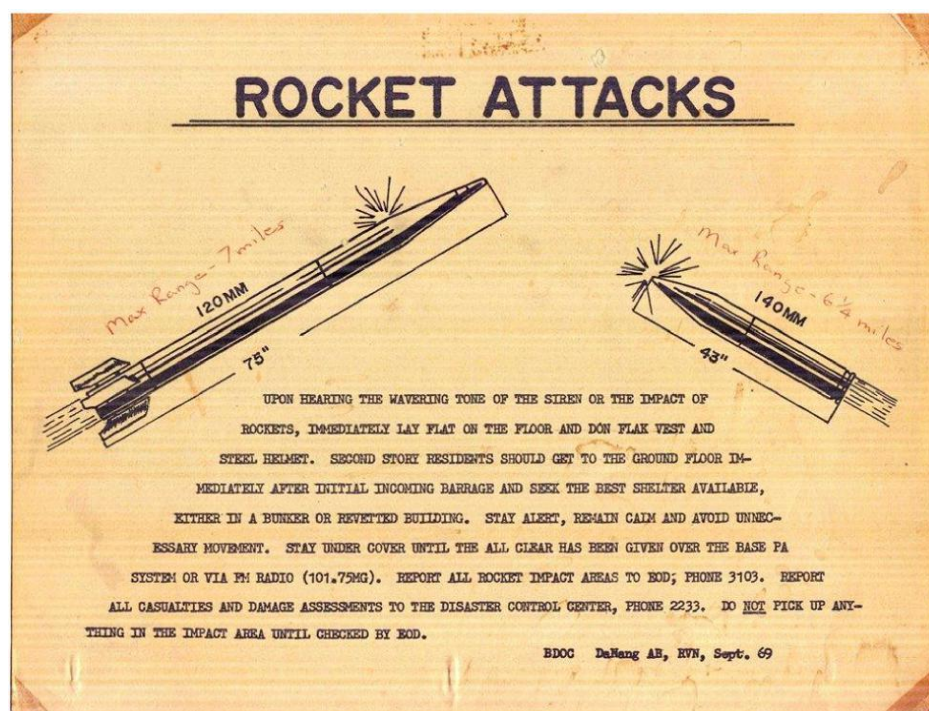
RVN Aircraft Destroyed - 25

RVN Aircraft Damaged - 305

RVN Personnel KIA - 154

RVN Personnel WIA - 504

ROCKETS AND MORTARS

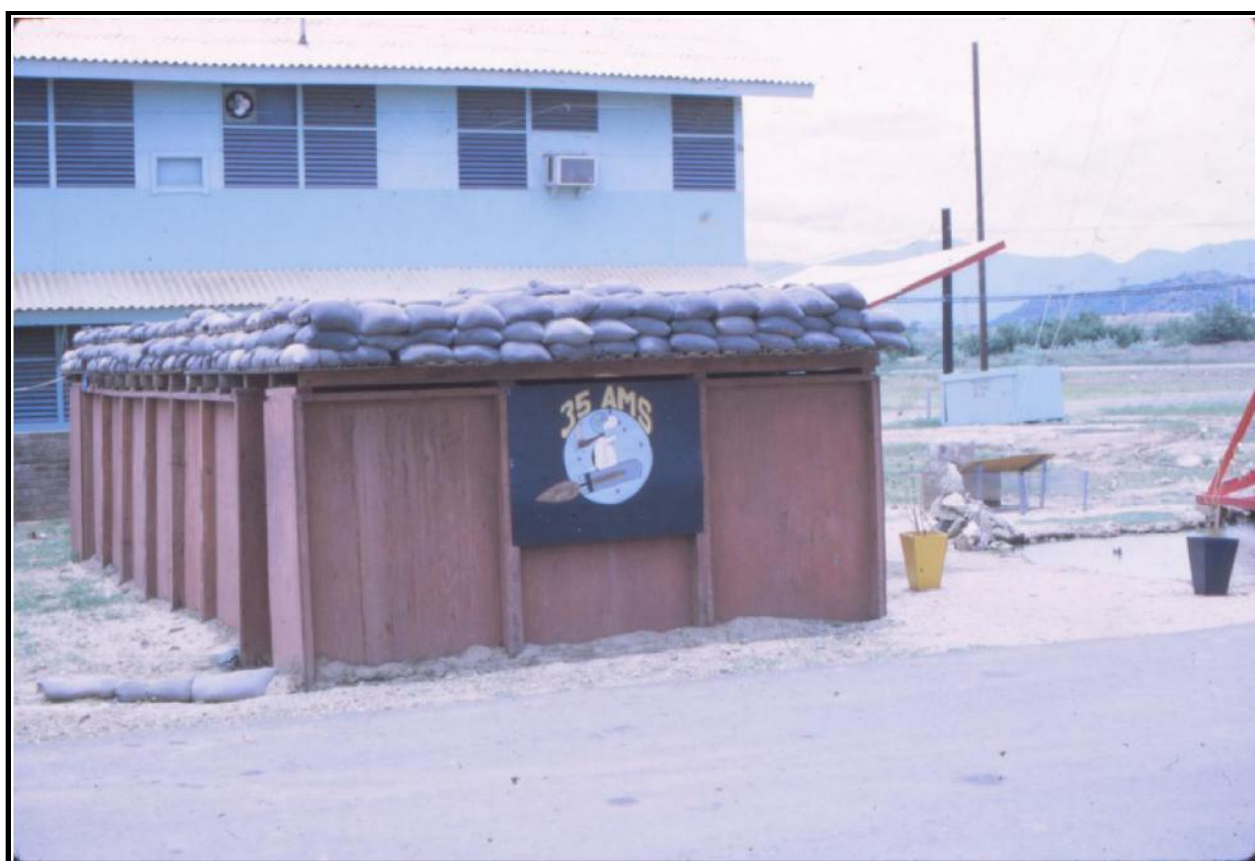


Posted in the barracks at Da Nang Air Base, which we called "Rocket City".

A 7.5-mile radius area around Phan Rang was called the “rocket belt” – any farther out than this was beyond the range of the rockets used by the VC/NVA at the time. The rocket belt was constantly monitored for enemy action, but enemy launching sites were set up under cover of darkness, and thus were difficult to discover.

In my experience, most of the rocket strikes happened during daylight, and this was because the rockets were timed to go off after a night time setup. Conversely, all mortar attacks occurred in the middle of the night and were actively being fired by enemy soldiers.

There was a siren attack warning system. Sometimes nothing would happen when it went off, and sometimes it would not go off when a rocket came in.

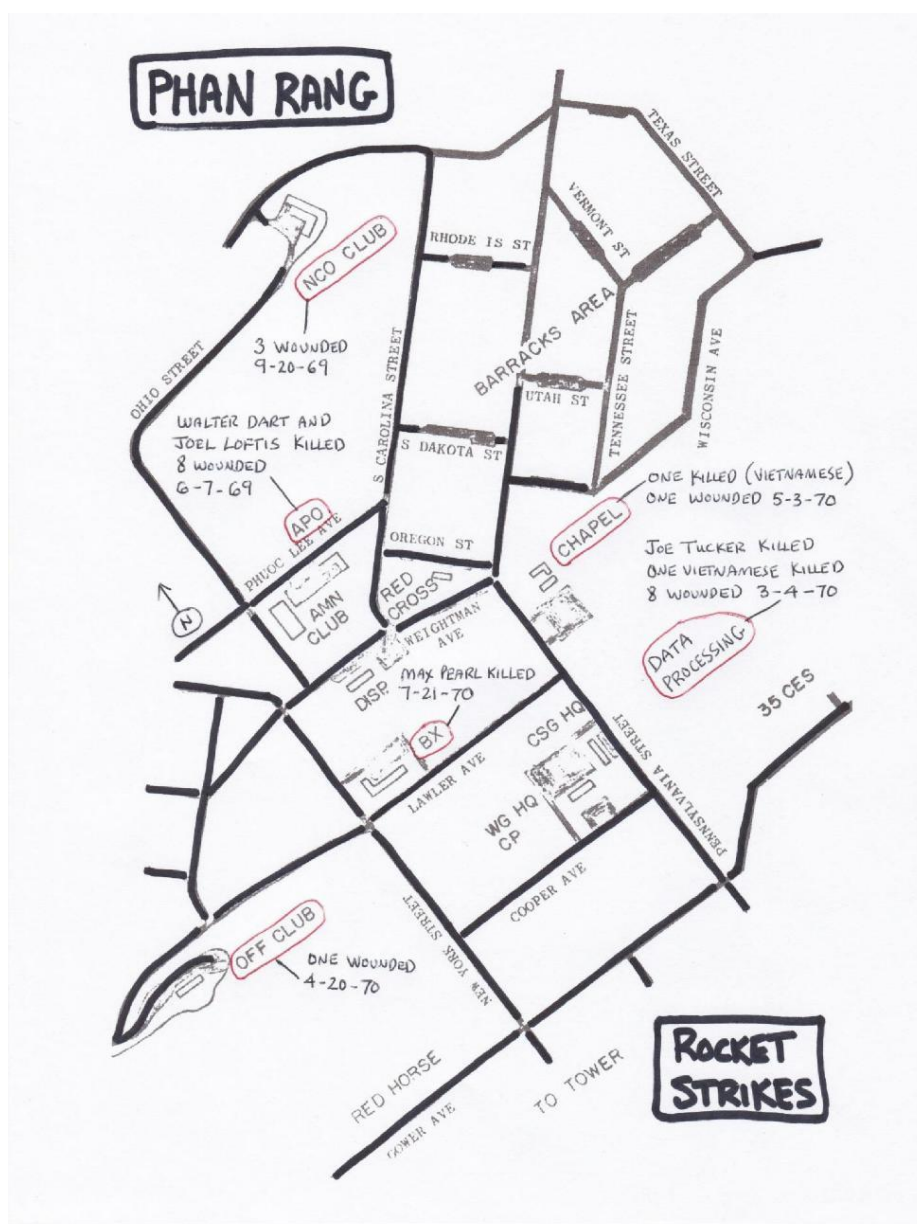


35th AMS Bunker, Photo by Bob Tucker

There were bunkers scattered around the base, and the one above was located right out the back door of the instrument shop. I remember sprinting to it while under a rocket attack.

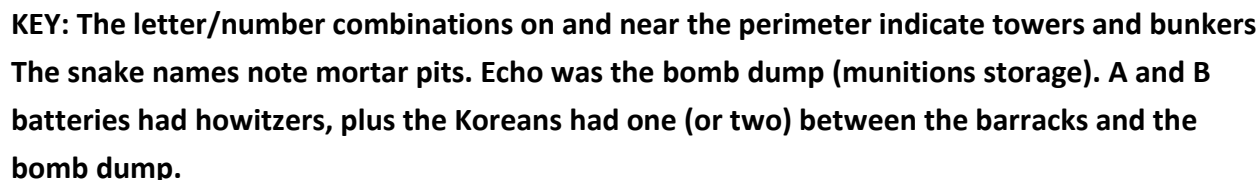


Top photo, an F-100 on the flight line after a rocket attack. Bottom photo: The 35th AMS — Instrument Shop was a few windows down to the left, Photo by Meredith Lewis



"Downtown" area of Phan Rang Air Base. USAF map annotated by Bob Thériault

The Air Force Security Police defended the base from ground attack, and manned the many guard towers surrounding the base, and this included K9 patrols.





Troops at the Security Police building prepare to deploy to the perimeter.

Both photos by Christopher Boles.

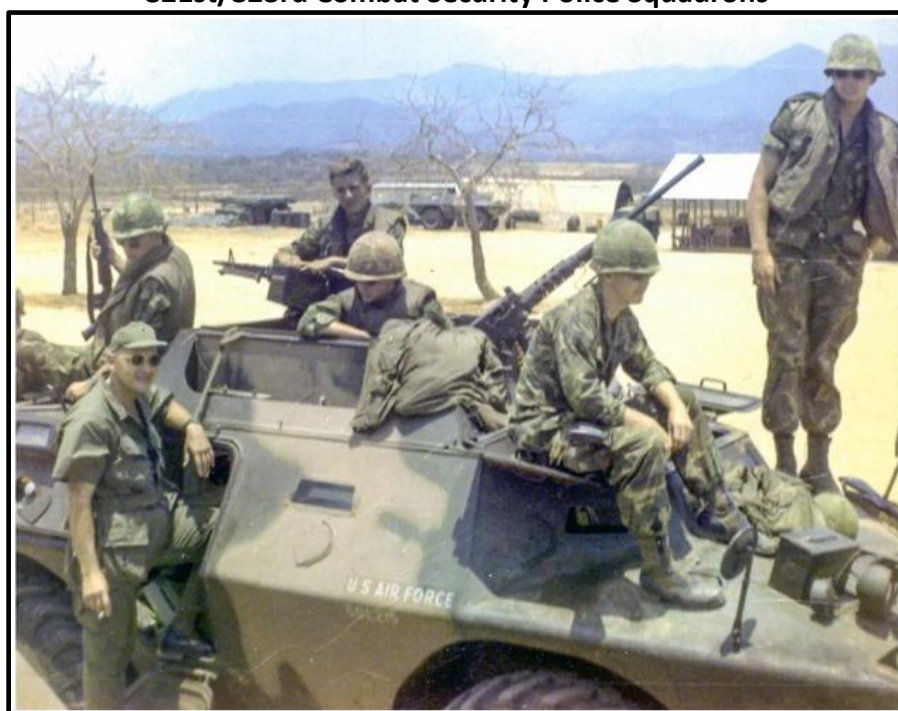


Security Police armored vehicles, photo by Robert Theriault.



M-60 at the main gate, Photo by John Henniger.

821st/823rd Combat Security Police Squadrons



Members of the 823rd CSPA at Phan Rang, photo by Randy Vuletich.

The Combat Security Police were specially trained units that acted as mobile ground defense forces that could be deployed at a moment's notice to any threatened air base in the country. The 823rd was at Phan Rang when I arrived but was replaced by the 821st shortly thereafter.



Randy Vuletich of the 823rd kindly gave me permission to use the two photos on the previous page. He can be seen standing (without helmet) holding the M-60 machine gun. That's Randy on the left. The caption on this image reads, "We were going on night ambush patrol, and I was ready. Phan Rang 1969."

Augmentees / Auggie Doggies



35th AMS Augmentees (L to R), a guy from Fire Control, Bill Riggins and me.

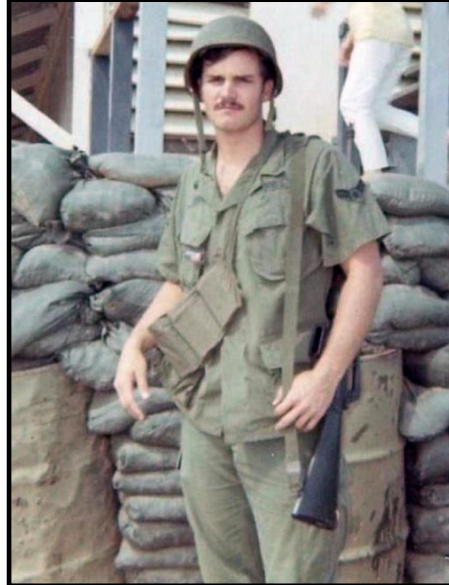
At all 10 air bases in Vietnam, a limited number of non-combat airmen were trained to augment the security police during times of low manning or high threat.

"Augmentees volunteered to work with the Security Police out on the wire. They were a great bunch of men and we SPs appreciated them. If my memory serves me right, there were over one hundred augmentees that

were trained and ready to be deployed." according to Sgt Joe Kaupa



Tiny Taylor from Illinois with an M-60 machine gun. Tiny was in Auto Pilot Shop. Photo by Bob Thériault



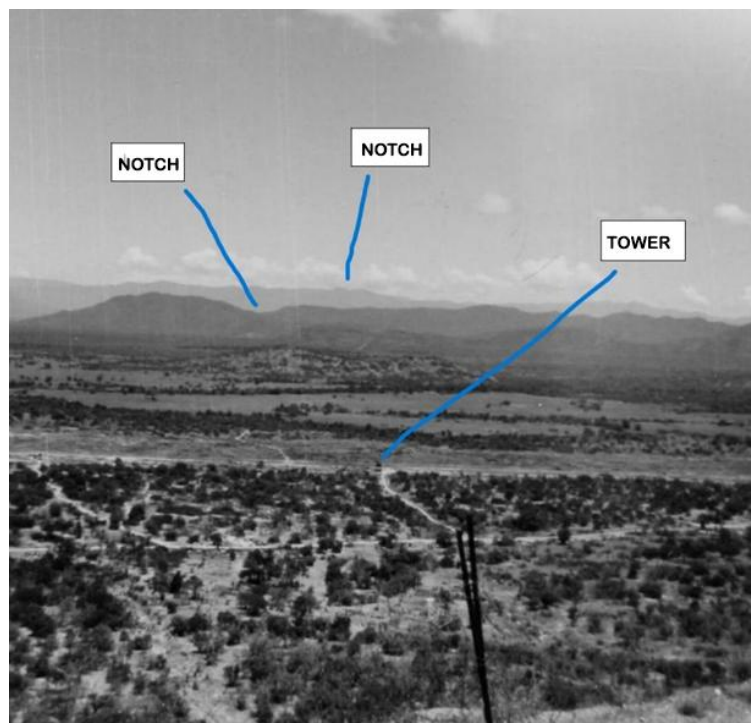
My fellow F-100 Instrument man and good friend, Bill Riggins from Florida. Photo by Bob Thériault

Training included basic tactics, and familiarization with the M16 rifle, M60 and 50 caliber machine guns, M79 grenade launcher, and slap flares.

I remember we were shown photographs of many of the Viet Cong that had been killed on the base during an attack earlier in the year – no doubt to bring home the seriousness of what we were training for.

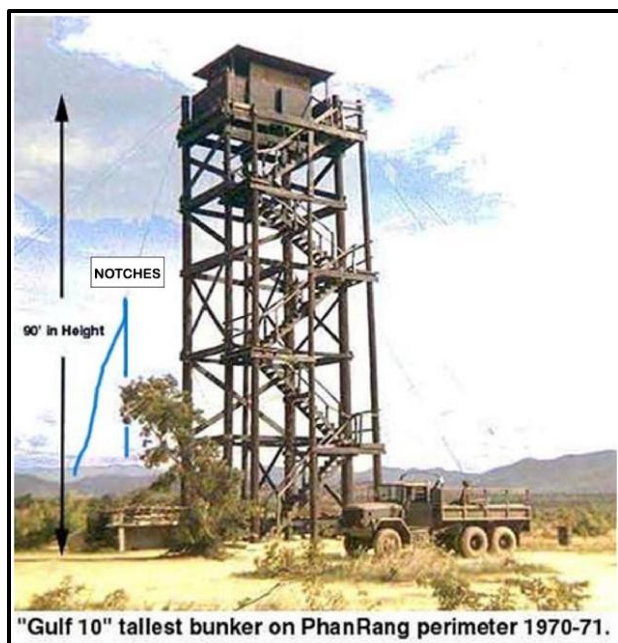
I wrote home that there were “10 or so Auggies from each squadron.” Some of my squadron mates pulled perimeter duty during the day, but I was out strictly at night with Panther Flight. It was a surreal experience, indeed.

I was actually fairly accurate with the M-16, probably due in part to my early days on the ranch shooting our 22-bolt action Winchester 22 rifle - and I had already earned an expert marksman ribbon at boot camp the year before.



Western perimeter, Hotel/Gulf area. Photo by Bob Thériault.

More than fifty years ago I had simply written "Perimeter" on the back of this photo but did not indicate where it was. Thanks to a little geography detective work, I can now say it is on the west side of the base. I was able to compare some of the background features with the photo of Gulf 10 on the next page.



"Gulf 10" tallest bunker on PhanRang perimeter 1970-71.

Since I only was sent out at night as an augmentee, it was difficult to tell where I was. We were delivered to the towers in the back of the standard military truck called a deuce and half, as seen above. I do not remember this tower; in fact, I don't remember one near this tall.

Dowling / VSPA.com

SOUTH KOREANS

On a hill between our barracks and the bomb dump, was the REPUBLIC OF KOREA's 9TH “WHITE HORSE” INFANTRY DIVISION compound, complete with a howitzer that went off randomly day and night – to keep the communists on their toes, in the same manner that the communists kept us on our toes by randomly firing rockets at the base. At the summit of the hill, a pagoda-like structure projected upwards.



AUSTRALIANS

There was a unit of RAAF AIR DEFENSE GUARDS stationed at Phan Rang, and they conducted patrols/ambushes outside the perimeter to further protect the air base.



RAAF Air Defense Guards, with Ian Fraser kneeling second from left

Photo by Ian Fraser.

“I did many night and day patrols as an RAAF Air Defense Guard outside Phan Rang. I witnessed many rocket and mortar attacks and experienced aa close-quarter gunfight with the VC one night in June 1970. One of our section personnel was wounded.” – **Ian Fraser**



Ian Fraser recently posted this map on Facebook, saying “My patrol map of Phan Rang which I used in Vietnam. No markings or notes in case of lost or capture.”

U.S. Army



US Army tank. Photo by Bob Thériault.



**US Army medevac helicopter at Phan Rang.
Photo by John Alexander.**

The Army had a rear area base camp at Phan Rang, and though they did not directly provide support.

NORTH AMERICAN F-100D SUPER SABRE



VZ 574 loaded with napalm and high drag "snake eye" bombs. Photo by Curtis S. Bartsch.

My primary duty was to work on this aircraft during my year in Vietnam, and we also had a couple of 2-seat F models.

The F-100D fighter-bomber, heavily used as a close air support aircraft for ground troops in South Vietnam, was about 47 feet long (not counting the pitot boom projecting from the nose), and the wingspan was about 39 feet. It was powered by a single Pratt & Whitney J57 turbo jet. Armament used while I worked there included conventional bombs, cluster bombs, napalm, and 20mm cannons (4 mounted in the fuselage). “Super Sabre pilots earned a reputation with FACs and troops for great accuracy and a willingness to press home their attacks at low altitude against considerable enemy opposition.”

Occasionally, from a safe distance, we would watch the F-100s attacking NVA/VC positions. In my memory I can still see the napalm drops... the dive of the aircraft below the horizon and seeing the nose lift as the jet accelerated away, followed by a flood of rolling liquid fire. VZ 574, pictured on the previous page, was lost in combat on my birthday in January 1970.



Super Sabre pilot prepares for a combat mission. Photo by Bob Thériault.

How many F-100s were stationed at Phan Rang? Official records indicate:

67 on June 30, 1969

77 on December 31, 1969

65 on June 30, 1970

There were four Tactical Fighter Squadrons:

352nd TFS YELLOW JACKETS **VM**
612th TFS SCREAMING EAGLES **VS**
614th TFS LUCKY DEVILS **VP**
615th TFS PANTHERS **VZ**



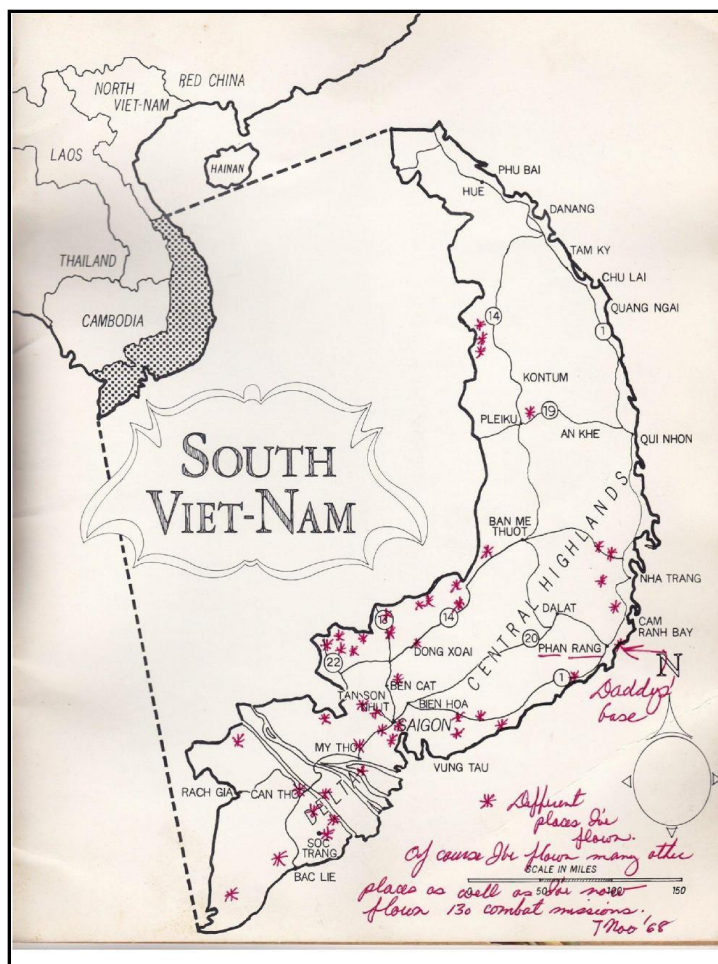
**HOOs blast enemy rocket
sites near Phan Rang AB**



F-100 cockpit photo view by Colonel Sam Dickens who flew out of Phan Rang 1968-69.

Courtesy of Colonel Dicken's son, David T Dickens.

I am fascinated by the map on the next page because we never knew where the pilots were off to – undoubtedly the “need to know” syndrome. Colonel Dickens was striking targets 300 miles away from our base. It seems that he wrote this to his kids, and there were many more combat



missions to be flown because he did not depart Vietnam until April 1969.

Annotated map by Colonel Sam Dickens via David T Dickens.

Apparently, the F-100 was not the easiest aircraft to fly, but pilot Jim Icenhour had some nice things to say about it: "Once you got the nose pointed down it would accelerate nicely, and it was a very stable and very accurate dive bomber – much better than the F-4 or F-111. Accuracy of less than 50 ft for a 30-degree dive bomb was routine... all in all it was a great airplane to fly my combat tour in."



F-100 post flight at Phan Rang. Jim McGaughey



Fighter squadron ops buildings. Photo by Colonel Sam Dickens via David T Dickens.

Instrument Shop



Bob Thériault

Yes, here I am in the 35th AMS Instrument Shop – 10 feet from my left shoulder is the Auto Pilot Shop, and 8,000 miles from my right shoulder is home! Those are F-100 instrument panels

on the bench which have been pulled probably for phase inspection, and a flight line toolbox is visible on the floor.

At Phan Rang

Avionics Keep F-100s in Tune



Ray Ingersoll

Phan Rang - In the Air Force there is an ever growing use of avionics, a term which stems from a combination of aviation and electronics. As aircraft become more advanced, avionic devices ranging from radar to radio become more complex.

Servicing sophisticated systems on Air Force planes requires the talents, intelligence and energy of a select group of airmen. The technicians of the 35th

Avionics Maintenance Squadron here are part of the group.

The 35th AMS is divided into two sections. The electronics branch is under the direction of 1st Lt. Robert C. Paderzani and the communications-navigations branch has Capt. George G. Friel in charge.

"The wing is principally equipped with F-100 Super-sabres," explained Captain Friel.

"The F-100 came into being before the transistor, so our radios are tube-equipped," the officer said in his shop office. "We find tubes are the first to go, and alignment is the second most common problem. Old age, high humidity, heat and vibration that placed heavy demands on this equipment.

"In the way of navigational aids we service the tactical air navigational system and automatic direction finding system. The system give both range and azimuth readings of ground stations," the captain explained.

Lieutenant Pederzani said they work mainly on three systems: the fire control, which is the weapon sighting and radar system: the damper, which furnishes the aircraft with stability, especially while making bombing runs: and the engine performance, flight and navigational

instruments, most of which can be seen in the cockpit.

When avionics equipment needs servicing on the flight line, a work request is radioed into the shop's work-control centers. Within minutes, a trouble-shooting team is on its way to the aircraft.

The avionics building is fully air-conditioned to protect sensitive test equipment against excessive temperature and humidity.

The squadron, commanded by Lt. Col. Robert Branch Sr., maintains work ships around the clock, seven days a week. (7th Air Force News)



Two Californians take a break. Rich Lockhart (Ventura) on the left, and Phil Nichols (Manteca). Photo by Bob Theriault



Cockpit of an F-100 by Bob Thériault

That's a flightline step van in the background. On certain days we were assigned to drive these vehicles to shuttle men between the shops and the flight line. One day a funny fellow named Doughty was driving, and sitting next to me was a supervisor, so we were on our best behavior. Doughty seemed to be driving a bit erratically, and the super told him, "Damnit, watch how you're driving!" Doughty lifted the steering wheel off the steering column and handed it to

him while the vehicle continued to wander down the road and said, "Here, you drive!" That shut the man down, and I still laugh about that incident. Some of those vehicles were not in the best shape.

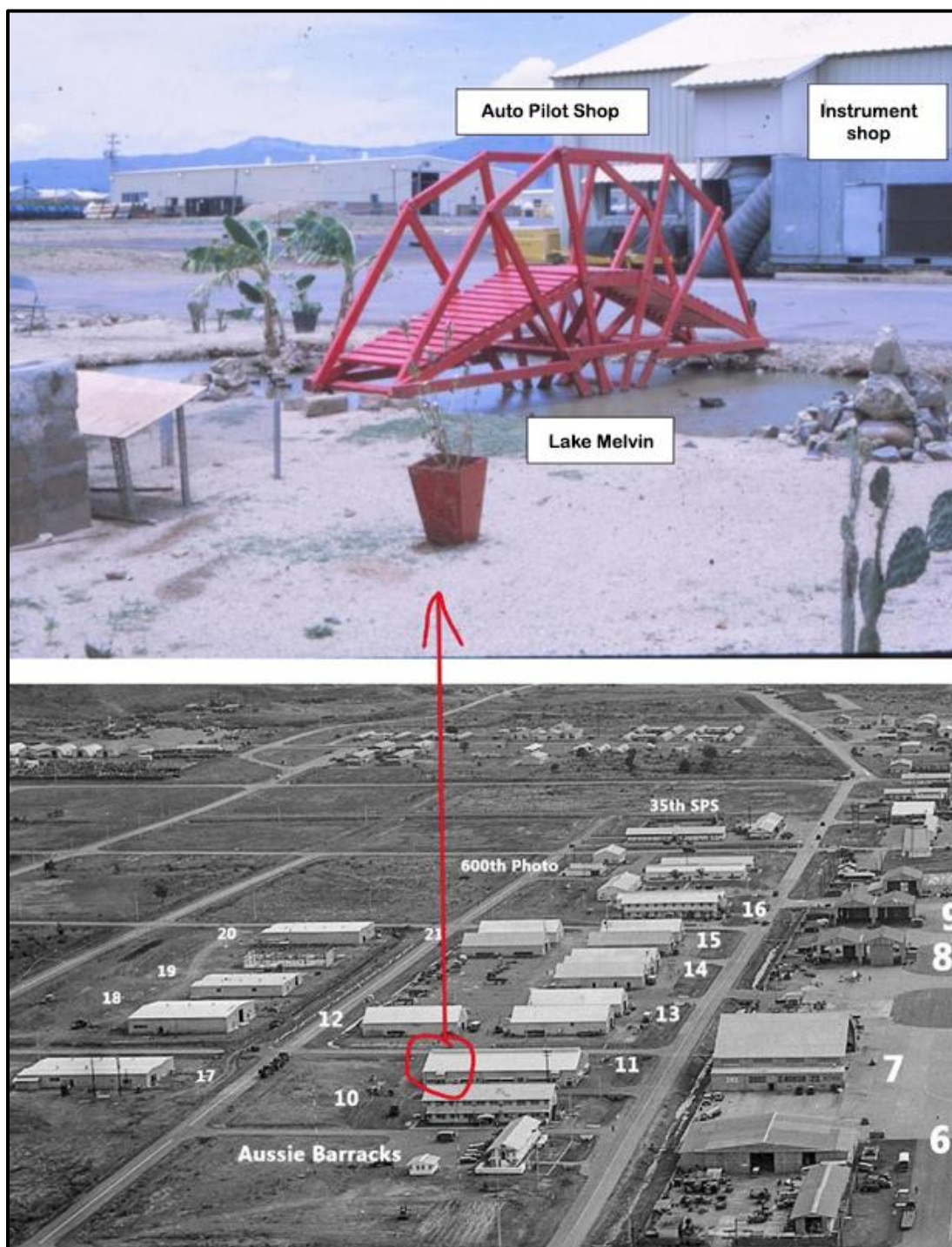


Meredith Lewis



Meredith Lewis

After a rocket hit the AMS shop building, these humorous signs were subsequently posted on the side door into COM/NAV. Photos by Meredith Lewis



Top photo: View of SW corner of AMS shop building. Photo by Bob Tucker

Bottom Photo by Christopher Boles

"Lake Melvin (see previous page) was named after Instrument Shop SSgt Melvin, whose idea

was to create it from air condition condensate,” Lee Moore has reminded me. The bridge was built by Auto Pilot guys.

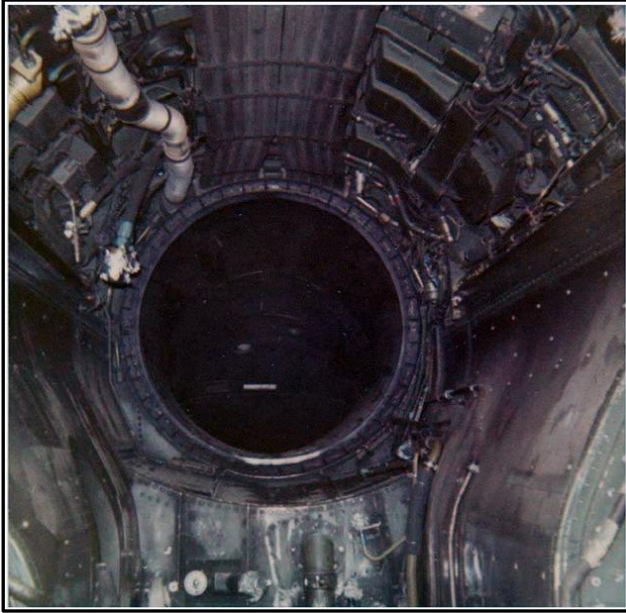


Col. Bill McDonald with one of his F-100Ds during his time as 308th TFS maintenance boss from November 1968 to December 1969. In his opinion, “The F-100 presented some touch maintenace issues as the aft section was a “bear” to pull for an engine change, wing stats often got stuck and the anti-skid system and fuel-quantity indication presented problems.

(The photo and caption at left are from the excellent book “F-100 Super Sabre units of the Vietnam War” by Peter E Davis with David W Menard.)

The fuel quantity indicating system was the responsibility of the Instrument Shop, and I agree with Colonel McDonald (pictured at left) – there were constant work orders for recurring fuel quantity problems. Multiple fuel tanks in the wings and fuselage with the associated wiring between the transmitter probes and the gauges in the cockpit made for a challenge to us repairman, but it was satisfying to get

the aircraft back into service with a repair.



The tail cone of an F-100. Photo by Bob Thériault

We had to crawl up the tail pipe to get to the thermocouple for the exhaust temperature gauge. I don't think any of us liked that job. The Instrument shop had responsibility for wiring and transmitters all over the plane - in the fuselage and wings, plus of course the instrument panel in the cockpit.



“In the corner of the shop.” What am I doing with the carpenter's saw?



“In the shop, sick with the flu.”

Early days in the two photos above, as I'm still wearing a stateside uniform. Notice the ear plugs hanging from my pocket – we always wore them on the noisy flight line.

MARTIN B-57 CANBERRA



**8th Tactical Bomb
Squadron Canberra
B-57 Bomber. Photo by
Bob Thériault**

There were 13 of these aircraft at Phan Rang when I arrived, and along with the Australian aircraft, they occupied the first five rows

of revetments on the flight line. They belonged to the 8th Tactical Bomb Squadron and operated at night. I recall them taxiing out, fully loaded with bombs, their long wings rocking with the undulation of the pavement as the engines made a peculiar sound, like giant vacuum cleaners. The 8th rotated back to the states before the end of 1969.

RAAF B-20 CANBERRA



**Royal Australian Air Force 2
Squadron B-20 Canberra.
Photo by Bob Thériault**

There were eight of these bombers that went by the call sign "Magpie". They were parked in the first two rows of revetments on the flight line (A and B), not far from our instrument shop. Like the American Canberras, they flew at night.



The Australian Flight Line Headquarters. My shop is the third building in the background. Photo by Christopher Boles



The Cheap Charlies Club

There were a number of "Clubs" in 2 Squadron. One of these was "The Cheap Charlie Club". The badge had to be carried at ALL times and was to be produced on a challenge of "Cheap Cheap". Failure to do so would incur a fine at the next meeting and the meetings were held every two weeks and fines would be handed out by the president. The "crimes" committed were based on not being "cheap" like offering someone a cigarette, offering to shout the FIRST round of drinks, etc. The money raised went towards the drinks for the next meeting. During and after the meeting the drinks would flow somewhat freely and then "the games" would begin.

UC DAI LOI – CHEAP CHARLIE

Courtesy of former No. 2 Squadron member - Ray Simpson, Phan Rang AB Nov '69-Nov'70,
at <http://www.geocities.ws/rayandjenny4358/>

In Vietnam Australians were referred to (mainly by the bar girls) as Cheap Charlies because of our habit of not tipping, nor wanting to buy them drinks just for the pleasure of their company. It was part of their job to get you to buy them drinks and to get you to drink more. It worked well on others but no so on the "bloody lousy" Aussie. So as time went on a ballad to the Cheap Charlies appeared.

To those who do not know, in Vietnamese slang:

Uc Dai Loi Australian

Saigon Tea Cold tea for which you paid the price of a whiskey

Pi (dong) Vietnamese currency

MPC Military Payment Certificate

Mama San The lady who ran the bar & girls

This song is sung to the tune of “**This Old Man**”

Uc Dai Loi cheap charlie
He no buy me Saigon tea
Saigon Tea cost too many pi
Uc Dai Loi he cheap charlie

Uc Dai Loi cheap charlie
He no part with MPC
MPC worth many many pi
Uc Dai Loi he cheap charlie

Uc Dai Loi cheap charlie
He no go to bed with me
For it cost many many pi
Uc Dai Loi he cheap charlie

Uc Dai Loi cheap charlie
Make him give me one for free
Mama san go crook at me
Uc Dai Loi he cheap charlie

Uc Dai Loi cheap charlie
He gave baby san to me
Baby san cost many many pi
Uc Dai Loi he cheap charlie

Uc Dai Loi cheap charlie
He go home across the sea
Baby san he leave with me
Uc Dai Loi he cheap charlie

FAIRCHILD C-123 PROVIDER "BOOKIE BIRD"

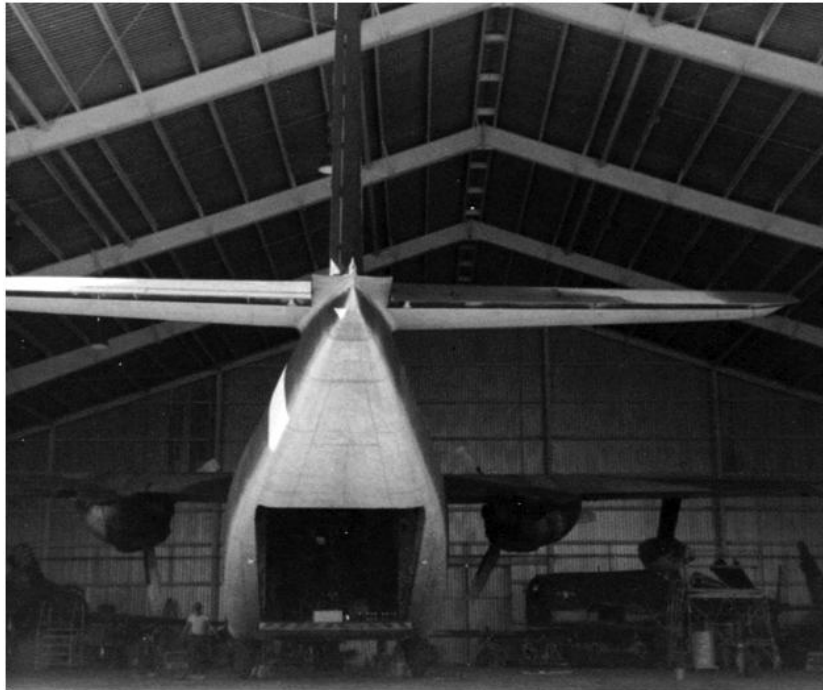


A C-123 on the taxi way. Bob Thériault

The 123s hauled anything and everything – delivering troops, supplies, food and mail – and often to very dangerous locations. One sharp memory I have retained is of a C-123 landing at Phan Rang, looking like a crab because it couldn't fly straight. There were a number of bullet holes in it, especially in the vertical stabilizer, but the pilot was able to overcome this and safely land the aircraft. I travelled between Phan Rang and Cam Ranh in 123s a few times and I can say they were very noisy inside!

The C-123 was the aircraft used in Operation Ranch Hand (Agent Orange), and the most well-known one was called "Patches." Its name underscores the dangers these crews faced – it had 600 to 1000 bullet holes in it that were patched during its time in the war, and indeed, seven crew members received purple hearts for wounds they suffered during the flights.

Curiously, by the time I arrived at Phan Rang "Patches" had been converted to a pesticide sprayer to control mosquitoes, now no longer painted in camo, but in silver. It periodically flew over us and you could feel the malathion mist descending on you. Of course, at the time I knew nothing about the name or the history of this silver bug sprayer.



A C-123 receiving maintenance in a hangar. Bob Thériault

The aircraft pictured above is an updated “K” model with turbo jets mounted outboard of the propeller engines.

To be continued...



Doug’s Comments: This newsletter was researched and composed by Douglas Severt. 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.