

# Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.  
"Keeping the memories alive" Newsletter 299

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**Cited for Gallantry**

**615<sup>th</sup> TFS Unknown Hero**

**Twass the night before Christmas**

**Phan Rang Annual Fishing Trip**



**Photo by Joseph Burkhart and that's him standing next to the aircraft.**

**Phan Rang, Vietnam** - Chuck the FAC, a stumpy, sandy haired, square - jawed captain, likes to roll the inevitable stub cigar in his mouth and say:

"Sometimes a FAC has a punch like a battleship - and all from that little bitty airplane there that chugs around the sky at 80 knots.

"Sometimes a FAC is the death angel for the Viet Cong. And sometimes he can be an angel of life for our own troops pinned down, outnumbered, and taking a shellacking from the Viet Cong."

He refers, of course, to the duties of a forward air controller or FAC. The FAC is the aimer for as big an air strike as a combined Vietnamese and Air Force tactical air control system may be willing to allocate.

As Capt. Chuck Snyder, 34, Erie, Ill., said, no ordnance is dropped in South Vietnam, in the expanding war against the Viet Cong and regular North Vietnamese battalions unless a FAC is there to put his smoke rockets into the target area and to guide the 600-mile-an-hour jets down into the delivery dives and to "con" the pilots into the precise targets he wishes to strike.

## Hot Morning

Your observed met Capt. Chuck one hot morning a day or two ago on the interlocked aluminum plates of a parking area for the huge six-month-old Phan Rang air support base 170 miles north of Saigon. Hot sun beat down on Snyder's faded blue-gray flying suit and his close-cropped hair. He had a belted .38 caliber revolver and brass cartridges at his hip. Jungle mountains ringed the horizon around the open valley.

"Come on, hurry - I've got a strike ordered and we've just got time to get there ahead of the jets," he said. "It's a V.C. rest camp in the hills only 27 miles north of here. One of our hill agents says he has it pinpointed and we're gonna work it over."

Snyder put on his flak vest and threw another my way.

"Some of our boys sit on one and wear another," he said "Suit yourself, but I wear mine."

We climbed into the two tandem seats of the little gray, high winged monoplane with its glass side panels - left wide open in the heat - and its 214 horse power engine and fixed pitch prop.

Under each wing a fitting carried two smoke rockets in tubes. Snyder had an M16 automatic rifle and ammunition tucked beside his seat, but otherwise the offensive armament was

combined very high frequency and ultra-high frequency radio for air-ground and air-to-air conversations.

## **‘OVER V.C. LAND’**

“off over V.C. land,” he said into the intercom mike as he snapped switches, and the little engine (exactly like those of civilian Cessna airplanes used for training and sport flying back home) turned over and began purring.

Snyder called the Phan Rang tower and identified himself as “Baron 61” - his call sign. After we had taxied carefully around much larger aircraft, including a dozen or more F4 Phantom fighters which at this time are the main reason for existence of the base, we lifted off the 10,000 foot strip in about 600 feet of run.

“This’ll take us 15 minutes to get to the area.” he said, his voice coming through clearly though slightly distorted in tone over the intercommunications channel. “Might as well sit back and look around.”

“The V.C. controls every foot of the mountains and even some of the plain.” he continued. “At night they came down in squads and even company strength- 60 to 80 men - and take rice, salt, sugar, and information from the villagers.

“Sometimes they kill the village major or head man, especially if he is not cooperative. That little village over there was overrun by a V.C. outfit less than 10 days ago. The major and 7 or 8 others were killed and 17 or 18 men and women wounded or tortured.

“Our howitzers from the 101<sup>st</sup> attached artillery swiveled their tubes around and pumped 50 or 60 rounds and pumped 50 or 60 shells into the village and the V.C. retired. We had the wounded in our hospital the next morning. But it just shows you. That village was 2 ½ miles outside our perimeter.

## **CLAP OR SHOT**

“O, yes, this is V.C. country around here. When the strike is over I’ll take you around my beat

and let you see what it's all about. I get fired on almost every day - thankfully not by automatic weapons, most times. But if I go skimming too low over one of these ridges, two or three of those cocky V.C. snap off shots at me. If we get fired on you'll hear the clap of the shot, even if the bullet is nowhere near us.”

At this point, with the little Cessna 01 Bird Dog plane climbing through 3,000 feet, Snyder switched to his transmitter and called, “Blue Fin, Blue Fin - this is Baron 61.”

Blum fin, the ground radio station for the province at intelligence headquarters in the town of Phan Rang, replied immediately.

“Roger Baron 61, your strike is scheduled for 0945 hours. Four raids with four 250 pounders each and a pistol. Call sign Phantom 21.”

Listening, Snyder turned in his seat, lifted a red wax crayon and wrote the pertinent information on the Plexiglas window at his right. The he replied.

“Very well, Blue Fin. I am 10 minutes from target area but will make rendezvous. Please report to Phantom.”

## **CROWDED WITH VOICES**

The air frequency over which these messages were exchanged was crowded with other voices - other controllers and ground stations and even air strike.

All over Vietnam at that hour strike forces were marshaling to hit at the enemy form the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel to the southern tip of the Mekong Delta, 911 miles away. There are 214 FACs working above Vietnam, and they manage to keep the Viet Cong down in daylight, although the V.C. owns the night and the outskirts of the “island” bases spring up all over South Vietnam. On this particular day, 390 in-country support sorties were flown.

Below us the countryside changed from a dozen shades of green in paddies, small fields, villages, and even pasture lands to the foothills of the mountains along the coast and north of Phan Rang.

"Those are deserted villages," Snyder said. "We moved the people north to this point where we could protect them. From the point north it's V.C. country again. Anything moves on the roads, the beaches, in the hills, and I can shoot."

We were putt-putting along at the level of the coastal hills, 3,000 feet above the sea with its lovely greens shading into blues and purples, the golden beach and the thick and interwoven jungle growth just inland. Looking behind us I saw four F4s, each leaving a faint smoky trail, streaking down toward us in single file.

"Phantom 21 has Baron in sight," came a muffled voice over the receiver. "We are just above you, Where's the target?"

"Haven't marked it yet," Snyder replied. "Checking to be sure. I suggest north of south passes with break over the sea. I will be to the east. Going in to mark now."

## MARK ON MAP

The little 01 airplane turned toward the hills, as Snyder pored over a small map. He had a pink crayon mark on the map. While holding one finger there, he maneuvered the aircraft toward a bare spot in a saddle between two higher ridges.

With his left hand he reached to an arming switch for the left outboard rocket. While the plane turned and twisted as we approached to within 2,000 feet of the suspected V.C. camp. Capt. Chuck suddenly rolled into a steeper nose-down position. There was a "pop," no loud or sharp and I watched a rocket speed like a fired arrow into the upper center of the cleared area.

"There's the smoke." Snyder said to Phantom 21. "Put your weapons into that point of jungle that points from the south of the smoke."

"On the way." was the reply. We turned northward, and by straining we could see the first F4, in a 35 to 40 degree dive, streaking at increasing speed at the clearing. The plane apparently had come from above 8,000 feet. As we counted three it began to flatten the angle and half a second later swept just above us - as it seemed - and banked left out over the sea.

“Crump thud,” came the impact of the bomb, and gray smoke curled from the jungle Snyder had indicated. Very matter-of-factly he spoke.

“No 2, put yours a little shorter. That was 100 meters long.”

## **ALREADY IN DIVE**

The second F4 was already in its dive and the pilot merely grunted on the plane-to-plane frequency. As No. 2 banked left in turn the “thump, crump” was repeated and smoke rose almost from the same point where the first 250-pound bomb struck into the trees.

“Still a little long,” Snyder transmitted. “Three, put it 100 meters shorter.”

And so it went for eight dives as each let go two bombs and then pulled up to orbit, well above our altitude and hidden from our eyes by puffy, broken clouds at 6,000 to 7,000 feet.

“Let me take a look,” Snyder told Phantom leader.

Our little plane moved over, descending but not increasing its speed, so we could look closely into the jungle canopy. We continued to descent, not over 1,500 feet from the target, until we could peer back beneath the upper layer of growth.

“Can’t see a damned thing,” Snyder grumbled. “In this kind of target if you don’t get a secondary explosion - on that is not related to the bombs you’ve dropped - you never know what good you did.”

“Think we will waive the pistol,” he transmitted to Phantom. “So long, and thanks for the job.” The “pistol” refers to the 20 millimeter gun package which the air-ground F4s carry in a center line, streamlined pod. The pilots have no air-to-air computing sight for this weapon but it is used very effectively in ground staffing against non-moving targets. Each pod carries 1,500 rounds and the fire is devastating against houses, vehicles, trucks, small bridges, sampans and troops.

## NEEDED NAPALM

"Down there," Snyder gestured with his thumb at the clearing. "Those 20 millimeters are soaked up by the trees and the vines and are not the best weapons. We should have had napalm, but around here we take what we get."

Twice more we circled the clearing, with Snyder obviously hoping that the Viet Cong - if they were there - would take a shot or two at him, thus revealing their presence. But no shots came.

"Half the time it's like this," he groaned. "You get results when you don't expect 'em and don't when you do. We'll have to get the agent report."

"Usually agents are working for both sides. Often they're people who tote rice or salt or other foods to V.C. camps. Mostly they try to count new graves to get casualty figures. I don't really know whether this was a dud strike or not."

"Blue Fin, this is Baron 61. What have you for me?"

"Nothing for Baron 61 right now. Are you going to cover your beat?"

"Rog -out." Snyder replied. And then on the intercom he said:

"Well, there it is. We can kill 'em if we see 'em. That's the big difference between what happened to the French here - when they got driven out by guerrillas - and what's happening to us. We are getting plenty of kills - many more than are reported, we know, because the policy on V.C. death casualties is very conservative. You have to see a body to get credit and the V.C. try to carry off all wounded and dead, just to prevent us from getting a reasonable record of effectiveness."

"Ole Charley has got to be hurting. But the funny part of it is that he keeps increasing in numbers as more troops come in through Laos and Cambodia from the north. Charley hasn't given up yet, but if we just keep this pressure on he's bound to break."

("Air Officer Aims Death at Viet Cong" - Captain takes writer (Wayne Thomis) along to show how it's done. Wayne was a Navy pilot in World War II, and was in Vietnam to describe how air



power has been adapted to wage a limited war. Tactics, equipment and weapons have been developed to meet the challenge of a frequently-unseen enemy fighting in small, mobile groups under the cover of swamps and jungles. Thomis has flown on combat missions, lived with the crews at their bases, and interviewed top commanders.)



**Sergeant Love Wins DFC Flying C-123 In Vietnam**  
**"Severe battle damage and an airman first class is flying the airplane."**

"We have dead and wounded on board, severe battle damage and an airman first class is flying the airplane....," the co-pilot told the control tower at Tan Son Nhut, Vietnam.

The controller gulped and asked for details.

"The pilot's badly wounded and so am I," he replied, "Our loadmaster is flying and I'm directing him."

The impromptu pilot was A1C (now Sgt.) David T. Love, now an operations NCO with the Thunderbirds. He was chief loadmaster on a C-123 Provider on what started as a routine resupply mission in the Mekong River Delta of South Vietnam.



His aircraft was diverted into a Vietnamese Ranger camp to pick up critically wounded soldiers and airlift them to Saigon. "As we lifted off the dirt runway, we were hit by heavy .30 caliber fire. They really had us zeroed in." Love recalls. "The bullets blew our nose gear tire, which presented some problems later, and damaged the right engine.

"We took the worst hits in the cargo section. Bullets went right up through the plane's belly and killed or more severely wounded most of the rangers who were lying on pallets on the floor."

Avery "Shook" but otherwise undamaged Airman Love scampered between the pallets to the cockpit to make a "routine" check of the "front office," There, matters were anything but routine.

"When I saw both pilots wounded and bleeding and looked at the right engine, I thought all was lost. The co-pilot was flying the airplane with one hand but he was having a tough time staying conscious. I did what I could for the pilot and moved him into the back with the rangers, then ran back up front to help the co-pilot.

"I jumped into the pilot's seat and took hold of the wheel. I was petrified but I knew the co-pilot couldn't fly the thing. You don't just let a C-123 fly itself; you have to drive it, like a truck."

And drive it he did, right back to Tan Son Nhut.

When the aircraft entered the traffic pattern, everything was ready. Ambulances and fire trucks were positioned along the runway.

Slowly and shakily, Love brought the aircraft lower and lower; the co-pilot's calm instructions getting weaker.

When the tower asked if his gear was down and locked, Love had another shock, He couldn't tell, but he knew the nose gear had no tire - just a bare strut.

Finally he was down, and up, and down again. He bounced twice but slowly the plane came to

a stop. There was no fire.

Sergeant Love was presented the Distinguished Flying Cross for his adventure.

Both pilots have recovered. (The Carrier's Courier, Smyrna, Tennessee, Friday May 31, 1968.)

**Editor's notes:** There are many mysteries surrounding this story. It's not that I doubt the authenticity of the story, but I have done a lot of research over the years and found it unusual that this story can only be found in one publication. Experience has shown me that many stories are carried in most newspapers; with the content remaining the same and only changes might be the headline. I have spent days searching NewspaperArchive.com and also Newspapers.com and can only find it in the one publication that is reproduced in this issue.

Not only that, but searching all the databases that lists the recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross there is no entry found for a David T. Love. However I've learned that except for the Medal of Honor, the Department of Defense never made centralized lists of persons who were awarded military medals during the Vietnam War. In most cases, the awards were recorded only in each casualty's personnel records. If a recipient wants to be recognized they probably would have to join a group or take some other action to be included.

I reached out to the Vietnam Legends on Facebook to see if they had any knowledge of this incident and I received this interesting response from Robert Chappellear, a long time contributor to the newsletter and the author of two books, "Tales of Phan Rang", and "Tales of Bein Hoa". Here is one of his responses: "I'm sorry that I cannot remember if it was Dave Love or not but we had a Loadmaster in the 309th SOS that was a certified commercial pilot (multi-engine rated) that we used to let fly the plane every now and then. This was in 67-68. Probably in late 67 early 68 because I was still a co-pilot when on a mission from Phan Rang to way down south in the Mekong cruising down the coast with a empty airplane I went back to the cargo bay and laid down on those uncomfortable canvas seats and took a nap. I woke up a bit south of Vung Tau and was surprised to find the aircraft commander asleep on the seats across from me. I looked up at the flight deck and found the loadmaster sitting on the left in the aircraft commanders seat and the flight engineer on the right in the co-pilots seat. I quickly jumped up and my sudden movement woke the AC and that's when he told me about the "experienced loadmaster" that was often allowed to fly the airplane. Later when I had upgraded to aircraft

commander the "loadie" had rotated back to the States so I never flew with him again."

When reading the account of the incident, I wrongly thought that the aircraft would have been a loss, however it must have been repaired to fly again. With the thought it was a loss I wondered why it wasn't listed in "Vietnam Air Losses" by Chris Dobson, so I sent them a message and here is their response:

**Thank you for contacting us.**

Since the aircraft was not a loss, it's not included in our database, nor is the story recounted on our website, as you noted. Apparently, it wasn't a belly landing since the article says he bounced a couple of times when he touched down. Not unusual at all for a first-time pilot since he has no experience at judging the height of the cockpit above the runway when the wheels touch down. He hits too hard, the struts compress and rebound, throwing the airplane back in the air. That can sometimes lead to "porpoising" down the runway with each cycle getting larger because the inexperienced pilot pushes the nose over, trying to counter the bounce and hits harder on the next cycle. It sounds like this guy did a wonderful job, saving many lives. He richly deserves the DFC, and I have no doubt he received that award.

Many loadmasters have received DFC's across many years, even when they didn't actually pilot an airplane. It seems to have been treated by the Air Force as a step down from a Silver Star. So, if the pilot got an Air Force Cross, and the co-pilot got a Silver Star, the loadmaster might get a DFC rather than "just" an Air Medal.

Maybe it's just me, but I think it's a story worth telling over and over even if it didn't have a connection to Phan Rang AB, but who knows it might.

## **Veterans Voices**

### **Roy Neil Belote**

You might be surprised about how valuable carpenters are in the U.S. Military. From constructing buildings to making major repairs, carpenters keep busy. They also often work in the middle of harm's way.

Roy Neil Belote, of Hewitt, Texas, was a carpenter in the U.S. Air Force. He enlisted in the Air Force after a draft notice for the U.S. Army prompted him to do so.

Belote was born and raised in Knoxville, Tennessee. At age 10 he moved to Greenville, Tennessee, where he graduated from Mosheim High School in 1963. He went to work on the family cattle and tobacco farm, where he did everything from herding cattle to hoeing tobacco.

When he got his draft notice, Belote knew he didn't want to join the Army. "Joining the Army wasn't too good, because Vietnam was going full blast." He said.

## **U.S. AIR FORCE**

So, on 11 Aug. 1965, he signed up with the Air Force and was sent to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. It was there he received his advanced training as well as training in carpentry. He became responsible for any kind of maintenance inside or outside a building that needed to be fixed with wood. He stayed at Lackland until Jan. 7, 1967, when he was sent to Vietnam.

He became a Red Horse with the 554<sup>th</sup> Red Horse Squadron, which stands for Rapid Emergency Deployment Heavy Operation Repair Squadron. There were some 400 enlisted men and 28 officers. They were the equivalent of the Navy's Seabees.

Some 28 men, including Belote, were jump-qualified and they parachuted into Phan Rang to get the process started until the others caught up. He constructed buildings and one of them was named after him. "As far as I know, it is still there." he said.

Belote was stationed at Phan Rang but was sent to Da Nang for 45 days, while there he and the crew built 15 two-story barracks for the fighter pilots and crew in just 45 days.

It was a lot more dangerous in Da Nang than Phan Rang. One night, for example, it rained 50 122 mm Russian rockets, which made a mess of the ramp, runway and several planes as well as moderate damage to a barracks. There was a jet engine in the roof of the barracks, which required removal and repair. Luckily, no one was using the structure yet.

Another time, he was in a major firefight and was blown off a building when an AL-47 bullet hit

him through the back of his shoulder. The bullet was so hot, it cauterized his rib and he later had to have the rib removed. He never received a Purple Heart for it. He injured his shoulder, leg and ribs.

## **Recognition**

While in Phan Rang, however, Belote won a Unitarian Award for his work with an orphanage the squadron adopted. The soldiers would visit them on their days off and bring presents and food during the holidays. It was a bright spot in the middle of dark time in Vietnam.

Belote returned to the States but was deployed a second time to Vietnam from Forbes AFB in Kansas. He just missed the Tet Offensive, but there was still plenty of shooting going on. He stayed for a year in Da Nang. He carried an M-16 and was knowed to use it, but I like to forget about that part,” he said.

After returning to the States, Belote was sent to Okinawa for three years with a maintenance squadron. It was a more laidback time, and he worked regular hours instead of 12-to 14-hour days. During his time there, he went scuba diving and would collect fish to sell to the locals for their aquariums.

Belote then was sent to Webb AFB in Big Springs, Texas, where e met his future wife, Nona Phillips. Now married about 48 years, they each had four children from a previous marriage. They now have 14 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren, with No. 22 on the way.

Belote left the military on Sept. 7, 1976, after 12 years of service because he didn’t’ want to be deployed any more. He was about to be sent to Korea.

In addition to the Humanitarian Award, Belote earned a Bronze Star, a Presidential Unit Citation, an Air Force Commendation Medal and several sharpshooter ribbons (he was an expert marksman) among others.

He went to work as a locksmith on several bases in Texas before he became a

truck driver for over a decade. Eventually he moved to Hewitt, where he's been ever since.

(Waco Tribune-Herald (Waco, Texas) Jan 31, 2021)

## Cited for Gallantry

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Flagstaff native Lt. Col. Thomas M. Knoles has been awarded the nation's third highest military honor, the Silver Star, for gallantry in air combat over Vietnam.

Gen. T. R. Milton presented the medal to Knoles in his Pentagon office here with a citation praising Knoles for his gallantry in air action to support Vietnamese ground forces heavily engaged with the enemy.

The citation read, in part, "Despite restricted run -in headings, heavy automatic weapons fire and known battle damage to his aircraft, Col. Knoles continued to deliver his ordinance with devastating accuracy in close proximity to the friendly forces and neutralized the hostile enemy thrust,"

Knoles, son of State Sen. and Mrs. Thomas M. "Tommy" Knoles, D-Coconino, of Flagstaff, was attached to the "Plans Headquarters, U.S.A." in Washington D.C., after a year's duty at Phan Rang, Vietnam.

Officials said Knoles, who commanded the 614<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron in Vietnam and is a veteran of 258 combat missions in F-100 jets, has been singled out for promotion to colonel and will pin on his "eagles" early next year.

Knoles and his wife, Mary Lou, and four children are living in the Washington D.C. area.

He was born and raised in Flagstaff, and graduated from Flagstaff High School and attended the University of Arizona for a year before going into the Air Force. (*Arizona Daily Sun, Flagstaff, Arizona, Monday, December 9, 1968*)

## Serving Our Country

First Lt. **Ronald R. Deyhle**, the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Fed Deyhle of 212 W. Perrin Av., and the son of Lt. Col. and Mrs. Roger Deyhle of Albuquerque, New Mexico, recently placed first in a gunnery training course held at the Gila Bend Gunnery Range in Arizona.

Lt. Deyhle was named the winner of the Barry Goldwater top gun award of his class. He is presently assigned to the 311<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Training Squadron. (*Springfield News, Springfield, Ohio, Wednesday Jun 14, 1970*)



### **Capt. Ronald R. Deyhle Receives Silver Star**

Lubbock Tex. - Air Force Capt. Ronald R. Deyhle, son of Lt. Col. and Mrs. Robert E. Deyhle, 2532 25<sup>th</sup> Loop, Kirkland AFB, has received the Silver Star Medal for Gallantry as an F-100 Super Sabre pilot in Vietnam.

Capt. Deyhle was cited for his close air support of a South Vietnamese Ranger camp under heavy attack on April 7, 1971.

Despite intense antiaircraft fire, mountainous terrain and poor visibility, the captain made repeated, low-level attacks against hostile positions enabling the allies to hold their strategic forward location.

Capt. Deyhle also received his second through 13<sup>th</sup> awards of the Air Medal for missions he flew while assigned with the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang Air Base from July 1970 to July 1971.

He was presented the decorations recently at Reese AFB, Tex., where he now serves as an instructor pilot with the 3500<sup>th</sup> Pilot Training Wing.

A 1964 graduate of Albuquerque's Highland High School, he earned a B.S. degree in biology at the University of New Mexico. He was commissioned in 1963 upon completion of the Reserve Officers Training Corps program at the university. (*Albuquerque Journal, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Monday, December 6, 1971*)



**Note:** Additional stories about or authored by Ronald Deyle can be found in Phan Rang Newsletters 194, 206, 207, 214, 215, 217, 221, 225, 239, 240, 265, 269, 279 and 281

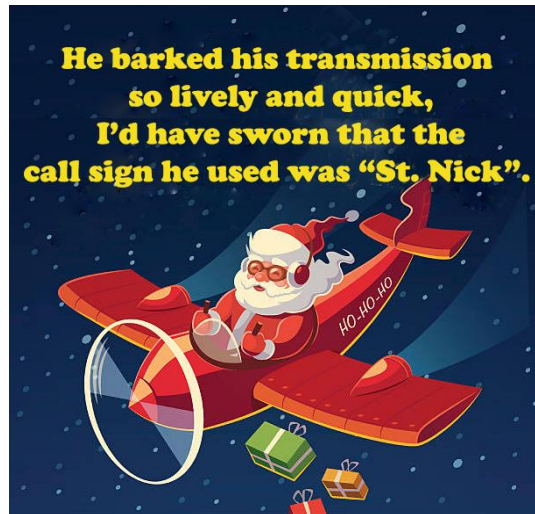
Airman 1. C, **Lansing G. Lockhart**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred W. Lockhart Sr. 2416 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, has been assigned to Phan Rang Air Base as a security Policeman. He formerly served at Pease Air Force Base, N.H. He was graduated from Atkins Senior High School in 1970, (*The Sentinel, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Saturday, June 26, 1971*)



**Can anyone ID this Captain from the 615<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing who is being honored for completing 225 missions.** Both photos by Christopher Boles. These photos first appeared in Phan Rang News 63 without any responses.







Twas the night before Christmas, and out on the ramp,  
Not an airplane was stirring, not even a Champ.

The aircraft were fastened to tiedowns with care, In hopes that come  
morning, they all would be there.

The fuel trucks were nestled, all snug in their spots, With gusts from two-forty  
at 39 knots.

I slumped at the fuel desk, now finally caught up, And settled down  
comfortably, resting my butt.

When the radio lit up with noise and with chatter, I turned up the scanner to  
see what was the matter.

A voice clearly heard over static and snow, Called for clearance to land at the  
airport below.

He barked his transmission so lively and quick, I'd have sworn that the call  
sign he used was "St. Nick".

I ran to the panel to turn up the lights, The better to welcome this magical  
flight.

He called his position, no room for denial, "St. Nicholas One, turnin' left onto  
final."

And what to my wondering eyes should appear, But a Rutan-built sleigh, with  
eight Rotax Reindeer!

With vectors to final, down the glideslope he came, As he passed all fixes, he  
called them by name:

"Now Ringo! Now Tolga! Now Trini and Bacun! On Comet! On Cupid!" What  
pills was he takin'?

While controllers were sittin', & scratchin' their head, They phoned to my  
office, & I heard it with dread,

The message they left was both urgent and dour: "When Santa pulls in, have  
him please call the tower."

He landed like silk, with the sled runners sparking, Then I heard "Left at  
Charlie," and "Taxi to parking."

He slowed to a taxi, turned off of three-oh And stopped on the ramp with a  
"Ho, ho-ho-ho..."

He stepped out of the sleigh, but before he could talk, I ran out to meet him  
with my best set of chocks.

His red helmet & goggles were covered with frost And his beard was all black  
from Reindeer exhaust.

His breath smelled like peppermint, gone slightly stale, And he puffed on a  
pipe, but he didn't inhale.

His cheeks were all rosy and jiggled like jelly, His boots were as black as a  
cropduster's belly.

He was chubby and plump, in his suit of bright red, And he asked me to "fill it,  
with hundred low-lead."

He came dashing in from the snow-covered pump, I knew he was anxious for  
drainin' the sump.

I spoke not a word, but went straight to my work, And I filled up the sleigh, but  
I spilled like a jerk.

He came out of the restroom, and sighed in relief, Then he picked up a phone  
for a Flight Service brief.

And I thought as he silently scribed in his log, These reindeer could land in an eighth-mile fog.

He completed his pre-flight, from the front to the rear, He put on his headset, & I heard him yell, "Clear!"

And laying a finger on his push-to-talk, He called up the tower for clearance and squawk.

"Take taxiway Charlie, the southbound direction, Turn right three-two-zero at pilot's discretion"

He sped down the runway, the best of the best, "Your traffic's a Grumman, inbound from the west."

Then I heard him proclaim, as he climbed through the night, "Merry Christmas to all! I have traffic in sight."

*Contributed by Jim Martin*

*Merry Christmas to each and every one of you,  
we have so much to be thankful for and it's all because of  
each and everyone of you.*



The Phan Rang Newsletter was initially started to keep the interested up and promote the annual reunion of Phan Rang Vietnam Veteran. The initial issues mainly contained news stories from publications that veterans had saved and shared with the author, like the Phan Fare (The official publication of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing), 7th Air Force News and the Pacific Stars & Stripes.

As with any endeavor as bold as the creation of a major air base in a combat zone it became apparent that it was the "people" that made it successful so personal biographies were sought and became an integral part of the newsletters.

Most of the articles in the newsletters are not in date order, however, there are a series of letters that are specifically dedicated to a designated time period.

Current date specific information, such as reunions and PRAB sale items have been removed and not included in this book.

All newsletters were researched and composed by Douglas Severt.



This is the second volume of the Phan Rang Newsletters. The initial issues mainly contained news stories from publications that veterans had saved and shared with the author, like the Phan Fare (The official publication of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing), 7th Air Force News and the Pacific Stars & Stripes.

As with any endeavor as bold as the creation of a major air base in a combat zone it became apparent that it was the "people" that made it successful so personal biographies were sought and became an integral part of the newsletters.

Most of the articles in the newsletters are not in date order, however, there are a series of letters that are specifically dedicated to a designated time period.

Current date specific information, such as reunions and PRAB sale items have been removed and not included in this book.

All newsletters were researched and composed by Douglas Severt.



This 3rd edition contains edited versions of Phan Rang Newsletters 35-49. These are only edited to match a book format and remove articles that were meant to provide information on pending reunions and other timely Phan Rang information

Tales of the Flight Line Saga, by Jack Anderson continues and each issue has a part of Robert Chappellear's "Tales of Phan Rang" and concludes with this edition. Also included is the comprehensive "Chronology of VC/NVA Attacks on Phan Rang". Each page contains plethora of base and Vietnam information that was very relevant to the assigned servicemen.

Finally Marjorie T. Hanson the author of "Brave Warriors, Humble Heroes: A Vietnam War Story" is introduced with excerpts from her book in upcoming newsletters.



The Phan Rang AB Reference Library brings all of the often sought information on Phan Rang AB under one cover. Richard Buickerood, a pilot and Phan Rang veteran wrote the very comprehensive report on the U.S. involvement in Vietnam from beginning to end.

Included are listings of all the aircraft that were assigned to the base along with all air losses including information on crews and description of the loss.

The casualty list is a comprehensive list of all deaths in Ninh Thuan Province as well as deaths that occurred on any base assigned aircraft anywhere in Vietnam.

Finally a detailed report on every attack on the base, including loss to personnel, infrastructure and aircraft.

**Available on Amazon**





**Richard Ward is in charge of the annual Phan Rang fishing trip in Oregon, Ohio in July.**

**Arriving July 8th, fishing July 9th and 10th and leaving on the 11th. Right now he has 13 people signed up and he's looking for another 5 to be able to fill 3 boats. Target fish are walleye.**

**If anyone is interested please message him and he will give you more details and tentative cost.**