

Phan Rang News No. 30

In this issue

Chaplains Laud Troops' Morale

Survival—With Baby Bottles

CAMS Unit Sets Mark for Test Stand

Navy, Air Force Pilots Swap Seats (Capt. Robert S. Pahl)

Tales of Phan Rang (part 5)

Phan Rang AB Gets ARC Unit

Col. J. A. Wilson Receives 5 Medals for Vietnam Duty

35th Security Police Squadron...a Pictorial

The 2014 "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB Reunion

Got Photos or Stories?

Chaplains Laud Troops' Morale (*The Stars And Stripes, Monday, December 11, 1967*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (Special) — Two recently assigned chaplains are impressed by the high morale they have encountered among the thousands of Air Force personnel at Phan Rang Air Base.

"I think the morale is tremendous," said Chaplain (Capt.) William H. Mattox.

"I'm very much impressed with the spirit of these men," said Chaplain (Capt.) Charles R. Hutsler. "They feel they're all united in one purpose to accomplish our mission here in Vietnam."

The base houses a wing of F100 Super Sabre jet fighters and B57 Canberra bombers, and a wing of C123 Provider transports. The F100s and B57s carry out combat missions in support of Allied ground forces. The C123s deliver supplies to Army Special Forces camps and other installations throughout South Vietnam.

Mattox said his duties include both preaching at regular services and counseling men, in between services, along the flightline area and throughout the rest of the base.

Phan Rang News No. 30

Hutsler, a former enlisted man, said, "It's a real joy, to go on the flightline to talk with the pilots and enlisted support personnel. 'These men work long tedious hours.' He said his duties included counseling men suffering from loneliness and men upset by problems at home.

Hutsler believes his experiences as an enlisted man were valuable in helping him to understand the men's problems.



Survival—With Baby Bottles (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Monday, July 10, 1967)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01) —Baby bottles for jet fighter pilots?

Believe it or not, they've become standard gear for F100 Supersabre pilots of the 612th Tactical Fighter Sq., which recently completed its 10,000th hour of combat missions in Vietnam.

One of the pilots, Maj. Robert L. Ziman, 36, from Riverside, Calif., explained that the plastic bottles fit neatly into the fliers' G-suits (antigravity suits) and will come in handy in case any the 612th Screaming Eagles ever have to bail out of their aircraft.

"When a pilot jumps out of an aircraft, one of the first things he's concerned with after he kit," he continued, "but it's not of water," said the major, whose wife and five children live in Memphis, Tenn.

"Each pilot carries a survival kit, he continued, "but it's not always easy to get to in the heat of a combat situation . . . and that's where the baby bottle enters the picture."

All the pilot will have to do now is reach inside his G-suit, where the waterfilled bottle will be readily available.

To celebrate the initiation of Operation Baby Bottle, Ziman and the rest of a flight of F100 pilots who had just completed a combat mission on a recent evening reached for their bottles and toasted one another with the water inside as their Supersabres were being serviced on the Phan Rang flightline.

Ziman said he has no intention of taking any of the bottles home to his children in Memphis. Instead, he plans to "pass them on to the next generation" of pilots.

Phan Rang News No. 30

CAMS Unit Sets Mark for Test Stand (*The Stars And Stripes, Monday, December 11, 1967*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (Special) — Working 12 hours a day, the men of the 315th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Sq (CAMS) at this base assembled the first C123 Provider engine testing platform in Vietnam in record time.

"It normally takes 25 men 30 days to put one together," said S.Sgt. Ralph S. Young, an engine mechanic with the 6200th Field Maintenance Sq at Clark Air Base P.I. "Twenty guys from CAMS pitched in and did it in ten."

On temporary duty with the 315th, Young accompanied the test stand from Clark and supervised the construction at Phan Rang.

"This stand was modified to test C123 engines," Clark said. "It had to be strengthened and a firewall added. When it arrived here, hardly any of it was together. All the supports and the top of the control housing had to be welded back on."

First Lt. Steven E. Fritts, OIC of the CAMS propulsion branch, was in charge of the project. "Phan Rang will be the sole facility in Southeast Asia for testing the R-2800 engine," he said.

The R2800 is the 2,350-horsepower unit used on all models.

Navy, Air Force Pilots Swap Seats (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Thursday, Feb. 18, 1971*)

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — 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 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.

Phan Rang News No. 30



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 F100 to Navy Lt. Jeff R. Woodfield, from the aircraft carrier Hancock, during a pilot exchange program. (USAF)

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. Singlet;, and 1st Lt. James F. Kilpatrick with the 615th TFS traded with Lt. (j.g.) Gerald, D. Tucker.

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 fitted into the swing (roll and pitch) of carrier life. The carrier operates in an area off the Republic of Vietnam 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."

Tomlins said; "We, made, what appeared to be a kamikazi run on the carrier when we landed. We came in about 15 feet off the, deck. The landing officer told/us to kill the engines, and we just fell -the rest of the way." The lieutenant was also impressed by the Navy's careful Aiming and precise coordination when moving a number, of aircraft on such a small deck.



Capt Robert Pahl

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. Bruce, 612th TFS, with Lt Jeff, R, Woodfield and 1st Lt. Sanders L. Avery, 615th TFS with Lt. J. R. Carlson.

Woodfield described what it is like aboard an .aircraft carrier "Our carrier has one air wing on it. In that wing are two fighter, squadrons and three attack squadrons flying F8 Crusader

Phan Rang News No. 30

and A4 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 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 Rang 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 their facilities, the overall operation and was impressed with, the F-100 Super Sabre combat mission flights.

The purpose of the exchange program was to strengthen interservice 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 since Air Force and Navy officials hope to continue the, program in the months to come.

TALES OF PHAN RANG



BY ROBERT CHAPPELEAR

Tales of Phan Rang (Part 5) by Robert Chappelear

Tales of Phan Rang
Published by Robert L. Chappelear at Smashwords
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An account of the author's one year tour of duty flying C-123 cargo aircraft in Viet Nam. Provides descriptions of life in country and the missions that were flown.

This book is a description of that year providing an insight into what it was like to live and fly in that conflict and during that time of the war.

About Robert Chappelle

Retired from two careers, the first was as a fighter pilot for the USAF; the second as a system engineer for a defense contractor. Accumulated 6000 hours of flying time in 7 different operational assignments including three tours to Asia and one to Europe. As an engineer I worked on the airborne command post, nuclear aircraft carriers, presidential helicopters, and various other communication systems.

Married with three sons and one step daughter and three grandchildren (1 grandson, and 2 granddaughters). Though I have made 36 moves during my lifetime I am now settled in Minnesota. Looking forward to additional traveling throughout the United States after my wife's retirement in two years.



Chapter 5 – Last Flights Home

Giving the KIA a ride home was a tough mission regardless of whether the casualty was American or Vietnamese. Of course it was war and every time I transported an American KIA there was something that occurred that made the event memorable. Usually the noteworthy event was not something nice. We were usually the second leg of the trip home for a KIA.

There was a helicopter flight that transported the KIA from the field to the landing strip where we picked up the KIA. We never transported the aluminum caskets that you used to see on the nightly news. We always provided the ride from a small forward base to Ton San Nhut Cam Rahn Bay. So we were always transporting the green rubberized "body bags". I still recall how often the body bags carried into the aircraft by his comrades were curiously short, sometimes only about three feet long.

Then we would hear one of the escorts morosely recall, "Jim used to be 6 foot 3".

Or maybe we would hear one escort ask another, "Did you get all the parts?"

The reply might be, "No, we couldn't find his head."

Or maybe, "We couldn't find his legs."

Our job on these flights was to transport the KIA to an Army Mortuary at either Ton Son Nut or Cam Rahn Bay. At least these types of missions would be relatively simple. There would never be any extraneous passengers except for the escort and we never got any kind of a run around or divert from higher headquarters. When we landed we never had any "hold short" taxi instructions. We would be directed to the parking ramp and met immediately by an ambulance. Often the recovery detail would be boarding the cargo ramp at the rear of the aircraft even before engine shut down. Fortunately I did not fly many of these type missions and I never had to fly more than five KIAs at a time.

Phan Rang News No. 30

As shocking as these conversations and transporting American KIAs was, transporting Vietnamese KIAs was even worse. The Vietnamese were usually transported in sand filled wooden coffins. Most Vietnamese casualties were buried where they fell, like the British military tradition. Sometimes though, especially in the cases where a KIA came from a prominent or politically connected family then the KIA would be transported back to home and his family. It seemed however, that there was never as much of a sense of urgency attached to transporting the Vietnamese home as there was for the Americans. Therefore it was often several days or weeks between death and the transport of the remains back to home. The smell was usually overpowering and in spite of the sand often there were "fluids" seeping from the bottom of the wooden coffin that was used by the Vietnamese. Even after washing the cargo bay clean of these fluids, the smell would remain for several days. As I said, there was never as much of a sense of urgency with the Vietnamese KIAs as there was for the American KIAs. Matter of fact I recall delivering one Vietnamese KIA to a remote air strip in IV Corps. The only escort for the casket was what we understood to be the man's wife. We, the crew of the C-123 unloaded the

coffin, placed it to the side of the runway and escorted the lady to the coffin. As we took off we saw her setting there on her husband's coffin looking to the west and I am sure hoping that the family would show up soon.



To be continued. Roberts's book is available for purchase. See link at the end of this newsletter.

Phan Rang AB Gets ARC Unit (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Saturday, Aug. 26, 1967*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (7AF) —The American Red Cross recently opened its new \$24,000 recreation facility at Phan Rang air base. The structure, constructed by a team from the 554th Civil Eng. Sq. (Red Horse), was officially opened with a 'busting in' ceremony.

'Busting in' was Airman 1.C. William G. Peterson, 22, who gained the honor of breaking through an aluminum foil barrier stretched across the main entrance.

Col. J. A. Wilson Receives 5 Medals for Vietnam Duty (*The New, Van Nuys (Calif.) August 15, 1968*)

Air Force Col. James A. Wilson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur W. Wilson of 1216 S. Adams, Glendale, has been decorated with, five military medals at Mather Air Force Base, Cal.

Col. Wilson received the Silver Star, his second Legion of Merit, the second award of the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) and two Air Medals for heroism and meritorious achievement during his most recent tour of combat duty in Southeast Asia.

The Colonel who served two tours in Vietnam during which he flew F-100 Super Sabre aircraft on 238 combat missions earned the Silver Star for gallantry while leading a force of F-100s against an enemy force near Saigon. In adverse weather and in the face of intense ground fire, he led repeated attacks on enemy positions.

He was awarded the Legion of Merit for outstanding service to the United States as commander of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam.

Col. Wilson was cited for his work in building up Phan Rang Air Base from its early stages to its current position as one of the finest and fastest growing facilities in the Republic of Vietnam. He was praised for the security measures he instituted which have made Phan Rang one of the safest and most secure bases in the country.

A mission in support of friendly units in heavy combat with a large enemy force during Operation Dan Chi earned Col. Wilson his second DFC. Under intense ground fire with friendly forces in the immediate area and in airspace congested with other tactical aircraft, he persisted in his attack, destroying numerous, enemy bunker positions and relieving the pressure on the ground forces.

Wilson received the two Air Medals for his airmanship and outstanding courage on successful and important missions under hazardous conditions. He now holds a total of 13 Air Medals.

Decorations previously awarded to him include the Air Force Commendation Medal and the Vietnamese Cross Gallantry with Silver Star.

Col. Wilson is presently commander of the Air Training Command's 3535th Navigator Training Wing at Mather. As wing commander he is in charge of all navigator training for the Air Force, including undergraduate navigator, navigator - bombardier and electronic warfare officer training.

Phan Rang News No. 30

A 1937 graduate of Glendale High School, Col. Wilson attended Glendale Junior College and San Jose State College prior to entering military service in May 1941.

He was commissioned through the aviation cadet program in 1942 and served in the European Theater of Operations during World War II.

Col. Wilson is married to the former Shirley Ann Pittaway. The Wilsons have two children, Catherine 11 and Stephen 10.

More on the next page.

News From many sources from "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 30



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Phan Rang News No. 30



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...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 30



More on the next page.

Phan Rang News No. 30

Authors in our Midst

<p>By Steve Janke...click to buy book</p>	<p>By Robert Chappellear...click to buy</p>	<p>By Jack Anderson...click to buy book</p>	<p>By Vic Markle...click to buy book</p>

The 2014 "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB Reunion

The 2014 "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB Reunion

Where: DoubleTree by Hilton, Reid Park, 445 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson AZ

When: October 9-11

Single/Double rate \$99

Banquet 11 October in the Bonsai Room



You may now make your hotel reservations for the reunion. Click on the Double Tree logo above and it will take you to the Phan Rang AB Reunion Web Site. Please make your reservations early which will help us greatly in the planning process and also to insure that everyone that wants to attend gets the reunion rate. This is a smaller hotel than the previous year, so we have to watch it very carefully. Remember if circumstances prevent you from attending you can always cancel within 24 hours of your check-in date. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact [me](#).

