

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive**

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

In this issue:

‘Happy Valley’ Phan Rang AB Reunion Information (new stuff)

Why ‘Westy’ is Popular

Sergeant’s Friend Won Medal of Honor

GI-Viet Allies Meet the Test Of Friendship

Phan Rang Medics to Go, But Their Knowledge to Stay

Vietnam Remembrances - Tales of the Flight Line saga continues

Tales of Phan Rang (part 11)

Phan Rang As I Remember It - by Pat O’Connor

Authors in our midst

‘Happy Valley’ Phan Rang AB Reunion Information



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. 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](#).**

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

Here’s a breakdown of the activities for the reunion:

- **Tour 1 -10 Oct.** - Davis-Monthan AFB and Bone Yard Tour (See note below). This tour is open to only 54 people (one bus is all that the base will allow) and you can [sign up](#) for that tour and we will request from the participants base points of interest where they would like to visit. In addition when you sign up I also need full name, SSN, date of birth, driver’s license number and state of issue or if you have a military ID just state that as I need to prepare a ‘Guest List’ of all visitors and provide to them five days prior to the planned visit. The transportation cost for this tour is \$16.00 per passenger and is approximately 6 hours in duration. The bus will probably stop at a base restaurant or the BX for lunch and you will be on your own.
- **Tour 2 -10 Oct.** -Pima Air and Space Museum and Bone Yard Tour. You are on your own for lunch at the museum snack bar. Please visit the [museum web site](#) for information about the museum. The cost of this tour for transportation is \$21, \$12.50 for museum admittance, \$6 for Bone Yard tour and \$5 for a docent making the total cost at \$45.00 per person.
- **Tour 3 -11 Oct.** - Pima Air and Space Museum...the bone yard is closed on the weekends. There is a \$16.00 transportation cost for this tour and \$12.50 museum admission cost. The total cost for this tour is \$29.00 per person. You are on your own for lunch at the museum snack bar. Please visit the [museum web site](#) for information about the museum.
- **11 Oct.** - Southwest style Banquet buffet style in the Bonsai-Boojum Room. The cost of the banquet is \$56.00, which includes a 22% service tax and 8.1 sales tax.
- All dates - the hotel courtesy bus is available to the Park Mall as well as all other destinations within a 3-mile radius of the hotel.

Here’s the cost breakdown for the various activities:

- **Tour 1** - Base and Bone Yard Tour and banquet and reunion fee: \$82.00 per person.
- **Tour 2** - Pima Air and Space Museum and Bone Yard Tour, banquet and reunion fee: \$112.00 per person.
- **Package 1** - Includes Tour 1 and Tour 3, banquet and reunion fee: \$111.00 per person.

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive**

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

- **Banquet only** and reunion fee: \$66.00

Please select from the options above (the cost stated are for each participant) and mail your check to:

Jack Anderson
826 72nd St. SE
Auburn, WA. 98092

If you have any questions, please [write](#) or call me at 405-732-5449. Once you decide on what you plan on doing please let [me](#) know as I will be keeping track of participants for each tour. If you DO NOT plan to attend the reunion you DO NOT need to respond. For Tour 1 participants, I will only consider you as being signed up when all required information is supplied.

Note: This information is just to let you know what I’m doing and where the costs are coming from. I hope it doesn’t muddy the waters, but the most important information you need is listed above. First of all the banquet buffet cost \$42.00 + 22% Service Tax and 8.1% sales tax bring the total to \$55.37 and in all the calculations above I’ve rounded it off to \$56. The buffet is a ‘Southwest Buffet’ consisting of:

Roasted Chicken and Lime Soup
Red Chile Caesar Salad
Corn and Flour Tortilla Chips with Salsa and Guacamole
Smoked Tomato, Cilantro and Black Bean Salad
Grilled Chicken or Beef Fajitas
Sea Bass Baked with Tequila, Lime and Cilantro
Finished with a Ruby Red Grapefruit Beurre Blanc
Flour and Corn Tortillas, Grilled Seasonal Vegetables, Spanish Rice
Cornbread and Mesquite Honey Butter
Caramel Flan, Toasted Pistachio Sugar Cookies

For our transportation needs we are contracting through Mountain View Tours, Inc. On Friday, 10 Oct. we will have two busses; a 54 passenger coach (\$849.00) and a 49 passenger coach (\$748.00) for 6.5 hours each. The 54 passenger coach will be used for the base and bone yard tour and the 49 passenger coach used for the Pima Air and Space Museum and Bone Yard tour. On Saturday, 11 Oct. we will have one 49 passenger coach for just the Pima Air and Space Museum.

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive**

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

The reduced museum admittance fee is \$12.50 for the museum and \$6 for the bone yard tour, all of which we have to pay for in advance.

The last fee is a ‘Reunion Fee’ of \$10 per person. This fee will help pay for the expense of printing schedules, buying name tags, supplying the hospitality suite with food and refreshments and other incidental expenses associated with a reunion and may be helpful in defraying transportation cost if we should come up short.

One last thing...in the event we have more than 54 people wanting to get on the base tour (Tour 1), I’m very sorry that we couldn’t accommodate everyone. Since the base makes the rules and will only allow one bus I thought it was too nice of a tour to turn down, because Public Affairs said they will take us anywhere we want to go. If it includes the flightline area, we have to transfer to a government bus. For the bone yard tour the bus can stop and passengers get out and look around and touch, unlike the bone yard tour from the museum which is just a windshield tour.



Why ‘Westy’ is Popular (PHANFARE September 13, 1967)



An incident at Phan Rang Air Base recently provided a clue to the immense popularity of Army General William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam, among the members of his command.

It happened while the general was visiting the operations building of the F-100 Super Sabre squadrons at Phan Rang. An airman said the general was invited to inspect some

Gen. Westmoreland inspecting ROK troops at Phan Rang AB.

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

equipment in the 615th TFS area of the building.

“I don’t want to see the equipment, I want to see the men.” The airman quoted the general. The incident occurred during a recent inspection at Phan Rang Air Base. (See Phan Rang News 35 for the story on Westmoreland’s visit to Phan Rang.)

Sergeant’s Friend Won Medal of Honor (PHANFARE September 13, 1967)

“I found out he was a fighter jockey, and I about dropped dead!”

That’s how MSgt. Richard H. Rice, from Chandler, Ariz., the Base Civic Action NCO, described his acquaintance with Maj. Bernard F. Fisher, the only Air Force winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor in the Vietnamese conflict.

The sergeant has a magazine photo of the gallant major, and there are still vivid memories in his mind of the friendship that developed between the two men four years ago at Homestead AFB, Fla.

Sergeant Rice was president of the ‘Gators’, a skin diving club at the Florida base, when Major Fisher was stationed there as a captain. The future war hero joined the club, and Sergeant Rice taught his two eldest sons how to skin-dive.

When the sergeant first met the Air Force flier, he recalled, the officer gave no indication of being a flier. As a matter of fact, Sergeant Rice thought he might be a personnel officer.

He described the major as “read modest guy...very friendly...a very pleasing personality...He’d give you the shirt off his back if you needed it.”

Noting that the Air Force hero “always volunteered his services,” Sergeant Rice observed that Major Fisher would take member of the club skin-diving in his own boat.

Earlier this year, the major received the Medal of Honor from President Lyndon B. Johnson for flying his Skyraider “into the valley of death” to rescue a fellow pilot.

Sergeant Rice noticed his picture on the cover of the “Airman Magazine” not long afterward, and stared at the name beneath it.

Sure enough, it was the “real modest guy” from Homestead AFB.

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive**

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”



Major Bernard F. Fisher, USAF

Medal of Honor Mission

10 March 1966

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. On that date, the Special Forces camp at A Shau was under attack by 2,000 North Vietnamese Army regulars. Hostile troops had positioned themselves between the airstrip and the camp. Other hostile troops had surrounded the camp and were continuously raking it with automatic weapons fire from the surrounding hills. The tops of the 1,500-foot hills were obscured by an 800 foot ceiling, limiting aircraft maneuverability and forcing pilots to operate within range of hostile gun positions, which often were able to fire down on the attacking aircraft. During the battle, Maj. Fisher observed a fellow airman crash land on the battle-torn airstrip. In the belief that the downed pilot was seriously injured and in imminent danger of capture, Maj. Fisher announced his intention to land on the airstrip to effect a rescue. Although aware of the extreme danger and likely failure of such an attempt, he elected to continue. Directing his own air cover, he landed his aircraft and taxied almost the full length of the runway, which was littered with battle debris and parts of an exploded aircraft. While effecting a successful rescue of the downed pilot, heavy ground fire was observed, with 19 bullets striking his aircraft. In the face of the withering ground fire, he applied power and gained enough speed to lift-off at the overrun of the airstrip. Maj. Fisher's profound concern for his fellow airman, and at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Air Force and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

During the Battle of A Shau on March 10, 1966, a C-123 crew flying in the vicinity of the Special Forces Camp taped the actual rescue as it was in progress. The tape was later given to Major Fisher as a souvenir. The recording was not started until after the initial decisions to rescue Major Dafford ("Jump") Myers were made and the first recorded sentences were of Fisher telling fellow Skyraider Pilots (Captains Francisco "Paco" VASQUEZ, 29, of Puerto Rico; John LUCAS, 28, of Steubenville, Ohio; and Dennis HAGUE, 28, of Kellogg, Idaho) how he planned to land on the debris- littered strip where Myers was down. Another pair of Skyraider pilots, Jim GUNTER and Pete HOUK, arrived as the rescue was unfolding. They flew cover for the takeoff portion of the rescue and then continued to hit the Viet Cong positions after the rescue was completed.

Capr Richard Robbins composed and performed a song about Bernies mission in Ashau at a promotion party for the man he rescued, new LtCol Dafford "Jump" Meyers. In its original version, the song was not suitable for family listening. Tennessee Ernie Ford modified the lyrics slightly.

Major Fisher became the first living Air Force Medal of Honor winner when he was presented the medal at a White House Ceremony by then President Lyndon B. Johnson.

The USAF Museum has the A-1E Skyraider that Maj Bernie Fisher flew on his Medal of Honor mission.

GI-Viet Allies Meet the Test Of Friendship (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Wednesday, Jan 5, 1972*)

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special)—Americans at this base and Vietnamese from the local province of Ninh Thuan have been allies since the base opened in 1965. Equally as important, they have become friends.

With the current relative quiet in the province, the community relations program is flourishing. Although the establishment of an American-Vietnamese community relations committee and friendship council has led to improved understanding and friendship, the real success of the program has been in the interest taken by the individual men of base and their friends in the province.

For their part, the men of Phan Rang have supported orphanages, helped students stay in school, held parties for the children of the local hamlets, arranged tours of the base and aided in construction projects.

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

Airmen have acted as advisers to the local Boy Scout program. Some black airmen formed a band, the Black Coalition, and have played in the local province to give the Vietnamese a sample of soul music. Cartoons have been shown in the city of Phan Rang to the delight of the community's children. Funds have been donated to buy toys and candy to be distributed during Tet to orphans of Vietnamese soldiers.

Phan Rang Medics to Go, But Their Knowledge to Stay (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Tuesday, April 20, 1971*)

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — Four U.S. Air Force medics are waging a very special, private war here in the city of Phan Rang — a war against ignorance, disease and death—a war to save lives.

Dr. (Capt.) William G. Kraybill, Jr., along with three USAF medical technicians, M.Sgt Vernon W. Priesing, and S.Sgts. Craig E. Wenzel, and Wendel T. Wingo, are working with, their Vietnamese counterparts at the Ninh Thuan Provincial Hospital in downtown Phan Rang. They are treating myriad diseases practically unknown in the United States.

The physical act of treating patients, however, is secondary to these men. Their main function is one of teacher, both to Vietnamese medical personnel at the hospital and to Vietnamese peasants, living in hamlets and villages surrounding Phan Rang.

"Education is the most vital thing we can give these people, for without proper public health measures being enforced, or better yet, willingly observed by the people in this area, the battle we, are waging against disease here will continue without, let up," said Kraybill. "I myself came into Vietnam completely unaware of many of these peoples' problems. My first month in fact, I spent curled up with a text book on tropical diseases found in this area. Leprosy, plague, spinal tuberculosis, skin infections, and other diseases I had barely heard of were suddenly commonplace, and the only way to begin getting rid of them was through education."

"When I was assigned to the MILPHAP (military public health assistance program) staff last September, I found many inroads had already been made by the Vietnamese themselves under the guidance of U.S. medical personnel. One of the truly outstanding programs is the model hamlet'," the doctor continued.

"Vietnamese and U.S. medics went to a village and initiated a program of improving public health facilities, this included educating the villagers in personal and public sanitation areas such as disposal of trash, human waste and garbage, in addition to starting a program of immunizations. Once the hamlet was brought up to contemporary standards, the public health

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

officers began inviting hamlet chiefs from neighboring villages in to visit. Between what we told them should be done, and what they saw could be done, the program began to spread out. There are now several hamlets which have made drastic improvements and the ideas are spreading to neighboring hamlets. By reducing breeding grounds for flies and rats, we are beginning to make an inroad against the diseases carried by them, such as plague.

"Our number one. problem, however, is not a disease caused by filth; it is tuberculosis. There are forms of TB here I had only heard of in textbooks," Kraybill commented. "Perhaps the most unusual is spinal tuberculosis. Everyone thinks of TB as a disease which strikes the lungs. However, some rare forms also strike bone tissue. If it isn't caught in time, the afflicted person can be crippled for life!

In our clinic, the doctors treat 30 or 40 people a day. Lack of trained personnel limits us to operating, two days a week. Working with Dr. Doan Trinh, the province public health officer, I see every patient to help make a diagnosis. Not everyone who comes in has TB. Many are simply suffering from coughs caused by colds or other minor illnesses. But, and this is important many who come in do have tuberculosis. By catching it early enough, we stand a good chance of arresting the disease and curing the patient.

"It is significant that people are coming in more freely. They are aware of the dangers of the disease through the public health programs and are taking steps to protect their health. Once something like this starts snowballing, effective public health becomes a reality.

"No doctor can ever feel satisfied with progress against disease, when there is still so much to be done, but at least we've made a start, and the Vietnamese doctors, nurses, and technicians can carry the ball the rest of the way.

"The MILPHAP actions here will end in July," the doctor concluded, "and the Vietnamese medical personnel are more than able to handle any future actions."

Another program initiated by the MILPHAP group is referring persons requiring specialized treatment to the USAF Hospital at Cam Ranh Bay. Those unable to make the trip to Cam Ranh are seen by doctors from the USAF base there who travel down to Phan Rang.

"We have three doctors who visit regularly," said Kraybill. Dr. Charles Rubin, an ophthalmologist, handles all persons needing eye treatment, while Dr. Thomas Hoshaw handles cases where the eyes, ears, nose and throat are infected. Dr. Louis Breshie also visits here frequently and serves as a urologist. Most of the doctors really enjoy the chance to treat patients with diseases which are unfamiliar to them. It's a real challenge that sometimes draws on all of our experience."

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

Vietnam Remembrances - Tales of the Flight Line saga continues

In the previous issue of Phan Rang News 34, we had an excerpt from Jack Anderson’s book **“Vietnam Remembrances - Tales of the Flight Line”** where he wrote about his arrival in Vietnam. This inspired **Pat O’Connor**, Sgt, USAF to share his experiences with us. Pat was a Security Policeman and spent all of his duty of the perimeter or water point outside of the base.

I remember the first day we landed in Cam Rahn Bay. It was so hot and humid. I bought an ice cream sandwich, took one bite of it and the rest of it fell onto the dirty floor. There was a flock of little Vietnamese kids that scrambled and fought each other for that dirty ice cream. As I turned around, there were kids coming out of trash cans. Almost couldn’t believe my eyes.

Then we loaded onto a C-130 for transport to Phan Rang. After arriving I remember walking towards the Security Police Barracks. Other guys were going home as we passed them. I can still hear them saying, “You guys are going to love it here, the base hasn’t been hit for three months. Wouldn’t you know it we were hit with 107 rockets that very night. That was the only night we sheltered in the bunkers just outside the barracks.

The next morning we went to guard mount which by the way was right beside the flight line. Then we were dispatched to the perimeter to our assigned guard towers. This was an everyday event. What scared the hell out of us though was, during incoming attacks we had to run out of the barracks without weapons and ride on the back of a Duce and a half to the flight line where issued our weapons then deployed to the perimeter. We were not permitted to keep our weapons in the barracks. I thought that was pretty dumb to have the guards for the base respond to the guard mount area without weapons while receiving incoming rockets or mortars.

While on duty on Juliet 6, on day shift I spotted a gook inside the fence line near Juliet 7. I immediately called central security control who dispatched the SAT leader to my location. He contacted me by radio and said, don’t shoot him O’Connor I’ll get him. He drove up in his jeep, jumped out and ran after the gook and caught him. Whatever happened to the gook I’ll never know, except he was turned over to some South Korean Rock Soldiers (ROK) that did Recon for us.

I don’t remember which month but we were advised that some NVA’s were approaching our base. Some F-100’s were dispatched and I was able to watch them bomb the bastards from my tower in the Delta area. That was a beautiful site. There was another time we were deployed while under attack and Spooky was firing just outside the Main Gate. That was like watching fireworks. The VC were attempting a ground attack.

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive**

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

Just wanted you to know what the Security Police experienced guarding the base. Our job was to keep the base, aircraft and all of us safe. **We did that with pride.**

Now back to Jack’s story.

Last week Jack arrived in Vietnam and we experienced what it was like to deplane from the comfort of the contract carrier B707 or DC8 that carried most of us to Vietnam and onto the tarmac at Cam Ranh Bay (VCR). If nothing else the stifling heat and humidity hit you like a ton of bricks. As for me, it wasn’t such a shock because I had previously been stationed at Clark AB and I know what it was like because when I arrived and stepped off that plane at Clark with my class-A blues on. At VCR what struck me was the sand...it was everywhere. I thought how in the hell did they build all of this stuff in a sand pile.

Jack is now settled down at Phan Rang and he’s given us a little overview of his work and the layout of the flightline area. He then goes on to describe some of the other weapon systems he sees around him.

Spooky and Shadow

We had two old C-47 cargo planes that had been equipped with an amazing weapon. It was a gun which sprayed bullets so that, on the ground, there wasn't an area over six inches in any direction that wasn't hit with a bullet. It could blanket an acre in less than a minute. They would also drop phosphorous flares hung by a parachute that lit up entire areas as though it were daylight. The entire flight line, as well as the perimeter and beyond, would light up. As if that weren't enough, it also had a very bright searchlight that shone down and lit up the ground. We called them Spooky.



SPOOKY



SHADOW

From the flight line, the spraying bullets looked like a white line slinking from the plane to the ground and whipping around. Something like every fifteenth bullet was a tracer which could be seen, but the bullets came out of the muzzle so fast, every fifteenth bullet made it look like a beam of light. An amazing sight, but being on the ground underneath it had to be horrifying. It was the baddest thing in 'Nam.

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

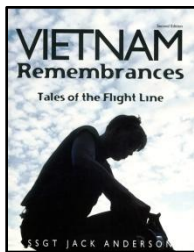
“Stories worth telling”

That is until the Spooky's were replaced with a couple of planes we called "Shadow." The Shadows were modified C-1 19's. They were called Shadow because they were a "shadow of light" in the darkness. The "shadow of light" name came from the triangle of light their search lights created emanating from their bellies and fanning out to the ground. The night sky backdrop made them look as though they were casting a shadow, which in this case was a shadow of light. I can't even begin to imagine how many bullets per second she released, yet we were still being mortared almost every night. Where did the VC hide?

We would often emerge from the bunker after the all clear had sounded and see Spooky "hosing down" an area outside the perimeter. We knew that Charlie had better either be deep underground or a long way off by that time, or they would get what we felt were their just desserts. There was no surviving Spooky if you were above ground.

I have learned since being home that some places in 'Nam called both Spooky ad Shadow, "Puff the Magic Dragon." A suitable name for sure.

I'm going to put down Jack's book until next week, but if you want to immerse yourself, please get the book. It's real easy, just click on the link below. Also if you've read the book and or would like to give some feedback either on the book or what you've read on these pages, please send in your comments. They are welcomed by both Jack and I. Click on the book or [here](#) to order yours.



Tales of Phan Rang (part 11)

TALES OF PHAN RANG



BY ROBERT CHAPPELEAR

Tales of Phan Rang (Part 11) by Robert Chappellear

Tales of Phan Rang
Published by Robert L. Chappellear at Smashwords

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

Copyright 2010 Robert L Chappellear
(used by permission of the author)

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 Chappellear

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.

Chapter 11 - Brown Jugs

I guess that someone might look at the title of this chapter and get visions of the mammary attributes of female girl rock and roll bands that sometimes visited the bases in Vietnam. However, in this case “jugs” refers to the cylinders on the Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engines of the C-123. This was a “radial” engine with two banks of 9 cylinders each that got its name because it produced 2800 Horsepower. This engine was designed and produced during WWII and was used on many aircraft of that era including the C-123. The cylinders unlike an automobile engine were not enclosed by an engine block. Instead each cylinder was separate from the others, with cooling fins and arranged radially around the center crankshaft, which in turn was connected through mechanics to the propeller. Because of this stand alone configuration, the individual cylinders on a radial engine are commonly called “jugs”. Sometimes there would be a failure of a jug, maybe the casing would come loose from the crankcase, or a valve would fail, or sometimes even the cylinder casing would crack and fail as a result of thousands of hours of use.

So along came a mission late in my tour when I was scheduled to fly a PAX flight to several bases in II Corps. My first sortie for the day was to carry 44 passengers, all Army personnel from Phan Rang up to Nha Trang also located on the east coast of Vietnam and about 110 miles north. Prevailing winds meant that we were taking off toward the north that day and the route to Nha Trang would be to continue straight ahead while climbing to about 5000 feet, go through the mountain pass between Phan Rang and Cam Rahn Bay enroute to Nha Trang. At that altitude we could pass directly overhead of Cam Rahn Bay without interfering with their

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

traffic pattern and were legally not required to talk to tower or Cam Rahn approach. I was leveled at 5000 feet almost dead center overhead of Cam Rahn Bay, off set just enough that I could look out from my lower left side window and could see Cam Rahn Bay runway when there came a “KAWHAAAAM” from the number 1 or left engine! It was immediately followed by “WHAM, WHAM, WHAM,WHAM”! And engine instruments showed drops in RPM, and Torque Oil Pressure.

I declared on the crew intercom, “Initiate Left Engine Failure Emergency Procedures – Throttle Affected Engine – Retard to Idle”. That is standard procedure for multi-engine airplanes, after there have been times when control cables got reversed and if a pilot rapidly shut down an engine without confirming that he actually had the malfunctioning engine identified, occasionally the wrong engine got shut down instead.

As soon as I retarded the throttle to idle the engine smoothed out and the noises stopped. I asked the co-pilot to look out his window at engine number two, on the right side and tell me if there was any visible sign of malfunction. He looked out at the engine and said that it appeared fine. I told him to watch carefully as I advanced the throttle for number one. With only a slight increase in power the number one engine again started the loud banging sounds and started to shake a bit. I again retarded the throttle to idle and called for the next action item, “Mixture – affected engine – idle cut off”.

Followed by, “Ignition – affected engine – off”.

And, “Propeller – affected engine – feather”.

As I said this was close to the end of my tour so I knew tower radio frequency by heart, I just reached down to the radio control head on that infamous electronics panel located on the floor between me and the co-pilot and the I dialed in the radio frequency for Cam Rahn Bay control.

I called, “Cam Rahn Bay tower, this is Bookie 523, I am the C-123 on the high downwind directly across from your location and I am declaring an emergency at this time.”

Cam Rahn Bay tower came back with, “Bookie 523 what is the nature or your emergency and what do you want us to do?”

I replied, “I have just lost my number one engine, I have 5000 pounds of fuel on board, I have 48 Souls on Board. I want clearance to land directly from present position.”

Tower answered back, “Bookie 523 report gear down and locked, and we’ll scramble the fire trucks.”

I called for, “Before descent check, gear down and before landing check”, then I flew a steeply descending left turn to final at Cam Rahn Bay and called on the radio, “Cam Rahn, Bookie 523 gear down and locked”.

Cam Rahn Bay tower said, “Bookie 523 cleared to land, turn off the runway or stop straight ahead at pilot’s discretion.”

I flew a sweet landing and was pleased to call the tower on roll out and said, “Cam Rahn tower

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

everything is under control and I will turn off at the mid-field taxi way.”

Tower said, “That’s approved; let us know what you are going to do.”

I turned off the runway and taxied into the Aerial Port parking ramp and shut down the Number two engine. When I climbed down from the flight deck into the cargo bay there was an Army Major waiting for me who said, “Damn Lieutenant, that was about the smoothest landing I’ve ever had in one of these pieces of shit, but the trip seemed pretty short to be at Nha Trang.”

I said, “You’re right Major – we’re not at Nha Trang, we’re at Cam Rahn Bay.”

He asked, “What are we doing at Cam Rahn Bay?”

And I replied, “Damn Major didn’t you hear that left side engine clankin’ and clatterin’? We lost that engine and shut it down up there about 5000 feet.”

He then paled to a stunning shade of white in spite of the Vietnam tan and I thought he was going to stumble as we were walking down the cargo ramp.

Right then the Flight Engineer called, “Hey Lieutenant C, come look at this.”

He had removed the panels from the engine nacelle and when I walked over, followed by the Army Major, I saw that one of the jugs was completely separated from the crankcase and just hanging there by the piston rod. I could tell by the dents in the adjacent jugs that the blown jug had been banging around and knocking the dickens out of the two to the left and right and the three others that were on the bank right in front. Oh yeah, not to say that this all happened quickly, but it was about this time that the fire trucks scrambled by the tower when we declared the emergency pulled up to our airplane.

Now the Army Major said, “Holy shit!” and turned even whiter.

I walked into the PAX terminal with him and the other passengers where they signed up for another flight to Nha Trang or points north and I made a telephone call back to Phan Rang. They told me that they would send a replacement airplane, new engine and some maintenance guys to change the engine. Actually, it didn’t take to long to get things organized for the replacement airplane and other equipment showed up about 6 hours later and we jumped on board and returned to Phan Rang with that other crew. The maintenance guys replaced the engine over night. That repaired airplane was returned to Phan Rang the next day and was back on the schedule 48 hours after it had blown the jug.



“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

Phan Rang As I Remember It - by Pat O’Connor

Pat had previously told us about his arrival in Vietnam in Phan Rang News 35 and now he reminisces about some of the guys he remembers.

John McKay, we had a hooch maid who always called him McClay. She always greeted him by saying. “McClay, McClay, I love you McClay. John paid her to wash his clothes with MPC. Then there were two guys with the same last name, “Lynch” **Mike Lynch** was from Illinois, whom I nicknamed “noose”. Then there was **Dave Lynch**, no relation from Boston. He was a giant man at 6’9”. whom I named” Baby Noose”. Noose and Baby Noose became friends, except for one day at the NCO Club. Both were getting drunk. All of a sudden they were in a fist fight. Noose ran out of the club while Baby Noose was hot on his trail. Baby Noose literally broke a tree limb off and chased Noose until he ran out of breath. Good thing for Noose who was tall but skinny, and Baby Noose was not only a giant but was a better than average size man. They did make up shook hands and were drinking buddies during the rest of their stay in Nam.

Then there was a guy named **Vince Glowacky**. He was a real skinny guy. He was from Chicago. One morning we were all getting ready to head to the flight line for the day shift. Glowacky wasn’t in the barracks. We went looking for him, tracing our way from the barracks to the NCO Club. Well, we found his pants, then a shirt, then shoes. Turns out while we were looking for him he made it back to the barracks, passed out in his bunk with an empty bottle of Vodka on the floor. He didn’t go on duty that day.

The craziest thing about Glowacky was when he was on guard duty on Bravo 5. That day I was the area SAT Leader for Bravo area. Vince called in to Central Security Control, requesting permission to shoot a chicken. The desk sergeant replied, Glowacky, It’s against the law to shoot domestic animals in the Republic of Viet Nam. I was dispatched to his tower and was able to stop him just prior to shooting the chicken. From that day on we called him,” Chicken Man Gllowacky”

I’ve only been in contact with one guy since leaving Nam. His name is Johnny Sullivan. He shared our cubicle. He was from Mobile Alabama. I distinctively remember the first thing he would say when talking to you. He would always start out saying “ Let Me Tell Ya”. I looked up his name on the internet in 2009. There were five guys with the same name listed. So I called the first number, didn’t tell him who I was, but asked if this was Johnny Sullivan. His response was, this is Johnny. So I asked him, are you the Johnny Sullivan who was in Phan Rang Viet Nam in 1968-69. immediately he said, “ Pat O’Connor” God Damn man how long has it been. We both recognized each others voice. So we’ve kept in touch. My daughter moved to Pensacola Florida in 2010. So I made it a point to visit her, my granddaughter, and Johnny. He owns his own Barber Shop. Went to see him at his shop, walked in, and when he saw me you could have heard a pin drop. So he said, “ Let Me Tell Ya” it’s really great to see you after all these years.

And I got a free hair cut. Johnny said his wife Paula wanted to meet me. So we met for breakfast the next morning. That was the first two and a half hour breakfast I ever had. Johnny

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive**

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

brought up some memories from there that we both shared. Some were good some were painful. I still am troubled about the painful memories. Goes to show you PTSD stays with you.

Authors in our Midst



Rob Morris

Click [here](#) to see all of his published books that are available on Amazon.

Untold Valor: Forgotten Stories of American Bomber Crewmen in Europe in World War Two (Potomac, 2006)

Combat Bombardier: Memoirs of Two Combat Tours Over Europe in World War Two (with Leonard Herman) (Xlibris, 2007)

Wild Blue Yonder and Beyond: The 95th Bomb Group in War and Peace (Potomac, 2012)

Untold Valor: The Second World War in the Pacific (Fonthill, 2014)

The Civil War Chronicles (Instinctive UK, 2013)

Presidents of the USA (Instinctive UK, 2013)

Not shown on Amazon but also his:

501 Jazz Greats (Barrons UK) (Contributing Writer)

The Battle of Gettysburg (Instinctive UK)

Magazine articles in:

World War Two History Magazine *Dispatches*

Upcoming publications:

Marinell: The Story of a P-51 and the People Who Knew Her

Dancing Through History: The Football Life of Ron McDole (ghost-writer)

The Spooky Gunship Story



Mike Trahan, "**The Gift Part Two - The Air Force Years**", featuring the Spooky Cover, is now available on Amazon.com in Paperback and Kindle. It contains a personal account of our mission out of Nha Trang and Phan Rang during the last nine months of USAF AC-47 operations in Vietnam.

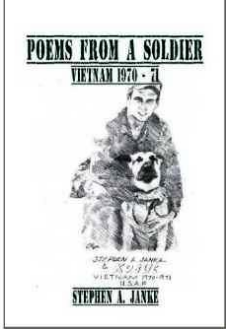
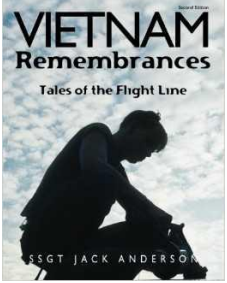
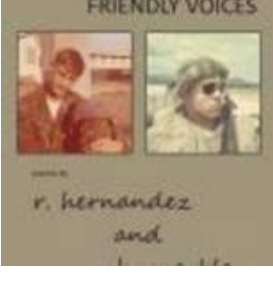


Click [here](#) to buy.

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam
...keeping the memories alive**

Phan Rang News No. 36

“Stories worth telling”

			
<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>

Note: All articles reproduced here are from various sources and the book material is used with the author’s permission. Previous issues of this newsletter are available [online](#) or on the “Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB Facebook group site. Comments or suggestions are welcomed and can be sent to [Douglas Severt](#).