

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

Phan Rang News No. 43

“Stories worth telling”

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Doug’s Note

Reunion Dialogue by Doug

I want to start this dialogue out with an apology, an apology to some who are not going to make Tour 1 because as I previously stated the bus only holds 54 passengers and we are only allowed one bus. In almost every newsletter I asked that when you made up your mind which tour you wanted that you had to notify me (Doug Severt) because I was keeping track of the numbers and also building the “guest list” of all passengers with the pertinent information that the Air Force required and send the money to Jack. Well, most of you did just that! Others didn’t, but instead sent a letter to Jack along with their money. Then Jack leaves the country for a couple of weeks and all the time, I’m filling up the bus with those contacting me, but when Jack returns and I reconcile my list with his I find that we have 6 people too many. Those unnamed people are who my apology is directed.

Here’s new information on Tour 1. Places to be visited on Davis-Monthan AFB are the A-10 Squadron, Electronics Combat Squadron and the rescue unit. Lunch will be at the Mirage Club

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(All-Ranks Club), in the Sahurao Room served cafeteria style and individual pay. Friday is Southern Cuisine and chicken and catfish are featured.

As previously reported I had to cancel Tour 2 that was scheduled to go to the museum and bone yard on Friday because we only had 5 people signed up for that which didn't justify almost a thousand dollars for a bus. After talking to a lot of people, there will be a lot of people in attendance that will have transportation and we will make sure that everyone that wants to go that day can get out there.

Tour 3 is still scheduled. I just signed the contract on 29 Aug, but so far we only have 13 for that 49 passenger bus, but I suspect the numbers will increase. Remember that this is for Saturday, 11 October and it only goes to the museum because the bone yard is closed on the weekends. Depending upon schedules, we may have the bus make several trips back and forth to the museum to allow for a more flexible departure time from the hotel and also the museum if some don't want to stay as long.

I hope these lengthy messages aren't confusing people, but I try to spell it out the best I can. My wife says I ramble too much. If you have any questions, please write or call me.

Doug Severt

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BRAVE WARRIORS, HUMBLE HEROES: A Vietnam War Story

I'm excited to report that I've been contacted by Marjorie T. Hansen, who wrote a book titled **“Brave Warriors, Humble Heroes: A Vietnam War Story”** from her husband's letters home. Here's a summary of the book:

Through her husband's letters from Southeast Asia about his combat missions in Vietnam and over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos in 1971 and 1972, Marjorie T. Hansen shares a gripping journey into one of the most divisive and turbulent periods in our nation's history. **Brave Warriors, Humble Heroes: A Vietnam War Story** captures in a flier's words the conflict, drama, frustration, and longing for home and family that mark combat missions. Through meticulous

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research and compelling narrative, Marge brings to readers a chance to understand what may have been only an ongoing headline in the news for those at home or a distant episode in



Marjorie T. Hansen

American history for younger readers. In her voice and Charlie's, she shares the experience of those who serve and those who support them. Brave Warriors, Humble Heroes is a story of enduring love that played out all over the world: Japan, Florida, Mississippi, Ohio, Alabama, California, Hawaii, South Vietnam, North Dakota, Texas, and even to a remote jungle base in the war zone on the Laotian-Thailand border.

For Marge and Charlie the legacy of the Vietnam War continued as both would face the effects of Agent Orange—he from his assignment to front-line bases and she from her visit to him at one of those bases. Brave Warriors, Humble Heroes recounts the story of one war, one humble hero, one marriage, and one family. This book stands for all those whose voices have not been heard.

Charlie was at Phan Rang assigned to 310 Tactical Airlift Sq. as navigator, C-123K and Chief Scheduler from Apr 1971- Dec 1971 then transferred to NKP, AC-119K Stinger gunships.

In the next issue I will include a Q&A with Marge and some letters from Phan Rang. It's very possible Robert Chappellear "Tales of Phan Rang" and Charlie have crossed paths.

Crew Chief's Alertness Saves Phantom, Pilot (*Seventh Air Force News, Oct 2, 1968*)

PHAN RANG — A1C Gary A. Moon, Whitesboro, N.Y., 352nd Tactical Fighter Squadron, Phan Rang AB, was honored recently for his quick action in halting a malfunctioning aircraft from taking off.

Airman Moon, an F-100 Supersabre crew chief, had prepared his aircraft for a mission and was watching it depart from the revetment area when he noticed that the left wing flap was partially lowered.

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Realizing that this condition could result in a major accident and severe injury to the pilot, he flagged down a squadron maintenance vehicle and rushed to the arming pit at the end of the runway.

Upon arrival, Airman Moon was able to warn the pilot.

In commending him for his quick action, Lt. Col. William T. Creech, Benson, N.C., indicated that if the F-100 had tried to take off with one lowered flap, it might have rolled over as soon as the wheels left the ground.

He credited the airman with saving the Supersabre and the pilot.

Son Follows Father To Same War Zone *(Seventh Air Force News, Oct 2, 1968)*

NHA TRANG — The name Beam is a familiar entry on the rosters of the 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing in Vietnam.

For a year, CWO Jack E. Beans, Jr., Omaha, Neb., was a member of the wing's maintenance division at Tan Son Nhut AB until his return to the states last September.

Shortly after he departed, his son, 1st Lt. Jack E. Beam, III, joined the 361st Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, a unit of the 460th TRW, at Nha Trang AB.

Although the two never got together in Vietnam, they shared at least one common experience. Both worked with the venerable C-47 aircraft, now seeing extensive action over Vietnam.

While at Tan Son Nhut, the elder Beam supervised maintenance on the aircraft. He had flown aboard the same type of aircraft in World War II as a flight engineer.

His son is a pilot on the C47 at Nha Trang.

Now stationed at Offutt AFB, Neb., Mr. Beam will have at least one war story to tell his son when they see each other again in November. During a night mortar attack on Tan Son Nhut, he was stranded in the base maintenance office. With the lights off and no weapon available, Beam listened carefully for signs of enemy infiltrators in the area.

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Suddenly he heard noises outside the building. He grabbed a 2 x 4 and was prepared to swing on the first person to walk in. But the lights came on in time for him to see that it was a security policeman making a check of the building.

His son has his own story to tell. He was in the left seat of a C-47, about to take off from the Nha Trang airstrip, when a propeller on the left engine spun off while turning at high speed.

Usually the prop crashes into the fuselage in such a situation. But this time it spun away in front of the moving aircraft, and no one was injured.

Chronology of VC/NVA Attacks on Phan Rang AB, 1961-1973

Column 1 and 2: Local RVN date and time

Column 3: Type of attacks: Standoff (STO); Standoff and Sapper (S&S).

Column 4: Standoff rounds impacting on base.

Column 5 and 6: US Losses Aircraft Destroyed (DES) and Damaged (DAM)

Column 7 and 8: US Losses Casualties Killed in Action (KIA) and Wounded in Action (WIA)

Column 9 and 12: RVN Losses Aircraft and Casualties

Column 13 and 14: VC/NVA Losses KIA and WIA

				US Losses				RVN Losses				VC/NVA Losses	
Attacks				Aircraft		Casualties		Aircraft		Casualties		Casualties	
Date	HR	Type	RDS	DES	DAM	KIA	WIA	DES	DAM	KIA	WIA	KIA	WIA
Mar 7, 68	0105	STO	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NR	NR
Jun 23, 68	0005	STO	18	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aug 21, 68	0003	STO	27	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan 26, 69*	0015	S&S	74	2	11	0	15	0	0	0	0	16	1
Feb 22, 69	0128	STO	86	0	20	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb 24, 69	0132	STO	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 15, 69	0117	STO	34	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 15, 69	0554	STO	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 16, 69	1904	STO	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

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				US Losses				RVN Losses				VC/NVA Losses	
Attacks				Aircraft		Casualties		Aircraft		Casualties		Casualties	
Date	HR	Type	RDS	DES	DAM	KIA	WIA	DES	DAM	KIA	WIA	KIA	WIA
Mar 19, 69	0235	STO	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 21, 69	2254	STO	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 24, 69	0234	STO	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apr 13, 69	0128	STO	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apr 21, 69	2358	STO	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 12, 69	0047	STO	30	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 12, 69	0530	STO	9	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 16, 69	0021	STO	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 22, 69	0003	STO	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 22, 69	2108	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun 6, 69	0303	STO	15	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	8	0	0
Jun 7, 69	1620	STO	3	0	0	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun 11, 69	0001	STO	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun 18, 69	2359	STO	14	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun 20, 69	1924	STO	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 15, 69	1543	STO	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 19, 69	2325	STO	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 20, 69	0649	STO	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sep 4, 69	2347	STO	18	0	3	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sep 13, 69	0007	STO	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sep 20, 69	1840	STO	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 4, 69	0810	STO	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 4, 69	1208	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 9, 69	1545	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 16, 69	0815	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 21, 69	0915	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dec 3, 69	0755	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dec 14, 69	0940	STO	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan 5, 70	0635	STO	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan 20, 70	1905	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan 25, 70	1555	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb 11, 70	0005	SAP		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Feb 16, 70	2350	STO	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb 21, 70	2235	STO	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 4, 70	1528	STO	1	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	2	0	0

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				US Losses				RVN Losses				VC/NVA Losses	
Attacks				Aircraft		Casualties		Aircraft		Casualties		Casualties	
Date	HR	Type	RDS	DES	DAM	KIA	WIA	DES	DAM	KIA	WIA	KIA	WIA
Mar 14, 70	2125	STO	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apr 1, 70	0024	STO	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apr 1, 70	0935	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apr 5, 70	1513	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apr 7, 70	2325	STO	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apr 9, 70	1021	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apr 20, 70	0657	STO	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 3, 70	0045	S&S	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 6, 70	2105	STO	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 7, 70	1104	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 16, 70	2130	STO	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 30, 70	0749	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun 6, 70	1004	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun 10, 70	1003	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 2, 70	1020	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 9, 70	0916	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 20, 70	0747	STO	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aug 8, 70	1941	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aug 22, 70	0929	STO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aug 31, 70	1434	STO	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oct 4, 70	1019	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 8, 70	1014	STO	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 29, 70	1058	STO	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 27, 71	2325	STO	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sep 25, 71	0854	STO	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 9, 71	1308	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb 5, 72	0758	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb 21, 72	0825	STO	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* On 26 January , 1969 a sapper, mortar, and rocket attack was launched against Phan Rang AB. During the attack 82mm mortars and 107mm rocket rounds impacted inside the base. Three buildings and two hangers received minor damage. USAF personnel wounded totaled 14 (4 K-9), 14 enemy KIA and one captured. Two F-100s were destroyed and numerous other aircraft were out of commission. The following is my recollections and the intelligence transcript of the captured North Vietnamese whose account highlighted with " before and " after his quotes.

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I was barely 20 years old and trying to experience life; I was an "OJT" Sentry Dog Handler in RVN, recommended for the job by a couple of friends and good handlers; Jesus Parra Jr. and Bob Dragich. I arrived in-country in April 1968, and became a member of the USAF 35th TFW (Tactical Fighter Wing) Security Police K-9 Squadron at Phan Rang AB. Phan Rang AB was located about three or four miles inland from the South China Sea, 35 miles South of Cam Ranh Bay, and 9 miles East of Phan Rang AB City population 24,000. The climate was semi-arid and we lived in drought conditions more often than not. My dog's name was Winston (A170).

Phan Rang AB was considered a "Single Purpose Base" by MACV/PACAF & USAF. We provided: "Sorties for ground support, night interdiction on supply/truck routes, logistics, and C-123 Ranch Hand Operations (Agent Orange)." Phan Rang AB was particularly vulnerable to off base interdiction because the base water supply and jet fuel was piped in. For the most part Phan Rang AB abated minor conflicts, i.e.; mortar, rocket and probes until about November 1968.

In most cases, a K-9 alert meant something. However, because many times nothing could be confirmed by nighttime illumination, and day time investigations usually revealed little, the prior night's information about a K-9 alert simply became Security Police shift note. No one paid too much attention to the alerts. Except for us dog handlers.

We knew the alerts where a barometer of things to come at Phan Rang AB. And on January 26th, 1969, there was a wake up call.

" The 16th Company began preparing for the attack on Phan Rang AB in June 1968. Preparations included reconnaissance of the base, training personnel in penetration tactics and methods of night observation, and the acquisition of weapons and supplies.

Although he (captured NVA) did not take part in recon missions he reported that his company commander directed four missions prior to the attack, one in June '68, one in November '68, and two in January '69. Guerrillas supplied by the District HQ acted as guides for the recon team. In November '68, the company commander conducted the training in penetration tactics and night observation. The men were told how to approach a fence and how to select sections of the barbed wire to cut. Instruction was also given on disarming mines and flares, but the source could provide little specific information on these subjects. He also had very little knowledge of night observation techniques. He did remember that the training covered listening for sounds and then trying to locate their source. During the second week of January '69, the 16th company requested ammunition from District HQ. "

Jimmy Thornton (Handler of Gunner #2B29) and I were scheduled off on the evening of January 25th, so we decided to use our privileges on the "hill" at the NCO club. Around 22:15 we decided that we had our fill of food and brew and made our way back down the hill. Everything seemed normal; the lights of the flightline filled the sky and our B-57s with their distinctive sound (sort of like a Hoover vacuum in heat), were launching to go destroy trucks on the Laotian and Cambodian borders.

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There was "a partial moon" and the sky was partly cloudy. It seemed like a good time to get a rare night's sleep. Both of us hit the rack so that we could enjoy sleeping in the "cool of the night". We patrolled at night, so it was great to be able to sleep at night. As we innocently began to doze we never suspected that the NVA H-13 Sapper Company, part of the 351st NVA were about to launch a sapper raid and standoff attack that would embed our memories forever.

" He (captured NVA) described the distance from the outside fence to the aircraft parking area as about one kilometer. There were five fences in that stretch, each consisting of three rolls of concertina. No mention was made of mines or flares. The number of security guards and types of weapons were unknown, and the "dogs were described as stupid and afraid to leave their handlers"! (sing loi chumps, you blew it). After the briefing, the company divided into four cells and each man was assigned a specific duty. The first cell consisted of five men, including the company commander and the source. The source's mission was to destroy aircraft by placing large satchel charges near the wheels of the large ships and by placing tin can grenades on the wings of smaller aircraft. He was armed with one two-kilogram satchel charge, one three-kilogram satchel charges, two tin can grenades and two hand grenades. The other three men were assigned various tasks such as penetration of the fence, defense of the attacking force, and destruction of long range targets using B-40 rockets. The second and third cells were to attack bunkers located inside the fence, while the fourth cell was a back up unit whose men would act as replacements for penetrates.

At approximately 14:00 hours the 16th Company left its new base camp and traveled to the point of attack, bypassing the east side of the base in order to approach it from the south. At about 22:45 they moved to an area 500 meters from the south perimeter. The men began crawling toward the fence. After reaching an area approximately 30 meters from the fence, they removed their clothing. Two men were sent ahead to reconnoiter the fence. A few minutes later, men assigned the task of penetration crawled forward and began cutting wire. After opening a section large enough to crawl through they advanced towards the second fence which was about 30 meters away.

As they reached this fence the source heard a dog barking (Tim Hunstiger's dog). Voices were heard and a flare exploded over the area; security guards inside the second fence began firing into it. The attackers immediately withdrew to an area about 10 meters outside the perimeter fence hoping for a second chance to attack. During this time the source observed that the company commander was wounded. He was wounded himself and lost consciousness."

Around 23:30 our Kennel Master interrupted our sleep (probably about 4 or 5 of us were off that night). He advised we had to proceed to the kennel, get our dogs and go directly to the "Juliet Area" (J1-2-3)for sweeps. Since most of us were admittedly half buzzed and groggy we weren't sure what was happening. We heard no sirens, nor the tell-tale squeak and thud of incoming mortars; the usual "MO" for an attack at PR.

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We were told the attack began silently at the wire and NVA were pinned down in the canal near Kilo58; it was our job to flush them out. The attack was beginning to escalate and we began receiving incoming mortar and rocket rounds; at the same time the "Bravo" area was taking small arms fire. Sgt. Tim Hunstiger, who's dog was part of the initial alert in the "Juliet area" was already wounded and heading for med-evac to Cam Ranh Bay.

SP Capt. Garth Wright (Assistant OPS) was already on the scene and realized that penetration through the stone bridge that passed over the drainage ditch in the "Juliet Area" coincided with a dirt road intersection that formed a triangle, and lead directly to the C-123 area. Once inside the NVA could be easily concealed as the area was covered with dense brush. The penetration point was ideal as the target area could be obtained within minutes and destroyed. Capt. Wright called for more assistance.

By this time Jimmy Thornton (with K-9 Gunner), Tom Caputo (with K-9 Fritztie), and a guy named Mollica, a.k.a. Captain America (Duke) and myself deployed to the "Juliet Area". Our Flight Chief, SSGT Glenn Redmond met us and explained what he wanted. I knew this wasn't going to be fun because Glenn had Hunstiger's dog.

We proceeded to the fence line between perimeter towers J-3 and J-4 and formed a wedge heading into the brush in the canal. In the meantime other K-9 teams consisting of Sgt. Ron Logan, A1C James Dean, Sgt. Danny Hatton and A1C Anthony Lampe, attempted to flank the area by going around an old ruined helicopter hut near the dirt road and an old barbed wire fence. They took extremely heavy fire and were forced to seek cover.

As the four of us penetrated the canal in hopes of flushing out the NVA, Capt. Wright, Logan, Dean, Lampe, and Hatton swung down the old back road towards an abandoned APC near J-3. Someone yelled from the bunker near J-3 "Watch out, VC are by the APC". Two SPs were pinned down near the APC by B-40s and grenades and the SP in the J-3 tower was trapped. Logan and Dean used suppression fire to give them a chance to escape. Small arms fire and explosions were coming from every where and it was mass confusion. Sgt Kirk (heavy weapons) arrived with his jeep mounted with a mini-gun and he began to quell incoming small arms fire from the perimeter.

In the meantime, we lost track of Caputo ("Cap") and Fritzie. The illumination was reduced at the same time the incoming was beginning to subside. This was good and bad for K-9. We felt we had the upper hand at squeezing "Charlie" into a box he couldn't get out of, and the illumination was part of getting them into the box (it is very rare for a sentry dog team to wish for illumination while exposed-we did this night). The bad part was when the flares stopped we didn't know where each other was except by voice. We had no defined post that we were accustomed to; sweeps were different. So where was Caputo?

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We were still taking small arms fire and we knew the NVA were still inside. A pop flare was launched and I saw "Cap" near the abandoned APC firing toward the bushes, "Cap" hit the ground and was motionless. Fritzie was already dead, killed by one round. Jimmy, Mollica and myself and a couple of Med Techs ran to his aid. As we stared at "Cap" one of us asked, "Is he dead"? Then he stood up and started to walk away. Wounded and in shock the medics took him away.

As the night progressed and the early dawn began to creep above the horizon we still took in small arms fire from the perimeter, but the penetration and flushing out of "Charlie" on the inside of the base was put to rest. Jimmy, myself and Mollica spent the late hours popping slap flares when requested. We let the dogs lay at rest, with no objections; we held our spot at the triangle in the road, where it all began, and did more sweeps as needed.

The NVA soldier regained consciousness around 07:00 and managed to crawl to a ditch where he again passed out and was subsequently captured by AF Security Police. The source believed that the attack failed because the 16th Company did not have enough information concerning dogs, guards, and mines. It is obvious that the attackers had little notion of the fire power of the security guards and that they did not know that sentry dogs are used primarily for detection.

After reading the statement of the captured NVA soldier it proves our dogs alerts where on target. We were right all along. The incident proved once again that there are few teams that could match, a Handler and his Dog.

First Published in Viet Dog Handlers Association newsletter "Dog Man" by
Craig Lord

Army Lauds Spooky Support (*Seventh Air Force News, October 2, 1968*)



Lt. Col. Donald W. Feurstein, commander of the 3rd Special Operations Squadron, Nha Trang Air Base, accepts a plaque from U. S. Army 1st Lt. Jeffery M. Milson, officer-in-charge of the Linh Chu Beach facility near Phan Rang AB. Lieutenant Milson presented the plaque in appreciation for the support of the AC-47 Spooky gunships assigned to the 3rd SOS, Flight B at Phan Rang.

**Former Phan Rang'r Adding Filmmaking to his Vast Repertoire...A Place To Be Somebody
(WWW.DELAWAARETODAY.COM, SEPTEMBER 2014)**



Could it be that the next "It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia" will be made in Delaware?

Who's to say? The fact is that the premiere of "The Wilmingtonians" at the Delaware Art Museum in April was a sellout.

Directed by Gordon DelGiorno of Film Brothers in Wilmington, the quirky 30-minute film, shot in Trinity Vicinity, was scripted by Michaelangelo Rodriguez of New Castle, a lifelong writer who, at 68, is chasing a dream.

"I'm just a writer. I meet all kinds of people," says Rodriguez. "There are lots of great stories in Delaware. I had to put them together."

"The Wilmingtonians" tells the story of Roy the dreamer (local actor Michael J. DiFlorio); his wife, Rosita, the screamer (Cindy Carillo); and her two adopted children, tween Tinkerbelle and teen Napoleon. The family moves from Texas to Wilmington to find work. ("I want to be somebody," Roy repeats often, playing off the city's real-life slogan, A Place to Be Somebody.) What they find is Rosita's estranged mother in a one-bedroom apartment and her ex-boyfriend, the mayor, who puts them through a series of filthy tests—scrubbing toilets, picking up dog dirt—to prove they love Wilmington so much they're worthy of help in finding a home. The only

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problem(s): The mother is a lush and the mayor is a fraud, which leaves the family out in the cold—for now.

"I was inspired by 'Downton Abbey,' Winterthur, the Riverfront. I wanted to put it together," Rodriguez says. "There's a lot of romance here, a lot of history. I was inspired by all that."

A former reporter for Scripps Howard News Service, Rodriguez studied fiction writing under the acclaimed novelist Joyce Carol Oates before writing two self-published books, "The Story of Coqui Clause" and, two years ago, "Waiting for the Garden of Eden."

His plan is to make two or three films a year, then show them at festivals. A sequel is already in the works. "We're just trying to create something really good," Rodriguez says. "My idea is to create a series and get it on TV. That would be fun."

"The Wilmingtonians II" is definitely notches above the first one," says DelGiorno. Look for its premiere at the Film Brothers Festival of Shorts in October.

(Note: Michael was a featured speaker at last years 'Happy Valley' Phan Rang AB Reunion in San Antonio. The complete text of that presentation appears in Phan Rang AB News 2. Michael will also have a presentation at the reunion in Tucson.)

Shutterbug Captures Action...Unique View of *(Seventh Air Force News, 2 October 1968)*

NHA TRANG — Seeing the world through rose-colored glasses has nothing on the exclusive view of Vietnam seen through the ground glass lenses of an Air Force combat photographer.

Sgt. David Jones Jr., Detroit, Mich., gets that view while serving as a combat photographer with the 14th Special Operations Wing at Nha Trang.

The wing flies nine different types of aircraft and operates from 11 major airfield locations throughout Southeast Asia.

The 14th SOW is composed of the only AC-47 Dragonship squadrons, the only psychological warfare squadrons, and the only counterinsurgency helicopter squadron in Southeast Asia.

Sergeant Jones' job is to photograph all facets of the wing's fighting mission. He has flown combat missions on nearly all of the 14th's aircraft, including the AC-47 Dragonship, and the UH-1F Iroquois helicopter, a "flying machinegun nest."

He has also flown psychological warfare missions on O-2 Super Skymasters and U-10 Couriers involving leaflet drops and loudspeaker messages over enemy concentrations.

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He has flown and photographed air rescues with the Air Force's pararescuemen, and sat in the back seat with forward air controllers as they guided their small spotter planes low over enemy strongholds to mark targets and direct tactical air strikes.

Other assignments have allowed him to travel with Air Force medical civic action teams as they visited Vietnamese hamlets, covering food distributions to refugees and other humanitarian projects.

During the Tet offensive, Sergeant Jones recorded the activities of the security police and other units defending Nha Trang.

For his actions in Vietnam, Sergeant Jones has been awarded the Bronze Star, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Medal with one oak leaf cluster, and the Vietnamese Honor Medal Second Class.

American GI Numbah One...Says Shoeshine Boy *(Seventh Air Force News, 2 October 1968)*

A1C Marvin S. Monk

PHAN RANG — To eight-year old Nguyen Tu, most Americans from Phan Rang AB were much the same. They all smiled at him and sometimes gave him big tips for their shoe shines. Recently he learned that they can be very different.

Playing on a vacant lot in Thap Cham, a small hamlet adjacent to the air base, Nguyen broke his arm. With no parents or relatives to care for him, he did not seek proper medical care. The arm began to heal in a deformed manner.

Then A1C Karl G. Mayne, Gypsum, Colo., stepped in and changed Nguyen's opinion about the men at the base.

Airman Mayne, an aircraft mechanic assigned to the 35th Field Maintenance Squadron, frequently visited the shoe shine boys and tried to help them. On one of these visits his small friends pointed Nguyen out. He looked at the arm and asked how long it had been hurting. Three days, came the answer.

Gaining as much information as possible from the towns people, he hired a taxi and took the boy to the Provincial Hospital just outside Phan Rang City. On arrival, the boy was immediately treated by Dr. (Capt.) Norman R. Boeve, Grand Rapids, Mich.

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"There were two bones fractured near the wrist," Doctor Boeve recalled. "We set the arm and put it in a cast. Airman Mayne comforted the boy, but from the looks of Airman Mayne afterwards, he needed it more than the boy," Doctor Boeve chuckled.

A few weeks later the cast came off and the boy was ready for a new job. This time though, he was taken on as an apprentice at a shoe shop, making shoes instead of shining them.

"The most rewarding thing to me," said Airman Mayne, "is that the bad arm has been fixed correctly and the boy is on his way to learning a useful trade."

Refugees Receive Food, Aid...From 310th SOS *(Seventh Air Force News, 2 October 1968)*

PHAN RANG — Members of the 310th Special Operations Squadron, Phan Rang AB, recently aided 41 Montagnard families in Hoai Truong refugee hamlet, located near Ninh Thuan Province.

First Lt. Larry L. Meinders, Belknap, Ill., unit civic actions officer, and Sgt. Dale E. Monjar, Bradford, Pa., squadron civic actions non-commissioned officer, led a party of six men to the hamlet. They brought with them some 1,400 pounds of rice, clothing and school supplies.

"We are fighting two wars here," Sergeant Monjar said. "This is the heart and soul of the second war. We are trying to convince these people that we are here to help them and their government."

The families that were aided have not been able to provide for themselves. They have been clearing land that will be farmed in the future by all members of the hamlet.

The rice and clothing were evenly divided between all of the families and the school supplies were donated to the school that the squadron helped construct.

The people of the hamlet, driven from their homes in the mountains by enemy soldiers, had been hunters. They are now learning a new way of life under the protection of the government and with the assistance of the men of the 310th SOSQ.

Lieutenant Meinders was on his first trip to the hamlet after taking over the post of squadron civic actions officer.

"We have a long way to go," he said, "but the men of the squadron are trying. The Montagnards are trying very hard also. The men from the squadron who are here now will tell others what they have seen and we hope to build more support this way."

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Lt. Col. Everett C. Brown, Skiatook, Okla., a C-123 Provider pilot and the information officer for the 315th Special Operations Wing, felt that the squadron was really helping the people.

"The leaders in the hamlet tell us what they need and we try to get it for them," he said. "We give them materials and then they build whatever it is that they need."

"This gives them the opportunity to help themselves," he pointed out, "and is a very important part of the program."

Other airmen who made the trip to the hamlet and assisted in distributing the supplies were Sgt. Randall L. Frank, Eldorado, Wis., A1C Frank D. Green, Winston-Salem, N.C., and A1C Daniel J. Carr, Concord. Mass.

Airmen Give China Beach Orphans \$250 (*Seventh Air Force News, 2 October 1968*)

PHAN RANG—The 240 children of China Beach Orphanage recently benefitted from a \$250 cash donation delivered by members of the 311th Special Operations Squadron, Phan Rang AB.

The cash was part of a \$500 gift Maj. Robert A. Carlone, Colorado Springs, Colo., 311th SOS civic actions officer, solicited from a personal friend in New York City.

It was part of 311th's yearlong aid to the non-denominational orphanage maintained by Christian missionaries.

TALES OF PHAN RANG



BY ROBERT CHAPPELEAR

Tales of Phan Rang (Part 18) by Robert Chappelear

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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.

Chapter 18 - Missing Friends

I have on occasion been asked if I was ever deathly afraid in Viet Nam. For myself as an aircrew member I have to say that things happened so fast when I was participating in a mission that I didn't have time to be afraid. When not involved in a mission I like so many others forgot my fears usually with the aid of Jack Daniels or Mr. Chivas Regal. This seemed a fairly common coping mechanism there in Viet Nam and many of us paid a price for this later, myself included.

I thought more at that time and still think more about friends and mates that did not return than I did of myself not returning. Even though there was always the specter of death in the air in Viet Nam as an aircrew member it was different than what was experienced by the grunts. We did not have the horror of seeing a friend blown apart, or take a round, or anything like that. For aircrew instead, we just had friends, squadron mates, and acquaintances that launched on a mission one day and never returned. Sometime there would be a memorial service if there were remains, but there would always be the memories. There was the memory of the two C-123 RTU classmates and forty passengers that bought the farm because some dumbass jarhead refueled their airplane with jet fuel instead of Aviation Gas, there was the check pilot, aircraft commander and crew that made the hard landing at Gia Nghia one day and crashed while trying to return home, there was the squadron crew that ran into the mountain during a typhoon, and there was the crew that crashed while spraying the field for mosquitoes -

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fourteen friends that first tour. Fourteen people that did the same thing as I, but they didn't come home.

This book is dedicated to each of them and their memory.



The author receiving his first Air Medal.

Thank you Robert Chappelle for a wonderful journey back in time. Your skills as a pilot are matched only by those of an author who could transport us back to a time and place existing only in our memories, and making those memories more vivid. Thanks for the ride. Doug S.

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To buy Robert Chappelle's book, click [here](#).

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Reunion Note...a few words about the tour. Many people have talked about wanting to see the type of airplane that they worked on while in Vietnam when they go on the Bone Yard tour. The purpose of Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (AMARG) is to provides critical aerospace maintenance and regeneration capabilities for Joint and Allied/Coalition warfighters in support of global operations and agile combat support for a wide range of military operations and not to just store airframes. The bottom line is they do not have Vietnam Era aircraft except for those that continued to be operational long after Vietnam such as the C-141 and C-5. The AMARG web site does have a complete list of aircraft that are on display.

The Pima Air & Space Museum does have on display a B-57E, WB-57F, F-100C, C-123B/K and a C-119C. You can visit their web site to get a complete list of air and space vehicles that are on display at the museum.

Doug’s 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 always welcomed and can be sent to [Douglas Severt](#). Some have asked who edits this newsletter because of errors and possibly inaccurate information and I have to accept all the blame. I very seldom wear my glasses but I do use a larger font so that both you and I can read it better and I can possibly find typos, but I don’t profess to know or see it all. Also sometimes my arthritic fingers get a little crazy and hit keys I never intended to hit. I take most of the articles appearing here from newspaper achieves and the Phan Rang AB newspaper the PHANFARE. If you find that I’ve included some inaccurate information please notify me by email what the error is and I will correct it in the next issue.