

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

Phan Rang News No. 52

"Stories worth telling"

In this issue:

Pictures and comments from a Facebook post by James Kucipeck

Men of the 435th Munitions Maintenance Squadron

Back to the Mid 60's

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VC to Their Front, Tiger to the Rear

Sgt Tahmooressi



**Pictures and comments from a Facebook post by James Kucipeck
The Bomb Dump**



This is the napalm storage area where the units were lugged and finned and readied for the flight line. You will note that napalm in the crates are a newer unit.

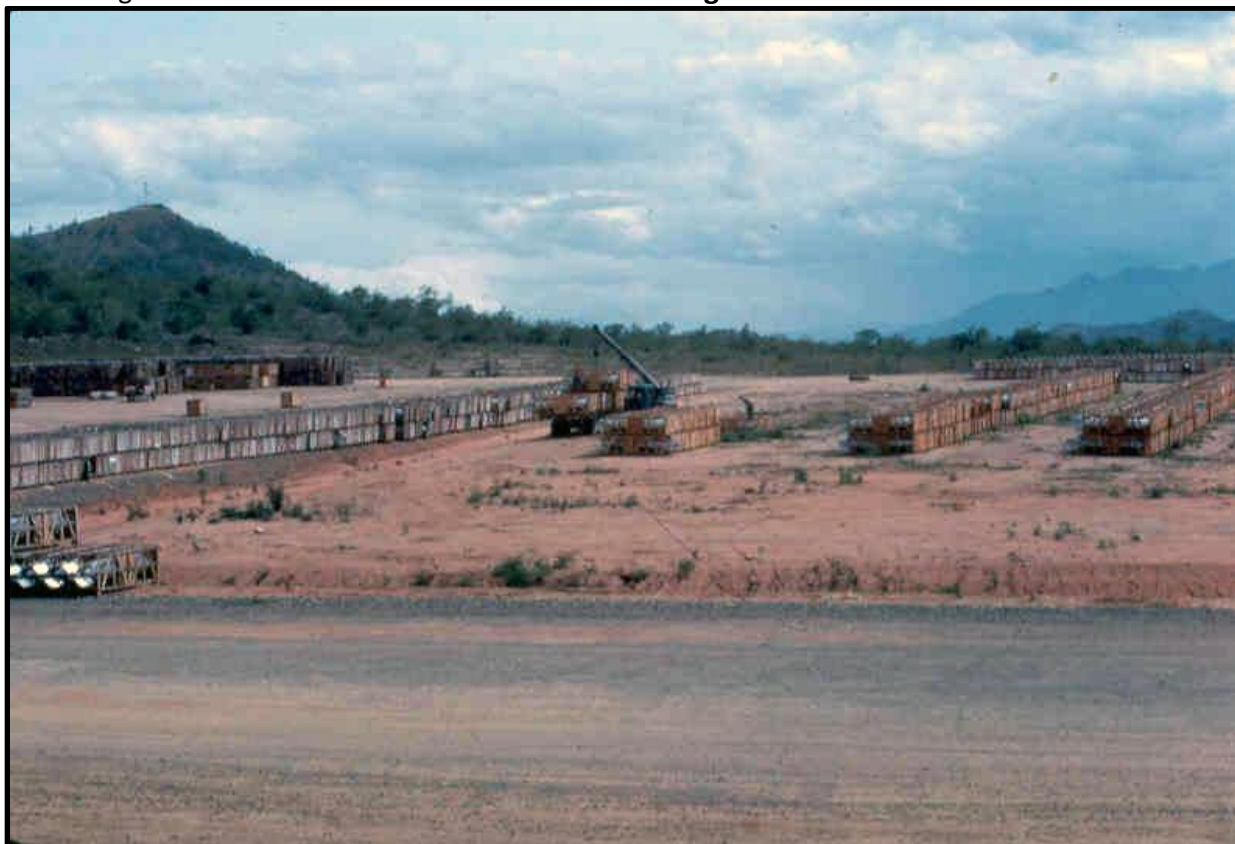
Originally we filled them here in the field where JP 4 (compliments of POL) was mixed with a gelatin mixture which made the napalm thicker and burn hotter and stick.

Later that year we started getting units prefilled in the "states". Courtesy of Dow Chemical. The crew in pictures were LeRoy Jordan, Elijah Cherry, ? Puccini, Charlie Hudgens and Neil Pillar. A closer look at the napalm area shows NCO hill in the upper right side. During monsoon season this area was a mess with red, sticky mud.

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Facebook Comments to Jims post:

Jack Anderson: I'm really enjoying your pictures, Jim! They show a side of Phan Rang I have never seen until now. Keep 'em coming!

Buddy King: I worked with these.

David Knighton: They didn't use Fins when I was there in 69/70. They only put on a nose and tail cone along with fuses and WP. Guess they figured they were more effective if tumbling instead of a straight into the ground drop.

James Kucipeck: Dave, you got it!

Steven Chavez: 1969/70

Steven Chaves posted the following pictures.



Ready line 1969/70



Gerber and Hoa



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James Kucipeck: Great pictures Steve, I knew there were more 461's out there!

Sam Lewis: Thinking about the napalm and the bomb dump as all who were in that thing remember they had a strict rule about flammable material and lighters and matches. We had a little security police guy named ‘Bashada’ who after every daily delivery of c-rats to the towers he would sneak out of his tower into the Napalm storage area with his p-pot and scoop up Napalm that had leaked out of the bombs, take it back up into the tower, lite it and, heat his C-rats right there in that fire trap tower in the middle of that bomb dump. He had a girlfriend downtown and was on his second extension because of her. One day he was caught, court marshaled and shipped out, and we never heard from him again.

James Kucipeck: Was he a little "dinky dau"? Once that stuff gets going you can't put it out. I hope they gave him a Section 8 discharge!

James Kucipeck: Sam, by the way I forgot to say thank you guys for watching over the "bomb dump" 24 - 7!

Sam Lewis: We never heard what they did to him other than he was facing a court martial. They hauled him off right from the tower as much as I and Tom McCandless who was there with us can remember. You’re Welcome James, it was our job.

Ken Daggett: As I recall, the finned BLU-27s were for the B-57s. I was told they were dropped from altitude and made good spots to orient for bomb drops.

James Kucipeck: Interesting, I did not know that. We at the bomb dump didn't get much feed back on things.

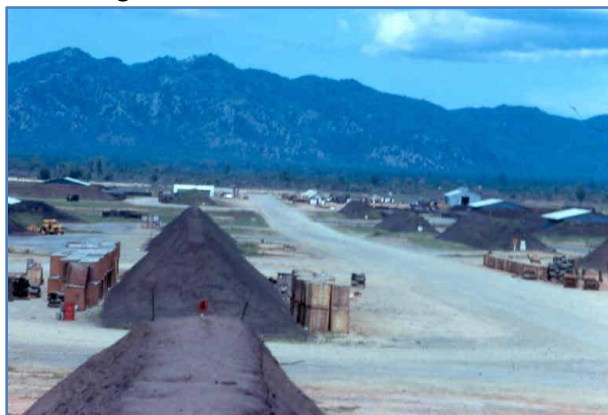
Jack Anderson: Ken, I was a B-57 crew chief and I never heard that they dropped napalm from anything but a low level dive. What you say may be true, but I never heard that. Also, I don't remember fins on them. I was there late '68 to late '69.

James Kucipeck: I think Dave Knighton in an early post on this subject indicated that the pilots wanted the napalm unfinned because they tumbled and were more effective.

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James Kucipeck: A similar picture Steve taken from the top of the MK 82 revetment which was the last one on the right in '68. I understand that the bomb dump was expanded after I left. Your picture looks like the main road is longer with additional revetments and buildings. Maybe it just the perspective or I am getting old!



Napalm crew Charlie Hudgens, standing on truck and Neil Pillar in the background on their way to the burn pit. I came to Phan Rang from Kunsan, Korea in '67 with these guys, incidentally we went to tech school in Lowry and are still best of friends today.

Facebook Comments to Jims Post

David Knighton: Great shot of Charlie Mountain. Also I never went to the outside pit but did make a couple trips to the inside one during my one month stint on Day Shift.

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Neil Pillar: That does bring back a memory. Seemed like a million crates by the time I left. I remember the Viets found a huge Boa or some big snake in the burn pit. They had a feast.

Donald Brodersen: Jim, do you remember when Bohn dropped the farm tractor into the pit? I can't recall his first name.

James Kucipeck: I do remember that, but his first name escapes me.



Comments by James Kucipeck: I have been watching the Facebook pages in awe of all the flight line and base pictures that you have put up, they are terrific! I had a very different experience at Phan Rang as I worked out in the "bomb dump" in '67-'68. I got to work with many Vietnamese Nationals (actually not VN's at all but Chams). This is Phuc my crew chief counterpart who ran the VN side of things.

Archie T Pinkley: Great Pics James Kucipeck....Brings back good memories !!!!

James Kucipeck: Thanks for the comments, I truly enjoyed working with the VN.

PeeWee Clevinger: Been there many, many times. I drove truck for the 529th Transportation (US Army) during '67 and one of our jobs was bringing in supplies and munitions from the harbor to the base.

Buddy King: I to worked in the bomb dump also .1969

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James Kucipeck: Buddy, what crew did you work on? Were you night or days?

Jack Jobes: First night working on Panther Flight I was put in a tower in the "dump" but they forgot to tell me there were trip flares in the wire around the perimeter of the "dump". I about came out of my tower when a rabbit (or some other critter) set one off.

James Kucipeck: Thank you for being out there for us!

Donald Brodersen: Good picture Jim! I probably unloaded Pee Wee's truck a time or two.

James Kucipeck: Don, I'm sure you did. How about this photo of Army hauling from the "beach? Maybe PeeWee was driving one of those rigs?



James Kucipeck: Incidentally, during Tet this was an ongoing haul night and day!

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PeeWee Clevinger: We ran deuce and a halves and ran them day and night.

Steven Chavez: (storage crew) PRAB 60-70 435 MMS



James Kucipeck: Great picture, where in the "dump" was this taken? I notice the ladder in upper right corner.

Archie T Pinkley: Is that to get out in case stuff started going off ????

Steven Chavez: East end (opposite of the scrap medal dump) near the ROK/Red Horse mount. The ladder is to the security tower. The VN and Chams loved to check out the base for C-Rations and cigs. I am in the middle as the official Storage Crew Weed-Abatement guy.

James Kucipeck: What a great memory! I remember the area well

Steven Chavez: Someone on this site named them all . . . around 2 years ago. I will check my facbook James Kucipeck good talking and thanks. it was an honor serving with you!

Michael E Hood: I know Phuc, he worked Aerial Port in 71.I will find his picture and post.

David Knighton: Ammo get together at next reunion. If those jet mechanics (who always seemed to find something else to do somewhere else when we showed up with a truck load of bombs) can do it, so can we.

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James Kucipeck: Here, Here, I'll second that motion!

Steven Chavez: humpin' 750's PRAB 1969



This is the VN crew that I worked with on a daily basis in the bomb dump. All interesting people some very old, some young, one in particular always intrigued me and that was the older gal, "Frenchy", actually Nguyen Thoi Thi was a house maid for the French. She spoke French fluently, hence the nickname. She would always kid me about my age, 22 at the time, "babysan"! All good workers and friends!



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Neil Pillar: Jim, brings back memories. You remember we didn't have any with us. We had to do all the work. Kidding Ha!!

George Carrie: Silly question but working in the bomb dump, did these 'civvies' go through a TSA checkpoint every day? It looks too easy to slip a grenade in a pallet!

James Kucipeck: They did get a rudimentary check by the security but I am not sure where that was done. I don't recall that it was done at the bomb dump. Maybe someone from security could speak to that.

Sam Lewis: YES YES AND YES on the security check when the Vietnamese workers entered and left the Bomb Dump in 67-68. I used to hate that security entry point. I used to have to frisk them from head to toe taking off their hats and checking their hair for whatever type of contraband especially flame makers and then had them open those smelly little tin Lunch pans and look through them with whatever that was in there they ate.

James Kucipeck: Sam, thanks for doing an outstanding job. As far as I know none of mine were caught dirty! As far as pacing off "clicks" that's another story!

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The Burn Pit



This is the burn pit at the bomb dump which is outside the "wire" note the security tower on the right. The picture may not seem significant at this point but the other pictures illustrate the waste that we generated each day. Literally hundreds of tons per day of perfectly good plywood and 2 X 4's and sundry other materials some of which were hazardous. We would take a "leaker", a leaking napalm unit, and split open with an axe and set it afire and burn the pit. It is interesting to note at this point that if you follow the Agent Orange issue that "burn pits" contributed to the problem!



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Michael Mulcahey: I lit a few leakers there myself!



Steven Chavez: There was a guy named "Scotty" at the burn-pit for a little bit

James Kucipeck: That's what I'm talking about! Keep those pictures coming, I'll bet you have more to share.



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MEN OF THE 435TH MUNITIONS MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

William	Gentry		Allen	Chuck		Burce J.	Hoskins
Tom	Klopp		Michael	Curran		Shadrack	Howard
Dan	Lemley		Garry	Davidson		Charles	Hudgens
Grego, N.	Richard		Robert A.	Dawson		Wilson B.	Hughes
Floyd	Forsman		Barzielee	Drewry		Fermoyle, L.	James
Dennis	Larsen		David R.	Duba		Charles (Chuck)	Johnson
Lowell	Miura		Devine, S.	Duwayne		Vernon A.	Johnson Jr.
Richard	Vining		. Thomas	Elwood R		Carlos	Kellel, W. Jr.
John R.	Anderson Jr.		Gael D.	Epp		Tom	Kimbrough
John	Asher		Marion J.	Eslick		Tony	Kozumplik
Robert	Baczek		John F.	Esquibel		Gerhard A.	Kruckberg
Robert S.	Beck		Vincent	Falconerie		James	Kucipeck
Robert L. Jr.	Bennett		Robert C.	Fletcher		Leo L.	Lambert Jr.
Charlie	Berry		Javon	Frye		Robert L.	Landis
John D.	Bethea		Raymond	Fuller, H.		Russell M.	Landry
Robert	Blockston		Charlie E.	Gifford Jr.		Kenneth M.	Laster
Jerry	Boling		John P.	Graper		Alvin L.	Lawter
Gene	Bonham		William E	Griffin		Delbert	Lee
Art	Braden		Willie L.	Griggs		Leo	Lessard
John	Bradley		Charles E.	Haskins		Dalenger, K.	Maley
Willis D.	Breeden		James H.	Healy		David	Marshal
Richard M.	Bright		Logan	Henderson		Richard	Matheisen
William E. L.	Bunn		John	Hennigar		John W.	Matthews
Jesse T.	Carrington		Del W.	Henry		Phillip M.	McCrae
Jimmie C.	Catterton		Richard A.	Hillenbrand		James	McEntee
Elijah	Cherry		Jimmy	Holloway		Keven	McQuade
Glen L.	Childers		Timothy D.	Nicholson		Collins	Michael

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Homer J.	Chisholm		Obrien	James H.	Michel
Raymond D.	Riggs	Kenneth N.	Olson	Steven	Mraz
Terry M.	Riley	Charles A.	Onstott	Roy L.	Mullinax
Michael	Roylance	William C.	Outler	Phillip G.	Nalley
Joseph F.	Ruscetta	Steve	Painter	Pierce A.	Newton
Joseph F.	Ruscetta	Millard R.	Parker	Rick	Sigman
Robert R.	Ryan	Haselhacher	Peter	Johnnie W.	Snelson
David L.	Sanders	Keith	Peters	George R.	Stowe
John V.	Sayago	Kenneth C.	Pielhop	William F.	Suhr
John V.	Sayago	Steve	Pilatich	Don P.	Taulli
Joseph A.	Sayago	Edward J.	Radiker	Joseph	Taylor
Joseph A.	Sayago	Timothy D.	Ramsey	Willis R.	Taylor
Mark	Sellers	Hans	Rasmussen	Frederick W.	Von Kutzloben
Humberto Andres	Serna	Duane L.	Rawson	Rex	Ward
Hans-Georg F.	Wurfel	Steve	Russ	William T.	Weatherington
W. N.	Youngquist Jr.	Edward	Sponenburg	James P.	Wellman
Ken	Miller	David	McGaughey	William F.	Whitaker
Michael	Mulcahey	Lou	Cook	Theodore	Wink
David	Knighton	Larry	Cormier	Michael	Reed
Edwin	James				

Back to the Early 60s’

Note: I obtained several issues of the Pacific Stars and Stripes from Howard Taylor from 1966 and 1967 and because I thought that period of time was pretty significant to the Vietnam War I’m going to include in this issue and future issues all the Vietnam related articles from these issues. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have.



**THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES ARE FROM THE PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES, SUNDAY, JANUARY
15, 1967 EDITION**

Advisers Out to Lose Their Jobs

By THOMAS L. RAINWATER

SAIGON (PAO)—Through mud, sand and rice paddies they march and fight together, the Vietnamese Marines and their U.S. Marine Corps advisers.

"It's the only job in Vietnam to have," according to Capt. John W. O'Donnell, of Allentown, Pa., senior adviser to the Vietnamese Marine Corps' 1st Bn. His fellow advisers share his enthusiasm.

"It is the type of assignment most marines ask for, but few get," Maj. Laurence R. Gaboury, of Bridgeport, Conn., senior adviser to the Vietnamese Marine's 5th Bn., said.

"What we are trying to do is work ourselves out of a job," the major added.

"The Vietnamese marines are using the USMC as a model to build a Corps within the framework of their resources and organization," he continued.

Gaboury emphasized that the Vietnamese marines are not copying the U.S. Marine Corps.

The U.S. Marine Corps' advisory effort since 1954 has resulted in the Vietnamese Marine Corps modeling, with modifications, its tactics, organization and mission after the USMC.

With its U.S. Marine advisers, the VNMC deploys in a task force organization. The two task forces, Alfa and Bravo, are staffed by approximately 125 officers and men each.

Assigned to each task force are two U.S. advisers. The third adviser-member of the task force works, several miles away, at the tactical command post, from which an operation is coordinated.

The VNMC with the U.S. advisers, were recently engaged in an operation in Quang Tri- Province, bordered by the DMZ to the north. For men like O'Donnell, the day's work began long before camp broke and the battalion moved out.

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With his counterpart, Maj. Pham Van Thang, commander of the VNMC 1st Bn., O'Donnell studied the operational chart.

Before the battalion moved toward its first objective, several radio messages had been sent, received or monitored on the field radio.

Conversations ranged from a "good morning" to a coded-language discussion of the day's search and destroy operation.

By 8:30 a.m., the VNMC battalions, with their advisers in company, headed for the day's first objective, an enemy controlled village.

The advisers remained with the battalion commander or the battalion executive officer. His basic job is to be available to assist his Vietnamese counterpart as requested.

As the unit moved over sand dunes, rice paddies and mud toward its objective, O'Donnell monitored the air support messages.

When spotter services were required, a plane was contacted by radio.

Along with Thang, O'Donnell sought checkpoints to ensure that the battalion's location was accurately computed and recorded in case artillery was needed.

Between 3 and 4:30 p.m., the battalion moved into an area and established a unit headquarters for the night. The defensive perimeter was established.

Today was a quiet day; no VC were found.

But the day was not over for O'Donnell, his fellow advisers, or his VNMC counterpart.

The day's events were reviewed, and the next day's planned activities were discussed.

In the northern provinces of South Vietnam it is monsoon season. As opposed to the southern Provinces, it is now chilly at night, and nightfall comes early.

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The night for many VNMC troops in the field was spent in an abandoned school, a thatched hut or a brick-cement building. For others, it was spent in a little drizzle under a poncho or in a hammock on the perimeter.

Established by presidential decree Oct. 1, 1964, the Vietnamese Marine Corps mission covers all counter guerilla operations from search and destroy operations to road security.

The all-volunteer VNMC, headed by Maj. Gen. Le Nyuyen Khang, is a part of the General Reserve Forces of the Republic of Vietnam and is under the direct control of the Joint General Staff.

“The Vietnamese Marines have the same heart and same guts as the U.S. Marine. The only difference is that the Vietnamese are smaller physically, but they have the same great spirit.” Gaboury said.

VC to Their Front, Tiger to the Rear

PLEIKU, Vietnam (IO)—Operation Paul Revere IV had the enemy running for shelter with every sighting of American troops, but one night during the operation, a stalemate took place.

Sgt. Harold L. Simons, of Orlando, Fla.; PFC Barney L. Moore, of Jackson, Tenn., and PFC Michael L. Miner, of Kellogg, Ida., all of A Co., 1st Bn., 22d Inf. moved forward of their unit's position near Plei Djereng and set up a listening post.

To their front lay a deep ravine. To their right, the only escape route for the three soldiers if they were attacked.

After hours of listening, watching and waiting the trio spotted a platoon-size enemy unit sneaking into the ravine.

At the same time a noise came from their escape route. Someone was in the bushes to their right. After straining to see down the dark path, the assailant finally came into view—a tiger.

Where to go? What to do? They would have to wait and sit quietly hoping not to give their position away to either the VC or the tiger. "Minutes seemed like hours while that tiger was sniffing around," said Simons. "We thought he'd never leave."

A few more minutes passed and then the three thankful troops made their way back to their unit and reported the enemy movement—and the tiger.

Sgt Tahmooressi

Some 214 days ago, a Marine was driving from Florida to California, made a wrong turn and wound up on a road leading into Mexico. He knew he was wrong but could not get right again



without entering Mexico. At the checkpoint he voluntarily told the Mexican authorities that he had weapons in his pickup truck. He was arrested and held for 214 days. He is now released and back home in the USA. He is suffering PTSD and I am not sure what happens to him in the future. I do know he is at this moment the happiest

Marine in existence. I want to pay tribute to Fox News, Governor Bill Richardson, Congressman Ed Royce, Congressman Salmon and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen for their diplomatic support with the Mexican authorities in obtaining his release. A very special thanks also goes to Greta Van Susteren and Megyn Kelly, fox news, for their relentless reporting on his being held in a Mexican prison and the sometimes harsh treatment that he received. There also is a Marine by the name of Montel Williams that worked his tail off in obtaining his release and providing guidance to Sgt Tahmooressi during his captivity. He is definitely a Marine's, Marine and I can't tell you how proud I am of him for his relentless efforts of a brother Marine. However the real hero was the Sergeants Mother (Jill) who worked day and night attempting to obtain administration support (His commander in chief) for the soldier's release. **It was never provided.** Welcome home Sergeant Andrew Paul Tahmooressi we are very glad to have you home.