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C-123 Rescue

by **Charles F. Hendry** from a post on Facebook (*Charles was assigned to the 315th CAMS/Recip. Eng. Shop, 7/70-5/71*)

How about a happy ending story from the C-123 side of Happy Valley?

One of our C-123s from Phan Rang broke down in Kontum, an Army Special Forces camp in the Central Highlands, and it had to be rescued.

As usual, I raised my hand and begged to go. Short trip, fix one plane and come home, no big deal. Got issued M-16 and grabbed my tool box and SSgt Charles Weatherford and I hopped a C-123 to Kontum. When we arrived on scene we discovered that the C-123 required a cylinder change and it was too late in the day when we arrived to get the necessary parts to us that day.

Army Special Forces camps in the Central Highlands are an exciting place at night because of all the artillery action, but they eat really good and basically have a good time in spite of all the action going on around them.

We spent the night listening to outgoing large guns. In the morning we returned with the Aerial Port guys to the air strip which is unsecured at night, but the ARVN troops formed a human ring around our plane to protect it overnight.

Once we arrived the local USAF Aerial Port guys told us that no one firing at the plane at night was very unusual and disturbing. Hate to admit it but dumb Americans. Our C-123 carrying the repair parts arrived in the morning and parks where...right next to the broken aircraft.

SSgt Weatherford and I start working on the aircraft with a fork lift and a 55 gal. drum for our maintenance stand. We hear a noise, we look at each other, we listened to outgoing all night and we say to each other "this ain't outgoing". Jump down and haul ass for the sandbag

bunker and dive through the door. Rocket goes about 50 yards past the plane and removes some small buildings.

I look up and realize that I have landed in the lap of a Montagnard old woman. They only wore skirts so you know what I was facing; she also had a live chicken under one arm. Lovely!

We repaired the aircraft and took off to return to Happy Valley and enroute the 834th Air Division controller tells the pilot "take those guys to Pleiku to repair another C-123".

We arrive, work on the plane and want to leave because we brought nothing besides M-16 and toolboxes. Feeling pretty funky we find out that the base is out of cigarettes, and to make matters worse it was constantly raining.



SSgt Weatherford starting work on the C-123 at Kontum.

We spent the night and get drunk. Next morning we take off to return to Happy Valley not smelling very good or feeling very good either. Radio message to pilot "take those guys to Bien Hoa" to fix a broken C-123.

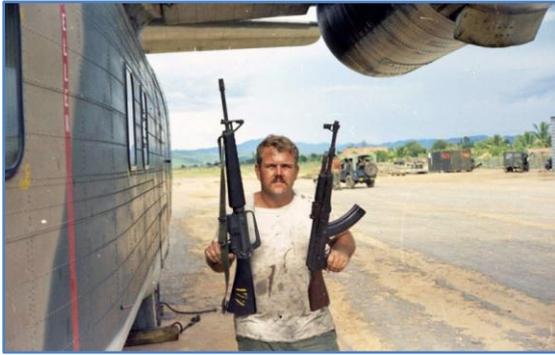
We fix the plane, watch ARVN pilots taking off in A1Es and look to bum a ride home. We see a C-123 being loaded by forklifts and we make a beeline for it and the pilot, a Captain, says "Of course we'll take you home". Lieutenant from Bien Hoa comes up and says "these guys can't go on this plane because it is loaded with bombs for Phan Rang". Our Captain says "are you sure"

Phan Rang AB News
...keeping the memories alive

and the Lieutenant says “yes”. Our Captain, wish I knew his name as he is my hero, said “then get your Fxxing bombs off of my plane because these guys are going with me to Phan Rang” and the Lieutenant just sort of vanished.

I had many very good experiences with our pilots and I wish I could thank them personally but maybe he will read this and understand how much he was, and is, appreciated.

Finally after arriving home to Phan Rang, we were dirty and didn’t smell very good but we were very happy to be back in Happy Valley. We had no trouble getting a seat on the bus from the C-123 side of the base (smell kinda helped) to our barracks.



Left: The author, Charles F. Hendry scarring the VC away from the airstrip at Kontum.



A Caribou (C-7) visiting us. Our repair parts were coming in on the C-123 that is about to land on the left side of the photo.

Jerry Hartley: We had to come up with some strange work platforms out in the field.

Don Brunkhardt: How many pistons did the 123 have?

John Ryan: Strangest work platform I ever used was the front bucket on a payloader. Once we pulled the prop dome we were skating in oil.

Bruce Hinman: 18 cylinders, 2 rows of 7. One of the best Pratt and Whitney made, used on many different aircraft.

Charles F Hendry: Don Brunkhardt, 18 pistons. Two rows with 9 Cylinders on each row. These were Pratt & Whitney R2800-99W engines. 2800 cubic inches engine size, 2500 horse power and the W indicated that it had water injection (could be used on take off for cylinder temperature control at max power settings)

Bruce Hinman: Your right, I hit the wrong button, 9 cylinders each row.

John Ryan: Didn't the water injection also increase manifold pressure?

Charles F Hendry: John Ryan, I'm not aware whether the water injection did or didn't have any effect on manifold pressure. Sorry, just never thought of it.

Bruce Hinman: No effect on manifold pressure, increased torque and horsepower.

Tom Strait: You're right Bruce. The water-alcohol mix would cool hot spots in the cylinder to prevent pre-detonation. It would also cool the fuel/air mixture going into the cylinders so it was more condensed thus producing a larger explosion in the cylinder. The larger explosion of fuel in the cylinder would produce a super heat and turn the water to steam which has a very high expansion rate increasing the force on the piston, resulting in increased torque and horsepower.

Lupe Saenz: Great photos. Thank you for your service in keeping those birds flying. I m a fellow Phan Ranger from the 35th civil engineers supply group.

John Schrank: You have some great pictures!

Archie T Pinkley: Kontum was a lovely place....Wasn't It ?????

Charles F Hendry: Archie, you already know the answer and for everyone else "No it wasn't". I went in the USAF for a reason and Kontum reinforced that thinking.

Archie T Pinkley: Charles..I had the good luck to see Pleiku, Ban Me Thout, Bao Loc and Soc Trang; none of which I thought were Vacation Hot Spots !!!!!

John Ryan: I think I landed in damn near every accessible landing strip between Dong Ha and Vung Tau. Didn't leave anything behind that I need to go back for.

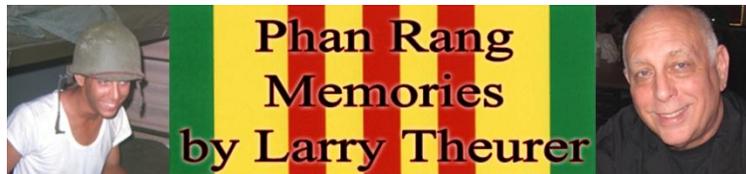
Archie T Pinkley: I thought I left my Balls after some of those landings.....It turns out they were just sucked up with Fear !!!!!!!

John Ryan: After a few trips you sort of got used to it. Not completely but you knew what to expect.

Archie T Pinkley: YeahThe sound of Props reversing while 20ft off the runway is reassuring .

Tom Strait: John do you remember a runway built over a hill where you had to go down and then fly up to land and roll out over the hill? And Archie, we were young and the "pucker power " was not important, right? Better the sound of a reversing prop than the props trimming trees at the end of the runway.

Charles F Hendry: Got accustomed to flying on a C-123 and then get on a C-130 for the first time. Flew from Happy Valley to Cam Rahn Bay on a C-130 and I was confused as hell. That was scary.



VIETNAM'S BIGGEST WEAKLING

The Players:

A1C James Avery (crew chief) and A2C Lawrence Theurer, 8th Tactical Bomb Squadron

A1C Jim Avery and I are at a B-57 tasked to remove a 20MM cannon. **Avery** is on top of the wing with me underneath.

I go under the wing, open the lower gun bay door, unlock the barrel and pull it out of the wing tip, then grab hold of the bottom of the 20MM cannon frame and hold it up while Avery up above on top of the wing unlocks the gun mounts so it drops free and then I gently set it on the ground. If I remember it weighed maybe 80+ lbs.

Now this is something I had done 100 times before. The problem that day was that I was really, really dead tired to begin with. I had been dragging all day long.

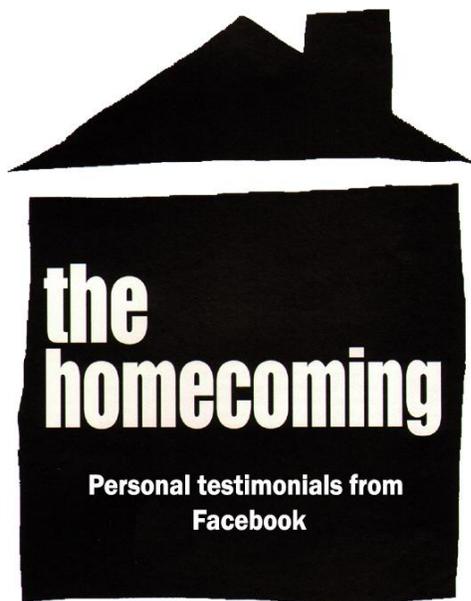
So I reach up, my arms extended over my head holding the gun and Avery starts undoing the mounts. But he's having trouble. The last mount is stuck. Time is ticking by and he's working and cursing and working and cursing and my arms are hurting more and more and all the blood

is draining from them. Then my arms, my shoulders, my back, my knees all begin losing strength.

Finally after what seemed a lifetime I hear a click and the gun drops free. I tried with everything I had but my arm muscles totally failed me and the gun is now resting on top of my head. Then to my horror my knees, neck and back begin to fail and I just start slowly sinking down. I end up squatting like a Vietnamese with the gun on top of my head and my neck scrunched down and I was stuck there and could not budge.

I remained trapped in that position until Avery came down off the wing to my rescue. He stood there just staring at me in surprise for a few seconds until I gave him a pitiful look and he walked over and lifted the gun off me, didn't say a word, just shook his head ruefully with a look that told me he thought he was working with the biggest wimp in Phan Rang.

Doug's Note: Occasionally Facebook posts and comments to that post are so poignant that I think they are worth saving and sharing with a larger audience. I think saving these stories is important, because after a period of time they just drop off of Facebook; never to be seen again. In some of these post, and particularly "**The Homecoming**" post the guys are writing from the heart, often speaking of these events for the very first time. Some haven't even had this discussion with their family and now they are letting it all pour out. It's therapeutic for them and I just wanted to capture that conversation.



The Homecoming (personal testimonials from Facebook)

Rich Luckhaupt: Here is one thing that I have noticed lately or maybe didn't pay that much attention to before. I am seeing more and more Vietnam vets displaying that they served in Vietnam by wearing hats, shirts, coats, etc. etc. Even I am doing it. I used to tell people that I served over there and I kinda got the you know, cold shoulder. But now it is different. Maybe, finally we are starting to get some recognition for what we did

Tom Mix: Yes I agree we are getting some recognition many of them that weren't even born back then!

Michael E Hood: I still get the cold shoulder.

Steve Phillips: Not from me Michael E Hood, welcome home....

Doyce Bailey: I agree with observation. I have "come out" recently myself. It is very heartwarming to receive a handshake and a thank-you. Just sucks that it is 50 years too late.

Mike Crowder: I've been thanked more than once.

David R. Gilliam: The "welcome home" I received back then is the one that will stick in my mind. It is nice that some are acting differently now, but the past is too hard to forget.

Rich Luckhaupt: And I think more and more Vietnam vets ARE coming out and letting people know that they did serve and that they do not need to bow their head in shame. I never did bow my head and if some didn't like it, they can kiss my a\$\$.

Doug Severt: I know what you mean, actually before Facebook I probably wouldn't even have thought much about even telling anyone I was in Vietnam. When we were in Branson, Mo. for a reunion recently people were constantly thanking me for my service and they seem to be doing that at other places as well.

Donald Luke: Generally in the past, I would wear a boonie hat with Vietnam ribbons on it, a Spooky pin and a 4th SOS pin. I figured that if someone recognized the service ribbons and knew what they were for, they might engage me in conversation. Some folks recognized that they were service ribbons but were not sure what they meant but thanked me for my service anyway. For those, I would explain what they signified. Around August of this year, I finally picked up a Vietnam Veteran ball cap and put the two pins on it and since then, have gotten many "Welcome Backs" and "Thank You for Your Service". And, yes, the young lady at Lowe's asked if I wanted my veterans' discount as I was checking out.

Larry Pfau: I got spit at walking through San Francisco airport, sure is nice to see the change of attitude.

David Gile: I don't wear my Vietnam hats that often and have only received a couple thank you's for my service. Maybe people are realizing that our time is limited. In another 30 years there will only be a hand full of us left.

Gene Eddy: Doug, I didn't say hardly anything about Vietnam for maybe 20 years but finally realized I was proud of what I did over there!! After that the hats and stuff are very common on me now!!!

Steven Chavez: I never wore my Vet hat. The PTSD had a grip on my ass! Now 44 years later and talking at the Vet Center and the VA and taking my meds . . . I have been feeling great. It has been a looong time since I felt happy without getting angry at myself. It feels good and I feel proud that I served in Vietnam. Damn right!! I wear my pride now. screw 'em! I am proud to serve with all of you! God bless us all.

Terry Evers: Never said anything. Nobody was interested. Now I wear a hat that just has the three ribbons. I like that the only ones that get it were there. A nod or a smile, a little salute. Great!

Robert Kellington: Today at Whole Foods - A young man born in Saigon thanked me for his freedom and my service - Three clerks thanked me for my service - amazing after all of these years.

Bill Lyle: It's been my feeling that the military men and women of the past 13 years to present have given us old timers something to be proud of...GOD bless them all.

Jack Anderson: A long time coming!

Norman Ream: Most common question when i went back to Nam 6 years ago was "Were You A Warrior?", wasn't quite sure what they were asking. Finally I asked MamaSan what they meant, she said they wanted to know if we had been there to protect her country from the Communist. They all were very gracious and thanked us for being there.

Jack Hanson Sr.: Today as I was going into WalMart here in Wenatchee WA. I was stopped by a man and he shook my hand and thanked me for my service and being a Nam Vet. Was wearing my hat with all my pins and told him thank you. I have been told Thank You and have my hand shock a lot. Thank you all for your service and God Bless our Troops.

Wayne Rodgers: Just keep wearing your hat Rich.

Christopher Boles: Interesting you should say this, as I just bought my first hat about a month ago. I am wearing it proudly. Now that Veterans Day is coming up soon, I expect to shake a few hands also. Thank you for posting.

Jim and Melena Smith Farrell: It's about time! I am proud of my father and always have been! Thank you for serving our great Nation!

Nancy Passe Kaupa: I wear my hat most of the time as I am proud to have served with my brothers. Last week a guy in Wal-Mart was checking out and saw my hat stopped the clerk and walked back to me and shook my hand and just wanted to say Thank You. He then went back to the check out and continued checking out. Wasn't sure what he was up to when he was looking at me and staring, and walking towards me. It finally makes you feel good but we'll never forget the welcome home in 1969 getting spit on and called a baby killer. Thanks brother Rich.. Joe K.

David Knighton: The past year I have had more thank you's than all the previous years. It is just too bad that all those Vietnam Veterans who have died since returning never got to experience the feeling. RIP Brothers/Sisters!

Danny Sisk: I have purchased two Viet Vet caps from the Nashville VA commissary since 2010. Both look old and worn because they have been used constantly. Many, many young people have gone out of their way to thank me.

Don Baker: I too have had the same response; I did put pins for the 7th AF, F-100, and a F4 on mine (6 mos Ubon, 6 mos Phan Rang) which stimulate comment. Knott's Berry Farm Amusement park, (So Cal) offers free admittance to all Vets and 1 guest during November. Maybe other Cedar Fair owned parks do the same?

Gloria Powell: It's about Dam time. God Bless all who served during that time!

Steve Gentry: We were brought up to always respect those who served. If it wasn't for all of you we would not have the freedoms we have today. THANK ALL OF YOU FOR SERVING!! I have the utmost respect for you doing so.

Charles F Hendry: I have also recently started wearing a Vietnam hat and got a Texas tag on my car with "Vietnam Veteran" on it. I have had more people in the past year tell me welcome home, shake my hand, pat me on the back in the grocery store than ever before. It does make you feel good and exactly opposite of the way we were treated when we originally arrived back home. Personally I think that the recent unpopular wars have increased people's awareness quite a bit. These guys in the Middle East are going through hell and I greet them whenever I encounter them. My wife and I lived in the Middle East for 8 years when I was a field service rep for a major jet engine manufacturer and the rep to this country's Air Force. Some of the people are nice but the living conditions are not the best and we were in a stable country. I have a small understanding of what these guys are going through and it is not that different what we went through 40 years ago. Thanks for posting this Rick.

Steve Phillips: I know what you mean, i was in Tehran for 2 year with the army.

Bob Tucker: I've never liked wearing hats! I still have all my hair and hats mess it up. I do wear a RVN T-shirt and do get many thanks. I wasn't treated bad when I came home but wasn't acknowledged for my effort either. I've always been proud of my service. I respected the Army and Marine guys and thought they did more than I did due to being on the ground and in the bushes. But due to this organization, I have come to realize that no matter what your job was, you were needed and you were as important as anyone else in any branch. We were there and that is what is important. Probably wasn't treated bad because I am not from the left or right coasts!

Charles F Hendry: You have already alienated about 90% of us by stating that you still have all your hair. Are you saying that we wear hats because we don't? (Unfortunately you are correct on this one). My wife is from the Midwest and I understand your last sentence and agree. I'm from Florida so I'm a "coaster".

Bob Tucker: I lived in Florida for 5 years in the '70's and found it to be like Kansas as far as Vietnam goes. It is in the south, which I exclude from the coasts. Sorry I unintentionally included it. LoL. I should have said north east but that is just my opinion. We Vietnam vets have brothers from across the country and no matter where we are from, we are making a difference in our communities by being proud of our service. Even if someone is not a RVN vet but served during that time or anytime, I believe they deserve respect for their service. I'm still rambling on I guess. As far as hair goes, if you look at the last reunion pic, you will see that there are a lot of us with hair. Must be the Agent Orange affect. From your picture it looks like you are holding your own. Just a little recession going on there! The cat looks full headed though. LoL. Thanks for your comments.

Donald Luke: I blame my loss of hair on the top of my head as a result of sleeping with a foam rubber pillow . . . the pillows erased all the hair off of the top of my hair, yeah, that's what happened . . . Generally I haven't worn hats in the past because of my occupation. However, because I am hair challenged on top and have been for a long time, while I was active with Boy Scouts and doing hikes and backpacking trips, I purchased some "boonie" hats. They can be rolled up, washed, folded, rained on, and in general, worn pretty much everywhere until they wear out. That has been my hat of choice for many, many years. A few years back, I attached the three ribbon Vietnam ribbon rack to the front of the hat. From a previous reunion, I had purchased a Spooky hat but finally bought a few Vietnam Veteran ball caps and tend to wear them now.

Jerry Leonard: I stayed Overseas after My 2nd Tour from 1968 to 1994. Never seen the Hate that some of you've seen.

John Ryan: I personally did not experience the hate that others experienced. Travelling thru airports could cause severe anxiety at times but was never personally attacked.

Max Smith: I wear my hat occasionally also, and get some remarks about my service. I can't help but wonder what their feelings were 45 years ago. Some younger folks comment too, and that is appreciated! But I don't need anyone's approval for my actions back then.

James Kucipeck: Rich Luckhaupt post is interesting because I find the same thing happening to me. However, that wasn't always the case let me take you back. Now the year is 1968, early June, I had just arrived at McCord headed for home, thru SEATAC, to O'hare, to JFK and the last

leg of the flight was to Albany, NY. In the airport at JFK I watched fellow travelers eyes glued to the TV news, Bobby Kennedy had just been assassinated. I thought that all of this was surreal, assassinations, hippies, long hair, psychedelic music, the whole antiwar movement etc. Please understand that I just returned from 25 months overseas 13 months in Korea and 12 at Phan Rang, back to back tours! A different time and I wasn't sure where I belonged!

After landing in Albany, NY I had to catch a bus to travel another 150 miles. The bus ride home was beautiful, not only because it was home but it was such a stark contrast to Vietnam. A couple of older ladies asked if I was headed home, and they said "We thought so" and wished me well. The bus driver let me off before the bus station so I could hitch-hike the last 20 miles. While "thumbing" a ride in my 1505s a car pulled alongside and asked where I was coming from and I replied "Vietnam", he then asked "How many babies did you kill?". He then sped off leaving me standing by the side of the road. Another car pulled up shortly and the driver asked what happened and I explained and he told me to get in, he was an off duty state trooper. He gave me a ride right to my home.

I have only told this story to my wife and few close friends. It still haunts me to this day. Sometimes when I do tell it I get this weird feeling, choke up and tear up. I am sure that some of you have had a similar experience.

Bobby Flack: When I flew back, my plane was late getting into O'Hare. Had to literally run through the airport to my connecting flight, which they HELD just for me. I was so surprised and grateful!

James Braun: My story isn't so dramatic, it is much better. I flew into Travis caught a cab to the San Francisco airport with a few other guys then caught a direct flight to Baltimore. I was so tired from all the travel I went to sleep on takeoff when we got to Baltimore the stewardess woke me and said I looked tired so she let me sleep instead of waking me for the meal they served back then when I got in Baltimore. I called my Uncle and asked if he could give me a ride home because my mother did not know I was there end of story.

Sam Lewis: I've worn the USAF Vietnam Vet caps for years since the early 90s and Desert Shield anyway, worn out at least a dozen of them when I worked until I retired. I've been proud of them and most of the time until recently when people actually started thanking me I could have cared less if anyone else wasn't.

Tom Strait: Bobby Flack, How interesting. I departed SeaTac for O'Hara and had to run thru SeaTac to catch the plane. Before my plane got to the gate at O'Hara, the stewardess came up to me and said that I would have to check at counter after getting off and they would direct me to the next gate. We were late into O'Hara and they were holding my connecting plane to Des

Moines for me. People at the counter were very polite but said I had to run to the next gate, which I did. Got to the gate and with a warm smile the stewardess said they were waiting for me. I was impressed, but figured my luggage would not make the quick change. To my surprise, I and luggage arrived Des Moines together. I couldn't have asked for a better home coming and service. Amazing!

Bobby Flack: Hey Tom Strait, the image of my smiling stewardess will be with me forever. I ran to my seat and looked out to see my luggage being rushed by itself on a tractor to our plane. This wasn't normal protocol. I think they did it because of my military status ticket. It was a nice welcome home. When I got home, my Mom cooked my favorite foods. I took off my uniform and relaxed. I was home.

Charles F Hendry: When our aircraft arrived at McCord there was some problem with the customs or immigration or somebody and they wouldn't let us off of the plane. The longer we sat the rowdier the plane became. Finally it got so bad the entire flight crew abandoned the aircraft. Of course we had a lot of Army & Marines aboard who were a bit more stressed than us USAF guys and that really was most of the problem. Finally, thank God for us and the owners of the aircraft, they let us off and I got down on my knees and kissed the ground. Made it to West Palm Beach airport and went to my mother's house and TOOK A LONG AND HOT BATH. Next day got on a friends private plane and went to Siebring for the sports car races. Military just expected you to flip a switch, yesterday is was OK to kill somebody and today don't jaywalk or you will get in trouble. Don't know how the Army & Marines combat troops handled that. Government didn't care.

Joseph Burkhardt: My story was as follows; Just returned from PRAB, took a commercial flight to Atlanta then a Greyhound to Brunswick Ga., got off the bus at the station about 12:00 at night. As I had not been to my folks current house I asked 2 Brunswick City Police in a squad car out front of the Greyhound station how to get to their house. I was wearing my dress blues carrying a heavy duffle bag & a parachute bag, they looked me up & down, curtly gave me directions and then as I walked in the indicated direction they followed me at a crawl matching my pace the entire way to my folks house, about 12 blocks, never once saying hey Sarge hop in and we'll give you a lift. Some welcome !! I'll never forget that.

Bobby Flack: Isn't easy to forget or forgive. Our families were there for us, and that was the important thing. People saying thank you now rings a bit hollow to me. I don't wear any insignia about Vietnam on Veterans Day; except for my small AF tie tac. I might this year, though. This group has brought back some pride.

Jeffrey Schott: We who went to NAM have nothing to hang our heads over. It was the SOB in Congress who cut off the funds the left the Vietnamese up the creek without a paddle. Those

SOB have NEVER been held accountable to what they did to us and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese.

Bob Tucker: Every Vietnamese I am acquainted with, I ask where they are from and their story. As I talk to the younger ones I have found that their parents/grandparents didn't tell them much, just that they are grateful to be here. I have had many people ask me if it bothers me that we let the Vietnamese immigrate to the US. I have always said, "Not at all. They were on our side and would be dead if we didn't let them in". They are our brothers and sisters too, IMO.

Donald Luke: During 1968, a friend from our church who was in the Army and I were both headed to Vietnam and were leaving the same week. Our parents wanted us to go to church with them on the last Sunday before we left so we went with our parents in our dress uniforms. The pastor at the church, Reverend Joseph Brady, knew we were headed to Vietnam. For those who do attend Sunday services, when you walk in, you are usually handed a pamphlet with the days content to be presented. Apparently, the pastor was anti-war and did not do the sermon that was published in the program and instead, with our parents sitting there with us, went into a rant about the injustice of the war and talking about a friend of his who's son had come home in a "pine box". PINE BOX???? He went on and on and on . . . Needless to say, our mothers got pretty upset and started crying and I think we had to leave. Shortly after, my parents found a new church to attend. This is the same pastor who, when I started growing my beard and let my hair get long (it was the sixties!!!) several years prior "suggested" that I should be clean shaven before attending church the next time. I had stopped attending that church after the "clean shaven" discussion and only went to the service before heading to Vietnam at my parents' request. After moving to Tucson, my parents told me the Reverend Joe Brady had moved to Tucson when he retired, friends from the old days informed them. Asked if I wanted his address . . . I said . . . NO

Joyce Sims Severt: @ James Kucipeck: I think you missed your calling as the 'memory' you related is book worthy. So well written, so touching and so meaningful; with all my heart, I hope that you have come to terms with the ignorance that you guys were met with. For what it's worth, I was never there but still tear up when I talk about how I felt during those years!

James Kucipeck: Joyce thank you so much for the kind words, they are truly appreciated!

James Gilliland: I wear my Vietnam Vet hat or a Red Horse hat every time I go out the door. As for being looked at when I came back from Nam the first time well I flew into SeaTac and took a hop to Mather AFB, caught the base bus to the Greyhound bus station well while walking across the lobby in my 1505 this long hair passed me and called me a baby killer. I asked myself if I should drop my bag turned around to deck this idiot, but I changed my mind when I saw the

blue uniform the 38 gun and hand cuffs on the guy behind him I turned around got my bag got on the bus and went home. It gets better though the little town (Salida Ca.) has a volunteer fire department and they had a call and the siren went off. I laid frozen in bed until I figured out that I was at home.

John Shields: I ran the half marathon in January with my Phan Rang cap on. I received many thanks for my service while running. It never would have happen in the late 60's or early 70's.

Doug Severt: For me the reception and welcome home recognition we received at the Parade and Graduation ceremony at Lackland that we received as a group during our San Antonio reunion will go down as one of the most memorable for me. I know I had goose bumps and a few tears when they gave our group a standing ovation. Not only that, but even getting thanks from so many of the young airman that we met along the way during our visit to San Antonio.

Charles F Hendry: Donald Luke your story has really depressed me. I can't imagine some idiot doing this to you. He is no man of God. I am not into organized religion but believe that you lead your life according to the 10 Commandments and this man will spend his days in hell. I hope that you did not let this idiot cause you too much stress. Your service to your country is appreciated and you know that. I feel sorry for this man who calls himself a man of God.

Sam Herold: I was home for a class Reunion and all night a classmate wore a hat that said Vietnam Era Vet. The next day in a smaller group I asked him where he served and was surprized when he said Germany. He went on to explain the word era made it appropriate for him to wear the hat. What do you think of that? I've never worn anything that told others I was a Vietnam vet. (mostly because I don't wear hats or T's) But was kind of offended that he thought he could. Thoughts?

Larry Pfau: Almost like stolen valor.

David Knighton: Just looking for undeserved attention.

Jack Anderson: It's interesting that he sees nothing wrong with displaying ribbons he didn't earn. It seems that suddenly everyone wants to be a Vietnam Vet. We were vets before it was cool.

Bobby Flack: I salute all veterans, no matter when or where they served. But I agree that you only take credit for what you really did.

Bombers Continue Raids on Enemy (*The Abilene Reporter-News, Abilene, Texas, Monday, Sept. 20, 1969*)

SAIGON (AP) - American B52 bombers kept up their raids across South Vietnam Sunday despite what, the U.S. Command described as the lowest level of enemy activity in three weeks.

The bombers dropped as much as 750 tons of explosives on concentrations of North Vietnamese troops and on staging areas. The strikes ranged from deep in the Mekong Delta, 160 miles southwest of Saigon, to the far north, 360 miles above Saigon.

Eight more raids by the big bombers were carried out over Sunday night, the U.S. Command reported, ranging from 18 miles southwest of Da Nang to 68 miles northwest of Saigon.

The command said targets of the overnight raids included enemy activity, troop concentrations, base, camps, bunkers, storage and staging areas.

Ground fighting continued to be sporadic. U.S. headquarters reported 10 enemy rocket or mortar attacks overnight. Three of them were against American installations.

The most significant enemy initiated action reported was mortar and small arms attack on U.S. Marines of the 3rd Division, which is being sent home from Vietnam by Dec. 15.

U.S. military headquarters has said in the past that the scale of American operation has been influenced by the scale of enemy military operations.

Asked to reconcile this statement in light of continued B52 raids despite the low level of enemy activity, a command spokesman replied: "The low level of activity doesn't necessarily mean they (the enemy) are idle if they are putting in caches and building bunkers and fortifications. These acts preparing the battlefield, precede his launching attacks. We've got to keep him off balance."

The spokesman said the B52s were attacking enemy bases and staging areas from which the enemy could launch a new round of widespread attacks as they did in August and the first week of September.

Phan Rang Dedicates Facility in Honor of Pilot (Update from an article in Phan Rang News 51)

I received this message from Bob Blankenship: "...The one about the dedication of the Alert Facility named in honor of Captain Andrews, a 615th pilot shot down in Vietnam. I was Captain

Andrews crew chief the day he was shot down. We had been talking about our families back home just before he launched on his final mission. Another fact that I'm proud of at the time was I actually helped Red Horse build the covered revetments at the Alert Facility and then did time on alert there myself."

"I was a crew chief on an F-100D, tail number 383, nick named "Thunder Chicken" and "Jody" which stood for just one dam year or if you were a negative person, Jody was the guy back home taking care of your girl. My revetment was located below the Control Tower and the people in the tower actually adopted "Thunder Chicken". I served at Phan Rang from July 15th 1969 until July 14th 1970."

A very moving video. This one is special.

If this does not tear at your heart nothing will. Put aside the day's clutter, take a moment... Absolutely one of the best tributes to our military that I've ever seen

Simply awesome... After you click on [Mansions](#); do not click on anything else. It will start playing by itself. Sound UP.! Full Screen.!

COMING SOON...PRESS RELEASES FROM PHAN RANG AB