

Phan Rang AB News No. 56

"Stories Worth Telling"

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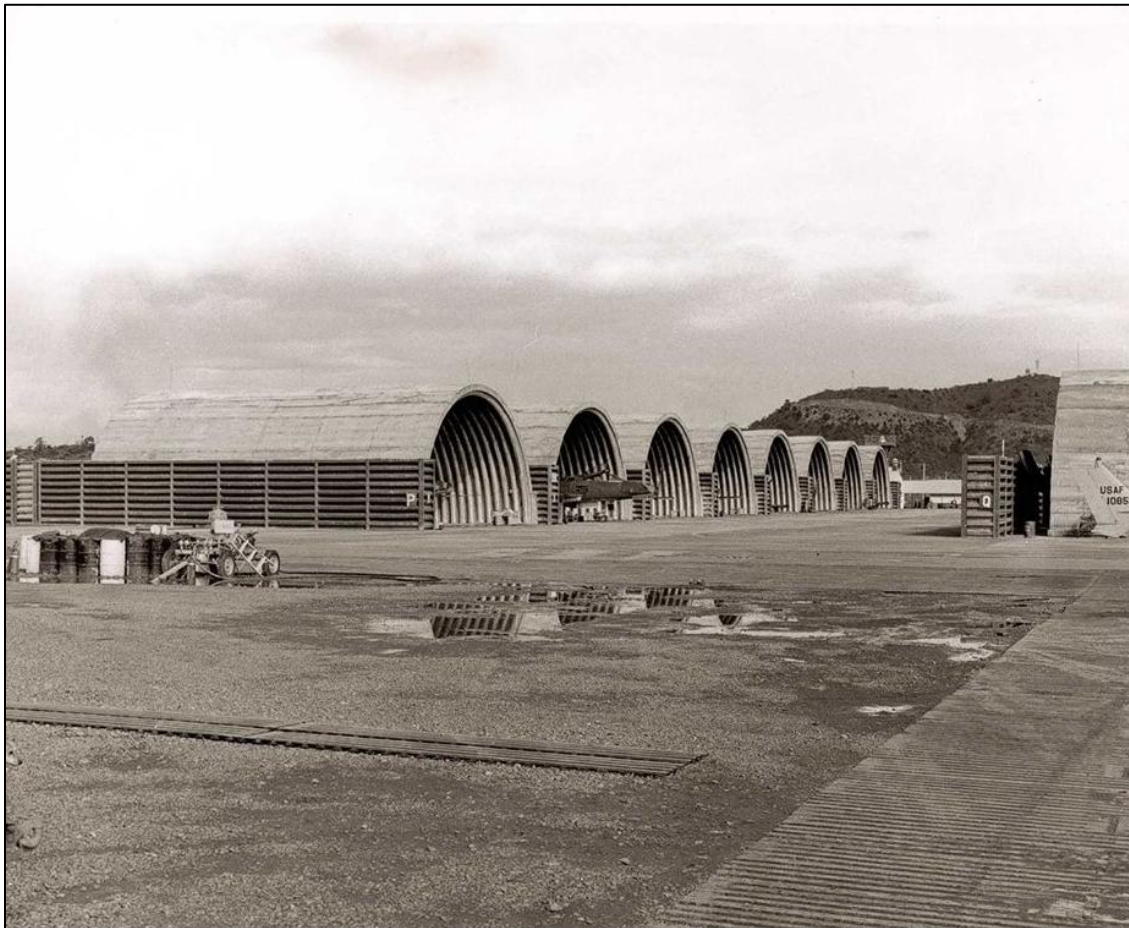
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RIP Felipe G. Lundin

Concrete Revetments Under Construction







[Ken Daggett](#) I watched these being built. They had a movable form on each side that was filled with concrete, then raised to the next level when the first pour was hardened.

[Christopher Boles](#) There was a cap put over the top of the one you see going up, and then concrete was poured in using a pumping truck. It was allowed to sit for a couple of days to cure, then removed.



This photo shows where a rocket made a direct hit, hardly leaving a mark.



Two F-100's sitting outside of their revetments. One is ready for a mission and the other one gets an engine change. Photo by Christopher Boles.

554th CES Cited for 'V'

CAM RANH BAY AB, Vietnam, (Special) — An Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with a "V" device for valor was presented to the 554th Civil Engineering Sq. by Gen, L. D. Clay Jr., commander of 7th Air Force, during ceremonies here.

The Red Horse unit received the award for activities at Phan Rang AB during 1969. The squadron moved to Cam Ranh Bay AB in January.

The formal ceremony marked the third time the 554th CES has received the award, but it was the first time with the "V" device.

Squadron members were cited for providing perimeter defense at Phan Rang as well as massive construction work. "Also during base rocket and sapper attacks they deployed to a 2-mile portion of the base perimeter to provide frontline defense," it was noted.

Airmen Aid School (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Saturday, Sept. 23, 1967*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01)— The men of the 614th Tactical Fighter Sq. at Phan Rang AB recently donated \$1,271 to the An Phuoc District High School near Phan Rang as a part of the base Civic Action program. The funds are being used to build two additional classrooms and a modern kitchen and dining hall.

Westy Lauds 7th AF Support - 'The Best' (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Saturday, Sept. 23, 1967*)

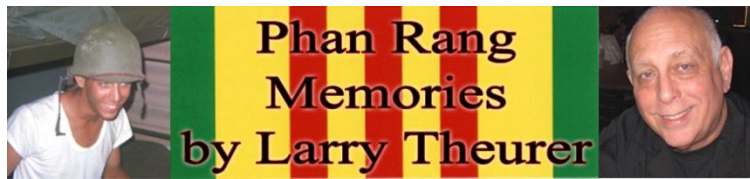
PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01) — "Never in history has the United States Army received better air support than it is receiving at the hands of the Seventh Air Force here in Vietnam," said, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam, during a recent inspection tour of Army and Air Force units at Phan Rang AB.

"The air units stationed here at Phan Rang are an important part of this great team," the general said. "The close support that is provided by the F100s based here has been of the highest order. I talked to many of the pilots today. . . 'I was given a comprehensive briefing, and I consider the efficiency very high."

During a three-hour visit, the general met with officials of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing; elements of the U.S. 101st Airborne Div., a unit of the South Korean White Horse Div., and the No. 2 Sq. of the Royal Australian Air Force,

"It is a very exciting experience to see how these nationalities are working together." Said Westmoreland, taking note that a Vietnamese battalion as well as regional and popular forces are part of the Allied team in the Phan Rang area.

"The coordination, I would consider, (is) almost perfect," he continued. "Everybody is in high morale. Everybody is very proud of their relationships with other services and other nationalities, and it's one big learn team held together by our common desire to defeat the Communists who are attempting to dominate this country under the leadership of Hanoi."



GARBAGE DETAIL – SOUTH KOREANS

I was taken off the flight line to do two days of chores for the First Sergeant, assisting another guy dumping garbage. The guy was driving a huge yellow tractor with a cab and four five foot tall tires. Hitched to the back was a big two wheeled wagon with high wood sides which we filled with trash from the barracks. We traveled to the North side of the base in sight of the South Koreans camp. There was a large pit 15 foot deep, many feet wide and long. We backed the wagon to the edge, and then carefully backed up more until the wagon wheels rolled into the pit and the tilted wagon was dangling over the edge, hanging by the tractor hook. All the trash would slide out.

One day the trash got stuck. The guy with me climbed in the wagon to stomp on it and get it sliding. It suddenly gave way and he went with it. Fortunately I was hanging over the edge of the wagon and grabbed his wrists as he slid by. He was hanging there in air over the pit but he did not weigh much. I pulled him up over the side.

In the pit one third of the trash was burning with lots of smell and smoke. It was sad to see about 25 old Vietnamese women down in the pit close to the fires scavenging whatever.

Also heartbreaking to see in the pit was at least 15 pallets of unopened beer cans that had must have gone sour. The sight would have made some guys cry like a baby.

On the opposite side of the pit were South Korean soldiers keenly watching to see if any Playboy type magazines were being dumped. They would scramble down in the pit and grab them before they burned. Since I had noticed a box of those types of magazines in our trash, I fished it out and carried it to the Korean guys. They were very grateful. I did my bit for International Relations.

On the way back from the dump, hitchhiking on the opposite side of the road was four South Korean fully combat armed soldiers headed the other direction to their compound. As we approached, a blue Air Force pickup truck is coming toward us, driven by a snooty looking older Air Force guy, dressed in the light brown uniform worn in an office. In the cab he has two young Vietnamese women. In the truck bed nothing. As the Koreans are frantically waving their thumbs, he sticks his nose in the air and blows on past them. Boy, were they pissed. So was I. I

thought “What a jerk!” They were jumping up and down yelling. Two of them raised their rifles and took aim at the pickup driver. As we passed by they turned and yelled and pointed their rifles at us. I felt very ashamed for that man’s action. I wanted to stop, give them a ride but I wasn’t driving. My driver was so scared he floored it and raced out of there. So much for International Relations!

WHO WAS YOUR LOWEST RANKING PILOT ON A VIETNAM MISSION?

Charles Hendry is trying to find out the lowest ranking person who flew on a regular Vietnam mission on a Phan Rang based aircraft. I know that this sort of excludes you jet guys and probably only includes us C-123 guys along with C-119 & C-47 but someone may sneak in here and surprise me. I have already declared myself the winner but I certainly could be wrong and if you beat me it will be a good story and I would like to hear it.



As you may have guessed this is a C-123 story (with photos for proof). We were on a recovery mission for another C-123 that was broken down somewhere, so the aircraft we were on was basically empty except for us repair guys and maybe a few parts.

The Crew Chief, APG (Air Plane General) troop of our adventure was a pretty outgoing guy who liked to “push the envelope”. I can’t remember his name but maybe someone will recognize him from the photos. I hope so. The crew chiefs were always closer with the pilots than us engine guys as they saw them every sortie out of Happy Valley. During the flight the crew chief troop (E-4, buck Sergeant) convinced the aircrew to let for him ride in the right seat to get “comfortable”. It wasn’t long before he convinced them to ride in the left seat and he even flew aircraft for a while. You can see the smile on his face.



So, if you had a similar experience please tell us about it. If you beat me it won't be a big deal with no prize so let's hear your story.

Four photos are

attached. One photo is the instrument panel of the C-123 in flight, kind of hard to see the gauges but a Bookie expert will be able to tell. The other two photos are our un-named E-4 in both the left and right seats of the C-123. Also a photo out the "window" (just an opening) right in front of the #2 prop with the metal garbage can bungee'd under it for a nice place to sit and sight-see.



Tom Strait: Brought back a great memory, Charles. I had a very similar experience in a C-123. I was invited to ride right seat. Copilot wanted to get some rest from the night before. That's another story. Soooo, climbed in and got instructions from the pilot on keeping heading correct, artificial horizon for altitude etc. Was feeling pretty good and the pilot asked me if I had ever taken flying lessons as he took the wheel back. Then said he would take the plane off

course and change altitude and would let me return it to the correct settings. While concentrating on his changes the pilot was also turning a small wheel that adjusted the elevator trim tabs which I failed to see. Finishing his changes, he told me to take the wheel and when ready would let me have the plane. I said ready. He let go of the wheel. The plane went into an immediate nose dive. Holy Crap, I was looking at the ground through the windshield. Pucker power was 100%. Remember the sleeping copilot? He wasn't tired any more.



Charles F Hendry: Thanks for your story. Looks like we had a "nicer" Pilot on our journey.

Tom Strait: Naa, the crew was great, Charles. It was a good lesson for me to stay alert of all the surroundings. But hearing and watching the copilot's reaction was the best. (I can't repeat it here.)

Robert Chappelle: About three months into my tour I was flying a mission where the first sortie of the day was an empty hop from Phan Rang to Vung Tau. was a fresh 1st Lt and the aircraft commander was a slightly older 1st Lt. I should not have been flying for I had partied pretty hardy the night before. After Take Off, climb and level off I told the AC I needed to go back to the cargo bay and lay down. I went back and stretched out on the canvas troop seats along the right side of the cargo bay. I noticed that our flight engineer, a SSgt, climbed into my empty copilot seat. I quickly fell asleep. About 40 minutes later my eyes cracked open and I saw the other 1st LT asleep on the troop seats on the left side of the cargo bay. My eyes then popped wide open and I diverted my attention to the flight deck where I saw the load master, a A1C sitting in the aircraft commanders seat. So there we were with a A1C Aircraft Commander, and at SSgt Copilot. I then heard the A1C say over the intercom, "You guys should probably get up now, we're about 5 minutes out of Vung Tau." (It actually turned out that the A1C had a commercial multi-engine license and he sat in the left seat fairly often during cruise flight. He later acquired an Airline Transport Pilot Rating and flew for a commercial airline when he returned to civilian life.) So there - the lowest raking aircraft commander I ever saw was an Airman First Class. (In early '69)

Viets Go Red-Hunting in Blue With Black Dragon Gunships (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Wednesday, Nov. 17, 1971)

TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam (Special) — Twintailed Black Dragons have replaced the Shadow as the guardian of beleaguered Southeast Asia hamlets.

The dragons are not mythical monsters of ancient lore, but are AC119 gunships of the Vietnamese Air Force's 819th. Sq.

Called Shadows when they were assigned to the 17th Special Operations Sq. of the U.S. Air Force, the twin-engined airborne destroyers have joined the VNAF ranks and have been christened Hac Long ("Black Dragon"). They are adding a new chapter to the legendary exploits of gunship crews during more than two years of combat in Southeast Asia.

The Black Dragons are the second generation of fixed wing gunships to operate in Vietnam. Earlier the VNAF received the AC47 Spooky, the aircraft which proved the feasibility of the gunship.

The AC119 carries four 7.62 miniguns, one more than its AC47 stablemate, and each gun can spew up to 6,000 rounds of fire power per minute.

The Black Dragons are creatures of the night, and each carries flares and a battlefield searchlight capable of illuminating areas the size of several football fields.

Each aircraft carries an eight-man Vietnamese Air Force crew —two pilots, a navigator, a night observation scope operator, the searchlight operator, and three gunners.

The crew is a careful blend of experienced pilots and capable technicians. Each man has received

individual and crew training enabling him to perform a valuable role in the gunships operation.

The pilots received their initial training in the United States then returned to their homeland for gunship tactics training at Phan Rang AB. While at Phan Rang, the pilots became acquainted with the other specialists who would eventually comprise the crews. During the two month long program at Phan Rang however, each man quickly learned to become a part of the tight-knit crew of an AC119.

The first all-Vietnamese AC119 squadron was activated on Sept. 10 at Tan Son Nhut AB, following continuation training with U.S. advisers. Its crews now certified as combat ready, the 819th VNAF Sq. joins the rapidly expanding Republic of Vietnam Air Force for the defense of their homeland against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese.



Felipe G. Lundin "Phil" was born February 13, 1946 and passed away November 26, 2014 peacefully at home surrounded by his family. Felipe was born in Nogales, Sonora and moved to Tucson at a young age. He is a graduate of Tucson High and served in the Air Force shortly after. He worked as a copper miner at Duval Mine and retired from Pima County after 20 years. After retirement he turned his efforts towards his passion Humane Borders. As President and long-term member he advocated for the human dignity and rights of migrants. He is survived by his wife, Donna (Carter); seven children, Kimberly McManus (Doug), Paula Rapp, Felipe Lundin (Jennifer), Cassia Lundin, Christopher Lundin and Hillary Lotz (Jonathan); 16 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and his younger siblings, Frank and Mary. Funeral Services will be held on Thursday, December 4, 2014 at St. Ambrose Church, 300 S. Tucson Blvd. Rosary/Mass at 11:00 a.m., reception to follow at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 601 S. Tucson Blvd. Felipe was a loving husband, a proud father and a great friend. He touched the lives of many.