

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

In this issue:

‘Martians’ Invade Village

C119 Tails: Strike Team Engages Charlie at the Perimeter

Phan Rang, Tuy Hoa Split Best Base Laurel

Old Shakey’s Size Accommodates Cargo More Sophisticated Planes Can’t Touch

Protecting Phan Rang AB: Ken Swickard’s Story

NCO 1 Of Top 12 In AF

2015 Reunion Information

Phan Rang Memories by Larry Theurer: Brown - Hotter than A

315th Selects Airman of the Month

Shadow Has Busy Week

Phan Rang AB Gets ARC Unit

Doug’s Comments

Who’s Who at Phan Rang

‘Martians’ Invade Village (*Seventh Air Force News, November 6, 1968*)

PHAN RANG — It was an invasion from MARS! Yet, the U.S. soldiers in the small compound at Hiep Kiet Village near Phan Rang AB couldn't have been happier.

These "Martians" were members of the 1882nd Communications Squadron Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS). The occasion was a test conducted by a MARS team headed by Air Force Capt. Robert C. Sparks, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

"This visit," explained Captain Sparks, "was a test of our capability to place telephone calls directly from the soldiers in the field to their wives and mothers back home."

"During the final weeks before Christmas, we plan to visit all U.S. Army field units in the Phan Rang area, giving them an opportunity to call their families — our Christmas gift from the Air Force MARS to the U.S. Army," he noted.

"We believe this is a 'first' for Vietnam," Captain Sparks said, "the first time an Air Force MARS unit has moved into the field to bring together by voice the men and their families on opposite sides of the earth."

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

For the initial try out at Hiep Kiet, Captain Sparks and a team of three MARS non-commissioned officers carried less than 50 pounds of gear including transmitters, receivers, cable and a portable antenna.

Air transport to and from the Army outpost was by U.S. Army Huey helicopter. The MARS team patched in eight calls home during the brief test.

"I feel we can say the experiment was a complete success," said SSgt. Patrick Gallagher, Pittsburgh, Pa., MARS operator. "All we need to cross 15,000 miles of water are four radios, five telephones and two people in love."

Other MARS team members taking part in the field test were Sergeants Theodore F. Trojanowski, Bayonne, N.J. and Marsden Cleckley, Winston Salem, N.C., volunteer MARS operator.

At the base MARS station supporting the field unit were operators Sergeants Gordon E. Harter, Lake Worth, Fla., and Jesus R. Rodriguez, Detroit, Mich.

The phone calls were placed through a Stateside contact with a MARS affiliate station at Travis AFB, Calif.



From an original photo posted by Chris Kleckner.

Strike Team Engages Charlie at the Perimeter

Not sure if anyone from Security Police in 1969 would remember the following incident: One of my most interesting missions aboard the Shadow was one night on Alert, we got scrambled (frequent occurrence).

As we taxied out, the aircraft commander called back to us Gunners and Illuminator Operator to **NOT** take up 'Takeoff Positions' (strapped into the jumpseats).

He then followed with, "gunners go to pre-target checklist". Now at this point, we are just rumbling down the taxiway; with R3350s just a idling along. The three of us were wondering

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

what's up? So, as he straightened her out for the takeoff run, he called back "gunner give me 2 guns high rate of fire, and guns HOT!"; So I responded with 2 guns, high rate of fire, gun switched ARMED. His response was (paraphrasing here) "everyone hang on and don't sit down".

As the old girl started rumbling down the runway and the water injection kicked in, I swear the vibration cracked a couple of my teeth! As soon as we went gear up at the end of runway; the aircraft commander just hauled that lumbering brute over into a left hand bank and when the main gear doors closed and actuated the squat switch; both minis sprang to life and he fired out 3000 rounds of 7.62.

After about one or two full orbits, we pulled off target and I could see the security police's "Strike Team" engaging Charlie at the perimeter while I reloaded guns 1 and 2.

That APC with the twin 50's was a beautiful sight from the air; I wish Christopher Boles, the base photographer had been aboard to photograph it.

We took up a patrolling orbit over the bay while the 'Strike Team' completed the engagement. We were shortly thereafter cleared to return to Alert Status, so we landed and rearmed and refueled; waiting for the next call.



Jim Mattison next to one of his miniguns.

Phan Rang, Tuy Hoa Split Best Base Laurel (*7th Air Force News, November 6, 1968*)

SAIGON — Phan Rang and Tuy Hoa air bases have been selected as "best bases" for the third quarter of 1968.

The Best Base Improvement Program Award was announced by Gen. George S. Brown, Seventh Air Force commander, following the selection based on evaluation visits by a group of senior officers from 7AF headquarters.

Under the command of Col. Stanley J. Obarski, Phan Rang recently added aerial port facilities (Det. 8, 14th Aerial Port Sq.) and a skeet range, and is nearing completion of a crash rescue fire station, indoor theater and swimming pool.

Thy Hoa's base commander, Col. Ross D. Norton, has initiated many self-help projects to improve both facilities and appearance of Tuy Hoa.

Tuy Hoa was named best base in Seventh Air Force in 1967.

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

The base has also been cited for Best Recreational Facilities, Best Civic Actions Programs, and Most Improved Facilities.

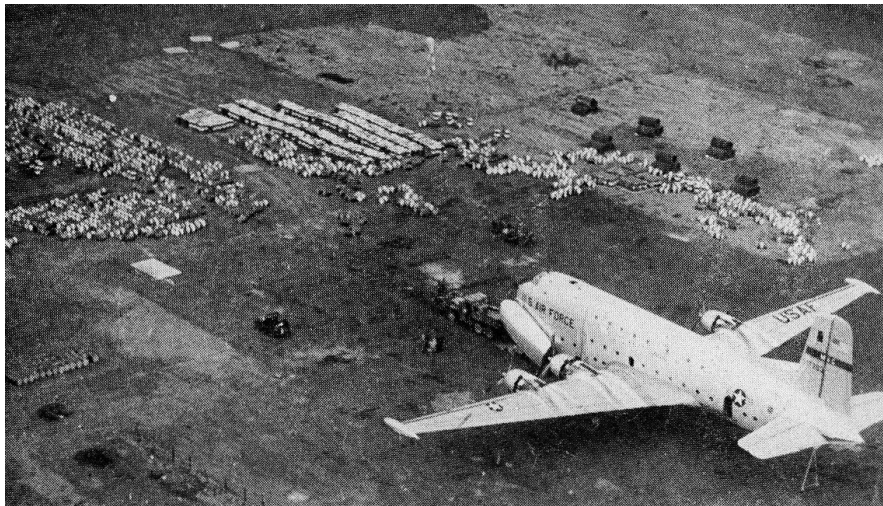
Phan Rang AB is the home of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing and the 315th Special Operations Wing.

Tuy Hoa houses the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing, the largest F-100 wing in Vietnam.

Old Shakey’s Size Accommodates Cargo More Sophisticated Planes Can’t Touch (*7th Air Force News, November 6, 1968*)

By TSGT. SAM POLSON

HICKAM AFB, HAWAII MAC) — "There's just nobody else out here that can do the things we're doing!"



Aerial view at Song Be, Vietnam, shows typical small airstrip (upper right) into which 22nd MAS crews frequently operate. Eleven squadron crewmen received Distinguished Flying Crosses recently for airlifting urgently needed artillery into Song Be.

These words, spoken by a member of the 22nd Military Airlift Squadron at Tachikawa AB, Japan, pretty much sum up his organization's performance in Southeast Asia.

Flying ungainly old C-124 Globemasters, the 22nd MAS' prime mission is transporting outsized cargo in support of Allied forces in SEA. The outfit is often billed as Military Airlift Command's only true combat

airlift unit.

Besides being noted for hauling bulky pieces of cargo other squadrons can't manage, the 22nd is also building a reputation for operating into small, hazardous airstrips usually bypassed by MAC planes.

To accomplish its mission under these unusual circumstances, the squadron relies on three major assets: highly qualified pilots; experienced crew members; and the reliable — if

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

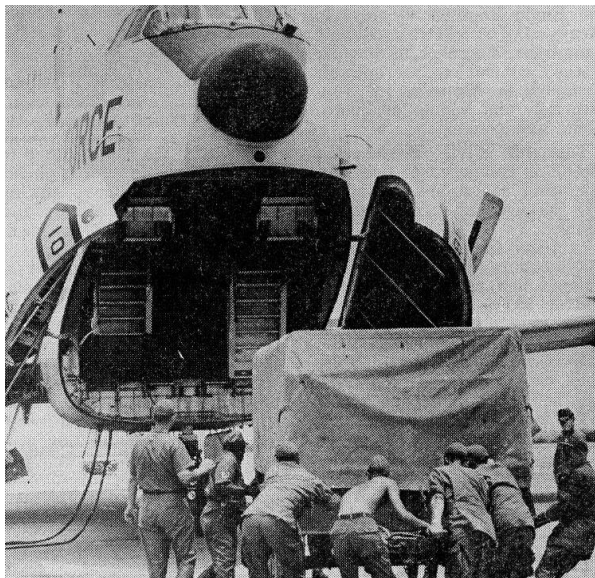
“Stories worth telling”

somewhat antiquated — aircraft they affectionately call "Old Shakey."

Flying Crosses

One mission recently earned Distinguished Flying Crosses for 12 squadron crewmen. That particular operation saw a pair of 22nd MAS crews shuttle from Bien Hoa to Song Be to deliver 385,000 pounds of urgently needed equipment. Included in the loads were 175 mm. Howitzers whose widespread undercarriages precluded them from being airlifted by any other available plane than Shakey.

Compounding the difficulty was a small, 4,000-foot airstrip, a 2,400-foot hill on the approach, poor weather and heavy Viet Cong ground fire.



Army and Air Force troops bend their backs to a 1 1/2 - ton trailer as they prepare it for loading onto C-124 at Bien Hoa, Air Base, Vietnam.

The DFCs for the Song Be mission were presented by Brig. Gen. Ernest J. White, commander of the 61st Military Airlift Wing of which the 22nd MAS is a unit. In a brief address to the award recipients, General White spoke of the rarity of MAC airlift crews earning the Air Force's seventh highest medal. He also spoke of the mission the squadron is carrying out.

"You guys out here," he quipped, "and the jobs you're doing in Southeast Asia, are the reason we in this wing can TRULY call ourselves the 'Fighting 61st!' "

Records bear out the general's words. Since January 1965 the squadron has had 527 Air Medals and 12 DFCs approved for its crews. There are still 16 other high awards pending.

One Chapter

But the Vietnam chapter is only one in a bookful that has been written by men of the 22nd. Since the squadron's birth at Melbourne, Australia, in April 1942, the unit has gone on to etch its name in every major action of which the Air Force has been a part. It has seen duty in World War II, the Berlin Airlift, Korea, the Lebanon crisis and even the French/Indo-China conflict.

The squadron's participation in the latter operation is recorded in an unpublished history of the 22nd MAS titled "Double Deuces," written by Capt. Carl J. Armani and 1st Lt. David S. Miller.

In speaking of their airlift of wounded French soldiers after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the book states: "Little did anyone realize at that time the significance of the French defeat in Indo-China;

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

little did the 22nd realize that within a decade the U.S. would be carrying on that same war; and little did the 22nd realize that Indo-China (Vietnam) would become its major mission."

Bumble Bee

Another section of the book speaks with fondness of the squadron's planes.

"At first sight Shakey takes your breath away," the authors say. "She is huge, standing 48 feet tall, measuring 130 feet long, and she has a wingspan of 174 feet. . . . She can take off with a gross weight of over 194,000 pounds.

"She resembles the proverbial bumblebee — which scientists have deduced cannot fly due to physical impossibilities. But she does fly; she has been doing it for years — since 1952 for the 22nd. . . ."

According to Capt. Larry Thacker of the 65th MAGp Operations Requirements Section, the percentage of outsized loads hauled by the 22nd ebbs and flows in direct relation to activities in Vietnam.

"You can just about tell what our percentage of outsized cargo is," said Captain Thacker, "by reading the daily newspapers. When the stories tell of a big push, you can bet the squadron is carrying more of the big stuff."



Screen shots from a video by Doug Severt

Protecting
PHAN RANG AB
by Ken Swickard

It was the first week of February 1968, and I had started the perimeter medical patrol a few days earlier.

I was riding with the K-9 supervisor, SSgt Douglas McKinney. He was known to his friends and troops as “Mac”.

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

Since it was still winter, the evening temperature had dropped to a chilling 56 degrees. I believe that it was close to midnight when Mac got a call of dogs alerting near the beach gate and that a convoy from Cam Ranh Bay was stalled outside the gate.



Since his dogs were involved, Mac put the M151 to its endurance limits and got to the area about the same time that Pink Eye (Army spotlight on top of "The Hill") illuminated the whole area like daylight.

A few “pop” flares were still floating down after being launched by the closest guard towers on either side of the gate.

Ken Swickard, left and Kent von Kluegl on duty at Phan Rang.

The Army convoy was just sitting on the road, with a Lieutenant and his driver in the lead M151, inside of the Beach Gate, and a couple of fuel tankers and three covered duce and a half's (two and a half ton trucks) sitting and idling just outside of the perimeter fence.

The driver was wounded and the Lieutenant had a bullet hole directly through his forehead that had removed most of his gray matter out the back of his head. He was just slumped in his seat, with his head turned to the side like he was looking for something out of his now death glazed eyes. No hole in his windshield or any other sign of enemy fire. No one heard any shots. The two handlers with dogs checked both sides of the road, the length of the convoy, and finding nothing, the caravan then moved onto the base.

The dispensary was called and they brought out the Blue, White & Red “Target” (ambulance) and took both of the casualties back to the dispensary for examination, treatment, and/or bagging.

We could not figure out how they were shot other than a sniper hit him just as they were entering the base. It was later determined that they had been shot closer to the Beach Area and the driver had driven on to the base gate.

NCO 1 Of Top 12 In AF (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Thursday, July 22, 1971*)

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam

(Special)—A versatile noncommissioned officer assigned to the 1882nd Comm. Sq. here is one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen for 1971.

M.Sgt. Arthur G. Miles Jr., the Air Force Communications Service nominee, will be an honored guest at the Air Force Association convention in Washington Sept. 20-22.

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

Noncommissioned officer-in-charge (NCOIC) of the squadron's communications-electronics (C-E) program, Miles is also a boxing, track and field champion, and a leader of black activities.

While assigned to the 95th Strategic Wing at Goose AB, Labrador, in 1967, Miles was recognized for his job knowledge and leadership and selected for retraining into the C-E programs management career field. In addition, he was named "PRIDE" Man of the Quarter for exemplary performance as the wing NCOIC of C-E plans and programs, cited for compiling the highest "error-free" Communications - Electronics Support Program rate over a 10-month period within the 16 8th Air Force bases.

Following these achievements, Miles attended the SAC NCO Academy and the C-E programs management supervisor courses, graduating in the top 15 per cent of his class.

At Phan Rang the sergeant was assigned the additional duties of unit manpower representative, resources adviser and resources conservation (RECON) administrator. In the latter capacity, he submitted the first RECON savings item within AFCS to be validated for more than \$1 million.

The San Francisco area Golden Gloves champion and Pacific AAU Junior boxing champion in 1952, Miles continued his interest in sports while in the Air Force, competing in 1956 in the Air Force World-Wide Boxing Tournament and later turning his talents to track and field.

In 1960, working with the Turkish Olympic Track and Field Team, he became the first American airman ever invited to compete in the Turkish National Track and Field Championships.



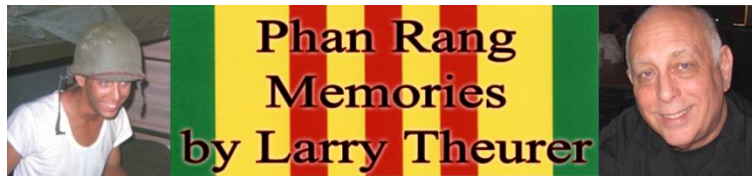
Here’s what you need to know about the reunion	
Where: Crowne Plaza Charleston Airport - conv. Ctr., 4831 Tanger Outlet Boulevard North Charleston, South Carolina 29418.	
Cost: \$124.00 per room, per day. Includes 2 full breakfast buffets. Rooms will be available at the group rate three days prior to event and three days following event based upon availability.	Cancellation policy: You may cancel any time prior to 24 hours prior to 4 p.m. arrival without any penalties. If you cancel less than 24 hours prior to 4 p.m. arrival, the individual may be subject to pay the hotel a cancellation fee equal to the first nights room and tax.
Internet: Complimentary high speed internet in lobby, meeting areas and sleeping rooms.	Guarantee & Billing: Guests are responsible for paying all reserved accommodations and

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

	incidentals.
Check-in time: 4:00 p.m.	Check-out time: 11:00 a.m.
Rooms: <i>The hotel will offer a mix of king, double queen and handicap accessible rooms based upon availability.</i>	Parking: Complimentary parking and airport shuttle.
Banquet: We are still in the planning stages, but it will be somewhere in the ballpark of \$55 for 3 entrees and \$48 for 2.	Tours: We will have a base tour and probably a downtown tour, but this is also still in the planning stages and once they are finalized I will let everyone know.
<p>Click here to make your reservations</p> <p>Make plans now to join us in Charleston, 9-11 October 2015.</p>	



BROWN - HOTTER THAN A

I’m on the old linked steel ramp on the East side of the runway. Revetment side not built yet.

I’m in the chow tent with A1C Avery, Brown and another fellow I can’t name.

Me, Avery and the other fellow get our meals and sit at a table. On each of our plates the cooks had placed one big, long, bright red, mysterious thing the size of a middle finger. None of us could figure out what it was.

Brown arrives and sits down. Avery says “Hey Brown, what the hell are these things?”

Brown says “That’s a Cayenne Pepper. It’s hotter than an @!%#*-er ”

To that, Avery and the other fellow of course immediately challenge Brown “We will bet you a steak dinner when we get back to Clark that you can’t eat that whole thing at once”.

Brown immediately accepts the challenge and in three bites his pepper is gone and he swallows.

We are looking at his face and within 10 seconds his eyes tear up and sweat beads out on his head and the expression on his face is like maybe he’s thinking accepting that bet was not a good idea.

Then just like you see in a cartoon, the neck above the collar turns bright red and the red line begins rising up his neck like someone filling a glass jar with red paint. It continues up over his

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

ears to the top of his head and he frantically begins grabbing all the water on the table he can find.

Everyone thought they were going to laugh when this began but we could see that he was obviously in some serious pain, so no one was laughing.

They were ribbing him about it afterwards though.

Three days later I asked Avery “How is Brown?” He said “He’s recovered now, but he still can’t taste anything”.

(A2C Lawrence (Larry) Theurer was with the 8th Tactical Bomb Squadron, loading munitions aboard the B-57 Canberras. I was fortunate to have meet Larry at the B-57 Bummers reunion in Branson, Missouri and after I had seen what he had written I asked if I could share his stories with the Phan Rang community. Of course he agreed and this is just another one of the many stories to come.)

315th SELECTS AIRMAN OF THE MONTH



PHAN RANG AB, Republic of Vietnam (7AF)

TOP AIRMAN

Airman First Class Thomas J. Reeves, 19, Hackensack, NJ, 315th Special Operations Wing here, working on a C-123 Provider tire. He was selected Airman of the Month for August by the Wing. (U.S. Air Force Photo by A1C Christopher P. Boles)

Dated Sept 2, 1969

Shadow Has Busy Week (*Phan Fare*, May 29, 1969)

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

During the period from 6:01 am May 10 to the same time seven days later, the "Shadow" men of "B" Flight, 71st Special Operation: Squadron, were extremely active!

Within that very short period of time, Shadow: from Phan pang flew 46 sorties with only six aircraft! They logged an impressive total of 176.3 flying hours while firing more than 550,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, and launching 518 flares for ground illumination. Another 19 hours of constant illumination were also provided by their high-intensity white lights.

On two of the day: of this busy week, "B" Flight launched every AC-119 on the field to support troops in contact, to provide base defence for Phan Rang, or to bring their mini-guns to bear against enemy positions.

Working all right every night and keeping up with the required additional duties too, will begin to wear down anyone. So if you happen into some droopy-eyed 71st troops, don't be too critical; there are a lot of grateful "grunts" that will sleep again because Shadow met every request for support during one helluva busy week!

Phan Rang AB Gets ARC Unit (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Saturday, Aug 26, 1967*)

PFIAN RANG, Vietnam (7AF) —The American Red Cross recently opened its new \$24,000 recreation facility at Phan Rang air base. The structure, constructed by a team from the 554th Civil Eng. Sq. (Red Horse), was officially opened with a 'busting in' ceremony.

'Busting in' was Airman 1.C. William G. Peterson, 22, who gained the honor of breaking through an aluminum foil barrier stretched across the main entrance.

Doug's Comments: I have to apologize to anyone that might have tried to click on any of the links I had posted for previous issues of the Phan Rang Newsletter and they didn't work. What I did is link them to the files that we have posted on the Facebook page, but if you aren't a member of Facebook you couldn't reach them. When I did it, I thought of that possibility and I did do some tests, but I guess I wasn't thorough enough. Previously I had them linked to a web page that anyone could access, but since it's my responsibility to upload them, I got lazy and didn't do it consistently so I thought going through Facebook would be best. Well, now I have to redo all those links to that web page, but it will take me some time and the Phan Rang Library will again be in a future issue. Here is the [link](#) to that web page to download any of the previous issue of the Phan Rang Newsletter. As long as I'm doing this mea culpa I will also apologize for sending out the newsletter without attaching the newsletter. I appreciate those guys that are quick to notify me of my error and telling me that Alzheimer's is setting in early.

Anyone willing to help highlight your organization? I thought it would be nice to do a special in the Phan Rang News highlighting a specific organization with a write-up of the organizational mission and with pictures and maybe even the names of those individuals that we know were

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 61

“Stories worth telling”

assigned. If you would be willing to do that, please contact [me](#). The main thing you would have to do is the write up and work with me to pick out appropriate pictures from the archives.

If you would like to be added to the Phan Rang mailing list, please contact [Doug Severt](#). I’m the same guy you need to contact if you would like to be removed from the mailing list. Nothing fancy or automatic here.

Who’s Who at Phan Rang

PHAN RANG STAFF MEMBERS

Joseph Burkhart: Master of Ceremonies

Robert Kellington: Tour Coordinator

Jack Anderson: Treasure

Lou Ruggerio: Site coordinator/Contract negotiator

Douglas Severt: Reunion Coordinator

Ed Downey/Barbara Brandt: Ceremonies

Christopher Boles: Photographer

Mike Maleski: Chaplain

FACEBOOK GROUP ADMINISTRATORS

Douglas Severt, Kenneth Rowsey, David McGaughey, Vincent Joseph Miller (Susan Anderson-Miller) and Kirk Minert

...and the 770 members (and counting) of the “Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB Facebook group.