

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

**In this issue:**

**Student Athletic Games - Phan Rang: Phan Rang AB GIs Aid School Athletes (Pt 2)**

**LOX Production Requires Careful, Exact Handling**

**Army Plane Crash In Storm Kills 4**

**‘Stingers’ Give VC Bad Day**

**Keeps 'C' Flight In Business**

**35<sup>th</sup> TFW Pilots Win Plaudits**

**Reunion Marks Command Change**

**Phan Rang Facility Expands As Photo Hobby Shop Opens**

**Storm Hits Viet Coast**

**10,000<sup>th</sup> Mission**

**New Battalion Joins Brigade**

**Phan Rang Memories by Larry Theurer: 750lbs of Napalm Vs. Human Foot**

**Serving our Country**

**2015 Reunion Information**

**Who’s Who at Phan Rang**

**Archives of the Phan Rang News and the Phan Fare (Phan Rang AB Library)**

**Student Athletic Games - Phan Rang  
Phan Rang AB GIs Aid School Athletes (Part 2)**

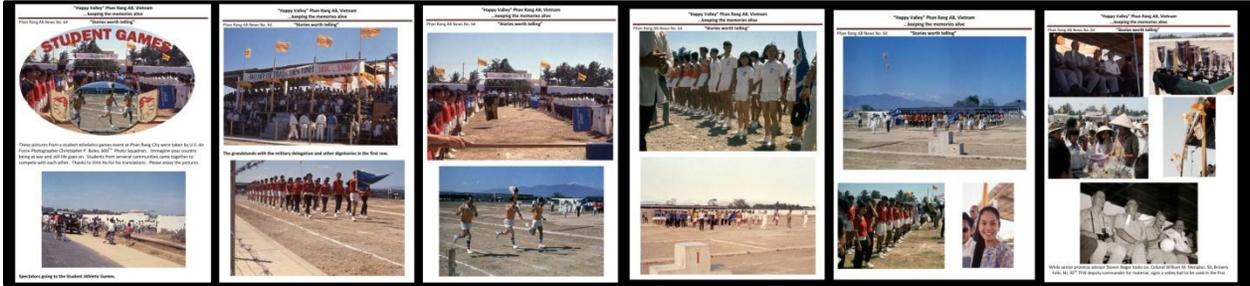


More than three thousand Vietnamese citizens joined with provincial and military officials representing Phan Rang AB, at opening ceremonies of the first annual Provincial High Schools Sports Meet recently held at Phan Rang City. In the Phan Rang News 64 the pictures in the film strip below were presented. Because of the great number of pictures available for this event I split the story up into two parts so that the pictures from the opening ceremonies could be included. All pictures are by and from the Christopher P. Boles collection who was a photographer for the 600<sup>th</sup> Photo Squadron.

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

“Stories worth telling”



Thumbnails of the pages in Part 1.

Pictures from the Korean portion of the opening ceremonies of the Student Games held at Phan Rang City. Members of the Republic of Korea’s 9<sup>th</sup> “White Horse” Division stationed at Phan Rang AB demonstrate karate moves. These pictures are pretty awesome when you think about how fast these guys were doing the kicks and performances such as this helped foster the reputation the Koreans had as a formidable fighting force. All photos by Christopher P. Boles, 600<sup>th</sup> Photo Squadron.



**Block-Breaking Machine**

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**



**Demonstrating Korean Kata**



**Board Breaking**

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**



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...keeping the memories alive**

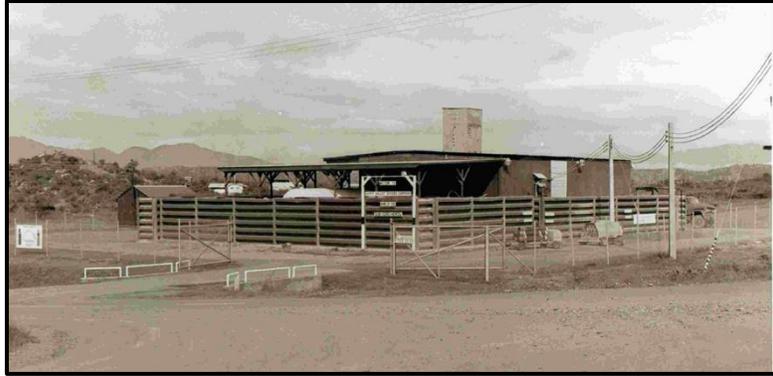
Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

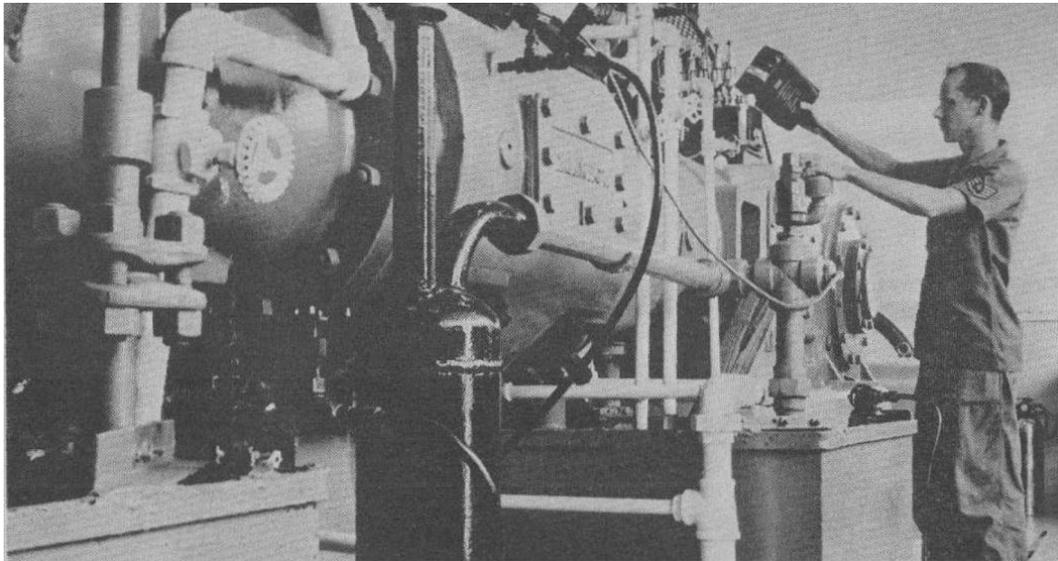
**LOX Production Requires Careful, Exact Handling** (*Seventh Air Force News, August 27, 1969*)

**Story by Sgt. Douglas L. Christy and Photos by A1C William F. Diebold and Christopher Boles.**

**PHAN RANG**-“It is something like a super air conditioner,” the sergeant said, motioning towards a conglomeration of pipes, dials, tanks and assorted machinery.



LOX Plant, Phan Rang AB. Photo by Christopher P. Boles, 600<sup>th</sup> Photo Sq.

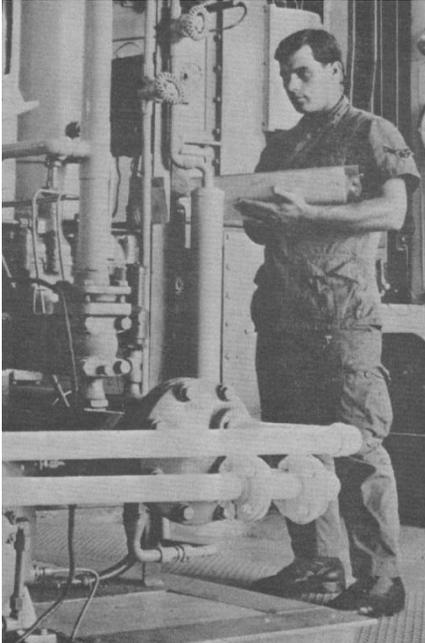


Necessary Oiling. SSgt. John D. Whitten

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

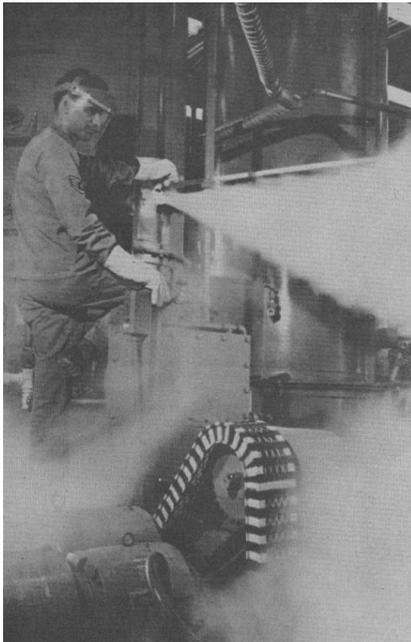


Checking the Hourly Report. Airman Bien



Relieving the Pressure. A1C Donald E. Bien

"I'll show you what I mean," he added, turning a valve. A stream of fog jetted forth, then quickly dissipated into the hot air. "That's liquid oxygen (LOX), the air we condition. It is 99.5 per cent pure and is about minus 297 degrees Fahrenheit as it leaves the valve," he explained.



Draining Liquid Oxygen. SSgt. Domingo A. Lacayo

Supervising the production of LOX here is MSgt. Hasten D. McHam, Damascus, Ark., noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the plant.

About 32-40 gallons of LOX and 45-50 gallons of liquid nitrogen are produced hourly on a continuous basis.

The oxygen is used for breathing by aircraft crewmembers, for hospital use and for welding. Nitrogen is used to clean the fuel systems on B-57 bombers based here.

The equipment is operated and maintained by cryogenic fluids production specialists and technicians. Cryogenics is the area of physics relating to the production and effects of very low temperatures.

Sergeant McHam explained the production of liquid gases at the plant. "Two compressors draw in air from the

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

outside and compress it to 2,100 pounds per-square-inch," he said.

"Water, impurities and other gases are removed during subsequent steps," he explained. "The remaining oxygen and nitrogen are chilled so that they become liquid. They are then separated and stored.

One advantage of producing the gases in liquid form is that they occupy less volume than in the gaseous form and, hence, are easier to store. For example, one unit volume of LOX expands to 860 units of the gaseous product.

"Literally speaking, it's a real cool job," Sergeant McHam concluded.

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**Army Plane Crash In Storm Kills 4** *(Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, October 22, 1971)*

S&S Vietnam Bureau

**SAIGON** — Four American soldiers died late Tuesday morning when their single-engine plane crashed in a storm 30 miles south of Cam Ranh Bay, U.S. Army spokesmen said Wednesday.

The U6A Beaver aircraft was attempting to return to Phan Rang AB after a flight to Ban Me Thuot was aborted by bad weather.

All aboard the craft, two captains, one lieutenant and a sergeant first class, died in the crash, spokesmen said.

The plane, from the 35th Eng. Group Aviation section at Cam Ranh Bay, was reported missing at 11:53 a.m. Tuesday by Phan Rang air traffic control.

Members of Det. 1, 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery group at the air base later found the wreckage.

Cause of the crash is undetermined a spokesmen said. Identity of the dead soldiers was being withheld until their families are notified.

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**‘Stingers’ Give VC Bad Day** *(Seventh Air Force News, December 11, 1968)*

**PHAN RANG** — F-100 Supersabre pilots from the 352nd Tactical Fighter Squadron "Yellow Jackets," here recently had a number of good combat sorties over South Vietnam all in one day.

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

Three of the missions were flown in support of Free World forces near Binh Tuy in IV Corps, in the southern part of the Republic.

Commenting on his own mission, Capt. Henry J. Pirkkala Jr., New Castle, Penn., said, "We had several structures in the open and the forward air controller (FAC) saw ground fire on every pass we made." The end result of the Supersabre jockey's mission was seven enemy structures destroyed, six damaged, four sampans destroyed and four bunkers destroyed.

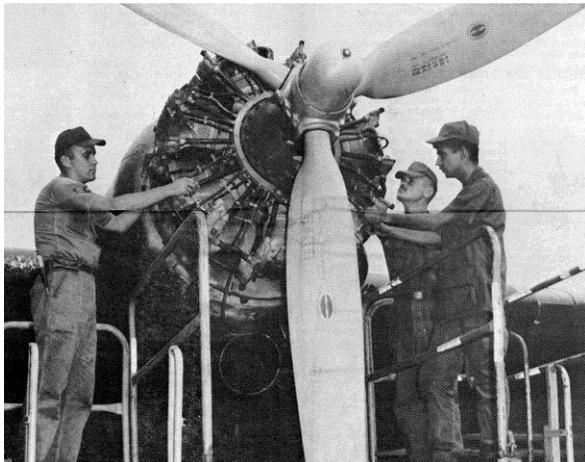
Maj. Donald W. Houston, Lodi, Ohio, described what happened on the mission that he flew with Lt. Col. Robert D. Hook, Dayton, Ohio, like this, "There were numerous structures visible through the trees. Our bombs were all on target and one hit a structure and yielded a large secondary explosion."

The final BDA for the five sorties was 20 enemy structures destroyed, 11 damaged, 17 bunkers destroyed, 2 damaged, and 6 sampans destroyed. The high flying "Yellow Jackets" also were credited with one KBA (body count).

Add to that two secondary fires and two secondary explosions and 200 meters of trench destroyed, and indeed it's obvious that the pilots of the 352nd did have a good day.

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**Keeps 'C' Flight In Business** (*Seventh Air Force News, December 11, 1968*)



**Three maintenance men of C Flight perform routine maintenance on the engine of an AC-47.**

PHU CAT — Newspaper headlines often stress the outstanding job done by the air crews of the AC-47 Dragonships, but the men behind the scenes in the "Spooky" operations are also just as important.

Behind the air crews stand a team of ground crews charged with keeping the respected old AC47 in A-1 condition. The maintenance men of C-Flight, 4th Special Operations Squadron at Phu

Cat AB, must review, check, analyze and insure fast, efficient maintenance service for the aircraft.

It takes hard work, dedication and long hours for the maintenance men, but the record these men have accumulated over the past months speaks for itself. Despite adverse weather

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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

conditions, during the last nine months the maintenance men have seen the Dragonships airborne over 800 times and have seen them log nearly 2,900 hours of combat time.

The AC-47 is not one of the newest aircraft in the Air Force inventory, in fact it is one of the oldest still being used in the Republic of Vietnam, but the military version of what civilians know as the DC-3 and what stateside Air Force personnel know as the "Gooney Bird" has proved its worth thousands of times lending firepower and flare support to villages, hamlets and friendly camps under night attack from the enemy.

Thanks to an enviable job done by the maintenance men of C-Flight, the Dragonships are airborne nightly supporting Free World Forces in their battle against communist aggression in the Republic.



SSgt W. E. Ellison gives start clearance as Sgt. R. J. Hornberger stands fire guard.

**35th TFW Pilots Win Plaudits**

**PHAN RANG**—Pilots of the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing here, commanded by Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., Alexandria, Va., were thanked recently for their "outstanding support rendered . . . to Operation Peng Ma."

In a letter to Colonel Gailer, Lt. Col. John W. Kierman, air liaison officer, 9th Republic of Korea (ROK) Infantry Division extended the appreciation of Maj. Gen. Chang Hun Yu, commanding general, 9th ROK Infantry Division, and of the Division Tactical Air Control Party (USAF).

"The outcome was a resounding success for the Korean forces, has significantly lessened the threat against Nha Trang AB and the city of Nha Trang, and was a fitting 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary triumph for the 9<sup>th</sup> ROK Infantry Division," he wrote.

The efforts of your command, he continued, "made a major contribution to the successful outcome or the operation. I consider the overwhelmingly favorable ratio between friendly and enemy casualties as prima facie evidence of the effectiveness of the air support."

Although official "killed by air" figures had not been released, the enemy took 382 soldiers killed in the operation and nine wounded.

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

**Reunion Marks Command Change** *(Seventh Air Force News, December 11, 1968)*

PHAN RANG - The arrival of Wing Commander John Whitehead here to take command of the Royal Australian Air Force Number 2 Canberra Squadron also marked his reunion with Air Force Lt. Col. Samuel T. Dickens, Washington D. C. a former squadron mate.

In 1956 and 1957, then Flight Lieutenant Whitehead and Capt Dickens were assigned as exchange pilots with Royal Air Force Squadron Number 92 at Linton-on-Ouse, near York, England.

They were flying the Hawker Hunter ‘six’ type aircraft and served together for seven months.

The two officers became very close friends during this time and when Colonel Dickens wed the former Miss Marcella F. Smith of Corbin, Ky. On Jan. 26, 1957, in London. Commander Whitehead was the best man.

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**Phan Rang Facility Expands As Photo Hobby Shop Opens**

By TSgt. John B. Mahony

PHAN RANG — A photo hobby shop furnished with more than \$6,000 of new darkroom equipment recently opened at Phan Rang AB.

"The new shop is open to all airmen regardless of their prior darkroom experience," explained SSgt. David L. Short, Houston, part-time manager of the shop. "All he needs is an interest. There will be a darkroom instructor on duty from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

"The shop has the equipment capability to process both color and black and white," he continued. "We will not do color printing since that would tie up the facilities too long. Even as it is, we expect to operate on an appointment basis. We can handle ten photographers during each three-hour session. And, depending upon the call for it, we will let the men do color transparencies except for Kodachrome."

In the printing room, there are two D3V Omega enlargers featuring automatic focusing and



**This Is the Way It's Done**

At the opening of the new Phan Rang AB photo hobby shop, Col. Frank L. Gaiter Jr. (center), Arlington, Va., listens intently while the shop manager, SSgt. David L. Short, explains the operation of a print enlarger. Colonel Gailer, 35th Tactical Fighter Wing commander, then made a print, starting with the enlarger and working through to the print dryer. SMSgt. Michael Skovran, arts and crafts director of the hobby center, looks on.

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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

electronic timing. The Omegas can handle up to four inch by five inch negatives. Five smaller enlargers can handle up to two and one-fourth inch by three and one-fourth inch negatives. Beside each enlarger is a cutting board and timer. A contact printer is also available.

The printing room is equipped with safe lights and full air conditioning keeps the chemicals at 68 degrees as well as making working conditions ideal.

"There is a 50 cent charge for each three-hour session to help cover operating expenses," Sergeant Short said. "Chemicals are furnished at no charge. Printing paper can be bought at the hobby sales store for 50 cents for six sheets or \$7.60 for a box of 100 sheets. Free lockers are available for storage of personal equipment.

"Each three-hour session will include only darkroom time," Sergeant Short explained. "An additional hour will be allowed for washing and drying prints."

Six tripods are available for 24-hour loan service.

The shop has two print dryers, a washer and a dry mounting press.

"Opening this photo shop completes the hobby center," said SMSgt. Michael Skovran, Ft. Walton Beach, Fla., arts and crafts director of the hobby center. "When we moved into this building in June, there wasn't even tile on the floor. Now, in addition to the photo shop, the building houses a 33-station tape center, a hobby resale store, model slot car track, an electronic hobby shop and a leather craft shop."



**Phan Rang Model Raceway** after its move to the new Base Hobby shop circa Oct 1968. I brought it down from an old hootch up by Happy Valley Drive Inn. Here, it's on new wood framed knee walls, with the original steel stands as well, and new red naugahyde upholstered bumper wrap courtesy of the parachute shop. Photo and comments by Michael Hibner

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

Our 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing commander Col. **Frank L. Gailer Jr.** is truly an American Hero. His biography reads like a Hollywood miniseries. Brigadier General Gailer is alive and well and all Phan Rangers that attended the reunion in San Antonio had the honor of meeting him and his wife. There is so much information about him that I could probably fill up every newsletter from now on with his life’s story, but instead I will just provide a brief edited biography from the Air Force web site.

General Gailer was born in Bakersfield, Calif. He entered the aviation cadet program and received pilot training at Parks Air College, Garden City, Kan., and Eagle Pass, Texas, where he earned his pilot wings and commission as second lieutenant.

In September 1943 General Gailer was assigned to Columbia Army Air Base, S.C., for tactical training in the B-25 aircraft and in February 1944 was transferred to P-40 training at Thomasville, Ga. In July 1944 he joined the 357th Fighter Group in England as a P-51 pilot. Flying with the 363rd Fighter Squadron, he was credited with destroying 6 1/2 enemy aircraft before he was shot down in November 1944 and interned by the Germans as a prisoner of war in Stalag One.

General Gailer returned to the United States in 1945; and until June 1946, he served as base flight operations officer at Selfridge Field, Mich. He went to the Panama Canal Zone as a squadron commander in the 6th Fighter Wing. From February 1949 until June 1954, he served as group operations officer and then deputy commander of the 6570th Chemical and Ordnance Test Group, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

In February 1955 General Gailer was assigned the U.S. Air Force Mission to Uruguay as the jet fighter adviser. From December 1958 until June 1962 he served as chief, Latin American Missions Branch, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Headquarters U.S. Air Force. From July 1962 until July 1963, he served as an action officer in the Office of the Special Assistant for Military Assistance Affairs, with the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Gailer next attended the National War College, Washington, D.C., graduating in June 1964. From there he served as deputy commander for operations, 3640th Pilot Training Wing, Laredo Air Force Base, Texas. In January 1966 he was assigned as the first commander of the newly organized 3630th Flying Training Wing, Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. From August 1967 to July 1968, he was assigned to the National War College as a member of the faculty. In September 1968 he assumed command of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam.

General Gailer is a command pilot with more than 6,100 flying hours, including more than 2,000 hours in both conventional and jet fighter aircraft, and more than 500 combat hours. He completed 235 combat missions in the F-100 Super Sabre over the Republic of Vietnam. Distinguished Service Order Second Class from the government of the Republic of Vietnam.

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

**Storm Hits Viet Coast** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, October 30, 1970*)

**SAIGON** (AP)— Tropical storm Louise slammed into the central coast of South Vietnam with 58 miles per hour winds early Thursday and forced evacuation of aircraft from two huge U.S. Air Force bases.

The storm, which hit land just 10 miles south of Phan Rang AB, 160 miles northeast of Saigon, also cut into allied military operations by causing the cancellation of many American air strikes.

But weather forecasters said Louise apparently caused little damage as its strength began to dissipate after hitting the coast.

As precautionary measures, however, aircraft at both Phan Rang and Cam Ranh Bay, 35 miles to the northeast, were evacuated from the danger area.

The U.S. Command said U.S. fighter-bombers logged only 43 tactical airstrikes in South Vietnam during the 24-hour period that ended at dawn Wednesday.

It was the lowest number in two years and marked the second straight week in which storms had drastically curtailed air operations. When typhoon Kate struck the northern coast last Saturday, headquarters reported only 46 tactical air strikes were logged.

The weather had no effect on the 2 ½ -week long bombing campaign against North Vietnamese supply routes in southern Laos.

The command said U.S. B52 jets launched fresh strikes against the Ho Chi Minh Trail over which war materials and reinforcements are ferried to North Vietnamese troops fighting in South Vietnam and Cambodia.

The big bombers have flown more than 500 strikes against the supply route since the campaign began Oct. 10.

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**10,000<sup>th</sup> Mission** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, November 10, 1967*)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01) When Maj. James L. Anthony, an F100 Supersabre pilot with the 615th Tactical Fighter Sq. Black Panthers, not only chalked up his 83rd combat mission when he returned to Phan Rang AB from a strike recently — he chalked up the squadrons' 10,000th combat mission.

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 65

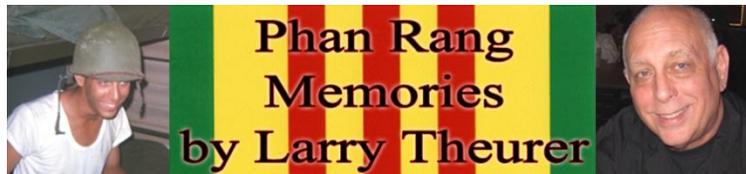
**“Stories worth telling”**

**New Battalion Joins Brigade** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, November 10, 1967*)

CAM RANH BAY (01)—The 1st Brigade, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Div., added another infantry battalion recently when the 3rd Bu. (Abn 506<sup>th</sup> Inf. , arrived here from Ft. Campbell, Ky.

Lt. Col. John P. Gerarci and his battalion were greeted by Brig. Gen. S. II. Matheson, brigade commander. Gerarci enters his third tour in Vietnam.

The paratroopers moved to Phan Rang AB where they will undergo training before joining the rest of the brigade in combat.



**750LBS OF NAPALM vs. HUMAN FOOT**

I'm between loads waiting the next assignment, wandering through the big steel revetments. I stopped to watch another crew loading bombs. They had completed the bomb bay and were hanging 750lb napalm bombs on the wings, two on each wing. They started on the right wing and using the MJ-1 bomb loading machine lifted the bombs into the wing bomb racks, inserting the bomb lugs into rack latches until they locked together. They then would lower the MJ-1 cradle a bit and, grab the tail fin and shake the bomb side to side to make sure it was securely latched.

I saw them shake both bombs on the right wing and then go to the left wing. After all four bombs were loaded they came back to tighten down sway braces. Once the braces were tightened a man named Stone, nickname "Stoney", grabbed the tail fin of one bomb and gave it a final shake. The MJ-1 machine was no longer under it.

The 750lb bomb silently dropped off the rack and the tail fin landed right on his foot. Fortunately the bomb shell did not rupture and spill the napalm (bad) and extremely fortunately the white phosphors canisters in each end of the bomb which ignite the napalm did not break (very bad). If these two events had both happened I would not be here telling you this story.

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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

The other crew members pulled him to the front of the plane where he lay in agony. Another crew nearby came running over to assist and some ran to the line hut to get the Sergeant on duty there and grab the line truck to drive the man to the hospital.

Incredibly, when they did so the Sergeant refused to allow them to use the truck! He insisted that they just call for an ambulance and wait for it to arrive. A huge argument erupted between the two load crew chiefs and the Sergeant which went on for about 5 minutes.

Finally the Sergeant came to realize that if he didn't give them the damn truck he was about to need two ambulances, one for the injured man and another for himself. They loaded up the injured man and sped off.

In 2014 I encountered him at the B-57 Bummers Association convention. Surprisingly he said he was not seriously hurt. What saved him was the fact that the fins on the bomb were set at a 45 degree angle. If they had been vertical his foot would have been cut off.

*(A2C Lawrence (Larry) Theurer was with the 8<sup>th</sup> 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. **If you like Larry's stories, please let me know and I'll pass it on to Larry.***

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Airman **Patrick L. Guzaldo**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Philip M. Guzaldo of 656 N. Trumbull, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. An aircraft mechanic, he is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. He is a 1967 graduate of Holy Trinity High School. (*Northwest Journal, Wednesday, January 24, 1968*)

U.S. Air Force's Sgt., **Allen D. Hitz**, from Medaryville, met U.S. Representative Earl F. Landgrebe (R-Ind.) during the congressman's" recent visit to Phan, Rang AB, Vietnam, while

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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

on a fact-finding tour of Southeast Asia. Sgt. Hitz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Hitz, Rt. 1, Medaryville, an aircraft maintenance technician assigned to a special operations unit at Phan Rang and helps maintain the unit's AC-119 gunship aircraft. A 1963 graduate of Medaryville High School, he enlisted in the Air Force in 1965. Sgt. and Mrs. Hitz have two children, Robert, four, and David, one. *(The Pharos-Tribune & Press, Logansport, Indiana, Wednesday Evening, October 31, 1970)*

Airman 1. C. **Thomas C. Stipp**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Stipp of Granny, is now on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Stipp, an aircraft equipment repairman, is assigned to unit of the Pacific Air Forces.

He previously served at Cannon AFB, N.M. The airman is a 1967 graduate of Granby High School. His wife is the former Margaret L. Rentfro of Granby. *(Joplin Globe, Thursday, Nov. 26, 1970)*

Spec 4 **Larry A. Deyo**, whose wife, Glenda, lives on Joplin Route 4, recently was awarded a safe-driving certificate while serving with the 589th Engineer Battalion near Phan Rang, Vietnam. He received the award for driving military vehicles more than 18,000 miles with no accidents or traffic violations. Spec. 4 Deyo is a dump truck driver in the battalion's 586th Dump Truck Company, He entered the Army in September, 1969, completed basic training at Ft. Campbell, Ky., and was last stationed at Ft. Hood, Tex. He is a 1969 graduate of Columbus Unified High School, Columbus, Kan. *(Joplin Globe, Thursday, Nov. 26, 1970)*



**Crowne Plaza Charleston Airport** - conv. Ctr., 4831 Tanger Outlet Boulevard North Charleston, South Carolina 29418.

<b>Here's what you need to know about the reunion</b>	
<b>Cost:</b> \$124.00 per room, per day. Includes 2	<b>Cancellation policy:</b> You may cancel any time

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

full breakfast buffets. Rooms will be available at the group rate three days prior to event and three days following event based upon availability.	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.
<b>Internet:</b> Complimentary high speed internet in lobby, meeting areas and sleeping rooms.	<b>Guarantee &amp; Billing:</b> Guests are responsible for paying all reserved accommodations and incidentals.
<b>Check-in time:</b> 4:00 p.m.	<b>Check-out time:</b> 11:00 a.m.
<b>Rooms:</b> <i>The hotel will offer a mix of king, double queen and handicap accessible rooms based upon availability.</i>	<b>Parking:</b> Complimentary parking and airport shuttle.
<b>Banquet:</b> We are still in the planning stages, but it will be somewhere in the ballpark of \$55 for 3 entrees and \$48 for 2.	<b>Tours:</b> 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.

[Click here to make your reservations](#)

**Make plans now to join us in Charleston, 8-11 October 2015.**

Breakdown of the days

8 Oct. Travel/Arrive Charleston	9 Oct. Base/City Tours	10 Oct. Tour - Evening Banquet
11 Oct. Check-out/Travel		

Here’s the latest on the bus tour to Joint Base Charleston. I had a survey on Facebook and there were about 21 people that showed an interest; however I’m sure that will change because last year we had more wanting to go than we had seats on the bus. Lou is working on lunch at the Charleston Club. That is expected to be about \$21, but more on that later. I hope to have all of the cost finalized by next week’s newsletter, so please stand by.

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”  
Who’s Who at Phan Rang**

**PHAN RANG STAFF MEMBERS**

**Joseph Burkhardt:** 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 780 members (and counting) of the “Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB Facebook group.**

**PHAN RANG AB LIBRARY**

**PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE PHAN RANG AB NEWS**

*(The Phan Rang AB News is a newsletter compiled from various sources by Douglas Severt to heighten the awareness of Phan Rang AB and to keep interested personnel informed about the annual Happy Valley, Phan Rang AB reunion.)*

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<a href="#">Phan Rang News 1</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 2</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 3</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 4</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 5</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 6</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 7</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 8</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 9</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 10</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 11</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 12</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 13</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 14</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 15</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 16</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 17</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 18</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 19</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 20</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 21</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 22</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 23</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 24</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 25</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 26</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 27</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 28</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 29</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 30</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 31</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 32</a>

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 65

**“Stories worth telling”**

<a href="#">Phan Rang News 33</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 34</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 35</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 36</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 37</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 38</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 39</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 40</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 41</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 42</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 43</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 44</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 45</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 46</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 47</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 48</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 49</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 50</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 51</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 52</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 53</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 54</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 55</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 56</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 57</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 58</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 59</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 60</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 61</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 62</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 63</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 64</a>