

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 72

“Stories worth telling”

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2015 Reunion Information



Brothers Hold Brief Reunion - One Coming, One Going (*Seventh Air Force News, October 1, 1969*)

PHAN RANG - A1C Gary R. Allen arrived here recently with just enough time to help his 21-year-old brother, Sgt. Ronnie W. Allen. pack and board an aircraft for home.

The forthcoming departure of a cousin, Sgt. Michael C. Allen will leave Gary as the only family member here.

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"I never expected to see them so soon or for such a short while," said Gary, who is assigned to the 35th Security Police Squadron here.

The last time the trio met was at a family dinner while Ronnie and Michael were home on leave and before Gary joined the Air Force.

During their reunion they talked about their travels and jobs. Ronnie, a jet mechanic, showed his younger brother the F-100 Supersabres of his 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

Michael, also a jet mechanic, has been showing cousin Gary the B-57 medium jet bombers of his unit, the 8th Tactical Bombardment Squadron.

Special R&R Unites NCO, WAF Sweetheart *(Seventh Air Force News, October 1, 1969)*

By Sgt. Doug Christy

PIIAN RANG - A Phan Rang sergeant here will meet his fiancée in Hawaii during a special rest and recuperation leave, thanks to the efforts of sympathetic superiors.

Sgt. Stephen Carroll, assigned to the stock control unit of the 35th Supply Squadron, received word from his fiancée, a WAF sergeant, that she had won a week-long free trip to Hawaii.

Sgt. Linda L. Antley, assigned to the 60th Supply Squadron at Travis AFB, Calif., was selected the unit representative in the base's Savings Bond Drive.

Sergeant Antley went on to win the base-wide honors, which earned her the Hawaii vacation and a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond.

"When I received the letter about the trip, I thought it would be great to go there and meet Her however, I had my doubts of it ever materializing," explained Sergeant Carroll.

Then he talked with his supervisor, MSgt. Elijah M. Hill, who wrote a letter and got things going. Meanwhile, the young sergeant kept his fingers crossed.

"I had to apply for a special R&R," Sergeant Carroll said. "When approval came through, I was on cloud nine. It is really great how the Air Force helped us out."

Sergeant Carroll and Linda have been engaged since May. They plan to marry in February or March.

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Shadow Aids Rescue Of Surrounded Patrol (*Seventh Air Force News, October 1, 1969*)

TUY HOA-An AC-119 Shadow gunship crew from A Flight, 17th Special Operations Squadron here, was recently accorded credit for assisting in the successful pickup of a patrol team deep within enemy positions.

Maj. George W. Pollock was the aircraft commander.

"We've got a team out there completely surrounded," reported the Direct Air Support Center. "We want you to go there and suppress the hostile activity and particularly the ground fire, so we can get some helicopters in to pick them up."

With Capt. Harman E. Fawcett at the controls the gunship arrived over the target area.

"Those guys were really in tight spot," commented Captain Fawcett. "They were in dense jungle with a North Vietnamese regular unit on three sides of them. A forward air controller briefed us on the situation as we came into the area.

"To keep from being pinned down, the team tried to keep moving. They would put out smoke marker and move off. Then we would put our mlnigun firepower right on the smoke as the enemy moved up. After while, we were able to beat back the enemy force from the ground troops and give them some relief.

"But we had been taking heavy automatic weapons fire while we were there. Then we and the FAC started taking anti-aircraft fire.

"Two A-1 Skyraider pilots arrived and started firing on the enemy guns. They also put part of their bomb load into the enemy positions we had been firing against," Captain Fawcett concluded.

Shadow Flies ARVN General (*Seventh Air Force News, October 1, 1969*)

TAN SON NHUT - A step towards familiarizing Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces with the capabilities of the Air Force's AC-119 Shadow gunship was accomplished recently by members of C Flight, 17th Special Operations Squadron here.

The unit hosted Lt. Gen. Do Cao Tri, ARVN III Corps tactical area of operation commander, to a gunship orientation flight.

General Tri was accompanied by Brig. Gen. Homer K. Hansen, Seventh Air Force tactical air control center deputy director. Piloting the AC-119 was Lt. Col. Paul J. Buckley, C Flight commander.

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During the flight, the crewmen demonstrated the gunship's miniguns , night observation sight and illumination devices to General Tri.

After landing here, the general commented on the flight. "Fantastic! It was my first flight in an AC-119 gunship and it was a very good experience. The crewmen are experts . . .and very accurate."

In addition to Colonel Buckley, other crewmen on the mission were Maj. Tommy D. Stevens. navigator; Capt. Mortimer J. Hall, navigator; MSgt. Buddy R. Byler, flight engineer; and Sergeants Kenneth Pall, illuminator operator; Joe B. Psalmonds Jr. and James L. Farrell, aerial gunners.

Canberra Briefing Twin (*Seventh Air Force News, October 9, 1968*)

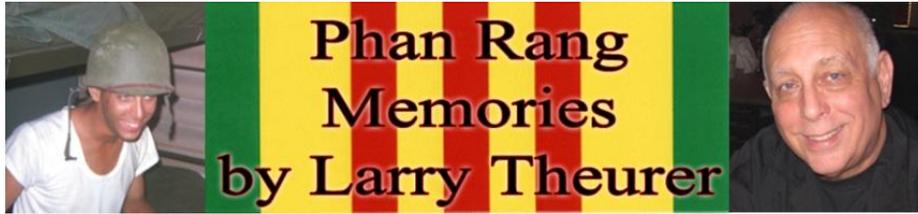


Sgt. Edward Jahn, East Nassau, N.Y. , explains the B-57 Canberra cockpit functions to twin, Army PFC. Robert Jahn. Edward, a B-57 maintenance man, arrived at Phan Rang AB last spring. Robert, a vehicle mechanic, arrived in August and is assigned to the 21st Supply and Services Company at Phan Rang.

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RATTIS NON GRATIS

Down the hill from the barracks was a chow hall in a big tent. We were issued Mess Kits to go there, a steel cup and fork, knife and spoon in a folding metal bowl.

After eating you would go out back of the mess tent and clean it in big garbage cans full of boiling water. You had to hold your kit carefully and not be stupid enough to drop into the water, like I did, or you would have to wait until chow was all over and they dumped the cans so you could retrieve your kit, like I had to.

“...there was a small rat curled up sleeping in my cup.”

In my locker I set my kit on the shelf with the steel cup next to it sitting top up. When I came back later and opened my locker, there was a small rat curled up sleeping in my cup. He looked at me and scampered out of a hole in the back of the locker. I had to hike down the hill to the chow hall and scrub the hell out of my cup. I then kept the cup face down on the shelf.

A month later I forgot and left the cup sitting up again. I open the locker and there is the same rat curled up in my cup again. Arrrrgh. I cleaned it and kept it inverted for weeks and then forgot again a third time and left it top up and damn there he was again. Three times. Same rat. He sure liked my cup for sleeping.

After that I never forgot to put it top down and put a weight on it.



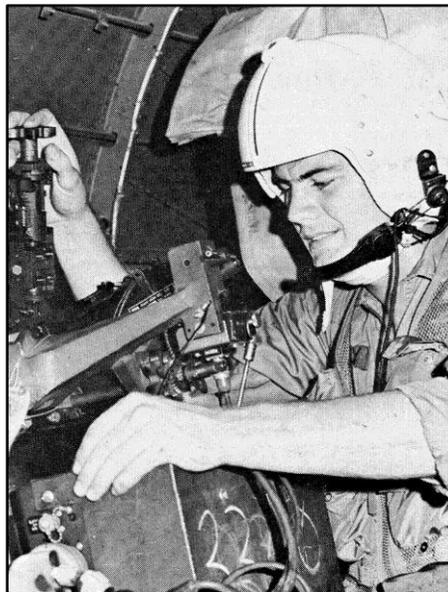
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Dragon’s Fire

A1C Michael C. Johnson, Orangedale, Calif., an aerial gunner with “C” Flight, 4th Special Operations Squadron at Phu Cat AB, removes the minigun covers during a check on the AC-47 Dragonship.



Bein Hoa Sergeant Ends ‘Busy’ Tour *(Seventh Air Force News, October 9, 1968)*

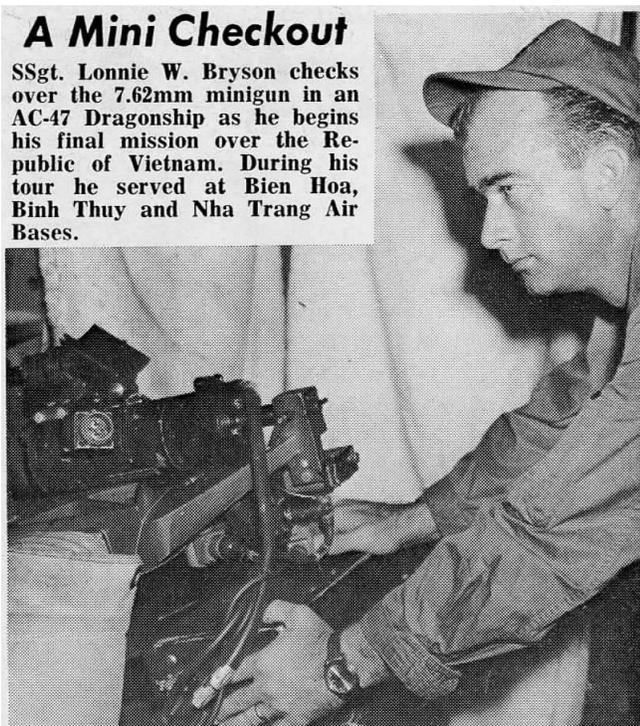
BIEN HOA—“It's been a hair-raising but rewarding tour” commented SSgt. Lonnie W. Bryson, Beaumont, Tex., after completing his final combat mission over the Republic of Vietnam.

Sergeant Bryson, an AC-47 Dragonship flight engineer with Flight C, 3rd Special Operations Squadron here has logged more than 1,000 combat flying hours in the fire-support aircraft during his year-long tour.

“I managed to get in on a lot of action because I transferred around a lot,” he commented. “Bien Hoa was the third base I saw duty at in Vietnam.”

A Mini Checkout

SSgt. Lonnie W. Bryson checks over the 7.62mm minigun in an AC-47 Dragonship as he begins his final mission over the Republic of Vietnam. During his tour he served at Bien Hoa, Binh Thuy and Nha Trang Air Bases.



Sergeant Bryson earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for a mission 20 miles south of Can Tho during the Tet Offensive. Enemy forces had succeeded in overrunning an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) outpost near the village of Phan Hiep by using human wave assaults.

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"We scrambled to the area while the friendlies headed for bunkers," said the Sergeant. "As soon as we were sure every friendly was under cover we shot up the area with our mini-guns. The next day, after the post was retaken, the friendlies counted 134 bodies as a result of our fire and 29 more that they had killed."

On another mission Sergeant Bryson and his crew came to the assistance of another outpost. Dodging heavy enemy .50-caliber fire the aircrew succeeded in knocking out two of the sites and destroying 12 enemy sampans trying to flee.

Helping the Underprivileged, That's...Civic Action

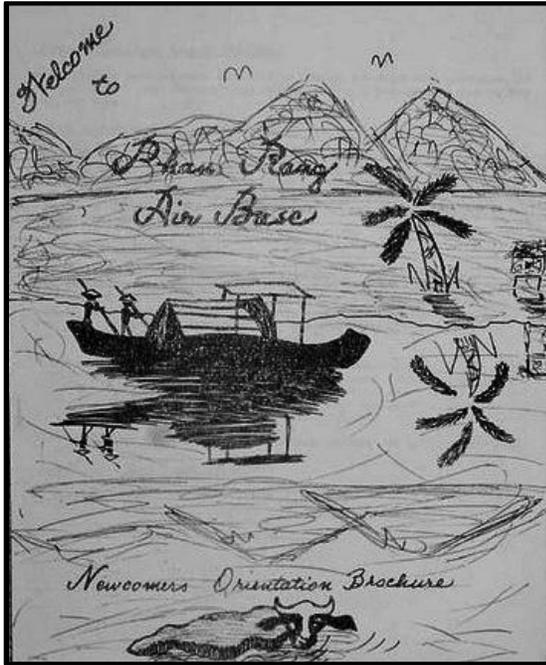


Vietnamese Children Get Their First Playground Set. Something new in Civic Action, a swing set manufactured by the 35th Field Maintenance Squadron members at Phan Rang AB was delivered recently to the Suoi Du hamlet school 12 miles north of the base. First Lt. Bryon A. Wolter (center), Algoma, Wisconsin, said, "The people had evidently never seen a playground swing before. But once we set it up and explained what it was for. they really had a good time.

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The cover for a Newcomers Orientation brochure, circa 1966-67.

Loadmaster Becomes Bombardier

Spooky, Ground Marker Flare Spell Fireworks for Rockets *(Seventh Air Force News, September 18 1968)*

DA NANG -SSgt. James W. Murray, Hayward, Calif., a loadmaster with the 4th Special Operations Squadron "A" Flight here became a bombardier on a recent AC-47 Dragonship mission.

The crew was flying in support of U.S. ground troops in contact with an unknown size enemy forces 11 miles southwest of Da Nang. While the Dragonship's miniguns fired into the enemy positions Lt. Col. Charles G. Memminger, Montgomery, Ala., commander of "A" Flight, ordered a ground marker flare to be dropped.

A ground marker flare does not have a parachute attached, but drops straight to the ground and is used as a reference point for the circling gunship. As the AC-47 passed over the target, Sergeant Murray kicked the flare out the door.

"I believe the flare hit a cache of rockets, because when the fireworks went off, there was a pretty good explosion directly below us."

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The initial explosion was approximately 25 yards in diameter where the flames and debris shot up, and a sustained fire followed.

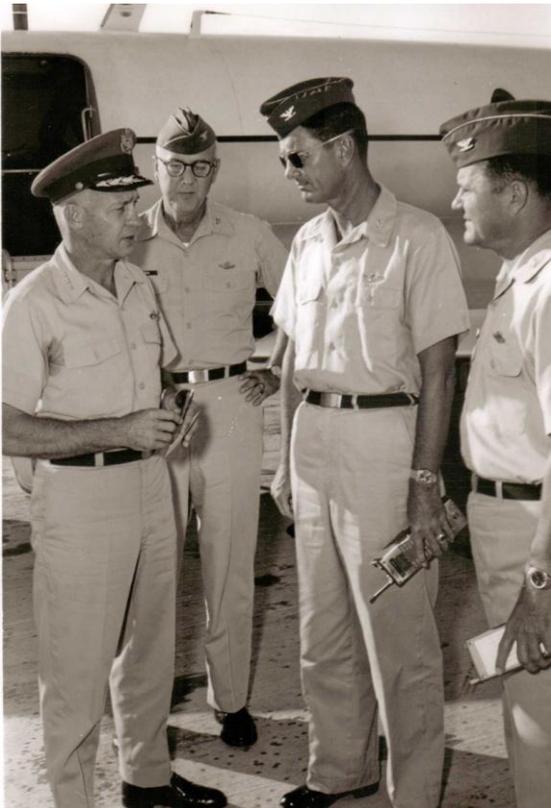
"I was really surprised when I saw the explosion," stated Colonel Memminger, "Sergeant Murray notified me what had happened over the intercom just as the shock waves hit the airplane.

"Our first thoughts were that artillery had caused the secondary explosions," said Capt. George J. Fournier, Bethel, Conn., student navigator, "but a radio check confirmed that no artillery was aimed in our direction."

Colonel Memminger then maneuvered the AC-47 around so he could see the blaze below.

"I just couldn't believe it," said A1C Carl W. Wagenfuehr, Floresville, Tex., aerial gunner.

Ten to 15 minutes later, crew members saw enemy soldiers trying to put out the flames by shoveling dirt on the fire.



GENERAL WELLS VISITS PHAN RANG AB

PHAN RANG AB, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
(7AF)

Lieutenant General Nelson W. Wells (left)
U.S. Air Force Inspector General (IG) arrives here as part of an inspection tour. He is greeted by Colonels Walter T. Galligan (2nd right) 44, Bronx N.Y. commander of the 35th Tactical Fighter wing; and Leslie J. Campbell Jr. (right) 46, of Great Bend, Kan., commander of the 315th Special Operations Wing. Accompanying the general is Colonel C.J. Ellen Jr., Seventh Air Force IG
(Photo by A1C Christopher P Boles)
Dated Sept 28 1969

Young Us/Old Us



The pictures are what I like to call before and after pictures of a 50+ year friendship. The first picture is Neil Pillar and myself (Jim Kucipeck) taken in Phu Cat, TDY from Phan Rang in the spring of '68. We attended Tech School in Lowry and served in Kunsan, Korea and of course Phan Rang. Although we have seen each other off and on thru the years and talk frequently it will be great to see him and share "war stories" with the rest of the gang at the reunion. Note in the first pictures the "cocktails and hors d'oeuvres" after a hard day in the bomb dump. In the second picture there are no beverages, probably just had our Gaviscon!

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Written by PETER FONDA · DENNIS HOPPER · TERRY SOUTHERN
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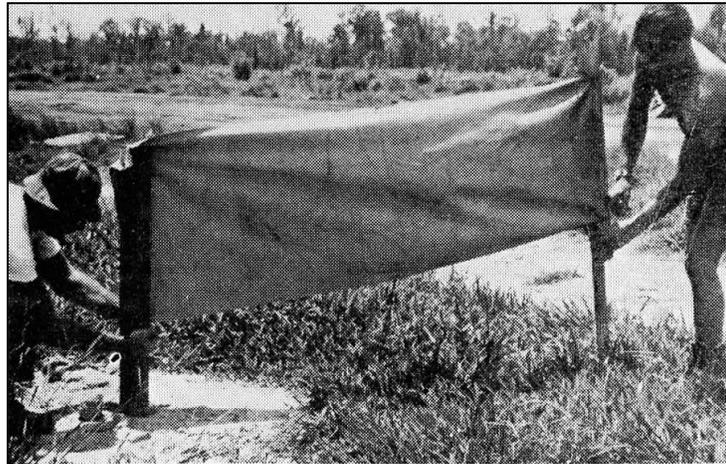
‘...Hard to Get Supplies Without Airlifts.’

SAIGON — Sky King stared somewhat anxiously at the red blotch smeared across the clouds by the late afternoon sun, then glanced quickly — almost imperceptively — at the treeline flanking the perimeter runway at Thien Ngon Civilian Irregular Defense Group Camp (CIDG).

After heavy attacks on the camp in late September, SSgt. Howard "Sky" King was understandably apprehensive.

BEYOND THE AIRSTRIP, where the tangled Vietnam jungle stretched four full miles to the Cambodian border, the naked perimeter provided no buffer between him and whomever the woods concealed.

"Hey Sky!" SSgt. Jimmy C. Grisham, Ecu, Miss., cut into Sergeant King's reverie. "The panels are all laid out. Now it's just a waiting game." At 22, Sergeant Grisham was almost too young to be five pay grades above the rank of the Air Force recruit. Something like one man in a thousand makes it that quickly.



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"Great," grinned the other. The plastic panels were raised on poles facing west at calculated intervals up and down both sides of the runway.

When the C-130 aircrew arrived, flying in supplies from the 834th Air Division at Tan Son Nhut AB, the pilot would have to rely totally on the panels to tell him where to release his load.

BECAUSE THE CAMP'S washboard-dirt airstrip was difficult to land on, and because of the danger to any airplane landing at a potential combat arena like Thien Ngon — which straddles a major communist infiltration route — the chiefs at division headquarters decided to have the much-needed ammunition and equipment airdropped to the Green Beret advisors and their Vietnamese CIDG forces.

Several days ahead of the drop an Air Force combat control team from Tan Son Nhut's 8th Aerial Port Squadron was dispatched to Thien Ngon to set up a drop zone, coordinate with the Special Forces team commanders and recover parachutes and pallets after the drop. For this mission the chiefs sent one of their best three-man teams led by "Sky" King.

Sergeant King had chosen young Grisham and another staff sergeant, Ernest C. Shervey, Alexandria, La., for his team.

THE CREW HAD scouted the drop zone, conferred with local Special Forces and ARVN commanders on where and how the drop was to be made, and set up equipment for recovery of the loads.

Then they scrutinized the airstrip where the load was to land, double-checked the positions of the panels, and sent a radio message asking that the transport have fighter cover and that there be forward air controllers in the area to direct any necessary strikes.

The difficulty with the drop would be the ever-present possibility of enemy fire. That lumbering airplane—coming in so low and slow — makes a great target.

THE C-130 HERCULES would have to make only one pass, drop its load, then nose up sharply and head home. Because the small camp had little heavy equipment for recovery of heavy loads like the ammunition, the cargo pallets would have to be set on the airstrip itself.

Therefore, between the camp commander, the Air Force airdrop mission commander, and 834th AD planners, a low-altitude parachute extraction drop (LAPES) was decided upon.

The LAPES method requires the pilot to fly over the strip just a few feet off the ground as a parachute is shot out the rear of the airplane. The canopies catch the wind and whips the cargo out and onto the ground, where, braked by the chutes the pallets slide to a quick stop.

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A CRACKLING VOICE on the radio told Sergeant King the C-130 was a minute away. At the same time a pair of thundering F-100 Supersabres screamed over the camp and out into a gyre over the woods at an impossibly low altitude.

Suddenly the cargo transport swooped in toward the strip. The NCO braced and watched anxiously. The other controllers shielded their eyes as the aircraft swept over the strip.

Then the airstrip disappeared under a storm of dust. Clouds swirled up, obscuring the C-130 as its four 4,050-horsepower Allison engines roared along the strip.

WITH A THUD barely audible above the

engines, three pallets shoved out the rear and skated to a halt dead-center on the airstrip.

The Green Beret commander praised the airdrops, saying he would be hard-put to get supplies without them. "I hope those riggers and aircrews at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base (where the transports depart) know how much good they are doing us."

(Story source: Seventh Air Force News, December 18, 1968.)



Ground to Air Communications. SSgt. Jimmy C. Grisham, controls radio communications between the ground site and the C-130 Hercules transport on a LAPES at Thien Ngon CIDG Camp. It is wet in that ditch, bet the camp needs those supplies!



Thanks to
Lanny Atherton

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‘Spooky’ Maintenance Men Net High Praise (*Seventh Air Force News, December 18, 1968*)

DA NANG — "They're some of the best in the Air Force. They have trained hard, and become proficient in a very short time under the most unusual circumstances," says SMSgt. John C. Ornelas, maintenance superintendent of "A" Flight, 4th Special Operations Squadron at Da Nang Air Base.

"Through them," he continued, "Spooky" is able to take to the sky each night and eliminate one of the enemy's most potent advantages — darkness."

Sergeant Ornelas was speaking of the 22 maintenance specialists who take care of the five AC-47s of "A" Flight, and work around-the-clock to keep them flying.

"Spooky" flies all night, every night, providing illumination and, when needed, devastating firepower to allied positions in contact with enemy forces. The flight provides this special defense for the entire I Corps area.

Since the unit's arrival in February, flight aircraft have been maintained at an in-commission rate of 98.9 percent and utilization rate of 98 per cent. Further evidence of the outstanding maintenance rendered to the "Spooky" aircraft is the fact that during the first four months of their stay here, there were no aborts of any kind and 100 per cent in-commission and utilization rates. The five aircraft average more than 600 flying hours per month.

Sergeant Ornelas, San Antonio, credits this record -to well qualified

line chiefs and shift leaders who "always get the best efforts from the aircraft mechanics."

These mechanics perform all



'Spooky' Maintenance. 'Spooky' maintenance men, Sgt. Gary B. Palker, Glen Ridge, N.J., and A1C Andrew P. Robbins, Des Plaines, Ill. (right), perform minor maintenance on the engine of one of the 'Spooky' gunships assigned to "A" Flight of the 4th Special Operations Squadron at Da Nang AB.

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maintenance required to keep the aircraft flying, including special and calendar inspections, daily pre-flight and postflight maintenance, and engine and flight control changes. They also load the flares and minigun ammo, launch, recover and turn the AC-47s around.

Since "A" Flight has a night mission, the majority of the maintenance is performed during the day. Other daytime activities are maintenance and flight training to keep all personnel honed to a razor's edge of perfection. This training pays off, since seldom is an aircraft out of commission for more than two hours.

The night crew is concerned primarily with launching, recovering and turning the aircraft round for another mission. This consists of refueling, rearming and getting Spooky back into the air with as little delay as possible.

Vietnamese Workers Prove Integral Part Of Air Force Team (*Seventh Air Force News, December 18, 1968*)

PHAN RANG — Phan Rang AB employs more than 1,500 Vietnamese civilians. The vital tasks they perform in supporting the tactical air and close air and support mission of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing here range from administrative work to painters, carpenters, automotive mechanics and food service technicians.

Initial civilian recruiting was hectic but in the past two years the Vietnamese have settled in, integrated with their American Air Force counterparts, and are now an invaluable part of the Air Force team.

Examples of their progression are Tran Dam who, first employed as a cook's helper, is now head Vietnamese cook in one dining hall.

Nguyen Van Thanh, civilian liaison officer for the base civic action office, has been called "indispensable" by 1st Lt. Bryan A. Wolter, Algoma, Wis.

Miss Tran Thi Ngoc Diep, 35th Transportation Squadron, was one of the first two Vietnamese employees to be awarded the civilian Sustained Superior Performance Award, a cash bonus for continued outstanding work.

A vehicle radiator repairman has taught his skill to an endless number of young airman auto mechanics. There are but a few examples of the many accomplishments that have made the Vietnamese a vital work force at Phan Rang.

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**GIDEON EARNS ‘ABLE
AERONAUT’**

PHAN RANG AB, Republic of Vietnam (7AF)
OUTSTANDING AIRMANSHIP
The Pacific Air Force’s “Order of the Able Aeronaut” is present to First Lieutenant Francis C. Gideon Jr. (left) 24, by Colonel Frank L. Gailer Jr. , 45, Arlington VA commander 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang Air Base. Gideon’s “outstanding airmanship” enabled him to land his crippled F-100 Supersabre with minimal damage. (USAF Photo)



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Reds Shut Down Saigon Base (*Sandusky Register, Wednesday, April 16, 1975*)

SAIGON (UPI) - Tank-led Communist forces captured another provincial capital today, shut down Bien Hoa air base for nearly six hours with an artillery barrage and routed a South Vietnamese regimental base outside the province capital of Xuan Loc.

The series of military setbacks shook the morale of war-weary government troops fighting to keep the remnants of a dwindling South Vietnam from falling into Communist hands. They coincided with reports the Communists had established an air base at Pleiku in the Central Highlands.

The Communists, moving under a barrage of more than 1,000 shells, overran the 2,000-man regiment of the 18th Division at Gia Kiem eight miles northwest of Xuan Loc which is 38 miles northeast of Saigon. By nightfall, field reporters said, the battered outfit had retreated to Trang Bom only 23 miles from the capital.

The regiment, which some field reports said appeared to be 80 per cent destroyed, blew up eight American supplied 105mm and 155mm howitzer artillery pieces before fleeing, military sources said.

Sources said other government troops today abandoned the province capital of Phan Rang, on the south China Sea coast 165 miles northeast of Saigon, when it was attacked by a 5,000-man Communist force moving with tank support.

It was the 18th provincial capital lost to the Communists in the current offensive and left the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in full control of Ninh Thuan Province. The Communists now control 18 of South Vietnam's 44 provinces and two-thirds of the nation's territory.

Military sources said government warplanes bombed the Phan Rang air base after the city's 2,500 defenders fled to ships waiting offshore. Two South Vietnamese generals were feared trapped in the city, and Communist tanks were reported cruising the streets.

Intelligence sources said the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had established what they considered their main air base in the fallen Central Highlands province capital of Pleiku. 230 miles north of Saigon.

The sources said at least one Korean War-vintage MIG19 jet and some Soviet-built helicopters were on the ground at the Pleiku airfield.

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Communist troops meanwhile today fired more than 30 rounds of 130mm artillery into the government's major airbase at Bien Hoa 14 miles northeast of Saigon and headquarters for South Vietnam's Military Region III.

Military sources said the barrage destroyed at least four F5 jet fighterbombers on the ground and the base was closed for nearly six hours. The sources said at least two airmen were killed and three injured in the 7 a.m. shelling. The 130mm gun is the biggest and most feared weapon in the Communist arsenal with a range of 17 miles.

Despite the defeat sustained by the 18th Division outside Xuan Loc the strategic city apparently remained in government hands. The South Vietnamese units at Gia Kiem moved down provincial Highway 20 and then onto Highway 1 on which they made their way to Trang Bom, field reports said. Although Bien Hoa was closed during the morning, government F5 jets were flying missions around Xuan Loc by early afternoon.

Military sources said North Vietnamese gunners bombarded Bien Hoa Air Base near Saigon with rockets and artillery today, halting air strikes against Communists, advancing toward the South Vietnamese capital.

The sources said the Communists fired a 10-minute, 30-round rocket and artillery barrage at Bien Hoa and the nearby government military headquarters for the Saigon area.

Two busloads of American contractors were turned back at the gates of the shellbattered air base after the shelling and ordered to return to Saigon.

There were no immediate reports on casualties at Bien Hoa, 14 miles northeast of Saigon.

The Communists also stepped up pressure on the besieged provincial capital of Xuan Loc, considered by many military strategists as the key to the battle for Saigon.

Military sources said Communist infantry, attacking under the cover of a 1,000-round shelling barrage, overran a government outpost eight miles northwest of Xuan Loc.

The sources said the defenders destroyed eight American-made howitzers before retreating toward Xuan Loc, 38 miles northeast of Saigon along French-built Highway 1.

The military command in Saigon also reported fierce ground fighting less than two miles northwest of Xuan Loc. A spokesman said 32 Communists were killed in one clash. Three government soldiers were reported wounded.

The pilots of government warplanes reported killing 121 Communists and destroying 16 artillery pieces Tuesday in raids nine miles northwest of Xuan Loc.

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**“Stories worth telling”
USAF B-57B (878)**



Photo by Gary Stone

 <p>Joe Schwarzer: John, That may be #878. The info. I have on # 876 says it exploded on takeoff from Da Nang on 1/11/1966 killing both crewmen.</p>	 <p>Raymond Witbrodt: Looks like a load crew waiting for bombs and ammo.</p>
 <p>John Hennigar: Check out the guy on the bicycle.</p>	 <p>Jerry Leonard: Before all the aircraft had revetments, parking plans for the night were hand carried to the crews by bicycle. Later, after dark, the aircrafts would be moved around so that Charlie would not know the locations.</p>
 <p>Joe Schwarzer: It has to be 878. Just checked the info on 870 and it was shot down 8/6/1964 and unfortunately the crew was also lost.</p>	

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 72

“Stories worth telling”



Click on the logo to make your hotel reservations.



Phan Rang AB “Happy Valley” Reunions

**Dayton
2012**

**San Antonio
2013**



**Tucson
2014**

Reunion Comments	
Annette	Always great thoughts about the re-union & the friendships made!!
Jeremy	Can't wait for the next one.
Doug	It just makes me feel good thinking about that reunion!
Joyce	Me too, Doug; one of the highlights of my life.
John	...our wives are the “Chocks” for our loose wheels.
Roger	Didn't we have a good time?
Doug	I can't wait to do it all over again
Annette	Counting down the time to Oct. It will be great again!
Jack	... I mentioned in my original Post that there were only slightly more then 20 at the Dayton, Ohio reunion, I only knew three other guys. After a couple days together nobody could

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	<p>leave without dozens of hugs. In San Antonio, I was walking in for breakfast with Mike Granese, who lives near and traveled with me, when a complete stranger asked us if we wanted to join him. It turned out to be Robert Kellington (AKA Bob). Somewhere along the way we met Roger Burchett and his wife, Ina. Jim Kucipeck and his wife Betsy were total strangers until they sat at our table last year in Tucson. Doug Severt and Joyce Sims Severt along with Kirk Minert and his brother Paul have been friends since Dayton. We met Susan Byrnes Matherne and Lou in Dayton. These are only some of the ones who have ended up as Facebook friends. I understand being nervous walking into a crowd of strangers. Trust me! I'm just trying to let you know they won't be strangers for long. Somewhere during the weekend they magically turn in to Brothers and Sisters whom you love.</p>
Joseph	<p>I got on the plane at Atlanta bound for Tucson an Al Roberson, who I had never met , in a PRAB hat sat next to me and we BS'ed all the way to Arizona then we were picked up at the airport by Charlie Cafarelli who took me to the hotel after taking us both to lunch. These were both guys that I had never met before but treated me like a brother...And that's just on the way there...Ain't none of us strangers....just folks you ain't met yet.</p>
Jim	<p>... I would like to tell you my experience at the last reunion, Tucson, in Oct. of 2014.</p> <p>I really didn't know much about the reunion except a few sketchy details that I found on the internet. I wasn't a member of the Happy Valley group then and knew no one at the reunion. I told my wife about it and said that I wanted to attend. With little or no knowledge about the whole thing we booked a room and a flight to Phoenix with transportation to Tucson. When we arrived in Tucson Doug and Joyce Severt, along with the Ruggiero's, Ken Miller and others were all sitting in the lobby with Phan Rang shirts and hats so I knew that I was in the right place with the right people. I explained my situation and they were most welcoming and told me all the information that I needed.</p> <p>The rest is history, I met guys and gals that I never knew before, remember I knew no one before going to Tucson. Some guys were there before and after I left Phan Rang. We shared stories about our experiences at Phan Rang and had a few beers (well maybe more than a few)!</p> <p>If you are thinking about going, do it, you won't be sorry! If you're worried about going solo, don't, a lot of guys did. The wives that did attend enjoyed themselves. It was a cathartic for me to attend as I kept so many of my feelings about my part in Vietnam bottled up for years. Just to talk about our shared experience with other PR vets made me feel so much better!</p> <p>Go to Charleston, you feel better for it!</p>

Note: I've created a reunion slideshow from pictures from all of the previous reunions. The show will be shown in Charleston and will also be available on DVD. It's really a trip down memory lane!

This newsletter was compiled by Douglas Severt. I'm currently going through all of the Seventh Air Force News papers that were loaned to me by Kirk Minert and making sure that I haven't missed anything before I send them back to him.