

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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**"Stories worth telling"**

In this issue:

**Air Base Feeds 120 Viet Orphans**

**"He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother"**

**Civilian Returns To PR**

**Veteran C-47 'Dragonship' Pilot Due to Command Spooky Flight**

**Phan Rang Memories by Larry Theurer: Strawberry Shortcake...War Is Hell**

**Capt. Howards War (Cartoon)**

**Combat Photogs Taste Ground War**

**Sgt Rick Dixon Receives Plaque**

**Reloading a Mighty Mini**

**Military Payment Certificates**

**'Long Arm of Law' Catches Pilot's Wife**

**Young Us/Old Us...Antonio Salazar & Tom Parsons**

**Gunner Uses Leave To Help Children**

**Royal Air Force Air Marshal Visits Phan Rang**

**554<sup>th</sup> CES Cited for 'V'**

**315<sup>th</sup> SOW Cites Webb**

**A-37 Pilots Clobber Enemy Concentration**

**'Spooky' Parents for Girl**

**F100 'Gas Stand' A Boon to Fliers**

**Tales of Phan Rang/Tales of Bien Hoa**

**Phan Rang AB Library**

**2015 Reunion Information**



**Air Base Feeds 120 Viet Orphans** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Thursday, December 21, 1967*)

**PHAN RANG, Vietnam**

Phan Rang AB aided 120 Vietnamese orphans who for two days were stranded without food because of a washed out road near Thap Cham.

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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**"Stories worth telling"**

Hearing of the plight of the children, Chaplain (Capt.) Guy Morgan, Brooklyn, phoned the Phan Rang civic actions officer, 1st Lt. Arthur J. Querido, 25, Hartford, Conn. Querido contacted the 35th Services Sq. and Sgt. John J. Quinn Jr., 26, West Newton, Mass., provided enough Ration meals to feed the children.

**"He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother"**



**Joe Schwarzer:** ...this photo ... is one of my favorites. It was taken at the strip in 68. Look closely and you can see the boy with his brother on his back.

The road is long  
With many a winding turn  
That leads us to who knows  
where  
Who knows when  
But I'm strong  
Strong enough to carry him  
He ain't heavy, he's my brother

So on we go  
His welfare is of my concern  
No burden is he to bear  
We'll get there  
For I know  
He would not encumber me  
He ain't heavy, he's my brother

If I'm laden at all  
I'm laden with sadness  
That everyone's heart  
Isn't filled with the gladness  
Of love for one another

It's a long, long road  
From which there is no return  
While we're on the way to there  
Why not share  
And the load  
Doesn't weigh me down at all  
He ain't heavy, he's my brother

He's my brother  
He ain't heavy, he's my  
brother...

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam  
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---

Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**

**Civilian Returns to PR** (*Seventh Air Force News, October 30, 1968*)

**PHAN RANG** — "I feel a much greater sense of accomplishment here than in civilian personnel work in the U.S. We have far more of a challenge in Vietnam," said Fred Johnson, Valparaiso, Fla., temporary civilian personnel officer at Phan Rang.

It was Mr. Johnson's second tour as civilian personnel officer in Vietnam and second stay at Phan Rang. His present permanent position is as chief, Employee Management Relations, Seventh Air Force.

During his first tour in Vietnam, in 1965-66 he established the Civilian Personnel Office at Nha Trang and then also accomplished the same task at Cam Ranh Bay AB.

*“I have found that the Vietnamese are intelligent, able and willing people.”*

For seven months, he divided his seven-day work week between the two bases, working five days at Cam Ranh and two at Nha Trang.

Later, he was reassigned to Phan Rang to head the civilian personnel facility there. "The six employees I recruited during my earlier stay here are still working in civilian personnel. The man who is now our Vietnamese civilian personnel chief had been working as a translator in the dining hall. I sort of stole' him," Mr. Johnson said.

"Although there has been tremendous improvement in the civilian personnel situation since the initial Air Force buildup three years ago," he said, "there is still a great potential for growth."

"By now, we've settled down to stable civilian employment. I have found that the Vietnamese are intelligent, able and willing people. Progress at this time is up to the supervisors — the Vietnamese can only learn as much as you teach them."

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**Veteran C-47 ‘Dragonship’ Pilot Due to Command Spooky Flight** (*Seventh Air Force News, October 30, 1968*)

**PHAN RANG** — The AC-47 Spooky" Dragonship is truly a remarkable aircraft, but more remarkable still are the men who fly it. One such man is Lt. Col. Andrew S. Dudley, Grandview, Mo.

Colonel Dudley, who will soon take command of "B" Flight, 3rd Special Operations Squadron, has more than 12,500 flying hours, many of them in the venerable C-47.



**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam  
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---

Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**

"Spooky" is the Air Force weapon charged with night support of friendly troops in contact with the enemy. It is armed with three 7.62 mm guns and carries flares for night illumination.

In 1944 Colonel Dudley "checked out" in the C-47. "It seems strange to be flying the same type plane after so many years," he said, "but it is still very useful in guerrilla-type warfare."

Since "Spooky" is primarily a night fighter, assessments of battle damage are almost impossible, but in other ways, the pilot usually knows what he has hit. "The friendly ground farces are always happy to see us coming in," the colonel continued, "because they realize the effect our firepower has on the enemy.

"As long as this type of combat goes on, there will always be a mission for Spooky," he concluded.



**STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE...WAR IS HELL**

They built a real nice chow hall in a big metal building somewhere North of the runway. Nice and cool inside and the food always very good. They had fresh milk in containers, not powdered milk.

The Army guys used to walk all the way from their camp to come eat there. Their eyes would be as big as half-dollars and their mouths hanging open in awe when they entered the chow hall door.

One day the menu was roast beef and mashed potatoes and peas and then afterward Strawberry Shortcake. But by the time I finished eating the main meal and went for desert I discover they had the shortcake and they had the strawberries but had run out of the whipped cream topping.

Boy was I mad. I'm thinking "What an outrage. How do they expect me to fight a war under these conditions? I should write my Congressman." HAHA

Years later at my job I used to eat lunch with group of civilians, a former Air Force guy my age who had also been to Clark and Viet Nam and three former Marines, one who had been wounded at Hue City.



**"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, Vietnam**  
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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**"Stories worth telling"**

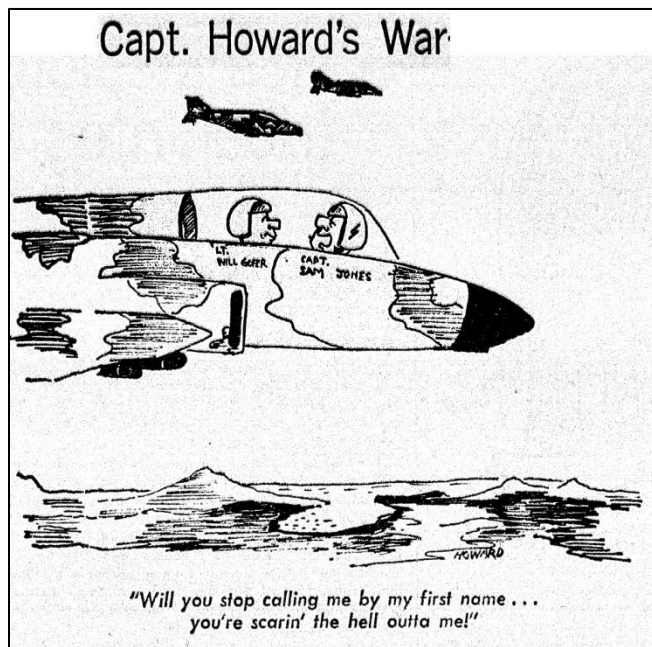
When the civilians would ask how tough it was in Vietnam I would relate the above story. Then I, my Air Force friend and the civilians would all get a big laugh at the reaction from the Marines who would be furious. One would say "Damn, I had to bury my canteen just to keep it lukewarm".

*...we would say "You should have joined the Air Force".*

The other Marine would tell how on his way to Vietnam his group passed through a West coast Air Force base. They were taken to an Air Force chow hall and were all in shock and awe at that place. They ate so much that the Air Force Colonel in charge of the chow hall went to the Marine Commander and ask him to tell the Marines not to eat so much because he was running out of food. They cleaned the place out going back through the line 4 times.

I and my Air Force friend would laugh at them and say "You should have joined the Air Force".

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Note: His first name is 'Sam'.

**Combat Photogs Taste Ground War** (*Seventh Air Force News, October 30, 1968*)

BY SSGT. RICHARD FULTON

**TAN SON NHUT**—During the recent action in the vicinity of Tay Ninh City, two photographers of the 600th Photo Squadron here, were on hand to cover a C-130 low altitude parachute extraction system (LAPES) resupply drop.

**"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, Vietnam**  
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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**"Stories worth telling"**

Sgt. Carl Leach, Baltimore, Md., and A1C Jerry L. Prestwood, Lendir, N.C., received a firsthand view of the ground war as the enemy attacked en force.

Sergeant Leach, a still photographer, and Airman Prestwood, a motion picture photographer, were on their way to Thien Ngon Special Forces camp to cover the resupply drop.

"This was my first time under fire on the ground," Sergeant Leach said. "I had had a little experience with a C-123 transport plane in the air but this was a lot different.



***First Hand View***

*A1C Jerry L. Prestwood, Lendir, N.C. walks to a helicopter landing pad at Thien Huong Special Forces camp after filming tactical air strikes against communist, positions concealed in the tree-line in background. (Photo by Sgt. Carl Leach)*

"Actually, the combat really started for us at Thien Ngon. Before we went out, we knew there was fighting in Tay Ninh City but it was far from where we would be."

The sergeant continued, "An Army helicopter flew us to the camp where we were to cover the LAPES drop. Right after we landed, the camp commander, a Special Forces captain, told us that just before we arrived, they had taken some Casualties. He also told us that the day before, a company-sized enemy force had been engaged right outside the perimeter, and at the present time, the camp was completely surrounded by Charlie.

"Soon after our conversation," the NCO said, "There was a good demonstration of air power and we got some good motion pictures of tactical fighter aircraft strafing the edge of the woods surrounding the camp.

"Due to enemy activity, the C-130 drop had been postponed until the next day. The camp had been under attack every night

from mortars and rockets.

"Airman Prestwood and I decided that we would take the camp commander's advice and took the next helicopter back to Tay Ninh.

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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**

"As we were leaving, we had a close call. Mortar fire started to explode nearby as we were boarding the helicopter. We made a spectacular escape under fire from that place; I will remember that the rest of my life."

"I had never been in a close combat situation until that trip," added Airman Prestwood.

"Special Forces troopers told us there was fighting in the town," he continued.

"I took some photos of the 105mm howitzers being fired. There were also some F-100 Supersabre air strikes going on. We could see the bombs explode but it was too far away to photograph."

Describing their hasty exit, Airman Prestwood said, "As we were loading our equipment onto the helicopter, mortar rounds started to explode all around us. The guys started throwing on equipment and everyone piled in. We had to get that chopper out of there fast!

"It was my first time under fire and I was sure glad to get back safely to Tan Son Nhut," he concluded.



Sgt. Rick Dixon receives a plaque for his service in the 614<sup>th</sup> TFS “Lucky Devils”.



**"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, Vietnam  
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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**"Stories worth telling"**

**Reloading a Mighty Mini** (*Seventh Air Force News, October 30, 1968*)



**RELOADING A  
MIGHTY MINI**

SSgt Robert W. Conley, Eufaula, Okla., an AC-47 Dragonship aerial gunner assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, Pleiku AB, reloads the number one minigun during a Dragonship mission.



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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**



**‘Long Arm of Law’ Catches Pilot’s Wife** (*Seventh Air Force News, October 30, 1968*)

**Small Offense but Lots of Red Tape**

**TUY HOA**—Oh the trials and tribulations daily encountered by a squadron commander! Recently Lt. Col. Fred J. Fink, Albuquerque, N.M., was confronted with a rather unusual request.

The colonel commands the 188th Tactical Fighter Squadron, a New Mexico Air National Guard unit on active duty with the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing at Tuy Hoa AB.

It seems that the wife of a squadron pilot got herself into a little "trouble" recently. Marjorie Van Scyoc, wife of Maj. James M. Van Scyoc, Albuquerque, was the defendant.

Mrs. Van Scyoc received a parking ticket from a security policeman at Kirtland AFB, N.M. Under the remarks section of the citation she was instructed to inform the unit commanding officer of the violation. She followed her instructions to the letter.

Correspondence concerning the case reached the office of Colonel Fink at Tuy Hoa. Mrs. Van Scyoc had gone to great lengths to bring the matter to his personal attention.

The letter read in part, "Enclosed you will find a parking ticket that appeared under the windshield wiper of my automobile on Sept. 4, 1968. Remarks instruct me to inform my commanding officer (you) of the incurred violation. As the commanding officer you will know the correct procedure in handling same. Would appreciate your expeditious handling of the matter".

Mrs. Van Scyoc further went to the "trouble" of having the letter notarized by Mrs. Sandra Quinlan, wife of Maj. David L. Quinlan, Albuquerque. Mrs. Quinlan is a notary public and her husband is also stationed here with the 188th TFS.

**"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, Vietnam  
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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

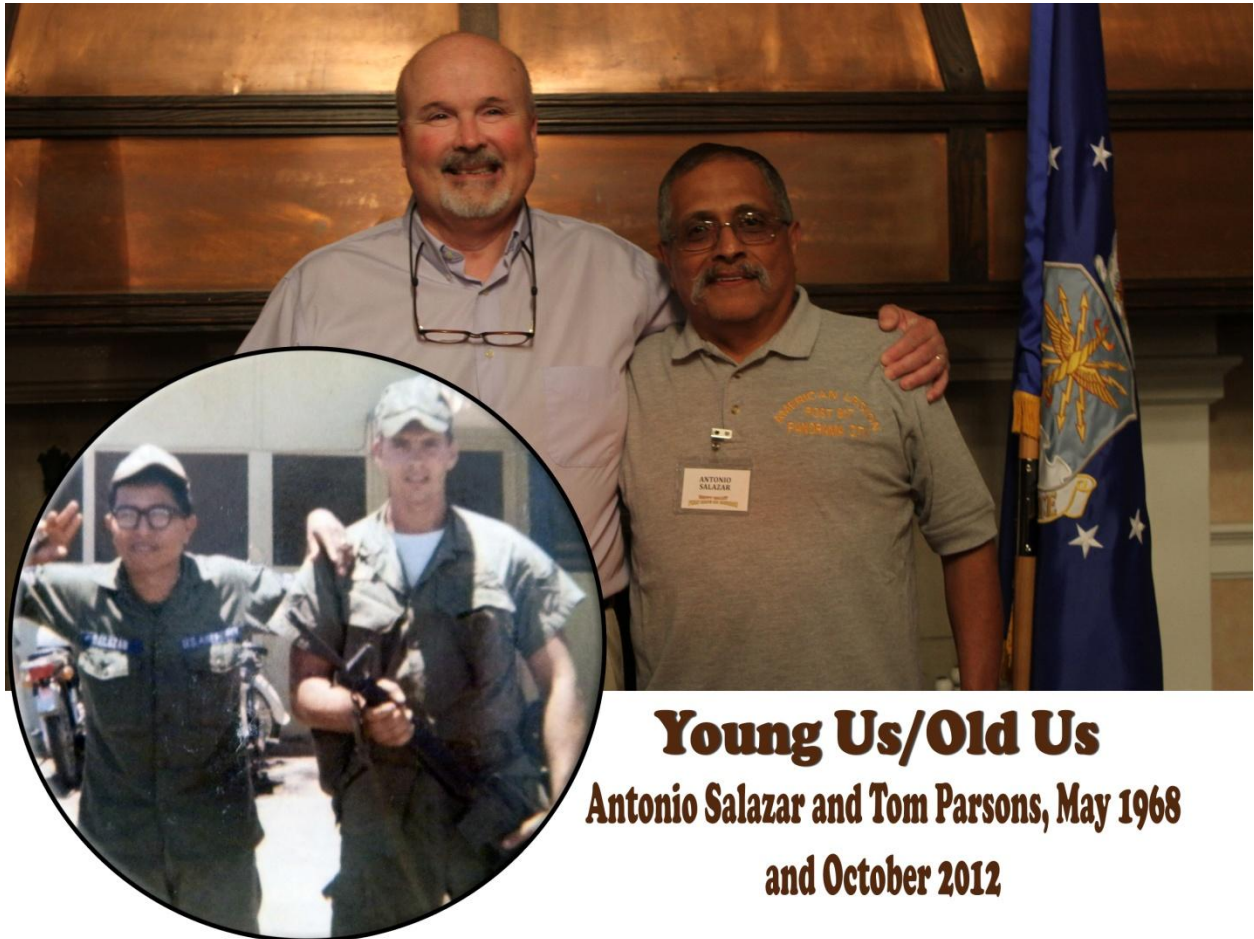
**"Stories worth telling"**

Witnesses to the document included Mrs. Janet M. King, wife of Maj. Vernon R. King, Albuquerque, and Mrs. Patricia J. McNerney, wife of Capt. Richard P. McNerney, Albuquerque. Both husbands, coincidentally, are fighter pilots with the 188th.

Perhaps the most unusual witness was Timothy Patrick McNerney, son of Captain and Mrs. McNerney. Young Timothy can't write. He's only one month old. However, he left his mark on the document just the same. His footprint was used instead of a signature.

Colonel Fink responded to the request with the normal efficiency found in a squadron commander. The letter was forwarded through channels to the Kirtland AFB staff judge advocate office. In addition, Mrs. Van Scyoc was "chewed out" via personal correspondence. "I even gave her husband a mild verbal tongue lashing", the colonel quipped.

**Young Us/Old Us...Antonio Salazar and Tom Parsons**



**Young Us/Old Us**  
**Antonio Salazar and Tom Parsons, May 1968**  
**and October 2012**

**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam  
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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**

**Gunner Uses Leave To Help Children** (*Seventh Air Force News, October 30, 1968*)

**NHA TRANG**—If you had 30 days leave to spend anywhere the world, where would you go? The U.S.? Europe? Australia?

The decision was an easy one for TSgt. Gerald A. Cooper, Detroit, Mich., an aerial gunner on an AC-47 Dragonship at Nha Trang AB.

He spent his leave in Vietnam.

"I've been visiting Thanh Hai orphanage outside Nha Trang regularly since I arrived in Vietnam 21 months ago," Sergeant and when I extended my tour for the second time, I decided to spend my leave working on a lot of things that needed to be done there."

"Most of the electrical wiring in the buildings had burned out," he said, "and I rewired the whole place. I also repaired generator and a water pump which were broken. I guess you'd say I was a sort of all-around handyman for 30 days."

Thanh Hai, founded by seven Catholic Sisters for the Love Cross in 1965, was "adopted" by the 4th Special Operations Squadron, of which Sergeant Cooper is a member, in November 1966. Since his arrival two months later, the aerial gunner has spent much of his spare time working at the orphanage.

"I normally spend two full days a week there," he said. On Wednesdays I bring any of the kids who need medical attention in to see a doctor, and on Fridays I carry supplies out to them and help with whatever work has to be done."

His latest project was a homemade wing set for the orphans, which he and several other squadron members assembled on a recent Sunday.

I guess it sounds kind of funny," he mused, "to spend a 30-day leave in Vietnam instead of going somewhere else. But those kids are great. They're polite and eager to please, and always ready to help with any kind of work that has to be done."

"And," Cooper concluded, they don't have anyone else to love or take care of them."

**(What a noble thing to do! I really admire TSgt. Cooper.)**



**"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, Vietnam  
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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**"Stories worth telling"**

**ROYAL AIR FORCE AIR MARSHAL VISITS PHAN RANG**



**PHAN RANG AB**, Republic of Vietnam (7AF)

Royal Air Force Air Marshal Sir Neil Wheeler (left) RAF commander FAR east Air Force is greeted upon arrival here by Colonel Walter T. Galligan (center), 44 Bronx, N.Y. , 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) commander and Brigadier General Homer K. Hansen, Director of the Seventh Air Force Tactical Air Control Center at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Air Marshal Wheeler also visited the Number 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, and the 315<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing, both stationed at Phan Rang. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Det. 5 600<sup>th</sup> Photo Sqdn.)

Release # PR-1—69-5  
By Major John Tabor

**554<sup>th</sup> CES Cited for 'V'** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Thursday, October 15, 1970)

**CAM RAHN 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.

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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**"Stories worth telling"**

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 2-mile portion of the base perimeter to provide frontline defense," it was noted.

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**315<sup>th</sup> SOW Cites Webb**

**PHAN RANG** - The 315th Special Operations Wing recently selected Sgt. Bobbie J. Webb, Thayer, Mo., Airman of the Month for May 1969. A 1965 graduate of Thayer Senior High School, he has been in the Air Force since 1966.

Prior to his entry into the service, Sergeant Webb was employed as a telegraph-communications operator with the Chicago-Northwestern Railroad. Reporting for Air Force duty, he was sent to Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., where he was trained as a welder.

Since then, through his initiative, he has become a qualified and certified heli-arc welder. In his three years service, he has quickly worked his way up the promotion ladder. He was recently selected for promotion to the rank of staff sergeant.



**Sergeant Webb, Airman of Month (USAF PHOTO)**

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**A-37 Pilots Clobber Enemy Concentration** *(Seventh Air Force News, October 11, 1968)*

**BIEN HOA**—Two A-37 pilots from the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing's 604th Special Operations Squadron here recently ripped apart an enemy concentration 35 miles north of Can Tho.

Piloting the aircraft were 1st Lt. Terry L. Hunt, Flowery Branch, Ga., and Capt. Grant H. Clayton, Aberdeen, N.C.

"Our target consisted mainly of fortifications scattered out in two heavily vegetated areas along a canal," Lieutenant Hunt related. "The FAC (Air Force forward air controller) marked the first spot and Captain Clayton started in.

"We got a little surprise then," Lieutenant Hunt said. "As Captain Clayton was releasing his first bombs, I saw several flashes directed at him. His bombs ripped out the whole area and caused an explosion that reacted like fuel because it gave off heavy black smoke. No more ground fire came from that area."

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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**

The lieutenant went through dry on his first pass because he couldn't get a clear picture of the target through the smoke.

"I rolled in on my second pass and laid the bombs about 75 meters beyond Captain Clayton's," Lieutenant Hunt continued.

"The whole area appeared to blow up and the FAC reported the fireball about 1,000 feet in diameter at the base. He figured it had to be TNT.

"We continued our attack, with the other aircraft strafing ahead of me to keep Charlie's head down so I could put my bombs in," the lieutenant concluded.

In addition to the two explosions, the FAC credited them with destroying eight enemy fortifications, one bunker and two sampans and damaging one fortification and two sampans.

*(This story is for Robert Chappelle who also had a tour of duty at Bien Hoa flying A-37's besides flying C-123's at Phan Rang.)*

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**‘Spooky’ Parents for Girl** *(Seventh Air Force News, October 11, 1968)*

**DA NANG** — A seven-man AC47 "Spooky" gunship crew of "A" Flight, 4th Special Operations Squadron here, has adopted a young Vietnamese girl to insure her continued education.

The Spooky crew wanted to provide educational assistance to the local Vietnamese children through personal contributions, so they decided to select one deserving student and concentrate their efforts on a single scholarship.

At the Bo De High School, in Da Nang, they found 16-yearold Nguyen Thi Thanh-Nhu, second year high school student, and one of eight children in her family.

A look at the Vietnamese girl's record indicated that she rated second in her class in her first high school year, but that the financial circumstances of her family would not allow them to continue her education.

The Spooky crew unanimously agreed that Thanh-Nhu deserved a break, and that they would sponsor her through another year of high school.

The Spooky crew members are: Majors Hansel E. Lee, Albuquerque, N.M.; Reubon E. Williams, Clara City, Minn.; Capt. George J. Fournier, Bethel, Conn.; Mgt. Leonard T. Rose, Oakdale, Conn.;



**“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, Vietnam**  
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---

Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**

SSgt. Dale P. Bost, Granite Falls, N.C.; and Sergeants Rody Egister Jr., Columbia, S.C., and Lloyd J. Marshall Jr., Scituate Harbor, Mass.

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**F100 ‘Gas Stand’ A Boon to Fliers** (*Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Thursday, June 15, 1967)

**PHAN RANG**, Vietnam (7AF) —With the completion of more than one mile of fuel pipeline, the thirsty F100 Super Sabres four tactical fighter squadrons' at Phan Rang Air Base are now able to get fuel in much the same way automobiles get gas at a service station.

A new hydrant refueling system employed by the 35th Supply Sq., commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas R. Jones, can refuel 12 jets simultaneously at a 'service station' on a ramp of the flightline.

Before the new system was inaugurated, pilots had to wait for a fuel truck to deliver gas.

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**Capt. Howard's War**



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

---

Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**

## **Tales of Phan Rang**

Series: Tales of Viet Nam, Book 1

By Robert Chappelle

An account of the author's one year tour of duty flying C-123 cargo aircraft in Viet Nam. Provides descriptions of life in country and the missions that were flown. Presented not as a political view but rather simply as an account of that year and what it was like to be there. The author was assigned to Viet Nam on 4 October 1968 as a C-123 co-pilot. He was a 24 year old 2nd Lieutenant recent graduate of USAF pilot training and on his first duty assignment. While there he participated in passenger flights, cargo delivery missions, air drops, and emergency resupply missions. He upgraded to aircraft commander and experienced many unique adventures in special forces camps, Philippine Islands, and Australia.

This book is a description of that year providing an insight into what it was like to live and fly in that conflict and during that time of the war.

## **Tales of Bien Hoa**

Series: Tales of Viet Nam, Book 2

By Robert Chappelle

Always wanting to be a fighter pilot, Bob Chappelle volunteered for a second tour of duty in Viet Nam. This is the story of that second tour. It is a telling of what it was like to fly the A-37 Close Air Support Fighter. This airplane was "the worlds smallest fighter, the fastest gun!" The airplane only weighted roughly 6000 pounds but the gun shot 6000 rounds a minute. Always wanting to be a fighter pilot, Bob Chappelle volunteered for a second tour of duty in Viet Nam. This is the story of that second tour. It is a telling of what it was like to fly the A-37 Close Air Support Fighter. This airplane was "the worlds smallest fighter, the fastest gun!" The airplane only weighted roughly 6000 pounds but the gun shot 6000 rounds a minute. The airplane quickly gained a reputation for superior accuracy and so it quickly became a favorite of both the Forward Air Controllers and the ground troops that it supported. This story of that year flying the airplane out of Bien Hoa Air Base Republic of Viet Nam relates what it was like to fly these missions. It describes in detail, daytime/night "fraggd" missions, "Sky Spots", daytime/night time "scrambles". The book includes descriptions of transitioning from flying cargo airplanes to flying this air to ground fighter. There are mission descriptions of missions flown in close support of friendly troops, missions flown in mountains, and exciting missions like what it is like to hit a tree with the airplane going about 300 MPH.

These books can be downloaded for reading on your Kindle, Ipad, tablet or computer. I previously just downloaded and read Tales of Phan Rang but then when I was talking to a friend the other day he told me that he was reading Tales of Bien Hoa and it is just as exciting and written with as much detail to make you think you are there as Tales of Phan Rang. I've downloaded it for my Ipad and will be reading it during my upcoming vacation. To buy either [Tales of Phan Rang](#) or [Tales of Bien Hoa](#), just click on the link and it will take you directly to the Smashwords site.

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**...keeping the memories alive**

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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**“Stories worth telling”**

**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...‘keeping the memories alive’)*

To download any of the previous issues of the Phan Rang AB News, just click the hyperlink of the desired issue. I’ve redone all the links and now anyone can access them. These documents are viewable on your Kindle, Ipad in IBooks or on your tablet. Download them and read them at your leisure on your mobile device.

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<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>
<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>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 65</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 66</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 67</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 68</a>
<a href="#">Phan Rang News 69</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 70</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 71</a>	<a href="#">Phan Rang News 72</a>



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

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Phan Rang AB News No. 73

**"Stories worth telling"**



**Click on the logo to make your hotel reservations.**

**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 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion is shaping up to be the best ever and one of the largest. I have to add a caveat because nothing can beat the very first reunion when many of us met for the very first time and some had not seen each other since leaving Vietnam. We are also going to have some very interesting speakers. You will not be disappointed...make your reservations now!**

**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.**