

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 77

“Stories worth telling”

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New, Larger Dental Clinic Opens with Increased Staff (*Phan Fare' The Happy Valley Weekly, July 3, 1969*)

Brief ceremonies were held recently at Phan Rang AB to mark the opening of the new dental clinic facility.

The base dental clinic was moved from temporary quarters in the 35th USAF Dispensary to an adjacent, newly constructed building. This larger structure will enable the dental staff to more efficiently meet the increasing dental needs of Phan Rang personnel.

Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr. 35th TFW commander, cut the ribbon at the grand opening ceremony and was also the first official patient at the new facility.

Under construction since the middle of March, the clinic has, eight dental treatment rooms, a laboratory, administrative offices, waiting room and conference room.

Also moving in the building were the Military Public Health and Medical Materiel offices. The military Public Health office monitors working areas for health hazards and checks Vietnamese employees to make sure they comply with physical examination requirements and have current health cards.

The Medical Materiel office stores and distributes all medical supplies for the dispensary and other organizations on base.

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The clinic will provide complete dental service, Stated Lt. Col. James D. Browning, dental officer in charge of the clinic. “Our present staff of four dental officers and fourteen technicians will be increased to keep up with our enlarged dental operation.”

"Not only will, the dental clinic serve the personnel of Phan Rang Air Base," added the doctor. "But dental treatment will also be made available to the MAC-V (Military Assistance Command-Vietnam) team in Phan Rang City and Army personnel who are stationed at camps as far away as Phan Thiet."

Dental treatment is not limited to the military. About three days a week, the clinic conducts DENCAP (Dental Civic Actions Program) in the local Phan Rang area. On a rotating basis, a team of one dental officer and at least two technicians visit the communities of Thap Cham, Long Tre Province and Phan Rang City to give free dental aid.

Yellowbird Wins Maconomy Award (*Phan Fare' The Happy Valley Weekly, July 3, 1969*)

A member of the 8th, Tactical Bombardment Squadron "Yellowbirds" recently received a MACONOMY Achievement Certificate at Phan Rang AB.

Lt. Col. Louis I. Lawrence, a navigator-bombardier in the squadron's B-57 Canberra bomber, had conducted an inventory of the unit's property. As a result \$19,000 of excess property was returned to supply channels for use by other units. He also saved an additional \$700 on other projects.

Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr. 35th TFW commander, made the presentation.

Col. Gailer Leaves For England To Head Wing Slated For F-111 (*Phan Fare' The Happy Valley Weekly, August 8, 1969*)

It has been 25 years now since Colonel (then 1st Lt) Frank L. Gailer Jr. bailed out of his flaming P-51 Mustang fighter plane and into Germany where he spent the last seven months of World War II as a prisoner of war.

This week Colonel Gailer will be leaving for England on more than a sentimental visit. It was from a base in England in 1944 that he became a fighter ace credited with destroying 61/2 enemy airplanes before he was shot down and interned--all before his 22nd birthday.

In England, Colonel Gailer will command the 48th TFW, an F-100 Super sabre-equipped Wing similar to the 35th TFW which he has commanded for the past year. The 48th TFW is slated to convert to the variable sweep winged F-111 fighter-bomber.

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"It is a challenge I look forward to," the colonel told Phan Fare. "I expect the transition from F-100s to the F-111's to have all the problems anything new has to offer."

Colonel Gailer himself piloted his F-100 on 235 of those missions.

After commanding his 35th TFW in combat, any future assignment could very well be anticlimatic. After all, since his arrival at Phan Rang Air Base last September, the F-100s and B-57s of the 35th TFW flew more than 27,000 missions in combat. Colonel Gailer himself piloted his F-100 on 235 of those missions.

"To have accomplished the mission and send my people home alive, safe, and uninjured...(is his) greatest satisfaction."

When asked what his greatest satisfaction was as 35th commander, the colonel replied without hesitation, "To have accomplished the mission and send my people home alive, safe, and uninjured. Unfortunately, we've lost some people and aircraft, which you expect in combat."

Colonel Gailer also had the ground defense of Phan Rang Air Base foremost in his thoughts. "I feel a very strong sense of personal pride in what my people have done, what we've worked to achieve here in making Phan Rung one of the most secure bases in Vietnam. The times the enemy has attacked it has been at great loss to himself. We've convinced the enemy that Happy Valley is not the base to attack."

Speaking in his office at Phan Rang, the colonel had the highest praise for the performance of 35th airmen from air crews to Mechanics.

"It's been a very, very hard working year for all these men working 10, 12 hour days," He said with appreciation in his voice. "Remember, we're not close to a big town where the airmen can go for a break from the work routine. We are all by ourselves; therefore, we have to be able to run our program within the barbed wire (base perimeter) and to keep our people reasonably happy during this long lonesome year.

"I don't think anyone questions that we've got some of the finest maintained aircraft.."

"I'm as impressed as I can be with the young airmen," Colonel Gailer continued. "They're really good. I've had two very young airmen crew chiefs on my plane. I don't think anyone questions that we've got some of the finest maintained aircraft over here. It's a big outfit, a big operation, and its got good operation right up and down the line."

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Backing up the colonel’s claim to having “some of the finest maintained aircraft” in Vietnam is the fact that the 35th has won the 7AF Daedalian Maintenance Trophy Award two years running.

Construction on the base during the last 11 months has set some sort of record with the compleion of more than 120 major projects ranging from the theatre to the hobby shop. Colonel Gailer sees no slowdown in the continuous improvement of the base.

“We’re putting an emphasis on building more and improving the present enlisted housing,” he said. “A program is underway to brick revet all airmen dormitories in the next year.

“...we make Happy Valley a brighter place to be.”

“As much as we can, we make Happy Valley a brighter place to be. Of course the toughest job for anybody here is being away from one’s family. A year’s a long time.”

Colonel Gailer will be meeting his family in Denver upon his return to the United States. After another stop at his home in Arlington, Va., the colonel and his family will leave for England in early September.

Phan Rang Unit Redesignated (*Air Force Times, 28 January 1970*)

PHAN RANG AB—The 315th Special Operations Wg. has been redesignated as the 315th Tactical Airlift Wg. Its four special operations squadrons were simultaneously redesignated as tactical airlift squadrons.

The change was made to better reflect the primary mission of the 315th—providing tactical airlift support as needed for allied forces throughout South Vietnam.

Flying the jet-equipped C-123, crews of the 315th can carry up to nine tons of cargo at a time, and can land at more than 100 airstrips in the country.

Commanded by Col. L. J. Campbell Jr., the wing flies more than 9000 tactical airlift sorties a month, carrying more than 25,000 tons of food, fuel, equipment and ammunition.

War Zone Reports

Highlights of '67 In the War Zone (*Air Force Times, January 17, 1968*)

For Pacific Air Forces (PacAF), 1967 proved to be a year unparalleled in its history. While meeting USAF and Pacific Command commitments by providing aerial deterrence and defense to a vast portion of the earth's surface, PacAF was heavily involved in air support of the war in Southeast Asia.

During the year, a number of new targets in North Vietnam, formerly off-limits, were struck by USAF fighter-bombers. Heavy losses were inflicted on enemy resources, manpower and materiel.

The year also produced an increase in aerial dogfights between USAF and Communist-built MIGs.

A record number of sorties were flown in South Vietnam, as were missions in the North. Rescue crews continued to make some of the most hazardous flights of the war, penetrating deep into North Vietnam to rescue downed aircrew members.

Daily attacks against enemy troop concentrations were made by B-52s. Supply areas in South Vietnam, enemy buildup areas near the demilitarized zone and the Mu Gia Pass area in North Vietnam were all struck by heavy bombers.

Cargo and passenger airlift records were broken virtually every month of the year.

JANUARY

In aerial combat over North Vietnam, pilots of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wg. downed seven MIG-21s January 2 over the Red River Valley. This was the largest number of MIGs downed in a single day of the Vietnam war.

As the new year began, 2158 combat strike sorties were flown in South Vietnam by USAF pilots—a weekly record.

Aeromedical evacuation personnel of the 315th Air Div. recorded a new high for the number of patients handled in a single month. During the first week in January, more than 1980 patients were air evacuated from the Far East and Southeast Asia to Western Pacific hospitals.

FEBRUARY

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Striking deep into the heart of North Vietnam, USAF jets hit the previously untouched Thai Nguyen railroad yard, 35 miles north of Hanoi, February 3.

USAF fighter-bomber pilots established a new single day record February 22, flying 397 tactical strike sorties.

During the early morning hours of February 27, Viet Cong heavy artillery shelled Da Nang AB and the adjoining Vietnamese village of Ap Do, killing 47 persons including 12 Americans, and wounding 45 others, 30 of them U.S. servicemen. This was the first time Communists used longrange, eight-inch rockets in the ground war. Eleven U.S. aircraft were destroyed or damaged in the attack.

USAF aircraft participated in the first troop parachute drop of the war when the 173d Airborne Brigade jumped in support of Operation Junction City.

MARCH

USAF F-105s and F-4s struck the Thai Nguyen steel plant March 10 for the first time.

Capt. Max C. Brestel, 355th TFW, became the first double MIG-killer of the Vietnam war when he downed two MIG-17s during a single mission March 10.

Correspondents from throughout the world visited Takhli RTAFB March 10 when the U.S. and the Thai governments jointly announced USAF pilots were flying bombing missions over North Vietnam from Royal Thai air bases.

The one-billionth psychological warfare leaflet was dropped over North Vietnam from a C-130 March 31.

APRIL

In the largest tactical airlift unit move of the war, C-130s of the 315th Air Div. transported the entire 196th Light Inf. Bde. from Tay Nith to Chu Lai. Division aircraft flew 351 sorties, transporting some 3500 troops and 4000 tons of equipment. The move took place April 9-14.

USAF fighters bombed Hoa Loc airfield, 17 miles southwest of Hanoi, April 24. This was the first time a North Vietnamese airfield was bombed.

MAY

Pilots of the 8th TFW shot down seven MIGs May 20. May became the biggest "MIG-kill" month of the Vietnam war, when 21 MIGs were claimed by USAF pilots.

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Phu Cat AB, Vietnam, became combat operational May 29.

The 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Gp. of the 315th Air Div. set a new record, moving 12,298 patients during a single month.

JUNE

The first O-2 arrived in Vietnam June 9, and were scheduled for duty as forward air controller aircraft and for psychological warfare.

The USAF's airlift total in Southeast Asia surpassed the Berlin Airlift cargo tonnage figure 1,783,000 June 11.

The first enlisted WAF arrived in Vietnam June 17.

JULY

The 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Gp. rescued its 1000th person July 15.

A squadron of A-37 light attack jets arrived in Vietnam July 26 for combat evaluation. The aircraft were assigned to the 3d TFW at Bien Hoa AB.

AUGUST

The Hanoi (Paul Doumer) highway and railroad bridge was hit by USAF fighter-bombers August 11 for the first time. This attack was the closest bombing yet to the heart of Hanoi.

F-105s hit the Lang Son railroad yards August 13. The yards are located less than 10 miles from The Chinese border.

USAF female flight nurses flew aeromedical evacuation missions in Vietnam for the first time August 19.

SEPTEMBER

F-105s teamed with F-4s to hit Kep airfield September 9, destroying three MiG-17s on the ground, setting off a fuel dump fire at one end of the field, and rendering the main runway unserviceable.

A record 2380 USAF strike sorties were flown against enemy base camps, bunker complexes, gun emplacements, troop concentrations and fortifications in South Vietnam during September 9-15.

OCTOBER

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F-4s of the 8th TFW and F-105s of the 355th and 388th TFWs teamed up to hit Phuc Yen airfield, 18 miles northwest of Hanoi, for the first time October 24. Four MIG-21s, four MIG-17s and one MIG-15 were damaged or destroyed in the raid, which also cratered the runway and set off massive secondary explosions.

USAF fighters returned to Hanoi October 25, hitting the Paul. Doumer highway and railroad bridge, 1.7 miles northeast of the city. Reconnaissance photos confirmed two spans destroyed and extensive structural damage inflicted on the bridge.

NOVEMBER

Bad weather cleared over North Vietnam November 17, enabling F-105 pilots of the 355th and 388th TFWs to hit the Hanoi Bac Mai airfield, one mile south of the capital city, for the first time. SAM activity and AAA fire were extremely heavy in the area.

DECEMBER

The Senate confirmed a fourth star December 14 for Lt. Gen. William W. Momyer, commander of PacAF's Seventh AF in Vietnam.

The biggest airlift of the Vietnam war ended December 29 when the last paratrooper brigades of the 101st Airborne Div. landed at Bien Hoa AB. Vietnam. The move involved 10,356 troops. and 5118 tons of cargo, vehicles, 105-mm cannon and 37 helicopters. It took 393 trans-Pacific flights complete the move.

As 1967 drew to a close, AF strike pilots were flying an average 43 missions a day against targets in North Vietnam and 370 strike sorties daily in South Vietnam.

Military Cautioned: Avoid War Debate (*Air Force Times, September 20, 1967*)

WASHINGTON—Air Force C/S Gen. John P. McConnell last week said that although public debate over the Vietnam war was healthy, the military should not become involved in the controversy.

His address to a group at Kelly AFB Tex., followed the Senate Preparedness investigating subcommittee's recent report which charged that splits existed between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Defense Secretary McNamara on conduct of the war.

"I feel strongly that we, as military on active duty, have no business participating in public debate on decisions which rest with our civilian superiors" he said.

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"Whatever their decisions may be, it is our job to carry them out to the best of our ability and within prevailing restraints that stem from considerations other than military," he continued.

Gen McConnell had told the Senate panel last month that bombing of previously forbidden targets would increase Hanoi's problems. He told his audience at Kelly "these spared targets remind the enemy that added pressure can be brought to bear on him. We nevertheless are in a position to increase our air attacks to any level needed to help achieve our national objectives."

McConnell also said use of airpower over North Vietnam had enabled the U.S. to limit its troop commitments in South Vietnam. Secretary McNamara, during a press conference the next day, differed.

Asked about his reaction to McConnell's statement, McNamara said, "I don't think it's possible to correlate the number (of men) in the south and the bombing in the north.

Scene: black as pitch. **Setting:** Somewhere in Vietnam. **Action:** “Charlie: set to attack.

Suddenly, it is...**Daylight At Midnight**

The night was made to order for a Viet Cong attack. Inky blackness completely surrounded the Special Forces Camp at Plei Me. There was no moon at all. Intermittent rain made it even more miserable.

It came. At exactly 2330 hours the VC — Charlie — struck. Deadly orange flashes stabbed out from the jungle. American soldiers returned the fire, but it was like shooting with their eyes closed. Something had to be done—and soon!

"Somebody get some flares!" shouted one combat veteran.

Soon the drone of an airplane engine was heard overhead. One spark of light was followed by two more, then three and four. Suddenly, it was daylight at midnight.

When the sergeant called for light, his request was radioed to Tan Son Nhut AB near Saigon. A flareship crew from the 315th Air Commando Group was soon airborne and



Dragon-ship loadmaster, SSgt. James P. Davis primes the fuses on a load of high-intensity flares as his C-47 aircraft taxis out the Bien Hoa AB runway for another night mission.

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on its way to the battle area. And, fighter aircraft were scrambled for close air support at the camp.

A box of high-intensity flares rode in the belly of a C-123 Provider and beside it sat a volunteer flare kicker. He was experienced; that was obvious. He had already checked each 27-pound, innocent-looking canister. He was ready. The flares were ready.

Over the Plei Me camp, the volunteer went to work, launching the string of lights that literally turned night into day. His artificial suns enabled the fighter pilots to zoom in with blistering, devastating attacks which held the enemy at bay long enough for the Green Berets to mount their own counter-attack.

The action continued through the night. When the first C-123 had expended its last flare and turned back to Saigon for more, a second Provider began illuminating runs back and forth over the camp. The enemy was restrained and, at dawn, he melted back into his jungle hideaway.

Plei Me had been successfully defended, thanks in a great measure to the air commandos and the volunteer flare droppers, truly an unusual and elite group of airmen.

Double Duty

Although the job of dropping flares is assigned to the crew chief and loadmaster of each crew, most of the flare kickers in Vietnam volunteer for the job.

They work hard by day, 10 to 12 hours at various administrative-type functions. At night they become the lamplighters of Vietnam. They fly mission after mission, helping to deprive the Viet Cong of the protective black shield he uses to conduct his hit-and-run war.

Some of the flare kickers have flown more than 50 combat support missions and accumulated over 300 flying hours during their "off duty" time. One airman, SSgt. Richard Donald, Jr., estimates that he has flown, overall, almost 800 missions —some only 15 minutes long—during his tour at Da Nang AB. He's now at Randolph AFB, Tex.

The volunteer flare kickers don't do this extra work to escape some imagined humdrum of their everyday job. They know that their nighttime job is secondary and that they must return to

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Flare kickers SSgt. Paul E. Gwinnup and A1C Larry J. McComb get ready for a long night of flare-dropping activity in their C-123 Provost.



Down the chute and into the night slides another two-million-candle power flare, released by SSgt. R. L. Cowal, a C-123 flight engineer.

their normal duties every morning. But still, almost every night, some of these volunteers wait for the call to go aloft for five or six hours of flying over enemy-held territory or suspected enemy positions.

They work many hours and fly many missions, all voluntarily. And, they receive no flight pay.

Two typical volunteers are SSgt. Thomas L. Huddleston, chief clerk for the 8th Aerial Port Squadron, and A1C Billy L. Harmon of the 315th Air Commando Wing Standardization Evaluation Section, both at Tan Son Nhut AB. One night, not long ago, they dropped 437 flares over one ground operation.

Why do they take on the extra flare-kicker duties? Their reasons are numerous but usually they are to satisfy a desire for a more active role in the air war.

Working with the flares is no job for a nervous type person. Sergeant Donald was flying as a flight mechanic on a C123 flare mission out of Da Nang when one of his "candles" suddenly ignited prematurely. It dropped near a box of 200 more flares.

Knowing full well that one of those flares can burn through the floor of a plane in as little as three seconds, Sergeant Donald quickly grabbed the hot burning flare and threw it out of the aircraft. For his heroic action in complete disregard for his own safety, Sergeant Donald received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

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Many other flare kickers have been decorated for outstanding devotion to duty and voluntary heroism. As of mid-1966, personnel of the 8th Aerial Port Squadron had received 26 Air Medals; and, they didn't even have an aircraft assigned to their unit.

Crewmembers Help

Flare ships fly every night. When they are not engaged in actual drops, they fly airborne alert patterns. Sometimes the appearance of a flare ship is enough to deter the Viet Cong from pressing an attack. "Charlie" knows he can't depend on the darkness to shadow his insurgent actions. He knows that if he sustains an attack, the flares will be dropped, his position will be revealed and the ground troops will pick off his forces with rifle and machine-gun fire.

But, there are times when there just aren't enough volunteer flare kickers to fly all the missions. Then, the flight crews must do the job.

Loadmaster SSgt. James P. Davis, flying out of Bien Hoa AB, is one of these aircrew members who has flown many such missions. In fact, Sergeant Davis is convinced his title should be changed to "unloadmaster." He has chucked out more than 3,000 high-intensity flares from the belly of his AC-47 "Dragon-ship."

Normally, the loadmaster is concerned with weight distribution and cargo placement. But, in Vietnam today, the loadmaster of the AC-47 must know how to store, arm and toss out flares as well as accomplish his regular loadmaster duties.

"It's tricky business," says Sergeant Davis. "It is vital that we be timely and accurate. When the pilot yells, 'flare away,' I must make certain the flare gets out the door—then, I throw another, and another, and another. I keep them moving until the run is completed."

Teamwork is essential. The gunner, flight mechanic and flare kicker must always be keyed to the rapid instructions of the pilot.



This artist's conception shows how a two-million-candle-power flare cannister drops out and down from the rear of a C-123 Provider.

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Each flare provides about two million candle-power of light for about three minutes. The "candles" are kicked out in series to provide an umbrella of illumination which enables ground forces to see the enemy and repel attacks. The high-intensity flares also provide all the light necessary for strike pilots to drop their rockets and bombs where they will do the most good.

At first, most of the missions were flown by the C-123 Providers. Today, however, AC-47 Dragon-ships and even A-1E Skyraiders are being used in the program. It's a big operation. On one mission employing both AC-47s and C-123s, volunteer flare kickers and crew members dropped almost 4,000 flares, the equivalent of one and a half days of continuous illumination.

Kicker Is Misnomer

Actually, the term "flare kicker" is not indicative of the system. The men who handle the flares do not "kick" them out of the aircraft. They either throw them out manually or use special ejection devices designed for this type of operation.

One of the first voluntary flare kickers in Vietnam was SSgt. John A. Van Pelt, an adviser with the 74th Tactical Wing of the Vietnamese Air Force. He and his companions developed a way to use the A-1E on flare drop missions.

The members of Air Force Advisory Team 7 converted cargo space of the Skyraider into a storage area for flares. When a target hove into view, the volunteer dropper would eject his candles through the parachute tube of the plane. The method proved successful and is now being used frequently.

SSgt. Richard L. Cowal, a flight mechanic with the 19th Air Commando Squadron, uses the four-chuted dispenser, specially developed for dropping flares from the C-123 Providers.

And SSgt. Edwin A. Osborne, a gunner with Detachment 1, 4th Air Commando Squadron at Da Nang AB, fuses his flares by hand and manually tosses them out the door of his AC-47 Dragon-ship.

All in all, the contributions of the volunteer flare droppers are most appreciated by those who have been under attack in the dead of night. Suddenly they hear an aircraft overhead. Looking up, they see a light descending toward their position. Several other bursts of light slowly drift downward until the area is completely illuminated.

"We all know this service is vital to the outcome of the many individual battles fought here every night," said one volunteer.

Nobody asks these men to do this job. But whenever there is a need to brighten up a battle area, some one of these dedicated individuals will step forward and volunteer to kick out the flares.

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(Source: *The Airman*, February 1967)

Not Always Understood **‘Shadow’ Proves Versatility** (*Air Force Times*, (Europe) July 22, 1970)

By Lt. Col. A. R. Savera

TAN SON NHUT AB — Probably one of the least understood weapons systems used in Vietnam is the AC-119 Shadow gunship.

This aircraft is one of the most versatile Allied ground forces have to work with in support of their operations. Ground troops who know the capabilities of the Shadow and how to use them find that the aircraft can mean the difference between the success and failure of a mission.

The shadow, formerly called the "Dollar Nineteen," is equipped with several miniguns which shoot 7.62mm rounds. These guns can spew out lead as “slow” as 3000 rounds per minute and as fast as 6000 rounds per minute. With this firepower, the Shadow can saturate all or part of a battlefield with extreme speed.

When called in support of ground forces, the AC-119 first makes a positive identification of the Allied positions before firing. But once these positions are known, the gunship crew can direct the fire as close as necessary to the Allied troops with almost complete safety.



'Shadow' Flies Over Vietnam Countryside.

If the enemy is extremely close to the Allied forces, a man on the ground can "talk" the miniguns in amazingly close. In defending outposts and camps, Shadow aircraft have shot enemy penetrators off the perimeter fence.

Due to the fact that the Shadow only flies missions at night, each aircraft has equipment which will literally turn night into day.

Shadows are equipped with a 1,500,000-candlepower spotlight. This light is often used to pinpoint areas and light up locations, so that ground forces can join up or evacuate from rugged terrain, or in search operations over the sea. It is also used to spot targets for fighter air strikes, to light up landing zones and to illuminate enemy positions. It can also be used to illuminate targets for the Shadow's own benefit. However, the aircraft can fire 'With the same degree of accuracy in an automatic mode using infrared light, to pinpoint the target.

Along with the spotlight and infrared light, the Shadow packs a full rack of flares.

The Shadow aircraft has a strong psychological impact on Allied ground troops. When an AC-119 is overhead, they know they have quick and accurate air support at their command. The roar of the miniguns, the red glow of tracers and the illumination of flares or spotlight is a tremendous psychological lift for them when in contact with the enemy.

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The tactics the Shadow crews can use are virtually limitless. The aircraft is there to aid the ground forces, and if they know Shadow's capabilities, the aircraft is a great advantage.

Vietnam Communique (*Air Force Times, September 20, 1967*)



SAIGON — Striking a truck park before dawn on August 29, B-57 pilots from the 35th Tactical Fighter Wg. at **Phan Rang AB**, caused secondary explosions and 100 secondary fires. Seven trucks were destroyed as a result of the bombing and strafing attack 32 miles north-northwest of Dong Hoi.

F-105 pilots from the 355th and 388th TFWs joined forces to hit the Kep Army barracks and rail yard, 37 miles northeast of Hanoi. At least eight buildings were destroyed in the barracks area. Five secondary explosions were reported in the main rail yard where 40 pieces of rolling stock were located.

On August 28, F-105 pilots from the 388th TFW bombed and strafed artillery rocket launchers in the northern half of the DMZ.

F-4 crews from the ,12th TFW at Cam Ranh Bay AB got two secondary explosions when they hit surface-to-air missile. support equipment, 25 miles south-southeast of Dong Hoi. One mile away, Phantom crews of the 8th TFW strafed two missile transporters.

AF strike .pilots also hit the Vu Chua and Cao Nung railroad yards, northeast of Hanoi earlier in the day.

The main runway, taxiway and revetted parking areas of Hoa Lac airfield were heavily damaged August 30 by F-105s from the 355th and 388th TFWs. Post-strike photographs of the area, 20 miles west of Hanoi, showed there were no MIGs on the field. Decoy bomb crates had been painted on the runway and silhouettes of aircraft had been painted in three parking stalls. It was the twelfth time the Air Force had bombed the field.

Crews from three AF wings struck railroad targets deep in North Vietnam on August 26. Four trucks were destroyed in a truck park and three POL fires sent smoke rising to 3000 feet September 1 after Phantom crews from the 366th TFW based at Da Nang bombed the area, 13 miles north-northeast of Mu Gia Pass.

F4 crews from the same wing destroyed six anti-aircraft sites 25 miles west-northwest of Dong Hoi later in the day while 8th TFW Phantoms hit five trucks and probably two others on a strike of an enemy convoy northeast of the Mu Gia Pass.

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On August 31, Thunderchief crews from the 388th TFW destroyed the Lang Lau railroad bridge, 36 miles north of Hanoi.

A total of 528 armed reconnaissance and strike missions were flown during the week. Pilots reported 300 fires and 184 secondary explosions. Twenty-four AAA sites were destroyed or damaged, 126 trucks destroyed, 30 pieces of rolling stock knocked out of commission and roads were cut in 89 places.

Two aircraft were downed in the panhandle during the week. An F-4 was lost to unknown causes and an F-100F was shot down by ground fire. Both F-4 crew members are still missing in action. One pilot of the F-100F was rescued.

Due to an increase in enemy night activities during the week of August 26 through September 1, AC-47 crews upped their support of Allied ground forces throughout South Vietnam. It took 169 Dragon-ship crews to answer the calls of ground units in need of flarelight and firepower. During the missions, the crews dropped flares and fired 938,700 rounds of ammunition into enemy positions.

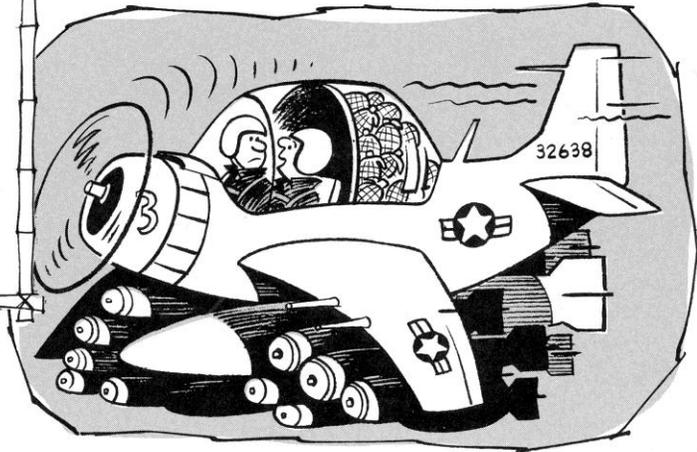
Enemy base camps, troop concentrations, water traffic and fortifications in South Vietnam were struck by 2231 AF tactical fighter aircraft during the week. Bombs and ammunition accounted for 67 secondary explosions, 45 fires, 111 enemy killed, 119 sampans sunk or badly damaged and numerous bunkers and fortifications destroyed or damaged.

Thirteen of the 20 bombing raids flown by B-52 crews during the week were flown against enemy targets in the DMZ. B-52s have hit enemy positions in the DMZ on 29 separate raids since August 13.

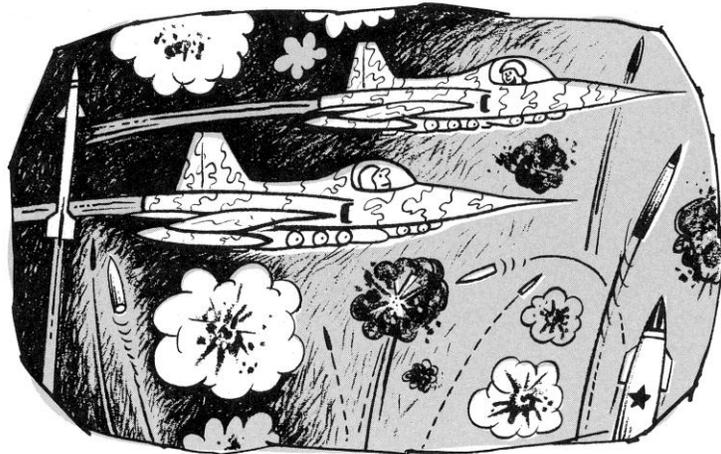


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JUNGLE JOLLIES



"When they said this mission was a MAXIMUM EFFORT, they weren't kidding!"



"I think Charlie is trying to get our attention."

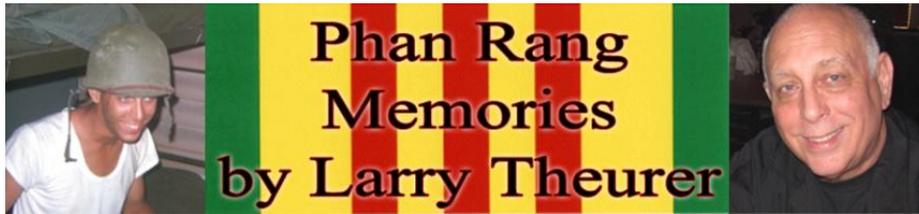


"Good afternoon, Bluebirds One and Two, this is The Baron, your NUMBER ONE Forward Air Controller. Me show you beaucoup VC. You like?"

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“Stories worth telling”



FUN AT THE END OF THE RUNWAY

I spent many days at the end of the runways doing arm/de-arm. Many of those days were with Sam Boone. We would talk for hours about everything. We had a small shack, just some boards; a seat and a black plastic sheet for a roof. I have a picture of me sitting in it. Later the Air Force built white wooden sheds at each end. They had tables inside them with checker boards but we never had any checkers.

“Nice Doggie”

One day we looked down the runway and were terrified to see a big German shepherd guard dog running loose across the runway. Fortunately he didn't see us as we had nowhere to hide. The area was barren with no trees to climb and the little shed only six feet tall with a plastic sheet roof. We had no weapons or radio to call for help. All I could have done was say “Nice Doggie” or have been able to outrun Sam.

“It would drag you down the runway on your face.”

Another day an F-100 came in and left his drag chute in our area so we were messing with it. The wind was blowing about 25MPH. We laid the chute out flat with the top pointed downwind, grabbed the steel cable and gave one of the risers a tug up and the chute would inflate. Wow was that strong! I could not hold it. It would drag you down the runway on your face.

We had great fun with un-fired .50cal High Explosive Incendiary rounds we would accumulate from de-arming the B-57s. We would pull the heads off the round, pour the HEI powder from them into a small pit, then we would pour a line of the slower burning gunpowder out of the tail of the shell case, connecting the pit to our shack and light it the end of the line. **What a blast.**

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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 4th 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.