

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

Phan Rang AB News No. 88

"Stories worth telling"

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35th TFW Wins Award *(Seventh Air Force News, April 23, 1969)*

PHAN RANG - Gen. George S. Brown, commander Seventh Air Force, flew to Phan Rang AB recently to present the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

In presentation ceremonies at the base, Col. Frank L. Gailer Jr., of Arlington, Va., wing commander, accepted the award on behalf of the wing.

The citation accompanying the award cited the F-100 Supersabre wing for "exceptionally meritorious service while engaged in operations against an opposing armed force from September 3, 1961, to May 2, 1968. During this period, personnel of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing flew a total of 21,740 combat sorties, involving 40,661 flying hours."

"Sure does bring back a lot of memories. I had a good time during my tour. As said before everything is what you make it out to be. I have made a lot of friends from that era." ...Gary Stone

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Hello Dolly! Martha Raye Wow Large Audience (*Phan Fare, The Phan Rang Weekly, November 1, 1967*)



Martha Raye in Vietnam

Despite a whirling dust storm at the beginning of the evening, Martha Raye and a cast of 19 singers and dancers in the USO sponsored show, Hello, Dolly!, entertained nearly 3000 enlisted men and officers last Wednesday.

Her deviation from the script and cavorting with the cast and audience alike, brought the audience closer to the warmth that the ‘Sweetheart of Vietnam’ has for the G.I.

At the close of the program, Martha walked to the front of the stage for a heart to heart talk with the audience.

“It makes an American woman like me, proud indeed to see such fine young men.” She continued, “Fellows ask me Maggie, that is my real name...what is going on back home? All those demonstrators and card burners...what is it all about?...All I can say about those demonstrators and card burners is...that they are a small minority of people that do not matter anyhow...There are millions of people back home other than your friends and loved ones, that do love you and do respect you, and know why you are over here. They believe in what you are doing...just remember, guys, the demonstrators and card burners couldn’t even shine your boots...and don’t you forget it.”

Colonel James A. Wilson, 35th Tactical Fighter Wing commander, presented her a plaque from the base.

After the show, in an interview, Martha commented on the base. “It has certainly changed since I was here in 1965. I arrived four days after the 101st Screaming Eagles, and all we had were tents. I might add, there were no latrines for ladies.

One of the cast members commented on the audience as being one of the best that they had played before, “We just couldn’t help but ‘up’ in our performance, the feeling of the audience was just great. It was really a thrill to perform for them.”

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The cast and Martha were treated to refreshments at the NCO Open Mess after the show, where they just sat and listened to one of our local combos, and talked with the people.

The cast of Hello, Dolly will soon disband and head back to the states, but Martha Raye is staying till February, “Because there are still troops here.”

Five Super Sabre Pilots Honored During Flagpole Retreat Ceremony *(The Phan Fare, March 21 1971)*

Five Air Medals and four Air Force Commendation Medals were presented to Phan Rang AR airmen in a pre-retreat awards ceremony Mar. 16 at the base flagpoles.

Col. Cregg P. Nolen Jr., 35th Tactical Fighter Wing commander, presented the medals during the late afternoon formation.

The Air Medals were presented to Dr. (Lt. Col.,) Royce Moser Jr., 35th USAF Dispensary commander; Maj. Alan M. Edwards and Capt. Carl V. Lyday, 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS); and Capts. Charles R. Chadwick and Joseph A. McGrath, 615th TFS.

The 35th's flight surgeon and the four F-100 Super Sabre pilots were cited for outstanding airmanship and courage in the successful accomplishment of important missions under extremely hazardous combat conditions in the skies over Southeast Asia.

Receiving the Air Force Commendation Medal were MSGts. George D. Martin and Norman M. Olney, SSgt. Robert V. Daniels and Sgt. Gary A. Bergquist.

Sergeant Martin, currently NCO in charge of the 35th TFW Office of Information, received the first oak leaf cluster to the Commendation Medal for his meritorious service as NCO in charge of the Information Branch, Plans and Information Division, USAF Orientation Group, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, from Sept. 1, 1967 to Nov. 13, 1970.

Sergeant Olney, a flight chief with the 35th Security Police Squadron, was awarded the Commendation Medal for his performance as an Armed Forces Entrance and Examining Station liaison representative with Air Force Recruiting Detachment 702, Headquarters 3507th USAF Recruiting Group, Des Moines, Iowa, from Nov. 7, 1966 to Dec. 31, 1970.

Sergeant Daniels received the first oak leaf cluster to the Commendation Medal for outstanding service as Environmental Systems shift chief, 35th Field Maintenance Squadron, from Mar. 21, 1970 to Mar 26, 1971.

Sergeant Bergquist was awarded his Commendation Medal for meritorious service as an

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Intelligence operations specialist with the 35th TFW from Dec. 12, 1969 to Dec. 12, 1970
He is currently serving on six-month voluntary extension.

Buddy King: While we did our time in Phan Rang, did we make the world any better for someone?

Cindy S. Weber: You indeed made the world a better place for me. And you keep making it a better place every day that you live to tell of your time spent protecting me. I can't thank you enough! God Bless You!

Robert Doebelin: I didn't want to be there when I was there but if I had to do it again I would.

Vincent Donadio: I worked with a Vietnamese guy who was from Phan Rang we made the world better for him and the organisation we worked for benefited just because of his knowledge.

C Dan Brownell: Buddy King---yes we did as well as our troops now days. The people we help are great full as well as the kids who always love an American GI. Just the dang politicians who cannot keep their nose & fingers out of everything---if they would only listen to our Generals & other military personnel. At least our rotten treatment back then has done wonders for the way they are now treated. That in its self was worth it. Thanks for your service my friend.

Peter Marcuzzi: Kept everyone in good drinking water and working wastewater treatment with hard work from 6/69 - 6/70.

George Varney: Yes, Peter, I am proud of everyone's service, did not have time to think about everyone's job till later down the road, 6 days on and 1 RDO, didn't leave much time for thinking of other jobs. Glad we had the best SP's Security in Viet Nam.

Joseph Burkhart: I would like to go out on a limb and predict doubling the number of folks we had at Charleston...A worthy goal for sure...

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The F-100 Phases Out of RVN: Final Phase Inspection



SSgt. George Varney, front row third from the left, after completing the final phase inspection of the final F-100 Super Sabre at Phan Rang prior to it being flown back to the US to a reserve unit. Sgt. Varney reports that most of the crew remained on station for at least three weeks before they were transferred to other bases, with most of them going to Cam Rahn Bay. Sergeant Varney was later assigned to Bien Hoa to work on the A-37s.

Base Rated Outstanding by Safety Survey Team *(Phan Fare, The Phan Rang Weekly, November 1, 1967)*

Phan Rang Air Base has just received the results of a Management Safety Survey from PACAF with the rating of outstanding.

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A team of safety officials arrived here and inspected the base recently. They used a safety checklist as criteria by which to judge the safety program that our own safety officials have set up.

The Safety program is divided into three parts, Flying, Explosive and Ground Safety.

The Flying Safety program is primarily responsible for the safety of aircraft and the operations of the flightline. Pilot safety is under this section also.

Ground Safety is responsible for building safety, recreational safety and vehicular safety. Plus many more related fields.

The report noted that the general housekeeping of the flightline area was excellent. The night operations were well supervised and that the wing standardization crew has begun wing-wide standardization efforts.

Overall the flightline and munitions operations showed great advancement.

The report also noted strong command guidance and supervision throughout the entire 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. The standardized briefings were highly effective.

Responsibility for maintaining strong and effective leadership in the field of safety rests with the Wing Information Office.

Major Amos O. Fox, chief of safety, and his staff keep constant surveillance of safety procedures used on base.

The flying safety section is headed by Maj. Gerald McCarthy, and he is assisted by Capt. Buren G. Galbraith.

The explosive safety section is under command of Maj. Robert J. Cottone, Staff Sergeant David C. Wiles assisted in the explosive safety program, and TSgt. William A. Oblein works in the weapons safety program.

The explosive safety section is responsible for the safe handling of ordnance and ammunition, Small arms safety is also considered under their jurisdiction.

Ground safety, which covers all aspects of personal safety covering vehicular, recreational and living-quarters conditions, is handled by SSgt. William A. Riggs and Sergeant Elmer R. Moffett.

Handling the mountains of forms, reports, and other paperwork are Sergeants Jimmie W. Washburn and Vendra G. Lamkin.

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“The safety program on base is a constant job. There are safe procedures outlined on how to do almost everything. It is our job to see that these procedures are established throughout every aspect of living and working on base,” said Major Fox, calling on all base personnel to support this vital program.

Four F-100 Missions Net 41 Enemy Deaths (*The Phan Rang Weekly, March 27, 1968*)

Four F-100 missions flown recently by pilots of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, in the area of Dak To, Qui Nhon and Pleiku resulted in 41 confirmed enemy deaths, according to reports from friendly forces at the scene of the air strikes.

A flight of 614th TFS pilots including the Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Thomas M. Knoles III, was credited with killing 21 enemy troops in an air strike carried out near Qui Nhon in support of Korean battle elements.

The strike caused a secondary fire, and destroyed two enemy fortified positions and one bunker.

In another air strike in the Qui Khno area, a flight of 352nd TFS pilots including the squadron operations officer, Lt. Col. William G. Hartling, were credited with killing four enemy troops, caused a secondary fire, and destroying five enemy fortified positions.

The air strike was flown in support of the 1st Regiment of the Minh Ho Division of Republic of Korea forces.

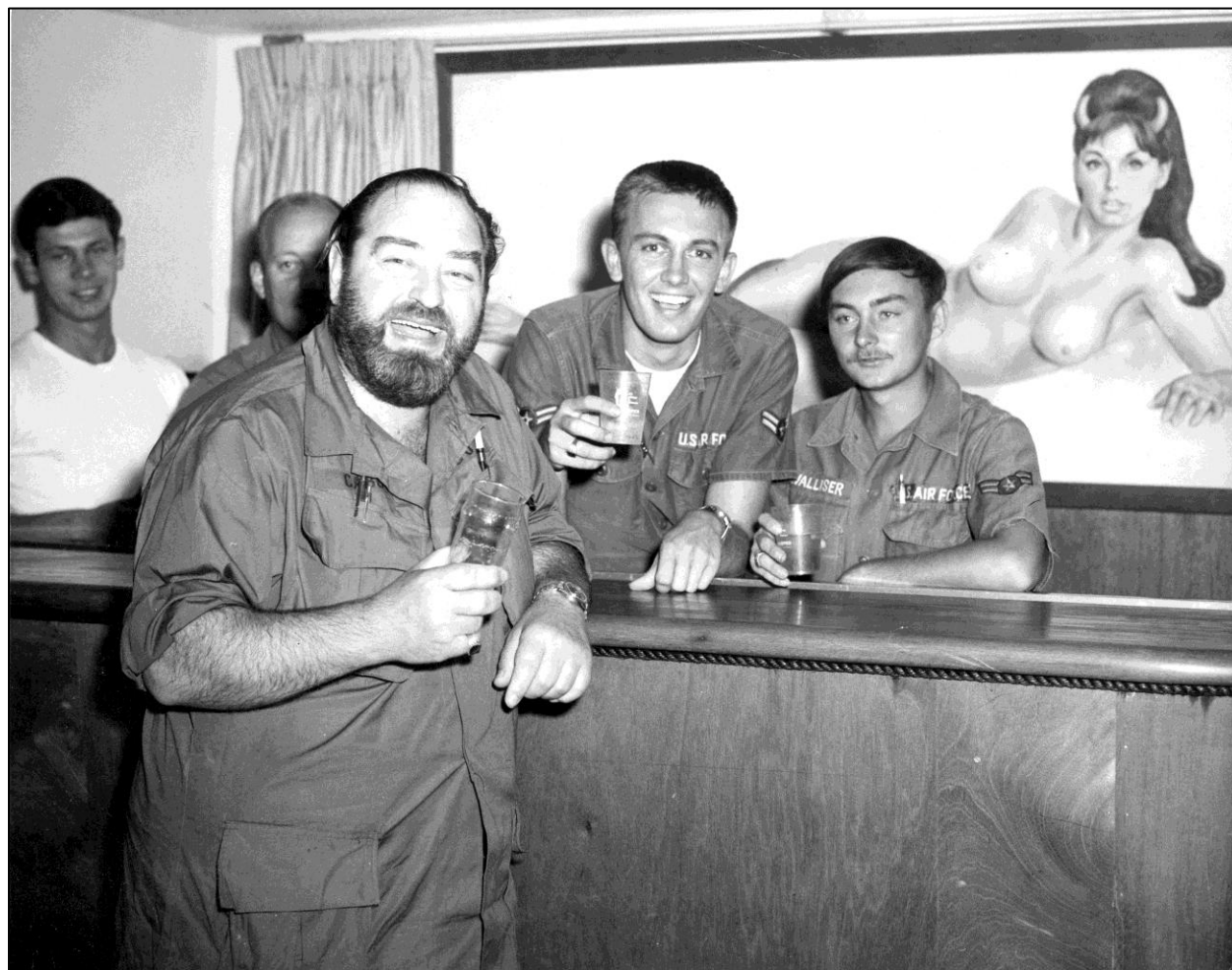
Hartling also figured in an air strike which resulted in the death of 10 enemy troops near Dak To. It was flown in support of elements of the Army’s 4th Infantry Division. With Hartling was another 352nd pilot, Capt. James R. McNeil.

An air strike flown by 614th TFS pilots including the squadron operations officer, Lt. Col. Randall L. Steffens, and Maj. Mathew E. Wallace, near Pleiku in support of the 4th Infantry Division resulted in six enemy deaths and the destruction of an enemy automatic weapons position.

Steffens commented that the F-100 pilots drew fire from it. He said the FAC at the scene “Was real pleased” with the F-100 pilots’ performance.

Ground sweeps by friendly forces at the scene of the four strikes provided data on the number of enemy troops killed by the F-100 pilots.

Sabastion Cabot Visits the 614th Pilots Lounge

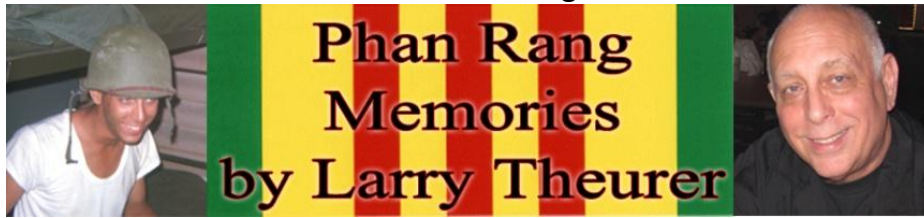


Sebastian Cabot an English film and television actor best remembered as the gentleman's gentleman, Giles French, opposite Brian Keith's character, in the sitcom Family Affair (1966–1971) visits the 614th TFS "Lucky Devils" Pilots Lounge. Pictured is Sebastian Cabot in the foreground and standing behind the bar is Robert Kellington with the others unidentified. Robert Kellington was instrumental in bringing the painting, hanging behind the bar to Phan Rang Air Base. The picture had been previously commissioned by the 614th TFS by a Hong Kong Artist and it was Roberts's job to travel to Hong Kong on the base's C-47 Roadrunner to pick it up. Bring it back he did, however he was only on a 3-day TDY, but the Roadrunner broke down and it turned into a 7-day vacation, but he did bring the painting back to Phan Rang.

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THE PERILS OF EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL

It's night. Avery and I are riding in the blue shuttle bus passing by the Airman's club and going up the road toward the barracks. Avery sees something in the bus headlights in the ditch beside the road and yells for the driver to stop.

He gets out and there, passed out face down in the ditch, with his pants and underwear down to his ankles, is a very drunk Airman. He had stopped to take a whiz and passed out in mid-stream. He was lifted up out of the ditch, his pants pulled up and carried on the bus and lay on the floor. Now days I would have suggested we take someone in that bad state to the hospital to check for alcohol poisoning but I didn't know about that stuff then.

There was a delay while everyone on the bus tried to figure out who he was and what barracks he belonged to. Finally someone said they thought they knew what barracks they had seen him in and the bus got rolling and he was deposited there.

"..he would have been in real bad shape spending a night in that ditch with the fire ants nearby especially with his pants down."

I was thinking later how lucky that guy was we came along and found him. I think he would have been in real bad shape spending a night in that ditch with the fire ants nearby, especially with his pants down.



More pictures from the 2015 PRAB Charleston Reunion

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From left to right: John Ploof, Margie Greenleaf and Pat Ploof with William Martin and David Litke in the background. Photo by Jim Greenleaf.



Lisa Amador, Bob Kellington and Linda Schrank. Photo by Linda Schrank.



Lou and Susan Mathern. Photo by Linda Schrank



Tom Parsons sitting in the co-pilots seat of a C-17. Photo by Tom Parsons.

Mike Granese: ...it is great to meet new friends, with whom we have so much in common. Hope we have even more join us on Oklahoma.

After a 3600 mile road trip we finally made it home... and were greeted by a yard full of leaves and frost. I cannot express how awesome Nancy and I were treated like family at the reunion even though we had never met a single person before. Being our first reunion, it was like we have known everyone since childhood. All of you made us feel so welcome. THANK YOU..... Words cannot described it. It was a

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great concern for us, but never again. For those of you that have never attended this reunion, NO CONCERNS.... It was indeed Nancy and my privilege to meet you all. On a personal note I was so honored to meet fellow 35th SPS men both SPS and Augmentee's (Who were SPS when working on the perimeter). I never realized the number of augmentee's working the night of Jan 26th, 1969, although there was 180 troops that worked the perimeter on Panther Flight each night. It was my honor to serve with all of you Phan Rang men no matter what area you worked in. We really enjoyed talking with everyone there. ... It is going to be great to put a face with a name on the Facebook website. For those that checked out the photo's of the sapper attack on Jan 26th, 1969, hope you enjoyed them. For those that bought my book I sincerely hope you enjoy reading it. It would be great to hear back from you once you finish the book, good or bad comments. Thanks again everyone for a totally awesome reunion as we all are truly "Brothers". See you in Oklahoma City in 2016.

...Joe Kaupa

Authors in Our Midst

Talk about “keeping the memories Alive” we have so many authors that are connected to Phan Rang AB in one way or the other. I need to consolidate all of them and feature them in a future newsletter because we have so many of them I can’t remember all of them. But for a start I would like to start with Robert **Chappelear**. He’s retired from two careers, the first was as a fighter pilot for the USAF; the second as a system engineer for a defense contractor. Accumulated 6000 hours of flying time in 7 different operational assignments including three tours to Asia and one to Europe. He’s written two books that are both available on [Smashwords](#) for download. They are “**Tales of Bien Hoa**” which is the story of his second Vietnam tour. It is a telling tale of what it was like to fly the A-37 Close Air Support Fighter. This airplane was "the world’s smallest fighter, the fastest gun!" The airplane only weighted roughly 6000 pounds but the gun shot 6000 rounds a minute. Robert writes with such detail that you feel like you’re in the cockpit with him. My favorite of course is “**Tales of Phan Rang**” which is an account of the author's one year tour of duty flying C-123 cargo aircraft in Viet Nam. Robert 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. All eighteen chapters of Tales of Phan Rang is presented in Phan Rang News 24 through 43. Click

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[“Smashwords”](#) to go directly to where you can buy his books. I would suggest buying them both...they are really cheap. Maybe we can talk him into coming to our reunion in 2016.

Next we have a true life story written by our own Phan Ranger Joe Kaupa, titled **“Protect & Serve”**. I just got the book at the reunion, so I haven’t yet read it, but I’ve heard that it’s a good read. The book is a story of the life of a young man growing up in rural Southeastern Minnesota graduating from Plainview High School, joining the military immediately after graduation, getting married to his childhood sweetheart, starting a family and getting his orders to Vietnam. The book tells the story of his long year in Vietnam and his twenty-nine years as a law enforcement officer in rural Minnesota. My first thought was that there certainly can’t be much crime in rural Minnesota, so what exciting things could he write about? I asked him about that and he assured me that I would walk away with a different option on rural Minnesota. You will probably also get to meet his lovely wife, Nancy and their children. Joe has given me permission to give you some excerpts from the book, but that will be in a future issue. To get **“Protect & Serve”** from Amazon click [here](#). If you have a Kindle or iPad you can download it and start reading immediately.

[“Forgotten People, Forgotten Times”](#) by Vick Markle is another Phan Rang treasure penned by many Phan Rang notables. In the front of the book it warns me not to reproduce or transmit any part of the book, so I’m pretty limited on what I can say without getting into trouble. Clicking on the hyperlinked title will take you right to the Amazon seller.

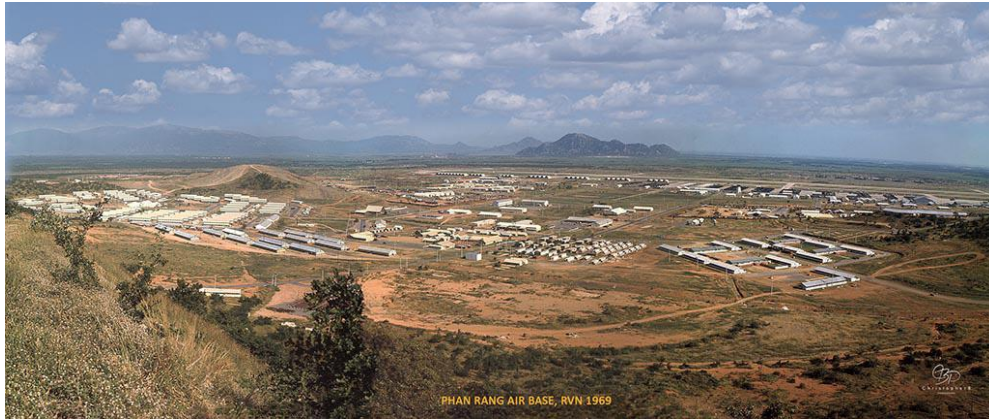
There are more...**Mike Trahan, Jack Anderson** and **Margie Hansen** which I will list in a future issue. If there are more, please let me know as we must have been a very talented bunch at Phan Rang.

PHAN RANG AB PANORAMA 1969

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PHAN RANG STAFF MEMBERS

Joseph Burkhart: Master of Ceremonies

Robert Kellington: Tour Coordinator

Jack Anderson: Treasure

Lou Ruggerio: Site coordinator/Contract negotiator

Douglas Severt: Reunion Coordinator

Ed Downey/Barbara Brandt: Ceremonies

Christopher Boles: Photographer

Bob Tucker: Keeper of the Rolls

Mike Maleski: Chaplain

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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. If anyone would like any of these newsletters in Word format, just let [me](#) know.

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For those who have fought for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know. Just living the dream & having Fun.

This newsletter was compiled and published by [Douglas Severt](#).

