

Phan Rang News No. 10

"Stories worth telling"

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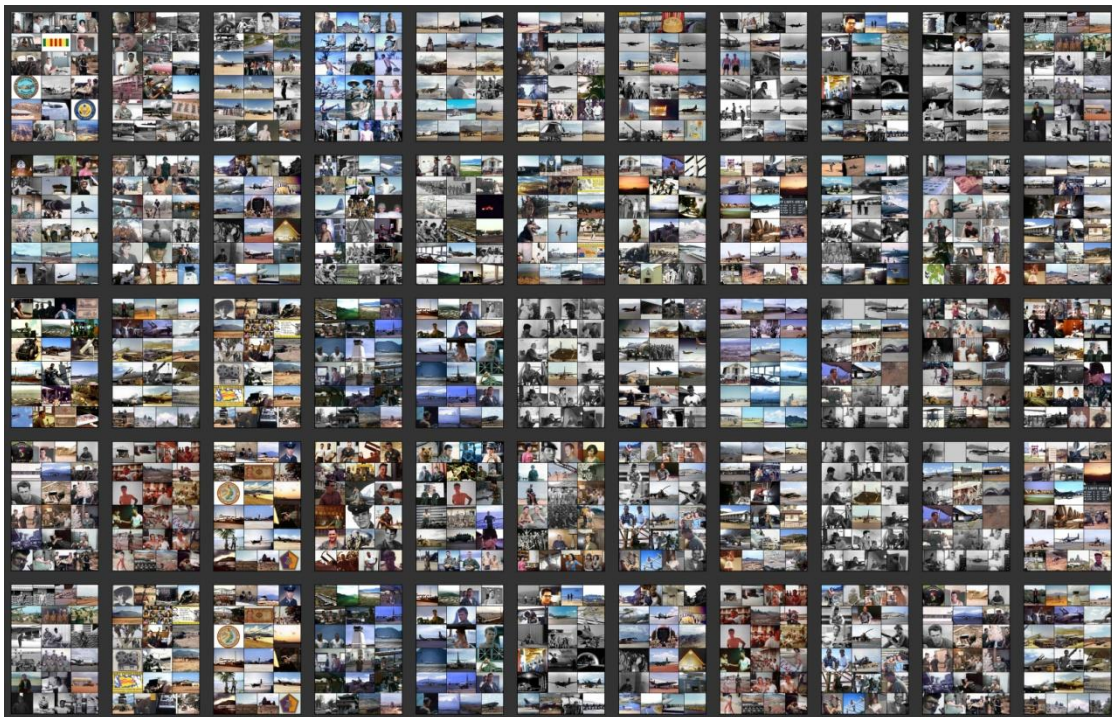
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Just a few of the thousands of Phan Rang pictures on the  
"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB Facebook group.

## **Fight For Life - A True Account**

**THE NAVIGATOR HANDED THE PILOT OF THE B-57 A BLOODY NOTE WHICH READ: "HIT BADLY-ARM AND LEG-LOSING BLOOD." BAILOUT NOW WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. THE PILOT HAD TO KEEP THE WRECK IN THE AIR. IT WAS A ...**

The flight was a routine interdiction mission for two B-57's, one flown by Captain Mason with Captain Jere P. Joyner as navigator. After the aircraft had completed their bomb runs, the FAC reported a group of about seven enemy trucks on a road 10 miles away. Captain Mason led the flight in the direction of the trucks intending to strafe with his four 20mm cannons. He located the trucks in the haze and rolled in on his strafing run. Suddenly the sky was filled with anti-aircraft fire. Captain Mason's B-57, wracked by several hits, rolled to an almost inverted attitude and the cockpit filled with smoke and debris. The whole aircraft was vibrating violently and the control column was buffeting back and forth through an eight-inch arc.

As he fought for control of the bucking aircraft, Captain Mason noted that the fire warning light for Nr 2 engine had come on, and the fuel low pressure light was illuminated. Thinking only of getting the aircraft out of the immediate target area and to a safe bailout altitude, he immediately selected emergency fuel and fuel by-pass, but left the engines running. As Captain Mason managed to get the aircraft under control and out of the enemy fire, his navigator, Captain Jere P. Joyner, managed to pass a blood stained note that read, "hit badly arm and leg losing blood." Fortunately, Captain Mason had a tourniquet in his pocket and was able to pass it back to Captain Joyner.

Faced with a severely wounded navigator who very possibly would not survive a bailout, Captain Mason elected to try to fly the aircraft to his home base, 145 nautical miles away. Just as he began to start a systematic evaluation of the damage to the aircraft, the vibration in the left engine increased, and the oil pressure gage showed excessive pressure. Retarding the throttle to 75 per cent rpm reduced the vibration and pressure. He then turned his attention to the right engine which still had the fire warning light illuminated. Just as he was about to shut down the right engine, the vibration in the left engine became violent again and the oil pressure went way out of limits. The decision then was to shut down Nr. 1 while hoping that Nr. 2 would continue to run since the engine instruments at least were within limits.

Captain Mason's B-57 had been badly mangled by three direct hits and one near-miss. One shell had hit and exploded in the lower right side of the cockpit directly to the right of the navigator. This shell riddled the navigator with 46 separate fragments in his legs and right arm. As this shell exploded in the side of the cockpit, it severed a wire bundle and oxygen lines, which left the aircraft with no interphone, UHF radio, navigation radio, gyro instruments, fuel quantity gage, or oxygen. The only instruments operating were the airspeed indicator, altimeter, vertical

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speed and standby compass. Unknown to Captain Mason, this shell also created a short in the landing gear extension system that caused all three landing gears to extend and lock down. However, the selsyn indicators in the cockpit showed left main and nose gear intermediate and right main gear up.

Two other shells hit the right wing. One hit outboard of the engine just behind the main spar. The explosion tore a 30-square-foot hole in the lower wing surface and a 4 x 5-foot hole in the upper wing surface. The other shell hit in the inboard flap area destroying the flap, severing a hydraulic line and putting several holes in the tail pipe. The hydraulic leak ignited and burned part of the wing trailing edge until the hydraulic fluid was exhausted.



During the 45-minute flight back to Da Nang, Captain Mason was able to maintain only 200 knots with a slow descent to a minimum altitude of 3000 feet. He tried to increase the power on the one remaining engine but the aircraft buffet became so severe that, since he was able to maintain 3000 feet, he decided to continue back to his base at that altitude.

As he came within sight of Da Nang, Captain Mason faced the problem of landing a badly damaged aircraft at a congested air base, with no radios, unknown fuel quantity, and a seriously wounded navigator.

As they approached the base, Captain Joyner regained consciousness enough to attempt contact on guard channel using a URC-10 survival radio, However, no contact could be made so Captain Mason entered the traffic pattern and made a pass across the field at 500 feet both to determine landing direction and to let the people on the ground know he did not have a radio. An F-4C pilot in the pattern noted the damaged aircraft and alerted the tower and thereby the crash rescue network.

As he started a wide turn to final, Captain Mason put the gear handle down but the gear indicators continued to show left main and nose gear intermediate and right main gear down. Captain Mason then pulled the emergency gear extension handle out but still had no indication of safe gear. Since to land with this indicated gear condition would be very hazardous, and because he was too close to complete emergency pumping of the gear, Captain Mason again made a single engine go around at 300 feet. The aircraft descended to almost 50 feet before starting to level off, beginning a slow climb. The airspeed dropped to a low of 140 knots, but Captain Mason was able to control the aircraft as he began a slow climb to a downwind. During this time he managed to pump more than the recommended 450 strokes on the emergency gear extension system with no positive results.

Realizing that a gear up landing was safer than one with a gear partially extended and that the pumping was having no effect, Captain Mason placed the gear handle and emergency extension handle in the gear up position. As he again turned final, he planned a gear up, no flap landing because he needed to get his seriously wounded navigator on the ground for medical attention. The approach was skillfully done and much to his surprise the aircraft settled smoothly on its gear and rolled out on the runway.

Captain Mason gently applied the brakes, using hydraulic fluid and pressure remaining in the brake system and brought the aircraft to a smooth halt with all the gears still down. Since there was no hydraulic fluid remaining, the rescue crew had to jettison the canopy to get Captain Mason and his semiconscious, still bleeding navigator out of the aircraft.

As the result of Captain Mason's determination to get his navigator safely back to base for medical attention, Captain Joyner survived and has since recovered from his wounds.

Captain **Larry B. Mason**, a B-57 pilot based in South Vietnam displayed an outstanding feat of airmanship and heroism. So many of these stories that are featured in this newsletter fall in that same category, but this one really put a lump in my throat when I was editing it. If anyone knows more about this event or what happened to these two individuals it would be nice to add as a footnote.

**John M. DeCillo commented:** "Read it all in the book by T. E. Bell B-57 Canberra Units of the Vietnam War...The incident happened before I arrived at Da Nang in '66 but I am familiar with it. I have been honored to converse with Larry Mason electronically. I was also honored to be a contributor of many items in the way of photos, weapons info and configurations for Mr. Bell's book."

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## 'Spooky' Receives Aid From VNAF Observers

*(Seventh Air Force News, August 7, 1968)*

**BIEN HOA** - Two Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) sergeants played key rolls in the defense of an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) outpost recently while flying as observers aboard two U.S. Air Force AC-47 Dragonships of the 3rd Air Commando Squadron stationed here.

VNAF Sergeants Tran Van An and Pham Van Vinh acting as liaison between the beleaguered outpost and the Dragonships, translated instructions from the ground which resulted in accurately pinpointing the attacking enemy forces and enabled the AC-47s to bring their 7.62mm mini-guns to bear on them.

Maj. David W. Howell, La Jolla, Calif., navigator aboard one of the Dragonships, gave full credit for the successful defense of the outpost to the two sergeants, and described the action.

"Actually the action took place on two nights at the same outpost," he said, "so that we really saved it on consecutive nights."

"Both times it was our Vietnamese sergeants who contacted the ground commander, analyzed the situation, and then translated the instructions into English, for me and pinpointed the

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enemy on my maps. Without them, we would have been shooting in the dark not knowing if we were putting our firepower on the right spot,"

"Both times there was a good deal of chatter between our aircraft and the ground, and our translator told us that the ground commander was thanking us profusely for our assistance.

"You can't argue with success, and we were successful in saving the outpost. In any situation such as this where you have a language barrier there's always the problem of confidence or lack of it, in one another. Well now we'll definitely be using them more often with full confidence between one another," concluded the major.

### **Major Nabs Safety Post**

*(Seventh Air Force News, August 7, 1968)*

**PHAN RANG** - Maj. Donald O. Neary, Aurora, Colo., has been named the F-100 Supersabre Safety Officer for the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang AB.

He is a member of the 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron, formerly a unit of the Colorado Air National Guard (ANG).

As the Supersabre flying safety officer he will be responsible for all of the Supersabre safety programs at Phan Rang.

### **Sgt. Picks Air Force Over Singing Career**

*(Seventh Air Force News, August 7, 1968)*

**PHAN RANG** - Given the choice, who would select an Air Force career over a career in the world of country music? It was the choice faced nearly two decades ago by TSgt. Lewis P. Raleigh, Raton, Ohio.

Sergeant Raleigh, commander Law Enforcement "A" Flight, 35th Security Police Squadron, Phan Rang AB, made his decision 18 years ago when he was discharged from the Army Air Corps. "I got out and we formed our own group but I missed the old Air Force ways," he commented.

An Air Force career did not stop his musical ambitions, however. He has carried his Bluegrass banjo and fiddle interpretations with him all over the globe.

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Smiling reminiscently, he recalls a rare encounter with a young PFC Eddie Fisher. "It was at Weisbaden, Germany in 1952," he commented.

"There was a talent, show at the Nimbus Club on base. Private Fisher was playing a mandolin at the time." Sergeant Raleigh took first place in the contest with his banjo.

Other performances dot his memories, such as an appearance on KEIT radio in Jonesboro, Ark. with .country comedian Speck Rhodes, now appearing on the Porter Wagner Show. The sergeant is a close friend of such notables as Flatt and Scruggs, Peewee King and Leon Lindsey.

His start in music came at the age of nine when he got his first guitar. He is a member of "Don Eblin" and the String Busters", a local, country music group.

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## Tactical Airlifters Surpass Three Million Ton Mark

*(Seventh Air Force News, August 7, 1968)*

By Capt. Ken Kashiwahara

**SAIGON** - Tactical airlift crews in Vietnam recently transported the war's three millionth ton of cargo and passengers, surpassing yet another milestone in history's largest, sustained airlift operation.



**QUICK OFFLOAD**—Air Freight specialists of the Air Force's 2nd Aerial Port Group unload cargo from a C-7A Caribou transport. The port group has combined with airlift crews to move more than three million tons of cargo and passengers in Vietnam.

By comparison, Allied airlift crews transported 2,343,000 tons during the famed Berlin airlift 20 years ago, 650,000 tons during China-Burma-India "Hump" operation over the Himalayas in World War II, and 392,000 tons during the Korean War.

The three million ton record was the result of the effort of crews and ground support personnel from numerous organizations. The men and materiel airlifted were carried on three main types

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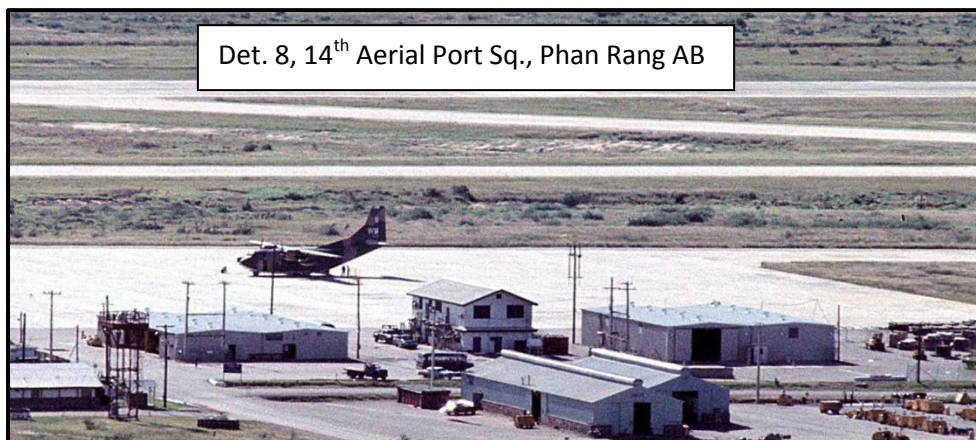
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of aircraft: the C-7A Caribou, assigned to the 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing, headquartered at Cam Ranh Bay AB; the C-123 Provider, assigned to the 315th Air Commando Wing, based at Phan Rang AB; and the C-130 Hercules assigned to 315th Air Division units in the Western Pacific area, but under the operational control of the 834th Air Division while in Vietnam. Caribous flown by members of the Royal Australian Air Force also contributed to the total tonnage.

In addition, to the flying units, personnel from the 2nd Aerial Port Group, with three squadrons and 45 detachments throughout Vietnam, played a key role in amassing the tonnage. Aerial port specialists handled all loading and unloading of cargo and passengers, providing a rapid and efficient flow throughout the network of airlift routes in Vietnam.

The Airlift Control Center at Tan Son Nhut AB and its many Airlift Control Elements (ACLEs) throughout the country were responsible for controlling and directing the massive airlift force.

Today, at the peak of the wars airlift operation, an airlift aircraft takes off or lands somewhere in the country every 33 seconds, transporting an average load of 6,000 pounds every minute around the clock.



Det. 8, 14<sup>th</sup> Aerial Port Sq., Phan Rang AB

"An extraordinary amount of professional airmanship and superb effort has gone into the compilation of this impressive tonnage figure during the past years," said Brig.

Gen. Burl W. McLaughlin, 834th Air Division commander, the single manager of in-country airlift. "I have nothing but praise and admiration for all personnel who contributed to accomplishing this historical feat which was attained under the most trying and hazardous conditions imaginable.

"But stark figures and statistics, although impressive, are by no means the true measure of success for tactical airlift in combat," the general continued. "Our primary job is rapid response to the combat commanders' emergency requirements for ammunition, weapons, supplies and troops, a task which was really the keystone in the basic foundation in this great tonnage figure."



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Airlift crews flew into more than 170 different airfields during this period, the majority were remote and primitive strips with short and rough overruns, nonexistent navigational aids and hazards of ground fire a constant danger. But over the years, several stand out as stark reminders of the vital role played by airlift. Dak To, Konturn, Song Be and more recently, Khe Sanh, A Shau Valley and Khan Duc will long be regarded as milestones in airlift operations.

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## **Munitions Loaders Earn Maintenance Awards**

*(Seventh Air Force News, August 7, 1968)*

**PHAN RANG** - Four munitions loaders assigned to the 352nd Tactical Fighter Squadron here recently received the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Certificate of Maintenance Achievement as the outstanding munitions loading crew of the quarter for the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing.

Sgt. Melbourne D. Crawford, East Point, La., Sgt. Jack L. Grolls, Inverness, Fla., and Airmen First Classes Paul W. David II, Leighton, Pa., and Donald D. Lewis, Partridge., Ky., were selected for their proficiency as weapons loaders and their professionalism.

Gen. John D. Ryan, commander in-chief PACAF, commended the men for "... excellence in the performance of duty in support of your squadron's mission. Your dedication and proficiency," General Ryan continued, "have done much to enhance the PACAF capability."

The weapons loaders were also congratulated by Col. Herndon F. Williams, Florence, S.C., 35th TFW commander. "Your effort," he said, "has resulted in a substantial increase in the combat capability of this wing." "This was best seen," Colonel Williams indicated, "in more rapid turn arounds, more missions flown, more on time takeoffs and an increase in mission reliability."

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## **O-2 Sets New Mark**

*(Seventh Air Force News, August 7, 1968)*

**PHAN RANG** - A new record for landings was made this week at Phan Rang AB, when an O-2 Cessna from Detachment 1, 509th Tactical Air Support Group, made its 4,000th landing in less than a year.

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The O-2 is used by the Forward Air Controller (FAC) Theater Indoctrination School at Phan Rang to train all FACs just arriving in country.

Flying the O-2 and making the 4,000th landing was Lt. Col. Charles H. Parsons, St. Petersburg, Fla., an air liaison officer from Da Nang AB.

"It's really a great little airplane," said A1C Kenneth F. Greaves,

Lombard, Ill., the crew chief. "In making the 4,000 landings we have never had any trouble with the landing gear."

According to 1st Lt. Evert P. Heydlauff, Puyallup, Wash., chief of maintenance for the detachment, "This O-2 has over six hundred more landings than any of our other aircraft, and usually has a different pilot flying the aircraft each time it goes up."

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## Two Pilots Get Praise

*(Seventh Air Force News, August 7, 1968)*

**PHAN RANG** - Maj. James E. Kelm, Glendale, Ariz., and 1st Lt. Earl F. Thompson, Capleville, Tenn., F-100 Supersabre pilots assigned to the 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Phan Rang AB, were praised recently for their professionalism while assisting Army of the Republic of Vietnam (A R V N) forces in Bac Lieu Province.

A letter received by the 35th by the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing from the Air Liaison Officer assigned to the 21st ARVN Division indicated that the two pilots delivered their ordnance against the enemy in a highly professional manner.

The forward air controller working with the ARVN unit indicated that the air strike broke the enemy attack and sent the Viet Cong company fleeing from the battlefield.

The Phan Rang aircrews "switched targets without delay and strafed the bunkers and tree lines where the Viet Cong tried to take cover." Col. William I. Williams, the commander of the 504th Tactical

Air Support Group, the headquarters for all Vietnam forward air controllers, praised the aircrews for their close cooperation with the FACs in supporting the ARVN forces.

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## 'Here Yesterday, Gone Tomorrow'

*(source and date unknown)*

**PHAN RANG** - The US, Air Force is taking up its 10,000-foot long, 105-foot wide aluminum matting (AM-2) runway here and shipping it to another air base in Southeast Asia for reuse.

The matting, representing an acquisition cost of \$10.6 million, is expected to be removed by March 25.



A 12-foot section of AM-2 aluminum matting is loosened by workers as Phan Rang's 10,000-foot long by 105-foot wide runway is dismantled for shipment to another base.

Project engineer for the runway's removal is TSgt Arturo, Arriaga, 315th Civil Engineering Squadron, says the AM-2 sections will be transported to Cam Ranh Bay AB for transshipment.

The runway was constructed in 1966 of reinforced aluminum planks measuring 2 feet wide, 12 feet long and 2 inches thick. The sections are held together by fitted grooves on the side and secured by aluminum locking bars.

To remove the sections, a row is loosened, flipped over and separated, cleaned and stacked.

The dismantling contractor is the Kuwang industrial Company, Ltd., of Saigon.

## Off Duty Bummers at the Beach



Let to right: John DeCillo, Howard Taylor ( in the sand ) Randy Jones behind Taylor and Kenny Creel. John DeCillo, 1967.

**Note:** I know not all of these stores may have a dateline of Phan Rang, but we have a lot of members and readers that have an interest in stores dealing with the F-100, C-119, C-47 and C-123 aircrafts. Some may have friends or may have even been stationed at one time at these other bases.

Also if you are new to the Phan Ranger mailing list and you would like copies of previous issues of the Phan Rang News, just send me a note and I'll will send one your way. If you know of a Phan Rangers that would be interested in receiving news about Phan Rang AB, please let me know and I will add them to the mailing list.



**John Rowston takes the Parting Shot\***

\*Notice the plastic 6-pack ring lying on the ground...I wonder if he might be aiming at the culprit that took the cans out?