

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
"Keeping the memories alive" Newsletter 291

PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED STORIES
in the Phan Rang Newsletter

from the
PACIFIC
STARS AND STRIPES

VOLUME 4

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Army Gets New Look at Air Strikes



Air Force Capt. Patrick L. Robinette (right), 33, of Ely, Nev., buckles Army 1st Lt. James B. Craig, a 25-year-old platoon leader with the 101st Airborne Div., into the back seat of an F-100 Super-saber. Craig, from Amherst, Mass., flew on a 35th tactical Fighter Wing combat air strike to observe the difficulties encountered by Air Force pilots. (USAF)

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (7th AF)—Army 1st Lt. **James B. Craig**, a platoon leader in the 1st Brigade of the 101st Air-borne Div., already had a healthy respect for Air Force pilots when he climbed into an F-100 Supersabre here recently.

He may owe his life to an Air Force pilot.

Three weeks after he arrived in Vietnam, he was leading a reconnaissance mission when a north Vietnamese battalion attacked.

Remembering his day near death, he says, "Here I was, a young second lieutenant with a platoon heavily outnumbered, and with several casualties. These guys, who had been through battles before, were watching to see what I would do.

"Let's get some air in here, I yelled." Smiles broke through his men's grim looks, and he knew he had made the light decision.

He expected a long wait. "I couldn't believe it," he says, "when less than five minutes later, the planes were there and the forward air controller was asking me where I wanted the ordnance."

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That air strike gave Craig a chance to re-group his men and evacuate his wounded, and it looked simple to the man in the middle of a battle.

"You get into trouble, you call for air. They come in, zap the enemy, and that's that," said Craig.

Now, he looks at the pilots' job differently, because he's one of many Army officers who are participating in a close air support mission from the back, seat 35th Tactical Fighter Wing F100s and B-57s.

The program was initiated to show ground troops the difficulties of Air Force pilots who fly daily combat missions. The results, according to program originator Army Maj. **Fred S. Lindsey** Poughkeepsie, N.Y., are positive.

"After the orientation rides, Army personnel return to their units with a better understanding of the capabilities of the aircraft, and are more effective in directing air strikes," he says.

A benefit is increased respect between Air Force pilots and Army leaders.

After his ride, Craig said, "I wouldn't trade places with them for all the tea in China. Sure, we're on the ground fighting face-to-face with the enemy. But when pilot rolls in on a target he's the center of attention, and Charlie throws everything he' got at him.

"I learned a lot from that ride. I couldn't fly the plane, but I've seen what they have to go through to drop the ordnance." (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Monday, Feb. 6, 1967*)

U.S. Is Taking Its Gear Home

By SPEC. 4 JIM SMITH

S&S Staff Correspondent

CAM RANH BAY AB, Vietnam — All over Vietnam buildings are being disassembled, vehicles are being collected and equipment is being readied for shipment back to the United States.

American officials are trying to salvage all the military hardware they can as the troops are

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withdrawn and bases close.

The extent of the huge pullout was evident at this big Air Force base recently when a Korean contracting company took up a 10,000-foot-long, 102-foot-wide aluminum plank runway for shipment to U.S. bases throughout the world. The project was designed and monitored by 1st Lt. **Chris Doepke** of the 483rd Civil Engineering Sq. here. Doepke says the removal will save the government an estimated \$5.6 million.

It is the first such project the Air Force has ever undertaken, he said, and the same method is being used to remove huge sections of runway at Phan Rang and Tuy Hoa ABs.

"We made up all the programming documents and got them approved at 7th AF and Pacific Air Forces in Hawaii," Doepke said. "The Koreans caught on very fast. I have to hand it to them. They had an assembly line going where they pulled up a whole section the width of the airstrip then unhooked the clamps, cleaned the planks and stacked them neatly on pallets."

Most of the 40,000 planks — which are two feet wide, two inches thick and six to 12 feet long — already have been sent by cargo ship to other U.S. bases, he said.

The runway has been here since 1965. Since the American presence here has dwindled from 10,000 to less than 5,000 men and only one of the base's two parallel sections of runway was needed for combat and supply missions, however, the decision was made to remove the aluminum and leave the concrete section. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Thursday, Feb. 17, 1972*)

Nickel and Dime AF Units making big changes in Vietnam

SAIGON (7th AF) — "Triple Nickel," and "Penny Short", squadrons are making lots of change.

When each squadron started out, neither had anything but tons of sand and clay. Today they have main acres of improved real estate, buildings and equipment. The cost was — and still is — long hard working hours for the airmen and buckets of sweat.

Each squadron is unique in Air Force history. Both were the first ever created for exclusive Air

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Force construction work.

Officially called 554th and 555th Civil Engineering Sqs. (Heavy Repair) both were assigned in Vietnam under the code name “Red Horse.” Because of the numerical designations, airmen began calling themselves "Triple Nickel" and "Penny Short."

Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Rang Air Bases are being built by the Red Horse squadron airmen. Elements of the units began arriving in January and are now at full strength.

The units are self sustaining. Each can remain and work in respective areas indefinitely. Both are equipped with heavy machinery such as bulldozers and giant earth moving equipment, doctors , medical technicians, cooks, etc.

At Cam Ranh Bay, the Triple Nickel airmen are building a port facility and air base to handle war supplies that will later arrive by ship and aircraft. Cam Ranh, according to engineering officials, is one of the most beautiful and ideal natural harbors in the world.

The two-fold mission of project Red Horse includes repairing airfields damaged by enemy forces or natural causes. From time to time segments of the units are deployed to make such emergency repairs. In addition the squadron's highly skilled airmen drill deep wells to supplement the water supply at various bases.

One of the first projects outside the Cam Ranh and Phan Rang areas was the deployment of a deep well drilling team. This team and drilling equipment went to the Da Nang the second largest base in Vietnam, to drill for additional water to supply American and other free world forces stationed there.

When the Red Horse team and equipment arrived at Cam Ranh Bay they found a beautiful sandy beach washed by the gentle South China Sea. The sand however, almost became a more hostile enemy than the Vietcong.

When the big ships came alongside the long jetty that extended to the deep water of the sea. Air Force men began unloading the cargo of road scrapers, bulldozers, jeeps, flat-bed trailers

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and trucks .

As the trucks and flat-beds were unloaded, they were filled with smaller items necessary for the construction of an air base. Trucks laden with goods bogged axel deep in the shifting soft sand and the dozers first job was to tow them to harder and higher ground.

The first job of the Triple Nickel Red Horses were to build themselves a place to live, and sanitation areas. Almost overnight, a tent city was created that housed all the squadron.

A "great debate" started among the airmen as to which is worse to work in — sand, clay and or mud. The debate is still being argued. According to S.Sgt **Thomas G. White**, Albany, Ga., a carpenter with Triple Nickel, no one "wants to win that argument”.

A fight is being won however. That is the fight between man and nature. Triple Nickel and Penny Short airmen run into natural hazards such as rain and mud at Phan Rang and wind that blows sand at Cam Ranh.

Air Force Lt. Col. **Albert L. Morgan Jr.**, of Lompoc, Cal., is chief of resource planning for Red Horse. Mogan said when Triple Nickel crews went into Cam Ranh Bay, the place was absolutely bare except for a few scrub bushes.

According to White more than a million yards of sand and clay has been moved, more than 20 tons of cement has been poured, more than 230,000 feet of lumber has been nailed up with 3,000 pound of nails and 12 miles of roads have been built at Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Rang.
(Pacific Stars & Stripes, May 23, 1966)

Viet Air Force Set To Take Over C119s

By SPEC. 4 LARRY A. MYERS

S&S Staff Correspondent

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam — AC119 gunships, with their sophisticated light-intensification devices, fire control systems and rapid-fire miniguns, will be turned over to the Vietnamese Air Force early this fall, according to informed sources here.

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Since early February the 17th Special Operations Sq. (SOS) has been busy training 192 VNAF personnel, 24 complete crews, to operate the bullet-spewing "Shadows," said Lt. Col. **Wendell E. Cosner**, chief of the training program.

The training here, which puts heavy emphasis on "learning by doing," lasts two months, Conner said. Five days of formal classroom instruction is followed by eight training missions and 15 combat missions.

"Ninety-five per cent of the learning is in the air or at the aircraft. We have all sorts of first-class teaching and graphic aids, but we've found that 'show and tell' works best," Cosner "said.

The training program, which was developed by the 17th, has been modified several times to increase its effectiveness, Cosner said. Virtually all the VNAF pilots who enter the program are highly skilled, but the remainder of the eight-man crews are often totally inexperienced, he said.

"We have to break old habits among the pilots and create new habits among the vest of the crew," Cosner said.

Because of the complexity of the aircraft's mission, each crew must learn to function smoothly as a team, Cosner said.

For example, the pilot, copilot and crew chief must simultaneously operate different controls to keep the gunship properly aligned once it is on target, Cosner said.

"Many Air Force people think this is one of the most difficult operations there is. There is zero room for error," he said.

But the aircraft's two navigators are the heart of the operation, Cosner said. They must locate the target and direct the fire of the plane's guns, a critical operation when the enemy is close to the "friendlies," Cosner said, In addition to the usual navigational aids, the AC119s carry special night observation scopes. With these devices a navigator pin-points the target and keeps it in view while the craft's guns are firing, Cosner said.

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Despite the complexities of the operation, the Vietnamese have shown themselves an able match to the task, Cosner said.

"We've had a number of instances early in the training when we put the VNAF crews into combat situations and they did remarkably well," Cosner said. One recently graduated class flew several missions around Fire Base Fuller, the scene of heavy fighting in late June, he said.
(Pacific Stars & Stripes Saturday, July 10, 1971)



Photo by William Diebold

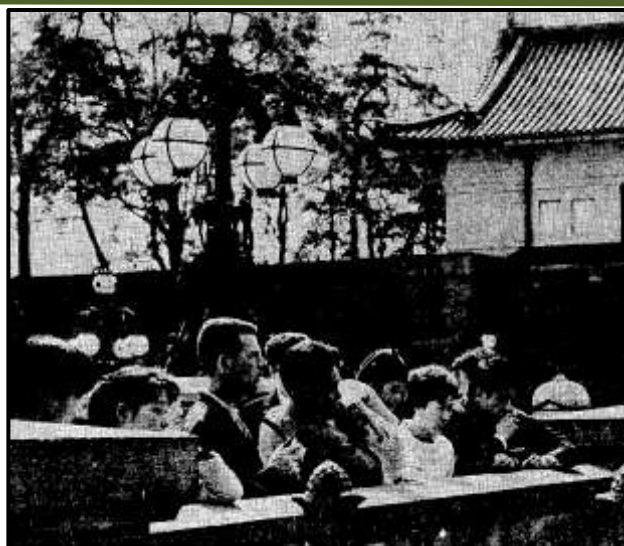
Dennis Seaton posted on Facebook in answer to a question as to “How many people were stationed at Phan Rang AB” - From 1965-1975 there were 34,462 personnel that were stationed at Phan Rang AB. (No source given)

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Airman of Year lives It Up A1C James Sprinkle, (third from left) Pacific Air Forces First-Term Airman: of the Year; enjoys his reward, a week-long holiday in Japan, with a little rubbernecking with other tourists at the imperial Palace in Tokyo. Sprinkle, 23, who loads bombs on fighter planes at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, won \$100 expense money, a seven-day leave and jetliner tickets to Japan for his "outstanding performance and devotion to duty" while assigned to the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. He hails from New Albany, Ind. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes* Wednesday, March 15, 1967)



Airmen have Goodwill Sewed Up

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — Fifteen Phan Rang AB airmen traveled to Ba Ran village, six miles from this coastal air base in Ninh Thuan Province, recently to present needed supplies to a Vietnamese sewing class. Air Force Maj. **William S. Pantle**, of the 315th Tactical Airlift Wing (TAW), led the way with yarn, thread and crocheting needles in hand.

Pantle, the 315th community relations officer, led another group from the unit earlier this year to donate the initial supply of assorted sewing, knitting and embroidery materials to the Montagnard and Vietnamese villagers.

The materials were accepted by a French priest, Father Beliard, and two Vietnamese nuns who used the items to set up a sewing training center for the residents of the foothills hamlets. The village of Ba Rau is made up of two Montagnard and one Vietnamese hamlets.

The sewing class, started six weeks ago, has a dual purpose. The boys and girls will learn how to crochet and sew but they will also produce items that can be sold in the local economy to raise money to help the project become self-sufficient.

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The items made by the teenagers include handkerchiefs, hats and booties for babies, sweaters, and shawls. While at the school, Col. **Robert R. Flynn**, 315th TAW vice commander, Pantle, and 1st Us. **Dennis Kasselmann**, 310th Tactical Airlift Sq. (TAS), and John S. Printz, of the 311th TAS, were each presented a shawl by the students of the class. The shawls, some, of the first made, were given in appreciation of the help rendered by the airlifters of the 815th TAW.

The needed yarn, thread and needles are purchased by Phan Rang AB airmen while they are on R&R or leave. (*Pacific Stars And Stripes*, May 24, 1971)

Grass Roots Viet Support

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01) — A1C **Robert A. Lowe**, an administrative specialist in the 35th Security Police Sq. recently wrote to his mother in Akron, Ohio, asking that she send him some Bermuda grass seed. The airman's letter has resulted in 'Operation Needy-Seedy' in his hometown.

When Col. **Lewis R. Riley**, AB commander, suggested his men write home requesting Bermuda Grass seed to barren look of the newly-constructed installation, Lowe went into action.

"I wrote to my mother. She actually got the operation going by getting it into the newspaper," Lowe said. (*Pacific Stars And Stripes*, November 02, 1967)

C-123 Squadrons Fly Dual-Roles

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01)— The five C-123 Provider squadrons and 1600 men under the command of the 315th Air Commando Sq., commanded by Col. Bill M. Richardson, are performing two different missions in support of the war.

The missions include hauling war supplies into small unlighted landing strips, and defoliation, which involves spraying of chemical agents to kill vegetation used by the enemy to hide.

(*Pacific Stars And Stripes*, November 02, 1967)

An Outstanding Airman	
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M.Sgt. Arthur G. Miles and California state	
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Sen. **Mervin Dymally** admire a plaque given to Miles for his service with the American Minority Serviceman's Association in Vietnam. Miles, now stationed at McClellan AFB, Calif., is one of 12 chosen by the Air Force as Outstanding Airmen of 1971. Dymally is from Miles home district in Los Angeles. Miles served with the 1882nd comm., Sq. at Phan Rang AB in Vietnam. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Saturday, August 21, 1971*)



Living Up To His Name

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — True to his name Air Force S. Sgt. **Will I. Cook** of Montgomery, Ala., reenlisted here for another four years to do just that. Well, almost anyway. A 14-year Air Force veteran, Cook is the chief steward at the Officers' Open Mess. Before entering the service in 1956, he was the chief cook in a Los Angeles cafeteria. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Monday, Nov. 9, 1970*)

10,000th Mission

PHAN RANG, Vietnam — When Maj. **James L. Anthony**, an F100 Supersabre pilot with the 615th Tactical Fighter Sq. 'Black Panthers,' not only chalked up his 83rd combat mission when he returned to Phan Rang AB from a strike recently — he chalked up the squadrons' 10,000th combat mission. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Friday, Nov. 10, 1967*)

New Battalion Joins Brigade

CAM RANH BAY — The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Div., added another infantry battalion recently when the 3rd Bu. (Abn) 506th Inf. , arrived here from Ft. Campbell, Ky.

Lt. Col. **John P. Gerarci** and his battalion were greeted by Brig. Gen. **S. H. Mathesom**, brigade commander. Gerarci enters his third tour in Vietnam.

The paratroopers moved to Phan Rang where they will undergo training before joining

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the rest of the brigade in combat. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Friday, Nov. 10, 1967*)

Phan Rang AB Airman Honored

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special)—Airman 1.C. **Jon F. Goldbaum**, Benton Harbor, Mich., a member of the 1882d Comm. Sq. here, was recently selected as the squadron's Airman of the Quarter.

A computer repairman, he was selected for his overall knowledge of his job, squadron policy, the chain of command and current events.

Prior to his assignment here, Goldbaum served at Norton AFB, Calif.

The 1882nd Comm. Sq. is subordinate unit of the South East Asia Communications regional headquartered on Clark AB. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Monday, Nov. 10, 1969*)

Home 'Folks' Did Care

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special)—Personal replies from 46 state governors were received because three men of the 1882d Communications Sq. here decided to show their buddies the people back home do care about serviceman in the Republic of Vietnam.

T. Sgt. **Owen J. Healy** of Dearborn, Mich., explained that "In our letters to each of the governors, we requested a crest, a replica of the state seal or anything commemorative of that state which we could display in prominent and heavily traveled area of the base.

"Due to the tremendous response to our requests, we almost ran out of space," he continued. The variations in size and design of the mementos challenged the men working on the project to find a suitable way to mount them for display.

"The 3 by 5 foot flag from my home state was well taken care of, as were the items from the other states," said Sgt. **Charles Collins** of Watervliet, N.Y. "We had a hard time deciding how to best display the mementos, but we finally chose arranging them in order of entrance into the Union."

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Even though the project lasted more than three months, few people knew of its existence. Almost all the work and preparation was done by the three men during their off-duty time. One afternoon the items were placed in a long hallway in the base communications center.

First Lt. **David H. Albert** of Millstadt, Ill., the third man in the project, said, "This was a complete surprise to everyone, including the squadron commander. "I was very pleased to receive the fine letters that accompanied the display items from the various state executives," Albert continued. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Friday, Nov. 14, 1969*)

(**Note:** This very same article from November 14 appeared in the Stars & Stripes three days later on November 17 and the only difference was the header)

Mementos, Letters Prove 'Folks' Care

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Luci Off To Hawaii To See Pat

DALLAS (UPI)—**Luci Johnson Nugent** and her 16-month old son, Lyn, left for Hawaii Saturday for a reunion with Airman 1.C. **Patrick Nugent**, who has been in Vietnam seven months.

Luci, President Johnson's younger daughter, and Lyn arrived from Austin, Tex., their home, in a friend's private plane. They boarded an American Airlines plane in Dallas for San Francisco.

In San Francisco, Luci will visit Melinda Bates, widow of a Navy pilot killed last month in an explosion in Vietnam. She and Lyn will spend a week sightseeing in Hawaii before Nugent arrives Nov. 20 for a week of "rest and recreation."

Nugent is a loadmaster on a C123 cargo plane with the 309th Special Unit from Phan Rang, South Vietnam.

Luci is expected to return to Austin in time to join her sister Lynda Robb and Lynda's 2-week-old daughter Lucinda Desha Robb for Thanksgiving dinner with the President and Mrs. Johnson at the LBJ Ranch Nov. 28. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Tuesday, Nov. 12*)

NCO of Quarter

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special)— S. Sgt. **Cyril E. Hill** of Pensacola, Fla., a member of the 1882d Comm. Sq. here, has been selected as the squadron's noncommissioned officer of the quarter. (*Pacific Stars And Stripes, November 17, 1969*)

Dispensary Honored

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PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01) —The 35th USAF Dispensary here was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. Col. **Herndon F. Williams**, Florence, S.C., 35th Tactical Fighter Wing commander, presented the award to airmen of the officers and medical unit. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Tuesday, April 23, 1968*)

C123 Sprayers Rise Early To Drive Mosquitoes Buggy

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — Two aircraft of the 12th Special Operations Sq., a unit of the 315th Special Operations Wing here, carry out one of the most specialized and humanitarian missions performed in the Republic of Vietnam.

The "Bug-Birds," C123 Providers of the 12th Special Operations Sq., are outfitted with equipment to spray mosquitoes and control the malaria-ridden insect.

Capt. **James G. Murphy** of Floral, Ala., a C123 pilot, explained, "The 'bug-birds' fly daily and spray malathion over air bases and villages throughout Vietnam. It is necessary to spray regularly since the local heat and humidity provide ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes."

Because mosquitoes hide to avoid the sun's heat, spraying takes place in the early morning, between sunrise and 8 a.m. Since this time restriction does not allow a crew to depart from Bien Hoa AB, home of the 12th SOS, and still reach all of their targets during these critical hours, bug crews frequently spend a week at a time away from home base, operating from an air base in the vicinity of their targets.

The Provider carries a crew of four, the pilot and copilot, a navigator, and a flight engineer. The navigator is responsible for directing the aircraft on its 10 to 15 passes over the target to insure complete coverage with a minimum of overlap and aircraft maneuvering. The spray pattern used may vary considerably, depending on terrain, the shape of the base or village, the weather and local air traffic. The flight engineer must control the rate of the spray's discharge, and turn the spray on and off for each pass.

Exact timing is required, as only a few minutes of spray can be carried on the aircraft for each mission.

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During the spraying, the pilot and copilot maneuver the aircraft at a critically low altitude, watching for obstacles and local air traffic.

"When sprayed from an aircraft, malathion disperses in the air in the form of micron particles," explained T.Sgt. **Richard D. Bugg**, flight engineer. Though these particles primarily kill flying mosquitoes on contact, residual spray on plants is also partially effective.

"We used malathion since it is effective and offers no threat to people, animals or plant life," he said. Bug targets are sprayed once every nine days to provide continuous mosquito control. All targets are previously tested as breeding places for mosquitoes, and approval is coordinated with the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, surgeon general, who keeps close watch over malaria cases to determine the need for the spray. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Thursday, Nov. 27, 1969*)

NCO 'Inherits' Boy At Base Beach House



M. Sgt. Milton Corry and his "adopted" son Thich Trong Truong examine a lobster outside the Phan Rang beach house.

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (7AF) —Things looked grim for Thich Trong Truong, a 17-year-old Vietnamese boy when his father was killed more than a year ago in a motorcycle accident in the town of Trap Cham, near Phan Rang AB.

The boy's mother abandoned him and he began hanging around the beach facility for Air Force personnel from the base.

Then a sergeant, who works at the facility 'adopted' him. Thich Trong Truong, became a permanent

fixture at the beach house.

Last August, when M.Sgt. **Milton Corry**, 38, arrived at the air base he "inherited" the boy from his initial 'foster parent', who had rotated to the states.

Corry, who has a wife and five children in the states, fitted naturally into his new role as the

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boy's unofficial guardian.

"I try to guide him the best I can," said the sergeant. Thich Trong Truong lives in a little room near the snack bar at the beach house where he works serving soft drinks. He speaks English now, and many G.I.s use him as an interpreter" Corry said.

He said the boy has two ambitions to, buy a motorbike and to become an interpreter when he joins the Vietnamese Air Force next year, Corry goes shopping with his "son" occasionally in local towns, for such items as shirts, and sometimes he sits down with the Vietnamese teenager to straighten out problems with a man-to-man talk.

Soon Corry will complete his tour at Phan Rang, and the youth, a shy youngster with a big smile, is already apprehensive about the day he'll be parted from his foster parent.

"He's being Americanized," Corry said, the warm hearted American sergeant makes no bones about the fact that he too dreads the moment of separation. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Tuesday, September 5, 1967*)

Aid for an Isolated Village

Doctor: I'll Do Anything to Stop VC

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (7AF) —The gleaming cleanliness and antiseptic odor typical of hospitals was absent as patient after patient filed past Air Force Doctor (Capt.) **Jaroslav K. Richter** to present their ailments and receive medical treatment.

Assigned to the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing's hospital, Richter had led a medical Civic Action team to an isolated Vietnamese village half way between Phan Rang and Cam Ranh Bay on the coast of the South China Sea.

His reason for making the dangerous trip into an area which the Viet Cong control by night was simply stated: "I have a great sympathy for these people." The 28-year-old doctor who now makes his home in Chicago knows what it is like to live under Communist oppression. He escaped from Czechoslovakia in 1951, eventually immigrating to the United States. "I'll do anything to stop the Viet Cong," he says.

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His concern for the Vietnamese prompted him to make his first visit to the village after he was asked by a Navy liaison officer of Phan Rang's Vietnamese Coastal Patrol Station.

"This village is kind of an out of the way place and the people can't get to the Phan Rang Province Hospital for medical attention. Since they have quite a few medical problems, we decided to adopt this particular village and give them our medical help," he said.

Transportation almost to the village is provided by a junk manned by personnel of the Vietnamese Coastal Patrol. At the tidal basin near the village, medical personnel and their equipment are transferred to a small fishing boat for another hundred yards.

The last portion of the trip is covered by walking in waist deep water for the remaining hundred yards to the shore. As they trudge to the small building where they will begin the medical treatment, people pour out of the grass and mud hutches almost as much to look at the taller Air Force men as to seek treatment for their ailments.

Richter is thought to be the first American to enter the village and has made three trips there already. Lt. (j.g.) **David Greenberg** of Woonsocket, R.I., a Navy advisor to the Vietnamese Coastal Patrol, says the Viet Cong come into the village regularly at night to propagandize.

These medical teams are the only Americans that the villagers see and the kids swarm all over Richter, according to Greenberg. He said. "They treat him like a Santa Claus in fatigues—but with a medical kit."

As the afternoon passes sweat rolls down the faces of the medical personnel as they treat case after case—minor and major illnesses, curable and incurable ailments.

The presence of the Viet Cong is known. The point is made by the Vietnamese Popular Forces guards near the medical personnel to insure their safety.

With the medical chores finished, Richter picks up several packages of the candy-like throat lozenges and passes them out as the kids gather around.

“Happy Valley” Phan Rang AB, RVN

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Relaxed now, with a smile on his face and a laugh in his voice, he attempts to talk to the children. He gives the impression of a contented man.

It was a full day's work for the Air Force doctor—he treated nearly 45 Vietnamese people. But the day was not quite completed. When he boarded the junk, a small fishing boat pulled alongside. Leaping precariously out from the junk with the boats rolling on the waves, Richter finally saw his last Vietnamese patient of the day. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Wednesday, July 19, 1967*)

New Boss for 309th

PHAN RANG AB (Special)— Lt. Col. **Harvey H. Hogue**, 43, of San Antonio, recently took command of the 309th Special Operations Sq. here. He replaces Lt. Col. **Paul E. Rova**, who has been reassigned to Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces, at Hickam AFB in Hawaii. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Sunday, Sept. 28, 1969*)

'Blind' B57 Hits The Target

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01) —“We were flying at night and didn't know whether we were upside-down or right-side up,” said 1st Lt. **Melvin Burns**, a B57 Canberra navigator, as he described a night mission over North Vietnam.

Burns, 24, assigned to the 13th Tactical Bombardment. Sq., used a compass, mathematical calculations and dead reckoning to guide the B57 to its target after navigational equipment failed and the main Altitude indicator malfunctioned.

A veteran of 104 combat missions in Vietnam, the young officer managed to rendezvous with two other B57's of the squadron at the scene of the target, 85 miles north of the Demilitarized Zone, and "I've never seen as many lights on "the highway as on that particular night."

The trio of bombers made a series of passes which resulted in the destruction of eight trucks, eight secondary explosions and eight billowing fires.

The lieutenant identified two of the blazes as large fuel fires, marked by black smoke clearly

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visible at 1,500 feet.

"We saw at least 20 to 30 pairs of lights," said Burns as he recalled the start of the bomber assault on the trucks, which were right along a mountain pass. The B57 crews divided up their target, and Burns noted six secondary explosions on the first bomb run.

He estimated 40 rounds of anti-aircraft fire came up at the B57s, and added that on a previous night mission 200 rounds of fire greeted his aircraft in North Vietnam. (Pacific Stars & Stripes Friday, Oct 13, 1967)



Doug's Comments: The 2024 reunion is getting closer and the locals are planning some special events for us beside those that we've planned. Even at our very first reunion in Fairborn we were treated very nicely by Green County with a nice poster that was displayed in the hotel lobby and reusable shopping bags for all the attendees. The annual gathering of Vietnam Veterans can be a life-changing event for many of us, so if you haven't already committed to attending, now is the time to act. Once again I would like to make a call-out to those members that have not submitted a bio. I would like to have a whole issue devoted to bios as I've had in the past, so if you haven't written one, now is the time to preserve your legacy so that when you pass your descendants won't have to ask what you did in the war. This newsletter was researched and composed by Douglas Severt. To see a list of all previous newsletters click [here](#). To unsubscribe to Phan Rang News, dougsevert@gmail.com and put 'unsubscribe' in subject line.