

Phan Rang AB Newsletter

The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there.
"Keeping the memories alive" Newsletter 293



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Red Cross Girl in Vietnam Swings

PHAN RANG, Vietnam (01) —A young woman on the staff of the Red Cross Recreation Center at Phan Rang AB made a “smashing” debut by throwing an airman, who outweighed her more than 60 pounds, seven times.

Miss **Pat Rowan** accomplished this feat during a judo exhibit at the center. The attractive blonde said the airmen at the exhibit “were scared to death I was probably going to kill myself.”

Actually, they needn’t have worried. Pat studied judo for one semester as a senior at Texas Christian University, from which she graduated last spring with a degree in sociology and psychology.

She arrived in Vietnam less than a month ago. Her reason for coming: “concern for the men over here . . . duty and patriotism. I just want to do my share.”

Pat, who stands 5-foot-6 was demonstrating general throwing techniques and ways in which women can ward off assailants. The airman she threw across her hip holds a third degree black belt in judo. (*Pacific Stars And Stripes, November 28, 1967*)

Men of 389th Operate From ‘Bare’ Viet Camp

Phan Rang, Vietnam - Operating from a ‘bare’ base Air Force F-4C Phantom crews flew strikes from the Phan Rang air base against Viet Cong targets only two days after completing a new, aluminum runway here.

The base which consists of the new runway, an older runway nearby and temporary buildings for living and office space is located about 65 miles northeast of Saigon. Although permanent buildings are being built, most men at the base still live, eat, sleep and work in tents or hastily-

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constructed wood buildings.



BARE NECESSITIES - Using outdoor facilities of the Phan Rang air base, Air Force Maj. **James R. Kirkpatrick** (left) of San Antonio, Tex., and Lt. Col. **Wilbur C. Pensinger** of Fairborn, Ohio, prepare for the day's activities. Until permanent buildings are constructed at the base about 65 miles northeast of Saigon, Air Force men live, eat, sleep and work in tents or hastily-constructed wood buildings.

Since arriving here may 14, F-4C crews from the 389th Tactical Fighter Squadron - a 366th Tactical Fighter Wing unit - have flown more than 1,000 close air support and other combat sorties against the Viet Cong.

Phantom crews from Phan Rang have been credited with destroying or damaging more than 1,20 buildings, possibly killing more than 115 VC and destroying or damaging about 50 fortifications. (*Alamogordo Daily News, Alamogordo, New Mexico, Sunday, June 19, 1966*)

Richard Newell Promoted

Col. **Richard G. Newell**, former commander of the 352nd Tactical Fighter Squadron from Myrtle Beach AFB, has been promoted to full Col. and been named assistant deputy commander for operations of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam.

Two days before his reassignment, Newell flew his unit's 1,000th combat sortie. A veteran of more than 20 years service, the colonel led his squadron from Myrtle Beach to Phan Rang in August, flying the 10,000 miles in 20 hours.

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The 352nd has logged 1,700 flying hours in Vietnam since arrival, destroying or damaging 780 enemy structures, 28 sampans, 10 vehicles and 45 positions.

Officer Serves God And Country

A Clarksville Army officer currently serving at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam believes in serving God wherever he might travel.

Engaged as a soldier for his country for the last 19 years, Capt. **Ralph Conklin** also stays busy as a soldier of Christ. His latest exploits in the latter field is the founding and teaching of a Sunday School class for the servicemen stationed in and around the Phan Rang Air Base, 65 miles northeast of Saigon on the South China Sea.

The men who attend Capt. Conklin’s class sometimes have had to attend in danger of their lives. In fact, the night the group held an organizational social, the Viet Cong began shelling the area and although none of the men were hurt, they lost all their steaks which they were preparing for the meal.

Later, however, the secretary of the Sunday school class was a victim of an enemy attack and lost a leg and received a badly shattered arm.

The officer, a mission-minded Southern Baptist, became interested in the Sunday School endeavor when he noticed a beautiful little Air Force Chapel near the base was only being used on Sunday mornings for worship service. He inquired of the chaplain in charge and asked about starting the class, to which the chaplain readily agreed.

The class was begun last December with some eight persons as a starter, after the class was advertised by word of mouth. The class expanded until about 27 persons were enrolled and an average attendance of 17 and 18 has been reached.

The career servicemen, who plans to retire in about a year, serves as a ground liaison officer between the Army and Air Force.

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For assistance in teaching, Conklin wrote back to his home church here, Gracey Avenue Baptist, and asked for literature. The church immediately sent the necessary materials and continued to do so from then on. Aid was also given him by the Cumberland Baptist Association Office here, headed by Superintendent of Missions, Thurman Fox, who sent various tracts and other aids to the teacher.

An ordained Baptist deacon, Capt. Conklin has long been engaged in church-related work. He was serving as Brotherhood Director for the Cumberland Baptist Association prior to going to Vietnam. This is his second tour in Vietnam.

When at home in Clarksville, he attends Gracey Avenue, where his wife, Frances, serves as organist.

A native of Michigan, Capt. Conklin served as an enlisted man for 17 years, and was commissioned as an officer in 1967. He has served three tours of duty at Ft. Campbell, Ky., and his wife and their three children, Rita, 14; Lisa, 11, and Scott, 7 reside here in Clarksville.

He was presented the Army Commendation ribbon in Saigon recently for his work with a special training company at Ft. Campbell, while he was stationed there.

During his tour in Vietnam he recently made a complete review of existing defensive positions following an attack on Phan Rang by hostile forces and in coordination with base security officials, he established tighter security measures to protect the unit's operations, supply and aircraft revetment areas.

Capt. Conklin will be coming home from Vietnam the first week of August. He currently is working to get someone to take over his position as the teacher of the Sunday School class and keep it operating. Mrs. Conklin hears regularly from her husband who keeps everyone back home posted about the class, and says that the effort has been a big blessing to him. (*The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville, Tennessee, Friday, July 25, 1969*)

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WHAT'S LEFT - Capt. Conklin poses by what's left of an enemy mortar attack near Phan Rang Air Base. Shillings occurred sometimes during Sunday School Class meetings.



HONORED - Capt Ralph Conklin receives the Army Commendation ribbons while stationed in Vietnam for his work he did with the special training company at Ft. Campbell, Ky.

Give Scholarships - Four officers and four enlisted men from the 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, presented scholarships to 35 students at the An Phuoc High School. First Lt. **Alva R. Cox**, said it costs 1,000 piasters (about \$9) to support a student at the boarding school for one month. Each of the scholarships was for the sum of 500 piasters. A veteran of 145 combat missions the young officer noted that each pilot of the -100 Super Sabre Squadron sponsors a student at the school. (*The Hill Top Times, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Friday, December 29, 1967.*)



For some new readers to the Phan Rang Newsletter, you may not know of one of the most prolific writers from Phan Rang. He is Larry Theurer, a “Bummer”, who has written about his experiences using both humor and drama, but sometimes that can be funny as well. His stories are short and sweet and if you would like to check him out, his stories start out with issue 50 and continues through 93.

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834th Wins Second PUC

TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam (Special)—The 834th Air Div., responsible for all U.S. Air Force cargo and troop transport in the Republic of Vietnam, has received its second U.S. Presidential Unit Citation.

The division, headquartered at Tan Son Nhut AB, was cited for its outstanding airlift support for the Free World Forces in the Republic for the period April 1 to June 30, 1970. The earlier award covered the period Jan. 21 to May 12, 1968.

Under the division are Detachments 1 and 2 at Tan Son Nhut and Cam Ranh Bay AB, respectively, both flying C130 Hercules aircraft; the 315th Tactical Airlift Wing at Phan Rang AB, flying C123 Providers; the 483d Tactical Airlift Wing at Cam Ranh Bay, the only C7 Caribou wing in the U.S. Air Force; and the 2nd Aerial Port Group, headquartered at Tan Son Nhut.

In its five years in Vietnam, the 834th has been responsible for carrying out the largest sustained airlift in history, dwarfing the combined totals of the Berlin Airlift of 1949, the “Hump” airlift over the Himalayas during World War II and the tactical airlift of the Korean War.

More than two billion tons of cargo and 3.5 million passengers were carried aboard the unit’s aircraft in the last year alone. (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Friday, Oct, 1, 1971*)



JUST OPEN ...The new bar and dining room just open after completion of NCO Open Mess at Phan Rang AB.

Best NCO Open Mess - Phan Rang In Vietnam

CMSgt. **Jesse L. Anderson**, NCO Open Mess club secretary, reported for duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, the day after Christmas in 1965.

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operating capital, he immediately set up the first enlisted club there.

Although only a tent, it became the gathering point for off duty base personnel.

By August 1966, a period of just ten months, the facilities had expanded to include a new NCO Open Mess, a COLA Mess for NCOs and a separate Airmen’s Club.

Rather than feeling disheartened by the obstacles of war, his foresight, perseverance, and outstanding ability as an organizer and manager were cited as being directly responsible for the development of what has been referred to by visiting personnel as the finest NCO Open Mess in Vietnam.

While pulling his tour in Vietnam, his wife Bobbie and their five children lived in Smyrna. (*The Carrier’s Courier, Smyrna, Tennessee, Friday, February 9, 1968*)



Thank-you received here - Area ditty bags reach Vietnam

Those Red Cross ditty bags so many area individuals spent so many hours preparing reached their destination, according to a letter received from South Vietnam.

Richard C. Irwin, Red Cross Field Director, and his assistants wrote Mrs. **Merian Robinson**, Columbus County Chapter executive secretary, that the shipment had arrived.

“It is appreciated how much planning and organization as well as love went into the making, the packing and finally, the shipping of these ditty bags. They have arrived in good condition. Preparations have been made for their distribution to servicemen at Christmas time,” he wrote.

The bags were sent to Phan Rang Air Base, located about 150 miles north east of Saigon.

“We believe the holidays will be happier for members of the Cambria American Legion

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Auxiliary, Caledonia Neighborhood Club, Poynette, Homemakers. Wyocena YNCA Homemakers and the Portage VFW Auxiliary knowing these gifts have arrived safely, making Christmas a bit merrier for the servicemen in Vietnam.” Mrs. Robinson said.

Phan Rang Air Base is called “Happy Valley” by the servicemen. Besides the Air Force Units, there are Army artillery units with their outlying fire bases and Army Aviation Assault Helicopter units.

Said Irwin: “We know the men will have appreciation for your thoughtful gifts. So for them, please convey our appreciation to each individual and group that make your project a success this year. (*Portage Daily Register, Portage, Wisconsin, Friday, December 18, 1970*)



Servicemen, especially those serving overseas, appreciate remembrances from home at Christmas time. Here, Pfc. **James Hekman**, 20, Kalamazoo, Mich., clutches a present under his arms as he reads a letter from home. Hekman has been in Vietnam for six months and is located at Con Thien, about 350 miles to the south, at Phan Rang Air Base, servicemen received Red Cross Ditty bags prepared by individuals throughout Columbia County.

Thanks from Happy Halley

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 74 members, who helped pack the Christmas Ditty Bags sent to Vietnam, received a letter of appreciation from the American National Red Cross, Office of Field Director, Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam which said, in part, “It is appreciated how much planning and organization as well as love went into the making, the packing and finally the shipping of the ditty bags. This Red Cross field office covers Phan Rang, Air Base affectionately called “Happy Valley by the servicemen. We not only have Air Force with their outlying fire bases and army aviation assault helicopter units. We know the men will have appreciation for your thoughtful gifts,” (*The Journal Times, Racine, Wisconsin, January 13, 1971*)

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Four Flags Fly - An addition to the headquarters at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, is a set of flagpoles which fly the colors of the United States, Vietnam, Korea and Australia. Each of the nations has military men in the Phan Rang area. The flag complex was completed by the 35th Civil Engineering Squadron. (*The Hill Top Times, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Friday, July 12, 1968*)

Transient Critical

PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (AFNS) - Transient accommodations here will be extremely limited for an indefinite period. In order to prevent personnel hardships and inconveniences, personnel planning temporary duty at Phan Rang AB should have confirmed reservations prior to arrival.

(The Sheppard Senator, Wichita Falls, Texas, Thursday, October 16, 1969)

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War Sometimes Turns Positive Face

PHAN RANG (7AF) - Little **Huynh Tai** was a pitiful sight, that day, more than a year ago when his father, **Huynh Tho**, carried him into the Phan Rang Province Hospital after walking for more than three days to make the 50 mile journey through Viet Cong controlled territory.

Barely 8 years old, tiny Huynh was not mauled and torn by Communist terrorists but his frail body was ravaged by a silent killer - tuberculosis. Already paralyzed, his life expectancy could be counted in days. This hospital in Phan Rang City was his last hope.

While donating his spare time and medical knowledge to help the understaffed Vietnamese doctors at the hospital, Air Force Capt. **Harry L. Tucker**, 30 of Winter Park Fla., a physician at the Phan Rang air hospital, examined the new patient.

HE FOUND pulmonary and probably abdominal tuberculosis. The disease had attacked his spinal column, destroying several vertebrae which collapsed the spine into a bent over position. Pressure, caused by the abnormal position had paralyzed Huynh’s lower extremities.

Too weak to survive a necessary operation to relieve the paralyzing pressure, Huynh was given anti-tuberculosis treatment by Dr. Tucker. Tension mounted as little by little the strength returned to his disease wracked body.

Within two weeks Huynh was airlifted to the modern medical facilities at Cam Ranh Bay air base. A three-man team, including Dr. Tucker, performed the operation to drain an abscess and relieve the paralyzing pressure. Encased in a cast from hips to chin, Huynh was returned to the province hospital in Phan Rang.

TWO MONTHS later and continuing to gain strength, Huynh hesitantly placed one foot in front of the other to take his first trembling steps since the dreaded disease began its attack. With each step, his tentative grin broke into a bigger smile until it seemed his face could no longer hold the happiness.

Vietnamese doctors, nurses, ward attendants and other patients watched those first steps. His happiness penetrated the pain and hardship of the other patients, easing their troubled minds

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for a while as they shared his joy.

Already, it seemed the kind Air Force doctor was responsible for a miracle. But the horizons of Dr. Tucker’s hope knew no bounds for he turned his efforts to a permanent cure for Huynh - an operation to fuse his spinal column.

Extremely difficult, the operation demanded a modern well-equipped hospital and a specialist in this field. Dr. Tucker contacted Dr. **Royston Miller**, a noted surgeon and chief of orthopedics at Orange County Memorial hospital in Florida.

DR. MILLER volunteered to operate and also arranged for Huynh to recuperate at the Harry Anna Crippled Children’s Home in Umatilla, Fla.

As one barrier after another was crossed by the persistent Air Force Doctor, the reams of paperwork necessary for Huynh’s trip and entry into the United States was rapidly being processed.

And then the inevitable snag.

Huynh’s father bore the same name as a Viet Cong terrorist. The Vietnamese National Security Police had prepared a folder on Huynh Tho and were reluctant to release a suspected terrorist from their control.

Lum Van Quang, Civic Action Liaison officer who worked closely with Dr. Tucker as interpreter and liaison with the Vietnamese government set to work on this problem.

SOON, the folder was released and Huynh Tho was free to accompany his son when, perhaps the boy needed his father the most. But Huynh Tho’s small salary as a stone mason left no money to cover his expenses for the trip.

Meanwhile, Huynh’s struggle had attracted the attention of nearly everyone in the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. Air Force pilots, aircraft mechanics and support personnel dug deep in their pockets to donate more than \$1,900 to allow the father and son to be together.

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Nearly seven months after Huynh’s condition became known to Dr. Tucker, the Vietnamese boy and his father boarded a jet-transport aircraft that took them to the United States.

AFTER the operation to infuse his spine, the heavy body cast was replaced with a lighter and more comfortable brace. Months of recuperative care and additional medical treatment brought a stocky Huynh back to Vietnam recently.

Airlifted by helicopter to their tiny fishing village, the little Vietnamese boy that was carried from the village in his father’s arms returned a picture of good health.

Since Dr. Tucker has returned to the United States, Huynh will now be under the care of Dr. **Henry Hamilton**, 32, of Cheshire, England, a member of the International Rescue Committee at the Phan Rang hospital.

DR. HAMILTON will examine Huynh once a month for one year. He expects the brace to be removed in about six months and said the boy is doing “real well”.

Captain **Jerry C. Cauley**, 30, of Gridton N.C., Phan Rang Air Base hospital administrator, whose office handled most of the monumental typing chores for Dr. Tucker said “I was amazed at how well Huynh now looks. When I first met him, he was sad and looked confused at the pain he had to bear while his young friends played. Now he has happiness written all over his face.”

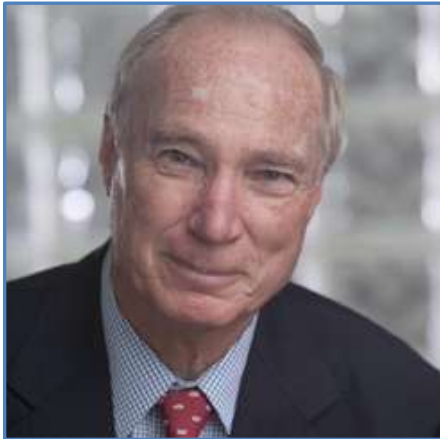
With bluntness typical of a Vietnamese person speaking English, Dr. Doan Trinh who was at the Phan Rang Province hospital when Huynh was carried in said, “He is much happier. He has a straight spine.”

The ‘straight spine’ is a fit to the small Vietnamese boy by the tall American for a reason most people simply would not understand.

The Air Force doctor cared

(The Oregon Daily Journal, Portland, Oregon, Wednesday, September 27, 1967)

Harry Tucker



Harry Lan Tucker, MD., died on Sunday, April 6, 2014 at his home in Winter Park, Fl., ending his lengthy battle with Alzheimer’s disease. He was 78. Dr. Tucker is survived by his wife of 30 years, Eileen “Renee” Tucker, their son Lawrence Tucker, his daughters DeLan Gilliam and Dr. Luci Saha, their husbands Dr. Michael Gilliam and Dr. Sukamal Saha, and his five grandchildren, Cameran, Michael, Luke, Joshua and Matthew. Dr. Tucker did his undergraduate studies in physics at Georgia Tech University. He graduated from Emory University School of Medicine, and began his surgical

residency at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. After leaving Atlanta, Dr. Tucker served in the Air Force for three years, achieving the rank of Captain. He served as flight surgeon at Wright Patterson AFB and later as a staff surgeon in Phan Rang, Vietnam. During his military service he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. Upon discharge from the Air Force, Dr. Tucker completed his orthopedic surgery residency at Orlando Regional Medical Center and went on to receive specialized training in hand surgery at Vanderbilt University and hip surgery at Wrightington Hospital in Wigan, England. Dr. Tucker served the Orlando community as an orthopedic surgeon in private practice and as director of the orthopedic residency training program at Orlando Regional Medical Center from 1972 to 1990. He was tireless in his pursuit to bring the highest quality care to his patients, and an exceptional educational experience to the medical residents he trained. Upon retiring in 1990, Dr. Tucker relocated with his family to Tallahassee, Fl., where he volunteered at Neighborhood Health Services, a needs-based clinic. He returned to the Orlando area in 2013. Having never met a stranger, he was known for his great stories and witty sense of humor. He loved fishing and playing golf with his son and buddies, but his true love was sailing, and it inspired him to learn how to navigate by the stars.

Note: This same basic story has been carried in several issues of the Phan Rang Newsletter, but this version has more details than the previous ones. The following issues of the Phan Rang Newsletter carried this story *“Viet Boy’s TB Cured In Florida”*, News 104 *“Because Air Force Doctor Cared, Boy Walks Again”*, News 112 *“Viet boys TB Cured in Florida - Air Men Make it Possible”* and News 114 *“Air Force Personnel Never Too Tired To Aid Villagers”*.

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PHAN RANG BEACH - The beach facility at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam, consolidated under Air Force control, has been selected as the safest and most improved recreation facility in Pacific Air Forces.

The beach staff includes a member of the base personnel services office, four Air Force security policemen who double as lifeguards and three Army lifeguards.

Up to 500 military personnel can be found at the beach on a good day, and the range of activities goes from water-skiing and scuba-diving to volleyball, horseshoes, badminton and football. (*The Hill Top Times, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Friday, May 17, 1968*)



Sgt. Gary Warfield On Duty At Phan Rang AB, Vietnam - WITH U.S. COMBAT AIR FORCES, Vietnam - Sergeant **Gary A Warfield** son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward S. Warfield Sr., of 723

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East Market street, Danville, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Sergeant Warfield, a supply inventory specialist, is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he was assigned to Tachikawa AB, Japan. The Sergeant attended Danville High School. His wife is the former Mary E. Lutz. (*The Danville News, Danville, Pennsylvania, Friday, March 22, 1968*)

Prentiss Farley At Phan Rang AB - Airman First Class **Prentiss D. Farley**, whose parents are Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Best of Folsom, is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Farley, an electrical power specialist, is a member of the Pacific Air Forces. The airman is a graduate of Mira Loma High School, Sacramento. (*The Folsom Telegraph, Folsom, California, Thursday, February 1, 1968*)

At Phan Rang AB - PATERSON - Airman 1C **Thomas E. Glinka**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Glinka of 85 Tuella Ave., is on duty at Phan Rang AB, Vietnam. Airman Glinka is an aircraft mechanic. Before his arrival in Vietnam, he was assigned to Dover AFB, Del. The airman is a 1864 graduate of Don Bosco Tech. High School. (*The Morning Call, Patterson, New Jersey, Friday, October 18, 1968*)



From Carol Clarke - LOVE the Red Cross thank you letters (Responding to an article in issue No. 292). Thank you for printing them. God bless all those Red Cross Chapter volunteers, Scout troops and others who

made cookies and carefully packed them in coffee cans with rows of popped popcorn in between to keep the cookies from breaking. Didn't always work but we ate the crumbs anyway. By the time I was there, some folks back home didn't know how they felt about the war, but they knew they wanted to support our troops and sent cookies to express their regards. Our Helpmate Chapter was from Indiana and they were awesome. We had coffee cans full of cookies in boxes stacked all the way to the ceiling for Christmas, 1970!

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Thank you to you for keeping the memories alive!

Carol

(Doug’s comments: Carol Clarke was one of those Red Cross volunteers. To see more about Carol look in Phan Rang Newsletters, 127, 136. 216. 236. 254, 261, 265 and 275.



From: Roger Lambert

Doug, Another enlightening issue, Doug. Many thanks for your continued publication of South Vietnam events that I would otherwise be unaware of ...

Regards, Roger

(Doug’s comment: I don’t think there has been an issue that Roger hasn’t commented on and of course those comments are always appreciated, just as were the stories that he has told to us about the Royal Australian Regiment in Vietnam.)



From: Christopher Boles

Hello Doug, I’d like to express my gratitude for the outstanding work you have done over the years to document what happened at PRAB.

It never ceases to amaze me where you find all of this information printed in the PRAB newsletters. It truly documents what happened on our airbase. Just where do you find all of this information?

It also goes to show that the IO was busy pumping out all of these articles. Perhaps is there some way you can show some kind of a post about who all served in the information office and gratitude for all their work?

Christopher Boles

Prescott Valley, AZ

(Doug’s comments: I also need to express my gratitude to Christopher for sharing with me the multitude of “Press Releases” and the hundreds of pictures that he sent me, early on, when I started with this newsletter. His input was the basis for the newsletters and will contribute to the legacy of the base and more importantly the men that served there and those that never caught the “Freedom Bird Home”. To this day I still have some of his contributions, but even though they have been published I just can’t delete them. Kirk Minert is right up there with

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Christopher for sharing his whole “hoard” of Vietnam memorabilia with me. Without the impetus of Christopher and Kirk, I would never have been able to do this for so many years. Besides the contributions from so many other members I also have been fortunate to have a library system that provides me with on-line access to “Access Newspapers Archives” which I can search tens of millions of U.S. and international newspapers whose coverage goes back more than 400 years and fortunately the Pacific Stars & Stripes is one of the papers that I can search for. Now besides that I also have a subscription to Newspapers.com. These sources can provide me with facts about Phan Rang, but the real story is told by the individuals that served, through their personal stories and biographies., those are the most meaningful!)



From: Bonnie Simmons

Doug, Thank you for the Keeping the Memories Alive. (Bonnie is another faithful reader that comments on every...and I mean every newsletter. If I didn't receive something from Bonnie after sending out a newsletter I would have to do a welfare check. Bonnie is the widow of Charles Simmons. I was going to describe Charles, but if you haven't already read about him, you need to read his autobiography in issue 223, “Remembering Charles Lee Simmons” in issue 239 and “An Extraordinary Man” in issue 251. After you read his story you will admire him and count him among the pioneers of our country that had the grit and mettle that made America great.)



From: Jim. Thanks for the latest installment of the newsletter - it was not intended to be funny, but, given the current events in the world, one takes a little humor when and where it can be found! (Jim, was referring to issue 236 which covered the period of time at Phan Rang from Mar 21 to 23 May 1971.)

Reading the events of March-May 71 makes me VERY grateful I served my time at Phan Rang in 1966! While we may not have had modern conveniences like flush toilets, actual heated showers and air conditioning, we did NOT have rabies, nor can I remember anyone having a stray dog for a house pet. (Jim is referring to the article “Confirmed Rabies Case Spurs Action by Base Medics”, I know it was not funny to the 21 individuals involved, but the idea of 21 guys being simultaneously treated for rabies is hysterical, especially since I would be willing to bet that a large part of the problem was of their own making! A lot of the K-9 guys I ran across were worried about their dogs getting rabies from the rats when seemed to be at a lot of the

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outposts, but at least their dogs were vaccinated. The idea that house pets and squadron pets had become so commonplace that they were being registered, vaccinated, and accounted for makes sense, but, guys being guys, and rules being there at times to be broken, I fully understand that the proper registration did not take place. What a hell of a price to pay for stupidity.

Then I read the piece of the 1882 “savings” award. (“1882nd Comm Saves Bundle In Resources Conservation Program”). Man oh man, were “the powers that be” really that stupid? However, being given a goal to save 28K and coming up with a plan to save a couple of hundred thousand certainly should have gotten someone some recognition. I would be willing to bet that there were also “promotions” on the horizon for someone!

Anyhow, just thought I would share. In 1966 I wasn’t that wild about where I was but I was always grateful that the bad guys never got rockets while I was there and although we did have a couple of mortar attacks there was never anything really “serious” in terms of attacks during my tour. I vividly recall reading a newspaper some time after I got back and it was talking about a pretty major attack on a base in Vietnam and I was more than a little surprised to learn the base I was reading about was Phan Rang. I had had the reverse thing happen when I was returning from R&R and we had RONed at Na Trang. I picked up a copy of Stars n’ Stripes and read an article about a mass killing where X had been killed and 40 wounded. I assumed this had taken place somewhere in Vietnam and was devastated to learn it had taken place from the UT Tower in Austin and Chs Whitman has reigned down terror on everything in sight for close to an hour.

Take care and be well - cheers



Doug’s Comments: I think the story of Huynh Tai is one of the most heart wrenching story to come out of Phan Rang. When I typed that story and put it to paper it was hard not to get teary eyed. Not only for the child, but the father that carried him for 50 miles in hopes of him being treated, not knowing how serious his son’s condition was. It’s gratifying to know that Dr. Tucker’s volunteerism spirit had continued throughout his life. 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.