

Please type or use pen to provide the requested information. This data will be used for the Ranch Hand History Project and then placed in the Archives at Texas A&M. It is your information. If you wish to restrict any part of this material, please indicate so:

I hereby authorize the scholarly use of the following information, except as indicated.

SPIVEY Delmar Baen (Pete) *Delmar B. Baen* October 27, 1981
 Name (last first middle signature date)

Specific Information

Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided. Be specific.

1. Ranch Hand service: From 1 November '65 to 2 August '66. Where? DaNang/Saigon Vietnam
2. RH/C-123 training: Where/when? 1 July '65 thru 30 Aug '65 / Hurlburt Aux Fld, Eglin AFB, FL
3. Rank while in RH? Captain Present/retired rank? Lt. Col. / Ret.
4. Duty(s) while in Ranch? Navigator / Stan-Eval Nav / Chief Nav dates? 1 Nov 65 - 2 Aug 66 (10 Dec 65 - 15 Jul 66)
DaNang
5. Other Vietnam service? Where/when? two wk TDY - Jul 71 (USAF Rep. to Eng. strat. Study Grp. USA for Cong. study on effects of Herbicide)
6. If aircrew member:
 - a. Number of missions: RH 219 (+) Other (specify) T-28/C-47/KC-97/C-119/C-123/C-130/C-141
 - b. Combat flying hours: RH 769.7 Other (specify) Total Flying Hrs. 5968.2 U-4

Narrative Information

On a separate sheet(s) of paper, please answer the following questions with as much detail as possible. Write too much, rather than too little. Use names and dates, if possible. If you want a name "blacked out" before this goes in the archives, just circle the name. On the sheets, indicate the number of the question you are answering, and put your last name and the form number in the upper right-hand corner of each sheet.

7. Special missions/operations participated in? (name, when, where, what, who else)
8. Decorations? (If Purple Heart, DFC, or above, give date and details of the act. If you have a copy of the narrative justifying the medal, please attach a copy.)
9. Were you present during an attack against the base, Ranch site, or quarters? Explain.
10. Were you present when a Ranch aircraft was shot down or crashed? Give all details.
11. Were you present when a Ranch crew member was killed or wounded? Give as much data as possible, even if you didn't directly observe it or are not sure of date or names.
12. Did you ever see or repair unusual battle damage (more than routine skin holes)?
13. Did you ever help plan RH missions? If so, what was the procedure?
14. How did you get into the Ranch? What did you know about the mission beforehand?
15. What were you told about the chemicals used? In Vietnam? Before Vietnam?
16. Other than something already discussed (or going home), what is your happiest memory of the Ranch (or Vietnam)? What is your unhappiest (saddest)?
17. What unusual, odd-ball, weird, funny, etc., thing happened to you in VN or training?
18. Same as question 17, but you saw it happen to another person(s).
19. What were your quarters like? Your routine day? Your parties? Anything else?
20. We know that the Ranch was unique. What should I tell the reader that will help him understand why this was a special outfit of special people? What or who should I not talk about?

Other data: Do you have any good pictures (especially of RH members), any journals, notes, diaries, letters, briefing notes, maps, etc., that I could copy? If so, DO NOT SEND THEM with this form. Repeat...DO NOT SEND THEM!!!! Describe the items on a separate piece of paper, with your name and form number on it. I will write and give you instructions on when to send them, or how to get them copied, at a later date. All materials will be protected and returned to you!!! Thank you for your help and time.

Please return this form and the narrative sheets in the enclosed envelope to Texas A&M.

Dear Paul -

I think you are asking each of us to write a book!

- #7. Of course each RH mission was "Special," but I'm sure you'll find more than you bargained for from each respondent.
- 2 Dec 65: All UC-123's and crews moved to Da Nang for highly classified mission (published that month in NY Times). Believe it was 10 Dec we took first shipper into Laos for crop spray - wx out. worked crop and minor targets in Laos for about 1 wk. I think they left 2 planes up for another wk then I went back to Ton Son Nhut. Capt. (forgot his name - Jack knows him well) (last I heard he was flying in Alaska) and myself stayed on. Pres Johnson called for ~~close~~ - fire which meant we couldn't fly spray missions. (Think his first name was Charlie (not Hubbs). Anyway we flew one to two missions a day in Laos plotting Koo Chi Men Trail from Kz pone AF south. This lasted into Feb 66, by which time we had the whole thing plotted from Kz pone to Cervain AF down by the triangle. Charlie + I took our 1:25000 charts down to 7th AF targeting and passed on the exact location of the trail to them. This was the first time anyone had plotted the main road with by-passes and side roads with accuracy. Originally we had only been targeted for small foot paths crossing the border. Now we began to be targeted on segments of the main road. Although not as success as we would have liked to have been, we did burn the trail which made it easier for F4C's/fighters to see. This lasted through March or April by which time we were putting 2 to 3 birds at Da Nang for the operation. Also by then the Nakhomphenom operation had started and we were passing intel back and forth to them. worked well for both of us. We had also moved further north on special targets at N. Vietnam/Laos border. Sprayed one segment of covered road (1 place work-trellis covered with live growth) over 2 kilom. long. The first mission up on that target may have been a unique one in that we actually flew into N. Vietnam and sprayed for about 3-4 Kilom. in the karst area. To my knowledge it was the only time RH sprayed in N. Vietnam. (I don't include DMZ work) One other incident you may be interested in that was never carried out - but fully weighed & considered: The day the VC overran Ashau we were on a Laos mission, wx out and returning via Ashau. Heard the whole thing going on and Dick Peshkin (Da Nang CO) went on home. Mitchell, ^{Jim} ~~Dick~~ and myself stayed behind at altitude to tape the dialog. We got to talking and decided that with a full tank of spray, extensive knowledge of the terrain and the understanding of VC propaganda about spray we could fly down the valley with spray on, return and be out of there in less than four minutes and relieve the SF camp from being over-run. To this day I sincerely believe it would have worked! One more funny and I'll quit. Roy Kubby and I dreamed up a fly by at Da Nang with a 30' x 3' screen banner that spelled out FUCK COMMUNISM. We spent about 4 days painting the banner, fixed it up with 2x4's and static line - flew our mission and decided to test it out on the way home - MISTAKE! we got the damn thing out abridge - down and then we couldn't get it back in so eventually cut it off and watched float down into or on top of the hooran jungle. At Da Nang in those days it would have been ok to do it. Probably would have made the press some where. At Ton Son Nhut we would have been court martialed, for sure. Given two B+B's I could think of more. Came home 3 mo. early due to Laos missions (over 65) since at one time 7AF was curtailing for 20.
- #8. DFC, BS, don't remember dates or incidents since neither were important. Will dig out the stuff if you need them.
- #9. No.
- #10. Yes. Paul Clinton shot down over Pineapple Forest (S. of Da Nang on coast) Don't think anyone killed but Paul was hurt bad enough to go home. F4C Mech. did a great job of holding off VC. Support A/C covered well & luckily a chopper (Marine) was returning from mission and picked up crew.
- #11. Yes. Dick Peshkin/^{AK} Dick King/^{CP} Pete Spivey/^{NAV} Stud. Nav/^{NAV} F4C Mech. ? / Laos mission, 2 ships - lead flying 200' and guiding #2 on road + target. Got zapped (probably quad-50's) lost #1. Dick's windshield hit and he slumped over. Dick King did outstanding job. feathered #1, max power #2, dump ord, right turn away from fire & hills, couldn't climb but did maintain alt. Stud. Nav out of cockpit, Pete in nav. to Nakhomphenom. Peshkin/King & stud. nav. all Purple Hearts, F4C Mech & Pete not a scratch! Apr 66 time frame. No one hurt bad.
- #12. See #11.
- #13. Yes, From Dec 65 - Aug 66. Jim Pochurek planned or help plan all Ton Son Nhut missions - I planned or help plan all

#2 Da Nang missions. I was the mountain Nav, & Jim was the delta Nav. As mentioned in #7. Yerks and I planned all trail missions and in fact even targeted the trail. Basically, it amounted to Nav. planning on the 2-3-4 ship formations since SOP was used for formation tactics. WX, temp, direction and surprise were the most important considerations of planning. Other factors such as: redactions with fighters, length of spray run, multiple targeting and expected intensity of ground fire were considerations. Type of defoliant was handled by pilots, Flt. Mech. & loaders. This is one outfit where navigators were a major factor in planning and execution of the mission. Also of note might be on-target tactics. Most delta targets were well defined and, although they required detailed briefings of the pilots for timing and identification, you could see the target. In the mountains, even when you knew exactly where the road entered the heavily treed area, you couldn't see where it went. We used 3 methods of spraying such targets. #1 when no resistance was encountered you could fly along at 500'-700' doing 360's and drop smoke grenades to mark the road at intervals. After 3 grenades you had to go back and spray that sector before the smoke dissipated, then start all over. Worked well on cold targets. #2 used one aircraft to lead the second through the target. By flying 500'-700' the pilot could see the target and guide #2 through the area verbally. (this is how we got hit in quest. #11) It worked well when you could see the target from a higher than spray alt. and was a cold target. #3 used only on hot targets and was not the preferred method. By careful study of 1:250,000 charts the nav. could give headings and time on each leg of a run. It required extensive planning and the utmost concentration on target. On normal target runs the ability of the nav. to describe the terrain to the pilot and the rapport in communication between the two was vital. Each nav. had his own technique. For example: Flew one mission in delta on a hot target. Very detailed planning. MacCoughlin, Jim Weaver and myself (all well experienced) went over all of it carefully. ~~we~~ I was judged available (right by about 8-10 min. and when we hit the deck (50') on approach I couldn't see the identifying landmarks. We got lost quickly, dropped down to about 15' cause they were shooting hell out of us and headed for the coast. We made it. Debriefed Russ Mahoney and Russ & I flew it 3 days later as a piece of cake. Slightly different tactics and one hellva lot more light!

#14. FIRST Nav. to go directly into the Ranch from out of country! Had heard all Rancheros were nuts (affected by the herbicide). Ferried 3 birds across with Ralph Dresser et al in Nov. 65. During the trip I got to know them and asked Ralph if I could fly with them. He said to ask Russ Mahoney when we got there. First question off the aircraft - answer No! Later that night at O Club, all drunk, asked again and got a maybe. Next day assigned! Gave up Chief Nav at Da Nang (310th TWS) for the job. Knew little about the mission prior to getting there.

#15. Excellent indoctrination to herbicide. Not only by experienced pilots (think Charlie Yerks drank some - know later that Charlie Hubbs, Pete Spivey and maybe Ralph Dresser did in demonstrating to incoming crews the safety of the chemical) believe we also had an Agricul. man from Saigon brief us on all aspects of the chemical. Knew we were a hellva lot more worried about getting shot than the chemical. All in Vietnam. Prior to Vietnam - nothing. Note: Personally requested reassignment from MAC C-141's to Hurlburt to instruct navs. going to Nam. Got there in Nov. 67 and set up nav. training for Ranch as well as other special ops. missions. All navs. got a taste of all spec. ops. missions in Nam from Nov. 67 thru Jan. 69 and feel sure indoctrination continued after that.

#16. As with my job, the satisfaction derived from it is the most important aspect in doing it. That is the case with RH and myself. Added to the appreciation reflected by all of my compatriots while I was there, the knowledge of success, acclaim, recognition and friendship created a happiness unsurpassed in my military career. Contrary to your question, my saddest moment was going home. That is a long story in itself, but I cried mightily the night I left so did many others.

#3

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(cont) #16 I won't elaborate more on my going home here - see #17. As for happiness, the memory of the closeness of each man, the acknowledged fact that each man's life was to a great degree dependent upon the other's response was understood (never spoken of) the respect for each other's ability, the acute awareness of each other's faults and the acceptance of those faults with understanding. The knowledge that each crew member knew your faults and would help or assist you as needed or overlook them in non-emergencies. Of course there were some who didn't fit, but usually they dropped by the wayside or were eased out as the case may be. That was my happiness and it still persists to this day with those I flew with. Kathy, my wife, doesn't understand me when I refer to so many people as my best friends. There isn't anyone who could take place in my life - they know it and I know it.

#17 You must be kidding! The whole experience is unique. Paul, you've probably heard most of the stories already, but I neither have the time nor the energy to retell them here. (By the way, they get bigger & better every year) Charlie Hubbs and his beer can tap shoes. Paul Clinton and his requisition of a jeep for the Ranch. Jim Pockurek & my self playing football (tackle) in the Nav. house in Da Nang - or tic-tac-toe in the red-light district in Da Nang. The Great Honda Race at 3 AM in "100 p Alley" in underdrawers. The night we undressed the professional Austr. stripper at the Nav. house in Da Nang and what happened afterwards. The morning Jim Pockurek was drunk and punched the wing CO. in the stomach coming out of briefing - only to get hypoxia on the mission and turn blue in the lips & fingernails. Getting chewed out by the wing D.O. at Da Nang for having the aircraft with flat tires on the middle of the runway (twice, and me the navigator!) etc.

#18. See #17

#19. I was lucky. I lived in an apartment on 100 P Alley in Saigon with 6 other guys (2 Rancheros) Good food, maids, house boy, security etc. In Da Nang, Jim Pockurek took me to the Nav. house downtown (6 AF & 1 Navy) all AF were navigators. (They had a Pilot house too) Stayed there the entire time I was in Da Nang, even while the city was partially occupied and off-limits. Da Nang was air conditioned plus all the same amenities as Saigon. Routine day began about 5 AM with a get up briefing coffee preflight & mission. Then back to debrief, plan for the next day and off by 1 PM or 2 PM. Parties at both Da Nang and Saigon were good to excellent! About every third Sunday the Ranch would have on at Ton Son Nhut where

^{#4}
would all get together. Some good pics. of those parties are avail. somewhere.

#20. The spirit the read must grasp and the one you'll have the hardest time with is the esprit-de-corps that existed along with the comrades - and why? The uniqueness of war for all of us is an experience that must be shared and it is in the sharing that the understanding occurs. Giving a fellow Ranchero a last letter to be delivered to your family - the feeling that you are blessed by God and that you won't die and the risks taken believing in that feeling. Suddenly learning the vulnerability of all of us - the unfairness of life - and the reestablishment of the "protected by God" feeling in order to be able to live even day to day. That feeling and understanding coupled with the comments in #16 and #17 are the basis of the "Specialty" of the Ranch. I really can't think of anything or anyone "not" to talk about.

OTHER DATA: Pictures and articles on Ranch Hand cut out of newspapers, RH stationery. (2 different types) the various RH shirts and flying suits.

Paul, I don't know how you plan on addressing the Agent Orange problem in your Ranch Hand History or even if you will address it. But on file at the Air University at Maxwell AFB is a Corona Harvest Study dealing with the use of herbicide in Vietnam from 1962-1968. Not sure of the title any more or what volume of Corona Harvest it would be in. Think the title was Lessons Learned In Vietnam. It was a three part study one dealing with Helicopters, one on (Airlift - I think) by a Capt. Robert White and one on Herbicide by Pete Spivey (Maj.). Those 3 studies were TAC assigned and I spent 6mo. on a 315 page commentary. It includes history, political aspects, people, commanders, chemical studies (pro + con) policy in country etc. It was a damn good study which I defended at TAC HQ prior to publication. Also was the AF herbicide expert assigned to the ESSG of the Army in 1971 for an overall evaluation of the effects of herbicide in Vietnam done for Congress under the auspices of the Nat. Acad. of Science. This should prove to be an excellent source of material.