

PHAN RANG

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THE PHAN RANG WEEKLY

OCTOBER 11, 1967

"AIRFIELDS DAY" HELD

Personnel of the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron, Air Field Division, recently closed down their seven day a week, 24 hour a day construction operation to take a day a day of rest, and soak up a little relaxation, saltwater and barbequed steak at the beach.

On hand for the big event, which was the first time the whole airfield construction division had been together for a special occasion, were Col. James A. Wilson, commander of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing and Col. Bill M. Richardson, commander of the 315th Air Commando Wing and Col. Robert H. Carey, commander of the 1st Civil Engineer Group at Saigon.

Colonel James A. Wilson, commander, 35th Tac Ftr Wg, recently received the following letter from General William W. Momyer, 7TH Air Force Commander: It is passed on for the information of all Phan Rang personnel.
(1 October 1967)

Dear Colonel Wilson

1. Your base has been selected as the most improved base in 7th Air Force and as having the most improved recreational facilities in the 7th Air Force for the third quarter of calendar year 1967.
2. I wish to take this opportunity to commend all members of the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing and tenant Air Force units stationed on your base for their exemplary performance and support of the Base Improvement program while working under adverse conditions and performing tactical missions in the Republic of Vietnam. Your continued support of this program will result in better living and working conditions for all personnel.

(Signed)

WILLIAM W. MOMYER, Lt. General, USAF
Commander

Colonel Wilson and Colonel Richardson, both praised the fine work which the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron (Airfields Division) has accomplished at Phan Rang in support of operational ground facilities.

"Airfields Day" started with a nine inning baseball game and then the officers and men of the division boarded trucks for the ten mile trip to Phan Rang's beach, where tasty sirloin steaks and all of the trimmings were the order of the day.

Lunch, swimming, horse shoe pitching, and a tug of war between the non-commissioned officers and the air men of the division enabled the men to have an occasion to remember.

During the past year, all horizontal construction on Phan Rang Air Base, which includes building parking ramps, laying asphalt roads, building foundations which required rock fill have been constructed by personnel of the Airfield Division of the 554th Civil Engineering Squadron.

According to Capt. David D. Currin, chief of the air fields division, the 204 airmen who are assigned to him have worked in the 100 degree heat, clouds of red dust and heavy torrential rain storms, often more than 12 hours a day to build this modern air base.

"This was their day" said Captain Currin.

TOP SERGEANT OF AIR FORCE TOURS BASE

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Paul W. Airey visited Phan Rang Air Base this week. During his four hour stay on the base, he toured almost every facility and visited Phan Rang's beach.

During the 24 years he has been in the Air Force, he has been in communications and started out in 1944 as a radio operator and gunner on B-24 Liberator bombers. Among the most dangerous missions he flew in World War II were the Palesti Oil Field raids where one bomber in three was shot down.

Later on in 1944, he was shot down and placed in a German Prisoner of War camp. He emerged one year later 90 pounds lighter and in bad health.

Before leaving Phan Rang Air Base, the Air Force's senior enlisted man had lunch at the Non-Commissioned Officer's Open Mess with Phan Rang's Chief Master Sergeants and First sergeants.

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F-100 PILOTS CATCH V.C. IN OPEN AREA

Two F-100 pilots from the 615th Tactical Fighter Sqdn. at Phan Rang air base were scrambled to an area where allied troops were in contact with enemy forces 63 miles west of Can Tho recently.

The attack by Captain John F. Miko of West Mifflin, Pa., and 1st Lt. Christian Crooker of Flourtown, Pa., netted 16 enemy killed and six military structures destroyed.

The Pennsylvanians also damaged 18 military structures and destroyed nine sampans.

"It is the best strike I've had since coming to Vietnam" said Capt. Miko, "we just caught them out in the open. One of the Forward Air Controllers said that we dropped one bomb right in the middle of a group of eight."

Lieutenant Crooker said "that he had not had any strikes to equal this one in all of the missions he has flown in Vietnam."

"Buy United States Savings Bonds and save money"

GOLD LEAVES ANNOUNCED

Twenty-six captains on base are due to receive their gold leaves (as temporary majors) before the end of Fiscal Year '68.

The promotions will take place in monthly increments to be announced in the DB.

The soon-to-be majors are Captains J.E. Anderson, D. L.F. Bice, A.L. Chase, C.G. Clark, M.F. Connolly, F.G. Farthing Jr., L.G. Frazier, B.G. Galbraith, Gatto, Hanford, Kasznia, Krafft, Mecham, Moyer, L.J. Murphy, Palanek, Pollard, Ramage, Redican, Sharpe, Sloan, W.J. Wallace, Wiggins, Waldbillig, Obriant, and Maurice L. Lancaster.

Congrats from PHANFARE.

WHAT'S GEEIA ?

BY: A1C Bill Gaither

The abbreviated nickname of this hard-working Air Force agency is often heard, especially on new bases, but surprisingly enough few people can tell you what the five letters signify.

"GEEIA" spelled out is: The Ground Electronics Engineering and Installation Agency, which is a part of the Air Force Logistics Command. This agency is charged with the responsibility for engineering and installation of communications facilities for all Air Force bases.

In the brief history of Phan Rang Air Base, many GEEIA teams of talented communications specialists have worked long hours and battled many problems to install equipment that was essential to a base of this size.

Many people on the base believe that the GEEIA men are members of the 1882 Communications Squadron, but this is not true. The GEEIA teams presently working on the base are attached directly to the base for the duration of their job and only coordinate the various projects through the local Air Force Communications squadron.

Once the base communications system is finished, the 1882nd Communications Squadron will maintain and operate the systems.

The GEEIA team that is presently working on the base is deployed from the 485th GEEIA Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay. This team is currently installing underground telephone cable which will link the entire base complex into one automatic dial telephone system.

When the system is completed, you will be able to direct dial any phone on Phan Rang Air Base.

'LUCKY DEVIL' WINS MEDAL FOR CRUCIAL F-100 AIR STRIKES

An F-100 Super Sabre pilot of the 614th ('Lucky Devils') Tactical Fighter Squadron has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in the wake of a series of air strikes in which three F-100's of the squadron helped turn the tide against the Viet Cong in the Mekong Delta.

First Lieutenant Louis V. Distelzweig Jr. from Springfield, Ill., a veteran of 168 combat missions in Vietnam, said "the engagement took place 85 miles west of Saigon, after the Viet Cong had repelled an attack by South Vietnamese forces and inflicted heavy casualties on them."

Despite poor weather and heavy automatic weapons fire, "we could see the tracers coming by the aircraft" said the Lieutenant. The air strike turned the tide against the Viet Cong. The South Vietnamese forces regrouped and then overran the enemy position.

The young pilot said "the friendly Vietnamese forces were only 300 yards from the enemy position, making it extremely difficult to hit the enemy without incurring casualties among the friendly forces. The Viet Cong were in fortified positions along a canal bank, he continued and were heavily entrenched.

Lieutenant Distelzweig said "I am using everybit of the pilot training the Air Force has taught me and find that with each mission flown, I like the F-100 that much better."

MOVIES ON TAP

TONITE: 'The Secret Seven'...this sounds like a bit of crime or espionage.
FRIDAY: 'Mother Goose a Go-Go'...Your guess may be better than ours??!
SATURDAY: 'War, Italian Style'...Believed to be a warm, Italian-type comedy
FLASH! At 8 p.m. on Oct. 25 (two weeks from today), Martha Raye will star in the USO show 'Hello Dolly' at the base theater.

Around The Clubs

At the NCO Club:

FRIDAY: Happy Hour from 6 to 7 p.m. Then from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., there'll be a variety show called Luciano & Ninon.

SATURDAY: Friendship Night, featuring music to dance by. Bring your own pal-friend, and enjoy life from 7 to 10:30 p.m.

At the Airmen's Club:

SATURDAY: The Luciano & Ninon variety show will be on stage from 8 to 9 p.m.

RED CROSS HI-LITES

TONIGHT: Chess and Checkers

THURSDAY: Hootenanny...folksongs & popcorn

FRIDAY: Pinochle tourney

SATURDAY: Judo exhibition

SUNDAY: Las Vegas Nite....The last one held at the center was a smash hit. Y'all come.

TUESDAY: Table tennis tourney

COMING SOON: Don't miss the Powder-Puff Derby at the center one week from tonight. Here's your chance to challenge the girls to anything from hop-scotch to rope-jumping and prizes will be awarded to the winners.

PROMOTIONS REVEALED

According to SSgt. Ray Gervais, promotions technician at CBPO, a lot of people around here got promoted on October 1.

Two men were upped to senior master sergeant: Harold L. Ingle of the 35th CES and Clifford R. Bivins of the 35th SPS.

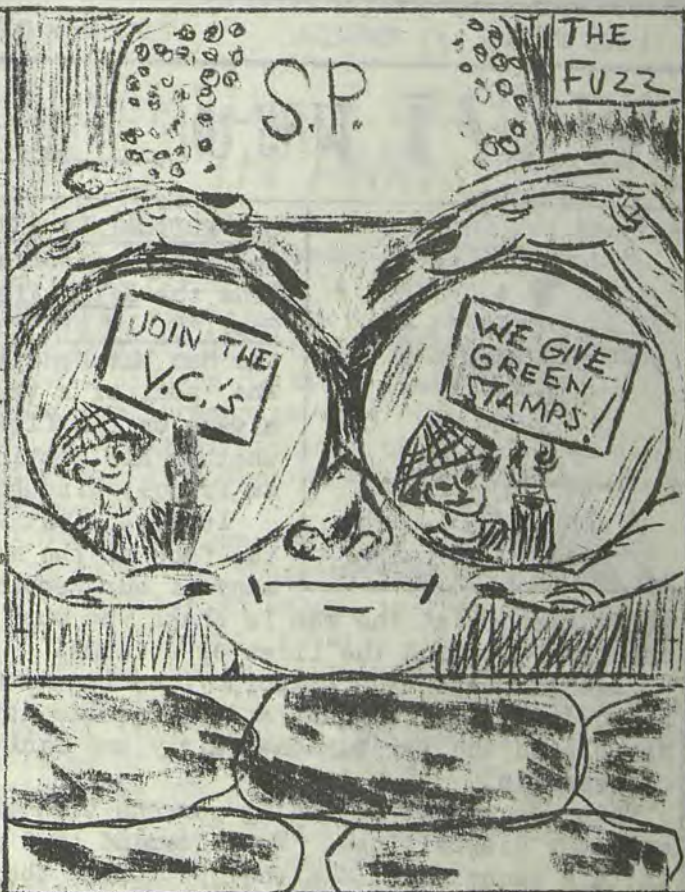
Seventy-one airmen third class became A2C and 115 A2C became A1C. Most of the new A1C are members of the 35th SPS.

The Oct. 1 promotions also included six tech sergeant stripes, and five new master sergeants. Sergeant Gervais expects the Dec. 1 promotions to SSgt., TSgt., and MSgt. to be announced to the squadrons on Nov. 15.

The sergeant noted that a number of men at Phan Rang will be promoted to A1C on Nov. 1.

POST OFFICE POOP

EARLY BIRD: SSgt. Burger reports that a SSgt. in the 35th Supply Squadron has received a Christmas package, not to be opened till Dec. 25. One comment: "I hope it isn't cookies!"



JUDO HOOTENANNY DUE AT R.C. CENTER

Two of the liveliest items on the Red Cross Center agenda this week are a hootenanny tomorrow night at 7 p.m. and a judo exhibit on Saturday night at 7.

Starring in the hootenanny will be: A1C Dave Johnson (R & R administrator) and A2C John Federspiel, offering folk songs and folk rock....the well-known Manons with mellow music for the soul....Lester Watson with music to remember....and Lieutenant Michael Fagan with a program of songs accenting Irish folk music. The lieutenant is reported to have semi-professional experience as a singer.

The judo exhibit Saturday will feature SSgt. Charles Russell and A1C Marshall Flowers. It is just possible that one of the Red Cross gals will join the act.

The exhibit is the prelude to a hoped-for judo class on base.

At the exhibit, you'll find a display of self-defense, women's self-defense, sports judo, and a question-and-answer session.

FOOTBALL BEGINS

The Phan Rang flag football league season was scheduled to get under way two nights ago (Monday) with a game pitting the 315th Air Commandos against the 35th SPS. (FLASH: This game was rained out.)

Eleven teams are in the new league, and six games will be played every week. These games will take place at the new football field adjacent to the dispensary at 5:15 p.m. every night except Sundays. League play will continue thru Dec. 12. Hats off to 35th CES for creating the new football field...in one hour flat!

WW I WAS UN-POPULAR TOO!!



OLD EDITORIALS NEVER DIE: The following editorial was taken from the Kelly Field Eagle of Sept. 5, 1918: "The Man Behind the Man Who Mans the Guns --- The 'soul of a true soldier is always on the firing line,' whether his destinies lead him to France, Hindustan or what not.

It is a point well taken in the face of the mouthings of many of our people who cast aspe-

rsive glances at the man in Khaki who must serve his country ---behind the lines or at home.

America is a true Democracy, as is witnessed in the Selective Draft, a great and Democratic movement which has placed the war burdens fairly and equitably upon citizenship.

This war cannot be won by persons with bitter tongues and sour dispositions. We recommend that those afflicted in this manner should either patronize their physicians or keep their mouths shut. Persons who have time to waste by criticizing the fairness of the adjustments of war burdens might profitably turn their thoughts to more constructive efforts towards doing their part in winning the war.

Any person in these times who disrupts the unity of purpose of this army by prattling over petty details is a traitor to his country's ideals and should be immediately squelched."

(Writer Unknown)

AS VIEWED FROM MY WINDOW

Thinking back over the last year, which will be over in less than 90 days, it occurred to me that many of the men in my command at this time, will be away from home during the Christmas and Thanksgiving holidays.

I personally regret that each and everyone of us cannot be with our families at such times, but the job we are accomplishing here in Vietnam is serving a double purpose, in that by helping the Vietnamese people to achieve a free society, we also insure the safety of our own families from the Communist threat.

Remember that the cost of that Christmas gift is not what is important, but the thought behind the giving is what counts.

I am more impressed with the fine job you are doing at Phan Rang with the passing of each day. Everyone from the newest file clerk, to the command pilot is giving his all for what he believes in.

James A. Wilson
Col. JAMES A. WILSON, commander
35th Tactical Fighter Wing

PMOC TO HOST SPEAKER TONITE

Learn about the Jewish religion at tonight's meeting of the Protestant Men of the Chapel. The gathering will take place at the Base Chapel at 7:30 p.m. and light refreshments will be served. The guest speaker will offer highlights of the Jewish religion, and Jewish songs.

SILVER STARS FOR F-100 FLIERS

Two F-100 Super Sabre pilots received Silver Star medals in ceremonies at Phan Rang air base recently.

Captain Vincent J. Kelly, 29, of Buffalo, N.Y., and Capt. Thadis W. Crooks, 27, of Mt. Pleasant, Tex., were decorated by Lt. Gen. William W. Monyer, Seventh Air Force Commander.

Captain Kelly, a member of the 614th Tactical Fighter Squadron received his award for conspicuous gallantry during an F-100 attack against an enemy position near Can Tho last April. The Captain flew numerous runs in against heavy ground fire to suppress the position and cause withdrawal of the enemy force.

Captain Crooks, a pilot with the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron, received the award for distinguished gallantry in an F-100 attack against enemy forces near Tay Ninh last April. He led his flight in support of friendly forces engaged with enemy forces.

The Captain made repeated low level attacks against enemy ground fire and delivered his ordnance with outstanding accuracy.

Both pilots are currently flying combat missions out of Phan Rang Air Base.

SNAKE SHOW IS SMASH HIT!

Last Wednesday a crowd of 155 people watched a spectacular snake show at the Red Cross Center.

Phan Rang's well-known snake-hunters, Gaither, Witman, & Eggleston Inc., displayed poisonous and non-poisonous snakes, showed how to milk a snake, and conducted a question-and-answer session. 'Sam', the blonde director of the center, said it was one of the most successful programs yet held in the center, and noted that a new edition of the snake show would be presented in November.

Airmen got a chance to handle the snakes at the show.

PHAN RANG COLONEL PASSED FOR NATIVE SON

Colonel Bill M. Richardson, 46, from Russellville, Kentucky, commander of the 315th Air Commando Wing at Phan Rang, lived in Yugoslavia from May 1957 thru May of 1959.

Colonel Richardson, was the Assistant Air Force Attache at the American Embassy in Belgrade.

During his stay in that Slavic nation, the colonel wore civilian clothes, and lived much like a citizen of that country.

Colonel Richardson said "that when possible, he enjoyed traveling around the country and meeting the common people; this was especially interesting from the individual point of view, as most people he met thought that he was a native of Yugoslavia and talked freely with him about their day to day lives and would answer questions candidly."

The most interesting of all functions the colonel had to attend were the embassy parties. Attending these functions, were the staffs of all other nations represented in Yugoslavia. Twenty, sometimes 30 different nationalities attended these parties, and since all spoke the slavic language, one could learn much about the different communist nations and their approach to a similar problem.

In his role as Wing commander of the 315th Air Commando Wing the colonel has five C-123 squadrons and 1600 men, who are performing two different missions.

The two missions of the 315th ACW include the hauling of war supplies into small unlighted landing strips in South Vietnam and a defoliation mission, which is rare. This is the first war in which chemical agents have been used to kill vegetation which can and does hide whole enemy regiments from American and Vietnamese forces.

The Colonel continued "my men take lots of small arms fire during these low level missions and have to wear body armor from the neck down as the Viet Cong does not like having their jungle home destroyed.

Colonel Richardson went on to say "I have the best darn pilots in South Vietnam, and they are doing a great job."

The 315th has flown everything from empty oil drums to cows in support of the Allied ground forces in Vietnam and it is a good feeling to know that you are accomplishing a job that is keeping people alive and well" said the Air Force veteran who will return to the United States in November.

COLORFUL CEREMONIES HELD IN PHAN RANG

Several hundred Vietnamese adults and kids turned out last Tuesday (Oct. 3) to watch colorful ceremonies in Phan Rang at which 15 token scholarships were presented to Vietnamese students by officials of the base. MSgt. Richard H. Rice, Civic Action NCOIC, said the ceremonies were "the province chief's way of thanking the Armed Forces for sponsoring underprivileged children through scholarships."

Through the generosity of 16 squadrons of the base, 181 youngsters of a Catholic and a Buddhist high school in Phan Rang and a Cham high school outside Thap Cham currently enjoy such scholarships.

The token scholarships awarded last week by Lt. Col. Miles of the 614th TFS, Lt. Col. Sawyer of the 615th TFS, and Maj. Mead of the 352nd TFS are worth a total of 38,000 piasters, according to Sergeant Rice.

The 35th TFW commander, Col. James A. Wilson, gave the keynote speech at the ceremonies, noting that the future of Vietnam belongs to its youth, and that only through their education will freedom and democracy flourish in this country.

A total of about 24 Army and Air Force personnel were on hand, along with the province chief, and the principals, teachers, and students of the three high schools.

"I'll never forget it," said Sergeant Rice, "because of the colorful costumes, the wonderful native music... The people were giving these dances, ceremonies, and their speeches and songs straight from their heart.... You could tell by the expression on their faces."

CIVIC ACTION ENGLISH CLASS PROGRAM SPURTS

The big fad in the towns of Thap Cham and Phan Rang these days is studying English.

Civic Action monitor SSgt. David Kinney said that 15 Air Force personnel, including an officer, three sergeants, and 11 airmen, are conducting classes.

Their students include 97 youngsters in Thap Cham, 97 youngsters in Phan Rang, and, under a brand new program, 55 cabinet members, South Vietnamese officers, and other government employees of the province of Ninh Thuan.

The 35th AEMS is providing three teachers and the 35th SPS is providing another two. Soon the Vietnamese policemen of the local area will also join in the English program.

Sergeant Kinney needs more teachers. Call him at Ext. 2464 if you're interested. Night shift workers are needed to teach two high school English classes six mornings a week.

A college education is preferred for men who want to teach adult classes. "I need teachers who are 'steadies'," said Sergeant Kinney, stressing regular attendance.

NEXT WEEK: Read about the 35th FMS airman who recently got married while on E & R in Honolulu. The bride flew over from Calif.

THE ARMY SAYS 'THANKS!' FROM CHU LAI WITH LOVE

By SSgt. Jerry Hirsch

To find out how the Army feels about the air strikes conducted by Air Force jet fighters and jet bombers such as the F-100's and B-57's of Phan Rang Air Base, I spent three days at the forward area headquarters of the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division at Chu Lai last week.

In the midst of a critical battle, in which elements of the 1st Brigade had surrounded a North Vietnamese regiment and what was believed to be a North Vietnamese division headquarters, 40 miles from the Brigade Hq., I interviewed almost two dozen Army fighting men.

I talked with a mortar platoon sergeant, a rifleman, combat medics, a reconnaissance platoon sergeant, a scout, line company first sergeants, a point man in an infantry platoon and many other men.

I flew over the battleground with an Air Force forward air controller as he directed an air strike which wiped out an enemy machine gun position (See story below).

Every single Army man I talked with showed admiration and enthusiasm for the air strikes and the guts and precision of the pilots who flew them.

It all added up to a tremendous vote of confidence in the Air Force by men engaged in a fierce battle in which air strikes were constantly being used to bolster ground operations.

I left Chu Lai thinking that if all the pilots, maintenance personnel, and support personnel of Phan Rang AB had been with me at Chu Lai to hear for themselves the words of these men about the air strikes, it would have been a tremendous boost for the morale of each man on this base.

In coming issues of PHAN FARE, some of the interviews with the Army men will be published in detail. In the meantime, here are a few samples of their comments:

"I think they (the air strikes) are pretty effective, both in destruction and in the fear that they inspire in the NVA (North Vietnamese) troops...They're definitely afraid of the air strikes."

"They're nice...They're helpful...and I really like them."

"You have to have them at certain times, you need them, and I'd have to say there have been tight spots when we wouldn't have made it out without tactical air support."

"They always hit right on their mark...We're all glad that they're there to help us, and we need them pretty critically out there."

FRANK McGEE, NBC REPORTS FROM SCENE

Frank McGee, famous news correspondent of NBC-TV, went out into the thick of the fight (described at left) to film a one-hour combat documentary scheduled to be shown on TV on December 1.

He and other members of his seven-man team were with 'C' Company of the 2nd Battalion during an intense fire fight which he described as follows:

"During the late afternoon hours and at night there were air strikes constantly going into that area, putting down more fire than I've ever seen, and just lacing the mountainsides and the valleys.

"I'll tell you this: I have detected absolutely no friction, no animosity, and no jealousy between the two services (Army and Air Force) at all.

"The kids on the ground appreciate those planes up there, they know what they're doing, they know that they're there in support of them....They love to see them come in....and when I was out there I loved to see 'em come in too!"

"Among your field grade officers, one of the things that they will point out to you after two or three days is the close relationship, working relationship, that exists between the Army and the Air Force now."

Mr. McGee was interviewed at Brigade Hq.

TO THE ATTACK WITH FAC

It was a chilling experience.

I was in the back seat as 1st Lt. Robin G. Tornow 25, from Kansas City, Kansas, a forward air controller for the 2nd Battalion, flew a three-hour combat mission over the battleground in his unarmed O-1E 'Bird Dog' observation aircraft.

During this mission the icy-nerved Air Force pilot directed a series of air strikes which silenced a 50 caliber machine-gun position and automatic small arms fire in the area.

These strikes also destroyed eight enemy structures, and unleashed ordnance on the rear area of a division headquarters of the enemy.

I felt the concussion of the bomb blast. I looked down and watched a jet fighter streak across the target. Twice there was a sharp pinging sound, suggesting enemy ground fire. "There'll be about three or four more strikes going this afternoon," the FAC said afterward. I was glad this mission was over.