

THE WING HAS BEEN AWARDED 5 AFOUA WITH VALOR AND THE PUC FOR ITS PERFORMANCE. OTHER AWARDS AND DECORATIONS ARE STILL PENDING BOTH FOR THE WING AND FOR ASSIGNED AIRCREW MEMBERS.

PERSONALLY, FOR ME, SERVING BOTH AS A MEMBER AND AS A COMMANDER OF THE 12TFW BRINGS OUT ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF MY CAREER THAT I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER AND CHERISH.

IF THE 12TFW IS ACTIVATED AGAIN I FEEL CERTAIN THAT FUTURE MEMBERS WILL UPHOLD ITS GOOD NAME AND RELISH ITS PAST HISTORY AND RECORDS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT. I WISH ALL MEMBERS OF THE WING A BRIGHT AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE AND DEEPLY APPRECIATE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO A FLYING AND FIGHTIN OUTFIT THAT ALL CAN BE MOST PROUD.

2. WELL, WITHOUT A DOUBT "PEOPLE" RECORDED THE HISTORY OF THE WING" AND WERE ABOVE ALL ELSE" RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OUTSTANDING SUCCESS IT HAD. NEVER HAVE I WITNESSED A MORE CLOSE KNIT OUTFIT. OFFICERS AND AIRMEN ALIKE, WERE WILLING TO GIVE AN UNLIMITED AMOUNT OF ENERGY AND SACRIFICE TO INSURE SUCCESS. DETERMINATION, TEAMWORK, PROFESSIONALISM, LONG HOURS AND HARD WORK ARE SOME THOUGHTS THAT RUN THROUGH MY MIND. I HAVE FOUND PEOPLE TO BE MUCH CLOSER AND DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER IN A COMBAT ENVIRONMENT. BACK TO THE SUCCESS OF 12TFW, THE KEY TO SUCCESS OF ANY UNIT IS TO GIVE THE PEOPLE DIRECTION, MAKE AVAILABLE RESOURCES NEEDED FOR A JOB AND THEN LEAVE THEM ALONE. THE WING WORKED HARD, PLAYED HARD, IT FLEW SAFE AND FOUGHT WITH PROFESSIONALISM. AFTER THE AIRCRAFT HAD DEPARTED FOR THE STATES I FOUND A CREW CHIEF IN A REVETMENT WITH FLASHLIGHT IN HAND WRITING HIS FOLKS A LETTER. I ASKED HIM WHAT HE WAS DOING AND HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD LIVED WITH HIS AIRCRAFT SO LONG THAT HE REALLY MISSED IT AND

JUST WANTED TO RELATE HIS THOUGHTS HOME FROM THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD WORKED AND MAINTAINED HIS SECOND HOME. I ADDED A NOTE TO HIS LETTER. THATS SUCCESS IN MY BOOK.

3. THE F-4 IS PROBABLY THE MOST DIVERSIFIED FIGHTER EVER BUILT AND IN MY MIND IS NOT EVEN CLOSE TO BECOMING OBSOLETE OR WORN OUT. IT HAS PROVEN ITSELF IN AIR-TO-AIR COMBAT AND IN A CLOSE AIR SUPPORT ROLE. A TWO ENGINE AIRCRAFT WITH TWO CREWMEMBERS, A HIGH OR LOW ALTITUDE CAPABILITY IN ALL KINDS OF WEATHER, DAY OR NITE! WHO CAN ASK FOR MORE. EVEN FOR THE UNCONVENTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN SEA IT IS STILL A FIGHTER PILOT'S DREAM. IT CAN DO ANYTHING. THE RECORD OF THE F-4 SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.

COL MELTON  
12WG/CC

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DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

IT'S A DISTINCT HONOR FOR ME, AS THE LAST U. S. AIR FORCE COMMANDER OF PHU CAT TO BE PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY DURING WHICH IT IS TRANSFERRED TO ONE OF OUR FINEST ALLIED AIR FORCES, THE VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE.

I AM PROUD OF MY TOUR HERE AT PHU CAT, FIRST AS VICE WING COMMANDER, THEN AS WING COMMANDER AND NOW TODAY. I AM PROUD BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE MEN WHO FLEW OUR F-4'S AND THE MEN ON THE GROUND, ALL THOSE SUPPORT PERSONNEL WHO ASSURED THAT WE DAILY CARRIED OUT OUR MISSION.

AND I AM EQUALLY PROUD TO BE HERE TODAY TO BE A SMALL PART OF THE CEREMONY IN WHICH IT OFFICIALLY BECOMES A PART OF ANOTHER ORGANIZATION FOR WHICH I HAVE THE HIGHEST ADMIRATION - - THE VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE, AND IN PARTICULAR THE NEWLY FORMED 22ND AIR BRIGADE.

DURING MY SHORT ASSOCIATION WITH THE ORIGINAL GROUP OF PERSONNEL WHO ONLY A FEW SHORT WEEKS AGO CAME HERE TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THIS TRANSFER, IT BECAME QUITE EVIDENT THAT THEY WERE PROFESSIONALS IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD. A GROUP OF DEDICATED, HIGHLY - SKILLED INDIVIDUALS THAT, AS WING COMMANDER I COULD IMMEDIATELY SENSE WOULD WITHOUT FAIL CARRY FORWARD WHAT WE LIKE TO CONSIDER THE SPIRIT OF PHU CAT. A SPIRIT OF SKILL, ABILITY, DESIRE, PRIDE, AND ABOVE ALL, PROFESSIONALISM.

I AM PROUD OF THE RECORD OF THE 12TH TACTICAL FRIGHTER WING. AND I AM ALSO PROUD TO BE LEAVING WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE WILL NOT ONLY EQUAL BUT EVEN SURPASS THAT RECORD.

I SAY THAT BECAUSE THEY ARE PROFESSIONALS I

12WG/CC  
MCLTON

The 12th Tactical Fighter Wing--first Air Force unit selected to convert to the F-4C Phantom II and winner of five Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards during its almost six years of service in Vietnam--has been operating against the enemy consistently since its arrival at Cam Ranh Bay in November 1965 and subsequent move to Phu Cat in April 1970.

Composed of the 389th and 480th Tactical Fighter Squadrons, the 12th TFW, during its almost six years of extensive combat, has flown approximately 110,000 combat missions and dropped over 26,000 tons of ordnance. Since its arrival at Phu Cat in April 1970 the Wing has flown over 15,000 combat missions, receiving credit for over 2,000 enemy troops killed by air with over 2,500 secondary explosions caused by its precision bombing.

During the Wing's tour in Vietnam its aircrews have become recognized for their precision bombing in close air support of ground forces, using low angle and low altitude bombing procedures. The missions were extremely demanding due to the critical nature of the targets, usually near friendly troops, and the prevalence of low ceilings, mountainous terrain and intense small arms and automatic weapons fire from hostile forces.

In Lam Son 719 the crews of the 480th and 389th Tactical Fighter Squadrons flew over 1400 sorties in an operation that saw extensive close air support in a highly defended environment with intense enemy anti-aircraft defenses. It also participated in Lam Son 720 and gave strong assistance to Fire Support Bases Six, Fuller and Carroll as well as Lam Son 810.

Immediately after the move of the Wing designation to Phu Cat, 12TFW aircraft began support of the besieged CIDG camps of Dak Seang and Dak Pek near the Cambodian border, receiving credit for 450 enemy killed by air. In the Cambodian operation 788 combat sorties were conducted.

While at Cam Ranh Bay the 12th TFW gave air support to Operations Junction City, Grand Slam, Cuu Long 64, Coronado V and Shenandoah II.

Daily aircrews of the tactical squadrons of the 12th TFW--the 389th and 480th--continue to fly tactical support missions, many times giving vital direct air support to troops in contact with the enemy, epitomizing the challenge that "The mission of the U.S. Air Force is to fly and to fight--and don't you forget it!"

## 389TH TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON

The 389th Tactical Fighter Squadron, located at Phu Cat AB, RVN, is an "ace" squadron, its aircrews having destroyed six enemy MIGs while assigned to the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing at DaNang AB, RVN.

Originally stationed at DaNang with a primary air-to-air mission, the squadron easily adjusted to an air-to-ground mission in late 1967, giving accurate tactical air support during the siege of Khe Sahn, Operation Niagra and Operation Delaware in the A Shau Valley during 1968.

Until the bombing halt in November 1968 it saw intensive action over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam.

Since its transfer to Phu Cat in June 1969 the 389th has flown over 13,000 combat missions, participating in such key operations as the siege of Dak Seang and Dak Pek, the 1970 Cambodian Invasion, Lam Son 719, Lam Son 720 and Lam Son 810, as well as support of Fire Bases Six, Fuller and Carroll.

While in Vietnam it has been awarded three Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with V device and the Presidential Unit Citation. The unit arrived in RVN in March 1966.

Lt Col Thomas H. Thompson is the current commander.

## 480TH TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON

The 480th Tactical Fighter Squadron, stationed at Phu Cat AB, RVN, is credited with the first enemy MIG shot down by a U.S. Air Force crew, one of nine MIGs destroyed by the unit while assigned to the 366th TFW at DaNang.

In September 1967, while still stationed at DaNang, the mission of the 480th was changed from principally air-to-air to air-to-ground. It participated in Operation Niagara, the siege of Khe Sanh, Operation Deleware in the A Shau Valley and saw intensive action over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam until the bombing halt in November of 1968.

Since its arrival at Phu Cat in April of 1969 the 480th TFW has flown over 14,000 combat missions, participating in such key operations as the siege of Dak Seang and Dak Pek, the 1970 Cambodian Invasion, Lam Son 719, Lam Son 720 and Lam Son 810, as well as support of Fire Bases Six, Fuller and Carroll.

The unit has been awarded two Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with V device and the Presidential Unit Citation for its service in Vietnam. It arrived in Vietnam in February 1966.

Lt Col Charles J. Cunningham Jr., is the current commander.

-OL MELTON  
12WG/CC

1. FIRST, LET ME SAY FOR ALL PERSONNEL OF THE 12TFW, PAST AND PRESENT, THAT WE'RE EXTREMELY PROUD OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS WHICH ARE TOO NUMEROUS TO RECALL FROM MEMORY. BUT THE WING HAS BEEN IN A STATE OF MAXIMUM COMBAT READINESS IN VIETNAM FOR SIX YEARS NOW, AND OF COURSE OUR ASSIGNMENT WAS TO CONDUCT COMBAT MISSIONS WHEREVER DIRECTED TO DESTROY HOSTILE FORCES AND THEIR WAR MAKING CAPABILITY; AND ITS PRETTY OBVIOUS THAT THE TASK HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BECAUSE WE'RE GOING HOME NOW WITH BOTH PERSONNEL AND AIRCRAFT.

DURING THOSE SIX YEARS THE 12TFW WAS THE FIRST UNIT IN VIETNAM TO CONVERT TO THE F-4 PHANTOM, AND IT HAS FLOWN OVER 110,000 COMBAT MISSIONS AND DELIVERED OVER 26,000 TONS OF ORDNANCE. THE WING HAS PARTICIPATED IN ALL MAJOR OPERATIONS AND IN LAM SON 719 ALONE WE FLEW OVER 1400 COMBAT SORTIES. AND THIS WAS A REAL TEST OF WHAT ITS ALL ABOUT - CLOSE AIR SUPPORT FOR FRIENDLY FORCES IN CLOSE COMBAT WITH THE ENEMY. THE AIRCREWS OF THIS WING REALLY HAD THEIR STUFF TOGETHER AND PERFORMED OUTSTANDINGLY.

THE 12TH WING AIRCREWS HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS EXPERTS FOR THEIR PRECISION BOMBING IN CLOSE AIR SUPPORT OF GROUND FORCES; THAT IS USING LOW ALTITUDE LOW ANGLE BOMBING PROCEDURES. SUCH MISSIONS WERE EXTREMELY DEMANDING AND HAZARDOUS DUE TO THE CRITICAL NATURE OF THE TARGETS WHICH WERE USUALLY NEAR FRIENDLY TROOPS AND WITH LOW CLOUDS AND LIMITED VISIBILITY IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN WITH INTENSE SMALL ARMS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE FROM HOSTILE FORCES.

BY ANY STANDARDS OF MEASUREMENT, THE 12TH WING HAS SURPASSED ALL EXPECTATIONS AND MORE THAN MET THE DEMANDING CHALLENGE OF COMBAT WHILE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

## THE MISSION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE 12TH TFW

The mission of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing is to conduct combat missions to destroy enemy forces and facilities, and to maintain all assigned forces in a state of maximum combat readiness for employment in the event of general war. The wing plans for, executes and supports combat operations as directed by higher headquarters.

The 12th Tactical Fighter Wing, with headquarters at Phu Cat Air Base, RVN, has two Deputy Commanders and a Group Commander. Col Albert L. Melton is Wing Commander, assuming the command from Col Richard H. Schoeneman on October 4, 1971, after serving as vice-commander since March. The wing vice-commander is Col Robert E. Hall.

The Deputy Commander for Operations, Lt Col Albert S. Borchik Jr., is responsible for two tactical fighter squadrons, the 480th and the 389th.

The Deputy Commander for Materiel, Col Charles M. Hunter, Jr., is responsible for four squadrons: the 12th Field Maintenance Squadron, the 12th Avionics Maintenance Squadron, the 412th Munitions Maintenance Squadron and the 12th Supply Squadron.

The 12th Combat Support Group, commanded by Col Mac Vickrey, operates and maintains Phu Cat Air Base and has five squadrons: the 12th Headquarters Squadron, the 12th Security Police Squadron, the 12th Services Squadron, the 12th Civil Engineering Squadron and the 12th Transportation Squadron.

In addition, the 12th USAF Dispensary and the Chiefs of Information and Safety come under the direct control of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing commander.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF PHU CAT AIR BASE

Phu Cat Air Base is located approximately 20 miles Northeast of the city of Qui Nhon in Binh Dinh province. It lies in a large, fertile, rice-producing valley of the Central Highlands. Prior to being secured by combined U.S. and ROK forces during Operation Pershing in March 1966, the area now occupied by Phu Cat Air Base was a Viet Cong training center.

In January 1967, two squadrons of C-7A Caribous, the 459th and the 537th Tactical Airlift Squadrons, arrived at Phu Cat and began operating from a 3,000 foot laterite runway. There were approximately 1,200 Air Force personnel assigned to the base at that time.

During May and June 1967, two F-100 squadrons, the 416th and the 612th Tactical Fighter Squadrons, arrived and began flying combat missions from the newly completed 10,000 foot concrete runway.

In February 1968, the 355th Tactical Fighter Squadron, formerly assigned to Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina, arrived for combat duty.

The 37th Tactical Fighter Wing grew to four F-100 squadrons in May 1968 when the 174th Tactical Fighter Squadron, formerly assigned to the 185th Tactical Fighter Group of the Iowa National Guard arrived.

In April 1969, the F-100 squadrons began to be replaced by F-4D Phantom squadrons. The first to arrive was the 480th Tactical Fighter Squadron from Da Nang Air Base. They were followed by the 389th Tactical Fighter Squadron also from Da Nang, in June 1969.

During the latter half of 1969, the 361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron and Detachment 1, 6994 Security Service Squadron arrived from Nha Trang.

It was announced, in December 1969, that the 37th Tactical Fighter Wing had been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism under hostile fire during combat operations from 1 July 1968 to 31 December 1968.

On 31 March 1970, the 37th Tactical Fighter Wing was redesignated the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing, with F-4D Phantoms as the primary tactical aircraft, the wing designation moving from Cam Ranh Bay. Other aircraft operating from the base include EC-47 and C-47 Skytrains, C-7A Caribous, O-1 Bird Dogs, O-2 Super Skymasters and HH-43 Huskies (also called Pedro).

COL MELTON  
12 WG/CC

PHU CAT AIR BASE  
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Mar 66    | Site of base selected.                                     |
| Apr 66    | Korean Tiger Division arrived.                             |
| 1 May 66  | Civilian construction firm arrived.                        |
| 20 Dec 66 | Concrete pouring began on main runway.                     |
| 29 May 67 | First tactical combat sortie flown by<br>an F-100 (37TFW). |
| 16 Apr 69 | First F-4D assigned.                                       |
| 1 Apr 70  | 37TFW redesignated the 12TFW                               |
| 20 Oct 71 | Last combat sortie flown from Phu Cat.                     |

WING COMMANDERS AT PHU CAT

37TFW

15 May 67 Colonel Edwin A. Schneider  
15 May 68 Colonel Leroy J. Manor  
1 May 69 Colonel Harry B. Trimble

12TFW

13 Apr 70 Colonel Larry M. Killpack  
4 Oct 70 Colonel Ralph S. Parr  
19 Feb 71 Colonel Richard H. Schoeneman  
4 Oct 71 Colonel Albert L. Melton

12TFW DECORATIONS

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award  
15 Oct 65 - 30 May 66  
1 Jun 66 - 31 May 67  
1 Jun 67 - 31 May 68

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award  
(With Combat V)  
1 Jun 68 - 31 May 69  
1 Jun 69 - 31 Mar 70

UNDER CONSIDERATION

Presidential Unit Citation  
8 Feb - 8 Apr 71

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award  
(With Combat V)  
1 Apr 70 - 21 Oct 71

12TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING  
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Jan - Jun 64 | First USAF Wing converted to F-4 aircraft.                             |
| 29 Oct 65    | 12TFW F-4Cs arrived at Cam Ranh Bay AB, RVN.                           |
| 1 Apr 70     | 12TFW moved to Phu Cat AB replacing 37TFW.                             |
| 20 Oct 71    | 12TFW flew last combat mission in SEA. Target was in eastern Cambodia. |

NOTE: 12TFW has flown 110,336 missions in SEA.

MELTON  
12 W6/CC

NOTES FOR END-OF-TOUR REPORT

- 4 Oct 71 Assumed command of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing vice Colonel Richard H. Schoencman, who was assigned to Nakhon Phanom AB, Thailand as commander of Task Force Alpha.
- 4 Oct 71 Published 12TFW OIPORD 72-7, "Coronet Boar." This directed the redeployment of 12 F-4D aircraft from Phu Cat AB to Holloman AFB, N.M.
- 8 Oct 71 389TFS flew last scheduled combat sortie in SEA.
- 15 Oct 71 389TFS transferred without equipment and personnel to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.
- 20 Oct 71 480TFS flew last combat mission. This was also the last sortie for the 12TFW.
- 26 Oct 71 Deployment of 389TFS aircraft; first cell of six F-4Ds departed Phu Cat at 0645 local time, with the second cell of six leaving 30 minutes later. Crews for the deployment were selected from F-4 units throughout SEA. There were 13 12TFW crew members included in the deployment.
- 2 Nov 71 Last two F-4Ds departed Phu Cat Air Base for Clark AB, P.I.
- 16 Nov 71 Deactivation ceremonies for the 12TFW were held at Phu Cat AB, RVN. HQ PACAF SO G-266, dtd 5 Nov 71, officially deactivated the Wing on 17 Nov 71.

AL MELTON  
NEV HEISER  
CHUCK  
CONNIFFMAN  
GLEN

5 Nov 71 Deactivation Ceremony officiated by the wing. Also held at [AFAT memorial] OTHER INFORMATION to the 7th AF assigned personnel were given by 31 Nov 71

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 1. Final Sorties: | OCT       |
| In-country        | 214       |
| Cambodia          | 102       |
| Laos              | <u>26</u> |
| Total             | 342       |

Majority of in-country sorties (fragger) were in MR III (129); additionally, there were 26 scrambled MR III missions. Average monthly number of sorties since 1 Apr 70 was 674.5. Figures do not include maintenance and training missions.

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- 2. Disposition of Aircraft
  - Redeployment of 480TFS aircraft
    - a. Original PACAF PAD 72-11 called for the return of 480TFS aircraft to Holloman under similar plans as the 389TFS had.
    - b. A change to the PAD deployed 480th resources within SEA (Air Asia). Wing F-4Ds were sent to Ubon AB, Thailand (four), Udorn AB, Thailand (six), Da Nang AB, RVN (one) and Clark AB, P.I. (five).

Five 12TFW F-4Ds were sent to IRAN facilities at Tainan AB, Taiwan.

3. Phu Cat Air Base

- a. Under Closure Assumption: 7AF PAD 71-7-21, "Phu Cat Project," dtd 1 Sep 71, called for the end of operations by 30 Nov 71 when the base would revert to a caretaker status until 31 Mar 72 when it would close.
- b. Under VNAF Transfer Plan: 7AF PAD 72-7-5, "Phu Cat Transfer," dtd 11 Nov 71, calls for transfer of the base to the VNAF with all 7AF personnel departing the base NLT 31 Dec 71. The PAD is a step-by-step plan for turn-over of all facilities and operations to the VNAF.