

Col Bill Thomas

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 3825TH SUPPORT GROUP (ACADEMIC) (AU)
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA 36112



REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

HOS

SUBJECT:

Air Force Historical End-of-Tour Report Program

25 FEB 1972

Rec'd 2 MAR 72

TO: Col Albert L. Melton
58 TAC Tng Wg
Luke AFB AZ 85301

1. This letter is to remind you of your role in the End-of-Tour Report Program and to reemphasize the importance of the report. Current, firsthand knowledge regarding the use of airpower in Southeast Asia, which only active participants in key positions such as yours can provide, remains a critical element in documenting the conflict.
2. Duty requirements in SEA may have limited the amount of time you could devote to the accumulation of material for a report. However, we hope that you have been able to find time to marshal your thoughts and notes in the preparation of this report.
3. If the nature of your duties and experiences will permit, request the report follow the guidelines provided in the suggested attachment 1 format. The report (three copies) should be mailed directly to the Historical Research Division, 3825/HOA, within 30 days after reporting to your new duty station. Classified reports must be handled in accordance with AFR 205-1.
4. As pointed out in our original letter, it is the timely, individual observations, experiences, conclusions, and recommendations which are of greatest value to the End-of-Tour Report Program. We are confident your report will be a valuable contribution to the documentation and evaluation of the conflict in SEA, as well as a primary source document for future Air Force historical studies.

FOR THE COMMANDER

V. H. Gallacher

V. H. GALLACHER, Lt Col, USAF
Chief, Special Acquisitions Branch
Historical Research Division

1 Atch
Sample Format

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 58TH TACTICAL FIGHTER TRAINING WING (TAC)
LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, ARIZONA 85301



OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER

SUBJECT: End-of-Tour Report

TO: 3825 (HOA)
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

The following End-of-Tour Report is submitted in support of Project CORONA HARVEST and the USAF Historical Program.

PART A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.

Name: Melton, Albert L. Rank: Colonel
Duty Station in SEA: Phu Cat AB, RVN
Job Title: 12th Tactical Fighter Wing Vice Commander, 16 March - 3 October 1971; Wing Commander, 4 October - 16 November 1971; 6259th Air Base Squadron Commander, 17 November - 31 December 1971. Duty AFSC: 0066 and 0002.
Inclusive Tour Dates in SEA: 7 March 1971 - 1 January 1972.
Current ZI Address: 58th Tactical Fighter Training Wing, Luke AFB, Arizona 85301.
Name and DEROS of Replacement: None. Wing and USAF units inactivated and/or transferred. Phu Cat AB transferred to VNAF effective 1 January 1972.

PART B. RESUME OF DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES.

Initial assignment as Vice Commander of the Wing carried with it those primary duties, responsibilities, and obligations associated with being the number two man on base, plus those of Wing Inspector General, Wing Awards and Decorations Officer, assumption of command during periodic absences of the commander, responsibility for preparation and maintenance of wing mission briefing materials and brochures used frequently for visiting dignitaries and inspection teams, and flying of combat missions in F-4 aircraft. Additionally, without the assistance of a Wing Executive Officer, relieving the Wing Commander of numerous administrative details was no small task.

After assuming command of the wing on 4 October 1971, vice Colonel (Brig Gen selectee) Richard N. Schoeneman, it was only 16 days later that the wing flew its final combat mission, 20 October 1971.

PRIDE IN THE PAST



FAITH IN THE FUTURE

COL
MELTON
12WG/CC

NOTES FOR END-OF-TOUR REPORT

- 4 Oct 71 Assumed command of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing vice Colonel Richard H. Schoeneman, who was assigned to Nakhon Phanom AB, Thailand as commander of Task Force Alpha.
 - 4 Oct 71 Published 12TFW OPORD 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. AL MELTON
NEV HEISER
CHUCK
CUNNINGHAM
GLEN 3
 - 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. GEN
LAVELLE
PRESIDED.
 - 5 Dec 71 *Final Ceremony officially turning Phu Cat AB over to the VNAF. All TAF assigned personnel were gone by 31 Dec 71.*
- [AFAT remained.] OTHER INFORMATION
- | | | |
|-------------------|------------|--|
| 1. Final Sorties: | <u>OCT</u> | Majority of in-country sorties (fraggd) were in MR III (129); additionally, there were 26 scrambled MR III missions. Average monthly number of sorties since 1 Apr 70 was 874.5 Figures do not include maintenance and training missions. |
| In-country | 214 | |
| Cambodia | 102 | |
| Laos | <u>26</u> | |
| Total | 342 | |
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.

Following standdown on 21 October 1971, the Wing's prime mission became that of phase down, transfer, inactivation and/or redeployment of aircraft, personnel, and materials. This was preparatory to transferring Phu Cat AB to the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF).

After the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing was deactivated on 16 November 1971 it was replaced by the activation of the 6259th Air Base Squadron on 17 November 1971, at which time I became the squadron's Commander, which carried with it an additional duty as Base Closure Officer (BCO). Our primary responsibility was to bring about an orderly phase down and transfer of USAF resources. In short, we were tasked to vacate Phu Cat AB by 31 December 1971, leaving only an Air Force Advisory Team (AFAT) and those materials designated for direct transfer to VNAF.

Major flying units of 12 TFW consisted of two (2) assigned F-4D squadrons (389 and 480 Tactical Fighter Squadrons), and two (2) tenant squadrons, one EC-47 (361 TEWS) and one C-7 (537 TAS).

PART C. BRIEF DISCUSSION OF MAJOR TASKS.

While Vice Commander the 12 TFW was tasked to participate in all major operations flying combat missions around the clock, seven days/week wherever fragged by Seventh Air Force (7AF). During LAM SON 719 (ARVN intrusion into Laos, near Tchepone) the wing's F-4 aircrews flew over 1400 sorties. This was an operation that saw extensive close air support in a highly defended environment, and that was a real test of what it was all about - close air support for friendly forces in close combat with the enemy.

The wing also provided close air support and strike missions in smaller, but still major, operations such as LAM SON 720 and 810, and continuously gave strong airpower support to Fire Support Bases under siege along the DMZ and Vietnam/Laos border areas.

Interdiction missions in southern Laos, strike and close air support missions predominantly in Military Regions I and II, occasional missions in Cambodia and Route Pack One, support of rescue efforts, mining missions and Gunship escort rounded out the wing's major tasks.

NOTE: End-of-Tour Reports submitted by Colonels Richard N. Schoeneman, Wing Commander, and Ellis E. Stanley, Deputy Commander for Operations, during this same time frame expound on and document in detail all major accomplishments and tasks of the 12 TFW prior to 4 October 1971.

My tenure as Wing Commander started on 4 October 1971 at a time when the future status of Phu Cat and 12 TFW was uncertain. 7AF PAD 71-7-21, "Phu Cat Project", dated 1 September 1971, called for the end of operations by 30 November 1971 when the base would revert to caretaker status until 31 March 1972 when it would close.

On 4 October 1971 we published 12 TFW OPORD 72-7, "Coronet Boar". This plan directed the redeployment of 12 F-4D aircraft from Phu Cat AB to Holloman AFB, N. M.

On 8 October 1971 the 389 Tactical Fighter Squadron flew its last scheduled combat sortie in SEA.

On 15 October 1971 the 389 TFS (name only) was transferred without equipment and personnel (WOPE) to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

On 20 October 1971 the 480 TFS flew its last combat mission, which was also the last combat sortie for 12 TFW. The mission was against portions of the trail network in the tri-border area of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and consisted of four (4) F-4s with 12 MK-82 LD bombs each.

On 26 October 1971 the deployment of 389 TFS aircraft started when the first call of six F-4Ds departed Phu Cat at 0645 hours local time, with the second call of six leaving 30 minutes later. Crews for the deployment were selected from F-4 units throughout SEA. There were 13 12 TFW crew members included in the deployment.

Originally, PACAF PAD 72-11 called for the return of 480 TFS aircraft to Holloman under similar plans as the 389 TFS had. Later, a change to the PAD deployed 480 TFS resources within SEA. The last two F-4Ds of 12 TFW departed Phu Cat AB on 2 November 1971 for Clark AB, P.I. Wing aircraft were sent to Ubon AB (four), Udorn AB (six), Da Nang AB (one), Clark AB (five), and five to IRAN facilities in Taiwan.

Before the closure PAD had been fully implemented the wing received 7 AF PAD 72-7-5, "Phu Cat Transfer" dated 11 November 1971, which called for transfer of the base to the VNAF with all 7 AF personnel departing the base not later than 31 December 1971. The PAD was a step-by-step plan for turnover of all facilities and operations to the VNAF.

On 16 November 1971 deactivation ceremonies for the 12 TFW were held at Phu Cat AB, RVN. Hq PACAF SO G-266, dated 5 November

1971 officially deactivated the wing on 17 November 1971. Then on 5 December 1971 a formal ceremony officially turning Phu Cat over to the VNAF was held with the Secretary of the Air Force officiating. All 7AF personnel had departed Phu Cat by 29 December 1971.

In retrospect the aircrews of 12 TFW were recognized and acknowledged as experts for their precision bombing in close air support of ground forces; that is, employing low altitude low angle bombing procedures with BLU-27 and MK 82 HDs, commonly referred to as "Nape and Snake". They were also very adept and fearless in the dispensing of smoke and BLU 52, frequently used as a means of enhancing the rescue efforts of downed aircrews in hostile territory. Mining missions with CBU-42 was also a specialty of 12 TFW aircrews. Such missions as listed above were extremely demanding and hazardous due to their critical nature and generally required maneuvering in areas with low clouds, limited visibility, and mountainous terrain as natural elements and small arms and automatic weapons fire from hostile elements. Otherwise, the wing employed no sophisticated systems, equipment or weapons in fulfilling its mission, just plain old conventional weapons with standard techniques and procedures for delivery; high and low angle, and level with enemy defenses, weather, terrain and tactics being the dominant factors. Aircrew safety was paramount. During my assignment with the wing no aircraft or aircrews were lost. Neither did we have a "short round" which would have killed or injured troops on the ground.

PART D. INITIAL PLANNING - PHU CAT PROJECT.

The military necessity to retain the operational capability of Phu Cat AB during the Lam Son 719 operations in early 1971 negated further Headquarters 7th Air Force planning of closure actions for the last quarter period of Fiscal Year 1971. However, when it became imminent that base closure would eventually take place during Fiscal Year 1972, emphasis was immediately placed on the identification of all excess supplies and equipment within each organization under the Headquarters PACAF "COMMANDO SQUEEZE" Program. This program, from the period 1 December 1970 to 18 September 1971, when the program was terminated at Phu Cat due to receipt of base closure directives, was responsible for the identification and transfer disposition of \$13,177,248.00 of excess supplies and equipment. In conjunction with this program and 90 days prior to official notification of base closure, the Chief of Supply discontinued automatic stock replenishment requisitioning. Requisitioning on a selective basis was continued for mission essential support and base closure requirements.

A Logistics Phasedown Center was initially established by the Director of Materiel in 4th quarter FY 71. This center was eventually to become the Base Closure Task Force Center at a later date. The location for the Logistics Phasedown Center was wisely chosen. Its location was contiguous to the Aerial Port and Base Operations in addition to being within close proximity to other base industrial site locations. The interior of the Logistics Phasedown Center was large, well illuminated, and comfortably air conditioned. Ample, available wall space would allow for the massive display of future required program charts necessary for the overall monitoring of all base closure actions.

Initially, the Logistics Phasedown Center was not permanently manned and was used primarily for weekly "COMMANDO SQUEEZE" meetings. Upon notification that Phu Cat AB was to commence base closure actions as prescribed in 7th Air Force Program Action Document 71-7-21, the Logistics Phasedown Center was redesignated the Base Closure Task Force Center and was activated on 6 September 1971 with the permanent assignment of two Officers and two Airmen with full time duties within the closure center.

Published documents available to the closure center included; 12 TFW OPLAN 702 (Tenant Withdrawal/Base Phasedown/Closure Guide), 7 AF PAD 71-10 (Tuy Hoa Project Final Report), Takhli RTAFB Phasedown Report, and PACAF Materiel Programming Guide for Incremental Re-deployments (MPG 70-1). All of these documents were of invaluable assistance for the initial organizational planning of the closure center as well as for orientation purposes to all personnel actively involved in base closure. In retrospect, it was surprising to note how many of the base assigned key personnel were not knowledgeable in the use of Y+ and Y- dates and the overall understanding of time phased actions as contained program action documents. Other than for a possible oversight on the part of Higher Headquarters, it prescribed use of "Y" dates as contained in 7AFM 27-1 (Base Closure). This deviation, insignificant as it may have appeared initially, required additional hours of explanation to personnel on the use of "Y" dates as they differed from 12 TFW OPLAN 702, as referenced above.

Upon activation of the Base Closure Task Force Center, efforts were immediately expended on the installation of additional telephones, Xerox copies, administrative furniture, security safe, wall display and briefing charts. Within a few short days the closure center became a functional and operational center with a command post atmosphere for all key personnel. Initial daily meetings were conducted and consisted of all key base personnel. Within a few weeks it was

determined that more effective daily meetings could be held if the amount of attendees could be reduced in numbers. It was decided to form five (5) coordinating groups within the organizational structure of the closure center. These coordinating groups would then represent various other base organizations with only the coordinating group monitor attending the daily closure meeting. Information obtained from the daily meeting would then be passed on to the organizations represented within a particular coordinating group. In addition to the five group coordinating monitors, attendance at daily closure meetings also included Civil Engineering, Personnel, Transportation, Resident Auditor, Management Analysis, and Air Force Logistics Command Representatives. With attendance limited to 12 people including the Base Closure Officer, effective round table discussion was possible. This organizational structure of the Base Closure Task Force Center was highly successful and is recommended for use at other bases undergoing closing procedures.

Base closure actions as related to the organizations of Field Maintenance, Avionics, Munitions, and Supply were extensive. The transfer of all tactical and base support aircraft with the ultimate turn-in of all related supplies and equipment followed by the turn-in of thousands of other base distributed assets of supplies and equipment necessitated that these particular organizations within their specific coordinating group form their own internal phasedown center to specifically monitor time phased actions as pertained to their activities. This subordinate phasedown center within the Materiel Directorate proved highly successful and was of great value to the Base Closure Center in its responsibility of monitoring related time phased actions within the program action document.

The massive display of wall charts within the Base Closure Center were successfully used for briefings and management control. Wall charts were used for posting personnel strength, facility and installed property disposition, cargo movement, vehicle status and overall program status of the time phased actions.

Each base organization representative was required to update their respective display charts daily or weekly as required. Program action document progression was monitored within and by each organization using a standard management analysis form. Information from these forms were provided to the Base Closure Center to assist in the monitoring of the entire time phased program.

The presence of the Advanced Logistics Assistance Team (ALAT) on base to assist as needed in base closure was of paramount importance. This team with its expertise and knowledge in areas of supply and packing and crating provided the assistance needed at management level to organize and direct the most critical areas of supply disposition and traffic management. No Air Base scheduled for closure should ever refuse the services of these available teams.

During the first six weeks of base closure actions there was constant unofficial information being received that Phu Cat AB would be given to the Vietnam Air Force and that continued closure actions would be stopped and transfer of all real estate property, common equipment and supplies would commence. This information became official in late October 1971 and required a complete change in operational concept from base closure to base transfer procedures. In addition to this major change of operations, base closure date of 31 March 1972 was changed to completion of base transfer not later than 31 December 1971. This action provided Phu Cat AB personnel approximately 60 days to complete a monumental task.

PART E. MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS.

VNAF TRANSFER: During the transfer of Phu Cat to the VNAF, they were only able to assume full operational responsibility for a couple of areas. These were Base Operations and Weather. Several 6259th Air Base Squadron personnel assisted them in becoming familiar with the equipment in these areas and they then departed Phu Cat. There were other areas where there appeared to be a reluctance to pick up the responsibility. AGE Shop, Communications Maintenance, Security Police, Supply and Civil Engineering did not have all the necessary people nor organization to assume full responsibility. The decision was made to proceed with the transfer even though there was an overall drop in effectiveness in these areas. There were enough Air Force Advisory Team augmentees to bridge the gaps in most of these areas until more skilled personnel could be acquired.

During the transfer, some difficulty was experienced between USAF transfer team members and VNAF team members. There was an overall lack of trust, but as these teams worked together these difficulties were smoothed out to the point where satisfactory progress could be made. Another difficulty experienced between the team members, especially early in the transfer, was VNAF personnel non-availability. Many days were wasted waiting for VNAF counterparts to be

available on base because of R&R and other reasons. Most of the above problems could be attributed to a lack of organization and command and control of the available personnel. They appeared to use a methodical approach to accomplish PAD actions even though we were trying to transfer in the compressed time allocated prior to 7 AF personnel departure.

PROGRAMMED ACTION DIRECTIVE (PAD) DEVELOPMENT: Phu Cat project PADs received were of very little benefit as far as offering concrete help in phasedown/transfer of the base to the VNAF. It would appear the approach to take in preparing a phasedown plan for a base would be to have the base prepare a document similar to the 12 TFW OPLAN 702 (Tenant Withdrawal/Base Phasedown/Closure Guide). This document contained phasedown plans for every organization on the base. Each organization was forced to look carefully at their requirements for phasing down. This was done in a time frame such that careful attention could be paid to detail. Then each organization's plan was integrated into the base master plan. The next logical step would have been for early submission of this document to 7th Air Force for review and inclusion of items of importance from a headquarters point of view. This document could then have been returned to the base and formed the foundation for a comprehensive meaningful phasedown plan. Instead, PADs received on the Phu Cat project had to of necessity be prepared in haste and without taking into consideration local requirements. Since the required pre-planning had not been done, this approach resulted in a plan that contained only half the information required for closing the base. It also resulted in status reports on phasedown/transfer, which without much more data than was required by the PAD, proved difficult or impossible to interpret. Also, many of the organizations on the base did not even have action items. For instance, Civil Engineering, which had one of the major rolls in the transfer of the base had no action items at all. How can you determine the status of facility transfer when Civil Engineering does not even have to report? The most meaningful portion of the PAD was prepared jointly by local LGS and 7th Air Force LGS personnel. This portion included the local requirements as well as those of 7th Air Force. A plan developed by the base, approved by 7th Air Force, and implemented by a general 7th Air Force message would provide a useful document both to the base and to 7th Air Force.

PART F. LESSONS LEARNED.

PERSONNEL DEPLOYMENT: It became evident very early in the closure operation that personnel did not want to depart from Phu Cat. Even after closure became inevitable, supervisors were reluctant to schedule the release of their personnel. Both situations could probably be attributed to the lack of clear cut directions throughout the months of September and October. Personnel remaining on base require services; therefore, personnel have to provide these services. A concerted effort was made during early November to get personnel scheduled to move off the base. Several special airlifts were provided for personnel to out-of-country bases. As phasedown progressed, it was discovered that in-country personnel were signing out of their squadrons but were not actually departing the base. During early December, CBPO began monitoring the Aerial Port manifests to insure that people were actually departing as soon as they were released from duty. It must be made clear to all personnel and their supervisors that the "name of the game" is all personnel out immediately upon completion of their jobs.

MATERIAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT: It is imperative that all MHE must be carefully inspected prior to entering a phasedown schedule. This must be done if lost time is to be avoided during phasedown. Waiting for organizations to bring in equipment is not an acceptable approach. They must be forced to have their equipment inspected and repaired where necessary. Also, some means must be provided for daily servicing at each work location. It is much too hard on equipment and too time consuming to have to go to the base service station each time gas and oil are required. This could be expedited by providing a mobile service station.

DISPOSITION OF EQUIPMENT: When a base is entering a phasedown situation, it is absolutely necessary that timely disposition be made of buildings, vehicles and equipment as early as possible, and that once disposition is made that it remain firm. Constant change becomes very frustrating to personnel who are working a tight schedule. It is imperative that there be close coordination between PACAF and 7AF to alleviate conflicting disposition instructions before they are transmitted to the base. This was an overall problem at Phu Cat. For instance, (1) Shipping instructions were still being received on air conditioners even after the last ones were shipped. (2) Seventy vehicle code changes were also experienced. (3) UNIVAC 1050-II disposition was changed after it had been shipped from the base; and in spite of the fact that its removal had been scheduled for 45 days.

BUILDING TRANSFER TO VNAF: Procedures for accelerated transfer of buildings proved to be totally inadequate. Using approaches suggested by 7th Air Force and other agencies, only ten buildings were transferred in twelve days. With a maximum of 45 days to transfer 456 facilities, it was evident some new approach must be devised to speed up transfer. The solution to this problem was a joint inspection of the buildings and close coordination between VNAF and USAF CE on preparation of DD Forms 1354. This enabled the facilities to be turned over by zones. The buildings were then signed for on hand receipts from the VNAF for use by the Air Force occupants. After the occupants finished with the buildings, the hand receipts were then returned by the VNAF. This procedure enabled all buildings to be transferred in 30 days.

DEDICATED PHONE REQUIREMENTS: There are two functions on base which require dedicated phone lines. Due to the fluid situation with regard to personnel assignments, it is necessary that personnel have access to those responsible for scheduling port calls. After the arrival of VNAF on base, it became evident that a direct line was required. Much time was spent by personnel attempting to reach the Tri-Service ATCO at Tan Son Nhut to either arrange or change port calls on short notice. The Autovon lines were usually tied up with other calls. This same situation was experienced by the Base Closure Office. During the critical periods of phasedown, communications with 7th Air Force is required. Yet there were times when neither 7AF nor local closure personnel could contact each other. The situation improved after a "Blue Chip" line was installed in the 6259th Air Base Group Commander's office. Base closure personnel were given access to this line.

7AF CLOSURE CENTER (LGC): This office was of tremendous assistance after it was established at Tan Son Nhut. It provided base closure personnel with a central point of contact for solving "short fuze" type problems. Their assistance in helping to resolve equipment disposition problems greatly aided the base in phasing down and transfer and shipment of equipment. Development of this type of office at PACAF should also enable many problems to be solved without lengthy coordination delays.

SPECIAL PLANNING: It became evident very early that the 12TFW OPLAN 702 and the Phu Cat Project Programmed Action Directive (PAD) were not going to provide a detailed enough plan for the phasedown/transfer of the base. As required by the PAD, the Vehicle Utilization

Board (VUB) was disbanded as one of the early time phased actions. The base realized that a detailed plan for turn-in of vehicles was going to have to be developed. The VUB was reorganized and detailed turn-in schedules for vehicles belonging to the various organizations were developed. It was also necessary for the CBPO and Base Closure Center to develop a personnel phasedown plan. This gave each organization a goal to work toward. This proved to be an effective tool for getting personnel off the base. Civil Engineering found it advantageous to set up an overall plan for the transfer of buildings.

PART G. OTHER COMMENTS.

One of the most important aspects of the transfer operation was keeping lines of communication open to all agencies involved. There must be sharing of ideas and open discussions if a transfer is to be made effectively. At Phu Cat the Air Force Advisory Team had a representative on the Base Closure Task Force. This representative was kept apprised of all message traffic and of all other communications. He occupied a desk in the closure center and participated in all meetings of base organizations. This enabled base personnel to have a line of communication with the VNAF and greatly assisted in solving mutual problems. It also made the transition from USAF to VNAF much easier. Additionally, highly qualified Phu Cat personnel were reassigned to the AFAT while others were retained as augmentees for a period beyond the final transfer date. Their continuity and assistance enhanced the entire program.

All base organizations must be very careful to leave responsible building custodians until all facilities are completely transferred to the VNAF. Additionally, it is most important that these individuals be appointed early in the closure and that they be held accountable for the maintenance and cleanliness of the facilities.

A security plan for the base during the transition period is absolutely essential. This plan should be developed by Base, AFAT, and USAF security personnel and approved by the Commanders of the respective organizations. One of the most important considerations of the plan must be at what point does the VNAF begin to assume responsibility for base defense and law enforcement. Experience has shown that a gradual phase-in of VNAF is preferred over an instantaneous transfer. The transfer should not be made until the majority of Air Force personnel have departed. This consideration dictates that the Security Police are one of the last organizations to disband and ship their personnel.

Communication with base personnel becomes more critical as the Air Base Squadron diminishes in size. The daily base closure meetings provide an excellent opportunity for inter-communication and allows for maximum coordination between organizations. This enables the Commander to have a daily look at the progress being made by all organizations. It also serves as a channel for communicating a sense of urgency for completing the task. There is a tendency to slow down and hold on to personnel. The Commander must continue to press the organizations for timely release of their people.

Another channel for communicating sense of urgency to all personnel is through periodic meetings of organizational commanders. The Air Base Squadron Commander should retain Article 15 authority and legal personnel to administer disciplinary and legal actions until the completion of transfer. Experience has shown that legal assistance from another base is too slow and cumbersome; therefore, Commanders will tend to treat infractions of discipline too lightly.

Phu Cat was given sixty days to transfer the base to the VNAF. In spite of many handicaps; such as lack of timely decisions on disposition of equipment, the transfer was made in about fifty-three days. During this period, two squadrons of F-4s and one squadron of EC-47s were deployed as well as their associated equipment and personnel. 1,878 facility items of equipment were shipped from Phu Cat. These included such items as Porta-Kamps, trailers, air conditioners, refrigerators, and a few relocatable buildings. 456 facility line items were transferred to the VNAF.

There were 498 vehicles requiring disposition. Sixty-six were transferred to the VNAF in-place, the AFAT kept eighty for their internal use and eventual salvage, and sixteen were kept by the VNAF for parts. 336 were transported from the base to either Phu Tai for salvage of Qui Nhon for water transport.

Han Jin Trucking Contractors, Sealand Vans, trains, C-130s, C-123s, C-141s, and other modes of transportation were used to transport the equipment and supplies from the base. Approximately 15,497 tons were shipped during the phasedown.

The following is a summary of facilities and equipment transferred to the VNAF.

Facilities	33.693
Munitions	1.44M
Equipment	10.2M
Supplies	.875M
Land	3.5M
TOTAL	49.708M

ALBERT L. MELTON, Colonel, USAF
Vice Commander