

# NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB

by John W. Cary III,  
Nakhon Phanom RTAFB  
56th SPS, 1974-1975

I was glad to see Ken Thompson's write up in the July GUARDMOUNT about his tours at Nakhon Phanom (NKP). I've read a lot about numerous locations in Vietnam and all over SEA but rarely, if ever, see anything about NKP. I spent one year (Sep 74 to Sep 75) at Nakhon Phanom during the last year of the war and I was one of the last 100 U.S. troops to leave SEA and close down NKP. I was a communications clerk in the *87th COMM SQ of 56th SOW (Spec Ops Wing)* but was reassigned to the *56th SPS* for the last four months (having been a SP Augmentee and gone thru training at Lackland during prior assignment).

I pulled perimeter patrol and flight line guard duty every night during those last months, and Ken Thompson's comments were absolutely correct about those of us who served in Thailand deserving the same respect as our brothers who served in Vietnam. NKP was a Top Secret camp from which numerous special operations were run and from which the "*CIA's secret war in Laos*" (as today's history books refer to it) was run.

Pathet Lao insurgents regularly blew up flight facilities equipment and sappers harassed and hit the camp. There were many U.S. casualties at NKP and in Ops in Laos from NKP and even casualties during the last few months as the war finally closed down. Nakhon Phanom was a primitive place compared to other AFBs in Thailand (e.g. Korat, Udorn RTAFB, U-Tapao RTAFB) and was next to the Mekong River in NE Thailand on the Laotian border. Recon drones, launched elsewhere in Thailand to fly over and film North Vietnam and the Ho Chi Minh trail, sometimes went down close to the river and NKP SPs (base ground defense) teams took part in their recovery. North Vietnamese backed Pathet Lao insurgents constantly threatened that region of Thailand during the year I was there. NKP was also the underground intelligence center for the 7th Air Force.

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