

# Vietnam

*35th SPS*

## *Turn Up The HEAT!*

*by Robert Claud, A1C  
35th SPS, Panther Flight  
Phan Rang, RVN 66-67*

### Turn the Heat UP

While serving my tour in Vietnam, I was on convoy detail once. We were going to escort a five ton truck with flatbed trailer from Phan Rang AB to Phù Cát AB, and back. We were going to pickup a load at CRB, about 24,000 lbs., of dog food for the K-9's.

Photos by [Carl Tripp](#). Convoy Phan Rang, 1968



The Sgt in charge told me to ride with the truck driver. There was one gun jeep in front and one in back of the truck. About 10 or 15 miles out of Phan Rang on Hwy. 1, we stopped to relieve ourselves. The truck driver pulled the truck as far off the road as he could and stopped. There was a steep bank and a real muddy ditch at the bottom just at the edge of the road where we stopped.

When I opened the truck door to get out, my rifle (M16), which I had placed in the doorwell, fell out and down the bank. The rifle landed with the barrel stuck in the mud. I jumped out and scrambled down the bank to retrieve my rifle. Pulling it out of the mud, I climbed back up the bank as fast as I could. When I got back up on the road, I found mud was really packed into

the barrel quite a lot

I climbed back into the truck and told the driver that I had to get the mud out fast. As we began to roll again I found out that I didn't have a cleaning rod with me. We were approaching a bad place on the route, where there was a rubber and coconut grove on both sides of the road--a place convoys had been subject to sniper attacks.

Well, I began to hit on the barrel, but the mud would not break loose. I then asked the driver if the heater worked on the truck. He said, "I don't know, who needs a heater in this \*##% country." I told him to try it and turn it as hot as it would go!

The truck's heater was heavy duty and began to blast out heat, so I placed the rifle barrel up to it. After about a minute or so I began to hit on the side of the barrel with an M16 mag, and small pieces of dried mud fell out. This process took a while and we were getting very hot and sweaty in that truck cap. It took probably five to ten minutes to get the barrel cleared to where I could see through it, just before we arrived at the grove of trees.

We went on to Phù Cát and back to Phan Rang without any trouble. I was the one who had trouble and a hot ride for awhile, but someone else could have turned the heat up that hot day in 1966. From then on I carried a cleaning kit with me... and convoys were No Sweat.

**From: Dinubilo, Don E.**

**I was stationed at Phan Rang from April 1966 to April 1967. I was on the Panther Flight working nights too. We basically supported the K-9 units. Some of the other jobs we did were convoy duties (the trip to Phù Cát as you mentioned was one scary mutha, never ride as rear guard), night time patrols, 3 man machine gun nests (on top of Nhu Dot ), 24 hour beach patrol (two men), door gunner (in order to get to Tân Sơn Nhứt for my RandR), escort duty for VIP's and one time our hooch was asked to ruck up for insertion by chopper, at dusk, to guard a downed F-4. Thank God that the 101st got there first. We manned observation towers along the western perimeter and guarded the bomb and ammo dump. Many, many long nights. C rations were better than the chow hall food.**

**Sometime in July or August we received small arms fire and the K-9 units were pinned down. A three hour fire fight ensued. We had a 81mm at Air Police Headquarters that was providing illumination rounds fired by the A1C desk sergeant. A C130 finally came over and kicked out those flares that light up a football field. Tracers were everywhere and even our 50 cal. was put into action. By the time we could see daylight, the firing had stopped. We stayed in our positions until the 101st could search the area in front of us. They couldn't find anything. Most of us were too excited to sleep and the story was told and retold for several weeks. Lt. Barth, Lt. Bonner and Sgt Korn were so proud of the black berets.**

**The Panthers were indeed a different kind of Air Police Unit. I suppose that there are many many stories of this kind and I have always wondered why the Air Force didn't recognize their ground troops. When I returned to the States, I just couldn't get with "STATE SIDE DUTY."**

**Well, I got to run, it was nice telling a story about the NAM. Hope to hear from you soon.**

**WELCOME HOME.**

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