

Friendly Fire!

ĐÀ NẰNG, PHAN RANG, PHU BAI

1968

by **Bob Mitchell**

Phan Rang, Phu Bai, Đà Nẵng

April 1967-Dec 1968

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I don't remember the exact date but it was either late 1967 or during 1968. I was stationed at Phan Rang and Đà Nẵng. When I arrived in country I was stationed at Phan Rang, I extended my tour of duty 6 mos. and shortly thereafter was shipped to Đà Nẵng for the duration of my tour. I would have to dig out my records to give exact dates.

Friendly Fire:

After reading [Danny Williams' account](#), I thought I would submit my own friendly fire experience. I was posted at the end of the runway at Đà Nẵng facing the mortuary, I believe the post designation was Bravo 10. C.S.C. Shouted over the radio: "ROCKETS, ROCKETS, ROCKETS!" and everyone hit the sandbag bunkers on post. Before I could enter mine two missiles came down the runway, over my head, over the mortuary and, as I was later told, into the bay, after passing over the town. Seconds later C.S.C. called me on radio and asked if I saw the missiles, I replied, "would you like the serial numbers?". Their response was that they were "FRIENDLY MISSILES." To which I responded that they didn't look to friendly to me. It seems a jet returning from a mission launched its wing rockets upon touchdown. I still don't know if it was mechanical or pilot error, but I'll never forget the event.



Lazerth!

(Artist: Unknown)

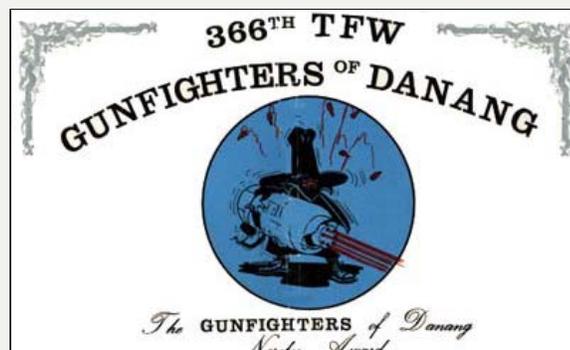
I was on post at the end of the runway, across from the Đà Nẵng mortuary, when the SAT TEAM brought coffee which I needed. The SAT Team leader was Staff Sgt Tyer. They said their coffee was only lukewarm, and that if I were to cross the road and go into the mortuary, then I could get some coffee from the crew in there, as they had just brewed a big pot; and I could take a latrine break at the same time. I walked across the road and the SAT TEAM watched my post. Inside the door was a single troop, sitting at a desk, with his head down and sleeping. I approached him and he sat up. I told him that the sarge said I could get a



cup of hot coffee and take a latrine break, if it was ok with him. He said, sure the coffee's in the next room. I proceeded into the next room and there were stacks of aluminum coffins everywhere. In each top coffin was a soldier wearing boots fatigue pants and a tee shirt; with their hands folded neatly on their chests, eyes closed and looking very reposed. I was kind of taken back by this site and tried to be respectfully quiet as I looked for the head and the coffee. That is until they all sat up together and asked what I wanted. Of course the latrine break became an immediate necessity. You see the crew had nothing to do so they were resting in the coffins. *I don't remember if I bothered with the coffee on the way out.*



The 366th TFW logo.



Picture of the stalls at the main gate where we searched the civilians who came on base everyday.

I was working personnel search on the main gate in the morning. As I was searching the local civilians coming through the stalls to work on base I spotted the tallest Vietnamese person I had ever seen. He was over six feet tall and hunkering down not to stand out in the crowd. I had seen him come out of the ditch across the bridge from the main gate and



blend in with the crowd of workers. He wore the black silk pajamas, sandals and the pointed straw hat. He was broad shouldered and well built far from what we usually saw coming in.

He merged with the other workers still stooping as to not stick out. I saw him move through the crowd and get in line in one of my stalls. I knew this was going to be unusual. When he finally got to me I saw he was not Vietnamese but a white male. I don't know his Nationality as he never spoke a single word to me. He simply handed me a laminated card that said something like -- get me to the highest security person on your base ASAP. I brought him in the gate shack and called CSC for someone to come out to the main gate. They asked why and I said I can't say just send someone quickly. A staff sgt. came roaring up to the gate in his jeep and wanted to know what I wanted, so I told him what happened and showed him the laminated card. He put the gentleman in the jeep and drove off, after telling me this never happened Mitchell, do you understand? I said yes sgt. and that was the last I ever heard or saw about the incident. I never mentioned it back in the barracks or said anything to anyone for about thirty years.



366th SPS barrack's sign: Tiger Flight, Hut 10

Đà Nẵng AB: These are some friends of mine. *No Pain... No Gain.*

Photo (above right). Bottom-Left: Myself-Bob Mitchell. Behind me is Gary Lewis-from Georgia. Next to him, the guy in the flight Jacket is Ron "Monco" Covert from California, and the blonde guy next to him is my cubie Bill Allen from Farmington, Missouri. Behind Bill is Vic Billeci, California, ALSO SERVED AT Đông Hà. Right-Front: I can't remember his name but he was a very funny guy.

I've seen a number of photos of the civilian

Vietnamese houses across the street from the 366th SPS barracks, circa 1967-1968. These people in the picture attached lived there. Their names, left to right are: Kim, her brother Phuong, and I don't recall the other girls name. They would pick up and return laundry over the fence.



They did good work at excellent prices, and were very nice people. I wonder where they are and what they're doing now.



Phan Rang AB: This is me outside barracks at Phan Rang.



From Đà Nẵng cube mate: *Walking Wounded.*

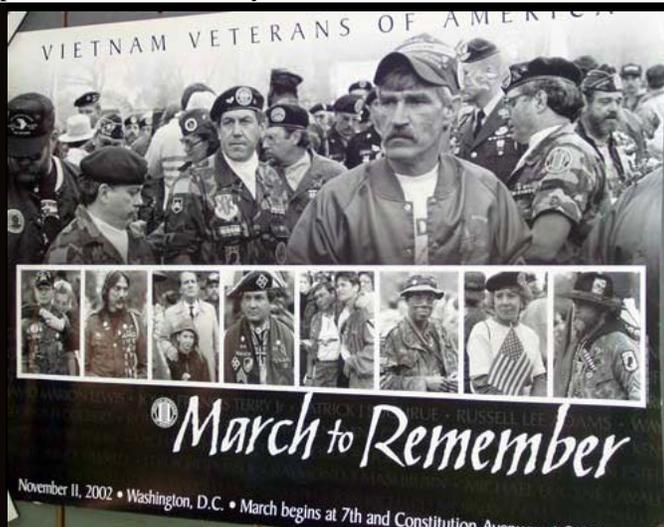
Phu Bai: When I was transferred from Phan Rang to Đà Nẵng I was sent to a **As for the "wounded" photo**, I got hurt twice at DaNang: radar site above Huế manned by Đà Nẵng personnel from the 366th. It's name once playing basketball behind the huts and another playing was Phu Bai, I was sent back to Đà Nẵng because I was a 77130 and not football on China beach. 77150 as required. I never hear of it mentioned, is it on your roster of bases?

Phan Rang M. P. This is the M. P. counterpart at one of the gates at **Phan Rang**.

This is the M.P. counterpart at one of the gates at Phan Rang.



Phil Arcadipane asked me to forward the picture of his tattoo to you.



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