

Last Flight From Saigon 9. Map of Tan Son Nhut AB, Spring, 28 Unloading Satellite Receiver From the C-5 That Later Crashed With a Load of Orphans

It was located near the city of Saigon in southern Vietnam. VVTS has been a major Vietnamese civil airport since the s. A taxiway parallel to the original runway had just been completed by the E. Lane company for the U. Operations Mission, but parking aprons and connections to the taxiways were required. Under the direction of the U. A full handover of training responsibility took place on 1 June when the French training contracts expired. It operated with the French Air Force unit serving the International Control Commission and in April with the departure of the French it inherited its 10 H helicopters. The squadron would be inactivated in June and its mission assumed by the 2nd Air Division, while its pilots formed the th Fighter Squadron at Bien Hoa Air Base. The system handled the flow of aircraft from take-off to target area, and return to the base it was launched from. This was known as the Tactical Air Control System TACS , and it assured positive control of all areas where significant combat operations were performed. Without this system, it would not have been possible for the RVNAF to deploy its forces effectively where needed. DASCs were responsible for the deployment of aircraft located within their sector in support of ground operations. A communications network inked these three levels of command and control, giving the TACS overall control of the South Vietnamese air situation at all times. Additional information was provided by a radar network that covered all of South Vietnam and beyond, monitoring all strike aircraft. The plotters invited loyalist officers to a routine lunch meeting at JGS and captured them in the afternoon of 1 November The attack began early on 31 January with greater severity than anyone had expected. On 24 February another rocket and mortar attack damaged base buildings killing 4 US personnel and wounding Other courses included navigation classes and helicopter transition and maintenance training for the CH Chinook. At the end of , the RVNAF were totally in control of command and control units at eight major air bases, supporting ARVN units for the expanded air-ground operations system. In the first month of the offensive, transports from Tan Son Nhut ferried thousands of troops and delivered nearly 4, tons of supplies throughout the country. These Cs remained in natural aluminum finish throughout the war The Paris Peace Accords of brought an end to the United States advisory capacity in South Vietnam. The technical assistance provided by the personnel of the DAOs and by civilian contractors was essential to the RVNAF, however, because of the cease-fire agreement, the South Vietnamese could not be advised in any way on military operations, tactics or techniques of employment. The RVNAF provided statistics with regards to the military capability of their units to the DAO, however the accuracy of this information was not always reliable. Although equipped with large numbers of Cessna A Dragonfly and F-5 attack aircraft to conduct effective close air support operations, during the offensive, heavy bombardment duty was left to USAF aircraft. When North Vietnam invaded in March , the promised American intervention never materialized. Congress reflected the popular mood, halting the bombing in Cambodia effective 15 July , and reducing aid to South Vietnam. The general staff plan for the invasion of South Vietnam called for 20 divisions, it anticipated a two-year struggle for victory. Instead of an orderly withdrawal, it turned into a general retreat, with masses of military and civilians fleeing, clogging roads and creating chaos. On 30 March , South Vietnamese soldiers surrendered after being abandoned by their commanding officers. By late March the US Embassy began to reduce the number of US citizens in Vietnam by encouraging dependents and non-essential personnel to leave the country by commercial flights and on Military Airlift Command MAC C and C-5 aircraft, which were still bringing in emergency military supplies. Airborne troops were sent in for one last attempt to hold the airfield, but the defenders were finally overrun on 16 April and Phan Rang Air Base was lost. This directive was subsequently reversed; some operators had ignored it anyway. In any case this effectively marked the end of the commercial airlift from Tan Son Nhut. It was decided that from this time only Cs would be used for the evacuation due to their greater maneuverability. There was relatively little difference between the cargo loads of the two aircraft, Cs had been loaded with up to evacuees while Cs had been taking off with in excess of C flights were stopped temporarily after the air attack but resumed at The

crew evacuated the burning aircraft on the taxiway and departed the airfield on another C that had previously landed. The lead T was hit by M67 recoilless rifle and then the next T was hit by a shell from an M48 tank. The PAVN then sent 3 tanks and an infantry battalion to assault the main gate and they were met by intensive anti-tank and machine gun fire knocking out the 3 tanks and killing at least 20 PAVN soldiers. The 6 surviving tanks arrived at the main gate at

Chapter 2 : Tan Son Nhut Air Base - Wikipedia

VNAF F-5E Tiger II, Tan Son Nhut AB, Spring (May 9th update) Sign in to follow this. Edited May 9 by Daniel Leduc. 13 Marcel

Edit On August 19, 1968, U. Kennedy approved a long-range radar facility to be sited near Da Nang to observe and report Soviet flights across the Laotian border. These C-119s delivered supplies to distant outposts established by the Army Special Forces along the border with Laos, and to drop South Vietnamese parachute troops in operations against the Viet Cong. By early 1968, Okinawa-based Marine Aircraft Group 16 MAG had established a satellite base at Da Nang, including a squadron of UH-1H troop transport helicopters, O-1A light aerial reconnaissance aircraft and support personnel, including a man security platoon from the 3rd Marine Division on Okinawa. In an operation code named "Shufly," the Marines ferried ARVN troops on combat operations, evacuated the wounded, helped keep supplies flowing to ARVN units in the field as well as Special Forces outposts in the rugged mountains along the Laotian border, and provided an air search-and-rescue capability in I Corps region of Vietnam well into Navy doctors in remote villages and Christmas parties for Da Nang children orphaned by the war. The two Marine choppers had been trying, at dusk, to locate and rescue a U. Air Force pilot and his Vietnamese observer, whose aircraft reportedly had gone down on a bombing run that afternoon. It specialized in missions to remote mountain airstrips and drop zones and flights into the A Shau Valley using junior but more experienced C-119 pilots specially trained at Pope AFB, North Carolina. Squadrons deployed to Da Nang AB were: On April 3, 1968, three North Vietnamese MiGs attacked a strike package near the Dong Phuong Thong bridge and damaged a Crusader and then escaped unscathed. The next day, two MiGs attacked a flight of four F-4s and shot two of them down. The 1st would rotate with the 2nd TFS in day deployments. During the entire deployment of the 1st only two fleeting encounters between FCs and enemy fighters occurred. From April 20 to November 20 of they carried out 2, missions of machine-gunning, bombing and escorting strike aircraft, sometimes in North Vietnamese air space. It was decided to withdraw the FC from support of strike missions over North Vietnam, unless and until the MiG threat reappeared. By late August, these FCs were involved in airstrikes against targets in both Laos and South Vietnam, exchanging its role of air superiority for that of ground attack. However, losses were heavy, with three F-4s being downed by ground fire and SAMs in the next couple of months. The FC was not very well suited for the ground attack role, being incapable of carrying an adequately large offensive load. In addition, it could not carry out operations in bad weather and could not sustain a lot of battle damage. The Starfighter took part in Operation Bolo on January 2, 1968, which was a successful attempt to lure North Vietnamese fighters into combat. However, the F-4s were not used to actively entice and engage MiGs, but were used instead to protect the egressing F-4 force. The F-4 Phantoms scored heavily during this engagement. The 1st was then rotated back to George AFB for the last time. Both aircraft were later repainted in camouflage. The 1st was responsible as the host unit and for operational squadrons assigned to Da Nang. In order to make up losses incurred at Bien Hoa, some BB-1s had to be transferred to Vietnam from the Kansas Air National Guard, and 12 BE-5As had to be withdrawn from target-towing duties and reconfigured as bombers to make good these losses. Operating on rotating deployments from the 1st Fighter Wing at Clark AB, Philippines, the BB-1s carried out attack on trails used by Communist trucks, storage and bivouac areas, bridges, buildings, and AAA sites. Note that the three victory stars were scored on May 12, 1968, by Maj. Dudley pilot and 1Lt. Hargrove pilot and 1Lt. Preister pilot and Capt. Its operational squadrons were:

Chapter 3 : Tan Son Nhut AB : Wikis (The Full Wiki)

Bombing of Tan Son Nhut Air Base Part of Fall of Saigon, Vietnam War On 28 April , Tan Son Nhut Air Base became the target of North Vietnam's first successful air-attack against a South Vietnamese target.

Tet holiday period of Picture in Public Domain Vietnamese Communist Heavily guarded, a Viet Cong captive awaits interrogation following the attacks on the capital city during the festive Tet holiday period of We stopped the falling of the dominoes. The fact is, we as a nation did not make good our commitment to the South Vietnamese. The Common belief is that the domino theory was proved false. The domino theory was accurate. Without that commitment, Communism would have swept all the way to the Malacca Straits that is south of Singapore and of great strategic importance to the free world. If you ask people who live in these countries who won the war in Vietnam, they have a different opinion from the American news media. The Vietnam War was the turning point for Communism. The United States lost the war in Vietnam. The American military was not defeated in Vietnam. The American military did not lose a battle of any consequence. From a military standpoint, it was almost an unprecedented performance. The last American troops departed in their entirety 29 March How could we lose a war we had already stopped fighting? We fought to an agreed stalemate. The peace settlement was signed in Paris on 27 January It was reported as an overwhelming success for the Communist forces and a decided defeat for the U. Nothing could be further from the truth. Despite initial victories by the Communists forces, the Tet Offensive resulted in a major defeat of those forces. Still, militarily, the Tet Offensive was a total defeat of the Communist forces on all fronts. It resulted in the death of some 45, NVA troops and the complete, if not total destruction of the Viet Cong elements in South Vietnam. The Tet Offensive succeeded on only one front and that was the News front and the political arena. This was another example in the Vietnam War of an inaccuracy becoming the perceived truth. However, inaccurately reported, the News Media made the Tet Offensive famous. All credit for the research of these myths belongs to: Then read the following speech presented by Captain Daniel L. Navy, at the Pensacola Civitan Club on 19 Feb and ask yourself how anyone can take the position that all we have to do is bring our troops home from the Middle East and Islamic terrorists will never bother us again. Captain Ouimette is a native of Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was a cool fall day in November in a country going through a religious and political upheaval when a group of Iranian students attacked and seized the American Embassy in Tehran. The attack on this sovereign US embassy set the stage for the events to follow for the next 23 years. America was still reeling from the aftermath of the Viet Nam experience and had a serious threat from the Soviet Union when then, President Carter, had to do something. He chose to conduct a clandestine raid in the desert. A poorly trained, poorly equipped and poorly organized military was called on to execute a complex mission that was doomed from the start. Shortly after the Tehran experience, Americans began to be kidnapped and killed throughout the Middle East. America could do little to protect her citizens living and working abroad. The attacks against US soil continued. In April of a large vehicle packed with high explosives was driven into the US Embassy compound in Beirut. When it explodes, it kills 63 people. The alarm went off again and America hit the Snooze Button once more. Then just six short months later a large truck heavily laden down with over pounds of TNT smashed through the main gate of the US Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut. America mourns her dead and hit the Snooze Button once more. Two months later in December , another truck loaded with explosives is driven into the US Embassy in Kuwait, and America continues her slumber. The following year, in September , another van was driven into the gates of the US Embassy in Beirut and America slept. Soon the terrorism spreads to Europe. In April a bomb explodes in a restaurant frequented by US soldiers in Madrid. Fifty-nine days later a cruise ship, the Achille Lauro is hijacked and we watched as an American in a wheelchair is singled out of the passenger list and executed. The terrorists then shift their tactics to bombing civilian airliners when they bomb TWA Flight in April of that killed 4 and the most tragic bombing, Pan Am Flight over Lockerbie, Scotland in , killing America wants to treat these terrorist acts as crimes; in fact we are still trying to bring these people to trial. These are acts of war The terrorists decide to bring the fight to America. The following month, February , a group of terrorists are

arrested after a rented van packed with explosives is driven into the underground parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York City. Six people are killed and over are injured. Still this is a crime and not an act of war? The Snooze alarm is depressed again. Then in November a car bomb explodes at a US military complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia killing seven service men and women. A few months later in June of , another truck bomb explodes only 35 yards from the US military compound in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The terrorists are getting braver and smarter as they see that America does not respond decisively. They move to coordinate their attacks in a simultaneous attack on two US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. These attacks were planned with precision, they kill America responds with cruise missile attacks and goes back to sleep. And of course you know the events of 11 September Most Americans think this was the first attack against US soil or in America. How wrong they are. America has been under a constant attack since and we chose to hit the snooze alarm and roll over and go back to sleep. The President is right on when he says we are engaged in a war. I think we have been in a war for the past 23 years and it will continue until we as a people decide enough is enough. America has to "Get out of Bed" and act decisively now. America has changed forever. We have to be ready to pay the price and make the sacrifice to ensure our way of life continues. We cannot afford to hit the Snooze Button again and roll over and go back to sleep. We have to make the terrorists know that in the words of Admiral Yamamoto after the attack on Pearl Harbor "that all they have done is to awaken a sleeping giant. Thank you very much. Lincoln, paraphrasing Mark 3: We seem to be as divided today over the Middle East as we were during the Vietnam war. The news media has misreported and misinterpreted our war efforts in the past. Do not be deceived again. Whether or not you agree with United States policy, if we lose this war with Islamic terrorism we will cease to exist as a nation. My friend Charles Penely, who was a member of the th SPS, has an excellent web page devoted to the th and would welcome your interest. Please feel free to follow the links below: The attempted ground penetration on the south perimeter was between Delta Bunker 7 and Delta Bunker 6. From hours, 6 May through hours, 22 May each of these attacks either preceded or was in conjunction with enemy infiltration attempts and ground assault activities against the air base and adjoining areas. Mini Tet Map Unit Commanders engaged in operations: There were major approaches used during the assaults. The early attacks from the east were apparently diversionary in nature to permit forces in the west to position themselves for an assault on the 6th precinct. However, the major forces were pinned down. The first attacks on Saigon took place in the area of the New-Port Dock facilities and bridge. The later unit was to stay in the area, organize a local government and, with this as a base, press for a coalition between themselves and the GVN. The above mentioned forces failed in their mission due to the presence of allied forces. Their mission was to enter and hold the 6th precinct along with the Phu Tho Hoa area. There were no casualties. Two minutes later Tango I reported heavy movement behind the Catholic school, adjacent to the south perimeter. Tango I reported razorbacks making heavy contact with an unknown size enemy unit behind the Catholic School. They encountered heavy fire from various Viet Cong positions within the buildings in that area. The Viet Cong heavily employed RG-P-2 rockets and automatic weapons on the assaulting airborne company. Machine Gun and B 90mm recoilless rifle engaged the Viet Cong in the village adjacent to the south perimeter. B fired 3 rounds of 90mm destroying enemy RPG-2 rocket firing positions which were blocking the Vietnamese Airborne companies sweep of the area. BG-5, destroyed an enemy machine gun position which was protecting the before mentioned RPG-2 site. McNitt reported observing an individual on a roof top adjacent to Delta Sector holding an aiming stick. Permission to fire was granted and the individual was eliminated.

Chapter 4 : After Action Reports.

Indeed Dan, sorry you lost your brother. I lost my sister @ 47 (just a year older than myself now) back in and it still hurts. Condolences, and I know it wont help right now, but time does help heal.

Ground transportation Bus and shuttle A bus station is situated in front of the international terminal and is served by Ho Chi Minh City Bus. It is connected to the city center by bus line and as well as shuttle bus line. However, it is currently not known when the line will be constructed. As an effort to ease traffic bottleneck, in August, Pham Van Dong Boulevard officially opened and connected the airport to National Route 1A in an intersection east of the airport. Out of people on board passengers and 17 crew members, people were killed. There were no casualties but the aircraft was written off due to substantial damage beyond repair. Tong proceeded to drop anti-communist leaflets over Ho Chi Minh City before parachuting out of an emergency exit. Vietnamese security forces arrested him on the ground two hours later. The aircraft landed safely, and no one on board was injured. This incident also disabled the radar system, halting air traffic control capabilities. Overall, 92 flights were affected, 54 of them were within Ho Chi Minh flight information region and 8 were preparing to land at Tan Son Nhat at the time of the incident. No air traffic accident occurred and operations fully resumed by noon the next day. The bomb in the terminal failed to detonate due to internal sabotage. The bomb in the garage initially also failed to detonate because the activator was out of range. No one was injured nor killed in the attack. A total of 15 people were arrested for involvement in the attack, according to the Vietnamese state media. In a report submitted to the Vietnamese National Assembly in, legislators deemed continued expansion of Tan Son Nhat problematic in five aspects. Firstly, it would be more economically viable to build a new airport rather than extensively upgrade Tan Son Nhat. Secondly, Tan Son Nhat airspace overlaps with that of Bien Hoa Airport, which is currently reserved for national defense purpose. A reduction in military activities in Bien Hoa is considered to be temporary and unsustainable. At the same time, Tan Son Nhat also acts as a strategic location in national defense; therefore, the airport cannot be used entirely for civic air transport. Additionally, due to its urban location, aside from increasing ground traffic stress in its access points, the airport cannot operate between midnight and 5AM in accordance to the International Civil Aviation Organization sustainable development goals, further limiting its capability. The project will be divided in three stages. Stage One calls for the construction of two parallel runways and a terminal with a capacity of 25 million passengers per year, due to be completed in. Stage Two is scheduled for completion in, giving the airport three runways, two passenger terminals and a cargo terminal designed to receive 1. The final stage is scheduled to be initiated after, envisioned to handle million passengers, 5 million metric tons of cargo annually on an infrastructure of 4 runways and 4 passenger terminals. The total budget for the first stage alone was estimated to be 6. Under the chosen proposal, there would be a new mixed-use Terminal 3 and a civil-use Terminal 4 to be built on the south side of the airport, a parallel taxiway between the existing runways and technical hangars on the northeast. The estimated time to complete the upgrade would be 3 years and the airport would then have a capacity of million passengers annually. In March, ADPi presented their plan for the expansion. The firm advised against the construction of a third runway and supported a southward expansion plan.

Chapter 5 : Bombing of Tan Son Nhut Air Base - Wikipedia

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Constituted 3 Emergency Rescue Squadron on 14 Feb Activated on 15 Feb Inactivated on 18 Jun Organized on 8 Jan Inactivated on 31 Jan Redesignated Rescue Group on 29 Jul Activated on 1 Oct None not manned , Feb ; Capt Robert S. Register, 28 Feb ; Maj Edward F. Roth, 24 Oct ; Capt Cecil J. Hewlett, 10 Nov ; Capt Claude P. Kitchens, 5 Dec ; Capt William H. Vernon, 28 Jul ; Maj Everett A. Nolan, Mar ; Maj Harvey E. Beedy, 25 Jul ; Maj Theodore P. Tatum, 16 Aug ; Col Klair E. Keck acting , 3 Jun ; Col Tracy J. Petersen, 15 Jul ; Col Gene L. Douglas, 1 May ; Col Collier H. Davidson, 18 May Jun Beall, 8 Jan ; Col Albert P. Lovelady, 1 Nov ; Col Paul E. Leske, 6 Oct ; Col Hollon H. Frazee, 17 Aug ; Col Frederick V. Pinyerd, 18 Oct ; Col Herbert Leong, c. Jul ; Col Warner A. Britton, by Nov ; Col Cecil N. Zehnder, by Jan ; Col Richard F. Forrester, 3 Dec Jan Flew combat rescue and evacuation missions at Biak Island and in the Philippines. Provided courier service, carried supplies and messages, evacuated allied prisoners and wounded personnel, and occasionally provided reconnaissance. From provided rescue capabilities in Japan. Flew combat rescue and evacuation missions during the Korean War, Credited with rescuing almost 10, United Nations personnel, including almost 1, combat saves behind enemy lines. Returned to providing rescue capability in Japan, Performed combat search, rescue, and recovery missions in Southeast Asia, Credited with 3, saves, including 2, combat saves. Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers. Distinguished Unit Citations Korea: Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations: Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm: Commanders, Aircraft, and Operations through 31 Jan Supersedes statement prepared on 30 Jun Approved on 18 Mar Prepared by Carl E. Approved by Judy G.

Chapter 6 : Tan Son Nhut Air Base | Revolv

Tan Son Nhut Air Base (Vietnamese: Căn cứ không quân Tân Sơn Nhứt) () was a Republic of Vietnam Air Force (RVNAF) facility. It was located near the city of Saigon in southern Vietnam.

A taxiway parallel to the original runway had just been completed by the E. Lane company for the U. Operations Mission, but parking aprons and connections to the taxiways were required. Under the direction of the U. A full handover of training responsibility took place on 1 June when the French training contracts expired. It operated with the French Air Force unit serving the International Control Commission and in April with the departure of the French it inherited its 10 H helicopters. The squadron would be inactivated in June and its mission assumed by the 2nd Air Division, while its pilots formed the 1st Fighter Squadron at Bien Hoa Air Base. The system handled the flow of aircraft from take-off to target area, and return to the base it was launched from. This was known as the Tactical Air Control System TACS , and it assured positive control of all areas where significant combat operations were performed. Without this system, it would not have been possible for the RVNAF to deploy its forces effectively where needed. DASCs were responsible for the deployment of aircraft located within their sector in support of ground operations. A communications network linked these three levels of command and control, giving the TACS overall control of the South Vietnamese air situation at all times. Additional information was provided by a radar network that covered all of South Vietnam and beyond, monitoring all strike aircraft. Use in coups[edit] See also: The plotters invited loyalist officers to a routine lunch meeting at JGS and captured them in the afternoon of 1 November The attack began early on 31 January with greater severity than anyone had expected. On 24 February another rocket and mortar attack damaged base buildings killing 4 US personnel and wounding Other courses included navigation classes and helicopter transition and maintenance training for the CH Chinook. At the end of , the RVNAF were totally in control of command and control units at eight major air bases, supporting ARVN units for the expanded air-ground operations system. In the first month of the offensive, transports from Tan Son Nhut ferried thousands of troops and delivered nearly 4, tons of supplies throughout the country. These Cs remained in natural aluminum finish throughout the war The Paris Peace Accords of brought an end to the United States advisory capacity in South Vietnam. The technical assistance provided by the personnel of the DAOs and by civilian contractors was essential to the RVNAF, however, because of the cease-fire agreement, the South Vietnamese could not be advised in any way on military operations, tactics or techniques of employment. The RVNAF provided statistics with regards to the military capability of their units to the DAO, however the accuracy of this information was not always reliable. Although equipped with large numbers of Cessna A Dragonfly and F-5 attack aircraft to conduct effective close air support operations, during the offensive, heavy bombardment duty was left to USAF aircraft. When North Vietnam invaded in March , the promised American intervention never materialized. Congress reflected the popular mood, halting the bombing in Cambodia effective 15 July , and reducing aid to South Vietnam. The general staff plan for the invasion of South Vietnam called for 20 divisions, it anticipated a two-year struggle for victory. Instead of an orderly withdrawal, it turned into a general retreat, with masses of military and civilians fleeing, clogging roads and creating chaos. On 30 March , South Vietnamese soldiers surrendered after being abandoned by their commanding officers. By late March the US Embassy began to reduce the number of US citizens in Vietnam by encouraging dependents and non-essential personnel to leave the country by commercial flights and on Military Airlift Command MAC C and C-5 aircraft, which were still bringing in emergency military supplies. Airborne troops were sent in for one last attempt to hold the airfield, but the defenders were finally overrun on 16 April and Phan Rang Air Base was lost. This directive was subsequently reversed; some operators had ignored it anyway. In any case this effectively marked the end of the commercial airlift from Tan Son Nhut. It was decided that from this time only Cs would be used for the evacuation due to their greater maneuverability. There was relatively little difference between the cargo loads of the two aircraft, Cs had been loaded with up to evacuees while Cs had been taking off with in excess of C flights were stopped temporarily after the air attack but resumed at The crew evacuated the burning aircraft on the taxiway and departed the

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Chapter 7 : Full text of "Last Flight From Saigon"

Map of Tan Son Nhut AB. Spring, 2&28 April USAF GI30 Hit by Rwkct Fire at Tan Son Nhut AB During rhe Early.

It conducted strategic reconnaissance, covert action, flareship, and psychological warfare among other missions, including night attack and transport. It operated throughout the Indochina theater. Jackson, USAF was the pilot and aircraft commander. His co-pilot was a Chinese Nationalist. His loadmaster was SSgt. There were 14 other Chinese Nationalists on board. Nationalist China had offered military assistance and an advisory group did arrive in the RVN in October. On the surface, they were to provide political warfare advice, agricultural and construction support. The official explanation for this crash was that there was a mid-air explosion, but I understand some in CIA dispute that. Jackson drove to his aircraft and headed for Tan Son Nhut, but was hit by ground fire and crashed. The crash occurred at hours, 5 miles south of Bien Hoa. Three bodies were removed, but Capt. Forty Popular Forces personnel and two sergeants were sent to protect the crash site. Just a moment on the Nationalist Chinese. In his book *Air Commando: Chinnery*, the author talks about Project Duck Hook. In any event, Chinnery wrote: Ten of the 60 were interpreters. The training emphasized night low-level and bad-weather missions in mountainous terrain, using three serially configured aircraft. This map shows a lot of things. The ovals, I believe, are refueling tanker orbits. You can see the DMZ. Northern Laos was called the Barrel Roll. You can see the location of Hanoi in North Vietnam. This system did not formalize until late but it gives an idea of how the USAF and Navy divided the country for attacking purposes. RP 6B hosted the Haiphong harbor. That was a long and difficult logistics tail, one which the US was able to impede, but never shut down. That would have required ground forces inside Laos and Cambodia to block the trail supported by air. NVN generals say such an effort would have ended the war promptly. Each one of them was numbered. A few Lima Sites were rather large, with fairly sophisticated runways, but most were barebones, nothing more than dirt landing patches with some huts or tents, trucks or jeeps, and people, civilian and military, who could move friendly ground forces, equipment and supplies to those fighting against the NVA regulars and Pathet Lao indigenous forces who were fighting against the Royal Lao Government RLG. In some, perhaps many, cases they also served as sites hosting critical communications and navigation equipments to help facilitate coordination of the air and ground war in Laos and over NVN. Quite often SAR aircraft, helicopters and fighters, usually A-1Es, were deployed at one or more of these so they could get to the downed aircrews fast. The Navy, sitting offshore, also could often get to the aircrews rapidly as well. It will be a bit of a pain, but you might wish to refer to these maps as we press ahead. So were transportation links from Hanoi to China. I believe this aircraft was flown by Capt. His wingman, Fox 24 reported seeing Fox 23 eject but saw no chute. There was a weather problem, visibility ft. Both sites had limited SAR forces standing alert there for just this kind of thing. Fox 23 was lost near the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They were initially designed to be long range bomber escorts. The Vietnamese invited four aircraft for an air show, which never took place. They were part of Project Pipe Stem. I also believe it was flown by Capt. A chute was spotted at and a C transport such as is shown here was scrambled to provide high cover, an overview and command and control support to SAR forces. Helicopters were scrambled from NKP at Lynch Alfa was one of these. But by no chute was found and no signal from the pilot was heard. At the helicopters were turned around and brought back to home base. An aircraft call sign Cotton Picker was scrambled at. At another helicopter was over the area but could not find the downed pilot or any leads on him. Please allow me to note that the POW Network report on this loss reflects that Williamson was seen to eject and land safely and that radio signals from him were heard. The NVN issued press reports indicating Williamson was alive. Therefore I have assigned Hudson 2 to Capt Berg. Your best friend would lie, cheat and screw you to get your slot on a Dooms Day mission. But there is a helluva story here that took me days to reconstruct from multiple sources. Then, after considerable research and some luck, I think I am able to piece together the story from those notes. The Notes For Archie, July 27, started off badly. He was called to the command post where Capt. Brandon told him no Navy A-1s would be available on this day. Simler instructed the command post to get some A-1s from Bien Hoa. The command post did so and asked that they be re-positioned over to Udorn.

Weather was bad so only four Bien Hoa A-1s could make it over to Udorn on the southern route and would not get there until the next morning so long as they did not have to refuel. They too had been delayed by weather at NKP. The Jolly made it to LS and was in position at So some SAR support was in place or getting there. There was so much activity he was not noting call signs or aircraft identifications. On a later page, he pieced that together a little bit, which was most helpful to me. At , I believe on July 27, , Archie was notified that there was a downed pilot, southwest of Hanoi and not far from Hanoi. He was said to be in the river. Then at the word came in a second aircraft was down. They were next notified there was a mid-air collision about 10 miles southeast of Udorn in Thailand at One chute was spotted. So it would appear two more aircraft are down, but in Thailand. It was almost as though he might have figured it was a local training accident. Then at Udorn reported that Ceader 2 was down just west of Hanoi, so we have a fifth aircraft down near Hanoi. Archie noted that Dogwood was working with SAR forces on the radio, operating as a kind of controller, which meant he was on the ground and in pretty good shape. At the HCs controlling the SAR mission were told to stay out of the ring referred to earlier. A call also went out at this time to see if a HU Albatross was on its way, such as the one shown here. Well, it looks like the SAR force had a real set of challenges on its plate. Up west of Hanoi, it appears there were four FDs involved, which Archie later identified: Hudson 2, Healy 2, Ceader 2 and Dogwood, all on the ground. Dogwood was still on his radio operating as a voice controller. At another HH was launched. At a report came in that Canister Flight had a good location on Dogwood and that he was okay. Canister also reported that a CH-3C was about to go in after him. At Healy 1 who was flight lead said Healy 2 went in to the river and Healy 1 saw a dingy but never saw the pilot. Healy 1 was running out of fuel and had to leave, and on his way out he reported seeing boats within yards of the dingy. After getting refueled and returning to the scene, Healy 1 saw nothing in the area. Also at a CH-3C was hovering over Dogwood who was hiding in the woods but could not get at him with the hoist. So he looked for a place to land. So, where are we here? We had four FDs down near Hanoi. One of them, Dogwood was picked up and rescued. We also had a mid-air collision in Thailand, tough Archie made no further mention of them. In any event, two more aircraft were down, for a total of six. Those were the notes. I presented them this way to show you how crazy a day it was and how fast events transpired.

Chapter 8 : ____prha day in the life Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Processing the Memories, or lack of part 1

footnotes =: "For the civil use of the facility, see Tan Son Nhat International Airport "Tan Son Nhut Air Base () was a Republic of Vietnam Air Force. Force (VNAF) facility. It is located near the city of Saigon in southern Vietnam.

Not long after it was established as a VNAF base the facility took on a tactical role as well as that of a depot. From this point Bien Hoa became the base of newly formed and continually growing air units. With its close proximity to the international airport at Saigon, Bien Hoa Air Base was the easiest tactical air base to be reached by visiting news reporters, and therefore it received the greatest amount of news and photographic coverage during the war. After service in Vietnam, this aircraft was eventually sold to the Nationalist Chinese, then scrapped at Clark Air Base in late . The unit had a designated strength of officers and enlisted men. The declared mission of the unit would be to train indigenous air forces in counterinsurgency and conduct air operations. The th CCTS acquired the logistics code name "Jungle Jim," a moniker that rapidly became the nickname of the unit. McNamara actively began to consider dispatching military forces to test the utility of counterinsurgency techniques in Southeast Asia. On 11 October , President John F. The mission was to be covert. The commandos were to maintain a low profile in-country and avoid the press. The aircraft were configured with VNAF insignia, and all pilots wore plain flight suits minus all insignia and name tags that could identify them as Americans. They also sanitized their wallets and did not carry Geneva Convention cards. The unit would be officially titled Det. They would turn out to be the nucleus of an expanding Air Force and American presence in South Vietnam. Within days of arrival, the Ts and pilots were ready for orientation flights. The Farm Gate pilots launched with VNAF escorts and delivered their ordnance, but, when mission reports were reviewed, the crews were told not to conduct independent air operations. The cover story was that the Americans were in-country to train South Vietnamese pilots. On 26 December , Washington issued new regulations directing that all Farm Gate missions would include at least one South Vietnamese national on board every aircraft. McNamara further amplified this requirement by stating that the Vietnamese would fly in the backseat position. Americans, with Vietnamese aboard, were soon flying to destroy Viet Cong supply lines and forces. Flying from Bien Hoa and air bases being improved up-country at Da Nang and Pleiku , T and B operations emphasized "training" for reconnaissance, surveillance, interdiction, and close air support missions. This was the first of several Farm Gate losses. Forward operating locations were opened at Qui Nhon and Soc Trang. Commanders at 2nd Air Division could see that the South Vietnamese Air Force could not meet all needs, and they increasingly turned to Farm Gate crews to fly the sorties. Realizing that he needed more assets, the commander of 2nd Air Division, Brig. Anthis, asked for additional Air Force personnel and aircraft for Farm Gate use. Anthis wanted 10 more Bs, five more Ts , and two more SCs. McNamara reviewed the request, but he was cool to the idea of expanding Farm Gate units for combat use. Still, McNamara approved the request for additional aircraft and also assigned two Us to Farm Gate. Shortly thereafter, McNamara directed the commanders in Vietnam to develop a national campaign plan to defeat the Viet Cong. The South Vietnamese Air Force was to increase its force structure by two fighter squadrons, one reconnaissance squadron, several squadrons of forward air controllers, and several more cargo squadrons. The FA was finally withdrawn from Southeast Asia in December with the phaseout of the aircraft from the USAF inventory, also the clear lack of need for a dedicated air defense interceptor over South Vietnam. The FA established an excellent safety record during its duty in Vietnam. As the buildup continued, USAF directed the activation of a more permanent organizational structure to properly administer the forces being deployed to Bien Hoa Air Base. To preclude the need for an increase in personnel, it would absorb the Farm Gate men and equipment. The airmen began to prepare for the reorganization. But the missions continued, and on 20 July an SC crew flew an emergency night mission to Loc Ninh and, disregarding enemy fire, strong winds, and blacked-out conditions, landed and rescued six severely wounded South Vietnamese troops. It is the heritage of the air commandos. Between October and July , 16 Farm Gate air commandos were killed. Within a year of its establishment, the 1st Air Commando Squadron had shed its Bs and SCs and grounded some of its Ts after two more went down due to catastrophic wing failures. On 8 July it was redesignated the 34th Tactical Group.

On 8 July the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing was activated. They then moved up to Bien Hoa in July. This mission was expanded to include forward air support, combat support liaison, visual reconnaissance, forward air control of fighters, artillery adjustment, and escort for convoys, trains, and helicopters. The squadron also flew psychological warfare, radio relay, and re-supply missions. Primarily it provided visual and photographic reconnaissance and airborne forward air control for fighter aircraft. Photo shows the aircraft shortly after their arrival, in natural aluminum and unpainted. Aircraft also show their In-squadron identification letters In , the worsening situation in South Vietnam led the United States to introduce B-52 Canberra tactical bombers to perform tactical bombing strikes against the Viet Cong. As it happened, this move did not take place until August 5, following the Gulf of Tonkin incident in which North Vietnamese gunboats clashed with United States Navy destroyers. This would mark the first deployment of jet combat aircraft to Vietnam. However, this was technically a violation of the Geneva Protocols which forbade the introduction of jet combat aircraft to Vietnam, so the squadrons were assigned to the 1st Fighter Wing at Clark AB , Philippines and carried out rotational deployments to South Vietnam on a temporary basis. The deployments began and the first B-52s arrived in the first week of August. The first two B-52s to land collided with each other on the ground and blocked the runway at Bien Hoa, forcing the rest of the flight to divert to Tan Son Nhut Airport on the other side of Saigon. One of the B-52s was hit by ground fire and dived into the ground during approach at Tan Son Nhut and was destroyed, killing both crew members. Ground rescue parties were unable to reach the planes due to strong Viet Cong fire. Also, maintenance facilities for the B-52 at Bien Hoa were scarce. The red circles represent the spot where a deceased person was located. Burning Aircraft on ramp at Bien Hoa AB after explosion Wreckage on parking apron after explosion and fire Aerial view of fire Initially, the B-52s were not cleared for actual combat missions, the aircraft being restricted to unarmed reconnaissance missions that were mainly designed to boost the morale of the population. However, actual combat was not to be delayed very long. The attack began shortly after midnight at It was estimated that there were 3 81mm mortars. The attack was effective as 27 aircraft were hit, including 20 B-52s 5 destroyed , 4 helicopters and 3 A-1H Skyraiders. A fourth Skyraider crashed trying to take-off. This strike was, incidentally, the first time that live ordnance had been delivered against an enemy in combat from a USAF jet bomber. The B-52 mission continued to increase to the point that it became an around-the-clock commitment. This forced the weapons storage facility to deliver ordnance well ahead of the frag orders. There were bombs stored underneath the wings of the B-52s. The ordnance consisted of , and pound general-purpose bombs. Many bombs were armed with time-delay fuses. They were set for 24, 36, 48, 72 and hour delay. All fuses were anti-withdrawal. The B-52 was started with a black powder cartridge that fired when the pilot hit the starter switch what in turn caused a small starter turbine to spin. These turbines sometimes spun loose and flew out of the starter housing. When the explosions finally ceased, ten B-52s, one Navy F-8 Crusader and fifteen A-1Hs were destroyed plus several ground support units. Twenty-seven men killed and over were wounded. The most severely wounded were evacuated to Clark AB. One of the two line chiefs, Master Sergeant Leon Adamson, was possibly the most critically wounded that survived. The other line chief, Master Sergeant Hicks was never found. The B-52 maintenance officer was on business at Clark AB when the explosions occurred that morning. He flew back to Bien Hoa that same afternoon to assume his responsibilities. He was later assigned as a member of the Air Force investigative board. Before the explosions, perimeter security was the responsibility of the South Vietnamese Army. After the explosions the 1st Airborne Brigade moved to the base to secure the perimeter. Investigation and aftermath Edit After the explosions, a great number of generals and their staffs came to Bien Hoa to see for themselves what had happened. Martin, convened an investigation board headed by Major General Gilbert L. General Westmoreland along with retired General Maxwell D. Taylor , Ambassador to Vietnam, also came to see the extent of damage so they could brief their superiors. The aircraft and the ammunition were stored too close together which allowed the fires and explosions to propagate. The accident investigation board recommended improvements. In the face of such experience, engineers initiated a major program to construct revetments and aircraft shelters to protect the valuable assets. The surviving B-52s were transferred to Tan Son Nhut AB and continued to fly sorties on a reduced scale until the losses could be made good. When deployed at Da Nang, the 8th and 13th Squadrons came under operational control of the 2nd Tactical Fighter Wing which became the

35th Tactical Fighter Wing about a year later. It remained until withdrawn on 31 October. Missions of the 3d TFW included close air support, counterinsurgency, forward air control, interdiction, and radar-controlled bombing. Supported numerous ground operations with strike missions against enemy fortifications, supply areas, lines of communication and personnel, in addition to suppressing fire in landing areas. During this time, the 3d TFW also participated in combat evaluation of the Cessna A aircraft for counter-insurgency operations and the F-5 Freedom Fighter as a light tactical fighter. This aircraft survived the war and was eventually registered as N91RW in The squadron was tasked to test the A in combat over three months under a program named "Combat Dragon".

1. *Tan Son Nhut AB, Perimeter Tower. Photo by Richard Shelton, TSN, th SPS; BT, nd SPS.*

DASCs were responsible for the deployment of aircraft located within their sector in support of ground operations. A communications network inked these three levels of command and control, giving the TACS overall control of the South Vietnamese air situation at all times. Additional information was provided by a radar network that covered all of South Vietnam and beyond, monitoring all strike aircraft. Recruits were given a screening test, followed by a physical examination. Basic requirements for service in the VNAF was to be a Vietnamese citizen; at least age 17; minimum age 25 for flight training; no criminal record; the equivalent of a US 9th grade education for airmen; 11th grade for those entering pilot training or a 12th grade for non-rated officer. If a volunteer met all the qualifications, the recruit was then sent to basic training at the ARVN training base at Lam Song. After two months of training, or four months for aviation cadets, the recruit was given an aptitude test and progressed to specialized technical training. From there, he was sent to one of the ARVN wings for journeymen training. Aviation cadets pursued three additional months of specialized training after completing their initial four-month training course. Some were sent to the United States for advanced pilot training while non-rated officers pursued training in South Vietnam for their non-flying assignments. This training lasted about nine months, whereupon a cadet served in an operational unit for about a year before receiving a commission as a second lieutenant. Women also served in the VNAF. Women were assigned to VNAF wings, Headquarters, the Air Logistics Wing, performing duties as personnel specialists, secretaries and other administrative roles. The attack began early on 30 January with greater severity than anyone had expected. When the communists attacked much of the VNAF was on leave to be with their families during the lunar new year. An immediate recall was issued, and within 72 hours, 90 percent of the VNAF was on duty. The chapel on the base was one of the early direct hits. If not for the work of the United States Air Force 3rd Security Police Squadron in the early hours of the attack the entire base may have been in danger. The Security Police, despite being outnumbered, with help from the United States Army Helicopter and ground units, killed nearly enemy combatants. Over the next three weeks, the VNAF flew over 1,000 strike sorties, bombing and strafing communist positions throughout South Vietnam. It took the offense to the communists, supported ARVN ground units capably and achieved a high level of strike performance.