

FAREWELL

FROM THE BEST BASE IN SEA

Commemorative Issue

By MSgt. James Batters

'Twas the day of base closure
and all through Korat,
the Americans had departed.
They were gone, but not forgot.

The BX was silent, the theater still
The clubs were not open, the patronage nil.
A silence had descended, an era of gloom,
the Americans had departed, all had gone home.

The last of the GIs, as he boarded the plane, .
took one last look, he'd not be here again.
The memories he had as he viewed the empty base,
were etched in his mind and mirrored on his face.

His thoughts were of friendships, of good times and bad.
His thoughts were of beauty and it made him quite sad,
to know that he'd never return to this place,
this far away land full of beauty and grace.

He finally turned and entered the door,
the plane taxied out and the engines did roar.
Emotions were mixed, some happy, some sad.
But no-one appeared to be genuinely glad.

We all have some memories of good old Korat,
and forget about Thailand? We definitely would not.
But as the plane gained altitude each man felt alone,
the last load of Airmen were on their way home.

SAWADEE FLYER

Korat RTAFB, Thailand

Commemorative

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Issue

the SAWADDEE WEEKLY

U.S. AIR FORCE—AEROSPACE POWER FOR PEACE

**The
year
that
was,
1966**

The "Year of the Horse," as 1966 was known in Southeast Asia, was a busy one for the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing.

During the year, the 388th grew with the addition of a number of new buildings and units activated.

The Services Squadron was activated in January 1966. During the same month, Col. Orbin R. Smith Jr., assumed command of the 6234th Combat Support Group (now the 388th CSG).

Col. William S. Chairsell took command of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) when Col. Monroe S. Sams departed for the Philippines in July.

Expansion of base facilities shared the spotlight throughout the year with community relations people-to-people projects. Officers, NCO's and airmen alike shared in the benefits of new quarters, open messes, dining hall, swimming pool, water tower and a number of recreational facility improvements.

The base was assigned a separate Air Post Office (APO) in August 1966. Work also began on a telephone dial system, scheduled for operation in late December 1966, and Armed Forces Radio and Television Service opened the Armed Forces Thailand Network and officially went "on the air" Nov. 11, 1966.

During June 1966, the Aerial Port Unit opened the first up-country Thailand air terminal. In July 1966 the first in-country permanent-type dining hall was opened and in December 1966 the dining hall was dedicated and honored in the memory of A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, who was killed in action at Bien Hoa, Vietnam.

The Wing was also first in receiving the first, and the second, award of the 13th Air Force Semi-Annual Tactical Unit Flying Safety Award. Set up in November 1966, the award went to the 388th for logging

15,000 flying hours "over all types of terrain and in all types of weather."

An ambitious English language assistance program got underway in June 1966 at the request of the local Thai education department. Dubbed "Project PET," (Project English Teacher) it assisted several Korat schools, the local youth center and local officials in learning the English language.

Nearly every unit on the base was at one time or another involved in people-to-people projects by assisting local institutions and communities.

Clothing and funds were donated for fire victims of Korat city in several instances. English books were donated through the efforts of individuals, to schools enrolled under Project PET.

The Air Police assisted nearby villages by rebuilding the school, building wings, teeters and, with help from the Civil Engineers, built a klong for the storage of water during the dry season.

The medics and dentists established a weekly sick call to the villages and treated hundreds of Thai nationals.

They also worked with the Army to avert a cholera epidemic early in the 1966 year, which threatened Korat. More than 1,000 school children were inoculated against the water-borne disease.

The base fire department responded to several calls for assistance to fight fires in Korat city.

A host of dignitaries, both military and civilian, visited the base during 1966. These included: Hon. Harold Brown, Secretary of the Air Force, and Hon. Stanley R. Resor, Secretary of the Army, who made a brief stop on their Southeast Asian tour during January 1966. Hollywood personalities visiting the base in 1966 were Robert Mit-chum and Arthur Godfrey. Several USO shows were presented, including Bob Hope's Christmas Show.

other significant events of 1966

In January 1966 (beginning with the Jan. 3, 1966 edition), it became official! Korat got its own newspaper. Named the Sawadee Weekly, the mimeographed journal was published and distributed every Monday (later changed to Saturday). The newspaper's name, submitted by Base Data Systems and Statistics Office, was chosen from among 48 entries.

Korat RTAFB's own Dental Clinic opened its doors in February 1966. The clinic was located in a standard hootch adjacent to the Dispensary Administrative building. In the past, airmen had their

dental needs taken care of at the dental clinic at the Army's 31st Field Hospital.

The grand opening of the Airmen's Club took place Feb. 19, 1966. The club's interior featured a large ballroom, bandstand, game room and snack bar and dayroom.

The fully air-conditioned club was unique in that it was the first building with indoor latrines.

Later the club was relocated to the 16th Special Operations Squadron building.

Sawadee

FLYER

1967



KORAT RTAFB THAILAND

388 TACTICAL FIGHTER WING

The year 1967 saw the 24th year of existence for 13th Air Force. Topping the list of significant events for the year was a visit to Korat by the late President Lyndon B. Johnson in December 1967. In a predawn address, the late President of the United States told Korat airmen that U.S. airpower was a major factor in defeating Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. During his stay at Korat, the President pinned six Distinguished Flying Crosses on six fighter-bomber Korat pilots, rapped with pilots and toured the installation as well as meeting with members of other Thailand-based operations.

The air war over Vietnam raged in full scale operations over the north, with Air Force pilots and aircraft distinguishing themselves in strikes on various supply routes bridges and battering enemy MIGs.

In fact, it took only 90 seconds for a flight of 388th Tactical Fighter Wing F-105 Thunderchiefs to down two out of three MIG-17's they engaged east-northeast of Hanoi after completing a successful strike against a railroad and highway bridge.

First Lieutenant David B. Waldrop III, became the first F-105 Thunderchief pilot to shoot down two enemy MIG's during a single engagement on Aug. 23, 1967, over North Vietnam. He was assigned to the 44th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

Two members of the 469th Tactical Fighter Squadron, an element of the 388th TFW, literally flew past a milestone in their unit's history in 1967 when they logged 20,000 combat flying hours for the "Fighting Bulls" of the 469th. The oldest tactical fighting unit at Korat at the time, the 469th was engaged in combat activity against the enemy since November 1965.

A number of 388th TFW pilots achieved the coveted 100 Mission status in 1967.

Letter from airman to Dear Abby floods APO with "pen pal" mail

In one of the most unusual events marking 1967, A2C Joseph W. King volunteered to help in Korat's Consolidated Mail Room.

While sorting the mail, he noticed there were many men who were not receiving any mail at all.

He decided to send a letter to the "Dear Abby" column and that was when the fun began.

In his letter, Airman King said: "Abby, if any of your readers, male or female, young or old, have time on their hands and can afford one postage stamp per week, please ask them to write to: Pen Pals, C/O A2C Joseph W. King, 483d GEEIA Sq., Box 764, APO San Francisco, 96288." He signed it, "Hopefully, 'GI Joe' King."

Addy's answer was, "Dear Joe: Okay, I have just lead with a 'King', now let's see if we can't make game. Good Luck!"

Well, the game was on and the article appeared in newspapers all over the U.S. The first few responses gave no indication of what was to come.

The "pen pals" averaged more than 9,000 letters each day. So up to March 25, 1967, Airman King received more than 50,000 pieces of mail.

Airman King had only one comment when he learned what success his program was having... "HELP!"

The 388th TFW chalked up their first Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in April 1967 for distinguished service.

The 388th TFW was also presented the H.H. Arnold Trophy and all personnel assigned to the base were designated Air Force Men of the Year by the Air Force Association. The award was in recognition of the major contributions made by the 388th to national security over the year.

Bob Hope again came to Korat in 1967, in his second quarter century of bringing entertainment to service personnel all over the world.

On Oct. 1, 1967, 13th Tactical Fighter Squadron was redesignated the 44th Tactical Fighter Squadron in a change of command.

The Bank of America arrived at Korat also in October 1967, bringing many banking services to Korat airmen.

Five members of the 388th TFW's (night flying, hunter, killer 44th TFS Vampires) added their names to the list of the F-105 crews completing 100 missions over North Vietnam.

Bringing a special tribute to the F-105 Thunderchief pilots of the 388th TFW, and a portrait of 1st Lt. Karl W. Richter (shot down on his 198th mission over North Vietnam), Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. McConnell visited Korat in December 1967.

Frantic preparations provide undercurrent to LBJ's visit

Who is coming her? That was the exclamation chorused throughout the afternoon of Dec. 22, 1967, as word of President Lyndon B. Johnson's plans to stop at Korat RTAFB sifted down to officers and NCO's in charge of Korat sections.

Preparations had to be made for the reception, protection, housing, feeding and transportation of a maximum of 300 people in the presidential party.

First thoughts, of course, went to security. The base Security Police went into an increased security alert, pulling all men into duty status along with Thai guards and augmentees, to beef the total security force to 570 men.

The next major area was in billeting. On an already crowded base, where in the world would Korat put 300 people? That question was asked more than once as officials watched the President's estimated arrival time draw nearer.

Fortunately, a newly completed, two-story dormitory was made available. Furniture had to be supplied for the building, however. The regular billeting rooms were cleared, carefully furnishing the rooms in the new building for visiting VIPs. Barely finished new base officers' quarters were also rushed into preparation.

At the same time, the 388th Transportation Squadron was hard at work preparing every available vehicle to transport members of the presidential party from place to place during their stay.

For everyone involved it was a lot of hard, hectic, often frustrating work, with little or no sleep. And what most of the presidential party saw on the surface as a short, fairly smooth and rather uneventful visit to Southeast Asia, was a frantic, long to be remembered 24 hours for those involved in hosting the President of the United States.



**The year
that
was,
1968**

The year 1968 saw the RTAF and USAF combine forces to help build a new health center in the village of Ban Nong Ploang Manao in the first of a series of village health centers.

Three master sergeants at Korat headed the list of AFCM's awarded in 1968.

A 34-year-old Major, Richard P. Cisco, a Republic F-105 Thunderchief pilot with the 44th TFS, logged his 1,500th flying hour in the Thunderchief, putting him past the 3,000 hour mark in jet aircraft.

Dec. 6, 1968 was a big day for SSgt. Charles E. Halverson and Korat RTAFB as Lt. Gen. Francis C. Gideon, then 13th Air Force Commander, administered the oath of enlistment to the young NCO.

Col. Allen K. McDonald assumed command of the 388th TFW Dec. Colonel McDonald

was the sixth person to command the 388th TFW since it was activated in April 1966 at Korat RTAFB.

Dog handler tells tale of Duke's losing battle

Darkness brings its dangers, and sentry duty around Korat in 1968 sent men and animals out into the night through rugged terrain to maintain the security of the installation.

On one such patrol of 1968, Sgt. John M. Brooks, a canine handler with the 388th Security Police Squadron, was patrolling his sector near the Munitions Storage Area with his dog, Duke.

"About midnight Duke and I had just passed through a small clearing and had walked into some tall grass when I noticed him limping on his right rear leg," explained Sergeant Brooks. "So I took him back to the clearing to examine his leg."

"I knelt down, wrapping an arm around Duke's body and turned on my flashlight to check him," continued the sergeant. "Well, the beam from my flashlight shined upon a bamboo pit viper several feet away, poised and ready to strike."

"I pulled Duke back a few feet, took my M-16 off my shoulder, pinned the snake to the ground and cut its head off with my jungle knife," he said.

Examination of Duke's leg revealed the telltale fang marks,

so Sergeant Brooks radioed his supervisor that he needed help. By this time Duke's paw and lower portion of his bitten leg had swollen almost three times normal size. Before help arrived he collapsed as the poison spread through his blood stream.

When the supervisor arrived with the truck, Sergeant Brooks placed Duke in the back and they rushed him to the kennels where a veterinarian and other needed personnel were waiting.

At the kennels, the vet worked for almost 12 hours, giving him the full snake bite treatment. But Duke had already gone into shock and the attempts to save his life failed.

"By the position of the bite and considering the way I was walking Duke, the snake would have gotten me if Duke hadn't been there," Sergeant Brooks concluded.

Shortly after this incident, Col. John H.M. Linebaugh, 388th Combat Support Group commander, ordered that all handlers in the canine section must wear the all-leather combat boot for added protection while walking their post.

Korat RTAFB's Base Supply Section was announced as the recipient of the 13th Air Force nomination for the Daedalian Supply Effectiveness Award for 1968.

The Most Reverend Terrence J. Cooke, Archbishop of New York and military vicar to Catholic personnel in the Armed Forces, visited Korat RTAFB in 1968 for the first time. The archbishop was on a Christmas tour of military installations, carrying on the traditions and work of the late Francis Cardinal Spellman in providing spiritual guidance to U.S. servicemen.

Korat RTAFB was rated outstanding in safety as a result of a 1968 safety survey.

And finally, Bob Hope, alias "Old Ski Nose," and his cast arrived at Korat RTAFB Dec. 28, 1968, for their fifth consecutive Christmas show in as many years.

Korat personnel make effort to cement Thai-U.S. relations

Good community relations have always been a primary concern of the U.S. Air Force at Korat RTAFB.

Participation in community relations and civic actions programs here can be traced back to the beginning of Air Force operations at Korat.

Such programs took many forms.

They included specific aid and assistance which is designed to help the Thais "help themselves" in such areas as health, sanitation and public welfare and direct people-to-people programs on individual and unit level which aim to foster an improved image of the American.

One of the most successful and popular of the people-to-people programs was Project English Teacher. The project, known locally as PET, began in 1966 and consisted of volunteer airmen and officers assisting teachers in Thai grade schools in the instruction of English.

Volunteers taught two one-hour classes per week at four schools in Korat City. In July 1968 almost 70 base personnel were active in PET.

Almost every organization on Korat RTAFB in 1968 had its own people-to-people project. One squadron raised money to assist a Thai student further his education in the United States; another sponsored a Thai for an American Field Service Scholarship.

Two units combined to provide materials and personal assistance for Thai youths confined at a correction center.

Two major participants in the civic actions program were the 388th USAF Dispensary and the 388th Security Police Squadron. Both worked closely with the Royal Thai Air Force and Thai security guard counterparts in joint programs.

Medical assistance visits were made to local area villages once a week by dispensary personnel. They worked with representatives of the Thai Department of Public Health and RTAF medicals, administering medicines, treating illnesses and performing dental work.

Security policemen helped build or perform major repairs on three village schools. Their most ambitious 1968 project was construction of a nine-room, 40 by 200 foot school about 25 miles from Korat RTAFB. It eventually served approximately 1,000 first through-seventh grade students in the area.



Korat RTAFB, Thailand



U.S. Air Force—Aerospace Power for Peace

SAWADEE FLYER

The year that was, 1969

The year that was, 1969, saw the establishment of a new, modern spacious base exchange.

Col. Ted H. Ostendorf arrived as the new 553rd Reconnaissance Wing vice-commander.

Bob Hope made his appearance at the Camp Friendship Yim Yarn Theater in a white flight suit and jungle hat while carrying his favorite golf driver.

Col. John W. Grow Jr., assumed command of the 388th CSG, taking over from Col. John H.M. Lindebaugh.

Dining Hall Number One closed its doors in February 1969 to allow for a complete renovation to better serve Korat airmen in the future.

Repairs to the runway at Korat RTAFB in February 1969 closed the expansive mass of concrete for a month.

Dining Hall Two closed for an indefinite period of time in April 1969.

A third red, white and blue streamer of the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA) was added to the flagstaff of the 388th TFW in April 1969.

The 553rd Reconnaissance Wing completed 50,000 hours of accident-free flying in April 1969.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth C. Dempster, 13th Air Force vice commander, presented the 553rd RW its first AFOUA in May 1969.

"Frantic fun for funds," is what the program was called to raise money for the Nakornrajima Provincial Hospital in Korat city as Korat's AFTN outlet held a 30-hour Radio Marathon sponsored by the Junior Officer's Council and AFTN. The project raised \$7,000.

Gen. John D. Ryan, Air Force vice chief of staff, presented the Presidential Unit Citation to the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing in a ceremony in May 1969.

The Hon. Doctor Robert C. Seamans, Secretary of the Air Force, paid a brief visit to Korat RTAFB as he passed through Thailand on an orientation vis of bases within the Pacific Air Forces in May 1969.

Ninety-six cadets of the U.S. Air Force Academy came to Korat RTAFB in June and July 1969 to perform various duty.

Col. John A. Nelson assumed command of the 388th TFW, succeeding Col. Allen K. McDonald in June 1969.

Col. Ted H. Ostendorf assumed command of the 553rd RW in July 1969 replacing Col. Henry L. Timmermans.

Korat RTAFB may well have established an Air Force record in July 1969 with the reenlistment of 22 airmen in one day.

In August 1969 Snoopy, the mascot of the 553rd RW celebrated his second birthday. Pupils in the third grade at Stockbridge Plain School, Stockbridge, Mass., sent 23 hand-written letters to help him celebrate the occasion.

Twelve enlisted Women of the Air Force (WAF) reported to Korat RTAFB in December 1969. This local report followed an announcement that WAF would be assigned to bases in Thailand.

In October 1969 Dining Hall Two re-opened to serve noon and evening meals for all E-5s through E-9s.

Also in October 1969 the 388th TFW sponsored a reception and dinner in honor of the 44th TFS and six of the squadron's F-105 crewmen who completed their Thailand tours of duty.

A change of command ceremony Dec. 5, 1969 marked the departure of Col. John A. Nelson, 388th TFW commander. Col. James M. Breedlove, became the eighth man to assume the 388th top spot. Col. John W. Mitchell became the new 553rd RW commander, taking the reins of command from Col. Ted H. Ostendorf.

Construction on a new base theater for Korat was near 26 per cent complete in October 1969.

"Project First Class," a program designed to invite everyone on base to speak his mind to the wing commander about housing, dining and recreation facilities at Korat and possible improvements was started in November 1969.

Nov. 15, 1969 marked the opening of the base exchange concession center. Gen. George McCord, chief of the Army-Air Force Exchange Service, presided over the ceremony. The new facility provided some operations not previously offered to customers and added some others.

And finally, topping off the calendar of 1969 major events, the mascot of the 553rd RW, Snoopy, returned home from Southeast Asia with two full tours of duty under his belt of fur. He was credited with 158 missions, 534 flying hours in the EC-121 Constellations, all as an airborne radio operator. He was taken back to the States in a civilian aircraft however.

Roscoe is 388th's VIP--- 'Very Important Pooch'

By Sgt. Steve Pivnick
(Saturday, March 29, 1969 Sawadee Flyer reprint)

He belongs to no one, he belongs to everyone. Roscoe is the pride of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW).

He came to Korat as a puppy in June 1966 from Yokota AB, Japan, with his master, a young F-105 pilot. Shortly after his arrival, the pilot was shot down over North Vietnam and declared missing in action. Roscoe has been waiting for his return ever since.

Left without a master, he was adopted by the entire Wing and became mascot particularly of the fighter crews.

About mid-1961 Roscoe "adopted" Lt. Col. Robert W. Smith, then commander of the 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS). When hungry Roscoe would wait for Colonel Smith by his jeep around meal time, and when the colonel arrived, both would drive off to the Officer's Open Mess. They were almost inseparable.

Inevitably, Colonel Smith returned to the U.S. For reasons of his own, Roscoe decided to take a short "leave" shortly after the colonel departed. He returned three days later looking like he had engaged in a "dogfight" of his own.

While Roscoe was confined to the veterinary clinic with stitches

in one of his legs, Col. Allen K. McDonald, (then) 388th TFW commander, took him for rides or daily exercise. Since then, Roscoe and the colonel have become the best of friends. He can be seen riding about the base in the colonel's car or waiting for him outside his quarters or office.

Due to his association with the "Fighting 388" Roscoe has become a celebrity of sorts as a star of the motion picture, "There is a Way," filmed here.

Well aware of his reputation, Roscoe frequently can be found curled up on two VTR chairs in the Wing's Richter Hall Auditorium, as he was depicted doing in "There is a Way."

Roscoe is also well known to the 388th Security Police Squadron. Since the only warm-blooded animals allowed on base are official mascots, the security police have Roscoe's picture hanging in their operations center to insure their people know him well.

Finally, Roscoe has been honored by having the Korat air navigation (TACAN) approach named after him, making it perhaps the only TACAN with a name. (Most TACANs are known by numbers only). As a result, all aircraft utilizing the TACAN call into "Roscoe Letdown."

So, Roscoe waits for his missing master. In the meantime, he belongs to the entire 388th TFW.

Korat moves

on to the

age of the

70's. 1970

As Korat RTAFB emerged into the decade of the 70s the war in Vietnam was nearing its end. Peace would come in 1973.

Still, in 1970 a new decade made no difference to the personnel to whom Korat was a temporary home. Some would leave, others would replace them, but the air war over North Vietnam would continue.

The 469th Tactical Fighter Squadron flew its 60,000th combat hour March 18, 1970. It was believed to be a record for Thailand-based fighter units.

The Korat RTAFB community relations program was judged best in 13th Air Force for 1969, the results being announced in April 1970. No other Thailand base even placed in the voting.

Carrying a new heavy maintenance modification, in use for the first time in Southeast Asia, an F-4D Phantom fighter-bomber flew a functional check flight at Korat in mid-May 1970. The aircraft was the first of 21 such aircraft which would receive the modification during fiscal year 1970. The modification improved the capabilities of the various avionics systems on the F-4D and increased engine safety by reducing the possibility of ground fires.

May 23, 1970 marked the opening of the renovated Korat NCO Open Mess. More than 1,200 people attended the grand opening ceremonies. This capped an \$89,000 remodeling program on the club.

Korat was judged by its peers as having the best recreation facilities in Southeast Asia in June 1970.

Korat RTAFB's F-4E's were the busiest Phantoms in the Southeast Asian skies in 1970, according to Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces. A letter released in 1970 by PACAF said that a research of F-4E utilization rates indicated that the 388th TFW had established a record for PACAF F-4E Phantom utilization for the period of December 1969 through May 1970.

As of 1970 "Klong Airlines" was still the only passenger service flying in and out of Korat on a daily basis. Klong Airlines was the affectionate name given to the Air Force's C-130 in-country passenger flights.

In November 1970 the 42nd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron arrived at Korat RTAFB from Takhli RTAFB. They were equipped with EB-66 aircraft and were commanded by Lt. Col. Moe Shiver. They were engaged in aerial reconnaissance operations in Southeast Asia since their arrival and for years during the Vietnam conflict.

The 469th TFS celebrated its second anniversary as an F-4E unit at Korat RTAFB in November 1970. It was the first fighter group to arrive at Korat in 1965 and flew F-105 Thunderchiefs.

December 1970 saw a big announcement come from the NCO Open Mess. They said that all NCO grades would be welcomed as members of the club.

And finally, Bob Hope again visited Korat and Camp Friendship in 1970 and this ended his Thailand and Southeast Asia Christmas Shows. (See related story).

Bob Hope shows helped boost season spirits

The Bob Hope Shows have come and gone. The thousands of spectators that converged on near by Camp Friendship Yim Tam Theater and at Korat RTAFB for some years have melted back into everyday existence that was prevalent before he came.

For a few short hours every Christmas between 1965 and 1970, the anticipation of his show, the enjoyment of his entertainers on the stage and the many words spoken about the evenings on the trek back to the hootch every year by those who had witnessed filled the atmosphere around Korat RTAFB.

For the hundreds who welcomed the troupes at Aerial Port it was a chance to get the first glance at a celebrity or at a plane-load of pretty girls.

The parade route followed by the Hope troupe each year to the Officer's Open Mess was jammed with anxious admirers and well-


wishers just wanting to wave a hello, snap a picture, express their gratitude to a truly dedicated performer with a generous heart.

When Bob Hope gingerly stepped on the stage each year the show began. Now for an hour and one-half everyone could forget the loneliness they felt at being away from home at Christmas time. For a few minutes, they could take a break from the normal routine to enjoy some good old American entertainment.

It was Bob Hope, Ann-Margaret, Connie Stevens, Theresa Graves, The Goldiggers, Miss World, Miss America and the many other top names in entertainment too numerous to mention, not to mention the many personnel behind the scenes.

It was these people who helped make Christmas a little more enjoyable to personnel in Southeast Asia. All of it spearheaded by a dedicated performer named Bob Hope. Thanks for the memories, Bob.

SAWADEE FLYER



Best Class 2 Newspaper in PACAF, 1971

Published by U.S. Forces for circulation only to U.S. Forces Thailand.

**The
year
that
was,
1971**

1971 was a year topped off by Korat's AFTN outlet winning a national award for the second year in a row for journalism. A program written and produced locally entitled, "Taken Prisoner," dealt with the growing concern for U.S. prisoners missing in Southeast Asia and contained the voices of wives of the missing and people in our government who are trying to do something about the situation.

Another milestone was reached in Thai-U.S. relations when the U.S. transferred the former 388th U.S. Air Force Hospital at Camp Friendship to the Royal Thai Army.

The year 1971 also represented a new look for the Sawadee Flyer. Readers will notice the flag at the top of the page, which was drawn by Mr. Supol O'Popant, a Thai employee assigned to the Office of Information in 1971. Although not old in comparison with Stateside military newspapers, the Sawadee Flyer is old in Southeast Asia. The original edition of the then-called Sawadee Weekly came off the mi-

meograph press on Jan. 3, 1966. It became a four-page offset press publication Oct. 7, 1967, and on that date changed its name from the Sawadee Weekly to the SAWADEE FLYER.

Many improvements have been made over the years, including a doubling of the number of pages. Today, airmen at Korat RTAFB (this article was written in 1971) are the only U.S. Air Force personnel in Southeast Asia that have their eight-page newspaper published especially for them.

Col. Webb Thompson took over the reins of command from Col. Irby B. Jarvis and assumed the duties at the top of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing.

And finally, the famed 6010th Wild Weasel Squadron, flyers of the only F-105 Thunderchiefs left in Southeast Asia in 1971 was redesignated the 17th Wild Weasel Squadron. The Thunderchiefs arrived at Korat RTAFB Sept. 24, 1970, and the 6010th was formed in November the same year.



Nitnoi Theater

THIS NONDESCRIPT WOODEN structure was Korat's movie house until the late '60's. Since demolished, the theater was located across the street from the post office and next door to the current location of the 388th Headquarters Squadron Section orderly room. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

Their mission was to fly and fight: A picto



EC-121 Warning Star

OCTOBER 1967 TO June 1974.
Flown by the College Eye Task Force.



EC-121 Constellation

OCTOBER 1967 TO December 1971. Flown by the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing.



F-105

AUGUST 1964 TO May 1968
Flown by the 13th, 34th, and 17th Wild Weasel Squads.

HH-43 Huskie

AUGUST 1964 TO March 1975.
Flown by various Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service detachments.



HH-53 Jolly Green Giant

MARCH TO DECEMBER 1975.
Flown by the 56th and 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service.



HC-130 Hercules

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 1975. Flown by the 56th and 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons.



AC-130 Spectre

JULY 1974 TO December 1975.
Flown by the 16th Special Operations Squadron.

Operational history of Korat aircraft (1964-1975)



Thunderchief
 and November 1970 to October 1970.
 and 469th Tactical Fighter Squadrons
 on.



F-4E Phantom II

NOVEMBER 1968 TO June
 1974. Flown by the 469th
 and 34th Tactical Fighter
 Squadrons.



EB-66 Destroyer

NOVEMBER 1970 TO
 March 1974. Flown by the
 42nd Tactical Electronic
 Warfare Squadron.

EC-130 Hercules

APRIL 1972 TO May 1974.
 Flown by the 7th Airborne
 command and Control Squad-
 ron. Not shown.



A-7D Corsair II

OCTOBER 1972 TO December 1975. Flown by the 354th Tactical
 Fighter Wing and the 3rd Tactical Fighter Squadron.



F-111

JULY 1974 TO June 1975. Flown
 by the 347th Tactical Fighter
 Wing.



F-4D Phantom

JUNE 1974 TO December 1975. Flown by the 34th Tactical
 Fighter Squadron.



The year that was, 1972



The year 1972 saw an unusual event for a Thailand U.S. installation. Christmas broke through at Korat RTAFB with the sun sitting like a large orange on the horizon and the promise of a warm day ahead. And that promise wasn't broken. Christmas Day had arrived in Thailand.

Possibly to go along with the unusual Christmas, personnel at Korat adopted a theme of an elaborate and unique (for Thailand) Hawaiian luau. The event, attended by some 6,000 personnel, was held on the lawn of the base Chapel.

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (then Richard D. Kisling) visited Korat during January 1972 as part of his initial tour of bases where the U.S. Air Force has personnel stationed.

Adding just one more convenience to Korat RTAFB, the Asian Garden Cafeteria opened in January 1972.

An F-105 Thunderchief crashed and burned and an EB-66 aircraft (reconnaissance) skidded off the runway at Korat RTAFB during separate incidents Feb. 2, 1972. Both crew members of the F-105 ejected. The navigator sustained minor injuries, but Maj. Charles H. Stone, the pilot, was a fatality. Major Stone was TDY to Korat from Kadana AB, Japan.

The National Executive Council, the supreme authority of the Thai government, recently issued a series of guidelines in February 1972 on entertainment throughout the kingdom. The new decree (in 1972) provided that all bars, massage parlors, nightclubs and entertainment businesses or hostesses may not open before 6 p.m. They must close by midnight.

Col. Stanley M. Umstead Jr., 388th Tactical Fighter Wing commander, announced in February 1972 the formation of a race relations series at Korat. The program was designed for officers and NCOs in managerial positions.

February 1972 also marked the end of medical support available at Camp Friendship. The 388th USAF Hospital assumed control of every phase of medical treatment for the Air Force and the Army.

March marked the month that the 1998th Communications Squadron racked up its sixth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. They also received a quarterly Air Force Communications Service Safety Achievement Award.

March 14, 1972 was the date that the doors opened to the Korat RTAFB Social Actions Center in Bldg. T-215, across California Ave.

from the 388th TFW headquarters.

McDonnell-Douglas Corp. presented a plaque to the 469th TFS in March 1972 for 40,000 hours of accident-free flying.

The Korat Cobras outlasted Udorn to capture the All-Thailand Softball Tournament held at Korat in March 1972 (sound familiar?). Final score? Korat, 11, Udorn, 9.

In May 1972 the Post Office initiated fluoroscoping as a deterrent to the illegal smuggling of contraband from Southeast Asia.

Lt. Col. Roger Myhrum, 469th TFS, logged his 500th mission in May 1972.

A memorial service was held in the base Chapel for two firefighters who died fighting a fire on an F-105 Thunderchief May 17, 1972. There were two American and four Thai firemen who died fighting the fire. After the fire on the plane was assumed under control, there was a sudden explosion that caused the untimely and tragic deaths.

The combined efforts of mining, naval gunfire and numerous air strikes by Korat-based fighter-bombers had almost isolated North Vietnam from its outside supply sources in 1972. According to Lt. Gen. George J. Eade, Air Force deputy chief of staff for Plans and Operations, made the assessment in mid-1972. With their ports literally closed, North Vietnam must rely primarily on its railroads as the major means of importing and transporting goods and materials of the war. However, successive strikes against the enemy's rail systems had major impact on this method of transportation. General Eade also pointed out that aircraft losses were becoming fewer and fewer than at any other point in the war.

July 1972 marked the month that an F-4 piloted by Korat aircrews downed a MIG-21 over North Vietnam. This was the wing's first confirmed kill in almost five years.

The 469th TFS changed commanders, Lt. Col. Edward M. McHale taking over for Lt. Col. Roger B. Myhrum.

On Aug. 5, 1972, Korat RTAFB welcomed yet another commander of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing. Col. Richard E. Merkling assumed the reins of command from Col. Stanley M. Umstead.

In September 1972, Air Force F-4 Phantom crews from the 388th Tactical Wing blasted three enemy MIG-21 aircraft out of North Vietnam's skies.

And finally, in 1972, the 388th TFW celebrated its 30th anniversary.

sawadee flyer

Vol. 6, No. 1

Korat RTAFB, Thailand

Jan. 13, 1973

Peace preached as Vietnam era ends; 1973

"From the darkness of war into the light of peace."

The year 1973 was of special significance not only to Korat RTAFB but to all Americans — the war in Vietnam was over and the POWs came home, many of them crewmembers who had flown from Korat during the previous seven years.

As the year began, two Korat colonels, Thomas M. Knoles III, 354th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) commander, and Richard E. Merkling Jr., 388th TFW commander, were notified they had been nominated by the President for promotion to brigadier general.

Col. Mele Vojvodich Jr. took command of the 388th TFW Jan. 25, succeeding Colonel Merkling.

Korat played host to six National Football League pros Feb. 10 and 11. They visited the base as part of a 17-day USO tour of Thailand.

The Thai Security Guard Regiment, headquartered at nearby Camp Friendship, marked its eighth anniversary in February with a colorful ceremony including senior Thai and American military officials.

The 3rd Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) became the first permanently assigned A-7D unit in the Pacific Air Forces upon its activation at Korat March 15.

Then-Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Richard D. Kisting visited Korat April 25 in conjunction with a tour of Pacific bases.

Five Korat crewmembers were presented the Silver Star April 27 for gallantry while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force. They were: First Lieutenants William C. Diehl and Kenneth Webb III, 34th TFS (F-4 Phantom); and Captains Harry F. Johnson, Lonnie O. Ratley III AND Dwight F. Wilson, 353rd TFS (A-7D).

On May 18, Lt. Gen. William G. Moore Jr., 13th Air Force commander, pinned the fourth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award on the 388th TFW's flag. The AFOUA with Wing Combat "V" device was presented for exceptionally meritorious service against opposing armed forces in Southeast Asia from Oct. 10, 1970 to May 20, 1971.

During June, work was begun to convert the 700-man dormitories from cubicle format to semi-private rooms. The renovation was an off-shoot of the 388th TFW's People Program.

On June 31, Col. Robert K. Crouch succeeded Col. Mele Vojvodich Jr. as 388th TFW commander. Also on the 31st, the locally-contracted blue shuttle bus service went into operation with eight "blue monsters" picking up passengers every 7 to 10 minutes.

Six Korat fliers received Distinguished Flying Crosses in July for their participation in Linebacker II operations the previous December. They were: Lt. Col. George C. Richards and Maj. Peter B. Trainer Jr., 42nd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (EB-66); Captains Theodore R. Powers Jr. and David T. Roen, 17th Wild Weasel Squadron (F-105); and Capt. Kirby M. Carlton and 1st Lt. Kenneth J. O'Brien, 34th TFS (F-4E).

The 34th TFS "Tiger FACs" ended their mission as F-4 forward air controllers in July. The changing combat mission requirements in Southeast Asia ended the need for the lightning-fast Phantom FACs. The 34th had started its fast-FAC mission on March 1, 1969, and flew more than 2,500 missions before reaching its fourth birthday.

Aug. 15 was a milestone in the base's history. This date marked the end of Korat's combat strike missions. More than 20 newsmen representing the international press were on hand when the F-4s and A-7s returned from their final mission, a bombing strike in Cambodia. An EC-121 Warning Star from Korat's College Eye Task Force was the last aircraft to land before the 1 p.m. curfew.

Col. Ralph A. Yates became the new 388th Combat Support Group commander Aug. 18, succeeding Col. John C.M. des Isles.

Music, comedy, variety acts and more highlighted the "Tops in Blue '73" performance at Korat Oct. 6. Combining the talents of 18 winners in the 1973 Air Force Worldwide Talent Contest, the troupe put on a 90-minute performance for the base population.

Col. William D. Curry handed over the reins of the 354th TFW, Deployed, to Col. Michael G. Filliman in October.

Another renowned entertainer performed at Korat Nov. 29 as George Jessel brought nostalgia and laughs to an eager crowd.

The annual Korat Kids Carnival was held Dec. 1. Proceeds from the vent, sponsored by the chapel, were divided among St. Mary's Missionary Hospital, the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Khon Kaen Leper Colony Operated by the Sisters of the Order of St. Francis.

As 1973 passed into history, it was announced that Col. Thomas H. Normile would assume command of the 388th TFW shortly after the new year succeeding Col. Robert K. Crouch.

'Business as usual' marks final missions

Korat's combat strike missions ended Aug. 15, 1973, not with a bang, but with the muffled snap of unfolding F-4 drag chutes and the deceptively quiet scream of A-7Ds.

The only hint this was more than just what 388th Tactical Fighter Wing commander Col. Robert K. Crouch described as "business as usual" was the more than 20 newsmen from the international press.

The members of the press seemed disappointed there wasn't more excitement, more action in the last missions of a long and difficult war.

"They were expecting elation, looking for parties," said Colonel Crouch. "One is always happy to stop bombing but we've still got to work hard to maintain our readiness. If we're not ready today, we won't be ready tomorrow if we're needed."

Colonel Crouch had an unexpected passenger in his aircraft. It was the American flag that had ridden in the first 388th aircraft to fly over North Vietnam in combat in 1966.

SAWADDEE FLYER

Vol. 7, No. 4

Korat RTAFB, Thailand

Feb. 2, 1974

The year that was, 1974

There was a great deal of coming and going of people and aircraft at Korat during 1974. Perhaps one of the most important of the comings was the visit by His Majesty the King of Thailand and the Royal Family. Their Majesties the King and Queen and the two Princesses arrived at Korat RTAFB by plane to make an alms offering in honor of the annual Kratin's Ceremony. The Royal Family also participated in opening ceremonies at the new Boon Watana School in Korat City. Among U.S. Air Force officials on hand to meet Their Majesties were Colonels John P. Russell, Maurice Seaver and Kenneth H. Gallagher.

Early in the year Col. Thomas H. Normile assumed command of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing from Col. Robert K. Crouch. Among the first groups to leave in 1974 was the 42nd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron which redeployed to Clark AB with its EB-66 aircraft. The 42nd was the final Air Force squadron to fly the venerable EB-66 "Sookie."

In April, the Sawadee Club closed, consolidating enlisted entertainment in the NCO Open Mess.

Also in that month the 355th Tactical Fighter Squadron departed Korat for Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C. with 19 A-7D Corsair II aircraft. Their departure left the 3rd TFS as the only USAF A-7

unit in the Pacific. The 3rd TFS became a part of the 388th TFW.

The 7th Airborne Command and Control Squadron and the College Eye Task Force followed the A-7s in May. When the final EC-121 Constellation lifted from the Korat runway it ended more than nine years of airborne radar operations in Southeast Asia.

On July 3 Col. John P. Russell assumed command of the 388th from Colonel Normile. COLONEL Russell had previously served as vice commander. On the sports scene the U-Tapao Bombers claimed the All-Thailand Fast Pitch Championship in July from Korat's Cobras in the series' final two play off games, 4-3 and 8-4.

The F-111's of the 347th Tactical Fighter Wing joined the F-105s, A-7Ds and F-4Ds of the 388th TFW on the Korat flightline in July. The swing wings made the move from Takhli under the command of Col. Cecil D. Crabb. Also in July the 16th Special Operations Squadron left Ubon and brought their AC-130 gunships to Korat and the 388th.

On Oct. 30 the F-105s and men of the 17th Wild Weasel Squadron wrote the final chapter of their exciting book as they left for the United States after 10 years in Thailand.

Thuds leave SEA; loved by all pilots

It smashed bridges and railways; destroyed steel mills, tangled with enemy MiGs and flew SAM suppression missions. It carried the brunt of the bombing campaign over North Vietnam in the middle sixties. The F-105 Thunderchief proved itself a formidable weapons system. The Thuds ended their illustrious combat story Oct. 30 when the 17th Wild Weasel Squadron departed Korat for the United States after 10 years in Thailand.

The men who flew the Thunderchief had a real love affair with their bird as one 105 driver put it: "Sometimes I go out on the ramp and just look at the beauty, even on days I don't fly."

Because of the nature of the specialized mission of the Thuds, its crewmen were some of the more experienced flyers. Their mission was the support of aircraft entering areas defended by anti-aircraft

artillery (AAA) and surface-to-air missiles (SAM), and the destruction of those SAM and AAA sites when they posed an actual threat to American aircraft.

On what was acknowledged as one of the most dangerous missions over the North, the Weasels waited for the SAM or AAA sites to "come on the air," locking their radar in on the approaching flight. Then the F-105 crews quickly fired their radar homing Shrike or Standard ARM missiles into the launch site.

They also went after enemy ground control intercept radar sites.

It was believed that occasionally the North Vietnamese AAA and SAM sites would even stay "off the air" fearful of the Thud's deadly response.



Most popular place on base

Most popular place on base A LETTER FROM HOME was usually enough to cure the "depression blues" on any given day. On most days at Korat's Air Post Office (APO), you could see many GIs waiting by their post office box for their hopeful letter from Mom or wife or sweetheart or friend. No doubt about it, this was definitely one of the most popular places on Korat RTAFB. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

SAWADEE FLYER

Korat RTAFB, Thailand

Volume 8, number 47

December 6, 1975

1975, the final story of Korat

1975 was a big year for Korat in many ways. In January a memorial was dedicated to the prisoners of war/missing in action airmen from Korat. With Lt. Gen. John W. Roberts, personnel director, Headquarters USAF, in attendance. Local Korat City journalists were given a tour of four 388th Military Civic Action projects spread throughout the 16 kilometer CivAc area.

The 347th Tactical Fighter Wing overcame the obstacles associated with moving their entire Wing to Korat in 1974 and still performed the best maintenance in Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) to win the PACAF Outstanding Maintenance Award Trophy for the second straight year.

The 347th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) redeployed its aircraft in June with the F-111 fighter-bombers being reassigned to Nellis AFB, Nev., and the Wing being deactivated. This was the beginning of the end for Korat RTAFB.

The five remaining AC-130A gunships assigned to the 16th Special Operations Squadron left June 30. "A" model gunships were first introduced into Southeast Asia (SEA) in September 1967. They flew more than 11,000 combat sorties and logged almost 45,000 combat hours during their stay in SEA.

In July the 388th TFW got a new Wing commander. Col. Neil L. Eddins took over the reins of the oldest wing in Thailand from Col. John P. Russell who moved to PACAF Headquarters. Both colonels had previously served with the 388th TFW in 1966.

August and September brought the base a remodeled NCO Club that the 388th Civil Engineering Squadron spent nearly \$50,000 on. The club held a gala grand opening featuring Kiko Gatchalian and His Band from the Clark AB, P.I., Coconut Grove (Airmen's Club). As a result of the U.S. withdrawal from Nakhon Phanom RTAFB the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS) moved to Korat and absorbed the 56th ARRS that had been here. The combined unit flew HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant helicopters and HC-130P "King" search and rescue aircraft.

The saddest event that occurred in September was the death of the 388th TFW mascot, Roscoe. Roscoe died outside his favorite place, the Officer's Open Mess Sept. 13. The cause of death was old age and a heart attack. As a member of the 388th, he received a full funeral service with military honors and eulogy by Col. Neil L. Eddins, 388th TFW commander.

Throughout October and November activities went on as normal but every organization was making preparations for the impending announcement of United States withdrawal from Korat. On Nov. 24 the official announcement was made by the governments of Thailand and the U.S. to close the U.S. facility at Korat RTAFB by Feb. 29, 1976.

December was a memorable month for all personnel at Korat. All combat aircraft departed the base that month which represented three squadrons and 54 aircraft. The 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) flew 24 F-4D Phantoms, the 3rd TFS flew out 24 A-7D Sandies and the 16th Special Operations Squadron flew out six AC-130 Hercules gunships, all to new assignments worldwide. The fantastic fact about these aircraft departures is that all 54 aircraft departed on schedule without a single abort. On Dec. 23 the 388th TFW, host wing here since 1966, was symbolically transferred to Hill AFB, Utah, from Korat RTAFB, with ceremonies at both Hill and Korat. The 388th TFW commander, Col. Neil L. Eddins, assumed the same position with the Wing at Hill AFB.

The last aircraft to depart Korat belonged to the 40th ARRS. The HC-130P "King" aircraft flew to their new assignments and the HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant helicopters were airlifted to their new homes via C-5A Galaxies.

388 TFW shifted to H11 AFB

Effective Dec. 23, 1975, the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), host Wing here since 1966, was symbolically transferred from Korat RTAFB to Hill AFB, Utah, with ceremonies at both Korat and Hill.

The 388th TFW commander, Col. Neil L. Eddins, assumed the same position with the Wing at Hill AFB.

The 388th has a long and impressive history dating back to its beginnings as the 388th Bombardment Group (heavy) during World War II, when its aircraft struck a number of significant targets in the course of the conflict. The 388th also performed interdiction missions during the war as well.

In August 1945 the 388th returned to the U.S. and was deactivated at Sioux Falls AAB, S.D., Aug. 28, 1945.

March 23, 1953, saw the 388th designation return to the rolls of the Air Force units with the institution of the 388th Fighter-Day Wing. The Wing was redesignated as a fighter-bomber unit on Nov. 5, 1953, and on Nov. 23, 1953, it was activated at Clovis, N.M. The 388th FBW began training in the F-86 Sabre jet in 1954, and on Nov. 28, 1954, began its move to Europe as a part of the build-up of U.S. forces under the NATO agreement.

During 1956-57, the 388th FBW converted to the F-100D Super Sabre and on Dec. 10, 1957, the unit was inactivated in France.

The third of four "reactivations" of the 388th took place on May 1, 1962, and the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) was born at McConnell AFB, Kan. While at McConnell, the Wing was equipped with F-105 Thunderchiefs. On Feb. 8, 1964, the 388th was discontinued and inactivated at McConnell.

The need for a more stable organizational control of combat units operating in Southeast Asia on missions over North Vietnam brought about the 388th's return to combat status once more, this time in 1966. Activated on March 14, 1966, the 388th TFW was organized at Korat RTAFB on April 8, 1966.

While being organized at Korat, the 388th TFW inherited the history and honors of the 388th Bombardment Group (heavy), which had been activated Christmas Eve of 1942 at Gowen Field, Idaho. The group trained for combat in the famed Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, moving from Gowen Field to Sioux City Army Station, Knettishall, England, where it remained throughout the war as one of the key units of the Eighth Air Force.

In June 1966 F-105s of the 13th and 34th Tactical Fighter Squadrons deployed from Japan and were assigned to Korat for combat duty with the 388th TFW.

The 388th TFW established an unrivaled reputation for the aggressiveness of its aircrews in attacking and destroying surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites, anti-aircraft flak sites, MIGs and other defensive installations surrounding the major enemy targets throughout the Vietnam era.



King, Queen of Thailand, loved and revered by all

Beauty, grace and charm—
These descriptions immediately come to mind as Queen Sirikit appears in sight. These qualities alone would have won her the admiration and loyalty of her people.

But Queen Sirikit, whose birthday is celebrated Aug. 12, has also demonstrated how a queen should act to effectively fill her place in a constitutional monarchy.

As the model of Thai women, Her Majesty the Queen exemplifies what an ideal mother and wife are like. One of the best-dressed women in the world, the Queen encourages good taste, well grooming and fashion on a country-wide basis. She promotes the use of Thai silks, one of Thailand's home products, Thai national costumes and demonstrates Thai cultures and characteristics.

As a tireless social worker, the Queen insists on various programs encouraging the social well-being of the population. She realizes her programs through her position as honorary president of the National Council of Social Welfare and as president of the Thai Red Cross.

Her capability as Queen has been proved many times. In 1956, when His Majesty the King entered the monkhood, the Queen assumed the responsibilities of head of state, winning the distinction of "Somdej Phraborom Rajininth," the title given to a Queen capable of performing the functions on the King's behalf.

As Thailand's ambassador, Her Majesty has brought good will and friendship to numerous countries around the world where Their Majesties have paid state

visits. She has left such a favorable impression on her host countries that people still talk of her admiringly. At home Queen Sirikit graciously hostesses visiting foreign dignitaries and heads of state.

Queen Sirikit's official performances are unsurpassable. Grace is what she brings to her people. Admiration and loyalty are what she wins from them.

His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej was born at Brookline, Mass., Dec. 5, 1927, while his father was a medical student at Harvard University. His father was the late King Mahidol Adulyadej; his mother was HRH Srisangwal.

He has one sister, Princess Kalayane Wattana. An older brother, the former King Anandamahidol, was killed in 1946.

When he was a year old, his parents returned to Thailand after his father earned a medical degree from Harvard. His father died a year later.

The young prince attended school in Bangkok until he was 5, and in 1933 he accompanied his mother to Switzerland and attended Mere Mont primary school in Lauzanne.

He grew up with the royal servants at a palace decorated with Thai objects of art and culture. As a young man he was interested in music, carpentry, ship building and photography.

In 1943 his brother took the throne as King Rama VIII. Prince Bhumibol returned to Thailand when he was 11, but spent only a short time in Thailand before returning to Switzerland to continue his studies.

His Majesty King
Bhumibol Adulyadej

Her Majesty
Queen Sirikit

Korat grows from clearing into bustling installation

In April 1962, the U.S. Air Force had one officer and 14 airmen assigned to Korat RTAFB on temporary duty status.

From this meager beginning, Korat's military population peaked to almost 7,000 in the early 70s and the air base had grown from a little clearing in the brush of the Korat Plateau into a sprawling installation dotted with single and two-story dormitory buildings, modern maintenance facilities and well-designed offices.

Korat RTAFB is headquarters for Wing Three of the Royal Thai Air Force. For many years before it was relocated near Nakhon Phanom it was the headquarters for the Royal Thai Air Force flying training school.

At various periods during the U.S. facility's existence, it has supported two operational wings simultaneously, always with the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) as host wing. These "tenant" wings were the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing, flying the Lockheed EC-121 Constellation, the 354th TFW, flying LTV A-7D Corsair IIS and the 347th TFW, flying the General Dynamics F-111 fighter-bomber.

In addition to the operational wings, Korat was home for more than 30 associate units representing seven Air Force commands.

Aerial traffic at Korat presented an unusual picture over the 10-year period. Sleek Republic F-105 Thunderchiefs, McDonnell-Douglas F-4 Phantoms, F-111s, A-7Ds, shared the sky with versions of the EC-121 "Connies" as well as Douglas EB-66 Destroyers and the versatile Lockheed C-130 Hercules gunship, rescue and cargo versions. And of course there were the Lockheed C-141 Starlifters and C-5 Galaxies which passed through Korat bringing in people and equipment and later taking them out.

The base is located about five miles south of Korat City (the real name of Korat City is Nakhon Rajisima) whose population is in excess of 100,000. It is approximately 170 miles north-northeast of Thailand's capital city, Bangkok.



sawadee flyer



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- AIC Dale Gillette.....Editor
- TSgt. Sam Hill.....Production



Part beagle and all Bat Cat

"SNOOPY," THE OFFICIAL mascot of the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing at Korat RTAFB looks as though he might be thinking of the night when, "There I was in a thunderstorm and..." (U.S. Air Force Photo)

Roscoe, Snoopy two special dogs

July, 1969 - They're only dogs, but the lives they lead are pampered.

One is Roscoe; he's the grizzled old veteran who has the run of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW). The youngster is Snoopy, a flying mascot with the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing.

As the senior mascot, Roscoe receives preferential treatment at the Officer's Open Mess where he eats what the other members are served - free of charge.

Snoopy, who came to Korat RTAFB with the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing, still flies his missions aboard the Lockheed EC-121R Constellation. And, he still comes and goes pretty much as he pleases, dividing home between the wing's two flying squadrons, the 553rd and the 554th. He became a two-year veteran with the Wing in June 1969.

Roscoe came to the 388th TFW in mid-May 1966. He, too, shares his time equally with the flying squadrons of the Wing, though he has been known to prolong his visits to those outfits that had especially well-stocked larders or extra-soft chairs in which he could curl up for long afternoon naps.

The two dogs are the only authorized mascots on Korat RTAFB, and both are allowed to roam freely. Pictures of them are posted in the 388th Security Police Squadron's operations center, and policemen are admonished to insure that nothing happens to either.



A dog's Life?

ROSCOE, THE FAMED mascot of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing, relaxes in one of his favorite places, the office of the 388th TFW Commander, Col. Allen K. McDonald. Roscoe came to Korat in mid-May 1966 and was adopted by the Wing when his master was shot down shortly after arriving here. (U.S. Air Force Photo by AIC Anthony Pacheco)

SWITCHING CENTER



Grin and Bear It

TRANSFER OF OPERATION and maintenance responsibility from Philco-Ford to the 1998th Communications Squadron (AFCS) for the Korat RTAFB AUTODIN Switching Center is symbolized by the handover of "ASCII," the bear. Ray Summerfield, Philco-Ford site manager, makes this presentation to Capt. William Scott, officer-in-charge. ASCII is about the same age as the ASC which was "born" Dec. 23, 1967, and is named after computer language coding for the American Standard Code for Information Interchange. The computer feeds data while ASCII specializes in hot dogs, doughnuts, ice cream cones and coke. (U.S. Air Force Photo by AIC Tim Monk)



7th ACCS mascot

"JOHN," THE MASCOT of the 7th ACCS, loves to give the girls a hard time, according to legend. You have to feed John and then run around to feed the female or John will take it away from her. (U.S. Air Force Photo)



Tiger for Tiger

THE 388TH SECURITY Police Tiger Flight's mascot blends into the camouflaged uniform of Thai Master Sergeant In Kasem, Thai flight commander of Tiger Flight. The baby tiger, found by Sergeant Kasem in the jungle, receives a gentle stroke from Sgt. Gerald Ammons, a member of the flight's quick response team.

A brief glimpse at Korat history

- April 1962— One officer and 14 airmen on temporary duty (TDY) are the first Air Force personnel ever assigned to Korat RTAFB.
- July 10, 1962— First permanent-party Air Force personnel arrived for duty.
- Aug. 5, 1964— Personnel and equipment began arriving to support a tactical fighter operation. Initial buildup was to approximately 500 personnel.
- August 1964— Construction of base facilities started.
- Aug. 15, 1964— Operational mission of the TDY fighter unit began.
- October 1964— Essential base facilities established by U.S. Air Force construction teams.
- February 1965— TDY tactical fighter strength increased to two tactical fighter squadrons, both assigned to the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) and flying the Republic F-105 Thunderchief aircraft.
- March 1965— One PACAF squadron replaced by a Tactical Air Command McDonnell-Douglas F-4C Phantom rotational unit.
- April 1965— 6234th Air Base Squadron established as a permanent unit to support the TDY fighter units and their operations. Squadron was in existence until the end of April when it was deactivated and the 6234th Combat Support Group, 6234th Support Squadron and 6234th Material Squadron were designated and organized.
- 6234th Tactical Fighter Wing activated. The Wing was responsible for all Air Force units in Thailand until permanent wings were established at other bases.
- April 8, 1966— 388th Tactical Fighter Wing organized at Korat RTAFB. At this time, it absorbed the personnel, equipment and resources of the 6234th TFW. (In 1968, the inactive 6234th was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation) At the time of its activation, the 388th TFW was assigned two tactical fighter squadrons flying the F-105; the 469th and 421st. Both had been stationed at Korat since November 1965.
- June 1966— F-105s of the 13th and 34th Tactical Squadrons deployed to Korat from Japan and were assigned to the 388th TFW for combat duty.
- June 29-30, 1966— Destruction of the heavily-defended Hanoi petroleum storage area earns the 388th TFW its first Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA).
- March 10, 1967— 388th TFW participated in first strikes on the Thai Nguyen iron and steel works and thermal power plant near Hanoi.
- April 1967— 421st TFS inactivated and replaced by the 44th TFS.
- May 1, 1967— 388th TFW receives the Presidential Unit Citation for the period March 10 through May 1, 1967.
- June 29, 1967— 388th TFW pilot Maj. Fred L. Tracy flew the first F-105 to shoot down a communist MIG-17.
- June 30, 1967— 388th TFW receives second AFOUA for sustained outstanding combat operations for the period July 11, 1966 to June 30, 1967.
- Aug. 11, 1967— 388th TFW F-105s participate in the first raid on Hanoi (Paul Doumer) highway and railroad bridge.
- October 1967— First Lockheed EC-121 Constellation reconnaissance aircraft of College Eye Task Force lands at Korat RTAFB to begin operations.
- 13th TFS designation transferred to Udorn RTAFB for a new F-4 unit. Its personnel, resources and mission reassigned to the 44th TFS at Korat RTAFB.
- Oct. 19, 1967— First flight of EC-121 aircraft of 553rd Reconnaissance Wing arrives at Korat RTAFB.
- Oct. 24, 1967— 388th TFW aircraft participate in first air strike against the Phuc Yen MIG base.
- Dec. 18, 1967— 388th TFW aircrews participate in last and most destructive attack on Doumer Bridge and are credited with leaving the key bridge completely unserviceable by destroying eight and damaging three of the bridge's 19 spans.
- Jan. 31-Feb. 4, 1968— 388th TFW F-105s participate for the first time in a bombing mission by Thailand-based aircraft within South Vietnam in operations during the Tet offensive.
- June 30, 1968— Wing receives its third AFOUA for sustained outstanding combat operations from July 1, 1967 to June 30, 1968.
- Nov. 17, 1968— First unit of McDonnell-Douglas F-4E Phantoms to deploy to Southeast Asia arrives at Korat. Deploying as 40th TFS, the unit became the 469th. The replaced personnel and aircraft were distributed among the other F-105 units in Southeast Asia.
- Nov. 22, 1968— F-4Es of the 469th TFS fly their first combat mission.
- May 9, 1968— F-105s fly their last day of combat operations for the 34th TFS.
- May 11, 1968— F-4Es of the 34th TFS fly their first mission in combat.
- Oct. 10, 1968— F-105s of the 44th TFS fly their last combat mission as part of the 388th TFW and recover at Takhli RTAFB.
- November 1970— The F-105 returned to Korat RTAFB when the 6010th Wild Weasel Squadron, flying specially equipped F-105s, was formed. It was redesignated the 17th Wild Weasel Squadron Dec. 1, 1970.
- 42nd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron, flying EB-66 aircraft, was transferred to Korat RTAFB from Takhli RTAFB.
- Dec. 15, 1970— 553rd Reconnaissance Wing (RW) deactivated and the 553rd Reconnaissance Squadron (RS), one of the two assigned to the 553rd RW, reassigned to the 388th TFW.
- Dec. 31, 1970— 553rd RS inactivated.
- April 1972— 7th Airborne Command and Control Squadron, flying C-130 Hercules aircraft, relocated to Korat RTAFB from Udorn RTAFB.
- October 1972— A-7D Corsair IIs arrive to form 354th TFW. 469th TFS inactivated.
- 17th Wild Weasel Squadron inactivated. All the unit's aircraft and resources transferred to George AFB, Calif., marking the end of the F-105's presence in Southeast Asia.
- Dec. 18-30, 1972— Linebacker II air operations over North Vietnam.
- Dec. 30, 1972— 388th TFW receives fifth AFOUA for sustained combat operations during Linebacker II.
- March 15, 1973— 3rd TFS, flying A-7s, is activated.
- April 1973— 354th TFW redeploys to the U.S.
- March 15, 1974— 42nd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron is deactivated.
- May 1974— 7th Airborne Command and Control Squadron is relocated to Clark AB, P.I.
- July 1974— F-111 equipped 347th TFW moved to Korat RTAFB from Takhli RTAFB.
- 16th Special Operations Squadron (SOS), flying AC-130 Hercules gunships, joined the 388th TFW from Udorn RTAFB.
- June 1975— F-111s re deploy to the U.S. 347th TFW deactivated.
- December 1975— Joint Thai-U.S. announcement cites closing of U.S. involvement at Korat RTAFB.
- F-4D Phantoms of the 34th TFS, A-7Ds of the 3rd TFS and AC-130 Hercules gunships of the 16th SOS re deploy.
- Feb. 29, 1976— U.S. Air Force facility at Korat RTAFB closes.

