



"THE CHARGING CHARLIE" Prime BEEF and RED HORSE Newsletter



FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE: PRIME BEEF/RED HORSE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Randy Eckert, Greg MacDougal
and General Tim Green



A few of the Prime BEEF
and RED HORSE "Originals":



**THIS NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED TO AIR FORCE COMBAT CIVIL ENGINEERS (RED HORSE AND Prime BEEF)
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.**

NOTES AND MEMORIES

A great reunion paying tribute to the accomplishments of the RED HORSE and Prime BEEF civil engineers; by Dick Aldinger, Newsletter Editor

Here are a few memories that I have from The REDHORSE Association (RHA) Convention/ Reunion. They are in no particular order.

- Listening to members of the original RED HORSE and Prime BEEF units tell their stories about building bases in Vietnam and Thailand.
- Hearing Bruce Swafford tell his story about visiting Vietnam in the early years of the 60s and later on constructing revetments and facilities as a member of Prime BEEF Team #1.



- Watching so many Horsemen, Prime BEEFers and their wives reconnect with old friends from their AF Civil Engineering days as well as making new friends.



Opening Ceremony and Presidents Welcome

- Meeting Horsemen and Prime BEEFers from almost every state in the union.
- Spending an enjoyable afternoon with the 823rd RHS at Hurlburt Field. The relaxed informal atmosphere provided by Col Mike Griffin and his entire squadron gave the reunion attendees a chance to mingle and see the outstanding quality of today's airmen. We also were updated on squadron deployments, new equipment and visited the House of Legends Museum.



- The intense interest of the wives in attending many of the sessions throughout the entire reunion.



- Meeting Anthony Salazar and his "Band of Brothers" from the original 555th RED HORSE Squadron (RHS).



- Meeting Col Orson "Al" Israelsen, a WWII Bomber pilot and 2nd commander of the 555th RHS.



- Chatting with Herschel Harris, former member of the 557th RHS who has serious vision problems. He found out about the Reunion only a week before it started but hopped on a plane and was at almost every session.
- Hearing the inspirational words of Florida State Legislator Matt Gaetz who read a citation given by the Florida Legislature to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Prime BEEF and RED HORSE.



HISTORY OF EARLY RED HORSE SQUADRONS



History of "Charging Charlie" presented by Bill Ackley

Air Staff approved the concept of RED HORSE Squadrons and commanders were named September 30, 1965 making 2015 the 50th Anniversary of RED HORSE and thus our tribute to the following squadrons.

554th Squadron (Penny Short) deployed concurrent with the 555th and were stationed at Phan Rang. Their current location is Guam. Original members are shown below.



555th Squadron (Triple Nickel) deployed concurrent with the 554th and were stationed at Cam Ranh Bay. They currently are a reserve unit stationed at Nellis AFB. Original members are shown below.



556th Squadron was deployed in July 1966 to U-Tapao Air Base, Thailand and portions of the squadron deployed to five other bases. They currently are a reserve unit located the 823rd at Hurlburt Field. Original members and Vietnam members shown below.



819th Squadron was deployed in September 1966 to Phu Cat AB with detachment units deployed to an undeveloped area classified as unsecure without any base support. They are currently located at Maelstrom AFB. Original and Vietnam members shown below.



820th Squadron was deployed to Tuy Hoa in Oct 1966 where they completed nearly 50% of base construction needed for facilities, revetments, roads, and ammunition storage area. They are an Active Unit currently located at Nellis AFB. Original and Vietnam members below.



823rd Squadron was deployed to Bien Hoa in Oct 1966 with detachment units sent to Tan Son Nhut, Vung Tau, and Pleiku. They are currently located at Hurlburt Field.



Original members of the 823rd



823rd Vietnam Veterans

307th Squadron has been deactivated so it was especially nice that the reunion gave them a chance to get together and gave us a chance to pay tribute to their many accomplishments and wish them well.



Prime BEEF Teams were first used for a deployment to the Dominican Republic in 1965 but bases in South Vietnam were dramatically over crowded at this time. On May 16, 1965, munitions on a B-57 exploded killing 34 and injuring 100. Forty aircraft were damaged. Between August 1965 and July 1966, 25 Prime BEEF teams were then deployed to Vietnam to build revetments and support new construction as their mission expanded. The following are the members of those early teams and were awarded a special commendation at this reunion and recognized for their contributions (page 3).





Original Prime BEEF members.

A special presentation "Remembering Vietnam" was made by Rick Lettau.



TIME TO SOCIALIZE

A fun event held on Tuesday was the Burger Burn at the 823rd RHS at Hurlburt Field which gave everyone time to socialize.



Another favorite was the House of Legends, the RED HORSE Museum located at the 823rd RHS

at Hurlburt Field. See story below about the 823rd.



MORE REUNION STORIES

By Charles "Chuck" Evans, Col USAF (ret)

I recently had the honor of attending the 50th Anniversary Convention of RED HORSE/Prime BEEF held at Fort Walton Beach, FL from October 12-16. By way of background I retired from the USAF with 26+ years and most of that was in Civil Engineering but I was never in "the Horse". The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to meet members of all of the original RED HORSE teams as well as some members of the original Prime BEEF teams that went to Vietnam in late 1965 to provide the required facilities to support the USAF's mission there. Not only did we get to meet the previous members of the various squadrons but we also were lucky enough to attend an afternoon at the 823rd RED HORSE Squadrons facilities at Hurlburt AFB. We were shown some of the new equipment that the squadron has and the

highlight was meeting the men and women who are the team.



They are bright, friendly, and highly motivated individuals who certainly represent the very best of the Air Force. The last night of the Convention was a banquet with Maj. General Timothy S. Green as the guest speaker. He provided a

