

A Vietnam Vet's Reminiscences



Richard Upchurch and his F-4 Phantom II, which he was Crew Chief on, during his tour in Vietnam. 1968

Richard Upchurch was in Military Aviation for 21 years and retired from it in 1992. He writes about his memories of Pan Am from his days in Vietnam.

I have Aimee Bratt's book, Glamour and Turbulence, I Remember Pan Am, 1966-91. In Chapter 5, she talks about her Vietnam R&R Flights, and I was on one of those flights, mid 1968, to Yokota/Tokyo, for my 7 day R&R. I don't know if Aimee was on my flight or not, but I always wanted to thank Pan Am and all the Crews and Flight Attendants for a wonderful slice of the States, for a short time anyhow. I watched many flights take off and land at Danang AFB where I was stationed and always thought about the Crews and Flight Attendants, willingness to risk their lives just so we could get out of the War Zone for just a little while and feel good, relax and not scared for that short time we had. I made it home after my tour, but some, even after those R&R flights, did not make it out alive.



Pan Am at Danang Air Force Base, Vietnam 1968. Photo by Richard Upchurch, used by permission.

In some way, maybe through your web site, I wish you could tell anyone who might read this and remember those days so very long ago, and help me to convey just how much I appreciate what they did. Also to Pan Am's History, I want to thank the Company for agreeing to go in harms way for such a humane reason.

Sincerely, Richard Upchurch, Sgt., USAF F-4 Phantom II Jet Fighter Crew Chief, 366TFW, 480th TFS, Danang, VN. Oct. 1967-Sep. 1968



Pan Am taking off from Danang AFB, VN, 1968. Photo by Richard Upchurch, used by permission.

Below, Pan Am Historical Foundation Photo

PAN AM HISTORICAL FOUNDATION



U.S. servicemen board a DC-6 in Saigon 1960s