

The Joshua Tree

November 26, 2024

CONTINUED TALES FROM THE VIETNAM JUNGLE

From the skies of Southeast Asia to the confines of prisoner-of-war (POW) cells, the Vietnam War was a battleground for courage, camaraderie, and survival. Retired USAF fighter pilot **Tony Marshall** shared his remarkable experiences from his time at UDorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, weaving together personal anecdotes, cultural insights, and tales of resilience.

For Tony Marshall, stationed at UDorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, camaraderie defined his experience. One of the most colorful characters he encountered was "The Thief," a Pakistani man who could procure tailored suits for any occasion. Tony also fondly recalled dining at the local gem "Yom Noi," a restaurant that stood out for its delicious meals.

On the base, performance mattered more than skin color. Though everyone, regardless of rank, was referred to as "Boy" in casual parlance, Tony said there was no discrimination—it was all about how well you did your job.

The base had its quirks, including a nightly ritual called "The Dap," an ever-evolving handshake that became



a hallmark of their shared culture. Mascots added to the atmosphere: a Black Panther named Eldridge, a dog, and even an 8–10-foot python brought a strange sense of home to the base.

Nicknamed "Water Boy," Tony also indulged in his love of photography, capturing the unique mix of war and humanity around him.

Tony explained the high-stakes maneuvers required of fighter pilots, such as the "SAM break," a rapid change in altitude or direction to evade surface-to-air missiles.

Pilots were equipped with personal lowering devices containing 150 feet of webbing, allowing them to safely descend if their parachutes tangled in trees.

Friendship was critical to survival. Tony remembered Roger, nicknamed "The Wing Nerd," who ignored warnings during a mission. After his plane went down, Roger survived 14 days in the Vietnam wilderness before being rescued.

One of the most powerful stories Tony shared was about Mike Christian, a young Naval pilot imprisoned with him. Mike secretly crafted an American flag from scraps, sewing it together with threads from his blanket. When guards discovered the flag, Mike endured brutal torture. Yet, undeterred, he began making another flag, demonstrating unyielding courage. For Tony and others, the tattered flag symbolized freedom and unity, even in the darkest moments.

This Week's Functionaries

Invocation:	Bill Edwards
Flag Salute:	Bryan Gillespie
4-Way Test:	Mike Page

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GILLESPIE'S GAB

Thank you to Tony Marshall for stopping by again to share more stories from his time in the USAF

fighting for our Country in Vietnam. Thank you for your service and look forward to having you back at another time.



Christmas is just around the corner and that means it is time to sign up for the annual Rotary Christmas Party happening on December 12th at Chateau Chang in Victorville. Sign up at Club meetings or with Bill Edwards. It is always a wonderful time and we look forward to seeing you there!

Please join us from December 13 - 15 for an annual visit to the orphanage and water tank project with our sister Club in Enseñada. There is a hotel special 2-night special with the third free. Please see Russ Stringham or Steve Murray for more information.

Until next time...

Bryan

Tony Marshall

Continued from page 1

Tony also reflected on the cultural contrasts he observed in Vietnam: The Vietnamese placed great importance on saving face. Centuries of war had shaped their resilience.

Societal rules were strict—no mustaches, one romantic partner, and a single state-controlled newspaper.

Their philosophy emphasized redemption: “One good deed erases 100 bad deeds.”

The 13th Tactical Fighter Squadron, known as the Panther Pack, lived by four simple but profound rules:

Get the mission done.

Bring everyone home.

If a MiG becomes a threat, take it out.

If it's not fun, you're not doing it right.

These principles balanced the seriousness of their mission with the need to find moments of levity amidst war.

Tony also recounted the story of John Milton, whose mother showed remarkable strength during his captivity. Even when informed of her son's capture, she remained stoic and resolved to support her family. Upon his return, she firmly demanded his release from the hospital, embodying resilience and unconditional love.

Through stories like those of **Tony Marshall, Mike Christian, and John Milton**, we glimpse the courage and sacrifice of those who served during the Vietnam War. From the skies above Southeast Asia to the cells of POW camps, their experiences remind us of the power of resilience, unity, and patriotism.

Their legacy serves as a beacon of hope and a reminder of the strength of the human spirit.



THE MAGIC OF ROTARY

Big Blue Poker Chip



Bryan Gillespie had the chance to draw the Blue Chip, but he drew green and left it for another Rotarian to try next time. We will continue the opportunity next week with 3 chips and \$450 for the lucky Rotarian who can draw the Blue Chip!

Spoon of Exception



Bill Edwards had another week with the Spoon and once again shared sponsorship opportunities available for the Rescue Mission Alliance's Gala, entitled "Pursuit" coming up in March 13, 2025 celebrating their 25th Anniversary! The event will feature dinner, live music and auction items. Sponsorships range from \$20,000 to be a Platinum Sponsor, to a \$1000 table sponsorship and more in between. Get more information at vrescuemission.org/fundraiser.

The Spoon will be auctioned next week.

Raffle



Bill Edwards donated three books this week, including his brother's title, with one book going to Jon Hove and the other two to President Bryan Gillespie.

Rotary Guests

Due to the extremely low turnout this week, we had no guests and Tisha Lopez once again served as a Stand-in for Chris Ackerman.



The Polio Pig

Collected this week: \$10.00

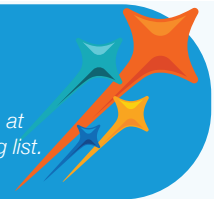
Polio Pig: \$5 + Chip (Bryan Gillespie) \$5 = \$10.00

Collected to Date: \$20,912.83

Total equals: 102,804 Doses!

One dollar equals 2 Doses of Vaccine!

\$500 pays for a Polio Clinic!



VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS

Board of Directors

President 2024-2025	Bryan Gillespie
President 2025-2027	Bill Edwards
President 2027 - 2028	Please be Interviewed
Immediate Past President	Steve Murray
Executive Secretary/Foundation/Grants	Margaret Cooker
Treasurer/Scholarships	David North
Youth Services/Ethics Essay	Ron Boyd
Club Service & Membership	Bill Edwards
Community Service/Speech Contests	Mike Johnson
Vocational Service	Please Volunteer
International Service	Ben Tafoya
Member At Large, Young Leaders Contact	Arsalee Morales
Member At Large, Special Projects	Rob Kilpatrick

Members-at-Large: Bob Basen, Darron Poulsen, Angel Espino

Positions & Committee Chairs

BOD/PP Secretary	Pam Murray
Special Billing	Esther Mears (TBD)
Public Service Awards	Please Volunteer
Teacher Mini-Grants	Angel Espino
Dan Stover Music Contest	Angel Espino
Joshua Tree Editor	Chris Ackerman
Read B4K	Please Volunteer
Foundation & Grants	Margaret Cooker
Food Baskets	Please Volunteer
Interact (Junior Rotary)	Please Volunteer
Programs	Mike Page
Fundraising	Stefanie Montoya
S.T.A.R. Students	Angel Espino
Club Learning Facilitator	Please Volunteer

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship
at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Bear Valley
Country Club, 13229 Spring Valley Parkway, Victorville

Make-up Days and Locations

MONDAY:	San Bernardino East, Imperial Palace, noon
TUESDAY:	Rancho Cucamonga Sunrise, 7:15 a.m. Empire Lakes Golf Course Rancho Cucamonga, 12:00 p.m., Etiwanda Gardens
WEDNESDAY:	San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon, Barstow, DiNapoli's Firehouse, 1358 E Main St, Barstow, CA
THURSDAY:	Apple Valley, Rusty Bull, 13685 John Glenn Rd, Apple Valley, Noon. Ontario, 12:15 p.m., Doubletree Hotel San Bernardino, Denny's at I-15, 7 a.m. Redlands, Masonic Temple, noon
FRIDAY:	San Bernardino North, Elks Lodge, 12:05 p.m.

Calendar Dates

- Dec 2:** **Board of Directors Meeting**
5:00pm Fellowship
5:30pm Board Meeting
Location: Robar Enterprises
17671 Bear Valley Road, Hesperia, CA
- Dec 12:** **Rotary Christmas Party**
6:00pm • Chateau Chang
Sign up at club meetings or contact Bill
Edwards for meal choices for you and
your guests.

Upcoming Programs

- Dec 3:** Bobby Clemmer, Fire Chief, City of
Victorville **TOPIC "My Background
and Vision for the Victorville Fire
Department"** (McEachron)
- Dec 10:** Randy German, Sheriff Captain **TOPIC
"Introduction and Update on Public
Safety in Victorville"** (McEachron)
- Dec 17:** Michelle Lynn and Henry Phan,
Providence St. Mary **TOPIC "Bringing
Physicians to the High Desert"** (Page)
- Dec 24:** **DARK**
- Dec 31:** **DARK**
- Jan 3:** Nicole Orr and Katie Berrios,
Providence St. Mary **TOPIC
"Coordinating Sexual Assault and
Domestic Violence in the High
Desert"** (Page)

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