

The story of the wingtank shower

By Bill Page

On arrival with our landing craft assault on the beach at Vung Tau, South Vietnam, we were flown by C-130 to Bien Hoa Air Base. Det 1, 3rd RRU was in support of the 173rd Airborne and located on the northwest corner of the airbase. A few of Det 2 personnel spent two days as guests of Det 1. While there several of us took a jeep tour around the airbase. I remember a junkyard containing several aircraft that had been damaged by previous mortar attacks. One of those aircraft was a B-57 Canberra with external wingtanks.

Fast forward to Det 2 locations: When I took a shower from the old ESSO 55 gal drum shower, it was usually cold or cool water and was also limited. I often thought of the wing tank.



One day when things were calmed down, I think it was Earl Hatch - Motor maintenance, Dale Ellingson and myself took a jeep with trailer and the necessary tools on a drive to the Air Base. We parked the trailer under the large end of the B-57 wingtank. As I had known that some combat aircraft had drop tanks, which had explosive bolts, I inspected the bolts and checked the aircraft for power. None were found. So we dropped the tank into the trailer with the small end sticking up and out the back. We drove out the main gate with no questions asked.

After the tank was delivered to Det 2, several of our inventive personnel constructed a platform for the tank and rigged the necessary plumbing. I made arrangements for the engineers to come by and fill it in the mornings. Being the tank was painted black, the daily sun heated the tank. I had a warm shower in the evening.

Lt. Button said that Sgt. Blake expressed a concern about where it came from, he told Sgt. Blake "Don't ask".



Dale O. Ellingson with our new B-57 shower