

New 7th Supply Chief

TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam (Special) — Brig. Gen. Peter R. DeLonga has assumed duties as the 7th Air Force deputy chief of staff for materiel. He succeeds Brig. Gen. Paul F. Patch, who departed for Hickam AFB, Hawaii, where he will be deputy chief of staff for materiel at Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces.

Nothing Spared for Tan Son Nhut's Ribs

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SAIGON — It is entirely possible that a man could start at Tan Son Nhut AB here and travel in any direction halfway around the world and never find barbecued spare ribs more saucy or delicious than those served up from a charcoal grill at the Airmen's Open Mess annex right on base.

The mess is behind the annex bar in a green-walled and smoky kitchen which has a sign at the end of the serving counter that says: "For the club's sake . . . all sales must be rung up." The chow is worth paying for. There's a fair wait for grub and some flies in the place, but the wait pays off, and who'd deny a little bitty old fly a good meal now and again.

It is conceivable that there's an out-of-the-way grill somewhere below the Mason-Dixon Line which could match the fare. Those who know about it are mighty lucky. They could

probably make a fortune selling instructions on how to get there.

As it is, however, S.Sgt. William Thompson eats at the annex nearly every night. "I'm an experienced barbecue man myself," Thompson says, and he contends the annex doesn't have to apologize to anyone.

In the matter of barbecue, Thompson will take no ribbing. His parents run a barbecue place in Columbus, Ga., called the Zombie Inn, and Thompson talks about the barbecue art with reverence.

Ribs should be cooked, he explains, "fairly slow and over a fire that's not too hot so it's not done on the outside and raw on the inside." That's roughly how they do it at the annex, according to the cooks.

They keep one side of the grill hot and the other medium hot and just keep moving them around. Explains Sgt. John Nixon, who cooks: "We just care what they taste like."

Nixon, who is no relation to

the President but wishes he were ("I wouldn't have to work nights, that's for sure"), is one of a crew of enlisted men who work during spare time for spare cash barbecuing ribs, chicken and chunks of beef at the annex. Sgt. Ron Hannon is the man who makes the sauce.

The all-important sauce is made, Hannon says, from Ketchup, worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, garlic salt, hot peppers, salt, pepper, and onions "if we got 'em." Hannon says he makes a batch a night in a 20-quart kettle.

The man who supervises the process is S.Sgt. Donald Russell. Russell says the annex sells 50 to 75 pounds of ribs a night. They also sell, he says, 200 steaks a night, 320 hamburgers and a 100 pounds of barbecued chicken. The highest priced items on the menu, which are steaks and a combination plate, sell for two bucks.

Two of the cooks are from

Georgia, like their customer Thompson. One is Sgt. Louis Everett, a security policeman who works eight hours a day at the post main gate and five hours a night at the grill. The other is Sgt. James C. Shingler, also a security policeman, who's got an affinity for barbecued ribs. "I ate a lot of 'em growing up," he says.

In fact, there seems to be a great barbecue tradition in the back room at the annex. The annex manager, S. Sgt. Andy Williams, who was raised in Chicago, has been in the club field for 10 years and allows as how "I was brought up on ribs." The cooks say they've got full colonels and privates stopping by to dine.

And why not? There is no finer tradition than barbecue out of ribs, short of Eve.

Pacific Stars & Stripes 7
Friday, June 19, 1970