

Biên Hòa AB Attacks!

My First Night Of Real Fear

3rd APS

1965-1966

My First Night Of Real Fear

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I had been in country for a few months and outside of sniper fire from Buddha Hill and attempted penetration of the perimeters nothing much was going on. I know there was a war going on because I could watch it across the river and see the A1E's bombing and dropping napalm and hear the B52's dropping there pay loads at night but not much at Biên Hòa AB. You could hear small arms fire at night and see tracers flying all over the place but the base seemed to be secure. I would find myself wondering what I would do if a certain thing would happen and how I would react.

I really did not have a strong fear factor because things had been so quite and I found myself in a mind set nothing was ever going to happen then one night in 1966 while riding rifleman on a strike team my first night of real fear that I could die happened. I, along with SSgt Baker and another SSgt whose name I don't remember, was patrolling the north perimeter and bomb dump area. A call came across our radio that a K-9 had alerted to something or someone in between the runways and we went to the north end and took up a position for possible contact with VC infiltrators.

In no time a C-47 in the cover of darkness began to drop parachute flares and our security of darkness seem to become as bright as day. It was then I begin to hear small arms fire and I saw tracers going in different directions. I have heard people say they have been so scared that their knees were knocking and I can identify with them for mine were shaking and my heart was up in my throat. I knew when assigned to a strike team that this could happen and things had been too quite for too long but we were sitting targets lit up like a Christmas tree.

We could hear the K-9 handlers working and then silence. The flares faded and darkness once again covered us and strangely enough I somehow felt I was safe again and my thoughts immediately went to where is the infiltrator. That night Charlie got lucky and escaped and I got lucky and was not hit by all the small arms fire that was flying around. It didn't last long but at the time it seemed like forever. I was only nineteen and I knew I did not want to become a statistic that night but like all the SP brothers that served at Biên Hòa before and after me fear was not our enemy but for many it is what kept us alive.

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