

Vietnam

Biên Hòa flight line VC/NVA Base Attacks

Attack against Biên Hòa AB, RVN, 31 Jan 1968

STATEMENT

William Piazza, SSgt, USAF

AIC

January 30/31, 1968

3rd Security Police Squadron

Biên Hòa AB, Vietnam

On 30 Jan 68, I, SSgt Piazza, had my resupply teams report to work at 1500 hours to start picking up vehicles from the motor pool for "C" Flight Security, the midnight shift. At 0100 hours, we had three resupply teams on base one in the east, west, and north, and I had the one in the north.

At approximately 0300 hours, 31 Jan 68, while driving on the old perimeter road, I noticed flashes coming from the flight line area of the base. Then someone called over the radio that we (Biên Hòa AB) were under rocket attack. I stopped the vehicle and told the three men with me to take cover. We could hear the rockets go over us and see them hit the base. After ten minutes or more the attack stopped, I got my men together and started back to the main part of base, but only got as far as Q-4 and I hear Central Security Control (CSC) call for Def 6 (East End Resupply) to go to Bunker Hill-10 for resupply. I heard Def 6 call in and state that they were stopped up at the MP check point by sniper fire from the east. As I pulled up to the MP CP, Sgt Lee, Def 6 Leader, had his men under cover, I told AIC Simmons Def 6 rider to take charge of my men and told Sgt Lee to come with me. We took a case of flares from his truck and put them in my truck and started back toward the west end.



FOR GALLANTRY—Gen. William W. Momyer presents SSgt. William Piazza with the Silver Star for gallant and meritorious service during the Jan. 31 enemy attack on Bien Hoa AB. (USAF PHOTO)

General Momyer Awards Sergeant With Silver Star

BIEN HOA — SSgt. William Piazza, a member of the 3rd Security Police Squadron at Bien Hoa AB has been awarded the Silver Star, the nation's third highest decoration for valor by Gen. William W. Momyer, commander of Seventh Air Force.

Piazza, a native of Wichita Falls, Tex., received the medal for gallant and meritorious service during the enemy attack on Bien Hoa, Jan. 31.

Piazza was assigned to Defense 5, a mobile resupply unit. He made a run to Bunker Hill 10, which was where the enemy ground forces were attempting to penetrate the base.

When he arrived at the

bunker, his support was needed, so he stayed.

Small arms fire could be seen all through the area. Then, B-40 rockets fired by the enemy came in. A total of 12 rounds hit the old French fortification. One of the rounds killed the officer in charge and wounded our other defenders. Piazza then took charge of Bunker Hill 10.

The Viet Cong and NVA (North Vietnamese Army) made repeated attempts to overrun the outpost but, with the sergeant directing the defense, they were repulsed.

The battle raged for more than six hours. When Piazza left, 153 VC and NVA had been killed and 25 had been detained near his post.



BATTLE OF BIEN HOA AB, JAN 31, 1968

Photo by VSPA Member, Sgt Kennedy: Bunker-10.
(Biên Hòa After Tet: by Sgt Kennedy)

About halfway down the runway we turned off the road and got on the new runway and started back toward the East

end until we came to the end of the runway and then we turned south toward the base until we came to the road that comes up behind Bunker Hill-10. As we started down the road a K-9 unit stopped us and told us that Capt Maisey did not want anymore vehicles up at Bunker Hill-10, so Sgt Lee and I started toward Bunker Hill-10 on foot with a case of flares and our M-16s. After we got there I informed Capt Maisey that we had a truck full of ammo and other equipment, this was about 0323 hours. About three or four minutes later, I started back toward the truck which was about 200 yards behind Bunker Hill-10 and drove it to a point just behind Bunker Hill-10.

Photo by Sgt Kennedy: Bunker-10.

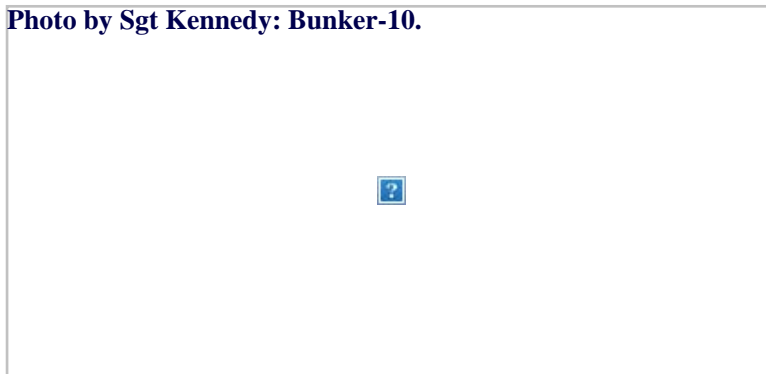
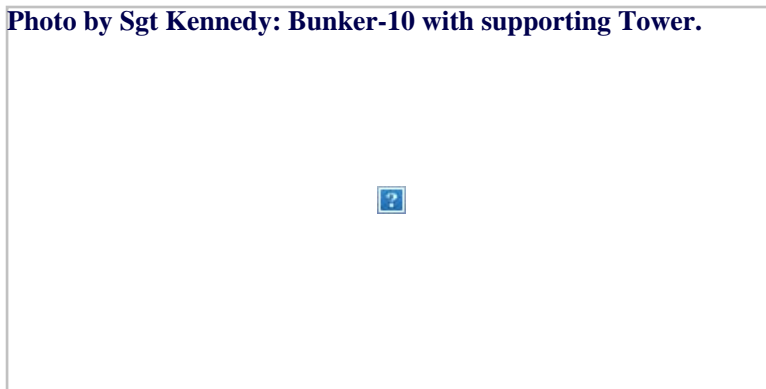


Photo by VSPA Member, Sgt Kennedy: Bunker-10 and support Tower.

At 0330 hours, the VC and NVA hit Bunker Hill-10 with RPGs 2 and 7 plus small arms fire from the east and south and some from the north. As I began to fire, a Lieutenant from the Army that was with Capt Maisey said he did not know how to fire a 40mm, so I gave him my M-16 and started to fire the 40 mm at the enemy. For a while I was the only man outside the bunker and could see the enemy all around us. As the choppers were firing over head at the enemy, I kept asking the men inside the bunker if they were okay, and someone said that one man was dead, but did not know who it was. Then the choppers got too close with their fire so I jumped over the body of the dead man into Bunker Hill-10. After firing from the inside for a while, the sky wasn't lite up as much as before, so I went outside again and could see that the Spooky flares in the sky were getting fewer, so I started popping the rest of the hand-flares that we had and also kept on talking on the radio to CSC, plus trying to direct the fire power around Bunker Hill-10.

Photo by Sgt Kennedy: Bunker-10 with supporting Tower.



After six or seven hours of battle at night, the day look real good and as I looked over the battlefield, I could see a lot of dead VC and NVA bodies. As the day went on, we had to be very careful of not shooting any US troops making a sweep outside the base. I had a set of binoculars and could see the 101st Air Cav and the VC and NVA moving back and forth about a quarter mile off the east end of the base. Myself and the four other men who remained at the bunker all that day without food and little water, helped give cover to Capt Strones and the men who made the two sweeps with him through the field just north of B. H. 10. At both times we were called upon to give fire support to them, plus I would radio information from Capt Strones to CSC and vice-versa.

About 2200 hours, 31 Jan 68, we went back to work with four resupply teams, north, south, east and west. This is true to the best of my knowledge and I hope that I can help you in any way possible in training any Security Police Personnel going to SEA. Also, this is a list of the attacks on Biên Hòa AB, I hope you can use it.

Strones:Silver Star won at Biên Hòa (Flight Commander)
Piazza:Silver Star won at Biên Hòa (Logistics Sergeant)

VC / NVA Attacks against Biên Hòa AB, SVN: 05 Nov 67 - 15 Jun 68

DATE	TIME	No. Of Rounds	TYPE Attack
05 Nov 67	2340	15	Mortar

31 Jan 68	0300	45	Rocket
31 Jan 68	0330	VC & NVA	Base Penetration
09 Feb 68	0025	12	Rocket
11 Feb 68	0003	20	Rocket
13 Feb 68	0257	15	Rocket
18 Feb 68	0100	21	Rocket
28 Feb 68	0100	30	Rocket
04 Mar 68	0200	20	Rocket
12 Mar 68	2250	12	Rocket
22 Mar 68	0138	12	Rocket
05 Apr 68	2217	30	Rocket
05 May 68	0304	35 / 60	Mortar / Rocket
05 May 68	0600	10	Rocket
07 May 68	0645	03	Rocket
07 May 68	1930	02	Rocket
09 May 68	2344	04	Rocket
10 May 68	0324	05	Rocket
14 May 68	2253	04	Rocket
20 May 68	1945	02	Rocket
26 May 68	0330	02	Rocket
29 May 68	2212	15	Rocket
09 Jun 68	2306	76	Mortar
15 Jun 68	0237	50	Rocket

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