

VIETNAM

Biên Hòa AB

3rd SPS

EATUSOVERFOURUS TREE

by William Weber

LM 146

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Biên Hòa AB Dec.1970-Dec.1971.

During the second half of my one year tour of duty at Biên Hòa AFB, I was C Flight armorer, and, during certain times of each shift, things slowed down, and there was time to kill. Boredom set in and when that happens, anything can be the result.

Biên Hòa was a pretty nice base in 1971, and, compared to the army, next door at Long Bien, we did have it pretty good! Well, Biên Hòa had a base movie theater, and I saw quite a few movies when I was there, and that theater was in the center of the base "downtown" area, near the post office, bx, and clubs, etc.. There were always quite a few people walking around, and the area was pretty busy, most days and early nights. Just outside the theater, on the north side of the building, there was a small tree growing. It wasn't much of a tree - pretty scabby, really! I can't even remember if it gave much shade either, but there in the midst of grassless hardscrabble soil, was that tree, growing all by itself!

Getting back to me, and the armory, and boredom, comes the story. One night, after having gone to the movie, and having issued "C" Flight it's weaponry, I got this idea, which included that scrawny tree. A1C Roger Combs and I got some wood and stencils, and made up a very official looking sign, painted all white, and stenciled with red and blue letters the following message: "Attention This Is A Rare EATUSOVERFOURUS (Lifer Eating Tree) Beware Of Falling Bones!" We snuck out of the armory one night and hustled down to the theater and staked that sign directly under that scrawny tree! We even scattered some old chicken bones around under the tree. It was a real hoot! It looked great!

I tell you what, that sign looked so real and official that it stayed up for quite a few days until some humorless lifer had it removed! It had the same color scheme as the base perimeter signs do, and it really looked official! I'm not sure if Combs ever told anybody what we did, but until I wrote this story, I didn't tell! I do know that one heck of a lot of photographs of that tree and sign were taken by many a base airmen, and a whole lot of grunts from the army base!

Everybody who saw that sign (at least everybody who had a sense of humor) got a kick out of it!

Bill Weber
LM-146

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