



## SAT Whiskey Charlie! Cam Ranh Bay AB Air Base

# SAPPERS!

by James R. Randall  
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*(Photo: Jim Randall by SAT jeep the morning after our little run in with some NVA sappers. Note the AK-47 bullet holes in the windshield.)*

*Reading the accounts of a night that Cam Ranh Bay AB was hit by sappers has prompted me to write the following account of that action.*

**483rd SPS, Cam Ranh Bay AB, June 12, 1970** - Normally, as an A1C, I was assigned to a Mortar Battery, Lightning Delta, but on 12-June-1970 I was assigned as the Sixty man on the SAT team Whiskey Charlie. Around 0200 we were stopped at one of the Oscar posts by the water, and started taking incoming rockets and mortars. Over the radio I heard a K-9 unit call in that he had a 10-55 and had sappers in the wire around the NAF (Navel Air Facility), less than a half mile away, so we jumped in the jeep and hauled butt to NAF. A twelve-man sapper team had penetrated the base!

I was riding shotgun and had the M60 cradled. I really didn't know what we would run into but the incoming had stopped and things were still blowing up. Coming around a bend in the road I saw one of the towers, right in front of the main gate at NAF, explode and then I saw a tall figure, standing in the middle of the road, wearing nothing but a loin cloth, a satchel around his neck and a AK-47 pointed right at us! I fired my M60 just as he fired his AK, and I saw my tracer rounds walk right up his body, spinning him around like a puppet on a string. We were so close that I could see the surprise in his eyes as he died--*I will never forget that expression on his face.*

His AK-47 rounds hit our windshield and the Sergeant drove the jeep into a ditch. We jumped out and immediately ran into another sapper coming out of NAF--we both looked at each other for what seemed an eternity. I pulled the trigger and nothing happened--my 60 had jammed! The other SAT A1C fired his M16 at the VC on full auto and missed. The sapper just turned around and the last thing I saw of him was his behind wiggling through the concertina wire on his way back into My Ca Ville. We were very fortunate that night not to have gotten greased, and I thank God for my life everyday, but I've lived with the memory of that night for 30 years and decided that It was time I told my war story.

Our SAT had repulsed a twelve-man sapper team's infiltration at that point. Another sapper team still got through and blew up part of the POL area. For that action two other members of my SAT team, and I, were awarded the Bronze Star w/V Device.

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