



## **SAPPER ATTACK!**

### **1 July 1965**

# **Three Days of Hell**

## **Đà Nẵng, 23rd ABG (MAAG)/AP**

compiled by Don Poss.

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A1C Al Handy, TDY from the 831st APS, George AFB CA, arrived at Đà Nẵng Air Base, South Vietnam, on Monday, June 28th 1965. Three Days of Hell began, and his TDY tour abruptly ended and he was unceremonious return to George AFB. *Something was not right....*

*This report is an attempt to sequentially relate the events concerning a 1 July 1965 VC/NVA Sapper attack at Đà Nẵng AB, SVN. The report merges statements of participants and witnesses as the attack unfolds, and where possible related photos are inserted. For context, refer to the complete statements of participants and witnesses from the [References](#) page.*

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### **ACCOUNT OF 1st LT. Fred Reiling (LTC, Ret. USAF):**

Some details of the *Đà Nẵng*-memory of the night of SSgt Jensen's death:

At the time, we had three areas on the base that we were guarding.

**First**, was the north end of the ramp where the aircraft scheduled for sorties either in-country or up north were parked. As I recall, they were mostly F-104's, A-1's, and B-57's.



**Secondly**, was the bomb dump which was across the runway about midfield.

**Finally**, was the south end where F-102's and C-130's were parked.



**The F-102's were TDY from Clark** and were for air defense of the base. The crews were on "Alert" and lived in tents between the taxiway and runway.



**On the night in question** we had a guard [Post-1] adjacent to the tents the F-102 aircraft and people were in. We also had a SAT team responsible for all other transit a/c parked all over the ramp. The C-130's were parked on the east side of the taxi way in the newly completed revetments.

[Operation Ranch Hand was an Air Force program to use C-123K aircraft to spray herbicides over large areas was one of many programs under Operation Trail Dust. The aircrews charged with spraying the defoliant used a sardonic motto- "Only you can prevent forests": 1) wikipedia. 2)AF Magazine/Ranch Hand .]



**The actual perimeter of the base** was the responsibility of the 3rd Marines [March of 1965: Marine combat troops, Ninth Marine Expeditionary Brigade, arrived at Đà Nẵng Air Base], and we had the pockets of our [USAF high-value assets] resources that we guarded. We also had people spread out in the base proper to protect the people, especially in the "compound" where most of us lived.



**That night** [1 Jul 1965], I don't recall the exact time but it was late enough that most of us were in bed, SSgt Jensen was performing duty as coffee patrol and hence he had the truck (I thought it was a ton and a half, but not sure) and was on the south end at the time of the attack. He was delivering coffee to the guard [A1C Al Handy] on the F-102-tents when we started receiving incoming mortar rounds.

(Don Poss, [War Stories](#) and [VSPA](#) Webmaster)

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