

Statement of Al Handy, Regarding Da Nang AB, 1 July 1965

This event actually started 3 days prior to that awful night. I was posted at post 1(one) 3 days earlier and during my shift trip flares went off. I called that in to H.Q. and the S.A.T. vehicle came out and made some passes using the head lights to see by and said it was nothing. The next night the same thing occurred, and they reminded me that the Marines had security under control on the other side of the fence. All 3 nights were this way. In the mean time I continued walking my post each night and sniper fire would come in and bounce off the ramp I was walking. I finally got on the other side of the taxi way lights and the rounds stopped. I knew someone or something was there and using the head lights of a vehicle to search was not good enough.

At around 12:50 A.M., July 1, 1965, Sgt. Jensen drove the coffee truck up to where I was. I opened the passenger door and he said the pot was on the floor on the passenger side. It was an 8 cup pot that Terry brought out to me while the large pot was still brewing. He knew I liked coffee, what a guy. Before I could pour the first cup a mortar round went off about 30 yards in front of the truck. I dropped the pot, he said to contact H.Q so I tried to use the radio. I think all I got out was "post 1 to desk" and I could see around 15 NVA shoulder to shoulder firing rifles and throwing hand grenades. I dropped the radio, and took my M16 off my shoulder and took the safety off. I had a round in the chamber and was on fully automatic. All the while Terry was getting out on the drivers side. By the time I was ready to fire Terry had already been hit and parts of Terry were on the front of my uniform. I saw him drop out of the corner of my eye and that's when I spent my first magazine of 20 rounds, it took about 1 ½ seconds. I saw a few of them go down, but the rest were still coming. I put the second clip in and switched to semi-automatic. I kept firing at them and by the time I reached the fox hole, which was full of trash from day shift, I spent my second magazine. I changed clips and took careful aim each shot knowing I would run out of ammo. I saw Terry at the back of the truck with an NVA standing over him and I shot him. I didn't know Terry had already been shot in the back.

While in that fox hole rockets were cooking off and bouncing along the ground. One went right over the top of the fox hole and hit the out house behind me. I thought it was an NVA running towards me and I almost stood up to shoot him, thank goodness the rocket was faster than I was.

I shot another NVA trying to go pass on my blind side at the end of a large bunker. I saw the leaves on his helmet and shot through a tent in front of him. I don't know if I killed him or not. He didn't get by is all I know. I wasn't counting my rounds but I know I was nearly empty.

During the whole battle the S.A.T. vehicle tried to reach us, Sgt. Bush was part of that team. The first time they caught fire and turned around and left, the second time the same thing happened, the third time they made it all the way. I rolled out the back of the fox hole and ran down a drainage ditch between the taxi way and run way yelling my last name hoping they wouldn't shoot me. When I got to

the vehicle all I could think of was I needed more ammo. I didn't get any. The next thing I knew I was being taken to the dispensary. While I was there someone came in and wanted to know why I shot Terry. I said I didn't. They handed me a note pad and told me to write everything down. Later I heard they were OSI. While I was there a Capt. came in loving on me. Caught me off guard and had to push him away and asked him what he was doing. He said he and 25 other crew members were in that large bunker and saw the whole thing. He thanked me for saving their lives and left. Wished I would have gotten his name for verification now. I had no idea that anyone was out there.

At the beginning, while being posted, we passed a group (4-5) of Marines huddled in a circle just before you get to the Liquid Oxygen Plant. Never saw one during the battle.

I know Sgt. Bush gave the best report he could, but he was not there the whole time. And I was a 3 stripper, not 2 TDY from George A.F.B., CA. (Victorville).

Respectfully,
Al Handy