



**Biên Hòa Air Base,
BRAVO ONE THREE
3rd Security Police Squadron 1968**

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----- Original Message -----

From: BobGV@aol.com

To: Don Poss

Sent: Monday, May 12, 2003 8:55 PM Subject: VSPA:
Biên Hòa AB, Stories

To Ron Peterson:

Ron,

I was reading about the death of A2C Horace
Holbrook on **12 May 1967** from a rocket attack
and you commented that it was the first major attack at Biên Hòa.

No disrespect intended to Airman Holbrook but that was not the first major attack at Biên Hòa as you stated. I was stationed there (as a A2C) in 1964 and we had 80 rounds or so of 81mm mortars lobbed in and four Army hotches sustained direct hits and all the fatalities that night were Army soldiers. I know of several who were wounded including an Air Force Airman who was on the air crew of an HH-43 (firefighter/rescue) on standby near the control tower and while running for cover away from the tower, was a victim of friendly fire from the Army area where the majority of the casualties had occurred. We had a squadron of B-57s on the hotpad at the time of the attack and afterwards, only (2) were flying the next day - six were burned to puddles of melted metal and engines. I was in the fire department and I took pics of this myself. An **Airman was awarded a Silver Star** that night for pulling a burning parachute flare off several hundred thousand gallons of aviation fuel stored in rubber bladders.

I think you will have to agree this was probably the first major attack. The attack began about 12:20 a.m. on Halloween of that year.

I did like your website and sure enjoyed reading about those who were there after me. Thanks for your efforts.

Robert G. Vanzant
A2C, AF15667095
Fire Protection Specialist (AFSC 57150)
Biên Hòa.AB, RVN (APO 27)
GOOGLE: "Biên Hòa" "November 1, 1964"



Two days before the U.S. presidential election, Vietcong mortars shell Biên Hòa AB near Saigon. Four Americans are killed, 76 wounded. Five B-57 bombers are destroyed, and 15 are damaged. *Photo: American aircraft burn on the ground at Biên Hòa*

On November 1, 1964, Viet Cong squads shelled the airfield at Biên Hòa with mortars, destroying five of the B-57s parked there and damaging 15 others. On 19 Feb 1965, the B-57Bs were released for armed combat operations with the first mission taking place the same day. The B-57Bs hit North Vietnamese territory for the first time on March 2, some 25 miles north of the DMZ.

Source: The Pentagon Papers, Gravel Edition, Volume 3, pp. 590-591

"... **The Biên Hòa incident of November 1, 1964** poses an even more pressing requirement for action under the retaliatory principle confirmed in NSAM 314." Air Force's Ground Support in Vietnam: "For the first three years of U.S. involvement in South Vietnam, the Air Bases were more or less left alone by the Viet Cong. All of that changed shortly after midnight on November 1, 1964, when Viet Cong gunners fired between 60 and 80 rounds from six 81mm mortars on Biên Hòa, then escaped from the area without being detected. Four Americans were killed and 72 wounded. Moreover, five B-57 jet bombers were destroyed and 15 damaged, along with four U.S. Air Force helicopters and three VNAF (Republic of Vietnam Air Force) A-1H fighter-bombers. Air Force security policemen began trying to improve base defenses as harassing attacks became more frequent..."

Timeline: "November 1, 1964

Vietcong raiders infiltrate the US Air Base at Bienhoa, 12 miles north of Saigon, killing 5 US servicemen and two Vietnamese, wounding about 76, destroying 6 B-57s, and damaging some 20 other aircraft. Senator Goldwater challenges President Johnson to admit to the American people that the US is involved in an undeclared war in Vietnam."

The Vietnam War, America Commits, 1961 - 1964: November 1, 1964 - The first attack by Viet Cong against Americans in Vietnam occurs at Biên Hòa AB, 12 miles north of Saigon. A pre-dawn mortar assault kills five Americans, two South Vietnamese, and wounds nearly a hundred others. President Johnson dismisses all recommendations for a retaliatory air strike against North Vietnam.

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