

Cam Ranh Bay AB Stand Off Rockets and Sapper Attack

Bomb Dump Explosion!

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Photo by Don O'Fee. Cam Ranh Bay AB Munitions area exploded and burned for 2 days! August 25, 1971, 0226 hours. The Stand Off and Sapper attack resulted in the destruction of 6,000 tons of munitions valued in 1971 dollars in excess of \$10,300,000.

It was a hot summer night in August 1971 at Cam Rhan Bay Air Base. I was on a North Bay kilo post when in the Tri-Service bomb dump area a Kilo unit got an alert. The Sierra, Whiskey, Kilo and Tango units went on Immediate Alert. Shortly thereafter, all hell broke loose. In my area, one of the Tango posts spotted a flash from the mountains over looking the bay area. This instituted an "incoming" warning over the radio to all posts. I had been incountry for only a few months and did not fully grasp an 'incoming' was up close and personal'. In a matter of seconds, one rocket blew up in the bay in front of me and another flew overhead and exploded behind me. My dog, Ceasear and me ate dirt. We were not hurt, just a little shaken. Less than an hour later, the first of many satchel charges exploded in the tri-service area. I clearly remember a Tango security policeman yelling, "*There goes another one!*"

The tri-service area had 200, 500, 1000 and 10,000lb bombs in revetment areas. There were many bombs in each revetment. The satchel charges thrown in the revetments, exploded, and this ignited the bombs. I was miles from the tri-service area, but could clearly see all the explosions. When a revetment of 10,000lb 'Cheeseburger' bombs exploded, the concussion and mushroom cloud resembled a nuclear blast. There were explosions all night long and into the morning. We were very lucky there were only a few casualties.

The next night I was picked to go on post in that area. As one of the few Sergeants in K-9, I had to go. There were white phosphorous and small pellet shells scattered all over the area. We avoided any contact with hazardous material and made it through that first night. One thing I will always remember is that two nights later, I was on post during a lightning storm. At the first flash of lightning, me, and I'm sure others, hit the dirt. I will never forget the experiences of good old Cam Rhan Bay, and would not trade them for any thing.

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