



Đà Nẵng Air Base... Rocket City

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ACCOUNT OF A1C Handy :

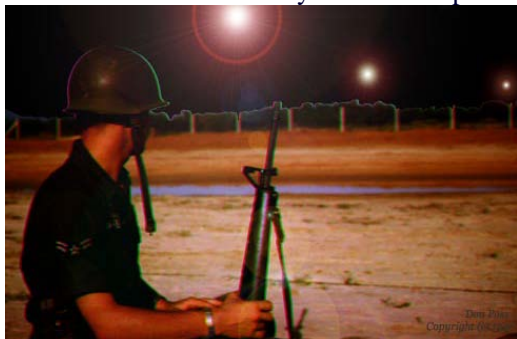
I was standing at the open door on the passenger side picking up the 8 cup pot from the floorboard. Before I could pour the first cup or ask him [Sgt Jensen] any questions, a mortar round went off about thirty yards in front of the truck. When the first mortar went off, I dropped the pot and Sergeant Jensen said for me to contact H.Q., so I tried to use the radio -- the Motorola was the type that could fit on a belt, but this one had a strap so I could carry it on my shoulder. It worked either way. I didn't put it on my belt, I had enough there already with the ammo pouch.

Sgt Jensen had his door open and was getting out (turned and still in the sitting position with his legs outside) when the small arms fire started. While he was turning is when he told me to radio HQ. 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 at the aircraft. Sgt Jensen was hit when I made the attempt to call. I dropped the radio when *I saw the VC shoulder-to-shoulder firing at us*. All the while Terry [SSgt Jensen] was getting out on the driver's side. That's when Terry went down, I could see him out of the corner of my eye. I had no further commands from Terry. I took the safety off and emptied my first mag at them in about 1 1/2 seconds, using a right to left sweep.

Everything was happening at *90 miles an hour!* Sapper explosions! Fireballs! The flight line and revetments were lit up by generator flood lights. Everything was that *white-orange* surreal light and now C-130 aircraft were exploding fireballs and debris was flying everywhere. The noise was jarring to my ears and explosions like a punch to my body.

Mike Bush, (MSgt, USAF Security Police - Retired) :

Over the noise of the enemy's fire and explosions, SSgt Jensen yelled at Airman Handy to "Get the radio in the bunker," as the truck that SSgt Jensen was driving was not radio equipped. At the same time, the NVA force moved from behind the C-130 revetments area, and across the taxiway, firing as they advanced, into the small tent/trailer area, located between the taxiway and the active runway where the alert crews, and maintenance troops were billeted.



Meanwhile, Airman Handy had been attempting to contact CSC with the radio located in the bunker (a large "portable" non-

tactical Motorola radio, not a small hand-held radio which he could have worn in a belt carrier case), with negative results.



ACCOUNT OF A1C Handy :



I dropped the radio and took my M16 off my shoulder and took the safety off – *I had no choice*. It was a reflex to start firing – I knew we were dead if something didn't happen and happen now! I had a round in the chamber and was on fully automatic.

ACCOUNT OF A2C Tom Winn:



Photo: A2C Tom Winn, Đà Nẵng AB, 1965

When the attack first took place it was known the VC had penetrated the base perimeter.

SSgt Jensen tried unsuccessfully to open the driver's door to the vehicle, but it wouldn't open. He spent several precious seconds stuck in the vehicle trying to open the driver's door. He may have already taken one round shot through the truck door before he finally actually exited the vehicle.

If the door of the vehicle SSgt Jensen was driving hadn't jammed, he might have had time to exit and take cover in the culvert next to the sentry post. There was a small culvert or ditch between the taxi-way and the runway.

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

They opened up with small arms fire and Sgt Jensen returned fire with his side arm, a .38 revolver. *He had left his M16 at the desk when he got the coffee jug.*

Mike Bush, (MSGT, USAF Security Police - Retired) :

SSgt Jensen dismounted the vehicle on the driver's side (preparing to engage the sapper team), and was immediately struck once in the lower abdomen by a 7.62 X 39 mm. AK-47 round. SSgt Jensen went to his knees, and though painfully wounded, drew his .38 caliber revolver, and returned fire at three NVA soldiers at a range of approximately 30 yards. Seeking better cover, SSgt Jensen managed to crawl around to the rear of the vehicle, where he took up a position behind the right-rear tandem wheels, and prepared to re-engage the enemy.

ACCOUNT OF A2C Tom Winn:

SSgt Jensen ... [at] the rear of the vehicle crawled under it...

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

He ... then ... took up a defensive position and continued firing.

[Mike Bush, \(MSgt, USAF Security Police - Retired\) :](#)

SSgt Jensen fired three rounds, and witnesses later recounted that two of the NVA soldiers went down -- no enemy bodies were found as the NVA always removed the bodies of their dead upon withdrawal.

In the ensuing confusion, the NVA soldier managed to circle around the rear of the burning ton-and-a-half truck, and approach SSgt Jensen undetected.

[Article: Time Magazine, Bigger & Uglier, July 9, 1965](#)

Excerpt: Immediately he [SSgt Jensen] ordered the nearby sentry [A1C Handy] to return to his bunker and to call for the security alert team. Jumping from his vehicle, he took cover and opened fire on the attackers with a .38 revolver. They returned his fire, wounding him severely. Ignoring his wounds, Jensen crawled up and into the rear of his truck and continued to fight it out with the enemy forces. He knew that only he and the sentry stood between the Viet Cong band and another bunker where 25 flight line personnel had taken cover after the explosion.

[ACCOUNT OF A2C Tom Winn:](#)

... A VC came from behind [the truck] several seconds later ...

[Mike Bush, \(MSgt, USAF Security Police - Retired\) :](#)

The NVA soldier stood over the gravely wounded SSgt Jensen ...

[ACCOUNT OF A2C Tom Winn:](#)

... and sprayed him with automatic gun fire.

[Mike Bush, \(MSgt, USAF Security Police - Retired\) :](#)

... firing four rounds into his upper and middle back, killing him instantly.

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

He was killed in the gunfight and the sappers continued on with their bandoleer grenades, placing them under aircraft and attempting to get to the tents where the people were sleeping.

Sgt Jensen, by standing his ground, kept the sappers out of the tents and consequently saved many lives, but gave his own by his action.

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