

## 366th SPS, USAF

Tan My, Vietnam

LORAN Tower

The Army Lost my Cookies

1972

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Đà Nẵng, 366th SPS Det-1/Tan My

### The Army lost my Cookies at the tender age of 19.

It was spring, 1972. The Easter Offensive was hot and heavy. The Army who operated the Port at Tan My had pulled out and turned it over to the ARVN. What we didn't know was the Army took our mail address with it. Our mail was being marked "no such address, return to sender." They were seeing the Easter Offensive on TV and realized the NVA were farther South than I was. At a loss as to what to do with the stale cookies and cigarettes that were coming back, my parents did what every South Carolinian did back then. They called Senator Strom Thurman's office.

We were doing long hours. At 8pm we went to post, usually a tower or bunker, or sometime roving patrol. At 8am we went to chow and either filled sandbags/repair bunkers and perimeter flares etc. or mail/scrounge runs. Either way it was afternoon before getting some shut eye.

It was mid-afternoon when I awake to some Coastie (short for USCG personnel who ran the electronics for a Loran tower), telling me, *my Mother is on the landline*. The only thing I remember is saying something about the possibility of this being his last day in country. We were in the middle of nowhere. Some 30 miles south of the DMZ. Miles from a base or city. There is no payphone at the corner. He was gone and I was happy.

Just as I fall back to sleep, some jerk is banging at my door, walks in and says "Airman Thomas--*your Mother is on the landline*." It was the Coast Guard Captain and he wasn't playing. My Mother *was* on an old hand crank field phone. With the Easter offensive well underway, we had trouble getting any supplies. What we did get came in a net under a Huey. Yet, here's my Mother, on a crank phone in a sandbag bunker.

I don't remember much about it. Shortly after they contacted Senator Thurman, he had them on the phone with me and my cookies on the way. I have to be the first person able to ask their Mom to "please come get her baby boy" from a sandbag bunker in the middle of a war zone.

I Never did know how that worked, but I got my cookies and Thurman got reelected.



**1. Tan My, Loran Station: Whoopie-House, and Tower. Photo by: Mike Thomas, 1972.**

**The Whoopie House:**

Two former ROKs came back and opened a bar, restaurant and a place to relax, right outside our perimeter. We had a landline where we could place orders and have it delivered!! It was the former summer house of a past ruler or something. There are enough stories about that place to write a book. After it opened we had a lot of station inspections from the Army Brass. All conducted from the Whoopie House.



**2. Tan My, Loran Station: Tower. Photo by: Mike Thomas, 1972.**



**3. Tan My, Loran Station: A1C Joe Whitehead. Photo by: Mike Thomas, 1972.**

**A1C Joe Whitehead:** Joe is standing "on deck", as the Coast Guard insisted on calling it, just inside the perimeter gate of the Tan My Loran C Station. Behind him is the Command Post Bunker being built. My guess is that makes it early March 1972. We were preparing for the yet to be fought, Easter Offensive. I think we filled enough sandbags to replace the Hoover Dam! I would love to hear from Joe.



**4. Tan My, Loran Station: Main Gate. Tower, top-right. Photo by: Mike Thomas, 1972.**

**Papa San:** This is a picture of A1C Bill Ashworth letting our Papa San out of the gate after a days work, with a load of planks and his prized bicycle. Would like to hear from Bill also.



**5. Tan My, Loran Station: Tower as seen through main gate fence. Photo by: Mike Thomas, 1972.**



**6. Tan My, Loran Station: Port of Tan My. Russian Tank. Photo by: Mike Thomas, 1972.**

**Captured Russian T XX Tank:**

Sometime around the end March 1972, the NVA started bringing Tanks and Artillery across the DMZ and the "radio chatter" and scuttlebutt confirmed that it was happening. Yet, everyday when we pick up intel at the MACV compound in Hue, it says that it's not possible for them to bring them that far. I remember we use to make fun of it, that somebody ought to at least fly over the place before making the report. Which brings me to what I was told about the tank.

Here is a captured Russian Tank from the NVA whom MACV assures us is a figment of our imagination. Supposedly they were on their way to the MACV compound in Hué to park it in the Commander's office. While I doubt that, over the past few years, I've begun to believe they really were going to Hué to show the brass. I wonder what they really did with it?

Russian T XX Tank  
Port of Tan My 1972



**7. Tan My, Loran Station: .50 Cal in bunker. Photo by: Mike Thomas, 1972.**

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