

**1** - Brief History, Background, and News: Viet Cong attacks against two South Vietnam Air Bases in 1964-1965. The two major Air Bases Bien Hoa AB, near Saigon, and Đà Nàng AB, south of the DMZ, were attacked by suicide-sapper teams, tossing explosive satchels, and under cover rocket and mortar barrages. US Military were killed and wounded and aircraft were destroyed. These two attacks had unforeseen consequences for the Viet Cong and NVA, leading to a major expansion of USAF security forces, and the establishment of Combat Security Forces within the US Air Force.

Viet Cong attacks upon South Vietnam Air Bases increased with loss of US lives and destroyed and damaged aircraft. USAF Security Program surveyed and focused on developing an airbase ground defense concept, and test specialized Security Police Squadron forces: Biên Hòa Air Base, 1 November 1964: Viet Cong attacked with rockets and mortars.



Every airfield should be a stronghold of fighting airgroundmen, and not the abode of uniformed civilians in the prime of life protected by detachments of soldiers. Winston Churchill, 29 June 1941

The true measure of any program lies in the results achieved. US Air Force Doctrine Document 2-4.1, page 1 (https://www.globalsccurity.org/military /library /policy/usaf/afdd/2+ 1/afddZ+ I.pdf)

The following selected headline news articles reported the major attacks upon South Vietnam Air Bases that prompted the USAF to develop a combat security police squadron (*fighting air-groundmen*) capable of carrying out an Air Base Defense Mission.

1966-1967 Phu Cat, Base Camp



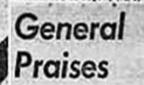
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e attack on film Has airfield near Saipus killed mericans and destroyed five B-57 twin-engine jet

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1-1. (above) Biên Hòa Air Base, North of Saigon, came under fiery rocket and mortar fire, 1 NOV 1964, receiving 70 rockets and mortars.

1-2 .(Photo, right): November 1, 1964, Bien Hoa Air Base: A Viet Cong mortar team penetrated Bien Hoa Air Base perimeter in a fierce thirty minutes Stand Off rocket and mortar barrage, striking the flight line with 70 rounds killing four US servicemen and two Vietnamese, wounding an additional 76, and destroying a USAF squadron of five B-57 Canberra fighter-bombers, and 25 helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.



The above USAF Photo shows the unfolding disaster that befell Bien Hoa Air Base, 1 November 1964.

**1-3.** For a better understanding of what the disaster looked like, click the below link and animate the composite photo. (*It is a large file so let it load*)*T* 

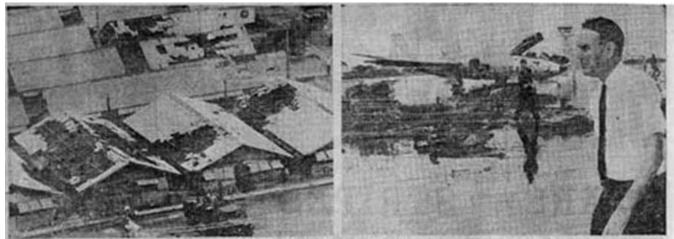
#### **Click to Animate below Photo**

http://www.vspa.com/images/a\_bh-b57-mortar-attack\_1964.gif

(Composite by Don Poss)



### 1-4: AP Article, 2 July1965.



Maxwell D. Taylor tright photos white the air base p

# Johnson Replaces General Praises B-57s Hit by Reds Defenders

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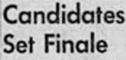
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Information from the American spokesman in Saigon indicated that both the South Vietnamese soldiers and American marines were responsible for the lapse in security that permitted a Vietcong assaúlt team to enter the Danang base.

The spokesman said the team

of 6 to 10 men first entered through an outer perimeter patrolled by South Vietnamese Government forces and then through an inner perimeter for which the American marines had total responsibility.

At Danang, some marine officers were protesting that they had sought to patrol the outer southern region of the base but had been prevented by the Victnamese from doing so.

According to the most accurate reconstruction tonight, the Vietcong team cut the wire in the air base fence at 1:30 A. M. They were supported by 10 or more rounds of \$1-mm, mortar fire,

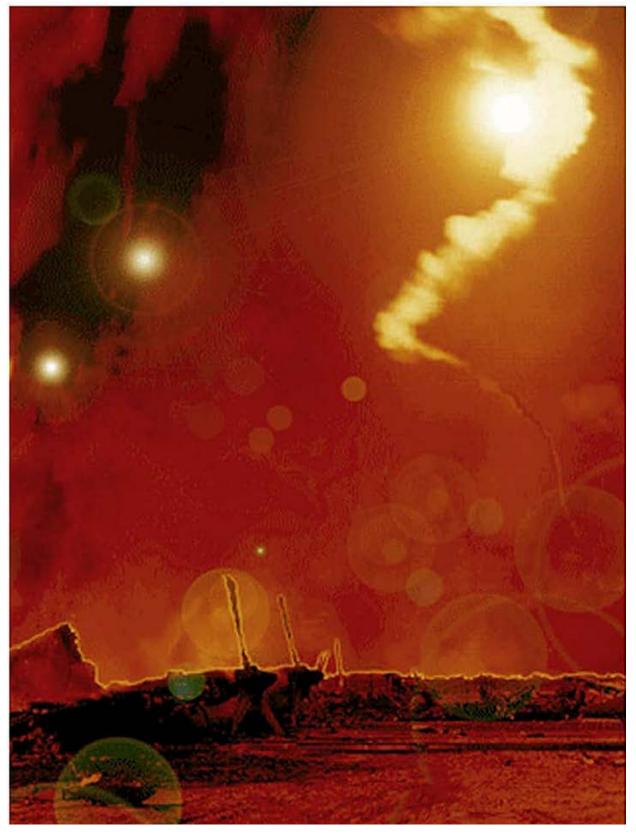
to date

The team destroyed with explosive charges two United States Air Force C-130 Hercules transport planes and damaged another. One Air Force F-102 Delta Dagger fighter plane was destroyed and two more severely damaged with 57-mm. recoilless-rifle fire.

Attack Was Political, **Barry Hints** 

# 1-5 (Photo left, Composite by Don Poss) July 1, 1965, Đà Nàng Air Base:

Đà Nàng Air Base was attacked by a Viet Cong sapper squad accompanied by personnel from the Third Battalion, 18th Regiment, 325th People's Army of Vietnam Division (PAVN).



**Đà Nàng Air Base, 1 July 1965:** A 25 men Viet Cong Suicide Sapper team penetrated the giant Air Base's southeast perimeter (guarded by ARVN), through five holes cut in the perimeter fence. Attacking under a mortar barrage of high-explosive rounds, a firefight ensued with TSgt Terrance Jensen (KIA) and AP Al Handy (TDY).

**US Casualties:** 1KIA, 3 WIA. **Aircraft:** 3 destroyed, and several damaged; 1 Viet Cong POW was captured.

**1-6: Below photo** shows the aftermath of the Air Base attack. Revetments area debris is mostly cleaned up, but destroyed and damaged C-130s are partially still in place on 8 July 1965.



**Background on Air Police Đà Nàng AirBase duties on 1 July1965:** During the Sapper attack there were 90 Air Police personnel at Đà Nàng Air Base and assigned to the **23rd Air Base Group/AP.** Their duty was security of Air Force Assets, and *not* security of the Air Base or perimeter (manned USMC and ARVN). AP Weapons: .38 revolvers, M-16 Rifles, and Shotguns.

The next twelve months would see a rapid build up of Air Police personnel. The **6252nd Air Police Squadron** was activated and expanded to 1100 Air Police, and 55 K-9 Sentry Dog teams. In that year, the squadron name would change twice more: **35th Air Police Squadron**, and **366th APS/SPS**. Duties expanded to include internal perimeter security, ammo dump, base security, and law enforcement. Don Poss, Đà Nàng AB, K-9, 1965-1966

#### 1-7. 1964: Viet Cong Mortars Vietnam Air Bases; Biên Hòa and Đà Nàng.



**July 1, 1965: Dà Nàng** AB attacked by Sappers and received 6 mortars. US casualties, 1 dead (Air Police TSgt Terrance Jensen) and 3 wounded; 3 aircraft destroyed, 3 damaged; and 1 VC POW captured.

Newspapers: 1 July 1965: Đà Nàng Air Base attacked by Sappers and mortars.

## 1-8. NEWS - Viet Cong Suicide Unit hits Đà Nàng Air Base, RVN, 1 July 1965.



# 1-9. VC Mortars destroy C-130 Aircraft at Đà Nàng Air Base, RVN, 1 July 1965.



**1-10. VC Mortars destroy F-102s at Đà Nàng Air Base,** RVN, 1 Jul 1965. TSgt Terrance Jensen, 23rd ABG/AP KIA.



# Suicide Unit Hits Da Nang

(Continued From Page 1) south end of the airstrip at about 1:30 s.m. From a position between the base and the southern limits of the defense perimeter, the guerrillas poured about 30 rounds of 81mm shells onto the edge of the runway.

The suicide squad field when American crewmen scrambled from their tents and trailers surrounding the aircraft.

At the same time the suicide squad was cutting through the tangled barbed wire defenses of the base, another Viet Cong squad penetrated within two miles of the base and unleashed the bar rage of mortar rounds.

Most-of the mortar fire landed beyond the amplane parking area. And at least a dozen rounds hit the runway.

Damage from the mortar fire was called "minimal" and did not put the vital base out of operation.

As the sound touched off the grenades they sprayed the area with automatic weapons and small arms fire.

One cycwitness said he saw, about six Viet Cong running back toward the backed wire after the attack was over, There was no immediate mdication of whether any of the Vist Cong infiltrators were killed.

Reports of shooting around the flightline tallied with reports of shadowy figures running away from the plane park.

A Marine spokesman said Viets numese troops were responsible for the sector of the perimeter in which the Viet Cong set up their mortars;

American airmen risked their lives to roce in a mong the blaxing aircraft. They hauled a number of Delta Daggers to safety with two tractors.

The base, 385 miles north of Saigon, is used by the U.S. Air Force for many of the bombing raids against communist north Vietnam and for support attacks against Viet Cong ground raids in the area. The base and the nearby city of Da Mang have been protected since March by the 3d U.S. Marine Amphibious Force, which numbers about 15,-000 men.

Marine mortars answered the communist mortar fire soon after it began. Spotter planes fiew overhead, dropping flares in an attempt to locate the enemy-

Marine pairols hurried out beyond the perimeter. All roads in and around the town were closed and police and troops patrolled the streets.

All personnel were evacuated from the southern end of the runway as soon as the planes were hauled to safety. None were permitted back into the area because it was feared bombs aboard the damaged aircraftmight explode.

Two of the American wounded were members of A Det., 509th Fighter Interceptor Sq. They were cut by flying glass when explasions blew out the windows of the trailers in which they were sleeping.

The three other wounded were marines.

Viet Cong attacks against Air Bases would continue throughout the war, with loss of US lives and aircraft destroyed or damaged on the ground.

• August 2, 1965: Nha Trang AB received 7 rounds; no casualties or aircraft destroyed/ damaged.

August 23, 1965: Biên Hòa AB received 97 rounds; US casualties, KIA, 24, WIA, 11 aircraft damaged; VNAF, 0 KIA, 5 WIA.

After attacks at Dà Nàng and Biên Hòa airbases, the USAF Security Program focused on developing an Air Base Ground Defense concept, and combat security force capable of engaging and repelling enemy commando raids in the Republic of Vietnam, to be known as **Operation Safeside.** 

From the fire and flames of the Viet Cong and NVA's initial major attacks against Bien Hoa and Đà Nàng Air Bases, Operation Safeside was formed, and the Air Force Security Police would evolve in to Combat Security Police (Light Infantry), and after the Vietnam War ended in 1975, the Security Force Squadrons.

Duties and Weapons would continue to change and improve. Don Poss