



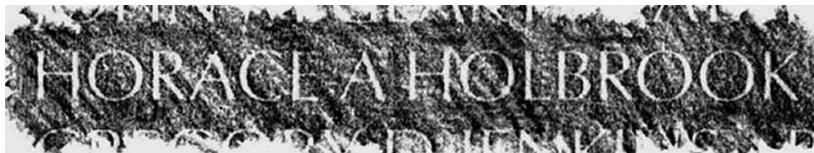
Biên Hòa Air Base - Rockets!

12 May 1967

by Ron Peterson

A2C Horace Alvie "Buster" Holbrook

Bronze Star w/V



I was with the 3rd Security Police Squadron at Biên Hòa from May 1966 to June 1967. I was off duty on the night of 12 May 1967 when A2C Horace Holbrook was killed in a rocket attack. It was a major attack at Biên Hòa—rockets and the works.

The photo was taken from the main sidewalk that goes between the huts from the guardmount and armory area to the last huts in the rows. His hut was on the flight line side of the hut rows. There was a taxiway just out from the back of the huts on the left of the sidewalk.

There was a bunker barrier with concertina wire on top, then a dirt road, then grass, then the taxiway, more grass and the runway. We used to park our vehicles on the dirt lane next to the bunker wall.

Several of the guys used to play cards outside of one of the huts. I think the blond haired guy's name is Dorsey. The guy standing in the "T" shirt is named Sullivan. The guy without the "T" shirt is named Brunelle... I was his bunkmate for a while before he rotated back to the states, I think to Connecticut.



The alert was sounded that we were taking *in-coming*. There was a lot of confusion at first, it was our first time hit. I remember diving in a house bunker near the latrine. Holbrook's hut was on the other side of the latrine. We heard the rocket coming, sounded like breaking a bundle of cedar kindling. Then it hit.

I remember seeing every color in the spectrum, a tremendous rush of air in and out of the bunker, and the deafening explosion. It was quiet for a second and then we could hear a lot of screaming. There were two guys I had just gotten to know, named Murray and A1C David Ware. Ware got pinned between his bunk and the wall and had a huge hole in his side, he was dragged into the bunker I was in (sure would like to find either of those guys).

I am sure about David Ware's side injury. When I came back in to the hut area after daylight I saw the hut where Holbrook had been. I remember being told that the guy with the side injury that was dragged into the other end of the bunker had been pinned between the end of his bunk and the wall that was still standing. I have doubted my own memory several times about those days. I don't remember seeing either of those guys again and I rotated back home shortly after that attack. I think I was told the guy who was screaming with the side injury, David Ware, was medevaced out to a big hospital.

A lot of the guys just went under their bunks instead of going to a bunker. Holbrook lived at the end of his hut and took cover under his bunk. The rocket came in at the other end and the majority of the damage was on his end. I was told that he misinterpreted the second alert siren for the all clear and had come out of cover and was getting his gear out of his locker when the rocket hit.

Shortly after the rocket hit on the bunker the rest of us assembled and went to post. I ended up in the new bomb dump on the west end and I had always worked the east end so it was all new ground for me. Spent the rest of the night sitting back to back with a guy I had never met before. Holbrook was talked about as the nice kid from the states. I don't think he had been in country very long.

The 3rd SPS Christmas of 1966 - My dad went out behind our house and dug up a small Douglas Fir tree. He wrapped it in wet burlap and tin foil and shipped in Air Mail to me.



We were the only guys that I knew that had a live evergreen Christmas tree decorated for Christmas. That is me in the photo, front of the tree with a small transistor radio my folks sent.

We planted the tree outside of my barracks and it was still alive when I left. It was an assigned chore to water the Doug Fir everyday. I worked for MSgt Morgan on bunker building duty for a week or so before I processed out.

Holbrook's death had a major impact on me, I still remember his whole name after all these years. I have always wanted to find his folks or

a relative and share what everyone felt about him... that he was a great kid and everyone liked him.

I hope this helps someone to remember other things.



Many years have passed since 1966 at Biên Hòa. The above photo is the first photo that I realized I had Graves disease, a goiter (the big lump on my neck) or what is commonly known now as hyperthyroidism. I have no idea what caused it but I have heard of others getting thyroid disease that were in Nam. I was treated with radioactive iodine at Travis when I got back and have had problems several times over the years. Just last year I had the last part of my thyroid killed with another radio active isotope and I now have to take meds for the rest of my life. I am just finishing up 26 years in law enforcement so it hasn't effected my career but I often wonder how it all started.

Ron Peterson,
Bellingham, Washington

From: James Lebowitz

The comments by Ron Peterson concerning the rocket attack at Biên Hòa in May 1967, and the death of Horace Holbrook, are very accurate to the best of my recollection. In addition the injury sustained by A1C David Ware, several other Security Police sustained various types of wounds. One was Dennis Hahn.

Concerning the pictures, the person with the blond hair is Dorsey (I do not recall his first name). I am in the last picture on the bottom right---the one without the shirt and in skivey shorts.

James Lebowitz

Special Research by
Ken Record (Capt.)
VSPA Associate, and Historian

Recently the state of Alabama dedicated the above Alabama Vietnam Memorial in the City of Anniston, AL (Location:



Memorial Park, 17th Street and Quintard Avenue). The name of Horace Holbrook appears on the memorial.

The official AF Casualty book (Hostile) shows that an A1C David WARE was WIA at Biên Hòa on 12 May 1967, during the same attack that killed A2C Horace Holbrook. This information was not known until Ron Peterson asked that it be confirmed by VSPA, and his name added to the VSPA SP Purple Heart Page.

The following dedication panels are on Alabama's Memorial Wall, including a poem, by a local VN Vet:



HORACE ALVIE HOLBROOK

A2C - E3 - Air Force - Regular

Length of service 2 years
 His tour began on Nov 16, 1966
 Casualty was on May 12, 1967
 In BIEN HOA, SOUTH VIETNAM
 HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY
 ARTILLERY, ROCKET, or MORTAR
 Body was recovered

Panel 19E - Line 96

THIS NAME ON THE WALL

WHO AM I, THIS NAME ON THE WALL?
 I'M JUST A PERSON, WHO ANSWERED HIS NATIONS CALL.
 FROM A LAND IN THE SOUTH, WHERE AS A BOY
 I WOULD PLAY,
 TO THE JUNGLES OF ASIA, A LAND FAR AWAY.

SO, WHO AM I, THIS NAME ON THE WALL?
 A PERSON PROUD TO DO HIS PART, BE IT BIG OR SMALL!
 I SERVED IN THE JUNGLES AND RIVERS,
 AND SOMETIMES I TOUCHED A CLOUD.
 MY WISH WAS TO COME HOME SAFE,
 AND MAKE MY COUNTRY PROUD.

AND WHO AM I, THIS NAME ON THE WALL?
 SOMEONE WHO LEFT FAMILIES WAITING,
 A FRAID OF THAT FATAL CALL,
 I WAS A SON, I WAS A BROTHER, A HUSBAND
 AND A DAD,
 SOMEONE WHEN HIS NAME IS MENTIONED,
 EVOKES THE WORST KIND OF SAD.

SO LIFT YOUR EYES TO HEAVEN, WHERE
 EVERYTHING IS WELL,
 YOU KNOW THAT I'M IN HEAVEN, I SERVED
 MY TIME IN HELL,
 KEEP OLE GLORY FLYING, AND NEVER
 LET HER FALL,
 I'M LIFE, LOVE AND LIBERTY, BUT I'M NOT
 JUST A NAME ON THE WALL.

KEN ROLLINS
 MARCH 7, 1994

**ALABAMA VETERANS
 OF VIETNAM
 MEMORIAL WALL**

DESIGNATED BY THE SENATE
 JOINT RESOLUTION
 NO. 75
 ADOPTED BY THE
 LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA
 APRIL 28, 1992

DEDICATED IN ANNISTON ALABAMA
 JULY 25, 1998

We Take Care of Our Own