

Tân Sơn Nhứt
December 4-5, 1966
Base Attack

377th Security Police Squadron, Tân Sơn Nhứt, RVN

by [Capt Chuck Henry](#)

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Capt. W. C. Henry

Tân Sơn Nhứt base attack, Dec 4-5 1966: I don't want to get overwhelmed with this, but I am deeply affected by much of what I have read. Thank you for a major job of putting this site up and gathering what you have so far. You already added me to the [officer's list](#) for the 377th, 1966-1967, thanks, and I am pulling together more thoughts.

I just read your request for information from people who were there for the 12-4/5-66 attack, and you mentioned a former squadron member who is now 75. As Security Ops officer at the time of that attack, I have a flood of memories, and maybe I have some which would help answer our buddy's questions or needs. Who is he, and where was he during the attack, to see if I can put pieces together in my memory for anything I can do to help.

During the initial 12-4 attack, I responded by jeep from the officer's quarters to Central Security Control (CSC), and by the time I got there [Major Fox](#) was putting things together. I was sent out around the base on a series of coordinating tasks during the night, and did not know about the Quick Reaction Team that got hit on the west perimeter road until later that night, when I worked my way out there next morning in my jeep (which had serial number 777, an inside joke for anyone who remembers the SAC days). I have photos of some or most of the QRT trucks which were hit out there, some of the bunkers and that water tower observation post, and a lot of other stuff, and will have to take my time figuring out how much of it you may want or need, and how to get it to you.

I was the officer who radioed to CSC at one point during the first night to tell them to knock off the background chatter in the control room, because it was interfering with our radio traffic, and was told later it was some 1 or 2 star general who had dropped in to try to take control of something he knew nothing about. Does anyone else remember anything about that incident, or how they got the general out of CSC?

I remember being directed to the body of one of our guys, I think it was [Oliver Riddle](#), around first light, just outside the perimeter road, and being overwhelmed with having lost three men from my unit in the first combat I had experienced. I had to stand there for a long time, to get the prayer and the crying done because I did not want the guys on the road to see their captain so close to bawling like a baby. I found the names of [Riddle, John Cole and George Bevich](#) on the traveling Wall when it came through our area, and was stunned by the feelings that came back when I touched them. If you get a chance to see the Wall, find them, and make the connection.

There was one of our response team units that got hit by an RPG-2 on their way to Bevich's support, as I recall, and the team was led by a SSgt I knew from McCoy AFB, a great guy whose name is now lost. I thought for many years that one of his team was killed by that rocket, but not if Cole and Riddle were both on the QRT on the perimeter. I would like to

put the memories of who was on that team back together.

About NCO's in the 377th at the time of that attack: I think CMSgt Ford was there, and Maxie Bush, at that time, but that is off the top of my head and I'm not sure. Can't find any notes about it. TSgt Watson was on Terminal Security (the airport terminal and customs) around that time, which I can reconstruct from an interoffice memo referring to a broadjump competition he was promoting. I was willing to compete, if he provided the *broad*. There was an NCO, SSgt I think, named Smith in Charlie Sector who got a Silver Star for his magnificent juggling of the defense of the MLR during the first attack, etc.... sorry, first names are long gone. I may think of more, but wish I had saved some rosters of the outfit from those days.

Here is a little story for a connection: You mentioned being stationed at the M60 post outside CSC at the intersection during the Tet 68 attack? Different attack, I know, but during the night of 12-4-66, I was sent out from CSC to gather some SPS troops and lead them across the ramp to reinforce the revetments and the Charlie Section MLR. In the dark, unable to make sure who my NCO's and troops were, we put together a group of about 20 guys or so, who were supposed to follow me across the ramp to the first machinegun post, reinforce it, and then work our way post by post to the MLR. When we started across the concrete, all hell broke loose (unrelated to us) with tracers and automatic weapons fire coming from the MLR and the bunker where one of our guys had just taken out an NVA with his shotgun while the NVA was satchel-charging either a C-47 or a chopper -- I think it was the Gooney Bird. Anyway, I was running across the concrete toward what would later be your post, and discovered it was very quiet and I was very alone. The other guys had gone back to CSC to come up with a better plan, and later did reinforce the line, but without the running across the open concrete. It worked out for me, because while I was walking back to CSC, a bit grumpy about being left out there alone, a staff car came along with a 2-star flag, headed right straight toward the area of the flight line where the automatic weapons fire had just been so intense. I got to tell the general to turn around and get back off the flight line before he drove right into it. Don't know who he was.

Another memory, but I don't remember if it was the first or second night. Three NVA got cornered in a patch of grass and bamboo out in the middle of a big bare laterite area, between the old runway and the new one then being built. We had many troops lined up along dirt berms left by the construction tractors, near the patch of foliage, but everytime we tried to move the NVA would open up on us. Someone found some slap flares, and we used those to orient ourselves and figure out where the NVA muzzle flashes were coming from. We poured major small arms fire and threw a bunch of hand grenades into the bush until Major Fox told us to send in three guys to see if the NVA were dead. Lt. Jack Howe, and an enlisted man whose name I never got, and I went in. Supposedly in the dark, but someone fired a slap flare while we were in there, and one of the NVA seriously wounded but not dead opened up on us with his AK-47. Lord knows how many people fired at his muzzle flashes until they stopped, and I know I emptied two magazines and my .38 at the position until I was ready to quit. From about 10-15 feet in the brush, I wasn't going to move and make any noise unless I was sure. We were surprised by how much firepower that guy was packing, for his size, besides his rifle. I think Lt. Duc and the Quan Cahn took care of cleaning up the three NVA's weapons, grenades, satchel charges and some little tapered glass tubes which someone speculated was some kind of painkiller or --- does anyone know any more about that?

A TSgt Jeff Petty has just let me know that Major, later Lt. Col. Roger Fox died last April. Damn! He was my supervisor 66-67, and apparently was Squadron Commander later on. We called him "The Fox", and were told he knew more about sentry dogs and the history of the program than most any officer in the AF. I know firsthand that he had a lot to do with picking the finest handlers and dogs we could find, for TSN, and had an uncanny way of working headquarters for anything he could get for the squadron.

There probably ought to be a length limit on letters from former squadron members, and I have surely exceeded it. Good night for now. Thanks again for putting up this site for a fine outfit.

Capt Chuck Henry

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