

TET 1968

Tan Son Nhut Air Base, 377th Security Police Squadron

by **Bernie Beldin**,
Major, USAF (Ret.)

SSgt Bernie Beldin received the Bronze Star Medal with V Device, for valor, during Tet 1968 at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. He continued college and graduated the Air Force OTS in September 1976, receiving a commission as a second lieutenant. Major Beldin is now retired from the USAF. The following is his account of Tet 1968 and his USAF career.

TSN AFSFA Tiger Flight News Article:

Tiger  Flight

Hero's Corner



Our medal winners

by Rick Maitland, Publicity Chairman

SSgt Bernard E Beldin was awarded the Bronze Star Medal (with V device) for his actions at Tan Son Nhut on January 31, 1968.



Bernard E. Beldin



SERGEANT BERNARD E. Beldin distinguished himself by heroism while engaged in ground operations against an opposing armed force at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, from 31 January 1968 to 3 February 1969. During this period, Sergeant Beldin volunteered to be in charge of Base Police escorts. He personally led details which escorted eighteen convoys between Tan

Son Nhut Air Base and various locations in the Saigon/Cholon area. Although firefights and snipers were a continuing hazard, Sergeant Beldin never once faltered or lost

his initiative. His willingness to expose himself to hostile fire was instrumental in permitting this base to function at near normal level and house and feed thousands of additional personnel while under a virtual state of siege. By his heroic actions and unselfish dedication to duty, Sergeant Beldin has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force. I

I started writing my remembrances of Tet 1968 a few years ago in response to a request from the Air Force Security

Forces Association. I just never got it finished, so this may be the impetus I need.

Regarding feeling today about what I did then, I just did my job. When I enlisted, I swore an oath, and I tried my best to uphold that oath. When my NCOIC called to me shortly after the attack began on Tan Son Nhut AB early the morning of January 30, 1968, I responded and did what I was told. I don't consider myself a hero, just a troop who did his job.

Yes, I was a SSgt during my Vietnam tour. My transition from enlisted cop to an officer cop might be interesting to some of today's youngsters.

I enlisted in the AF shortly after graduating from high school (I graduated in June 1960 and entered onto active duty at the end of September 1960). I stayed @ Lackland AFB for 11 weeks of basic training before heading to Edwards AFB, CA, as a "DDA" (Direct-duty Assignment) air policeman. I remained in the career field until January 1969, when I cross-trained into the Training Management (OJT) career field. I maintained a secondary AFSC as a security policeman, and got back into the "cop/security" business a couple of times for special projects. I returned to the Security Police career field upon commissioning in August 1977, and remained in that field until my retirement on July 1, 1992.

I started my college education (night classes) while stationed in France (1962-65), and then continued for a short time after rotating to Mather AFB, CA, until I got promoted to SSgt and had to go on "OJT" to upgrade my skill level. I transferred to Ramstein AB, Germany, in 1969, and began taking college courses (night and evening classes while working "days" @ my training manager job) through the Univ. of Maryland Overseas Division in early 1970. That continued until my rotation back to the States in August 1972. I continued my education, again through night courses, with the exception of one 10-week stint of "Bootstrap Non-terminal TDY" during which time I attended classes during the day and evening for that period. I finished the requirements for my bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice in July 1975, and then applied for Air Force OTS in September 1976. I was accepted, after having completed 16 years of active duty, attended OTS in the spring/summer of 1977, and was commissioned in August 1977. My first commissioned assignment was F. E. Warren AFB, WY, as a missile security flight security officer (FSO). I've never had regrets doing it the way I did. If I had to do it over, I'd begin college as soon as possible after enlisting. I'd also advise youngsters today to finish high school, go to college, and then join the military as an officer. It is, indeed, a different way of life (at least as I remember it).

I'll try to get something put together shortly about my award and the circumstances.

Have a great holiday season,

Bernie Beldin
Major, USAF (Ret.)

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