

Kaboom ...

Tân Sơn Nhứt - 1968

by Denis Cook (RIP: 21 May 2017)

Several days after Tet '68 at Tan Sun Nhut Air Base, a column of Tanks and APC's came through my gate. There were probably 100 to 150 units passing through, a detachment of the 25th. It was hot sunny and my view was from the top of an old French fort--something out of a French Foreign Legion movie.

The column stopped at the gate while the ARVN Captain, at my location, refused to let pass. He had orders that the gate should never be opened under any condition. A small chopper landed and a General got out. Military courtesies were exchanged as well as some verbal profanities.

The gate was then opened rather quickly. As the column passed by I was awed--I had never seen so much fire power in one place! An APC was directly next to my position when a puff of white smoke suddenly covered it and a concussion knocked me on my ass. As I lay there a huge chunk of something shoot straight up like a rocket. It roman-candled about 50 yards before hitting the ground. The APC was destroyed. The crew never had a chance--they were all lost.

The 25th alerted thinking the explosion was a mine. It was later determined a trooper had a grenade attached to his harness that snagged the pin and tumbled the grenade into the onboard munitions, setting it all off.

The joys of the unexpected discharge--just when you think your safe, you're not.

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