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get used to it. But to a man they agree they'd rather be there with their highly sensitive and intelligent dogs that somewhere else. "At least we have someone to talk to" sums up the feeling of the K-9 sentry dog handlers.

Following the April attack on Tan Son Nhut, the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) made a study of the base defense of the base, Major Fox said.

Many improvements have been made since the study was completed. New perimeter lights have been installed, and key points re-fortified.

Another aid has been the spare-time project of the Air Police in clearing waist-high elephant grass along the base perimeter. The Air Police bulldozed, mowed and burned more than 700 acres of the dense reed-like growth. Destruction of the grass has robbed the VC of a place to hide and has made it easier for K-9 and post patrols to observe anyone approaching the base perimeter.

One of the busiest places in the air police are — day or night — is the armory. SSgt. William R. Adkins, 38, Pikeville, Ky., armory chief, points out the importance of the section. "The M-16 rifle and other weapons mean the difference between life and death," he said. "Each man takes much care of his weapon, including the meticulous cleaning of it. He knows that he may need it at anytime.

PRIDE . . . in himself and his unit flourishes among Air Police forces in Vietnam. They work as a team. There is also still some "spit and polish" attached to being an air policeman. During guard mounts — whether it be the daytime force garbed in the normal green fatigue uniform with blue helmet or the night unit dressed traditional combat camouflage fatigues — it is the same. Flight leaders check weapons (during night guard mounts by flash light), uniforms, and pass on vital information.

One thing is certain. Air Police units in Vietnam are well trained, experienced and equipped to do the job. AND THEY ARE TOUGH.



**CHECKING POSTS** — A security alert team (SAT) checks a sentry dog post for possible enemy activity. The jeep SAT teams are quick reaction forces that roam base defense areas. Members of the team are (from left front) Airman First Class Freeman Tilden, 21, of Atlanta, Ga., Joseph A. LeBlanc, 22, of Baton Rouge, La., and Francis A. Jasinski, 21, of Buffalo, N.Y. (back seat). K-9 handler, A1C Leon E. Senecal, 22, of Easthampton, Mass., and his sentry dog, Rex, are the first line of detection of enemy attempts to infiltrate sprawling Tan Son Nhut AB.

*Taken from Seventh Air Force News — Date and Author Unknown*

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(Close Up)

*I believe this story was published in the Stars & Strips shortly after the December 4 & 5th attack at Tan Son Nhut but the front page portion is missing. However, the remaining portion does tell a great story and is a tribute to the men and dogs of the 377th SPS.*

## 3 Dogs Die Heroes in Defense of Airfield

### From First Page

down as the infiltrators began a rush to cross the main airport runway, maneuver past the line of sandbagged bunkers that make up the main line of defense, and penetrate the flight line where scores of jet fighters and transport aircraft are located.

Only one Viet Cong got through, testimony to the defense of 50 American air policemen who fought the guerrillas to a standstill, killing 18 and capturing four.

Airman Marsh, patrolling off the northwest end of the main 10,000-foot airstrip, was the first to notice the infiltrators.

"THEY WERE padding along 50 yards out," he said. "Rebel didn't alert me because the wind was blowing in the wrong direction. But he saw them when I did."

Marsh called urgently into his radio, unclipped Rebel's leash, and slithered back to his waist-high sandbagged bunker. A grenade blasted the silence, fragments hitting Marsh's sector leader who was driving 100 yards away.

"Then it all came in — mortars, rockets, grenades, machine gun fire," Marsh said. "I dropped to my knees and kept firing."

Half a hour mile away, another patrol sentry, Airman 2.C. Larry Laudner, from Rockford, Iowa, heard the grenade explode, and the clatter that followed.

"I DROPPED to my knees and jumped into a ditch, busting my radio," Laudner said. "I look back and I saw maybe 20 Viet Cong, but they fooled me at first. They were moving in military formation, they looked like regular Army troopers," he said.

The sentry challenged the group. "They dropped to the ground which is not so unusual. Then I told them I had a dog and that they had to identify themselves. I was still thinking they were ours," Laudner said.

When no reply came from the

group, he let his German Shepherd dog, Chubby loose.

"CHUBBY MOVED out about 20 yards, then he cut in and I knew he was on to something.

I heard a scuffle, a yell, then I saw Chubby spin out, and an automatic weapon firing. I opened up with full automatic, sweeping from the left to right. I think I killed two or three," Launder said.

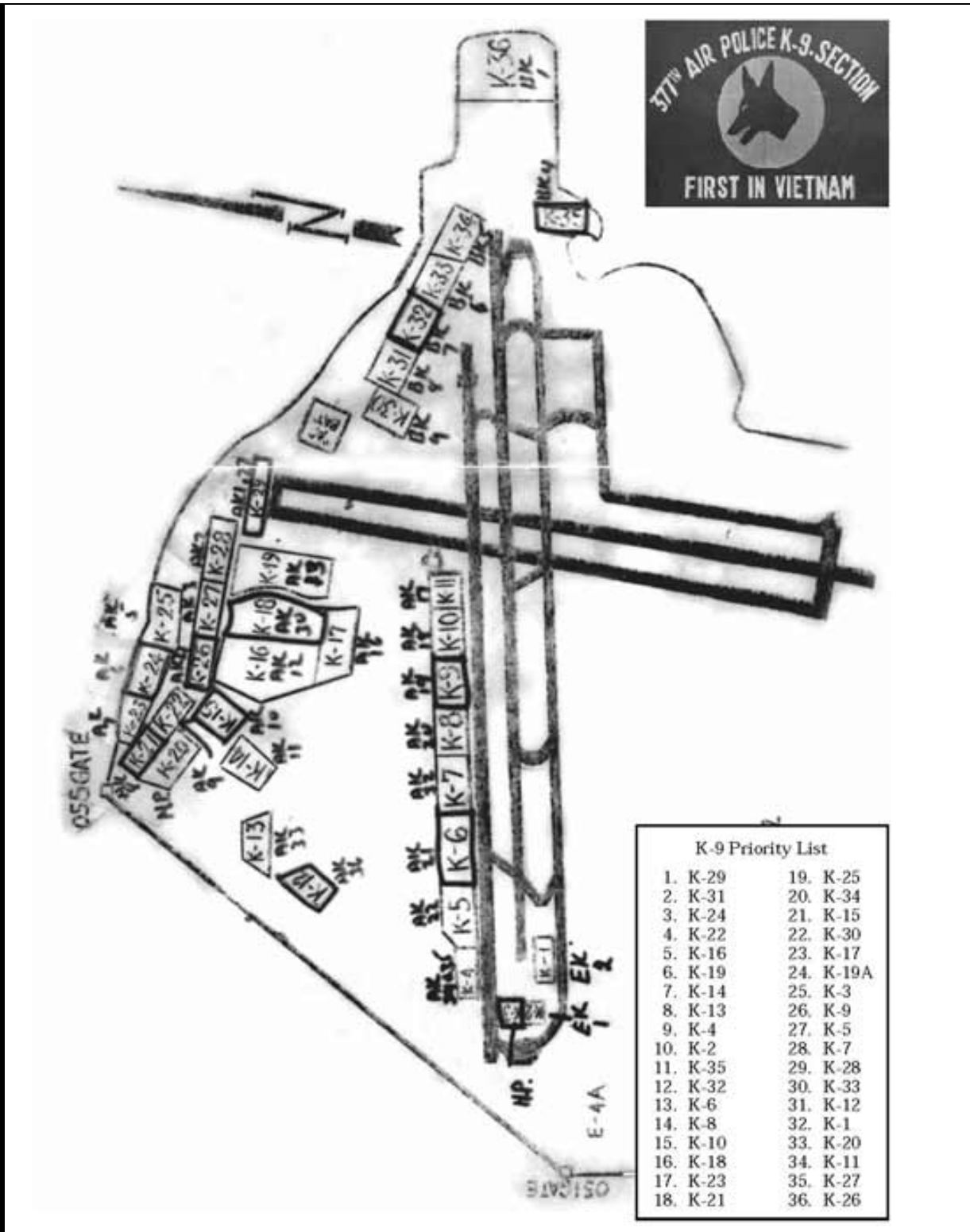
Neither Launder nor Marsh were hit as the Viet Cong infiltrators swept past them toward the air police bunkers spaced 20 yards apart on the flight-line side of the main airstrip. Each of the bunkers held one M60 machine gun and two automatic rifles. These weapons cut the attacking Viet Cong to pieces.

THE MAIN FIGHT lasted 30 minutes, with the American force of 50 air police bearing the brunt of the action in the main line of defense. Three Americans were killed, five wounded.

The Viet Cong left 18 dead behind them. The bullet-ridden bodies, dressed in flimsy black shorts, some without shirts, were gathered from around the bunkers at daybreak.

Amongst them were the carcasses of the three sentry dogs.





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EXCHANGE PHOTO SERVICE





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