

Vietnam

Vung Tau AB

Detachment 1/621st Tactical Control Sq/SP

Vung Tau AB, Det-1/3-8/621st TCS/SP

(Apr-Jul 1968)

by Dave Dowdell,

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Vung Tau AB, SP Tower as viewed from aircraft just taking off.
Courtesy of Charles Harris, Australian military

There was an elevated hill above Vung Tau Air Base, on the peninsula. It was dubbed "VC HILL." We had an initiation for ALL SP's who were assigned there. The Aussies would drive their jeep, or 3/4 ton truck, up to the top of VC HILL, put the vehicle in neutral and coast all the way down the hill. A couple of times, some Viet Cong would be in position to snipe at the vehicle as it was rushing down the hill. One initiation actually resulted in AK-47 rounds hitting the vehicle. We were young and stupid, to say the least!

If my memory serves me well, the unit was Detachment 1/621st Security Police Squadron. The other Detachment was at Dao Phu Quoc, an island off the southern tip of South Vietnam (see map, right). The Vung Tau Air Base duty was USAF SP's augmenting the Australian Air Force Defense Forces, in the security of the Air Base.

Being stationed with the Aussie's was an experience. We were involved in a month long SCRABBLE tournament with the Aussies. They would do some extreme things out on post. The Aussies used aluminum cigar canisters, which once held a single cigar, to cover their flash suppressors on their 7.62 Enfield Assault Rifles. They would remove



the round (bullet) and fire the primer and powder, so to shoot the aluminum canisters at other bunkers, just to pass time. Their nighttime meals (out on the perimeter) were unique for RVN. The Corporal would bring out soup and steamed shrimp for us to eat! I never drank so much beer in all my life when I was around the Aussies. A can of QUEEN'S BITTER, at 7AM, was the norm for our guys.

I hated to go back to Tan Son Nhut!

Dave Dowdell,
VSPA LM 144

There were SP's at Vung Tau AB. The 621st was a Tactical Control Sq. and had Det's 3-8. The SP's may have been assigned as a Detachment to the 621st TCSq. because they were not large enough to be a SP Sq. I believe he was there with the SP's as stated but they served as a Detachment.

We have lots of SP's that served at radar sites, Đông Hà Air Field, etc. that fit this category. Tom Batson, one of our VSPA members, was an Officer in RVN and told me he was in charge of all the radar site security and had small Detachments of SP's providing security all over the country. I asked him long ago to do a write up on this. He hasn't. Maybe it's time we contacted him again. He could give us locations and unit numbers for those guys. We need this info to document SP service history in RVN. I've e-mailed a high school buddy who was stationed with me, at VUNG TAU, to verify the Detachment's designation. He remembers everything about Vietnam. I'll let you know what he says.

-- Steve Ray

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