

Vietnam

3rd APS

Biên Hòa AB, Attacks!

Photos by **Kerry Tolan**

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Biên Hòa AB, 1971-1972

I recently rediscovers a 30-year old cassette tape where I recorded several of the rocket attacks at Biên Hòa in 1972. As I had a recorder literally strapped to my leg during patrol, these recordings capture some pretty close hits. I have (after several splices) digitized the tapes into wave files - the sound quality was in remarkably good condition. I am now in the process of editing the wave files prior to reformatting them into mp3 files. All of the files contain on-going radio chatter that itself is fascinating to listen to.

Click on the MP3 file, then when your Player pops up, click on the Start Arrow.

I've captured the following base attacks:

1. Rocket Attack from Delta 1 (ramp sentry) -

This includes the distinctive sound of rockets being launched in several waves (and my running like hell for cover). Several close-in hits that overloaded the microphone. This is from my walking post (call sign - Delta One) on the flight line. There are three files belonging to this attack, representing three separate waves.

[bh-delta-one-1-first-wave.mp3](#) (651k)

Of interest is that I caught the actual launch sounds in the next two waves. Also, this series of tapes represent the recordings of very close impacts - enough so to overload the microphone. This file catches the general radio chatter.

[bh-delta-one-2-second-wave.mp3](#) (252k)

[bh-delta-one-3-third-wave.mp3](#) (276k)

2. Rocket Attack from Police 5 (main gate)

As the impacts didn't overload my microphone, this is the best rendition of 122s hitting home. These recordings were made possible by having a cassette player strapped to my leg during my duty hours. If something happened (and I wasn't too terrified), I'd slap the record button. This particular file was recorded at Biên Hòa's main gate (call sign - Police Five), probably in 1972, and presents the clearest sounds of 122mm rockets impacting, as they were far enough away to not overload my microphone. It also demonstrates my first dropping my helmet, then my magazine, as I fumbled to load my M16... *heh-heh*.

[bh-le-five-rocket-attack.mp3](#) (370k)

3. Bullseye 7 (bomb dump tower) - Just after the rockets hit - you can hear an aircraft exploding in the distance and my deploying slap flares.

This is the last file (sorry about the size) which records when sappers blew up the flight line bomb dump a few blocks down from my barracks. I woke up by being damn near blasted from my cot, and hit the "record" button as I swung under the bed. The explosions are from the bombs themselves as they cook off. Following is an AFVN report the next day recounting the attack.

[bh-bomb-depot-exploding.mp3](#) (1085k)

Barracks (during flight line bomb dump sapper attack) was cut in half by a 122mm rocket.



Confusion in the barracks with repeated explosions as the bomb dump explodes. Over the next few days I will be editing - primarily the Delta 1 recordings where there's several minutes between attacks. I will also carry archive files of "raw audio" which will be rather lengthy. Until I convert these to mp3, I've no final idea on their size. I expect to have them ready in a few days.

4. Also captured is an apparent probe by VC along the perimeter with the marine bunker frantically calling for mortar illumination and the sound of their M60 machine gun opening up. This is one in a series of 3 files.

[bh-bullseye-seven-1-initial-shock.mp3](#) (508k)

This is the 5th of 8 files. It features the immediate aftermath of an attack with me up in a 20 foot tower (call sign - Bullseye 7) in the Biên Hòa bomb dump. I'm busy dispensing slap flares. There's a revetment chock full of 250lb bombs behind me, and my comfort level is quite clear in the opening radio conversation.

[bh-bullseye-seven-2-aircraft-exploding.mp3](#) (226k)

This is the sixth of 8 files, and the second in the "Bullseye" series featuring the same attack. The neat thing here is that you can hear the rumble and pop of aircraft blowing themselves to bits from missile hits on the flight line - which is over a kilometer away. Radio chatter includes discussing the conflagration.

[bh-bullseye-seven-3-sappers.mp3](#) (230k)

Features where sappers are discovered by a Marine bunker down the perimeter. They call for illumination rounds from a 60mm mortar (call sign - Little Whiskey) and then open up with their M60.

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