

# VIETNAM

Biên Hòa AB

3rd APS

March 16, 1969

## *First Incoming!*

by William Weber

LM 146

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### March 16, 1971:

Having been "in country" less than three months, at Biên Hòa AFB, on March 16, 1971, I was posted as the M60 machine gunner on the flight line Security Alert Team, when I had my first taste of "combat". I remember it as if it had occurred this very morning!

We had just finished making the rounds of the different posts, in our sector, checking sentries and handing out coffee, or kool aid, to whoever wanted it, and had parked, on the flight line, to finish out the tiger flight shift, just before the sun was going to come up. It had been a long, hot, quiet night, and there we were, eyes dropping off, and heads nodding. Soon, we would be relieved, and then we could cop some zzzz's. Once, I caught myself going under, and opened my eyes just in time to see the first 122 mm round, of a five round attack, impact about 100 yards in front of us. BAM - fireworks on the ground, real close to a sentry who was guarding two Jolly Green Giants in their revetments. We had just left him, about 20 minutes prior to the attack! Without being told, we rolled out of the jeep and hugged the ground, getting as flat as anyone could, who was trying to keep from being a casualty. When the explosions stopped, we climbed back in the jeep and SAT team leader, SSgt "Red" Byers, threw it in gear and headed toward the impact site, to see if the guard was OK, as I readied my weapon, for the ground attack that never came!

When we got there, the guard was nowhere to be seen. Pretty soon, a head popped up from behind some sand bags, and it was him. Although the rocket impacted very close by just the other side of the revetment, probably no more than 15 yards away, he was not injured! I asked him if he was OK, and he said "Yeah man - got a match?" I gave him a book of C-ration specials, and watched as he tried to light a cigarette with trembling hands. Right - I was thinking - me too!

Well, that was my baptism under fire, and I came just that close to not being here today, to reminisce, and be able to spin this true "war story"!

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LM-146

*We Take Care of Our Own*

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