



Bruce Buckelew as he looked in 1970 while he was stationed at Cam Ranh Bay.

A WAR STORY **Smelling Like A Rose**

by **Bruce H. Buckelew (RIP: 2/18/2018)**
483rd SPS
Cam Ranh Bay AB, 1970 -1971

I was off-duty in a bunk at the time of the attack and the *strangest thing happened.* We all got up and *knew something was wrong*--even though the explosions had not occurred and "Giant Voice" wasn't even activated. Then all hell broke loose. We heard explosions and saw a giant fire ball. Since all the security vehicles were in use we grabbed weapons from the conex box setup for that purpose and boarded a bus. I thought at the time how ironic it was to be going into a possible fire fight by the school bus and Air Force blue. We ended up in the base dump as a blocking force and you know our mamasans let us know about the smell the next day. I did not hear that the airman on duty in the pump house ran out of it during the first explosion and right into a VC carrying a satchel charge. Not having a weapon he exercised the better part of valor and ran back into the pump house followed by a satchel charge. It was a stroke of luck he was not killed. But the exception of one airman, the POL tanks themselves, the news service reporting that the base had been overrun (scaring the hell out of loved ones) we all came out "*Smelling Like A Rose*".



This is the remains of the POL tank involved in the Sapper attack. refer to the story 'Smelling like a Rose' The tanks in the back ground showed effects of the intense heat but did not burn, they were filled with JP4 We were lucky that other tanks did not explode causing more damage. There were satchel charges placed at other tanks but they did not cause the fire this one did

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