

VIETNAM

ĐÀ NẰNG AIR BASE

23 JULY 1968

Rockets, Rockets, Rockets!

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It was 44 years ago today that I had gone through my First ROCKET attack. I was on a riding patrol, we had been on the ground several times that night before it was our turn, and everyone was getting their fair share as we had *picked up* some pies at the chow hall (they didn't know they gave them to us!). We turned off the main road from Gunfighter Village to the flight line, and were in a covered SP jeep. I sat in the back... pies on both sides of me, and then we got the alert again on the radio: **Rockets, Rockets, Rockets** ... from Marine-1. I don't know how I got out of the jeep but I dove between the cross-poles holding up the jeep's canvas top... I did not step on one pie... and rolled into a ditch with yucky nasty whatever-water. The 122 rockets started slamming on the flight line and we were just 100 yards from the line. I heard the 122's going over my head and hitting 100 yards from us, and I counted three passing overhead (the official count was 16). For the first time, to me, it sounded like 50 incoming rockets! I tried to get back into the jeep the same way I got out, and that wasn't happening. One of those first move-things we made, I guess, was we changed jeeps and got one **WITH OUT** a top. Ya think it would be easier to get out of, right? *wrong*—0602 hours we just made the turn off the road from the flight line to go into Gunfighter village.*

As we made the right hand turn we heard the now-distinctive sound of 122 rockets cracking in the close back ground. I leaped out of the jeep and my left foot got caught on the handle of one of the 60's ammo cans and it jerked me down and twisted my leg as I had hit the ground. I was able to free myself as the jeep started to drag me (both elbows were covered in blood) just as the **SECOND**--yes, I said the **SECOND**-- round hit to our One o'clock. It hit on the other side of the big Marine command bunker. A Marine, standing outside when it just missed the bunker, came over the top and the explosion blew out away from him. He did get slightly injured, and we had to go over and check out what happened. With all the blood on my shirt from the elbow scrapes, I thought I got hit myself! There was a **SECOND** round on the 0602 attack—the first was to our 6 o'clock the second was to our 1 o'clock. And that was my first-ever rocket attack experience: 16 rockets damaged five aircraft.

Jim DeArment

** Once you have heard a 122 rocket impact you will NEVER forget that sound!*

U.S. - 1968 Jul 23, 0204. DN STO 16 Rnds, 5 A/C Damaged; RVN - 2 A/C Damaged, 2 KIA.

U.S. - 1968 Jul 23, 0602. DN STO 01 Rnd., 0 A/C Damaged; RVN - 0 A/C Damaged.

We Take Care of Our Own