

Bright Moon Rising

(c) 2013, by Don Poss

A bright moon rising...skipping from cirrus cloud to cloud, like a rock skipping pond water. Its moonlight pale and silver-luminescent, bathing all in subdued brilliance; cloaking mountains and closer hills softly, and crests in blackest silhouette. Don Poss, an Air Force Sentry Dog Handler, never considered that he and his dog Blackie, like the mountains, were likely silhouetted, and anyone inclined to do so—in the right spot—might have blown him away as easily as at a target-range.



Having just quartered his post, he stood quietly in the night and easily read his c-rations labels, hoping for his favorite pound-cake everyone else seemed to hate. Earlier, he traded one can of peaches for five poundcakes, letting the other handler think he bettered him in the trade, and added them to his stash.

Briefly, on nearby Freed Hill 357, green and red tracers glided slowly crisscrossing swords, and faded. The sentry's thoughts had replayed his prom night, and home, and the K-9 team moved away from the active runway—Blackie's, ears perked, his eyes scanning the marsh perimeter.

Photo left, by Don Poss: 1965-1966, Da Nang Air Base, 35th SPS. Handler Don Poss and Sentry Dog Blackie 129X.

Kneeling, the sentry's eyes were drawn toward the heavens, in awe. For some reason he wondered what had placed him in Vietnam a hundred years after his relatives had fought in our own great war against the states; on both sides. He understood the reasons for that war... sort of ... but still struggled with exactly why we were in Nam; no one had explained what was so important about Vietnam to fight over.

Squatting with his prize cake, he broke off a piece for his dog—if he ate, Blackie ate—it was still fresh and crumbly-cake, wishing he had a coffee to dunk it in. The smell of churned earth hung heavily, courtesy of the runway day-construction squids... at least he was fairly sure they were Navy.

He glimpsed his Seiko watch, only minutes had passed since the last check, and watched an F-4 Phantom afterburning nearly straight up as if targeting the haloed bright moon itself—rising ever higher— and when almost within reach ...
the Phantom merged with the stars.