

Some Memories of Nam

© 1996, by John W. Fox
31st SPS, Tuy Hòa, 1968-1970
377th SPS, Tân Sơn Nhứt;
12th SPS, Cam Ranh Bay AB;
90 SOS (Det 1, 483 ABGp), Nha Trang 1970-1971

Reading Steve Ray's, "[A Different Mission](#)," brought back some nostalgia, and is actually the first thing I've read in years that could tempt me to consider doing this.

I was in Cam Ranh for about seven weeks (4/1/71 - 5/18/71) and twice when on trips to an orphanage. I didn't go as a guard, but I did carry a .38, as was required at the time. In fact there were only about eight or nine people on each trip, and only three .38's for arms, but we transported food and clothes to the kids.

There were only three nuns at the orphanage, and two village women also helped out. Surprisingly, with all their suffering, the kids were in pretty good spirits and happy as hell to get a hot meal that was not lacking in quality or quantity. The only other memory of those trips was stopping on the way back to base to buy a burlap bag of charcoal (at least 60 lb.) for about 200 Dong. It's hard to believe that was twenty-five years ago.

Just prior to Cam Ranh, I was in the 377th SPS, at Tân Sơn Nhứt (12/15/70-3/31/71). I was a QRT on the flight line (days), but we really didn't do much. After Cam Ranh I was sent to Nha Trang AB, which was VNAF controlled, and was with the 90th SOS. There were only 21 Security Police there to protect our operational area (4 C-130's and 6 C-123). Three men to secure the area, two on patrol, and one in dispatch/CSC. We had one V-100 and two M-151's. One of the jeeps was so bad off that the army (our support) finally refused to fix it any more because, "you can't weld rust."

Steve Novikoff, a fellow NCO and SP, and I use to go to the army side (helicopter training) of Nha Trang and get rides to different areas of II Corps, and usually had to hitch rides back to be on time for duty. One time, I had no ride back from Cam Ranh and wound up crossing the large bridge and getting a ride back to Nha Trang with an ARVN convoy, I was dropped off by the Buddhist Statue and walked through the town and back to base, about 4 Km.

Another time Steve and I were stranded in Cam Ranh and started walking back to Nha Trang (48 Km) and had little luck. We were passed by so often that we finally rolled our sleeves up over our chevrons, and were quickly picked up by a special forces SFC who drove us all the way to 5th Field Force in Nha Trang. A little imagination goes a long way.

We Take Care of Our Own