

## **Tân Sơn Nhứt Air Base 377th SPS, Det 1 Peace Commission Talks March 1973**

**Good-bye... Tân Sơn Nhứt  
... the driver said to me, "Get On."**

by **George T. Leather**, A1C  
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***Good-bye Tan Son Nhut... March or April?*** The exact date escapes me right now. Had just finished TDY tour at Biên Hòa with the 377th SPS, Det 1. Spent several tours of duty outside of Peace Commission talks which began at Tân Sơn Nhứt, in January 1973. I recall the humiliation of standing next to VC counterpart during the talks. NLF Delegation had been afforded the comforts of Camp Alpha during peace talks.

Secretary Kissinger and Vice President Agnew had been through TSN, evidently, to convince RSVN President Thieu that the bogus peace pact was a good one. Anyway our bags were packed and it was obvious that we were leaving any day. At some point after returning from Biên Hòa, our 377th SPS Air Base defense unit was incorporated into the 377th SPS Law Enforcement unit. I think this is how I found myself on the Main Gate at TSN on the final night of the 1973 American military withdrawal from Vietnam.

It was not like the chaotic end of the American presence in RSVN which was to occur in 1975. As a matter of fact, it looked like it was just going to be another long and boring late shift. The lumbering C-130 gun ship circled above, dropping illuminating flares and it was approaching 2 A.M. My Quah Canh (QC) partner and I were somewhat surprised when a deuce and a half pulled up and the driver said to me, "Get On." I think, I hesitated for half a second and was about to say good-bye to the QC. But he turned his back on us, not looking very pleased. I don't blame him. I knew and he knew that his future was not too bright. I very quickly got over *his problem* and hopped onto the back of the truck.

Back in the cantonment area, we changed into khaki uniforms and were transported out to the flight line. To my astonishment, two TWA 747's were parked on the tarmac. Cool! Maybe they had round eyed stewardesses aboard! It seemed like forever that we stood loosely about in ranks and the large, bright orange sun was beginning to come up. It was daylight when a convoy of vehicles pulled up. Out alighted all kinds of official looking people.

I recall at least one table being set up with chairs. An NLF official was chatting on a field phone. And I'll never forget the female VC with a green chiffon scarf wrapped around her pith helmet. She began photographing us with an old (I think, eastern-block) camera. We began to board. Some of us flipped the female VC the bird. "VC, beaucoupe toom-toom!"

***Good-bye Tân Sơn Nhứt.***

**A1C George T. Leather**

**January 8, 1973**

**North Vietnam and the United States resume peace talks in Paris.**

**January 27, 1973**

**All warring parties in the Vietnam War sign a cease fire. Henry Kissinger's initials on the Cease Fire.**

**March 29, 1973**

**The last American combat soldiers leave South Vietnam, though military advisors and Marines, who are protecting U.S. installations, remain. For the United States, the war is officially over. Of the more than 3 million Americans who have served in the war, almost 58,229 are dead, and over 1,000 are missing in action. Some 150,000 Americans were seriously wounded.**

**Aug. 15, 1975**

**The American pullout is complete when U.S. warplanes cease bombing missions in Indochina.**

**April 30, 1975**

**At 4: 03 a.m., two U.S. Marines are killed in a rocket attack at Saigon's Tân Sơn Nhứt airport. They are the last Americans to die in the Vietnam War. At dawn, the last Marines of the force guarding the U.S. Embassy lift off. Only hours later, looters ransack the embassy, and North Vietnamese tanks roll into Saigon, ending the war. In 15 years, nearly a million NVA and Vietcong troops and a quarter of a million South Vietnamese soldiers have died. Hundreds of thousands of civilians had been killed.**

*Above information compiled from random info on the web.*

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