



377TH SECURITY POLICE SQ.

PROVEN IN COMBAT

Newsletter for the 377th Security Policeman

Volume 4

2014

Scouts Jamboree

My name is William "Chuck" Henry" and I would like to tell you about an incident that took place on Tan Son Nhut, Oct 6, 1966.

I was on duty with the 377th Security Police Squadron, and learned that Vietnamese Scouts were holding a Jamboree in a large field adjacent to the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) dependent's housing area.

There was also a VNAF fly-over planned that day, for the Scout Jamboree.

I drove down to the field and wandered around talking to some of the Scouts (some of whom spoke English passably) and all of whom were friendly, open to visiting with American strangers and excited to show me how they built their structures with bamboo and plenty of string and banners.

Very colorful and interesting to a former US Scout.

I was surprised to see a lot of Vietnamese Girl Scouts, just as good at formations, discipline and activities as the boys.

I took a few photos, and was there for maybe an hour at the Jamboree.

After I left the Jamboree and went back to my own patrols, word came in to Central Security Control (CSC) and Base Police headquarters that a VNAF A1-E had crashed into the VNAF dependent's housing area.

I responded, as did every 377th Base Police unit available, and the VNAF QC's, to secure the area.

I was told that the A1-E had been one of three, flying in formation, and inverted when it passed over the control tower, the VNAF A1-E flightline in Charlie Sector, and over Nguyen Kao Ky's headquarters compound across the street and to the East of the Scout Jamboree.

The A1-E was loaded with munitions, and flying slower than it should have been in hot and humid air, that close to the ground. When the pilot realized he had lost too much airspeed, he tried to roll back upright but clipped the concrete roof of a VNAF sentry tower, and crashed into the VNAF dependent's housing area.

Gen Ky's compound had its own guards.

One of those sentries had been in the tower when the A1-E clipped it, but survived. I got a photo of the sentry still in his tower, in shock, within minutes of the impact.

I then went to the crash site in the housing area, and was part of the perimeter trying to keep US photographers, spectators and USAF/US Army personnel from running in to look at the bodies, take pictures, etc. while the first responders came in.

There were some heroic people who tried to render assistance, and some idiots who didn't get the idea that it was a Vietnamese area, Vietnamese victims, and at least one small kid lying dead in the debris, and scorched, live ammunition and rockets (maybe bombs, I'm not sure now) all over the place until EOD got to it.

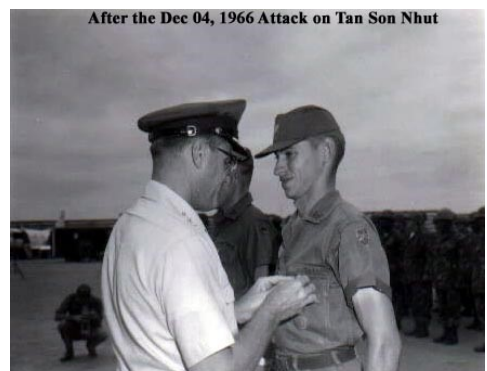
We had our hands full with perimeter control for several hours, until we

turned it over to VNAF and pulled out, and I did not take many pictures of the damage, just one or two of the damaged housing after things settled down.

I went back to check on the Scouts, who were shaken up, as the plane crashed just South of their Jamboree field, and many of them saw it go in.

I have always wondered what become of them after we left.

Chuck Henry, former 377th SPS Security Ops Officer.



Lt Gen Momyer awards the Bronze Star to Capt W. C. Henry
377th Air Police Squadron, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, RVN



**THEY
SERVED
PROUDLY**

377th Combat Security Policeman
Capt William C. Henry, USAF



MSgt Arnold R. Lilly

377th Security Police Squadron
Flight Commander
Charlie Flight Law Enforcement
March 5, 1972 - March 29, 1973

**377th Security Police
Last Day In Vietnam**



Lilly, Arnold

I was a Member of the 377th Security Police Squadron, assigned duty as Flight Commander of "Charlie" Flight during the period March 5, 1972 - 29 March 1973.

The representatives of the United States and Republic of North Vietnam were discussing the size and shape of the tables for the peace conference in Paris.

There had not been any serious talks to reach an agreement.

The war effort had changed by both sides.

The US had withdrawn most major combat units and the mission was being assumed by members of the South Vietnam military.

In the spring of 1972 the North Vietnamese embarked on a major offensive near the city of An Loc.

The command element decided that we should prepare for an attack closer

to Saigon.

Their decision was to fortify in anticipation.

A large number of forces had been sent home earlier and the Security Police Squadron was required to start a two flight system with 12 hours duty.

This started on the 20th of April and continued until May 22, 1972. Martial Law throughout the country was implemented May 12th.

There was one standoff attack April 14, 1972 around 0900 hours.

Two rockets impacted behind the 1300/Base Exchange area causing no significant damage.

Two rockets impacted in Vietnamese controlled areas and several Vietnamese civilians were killed and wounded.

The base experienced three more standoff attacks during my duty your:

September 10, 1972 - 3 rounds
December 06, 1972 - 28 rounds
January 28, 1973 - 11 rounds

During each attack I was off duty and was part of the response from the barracks area.

Noteworthy is the fact that all off duty personnel responded without hesitation.

Response teams were formed and dispatched in an orderly buildup.

The troops were ready to defend the base when required.

We had the usual Bob Hope Christmas show.

Miss America came by the theater while I was working my "off duty" job.

She bestowed kisses and autographed pictures to everyone around and our morale was enhanced.

Other members of the show visited

several parts and work areas of the base while they were not performing their show.

I was part of the final few to depart Vietnam.

All of the facilities on base closed by the middle of March.

The Law Enforcement flight had dwindled to 24 including me.

We worked the final Law Enforcement shift and "turned out the lights."

I turned in my weapon and trusty radio to the Armory.

The armorer put it in a packing crate and grabbed a hammer and nailed the box lid while we waited.

The radio was issued to me on my first duty day in March, 1972.

I kept it in my wall locker my entire tour and changed the battery at the armory as needed.

It had served me well without problems for 13 months.

The warrior of TET 1968 were largely responsible for such serviceable equipment.

They had major radio problems and the Air Force corrected that problem before I arrived in Vietnam.

I parked the Chief, Security Police jeep at Building-19 and left the keys in it.

We did not have a relief flight all duties were assumed by Vietnamese Air Force Quan Canh.

I went to the terminal stopping at the Base Chapel to pause and remember my close friend A2C John Cole who perished in the December, 1966 attack on Tan Son Nhut AB.

There was an Association Press report that the last 2,501 troops departed Vietnam on March 29, 1973.

My flight was the next to last flight.

The final flight was the command element (Colonel O'Dell - Base Commander, with the United States flag folded neatly and cradled in his arms.

Lt Col Luckett - Chief, Security Police, etc.

We were observed by the North Vietnamese delegation led by NVA Colonel Bui Tin as we boarded our departure flight.

He stood at the boarding ramp and etched another mark on his clipboard as each American passed.

That was an eerie feeling.

We had worked long, hard shifts and been bombarded with incoming rockets and ordance often during the previous 13 months.

It was difficult concept.

Our plane was airborne at 1300 hrou, March 29, 1973 and United States involvement in combat with North Vietnam officially ended.



Lilly, Arnold

Sgt Timothy Clifford

377th Security Police Squadron
Base Police, 11/64-11/65
Base Police, 05/68-05/69



Clifford, Timothy

South Vietnamese Coup

On my first tour 11-64 to 11-65, those of us who are young enough to remember back then should also remember the February 19- 65 coup.

The South Vietnamese Army took control of Tan Son Nhut and the South Vietnamese Air Force took Bien Hoa.

That day I was on duty at the Air Operation Center (AOC) when all of a sudden there was a banging on the door and someone yelling in Vietnamese it was a couple soldiers with looked like the old WW II Tommie guns.

The OIC of operation for the building opened the door and the soldiers came in yelling in Vietnamese.

A translator at AOC informed me they were taken over the building and I was to surrender my post and weapon.

I know we all remember the rules never surrender your post or weapon without authorization so I called my NCOIC and was told that yes the base was taken over by the Vietnamese

Army and since we were guest in the country I was to let them have control of the building but NOT my weapon.

As I walked out to get in the Air Police truck sent to pick me up the soldier kept yelling and pointing his weapon at me.

The translator kept saying he wants your weapon but I kept walking to the truck and thinking if he shots me that is no way to treat a guest.

The next day General KY, Commander of the Vietnamese Air Force threaten to bomb Tan Son Nhut if the Army did not stop the coup.

The Army and Air Force agreed to talk and we went back to work and the coup was over.

It was nice to know we were there to help them solve the problems. Such was life in the early day in Vietnam.

How things change with time

When I returned to Tan Son Nhut for my second tour in May 1968, I could not believe this was the same place I left in 1965.

I went from living on one floor, I call a shack to this gigantic compound with two story barracks.

There were more guys just on "C Flight" in 1968 than I think in the whole squadron in 1965.

The army was twice the size and weapons I did not know the Air Force had in their inventory.

I will tell everyone now that my second tour is a complete blur.

I have told my wife I really don't think I was there.

But I have my personnel records, commendations and some personal belongings to prove to myself that I was there.

What is the reason why I think my second tour was a blur.

On my first day in country I was informed that I would be assigned to "C Flight. Law Enforcement" after some additional training.

That night I could not sleep so I decide to go over to LE operation and introduce myself and see what is happening.

I don't remember the time, just a siren, someone yelling take cover and then a noise like nothing I have ever heard.

It sounded like lightning, had just hit a power transformer.

I tried getting under a file cabinet but since it was sitting on concrete, I could not dig a hole to take cover.

When I asked, "What the h___ was that?"

I was told it was a 122mm rocket and I would get use to them.

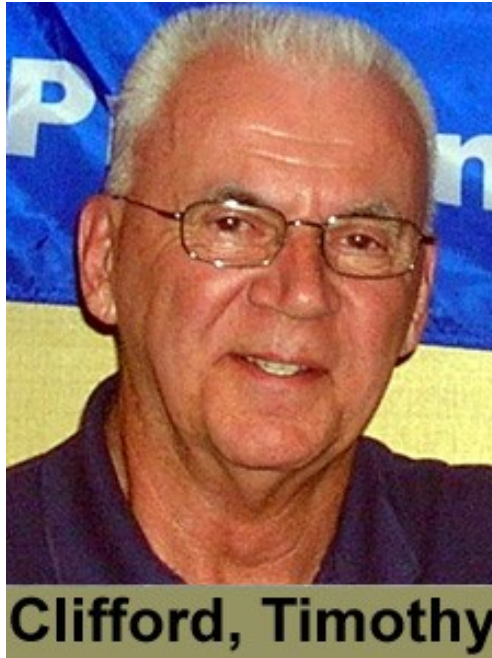
Just then, I realized that coming back for a second tour was not one of my brightest ideas.

364 days later, on my way home, I still thought coming back was not a bright idea.

So that first night I received a "Welcome Back to Vietnam Party," is my reasoning for the second tour 1968-1969, is a blur.

That also explains why reunions are so much fun.

I hope that each time, I will meet someone who was there in 1968-1969 and you can tell me, "I was really there."



The Beginning:

"You're not going to travel in those?" my mother said as I came out of my room to travel to Vietnam. I was dressed in my light weight, tan uniform known as "1505's". It was November 1968 and the temperature was hovering just above freezing. "Mom it is 90 degrees and more where I am heading" I said, "doesn't help you if you arrive frozen" she replied. I got somewhat the same reaction in Chicago where the temperature was not much better and again at Travis AFB California as it was in the 50's. Most everyone was in their Dress Blues, I had spent a year in Thailand and knew it was summer where we were headed. Stepping off the big bird on the TSN flight line, the heat and humid conditions were like a blow when it hit you. The thing I was thankful for was the scent was not as distasteful as Thailand but still wrinkled your nose at the first lungful. I had just reenlisted and figured my time at Luke AFB Arizona would be short lived. Luke was wonderful duty, Tactical Air Command and a training base just outside the city of Phoenix. Mostly Law Enforcement duty with some security patrols on the flight line. I knew Vietnam was going to be different. I had followed the TET offensive on TV and the news magazines. The training at the AZR course

at Lackland AFB was in the form of Army Infantry tactics rather than base defense. Upon arrival it seemed everything went into overdrive. More training with weapons and applying lessons learned from TET. Getting used to sleeping with Huey choppers flying over the barracks. Then finally assignment to Delta Sector and more training on our defense setup based upon what we were facing there.

The Middle:

Almost 9 months had passed and I was a full-fledged fighting member of Delta and was in charge of Delta Bunker nine. Had the pleasure of working with my fellow Wisconsinite Doug Bausch and was the newcomer training instructor on bunker defense for the sector. I also was an experienced scrounger and my assistant sector leader, Henry Abbotsford, gave me the best complement I ever received, "Templeton, you are a bit anal but you run a tight bunker". With just three months to go on the one year assignment, I got a letter from my mother lamenting that with their 25 wedding anniversary coming up, I would not be there for it. The ability to extend 6 months in country got you an extra 30 day leave and a round trip air ticket to anywhere in the world. This was a no brainer, my mother almost passed out when I knocked on their door the evening before the party. Outside of the party, the only thing that still stands out to me is the two Benjamin air pistols I bought to kill rats at night.

The End:

Some of the memories are bitter sweet, others are such that I can close my eyes and almost be there. Others not worth remembering. Relieved to have put the time behind me still in one piece. Missing the great guys I had served with. The taste and scent of the air when the big bird closed the door and kicked in the air conditioning. Headed for Misawa AFB Japan knowing that SAC would never again get their hands on me. Watching and listening to the uneaten K rations burning and blowing up in the burn barrel just after the sun came up. Knowing I



Templeton, Chuck

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Knowing I would never quite have the same fulfilling feeling of a job well done when the pig truck picked you up for the trip to the armory.



If you
have not
submitted
your story,
then
please do
so!