

Tan Son Nhut Air Base  
Rocket and Mortar Attack  
April 13, 1966

Attack # ---- 07	Type ----- STO = Stand Off Attack
Year ----- 1966	Rounds ----- 243 = Rockets and Mortars
Month ----- Apr	US Air Craft ----- 062 = Damaged
Day ----- 13	US KIA ----- 07
Hour ----- 0027	US WIA ----- 111

AIR FORCE, AIR POLICE DESCRIBE ACTIONS DURING VC ATTACK

“Sgt Pete Coxon, 377<sup>th</sup> Air Police Squadron, was in the Air America area.” The road to the airport, runs into the airport and the road leading out, passes the Air America area. The first explosion that I heard, I thought was inside the terminal, by zappers. I went out of the area and took a position, in the ditch. To await the zappers retreat. Then all the explosions started going off, all around and I then realized, we were under mortar attack. Upon going back into the Air America area, a mortar hit the aviation fuel tank farm, located on the east perimeter, of the base, about 50 to 100 yards away. Throwing debris on top of us, I took cover in Air America post. The fuel tank burned for two days. One round that hit the Air America area, which was Chinese, was a dud. We needed more of those.



"A3C Michael V. Motherway, 377<sup>th</sup> Air Police Squadron, 20, of Tucson, AZ., described his actions, during a 20-minute Viet Cong mortar barrage, on the Tan Son Nhut Air Base, near Saigon, Vietnam.

The barrage started about 12:30 a.m.

Deeds of courage and humanity were common here, as the base experienced it's first assault.

"Richard W. Lindbeck, 377<sup>th</sup> Air Police Squadron, 21, duty during the attack told how he took refuge, in a large steel crate, but he picked the wrong place.

"I was on duty, at the radio center," explained the youth, from Iron County, MI."

"When, the first rounds came in, I dived into an open Conex (a steel crate about eight feet long on each side).

"I no sooner got into it, before a round went into the box above me and exploded. The noise and shock were terrific. Some shrapnel flew through the floor of the box above and into the top of mine. I wasn't hurt."

"Air Force 1st Lt. James E. Duncan, 377<sup>th</sup> Air Police Squadron, of Adelanto, CA., Officer In Charge, of air policemen on duty, in a barracks area, told of another case, in which his men kept clear heads during the attack."

"We had reports," Duncan said, "that during mortar attacks, the Viet Cong, if they penetrate the base, often change into khaki, so they would be dressed like Republic of Viet Nam soldiers."

"A2C Dallas L. Endicott, 377<sup>th</sup> Air Police Squadron, 22, of Delbarton, WV., was the gate guard of an area, where hundreds of American airmen were quartered.

"Endicott," Duncan said, "stopped eight armed Vietnamese dressed in khaki clothing."

Endicott, challenged the men, as they approached his station. All of them failed to stop, on the challenge. "He was perfectly within his right to open fire, but did not," the senior air police official said.

Instead, Endicott coolly approached the men, disarmed them and then identified them through Tan Son Nhut gate passes they carried.

"Endicott, had an. option. He chose the right way," said Endicott 's supervisor, TSgt Bobby J. Eisenberg, 377<sup>th</sup> Air Police Squadron, 33, of Marietta, Ga.

Air police support during the emergency was "Prompt, responsible and orderly," according to Lt Col Roger G. Benton, 48, of Longview, WA., " Commander of the 377th Air Police Squadron. The unit provides "internal security" for the air base.

He said no attempt was made by the Viet Cong to infiltrate the base and no sabotage was reported.

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For Immediate Release  
Apr 66 077

Air Force Security Police At Tan  
Son Nhut Show Strength To VC

Saigon – Air Force security guards showed their strength during the Viet Cong Attacks on this sprawling air base Apr 13, 1966. Air Force Lt Col Roger G. Benton of Longview, WA., Commander of Security Police on Tan Son Nhut praised his Air Police for their action.

When Viet Cong 82mm mortar and 75mm recoilless rifle shells were raining on the Tan Son Nhut Air Base, just after midnight, April 13, 1966. Air Force, Air Police, immediately swung into action.

The policemen, already on defensive stations throughout the base, took precautions for which they had been trained.

""My men went into their alert positions smoothly and effectively. I want to point out that the VC did not physically penetrate the base," Benton said.

"Air Force MSgt Clay E. Durbin of Lexington, KY., a security flight commander, said his men reacted exactly as they had been taught."

The Air Force's K-9 corps also trains at night. Had the VC attempted to penetrate the base during the attack, they would have run into a wall of sentry dogs and handlers. Backing up the dogs was another wall of sentries strategically placed with automatic weapons that could fire more than 700 rounds a minute.