



Gerald Mack Avera's Account of a Viet Cong Attack during the Vietnam War

(Typed up by his daughter Theresa Miller)



These are my Father's notes about being wounded in Vietnam. At 0500 on 4 Dec 1965 I was wounded in a Viet Cong attack on the Metropole BEQ in Saigon, Vietnam. The Viet Cong drove a van filled with 250 pounds of explosives in front of my BEQ just to the left of where my room was facing. The explosion killed 10 people and wounded 130. I was knocked unconscious. When I regained my senses I was laying on the floor of my room covered with debris from the blast. I had been hit on top of my head over my right eye and on the chin with shrapnel. Flying debris had made cuts and bruises on me from head to toe. Part of the cement wall had fallen on my back and shoulders and some of my skin was rubbed off. A short period after the explosion, when I realized what had happened, I was in a semi-conscious state and felt numb all over. My ears and body felt like it was ringing. When I was a child, I once had a firecracker go off in my hand. The feeling I had after the explosion was similar but magnified ten thousand times. I was lying on the floor and continued to just lay there for a few minutes trying to regain my thoughts and trying to figure out what to do. It was still dark outside, and I soon realized it seemed a lot darker then normal. Blood from the wound on the top of my head and over my right eye was running down my face and into my eyes. I could not see a thing and thought I was blind. I was afraid to move because I was on the third floor and did not know if there were holes in the floor. I could hear cries from the wounded, but I heard no one coming to help us. After what seemed to be eternity, I heard voices of people calling out asking who needed help.



They were other servicemen from BEQs nearby who had come to evacuate the wounded. The hospital was located across the street from the rear of my BEQ, so it was only a short walking distance. Two men started carrying me around the building and across the street to the hospital. When we got into the street facing the hospital someone noticed claymore mines directed toward the wounded people being carried to the hospital. The Viet Cong had done their home work. The intent was to catch the wounded crossing the street to the hospital with delayed action claymore mines. Someone shouted "Claymore Mines" and everyone hit the deck. We all laid there in the street for several minutes until explosive experts came and determined that it was safe to move. The trigger devices in the claymores had been damaged by the blast. I was placed in a stretcher on the ground outside the hospital. Later, a medic came around to see how badly I was wounded. They pried open my right eye which was swollen shut and shined a light in it. It was a quick look over and then they left. I must not have been in danger of death, and they took the more seriously injured first. After some time, I was moved into the hospital, and placed in a bed in a room with other wounded men. I began to get really cold. I screamed for someone to get me some blankets. People rushed over and started sticking things in my arms. I later learned I had gone into shock. I remained in that room until about 1100 when they came and took me to another room. They cleaned the blood from my face and body. The doctor sewed up the cuts in the top of my head, over my right eye, and chin. Cement grain particles were imbedded in my back and shoulder. They picked out as much as they could, and told me my body would fester and reject the other particles remaining. I was in the hospital for 3 days. Because other seriously wounded were coming in, they needed my bed. I was sent to another BEQ to recover as a sick-in-quarters out-patient for 2 weeks prior to returning to duty. My right eye remained blood shot for months. I was treated with drops in my eye, and I had frequent throbbing headaches.

See pictures below



