

DASPO/MACV Army "A" Photo Team Visits The Saigon Zoo

Several fellow Army photographers had said the Saigon Zoo was an interesting, quiet and cheap days activity. The street noise from honking horns, the no mufflers on cars, trucks and other motorized vehicles would be missing. The zoo would be an escape to a peaceful serene spot within the ~~capitol~~ city. Cheap from the aspect it cost less than a coke from a street vendor, which charged 100P per soda. Interesting from the standpoint, I rightly didn't know what to expect, except the East boundry of the zoo was the Saigon River.

It would be difficult for a country in the midst of a war to contribute much to the countries animal showcase. Especially in light, that thousands of hungry and starving refugee could find free meat at the zoo. I had mixed emotions on what to expect, as I paid the enterance fee.

At the admission gate I was surprised. I expected to see a crowded zoo, but there were only a few Vietnamese families and some young couples on dates. I was the only American there. The grounds were well maintained. The grass was cut to normal mowing height. The walk paths were well manicured. There were no weeds or grass growing out of the gravel on the paths. This alone was more than I hoped to see. Indeed the zoo was a quiet locale. No one was yelling or howling, just a water taxi on the Saigon River. The bushes were trimmed into figures of animals, without a leaf out of place. Everything was perfect.

As figured a lot of the cages were empty. The bear looked like it suffered from malnutrition. They had a native Vietnamese elephant and tiger from the Bam Me Thout area. Birds had their cages, but the peacocks roamed free. Indeed the zoo was an interesting experience.

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