

# The Mobile Advisory Team

LATE IN 1968 the 1st Australian Task Force deployed three mobile advisory teams (MATs) to different parts of Phuoc Tuy Province in support of the accelerated pacification programme.

Each infantry battalion, helped by its affiliated units, organised a team. 4RAR/NZ(Anzac)Bn's team consisted, initially of 2Lt D.M. Stewart (D Company), Sgt J.W. Downes (104 Field Battery), Cpl P. Dawson (D Company), Cpl M.N. Shaw (C Company), Pte T.R. Provis (Support Company) and Pte G.P. Graham (Administration Company, driver). Pte G.C. Gardiner replaced Pte Graham on 9 February 1969, and early in March Pte J.B. Wrigley took Pte Gardiner's place.

The three MATs attended a concentrated orientation course run by Capt R. Guest, of AATTV, and his advisory team at the 18th ARVN Division training centre south of Nui Dat. The course, from December 2-5, gave the teams a grounding in the province/sector organisation, Regional and Popular Force organisation, equipment, training and logistic support.

The revolutionary development programme, advisory techniques and handling of weapons used by the ARVN were also part of the course. It finished with visits to Regional Force outposts along Route 15 and to the Australian-built village and outpost at Ap Sui Nghe.

The battalion's MAT moved into Dat Do on December 15 to train and advise RF and PF troops. It was under the direction of the US district adviser and the Vietnamese district chief, and lived with the US advisory team. Pte J.R. Love, of the battalion's intelligence section, lived with the US team and assisted the US intelligence officer.

4RAR/NZ(Anzac)Bn's MAT worked with five PF platoons and 612 RF Company in Dat Do. The PF platoons were similar in organisation to Australian rifle platoons, but the company had an additional heavy weapons platoon containing mortars and machine guns.

The company had recently been issued with new M16 rifles and the day after arriving the MAT started training the company in the use of the weapon. This was a good beginning, as the Vietnamese were keen to learn and seemed readily to accept the Australians.

Four days after arriving, the district compound was heavily mortared by the VC. Consequently, the MAT spent Christmas completing the concrete reinforcing of its compound bunker.

After Christmas a weekly training programme was drawn up, with attention going to one PF platoon a week. Difficulty was experienced obtaining and using interpreters, but first aid, weapon training, fire and movement, map



MR. MOTHER



MR. COMPANY OFFICER



BRING THE EYES OF

MR. SELF



MRS. MEN



MR. BIRD



MR. PLATOON SGT.



MRS. BATHMAN



MRS. PSYCHIATRIST



"Makes you want to call for a defoliation mission, doesn't it?"

reading (on a limited scale) and range practices were all successful aspects of training. The team accompanied the platoons on night ambushes in the hamlets.

Four of the five PF platoons were issued with M16s while the MAT was in Dat Do and, in addition to training the men in the use of the weapons, the team took them to the Van Kiep training centre ranges at the foot of the Warburtons, where shooting practices were held.

The RF company was issued with M60s during this period and the team conducted the necessary training. The team also assisted the Vietnamese with projects around the district and compound.

Early in January 1969 Sgt Downes was medevaced because of illness and this kept him away from the team for several weeks.

Pte Provis worked with the medical civil aid programme (Medcap) and also assisted in the aid post when casualties were brought in after a contact or mine incident.

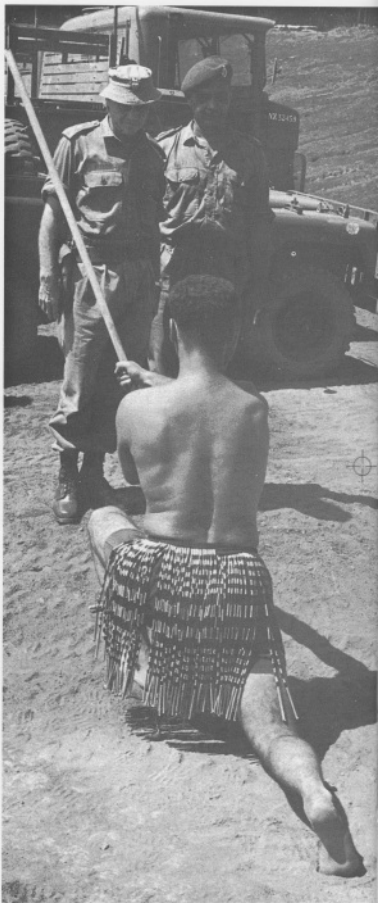
2Lt Stewart was secretary of the weekly meetings of the District Pacification Committee. The meetings resulted in Phase II operations (civil aid) of 4RAR/NZ (Anzac) Bn being directed into Dat Do.

The MAT helped with liaison between the Vietnamese and 1 Field Squadron RAE, which carried out land-clearance around Dat Do, and the team went on many Medcaps and Dentcaps.

During Tet the MAT enjoyed the quiet hospitality of the Vietnamese. However, such delicacies as duck blood soup were avoided where possible!

After Tet there was more training. Three members of the team were with a platoon of 612 Company in a night ambush position when it was attacked from the rear. Fire support was called in from the Horseshoe. Cpl Dawson was killed in action during this contact. Shortly after this incident, which was on March 10, the team was withdrawn to Nui Dat for leave and re-posting within the unit.

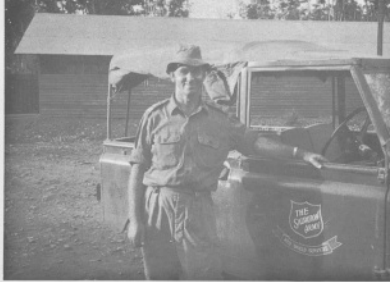
Early in April a new MAT was deployed to Dat Do under similar arrangements. The new team consisted of: Lt D.R. Graham (C Company), Lbdr R.J. Beasley (104 Field Battery), Lcpl D.J.E. Inall (V Company), Cpl A. Apiata (W Company), Pte J.R. Grubb (Admin Company, driver) and Sgt Phat (ARVN interpreter). Pte J.P. Donegan went to assist the US intelligence officer.



Brigadier Pearson, accompanied by Padre Yescoc, is given the traditional Maori challenge.



Australian singer Yvonne Barrett entertains troops during a concert at Nui Dat.



The battalion's Salvation Army representative, (Hon) Capt Gilham.



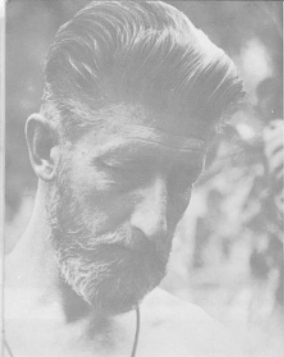
Centurion tank of C Squadron.



Pte Friend sorting mail at BNZIR Component.

At the battalion's Anzac Day parade, Pte Sharman blows a bugle which was carried through the Middle East, New Guinea, Borneo and Malaya campaigns.





Sgt Cook assault pioneer sergeant.



Lt Col Greville (right) accepts the flag of 1RNZIR from the commanding officer of 1RNZIR, Lt Col Brooke, MBE.



The commanding officer keeps in touch with a heliborne assault.



A Chinook helicopter lifts a bulldozer from a fire support base.

APCs in close country.



The aerial workhorse of the battalion.





Major Sullivan, operations officer, pores over maps in the battalion command post.



Captain Barwick in the battalion command post.



Airstrike.

The battalion flies out for Operation Overlander.

