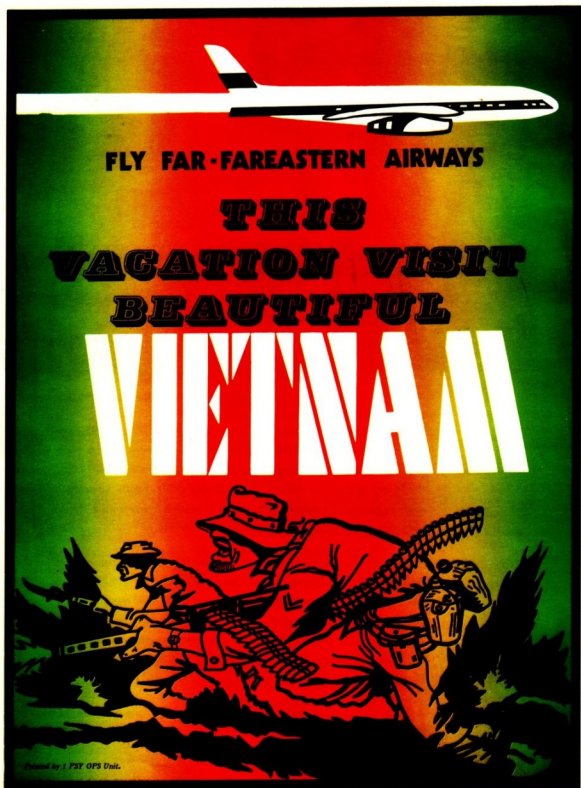


1 Visit Vietnam This Vacation



VISIT VIETNAM THIS VACATION

With this in mind, the Fourth "fleet of foot" prepared for its second tour of South Vietnam, for some being just another campaign but for others, the thrilling experience of war for the first time.

Prior to training at the Jungle Training Centre, the companies were satisfied with their own self contained exercises in the Mt. Spec and High Range training areas. With three weeks in four in the bush and with the inevitable duty week, there was little time for rest as the CO found one day when he was ambushed by call-sign 21 while visiting training.

Canungra turned on sunny Queensland weather for us but down in Wiangaree, ie in New South Wales, the cold rain did little to enthuse diggers already seeing good hard yakka. Vietnam was only six months away and Administration Company, the first such company ever to go through the Jungle Training Centre as a rifle company, had completed training when leave came.

Three hundred and eighty officers and soldiers had been sent to specialist courses early in 1970 to cross-train them in many fields enabling the battalion to adapt to almost any roll that it may be called upon to fulfil in the coming campaign.

In August 1970, the first of many Fire Support Bases built by the Fourth Battalion and 104 Battery was scraped together at High Range. It was FLINTSTONE — its character synonymous with its name. Then with many lessons learnt and after leave, the battalion "hooked in" to GRANITE VALE. Listening to the Admin/air net in those days was quite something as Maintdems were read back, read back and read back again. But the one talent the soldier did learn on GRANITE VALE was to offer thanks — all learnt on the last day as he thanked the Almighty for not having to visit High Range again prior to Vietnam.

Then the real tests began. Mt Spec gave the soldiers thirty-six inches of rain in ten days over THIRD STAB. The planned four hour drive to Fire Support Base SAPPHIRE became an eight hour one on almost impassable roads. As the rains continued, SAPPHIRE almost slipped off the mountain, (never a good host) while SAFFRON sunk into the black peat of the lower plain.



Tranquillity dust.



Play up, play up and play the game (2LIs Kevin Byrne and Gary McKay with Pte Kerry Bosse).



Long way to go for a beer (Ptes "Joss" Tite, Peter Deres, Sgt Owen Legg, Ptes Jeff Byng, Peter Booth, Winton Gill, Cpl Bill Osmond, Sgt Ken "Dusty" Miller, L/Cpl Clive Clewley, Ptes George Tsakisiris, Bob Hines, Lt Mike O'Neill, Ptes Dick Crouch, Michael Cain and Ctn Dave Hooper).

MONARO MALL was a flexible exercise. From Shoalwater Bay, to High Range (dread that!), Mt Spec and finally Mt Stuart with the odd cancellation included, it was finally performed. The echelon was at the Mt Stuart re-entrant. Headquarters was at Fire Support Base MURPHY down by the Ross River and the companies hacked the pace over the southern ridges of Mt Stuart, occasionally being a little displaced and finding themselves on TV. One hundred thousand sand bags, a lot of sweat and a most unusual training atmosphere, somehow added up to a worthwhile activity.

Pre-embarkation leave . . and then away on 30 April 1971. Townsville saw us go, the whole seven hundred and five of us with the gunners, marching past and paying the compliment to the Task Force Commander. A few hours later, the Advance Party jetted away to take over the base from 2 RAR/NZ, then only twenty-three days from return to Australia.





C Company on THIRD STAB (Cpl Bob Jordan, Pte "Bubs" Jankowski, Sgt "Boris" O'Brien, Pte Noel Potter, Cpl Ron Templeman, Pte "Brownie" Brown and "Doc" Case).

☐ **THIRTY-SIX inches of rain in 10 days did not delay THIRD STAB.**

The 4th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, its direct support battery, 104th Field Battery, The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, with armour and engineer support were exercising on THIRD STAB in the Mount Spec area near Ingham. That's part of the scene, right.

It was a South Vietnam-type operation with all the tropical trimmings.

Enemy for THIRD STAB was provided by 6RAR.

The GCC N. Comd., Maj.-Gen. A. L. MacDonald, paid a visit during the cordon and search phase of 'Long Hoa' village.

He was accompanied by the exercise director and Commander of 3rd Task Force-North Queensland Area, Brig. D. S. Thomson.

"Despite the torrential rain, blasts of high wind and continual operation in mud, the exercise was of great value," reports ARMY's UC.



Hey! They're over there.



The Echelon.



*When I was your age (2Lt Reg Swarbrick with the
RSM at FSB Murphy).*