

Operation IRON MAIDEN

23 May 1971-2 June 1971

V Company were all ready deployed when 4 RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion took over from 2 RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion at midnight on 23 May 1971.

The operation commenced on 15 May as a combined cordon and search of the area of the Viet Cuong and Ngu Yen Hiep rubber plantations (a known VC supply area) with Regional Force Companies, National Police and South Vietnamese officials from District Headquarters at Duc Thanh.

APCs from B Squadron, 3 Cavalry Regiment inserted most of the friendly forces and assisted in forming part of the cordon. Though in excess of three dozen illegal unidentified civilians were detained as a result of the cordon and then held at District Headquarters, nearly all were released to return to the plantation area, due to lack of evidence.

V Company continued to operate in the Courtney Plantation area. Their patience was tried repeatedly by small civilian groups "legally" carrying food to and from the village of Cam My, located just across the border of Phuoc Tuy and Long Khanh Province.

However, in late May, acting on information obtained by an SAS Reconnaissance patrol, V Company deployed further west and located evidence of recent VC main force activity. On 2 June, Two Platoon logged the battalion's first "kill" — a member of 274 VC Regiment. Increasing evidence and intelligence obtained from I ATF set the stage for 4 RAR/NZ to be inserted into the general area in which V Company had been operating, across the northern boundary of Phuoc Tuy Province astride Route 2.

Results: Own Troops — Nil Casualties
Enemy — 1 KIA

