



V Company

Company Headquarters Roll Call

- Hall (OC)** — Incredibly, avoided all the dreaded Vietnamese diseases, causing speculation as to whether the claymore mine bag, worn conspicuously round his neck, contained preventive pills and powders instead of maps. Prone to throwing tremendous wobbles just before helicopter lifts, occupying harbours etc, etc.
- Kidd (2IC)** — Should be remembered as the quartermaster's and signallers' nightmare. Would you believe eight pages of one main item, plus additions, in February? Was medevaced two days later.
- Rangiua** — Not renowned for his grasp of the seven times table, and none of his fly-outs worked out quite the way he intended. Personally responsible for the highest expenditure of smoke grenades in the whole war. Inevitable contribution to O groups: "Shouldn't we close the bar tonight?"
- Weir** — Commonly known as "Gunga Din." Familiar sight to all with his red nose. Disagreed with the tactical situation in Phuoc Tuy Province and when last seen was still arguing with the OC on how Operation Federal should have been conducted.
- Armour (FO)** — Attachment from 104 Field Battery, who was last seen waving a fond farewell to V Company, muttering, "280 days to go," or words to that effect.
- Burns (FO)** — V Company's first artillery rep. Only IA — in a contact, under fire or at any time — was to ask his batman to let the air out of his lilo tubes thus allowing him to sink below the level of his one-sandbag-high protection around his sleeping place.
- Amas** — Without doubt the most harassed member of V Company, who had the misfortune to break his ankle while hotly pursuing a VC in the latter stages of Operation Capital. Tears of joy streamed down his face as he was carried to the Bristol Freighter screaming: "I don't want to go."
- Burgess** — Escaped from 1ARU to take over the reins from the last entry, but ended up wearing them. In the Dat, often found between O groups hiding behind the ammo bunker trying to write letters.
- Pringle** — Quite British about it all. Unfortunately, trapped in Sin City Saigon when whisky was substituted for the water in his water bottle. On exposure of the dastardly trick, was quite happy to make a donation to the Public Fund.
- Wright** — From Transport Platoon, Malaysia, to driving an M60 in the jungles of Vietnam. "Tubby" was the only man to keep a good figure — obviously thrived on C rations.

- Hopkins** — "Hoppy". A friendly beast who conducted a lively correspondence with Diana, from the USA. Under the load of M79 bombs was easily recognisable by the hearing-aid screwed permanently into his right ear.
- Ropiha** — Everybody's friend, who narrowly escaped matrimony to a Vung Tau maiden by the clean heels and dust of a fast-flying Bristol.
- Capill** — Renowned for his never-ending appetite. A cover man, easily followed by a trail of C ration tins.
- Walker** — "Call me Ron." A sack man from way back. Never known to moan, weeeeeell, hardly ever.
- Thoreau** — "The Big T." Graduated from driver to rifleman, normally travelling as Tail-end Charlie. Danger Man as far as mechanical gadgets were concerned. Wrote off only two Land-Rovers while company driver.
- Fletcher** — "Foghorn". South-East Asian manager of Woolworths for 12 months, but never able to show a profit. Accidentally went outside the wire twice.
- Wates** — "Call me Percy." Frequently seen departing for Baria on a Land-Rover in a cloud of dust with piastres trailing in his wake. Perpetually tidying up after the CQMS?
- Williamson** — "Constant Camel Smoker." Suspected member, if not leader, of the "Hell's Angels Club" in the Dat. Warned frequently not to use aviation fuel in the company motor-scooter.
- English** — Intrepid deputy-leader of rear details, hence the title "Commandant Stalag 5." Often plagued, while giving briefings, with unit positions marked in the wrong place on the map. Never accidentally went outside the wire.
- Wharerau** — "Breadmaker." Always smiling, but would never divulge his breadmaking recipe to anyone. Ever so polite to MPs in Sin City Saigon.
- Martin** — "Those fatigues have done it again. Boiled the fruit salad and deep froze the spuds."
- Ellis** — "Call me Speedy, mate." From Queensland or one of the other provinces of New Zealand. Best remembered for his attempt to board a chopper at the 'Shoe in shirt, shorts, webbing and jandals (thongs), waving an LD chit in the breeze.
- Collier** — Best known for his baked beans and spaghetti bolognese — Ugh! Also scored well in Sin City Saigon.
- Burberry** — Normally seen hanging off the end of a foul-smelling pipe encoding locstats into unprintable words.
- Smith** — "Smithy". Only sig in Vietnam heard calling up his own call-sign.
- Berry** — "I hate maintdems." Known as Farmer Dick, whose cry during the tour was, "Why did I leave my horse and dogs?"
- Martin** — "Willie the Con." Went on R and C to Malaysia for six days, met Count Malaria, and spent a month there. Malaria, in his opinion, was the most popular thing since the miniskirt.
- Cooper** — The only man to kick a C ration tin down the slopes of Nui Nghe screaming: "Those Yanks have done it again. No peanut butter."
- Warren** — Cured most ailments — except his own, as he always seemed to be wearing jandals. Wrote his own LD chits. Impressed Three Patoon with the speed in which wounded Charlie was finished off.
- Kennedy** — Known as "Starlight Blowfly," "Blue," or "Red." The platoon sergeants' Nemesis. Favourite saying: "I must have lime, creosote and disinfectant." Normally found behind the cookhouse wallowing in the sludge hole. Loved showing films.
- Green** — The tame gunner. Uc-Dai-Loi from way back. Often burst into tears on receipt of postcards from a fellow-countryman, Bdr Fountain, sent from Surfers' Paradise.
- Young** — Liked Vietnam so much he tried to volunteer to stay on with the next V Company for a further six months. By then the orderly room might have been tidied up.
- Birkett** — Frequently found hibernating in the back room of the orderly room under old maps and year-old copies of the Wellington Evening Post. Periodically came up for air clutching magic charts or to attend O groups. Prone to painting slogans on walls and roofs.
- Preston** — Without doubt the most popular bloke in the company. "Carton of VB please, Gav." Often seen in the Dat carrying canned goodies from Point A to Point B, especially on pay day. Otherwise, lived in a world of his own, conducting frequent stocktakes. Owes his soul to the company store.
- Faulkner** — Our boy Joe. Normally recognisable by the steering wheel in his hand during the day and a guitar during the night.
- Temepara** — Loved the natives so much he went to live with them. Taught them all the necessary arts such as poker, boozing, getting perks, taking a siesta and ensuring a continuous supply of stick books.
- Bailey** — Good for a "hook in" any time of the day or night. Taken from us early in the tour when it was found V Company was getting far too many decent buildings and facilities. Had some curious party tricks.

One Platoon Roll Call



- Dodson** — First of line, last in line. Commonly known as "Canvas Back" or "Sandal-foot Sam."
- Webb** — Our second commander, who could never make up his mind how much hair to grow or where to obtain it. An imported Kiwi, but one of the earlier models.
- Farland** — "Mad Mike." "Two cans of beer doth not a good night make. What, no women? Roger-dee!" Our Birdman.
- Sandford** — The Mountain Mule, with piles of gear. Mother to Little Red One — "Hide your cans, here comes Sandy." Often divorced or separated from us, but always faithful.
- Southern** — The padre's friend. Only MFC to run out of 105mm ammunition. Often heard to say: "When we get back, let's give it a nudge, shall we?"
- Christie** — "Korea" the old man; wounded by a loaded rake. Still thought he could keep the younger ones at bay.
- Manihera** — SWALK. Junior always received 50% of company safe-hand mail. Recovery from R and R was a problem.
- Rogatski** — Had dollar signs for eyeballs. "Scrooge MacRogatski" had highest velocity wallet in company. And those bandy legs. "Spy."
- Bush** — "Vive la Pukekohe. Good grief!" Platoon Red Baron, with E-type Jag and ever-ready wit.
- Harrison** — Immaculate bald-headed rooster, ever willing to sacrifice himself for platoon medical spots.
- Ransfield** — "Tunku Abdul Ropeta," King of Rotorua. Blood group: VB. Callsign: Clank, clank.
- Ashton** — "Tapeworm." Read Charles Atlas ads in earnest, then said: "Please send me muscles!"
- Banks** — Once forgotten, now remembered. Wanted to buy a cheap chopper.
- Brown** — Chief of the hangi. If well lubricated, a chef's delight.
- Butt** — "Combat." From hills of Borneo to plains of Vietnam. Had difficulties with Vung Tau beauties.
- Grant** — "Grunt." Of undoubted value to commander as source of latest tactical intelligence.
- Healey** — "Hawk-eye." Tail-end Charlie for everything except beer queue.
- Hopping** — From motor-bike to chopper; a man who would throw out rations to make way for books.
- Isbister** — "Issy." Order in the court. Here comes the judge.....GUILTY!"
- Keelan** — Baldie's the name, signals the game. If company couldn't get them, Baldie would.
- Kingi** — "Eagle-eye" never missed a trick. Those shorts would have gone down well with the Gisborne Boy Scout troop.
- Kopae** — Swinging cover scout, with all those hippy shake movements during contact with Charlie and birds of Vung Tau.
- Martin** — His name was Hardy. Proved it in the field (as well as Vung Tau).
- Manning** — "Going on leave at last. How am I going to get this mattress off my back, Doc?"
- Murray** — Shooter from way back. "The war is going my way at last."
- Orr** — Those boots were made for carrying bayonets, knives, forks, spoons, money, but never Johnny.
- Penney** — "The Tauranga Shark." Only one of its kind that could live in a beer glass.
- Peterson** — "Speedy." Not fastest man in platoon, but had fastest belt-fed M79 in battalion.
- Price** — "The Big Red One." Had cleanest M60 in company and, boy, it worked!
- Rarere** — Platoon headquarters' hot line to White House, Kremlin or task force headquarters. Last of platoon to live in marquee.
- Rayner** — Only man in platoon to carry out a lone recon without a weapon. Wished he could grow wings. The great deerslayer.

Smith	— Put a Tiger in your tank, but never in Smithy.....
Taylor	— "Hairy Legs." Only man whose legs trembled when CSM said: "Get a haircut."
Teatonga	— Our haka-boogie rep. Small in stature, but big in voice.
Thomas	— Has he completed his mansion that he started over there?
Trow	— "Taihape Kid." Will he ever part with his bulldozer and settle for a wife?
Tuaiti	— "Monday, Monday, so good to me," sang the Mamas and Papas of Vung Tau.
Tuhura	— "Ossie." Bubble's Sugar Papa San. "Gaw dammit, man."
Turoa	— "Bubble." Platoon jester, who just had to talk on sentry to stay awake.
Warahi	— RPG contacted; 7.62mm short extracted. Even Charlie liked Old Spice, too.
Williams	— Only West Coaster to work on a Saturday after closing time. Been on compo ever since.
Wiltshire	— "Punchy." Wondered why he wasn't awarded a tko over that rubber tree. Points decision.
Wilson	— "Tubby." We couldn't see what she saw in him (hidden talent). Neither could Lcpl Bush.

The Platoon

*He was conceived by her, that time between morn and night;
Tropical rain and tropical heat,
Among the sweat of toiling men,
Amid the jeers, the smoke and cans
That was their lot.*

*Where the horse's hoof to earth did touch
To form the womb
She held in trust
For expectations yet unresolved; of form unknown;
A time to come.*

*One noble deed with courage faced;
A birth, a legacy, tradition shaped;
Pride engendered esprit de corps;
The form now known,
His future assured.*

*Actions fought, his watch completed,
Day by day maturity gained;
Undeterred, no matter the test,
This bond remains.
The essential spirit, Little Red One.*

Memories of the Company

Will company headquarters ever forget:

- The commanding officer's Montgomery-style NZ beret.
- The look on the CSM's face when he was waved to by two NZ nursing sisters passing in a Land-Rover as he walked naked to the shower.
- The language of the soldier one dark night as he surfaced in one of those 44-gallon drum latrines.
- The difficulty the RSM had with Maori names — **Guilty!**

Will One Platoon ever forget:

- Its psychedelic latrine.
- The hammock which collapsed on the wettest night of the tour.
- Bed checks at the Peter Badcoe Club. Who WAS duty officer?
- Grass, growth and grumps (flower power).
- Little Red One.
- Overpaid marriedies and underpaid singles.
- Plastic potato.
- The village idiot.

Will Two Platoon ever forget:

- Three wonderful trips to Vung Tau and three terrible trips back.
- Op Merino, where a certain corporal's "just another 25 metres" led to a three-day war.
- God's rumours (CSM).
- The bar afterward, where, if words were bullets, there would be no VC left.
- Raking leaves.
- Count Malaria appointing Cpl "Scoobie" Noble of Three Platoon as Sunray C/S 52.
- Guy Fawke's night—our flares and Charlies' rockets.

Will Three Platoon ever forget:

- The Chieu Hoi it stalked, only to find he was the new MFC, left behind in the rush of a contact.
- The horrified look on the face of the Vietnamese farmer as the grenade planted in his bag was "found" at the checkpoint.
- Bathing beauties and boat patrols on the Song Dong Nai, and the corporal breaking the tense silence saying, "Hold my rifle and pass the soap; I'm going to fall in."
- The tracker-trained NCO saying: "Did you notice my deliberate mistake?" after leading the patrol round in a circle.