



Administration Company

ADMINISTRATION COMPANY, or Admin Company as it was more commonly known, supplied the essential non-fighting elements of the battalion.

These were drivers, cooks, bandsmen and Q staff. RNZIR Component, an administrative cell concerned solely with the New Zealanders, came under Admin Company for rationing and quartering.

Admin Company's tasks were unenviable, involving, in the main, long hours of tedium in Nui Dat.

Boredom and frustration were two common enemies of the company's soldiers. Relief came in the form of TAOR patrols, escort duties on road convoys and similar tasks. The bandsmen often found themselves in fire support bases supplying perimeter defence personnel.

Admin Company's job was to administer the battalion in base and in the field. It was the company's task to see the companies in the field always had enough rations, clothing, ammunition, fuel and a hundred and one other items to keep them going.



Besides this, the company took over many tasks of the battalion while it was on operations; such tasks as TAOR patrols, wire sentries and work parties.

The company was commanded by two officers during its tour, Major M.C. Morrison until January 1969 and Major B.V.D. Lindsay. Both these officers became battalion base commander when the battalion was out of Nui Dat.

Two New Zealanders served as the company's 2IC. Capt B. Dyer came to 4RAR/NZ(Anzac)Bn from 2RAR.

Upon his return to New Zealand his position was taken over by Capt P.G. Frazer.



The CSM was WOII G.I. Neagle, CQMS Ssgt C. Constable and company clerk Cpl J. Todd, who was succeeded by Cpl R. Beasley.

Elements of Admin Company dealt with all maintdems and opdems. At first these were taken down in the company command post and then sent to the CQMS concerned. When three signallers were assigned to work at Eagle Farm the maintdems were taken down at the helipad, relieving pressure on the command post personnel.

Most members of the company had been in it since the battalion was formed, but many had never been employed on tasks involving anything other than their own skills.

TAOR patrols and duties outside the base were a challenge for all.

The Band

The battalion band very nearly did not make it to South Vietnam.

Toward the end of 4RAR's tour in Malaysia, Army Headquarters decided the battalion could no longer have on establishment a regimental band. All members of the band received posting orders, most to Townsville to start off the new 6RAR band. However, the commanding officer of 4RAR at the time, Lt Col C.H.A. East MBE, asked to be allowed to keep the band for the battalion's forthcoming

tour in South Vietnam. About half the old members were re-posted to Enoggera, along with replacements from School of Music and other command bands.

Up to January 1968 the band carried out many official engagements, but after that concentrated on medical training and exercises. Stretcher bearer teams were formed and given instruction by the RMO, Capt E.D. Lewis.

Whenever possible, musical rehearsals were resumed and the band achieved a high standard. The band played many concerts during HMAS Sydney's voyage to South Vietnam with the battalion aboard.



For the start of the tour the band was virtually disbanded because stretcher bearers lived and operated with the companies. Any special engagements were played by a small number of bandsmen.

In August the commanding officer told the band to reform as a platoon, its duties being defence employment and to provide music. The band performed at functions such as the opening of the swimming pool at the Peter Badcoe Club, the presentation of awards to 1st Australian Logistic Support Group troops at Vung Tau, officers' and sergeants' mess functions and barbecues.

In September WOII H.R. Jenkin took over the position of bandmaster. Over Christmas and up to February the band was occupied with defence duties at fire support bases and no playing took place. However, the end of the tour came into sight and in March the band started rehearsing again for the numerous end-of-tour functions.

Army Headquarters had the last say. At the end of the tour 4RAR was to lose its regimental band.



Transport Platoon

TRANSPORT PLATOON—MOTTO: "You serve by fighting. We fight by serving."

There were two major problems facing Transport Platoon when it arrived in South Vietnam.

The first was most of the vehicles were in poor mechanical condition, having been in service since 1RAR arrived in Vietnam on its first tour. There was no question of getting replacements for them, so the platoon had no alternative but to try to resurrect them.

The second problem was a superfluity of vehicles over drivers—there were 12 more vehicles in the pool than there were drivers to service and maintain them. However, the platoon needed the excess to replace vehicles which spent long periods in workshops.

The platoon had six full-time New Zealand drivers who, between them, managed two 2½-ton trucks and four Land-Rovers. After seven months in country the platoon reached its full complement of NCOs, a vehicle NCO, three corporals and three lance-corporals. This included the New Zealanders.

Besides supplying the companies with normal day-to-day transport requirements, the platoon had to supply road convoy vehicles, cavmobile gunships and vehicles for fire support bases.

Road resupply to the Horseshoe for the first part of the tour was a daily task, but later became less frequent.

During Operation Federal a convoy from Long Binh was involved in a contact which resulted in a VC being



captured and an AK47 recovered. At some stage of the tour road convoys covered every major route in the province.

The platoon's contribution to cavmobile operations was two Land-Rovers daily, mounted with 106mm recoilless rifles or M60 machine guns. These vehicles averaged more than 100 miles a day, and often this went up to 300. It's not surprising wear and tear on them was high.

Land-Rovers and trucks were deployed to fire support bases which included Lion, Betty, Janice, Sandpiper and Concord. They were used on many tasks, one which caused OC Transport Platoon much worry being scrub-crushing.

A Land-Rover was stationed permanently with the mobile advisory team at Dat Do, but it became a casualty in a VC mortar attack.

Throughout the tour Transport Platoon was given tasks outside the task force base to relieve the monotony of day-to-day driving within Nui Dat. These breaks outside the wire were welcomed by all.

Q Platoon

The primary task of Q Platoon was to resupply the battalion during operations.

This was carried out in three ways. Firstly, stores could be sent to the battalion by road or air direct from Nui Dat. Secondly, supplies could be sent forward to the companies in the field from a forward echelon within Phuoc Tuy Province. Thirdly, when the battalion was operating outside the province, maintenance could be carried out from a forward echelon outside Phuoc Tuy Province. This was normally stationed at Long Binh.



Wherever the platoon had an AQ cell working, it operated under the assistant-quartermaster, 2Lt J. Pietzner.

Resupply from forward echelons and Nui Dat was handled by the 2IC Admin Company, assisted by the regimental duties warrant officer, WOII L. O'Keefe, who ran Eagle Farm.

The platoon was always able to keep the battalion supplied with most things that were needed. However, when 11,000 pairs of socks were demanded in six weeks the strain of resupply was felt.

During its tour in Vietnam six members of Q Platoon, mostly national servicemen, returned to Australia. All served the platoon well. One worthy of mention was the battalion tailor, Cpl A.G. Death.

Besides carrying out their tasks in Q Platoon, members took part in TAOR patrols, road convoys and other jobs outside the task force base.

Eagle Farm

Eagle Farm was the name given to the battalion's helicopter landing pad at the southern end of the battalion area.

Eagle Farm served as the rear AQ cell when the battalion was operating within Phuoc Tuy Province.

Through Eagle Farm went nearly every item requested by those in the field. Staffed by five people, the 2IC Admin Company, WOII O'Keefe and three battalion signallers, it was not unusual for 20,000lb of stores to pass through Eagle Farm in one day.

A company desiring resupply submitted a maintdem to Eagle Farm via the forward AQ cell. This was passed to the CQMS of the company concerned who assembled all the items requested. The stores were checked for weight and sorted into loads by Eagle Farm personnel.

To save radio time a commodity code was used for requesting items. W Company had a problem with this when it first came into use. The company wanted some mee—dry noodles and flavouring which, when boiled in water, made a meal. A new wireless operator took down the maintdem and was not familiar with mee. He thought W Company meant MEE on the commodity code. The company was not a little unsettled to receive in the maintdem a large quantity of Duralex Suppositories. The RMO must have scratched his head over that one. After that, W Company asked for mee by its full title, Japanese mee.

Eagle Farm personnel considered their best effort was an opdem for ammunition from C Company, which was in contact at the time. Within five minutes of receiving the details, the ammunition was being loaded onto a helicopter sitting on the pad.

The Cooks

A mountain of obstacles faced cooks of the Australian Army Catering Corps when they arrived in Nui Dat.

Most of the team had little more than a basic cooking course behind them, but, joining the Kiwi cooks from V and W Companies, they soon built a pile of experience. Dust, heat, improvised and field cooking equipment, plain kitchens with no modern conveniences and a new US ration scale posed initial problems, but were a challenge quickly taken up.

Kitchen remodelling was the biggest task, but soon all were workmanlike and satisfactory. The cooks learned how far the ration scale could be stretched, and the 20 or so different methods of presenting mince were quickly mastered.

More than 600 men returning to Nui Dat from operations posed special problems. The end of an operation meant company-sized barbecues. This was all very well, but the ration scale didn't quite run to luxuries called for by such functions.

But all was overcome and the barbecues were highly successful. Formal dinners and buffets in Vietnam were a headache, again because of the lack of suitable food. But the cooks brought skill and imagination to bear and all were successfully accomplished.

The battalion spent Christmas in the field so, naturally, Christmas dinner had to be served in the field. The huge spread was prepared in company kitchens, packed into every available container, loaded onto trucks and driven to the festively-decorated battalion position. It was an unusual task, but the result was greatly appreciated by the troops.

The cooks did not spend all their tour in the kitchens. They joined the rear detail parties in TAOR patrols, wire defence, shotguns on road convoys and a variety of other non-catering tasks.