SOUND COLLECTION

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

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Hello Lex, this is Bob Moore.

On the second tour of the battalion I held three jobs. Firstly as Platoon Sergeant, First Platoon, A Company. I held that job until mid-July 1968. I was then Hospital Visiting Officer until mid-October. Then after Phil Thompson was wounded I became MFC Charlie Company.

But back to A Company. As mentioned, the first operation we really went on was a one-day operation in the Binh Ba Rubber Plantation which was rather uneventful. The second operation was Operation Blaxland in the Nui Dinhs in which One Platoon was engaged in two fleeting contacts - there was no result on either side - and for One Platoon it was otherwise uneventful. Three Platoon, however, got the first kill of the battalion on 27th April '68 when they discovered an enemy bunker system which they assaulted into killing one VC.

Getting back to One Platoon, during our movement between the two high features of the Nui Dinhs we came across a track crossing a creek and the Platoon Commander, Mal Meadows, decided to put an ambush in, one section forward. This was the section commanded by Corporal Bob Towns. They really ambushed the track without any result. On our return to Nui Dat, Bob Towns was promoted to sergeant and he became Platoon Sergeant of Two Platoon, A Company.

Our next operation was Operation Toan Thang - "final victory" or "complete victory". There were three phases. The first one we operated out from Fire Support Base Anderson and it was on this Fire Support Base that A Company - specifically One Platoon - put in a successful ambush, or contact, against some tax gatherers killing a couple, I think it was, and later, one was wounded, they followed a blood trail and the next day found him and killed one VC. The Company split then: One Platoon went to Fire Support Base Harrison initially and was later rejoined by the remainder of the Company who had gone, I think, to Black Horse - they had a night at Black Horse - then rejoined us at Harrison where we were patrolling out from Harrison, uneventful, before we went to Coral.

We were told at the briefing before moving into Coral that we were going there to ambush either demoralised VC parties returning from Saigon or infiltrators trying to get to Saigon. Well, you know the result of Coral and Balmoral. I think we got the shock of our lives, it was on such a scale. I don't think anybody really envisaged it.

One Platoon was the last platoon in the battalion, and A Company the last company, in One Platoon the last platoon into Coral. It was very late on the Sunday afternoon, May 12th, and we were told to look out for Captain Raggett, the Company 2IC, who'd be holding up a map - the back of a map - which he did. As the chopper came down we saw Bill Raggett shaking this map; we knew where he was. We all rv'd and we moved very quickly out of the area. It was probably ironic that we moved out past the mortar platoons. There were a few friendly exchanges between the boys, you know, 'dig in', 'you beauties', all this sort of thing. Bob Hickey, John Kerr, there were quite a few of them, Jock Witten I spoke to on the way out. Regrettably, Bob Hickey and Jock Witten and a couple of others were killed that night.

One Platoon wasn't really engaged, or didn't have an engagement until the early hours of the morning of the 13th. As the VC were coming out, getting away from the place [FSPB Coral], they brushed past the eastern perimeter and I think it was Harry Whiteside that shot one of them. A body dropped into a ditch that ran near us. He let fly with one or two M72s into them without other result. And we did a sweep out in the morning, just saw the one body. There were what we thought were a couple of blood trails, but it's pretty hard trying to pick out what was what over the ground, a lot of it was charred and we think there were blood trails. But afterwards the Company started moving back to the Fire Support Base. Three Platoon was pinned down between a contact between the VC and Delta Company, and didn't really get back until well after lunch. By that time One Platoon had moved back to the Fire Support Base. Our platoon area was between two roads - one frequently used; one infrequently used - and about forty or fifty metres out to our front was a big wide ditch. We went into the ditch first then when Mel Meadows had got an idea of where our linking units: Two Platoon was our left linking unit; to our right rear was Six Platoon; B Company was virtually to our rear. But we'd linked up and we started digging into shell scrapes that afternoon.

To our left between us and Company Headquarters were two very large bomb craters but we will speak a little bit more about those later on. From memory the Platoon [One Platoon] at that time consisted of Lieutenant Mal Meadows, myself, Sergeant Bob Moore as Platoon Sergeant. We had attached to us Sergeant Tony Harris the Mobile Fire Controller or MFC, he had a Sig called McClelland. Harry Whiteside was one of the corporals. We had Corporal, then Private, Fred Annesley. A machine gunner called 'Daphne', I can't recall his surname, but he had a girlfriend Daphne and had her name written on his bush-hat hence the term 'Daphne'. There was Privates Greg 'Blue' Coles, Leon Kubiak, John Langley or 'Jock' Langley, Jimmy Bray, Kevin Forbes, Danny Donohue, Shortie Bean, Ken Haze, Peter Burdquest, a chap that was left from Seven Platoon called Fury, Rod Quarrel, Peter Van-somebody I just can't think of the rest of his name - Van-something, Ian Bulmer and a fellah called Bailey, I can't think of his other name. Missing from the Platoon at the time was Bill Colins who was in hospital, Chocker Pryor, Corporal on Saigon guard, and Joe Minicon who was on R&R at the time.

The night of the 13th was relatively uneventful but on the 14th and 15th the Platoon spent the days ambushing and coming back late in the afternoon, starting the wiring. Now the wire stopped just in front of Three Section because B Company, instead of linking up, for some reason put their wire right round the back of our Platoon which led to an incident during the morning of the 16th. It was nearly disastrous but I will speak of that in a minute. So we spent our time ambushing, standing patrols on both days and, as I said, wiring. On the afternoon of the 15th we believe that the North Vietnamese started following us back towards our perimeter - we had that feeling. Incidentally, on the afternoon of the afternoon of the 15th Tony Harris called in some mortars on cooking odours that were quite near to our ambush position. We thought we'd heard noises, we weren't quite sure, but we picked up the distinctive odour of cooking. So in the general direction Tony brought in mortars, we don't know how effective they were. As I mentioned, as we returned to the Platoon position we thought that we were being followed and obviously we were.

At approximately half past eight that night, on the 15th, Three Platoon reported movement near the wire so the battalion stood to. There was no further activity and I think, from memory, we went to about fifty per cent, then sort of stand-down back to our normal

routine.

The morning of the 16th at approximately half past two, I think it was, we were all startled, stood to, there was incoming mortars and rocket fire. Shortly after young Peter Bourke was shot, one VC was inside the wire - he was a grenadier this bloke - the only weapons he was carrying were a belt of grenades round him. We also thought that there was movement near the two bomb craters we mentioned. So Harry Whiteside and Fred Annesley threw some grenades into the craters. One of the grenades that had been carried by Fred Annesley for some time was an American pineapple type, it failed to explode. During the night Harry Whiteside fired a number of M72s. There was a big tree to the left of Bluey Cole's machine gun pit and Harry stood near the tree, fired two or three M72s and one of them failed to go off, so it too was thrown into the crater with the dud grenade and they were later blown by the engineers. Fred Annesley, incidentally, was a tower of strength that night.

During the night the artillery support was incredible, it was coming from all directions. From our own supporting 102 Battery, from the 155s, the eight inchers from Bien-hoa. One of them came quite close, about twenty to twenty-five metres out from our perimeter and it left a couple of craters but they were nowhere near as big as the two bomb craters.

The air support initially was U8 Huey Helicopter gunships firing rockets and mini-gun support. Due to the B Company position at the rear of One Platoon and Two Platoon, to One Platoon's front left as it appeared to the pilots, there was confusion as to who the people were laying around in these pits, and also confusion in B Company. Or something happened - they had a trip flare in the wire which added to the confusion when the trip flare was detonated. So we had to mark the perimeter and it was marked by burning hexamine tablets. Now I got the word around quick and I used what I did by going to the front pits and igniting our blue American tablets which ignited very quickly, then the Australian tablets - they took a little while to get going, we put them on top. The support from the gunships continued from there.

Further out the gunships spotted a lot of VC movement and went to engage one of the VC bodies of troops and they were fired upon by 12.7 heavy machine gun fire. So an air strike was called in and it was during this period that four 500-pound bombs were dropped approximately 400 metres to our north and followed by a strafing attack by the striking aircraft.

It was during the sweep that morning that we found near the bomb craters caused by the 500-pounders the top of a human skull but was not allowed in the body count as the rest of the body couldn't be located - it was probably in a thousand pieces. During the action I tried twice to get a resupply party to Company Headquarters for ammunition. The first was unsuccessful because there was tracer coming up the main road to our left between us and Company Headquarters, and we got on the Company net and Captain Raggett told me be got on the Battalion net to ensure that there was no firing and on the second occasion we got in, got the ammunition and our trip was quite successful. It was during this resupply that we encountered Captain Bill Raggett, he had a lot of blood all down one side of his face. I asked him if he'd been hit, he said, 'Yeah, by a bloody star picket', this was whilst resupplying ammo to Three Platoon. His remark seemed to ease the tension a heck of a lot with the Diggers that I had with me on the resupply party and it certainly enhanced Bill Raggett's standing in the Company.

Shortly after the resupply Jimmy Bray and Forbes were wounded by a mortar. I think it was one of our own that was dropped short. It struck a tree. They got a bit of shrapnel in them and Jim Forbes was sent home, he got wounded in the upper arm. But Jimmy Bray wanted to stay on, much to his credit, and he did. It was later too that Tony Harris's Sig, Private McClelland was accidentally wounded by the GPMG M60 which it overheated and jammed. He tried to clear it. The thing discharged and the spent cartridge, I think, struck him in the side of the face.

In the whole of the action, which is well documented in your book, ['The Battle of Coral'], the Platoon, or the Company, the Battalion, they performed very well but there was one bloke that I should remark on and that was Tony Harris. When he was adjusting the mortar fire, especially in the very early stages, it was a tremendous morale booster to the troops at the front because you're never quite sure what's going on, and Tony adjusted right across the front of Two Platoon around to our right and it was a great morale boost with Tony performing. He was very cool; he did it very well.

During the morning the Company swept north-west then east locating some NVA [Vietnamese] bodies. Two Platoon had a contact, there was a bloke in the grass, whether he was about to fire on them we will never know but they couldn't afford to take the risk and shot him. To the east there was VC weapon pits, one containing about eight or ten sixty-millimetre mortars. Later that afternoon, after the sweeps, and we got back to continue wiring, there were a few sniper rounds taken in the Platoon area but without any effect. I think Three Section returned some fire into the general direction where they thought the shots had come from.

It was also that night we had attached two anti-tank people with one ninety-millimetre RCL. This was a great morale booster, capable of firing across the front of the platoon and this brought our strength back to about one and sixteen [one officer, 16 other ranks] plus Tony Harris. We operated for a few days as a two section platoon after that, and for a couple of days later the perimeters were readjusted again and One Platoon moved to a new and final location at Fire Support Base Coral. Within a few days the following personnel rejoined the platoon. There was Corporal Chocker Pryor who, as I mentioned, had been on Saigon guard, Billy Collins who had been in hospital, and Joe Minicon back from R&R, and there were two or three other Diggers who came in whose names escape me now. One or two of them may have been in that first lot that I mentioned, I'm not quite sure.

This brought our strength back to approximately one and twenty-one, enough to operate as a platoon with three sections. There were two big company operations after. They were both recces in force, one of them was uneventful but the other we had two contacts with the enemy. The first was when Shortie Anderson from Three Platoon shot a lone VC and the second, it was late in the afternoon when the Company was about to cross a clearing and we were fired upon. Now, we fired a few shots in return in the general direction. We were accompanied by the tanks on that occasion who returned the fire with the twenty-pounders fired at the snipers. The firing ceased, some APCs returned to collect the Company and the Company returned to Fire Support Base Coral.

The next operation which was called Toan Thang 2 was conducted a couple of weeks later but there was very little activity. There was certainly no contact with the enemy. But as we'd started to move into the wet season all companies had a lot of sickness, what they call

PUO - pulmony of unknown origin - more popularly known as malaria.

It was about this time, even from Coral, I'd had a lot of ear trouble in the right ear and with one thing and another I was made Hospital Visiting Officer, a job which I performed from late July until early October. The duties of the Hospital Visiting Officer were taking mail to, getting mail from, the soldiers of the battalion, making sure that they were administered from the battalion point of view because once they were in hospital, of course, they were administered and administered very well by the First Aust Field Hospital but there were always things that they needed from the battalion. Looking after the names of the sick and wounded, getting deceased effects down to the ALSG area, ferrying specialist appointments - blokes who had all sorts of things wrong with them that were treated as outpatients - to both the Aust Field Hospital and [US] 36 Evac Hospital. Acting as a courier generally as required to either ALSG or any other place they had to go.

There was one thing: all personnel, even the walking wounded, those as outpatients, had to be armed and the vehicle moved independently to Vung-tau daily until we encountered two incidents. The first one was a grenade thrown from a Lambretta minibus between the HVO vehicle and the US jeep nearing the Hoa Long sand pits. The jeep drove to the check point outside Hoa Long and we were waved on. There was nobody injured, but the bus, everybody was ripped out of the bus and searched. I don't know the outcome of it. A week or so later, whilst travelling to Vung-tau, our vehicle had just passed through Ba Ria and had turned right at the corner at that big strafed theatre building, it had all the rocket holes in it and machine gun fire or small arms fire pock marked around it, when we were heading east to Vung-tau when debris and a flash shot upwards into the air in the distance followed by a mighty explosion and black smoke. Thinking it must have been a demolition we continued on our journey. Nearing Cat Lo before we got to that big bridge that crossed the river, the traffic had stopped and we learned later that there had been a mine incident. We were unable to continue or turn back, the traffic was banked up in front of us and behind us, and we felt quite vulnerable. About forty-five to sixty minutes later we proceeded forward, stop and start, until we passed what had been an ammunition truck. Half the road had been blown up and Quan Canh police [ARVN MPs] were searching the area very thoroughly, and checking the vehicles, including ours, as we went passed. Apparently the VC had intended destroying what they had through was a US Army truck carrying one fifty-five millimetre charged canisters but it was carrying empty canisters. After this incident all personnel travelling to and from Vung-tau were required to travel in convoy, particularly between the US coastguard base at Cat Lo and Ba Ria, and again all personnel had to be armed with long-barrelled weapons. On the return trip once, and I was very sorry about it, I had to eject our very popular padre John Tinkler from the vehicle, because he made a point of never carry weapons but unit standing order said that anybody travelling had to be armed. He didn't want to carry a weapon so regrettably we had to ask him to get out of the vehicle. He took it in good part, he understood and he made his own way, I think he got a lift back in an aircraft.

It was during this convoy that a rather amusing incident occurred. The Hospital Visiting Officers' vehicles of 1RAR, 3RAR and 4RAR often rv'd at the Cat Lo coastguard base in order to form or join a convoy in the afternoon because we never all left together, we all had different duties, different things to do, but we'd make a point of around four in the afternoon, or half past three till four, of rv'ing opposite the base because it was relatively safe getting from Vung-tau to the Cat Lobase. It was afterwards that the problem seemed to occur. This was to form a convoy or rejoin the convoy back to Nui Dat. On this

particular occasion it was raining cats and dogs in the late afternoon or mid afternoon in Vietnam in the wet season - it was raining extremely heavily. 1RAR and 4RAR vehicles travelled together as far as Cat Lo whilst we waited for the 3RAR vehicle. As I said, pouring cats and dogs, the two vehicles pulled up in front of a row of bars come brothels. Now as soon as we pulled up the Diggers hopped out and took shelter on the verandahs and kept an eye on the vehicles. We removed everything that could be removed from the vehicles and watched them and we were all like drowned rats and this included the Salvo Officer [Salvation Army] who was from 4RAR and returning to Nui Dat. It didn't take long for the enterprising mamasan [female bar manager] to start selling drinks to the Diggers and invite a few of the boys inside, which a few of them, including the Salvo, did, because it was still getting a bit wet on the verandah and they stepped in out of the rain. Well, we made sure that there was enough left on the verandah to keep an eye on the vehicles. Now the Salvo had a goffer [soft drink] and just stepped inside with the rest to take shelter. He hadn't been inside very long but we spotted the lights coming up the road, and lo and behold, it was the 3RAR vehicle. So we all went out, the rain had eased up a little, reformed our convoy, and away we went. I mentioned the incident when I got back to both the assistant adjutant and the battalion 2IC, Roger Hutton, who thought it was hilarious and he apparently told the CO of the HVO taking the Salvo to the brothels at Cat Lo. Well, the CO gave me a bit of a chiacking over it, he knew what the background of the thing was. But even nowadays, often if I'm speaking to some of the old and bold on ANZAC Day, they often refer to the day that I took the Salvo to the brothels at Cat Lo.

It was also while I was acting as Hospital Visiting Officer that Sergeant Phil Thompson, the MFC of Charlie Company, received a shrapnel wound to his upper arm at Operation Nowra which was at Long Dien. When he was wounded Sergeant Ken Phipps took over as MFC Charlie Company, and he remained in that job until Operation Windsor. It was after Windsor that Ken was promoted to WO2 and appointed CSM Charlie Company in place of W02 Wally Thompson who had returned to Australia to become RSM of 4RAR, I think it was, or to the Infantry Centre before his appointment to 4RAR. I became the MFC Charlie Company in October, call sign 83 Alpha. At the same time Major Brian Honner took over as OC of Charlie Company from Captain Jock Smith MC who'd commanded the company after the departure of [Major] Digger Campbell.

My first operation was Operation Capitol from 28th October to 29th November. C Company secured the Fire Support Base and remained in the Fire Support Base during the first phase of the operation. It was whilst we were at this Fire Support Base that some of our members in an APC ran over a canister of CS gas. The result was most discomforting: teary eyes, runny nose - you name it - and a couple of blokes did have their eyes affected from it. It was also when one of the vehicles ran over a very small mine just enough to shake a couple of them up, but not enough to do much damage to the APC. There was a bit of track damage but not much. The Company then moved past Fire Support Base 'Diggers' Rest' and cleared an area up to an allotted AO. Apart from a very fleeting sighting of two VC no contact was made with the enemy, however, it was on Capitol that Second Lieutenant Terry Langlands and Corporal Fred Annesley were killed in action. I didn't know the platoon commander very well but knew and liked and respected Fred Annesley and was very sorry to hear of his death and, of course, the platoon commanders over the Admin Air Net. Fred was probably one of the best soldiers I'd the pleasure of meeting. He'd extended for six months to come home with the battalion, he was left over from 7RAR after about six month's service with them. Served with 1RAR, extended to come home and regrettably was killed. He was sadly missed by those who knew him.

After that operation the Company went on Operation Goodwood Phase 1 from 3rd December till 4th January. Even though the operation proper finished on 1st January we didn't get back till the 4th as we did two cordons and searches but I will speak about those a little later. Operation Goodwood was a vastly different proposition. This operation started in the Hat Dich [ph = hat zick] commonly pronounced Hat Ditch. On the second day we moved to what was later called Charlie Feature. We moved to that feature and were fired upon. I was travelling with the forward platoon and in order to get the forward platoon out, I was directed over the company net to direct fire in the direction of the firing which we could pick out then as a bunker system, which I did. On the company net I directed the fire which was redirected to the artillery net by the FO party. The leading platoon was extracted without casualties which worked out pretty well.

After the withdrawal of the leading platoon, the company reorganised, and Nine Platoon, backed up by the company, then started probing the perimeter to see exactly where they were, and were again fired upon and with the same result. We called in supporting fire and got them out. That afternoon an air strike was called in and a troop of tanks moved up to join the company. The following day the company, supported by tanks, assaulted the bunker complex with the tanks leading and troops behind the AFVs. The assault was both fast and confident. The AFVs drove straight into the bunkers with the muzzles of the twenty pound guns depressed. They drove up to the bunkers, placed the muzzles in the entrance of the bunkers and fired. It was a tremendous morale booster for the Diggers. Most of our casualties were previous taken in or near bunkers. I still have vivid recollections of Sergeant Roy Gladingboel, Platoon Sergeant Eight Platoon, throwing grenades into some of the bunkers and Lieutenant Tony Jensen, the Platoon Commander Eight Platoon, assaulting his platoon over from our left, from the company, into bunkers. Both confided to me later that in view of the casualties taken on earlier operations in the Hat Dich, presence of the tanks really boosted the confidence of the Diggers. I also think that company morale received a great boost. It was the first real test of the new OC Major Brian Bronx Honner, and he gained the confidence of the company. He became very confident as his predecessor, Digger Campbell, was. Very confident and very popular. The assault resulted in one enemy killed in action. It was a very fresh body, probably killed the previous day by the look of some of the shrapnel wounds - from the previous afternoon. He was buried in a very shallow grave, part of him was protruding, that's how he was found so easy and we knew he was so fresh. And the capture of ammunition - stacks of ammunition - two naval mines of all things, one scraped out 500-pound bomb and miscellaneous equipment.

After the assault the company searched the area and seemed to hit what appeared to be several bunker complexes. However, the locations were plotted on maps and it became very evident that each was part of the one large complex.

I will just digress for a minute on these bunker complexes and hark back to the tanks. Whenever a platoon or company was moving, the lead platoon knew when they were in the vicinity of bunkers by the trees. If the bunkers were on a hill when you were approaching them on the side or at the foot of the hill, there were trees cut off about anything from six inches to about a foot above the ground and these trees were anything from about four to about six or eight inches in diameter. It was then that the troops became very toey because we knew that in the vicinity were bunkers. But once we'd had the experience of going in behind the tanks, having that protection, plus the mobile fire support of the tanks, the

troops became very confident when near or around suspected bunker systems.

The Company harboured up for a couple of days in the area searching out the area. It took two or three days to search the area thoroughly and whilst we were waiting for the engineers to come up and destroy some of the bunkers the remainder were later destroyed by air strike. Eight Platoon was detached to move to our new location and the remainder of the company remained at that location for a few days while the engineers destroyed both bunkers and the captured ammunition.

Eight Platoon had a few contacts killing several VC on the way to the new location, and in about three or four days the company moved to rejoin Eight Platoon who had secured the new company loc [location] and were to take a resupply for the company. During the move the company made contact twice, both in bunker systems. The first resulted in two enemy killed in action, and we suffered three or four wounded. The second contact later that afternoon resulted in three enemy killed in action. The company withdrew to a night harbour and the following morning again passed through or around this bunker complex very wearily.

After the first contact we got on the Admin Air Net, and had a Dust-off to evacuate the wounded that we had. We took a resupply of ammunition and water and then I had a section. We went back to the bunkers, I set up a marker balloon for aircraft and again, that bunker system, I believe, was later destroyed by an air strike.

The Company linked up with Eight Platoon later that morning and established a harbour position and was resupplied. That night I was attached to Nine Platoon for a platoon ambush. The night was uneventful; the platoon returned to company location. The following morning I again accompanied Nine Platoon under Sergeant Ken 'Blue' Brunette two or three hundred metres from the company loc towards a creek crossing where Eight Platoon had previously had an engagement. Now we were to ambush the junction of the creek and the tracks. The following morning a small group of VC were ambushed and from memory we killed three VC. Our ambush had been near the site, as I mentioned, of the previous contact by Eight Platoon. Although some enemy killed in action by Eight Platoon, I'm not quite sure of the numbers.

We returned to the Company location where Sergeant Blue Brunette was detached and command went to the newly promoted Sergeant Brian Broderick. Again I was attached to the Nine Platoon and the following morning we crossed what was called 'The Blue', the blue line, the creek, in the map where we'd had the previous successful ambush, and we ambushed in that area for the next three days and each morning we sprung successful ambushes daily. The last being a resupply party. They were carrying tinned fish, vegetables, tobacco, cigarettes, some money and from memory I think we killed about three on that occasion. All up, there were about eight or nine VC killed by Nine Platoon at this particular location.

We returned to the Company location a day or so before Christmas 1968. The night before Christmas Eve the VC detonated a DA D10 Claymore into the company location but there were no casualties. On Christmas Eve, although we were supposed to be enjoying a cease fire, we got little sleep because the VC carried out a successful attack on a battalion of Thais on a rubber plantation two or three thousand metres to our north-west. On Christmas Day the CSM and Platoon Sergeants ran around Coffee Royal to the company and we

enjoyed a hot box lunch for Christmas lunch - oh, the luxury of it all.

On Boxing Day it was back to business: patrolling, ambushing, et cetera. This time with Seven Platoon. On 28th December, after resupply, Seven Platoon moved out to an ambush location. The Platoon bumped into a bunker complex. The VC occupants detonated a CD mine believed to be a UXB 105 millimetre high explosive shell, killing one of the machine gunners, Private Cox, the last man to be killed in the battalion on the Second Tour, wounding the Platoon Commander, Lieutenant R. Convery, who was later murdered in 9RAR, and wounding two or three others. The Company rejoined Seven Platoon and occupied the bunkers. The VC had bugged out. The Company patrolled out from the bunkers while the engineers were brought in and were later resupplied with explosives, et cetera, to destroy the bunkers which they eventually did.

On New Year's Eve the Company moved to a new location where we were airlifted out on New Year's Day. We harboured on the New Year's Eve and moved out on New Year's Day to a new location near Fire Support Base Heavy Weight in readiness for the two cordon and search operations.

The first entailed a night cross country move by the battalion to get in position. On this occasion Charlie Company was part of the cordon. The second move also meant a night move, but down a road, and the companies moved straight into their cordon positions and Charlie Company was held in reserve because on this occasion they were the searching company. Both operations were reported as being successful, taking prisoners, suspects, et cetera.

The Battalion returned to Nui Dat on 4th January. The following day the Company enjoyed the belated Christmas dinner thoroughly enjoyed by all ranks. Morale was high. It was reported that the battalion was credited with thirty-three killed by body count, Charlie Company was credited with thirty-one of those kills.

END OF TAPE ONE - SIDE ONE

START OF TAPE ONE - SIDE TWO

The Rung Sat Swamps and lasted approximately two weeks. Although extremely hard slogging the operation was relatively uneventful. There were a couple of minor incidents. The first one was the discovery of a body by Eight Platoon. I was attached to Eight Platoon who were to ambush known tracks in the area. The first afternoon out we came across a body that was badly decomposed and had been partly eaten by pigs. The body was partly covered with dirt and near the body were these trees, or stumps of trees, that I'd mentioned before that indicated that we were near a bunker system. So, it was late in the afternoon, and the platoon harboured up that night, I adjusted some DFs around our area, and the night passed relatively uneventful. The next morning we found the bunker system which was assaulted by Eight Platoon. The platoon was then commanded by Sergeant Roy Gladingboel who did a magnificent job when he assaulted. By fire and movement the platoon, sections using two down, one section on the move, assaulted into the bunkers except for the last few metres when everybody was occupied, very well executed, but the bunkers had been deserted. We searched the area and apart from a whopping great well near the track there was not a great deal to report. The bunkers were marked and later destroyed.

There was also a couple of fleeting sightings of VCs without result. Unfortunately we lost an APC, the APC commander was killed in action when it ran over a mine. After this operation the company was engaged in platoon ambushes on the eastern side of the Nui Dinhs. On one of these ambushes I was with Nine Platoon, we thought we'd heard some noises, went into a quick ambush position but nothing came of it.

On our return to Nui Dat we welcomed our replacements, the advanced party of 5RAR. The Company was engaged in a clean-up and apart from a few small operations aimed at familiarising our replacements for the area, there wasn't a great deal to report.

Lex, this finishes the brief resume of what I can remember of the operations I was on with One Platoon A Company, Hospital Visiting Officer for about nine weeks, and, finally, the last four months as MFC Charlie Company. I'm enclosing a couple of pictures and some newspaper clippings. The newspaper clippings are mainly of the time spent at Coral from the Newcastle Morning Herald, the Newcastle Sun, on Australia's worst week of the war as far as the casualties went. Use them in any way you wish. If there is anything that I can add or fill in any gaps please let me know - just drop me a line explaining what you may require. I've got a few photos, they may be of benefit if you need them but you are probably inundated by them now.

Best of luck on the book and if I can be of any further assistance please let me know. All the best, mate.

BOB MOORE

END OF TAPE