

'Paludrine Parade'

Official Newsletter of the Royal Australian Army Service Corps
Vietnam Supply Platoons Association



Patron: MAJGEN David McLachlan AO (Rtd). Web Site: <http://raascsupply.asn.au/>



Issue No: 46 Autumn
March, 2017

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In our last edition, we gave you some basic information on our next reunion to be held in Hobart. Well—full credit goes to our President, Graeme Sherriff, who has been working feverishly to find accommodations, organise tours, negotiate costs and to find a great place for our AGM and the Corps Formal Dinner. Over the next few pages you will find full details of what has been organised. It's an exciting itinerary and should mark the 2017 Hobart Reunion as one of the best that has been planned. So check it all out, get your registration payments in, book your accommodation, make your travel plans and just get there. (Ed).

From our President. Please read all of the documentation provided on pages 6 and 7 of this Newsletter relative to our coming reunion. We all had a great time at our last reunion in Perth WA. Hobart is shaping up to be even better.

Please take the time to personally invite any of our existing or potential new members.

The Tours. The tour bus has a capacity of 57 seats. Our aim is to fill all seats, or most. Tour pick up times from accommodation venue will be advised in due course. Tour lunches are NOT included in the cost to members, that's at your cost. However, the entrance fee to national parks is included.

Our Accommodation venues.

Recommended accommodation is well located near the Hobart city centre, basically walking distance to the Hotel SOHO, which is the site for our Registration, Melbourne Cup get together and our Formal Dinner.

Cost to Members. Be assured the Committee has spent a good deal of time in sourcing affordable options for both accommodation and tours. The Cost to members is all inclusive of the following:

- TOUR 1 – Port Arthur.
- FORMAL DINNER
- TOUR 2 – Huon Valley.
- REMEMBRANCE DAY (Excludes lunch).
- TOUR 3 – Coal River. Includes Mt. Wellington and Historic Richmond.

**Equates to
\$200 Per Person.**

RSVP - DEADLINE DATES. As the tour bus only has a capacity of 57 seats, registration will be on a 'first come first served' basis. So Please make the decision, register and forward your remittance. Requested on or before;

30th April 2017

Then book your accommodation and finalise your travel arrangements.

Finally, are you up to date with your Membership Fees?

Looking forward to a fantastic reunion with great camaraderie.

Graeme Sherriff (President).

Any Tour or Reunion enquiries ring Graeme on 0411 797 036

NON-LIABILITY HEALTH CARE FACT SHEET

NEWS FLASH

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has released a factsheet about non-liability health care treatment available to current and former members of the ADF, which includes details of who is eligible and how they can apply to access treatment. All current and former members of the ADF with continuous full-time service are eligible for treatment of the following conditions: post-traumatic stress disorder, depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, alcohol use disorder, and substance use disorder. Find out more about Non-Liability Health Care via – Fact Sheet HSV 109 – Non Liability Health Care.

Keeping the Troops in the Field. Part 1: Rations

Bob Hall and Andrew Ross. This article is reproduced from <https://vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au>. The site of 'Australia's Vietnam War.' Restriction on space has only allowed for half of the article to be printed in this edition, with the next half being included in the Winter edition of Paludrine Parade.

In any campaign, rations form a significant component of the dismounted soldier's load. However, in counterinsurgency campaigns in a jungle environment, rations and water can become a very large component of the soldier's load. Jungle and vehicles don't mix so the infantry will be expected to carry on their backs all they require – rations, water, ammunition – to keep them in the field. The enemy will seek to exploit the problems of resupply we face by establishing bases in the most remote, difficult to access parts of the AO. Helicopters or free dropping supplies from fixed wing aircraft may also be limited due to a variety of factors including the need to maintain security and the risk of ground fire.

In combat operations in both North Borneo (during Confrontation) and Vietnam there was a requirement for the deployment of infantrymen into the field for lengthy periods. In Vietnam, 1ATF patrols were initially of about 4 to 6 days duration, but the rapidly increased as the Task Force established dominance of the area surrounding the Nui Dat base.

As operations penetrated deeper into the remote parts of the Australian AO, operations of 28 days or more, became common.

To sustain troops in the field over periods of this length required the periodic resupply of rations (and other items). However, re-supply whether by helicopter, APC or other vehicle, tended to compromise the security of the deployed troops.

This resulted in pressure to limit resupply missions as much as possible. These twin pressures – to remain in the field yet with strictly limited resupply – led to soldiers being required to carry heavy loads of rations.

It was common for soldiers to be issued with 6 or even 7 days rations with the expectation that these would be 'stretched' to cover an 8 or 9 day gap between resupplies.

Rations available.

Australian Combat Ration (One Man). This ration weighed 1.362 kg. It provided 5 varieties, each supplying the soldier with tinned and dry meals covering a 24 hour period.

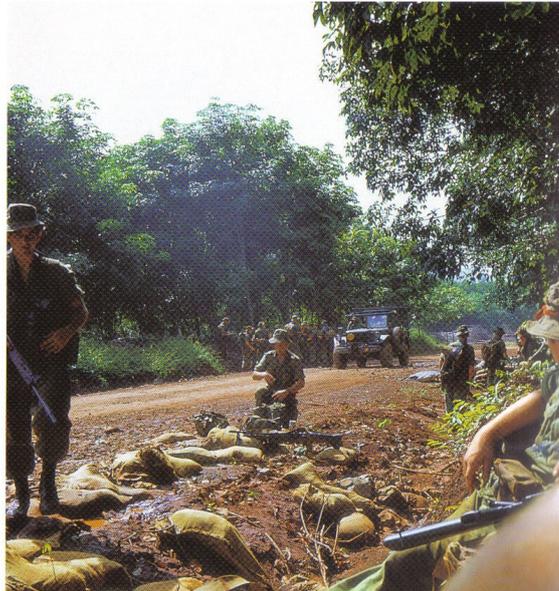
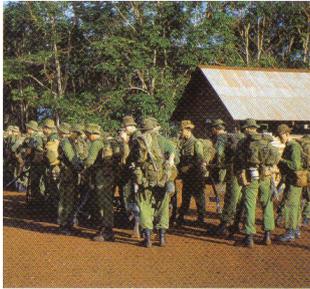
US Army 'C' rations. Weight of three meals was 2.724 kg, twice that of the equivalent Australian Combat Ration (One Man). The meals came in 12 varieties.

Australian Combat Ration (One Man) Light Weight. This ration weighed about 0.7 kg and came in three varieties. It provided freeze dried meals in foil packages that could be used to prepare the meal, thus doing away with the necessity of using a mess

meal was more substantial reflecting the greater opportunities for food preparation when the patrol had stopped for the night. Over the course of an operation lasting perhaps 28 to 30 days, the limited range of meal varieties quickly palled. Commanders often solved this problem by substituting a percentage of US 'C' rations for the equivalent number of days of Australian Combat Rations (One Man). The percentage mix of Australian to US rations varied throughout the course of the war as soldiers' tastes changed and the need for greater variety became imperative with longer operations. Mostly the

balance was 50-50, but some units pressed for a shift to 70 per cent US 'C' rations to 30 percent Australian Combat Rations (One Man). US 'C' rations came in 12 varieties. The balance of US 'C' rations to Australian Combat Rations (One Man) was significant because the US 'C' rations weighed almost twice the weight of an Australian ration. Unlike the Australian ration, US 'C' rations provided a single meal in a

cardboard box. Three boxes, each about the size of the Australian Combat Ration (One Man), made up the day's ration. By mid-1969 infantry units were ordering the new Australian Combat Ration (One Man) Lightweight, in larger numbers. It tended to be issued on the basis of one Lightweight ration to every two or three 'heavyweight' or 'normal' rations. In infantry battalions it was never used as the sole ration on issue. Its range of varieties was too restricted and, although it could be eaten dry if absolutely necessary, it needed water to make a palatable meal. SAS patrols also used these standard rations but supplemented them occasionally with lightweight British and US Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) rations specifically designed for SAS patrol use.



tin or mug. Also part of the soldier's field rationing kit was the hexamine stove and packet of hexamine tablets. The stove weighed 0.14 kg and the packet of tablets weighed 0.227 kg.

Operational requirement for rations.

The standard ration pack issued to infantrymen in Vietnam was the Australian Combat Ration (One Man). It consisted of three meals sealed in a plastic bag together with items such as a can opener/spoon, matches, toilet paper, etc. The contents of the ration were intended to provide a reasonably substantial breakfast which included a tinned meat meal intended to be heated using the hexamine stove. A light lunch of dry biscuits and spreads (margarine, vegemite, cheese, jam) was provided with the intention that this could be stowed in the pocket, and thus obviate the opening of the field pack for the midday meal, and would not require heating, though heating was required anyway if the soldier wanted a cup of tea or coffee with his midday meal. Most did. The evening

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Culling of rations. Soldiers did not carry the complete ration on operations. Although the Australian Combat Ration (One Man) – both ‘heavyweight’ and lightweight – and presumably the US ‘C’ ration, were designed to deliver a balanced diet to the soldier, infantrymen always culled their rations, rejecting many items in an effort to reduce their ration load. However, the culling of rations took time, particularly at resupplies in the field, and produced large quantities of ‘rubbish’ such as rejected ration pack components, wrappings, etc., that might be useful to the enemy if left in the field. Therefore, companies often ‘institutionalised’ the practice, having their Company Quartermaster Sergeant back at Nui Dat open the packs and remove many items from them, before loading the remainder into sandbags for delivery to the troops by resupply helicopter. In some rifle companies, this was done with a rather heavy hand and troops often complained about the result. In D Company 8 RAR for example, the company commander not only severely culled the rations but also decreed, at one point, that hexamine tablets would not be issued, so hot meals and tea and coffee were ‘off the menu’. This move reduced the load carried by soldiers but resulted in a morale problem until hexamine tablets were once again issued. According to Dr C.F.A. Younger of the Army’s Food Science Establishment (AFSE),

‘the theoretical daily caloric intake required by an infantryman weighing 70 kg and aged between 18 and 35 [was] 3,300.’

The Australian Combat Ration (One Man) delivered between 3,142 and 3,843 calories depending on the variety of ration pack and therefore comfortably met the caloric requirement if totally consumed. But when soldiers (or their company quartermaster staff) culled their ration packs and threw out many items, they effectively reduced the caloric value contained within the ration. Younger wrote that:

‘Investigations conducted into the quantity of food actually carried by Australian servicemen whilst engaged in operational patrols in Borneo [during Confrontation] revealed that of 64 ra-

tions analysed, 72 per cent provided less than 2,500 calories and 40 per cent provided 2,000 calories or less. During the trial of the combat ration (one man) light weight, in South Vietnam, the caloric value of the ration actually consumed, after allowing for rejected and unconsumed food, was 1,980 calories daily.’

Clearly, calories actually consumed were substantially less than calories required. If



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL PJE/71/0205/VN

Private Brian Haseldine, a mortarman of 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) breaks out some C rations after a resupply from Task Force Headquarters to company headquarters of Support Company. The three small cardboard boxes each contain one meal.

caloric intake falls below expenditure the soldier moves into caloric deficit and body weight loss occurs. However, according to Younger, this may not be a problem unless physical performance is impaired and provided soldiers are subsequently given an opportunity to recover their condition.

‘The level at which physical performance begins to fall off is of profound importance’ wrote Younger, *‘as this dictates the caloric deficit which can be safely sustained.’*

Experiments were conducted to identify the levels of caloric deficit that might be used without ill effect for limited periods. One such experiment involved 30 men on a ration providing 1,500 calories per day for 10 days. Physiological measurements of the physical performance of the subjects showed that their performance had actually improved over the course of the experiment.

But experimental conditions were quite different from sustained combat operations. Younger thought that the subject’s improved physical performance may have been due to them being slightly overweight at the beginning of the experiment or to the higher levels of activity during the trial. Younger wrote that;

‘the most significant finding was that there was no deterioration over the ten-day period with an actual intake of 1,400 calories per man daily.’

However, it would seem dangerous to apply these experimental results to combat operations in which soldiers were already stripped of any excess weight through a period of rigorous pre-deployment training. Another trial was conducted under simulated operational conditions in Malaysia using rations providing 1,500 calories per man per day. The trial covered two 10-day periods on the low calorie rations separated by a 7-day recovery period. Younger wrote that:

‘An interesting point which emerged was that the relationship between body weight loss and performance score during the second period was almost statistically significant, in that the greater the body weight loss the poorer the performance score. This indicates that the caloric intake in relation to the work load and recovery period could not have been reduced much further without performance falling off. This means that, in terms of calories, 1,500 represents the smallest ration which can at present be envisaged for use for periods of up to ten days.’

The weight saving in using a ration of this level of caloric value was ‘at least eight ounces [0.23 kg] per 24 hours period compared with the Australian Combat Ration (One Man) Lightweight, the lightest combat ration currently being produced (24 ounces [or 0.68 kg])’. However, by 1968 infantry reconnaissance in force operations in Vietnam were usually of at least 28 days duration with the troops being resupplied in the field. Some were longer. Nor was there an opportunity for a 7-day recovery period between operations. The tempo of operations often resulted in any ‘recovery period’ being between 3 and 5 days, and often in that period platoons were required to do their share

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of local 24-hour security patrols around the Task Force base perimeter. Furthermore, this pattern was maintained for a year. Younger was aware of these considerations. He had conducted field trials of lightweight rations in Vietnam where he noted that infantry patrols were often of 28 days duration or more. He wrote:

'After this length of time, it is likely that some effect of vitamin deficiency would be apparent. Discussion with the medical officers in the area did not reveal any gross evidence of clinical effects of inadequacy. The most notable were two cases of Haemorrhagic manifestations, one of which required blood transfusion, which did apparently respond to administration of ascorbic acid. There is little doubt that because of the need to reduce the soldiers' combat load, the rations actually taken on patrol are nutritionally inadequate in many respects, particularly with regard to caloric value, and vitamins of the B group and ascorbic acid.'

Younger's focus appears to have been upon weight loss and physical performance of troops consuming low calorie diets. We wonder about possible psychological or emotional effects such as the maintenance of high levels of concentration, morale, decisiveness, aggression, complacency, response time, etc. The possible effects of low caloric intake on these issues is not mentioned in any of the literature we were able to locate for this study but the subject may be addressed in various Army Food Science Establishment (AFSE) reports. The most relevant reports cited by Younger appear to be:

Younger, C.F.A., *Analysis of rations taken by Australian soldiers on patrol in Borneo*, AFSE report, July 1966.
 Young, D.R., *Performance in relationship to food energy intake: Activities reports*, QMF & CIAF, 1961, 13, 146-151.
 Younger, C.F.A., *Trial to determine the effect of a diet providing 1500 calories daily, on a soldier's physical performance*, AFSE, report 3/67.

This article will be continued in the Winter Edition of Paludrine Parade.

Just for a giggle!



My high school assignment was to ask a veteran about the Vietnam War. Since my father had served there, I chose him. After a few basic questions, I very gingerly asked, "Did you ever kill anyone?" Dad got real quiet. Then, in a soft voice, he said, "Probably. I was the cook."

US Army rescues 47 sex slaves from ISIS



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A ration run—extract from New Zealand's 21st Battalion which fought in the Battle of Cassino in April, 1944 Italy during WW2

Rations are brought up daily from the ration point well south and at present, company 2IC's are supervising the preparation of the evening meal for our boys up the sharp end fighting in Cassino. Hot stew made from fresh beef, with plenty of dehydrated vegetables, to be followed by rice pudding and tinned peaches. We have a little flour, so Cornish pasties are being made and will be used as the midday meal. For breakfast this morning we had a change, good American Spam made into fritters. Quite a change from soya links. The time is 1830 hrs. The food is ready packed in hot boxes and sand bags, the companies have improvised Thermos packs for hot cocoa. Having poured boiling cocoas in Jerry cans, the cans have been placed in sacks and packed with straw. This will keep the drink hot for a couple of hours. The battalion Transport Officer and the battalion QM make this trip every night. We have three jeeps with trailers and one truck for carrying the carrying party. The carrying party comes from battalion drivers and company storeman. The little convoy moves off just before dusk and drives quietly along Highway 6 but does not pass Mt Trocchio feature until its properly dark. We have about 2 1/2 miles to Cassino along a straight highway which is under observations from the Liri Valley. Most



nights its quiet, with only the occasional shelling on Highway 6 near the crossroads to San Vittori, but it gets a little sticky down near the Rapido River. The enemy has several big guns in the Liri Valley and does the main road over at regular intervals just with the hope of catching a ration party moving in or out. We have been lucky, so far we have missed everything. We get to the bridge over the Rapido. Everything is very quiet. Vehicles are pulled off the road and the food unloaded. We have got an extra load tonight: batteries for the 38 sets, so our little carrying party is well laden down.

Quietly, but efficiently the party picks up the load and moves off. We haven't far to go, only about 600 yds, but the road is all shell holes and under water in places. An officer and sergeant are bringing up the rear. The party moves quickly and quietly, then suddenly the first mortar shells land bang square on the road, everyone is down. Herman the German certainly can put down a concentration of mortar shells when he wants them and where he wants them. It stops as quickly as it starts. An officer moves back through the carrying party, not a man has been scratched. The drivers don't like this and they're keen to get moving again. We pick up our loads and get moving. We arrive in Cassino or what's left of it. The Transport Officer falls in a shell hole at least 20 ft deep and narrowly misses getting shot up by a trigger happy Maori boy who fired first and asked for the Pass Word afterwards. Another officer arrives just in time to save the ration party. The food is handed over very quickly to company guides who have been waiting. Batteries are dumped and empty containers plus a couple of walking wounded are picked up and our little party moves off again on its homeward journey.



Hobart Reunion 6th to 13th November, 2017

REUNION ITINERARY

Mon 6th November. Members start arriving in Hobart

Tuesday 7th November.

1100 hrs onwards at the Hotel SOHO situated at 124 Davey Street, Hobart for REGISTRATION and MELBOURNE CUP DAY Celebration. We'll even run our very own Cup Sweeps!

Wednesday 8th November.

TOUR 1 – PORT ARTHUR

Port Arthur is a former convict settlement and is one of Australia's most significant heritage areas and open-air museum. Port Arthur now represents the best surviving example of large-scale convict transportation and is officially Tasmania's top tourist attraction.

Thursday 9th November

AM - FREE TIME – Hobart City, Derwent River Cruise. Maybe a visit to Cascade Brewery. All good options.

1800 hrs for 1830 hrs
Hotel SOHO FORMAL DINNER (Suit/medals)

Friday 10th November.

TOUR 2 – HUON VALLEY

Tassie is known as the 'Apple Isle' and the majority of apples are grown in and around the valley. The area is picturesque and has easy access to the wilderness rainforest. There's breath-taking views of the forest canopy at Tahune Airwalk, on the edge of 1.6 million hectares of World Heritage Listed forest.

Saturday 11th November.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

10.30 am – 11.30 am. Service at Cenotaph.
12.00 noon. Arrive Glenorchy RSL & lunch
2.00 pm. Plaque Dedication.
2.30 pm Annual General Meeting at the RSL.
3.30 pm -5 pm. Fellowship

Sunday 12th November

TOUR 3 – COAL RIVER.

(Includes Mt. Wellington and historic Richmond)

Crowned by alpine vegetation and winter snow, Mt Wellington provides a glimpse of the unfolding panorama of river, fields and the aquatic setting of Hobart. Historic Richmond is in the heart of the Coal River Valley wine region that tells the story of an early Tasmanian colonial village. It has more than 50 Georgian buildings, beautifully restored and now operating as cafes, restaurants, galleries and accommodation. Also famous for the Richmond Bridge on the Coal River and built in the 1820s, it's the oldest bridge in Australia. Richmond also houses the oldest gaol in Australia. Then there's the model village highlighting life of settlers in Hobart in the 1820s. There's plenty of good food and wine from traditional bakeries and pubs in town serving up the best Tasmanian produce.

Monday 13th November.

Members depart

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION VENUES



Woolmers Apartments . (4.5 Star venue)
Christine or Jeanette, (03) 6221 6999
123 – 127 Sandy Bay Road, Sandy Bay
Email: info@woolmersapartments.com.au

7 double studio apartment @ \$120 per night – (Double bed)
5 double executive studio apartment @ \$140 per night (Queen bed)
4 x 2 bedroom single level apartments. \$165 per night.
(Queen bed plus 2 singles)



St. Ives Motel. (4.4 Star venue) Kathryn: (03) 6221 5555
67 St. Georges Terrace, Battery Point.
(8 – 10 min walk to waterfront/city)

43 apartments/rooms. Internal kiosk & coin op laundry
Deluxe studio Double. 31 m2 @ \$168 per night.
One nights deposit on booking and balance on arrival).
FREE Parking & Wi-Fi. Kitchen, cable TV, lift,



Mayfair Plaza Motel. (4 Star Venue). (03) 6220 9900.
236 Sandy Bay Road, Sandy Bay.
Standard Queen, laundry room, no kitchenette,
free WIFI, 40 m2 @ \$133 per night.

Travelodge. (3.8 Star Venue). (03) 62207100
167 Macquarie Street. Standard Queen. Small kitchen
with m/wave, free WIFI, 22 m2 @ \$158 per night.

Please note that when making a booking, mention that Graeme Sherriff has organised the cost for our 2017 Hobart Reunion at the discounted rates shown above.



Membership Application/Renewal Form

New Application or Renewal (circle which ones) 2017/18 or 3 years

Surname:

Given Names:

Address:

State: Postcode: Date of Birth:

Phone No. (Home) (Mobile)

Email Address:

Vietnam Service Details:

Dates: From To

Spouse/Partner's Name:

Membership: 1-year membership (Vietnam Veterans and Associate/non-Vets) \$20
3-year membership (Vietnam Veterans and Associate/non-Vets) \$60
Association Badge \$10 – Free badge to new members

Payment details:

- By **cheque** payable to: RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association, PO BOX 207 Mitchell ACT 2911. (include this form).
- Or **Electronically** by direct credit to:
Westpac Bank, BSB 032 713 Account 434593.
(Provide name etc as reference and send this form by post or email)
- Or **Cash Deposit** at any Westpac Bank, BSB 032 713, Account 434 593.
(Provide 6 digit DOB as ddmmyy as reference and send this form by post or email).

Office Use Only: Member Number/Receipt:.....
Membership Card issued/date.....Database.....Banked.....
Scan/send to Area Reps.....Membership Mgr Notified.....