

**A pictorial tour of C Company at war in Vietnam in 1966**



**from the private collection of photographs of**

**Geoff Jones  
and  
Jim Barrett**



## On Operations

Front: Cpl Geoff 'Doc' Jones (C Coy Medic)

Centre: LCpl Graham Spring (Regimental Signaller)

Rear: Major Brian "Thumper" McFarlane (OC C Coy).

Thumper was a fine officer and leader of men and he was greatly respected by all in C Coy. Brian has written of his experiences as OC C Company in his autobiography 'We Band of Brothers – A true Australian Adventure story'

On his chest 'Doc' Jones is wearing the newly issued US Army medical pack which is attached by clips to both sides of the webbing harness. He and others preferred to wear it with one side unclipped so that it could be flicked under the arm when going to ground. The alternative is to have your head and body raised by about six inches. In a fire fight that is most unpleasant.



Right: Cpl Nick Rogers (Stretcher Bearer)

Centre: 2Lt Mick Gillespie (7 Platoon Commander).

Far Left: Pte Ossie Osmond (7 Platoon)

Rear: Major Brian McFarlane (OC C Coy)

Mick Gillespie was a fine young National Service officer was greatly admired and respected in C Company. He died in a car accident near Wagga Wagga, NSW in 1967 soon after returning from Vietnam.

Ossie Osmond brought down the enemy bugler who was putting the wind up us on Operation Hobart.



Pte Merv Handley (C Coy Signaller) resting with his AN PRC 25 radio set on his back

Note the rolled up sleeves and open shirt, much in the way of WW2 fighting in New Guinea. It wasn't until later tours of Vietnam that troops wore sleeves down and camouflaged their skin

### **Sandbagging a captured rice cache**

Pte Norm Wotherspoon (Right – C Coy 2IC Batman). Norm was batman to Captain Peter Harris.

Enemy rice caches were frequently found in the jungle. They were either destroyed in place or sandbagged for back loading





Left: LCpl Frank Parker (Intelligence Dutyman)

Right: Gnr Doug Huwyler 161 Bty RNZA (Arty FO Sig)

Frank Parker is carrying his personal weapon (M79 grenade launcher) which he used to good effect.

In 1966, NZ government policy was for married soldiers to deploy to Vietnam for a nine month tour of duty whilst single soldiers spent 18 months. This was much resented by the 'singlies'. Doug Huwyler had already completed 12 months in support of 1 RAR at Bien Hoa before joining C Coy in June 1966. He was an experienced soldier and a good bloke. He was killed in a car accident in NZ three weeks after returning home

**Patrolling (a special skill of the Australian infantryman C Company 6 RAR – Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam, 1966. )**



**In 'light rubber' (young rubber plantation)**



**In rice paddy fields**

**In jungle**



**Always wet, constantly tired, and sometimes 'pissed off'.**

**Operation Enoggera  
Long Phuoc Village, Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam, June 1966**

**O**peration Enoggera was the first battalion operation (21 Jun – 5 Jul 66). Our task was to search the village of Long Phuoc, clear it of any Viet Cong and confiscate any caches of materials found. The destruction of any tunnels and caches and, in fact, the entire village, was also to be implemented. *Acknowledgement to Vietnam 'A Pictorial History of the Sixth Battalion the Royal Australian Regiment 1966 – 1967.*



**Support Section  
C Coy 6 RAR**

Sandbagging and back loading a captured rice cache

Left to Right.  
Pte Terry Jackson, Cpl Ted Hartley, Pte John Winstone, Pte John Mielnkowski (seated) and Pte Peter Irvine

John Winstone was one of C Company's true characters – a quick wit – humorist and cynic. When the going was hardest you could rely on the big bloke to say something that would relieve the tension. Of a girl with bucked teeth, he would say, "she could eat an apple through a tennis racquet" and of his mate Harry Prosser, "he could get as full as a state school hat rack"

**Rounding up the Villagers**



**Operation Enoggera  
Long Phuoc Village, Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam, June 1966**



**C Company Headquarters**

Left to Right: LCpl Graham Spring (Sig), Pte John Bartrim (lying unsupported), Khoi (ARVN Interpreter, Major Brian McFarlane (OC C Coy – back to camera).

9 Platoon is reporting a 'Sitrep' on sniper activity about 100 metres from CHQ. The sniper was thought to be an old man. He was a nuisance for several hours and was not caught. He was also a poor shot. 'Thumper' looks pretty calm in the circumstances



**Long Phuoc Village goes up in smoke**

Long Phuoc was a strongly held Viet Cong enclave. In an operation by 1 RAR and US forces to clear the area for the proposed Australian Task Force base the Americans suffered many casualties in and around Long Phuoc. Later, the majority of villagers were relocated to Hoa Long village.

During Operation Enoggera the remaining Long Phuoc villagers (suspected VC and sympathisers) were rounded up and the village was destroyed. Not a building was left standing. 1 Field Squadron Engineers and 6 RAR Assault Pioneers 'blew up' the more substantial dwellings

### Going on Leave – August 1966



Embussed at 6 RAR front gate for 24 hours leave in Vung Tau

Left to Right: LCPL Rick Bensley (9 Pl), Pte Harry Prosser (8 Pl) and Pte Bob 'Vic' Morrow (9 Pl)

Vic Morrow was severely wounded on Operation Vaucluse on 10 Sep 66

In a letter to Doc Jones and 9 Platoon, Vic wrote in tortuous writing with his left hand.

'I hope you can read this, my writing arm is a bit tied up. I want to thank you for the job you did on me the other day. I don't know whether you know what was the matter with me but I had three broken ribs, a hole in my lung, a hole in my liver and a hole in my diaphragm and the muscle in my arm blown out so I was pretty crook. I had 44 pints of

blood before I stopped leaking, that is the hospital record. They cut me nearly in half to fix my insides up. It starts about two inches below my tit and goes to the back of my shoulder blade. The bullet went through my arm but didn't hit any nerves, arteries or bones. You could put your thumb into the hole under my arm. I have a cast on my arm because all the muscle is missing. At one time I had eight tubes in me. They cut a hole about three inches in my left groin to get the blood in faster. The doctor says I will have to have a skin graft on my arm when it fills in. I didn't remember anything up till Wednesday. I still get a fair bit of pain but I guess that is to be expected. They said the chopper had \$10,000 damage to it when it took me out. They reckon it was cutting down trees with the blades. They couldn't land on the hospital pad, they landed at the air strip. The blades were so damaged it couldn't take off again and they had to tow it away. According to the doctor I should be dead, but I wouldn't be in it. He reckoned he aged 4 years in one night. I have an idea that I was running off at the mouth while you were fixing me up and I have a shocking idea that I said Harris wasn't a bad bloke\*, under the circumstances I won't be held responsible for my actions. I am going home tomorrow, 19/9/66 and I will be in 2 Camp Hospital at Holsworthy, so I will only be 60 or 70 miles from home. Reckon I go for a medical discharge. Anyway, I will write now and again so watch out for the Charlies and if you are after a homer don't try this one. It will get you home alright but by hell it's a bloody hard way to go about it '.

Signed 'Vic'

(\*Captain Harris forgave Vic for his remark and Vic says he didn't really mean it, so that's settled)

*(The US Army 'Dust Off' was damaged by impact with the trees and by enemy fire).*

Harry Prosser was one of C Company's true characters. A good soldier, a larrikin and, a funny man. Harry was always in trouble and his defence was invariably, 'but, I've done worse things before this, sir'.

Harry liked a beer on a hot day. He enjoyed it so much that he bought a liquor store in Reservoir, Victoria in which he was highly successful



**Waiting for the leave truck at 6 RAR front gate sentry box**

L to R. Cpl Geoff 'Doc' Jones and Pte John Bartrim (Regimental Signaller attached to C Coy)

### **Kicking Back in Vung Tau**

**C Company's first day off in nearly 3 months of intense operations**



**Vung Tau R & C Centre – Aug 1966**

Front: Sgt Phil Crossingham (Pl Sgt 9 Pl)

Centre: 2Lt Eric 'Lobster' Andrews (8 Pl Comd)

Rear: LCpl Rick Bensley (9 Pl)

Phil Crossingham, aged 22, - a first class soldier - bold and aggressive in battle. At Caboolture, Qld on 18 June 1967 this highly respected soldier and his young family died when their car left the road and plunged into the Caboolture River. He is buried with wife Beth and children Lisa (3) and Philip (1) at Nambour cemetery

Eric 'Lobster' Andrews, aged 24, Army and Battalion rugby representative. There was never a better map reader



## 24 Hours Rest and Convalescence Leave – August 1966

**C** Company's first day off in nearly 3 months of intense operations. A lot was packed in to those 24 hours  
The Rest & Convalescence Centre was a stately home leased by the Australian Government for use as a leave centre. It was much admired by the Americans. The first floor verandah overlooked Vung Tau Harbour and the South China Sea



At Vung Tau R & C Centre:

Left to Right: Pte John Bartrim (CHQ), Pte John Powers (9 Pl), Pte Merv Handley (9 Pl), Pte Lyndon Giles (8 Pl), Pte John Winstone (Spt Sect CHQ), Pte Bob 'Vic' Morrow (9 Pl), LCpl Rick Bensley (9 Pl), Pte Ken Enders (7 Pl) and Pte Mark 'Scrub' Minell (8Pl).



### **C Company Lines, Nui Dat - 1966**

‘Discipline’ was uninterrupted on operations. Here Pte Terry Hunt (left) and Jim Barrett (right) are filling sand bags as field punishment (Restriction of Privileges in peacetime).

Jim ‘Porky’ Barrett was known by many members of C Company from when they served together in C Company 2 RAR.

Jim left C Company 2 RAR to join 1 RAR as a reinforcement, then on operations at Bien Hoa. When 1 RAR returned to Australia Jim completed the remainder of his 12 month tour of duty with C Company 6 RAR. He was a very popular soldier – everyone’s mate - and when he had nearly completed his tour he was assigned to run the canteen. Jim

was a great scrounger and an inspired choice as ‘canteen manager’.

Jim returned to Vietnam with 8 RAR and on 28 February 1970, as the senior Section Commander he took command of his platoon after the Platoon Commander and Platoon Sergeant were wounded and killed. When supervising the evacuation of the last casualties Jim stepped on a mine and died instantly.



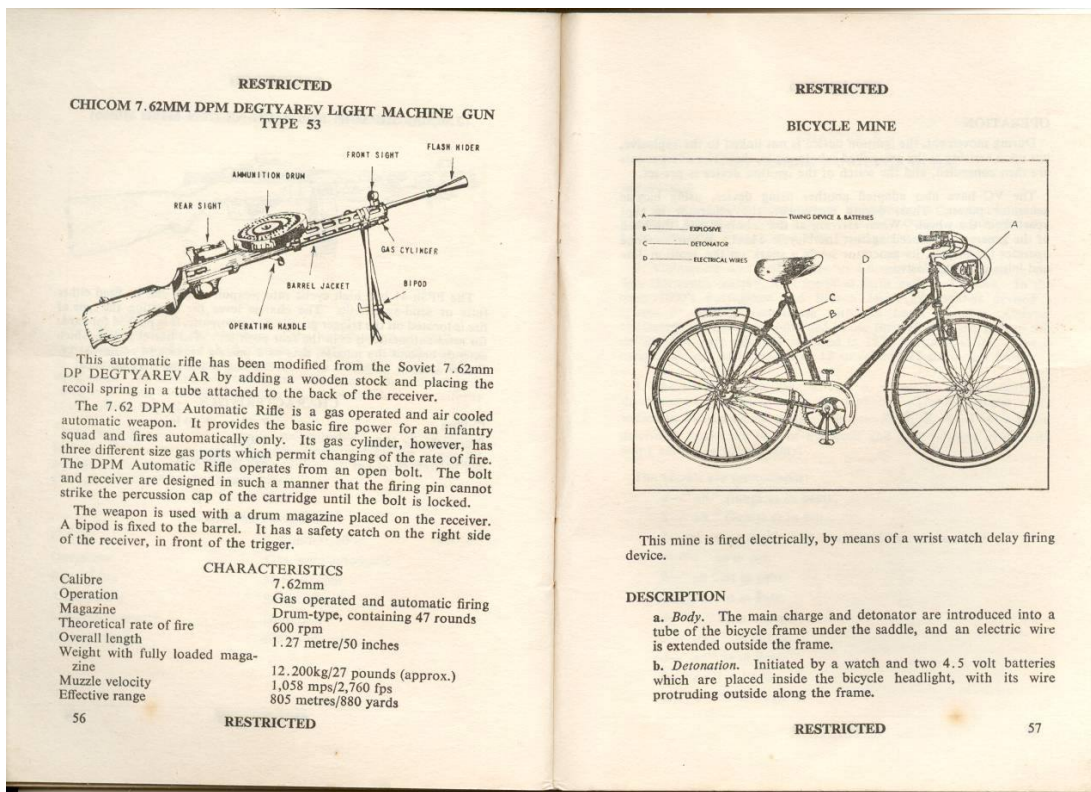
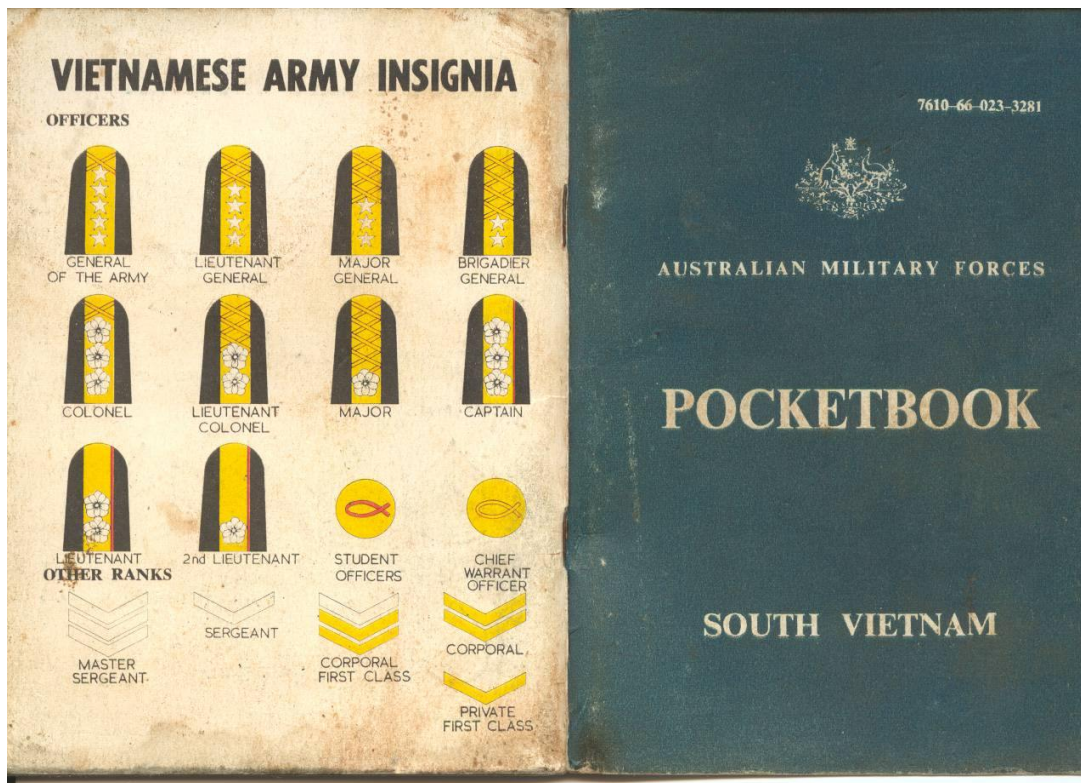
### **C Company Kitchen and Mess/Canteen Annex, Nui Dat 1966**

When constructed the edifice was slightly out of alignment and everyone felt sure that with a little help from the unit vehicle it could be straightened.

With the help of a tow rope tied to the framework and Ted Daly at the wheel the canteen collapses to the ground.

“It was an accident, Sir”!  
“I took the strain and the building stood up, then it came towards me and, it just kept coming. I had to jump”.

The book that gave us 'useful phrases' and told 'everything' about the enemy!



## 6 RAR gets a Rugby lesson from 161 Bty RNZA at Baria Oval - 1966



**We got a fearful hiding and the Kiwi's never let us forget it**



### **C Company supporters go home disappointed**

Left to Right: Pte Ken Wallace (7 Pl), 2Lt Mick Gillsepie (7 Pl Comd - back to camera),  
Pte Graham Irvine (8 Pl), Pte Harry Prosser (8 Pl) and Pte Tony Blanco (7 Pl)

Only weeks later, Ken Wallace was slightly wounded and deafened by a command detonated mine that exploded a few feet from him. Fortunately, he was situated precisely at the centre of the mine's exploding arc. Had he been inches to the left or right he would have been killed.

Note that whenever we travelled in soft skinned vehicles we wore steel helmets. There was a constant risk of ambush or land mine.

## C Company Heroes



**Nui Dat 1966**

Standing Left to Right: Pte Wiley Halfpenny (7 Pl), Pte Bob 'Vic' Morrow (9 Pl), Cpl Ray Pyne (7 Pl), Pte Ken Enders (7 Pl), Pte Rod Hogan (7 Pl), Pte Tim Whelan (9 Pl), Cpl Brian Cosgrove (8 Pl), Pte Peter Madden (8 Pl), Pte Barry Zazoniuk (7 Pl), Pte Neil Reeve (9 Pl)  
Sitting Left to Right: Pte Merv Handley (9 Pl), Pte Ken Mills (8 Pl), Pte Bill Cox (7 Pl) and Pte Ron Aslan (9 Pl)

**Thumper's heroes** (above) photographed in C Company lines, returned from ops, freshly scrubbed and laundered, and thinking about their first leave in Vung Tau.

An aside. The battalion's laundry was done at the Vietnamese laundry in Hoa Long Village. 6 RAR had laundry mark prefix 'V' with the company letter following. In the case of C Company it was VC and for A Company, VA; VB designated our neighbour on the left flank; and, D Coy showed no embarrassment for their mark at all. Every member had a laundry number. My laundry number was VC 10 – I have remembered this because it reminded me, 'Viet Cong Number 10'.

### A break on operations



Left to Right: CHQ group

Captain Peter Harris (C Coy 2IC)  
LCpl Graham Spring (Sig) and  
LCpl Frank Parker (Int Dutyman)



Saddled up and ready for Operation Hobart, July 1966 are Cpl Geoff 'Doc' Jones and Pte John Krahnert (Spt Sect). Battle procedure is under way. At left of photo (back to camera) is SP4 Jim Gleason preparing his map. Jim was the Sig for the US Army 155mm Arty FO, A Bty 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion/35<sup>th</sup> Artillery, 2Lt Gordon L. Steinbrook. In his book 'Allies and Mates – An American Soldier with the Australians and New Zealanders in Vietnam 1966 – 67' Gordon Steinbrook has written of his experiences with C Company. (University of Nebraska Press - Lincoln and London - ISBN 0-8032-4238-7)

Pte Jim Barrett, 1 RAR veteran and latter day C Company 'Canteen Wallah' at Nui Dat (KIA 28/2/70)



**9 Platoon C Coy 6 RAR  
on Operations in South Vietnam – September 1966**



Left to Right: Pte Neil Reeve, Pte Hedley Stewart, Pte Pat Walker (kneeling), Pte Tim Whelan, Pte Peter Gordon and Pte Alan Kunde



On the M113 APC Ramp Left to Right: Pte Tim Whelan, Pte Alan Kunde (on the radio) 2Lt Stuart Penny (9 Pl Comd) and Pte Pat Walker (front) with two ARVN soldiers to his right

### Bill Winterford, MM C Company 6 RAR



Bill Winterford at Enoggera before embarkation in May 1966. Bill was awarded the Military Medal for his actions a machine gunner on Operation Hobart on 25 July 1966.



**The 6 RAR Honour Board at BHQ, 6 RAR Long Tan Lines, Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera**

The name of Sapper Les Prouse, 1 Fd Sqn, who died of wounds on 25 July 1966 whilst attached to C Coy on Operation Hobart is listed on the Honour Board.



A plaque for Pte Gordon Knight, C Company, killed in action on 9 July 1966 is displayed at the RAR National Walk at Enoggera. Gordon Knight was 6 RAR's first battle casualty.



# C COMPANY – 6TH BATTALION ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT



## **Reunion - June 1995 Queensland Greek Club, Brisbane**

Back Row - Standing L to R. Harry Prosser, Peter Irvine, Ray Croft, Tony Wynd (B Coy), Peter 'Paybooks' McFarlane, John Winstone, Peter Neate, Reg Lillywhite, Ken Mills, Ken Enders, Mal Black, John 'Pommy' Wright, Bill Warren, Barry Zazoniuk, Ray Pyne, Geoff 'Doc' Jones.

Middle Row - Kneeling L to R. Peter Harley, Peter McNamee, Ian 'Stinga' Rae, Wylie Halfpenny, Merv Handley, Bill Cox, Paul 'Blue' Pearce, Rick Bensley, Neil 'Pop' Baker, Rodney Cox, Peter Moore, Rod Hogan.

Front Row – Seated/kneeling L to R. Bob 'Vic' Morrow, Norm 'Blinky' Wallace, Jeff 'Blue' Foster, Ted Daly, Graham Mason, Geoff 'Mousie' Robinson, Neill Lindsay.

**The Infanteer**  
**(by a 'Gunner' NX 71702)**

**He is born to the earth on the day he enlists  
He is sentenced to life on the soil,  
To march on it, crawl on it, dig in it, sprawl on it,  
Sleep on it after his toil**

**Be it sand, rock or ice, gravel, mud or loam,  
He will fight on it bravely, will die,  
And the crude little cross telling men of his loss  
Will cry mutely to some foreign sky**

**He's the tired looking man in the untidy garb,  
Weather beaten, footsore with fatigue,  
But his spirit is strong as he marches along  
With his burdens for league after league**

**He attacks in the face of murderous fire,  
crawling forward, attacking through mud,  
When he breaks through the line. over wire and mines  
On the point of his bayonet is blood**

**Should you meet him, untidy, begrimed and fatigued,  
Don't indulge in unwarranted mirth,  
For the brave infanteer deserves more than a sneer  
He is truly the salt of the earth**