

## BACK TO PHOUOC TUY PROVINCE

I have been thinking about visiting Vietnam for a number of years, but as time came to book I backed down. Last year I took a cruise through Asia with my wife Marian and it stopped at Ho Chi Minh City for five hours and I said that I might not get off the ship. When the ship berthed at the port I decided to go ashore. It was quite an experience getting on to the shore as at the other end was a soldier in greens with red stars on his hat and holding an AK47 assault rifle. Which was rather disturbing, however the time ashore was not as bad as I imagined.



Alan, Bill and Russell at Nui Dat

After returning to Australia I spoke to many people about making the journey back and lots of people gave me maps and photos for future reference. So after 50 years I returned to Vietnam with my son Stephen. After I had booked I found that Russell and Audrey Briggs and Val and Bill Hunt were going at the same time, so I became calmer being backed up by 5 RAR veterans and Stephen.

We all arrived safely and spent the night in Ho Chi Minh City till the next day when we caught the ferry to Vung Tau. We got a thorough drenching getting both

on the ferry and off at the other end. Welcome to Vietnam!!!!!!

We went down to Belly's Bar, which had great food and cold beers and to meet the great man Belly's. They hold regular raffles and donate it to schools and the needy. Great job they do!!!

We caught up with Peter Taylor ex-D Coy 5 RAR second tour that lives there permanently with his partner Chau. He is President of the Vung Tau Veterans and Friends Children's Fund. They conduct tours of Vung Tau and Nui Dat.

The next day Peter took us on the Vung Tau tour which was amazing as they have done so much work it was unrecognisable from what we knew.

We all stayed at the Grand Hotel, the hotel is great and I can recommend this to any one visiting.

The following days we visited the Long Tan cross, the church in Binh Ba. Many of us including myself from Charlie Coy 1st tour had a service in there. Next day we went up to Nui Dat and surrounding areas. It had been raining most days since we arrived and where I made the mistake of not wearing hiking boots as when we walked into the rubber plantation there were rivers of water running through and mud up to my ankles. This brought back memories of when we arrived in 1966 and slept in the mud and rain for the two years we were there.

I would like to thank Peter Taylor and Chau for looking after us so well and making the

tour so special. People do not realise what they do for charity, providing clothes for school children, and building houses for the needy and providing food parcels for low income families. Also I would like to thank Tony Keddey from Down Under Bar, He is the owner and a former Vietnam veteran from 1 Field Regiment, it is a good place to catch up with mates and have a cold beer.

Last but not least are Audrey and Russell who purchased food to distribute to the poor people which included 25kg of rice, cooking oils, sugar and noodle's and other items too numerous to name. The Captain from the Army Unit, which I think was 33<sup>rd</sup> Regiment (NVA), lined up people and checked their name off. One of those women was a young girl hiding in tunnels when D Coy, 5 RAR, entered the village in June 1969.



The Vietnamese Unit Commander and Russell

Another person I almost forgot is Jason Fenech who has gathered memorabilia and runs a school for children who do not have a birth certificate and cannot attend a government school. We all left donations for them as we left.

I am so glad that I took my son there as it opened up his eyes to what we went through.

Alan McNulty DCM  
5 RAR 1966-67 and 1969

