

## Vietnam re-visited.

(A lot of these pics were sourced from the AWM site.)



Electrical fitter Tom Van Dyken (left) supervises Ray "Luigi" Hanlon who is testing a Caribou aircraft's inverter which supplies AV power to various instruments. March 1966.



Electrical fitter, Allan Elliott of 35 Squadron, working on electrical components on one of the Caribous at Vung Tau - November 1966.

Allan was awarded a certificate of "Commendation for Outstanding Service" by the CO of the Squadron, Wng Cdr Charles Melchert, who made the presentation during a parade of the full complement of 35 Squadron, personnel.

The citation for the award reads:

*'Corporal Elliott demonstrated great devotion to duty and a high degree of professional skill in designing and manufacturing test equipment, at the same time as effectively supervising a large squadron electrical section. His initiative, inventiveness, and outstanding efforts have set a high standard example and improved the effectiveness of his squadron'.*



After my wife died, I couldn't even look at another woman for 10 years.  
But now that I'm out of jail, I can honestly say it was worth it.





Siebe Van-Stam, a crewman gunner with No. 9 Iroquois helicopter Squadron.



Peter Tickner, 9 Squadron, (Framie) is checking the hydraulic union on an Iroquois. June 1969.



Paul Covington, gunner, checking his weapon before an operation. Jan 1967.



Robert Oliver, (Framie) and Roger Wilde, (Sumpie).



Exterior view of the partially completed 9 Squadron, Airmen's Club, (1966) colloquially known as the 'Ettamogah Hotel' after the 'Australian Post' cartoon drawn by Ken Maynard. The sign was painted by Joseph Riches, an aircraft spray painter, known amongst squadron members as 'Joe the Painter'. Sticking out from the left-hand side of the tent is the bar, which has yet to be positioned. The 'Ettamogah Hotel' was established to provide a recreation facility separate from the 35 Squadron bar and was run on a volunteer basis, wherein rostered squadron members would stock the bar with beer, Pepsi soft drink and ice purchased with their own ration tickets from the base PX store. Patrons provided their own spirits and entertainment.







Unloading 9 Squadron helicopters from HMAS Sydney, at Vung Tau Harbour, South Vietnam, June 1966. Following the arrival of a 9 Squadron advance party on 3 May 1966, the squadron's UH-1B/Iroquois helicopters arrived in Vietnam in June 1966 aboard *Sydney* which anchored off Vung Tau. The following day, the aircraft were brought up from the hangar deck and had their rotor blades fitted before flying off the aircraft carrier. The squadron moved to Nui Dat at the end of the month. Operating out of Luscombe Airfield at Nui Dat, the Iroquois carried out a variety of roles in Vietnam; primarily the transport of infantry and logistic support, but the helicopters were also used to drop leaflets over enemy territory, conduct aerial spraying to rid the base of mosquitoes and to kill vegetative growth around the base and to destroy agricultural plots in Viet Cong territory, denying the enemy a source of food. The squadron was re-equipped with larger UH-1D Iroquois helicopters beginning in November 1966 following which the squadron worked in conjunction with aircraft of the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam and United States forces, transporting troops to and from patrols and evacuating wounded soldiers from the battlefield.



9 Sqn Troops arriving at Nui Dat (Luscombe field), waiting for the limos to take them to the motel.



Nui Dat, with Luscombe Airfield on the right. Luscombe Airfield was named after Lt Bryan Taylor Luscombe, the first Army pilot killed in the Korean War. Work on the airstrip was started soon after the Australians arrived at Nui Dat in June 1966.

Working on an Iroquois helicopter of 9 Squadron at Vung is Bruce Clark, (Sumpie) who is being assisted by trainee Vietnamese mechanic Tran Van Dao. March 1968.







Working on the engine of a 9 Sqn Iroquois is Ivan Ray Wescombe. April 1967.



An aerial view of helicopters from No 9 Squadron, lined up on their flight line at Vung Tau. June 1966.





Sampling some of the local brew are L-R: Robin Gee, Douglas Bowie, Kevin Seckington, Ray Bessen, Wayne Darcy, John Florence and Kevin Devine.



John McDougall, "tinkering" with one of the engines off a Caribou. October 1966.



Stu Spinks, Caribou pilot, reading the letter from his girl friend back home, for the 20<sup>th</sup> time.



John McDougall, Sumpie, (seated on the left) and Ian Johnston, Radtech, being served cold drinks on the beach after work??. The villa occupied by the men is only yards from the delightful town (front) beach. A small kiosk along the beach provided refreshments and shady seats as well as friendly service for the Australians. October 1964.

What did you do in the war daddy??





Ian Taylor, boss of the radio section at 35 Sqn Vung Tau showing, what looks like a bit out of a foreigner, to a trainee. In August 1966, 35 Squadron were training young local Vietnamese men in trades associated with the aircraft industry. They were trained up to the stage of assistant to an Australian tradesman and sometimes after they have had 12 or 18 months training, they would leave to join the Vietnamese Army or civil airlines. After Vietnam, Ian returned to Australia and took over 38 Sqn radio section.





The late [Peter Mansfield](#), (Framie) of 35 Squadron, shows Vietnamese lad Pham Thai points to look for in fitting a wheel to the undercarriage of a Caribou aircraft, in the hangar at Vung Tau.



Len Grinham, (Sumpie) shows Vietnamese Nguyen Van Thu, how to fit spark plugs into a Caribou aircraft engine at the maintenance section of Vung Tau Airfield.





Douglas Ellacott (Sumpie) of 35 Sqn, shows Peter Davidson, (9 Sqn pilot) how to pull a cylinder off a Caribou engine.



Colin Knudson (Framie) of 35 sqn shows some hydraulic bits from the Caribou to Hoang Nam.



Loady doing preflight.



An aerial view of the new No 5 Airfield Construction Squadron (ACS) hangar in June 1966. The huts in the background are the headquarters of the various RAAF squadrons operating out of Vung Tau, South Vietnam. The hangar later became the maintenance workshop for No 9 Squadron and No 35 Squadron.





Warren Churchin, (Framie) with No 35 Squadron and David Darcey, 9 Sqn crewman and gunner, inspecting the wheels of a Caribou. Dave Darcey carries his issue 9mm pistol in a 'wild west' holster he bought in Vung Tau. Many of the crewmen bought this type of holster to take back to Australia as souvenirs.





35 Squadron, Engineering Officer, Herbert (Wally) Solomons, and the CO Charles Melchert, inspecting the crashed Caribou for the extent of damage and to make a list of the parts required to make it airworthy.

Got an e-mail today from a "bored housewife 32, looking for some action!"  
I've sent her my ironing, that'll keep her busy.





The late [Keith Bosley](#), (Loady) hands a Montagnard woman a teddy bear from a collection of toys sent to 35 Squadron by Support Command Headquarters. The Montagnards gathered around the Caribou after it landed at Plei Mrong Airfield with ammunition for the Special Forces Camp based.



Welfare boats at Back Beach.



Main Street, Phan Rang, 1966.



2 Sqn HQ, Phan Rang, 1971.





Rolf Aronsen CO 2 Sqn, and Dave Inglis (April 1967).



**Standing L-R:** Ian Dainer, Barry Oliver, Graham Maher, Laurance Kuchel.  
**Front L-R:** Noel brown, Greg Ewan, Ian Simkinson, Phil Crisp. (1971)



Peter Herbert and Kevin Conner in the tape-recording centre at Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam. The USAF provided the tape centre as an amenity for the many airmen who have tape systems and it enables them to build up a library of taped music.



“Home” for the blokes who kept Phan Rang’s Canberras flying. The blokes at Vung Tau enjoyed similar facilities as those at Phan Rang - facilities that Army blokes at Nui Dat could only dream of.





The "Koala Bar" – the Airman's club for blokes at Phan Rang. Dec 1970.



2 Sqn Sumpies on a D service.



Pilot, FO David Smith, and navigator, FO Peter Murphy, stand next to their Canberra on which is loaded the last bomb dropped by No. 2 Squadron in Vietnam. The bomb was painted white and the armourers had printed in red the words "76,389<sup>th</sup> and last bomb compliments to Charlie from RAAF No. 2 Squadron RAAF UC Dai Loi".

Murphy was given the honour of flying the squadron's final mission as his 310 Vietnam missions with No. 2 Squadron was the Squadron's highest number of Vietnam missions.

Growing up with a dyslexic father had its advantages.  
Whenever he caught me swearing, he used to wash my mouth out with soup.





A RAAF Squadron Leader hosing down members of 2 Squadron, who have climbed aboard the Canberra to celebrate its return to Phan Rang it had completed the Sqn's last bombing operation in Vietnam.



The opera house in the Australian quarters at Phan Rang. This structure was used to screen movies to the RAAF personnel at night.



2 Sqn dongas.



2 Sqn personnel, March 1971.





Ken Marks – radio, 2 Sqn Phan Rang, April, 1971.



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