



## 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment

7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (7RAR) was raised on 1 September 1965 at Puckapunyal, Victoria. The battalion began arriving in Vietnam in April 1967, relieving 5RAR. It was part of the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) and was based at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy province.

7RAR was deployed outside of Phuoc Tuy with 2RAR from 24 January–1 March 1968. During this time it took part in Operation Coburg on the Bien Hoa–Long Khanh border. The aim of the operation was to provide protection to allied bases during the 1968 Tet Offensive and was the first time 1ATF was deployed outside of Phuoc Tuy province. 7RAR was involved in the operation until March, apart from a break it took from 9–13 February, when it returned to Nui Dat.

The battalion spent the majority of its tour patrolling in Phuoc Tuy. It also carried out numerous cordon-and-search operations. It was relieved by 1RAR on 9 April 1968 and arrived in Sydney on 26 April.

7RAR returned to Vietnam in February 1970, again relieving 5RAR. It was mainly involved with pacification operations in Phuoc Tuy, which had become the 1ATF priority in April 1969. This involved seeking out and destroying the enemy in its base areas, preventing enemy access to the civilian population, and helping to create a secure climate for South Vietnamese social, political, and military life. The work was demanding, dangerous, and monotonous for the troops.

As part of the pacification programme, 1ATF took part in Operation Cung Chung. This operation involved four phases of activity from 12 June 1970 to February 1971. Cung Chung involved intensive patrolling and ambush in order to deter the enemy from moving through the area. The operation was successful but the consistent patrolling placed a strain on the troops.

In February 7RAR was relieved by 3RAR and departed for Australia later that month, arriving in Sydney on 10 March.

### Glossary

**1Australian Task Force Vietnam; North Vietnamese Army; Pacification; Viet Cong; Phuoc Tuy Province;**

- **Bien Hoa**
- **Vietnam (1967-68) (1970-71)**

## **Casualties**

- First tour: 18 killed
- Second tour: 18 killed, 34 wounded

## **Commanding Officers**

- **Grey, Ronald Alwyn**
- **Smith, Eric Horal Francis**

## **Decorations**

- First tour
  - 1 DSO
  - 2 MBE
  - 2 MC
  - 2 DCM
  - 3 MM
  - 14 MID
- Second tour
  - 1 DSO
  - 2 MBE
  - 2 MC
  - 2 MM
  - 5 MID

## The 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (7 RAR)



The photo that came to define the Australian experience of the Vietnam War is of members of 5 Platoon, B Company, 7RAR just north of the village of Phuoc Hai, beside the road leading to Dat Do...



Members of 5 Platoon, B Company, 7th Battalion (7 RAR), boarding an Iroquois helicopter at Phuoc Hai, beside the road leading to Dat Do, Phuoc Tuy, Vietnam. Photos courtesy of The Australian War Memorial...