

1731007. PTE. MAY. A.S.

1102. DEPT. 6 R.A.R.

AUST. FORCES VIETNAM.

AUST. F.P.O. 3.

C/ G.P.O. SYDNEY.

25-8-66.

Dear Mum, Dad, Jan;

I suppose by now you will have either given me up for dead or else you probably think that I have forgotten you. Well guess what, you ~~wrong~~ are both counts, because I haven't forgotten about you and I am still kicking (as silly as ever).

By the time you receive this letter you will have heard about our little one sided battle out here. I will have to make this letter very short because it is now 9-30 PM. and I am sitting in the platoon tent with a bottle with a cork, and a wire going through the cork and that is what I am writing by.

I will try and describe what happened on the 18th as best I can. For a start, I was forward sent when we were hit and I still can't believe that I am still alive. (Without a word of a lie mum by rights I should have been the first one to get it).

The whole company (10-11-12 platoon), were out on an opp. (first day). when we came across a

2

fresh track (barefoot marks), and the c.o. said, "Platoon Q can follow it up for about 500 to 1,000 yds and if you don't find anything meet the rest of the company (10-12) at our harbour position (marked on the map). Well we left the rest of the company and we started to follow this track. After about 600 yds one of the blacks said "look at the kids in front of us". When we had a look we saw 8 blacks just sitting around eating and they all had rifles, one of them saw us and he jumped up and he pointed his weapon at me from the hip. (He was about 30 yds away). and he fired. just as he fired I hit the ground and the bullet went through my pack. I then ~~gave~~ gave him a burst with my armoured light and he went arse over (excuse the French). The next minute he was up and running & with his mates, we fired on them but they were zigzagging through the rubber trees and they got away. But this black that I knocked over dropped over dropped his rifle and our boss (Mr Sharp) picked it up. Then we spread out in extended line (.....) and we started to sweep through the rubber plantation to see if we could find them. After about 300 yds we came across a house (which we searched) but there wasn't anyone there. Just then our Sgt. said to the platoon commander, "I think we have gone far enough sir" but he was determined

to get these VC. so he said ("No, we will keep going for about another 500 yds and if we don't see them we'll turn back & and return to the rest of the company").

This was alright, we went about 150-200 yds further on and then all hell broke loose. Honestly I didn't know whether I was Arthur or Martin. We all hit the ground, and returned the fire. We held them off for about 1½ hrs before anyone was hit. But then the blokes of 11 platoon were getting killed like flies. One of my best mates from my section was lying about 100 yds away from me and I just happened to look over towards him and his head gave a funny jerk and he rolled over facing me and where his face should have been was just one mess of blood and stuff, he lie there for about 5-10 minutes making funny noises and then he just became quiet, and I knew he was dead, and even though I was looking at him I still couldn't believe it.

The next minute our artillery was dropping all around us and we could see the VC. about 40 yds in front of us just getting lifted off of their feet and blown to bits. We were there for 3 hrs fighting them before the rest of the company could get up to us to give ~~us~~ a hand and we found out later that we run into 3 battalions of VC. (1800 men).

and boy! I don't mind telling you "I was scared". The whole battle lasted for five hours and by the time reinforcements came in, we had only 40 rounds of ammunition left in the whole company. I myself only had one round in the breech. Now you might think this is bull but, there was L/CPL Magnussen, CPL Moore and me. ^{There} ~~There~~ ^{was} a 8" gully I was lying in. and between the three of us we accounted for 86 VC DEAD ~~and~~ about 6 o'clock our SGT. said to withdraw back to the company and as I got up to make a run for it a bullet hit my pack dead centre, went straight through ^{to} my shovel which I had dropped there and the force of it hitting me knocked me sprawling. I immediately took off my pack and dropped my wedging and was just about to make another run for it when I heard Lougie Fabian yell out, "I'm hit I'm hit", well, you know that we were good friends before we left to come over here, now that ~~we~~ we have been no, or a seconds and living in the same tent and sharing our problems together for the last 3 mths the bond between us has been getting stronger all the time, and when I heard ~~him~~ ~~to~~ him yell out, my only thought was ~~no matter what~~ no matter what, I had to try and get ~~him~~ ~~him~~ ~~out~~ ~~with~~ ~~me~~ ~~and~~ I turned back to ~~give~~ ~~to~~ give him a hand and let then

I could see he was running up towards me so I just stayed behind a rubber tree and I waited for him. Then when he got up level with me we ran together for about 100 yds and someone fired at us from the left flank. so we hit the ditch. we got up again when the firing died down a bit and took off towards the house we passed earlier but as we came up to it 12 platoons were under fire from V.C. in the house. we then changed direction right and we went for about 100 yds again until we came across a tree that had been knocked down by artillery and we got in amongst the leaves. We stayed there for about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour and we were quite prepared to stay there all night and make our way back in the morning because ~~they~~ this time after changing direction we didn't know which way the rest of our platoon were. but then a red smoke grenade (which means friendly forces) went off about 180 yds to our left front. and I said to Llang bet's guy boy and then we took off for all we were worth. That's about all I remember because when I got there ~~I~~ I flaked out. When I woke up the rest of the Battalion was there and so were the A.P.C.'s and the firing had stopped. About 12 o'clock P.M. we piled on to the A.P.C.'s and we took the wounded to the helipad to be choppered to the hospital. We camped there for the night and the next morning we went

6

back to see what damage had been done. On our way we came across "Custard" (Barry Meller) sitting up against a tree having a smoke, he had a bullet in his leg and another went through his cheek just missing his teeth. we picked him up and continued on to the scene of the battle and there we found 18 of our guys dead, lying over their weapons and every one was shot through the head. But when we were starting to wrap their bodies up. someone yelled out "I'm over here", and someone said "who" and a yell came back "it's me Jim" and low and behold there was old Jimmy Richmond laying there with a bullet through his chest, just below the right breast. (You can imagine what kind of a night he and Custard spent out there wounded and all by themselves with V.C. everywhere.

You know, there were only 5 blacks from 11 P.L. who were not wounded, but there were also 14 dead (11 P.L.) and 9 wounded. During the night the bloody V.C. ran off with my webbing, grenades, magazines and mackette. so now I have got all new stuff.

Long is back here with us now. he only had a bullet go through the muscle on top of his elbow but now he is A. ok. They will probably print the names of the dead and wounded in the papers so I won't write their names. Anyhow Mum I won't write anymore about it just

7.
I'll finish this letter by answering a few questions you have been asking in your last few letters.

I have received all of your parcels except the other parcel of goodies which was sent by boat. The one you sent Air Mail only took 4 days. One important thing is to tell Carmelita that I love her very very much. And for as long as I live, I'll never stop loving her. believe me.

Tell Graham that I am sorry to hear about Billy dying but you must admit he would've been better off. And also tell him that I'm sorry about the nasty letter I wrote and ask him to forgive me will you? and tell him that I will be writing him soon. And also ~~ask~~ tell him that I reckon that Fred (Gerry) is a bloody goose.

I hope you have a good time at the show. I wish I was there with you with Carmelita beside me. I tell you mum I just can't wait to see you all again, by the way I bought myself a jacket the other day and I am sending it home for you to keep for me untill I get home. I would like you to show it around because I think it is a beauty and tell Carmelita that she can wear it whenever she comes over. And fun to but only in the house. Well mum I must go now I'll write you as soon as I get a chance.

I remain

Your loving Son

Allan xxxxxxxx.

P.S. Don't forget to tell Carmelita that I Love her and also tell Graham that I am very sorry about the letter I wrote.

Allan. xxxxxxxx.

P.S. Give my best regards to Llang and tell him I'll write as I possibly can.

FORCES MAIL
METRO

Mrs. C. O. May
100 Boxgrove Ave.
Wynnum, Heights
Brisbane
Queensland.
Australia.



VIA AIR MAIL
CORREO AEREO
PAR AVION

SENDER

1731007 ATE MAY. AJ.

11 PL. D COY. 6 R. A. R.

AUST. FORCES. VIETNAM.

AUST. F. P. O. 3.

C/ F. P. O. SYDNEY.

PRO3757
AL05339

1
I Allen James May of 33 Cranston

Street Wynnum West started working for the Brisbane City Council on or about 23-11-63.

~~On~~ I was employed to work as a labourer on Storm Water Drainage & after 6 weeks was made up to be a "Ganger" in charge of 14 other men at age 19.

On the 30th June 1965 I was called up in the first intake of National Service, Royal Australian Army. During my Service with the Army, I was sent to Hapooka for 3 months training & then was sent to 11 Platoon L. Company 6. R. A.R. at Enoggera Barracks for corp. Training. After 3 months, we then went into intensive training for a tour of Vietnam.

When 6th Battalion Flew out of Brisbane on approximately 23-5-1966 I was still on pre-embarkation leave, as I had spent 3 or 4 weeks in camp hospital at Uperanga with a double ureter ^{INFECTION} which was discovered during training at Leavess Plateau Rockhampton.

I actually flew out of Brisbane 3 days later.

I rejoined my unit at Vung-Tau, and soon after. (on the same day), we went out on a climatisation Patrol, During which, unbeknown to us we found ourselves going behind the South-Vietnamese Army (ARVN) firing range, just as they opened fire on target practice, and I can tell you, this really put the shits up me, as hundreds of bullets cracked over head. ^{IF I THOUGHT THAT WE WERE GONERS}

Shortly after, 6TH Battalion moved out & we then went on to build our camp at what was to be known as "Nui-Flat".

"On the night of 17th August 1966 our camp at 'Nui Flat' was hit by Mortars and we were put on 'STAND-TO'".

On the morning of the "18th August 1966" D Coy met up with a platoon from "B" Coy, who were sent out to try and discover where the mortars were fired from. "B" company then returned to camp and the whole of "D" company carried on with the search.

My job with 11 platoon was "Forward Scout" for the whole tour, a duty I shared with my second scout, Plang Fabian. On this particular "Patrol". Then Major, Harry Smith C.O. Decided that 10 PLATOON was to follow the road that we were on, 11 PLATOON, with myself as "Forward Scout" was to follow. ^{FRESH} some tracks off to the right "which I had found earlier" and 12 Platoon was to circle back the way we had come & to hook around to the left after 2,000 metres, (LIMIT OF PATROL)

3

I led 11 PLATOON along the track that I had found, until we came across "4 VIET CONG," having a Break. We made contact, killing one & wounding 2 others, of whom we followed into a Rubber Plantation now known as "LONG-TAN" After about half an hour, all hell broke loose as approximately 2,400 Viet-Cong opened up on 11 platoon with Rockets, mortars, grenades, machine gun, 50 calibre, and small arms fire, missing me & killing our Lieutenant in the initial ~~Barrage~~ Barrage.

I went to ground and after about 20 to 30 minutes of missing Vietnam, there seemed to be a lull in the firing at which time I heard my mates behind me screaming to me that they would give me covering fire so that I could make it back to them, after about five attempts, I remember that I was finally in the company of some of my mates, actually I can remember at one stage I watched a Viet-Cong strutting towards me and I could see the bullets hitting the ground in front of where I was & I remember turning to Corporal "Bluey" Moore & saying "Did you see that Blue, that Bastard is trying to kill me, and he replied "Well shoot the Bitch" & I remember saying, as if in a daze, "Oh! Yeah, I never thought of that." Then, as soon as I shot the guy in front of me & I saw him fall, everything came back into its right perspective, and I knew that I was in the shit. Not long after a monsoon rain cloud hit making it much much worse, as it lasted about 1-2 HOURS.

4/ What with the rain, it was made worse because the Viet Cong kept coming & coming in waves through an eerie mist.

After approx 3 hours of continual fighting the word came through to withdraw, and I ~~can~~ remember our Sergeant screaming "EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF" & I also remember at the same time as he called, that I had about half a dozen Viet Cong to my right front, by the time I had outsmarted & disposed of them, I turned & looked behind me to move back with everybody else, only to find that I was by my self. (ALONE).

After a period of about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour I came across my 2nd scout Plang Fabian looking bewildered, with a bullet wound to his arm.

We teamed up & I suggested that we lead over to a large Rubber tree that had been blown over by either a mortar or a rocket, that way, I said, we would have some type of cover & at least we would be out of sight of the V.C.

When we reached the tree, we were surprised to find Brian Hall camped under it as well.

We stayed there for about 10 minutes & Plang asked me "What are we going to do & which way are our blakes", but all I could think about was having a smoke. When I mentioned it Plang said "me too" so we went ahead and I lit 2 cigarettes & we smoked then meanwhile Brian panicked & had to be restrained. *?*** K. O.

✓ 5-1-98

✓ 7-1-98

✓ 12-1-98

✓ 14-1-98

✓ 19-1-98

✓ 21-1-98

✓ 28-1-98

~~30-1-98~~

✓ 2-2-98

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✓ 9-2-98

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✓ 9-3-98

✓ 11-3-98

23-3-98

25-3-98

30-3-98

5 Plang & I just looked at each other & I shrugged my shoulders & said "Well mate, well just sit here & see what happens," and just as I spoke, we heard choppers and at the same time we saw "White Smoke" as well as "Red Smoke" & all of a sudden we knew that we still had a chance of survival.

As it turned out, the choppers were dropping us a re-supply of ammunition, & when we saw "FRIENDLY SMOKE" we decided to take our chances & make a run for it as they were only about 500-1,000 meters away. I said to Plang & Brian, who by this time had recovered "If we don't go now, who knows what will ~~for~~ happen to us."

When we finally made up our minds to "MOVE OUT" I can remember standing up in a crouched position & as I did, I was just picked up bodily off the ground and thrown forward about 30 feet & I was slammed into a rubber tree on my left shoulder. I honestly thought that my shoulder & back were broken because the pain was excruciating. I know one thing though, the three of us, ~~then~~ after we decided that I wasn't dead, ^{we} all got down on our guts & we slowly & painfully made our way back to our own company, or what was left of them. ~~I~~ I later found out two things. firstly we were the last three to get back & ~~also~~ secondly, when I took my back-pack off to put my re-supply of ammo in when I discovered that the thing that had sent me flying into a rubber tree, hurting my back & shoulder was that a bullet had gone completely through my

§ Entrenching tool & rickshooting through my ration pack.

My name is Allen James May, during June of 1965, I was working for the Brisbane City Council as a ganger doing Road Construction and Storm Water Drainage, when I was called up in the first National Service Draft.

I lived at Wynnum Heights Brisbane, Queensland.

I was sent to Kapooka for (3) three months Basic Training. When that was completed, I, along with approx- 500 other Nashos was posted to 6. R.A.R. at Enoggera which had been especially raised to accommodate the first intake of National Servicemen.

I ended up in 11 Platoon D. Company, 5 section as a private

After (9) nine months Core Training including Levers Plateau and Canungra I had specialised as a Forward Scout. When asked who are you?, my reply was. "1731007 MAY. A.J. 11. PLATOON D COMPANY 6 RAR. SIR!"

At the end of (9) nine months Core Training, we were sent to Vietnam.

So there we all were, Bank Tellers, Mechanics, Labourers, Cooks, Construction Workers, and the like, even Unemployed. WE WERE ALL NOW SOLDIERS IN VIETNAM.

After a week in Tung Tau 6 Battalion was transported by Chinook Helicopter to Nui-Slat in Phuoc-Tuy Province, where, in between Patrols, Mud, Monsoons & Mosquito's we all pitched in and built what became our Base of Operations. This also included rolls of barbed wire about 20 metres wide around the whole Base

We never saw a pick or shovel for (3) three months, all of the fighting pits, and the sand-bags filled with dirt for protection, was done with our entrenching tools.

While this was going on we slept under our 8' x 6' plastic sheets on a single blow up mattress. Until we received some Herclot 20 x 20 Marquee Tents left over from the 2nd World War. These (4) four man tents became our home for the rest of our Tour. (approx 9 months).

After being Mortared by the Viet Cong. in the early hours of 17th August (2:00 AM). Delta Company was sent out on the afternoon of 18th August to relieve Bravo Company, to try and find those responsible for the Mortar Attack.

As fate would have it, I was Forward Scout of 11 Platoon when we came under heavy fire in the Rubber Plantation which is now known as "The Battle of Long Tan."

A. J. May.

"The Nash's Lament"

We had no choice
We didn't volunteer,
It was the Brass at home
Who sent us over there.

They said to me.
You're a fighting man
And you're on your way
To Viet Nam.

We had to fight
The Viet Cong
We didn't know
Who was right or wrong

We fought & fought
through smoke & rain.
Will there be no end.
Will I go insane.

We are now at home
Thirty years have gone
And we still don't know
Who was right or wrong

We scream & shout.
While we're asleep.
And all we have
Are memories deep.

I hope one day
Before I die
They will admit
It was all a lie

They stole my life,
But who gives a damn.
It's all because
Of Viet-Nam.

A. J. May 11. PL. D. COY. 6. RAR.
First Tour.

The Nasho's Lament

*We had no choice,
we didn't volunteer.
It was the Brass at home
who sent us over there.*

*They said to me,
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It's all because
of Vietnam.*

A.J. May 11 Pl. D. COY. 6 RAR 1st Tour

Forever In My Mind

The day was gone and night had fallen,
We laid in our bunks cause sleep was calling.
At half past one we woke in fright,
Mortars were exploding coming out of the night.

It was the 18th August and we have been told,
That all of "B" Company had gone on patrol.
As we sat in our tents our feelings were high,
Because from now on we were all on stand-by.

It was now twelve o'clock the tension getting higher,
"B" Company was coming back through the wire.
They had found the place from where the mortars were
fired,
But they lost the tracks and returned to camp, tired.

We found out later there was no doubt,
They had attacked us with mortars to draw us all out.
Mount up "D" Company came the call,
We'll show "B" Company once and for all.

We went to the spot where the trail had gone cold,
Eleventh Platoon front and centre, we had been called.
Can you find the tracks that "B" Company lost,
To me they stood out like a soft morning frost.

We followed the trail through rubber and scrub,
And found eight Viet-Cong, squatting eating their grub.
We open fired killing but one.
The others ran wounded, shit they could run.

Twelfth Platoon went South and Tenth did go north,
Us the Eleventh went ahead for all worth.
Through the rubber we went chasing these men,
This was the area known as "Long-Tan".

We went past the house that was built on the site,
And all of a sudden we stopped dead with freight.
Bullets and rockets exploded with sound,
It took but an instant to all hit the ground.

Some lay there wounded, some lay there dead.
The rest of us worried of what lie ahead.

We fought there for hours amidst cries of pain.
When out of the skies poured the Monsoon rain.
It seemed like forever, will this ever end,
They came at us repeatedly, again and again.

After four and a half hours the A.P.C's arrived,
Their fifty mills booming, we just might survive.
Then came the call "pull out, lets depart",
"Every man for himself" a loud voice did bark.

When I looked around to check on my mates,
I was there by myself, I had left it too late.
As I moved back to find where they'd gone.
I saw my mate "Doug" all bloody and torn.

As I looked at my friend with pain in his face,
I said with a shrug, "were not out of this race".
My mate said to me, "which way do we go".
And I said back to him, "how the fuck would I know".

We made a decision to move straight ahead,
And along the way we passed our own dead.
We came to a tree that was felled by a shot,
And found another mate, what pleasure we got.

Now this was the time to go or to stay,
But "Alas" the big problem, how far, which way.
Look over there, I nearly did choke.
Can you see it, Can you see it, Friendly white smoke.

We three headed out, our hearts filled with glee.
We're going to make it, that's our Company.
We made it back all muddy and wet,
The last three to make it, a warm greeting did get.

We stayed there all night all sad and forlorn,
Wondering what lie ahead with the coming of dawn.
The morning has come, it is a new day.
Back to the scene of the battle, where our good friends
lay.

We wrapped up our dead, two wounded did find,
The night they had survived was one of a kind.
Over three hundred enemy we buried that day.
Just kept digging graves where ever they lay.

After five and a half hours under attack,
Boys had gone out, Men had come back.
One things for certain of that you can be sure.
"The Battle of Long-Tan" will be a memory for
evermore.

For another nine months we stayed in that place.
At last going home to the real human race.
As we marched through the City to the bands rat-tat-tat,
The crowds booed and yelled and at us they spat.

We thought we were heroes, we were just it,
But not so the crowds, they treated us like shit.
I turned to the crowd, and to them did yell,
"When I die, I'll go to heaven cause I've served my time
in hell".

Vietnam 1996-1967

"Forever in my mind."

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We fought there for hours Amidst cries of pain.
When out of the skies poured the Monsoon rain
It seemed like forever, with this ever end,
They came at us repeatedly, again & again.

After 4½ hours the Q.P.C's arrived
Their fifty mills booming we just might survive.
Then came the Call Pull out, lets depart,
Every man for himself A loud voice did bark.

When I looked around to check on my mates
I was there by myself, I had left it too late.
As I moved back to find where they'd gone
I saw my mate "Plang" all bloody and torn.

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Vietnam. 1966-1967.

A. J. May 11. PL. D. COY. 6 RAR. 1st TOUR.

Deoy Flight 23.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

ORIGINAL

ADMISSION TO MILITARY AREAS - MEMBERS RELATIVES/FRIENDS

Unit Title 6 RAR. Pass No. 373

Date Valid..... 9 JUN 1966

Members Details: Regt No. 1731007 Rank. RTE Name. MAY AJ

Detail of Pass Holder: Name MR. CO. MAY Address. 100 BOXGROVE AVE WYNNUM

Other persons permitted entry Mr & Mrs INGRAM Carmelita Ingram

Mr May Janet May

.....
Entry to RAAF BASE Between 2230 hrs and 100115 hrs

NOTE: All persons permitted entry on this pass are to move through entry point as a group.

This pass is valid only on the date and times as stated.

Adrian Down May
Maj
GS(Int) HQ N Comd

Date of issue..... 8 JUN 1966