

MEMORIES TALES OF THE 'BEAR'

Another tale of the "Bears' adventures or mis-adventures in Vietnam depending on your outlook on life. This mishap happened when the Battalion was sent to relieve the American Regiment guarding Tan Son Nhut Air Base. The unit was driven from our base at Nui Dat to the area designated as the area of responsibility for the Australians. To get to this area the convoy we were travelling in passed thru a village which the Americans had nick named "Dodge City". The mere thought of a place called Dodge City had the Bear quivering in excitement. As we entered this exotic village the convoy pulled to the side of the road to allow a large American convoy to pass us from the other way. Now what happened next would be described as an accident, the kind that would only happen to someone of the Bear's luck. While we lower type, personnel, as the Bear referred to the rest of the section had to travelled in back of a truck, he travelled in the rear of a land rover. This meant his weapon leaned against the side of the vehicle with the barrel protruding over the edge, 'YES' sure enough an APC travelling with the passing convoy clipped the protruding barrel of the Bears rifle, the noise was terrible, but a quick inspection by the Bear declared no damage. This was later to be questioned, because of a contact with the local VC, who had the audacity to take a shot at the section the Bear happened to be traversing the woods with. The section instinctively went to ground but the Bear stood his ground defiantly demanding to know where the shots had come from. It took but a moment before he could see for himself the villainous VC with the intent to do harm to those friendly nature lovers travelling along with the Bear. This situation could not continue, so the Bear with all of the calm of being on a rifle range, took careful aim at the miscreant and fired much to his dismay he missed, he tried once again and missed again. Before he could fire again the members of the section rallied and covered the area with heavy fire, according to the Bear "accidentally killing" the VC. The section then had the cheek to claim the kill as a section victory but to this day the Bear claims this as a personal victory to himself. On his return to Nui Dat the bear hastily presented his weapon to the Battalion armourer declaring his dissatisfaction at being issued a faulty weapon, which after inspection by the armourer proved to be the case. To this day the battalion armourer does not know how a weapon from his armoury could have a slight bend in the barrel.