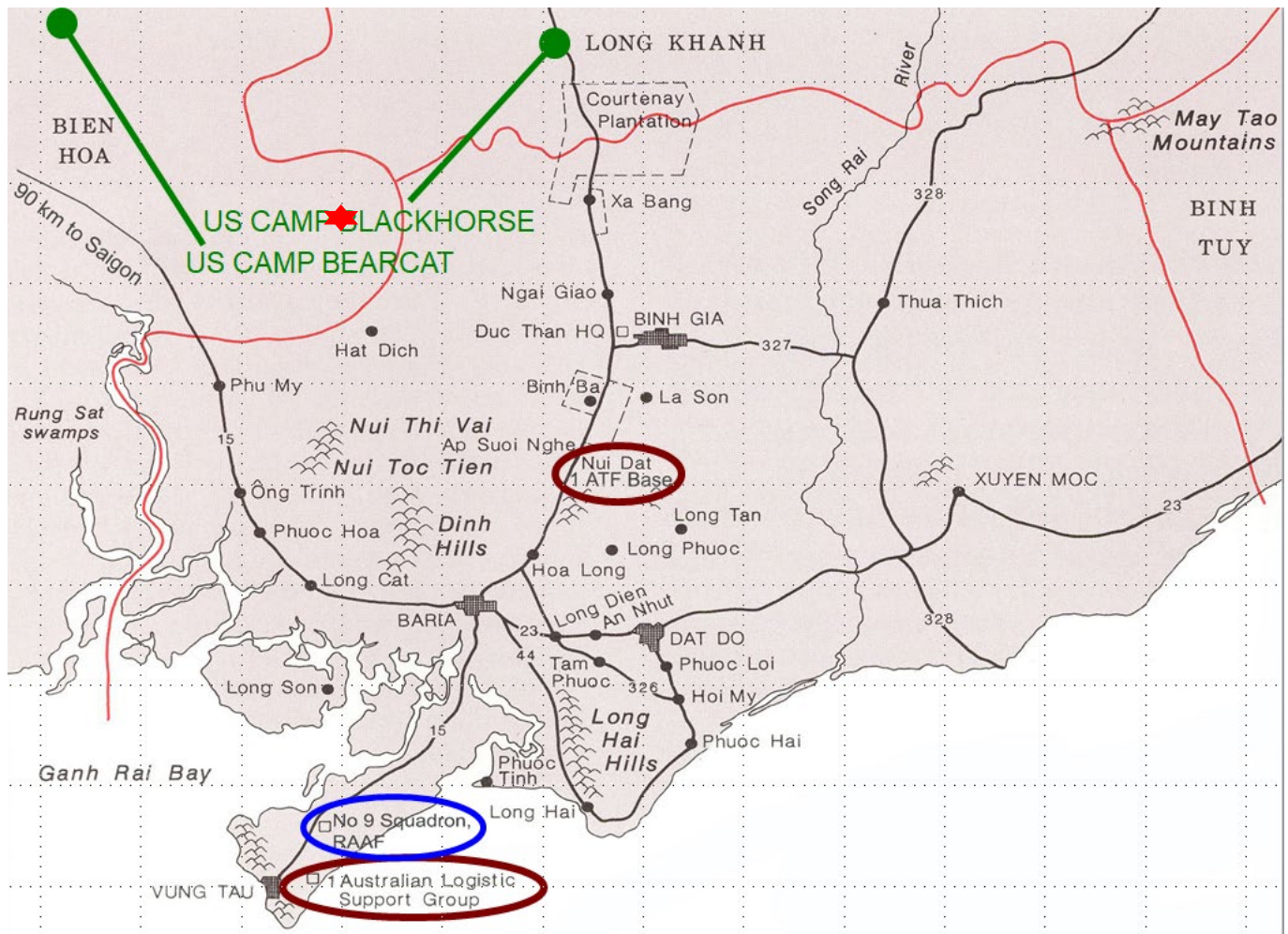


ONE OF MULTIPLE 9SQN AMMO RESUPPLIES DURING ENEMY ENGAGEMENT

The 1ATF Duty Officer's Log regarding the probable timing and detail of this event is now mysteriously missing in AWM archives and there is no mention in 9SQN Unit History. I never recorded the detail of actions on Pilot Mission Debrief forms, just the statistical information. The action activity is recorded in 4RAR Unit Log with reference to medevacs; but not ammunition resupply, although annotated in my logbook.

This happening occurred on 23Jul68 at a location roughly 10 clicks north-east of Phu My. We were A2-378, Albatross 01, BD, John Sampson, Jan Kiewiet, Glen McKay.



After being in country for about 4 months, I had learned of the enemy stronghold areas and developed the habit of monitoring 1ATF unit nets whenever they were operating in those localities (my inner self viewed this as 'reading the battlefield'). In this case, 4RAR had elements deployed on the western edge of the Hat Dich, which was a known base location for 274VC Regiment.

While monitoring the 4RAR net, I heard a contact report and anticipated an OPDEM for ammunition resupply would soon follow as the Kiwi Companies fired off ammunition furiously during engagements. So, we repositioned the aircraft to have adequate fuel and to be available to expeditiously perform the task, advising ATOLL accordingly. (ATOLL was the small RAAF manned Air Transport Operations Centre within HQ 1ATF Command Post).

Sure enough, an OPDEM task materialized and we swiftly uplifted pre-packed ammunition from Eagle Farm pad at Nui Dat, then headed towards Bearcat.

About 5 clicks short of the contact area (at about YS305835), we advised 'V' Coy we were inbound from the south-west. They responded as being in heavy contact and pinned down by enemy at very close quarters. When a bit closer we called for and identified their YELLOW smoke and they stressed not to go beyond their smoke.

We decelerated above canopy that was probably only about 60 to 80 feet high and crept slowly forward until sighted by ground elements who asked us to manoeuvre before ammo drop, again emphasizing not to go any further forward.

We were right over their rifle muzzles and there was continuous cacophony of intense firing from both sides, causing us to shout on the intercom. The intensity of the shooting from the New Zealanders was probably deterring the enemy from firing at us and had suppression been necessary, doorguns would have had to be depressed maybe 45 degrees.

At their call, we began dropping the ammunition where they needed it as they could not move and when that was accomplished they asked: *'Can you take out a casualty?'* *'Sure.'* *'We cannot move him so we will have to get you to reposition; but do not go any further forward.'* *'Okay.'*

A grinning Maori subsequently appeared on the end of the winch cable, it being a great honour for a Maori Warrior to be wounded in battle. From the ground: *'Thanks much Albatross.'* *'Roger; play it cool.'*

We slowly backed away from the brawl then pivoted toward Phu My, before routing for Vampire (1 Australian Field Hospital) at Back Beach Vung Tau. Our perforated Maori began worsening during the 15 minute transit but he survived due to prompt evacuation.



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