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The  
Newsletter  
of  
Australian Army Training Team  
VIETNAM

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R & R

The following is an extract from a memo prepared by Peter Conway who was recently on R&R and has summarised his experiences of the Administration procedures.

A vote of thanks to Peter for this time and effort in preparing this information.

"Gentlemen,

I thought I would take this opportunity of dropping you a line reference R&R in the hope that it may be of some assistance to you when your time comes to prepare for that well earned five precious days at home. Undoubtedly this will be of little interest to those of you who have already had R&R leave but to those who haven't I sincerely hope that you do get some value from it and that perhaps it will save some embarrassment either at Camp Alpha or Sydney. I will put my experiences in the form of an itinerary and commentary with notable points.

Monday 21st June

0800: Medical at RAP. Free World Headquarters. This is not a very detailed medical. The doctor simply asks you "How do you feel" and "Have you anything wrong" he will then fill out a form saying that you are fit to proceed on R&R in Australia. Be sure to tell him that you take Chloroquine-Primaquine Anti-Malarial tablets and he will also endorse this on your clearance and issue you with one tablet to take whilst on R&R. If you are taking any other tablets for a health disorder and wish to take these tablets out of country ensure that you inform the doctor of such and get a prescription authorizing you to take these tablets. Failure to do so will result in the tablets being confiscated at Camp Alpha.

Make sure you collect your IHC from the medical authorities.

0815: Collect pay book from Pay Rep. HQ AATTV.

You are then free to do as you wish until you have to leave the Vinh-Loi that afternoon. The Movements WO (Vince Metzroth) will inform you what time the vehicle will report for you. I went to the Cash Office HQ AFV in an endeavour to change some MPC into Aust currency only to be informed that as I was going on R&R it would be done at Camp Alpha prior to departure.

1630: Vehicle reported to Vinh-Loi.

1700: Arrive at Camp Alpha.

Current policy is that on arrival there your baggage should be weighed. Policing of the 66 lb weight limit is in force. However I am of the opinion that some leniency is being allowed however don't bank on it. After weighing of baggage you then report to a briefing room where you can leave your baggage. You are then free to use the facilities of the mess hall and the club. Before departing the briefing room ensure that your baggage is locked and that you don't leave cameras with it. You must be seated in the briefing room again by 1825 hrs.

1830: Briefing by movements and pay personnel. This briefing is for Australians only. First part of the briefing consists of filling out a customs declaration form and issue of Boarding pass and travel orders. Movements personnel will then brief you on what you can take and what you can't take. I feel I should inform you of this.

#### Cigarettes

You may only take as many cigarettes as you feel you will smoke between Saigon and Sydney. Don't take cartons as you will only have to dispose of them during the customs search in Saigon or prior to getting off the plane in Sydney. I feel two packets is ample.

#### Liquor

You may take one bottle of liquor provided the seal is unbroken. The seal must still be unbroken on arrival in Sydney. May I point out here that the journey is completely dry as far as alcoholic beverages are concerned.

#### Currency

You may take no more than \$1 MPC.

N.B. The maximum amount of MPC you may convert to Aust currency is \$10 for which you will receive \$9 Aust. If you have more than this on your person you can dispose of it in the one of the following ways.

- a. Have it credited into your pay book.
- b. Have it secured in a safe deposit box at Camp Alpha until your return (which I'm led to believe is not 100% safe) or

/c. Donate

c. Donate it to legacy.

My suggestion is that you secure any amount above \$10 in the safe at HQ AATTV.

### US Equipment

You cannot take any item of US equipment with you. This includes:

Poncho liners

Combat smocks

Boots

Knives etc.

If you do get as far as the customs counter with any US equipment chances are that it may be confiscated by the US Customs police. This is then just some advice which may be of assistance to you.

This then is the completion of the Australian briefing which takes approximately 30 minutes.

1900: Report to customs hall.

You are taken in, in groups of five where you will place your baggage on the floor and it will be subject to search (presumably for drugs) by an alsation dog. On completion of this you then take your baggage to a counter where it will be searched by customs police. I found the search to be quite thorough even to the extend where the contents of my toilet bag were emptied on to the counter and my aerosol shaving cream and body deodorant shook and sprayed. Also at this counter you are required to hand in your customs declaration form. You will receive your baggage checks here and that will be the last you will see of your baggage till arrival in Sydney.

On departure from the customs hall you will be required to enter a small cubicle where you will be subject to a body search. In the case of Warrant Officers and Officers the customs police to not lay hand on you. They will merely ask you to empty out the contents of your pockets; however they do search your wallet. If you are carrying excess currency you will be pointed out to an Australian MP who will ensure that you dispose of the excess by one of the means I previously mentioned.

From there you are then taken to another briefing room, where you can change your currency.

/ You

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You will not be permitted to leave this room until you board the bus which takes you to the aircraft. You will be asked to occupy the front seats in this room, the purpose of this being that you will be first on the aircraft and first off in Sydney. It is then that the American personnel will join you in this room.

2045: A quick briefing by American personnel reference boarding procedure and then on to the buses which will take you direct to the aircraft. Scheduled take off time was 2115 hrs however due to traffic in the area we were not off the ground until 2130 hrs.

We were informed by the Captain that the flight time to Sydney was 7 hrs and 58 mins however the actual time it did take was 8 hrs and 15 mns so as you can see we were about thirty minutes late arriving in Sydney.

Tuesday 22nd June

0745. Arrived dear old Sydney.

Customs officials board aircraft and once again inform you that all un-smoked cigarettes and pornographic literature be left aboard prior to disembarkation (I wonder what happens to it). From there you move inside the international terminal to the health counter where your IHC is inspected to ensure your inoculations are up to date. You are required also to fill out a form with where you will be during your R&R. (next of kin also) From there you move towards the baggage collection point; enroute once again you are subject to another body search, however everybody does not go through it. There was a slight delay waiting for baggage but I think this was to be expected. Whilst awaiting for baggage Australian movements personnel will move forward and request that members travelling intra-or interstate be given priority going through customs so as to enable them to make the domestic connecting flights.

Sydney Personnel. Report to movements Sgt who will issue with a proforma (which you have to sign for) which tells you where you have to report to and the time for your return journey. Namely R&R Centre Woolloomotoo 0845 hrs six days from then.

Pay is then available to you if you so desire. You will be informed where to go.

/Intra

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Intra and Interstate Personnel

Sign for reporting proforma.

Receive domestic airline ticket (return booking already made).

Book baggage through.

Pay if required.

Board the bus and proceed to domestic airline.

If you are cutting your connecting flight a little fine the movements SGT will advise you to forego pay and proceed direct by taxi to domestic airline company.

Summary

All in all will organised by both American and Australian. Movements personnel, however let me reinterate that this was only my personal experience. I hope that you may be as lucky as I was and that it works just as will for you.