Flowers for Mother

Australian soldiers in Viet Nam spent $1,000 on flowers for Mothers' Day, May 14.

They ordered the white blossoms through the Australian Services Canteens Organisation's Viet Nam detachment, which provides a flower delivery service for the men.

The orders have come from soldiers in all kinds of units. From the infantrymen of the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat, the Logistic Support Group at Vung Tau, and Army Training Team advisers fighting beside Vietnamese and mountain tribespeople in isolated areas north of Saigon.

The "flowers for home" scheme, however, is not a special service for Mothers' Day only, according to the officer commanding the Task Force Canteens Organisation, Lieutenant Bruce Anderson, of Horsham, Victoria.

Lieutenant Anderson said today the soldiers could send flowers to anybody in Australia, at any time.

He said the delivery service was just one facet of the Organisation's role in Viet Nam.

Flowers for Home

Through its postal exchange stores at all major units, troops also buy a wide variety of goods at prices often 50 per cent less than they would pay at home.

In the Task Force area's main store at Nui Dat, soldiers have made individual and bulk purchases amounting to $314,000 dollars in the past six months.

Soldiers have bought directly over the counter:
- $20,500 worth of watches, radios, cameras and tape recorders,
- $29,000 worth of jewellery, household linen, clothing, ornaments, books and magazines,
- $1,500 worth of flowers.

These figures set at $100 dollars the amount spent by each Digger in the Task Force during the six month trading period.

In addition, most soldiers make many of their purchases at Rest and Recuperation leave centres such as Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore. Individual purchases in these cities usually amounted to hundreds of dollars, Lieutenant Anderson said.

He estimated that each soldier would take home about $300 worth of "goodies" and gifts at the end of their tour of duty in Viet Nam.

Soldiers of the Australian Services Canteens Organisation Detachment at the Task Force are: Lieutenant Bruce Anderson, of Horsham, Victoria; Sergeants Michael Williams, of Grovelly, Qld., Des Walker, of Redcliffe, Qld., Kevin Eggins, of Singleton, NSW.; Corporals Ross Lane, of Adelaide, Dale Storey, of Murwillumbah, NSW., Peter Stitz, of Melbourne; and Private Terry Wilson, of Sandringham, Victoria.

List: Commands only

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