



The Ranger



December 1997

Foreword from the Commanding Officer

1997 saw another year of significant achievement for the Battalion with our training being focused on the development of junior leaders, the attainment of Army Individual Readiness Notice (AIRN) qualifications and Infantry core competencies.

The Restructuring of The Army (RTA) and the resulting trial of the 4th Brigade has been the major thrust behind much of the increased resources which come the way of the Battalion. Major improvements are currently underway to our depots. These will, on completion, provide us with a much improved working environment, and a better public profile.

RTA has provided for an increase to our full-time staff. Over the next two posting cycles we will have an additional 33 full-time members posted into the Battalion. These members will be filling a variety of position within the Battalion's Establishment and be physically located throughout our nine depots within country Victoria.

Common Induction Training (CIT) is here to stay. It provides the Battalion with a common standard of training for its newly arrived members on completion of their recruit and IET training and will be the way of the future.

The Battalion has successfully completed its first two 'block training periods'. These were Exercise Gallipoli at Kapooka, and Exercise Polygon Wood at Puckapunyal. The conduct of these activities allows us to participate in a variety of concurrent training and gain maximum training value from the available resources. 1998 will see the Battalion exercising at Pooncarie in February, and this will be the final lead-up to our major field exercise at Culltana. The Battalion will return to Kapooka in July for the second nine days training period.

As the year draws to a close many of the staff have completed their posting with 8/7 RVR. All have significantly contributed to the advancement of the Battalion during their time with us. To

those members, you each have my personal thanks for your devotion and the professional service you provided during your time with us, and best wishes for the future. It would be remiss of me not to make special mention of the contributions of our RSM, Warrant Officer Class One Stephen Ward. He has worked tirelessly in ensuring the Battalion meet its obligation to firstly its soldiers and then external commitments.

To the members of the Battalion, their wives and families I thank you for your continued support. May the coming festive season be a safe and joyful occasion, and I look forward to your support in the new year.



*Lieutenant Colonel
R.C. Barnes
Commanding
Officer.*

Community Involvements in 1997.

April 1997, S/Sgt Mick Wakeling and Pte Jacky Grant co-ordinated two teams of 8/7 RVR personnel to participate in the Round the Lake Relay Race to raise money for the Bone Marrow Donor Institute. Congratulations to all who participated.

McHappy day provided an opportunity for 8/7 RVR soldiers to check out what really does go into a Big Mac. Thank you to all who assisted.

Some members tried to earn money for charity by shaving off their hair. I don't know if there is any truth in the rumour that the CO had to be shaved twice before sponsors felt that they had got their monies worth!?

The Officers Mess in 1997 - Major W.A. Akell, PMC

Despite the dispersal of our members throughout country Victoria, the mess still maintained a steady social calendar during periods of collective training. Two Regimental Dinners were held during the year along with three Pre-parade Dinners and the popular Christmas In July function was conducted mid-year.

We held our first Regimental dinner at Puckapunyal during the May Camp. Guests included The Honorary Colonel of The Royal Victoria Regiment, Sir John Young AC, KCMG and the Regimental Colonel, Brigadier WJ Hocking ED, RFD. Sir John gave an interesting talk on his experience as a Guard Commander for Rudolph Hess at Spandau Prison.



The Christmas In July function was held at Ranger Barracks with our Padre Chaplain Glynn Murphy leading the captive congregation in Xmas carols and the manger playette. All agreed that the night was totally enjoyable and the function will continue on the social calendar.

The Past Commanding Officers Dinner was held early November. This was attended by several of the former Commanding Officers of the Unit and was also the forum at which those members leaving were farewelled. Farewells included MAJ's Harris, Cole, Haughton, CHAP. Murphy, CAPT's Smith, Clarke, Challis and the Mess made a presentation to our departing RSM. Bernie Farley was promoted from SQN LDR to MAJ during the evening and he and wife Carmel were welcomed along with LT Tom Hodgson.

The year finished with the traditional All Ranks visit to the Mess on the final parade night.

My sincere thanks to all who supported the Mess during the year, and best wishes for a safe festive season, to members and their families.

Hair-raising Experience

An initiative of CPL Al Carlin was the lopping of several of the Ballarat based Unit members for charity. This started as an individual challenge between two of the Bn HQ ORD Room staff and swiftly spread throughout Ranger Barracks.

The challenge consisted of either a recruit style No 2 haircut or the popular shaved head look for the never to be repeated cost of \$10 per head, (no pun intended). Proceeds of this activity went to Legacy, with the Commanding Officer presenting the cheque for \$120 to the President of the Ballarat Legacy a couple of days after the event.

The accompanying photo shows the Unit barber (questionable) WO2 Ken McMillan adding the finishing touch to CPL Dave Allengate whilst several of the participants force a smile for the camera.



RSM's Corner

The last 18 months have been a busy and exiting period for the Battalion. There are many things going on with the development of the Army of the Future. You, the soldier, are part of this future. Restructuring, new training requirements and competency based training are now embedded in the battalion. The successes of these challenges depend upon our Junior NCO's and soldier's ability to embrace the changes and to be professional as a soldier. I want to reassure all soldiers that they are our most important asset and will remain so regardless of the Army's' future structure.

However, to be an effective soldier you must abide by six basic tenants and offer this unit a clear commitment of duty. The Tenants that you are required to stick to are: LOYALTY to your country, service and fellow soldiers in the conduct of your everyday tasks and to the ethos of the Army, this unit and our mission; COMRADESHIP in the display of tolerance to your mate who is less capable than yourself or less capable of the commitment to their country and unit; DISCIPLINE in the sense of enforced discipline to do things the Army way and that of self discipline to abide by these tenants and do what is required to meet the commitments your training demands; COURAGE to face the adverse conditions experienced by the Infantry soldier both in peace and war as well as the courage to speak your mind and stand up for the moral principles that you, as a soldier, believe in; ALERTNESS to the events that are happening around you and to fix any problems that arise prior to them becoming an issue; and finally, ENDURANCE in the physical sense of being tough and fit for service to the nation and your unit and in the mental sense to undergo the extra strain that changes and uncertainty bring to your military life.

It is these basic tenants with solid realistic training that will make you a good soldier. This unit has a proud history in country Victoria and will continue to do well into the future with your support. I wish all members and their families a very happy Holy Day and festive season and look forward to hearing of the many good things that this unit is about to do.

*To be an effective soldier you must abide by six basic tenants...Loyalty
..Comradeship..
Discipline..
Courage..
Alertness..
Endurance..*



PTE Jacky Grant of BHQ shows her style as she confidently walks the plank at the High Wire Course at IRTB during Exercise Gallipoli

Behind the Scenes

With the reorganisation of 8/7 RVR, Admin Coy has retained its structure and not undergone any major establishment changes over the past 12 months. However, as for the number of personnel within Admin Coy we have had approximately a 30% strength increase. Welcome to the members of DUC who were reallocated to Admin Coy WEF 1 Jul 97. Our current strength now stands at 67 personnel compared to 48 in Dec 96.

Admin Coy has had a fairly successful year in 97. Our efficient strength as at 30 Jun 97 was approximately 75% of our posted strength. With the introduction of the AIRN requirements we are well on the way to having most of the Coy AIRN qualified in the first year. Admin Coy has still been able to provide Q, Tpt, Catr and Med support to the Bn throughout the trg year.

Much of the success that Admin Coy has enjoyed over the past year has been attributable to the ARA Cadre staff within the Coy. Their support is very much appreciated by the members of Admin Coy. In particular the QM and his staff as well as the Tpt Spvr have provided invaluable advice and guidance to the Bn and the Coy. Catr Pl have again excelled in their culinary delights over the past 12 months, providing excellent meals both in the field and in the barracks, well done Catr Pl.

With the departure of the OC, MAJ Cole, in Nov 96, Admin Coy has until now been without an OC. The new OC will be MAJ Leckie who has been coaxed out of retirement to reassume his appointment as a MAJ in the part time Army. MAJ Leckie has a long association with 8/7 RVR and has previously been the OC of B Coy as well as OPSO and a full - time year as 2IC.

The following personnel have recently joined Admin Coy:

CAPT Hession - RMO;
SSGT Said - RAP;
SSGT Westbury - CQMS;
CPL Faul - TPT;
CPL Harrison - Q;
CPL Holland - RAP;
CPL Wilson - VM;
CPL Gould - TPT;
PTE Andrew T.A. - Q;
Andrew L.R. - Clk Admin;
PTE Butters - TPT;
PTE Peters - TPT; and
PTE Renouf - RAP.

The following members have achieved personal mile stones over the past year:

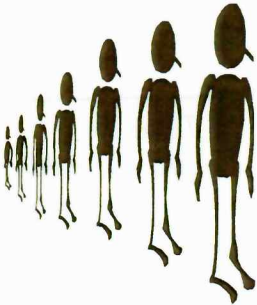
CPL Ivey - promoted CPL this year as well as achieving "Student of Merit" on his Subj Four for CPL;
LCPL Cashin - promoted LCPL and getting married not so long ago; and
SGT Bourgonjen - was heard to be very happy recently after returning home for a reunion visit with wife and family. We're not sure about which part of the trip home made him happy, but apparently there were some highlights that should keep him going until his next trip home!

Admin Coy is currently enjoying a healthy strength state but as usual we are always on the look out for new personnel to join our fold.

Admin Coy can offer the joys of practising Infantry soldier skills as well as teaching you a new trade.

We have vacancies in Catr Pl for those personnel who would like to consider becoming a Cook.

Our Tech Spt Pl could also do with some more Veh Mechanics and Armourers, so if you think you have a civilian trade that might be recognized by the Army please give Admin Coy a call.



From the River Bank - C Coy - Capt Watson

It is my intention in this report to make mention of some of the outstanding personalities and achievements in the Company during the year. However I am aware that human memory is fallible and if anyone feels they have been left out please don't think that your contribution went unnoticed, at the same time its too early yet to breathe a sigh of relief thinking that your crimes went unnoticed and will remain unpunished.

Not only did the Company start the year with a new OC, but there were a number of other significant personnel changes as well. Warrant Officer Wayne Harris was posted in as Training Warrant Officer and his first task was to assist the OC in drafting a range instruction for the battalion range shoot. The OC's confidence was shaken when his instruction was returned by Warrant Officer Harris with more red ink than a road map prompting some rather hasty revision in service writing.

Another Warrant Officer to join the Company was Geoff Morris who took over as CSM on the departure of Bob Brand. Geoff hailed from Sydney University Regiment and brought considerable experience to the job. He also must have brought some nostalgia for he also managed to resurrect some ancient SLR's to enable 9 Platoon to mount a guard on Remembrance Day. Happily, at the end of the year with their armoury upgrade Swan Hill personnel were again able to drill and train with F-88's.

Another addition was CQMS, Staff Sergeant Geoff Ingall who proved himself to be something of a dark horse on the range. LCPL Kev Farrell achieved best shot in the Company this year but I still retain a vivid image of Staff plotting a comeback next year Later in the year we welcomed CPL's Curtis and Lavanda, SGT Steve Cox and Captain Chris Saultry.

I have a few other impressions of the year, being pulled up by the local Police who wanted to know if war had broken out in the peaceful Hyah Forest, location of one of our bivouacs. Also our LWC Canungra contingent showed their environmental credentials and saved fuel by pushing a trailer up and down San Mateo Avenue, MILDURA.

CPL Mal Logue showed great promise as a wine waiter together with all the other NCO's who enabled the soldiers to enjoy their dining in night. I was also proud to accompany SGT's Bill Clayden and Peter Kinleyside together with CPL Darryl Jack and LCPL Kev Farrell to Victoria Barracks in MELBOURNE where their employers were presented with certificates of appreciation from Federal Minister Bronwin Bishop.



PTE Adam Bennett of Swan Hill takes aim with the F88 Steyr during C Coy's Range Practice at Puckapunyal in March 1997.

I also recall visiting CPL Bic Holland on his Medics Course at Dunlop Barracks BRIGHTON and being told by the staff of 6 Field Ambulance what a shame this poor deprived country lad had never seen the beach before in his life and the trip to the seaside they had put on for his benefit. I admire CPL Holland for maintaining a straight face through all of this.

I've also got a lasting impression from the basic survival course run by the OPSO and RSM of the look of hungry delight in the eyes of PTE Paul Keirl as he brought a blue tongue lizard back to camp. Somehow, I knew that lizard wasn't long for this world.

I must also pay tribute to our Admin Coy detachment who have enabled us to operate semi independently at times, and I can't forget the seemingly endless piles of recruiting folders presented for signature by SGT's Peter Kowski and Paulette Randall.

In conclusion I will address my remarks to the newer members of the Company, those personnel who have just completed recruit / IET training or are waiting to attend their courses having passed the enlistment process. You have completed or are about to complete the most difficult phase of becoming a soldier because a lot of what you see and do is still unfamiliar. As your careers progress the effort required wont decrease but your familiarity with your place in the organisation will increase. I assure you that you are an important and welcome part of C Coy.

It is quite appropriate that one of our ancestor battalions, the 7th, took the vine leaf as its symbol, because the company is just like a grapevine. While it requires an established base, without new growth it won't produce anything of value.

May Trg Week - (Well, we may do it...then again we may not!)

May TRG week was to be my last with the old A coy before my new posting to 2IC B in July. It was fortunate than that due to a minor attendance problem, fixed by a few charges in June, A and B COY joined together for the exercise. It was my first real look at B COY and it was a chance to see what I was getting myself into. What I didn't anticipate was that the size of the CHQ was almost half the COY. Two CHQ's and three sections. What a week.

A number of training points were covered during the week including first aid training, navigation and section attack, from first contact through a full reorg. Meanwhile at the HQ training included how to put up a tarp. It only took two Capt, four WO, three SSGT's and two storemen about twenty attempts before we got it right. The cord was rotten really!

Writing out a piquet list was next on the training schedule. One member of the CHQ staff who will remain nameless made a small mistake and left one of his fellow WO's on piquet for a four hour stint. I would have thought that he may have picked up his mistake in that he was on just before and had to wake up the unfortunate member for his double shift.

Camouflage and concealment was next. The main TRG point: try not to look too much like a log at night in case you almost get urinated on. Thanks CSM for the lesson. (The only good point in favour of a hutchie over a bivvy bag).

Survival techniques were taught by WO Varty. How to clear and level a site and erect an elaborate two story Hutchie with master bedroom. Also fire making with flint and steel. I still think that the TRG is a little out of date as we can't take the flint off our muskets now.

The DS stick competition was won by WO Varty's carved wood and metal master piece.

Finally a terminal test was conducted for all. During the week a number of personnel were taken out of the field for dental and medical checks. One of these included the OC. What he'd done before he'd left was give his concept of training for the section attack assessment. However he'd failed to issue orders for the patrols. The CSM's had an idea of the concept just as the 2IC's did and the O'Gp was to be at 0900. Unfortunately the OC got his appointment with the medic's on the same morning. Fifteen minutes before the O'Gp. The CSM's approach and ask if the OC had issued me with his orders. Blank stare! OK not a problem, adlib! A quick check with all the DS and lucky that there was only three sections. Thanks for the test boss, did I pass?.

..The main trg point - try not to look too much like a log at night in case you almost get urinated on...



Author Ron Austin, left, 8th Battalion AIF veteran Angus Clark and the Commanding Officer discuss "Cobbers in Khaki" at the books launch at the Ranger Barracks in April.

"Cobbersin Khaki" records the Unit's history during WW1.

For further information on the Battalion's history, why not visit the Unit Museum in Ranger Barracks. Admittance is free.

Bigger Bangers

1997 saw the relocation of 8/7 RVR's Assault Pioneer Platoon from the Hamilton Depot (now closed) to be co-located with the new Alpha Company at Geelong. The newly formed Platoon Headquarters consists of LT Richard CELM, ex Bravo Coy 2IC and SGT Phil McILROY, ex Bravo Company.

Thanks go to SGT Phil BAULCH for many years as the Assault Pioneer Sergeant at Hamilton. SGT BAULCH, and the remaining members from Hamilton, have now transferred to Warnambool.

On 18 February 1997, 20 members of 5/6 RVR in Geelong transferred to 8/7 RVR to form the new Assault Pioneer Platoon. An alcoholic welcome was extended to them:

A new era in Assault Pioneering then began within the Battalion, with two full sections of soldiers eagerly waiting for the Basic Pioneer Course in Nov/Dec '97. With SGT McILROY attending the Officer/NCO Course in Oct/Nov '97, and with all members qualified, next year is shaping up to be an exiting year for the Assault Pioneer Platoon.



“Careful mate, we’ve only got the one round!”

With mortar ammunition in scarce supply, careful aim was taken with the round allocated to the Mortar Platoon in 1997.

Subby Killer!

I knew that they had had a few LT's in B COY and coming from A COY were LT's are as rare as lips on a chook we tend to hold on to them with the grip of a hungry Rotweiler. B COY always seemed to have a full set of subbies so I was looking forward to having a few PL COMD's that weren't SGT's or CPL's (or having to do the job myself).

I was totally unprepared when my new boss casually mentioned that "I seem to have a little problem with LT's. I've managed to loose 10 of them in the last 18 months".TEN! In 18 months? This had to be a record, even compared to the landing at ANZAC.

I asked him if there was a problem. "No, I guess that I just frighten them".

The thought crossed my mind that he was pulling my chain and the story of Jack the Giant Killer came to me from my childhood. So I checked and there it was in black and white in the nominal roll 10 in 18 months. Next thought, what the hell have I walked in to and how long am I going to last?

But I've known OC B ever since I was a recruit and he was my troop commander, nearly ten years. Although he

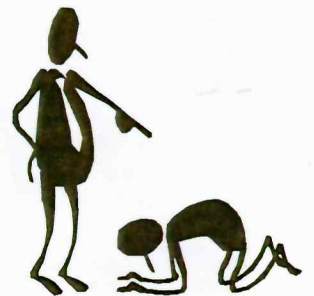
expects a lot and that it be done well he's a fair if demanding boss. That didn't explain 10 subbies in 18 months.

So I started looking at the names on the list again and I recognised some of the names. A few that had to pull the pin due to personal problems, good men. But there were a few duds, that even when I was a LT didn't think that they'd lans. Even one that I would have culled, So B COY has had a bad run, well things can't get any worse can they?

It wasn't until a few weeks later, only one week after I'd introduced a replacement LT for the 10th casualty, that I found the answer. The OC calls me at work to keep the info flowing and mentions that the 11th has quit after one week. So the record climbs, unchallenged so far in peace or war and the reputation grow "OC B the Subby Killer".

But I just had to say "You know the real problem boss, it's not that you loose all the LT's, it's that all the good ones that stay, turn in to Captains!".

CAPT P. Challis



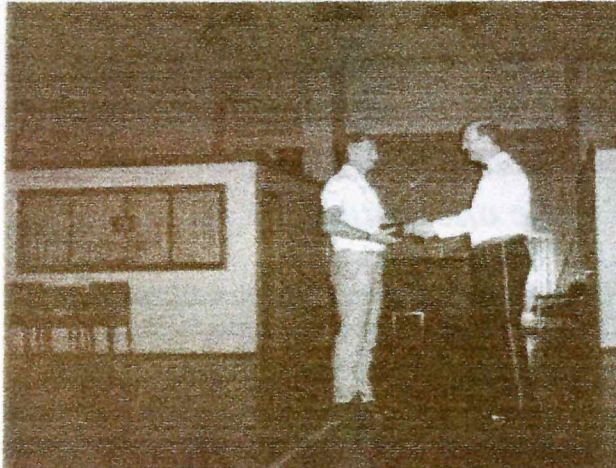
Picture Postcards



Left: Sgt Rod Bourjonjuen and Sgt Mark Broemmer receive the Defence Force Medal from the CO during Ex Gallipoli at Kapooka.

Below: RSM Wo1 Steve Ward negotiates the Run, Dodge, Jump course during Exercise Gallipoli.

Thank you to all contributors. Unfortunately, not everything could be included in this issue. Ed.



THE BATTALIONS BIRTHDAY

During Exercise Gallipoli, the Battalion celebrated its 139th Birthday. Pictured cutting the birthday cake is The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Rob Barnes with the youngest member of the Unit, Pte Darren Sculley.

Just a bit off the top please.

WO2 Ken McMillan prepares to give the CO a close shave to raise money for Ballarat's Legacy Week. Ten sunit staff braved the blade.

