
THE RANGER

2001

The Annual Journal of the 8th/7th Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment



Regimental Colonel

Brigadier W.J. Hocking ED, RFD

Allied Regiments

The Staffordshire Regiment

(The Prince Of Wales)

The Royal Regiment of Canada

Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Colonel R. Haughton

Allied Associations

The associations of the 7th Battalion incorporating the
7th Battalion AIF

7th Battalion AIF (1939 – 1945)

2/7th Aust Inf Battalion

7th Battalion RAR

The 8th Battalion (Ballarat) Association

The 8th Battalion (Ararat) Association

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Front Cover

The Battalion leaving Ranger Barracks, Ballarat for the last time on Tuesday 24 July 2001 after 115 years of continuous occupation. (Photo courtesy Ballarat Courier)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF 8/7 RVR

The 8th/7th Battalion, the Royal Victoria Regiment, encompasses the area bounded by Mildura, Warrnambool, Geelong and Shepparton. The Battalion Headquarters is at Ballarat, 110km west of Melbourne.

The history of the Battalion commenced on the 23rd October 1857, when a meeting of citizens in Ballarat was convened to consider the possibility of establishing a Rifle Corps in the District. Representations were made to the Government of the Colony of Victoria and assent for the enrolment of a Corps was received on the 21st July 1858. The first parade of this new unit was the 9th August 1858.

This date is celebrated annually as the Battalion's birthday.

The Battalion has existed since that date with an uninterrupted history, although under a variety of titles. The present day 8th/7th Battalion traces its lineage back to a number of units. These include the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment), 59th Battalion (The Hume Regiment), 7th Battalion (The North West Murray Borderers) and the 38th Battalion (The Northern Victorian Regiment).

The Battalion has been granted and exercised Freedom of Entry to the following cities in the area:

Ballarat	1983 and 1998
Echuca	1989
Hamilton	1990 and 2000
Maryborough	1980
Swan Hill	1988 and 1999

The current operational role for the Battalion is in the defence of vital assets in Northern Australia, as part of the 4th Brigade from Victoria.

The year 2001 marks the last year in which the Battalion paraded in the Ranger Barracks in Curtis Street, Ballarat. The Battalion has continually occupied the site since the 2nd July 1886.

8/7 RVR BATTLE HONOURS

Boer War

South Africa 1899-1902

World War One

Landing at Anzac Cove

Somme 1916-1918

Bullecourt

Ypres 1917

Polygon Wood

Amiens

Albert 1918

Mont St Quentin, and Hindenburg Line

World War Two

Bardia 1941

Capture of Tobruk

El Alamein

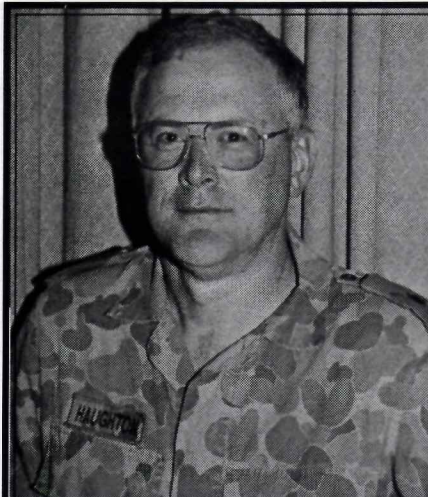
Greece 1941

South West Pacific 1942-1945

Finisterres

Hari River, and

Borneo



From LTCOL Rob Haughton

A year has passed since I took over as CO, and has it been an eventful year.

The move from Curtis St Barracks, after 114 years of continuous occupation by the Army, in both its current form and past manifestations has been both trying and challenging. To maintain Battalion operations during the move was difficult, but was achieved. The negative press did not help the public image of the Battalion and steps taken helped but in reality the Battalion was caught between the developer and the Defence Estate Organisation who were the parties negotiating the sale. The move of the Museum to Sebastopol, even as a temporary measure has been very successful and will help continue the history of the Battalion over the future years.

I was pleased that we marched out from Curtis Street but felt as if the old Ghosts of past members and soldiers were wondering why the Battalion was leaving. The flag lowering and Colours on parade I feel was a fitting farewell to the Depot. Time moves on.

The temporary accommodation at Broodseinde Barracks for all Ballarat personal has led to reduced office space and the Q Store and Transport removed to a warehouse, but it is workable and very friendly.

I have made an effort throughout the year to visit as many of the Battalion's Depots on Parade Nights as possible and the Company HQ locations on a regular basis. I have been pleased to see the level of enthusiasm and professionalism at all locations and in particular the recruiting and training programs in place to both attract and retain our soldiers. Keep up the good work.

The SED review has occurred and it would be remiss of me if I did not cover some issues that came from

this negotiation on the future of the Battalion. As a result of the review the new structure allows for all depots in the Battalion to be manned by full time staff, and a majority of key positions have and will be filled. The Battalion will be changed in a number of areas but all individuals will have a position and a clear role to meet job requirements for current and future positions within the Battalion.

Further challenges are in store for the Battalion in 2002 with three Multi User Depots (MUDs) being constructed, one for Ballarat, one for Geelong and the one in Bendigo has commenced. Expectations of the Army for the Reserve will focus on real capability that can be produced and employed in operations. This will impact on the Battalions members as each person will need to confirm the level of commitment they can give, whether it be for voluntary service on a full time basis or other forms of service requirement. All members of the Battalion have the skills, knowledge and attributes to achieve all competencies in their trade and rank and be ready for the opportunities that may present.

I expect all members of the Battalion to focus on recruiting and sell a positive image to the community of the Army. This battalion is the face of the Army for most of Rural Victoria and as such any actions positive or negative will reflect on the Unit.

I personally wish to thank all battalion members for their contributions and their families for their support over this year and welcome new members to the Battalion, and a farewell to members who are leaving for further postings.

RSM's Report

The end of training year 2001 is looming large on the horizon. It is hard to believe that ten months have passed since I took up the appointment of RSM to the 8th/7th Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment.

The Battalion has seen some massive changes over a short period of time. They range from the closure of the Curtis St Depot and relocation of BHQ to Russell St, through the change in role and task all the way to the SED Review, which will have an impact on our future manning and tasking.

The only constant for the year has been the professionalism and high standards that you, the soldier, have continued to display. Whether it is while attending course, parading on a Tuesday night, or participating in Battalion or Brigade activities, I have been continuously pleased with the overall standard displayed. This is not to say that we can rest on our laurels.

I know that I am probably speaking to the converted when I say that the biggest disappointment I personally have with this year is 8/7 RVR's inability to consistently parade 80% plus of soldiers. On the majority of activities conducted for and by the Battalion this year the attendance turnout was, to say the least, poor. To achieve meaningful training and more importantly, to assure the Battalion's continued relevance as we progress further into the new millennium, we as a group need to recruit and retain our numbers. This will not happen if we cannot put more than a platoon minus per company in the field on any given activity. A Company cannot conduct realistic training at sub-unit level without a sub-unit.

I insert here a quote from a young Platoon Commander that was overheard during one of the HAMEL lead up weekends, "S..t, is the battalion here?" To put the comment in context, it wasn't until daylight on the Saturday that the Lt actually saw the visual impact of having a full platoon move out of the harbour on a patrol activity. It was the first time he had had an opportunity to command a platoon in the field. In the same vein, it was the first time that platoons SGT and CPL's had seen a full strength platoon in the field since completing their various promotion courses.

I am making it my personal creed as we move into 2002 to aim for an 80% attendance for every single activity and I ask you, the only people who can make it happen, to adopt the same creed. The SGT's should be ringing the CPL's who should be ringing the LCPL's who should be ringing the Group Commanders who should be ringing the soldiers to ensure that all members are attending all activities. I know this is pie in the sky stuff and not everyone will be able to parade on a given day. It's not working now however, so what have we got to lose? Give it a try and let's see what happens. You never know, if the mateship and esprit of days gone by is reinforced / reintroduced and people actually care about their mates, Battalion and service, maybe just maybe that young "Subie" will see a full strength platoon again, other than on his Regimental Officer Basic (Infantry) course that is.

Good luck and good soldiering to all in the future.

'Duty First'

From the Editor

We live in interesting times. The Battalion since the last issue of 'The Ranger' magazine has seen a lot of water pass under the bridge.

The magazine reflects the life of the Battalion and the many different activities that members of the Battalion have been involved in over the 12 months, whether it is home training, courses, camps, or service interstate.

Equally as interesting are the number of members of 8/7 who have served or are currently serving overseas, be it Bougainville, Sierra Leone or Timor.

Probably for 8/7 RVR, the most notable event of the year was the departure from the drill hall that the Battalion had continuously occupied since 1886. Certainly it occupied the minds of many of the Battalion for much of the year.

Temporarily accommodated in demountables at Russell Street, the Battalion can now look forward to the construction of the new MUD and all the work that will be involved in planning and moving to the new location near the Arch of Victory.

Since the last publication, the world too has changed. The arrival of the illegal immigrants to our near north, the horrendous events on September 11th in New York and Washington DC will impact on us all, particularly those of us who serve in the Defence Force.

Certainly Timor impacted on the Battalion. Who knows where the events in the next 12 months will lead the Battalion? Contingent with this is the change in role for the Reserve in the Defence Force, and the legislation that has been passed to support this new role.

As stated at the beginning, we live in interesting times. For all the varied activities that the Battalion has been engaged in the 2000 – 2001, 'The Ranger' reflects a good cross section of these activities.

Read and enjoy.

The Editor

Alpha Company

The start of the year was celebrated with the safe return of A Coy's Timor veterans, LCPL White, PTEs Baird, Berends, Dinning, and Miller. Most members took full opportunity to listen to the "warries" of now operationally experienced soldiers. LCPL White was soon promoted back to his former rank of CPL.

The Alpha Coy weekend in March went well with LT Fehring in command. It started off with a night patrol of 3-4 km using Ninnox, which got the blood running. Section attacks and patrolling were the tasks for Saturday. It was wet, cold and miserable, perfect conditions for the infantry to train in (according to their PL COMD). The weekend concluded with a PL patrol and attack that was conducted with a lot of vigour despite a large opposing force of aggressive leeches.

April saw 25 members partake in the 'Beat the Retreat' at Queenscliff. A Coy was able to conduct its parade but shortly afterwards a bomb threat occurred and the rest of the evening cancelled.

In May the Coy saw the departure of its CSM WO2 O'Brien to Kapooka on FTS. WO2 O'Brien has been missed and will be remembered for his professionalism and always putting his soldiers first and foremost.

LT Salagaras ran the weekend in May. The focus on the weekend was an assault on the Boswell St Depot that had been "taken over" while the PL was doing a CFA. On their return the PL was confronted with several wounded lying in the street and that set the tone for the night. The assault went well despite a major "blue on blue", numerous members becoming casualties to booby traps, 50% of the enemy getting away, and the OC being shot by his own troops. Apart from that the building was successfully cleared.

May also saw around 12 members partake in a public relations exercise at the new Mecure Hotel in

Geelong. Members abseiled down the building and the experience was enjoyed by all.

Alpha company continues to have soldiers who are have found their time here so enjoyable that they have chosen to go full time. This year we have seen PTE Panetta leave to the ARA and PTE Alexander, PTE Byrne, PTE Northfield, and CPL Bond are hoping to transfer sometime next year. We also lost PTE Carrol and LCPL McHale to Commando's, while CPL Harper went over to the "darkside" (officer training).

In July Alpha Coy celebrated the arrival of its new OC, MAJ Kyle Tyrrell. One of the new OC's first duties was to present SGT Brandich and CPL Bond their 20 year infantry service awards. WO2 O'Brien also received his 20 year award which was presented by our RSM at Kapooka.

In mid August A Coy saw the arrival of several new members transferring across from the now disbanded assault pioneers. Despite the loss of pioneers, senior PTEs are looking forward to retraining in Recon, Sigs or DFSW in 2002.

PTE Alexander, PTE Dinning and PTE Moran successful completed their subject one for Corporal. All did well with PTE Dinning just being "pipped at the post" for Student of Merit. Showing the way LCPL Baird was promoted to CPL in August.

Recruiting has been going well with a healthy training platoon now parading each Tuesday and being run in the capable hands of Sgt McIlroy and Sgt Hardcastle, and with more Direct to Unit (DTU) and Training Force Establishment (TFE) in the pipeline for early 2002.

The Mighty Three Platoon LAVERTON

This year has been a building year for 3 Platoon and that is exactly what the Platoon has accomplished. Starting with eight men, we now have 24 men on the books with another half a dozen or so at Kapooka. The platoon certainly looks strong for the upcoming year.

3 Platoon has found a new home on the RAAF Base at Laverton and is settling in. With the facilities the Base can offer, it makes business comfortable. The gym and pool are used most Tuesday nights. Good for some not so good for others.

With the lack of JNCO's in the Platoon the senior lads have had to step up and a top job they have done. Hopefully Matt "Matty" Russell, Paul "Joey" Joseph, Simon "Whitie" White and Mark "Lav's" Lavery will get their opportunity next year to step up to plate and wear the rank that they deserve.

A few different skills have been acquired by 3 Platoon. At the start of the year, Sgt Cox, Cpl Corney, Cpl Arundell and PTE Matty Russell successfully completes their "floaties", that is completing their basic watermanship course (Skegs eat your heart out. This was how you handle the surf? Plenty of grunt and lots of spray).

Later in the year some of the lads, PTE "Joey" Joseph, PTE "Whitie" White completed their DFSW training getting plenty of bangs for their buck, well the tax payers buck. At the same time Cpl Corney learnt to drive (scary). He claims he knew how to drive beforehand, but we thought we would play it safe. PTE "Matty" Russell also learnt to talk?? Over the radio.

Some of our DTU's made the transition to TFE and discovered that they now had some "waries" to tell from their training. Though some were best left untold? Thanks Bayliss.

Unfortunately there is not enough space to write of all the exploits and adventures of 3 Platoon. In conclusion 3 Platoon's looking bigger and better, 2002 better brace itself cause 3 Platoon is going to keep rocking the Naughties (00'ies)

By the by. Recruiting has been going well with a healthy training platoon now parading each Tuesday and being run in the capable hands of Sgt McIlroy and Cpl Hardcastle.doc)

LT Adrian Whitehead



Bravo Company



THE STING behind 8/7



B Company group photo at Longlea after a CFA.

This year has been a challenging year for the Company, and with the real expectation of operational service overseas the members of **BIGGER, BRIGHTER, BRAVER BRAVO** approached the training with added determination.

B Coy started the year in fine style with the return of a number of East Timor veterans - CPL's Parker, Stapleton, Rantall and Dell, LCPL Dickson and Pte's Purcell, Meinhold, Fitton, Butters and Farquhar rejoined their mates and have been inspirational and a definite influence in the Coy. It's an old statement "That the Front will only hold as long as the Infantry will hold" and "All battles and all Wars in the end are won by the Infantry". B Coy can be proud of the effort they have put in this year to re-inforce these statements and carry on the outstanding tradition that this great Battalion has.

The Coy has been tasked to undertake the full gamut of Infantry work this year. From Ceremonial duties, such as ANZAC Day in the platoon's home localities, the Vietnam Veterans' Commemorative Service at the South East Asian War Memorial at Ballarat, and Remembrance Day, to all the lead-up field training for Ex Hamel.

As with all Reserve units, personnel are posted in and out. At the beginning of the year SSGT Rockie



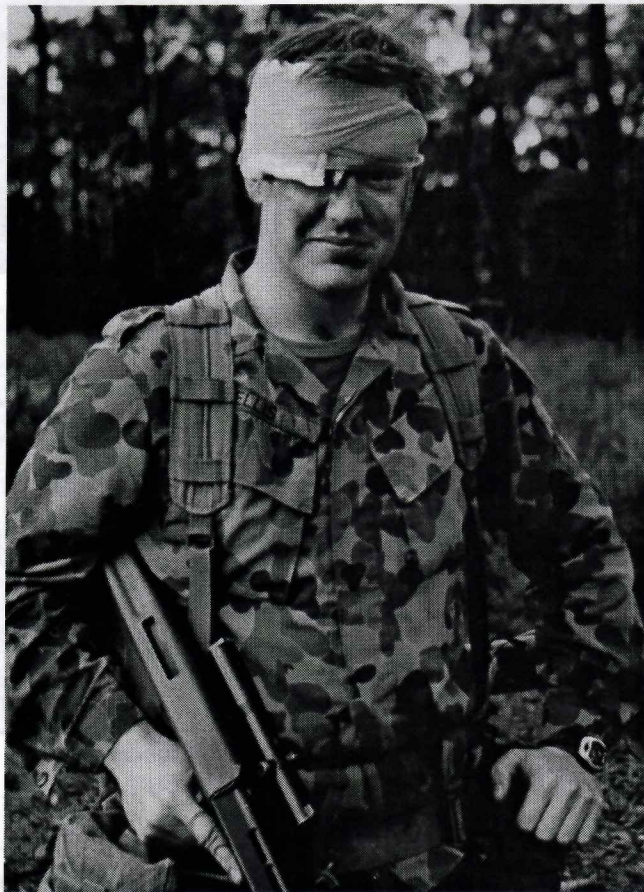
MAJ Laidlaw and CPL Rantall after CPL Rantall's presentation of his AASM.

McCoombe became the new CQMS. You always knew when Rockie turned up at work, in fact you knew when he left his flat, as what was left of his exhaust pipes only partially quietened the noise from his bike. Rockie didn't like Ballarat much, and now is enjoying the Qld sun. *Good Luck Mate.*

B Coy must have a monopoly on miniature ex 5/7 RAR CQ's who drive big bikes as our next CQMS, SSGT Barry Phillips is three-foot nothing, ex 5/7 and has a big bike.

CPL Leckie finished her Full Time service much to the dismay of the CSM and reverted back to Part Time and is now posted to 4/19 PWLH. Thanks Andrea for all your hard work. The Coy has not been able to find that screen saver you were always looking at - you know the one - the one with all those *playing cards* on it.

The Coy 2IC (the Jonah Lomu lookalike) moved into the ADJT's job. CAPT Falloon was happy to move on as the Council was going to put in a smoke detector on one of the Coy buildings. hmmm. Thanks Sir for all your work you put in for the Coy. A special thanks now for the OC B Coy, MAJ Laidlaw. One reason the Coy has been doing so well this year is because of the hard work the OC has done during the year.



PTE Ellis - Weekend training at Longlea. PTE Ellis claimed it was a Ex injury but his section said his head exploded because he had to make a decision.

The year started with Ex Mena Camp where the Coy once again experienced the joys and pitfalls of summer at Puckapunyal, and who could forget those wonderful wholesome meals – Rice with everything, and those meatballs .. mm.mm.

Next came two weekends at Enfield State Forest. It amazed everybody just how much noise a Digger can make patrolling through the bush at night using night vision goggles!

On the first weekend, the Coy dug shell scrapes to cover the competency factor, and the point was made why Aussies are called *Diggers* when the OC gave the word to stop *digging*, it took 15 min for the last *diggert* to stop *digging*.

The second weekend was remembered for the beautiful Victorian weather, and how the water table at Enfield is 1m above the ground. CPL's Stapleton and Derrick had the feeling they had entered the Paris Daka Rally when the Mog from Warrnambool broke down and SSGT Rockie McCoombe had to drive down and pick them up. You see Rockie only uses

the white lines on the road as a guide and relies more on the cattle fences either side of the road to drive by.

One of the weekends we spent was at Longlea. The most memorable event was, where after a contact, our Coy Medic went to the first patient she saw, who just happened to be one of the enemy, patched him up, threw him in the back of a Rover, and went to drive off, leaving two of our own wounded with a most disgruntled and bewildered look on their faces.

The last few weekends' training have been directed towards EX Hamel. The Role of the Infantry states, "regardless of season, weather or terrain" and this really struck home when members of the Coy endured a three and a half hour ambush in wet, freezing conditions, and finding out about the limitations of NVG in the rain.

At the end of EX Hamel the Coy will be ready for that phone call from the **PM** to unleash the Dogs of War and let B COY deal with any potential enemy (as long the enemy bases his tactics on leaving two enemy at the base of a small isolated tree, and when walking along tracks at night, arms himself with Dolphin torches).

In conclusion, a Rifle Coy is only as good as the support it gets, and from all the members of B Coy, we would like to thank Admin Coy, all the cooks, drivers and Qies, BHQ, all the combat clerks, and non-combat clerks, and especially, the Chief (Kym Scobie), the Chaplain for his words of wisdom, and Support Coy.

From all the members of B Coy, we would like to wish everybody who is getting posted, or moving on, the best of luck! To all the members of the Battalion and their families, a Merry Christmas and good soldiering in the New Year!

4 PL, Ballarat *Esprit de Corps*



4 PL Ceremonial duties, Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Service 19 August 2001

This year has shown a marked improvement in both the quality and quantity of training conducted by our intrepid platoon. The few and proud regular parades we have here have been steadily re-inforced by a growing number of TFE's over the last few months, allowing us an increase in cannon fodder, as well as a medium for us to impart our collective wealth of experience upon.

The increase in manpower has allowed us to conduct some very relevant training, mostly beefing up our very scant knowledge in the area of APC's. This has been a godsend with EX Hamel looming on the horizon; there is a general feeling of confidence now growing amongst the men. Despite the CO's directive, that ended up on the desk of GOD, that started "rain is an appropriate and essential part of any training weekend", the training over the last few weekends has been very worthwhile. Like the Lord Himself, sometimes the Army works in mysterious ways.

Individual comments from members of the Platoon:

➤ PTE FITTON (the July Sig Cse Camp)

While working hard to obtain my qualification for a Combat Sig, we managed to obtain a Cadet Arm Badge. So under the guidance of myself, we removed all of one of our fellow's uniforms, and left only one set complete with a new Cadet Arm Patch, making him the newest Cadet.

That morning, we informed a Cadet Warrant Officer at breakfast, that a Cadet was sitting with us, and asking to buy smokes and alcohol from us. The Cadet WO asked the victim of our work to move. "No", came back the response. He then tried to forcibly remove him by dragging the chair away. That was when we informed him that he was not a Cadet, and that we were just taking the piss out of them. That was the start of many pranks to come, lightening the Course's atmosphere for all.

➤ PTE Di CESARE

A certain member of B Coy, recently returned from Kapooka, made an almost fatal mistake when he ventured down to the main Q Store in civilian attire, with a Cam T-shirt underneath his jumper. It was only when he returned home, and glimpsed this oversight in a mirror, that he understood why W02 Green raised his voice to 100 decibels, and questioned this new member's intelligence & sexuality.

➤ PTE WHITEHEAD

4 PL has participated in several Company and Battalion training weekends. The term "all seasons, weather and terrain" you wished was not in the role of the Infantry. We had one of the wettest weekends at Enfield. Everything was wet. The worst thing was that I didn't bring a spare set of Cams.

One of the highlights was the Pioneer Field Engineering module. Even though some of the structures were a bit ambitious, we still had fun. It is also good talking to the other guys who have come back from Timor, and other Courses.

➤ PTE THEWLIS

The three hour Ambush at Pucka, when it rained the whole time, was when we learnt how well Ninnox operates in the rain. The enemy passed through three times, but on the third time, we only spotted them because they had torches!

➤ CPL SPIELVOGEL tells about "Not so happy"
GILMER

Gilmer's pack was a dog fight from the start. We tried to help, but he claimed he knew what to do. After a pretty easy weekend where our packs spent the whole time on the ground, we left Enfield with a 6km march. "Happy" had his rifle slung, and after being told to take off the sling, he would tell us, "I'm right". About 1km into it, he started complaining. After 2km, he kept adjusting his pack, and slowing down. Then, it happened. On the walk, mid-step, he fell flat on his face, pack on his back with a mouthful of mud. Most of the guys just stood there and looked, while the "Sarge", Ellis and Rat went over. Upon waking up, he started swinging like a wounded bear, belting Ellis in the chest and head, and kicking the "Sarge" in the leg. Rat said, it's okay Happy", and he woke up, not knowing what had happened.

➤ SGT PRADA

The most memorable incident that comes to mind was on EX Diggers' Rest. I had instructed PTES Fitton and Purcell to dig a latrine outside the PL position by about 10m. I indicated the trees that I wanted the pit next to.

We had to move off on a patrol soon after that, observing the two of them digging away - they seemed very professional in their duties. It was not until I needed a crap that the truth hit home. The pit was beautiful - the right depth and they had started to fashion a seat and all! Had it not been for the 45° angle of the hill, it would have been a perfect job. BUT I had to rope myself to a tree to do my job!!!

5 PL Bendigo



5 PL had a very busy and rewarding year. Many faces have come, and a few have gone, but the spirit of the largest Platoon in the Battalion is strong, and we are building toward having a fully manned Platoon of 30 qualified diggers in the next 12 months. Hopefully, we will be able to do more than just "dig", and be issued with weapons, at some stage! One never knows!

A few of the incidents that have made this year memorable:

- The weekend when the bus, returning from Ballarat to Bendigo, broke down in Daylesford. On inspection of the cause, CPL Mazzon discovered that the gear stick had disconnected from the gearbox. CPL Mazzon then crawled underneath the bus, and reattached the gear stick by using a piece of hootchie cord, which enabled the bus to continue on its journey within 20 minutes, as opposed to waiting for a replacement from Melbourne (4 hours).
Use No. 1001 for hootchie cord!!
- PTE (**any port in a storm**) McIlroy revived us with constant stories throughout the year, of his numerous conquests. Very enjoyable, to say the least, even if not wholly substantiated!!
- PTE Hayden, whose blood is so green he wears an Army ring (what?), actually paid a private firm to make an Army Decal to put on his car!!
Yeah, I'm proud too mate!!
- LCPL Dawbom, who decided to kill a kangaroo whilst driving home on his motorbike from parade - at 90km/hr - still managed to keep the rubber side down!! (How?)
- TO SGT Skiparis, who deployed to East Timor. Thanks for all the letters!!
(What letters?)
- AND LAST BUT FAR FROM LEAST - CPL Mazzon and CPL Derrick who sustained injuries whilst "pack marching" and "riding my BMX". Who will ever know the truth anyway?!!

6 PL, Warrnambool



The Warrnambool team started the year off by welcoming new ARA staff and their mates back from active service in East Timor. CPL's John Stapleton and Roger Derrick injected a new energy into the Depot almost immediately, and their enthusiasm and good humour had a most positive effect for the commencement of the year.

Activities that were undertaken involved a Careers Lecture Tour (CLT) of schools in the region, and the posting through the City of Warrnambool of recruiting posters for the Unit. With recruiting being the biggest priority for the Depot, John and Roger set out to, not only establish contact with the people of Warrnambool and the surrounding region, but also formulate and provide the basic information necessary to build up a viable recruiting program. A lot of hard work and long hours went into compiling contact lists, liaising with the points of contact and getting recruiting activities prepared and executed.

A recruiting activity in May involved the setting up of a vehicle and command post hide on the Pertobe Road foreshore area in "full-tac" over the weekend. The response from the public was enthusiastic and the presence of members of the battalion were welcomed both by families out for the day and revellers during the night whose activities proved to be most eye opening.

Anzac Day 2001 lived up to being the most important day of the year as far as remembering the sacrifice of those who have previously served, and as a celebration of the spirit of members of the forces both past and present. The Social Club served as a centre of activities until well into the small hours of the morning, as members of the Depot enjoyed the opportunity to break in the beer tap and cracked a few kegs.

Some photos, which WILL remain in albums, locked in safes, were obtained but all in all the gang had a great night. Anzac Day itself was made even better by the opportunity for the Army members of Warrnambool to meet and socialize with their Navy counterparts from HMAS Warrnambool. Elements of the crew were in town to join in the celebrations - a brilliant bunch of lads who will be most welcome in the Social Club and Depot in the future.

Mid-year, the Depot unfortunately bade CPL Derrick farewell as he was posted to Bendigo to continue building up the Depot numbers there. However, in spite of obligations in regard to courses with both CPL Stapleton, and now LT Jones on FTS, we continued to achieve results in the recruiting field touring throughout the North, Eastern, and North Western approaches to Warrnambool, as well as in the City itself, with 17 schools being contacted and given recruiting packages and information on CLT's.

The response from the recruiting efforts has been exceptional and has shown the potential for much greater results from the region in regard to recruiting numbers for the Battalion, that is, provided the Depot can be resourced to engage in a sustained and planned recruiting drive; the groundwork for which has been laid and the planning has been undertaken.

All members of the Depot have provided both great ideas and suggestions for the Depot and the Platoon in regards to the club, training, gym, history room and Depot grounds enhancing what the Depot has to offer in spite of limited resources. Their enthusiasm and dedication to the Depot is acknowledged and appreciated. Individual members of the Depot have given their time and effort to enable various projects to proceed, and for the smooth day to day functioning of the Depot. Their efforts have stood out in this respect. These members of the team include Mr Lyndon King, SGT Darryl Williams, CPL Steve Ivey, CPL Chris Rantall. Again your efforts and enthusiasm are appreciated by the Depot.

To conclude, the team is preparing for EX Hamel, and the possibility of deployment overseas, to where we can best do our job to serve this great country and people we are part of.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Depot for the sensational 24 months that I have had in Warrnambool. It is you who make all undertakings worthwhile, and it is your enthusiasm and humour that makes it so much fun.

Good soldiering for the future, and keep up your high standards, can-do attitude, and above all, humour in all situations. Borrowing from the Manx - *"Whichever way you are thrown always land on your feet"*.

B Company Quotes

WO2 Pellow – “You’ll need a bigger bed to put my butt in!”

**“There’s enough Q-ies here to sink a battleship!”
SGT Wait: “You’ll need one”.**

CAPT Priestly – “You are to finger these people”.

WO2 Scobie: “I’d rather be a poofa than a Q-ie!”.

OPSO - “I don’t write ‘em, I just read ‘em”.

**CAPT FALLOON: “NOW THAT MY WIFE AND THE TWINS ARE AT HOME,
I’LL BE SPENDING MORE TIME AT WORK”.**

WO2 Pellow – “This is a head shed, and that’s a head *@#!”

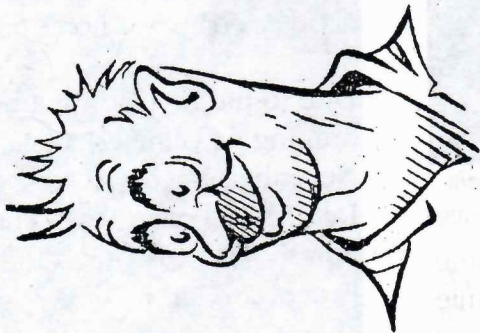
SGT Taylor: “The Manager couldn’t bend over enough for me”.

WO2 Spencer – “You’re still a spunk Jim”.

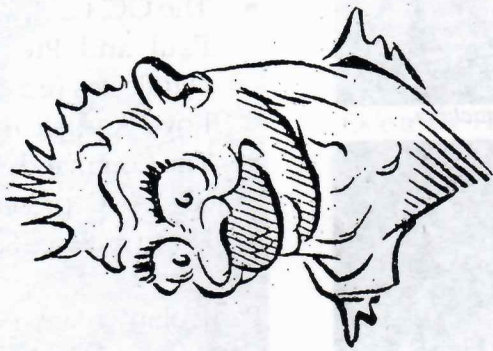
RSM - Words of one syllable, Tiny, please!”

OPS - “The word “Deserter” springs to mind!”

THE EVOLUTION of SGT SKIPARIS IN EAST TIMOR.



2



3



4



"GUNK!"

6

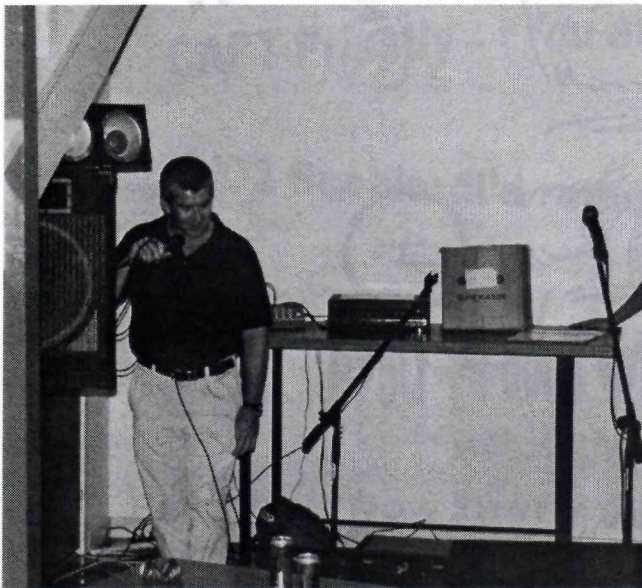
- 2 MONTHS
- 3 MONTHS
- 4 MONTHS
- 6 A WHOLE 6 MONTHS IN COUNTRY
(YOU GIVE UP THEN!!)

B COY 8/7 RVR

Charlie Company

- News from the North

The 2000 training year ended for the company with a meal at the Riverview Café at the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement. This was followed by fun and games back at Messines Barracks, a highlight of which was the Karaoke machine. Some members revealed hidden musical talents – perhaps some others should have kept their talents hidden. . .



The OC gets down and dirty on the Karoke machine.



Padre Martin de Pyle always likes a chat with the diggers - even old ones like Bruce Ruxton.

2001 saw the arrival of a number of new full time personnel: SSgt Peter Anderson to CHQ, Sgt Jamie Cassidy to 7 Pl Mildura and Sgt Bill Armstrong to 9 Pl Shepparton. The steady drain of company personnel to the regular army continued, however by the end of the year the concerted effort at

recruiting in each of our three depot locations began to yield positive results and pay the dividend of increased numbers parading at all depots.

With the SNCO's and OR's ably managed and led by the CSM WO2 Jim Boatwright, that exclusive band, the Officers of the Company, had their numbers further reduced with the departure of Lt Luke Jackson. This however proved no obstacle to their long established tradition of carrying out close reconnaissance and assessment of hostelrys and nightspots within the company AO and elsewhere.

It was pleasing to see a number of company personnel achieve recognition for sustained good performance:

- Cpl Jamie Cassidy was promoted to Sgt whilst Pte Stephen Ash was made up to LCpl.
- The OC, CSM, Sgt Andrew Turner, Cpl Trevor Faul and Pte Kevin Farrell all received certificates recognising 20 years service to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps.
- The Commander 4 Bde, Brigadier P. Alkemade RFD ADC, presented Cpl Viv Holland with the Defence Force Service Medal.

Particularly noteworthy was the award of a Land Commander's Commendation to Pte Adrian Coatsworth for the courage and initiative he showed in coming to the aid of the victims of a motor vehicle accident on his way home from a company bivouac.

Due to the focus on Exercise Hamel, company training was limited to the first half of the year. Nevertheless we were able to conduct bivouacs at Lake Cullulleraine near Mildura, the Wellsford State Forest outside Bendigo and the Nyah State Forest near Swan Hill.

These activities concentrated on individual, team and section skills in a platoon setting and the culmination of this was the section competition held

in the Nyah State Forest. It was a gruelling 24hr activity which none of the participants should forget in a hurry. The 5km stretcher carry followed by 5 hours in ambush was a particular highlight!

The year held a number of other highlights, not least for me as OC of being pressed into service as host officer for the Chief of Army due to his unexpected early arrival at a Mayoral Reception in Swan Hill!

This is my last contribution to the Ranger as OC C Company. After farewelling numerous members of the company to the regular army I have decided that "if you can't beat them – join them!" and will commence a two year period of Full Time Service at ACATC Puckapunyal next year.

As I hand over command at the end of the year to the 2IC Captain Chris Saultry I would like to thank the soldiers of C Company for making this command a truly satisfying and fulfilling one for me. To everyone, both C Company and the remainder of the Battalion – all the very best for the future!

Major Tony Watson



C Company CSM, Warrant Officer Jim Boatwright remains vigilant during the Swan Hill Vietnam Veteran's Day Service.

DAWN SERVICE SUCCESS

By Kate Lahey

The dawn service has become fashionable in recent years, with huge crowds in Melbourne and Aussies and Kiwis turning Gallipoli into a backpacker's Mecca.

However, there is still a lot to be said for a service boasting a crowd of less than 150 in a rural city.

For those of you who were asleep in the last dark hour of Wednesday morning, soldiers, veterans and civilians gathered at Swan Hill's cenotaph to remember those who fought in the war.

The service attracted local survivors from various battles since the landing on a Turkish peninsula 86 years ago.

In the few minutes it took me to get to the cenotaph, I noticed the sky above me was full of stars.

Everything's scarier in the dark, even familiar things can seem threatening.

So how would it be to arrive on an unknown beach in pitch black, certain an enemy was not far away?

I hope I never know.

Swan Hill RSL president Barry Townley guessed there well over 100 people at the service.

Their ages ranged from those who would not yet know how to spell "war" to men who had served in Vietnam, to veterans in their eighties. Mr Townley delivered The Ode to the Fallen and Geoff Jones played The Last Post on trumpet.

Five young sailors from HMAS Cerberus were present, as well as local army reserves including Kate McLoughlan, celebrating her 18th birthday.

The reserves guarded the cenotaph and Jim Willox played the bagpipes as people laid poppies on the memorial's steps.

While one had to coordinate two walking sticks to lay a poppy, another simply had to remember which hand held her teddy, and which her flower.

Many people continued to the RSL Club for a breakfast of vegetable soup. I preferred this service to the one I attended in Melbourne last year.

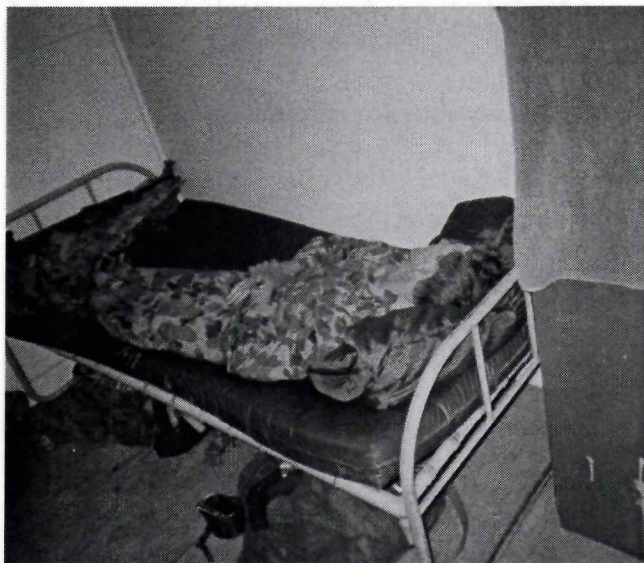
While it is good to see a rock-concert-sized crowd paying respect to soldiers who died for their country, it was more satisfying to meet some veterans, not to have to queue too long to lay a poppy, and absorb the quiet of a sleeping town.

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7 PLATOON, CHARLIE COMPANY

The calendar year started off well for 7 PL. We had good turnouts to a couple of parades, but unfortunately, with the loss of our platoon commander, we were a bit short at the top.

Good numbers were posted for the first exercise of the year, "Mena Camp". This was the first time that CPL Nichols and LCPL Charman had experienced being instructors on a course, as they were allocated to the RIOS course as Section Commander and 2IC.



Ex Mena Camp - SGT Jackson Bo???. What is it with SNCO's?



Ex Mena Camp - SGT Jackson Bo???. As ever.

Once the course got under way, and as those that were there can tell you, it was bloody hot. With temperatures reaching the low 40's, the boys from Mildura didn't bother about the heat but went about their normal routines.

Some of the soldiers amused themselves between lessons with an innovative game derived from those

learned at Op Gold called Asshole, which fairly well occupied most of their spare time. For some of our SNCO's, the time was spent racked out as you can see by the preceding photos.

Because of the extreme heat, it was decided to step off on a CFA at about 0400hrs to avoid the possibility of heat exhaustion amongst the new troops. Off we trundled from range control down to the sneaker lanes. One of our soldiers, PTE Cooper, found out first hand what it means to drink water whilst doing a CFA. He fell away with heat illness and was threatened by our good Corporal Medic, CPL Wallace, that he could either drink from the water bottle or suffer the agony of being rectally hydrated in the back of the 'Rover as everyone else marched past.

February came and went, as the short month usually does, with some excellent turnouts to all parades, and PTE Moloney was shining as always with his spirited PT sessions. Bloody PTI's, all they want to do is run and do push-ups. We welcomed back the services of Pte Hawson, fresh home from East Timor, only to lose him again to Scouting camps and the Gang Show which is a big gathering of the Sunraysia Scouting Community.

It wasn't long before the March training weekend came around. This was a company-training weekend held at Kiarivu Barracks in Mildura, and also at Neds Corner along the Murray River. Our Depot Commander, CPL Cassidy, conducted a recon of the training area for suitability, and informed the CSM WO2 Boatwright, "...you can't miss it, there is only SIX TREES in the AO".

Then the CSM arrived and led out the troops, only to find that there were six THOUSAND trees in the AO, hence the new nickname for CPL Cassidy, "Six-Trees". (Cass, however, informs us that he was told a completely different area). Yeah right!

MAJ Watson, OC Charlie Company had put down that there was going to be a section competition run between the three depots in the Company, with Mildura strongly in the lead with a section minus, against only a couple of troops each from 8 and 9 Pl.

A few lessons were out of the way, and it was down to business. CPL Nichols conducted a recon for a night ambush, orders were given NFE on, ambush was set, ambush was sprung, enemy neutralised, and back we headed. Only one problem, where the hell is the 2IC? Oh yeah, someone forgot to tell LCPL Charman that we were going. Eventually he found his way back to the position, in a round about fashion. You know it pays to pass information down the line when you are moving at night.

Our piquet was established in our night loc., and was running smoothly, when all of a sudden, the SMURF Troop, (enemy consisting of SGT Laity, PTE Webb and others) decided to probe us. "...According to Intelligence, the enemy have a habit of doing this funny little dance as they probe through at night..." It was also discovered that trees still move at night, even through the NVG. Another thing is that those great dark green sleeping bags that hide you when sleeping don't when using the NVG as well. These things have a tendency to glow in the dark. (Well, back to drawing board for ADI.)

Towards the end of the month, the 7 Pl. lads, along with some compatriots from 10/27 RSAR ventured down the river for some frivolity for PTE Gosling's bucks party. I think that he didn't mind the flour, eggs, treacle, tomato sauce, but I think the Deep Heat was the worst part. Luckily for Goose that it was still quite warm, as the river was very invigorating. The 40lb ball & chain was a worry as he entered the water too. Congratulations go out to PTE Gosling as he "tied the knot" on Easter Saturday in Mount Gambier.



PTE Gosling trying to return 7 Pl's kind wedding gift!

On the 20th April, members turned up in preparation for the Company training weekend in Bendigo. Stores were issued, equipment checked, loaded into the trailer and we loaded on the bus and hit the bitumen towards Swan Hill. Little did we know that the trailer door had broken along the way, only to discover that it was open upon arrival at Swan Hill. An equipment check was completed, but where was LCPL Charman's webbing? It was missing, along with the contents, which included complete CES for the Steyr and also complete CES for and including the **NVG**. **(M#TH&R F*C&@R)** Cass cried.

So off they went MAJ Watson and CPL Cassidy back along the highway to Mildura to find the gear. The weekend still went on, although on a sour note for some. The searchers didn't locate the gear on their travels. Back and forward in the OC's car with a fogged up windscreen at 50 Km/h.

Some of the other troops learnt a hard lesson that weekend also, with both CPL Nichols and PTE Cooper suffering against the elements as it poured rain on the Saturday night and both had to be evacuated out with hypothermia. Unfortunately, and CAPT Saultry can confirm, the GPS and NVG failed dismally that night in the elements, as we couldn't see nor locate ourselves under the harsh conditions.

On a happier note for the weekend, an ex-member of 3 RAR was travelling along towards Swan Hill after us and recognised the webbing and picked it up, and reported it in to CPL Cassidy on Monday morning. We were all very grateful for that. There is one thing though; those clips that always break during contact drills seemed to stay intact at 100km/h when they hit the bitumen, so that has to be something. Next time you see me on a weekend, come up and I will show the battle scars.

ANZAC Day is always well attended in Mildura, with very large dawn and daylight services being held on the day. It was also well attended by the members as well. Last minute drills were fine tuned on the night before, then the spirits were high for the Kapyong Day drinks that night, then into it for the dawn service. Pte's Farrell, McGlashan, Shields and Cooper were stationed a catafalque guards, with LCPL Charman as guard Commander. The day was quite cool during the dawn service, but find a dawn service in the southern states that isn't.



We had a good turnout for that with reportedly the largest gathering for a dawn service for quite some years. Back to the depot for a well-earned breakfast and a snooze before heading down for the big one, so to speak, with the daylight service. Unfortunately Pte Farrell hadn't placed his magazine on correctly, so when the command for present arms was given for the Last Post, he not only presented arms, but the magazine to the unsuspecting guard commander. Apart from this little hiccup, the day ran very smoothly, with the new guys proving their worth as catafalque guardsmen. The efforts of troops was well appreciated by the citizens of Mildura and the RSL.

May training weekend came around next and was well attended by our 7 PL lads, as expected. This was the Battalion run range weekend, where some of us had the opportunity to fire some sub-calibre anti-armour weapons, as well as the usual LF practices with the Steyr and Minimi, sneaker ranges and throwing grenades at both the static and assault ranges. For some of the Platoon, it was the first time to fire the big stuff, 84mm Carl Gustav and 66mm SRAAW. You should have seen the smiles all round after that morning. You couldn't wipe the smile from Pte Shields or LCPL Charman, as they were first time firers. Fortunately there weren't any mishaps during that practice. The grenade ranges were enjoyed by all as we infantry troops don't get much of an opportunity to blow stuff up, and we love it!!! I think that we can add that to our resume now, but some how I'm not sure how the employers might take to it though, what do you reckon?

The June weekend was held in the pristine surrounds of the Nyah State Forest with a good attendance from all Platoons. This was the end of our friendly competition between the sections within Charlie Company. The weekend started off with a 3km battle

run in a time limit. We certainly discovered how difficult it is to cover that distance running with webbing and rifle. The time was blown out to 21 minutes, but we still managed to finish as a section, so well done fellas. Then the diggers went through their paces with a few weapons handling stands that incorporated the employment of the 66mm SRAAW, deploying the Claymore and both Steyr and Minimi TOETs. Overall, good drills performed by the troops.

A patrol bearing was given to CPL Nichols and off we headed. (Careful men there is enemy out there...!) We came across an injured soldier who had stepped on a mine. Mine clearance! All round defence was put in while a group prodded out to him to provide first aid to the casualty, then evac him out. All safe and well.

Next bearing given and then we patrolled off again. Then someone yelled out "Contact"! and the bloke behind me swore..." (quote from I Was Only Nineteen by Redgum) Yes that's right folks, we came across a well placed enemy of TFE's and they saw us first!. Away we went. CPL Nichols had a brilliant plan, LCPL Charman would stay put with the gun, (I like that idea) and he and the rest of the section would conduct a flanking assault on the enemy. Unfortunately for the fire support, LCPL Charman was apparently shot in the face whilst the assaulting force was placing themselves for the attack. (Because he forgets that he is the 2IC and not the Secco (that will shut him up).

So a stretcher carry had to come into it, CPL Cassidy gave CPL Nichols the next scenario and route to take, but sure enough, CPL Nichols heads off in the wrong direction, back on track, off they go. PTE Dacey, who was SIG for the section, decided to give a running commentary of the Platoon conducting their stretcher carry, by placing the handset for the radio in the top of his pack, so when it was his turn to carry the stretcher, the bar would depress the switch and all the DS could here what was going on. "...In, out, in, out, in, out, come you bunch of pussies, put some @#%*#@ guts into it and carry this @#%&*#\$\$% stretcher..." I think these were some of the things being said. Be careful next time as Big Brother could be listening.

An ambush was next, and didn't we know how cold it was. I think what kept some going, was the fact they were shivering so much, it was waking them up. PTE Hopfner found out what it is like to relieve yourself in an ambush when you can't feel your fingers. (So that was what that smell was on the bus on the way home.) Needless to say, the enemy didn't want to get cold that night, so 5 hrs later, we withdrew from the site and found a secluded area out of the wind to sleep.

The next morning saw us put in a section attack, which was conducted with much success. 1 Section = 1, enemy = 0. Hey, hey, hey. The teamwork exercise at the end was the icing on the cake, with us having to get a section plus equipment across a poisoned stream without touching it at all. Complete success with all members getting across in approximately 6 ½ minutes. Well done.

At the culmination of the weekend, it was drinks all round as CPL Nichols had the winning section, and is proudly the first name to appear on the new trophy. Keep up the good work. Commiseration's to **all the other sections** who competed.

July went by pretty quietly with the Div. courses camp on the first 2 weeks. PTE Gosling ventured down to Tasmania to participate in Sub 1 CPL Course. I think that was the first time that all his warm gear had been worn at once. Reports back say that one of the students actually had a Tasmanian Devil try to get into his/her pack during the night. Scary stuff. They can eat through eskies and chew open tin cans for food. Congratulations go out to Goose for passing the course with good marks.

PTE McGlashan also went away to complete his modules for IET Rifleman course. Puckapunyal can just as harsh as Tassie in the winter, as he found out also. Congratulations to him also for passing those modules completed.

July also saw the induction of 3 new recruits to Mildura, recruits Bain, Roussac and King. Recruits Bain and Roussac will be welcomed to the section when qualified, and Recruit King will be our chauffeur driver. Congratulations go out to both of them and good luck with their recruit training at Kapooka.

August brings up the lead up weekends for Ex-Hamel. We had good attendance for this weekend, although, as we were losing PTE Gosling to the ranks of the Regs, we had a farewell for him a couple of nights earlier. We also found out at this time how much balance PTE McGlashan has after he stumbled from off a stainless steel wine tank at work and fell onto his knees. Well that is his story, and he is sticking to it.

We found ourselves conducting urban patrolling, and VCP's. I tell you, a lot can be learnt from the soldiers returning from East Timor with their experience with this type of warfare. Body armour and helmets can be a pain as well. That stuff gets heavy after a while, and the body temperature gets up too. We found ways of improving the way it sits on the shoulders to avoid getting welts from rubbing. Maybe we should write that stuff down and submit it to ADI for perusal.

The Charlie Company staff also conducted a blank sneaker lane to show how important your arcs or responsibility are to you, and also how you need to make eye contact with your mate behind you. SGT Armstrong had placed himself well and wasn't seen by any member until the hammer fell on his weapon. It just goes to show you that you can't afford to leave any stone unturned.

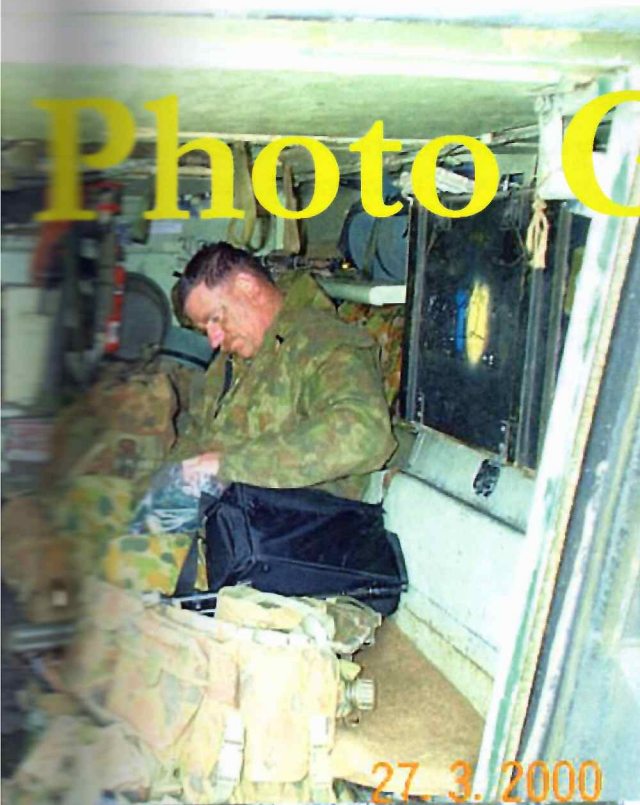
Scenario based training was conducted during the lead up to the September training weekend, with the depot being taken over by terrorists (Sgt's Jack, and Collihole). Unfortunately, they had escaped when they heard the men from 1 Section were on their way to clear them from the area. A few parade nights have been conducted with the emphasis on urban tactics and OFOF and ROE scenario's. CPL Cassidy was pleased with our efforts. But it is being discovered that there is a very fine line between red and amber cards, but crossing it at the wrong time can get you in a lot of trouble.

September saw the next phase of the lead-up to Hamel. It was a terrible night when we prepared to leave Mildura. 120km/h winds, blackouts across approximately 1500 houses, debris flying around everywhere, and we had to get on a bus and head south. It wasn't pretty. We believe that we were following the rear edge of the storm until we stopped in Ouyen to eat, when it cleared a little.

8/7 RVR 2001



Photo Gallery



Cpl Cassidy, fresh back from Sub 1 Sgt. in Townsville, drove us down. We worked out that a coaster can get from Mildura to Puckapunyal on a full tank of fuel, but you must stop at the POL point in Pucka to top up the fumes on the rag before going in to site 6. So we now call him Cpl. 'Six-trees, Ninnox, Will we make it?' Cassidy.

Unfortunately, we only had a Cpl and L/Cpl attend this weekend, along with PHQ. Pte McGlashan again had a mishap with some low grade cleaning acid splashing in his eye and couldn't attend. This boy needs a cushy job instead of the one he has.

It was back to the ranges again for the dis-mounted phase of the exercise, completing a group and zero practice on section weapons in the driving rain, with it sometimes coming in sideways at us. Then it was down to the sneaker lanes to strut our stuff, also in the rain.

Unfortunately, we knew what was coming. Yes you guessed it, a night ambush, with Ninnox. That was good. We moved in, placed out all sections of the site, then waited. Then the heavens opened up and we copped it. Its funny to be wet in an ambush, but you know when you are really wet when you can feel the water run down into your crotch while you are trying to lie still. Once again, the NVG failed in the wet conditions, as all lenses fogged up and nothing could be seen. Some of the blokes found out that you need to put the comms cord on the ground, as Roos tend to hop around at night and destroy a well-laid plan.

The rain didn't ease up until the early hours of the morning when we were treated to a beautiful day of complete sunshine. But little did we know that we had to climb over a mother of a hill near the sneaker ranges, in marching order, to seek out the enemy. We did it.

Congratulations go out to CPL Cassidy for his promotion to SGT. Now he is SGT 'Six-trees, Ninnox, Will We Make It?' Cassidy.

Well that all from us up here in Mildura, hoping to have some more great news from 7 Pl. Charlie Company in the next issue of Ranger Magazine.

8 Pl - Swan Hill

For 8 Platoon it has been another busy year, although not as busy as last year with the Olympics.

At the start of the year we welcomed Pte's Dear and Oram back from CIT at Kapooka. Our first company training weekend was held in the vicinity of Mildura. For those of you who don't know where Mildura is, look in the top left corner of your Victoria State map. The CSM had selected a good training area. It was so good it was almost a shame to spoil it by doing military activities; near the river, under shady trees, no one else for miles. However refresher training was conducted to knock the cobwebs off the soldiers skills, as most of them had not practiced their infantry skills since before the Olympics.

April's training weekend was held at Bendigo, where the soldiers remembered what it is like to operate in the pouring rain. Some good lessons came out of this weekend, that the soldiers made sure, were not forgotten on the following weekends. Mid year saw the arrival of Pte Arnold form CIT, and the departures of Pte's MacDonald and Pascoe to ARA service. Firstly to IET at Singleton then to the wider ARA infantry world. Pte MacDonald is currently at 2 RAR and looking forward to 6 months in East Timor.

July saw Pte Coatsworth presented with the Land Commanders Commendation for assisting at the scene of a road accident. He was the first on the scene and the only person until emergency services arrived, after he had contacted them. He rendered immediate first aid to the victims and assisted with getting them out of the overturned vehicle. Well done Coatsy!!! July also saw Pte Ash promoted to LCpl Ash, and the arrival of Pte Belcher.

Preparations and training are well underway for Ex Hamel at the end of the year. Unfortunately, due to the time of the exercise a significant proportion of the platoon is unable to attend due to harvesting crops.

With Pte Belcher now at CIT and looking to do RIO-B along with Pte Arnold, in December, one soldier currently at Kapooka, another to enlist shortly and 4 more currently going through the testing process,

the future is looking good.

Just some stats from the platoon so you can see what it is like in a smallish (10,000) country town.

Platoon strength start of 2000	10
Transfers to ARA	4
Transfers to inactive	1
Transfers to other units	1
Transfers from other units	1
Platoon strength end of 2001	11

WA Turner

Sgt

8 Pl.

9 Platoon - The Year in Retrospect

The last 11 months have been pretty hectic for the members 9 Platoon, due to the number of new march-ins, recruiting activities, Exercise Hamel and the end of the year courses period. Some soldiers couldn't handle the pace of the modern Army Reserves with it's demanding operating schedule, so they "pulled the pin" just before the first Training weekend. To them we say "Goodbye and best of luck with what you choose as your new profession from 9PL".

At the end of the first training weekend, by the time the stores had been cleaned and every piece of equipment accounted for it was Anzac Day. The Platoon was given the task to conduct two cenotaph duties at Cobram and Shepparton. With the numbers we had at Somme Barracks we were pushing it. In marched a new member from Kapooka, PTE Watson and after a quick two and a half hour soldiers five and the late night pick up of a hire vehicle from Goodfellows Truck Rental we were finally ready for Anzac Day. The day was a great success for the members of Somme Barracks. Well done to all involved especially to Watto. The day was completed by a family BBQ back at the depot which was well attended the members, family and friends.

I'm quite sure that everyone has heard of the expression "if we build it they will come". Well you guessed it. The focus of the Platoon switched to a

recruiting drive. As soon as the word work was mentioned CPL (H) Herbert decided he was going to hang up his baggy "Bake Bean" suit for a blue uniform. The first activity was the Shepparton gun show and was that ever an eye opener. There were many different walks of life and gun nuts that paid us a visit over that weekend asking us questions like how much, where can I, and how do I get one of those (meaning the Steyr). Members to join us after a successful recruiting activity were Doyle, Baglin, Clark and Hubbard.

Before, we knew it the June Training weekend dawned upon us with the Company champion section. The eventual winners were seven Platoon. (yeah only cost them a six pack of Guinness. Lets see if they do it next year?)

Over the following months we focused on more recruiting activities which bore us the fruits of 8 new members joining the reserves. I'd like to take the opportunity now to welcome them to the mighty 9Pl and C Coy.

All our members have taken part in the preparation for Ex Hamel and for many the first Hamel weekend was their first introduction into the reserves.

A Grand Final Day social function had the mighty Bombers and some out of towners playing off with some Calcutta's and raffles being run. This led to a very interesting day with Wato and Hoffs spending a lot of their hard earned on trying to buy the stars of the two teams. However, Wato eventually ran out the victor with one of his outsiders coming home (he paid 50 cents for him) with the spoils, and the Sarge wanting to close the boozier because the out of towners got up to win in a close one (thanks to the best thing money can buy, umpires!) but enough said on that.

With Ex Hamel in full swing it has been a great experience for all our new members. With the end of the year approaching we move into the Courses period with has all our members attending either courses or Ex Hamel.

In closing 9 Pl wishes all members and their families, past and present, seasons greetings and remember our motto in 2002: FULL BORE!

Trained Soldier



THE ROLE OF INFANTRY

**TO SEEK OUT AND CLOSE WITH THE ENEMY,
TO KILL OR CAPTURE HIM,
TO SEIZE AND HOLD GROUND
AND REPEL ATTACK BY DAY OR NIGHT
REGARDLESS OF SEASON, WEATHER OR TERRAIN**

Support Company

As another year draws to a close it is time to stop and reflect on what has been and what is to come.

The Company has kept busy with the training of the DTU and TFE's. All training weekends have been successful with good turnouts for most of them. The invaluable help of WO2 Dernehl, SGT's Baulch, Beales and Wait and CPL Dell providing instruction of the extraordinary kind, all added to what were, fun filled happy weekends!

Aside from the training weekends the Company has run a successful Signals Course during the SRCC. Thanks to 5/6 RVR for their help! We also had the pleasure of providing comms support to the Victorian Endurance Riders Association. We all managed to keep our sanity doing it but went crazy in the process!! Again many thanks to 5/6 RVR for their support!

The company around this time was lucky enough to have its own Company Clerk. CPL Campbell-Foulkes brightens an otherwise dull office on Tuesday nights and soon had the OC running errands for her. From keeping on top of the paperwork, and dictating what music we could or could not listen to, she has settled in and done an excellent job. There have been tons of funny happenings and quotes throughout the year, but I can't remember any of them.

The year has also seen the Company become the Battalion's hub for planning and tactics training. Most only see it as a game! However to those involved, it is adrenalin producing stuff, providing hours of thoughtful thoughts and other awe inspiring feats!! It also upset the then RQ, so it can't be a bad thing.

The Company has gone through a lot of changes this year, from closing down Pioneers and Mortars to taking over the responsibilities for the TFE and DTU soldiers. The result has been the Company with the highest manning in the Battalion. Thanks need to be given to those individuals who have put so much effort and time into recruiting for the Battalion. They know who they are.

Nominal Roll

MAJ Gale
 WO2 Pellow
 WO2 Dernehl
 SGT Baulch
 SGT Beales
 SGT McCulloch
 SGT Wait
 CPL Campbell-Foulkes
 CPL Dell
 CPL Paizis
 CPL Todd

Plus DTU enlistees and TFEs

Admin Company

With the changing role of the Bn, the role of Admin Coy has also changed. It appears that the days of an A Echelon deploying are a thing of the past. However, the task of providing Q, Catering, Medical, Transport and Technical Support to the Bn remain.

CHQ

Major Leckie remained as OC for the year. He was an Umpire with D Coy 2 RAR on Ex Tandem Thrust 01 at Townsville, Shoalwater Bay and Rockhampton in Queensland in May (see separate article). The Army in its wisdom has granted a 16-month "age extension" to the OC so that he can oversee some major changes to the Coy (and Bn) structure in year 2002. The Coy 2IC, Capt Gowers, took on the QM role on FTS in March when the incumbent QM, Capt Kevin White, was posted at short notice. Lt Warrick Stapleton, the Transport Officer, moved into the 2ICs position. WO2 John ("it works for me") Spencer remained as CSM, but began Long Service Leave in October prior to discharge in 2002. We look forward to seeing him again when he moves across to the "dark side" and becomes a Part-time soldier. Ex Regular WO2 Findlay joined the Bn in July and took over as Acting CSM in October.

Q

The QM, Capt Kevin White, who was only in the Bn for a short while after his leave, was posted in February. This left the Bn without a QM and for a while the newly promoted RQMS WO2 Greg Green took on the mantle of QM. Capt Gowers then put his hand up for FTS and assumed the role of QM on 1st March and remained in the position until 31st October. With the Tech Sgt Rob Voigt and Pte Peter Brewer (also on FTS) as his only Full-time staff, Greeny carried out the relocation of the Bn Q Store and Tpt Section into the Dowling Street warehouse. Immediately following the move, Sgt Voigt undertook a 100% stocktake of the Clothing Store, with some interesting results. Pte Fran Webb is the only other "storeperson" in the Main Q, and she

shared her time between the Main Q and Mildura where she has been working. Other storepersons in the Coy are Ptes Andrew at Shepparton and Pte White at Warrnambool.

Tpt

The Tpt Pl began the year with Lt Stapleton, the former 4BASB officer who was the LO on Ex Bob Dubi II, joining the battalion as Tpt Offr, and Sgt Allen Tarr as the Tpt Supervisor. With Lt Stapleton moving into the Coy 2IC position, Sgt Tarr has run the platoon for the year. He has been well supported by Pte Robert White (also on FTS) and by Cpl Jacka Smith a part-time member on his second "age extension". Pte Gerard Dooley has also been a consistent attender in Ballarat, while his brother Michael is on Long Leave. Pte Neil Finlay also is on Long Leave. Other members of the platoon were Pte Peta Maher at Warrnambool, Pte Mainwaring in Shepparton and Ptes Choundary, Gainger, Dwyer and an old hand Pte Sullivan at Ballarat.

CAT

Mark Broemmer remains as the Caterer. This year he attended and passed the Subject Course for WO and was promoted WO2 on 18th September. Cpl Steve Ivey remains a stalwart for the Catering Section. He travels from Warrnambool to attend virtually all Bn activities, arriving before the troops to ensure they are well fed. The Section lost Pte Bob Kenyon, another stalwart of the section, when he was discharged on medical grounds in his 15th year of service. Pte Coramen Palma at Mildura has been a handy addition to the platoon, and former One Tel employee Pte Michael Currie has also done a lot for the section. The section looks forward to Pte Greg Fox gaining Cook's qualifications.

Tech Spt

Sgt Rod Jackson remains "the Tech Spt Pl". Our Armourer resides and parades at Mildura and looks after the C Coy weapons, the Mildura Store, and

when he is able to, assists in maintaining Bn weapons. Last year Cpl Darren Werry left the Pl to go on FTS. He did a Tour of Duty in East Timor and mid year made a last visit to Ranger Barracks when back in Ballarat on leave.

Med

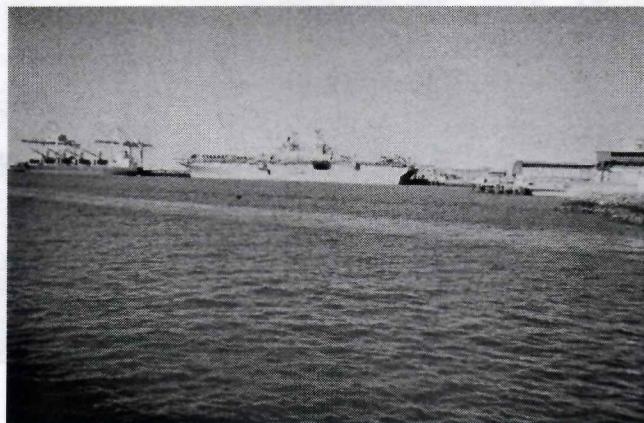
It has been a hectic year for the Med Pl, which became the biggest in the Coy. The Bn welcomed back Maj Mark Harris as RMO. Mark had been posted to 4 CSSB (formerly 4 BASB) and returned to the Bn in August just in time to go to Bouganville for his second 6 week tour.

SSgt "BJ" McKeon has run the Med Pl from May '99 until going on leave in October prior to his posting to Kapooka in November this year. In Ballarat, he has been ably supported by Cpl Adam Wallace and Pte Adam McKay. Cpl Wallace will enter the ADF Undergraduate Scheme in 2002 and will be commissioned into a Field Hospital posting.

The Bn welcomes back the man from Mars LCpl Ray Borowiak, a former B Coy soldier who is now the B Coy Medic. Ray has also been carrying out First Aid Training on Monday nights for the Cadets in Ballarat. Cpl Rogers looks after Shepparton and Cpl Viv Holland, who this year received his RFM, looks after Swan Hill. Bendigo welcomed Cpl Gioffre from 13 BASB in WA. Cpl Wright, who joined the Bn from 4 BASB has been to Bouganville on FTS and is now posted to the Watsonia Medical Centre along with Cpl Greg Graham, also on FTS. At Warrnambool, Pte Chris Skinner, who has received her Honours in Oceanic Science, will attend her Cpls Course next year.

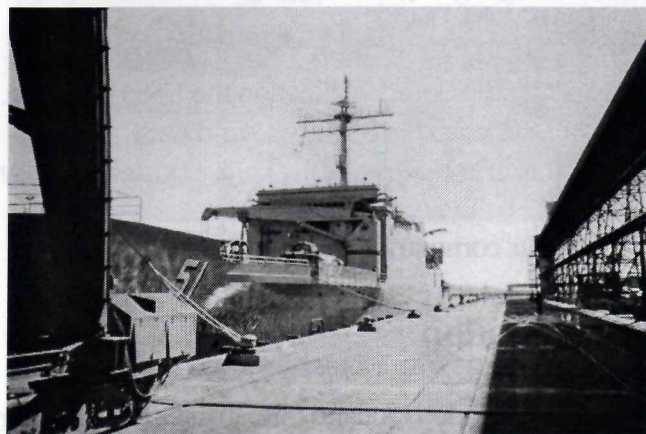
The Med Pl welcomed 5 TFEs this year. Pte McLoughlin from Swan Hill attended a Technician Preventative Medicine Course and will apply to join the ARA. Pte Harry, who is busy working with BJ at Ballarat and Pte's Vorbach in Geelong, Lanche in Warrnambool and Northfield in Geelong.

TANDEM THRUST 2001



USS Essex at Townsville

Ex TT01 was a US directed exercise with AS participation. It was difficult to get an accurate number, but it is believed that 27,000 Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen took part. A total of 102 Umpires took part and came from the AS Army, RAAF, US Army, US Marines, NZ, PNG and Fiji. Umpires included Maj Jeff Cole with Opposing Forces (Opfor or Red Force), Maj Neil Leckie (Blue Force, D Coy 2 RAR) and Sgt David Wait (Blue Force, 12 Pl D Coy 2 RAR). Umpires reported to Townsville on Tuesday 8th May and had 2 days Umpire Training (which included a game of Touch Rugby and a social gathering). On Thursday evening, all "Opfor" Umpires departed for SWTA. "Blue Force" umpires joined their units at Townsville. Sadly, the D Coy umpires found that 2 RAR were on standdown Friday and Saturday.



HMAS Kanimbla (51) sister ship to the now infamous HMAS Manoora

The "Blue Force" umpires finally reported to their units on Sunday for Orders and Issues and on Monday departed from Lavarack Barracks in buses for the Port of Townsville. A and D Coy boarded HMAS Kanimbla, while B Coy 1/5 BLT boarded HMAS Manoora. Then began a 4-day cruise of the Great Barrier Reef taking the ships to Freshwater Bay at the SWTA.



D Company 2RAR loading on HMAS Kanimbla

Day 1: cruised near Townsville and joined the fleet: USS Essex, USS Germantown, USS Juneau, HMAS Brisbane, HMAS Canberra, HMAS Manoora and HMAS Kanimbla.

Enemy losses: USS Gary, HMCS ? 6 F18

Day 2: cruised south.

Enemy losses; HMCS ? Patrol Boat, F15.

Day 3: at anchor, joined by 4 LCH (with 8 APCs each), and 3 LCM8 (with Leopard each).

Day 4: cruised South. A Coy transferred to USS Essex for Air Mobile Assault, B 1/5 transferred from HMAS Manoora to HMAS Kanimbla.

Total damage to "Blue Force": HMAS Brisbane hit twice, minor damage, HMAS Manoora hit three times, minor damage.

Day 5: 0100 breakfast then standby for transfer to LCHs.

For the Exercise

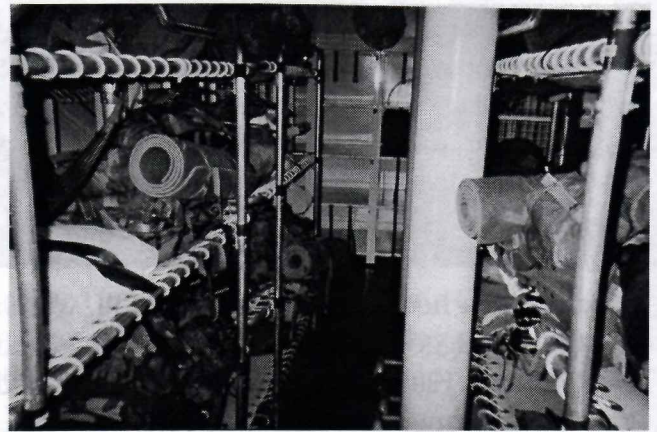
CINCPAC was Comd 7th Fleet on the USS Blueridge. COMFLOT was the Deputy Comd (AS).

Combined Land Force (Blue) was commanded by Comd 3rd Bde, Brig Kelly.

Opfor was commanded by Comd 1st Bde.

The Situation

Silverland invaded Outland (Shoalwater Bay Training Area) in Dec 2000. Ausland and Whiteland were deploying to Outland to defeat the Silverland forces in the SWTA. It was expected that Silverland would employ delaying defences until it could concentrate all its forces in an effort to destroy the Ausland/Whiteland forces in detail.



Soldiers accommodation on board HMAS Kanimbla

Enemy Forces

DJFHQ (known by many as Deplorable Joint Farce HQ).

HQ 1 Bde.

2 Cav Regt (-) (2 Recon Sqn)

1 Armd Regt (-) (1 Sqn, Recon, Spec Eqpt)

5/7 RAR (Mechanized) (-) (2 Coy).

6 RAR (Motorized)

1 CER

Friendly Forces

USS Essex – controls all aircraft for the fleet.

31st MEU (Marine Expeditionary Unit) – looks after troops on ships. It has no capacity to look after tactics.

HQ 3 Bde

2 RAR Battle Group Combat Team (CT) Taipan

B Coy 1/5 BLT (1 Tp 3/4 Cav, 1 Tp 1 AR, 16 Tp 3 CER)

CT Dingo

D Coy 2 RAR (2 Tp 3/4 Cav, 2 Tp 1AR, 15 Tp (-) 3 CER)

CT Crocodile

A Coy 2 RAR (Air Mobile)

3 RAR Battle Group

3 RAR

1/501 PIR (Alaska)

Topography

Shoalwater Bay Training Area: Freshwater Bay Beachhead; a wide half moon bay with about 50m of sand. Inland: lightly forested, hilly with good unsealed roads. Some deep creeks with thick scrub along the edges. Further inland the land flattens out.

Scheme of Manoeuvre

A two pronged attack, with the first attack by an Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) at Freshwater Bay in the East which is to deliver 2 companies ashore by Landing Craft (LCH and LCM8) and 1 Company by Air Mobile and the second attack by parachute drop of 2 companies at Williamson Airfield in the North-West followed by ground insertion.

Freshwater Bay and the advance West

Day 5: The first wave, D Coy 2 RAR, transferred from HMAS Kanimbla at 0335 to an LCH that unfortunately had B Coy 1/5 Bn's APCs. The Coy landed on the beach at 0515 (1 hr and 15 min after H Hr). B Coy 1/5 followed and after both companies found their correct APCs, the Combat Team (CT) departed the beach at 0640 under the watchful eyes of a large media contingent and a few protestors, with tanks and B Coy leading. 12 Pl D Coy remained for Beachhead Protection. Next followed the Engineers and then D Coy and the other troop of tanks. After first light the A Coy 2 RAR Air Mobile Company deployed. The CT headed west along Dingo Drive.

Apparently on the last exercise the Engineers complained about a lack of activity for them. This exercise would be quite different. The Silverland forces had laid minefields and prepared tank ditches to delay the "Blue Force". The first of these was detected less than 10 km after leaving the beach. D Coy 2 RAR took the lead by bypassing the obstacles and left B Coy 1/5 and the Engineers to breach them.

The first sign of occupation of US troops (either Opfor or Blue Force) came a further 5 km down Dingo Drive. A Damage Report was required indicating that the troops had left their area without filling in their pits, not digging holes when toileting and not taking their rubbish with them. US ration pack rubbish was everywhere. This became a common sight everywhere that the US troops operated.

After passing Samuel Hill Airstrip, D Coy found the next set of obstacles to the West of the property Brampton Vale on the East West Road. While the Engineers once again dealt with the obstacles, D Coy



Part of D Company 2 RAR Battle Group, Shoalwater Bay Training Area



AS Leopard Recovery Vehicle



US Armoured Amphibious Vehicle (AAV)

retired to its night location.

Day 6: D Coy advanced until just West of the Brown Route junction when a further obstacle of minefields and tank ditches were located. .50 cal fire, artillery and observation of the obstacles twice halted the advance. The Coy retired to the junction where it was promptly hit with artillery causing it to move further down Brown Route where it stopped before returning to the junction for the night. As this obstacle was holding up the whole advance, the CO 2 RAR took CT Taipan back towards Samuel Hill and sent them around Mountain Track to bypass the obstacle.

During the hours of darkness, the Engineers with D Coy cleared a path through the minefield while a known OP was hit with artillery and mortars before a platoon tried to make visual contact with the OP by using their NVG. Unfortunately the plan to DF and observe, DF and observe etc until the OP was abandoned did not work, so the Coy hit the OP head in the early daylight hours of the following day.

Day 7. Finally, with the aid of a troop of tanks from CT Taipan, which unfortunately killed a "Blue Force" Gun Group, the position was cleared.

The advance continued along the East West Road turning South at the Elanora Road where CHQ halted while the platoons carried out patrolling tasks. At this time an "Opfor" LOH flew over which lead to the CHQ area being hit with a F111 strike. This was to create a mass Medivac situation to test the Medivac system. It failed!

1200	Airstrike, 4 Pri 1, 4 Pri 2 Cas
1205	Medic assessing casualties
1230	Coy requests Medivac
1400	APC (Amb) arrived – notified at 1335 to attend
1415	Requested arrival time of Helo
1515	Notional Helo have left Manoora, where are real Helo?
1615	Notified of imminent arrival of 2 actual Medivac Helo
1625	2 Medivac Helo arrived, couldn't land as too much dust, so returned to Manoora empty.
Result:	4 Pri 1 and 2 Pri 2 Cas needed body bags!

By this stage, B Coy 1/5 had left the exercise to go to the live firing phase and A Coy 2 RAR had joined D Coy. The next morning, **Day 8**, saw a Bn attack on the Raspberry Creek area with the 2 Coys, Tanks and a Bulldozer. Although the CO had little information on dispositions and strengths of the enemy, the plan was for a left hook across Razorback Creek (hence the need for the bulldozer) and to swing in to Raspberry Creek from the East. D Coy secured the creek crossing which allowed A Coy and the tanks to hit the objective. The bulldozer was worth its weight in gold. It cleared a simple

path for the Tanks and APCs to cross the creek in about 20 minutes. The attack itself appeared to be successful, although each side would give a different version of the outcome. D Coy then went through Raspberry Creek and fought a subsequent battle for 122 feature. Following the defeat of the "Opfor" forces on the feature, against the basic principles, D Coy remained on the 122 feature for the night.

The next morning, **Day 9**, D Coy was tasked to provide security to the North West of Raspberry Creek and was dropped on the 67 feature. The Coy carried out dismounted sweep to the North West and came up against a sizeable force that it reconnoitered, withdrew from and reported to higher. A Coy ambush with a troop of tanks was set on the Lemon Tree Road between the "Opfor" forces and BHQ 2 RAR, but after a quiet night, the exercise concluded at 0600. Apparently the Opfor forces wouldn't have had the ammunition for a decent firefight at that time anyway.

Day 10: The umpires were withdrawn to BHQ, which by that stage had shifted to the West of Raspberry Creek. By noon all umpires had assembled at the BSG at "The Plains" and were bussed to DSU Rockhampton.

Highlights

1. Meeting and mingling with a wide range of experienced members of the Regular and Part Time Army, US Army and Marines and other forces.
2. Seeing the facilities of Lavarack Barracks
3. Cruising the Great Barrier Reef and being a part of the amphibious landing at Freshwater Bay.
4. Seeing the mass of military equipment used by both the US and Australian Armies.
5. Being a part of an armoured advance: Tanks, APCs and Engineers.
6. Seeing DSU Rockhampton and the CEGS organization.

Lowlights

1. The lack of forward planning by all levels. The main problem being that no Initiating Instruction had been issued by the US and therefore much planning had to be done "in a vacuum".
2. The inexperience of all levels in amphibious operations. Maj Westbury (UK Marines advised that Kanimbla and Manoora were 2nd Wave Ships that would be operating as 1st Wave ships and that we were the "Guinea Pigs" in helping them develop SOPs for Army/Navy Co-operation.
3. The poor tactics at higher level concerning the probable casualties in any contact with the enemy. For example, lack of recon, lack of use of fire support (smoke) when advancing on known OPs, remaining on positions after clearing them of enemy.
4. The absolute failure of the Medevac System (4 hours for a helo to arrive).
5. The lack of fire discipline, for example, mass firing at helos as they passed our positions.
6. Poor carriage of weapons, for example, pointing weapons at your own soldiers, not checking safety catches.
7. Many incidents of "Blue on Blue" and "Red on Red" shooting.

RECRUITING AT THE GRAND PRIX – PHILIP ISLAND



Cpl R Derrick of Bendigo and Cpl J Stapleton from Warrnambool man their stand at the Philip Island Grand Prix

Over the three days of this major event, the duo of Cpls Derrick and Stapleton displayed Cpl Derrick's Army 131901 RS125 Grand Prix Racer, and his CR125 Motocross Racing motorcycle.

Cpl Derrick has been representing Army 131901 in motorcycle competitions for a number of years, competing as a National 'A' grade rider in all levels of competition up to the Australian Championships.

The pair were able to conduct excellent Army public relations and act as ideal 'ice breakers' for the remainder of the 4BDE elements that were on display.

Cpl Derrick featured in the official event programme along with RAAF pilots as a talking face of Defence.

Next year Cpl Derrick will compete on a Yamaha TZ250 Grand Prix motorcycle with the support of a Melbourne based motorcycle dealership and Defence Recruiting.

Courses camp bombs Pucka

Stories and Photos by PTE Martin West
Printed in Army News August 30, 2001

Part time Infantry soldiers from around Australia recently got a chance to develop their skills at Puckapunyal with a bang.

Sixty-five diggers from Western Australia, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria attended Mortar, DFSW and Reconnaissance courses on a 5/6 RVR Courses Camp.

The predictably appalling Puckapunyal weather was not a problem and aspiring reconnaissance patrollers actually appreciated it – some of the time.

Pte Adam Wood, Recon Pl 5/6 RVR, said the bad weather was good because it reduced visibility and lowered enemy morale.

“All we had to do was keep our own morale up”, he said.

“One day the rain was so heavy I couldn’t see 100m in front.

“The course was cold, wet and tiring but we covered all the skills needed to become a basic patrolmen.”

He said the course had two Sergeants who were Timor veterans, and two experienced Reserve Recon corporals, who between them passed on a wealth of knowledge.

“The way information was passed on was by honing in on our skills rather than learning it by numbers.”

Lt David Cadogan-Cowper, Mortar Pl 5/6 RVR, said the courses camp was critical to the development of soldiers.

“The mortar course will help maintain the interest of senior soldiers”, he said.

“It gives them an insight outside of rifle companies and they understand how fire support can be used in support of infantry.”

“The courses also makes them more suitable for promotion, because they have a wider understanding.”

He said 24 trainees achieved the required standard at the camp.

“The mortar course benefited greatly from students coming from around Australia.

“There was a lot of competitiveness between soldiers from different states - everyone wanted to be the best, it raised esprit de corps a lot - but everyone got on really well.”



Above & Below: Mortar men bomb an unsuspecting hillside on the Puckapunyal Range during a 5/6 RVR-convened courses camp for reservists from all over Australia.



Victorian Diggers improve deployment chances

Stories and Photos by PTE Martin West
Printed in Army News August 30, 2001

Victorian-based diggers from 5/6 and 8/7 RVR may have increased chances to serve overseas following the trial of a new High Readiness Company.

The trial has been instigated to test the viability of establishing Reserve sub-units on shortened readiness.

Adjt 5/6 RVR Capt Gerard Nolan, said the results of the High Readiness Company trial could open up new opportunities for part time soldiers.

“During 6 RAR’s deployment to East Timor, a number of individuals were given the opportunity to serve overseas”, he said.

“The purpose of this trial is to evaluate the ability of the reserve forces to provide sections, platoons and even companies as opposed to just individuals.”

The High Readiness Company will gather to train on weekends and on Exercise Hamel.

“During these periods the company will conduct a variety of progressive activities designed to raise skills to a new level, resulting in more advanced and exciting training”, he said.

“The trial will conclude with the company deploying to the Canungra next year where individual and collective skills will be evaluated.”

Capt Nolan said soldiers who had already served in Timor were a great boost to the new unit.

“They provide inspiration as well as experience to the company.”

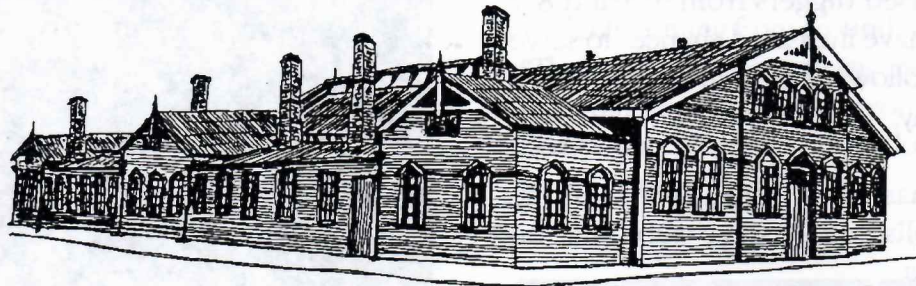
The High Readiness Company trial will continue next year at Canungra.



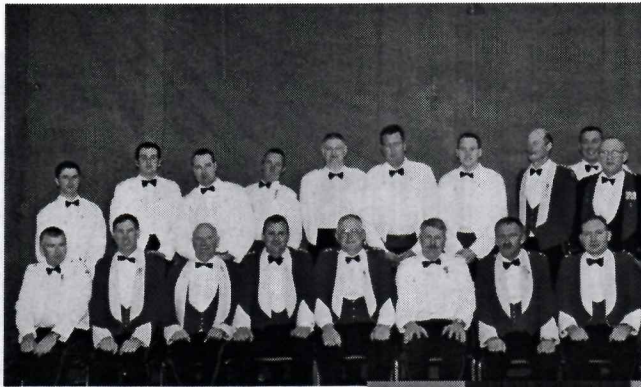
Above: Soldiers from 5/6 and 8/7 RVR conduct company-level operations at Puckapunyal as part of a High Readiness Company trial. The trial is aimed at testing the viability of establishing Reserve sub-units on shortened readiness thereby improving soldiers' chances of securing overseas deployments. First-hand experience of individuals who have returned from East Timor is adding to unit knowledge and collective enthusiasm for the concept.

Farewell to Ranger Barracks

1886-2001



"Ranger Barracks" 1886



Ranger Barracks Memories

“My Name is Legion for we are many” or “Life Goes On”

Look around and see the ghosts of the past. Lined up by the Colour Sergeant, in neat formation. The black leather cross belts shined to perfection. Lancaster muzzle-loading percussion rifles shining with oil. Their sealskin busbies rakishly tilted. Officers to the fore. The Flag of the Union flying proudly on the pole in front of the parade ground. The day designed to commemorate the fusing of the three Ballarat Corps into one. It is 1874 and it is with a heavy heart that the individual members of the Corps see their history count for nought as they merge into one. Whilst with gladness they acknowledge that their predecessors efforts will be remembered as part of the history of the new Ballarat Rangers Corps.

The view shifts. On the same parade ground a similar scene unfolds. The Flag of Unification still dances in the breeze atop the pole. Serried ranks of men in their ceremonial finest stand patiently in the sun as the Commanding Officer reads from the proclamation from the Queen. It is with pride that LTCOL J. T. Sleep announces the official news that the Ballarat Rangers are no more and that the 3rd Ballarat Battalion Victoria Rifles is now in residence. The Colour Sergeant moves along the rear of the parade quieting the rumbles of discontent within the ranks as men mutter that this is the end of the world as they know it. It is Jan 1884.

In my mind it is 1892. It is with a sense of *déjà vu* that I witness LTCOL A. M. Greenfield stand in the same spot as his predecessor and read the direction from the Governor General of Victoria that from this time on the “Ballarat Battalion Victoria Rifles” would henceforth be known as the “1st Battalion 3rd Victorian Regiment”. It appears as if the same Colour Sergeant is dealing with the same miscreants as he quells the mutters of discontent within the ranks. He explains patiently that the name is unimportant, the history will travel with the new unit. The soldiers are the heart of the Battalion. Not the name they parade under.

The scene lurches. Transposed over the parade ground the images of other soldiers take their places. It is 1896 and LTCOL R. E. Williams CMG, VD announces the

formation of the 3rd Battalion Victoria Infantry Brigade. In a kaleidoscope of impressions, the scene changes again and again. In each cameo, a LTCOL announces the change of designation as the original Ballarat Volunteer Rangers are metamorphised until finally it is the year 2001. The scene steadies as the 8th / 7th Battalion The Royal Victorian Regiment marches out of the Drill Hall they and their ancestors have occupied for so many years.

Small things have changed. The name has been amended over and over again. The uniform is now a drab disruptive pattern that blends into the landscape rather than awing the enemy by saying “Here I am. Harm me if you dare.” The weapons are now semi-automatic carbines interspersed with fully automatic machineguns. They have the ability of laying down a withering hail of fire when placed in the hands of professional soldiers such as these. The Australian National Flag has replaced the Flag of Union flying at the peak of the pole for we are now a nation in our own right. The Colour Party and Escort wear polyester Ceremonial as they proudly march at the centre of the Battalion. Medals on chests, Queen and Regimental Colours flying free. The ghosts of soldiers’ past gather in the wings and dolefully shake their heads. I imagine the Colour Sergeant still moving amongst them, carrying out his task that has been his lot for generations. “Relax men.” I hear him say. “The Battalion that was once us is in good hands. The name has changed, the uniform is not the same, and now the Drill Hall that was our home has also come to pass. So what? Our history is embodied in these fine men and women, not in bricks and stone, not in names. The Battalion will continue to guard our legacy and will move into the future with clear eye and stout heart. It will meet all challenges and overcome all adversity. Nothing remains the same and any that wish it to are already dead. The universal law of evolution states that

“Entropy is death, change is life.”

P E. CROFT

WO1

RSM

8/7 RVR

Ranger Barracks Memories

by Maj Neil Leckie

My first visit to Ranger Barracks was to attend the 2 RVR Ball in November 1972. The visit to the barracks was memorable for me not so much for attending the ball along with several hundred others, but for the other things that happened over that weekend, that is, car damage (hit some galahs at about 100mph, had a flat tyre and had the rear vision mirror vandalised) and being locked out of my accommodation at Craig's Hotel while still wearing my Patrol Blues Mess kit. However, Ranger Barracks itself left an impression on me.

My second visit to the barracks was not until early 1981 when, having moved to the Ballarat area for work, I met with the then CO, LTCOL Ted Lynes, in his office to discuss a transfer to B Coy as 2IC. The barracks had changed little. It was a busy place on a Parade Night. The battalion strength was over 400 and Annual Camps attracted an average of around 250.

As 2IC and shortly after as OC B Coy, visits to Ranger Barracks were rare until after parade when all Ballarat officers attended the Officers Mess. Many a cold Ballarat winter night was spent around the open fire in the Mess until well into the wee small hours of the following morning. The Officers Mess, like Ranger Barracks itself, had character and there were many characters among its members.

It was not until late 1987, about the time that the battalion changed its number from 2 RVR to 8/7 RVR that I was posted to BHQ. During the following year as OPSO and in 1989 as the full-time 2IC I got to know the ins and outs of the barracks. It was a curious mix of the new (the so called demountables at the Curtis St end) and the old (the rambling up and down old house where the Q staff worked).

The building was both practical and impractical. For K89, the complete compliment of over 400 soldiers paraded for their final issues and briefings and prior to many activities any number of fully loaded vehicles could be

seen parked inside the building for security. The building provided comfortable indoor sporting areas for the staff and was often used for both military and civilian displays.

The building had offices which were either too big or too small, were damned hot in the summer or freezing cold in the winter, had power points (and later computer terminals) in the wrong places and was always a noisy place to walk and work in.

But despite its shortcomings, it was an imposing building and a landmark in the area. To those who served in it for any period of time, it always felt like home.

by Cpl "Jacka" Smith

My first memories of Ranger Barracks were in about 1956 when my brother was doing his National Service. He had done his 3 months full time and was doing his one night a week for 2 years to complete his time. I used to meet him after Parade and get a ride home. In those days the ORs Mess had hot pies and tea or beer for the diggers.

I joined the then 2 RVR myself in 1965 for 12 months. Lt Dowrick signed me up. At that time there was a Live Firing Range in the back yard where we used .22 Calibre weapons. In those days the back yard went about half way across what was the council car park before the barracks closed. The Orderly Room was only the office where the typist and the file compactus were when we left the barracks. The larger Orderly Room and the Conference Room were built much later.

The Transport Platoon has had 3 locations in my time. Where the museum was located was the Regular Army Recruiting and Tpt was next to it. Then we moved over to the office near the Officers Mess and later moved out to the former Married Quarter with the Q Store staff.

Some of the vehicles held by the Tpt Pl were:

Staff Cars: HQ Holden Station Wagon

Ranger Barracks Memories

Datsun Bluebird Station Wagon
 Ford XB, XD and XE Station Wagons
 Holden VN – VX Station Wagons

Trucks: Mark 3 4 Wheel International
 Mark 4 6 Wheel International
 Unimogs

Land Series 2
 Rovers: Series 3
 Series 110

Since 1965, I remember the floor being rebuilt once. There was a lot of rain and the floor buckled badly. It was pulled up and re-laid.

There have been many Army Balls in the barracks. They were really big deals back then with over 700 people attending. We polished the floor with hessian towed behind a Land Rover.

ORs nights years ago turned into riots and once there were 12 Police Cars there with police using batons on the civvies who would not leave. The barracks made \$2,000 that night.

THE BIG MOVE

by Capt Cliff Gowers

As we are all aware, the big move from Ranger Barracks in Curtis Street to Broodseinde Barracks in Russell Street and to the Q and Tpt warehouse in Dowling Street happened this year. It was a nightmare for some, a welcome change for others and I still think there are some that haven't noticed the difference!

The move had been mooted as far back as 1996. Planning was underway by 1998, and the current staff are now living with many decisions made from that time. Overall there was a 50% reduction in building requirements from the initial plan and a financial cap made the cost saving an exercise not a theory.

Most of the final planning was left with the Q Staff, in particular WO2 Greg Green and myself. In addition to planning, there were the constant battles with contractors involved with the new shopping complex, negotiations with every cat and dog in and out of Ballarat and the constant running around to keep the project in hand. Even though there were a lot of hiccups, it was pleasing that there were no major setbacks, and all planning dates were basically adhered to.

Most of the contract work for both Dowling Street and Russell Street was supervised and constructed by Mr Allan Webster (from Funktion Enterprises) and his two trusty offsidiers Brett and Tom whom most of us got to know. These three guys set up a system whereby if SSgt "Rocky" McCoombe asked a question and one of them answered it, the other two would oblige with three free punches. After a while Rocky got bored and didn't bother them.

Anyway, I am sure that the "Village People" and the Q Store are happier in their new locations.

A special thanks to "Greenie" (by name, but not by nature) for all his efforts. Greg played a vital link in all aspects of both moves and was the contributing factor to the success of the project.

As for the newspaper reports about damage to the barracks: there was no damage as such. We simply removed what was agreed to prior to the move out. Sure, this did leave a few holes and marks, but nothing like what there was made out to be!

LETS DO IT ALL AGAIN WHEN THE MUD IS COMPLETED IN 2004!

Ballarat Ranger Military Museum

The Ballarat Ranger Military Museum recently bid farewell to the majestic Ranger Barracks.

The mammoth task of moving was commenced on the 19th of July and it has been a slow process to try and bring the new venue of the Museum up to a presentable standard ready for the official grand re-opening on the 11th of November, (Remembrance Day). The Museum is now situated at the Sebastopol RSL Memorial Hall at the corner of Birdwood Avenue and Beverin St, Sebastopol.

Previously this part of the building had been used as the "supper room" by the RSL and more recently as a sparring gym for up-and-coming boxers.

While the appointments are somewhat spartan, the room does offer more space than we previously had access to. I am determined to use as many of the Museums acquisitions as possible to try and provide as much insight into the proud and colourful history of the Battalion as I can.

The Museum is taking shape and it is my wish that at some stage in the future we will also provide more research facilities for interested people.

The Museum's mission statement is to preserve and promote/display the history of the Battalion and the role of individuals from the local surrounds that are in 8/7 RVR's sphere of influence.

The Museum committee has expanded somewhat with the XO MAJ Cole heading the committee as chairperson; Mr. Ben Smith taking on the position of Treasurer and Assistant Curator, (a position that has already seen him volunteer his help for many hours helping me set-up); recently retired MAJ Bill Akell has also provided his continued support and guidance.

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the following members and ex-members of the unit to the Museum

committee, SGT Trevor Beales, CPL Graeme Paizis, CAPT Rupert Dalley, LTCOL(R) Ted Lynes, LT(R) Shane Ryan, WO2 (R) Jack Elliott, BDR (R) John Dellaca.

Of course, I would extend a hearty welcome to any other members of the unit (or ex-members) to join the committee. The only pre-requisite is that you should have a keen interest in the unit's history and be willing to give up a little of your time and effort to assist in the success of the unit Museum.

The Museum, once the official re-dedication has taken place, will be open to the public on Sunday afternoons between the hours of 1300 and 1600h. This is to coincide with the opening times of the Ballarat RSL Historical collection in Lyons St, Ballarat, to allow interested people to access both collections on the same day.

The Museum will also be open by appointment to school groups and other interested parties. All members of the unit should take the time to visit the Museum and touch base with the unit's roots.

Another big task ahead is to fully collate the museum inventory and have it entered on the ARMY History Unit files. This will allow further use of photos and graphic detail of museum items onto the internet for historical reference and research.

Finally, I wish to pass on my thanks to all of those members and past members of the unit whom have donated various items of historical interest, and would extend a request that any current items that 'have future historical significance' be considered for donation to the Museum for safekeeping.

WO2 M Broemmer
Museum Curator

Ranger Barracks

1886 - 2001

