

The annual journal of the 8th/7th Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment.



The Ranger 2006



Freedom of Entry to the City of Greater Bendigo and Remembrance Day Service 2006.

Honorary Colonel
Professor David de Krestler AC
The Governor of Victoria

Regimental Colonel
Col P. A. Riley AM, RFD

Allied Regiments
The Staffordshire Regiment
(The Prince of Wales's)
The Royal Regiment of Canada

Commanding Officer
Lt Col R. J. Marsh RFD

Regimental Sergeant Major
WO2 S. Armstrong

Allied Associations
The associations of the 7th Battalion
incorporating:

The 7th Battalion AIF
The 7th Battalion AIF (1939-1945)
The 2/7th Australian Infantry Battalion
The 7th Battalion, RAR

The 8th Battalion (Ballarat) Association
The 8th Battalion (Ararat) Association
The 8th/7th Battalion – 2 RVR Association



Editor: Major Neil Leckie
Cover Design: Pte Tavis McLaren

INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF "THE RANGER"

Battalion History	Commanding Officer's Report
Executive Officer's Report	Cpl Gaitan Gymnasium
OPS Cell Report	Freedom of Entry Bendigo
Remembrance Services	Battalion structure
Op Acolyte	Naming of Geelong MUD
Prince of Wales Award	A Coy
B Coy	C Coy
CSS (formerly Admin) Coy	ADM Presentation
'Dinkum Oil' Book Launch	39 th Battalion re-raising
Ranger Museum	Iraq

EDITOR'S COMMENTS:

Thanks to all members who contributed. If I don't receive any input from an area of the battalion, nothing gets written on that area. You only get out what you put in!!!

Many thanks to Pte Tavis McLaren for his work on the cover.

BATTALION HISTORY

As the headquarters of the battalion has been in Ballarat since the re-raising of the CMF in 1948, the official birthday of the battalion is taken as 9th August 1858, which is 16 days before the Bendigo militia was formed. Consequently, in 2008 the battalion is officially 150 years old.

Planning is in hand to have a history of the battalion compiled for launch at the 150th celebrations, along with a re-opening of the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum back on defence land.

If you have any interesting items of history from an Army depot in your town, or from towns in Victoria and Southern NSW which once had an Army presence, please forward them to the XO for inclusion in the history. Some examples of current battalion memorabilia are:



38th Bn Colour at Swan Hill



1 Independent Rifle Coy RVR Flag at Mildura

8/7 RVR – A BRIEF HISTORY

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

The Ballarat part of 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 the new unit was the 9th August 1858. As the Battalion Headquarters is based on Ballarat, 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), 7th Battalion (The North West Murray Borderers), the 38th Battalion (The Northern Victorian Regiment) and the 59th Battalion (The Hume Regiment). These battalions cover the major cities of Ballarat, Mildura, Bendigo and Shepparton.

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

Ballarat	1983 & 1998	Maryborough	1980
Echuca	1989	Swan Hill	1988 & 1999
Hamilton	1990 & 2000	Greater Bendigo	2006

The year 2006 saw the Geelong members move into the refurbished Geelong Depot, which they now share with 2/10 Fd Regt, the Laverton members move into larger premises at Laverton and a new depot open at Monegetta.

8/7 RVR BATTLE HONOURS

Boer War : South Africa 1899 – 1902

World War One

Landing at Anzac Cove
Somme 1916 – 1918
Ypres 1917
Bullecourt
Polygon Wood
Amiens
Albert 1918
Mont St Quentin
Hindenburg Line
Pozières

World War Two

Bardia 1941
El Alamein
Capture of Tobruk
Greece 1941
South West Pacific 1942 – 1945
Finisterres
Hari River
Bobdubi II
Lae Nadzab
Borneo

COMMANDING OFFICER

"The young people of today are the leaders of tomorrow, but we sometimes wonder whether they are going to be followed or chased." - Anon

It seems only yesterday that the XO was chasing me for last year's Ranger Magazine article and I now realise what a busy and challenging year we have had. In order to appreciate this I will start with the year in review. At the start of the year the battalion participated in Op Relex - supporting of our Navy brothers patrolling the Northern Borders from Darwin to Christmas Island in search of illegal fisherman. This was ably commanded by 2Lt Paul O'Donnell who returned a Lt with a wealth of experience. In March, together with the rest of the 4th Brigade, the Battalion participated in Op Acolyte - Defence Support to the Commonwealth Games. The 4th Brigade RRF undertook venue search tasks, Vehicle Checkpoints and ceremonial duties whilst I had the onerous task of sitting at the MCG for two weeks as the Senior Defence Liaison Officer.

On the training side and exercise side, the battalion conducted a number of major activities:

- Initial Employment Training (Module 1) at Puckapunyal in February,
- A Reconnaissance course in Tasmania & Signallers Course in Warrnambool in March,
- A Battalion Live Fire Exercise at Puckapunyal in June,
- Exercise Hamel, the 4th Brigade concentration at Cultana, SA in September, and
- Initial Employment Training (Module 1 & 2) in Tasmania in November.

Together with another busy training program next year the battalion is preparing to deploy a platoon and CSS elements to the Solomons as part of Op Anode - Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.

The battalion has been busy refurbishing facilities, much to the credit of the QM and staff. We now have nine depots; Warrnambool, Geelong, Laverton, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Mildura and a new depot at Monegeetta. In Geelong, A Coy has co-located with 2/10 Fd Regt in new Multi-User Depot which will be formally opened in December by the Divisional Commander Maj-Gen Flawith.

On the personnel side we suffered for most of this year for a lack of ADJT, RSM and RQMS at various times but the OPSO, CC and QM carried the extra burden. I greatly appreciate their work and that of WO2 Armstrong (Acting RSM), and Lt O'Donnell & Capt Baird (Acting ADJTs) for their help.

The battalion currently has an effective strength of 330 of which 30 are ARA, 100 are in training and 200 are trained. An audit of Army Individual Readiness Notice compliance was conducted at the end of October which had the battalion at 74% compliant which is a significant improvement over the 20% at the beginning of last year.

On a sad note the battalion lost Cpl Alex Gaitan to leukaemia in the middle of the year but has dedicated the BHQ gym in his memory recognising the gruelling PT sessions he regularly ran.

Our recruiting team, capably led by WO Steve Merchant, exceeded the recruiting target of 75 by 2 and implemented many effective strategies which will bode well for the battalion's future.

The new Battalion Structure kicks in next year. The Battalion will have BHQ and CSS Coy and 3 Rifle Coys with embedded Combat Support and Combat Service Support elements. The Rifle Coys will be geographically located with C Coy in the North, B Coy in the Centre and A Coy in the South.

In the New Year, the battalion will welcome a number of new faces in the HQ. My successor as CO is Lt Col David McKerral ARA who is currently in Bagdad. WO1 Daren Murch is our new RSM and Capt Mathew Whitwell the ADJT. The stability of the battalion will be ensured by the remaining of Major Michael Brown as OPSO and Maj Neil Leckie as 2IC, although they may swap roles for a bit of variety!

Last weekend the battalion received the Freedom of Entry to the City of Greater Bendigo which was a fitting way to spend Remembrance Day. Although the year is not over, as we still have much to do, I am very proud of what the battalion has achieved. I look forward to the battalion going from strength to strength and celebrating it's sesquicentenary on the 9th August 2008 with a great sense of pride.

Now to the quote: One of the great delights of being a Commanding Officer is watching the growth of young leaders, soldiers and officers. I have been lucky to serve with and have the opportunity to promote many of them as they grow in capability and competence. Accordingly, I am confident our future is sound and not without humour. Finally, I wish all our family and friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Robert Marsh, RFD
LTCOL
Commanding Officer
8th/7th Battalion,
Royal Victorian Regiment



Lt Col Marsh, Regt Col, Col Riley, Hon Col Mr John Landy and CO 5/6 RVR Lt Col Grimes at Government House for the farewell to the Hon Col

The XO Major Leckie Presents the CO Lt Col Marsh with his ADM

EXECUTIVE OFFICER Maj Neil Leckie

Another extremely busy year gone. Where did it go? When I gave away full time work and became a part-time teacher I thought that I would have plenty of time to do all sorts of things. Not so. People say that you always find things to do to fill in your time. This year was no exception. There have been innumerable tasks to be done, many under the guise of the XO's Duty Statements of "understudy and fill in for the Commanding Officer" and "other duties as directed".

Most of the activities were pleasant! On 27th May, along with the Regimental Colonel, Col Paul Riley, my wife and I attended the Battle of Crete Commemorative Luncheon held by the Hellenic Sub-branch of the RSL. The lunch was held at the sub-branch clubrooms in South Melbourne. What an eye opener! All speeches were made in Greek and English. The food was magnificent. Huge plates of fish and chips was brought out. There was more there than we could eat, and this was only the appetiser. What followed then was the main course of roast lamb and vegetables and then sweets.

The senior guests at the lunch were Air Marshall Margaritis Mouzas, Vice Chief of the Hellenic Defence Force, and Navy Captain Anastasios Michelis. Fortunately for them the Greek team were in Melbourne for the soccer friendly that weekend and they were able to see the game.

The lunch is about commemorating the Battle of Crete in which the Australian 2nd/7th and 2nd/8th Battalions fought. 17,125 Australians took part in the battle during the period 28th May to 1st June 1941.



Regt Col, Col Paul Riley, with Air Marshall Margaritis Mouzas and Mrs Mouzas and Captain Anastasios Michelis



Guests at the Battle of Crete Dinner

Another activity attended was the renaming of the Overseas Deployed Forces Unit to 39th Personnel Support Battalion on Kokoda Day, 8th August, at The Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. (See separate article). This activity was extremely significant to me as with my wife I had just completed the Kokoda Track and the efforts of the 39th Battalion was fresh in my mind.

Then there was the Vietnam Veterans Annual Dinner in Ballarat on 25th August where the guest speaker was a man I undertook officer training with. Gary McKay was awarded a MC for his actions in South Vietnam. He was also the last officer wounded in the conflict.

Later in the year I was involved in organising Cpl Baird getting to the UK for his RVR Association Scholarship attachment with the West Midlands Regiment where our Allied Regiment, The Staffords, have their Territorial Army Companies now located. (See separate article).

Then there were the Remembrance services at the Macarthur Street Primary School (another article) and the big one at Bendigo on Remembrance Day (also another article).

Lastly there were two book launches. The first was Ron Austin's book "Where ANZACs Sleep" on 23rd June at Ranger Barracks. This book is a collection of photographs taken mainly at Gallipoli by the 8th Battalion's Capt Jack Duffy. The second launch was for Amanda Taylor's book "Dinkum Oil" in Ballarat on 10th November. This book is a collection of World War One letters published in the Ballarat Courier (another article).

Tie all this in with working with the committee getting the museum building up to scratch, working on the battalion history etc etc etc and the year has flown.

The good news for me and I hope for the rest of the battalion, is that I have been granted an extension to my service and will remain with the battalion until after the 150th Birthday celebrations in August 2008. During this time I will be working towards the completion of the history of the battalion and the opening of the museum.

Your assistance in these matters will help.

CPL ALEX GAITAN MEMORIAL GYMNASIUM

Alex Gaitan joined the Army Reserve with 8/7 RVR on 25th March 1995. On 1st January 1996 he joined the Regular Army and went to 1 RTB Kapooka. On 23rd December 1996 he was posted to the School of Armour and served with the Armoured Corps until transferring back to 8/7 RVR as a Reservist on 20th January 2003. After a period of time overseas, Cpl Gaitan returned to serve with 8/7 RVR as a Sub-unit PTI and Medical Clerk with the RAP. Despite undergoing a bone marrow transplant, Alex succumbed to Leukaemia and passed away earlier this year.

To honour his memory and the valiant fight he put up against his illness, the battalion named the BHQ Gymnasium after Cpl Gaitan. On 31st October his father Manuel, mother Clara, brother Henry and sister Magaly, along with a few family friends, attended a short service and unveiling of the nameplate for the gymnasium run by Chaplain Buijs.

Manuel Gaitan was an Alpaca farmer in Peru. With his family he brought Alpacas to Australia via New Zealand and settled in Victoria. They worked for Lismore farmer, and former 22 RVR Sgt, Chris Lang and have remained good friends. Chris attended the service.



PMC Ranger Club Cpl Troy Best presents Cpl Alex Gaitan's family with his framed medal outside the Alex Gaitan Memorial Gymnasium

OPERATIONS CELL REPORT 2006

2006 was another very busy year for the battalion. 8/7 RVR has a relatively high tempo for a regionally based reserve unit. The following highlights the main, but not all, activities and some of the participants in these activities. There were many weekend and day activities conducted during the year that were important for the operational focus of the battalion. This article will concentrate on the continuous activities conducted by the unit or to which a significant contribution occurred.

There were also many directed support tasks undertaken by the unit, which at times placed a heavy load on certain individuals.

The 8th /7th Battalion, is to be re-rolled from January 2007. The role of 8/7 RVR will be:

“To provide specified individual and collective light infantry capabilities to support, sustain and reinforce Army's operational forces.”

The battalion exists for the purpose of producing capability for defence. It is well equipped and resourced to undertake all the training and tasks required of it, within some personnel limitations.

INFANTRY IET MOD 1 Course 4-19 Feb

The first major activity was the Infantry IET MOD 1 Course which was conducted out of Passchendaele Barracks, Bendigo. WO2 Anthony Osmond, CSM C Coy was the Course Manager. Eight members of the unit qualified on the course. Good use was made of Wellsford State Forest for navigation training. The battalion's cooks catered for the activity.

RECONNAISSANCE COURSE 6-28 May

A Reconnaissance Course was held at Buckland Training Area in Tasmania during May. It was a very demanding course. The students deserve much credit for undertaking this challenge. The conduct of the course was a joint effort with 5/6 RVR. WO2 Jason Watene from 5/6 RVR was the Course Canager. Twelve members of the battalion attended the course. Cpls Craig Hansen of Mildura and Steven Oakley from Laverton instructed on the

course. Pte Bruce Wilson of CSS Coy catered for this activity. Lt Marcus Doherty, as a student, would put many of the skills learned on this course to practice during EX Hamel.

SIGNALS COURSE 6-21 May

A Basic Communicators Course and a Specialist Communicators Course was conducted at Warrnambool during the May. The course was managed by the OC A Coy Maj Mike Bowman. The course resulted in twelve personnel qualifying within the battalion.

OP ACOLYTE

Op Acolyte was the ADF support to the Commonwealth Games held in Melbourne. Fifteen personnel from the battalion were part of JTF 636. Personnel worked out of Point Cook, supporting many activities at the games, including searches and security at Vehicle Checkpoints. The Commanding Officer, Lt Col Robert Marsh, was also involved as the Senior Defence Liaison Officer at the MCG.

15-26 Main

The Pay Cell at BHQ Ballarat was involved in paying all the reserve members of the 4 BDE RRF and associated reserve staff, with thanks to Cpl Gary Wilford for inputting pay for all personnel involved.

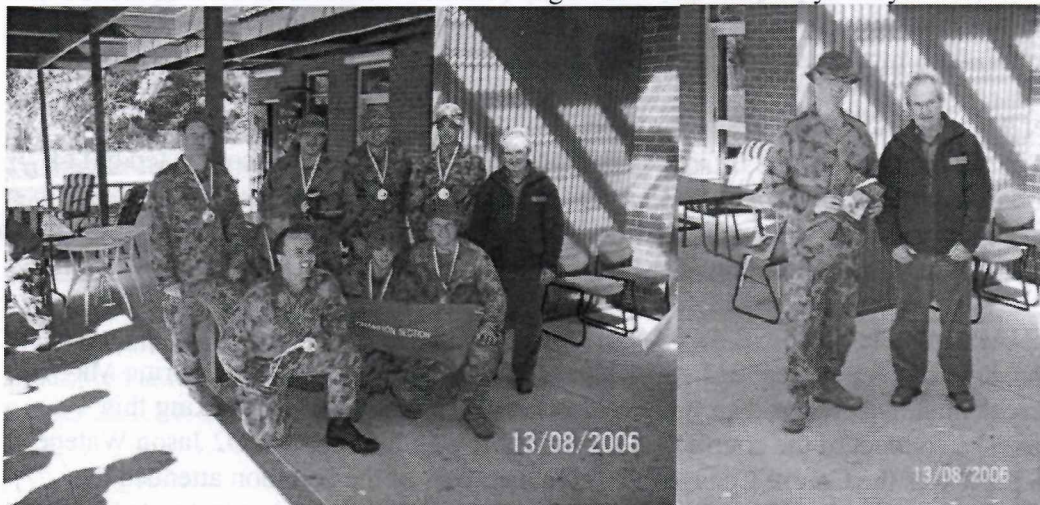
EX POLYGON WOOD 24 Jun -1 Jul 2006

One hundred and nine personnel attended the LFX conducted at Puckapunyal Training Area. The activity had an important operational focus. Maj Michael Bowman and WO2 Sean McGinley of A Coy organized this excellent activity. Many personnel completed qualifications/ re-qualifications on different weapons. Also AIRN was brought up to date, as much as possible during the LFX.

Site 6 was utilized for accommodation, as tents remained erected, post Op Acolyte. The caterer WO2 Mark Broemmer set up a field kitchen for the first three days of the exercise. This provided a good opportunity for the Catering Platoon to practise cooking for large groups in a 'near field' environment.

The exercise included blank and live fire platoon attacks culminating in a night company live defensive shoot.

MILITARY SKILLS WEEKEND 11-13 Aug 2006 Presentation by Terry O'Brien VVAA



A Coy's Champion Section 2006.

Pte Coates-Holiday Champion Soldier 2006

EX HAMEL 2-17 Sep

Seventy members of the battalion attended Exercise Hamel in Cultana Training Area in South Australia. 8/7 RVR provided a platoon to a rifle company commanded by 5/6 RVR, an OPFOR Platoon commanded by Lt Doherty, and personnel to 4 Bde HQ and elements of CSS Coy integrated into 4 CSSB for the exercise. Employers were flown to Cultana during the middle weekend along with the Divisional Commander, Maj Gen Ian Flawith, to visit the soldiers. He was so impressed that he ordered that the same activity should occur next year. The training included a firepower demonstration, using the full suite of battalion weapons in addition to guns from 2/10 Fd Regt.

Lt Doherty and his OPFOR platoon received a reputation for "daring, boldness and ingenuity". There appears to be no fear with this team. Some comments from 4/19 PWLH may even have used the term "recklessness".

To everyone who attended, good work.

INFANTRY INITIAL EMPLOYMENT MODULE ONE COURSE AND MODULE TWO COURSE 11 Nov – 10 Dec.

The organizing of these courses was particularly onerous as the courses were conducted in Tasmania, in unfamiliar training areas. The conduct of these courses in an unfamiliar environment, and with an elevated level of logistic preparation is evidence of the level of professionalism within the battalion. There were significant amounts of equipment required and planning for sixty students on each of the modules of the course. Both air and sea transport was used for the movement of personnel and stores to Tasmania. Although the Module One Course was undersubscribed with forty six personnel, the Module Two Course had over eighty personnel nominated.

OPERATIONS

WO2 Anthony Osmond was sent to California from April to Jun 2006 to train USMC personnel before they deployed to Iraq.

CPL Craig Hansen is currently seconded to 6 RAR in East Timor as a sniper supervisor until March 2007.

Several members have completed tours of duty in Iraq before returning to or taking up their postings at 8/7 RVR: the Adjutant Capt Kaylene Baird, the RQMS WO2 Brian Kirby, and Pte Brown-Kerr, Storeman C Coy Bendigo.

OP RELEX

Lt Paul O'Donnell led a team of battalion personnel to sunny Darwin over the Christmas period 2005. He was promoted in Darwin to Lt by the Division Commander Maj Gen Flawith. The soldiers received praise from the Divisional Commander for their work on this operation.

SED REVIEW

The organization of the battalion will change slightly in 2007. The fulltime component of the Battalion will be reduced to twenty seven (27) personnel. This does not necessarily mean that 27 personnel will be posted to the unit, but ideally this is the case. Personnel on two year postings beginning in 2006 will remain in 2007. Several personnel have already been

approached to undertake Continuous Full-time Service in positions that will not be filled by Full-time staff in 2007.

The new structure sees the removal of Support Company from the Reserve Battalion ORBATs. This has already occurred. The D Coy organization will simply be known as Recruiting Cell. However, the specialist elements of Support Company are catered to in the new SED with DFSW elements and Assault Pioneer positions within each rifle company.

FUTURE - OP ANODE

There will be approximately forty positions available for members of the battalion to participate Op Anode. during the second half of 2007. This is part of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. This task will take approximately seven months from June to December 2007. Members nominating will need to be AIRN compliant, trade qualified and have the time to do the task. This is an exciting opportunity for the Battalion to have its members participate in operations at an appropriate level.

CONCLUSION

The battalion has achieved in many areas this year. Ten personnel from the battalion completed Subject One for Corporal Courses in Brisbane. In November six soldiers were promoted to Lance Corporal. The unit is certainly looking forward to maintaining what is often cited as a "credible capable and committed" battalion. This is both a collective and individual goal. Thankyou to all the members of the battalion who put in an exceptional effort to do the tasks required of the unit.

The battalion achieved an excellent AIRN outcome with 74% at the census date of 30 September. This was a great outcome for the battalion. You must be compliant at all times, and also be compliant when nominating for Training Command courses.

I also wish to congratulate Lt Col Marsh, on his promotion to Colonel and wish him every success in his new role as Colonel Reserve Policy and thank him for his guidance, leadership and direction during the command of the battalion.

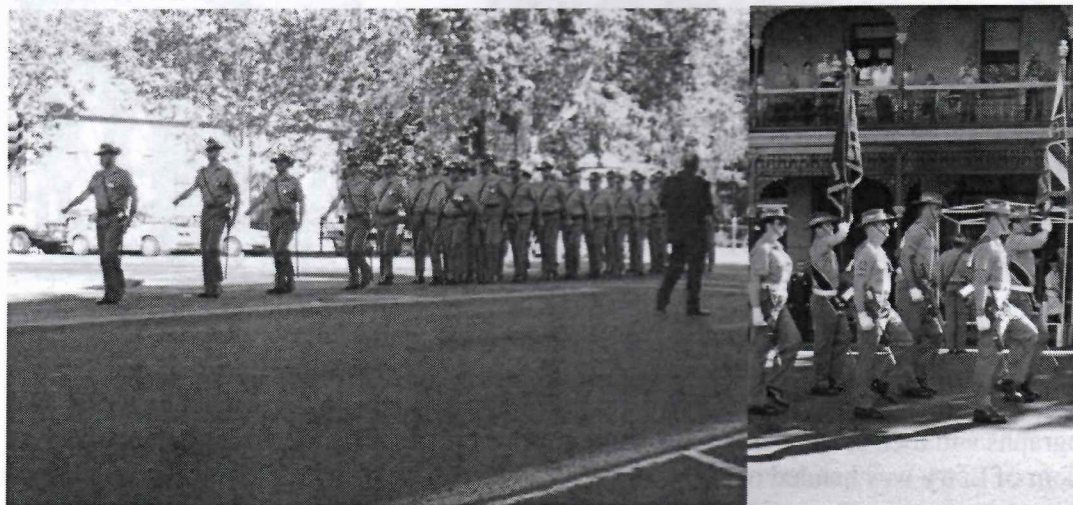
FREEDOM OF ENTRY TO THE CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

On Remembrance Day, 11th November 2006, the Council of the City of Greater Bendigo granted the right of Freedom of Entry in their city to the 8th/7th Battalion, The Royal Victoria regiment at a parade held outside the historic Shamrock Hotel in Williamson Street.

The day commenced at 0500 hours with some tired bodies dragging themselves out of bed having had just a few hours sleep after arriving at Passchendaele Barracks on Friday night. A full rehearsal, the only one available for those members participating was held, followed by a shortened rehearsal. Then it was off to breakfast, where the Caterer had provided the members with steaming hot food along with breakfast cereal and toast, and changing into "polys" for the parade.

The buses left at 0815 for the Pall Mall Car Park. Exactly on time at 0858 hours the battalion marched off for the Shamrock "Parade Ground". The Host Officer (The Regimental Colonel) Col Paul Riley, the Principal Guest (The Brigade Commander) Brig Steven Aird and the Mayor of The City of Greater Bendigo, Cr David Jones, were all welcome to the parade. The

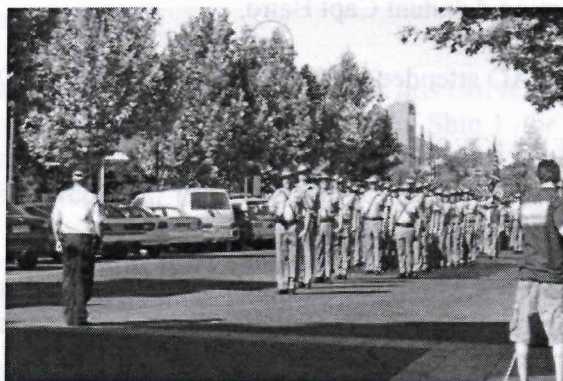
Mayor inspected the guards and the 5/6 RVR Pipes and Drums before presenting the Freedom of Entry Scroll to the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Robert Marsh.



Battalion marching on prior to receiving the "Freedom"

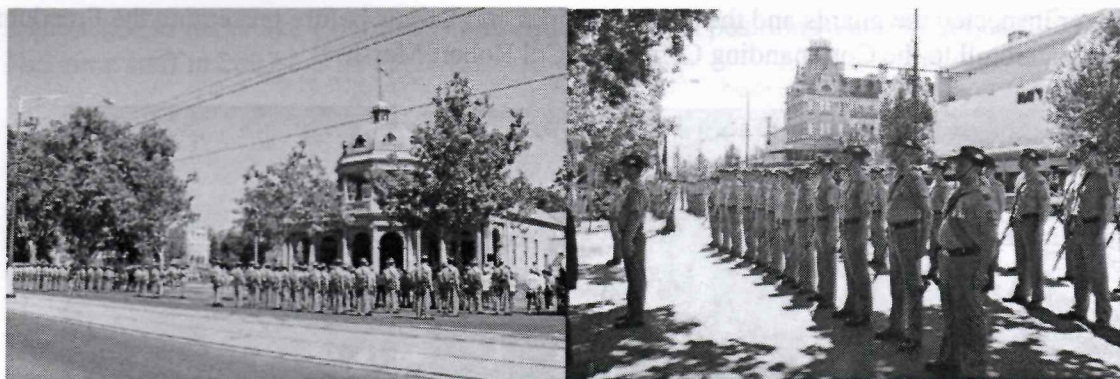
Colour Party marches on after receiving the "Freedom"

After a speech from the Mayor and a reply from the Brigade Commander, it was the time for the Colours to be marched on and the battalion saluted the Councillors and citizens of the City of Greater Bendigo. From there the battalion marched through the streets of the city and were challenged by a Policeman. Having viewed the scroll the Policemen allowed the battalion to proceed with its march.



"The Challenge" outside the Town Hall

After a break for refreshments, the battalion then marched to the Cenotaph outside the RSL Museum in Pall Mall where it participated in the Remembrance Day Service. All in all a great morning, but the day was not finished.



Bendigo Remembrance Day service at the RSL Memorial, Pall Mall

The local members and dignitaries moved to the old Passchendaele Barracks for a series of photographs and then some went to the Town Hall where the official Scroll granting the Freedom of Entry was handed over.

The last part of the day for most was undertaken back at the new Passchendaele Barracks where the Brigade Commander, Brig Aird: promoted six soldiers: Ptes Petering and Miller of A Coy, and Ptes Crowe, Hawson, Theodore and Trickett of C Coy to LCpl, promoted Cpl Werry (CSS Coy) to Sgt, presented a Petroleum Operators Badge to Cpl Wilford, presented the Australian Defence Medal to Maj Worsteling (OC CSS Coy), Sgt Curby (C Coy), Cpl Holland (CSS Coy, Swan Hill), Cpl Rogers (CSS Coy, Shepparton) and WO2 Dingley (Chief Clerk, BHQ), presented the ASM to Cpl Pollock for East Timor, and presented the Iraq Medal to the Acting Adjutant Capt Baird.

That evening the CO and XO attended the RSL Remembrance Day Dinner (separate article).

REMEMBRANCE SERVICES

9th November 2006, Ballarat

In 2005, a move was made for battalion associations to give schools the opportunity to hold and display their memorabilia. The 2nd/8th Battalion, with its connection with Ballarat, chose the Macarthur Street Primary School in Ballarat as their school.

The School's Remembrance Day Service this year was held on Thursday 9th November. Mr Keith Hill, the President of the 2nd/8th Battalion Association, who travelled by train from Melbourne, and the XO 8/7 RVR, Major Leckie, attended the service.

This year's service remembered the 90th Anniversary of the first ANZAC Day and the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. The service commenced with a song played over the PA System and then a second song "Walk with Me." sung by the school choir, accompanied by the School Principal, Mr Andy Blackall, on recorder. Mrs Deb Edwards, the service co-ordinator, then lead the Grade 6 pupils, who all participated, with the reading a poem, "Please Wear a Poppy", several short addresses on the commitment of the Australians in WWI and in

Vietnam, followed by The Ode, the laying of an 8th Battalion Colour Patch wreath, the last post, a minute's silence and the Rouse. The service concluded with the playing of the National Anthem.

It is pleasing to see the pride that the children in our schools have in the efforts of the men and women who have in the past and today serve their country.

11th November 2006, Bendigo

Following the Freedom of Entry to the City of Greater Bendigo Parade on Remembrance Day, the CO, Lt Col Marsh, and the XO, Maj Leckie, attended the Bendigo Sub-branch Remembrance Day Dinner. They shared their table with Mr Cliff Richards, President Bendigo Sub-branch, and his wife Trish; the Sub-branch Secretary, Mr Murray Poustie, Cr Kevin Gibbins representing Cr Jones The Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo; Mr Kevin Herman of Veterans Affairs Melbourne and his wife Pam; and Capt Danny Ellerton, OC 15 Tpt Sqn Bendigo and his wife Chris.

The Bendigo RSL was this year awarded the RSL Sub-branch of the Year. The meal was pumpkin soup, roast beef and vegetables and apple pie and cream served very efficiently by the award winning RSL Staff. As would be expected, there were a few speeches during the evening, and most included a thank you for the participation of 8/7 RVR in the Remembrance Day Service and comments on the great Freedom of Entry Parade that morning.

During the evening there was a presentation made by Lt Mark Pritchard and three of the Navy Cadets from the Training Ship Bendigo (the Navy Cadets based at Passchendaele Barracks). The presentation was made as a way of the cadets thanking the RSL for their financial support in assisting the cadets to attend the decommissioning of the HMAS Bendigo in Cairns on 9th September this year. The cadets spoke on the decommissioning of the ship and their visit to Cairns and the Navy Base there.

The original HMAS Bendigo (Ship 1) was a Bathurst Class Corvette, which saw service from 141-1946. The Bendigo RSL has some memorabilia from Ship 1: the ship's bell, its 1942 Ensign, a scale replica and some documents. The second HMAS Bendigo was a Fremantle Class Patrol Boat which served from 1983 to 2006.

Five cadets, three Navy Cadet Staff and Cr David Jones, the Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo, attended the decommissioning ceremony along with 8 of the 17 Ship's Commanding Officers. Also in attendance was Mrs Lynton who broke the bottle of champagne at the ship's commissioning.

The cadets presented the RSL with a framed Certificate of Appreciation for their support and the city with the ship's gangway banner. Cr Gibbins felt that the banner was best held by the RSL and passed it on to the RSL.

Once again it was great to see the commitment of the teenage cadets, who under all sorts of competing pressures, enthusiastically embrace the discipline and comradeship of the services.

The cadets also attended the commissioning of the HMAS Ararat, the replacement ship for the HMAS Bendigo on 10th November.

NEW BATTALION STRUCTURE

As of 1st January 2007, the battalion will have a new structure. This change will allow a better career path for members of the rifle companies and allow the battalion strength to increase.

BHQ remains as the operational and administrative command. There will be three rifle companies:

A Coy (the Southern Company) with the Geelong, Laverton and Warrnambool Depots. There will be a Pioneer Section attached to the HQ and three rifle platoons of three rifle sections and a support section each. The company will also control the Recon Platoon,

B Coy (the Central Company) with members at the Ballarat and Monegetta Depots will also have a Pioneer Section attached to its HQ and three platoons of three sections and a support section each, and

C Coy (the Northern Company) with the Bendigo, Shepparton, Swan Hill and Mildura Depots will also have a Pioneer Section attached to its HQ and three platoons of three sections and a support section each.

Support Company has been broken up into a Signals Platoon, with a headquarters and six detachments, a recon Platoon under A Coy and Pioneer Sections with the three rifle companies.

Admin Coy will now be called the Combat Services Support Company or CSS Coy. Its role remains unchanged and it will continue provide Q, Catering, Medical, Transport and Technical Support.

As stated earlier, D Coy will now be called the Recruiting Cell.

OP ACOLYTE Ode to Op Acolyte, by SSgt Ivan Solomano

Five years ago, Steve Bracks said,
"We've got the Games.
It'll bring in the tourists
And get Melbourne some fame."

Police Chief Nixon said,
"What about security?
We've got too few police
And that's a damn surety."

"The baddies will come,
They'll bomb and they'll maim.
I'll not be a scapegoat,
I'll not take the blame."

"We could hire some Chubbies,
Borrow a guard or two.
But that won't be enough,
We're still too few."

They searched some buses,
Some cars and a truck.
The compactor was opened.
Willie got covered in muck.

Some drivers got angry,
"You're making me late."
"I'm sorry there Sir,
You'll just have to wait."

"Your numbers don't match.
You're not on the List.
I can see that you're angry.
I'm sorry you're pissed."

"Your seals are all broken,
They're small blue, not white.
It should take just a moment
To put this all right."

“Don’t panic,” said Bracksy.
“I’ll give Johnny a call.
He’ll bring in the Army.
They’ll all have a ball.”

Christine said “OK, but
Don’t let them bring Steyrs.
But they must wear those nice cams,
That I do so admire.”

“We’ll give them a vest,
A mirror and a Maglight.
When the terrorists see them,
They’ll get such a fright.”

So the Army arrived,
STG was started.
From civvy work and families,
The soldiers departed.

They’ve got some commanders,
Ralph, Healy, Khan and Fink.
They’ve got somewhere to stay.
They’ve got somewhere to drink.

The venues were searched.
They found a checkbox.
They kicked in the doors
And cut open some locks.

They searched high and low.
They went through the trash.
They found some used condoms,
But no bombs or no cash.

The next phase began.
They built a VCP.
They found some knives,
But not even one IED.

“Behave yourself now.
Just do what I say.
This search can be quick or,
We can take all the day.”

“Your rego’s expired.
You’ve got the wrong pass.
Now calm right down or you’ll
Get a boot up the arse.”

Most drivers were happy.
They did what we asked.
But the matrix was flexible
And we were often re-tasked.

Then the athletes went home.
The ‘06 Games had ended.
Stores were returned.
All damages mended.

No bombs had exploded,
No incendiaries ignited.
Johnny was happy,
Christine was delighted.

The troopies went home,
Back to their own houses.
They said “Hi” to their kids
And caught up with their spouses.

Over time, the memories will fade.
It’ll seem like a dream,
That you were involved with the Games,
As part of a Team.

But in many years time,
When asked, “What did you do?”
You can hold your head high and say,
“I was with 4 STU.”

3 Platoon “Ever Vigilant”

NAMING OF GEELONG MUD

On Saturday 9th December 2006, the Geelong MUD, the redeveloped Geelong Barracks, was renamed Newland Barracks. Capt James Ernest Newland was born in Geelong and served with the Artillery in the Boer War. In WWI he served at Gallipoli with the 12th Bn and was commissioned on 22nd May 1915. Capt Newland was MID at Pozieres and was awarded a VC for his actions in April 1917 at Bapaume-Cambrai and Lagnicourt. He was the oldest AIF member awarded a VC.

PRINCE OF WALES AWARD Lt Daniel Strack, B Coy

After going through an extensive selection process coordinated by the Defence Reserves Support Council (DRSC), the organisation that liaises between the employers of Reservists and the Australian Defence Force, LT Daniel Strack was awarded the prestigious Prince of Wales Award. This award allows a Reserve member to attend a two week training activity with an organisation allied to his civilian occupation and a further two week activity with a military organisation in another country.



Lt Daniel Strack receiving his POWA
From the CA Lt Gen Peter Leahy

Strackie with Miami Police

An Australian Customs Service Officer, LT Strack undertook research into the development of a currency detector dog capability for the Australian Customs Service Detector Dog Program. His two-week attachment to United States Customs and Border Protection provided the opportunity to discuss technical currency detection issues with Canine Enforcement Training Centre staff in Virginia as well as observing operational currency detection dogs at Miami International Airport.

Last year Lt Strack received an award as a Training Instructor with the Customs Detector Dog Program. But he said "We can learn a lot from the experiences of our US colleagues. They are very good at what they do, and have extensive experience in counter-terrorism initiatives including the detection of terrorist financing and money laundering. Their currency dogs have been around for a number of years and have proven themselves with many multi-million dollar currency seizures."

"The introduction of currency dogs will help Australian Customs and other Federal authorities uphold strengthened border controls."

Customs have narcotic, explosives/firearms, and chemical detection dogs currently working at Australia's major ports. "Having a currency detection capability will strengthen our ability to detect terrorist financing activities, provide opportunity for greater inter-agency co-operation, and will develop the Federal Governments multi-layered approach to combating terrorist activities in Australia."

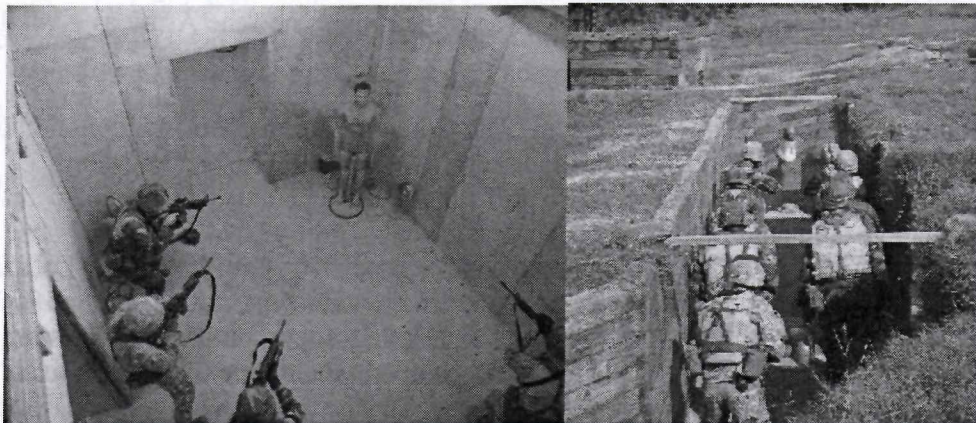


Strackie undergoing Dog Handling Training

The second element to the Prince of Wales Award was a two-week military attachment to the US Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. LT Strack, who is an Infantry Platoon Commander at Monegetta, was able to observe and participate in a variety of live-fire urban operations training exercises at the US Infantry Schools state-of-the-art facilities, including Booker Range Shootouse and the McKenna MOUT site.

“The rooms we used were made of a cement-fibreglass-rubber compound that allowed the rounds to be absorbed by the wall, negating ricochets and splashback”. Digital video recording of the exercises allowed quality after-action reviews to be conducted prior to the live-fire exercises.

“The use of 9mm ammunition really brought a sense of urgency into the students approach to weapon handling and muzzle awareness, which was particularly important before moving into the live-fire exercises.”



The Live Fire Room and Live Fire Bunker at Fort Benning

Gaining exposure to the practical use of the US Army’s urban training facilities and established training methods will help to enhance 8/7 RVR’s ability to develop advanced soldier skills. “All the instructors had seen active service in Iraq, bringing a wealth of knowledge for the students to draw from.” “We have our own methodologies for soldier training, as the US does. Combining our doctrine with their practical use of urban training

facilities and lessons learned in combat environments will provide the basis for advanced soldier training and development.”

In addition to the urban training, LT Strack also had the opportunity to assist another Australian, WO2 Jim Wieland, Sergeant Major of the United States Infantry School Combined Arms & Tactics Directorate, with the conduct of a TEWT for an Officer Candidate School course.

“The sharing of knowledge and experience with each other has benefits for both,” said LT Strack on both his Army and Customs attachments. “I’m richer for the experience, and grateful for the opportunity.” Lt Strack looks forward to passing on much of this experience to his soldiers at Monegetta and throughout the battalion.

A COY from Lt Warfe OC 1 Pl.

The year of 2006 was always going to be full of challenges for the members of the Geelong Depot of 8/7 RVR. Our parade numbers were at unsatisfactory low levels, the prospect of an entirely new Company Headquarters loomed over us, and the less said about our depot building (affectionately known as ‘The Cottage’) the better. However, after parading at “the warehouse”, which visitors and potential recruits could not find, “The Cottage” was at least visible to the public. Despite these impending challenges, I am proud to report that 2006 has undoubtedly been the most successful and progressive year in this depot’s recent history.

For the first time since I have been the platoon commander at this depot, Geelong is nearing its goal of having a full platoon of qualified soldiers on its books. This has been no mean feat, but well worth the effort by all in the depot. New blood is vital for the ongoing success of any depot, and on this regard, Geelong looks set for another cracking year in 2007. As well as the excellent recruitment we have experienced over the past 12 months, we have also been able to retain almost all of qualified members from 2005, and this is a testament to their continuing commitment and enthusiasm towards their mates and the Army as a whole. Well done to all for a great year!

The members began parading this year in ‘The Cottage’, a four room stand-alone house that you could barely accommodate a headquarters unit, let alone a platoon worth of diggers. Consequently, as our numbers grew, so did the 11x11 tent city that began to resemble a United Nation humanitarian mission in Pakistan. Until, FINALLY, one fine day in September, we moved (the whole 40 metres!) into our newly refurbished Multi-User Depot on the original Myers Street site. When completed, the site will consist of a number of fully fitted offices and lecture rooms, three wet-weather training sheds, a large Q-building and an armoury. The official opening is set for 9th December, when hopefully our “boozer” will be complete and operational; suspending the need for the platoon to migrate to the local McDonald’s at the end of a gruelling Tuesday night.

Seeming this is suppose to be a yearly report, it would be remiss of me if I didn’t actually report on the activities conducted by the Geelong depot during the year, so here we go:

1. Various company weekends focusing on urban patrolling, security operations, and AIRN compliancy set the scene for additional weekend training opportunities next year. Point to note: if someone steals your weapon, is it wise to give chase... unarmed?

2. ANZAC Day – a commendable performance was put in by all members performing Geelong’s only dawn service and various catafalque duties at a number of RSL locations. A fine rendition of Kenny Roger’s “The Gambler” enjoyed by all.
3. Battalion Live Fire Exercise was once again well supported by Geelong members, resulting in the successful repulsion of the 3rd Musorian Division... good work men! Point to note: yes, raw eggs can successfully be carried and eaten out field... thank you PTE Robertson.
4. Exercise HAMEL, the Bde Ex conducted in Cultana, SA, in September, was the last major field activity on the parade card for the year and saw a gallant 6 Platoon show superb battlefield discipline to bamboozle the OPFOR (led by a clearly outperformed LT Doherty... better luck next time my friend!)
5. A number of successful recruiting activities at Deakin University, a Geelong Football Club home game, and the Geelong Show.

This year, the Geelong Depot has welcomed the well-deserved promotions of Corporal Robert Burrell and Lance Corporal Robert Miller, and it is always satisfying to see hard-working and dedicated soldiers progressing through the ranks and, more importantly, the pay scales. Congratulations Buzz and Millsy, keep up the good work.

I would like to formally thank a number of people for making 2006 the year that it has been for the Geelong Depot. Firstly, to the hard working and ever-enthusiastic CSM, WO2 Sean McGinley, believe me that your dedication and long hours have never been taken for granted by the members of the depot, and we would like to thank you for restoring our faith in the Regular Army’s Warrant Officers. To Cpl Stoop and Cpl Ferguson, who leave us after many years loyal service, once again you have made it immeasurably easier on us to conduct training and administer the platoon effectively. Good luck in Tasmania in all your endeavours. To Cpl Lakey, your recruiting prowess has been an absolute asset to this depot and the company as a whole (I swear if anyone could actually sell ice to the Eskimos, it would be him), and I’m sure we will miss your dedicated service next year. Finally, thanks go to Pte Breach (who is another who will not be gracing the corridors of Myers Street next year) for his tireless efforts in the orderly room and countless hours on radio piquet over the years. Once again, good luck for the future in whatever you choose to undertake.

It has undoubtedly been a challenging but rewarding 12 months for the Geelong Depot, and things are looking even brighter for 2007: numbers just keep increasing, the final completion of the new MUD will enable much more efficient training and development of *esprit de corps*, and the formal re-establishment of a pioneer capability at Geelong has many people enthused. The test now is to ensure we capitalise on the good work that has occurred this year to making 2007 bigger and more successful than the excellent performance of all members in 2006.

LAVERTON

2006 at Laverton was a year full of activities, courses, exercises and some very memorable social functions. Yet the highlight of the year was the long awaited shift from building 588 into building 123, notoriously known as “The Hangar”.

The shift to the hangar was a defining moment of the year at Laverton. At first it seemed like the task would be pointless as the ancient, pre WW2 era building needed a lot of attention. After cleaning up we segregated areas of the hangar into a classroom, Q-store, gymnasium and an area for the W.G. Nottingham Soldiers Club. Once we shifted in all the equipment, Building 123 finally started to take shape and our new home began to look a lot less depressing.

The Year started with an AIRN mandatory training weekend on the 4th/5th of February where all Alpha Company attended. This weekend was followed by two similar weekends; the first focused around DFSW weapons where many soldiers became Mag-58 and 84mm qualified and the second an Urban Training weekend on the 14th/15th of October.

These training weekends were run hand in hand with many exercises or operations Through-out the year. The first of these was OP Acolyte, which was assistance to the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. Laverton supplied three members.

The first major exercises that concerned Laverton was the company LFX, op Ypres 2, where Laverton supplied 1 section and a recon patrol. The number attending fluctuated over the period of the exercise due to members having civilian commitments, however, overall it was well supported.

The second major exercise was the Brigade Ex Hamel at Cultana, SA, where Laverton supplied half a platoon as part of a company in defence. Many vital lessons were learned from this activity and included valuable skills learnt from the cadets supplied to the sections.



Pte Dvorecek receiving guidance from a Cadet.

Laverton Section at Cultana

Several courses were run during the year and involved many Laverton members. They included multiple MOD1/MOD2 Infantry IET Courses where many Laverton members became 343-1 compliant. Other courses with Laverton Participants included the highly awaited Recon course, held in sunny Tassie, and the Signals Course, held in equally sunny Warrnambool.

Socially the year contained many interesting functions. These included a function to celebrate the opening of the new location of the W.G. Nottingham Soldiers Club on ANZAC day eve, which crept into the next day, which then in turn crept into the following night. This year's AFL Grand Final was also celebrated at the depot, where we were able to sport 12 kilos of

meat on our brand new spit. Other memorable nights at the W.G. Nottingham Soldiers Club included the end of the Company LFX night and a function on the Saturday night of the urban training weekend.

Although there were no promotions, this year has been a brilliant, prosperous year at Laverton and hopefully next year will yield a few extra stripes and our depot will keep progressing and numbers continue to grow well into 2007.

WARRNAMBOOL by Cpl David Hastings

It has been another busy year at the Warrnambool Depot. New enlistments for the year were Pte Quigley, Pte Swam, Pte Murphy, Rec Ballagh, REC Oakley, Pte Gleeson, Pte Harbour and reenlistment Cole. Numbers were further boosted with the transfers in of Pte Louw, Pte Dougherty, Sgt Hirst and new Depot Commander Cpl Hastings.

Members leaving the depot were PteE Price and Pte Stokes (both full-time); Pte Stoman, Pte Woodward, Pte Keane, PTE Harpley (all Ballarat); Sgt Harding (6RAR), Maj Laidlaw (Brigade) and Maj Bowman (Moved to QLD)

Exercise Hamel was attended by Maj Bowman, Cpl Anderson, Cpl Charman, Pte J Petering and Pte W Petering. Everyone one was glad to be moving away from Pucka for the exercise and looking forward to a change of training location. Highlights of the exercise was the company attack and working with the APC's. With the new members joining the Warrnambool Depot hopefully in future exercises we will have at least a full section!

The live fire exercise was also another opportunity for us to test our skills in the defence. Attendance by Maj Bowman, Cpl Charman, Pte J Petering, Pte W Petering, Pte Meade and Pte Quigley.

Highlights for the J.W.H Atkinson MC Soldiers Club were the unveiling of J.W.H Atkinson medals. Sgt Harding started the search for replica medals to be on display in the club. Unfortunately, Sgt Harding had left Warrnambool by the time that they went on display. He worked very hard to make sure the event was a success. The event was a great success with over 100 people attending and members of Jack Atkinson family in attendance. Also the yearly 2 RVR Association Dinner was a success as well.

With a new Depot Commander come changes. Cpl Hastings put to the members some ideas about renovating the J.W.H Atkinson Soldiers Club. With the majority being in favour the renovations got under way quickly with a lot of hard work by Cpl Hastings, Pte Stoman, Pte Stokes, Pte Meade and Pte Price. With thanks to Cpl Anderson for supplying the paint and ex member John Stapleton for doing the polished floor boards. The boozier was repainted, carpet ripped up, floorboards polished and new larger windows installed. The renovations look fantastic a big thanks to the work by those mentioned above.

Members who attended courses for the year were Pte Meade (Sig), Pte W Petering (Mog) and Pte J Petering (DFSW & Sub 1). There are also a number of new members completing IET's and basic training.

Recruiting has been a major focus for the year with the aim to boost numbers so Warrnambool can get a full section in the field. One particular recruiting highlight was by Pte

Louw. Under strict instruction from Cpl Hastings to recruit any one we could, Pte Louw actually did listen and went on his own mini recruiting drive at Deakin University. He recruited three females from Deakin. Pte Louw's enthusiasm to raise the profile of Army Reserve in Warrnambool did not stop there. He attended the Warrnambool Show where he spoke to the local radio station and talked them into letting him have a chat live on air. He was addressed as "Agent Louw" (a promotion!?) on air and other than that did a good job by all accounts.

A big thanks to Pte W Petering for driving 3 hours on a Tuesday to get back just in time to parade at Warrnambool a dedicated member! To all those how have left Warrnambool to go to another depot you are welcome back any time if you are in Warrnambool on a Tuesday. Pte Keane told me that Warrnambool Depot is so good that he was thinking about just driving back on Tuesday to parade here!

Apologies to any events that I have forgotten and all those embarrassing stories I have forgotten also (names unnamed can rest easy now).

B COY

In 2006, B Company completed its last year as the battalion's Training Company and looks forward to resuming the traditional role of a Rifle Company in 2007. The Headquarters was made up of the Company Commander Capt John Spencer, CSM and Acting RSM WO2 Shane Armstrong, CQMS Sgt Trevor Beales (who is often working with the Main Q) and Cpl Steve Linane (who also has a second hat and works in the Battalion Orderly Room). This year the company has opened a new depot at Monegetta under Lt Daniel Strack. Strackie is slowing getting a few numbers at Monegetta and is looking forward to a big year in 2007. Thanks must go to WO1 Greg Green who has been the Project Officer for raising the facility at Monegetta.

C COY

C Company has had a good year in 2006 which has seen a significant increase in numbers. There have been numerous activities and support requests that have been well supported by C Company members. Reports from these activities and tasks have stated that the C Company members that have attended, have acquitted themselves in a professional manner and achieved good results.

Bendigo and Shepparton continue to be our largest depots with Mildura and Swan Hill being considerably smaller. The size of the depots is in no way indicative of the enthusiasm and dedication of their members. Swan Hill is slightly disadvantaged as it does not have a permanent ARA presence for day to day continuity. CPL Logan continues to do a superb job as GRES Depot Manager. 2007 will see a national recruiting drive with the possibility of an increase in numbers for all depots.

The major activities that C Company was involved in were, firstly: the Commonwealth games. The main task for this support activity was to assist in the security of the village accommodation. This activity provided soldiers with an ideal opportunity to interact with a variety of internal and external agencies, meet with people from a variety of countries and participate in an international event. Reports have been favourable and those who participated are commended for their professionalism.

The Battalion Ranges Week was a well needed opportunity for all members to practice live weapon handling with a large range of battalion weapons. For some soldiers it was their first time firing particular types of weapons and the experience will continue to prove invaluable. It is essential that soldiers take every opportunity to live fire weapons as more opportunities will develop greater expertise and confidence.

Exercise Hamel proved challenging for all involved. C Company provided soldiers for the enemy party and instructors for the Mod 2 Infantry IET Course. The soldiers involved in the enemy party enjoyed the experience which allowed them flexibility in the practice of their soldier skills.

A big activity for C Company was the 'Freedom of Entry to The City of Greater Bendigo'. There was a lot of hard work conducted and the effort into organizing the event ensured that was a great success.

C Company has been fortunate to be able to deploy several of soldiers overseas. CPL Anderson participated in Exercise ANZAC Exchange. This Exercise was designed to exchange soldiers from like units in Australia and New Zealand to allow interaction of ideas and skills.

C Company's CSM, WO2 Osmond, was selected for a 3 month detachment with the US Marines in California. His role was to aid in the development of Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) for the Marines being deployed to Iraq.

CPL Hansen was selected and deployed for a specialist roll in East Timor. He is to be commended on this achievement and we wish him a safe return from his deployment.

There have been several 'outstanding achievements' on courses during 2006:

- PTE D. Crowe, Student of Merit Subject 1 Corporal
- CPL S. McKinley, Student of Merit Subject 1 Sergeant
- PTE K. Hayden, Student of Merit Subject 1 Mod 1 Clerical
- LCPL C. Hayden, Student of Merit Subject 1 Corporal

The above soldiers are commended for their achievements. They have set a high standard for the rest of the battalion

The OC and CSM of C Company are to move on at the end of 2006. The OC, Maj Townsend, will take up a two year full time military contract at CATC in Puckapunyal. He will be part of the team planning the Army of the future. He has been instrumental in setting up a lot of the procedures for the C Company and the company wishes him and his family all the best for the future.

The CSM, WO2 Osmond, has decided to end his full time military career and will transfer to the Army Reserve in 2007. We wish him and his family all the best for the future.

C Company has had a busy but rewarding year. It has achieved a good level of training. With the experiences gained there are numerous individuals who are being looked at for promotion in the near future. 2007 will see training orientated around possible scenarios around the

Pacific Region. With the same professionalism and commitment shown in 2006 C Company will be capable of delivering similar, if not better results in 2007.

C Company wishes the rest of the 8/7 RVR a Merry Christmas and good soldiering in 2007.

SWAN HILL

Last year saw the loss of the last full-time member posted to the Swan Hill Depot and the responsibility for the management falling on the ARES staff Cpls Logan & Holland jointly with CHQ in Bendigo. This has proven a challenge as civilian contractors and Army demands for access on the depot at all hours have to be managed with our civilian employers. With just two people left on the books at one point in 2005 things were looking pretty bad for Messines Barracks. It is good to report that things have turned around in 2006. While we still have no full-time member of staff here, numbers have significantly improved from last year's low point. There are now nine soldiers parading at the depot, 7 members of 8/7 RVR based at Swan Hill including our first soldier directly recruited into the Swan Hill Depot for four years Dale Jobling. We would also like to welcome Ptes Hawson from Mildura and Shanley from the ARA who also transferred in this year. In addition, Cpl Allen from 1 MP and Cpl Brown from 4/19 PWLH also live locally and parade at the depot rounding out our numbers.

During the year a ULP Course was run at the depot and was well attended by C Coy members and a couple of A Coy boys who took the long drive up from Warrnambool. Along with the URO conference in Wangaratta, the course was a big success especially with re-energizing the GRES members from Swan Hill and Mildura who have had to step up after the loss of their ARA staff in recent times. The Brigade Recruiting Cell said it was the best course they had run to date with lots of ideas, feedback and debates expanding what may otherwise have been a dull course. Not just a Piss Trip!

In other local activities during the year, we supported ANZAC Day, OP Acolyte and the RRF along with the demands of the training program. Links have also been established with the local RSL, Vietnam Veterans, the Veterans Affairs organization and the local council. This led to Cpl Logan being invited to attend a CPX at the Swan Hill Emergency Management Committee. It proved to be an excellent training experience for all parties involved. Cpl Logan started his promotion courses for SGT in June and Cpl Holland was to upgrade his qualifications as a Medic in November. Pte Luke Dear and his partner Karen welcomed the birth of their first child Elizabeth.

On the social side, over the course of 2006 Cpl Viv Holland held a fishing weekend which included a number of Mildura boys. While the Murray Crays were in good supply only local knowledge seemed to work as only Viv managed to land a fish all weekend!

This year has also been a good year for spotting ex-Swan Hill members in the media with a number of them popping up all over the world in including Iraq and Afghanistan. In recent years Sgt Bill Clayden, Padre Martin de Pyle, Dean Simmons, Dave Ulrich, Luke McDonald, Kate McLaucglan, Trent Goddard, Brett Dacey and Ben Girradello have all gone full time and been posted overseas. Our former, Padre Martin de Pyle, while posted in Iraq would give highly entertaining and popular tours of all the holy sites to anyone who visited the area. Good Luck guys and come home safely.

MILDURA

2006.... What a year the lads at Mildura have had! We saw a lot of changes and improvements and a fair share of comings and goings after it was almost a ghost town for many months when our Depot Manager Cpl Sean Connelley left to chase his lady in Europe. The ball started rolling again, however, when Conner's replacement Cpl Craig Hansen (Ex 5/7 RAR) rocked up at the beginning of the year to start his two-year posting here.

We had some blokes getting qual'd in their IETs, doing courses all over the joint and a few Exercises too. Rowie and Chands went to Warrnambool for two weeks to learn how to be 'handbags'. Although they say they had a blast, good old Rowie missed out on getting a 'tick in the box' 'cause he didn't bury a 'K Phone' wire..... What the!?!

Kev Farrell got himself all qual'd up on the Mack and Crane Courses, but later in the year bugged his ankle doing counter-ambush drills from a 'Mog. Of course it didn't take long for the boys to turn the white plaster black with obscene one-liners.

Theo came back in one piece from Op Relex. Lucky for him they didn't take cross the equator!

Some depot members took part in this year's LFX providing a section including Goddy, Derms, Chands and Crumbie. They didn't realize how cold it can get in Pucka until they discovered Derm's gun frozen in its stakes. Speaking of freezing your off, Simmo went to Tassie for the Recon Course to learn some 'sneaky, peaky' type stuff (ie recon). Whilst nobody knows exactly what he learnt down there, we soon discovered that when Simmo hear 'Contact front!' he turns around and bolts in the opposite direction.

Ex Hamel was a great one for us also. Theo was assigned 2IC for one of the A Coy sections and almost needed his brew mug surgically removed from his non-master hand after creating hours of down time for himself in his appointed role. The rest of the blokes were there to play enemy though and young Willy, fresh from Kapooka, wouldn't stop grinning until he got sent off to man Sentry Post 6 halfway through the Ex. And Hano (Cpl Hansen) had to make a quick get away from Hamel for a 6 month tour of East Timor, lucky bugger!

Cpl Robert Walker joined us soon after Hamel to fill Craig's spot and is currently floating between Mildura, Bendigo and Swan Hill, but says he is looking forward to digging in Mildura.

We have taken part in a few Recruiting activities after the Unit Level Promoter's Course in Swan Hill, one being the Deniliquin Ute Muster. The course has made us focus on what we can do here in terms of further recruiting to boost our numbers as Swan Hill is starting to catch up since they poached 'Horse' from us.

Everything is starting to swing into play for Mildura it seems. Woodsy has come back from the Army Aviation Training Centre, Richo and Willy will be Qualified Riflemen any time now, Simmo's son will be joining us and we're soon to send some more lads down to enlist.

So with that, we hope to see everyone join in on our outings next year. And if you're ever in Mildura, you should drop in for a 'coldie' with us and maybe watch some footy on our Beaucoup Plasma TV.

We have had a few visitors this year with the XO (twice), the Adjutant and the Padre (doing his farewell visit) all enjoying that TV.

Ins and Outs were:

In: Cpl Craig Hansen (ex 5/7 RAR and ARTC then out to East Timor), Cpl Rob "Tex" Walker (ex 1 RAR), Pte Peter Woods (173 Surveillance) and Pte Sean Williams.

Out: Cpl Connelley, Pte Leviston (back to Ballarat) and Pte Nigel Hill (back to 5/6 RVR).



Mildura members and visitors enjoy the new TV in the Pearse Club

SHEPPARTON by Cpl Buck Rogers

Incomings and Outgoings: We gained a new Company 2IC Capt Gerard Whitton, a new digger Pte Eric Padman (5/6 RVR) and the numbers also grew with recruits Dave Hodgson, Troy Robertson, Brian McLeod, Josh Adams (from Cadets), Kayde Crapper (yes, correct spelling), Troy Buckley, Neil Johnson, Daniel Fleming and M. Read.

We started the year (first weekend in February) with an ARIN weekend. Saturday was a range shoot at Puckapunyal and Saturday night a social evening. Sunday was "death by lite-pro" in a classroom with the compulsory lectures. It was good to get a fresh start to the year.

EX ACOLYTE

For the last half of 2005 a number of members of 8/7 RVR had been putting extra weekends in, in preparation for the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, as part of the Security Task Group. On the last week of February to the beginning of March SSgt Solomano, Cpl Rogers, Pte Andrew, Pte Moore and Pte Maskecheff started their "tour of duty". We soon discovered two things about Joint Task Force Operations:

1. The big wheels turn very slowly, that's why they look like they are going backwards!
2. What ever you were just told is now irrelevant.

The Op Acolyte members prepared for their two main rolls, venue searches and Vehicle Check Points (VCPs). At the VCPs we practised different scenarios both to revise our training and gain knowledge of our legal powers and wrong assumptions (lots of them, most

ending in civil charges against us personally) we made as members of the ADF when handling the general public.

We lived at the Point Cook Air Base at Laverton just outside of Melbourne from which we were bussed to the various locations to undertake the different tasks on a 24-hour roster.

One of the major tasks was to search every inch of the venues being used for the different events. By the end of searching one of the venues we had collected enough hidden men's magazines to fill two large boxes and more than two dozen 'bong' pipes which makes you wonder what the staff there do all day. We then supported the Victoria Police in controlling access to those venues.

Working with the Victoria Police was a very interesting experience. There were occasions where there were disagreements with persons trying to gain access to venues without the correct documentation. In these instances the police would defuse the situation (as they are trained to do) and make the final decision. On one such occasion at a VCP, a van was stopped. Upon checking the vehicle it was found not to have the required documentation to allow it to enter any venue, and the driver only had a pass for another venue. His vehicle was full of tools and electrical components, which would take hours to manually search. It was recommended to the driver that he should go to the Logistic Screening Zone to have his vehicle x-rayed and sealed and obtain the correct documentation which would allow him access to this venue (as stated in hand outs for contractors from the Commonwealth Games Committee). He became irate and a VICPOL Officer stepped forward to quieten the driver down. After talking with the driver, the Officer then told the ADF Team Leader that the driver and his van could pass, at which time the ADF Scribe recorded the details of the police Officer. The Police Officer enquired as to why his details were being recorded, and was informed by the ADF Team Leader they were required to keep a details of all incidents outside of SOP's including who authorised the driver and vehicle to pass without presenting the valid passes, so that should an incident arise from the vehicle being allowed to pass there would be a written record. The Police Officer then returned to the aforementioned driver and ordered him to leave the area and go obtain the correct passes and go through the appropriate x-rays and sealing process, and no matter how much he argued he would not be allowed entry to *this venue*. (The Police always made the final decision).

ANZAC DAY. 25th APRIL

Once again the Shepparton Depot supported a number of ceremonies around the region providing Catafalque Parties for both Dawn and Main Services in Shepparton, Cobram and Tongala.

DEPOT OPEN DAY

The open day was held in conjunction with 4 CSSB and Brigade Recruiting. With the weather not on our side only around 150 people visited on the day. But a number of lessons were learnt from this exercise which will continue to help make future Open Days more successful in both making our communities more conscious of the Reserve Army and gaining new recruits. Among other recruiting activities such as Elmore Field Days, Deniliquin Ute Muster, Shepparton Bush Markets, winter and summer, Shepparton Show, Gun Exhibition and Dookie Careers day. Our recruiting success has replaced many of the dead wood who left this year.

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY. 19TH AUGUST

The Shepparton Depot provided a Catafalque Party for the service. The service was attended by around 300 Veterans, their families and friends. It was a very moving day as most of the speeches were emotionally charged, the Vietnam Veterans acknowledged they now felt comfortable to remember their fallen mates in the view of the wider community and you were left with a lump in your throat that was not easily removed. After the service some of the veterans took photos of the Catafalque party and thanked them for their presence, support and their show of respect to the veteran's who did not return.

To finish off, the Shepparton Depot has had a successful year recruiting new members, and we are all looking forward to next year increasing the tempo of activities in and out of the presence of the public eye. With some luck we will get more equipment now the Q Store has had shelving fitted to be able to conduct more training on Tuesday nights.

CSS COY by Maj Worsteling

When I became aware that my contribution to the 2006 Battalion Journal was due, I looked back at the 2005 edition for inspiration and style. What struck me was that almost all of the articles I looked at started with words to the effect of "another year has passed by" (as they do). Here we are at the end of 2006 and I have say that the year has flown and I am saying the same thing in almost no time at all.

The first thing to note for the year is the company name change to properly reflect Infantry Battalion doctrine. Combat Service Support is a more accurate description of the roles and tasks we undertake to support 8/7 RVR in all of its activities. Our effectiveness in providing that support was again very visible in 2006. Many of our specialists reached their ARTDS limit in the early part of the year and are well on the way again for 06/07.

I acknowledge that the rate of activity in 2006 has placed heavy demands on our trade skills but members of the company were still able to attend specialist courses such as the Regimental Signals Course, a Mack Drivers Course and a Vehicle Mounted Crane Course. In addition, members of the company supported many battalion activities and Ex Hamel at Cultana. My message is that the situation is unlikely to change in 2007 with many and varied activities scheduled. This includes, potentially, an operational deployment to the Solomon Islands. I urge you attend as many of these activities as you can as they provide opportunities for you to gain the much needed experience to properly undertake your role in 8/7 RVR.

In doing so, I make the point that soldiers of the company actually carry out the roles they are trained for all of the time, wether it is a Tuesday night parade, a weekend activity or a brigade exercise. CSS Company soldiers cook, drive, maintain equipment, provide administrative and medical support as well as maintain soldier skills in real time when ever they parade. It is this paradigm that makes the life of a CSS Company soldier a busy one and hopefully a happy one.

On a sad note, the year saw the passing of CSS Company member, Cpl Alex Gaitan. I had many conversations with Alex before his untimely death and could not help being inspired by his indomitable spirit and will to fight his illness and win. He set an incredible example of getting on with life in positive and cheerful manner in spite of his condition. I am sure there is a lesson for all of us in his passing.

The year saw many comings and goings. I acknowledge the return of Capt Baird after a stint with US Forces in Iraq as an intensive care nurse and the march in of our new RQMS, WO2 Kirby, also from his service in Iraq. I must also mention the awarding of RAAOC JNCO of the Year Award, both at state and national level, to Cpl Steve Linane. This was a significant effort and an acknowledgement of his professional attitude to his trade, to 8/7 RVR and to the Army. I also congratulate Sgt Werry on his promotion to Sgt; it was well deserved and recognises his efforts in the technical areas of the unit.

We had a number soldiers undertake CFTS this year and I am sure those opportunities continue to be available from time to time. Again, this is an opportunity to gain valuable experience if you are able to commit. Sgt Werry and Pte Stoman will be able to fill you in on the joys of CFTS. Pte Stoman might even explain what happens if you are late for work whilst on CFTS.

On another sad note, the unit farewells our long serving (and suffering) QM, WO1 Ross Pringle. As I said at his farewell, I appreciated his support and his efforts to keep me in the loop of Bn activities during the last couple of years. In addition, I also acknowledge the departure of our other hard working Q staff, SGT White, Cpl Culic and Cpl Stoop.

In closing, I would like to again acknowledge the efforts of our Catering Section throughout the year in supporting the battalion. In case you missed out, WO2 Broemmer and his team do an excellent job often under adverse conditions. I also appreciate the efforts of our medical section under our RMO, Maj Harris. Again our AIRN stats are a testimony to their efforts.

On behalf of the Commanding Officer, I would like to thank all CSS Company members for your efforts during 2006 and ask that you continue those efforts in what is sure to be another busy year in 2007. I wish you and your families a safe and merry Xmas and all the very best wishes for the New Year. I look forward to working with you again in 2007.

QM Platoon by Sgt White

Well hello from the 'Mighty' Q Platoon. What a year it's been, is it really almost over, yes it is. (Thank The Lord)

The year started with a bang. At no time did anyone's feet touch the ground. With all the demands and want's from all call signs it's been a full on Logistical Battle.

In saying that, the first half of the year was an uphill battle with only the QM WO1 Ross Pringle his trusty offsider acting RQMS (real position: TQMS) actual tasks: clothing, R&I, Ledger and what ever else had to be done, SGT Michael White.

MIA during the start of the year was the TQMS's side kick, Cpl 'Side show' Mirko Culic. He was missing because he decided to get bloody married! What were you thinking Mirko! But it was an awesome wedding. (We love you Mirko)

News Flash just in, Cpl 'side show' Culic has been found alive looking like a married man. Down side to this happiness he decided to pull the pin and become a Reservist! I told him not to do it, but no he wouldn't listen.

Finally, they have all arrived. 'Where the hell have you been?' That's the new RQMS WO2 Brian Kirby and his lovely assistant Pte Ian 'Two Dads' Browne-Kerr. They were playing in the big sand pit over in Iraq. Pte Browne-Kerr was redirected and sent to Bendigo for two years hard labour. (Charlie Battalion).

Also a mention in Q dispatches, welcome to WO1 Greg Green who is posted to the unit on COPAS. He was tasked from the QM to work as the battalion's Project Officer, one of the many projects being the Geelong MUD.

Also to grace us with his charm was Cpl 'I'm in trouble again.' Mark Pollock who joined the Main Q later in the year from the big A Coy.

And finally the goodbyes from the Battalion, posted out from the 8th/7th RVR Q Store.

1. WO1 Ross Pringle (QM) – Posted to :- The Pilbara Regt Karratha W.A
2. SGT Michael White (TQMS) – Posted to :-The Second Battalion (2 RAR) Townsville QLD
3. CPL Mirko Culic (Ledger CPL) – Posted to :- Inactive Service (Married Life)
4. CPL Mark Pollock (Tech CPL) – Posted to:- The First Battalion (1 RAR) Townsville QLD (Donkey @\$%er)

TRANSPORT by Pte Daniel Stoman

Well yet another year has passed by, with all sorts of comings and goings. To start with we lost our transport supervisor in the Cpl Mark Reynolds (Now a Sgt Tpt Spvr at the School of Armour); we have had three attempts at his replacement: Pte Julie Armstrong, Cpl Darren Werry, and myself, all of endeavoring to do our best in a Sgt position.

During this year we have had a large, wide and varying amount of tasking beginning with the Signals Course being run out of the Warrnambool Depot. Then we had our first attempt at running a Transport Course in the shape of a vehicle mounted crane course which ran over two weekends in July, utilising both Ranger Barracks and the newly opened Monegeetta Depot just outside Romsey. I would like to thank Sgts Steve Ivey and Trevor Beales for all of their work in getting this course off the ground and running so smoothly even though they are not Transport Corps.

September saw the running of Exercise Hamel at Cultana Military Training Area in S.A. It was very pleasing to see a large number of drivers attend this Ex: Ptes Buckley, Farrell, Krizanic, and Collins "Double L". They Supported 4 CSSB in such a manner that was a credit to themselves and to 8/7 RVR, even to such an extent that their bodies were put in the "line of fire" so to speak with Kev Farrell breaking his leg doing fire and movement with 4 CSSB. The "Transporties" from 8/7 got to see the biggest road run they have seen in years with Sgt Beales being our Convoy Commander on the run to Port Augusta and back, it was quite successful apart from the loss of one vehicle in Mildura due to mechanical break down.

There have been a few changes to our vehicle fleet these past two years with brand new Coasters, Hi Aces and Ford Falcons joining our list of vehicles (much to the disgust of the Holden lovers in our unit especially the A/RSM). I would also like to thank Ballarat Holden for the use of three Vehicles for ANZAC day this year.



Sgt Ivey operating the Crane on the Crane Course at Ballarat

Convoy on return from Ex Hamel

This year has also seen the biggest influx of new blood to Transport Platoon I would like to welcome Ptes Borchers, Buckley, Johnson, Krizanic, Collins, Lindorf and Wilson along with Recruits Ballagh, Curran, Guy, Hogenhout, and Venner . We have also lost a few from our ranks with Ptes Smith, Collins and Thannhauser. Smithie was lost to Bandiana to begin a trade in Aircraft Fitting, Helen T took up a job in Katherine, Scott Christian left for warmer weathers and a posting to a Queensland Reserve Unit and Double L (Collins), is moving to Orange NSW to learn how to jump out of helicopters with the Rural Fire Brigade.

I would also like to thank many of the other member of 8/7 RVR who have assisted in Transport tasks thought out the year.

Have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year break and I am looking forward to next year.

PAR ONERI

PRESENTATION OF ADMs

Non-serving members are entitled to receive their ADMs either through the post or at a ceremony paid for by the Department of Defence and run by their local Federal Member. On 9th November the XO was asked to participate in the ADM Presentation by the Member for Ballarat Catherine King. About 40 ex members, family and friends attended the presentation held at the Old Ballarat Lodge in Main Rd. Approximately one million people are entitled to receive the medals. Thirteen medals were presented at this ceremony and covered 150 years of service.

Ballarat recipients included BDR Ian Archibald who served with the RAAF for 6 years and with the Army for 15 years. He joined the 2 RVR Band as Deputy Bandmaster under Bandmaster Darryl Honey man. Other recipients included SSgt George 'Tiny' Hepburn, a well known Ballarat Vietnam Veteran and Capt John Stevenson who served for 2 years and did three tours of South Vietnam. Military occupations included a cook, a rifleman, an Engine Mechanic (or Stoker) and an aircraft mechanic and came from all three services.

BOOK LAUNCH, "DINKUM OIL", 10th NOVEMBER

On 10th November 2006, Ballarat Author Amanda Taylor launched her book "Dinkum Oil" at the Ballarat Library. The book took 6 years to compile and chronicles the letters written by or to Ballarat people during "The Great War" and published in the Ballarat Courier. The Guest Speaker was Ross McMullin, author of the books on "Pompey" Elliott (the biography of the original 7th Battalion Commanding Officer, Lt Col Elliott) and on Will Dyson (the biography of the first "Official War Artist").

Ross spoke of the connection of Elliott (schooled in Ballarat) and Dyson (born in Ballarat) and tied them in with the letters in the book.

The book was officially launched by Dr. Tom Roberts, a member of the Ballarat Ex Prisoner of War Committee, who described the writing of a book as the book being first a toy, then a mistress, a master and finally a tyrant that you finally kill and fling to the public.

Amanda Taylor described herself as a "good talker". She was told that she had been "vaccinated with a gramophone needle and regularly boosted." She felt that she had a responsibility to put the book together and referred to the scroll presented to the families of those who perished. The words "Let those who came after see that his name is not forgotten" inspired her to complete this labour of love.

RERAISING OF 39th BATTALION

The Great War

Ballarat has a connection with the newly raised 39th Battalion, or more correctly, the 39th Personnel Support Battalion. The original 39th Battalion was raised for Active Service in WW1 at the Ballarat Showgrounds on 21st February 1916. It drew most of its recruits from the state's Western District and became a part of the 10th Brigade, 3rd Division.

The battalion sailed from Melbourne on 27th May and arrived in Britain on 18th July and commenced four months of intensive training. In late November the battalion crossed the channel to France and moved into the trenches of the Western Front on 9th December, just in time for the terrible winter of 1916/17.

The 39th would have to wait until Messines, Belgium 7-9th June 1917 for its first major battle. In the march to the start line the battalion would lose two thirds of its troops in a gas bombardment. The battalion, however, took all its objectives. While in this sector the battalion would undertake two other major attacks: the carefully planned and executed battle of Broodseinde on 4th October; and the disastrous battle of Passchendaele on 12th October. The battalion would remain in Belgium for the next five months rotating between the front line and rear areas.

When the Germans launched their last great offensive in the spring of 1918, the battalion was rushed to the south of France and played a major role in turning the German drive towards the railway junction at Amiens.

The battalion's next major role was in the ill conceived attack to capture the village of Proyart on 10th August. This was followed by an active role in the 3rd Division's advance along the

Somme Valley in August and early September. The last major action of the war for the battalion was between 29th September and 2nd October when it participated in the Australian-American operation that breached the defences of the Hindenburg Line along St Quentin Canal. The battalion was 'out of the line' when peace came on 11th November 1918.

Between the Wars

The 39th Battalion was disbanded in March 1919. However, it was re-raised in 1921 as the 2nd/39th Battalion Hawthorn-Kew Regiment (Militia). During the depression of the 1930s, little was spent on defence and the Militia had few volunteers. In 1937 the battalion was merged with the 37th as the 37th/39th Battalion and later with the 24th Battalion as the 24th/39th Battalion.

World War II

After war was declared in 1939, the 39th Infantry Battalion was formed in October 1941, as an independent battalion, for service in Australia and its territories, from volunteers serving in the 3rd Military District (Victoria). Its strength was 1,500 and its ranks were filled mainly by 18 and 19 year-old Militia volunteers. Its officers were senior level World War One veterans. These officers would later be replaced by 2nd AIF Officers.

The 39th Battalion Militia departed Darley Camp at Bacchus Marsh on 26th December 1941 and embarked HMT Aquitania for Port Moresby on 27th December equipped with WW1 weapons including Lewis Machine Guns.

In late June 1942 the battalion was ordered to cross the Owen Stanley Ranges. On 7th July, Capt Sam Templeton led B Coy on its 8 day walk across to Buna to receive stores sent by boat and take them to Kokoda where there was an airstrip. On 21st July the Japanese forces landed in the Buna/Gona area and on 23rd July members of the 1st Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB), led by an Australian, Maj Watson, ambushed the leading Japanese near Awala village. These were the first shots fired in the New Guinea Campaign. The surviving PIB members soon joined with B Coy 39th Bn and together these units fought delaying actions at Gorari and Oivi gradually falling back to Deniki where they were joined by the other companies of the 39th Bn.

On 8th August (now known as Kokoda Day), A Coy 39th Bn succeeded in re-occupying Kokoda where they fought off a series of fierce day and night attacks until the night of 10th August when greatly outnumbered, food and ammunition almost exhausted, they withdrew to Deniki.

The battalion then fought pitched battles at Deniki and again at Isurava, where they held up the Japanese from 17th August until 26th August when the 2/14th Battalion arrived and saved them from annihilation. After being relieved the remainder of the 39th Bn soon returned to Isurava to bolster the ranks of the 2/14th Bn who themselves were in danger of being overwhelmed. Each battalion owed their lives to members of the other battalion. The 39th Bn fought its last Kokoda Track action at Eora Creek on 1st September and when finally relieved on 5th September the battalion had seen seven weeks of continuous fighting.

After reinforcement the battalion would fight on in Gona and Sanananda. At the end of the fighting only 32 men remained. They faced a long march back to Dobodura Airfield for return to Port Moresby. They all marched and none fell out, marching to attention across the airfield.

After 20 months of service the 39th Bn was disbanded in July 1943.



President of 39th Bn Association Alan Moore
with CO 39 PSB (and former Adjutant 8/7 RVR)
Lt Col Daryl Clarke

New 39 Bn flag

ALLIED REGIMENTS

The Staffordshire Regiment

The First Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment was presented with New Colours on Friday 28th April 2006. The Parade took place at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, Staffordshire.

As advised in last year's Ranger, the British Army undertook a restructure last year. Consequently, The Staffordshire Regiment as we new it no longer exists, and we will have to await news of how this affects our Alliance with them. The 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment, a Regular Army unit has now become the 3rd Battalion of the Mercian Regiment. The 1st Battalion will come from Cheshire and the 2nd Battalion from the Worcesters Forresters.

With the reduction to 14 Battalions in the Territorial Army (TA), The Staffordshire's 3rd Battalion has provided two companies of the West Midlands Regiment, which is composed of six companies.

HQ Company (Wolverhampton),
A Company Birmingham and Coventry (Fusiliers),
B Company Kidderminster and Worcester (Worcester Forresters),
C Company Burton on Trent and Tamworth (Staffords),
D Company Stoke on Trent (Staffords), and
E Company Shrewsbury and Hereford (Light Infantry).

The regiment's members have served in recent conflicts and in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Northern Ireland. The entire Regiment is soon to be changed into the 4th Battalion, The Mercian Regiment.

ATTACHMENT TO THE STAFFORDS: Cpl Peter Baird

In 2005, the RVR Association awarded the first annual RVR Scholarship. These scholarships are awarded to a Corporal from one of the RVR Battalions on a rotating basis and provide the airfares and some small allowance for travel to a selected overseas location. Cpl Williams of 5/6 RVR was awarded the scholarship in 2005. He went to the UK in 2005. This year the scholarship was awarded to Cpl Peter Baird of A Company, 8/7 RVR.

This scholarship was a great experience for Cpl Baird and something that all Junior NCOs can aim for in the coming years. Our next scholarship is due in 2008.

Cpl Baird reports:

This year I was lucky enough to be granted a sponsorship from the Royal Victoria Regiment Association in order to visit an 8/7 allied regiment and learn about their training techniques, employment and general history.

For my choice of regiment I chose to attend the West Midlands Regiment or the "Staffordshire Regiment" as we know them. My reasoning for choosing our UK allied regiment was that their recent history has a great deal more operational experience and would prove interesting to witness how they operate.

Through a great deal of last minute planning and scheduling by all I was able to parade with C – Coy (Staffords) located in a "town" called Burton on Trent. This unit has an incredible amount of history with last year hosting the Regiment's Tricentennial celebrations. As per our own army, the British are also continually restructuring and eliminating/amalgamating units. The current plan being that the "Staffords" will again come under the title of the Mercian Regiment, encompassing the Midlands area of the UK. Given the history, there is a fair amount of feeling amongst many of the members.

On my arrival in the UK I was promptly collected by Sgt "Del" Wain and taken to my humble quarters for my time with the Staffords...I was more than amazed to find myself located quite literally in what I called the "castle". My housemates for the next two weeks were WO2 Dave "trapper" Travis and Sgt Sean "Gally" Gallagher. My other key minder for the week was Sgt "Dougie" Spooner. Bloody good blokes all of them.....a couple mad as cut snakes...but good blokes anyway.

I won't go through the entire itinerary however Capt Forrest MBE and his accomplices arranged a well balanced plan of both military and local area information. Activities ranged from a visit to the local brewery (there was 26 located in Burton at its peak), museums both military and general historical, an indoor downhill skiing centre and many other local attractions. It must be confessed that during an evening of visiting local establishments Dave and Gally introduced me to a nice local cider called "Mangers" that upon ending my evening also ensured my following 24hrs was not particularly of any active nature either.

A few points of note was the Stafford's Museum and all its associated history, but also in the local area is the township of Lichfield where Major Jim Massey took me to the Cathedral where there is an entire wing dedicated to the Stafford's with the colours laid up and whilst any Stafford is on active operational duty a candle is kept lit at the Stafford's alter. This to me was absolutely mind-blowing in its history, sentiment and scale. Also located in the town is a pub called "The Kings Head", this is the actual location where the Regiment was

officially formed. There is a plaque on the outer wall to state this fact with the interior of the pub adorned with memorabilia from the beginnings right through to current operations. The fireplace even had crossed 303's above it. Again just amazing history to take in at one point... plus a Regiment having "claim" to a pub is just brilliant.

To the actual company I was privy to working with. C-Coy of the Staffordshire Regiment is actually a Territorial Army depot (TA) or the British equivalent of the Reserves. They are still mech infantry working with Warriors, but next year C-Coy is to become the SFMG Company. Same as us they operate Mag-58's on tripod with C2, the only notable difference being they call them "Gimpies" (GPMG's) whereas I was always calling them 58's. The company structure and training was very similar to ours with Regular training staff located at the depot and generally TA NCO's and officers etc...

Just to give a very broad brush picture of some of the experience in this small depot there were members from operational activities such as Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Cyprus, The 1st Gulf war, current Iraq and a few other obscure ones here and there. One activity that caught my attention immediately is that every depot has its own area of RRF responsibility. So if an issue arises the members have designated marry up points and VAP/VCP areas of responsibility which they do rehearse (although they admit not often enough). The depots also have local security on parade nights and a very sound building clearance plan for bomb or IED threat. The training planning suffers from the same setbacks as our own reserves in that for any activity they never really know how many or to what level trained personnel are going to attend.

What is very interesting at TA level is both the minimal amount of force or discipline that instructors can utilise as well as the base level starting fitness that personnel arrive with. The UK doesn't have a strong outdoor sporting ethos aside from soccer (probably due to the weather). Most of the training staff stated that people simply don't come back if disciplines are strongly enforced at this level. It is also interesting that the TA only parades for two hours complete... if anyone pictures the admin issues to cover, then any stores/weapon issues then there is not much time for actual hands on training. There is almost never any PT during a training program. I attended two parade nights and a recruit training weekend held at one of the training establishments.

The Parade nights were the same as us... the regular paraders, the regular late comers and the regular non-attenders unless it is something like adventure training. The NCO running the parade night had a challenging evening with mounting guns on tripods with only one or two regulars and a handful of new kids. The training aids they had were very good and I will be replicating them in Geelong for many uses. Afterwards was the standard drinks in the mess... funnily enough there seemed a lot more people here than actually on parade!?!

The recruit training weekend was a bit of an eye-opener. The standard first night admin nightmare occurred with depots arriving at all hours with different manning levels as stated on returns (sounds very familiar). The TA also runs "try before you buy" or "live the life" weekends in order to attract new recruits. The next day was standard introduction to individual weapons lessons. I ended up dogging the lesson and assisting on instruction with Cpl "Foz"'s section as he had a couple of problem children who just didn't get it. Food was interesting and standard military portions. The evening had everyone knocked off and down to the boozier... I have never witnessed so many smokers in one small building in all my life... you needed BA to try and order a beer. Restraint was the plan for the evening as I knew there were a couple of physical activities in the morning.

Following morning was a 2 mile stomp with burgens (pack) on for the recruits and a 4 mile stomp for the members ready to attend school of Infantry. I chose to join Dave on the 4 miler. One section, 2 safety vehicles and some staff, Burgens on and we were off, about 400m in Dave turned to me and said "you watch, one will fall out shortly"... I laughed and replied he was taking the piss... sure enough about 30 seconds later, one down! (we had only exited the front gate). On to the bus with him! It was nothing too challenging 4 miles, must be completed in 1 hour or less. A few of the boys seemed to do it reasonably easy, a few struggled... I couldn't help myself but to add a few "soothing" words of encouragement as we progressed. I'm not sure if one squaddie found my jogging beside him backward all that amusing... WO2 Travis did! That was it, stomps over, weapons returned, return to local depots. Again similar to us, but with differing standards and time utilisation.

The second parade night was similar to the first. I assisted in instruction on TOET's and basic weapon drills. The company was also preparing for their remembrance parade (11/11) It is the UK equivalent of ANZAC day... again I was amazed at the minimal rehearsal they were taking in to their major parade, which I discussed with other members explaining the time we put in to parade preparations. The TA as per us is always pressed for time and people... it made me very thankful for the extra hour per week we get.

Knock off to the mess, a few presentations... they were impressed by the Regimental port we bestowed upon them and that was the official training complete. My final "official" military commitment was to attend the Fields of Remembrance ceremony at Westminster Abbey in London as a guest of the Stafford's association. Normal run of events has the Queen inspecting the plots, however she had taken ill and The Duke of Edinburgh stood in her place. Alas the gods were against the Stafford's this day, a normal 2 hour run took about 4 and ½ hours this day with the group quickly alighting the coach to make their way to the plot. Unfortunately due to the timing and crowds not all made it to their area, however the ceremony was still viewed and the Duke conducted the inspection. A great deal of this activity was me posing for photographs, being the only Australian in uniform present and somewhat taller than your average Pom I wasn't exactly blending in. But it was good PR for the Stafford's and I as happy to oblige. I was even interviewed by the London Times regarding a ludicrous plan to change the poppy from red to white! It was quite an occasion and I am grateful to Maj Jim Massey for the opportunity.

With my official duties ended, I bade farewell to all and sundry and took of around the UK for a bit of a personal holiday.

The overall experience was fantastic, seeing how others train both in the similarities and differences was very rewarding. The operational tempo for the British TA is much higher than that of our Reserve which made their training a little more curious from my perspective. I have made some great friends, although if they do choose to visit I am not sure I could afford to feed Dave or Gally... they are true eating machines.

Met amazing people, seen unbelievable things and can only trust others will get this opportunity.

I would like to thank the Royal Victorian Regiment Association and the members of Battalion who provided the opportunity and assisted in making all this happen.

To try and summarize the pressures these guys both TA and Regular operate under I'll finish with an approximate quote from WO2 Dave "Trapper" Travis regarding current operations. "At the end of the dismounted foot patrol we would mount up, and just sit and pray until we passed through the gates of the base"

Cpl Peter Baird
A Company, Geelong.

THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF CANADA

Our second Allied Regiment is the Royal Regiment of Canada. The battalion is in regular contact with the Adjutant of the regiment, Capt Mihail Murgoci.

Mihail is a reservist who has spent many years on full-time duty with the regulars, covering a wide gambit from intelligence to communications security to brigade staff officers as the G1. In Canada, Reservists do not get a pension at this time, even if working full-time. We do get a severance package but it is meagre. Until 2005 the retirement age was 55 in the Canadian Forces but that is now 60.

Among his many skills, Mihail is a professional heraldic artist and calligraphist. Most of his work has been for the military doing retirement scrolls for senior Officers or NCOs, dedications, Books of Remembrance, Freedom of the City, etc and even wedding scrolls. He has been fortunate to have scrolls commissioned to be given as gifts to the Royal Family and a number of his scrolls have been signed by them and presented as gifts to senior military personnel, such as Regimental Colonels, on their retirement.

Mihail advises that his regiment had several soldiers serving in Afghanistan this year. Two of them were Officers. One is Capt Adam West who is to visit Melbourne when on leave and will hopefully visit 8/7 RVR.

It is planned that the regiment will have their Presentation of Colours around 1 Jul 07. It appears HRH Prince of Wales will be making an official visit to Canada and will be in Ottawa that day. Anyway planning a visit to Canada around that date should plan on visiting the Royal Regiment of Canada on that day for the presentation.



Capt Mihail Murgoci, Royal Regiment of Canada, with examples of his hobby.

THE BALLARAT RANGER MILITARY MUSEUM

From the outside it would appear that not much is happening with the Museum Hut. However, there have been a number of working bees and meetings over the year and the hut has been externally tidied up and painted and some internal work done in readiness for lining the walls and ceilings. The main problem is a lack of funds and moves have been made to secure donations of building materials from local businesses keen to support the retention of the Ballarat and District military history in our museum.

A contractor has been contacted by CSIG for quotes on the provision of new spouts and drains, a path and door ramps and conversion of the doors to outward opening.

The committee is working towards having the building ready for use as the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum during the 150th Birthday Celebrations in August 2006.

The XO (also wears the hat for Museum Manager) attended a Museum Practices Course in February and made a number of useful contacts.

On the fund raising side, the Curator, WO2 Broemmer organized a theatre night in Ballarat and about sixty people attended a preview of the film 'Kokoda'. A good night for all who attended and a good financial result for the museum.

Later in the year the Museum Treasurer and former Battalion 2IC Bill Akell, ran the Long Tan Raffle. On Long Tan Day, 18th August, our local MHR Catherine King drew out the winning ticket for the First Prize signed Long Tan Print held by Mrs Helen Stephens of Buninyong, and the second Prize of a signed Long Tan Book held by Cpl David Logan of Swan Hill. Well done to the winners and thanks for your support.

FROM IRAQ

The following are extracts from emails sent by former 8/7 RVR part-time and full-time member Major David Falloon.

11Jan06 Sir, and gentlemen.

Just a short note to say that I am here safely and enjoying myself immensely. The work is good and I am learning a lot from working in a Joint Headquarters. Work is constant and whilst I've had many late nights I expect as my knowledge base increases my routine will improve. As such time is going pretty fast and it has already been three weeks, another 23 to go.

We are relative safe on the base complex called Victory Base in Baghdad which is huge. Whilst we get some indirect fire from mortars and rockets occasionally and the towers get some small arms fire it is mostly ineffective. The population of the base is about half the size of Wagga Wagga and therefore the insurgents really don't try very hard. The dangerous areas are outside mainly in Baghdad and to the West and North. It is quite sickening at times to watch events unfold on TV in front of you (yes we have it going 24 hours a day) when it is probably only happening no more than 10km from you.

Whilst the Iraqis I have met seem quite nice you don't trust them an inch and so I carry a side arm with live ammo where ever I go on base. There are huge number of

Auger 2006

civilian contractors also here to service the population especially the Yanks with their PX, Barber Shops, Alterations Shop, Gift Shop, etc right down to Maccas, Burger King, Subway and Pizza Hut. They are mainly Indian, Pakistanis and Sri Lankins and you have to wonder why the hell they would come to a place like this because they don't get paid well. They like us Aussies (yes I am one) because we can at least talk to them about the cricket. As to the military side I have met soldiers obviously from the US and UK but also Poland, Romania, Italy and South Korea. The Italians have got to take the award for style as most of them sport little goatees or beards. Frank you might to take this up with boss.

We eat in a huge mess called a DFAC and it is like eating at a Westfield Shopping Centre Food Court for free and you can eat as much as you like. Free coke (by the can) and as much ice cream (Baskins & Robins) as you can stomach. I have to do a lot of PT to keep the weight down.

Well I must go so I wish you a happy new year and hope everyone's family is safe and you all have an enjoyable work year.

PS. Eli, there a Bradleys and M1 everywhere. You can't but help trip over the bloody things. Will get you some nice snaps for your album.

David.

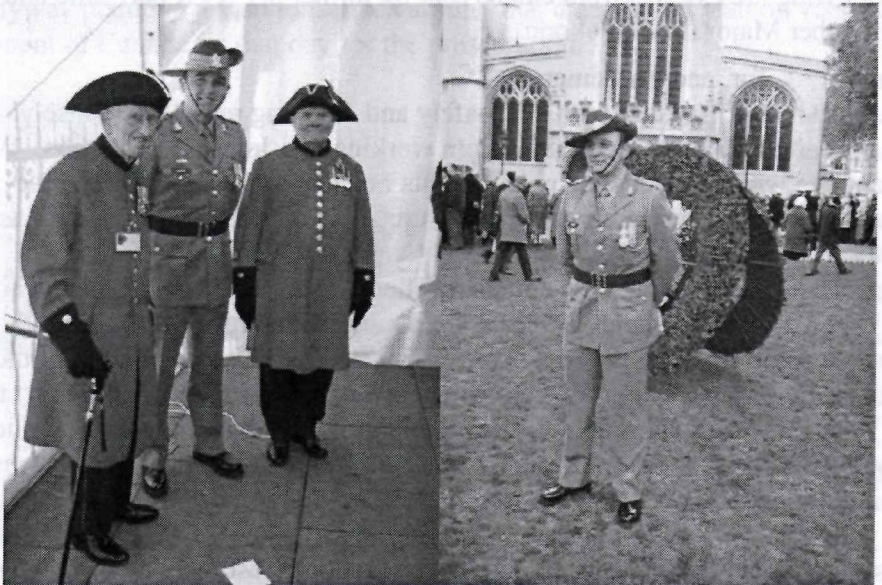
17Jan06 G'day mate

Believe it or not I am working pretty hard, long hours and not much privacy. I live in a room with 6 other blokes which is not bad considering one room has up to 32 guys in it. I am working as the AMTG Desk Officer in the J3 cell (yes operations) at HQJTF 633 which is the National Headquarters for the Australian contribution.

Therefore we have under comd all Task Groups whether operational or logistical. Pretty heady heights for a country bumpkin like me. I am the LO for AMTG/AATTI and make sure things happen. There is lots of staff work and Taskord (OPORDS). I also look after other training personnel around Iraq.

I have got my Battalion Flag and slouch Hat with me so I will be getting some photos with it. I will try and get one at the Al Faw palace in Saddam's big chair.

Got to go. David



Cpl Baird at the Remembrance Service in London

Addendum to The Ranger 2006

THE ORDERLY ROOM by WO2 Steven Dingley

The administrative hub of 8/7 RVR, the Orderly Room, has been no different to any other part of the unit this year - rocketing along at pace. In January, as the newly arrived Chief Clerk I asked about the manning of the Orderly Room. I was rather taken aback when CPL Best stuck his hand in the air and cheerfully replied, 'Just me, Sir'.

The next couple of months were pretty hectic for Troy as he tried to dig himself out from under the mound of paper that accumulated each day. For those who don't know Troy, he is the guy who needs to be surgically removed from his telephone headset. Troy has reconsidered his future and decided transfer to the RAAF as a 'computer geek' as the direction he wants to take. He will march out early in 2007. Good luck as a blue orchid, Troy and make sure you take that bloody headset with you so it annoys your RAAAFie mates as much as us.

Thankfully CPL Steve Linane relieved the pressure, taking on a full time service contract as the Movements Clerk. Steve runs a tight ship, and has gained the confidence of all those he has dealt with this year. Shortly thereafter SGT Brett Stephenson transferred from the ARA and commenced parading regularly as a reservist. His gruff exterior had a lot of people on tiptoes around him for a while until they came to know the bloke. His arrival saw the departure of SGT Alison Wait to CSS Coy. Alison had been moonlighting as a clerk with BHQ when not working for the WO Caterer. Thanks Alison for your help when the Orderly Room was severely understaffed.

As usual our ever dependable APS Registry Clerk, Dee Saunderson was the rock around which the Orderly Room revolved. Dee was awarded with a much deserved Australia Day Medallion on the honours list this year, so congratulations again Dee.

Unfortunately we lose the ARA pay clerk CPL Gary Wilford next year to AFSU in Canberra. When the Orderly Room had tumbleweeds blowing through it earlier in the year, Gary was there to back us up and lend a hand. Those who attend functions or happy hours would also notice that Gary is commonly the barman who volunteers to remain behind with the stayers.

PTE Kerrie Saffron is the 'reality check' of the Orderly Room. As well as providing a reliable pay function, Kerry is never short of an opinion and doesn't mind expressing it. Kerrie's candour is appreciated and she can always be relied upon to call a spade a spade. (Actually she is more likely to call it a 'bloody' shovel).

SGT Michelle Parry is the calm, capable and businesslike hand on the helm in the Pay Cell. Michelle is never shy of extra work and like every member of the Pay Cell has taken on extra responsibilities this year. Thanks Michelle and see you next year.

In closing, I want to publicly thank every member of the Orderly Room for their work this year. You are without exception professional, capable, hardworking and best of all you make the Orderly Room a happy place to work.



