



# The Ranger 2007



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







**Honorary Colonel**

Professor David de Kretzer AC  
The Governor of Victoria

**Regimental Colonel**

Brigadier Douglas Ball AM RFD ADC



**Allied Regiments**

The Staffordshire Regiment  
(The Prince of Wales's) now a part of  
The Mercian Regiment  
The Royal Regiment of Canada

**Commanding Officer**

Lieutenant Colonel David McKerral



**Regimental Sergeant Major**

Warrant Officer Class 1 Darren Murch

**Allied Associations**

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

The 8th Battalion (Ballarat) Association  
The 8th Battalion (Ararat) Association  
The 2/8th Battalion AIF Association in association  
with the Macarthur Street Primary School, Ballarat

The 8th/7th Battalion – 2 RVR Association

**Editor**

Major Neil Leckie RFD

**Cover Design/Assistant Editor**

Sergeant Arthur Mazur



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### Editorial Comment

To ensure that the Ranger is distributed by the last Parade Night, the draft has to be at the printer in Watsonia at least two weeks before that night. Everyone likes to see the Ranger and read what the rest of the battalion did during the year and maybe see their own name in print. The Ranger can only be successful if there is a good amount of timely input. Despite the requests, orders, cajoling etc that has come from BHQ this year, I still find myself sitting at the computer finalising input the night before the draft is to go to the printer. The consequence will be a Ranger that has not been fully proof-read and will not contain the best content that it could.

If you or your company have had interesting activities that the rest of the battalion, and for that matter the rest of the regiment, should know about, get your articles in early in future.

Like the saying 'you get what you pay for', in this issue of the Ranger you will only get what has been put in. In some areas that was nil!!!!

Major Neil Leckie, Editor

### Battalion 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday

The headquarters of the battalion was formed in Ballarat in 1948, 90 years after the first 'volunteer' force was raised in Ballarat. Consequently, the battalion's birthday is taken as the date of the raising of that 'volunteer' force 9 August 1858.

On 9 August 2008 the battalion will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday. A weekend has been set aside on the Parade Card for the celebrations. There will be a Book Launch for the history of the battalion, the official opening of the rebuilt Ballarat Ranger Military Museum, a Freedom of Entry Parade in Ballarat and due to the expected number of visitors there will be a 'Reception' after the parade rather than a dinner. SO put the weekend 8-10 August in your diary for 2008 as a 'must attend'!

### Freedom of Entry

The battalion will exercise its right of the Freedom of Entry to Ballarat next August. The battalion also holds the Freedom of Entry to the cities of Maryborough (1980), Swan Hill (1988), Echuca (1989), Hamilton (1990) and Bendigo (2006). The first city to grant the Freedom of Entry to a battalion was in 1959 when the City of Shepparton granted the freedom to the 59<sup>th</sup> Battalion which became a part of 2 RVR in 1960.

## Battalion Headquarters

BHQ for 2007 saw some new members and some old hands. New members were Lieutenant Colonel David McKerral who joined the battalion in February from AHQ via a six month tour of Iraq with the Strategic Operation Centre of the Multinational Force; Warrant Officer Class 1 Darren Murch joined the battalion as RSM from HQ 1 DIV, Captain Matthew Whitwell joined the battalion from 1<sup>st</sup> Recruit Training Battalion as Adjutant and Chaplain Mark Simmonds from Stawell joined the battalion as the Padre.

Old hands with the Operations Cell under Major Mike Brown, who served a third year with the battalion, were WO2 Tom Hubbard who left us for Op Anode in May and was replaced by WO2 Shane Armstrong, and Matt Dell who was promoted to Sergeant in January, and of course the XO Major Leckie.

BHQ Staff 2007:	CO	Lieutenant Colonel David McKerral
	XO	Major Neil Leckie
	ADJT	Captain Matthew Whitwell
	Padre	Chaplain Mark Simmonds
	IO	SSgt Ivan Solomono
	RSM	WO1 Darren Murch

## CO

*The Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel David McKerral congratulates Daniel Strack on his promotion to Captain.*

Our role, as part of the ADF, is the defence of Australia. All personnel face the possibility of deploying to, or near, war zones. While the degree of exposure to combat situations would depend on a number of factors, we may be called upon to engage in direct action against enemy forces. Additionally, elements of the unit are required to deploy to unstable areas where the risk of violence is high. In these cases, personnel are required to engage in offensive or defensive action for the protection of themselves and others.



This year we have seen members of this battalion exposed to such situations and we are reminded that we should have a real focus during our training. We are training so that we may work effectively when called upon and perform to an extremely high standard. We train so that our mates can rely on us when things get tough and we don't let them down. We train so that Australia has a known quality it can rely upon when the call comes, and we train so that the ANZAC tradition continues to be upheld.

This year we have had members of the battalion deploy to the Middle East, the Solomon Islands and on ACAP tasks in remote areas of Australia. We have transferred around 40 people to the ARA, covering a variety of trades from rifleman to padre. We have posted cadre staff back to units who, by the time you read this, will be overseas. Next year the battalion will have the opportunity to take members to train in Germany for a month with five other nations. Support tasks for deployments are

becoming more frequent. We should all have a real expectation that we will be called on to represent Australia in the future.

I have been very pleased with what I have seen as I have toured the Depots and spoken with you on exercise or courses. This battalion has many fine men and women in its ranks, people I am proud to serve alongside. It is pleasing to see the dedication and effort that is evident. This year has held its own unique challenges and we have met them well. Now as the operational tempo continues to increase we need to ensure that we can meet the challenges of the future.

Now is the time to rest over Christmas, enjoy time with the family and think on what is to come. 2008 needs to see us focused and ready to train hard, and perform well. I am confident that we are able to meet that challenge.

## **XO**

Another year gone in a flash and Christmas is just around the corner. When you look back you think where has it gone and what did I achieve? It seems sometimes not much but I look at my Duty Statement and see that I am responsible for such things as Equity and Diversity, (no problems there, thank you all), Non-public Monies Accounts Audits (plenty of problems there, but all solvable!), Chairman of the Battalion OH&S Committee (no major problems here and we are improving all the time) and maintain AIRN Compliance (no problems there either: how hard is it to 'recognise a push-up' and 'recognise a sit-up' and walk 5 km?)

Then comes the tricky bits! Understudy the CO and represent the CO when he is unavailable. With a full-time CO that should be easy. Wrong! The CO this year has been extremely busy and being full-time it has been all too easy for him to be called upon by 'higher' and taken away on other tasks. However, it has been a great working for and with him for the year. The end of the year has been extremely busy. I have been trying to finish this magazine at the same time as finishing the first draft of the battalion's history. If some of the battalion members had put in their articles a few weeks ago, life would have been much easier!

Next year looks like being just as busy as this year with the courses, LFX and a possible deployment for us all. Hopefully, the battalion history will come together alright over the next few months and the museum building finished on time.

As I said, the year has been extremely busy, but as usual from this position, it has been great to have been able to contribute to and be a part of this battalion which gives a real capability to the Australian Army.

## **RSM**

The heritage of the Australian Soldier is built strongly around the characters that arose from country Australia. The 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, fondly known as Country Victoria's Own, is testament to the three core values that we base our soldiering upon – Courage, Initiative and Teamwork.

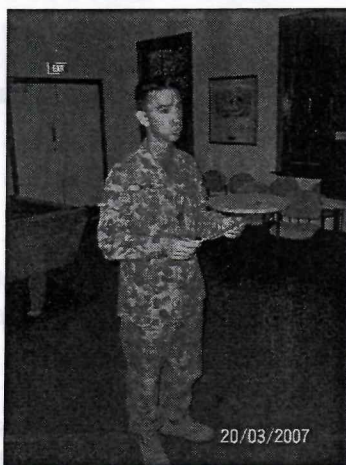
Throughout 2007, the Battalion has taken on many tasks that have tested the mettle of the officers and the rank and file. Three areas that I am particularly proud of where the Battalion has achieved very good results are in the fields of personnel management, community support and operational commitment. Each of these areas required leadership that was applied fairly, compassionately yet with a focussed approach.

Looking after the interests of the Battalion has been critical to keep growing and to retain our people. Many figures and statistics have been communicated around the unit at different stages, some are highlighted here: highest AIRN statistic for the year was 79%, 65 soldiers enlisted, 45 soldiers completed 1 RTB, 44 soldiers completed Mod 1 and 34 soldiers completed Mod 2 RAInf IET Courses, 15 soldiers promoted to Lance Corporal, 8 soldiers promoted to Corporal, 2 soldiers attended the Subject One Sergeant Course, 3 soldiers awarded the Soldier's Medallion for Exemplary Service, and 2 soldiers awarded the Commanding Officer's Commendation. These achievements are not made without the efforts and tenacity of personnel at all levels. Motivated and vibrant personalities, such as the people who feature above will be critical once next year's training program begins.

Social events have been important features within the battalion's calendar and have allowed well earned breaks from the routine. Formal dinners, the Officer/NCO dinner at Fort Queenscliff, the visit to the Bushmaster production line, the Mothers' Day shopping trip, the trivia night and battalion Christmas function were only a few of the great times that have allowed the families to come together. I look forward to meeting the new march-ins next year at similar functions.

The battalion is dispersed over about 150,000 square kilometres and with that turf brings many affiliations with large cities and small towns. ANZAC Day required the battalion to conduct 32 official support ceremonies. The battalion also conducted a synchronised collection effort during Legacy Week, which raised over \$12,000. Ballarat soldiers also sold Poppies leading up to Remembrance Day and raised almost \$1,000 in 6 hours. The ties with RS&L Clubs were made stronger in 2007 to the point where the battalion is now often the first port of call for advice within the community on important issues.

During the second half of the year, we deployed over 30 soldiers as part of a company group to the Solomon Islands to assist with the government's efforts to provide stability for the local infrastructure. Our men, many of whom were on their first deployment, did a fine job. The experiences and knowledge gained will become valuable assets during 2008 when we continue in the direction of effective and relevant training.



*RSM WO1 Darren Murch addressing ADM recipients at Geelong.*

The battalion has been blessed with many outstanding Regular Army personnel without whom the achievements above would have been limited. Professionalism has always been displayed by each and every one and has left a lasting impression on the soldiers who call country Victoria home.

I look forward to the New Year, which is our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, and greeting the next wave of people posted to, or enlisting in, the battalion.

Warrant Officer Class One Darren Murch

## Adjutant

As the 2007 training year draws slowly to a close, the battalion doesn't seem to have lessened its tempo. The end of year Module 1 and 2 courses will finish off a very busy year for 8/7 RVR.

The beginning of the year saw many new faces coming to the unit, with a new ARA CO, ADJT, RSM, CSM B and C Companies and an almost completely new Battalion Orderly Room. Initially, it took some time for these new members to become acquainted with the battalion and the way things were done. There have been many changes instituted this year in the general running of the battalion, and there are more yet to come. Hopefully, these changes make a smoother and more efficient battalion for the incoming personnel due in 2008/09.

In December, the battalion welcomes home its soldiers deployed to the Solomon Islands on Op Anode. A Pl (+) organisation has been detached to 4 Brigade HQ for almost the entire year, and no doubt the blokes are keen to get back to their families and loved ones. All reports that the CO has received have been very positive, outlining the excellent job being done by the 8/7 RVR soldiers deployed to Op Anode.

The highlight of my year as the Adjutant was my deployment to Kuwait as part of the Force Insertion Team (FIT) in August/ September. Along with nine other ADF members, most from 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, my role was to provide training and assistance to battle groups and inserting Force elements into Iraq and Afghanistan by running live ranges, medical training, IED training and assisting with their administration prior to insertion. Above all, the deployment brought home the fact that the ADF is engaged in battles with Terrorist Insurgents throughout the Middle East.

Our training must be as realistic as possible, and must push us as close to our physical and mental limits as we can get. Near enough is never good enough in battle.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of WO2 Sean McGinley (CSM A Company), WO2 Barry Fawcett (CSM B Company) and WO2 Mick Reyne (CSM C Company) for their hard work this year. They have ensured that the companies of the battalion have continued to work and run smoothly, while being physically displaced from the Battalion Headquarters.

They have balanced functions such as ANZAC Day parades with training activities such as weekend sub-unit training and both Battalion Live Firing Exercises. All soldiers and JNCO's should aspire to become like these three men, as they are three of the best WO2's in the Army. This can be seen by the number of soldiers from each of the companies who have transferred to the Regular Army this year. I believe that these figures are a direct reflection of the CSM's.

Next year, the focus and tempo of the battalion will change yet again. The battalion will set its sights on Counter Insurgency Operations (COIN). This is aimed at preparing the soldiers, NCO's, Warrant Officers and Officers for the challenge of fighting and destroying an enemy who never plays by "the Rules". The many challenges that this style of operations brings with them will provide the battalion with more than enough training and work to do, beginning in March with our first training weekend.

From this first weekend, the battalion will begin the task of preparing itself for another year of soldiering. As always, the initial priority will be AIRN status, as this determines the battalion's ability to function and provide capability to the ADF. The CO intends that the battalion concentration on 09/10 February will go a long way to getting us off to a good start, it will then be up to all pers within the battalion to maintain their AIRN compliancy.

The 2007 Training year has been busy, with many challenges for myself personally and BHQ as a whole. I feel that next year will be even busier, and that the bar that has been set this year will go up some notches by this time next year.

I wish every member of 8/7 RVR a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy beginning to 2008, and I look forward to resuming the war on Admin next year.

M.R. WHITWELL  
CAPTAIN  
ADJUTANT

### Operations Cell

OPS Cell Staff 2007	OPSO	Major Michael Brown
	OPS WOs	Tom Hubbard, Shane Armstrong
	OPS SGT	Matthew Dell
	Resources Manager	Mt Geoff 'Tiny' Pellow

After three good years at the battalion, I am being posted as the 2IC Warrant Officer and Non Commissioned Officer Wing at LWC, Canungra. I often hear the phrase "Ops never stops". The gentlemen in the OPS Cell work very hard to ensure that all the jobs are done. To achieve the many tasks there is a good team of people, namely: WO2 Shane Armstrong; WO2 Tom Hubbard; Sergeant Matty Dell and the recently appointed public servant, Mr Geoffrey Pellow. All of these people have worked together in various roles over the years, within the battalion. They have a good team spirit that enables the training of soldiers in the battalion, and external to it, to occur.

WO2 Tom Hubbard is presently in the Solomons as the CSM of Rotation 13 on OP ANODE, Solomon Islands. He is certainly missed in the OPS Cell, but making an important contribution to the success of the mission. The Battalion has 34 personnel on operations in the Solomon Islands. WO2 Hubbard moves to recruiting in 2008.

WO2 Shane Armstrong was "pleasantly" surprised when he came to the Operations Cell after a 'daunting year' as acting RSM. He discovered that OPS does stop, occasionally. WO2 Shane Armstrong's main task is ensuring that there are suitably qualified personnel to support the directed tasks given to the Battalion. He also "chases" post activity reports, among many other tasks.

Mr Geoffrey Pellow, aka "Tiny" was appointed in June 2007 as the Unit Resource Officer for 8/7 RVR. He also has responsibilities for the unit resources of 4 CSSB. As a reservist, Tiny also works in the OPS Cell at HQ 4 BDE, usually on Tuesday nights. During my first year at the unit, 2005, Tiny as the OPSWO helped me to navigate the workings of a rather large spread organization, with the numerous courses conducted, personalities, locations, coordination difficulties and so forth. I learnt, initially from Tiny, that one of the best tools we had at the unit was the OPS LOG on Lotus Notes, which unfortunately has not been replaced with Outlook. Tiny Pellow is a versatile individual who has the interests of 8/7 at heart and he has been a valued adviser to me.

The OPS Cell coordinates support to other military units in order to assist in their training. During the passed year, 8/7 RVR has provided OPFOR and instructors to ADFA, LWC-V, Royal Military College and Monash University Regiment. Also, personnel with specialist skills supported other units, for example, SGT Hansen - 6 RAR as a sniper supervisor in East Timor and Captain Baird

and Corporal Vorbach supported the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP) at Doomadgee in sunny Queensland.

In the table below are *some* of the support tasks performed by members of the unit.

SUPPORT	MEMBERS	Dates
Monash University Regiment	CPL Walker CPL Oakley	Jan 07
RMC Canberra	CAPT Whitwell WO2 Fawcett SGT Anderson SGT Lopez	Feb - Mar Apr - May 1-14 Jul 07 28 Aug - 16 Sep
6 RAR	SGT Craig Hansen	Sep 06 - Mar 07
15 TPT	WO2 Reyne	May 07
AACAP	CAPT Kaylene Baird CPL Vorbach	May - Jun 07
SCMA Fort Queenscliff	A Coy RAINF TACTICAL DISPLAY IN SPT OF ARMY BIRTHDAY	17 Mar
1 INT BN	MAJ M Harris LCPL Fitton and LCPL Purcell	Nov 06 Mar 07
ADFA Jervis Bay	PTE M Watters PTE B.C. Craske PTE D.J. McCrawley SPR A J Tait PTE P R McDermaid PTE G. P. Chandler PTE S.V. Godwin PTE Silverii PTE Krizanic PTE Black	3-14 May 07
AIST 15 US Marines California	CAPT John Spencer	May - Aug 07
Melbourne University Regiment	CPL Potton SGT Dell WO2 Murphy SGT Cox	8 Jan - 2 Feb May 07
Mission Rehearsal Exercise - Cowley Beach For OP ANODE	LT Paul O'Donnell WO2 Michael Reyne	Jun 07
OP Catalyst FIEG Kuwait	WO2 'Tas' McGinley CAPT Matt Whitwell	May - Jun 07 Sep - Oct 07
EX Talisman Sabre 07  Shoalwater Bay Training Area	PTE Cole 8/7 PTE Louw 8/7 PTE Quigley 8/7 PTE Collis 8/7 PTE Faul 8/7 PTE Simmons 8/7 SPR Trait 8/7	Jun 07
LWC Vic Sub 1 CPL	SGT Cox	Jul 07
Red Cross CFA Fiskville	MAJ N Leckie PTE Gregor PTE Winter	Jun, Sep and Nov.
APEC Sydney	PTE Faul	Sep 07
4/3 RNSWR INF IET MOD 1	SGT Cox	Oct 07

During the year, the battalion ran numerous courses including First Aid, Navigation, Prescribed Substance Testing, and Weapon qualifications. The battalion also conducted an infantry IET MOD 2 course at Murray Bridge, South Australia in October. It also conducted demanding Infantry IET Module 1 and Courses at Puckapunyal in November-December. The course panel sizes were 90 students in each. A Reserve Response Force Conduct course was conducted at RAAF Williams, Laverton from 22 Sep to the 28 Sep. The course was a great success with 44 from 4 Brigade and 6 personnel from 9 Brigade acquiring their qualification for entry into the Reserve Response Force.

In November and December 2006, the unit conducted successful infantry IET Module 1 and 2 course in Tasmania. The courses were very successful with WO2 Hubbard being the course manager for Module 1 and WO2 Armstrong being the course manager for Module 2. I wish to especially thank both warrant officers and the staff who made these interstate courses so successful.

There have been many weekend and day activities conducted during the year which were important for the operational focus of the battalion. The continuous activities at Majura in June, in September were well attended, resulting in many additional competencies being issued.



*Left: Camp Blake, Majura ACT.*

*Right: The 'boys' bombed up for a shoot at Majura.*

I wish to thank all members of the Battalion who have supported me, and those who got on with their job. I especially wish thank Sergeant Matt Dell for his dedication and perseverance. He has been in the OPS Cell since I arrived in Jan 2005. He has been under additional pressure and worked long hours during the passed months. I also wish him well with his transfer to the ARA. I also wish each and every member of the battalion every success and happiness in the future. I look forward to catching up with some of you on promotion courses in the near future.

*Cede Nullis    Celere et Audax*

Michael Brown  
MAJ  
Operations Officer

### **BHQ Orderly Room**

Orderly Room 2007	Chief Clerk	WO2 Steve Dingley then WO2 Michael McLennan
	Orderly Room Sgt	Sgt David Schafer
	Orderly Room Cpls	Cpl Michele Durham & Jacky Grant
	Pay Clerk	Pte Kerrie Saffron
	Reception	Mrs Deanne Saunderson

My, how fast time flies when your having fun. It's hard to believe that we are already into the second half of the year. The Battalion Orderly room has had many changes since the beginning of the year with Sergeant Dave Schafer (Orderly Room Sergeant), Corporal Jacky Grant (Movements / Finance Clerk) and Private Michele Durham (Pers Clerk) all marching into the unit in January 07. Having half the Orderly room with fresh faces promotes enthusiasm. Once Induction Training was completed WO2 Steven Dingley (Chief Clerk) ensured we all settled into our positions and then set some goals. The Orderly Room was at full strength.

Corporal Troy Best had applied for transfer to the RAAF, so once accepted, he departed 8/7 RVR in Mar 07. At approximately the same time, the Pay Sergeant, Michelle Parry decided after years of selfless, dedicated service to the unit, it was time to devote more time to her family. She has gone in-active until further notice. With the assistance of the Chief Clerk and Deanne Saunderson (the APS Registry Clerk, who had been with the unit for many, many years), we all settled in and started to tackle what was going to be a very busy year.

BHQ Orderly Room and the Q-Store Corporals were tasked with providing a Catafalque Party to the town of Lake Bolac for ANZAC Day. Sergeant Dave Schafer being the Catafalque Commander nearly blew out the hearing aids of a couple of old veterans, his voice was so loud the publican could hear him from inside the Hotel at the bottom of the hill. For most of us coming from large Brigade level celebrations on ANZAC Day, found it quite different having the unit so spread out attending independent celebrations in small towns and/or suburbs within Ballarat.

This unit being so geographically spaced always ensures that BHQ Orderly Room and Company Clerks never have a dull moment administratively. Most weekends at least one depot, or members of, holds a Navigation, WTSS, Live Fire or First Aide Course enabling our junior soldiers to qualify or become competent within their chosen ECN. In June, WO2 Dingley took Long Service Leave (LSL), Private Durham was on Subj One Corporal Course and Private Kerrie Saffron was off to Bali for three glorious weeks. This left the Orderly Room at half strength. WO2 Michael McLennan (GRes and public servant at APA-Melb) came across to 8/7 RVR on CFTS to fill the Chief Clerk position for 6 months.

With a Platoon strength from 8/7 RVR deployed on Op Anode, members attending courses in all states, soldier training, live fire exercises, discharging non-effective soldiers and ensuring members are AIRN compliant, yes we have had a busy year thus far. Private Saffron has returned from Bali with a tan and thrown herself back into the Pay Clerk position. Congratulations to Mick Durham being promoted to Corporal after receiving the OPS award on course for his outstanding efforts in the field. Its not all work, work, work, the CO ensures we have bbq lunches, functions outside the work area and plenty of R&R.

Corporal Jacky Grant.

### **A Company**

OC	Major Michael Stewart
CSM	WO2 Sean 'Tas' McGinley
Depot Managers	Sgt Xavier Lopez (Laverton), Corporal David Hastings (W'bool)
Officers	Captain Tavis Watt, Lts Philip Blackwell, Marcus Doherty and Cameron Warfe and 2Lts Shrikkanth Rangarajan & Jessica Gillam
Sergeants	Mirko Brandich, Steven Cox, Peter Hardcastle, Ivan Hirst
Orderly Room	Pte Steven Luxford
Q Store	Cpl David Anderson (W'bool) LCpl Chris Sizer (Geelong)

A Company has hit the ground running in 2007 and it is only looking better. The press has been on through A Company engagement with a number of large activities including supporting the Avalon Airshow, the SCMA Open Day at Fort Queenscliff, the pre-deployment preparation for OP ANODE and the constant support of external courses.

The training year started off with the annual A Company induction weekend 3 -4 February. The weekend was clearly highlighted by the numerous attempts by the Platoon Commanders and CHQ staff to deliver innovative and enthusiastic mandatory training lessons. Apart from the innovative training, the weekend had the very serious objective of establishing the required administrative basis for the conduct of another successful year.

The induction weekend was shortly followed by the participation of a Pl worth of A Company soldiers at SCMA Open Day at Fort Queenscliff. The A Company soldiers were involved in many aspects of the open day including public displays; recruiting stalls and the highlight of the whole show, a demonstration of a mounted platoon counter ambush drill. All soldiers worked extremely hard and truly showed off the capabilities that have been developed over the last few years in A Company to the Chief of Army.

Backing up to the SCMA Open Day, a section of A Company soldiers, under command of Lieutenant Warfe, supported the Avalon International Airshow. The soldiers were involved in recruiting stands by day and security duties at the show and at RAAF Williams by night. The section did a great job and all members left the show with some interesting experiences with the different international air crews.

A Company finished off the first third of 2007 with the numerous ANZAC day activities that the company is responsible for in the southern regions. ANZAC day and previous week were filled with the A Company's catafalque parties supporting many regional services including Bacchus Marsh, Ocean Grove and Warrnambool. In particular the highlights of the day were the Company's conduct of the Dawn Service at the Boer War memorial and the Company's inaugural march through the main streets of Geelong as part of Geelong's ANZAC Day ceremony.

After the successful conduct of ANZAC day, the soldiers of A Company have been involved in a number of activities ranging from tactical field exercises to live fire battlefield simulations.

The May training weekend saw the soldiers from A and C Companies operating in a combined platoon environment to conduct platoon attacks, ambushing, patrolling and platoon harbours in a simulated company environment. In particular, the May training weekend provided excellent training opportunities for junior commanders and soldiers. The junior soldiers were able to work along side more experienced soldiers in a platoon environment and the junior commanders at section and platoon level were able to exercise their command in the field and receive feedback from the experienced company staff.

The next activity in which A Company was involved was the Battalion Live Fire Exercise (LFX) at Majura Range in Canberra. While the soldiers enjoyed the hospitality offered by the Camp Blake facilities and the sub-zero temperatures, they were really there to test their marksmanship skills utilising live ammunition on a number of different weapons systems.

Those who attended the weapons training weekend prior to the exercise were given the opportunity to fire live ammunition for the 84mm Carl Gustav and MAG 58. There were some impressive Live Fire scores both on the F88 and F89 serials and some personnel also received ROAs for the 9mm pistol. By the end of the exercise, the soldiers had significantly improved their weapons handling

skills and more importantly, were increasingly confident in handling basic infantry weapons. Some of the highlights of the exercise included the section defence range night firing simulation and the visit to the War Memorial.

Concurrently, with all of A Company's activities thus far in 2007, there has been a select number who have been also conducting the pre-deployment preparations for OP ANODE. These members have been tirelessly wading through the administrative processes and paperwork before the beginning of the CFTS in mid June. These members have received the active support of the rest of the Company and should feel well prepared through the training the Company has completed in previous years. It should be noted that this training has only been able to be facilitated and executed through the efforts of the Company's ARA staff.

The month of July saw the departure of the OP ANODE personnel to commence their deployment in the Solomon Islands. A Company members deploying to OP ANODE included Lieutenant Warfe, Corporal Baird, Lance Corporals Baylis, J. Petering and Miller, Privates Blain, Cook, Harpley, Lim, Petering Coates, Johnson, Parker, Robertson, Towers and Tarrant. Although their departure marks the temporary decline in the number of experienced soldiers in each depot, they will each return with a wealth of experience, which will in turn aid the next group of soldiers in their training for deployment. Good luck fellas, and may you have a safe return!

The remainder of the year will remain busy for A Company. Tuesday night training will be targeted towards the up coming exercises, including a range training weekend utilising the new Battle Shooting Range at Puckapunyal and a chance to practice the marksmanship principles whilst wearing Enhanced Combat Body Armour. A Company will also be supporting other activities during the remainder of the year. In particular, there will be 7 soldiers from Geelong supporting Legacy at Skilled Stadium on 27 August 2007.

In other matters, recruiting and the logistics of the Company are going well. The long hours involved in recruiting and engaging the community surrounding the depots is starting to pay off with each depot maintaining a strong recruiting rate. Following the opening of the Geelong depot late last year, the Geelong members have settled in and the excellent new facilities are up and running (including the armoury and Q-store thanks to Private Sizer). The hanger at the Laverton Depot is still standing; however the fire drum has been put to rest.

A Company has many activities planned for the remainder of the year. Once the OP ANODE contingent has departed the Company training will focus on developing the junior soldiers and commanders. In particular the training will prepare the Company to perform at the BN LFX and BDE EX through a series of weapon and operations centred weekends. Time for the good stuff, can't wait!!

Notably, A Company welcomes the arrival of a new cook, Corporal Symons, who will be parading at the Warrnambool depot. This will provide a great hand to Corporal Ivey who has been performing the task alone for some time.

M.W. Doherty  
LT CHQ  
and others

The following are some special contributions from each of the depots.

## Geelong

In addition to the Dawn Service at the Boer War Memorial located adjacent to Kardinia Park, and catafalque guards at the Norlane and Ocean Grove RSLs, on Anzac Day we had the grand unveiling of the Wright-Nolen Award. This will be awarded annually on Anzac Day to a digger (can be NCO but must have been a private soldier in the last 12 months) who receives the most votes from his fellow soldiers. The award itself is pretty schmick! The inaugural winner was a very worthy Lance Corporal Robert Miller, who coincidentally was one of the organisers of the award along with Corporal Peter Baird. The award is named after two legendary figures of the Australian Army. Mr Harry Wright, who served at Tobruk and El Alamein with the 2/23<sup>rd</sup> AIF (when he was only 16), and then with the AATV; Mr Brett Nolen who served North West Murray Borderers with the first intake of National Service, and later as an engineer in Vietnam. He was widely considered Australia's foremost expert in explosives. Both men served in units that are ancestors of our beloved "Bandage over Blood", and both continued to provide instruction to the unit long after retirement. Unfortunately, Harry was unable to attend the first award due to ongoing health issues. We all wish him a swift recovery.

In December 2006, we moved into Newland Barracks. The barracks is named after James Earnest Newland VC, a Geelong boy who served in the Boer War, the Great War and also in Australia in WWII. The new MUD, what can we say, more swish than the cottage and tent, but without the charm and camaraderie offered by exposure to the elements and a boozier that consisted of a bar fridge. We all remember last Anzac Day with pollies hung up in the tent and blokes sleeping anywhere they could. Newland Barracks now offers us offices, lecture rooms, a proper orderly room, SALs, three wet weather training sheds and a boozier to share with 38<sup>th</sup> Battery, 2<sup>nd</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment. I think I hear the bar fridge calling.

After the departure of Corporal Lakey, the best recruiting man in the battalion, we were delivered a godsend with the arrival of Lance Corporal Truscott. Previously a member of the Deakin University Company, A Company 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>, and 2 Company (yes, a commanche!), he has returned to us and has taken over the reins of Corporal Lakey's Flying Circus to look after the new recruits until they are qualified riflemen. We knew we were onto the right man when "Trusty" said, "I'm going to make them run until I throw up"

Just when you thought that we couldn't fit more into a four month period, here it comes – OP ANODE. A Reserve deployment to the Solomon Islands. At the time of writing Corporal Baird, Lance Corporal Miller and Privates Johnson, Towers, Robertson and Parker are "posted" to 1 Section 1 Platoon. Private Coates is on strength as the Platoon Signaller, and Privates Craske, Slavin, Lees, McBain (Yes, he is really is seven foot tall and a machine!) and McCawley are skulking in the shadows, waiting to break one of our legs to get off the reserve list and onto the deployment. The training weekends have followed the standard pre-deployment routine, BFA-NOK forms-LF6-NOK Forms-Medical-NOK Forms-Dental-NOK Forms and so on .....

Down in sleepy hollow we have had our share of well deserved promotions. Lance Corporal Dinning became Corporal and Private Wieland made Lance Corporal. Congratulations to both. They will no doubt have their hands full with new soldiers coming though all the time and a number of "senior" members departing for ANODE.

R.A. Miller  
LCPL  
Geelong Depot

## Laverton

2007 is shaping out to be a promising year at Laverton. We've settled into the hanger and numbers have once again swollen to all new highs, not unlike the SPI200, thanks to the unrelenting recruiting being done by Sergeant Lopez.

The Year started off quickly at Laverton with the Company AIRN training weekend being held the first weekend after the Christmas - New Year stand down. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of February saw all of alpha company staying at Laverton for a weekend of riveting lectures and exciting PT sessions.

The AIRN weekend was shortly followed by the participation of a Platoon worth of men and women at the Queenscliff open day as SCMA. Where a majority were involved in a public display of a platoon, mounted, counter ambush drill.

The Finish of the Queenscliff open day coincided with the start of the Avalon international air show. The section of blokes who attended were involved in a variety of tasks. These responsibilities included recruiting during the day at Avalon as well as security during the night at Laverton and at Avalon.

The highlight of this year so far has been ANZAC day, and all the linked taskings. These associated objectives included a cenotaph party at Bacchus Marsh on the Sunday before ANZAC day; the guard commander was Lance Corporal Dvoracek. This was coupled by a cenotaph party at Meredith on the morning of ANZAC day where Lance Corporal Baylis was the guard commander. As well as the cenotaph parties, members from Laverton were involved in a march through the centre of Geelong.

These activities have been paralleled by all the associated OP ANODE Pre-deployment weekends. Presently there are 5 members from Laverton who are going to the Solomon Islands in July and this number could rise.

As the year roles on in Laverton and numbers rise there are many activities ahead to look forward too. The section level training weekend in May and the battalion LFX in June are few of the many training opportunities on hand to aspire towards.

L. Harpley  
PTE  
Laverton Depot

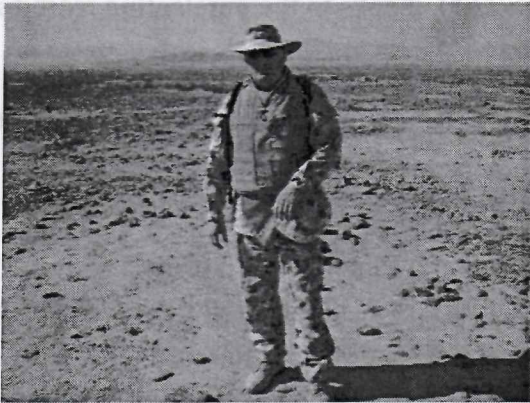
## B Company

B Company Staff 2007	OC	Captain John Spencer
	CSM	WO2 Barry Fawcett
	Officers	Captain Daniel Strack, Lieutenant David Wait
	Sergeants	Brett Stephenson, Steven Linane

## The Year in Bravo Company

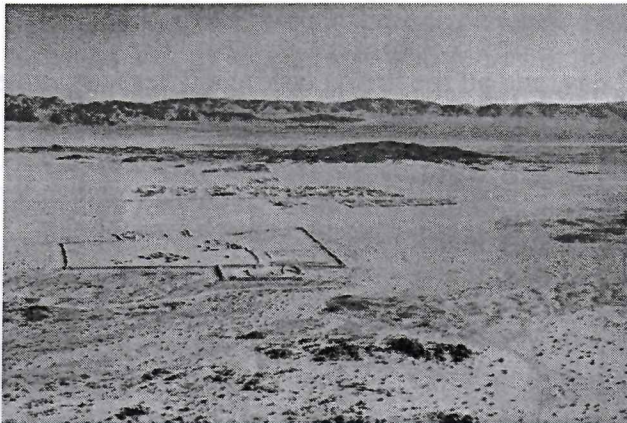
This year has gone by in a blur. It started with the new CSM WO2 Barry Fawcett moving in taking over from WO2 Shane Armstrong who moved to the OPSWO position. The tempo in the first few months was constant with the company preparing members for deployment on OP Anode, Active Service in the Solomon Island. B Company was well represented with a contribution of several

members volunteering for full time service and are currently still serving overseas to this date. From all reports the team are doing an excellent job as one would expect of members of the Big Blue B.



April saw a job offer as Contingent Commander for the Army Instructor Support Team (AIST15) to the USA. The AIST is a training team sent to the USA to assist with training of the US Marine Corps prior to deployment to Iraq. Being the dedicated officer that I am I accepted the task. Little did I know that I was being sent to 29 Palms in California! It sounds great however it is the main Marine Urban Warfare Centre and as with all military training areas it is located in the worst possible environment. In this case the Mohave Desert. Apart from the 50 degree heat, rattle snakes and no trees

it was a great training experience with an exceptional training facility and no expense spared. After four months in paradise I finally got back to the unit.



The company had been running well under the capable control of the CSM. During my time away the company had been involved in the conduct of MOD 1 IET courses and continuing the establishment the new company depot at Monegetta. This depot will be commanded by Captain Strack on his return from OP ANODE and is already manned by six B Coy members.

It is now coming to the end of the year however the CSM is still managing another MOD 1 IET course at Puckapunyal. This will be his last major activity for him with the company as he will be moving on next year to the dreaded OPS cell. I am also moving on taking up the position of Training Officer. I am handing over the company to Captain Strack who will be the OC for 2008 and Lieutenant Wait remaining as 2IC.

It has been a good year for the company with new faces good tasks and members deploying on operations. What more could you ask for as a soldier?

J.L.Spencer  
Captain  
OC B Coy

## **Bravo Company Part 1**

The first half of 2007 has flashed by with most of the Company's focus on Op Anode. Also this year Ballarat has welcomed some new faces to the Depot, most importantly our new CSM, WO2 'BAZ' Fawcett. Welcome is extended to the new B Company depot Monegeetta and we are all sure that the Battalions newest Depot will have much to contribute to our already prestigious unit.

B Company was tasked with assisting the URO at the Ballarat Universities O Day early on in the year. It was great to see the lads fighting to volunteer for this task. With trepidation I thought I should go myself to keep an eye on the lads. It wasn't long until I saw why the lads all volunteered. Two very lovely hairdressing apprentices were asking the lads about their service and the operations they had been on, some conflicts I didn't even know Australians had been on. Whilst they carried themselves proudly, it was at this stage I noticed one of the lads wasn't around. Strange perhaps considering the presence of these lovely ladies, so I scanned the area for his whereabouts. As I scanned near, middle and far distance, there he was, Private Boak signing the free David Hicks petition.

ANZAC Day in Ballarat was as eventful and exciting as previous years have been; with this year highlight being the confrontation between the leader of debortuary and mayhem Corporal S Fitton and one of our newest diggers Private Colley. The event started with a dare. Colley approached Fitto and in a shy and timid voice: "Excuse me Corporal but I've been dared to head butt you" to which Fitto replied "Well I wouldn't do that if I was you, mate." Colley then attempted to give Fitto a Scottish Kiss ie a head butt (unsuccessfully) and ended with Colley apologising "Sorry Corporal I think I might have \*\*\*\*\* that up" and bought Fitto and the rest of the Ballarat boys pints.

Yet another major event was the result of a tequila/ Mexican night where a challenge was put forward by Private Marie Yorston to Lance Corporal Dan Purcell. The contest started at 2030hrs (and to cut a long story short, Marie lost badly!)

It is hard to imagine how B Company will survive the rest of the year with it's senior Privates and Corporals heading off with OP Anode but it is fair to say that the start of the new financial year will bring with it promotions, parties and stories from B Company.

Writer unknown

## **Bravo Part 2**

With Bravo Company's Senior Soldiers away in sunny Singleton at the School of Infantry, honing their skills with TSP, the Ballarat Depot was left with Lance Corporal Beales and Private Bond to run the section. Monegeetta was in the hands of Lance Corporals Watkins and Byrnes and Private Tarquinio. The two Dues had plenty of guidance from three very experience soldiers. There was plenty of potential recruiting happening at Monegeetta, until they saw the depot with comments to the effect of 'is this it'. Never mind, Monegeetta is still in the development stage. Word is Monegeetta is the next big thing out on the street. With the Company Commander there along with the company's Section Commanders, it will be the place to be.

Training was focused on individual weapons and section level SOP's. With approximately ten soldiers parading at Ballarat and five soldiers at Monegeetta on a Tuesday night, training was achievable and the lads kept returning. With most of Bravo Company being made up of either Module 1 and Module 2 soldiers, training was at the basic level. Bravo Company assisted with charity events such as Legacy in which they collected quite a sum of money for a fantastic cause.

The lads were actively involved with the Red Cross training orchestrated by the Battalion 2IC and had great time doing different scenarios. It even drew soldiers that haven't paraded with the Battalion for some time.

The company was out in numbers for the Battalion LFX at Majura with Sergeant Linane attending. Lieutenant Wait made a cameo appearance for the 84mm shoot in Holsworthy. With plenty of ammunition to be fired, the lads that did attend had a fantastic week.

Sergeant Linane continues to ensure the lads at Ballarat are fit and ready to fight with excellent PT on a Tuesday night, and with Sergeant Linane being the best Clerk this side of the black stump (Commendation for best Clerk in the Army if you didn't know), administration was always sorted. Even so, outside agencies are trying to pouch him.

With numbers increasing for Bravo Company, 2008 looks like a promising year. It shouldn't be too long before they have a platoon on the ground and with the experience from its ranks, the command from its HQ, Bravo Company will be sending the other companies running with tails between their legs. Bring on 2008, because if you are not B Company, you are not the best.

CSM Bravo Out.

## C Company

### C Company Staff 2007

OC	Captain Bill Chapman
CSM	WO2 Michael Reyne
Q	Sgt Mark Curby
Ord Room	Cpl Paul Potton
Depot Comd	Sgts Craig Hansen (Mildura), Luke Anderson (Shepparton), Cpl David Logan (Swan Hill)
Officers	Lt Paul O'Donnell & 2Lt Lachlan Clancy
SNCOs	WO2 Phil Baulch, Sgt Darryl Jack, Sgt Rod Jackson

The year had started with a flurry of activity with the ARA conducting its mandatory training in Ballarat. Many a happy moment spent in front of Lite-Pro presentations. That's why the ARA get paid the big bucks! This was followed by the first opportunity for the new CSM (WO2 Reyne) and OC (Captain Chapman) to meet the Company in Shepparton for the sub unit delivery of AIRN and mandatory training information and activities.

The next major activity confronting the company was the first sub unit training activity held at Bendigo. The focus of which was Infantry Minor Tactics. The weekend went back to basics with the CSM delivering an amount of instruction or in his terms "Tactics for Toddlers" and reminding the company that "All drills are just bloodless battles and all battles are just bloody drills". However the opportunity to practice basic skills such as patrolling, harbour drills and section attack being of great overdue importance to the company.

ANZAC Day was a very busy affair with the company providing guards to Bendigo, Maryborough, Huntly, Cohuna, Shepparton, Tongala, Cobram, Mildura, Red Cliffs and Swan Hill as well as other minor tasks. However, all the activities were supported well and the traditions of ANZAC upheld for another year.

The next time the company was to meet, it was to be with the battalion at good ol' Puckapunyal. After an exhilarating WTSS ambush scenario, we had an attempt at the real thing (or as real as we could get it!), albeit designed for beginners (still 'tactics for toddlers'!) during the dawn hours of the Sunday. The night before had been taken up by a lengthy contact after a short patrol, which gave everyone the chance to get back into the field game. The weekend gave those who have not attended there IET a 'heads up' on what is to come.

The battalion's Ranges Week was an opportunity to do what soldiers love best- shoot bullets and blow bombs. It also provided for members to qualify in new weapons platforms, such as the 84mm Carl Gustav and the MAG58, along with 9mm Pistol qualifications. This experience, and that gained by the use of the other weapons platforms commonly found within the battalion, provided soldiers an opportunity to improve their skills and confidence with those weapons.

The Company has worked hard this year, and many of the newer soldiers have learned a great deal. Special thanks to Corporal Paul Potton, our Company Clerk, and Sergeant Curby our CQMS, both of whom are leaving us at the end of the year on posting. Thanks for all of your help 'Pottsy' and 'Sarge', and good luck for the future.

### **Shepparton**

Well another year has started for the members of Somme Barracks. It sees the return of all the old faces refreshed after a well earned break. A new Training program with some hard but enjoyable lessons has kept the members all interested and motivated.

Our first training weekend for the Company was run out of Somme Barracks. The weekend was aimed at covering all the mandatory training for the year. A good turn out from the members of Shepparton who were all keen to meet the new OC and CSM. The RSM was also keen to meet everyone and paid a visit to the WTSS at Puckapunyal.

It wasn't long before CO was also inbound for Somme Barracks to meet some of the members of the Battalion. While here he presented ADM'S.

The second Training weekend was run out of the state forest in Bendigo. It was a good chance to see what level all members were at. We can now focus on the skills that are lacking.

Anzac day was another busy one with all members participating in one or more services. This year's ceremonies involved Shepparton, Cobram, Tongala and Harmony Village.

Recruiting was already back in full swing with members supporting the Summer Bush Markets in the Shepparton and the Kyabram Rodeo in Kyabram. Both events showed a strong level of interest, but only time will tell how many follow through and join up.

New marches were Private Kliner, Recruits Billings and Learmonth. Private Graham has moved on from ARES to ARA with a few more to follow.

**CSS Company**

CSS Coy Staff 2007	OC	Major Peter Worsteling
	2IC	Captain Kaylene Baird
	CSM	WO2 Julie Farrer-Boatman
	Ord Room	Cpl Sarah Hiller
	RMO	Major Mark Harris
	NO	Lt Jennifer Lee
	Armourer	Sgt Darren Werry
	Tpt NCO	Sgt Bob Reid

Combat Service Support (CSS) Company is having a busy and interesting year, accurately reflecting my 2006 prediction. I am very proud of the company's "can do" attitude given the many support and training tasks the Primary Health Care Team (PHCT), Transport Section, Q Store and Catering Platoon is supporting.

The PHCT has conducted three First Aid courses and supported many company and battalion activities, including OP Borneo and the pending LFX. The company conducted its own training in April and included guest speaker Stuart Parker from the Ballarat Wildlife Park who displayed and handled a live brown snake as part of a snakebite revision lesson. Kerri Gordon, dietician, also commented on Corporal Rogers, and Private Rosewarne's excellent nutrition presentation as well as provided an update on all matters to do with food and well being. Also, congratulations to Corporal Vorbach on her promotion in July.

The transport section conducted a forklift and drivers course as well as supported and managed the organic transport tasking and assets. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Private T. Wilson's student of merit award achieved on completion of his driver's course.

The Catering Platoon welcomed Sergeant Symons from the ARA in August this year, who will compliment the platoon's very capable team. Included in this 'can do' team are Corporals Wilson and Currie whom received their promotions this year.

The Q Platoon has worked 'above and beyond' this year given the unit deployed a platoon to the Solomon Islands. The Q Platoon achieved this task and at the same time has supported the battalions many training activities, as always in a professional and dedicated manner. In the unexpected absence of the QM, I would like to acknowledge and thank WO2 Kirby for a job well done.

Other than brigade and battalion activities, the CSS Company supported the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP14), in far-north Queensland. Captain Baird and Corporal Vorbach provided four weeks sustainable PHCT support to the indigenous community; and Captain Baird, Lieutenant Lee, Corporals Creelman, and Vorbach provided medical support to 4 Brigade HQ in order to conduct mandatory medical screening and vaccination parades for Op Anode personnel. Captain Baird arranged a successful dental session at Puckapunyal for those battalion's members able to attend on the 18 August. Corporal Hiller aptly coordinated the session, and is working with Captain Baird to develop two sessions in 2008 to ensure the battalion's AIRN dental issues are over come.

To those CSS soldiers who nominated but were unsuccessful for this year's Solomon Island deployment, I acknowledge your enthusiasm and desire to serve your country. Be assured, the 2 Div will again call on the battalion to support operational deployments in 2008, and I strongly encourage you all to re-nominate next year.

In closing, my thanks to Major Harris, Captain Baird, Lieutenant Lee, WO1 Pringle, WO2 Broemmer, and Sergeant Reid for their continued service and support. In particular, my thanks to WO2 Farrar-Boatman, CSM CSS company, for her diligence and professionalism in managing the company's personnel across the state. Yet again another example of the companies 'can do' approach. Corporal Hiller aptly supports her in managing these administrative matters.

There are still some major activities occurring before the end of the year. I encourage you to continue to attend these activities and practice your trade skills at every opportunity. As I previously alluded to, your next operational deployment may be just around the corner. In addition, I urge you to maintain your AIRN status and not allow it to lapse. Managing this process is a large administrative burden for CSS Coy PHCT and Admin staff. This burden would be significantly reduced if you personally are disciplined enough to ensure your AIRN status remains current.

MAJ Worsteling  
OC

<b>Main Q Store</b>	QM	WO1 Ross Pringle
	RQMS	WO2 Brian Kirby
	Sgt	Sgt Trevor Beales
	Cpls	Troy Babao, Trevor Hooper

Well what can I say? We have all worked well during the second quarter of this year. The Company Q Stores have been very busy. And now with the QM back on board he's dusted off his whip and has made it quite clear, he's back. The RQ is always a phone call away or in the back ground watching all that goes on like a hawk with a magnum P.I mo. Day and night he was our assistance from a distance.

Our first point of call was EX Borneo (Majura). This turned out to be an excellent opportunity for us Q guys and gals to catch up, and for some of us to meet for the first time. Although most of us had not worked together before we adapted and overcame. Without a fuss and a few cold Brews, we managed to hook in and get the job done. And a job well done if I may say.

There were some shady characters though. The likes of Sergeant Beales (homer) who led the attack. Privates Hutchins ( Hucho), Simovska (Simo), Holt (Holty) not to forget the young back flipping Nguyen (Ninja). We had the likes of Private Brown-Kerr (Brown dog) who added his own flavour to our little hot pot. Private Brewer came on board to join our happy camp and added his own special touch. Lance Corporal Sizer kept things exciting for the newer members of the crew with secret Q'ie teachings. Corporal Babao was also on hand with myself as the contracted Brew makers. The jobs were split up well between the two of us and made it a lot easier to delegate instead of playing paper, Scissors, rock.

The younger members were keen to learn and learn they did. We all had a lot to teach each other and learn as well. Unfortunately the Q'ies were that good. We were able to account for all our gear which made the Weapon check a bit more of a challenge.

Like any other Exercise there is always something to take back with you. I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say Canberra is a bloody cold place.

CPL Hooper

<b>Catering Platoon</b>	WO Caterer	WO2 Mark Broemmer
	Sgt Cooks	Stephen Ivey, Rod Symons

2007 has been a year of mixed happenings for the Catering Platoon (and we are well on the way to achieve the appropriate numbers)..... As usual we have supported the battalion (and to a lesser extent 4 Brigade) to the best of our ability during the year. We, of course, are limited by certain factors that affect our effectiveness, the same as any other sub-unit of the battalion:

availability of staff,

level of training,

equipment availability, and

types of rations available.

These are some of the factors affecting outcomes. I believe that any of the battalion members that were fed by our Catering Platoon during the year were well looked after and if there were any issues they were dealt with quickly and were of a minor nature.

Sergeant Ivey has been present for many of our weekends and Tuesdays and changes in his civil employment have been a factor in the latter part of 2007. Steve remains an essential part of the backbone of the Catering Team.

Sergeant 'Rocket' Symons is a new member of the 8/7 RVR team, parading at Warrnambool and I welcome him with his wealth of knowledge and skills he has gained over many years in the ARA, particularly at the ADF School of Catering.

Two long awaited promotions occurred during 2007 with Private Michael Currie gaining the rank of Corporal and Private Bruce Wilson becoming a Lance Corporal for a few weeks before having the approval for his RPL recognised and he too, was promoted by the CO to Corporal.

Many of the new and junior members of the Catering Platoon have recently gained part or all of their qualifications for Modules 1 and 2. Private Simon Gellert having completed both Modules 1 and 2 now enters a period of 'On the Job Training' to fine tune his catering skills. His brother Private Matthew Gellert has completed Module 1 and would have completed Module 2 but for an unfortunate accident with his finger (at his civilian workplace)

New people around the Catering Platoon include Privates Luke Winter, Alex Muscat, Jodie Pitt and Recruit Emma Curran. At Bendigo depot two new members were parading, Privates Curtis and Touhey.

I can see now that all of the Module 1 and 2 Courses of ADF School of Catering will be well patronised by 8/7 RVR members in 2008.

All (save one or two) of the current members of the battalion Catering Team volunteered immediately for service with "OP Anode" but to our disappointment our services were not required this time. One would hope that in future operations and large scale exercises that the Catering Personnel would be lucky enough to get a look-in.

Our training is conducted directly through the work that we complete in support of the Battalion. We look after the catering needs of the soldiers in this unit and we do that, in my humble opinion, to a standard higher than any other unit in the Brigade or even quite possibly, within 2 Division. I would like to thank all of the Battalion Catering Platoon members for their ongoing trust and support and I look forward to training hard with them in 2008.

*"We Sustain"*

Mark Broemmer  
WO2  
Warrant Officer Caterer

### **Recruiting**

Recruiting Staff 2007      WO2 Michael Murphy  
Cpl Graeme Paizis

The first quarter of the year has been busy for the Recruiting Cell year with the Battalion participating in the Ballarat Begonia Street Parade, the Avalon Air show, and Bendigo's Easter Show. All of these events were well supported by multiple sub units and all were effective recruiting events with interesting stands to draw the crowds. There were many other smaller events held at the local units with Mildura and Shepparton having several successful recruiting activities.

On the recruiting card we have achieved the yearly required recruitment two months early thanks to an awesome effort by the Mildura Depot boys in getting 16 civvies to the JOES Day in early May. Big thanks go out to the Geelong and Laverton boys who help out with the Avalon Air Show for 9 days, and the Ballarat mob for participating in the Begonia Street Parade, and not to forget the Mildura team who participated in the Reno Walk in full marching order. Thanks to Hanso, Simo, Farrell, Wood, and Williams.

Recruiting Cell lost a couple of member early this year with Sergeant Rantell discharging from the reserves after 17 years service, and Corporal Wicks down at Geelong Depot moving on to greener pastures. Big thanks go out to the Geelong and Laverton boys who helped out with the Avalon Air Show for 9 days, and the Ballarat mob for participating in the Begonia Street Parade.



*Left: The Ballarat Begonia Street Parade with Privates Grant and Sevier*

The Next quarter was taken up with conducting navigation and first aid courses. This has also seen the introduction of the civilian First Aid Course in May, with the military First Aid Course now obsolete. This process although slow at first is now running smoothly for all participants.

Thanks go out to WO2s Hubbard, Reyne and Fawcett for running the navigation training this year, which helped many DTUs move to their respective companies and continue their training to become fully qualified in their trade.

The Recruiting Cell welcomed into its ranks this year Corporal Almond in Geelong who took over running the DTUs whilst WO2 McGinley was overseas on operations. Having come with a

recruiting background Corporal Almond fell into the job with great enthusiasm and brought several new ideas to our recruiting team. Corporal Logan took over Swan Hill with the depot recruiting more people this year than the entire last six years.

The third quarter saw most depots conducting Career Expos in their local area. These Expos, although not a great recruiting activity, did expose the battalion to their local community and give members of the depots exposure to recruiting activities with some positive results. The 'Deniliquin Ute Muster' and 'Elmore Field Days' were two short-notice activities conducted by 8/7 RVR whilst away on the Brigade/Battalion LFX, thanks go out to C Company for supplying members to support this event.

The fourth quarter was the recruiting cells most active time of the year with the shows touring the state. Unfortunately this year the shows were down in numbers due to the horse 'flu and this was noticeable by all those who attended. All activities conducted at the shows with the help of 4 Brigade Recruiting Cell went well, so thanks to the Brigade Recruiting Cell for all their help over this long and arduous period. The activities conducted over this period would not have been possible without the help of the B Company members and DTUs from the Ballarat Depot who have consistently helped out with recruiting events and local activities. Thanks go out to Lieutenant O'Donnell and Privates Bond, Ward, McMahon, Honeybun, King, and Corporal Hiller from Admin COY.

The end of the year is finally here and we have a few members to farewell. Corporal Hastings from Warrnambool heads off to 3 RAR to jump out of perfectly normal airplanes. Congratulations to Corporal Hastings who became a father this year. Sergeant Lopez from Laverton also departs on operations overseas, good luck and thanks to 'Hasto' and 'Lopy' for the help when I first took over the Recruiting Cell at the start of the year. Sergeant Anderson from Shepparton leaves for the big blue one, lucky bugger! WO2 Murphy moves over to B COY with WO2 Tom Hubbard coming in as Unit Recruiting Liaison Officer for 2008 with the long serving Corporal Paizis.

WO2 Murphy  
URLO

## **Op Anode**

### **OC Major Duckworth**

A letter from the OC of the Op Anode Company in the Solomon Islands to the RVR Association:

CTF 635 Operation Anode Rotation 13  
FOB MARITIME – HONIARA

Thank you for letter and accompanying copies of the recent RVR Association Newsletter to the members of the regiment currently deployed in the Solomon Islands. You will be pleased to know that I have seen members of the regiment already reading the newsletter today! I was pleased to see that you enjoyed "The Pineapple", I am keen for it to continue as it provides a snapshot of our current lives and lifestyle. I am enclosing a copy of Pineapple 2 that your members may also find of interest.

I note there are a number of upcoming functions on the association's calendar in the near future. Please accept my apology, but as you know, I am "unavailable due to

service requirements". I must say to current and future battalion members, if given the opportunity and availability, put your name forward for a deployment. For me as a Reserve officer, (or should I say "Regular Reserve"), this has been an amazing personal experience. It is hard work, particularly as a company commander, however we all know that soldiering is about working hard. No one complains about that. Given the international nature of the deployment, I am learning much commanding a company with a platoon of very large Royal Tongan Marines and a platoon of Territorial Kiwis on a rotational basis.

Association members will be pleased to know that the RVR boys from both battalions are doing a great job and do appreciate the support from those at home. They work co-operatively with the Participating Police Force (PPF) members and are also obtaining a whole new perspective on life, not only on patrol on the streets in Honiara, but also in the contrasting villages spread throughout the Solomons. Of particular note is the absolute acceptance of our presence and the joy we bring in children's faces after a simple game of soccer or a balloon from a soldier. There are young people here who lost three years of schooling due to the tensions. Three years of lost opportunity, which they openly say, RAMSI has retrieved. These young Australians do have a lot to be proud of, even if it is merely by their presence here. They have all donated their time and lives for a considerable amount of time. I said it in the Pineapple and I will continue to say, I am proud to join the increasing number of Australian Reservists who are given the opportunity to serve on an overseas operation, but more importantly, that we really are "making a difference".

Each of the RVR platoons has its own T-shirt of which they are fiercely proud. As OC, I see differences in the characters of each of the platoons, but the one thing they all share is their willingness to go that bit further even when not asked. I have seen individuals stand out and I have seen individuals helped by their mates. There is no better position to be in when in command on ops. We are operating in an operational environment called "Steady State" operations. Whilst the term provides its own meaning, we are under no illusion that any complacency will not be allowed. This is one of the benefits of all of those years training with the Reserve. The boys are motivated and create their own identities as Aussie soldiers have done and will continue to do in the future. I have seen the compassion and even tears in digger's eyes when they do the daily local Honiara rubbish tip run. They witness young children and their parents empty the rubbish trailer for subsistence. Our job here is made that much easier in the fiercely humid environment by the number of smiles and waves we receive from people who value our presence.

By the time you receive this letter we will be nearing the end of our tour however, there is still a lot more the RVR team will be doing here. In anticipation of a slow mail run, I have asked Lieutenant Cameron Warfe (8/7 RVR) to e-mail this letter to the Association via his personal e-mail account.

May I wish all members a safe and happy Christmas.  
Best Wishes and thanks again John.  
Yours sincerely,

(Original signed)  
M.W. DUCKWORTH, CSM  
MAJ OC 25 October 07

## CML Captain Strack

The military component of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), also known as OP ANODE, has a small team of soldiers that are the eyes and ears of the task force on the ground. With the primary task of engaging with the locals in order to provide the Commander CTF635 with insight into the Solomon Islands community, the three-man team has been out on the streets of Honiara talking to the locals about life in the Solomons.

As Commander CML, I have had the good fortune to work alongside New Zealand, Tongan and PNG Liaison Officers throughout all aspects of the mission. Ably supported by Sergeant Ken Rowe, 4/19 PWLH and Corporal Steve Ward, 5/6 RVR, the CML team has reached out to many parts of Solomon Island society to educate the locals of RAMSI's mandates, listen to concerns held by communities and delivering these messages back through to RAMSI HQ so that these issues may be addressed.

In conjunction with the Participating Police Force (PPF) and RAMSI Civilian personnel CML has participated in a series of community outreach programs designed to enhance community awareness of RAMSI work, and provide a forum in which the locals can ask questions of RAMSI activities. We present information sessions about the work of RAMSI's military component to community groups of up to 600 people throughout Honiara and in numerous surrounding islands. Utilising language skills gained from the ADF School of Languages Pijin Course, the CML is well equipped to deliver these presentations in Solomon Pijin, or English, whichever the locals prefer.

Since arriving in early August the CML has taken a lead role in the development of Solkick (Solomon Islands version of Auskick). Each Saturday the team heads down to the Rove Prison field to teach the kids how to play Aussie rules. Inaugurated by Australian PPF officers in 2003, CML has been instrumental in reinvigorating football in Honiara with a bit of passion and application. After successfully seeking sponsorship from the AFL to supply two sets of jumpers and a quantity of footballs, CML coordinated an AFL demonstration game for soldiers and locals together. The Clark-Dunning Memorial Trophy, as it is called, commemorates the lives of Australian Private Jamie Clark and Australian Protective Services Officer Adam Dunning, who both gave their lives while serving with RAMSI. It also gave the local boys the opportunity to showcase their skills while also giving the soldiers an opportunity to stretch "be at home" for a short while. The two teams were co-captained by 8/7's Corporal Peter Baird and Private Jayson Blain with the assistance of some senior local boys.

While playing footy might seem a bit of a distraction from regular soldiering, for the CML, this is what the mission is all about - engaging with the local community, getting them involved in joint activities, and empowering the locals to eventually take the lead in doing the job themselves. Apply this concept to the RAMSI mission at the highest level and there you have the mission purpose in simple terms - capacity building.

Having met so many good people from the Solomon Islands, from the Participating Police Force, the Tongan Defence Service, New Zealand Defence Force and Papua New Guinea Defence Force it will be difficult to say goodbye - but we are looking forward to coming home!

Each day is an adventure, who knows what's just around the corner?



*Left: Captain Strack addressing his charges after the Clark-Dunning Memorial match at the Panatina Rugby Fields. Right: Captain Strack at an Outreach activity with children from White River*

### Callsign 11

The opportunity to go on an operational deployment does not come around very often for an Army Reservist, and so when word started to circulate in late 2006 that 8/7 RVR would need to provide a platoon of soldiers to deploy to the Solomon Islands as part of Operation ANODE in 2007, there was a genuine sense of excitement and enthusiasm throughout the battalion. The next six months saw the rigorous but sometimes mundane process of nominating, selecting and finally training the lucky members of 8/7 RVR who would become part of the 13<sup>th</sup> Rotation of the Australian Army's contribution to the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

This process took a number of weekends during the first half of the year, where all nominated personnel attended Simpson Barracks in Watsonia to undertake the initial medical, physical and administrative requirements in preparation for the upcoming deployment. This included completing seemingly endless (and repetitive) paperwork and inoculations, weapon qualifications for the Browning 9mm pistol, and attending numerous intelligence and situational briefings. At this stage, no one has been able to locate the 'black hole' that seems to swallow all 'will proformae', pay details and personal category applications. The search continues...

It wasn't until the platoon (and a number of guys in the reinforcement contingent) undertook its six weeks of pre-deployment training at Puckapunyal in June and then Townville in July that the real work began. The platoon trained for mission-specific tasking, such as mounted patrols in infantry mobility vehicles (IMVs), low-level urban operations, key point defence, population protection and control (PPC) and Pidgin English language training. One of the highlights of the pre-deployment phase was undertaking the helicopter underwater escape training (HUET) at the specially constructed facility at Townville's Lavarack Barracks, which everyone found to be both challenging but rewarding experience.

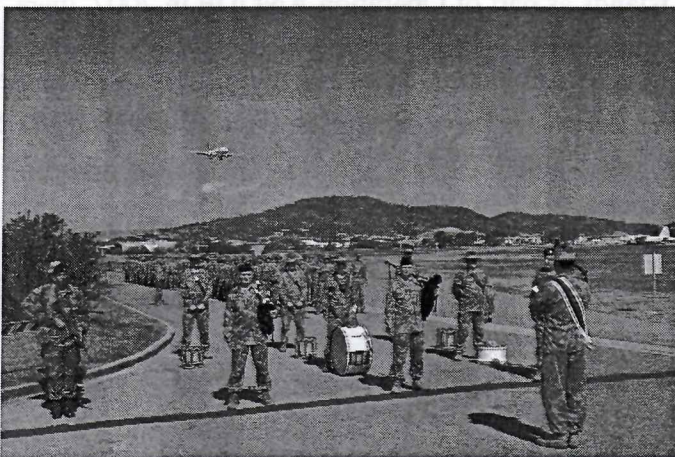
In only a short period of time, it was impressive to see the teamwork, camaraderie and dedication to duty that developed within the platoon, despite the fact that many of the guys had not worked together or even knew each other before this time. We were finally ready to do the job at hand, and the platoon deployed into the Solomon Islands area of operations in early August, representing our country, our unit and ourselves to the world.

## 200 Bob a day tourists, 11A

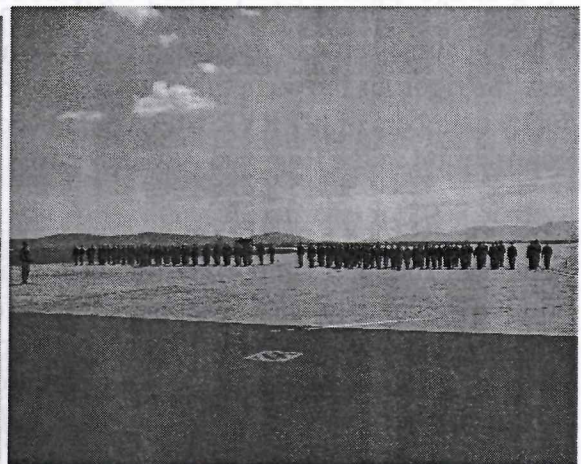
We've just passed hump day of the 4 months were spending over here in the Solomon Islands. It's been going really quickly and the lead up training seems like it was completed much more than 2 months ago.

The lead up training included 2 phases in two very differing climates. The first was in Pucka where we were lucky enough to be given the opportunity to share a building with PHQ. The freezing weather was greeted by the 5 heaters we brought for our building matched with a little bias by the zero heaters in the other platoon building. Morale was a battle between music and the weather but the former held out with Push it by Salt n Pepper becoming the song stuck in everyone's head.

The second phase of lead up training came after a weeklong 'Admin period' where we had no duties. This week was not to be confused with 'leave'. In Townsville we stayed at RAAF Garbutt where the facilities including the Mess and the Gym were second to none. The latter kept Private Robertson very happy indeed. During this phase we were lucky enough to get a weekend off. Our section spent the Saturday checking out the sites at Magnetic Island, our vehicle of choice being the Mokes that were available for hire. These were possibly the most unsafe, least comforting, vehicle I've ever ridden in.



*Left: Preparing for the Farewell Parade.*



*Right: 'On Parade'.*



*Left: Thank God it's over!*

Subsequent to a fantastic parade that was enjoyed by all we were on the plane for the Solomon Islands. Following our arrival at Guadalcanal Beach resort we squeezed into a cruiser and headed off to the first phase of our deployment; 3 weeks next to a Solomon Island Police Force outpost, at Tetera. The 3 weeks for our section included burning a pile of Marijuana confiscated by 2 Section, and many local meet and greets, these usually consisted of us driving into a village speaking to the chief, playing Frisbee with the kids, eating coconuts and swimming at the local waterhole. The stint at Tetera also included one very

competitive sports day at a local tech college. Games included soccer, touch footy and volleyball. We fought well yet it was a little disappointing that our sporting highlight of the day was when we almost beat their girl's volleyball team. None of the girls would have been taller than 5 feet.

After 3 weeks of checking out wrecked WW2 tanks, exploring abandoned American bunkers and ensuring law and order prevailed for the local Tetere population we were back to GBR to prepare for our provincial patrol. Our patrol took us to Small Malaita an Island 120 km east of Honiara, Guadalcanal. We were lucky enough to have the company of our platoon commander Lieutenant Warfe and a Medic, Private Hawkins (who amusingly enough unlike us didn't choose to be infantry and found the pack humping and rough living a bit of a struggle).

The patrol was great. Over the 14 days we walked 70 km through the jungle, our kit weighing between 40 and 50 kgs depending on whether we were carrying one of the two radios we were forced to take and how much water we had drunk, this all came to be too much for Private Robertson who had to be CASEVACed halfway through the walk with a rolled ankle. Private Petering also had to be canulated on the second day as the hot humid weather started to take its toll on the less able.

At every village, we sat down and had a chat with the local population and gave them a chance to ask any questions they had of us. The questions ranged greatly. Starting simply with "*Ufala marreit or nonoa*". (Are you married), which was mostly aimed at our attached female medic, Private Hawkins, and peaked at "*Wife blong mi, hemi littlebit crazy. If wife blong me hemi bad, me no killem die hem, save mi cut hem littlebit or nomoa?*". Which roughly translates to "if my wife is bad I won't kill her but can I cut her or not?"

*Right: 1 Platoon on patrol*

All in all the patrol was exceptionally sobering. One village chief welcomed us, through wiping away tears, as the "Saviours of the Solomon Islands". Half the patrol route hadn't seen any RAMSI people before and for a lot of people, especially the children, it was the first time they had ever seen white man. This was reinforced by the fact that most villages took between 20 and 30 minutes for a local to have climbed up a palm tree to get us some fresh coconuts.



The patrol for us was finished with an 8 hour boat ride back to Honiara that took 26 hours. Half way back we came across a broken down ferry and we were forced to "drift" over night until the closest tug boat, which was 9 hours away, came to tow the ferry. I decided to make the most of a momentary delay with some fishing. 3 hours later I'd seen heaps of fish, squids and the occasional shark, but hadn't even got a nibble let alone caught anything.

After a weekend of R and R we started 3 weeks of QRF.

After we finished QRF and we were replaced by the Kiwis, we shifted to FOB Maritime, the company forward operating base. We're now closer to the centre of Honiara and are ready for a lot more patrols.

With 'hump' day behind us we were now on the 'home' run. We've still got to finish our stint here at maritime, a rotation through an OP at Rove Prison and a mystery final 3 weeks to finish up the deployment. The Skills and experiences we've gained over here are invaluable and hopefully the second half of this deployment has as much to offer as the first.

A brief summary of the activity so far:

- |                   |            |   |          |                 |
|-------------------|------------|---|----------|-----------------|
| Lead up training. | Pucka      | Heaters   | Push it  | PHQ             |
|                   | Townsville | Gym   | Homeboys | Magnetic Island |
| Solomons          | Tetere     |   |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Sporties, girls volleyball team                       |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Rest days building                                    |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Burning weed  |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Hot house   |          |                 |
|                   | Provincial |   |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Small malaita   |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Coconuts  |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Chief crying Bulu                                     |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Stuck with the medic who didn't choose to be infantry |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Robbo malingering                                     |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Chief willie, snitch                                  |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Wazza malingering again                               |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | 70 km   |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Ocean shitters  |          |                 |
|                   | QRF        |   |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Beast man worms                                       |          |                 |
|                   | ○          | Then three weeks later                                |          |                 |

By Pte Harpley

### 11B Op Anode 2007

11B is a section made up of blokes from 8/7 RVR from all over country Victoria with blokes from Mildura, Ballarat, Laverton, and Warrnambool, and led by Corporal Tailor from 5/6 RVR. 11B as part of CTF635 deployed on Operation Anode on 07 August 2007. We deployed to our first area of operations being Tetere that night. In the following weeks we conducted daily patrols in the local area.



The highlight for 11B at Tetere was a joint drug bust involving members of the Participating Police Force (PPF), members of the Solomon Island Police Force (SIPF) and call sign 11B. During this joint drug bust, 1738 plants were seized.

*Left: 1 Platoon on Provincial Patrol in Small Malaita*

From Tetere, 11B deployed on their provincial patrol to Maliata. 11B inserted into Atoifi by air and liaised with PPF

member Sean Gallagher, an ex 5/6 RVR mortar platoon Sergeant. From Atoifi we conducted local patrols then inserted in to Atori by banana boat. Sean had liaised with the PPF at Auki, who were kind enough to lend us a land cruiser to conduct our patrol between Atori and Dahla. This brought on a lot of smiles as it saved us a lot of pack marching over some pretty unforgiving terrain in extreme heat.

Over the next 10 days we based ourselves out of Atori and conducted patrols along the Atori-Dahla road before returning to Honiara by air. For the three weeks following 11B provincial patrol, we were QRF based out of the Guadalcanal Beach Resort (GBR).

11B is currently conducting joint patrols with PPF and SIPF out of FOB Maritime in Honiara.

### **11C: (Chocs On Ops)**

The trip so far has been a roller-coaster ride of the best and worst parts of the military for 3 Section, 1 Platoon. It all started at Pucka in the first phase of the Force Preparation Training. We froze, we got gassed, we got drunk a lot. We did PPC training. And then we got drunk again. And after we got drunk, did we, One One Charlie, premier section in the rotation, stop there, go to bed, lead dull and boring lives? No! We continued to celebrate, and by celebrate I mean we grabbed our PPC equipment and re-enacted the Battle of Hastings. After three weeks of the hilarity of Pucka it was time for a break, so we star-bursted to the corners of Australia (well, Victoria and Canberra) for a week of saying goodbye to friends, family, and hygiene.

In no time we were all back in the green machine and on our way to RAAF Garbutt in Townsville, our home for the next three weeks. It was there that we first witnessed the formidable might of the section, when it was turned against a trailer full of civilians in a scenario shoot at the WTSS. The hose was well and truly turned on. Then it was off to the unseasonably cold Cowley Beach. For tropical Far North Queensland it seemed an awful lot like being back home. It was exciting, fast paced training. We sat around at the OP, we sat around at the FOB, and we sat around on QRF. We even went on a patrol to OP a cache, and sat around there too! We sat around on the beaches, we sat around in the jungle. We sat on the ground and we sat on the IIMV. Little did we realise how relevant this training would be to what we would eventually employed to do...

But not all of us, sadly. Back at Townsville on the way home from the boozier Moorey had an unfortunate accident and seriously damaged his knee. It soon became clear that he would not be able to join us for the trip, and he was flown home to recover from his injury. With him gone an opportunity arose for our token ginga, Mr. Iris. He settled into the section quickly and before we knew it One One Charlie was on a plane again, but this time we were on our way to Henderson Airfield, and *destiny*.

The plane touched down in the soon to be familiar humidity and we watched the Tongans do another Haka as the rotation 12 guys watched us in the world-weary way that we will soon watch the rotation 14 guys. After a few hours at the aptly named Guadalcanal Beach Resort we were on our way to FOB Tetere, with our gats loaded with magazines of live bullets- an exciting first for many of us.

When we arrived at Tetere we basked in the luxury: fridges, a bush shower, a giant tent to sleep in, and even a toaster we couldn't use for fear of shorting out the whole FOB. After some mild spasticity, mozzie domes were erected and we settled down for our first night of being Chocs on Ops.

*Right: 1 Platoon on patrol in Ripel*

In the weeks that followed we settled into the routine of Tetera: go on piquet, go on patrol, poke fun at the sad orphan kid in Ripel, watch yet another local reveal that he/she is distantly related to Willy, get bitten by mosquitoes, repeat. Those three weeks flew by and in the blink of an eye we were doing our 14 hours of battle prep for our 2 week provincial patrol along the Weathercoast.



The patrol looked easy to the people who planned it, 80km along the beach in 19 days. Piece of cake. How could walking on the beach ever be difficult?

The first day of what turned out to be a 114km patrol was described by amateur war correspondent Fred "Fred Bradley" Bradley to his millions of viewers as "murderous." As it turns out, walking along the beach is rather difficult when one wears a pack and keeps sinking into the sand with every step. When we'd had enough of the beach we tried the jungle, and became well acquainted with the fluid definition of distance in the Solomons- "not far" can mean anywhere from 2 to 20km and "a ten minute walk" is some distance so ridiculous it should never be attempted by man - ever. It was generally suspected that our guides were just getting our hopes up so that they could laugh to themselves as we cursed yet another yarmer between us and sleep. After 11 hours of stomping, the second day it became clear that we'd have to devise some alternative to walking to get us the 114km to Avu Avu, and the solution was banana boats. We hired our first one from an experienced man of the sea, Wilson. He assured us that his 9hp boat could carry the whole section and kit, more than 1,000kg, all the way to our next destination. Half way in he changed his mind. It might have been all the water coming in over the side of the nautical equivalent of a go-kart that did the trick. So we dropped off half, who started to walk, and the other half looked in amazement at the coastline between them and our destination. We ended up grabbing another boat to go back and get them so that night the whole callsign, soaked and tired, slept on the rocky, possibly crocodile-infested beach at Marasa Bay.

Over the next few weeks we stomped and boated our way from PPF station to PPF station. We stole jaffles at Mbambanakira, we burgled brevilles at Isuna, and eventually we ate possibly the best barbecue ever at Avu Avu, in the company of Mick Ingram from VicPol and Tonga the Tongan. We made it, CASEVAC-free. Of the 114km we walked 85km and boated the rest. We even made it to Avu Avu a little early and lived up the amenities until the chopper picked us up and took us back to GBR.

Life at GBR was a shock: hot showers, table service, wireless internet, a training programme! And booze! Our first couple of days there were a drunken blur and there was many a soldier worse for wear the next morning. Sadly we awoke to the rotation full of badly dressed 'pouges' without jobs and nothing better to do than rub their noses in our business, but we would learn to overcome it. It soon became clear why the 'pouges' refer to life at GBR as "groundhog day." Without much to do after the day's lessons were done boredom set in a little. We were looking for anything to break the pattern, and when 1 Section came down with worms and Fred got them by proxy a plan of A-Team like proportions came into fruition to trick him into providing a stool sample for poo testing that didn't exist. And it almost worked...

We soon said goodbye to warm showers and worms and moved house to FOB Maritime, where we worked to perfect our back flips, front flips, end-o's, and dives off the pier and into the occasionally murky water. After braving the dangers of Maritime, the perils of sea lice, sunburn, and bottles that may have been but probably weren't thrown at our IIMV One One Charlie is ready to go on protecting democracy at Rove Prison.

### Conclusion



*Left: Walade Small Malaita*

At this stage of the deployment, the platoon has achieved some excellent results and morale has been disturbingly high for the duration. Everyone is looking forward to getting home for Christmas and seeing all our supportive families and friends once again. We are also keen to return to the unit and bring with us new skills and experiences that will be an asset for the battalion in the coming years. I would strongly encourage all members of the battalion to work hard at their military career, and if

another opportunity to deploy arises (as it most surly will), do everything possible to seize the prospect with both hands and put your hard work and dedication to duty into action.



*Left: Remembrance Day*

*Cede Nullis Celer et Audax*

### C.G. WARFE

Lieutenant

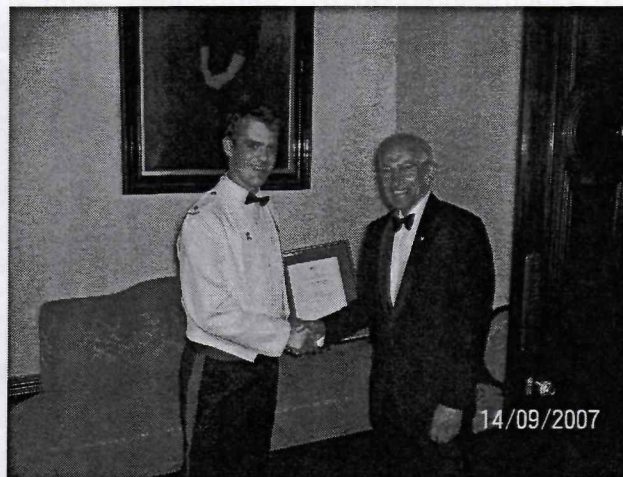
Officer Commanding 1 Platoon

Combined Task Force 635 Rotation 13

**Government House Visit**



*Left: Outgoing Regimental Colonel Col Paul Riley, Honorary Colonel Professor David de Kretzer and Mrs Jan de Kretzer and incoming Regimental Colonel Brig Doug Ball*



*Right: 2Lt Lachlan Clancy receives his Commission from the Honorary Colonel*

On 14 September the officers and SNCOs of the regiment were invited to Government House to a reception with the Governor and Honorary Colonel of the Royal Victoria Regiment Professor David de Kretzer and Mrs Jan de Kretzer. During the evening 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Lachlan Clancy was presented with his commission. Later the Honorary Colonel introduced the incoming Regimental Colonel Brigadier Douglas Ball, the former CO of 8/7 RVR and Commander of 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade. The Honorary Colonel thanked another past CO of the battalion Colonel Paul Riley, the outgoing Regimental Colonel, for his five years of excellent service in that role. The incoming CO of 5/6 RVR Lieutenant Chris Connelly was introduced and the outgoing CO Lieutenant Colonel Neil Grimes was thanked for his service in that role.

**'Pompey' Elliott Scholarship for Junior NCOs**



*Left: CO 5/6 RVR Lt Col Grimes, Regimental Colonel Col Paul Riley, CO 8/7 RVR Lt Col David McKerral in the 5/6 RVR Unit Historical Collection Room at BHQ 5/6 RVR at the Scholarship Renaming*

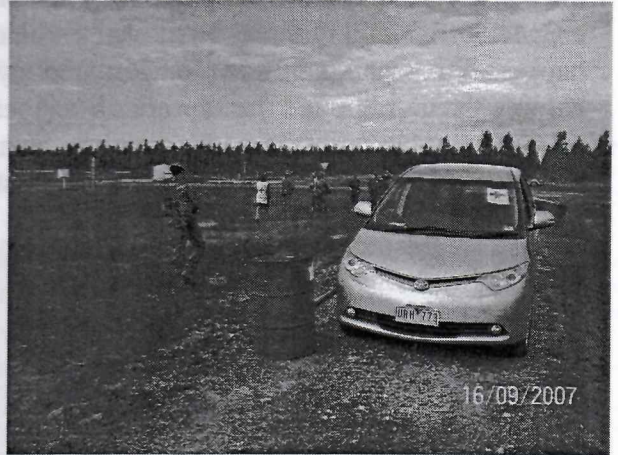
On 1 April the CO and XO, along with members of 5/6 RVR and the RVR Association attended a function at HQ 5/6 RVR in Hawthorn for the renaming of the RVR Association Scholarship to the 'Pompey' Elliott Scholarship. Part of Elliott's education was undertaken in Ballarat. He was tasked with raising the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion in WWI and took the battalion to Gallipoli in 1915. In 1916 he trained and led the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade which included the 57<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Battalions which were raised by splitting and reinforcing the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Battalions.

The scholarship is open to JNCOs of both battalions and funds travel each year for a JNCO from each battalion in alternate years for travel to extend the members military knowledge. In 2008 an 8/7 RVR JNCO will receive the scholarship.

### Support to Red Cross

*Right: Part of the VCP at CFA Fiskville in support of the Red Cross.*

Over the years the battalion has supported the Red Cross with a 'terrorist scenario' to assist their trainees in preparation for overseas deployment. After the 'scenario' the trainees are debriefed for almost two hours as would be done in the real situation. In September and November the battalion provided a small group of soldiers who provided a VCP and a separate militia force to add further realism to the course. Battalion members who attended the day had a most enjoyable time and their input was much appreciated by the Red Cross staff. There will probably be further requests for the invaluable support next year. As they say in the classics 'watch this space'.



### Remembrance Day Activities



*Left: Macarthur Street Primary School students at the 2/8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Service at the Shrine of Remembrance.*

Many of the World War Two battalion associations are closing as there are now not enough members alive for the associations to continue. When it closed, the 2/8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association decided to use the Macarthur Street Primary School as a repository for its memorabilia. The school attends the 2/8<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Service at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. The XO, along with two staff members and ten students from the school attended this year's service on 2 November. Captain Spencer also attended the school for their School remembrance Service on 12 November. The attendance by military personnel in uniform is well received by both students and staff. Again, for next year 'watch this space' as invitations for all sorts of functions are received by the battalion and we need attendees.

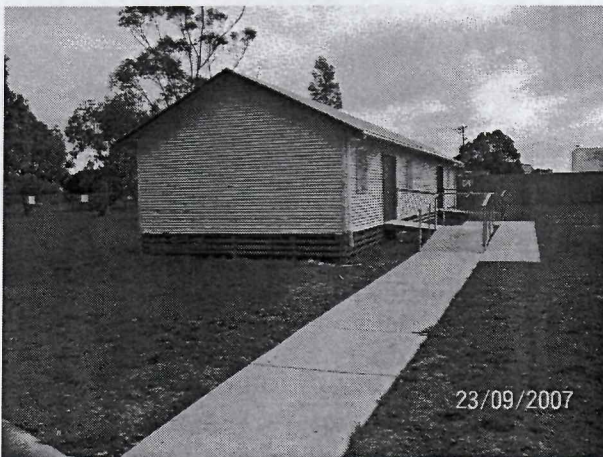


*Left: The Ballarat Catafalque Party.*

The battalion also provided a Catafalque Party in Ballarat on Remembrance Day.

## The Ballarat Ranger Military Museum

In 1987 the Ballarat Ranger Military Museum was opened in the original Ranger Barracks. When the barracks closed in 2001 the Curator, WO2 Broemmer and a few helpers moved it into a temporary home in the Sebastopol RSL Building. When the Russell Street Depot closed in 2003, the battalion requested that the P1 Hut, which came from the Ranger Barracks and had been used as a Cadet Office and Q Store, be moved to the new barracks for use as a museum. This eventually happened. A small band of volunteers, mostly from the Vietnam Veterans Sub-branch, have been helping the Curator and the Museum Manager (ie the XO) rebuild the inside of the hut ready for plastering etc in preparation for opening the hut as a museum. Planning is for this to occur on the battalion's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Weekend in August 2008.



The Museum Hut painted and pathed.



Work commences and framing for lining the hut.

The volunteers hold a Working Bee on the morning of the fourth Sunday of the month. If you can spare a couple of hours at a Working Bee over the next six months or so, your assistance would be most welcome. Once the hut is finished, the volunteers will need many hands to shift the contents of the museum from Sebastopol to Ranger Barracks, so mid next year you will receive notice when help is required.

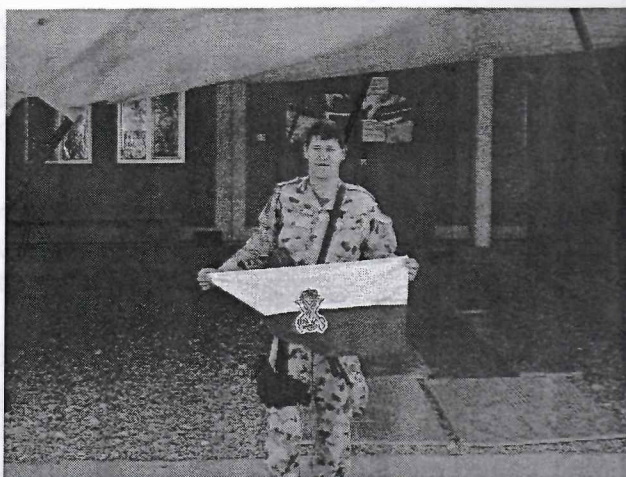
The new **Ballarat Ranger Military Museum** is due to be opened on **Saturday 9 August 2008**. Your support for the museum will ensure that this event will happen. The museum is now on a sound financial basis, having received a State Government Grant to purchase computers etc for its displays, but any donations in cash or kind will assist in its setting up.

Major Neil Leckie  
Museum Manager

### From Iraq

The following are extracts from an email from the former OPSO Major David Falloon, a man who spent five years with the battalion and has great pride in it.

The attached photograph was taken outside the front of the accommodation blocked used by Coalition (US & Aust) members at the Kurkish Military Training Base in about March this year. On my right shoulder I am wearing the brassard of the 1st Iraqi Training Battalion (blue) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Iraqi Training Battalion (red) that were presented to me by each of the CO's. (I had to wear them both so that I did not upset either).



The Kirkush Military Training Base (KMTB) is situated on the edge of a desert plain approximately 120 km Northeast of the Victory Base Complex in Baghdad and is located 27km west of the Iraqi /Iran border. The nearest town is Balad Ruz located a further 20 km to the west. The base was originally built by the former Saddam regime during the eight-year war with Iran and was used as a feint. At the time only the shell of the buildings existed.

Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gulf War the coalition completed the fit-out of the buildings and

established it as a training base. Initially this was undertaken by the British Army, then contractors and now the Iraqi Army itself supported by a Coalition Military Assistances Training Team (CMATT) consisting of US and two Australian Warrant Officers who act as Senior Military Advisors to the CO's of the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Iraqi Training Battalions. This level of Australian support was being increased in July 2006 following the Australian Army Training Team – Iraqi 6 deployment. 1<sup>st</sup> ITB at evening roll call 2<sup>nd</sup> ITB Barracks The KMTB is home to numerous Coalition and Iraqi units.

The US Forward Operating Base Caldwell was located within the Southwest portion of the base. A brigade of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division operated from that location but during the first half of 2006 this had been reduced to a Tactical Operations Centre. Other US special forces operated from the base as well as the US MiTT working the Iraqi 5<sup>th</sup> Division and the ITB. Iraqi units consisted of the headquarters of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division and one of its Brigades, Base Defence Unit, Base Support Unit (2<sup>nd</sup> line Support), the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Iraqi Training Battalions, the NCO Academy and a Regional Support Unit was in the process of being established to provide 3<sup>rd</sup> line support.

The Iraqi Training Battalions were established to conduct recruit and initial corps training. Each battalion raised is 1,000 strong divided into four companies with the recruit course lasting five weeks. During the training the soldier's aptitude and educational skills are tested and the Bottom 500 undertake the Infantry IET course. The remainder complete a Method of Supply Qualification Course in Transport, Maintenance, Supply, Military Police, Administration, Signals and Armourers Assistant. The NCO Academy is attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> ITB and conducts the Method of Instruction, Squad Leaders, Platoon Sergeants, Sergeant Majors, Warrant Officers and Chief Warrant Officers Courses.

David Falloon

### Allied Regiments

Anyone planning an overseas holiday in the United Kingdom or Canada should discuss their plans with eth XO and Adjutant and see if a visit can be arranged with our Allied Regiments during their holiday.

The battalion has two allied regiments and keeps in contact with both. The following articles are a brief run down on the Army forces of the countries of our allied regiments.

## **The Canadian Land Force Command (or Canadian Army)**

Land Force Command (LFC) is responsible for army operations within the Canadian Forces. It maintains bases across Canada and is responsible for the largest component of the Canadian Forces Primary Reserve - the Army Reserve.

LFC is the descendant of the Canadian Army which was the name of Canada's land forces from 1940 until 1968. The name was changed to LFC in a 1997 reorganization of the Canadian Forces.

Canadian infantry and armoured regimental traditions are strongly rooted in the traditions and history of the British Army. Many regiments were patterned after regiments of the British Army, and a system of official 'alliances' or 'affiliations' was created to perpetuate a sense of shared history. Other regiments developed independently, resulting in a mixture of both colourful and historically familiar names. Traditions such as Battle Honours and Colours have been maintained by Canadian regiments. Approximately two thirds of the Regular Force is comprised of 'Anglophone' units, while one third is 'Francophone'.

There are three Regular Force Armoured units, four Regular Field Artillery units which have traditionally been called the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery and four Regular Combat Engineer units. Regular Force infantry regiments (each of 3 battalions) of the Canadian Army are:

The Royal Canadian Regiment,  
Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, and  
Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment

The Regular Force component of the LFC consists of three field-ready brigades, with elements of a fourth. Each brigade contains a regiment each of artillery, armour, and combat engineers and three battalions of infantry (all scaled in the British fashion), as well as a service battalion (logistics), a headquarters/signals squadron, and several minor organizations. A tactical helicopter squadron and a field ambulance are co-located with each brigade but not part of the brigade's command structure.

Administratively, LFC has four areas. Each Area has, in addition to Regular Force troops, reserve forces organized in a total of ten Reserve Brigade Groups. The CF reserve force has four components:

- the Primary Reserve,
- the Supplementary Reserve,
- the Canadian Rangers, and
- and the Cadet Instructors Cadre.

Primary Reserve infantry training focuses on real world situations and the needs of the Regular Force who rely on the Reserves for augmentation on operational deployments. The primary reserve comprises citizen soldiers, sailors, and aircrew who train and are posted to CF operations or duties on a casual or on-going basis.

Reservists number approximately 23,000 (all ranks, all services). The CF maintains a "total force" policy as outlined in both the 1987 and 1994 Defence White Papers, where reservists are (in theory) trained to the level of and interchangeable with their Regular Force counterparts. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the reserves to sustaining CF operations, particularly following the Defence budget cuts and increased operational tempo of the 1990s.

The supplementary reserve is part of the CF reserve and comprises a voluntary call-up list for former CF regular- and reserve-force personnel who can be considered for reactivation in the event

of a national emergency. The Cadet Instructors Cadre (CIC) comprises those commissioned officers who are instructors with the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets, Royal Canadian Army Cadets, and the Royal Canadian Air Cadets. The Canadian Rangers are part of the CF reserve, provide surveillance and patrol services in Canada's Arctic and other remote areas, and are an essential component to Canada's exercise of sovereignty over its territory.

As of October 2007, Canadian Forces are in operations throughout the world, as part of Canada's obligations to NATO and the United Nations, as well as in support of its international allies, chiefly the United States.

The current notable deployment is Op ATHENA (2001-present) with 2500 troops in Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). In addition to this deployment, small detachments of Canadian military are based in different countries for assistance, espionage and logistical work.

### **British Army**

As an introduction to where our Allied Regiment the Staffords fit in the British Army, Wikipedia tells us: The regular British Army had a strength of 107,700 (trained and untrained) in 2006, while its reserve component, the Territorial Army, numbered 38,500. The British Army is undergoing a restructuring program envisaged in the 2003 Defence White Paper, 'Delivering Security in a Changing World', and the subsequent announcement of the Future Army Structure (FAS).

The army consists of three TLBs (Top Level Budget): United Kingdom Land Command, HQ Adjutant-General, and HQ Northern Ireland. Deployable combat formations consist of two divisions (1<sup>st</sup> Armoured and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mechanised) and eight brigades. Within the United Kingdom, operational and non-deployable units are administered by three regionally-defined 'regenerative' divisions (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>) and London District.

The core element of the Army is the 50 battalions of regular and territorial infantry, organised into 17 regiments. The majority of infantry regiments contain multiple regular and territorial battalions. Modern infantry have diverse capabilities and this is reflected in the varied roles assigned to them. There are four operational roles that infantry battalions can fulfill: air assault, armoured infantry, mechanised infantry, and light role infantry. The FV510 Warrior is the primary vehicle of armoured infantry battalions.

There are 11 armoured regiments within the regular army, of which five are designated as 'Armoured' and five as 'Formation Reconnaissance'. The 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Tank Regiment uniquely forms a component of the Joint Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Regiment. With the exception of the Household Cavalry, armoured regiments and their Territorial counterparts are grouped under the Royal Armoured Corps. Arms and Support units are also formed into similar collectives organised around specific purposes, such as the Corps of Royal Engineers and Royal Army Medical Corps.

### **Royal Regiment of Canada visitor**

Captain Adam West and his girlfriend Mandy McMahan visited 8/7 RVR on 14 December 2006. Adam is an Army Reserve member of the Royal Regiment of Canada, one of the Allied Regiments of 8/7 RVR. For the previous three months he had been the Platoon Commander of the 34 man strong Force Protection Platoon operating out of Kandahar Airport in Afghanistan. Their task is to escort convoys and to do this they used the South African RG31 Nayla Armoured Personnel Vehicle. The Canadian Army purchased 60 of these vehicles which originally were used to transport white children to school in SA. These four wheel vehicles have a remote weapons system firing either 30 or 50 calibre weapons. The only person outside the convoy escort vehicles is the air

attack observer. Several of the APVs, including Captain West's, have been hit by car bombs in Afghanistan, with only minor injuries to their crews. Along with the car bombs, Captain West has been fired at by RPGs, mortars and many small arms weapons.

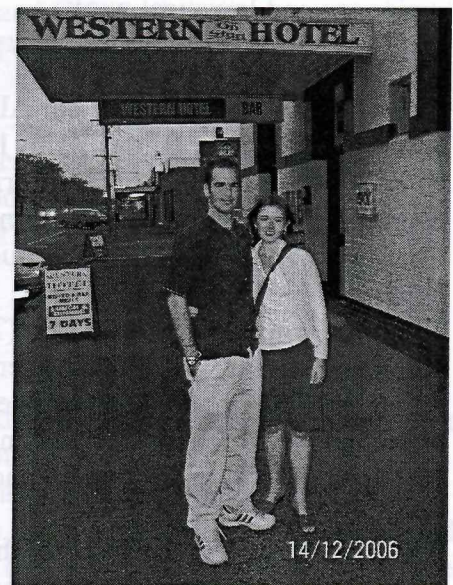
After a few weeks R&R with his girlfriend Mandy (Sydney, Christchurch and Queenstown in NZ, Melbourne and Ballarat) Captain West returned to Afghanistan to complete his seven month tour, while Mandy will return to he studies.

During 2006 Captain West was one of approximately 350 Canadian Army Reserve members in country as apart of their 2,500 strong commitment. The Canadians are committed to Afghanistan until 2009. Captain West believes that over the next few years the reserve component will more than double. Although not mentioned in details in the Australian press, the Canadians have actually lost quite a few soldiers during their time in Afghanistan.

Prior to deploying, Captain West was the Platoon Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the Grenadier Company of the Royal Regiment of Canada. The other companies are known as the Toronto Company (both of these companies are named after past regiments) and the 58<sup>th</sup> Company named after a WWI Battalion.

Captain West lives in Niagara Falls, Ontario while Mandy is a PHD Candidate in Thunder Bay Ontario and is studying to be a Clinical Psychologist.

*Right: Captain Adam West in Ballarat with girlfriend Mandy McMahon.*



### **Staffordshire Regiment**

From 1 September 2006 the Staffordshire Regiment, as it has been known in the past, no longer exists. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Regular Army) is now the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion (Staffords) of the Mercian Regiment. The other two battalions are the Cheshires and the Worcesters & Foresters. The Staffordshire Territorials now make up C (Staffords) Company Burton-on-Trent and D (Staffords) Company Stoke-on-Trent of the West Midlands Regiment (Territorial). The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion received new Colours on 28 April 2006. These Colours will now be laid up after the battalion returns from its latest tour of Iraq.

This battalion is maintaining its links with the Staffords. In 2005 Major and Mrs Kaye Leckie attended the 300<sup>th</sup> Birthday luncheon at Keele Hall at Keele University. In 2006 Corporal Peter Baird used his RVR Association 'Pompey' Elliott Scholarship to visit the Staffords Territorial Companies and in 2007 Major and Mrs Leckie visited the Staffords Museum where they viewed the display of 13 VC awardees. 2008 should see Lieutenant Paul O'Donnell visit the Staffords.

Odd Shots



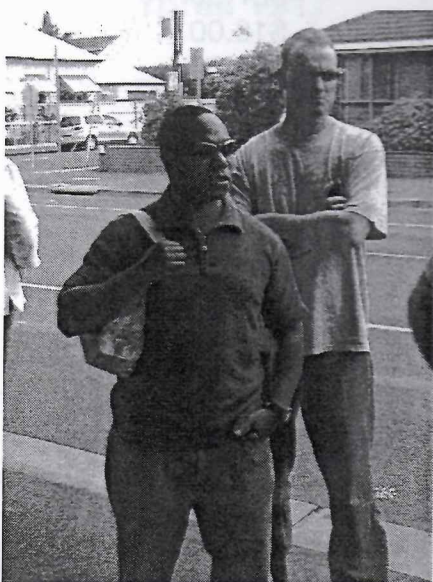
Solomons Patrol



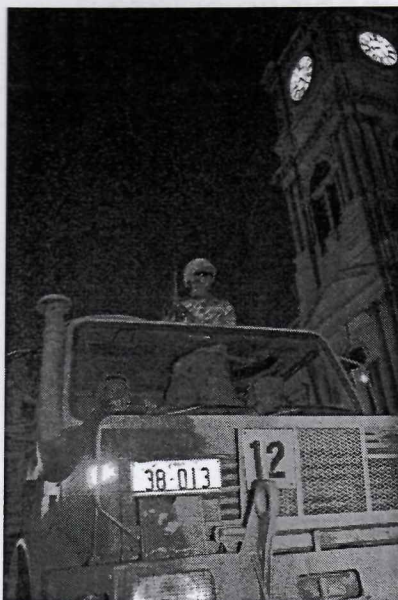
Solomons born soldier



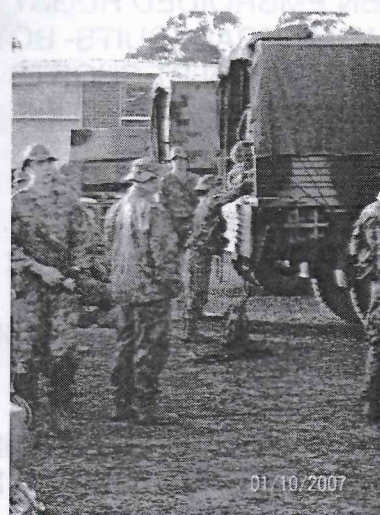
Bendigo ANZAC Day



Geelong



Ballarat Begonia Parade



Puckapunyal



Ballarat Regimental Dinner



Special Olympics Ballarat

**Regimental Funds**

Regimental Funds is a Non Public Monies Account which is designed to provide items for soldiers that cannot be provided through 'the system'. However, the 'Regt Funds' needs your support so that it can have some funds available to carry out its task. The following is a list of items available for purchase from regimental Funds:

**8/7 RVR REGIMENT FUNDS PRICE LIST**

**IF YOU REQUIRE ANY PRODUCT PLEASE SEE OPS CELL or YOUR DEPOT MANAGER OR COY CSM**

**CLOTHING**

UNIT PT LONG SLEEVE EMBROIDED SHIRTS	\$27.00
UNIT PT SHORT SLEEVE EMBROIDED SHIRTS	\$16.00
BN EMBROIDED RUGBY JUMPER	\$50.00
ARMY TRACKSUITS- BOTTOM	\$28.00
BATTALION PT SHORTS	\$10.00
RVR REGIMENTAL TIES	\$25.00
GLOVES	\$ 2.50

**ACCESSORIES**

LAPEL BADGES 8/7 RVR	\$ 4.50
LAPEL BADGES ARMY	\$ 5.00
LAPEL BADGE SANDS OF GALLIPOLI	\$10.00
ARMY CUFF LINKS	\$ 8.00
ARMY TIE BARS	\$ 8.00
8/7 RVR CAPS GOLD EMBROIDERY	\$ 4.00
8/7 RVR CAPS COLOUR EMBROIDERY	\$12.00

**BOOKS**

COBBERS IN KHAKI	\$45.00
OUR DEAR OLD BATTALION	\$45.00
WHERE TO FOR VALOR	\$16.95
THE MAD GALAHS	\$25.00
SOLDIERS STORY	\$20.00

**PLAQUES**

8/7 RVR WALL PLAQUE (LARGE)	\$45.00
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**PRINTS**

RANGER PRINTS (SET OF 4)	\$30.00
RANGER PRINTS	\$10.50

**EQUIPMENT**

THERMONATE MUGS	\$ 8.00
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## 8/7 RVR BATTLE HONOURS



**Boer War**

**South Africa 1899 - 1902**

**World War One**

**World War Two**

**Landing at Anzac Cove**

**Bardia 1941**

**Somme 1916 - 1918**

**El Alamein**

**Ypres 1917**

**Capture of Tobruk**

**Bullecourt**

**Greece 1941**

**Polygon Wood**

**South West Pacific 1942 - 1945**

**Amiens**

**Finisterres**

**Albert 1918**

**Hari River**

**Mont St Quentin**

**Bobdubi II**

**Hindenburg Line**

**Lae Nadzab**

**Poizieres**

**Borneo**



