

The

**BRANZ**



**2011**

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



**8/7 RVR, 2011:**

**Commanding  
Officer  
LTCOL Murray  
Duckworth CSM**

**Regimental  
Sergeant Major  
WO1 Rodney  
Rootham**

**Regimental Colonel  
Brigadier Douglas  
Ball AM RFD ADC**

**Allied Regiments:**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion  
(Staffords),  
The Mercian  
Regiment**

**The Royal Regiment  
of Canada**

**Ranger Magazine  
Editor  
Chaplain Stephen  
Maggs**

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Front cover: Pte Tristan Russell B Coy (17 Mar 12)

# CO

## LTCOL Murray Duckworth



It is a privilege to command 8/7 RVR and an honour to provide an article for 2011 edition of *The Ranger*.

The Army is all about people and capability. My thanks go not only to the previous CO, LTCOL Doug Laidlaw and his team, but to all of those members of the Battalion and its antecedents who have contributed to making our unique history. I must say that my task of appreciating the Battalion's history was made so much easier after reading MAJ Leckie's book, "Country Victoria's Own", which I thoroughly recommend.

This year, the Battalion welcomed a new CO, RSM, OPSO, ADJT and Padre. I was fortunate to have previously met MAJ Don Murphy (OPSO) in 2007 in the Solomon Islands and had the opportunity of spending some time with WO1 Rod Rootham (RSM) at Canungra in 2010 before we were both appointed to 8/7 RVR. CAPT Adam Moss was appointed as the ADJT on promotion from MUR and our new Padre CAPT Stephen Maggs is not only new to the Battalion, but indeed, new to the Army. I must thank the Padre for taking over the role as the editor of *The Ranger* from MAJ Neil Leckie, who retired in September after many years with 8/7 RVR. I wish to thank MAJ Leckie for his service to the nation and to congratulate him on his Brigade Commander's Commendation. I wish him all the very best in his 'retirement' and congratulate MAJ Cliff Gowers on his appointment as the new Battalion XO.

The old saying, "It never rains, it pours!" was certainly the unexpected introduction the new team received into the Battalion in January and February. As you will see in this edition of *The Ranger*, many 8/7 RVR members willingly supported flood relief efforts in western and northern Victoria over those couple of months.

I am fully aware of the community appreciation in the ADF support during natural disasters and I thank all of those members once again for their efforts.

In late January, I attended the ARA induction and was pleased to see a number of other new members join the Battalion, many with operational experience in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. Amongst the new staff, we welcomed SGT Phillips to A Coy, Laverton, SGT Edwards to A Coy, Warrnambool and SGT Herdman to C Coy, Mildura.

CPL Jake Holl and CPL Rebecca Peek were both posted into the Battalion Orderly Room. CPL Scott Bayliss was posted in as Tpt NCO and quickly rose to the challenges presented by the floods.

I was also pleased to see that a number of ARA members continued their service in the Battalion which helped to provide stability in the unit, particularly during the hand-over period. The Battalion induction weekend at Puckapunyal in February was well attended and it was good to see many of those who had returned in 2010 from Rotation 22 OPERATION ANODE (Solomon Islands), parading again.

Early in the year, I met with representatives from our various Regimental Associations and re-affirmed our relationships. The Battalion appreciates their efforts in supporting us. The Association's help will be evidenced once again in 2012 when RVR members deploy to Timor Leste and care packages will be prepared, as was done for previous Solomon Island deployments.

I knew 2011 was going to be a good year for 8/7 RVR, despite a number of identified changes and challenges. I am pleased that the Padre has focused on the subject of change in his article as it is going to be especially relevant over the next few years.

One of my early pleasures was to promote CAPT Spence and CAPT Neunhoffer to the rank of MAJ and OC B and C Coys respectively. Our system of medicals and health support moved to the 'Garrison Health' model and I thank CAPT Lee and her team in their efforts this year in assisting Garrison Health. Our geographical dispersion is always an on-going challenge, particularly from an administrative perspective with some limited IT resources; but our clerical staff, TRG WOs and Company HQ staff once again rose to the challenges. Our shortage of platoon commanders was always a challenge and one I hope to improve next year. Facilities improvements are necessary for our B Coy members at Monegeeta and I look forward to improving these early next year. Moves are also afoot to re-open the Kyneton depot in 2012, which will be good for B Coy and the local community.

Our Reserve pay system changed during the year to being paid every fortnight. We also had an opportunity to prepare and provide members for Timor Leste Task Group 4 (TLTG4) deployment in 2012. LT Guinea from C Coy Mildura and members participated in EXERCISE TALISMAN SABRE in preparation for this deployment. I congratulate MAJ John Spence, (OC B Coy) in being appointed OC TLTG 4 and wish him and his company the best in Timor Leste in 2012.

Performances at both the individual and collective levels were exemplary. Throughout this edition, you will see a number of these performances acknowledged. Of note, our Cambrian Patrol Team under the guidance of LT Marcus Soawyer and SGT Michael Phillips from A Coy, won the 4 Brigade challenge and team was just 'pipped at the post' by a NSW Reserve Unit. Our AASAM team did exceptionally well with PTE McMillan and CFN Hopfner being chosen to represent Australia in the Australian Army Shooting Team. PTE Tanavasuu was chosen to play in the Australian Army Rigby Team. A number of soldiers were recommended for the CO's Commendation this year and it gave me great

pleasure to make this award to LCPL Connor from C Coy.

Until being appointed as CO, I had not fully appreciated the esteem in which 8/7 RVR is held by the Victorian country community. ANZAC Day continues to gain momentum and the number of requests the Battalion receives for cataflaque parties, pre-dawn, dawn and main services increases each year. I am certain that the RSM relishes this challenge and thank him for his efforts in coordinating these important duties. I am particularly keen on maintaining our strong links with the community. We can all assist in supporting our reputation in our local areas. In many instances, we are the Army to the public. I wish to once again thank all of those members who support ANZAC Day activities, cadet activities and those who represent the Battalion at various public engagements. I would also like to thank Company staff who prepare our members for these and other activities such as the Arch of Victory/Avenue of Honour Official reopening by the Governor-General in Ballarat in November.

Next year, I am keen for the Battalion to train in different locations. I am sure we appreciate all that Puckapunyal offers, but we are ready to be seen more by our communities undertaking challenging training in varied environments.

In closing, I thank all 8/7 RVR members and their families and friends who understand our endeavours and support our efforts. I trust you will enjoy the *Ranger* and retain it as a memento of your service in 2011.

I very much look forward to another rewarding year in 2012.

Murray Duckworth, CSM  
LTCOL  
Commanding Officer

# XO

## Major Neil Leckie



### XO until 22 September 2011

With my impending retirement in September due to reaching Compulsory Retirement Age – for the third time - a lot of my time was spent with ensuring that everything was set-up for the incoming XO. This meant ensuring that WHS Procedures were up-to-date and that the 2010/11 NPMA (e.g. Soldiers Club accounts) Annual Audits were completed.

Early in the year I participated in the Welfare Board. This board looks at all members in the battalion who have welfare issues and ensures that the required processes are in place to assist the member to recover.

With no speaking duties on ANZAC Day I was able to march in Ballarat this year. As a former National Serviceman (or Nasho) and a member of the 8/7 Bn – 2 RVR Association I could have marched with either organisation. I decided that the rear file of the Nashos, who marched in front of the association, put me in touch with both.

With the end of the financial year approaching it was then time to ensure that all the out-centre NPMA were in good positions to be ready for auditing in July. By the end



*Final inspection at Mildura*

of July this meant visits to Laverton, Mildura, Swan Hill, Shepparton and Bendigo. These visits would also be my farewell visits to those depots.



*Swan Hill Depot (24 Aug 2011)*

*L-R: Chap Stephen Maggs, PTE Tarin Tants, SGT David Logan, PTE Viv Holland, MAJ Neil Leckie, PTE Matthew Batten*

I attended a second Welfare Board meeting in August and before I knew it the 20<sup>th</sup> September, my final Parade Night, had arrived.

I have served with 2 RVR and 8/7 RVR for 23 years of my 34 years of Army service. I paraded in all three depots that have been a part of the Battalion in Ballarat. The 'old' Ranger Barracks in Curtis Street – it was either hot or cold, noisy, draughty, offices were too big for one person, but too small for two people, but you always felt the sense of the history of those barracks when you walked through the doors; Broodseinde Barracks in Russell Street (now demolished and replaced with housing), the home of B Company – a great depot for a Rifle Company, and it was away from Battalion Headquarters; and the 'new' Ranger Barracks – it is not until you work in a building that you find out how practical a building is. The new barracks were designed for the battalion structure at the time of the design, and the last nine years of service in the new barracks were comfortable!

I left the battalion knowing that it was in great shape and that it was capable of providing a real capability for the Army and the Government.

In retirement I am still involved with the Army Reserve through the Ranger Museum. The museum is open most Thursday afternoons and I attend whenever I am available.

Good luck to all Battalion members as they train for deployment, which is what all Reserve members should be training for!

MAJ Neil Leckie  
XO

## Chaplain's Chat

Change, we are told, is the spice of life. 2011 was certainly a year of change with the marching in of new faces and the farewelling of familiar from 8/7. Personally, I had a headful of new challenges and experiences that have made 2011 a year to remember.



Change can be something to fear for some. It can become a crippling barrier that can stop us from broadening our understanding or gaining new life experiences. Just imagine if the world was unchanging. The same next year as it was last. At the very least it would be quite boring and uninspiring.

Consider the weather. It changes from year to year, unusually hot one year, very wet the next. Our children change very quickly. They begin as helpless infants that need our total care, the next thing we know their taller than us and know more than us. Even our closest relationships change over time, which can cause conflict if the changes are not recognised and understood.

Change isn't something we should avoid, but welcome, because it moves us towards becoming people with a broader perspective on life and tolerance towards others. I'm sure we all can think of a person we knew many years ago who is still the same; who hasn't 'grown up' yet. Sometimes change is unwelcome like a serious illness or death, but even then, it can alter our view to consider the biggies of life and our view of the world.

As soldiers we are expected to build on skills and become better at our tasks, building on skills learnt earlier. Gail Sheehy, a well known American author and lecturer said: "*Ah, mastery... what a profoundly satisfying feeling when one finally gets on top of a new set of skills... and then sees the light under the new door those skills can open, even as another door is closing.*" We never know what change can bring to us, it is a mystery that keeps life interesting and a challenge.

Those of you of faith will recognise the truth of the need to progress towards becoming better people- that only ever occurs because a change begins within.

Have a great 2012.

God Bless

# RSM

WO1 Rod Rootham



2011 certainly started off at a frenetic pace for the unit. With the massive amount of rain that inundated the country, the flooding that Victoria experienced could not be anticipated. I recall spending three hours on the phones with SGT Ian Cust as well as Dee Saunderson, ringing in excess of two hundred members of the unit, to see who was available to assist with the floods. It was reassuring to see you making yourself available on such short notice.

I have an appreciation of the commitment and dedication that you display to be able to meet your Military requirements, having previously served in two other GRES Units and thank you for your commitment.

As I stated during Induction Training in February, I do not believe in first impressions and never have. I am more interested in the lasting impression. With that, I expect from every soldier the following:

1. Always strive to improve professionally. Never rest on your laurels.
2. Have the moral courage to admit when you have made mistakes. Bad news does not get better with time. Never lie!
3. Be proud of being a soldier. You are part of an excellent team, so do your part, and don't let your mates down.
4. There is no such thing as a 'Dumb Digger', so don't expect any tolerance for conducting yourself [either through your actions or your words] in an unprofessional manner.
5. Don't be scared of change. Broaden your knowledge, and seek new challenges.

I would like to discuss the achievements of the unit this year. PTE Luke Winter was Trainee of Merit on his Cooks Course, which was a combined ARA/PT Course.

LCPL Erica Rosewarne was fortunate enough to be able to meet Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, during her visit to Australia. LCPL Chris Tucci, PTE Sophie Graham and PTE Luke Winter were very worthy recipients of the Soldiers Medallion for Exemplary Service. PTE Robert Trewartha received the Hellenic Award, and LCPL Scott Connor was awarded the CO's Commendation for 2011.

Our Unit performed exceptionally well during the lead up to Cambrian Patrol, coming first within the Brigade, and only being defeated by several points to be placed second in the Division. This result is in no small part attributed to the excellent guidance of SGT Michael Phillips, who has since discharged from the ARA. If you are looking for a role model, he should be at the top of your list.

You have achieved a lot this year, and should be proud of this. Be safe, and all the best for Christmas 2012.

WO1 Rod Rootham  
RSM

# OPS CELL

MAJ Don Murphy



**The** north-western Victorian floods were my introduction to 8/7 RVR and Victoria. The first couple of days on the job were spent trying to work out “where the #####” was whatever small town the local police officer was requesting assistance for! However, once I worked that out, we despatched soldiers to help and the communities were grateful for the assistance we provided. SGT Dave Logan at Swan Hill performed a sterling job as the ADFLO.

I was fortunate to inherit a stable OPS Cell with WO2 Shane Armstrong, SGT Jimmy Skett and PTE Josh Murphy all knowing how things worked and where “the bodies were buried”. They were of great assistance and support as the year ramped up.

The Battalion was very busy with DACC tasking for the floods, instructor and observer trainer support to first TLTG-3 and then TLTG-4. Almost all of the ARA and a good number of ARes filled these vital support tasks. Even the RSM and I spent a couple of weeks in Townsville, but it was well worth it, since we were able to be warm again!

Naturally, we still had to fill all the usual tasks of support to CAM courses, IET courses etc and the courses we ran within the Battalion. We rely heavily upon your contribution supporting these courses, and we would not be able to do so with the ARes members of the Battalion performing roles as instructors, cooks, enemy parties, drivers and general support. I am extremely grateful for those who did put their hands up for these tasks, sometimes at very short notice.

The last quarter of the year was spent preparing members of the Battalion for their impending deployment on TLTG-4. All up, 10% of the

Battalion was selected to deploy to Timor Leste in 2012. It was testament to the hard work and dedication of so many people that the Battalion was able to support this operation, particularly after so many of you had just come back from the Solomons at the end of 2010.

Overall the Battalion had a very good 2011, and 2012 should only be better.

MAJ Don Murphy  
OPSO

# ADMIN Company

## ADMIN COY HQ 2011 Just a word from the QM

**Firstly**, as the Senior soldier in the unit I would like to pass on to all the officers and soldiers of ADMIN Coy my personal thanks for your continued service and dedication to the unit for another year. This year as with most has once again been fairly hectic for the Coy as we continually bend to the ebb and flow of unit and BDE requirements.

This year we see a changing of the command structure, OC – MAJ C.N Gowers vacates his position from the coy and is to take up residency as the BN XO and Unit Safety Officer. The Coy's reign will be handed over to CAPT J. Lee for 2012.

As for myself I will be transferring to the GRES as 2IC of the coy after 25 years of ARA service in this unit as RQMS, CSM ADMIN, and Acting RSM and as the last ARA QM, 3RAR and SASR. I have decided to become a product of SRP and section 72 transfer across to the Public Service and continue to work for Defence as your Logistic Manager in 2012.

We will also see WO2 Bryan Wethling depart as he takes on his new role as Bravo Coy Training WO, WO2 Shane Armstrong is to join the HQ group and will take on some of the difficulties associated with managing such a diverse range of soldierly skills held within our company, somehow in the wake of WO2 Wethling's departure I cannot help but feel the red cordial high that currently exists may dissipate a little and migrate to Bravo coy area during 2012.

I look forward to the future in this unit and take pride in the knowledge that we all have made a contribution in shaping that future today.

WO1 Martin Griggs  
QM

*To OC C Coy – still no wpns for shep and you are not entitled to a Sam brown at public expense.*

*"Show me a man who will jump out of an airplane, and I'll show you a man who'll fight."*

*--General James M. Gavin.*

# A Company

*From the Officer  
Commanding's Desk:*

2011 has been a consolidation year for the "Big A" after the return from the Solomon's of a significant number of the officers and soldiers of the company.

The opportunity to deploy and serve ones country on operations should never be under-valued as the training and putting this training into effect in a country requiring our assistance will be a lasting benefit for those of us fortunate to be part of Rotation 22 of Operation ANODE.

For these members of the company, getting back into the "stop-start" nature of Army Reserve life after full-time soldiery and back to normality of work and family has required some adjustments and changes. Fortunately, the post operational leave period coincided with Christmas/ New Year so the adjustment

was cushioned by the festive season. Many a kilo gained.

The company remains the biggest "foot-print" of the battalion with depots at Geelong, Laverton and Warrnambool with 185 personnel, with 150 trained and 35 "in training".

The "in training" component are those soldiers at the start of their Army career's that require to do recruit and initial employment trained to become Infantry qualified to join the trained members of the company. This fostering of these members into the company is very important part of their development and acceptance into the infantry family.

This fostering is a key component in developing the team and is a critical factor in the long term success of the Army reserve where long

lasting friendships are made between people bonded together when one puts on a uniform.

Other than getting back into the swing of Tuesday night parades and the odd weekend a month at Puckapunyal, towards the end of the year, members of A Company along with the remainder of the battalion where putting together another company group to go to Timor for nine months, as part of Operation Astute. Again the ability of Army Reserve members to meet deployment requirements where proven and brings satisfaction to all involved.

MAJ Gareth Ward  
OC A Company

## THE YEAR FOR B COMPANY

2011 has been a year of rebuilding, preparation and redeploying.

The rebuilding comes after a very successful deployment in 2010 on Operation ANODE to the Solomon Islands. On return from this deployment those members of B Coy who deployed took a well earned rest over Christmas before starting 2011 with the usual mandatory training.

2011 had 8/7 RVR and B Coy once again start preparations for deployment, this time as part of ANZAC Company, Timor Leste Task Group. This Operation would see members of 8/7 RVR deploy with members of 5/6 RVR to Timor Leste as part of the International Stabilisation Force and B Coy played a major part in providing the manpower. And so the long and arduous task of preparation for deployment started.

Although the preparation was very familiar, as a lot of the Company members had only recently returned from Operations it was no less taxing as the Company was still required to conduct regular Battalion training and

# B Company

manage the day to day running of the Company.

The impressive thing was the number of 8/7 RVR and in particular B Coy members that put their hands up to deploy so soon after the last Operation. It is a real sign of the commitment and passion for the service the members of the Army Reserve has.

In my time serving with 8/7 RVR I have seen the changes in the operational requirement throughout the defence force and the need for the Army Reserve to stand up and be counted through providing a real capability. This capability has been called upon on numerous occasions over the last ten years and B Coy has constantly risen to the occasion. This has included providing individual roundouts to Regular units deploying to hot spots around the world or as part of a Reserve contingent deploying to Butterworth, Solomon Islands or Timor Leste.

B Coy is also empire building with plans to open a new depot at Kyneton and take over the depot at Warrnambool. This will allow a larger number of members from 8/7 RVR to be part of B Company, the premier company, which in turn will greatly enhance the moral and professionalism of the Battalion.

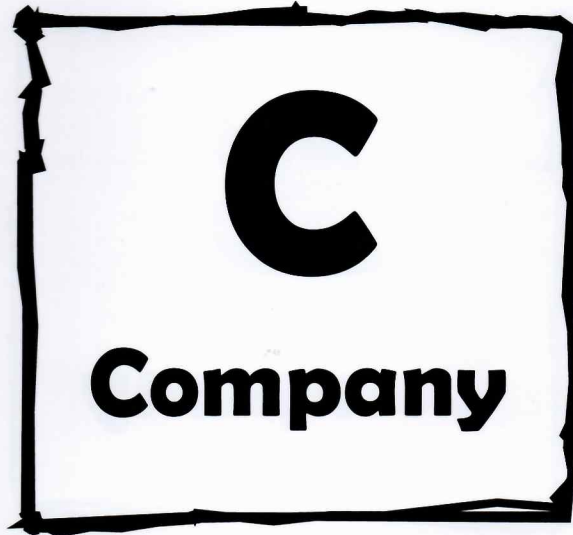
2011 will end with the men and women of B Coy and 8/7 RVR on Force Preparation at Puckapunyal getting ready for deployment. I will have the honour of being Officer Commanding for the deployment and look forward to leading what I know to be an exceptional group of young and not so young members of B Company, 8/7 RVR and 5/6 RVR.

I know that all will perform to a very high standard and display the best of traditions and service as representatives of B Coy, 8/7 RVR and the Australian Defence Force. I look forward to returning late in 2012 with all safe and well and knowing that we achieved our mission.

MAJ John Spencer  
OC B Company

2011 saw C Coy farewelling its long time OC Capt Chapman who took a break from the ARes to concentrate on his civilian career running the Mildura Airport. With Capt Chapman's departure I took over as OC of C Coy and was promoted to Major on 3 May 2011. My promotion took place in the field during a Coy exercise and was witnessed by those Coy members in attendance. This also saw the OC being based in Bendigo rather than Mildura. C Coy was able to utilise the TRG area at the rear of Passchendale Barracks for the first time in years, which was a refreshing change from Pucka!

2011 was C Coy's year for awards with a clean sweep, those being: PTE Trewartha received the "Spiros Vardos OAM Award" from the RSL Hellenic Sub Branch (see related article). LCPL Tucci and LCPL Connor both received the CO's commendations. It is great to see the soldiers being rewarded for their efforts. During the year the Bn focused on deploying soldiers to operations and after those members deployed C Coy joined with the remainder of B Coy to conduct PI level training activities. C Coy again supported ANZAC Day activities throughout the NW part of the State as well as supporting the local Cadet units. I was honoured to be invited to be the reviewing officer at the Navy, Army and Airforce Cadet end of year parades and functions. At the Navy Cadet dinner SGT Bell was honoured by the Navy Cadets for his valuable contribution in assisting the Navy Cadets out side of normal hours and SGT Bell was presented with an engraved statue for his work.



During 2011 we lost our ARA TRG SGT in Shepparton SGT Potter, when he decided to discharge from the Army and we also lost CPL Hart our Coy Admin CPL to the warmer climate of Thursday island. Both will be missed and we thank them both for their contribution. We did

however gain an ARA CPL from 3RAR as a TRG SGT in Mildura, who quickly turned the place upside down. C Coy welcomes SGT Herdman to its ranks with his wealth of experience and enthusiasm.

One memorable moment for me as an OC was standing on the rifle range during a live fire shoot when a fresh faced young digger ask "Sir, how long have you been in the Reserve?" To which I answered 18 years.

With a surprised look on his face he said "Shit Sir, that is longer than I have been alive, I am only 17." His face was even more surprised when he was told where I was about to stick my bayonet. Funny now, but not at the time.



Over all a great first year as an OC and I would like to thank all the members of C Coy for their contribution.

MAJ Paul Neunhoffer  
OC C Company

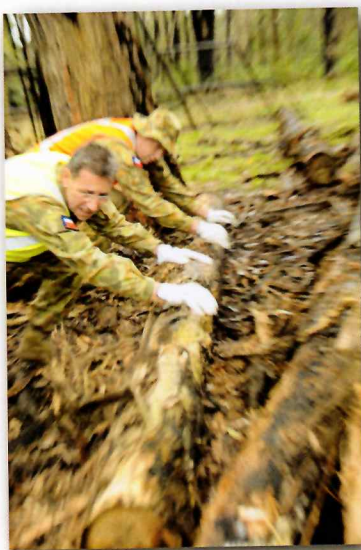
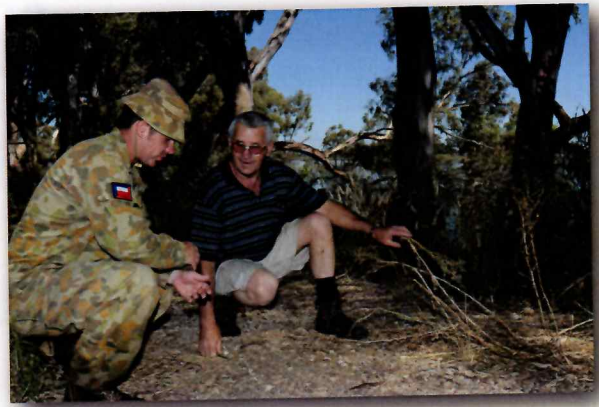
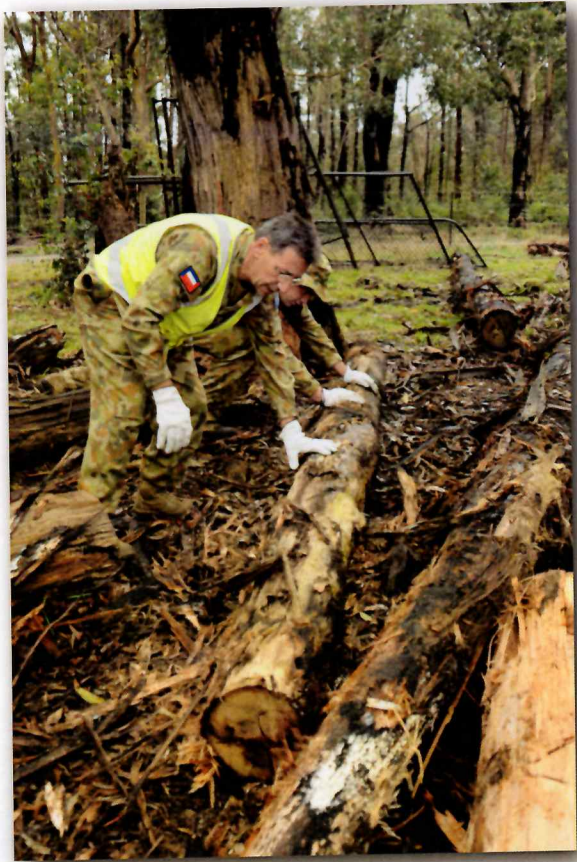
8/7 RVR

# Defence Aid to the Civil Community

4-10 Feb 2011  
Horsham



# TRAGEDY



# Mildura

**G**reetings from the unit's northern flank.

2011 saw some major changes in Mildura.

SGT Ivey was posted out and replaced by SGT Herdman from 3 RAR. Very soon the team soon learned about battle PT, circuits and "Mafia Rules".

From the word go, it was the usual AIRN shuffle, mandatory training, BFAs and the usual training that needed to be done. You could almost hear teeth grinding as the depot members were pushed, probably a first for many, into completing courses, attending training and realising that the job doesn't only involve a social get together on a Tuesday night.

By mid year, the nature of the depot had changed, along with some of the players, who decided that doing the "hard yards" was not for them. PT was now PT and not playing touch and doing BFAs, much to a certain platoon commander's disgust. We also saw the departure of Mr Guinea to the wilds of Timor Leste. Lets just say that he had a handle on it from the word "go" We look forward to seeing him back sometime in 2012.



*LT Edward Guinea and SGT Rod Jackson discussing world affairs.*

We have also seen some new faces march in, digger wise. Welcome to Fozzy, Spence, Cammo and Robbo and LCPL Day who came down from the "Big Blue One", we are still hearing donkey jokes

and braying coming from the training office! All the new soldiers have had an impact on way that we do business, even though Fozzy still has that worried look upon his face. We say farewell as well to PTE Howison, Blanch, Carmichael, Tulloch ( Big Head and all)

Barnes, Woods and SIG Harding. Good luck on wherever life's journey takes you.

And lastly, a big thanks goes out to the "Depot Dinosaur" Inspector, where would we be without you? It has been a good year, next year will be better.

SGT Wayne Herdman  
Mildura Depot



*Mildura Depot*



8-10th April

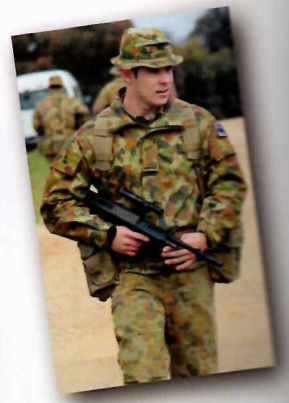
# Live Fire- Puckapunyal





12-14th Aug

# Live Fire- Puckapunyal





3rd May Bendigo

# B&C Coy Sub-Unit Training



# CATA

28th Nov-  
2nd Dec  
Puckapunyal





Photos: 4BDE

# VICTORIA'S 4TH BRIGADE PREPARES TROOPS FOR EAST TIMOR

MECC VIC/TAS 91/11

Friday, 9 December, 2011

Army Reserve soldiers heading off to Timor Leste as part of Operation Astute have been working hard over the past month with several activities and courses being held to further develop the skills they need for deployment early next year as Timor Leste Task Group 4 (TLTG4).

Courses such as Interim Infantry Mobility Vehicle (IIMV) driver training, Helicopter Underwater Evacuation Training (HUET), Public Order Management (POM), and Tetum language classes have allowed TLTG 4 soldiers to increase their proficiencies and be fully prepared for their tour of duty in Timor Leste.

As part of the International Stabilisation Force's commitment to the Government of Timor Leste, the soldiers' main task will be to assist the Timor Leste National and UN police in maintaining stability in Timor. The eight-month deployment will see the soldiers conduct patrols and maintain a positive public presence within Dili and regional districts, allowing them to develop a high level of trust and positive relationships across the community.

Puckapunyal Military Area has come alive over the past two weeks with the 4th Brigade Combined Arms Training Activity (CATA) being used as a platform for the soldiers to prepare for their role in-country. A series of scenario-based training exercises were carried out which relied on key skills learnt during their pre-deployment preparation. Role players were used to simulate real-life examples that may be faced in Timor Leste.

"Soldiers from the 4th Brigade have participated enthusiastically in this important opportunity to train our deploying soldiers in a range of activities to prepare them for operations,"

said Brigadier Robert Marsh, Commander of the 4th Brigade.

Timor Leste Task Group 4 is primarily made up of Army Reserve soldiers from the 4th Brigade (Victoria's Brigade) from a broad spectrum of civilian backgrounds.

# People



In passing...  
*20th September 1938 -21st January 2011*

CAPT Elizabeth Ann Smithson  
was a long serving 8/7 (2RVR) Officer.



**All in the Family...**

**Major Greg Smith (right)** was an officer in Ballarat in the 1980's. Served as a platoon comd with B Coy and later Admin. Currently in WA.

All in the Family... Maj. Smith alongside son LCpl Daniel Smith who followed in his father's footsteps in joining the Reserve.



A younger Lt. Smith sitting alongside an equally young Neil Leckie.



# The Face of 8/7 RVR

By Chap Stephen Maggs

**September** 2011 saw the end of an era for 8/7 RVR with the retirement of Major Neil Leckie, in fact the 3rd time, due to the change in retirement age over the past few years. It all started with a drop of a marble as a 'nasho' in 1968, going through recruit training and later officer training. On completion of national service he transferred to the CMF (Citizen Military Forces) later to be known as the Army Reserve. After a break from military service for a couple of years, he returned to Puckapunyal and completed additional recruit training. In 1981 he moved to Ballarat and was quickly given the posting as 2IC BCoy by the then CO COL Ted Lyons. He then served as OC of B-Coy, reflecting that it was "the best time he had in the army," mainly because in those days BCoy was physically separate from BHQ and had more autonomy.

Later he served as Operations Officer and served full time for a year. Due to mandatory retirement he left for a short period (first retirement). Then as the rules changed, he was asked to return and did so at the age of 51, re-enlisting for a further 4 years. Once again the age requirement changed yet again, and was able to stay a further 5 years, then another 5

**"Give it a go, if an opportunity comes up, give it a go!"**



years until he reached 65 this year. (Luck ran out). Serving for a total of 34 years.

Asked about the biggest changes he has seen in the reserves, he believes it was the opportunity to serve outside of their home states from about the mid 80s to do courses and train with ARA. Along with the expectation of the Reserves to contribute more to the

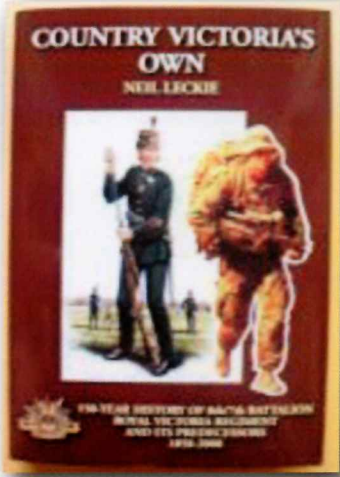
capability of army and so funding became more available. Prior to this the Reserves were often seen as a 'Dad's Army' without any real purpose. Today the

Reserves have opportunities to serve overseas which would never have occurred in years gone by. 8/7 has over the years become more professional and receives more support now that it has in the past.

Asked about the strengths of 8/7, MAJ Leckie believes it is because its people are predominately country people and are more naturally resilient and have more of an attitude of "Mr Fixit," which makes for good soldiers, particularly when out bush; they often feel more at home. Also many of the depots are located in country towns which have a rich military history of their own, which creates a bond with the local communities.

Exercise 'Tropic Lightning' to Hawaii was the Major's only 'deployment' in his career in 1987. It was a command post exercise, employed full time for 35 days. He remembers it well because he and the others did a total of about 40 hours of work, due to cancellations of the exercise. 'Kangaroo 89' was also a memorable exercise.

Without doubt the greatest legacy he leaves is "Country Victoria's Own", the written record about the various country Victorian battalions, later to be incorporated into what became 8/7 RVR. After 6 years of research and travelling throughout the state the book was published in 2008. He is currently researching a book on the Ballarat unit.



The acquiring of the Ranger Military Museum building situated at the rear of BHQ is also part of his legacy to 8/7.

After 34 years will he miss the army? "Yes, the camaraderie talking to soldiers, and seeing what their up to, helping them to deploy, which I couldn't do and then

having a few drinks in the mess, having the presentations... you just don't get those sort of things elsewhere."

These days the Major works part time for the Ballarat Mechanics institute, managing room hire to the public and researching his new book, along with helping man the Ranger Museum on Thursdays.

Any parting advice to young soldiers?

"Give it a go, if an opportunity comes up, give it a go!.. no such thing as not volunteering in the army."

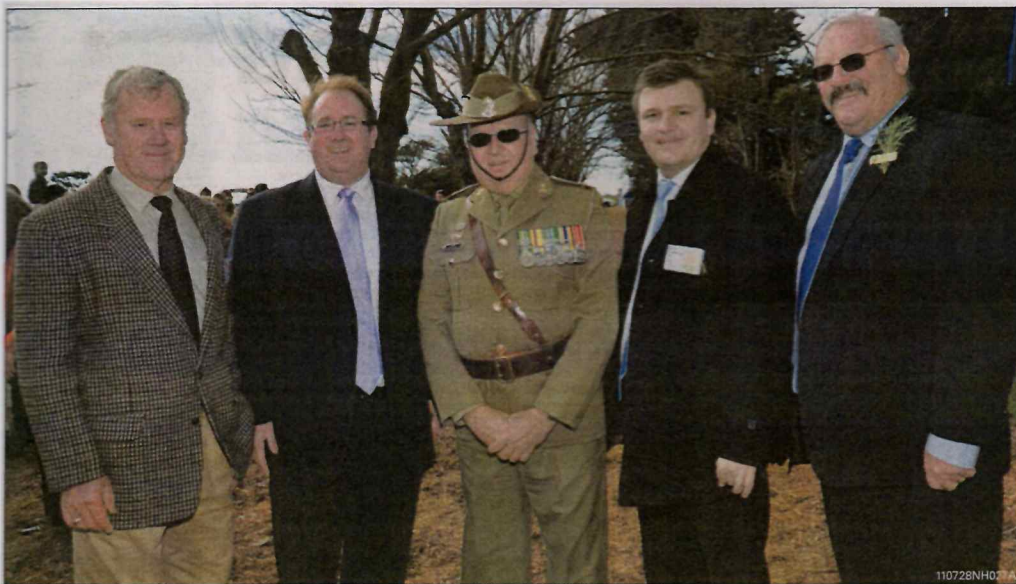


*Ranger Military Museum*



*The 'Stafford Cap' acquired in 2009 from the Stafford Shire regiment in the UK, our allied regiment. Swapped for a slouch hat...*





**HONOUR:** From left, Eurack's Alan Carew, Senator David Feeney, Major Gareth Ward, MP Darren Cheeseman and Colac Otway Shire mayor Brian Crook gathered at Eurack yesterday to honour the district's First World War soldiers.

## Elm avenue is a tribute to soldiers

by Carla Okai

**Eurack residents said they'd never seen their town so busy when more than 150 people attended a tree planting at the town's avenue of honour.**

Yesterday's ceremony replaced three dead elm trees in the historic avenue, 95 years after Eurack school children first planted the 100-metre line of trees.

The avenue of honour is dedicated to the district's First World War soldiers and lists those who enlisted before 1916.

Colac Otway Shire Council replaced three trees dedicated to Trooper A.W. Fyffe, Gunner W. Adams and Private J. Inman.

Colac's Brian Adams attended the ceremony to pay tribute to his grandfather, Gunner Adams.

"I think the old bloke would be pretty honoured by all of this, I can't believe how many people showed up to see it," Mr Adams said.

"He was a great man, he had

a farm here in Eurack and another one out at North Cundare, and he came and lived with us for a while in Colac when I was younger," he said.

"It wasn't an easy life for those blokes back then with the war and everything, but it's great to see these new trees go up so we can all remember them."

Heritage Victoria has recognised the memorial as the oldest of its kind in the state, and Eurack resident Mary Carew said the avenue was significant for the town.

"It's just fabulous to have them replaced, it means a lot to the residents here as well as all of the families of the soldiers," Mrs Carew said.

"The council's done a fabulous job bringing everybody together," she said.

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Senator David Feeney joined Corangamite MP Darren Cheeseman, council officials, residents and Beac Primary School pupils at the ceremony.



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**LEGACY:** Colac's Brian Adams attended a replanting ceremony at Eurack's avenue of honour yesterday, where officials planted a new elm tree to honour his grandfather who fought in the First World War.



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**TRIBUTE:** Colac City Band member Frank Irwin performs at Eurack's avenue of honour yesterday.

Colac Herald 29th July, 2011



**HEROES:** A tree planting at Eurack's Avenue of Honour, north of Colac, paid tribute to First World War diggers, and attracted dignitaries, families and community members.

# ANZAC DAY- Ballarat



# Awards

# 2011

Presented 12th February 2011  
Puckapunyal



# Top Soldier Recognised

## RSL Hellenic Sub Branch – Battle of Crete

Each year the RSL Hellenic Sub Branch hold a Battle of Crete Commemorative Function. The function recognises the efforts of the defenders of the Greek Island of Crete during WWII between 20 May and 1 June 1941. The defenders consisted of Australian, New Zealand and British soldiers from the Greek Campaign who had not had a chance to recover from that defeat. Against them were German paratroopers and mountain soldiers. Over eleven days the two sides fought a desperate action that generated tales of stubborn determination and reckless bravery on both sides. It was also warfare's first aerial invasion. Each year the RSL Hellenic Sub Branch call for nominations for a top soldier award from 4 Brigade units. PTE Robert Trewartha from C Coy in Bendigo was nominated to represent 8/7 RVR at this years function, being the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle. PTE Trewartha received the "*Spiros Vardos OAM Award*" in recognition of his two deployments to the Solomon Islands as well as his overall commitment, experience, leadership and mentoring of junior soldiers.

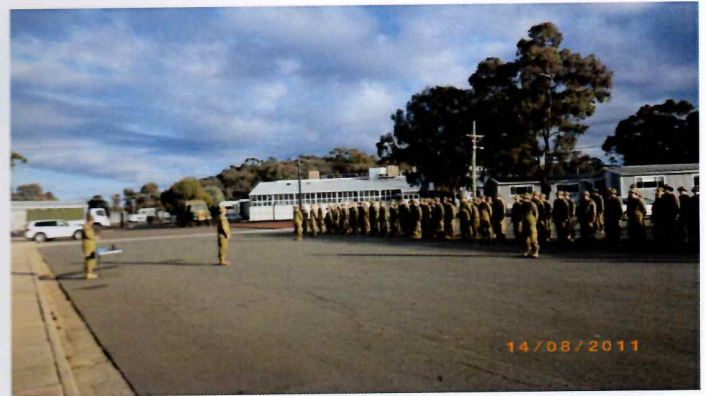


Above: PTE Robert Trewartha (left) receives his award from MAJGEN Barry



### Presentations to departing members 6th December 2011

SGT Ian Cust, WO Martin Griggs (Transferred to APS), SGT Jim Skett Posted to Western Aust. and WO2 Gary Kirk Posted to Puckapunyal



14Aug2011  
LFX Puckapunyal

# Odd shots...



The bookies exposed !



"This planking is hard on the knees..."



The Q store's new gaming sensation !



Finding the spare seemed to be the least of their problems...



Bloody dentures !



Second building on the right...