

Charlie Company



The Squadron leapt off to a flying start this year with it's weekly 10K strolls and 15K tests. 9 PL deployed to the F.F.B.S. Tully with the squadrons lids in tow. Only 4 days after Cyclone Winifred had flattened most of the 'J' in the area. The platoon, under the leadership of Herr Potter and acting PI Sgt Cess Wombat Petracca achieved a very high standard under quite arduous and different conditions.

As the year rolled on X country running became the go with squadron training under the OC with his socks rolled tightly we knew when the session would be a hard one. But it paid off later in the year with Cadre Squadron winning the BN X Country even on the rerun.

We did well throughout the year with the winning of champion company of Mil skills, orienteering and tennis with LCPL Jakins being chosen for the Bde.

DP1 checks ran thick and fast as the squadron prepared for deployment to P.N.G. the highlight of the year. On arrival we acclimated with a 15K X Country and a swim in the sea. Within a few days we deployed to the field and operated on tracks used during WWII and in true military tradition the mountains were steep with razor back ridge lines. The Climax of the bush trip was a squadron attack on a PL size enemy group on a feature using the same tracks as a similar attack on the feature in WWII. During the bush trip a number of weapons, pits, ammo and equipment were found and returned to Australia. Adventure training in P.N.G. had the platoons doing different activities. 7 PL rafted down the Sepik River. 8 PL survival training on an island. And the champion platoon went to Madang and roughed it for a week whilst diving on a sunken B25 Bomber.

The last week of P.N.G. was sports and the dark locals gave us a flogging, at everything except the X Country of course, in which we blitzed them. On our return to Oz we rattled with massive amounts of Anti Malaria Pills we had to take.

Exercise Wontok Warrior

Charlie Coy deployed to New Guinea for a month of independence for 120 people, three helicopters and three aircraft bulked out with stores. The exercise was to prove educational and challenging.

The aims of the exercise were to provide a different training environment and an intensive cultural exchange.

There was no distinct period of cultural exchange. The friendliness of the National population was evident from the start and the unofficial contact ranged from impromptu clinics on the beach from the children from 'Doc' Bryan to the police commandant at Madang referring to OC 9 PI as "Commander Australian Forces-Madang".

The company was hosted by 2 RPIR, located at Moem Barracks, Wewak. Although warned not to expect much we were still surprised at the small size of the town and all ranks soon found the best time was to be had with our hosts or on the beach a few minutes walk from the camp.

The field training phase was conducted in the Dagua area with several days work at section and platoon level heading up to a company advance to Tokeku pass, the site of a major operation by the 2nd/3rd Bn 2AIF. D Coy, 2 RPIR provided the support for the exercise. Used both in the sections and as enemy they soon showed their very high standard of individual skills in close country, disappearing from view in only a few metres and living very comfortably from the land. At the conclusion of this phase a commemorative service was held on the objective, followed by some enthusiastic burrowing for relics in the easily identified pits from 45 years ago. Interestingly, the most common relics on this site were Australian beer bottles!

A lack of raw materials reduced the company rafting expedition to a platoon. The home-made bamboo and steel drum rafts proved equal to the task of keeping a section afloat for three days although things became perilously damp on several occasions as the locals boarded to exchange artifacts for cereal blocks and survival biscuits. Great disappointment was noted on most of the faces when the only live crocodiles were securely fenced in on a farm.

Three adventure training activities were conducted. The largest group practiced newly learnt local survival skills on the beaches of Muschu Island, bartering remnants of rations for fresh fruit, vegetables, chicken and fish. From the length of time spent lying on the beach doing nothing, many were obviously quite weak from such Spartan fare.

A second group embarked as deck cargo on a coastal steamer to Madang. Their activities centred on swimming and diving on the reefs and wrecks in the area.

A far smaller group of 6 headed into the highlands to climb Mt. Wilhelm. The mountain, at 14,793 feet is twice the height of Kosciusko, all participants suffered from the altitude with sleepless nights and headaches. The climb was successful in that all reached the summit, and was followed by a leisurely trip through the highland provinces by vehicle.

The final phase of the exchange was the inevitable round of sporting activities where we were soundly trounced in all sports except a 13km cross country. Highlights of this were Lt Smith being unable to remember what country he was in after a solid tackle, and the RMOs soft ball team losing to the battalions second best pitcher (80KPH). Some face saving was achieved with the company taking 17 of the first 20 cross country places.

The exchange was a memorable one for all concerned. While it perhaps lacked the night life and strenuous social contact of Butterworth or Hawaii, the friendliness of the people, and the training completed, more than compensated.

Maxi Beagle

C Coy had only just returned from independent operations in the steamy jungles of Papua New Guinea when their services were required in deep North Queensland.

"THE COY" moved as part of the BN group by C130 to Burketown and from there to Inverleigh by CC08. In a combined operation D Coy swept through the Normanton township in APC's, while "THE COY" conducted an airmobile assault on the airfield. Once the airfield was secure "The Fighting Eight" was required to assist D Coy. A swift operation left six dead and gave 8PI, its first KIA.

Such was the reputation of this bunch of men that 2 AFDS asked for a platoon from "THE COY". Lt K.J. Potter pushed his men hard calling on his men to establish Ops in locations like the Purple Pub.

Meanwhile "THE COY" (-) plus a flight (platoon) from 2 AFDS started to clear AOs Maggie and Robin - a vast amount of nothing. Moving up to 150 KM per day, mounted in APC's; "THE COY" pushed the enemy to Bang Bang. Did C/S34 actually reach Bang Bang before the rest of the BN? - rumour says yes!

VCP's became the order of the day and "THE COY" became most proficient at establishing them. The enemy (always travelling out of exercise) exchanged pleasantries with those manning the VCP as they passed through.

"THE COY" captured some 17 prisoners during early patrolling operations some even captured by CHQ (Capt Paterson and SSgt Francis take a bow)!

Pte "Mad Dog" Peters did not seem to enjoy the exercise, in fact at times he was really **crabby!**



Gulf Country inhabitants.

BHQ discovered that the enemy was concentrating at Bang Bang about 10 days after we did. Reconnaissance Patrols were inserted into the area and promptly lost communications. A BN attack was decided upon and the Bang Bang death march commenced.

"THE COY", leading, secured the FUP and prepared to act as depth in the assault. Who could forget the sight of the men of 2 AFDS moving into the FUP - bodies erect, walking smoothly as if they were just out for a wee stroll!

The attack commenced and at one stage it looked as if "THE COY" would not be used in the assault. Eventually we were required and did no less than was expected of us, sweeping through all enemy resistance from all points of the compass.

The exercise concluded with a BN Bar BQ where LCpl Doran managed to consume thirteen cans of 2.1% beer - not bad on two cans per man!

The extremely flexible movements programme had "THE COY" leave early the following morning. In recognition of their services the men of "THE COY" were given a bar to the B.S.O. (Braised Steak and Onions) that they had won in the earlier Papua New Guinea campaign.

The gulf country will be remembered for its sheer nothingness, its even pleasant property owners, its drunk drivers and the considerable dust not to mention brolgas, little corellas, roos, catfish and crocodiles.

Kangaroo 86



CPL Muir examines the result of his shooting.

EX K 86 the logistical rockshow with a difference. The Squadron deployed as the force reserve. Having this as the basis for excitement we downed our gas masks helmets flack jacts and webbing and begun to excite ourselves by running around the BN area, under the carefull but demanding supervision of SGT Howard. On arrival at Oaky Creek the squadron handled a number of different and varied ops. Like the vehicle VCP check points on Halloween Night. The V.C.P. which was rolled up, turned violent. Then became a non event. The 2 hour Patrol which lasted 16 hours in Cappella with finding, breaking into and hot wiring of an enemy veh. The CSM discouraging a local magpie from attacking twice. The hasty withdrawal of 9 PL HQ off radio hill after a lighting strike during the storm. The cordon and search operation at Middlemount. Putting on the open day displays, and 9 PL with supervision from a civil film crew made stars of themselves firing their only shots of the Ex. The end of the year brings a number of farewells, our Q people, the white pinter and Scotte are going to Swan postings. The OC is going to be a seagull; Lt Smith, Lt Fitzgerald, CPL Petracca, CFN Bartlett and Sgt Howard (to be boss hog) will all move on at the end of the year as well as others. To all those leaving the squadron we wish you all the best at your new appointments or postings. For those who are remaining in cadre squadron we hope for a relaxed year in 1987.



OC Charlie — The agony of winning.



CSM Charlie and the RSM of the Army.