

# The Great Camel Race

## EXERCISE CAMELEER 200

Date: 02 OCT 87

Time: 0700

Location: Spt Coy 2/4 RAR

Occurrence: Frenzied activity

Reason: Cameleer 200 is on!

Yes! All those months of planning, writing, explaining and justification are over. Finally an adventurous training activity is underway! Exercise Cameleer 200 will be conducted from 02 Oct 87-20 Jul 88, in three phases:  
Phase 1 — Catch the camels  
Phase 2 — Training and Race preparation, and  
Phase 3 — Participation of a 2/4 RAR team in the Bicentennial Great Camel Race.

On 2nd October, 21 soldiers departed Lavarack Barracks for a Central Australian property called Angus Downs. The property, 1400 square miles in area, is located 60 miles east of Ayers Rock and 400 km SW of Alice Springs. Once there, and after setting up a base camp, the team broke up into smaller catching teams under the guidance of property owners, Arthur and Saurie Liddle as well as our mentor and expert on camels, Noel Fullerton.



Spot and Boxhead — Ships of the Desert



Steady as she goes — Sully

The next eight days consisted of driving over hundreds of kilometers of sand dunes, mulga and spinifex country searching for tracks and then following them up. Days were very long and all became expert in pit stop precision, with wheel changes and tyre repairs a regular activity.

After three fruitless days we snared, in relatively quick succession, four camels — now known as Spot, Boxhead and Sully. The fourth, another bull, got away. We again had a few more fruitless days of searching before the long haul home.

The camels weigh approx. 1500kg and stand about 7 feet tall at the hump. These monsters were caught by roping them from a moving vehicle. Once the animal had been brought to a halt, two men on either end of a 60' rope ran it round and round the camels legs, pulling tight until the animal fell over, whereupon several men leapt on it holding down the hump and neck, in this way we were able to quieten, treat and handle the camels at will.

The Camels became very settled quite quickly and even seemed to enjoy their tour halfway across Australia on the back of an army truck. This was in spite of an enforced two day stopover in Alice Springs due to vehicle breakdown. Whilst in Alice the RSL extended every hospitality and made our sojourn most enjoyable.

On arrival back in Townsville the camels were placed in a compound built for them courtesy of the remainder of Spt Coy. The camels will now undergo further veterinary treatment, recruit and IET training, before the big event next year.

All told, the exercise was enjoyed by all participants and most definitely reinforced the positive aspects and value of adventurous training.



Capt Polly 'Abdul' Farmer