

EX BLAZING SADDLES

By Major D.G. Lewin

Exercise 'Blazing Saddles'. The annual joint live firing exercise with 1 RAR was conducted in the High Range Training Area during August of this year.

After long and detailed deliberation a brilliant concept for the exercise was devised involving two company attack locations. This enabled each rifle company from 1 RAR and 2/4 RAR to practice battle procedure and control a live firing attack whilst being supported by RAAF gunships, artillery, mortars and SPMG.



Major Gumbley, A Coy and L/Cpl Walkbank.



Pte. Jack, Pioneer cutting Det Cord the hard way.



PTE Rendell, 3rd Coy.

Safety, as always was a major consideration, which to some imposed unrealistic limitations on the conduct of the exercise. However, who could forget the company that wanted to move into the danger area to observe the effect of the fire support. Imagine their concern when the RAAF "rocketed" the wrong feature, the one they were refused permission to sit on.

Each attack was preceded by a detailed fire plan from both gunships and artillery. The gunship strafes (to great effect) and "rocketed" (with less effect) the objective. Artillery then pounded the position pre H hour and then engaged suitable targets after H hour. Excellent support was provided by the pioneers in breaching the wire obstacles and from the SPMG platoon and Carl Gustav Teams firing on the objective.



Pte Noel McCrossan standing on a soap box to deliver orders. EX BLAZING SADDLES



EX BLADING SADDLES living up to its name.



And yet again!

As in any successful exercise an immense amount of support and co-operation is required between all participants and agencies involved. This ensures that people and communication arrive on time, troops are fed, safety is adhered to and contingency plans were ready for unforeseen problems or accidents.



Pvt. Baxter, A Coy.

Due to good planning and the efforts of those involved Exercise 'Blazing Saddles' was a marked success. Then there were the memorable moments never to be forgotten.

- The fire started by the gunships on day 1.
- The soldier seen attempting to "blow" his bayonet out of a figure 11 Musorian.
- The FO who after observing a 2.75 inch rocket pass harmlessly over the target requested the pilot to drop 200.
- The cooks feeding the control staff of 160 with rations for 128.
- The platoon that on losing the axis of assault over corrected and assaulted at right angles to the remainder of the company.
- The fire started by the gunships on Day 5 that make the return of the final company so hazardous.
- The same fire that required the gun battery to move so that they would not lose 'FACE' again.



Cpl. Dore at the live firing



EX BLAZING SADDLES. Pte. Riddle laying det cord for the Bangalore Torpedoes with L/Cpl Logan at the rear.



2Lt. Brough, A Coy and Pte. Fotheringham.