

Alpha Company - 1992

Right of the Line



Every training year seems busier than the last and presents its own special challenges. 1992 was no different.

After starting the year with a new 2IC, CSM and assorted other changes at all levels there were some quick introductions before beginning the training proper. The training at High Range during company training and the Battalion Air Week gave us a good idea of the temperatures we would find in the Northern Territory. There was also Doc Wilkin's quick lesson on party games you could play with a saline drip assisted by the uncomplaining PTE Sten.

Next up was some battle procedure and a quick flight to NT for Exercise K 92. The company had a good exercise being kept busy for most of the time and seeing some good sights. Some of the highlights would have to include the hospitality shown by the people of Kakadu, the joy flights over the National Park, the night flight and insertion on to Melville Island and reacquainting ourselves with the Iroquois helicopters whilst being the Brigade Reserve.

Then there was Mil Skills, in which the company acquitted itself well (apart from a couple of weapons that decided to have a look at the bottom of Paluma Dam). There were also some company training activities such as the hectic heavy weapons exercise which got back to basics and achieved some very good theoretical and practical results prior to the Battalion Live Fire Exercise. Of course there is the traditional trip to Tully which as always teaches and reinforces some valuable lessons.

Immediately after the jungle of Tully it was a mind switch to the EAAs of Services Protected Evacuation. Despite limited training and moving to an unfamiliar environment the company achieved very good results and some very favourable comments. There are some scenes that will

always stick with me from Exercise Maxi Beagle such as SGT Grimes leading the charge over the wire, PTE Fisher driving to Rolling stone minus his trailer and of course the look on Doc Pilcher's face when presented with a six foot tall pregnant woman (with a moustache) and being told to deliver the baby.

After some fine tuning and more training it was a time to start Exercise Swift Eagle. It is very difficult to comment on Swift Eagle except to say that after five days on HMAS Tobruk as the Battalion Reserve, the company was very proficient in scrabble and had caught up on many videos. However it was good to see that the little work that needed to be done was done to a very high standard (some airmobile EAAs by 3 Platoon, evacuee escorting on board the Tobruk, repelling boarding parties and some interesting concurrent training).

Of course the year was not only made up of military training. The company also did well on the sporting field notably winning the cross country, second in the athletic and winter sports competition and creditable performances in all the other sporting activities.

At present the company is on leave prior to departing to Malaysia, to fulfill Rifle Company Butterworth duties, until February 1993 but that will provide stories for next years magazine.

While we have farewelled all the departing members at various company functions this year I would like to take this opportunity to again wish them the best for their future. To all those that are staying get ready for some hard work and good times in Malaysia and another good year in 1993.

One Platoon The Fighting First

Well, 1 Platoon started the year with a flurry of activity to shock our systems back into work mode.

Some great exercises to dry out our alcohol sodden bodies were thrust upon us. Who could forget Battalion Air Week (wasn't it funny how we walked 38 km - yet only flew 18 km). The hot thirsty weather plus operating for 24 hrs on 4 water bottles had the unmistakable appeal of banging your head against a brick wall; only slightly interesting but mostly painful.

Then came Dead Roo '92 which was about as exciting as watching paint dry. While the other two platoons enjoyed high profile jobs 1 Platoon sweated it out in the spear grass guarding trucks. Oh by the way, 1 Platoon scored the only kills for the company in an airmobile vehicle ambush; 8 KIA and two vehicles.

The next few months were as per the training programme: ranges, MT Vince, APC familiarisation and the Bn LFX.

Then it was off to Tully where the remainder of the platoon (section) who was not playing enemy, on course, or just plain sick, completed the introduction course to Tully. There were a few memorable moments including the walk from Earls Court to the airfield at 0100 hrs in the pouring rain, the withdrawal from the live fire ambush and the all glorious village attack where so many brave 1 Platoon soldiers gave their lives to the DS. At least PTE Cook has now learnt which way the claymore mine faces.

Next was Maxi Beagle. The Fighting First took it in their stride to go from gut wrenching aggression to making brews for make believe females with hairy legs with gruff voices.

Having proved ourselves in Maxi Beagle it was now time to step into the big league. It was time for Swift Eagle. Covertly transported to HMAS Tobruk and whisked away to the island of Limpopo. The men of Bears Force 1 spent their time on board to hone their skills and practice many of the new abilities needed in SPE. Such as card playing, improving scrabble prowess, and video watching. Yes, the men of the First-A-Float were bored.

Well that just about wraps it up for this year for the Bears Number One Platoon..

We say good bye to:

- LCPL Carmichael - Bart leaves for D COY and a better way of life.
- CPL Boughton - Off to handbags after 6 years in Alpha, and
- SGT Lynch - To Mortars to become the first pocket size MFC.

To all who have gone and are staying, good soldering.



Members of Two Platoon playing as enemy for 42 RQR

Two Platoon

1992, the year of more exercises than you can imagine, began with a few days at HRTA to hone our skills and make ready for the year ahead. However no amount of preparation could prepare us for what was to be an awesome and different year.

Our first significant commitment was the Battalion Air Week. Yeah-Good-One! Air Week soon became: spot the chopper or walk week. In accordance with the walking theme 2 Platoon decided to hold a competition. The idea was to drink all available water then walk day and night for as far as you could and see who could die at the end of it. PTE Sten nearly took the prize only losing because Doc Wilkin didn't like the competition and in some quick work forced PTE Sten to drink from a normally unexplored orifice!

Following our heroic exploits on 'Air Week' it was decided to take the platoon to the Northern Territory for a couple of weeks of arduous 'WET' season training. On arrival at our first destination after a short truck ride we soon discovered that the northern wet season was not. On realising the platoon training would now be fruitless the exercise was cancelled. Instead we had to find other ways to amuse ourselves. First we decided to take a tour of Kakadu National Park and take advantage of some cheap accommodation. Then after a short stay on an offshore tropical island resort we returned to the mainland. Upon our return we chanced upon an abandoned WW2 airstrip where we uncovered some old Iroquois helicopters in which we set off to explore the N.T. A fun time was had by all especially those who were privileged enough to fly with James the Papua New Guinean. Some interesting flying.

Then it was time for Mil Skills. The time of the year where Chev and Marrie get to persistently tell each other that they are better than the other:

Results after Phase 1:	Chevalier	1
	Marr	NIL

Then there was the obstacle course:

Results after Phase 2:	Chevalier	1
	Marr	1

So we still don't know who really is the best.

It was shortly after Mil Skills that we once again departed for the hallowed soil of HRTA. This time it was for the Battalion Live Fire Ex, Ex Black Widow. We had heard of the awesome proportions of this exercise and we could not wait to get stuck in.

There were some tall tales about this Ex but we were not too sure about them. Like the one about the artillery landing in the front pits and APCs rolling over our pits at will. Not being too sure we consulted SGT Ostler who told us these stories were absolutely true. Not only that, but in Delta Company last year that's how he told the OC to run things.

Then the platoon went to Tully with the company in July where we were able to go hard and get some valuable training done. Some lessons learnt at Tully were:

- Steveo - yes it is hard to fight through the J without your specs.
- Dave - Number 1 scout is not as easy as it seems, and
- Deception plans actually work!

Maxi Beagle was boring except for the two Blackhawk rides; the brawl at ASD and the fact that 2 Platoon got the only kill for the company on the Ex. On ya Aardvark!

To bring the year to an end 2 Platoon as part of A Company received an all expenses paid cruise through the Whitsundays, twice, to and from sunny Shoalwater Bay. We were superb; saving the ship from attacking pirates; ensuring the ships volley ball net was used, reading all the books in the library and last, but certainly not least, making sure there was always someone to watch the ships videos.

Two Platoon is under new management as of 18 September 1992 when they will stand down prior to going to Malaysia over the Xmas/New year period of 1992-1993.

That is all.

Three Platoon

With a year that was dominated by large formation exercises and activities, the story of 3 Platoon in 1992 is probably similar to most other rifle platoons in 2/4 RAR. However, for members of Three Platoon there were many incidents which make the year unique.

The first major event for the year was Exercise 'March or Die', better known by some as Battalion Air Trg Week. It was during this exercise that PTE Gillies experimented with the after life experience, CPL Burton kept throwing away equipment for the Boss to pick up and the whole platoon fantasised about water and riding in helicopters. It was OK though, because CPL Wishart had done the course.

Exercise K92 began with an all expenses paid holiday to Kakadu for 7 days. It was during this period that 9 section was able to witness sacred Aboriginal rituals on pay cheque Thursdays. From Kakadu the platoon moved on to Melville Island. It was on Melville Island that CPL Norton decided to leave 7 section and PTE Walker saved the platoon by warning us of nearby crocodiles (that turned out to be shadows).

Military Skills followed shortly after K92, and it was here that 9 section showed their prowess in amphibious operations. It was a very cunning ploy to lighten the sections load by hiding a MAG58 and Steyr on the bottom of Paluma Dam for a couple of days. A pity BHQ didn't think so. They should have called in CPL Wishart - because he had done the course.

APC training was uneventful for Three Platoon, and then came the LFX. Ex 'Black Widow' will be remembered by the platoon not for the live firing, but for the walk in. The platoon was given a mountainous cross country route to follow in the dark of the night. Quote of the night would have to have been the boss saying "We'll cut straight across to that next feature - it shouldn't be that steep." It was a pity CPL Wishart hadn't done a Mountain Leaders course.

After the LFX came a two week stint in Tully. Between the Battalion Sports camp, Inter Service soccer trials, Courses and illness the platoon went to Tully with one and eighteen. PTE Smith finally learnt what front towards enemy meant, and LCPL Nortons section became known as the 'lost patrol.' The overall result was quite good, but on more than one occasion it was 'SHAME, SHAME, SHAME' for three platoon.

The Battalion Exercise saw CPL Burton setting the Land Commander, General Blake, straight on a few points, PTE Jenner giving rations away, and three platoon bashing some 4FD Regt heads. Shortly after the Bn Ex was the platoon function to end all platoon functions, and of course the bashing of a few more heads.

Swift Eagle was very much a non-event. Apart from one afternoon of air-mobile ops, the platoon didn't leave HMAS Tobruk. Volleyball skills improved a little, as did playing Scrabble and cards. But, this was to be the last major event for 3 Platoon, for soon after there was standown followed by BRL in preparation for Malaysia. The Boss left the platoon at this stage (to start his career in Int Corps). The platoon shall otherwise be unchanged for RCB, which will no doubt be a great trip for the whole platoon.

Quotes of the year:

- CPL Wishart - Listen! I've done the course
- PTE McCallum - I've had a beer!
- PTE Olsen - I'm not on steroids
- PTE Amory - See you tomorrow
- 9 Section - the gun was tied to the pack!

Event of the year:

- The platoon function at SGT Grimes house.

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