

11 Platoon

The start of '88 and the chosen ones have never had it so good. Celebrating the new year in downtown Bangkok. Patpong Road was a highlight of course, with the chosen ones extending the hand of friendship to the extremely friendly local girls (what a night) — except for J.D., who thought he was Guy Fawkes — only to be told by the local establishment that he wasn't. Back at Butterworth, we continued the tradition of social drinking and quiet conversations.

The highlight of one of the social occasions was the OC who was on top of the bar stamping his feet and playing music in time with the Rolling Stones, using a broom stick as a guitar.

Before we returned to Australia, we did an exercise with the Malays in the state of "Kelantan". We stayed with the 4th Renjer Battalion, they were very friendly and the accommodation was a sight to be seen (pure delight). One of the highlights of this exercise other than the beaches, was the bosses fabulous cam jobs (must have spent time with Ringling Bros. Circus or something). Also the Coy's classic attack on Banana Ridge where we lost more blokes to the heat than the enemy.

Back from Malaysta, we went on a deserved leave. We returned to work in late April ready for Mil Skills (how exciting). Overall the Pl still did quite well considering the

time available and just showed the rest of the Battalion just how good D Coy is.

"Max Beagle" — what can you say, except for the old adage "nothing's illegal until you get caught!"

With one major exercise to come "Swift Eagle", the year is coming to a close. We would like to wish the following, all the best for the future.

- Monty Ration Clerk
- Barney Int Section
- Stevy BHQ
- Grandpa Range Control
- Harro Depot Coy
- Dykey Discharged
- Grant SAS
- Rowso Recon
- Oker Recon

Highlights: Boss' innovative and unused cam jobs.

Boss' rope climbing ability (non-existent).

Bannana Ridge.

Burke and Wills Road House.

Coy BBQ Burketown (Dry).

Ricky on a leopard tank.



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D Coy Beer rests in Most Degrade



Cpl Ooster and LCpl Warty



LCpl Quinn



Is this the way to Scallophead?



12 Platoon

This report for 1988 actually starts in December 1987. At the completion of the courses period, the Dirty Dozen began preparing for our deployment to Butterworth. With some new faces in the Platoon – and most of the old ones – we all packed into the Here at Garbutt and set off for 3 months of "Play Hard – Work Hard".

Some of the highlights would have to be – Tigers in Lumut, Donny's Bar for Christmas, Shooting at Paluda, New Year's with the Rivis in Singapore, the Dozen on tour in Thailand and the most memorable of all – Exercise Haringaroo with the Malaysian Rangers.

On our return home, our attachments returned to their units and BRL commenced. When work finally started again it was almost a case of starting from scratch again – restoring the platoon to its once former glory. Brigade Air Training provided a good opportunity to start this restoration and get everybody's brain back onto soldiering rather than on leave. With a subsequent ODF alert shortly afterwards, our training was accelerated a hundred times and crammed into about 4 days of intense preparation. Our chance, however, was lost and we resumed the normal pace of Battalion life.

The platoon performed very well in the Battalion Military Skills competition, with sections placing well. Some individual performances during the Mil Skills Comp were exemplary. The standard of initiative and soldiering throughout was a credit to our reputation. As a result, the dozn was awarded a "Swan Trip" – to work with the ARES at Cowley Beach. Visions of sunbaking, sleeping, fishing and drinking beers in the sand were shattered when we discovered that the beach was only the staging area and we were quickly dispatched inland to the "J" and an enemy we never saw. Comments made in the midst of heavy rains and gale force winds, such as: "... surely this isn't the OC's idea of a prize?"... were soon forgotten during our extraction off the coast by zodiac out to an awaiting Patrol Boat (the video's onboard were memorable).

Camelising was next on the agenda for the dozn. We joined the famous bicentennial event at Longreach. Noteworthy was the Platoon commanders infamous ride, the women (girls) that the blokes are still getting letters from, the smell of the shower water in some of the showgrounds, the parties, the bush dance etc. etc. After going through places like Blackail, Baraldine and Augathella, we eventually arrived at Charleville where we handed over to the blokes from Charlie Company and returned home.

On our return, the Battalion was finally getting into the new DPM uniforms – hard to believe. Then it was bush again as enemy for IRAR on Ex Eager Eaglette (this is where our commanders got to show us what good navigators they are!)

After a memorable "Platoon against Platoon" attack to finish off the Exercise, and Ronnie RAAF deciding not to land at our LZ because it was getting to close to dunk – in true Dozen fashion we requisitioned a cattle truck and a local cocky who got us up to Mareeba (a lighted airstrip) where the CC08 awaited us (I don't think they were very impressed with the smell!)

And there was yet another manning change to the Dozen's nominal role when our Platoon commander left us and a new one marched in.



Cpl Chesney, Pte Ward and Lt Allen



Maj Probert, Lt Collins and Pte Wright

Royal Guard

2/4 RAR provided 20 personnel as part of the 187 strong Australian Army Public Duties contingent, to mount guard at Buckingham Palace, St James Palace, The Tower of London and Windsor Castle during the period 16 to 30 April 1988. The contingent set off for Nowra on 11 March to concentrate and rehearse for the next month on the intricate and new drill to be performed by the guards. Each member was thoroughly trained in each of the guard formats so that they would have an opportunity to be at each location whilst in England. Along with the drill came the difficulty of trying to kit out 187 people in the uniform and embellishments required for the guard. As it was, the last stripe was being sewn on uniforms the morning of our departure from Australia.

After a cramped but pleasant QANTAS flight from Sydney to London (the beer ran out just after Bangkok) the contingent arrived to snow and fog in the middle of the English spring.

After a week of final rehearsals and familiarisation (finding out where the cold beer was) the guard was ready to mount. Our first mount was at Windsor Castle and though an informal one in the

rain, went smoothly. Our first mount at Buckingham Palace the following day brought with it much publicity from Australian and English media.

For the next two weeks, the guard members were kept busy with a guard every second day. This meant lots of work maintaining uniforms and rehearsing after the completion of the previous guard. The week of standdown at the completion of the tour was most welcome and saw 2/4 RAR members travelling as far as Scotland, Germany, Greece and Turkey (Gallipoli).

The bearded Sgt Daly, our Pioneer Sergeant, caused much interest with the Australian and English media whilst on parade with his axe. His appearance on public duties was a first for both Australia and England.

As well as public duties, the guard performed a spectacular Beating the Retreat at Nowra, marched down The Strand on arrival in London and took part in a "Dial a Digger" service organised by a London radio station.

Even though problems had occurred in the rehearsal phase of the tour, all participants felt that the opportunity to represent the Army and their country on such a prestigious occasion will be one that they will remember for many years to come.



Front Row: LCpl Donaldson, LCpl Jolly, Cpl Rice, WO2 DePass, Capt Matthews, Sgt Daly, Pte Boughton, Pte Smith, Pte Dawson.
Back Row: Pte Cook, Pte Rootham, LCpl Wheeler, Pte Allan, Pte Fotheringham, Pte Thompson, Pte McLean, Pte Collingwood, Pte Neal, LCpl Donegan, Pte Benton, Cpl Quinn.



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XXXX

Our beer.