

# ALPHA COMPANY

1996 has been a busy year for Alpha Company. Its members have not only been involved in company training but also battalion activities. They have attended and conducted internal and external courses, participated in ceremonies and parades, have been attached to ARA companies for exercises, conducted recruiting activities and *still* had time to go to work.

We began the new year with a two week continuous training period in February which saw Reserve and ARA soldiers working side by side (an 'eye-opener' for both). The training concentrated on shooting skills and IMT at individual and section level. Support from the other elements of the Battalion greatly assisted in achieving the training objectives.

It was during this period that the decision was made to direct more time and effort towards recruiting, particularly personnel without previous military experience. LT Marsh was appointed as the Recruiting Officer, after his return from Full Time Service where he assumed the role of IO. The Company's size has increased dramatically and the trend should continue especially now that the battalion has taken on its new 'Commando' role.

The integration of Reserve soldiers within the ARA environment is progressing well, with members of the company participating in a number of battalion activities over the past year. PTE Rigg went to LWC with B Coy and CPL Len Martin with a number of soldiers including PTE's Bartolo and Waights acted as enemy for EX Blue Phoenix. LT Marsh, CPL Potts, PTE Anderson, PTE Bartolo (attached to C Coy) and WO2 Crimmins went with the Battalion to EX Swift Eagle '96. A great deal has been learnt by CPL Potts in regards heat stress, having been casevacated out during Swift Eagle. As it turns out, he was so excited about trialing the casevac system first hand that he does not even remember his ride in a helicopter.

In July, ten members of 2 Platoon attended the first GRes Infantry Rifleman's course to be conducted outside a Reserve Training Unit. The course was organised and conducted by SGT Wischusen (D Coy), using the TMP from the Infantry Centre - Singleton. PTE Beveridge was Student of Merit. PTE McWilliams took out the Most Improved Student award.

Company training has not only maintained its focus on IMT and shooting throughout the year, but has broadened its training to include VAP and SWOPS. In September, 1 PL made a trip to the NSW Fire Brigade Training Centre, in order to use their eight storey building complex, to practice building clearance drills. Earlier in the weekend 2 Sect had some interesting moments whilst manning a VCP at the rear gate to Holsworthy. One involved a car which went around the gate and failed to stop at the VCP. The soldiers were disappointed when the caltrops (six inch nails in a board) bent and failed to stop the vehicle. It was later revealed that someone, complained about having two of the tyres on his car punctured by 4RAR soldiers at the rear gate. The person involved was reprimanded for failing to stop at an authorised VCP, as well as two flat tyres to repair. The October continuous training period was utilised to further develop shooting and IMT skills, as well as to train the soldiers on the MAG 58 and Carl Gustav.

## Comings and Goings

A Coy said farewell to the OC, MAJ Rick Beer at the beginning of the year with CAPT Brown courageously filling the breach until the arrival of the new OC, MAJ Jim Riley in July. 2LT Dave Reay also joined the push this year as the Platoon Commander of 3PL.

The Battalion's new role brings about a change in the structure of the Company. In the long term many of the key appointments will become ARA positions, however there are no immediate changes planned.

LT Ang will hopefully be posted to the DFSW platoon at 2/17 RNSWR, LT Marsh is being posted to RCSC for six months and at this stage, the remaining officers have yet to find a new home. The soldiers have the option to remain with the Battalion and begin their Commando training.

## Notable Happenings

First annual All Ranks Company dinner in August. The dinner was a great success. No body was put through a wall and all Lite Pro machines survived in tact.

PTE Newell and PTE Waights are now qualified Buglers having attended the course at Singleton in September. PTE Waights was Student of Merit.

'Crackers' Newell got married (poor girl) in October.

PTE Gough, brother of 2IC Admin Coy was student of Merit at the Rifleman's Course conducted at 2 Trg Gp in October.

PTEs Veneros and Alit achieved perfect scores in the RAR Foundation shoot on 20 Oct, but were unable to save the Bn.

In conclusion, just when we thought it was safe to *assume*, the politicians go and change their minds. The initial challenges that we faced in 1995 and 1996 have been overcome, but 1997 will provide some bigger and better ones for Alpha Company and the Battalion as a whole. Bring 'em on!!





**BUILDING CLEARANCE  
PTE THOMAS & PTE BARTOLO**



**PTE 'CRACKERS' NEWELL & FRIEND**

