

RCB
B COMPANY
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No sooner had the dust settled from our deployment to Canungra B Coy found itself jetting off to South-East Asia as Rifle Company Butterworth. The tour involved three major activities. A month long deployment to Hua Hin, Thailand for Exercise Chapel Gold; a visit to Pulada for some live firing and then finished off by Exercise Harangaroo in Sarawak. Obviously there was some leave and good times to be had.

Exercise Chapel Gold was an opportunity for B Company to experience the delights of Thailand and also see how the Thai Army does business. The Coy spent three weeks in barracks and then finished off with a week long deployment to the field. The town of Hua Hin didn't know what hit it. The lads partied hard. It was all good natured fun and the Coy formed a good rapport with the locals. The field exercise was, to say the least, different. It involved long day marches in stifling heat along a single bitumen road. The lads managed to keep a sense of humour and the locals with cool drinks and smiling faces made the job a bit easier. The trip also involved a visit to the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery and the Bridge over the River Kwai. This day proved to be extremely valuable and was definitely one of the highlights of the visit.

The next stop was nine days of standown where all ranks were able to explore the region more fully. The majority of soldiers disappeared to further exploit places such as Bangkok and Phuket. Many of the more settled members of the company, however, took the opportunity to bring wives and girlfriends over from Australia for an Asian holiday.

Following standdown the Company deployed to the Malaysian Army Jungle Training Centre at Pulada, near Johore Bahru at the southern end of the Malaysian Peninsula. There the company conducted a series of live fire activities including: live fire battle pair training and section defence training. The company also took the opportunity to fire the integral section weapons such as the 84mm MDFSWS Carl Gustav and the Claymore mine.

This was followed by a week in barracks, then off the Sarawak on the island of Borneo for Exercise Harangaroo. This exercise involved another advance to contact; however, this one was vehicle mounted - except the day that the Australians were leading the charge. Funnily enough, on our day, the bridge was out and we had to walk AGAIN! I'm sure that the lads had visions of Thailand all over again. The exercise culminated in a Battalion attack with B Coy having the longest assault and then, not to forget the 'Malam Akrab' (the closing ceremony). This was the Malays' turn to show us their good manners and hospitality. I think that nearly everyone got a feed!

The Company then returned to Butterworth to get ready to return to Aus. But wait, 'Ronny RAAF' grounds the 707 and we have to return by C130 two days late. Anyway we all got home - some earlier than others - in one piece!

The deployment, though long, was worthwhile in that it allowed for interesting and realistic training without interruptions and with all company members available at all times, the RCB deployment is unique in that respect. It provided an unequalled opportunity for all ranks to come to grips with their jobs without distractions.