

Exercise Eager Eaglet

(A nice time was had by all)

The dust slowly settled outside the bustling western metropolis of Mingela and the heavily laden figures moved purposefully to the foreline as the slicks clattered East to collect the record sortie. Grim determination was reflected upon the faces of Charlie Company, professional as their perfect vision established from a range of 5km, that there was a 4X establishment in town. As one they tracked direct. As one they were rapidly turned 3200 miles by an impassing OC to solve the problem at hand; the assault on the Mingela corral! Despite the most concerted efforts of the planning staff and the Musorians, the biggest thrill since 1985 had begun.

Enough of the low level threat as perceived by Mr Nikk and preached in the White Paper. This, for the next two weeks, was to be fast moving, high intensity conflict with all associated trimmings. It has all started in February when the CO produced his concept:



Fig. 1

His operation staff, ever responsive to his will and totally in tune with his thinking, immediately produced an appreciation which was refined in a matter of minutes to Battalion Group orders. The Battalion 2IC produced the Administration concept and plan during one morning tea session and the XO 35 Squadron and GLO distilled the tactical air plan during an afternoon session at the Crown. Intelligence Section chewed cardboard at the rapid rate to produce spitballs for mud model construction and the QM ordered Chum rations for the nine dogs.

By the beginning of July we were tense. Details on Card instructions were skillfully omitted and the intensive 12 Squadron lobbying for personal fridges and showers was rejected.

On the appointed morning, with the 162 strip looking like Mascot, we prepared to launch. To the great concern of many there were changes afoot. Crocodile and his lads, operating in the strategic reconnaissance role, had been so close to the Musorians at Mingela, that they were able to count the number of gold teeth owned by the enemy commander, whilst he was sleeping. Unfortunately, this information arrived too late to have any effect on the initial plans. Poker faced and uncharacteristically tense, the CO advised the assembled multitude that the enemy had been identified, in strength, at Ravenswood and Burdekin Falls, as well as in the vicinity of the Burdekin River bridges west of Macrossan. Delta was dispatched to Ravenswood by APC, Alpha to the Dam by CC08 and Bravo to the Bridges by Trudi. (That will teach them to leave their phones unattended).

Objectives were quickly secured and clearance operations commenced in Company AO. The Forward Operating Base at Mingela, was supporting twenty aircraft ranging from CH47 to LOH and our major concern quickly materialized as providing

sufficient fuel to help our air assets operating at the intense rate.

The companies moved into new AO after 36 hr and started new tasks. This modus operandi set the scene for the remainder of the experience. Rapid movement using all resources, rapid company level clearance of restricted AO, variety and total flexibility. OC A Edreton, ever vigilant, continually ran the plinks over the Battalion CP and Sgt Price attempted to come to grips with really big convoys.

We concentrated in Hidden Valley after ten days of whirlwind movement and prepared for the final jungle assault on the white tailed possums of Paluma. We struggled through the thick stuff and finally cornered the Musorian remnants in a charming secluded creek line. After a taste a taste between Alpha and Delta as to who was lost and who wasn't, we conducted the Clayton's Battalion attack whilst Niner discussed the rigours of Infantry life with a television crew. After a lovely lakeside barbecue, where all molestation of white tailed possums and intimidation were subsequently denied, we marched back to the trucks and headed for Samichon.

