

Alpha Company

“A Year of difference!”

1986 proved to be a year of great activity caused by many different tasks back to back, allowing very little respite. No sooner had we achieved one objective, then we had to quickly adapt and prepare to tackle another.

The year followed a cycle of individual training, building to Platoon and Company training, then culminating in Battalion training. This led on to Battalion courses followed by stand down. After stand down we went into K86 and on to Christmas.

Chronologically the year was as follows:

Feb	Individual training
Mar	Bush Week
Apr	Ex Hard Yakka (a series of soldier team tasks). Ex Close Encounter (Mount Spec Coy Ex)
May	Military Skills Competition
Jun	Anti Armour Shoot, Live Fire Exercise, Parade for Governor of Queensland.
Jul	Ex Maxi Beagle
Aug	Courses
Sept	Courses and Stand down
Oct	K86
Nov	K86

The Company saw many march-ins from mid year onwards and the march-out of several members including:

Cpl Senior, 1RTB, Cpl Knapp, Rps then discharge, Cpl McGregor, 1RVR, Cpl Hill, discharge, LCpl Cauchi, AVN Cen, Pte Archer, 21 Sup Bn, Pte Shellshear, discharge, Pte Price G.E., discharge, and Pte O'Brien, discharge.

Inter-Battalion march-outs included:

Sgt Schlegel, Ops, Sgt Edwards, Int, Pte Dvoracek, B, Pte Cadelli, Admin, Pte McCarthy, Admin, Pte Willcox, Admin, Pte McMaster, Spt, Pte Kiernan, Spt, Pte Hicks, Spt, Pte Baldwin, Spt, Pte O'Regan, Spt, Pte Atkinson, Spt, Cpl Grant, Admin and Pte Headland D.

The Company started the year well on the sporting scene. The swimming carnival was strongly contested which resulted in a draw for first place between Support Company and ourselves.

We ran out winners in the Battalion Tennis Competition which was certainly due to the leadership and example of Sergeant Eddie Schlegel.

In Australian Rules, we had straight wins over all Companies except for the draw with B Company when they returned from Butterworth. The Company surged ahead.

Athletics saw a close struggle, with Alpha having to take a narrow second to Bravo.

We ended the year by winning the Inter-Company Rifle Shoot convincingly.

After the Easter stand down in the week 7-11 Apr, 86 the



Company conducted Exercise Hard Yakka, an Exercise Trained Soldier to test the full range of Infantry skills of the nine sections plus Support Section to determine a winning section. Closely contested, it included:

- stretcher carry;
- tactical river crossing;
- day/night navigation exercise and orienteering;
- construction of wire obstacles;
- battle efficiency tests;
- section attack;
- 3km run and shoot;
- claymore training;
- signals training; and
- NBCD/aslt grenade practice.

By the end of the week, the entire Company was feeling the strain with one section under Corporal Mearns running out winners.

Battalion Bush Week was conducted in High Range Training Area with our own choice of training activities, our aims were:

- machine guns live fire practice for MG teams;
- to test military skills at individual and section level; and
- an air mobile assault at Company level.

To achieve these, the Platoons started with separate areas of operations and regrouped for the air assault. Generally, the weeks activities were very successful with the Company showing a pleasing example of the year to follow. The exercise culminated in a Company route march to the Star River airstrip for a CCOB flight home to Lavarack.

Three Platoon

The year started pretty slowly for Three Platoon until about mid February when all the Platoon members had returned from leave.

After sweating off the Xmas spirits we went into the swing of more exciting things - you guessed it - TOET! (Tests of Elementary Training).

A month of retraining had passed and our Xmas fatties were now transformed into lean mean fighting machines.

Battalion Bush Week was upon us with no warning at all and soon we were out in the elements again with machine gun shoots, night and day navigation exercises, swimming and of course route marching.

After returning from Easter stand down, the Platoon was involved in the Company organized "Hard Yakka". This was a good means of getting back into training with the water crossing bringing out everyone's best.

We then moved into Exercise "Close Encounter" at MountSpec. In most cases it was a first look at "J". The Platoon performed well with only a few mishaps but everyone has been lost at one point or another.

Back to Lavarack for a week of duties then a week of Military Skills training for the event the following week. The Platoon came through creditably with one section topping the Company in three of the five events. Mount Vince was next and although being extremely cold we did not get any rain.

Quotable Quotes for Mount Vince were:

- "You have to kick freckle"
- "A friend in the butts is a friend indeed"

One of the highlights was when the Company Sergeant Major worked out what the white powder was!

Back to Townsville for the Anti Armour Shoot and Live Firing Exercise. A couple of good days with plenty of ammunition.

Exercise Maxi Beagle had a novel beginning with the Battalion Cross Country and an eleven hour bus ride into the starting area at Kajabbi.

The Exercise was a good way to break our new Platoon Sergeant "Shorty" Courtney to our way of thinking. It also enabled Corporal Birt and his jungle bunnies out in the open for a change.

Interesting aspects of the Exercise were:

- securing Burketown airfield;
- securing Normanton airfield with 2 Air Field Defence Squadron;
- Corporal Hill and Private Richards pig hunting;
- two cans per man at the Battalion BBQ;
- the Bang Bang Death March;
- nine sections cultural exchange mission;
- attempting to break the Guinness Book of Records for the greatest amount of soldiers in an APC;
- our "almost" river patrol.





COMD 1 Div chats with PTE Price and PTE Gavan



L/CPL Richardson and PTE Price negotiate the traverse ropes.

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