

SWIFTEAGLE



EX SWIFT EAGLE

By Major J.E.G. Horan

Ex Swift Eagle held between 3 - 23 May 81 was an exercise designed to test the capacity of the Operational Deployment Force Battalion Group to deploy by air complete with seven days stocks of live ammunition, fuel, rations, spare parts, etc.

120 C130 sorties were allocated to move the group to Mt Fullstop airfield west of Townsville on the Burdekin River. After the deployment we were tasked to defend the local population and industries ie the mines and stations.



Rations ready for a destruction run on Comapny DZ's



Life at the sharp end in A Echelon.

Mt Fullstop station had in its 100 years only had rain once in May. As usual 2/4 RAR made history once again with 4½ inches of rain falling in 36 hours.

The C130 fly in was abandoned after a couple of sideways landings in the mud and the remainder of the battalion minus stores flying by caribou. In all 48 C130 sorties and 47 caribou sorties were flown.

Regardless of the weather affecting the flying programme, the Exercise demonstrated that the battalion group was capable of deploying. The 48 C130 that did get in contained a mixture of troops, live ammo, trucks, landrovers and even two LOH helicopters in pieces.

Pte. Dyke surpassed himself by finding the battalion 2IC in the Command post and one young officer will always remember his 'bridge too far!' The Exercise ended with a one hundred vehicle convoy back to Lavarack.



A Echelon



Cpl. Ned Kelly to WO2 Steve Woods "and on the next command flash your arm smartly to the side."



'Hand over your car' Ned Kelly



Capt. Des Willmott claiming that turps is for cleaning the talc!



Major Guy "Can I go home in this one please?"