

EX. MUZZLE FLASH

By CAPT. I.J. ROBINSON

As everyone enjoys going to HRTA it would be difficult to justify a live firing exercise at Cairns. The Battalion in conjunction with 1RAR, embarked on a live firing exercise in August 81.

Planning for the exercise commenced months before the activity, organized by Major R.A. Wigney from 1RAR and a cast of thousands spent many hours travelling to and from High Range, sleepless night and shuddering at the thought of a mirage straffing a target 250m from the soldiery.



Lt. Collins commenting 'I wish I'd brought my Binoculars'

Those who remember last years performance (and may wish to forget it for one reason or another) were provided with, as the system declares, a more enlightened and interesting exercise with the use of artillery and RAAF support. In most instances this proved beneficial as many had not experienced live firing with artillery and air delivered ordinance in close support.

A battle inoculation range, company defence, company and platoon attack stands were set up. After a unique replacement for the Dart Target system was found the Battle inoculation range was closed. Value of a dart target is \$14 against other forms which are still being assessed. For further information and an indepth discussion on the subject, contact Lt. G.J. White, SFMG PL. 2/4 RAR.

As usual whenever the Army goes on exercise, it begins to rain. Although being a blessing in the reduction of bushfires it caused considerable movement problems, around the range resulting in a retreat from Stalingrad image from the Coy. attack stand to the Western Three Ways.

Set in a perfect amphitheatre with a control and observation point overlooking the target area was the Company attack stand. Here, the company received the maximum benefit from artillery and air. The artillery provided fire into the objective using high explosive and smoke, which the troops could observe and see the effect on the ground. The RAAF using Mirages and Skyhawks stopped the objective with 20 and 30mm cannonfire, troops being 250m away. Many were heard to comment on this with varied adjectives! The aircraft also delivered rockets and bombs onto the surrounding features as the assault commenced.



Whilst fighting through on the assault Pte. Boston was heard to say "These musician's don't bleed very much".

The best effects came from the helicopter gun ships. After much deliberation, the safety template was decreased considerably and gunships with maximum co-operation, placed accurate and effective fire on the target with assaulting troops no more than 200 to 250m away. The Platoon attack stand provided a lead up to this entertaining event.

The assault was conducted through a barbed wire fence that the pioneer Platoon destroyed with bangalore torpedoes. Once through, the Company fought its way through the position using small arms with fire support provided by the SFMG Platoon and another Platoon from a feature to the flank. After the position had been taken battle field clearance concluded the activity.



'Contact Front - 2 ants, 1 metre 12 o'clock gun gp 500 sdo fire! Pte. Worland and Sinnig go into action somewhat puzzled by this order.

The Company defense stand was organized over a twenty-four hour period. It allowed all Company weapons to be employed along with artillery and air. The company was inserted by APC over the period there were activities which lead up to an assault against the position and under the cover of APC fire and artillery the company was extracted.

The exercise concluded, as most do, with the worker returning to Townsville and going on leave to all the fleshspot of our fair town. The hierarchy, having been given an offer they couldn't refuse looked



Cpl. John Schwerdfeger show Lt. Lane Collins another fine example of North Queensland spear grass.

forward to returning to the same spot for a CP at the weekend.

All in all a successful activity which should provide a good base for the live firing in 82. This will take the form of 2/4 providing a Battalion attack with realistic support and every endeavour will be made to provide D Company with sufficient trees.

DUTY

By Pte D. F. NICHOLL

The wind blows hot
On the brick red plain,
The blood shows not,
Where the soldiers are slain.
Across the hell marched
The men in gree,
And from a far know
That they are seen.
A shot rings loud
In the hot, dry air,
A young soldier drops,
His life is o'er
Across the dusty plain
His comrades run,
Toward the enemy,
Their duty to be done.



Pte. Paul Denison places another round in his M203 during the assault.