

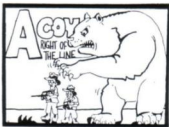
A COMPANY

Well Hoons!

The time has come to bid farewell. Normally at this time of the year, I usually dirk the Second-in-Command to write the company article. However, I've decided against it this year. Rather than provide you with the usual "...we came back from Xmas leave, got fit, lost weight, conducted individual/section training, Services Protected Evacuation training and conducted some live firing etc....," I thought I would instead reflect on some of the more memorable moments of my command.

Without doubt, the last two years have been among the most enjoyable of my career. They have provided me with a whole range of experiences from which I have learnt a great deal. Undoubtedly, the highlight was the company deployment to Rwanda in August as part of the Australian Medical Support Force.

Before we left Australia, I mentioned that the deployment would not necessarily live up to all our expectations, and this indeed has proven to be true. Despite this, you have all performed very well and done so under less than ideal conditions. I have been extremely proud of your efforts and thank you for the professional manner in which you have done business. I do appreciate that there are times when it is difficult to maintain a sense of humour and that there are times when you wonder whether it is worth all the effort. Yes, it is always worth the effort!



Looking back, a few others things stand out. The company never competed unfairly in any of the Battalion competitions. You always attacked training with vigour and produced good results consistently over the past two years. The company

has enjoyed a high level of morale and standard of discipline and I think we have been fortunate to have had a good team of officers and NCOs.

I look forward to my remaining time in command and trust that the excellent work you have produced so far will continue into 1995. As I write this article, the first few sections will have completed their first 72hr leave pass in Kenya and the others will be looking forward to a well deserved rest.

I trust that you have enjoyed your soldiering and you will continue with your career in the green machine. Finally, in summary:

- You have been good soldiers and I enjoyed commanding you.
- You always acted like men and I tried to treat you accordingly.
- Apart from the 94 cross country, I have been extremely proud of you.
- Be proud of what you do and how you do it. It always matters.

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1 PLATOON

Dear Mum and Dad,

As I have not written for quite a while I thought I'd pen you a quick note. The year started off with some new lids posted in from Singo. Also some RRes thought they would take the professional approach and change to the Regs. We also got a new Boss (straight from the college of knowledge) and a new SGT.

Our highlights for the year are too numerous to mention, but I'll give it a go. The major bush trips for the year was the enemy exercise for 1 RAR and Maxi Beagle. The funniest thing that happened was when you know the bloke you think is pretty grouse who does the coke advert. You know when the secretaries say its 11am and they walk over to the window and watch a bloke crack the top of a diet coke and sweat trickles down his wash board abs. Well he is in our Platoon and his name is Mick Landy (yeah mum I'll get his autograph for you). Anyway he was doing another photo shoot while we were on the enemy exercise. He was trying to impersonate Garfield on the front of a 1 RAR Unimog driving down the road at 100kmh. Boy he is one talented actor.

The CO of 1 RAR must have thought we did pretty good and he also wished us well on Operation Tamar in a town called Kigali. Some of the blokes think its somewhere in Tasmania.

The other highlight was the Military Skills Competition, the boys put in a bloody good effort. Two sections got a 2nd and 4th place on the obstacle course. Although our efforts didn't impress everybody, the boys thought they put in a damn fine effort. As I'm sitting here writing this letter to you, sipping over my hot brew and looking out over the parapet, I've suddenly realised Kigali is not in Tasmania, but Africa.

The lads are getting heaps of practice at gun pickets and brewing up. Anyway I'd better go as my picket starts in 5 minutes.

Love your well travelled son.

P.S. The boys send their love.

2 PLATOON

Sitting on the verandah overlooking picturesque Kigali, the mind fills with thoughts of the previous training year. In March, 2 Platoon receives another 2 "subs" from "Singo" and this was met with the usual name calling and the mudslinging had started in earnest. Some cop the brunt and come out of this period with a nickname like "Blow Rag". Where as others by fortune of an inherited surname escape with just "Doc" being branded to them.

Older members of the sections relish this period also, as promotion from gunner is more likely, not that all dislike this position. As the year starts to get moving its marked by colourful events that defy any reason. "Bergo" finding how many foreign objects he can embed into his forehead i.e. beer, glasses, ceiling fans and the like. "Christo" finding out how many successive weeks he can get punched out. "Keepy" having satanic attacks and taking it out on his mattress. "Ready" defying nature by continuing to breathe.

One memorable event was the 2 Platoon booze up at Maggie Island. After arriving at the island to find out the restaurant closed, the boys got a little unhappy, but as the motto goes improvise, adapt and overcome, so we did. We just found another pub. The unfortunate place was a pub/night club

in Arcadia Bay. After a nutritious meal of a steakburger and chips, everyone hooked in to the amber fluid. By 5pm "Ready" had made himself "welcome". 8pm and we are on the jetty waiting for the ferry when a handful of guys decide to go for a late night swim including an involuntary dip for the boss. That night the tally was 5 wet, cold and 'slightly wobbly' digs, one even colder Boss, two human punching bags care of some indigenous people and unbeknown to us, a Lance Jack who incurred the wrath of the locals at Maggie Island and was detained momentarily.

The 1 RAR enemy exercise was an eventful time for 2 Platoon with blokes growing beards, several days fishing and swimming on Townsend Island and getting to have a first hand laugh at the Donkey boys. Maxi Beagle began with a whimper at Camp Engstorm and finished off just the same. The highlight had to be girlfriends/wives visiting. We had never had a goffa or chicken sandwich like this out bush before.

Toward mid year, speculation of a trip to Rwanda and morale seem to gain an unsightly lift. Visits to the Regimental Aid Post took a downward turn. Speculation has turned to substance and were here in Rwanda. Christmas is coming and 2 Platoon is flying high.