

Eleven Platoon

What can you say about 11 Platoon? The year started off well when we all went up to Tully Holiday Camp and spent ten days doing nature walks with WO2 Bolton. He showed us some very handy bush craft skills, like how to track down, kill and capture the rest of our Platoon, who were playing enemy under the command of Cpl Brown.

Next, they sent us on *Battalion Bush Week* where we dug-in a Company defensive position. An active patrolling program was pursued. As it turned out, we did a lot of searching but very little closing with and destroying of the enemy.

We successfully finished our *Bush Week* and had a spell in camp to recuperate before we went on holiday *Wantok Warrior* over in the tropical paradise of New Guinea. The holiday was only for a month, but in true Delta Company style, we made full use of the time available and spent some time walking around West New Britain, visiting the local Natives and getting to understand their culture. We found

them to be very friendly people and some of the blokes found the women to be very easy to get on with. The diving on the reef about 100m offshore turned out to be a favourite pastime of many. We also spent time on exercise conducting attacks and ambushes in very difficult terrain.

The next highlight of the year was K89. This is where we spent an exciting two weeks with APC's. Where the ration plan was supposed to be 50% fresh, 50% CRP and I'd like to know who got my 50% fresh. I'm glad we got as many poppers as HQ 3 BDE. The rest of the trip was spent between Tim-buk-too and Woop-woop. When we came back, a number of the Platoon were left behind, resulting in a little party, and you all know the rest. The cells were full for a couple of weeks.

11 Platoon then played enemy for the RAAF survival course and caught more RAAFies than any previous platoon (but we don't like to boast like the other platoons). The quiet achievers of the company, 11 Platoon could always be relied on "to be there" while 10 and 12 platoon made all the noise — 11 platoon will just keep on keeping on.

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Twelve Platoon

The Dirty Dozen

After a short spell of rest and replenishment, the dozen were once again reactivated to do battle against the subversive forces that threaten this great country of ours. The 4 RAR reunion presented the Commanding Officer with the opportunity to officially welcome back the Dirty Dozen and breath a sigh of relief in the knowledge that, if all else failed, at least the Dozen could be relied upon to come through with the goods.

February saw trouble brewing to the North of Townsville, the Dozen were reacted and the search was on for Musorian irregulars near the township of Tully. The enemy fled into the jungle once word slipped out that the Dozen were on the way. While 11 Platoon were busy trying to find their platoon commander (lost on a recon), the Dozen were battling it out with the enemy in the "Great Gypie Forest".

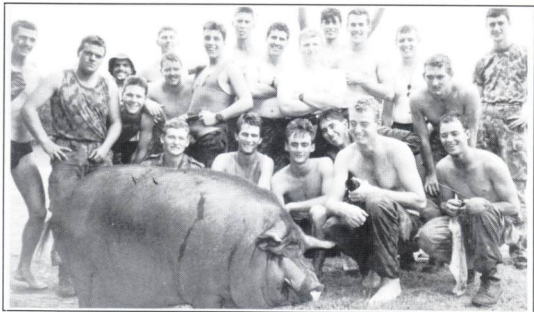
The early days of April saw the Dozen answer a call for help from the cyclone damaged community of Home Hill. The men were quickly on the scene and soon had the situation in hand. Tarpaulins were erected and backyards cleared of fallen trees. The Deputy Prime Minister arrived by Blackhawk and personally thanked the Dirty Dozen. The offer of a carton of XXXX and assorted bottles of spirits from the old lady across the railway line was politely refused. "Duty First madame, to serve is reward



Pte Bottomley, Pte Reagan, Lt Collins, Pte Wood

enough," replied young Botto.

Botto had barely recovered from his beating when the Dozen found themselves up against the notorious Gurkha Rifles during the *Battalion Bush Week*. The reputation of these little guys fell on deaf ears and before long, during an all night fighting patrol, the Dozen had become "the first on the block" to own their very own Gurkha PW. The fear in the enemy's eyes soon turned to laughter when he discovered that Sea Ostler had mistaken Roller for a Gurkha and was attempting to capture him. "What a bunch of fun loving guys," he told the RP's the following day, "if I hadn't been so busy laughing, I might have tried to escape."



12 Platoon at Tully

The Battalion's Military Skills Competition was contested in May. Under secret instructions from the Commanding Officer, the Dozen were told to stand aside and let someone else in the Battalion share some of the attention. Not wishing to upset the unit's morale, the Dozen took a well earned rest and just settled on being the best in the Company. Have you figured it out yet, OC's 10 and 11?

June saw trouble in PNG! The Dozen were deployed on a seemingly routine training exercise on the island of New Britain. The other two platoons provided a good deception while the Dozen conducted a 30km night insertion by foot into their AO. Having established a good relationship with the locals, the Dozen began their main task – psychological warfare and assessing the political situation in Bougainville. After an extensive programme of patrolling, ambushing and SP swilling, it was obvious that the Dozen were a force to be reckoned with. On numerous occasions, the Dozen were mistaken for reinforced SAS patrols (also operating in the area). The rebel leaders began to worry and by the end of the exercise, OC Dozen advised the government against sending troops to Bougainville, two days later the Dozen were Townsville bound by C-130.

July's main event was the Battalion Birthday Week, where OC Dozen practiced his rap dancing and unarmed combat at the ball. A lesson on gardening by Robbo ended a fun filled night for one and all. The atmosphere of mirth and merriment soon ended when the Battalion deployed on; "The one we'd all been waiting for."

Kangaroo '89 – "The Arse Kickers from Hell" (alias The Dirty Dozen) deployed under the cover of darkness to Tindal Airbase. Right from the start, the Dozen exerted their influence on the battlefield. How often during the training phase did the Dozen

respond to calls for help from the remainder of the company – OC 10; "There's a machine gun pit to my front! I can't handle it! I'll hold and provide fire support, please God send the Dozen NOW!!! The standard response from the other two platoons soon became; "I am in an excellent position to provide fire support!" After grinding many young Kamarian bodies into the Pine Creek dust, the Dozen deployed with the APC's and mortar section on independent operations to the north of Juby Junction.

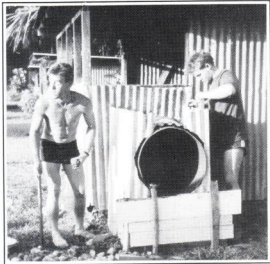
Paranoia, or maybe a gut feeling, from the Brigade Commander sent the Dozen rumbling towards a confirmed enemy position at the Union Extended Mine. A frantic message from OC Delta, with the Dozen in the FUP and about to launch into a three phase assault, halted the "party" with information from Brigade that we were up against a confirmed enemy platoon! Three hours later after a detailed recon – SITUATION ENEMY: nil – CIVIES: 3. "You're the first soldiers we've seen all month," replied the owner of the mine. The Dozen were disappointed, but not for long, the final Battalion attack at Roper Bar saw the Dozen attain the highest body count all exercise with a confirmed 34 enemy KIA. OC Dozen certainly had a few letters to send home to "Next of Kin" that day.

As September Standown draws to a close and the Dozen stand down as part of the ODF priority company, many members (once they finish RP's) will soon commence subject and specialist courses. The Dozen will undergo a complete restructuring, with all the commanders going their separate ways within the Battalion and Brigade. Once again, the ranks of the Dirty Dozen will thin out, making way for some new blood to keep alive the reputation of the last rifle platoon in the Battalion.

**** Apologies to OC's 10, 11 and Sgt Meuleners.**



Pre Jones, LCpl Harty, Pte Boots, Pte Bottomley, Pte Lynch, Cpl Ostler (Toilet)



Cpl Hunt & Pte Wadham