

# SUPPORT Coy

What happened to 1976. It seems only yesterday that we were arriving back in Lavarack Barracks suffering from too much Christmas Cheer to find the spiders had had a population explosion and that everything was under water. It really took us until the end of the Starvation Course (sorry, Survival Course) to lose our Christmas Cheer and until the end of April to dry out (water wise).

Settling in wasn't easy. The command structure of Support Coy was a whole new ball game. The new OC was a wog speaking midget, the 2IC, who took his time getting here, was a frustrated drop short; the blackhanded RSO was a fanatic and sadistic Iron Man specialist; Recon had a "kraut", say no more; and the old "bite your arse with all due respect sir" CQMS was angrier than ever.

Four major exercises wiser, we have "got it together", remedied our acute personnel shortage problem, made Spiersy a health fanatic and reduced Big Norm to a shadow of his former self. We even survived the Colours Parade intact, less sense of humour (with the exception of Pace Stick, who went to hospital for a well deserved rest and slight modifications to his legs).

Having reached this fever pitch of training, what are we going to do. The answer is quite obvious. Go on Christmas leave, reconstitute our paunches and try to forget as much as we can to ensure that there is something still to learn next year when it all begins again.

## Bright Sparks

In general, a fine year for a platoon with great potential. The attitude throughout the year has been one of guts and determination, to prove to others that we can operate, repair and control under any exercise circumstance. Under the command of Captain Joyce, Sgt Spiers, and Radio Sgt Nugent, the platoon has tripled in numbers, experience, and ability; all in one year.

"Happy Swinger" presented problems for all concerned. We were for the most part new and untried. However, once again we showed our true colours. We learnt from our mistakes and these, although great in quantity, gave us a chance to test our theories on communications. For a period of roughly four weeks, we tried everything that one might be expected to try, and some things that might be called novel. Sigs, although hassled by superior rank, proved what comms are all about. However, undeniably there were mistakes. These few are only human errors, and perhaps we made amends for them.

"Dauntless Defender" was one of our happier exercises. We did our job thoughtfully and at most times managed to smile.

Signals Platoon is divided into two groups, one being Line Section, the other obviously Radio Section. There is, of course, slight competition between the two, but it comes to no harm. Our training whilst in camp is varied and for the most part interesting. We are all eager to learn more and use better techniques. We are a fit mob, for the most part, and we do our share of

running and a bit of volleyball. We could probably defeat the battalion side.

On "Kangaroo II" we got up to our usual tricks, but we were well happy with the results. Even the Ops Officer smiled at us now and again.

Our awards for the most improved troops go to Pte Sharwood and Pte Riley. They deserve our congratulations. The year '77 will see us doing a bit of work in camp and the usual amount outside of camp.

Cheers for 1977.

"HAVE YOU FINISHED SIR?"



I HAVE BEEN IN SUPPORT TO SEAL OFF A REAL BOMB PROTECTING COY, BUT  
IN 1976 I WAS NOT THE 4th



"PIRED" LOOKING WAR-LIKE

## ANTI ?

ANTI ? PLATOON INDEED! Everyone knows what the platoon was anti. However, just in case there is any doubt, here is a short resume :-

- Anti Armoured Platoon.
- Anti Tank Platoon.
- Air Defence Platoon.
- Tracker Platoon.
- Reconnaissance Platoon.

The majority of the year we thought was spent in the Anti Armoured role, however, on pondering the point, we realised the majority of the year was not spent that way, but it was all one big reconnaissance.

The word reconnaissance we believe, is made up of the three abbreviated words of Latin as follows :-

- RECON—pronounced RECKON  
meaning—to think.
- NAISS —pronounced AN ASS  
meaning—that part of the body on  
which one sits.
- ANCE —pronounced ANCE  
meaning—to look  
to view  
to peruse  
to gaze.

So, after much deliberation, we at last found the answer to our task in life—"We thought we would sit on our ASS's and have a look", and here is what we saw. We saw 2Lt Hartmann almost convince us we had lost WWII. Just before he did, he was posted to "Stalag 10 Independent". We saw Cpl H. L. "Ollie" Smith prove beyond any shadow of doubt it is almost impossible to light a fire by rubbing pieces of wood together, unless one is a match. We saw Sgt "Injun" Jensen without a brew mug on two occasions. We also saw him with his OWN brew mug on one occasion. We saw Cpl Geoff Hassall BUY a packet of cigarettes. We saw Pte S. P. King with a map in his hand on Kanga II. We would like to thank the man who took it off him. We saw Pte P. Currie with his lips together, must have been taking a breath. We saw Cpl Don Watts, when he stood on tippy-toe that is.

In addition, we saw a good deal of Australia from different angles, by night and by day and in all weather, season and terrain and we can also think of 106 other reasons why no-one seems to argue with us.

A good year.

## PIONEERS

1976 opened on a sad note for us. Sgt Les Dennert was posted. A very experienced and capable soldier, his absence from our ranks was sorely felt. However, with typical resilience, we bounced back and were soon our usual brawling self, with new additions John Marshall and "Pixie" Wyllie to help out. But we looked forward to the arrival of "Bomber", especially as we watched his beard take shape and we laid our bets as to its final colour.

Exercise "Happy Swinger" gave our new blokes a real insight into Assault Pioneer work. They might have called us "gophers", Cpl Mick Domarecki stated he would curl up and die if he got any dirtier and subsequently transferred to Armour. The exercise over, we returned to camp for a few days well earned rest and then back to the grindstone. Lcpl Kevin Smith was heard to mutter vaguely about marriage whereupon he was immediately dragged away for a few drinks and a thorough lecture from which he emerged in a saner frame of mind.

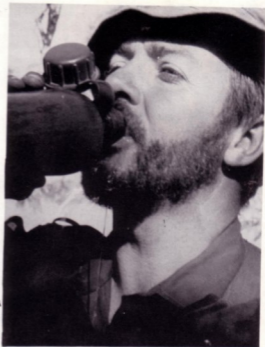
After what seemed an interminable period and many changes, we departed on Exercise "Big Country". A multi-phased exercise, it gave our younger ones a taste of the various tasks of the Pioneers—bridging, mine-field laying and breaching, booby trap clearance, Command Post and Regimental Aid Post construction, watermanship, navigation and track improvement—these were a few of the many snow jobs that fell upon us. Pte "Kiwi" Te-moni was a great worry for a while as we thought he had fallen in love. Some of us demolished some things in conjunction with the Engineers at Mataranka. Receiving a most cordial welcome reception from the citizens of Katherine, we proceeded to enjoy ourselves and reciprocate the hospitality extended. A meeting with a Darwin stubby left Lcpl Phil Callow wondering whose dirty sock washing water he'd drunk. Despite the hard work and hard play, we were happy to return home.

Arriving back in barracks, we learnt of Exercise "Dauntless Defender". With Exercise "Big Country" still fresh in mind, the exercise passed quickly and preparations began for the biggest event of the year: the Battalion Colours Parade.

Despite the fact that marching has never been our forte, we were represented by half the platoon. Amongst these were Ptes "Dutchy" Bentvelzen, Chris Gray, "Mac" McLean, "Okker" Oelkers, "Okker" O'Connor and "Blue" Tune. Much grumbling was overheard during rehearsals, though on the day every man marched ten feet tall. Conversation that night centred around the great feeling experienced as one of those on parade and plans for Pete Les Gill, who turned twenty-one the next day.

Preparing for Exercise "Kangaroo II", we find our record of accidents lists only hit thumbs, torn clothing and other small, quickly repaired items. We take pride in that our worst casualty was a case of severe burns, sustained by the Platoon Commander's pack.

Our congratulations go to old Jock on his promotion to sergeant, and our thanks go to those who left us this year.



PIONEER WITH A

DIFFERENT THIRST

THE CP OF HOWES HILL GETS UNDER WAY  
KANGAROO 2.



# Mortar Platoon

The Mortar Platoon story starts in January where one sees the platoon come drifting back from ARL.

A new regime takes over, and so it's heads down and the "Spirit of 76", mortar style, starts the year rolling. "Happy Swinger" was far from that and the delights of man packing 5,000 metres at night were not at all evident. Quick to forget that, we had a week-long shoot at the end of March in which to get procedures right again. Having fattened up on ten man packs, the platoon was then thrown into the horrors of Survival Training at Charters Towers.

Undaunted, the Sgts showed all the rest how to live like kings even if Henry Smith could catch all the pigs in the area. Fortified by Basil brews, it was a pleasure to get nine miles from CAMP HUNGER at the end.

After the first stint with APCs in May it was off to BIG COUNTRY and "hello" to KATHERINE. There followed four weeks of digging holes, big and small; cutting trees, tall and short; and drinking beers, hot and cold. We even became the enemy, and showed A Coy what it was about.

Back to Townsville for a well earned break, even though for a couple it was in the 2/4 HILTON, all expenses paid. Dauntless Defender came and went, with MFC Thrillseekers having sigs for the first time.

While the hand-picked few—Caveman King included—romped off to Singleton and new dazzling heights of mortar achievement—the rest of us sloged through a Basic Course which eventually saw the platoon built up to become one of the largest in the unit.

A couple of shoots in September and then KANGA II and Shoalwater Bay.

Thus the year can be remembered by: \$2 a pay for casket tickets; "when's the new mortar going to arrive?"; "another unobserved round"; and "the tracks will be here for us shortly".

## PIPE DREAMS



"O'BIE" RACKS HIS BRAINS

"HURRY UP, THE BOSS IS COMING."

