



## SUPPORT COMPANY

From the outset we knew that '84 was going to be hectic. The ultimate aim for the year was to lay the foundations for our ODF commitment in 1985. The priority to achieve that was manning and throughout the year many old and experienced faces have left us to return to rifle Coys, and on posting to new units.

Our thanks for their service, and no doubt the expertise and knowledge gained in Spt Coy will prove invaluable to their new sub units/units. To those who have joined callsign 6 — congratulations on making the grade.

During the year we were kept busy providing combat support to the Battalion. Two series of specialist courses and the perennial curse of duties soon whittled away the time.

At sport we met with mixed success, winning the cross-country, golf, pistol shooting, tennis and cricket. Why we didn't do better at Rugby and

Australian Rules is still a mystery. Unfortunately we relinquished the Schlyder Shield to C Coy, coming a creditable 3rd.

Whilst we came down in sport, we went up in Military Skills, from 5th to 2nd. Pioneers in particular, are to be commended for their improvement in that competition.

1984 has been a year of consolidation and my thanks go to those who have served the Coy well.

Best wishes for the festive season and good luck in '85.

Six-Niner

# SIGNAL PLATOON 1984

"The impossible will be done immediately — Miracles take a little longer."

The year began with a complete change over of the "men at the top." Capt "there used to be some hair up there" Woods became the RSO, Sgt "Donald Duck" (Rocky) McKelvie the Radio Sgt and Sgt Keith "who's been having a Fosters without giving one to me" Smith (spelt with two F's) the Pl Sgt.

After a quick broom sweep and a few shocks (called charges and extra's by most other people) the 1/84 Regimental Signals Course was upon us. The course was successful in the fact that 18 of the 25 students passed. The highlights were:

1. Rocky making friends in Cooktown.
2. The boss catching Rocky in Cooktown.
3. The RSO risking his life in a landrover with Flash.
4. Treading water during the rain storms in the 30' by 20' lecture room.

At the conclusion of such a strenuous course it was obvious that some members of the platoon required holidays. Rocky, "Brittle" Porter and "Who Dares Wins" Stanton flew to Hawaii with B Coy whilst Sgt Smith attended a very demanding subject three course to learn reading and riting — it didn't work!

The Bn CPX was the Pl's next endeavour. It was a great success for the Pl especially getting the RSO to carry an F1 Radio with all its CES and Cpl Mary Grant learning that if you try and carry all the Bn CP Radio equipment, it's bound to get you down.

The Bde hike "Spartan Challenge" proved to be a demanding challenge for all members of the Pl. All survived however, to fight another day. It was also discovered, much to the delight of BHO, that the RSO was a good "pot hole" finder. He spent more time practicing para rolls than he did walking.

An interlude of Pl training, and the military skills try then occurred. The section entered by the Pl did well and all are looking forward to next years competition.

Exercise "Northern Warrior" came and fortunately finally ended. Despite some equipment problems the Pl performed creditably on the Exercise. There was only the odd occasion when comms were not good and the Bn attack on line worked well for a first attempt. The only activity of any note was Brittle trying to find a radio that worked for him and no one else. The impossible did eventually occur.

What would a platoon be like without personalities?

Some notable events:

- Was it really time to sell your car Trevor or did the police not like the way you drove it after a couple of ales?
- Is it hard to get sleep Scooter when the nice man is asking you to blow in the bag?
- Are you really considering an inter-service transfer to the Navy Flash?
- What's married life like Willy and Jamesy?
- Does Smithy really have a girlfriend he visits late at night?
- Did Wayne Fotheringham really go down to Anzac Park to use the toilets?

Quotable Quotes

JJ - "I made sure I got drunk at camp and the mongrels still didn't wake me up."

Blossom - "Gee seeing that my girlfriend's now back in town I shouldn't be getting any more phone calls."

Smithy - "Why's that bin full of empty Fosters cans?"

The Platoon - "Sarge down stairs must have swapped bins with us."

Gouldy - "I must be the only normal one in the platoon - everyone else appears crazy."

Mary - "Look at me, I'm a professional sig. I carry all my own equipment."

Mary (after eight km leaning against the side of a hill) - "Can somebody please help me up."

Cawler - "If I go east we're bound to hit a road."

Mary - "I have got the right bearing — Where did all these hills come from?"

Parry - "My car really got bogged at Pallarendra last night!!"

Kim - "I might retire soon. I'm nearly eligible for my pension."

Blossom - "Can I really go to Cooktown Sir?"

Rocky - "It's not for us to question why on certain mornings the Boss is silent."

Parry - "The reason why I'm late Sarge is that my car got ripped off."

Krenke - "I must sell my car — but no one will buy it."



*The RSO and his pronto's await the Spartan Challenge kit check.*



*Pronto's Cooling Off*

*Back Row: Pte Baxter, Lcpl Boneham, Pte Walker, Pte Hite.  
Front Row: Pte Stanton, Pte Wilson, Pte Dilley, Pte Gould.*

# MORTAR PLATOON 1984

## General

As with most platoons in the Battalion, Mortars underwent a few changes in 1984. In order to meet demands placed on it by new cogs in the Battalion fly wheel, a busy training schedule has ensued. This has ensured that the skills of the platoon were constantly revised and practiced, with the ultimate objective of firing a danger close mission in the New Year.

## The Training

The Support Company Parade Ground was soon ringing to the cries of "PLATOON: ACTION" as the NCO's ran the platoon through its paces - against a mythical enemy who was never quite destroyed. The MLO made sure that those spare kilos disappeared, often to the distress of the platoon.

People began to stop and ask "just who are those soldiers?" "Mortars," came the resounding reply. This was all in preparation for a hectic start to the year: — a course, followed immediately by provision of support to RMC for their Artillery/Mortar Firepower week.

The first course did not provide the numbers hoped for, and we were able to welcome only three members to the platoon. However this demonstrated to the Battalion that Mortars were serious, and that only the highest standards were acceptable. It augured well for the second course in October.

The RMC shoot was an extremely busy time for our two sections. The record number of missions for any one day was 46, no mean feat. (We were helped of course, by Spt Tp 3/4 Cav and 162 Recce Sqn). Naturally we are biased, but think we proved to the cadets the superiority of mortars as a weapon.

During our demonstration to the cadets we weren't able to fire as far as the guns, but we were quicker; we were timely; and we were able to hit our targets! (We don't think we need the Laser Range Finder after all). The Chief Instructor of RMC

conveyed his congratulations and said how the cadets had enjoyed being with us.

Our Major LFX for 1984 was Exercise "HARD BLOW", conceived by our platoon Commander, with a little help from the Devil and the NBCD pam. The platoon was exposed to the more unusual and demanding aspects of their trade. Eventually, it was able to demonstrate its ability to do everything demanded of it! Mortarmen were flown into Fire Support Bases, donned NBCD TOPP 3 almost immediately, and proceeded to fire several Fire Plans. We roundly cursed ourselves for taking blunt axes to the field as well. We can hardly wait for "HARD BLOW II".

The Brigade had two activities for 1984, "SPARTAN CHALLENGE" and "NORTHERN WARRIOR". In the former mortars found themselves as 'sweepers' to the Battalion as the Brigade took different routes to MINGELA. Our weary bones and blistered feet provided evidence that MINGELA is 90 kilometres from TOWNSVILLE.

While on "NORTHERN WARRIOR", our platoon Commander was quafing ale in BERLIN on Exercise "LIONHEART". Meanwhile, the workers of the platoon provided live firing support for the rifle companies, acted as enemy and manpacked the tubes through the jungles of Mt. Spec. Some compensation was that various members of the platoon got to move up in the chain of command during the boss's absence.

## The Remainder

The remainder of the year was taken up with a far more successful course (welcome fellas), and a fortnight chasing the mortar's Holy Grail. This turned out to be the remains of one John Gilbert, speared to death in 1846 by aborigines. He was a member of Ludwig Leichardt's party of explorers, and was buried about 100 kilometres North-east of Normanton. We



*Taking it easy in APC's.*



*Instructing RMC cadets.*