

EXERCISE PACIFIC BOND 1994

OR A JOURNEY INTO MADNESS

"Schofield. I'm still only in damned Schofield Barracks", the ceiling fan cast shadows across my dingy room in the Quad. Today I would go up-country, into the box in search of Major Baumgart and his company of renegade Aussies. He'd been destined for a top slot in the corporation, but the pressure of working with 25th Infantry Division (Tropic Lightning), 2nd Brigade (Warriors) and 1-14 Infantry Battalion (Golden Dragons) had sent him mad. Now he was in the box, operating without any decent restraint. My task was to terminate with extreme disinterest.

The first sign I found of the Aussies were the mutilated bodies of some hapless GIs that had been attacked in some frenzied bloodlust known as - Rugby! All across the island these barbarians left a trail of destruction, empty beer bottles and mastercard bills.

Next I tracked them to the Staging Base for the Joint Readiness Training Centre (JRTC). They were easy to find. Frustrated by a supply system that refused to acknowledge they existed the Australians showed their convict heritage and acquired their stores by whatever means possible. Notable was a short, balding angry one, known as Skull, who took the Brigade Headquarters hostage until they gave him some ammo.

I tagged along with the '4th of the 22nd' - Regulars by God: an old foot unit that had swapped their fieldcraft and commonsense for firepower and bravado. I walked into the Regulars' Command Post and asked who was in command. A large African-American GI looked at me and laughed. It was obvious that no-one was in command. I had passed the point of no return.

Once in the box the Australians were easy to track. It was a case of finding the sectors not littered with rubbish and you had found the Aussies. The Aussies had gone feral. They stalked their enemy like wild animal stalking prey. One prisoner of war we interrogated spoke of the 'hunting mode' that came over the Aussies. The boys in Warrior Brigade obviously knew that the Australians were operating outside of the chain of command, because every opportunity they got to shoot at the Aussies they took.

With both the enemy and their own forces trying to kill them, no food, water or ammo it seemed as if the Australians had finally been run to ground. The plan was to abandon the Aussies in the bush without food or water and let them die. But, the war ended and they managed to escape to New Orleans by hijacking trucks and buses. The French Quarter is a seedy and decadent refuge for criminals and drunkards, little wonder then that they should go there. I heard tales from the local police of a thousand drunken Aussies terrorising Bourbon Street - there were only 120 of them.

I finally ran them to ground at an air terminal in Hawaii. Major Baumgart sat there mumbling something about the "horror, the horror". I watched as the vicious thugs who had terrorised the US Army for six weeks boarded their aircraft, as meek as lambs, just thankful that the horror was finally over. Or is it? Only 1995 and Exercise Golden Eagle (Hawaii) will tell.



Yeah, I'll take her, with the optional sports pack and racing stripes."



Exercise PACBOND was not a circus. It just looked like one!