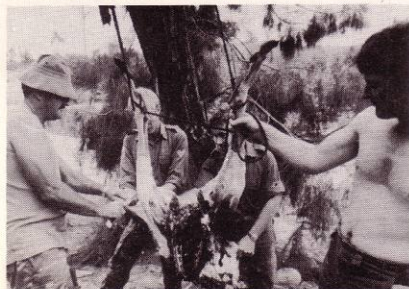


TREK ALONG THE HERBERT

By CAPT M. PARSONS

We set off on Saturday 15 November 1980, just seven of us, with the aim of surviving off the land under arduous Physical conditions. Our destination was the Herbert River Falls and the plan - to walk into the falls, then some 60 Km down the general line of the river to the end of the road out from Ingham.

On saying goodbye to the vehicles and the forlorn remains of our cut lunches we walked 5 Km into the falls. That night it was fish for dinner and some again Sunday morning. We also bagged our first roo before heading off down river.



Left to Right: Sgt. Kanake (Max), Cpl. Brady (Bones or Ian), Pte. Bell, LCpl. Neville (John).

The Herbert River Falls were really something to see, plunging down into a deep and magnificent gorge. We climbed down into the gorge a kilometre below the falls and tried again for some fish. We smoke dried some of the roo meat and having no luck with fish ate roo that night.



Left: LCpl Neville (John), Right: Pte. Jones (Bon)

Next morning having decided that it would take forever to follow the river along the bottom of the gorge we had to climb back out the same way we came down. Some 600 feet later we staggered onto the top of the last rise.



Herbert River Gorge. Left to Right: Cpl. Brady, LCpl. Neville Pte Jones, Pte. Bell, Capt. Parsons.

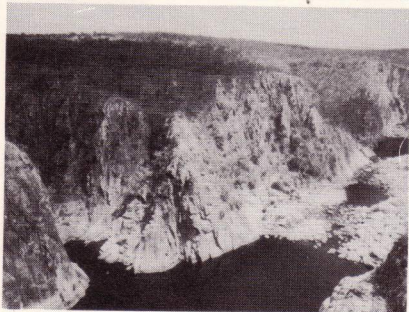
With some six kilometres of very tough country ahead of us we pushed on. Soon both lack of carbohydrates, having eaten only meat or fish, and the heat began to take its toll. Going up the hills you could feel the energy and drive ebbing away until every step became an effort. For lunch we tried our dried roo meat which mainly succeeded in making three of us sick and did not give us the energy boost we had counted on. By mid afternoon we reached our night campsite. The prospect of climbing down into the gorge again in our debilitated state was not enthralling. As we would have to climb out again the next morning, it was decided to stay up on the high country. So we made camp above a waterfall in the dry creek bed of Princess Creek overlooking the gorge.



Herbert River Gorge. Cpl. Brady - About to jump! Princess Creek 'Dry' waterfall.

To boost our energy stocks we ate one meal out of our two day emergency ration supply. We planned to put in a 20 kilometre effort next day to get us out of the worst of the rough country.

The ration meal and roo for breakfast did the trick and allowed us to cover the distance. By late afternoon, Tuesday we climbed back down into the gorge some 20 kilometres down river from the falls. We were now committed to walking out along the river bed as none of us could face the prospect of climbing back out the sheer walls that surrounded us.



Herbert River Gorge.

The rest of the walk down the river was relatively easy and allowed us to enjoy the unspoilt wild scenery. We covered about eight kilometres each day until the Saturday eight days from the time we started.

Although we encountered a few cattle in pockets along the river, we were surprised at the lack of wild-life, other than the obnoxious cane toad. The fishing however improved considerably and managed to sustain us until the last two days when we broke open the remainder of our rations.

We all ended the walk much thinner but in good spirits. Three of us nursed rather large and nasty blisters, but other than that were all in good condition.

We were all convinced about crocs in the lower Herbert when we came across tracks and slide marks in two sand patches during the second last days walk. Needless to say we were not too inclined towards swimming to pass the time while we waited at the end for our transport.

The walk was well worthwhile through some of the most rugged and striking country in Queensland. We managed to survive and cover the distance, but all found that our efficiency both mental and physical was markedly lower than had we been on full rations. The prospect of the nearest pie shop was more than tantalizing as we passed our last few hours waiting for the land rovers to arrive.

**THE
GOLDEN DOLLAR**
News and Casket Agency
*Welcomes all
Military Personnel and Friends*
377 Flinders Street
Phone 72 1752