

Exercise K 83 looked like being the climax of our years training. We had ambushed, roadblocked, OP'd and defended key points until we were blue in the face. 2 PL was ready for anything — W.A., watch out!

It was a memorable exercise for a lot of reasons. Apart from the 747 flight we will remember it for:

- getting airsick on the first insertion,
- red dust,
- a platoon attack and seven hills on the first day!
- red dust,
- no more contacts,
- red dust,
- the flight from Learmonth that never was,
- no more contacts,
- red dust,
- and of course, the many valuable training lesson!

1983 was a good year for the platoon and with few changes to come, will prove to be even better with 1984.



The MFC Sgt Smith with some fresh rations

1 PL REPORT 1983

The ODF training year, what a year! A chance for 1 PL to train to our heart's content. Another year to be exhausted for days, walk for miles, and be gassed silly.

A few square pegs and 'off the cuff' exercises showed us just how much we had to teach our enemy. In one case we searched for a lost enemy so that they could attack us. Or is that incorrect Cpl Edmonds? No, it was not always the case was it Hicks, as we sat watching and waiting for the enemy, and enemy of 2 PL and CHQ rendezvous. Eventually, all problems of enemy were solved as Lcpl Terry Sullivan' Knapp expounded his exploits against the japs.

The enemy were to become the least of our problems as our feet began to do the walking. Ex 'Big Dog' showed us what the song "These Boots are Made for Walking" is all about. It was probably just as well Stu Reid didn't catch the enemy landrover as 25 packs is a little too large a load. In all it was our endless wit that prevailed. As the miles passed by, old Les was heard to say, "Even the Germans marched the Jews to be gassed!"

As the C's slowly dissipated eyes turned North to Coen, to an enemy that would not play dead, Jerry water that was alive with marine life, and trucks that could career wildly through a group of engineers. We should also pay note to the RAAF scenic flights (Hey Danny!), of course the Command elements of the Platoon were never affected by these small dramas.

From one inspirational flight to another and it was 'W.A. here we come' followed closely by 'Where the hell are we?' as we surveyed the surrounding deserts. After an eternity of deployment we were finally on our D.F.H.P.T. (Defence Forces Holiday Package Tour) of N.W. Australia. Days of glorious sun and cool water prevailed whilst the remarkable packaging of the RAAF is yet to be surpassed Sardines etc., eat your hearts out. 1 PL has been 'combat loaded'.

Through a fast and furious year, the Platoon has held together to fight again in 1984. All members are to be congratulated and commended for giving their new Platoon Commander a very exciting, traumatic and fun-filled year. Well done men.

G.F. BOURKE
LT
OC 1PL

3 PL REPORT 1983

Our first activity for the year was a pleasant holiday in Tully. It was designed to introduce Close Country Operators to the new members of A Coy. The horrific stories of wait-a-while and endless rain unfortunately proved to be true, as most of the platoon soon realised. At the end-of-exercise barbecue Pte Shane Maloney, attempted to drink the boozier out of Fosters, and, as far as we know, succeeded.

Our next move on the battlefield was a Company training week at High Range. After the protection of the jungle, the lads soon learned how vulnerable a soldier is in open country. (They found it more difficult to hid their "tac durries" at night).

Ex Maxi Beagle was our next exercise and the Platoon moved through close country, gas, company attack and air mobile phases. The air mobile phase was conducted without the use of aircraft — a novel approach.

Northern Run saw the Platoon demonstrate its initiative and aggressiveness in two major incidents. The first was a platoon ambush during the Stuart Phase. Halfway through the Orders Group we received a message from 1 PL that the enemy would be in our location in five minutes. The Orders Group continued as we ran from our firm base to the ambush site. The plan called for primary and secondary ambushes to separate the vehicles. Cpl Ken Robinson led the primary ambush and successfully destroyed one vehicle and six enemy. The remaining 18 of us took on 22 enemy in three moves. After a fierce running battle in which Cpl Laurie Jackson chased two retreating rovers, 3 PL was triumphant. The result was one prisoner and the remainder KIA. One comment from the enemy, overheard as they crawled away, was "What are these crazy bastards?"

The second incident in which 3 PL demonstrated its amazing potential was the final PI attack conducted on the enemy Coy posn with the remainder of the Battalion deployed as cut off. Need I say more.

"Ex Wild Goose", a Platoon Training Exercise at Bluewater, put the lads through their paces under situations of high stress. On our last night skits based on the mannerisms of the PI staff, demonstrated their ability to keep smiling no matter how tough things got.

Finall Ex K 83. A twenty man platoon with five guns. (Spt Sect permanently attached). What firepower! So awesome were we that the enemy avoided us the entire exercise.

Remember...

The icecream girl at Learmonth?

Showers along the pipeline during the road blocks?

Our night off in Karratha?

The night the Recon Pte saw the UFO?

R.U.G. BOSI

2 Lt

OC 3 PL



Pte Smith with WO2 Dabinett



The ODF soldier goes to war — Pte Smith